

2022 ANNUAL REPORT



WESTERN NATIVE TROUT INITIATIVE

c/o WAFWA
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westernnativetrout.org

DEAR FRIENDS,

Thank you for being a part of the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) again in 2022. In 2022, WNTI and our partners funded four habitat restoration projects benefiting focal species with a total of \$320,000 National Fish Habitat Partnership funds, leveraged with \$790,726 in other partner contributions for a total projects value of \$1,110,726. An additional \$483,500 in other grants funded an additional 10 projects.

An ongoing partnership with the Resources Legacy Fund (RLF) through their Open Rivers Fund, continued to support our ongoing work on seven projects in the Upper Bear River in Idaho, Utah, and Wyoming to benefit Bonneville Cutthroat Trout, recreational fishing, and local communities and ranchers who divert water for irrigation. RLF also continued to support WNTI's portfolio of projects in the Warner Lakes Basin in southeast Oregon to benefit Warner Lakes Redband Trout (State Sensitive and Federal Species of Concern), Warner sucker (listed as Threatened under the Endangered Species Act), recreational fishing, ranchers, and landowners.

Collectively, the 14 projects funded in 2022 will remove or bypass fourteen barriers to restore access to 62.5 miles of stream for fish passage, restore 2.8 miles and 80 acres of fish habitat, and assess four fish populations and 14.5 stream miles. One temporary barrier was constructed to support Greenback Cutthroat Trout conservation efforts.

In 2022, WNTI awarded \$23,550 from its small grant program (funded 100% with donations) for six projects in ten western states and a Canadian province, matched by \$29,360 in public and private funding. The community-based projects emphasize citizen science and outreach to help address challenges facing the restoration and recovery of WNTI's focal species.

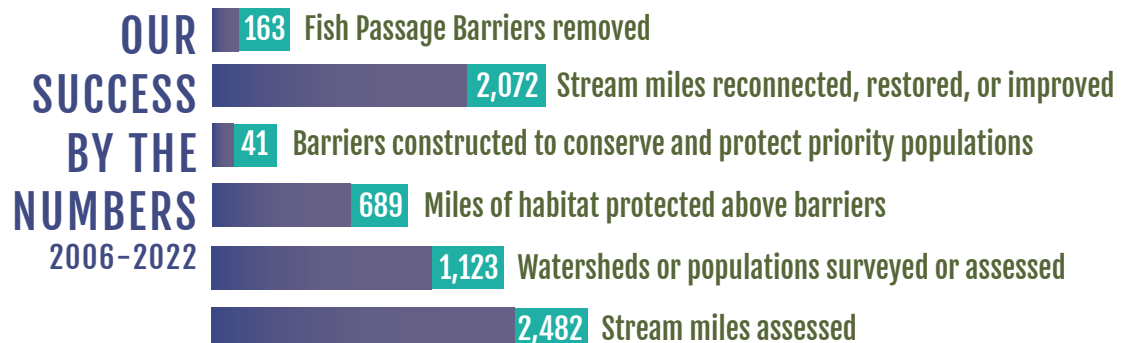
In May 2019, WNTI launched our Western Native Trout Challenge, inviting anglers to celebrate our western native trout legacy by catching native trout and char in their native ranges in each of the 12 WNTI western states, at their own pace. WNTI's 12 state fish and wildlife agency members partnered on the effort, along with the U.S. Forest Service, BLM, and Trout Unlimited. As of December 2022, 1,214 anglers had registered for the program with 178 anglers completing one or more levels already.

Thank you for making 2022 another successful year for WNTI. We 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 2023!

