WHAT'S NEXT?

In 2018, we will be installing the second barrier (on Black Canyon) and completing the design for the final, permanent barrier at the downstream end of the project reach. Work will also be done in collaboration with the US Forest Service South Park Ranger District and Wild Connections to expand a busy trailhead for both Colorado Trail and Ben Tyler Trail, repair a heavily-deteriorated edge of the Lost Creek Wilderness, and make way for the reintroduction of greenback cutthroat trout in Rock Creek.

In 2019, funding allowing, we will complete construction of that bottom-most barrier. Fish will be restocked into the stream once barriers are in place and whirling disease has been successfully eliminated (the WD parasite will die out over an estimated 3 years or so if it has no trout available as hosts – a process that has already begun for portions of Rock Creek).

PROJECT PARTNERS

COLORADOTU.ORG

GET INVOLVED

How can you make a difference for Rock Creek? Learn more about the project and how you can volunteer your time by visiting the link below. Colorado TU depends on support from people like you!

coloradotu.org/rockcreek

You can also find out about all upcoming volunteer projects or sign up to receive information about different projects below.

coloradotu.org/volunteer

BECOME A MEMBER

Join over 11,000 strong Trout Unlimited Members in Colorado. Together, we protect our local rivers and strengthen communities. Members volunteer their time and contribute much needed funds, strengthening our ability to protect Colorado's rivers and watersheds.

coloradotu.org/join

COLORADO TROUT UNLIMITED

ROCK CREEK NATIVE TROUT RESTORATION PROJECT

ABOUT THE PROJECT

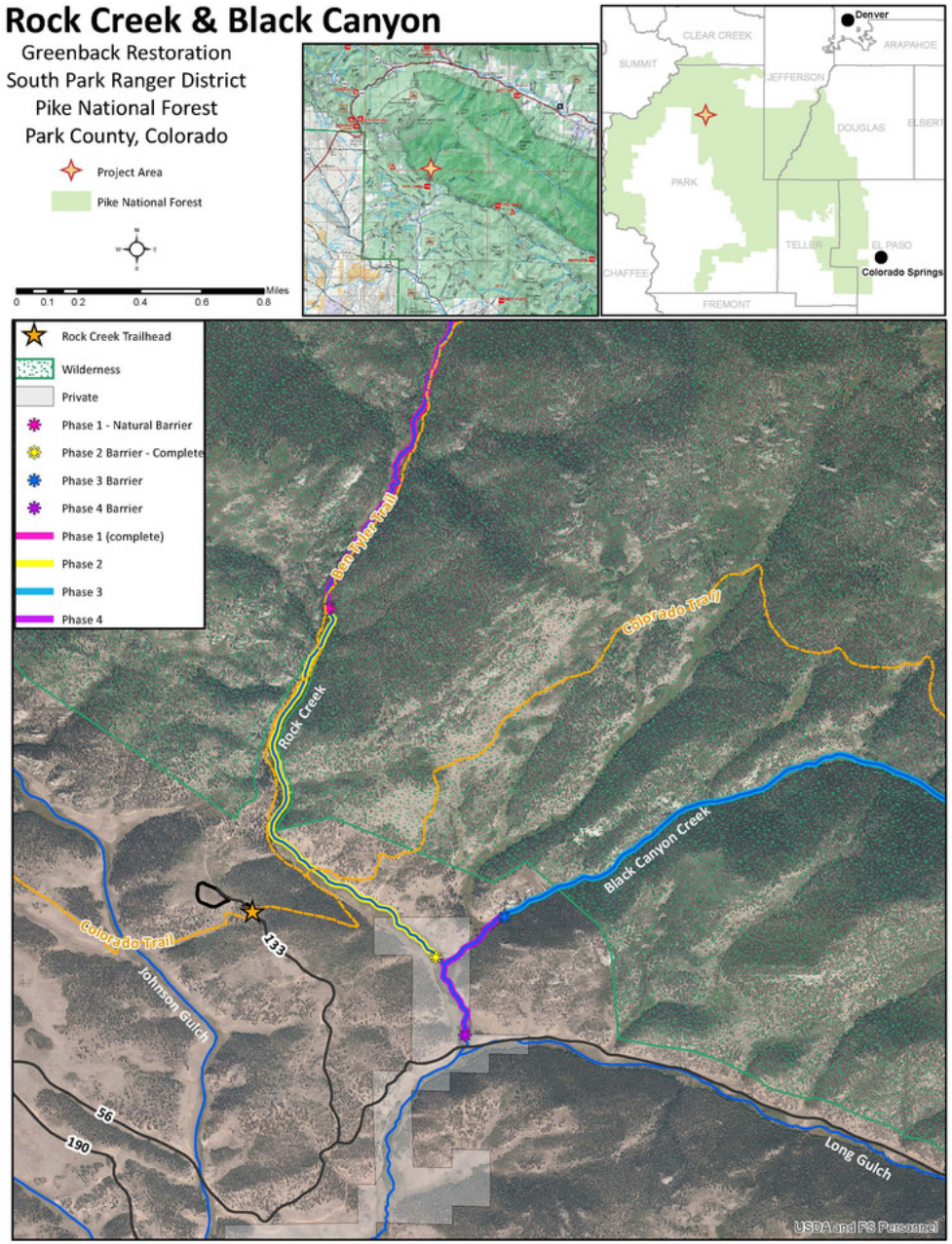
In the Tarryall headwaters, Colorado TU is partnering with the US Forest Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, and a local ranch owner on a program to restore greenback cutthroat trout in a connected "metapopulation" spanning Rock Creek and its tributary Black Canyon.

Rock Creek can be found in the Lost Creek Wilderness Area and is a tributary of the Tarryall River, which then flows into the South Platte River.

VOLUNTEER WORK

Work in the area includes: barrier construction, removal of non-native fish, riparian restoration, habitat improvements, and eventual restocking.

Volunteers and partners are working to restore the area through trail maintenance, willow planting, stream improvements, erosion control, fencing, and more!



PROJECT CONSTRUCTION

Work within this project includes both eradication of whirling disease from the lower watershed and restoration of native trout throughout the reach. To do this, 1 of the first 2 removable barriers was installed in 2017 to isolate and protect the habitat while non-native fish and whirling disease is removed. Once that is done, the stream will be reconnected.

A permanent barrier will be placed at the bottom of the project reach, near the Lost Park Road. The end result will be more than 8 miles of connected quality habitat for Colorado's state fish.

Credit: USFWS

Greenback Cutthroat Trout

Oncorhynchus clarkii stomias

GREENBACK CUTTHROAT TROUT RECOVERY

Once plentiful throughout the South Platte River Basin, the Greenback suffered significant impacts from early settlement, mining, habitat loss, and invasive fish species. Once declared extinct in 1936, biologists in Colorado have been working tirelessly to bring this native fish back to life.

In 2013, geneticists at the University of Colorado identified a small population of cutthroat trout in Bear Creek near Colorado Springs to be the "true lineage" of Greenbacks. Ongoing recovery efforts at the time were actually stocking a hybrid version of the Colorado River Cutthroat Trout which had been transported over the Divide in the late 1800s and shared similar traits to the Greenback.

The small population of less than 800 true Greenbacks has grown to over 3,000 since 2013. There is a strong collaborative effort to reintroduce the Greenback into native drainages throughout the Front Range, including: Zimmerman Lake, Rock Creek, Herman Gulch, and Rocky Mountain National Park. The reintroduction process can take several years at each location.

coloradotu.org/native-trout