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westernnativetrout.org

WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE

2016 ANNUAL REPORT

DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for your support again in 2016 – a busy year for the Western Native Trout Initiative! In late 2016, the WNTI Steering Committee approved an updated strategic plan and set strategic priorities for the next seven years. Updated species status reports were also completed for Apache Trout, Gila Trout, Greenback Cutthroat Trout, and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout.

WNTI continues to build support for strategic and effective native trout fish habitat improvements through outreach with partners through our Campaign for Western Native Trout. In 2016, WNTI continued to build our outreach program through production of a film, an Arc GIS ESRI StoryMap, and active outreach through social media and events.

In 2016, WNTI its partners funded seven habitat restoration projects benefiting our priority species with a total of $234,120 National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) funds leveraged to partner matches of $2,368,088 for a total projects value of $2,602,208. Projects were wide ranging and diverse - from a habitat restoration project led by the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to benefit Redband Trout in Idaho, to contributing to removal of a 14 foot high hydroelectric dam to restore Bonneville Cutthroat Trout passage to Mill Creek in Utah, to installing a Farmers Screen™ on an irrigation diversion to provide fish passage to a creek critical to production of fluvial Yellowstone Cutthroat fry for the Yellowstone River in Montana, to completing an eDNA-based inventory of juvenile bull trout habitats in the Wenatchee River basin. WNTI additionally funded 12 small projects through our Small Grants Program, awarding $33,465 in funding that was matched by $468,575 in other public and private funding, for a total small grants projects value of $502,040. WNTI's Small Grants program is funded through non-federal funds contributed by partners and donors like you.

Collectively, projects funded in 2016 will remove or bypass 14 barriers to restore access to 32 miles of stream for fish passage, restore 25 miles of riparian habitat, complete 18 habitat assessments, and assess 445 stream miles.

PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP/NATIONAL FISH PASSAGE FUNDS IN 2016:

- "k'wne' 'ulchiyark'wmntsut" (Hangman Creek Relict Channel and Floodplain Reconnection), *Idaho*
- Mill Creek Watershed Restoration, *Utah*
- Miners Gulch Stream and Riparian Restoration Project, *Montana*
- Mulherin Fish Screen & YCT Entrainment Prevention, *Montana*
- The Rapid, Range-wide, eDNA-based Assessment of Bull Trout Distributions: Wenatchee River Basin, *Washington*
- Connecting Teton Creek: Green Property Habitat and Stream Flow Restoration, *Idaho*
- Swauk Creek Floodplain Reconnection Design to benefit Westslope Cutthroat Trout, *Washington*

SMALL GRANTS PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2016:

- Arizona's Apache Trout - Get to Know Your Native, *Arizona*
- Lahontan Cutthroat Trout recovery interpretive panel, *California*
- Restoration of Colorado's State Fish, the Greenback Cutthroat Trout, *Colorado*
- Trout on Tejon, *Colorado*
- Bear Creek Watershed/Jones Park Restoration: Directional and Interpretive Signage, *Colorado*
- Sucker Creek Westslope Cutthroat Trout Passage Project, *Montana*
- Dry Cottonwood Cross-boundary Trout Conservation, *Montana*
- Temperature and Sediment Reduction to Improve Stream Health and Fish Habitat, *Montana*
- Exploration Lahontan Cutthroat Trout (LCT) Camp, *Nevada*
- Bum Creek Instream Restoration, *Oregon*
- Sprague River Restoration, *Oregon*
- Redband Trout Thermal Habitat Assessment, *Washington*

Thank you for being a part of the Western Native Trout Initiative. We truly could not accomplish all that we do without the continued support and dedication of our partners and donors. We are looking forward to continued success in 2017!

Sincerely,

JULIE MEKA CARTER
Chair, WNTI Steering Committee

THERESE THOMPSON
Project Coordinator

Results

Since its inception in 2006, the Western Native Trout Initiative has directed almost $5 million in federal fish habitat funds leveraged to $19 million public and private matching dollars for 123 priority native trout conservation projects. By leveraging funding provided to WNTI by the National Fish Habitat Partnership, WNTI and its many partners have successfully improved the status of western native trout populations in 12 western states including Alaska. With the collaboration and coordination of WNTI Partners, together we have removed 75 barriers to fish passage, reconnected or improved 1,033 miles of native trout habitat, and placed 29 protective fish barriers to conserve important native trout conservation populations.

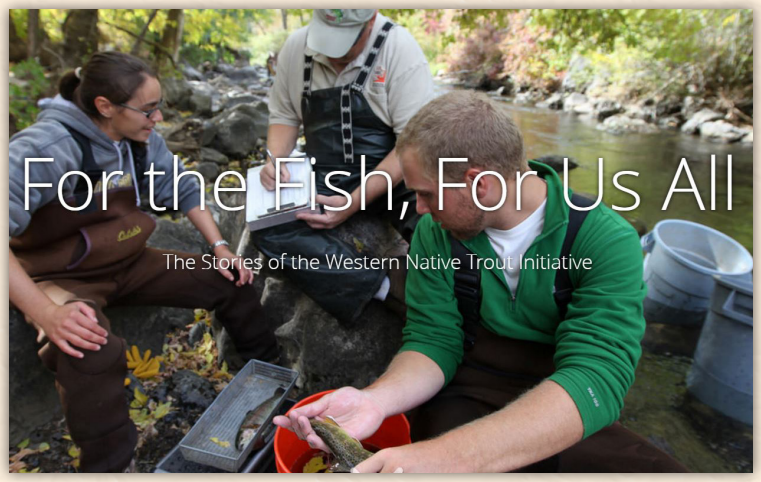
Bonneville Cutthroat Trout. Photo courtesy of Paul Burnett, Utah Trout Unlimited.

