

The Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited

Native and Wild Non-Native Salmonid Management Position – Adopted 4-3-2014

Arizona is fortunate to have historic populations of both several native trout species (Apache, Gila) and many well established populations of several wild (naturally reproducing) non-native salmonids (Rainbow, Brown, Brook, and Grayling).

The conservation of all Arizona's native trout and wild non-native salmonids is a priority of the Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited (AZTU) and the Arizona Trout Unlimited Chapters (AZTUCs); We believe that both native and wild non-native fishes of all salmonid species are important components of the state's aquatic communities. Both native and wild non-native salmonids have important cultural, recreational, scientific, economic and legacy values.

AZTU and the AZTUCs endeavor to ensure Arizona's native trout and wild non-native salmonids persist over time in both numbers and geographic scope so that they can be enjoyed by future generations for sporting, scientific, cultural, and economic purposes.

AZTU and AZTUCs follow Trout Unlimited's (TU) National Conservation Agenda and believe that fisheries management policies for Arizona should be applied on a stream by stream basis, always following good scientific processes.

AZTU and the AZTUCs consider various factors in developing rigorous positions on potentially conflicting native and wild non-native fish management issues in Arizona, and we therefore believe these positions support Trout Unlimited's Mission and Vision:

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

TU 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.

Factors to be considered in developing positions concerning the placement, control or eradication of wild non-native salmonids in areas where they may pose a threat to native species:

- Native salmonids are our top conservation priority: TU's North American Salmonid Policy (NASP, 1998) establishes conservation of native salmonids as the organization's top priority.
- Conservation of wild, non-native salmonids is also important and within our mission. Together, the NASP and TU's vision statement establish that conservation of both native and wild, non-native salmonids are important AZTU and AZTUCs objectives.
- The goal of AZTU and AZTUCs is to have many diverse self-sustaining coldwater fish populations, both native and non-native, that are healthy enough to support angling opportunity. If it is not possible to establish a self-sustaining native trout population in a water system, AZTU or an AZTUC may elect to support alternate means of providing fish for sport-fishing purposes after considering relevant ecological, economic and social factors.
- The NASP establishes the science-based principles and policies that guide the conservation work of AZTU and the AZTUCs.
- We oppose stocking (or supplementation) in waters where healthy, self-sustaining salmonid populations or stocks adequate for angling opportunities already exist and can be maintained with appropriate regulations. AZTU and the AZTUCs believe this policy should be extended to prohibit stocking of non-native trout species in fishless waters where native trout populations could reasonably be expected to exist with appropriate regulations.
- Socio-economic factors are to be considered in taking positions on management of wild, non-native fish and such factors include, but are not limited to: A) whether the removal of a wild, non-native population would eliminate fishing opportunities that could not be provided by restoration of native salmonids; and B) the level of local community support for removal.
- Management of wild, non-native salmonids must be determined on a case-by-case basis. While it is our top priority to protect native salmonid species, every watershed and its socio-economic context are unique. Attempting to control or eradicate non-native salmonids for the purposes of native fish conservation may not be practical or ecologically-advisable in all situations. Where ecological, cultural or economic considerations do not support eradicating non-native salmonids in a watershed where native trout conservation is a goal, AZTU and the AZTUCs will work with state and federal agencies in seeking the best way to advance native salmonid conservation while maintaining non-native salmonid populations.