



# ANGLERS' EDGE

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



Bi-Monthly Magazine

West Denver Chapter of Trout Unlimited

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[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

## 2020 Chapter Leaders

### The Cover:

Photo by Matt Smythe, Auk Bay, Alaska

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# The President's Message

Hurry up and wait!

Now that our members are starting to get vaccinated against covid 19, we are looking forward to resuming some sense of normalcy in our lives.

Unfortunately, social distancing and mask wearing are not likely to end anytime soon. In the meantime, patience and perseverance are the order of the day.



Our Chapter continues working via Zoom. We have had some significant achievements:

Our New Initiatives Team is rolling out a virtual watershed awareness challenge, #untrashyourwater. The goal is to increase the awareness of the importance of our watershed. By collecting trash, the watershed's health is improved, and you get a chance to win a fabulous prize.

Our Clear Integrated Water Management Plan just received a \$30,000 grant to facilitate the development of a comprehensive management plan for Clear Creek. This involves Clear Creek stakeholders from recreational users to municipalities.

Our Education Team has replaced our chapter meetings with webinars. On January 6, Matt Smythe presented "To Be In Alaska". On February 3 Zeke Hersh spoke about "Winter Fishing in the High Country". By promoting Zeke's talk through social media as well as our traditional channels, we set a record with 74 meeting registrants,

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

Stay safe,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ed Adams".



# ALAN KUBE

## A True Friend of West Denver TU

by Jon Weimer

In preparation for writing this article, I was trying to remember the circumstances under which Alan and I first met. I think my first involvement with Alan revolved around our Chapter's Fantasy Raffle. Tim Toohey and I headed up the Raffle for a number of years, and we always tried to think of ways to make our Raffle package more attractive.

Traditionally, the prize package consisted of either one or two graphite fly rods, but it occurred to us that perhaps a bamboo rod would be more alluring. So, I started making inquiries about whom I might approach to obtain a rod (I was reluctant to purchase a bamboo rod from a big retailer, such as Orvis or LL Bean). The name that kept surfacing was that of Alan Kube. I finally hooked up with Alan and asked if he could provide one if his rods (at a discounted price) for our Raffle? I made the pitch that having his rod in our Raffle package at the various fly fishing shows would provide him with some exposure. Alan's response was that he would provide us with one of his rods for free! Since his rods retail anywhere from \$1,700 to \$2,400, I said that,

in good conscience, I couldn't accept that offer, but we would be able to give him a nominal fee, say, \$200 or \$300 bucks. *Continued on page 6*



# Alan Kube, con't. from p. 5

He resisted taking even that pittance, and that's what Alan's been doing for the past 12 years! Alan and his wife have also engaged in charity work for children for many years, while working hard in their family construction business. Alan knew of the work that Trout Unlimited and our West Denver Chapter does with youth education, and that his contribution of a bamboo rod would support those efforts.

Alan is an interesting fellow. He grew up in the Denver area and went to Colorado State University. He has owned a highly successful concrete construction company since 1989. Alan has been an avid angler all his life going through the progression of bait fishing, spin fishing, with a "hook-'em and-keep 'em" mind set. Eventually evolving to fly fishing and embracing the catch-and-release ethos.

Always enjoying working with his hands, Alan started out making graphite rods. About 20 years ago, he received a copy of Jack Howell's book, "The Lovely Reed" as a Christmas gift. This book became his inspiration and guide to building bamboo rods and led to his setting up a bamboo rod-building workshop in the back room of his company office.

Slowly, but inexorably, Alan learned each of the approximately 260 steps that go into making a bamboo rod.

He says there's self-satisfaction in taking a piece of Tonkin cane and turning it into a beautiful fly rod. On average, Alan builds 10 rods a year and, unlike most rod builders, he also makes the reel seats, ferrules, handles, and other components for each rod. Also, unlike most rod builders, Alan does not make rods to make a living. Again, he oversees a prominent and successful construction company. This allows him the luxury to select his clients, and to take painstaking care and time to make an exquisite rod. He has won numerous awards for his craftsmanship, including National Bamboo Rod Maker of the Year (2018). I'm being somewhat facetious, but he appears to have developed a cult following among bamboo rod aficionados, and I'm always awed and amused when I see patrons of the fly fishing shows gush over his rods.

I bought a Kube bamboo rod about a decade ago, and I'm crazy about it. I concede, as does Alan, that most graphite rods perform well, but lack a certain quality inherent to bamboo. According to Alan, you cast graphite rods by the clock in your head. But, says Alan, you cast bamboo by the feel in your hand. I agree.

Alan Kube: Amazing craftsman. Our Chapter benefactor. Our Chapter friend.





# Crying in the Deer Stand

by Mark Shulman

Fly fishing is a journey with many stops. The stream, choosing the fly, the cast. Maybe a catch brought to net. And sometimes, the best result is someone you meet along the way. Matt Smythe is someone you would like to meet along the way.

In December last year, Ashley Giles of our West Denver chapter introduced me to Matt Smythe and it has been a pleasure to come to know this man. In his own words he describes himself as “Father, outdoorsman, veteran, advocate. And poet.”

The Finger Lakes of upstate New York, near Lake Canandaigua, are home to Matt. A land where lake trout prowl the deep waters, browns and rainbows bend rods in tributary streams and white tail deer thrive in abundance. Matt hunts and fishes them all.