COMPLETED CRITICAL NATIVE TROUT POPULATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENT

Coastal Cutthroat Trout

In order to ensure our collaborative investments are directed toward the highest priority projects, WNTI has funded over 645 watershed, fish population, and habitat surveys. Along with our partners at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, WNTI is completing a multi-year rangewide assessment for Coastal Cutthroat Trout. As part of this effort, a web based mapping application has been developed.
Find out more at www.bit.ly/CCTViewer

In 2016, WNTI also continued our collaboration with the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership and Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative and began work on an upper Rio Grande Basin aquatic assessment to assist fish species teams in conservation decisions.



WNTI's StoryMap features five stories plus a projects map overlaid with species' distributions.

OUTREACH ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Blueheads And Bonnevilles Film

WNTI continues to build support for strategic and effective native trout fish habitat improvements through outreach with partners through our Campaign for Western Native Trout.

In 2016, WNTI, along with our partners at the Desert Fish Habitat Partnership, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources, Utah Trout Unlimited, and Sage Lion Media, produced *Blueheads and Bonnevilles*, a 7-minute film about our collaborative work in the Weber River, Utah. The film serves as an anchor outreach piece for a broader Blueheads and Bonnevilles campaign celebrating our conservation work on the Weber River and broadening strategic partnerships to complete future projects that are still needed. The Weber River project was first submitted in 2012 as a National Fish Habitat Partnership "10 Waters to Watch" project and resubmitted again in 2016 as legacy project to support the celebration of NFHP's 10 year anniversary.
Find out more at www.westernnativetrout.org/bandb

WNTI StoryMap

In 2016, WNTI created an Arc GIS ESRI StoryMap called For the Fish, For Us All. WNTI's StoryMap features five stories plus a projects map overlaid with species' distributions. The five stories focus on Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout, interior Redband Trout, Gila Trout, Coastal Cutthroat Trout in Alaska, and Bonneville Cutthroat Trout.

Using beautiful photos along with historical and current background information, supported by stories about the projects WNTI has funded, we present overarching themes about iconic western water and landscapes, and common threats to the native trout: fish passage, catastrophic wildfire, decreasing water, human impacts, and competition from nonnative fish.
Explore the StoryMap at www.bit.ly/WNTIStoryMap.

About WNTI

THE WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE is a public-private Fish Habitat Partnership that works collaboratively across 12 western states to conserve, protect, restore and recover 21 native trout and char species. To achieve this mission, WNTI works together with its on-the-ground partners to:

ESTABLISH JOINT PRIORITIES FOR NATIVE TROUT CONSERVATION

Covering over 1.75 million square miles of public and privately managed lands, WNTI and our partners combine science-based assessments along with expert and local knowledge to establish joint priorities for native trout conservation at a landscape scale.

COORDINATE INVESTMENT AND COLLABORATIVE ACTION

WNTI provides a forum for partners to coordinate and invest their collective assets and capacity toward completing the highest-priority, native trout conservation efforts across the West. Proposed and led by local communities and resource agencies, these projects are funded and supported through WNTI's grant programs and in kind contributions by our partners.

EDUCATION, OUTREACH AND STEWARDSHIP

WNTI seeks to support and sustain the ongoing efforts of our on-the-ground partners by raising awareness for the importance of healthy native trout watersheds and facilitating greater public support for native trout conservation within local communities. Through our **Campaign for Western Native Trout**, WNTI helps encourage private investment and involvement in native trout projects and regional native trout conservation initiatives.

Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. Photo courtesy of Friends of the Teton River.

OUR SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS 2006-2016

- **75** *Fish Passage Barriers removed*
- **1,033** *Stream miles reconnected, restored, or improved*
- **22** *Barriers constructed to conserve and protect priority populations*
- **580** *Miles of habitat protected above barriers*
- **645** *Watersheds or populations surveyed or assessed*

STEERING COMMITTEE

Operating under the guidance of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Western Native Trout Initiative is governed by a Steering Committee that represents 12 western state fish and wildlife agencies, 5 federal resource management agencies, tribes, and nonprofit fisheries conservation organizations.

Julie Meka Carter,
Chair
Arizona Game and Fish Department

Jon Sjöberg,
Vice Chair
Nevada Department of Wildlife

Jeff Dillon,
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Craig Burley,
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Bruce McIntosh,
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Robert Clarke,
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Warren Colyer,
Trout Unlimited

Ed Schriever
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

STAFF
Therese Thompson,
Project Coordinator

THANK YOU PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
Americanfishes.com
Angling Trade Magazine
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bass Pro Shops
Bitter Root Water Forum
Blue Valley Ranch
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Clark Fork Coalition
Coeur d'Alene Tribe
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
El Paso County, Colorado
Federation of Fly Fishers – Southwest Council
Friends of the Teton River
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Kenai Watershed Forum
Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust
Klamath Lake Land Trust
Long Tom Watershed Council
Lower Clark Fork Watershed Group
Mid-Columbia Fisheries Enhancement Group
MiiR
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
National Fish Habitat Partnership
Nevada Department of Wildlife
New Mexico Department of Fish and Wildlife
Nooksack Salmon Enhancement Association
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Orvis
Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
RepYourWater
Rocky Mountain Flyathlon
Sage Lion Media
Sierra Pacific FlyFishers
Smith River Watershed Council
Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative
Spokane Riverkeeper
Terry Lee Wells Nevada Discovery Museum
Trout Unlimited
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Wild Fish Conservancy
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

And all the individual donors who contribute to WNTI!

The future of native trout conservation depends on the generosity of individuals like you who care about sustaining healthy western watersheds. When you give to WNTI, 100% of your donation is leveraged to support on-the-ground, locally led projects.

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