
National Conservation Awards

2016



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A strong supporter of conservation, and a TU Business member, TicketPrinting donates at least 5% of their annual net income to conservation groups, including TU. Located here in Montana, the TicketPrinting facility is wind powered, all products are printed on recycled paper and every shipment is carbon neutral.

TicketPrinting has also awarded \$10,000 in direct grants to our chapters and councils to help fund local conservation efforts.

In the past two years, hundreds of chapters and councils have promoted their events and activities to increase attendance and engage new audiences thanks to the easy-to-use, high-quality and affordable posters, flyers, postcards, tickets and more available in the custom TU Event Printshop offered by TicketPrinting.

Now, with the launch of the TU-branded Ticket River registration platform, your chapter or council can benefit from a fast, easy and effective way to manage your next fundraiser or other event with online ticket sales, registration tracking, social media sharing and other great features.

Learn more about the TU Event Printshop and TU Ticket River platforms online. Then do what hundreds of your fellow chapter and council leaders have already done and try them out for your next event. You won't be disappointed.

TU Event Printshop - <http://tu.ticketprinting.com>

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Since the early 1960s, Trout Unlimited (TU) has bestowed awards to publicly recognize the outstanding achievements of its members, chapters and councils that have embodied the values of TU and fulfilled its mission to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. TU also recognizes the contributions and accomplishments of individuals and groups outside the organization that have demonstrated significant leadership and success in the world of coldwater conservation.

Today, TU is proud to showcase an exceptional group of achievements by these award winners who represent grassroots conservation successes, professional commitment to conservation excellence and organizational strength within our chapters and councils.

Congratulations 2016 TU National Conservation Award recipients!

Chapter / Council Awards

State Council Award for Excellence: Arizona Council

Gold Trout Award: 185 - Spring Creek Chapter (PA)

Silver Trout Award: 163 - The Snake River Cutthroats Chapter (ID)

Volunteer Awards

Distinguished Service Award for Leadership: Charlie Charlesworth (PA)

Distinguished Service Award for Conservation: H. Bud Smalley (ID)

Distinguished Service Award for Youth Education: Joe Mark (VT)

Distinguished Service Award for Communications: Carl Haensel (MN)

Distinguished Services Award for Veteran Services: Lindsay Agness (NY)

Partner Awards

Corporate Conservation Partner: Costa Del Mar

Conservation Professional Award: Tom Horning

Conservation Communications Award: Travis Swartz



ARIZONA COUNCIL

It is often hard to imagine the dry, arid landscape of the Southwest as being home to some of our most precious native trout species, but in Arizona, two threatened species, Apache and Gila occupy a fraction of their historic range. They are impacted daily by human activity, the introduction of non-native fish and a warming climate — especially the increasing frequency and scale of wild fires.



Gila Trout, living in isolated pockets in the mountains of the Southwest, are among the most threatened native trout species in the country.

It is incredibly difficult to compare one state council to the next, as each state presents its own unique strengths and faces challenges that differ from others. What makes the Arizona Council stand out is the word “partnership” and the powerful way the Council drives this ideal forward at all levels.

In 2010, when the Arizona Council proposed the first ever regional Native and Wild Trout Conference, it heralded a starting point for a broad range of events and activities that would thrust the council into the center of the state and region’s advocacy, planning, science and restoration efforts.

More than a half-decade later, there continues to be a growing collaboration between the Council and the Arizona Game and Fish Department, the U.S. Department of the Interior, U.S. Forest Service, Arizona Wildlife Federation, Audubon, National Forest Foundation, Western Rivers Action Network, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership and many, many others.

This important work of forging strong partnerships and relationships with state and federal officials and agencies has increased the Council’s influence in water management planning efforts on large scales, enabled it to open doors to funding and expertise to greatly expand Trout in the Classroom in the state and develop a robust and vital angler science stream temperature monitoring program that is critical for the restoration of Southwest native trout.

Beyond all of this, the Council also excels in the vital role of supporting and strengthening the state’s four growing and thriving chapters.



GOLD TROUT AWARD



185 — SPRING CREEK CHAPTER (PA)

There is rarely a week that goes by when you won't find the 185—Spring Creek Chapter and its large cadre of dedicated volunteers out and about in the community surrounding their cherished namesake river.

It is this focus on building community, on reaching people not typically touched by TU, that makes them this year's Gold Trout Award winner.