Immediately upon graduating high school Matt enlisted in the Army, saw active duty overseas, and served eight years as a combat engineer. Leaving the service Matt embarked upon college and graduate school. He studied forensic pathology and poetry. He worked in a hospital morgue engaged in autop-

sies and would later go on to writing ad copy and features for national fishing publications. Matt is the former Director of Communications for the American Fly Fishing Trade Association and in January 2021, he joined the American Museum of Fly Fishing in Manchester, Vermont as Director of Membership and Outreach.

Matt recently spent a virtual evening with West Denver Trout Unlimited at our chapter meeting zoom call. He described his work with Trout Unlimited on conservation efforts and especially activities in Alaska. He shared with us a trip to fish Alaska with his teenage son. Matt revealed a father's love and his passion for protecting the environment.

Why the title of this article? These are Matt's words said during the zoom meeting. Shared without embarrassment to strangers. Matt described the late November day when he received a text that the Alaska Pebble Mine permit had been denied. He was hunting, perched in his deer stand. So moved by the news, he wept. One day soon, I hope to cast a line with Matt.



**Matt Smythe**

# The Poetry of Matt Smythe

## Canandaigua, NY

### BIG LOST

northwest of mackay  
young mule deer graze on sage-gray  
river glint in green

every spot holds fish  
embarrassment of riches  
there's no rush to cast

at times loose braids flow  
small runs cutting here and there  
casts in tight quarters

geese gabble upstream  
past the flatbed rail car bridge  
past the willow's sweep

flowing to the plain  
this waist-deep rush vanishes  
well-spring in reverse



### FIVE DAYS IN THE TONGASS

orca below us  
white foam push surrounds her breach  
our plane climbing west

rising and rising  
kyped maws swinging at stripped flies  
graceful abandon

long gravel-sand bar  
holds a wolf's tracks shadowing  
a black bear and cubs

shoulder to shoulder  
chum in watercolor stripes  
dollies gorge between

lithe glacial fingers  
feed milk-blue-gray to the salt  
soft intersection

where I find one fish  
I find a full hour of fish  
an eagle watches

whistles and hey bear  
soft banks along the river  
sitka spruce echoes



# Matt Smythe, con't. from p. 8

## METOLIUS

ponderosa pine  
towering sentinels  
this road wanders north

lush green seep-springs  
in the shadow of black butte  
current's exponent

from 99 bridge  
massive bull trout face downstream  
thirty-five feet deep

an elk from the ridge  
stopped at the far bank, staring  
my world, her world, same

outspoken rainbow  
like seventeen syllables  
alive in my hand



## A Fly Shop Navigates a Pandemic

### *By Kyle Perkins*

*Kyle is the manager and guide for Golden River Sports. Located on Washington Avenue in Golden, Colorado GRS is entering its 17<sup>th</sup> year in business as Golden's original fly-fishing and paddle shop.*

Working in the fly fishing industry can be fulfilling. Not necessarily lucrative, but rewarding in the sense that you get to share a passion with people in hopes that it might grow into the same for them. We also have a responsibility to care for the resources that support our industry and educate those new to it on why it's important to keep our waters and surrounding areas clean and cold. While we all had an interesting year to say the least, being in any outdoor industry was a good position. However, the fly fishing industry was not prepared for a global pandemic.

Although we knew the virus was spreading, it seems it escalated rather quickly. In early January, we were all set up for thousands of people at the Fly Fishing Show.

Then, GRS began our yearly Saturday fly tying demos. By mid-March, we were wrapping up our last demo. Who knew in less than two weeks we would be shut down due to a stay at home order.

I scrambled, writing all our product representatives and manufacturers putting orders on hold and fully cancelling some. We didn't know how long this was going to last, or how it was going to affect business. Usually in April, we start seeing Clear Creek open up, tourists start calling to pre-book guide trips, and foot traffic increases. Meanwhile, I'm sitting at home tying flies and getting out to fish occasionally.

*Continued next page*

# A Fly Shop Navigates

*Cont'd from page 9*

In May, we were lucky to get back to work, albeit limited. There was a lot of uncertainty though, as we just didn't know how this would fold out. We chose to go ahead and continue to push orders back while fully cancelling others. Golden, being the tourist town it is, might not see its usual business activity. Boy, were we wrong.

The first month GRS opened, we got absolutely crushed. Anything close to recreational on the kayak side was gone, including stand up paddleboards. At

one point, we ran out of 9ft 5wt rods. Waders and some reels were almost impossible to get restocked. The supply chain wasn't able to keep up with demand. Although our guide business wasn't as busy as normal, we saw many new local anglers picking up the sport and purchasing trips. Fly fishing in particular was growing in interest, but it wasn't without consequences.

