



# ANGLERS' EDGE

CONSERVING, PROTECTING AND ENHANCING COLORADO'S COLDWATER  
FISHERIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH



Bi-Monthly Magazine

West Denver Chapter of Trout Unlimited

April 2021, Vol. 27, No. 2

[www.westdenvertu.org](http://www.westdenvertu.org)

## Our Mission

To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

## Our Vision

By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

## Who We Are

Founded in Michigan in 1959, Trout Unlimited today is a national non-profit organization with 150,000 members dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Our staff and volunteers work from coast to coast to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain trout and salmon habitat on behalf of today's anglers and coming generations of sportsmen and women who value the connection between healthy, intact habitat and angling opportunity.

From forested rivers like the Farmington in Connecticut to the pristine waters of Alaska's Bristol Bay and all points in between, TU's work spans nearly a million miles of cold water all across North America. TU is the most effective coldwater fisheries conservation organization in the country. Donors invest in TU because we get things done on the ground, in statehouses and on Capitol Hill.

TU has a basic approach to its conservation strategy. First, we use the best available science to protect headwater spawning habitat for trout and salmon. We reconnect tributaries with their rivers to ensure resilience, and we restore waters where development has impacted trout and salmon and the opportunity to fish for them. Second, we sustain our work on the ground by:

- Using the best science to drive conservation priorities
- Promoting and maintaining a strong legal and regulatory framework to protect fish and fishing opportunity
- Connecting with passionate anglers who want to give back to the resource they value so much
- Increasing our ability to engage TU members in conservation by training, educating and building a strong community of angler advocates
- Connecting with generous donors and helping them give to the fish they cherish and the places they love
- Helping members connect and communicate with one another via our website, TROUT Magazine and the TU Blog

From the Penobscot in Maine to the South Fork of the Snake in Idaho and west to the Klamath in Oregon and California, TU and its staff and volunteers work on the ground in hundreds of places, protecting, reconnecting and restoring trout and salmon habitat for the benefit of today's anglers and generations to come. If you're interested in becoming a part of TU and giving back to the fish and the places you value, become a member and help us 'save the world, one trout at a time.'



## West Denver Trout Unlimited

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We want your contributions! Send them to the editor via email at <http://westdenvertu.org/resources/newsletter/> Scroll down to submission area.

#### The Cover:

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. “ Norman Maclean

Ashley Giles on the Arkansas River, near Salida, Co. April 3, 2021 Photo by Randy Hanner

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# The President's Message

A couple more months...

As many of our members receive vaccinations, we are beginning to plan a return to our normal in-person activities.

We expect to have an in-person Chapter meeting in June, the last before our traditional summer break— no meetings, just going fishing! All future meeting will adhere to all social distancing and mask protocols then in effect.



We are also working on the return of our Summer picnic in August.

Our Chapter continues working via Zoom. We long for more social interaction, but also expect that many of our team meetings will continue with Zoom after in-person meeting restrictions are lifted. It is just a quick and convenient way to get together.

Our mini-raffle fundraisers have been very well received. We are raising money to fund our ongoing costs, like our subscription to email management software and our storage unit rental expenses.

And the Fantasy Raffle is coming back! We are holding a condensed, on-line Fantasy Raffle from mid-April through early June. Stay tuned for details.

Thank you for supporting the Chapter by buying tickets, and watch our email blasts for more exciting events coming soon.

Stay safe,

# High Lakes Offer an Alternative to Crowded Fishing

## by Ron Belak

Mention “high lakes” to most Coloradans and they think of a beautiful photograph gracing a calendar at home or remember that artistically framed picture hanging in the doctor’s office. Bring up the subject to serious anglers, however, and they think of fat ice-out brookies or summer dry-fly fishing at one of Colorado’s many high-mountain lakes. For them, the secret is out—these lakes offer exceptional fly fishing for trout in uncrowded and unspoiled settings.

Colorado offers great stream and tailwater fishing, but only at high lakes can we find uncrowded conditions, and this is increasingly important during the COVID pandemic. Most of these lakes are miles removed from roads, thereby giving the angler a true wilderness experience. Anglers are also treated to breath-taking scenery, courtesy of alpine glaciers that carved the cirque basins and shelves where many of these lakes are located. Also, anglers can fish these waters worry-free during the heat of the summer because unlike the lower elevation rivers, the high lakes are insulated from rising water temperatures caused by heatwaves and drought. And there will be no doubt when a high-lake trout strikes. They are often aggressive, and many of them will be cutthroats that grew up from one-inch fry right where they are caught. Some rival tailwater trophies as cutthroats and brook trout can grow to 20 inches due to a longer lifespan in stillwater.

Most of Colorado’s 2,000 high lakes lie on public lands between 9,000 and 12,000 feet and are accessible by a few miles of Forest Service trail. Hikers enjoy the challenge of reaching the remote lakes in the rugged Holy Cross, Weminuche, Eagles Nest

and Mount Zirkel wilderness areas. Equestrians may prefer the more accessible and gentle terrain of the Flat Tops. Those launching float tubes, pontoons and canoes appreciate driving to within spitting distance of the many lakes and small reservoirs on the Grand Mesa. A host of lakes are also accessible by



Betty Lake, Indian Peaks Wilderness

short day hikes in the Indian Peaks, James Peak and Mount Evans wilderness areas.

Most fly fishers already possess much of the equipment necessary for fishing high lakes but will want to add to their arsenal. For those lakes accessible by auto or horse, a float tube is indispensable for reaching fish beyond casting distance from shore. High-country anglers prefer a four-piece, 5-weight rod for casting into the seemingly ever-present wind. They carry interchangeable spools loaded with floating line for dry flies and nymphs and a full-sinking line for streamers and wet flies. Adequate rain gear and layers of polypropylene, pile or wool are necessary for protection from the severe weather possible at higher elevations.

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# High Country Lakes, con't. from p. 5



High lake cutthroat

The high-country angler will find the entomology significantly different from lower elevation streams and rivers, but they need not purchase a whole new assortment of fly patterns. Midges provide the brunt of a trout's diet in high lakes, so anglers should carry midge pupae and larvae patterns in black, green, blood red and tan. Adult midges are imitated with Nos. 16 through 20 Orange Ashers, Griffith's Gnats, Black Gnats and parachutes patterns. Caddisflies are also important, so don't forget some Elk-hair Caddis for the adult and a No. 14 Gold-ribbed Hare's Ear for the pupa. Although mayflies are less important, anglers should be ready to imitate *Callibaetis* and gray drakes with No. 14 Adams and Mosquitoes. Pheasant Tails do a good job of imitating mayfly nymphs. One should never visit a high lake without black Woolly Buggers, orange soft hackles and white Rabbit Leeches as these flies are deadly when vigorously stripped on a full-sinking line, both at ice-out and during the summer when surface activity slows.

Just like streams, high lakes fish better at certain times of the day and season. Lakes below timberline fish best during early season when trout are cruising close to shore. In midsummer, these trout seek cooler and deeper waters farther from shore.

