

The International Wild Trout Symposium: The Past and the Future

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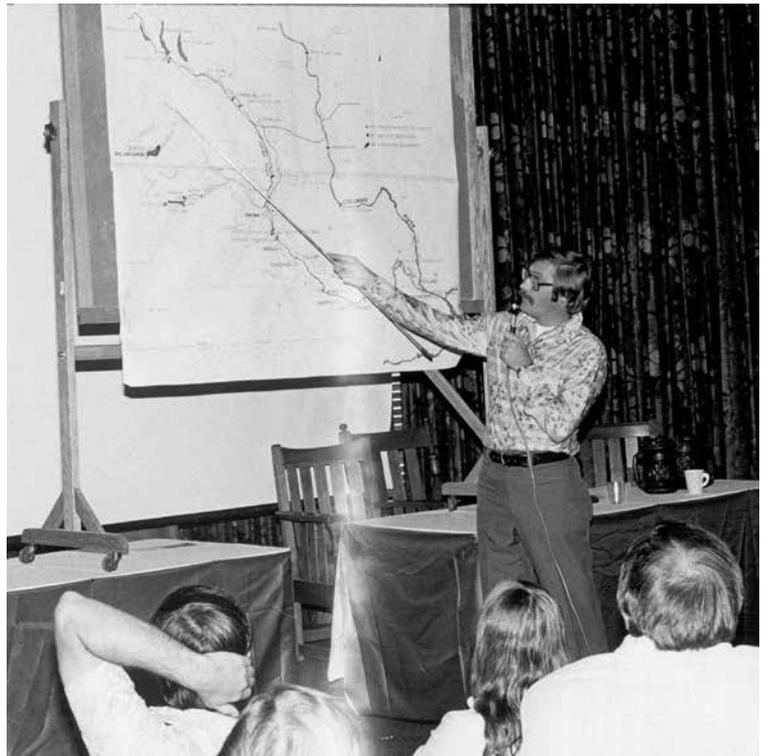


This fall, 22–25 September 2014, Wild Trout XI will convene at the Holiday Inn, West Yellowstone, Montana, and begin by celebrating the 40th anniversary of the International Wild Trout Symposium series. The first meeting was held in 1974 and brought together wild trout biologists and anglers to foster improved management of wild trout resources in the United States and Canada. From this modest beginning, the Wild Trout Symposium has subsequently been held every 3 to 5 years and has become an important sounding board for the conservation of wild trout. Wild Trout XI offers another unique opportunity for professional biologists from around the world to interact with educators, anglers, nonprofit conservation groups, and businesses keenly interested in wild trout populations and their associated fisheries.

HISTORY

Prior to Wild Trout I, discussions related to wild trout management occurred for decades at regional fisheries meetings across the United States and around the world. However, the idea for a broader meeting focused solely on wild trout began when three visionaries, Frank Richardson, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Trout Unlimited Executive Director Pete Van Gytenbeek, and John Peters of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, met for lunch in Denver in 1973 and discussed ways to advance the cause of wild trout. Their idea, to hold a geographically diverse conclave dedicated exclusively to wild trout management while staying in one of North America's most sacred wild trout sanctuaries, was presented to Nathaniel P. Reed, Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish, Wildlife and Parks. Reed enthusiastically endorsed the concept and based on his support, Richardson soon met with Jack Anderson, superintendent of Yellowstone National Park, and planning for the event began immediately.

As envisioned by the founders of the meeting, the mission of the Wild Trout Symposium was, and remains, to provide a forum for professional wild trout



biologists, conservationists, and anglers to get to know each other in an informal setting and be exposed to the latest wild trout science and research. The originators intended that the attendees would establish contacts across the United States and Canada and that they would communicate and share ideas related to the management of wild trout resources and the anglers who use and enjoy them.