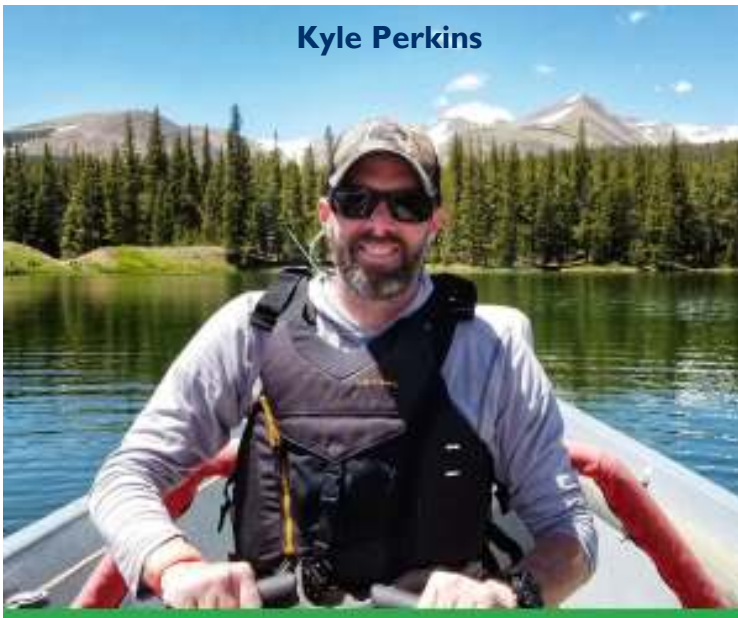
On a normal summer day, I like to take an hour break from the shop and shoot up the canyon and fish. Finding spots was hard enough, as people were flocking from all over the metro area to recreate. Unfortunately, a lot of these people were also leaving their trash on the banks and in the water. You can only do so much, but if this increased recreation continues, we need to mobilize to keep our local water clean. GRS is currently exploring ways to improve clean-up projects, but if anyone has any ideas, please don't hesitate to stop by the shop and share.

As we moved into fall and winter, things didn't really slow down as much as we're used to. Fly-tying is now the go-to activity. We're doing our best to keep up with the trends, but again, product supply is suffering. As we look to spring and summer, we're increasing orders and hoping for the best. So, if you stop by, please be patient and always let us know if you're looking for something specific and we'll look to see if

we can get it for you. We're also remodeling the shop a bit, so come by and see what's new. In the guide business, we're looking at new water in 2021. Some of it is public water holding cutthroat trout, and others are new private water destinations. You can always pre-book these trips with us to ensure your preferred date is set. Lastly, don't forget that Trout Unlimited members receive a 10% discount on just about everything in the shop. So, be sure to let us that you're a member!

Hope to see all of you soon in the shop or on the water! Here's to better 2021!

**Kyle Perkins**





# Yellow Hammer

## The Journey From Football To Helping Men Through Fly Fishing

*By Jennings Hester*

Sprinting down the field in my first camp as a linebacker at the University of Alabama, my veins were pumping with adrenaline. I was running at top speed to anxiously blow up the kick return wedge, but before I knew it, I was flying through the air after being completely de-cleated by two SEC tight ends. Our defensive coordinator walked over to give me a hand off the ground, “welcome to the SEC, son”.

Football had been my life from age eight. Georgia All-State linebacker. 6'3", 245lbs, 4.71 forty yard dash, 36" vertical, 380lb bench, 535lb squat, 580lb deadlift and the number of tackles were the statistics used to judge who I was as a man. Both by myself and others. My efforts were rewarded by a full scholarship to Nick Saban's first Alabama Crimson Tide class. From the outside, that probably sounds like a tough guy with an incredible life.

However, there was an invisible injury I was struggling through every damn day. Depression and anxiety hit me at an early age, sometime in high school. Self-hate, suicidal thoughts and plans, lack of mental clarity, inconsistent sleep, social withdrawal, lack of enjoyment from any activity. These are a few of the symptoms caused by Depression. It's not just about being 'sad'. Three years into college, at age twenty-one, I experienced a career ending injury. Football and training were the crutch I had used for years to cope with my mental illness. No one trained more than me. Now that my crutch was gone, the depression became more severe. Still, I continued to ignore the signs. Fast forward five years and my depression had spiraled into something uncontrollable. I was fired from a dream job where I couldn't focus, my family and girlfriend could not stand to hear the way I talked about myself and my father finally dragged me to see a psychiatrist. I got help via therapy and medicine and turned my life around.

those ten years, many men take their own life. Approximately 80% of suicides are men, while only 25% of people treated for a mental illness or substance abuse are men. We are much more likely than women to act out when dealing with a mental illness, meaning aggressive behavior, substance abuse or suicide.

Just over a year ago, I founded Fishing the Good Fight. A Denver based 501(c)(3) non-profit which supports Men's Mental Health by leveraging the therapeutic benefits of fly fishing and fly tying. We strive to destigmatize Men's Mental Health, provide resources for Men in Need and Make Lives Better. Fly fishing and tying have been and continue to be an instrumental therapeutic outlet for our recovery, and we wanted to pass it along to other men.

*Continued Next Page*



The average time between experiencing symptoms of a mental illness and seeking help is ten years. During



# Yellow Hammer, cont'd from p. 11

The mindfulness of fishing and tying, the sound of the water, the escape from the every day stressors. None of this is a surprise to anyone who fishes, but for us it was more than just peace. It was meditation, therapy and recovery. The number of men who have reached out to us to share their story of how fly fishing saved their lives has been breathtaking. Vets, teenagers, working age men with families. We knew we had tapped into something even more powerful that we initially realized.



What initially began as a pipe dream with no clear direction quickly turned into a legitimate organization. We didn't know how we were going to help men; we just knew we wanted to make an impact. Fishing the Good Fight sells hand tied flies and fundraises to support Men's Mental Health. We had constant requests to sell our flies. What started as a fly order here or there turned into over 4,000 flies shipped and \$30,000 raised in our first year.