Mid-morning and evening are the best times to fish as they coincide with peak insect activity. Above timberline, however, fish generally become more active later in the day because it takes longer for the air temperature to rise and stimulate aquatic insects to hatch. Here, fish cruise along shore the entire open-water season since near-shore water temperatures rarely exceed the trout's comfort range.

Each lake has its own personality, resulting from differences in entomology, limnology and fishery management. Generally, several day trips or multi-day trips to a given lake are necessary to truly appreciate the daily fishing cycles. It is often the figuring out of the trout's feeding habits that leads to success and brings back anglers on a repeated basis.



Ron Belak is a long-time TU member and a high lake angler for over 40 years. His freelance writing and photography appear regularly in *Colorado Outdoors* magazine, and he is the author of "Fly Fishing the Backcountry." Ron is currently working on a second book entitled "The Fishing Guide to 800 High Lakes in Colorado," due for release in April 2021." Ron's books are available through his website at [www.ronbelak.com](http://www.ronbelak.com).



# Conquering Runoff

## 5 Tips for Success

*by Randy Hanner*

Runoff. Not a word any fly fisher wants to hear. Especially when we have just had some of the best dry fly fishing of the year. The *Baetis* have just finished hatching and are pretty much wiped out with the higher flows. The fish will once again feel the chill of winter with the fresh snowmelt. But there are still ways to find fish when runoff rears its head.

### **Fish Bigger and Flashier Flies**

This time of year, the rivers are high, muddy, and cold. This means the fish have a hard time seeing smaller flies and they won't move far to eat. Runoff isn't the time to fish 7x tippet and size 22 midges. Large flashy and large dark flies are often the way to go. Black Rubber Leg wooly buggers, caddis nymphs, larger rainbow warriors, squirmy wormys, mops, and Kreelex flies are all excellent options for tempting runoff trout. However, bigger doesn't

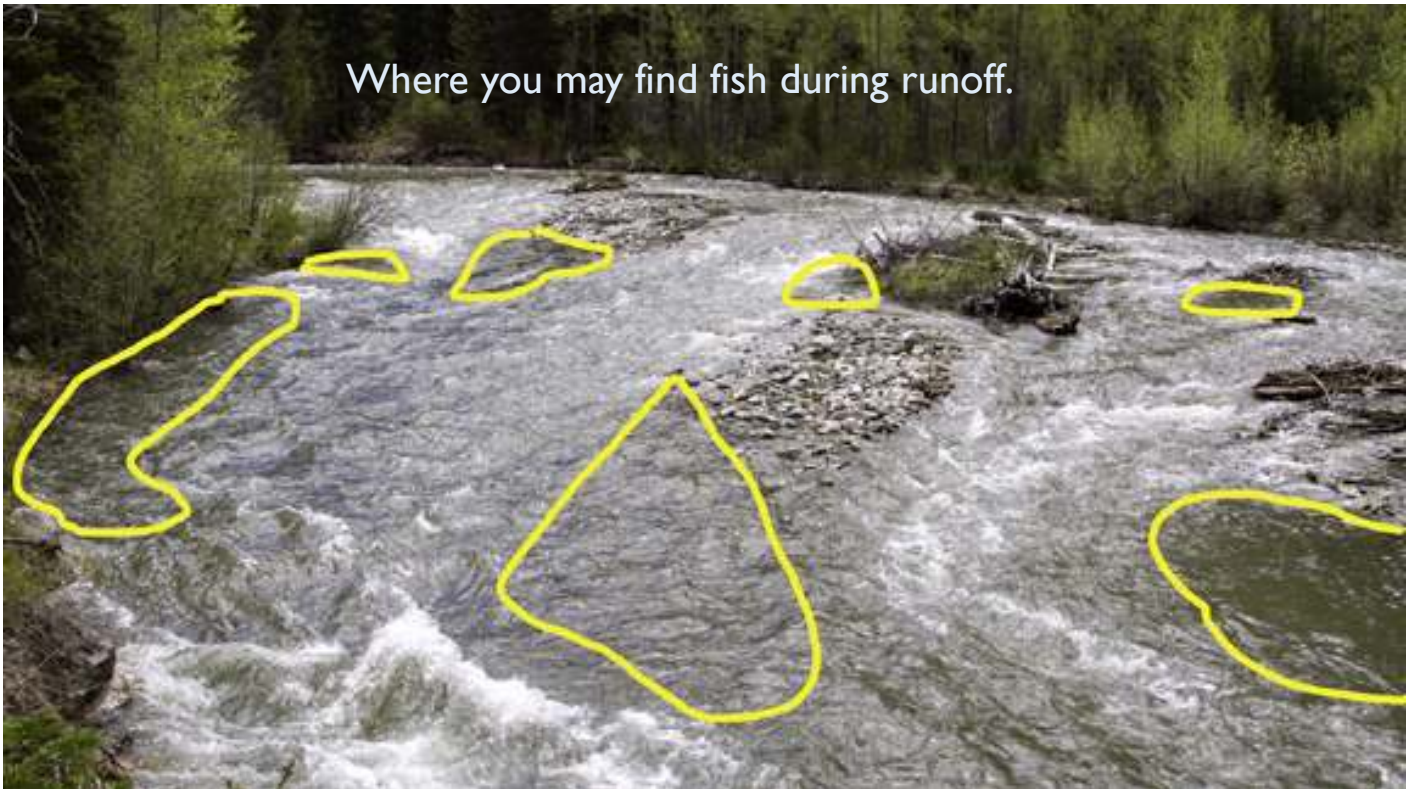
necessarily mean heavier. Often, fish hold near the banks and just because you're fishing near the bank doesn't mean it's deep. You don't need a ton of weight to get down when fishing near the bank, but sometimes it does help.

### **Concentrate on Fishing the Banks**

Due to the high flows and strong currents, the fish hug the banks during runoff. You shouldn't be fishing in the middle of the river where the strongest current is. The fish will look for areas where the current is moving the slowest. Typically, this is behind large boulders, in eddies, or even in current breaks caused by the bank or willows lining the banks. One of the best techniques for fishing runoff is finding pockets of dead water just off the bank and jigging your flies up and down in the pocket until a fish strikes.

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Where you may find fish during runoff.



# Conquering Runoff, from p. 7

## Move Slowly

Because of the temperature of the water due to the melting snow, the fish's metabolism slows back down to that of its wintertime state. This means that the fish aren't as active as they were just a few short weeks ago. Your flies need to be where the fish are so they have a chance to see them and eat them. Runoff isn't the time to try and cover miles and miles of river. By concentrating on the areas that a fish should be holding means you should slow down and spend time fishing in those areas. It's not uncommon to only fish 100 yards of stream in 8 hours. In many ways, fishing during runoff is easier than other times of the year because there are only a few places that the fish can be. Use your time wisely and concentrate on those areas. Sometimes you may need to give a spot 20-30 minutes before moving on.

