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In over 40 years of fishing this area, the most memorable fishing regulation change, in my mind, came about in 1998. At long last, the harvest limits for wild resident stream trout were finally reduced and on many a trout stream a 0 limit was put into place!

These changes to the provincial sport fishing regulations were a direct result of a series of open house discussions that were conducted in 1997, across the province. Thanks to regional anglers and other interest groups, a policy of protecting and enhancing wild trout populations or not so famous' waters was close to being a reality

As I write this, I can say with confidence, as a catch and release fly fisher, that I have witnessed a definite improvement in the quality of my angling experience and the health of the area's wild trout populations!

However, I can't help thinking about how long it has taken to finally get where we are alt Also, if you were to ask me if I an totally satisfied with the way our fisheries are managed. I would quickly respond—TNOT There are other management issues that I have an interest in and it is taking too long for these to be addressed!

I will give you a few examples of some of these issues, to help explain my concerns. The following is a brief summary of only two of many management pursuits that I have been involved in over the years:

The Jumpingpound Strain of Rainbow Trout in the Bow River

Back in the early 1990's, the JP Chapter of Trout Unlimited raised concerns about the existing harvest policy for both the Bow River and Bearspaw Reservoir. At that time is was legal to harvest 5 wild rout from both the dam and river. In their trout trapping survey on the JP Creek, a total of only 1,128 mature rainbow trout were captured and processed.

Considering that the JP Creek is the only spawning tributary for an isolated strain of rainbow trout, residing in 35 km of the Bow River and the entire Bearspaw Dam, it was determined by the Chapter that this was not a healthy number of rainbow trout for the system!

Despite efforts by the JP Chapter to get a reduction in the harvest numbers for both the reservoir and the river, the group was upset that nothing was being done! Especially after the investment in time and money that they had made to protect this important strain of trout!

Finally, in 1998, as part of the new province wide regulations, the harvest limit for the Bow River was reduced to 2 truct over 35 cm in length for a period of lime during the summer and fail months. Yet the Bearspaw harvest limit remained at 5 wild trout and the reservoir was open all year!

It wasn't until 2010 that the Bearspaw It wasn't until 2010 that the Bearspaw rainbow troubt population received the protection that they deserve. The harvest limit on both the Bow River and Bearspaw was reduced to 1 trout, with the exception of lake trout. The lake trout harvest limit remained at a catch limit of 3 trout. This had only taken the regional fisheries biologist approximately 15 years to accomplish, not to mention or give credit to whether he supported the changel Maybe he finally saw the gift. I am a divocate of a pro-active management at gray, name to be a supported take, re-active management blunder!

A few days after the phone call, I made a special trip up to the Boulton Creek day use parking lot, to have a look and possibly take a few photos. A recent rain had made the creek turbid in color and it would be difficult to spot any fish. However, I did manage to see a few very large rainbow trout, holding close to the stream bank. I adve posted, a large mumber of the freshly disturbed gravel showed the tell tale signs!

I contacted the same provincial regional biologist that had been striving to get the stocked cuthroat trout reproducing on the lower lake and I explain what I had found out over the past week. After asking him why there was no stream closure for angling on Boution Creek, while the spring spawning was occurring, he explained to me that the spawning activity was the present management policy for the lower Kananaskis Lake!

You can imagine my disgust with such a feeble answer to what I thought was an important issue!

Once again, in 2009, the issue of the Boulton Creek rainbow trout was brought to the attention of that same fisheries biologist. Thanks to the efforts of local angler, Jake Gotta, a meeting and electro fish of the creek was arranged for the spring spawning period on Boulton Creek. Also in attendance, was the provincial biologist for Trout Unlimited Canada.

During that meeting day on the creek, the group of staff and volunteers electro fished 60 very large rainbow trout, that had moved up the stream to spawn. The electro fishing was carried out on a limited section of the lower creek, in the same area that I had reported back in the late 1990's. I received an excited phone call from Jake about the days activities and results.

Jake explained to me that the entire group was so impressed by their results that they all agreed that some regulation changes needed to be put in place to protect these magnificent toul, during their spring spawning activity. A new regulation was put in place in 2010 and lake are finally protected during this vital annual event on Boulton Creek!

It only took a little over ten years, since the spawning activity was first reported, to get a regulation change on Boulton Creek! This spawning activity could have been reported before the time that I mentioned, but who knows for sure?

These are just two examples of a long list of issues that have to be properly addressed and that are taking a way too long a time, to be resolved. I think that it is very important for fisheries managers to listen to local anglers that can provide a valuable resource of knowledge for his ability to convince the provincial biologist involved in the Boulton Creek matter!

Over the four year term that I was habitat chairman, with the JP Chapter of Trout Unlimited and the few years after when I was just a member, the group worked with three different provincial fisheries biologists. The first two biologists inspired the group to complete a number of very worthwhile projects. The third and final biologist furstrated the groups efforts to get anything done!

In the late 1990's, the membership in the JP Chapter of TU slow declined and the group folded. I can't help thinking about how and why this happened. I have talked to many of the membership and the general consensus is that former members left the group out of frustration.

I know that feeling quite well! I continue to work on area fisheries habitat matters and it is required that I need a level of co-operation from the local regional biologists to get anything done, but the level of frustration of getting any support from this department on my programs continues to be a major problem.

If someone was to ask me if I am totally satisfied with the way our area's fisheries is being managed. I would respond with confidence, NOI If they asked me how is the level of cooperation with the regional biologist for this area, I can also say with experience that it is non-existent!

**Read More** 





Above: Boulton Creek



Waiting for Change!

Boulton Creek Strain of Kananaskis Rainbow Trout

Back in the early 1990's, a certain regional fisheries biologist was trying to convince TransAlta Utilities to alter the lake levels in the lower Kananaskis Lake, so that cutthroat trout could spawn in the old Kananaskis River channel inflow.

The objective of this endeavor was to create a reproductive option for the cutthroat trout that were annually stocked in the lower lake. After hearing about this goal, I contacted the said higher the stock of the said biologist and recommended that he look at Boulton Creek as a possible spawning tributary to the lower lake.

His response to my idea was that the Boulton Creek water temperatures were too cold for spring spawning cutthroat trout. I accepted this answer to my suggestion, assuming that this feeder tribulary had already been investigated as a cuthroat trout option. Nothing more was said, on my part.

Later on in the second half of the 1990's, I received a phone call from an old fishing buddy. Bary Bryant of Cochrane. It was late May and Bary and his family had spent the long weekend at the Boulton Creek campground, near the mouth of Boulton Creek. He reported that he ad observed huge rainbow trout spawning on the lower end of Boulton Creek, around the day use narking Id. use parking lot.

At that time, there was no regulation in place to prevent anglers from capturing these huge trout as they attempted to spawn in the creek. Not only was this a shame, but it indicated that little was known about the spawning event!