

TROUT UNLIMITED
STRATEGIES FOR THE
NATIONAL CONSERVATION AGENDA
Fiscal Year 2001

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Introduction

The mission of Trout Unlimited (TU) is to protect, restore, and conserve coldwater resources and the watersheds on which they depend. Each year TU's National Resource Board (NRB) meets at the annual convention to determine the national conservation agenda for the entire organization. The purpose of the national conservation agenda is to charter the course for all components of TU – national office staff, state councils, chapters and members – to work together over the coming year on a shared enterprise to implement TU's mission. The purpose of the national conservation agenda strategy document is to flesh-out the objectives and tasks that will be employed by all components of TU in the coming year to achieve the goals of the conservation agenda. The strategy document is intended to be specific enough to serve as a roadmap for our work in the coming year, yet flexible enough to allow for adjustments warranted by changes that occur with the issues that we are addressing. It should define, as clearly as possible, the respective roles of TU's components in implementing the Conservation Agenda.

In an effort to make this document more useful, this year we are providing an executive summary of the strategy, the “**EZ version.**” The intent of the EZ version is to increase the likelihood that the gist of the strategy will be read, circulated and utilized by our volunteers. Please circulate the EZ version and the longer version, the “**Long Form,**” to the chapters and interested volunteers in your jurisdiction, and please let us know what else we can do to improve the utility of the documents. Further, we will be placing the draft and final of the EZ and long form on the web and will be inviting comments on them. Feel free to provide comments to us via the web.

We will use the website as a more meaningful accountability tool. We will update the NRB and Council chairs on progress made on agenda items twice during the year, in April and July as usual. But also, we will report on progress made on the agenda periodically through the year. I encourage you to check our progress to stay informed about we have, and have not, achieved throughout the year.

Over the past eight years, the NRB has focused the TU conservation agenda down to four major categories, water quality, instream flows, Pacific and Atlantic salmon, and wild salmonid conservation. Set out below, in the long form of the draft strategy for each of these categories, are proposed goals for each, the major agenda items determined by the NRB for each, a series of background statements intended to describe the status of the issues, and a series of accompanying strategies and tasks intended to address the issue. The EZ version summarizes the goals, major agenda items, and objectives and tasks for each.

Finally, it is important to remember that, over the years the NRB has established a mature conservation agenda, with enduring issues. Thus, in the past few years, there have been only modest changes to the agenda. Increasingly, the NRB has examined how we can better implement agenda items using the full people power of TU. This effort to improve implementation has led to increased collaboration between national staff and councils/chapters, strengthening the organization as we pursue our mission. I encourage you to review the issues presented here (especially those that pertain to your region, state or chapter) with an eye toward ways your local efforts can help strengthen the national effort and vice versa.

EZ Executive Summary

I. Water Quality

Goal: To protect and restore the water quality aspect of trout and salmon habitat across the nation.

Polluted Runoff/Clean Water Act

Objective: Reduce the adverse impacts to coldwater resources from polluted runoff (nonpoint source) pollution.

Tasks:

- Protect and strengthen the Clean Water Act and seek increased funding for polluted runoff control programs.
- Work with, promote, and ensure accountability of watershed councils, including support for legislation designed to improve fish habitat using watershed council mechanisms, “The Fishable Waters Act.”
- Advocate for salmonid habitat protection and restoration in Forest Service’s proposals to reform its road management policies.
- Increase TU staff and member participation in USDA’s buffer initiative and other conservation programs, especially EQIP and WHIP, and increase program funding through Farm Bill reauthorization.
- Continue to provide TU legal staff to assist TU members who are addressing inadequate agency responses to flood remediation work, and continue to press a national strategy to improve the regulatory response in the wake of flood emergencies.
- Develop a TU position paper on factory farms to educate TU members about the risks posed by factory farm waste and provide guidance on addressing local factory farm threats, and in consultation with state councils, address individual high risk factory farm threats to coldwater resources.

Acid Mine Drainage

Objective: Restore Appalachian trout streams damaged by acid mine drainage.

Tasks:

- Advocate use of more available federal mine reclamation funding for stream clean-up, work to boost funding for the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative, and promote participation in the Initiative to TU chapters and councils in the Appalachian region

Home Rivers Initiative

Objective: Implement and expand TU’s Home Rivers program, a cooperative, science-based watershed protection and restoration effort designed to focus community energy into coldwater conservation.

Tasks:

- Continue BeaMoc (NY) restoration work with communities and state agencies.
- Complete the Kickapoo (WI) project transition by establishing a grassroots partnership within the watershed.
- Implement the Kettle Creek (PA) conservation plan, including providing assistance to the local watershed council and partnering state agencies to improve water quality in the watershed.
- Develop Home Rivers initiatives for the Jefferson River (MT), South Fork Snake River (ID), and Linville River (NC).

Acid Precipitation

Objective: Document the impacts of acid deposition on trout streams in the Appalachian region and work to reduce sulfate and nitrate deposition from acid precipitation to levels that would protect wild trout populations in the region.

Tasks:

- Assist researchers with conducting long-term monitoring projects, and use the projects to educate the public about the impacts of acid rain on Appalachian watersheds
- Develop an outreach program to enhance public education and increase TU member involvement in our acid rain programs.
- Advocate support for the best possible acid rain reduction bills in the 107th Congress.

Habitat Loss from Hard-Rock Mining

Objective: Prevent high value coldwater streams from being damaged by ill-conceived hardrock mining proposals.

Tasks:

- Continue our efforts to stop the ASARCO/Sterling mine (MT) via increased advocacy on upcoming administrative decisions and increased publicity on the threats posed by the mine
- Monitor activities on the two other mines: the Crandon Mine (WI) and the McDonald mine (MT).

Federal Lands

Objective: Protect and restore coldwater habitat on federal lands.

Tasks:

- Evaluate and act on legislative proposals that impact salmonids on federal lands.
- Continue to implement TU's Federal Lands Policy to protect and restore trout and salmon habitat on federal lands, especially regarding the Forest Service's efforts to implement roadless area protection and road management reforms.
- Continue to use the TU/Forest Service Partnership, Bring Back the Natives, and the Theodore Roosevelt Alliance programs as vehicles for Policy implementation and TU grassroots involvement in federal lands issues.
- Target several problem federal grazing allotments, such as the overgrazing in the Golden Trout Wilderness in the Inyo National Forest, for intensive advocacy for improved grazing practices.
- Pursue adequate appropriations for federal land management agency fisheries, watershed, and grazing management programs during congressional deliberations on appropriations bills.
- Through consultation with NRB members and Don Duff, determine high impact Forest Plan revision processes to engage in, to achieve substantial improvements for protection and restoration of coldwater habitat.
- Gather and disseminate information to TU volunteers about the increasing problem with recreational impacts on federal lands and how to reduce them.

Local Land Use/Development

Objective: Protect and restore salmonids occurring in urban and urbanizing environments.

Tasks:

- Implement the urban trout conservation committee plan, which includes developing a flexible urban coldwater watershed protection and restoration plan/framework that could be used by TU Councils, chapters and providing a clearinghouse of relevant information on urban coldwater protection and restoration efforts and programs.

Land Exchange Impacts on Coldwater Resources

Objective: Protect salmonid habitats on federal lands from being adversely affected by land exchange proposals.

Tasks:

- Implement the Land Exchange committee plan, which includes urging chapters and councils to become more actively involved in proposed land exchanges effecting coldwater resources in their areas, and advocating for greater recognition of coldwater fisheries values in exchange calculation procedures.

