


Fishers for Fish Habitat Forum

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‘Once there were brook trout in the streams in the mountains. You could see them standing in the amber current where the white edges of their fins wimpled softly in the flow. They smelled of moss in your hand. Polished and muscular and torsional. On their backs were vermiculite patterns that were maps of the world in its becoming. Maps and mazes. Of a thing which could not be put back. Not be made right again. In the deep glens where they lived all things were older than man and they hummed of mystery.’

Cormac McCarthy

U.S. aquatic resources

- **Total water area = 470,000 sq km**
 - excludes marine territorial waters
 - 204,000 sq km coastal waters
 - 110,000 sq km inland waters
 - 156,000 sq km Great Lakes



U.S. aquatic resources

- **Large river systems**
 - Mississippi / Ohio / Missouri
 - (central U.S.)
 - Yukon (Alaska)
 - Columbia (northwest U.S.)
 - Colorado (southwest U.S.)
 - Thousands of glacial lakes Northern US



U.S. aquatic resources

- **Among the world's most diverse:**
 - 3,032 fish species
 - 960 freshwater
 - 2,153 saltwater
 - 308 endemic U.S. fish



North American Wildlife Conservation Model

- Fish and wildlife belong to all citizens
- Fish and wildlife must be managed so their populations will be sustained forever
- Hunters and anglers help to pay for conservation activities



Human use of fishery resources

- 40 million recreational anglers
 - deep-rooted American tradition
- Economic activity of recreational fishing industry
 - US\$ 45 billion in retail sales
 - 1 million jobs

Conservation funds from anglers

- US\$ 600 million in license sales
- US\$ 685 million in excise taxes
- Derived from:
 - import duties
 - fishing equipment
 - gasoline for motorboats

Government authorities and cooperation

- Federal government manages marine fisheries in exclusive economic zone (EEZ)
 - NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service
 - Regional Fishery Management Councils
- 50 States are primary managers of fisheries within their borders
- Native American governments manage fisheries on reservations



Government authorities and cooperation

- Cooperation is essential for successful conservation
- Partners contribute funds, personnel, technical skills, and authority to cooperative projects

Government authorities and cooperation

- Private citizens contribute to conservation
- Fishing organizations
 - TU, FFF, CCA, BASS/ESPN, etc.
- Conservation organizations
 - Nature Conservancy, Sierra Club, etc.
- Watershed groups
- Private landowners

Status of fishery resources

- **Progress made under regulatory approaches since 1970:**
 - greatly reduced industrial and sewage discharges
 - doubled number of waters safe for fishing and swimming
 - reversed declines in some endangered fishes

Status of fishery resources

- Many fishes and habitats continue to decline
- U.S. waters are impaired due to:
 - pollution
 - fragmentation
 - altered flows and reduced water quantity
 - erosion and sedimentation
 - floodplain development
 - invasive species



Fish habitats & fish passage

- **Habitat restoration**
 - replant trees in riparian zone
 - exclude cattle from stream banks
 - stream channel re-construction
 - non-point pollution settling ponds
- **Fish passage**
 - remove obsolete dams
 - lifts, ladders or weirs to bypass dams
 - screen irrigation diversions



Managing invasive aquatic species

- Rapid, coordinated response
- Thorough monitoring of suspect habitats
- Focus on prevention
 - detection and monitoring
 - rapid assessment/response
 - control



Elements of Prevention

- Education and outreach to public
- Pathway risk assessment
- Modify agency operations using
- HACCP method (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point)



Outlook for fish conservation

- Continue successful regulatory approaches
- Emphasize cooperative partnerships
- Strategic habitat conservation
- Connecting people with nature to ensure the future of conservation



What is happening today?

- **Habitat Partnerships/Collaborative Efforts**
 - National Fish Habitat Action Plan
 - Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
 - FishNet
 - Fish Collaborative
- **“Hot Button” Issues**
 - Access
 - Funding
 - Education

Who is working together?

- **NGOs - Trade**

- American Sport Fishing Association
- American Fly Fishing Trade Association
- Recreational Boating and Fishing Fdn.

- **NGO's – Conservation/Education**

- Trout Unlimited
- Coastal Conservation Association
- Theodore Roosevelt Conservation P/ship
- Federation of Fly Fishers
- IGFA, TBF, BTT



Non habitat related

- **NGO's Veterans/Health**
 - Rivers of Recovery
 - Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing
 - Casting for Recovery
 - Reel Recovery
 - Casting for the Cure

Getting the word out

- **Media – online**
 - TakeMeFishing.org
 - GoFishn.com
 - MidCurrent.com
 - MoldyChum.com
 - TroutUnderground.com



Take Away Messages

- **Who gets to catch the last fish?**
 - *Stocked vs Native*
- Habitat equals opportunity
- This **is** hard work
- You are headed in the right direction
- Learn from our mistakes
- The next few years are important!

Resources

- Recreational Boating and Fishing Fnd.
 - www.takemefishing.org
- American Sportfishing Assn.
 - www.asafishing.org
- American Fly Fishing Trade Assn.
 - www.aftta.org
- Tom Sadler:
 - tsadler@midrivgroup.com
- Dispatches from Middle River
 - www.middleriverdispatch.com/mrgblog



Resources

- National Fish Habitat Action Plan
 - www.fishhabitat.org
- Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture
 - www.easternbrooktrout.org
- Trout Unlimited
 - www.tu.org
- Federation of Fly Fishers
 - www.fedflyfishers.org
- Coastal Conservation Assn.
 - www.joincca.com