Spring 2011

IDAHO TROUT


R. Chad Chorney Photo

CHAPTERS OF THE
IDAHO
STATE
COUNCIL

Hemingway

Magic Valley
Fly Fishers

Panhandle

Reed Gillespie

Snake River
Cutthroats

Southeast
Idaho
Fly Fishers

Ted Trueblood

Teton Valley

A publication
of Idaho Trout
Unlimited

2010 Snake River Cutthroats Chapter Heritage Award Presented to Matt Woodard of Trout Unlimited

Matt Woodard, the South Fork Home Rivers Initiative Project Manager for Trout Unlimited, was awarded the 2010 Heritage Award in recognition for his long standing service and dedication to the Fly Fishing Community in eastern Idaho by the Snake River Cutthroats Chapter.

The Heritage Award is given to an individual who has made a significant and a sustained commitment and contribution to protecting and improving cold water fisheries and promoting fly fishing education in eastern Idaho, and is the highest award given by the Snake River Cutthroats.

As a life-long resident of eastern Idaho who grew up fishing the South Fork, Matt made an early commitment to give back to the resource that has provided him with so many recreational opportunities. He became an active member of the Snake River Cutthroats in the 1980s, participating in various conservation projects, serving as a board member, and ultimately serving as the chapter president from 1992 to 1994. Matt played a key role in an effort to get the Bureau of Reclamation to manage winter flows on the South Fork based on what was good for the fisheries, not just based on what was good for irrigators. Matt's accomplishments since becoming the Home Rivers Project Manager have been substantial and will provide a lasting legacy that future generations will be able to enjoy. While there have been many players and a lot of dollars put into the South Fork and its tributaries over the past ten years, Matt provided the key with his ability to build relationships with skeptic landowners and his farmer-ingenuity to get things done on the ground. It was Matt's dedication and hard work in protecting, preserving and restoring the South

President's Message

TU Partners with like-minded groups to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain habitat for trout and salmon throughout the state.

This will be my last "President's Message" for the Idaho TU Newsletter. Although I am proud to have served, I will resign as the ITU Chair at our fall meeting, where we will elect new leadership. Fly anglers, more than most, learn to regulate their activities around the seasons. We spend our late winters and springs getting ready for trout fishing, and our late summers and falls getting ready for steelhead. We also adjust to longer cycles as a particular favorite river sees rises and falls in fish populations, or changes in the mix of bugs that thrive. I am doing the same, on a larger scale, adjusting my activities to the rises and falls in my lifestyle. And Trout Unlimited as a whole is in the midst of adjusting to the changes in the ecological, political and social mix that affects our fisheries.

What worked last year may not address the problems we face this year. To successfully protect and conserve Idaho's coldwater fisheries, TU must adjust to the same changes. So, we change leadership, we change priorities, and we develop new approaches, in the same way that an angler changes flies, lengthens (or shortens) his leader, and tries a new presentation. As always, we need your help in making these adjustments. As an organization firmly based in the communities where our chapters work, we rely on you and your involvement to set the priorities and drive the changes we constantly make. If you want TU to take on an issue, the best way to do it is to get involved and make us the TU you want to see. I promise that our existing leaders will make room for anyone who shares our mission. Thank you for letting me serve, I hope to see you on the river.

Ted Trueblood Chapter

Pierce Creek Project

Received EAS grant to help fund culvert removal on Pierce Ck, a tributary to the South Fork of the Boise River. By removing the culvert we will open up 2 miles of spawning habitat for wild rainbow trout of the South fork of the Boise. In March we received addition $107,000 grant to replace the culvert with a bridge and including a removing an unnamed culvert with a hardened crossing just five hundred feet downstream of culvert a major contributor to sediment to the Boise River.

Boise River Projects

Trueblood chapter continued to supplement past plantings at several restoration projects along the Boise River. We involved students, church groups, Cub and Boy Scout troops to help harvest, store, and replant hundreds of willow and black cottonwood tree cuttings at our various projects: Julia Creek side channel, Bown Crossing river bank stabilization project, Boise River bank stabilization project. Our Chapter continued to support Pam Elkovich with her mine waste cleanup projects in the Boise Basin this year.

JIM GREGORY PRESENTED WITH "*OUTSTANDING FISH PROFESSIONAL*" AWARD BY THE IDAHO CHAPTER OF THE AMERICAN FISHERIES SOCIETY

Jim Gregory has been presented with the "*Outstanding Fish Professional*" award by the Idaho Chapter of the American Fisheries Society at their Annual Meeting in March 2011.
Jim has worked with Trout Unlimited over the last decade and has made many major contributions to the conservation and sustainability of fishery resources and aquatic ecosystems in the Big and Little Lost Basins in Idaho. It was Jim's work that was recognized by the Forest Service in 2010, when presented with the "2009 Rise to the Future - Partner Award".

Magic Valley Fly Fishers Youth Group ("Ducktails") Going Strong

This past year, the Magic Valley Ducktails youth group participated in numerous fly fishing outings, catching trout, bass, and bluegill on the fly! The Ducktails also took a field trip to the College of Southern Idaho Fish Hatchery, and learned about ongoing efforts to raise sturgeon as part of the plan to enhance native sturgeon populations in the Snake River. Topics at monthly Ducktails meetings included entomology, fly tying, knot tying, and an inaugural fly casting "competition." For 2011, the Ducktails will continue along these lines as well as assisting the Idaho Department of Fish and Game with a willow transplant project in late May.

The Big Lost, Irrigators, and TU – a long-term success story
By Jim Gregory

One of the things I learned as a small boy, and that continues to be driven home to me through my career as a fish biologist, is that fish need water! Water is a limited resource throughout Idaho, and the Big Lost is no different. In fact, much of the colorful history of the Big Lost River valley relates to the limited availability of irrigation water. Throw in sportsmen and agencies wanting water for fish to the ongoing water wars, and you have the potential for serious conflict and ultimately bloody battles.