## Use Heavier tippet

As I mentioned before, runoff isn't the time nor place to fish 7x tippet. Because the water is off color, you can get away with fishing 0x-4x without any problems. Using larger tippet will help you land fish faster, and you'll also lose far fewer flies from getting stuck on sticks and rocks on the bottom.

## Fish Lakes

If all else fails and you decide that fishing rivers during runoff isn't for you, or you don't want to spend your time on the water with the crowds of people fishing the tail waters, the trout fishing in lakes is just heating up. There are plenty of lakes around that support trout, as well as warm water species.

Many lakes in Colorado that offer fantastic fishing are easy to drive to and you don't need a boat to have a great day on the water.

There are plenty of fish to be caught and not many anglers around to spoil the fun. Use these tips and you'll be sure to conquer runoff this spring!



*Randy Hanner is a WDTU volunteer, former Fly Fishing Team USA member, Umpqua Signature Fly Designer, photographer and world traveler.*



# Bustin' Out at Rainbow Falls

By Mark Shulman

The 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Rainbow Falls rendezvous scheduled for March 13<sup>th</sup> this year didn't happen. The fourth largest recorded snowfall in Denver history since 1881 did. Hurrah for Colorado snowpack.

However, one week later, the following Saturday, more than forty West Denver TU anglers were rewarded with glorious blue skies, temperatures soaring near 70 and Rainbow Falls was on! So were the trout. Rainbow, Cutthroat, Brook and even Donaldson Steelhead!



Snow, shorts, trout in net!

Upon my arrival I was advised to fish a 5 weight and size down the usual winter tippet as Rainbows Falls produces chunky fish. Good advice. Fly selection here is not too complicated either. Dries, midges, San Juans all brought fish to net.

The box canyon home to Rainbow Falls is a pretty drive from Denver and surrounds, whether the approach is through Deckers or from the south by way of Woodland Park. And thanks to the hard work of owner Richard Johnson and snow plow overtime, the dirt road access to the nine lakes and Trout Creek

was an easy ride. After a long winter, it felt good to get a little mud on the tires!

Ed Calmus, chapter president skillfully coaxed a famous yellow or banana rainbow to his net.



A little history ...

Now known as Rainbow Falls Park, native Utes made camp and hunted this area dating from the late 1700's. Fur trappers in search of beaver enter the valley in the 1820's. In 1882 a fish hatchery was built and rainbow trout raised here were served in restaurants in Colorado Springs and Manitou Springs. Through numerous owners Rainbow Falls Park held on to its historical roots and in 2008 was purchased by current owners Richard and Shawana Johnson. Renamed Rainbow Falls Mountain Trout, the Johnson's have made numerous improvements and operate a 101 acres trout fishing gem. Rainbow Falls Mountain Trout is a private, members and quests only fishing club, with access from April 1 – November 30. For more information please visit [rainbowfallsmt.com](http://rainbowfallsmt.com)

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# Rainbow Falls, cont'd from p. 9

West Denver TU enjoys exclusive fishing at Rainbow Falls just prior to their “stocking day” opening for members thanks to Jon Weimer who approached the club a few years ago. Now an important chapter fund raiser, Rainbow Falls is a great way to celebrate the start of spring. Occasional blizzard aside.

Matt Rivera produces a quality event and aided by wife Denise does the planning and leg work to ensure that everyone in attendance has a fun day of fishing and comradery.



Matt and Denise with Rainbow Falls owner Richard Johnson

Thanks to grill masters David Dudden and Troy Hayes anglers feasted on plenty of chicken and steak.



David Dudden and Troy Hayes

And of course, what makes this day so special is the support of West Denver TU anglers, some who have participated in all or many of the Rainbow Falls get-togethers.



I like catching fish and there's plenty of fish to catch at Rainbow Falls Mountain Trout. But I like more the opportunity to share a day in the mountains with good people. There's also the chance a bald eagle will cast a shadow overhead. Or you'll look up from Trout Creek to see a mule deer doe and fawn watching quietly in the snow.



*Photos by Troy Hayes, Randy Hanner and Mark Shulman. Mark is editor of Anglers Edge Magazine.*



# #unwasteyourwater

## Chapter & Community Cleans up

*By Collin Metscher*

In February of this year, West Denver Trout Unlimited New Initiatives Team launched a new campaign called #UnwasteYourWater (that's a hashtag, not a pound sign!). We are asking our chapter members and the community to pick up trash in their area and build awareness around local watersheds by sharing their pictures on Instagram using the hashtag.

In March, we took this initiative a step further and invited the chapter to join us at Prospect Park along Clear Creek for a cleanup day. Nearly 30 people join us and collected ~15 bags of trash and assorted debris! Thank you to everyone who came out to support our local watershed!

While there was plenty of 'average' litter, we had a few surprising finds:

A werewolf mask..



Jim Rubingh with unusual trash

A satellite TV dish



The Cleanup Management Team



Overall, an impressive haul and a fun way to spend an afternoon!

We will be hosting another in-person cleanup very soon – we hope you can join us.

For those who shared their pictures using #UnwasteYourWater and those who attended our clean-up, we'll be giving away this epic prize from Cody's Fish, Custom Angling Art!



*Collin Metscher is the leader of WDTU's New Initiatives Team.*



# Stream Girls

*By Geoff Elliot*

STREAM Girls is a watershed education program created through a partnership between Girls Scouts of USA and Trout Unlimited with the goal of engaging elementary and middle school girls in STEM-based exploration. In addition to STREAM Girls getting its name from the focus on watersheds, STREAM also stands for **S**cience, **T**echnology, **R**ecreation, **E**ngineering, **A**rt, and **M**ath. The program is divided into eight activities highlighting each of these subjects. Girls learn about stream flow measurements, aquatic macroinvertebrate life, riparian habitats, and fly fishing throughout the program. Using Field Notebooks to guide their inquiry-based learning, Girl Scouts get to know their local watersheds, develop new outdoor skills, and increase their understanding of real world applications of STEM.

In 2019, Colorado Trout Unlimited (CTU) brought STREAM Girls to Colorado under the leadership of Barbara Luneau, Headwaters Committee Chair, and Bianca McGrath-Martinez, former AmeriCorps Vista Youth Programs Coordinator with CTU. In partnership with Girls Scouts of Colorado, CTU structured the program as a single-day event and hosted six STREAM Girls programs during the spring and fall of 2019. These events were spread across Colorado's Front Range in Longmont, Denver, and Colorado Springs, and in Montrose along the Uncompaghre River. This first season of events hosted nearly 100 girl scouts! The programs attracted entire Girl Scouts troops, as well as individual Girl Scouts interested in rivers and fishing. The success of this first year was supported by Anadarko, now Occidental.



**Completing macro-invertebrate surveys**

Continued on page 13

# Stream Girls, cont'd from p. 12

After a successful year of hosting STREAM Girls events in 2019, Colorado Trout Unlimited was excited to carry the momentum into 2020 with six scheduled programs. Unfortunately, 2020 plans were stifled by the COVID-19 global pandemic. With public health orders restricting group size and concerns surrounding shared gear utilized during in-person programming, CTU shifted STREAM Girls to a virtual platform. To facilitate this transition, CTU staff and volunteers created several videos and sourced additional existing educational resources to support the STREAM Girls activities.