The proceeds are utilized in two different avenues. First, we run targeted marketing campaigns with one of our partners, Mantherapy. We target outdoorsman at risk for depression and/ or suicide, and direct them to the 'Head Inspection Test'. A simple series of questions provides men with insights into potential areas of risk for depression, anxiety, bipolar, substance abuse

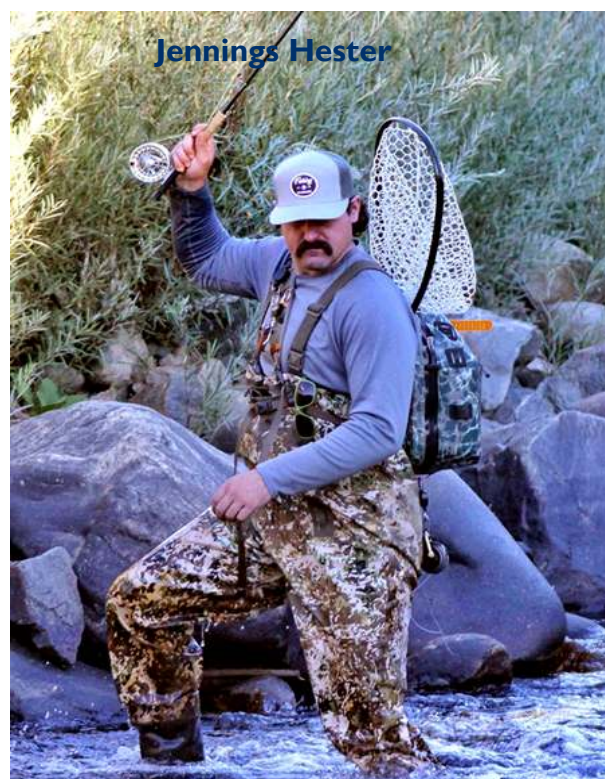
and more. From there, they are directed to male specific therapists in their area.

Second, we help subsidize therapy costs. Even many of the best insurance plans don't cover therapy sessions. At a point in my life, I had to decide between therapy and medication or deferring on mortgage payments. There are many men who want to get help, but simply cannot afford it.

In 2021, Fishing the Good Fight will begin conducting weekend retreats. Utilizing private water through Rare Waters, they will take small groups on a weekend excursion of fly fishing, nature, fellowship and mental health activities. These retreats will also be made available to corporate executives who would like mental health training.

The support we've received from the fly fishing community has been incredibly inspiring. From tying and guiding legends like Charlie Craven and Pat Dorsey to leading companies like Fish Pond and Trout Unlimited to individuals who just want to help other men.

If you'd like to learn more about our organization, visit [www.fishingthegoodfight.org](http://www.fishingthegoodfight.org). Whether it's to buy a handful of flies, become a member or make a donation, we cannot thank you enough. You're already buying flies, so why not buy Flies for Good?





## By Joshua Musa

RepYourWater is an apparel brand dedicated to providing uniquely designed, top quality gear for anglers and hunters while increasing support of local conservation and inspiring exploration. The company was founded in 2011 by two Coloradans, Corinne and Garrison Doctor of Erie, Colorado. Garrison started fishing around the age of 9 or 10, and has been an artist even longer. Garrison didn't have any family that knew how to fly-fish, so this was a self-propelled process for him. Garrison said, "When I was 9 or 10 years old I was camping with my dad on a crystal-clear high mountain lake, and I could watch the cutthroats scatter when I cast my little spinning lure into the water. There was a fly fisherman there who was catching fish after fish on dry flies. I told my dad right then, I want a fly rod for Christmas!"

Corinne and Garrison met at Lewis and Clark College in Portland, Oregon. Garrison took Corinne fly fishing on one of their early dates, about 15 years ago. Since then they have been traveling the world fly-fishing and growing their business. Corinne fishes primarily for trout because they are most common in our local waters. She also loves travelling and experiencing the local species other areas have to offer, whether it's fishing for Golden Dorado in Bolivia, or boat fishing in the flats of the Everglades for snook, reds, and tarpon. Garrison said "I love fishing for exotic species in far-flung locations but I would have to say that floating a remote stretch of a western river and throwing streamers at Brown Trout is high up on my list. That stretch of river will remain un-named..."

Garrison developed the idea for RepYourWater while guiding for a fly shop. He realized there was a hole in the apparel market, which was dominated by big fly-fishing brands or fly shops. There was no apparel being made that was just for the love of fishing, or fishing related to a specific place. This realization quickly led to release of their Colorado Flag Hat, back in 2011. Neither of them had designed or manufactured clothing, so it has been a learning experience for both of them. It initially started as a side hustle, while working long days and nights at other jobs. Garrison went full-time about 6 years ago, and Corinne was able to go full-time about 3 years ago.

*Continued next page*



Garrison Doctor



# Rep Your Water, cont'd from p. 13

RepYourWater started with hats, but Garrison and Corinne have continued to expand the RepYourWater brand by adding new apparel and art. Corinne's favorite product is the merino wool socks because they are functional and have fun fish designs. Corinne said, "Growing at a steady rate has been a challenge, as it is tempting to try to do all of our new ideas at once, but that isn't sustainable for us as a small team." 2020 was internally challenging because they had to figure out how to work together in a warehouse, during a pandemic. However, they saw many new people taking up the sport, or reigniting their love for fly-fishing. Corinne said "It has been awesome to see so many people reach out on social media or email, letting us know that they are new or returning to the sport. 2020 has taught us all to appreciate what we can do and control, and finding time in the healing world of nature is one of those things!"