The Chapter's conservation and anglers science activities this year are more than enough to earn accolades—over 1.5 miles of riparian habitat planted, 13 in-stream structures built, water quality monitoring, redd counts and angler surveys totaling more than 4,500 volunteer hours and valued at over \$210,000.



The 'Buffer Buddies' program is one of dozens of ways the Spring Creek Chapter reaches broad and diverse communities through their activities.

However, behind all of that conservation activity, are the myriad ways the Chapter reaches into the community. The Chapter is constantly hosting events and activities, including their robust Veterans Service Partnership program where 100s of veterans have experienced the power of both healing and community thanks to SCCTU.

A series of three videos - *SCCTU in the Community*, *McCoy Dam Riparian Project* and *Backyard Makeover* - raise the profile of the Chapter in an important communication medium.

Perhaps one of the most innovative approaches to engaging the community was the *Return the Roots – Runoff Pollutes* backyard makeover contest where homeowners along nine miles of Spring Creek were mailed TU's My Healthy Stream book and Penn State's The Homeowners Guide to Stormwater and challenged to plant riparian buffers and reduce their stormwater runoff.

For engaging the next generation, the Chapter's Get Outdoors Family Picnic attracts more than 300 people, and their Y Trout program puts Trout in the Classroom front and center for all community members - not just students.

The Spring Creek Chapter is firing on all cylinders and growing by the day.



SILVER TROUT AWARD



163 — THE SNAKE RIVER CUTTHROATS CHAPTER (ID)

The Snake River Cutthroats have a long history of successful in-stream conservation projects and habitat work and these hands-on efforts by volunteers are what makes them stand out as this year's Silver Trout Award winner.

While two of Idaho's most famous rivers - the South Fork and the Henry's Fork of the Snake River - fall within the Chapter's geographic reach and are the focus of many conservation efforts, there are nearly a dozen other creeks and streams the Chapter has actively restored in order to improve the health of the entire watershed.

In the Upper Salmon and Lemhi River basins over the past 10 years, volunteers from The Snake River Cutthroats Chapter have installed more than 3.5 miles of buck and rail fence to help protect critical spawning and rearing areas. Chapter restoration efforts have helped restore and protect over 40 miles of habitat.

Perhaps the Chapter's signature project in recent years are the efforts to re-connect Rainey Creek, one of the biggest spawning and rearing tributaries to the South Fork. A total of seven different diversions have been modified, combined, or totally rebuilt, all new fish screens have been installed and retro-fitted covering a 50-mile length of water. All of these newly built fish passage screens require constant care and cleaning and the volunteers from the chapter have racked up hundreds and hundreds of hours and over 9,000 miles of driving on their personal vehicles to head out up to twice a week to remove debris and ensure adult fish can make it to the spawning grounds and juvenile fish can head downstream to grow.

With a backbone of conservation success, and an annual fundraising expo that provides nearly a quarter-of-a-million dollars in revenue each year, The Snake River Cutthroats hope to leverage their credibility in the region to grow their membership, engage new and more volunteers and develop a strategic plan that harnesses their efforts and develops a long-term vision.



Toss a dozen logs and two dozen volunteers in a river and you get a stream restoration project. Do it again and again, dozens of times a year and you get The Snake River Cutthroats Chapter in Idaho.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE: LEADERSHIP

In memory of Stan Griffith



CHARLIE CHARLESWORTH (PA)

With over 3,500 TU volunteer leaders across the country helping grow and strengthen chapters and councils, selecting just one person to recognize with a leadership award is daunting.

Charlie Charlesworth, the current Pennsylvania Council President is not, however, being recognized for his role leading TU's largest council in the country - with 48 chapters and over 11,000 members across the state. He is not being honored for the volunteer roles he has held in the past - nearly every position at the chapter and council level - some at least twice!



What makes a 65-year-old, U.S. Marine Corps veteran snap a selfie in front a waterfall with a bunch of college kids? Passion. Passion for developing the next generation of river stewards and conservation leaders. That's what.

Instead, we choose to recognize Charlie for the long line of chapter leaders he has helped build over the years, for the next generation of conservationists he has inspired to step forward and for the focus he has placed so strongly on building succession and sustainability for his chapter and council.

