



East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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www.eastyellowstonetu.org

April 10th, 2018 Meeting Minutes

Location & Time: The Irma Hotel, Governor's Room, Cody, WY; 6:30p.m.

In Attendance

Dave Crowther, Lorna Anderson, Bob Capron, Elaine & Bill Tabacinski, Dave & Cathy Sweet, George Simonton, Kathy Crofts, Tom Reed, Ross Gorman, Birney Holberg, Tom Anderson, Bob & Sherry Vosseller, Amanda Wilson, Jason Burckhardt, Lori Bevenger, Larry & Maxine Thomas, Laura & Michael Laughlin, Dave Bensink, Bruce Fauskee, Jim & Diane Blakeslee, Alicia Viskoe, Joe Barski, Earl Robinson, Dan & Pia Brauser, Donna & Randy Moore, Robert Crooks, Mark Vondersaar

Program – Jason Burckhardt, Wyoming Game & Fish Department Fisheries Biologist, spoke about Invasive Walleye in the Buffalo Bill Reservoir and North Fork of the Shoshone River. The following is an attempt to summarize Jason's presentation:

- Jason began by acknowledging numerous collaborators that included graduate students and faculty from Montana State University
- Food Web Status – Who's Eating Whom?
 - Graduate students studied gut contents of fish and their primary finding was that Buffalo Bill Reservoir is not optimal habitat for Lake Trout or Walleye
 - Lake Trout, Rainbows and Cutthroat tend to segregate to different lake strata while Walleye seem to coexist within the same strata as Rainbows and Cutts
 - Different than what is seen in Yellowstone Lake
 - Around 6 months of the year there is less segregation and more mixing within strata, leading to changes in diet
 - Walleye are eating trout throughout the year
 - Growth curves of Lake Trout and Walleye affected
- 2016 Fish Tagging
 - 505 Walleye tagged
 - Estimated adult Walleye population in Buffalo Bill Reservoir → @ 1500
 - Annual angler exploitation of Walleye estimated at 492
 - These data served as inputs to developing Suppression Models
- Current Walleye Suppression Feasibility Study
 - Based on data collected so far models developed to predict Walleye age structure, number of eggs per female, egg and fry survival rates, life cycles, and total Walleye
 - This modeling → possible suppression strategies
 - Electrofishing
 - Gill netting
 - Angler harvest
 - The data suggest that if no suppression is implemented the Walleye population would grow during the next 20 years to over 100,000 females

- Future
 - Suppression measures are likely to continue into foreseeable future
 - Data indicates that it is uncertain whether angling alone can control the population even though modeling suggests that it could
 - Exploitation rates may be artificially elevated due to tagging and angler incentives
 - More studies involving radio-telemetry, population studies, identification of spawning sites, and angler incentives are all being considered
- Life cycle and fishery information
 - Fish living in the North Fork during the summer go to the Buffalo Bill Reservoir in the winter
 - Spawning takes place in the North Fork in the spring with juveniles going to the Reservoir to mature
 - The North Fork drainage is fairly steep with not a lot of dissolved solids; is a moderately productive fish habitat, and having the Reservoir access is a benefit
 - Rainbow, Brook, and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout stocking in the North Fork began as early as 1905, and was discontinued in 1989 when stocking was determined to be unnecessary to meet management objectives
 - The North Fork of the Shoshone is classified as a blue ribbon fishery based on trout biomass
 - Buffalo Bill Reservoir was constructed in 1910 and stocking occurred until 1995
 - Has been managed as a “wild fishery” since 1995
 - Walleye presence in the Reservoir was documented in 2008
 - Based on otolith analysis Walleye introduction into the Reservoir is estimated at 2002-2003
 - Data suggests that the founder Walleye came from Deaver and that there have been multiple stocking events, likely continuing today
 - When their presence was discovered emergency regulations were enacted
 - Walleye catch/keep limits were removed
 - Walleye classified as non-game fish with a must kill policy (no catch and release)
 - In 2014 electro-fishing removal of a primary spawning population occurred and has continued annually since
 - In 2017 gillnetting was performed in addition to electro-fishing
 - Males come into spawning areas and stay, but not the females, therefore electro-fishing alone ineffective for controlling female numbers - this is why gillnetting was added as a suppression strategy
 - ***Those who would like to volunteer in these suppression activities should contact Jason.***

Call to Order: the meeting was called to order followed by introductions.

Approval of Minutes of March, 2018 Meeting: a motion was made, seconded, and voted on; motion carried.

