



National Leadership Council

Climate Change Workgroup

January 16, 2026

Workgroup Co-Chair: Jeff Holtzem, jeff2002h@yahoo.com & Peter Gray, bccpjgray@yahoo.com

2025 CCWG Accomplishments

- Meet with the Climate Change Development Team every two weeks to plan actions.
- Added 18 new CCWG members largely as a result of a TROUT magazine article calling for CCWG Climate Change Coordinators (CCC)
- As requested, TU added CCC to the list of state Council and Local Chapter Leaders options.
- Conducted monthly CCWG meetings with Lindsay Slater and other TU leaders on TU policies issues and CCWG actions on climate change
- Created five Climate Change Resource Modules: Climate Change Coordinator (CCC) Role; Climate Change Science; Climate Change Adaptation; Climate Change Advocacy; Climate Change Education
- Presented on-line TU sponsored training sessions for these modules that were attended by 30 to 50 TU members. TU President, Chris Wood provided an invitation to TU members for each session.
- With Doug Agee's support developed and implemented a www.tu.org URL to house the CCC Resources Modules and Training Session recordings
<https://www.tu.org/ClimateChangeCoordinator>
- Developed a TU Climate Change Community Forum for messages and discussions about Climate Change.
- With Doug Agee's support, we created a structured TU Climate Change Community Forum Library of CCWG meeting Minutes, Coordinator Orientations, TU Climate Change Resources, Other Climate Change Resources, and Coordinator Action Posts.
- Began developing a CCWG AI/Data Centers Environmental Impact Resource Module based on the previous CCWG modules: developed a file structure to house the resources; and collected and summarized numerous resources according to a vetted outline consistent with the TU Government Affairs DRAFT Data Center Policy paper.
- Requested and received approval for CCWG leaders to speak at 3 of the 4 TU Regional Rendezvous sessions.
- Invited Dr Helen Neville to present Trout and Climate Change at CX3
- Explored with TU staff tracking TU National's carbon footprint



National Leadership Council Land Conservancy Work Group January 5, 2026

Workgroup Chair: Bill Pastuszek, 617-290-830, billp@shepherdnet.com

Workgroup Meeting Dates: The WG meets on the second Tuesday of the month.

Workgroup Goals:

1. Identify and fund projects that meet the criteria of the Cold Water Conservation Fund (CWCF)
2. Create awareness of the importance of Land Conservancy and the availability of funding for projects that meet the criteria of the CWCF.
3. Find funding sources to continue the work of the CWCF.

Workgroup Activity:

1. The Workgroup met regularly. A few months had no meeting as there was no substantive business to discuss.
2. We discussed potential grants. (Grants are issued on a 1:1 match by a TU chapter or council)
3. We discussed outreach activity
4. We created documentation to rate applications, and refined the grant criteria.

Workgroup Accomplishments:

1. We determined that we wanted to sunset the Schuyler Sweet Gift and we had a successful year in providing "jump start" funding for projects in MA, NH, and Alaska.
2. We provided a major grant for the McGalloway Project in Maine.
3. We provided outreach to several interested chapters and councils.

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

1. Poor interest in participating in the WG from NLC reps.
2. Challenged in being able to market the Fund to interested parties.
3. As we draw down the remaining funds provided by the Shuyler Sweet Gift, we are challenged to find additional funding sources.

Workgroup Next Steps:

1. Identify worthy projects and fund them.
2. Raise awareness of Land Conservancy concepts within TU. (We will probably provide outreach to councils and chapters in those states where we have WG participation and probably approach staff again.)
3. Raise funds for the CWCF
4. Follow-up and get progress reports of recently funded projects.



National Leadership Council

Native Trout Workgroup

January 16, 2026

Workgroup Chair: Trevor Fagerskog, Co-Chair: Eric Tichay

Workgroup meeting dates: 4th Wednesday of the month at 8:00 pm Eastern

Workgroup Goals:

- 1) The NTWG will hold 10 monthly calls annually that will support the TU Strategic Plan, Priority Waters, and expand a diverse corps of staff, volunteers, and partners.
- 2) The NTWG will publish 1 poster and 2 brochures to support the development of educational, informational and reference materials describing native species status, restoration and science projects, and threats such as climate change, invasive species, water demand, and energy development.
- 3) The NTWG will promote the increase and sustainment of members & supporters by communications through the TU community and website and participate in the TU annual meeting, two regional TU meetings and representation at two regional fly fishing or outdoor shows.

Workgroup Activity:

- 1) The NTWG held 9 monthly calls. The April meeting conflicted with the Eastern Regional Rendezvous.
- 2) The NTWG published 2 brochures and the "Get to Know Your Native Trout Series" *Bull Trout* poster. The poster was recently shipped for distribution. The brochures are titled, (1) *Get to Know Your Native Trout, Salmon and Char!* and (2) *Save our Native Trout; Stop the Spread of Invasive Fish Species for Our Future*.
- 3) NTWG members attended 3 regional rendezvous, set up booths at fly fishing shows (Lancaster, PA), and held a Virginia Council Priority Waters event in Marion, Virginia.