In 2003, TU started working in the Big Lost by identifying the causes for the fisheries decline in the upper Big Lost drainage and locating and prioritizing fish migration barriers. Two additional water-related issues beset the Big Lost: 1) there was a basin wide catastrophic decline in whitefish numbers and 2) the state was implementing conjunctive management and requiring mitigation for the impacts of groundwater withdrawals on surface water users. Conjunctive management and mitigation put an additional pressure on irrigation water while the decline of the whitefish, the only native salmonid in the Big Lost River basin, elevated fears that federal agencies would restrict the diversion of irrigation water (which was simultaneously happening in the Klamath River in Oregon).

Over the next several years, Trout Unlimited, with the blessing and help of local irrigators and the support of innumerable volunteers, agencies and private donors, provided fish passage around twelve of the prioritized barriers throughout the basin. In fact, as of December 2010, TU has installed fish passage at all of the high priority and many of the medium priority barriers as identified by the whitefish working group (Figure 1). Additionally, TU has verified fish passage at many of the fish passage projects. TU's efforts, however, have not just been directed at fish passage. TU has also completed a habitat improvement project, willow re-establishment project, and grazing exclosure project on the East Fork Big Lost, has participated in numerous fish salvage projects throughout the basin, and is working to identify ways to keep water instream for fish.

TU also worked closely with local irrigators to complete a study to determine how to keep perennial flow in the currently intermittent downstream reach known as the "Darlington Sinks." While permanent fixes to this problem are still difficult, internal operational changes by the Big Lost River Irrigation District, along with relatively high water tables (a function of recharge done by the irrigators with excess water in the spring) have resulted in river flows across the Darlington Sinks remaining perennial over the past 22 months. This is a condition that has not occurred for many many years, particularly during years when water production in the basin has been below average.

Trout Unlimited is currently working closely with Jim Rindfleisch (the manager of the Big Lost River Irrigation District) in collaboration with the Water Master, the Water Master's Advisory Committee, the Board of the Big Lost River Irrigation District, and other local leaders in the water community to assess the efficacy of delivering water to the pumps through recharge pits and the ground, rather than through ditches. If this is possible, it will result in less water being put into ditches and more water being put into recharge pits, which are easy to salvage at the end of the irrigation season. While this is a difficult and long-term project, it has the potential to fully address what may be the biggest limiting factor to the fisheries in the lower Big Lost River - low winter flows.

While TU has put substantial time and resources into the Big Lost River fisheries, biologists from the Forest Service, Fish and Game, and US Fish and Wildlife Service have also invested substantial time and resources. These efforts have involved completing population estimates, studies on migration, a whitefish management plan, evaluation of fish passage of barriers (which helped in designing the passage projects TU implemented), and evaluations of winter flows, entrainment in canals, and stranding in dry river sections.

Though water is still a limited resource in the Big Lost River basin, the basin-wide attitude of many local residents and water users has changed. They have seen a prominent conservation group (TU) and agencies that regulate and manage fish resources work cooperatively with them, instead of against them, to accomplish fisheries goals. And fisheries goals are being achieved. Whitefish numbers have increased over the past five years to the point that population goals outlined in the Whitefish Management Plan have been met upstream from the Mackay Reservoir and nearly met downstream from Mackay Reservoir. Connectivity objectives have been met throughout the basin. And, trout numbers in the upper Big Lost are on the rise. While these are important measures of success, the indicator that illustrates that success will continue is that Big Lost River Irrigation District personnel can be seen on almost any day, going about their business wearing TU hats!