Over the course of fall 2020, CTU hosted STREAM Girls programming through four virtual/self-guided events with the support of local Trout Unlimited chapters. The four STREAM Girls programs engaged 59 girl scouts from across Colorado. Beyond the Girl Scouts who received STREAM Girls patches, the virtual programming engaged entire families in getting outdoors to explore and learn about local watersheds. Although the virtual STREAM Girls events did not provide the same opportunity to connect with Girl Scouts and their families on the water, CTU was excited to receive positive feedback from participants. This included:

“This is a great program to introduce girls to fly-fishing and knowledge of local streams. It was a well-thought out, self-guided program that covered a great deal of information. We had a fun time doing all of the steps.”

“It is a wonderful break from our overwhelmingly electronic world! I thought it was a great way to introduce different aspects of stream science so that have it in their head as they are thinking about future endeavors.”

With the ongoing challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, CTU will be hosting additional virtual STREAM Girls events in Spring 2021. During the summer and fall, programs will transition back to in-person.



## Exploring local watersheds

As CTU looks to the future of STREAM Girls, staff and volunteers are exploring opportunities to adapt the program curriculum to engage new audiences through partnerships with community organizations serving underrepresented youth, like Lincoln Hills Cares, and expanding recruitment for all events to be inclusive of youth beyond Girl Scouts.

If you are interested in learning more about STREAM Girls, becoming a volunteer, or donating to support CTU's Headwaters Youth Program, please contact Geoff Elliot, Youth Education Coordinator, at [geoff.elliott@tu.org](mailto:geoff.elliott@tu.org).

*Geoff oversees youth education programs at Colorado TU, which include STREAM Girls, Trout in the Classroom, River Watch and the Conservation Camp.*

# Volunteer to Fly Fish for Science Yellowstone National Park

*By Paul Bunker*

“Volunteer!” Whatever you do kid, never, ever volunteer for anything!”

I remember those words of wisdom that a crusty ol’ tech sergeant gave me and a few other new Air Force recruits almost 50 years ago as we sat around at Friday afternoon beer call.

Fast forward thirty years later and there my wife and I stood in “volunteer heaven” along the banks of Soda Butte, surrounded by the majestic Bear-tooth and Absaroka Mountain Ranges in the north-east corner of Yellowstone National Park (YNP).



All we had to do was fly fish for science and catch fish to help the park’s fisheries office determine the health of the upper Lamar River drainage. If only that crusty ol’ tech sergeant could see what I did with his advice!

Now, once again, my wife and I are making plans to volunteer in 2021, and we hope you will be able to

join us. But first, a little more about the YNP Volunteer Fly Fishing Program.

## **The Program Starts**

In 2002, most of the park’s fisheries effort was focused primarily on removing illegally-introduced, non-native lake trout from Yellowstone Lake. First reported by an angler’s catch in 1994, the lake trout were devastating the native population of Yellowstone cutthroats. Due to the limited resources available (financial, time, and personnel) to accomplish the many research projects in other parts of the park, the fisheries office created the Yellowstone National Park Volunteer Fly Fishing Program for angling assistance.

Essentially, “citizen scientists” from around the country were recruited to come to the park and fly fish for science. Projects were selected by the park’s fisheries office and ranged from fishing remote headwaters to collect fin/scale samples to catching native Yellowstone cutthroats, non-native rainbows and hybrids in the Lamar River drainage to help biologists determine movement and spawning sites

## **Program Overview**

Volunteers came to the park at their own expense and typically spent up to a week “working” with the program. The program provided volunteers with entrance fees to the park and housing – two beds in the Utah Research Dorm or a nearby campsite big enough to hold a 20ft RV/5<sup>th</sup> wheel or tents. Volunteers brought their own bedding (sleeping bags) and necessary gear and purchased their own park fishing permit.



# Volunteer in Yellowstone, cont'd from p. 13



Volunteers were also responsible for providing their own meals, either self-prepared or purchased at nearby Lake Hotel/Fishing Bridge cafeterias.

Before hitting the waters, volunteers met with the program coordinator who outlined the projects the park fisheries office had selected for them to accomplish. A typical day started around 7AM, depending on the "worksite" location and the amount of anticipated driving time. Once at the site, the volunteers geared up and hit the waters. The coordinator recorded catch data, took fin/scale samples, and monitored all project activity. Once complete, everyone headed back home, and got ready for the next day's "work" project.

## Projects

After our first project in 2006 my wife and I were hooked on the program!

Our task for that day was to hike 4-5 miles up Trout Creek, a small tributary on the Yellowstone in Hayden Valley, in an area where no fishing is allowed because of wildlife activity. The thought occurred to all of us that we were walking on ground visited only by bison and bears and perhaps a few of the early native resi-

dents of the park.



Once to the headwaters, we caught resident fish and took fin/scale samples to determine genetics of the population. To be truthful, the fishing was fairly unspectacular that day, catching 3 to 5 inch fingerlings with a small, red slash on the lower jaw.



But the journey was truly unforgettable. Walking the ridges and going down into the draws carved out by the waters, we saw numerous skeletal remains and evidence of just how wild Yellowstone is. Bison were coming in and out of the places where we were fishing, and we thought at any moment we would see Kevin Costner rounding the bend. Continued on page 16

# Volunteer in Yellowstone, cont'd from p. 15

As my older brother John often says – “Unbelievable!” One of favorite projects occurred in 2015/16, when we assisted Kurt Heim, a Montana State University doctoral student in catching native YCT, non-native rainbows and hybrids in the Lamar River drainage. In fact, a group of volunteers from West Denver also came to the park and made an awesome video documenting their efforts. See [Saving Yellowstone Cut-throats - West Denver Trout Unlimited](#) ).

The volunteers had the tough job, catching the fish. After landing the fish, we transported them in yellow

eventual discovery of spawning beds, allowing park biologists to possibly slow and stop the hybridization between YCT and rainbows.



buckets filled with water back to Kurt's staging area, where he took measurements and other vital data before performing surgery on the riverbank. The fish were first bathed in a clove oil solution to anesthetize them. Kurt then made a small incision on the underbelly and inserted a small radio transmitter with a 4 to 6" lead hanging out from the incision. Once the fish were stitched back up, they were placed in a bucket of cold water, revived, and then placed back into the river.

Antennas and transceivers placed along the riverbanks picked their signals as the fish swam by. The project provided an accurate mapping of fish movement with



## What's with the yellow bucket?

In addition to their official task of fly fishing for science, the volunteers also served as ambassadors of the park's fisheries programs to the general public. The simple question often asked by a curious visitor or fellow angler on the water - “what's with the yellow bucket?” - gave the volunteer a chance to advocate and educate about what their “work” was all about. This interaction not only gave them the chance to demonstrate their passion for restoring native fish populations throughout the park, but also communicates the reasoning behind and the importance of fishing regulations designed to help the survival of native fish.





