

**Final Report
To
Arizona Sportsmen For Wildlife Conservation

\$1,875 Grant
to
10th Annual Native and Wild Trout Conference
April 11, 2019**

The 10th Annual Native and Wild Trout Conference was deemed to be another success with 145 registrations from various conservation organizations, state and federal agencies. The survey ratings are consistent with the past several years where ninety-six percent of the surveys rated the conference Very Good to Excellent.

The annual event has grown from 42 attendees in 2010 over the years representing a variety of conservation organizations, state and federal agencies.

This year Chris Wood, CEO and President of Trout Unlimited, was the keynote speaker. After his presentation, Trout Media of the national TU organization distributed nationally his article on *"Why Is It Important That We Recover Southwestern Trout?"*

(Link is at: https://www.tu.org/blog/why-is-it-important-that-we-recover-southwestern-trout/?utm_source=informz&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=informz).

Fifteen presentations from various professionals of conservation organizations and governmental agencies addressed topics such as the protection of wildlife from the challenges of climate change and forest fires, citizen science and stream monitoring programs, native and wild trout restorations and collaborations with the Trout Unlimited Southwest Native Trout Strategy (see attached agenda).

Two conservation awards instituted in 2014 to honor an organization (Apache Award) and an individual (Gila Trout) *"for their dedication to the conservation, protection and restoration of native and wild trout"* continued.

The 2019 Apache Trout Award was presented to the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest (<https://www.fs.usda.gov/asnf>). An important part of the recovery effort for native and wild trout is the extensive monitoring of stream habitat in the Apache and Gila Trout range. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest staff has led the way in this effort.

Gila Trout Awards were presented to Julie Meka Carter (AZGFD) and Jill Wick (New Mexico Department of Game & Fish).

Julie has been a tireless advocate for native trout in the western US. She serves as the AZGFD Statewide Native Aquatics Program Manager, was an original member of the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) Steering Committee and has served on that committee since 2008. Julie represents state fish and wildlife agencies as the Southwest US Region's representative for native trout species. She became the chair in 2014 and continues to serve in this role today.

Jill has demonstrated her passion and commitment towards Gila trout and their habitats for over ten years. She is the leader of the Whitewater Creek Gila Trout Restoration Project created by the catastrophic fires and flooding in 2012. She has engaged state and federal agencies with the public to quickly move planning and approval processes to implement restoration projects for native and wild trout.

To promote the Arizona Conservation License Plate, a free drawing was held and those eligible were only those who already had an Arizona Conservation License Plate displayed on their vehicle. Each of the four winners were given a *Fishing Arizona's High-Country* book.

The agenda and information on the annual conferences are available to the public for viewing at the Arizona Council of Trout Unlimited website at www.az-tu.com.



**10th Annual Native Trout Conference Attendees
April 11, 2019**

The \$1,875 grant from AZSFWC was directed to sharing costs for providing awards, food, water, soda, displays and paper products for the event. Acknowledgement of the AZSFWC grant was made throughout the event, a special drawing for those who owned a conservation license plate, included on the agenda, *Thank You Funding Supporters* slides shown throughout the presentation, flyers displayed on the registration website and at the food and conference registration tables (see various attachments).

Expenses incurred for the conference were:

\$ 629	Pre-conference dinner (AZGFD leaders, speakers, TU leaders)
914	Conference lunch: food, water, soda, paper products
1,279	Conference dinner/BBQ: food, water, soda, paper products
478	Awards
<u>412</u>	Displays, printing & signage
\$3,712	Total

The Arizona Council and four Arizona chapters thank you for your continued support in presenting this annual conference.

Any questions or additional information regarding the event or this report can be directed to:

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10th Annual Native and Wild Trout Conference
April 11, 2019
9:00a.m. - 4:30p.m.

