



caltrout.org

CalTrout's mission is to protect and restore wild trout, steelhead, salmon, and their waters throughout California.

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Ready for action in 2013

Thanks very much for making 2012 a great year for California Trout. Over the past year, we've seen our portfolio of conservation projects grow substantially.



Not only have we opened up new program offices in Ventura and Santa Rosa, but we've added the scientific and legal talent required to do great work and deliver on our mission. For arguably the first time in CalTrout's history, we can look at each of our offices around the state and see multiple, larger scale, and critical projects being led by CalTrout. That expansion is due to the support of thousands of supporters, as well as the many agencies, corporations and foundations that fund our work. In the end, it comes down to a talented team in our field offices, capable of identifying the right conservation opportunities, securing the funding, and being great project leaders. Darren Mierau, Arcata, has some exciting plans for the Eel and Elk Rivers. Curtis Knight, Mt. Shasta, continues to champion our work on the McCloud and Shasta Rivers. Drew Braugh, Mt. Shasta, secured over \$650,000 to restore Hat Creek. Mark Drew, Mammoth, is leading the regional water management planning process for Inyo and Mono Counties in the Eastern Sierra. Jacob Katz, Santa Rosa, leads our salmon recovery floodplains work in the Yolo bypass. And, Kurt Zimmerman, Ventura, oversees our Southern California steelhead recovery efforts on the Santa Clara and in San Diego/Orange County.



CalTrout staff at Mossbrae Falls on the Upper Sac.

This issue of the CalTrout Streamkeeper's Log introduces you to our regional team. I am confident you'll come away with a better sense of who we are and why you can believe in our work.

Tight lines,

Jeff Thompson
Executive Director, CalTrout



BIG NEWS!

California Trout has been awarded a \$650,000 grant from California Natural Resources Agency to restore iconic Hat Creek

Project aims to restore and increase wild trout populations in California's first official Wild Trout Area

The California Natural Resources Agency has awarded a grant for \$650,000 to California Trout to restore fish habitat and create new recreational opportunities in and around Hat Creek in Shasta County. The funding will support projects aimed at improving conditions for wild trout that were once abundant but have dropped to precariously low levels in recent years. "This grant is one example of the ways in which our agency is supporting projects that enhance recreational opportunities while supporting native fish populations throughout the state," said Secretary for Natural Resources John Laird. "Hat Creek is a special place, and the Hat Creek River Parkway project is a step in the right direction toward its potential as a thriving habitat for wild trout."

Hat Creek is well known to anglers throughout California and beyond. When native trout populations declined in the early 1970s, California Trout succeeded in restoring Hat Creek and designating the spring creek as California's first Wild Trout Water. By the 1980s, it was home to over 5,000 wild trout per mile thanks to ongoing conservation efforts. More recently, however, conditions have deteriorated and fish populations have once again declined. California Trout is now working to reverse the trend and restore trout populations in Hat Creek to 1980s levels.

"The slow deterioration of conditions in Hat Creek brought on by a combination of unrelated issues, including cattle grazing

and burrowing by non-native muskrats, have created crisis conditions for trout," said Drew Braugh, Conservation Manager of California Trout's Mt. Shasta Regional Office. "The funds secured today will go a long way toward creating habitat in which these native fish can thrive."

The grant from the California Natural Resources Agency will fund riparian planting of native plant species, strategically placing large woody debris into the creek, and constructing ADA-compliant trails along the creek to enhance recreational opportunities for the local population. In addition to financial support from the Natural Resources Agency, California Trout has worked closely with PG&E, which owns the

land, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences to develop and implement a feasible and scientifically sound restoration plan for Hat Creek.

"Hat Creek is truly at the heart of our mission to protect and restore wild trout and their waters," said California Trout Executive Director Jeff Thompson. "We have brought wild trout populations back from dire straits in this creek before, and we can do it again. Our partners in science and this important funding support from the California Natural Resources Agency are key players in helping us to make this happen."

