

OPTU NEWS

Old Pueblo Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited Chapter 531 www.optu.org Editor: John E. Murphy 520-250-4083

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings, Fellow OPTU'ers

First and foremost, a reminder that there will be no regular monthly meetings in June, July, or August. I wish you the very best of summers wherever you may be.

Secondly, I am very pleased to announce that Chris Wood, TU National President and CEO, will be in attendance at our fund-raising banquet on March 5, 2016. I met Chris ("don't call me Mr. Wood...") at the kickoff meeting for the Southwest Native Trout Initiative in Scottsdale late last month. Among other things we discussed our Bi-Annual Banquet, and he pretty much offered to attend if we could confirm the date early enough that he could reserve his time. Done and done...

A couple of days ago, I returned from the 6th Annual Native and Wild Trout Workshop held at the AZGFD offices in Carefree. This is the third workshop I have attended, and each time I come away with a renewed sense of purpose for the conservation and restoration of our native trout species. This workshop was especially important because TU formally announced to the public the Southwest Native Trout Initiative, a multi-year commitment to provide funds, personnel, and leadership to ensure the success of the restoration of Apache trout and Gila trout in Arizona, and Gila trout and Rio Grande Cutthroat trout in New Mexico. Following in this newsletter is the entire text of the announcement of the initiative along with the stated goals and strategies. It runs about 4 pages, but I hope that you will take the time to read the entire document, and provide any feedback you may have to me. Expect to hear a lot more about this in the near future. This initiative is going to happen, and OPTU and other TU Chapters in Arizona and New Mexico, along with Game and Fish agencies, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service, and many more will be integral to the planning and execution of the strategies for its success. As always, your help and participation are welcome.



The speaker for our May 6th meeting is Cinda Howard, guide and owner of Fly Fish Arizona and Beyond. Cinda has fished most, or all, fishable waters in Arizona, and many waters in other states and countries. She will speak on fly fishing in the White Mountains, with an emphasis on the eastern areas – public, private, and reservation streams and some still waters. In addition, she will draw the winning raffle ticket for two nights stay at the X-Diamond Ranch and one day of guided fishing for two anglers with her on the winner's choice of water. Last-minute raffle tickets will be available at the meeting, \$10 each or \$25 for 3. I hope to see you there

....Best Regards,

Steve Reiter, President

CONSERVATION

OPTU continues to work with Arizona Game and Fish to enhance our local fisheries. Last month we assisted by placing a new species identification sign at Frye Mesa Reservoir and generated a report of the fishing in Frye Mesa Reservoir and along the lower and middle portions of Frye Creek. We continue to work with Arizona Game and Fish on these and other issues.

We are awaiting the announcement about the award of the Embrace a Stream Grants. If we were awarded any of this grant money will be active in the spring and summer working on further conservation efforts. I will keep the club apprised of these developments through the Newsletter and web site. *Robin Marsett*

SOUTHWEST NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE

Background: A Native Heritage

The native trout of the Southwest are America's most imperiled trout. Many people do not associate the arid Southwest with trout habitat. Most are not aware of the pristine high mountain meadows, remote wilderness and verdant pine forests found there. But these streams and small rivers that originate in this high country are the lifeblood of the Southwest. Numerous populations of native trout once flourished in these streams, but these once vibrant trout populations have dwindled precipitously. Apache trout historically occurred only in the streams of the upper Salt River and upper Little Colorado River watersheds. Gila trout are less well known and their native range stretched from the Upper Gila River in New Mexico through the Blue and San Francisco Rivers along the Arizona-New Mexico border and west to the Verde River in Arizona. The Rio Grande cutthroat trout ranged from the high mountain headwaters of the Rio Grande, Pecos and Canadian rivers in Colorado and New Mexico southward to small streams in the Davis and Guadalupe Mountains, making it the only trout native to Texas.

These native trout of the Southwest—**Gila, Apache, and Rio Grande cutthroat**—are beautiful and hardy species, but they are at a critical juncture. Their status continues to decline from a combination of drought, wildfire and invasion by non-native fishes. Historically, the greatest threat to native trout was the introduction and establishment of non-native trout that compete with, prey upon, and hybridize with the native trout. With drought and warming waters, other non-native species such as smallmouth bass are extending their range into former trout habitat.