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

The workgroup is meeting without a permanent NLC member as the Chair.

Workgroup Next Step:

- The workgroup is considering the goal to evaluate the "*Guidance Document for NLC Resolution on Stocking Non-Native Hatchery Trout Over Native Trout Populations*."
- Select the next "Get to Know Your Native Trout Series" trout poster, recruit a project lead and volunteers to help fund, design, publish, and distribute the poster to Councils, Chapters and partners.
- Recruit an NLC member to Chair the workgroup.



National Leadership Council Great Lakes Workgroup January 16, 2026

Workgroup Chair: Greg Walz, gregorywalz@gmail.com or gwalz@michigantu.org

Workgroup Meeting Dates: 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 8-9pm Eastern:

<https://troutunlimited.zoomus/my/nationalleadershipcouncil>

Workgroup Goals:

- Provide a forum for Great Lakes NLC representatives and interested Council & Chapter leaders to share information and develop advocacy positions on issues affecting the Great Lakes which are recognized as Trout Unlimited Shared Priority Waters
- Advocate for strong policies to protect the Great Lakes and their tributaries

Workgroup Activity:

- Monthly Zoom meetings to share information among group participants and TU staff liaison (Jamie Vaughan)
- Monitoring progress of construction of the FishPass project on the lower Boardman (Ottaway) River in Grand Traverse County, MI. Innovative first-of-its-kind project to construct an automated system to keep unwanted non-native species from entering the river from Grand Traverse Bay
- Ongoing discussion regarding effects of Federal Government budget and staffing cuts affecting programs and agencies working on Great lakes issues

Workgroup Accomplishments:

- Signed-on to Healing Our Waters (HOW) Coalition letters to U.S. Senate and House of Representatives urging full funding for programs and initiatives included within the EPA Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) in the FY26 Federal budget, and a HOW Coalition letter opposing proposed rollbacks to the protection of wetlands and headwater streams under the Environmental Protection Agency Waters of the United States (WOTUS) Rules
- Shared opportunity for TU Councils and Chapters to weigh in on proposed changes to the Roadless Rule on Federal lands

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

- Generally low number of participants on monthly calls, few NLC Reps from Great Lakes states

Workgroup Next Steps:

- Continue to track ongoing and emerging issues affecting the Great Lakes which are Trout Unlimited Shared Priority Waters
- Work with TU staff liaison to develop advocacy and outreach efforts as needed to keep TU members informed and engaged



National Leadership Council
TUDARE Volunteer Steering Committee
January 16, 2026

No report received.



National Leadership Council

Priority Waters Workgroup

January 22, 2026

Workgroup Chair: Jeff Plackis, LI TroutBum@yahoo.com

Workgroup Meeting Dates: 2nd Wednesday of the month, 8pm-9pm via Zoom

Workgroup Goals:

1. Serve as an advocate for Councils and Chapters on issues concerning Priority Waters
2. Facilitate education and awareness of Priority Waters among grassroots members
3. Foster communication between grassroots members and TU National Staff regarding Priority Waters
4. Help facilitate grassroots implementation of TU's National Conservation Agenda as it relates to Priority Waters

Workgroup Activity:

- Continued to assess and prioritize workgroup tasks based on their value and the effort required, focusing on those tasks providing the highest value with the least effort
- Met with TU National leadership and proposed adoption and implementation of a standard template for Priority Waters Strategic Action Plans (SAP) that can be used by TU Staff when developing SAPs (best practice)
- Began to review a summary of the criteria for Priority Waters
- Supported the development of the NCA Survey as it relates to Priority Waters
- Developed an outline of a video explaining Priority Waters for grassroots leaders
- Reviewed and revised Workgroup Charter and Workgroup Message Map

Workgroup Accomplishments:

- Utilizing a decision matrix, determined a final list of tasks to be accomplished by the workgroup over the near-term (< 1 year) and long-term (> 1 year)
- Develop a plan/timeline to complete all near-term (< 1 year) and long-term (> 1 year) tasks

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

- Minor challenge – Continued confusion regarding the Priority Waters initiative among grassroots
- Minor challenge – Slight delay in completion of next steps due to change in workgroup members

Workgroup Next Steps:

- Complete all near-term (< 1 year) tasks within planned timeframe
 - Develop criteria for adding new Priority Waters that Councils and Chapters can understand and use for the future
 - Investigate and review alignment/synergy between the National Conservation Agenda and Priority Waters program (Annual deadline of June 15)
- Reassess plan/timeline to complete long-term (> 1 year) tasks and adjust as appropriate
 - Work with Communications and Grassroots WGs in conjunction with TU Staff to improve Priority Waters webpage, and create a better summary of the Priority Waters initiative