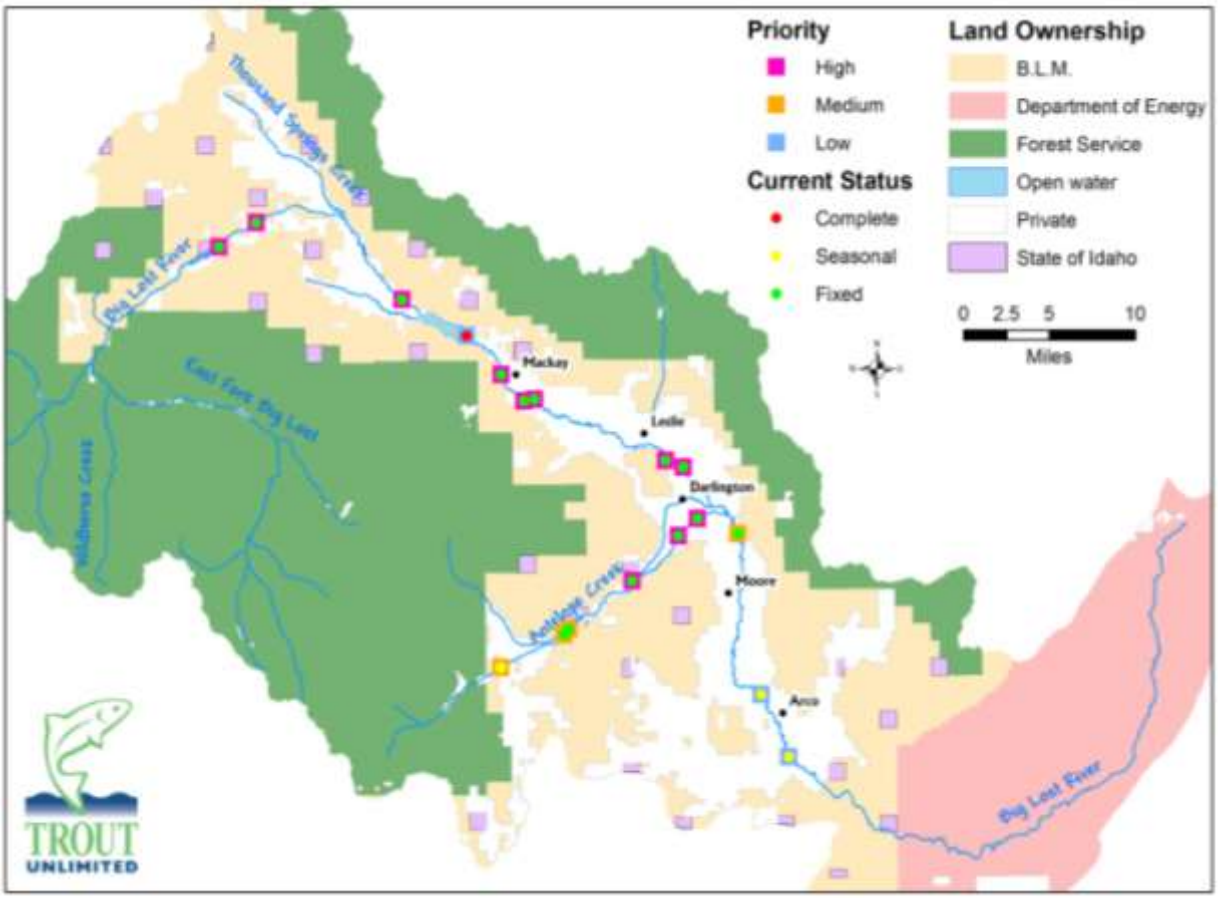

Figure 1 - Barriers identified in the Big Lost River drainage along with their priority for removal and current status (Complete barrier, seasonal barrier, or passage provided = fixed).

Trout Unlimited Reed Gillespie Chapter: Boulder Creek Restoration Project

The Reed Gillespie Chapter of Trout Unlimited is actively involved in a community watershed stewardship project on Boulder Creek. Our project partners are Donnelly Elementary School, McCall-Donnelly High School, McCall Outdoor Science School, Valley Soil and Water Conservation District, Valley County Pathways, city of Donnelly, Idaho Fish and Game, the Payette National Forest and local landowners.

In 2010, over the course of several volunteer days, 1/2 mile of Boulder Creek was planted with riparian shrubs by 30 Idaho Fish and Game volunteer crew and Trout Unlimited Volunteers. A ¼ mile of creek was fenced off for livestock exclusion and a ¼ mile of nature trail will be completed in Spring 2011 by Valley County Pathways at a 7 acre site, recently donated to the city by the Hugh Fulton Family. Slightly upstream, Donnelly Elementary School 5th graders worked with hydrologist Ned Fowkes in spring 2010 to design and construct a log grid stabilization structure on a severely eroding 100' section of bank by their school. The students priced out supplies, contracted services, and completed the project under budget.

Donnelly 5th graders are also taking part in Trout in the Classroom not only raising trout, but also studying the water quality in Boulder Creek by their school and upstream at a reference site. The students report their results annually to the Donnelly City Council. Their watershed stewardship efforts have made an impact in the community by engaging additional landowner participation in riparian restoration projects. Our chapter has provided technical support and supplies for this project.

In 2011, another ½ mile of Boulder Creek will be planted and eroding banks stabilized with willow weavings. Valley County Pathways and TU are also planning a Story Trail, 8-10 signs with pages of a nature-related children's book on each sign, to encourage use of the nature trail and provide a fun environmental education tool for families. McCall-Donnelly High School is making the sign bases for us and the American Association of University Women are donating books.

Funding for these efforts was received from the Whittenberger Foundation, DEQ 319 funds, Lightfoot Foundation, New Belgium Brewing, Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Laura Moore Cunningham Foundation, Idaho Power, and the American Fisheries Society.

Fulton Natural Area Nature Trail (artist rendering by Claire Remsberg)

Boulder Creek
Eroding Bank-
Before Project

Boulder Creek after
Log Grid Installation

Yellowstone Cutthroat Restoration on Six Mile Creek - Magic Valley Fly Fishers

The MVFF has partnered with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game and the United States Forest Service to assist in the restoration of native Yellowstone Cutthroat in Six Mile Creek. Six Mile is a small, isolated tributary of the Raft River drainage that contains suitable habitat for YCT, but which has suffered from Yellowstone Cutthroat & Rainbow Trout hybridization. Last year, the IDF&G eliminated the fish populations in Six Mile, in preparation for re-introduction of pure Yellowstone Cutthroat from a neighboring watershed. IDF&G subsequently transplanted 83 Yellowstone cutts, consisting of several age classes, from a nearby stream. The Magic Valley Fly Fishers then worked with the US Forest Service on stream habitat enhancement; primarily through placing large woody debris in the stream to act as suitable nursery habitat for juvenile YCT. During 2011, the IDF&G will assess the current population, as well as transplant additional Yellowstone Cutthroat. The MVFF again hopes to assist in this project by working with the IDF&G during additional YCT transplants.

Panhandle Chapter - Hooking Kids With Magazines

The Panhandle Chapter of Trout Unlimited has initiated a program designed to get kids away from computer games and outside to enjoy fishing.

Chapter secretary Gerry Porter noticed that fewer and fewer kids were showing up at the chapter's annual fishing clinic at a local stocked trout pond. His idea was to hook kids on fishing by supplying magazines such as *Trout* and *Northwest Fly-fishing* to school libraries. Visits to librarians at the schools confirmed that the magazines would be most welcome as budget cuts hadn't allowed the schools to purchase magazines for some time. A local sports store added several other magazines to distribute.

At present, nine intermediate and high schools in Bonner and Boundary counties are part of the program. Follow-up visits confirmed that the magazines were being read enthusiastically. Stickers are attached to the magazines identifying them as gifts from TU. There is also a local address given.

Since many of the magazines have been donated, the cost to the chapter has been minimal. We really feel that this program has given us a lot of bang for our buck!

Teton Valley Trout Unlimited

TVTU is charging into its second decade with a solid active membership, strong fundraising, and more than enough issues to deal with on the Teton River and its tributaries. Our flagship project over the past two years has been our restoration work on Fox Creek, a critical spawning and nursery tributary for the watershed's native cutthroat trout. Teton River Trout Unlimited partnered with the Teton Regional Land Trust to perform bank stabilization and plant willow stocks on hundreds of yards of Fox Creek. Part of this effort is funded with a Trout Unlimited EAS grant. Work should be completed in the Fall of 2011.

