

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE

DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for your support in 2015 - an active year for the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI)! This year marked the 10th year of the Initiative's work to preserve, protect, and enhance western native trout and char and their habitats. We had significant new outreach programming implemented in 2015, with the launch of our new website, active outreach through social media and a quarterly e-newsletter, hosting two symposia at the American Fisheries Society annual meeting, and launch of our Chasing Native Trout campaign.

Despite funding limitations for 2015, WNTI was able to award funding to three habitat restoration projects benefiting our priority species. We funded 3 projects with a total of \$128,710 National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) funds and \$99,110 of National Fish Passage Program (NFPP) funds leveraged to partner matches of almost \$1,013,000. We also re-invigorated our Small Grants Program, funding 4 small grant projects using non-federal funds contributed by partners and donors.

Projects funded through NFHP/NFPP in 2015:

- French Creek Fish Barrier benefiting Westslope Cutthroat Trout and Arctic Grayling. *Montana*
- Bear Creek Coastal Cutthroat Trout Habitat Connectivity and Enhancement. *Oregon*
- Horse Heaven Creek Instream Restoration for Redband Trout. *Oregon*

Small grants projects funded in 2015:

- Making a Difference for Trout on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula. *Alaska*
- Forest and Fins Education Program for Underserved Youth. *Washington*
- Nooksack River Stewards Program Expansion. *Washington*
- Get to Know Your Native. *Colorado/New Mexico*

A few project highlights from 2015 include:

- Barrier removal in Lost Horse Creek to benefit Bull Trout and Westslope Cutthroat Trout. *Montana*
- Increased complex pools, riffle habitat and riparian habitat for Yankee Creek Coastal Cutthroat. *Oregon*
- Completed assessments of Gila Trout habitat status after the Whitewater-Baldy Fire. *New Mexico*
- Weber River watershed improvements to enhance Bonneville Cutthroat Trout habitat beyond three restrictive barriers. *Utah*

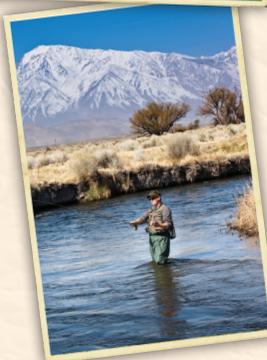
Thank you for wholeheartedly being a part of the Western Native Trout Initiative. We are looking forward to continued success in 2016!

Sincerely,

JULIE MEKA CARTER
Chair, WNTI Steering Committee

THERESE THOMPSON
Project Coordinator

OUR SUCCESS BY THE NUMBERS	2006-2015	56	Fish Passage Barriers removed
		494	Stream miles reconnected, restored, or improved
		28	Barriers constructed to conserve and protect priority populations
		570	Miles of habitat protected above barriers
		622	Watersheds or populations surveyed or assessed



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.



RESULTS

Since its inception in 2006, the Western Native Trout Initiative has directed over \$4 million in federal fish habitat funds leveraged to 15 million public and private matching dollars for 116 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 56 barriers to fish passage, reconnected or improved 494 miles of native trout habitat, and placed 28 protective fish barriers to protect 570 miles of important native trout habitat.

COMPLETED CRITICAL NATIVE TROUT POPULATION AND HABITAT ASSESSMENTS

In order to ensure our collaborative investments are directed toward the highest priority projects, WNTI has funded over 622 watershed, fish population, and habitat surveys. Along with our partners at the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission, WNTI is in the process of conducting a rangewide assessment for Coastal Cutthroat Trout. As part of this effort, a web based mapping application has been developed to support the rangewide assessment (bit.ly/CCTViewer).

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 states, 5 federal resource management agencies, tribes, and nonprofit fisheries conservation organizations.

Julie Meka Carter, Chair
Arizona Game and Fish Department

Roger Wilson, Vice Chair
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Bruce McIntosh
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Roger Harding
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Lee Nelson
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Jon Sjöberg
Nevada Department of Wildlife

Jeff Dillon
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Craig Burley
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Melissa Dickard
Bureau of Land Management

Scott Spaulding
U.S. Forest Service

Robert Clarke
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Warren Colyer
Trout Unlimited

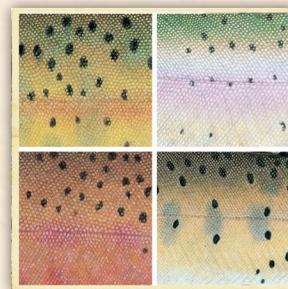
Mike Stone
Western Assoc. of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

STAFF
Therese Thompson,
Project Coordinator

OUTREACH ACTIVITY HIGHLIGHTS

Chasing Native Trout Campaign

Have you ever caught a native Western trout? Do you want to but don't know where or when to go find them? It's now easier for all angling adventurers to take a road trip and catch the fish of their dreams. Along with a gorgeous inspirational video filmed in southern Colorado, WNTI assembled a four-part course full of tips and tricks for chasing four beautiful native cutthroat trout; Bonneville Cutthroat Trout in Utah, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in Nevada, Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Washington, and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout in Colorado. The campaign was successfully promoted through social media, targeted Facebook outreach in different regions of the country, regular e-newsletter subscribers, WNTI's website, popular fly fishing blog sites, partner state and federal agencies' social media sites, and through private sector and NGO partners social media platforms. *Stay tuned for eight more species in eight additional western states being added in 2016!* Visit the campaign landing page here and be sure to subscribe to receive all the e-newsletters: chasing.westernnativetrout.org.



American Fisheries Society Symposia

In August 2015, WNTI hosted two separate symposia at the annual American Fisheries Society meeting in Portland, Oregon. Attendance at the conference was just under 3,500 participants.

What's New with Western Native Trout was a one and a half day symposium sponsored by the WNTI that focused on recent conservation and management actions benefitting western native trout through partnerships and cooperative efforts that result in improved species status, improved aquatic habitats, and improved recreational opportunities for anglers. Presentations were delivered by speakers representing a range of agencies and organizations – state and federal management agencies, universities, conservation organizations, and students. It was rewarding for WNTI to be a convener of so many different researchers, biologists, and a handful of students working across the west on native trout.

America's Fish and Fisheries – Shared through the Camera Lens – A 2015 AFS Film Festival was co-hosted by WNTI, and our wonderful partners at the Southeast Alaska Fish Habitat Partnership, The Salmon Project, the Sitka Conservation Society, and The Sustainable Southeast Partnership. Over 60 films were submitted, focusing on the connections between people, fish and fisheries, the unique life cycles and habitat needs of different species, and how resource practitioners and ordinary people are helping conserve fish and their habitats across the nation. The films were from a variety of perspectives—including commercial and sport fishermen, subsistence users, researchers and managers, volunteers, landowners, and even fish themselves. The festival provided an exciting vantage point to view successes and challenges in fisheries conservation. The festival program, which includes a brief description of each film, can be found at bit.ly/2015AFSfilmfestivalprogram.



Lahontan Cutthroat Trout, Nevada Department of Wildlife

THANK YOU PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game
American Sportfishing Association
Angling Trade Magazine
Arizona Game and Fish Department
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Bass Pro Shops
Blue Valley Ranch
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Crooked Creek Watershed Council
Federation of Fly Fishers
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Kenai Watershed Forum
Klamath Basin Rangeland Trust
Long Tom Watershed Council

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
Mountains to Sound Greenway Trust
National Fish Habitat Partnership
National Park Service
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
Sage Lion Media
Sierra Pacific FlyFishers
Southern Rockies Landscape Conservation Cooperative

Trout Unlimited
U.S. Bureau of Land Management
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

And all the individual donors who contribute to WNTI!