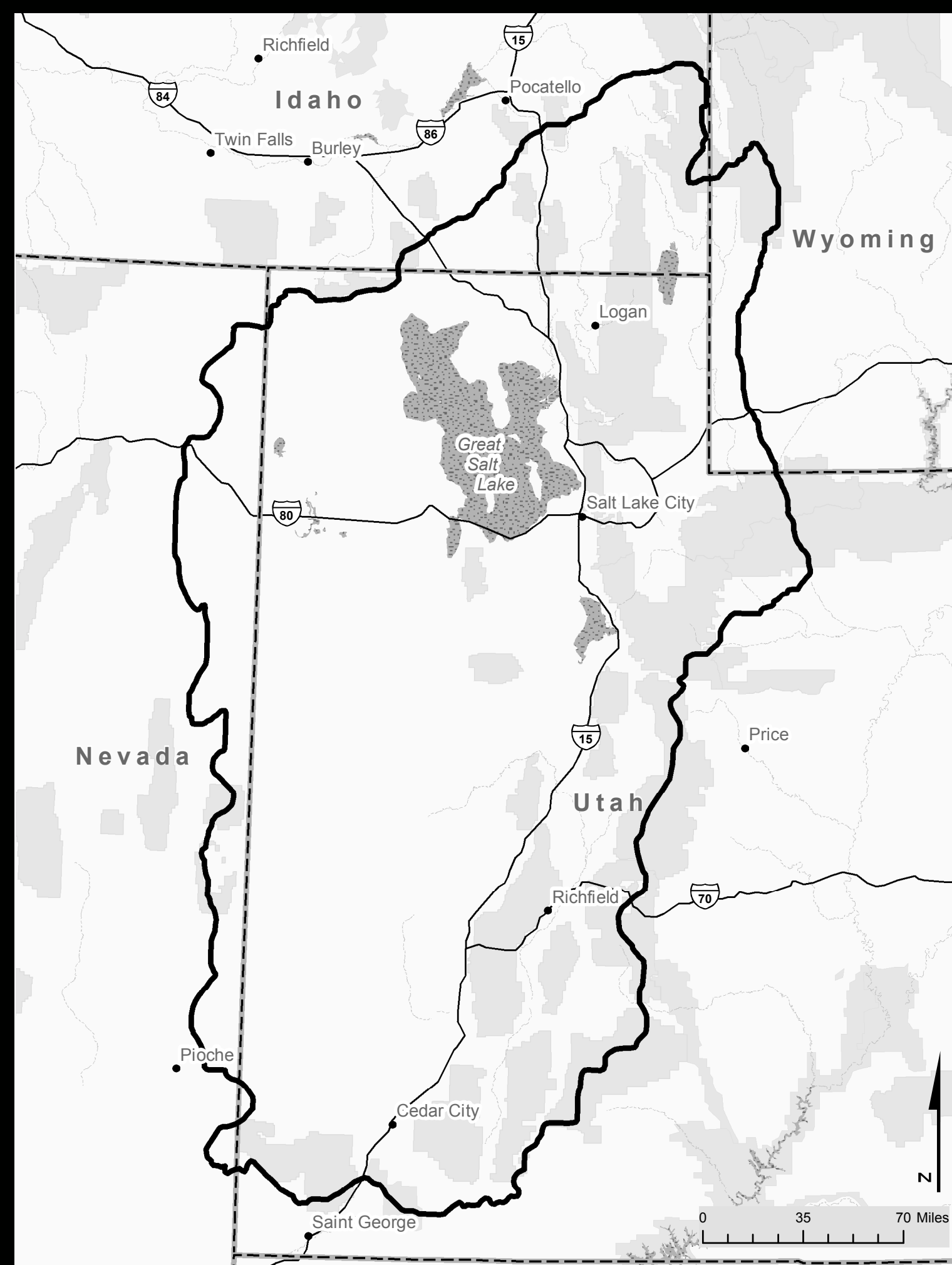


BONNEVILLE CUTTHROAT TROUT

The Bear River is home to the Bonneville cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarkii utah*), one of 14 known subspecies of cutthroat trout native to the western United States. Most common in Utah, the Bonneville cutthroat trout is found in many tributaries of the Great Salt Lake, including those in southern Idaho, Wyoming, and Nevada. About 14% of the Bonneville cutthroat trout's historical habitat is in Idaho.

The Bonneville cutthroat trout's name comes from ancient Lake Bonneville, a massive freshwater lake that was approximately the size of Lake Michigan that covered portions of southern Idaho, northern Utah, and eastern Nevada more than 8,000 years ago. Ancestors of modern-day Bonneville cutthroat trout lived in that lake. Today, the Bonneville cutthroat trout is distinguished from other trout by sparsely scattered large spots on its back and upper flanks, which may also exhibit a slight pink color, especially during spawning. They also have a distinctive red or bright orange "slash" along the lower jaw line. Although similar in appearance to rainbow trout, Bonneville cutthroat trout have larger spots.

Bonneville cutthroat trout were an important source of food for Native Americans and early Euro-American settlers and emigrants along the western trails. Many human behaviors affect the



The historical range of the Bonneville cutthroat trout traverses three states.

population size of Bonneville cutthroat trout, including diverting water for human use, which results in habitat loss for trout; constructing barriers that block the trout's natural migration habits; allowing over-grazing of livestock near streams and rivers, which brings extra sediment to the water; and introducing non-native fish, which can prey on and cross-breed with the native fish.

Careful management of the species by state and federal agencies, private partners, and Native American tribal governments has led to a promising outlook for this trout in some areas. Environmental laws and conservation programs focused on preserving the species have helped address impacts. For example, PacifiCorp's hydroelectric plants are required to take special actions to provide minimum steam flows and funds to improve habitat and population recovery in its area of operation along the Bear River in southeast Idaho.

Bonneville cutthroat trout range in size, coloration, and markings depending on habitat. Lake-dwelling (adfluvial, right) and river-dwelling specimens (fluvial, below) can be relatively large compared to tributary-dwelling individuals (below).



Images courtesy of Kirk Dahle, Trout Unlimited (above) and Idaho Department of Fish and Game (left).

This sign was erected by PacifiCorp to recognize our continued support for the conversation of this native trout species.