- Develop suggested list of Priority Waters talking points that all TU Staff, Councils and Chapters can reference at events to engage members and supporters; these can include educational descriptions of how this event ties into Priority Waters
- Ensure that the new TU branding line... "Every river needs a champion!" ... addresses urban rivers, "homewaters", etc. that may not be captured as a Priority Water. Additionally, remind chapters, councils and staff that they are empowered to decide what coldwaters are most important to them. (Tie into previous task regarding education/engagement)
- Develop tips and tricks for councils and chapters to increase community engagement (on Priority Waters and projects in general); possible online training or video; this task would need to be funded
- Support the development of an online repository of Priority Waters projects documents; we would need to work with TU National Staff to help/assist with this effort; this task would need to be funded



National Leadership Council

Responsible Mining & Energy Workgroup

Date: January 16, 2026

Workgroup Chair: Jeff Arterburn, jeffgilatu@aol.com

Workgroup Meeting Dates: 3rd Wednesday of the month, 8pm ET via Zoom

Workgroup Goals:

- We provide oversight for mining- and energy-related policies and legislation and facilitate analysis and discussion to identify potential impacts to native salmonids and/or sensitive cold watersheds.
- We engage TU Councils and Chapters working on mining and energy projects and/or their remediation including all stages of development (exploratory to permitting and operation to closeout). The workgroup will facilitate discussion and help to identify TU staff contacts with relevant expertise, provide critical reviews and comments, and work to update and develop new informational resources.
- We seek to assist TU Councils/Chapters with informed engagement and grass roots advocacy associated with mining- and energy-related issues and specific projects.

Workgroup Activity:

The RM&E works closely with **Ty Churchwell, TU Mining Coordinator**, and **Tasha Sorensen, TU Western Energy Lead**, to evaluate policy, legislation and specific mining, energy and/or remediation projects that are important for TU Councils and Chapters. Meeting agenda are structured to address current topics and associated deadlines, presentations feature invited speakers and experts, cooperation with other workgroups is emphasized where possible, and workgroup members work offline to provide critical reviews and commentary, and contribute to the development of information resources

- The RM&E WG covered a variety of **mining-related topics** during the June-December 2025 reporting period: 1) **abandoned mines** and monitoring the status and progress of **Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Pilot Program**; 2) the **Bonita Peak Mining District superfund site** restoration and trout recovery project that is being led by TU; 3) understanding the U.S. list of federally designated **critical minerals** and how expedited permitting can result in faster approvals and federal support for mining.
- The RM&E WG covered multiple **energy-related policy/legislation and oil/gas leasing topics** during the June-December 2025 reporting period: 1) executive actions and agency policy changes in **oil and gas leasing** with potential for major impacts on protection of cold water fisheries; 2) the use of the Congressional Review Act (**CRA**) to repeal Bureau of Land Management's resource management plans; 3) changes in the **NEPA process** that are expected to have serious consequences for protection of coldwater fisheries; 4) .
- The RM&E WG addressed overlapping interests with other NLC workgroups including **Native Trout** (Bull trout habitat/Stibnite Mine), **Communications** (Data Centers) and **Great Lakes** (copper and potash mining in the upper peninsula).

Workgroup Accomplishments:

- The RM&E completed an informational resource **Good Samaritan Remediation of Abandoned Hardrock Mines Pilot Program Frequently Asked Questions and Answers** and posted this on the TU web page.

- The **Updated Critical Minerals Report** “*CRITICAL MINERALS: A HUNTING AND FISHING PERSPECTIVE*” was completed and posted on the TU web page.
- We held a **joint meeting with the Responsible Mining & Energy and Native Trout Workgroups featuring TU Policy Lead for the State of Idaho, Michael Gibson** with a presentation focused on the shared interest in the Perpetua Resources Stibnite Mine in Idaho where native salmonid populations that are at risk. This project recently received an accelerated approval with consideration of the production of critical minerals (antimony).
- The RM&E reviewed a draft TU Internal Policy resource document focused on **Data Centers** and will submit collected comments/edits in early January.
- We are following the rapidly evolving landscape for oil & gas leasing on public lands and are contributing to the development of "fact sheets" to inform TU Grassroots on the extent and impacts of these changes.
- The RM&E Community Forum was used to disseminate additional information and links to webinars featuring topics of interest such as **Data Centers, Clean Water Act Briefing, the Good Samaritan Law, Roadless Area Conservation Rule**, etc.

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

Please include here any internal or external obstacles or challenges faced by your workgroup in achieving your goals.

