



WNTC Completions Reach 43!

The total number of people that have met the WNTI Trout Challenge reached 43 in mid-May of 2020. One individual achieved the Master Caster Level (18 species across 12 states), 9 people achieved the Advanced Caster Level (12 species across at least 8 states), and 33 people achieved the Expert Caster Level (6 species across at least 4 states). Congratulations!

WNTI Trout Challenge Completions Through May 15 2020

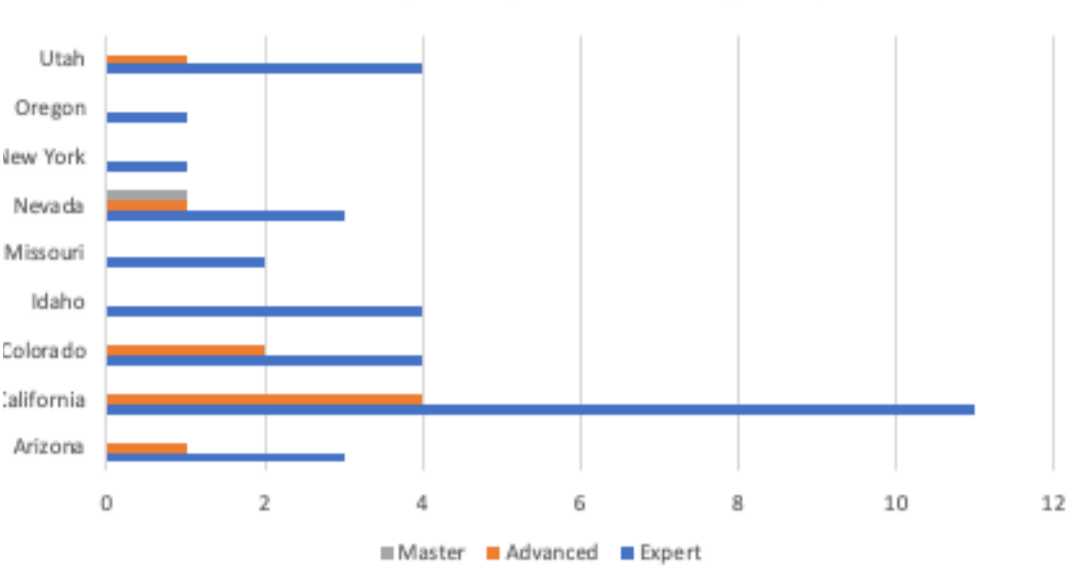


Photo: Mark Hutchings of Provo, Utah earning his Advanced Caster award catching a Bonneville Cutthroat Trout.

First Angler to Complete WNTC Master Caster Level

Steve MacMillan achieved Master Level in the WNTC in October of 2019. He caught Arctic Char, Coastal Cutthroat Trout, Alaska Rainbow Trout, and Dolly Varden in Alaska; Eagle Lake Rainbow Trout, Little Kern Golden Trout, Kern River Rainbow Trout, and California Golden Trout in California, Redband Trout in Oregon, Lahontan Cutthroat Trout in Nevada, Bonneville Cutthroat Trout in Utah, Apache Trout in Arizona, Gila Trout in New Mexico, Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Wyoming, Westslope Cutthroat Trout in Montana, Bull Trout in Idaho, and Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout in Colorado. Steve was the first person to receive both the Advanced Caster and Master Caster Level awards. Steve was the recipient of a Helios 3 flyfishing rod, a sponsor of the WNTC. Congratulations, Steve!



Lillard Fly Fishing Expeditions Supports WNTC

Lillard Fly Fishing Expeditions (LFFE) in Pisgah Forest, North Carolina is jumping on the Trout Challenge bandwagon. For every individual that registers for the WNTC, LFFE will make a donation to WNTI and will enter that individual into a drawing for a Rep Your Water native trout hat (drawing on May 15 and winner announced via Lillard Fly Fishing Expeditions Instagram).

Thank you, Lillard!



LILLARD FLY FISHING EXPEDITIONS



Graphic Credit: Joseph R. Tomelleri.

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout in Texas

Check out Chester Moore's blog on "[The True Trout of Texas](#)," a fascinating exploration of the history of Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout in spring-fed streams in western Texas, and the support for reintroduction and recovery of this species by Texas flyfishers.

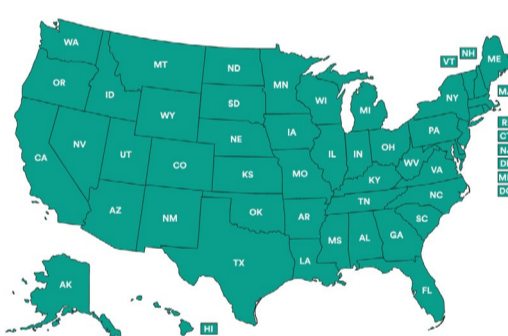
Struggling with Staying Indoors During the COVID-19 Pandemic? PLAN YOUR FALL 2020 WNTC FISHING TRIPS!

These are tough times for everyone as people are challenged with social distancing and stay at home mandates. Use this time to plan your Fall 2020 fishing excursions. WNTI has developed tools to help you, including [a series of fish maps](#) describing the Challenge, the fish species, catch and release techniques, and water bodies in each of the participating 12 states.

