



Truckee River Trout Unlimited – Chapter #103-2023 Strategic Plan

Executive Summary: The Truckee River Trout Unlimited Strategic Plan is the Board approved document the chapter will use to guide initiatives and activities from 2023 forward. It has been adapted from the Chapter’s initial plan adopted by the Board in 2019.

National Trout Unlimited has recently revised its strategic plan, and their stated Mission informs and is synonymous with our Chapter’s Mission:

AT TROUT UNLIMITED we fix rivers and streams. We bring people together. We make waters and communities more resilient to the effects of climate change.

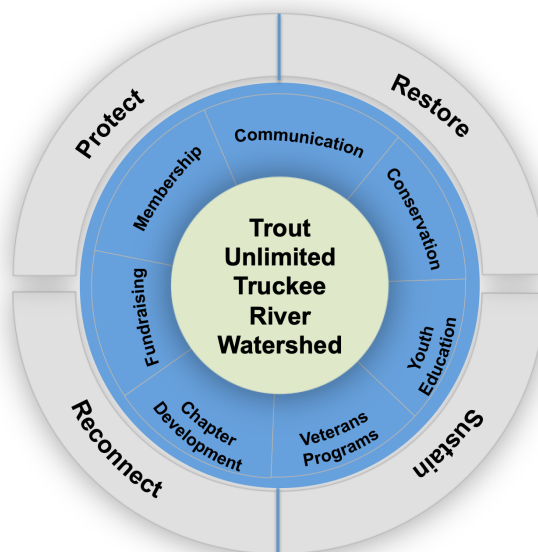
We believe the most complex and seemingly insurmountable challenges can be solved when people come together and get to work.

We know this from experience.

We were founded by anglers who saw that the rivers we loved were being degraded, and not much was being done about it.

The initial Chapter Strategic plan was guided by a comprehensive SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis completed in November 2018. A survey was created and sent to membership seeking input on the SWOT they perceived were integral to the Truckee-Tahoe watershed. The analysis is available at the end of this document and on our website at www.tahoetroutbum.org.

The Chapter’s Mission, as captured in the Strategic plan is made up of four basic watershed strategies, namely, to Protect, Restore, Reconnect, and Sustain.



Programs and Projects Completed 2019-2022 (Planned Pre-Covid)

1. Protect and Restore (Mission Driven Projects)

a. Short Term/Small scale

- Stampede Dam Rd cleanup (Adopt-a-Highway Program) completed, 2021
- Gravel Augmentation Days completed (supported local staff program in 2022)
- Great Sierra River Clean up
- Truckee River Day complete, 2021 and 2022
- Youth Trout Camp 2019, 2020 canceled, 2021 complete

b. Long Term/Large scale

- Truckee TU Youth Trout Pond initiated 2022
- Glenshire Drive Habitat Restoration completed
- Lower Martis Creek/Lake Habitat Restoration
- Highway 89 Section Stocking and Regulation changes
- Polaris Project in conjunction with TRWC no-go decision
- Trout Creek Habitat restoration (Town of Truckee) advisory role
- Prosser Creek post project repair

2. Reconnect and Sustain

Fundraising has been a significant challenge through this period. As a result, expenditures were limited, and the overall goal was to raise money where possible and minimize expenditures such that post-covid the Chapter would be well positioned to spring forward with new initiatives and activities. These fundraising initiatives are highlighted below:

- Membership-stable but minimal new members
- Fishmas Eve-canceled
- Grants-unsuccessful
- Merchandise-minimal success
- Fundraising Events and misc donations-relatively successful, started the period with less than \$20K in the treasury and ended 2022 with more than double that amount

Relationships with local non-profits and public entities are key in performing our Mission. Our involvement with the following is ongoing, in relative order of importance:

Truckee River Watershed Council (TRWC), Truckee River Basin Water Group, Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers, Tahoe-Donner Historical Society, Reno/Carson City/South Lake Tahoe/Sac Valley

clubs, CDFW, USFS, Army Core of Engineers, Town of Truckee, Lahontan Water Board, Bureau of Reclamation, and the Federal Water Master

Programs and Projects 2023-2025 (Planned Post-Covid)

3. Protect and Restore (Mission Driven Projects)

a. Short Term/Small scale

- Gravel Augmentation Days in partnership with the local TU Staff
- Trash and Cast Reno support leadership and participate in lower river clean-up
- Truckee River Day in partnership with TRWC
- Youth Trout Camp in partnership with the local TU Staff

b. Long Term/Large scale

- Youth Trout Pond - partnership with Tahoe-Donner Historical Society, initiated 2022; Go-no-go decision in 2023
- Glenshire Drive Habitat Restoration completed; additional monitoring to be implemented in conjunction with local TU Staff
- Lower Martis Creek/Lake Habitat Restoration
- Truckee River Watershed Council – partnership with Truckee River Watershed Council' look for "proof-of-concept" project to help fund and carryout.