Since their inception, RepYourWater has made conservation a key component of their business. They measure the success of their business not by how much they can make, but by how much they can give back. RepYourWater is committed to preserving our fisheries. They continue to work on their sustainability goals of maintaining zero-waste and carbon neutrality. RepYourWater donates 3% of every purchase to their conservation partners to benefit the industry and the environment. They have donated over \$274,000 to their conservation partners and have volunteered generously to Colorado Trout Unlimited and other local conservation nonprofits. Sustainability is important to them because climate change is one of the biggest threats to our fisheries. If you want to learn more about their conservation efforts, download the [RepYourWater Sustainability Report](#).

Corinne Doctor with a Happy Guide





# Conservation Citizen Scientists

*by Keith Greenwell*

West Denver TU has a multitude of conservation and “citizen scientists” projects that we participate in on an annual basis. They include partnering with government and nonprofit entities, i.e. Jefferson County open space, USFS, Colorado TU, River Watch, etc. Our focus is primarily on our home waters, the Clear Creek watershed.

This year we are endeavoring to group some of these activities into watershed segments and enlist volunteers to accept full or partial ownership of a segment. The segments that we have defined are: South Fork of Clear Creek, Chicago Creek basin, Fall River Basin, West Fork of Clear Creek and Clear Creek Canyon.

The major activities that we are initially including in this new organizational structure: stream temperature monitoring, alpine lake limnology, monofilament recycling, and stream/trail clean up.

A brief synopsis of what these activities entail:

**H2O temperature data loggers:**

USFS is monitoring H2O temp at headwater streams to assess possible reintroduction of Greenback Cutthroat/native trout. WDTU will launch the data loggers and visit the sites at least twice a year. Once in the spring to ensure the temp probe is still in place and that the logger is still collecting data. Second one is in the fall prior to ice up to download the collected data. The downloaded data is forwarded to the USFS for analysis. We typically have a meeting with the USFS in the spring to go over the resulting data and determine if any of the sites need to be eliminated or location changed. We currently have 15 sites that we maintain in the Clear Creek watershed. They are generally drive up or short hikes. Some require 4X4 vehicle access.

**Monofilament collection canisters**

PVC canisters for monofilament refuse have been installed by USFS at several popular fishing locations. Our responsibility is to empty and maintain canisters several times each summer. The collected monofilament will be forwarded

at the end of the year to Berkley-Fishing for recycling. WDTU is currently maintaining 4 sites and evaluating adding additional sites.

**Limnology**

Limnology is a study of water quality of still waters. This study will create baseline data, which will later be used to measure the impacts of climate change. Our volunteers’ hike to high mountain lakes and record; GPS coordinates, elevation, weather conditions, water acidity or alkalinity (pH), water clarity (turbidity), air and H2O temperature. There are 25 lakes in the Clear Creek drainage that we monitor at least every 3rd year. If we have sufficient volunteers’ we would like to visit each site annually. More data is always better. Some alpine lakes require up to a 5-mile hike. At the end of each hiking season the data is forwarded to Dr David Oonk of CU, who set up this climate change study for his database and analysis.



**Stream and Trail Cleanup**

We currently do not have a formalized program for trail/stream trash collection, just pack along a trash bag or two on trips into the high country. We are hoping to establish a trash pick-up day or two for each segment this summer.

*Continued next page*

# Citizen Scientists, cont'd from p. 15

Each of these individual activities require minimal time and several can be combined for a fun conservation day with ample time left over for fishing or exploring at a high lake or mountain stream or both.

For example: a trip up the South Fork of Clear Creek last year included stops at Georgetown Lake and Clear Lake to empty the monofilament canisters, a stop to download the H2O data logger near Guanella campground, followed by approximately a 3 mile hike to Murray and Silver Dollar lakes for limnology data collection.

Ending the day with catching some nice Cutthroat out of Silver Dollar Lake. A stop at your favorite brew pub to celebrate a gorgeous and productive day in the mountains is always a viable option.