II. Instream Flows

Goals: The purpose of TU's instream flows program is to protect and restore flow regimes in streams and rivers which sustain trout and salmon habitat across the nation, as well as improve fish passage and aquatic habitat in and around dams and diversions.

Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) Relicensing

Objective: Utilize the FERC relicensing process and federal natural resource laws to achieve substantial improvements in flows and fish passage for coldwater resources.

Tasks:

- Pursue terms and conditions that favor coldwater fisheries in selected FERC cases, and working with the Hydropower Reform Coalition to block Congressional efforts to pass legislation that would undermine Federal and state resource agencies authorities to prescribe fish friendly flows and fish passage for FERC hydro licenses.

Non-FERC Hydropower Management

Objective: Improve flow regimes, water quality, and fish passage in and around federal and other non-FERC regulated dams.

Tasks:

- Assist TU chapters and councils with their efforts to persuade project operators to improve coldwater habitat management at non-FERC projects, such as Corps dams in the Southeast.

Western Water Project/Eastern Water

Objective: Conduct programs in select states to utilize, and reform, state water rights programs, as well as federal water law, to ensure sufficient instream flows for salmonids.

Tasks:

- In Montana, use market mechanisms to acquire fish flows, compel the state fisheries agency to use its underutilized water rights authorities to protect instream flows, and work with Tribal governments to ensure that their water rights are being used effectively to protect fish habitat.
- In Colorado, use key water rights cases to compel the state's instream flows protection agency to enforce and utilize its authorities, work with the state agency to better develop its voluntary water rights donation program, and work to defeat harmful water proposals, including new dam construction proposals.
- Initiate state water projects in Wyoming and Utah.
- Utilize provisions in federal law to ensure that federal land management agencies, such as the Forest Service, use all available authorities to protect coldwater resources on federal lands.

- Engage fully in legislative and policy debates involving asset transfer and other BuRec reform issues to ensure that adequate legal protections remain in place if asset transfers and other reforms occur.
- Help chapters and councils in the eastern U.S. address interbasin transfer and other water withdrawal proposals that would adversely affect coldwater resources.

Small Dam Removal

Objective: Restore salmonid habitat through selective removal of smaller, uneconomical dams.

Tasks:

- Educate interested publics on dam removal success stories.
- Produce and disseminate reports on economic and engineering aspects of dam removal.
- Develop a citizen tool kit for dam removal and an activist guidebook and public information videotape.
- Develop criteria for successful river restoration involving dam removal.
- Implement the current information clearinghouse on all aspects of small dam removal to assist grassroots efforts to remove small dams.
- Provide TU members interested in dam removal with guidance and technical help with their projects.

III. Pacific and Atlantic Salmon Recovery

Goals: To conserve and restore wild stocks of Pacific and Atlantic salmon throughout their ranges in the United States.

Columbia/Snake River Recovery

Objective: Protect and restore Snake River salmonids.

Tasks:

- Continue to advocate for removal of lower Snake dams in all appropriate administrative, legislative and legal decision-making arenas.
- Continue to seek reforms of other factors effecting Snake River salmonid: hatchery reform, harvest reductions, and habitat restoration, necessary to protect and restore Snake River salmonids.

Watershed Protection and Restoration

Objective: Restore key salmon and steelhead watersheds.

Tasks:

- Participate in constructive watershed protection and restoration programs, especially on private lands, including Lagunitas Creek and Garcia River efforts in northern California, Potlach lands in northern Idaho, and Plum Creek HCP development in Montana.

US/Canada Salmon Treaty/Magnuson Act

Objective: Reduce overharvest of salmonids via sound implementation of the US/Canada Treaty and Magnuson Act.

Tasks:

- Advocate for aggressive implementation of the new US/Canada Salmon Treaty agreement, especially adequate funding to implement its fleet buy-out and other conservation and habitat provisions. Continue to work for responsible harvest regimes under Magnuson Act and other state and federal management programs.

Elwha and Rogue River Dam Removal

Objectives: Restore Elwha and Rogue Rivers via removal of key dams.

Tasks:

- Advocate for substantial funds to continue progress with the Elwha River dam removal and watershed restoration program.
- Advocate removal of the Savage Rapids dam to state and federal agencies, and seek funding authorization in Congress.

Maine Atlantic Salmon Recovery

Objective: Protect and restore wild Atlantic salmon.

Tasks:

- Defend in court the recent listing Atlantic salmon, advocate for strengthening implementation of the Maine state plan for Atlantic salmon recovery, and work with federal agencies to begin implementing necessary regulatory measures on aquaculture operations and drafting the species recovery plan.

Marine Survival and Interception of Salmonids

Objective: Assess factors limiting marine survival of salmonids, and advocate measures needed to increase marine survival.

Tasks:

- In cooperation with TU-Canada, conduct an assessment of the factors limiting marine survival of salmon, including interceptions, and the legal framework for effecting these factors, and make recommendations on how to improve marine survival of salmon.

IV. Wild Salmonid Conservation

Goal: To protect and restore native and wild coldwater resources.

Great Lakes

Objective: Restore coaster brook trout and other salmonids native to the Great Lakes.

Tasks:

- Help implement the Great Lakes coaster brook trout restoration plan, by pursuing initiatives such as Michigan coaster reintroductions, evaluation of a proposed Wisconsin state restoration plan, protection of remnant populations in Michigan and Minnesota, research on lake-spawning coaster populations, and identification of the criteria necessary for a lake-wide recovery of coaster populations.
- Work to restore lake trout by urging Congress to increase funds for the lamprey control program.

Endangered Species Act

Objective: Ensure that the Endangered Species Act remains a strong tool for conserving native salmonids.

Tasks:

- Defend the Act from being weakened during the 107th Congress.

Bring Back The Natives/Embrace A Stream

Objective: Protect and restore native and wild salmonids through cooperative conservation projects.

Tasks:

- Continue resource conservation, advocacy, and research work on nationally significant native fish projects through Bring Back the Natives, Embrace A Stream, Forest Service/TU Partnership, Coldwater Conservation Fund and the Shared Streams programs.

Wild Trout Research/Whirling Disease

Objective: Reduce the harmful impacts of whirling disease on salmonids.

Tasks:

- Continue to secure state and federal funds for whirling disease research and work to ensure that public funds are wisely used to fund highest priority projects.
- Continue private fundraising for high priority projects identified in the national whirling disease assessment.
- Continue to advocate for prohibition on stocking of whirling disease infected fish in Colorado and other states as necessary.

Stocking Policy Reform

Objective: Reduce harmful impacts of hatchery practices on native and wild salmonids.

Tasks:

- Participate in peer review of Atlantic salmon hatcheries in Maine.
- Publish and disseminate a brochure which describes the potential harmful effects (such as spread of whirling disease and other diseases, ecological and genetic effects) to educate anglers about the adverse impacts of bait bucket stocking.
- Advocate cautionary management and stocking policies, including reversal of the Forest Service/BLM policy allowing the stocking of whirling disease-infected fish on federal lands.

Aquaculture

Objective: Prevent harmful impacts to salmonids from aquaculture operations.

Tasks:

- Evaluate threats to salmonids posed by aquaculture operations and disseminate results to TU members interested in aquaculture impact on salmonids.
- Conduct an economic assessment of the Maine Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry to lay the groundwork for potential reforms necessary to protect wild salmon.

State Coldwater Resource Management Plans

Objective: Evaluate state coldwater management plans to enable TU members to advocate for improvements to state plans.