Get to know CalTrout's team on the ground

Curtis Knight CONSERVATION DIRECTOR

MS (Fisheries), Utah State



Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I'm California Trout's Conservation Director and Director of the Blue Ribbon Waters Initiative. I work in the Mt. Shasta region which contains California's biggest concentration of blue ribbon trout waters.

Right in my backyard, are the Upper Sacramento, McCloud and Klamath Rivers. A little farther away you'll find the Pit River, Hat Creek and Fall River. And that's ignoring the thousands of smaller waters and lakes I'm not going to name. For someone who fishes and wants to protect our fisheries, it doesn't get much better than that.

What are the most critical issues facing the Mt. Shasta region?

First, we need to watch out for the Upper Sacramento, McCloud, Hat Creek, Fall River and Pit River. A huge amount of spring water flows out of Mt. Shasta every year, and the rivers holding all that cold, clean water need to be protected, especially in light of climate change.

We've already seen a water bottler try to divert spring water out of the McCloud's headwaters. In addition, relicensing the dams that control the flows on some of these rivers is a long, drawn-out process, but it's critical we be there. It's not just about the amount of water in a river, but also about tracking fish populations.

We're heavily involved in the McCloud River dam relicensing, and we're still part of the ongoing adaptive management process on the Pit River hydropower relicensing, where we have some concerns about the new flows.

Second, Klamath River dam removal is still a high priority issue for us. We are on track to remove four dams from the river by 2020. We can create a truly world-class steelhead fishery and help bring back the salmon runs that today are a fraction of their historic populations. That's one reason why the Shasta River has become such an important project for us. When the Klamath River dams do come out, we need to have a source of wild fish ready to fill up the spawning areas. The Shasta River can be that source.

Plus, the McCloud redband trout are still an issue with us. We're protecting the tiny remnant populations that exist in the small streams above the McCloud River falls. We've made some progress restoring these relatively small, colorful trout, but these small, isolated populations can blink out in an instant.

Meanwhile, our Mt. Shasta Conservation Manager, Drew Braugh, is working on Hat Creek and Fall River. We just got funding to improve the Hat Creek fishery, and we are working closely with the Fall River Conservancy to implement restoration projects.

What are the long-term issues facing the Mount Shasta region?

Over the long run, we are focused on the removal of the four Klamath River dams by 2020. Dam removal is never a fast process, but the science says dam removal will be good for fish, and with over forty different stakeholders signing on to the dam removal agreements, we believe it has the consensus it needs to get done.

Climate change is also going to be an issue, though more for its effect on Central Valley species than up here in the Mt. Shasta region. Some agencies are studying the reintroduction of salmon back into the McCloud and Upper Sacramento Rivers which would have long-term effects on those fisheries.

We are concerned about the potential for raising Shasta Dam which would inundate several miles of the McCloud and Upper Sacramento Rivers. Look for our film 'Enough is Enough' that talks about this issue. Otherwise, we're very much in protection mode with our blue ribbon waters. There are so many threats – from water diversions to flow regimes to invasive species – that we can't relax.

Where would you choose to send someone in your region?

The McCloud River. It's breathtaking and the home of the rainbow trout that are now found literally all around the world. Once you've seen it and fished it, you never forget it.

Darren Mierau NORTH COAST REGIONAL MANAGER

MA (Biology), Humboldt State University, BA (Biology), Claremont McKenna College



Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I manage California Trout's North Coast region which stretches roughly from the Russian River north to the Smith River. I'd say the heart of the region revolves around the Smith River, Redwood Creek, the Trinity River and the Eel River.

There are some truly amazing rivers on the Mendocino Coast, but I'm focused on the rivers like the Trinity and Eel where CalTrout's biggest opportunities lie. They hold a lot of potential for recovering salmon and steelhead populations.

I can say this: I work in a beautiful part of the world.

What are the critical issues facing the North Coast region?

