

Sauerkraut Creek Fish Passage Project

Project Objective: Restore fish passage to Sauerkraut Creek for migratory populations of westslope cutthroat trout by replacing three undersized culverts that impeded fish passage during high flow periods.

Stream & Project Details: Sauerkraut Creek is a 2nd order tributary to the upper Blackfoot River entering near river-mile 102.1 and supports fluvial, genetically pure westslope cutthroat trout, and bull trout rearing. This project addressed the three existing road crossings in the drainage that were undersized and perched, created a barrier to fish passage during high flow periods and caused channel impairments. The three culverts were upgraded with concrete bridges following stream simulation guidelines and principles, allowing for aquatic organism passage, adequate hydrologic capacity for at least a 100-year flood event, and stream channel function. Fill slopes and stream banks were reclaimed using transplants, mulch and native grass seed.

Results: Access to the entire length of Sauerkraut Creek (over seven miles of instream habitat) has been restored for populations of pure westslope cutthroat trout migrating from the Blackfoot River to spawn and rear in Sauerkraut Creek.

Project Partners: Stew & Dolores Schwartz, Brent & Carla Anderson, USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, United States Forest Service, Chutney Foundation, Embrace-a-Stream, Patagonia World Trout Initiative & Big Blackfoot Chapter of Trout Unlimited.





Historic undersized culverts in the Sauerkraut drainage upgraded with free-span bridges to accomodate fish passage.