

BUILD IT AND THEY WILL COME: EARLY MONITORING RESULTS FROM THE NEVADA SPRING CREEK RESTORATION PROJECT^{AFS}

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Nevada Spring Creek is a tributary to Nevada Creek, an impaired tributary of the Blackfoot River. Nevada Spring Creek has been the focus of several restoration projects from 1990-2004. The goal of restoration work was to restore habitat conditions suitable for native trout, specifically westslope cutthroat trout and to improve downstream water quality and reduce thermal stress in Nevada Creek and the Blackfoot River. Restoration of four miles of Nevada Spring Creek took place in several stages, and utilized a variety of methods including complete channel reconstruction, instream wood placement, gravel addition, shrub plantings, sod mat stacking, and riparian grazing management changes. Pre- and post-project monitoring indicates that original project objectives are being met. Temperatures have been moderated throughout the entire length of the spring creek (decreased 10-15 °F) to provide the preferred range for trout. Initial fisheries surveys indicate community shifts in the upper and lower portions of the spring creek. Surveys in the upper section, a section previously dominated by brown trout, have found continued increased densities of brown trout and early signs of increased westslope cutthroat trout densities. A dramatic community shift was also detected in the lower spring creek as species diversity increased from three to six species, and a pre-project non-salmonid community shifted completely to an assemblage dominated by 85 percent salmonids (brown trout, westslope cutthroat and whitefish). In addition, a single bull trout was also collected, the first documented bull trout in the Nevada Creek watershed in the last 15 years.