Presentation of Treasurers Report:

- It was stated that since the EYTU Vice President reviews the monthly bank statements the Treasurer’s Report needs only to be presented, not accepted or approved
- Report
 - Expenses: \$353, included advertising and postage

- Income: \$1000, included raffle proceeds and a contribution
- Balance: approximately \$110,000 with \$33,280 committed to projects

Committee Updates

Conservation

- Beartooth Ranch (Tom Reed, George Simonton)
 - There is at least one county commissioner that wants the property to be used for grazing
 - The buildings are being torn down
 - The WY State Trust has informed the commissioners that use is limited
 - Sale of the property or deeding it to the county is off the table for now
- Cutthroat Collaborative (Dave Sweet)
 - This is a big effort by WY Game & Fish and good work is being done soliciting input and identifying watersheds that are candidates for further action
 - See the Game & Fish web site for more information
 - *Click on Get Involved, click on Community Outreach, click on Cutthroat Trout, then you'll see info about the Collaborative*
- Trout Creek Fish Screen
 - To be installed around May 1st – depends on Trout Creek Ranch personnel
 - Rotating drum screen
 - If members want to see it installed, let Dave Sweet know
- Sedimentation Tour, Willwood Dam Working Group #3 (Dave Sweet)
 - Tour scheduled for June 5th
 - Will be attended by agency, agriculture, legislative, and TU representatives
 - Looking at sediment sources
 - If you want to attend, let Dave Sweet know
- Soldier Creek fence installation
 - July 16-18
 - See Dave Sweet for more information (also, see previous meeting minutes)
- Recent Game & Fish Open House
 - Was a success
 - 13 lifetime licenses were awarded to kids (originally was going to be 4 but 9 additional licenses were purchased)
- North Fork Fish Screen (Bob Capron)
 - Work will be performed on the screen on Tuesday, April 17th

Website and Facebook Page – Lorna Anderson – assistance, eg with Facebook posts, is appreciated. Be sure to check out the EYTU web site (www.eastyellowstonetu.org) calendar tab for upcoming events.

Wyoming Council – Dave Sweet

- Meeting is scheduled for May 4th-6th in Laramie
- If you want to attend, see Dave

Unfinished Business: nothing to report on

New Business:

- Summer EYTU Picnic (Amanda Wilson)
 - looking at possibility of
 - Having picnic at Trout Creek Ranch
 - Or Trout Creek Day Use area of Buffalo Bill State Park
 - Later in summer and on a weekend
 - Also need to decide
 - If members bring own food or we have food prepared

- Time frame of picnic (date and time of day)
- Will discuss further during May Monthly Meeting

Other Discussion

- Kids Fishing Day Update (Bill Tabacinski)
 - The EYTU Kids Fishing Day committee met with the Optimist Club and the US Forest Service representatives – EYTU suggestions were approved; they included
 - Title changed from Fishing Derby to Fishing Day
 - There will be a catch and release option but kids will still get credit for fish caught
 - There will be angler mentors available
 - There will be knot tying demos
 - There will be an EYTU Info booth
 - There will be fly rod casting and spinning rod casting demos
 - The event is scheduled for Saturday, June 2nd, 8:30am, at Beck Lake
- There will be a Yellowstone Park Fisheries Update on May 3rd at The Cody Hotel
- The TU Western Regional Rendezvous is scheduled for April 27th-28th in Keystone, Colorado; the WY Council will cover registration fees
- The Outdoor Expo, run by WY Game & Fish, will be in Casper May 17th-19th
 - Volunteers will be entered in a raffle for a mule deer hunt
- 2018 Fish Rescue Update
 - George Simonton and Birney Holberg will coordinate activities with irrigation districts and landowners
 - Dave Sweet will manage the equipment
 - Amanda Wilson and Tom Reed will coordinate volunteers
 - Tom Anderson and Lorna Anderson will manage food requirements
 - Bob Capron will continue to mentor Coordinators as necessary
- Illegal Fish Stocking Signage Update (Robert Crooks)
 - EYTU partnered with Cody Anglers and Game & Fish
 - Illegal fish stocking can result in lifetime loss of fishing privileges in WY and 46 other states, in addition to other penalties
 - Pat Childers pushed this penalty change in the legislature
 - Most people are not aware of the potential penalties and fines, and this led to the idea for conspicuous signage
 - A handout was distributed showing signage layout
 - 37 signs (2' x 3', \$60/sign, excluding installation) will be placed at major waters in the Big Horn Basin
 - Advertisements will also be placed in newspapers
- Members were encouraged to think about potential speakers for next year's meetings.

Meeting was adjourned – motion for adjournment made, seconded, and voted on; motion carried.

Next Meeting:

- Tuesday, May 8th
- Speaker: Brandon Lewis – From Soldiers to Rangers: The Unique Assignment in Yellowstone National Park

Chapter Meeting Guest Presenters, Past, Present, and Future:

- September 2017: Dave Sweet, update on Yellowstone Lake Trout Removal Project
- October 2017: Liz Purdy, Greater Yellowstone Coalition; Protecting Yellowstone Gateways from mining
- November 2017: Jeremiah Vardiman, Bighorn Basin agricultural practices
- December 2017: none; Christmas Party and Silent Auction
- January 2018: Cory Toye of WY TU, will discuss design and construction planning associated with irrigation canal headgate fish screens
- February 2018: Kip Dean and Anne Marie Emery of Bighorn River Alliance, River restoration and preservation
- March 2018: Colton Curtis, Meeteetse HS graduate, will discuss his research on the Greybull River fishery – “Conservation of Native Trout Populations”
- April 2018: Jason Burckhardt, WY G&F, Walleye introduction and suppression at Buffalo Bill Reservoir
- May 2018: Brandon Lewis – From Soldiers to Rangers: The Unique Assignment in Yellowstone National Park
- September 2018 – November 2018: To Be Determined
- December 2018: Annual Christmas Party and Officer Election