Tasks:

- Survey state fisheries agencies to assess their planning mechanisms to determine whether the planning mechanisms are adequate to incorporate all aspects of progressive coldwater resource management, including strong research and habitat conservation programs as well as harvest regulation and stocking programs.

Invasive Species Management

Objective: Prevent and minimize harmful impacts of nuisance invasive species on salmonids.

Tasks:

- Advocate reauthorization of the Nuisance Invasive Species Act, and full implementation of the Act, to aid in reduction of risks to coldwater species from invasive species, as well as publicize the adverse impacts of invasive species to native coldwater species.

Western Native Trout Project

Objective: Protect and restore western native trout.

Tasks:

- Develop, fund and implement a new TU project to protect and restore western native trout species, to include a focus on assisting TU chapters and Councils with shared native trout conservation projects.

Long Form

I. Water Quality

Goals

The water quality program has the following goals:

- To protect current water quality laws, secure new legislative and regulatory measures that strengthen existing law, and use alternative approaches and incentive programs, such as participation in watershed conservation initiatives, that systematically protect healthy coldwater fishery watersheds and restore unhealthy ones;
- To protect, on a selective basis, waters of national or regional significance against threatened impairments associated with mining and other land development activities;
- To restore nationally or regionally significant waters that are impaired due to water quality problems;
- To disseminate public information that supports accomplishment of the above goals.

A. Polluted Runoff/Clean Water Act

Objective: Reduce the adverse impacts to coldwater resources from polluted runoff (nonpoint source) pollution.

Background

While polluted runoff remains as one of the greatest threats to coldwater resources and the nation's greatest water quality challenge, Congress has now reached its eighth year of failure to reauthorize the Clean Water Act (CWA) and strengthen its polluted runoff program. The CWA has remained intact because Congress has continued to appropriate money for it. Although the Senate Environment Committee chair has promised reauthorization action in the new Congress, it is impossible to predict whether any real action will occur. In the continued absence of CWA legislation, we must look elsewhere for solutions, including supporting various administrative proposals crafted by EPA, growth in TU's Home Rivers Initiative, through supporting and participating in watershed councils and other

cooperative ventures targeted on private lands, through opportunities on federal lands, and through various restoration programs, such as those designed to clean-up streams damaged by acid mine drainage.

The NRB identified three key areas to continue to work on in the polluted runoff area for 2001, forest roads and trails, riparian restoration and floodplain management, and factory farms.

Forest Roads and Trails Poorly designed, and poorly maintained roads and trails are some of the greatest documented threats to coldwater habitats in forested watersheds. The Forest Service has nearly finalized its proposal to prohibit road construction into most existing roadless areas, and it continues to fine tune its broader road reform proposal aimed at improving road maintenance and obliteration efforts. These are significant developments, and TU will work to ensure that trout and salmon habitat on Forest Service lands receive the benefit of the Forest Service initiatives.

Riparian Restoration/Floodplain Management Riparian zone protection and restoration will continue to be a high priority of TU's water quality program. TU will continue to strive to engage the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Bill voluntary incentive-based conservation programs to reduce polluted runoff from agricultural sources. In particular, some TU staff and members are participating in the USDA "buffer initiative" through the Conservation Reserve Program, the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) which is targeted largely on agricultural polluted runoff sources, and the Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP). A variation on the Conservation Reserve Program, called the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), which is designed to protect and restore high priority resources (e.g., the salmonid streams in Washington and Oregon) through protection of stream buffers, also holds considerable promise. Also, set to expire in 2002, Congress will begin work to reauthorize the Farm Bill, which presents a good opportunity to advocate for increased funding and improvements in its conservation programs

Restoration of flood-damaged waters and improved management of floodplains will continue to be a major job for TU. In the past three years, TU has achieved some successes in reforming the way resource agencies do flood remediation work, especially in North Carolina, West Virginia, and New York. Despite progress, there is still a long way to go to reform agency policies and practices, and train agency personnel on proper riparian and floodplain management techniques.

Factory Farm Runoff The proliferation of large factory farms over the past five years has raised a large threat to coldwater resources in some states. Major spills of factory farm waste have devastated waterways from North Carolina to Minnesota. In addition to catastrophic spills, ongoing runoff from factory farm fields threatens receiving waterways. EPA and some states have begun to try to regulate factory farms more rigorously to minimize their impacts. TU must play a larger role in addressing factory farm impacts to coldwater resources.

Tasks

- Defend the Clean Water Act from appropriations bill riders and other legislative efforts to weaken it, work closely with the Administration and Congress on the FY 2002 budget to ensure that the funding levels of FY 2001 are continued or are increased (National office staff and TU grassroots activists) .
- Work with, promote, and ensure accountability of watershed councils. We will continue to participate in local, watershed-based solutions to polluted runoff problems where appropriate, while working to ensure that watershed councils achieve their objectives. We will work to enact legislation designed to improve fish habitat using watershed council mechanisms, called "The Fishable Waters

bill,” which we expect to be reintroduced in Congress in January 2000. (TU national office staff; interested members, chapters and councils).

- Support EPA and state programs designed to 1) clean-up impaired waters using total maximum daily load allocations of pollution (TMDLs) and 2) reduce water quality impacts of factory farms (TU national office staff; interested members, chapters and councils).

- Forest Roads and Trails
 - Advocate for salmonid habitat protection and restoration in Forest Service’s proposals to reform its road management policies and advocating for long term protection of roadless areas that have coldwater habitat value. This work will be combined with our work to improve funding of the Forest Service’s fish and wildlife habitat conservation program (highlighted below). (TU national office staff and all components of TU membership).

- Increase Protection and Restoration of Riparian Zones and Floodplains
 - Increase TU staff and member participation in USDA’s buffer initiative and other conservation programs, especially EQIP and WHIP. Advocate for increased funding and program improvements to Farm Bill conservation programs during Congressional action on Farm Bill reauthorization (TU national office staff and interested chapter, councils, and members).
 - Continue to provide TU staff to assist TU members who are addressing inadequate agency responses to flood remediation work, and continue to advocate for improvements in the regulatory response in the wake of flood emergencies, such as working to improve the Corps’ use of nationwide general permits for flood remediation. (TU National office staff and members interested in riparian zone and floodplain protection).
 - Continue to implement a public awareness program on proper stream restoration methods and legal responsibilities for protecting streams, including completion and distribution of a educational brochure done in cooperation with the Federal Emergency Management Agency and the National Park Service. (National office staff).

- Factory Farm Runoff
 - Develop a TU position paper on factory farms to educate TU members about the risks posed by factory farm waste and provide guidance on address local factory farm threats. (TU national office staff in consultation with the NRB).
 - In consultation with state councils and chapters, address individual high risk factory farm threats to coldwater resources, with technical, legal and policy guidance from National office staff. (interested chapters and councils; National office staff).

B. Restoring Appalachian Streams Damaged by Acid Mine Drainage

Objective: Restore Appalachian trout streams damaged by acid mine drainage.

Background

Pollution from coal mines in the Appalachian Mountain region has degraded thousands of miles of salmonid habitat. Substantial increases in funding for abandoned mine reclamation and salmonid habitat restoration are necessary to secure meaningful reclamation efforts in mining states around the country. TU has helped to increase levels of funding for the primary federal programs, the Office of Surface Mining's (OSM) Abandoned Minelands Reclamation funds (AML) and the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative. In particular, Clean Streams Initiative funding has risen from \$4 million to \$12 million over the past five years. TU chapters and Councils have become increasingly involved in cooperative work under the Clean Streams Initiative to restore damaged streams.

