

**ADDENDUM TO THE WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE 2008
PLAN FOR STRATEGIC ACTIONS
7/18/2010**

INTRODUCTION

In January 2008, after an intensive scoping and development process, the Western Native Trout Initiative achieved WAFWA Directors approval of its Plan for Strategic Actions and in February 2008 was approved as a National Fish Habitat Partnership. In January 2009, the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) began operating under a new U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Multi-state Federal Aid to Sport Fish Restoration Grant (SFR MSG WY-M-10-C) that included specific objectives designed to reflect the responsibilities of WNTI under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan that allow WNTI to be a recipient of congressionally authorized dollars for approved WNTI conservation projects. The WNTI 2009 Multi-state Grant also includes specific objectives that also relate to the desire of some WNTI member states to include additional native salmonids for possible future conservation actions. The language from the Multi-state Grant follows:

A. Title: Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) Implementation

B. Objectives for Western Native Trout Initiative Operation and Implementation:

- Provide funding support for the WNTI Coordinator to facilitate the implementation of actions described in the Western Native Trout Initiative's Plan for Strategic Actions, resulting in western native trout projects that improve western native trout populations and habitats.*
- Update the WNTI Strategic Plan to meet new NFHAP Board guidance in respect to coordination and relationships with other recognized and candidate fish habitat partnerships and data use.*
- Update the Strategic Plan to develop conservation actions for other trout and salmonids not specifically addressed in the original document.*
- Provide funding support to develop a western native trout database with common data fields by encouraging compatibility of data through use of a common data protocol and shared data system;*
- Support the development and implementation of coordinated outreach strategies to engage organizations and individuals with interest in the conservation and stewardship of western native trout.*

The Western Native Trout Initiative Steering Committee determined that in order to meet these new objectives, it was appropriate to review and modify the WNTI Plan for Strategic Actions (further referred to as the "Plan" in this document). The Plan was completed and accepted by the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies in January 2008 and has helped guide the actions of the Initiative since then. In mid-2009, a WNTI working group presented a summary of potential Plan changes and adjustments to the WNTI Steering Committee, based on a thorough Plan review (*Review of WNTI's Plan for Strategic Actions Goals and Objectives With Recommendations for Amending the Plan, September 2009*).

The following suggested Addendum to the original Plan for Strategic Actions (PSA) includes language standardization and action item additions and updates that are displayed in sequence under the original PSA outline. The Mission, Vision and main body of the Plan for Strategic Actions remain appropriate and relevant for the operation of the Western Native Trout Initiative.

ADDENDUM TO THE 2008 WNTI PLAN FOR STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Addendum #1. Additional native western salmonids that can be considered for future actions that are related to the Goals and Objectives of the Plan for Strategic Actions:

Core conservation populations of native Arctic Char, Arctic Grayling, Dolly Varden, freshwater Rainbow trout sub-species, freshwater Kokanee and Lake Trout within historical ranges.

Addendum #2. Changes to Goal 1 of the 2008 Plan for Strategic Actions

Goal 1 – Protect, restore and enhance western native trout populations and measure success in improving the status of western native trout

Objectives:

A. Identify and characterize conservation populations by 2015

1. Develop common characterization of populations and habitats by completing comprehensive, standardized species assessments utilizing GIS-based protocols, such as the Cutthroat Protocol (IMP) (May, et al. 2005) or other similar methodologies. Update these no less than every five years. Encourage sub-species groups that have not adopted IMP to adopt and use (or use other developed protocols with similar scientific rigor and that can be adapted to a common database).
2. Annually gather information, establish baselines, and complete overall monitoring of species status.
3. Utilize the WNTI geographic working groups and WNTI species conservation teams as needed to serve as a forum to focus on particular species problems or needs, and/or recommend actions to the Steering Committee for consideration and funding.

B. Utilize assessment data to protect, restore or enhance important native trout populations through focused actions.

1. Use standard population manipulations to protect, restore or enhance native trout. Maintain and expand genetically pure populations, as well as pure populations with distinct migratory life-history requirements.
2. Protect the best core conservation areas and maintain genetic integrity of populations from degradation.
3. Utilize the WNTI species conservation teams to recommend and prioritize projects for WNTI directed funding.
4. Annually conduct research on habitats, population distribution, genetics, and species ecology to increase knowledge of native trout life stage requirements and to evaluate the success of conservation actions.
5. Work with neighboring NFHAP partnerships to coordinate data collection resources and share fish population information to help identify key watersheds that may be beneficial to multiple partnerships.

C. Integrate the use of non-native salmonids with conservation needs of western native trout species in a manner that recognizes the biological, cultural and economic importance of each.

1. By 2015 define and maintain core conservation areas for native trout to avoid conflicts between native trout conservation and non-native trout species management.

2. Implement non-native salmonid removal from habitats within core conservation areas and restore native trout populations.
3. Promote the establishment and use of native trout populations for recreational purposes as a replacement for non-native salmonid fisheries.