Sincerely,

JULIE MEKA CARTER
Chair, WNTI Steering Committee

THERESE THOMPSON
Coordinator



Projects

Additional information for all 2022 National Fish Habitat Partnership WNTI-funded projects can be viewed at: westernnativetrout.org/2022-funded-projects

PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH NATIONAL FISH HABITAT PARTNERSHIP FUNDS IN 2022

- WNTI operational support
- Cache la Poudre River Headwaters Greenback Cutthroat Trout Restoration: Corral Creek, *Colorado*
- Blackfoot River Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout Habitat Improvement, *Idaho*
- Rainey Creek Restoration Bridge-to-Bridge Phase 2 (Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout), *Idaho*

PROJECTS FUNDED THROUGH GRANTS FROM OTHER FUNDERS IN 2022

- Muddy Creek Fish Passage and Habitat Enhancement (Interior Redband Trout), *Oregon*
- Deep Creek Middle Diversion (Interior Redband Trout), *Oregon*
- Honey Creek Four Lower Diversions (Interior Redband Trout), *Oregon*
- Evanston Town Historic Dam (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Wyoming*
- Stauffer Creek Fish Passage Construction Phase 2 (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Idaho*
- Stauffer Creek Oxborrow Diversion Removal (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Idaho*
- North Eden Creek (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Utah*
- Dry Fork Smiths' Fork Culvert Removal (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Wyoming*
- Beaver Creek/Wuda Ogwa (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Utah*
- Steve's Creek (Bonneville Cutthroat Trout), *Idaho*



Evanston Town Historic Dam removal during construction. Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited.

WNTI SMALL GRANT PROJECTS FUNDED IN 2022

Additional information for all 2022 small grant projects can be viewed at: westernnativetrout.org/2022-small-grants-projects

- Get to Know Your Native Trout Colorado River Cutthroat Trout poster, *Colorado, Utah, Wyoming*
- Rainey Creek Restoration Kiosk, *Idaho*
- Native Trout Education, *Idaho*
- Native Fishes of Idaho Poster, *Idaho*
- Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout and River Etiquette Sign Project, *Montana*
- Coastal Cutthroat Trout Outreach and Communication Poster Project, *Alaska, British Columbia, California, Idaho, Oregon, Nevada, Washington*

Outreach Activity Highlights



WESTERN NATIVE TROUT CHALLENGE

In 2019, the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) launched a major new program called the Western Native Trout Challenge. westernnativetroutchallenge.org

The program celebrates the native trout and char species of the West and invites anglers to catch each species in its native or historic range and is a lifetime challenge for each individual who registers. Participants catch native trout and char in each of 12 western states. WNTI provides education, resources, inspiration, and prizes. The purpose of the Challenge is to strengthen angler awareness of these unique native species, help anglers understand native trout conservation, and grow the community of trout fishing aficionados.

As of December 2022, 1,214 anglers have registered for the Western Native Trout Challenge. Idaho Tourism published a native trout fishing guide in 2022 that features our Western Native Trout Challenge. In 2022, Tenkara Rod USA produced nine short videos of their adventures attempting to complete the Western Native Trout Challenge. Another nine videos are expected in 2023. The videos can be watched here: westernnativetroutchallenge.org/media



WNTI Instagram feed

Outreach Activity Highlights *Continued*



AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY CONFERENCE SYMPOSIUM

WNTI co-hosted a symposium with the Fish Habitat Section of the American Fisheries Society, *Western Native Trout: Managing the Threats and Building Resiliency* - at the annual American Fisheries Society conference in 2022. Presentations focused on western native trout species and their habitats in the face of climate change, including aspects of wildfire ecology and management, building resiliency in native trout populations and habitats during drought, promoting habitat recovery and restoration opportunities following stochastic events, and reducing the impacts of non-native species on sensitive native trout populations. There were 18 presentations that provided updates on research and/or management actions related to managing the threats and building resiliency in western native trout species.

GET TO KNOW YOUR NATIVE TROUT POSTERS

The next two Get to Know Your Native Trout posters in WNTI's series were printed and distributed for Bonneville Cutthroat Trout and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout. Two additional posters are being funded for production in 2023: Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and Coastal Cutthroat Trout.



Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest Award Winners

wildlife-forever.org/home/fish-art/winners2022/western-native-trout-award-winners-2022

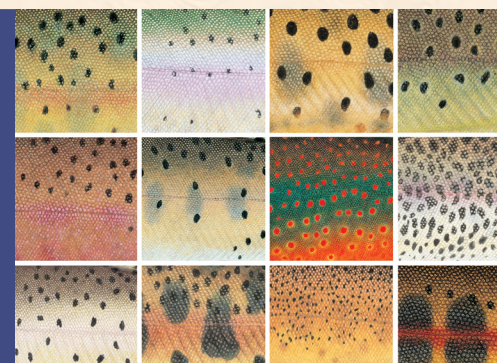
< WILDLIFE FOREVER STATE-FISH ART CONTEST

The Wildlife Forever State-Fish Art Contest partnered with WNTI again in 2022 to highlight the diversity of native trout in the western United States. This partnership connects youth to the assortment of native trout utilizing the Art of Conservation®. In honor of this collaboration, the Fish Art Contest created a new Western Native Trout Award. Winners were selected in four grade categories, Kindergarten-3rd grade, 4th-6th grade, 7th-9th grade, and 10th-12th grade and awarded a prize package from the Western Native Trout Initiative.

Social Media

To share accomplishments achieved in conserving western native trout across the West, WNTI posted 367 media stories on the partnership's Facebook page, which generated more than 100,000 "likes". WNTI maintains an active presence on other social media channels with 15,000 followers on Instagram and almost 1,000 followers on Twitter.

- /westernnativetrout
- @westernnativetrout
- @WNativeTrout





Angler Crew Clouse
Courtesy Sheldon Clouse

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.

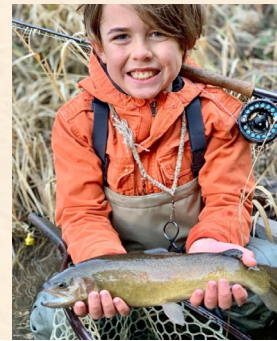
Coordinate Investment and Collaborative Action

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.

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.



Photos left to right: Monica Mitchell @lamoniz2 | Sam Simmons | Angler Fielding Cravens courtesy Michael Cravens

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

Julie Meka Carter, Chair
Arizona Game and Fish Department

Paul Dey, Vice Chair
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

Kevin Keith
Alaska Department of Fish and Game

Farhat Bajjaliya
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

Harry Crockett
Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Martin Koenig
Idaho Department of Fish and Game

Trevor Watson
Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks

Chris Crookshanks
Nevada Department of Wildlife

Kirk Patten
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Thomas Stahl
Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

Randy Oplinger
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Steve Caromile
Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Warren Colyer
Trout Unlimited

Melissa Dickard
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

Yvette Paroz
U.S. Forest Service

Robert Clarke
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Chris Cantrell
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

STAFF

Therese Thompson
Coordinator

THANK YOU 2022 PARTNERS AND SUPPORTERS

Alaska Department of Fish and Game

American Sportfishing Association
FishAmerica Foundation

Arizona Game and Fish Department
Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

AZ Fly Shop
California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Fly Fishers Unlimited
Coastal Cutthroat Coalition
Coastal Cutthroat Trout

Interagency Committee
Colorado Parks and Wildlife
Copper River Watershed Project

Fish Focus Photography
Friends of the Teton River
gaiacreative

Henry's Fork Foundation
Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
Idaho Department of Fish and Game
Intermountain West Joint Venture

Lake County Umbrella
Watershed Council

Living Waters Fly Fishing
Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
National Fish Habitat Partnership
Nevada Department of Wildlife

New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
NOAA Office of Habitat Conservation

Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
Orofino High School (Idaho)

Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission
Pheasants Forever
RepYourWater

Resources Legacy Fund (Open Rivers Fund)
Rocky Mountain Flyathlon

(Running Rivers)
Santa Clara Pueblo – Forestry Division
Tenkara Rod Co.
Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited Native Trout Work Group

Turner Endangered Species Fund, LLC
U.S. Bureau of Land Management

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service
U.S. Geological Survey

U.S. National Park Service
Utah Cutthroat Slam
Utah Division of Wildlife Resources

Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

Wilderness Lite Float Tubes
Wyoming Game and Fish Department

And all the individual donors who contribute to WNTI!

Thank you!