For anglers, southwest native trout provide unique recreational opportunities to pursue rare and beautiful trout species found nowhere else on Earth, in landscapes of remote wildness and rugged grandeur. These trout are also a rich part of our region's cultural and biological heritage. They are worth protecting and preserving.

The Opportunity

Trout Unlimited and its partners have recognized both the compelling need and tremendous opportunity to maintain and even expand these Southwest natives through accelerated restoration, reconnection, reintroduction and monitoring efforts. TU's grassroots leaders in the Southwest are keenly interested in the recovery of these native trout and have a demonstrated history of successful projects. For decades, Tribes, federal and state agencies including the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Forest Service, the Departments of Game and Fish in New Mexico, Arizona and the Colorado Parks and Wildlife have carried out successful restoration and protection projects—they, too, recognize the urgency of the situation and the potential to have a larger impact by working together.

These agencies, educational institutions and other partners are eager to engage and coordinate with TU in collaborative work on native trout. In addition, there are restoration projects underway in the region to improve forest health and sustain water supplies that should be closely integrated with trout restoration efforts. TU working with partners has demonstrated the ability to foster native fish restoration efforts in the Southwest. Multiple foundations active in the Southwest region could help provide funding support for new projects.

The Goal

The native trout of the Southwest are essential ecological components of riverine ecosystems and play important roles in the culture and history of the region. Our goal is that Apache, Gila and Rio Grande trout will be sustainably recovered in the Southwest, resilient to climate change, well distributed and with abundant, fishable populations. To attain this goal, we have identified the following strategies along with a sampling of the kinds of activities that would be needed to implement them.

Strategies

1. *Significantly contribute to the recovery of native Southwest trout through Protect, Reconnect, Restore and Sustain work.*
 - Actively participate in state and federal land management planning efforts (4FRI, Carson, Gila, Lincoln, Santa Fe, Rio Grande and Tonto NF's) to ensure recovery of the SW native trout.
 - Advocate for improved management practices for responding to wildfires for native trout in the Southwest.
 - Develop restoration, riparian management and forest management practices to minimize impacts from wildfires, droughts and floods for southwestern trout.
 - Develop improved restoration practices, including encouraging beaver establishment and grazing modifications for southwestern streams.
2. *Increase resilience to climate change impacts, particularly warming, drought and wildfire.*
 - Restore large, interconnected populations of native trout (Apache, Gila, and Rio Grande).
 - Establish broad geographic distributions of native trout across their range such as expanding the number of Gila trout populations in Arizona and reintroducing RGCT to Texas.
 - Ensure that genetic diversity of trout is maintained by establishing multiple populations of existing trout lineages.
 - Identify opportunities to improve stream flow in periods of drought.
3. *Improve the awareness of the plight of these fishes and the needs and opportunities for improvement.*
 - Continue and expand visibility of Arizona Native and Wild Trout Workshops.
 - Develop video and print materials that highlight the situation with native trout in the Southwest.
 - Develop and implement a comprehensive media campaign.

- Work with National Geographic or other national publications to help develop interest in the both the plight and opportunity for SW native trout.
- Document and highlight good work that is already underway and celebrate successes with awards and visible recognition.

4. Facilitate and contribute to our improved understanding of threats and recovery needs through research, monitoring and assessments.

- Increase cooperative studies with universities (revive RGCT monitoring, genetic studies).
- Develop active partnerships with USGS and USFS on environmental variables affecting native trout (stream flow, temperature, riparian studies).
- Collaborate with Forest Service Research Stations on fish and habitat studies (environmental (E)DNA; beaver introductions, flow augmentation).
- Increase cooperative studies with FWS (electrofishing impacts, native/non native trout interactions).

5. Increase the role of our membership base and volunteers to restore and monitor these fishes.

- Establish an environmental monitoring network (e.g. stream flow and temperature) in trout historical and current ranges.
- Assist in agency fish population and habitat assessment studies.
- Aid university and agency researchers with data collection. (e.g. eDNA sampling).

6. Expand on successful partnerships and coordination with state and federal agencies, recovery teams, tribes and other NGOs in the above efforts.

- Participate with other partner organizations to build an effective coalition committed to recovery of the SW native trout.
- Help lead fund raising efforts to accomplish the planned recovery work.
- Develop adequate staffing to ensure that the Initiative's goals are achieved.