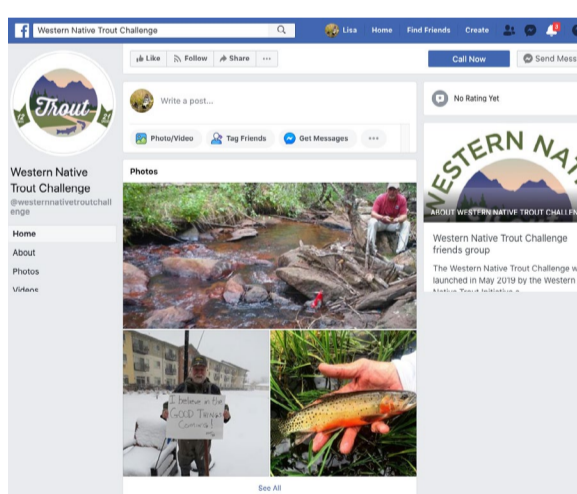
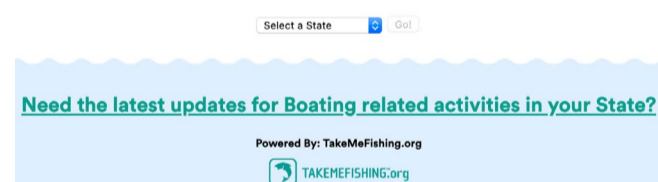
You can take advantage of some other trip planning materials, as well, such as Colorado's "Colo-Road Trips." WNTI recently worked with the Colorado Division of Tourism to develop [3 Days of Outdoor Adventure Cutthroat Trout Fishing in Colorado's Streams and Lakes](#).

And the Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundation is providing regularly-updated state guidance on fishing during the pandemic! Click on the map to the right to obtain the latest updates for fishing

State Agency COVID-19 Response and Updates



Select your State to get specific information about the changes to Fishing in your area



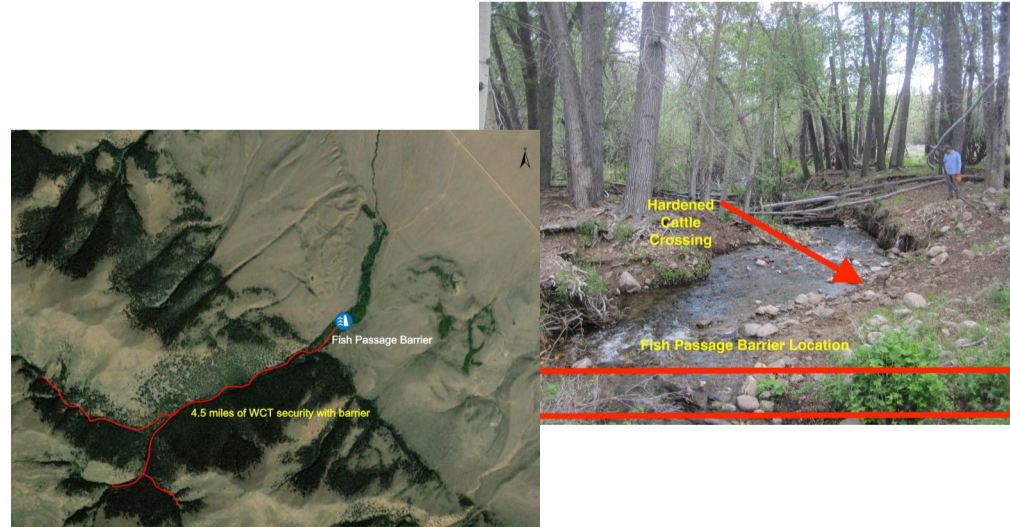
WNTI Launches WNTC Facebook Page

WNTI started a [FB group](#) for anglers who want to share information about the Challenge. This is a separate FB page from the regular WNTI FB page.



Challenge Supports Its First Restoration Project!

Ninety two percent of Western Native Trout Challenge registrations and 100% of donations will be put toward on-the-ground conservation projects. We are happy to report that the first on-the-ground project funded with Western Native Trout Challenge funds will be the Cottonwood Creek Fish Passage Barrier Project for Native Fish Security in Montana. Coordinated by Montana Trout Unlimited, this project reinforces a natural barrier in Cottonwood Creek to protect an aboriginal population of Westslope Cutthroat Trout in high value habitat and will increase the number of fish in this population that are genetically pure and used by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks for reintroductions of Westslope Cutthroat Trout across the Upper Missouri River Basin. [Read more](#)



Western Native Trout Initiative Steering Committee

The Western Native Trout Challenge is a program of the Western Native Trout Initiative. Operating under the guidance of the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the Western Native Trout Initiative is governed by a Steering Committee that represents 12 western states, 5 federal resource management agencies, tribes, and nonprofit fisheries conservation organizations.

- Julie Meka Carter**, Chair, Arizona Game and Fish Department
- Jon Sjöberg**, Vice Chair, Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Drew Cushing**, Utah Division of Wildlife Resources
- Bruce McIntosh**, Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Gillian O'Doherty**, Alaska Department of Fish and Game
- Kirk Patten**, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish
- Martin Koenig**, Idaho Department of Fish and Game
- Craig Burley**, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Paul Dey**, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
- Roger Bloom**, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Pat Saffel**, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks
- Matt Nicholl**, Colorado Parks and Wildlife
- Melissa Dickard**, U.S. Bureau of Land Management
- Yvette Paroz**, U.S. Forest Service
- Robert Clarke**, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Warren Colyer**, Trout Unlimited

- Kelly Hepler**, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies
- Chris Cantrell**, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

STAFF
[Therese Thompson](#), Coordinator



Questions about the Challenge?
Please email Challengeinfo@westernnativetrout.org

