

FY2025

Fisheries Habitat

Restoration

Project Opportunity

Middle Ponil Creek

Fish Barrier

Middle Ponil Creek Fish Barrier Designs and Construction

Background Information

- Middle Ponil Creek is located in the Valle Vidal unit of the Carson National Forest near Shuree Ponds
- In 2022, a core conservation population of Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout (RGCT) was rescued from Rito Morphy during the Calf Canyon/ Hermits Peak Fire. Middle Ponil Creek was an ideal location to place these rescued fish as it is within the Canadian drainage and a barrier in place to secure the population from hybridizing with other trout
- A treatment was completed to remove nonnatives and allow the Department to stock the rescued RGCT within a short period
- In 2023, NMDGF hired an engineer to evaluate the current barrier and make recommendations to ensure protection of the RGCT population. The engineer found that the barrier was no longer a functioning barrier and could potentially allow nonnative trout to move upstream during certain flows. The engineer's recommendation was to build a new barrier
- Since this is a core conservation (highest conservation status) population of RGCT, it is important to secure them as quickly as possible

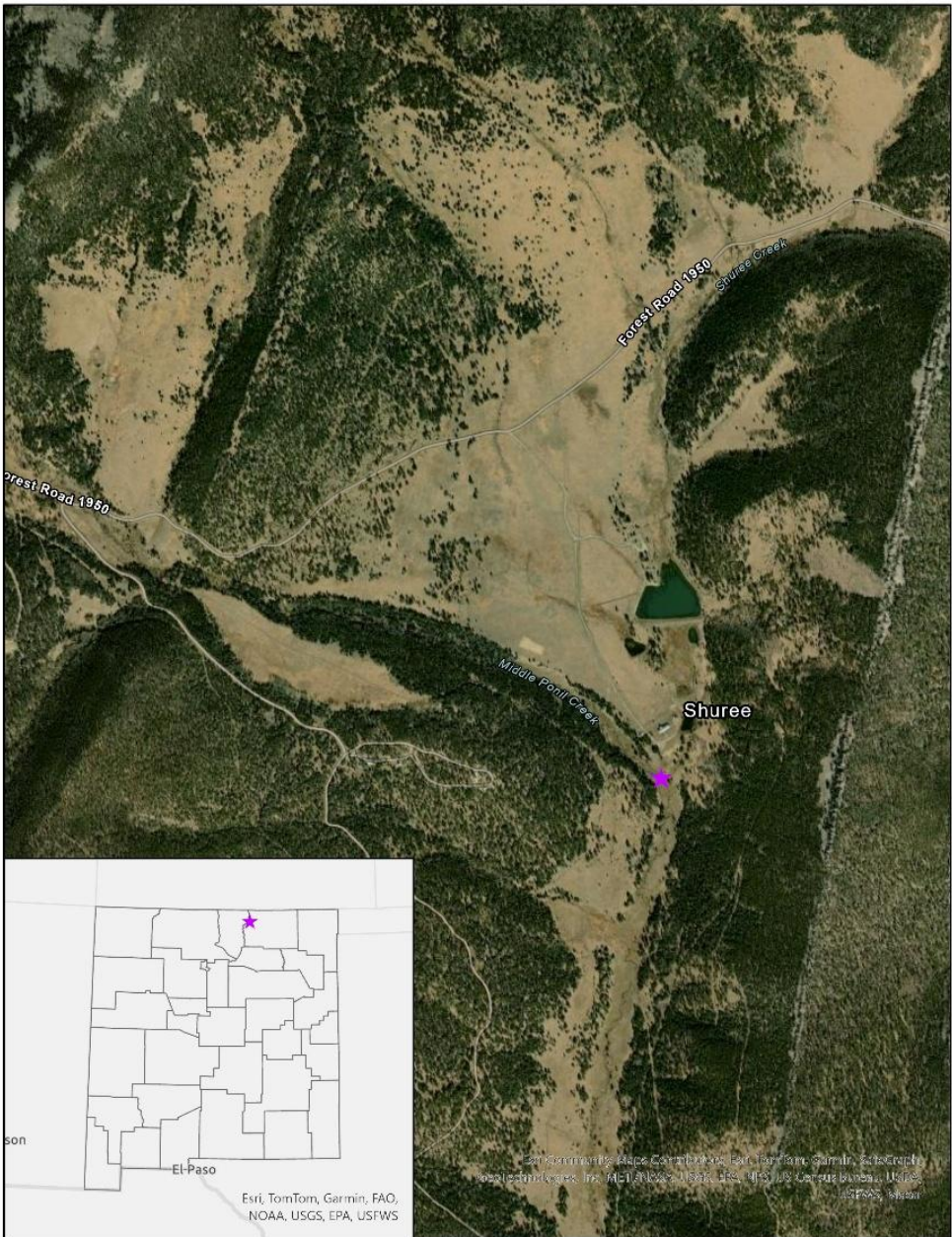
Project Contacts

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Proposed Action

- Complete designs of a new fish barrier
- Wrap up compliance (September 2024)
- Construction project with construction oversight
- **Estimated Budget: \$800,000**



Project Name:

Project relation to CAC advice or priorities:

Project Specific Details:

Historical Data:

Itemized Use of Funds:

