

Walatowa Visitor Center Native Fish Aquarium

Wondering what our native fish look like and you're not quite ready to go snorkeling with the forest fish crew. Here's another way to see our native fish.

After two and a half years of planning, finding funding sources, and collaborating with the Jemez Pueblo, the Santa Fe National Forest unveiled a 180-gallon coldwater tank at the Walatowa Visitor Center in January. This gorgeous tank is currently inhabited with one year-old Rio Grande cutthroat trout that were reared at New Mexico Game and Fish's Seven Springs Hatchery (big kudos to Pat, Frank and Yvette). Soon, we will collect native Rio Grande suckers, Rio Grande chubs and longnose dace from Jemez Mountain streams to include as part of the learning experience.

The aquarium display was completely financed by New Mexico Trout (insert loud applause). After a road trip to pick up the tank in Denver, we recruited Ron Maes (pictured left) from the Regional Office to help us with final setup. We gathered local rock from arroyos of the Jemez Mountains and carefully placed the rock in the chilly 52°F water. And then the fish arrived last week. Local high school students have been recruited to maintain the tank. Sarah Eddy, fish program assistant, is currently creating a large educational display (incorporating art work from local elementary school students) about our native fish and how visitors to the Santa Fe National Forest can help recover them. So come to the Jemez and see our native fish.

So many people made this happen. Huge thanks to Ron and Sarah along with Norm Siegel, Chris Gatton, Gretchen Sausen, Katrina Lund, Lisa Matlock, John Peterson and the kind folks at the Walatowa Visitor Center.