Teton Valley Trout Unlimited is using another EAS grant to complete similar work on Trail Creek. Trail Creek is one of several headwater tributaries that flow from the Teton and Snake River ranges. Like Fox Creek, Trail Creek is an important spawning tributary for the Teton River. But over the past century, overgrazing and channelization has severely compromised natural channel processes, fish and wildlife habitat, and riparian vegetation. In collaboration with Friends of the Teton River, TVTU volunteers will perform bank stabilization and plant native vegetation to bring Trail Creek back to health. Work on this project began in the Fall of 2010.

While TVTU and its partners work in earnest to rehabilitate the upper reaches of the Teton River watershed, we are unfortunately faced with talk of a new Teton Dam further downstream in the Teton River Canyon. The original Teton Dam was a dismal failure, collapsing shortly after its completion, flooding downstream communities, and killing 11 people. Lost in this disaster was the fact that the dam was built in an incredibly pristine environment that is a stronghold for native cutthroat. Today, the fishing in the Teton River Canyon has the reputation as amongst the best in the Greater Yellowstone area. Teton Valley Trout Unlimited, along with several local, regional, and national organizations, is fighting to make sure that this dream of a new Teton Dam does not become a reality. This is sure to be the biggest fight yet in our chapter's young history.

Teton Valley TU and Teton Regional Land Trust personnel work on streambank stabilization on Fox Creek

Teton Valley TU and Teton Regional Land Trust personnel use native firs as bank stabilization on Fox Creek

Ted Trueblood Chapter - (continued)

Our Project Healing Waters program has been successful. Our helped support four fishing trips last year. In the spring we start off with an evening of fly casting and instruction. This coming summer three river float trips planned

Last fall the Ted Trueblood chapter kicked off the Ted Trueblood Speaker Series. Ted Trueblood was a world renowned writer on western issues. The Trueblood chapter teamed up with the Andrus Center for Public Policy to start a speaker series that will periodically host a writer who holds and writes about western issues, policies, conservation and interests. The inaugural speaker was Timothy Eagan, author of *The Big Burn*. We had and audience of around 220 people who listened and learned about our chapter namesake.

The Ted Trueblood chapter completed our first year of a fly casting tournament. The model is set up as a skills course like the Orvis course in Bend, Oregon, and the casting course held at the National TU meetings the past few years. All monies generated by this contest are used to help fund the remaining portion of the Pierce Creek culvert project. In proceeding years will use this event as our fundraiser to help support future culvert replacements and habitat improvement on the South Fork of the Boise River.

The Blackfoot River

Trout Unlimited is embarking on an ambitious effort to initiate a new Home River Initiative on the Blackfoot River likely starting in the spring of 2012.

This effort will have the primary focus to restore Yellowstone cutthroat trout (YCT) in Idaho's Blackfoot River watershed, Trout Unlimited, along with Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Caribou-Targhee National Forest, BLM, USFWS, and local agricultural producers and irrigators, propose to initiate a watershed-scale restoration project to restore riparian and aquatic habitats, augment instream flows, restore fish passage, and improve water quality throughout the drainage.

Historically, YCT occupied much of the Yellowstone River and Upper Snake River basins in southern Idaho, Montana, northwestern Wyoming, and small regions of Nevada and Utah. Today, however, genetically pure YCT are found in only 43% of the available habitat within their historic range. Despite an earlier petition, the species is not federally listed under the ESA, but is considered a "sensitive species" or "species of special concern" by state and federal management agencies. Idaho contains 27% of currently occupied YCT habitat and the Blackfoot River in southeastern Idaho is the southernmost stronghold for the subspecies within its native range.

In 1959, the year that Trout Unlimited was formed on the banks of the Au Sable River in Michigan, anglers out here in eastern Idaho caught and harvested 15,000 native Yellowstone cutthroat trout from the Blackfoot River. The watershed supports three distinct YCT life forms: tributary resident, river-migratory (fluvial), and lake-migratory (adfluvial). Mature fluvial fish from the river and adfluvial fish from the reservoir ascend the Blackfoot River each spring and enter upper tributaries or the main stem river channel to spawn in late May and June. Most of the progeny of these fish rear in Blackfoot River tributaries for varying periods of up to two years. Many juvenile YCT then migrate downstream to Blackfoot Reservoir where they take advantage of the constant temperatures and abundant food supplies to grow large. After three to four years they are ready to return to the river to spawn. Other juveniles migrate from tributaries to the river where they rear to adulthood.

Its sad to say but these historic runs of huge trout with many in the 20 inch class (some well over 26 inches in length) are all but gone now. This population of Yellowstone Cutthroat trout (YCT) is now very close to blinking out without our help.

Factors that are contributing to the YCT population decline include fluctuating water levels from increased demand from farming and ranching operations, and predation from avian predators — particularly a burgeoning population of white pelicans. Water quality issues from 31 different phosphate mines with, 17 of those listed as EPA superfund sites within the drainage, are playing a role in the decline of these fish. Compounding that are significant livestock grazing issues along the river and its tributaries with increased sediment loading. There is also increasing recreational and off-road vehicle issues on public lands within the watershed adding to the problem.

The stage is for Trout Unlimited to become engaged in efforts to protect the watershed from future harm. Failure to do so will result in this treasured local fishery and outstanding wildlife habitat resources could be lost for good.

The Blackfoot project offers a great opportunity to rehabilitate the watershed from the following conservation objectives:

Riparian and Aquatic Habitat Restoration

Fish Passage Restoration

Instream Flow Augmentation

Monitor and Control Non-native species expansions and conduct YCT genetic analysis

Mitigate Phosphate Mine Impacts

Trout Unlimited's Science team's Conservation Success Index for Yellowstone cutthroat trout in the Blackfoot watershed shows that habitat degradation and poor water quality are among the most significant threats to native trout. The Blackfoot and its major tributaries are listed on the state list of impaired waters in Idaho, owing largely to elevated temperatures and sediment loads caused by riparian degradation and eroding stream banks. In contrast, population integrity and range-wide condition scores are relatively high, suggesting that the Blackfoot is a watershed where targeted strategic habitat restoration can achieve significant benefits for native cutthroat trout.