9:00a.m. Opening

Julie Carter - AZGFD

9:05a.m. Welcome

Ty Gray - AZGFD Director

9:15a.m. Keynote Speaker

Chris Wood - Trout Unlimited CEO & President

9:45a.m. Apache Trout Recovery in Arizona

Bryan Giordano - AZGFD

10:05a.m. Break

10:20a.m. Gila Trout Recovery in Arizona

Julie Carter - AZGFD

10:40a.m. Propagation of Gila Trout in Arizona

Kyle Tulisiak - AZGFD

11:00a.m. Native Trout Restoration in New Mexico

Jill Wick - New Mexico Department of Game & Fish

11:20a.m. Distinguished Service for Conservation Awards

John Jordan and Gary Stinson - Trout Unlimited

11:40p.m. Group Photo

Noon Lunch

1:30p.m. Converging Conservation and Angling to Involve Citizen Science Support for Restoration of Gila Trout

Jim Brooks - Retired US Fish and Wildlife Service

1:50p.m. Trout Unlimited Southwest Native Trout Strategy

Brad Powell - Trout Unlimited

Toner Mitchell - Trout Unlimited

New Mexico Updates

Condition Dependent National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

2:10p.m. Fate of Stocked Trout

Zach Beard - AZGFD

2:40p.m. Lees Ferry: Glen Canyon Dam Management Plan

John Jordan - Trout Unlimited

2:50p.m. National Fish Habitat Partnership

Chris Cantrell - AZGFD

3:10p.m. Break

3:25p.m. Rise to the Future Strategy & Riparian Strategy

Yvette Paroz - US Forest Service

3:45p.m. Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI)

Jeremy Kruger - 4FRI CEO (USFS)

Nate Rees - Trout Unlimited (Tonto Forest Plan)

Joe Miller - Trout Unlimited (Aquatics Toolbox)

