

## **A Brief History of the Formation of Rocky Mountain Flycasters.**

Sometime in the late 1970's a group of anglers from northern Colorado started a Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) club and Eric Pettine was president. Shortly thereafter, a Trout Unlimited Chapter was formed and Mark Vaughn was president. Eric Pettine reports that it was decided to put the two clubs together and form a chapter of Trout Unlimited/FFF called Northern Colorado Anglers. This new club was able to keep the number 010, indicating we were the tenth TU Chapter formed in the nation.

This chapter "was active for a few years, but then lapsed into inactivity. Realizing the importance of having an active chapter, several old and new members cooperated to re-activate the chapter as Rocky Mountain Flycasters." (This is a direct quote from the minutes of the first public meeting of Rocky Mountain Flycasters, dated May 25, 1983.)

In a letter dated June 6, 1983, Robert L Herbst, Executive Director of Trout Unlimited, writes: "It gives me considerable pleasure to inform you that the Trout Unlimited Executive Committee, in session on June 4, approved the Rocky Mountain Flycasters Chapter's request for a charter."

CEO Herbst went on to write: "We are very pleased that the formerly inactive Northern Colorado Anglers Chapter has been completely reorganized and infused with new life."

The officers of the new chapter were recorded in the first minutes as Pat Beauchamp, President; Vance Vorndam, Vice President/Program Chair; Tom Christian, Secretary/Treasurer; Kevin Burkhardt, Newsletter Editor; Mike Davis, Membership Chair/Publicity Director; and Dan Neill, Stream Reconstruction.

The bylaws list the original board of directors as Richard Bauer, Rocky Bloskas, William Connaughton, Jr., Mikael Davis, James Schmehl, James Shook, Robert Trossen, and Michael Herbst with James Ferguson listed as the Initial Incorporator.

The original meeting of Rocky Mountain Flycasters showed 37 anglers in attendance, including Eric Pettine, Rick Takahashi, and Louis Swift. Also in attendance almost every month was Dr. Robert Behnke; the foremost Salmonid Biologist in the world. Over the first 5-7 years, the chapter membership grew from 37 members to over 400. Monthly meetings moved from a room in the Poudre

Valley REA at College and Harmony to various locations, finally settling in a banquet room in the hotel now known as the Fort Collins Hilton. RMF now meets at the Fort Collins Senior Center. The Chapter now maintains a membership of approximately 1000 with many active volunteers who work to sustain, restore, reconnect and protect the rivers and their watersheds in Northern Colorado.

## **A Brief History of Trout Unlimited**

July 2009 marked the 50th anniversary of TU's founding, on the banks of the Au Sable River near Grayling, Michigan. The 16 fishermen who gathered at the home of George Griffith were united by their love of trout fishing, and by their growing disgust with the state's practice of stocking its waters with "cookie cutter trout"-catchable-sized hatchery fish. Convinced that Michigan's trout streams could turn out a far superior fish if left to their own devices, the anglers formed a new organization: Trout, Unlimited (the comma was dropped a few years later).

From the beginning, TU was guided by the principle that if we "take care of the fish, then the fishing will take care of itself." And that principle was grounded in science. "One of our most important objectives is to develop programs and recommendations based on the very best information and thinking available," said TU's first president, Dr. Casey E. Westell Jr. "In all matters of trout management, we want to know that we are substantially correct, both morally and biologically."

In 1962-63, TU prepared its first policy statement on wild trout, and persuaded the Michigan Department of Natural Resources to discard "put-and-take" trout stocking and start managing for wild trout and healthy habitat. On the heels of that success, anglers quickly founded TU chapters in Illinois, Wisconsin, New York, and Pennsylvania.

TU won its first national campaign in 1965: Stopping the construction of the Reichle dam on Montana's Big Hole River. Five years later, TU helped secure a ban on high-seas fishing for Atlantic salmon. And in 1971, TU took legal action to protect the last free-flowing stretch of the Little Tennessee River. Perhaps one of the most significant early applications of the Endangered Species Act, the action stopped the Tellico dam, but only temporarily: An eleventh-hour congressional appropriations rider later doomed TU's victory.

TU's recent accomplishments include:

- Securing permanent protection of 140,000 acres in California's Sierra Nevada in the Pacific Gas & Electric bankruptcy settlement.
- Negotiating a water deal that permanently sets aside 10,000 acre-feet of water in Montana's Bitterroot River.
- Employing cutting-edge technology like thermal infrared imagery to direct abandoned mine remediation work in Pennsylvania's Kettle Creek watershed.
- Advocating successfully for trout-friendly operation of five dams on the Housatonic River.
- Uniting TU members in five states in a broad-based, multi-partner effort to restore brook trout in the Southern Appalachian mountains.
- Leading a landmark effort to restore fishable Atlantic salmon runs on Maine's Penobscot River.
- Coordinating the Trout in the Classroom program, which teaches children in more than 100 schools about the importance of healthy aquatic ecosystems.
- Mobilizing hunters and anglers to ensure responsible use and lasting protection of the nation's public lands.
- Launching a watershed-scale conservation effort in the 24,000-square-mile Driftless region of Minnesota, Wisconsin, Iowa and Illinois

Driven by a powerful and dedicated grassroots network, TU is meeting the challenges of coldwater conservation and protecting our rivers and fisheries for generations to come.