

## *Spring ~ Summer Activities Report January-August 2025*

*With support from Truchas Chapter of Trout Unlimited*

Funding from the Truchas Chapter sustained and grew our work providing STEM experiences with students and young adults in our Watershed Academy Crews. The report summarizes our activities since January 2025 in supporting the Truchas Chapter's interest in connecting youth to rivers and doing stewardship work through the Watershed Watch and Watershed Academy programs.



*Saba Ijadi, Toner Mitchell, and Dr. Jerry Jacobi talk with the Pecos crew about the proposed mine in June*

River Source engaged 1,329 youth and 197 adults through both of the programs since January. Truchas Chapter funds specifically helped get Peñasco and El Dorado School students for a total of 146 people to local rivers to monitor water quality and release fish reared in the TU Trout in the Classroom program. We also leveraged the funding to support fish egg distribution of Wood Gormley. The education services we provide cultivate a personal connection of participants with the Rio Pueblo, the Pecos River, and the Rio Grande and teaches skills needed for the care and protection of local rivers.

Building on the school engagement, we recruited and hired thirty crew members for the Watershed Academy in June. Many of the applicants learned about the opportunity by attending a river field trip and decided they wanted to get more experienced in fisheries and watershed sciences. Crews were based out of El Rito, Peñasco, Pecos, Santa Fe and Las Vegas. Crew members met with land managers and policymakers to learn and engage in the management of the forest & water resources by performing hands-on watershed & ecological restoration



projects. Our partners included staff from USFS biologists and hydrologists, City of Santa Fe Water watershed managers, Trout Unlimited staff (Saba Ijadi and Toner Mitchell), Soil and Water Conservation managers, the New Mexico Acequia Association, and many more. Truchas Chapter funding was crucial to maintain and grow the ability to deepen our commitment to community-based conservation work that inspires a sense of urgency in activation in watershed protection, in civic life, and paying attention the crucial relationship to water and the rivers.

*Peñasco crew members removed noxious weeds, repaired erosion problems and refinished wood work at historic shelters*

### Some of the key outcomes for 2025:

- 146 youth and adults gained hands-on experience in monitoring water quality and in particular learned the critical role that a diverse community of aquatic invertebrates describes river health and supports abundant food for trout (in fall 2024 Truchas funding helped us engage 190 youth through the Watershed Watch program at three schools).
- The Pecos watershed crew learned from Dr. Jerry Jacobi, Dr. Jennifer Lindline, Saba Ijadi, and Toner Mitchell with three separate events including visiting and monitoring the location proposed for a proposed Terrero Mine and seeing in person the potential viewscape, ecological and cultural impacts of a mine from Thompson Peak and sampling for eColi and aquatic insects at four sites on the Pecos River.



*El Rito crew members after repairing eroding trails and shelters at Echo Ampitheater*



*Las Vegas crew built a book -stacked one rock dam to harvest water and prevent erosion.*

- Five youth crews increased skills in diverse practices of watershed and ecological restoration including building soil erosion control structures, planting Ponderosa pine seedlings in the Hermits Peak burn scar, harvested water to slow, sink and spread water in multiple river basins, used wood slash from thinning to collect sediment, recharge aquifers and reduce the risk of catastrophic forest fires.

- In January and May, we helped distribute eggs to Darren Smith's class at Wood Gormley School and helped with fish releases in partnership with Truchas Chapter members for the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades of El Dorado Community School on the Pecos River and the Rio Grande. We also led a field trip with Mercella Cordova and her students to the Rio Pueblo in April.

- Recruited, hired, trained and supervised intern Kianna Quintana who helped the Upper Pecos Watershed Association launch the Pecos Ambassadors program which got over 20 volunteers monitoring and helping clean seven Forest Service day use and campgrounds in the Pecos watershed so they USFS kept those amenities open for summer 2025.

To see our activities see youth in action via aerial imagery and videos by clicking on these links:

- [Compilation of Spring Watershed Watch Education Events including Peñasco](#)
- [Watershed Academy Crews Reading the Land and Restoring Watersheds 2025](#)



*Peñasco crew members removed noxious weeds, repaired erosion problems and refinished wood work at historic shelters*