4:05p.m. In the News Again: Public Lands and Uranium Mining

Brad Powell - Trout Unlimited

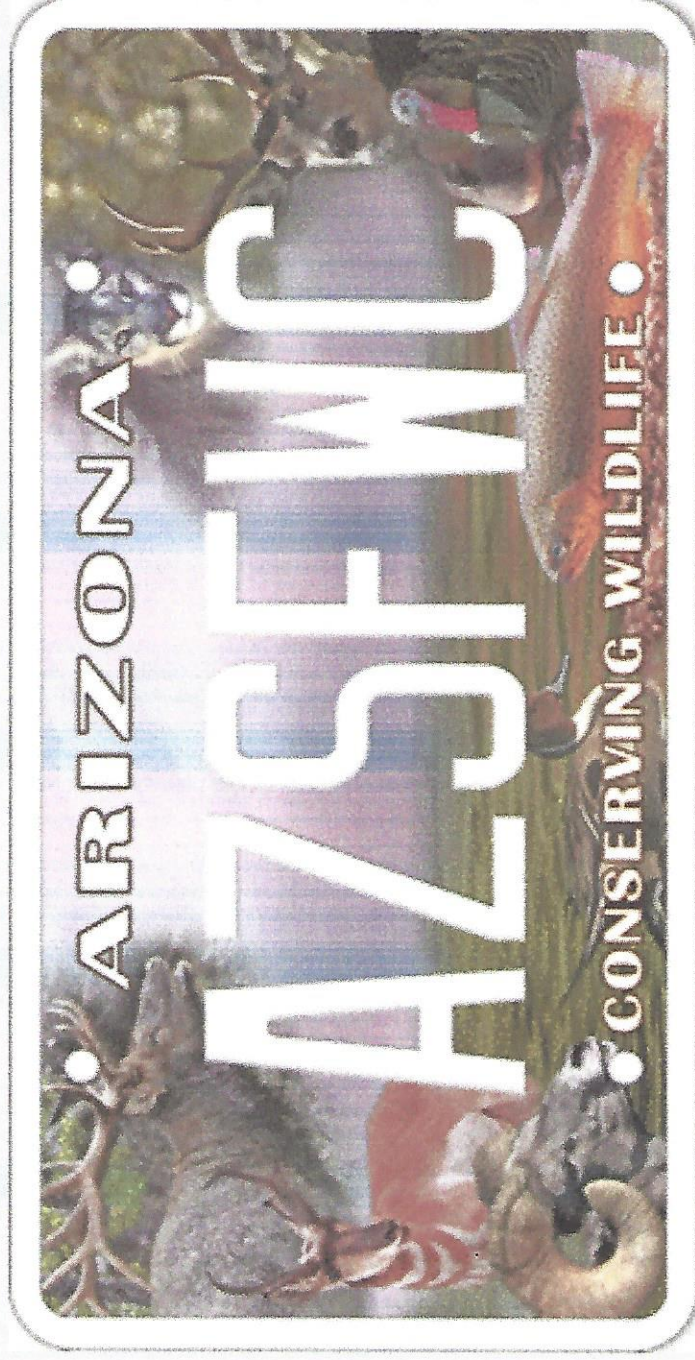
4:25p.m. Closing Comments

Thanks to Our Funding Supporters



Old Pueblo Trout Unlimited





**If you have a plate get a ticket at the
registration desk for a raffle especially for
conservation plate holders!**



Apache and Gila Trout Conservation Awards at the Annual Native and Wild Trout Conferences

The Arizona Game and Fish Department and the Trout Unlimited Arizona Council are proud to recognize the achievements of individuals and organizations that have made exceptional contributions to the conservation, protection and restoration of native and wild trout and their habitat in the southwest. Their efforts, whether through expertise, advocacy or education, inspire and encourage others to help protect nature for the enjoyment of all.

Apache Trout Award

The award is given to recognize an organization for its support of a wide range of efforts to protect and restore some of our great natural treasures – native and wild trout. These organizations have made long-term contributions to the conservation of these vital resources.

Gila Trout Award

The award is given to recognize an individual who has shown remarkable leadership and commitment to conserve and restore natural ecosystems, focusing on water, trout, other wildlife and their habitats.

Recipients:

2014 Apache Trout: White Mountain Apache Tribe Game & Fish

Gila Trout: Dr. Robert Behnke

2015 Apache Trout: New Mexico Game & Fish Department

Gila Trout: Jennifer Johnson & Jeremy Voeltz (US Fish & Wildlife Service)

2016 Apache Trout: Southwest Tribal Fisheries Commission

Gila Trout: Kelly Meyer (AZGFD) & Kevin Terry (Trout Unlimited)

2017 Apache Trout: White Mountain Lakes Foundation

Gila Trout: Jim Brooks (USFW) & Dave Probst (NM Game & Fish Department)

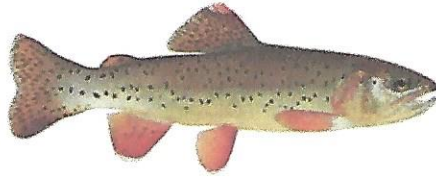
2018 Apache Trout: Mora National Fish Hatchery

Gila Trout: Yvette Paroz (USFS) & Jack Williams (Trout Unlimited)

2019 Apache Trout: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

Gila Trout: Julie Meka Carter (AZGFD) & Jill Wick (NM Game & Fish Department)

2019 Apache Trout Award



Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest

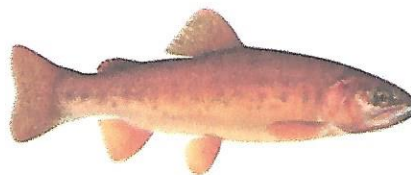
The staff of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest and its various Ranger Districts have been great supporters of and participants in the efforts to reestablish native trout to the White Mountains.

Encompassing over two million acres, much of the Gila Trout habitat in Arizona and all the Apache Trout habitat, minus the Fort Apache Indian Reservation, lie within the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest. By actively engaging in habitat improvement and extensive habitat monitoring of both Apache and Gila Trout waters, the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest has set a high standard of leadership and cooperation.

An important part of the recovery effort is the extensive monitoring of stream habitat in the Apache and Gila Trout range. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest staff has led the way in this effort. They have collected an extensive data set over the past several years and continue to do so. The development of innovative monitoring and analysis protocols is critical to the recovery efforts. The assistance, subject matter expertise and oversight of this effort provided by the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest staff is paramount in this effort.