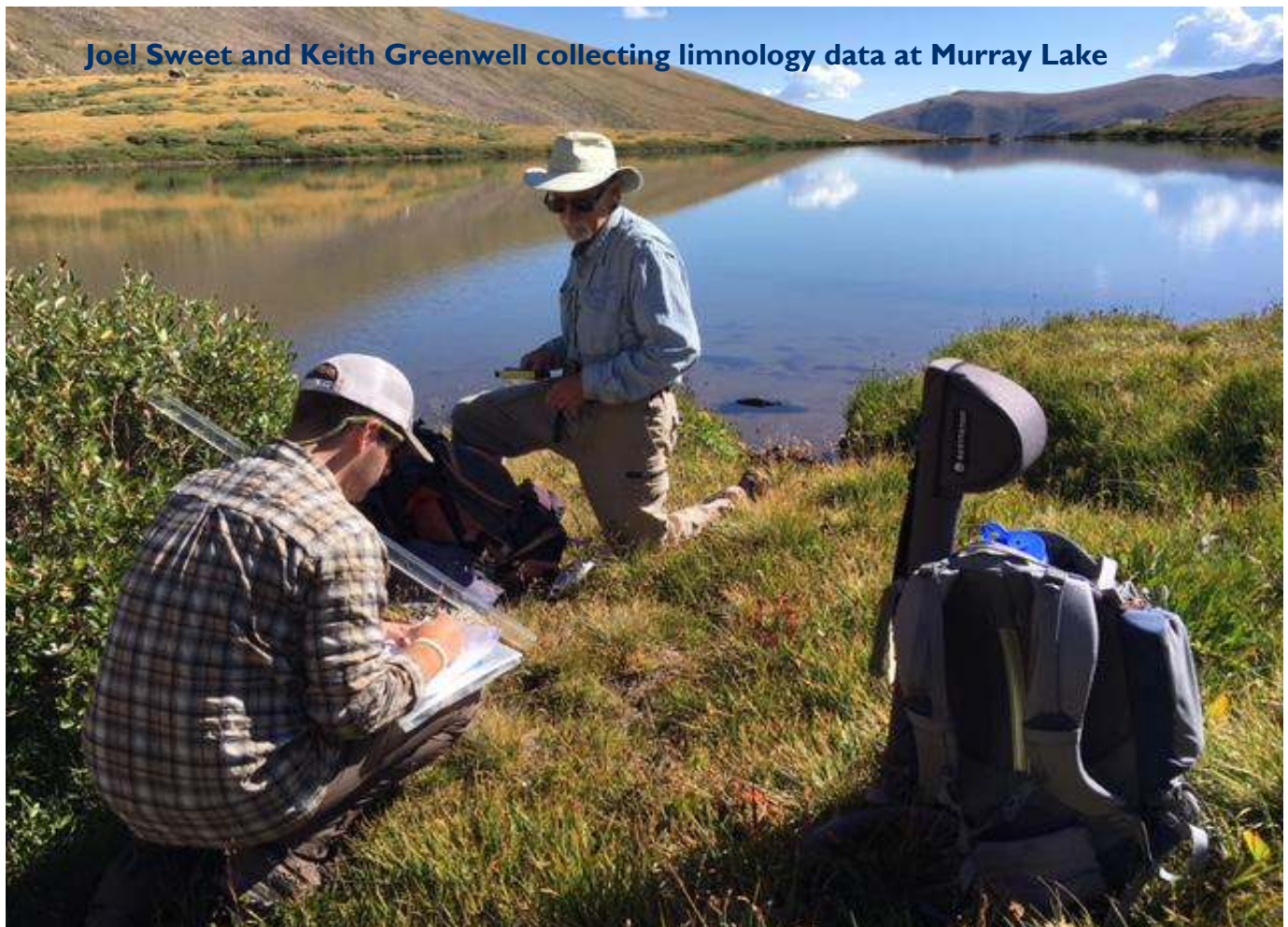
This spring, after the stream temperature data logging sites have been determined we will have an organizational meeting, hopefully in person, to determine who wants to manage the conservation sites.

Anyone who has interest in assisting with these projects, either taking ownership of a segment or just wanting to help on an occasional basis let me know and I'll keep you informed on the scheduled activities.

*Continued next page*



**Lower Chicago Lake Cutthroat**



**Joel Sweet and Keith Greenwell collecting limnology data at Murray Lake**



# Fishing Buddies Research Update Lower Clear Creek

*By Dan Pass*

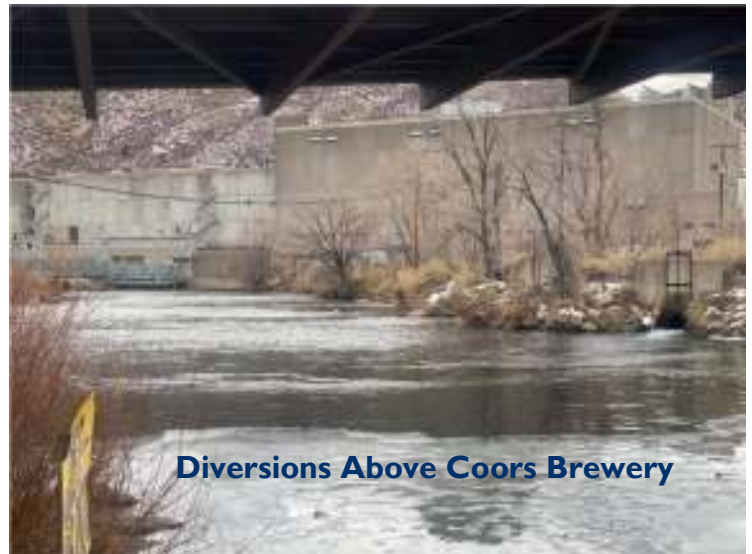
Fishing Buddies is a free WDTU Chapter program that offers one on one and group fly fishing outings to local waters to further expand our values, teach fly fishing basics, entomology, and comradery. We are always looking for new participants and volunteers to help further our program. If you or anyone you know would be interested in learning more, please email Dan Pass at [danpass303@gmail.com](mailto:danpass303@gmail.com).

In the very beginning stages of the Clear Creek Integrated Water Management Plan, Fishing Buddies lead several winter outings to scope out what we call “lower Clear Creek” from Wadsworth Boulevard to Youngfield Street. We took water temps, measured the depth of the river, did insect assessment and a little fishing too! We never caught a fish but found that lower Clear Creek could indeed support life. We found wide scopes of active insect life in the river, midges actively hatching, small mayflies and case caddis in the rocks and even a few scuds. Several unidentified species of forage fish were observed, affording that fish do survive and there is ample food for trout. Water temperature was a balmy 40-45 degrees as compared to river frozen above Coors. We never did catch any trout but were hopeful some were there!

As the Peaks to Plains project took hold and moved forward, many WDTU members started talking about the vast potential of lower Clear Creek. Members of the board discussed the comparison of Clear Creek as compared to Bear Creek and Boulder Creek, both of which have decent trout fishing as far as Wadsworth/287. So, this got us thinking, could Clear Creek, primarily in Prospect Park, be Colorado’s newest winter fishing destination? We think YES!

