



East Yellowstone Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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January 9th, 2018 Meeting Minutes

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

In Attendance

Dave Crowther, Lorna Anderson, Bob & Judy Capron, Elaine & Bill Tabacinski, Mark Vondersaar, Dave & Cathy Sweet, Jim & Diane Blakeslee, Laura, Madison, Joshua, and Jason Burckhardt, George Simonton, Larry & Maxine Thomas, Kathy Crofts, Jane & Greg Bieri, Dave & Jan Bensink, Lori Bevenger, Dave McMillian, Tom Reed, Linda Trask, Calvin Hazlewood, Cory Toye, David Beckett, Laura Bell, Andy Whiteman, Joe Fiedor, Richard Pontius, Ross Gorman, Jeff Sandvik

Program – Cory Toye, Wyoming Trout Unlimited, discussed fish screen options and TU experience with them; the following is a summary:

- Cory is TU's Director of Wyoming Water and Habitat, is a Wyoming native, and has been with TU since 2007
- There are TU project managers across the state; in addition to his statewide duties, Cory also manages Wind River area projects
- TU's mission is to conserve, protect, and restore North American coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, and that means taking steps to protect fish entrained in irrigation canals
- Since 2007
 - More than 140 TU projects have been completed
 - More than \$15,000,000 invested
 - More than 1500 miles of shoreline have been restored or reconnected
- Achieving project goals requires partnerships between landowners, agencies, water districts, TU chapters, and other organizations
- Comparison of various fish screens that TU has worked with or has information on (photographs of each included in Powerpoint presentation):
 - Hydrolox screens; vertically traveling screens; have mechanical and electrical components; expensive
 - Vertical screen with water wheel and wipers; powered by water wheel; sliding action of screen cleans it; debris and fish go into a bypass and returned to river
 - Vertical screen with wipers; solar driven
 - Flat plate screen, e.g. on Trout Creek; requires bypass flows adequate to carry fish and debris back to river/creek; can impact water rights of landowners
 - Drum screen; e.g. on Trout Creek; drum turned by water wheel; moving parts can be a hazard if not properly guarded
 - Corrugated fish screen; newer option; similar to flat plate screen; no moving parts; requires adequate bypass flow
 - Louvered fish screen; TU has not tried these yet; velocity carries most fish and debris over louvers; may be more appropriate for states that are subject to federal screening criteria where listed fish species are involved

- Several things have to be considered when TU prioritizes fish screen projects, such as: potential partnerships, fishery type, cost-benefit analysis, expected lifespan of equipment, landowner and water user interests, and operational and maintenance requirements (inherent design issues, necessity of landowner participation)
- Periodic visitation and inspection of screens are important for project success
- Alternative fish screen technologies exist, e.g. underwater acoustics, strobe lights, electric fields, but have not yet been pursued by TU; fish screen design needs to be consistent with location, landowner interests, etc.
- There is a fish screen engineering firm in Fort Collins, CO that analyzes screen options and associated costs

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

Following introductions Calvin Hazlewood of WY TU commended EYTU for the work it does and its commitment to the TU mission. Calvin reminded members that they should feel free to contact him with questions.

Approval of Minutes of December, 2017 Meeting: a motion was made, seconded, and approved.

Acceptance of Treasurers Report: a motion was made, seconded, and approved to accept the report (\$7800 in income from auction and other contributions; expenses included \$200 for 2 fish nets for fish rescue, plus cost of Christmas party desserts and some printing; assets total \$93,000 and include current obligations of \$33,000).

Announcements

- January 10th, 6p.m., Park County Library Grizzly Room, public meeting with Game & Fish to discuss Walleye introduction in Buffalo Bill Reservoir
- Copies of a letter to EYTU members from Sam Hochhalter, Game & Fish Regional Fisheries Supervisor, were distributed. The letter discusses an upcoming series of public meetings to discuss the path forward in the Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout restoration effort and the desire to engage the public in developing that strategy. The Cody meeting will be January 29th, Park County Library Grizzly Room, 5:30-7:30p.m.

Committee Updates

Conservation – Dave Sweet

- As the chapter identifies projects we will select team leaders, and will therefore not rely on a single conservation spokesperson
- Soldier Creek project. Soldier Creek has a healthy Yellowstone Cutthroat population. It is a small creek that joins with Buckskin Ed. A portion of Soldier Creek runs through a meadow that is within a grazing allotment. The livestock exclusion fence around the meadow is in poor condition, so there has been damage to the riparian habitat by cattle and wildlife. Approximately 500 linear feet of steeljack fencing needs to be installed; installation probably will be in 2019.
- Buckskin Ed. Has Yellowstone Cutts but around 66% of the stream's fish population is Brook Trout. During the week of August 27th to the 31st Cutts will be removed for protection, then during the week of September 5th the stream will be treated with Rotenone to remove the Brook Trout. ***Volunteers will be needed*** for these activities. Also, some steeljack fencing will need to be installed for riparian area protection.
- The Soldier Creek and Buckskin Ed projects are joint efforts with the Little Bighorn TU chapter. In addition to funds generated from the sale of the Commissioner's Tag that was shared by EYTU and the Little Bighorn chapter, \$40,000 is available from WWNRT (Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust), as long as the \$40,000 is matched –

volunteer hours and materials are counted towards the matching (we have 3 years to utilize the WWNRT funds).

