

WESTERN NATIVE TROUT CHALLENGE



An Arctic Grayling caught by Daniel Ritz. Photo credit: Daniel Ritz.

Important Updates to the Western Native Trout Challenge in 2022

We are excited at the success of our Western Native Trout Challenge program to date! Thank you to the over 1,000 anglers who have registered for the program and for those who have already completed or are in the process of completing the three levels of the program. You are all ambassadors for the native trout of the West.

When we launched the program in 2019, we made some well-researched assumptions on expected participation levels and costs. We are still committed to \$23 of each \$25 registration fee going toward conservation of native trout across 12 states, and to youth under 18 registering for free.

With the success of the program in the past 2.5 years, we are needing to make some tweaks to the rules to ensure the program is sustainable for the long term:

- Because the “prizes” for the Challenge (and postage to mail them out) are heavily subsidized, each registration entitles each registrant to one hat, two medallions, and three certificates. Once you have received three prizes/certificates (limit one hat), you need to register again in order to receive an additional hat, medallions and certificates.
- We are changing the rules so that an angler can now request more than one Expert Caster level certificate per year. A small subset of Challenge participants are choosing to focus only on the Expert Caster level and on achieving multiple Expert Caster certificates, instead of using fish caught at the Expert level to count toward the Advanced Caster or Master Caster levels (with careful planning). BUT be aware that if you choose to complete the Expert Caster Level two or three times, each time counts as one of the three certificates included in your registration. We can only provide one hat per registration. If you want additional hats to accompany your second or third Expert Caster certificate, you would need to register again.
- If you have friends or family who are interested in the program but have not yet registered... Please ask them to register for the Challenge before they begin fishing. This is for two reasons: 1) Registering helps us manage this program, predict program expenses, and simplifies our ability to communicate directly with registrants, and 2) We want anglers to read the information in the registration packet on how to prevent potential spread of aquatic invasive species before beginning to travel from state to state. If someone has started their Challenge and has not yet registered, we will still allow fish caught after May 2019 (or June 15, 2019 in Montana) to be counted toward their certificates even if they caught them before they registered. We realize that there is travel involved for this program and will not require an angler to re-visit a state where they caught a qualifying fish after May or June 2019 but were not aware of this program or that they needed to register before they fished.

Western Native Trout Challenge Stats-At-a-Glance

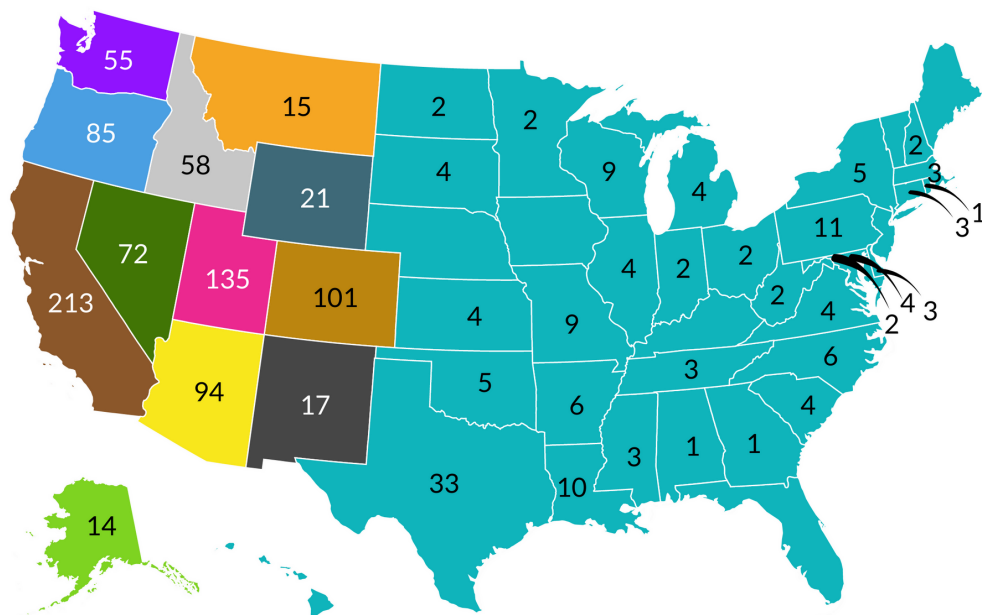
Canadian provinces: 3

A total of 1,074 people have registered for the Challenge to date.

California leads the nation in registrants, followed by Utah, Colorado, and Arizona.

A total of 85% of registrants are adults, and 14% are youth under the age of 18.

Master Casters comprise almost 7% of Challenge completions, followed by Advanced Casters (16%) and Expert Casters (71%). A few people have completed the levels multiple times!



WESTERN NATIVE TROUT 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 Dept.
- Paul Dey, Vice Chair**, Wyoming Game and Fish Department
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- Steve Caromile**, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife
- Chris Crookshanks**, Nevada Department of Wildlife
- Farhat Bajjaliya**, California Department of Fish and Wildlife

- Trevor Watson**, 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

Chris Cantrell, Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies

STAFF

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If you have any questions about the Challenge,
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