7. Increase fishing opportunity and angler engagement

- Develop active partnerships within the angler community to gain their support.
- Expand angling opportunities through the recovery of native trout.

WOMEN'S ACTIVITIES

Women's Initiative (WI)

TU.ORG WEBSITE FOR OPTU

The OPTU Website is at oldpueblo.tu.org. Do not use a www in front of the words.

Calendar

MAY 6 Regular meeting at the Viscount
- 6:30 pm - 4855 East Broadway, Tucson,
AZ, 85711. Speaker Cinda Howard, a
professional fly fishing guide in the
White Mountains and beyond.

MAY 6 BOARD MEETING: 5:30 to
6:30 pm. Viscount Suites.

MAY 27: Lie and Tie (6:30 pm); Dry
Creek Outfitters, 5655 East River Road,
Suite 131. Call Eric at 326-7847.

JUNE TO AUGUST

No regular meetings

PROJECT HEALING WATERS FLY FISHING



We have finished our rod building classes. In Tucson, all rods (except for one, that was accidentally broken at the end of classes) were submitted to the manufacturer of the rod blanks, Hook and Hackle, for judging. We give special thanks to Bob Cobb for lending his expertise. Without his help we would not have had the success we did.

Aided by Joe Vitelli's thorough planning, we have just returned from a rewarding trip to the San Juan River. Soldiers from both Tucson and Sierra Vista participated. Some soldiers waded while others used drift boats. Our next trip will be to Alaska.

James Owen



What we should avoid while fishing. Caught in the act of multi-tasking.

Upcoming Fishing Trips and Outings Reports

13th Annual San Juan, New Mexico Trip - 2015 - Fishing Report

A group of 5 anglers made their way to Navajo Dam and the Octagon Inn for the 13th Annual OPTU San Juan River trip. It is hard to believe that we have done this for 13 years straight, though this was the smallest group of attendees so far. We lost a 6th team member to illness just before starting. Our largest trip in the past was 18 people, which, though a lot of fun, was too many folks to coordinate. Our chefs extraordinaire this year were led by Gary Bedsworth (an actual professional chef) and Rob Gillette. I managed the other nights and they weren't bad either. Some great food overall and a few pounds gained over 5 days.

The fishing was exceptional as usual. We had gone about 3 weeks later than last year in hopes of clearer water for sight fishing, but the water was still a bit murkier than the clarity found in summer. Plenty of great though and we had several days of really good sight fishing when the sun and wind cooperated. Caught plenty of fish on all the other days as well.

A few of us spent part of one day at the Texas Hole and it was insane. I could see at least 30 fish at a time striking the surface and you had to work hard not to hook a fish on most casts. Of course being in the right position was important. The foam was gray with a bazillion midges and the fish were happily nabbing them. Most of the fish were in the 12 to 14 inch range, not matching the bigger ones in other parts (I managed a 23 inch one early on upriver). The next day I saw one of the drift boats parked on the side in the "good" spot in Texas Hole for the first half of the day. Popular midges among the fish included small blondes and grays with little action on the reds for some reason unknown to me. Chocolate emergers with tiny foam wings did the trick on many occasions. As usual, switch and switch and switch till you find what they want and go very small in most cases.

14th Annual San Juan, New Mexico Trip

Dates will be some Sunday to Friday in April 2016. If you are interested the cost should be about \$475 for all food, lodging, transportation, and fun. We may depart Saturday but not known yet (that would increase cost about \$35. Contact the editor at jemurphy51@me.com to sign up. Trip is limited to 6 people. Nonrefundable payment (unless a replacement can be found) won't be due till late February 2016.

Before and after the attempt at a grip and grin.



Tips and Tricks

- Store your wader repair glue in the freezer. It lasts much longer and warms up quickly.
- Google “fly fishing tips and techniques” for hundreds of useful links.
- Check out the Orvis Fly Fishing Learning Center: Here’s one on tips for winter fishing - appropriate right now. http://howtoflyfish.orvis.com/tests/tips-for-winter-trout-article?ADV=556337&EID=jemurphy51@me.com&cm_mmcc=orvisemail-_-Art%20Of%20Fly%20Fishing%202-_-OI-_-BOD_READI

DRY CREEK OUTFITTERS: NEWS AND BARGAINS

Call us if you need something. If you're unable to make it to the shop before your next trip, we are happy to drop a few bugs and/or leaders (or whatever) in the mail - shipping is free.

