



# GUNNISON ANGLING SOCIETY

THE GUNNISON CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

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Month: *June 2016*

## Gunnison Basin Adopt-A-Trout is off and Running!

A wild trout, groggy from the surgery, slowly swims back to the waters of Tomichi Creek. The trout, a large and decoratively spotted brown, has had a radio frequency transmitter implanted in its stomach cavity the incision closed with skillfully applied stitches. Soon after a group of high school students crowd around an antenna attached by a wire to a shoe box sized receiver listening for the tell tale “ping” of the transmitter. The antenna points to the trout’s hideaway tucked under overhanging willows. The trout and its travels will be tracked for the next year and a half closely followed by the high school students and Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff.



A groggy brown trout is released back to the waters of Tomichi Creek

A total of 15 adult trout were tagged and released at three points along Tomichi Creek over three days in April of 2016, the culmination of more than a year of planning and fundraising. The Gunnison Basin Adopt-A-Trout program is officially off the ground and underway! This collaborative effort pulled together many partners around a fisheries restoration and youth education originally pioneered by Trout Unlimited.

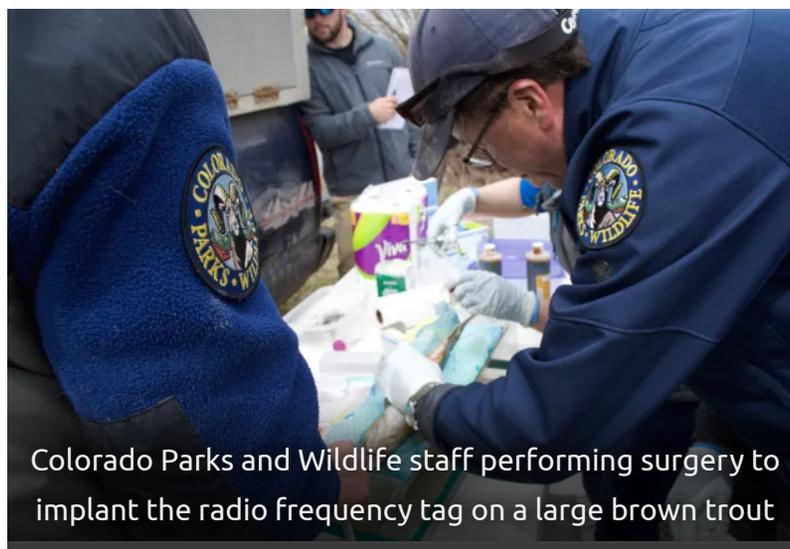


Staff members from BLM fisheries work to shock and capture trout on Tomichi Creek

The goal of the program is two fold:

1. Tag and track trout movements in the lower end of Tomichi Creek to help fishery managers better understand trout habitat and identify and prioritize restoration efforts.
2. Engage Gunnison area students in a real world research project and involve them in a curriculum that expresses watershed connectivity and to potential careers in natural resource management

The study area is approximately five mile long bounded on the upstream end by the Signal Peak industrial Park downstream to the confluence with the Gunnison River. By seeing where trout go in times of drought or flood we hope to better understand their habitat needs and target areas to improve habitat. This section of Tomichi Creek is typical of many mountain streams in the west as it suffers from degraded habitat quality, seasonally low flows, and increased water temperatures. This section of Tomichi creek has also been added to the state list of impaired water bodies. Since trout need relatively cold clean water and plenty of favorable habitat to survive studying them serves as a proxy to better understand the overall health of the creek.



Colorado Parks and Wildlife staff performing surgery to implant the radio frequency tag on a large brown trout



A radio frequency tag is carefully inserted into a brown trout

Gunnison Area students get a unique opportunity to be involved with a real life research project. The students using the scientific method create hypothesis and tests them with the data collected from tracking the trout. They also get the opportunity to go into the field and help gather the data. In addition they are exposed to lessons on geomorphology, entomology, riparian areas, and water resource management. The hope is to give students a better understanding of where their water comes from and how they impact their environment.

Students from the Gunnison High School hold the tracking antenna listening for the tell tale “ping” of a tagged trout

Students with Trout Unlimited’s Jesse Kruthaupt record the location of a tagged trout and what type of habitat it is using

Gunnison Basin Adopt-A-Trout Program represents a new way of approaching natural resource issues. A collaborative effort that has had support from Trout Unlimited, Gunnison Angling Society, Coldharbour Institute, Colorado Parks and Wildlife, Bureau of Land

Management, New Belgium Brewing, Upper Gunnison River Water Conservancy District, Gunnison River Festival, and private landowners. By combining the efforts of these different stakeholders as well as engaging the next generation we hope to build broad support and awareness of issues affecting our rivers. As for now the trout will continue to be tracked and more students engaged so that the once groggy trout can shows us how to better live in our environment.

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 Briant Wiles  June 1, 2016  General Info  0

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