Engaging younger leaders in TU's mission has been at the core of Charlie's efforts since he became active as a volunteer. As president of the Lackawanna Valley Chapter, he helped found a local TU Teens program that has graduated 12 students each of the last five years and grown to incorporate a one week conservation camp. He nurtured and inspired a 5 Rivers College Club, the Keystone Creek Walkers, to become active on campus and he helped develop a Women's Initiative program which has evolved into a strong and thriving group called the Northeast Pennsylvania Fly Girls.

Now here's the kicker, Charlie made sure these new programs would forever be closely tied to the local chapter by requiring that the president of the TU Teens, the Keystone Creek Walkers and the NEPA Fly Girls serve as full voting members on the Lackawanna Valley Chapter's board of directors. And vice versa, each of these programs has a chapter representative on their board.

Need proof that his focus on mentoring young conservation leaders works? Look no further than Charlie's successor as chapter president, Adam Nidoh, who took the helm of the Lackawanna Valley Chapter at age 28.



H. BUD SMALLEY (ID)

Re-establishing native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout throughout their historic range is a challenge that will take many, many decades. But thanks to volunteers like Bud Smalley, the task is less daunting and the future looks more hopeful.

The Portneuf River in southeast Idaho runs 100 miles before its confluence with the Snake River. Degraded by decades of bad land use practices, the river has straightened channels, high sedimentation loads, water quality issues, lack of stream bank stability and the all-too-common woes of inadequate in-stream flows.

Bud and his fellow volunteers in the Southeast Idaho Fly Fishers Chapter saw an opportunity to transform this river into a true gem - a recreational resource to be enjoyed by future generations. While everyone else was telling them it couldn't be done, the science told them the Portneuf River and its tributaries had the potential to come back from the brink.

With a belief in themselves and their local river, collecting partners along the way, and by putting in the hours—literally thousands of them—Bud and his band of volunteers have been turning the tide for half-a-decade and seeing that effort begin to pay off.

There's no doubt a long road is ahead for Bud and the Portneuf River. With two barriers to fish passage now removed, a mile of livestock land fenced off and thousands of willows growing and rooting and stabilizing the banks, progress is slow but constant.

One day soon, the Portneuf River may once again be a blue ribbon stream that runs right through town and it's rebirth will be due to people like Bud, TU volunteers who saw a path forward and were willing to invest their time and talent to make believers out of us all.



How do you get a reticent landowner to allow a restoration project including two miles of habitat restoration, removal of two fish passage barriers, one mile of livestock exclusionary fencing and more than 1,000 trees and shrubs planted over prime grazing grass? Time, patience and the ever-friendly smile of Bud Smalley, that's how.



JOE MARK (VT)

In 2013, when Joe Mark took over the Trout in the Classroom program for the Southwestern Vermont Chapter, he brought a passion for working with children and a lifetime of educational experiences.

Not only did he double the number of programs the Chapter supported, he also deepened the hands-on science taking place in the classrooms and on field trips. Joe makes sure teachers have the support they need and his background in education helps him find ways to integrate the program into their curriculum to encompass lessons in reading, writing, science, math and art.

Students in TIC programs supported by Joe are far more likely to be out in the field gathering Angler Science data and learning about watershed health, too, with water quality and macroinvertebrate studies and more complex efforts from kindergarten through college.

After driving his chapter TIC efforts forward, Joe turned his attention to the statewide program. Within a year, he had doubled the size of the program in the state, and raised over \$30,000 in grant and private funds to support the growth.

Recognizing that a TIC program can touch far more than the students in the schools each year, Joe spearheaded efforts to launch a special statewide TIC website - vermonttroutintheclassroom.weebly.com - and uses it as a platform to share photos, stories, student work and more with the larger community.

He's also garnered important media attention for the program, from local newspaper coverage to statewide television and radio features.

Thanks to Joe's efforts and the support of the Chapter and Council volunteers, the next generation is well on its way to being the stewards Vermont's local rivers need.



You never know when that spark will be lit inside the hearts and minds of the future leaders in conservation. Joe Mark believes that with every new student exposed to hands-on environmental education there is the potential to inspire one more steward of our rivers and our planet.



DISTINGUISHED SERVICE: COMMUNICATIONS

In memory of Jean Bollinger



CARL HAENSEL (MN)

When you invest in communications, in sharing the stories of all the great efforts of your chapters, council and the volunteers who make them tick, you see increased engagement of your members, more volunteerism and the financial support that makes our mission possible.

