



Western Native Trout Initiative

Western Native Trout Initiative Newsletter – February 2008

WNTI Strategic Plan Update

WAFWA Endorsement Received

The assembled Directors of western State Fish and Wildlife Agencies endorsed the Strategic Plan and future operations of the Western Native Trout Initiative at their recent winter meeting in San Diego earlier this month. The Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) is a collaborative planning and project implementation effort that will enhance and speed-up the conservation of western native trout.

With few exceptions, native trout populations have declined across the West, usually due to two general factors: habitat alteration and introduced non-native fish. Remaining native trout populations are often isolated from one another and exposed to increased predation, competition, and hybridization. The 15 native trout addressed in the WNTI have long been considered as biologically, recreationally and culturally important. Actions associated with conservation are often costly and remain inadequately funded. Progress has been mixed. Continued human population growth, coupled with potential habitat damage from a warming climate, has increased the urgency of securing and improving the status of western native trout.

The Initiative's Strategic Plan suggests that there are four areas of activity that should be pursued to both improve the status and habitats of 15 species of western native trout. The Plan was developed over 18 months by a working group that included representatives from 12 western states, several federal agencies involved with fisheries and endangered species management, national conservation organizations such as Trout Unlimited, Native American Tribal representation, and conservation-minded private and industry interests.

The Western native Trout Initiative has ascribed to the following four Goals, with the objective of securing additional funding to accomplish specific, locally-based actions that directly impact native trout populations and habitats:

- Protect, enhance, or restore western native trout populations and measure success in improving the status of western native trout.
- Protect intact watersheds, and enhance, or restore habitats that have been impacted by human activities or catastrophic natural events.



- Develop collaborative approaches and partnerships among agencies and stakeholders that emphasize cooperation and shared effort, and increase funding to implement high priority actions for the protection, conservation and enhancement of western native trout.
- Develop and implement effective communication, education and outreach programs to increase public awareness and encourage partnerships that benefit western native trout

Operations of the WNTI

The Western Native Trout Initiative will operate under the umbrella of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies through a Memorandum of Understanding with WAFWA member states and appropriate federal agencies and conservation organizations which agree to the purpose and value of conserving western native trout. In addition, the Initiative will be seeking public and private partners who share the common interest of protecting and improving native trout populations and habitats.

WNTI is actively seeking new partners. By joining the Initiative, partners accept the concept that the plight of western native trout will be improved through the application of resources – time, money and manpower – to planning and implementing on-the-ground projects. Partners will encourage management agencies and stakeholders to seek solutions to issues such as climate change, regional environmental and ecological threats such as drought, warming water temperatures, and invasive aquatic species. They will help to develop and implement outreach and educational programs to ensure public awareness of the challenges that face native trout populations; and help seek additional funding to accomplish the hundreds of needed projects.

Where can I get more information?

Visit www.westernnativetrout.org for more information about WNTI and the Strategic Plan.

Also contact the WNTI Coordinator – Robin Knox - at Ph. Phone 303-236-4402, FAX 303-236-8163
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