The big issue for lower Clear Creek is maintaining viable water flow and water temperatures. This lower river is subject to heavy withdrawal of its water for multiple uses. The most senior of those water rights is Coors Brewing, and while we love their beer, we would also love to work with them to help create minimum flows and regulate water temperatures.

Regarding water temperature, it’s a catch 22, in the wintertime when the river freezes up, the Coors outflow of warmer water, keeps the lower river unfrozen,



creating a flurry of insect life in the winter months. The flip side is there are sections of lower Clear Creek that dry up and the river can get too warm in the summer months during low water flow. Other water right holders, surface run off into the river and riparian zone issues also pose hurdles to create a sustainable trout habitat in lower Clear Creek. In December 2020 Fishing Buddies held another series of outings to lower Clear Creek to continue our research.

We went to Prospect Park in Wheat Ridge to sample insect life, journal conditions, measure water temperature, pick up some trash along the way and to fish. Unfortunately, again no fish were reported caught, but we did find lots of insect life, fished some great looking holes and saw a lot of promise in the river. We found aquatic worms, bright blue scuds, scores of baby leeches, small mayfly nymphs, tons of midge larva and case caddis.

*Continued next page.*



# Lower Clear Creek, cont'd. from p. 17



**Clear Creek Insect Life**

The water temps were consistently a shocking 48-49 degrees and the river was very murky with what seemed to be an algae bloom.



Curious as to why, we decided to travel upstream a bit into downtown Golden just above the Coors property.

We found a vast difference in water conditions, a frozen river above the bridge, unfrozen water where the return of Coors water entered the river and to our dismay, a dry riverbed below the diversion/water intake. The water temp in this area was 34 degrees, well below the recorded 48-49 degrees found in Prospect Park. What's happening in less than two miles to raise the temperature 14-15 degrees? That is something we hope to address, among other things, with the ongoing Clear Creek Integrated Water Management Plan.

This research effort along with the support of the entire team working on the Clear Creek Watershed Restoration project is just another one of West Denver Trout Unlimited's many worthwhile conservation efforts. We want to thank everyone for their donations of time, money and resources that make our Chapter so great!

Members and non-members are both welcome to join Fishing Buddy events, for more information on this and to learn more about Clear Creek Watershed plans and all of WDTU's ongoing efforts, please visit [www.westdenvertu.org](http://www.westdenvertu.org) To sign up to receive alerts on upcoming Fishing Buddies events please visit <https://www.meetup.com/westdenvertu-org/>.

Tight lines!

*Dan Pass is a long time WDTU member, Fly Tying Clinic participant, Fishing Buddies volunteer and local Realtor. He also owns hotel, fly shop & guide operation based out of Thermopolis, Wyoming holding permit to guide on both the famed Big Horn and North Platte rivers.*

# Gear Hound

## *The Moonshine Drifter Fly Rod*

Review by Jon Weimer



Those who know me recognize that I am a gear hound—always looking for that special fly rod, that special reel, that special line, which will give me an extra edge when fishing. Consequently over the years I have accumulated an arsenal of rods and reels, some of which have been relegated to the dust bin, never to be seen or used again.

About a year ago, I read a review of a rod by Kirk Deeter, the editor of *TROUT* magazine. He was lauding a rod called the Midnight Special, made by an outfit called Moonshine Rod Company (you have to love that name!). He went on to explain that the Moonshine Company advertises itself as “... a small batch, blue-collar fly fishing rod company...” formed by four guys in Charlottesville, Virginia. All their rods are designed in Charlottesville, although the production of some (but not all) rods is outsourced to China.

Anyway, I got on the internet to obtain more information about the Moonshine enterprise. Moonshine makes a fairly wide range of fly rods—in addition to the Midnight Special, they produce the Epiphany, the Outcast, the Rambler, the Revival, the Vesper, and my rod of choice, the Drifter. I was attracted to the Drifter because it was described as being a medium-action rod which I thought would best suit my casting

style. What was disconcerting to me, however, was that the only brick and mortar site in Colorado that sold Moonshine rods was a place called the Native Fly Shop, located off U.S. Highway 285 in Pine. I'll never purchase a rod online without having an opportunity to see and try it out. So, I made a mental note to myself that if I were ever in the Pine area, I would drop in at the Native Fly Shop and take a look at the Drifter.

That opportunity came in March of 2020 when I attended the Chapter fishing trip at Rainbow Falls. On the way back from that trip, I drove by the fly shop and decided to stop and take the opportunity to examine the Drifter. The owner of the Native Fly Shop is Luke Martin. He took pride in the knowledge that his shop was the only one in Colorado that carried the Moonshine series. He said that he was having difficulty keeping these rods in stock. He had one 9 foot, 5 weight Drifter available. He rigged it up for me and I took it out to the parking lot for a test drive. I loved it. What bothered me was the price (\$200), which made me think there must be something wrong with the rod-- but I liked the feel and the appearance of it, and convinced myself that I could use it as a backup.

*Continued next page.*

# Moonshine Drifter, cont'd from p. 19

Backup rod, hell! It's become my main "go-to" rod. I liked it so much that I've purchased another Drifter (I had to put in an outstanding order to Luke to let me know when he received another batch of these rods).