In addition to acid mine drainage restoration, prevention of acid mine drainage must be a high priority. Recent Congressional attempts to weaken OSM's and EPA's authorities to regulate coal mining, such as recent unsuccessful efforts to add a harmful rider to the Interior Appropriations bill regarding mountaintop removal of coal, remain threats to preventing mining impacts to coldwater resources.

Tasks

- Support using more of OSM's AML funding for stream clean-up and work to boost funding for the Appalachian Clean Streams Initiative, and promote participation in the Initiative to chapters and councils in the Appalachian region (TU National staff and chapters and councils in the Appalachian region).
- Protect the Surface Mining Law and the Clean Water Act from congressional rollbacks. (TU National office staff and grassroots activist members).

C. Home Rivers Initiative

Objective: Implement and expand TU's Home Rivers program, a cooperative, science-based watershed protection and restoration effort designed to focus community energy into coldwater resources conservation.

Background

In June 1994, Trout Unlimited began a conservation project focused on the restoration and protection of the Beaver Kill/Willowemoc (BeaMoc) trout fisheries in New York State's Catskill Mountains, the first TU "Home River" in the Home Rivers Initiative. In 1996, we initiated our second Home River project on the Kickapoo River in southwestern Wisconsin. In 1998, we started our third project, the Kettle Creek project in northcentral Pennsylvania. Finally, in 2001, if adequate funding can be raised, new projects on the Jefferson River (MT), South Fork Snake River (ID), and Linville River (NC) can be started.

The Home Rivers projects are cooperative, science-based watershed protection and restoration efforts designed to focus community energy onto much loved, but under cared-for coldwater resources. Thanks to the hard work of many TU volunteers in the local areas and key national office staff, the program has been very successful. The original BeaMoc project has been completed, and now Nat Gillespie, TU's riverkeeper for the watershed, is continuing the conservation work that grew out of the

project. The Kickapoo project has ended, and former project leader Laura Hewitt is overseeing implementation of a longer term Kickapoo conservation effort.

The Kettle Creek project is now fully underway. Funding has been gathered, Amy Gottesfeld is the project leader, and work has begun to restore the once renowned wild trout fishery of the watershed. Although there are still nice pockets of wild trout extant in the watershed, its waters have been degraded by acid mine drainage, warming water temperatures, and sedimentation.

Tasks

- Continue BeaMoc restoration work with communities and state agencies. (TU National office staff; New York TU members).
- Implement Kickapoo grassroots partnership within the watershed to coordinate restoration work and provide long term stewardship. (TU National office staff and Wisconsin TU members).
- Implement the Kettle Creek conservation plan, including providing assistance to local watershed committee and partnering state agencies to improve water quality in the watershed. (TU National office staff; Pennsylvania TU members).
- Fund, and develop plans for new Home River projects on the Jefferson, South Fork Snake, and Linville Rivers.

D. Acid Precipitation

Background

The 1990 Clean Air Act Amendments, although they may achieve their modest goals, are proving to be insufficient to reduce sulfate and nitrate deposition to levels that would protect wild trout populations in the Appalachian region. Many streams and lakes in the eastern U.S. continue to receive high loads of acid deposition, destroying trout habitat, especially that of native brook trout. Although there have been numerous studies on the effects of acid deposition on aquatic ecosystems, and our scientific understanding of these effects has increased substantially over the past two decades, this work has not been translated successfully into an advocacy framework for reducing emissions sufficiently to protect aquatic resources.

Documenting the impacts of acid rain to Appalachian trout habitat, educating the public and decision-makers, and advocating useful solutions to the acid rain problem, continue to be large needs that TU must address. This past year's installment of TU's acid rain study, conducted by researchers at the University of Virginia and assisted by hundreds of TU volunteers, proved that it continues as one of the finest citizen water quality monitoring programs in the U.S. TU has expanded its acid rain monitoring program from Virginia into western North Carolina to increase our understanding of the extent of the acid rain problem. All of these efforts must be continued into 2001 to lay the foundation for strengthening the Clean Air Act whenever reauthorization of the Act begins in Congress.

Late this year TU received funding to increase our efforts to reduce the impacts of acid rain. TU national office staff will work with volunteer leaders in the region to develop an outreach program that will enhance our efforts to inform the public about acid rain, and will expand TU volunteer involvement in data collection and advocacy in support reducing acid rain's harmful impacts.

Tasks

- Assist researchers with conducting long-term monitoring projects, and use the projects, especially VTSSS monitoring work, to educate the public about the impacts of acid rain on Appalachian watersheds (TU members interested in acid rain; chapters and Councils in the Appalachian regions; TU national office staff)
- Continue to secure funding for long-term monitoring projects that are documenting acid precipitation impacts on salmonids, including the Virginia, North Carolina National Forests and Great Smoky Mountain National Park's monitoring projects (National office staff; Councils and chapters in the Appalachian region).
- Develop an outreach program to enhance public education and increase TU member involvement in our acid rain programs.
- Advocate support for acid rain reduction bills in the 107th Congress. (TU National office staff; chapters and Councils in the Appalachian region).

E. Habitat Loss from Hard-Rock Mining

Objective: Prevent high value coldwater streams from being damaged by ill-conceived hardrock mining proposals.

Background

Adverse water quality impacts from hardrock mining are some of the biggest problems facing coldwater species in the U.S., especially in the west. To address the threat, TU has waged a successful "Four Mines Campaign" over the past three years. TU has worked to prevent the New World Mine (MT), the Rock Creek Mine (MT), and the McDonald Mine on the Blackfoot River (MT), and the Crandon Mine, which threatens the Wolf River (WI). The New World Mine project area land was purchased by the federal government. The Crandon Mine project proposal is still alive but has been slowed by a law passed by the Wisconsin legislature and signed by Governor Thompson. The McDonald Mine is dormant because its owner is in desperate financial shape, which is preventing any progress from being made on pursuing the permits needed to mine the site, and the passage of a state ballot initiative in November 1998 that prohibits new open pit gold mines that use cyanide leaching gold extraction methods. The Rock Creek Mine proposal remains as the most viable, active threat to coldwater resources. Permits for the mine are under active consideration by the Forest Service and other state and federal agencies.

Tasks

- Continue to prosecute our efforts to stop the Rock Creek mine via increased advocacy on upcoming administrative decisions and increased publicity on the threats posed by the mine (TU members in Idaho and Montana; TU National office staff).
- Monitor activities on the two other mines: the Crandon Mine and the McDonald mine. Resume work to stop the mine proposals as needed (TU members in Montana and Wisconsin; TU National office staff).

F. Federal Lands

Objective: Protect and restore coldwater habitat on federal lands.

Background

Our federal lands are vital to the sustained existence of many salmonid resources. New leadership in the Forest Service and BLM have provided TU with great new opportunities, such as through the Forest Service's reform of its road management policies, to strengthen salmonid habitat stewardship on federal lands. Unfortunately, the new leadership also has generated Congressional backlash, including a host of riders in recent appropriations bills, most of which were eliminated before the bills were signed into law. TU and others spent considerable effort working to defeat the harmful federal land management riders. Similar harmful legislation is likely to return next year.