D. Support development of a western native trout database with common data fields and data descriptions.

1. In cooperation with the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, use scientifically rigorous and standardized methodology to monitor and report changes in the status of native trout populations.
2. Share data on western native trout populations (and habitats) within guidelines established by a science and data sub-committee.
3. Work with the NFHAP Science and Data team to incorporate the national data needs into WNTI's data collection and analysis efforts to meet WNTI's responsibilities as a national partnership.
4. Work with overlapping NFHAP partnerships to develop communications between data teams to ensure that data collections meet NFHAP expectations.
5. Work with NFHAP and WAFWA to seek additional long-term funding for native trout data collection and population management.

Addendum #3. Changes to Goal 2 of the 2008 Plan for Strategic Actions

Goal 2 – Protect intact watersheds, and enhance or restore habitats that have been impacted by human activities or catastrophic natural events.

Objectives:

A. Utilize habitat assessment data to identify, protect, restore or enhance existing native trout strongholds.

1. By 2015 characterize key western native trout habitats and watersheds for species not already characterized using GIS-based protocols (i.e. Intermountain cutthroat protocol) or similar techniques.
2. Support habitat actions at the local and species-levels that protect, restore or enhance core conservation populations and the life history and migratory needs of the species.
3. By 2020, enhance 10-15 percent of degraded watersheds for western native trout while protecting and maintaining current core conservation populations and high-value watersheds.
4. Secure and enhance watershed conditions through standard habitat manipulations (e.g., barrier placement or removal, in-stream structure, flow enhancement, habitat connectivity).
5. Implement, evaluate, and monitor best management practices that include but are not limited to: modifying grazing practices, fencing riparian areas, closing and obliterating roads in the riparian areas, and ameliorating road, timber and mining disturbances.
6. Restore and enhance water flow, water quality, natural sediment regimes, and physical integrity of channels where feasible by replacement of culverts to allow fish passage (where passage is desirable). Screen water diversions to prevent entrainment, modify diversions to allow fish passage, and restore and improve altered channel and riparian habitat and flow conditions.

B. Encourage new research on native trout related to climate change, energy development, invasive species, and human encroachment or development in native trout habitats

1. Seek funding for new research on impacts of new and developing habitat concerns such as climate change, habitat loss from energy development and population growth and increased catastrophic habitat losses from fires, etc.

C. Support local and regional recommendations for western native trout habitat restoration and enhancement actions and seek additional funding from WNTI partners.

1. Become a recognized partner under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan. (Completed)
2. Coordinate with neighboring fish habitat partnerships to identify key watersheds where multiple species could benefit from mutual habitat conservation (protect, restore or enhance) actions.
3. Involve the WNTI species conservation teams and geographic working groups through their respective US Fish and Wildlife service regions to recommend and prioritize watersheds for project funding that will provide the best opportunities for native trout conservation and enhancement.
4. Modify habitat priorities based on best available science, the results of the 2010 National Fish Habitat Assessment and coordination with neighboring national fish habitat partnerships.

Addendum #4. Changes to Goal 3 of the 2008 Plan for Strategic Actions

Goal 3 – Develop collaborative approaches and partnerships among agencies and stakeholders that emphasize cooperation and shared effort, and increase funding to implement high-priority projects for the protection, restoration or enhancement of western native trout.

Objectives:

A. By 2015, support and assist in the completion of conservation agreements or recovery plans for all western native trout based on collaborative development and publication of realistic conservation strategies with priorities at the local and regional level.

1. Stimulate and inspire – through funding and meeting frameworks – the initiation of planning efforts for those native trout species that do not currently have a multi-state, multi-agency conservation plan or strategy.
2. Encourage updates, on a 3 to 5-year basis, of the cooperative management agreements among states, agencies and partners that revise and refine the priorities for action to protect, restore or enhance native trout populations.

B. Foster and support a diverse array of western native trout conservation actions based on public, private, and conservation organization partnerships. These efforts should be formed around distinct watersheds, species, or geographic areas, based on collaborative conservation or recovery plans.

1. Use the WNTI operational structure to seek and promote public/private partnerships for on-the-ground actions.
2. Develop a prospectus to inspire new partners to contribute financially to western native trout actions.

C. Promote and foster new partnerships at all levels to increase funding and public support for identified needs.

1. Identify and communicate the need for funds with potential public/private conservation partners to encourage involvement in the Western Native Trout Initiative. This will broaden the scope of support for improving the status of the native trout species.
2. Develop a WNTI Partners Council, or Friends Group from the WNTI contact lists, and invite entities to propose projects, provide financial assistance, and share ideas for improving the status of western native trout.

3. Work with current funding partners – states, federal agencies, the National Fish Habitat Action Plan, Trout Unlimited, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and others – to focus on implementing on-the-ground improvement actions.

4. Utilize venues such as the Wild Trout Symposium, local AFS Chapter meetings, and the Western Division American Fisheries Society annual meeting as forums that will solicit input into how WNTI can re-energize local support for native trout conservation and provide ideas for future direction through discussion of large-scale issues that impact western native trout (i.e. continued human population growth, impacts from a warming climate and increased emphasis on extractive energy development, mining and increased water use).