The first symposium was held 25–26 September 1974 at Mammoth Hot Springs Hotel in Yellowstone National Park. Over 300 anglers, writers, students, and professionals from every trout-supporting region in the United States and Canada met on common ground to talk about wild trout and establish a new tradition. In his keynote remarks, Willis King noted that if the meeting was to determine what attendees thought was “the right thing to do for wild trout,” it should center around two themes. First, “How do we perpetuate a natural fishery?” In other words, what tools are available to ensure the preservation of this valuable resource? Second, “What can we do to provide a satisfactory angling experience?” In Kivv0ng’s view, to accomplish this task, biologists first needed to understand the basic life history of the fish they are working with; next, develop a sound knowledge of the aquatic ecosystems they live in; and, lastly, we must understand how this information relates to anglers. King’s insights and challenges sound strikingly similar to those that wild trout managers face today.

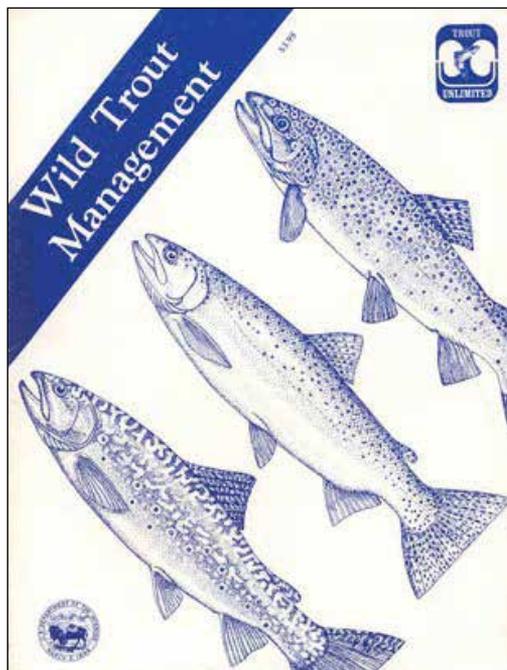
The first several symposia focused primarily on managing fish and anglers, water quality, watershed management, and possible deleterious consequences of stocked hatchery trout on wild trout populations. The use of special regulations to protect wild trout populations from overharvest was also a key meeting topic during the early years. However, there was little data to support many of the claims of special regulation proponents. Early state agency studies in California, Michigan, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Idaho, along with those in Yellowstone and Great Smoky Mountains national parks, provided much of the initial information related to the use of special trout regulations. Many of these initial studies, reported on at the first few Wild Trout Symposia, paved the way for later studies that included more detailed information on response of the fish populations to special regulations and rapidly changing angler opinions and desires.

The symposia that followed the first few meetings have focused on many of the key issues still affecting wild trout populations. These issues include native species restoration, conservation genetics, partnerships for watershed management, regulations and their appropriateness, educational tools for schools and the public, global warming, and acid rain. Each symposium has brought together many of the leading authorities on wild trout management and research from around the world as well as conservation leaders and students to discuss the latest challenges and opportunities related to wild trout resources. For four decades now, attendees have left these meetings and returned home armed with new ideas and tools that help protect and preserve these resources in the face of a rapidly changing environment that places more demands on shrinking resources.



WILD TROUT XI: “LOOKING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD” SLATED FOR SEPTEMBER 2014

Wild Trout XI will celebrate the 40th anniversary of this prestigious event. As with the earlier gatherings, a diverse group of leaders in wild trout management and research, educators, nonprofit conservation staff, and others from across the United States, Canada, and the world will meet to talk morning to midnight on their favorite topic, wild trout. The symposium will be kicked off with a plenary session highlighting the meeting history and lessons learned in the past four decades, along with an insightful look forward to the future of wild trout management. Based on past results, this meeting promises to provide the most up-to-date information available regarding future wild trout management, regardless of where these resources occur. Though several other wild trout-centric meetings of lesser



vintage are also of note, this meeting is arguably the premier meeting for the working wild trout biologist and other enthusiasts to attend. Although the meeting is no longer officially being held in Yellowstone National Park, the entrance gate lies only about a half mile from this year's venue, so there will be plenty of opportunities before, during, and after the meeting to explore the world's first national park. See you there!

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WT Symposium XI
Looking Back and Moving Forward
22–25 September 2014
West Yellowstone, MT

For more meeting information and a list of session topics please visit
www.wildtroutsymposium.com



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