- Mining and Energy Projects and the processes involved in their approval tend to be complicated, and can go on for decades, while rapid changes in policies and rules are being implemented by the current administration, accelerating some approvals and setting back protections for watersheds that were already in place. TU Councils/Chapters may encounter these projects at any stage, all of which make it extremely challenging for the workgroup to prioritize and track these without losing focus. These issues of mining, energy and water quality need to be addressed in the new NCA with the expectation for multi-year engagement. At this time there is uncertainty in how the current NLC Workgroup structure will change with the transition to the new NCA process and the results of prioritization.

Workgroup Next Steps:

The Chair's (Jeff Arterburn, NM) NLC term expires Jan-2026, and the workgroup will need to initiate a **leadership transition** to an active NLC representative. The relevance of the RM&E workgroup and possibly, the need for alternative organization and leadership structure should be determined based on the results from identification and prioritization of mining- and energy-related topics/issues with the new NCA process. The topics of mining, energy, land use policy, and water quality, as currently covered within the RM&E, are all related and frequently overlap, but could potentially be separated into multiple workgroups.

The RM&E will continue to focus on its portfolio of mining- & related water quality-topics. There has been requests for us to develop an **informational resource** for TU Councils/Chapters engaging mining issues, and this may involve updating the 2018 Extraction Handbook and/or developing new documents.

The RM&E will continue to focus on energy-related issues, policy and legislation including changes in **oil & gas leasing**, water and energy consumption impacts of **Data Centers**, and **Energy Generation by Hydropower, Pumped Hydro Storage, and Small Modular Reactors (Nuclear)**. We are communicating with TU WY State Director Leslie Bahn Steen and RM&E workgroup members are planning to participate in a site visit with TerraPower, the nuclear reactor design and development engineering company founded by Bill Gates that is developing a class of nuclear fast reactors and is building its first reactor near the site of a retiring coal facility in Kemmerer, Wyoming.



National Leadership Council

Delaware River Workgroup

Date: January 16, 2026

Workgroup Co-Chairs: Erick Lewis PA NLC Representative (ealewis@geisinger.edu) and Don Kieffer (defferda@aol.com), Co-chairs (Peter Tovar NJ NLC Rep former Co-chair)

Workgroup meeting dates: 4th Monday of the month at 7:30pm EST at <https://troutunlimited.zoom.us/j/3919433663?omn=84909307892>

Annual in-person meetings completed @ FUDR Headquarters in Hancock, NY and @ The Fly Fishing Show in Edison, NJ

Workgroup Overall Goals:

- Protect and enhance the Upper Delaware trout fisheries and watershed.
- Engage conservationists in advocacy efforts to monitor the NYC Delaware River water supply system flows in accordance with FFMP.
- Build effective local and regional coalitions in support of policies that improve UDR water quality and quality trout habitat.

NLC Annual Report on Delaware River Working Group (DRWG) 2025 Activities

Wrote and submitted detailed response to the 2025 Delaware Tailwaters Joint Management Plan* This response was submitted in August 2025 and requested clarification on timing and details of actions to be taken and additional suggestions for implementation of the plan; we also asked for follow-up meetings with the authors but have not yet met face to face.

As background, DRWG participated in the public presentation of the plan last spring raising multiple questions regarding implementation, specifics of proposed studies, project prioritization, funding and how citizens/NGOs can be involved.

*Authors: **New York State Department of Environmental Conservation** (Steve Hurst, Chris VanMaaren, Tim Pokorny, Fred Henson, Gregory Kozlowski) and **Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission** (Daryl Pierce, Nathan Walters, Cooper Barshinger, David Nihart, Kristopher Kuhn)

TU Priority Waters Strategic Plan for UDR

DRWG met with Tracy Brown to review her draft of the Plan and provided specific input and suggestions over several meetings.

Partnership with Friends of the Upper Delaware

DRWG members support and participate in various initiatives and activities sponsored by the FUDR throughout the year. FUDR leadership has also been closely engaged with and helped write our response to the Joint Management Plan.

Ongoing Activities

- Monitor DRBCA reauthorization which remains in federal budget discussions and awaiting approval; TU National's Kate Miller provided an update on TU engagement on this issue.
- Continue to engage with NYC Bureau of Water Supply regarding the Flexible Flow Management Plan (FFMP) with input on water quality and flows volume; also receive direct updates on schedule for completion of Hudson River Aqueduct project, now pushed back until after 2027.
- We participate in Delaware River Basin Commission quarterly conference calls representing TU and the NY/PA/NJ TU state councils' interests to the DRBC Subcommittees on Regulated Flow and Ecological Flow.
- Ongoing participation in RFAC conference calls and advocating for restart of the SEF Team or creation of a new, angler / conservation focused team.

Workgroup Obstacles and Challenges:

- Reconciling urgency of UDWG members who want to see immediate action on specific habitat concerns such as protection of redds during spawning season / year-round fishing with the slower pace of the NYSDEC/PAFBC UDR Joint Trout Management Plan implementation.