

# San Juan Tailwater Trout Research Project



## **What's happening?**

The New Mexico Department of Game & Fish, in partnership with New Mexico State University, is launching a research project on the San Juan River tailwater to better understand how Rainbow and Brown Trout interact. This will help us manage the fishery more effectively.

## **Why is this important?**

Anglers have reported lower catch rates, even though surveys show strong trout populations. Some evidence suggests the balance between Rainbow and Brown Trout may be shifting. This study aims to get to the bottom of it.

## **When and where?**

Timeline: Sampling begins in summer 2025 and runs through fall 2026.

Location: San Juan River, from Navajo Dam downstream 15 miles to the Hammond Tract.

## **How will it work?**

Researchers will use raft-mounted electrofishing (set to the lowest possible level) to catch and study fish. All fish will be released after data collection. Researchers will look at:

Age & growth (fin clips)

Survival rates (small passive integrated transponder tags, aka pet microchips)

Population size & structure (number, length, weight)

Brown Trout diet (stomach contents & tissue samples)

Rainbow Trout genetics (blood samples)

Angler catch rates (data from local guides)

## **What you need to know**

No fish will be intentionally removed or killed. The study is designed to minimize stress on fish. Fishing won't be disrupted. Sampling will mostly happen at night, and the raft covers only small areas at a time. This research benefits the fishery and economy. Understanding the fish population will help improve angling and support local businesses.

## **Contact**

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