Carl Haensel knew this when he pushed to re-launch the Minnesota Council newsletter three years ago. His fellow council leaders agreed and decided to invest the annual member rebate as well as some advertising revenue into putting a high-quality, full color, print newsletter in the hands of their members several times a year. The council also reaches new audiences by printing hundreds of extra copies to place at retailers large and small as a way to reach thousands of customers and fellow conservationists and anglers.

From the start, Carl wanted to make sure the newsletter was more than just a megaphone for the Council, and proactively worked to encourage all chapters in the state to share their stories and successes.

He also puts in considerable time recruiting articles and submissions from partner agencies and other organizations demonstrating the joint efforts of so many to protect and restore Minnesota's trout streams.

Reading through the newsletter offers an inspiring glimpse into the power of volunteers to make a difference. And that's the point.

Carl and his fellow council leaders know that their continued efforts are only possible if more people step forward with their time, talent and treasure and the newsletter is a powerful tool to recruit more people with passion to take the next step.

Read the Minnesota Council newsletter for ideas and inspiration online at: www.mntu.org/quarterly-newsletters



To tell our stories, capture our successes and shine a light on our potential is to help change the future of TU by inspiring new members and volunteers to step forward. Carl Haensel ensures that each Minnesota Council newsletter engages readers and helps them find their way to help move our mission forward.

LINDSAY AGNESS (NY)

Each year, thousands of veterans, active duty military and their families across the country experience the camaraderie and friendships that help them heal thanks to hundreds of dedicated TU volunteers.

For the lucky ones who get the chance to spend time on the water with Lindsay Agness of the Seth Green Chapter in New York, they also typically get to experience the wild fight of a large steelhead on the end of their line!

For Lindsay, the path to serving our veterans started when Melissa, a female veteran from Fort Drum who had experienced severe injuries and

trauma overseas, attended a local event hoping to find healing and rehabilitation through fly fishing. Six years later and Lindsay has only redoubled her efforts to get more veterans out on the rivers she knows and loves, wading in the waters that seemingly wash away the pain and anxiety and offer solace, comfort and healing.

Working with her TU chapter, Project Healing Waters and the OASIS Adaptive Sports, Inc., Lindsay and her husband Dave have helped countless veterans.

More importantly, Lindsay has been a strong advocate for supporting veterans in the community, garnering, much-needed local support and even engaging her employers through workplace grants, matching funds and volunteer days.

Just like any TU volunteer working with our veterans will tell you, Lindsay is quick to point out that she gets just as much from the experience as veterans receive by participating.

The friendships forged, the bonds built on the water and in the classroom, are important steps for these veterans as they begin their journey of healing. They, and TU, are fortunate to have such a tireless and dedicated volunteer as Lindsay and her warm and open smile to welcome them home.



“As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them.” —John F. Kennedy

The bonds Lindsay Agness forges with the many veterans she takes fishing, including Stevie Wall, are as powerful as the steelhead they tackle on the Salmon River in New York.



COSTA DEL MAR

How do you get hundreds of eager, college-aged anglers to invest their time and energy into conservation?

First, you design a special program for them, like the 5 Rivers college club. Then, you find an amazing corporate partner to invest in the program - and in the future of our rivers and streams - with a major donation and a ton of cool factor!



Costa Del Mar is one of Trout Unlimited's most dynamic corporate partners, and over the past five years, this partnership has grown not only in size but significance. As the primary supporter of the TU Costa 5 Rivers program, Costa is investing in the next generation of conservation-minded anglers and annually encouraging hundreds of college-aged fly fishers to "See What's Out There" via a nationwide network of nearly one hundred college clubs.

These clubs foster leadership and community on each campus and are the crucial capstone experience for young anglers involved in the TU Headwaters Youth Education program. Through Costa's belief in TU and our important conservation work, the Costa/TU partnership evolved into the creation of a national TU Costa 5 Rivers Coordinator position and on-going support of the east coast 5 Rivers Rally and its Colorado counterpart, the 5 Rivers Rendezvous.

More importantly, having the sponsorship of the world's leading sunglass manufacturer offering discounted products, giveaways and promotions for the most active students in the program, provides incentives that keep the clubs relevant on campus and make them attractive to new members.