In his article, Deeter indicated that your decision to purchase a rod **SHOULD NOT** be based solely on someone's review---that would be foolish. And, I agree with him. It must also be noted that a favorable review of a rod is certainly not an indictment of other rods. There are a lot of excellent rods on the market. A favorable review can only alert you that there may be a rod out there that is well suited for your casting abilities and pocketbook. With that admonition in mind, allow me to provide some specifics of this rod that might make it an optimal choice for you:

--The Drifter is available in various lengths (from 7 ½ feet to 11 feet) and various weights (from 3 weight to 10 weight).

--The Drifter is a 4-piece graphite rod, with anodized copper fittings complemented by a beautiful vintage brown matte finish.

It possesses an AAA-quality cork grip, a custom burl wood handle with a double-ringed reel seat, and alignment dots. Again, it's a 4-piece rod, but comes with an **EXTRA** tip.

--You get a hard canvas 5-compartment case (remember, extra tip) with an embroidered Moonshine logo.

--It comes with a no-fault, lifetime warranty.

These attributes, combined with what I feel is the rod's excellent performance/feel, make it an exceptional bargain at \$200. The Native Fly Shop is located at 34375 U.S. Highway 285, Pine, Colorado, and can be reached at 303-838-3474. For additional information and/or to make a purchase online, go to [www.moonshinerods.com](http://www.moonshinerods.com).

***\*Product reviews are solely the opinion of the reviewer. A review is not an endorsement or recommendation by ANGLERS' EDGE MAGAZINE or West Denver Trout Unlimited.***





# Riverside Reader

## *Never Cry Wolf, by Farley Mowat*

Book Review by Mark Shulman

### Non-Fiction

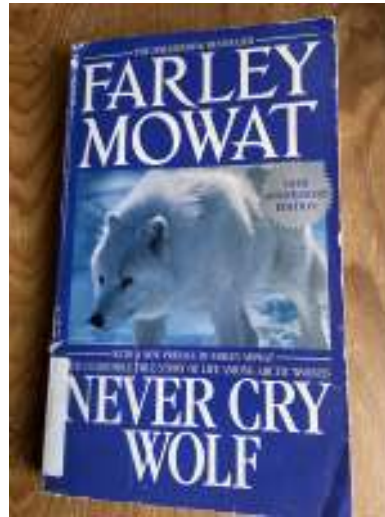
*We have doomed the wolf not for what it is, but for what we deliberately and mistakenly perceive it to be*

Farley Mowat, 1993

Farley Mowat wrote those words in a preface to the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his 1963 book, NEVER CRY WOLF. A scant 163 pages, NEVER CRY WOLF chronicles Mowat's two winters and a summer in 1948-49 spent in the Keewatin Territory of the Canadian Northwest Territories. A WWII, combat veteran with the Canadian Army, Farley Mowat joined the Canada Wildlife Service in the late 1940's. Mowat had studied zoology at the University of Toronto and had been published for some field writings before the war. His assignment to the mostly uninhabited, remote Keewatin Territory was to investigate the cause of the declining caribou population and determine if wolves were to blame. The prevailing attitude of the time was that wolves were wanton and voracious large mammal killers. Mowat was expected to corroborate that belief with "scientific" observation of wolf behavior. Mowat's findings suggested that wolves behaved differently.

Farley Mowat and this book are controversial and not without detractors. Accusations of plagiarism of others work as well as having fictionalized findings followed his career. Others credit NEVER CRY WOLF with challenging the notion that wolves should be exterminated as a species. Whatever side you take the book was a huge commercial success. It's a fast read. Also a good movie released in 1983.

Maybe this book's best legacy is to spark a conversation.



#### \*Footnote

On November 5, 2020 Colorado voters approved Proposition 114. By a very slim margin, mostly urban Front Range residents approved the reintroduction of the gray wolf to western Colorado. In 2022 or 2023, Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW) plan to release an undisclosed number

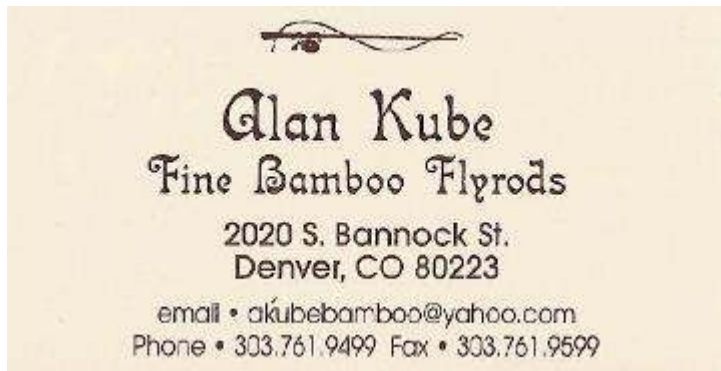
of wolves in undisclosed locations in western Colorado. The voters of western Colorado mostly voted in opposition to this wolf reintroduction. In October 2020, CPW detected a gray wolf, identified as M1084 of the Snake River Pack in Wyoming, in Jackson County, Colorado. In January 2020, CPW confirmed the presence of at least six wolves in Moffat County, Colorado.

Source: Colorado Parks and Wildlife, [cpw.state.co.us](http://cpw.state.co.us)

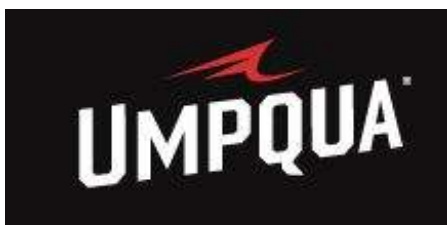


*Read any good books lately? Fly fishing, nature, environment all good! Please share your recommendations to Mark Shulman at Anglers Edge.*

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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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