Grazing The adverse impacts of grazing on federal rangelands to coldwater resources has precipitated a heightened TU interest in the issue. TU grassroots are engaged in advocacy efforts on numerous grazing management decisions around the nation, often attempting to get the federal agencies (BLM and the Forest Service) to enforce the terms of individual permits, or sometimes advocating against harmful grazing practices that the agencies are allowing to continue. Also, the 107th Congress may consider harmful grazing legislation that we must monitor carefully.

Funding The FY 2001 Interior Appropriations bill provided augmented funding for Forest Service and BLM fisheries and watershed restoration programs. TU must continue to work closely with the federal lands agencies to ensure that these monies are spent well in FY 2001, and work to ensure that sufficient funding is budgeted for FY 2002. With the help of the new funding, FY 2001 will continue to provide new opportunities to move forward with on-the-ground, watershed-based fisheries programs on federal lands, including projects and programs implemented through the TU/Forest Service Partnership Program, coordinated by Don Duff, and the Bring Back the Natives program, directed by Amy Harig.

Forest Plans Revision of federal agency resource management plans offers TU councils and chapters an opportunity to address extractive uses of federal lands in a manner that conserves coldwater resources. At least 87 of the 154 National Forests will be revising and/or making major amendments to their forest plans from FY 1999-2003. These plans provide the basic framework for making grazing and timber harvest decisions, as well as providing for conservation of aquatic resources. Increasingly, TU members are facing coldwater resource threats posed by recreational activity, such as poorly managed off road vehicle use. We must better educate our members on this emerging problem to enable them to be informed advocates.

Tasks

- Closely monitor, and vigorously defend against, legislative proposals that threaten salmonids on federal lands (TU National office staff and TU grassroot activists).
- Continue to implement TU's Federal Lands Policy, adopted by TU in 1994. Implementation of the Policy guidelines and strategies will occur on national, regional, state, and local levels by the TU membership and staff. The TU/Forest Service Partnership and Bring Back the Natives programs will be important vehicles for policy implementation and TU grassroots involvement in federal lands

issues (TU National office staff and members interested in coldwater resources on federal lands).

➤ Grazing

- National staff will work closely with TU grassroots to comment on, and if necessary, help challenge agency decisions on site-specific management actions, such as timber sales or grazing permit renewals, that effect nationally or regionally significant salmonid resources (TU National office staff and members interested in coldwater resources on federal lands).
- Target several problem federal grazing allotments, such as the overgrazing in the Golden Trout Wilderness in the Inyo National Forest, for intensive advocacy for improved grazing practices (TU National office staff and members interested in coldwater resources on federal lands).

➤ Funding

- Pursue adequate appropriations for federal land management agency fisheries, watershed, and grazing management programs during congressional deliberations on appropriations bills (TU National office staff and members interested in coldwater resources on federal lands).

➤ Forest Plans

- Through consultation with NRB members and Don Duff, determine high impact Forest Plan revision processes to engage in to achieve substantial improvements for protection and restoration of coldwater habitat. Provide TU staff assistance to TU members who are participating in the Forest Plan the revision processes (TU National office staff, Don Duff, and TU members interested in working on Forest Plan revisions).
- Gather and disseminate information to TU volunteers about the increasing problem with recreational impacts on federal lands and how to reduce them.

G. Local Land Use/Development

Objective: Protect and restore salmonids occurring in urban and urbanizing environments.

Background

Local land use decisions have always had substantial impacts on coldwater resources, sometimes for the better, often for the worse. TU grassroots individuals and chapters have often participated in local land use decisions. Although each local government process will have some unique characteristics, there are likely to be many commonalities as well.

In 1998, the NRB commissioned an Urban Trout Conservation Committee to study the issue and report its findings in 1999. Chairman Rick Ege and the committee did so at the 1999 NRB meeting. The Committee will continue to implement its plan in 2001.

Tasks

- Implement the urban trout conservation committee plan, which includes developing a flexible urban coldwater watershed protection and restoration plan/framework that could be used by TU Councils, chapters and grassroots advocates; providing a clearinghouse of relevant information on urban coldwater protection and restoration efforts and programs; conducting an inventory of urban coldwater resources; assessing selected key urban watersheds using GIS and other appropriate data to determine the extent of the threats coldwater resources face in the watersheds; and exploring the feasibility of a national conference on urban coldwater resources (Urban Trout Conservation Committee; TU national office staff).
- Distribute grassroots advocacy manual, which has a detailed discussion of local land use planning laws and advocacy tools (National office).

I. Land Exchange Impacts on Coldwater Resources

Objective: Protect and restore salmonids occurring in urban and urbanizing environments.

Background

The increasing use of land exchanges by federal agencies in the western U.S. (such as trading federal lands for state school lands) to consolidate their holdings has raised serious concerns about the effects on salmonid resources and use of those federal lands that are relinquished as a result of the exchange. The effects of this loss of sovereignty on aquatic resources pose increasing threat to salmonid conservation on public lands in the West.

In 1998, the NRB authorized a Land Exchange committee to examine the problem and report its findings back to the NRB in 1999. Chairman John Neuhold and the committee did so at the 1999 NRB meeting. The committee, along with interested TU members, will continue to implement its plan in 2001.

Tasks

- Implement the Land Exchange committee plan, which includes urging chapters and councils to become more actively involved in proposed land exchanges effecting coldwater resources in their areas, advocating for greater recognition of coldwater fisheries values in land exchange calculation procedures, and maintaining a database on public land exchanges, with emphasis on exchanges that potentially impact coldwater fisheries, that would be accessible to TU members (Land exchange committee; TU National office staff).

II. Instream Flows

Goals

The instream flows program has the following goals:

- To reform federal hydropower licensing procedures and standards in a manner that protects, conserves, and restores coldwater fisheries, and defend against harmful legislative and administrative proposals that would undercut reform efforts;
- Participate in licensing and relicensing of projects of national and regional significance;
- To advocate for coldwater fisheries and other aquatic resources in decisions regarding water allocation and management throughout the U.S.;
- To advocate for removal of dams, where appropriate, as a viable and cost-effective means of restoring rivers; and
- To promote public education concerning the role of instream flows in coldwater fisheries conservation and what constitutes biologically sufficient instream flows.

A. FERC Relicensing

Objective: Utilize the FERC relicensing process and federal natural resource laws to achieve substantial improvements in flows and fish passage for coldwater resources.

Background

TU has made some of its best achievements for coldwater resources through its work on relicensing of federally-regulated private hydropower dams. Under the Federal Power Act, each hydropower project that is privately owned and operating on a “navigable” river is under the jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (“FERC”). FERC can issue licenses for hydropower projects that range between 30 and 50 years. During a license term, it is difficult (if not impossible) to change the terms of the license with regard to flows or fish passage. It is only when a license is about to expire, and the licensee is seeking a new 30 to 50 year license, that FERC considers new license terms. This period of relicensing and implementation of new terms and conditions is when TU can have the most effect on hydropower operations.

The bulk of the new relicensing work is shifting from the Northeast to the West. TU is deeply engaged in substantial relicensing efforts in Washington, Oregon, California, and Idaho. Most of the major projects affecting salmonids that are just beginning to enter the relicensing process are in California. However, significant opportunities still exist in the East, and TU is working on projects in Maine, Connecticut, North Carolina and Tennessee that may yield significant gains.

Tasks

- Aggressively pursue terms and conditions that favor coldwater fisheries in FERC cases. TU legal and scientific staff will continue to work with chapters, councils, and volunteers to develop positions on the benefits of natural flows and restoration of wild and native coldwater fish and their habitat, including fish passage and dam removal (TU National office staff and TU members, chapters, and councils interested in FERC relicensing).
- Continue to monitor upcoming licensings at FERC, notify, advise and support members regarding such opportunities (TU National office staff).

