



U. S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Nevada Fish and Wildlife Office

Conserving the Biological Diversity of the Great Basin, Eastern Sierra, and Mojave Desert



Restoring Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in Currant Creek



Before project implementation, nonnative fish had open access to the upper portions of Currant Creek. Photo: C. Jasmine/USFWS

Currant Creek is a small tributary to the Mary's River in northeastern Nevada. Due to the presence of non-native fish, Lahontan cutthroat trout (LCT) were extirpated many years ago from this system. Through a voluntary partnership between the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for

Fish and Wildlife Program (Partners Program), the Nevada Department of Wildlife (NDOW), and a private landowner, steps are now underway to reestablish LCT back into its historic habitat.

After several investigations of Currant Creek, it was determined that habitat quality was good enough for LCT, but non-native trout would need to be removed before a reintroduction of LCT could be completed. A barrier in the lower reaches of the creek would need to be installed to ensure that non-native fish did not re-establish after their removal. In addition to eliminating the threat of nonnative fish species, the barrier also functions to stabilize a portion of the creek that was eroding prior to project implementation.

Once the partners agreed to move forward with the project, the Service and the landowner entered into a cost-share agreement which outlined how the project costs and implementation would be covered. In addition to sharing some of the project costs, the landowner provided in-kind services in construction of the actual barrier. The Partners Program was able to provide funding and technical assistance with the completion of all necessary state and federal permits in order to move the project forward on schedule.



A fish barrier will provide habitat for Lahontan cutthroat trout free of competing, nonnative fish species. Photo: C. Jasmine/USFWS

To date the barrier has been installed and the next step will be eradication of non-native fish species so LCT can be reintroduced. NDOW will be the lead for the removal of nonnative fish and also the reintroduction activities with support from the Service. Once the non-natives are removed, LCT and other native fishes including Paiute sculpin (*Cottus beldingi*) and speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*) will be reintroduced from nearby populations. It may take several years of reintroduction to ensure that LCT are able to expand and reestablish throughout the entire stream. These activities will begin in 2013.

This project is a great example of private landowners can work with Service's Partners Program to improve fish and wildlife habitat on their land. The scope of the Currant Creek project is greater than any one agency or landowner could likely complete alone. The Service recognizes that collaborative partnerships are the key to successful conservation efforts of fish and wildlife. It will be an exciting accomplishment when LCT are once again thriving in this historic stream system.