

Bear Wallow Creek, Arizona



Dewey Wesley/USFWS

Bear Wallow Creek on the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation in eastern Arizona was named one of the “10 Waters to Watch” for 2007, by the National Fish Habitat Board. The Western Native Trout Initiative chose the creek for the threatened Apache trout that swim its waters. A barrier built on the lower end of the creek now protects two more miles of Apache trout habitat above the barrier from non-native species that hybridize with it, or out-compete it for food and space. Helicopters flew in 100,000 pounds of materials to the remote creek; the barrier was built in 18 days. In 2008, biologists removed non-native fish above the barrier and reestablished

a pure population of native Apache trout. Project partners included the San Carlos Apache Tribe; Trout Unlimited; the Arizona Game and Fish Department; Natural Channel Design, Inc.; and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. “It’s in the best interest to protect the environment, the land and the water, including the Apache trout, not only for the Native tribes, but for all the people in Arizona,” said Wendsler Nosie Sr., San Carlos Apache Tribal Chairman. “If anyone calls Arizona home, they need to preserve what makes it beautiful.” The Apache trout lives only in the White Mountains. ♦ Jeremy Voeltz