# Volunteer in Yellowstone, cont'd from p. 16

## Where the program stands now

In 2017 and 2018, the program was suspended primarily due to the lack of the volunteer housing mentioned earlier. Because of the escalating maintenance costs of the Utah Research Dorm, the facility was closed. Without those two beds, many of the volunteers could not make the trip because they just couldn't transport the necessary camping equipment to the park.

Late in 2018, an effort was made by past volunteers to restart the program in the summer of 2019. Yellowstone Forever (YF), the official nonprofit partner of the park and main source of program funding, created a goal for us to raise \$20,000 to support 2 years of the program's operating costs. That goal was reached with generous individual donations and a \$5,000 grant secured from the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI). Announcements through the Trout Unlimited Online Community generated enough interest to fill the program with enough volunteers who would provide their own camping/lodging. However, in the interim, the program lost access to the housing used for the program coordinator, as well as the transportation used to transport volunteers to and from projects. And then came the government shutdown, and the park's fisheries office had to make plans for the 2019 season with the resources they had, and not what they hoped to have. Then COVID hit which halted a restart in 2020, and once again in 2021. So now our efforts are focused on making solid plans for a 2022 restart, come hell, high water, or ...

## But wait, you can still fly fish for science!

We are encouraging folks to come to the park in 2021 and conduct a do-it-yourself (DIY) program – lodge-

on-your (LOY) own, eat-on-your (EOY) own, drive-on-your (DOY), fish-on-your (FOY). You can bring a friend or two or even a group, just practice safe COVID protocols. The fisheries office has established several target areas where they need angler creel surveys to follow-up on native fish restoration projects completed in the past. In addition, another MSU graduate student will be starting his master's thesis validating the results of the 2015/16 telemetry work and establishing benchmarks for continued assessment of the health of the Lamar River watershed.

If you are interested in participating and would like



more information, please contact Paul Bunker via email - [pnsbunker@comcast.net](mailto:pnsbunker@comcast.net).

*Paul Bunker lives in Loveland, Colorado and is a member of the TU chapter Rocky Mountain Flycasters. He and his wife Suzanne have volunteered in Yellowstone National Park since 2006.*



# Riverside Reader

## *On Trails: An Exploration by Robert Moor*

Book Review by Alexa Metrick

### Non-Fiction

Robert Moor's *On Trails: An Exploration* is a polymath's consideration of a variety of iterations of what we mean by the word "trail." We learn about the first animal movement, 565 million years ago, and then explore the wild phenomenon of ant pheromone trails and tent caterpillar trails as examples of collective or system intelligence.

Moor then moves on to large animal migrations, exploring the three ways humans have learned about them: watching, herding, and hunting. He dives deeply into the relationship our continent's first inhabitants had with the landscape, explaining Cherokee trails and their correlations with the Cherokee language and stories.

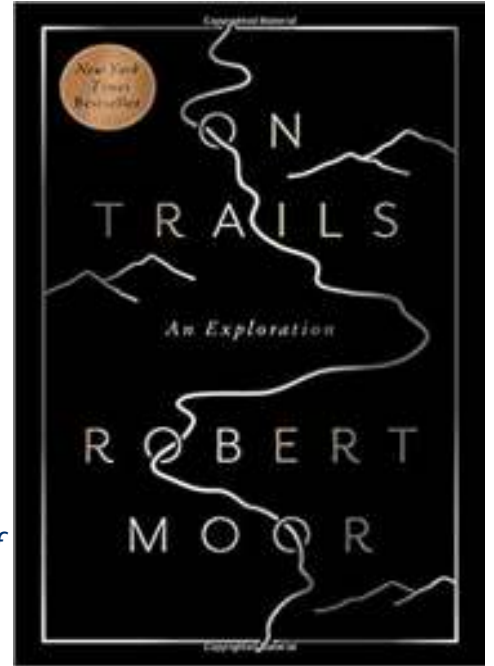
The book was prompted by Moor's hike of the Appalachian Trail in 2009, to which he returns to explore the Trails' origins. We learn about the idea of the International Appalachian Trail, which aims to follow the Appalachian geology from Georgia to Maine and into Canada, picking back up on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean and continuing through Western Europe.

By this time, the idea of what a trail *actually is* has morphed into more of a philosophy than a physical entity, and Moor emphasizes that with a character study of a man named Nimblewill Nomad. After completing his own hike of the Appalachian Trail, this man gave himself a new name, sold all his belongings, left his family, and began walking—and he hasn't stopped yet. This raises questions for the reader about the contrasts between freedom and responsibility. In explaining his lack of possessions and the difficulties their absence presents, Nimblewill says, "Freedom, in other words, has its own constraints."

Moor ends on a philosophical note, stating that "We are born to wander through a chaos field. And yet we do not become hopelessly lost, because each walker who comes before us leaves behind a trace for us to follow... The history of life on this planet can be seen as a single path made in the walking of it."

Moor's topic seems straightforward—types of trails—but that clearly-stated topic belies the complexity of the angles he uses to approach it. *On Trails* is a very entertaining read for those who have a wide appreciation of and curiosity about the world we live in.

Alexa Metrick, outdoor enthusiast and avid reader, is a former editor of *Anglers' Edge Magazine*.



*Read any good books lately? Fly fishing, nature, environment all good! Please share your recommendations to Mark Shulman at Anglers Edge.*



# Dutch Oven Campfire Cooking

*by John Semich*

When camping, your meals should be one of the highlights of your experience versus a package of freeze-dried food or canned something. The following are some ideas for nutritious, tasty and easy food preparation. Try variations of these methods vs. a hot dog on a sharpened stick.

The very versatile cast iron Dutch Oven using charcoal briquettes or using foil wrapped meals placed on campfire coals have been utilized for years.

Whenever making a campfire, use an existing fire ring, a bottom metal pan to protect the ground, or other considerations to prevent environmental damage. Please also make sure that any fires are well extinguished before leaving the area. Any of these methods can be adjusted for personal tastes, ambient temperature and wind conditions.

For meals prepared in advance or in very cold temperatures, place the portions (chile, stew, etc.) in a capable **vacuum seal bag** at home, then simply place the frozen meals in boiling water to reheat. Eat out of the bag for no fuss cleanup. These tips and recipes are general in nature.

**Foil Cooking** is one of the most basic methods beyond making s'mores at the campsite. Wrap your dinner selection in several layers of heavy aluminum foil, or one layer around the food, one layer of wet newspaper to help steam the food, then another layer of foil surrounding it. Leave some space in the package for food expansion and liquid. Secure the pouch tightly on the seams to prevent leakage.

Protein such as ground beef, ground turkey, chicken, ham chunks, sausage, fish, hot dogs, etc. can be the base for your creativity. Using diced frozen or fresh vegetables, pineapple chunks, cubed or hashed potatoes, seasoned to taste with salt, pepper, garlic,

butter, along with about 4 tablespoons of bouillon, soup, BBQ, Worcester, other sauces, or water helps prevent burning and steams the food. Place the foil meal on the hot campfire coals, then gently rotate until done in about 30 minutes. (fresh baked trout with lemon wedges & herbs anyone?)