Comprehensive Project Analysis:

Monitoring Plan/ Strategy:

Project Emphasis Species:



Middle Ponil Creek Fish Barrier

Valle Vidal



Project Contacts



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Background

Prior to 2022

the trout population was highly hybridized (rainbow/ RGCT)

July 2022

The Forest Service and NMDGF completed a treatment to remove hybrids

June 2024

Completed a feasibility study to assess current barrier and potential solutions

Summer 2025

Complete construction on barrier

June 2022

Fish Salvaged from the Calf Canyon/ Hermits Peak Fire (Rito Morphy a core conservation population)

Fall 2022

Stocked ~100 fish into Middle Ponil Creek

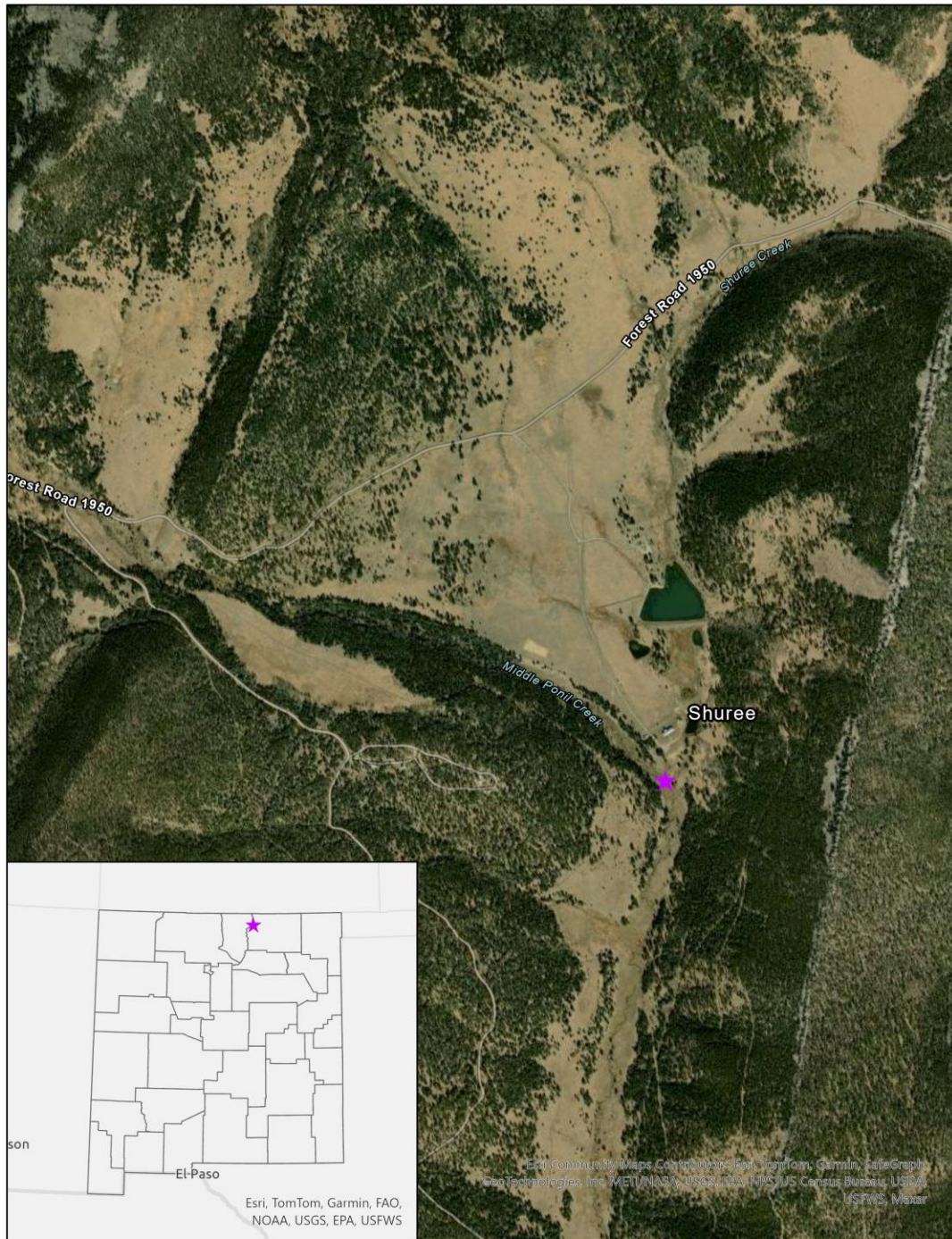
Fall 2024

Complete design on new barrier

Core Conservation Population (Highest Conservation :
Those populations with 1 percent or less introgression (hybridization) from nonnative trout.

Project Background

- Engineers completed a feasibility study in May 2024 and determined the current barrier is no longer a functioning barrier. Needs to be replaced as soon as possible to secure the RGCT population
- Water is able to get through and around the barrier during high flows
- The barrier needs to be replaced with a barrier that meets FMD standards (50-year flood)



Project Summary- \$800,000

- Priority to establish more Canadian populations of Core Conservation RGCT populations
- Due to the importance of this population the goal is to complete designs and begin construction as soon as possible
- Complete engineered designs and construction of new barrier
- Secure RGCT population by Fall 2025