4. Reconnect and Sustain (in support of Mission Driven Projects)

Fundraising has been relatively successful in the last year, and our treasury has more than doubled to approximately \$45K. As mentioned above, expenditures were kept to a minimum through the prior planning period, which positions us to fund key programs going forward. These fundraising initiatives are highlighted below:

- Membership-increase outreach and volunteer opportunities
- Fishmas Eve-reinitiate in 2023, consider new venue/approach
- Grants-seek key opportunities where we can effectively compete with other non-profits
- Merchandise-expand outreach and sell TroutBum SWAG through local shops and events
- Community engagement and support
- Reconsider a high value doner event/banquet

Social Media/outreach has been a significant challenge through this period. As a result, membership has remained static, and our ability to enhance our influence with other conservation

related partners has been challenging. The one bright spot in 2021/22 has been the upgrade of our Chapter website and hosting platform. This is ongoing, and more enhancements are planned for 2023. Additionally, our Facebook website has been static for several years, due to inability to gain access (a legacy issue). This will also be resolved in 2023.

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Addendum: completed in 2019

Strategic Plan SWOT White Paper

The purpose of this project is to inform a strategic planning exercise directed at continually improving our region's fisheries, and particularly the Truckee River and its tributaries. The strategic plan, once completed, will be a working document guiding the conservation efforts of Truckee Chapter (#103), as administered and implemented by its Board of Directors. The White Paper captures the current Chapter and Key Stakeholder views of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (aka SWOT) to our fishery.

The Process:

Individuals engaged in the conservation efforts for the Truckee/Tahoe watersheds were identified and asked to give input. Input was obtained in person, or in writing via an online survey.

The data and views collected are summarized in this document, and will be the basis of recommendations presented in the Strategic Plan. The White Paper will be an appendix top the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan will be shared with all those contributing to the inputs, as well as the Truckee TU Chapter membership as well as local organizations such as The Truckee River Watershed Council and Tahoe Truckee Fly Fishers.

The Board of Directors will endorse a final SWOT analysis and it will direct the Chapter's overall strategic plan, targeted for issuance in the winter of 2018.

Survey Results:

41 responses were obtained from an online survey (see Appendix 1). Approximately 300 online survey requests were made, primarily from TU Truckee membership as well as TFFF membership. This represents a 13% overall response rate which is considered good. In addition, 10 in-person interviews were held during September and October, 2018. Trevor Fagerskog, Dan Maher, and Dave Lass carried out the interview discussions with Key Stakeholders. The survey questions were the basis of the interviews. Key stakeholders and their organizations are listed below:

Lisa Wallace, Truckee River Watershed Council
Richard Anderson, Nevada County Supervisor, California Fly Fisher Editor
Roger Bloom, CDFW, NorCal Head of Inland Fisheries
Brian Slusser, Little Truckee Permit Holder
Dave Stanley, Little Truckee Permit Holder
Victor Babbitt, Fly Shop Owner, Little Truckee Permit Holder
John Marcacci, Past TFFF President, long time Truckee fly fisherman
Frank Piscotta, Little Truckee Permit Holder, Past TFFF President
John Jones, Board Member San Francisco Fly Casting Club
Chip Brown, past Board Member San Francisco Fly Casting Club

Bruce Ajari, TTFF Past President, longtime Truckee Fly fisherman,

Results:

Of the 41 survey responses, just over 50% have been fishing the Truckee/Tahoe region for over 10 years (~37% for greater than 20 years). Approximately 50% of respondents also consider the Truckee River and its tributaries their home waters.

Trend over time of the quality of the fishery

Overall the view in the survey is that the quality of the fisheries, on average, has declined, with some notable exceptions. Significant declines include the Martis Lake tailwater, stretches of featureless river along the Truckee River, and several high mountain marshes that either have disappeared due to man made obstacles, or significant drought related phenomena.