D. Develop and recommend projects for funding.

1. Establish a WNTI steering committee within WAFWA by July 2008. (Completed)

2. Develop online functionality for project application submission, project review/selection, and project reporting.

3. Utilize the WNTI web page as a clearinghouse where project proposals to benefit western native trout could be submitted at any time and added to the FONS system for consideration. Also use the web page to promote all potential sources of project funding to WNTI partners. List all WNTI related projects funded directly by NFHAP or indirectly through NFWF, private funds or other federal and state programs.

E. Develop a long-term Funding Approach and Plan to secure funding from NFHAP and alternative sources to fund both habitat and non-habitat WNTI Projects.

1. Continue to work with outside funding organizations such as Trout Unlimited, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, etc. to promote availability of non-NFHAP funds for western native trout conservation projects that include fish population data collection, renovation and management actions.

2. Continue to meet NFHAP responsibilities to ensure WNTI receives NFHAP funds for conservation projects

Addendum #5. Changes to Goal 4 of the 2008 Plan for Strategic Actions

Goal 4 – Develop and implement effective communication, education and outreach programs as a tool to increase public awareness and encourage partnerships that benefit western native trout.

Objectives:

A. Update the communications and outreach plan for WNTI by July 2011.

1. Establish a communications sub-committee that consists of professionals from several WNTI partner agencies and organizations to complete the plan.

2. Develop the communications plan in a manner that inspires partners to contribute and support the success of WNTI financially.

3. Work with WNTI NGO partners and the National Fish Habitat Action Plan communications director to increase effectiveness of communications to a variety of media and other potential partners.

B. Annually develop communication products for WNTI partners, anglers and others.

1. Survey partners, fish conservation community, and other western native trout interests to initiate communication, to understand their communication and outreach needs, and to determine the most effective means of information dissemination.
2. Identify elements of success in other campaigns that have promoted recreational use of western nonnative trout and incorporate successful elements in to the WNTI.
3. One product per year will be developed and made available to WNTI partners to promote and encourage involvement.

C. Use the WNTI Web site as a comprehensive source of information on western native trout species.

1. Maintain the WNTI Web site as a comprehensive source of information on all 15 western native trout species and include information on their status, biology, distribution, conservation needs and impediments, and conservation actions. Include links to official recovery plans, conservation strategies and conservation agreements. Develop the website as a repository for WNTI-related planning, news releases, informational brochures and other related items.
2. Develop enhanced communication to anglers about angling opportunities, such as the Wyoming Cutt-Slam or California Heritage Trout Challenge, and the benefits of conservation and management of western native trout to recreational angling opportunities.
3. In 2010, develop links on the WNTI web page to all western states and partners that promote and educate WNTI visitors about special angling programs for western native trout

D. Serve as a clearinghouse and source of information about how to obtain funding for native trout projects recommended through the WNTI regional sub-committees.

1. Develop outreach products that describe opportunities for partnerships and the funding that is available. Gather, catalog and make available a list of financial resources that are available to implementers for funding native trout projects.
2. Link to existing project funding sources resources such as NFHAP, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and Trout Unlimited (TU) and gather, catalog and make available other site links for different target groups.
3. Develop convenient and efficient means of distributing these tools using WNTI.

E. Develop and promote western native trout educational opportunities through web page links to the various state, Tribal and NGO organizations that have native trout conservation and programs with educational materials about western native trout for use in schools and community-based events.

1. By 2011 develop the necessary web page links on the WNTI webpage that promote and direct viewers to the various state and NGO programs.
2. Support the development of bi-lingual educational and informational information within state agencies for public distribution

Addendum #6. Remove the following objectives from Goal 4 of the Plan for Strategic Actions

1. Work with Project WILD, Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation, and Aquatic Resource Education Association personnel to develop specific educational materials dealing with western native trout conservation.
2. Work with Project WILD to develop a series of interactive educational tools designed to illustrate

the interrelationships of trout and aquatic habitats, and to demonstrate the cultural, biological, recreational, and economic importance of native trout ecosystems.

3. Evaluate the feasibility of initiating efforts in individual states to include trout ecology, or Trout Unlimited “Trout in the Classroom” into the primary or secondary school curriculums.
4. Develop materials that celebrate the unique nature of the western native trout habitats.

Addendum #7. Changes to WNTI Accomplishment Reporting

Objectives:

A. Update the WNTI strategic plan and Western Native Trout Status Report every five years to provide new recommendations for conservation actions.

B. Complete a new Western Native Trout Status Review in 2012 to assess the impact of WNTI accomplishments

C. Develop and maintain a catalog of local, state, and range-wide success stories that can be shared among groups and disseminated to the public.

1. Update the species project lists on the WNTI web-page and post completion reports as they become available each year.

D. Develop progress and accomplishment reporting guidelines and annual reports for WAFWA, WNTI Partners, the NFHAP Board and the FWS on the status of western native trout.

1. WNTI will produce an annual report for distribution to the WNTI partners, friends, media and other interested parties, as well as updating the Species Status review every 5 years.

2. WNTI will meet the reporting guidelines of the National Fish Habitat Board and Action Plan to retain the Initiative’s National Fish Habitat Partnership status.