Dry Creek resides at the River Center mall; NE corner of River and Craycroft and is open **Tuesdays through Saturdays** from 10 am to 7 pm Tuesday to Friday and 9:30 am to 6 pm on Saturday. Address: 5655 East River Road, Suite 131, Tucson, AZ 85750 and phone (520) 326-7847. East side of the River Center between a beauty shop and Japanese restaurant. Eric is a long-time supporter of OPTU and we all need to be sure to support him. So get over to DCO and buy some of those essential things you know you need. *The Editor*

FOR SALE

Patagonia River Crampons (clip on to your rubber soled boots and cut down on slipping on slippery rocks. Originally \$199 and never used. \$79. Call 520-250-4083.

The following items are for sale for the estate of Gary Corsi. Fly rod, 2 piece Redington FSF 8’6” 4 weight, with Reel, Guide 5/6, and fly line; includes Orvis case for two rods with reels. \$220. Fly rod, 2 piece Redington RS 8’0” 3 weight, \$30. Call Steve Brown, 520 797-9250.

Simms G3 waders, size medium, used once, like new, \$225. Contact Rob @ 520-909-8588 or azflyfshr@comcast.net

FOR RENT

4 BR house in Heber City, UT. 15 miles from Park City and a mile from the Provo River; 2.5 hrs to the Green. \$850 per week plus housecleaning fee. Extra beyond 4 guests. Call John at 520-250-4083 for info.

Arizona Game and Fish Interactive Stocking Schedule

http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/h_f/fishing/stocking/2012SumTroutStockSchedule.pdf

QUOTES AND JOKES

“I wept because I had no shoes, until I saw a man who had no feet.” *Ancient Persian saying.* Important to keep perspective.

Newsletter Items That Don't Often Change

MOVIE LINKS

Please send links to movies you have seen on YouTube or other places. I'll check it out and post. Here are a few:

Top Ten Viral Flyfishing Videos (courtesy of Ernie Gradillas) <http://www.flyfishinsalt.com/news/top-10-fly-fishing-videos?>

[cmpid=enews040213&spPodID=030&spMailingID=17130073&spUserID=MzU4MjY4ODA3NTQSI&spJobID=213641885&spReportId=MjEzNjQxODgrSo](http://www.flyfishinsalt.com/news/top-10-fly-fishing-videos?cmpid=enews040213&spPodID=030&spMailingID=17130073&spUserID=MzU4MjY4ODA3NTQSI&spJobID=213641885&spReportId=MjEzNjQxODgrSo)

Catching a nice Gila trout

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXEZVJmD3Yo>

This is a classic TU film called The Way of a Trout.

<http://www.lrc.tu.org/movies/TheWayofaTrout/>

Trout in the Classroom Video <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QWlnuFkCPFg>

Check out this video of Chris Woods of TU talking about our efforts in the Southwest.

<http://youtu.be/CwFry99OhqE>

This URL refers to the 1st book written on fly-fishing by a Benedictine nun and published in 1496. It shows a block print with the first Tenkara-style fly-fishing - recorded in Europe (not Japan). No fly reels back then.

<http://www.headwatersofhistory.com/2012/01/interviews-with-anglers-past-dame-juliana.html>

Controversy about what open containment fish farms are doing to native fish and what they might be doing to you when you buy farmed salmon at Costco. It is long but instructive. *Ernie Gradillas*

<http://vimeo.com/61301410>

Here is a great video on the "nutrient cycle"more so about salmon but is still a great lesson addition.

<http://aeon.co/video/science/alaska-the-nutrient-cycle-a-short-film-about-chum-salmon/>

OPTU FACEBOOK GROUP

If you add the OPTU group to your links in Facebook it will help make contacts with members. *Joe DeVries* jrdaz@cox.net

EDDIES NEWSLETTER

In case you would like to receive "Eddies: Reflections on Fisheries Conservation," click on the link and sign up for paper or email delivery. <http://www.fws.gov/fisheries/eddies/Subscribe/Subs.cfm>