Offsetting the declining view of the fishery quality are positives such as the Truckee and Little Truckee remaining significant and highly valued blue ribbon trout rivers.

External factors over time affecting the quality of the fishery

Water flow fluctuations, climate change including drought, and sedimentation in the basin are regarded as the most significant threats to the Truckee/Tahoe basin fishery. External factors over time affecting the quality of the fishery

Organizations that most impact the quality and sustainability of our fishery

The Federal Water Master is viewed as having the most (negative) impact on the quality of our fishery *vis a vis* flow controls. The Water Master is influenced by many organizations in turn, including multiple downstream water rights holders, the Pyramid Lake Paiute Indian tribe, California Department of Water Resources and the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board in Nevada

Attempting to influence the above stakeholders in a positive direction are all the other organizations one might imagine, including Trout Unlimited, CDFW, Truckee River Watershed Council, State Water Quality Control Board, Truckee Meadows Water Authority, Truckee River Basin Water Group, and the USFS.

Top Targets for Habitat Restoration

The Truckee River along Glenshire drive (aka "toilet bowl") and in the town of Truckee are the top mentioned areas for restoration. Also mentioned with some regularity were the Little Truckee (presumably the middle lot section), as well as tributary headwaters well upstream of Stampede Reservoir.

Single biggest threat to the health of the fishery

The lack of adequate water flows and drought are viewed as the single most important threat. The increasing population of humans in the basin are putting significant pressure on the fishery, be they anglers or otherwise. Linked to this are "downstream" effects including increased sedimentation (road run off from traction sand), erosion, surface water contamination, etc.

Views on past conservation efforts in the basin

The lower Little Truckee and Perazzo Meadows restorations are viewed positively. The Prosser restoration is viewed negatively.

The work the TRWC is doing is viewed as very significant overall to the fishery, and meadow restoration should be recognized as an integral part of fish habitat restoration.

Of potential importance is the observation that data are needed to ultimately call a restoration a success.

What species should we target in our conservation efforts?

Wild rainbow trout were highlighted by 83% of the survey respondents, followed by Lahontan Cutthroat at 80%, and Brown Trout at 68%. Hatchery trout were mentioned at 15%. Native whitefish were highlighted 10% of the time as write-in answers.

Changes to trout food sources over time?

Most mentioned were the impact of fluctuating water flows on most bug populations. Although these changes are most often short term due to the resilience of nature, they do impact fish populations.

Having said that, respondents appear to acknowledge that bug populations naturally change from year to year, and it is hard to identify any one pattern of change.

Has stocking of hatchery trout been positive or negative?

59% of respondents view stocking as positive, and 39% view it as a negative. Key stakeholders, when interviewed seem to all feel hatchery stocking is generally positive.

Support seasonal stocking in Truckee River tributaries?

60% of respondents are yes, and 40% no.

Catch and keep or Catch and Release, or both?

63% of 38 respondents practice catch and release, and 37% are both, depending on the water fished. Notable is that no one in the survey universe listed catch and keep alone.

Do you support the current open seasons?

62% of the 39 respondents said yes, and 38% said no.

How could regulations be improved to better manage wild trout populations?

35 respondents answered this question. Moving to catch and release only was mentioned the most often relative to the LT. Closure of the LT in winter was mentioned often as well, (aka Prosser regs). Also mentioned multiple times were establishment of more catch and release regulations across the watershed.

Should sport fishing regulations be simplified?

28% of 39 respondents said yes, and 72% said no.

If yes above, how should the regulations be made easier?

Mentioned most often by 12 respondents was to make the regulations uniform for a body of water, as opposed to some waters (e.g. Truckee) that have regulations by section of water.

Any other comments about regulations?

Mentioned the most by 19% of respondents was to increase enforcement. Also mentioned by many were specific changes to catch and take regulations, lowering the take limit.

Anything else?

Limiting guide days (on the LT) was mentioned several times across a few different questions.

Middle and North fork Yuba, American above Folsom, Jackson Meadows, and Milton reservoir were mentioned as restoration possibilities. Also noted for restoration were the west side Tahoe creeks, perhaps stock with LCTs as they have not yet recovered from the 1997 flood.

Significant population growth that continues to increase in magnitude, resulting in increased pollution, trash, and poor land use practices

Multiple for-profit organizations not always in sync with watershed conservation (e.g. rafting companies, golf courses, off road companies, agricultural water demands downstream, etc.)