Hashed potatoes, sausage, beaten eggs, and spices wrapped in foil and cooked for about 15 minutes makes a hearty breakfast. Turn your creativity loose. Never add cheese to your meal until it is removed from the coals. The oil can separate from the cheese and make a mess of your meal.

**Dutch Oven** cooking is versatile in that it can be used to both cook dinner as well as bake a dessert. The care and cleaning of seasoned cast iron cookware should be known prior to using. Charcoal briquettes provide a somewhat measured temperature for your gourmet adventure. The various sized cookware can be utilized for roasting, baking, frying, and stewing. Always brown the meat first before adding other ingredients then drain any leftover drippings. One rule of thumb is each briquette provides about 25-30 plus degrees of heat.

**Roasting:** about equal amounts of coals on the top and bottom (approx. 1:1). Continued on page 20



# Campfire Cooking, cont'd from p. 19

**Baking:** More heat on the top than bottom (3:1).

**Frying or Boiling:** (bottom)

**Stewing or Simmering:** (most coals on the bottom 4:1)

These are just a few of limitless recipes available for your Dutch Oven culinary experience. Mark Shulman, editor of Anglers Edge, fondly remembers Dutch Oven peach cobbler in his scouting past. That recipe and cherry cobbler are easily interchanged. Many ingredients and portions can be prepared at home and transported in plastic baggies or containers to save time for relaxation and somewhat true fish stories with your favorite libations.

## Seafood Jambalaya

- 1 Lb. boneless chicken breast, cubed
- 1 Lb. (mild Italian or Andouille) sausage diced
- 1 Lb. seafood (shrimp, crab, etc.)
- 1/3 cup oil (for meats)
- 1 Lg. chopped onion
- 1/2 cup chopped celery
- 2 small chopped red or green peppers



- 2 medium chopped tomatoes
- 14 Oz. chicken broth
- 2 cups sliced mushrooms
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1 teaspoon black & 1 teaspoon white pepper
- 1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

1/2 cup orange juice

2 to 3 cups long-grained white rice

Cook in a large Dutch oven. Heat chicken & sausage until cooked but not browned. Sauté vegetables in separate pan. If using raw seafood, steam separately until shrimp are pink. Add sautéed mix to the protein including the uncooked rice and spices. Mix thoroughly. Cover & bring to a boil, then remove some coals to simmer. Add Worcestershire, & orange juice. Add water as necessary to cook rice then mix in the seafood mixture. Simmer around 15 minutes, serves 8 to 10.

## Peach Cobbler

- 1 - box yellow cake mix
- 2 - 29 oz. cans of sliced peaches or equivalent
- 3 - eggs
- 1 - cup sugar
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 1/3+ cup oil
- 3 - teaspoons cinnamon
- Water
- Large Ziplock bag to transport & mix cake in

In Ziplock bag, mix cake, 3 eggs, 1-1/3 cups water, 1/3 cup oil. Preheat Dutch oven over 8 coals. Add 4 teaspoons oil to pot. Add 1/2 cup brown sugar to pot. When sugar has melted, dump in the peaches with no more than 1/2 cup of juice. Add 1 cup sugar, add cinnamon, then stir. Pour cake batter slowly over peaches.

Put lid on oven & add 12 coals to the top lid. After about 15 minutes, remove bottom coals & continue baking from the top until cake is brown. Check with a toothpick. Allow cake to cool 30 minutes.

*John Semich is vice-president of West Denver Trout Unlimited. He enjoys camping, cooking and many fishing adventures.*



# Fly Fishing the Famous North Platte River

*By Peter Mott*

I have had the privilege to fish and guide the North Platte River near Casper, WY for the last 26 consecutive springs. I know of no other fishery that has such diversity, quality and consistency. Throughout all this time, I have just begun to unlock the many secrets of this incredible river.

Just 30 minutes southwest from Casper, the tiny town of Alcova is home to mostly fishermen and guides, many living in retro 1950's homes and trailers. Coming back here year after year is like entering a time warp; it appears to not ever change. If you really think about it, Alcova has everything an angler needs: lodging, a post office, one gas station/convenience store and of course one fly shop. A colorful bar/restaurant has mastered the American burger and fries; you can stand on a chair and thumb tack a dollar bill with your

name on it to the ceiling too.

Known for its dense populations of hybrid Snake River cutbows and trophy size brown's, the North Platte grows big trout, very fast. A classic tail water, the dozen or so miles of river below Grey Reef Dam (commonly know as Grey's Reef but often spelled Gray's by the Bureau of Reclamation) are home to an average of 3500 trout per mile. Wyoming landowner laws are similar to those in Colorado; if the land adjacent to the river is private, so is the river bottom extending to an imaginary line halfway across the river. Most of this upper river of the Reef is privately owned on both sides of the river, and thus restricts walk and wade access. This has reduced overcrowding sometimes experienced by anglers both wading and floating the same lanes in other rivers.

## Big smile on Pete Mott



The North Platte meanders through a sandy, gentle, semi arid landscape. Drought tolerant native grasses and sagebrush are dominant occasionally a cottonwood tree will also accompany. Antelope, mule deer, bald eagles, osprey and sand hill cranes are common sightings; waterfowl are everywhere. Spring brings out the rattlesnakes too.

Best fished from the comfort of a drift boat, the river is wide, cold and deep.

Continued on page 22

# Fishing the North Platte, cont'd from page 21

Trout stack up in the deeper holes or “buckets” in sometimes very fast water.

I like to fish from the bank in, casting towards the middle runs of the river. With the assistance of any available eddy or current break, I can row back upstream and again present flies through these productive areas.

The Platte is a conveyor belt of fish food, nurtured by dam-controlled excellent clarity and consistent cold-water temperatures. Eggs, scuds, leeches, crane fly larva, sow bugs, crayfish and of course the segmented worm, phylum Annelida, are readily eaten nearly year around. These are larger-than-average aquatic protein meals and a major contributor to the strong, athletic build of these trout that often become airborne when hooked. I know of no other trout fishery with harder fighting fish.

I prefer to fish bugs and small midges in black or darker colors; sizes 18 to 24 are my most common spring pattern. Sometimes olive works best; tan, grey, chocolate, cream, orange, yellow, woodcock, and peacock are all stocked in large inventories in my boat fly boxes. Add red, wine, purple and pink and you get a feel for the complexity of the flies that I am feeding to sometimes particular trout. A favorite client has begun to custom-tie these in even more creative experimental colors, changing the thread color, wire color, bead color, and body material to create literally hundreds of thousands of different combinations. We are both still learning as we create, test fish, and attempt to master the style or color of bug that the trout prefer to eat at any given moment. I like our classroom, drifting along beautiful wide-open stretches of the famous North Platte River.