- Work with the Hydropower Reform Coalition and other allies to block Congressional efforts to pass legislation that would undermine Federal and state resource agencies authorities to prescribe fish friendly flows and fish passage for FERC hydro licenses (TU National office staff and grassroots activists).

B. Non-FERC Hydropower Management

Objective: Improve flow regimes, water quality, and fish passage in and around federal and other non-FERC regulated dams.

Background

TU members in the southeastern U.S. have played an increasingly influential role in obtaining fish-friendly flows from other federal dams, such as those in the TVA region and the dams on the White River watershed in Arkansas and Missouri. Tailwaters below these reservoirs provide some of the best salmonid fishing in the southeastern U.S. As the efforts of our members get increasingly sophisticated and effective in those endeavors, they need assistance from the national office to help with the legal and political obstacles that they face.

Tasks

- Encourage and assist TU chapters and councils with their advocacy of improving coldwater habitat management at non-FERC projects, such as Corps dams in the Southeast (TU National office staff and chapters and councils interested in tailwater management).

C. Western Water Project/Eastern Water

Objective: Conduct programs in select states to utilize, and reform, state water rights programs, as well as federal water law, to ensure sufficient instream flows for salmonids.

Background

Throughout the West coldwater fisheries are threatened by water diversions from streams which are authorized by state water allocation laws and administrative programs. On western state instream flows, TU has begun its third year of an aggressive program to put more water in the streams for fish in Colorado and Montana. Both state programs have gotten off to good starts and have achieved significant gains, yet continue to face daunting challenges because of the tight grip water users hold on allocation of water by the state, especially in Colorado. Also, both programs face a need to become more visible in the public eye --to seek to influence the "hearts and minds" of the public – to serve as a baseline from which further reform work can spring.

The need for similar TU programs in other western states is strong. We have have found funding opportunities that should enable us to establish new water offices in Wyoming and Utah in 2001.

On the federal lands instream flow front, TU's Colorado Western Water Project office has successfully intervened in cases before the Colorado state water courts in a major push by the Forest

Service to quantify and protect its “reserved” water rights for National Forests in Colorado. Also, TU is continuing its legal challenge of a Forest Service land use authorization on the Roosevelt National Forest that failed to protect minimum instream flows using bypass flow authority. Both reserved rights and bypass flows authorities may be challenged in the 107th Congress.

Also on the federal agency arena, in part spurred by the Bureau of Reclamation (BuRec), a wave of interest is sweeping the West regarding local irrigation district takeover of some of the BuRec’s dams and reservoirs. These proposals, some of which have been introduced as bills in Congress, often present serious risks to salmonid resources due to the loss of federal environmental law protections following institution of local control. TU must be fully engaged in this issue, commonly called “asset transfer,” to ensure that adequate habitat and instream flow protection remains as the legislative proposals move forward.

Finally, the NRB included an eastern water allocation element for 2001. Increasingly, TU members in the eastern U.S. are finding themselves drawn into water allocation disputes to protect coldwater resources. Proposals have ranged from basin transfer withdrawals for community drinking water in the southeast to groundwater withdrawal for bottled water production in Wisconsin. Some of these proposals pose grave threats to salmonids.

Tasks

- Through the Western Water Project, implement state instream flows campaigns in Colorado and Montana to begin to utilize, and reform, state water rights programs to ensure sufficient instream flows for salmonids.
 - In Montana, the program will continue to look for good opportunities to use market mechanisms to acquire fish flows, to work with the state legislature to close oversubscribed basins to additional extraction, press the state fisheries agency to use its underutilized water rights authorities to protect instream flows, and will work with Tribal governments to ensure that their water rights are being used effectively to protect fish habitat (TU Western Water Project staff and TU members in Montana).
 - In Colorado, the program will continue to focus on key water rights cases to press the state’s instream flows protection agency to enforce and utilize its authorities, work with the state instreams flows protection agency to better develop its voluntary water rights donation program, and will work to defeat harmful water proposals, including the new dam proposed for the Delores River watershed (TU Western Water Project staff and TU members in Colorado).
- Utilize handles in federal law (including water quality programs such as TMDLs) to ensure that federal land management agencies, such as the Forest Service, use all available protective authorities to protect coldwater resources on federal lands (TU Western Water Project staff, TU members in Colorado and Montana, and other TU members with an interest in water on federal lands).
- Engage fully in legislative and policy debates involving asset transfer and other BuRec reform issues to ensure that adequate legal protections remain in place if asset transfers and other reforms occur (TU Western Water Project staff and TU members with an interest in western water policy).
- Help chapters and councils in the eastern U.S. address interbasin transfer and other water withdrawal proposals that would adversely affect coldwater resources. (TU eastern conservation staff and

members interested in eastern water allocation).

D. Small Dam Removal

Dam removal has become an increasingly viable option for the disposition of dams, especially smaller, uneconomical dams in need of major repairs. Removal of the Edwards Dam in Maine, and the successful removal of numerous small dams in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania and other states, has spurred interest in dam removal. Also, literally hundreds of small dams across the nation are fast becoming safety hazards because they have been poorly maintained and have fallen into disrepair. The tremendous wave of opportunities that lie before us makes TU's dam removal efforts one of our highest priorities for the year.

Tasks

- Continue to implement an aggressive dam removal campaign. Specifically, Educate interested publics on dam removal success stories.
- Produce and disseminate reports on economic and engineering aspects of dam removal.
- Develop a citizen tool kit for dam removal and an activist guidebook and public information videotape.
- Develop criteria for successful river restoration involving dam removal.
- Implement the current information clearinghouse on all aspects of small dam removal to assist grassroots efforts to remove small dams.
- Provide TU members interested in dam removal with guidance and technical help with their projects. (TU national office staff: TU members, chapters, and Councils interested in dam removal).
- Build TU's presence as a national authority regarding dam removal and fisheries restoration through CCF-funded research and technical assistance projects (National office and field staff).

III. Pacific and Atlantic Salmon Recovery

Goals

The salmon recovery program has the following goals:

- To conserve and restore wild stocks of Pacific and Atlantic salmon throughout their range in the United States;
- To secure reform of resource management practices (hydropower, land use, harvest, and

hatcheries) that have caused the decline of wild salmon stocks;

- To sponsor and, where appropriate, conduct scientific and economic research projects that promote salmon restoration;
- To sponsor and, where appropriate, conduct habitat restoration projects; and
- To educate decision-makers and the public concerning threats to wild salmon stocks.

The salmon recovery program is a regionally focused hybrid of other TU programs involving clean water, instream flows, and wild salmonid conservation. Although there is considerable overlap with those programs, the dire situation confronting the nation's salmon stocks justifies addressing salmon recovery on a regional basis. Moreover, the geographic distribution of salmon habitat (the Pacific Northwest and New England) has resulted in great interest in salmon recovery on the part of regional organizations (Save Our *Wild* Salmon in the Pacific Northwest and the Atlantic Salmon Federation and its affiliates in New England). Success in recovering Pacific and Atlantic salmon requires carefully defining TU's role as a national organization and working cooperatively with regional organizations.

A. Columbia/Snake River Recovery

Objective: Continue to advocate for removal of lower Snake dams, in all appropriate administrative, legislative and legal decision-making arenas, as a cornerstone of Snake River salmon restoration.

