



Southwest Region

Fish and Aquatic Conservation

Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Contribute to Gila Trout Recovery

Mora National Fish Hatchery (Hatchery) and Rio Mora National Wildlife Refuge co-funded a crew from the Rocky Mountain Youth Corp (RMYC) this summer, with each site hosting the crew for approximately four weeks.

While the RMYC team was at the Hatchery they undertook fuel reduction projects on the grounds to mitigate wildfire hazards. The hatchery staff had identified the most critical areas for clearing and had prearranged to utilize a brush chipper from Sevilleta National Wildlife Refuge to speed the removal efforts.

The Grant Agreement that helped fund the team required 10 acres of the Hatchery grounds to be cleared of fuel. The hatchery staff



Group photo of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps team. Credit: USFWS.

were very pleased with the crew's work ethics, and were happily surprised when the crew doubled the required acreage to clear over 20 acres on the Hatchery property. The hatchery staff have submitted a proposal to procure the crew for next year to continue the fuel reduction efforts. Great work RMYC!

With the requirements of the Grant Agreement doubled and still more time to go, the crew assisted with other activities at the Hatchery. They assisted with plumbing projects, worked with Volunteer Priscilla Jansen-Toland to plant a new pollinator garden, and built a hiking path with waste wood chips.



Pulling the cut brush to be chipped. Credit: USFWS.



Feeding the brush to the chipper. Credit: USFWS.



Before fuel reduction. Credit: USFWS



After fuel reduction. Credit: USFWS

The crew even assisted with the Gila trout. They cleaned fish rearing units and assisted in adipose fin clipping on over 11,000 Gila trout that will be stocked in the Gila Wilderness for recovery efforts. The adipose fin is between the tail and dorsal fin and provides a permanent mark on the fish to distinguish hatchery fish from their wild cousins.

The efforts of the RMYC team were well above and beyond expectations and were greatly appreciated! ♦ Mora NFH and Las Vegas NWR



RMYC team members cleaning rearing tanks. Credit: USFWS.



RMYC team members and Hatchery staff working on adipose fin clippings. Credit: USFWS.



Clipping a Gila trout adipose fin. Credit: USFWS.

U.S. Department of the Interior
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Southwest Region
Fish and Aquatic Conservation
500 Gold Ave SW
Albuquerque, NM 87102

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/fisheries/index.html>

September 2015