Costa and its team - passionate anglers like us - are not content to sit back and let their financial contribution do the talking. Their staff are intimately involved with the program, supporting TU's Headwaters staff at events and activities and also providing guidance and innovative ideas for where to grow the program next. They truly go the extra distance to make a difference in the lives of so many future conservationists.



TOM HORNING (OR)

Sometimes it's the quiet ones, the meticulous students of nature who head out into the field in search of answers, who come back with the information that opens new doors of opportunity for conservation.

To say Tom Horning's long career as a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service has led to incredible things for native trout and salmonids is a gross understatement. To say, however, that this quietly passionate man only hoped to do his part, is to capture the essence of how he went about his work for decades with results that will benefit Oregon's rivers forever.

In the early 1990's, when a hydro power diversion was proposed for the Oak Grove Fork of the Clackamas River, Tom marshalled TU volunteers to help with a trout population study that showed a thriving and important coastal cutthroat population and helped not only protect the river from water diversions but also drove regulation changes and bag limits to further protect these fish.

On the Roaring River in the 2000's, Tom's survey work discovered a unique, previously unknown Redband Rainbow population that had evolved isolated from other species by a waterfall. His findings helped secure a pristine, 40,000 acre federal roadless area in the watershed.

These are just two examples from Tom's career, and the impact of his work on Oregon's rivers can never be fully measured as his field work and data likely played a role in many major policy and land protection measures. Thanks to Tom, and to thousands of angler scientists like him, we can make decisions about stream protection based on the best available data.



The power of the pen can change the world. In this case, the pen wielded by Tom Horning, a fisheries biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, wrote down the data gathered in the field over 20-plus years that identified unique native trout species, proved salmon were spawning where they were thought to be long gone and helped lead to the protection of the rivers these fish live in by bolstering the case for roadless areas and against hydro-power expansion.



TRAVIS SWARTZ (ID)

If Trout Unlimited had to choose a national spokesperson to spread our message far and wide, well, let's just say that Hank Patterson probably wouldn't be our first choice. Or our second choice. To be honest, he probably wouldn't even be on the short list of choices we'd consider.

But, as the saying goes, you've got to 'dance with the one who brought you' and like it or not, we just can't seem to get Hank to stop serving as our spokesperson anyway - believe us, we've tried. Repeatedly.

But Hank, and the man behind the legend, Travis Swartz, have definitely helped catapult TU into a new level of awareness and to reach a new, younger audience in a fun and engaging way through the video shorts and movies online at www.hankpatterson.com.

In a recent video, Hank explains to some new fly anglers how Trout Unlimited helps each trout have the opportunity to realize its full potential - even if that means becoming a "fishtronaut and swimming on the moon." Even if his messaging is a little off, his passion is undeniable and for that we owe a huge debt of gratitude to Travis Swartz.

Beyond supporting our mission and always being there when we need him, Travis has taken on many causes and used the Hank Patterson soap box to get the message across. Perhaps nothing is more meaningful to him than efforts to help Reel Recovery - an organization that uses fly fishing retreats to help men with cancer heal their body, spirit and mind - in memory of his friend and the co-creator of Hank Patterson, Reese Ferguson, who lost his battle with cancer this April.

TU, and the rivers we work to protect, have one of our strongest allies in Travis Swartz.



'Snap It!' Whether it's his passion for fishing and protecting our rivers - or his alter-ego's ability to drop side-splitting one-liners about people who aren't TU members, there's no doubt that our rivers, our organization and our poor, threatened, native Cuttyrainbrown trout owe a huge debt of gratitude to Travis Swartz.



THANK YOU FOR BEING A VOLUNTEER!



Trout Unlimited's more than 3,500 passionate and dedicated volunteer leaders who drive our 400 chapters and councils forward are the heart of our organization's strength and the major drivers of the impact we make together improving our rivers and watersheds.

Thanks to all of you, and the local level work that each of you do every day, TU is one of the most effective coldwater conservation organizations across the country and a model of how effective, local grassroots action and advocacy can change the world.

Please take some time to consider nominating someone in your community, in your chapter or council for a TU award in the future. To make a nomination for the 2017 National Conservation awards visit tu.org/awards. We hope you'll join us for that celebration in Roanoke, Virginia on Fri., Sept. 29.



SPONSORS



**IF YOU TAKE CARE OF THE FISH,
THE FISHING TAKES CARE OF ITSELF**



Josh Duplechian photo



NOMINATE YOUR LOCAL VOLUNTEERS

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