Two issues that consume much of my time are the Trinity River restoration and our work on the Eel River which is really picking up momentum.

Many are familiar with the Trinity River story. Starting in the early 1960s, up to 90% of the Trinity's flows were diverted south. It took 38 years to get even some of that water back.

Now we're in the midst of one of the largest steelhead and salmon restoration programs in the state, and while that's generally moving along, some stakeholders -- including me -- have concerns that the program is veering away from how it was originally envisioned.

The Eel River is occupying a lot of my attention. CalTrout's leading the development of the Eel River Task Force, a recognition of the fact that the Eel is a huge watershed with some issues that are too complex for any one agency or organization to address. We have to work together to make critical decisions about how to allocate limited resources to achieve the most progress toward species recovery and protection.

I'm working with stakeholders on several projects: the Eel River Estuary Preserve project, Bridge Creek railroad crossing removal, Woodman Creek Fish Passage project, and eventually PG&E's Potter Valley project to name a few. Some projects -- the Bridge Creek barrier removal -- will have an immediate impact by opening up more habitat. Other projects -- like the Estuary Preserve -- are more of a blank slate. The results could be spectacular, but a lot needs to be done.

The Eel has enormous potential -- it drains about 3,684 square miles -- yet it has suffered so much from poor logging practices and the floods of the 50s and 60s, from which it's never really recovered. Today's Chinook, steelhead and coho runs are in the 1% to 10% range of historic numbers. I'm really looking forward to seeing it come back to life.

What are the long-term issues facing the North Coast region?

Many of the projects I'm working on today will be the same projects I'm working on a few years from now. Some, like the Bridge Creek and Woodman Creek railroad crossing removal, will go quickly, but restoring the Eel River and Trinity River are long-term prospects.

Tell us about your favorite place in your region.

The South Fork Smith River is as beautiful as any place in the state, and the steelhead fishing can be good. The Mattole is also beautiful, and its steelhead fishery is coming back. The whole Mendocino Coast is awesome. I hope to expand my program out there in the near future.

Kurt Zimmerman

SO. CALIFORNIA REGIONAL MANAGER

JD, UCLA, MA (History), Stanford University, BA (Classics & History), Stanford University

Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I'm California Trout's Southern California Regional Manager. My office is located in Ventura, and I grew up in Pasadena and Sierra Madre, so I'm no stranger to Southern California.

My region stretches from the Santa Maria River in the north to the Tijuana River on the California/Mexico border. The region supports more than 2/3 of the state's population and it's also the home of the endangered Southern California steelhead.

In my former life, I was a federal prosecutor, who enforced environmental laws in Washington D.C. and later Los Angeles. I was also a natural resources attorney with NOAA, where I provided legal oversight for restoration projects, including a steelhead and salmon restoration project.

What are the most critical problems facing fish in your region?

Flood control efforts, including the construction of dams, and water consumption have driven the Southern California steelhead to the edge of extinction; today, only about 500 adults remain. Seventy-five years ago, the figure was probably closer to 50,000.

Another problem is public awareness, or the lack thereof. Most Southern Californians have never seen a steelhead and do not know that historically, there were steelhead runs in the region's rivers and streams. Nor are they aware that populations of wild trout still exist throughout the region.

Still, I'm optimistic. CalTrout is taking a leadership role in the fight to restore Southern California steelhead with projects like the removal of fish passage barriers and public outreach campaigns. In fact, we have formed and are leading two steelhead coalitions -- one in the Orange and San Diego County watersheds and another in the Santa Clara River watershed.

Are Southern California steelhead really so different?

Absolutely, I call them "super fish." One of the long-term issues we're facing is climate change; higher temperatures and changes in precipitation patterns will result in increased pressure on our already dwindling water supplies. The Southern California steelhead can survive much higher water temperatures than their northern cousins. As our climate grows warmer, that heat tolerance will prove critical.

What's your favorite place in your region to fish?

