

## **MEG AND BERT RAYNES WILDLIFE FUND**

### **Executive Summary**

Organization: Jackson Hole chapter of Trout Unlimited (JHTU)

Title of grant: 2017-2018 Jackson Hole Adopt-a-Trout Program

Executive Summary: The Jackson Hole Adopt-a-Trout (AaT) Program works with the Teton County School District to educate students about their local watershed and fisheries while also providing important data to resource managers. The program is both a robust educational program and a research project with real-world applications – which together help improve the health of our community’s aquatic resources by cultivating the next generation of stewards and identifying on-the-ground conservation needs.

Through the AaT Program, Jackson Hole Middle School science classes participate in a telemetry movement study of fish movement by “adopting” and following radio-tagged fish throughout the school year – a combination of field days and classroom activities. In addition to tracking and mapping the movements of tagged fish, which educators recognize as a valuable STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) learning tool for kids, students are introduced to local aquatic and fisheries resource experts and volunteers. The AaT program also provides resource managers with valuable data necessary to answer important questions regarding habitat conditions and trout migratory patterns, which in turn identifies new stream restoration and reconnection projects, measures the success of completed projects, and validates restoration work.

The 2017-2018 program is organized around a radio telemetry study of native Snake River cutthroat trout movement in the Fish Creek drainage, conducted by Trout Unlimited, Grand Teton National Park, and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. Thirty fish have been surgically implanted with radio tags, with 15 fish released into the Granite Supplemental irrigation ditch, a ditch that diverts water from the Snake River into ranch lands and developments in the Fish Creek drainage, and 15 fish released into Fish Creek. Fish movements have been monitored through two fixed antenna telemetry stations, telemetry tracking flights, and hand tracking on foot and by vehicle. Movement and mortality data will be analyzed by project partners in fall 2018. The Meg and Bert Raynes Wildlife Fund grant supported the purchase of the radio tags.

For the 2017-2018 school year, over 200 Jackson Hole Middle School students have been educated to date through two field days held at the Old Wilson Schoolhouse / Owen Bircher Park and 3 classroom days held at the Jackson Hole Middle School. The field day educational stations included fish surgery, telemetry, aquatic macroinvertebrates, water quality, electrofishing, and food webs. The classroom days included lessons on mapping and trout adoption, fish life cycles, and fish dissection. Upcoming classroom days will include lessons on mapping fish movement in Google Earth, and watersheds and stream morphology. The school year programming will culminate with a field day in June that will include stations on fish identification, weeds, fish movement, and fly casting, a fish hatchery tour, and a volunteer project.



Snake River cutthroat with radio tag prior to release in Granite Supplemental irrigation ditch. Photo: TU.



Adopt-a-Trout field day with fish recovering from surgery. Photo: WGFD.