

Region 2 Sensitive Species List

Rio Grande Sucker (*Catostomus plebeius*)

Recommendation Rationale: **R2 Sensitive Species (SS)**

This endemic of the Rio Grand Basin is critically imperiled in Colorado. Fewer than ten populations remain, several of which are transplants. It is declining in New Mexico (where it is a species of special concern); and only one historic population remains in Colorado. If anything, this species is in even worse shape, at least in R2, than the Rio Grande cutthroat trout. Only remaining historic population in R2 (Hot Creek, RGNF) is declining. Several transplants have been made, but there is little evidence of success so far. Competition, predation and hybridization with exotics are problems. The ubiquitous white sucker especially problematic. The RG sucker has declined and ultimately extirpated everywhere the white sucker establishes. This introduced species is now found in the Hot Springs drainage where the last historic RG sucker population occurs. In Colorado (RGNF), remaining populations are disjunct, with little dispersal capability between populations because of habitat fragmentation and the establishment of exotics. Remaining habitat continues to be vulnerable to degradation from a variety of management activities, including: grazing, logging, road construction, water development, and others. It is very vulnerable to competition, predation, fragmentation, and hybridization with exotics. This species clearly warrants sensitive species status.

Revised on January 13, 2003 by Gary Patton