



February 2009 Report to the Guadalupe River Chapter of TU.

The Truchas Chapter continues to make progress with its various partners on the project to place a fish-passage barrier on Alamitos Creek in the Carson National Forest. As you know, that barrier would protect a large population of genetically pure Rio Grande cutthroat trout from encroachment by non-native trout.

Representatives of our chapter met with the new supervisor of the Carson National Forest, other representatives of the Forest, a representative of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish and representatives of two traditional irrigation organizations (called "acequias" in New Mexico) in January to discuss the project. New Mexico acequias are local governmental entities under New Mexico law. The new forest supervisor is very supportive of the project, and we made good progress at the meeting. The forest engineer is recommending that the barrier be placed at the site of a current irrigation diversion for the two acequias represented at the meeting. If built at that site, the structure would act both as a fish-passage barrier and as an irrigation diversion structure. The analysis required by the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) will determine what site is actually selected.

All of the parties at the meeting were in agreement that the groups helping to fund the project would be recognized by signage on the structure. The forest supervisor recommended against a stand-alone sign, because of the likelihood of vandalism. We agreed on a plaque that would be fixed on the structure. The Guadalupe River Chapter would be listed on that plaque.

Since the meeting, we have signed an agreement with the Forest for our chapter to fund the NEPA analysis. A copy of the agreement is attached. Under the agreement, the Forest is required to complete the NEPA analysis by April 17 of this year and to bill our chapter for the cost of that work on a reimbursement basis. The Forest has committed to do the NEPA work for no more than \$10,000. Our chapter will fund the agreement with the \$3,000 from the Guadalupe River Chapter, a \$2,500 grant from New Mexico Trout, and the balance from our Chapter's Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Restoration Fund.

Since the meeting, as well, the commissions for the two acequias have approved the joint-structure approach and its location, if the Carson National Forest ultimately selects that site.

The forest engineer estimates that it will cost about \$60,000 to build the structure at the site of the current diversion. That estimate is based on the current cost of materials, particularly concrete, which could go up before bids are received from prospective contractors. If the final price for the structure is close to \$60,000, sufficient funds are available for the construction. Fifty thousand dollars are available through the federal grant from the Western Native Trout Initiative, and the two acequias have funds available from the New Mexico Interstate Stream Commission.



Our goal and that of our partners is to complete the construction of the structure by the end of this calendar year.

Please let us know if you have any questions.

Prepared by Kevin Reilly.