- Tim Wade has volunteered as team leader to work with the Cody Anglers on a project on Clarks Fork fishing improvements, including spawning assessments and habitat restoration

Fundraising – George Simonton, Birney Holberg, Dave Sweet, Tom Reed

- We were unsuccessful at being awarded a 2018 Commissioner's Tag
- \$5000 in contributions have been raised so far from the distribution of the Fundraising Letter and Brochure
- A fundraising letter was distributed to EYTU members so that members or their referrals can contribute
- We received an offer from an anonymous donor to match up to \$15,000 that we raise
- Tom Reed received a call from the local Audubon chapter that is disbanding. They might be willing to contribute a portion of their account balance to another organization.

Website and Facebook Page – Lorna Anderson

- Suggestions and assistance with editing the Facebook page are greatly appreciated.

Wyoming Council – Dave Sweet

- Tuesday, January 16th, there will be a conservation roundtable in Douglas. All NGO conservation groups are invited. It is hosted by TU and will discuss potential partnerships.
- The next Council meeting will be in Jackson on May 5th and 6th.
- The Game & Fish Expo will be in Casper on May 18th and 19th. It is geared for school-aged folks. TU will have a booth.

Unfinished Business: nothing to report on

New Business:

- Bill Tabacinski discussed the annual kids fishing day that is organized by the Optimist Club. The new person with the Optimist Club that is involved with organizing this event (Rich Gonzales) wants to work with TU on it. There is going to be an organizational meeting on February 6th. Bill made the following motion: EYTU will form a committee to define our involvement in the fishing day event and to represent our chapter in Optimist Club organizational meetings. The committee will identify/clarify/determine:
 - Our goals with respect to the fishing day event
 - What it is that we can/should contribute to the event
 - Best ways to promote and advertise the event
- Jason Burckhardt stated that he thinks this is a valuable event and that EYTU should continue to be involved
- Bill's motion was seconded and approved by member vote
- Committee volunteers: Laura Burkhardt, Jim and Diane Blakeslee, Dave Sweet, Tom Reed, George Simonton

Other Discussion

- 2018 River Clean Up. Flows are expected to increase earlier than usual this year which means that river volume is going to be higher than normal at the time Clean Up normally takes place. Will be discussed further at the next monthly meeting. **NOTE:** see Tom Reed's February 2nd emailed notice that the River Clean Up has been scheduled for February 17th.
- Willwood Dam update
 - There are 3 working groups

- Group #2 drafted an operating procedure in November with a follow up meeting in December. Dave Sweet prepared a draft letter representing EYTU's views and concerns about the draft procedure.
- Group #3 is looking at identifying upstream sources of sediments and ways to reduce them; so far they are focusing on identifying and quantifying sediment sources
- Medicine Lodge and Sunlight Creek Projects – Laura Burkhardt
 - Sunlight Creek. Creek bank stabilization design process started last spring. Will re-align stream channel and fill in old channel. Contract awarded and work is scheduled to begin in July. The new riparian area will probably need steeljack fencing to keep wildlife out. Also, Park County Weed and Pest will work on spurge and noxious weed mitigation. The EYTU Board will discuss what, if any, our financial commitments should be.
 - Medicine Lodge. Approximately 1 mile of stream has been improved. In September fish will be electroshocked and counted.
- 2018 Fish Rescue
 - The fish rescue project responsibilities will be subdivided with a team leader assigned to each group
 - Tom Reed will work on publicity
 - Dave Sweet will oversee equipment maintenance
 - We need volunteers to lead the following subgroups
 - Coordination with irrigation districts
 - Coordination of volunteers
 - Food management
 - Bob Capron will be available to advise the team leaders
 - We also need more people trained in CPR and electroshocker operation
- Illegal Fish Stocking Signage. Signs are currently at the Game & Fish shop and should be completed by spring. They will be posted in 5 locations.
- Cory Toye informed the chapter that the TU Bighorn Basin Project Manager position will be vacant as of February 15th. A job opening for a replacement will be posted. Cory will fill in as our area's project manager until the position is filled.
- Reminder: consider using Amazon Smile for your Amazon purchases.

Meeting was adjourned – motion for adjournment made, seconded, and approved

Next Meeting: Tuesday, February 13, 2018; Speaker: Kip Dean, Bighorn River Alliance, discussing river restoration and preservation

Chapter Meeting Guest Presenters, Past, Present, and Future (tentatively):

- 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: not yet determined
- June 2018: Annual EYTU Picnic