The Blackfoot is another watershed where TU's conservation model to "Protect, Reconnect, Restore, and Sustain" can help rebuild YCT habitat so that future generations may once again experience the amazing large trout spawning in the upper river and its tributaries in one of Idaho's storied rivers.

The Blackfoot will also provide an opportunity to bring the "One TU" model into play where all of TU's signature conservation programs (*Watershed Restoration, Western Water, and the Sportsman's Conservation Project*) can play a significant role. The combined effects of all of TU's programs will have lasting range wide positive effects in the Blackfoot basin.

TU has a real opportunity to help rebuild what was one of the West's best local fisheries. Working with local stake holders, the Shoshone Bannock Tribal members, mining interests, federal agencies, state agencies, local agencies, and other members of the community we can help ensure this fishery and the high quality wildlife habitat will remain for generations to come.

— Matt Woodard

South Fork Snake River Project's Update

We recently completed installation of a 4th Hydrolox fish screen on Rainey Creek last fall, and in the process eliminated another bad barrier to fish migration. If funding opportunities become available in the future we would consider modifying the last two diversion points on Rainey Creek with fish screens and good instream fish passage.

If all goes well early this fall we will complete the majority of the Palisades creek restoration project. Palisades is one of the four big spawning and rearing tributaries for Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in the South Fork. This project will seek to stabilize bed load movement, increase sinuosity, treat degrading banks, install new instream habitat to promote spawning and rearing, increase the overall length within the project reach, and a riparian re-vegetation component to tie it all together. Trout Unlimited was successful in acquiring a large 319 grant that will make this project whole. We are looking forward to getting on the ground their with our stream design consultant Gary Decker. Gary is a very talented hydrologist / geomorphologist that is superbly qualified for this project. Native Yellowstone Cutthroat trout will no doubt take a liking to what Gary has planned for Palisades Creek.

The work in the South Fork is almost complete, it's been an enjoyable project with a long list of quality project's that have been implemented to bolster and protect native Yellowstone Cutthroat trout in the Upper Snake Basin. With that come new projects and another watershed to transition to. For some time now TU has been developing an ambitious new Home Rivers Initiative (HRI) for the Blackfoot River. Starting in 2012 we will begin work in this new watershed drainage. The Blackfoot offers a unique opportunity to implement what TU calls "ONE TU" meaning that all of TU's conservation programs will be working together on the Blackfoot HRI. There is a long list of challenges before us that lie in taking on a project like the Blackfoot, but the rewards can be just as great. In a separate article read on about the new Blackfoot HRI.

The amazing success of the South Fork projects can be directly attributed to the sustained commitment of the Snake River Cutthroats Trout Unlimited Chapter. Their amazing efforts from volunteering for on the ground project work to razing all important non-federal local dollars that have been used as matching dollars to build the necessary war chest of funds has been critical to our success. Their dedication to these efforts is why we are where we are today. They are truly a remarkable organization; it has been and continues to be a pleasure to work with them.

Dempsey Creek Project / Pocatello SEIFF TU Chapter Pocatello

We were successful in getting a small Embrace-A-Stream grant through TU for a project on Dempsey Creek. Dempsey Creek lies directly behind Lava Hot Springs and flows north to the Portneuf with a population of native Yellowstone Cutthroat trout. This project seeks to rebuild a small diversion on Dempsey Creek to allow for full fish passage and to screen the outgoing ditch to eliminate entrainment. Longer term the Dempsey Creek water users would like to pipe the outgoing ditch on the project to provide additional water savings and reduce maintenance. Partners on the project are the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the South East Idaho Fly Fishers Trout Unlimited chapter (SEIFF), and the Idaho Association of Soil Conservation Districts.

Crow Creek Partnership Project with the Caribou Targhee National Forest

TU working with the Caribou Targhee National Forest and other partners will finish the Crow Creek project this summer and fall. We have been diverting flow in a 50-50 relationship between the new channel and the old one. This has allowed the new channel to become more stable and it has afforded us opportunity to revegetate the new channel in the process. Full flow will be diverted to the new channel later this summer. The old channel will be fully decommissioned and restored. A portion of the bottom end of the old channel will be left open as refugia for smaller fish and to allow for a small spring to continue flowing.

Crow Creek is a significant spawning and rearing tributary for Yellowstone Cutthroat trout that flows into Salt River which flows into Palisades Reservoir. There have been significant habitat changes that have been built into the Crow Creek project. Fish habitat, especially higher quality habitat, has increased by 104% through channel lengthening from 3,304 ft to 6,474 ft. Pool habitat and associated spawning habitat in pool tailouts were increased by over 9.5 times. Nine pools on 3,304 ft of existing channel was converted to 86 pools on 6,474 ft of restored channel.

This project once completed will be another fine example of where partners have come together to benefit the resource for future generations. Below is a listing of the partners involved that have made this project whole:

United States Forest Service
Youth Conservation Crews
Trout Unlimited
Wyoming & Idaho Natural Resource Conservation Service
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Idaho Department of Fish & Game
Idaho Fish and Wildlife Foundation
Snake River Cutthroats Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Private Landowner
Volunteers

Our work with this project may lead to further work on adjoining properties. The before and after transformation process is impressive with Crow Creek.

— Matt Woodard

4th Annual Sportsmen Against Hunger/Southeast Idaho Fly Fishers

It was a fun day at the 4th annual event to raise funds for the Idaho Food Bank. There were over a dozen clubs and organizations throughout the area assembled Saturday morning at the Cal Ranch Store in the Westwood Shopping Mall. Our *SEIFF* table was located in the same location as last year. Our table included club information brochures and a slide presentation. We changed our format to introduce something different: instead of having tying demonstrations, we set three vises and offered for first time tiers a chance tie their own fly.