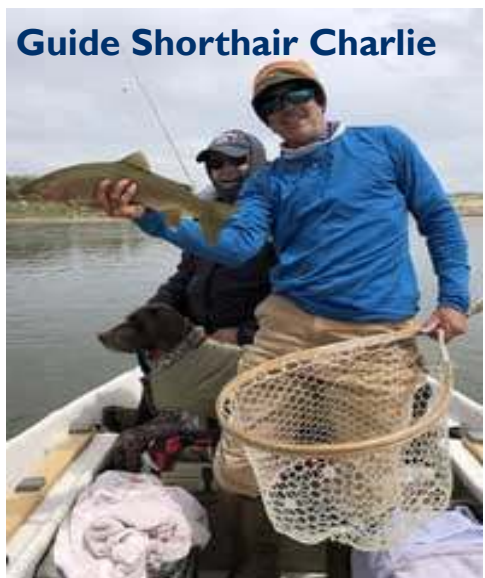
In May, baetis hatches start to dominate, mostly in the afternoons. Midge mornings and afternoon Ephemeroptera are common for my nymph rigs. I like to suspend the mayfly patterns however and fish emergers higher in the water column and or target shallower runs. Limited dry fly action in the lazy, slow water along the banks where these insects have collected all

day can also be successful.

Pale Morning Duns are our favorite hatch and usually begin to show up in early June. Patterns in 16, 18 and 20 match these colorful bugs, and it's always fun to go back to 4x tippet for tying on in the larger sizes.

I unfortunately miss the summer prolific trico hatches as I am back in Colorado guiding the Eagle River by late June. If you are in Wyoming, be ready for world class dry and subsurface angling as these bugs come off in incredible numbers steadily for weeks and weeks.

Known for the quantity and quality of healthy, very well fed trout, the North Platte River has been a favorite destination for beginner and expert anglers for decades. Arguably the best tail water in the West, fishermen can access generous amounts of river miles of angler uncrowded but trout-filled runs. Incredible food sources and consistent water clarity and temperatures support large numbers of huge trout on the Platte; so good I have made it my Home for literally months each and every spring. Come experience one of the best trout fly fishing rivers anywhere, and join me in unlocking the many secrets of this amazing fishery.

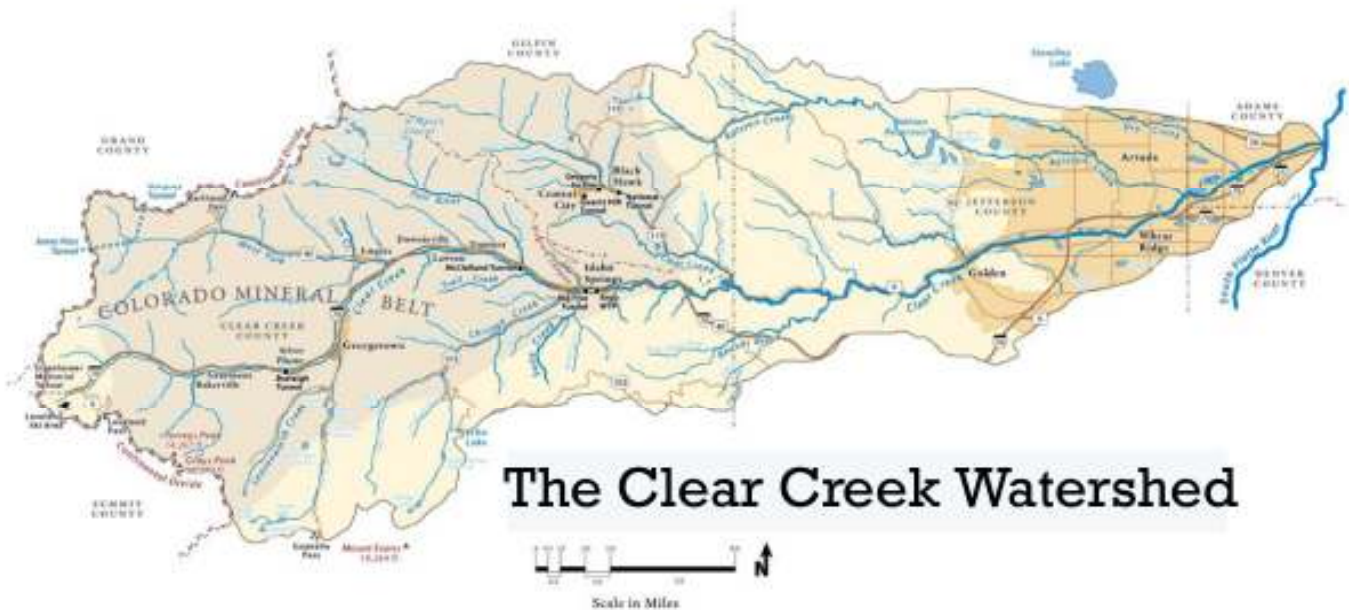


*Pete Mott is the founder of Trout Trickers fly fishing guide service and lives near Vail Colorado. He can be contacted at [trouttrickers@gmail.co](mailto:trouttrickers@gmail.co) or call 970-306-6255. Trout Trickers website is [trouttrickers.com](http://trouttrickers.com).*



# West Denver TU and Clear Creek

## *By Ed Calmus*



**wa ter shed** | \ 'wō-tər-,shed - a region or area bounded peripherally by a divide and draining ultimately to a particular watercourse or body of water. Clear Creek is the home watershed of West Denver TU, and has been the focus of much of the Chapter's mission to conserve, restore and protect cold water fisheries. Here is some of what we have done.

### **The Golden Mile**

The Golden Mile stretches along Clear Creek from Jefferson County's Grant Terry Park to Vanover Park at 10th and Ford Streets in downtown Golden. West Denver TU improved river habitat by installing numerous cross vanes, J hooks, and boulder clusters to provide winter habitat, bank stabilization, and feeding lanes. We also greatly improved fishing access. Total capital outlay was about \$200,000, exclusive of volunteer hours.

### **Canyon Reach**

The success of the [Golden Mile Restoration project](#) encouraged West Denver TU to plan and execute a second restoration project near Mayhem Gulch (highway 6, mile marker 262). Classic structures like

cross vanes, J hooks and boulder clusters provide winter habitat, bank stabilization, feeding lanes, and improved fishing access. Two innovative toe wood structures provide large organic masses to encourage riparian growth in extremely rocky terrain. Capital outlay was about \$300,000, exclusive of volunteer hours.

### **Canyon Reach Renovations**

In 2017, a stream condition survey noted damage and



deterioration of some of the original Canyon Reach restoration work. In 2019, we repaired cross vanes, deepened the main channel, and reset several J hooks.

# Restoring Clear Creek, cont'd from p. 23

Capital outlay was approximately \$32,000, exclusive of volunteer hours.

into the drainage. Fry were stocked twice, and now small greenbacks are caught in the stream.

## An "A" shaped cross vane and a flood plane bench



## Stream Clean Ups

The Chapter has long supported cleanup efforts along the Creek, from the Idaho Springs annual cleanup to the current #unwasteyourwater campaign. An amazing amount and variety of trash is collected.