The Southern California steelhead is an endangered species. It's not legal to fish for them and given their small numbers, you aren't likely to catch one anyway. On the other hand, the Kern River isn't that far from Los Angeles, and it's a great place to cast a fly.

For families looking for a fishing experience, Lake Cuyamaca -- near Julian, in the mountains north of San Diego -- is a beautiful place. It's at elevation, so they can stock it year-round with trout. The bait fishing is usually pretty easy, which is important when you've got kids.



Jacob Katz CENTRAL CALIFORNIA REGIONAL MANAGER
PhD (Ecology) candidate, UC Davis, BA (Biology), Sonoma State University



Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I manage the brand-new CalTrout Central California region and I am the Director of the Steelhead and Salmon Initiative.

The Central California region stretches along the coast from Monterey to the Mendocino Coast, and includes the anadromous waters of the Central Valley where I've been working to reestablish self-sustaining, naturally reproducing salmon runs. My office is in Santa Rosa.

I'm a PhD candidate at UC Davis Center for Watershed Sciences, and also a fly fisherman who guided in Alaska for seven years.

Tell us about the conservation challenges you're facing in the Central California region.

In the Central Valley, we're focused on salmon and steelhead. The problem is the water infrastructure – it was built piecemeal over the last century to drain the Central Valley for agriculture and development, divert water to ag and urban uses, and protect development from floods. In almost every case, it was created without consideration of its effects on fish.

Traditionally, dams and their effect on spawning habitats have dominated Central Valley salmon conservation efforts. This remains an issue of vital importance but spawning is only one of the links in the life history of salmon. Rearing habitat is also of vital importance and has been largely ignored up to now.

Our floodplains project is an attempt to address that. Over the last decade, we've learned size is the single best indicator of a salmon smolt's ability to reach the ocean and survive once they get there.

Traditionally, salmon fry (and this goes for steelhead too) would wash downriver at a fairly small size into one of the Central Valley's marshes or flooded regions. Out on the floodplain, the conditions are nearly perfect for growth and the young salmon grew at incredibly rapid rates.

Research has shown that floodplain-raised salmon fry grow at nearly twice the rate of a fry in the main channel. These floodplain-reared fish enjoy a much higher chance at survival. In other words, the Central Valley's floodplains are one of the reasons the valley had such giant salmon and steelhead runs. The good news is you can make some fairly minor tweaks to the infrastructure and get millions

of juvenile fish back out on to the floodplain. In fact, our Knagg's Ranch project has proven that we can do this in a way that works for flood control, agriculture, fish and waterbirds.

What long-term conservation issues loom large?

The long-term issues will remain focused on water, especially on the coast. How do we make sure we have enough left for fish?

Tell us about your favorite place in your region.

Austin Creek is one of the largest tributaries on the Lower Russian River. It's still a wonderfully wild place full of big steelhead. Snorkeling underwater in Austin Creek's green pools, watching big steelies slide back under old-growth redwood snags – that is one of my favorite places to be.

It's an incredible place that's sadly closed to fishing, though if we can recover the vast steelhead populations that once swam in the Russian River, one day Austin Creek could be re-opened to fishing. That's my career goal – rivers full of fish.

Drew Braugh MT. SHASTA CONSERVATION MANAGER

BA (Political Science) Western Washington University, MPA Monterey Institute of International Studies



Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I'm CalTrout's Mt. Shasta Conservation Manager, and currently I'm focusing on the restoration of two of Northern California's premier spring creek fisheries: Hat Creek and Fall River.

These spring-fed systems are special because they generate large volumes of cold, clean, nutrient-rich water. More specifically, the spring systems all around Mt. Shasta tend to produce elevated levels of nitrogen and phosphorous.

Why are these nutrients important? Because they grow fish, bugs, and aquatic plants much faster than most surface-fed streams. Spring creeks also tend to generate more constant flows year-round because they are fed by groundwater, whereas surface-fed streams depend more on precipitation and snow runoff.