Taking on the responsibility of planning and coordinating habitat improvement efforts has been critical in the long-term process of recovering fire damaged trout habitat. While these recovery efforts are supported by Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), the work could not be completed without the leadership, enthusiastic support and involvement of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest staff.

2019 Gila Trout Award



Julie Meka Carter: Arizona Game & Fish Department

Julie Meka Carter has been a tireless advocate for native trout in the western US. She began her career working in Alaska studying life history characteristics, hooking mortality and injuries on rainbow trout. Through progressive promotions, she now serves as the Arizona Statewide Native Aquatics Program Manager.

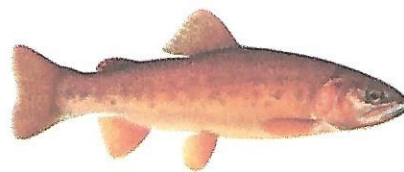
Julie was an original member of the Western Native Trout Initiative (WNTI) Steering Committee and has served on that committee since 2008. Julie represents state fish and wildlife agencies as the Southwest US Region's representative for native trout species. She became the chair in 2014 and continues to serve in this role today.

Her role on WNTI is voluntary and involves commitment, vision and leadership. She has helped write numerous grant applications on behalf of WNTI's Campaign for Western Trout, created an objective grant/ranking/approval process for evaluation of annual native trout habitat proposals, reviewed and ranked hundreds of proposals for projects, led two strategic planning processes and status assessments for Apache and Gila trout in 2008 and 2016.

Julie co-planned and moderated two-day sessions sponsored by WNTI at the annual American Fisheries Society meetings in 2015 in Portland, Oregon and in 2018 in Anchorage, Alaska. Both sessions were focused on western native trout management and conservation in the western U.S.

Among her many accolades is an award of merit from the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society for her "special contribution involving service above and beyond the call of duty".

2019 Gila Trout Award



Jill Wick, State of New Mexico Department of Game & Fish Sportfish Management Program

For more than ten years Jill Wick has demonstrated her passion and commitment towards Gila Trout and their unique aquatic habitats.

During that time, she has served as the Department's Aquatic Habitat Specialist, Gila Trout Biologist, Colorado Basin Native Fish Supervisor and Native Fish Program Manager. Over her career, she has exemplified the qualities of a great biologist. She applies a combination of sincere passion and hard work to achieve positive outcomes for the fish she manages. Jill is a consummate professional in representing the Department to the public, private landowners and the media. She has routinely faced contentious situations and demonstrated an ability to earn allies instead of making enemies.

She has worked on many substantial projects in her time with the Department but none exemplify her mental and physical toughness, penchant for planning and ability to lead so much as the Whitewater Creek Gila Trout Restoration Project. Jill seized an opportunity created by the catastrophic fires and subsequent flooding in the area in 2012. Those events nearly eradicated non-native trout from the drainage opening the chance for restoration of native trout in a place long thought to be socially and maybe physically impossible. Jill engaged her Department colleagues, Federal partners, and the public in a manner that quickly moved the project through the planning phases. As a true testament to Jill's skill, the project received a letter of support from Catron County and drew very little public opposition.

Planning a project of this magnitude is challenging but implementing it in a remote and rugged wilderness is even more so. Again, Jill applied her passion, dedication and tenacity to every aspect of the project. Over two years she led dozens of people into the wilderness to scour the drainage for non-native trout. She coordinated hundreds of mule loads and dozens of helicopter flights to move tons of gear around the watershed - always succeeding at having what was needed where it was needed for each day's work. Less than a week before the treatment week in 2018, a major winter storm knocked down literally hundreds of trees onto the trails critical for completing the project. Facing the possibility of a year-long delay in the project, Jill worked her network of contacts and found a solution.

In her newest role, Jill is bringing her intellect and dedication to bear on new challenges including implementing restoration projects for Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout in the Pecos River Basin while continuing to engage in Gila Trout Conservation.