As in years passed, we had great community participation and raised $1,300 through the poker run. We teamed up with Great Western Equipment. It is my understanding in talking to one of the Great Western representatives that they will be providing some kind of corporate matching to the funds we raised.

The money raised at this event is really important to the Idaho Food Bank. When the Idaho Food Bank can buy food with money, they bid on truckloads of food. Through this bidding process the Idaho Food Bank, on the average, is able to take one dollar and leverage it to purchase $10 worth of food. This means that the $1,300 raised will secure about $13,000 worth of food. That's a lot of food!!

Club members who came down Saturday helped support this event and worked at our table. Dan Murbarger, Dave Johnson (who also brought extra fly tying material), and Denny Jones really know how to interact with anyone who wanted to know about our club. They assisted those who wanted to test their skills at tying a fly. Thanks also to Portneuf River Outfitters who offered special pricing on a nice combination rod/reel that our club donated as one of the special poker run prizes, and for the special pricing for the material used for the first time tiers table.

Special thanks also to Cal Ranch for sponsoring this event again and for making all the clubs feel welcomed in their store. They are a great group to work with.

Darrell Brown
President, SEIFF

Trout In The Classroom/Southeast Idaho Fly Fishers

The fish aquarium in Amy Wren's first-grade class at Wapello Elementary in Blackfoot, Idaho, is covered with inquisitive little nose smudges and hand prints. That's because her young students are being treated to a face-to-face experience with some of Idaho's native wildlife— baby rainbow trout. These fish aren't your ordinary classroom pets; they are an important part of Idaho Fish and Game's efforts to get kids connected to Idaho's wildlife resource through the Trout in the Classroom program. For many years, Idaho teachers and their students have been able to participate in Trout in the Classroom—an opportunity to raise Idaho trout species from eggs to fingerlings right in the classroom before releasing them to the wild.

Prior to 2008, only one school in the Pocatello area, Lewis and Clark Elementary, had taken on the fun challenge of raising and releasing cutthroat trout (Idaho's state fish). That all changed in February 2008 when teachers from 8 additional schools (elementary level to high school) covering Pocatello, American Falls, Blackfoot, and Marsh Valley areas decided to join in on the fun after attending a WILD About Trout in the Classroom Workshop conducted by Fish and Game. At the workshop, teachers were taught the basics of tank set-up and operation, fish care, and were given an innovative curriculum geared toward teaching biology, ecology, habitat needs, and even chemistry and genetics through hands-on activities. The TIC curriculum prepared by Fish and Game focuses on science while incorporating reading, writing, math, and art skills.

The expansion of the program has continued since 2008 so that now southeast Idaho has a total of 18 Trout in the Classroom programs including Preston and Shelley schools. SEIFF contributed time, energy and financial support to help create this boom in the program. In 2008, SEIFF drummed up a total of $5000 for the TIC program and has contributed financial assistance every year since.

A typical classroom set-up for TIC includes a 29-gallon tank, filters, gravel, air pumps, nets, a chiller to maintain water a cold water temperature, and of course, the eggs or fish (depending on what the teacher prefers). Over the past few years, club members have also donated numerous hours in the classroom to help teachers and students with everything from tank set-ups to fish dissections to fish releases.

So, what does a program like TIC mean for wildlife and for Idaho? It means getting kids connected to their wildlife resource in a personal way helps to hook their interest in wildlife conservation and outdoor recreation. This is good for Idaho's wildlife and good for Idaho. But the TIC program has meaning for the students as well.

Jan Flandro used to incorporate TIC in her science classes at Franklin Middle School in Pocatello, and now has moved the program over to Irving Middle School. Some of the remarks she has received from students include: "The value of Trout in the Classroom is that you learn to record data and actually observe the 'real thing' as opposed to reading about it in a book." One of her former students remarked: "TIC teaches us more about the role of trout in our lives and the ecosystem."

Darrell E. Brown
President, SEIFF

Hemingway Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Habitat Restoration Silver Creek

In October 2010 Hemingway Volunteers cut and planted approximately 250 willows on the public access land at Silver Creek between The highway and Martin Bridge accesses. Willows provide shade to reduce water temperature, protect the stream banks and allow for stable undercut banks which provides fish habitat. This section of stream was devoid of willows, mainly due to cattle being grazed in the past. This is the first year Hemingway TU has attempted to restore this area. If the plantings are successful, next year the project will be expand. This restoration effort was done in partnership with the RR Ranch and coordinated by Carl Evenson Hemingway TU's Conservation Chair.

Access Cleanup and Signage

Hemingway Trout Unlimited has been unofficially maintaining trail access along the Big Wood River for the last two years. In 2010 Hemingway TU took the next step in moving forward with this project. The Chapter officially adopted the Trail Access maintenance from Blaine County Recreation District, which oversees the access. The District did not have manpower or monies to maintain all the accesses. Maintenance includes removal of trash and pruning of vegetation that covers the access paths.

A second part of the project is to help insure that all anglers on the river understand the IDFG regulations. The Hemingway Chapter designed and purchased regulation signs printed in Spanish and posted them, along with signs printed in English, provided by Idaho Fish and Game. The Big Wood River has three separate regulations.

Access signs are also posted which show access from the road and in areas where access from the river is confusing, egress signs are posted. The signs encourage people who use the access to respect private property, in order to maintain a good relationship between landowners and people who fish or use the access.

Hunter Van Bramer, a local Boy Scout, is has been coordinating and implementing the project as part of his Eagle Scout project. He is under the guidance of Hemingway Volunteers and Board Members Dave Spaulding and Bob Knoebel. Partial funding for the project was provided by the City of Ketchum and Blaine County.