## River Watch

Monthly from April through October, volunteers sample the water quality at several locations along the Creek. Water is tested for hardness, alkalinity, dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature, and dissolved minerals. Additionally, we annually sample macroinvertebrate life. Colorado Parks and Wildlife makes the data available on line, and the state uses the data to make stream remediation decisions.

## Greenback Re-introduction

### Sampling Invertebrate Life



The Chapter worked with the Forest Service to establish greenback cutthroat trout in the Herman Gulch drainage. First, non-native fish were caught and relocated. Then, volunteers backpacked greenback fry



## The Stream Management Plan

The Chapter is currently developing a Stream Management Plan (SMP) for the entire Clear Creek watershed. The SMP is an assessment of river health that assists communities to prioritize efforts toward the improvement of environmental and recreational assets. The concept of a SMP was included in the 2015 Colorado Water Plan, which was developed to identify the gap between available water supplies and future demands.

Phase I of the plan will formalize the stakeholder group through outreach and engagement, define the purpose and scope of the project, research and document existing plans within the basin to identify common goals and assess current conditions. Project participants anticipate additional phases of the project to identify, develop, and prioritize management actions envisioned in Phase I. The Chapter has raised \$44,000 to date to fund this effort.

*Ed Calmus is the current President of the West Denver Chapter*



# The Drift

*By Mark Shulman*

April 2020, one year ago, Kirk Deeter's article, *To Fish or not to Fish during the outbreak*, appeared in *Anglers Edge*. We were at the beginning of what turned out to be the yearlong s—storm called covid. Deeter's article framed thoughts and issues surrounding health concerns about fishing and the spread of the virus. With his usual clarity, Deeter suggested actions that provided anglers a pathway to indulge the activity we so dearly cherish but still remain safe. Travel less and avoid crowds would be the simple summation of his words.

April 2021, one year later. A hard journey. Vaccines bring new hope for a return to life as we knew it before mask wearing and not hugging loved ones. Maybe we'll get there. Maybe not quite. Much has changed in twelve months; I think some of the changes will remain. Outdoor space heaters sold out in stores and on line. Fishing, including fly fishing, found many new participants. Some report Colorado enrolled 100,000 new fishing license holders. And our national parks nationwide broke records in visitors through the gates. I spoke recently with a ranger in the Rocky Mountain National Park office. She outlined the timed reservation entry process for the park starting May 28 and running through October 11. Constraints are similar to 2020, although the hours for non-reservation entry are a little restrictive.

Last year covid crowd control was the reason for entry protocols. This year, my ranger source admitted, it's really more about overwhelming numbers of visitors. Other parks are also soon to adopt similar entry restrictions including Zion and Yosemite.

In February 2021, Kirk Deeter wrote again about the changing world of fly fishing. His *Angling Trade* Media article is entitled, *Is fly fishing going to implode as a result of the pandemic?* Once more, with his usual clarity, Deeter brings to focus a growing dilemma. The elephant in the room is on the river, and wearing waders.

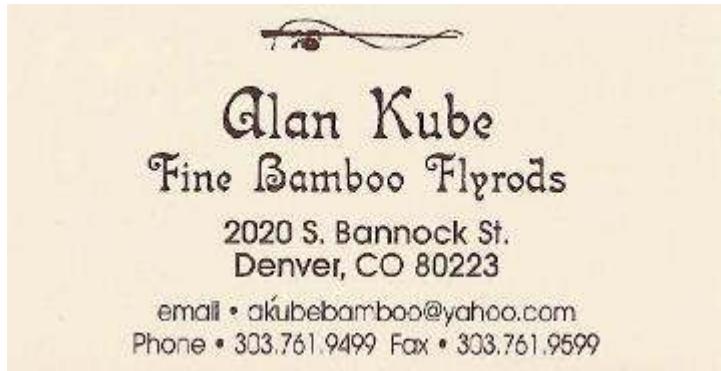
Well. It's April! Winter felt longer this year. I was happy to spend the official first day of spring on the river, in my waders, at Trout Creek Rainbow Falls. The sun on my face. Slow drifts just below the riffle. I met some people from our West Denver fishing club who had been talking heads on zoom calls over the past year. I would have liked to hug them all. Maybe soon. We'll address all the problems in life in due time.

See you on the river, I'll move downstream a bit.

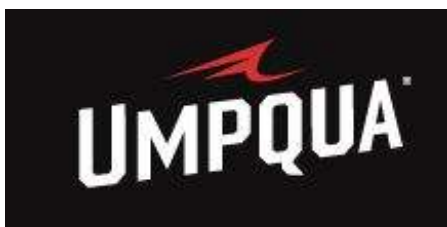
*Kirk Deeter is editor of Angling Trade, editor-in-chief of TROUT magazine, the national publication of Trout Unlimited. His book Trout Tips belongs on every fly anglers book shelf.*



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# ABOUT TU

## Trout Unlimited

“Founded in 1959, TU is the leading conservation organization dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring, North America’s trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Our 100,000 members are organized into 450 local chapters nationwide. These volunteer chapters are the “watchdogs” of their local rivers and streams. They conduct stream restoration projects, monitor legislation, and fight for “fish friendly” policies with state and local officials. Through its Washington DC-based national headquarters, TU conducts valuable scientific and economic research to foster more enlightened trout and salmon management practices, lobbies to strengthen environmental legislation like the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, and provides a voice for its 100,000 members.”

## West Denver Trout Unlimited

The West Denver Chapter, Trout Unlimited (WDTU, TU chapter #130) is a member-driven 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is conserving, protecting, and enhancing Colorado’s coldwater fisheries through volunteerism, education, and outreach.

WDTU was founded in Colorado in 1974, and now has over 1,100 members across western metro Denver, including Lakewood, Golden, Morrison, Englewood, Littleton, Wheatridge, and Arvada. Our conservation and community outreach projects include the development of a Stream Management Plan for the Clear Creek watershed, water quality and temperature monitoring, Jefferson County Outdoor Lab programs, Trout in the Classroom, and other youth fishing programs. WDTU’s governance also relies directly upon its members, who generously volunteer their time and effort to achieve the chapter’s mission. The WDTU Bylaws provide details on the chapter’s governance. The chapter’s Board of Directors has a board meeting every month (separate from the chapter meeting). Members are welcome to attend board meetings and are encouraged to volunteer to be an Officer or Director.



[www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)



[www.westdenvertu.org](http://www.westdenvertu.org)



[www.coloradotu.org](http://www.coloradotu.org)

## Community

### A Note About Email Address Changes

Please notify us whenever you change your email address, snail mail address and/or telephone number so we can communicate with you quickly and efficiently.

Linda Miyamoto [sullimoto@gmail.com](mailto:sullimoto@gmail.com)

Email Jon Weimer for more information.

## WDTU Chapter/ Board Meetings

### Note:

**Chapter Meetings** are temporarily suspended due to Covid-19. We hope to see you at a Chapter webinar! Chapter meetings are the first Wednesday of the month, except for July and August.

**Board Meetings** are held on the second Tuesday of each month via Zoom.

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