Background

Snake River salmon and steelhead are on the verge of extinction and are listed on the federal endangered species list. One of TU's highest priorities for Pacific salmon in 2001 will be to press the federal agencies handling Columbia/Snake salmon recovery, the National Marine Fisheries Service and the Corps, to adopt removal of the four lower Snake River dams as a centerpiece of salmon recovery. TU adopted a resolution favoring lower Snake dam removal at the NRB meeting in 1998. The resolution calls for expedited removal of the earthen portions of the four lower Snake River dams because we believe it is the most scientifically-supported, cost-effective mechanism available for restoring Columbia/Snake salmon and steelhead. In July, 2000, the agencies made a critical draft decision that failed to include removal as a cornerstone of recovery. We must advocate for strengthening the agencies' position.

Tasks

- Continue to advocate for removal of lower Snake dams in all appropriate administrative and legislative decisions. Raise the profile of dam removal in nationally significant media outlets. Galvanize support for dam removal by organizing grassroots advocacy to achieve greater support for dam removal in Congress. Publicize widely the value of dam removal and Columbia/Snake salmon and steelhead recovery and the results of TU's salmon extinction and economics studies (TU Councils, chapters, and members in the Pacific Northwest, TU members interested in salmon nationwide; and TU national office staff).

B. Watershed Protection and Restoration

Objective: Restore key salmon and steelhead watersheds

Background

With 35 “species” of salmon and steelhead listed as threatened or endangered in the western U.S., there is a tremendous need for, and interest in, watershed-level protection and restoration projects. Opportunities are especially significant where large landowners can be engaged in such activities with TU. TU has already entered into several such projects. Since the need for salmon restoration is so great, and watershed opportunities abundant, TU must make salmon watershed protection and restoration a high priority in the coming year.

Tasks

- Participate in constructive watershed protection and restoration programs, especially on private lands, including Lagunitas Creek and Garcia River efforts in northern California, Potlach lands in northern Idaho, and Plum Creek HCP development in Montana (TU national office staff; TU chapters and councils interested in watershed restoration projects).

C. US/Canada Salmon Treaty/Magnuson Act

Objective: Reduce overharvest of salmonids via sound implementation of the US/Canada Treaty and Magnuson Act.

Background

Overharvest of marine salmonids continues to threaten weak salmon stocks in the Pacific Northwest. Significant involvement will be needed in the federal and state harvest management forums for ocean and river fisheries to ensure that harvest is constrained and selective so that weak naturally spawning stocks can recover. This will require additional marking of hatchery fish, selective fisheries and significant reductions and closures of traditional fisheries.

One of our highest priorities in this area is to achieve successful implementation of the new U.S.-Canada Pacific Salmon Treaty agreement. In June, 1999, the two nation’s ended their long dispute and signed a new agreement restricting each nation’s fisheries in ways that were largely consistent with a series of recommendations TU and TU Canada had made earlier in the year. This year, TU has worked to convince Congress to fully fund aggressive implementation of the agreement.

Also on the harvest front, TU must work with federal and state fisheries managers in the region to employ conservation and habitat provisions of the Magnuson Act to better regulate salmon harvest and protect habitat in the region.

Tasks:

- Advocate for aggressive implementation of the new Treaty agreement, especially adequate funding to implement its fleet buy-out and other conservation and habitat provisions. Continue to work for responsible harvest regimes under Magnuson Act and other state and federal management regimes (TU national office staff; the Washington Council of TU; and TU members in Washington, Oregon, and Alaska).

D. Elwha and Rogue River Dam Removal

Objectives: Restore Elwha and Rogue Rivers via removal of key dams.

Background

Removal of the two dams that completely block salmon migration in the Elwha River watershed has been studied and recommended by the Department of the Interior. The Interior Department purchased the dams from their owners in 2000, a substantial step toward removal, and Congress provided additional funding for dam removal in the FY 2001 Interior Appropriations bill. A high TU priority will continue to be securing funds for Elwha dam removal over the next three years. On the Rogue River (OR), another excellent opportunity for dam removal --the Savage Rapids dam-- is supported by TU, other conservation groups, and state and federal agencies. TU is actively advocating dam removal with the dam owner and state and federal agencies, and is on the verge of having legislation introduced in Congress to authorize and fund removal.

- Advocate for substantial funds to continue progress with the Elwha River dam removal and watershed restoration program, and advocate removal of the Savage Rapids dam to Congress in support of dam removal legislation (TU national office staff; Washington and Oregon Councils of TU; and TU members in Washington and Oregon).

E. Maine Atlantic Salmon Recovery

Objective: Protect and restore wild Atlantic salmon.

Background

Atlantic salmon are in dire trouble throughout their range, and especially in the U.S. In response to legal pressure applied by TU, the federal fisheries agencies listed Atlantic salmon stocks in eight Maine rivers as endangered in November 2000. Now TU must work with the state of Maine, the federal agencies, industry and other conservationists to develop a functional recovery plan to save the species.

Tasks:

- Defend in court the recent listing Atlantic salmon, advocate for strengthening implementation of the Maine state plan for Atlantic salmon recovery, and work with federal agencies to begin implementing necessary regulatory measures on aquaculture operations and drafting the species recovery plan. (TU national office staff and the Maine Council of TU).

F. Marine Survival and Interception of Salmonids

Objective: Assess factors limiting marine survival of salmonids, and advocate measures needed to increase marine survival.

Background

Although not well understood scientifically, low survival of some salmon stocks, both Pacific and Atlantic, is becoming an increasingly important problem for salmon. Some aspects of marine survival, while clearly critical to salmon productivity (such as El Nino), are beyond our control. Other factors, such as excessive stocking of hatchery-reared fish into ocean feeding areas, and high seas interception by commercial or foreign fishing vessels, might be manageable if they were more clearly documented and quantified. TU needs to assess the problem and determine how it may play a constructive role in advocating helpful solutions.

Tasks

- Conduct an assessment of the factors limiting marine survival of salmon, including interceptions, and the legal framework for effecting these factors, and make recommendations on how to improve marine survival of salmon (TU national office staff in coordination with Alaska, Washington, Oregon, and Maine Councils of TU).

IV. Wild Salmonid Conservation

Goals

The wild salmonid conservation program has the following goals:

- To secure legislative and regulatory measures and other arrangements that conserve, protect, and restore native and wild salmonids;
- To conduct research and restoration programs involving biologically significant native salmonid stocks;
- To evaluate, on a nationwide basis, the impacts of propagation (i.e., fish husbandry, fish culture and stocking of hatchery fish) programs on the management of native and wild salmonids; and
- To foster among management agencies and the angling public greater recognition of native and wild salmonids as environmental and recreational resources.

A. Great Lakes

Objective: Restore coaster brook trout and other salmonids native to the Great Lakes.

Background

Conservation of Great Lakes salmonids is another key challenge for TU. The Great Lakes represent 95% of the surface freshwater in North America and harbor a diverse salmonid resource. TU has engaged in a multi-faceted plan to improve conservation of native populations of salmonids within the basin. The flagship effort of TU's Great Lakes initiatives continues to be coaster brook trout restoration. In 1999, a long sought milestone was achieved when a coaster restoration plan for Lake Superior was approved by the Great Lakes Fisheries Commission (GLFC). TU members from the region will now be

involved in implementing the plan, as well as a number of coaster restoration habitat restoration projects throughout the Superior Basin. For example, TU is partnering with the American Forest Foundation and the Michigan DNR on a coaster restoration project on the Salmon Trout River in Michigan this year. Also, Wisconsin TU members were instrumental in the establishment of the Whittelsey Creek Wildlife Refuge, which contains some of the best remaining coaster brook trout habitat in Wisconsin.