ATTENCION PESCADORES
REGLAS ESPECIALES
REQUIERE LICENCIA DE PESCA
LIMITE DE 2 TRUCHAS:
NINGUNO ENTRE 12 Y 16"
BCRD

IDAHO WATER PROJECT SUCCESS IN THE BIG WOOD RIVER PROTECTING MINIMUM STREAM FLOW WATER RIGHTS

Standard minimum stream flow water rights in Idaho can be accurately called "preservation flows." Established pursuant to a statute first adopted in 1978 they are late to the water rights priority game, yet they can only be established in streams where the necessary instream flow water is currently available. With their late priority they generally only protect minimum stream flows from being violated by newly established water rights. But, pursuant to a quirk in Idaho water law that protects junior water rights from being injured by water right transfers, those minimum stream flow water rights also protect minimum flows from older water rights that people seek to transfer into or above minimum stream flow reaches--or so we thought!

In the fall of 2009 the Idaho Water Project discovered that the applicants for transfers of old irrigation water rights low on the Big Wood River upstream to the center of the Big Wood minimum stream flow reaches were arguing that the injury protection for junior water rights were not applicable to minimum stream flow water rights. This would allow those transfers, and all other transfers of old water rights to minimum stream flow reaches, to deplete the minimum stream flows in a way that had never before occurred. If this argument carried the day a serious blow would have be dealt to the preservation protection the minimum stream flow water rights provide to stream flow habitats in Idaho.

As a result, the Idaho Water Project intervened in six cases where this argument was being made in the Big Wood Valley. We were the only conservation group to join with the Idaho Water Resource Board and downstream irrigators to argue that the minimum stream flow water rights are protected against injury in the same fashion as all other water rights. Thankfully, the Idaho Department of Water Resources rejected the argument of the transfer applicants and rendered a decision that agreed with our position in the cases. At this time one of the cases has been resolved by subordinating the transferred water right to the minimum stream flow rights, four of the transfers have been withdrawn, and one final transfer remains. It appears that in the last case the applicant will be willing to accept minimum stream flow protection.

Minimum stream flow protections are safe--for now.

Peter Anderson
Counsel, Idaho Water Project

Ted Trueblood Chapter (continued)

Trout Camp

Ted Trueblood held its second annual youth trout camp. We had several changes, the biggest change was hiring a camp director to help set up and facilitate the five day camp. The second biggest change was the shift to three days/ two nights out of town and two days in Boise. This year we expect to have better attendance with an earlier marketing effort.

Trout in the Classroom

This year we have a great group of volunteers and mentors who continue to make our program succeed. This past year we increased our total tanks by 4 in classrooms for a total of 48. There are 85 tanks in classrooms throughout the Idaho State Council. Every year we have been having more teachers wanting the program and not enough supplies or volunteers to support them.

Teton Dam Study Broadened to Henry's Fork Special Study

A year ago, the Bureau of Reclamation was preparing to launch a two-year study to assess "replacing storage water" that was originally slated to be held behind Teton Dam, which failed when it was filling in 1976. In 2008, when the State of Idaho had a booming economy, the Idaho legislature unanimously approved paying $400,000 to Bureau of Reclamation to complete the study, with the agreement that Reclamation would provide an additional $400,000 in match.

Since the announcement of the study in 2008, Trout Unlimited has led the effort to broaden the study to include more affordable water management alternatives that are more environmentally benign and socially acceptable. We lobbied Reclamation to model the study after their own WaterSMART program, which funds partnerships to study an array of water supply alternatives to meet agricultural, municipal, and environmental needs in light of climate and demographic change.

With oversight by the Bureau of Reclamation, the Teton storage study was broadened identify and assess water supply alternatives in the entire Henry's Fork watershed. The study, now called the Henry's Fork Special Study, received $400,000 in WaterSMART funds. According to the study's framework document:

> *The objectives of this Special Study are to assist future planning efforts and to provide specialized information that contributes to future decision-making processes at the state and local levels. This Special Study will identify opportunities for:*
> *the development of water supply;*
> *improvement of water management; and*
> *sustaining environmental quality.*

The meetings are to cover not only storage options, but an array of nonstructural alternatives to meet water supply alternatives as well. In addition, the study is taking place in the public venue of the acclaimed Henry's Fork Watershed Council to encourage transparency and open participation.

Six months into the study, groups like TU are still awaiting a well-rounded list of non-structural alternatives. To date, there are 26 storage alternatives on the table, including rebuilding the original Teton Dam, but also alternatives such as raising Island Park, Grassy Lake and Ashton Reservoirs, and new storage alternatives that would inundate critical Yellowstone cutthroat trout and wildlife habitat in Bitch Creek, Badger Creek, Conant Creek, and other places like Teton Creek Canyon, which has majestic views along the drive up to Grand Targhee.

Just as it is appropriate to float every possible storage alternative, it is only appropriate that the group discuss ***all*** of the possible non-storage alternatives and begin to focus on the best alternatives as discussions evolve. TU is working with the irrigation community and consultants to recommend an array of conservation and water management tools that would help meet eastern Idaho's water needs while leaving our most prized fisheries in tact. TU is hopeful that these alternatives will be presented to the study participants in the coming months before Reclamation chooses approximately ten for further study.

The study, slated to be complete by the end of 2012, will provide water supply information on the top ten alternatives, but will not recommend which alternative's) the State and Reclamation should pursue. Not only has TU's participation been imperative to broaden the study beyond rebuilding Teton Dam, it is just as important for us to help guide the study to wiser water supply alternatives and ensure that the agencies use the collected information and best judgment as they choose which alternatives to implement.

For more information, please visit www.tu.org/tetoncanyon or the Reclamation's website dedicated to the study http://www.usbr.gov/pn/programs/studies/idaho/henrysfork/index.html.

NEWS RELEASE

Embargoed until February 3, 2011

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Poll shows southeast Idahoans prefer less costly alternatives to rebuilding Teton Dam

Survey also shows broad support for river conservation

IDAHO FALLS – A new poll commissioned by the nation's largest river conservation group shows that residents of southeast Idaho prefer cheaper and less environmentally damaging alternatives to rebuilding Teton Dam by a better than 2-to-1 margin.

The poll found residents of southeast Idaho prefer making improvements in water efficiency to rebuilding Teton Dam by a margin of 63% to 26%. The poll found a similar margin when voters were asked to choose between expanding existing dams and reservoirs or rebuilding Teton Dam.

