



Legislation Text

File #: 19-052, **Version:** 1

Resolution of Acceptance for the Bear Creek Greenback Cutthroat Trout Habitat Restoration Grant

Presenter:

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Summary:

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Department are seeking a resolution of acceptance for a Great Outdoors Colorado Habitat Restoration grant award. The Department has been granted \$52,725.00 to assist with habitat restoration needs of the Bear Creek Greenback Cutthroat Trout.

Previous Council Action:

N/A

Background:

GOCO Habitat Restoration Grant:

GOCO funding for habitat restoration improves and restores Colorado's rivers, streams, wetlands, and critical habitat. The program offers \$500,000 in available funding each grant cycle.

Bear Creek Greenback Cutthroat Trout:

A 2012 study found that the greenback cutthroat trout population in Bear Creek is the sole remaining naturally-reproducing and genetically pure population of the fish, an exciting discovery that resulted in further research to ensure continued viability of Colorado's state fish. The Department of the Interior listed the greenbacks as threatened under the Endangered Species Act, a status that has remained since 1978. According to the 2016 US Fish and Wildlife Biological Survey, about 2,240 greenbacks occupy 3.4 miles of Bear Creek, with about 750 adult genetically pure fish.

This project aims to protect and enhance aquatic habitat, reduce harmful sediment, provide critical bank stabilization, and increase species resiliency to ensure the survivability of the threatened greenbacks. Beginning in the late 1800's loss of habitat caused by agriculture, mining, ranching and the introduction of non-native trout species began to take a toll on the greenbacks. By the early 1900's greenbacks had all but disappeared from Colorado's waters. The unanticipated discovery of the genetically pure population of greenbacks in Bear Creek extended conservation measures to the Pikes Peak Region.

As outlined in the USFWS Biological Opinion, the primary threats to the Bear Creek greenbacks are sediment discharges, habitat loss and degradation, and reduced stream flows related to climate change. This project will sustainably address all three of these environmental threats through in-stream improvements recommended in the Biological Opinion. Stabilizing the stream bank will

reduce harmful sediment discharges. Restoring, enhancing, and creating in-channel pools will address the reduced stream flows and dramatically improve aquatic habitat within Bear Creek. These project elements will provide conditions for the greenbacks to thrive, reduce the threat of erosion and sedimentation, and increase the resiliency of an integral population of greenbacks.

The County previously received \$75,000 from GOCO to fund the Jones Park Bear Creek Greenback Cutthroat Trout Restoration Project, which they completed last year. Our grant application is for habitat restoration on the City's property in Bear Creek Canyon Park, which is further down the watershed from the County's property.

All land managers are working in collaboration to implement the USFWS Biological Opinion, which directs the scope of work and timeline. In-stream work amongst land managers has been coordinated in an upstream to downstream direction to avoid sedimentation impacts to stream pool areas already treated. With the County's recent completion of habitat restoration in Jones Park, the project area within the City's jurisdiction is now the next priority.

This item supports the City's strategic goal relating to building community and collaborative relationships by supporting the efforts of the Department of the Interior to protect an endangered species located within the Pikes Peak Region.

Financial Implications:

The grant application requires a minimum cash match of \$13,575, which the Department allocated as part of the 2019 budget process.

Board/Commission Recommendation:

The Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services Board unanimously supported the proposed resolution and approved moving the resolution forward for City Council consideration on January 10, 2019.

Stakeholder Process:

Since 2011 agency partners have been working with the user groups to both inform and seek ideas for management. The collaborative roundtable consists of government agencies (U.S. Forest Service, Colorado Springs Utilities, El Paso County, Colorado Springs Parks and Recreation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Colorado Parks and Wildlife) and diverse users groups including Colorado Trout Unlimited, Cheyenne Mountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Colorado Motorcycle Trail Riders Association, Medicine Wheel (mountain bike association), Pikes Peak Range Riders (equestrian association), Trails and Open Space Coalition, Friends of the Peak, and the Sierra Club.

The roundtable serves to identify opportunities for restoration, collectively raise funds and commit resources to this conservation effort. As this project moves forward, partners have the opportunity to provide input for best practices and reflect on lessons learned from previous projects implemented in Bear Creek. To date, numerous projects have taken place, including the City of Colorado Springs' improvements to High Drive to reduce sedimentation, trail rerouting and closure to provide for responsible recreation in the area, and streambank and instream restoration efforts in the Jones Park section owned by El Paso County. Continual communication and feedback is a high priority with multiple land managers working towards a common goal on their respective properties.

Alternatives:

City Council may opt not to support the Resolution of Acceptance for the Bear Creek Greenback

Cutthroat Trout Habitat Restoration Grant.

Proposed Motion:

Move to support the Resolution of Acceptance for the Bear Creek Greenback Cutthroat Trout Habitat Restoration Grant.

N/A