Another issue of concern is the annual fight for adequate funding for the sea lamprey control program. Sea lamprey predation represents a major cause of lake trout recruitment failure and is a barrier to the establishment of self-sustaining populations in parts of the lower lakes. The continual struggle for funding is a consequence of the multi-state, province, and national flavor of the program.

Tasks

- Help implement the Great Lakes coaster brook trout restoration plan, by pursuing initiatives such as Michigan coaster reintroductions, evaluation of a proposed Wisconsin state restoration plan, protection of remnant populations in Michigan and Minnesota, research on lake-spawning coaster populations, and identification of the criteria necessary for a lake-wide recovery of coaster populations. (TU national office staff and Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Michigan councils of TU).
- Work with Congress to increase funds for the lamprey control program (TU national office staff and TU activist members).

B. Endangered Species Act

Objective: Ensure that the Endangered Species Act remains a strong tool for conserving native salmonids.

Background

As the number of salmonid species on the endangered species list continues to rise (now at 35) the ESA becomes ever more important to our work. TU must participate vigorously in the reauthorization of the ESA if it occurs in the 107th Congress.

Tasks

- Defend the fundamental underpinnings of the ESA during the reauthorization debate which may occur in the 107th Congress. Legislative improvements in the ESA may be necessary; gutting protection for listed trout and salmon is not (TU national office staff and TU activist members).

C. Bring Back The Natives/Embrace A Stream

Objective: Protect and restore native and wild salmonids through cooperative conservation projects.

Background

Several ongoing, highly successful TU programs will continue to focus on wild and native fish issues in the coming year. Bring Back the Natives (“BBN”) and Embrace-A-Stream remain the primary

TU grassroots grant programs involved in protecting and restoring native salmonids. The BBN partnership with the Forest Service, BLM, and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation is being revised this year to focus greater conservation efforts on to a smaller number of projects. In 2000, the Embrace-A-Stream program continued its strong record of investment in over 40 projects nationwide..

Tasks

- Continue resource, advocacy, and research work on nationally significant native fish projects through Bring Back the Natives, Forest Service/TU Partnership, and the Coldwater Conservation Fund (TU national office staff; chapters and councils interested in native and wild salmonid conservation).

D. Wild Trout Research/Whirling Disease

Objective: Reduce the harmful impacts of whirling disease on salmonids.

Background

Whirling disease continues to pose problems for wild salmonids in the western U.S. TU and others have been successful in helping to raise funds, via private donations and state and federal appropriations, to establish a strong program of research, including projects in Montana and at several other labs throughout the U.S. Some useful results have already been achieved, such as the development of a DNA diagnostic test which helps speed determination of the presence or absence of the disease in trout. But there is still much work to be done before suitable controls can be established in the wild. Thus, we will continue our longstanding effort to gain funding for, and publicize the results of, whirling disease research.

Tasks

- Continue private fundraising for high priority projects identified in the national whirling disease assessment. Continue to secure state and federal funds for whirling disease research and work to ensure that public funds are wisely used to fund highest priority projects, regardless of agency or state (TU national office staff; TU councils in Colorado, Montana, and Utah; TU activist members).

E. Stocking Policy Reform

Objective: Reduce harmful impacts of hatchery practices on native and wild salmonids.

Background

TU continues to be concerned about the biological and economic impacts of continual or inappropriate stocking of hatchery fish on native and wild salmonids. While recognizing that artificial propagation can be a legitimate tool in fishery programs, TU has long been a leading advocate of native and wild fish conservation. To assess the impacts of hatchery reared fish on native and wild populations, we conducted and completed in 1999 our evaluations of select state hatchery programs. We will continue to seek opportunities to engage in constructive evaluations of state and federal artificial propagation programs, including a potential evaluation of federal Atlantic salmon hatcheries in Maine. TU also continues to be concerned about stocking of non-native fish on federal lands.

An associated concern is the indiscriminate stocking of non-native fish by anglers on native salmonids. “Bait bucket fisheries management” is a problem that may be on the rise. TU must work to educate anglers about the harm to wild salmonids and other aquatic resources that occurs from this type of stocking.

Tasks

- Participate in potential peer review of Atlantic salmon hatcheries in Maine. (TU national office staff)
- Publish and disseminate information which describes the potential harmful effects (such as spread of whirling disease and other diseases, ecological and genetic effects) to educate anglers about the adverse impacts of bait bucket stocking (TU national office staff in coordination with interested state councils).
- Advocate cautionary management and stocking policies, including reversal of the Forest Service/BLM policy allowing the stocking of whirling disease-infected fish on federal lands and challenging the states that propose stocking infected fish.

F. Aquaculture

Objective: Prevent harmful impacts to salmonids from aquaculture operations.

Background

Aquaculture, especially large scale rearing of trout and salmon for food, is an expanding threat that TU should assess and address in a more complete fashion. A recent proposal to use substantial portions of three TVA reservoirs in Tennessee and North Carolina -- a proposal that TU members helped to kill -- is but one striking example of the new threats created by aquaculture to our coldwater resources. Also in Maine, large scale Atlantic salmon pen rearing poses serious risks to the few remaining wild salmon.

Tasks

- Evaluate threats to salmonids posed by aquaculture operations and disseminate results to TU members interested in aquaculture impact on salmonids (TU national office staff).
- Conduct an economic assessment of the Maine Atlantic salmon aquaculture industry to lay the groundwork for potential reforms necessary to protect wild salmon.

G. State Coldwater Resource Management Plans

Objective: Evaluate state coldwater management plans to enable TU members to advocate for improvements to state plans.

Background

Declining stocks of many native and wild salmonids have forced many state fisheries agencies to reassess their sport fisheries harvest regimes, generally toward reducing harvest and conserving fish. Also, the advocacy of TU and other conservationists is pressing state agencies for reduced harvest regimes that are conservation-based --even when fishing occurs on stocks that are relatively abundant -- to increase recreational fishing opportunities. TU should encourage this trend among state agencies.

More broadly, TU's work to reform state hatchery programs and to push for greater involvement of states in habitat protection and restoration has led to more comprehensive coldwater resource conservation planning in some states. TU should encourage such planning efforts, but we need to have a better understanding of them before we can be more effective advocates.

Tasks

- Survey state fisheries agencies to assess their planning mechanisms to determine whether the planning mechanisms are adequate to incorporate all aspects of progressive coldwater resource management, including strong research and habitat conservation programs as well as harvest regulation and stocking programs. The survey of state coldwater resource management plans should determine which states have them and which do not, how they are used by states that have them (such as how the plans effect budget and management decision-making processes), and how TU members, chapters, and state councils can participate in plan development and implementation (TU national office staff in coordination with key TU Council leaders and graduate student research from an appropriate university).

H. Western Native Trout Project

Objective: Protect and restore western native trout.

Background

Nearly every western native trout is declining and at some risk of extinction. Some of the crown jewels of the west, such as greenback cutthroat and California golden trout, are listed on the federal endangered species list or are candidates for listing. Restoring these fish goes to the very heart of TU's mission. TU received foundation funding in the fall of 2000 to begin to focus native trout conservation efforts in a more concentrated way, and we are working to develop a plan to implement the project.

Tasks:

- Develop and implement a new TU project to protect and restore western native trout species, to include a focus on assisting TU chapters and Councils with shared native trout conservation projects.