Even when they were given no alternatives to rebuilding Teton Dam, only 45% of southeast Idaho voters – albeit a slight plurality – favored rebuilding the controversial structure.

The original 305-foot high Teton Dam failed catastrophically in 1976, killing 11 people, causing $2 billion in flood-related damages, and shaking the public's faith in the Bureau of Reclamation, which built the dam. The Bureau of Reclamation and State of Idaho are in the midst of a two-year study to evaluate options for replacing the storage water that was lost when the dam failed.

The poll, conducted in December by Moore Information, asked 300 residents of southeast Idaho for their opinions on a variety of water-related issues. It has a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percent. The poll was funded by American Rivers.

The results were not surprising to pollster Bob Moore of Moore Information, whose list of Idaho clients includes Governor Butch Otter, Senator Jim Risch, Congressman Mike Simpson, and the J.R. Simplot Company.

"In this economic climate, people are going to make choices based on cost first and foremost, and building new dams is extraordinarily expensive," Moore said.
Governor Butch Otter and the Idaho Legislature are faced with closing a $340 million budget gap this year. The cost to rebuild Teton Dam is estimated at $500 million to $1 billion.

"Cost aside, the poll also found broad and deep support among southeast Idahoans for protecting the region's rivers for their natural and recreational values," Moore added.

An overwhelming 88% of the people polled agreed that Idaho should either protect its rivers at all cost or strike a balance between protecting rivers for their natural values and harnessing them to sustain economic growth. Only 7% of respondents said rivers should be harnessed for water and power even if it comes at the expense of the environment.

For Scott Bosse, Northern Rockies Director at American Rivers, the poll results were both eye-opening and heartening.

"Ever since Teton Dam failed, there has been an ongoing debate over whether it should be rebuilt," Bosse said. "We wanted to know how the silent majority of southeast Idahoans felt. Now we know. They want pragmatic, affordable alternatives that don't needlessly destroy our last, best free-flowing rivers."

That sentiment was echoed by Kim Trotter of Trout Unlimited, who grew up in eastern Idaho and whose organization has been a leader in the effort to come up with alternatives to rebuilding Teton Dam.

"Rebuilding Teton Dam is the most expensive, controversial option that is being evaluated in the Bureau of Reclamation study," Trotter said. "We believe there's a lot of low hanging fruit out there in the form of water conservation and aquifer recharge that would be much cheaper, less damaging to our rivers, and could be implemented much faster than rebuilding the dam."

On the subject of permanently protecting the Teton River Canyon from new dams, the poll found residents of southeast Idaho split down the middle, with 40% of respondents supporting the idea, 40% opposing it, and 20% undecided.

Mike Dawes, partner and guide at Worldcast Anglers in Victor, is not among the undecided's.

"I've been fortunate to have floated the Teton Canyon more than a hundred times," he said. "Not only is it one of the most spectacular canyons in eastern Idaho, but it's also one of the last places in the West where you can catch native cutthroat trout all day long and have the river pretty much to yourself. Anyone who thinks we should spend a billion dollars to dam that canyon obviously hasn't been there."

Idaho TU CarpFest 2011

The Idaho Trout Unlimited CarpFest will take place on Saturday, June 4, at Gifford Springs, about 20 miles downstream from American Falls on the north side of the Snake River.

The event will last one day this year, and teams will compete for a number of prizes, including the grand prize of a guided float trip down the South Fork of the Snake River. Registration is $150 per two-angler team before May 25, and $180 a team after that. Proceeds will go to various TU projects in Idaho.

The event is a fly-fishing-only tournament. The winners will be determined by the total weight of a stringer of carp at the end of the day. Fishing will start at 10 a.m. Saturday. Official rules will be announced in the coming days at www.carpfest.blogspot.com.

As is custom, anglers are welcome to show up on the Friday before the event to get some practice casting in. There will be in informal potluck barbecue on Friday evening, June 3, and there will be a "banquet" Saturday evening after the event. Cold beverages will be provided, as will hamburgers and hot dogs.

In the meantime, if you have any questions, please call Chris Hunt at (208) 552-0891, or e-mail him at chunt@tu.org.

Idaho TU Calendar of Events:

Idaho TU Carp Fest 2011 Gifford Springs, ID -- June 4, 2011. Gifford Springs on the Snake River, Idaho. For more information, contact Chris Hunt at (208) 552-0891, or e-mail him at chunt@tu.org.

Oneida Narrows Water Right Hearing August 29 - September 2, 2011: Contested case hearing regarding Trout Unlimited's protest of the water right application for the Twin Lakes Canal Co. dam on the Bear River. The dam would be located in the Oneida Narrows Canyon above Preston. Any TU member wishing to testify in opposition to the dam should contact our counsel, Peter Anderson, at (208) 345-9800 prior to August 1, 2011.

2011 TU Annual Meeting Plan to join us September 14-18, 2011 in Bend, Oregon. Go to http://www.tu.org/events/am2011 for more information or contact Nancy Bradley at nbradley@tu.org.. Early Bird Discount on registration before July 1, 2011.

Idaho TU State Council Meeting Saturday, October 29th in McCall, ID. Check out ITU's web site at http://www.idahotrout.org/ for updates, as well as for other ITU news and info.

R. Chad Chorney Photo

R. Chad Chorney Photo

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YES! I want to help protect Idaho's trout and the waters they swim in. Please begin or renew my one-year membership with Trout Unlimited. I understand my dues payment entitles me to all regular membership benefits, including a TU decal, personal membership card, and quarterly issues of TROUT magazine. If I do not indicate a specific chapter, the national TU office will choose the nearest one to me according to my zip code.

Name _____

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TU does not make e-mail addresses available to outside parties, for any reason, ever. Please help us conserve resources by providing your e-mail address.

SEND APPLICATION AND PAYMENT TO:

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WOOLLY BUGGER, WV 25438

Visit us online at www.tu.org/intro

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