

The main goal of Native Fish in the Classroom was to provide education about the habitat of native fish species in Colorado and the positive results that responsible environmental stewardship can provide. This program was designed to allow 4<sup>th</sup> grade students the opportunity to raise native fish while learning about biology, human/environment interactions, and conservation. In an effort to raise student awareness of the presence, ecology, value, and conservation challenges of native non-game fish found in the nearby Cache la Poudre and South Platte River Basin. Introducing students to non-game species of fish and informing them of the challenges of their existence has allowed students to think in a worldly manner about not only fish, but other resources in our environment.

Several goals were accomplished in our classroom. First and foremost, students became aware of non-native fish species and their abilities to survive in Colorado ecosystems. Matt Haworth, a fish biologist from Colorado State University, was able to present to the class and establish a foundation of knowledge for students to draw from throughout the semester and follow-up lessons. The most interesting observation came from students wondering how non-native species could eat food from a non-native habitat or ecosystem and not only survive, but flourish. In addition, students became aware of many climate factors related to the changing conditions of water or habitat. This led to many conversations about the responsibilities of humans to maintain a healthy planet that allows all organisms to live without unnecessary stress. Students also achieved the goals of learning about multiple aspects of a fish's life. Students became experts on habitats and certain threats that present themselves when non-native species are introduced and present.

The financing provided by the Lois Webster Fund played an immense role in obtaining necessary educational materials and opportunities for students in a low-income situation with an inner-city demographic. Many students at this school are not afforded opportunities to explore unusual topics, such as non-game species of native Colorado fish. As a school that is in the process of becoming certified as an International Baccalaureate school, it is key to have a focus on situations taking place outside of the classroom and the causation that leads to their occurrences. The financial support also provided a field trip to the Environmental Learning Center in Fort Collins, CO that granted students an educational, inclusive, and safe experience in a natural environment learning to compare and contrast native and non-native fish.

### **Summary of total project budget:**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Price/Unit (\$)</b>	<b># Units</b>	<b>Total (\$)</b>
30 gallon aquarium	279.99	3	839.97
Aquarium hood & lighting	51.99	3	155.97
Aquarium stand	49.99	3	149.97
Aquarium filtration equipment	29.54	3	88.62
Aquarium aeration equipment	22.34	3	67.02
<b>Total</b>			<b>1,301.55</b>