

CUTTHROAT TROUT RESTORATION ON YELLOWSTONE'S NORTHERN RANGE

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Growing concern over the status of Yellowstone cutthroat trout within Yellowstone Lake has led park managers to seek the potential for restoration of this sub species within watersheds of the park outside of the lake basin. These efforts are focused on Yellowstone's Northern Range, including the Yellowstone River and all of its sub-watersheds downstream of the Lower Falls at Canyon. A paucity of data concerning many of the small headwater streams, and a need to centralize the data that do exist, have previously limited our complete understanding of Yellowstone cutthroat trout status on the Northern Range. We aim to improve our understanding by combining historical records with contemporary field surveys from an effort begun in 2005. Each watershed is being classified by multiple factors, including basin size, potential for metapopulation processes, presence of existing instream barriers, trail access and other logistical factors, and the educational/interpretive value that each may provide. Watersheds will be prioritized to identify those that provide the highest probability for restoration success and overall value to the Northern Range initiative. The results will guide Yellowstone cutthroat trout restoration efforts in Yellowstone National Park in future years.