We're really lucky to have both Hat Creek and Fall River in our region. They are fascinating systems to work on; we're making progress on some challenging issues... and the fishing is unforgiving but rewarding when you finally land that 20 inch on 7x!

What are the critical issues facing Hat Creek and Fall River?

Hat Creek and Fall River both suffer from sediment issues that seem to have really disrupted their entire food web cycles. Over the last 20-25 years, both systems have experienced a major influx of fine sediment that blanketed their stream beds and altered their natural aquatic plant life cycles.

This may or may not be related to the terrible Eurasian watermilfoil outbreak in the Fall River that started around 2002. Excessive sedimentation like this can originate from various natural or anthropogenic sources such as flooding, channel straightening, and bank erosion from unrestricted cattle. The problem with low gradient, slow moving spring creeks is that they usually don't have the large flood events needed to flush excessive sediment out. So once it gets in there, it's stuck! But it actually moves faster than most people think; we're finally seeing the tail ends of both sediment slugs in Hat and Fall.

More importantly, we're starting to see aquatic vegetation growing again, which is really positive. There has been a lot of talk about dredging both systems but with these new signs of life – and stable fish populations – we want to help nature do its thing. Stabilizing streambanks, managing cattle better, restoring native terrestrial and aquatic vegetation, all these things will improve habitat conditions and increase the carrying capacity of both fisheries to hold larger and more abundant wild trout.

Tell us about your favorite place in your region.

The Hat Creek Wild Trout Area has become my new favorite place on earth! We obviously have big plans for this place and I can't wait to get started on our restoration plans. I'm really impressed with CalTrout's initiative and commitment to Hat Creek.

When I contemplate our ten- and twenty-year restoration vision, I get goosebumps just thinking about the legacy of fly-fishing here and the impact our organization will have.

There's no place better than sundown up on the hill above Carbon Flats. I can picture the restored canopy hanging over the river, bald eagles grabbing lunkers from the stream, maybe even a few anglers fishing there again!

Mark Drew EASTERN & NORTHERN SIERRA REGIONAL MANAGER

PhD (Forestry Resources and Conservation), University of Florida
MA (International Development Policy), Stanford University
BS (Forestry and Natural Resources Management), Cal Poly, SLO



Tell us a little about yourself and your region.

I'm the Regional Manager for the Eastern and Northern Sierra regions and the Director of the Imperiled Native Trout Initiative. Additionally, I serve as the Director of the Inyo-Mono Integrated Regional Water Management Program (IRWMP).

The Eastern Sierra region stretches from Mono County to the Southern Sierras and includes many popular rivers and streams like Hot Creek, the Walker River and the Owens River. To give you an idea of its diversity, my region includes Mt. Whitney and Death Valley – the highest and lowest places in the lower 48.

A significant portion of the region is publically managed, primarily by the Forest Service and the Bureau of Land Management, and includes an abundance of small creeks and streams harboring native and wild trout.

But it's also a region where the water is scarce, legal water battles are significant, and addressing local and distant water issues is a big challenge.

Let's talk about the critical issues facing you in the Eastern Sierra.

Our biggest challenge is the fair use of water resources. The Eastern Sierra region is unique; water is scarce and much of it is exported, requiring due diligence to protect the fisheries.

Legal issues are complex. In some instances, we're still working with required stream flows which stem from court decisions CalTrout won more than 20 years ago.

Given the complexity of water issues, the best way to shape water use policy is to be in on the planning process. That's why five years ago we initiated the Inyo-Mono IRWMP, an effort to bring relevant stakeholders together to identify priority water needs and implement strategies to address them.

The Inyo-Mono IRWMP has become a model of the regional approach to water use, and it now encompasses 11% of the state.

We also played a key role in writing the fisheries and aquatic management sections of *National Forests In The Sierra Nevada: A Conservation Strategy*. This document will help guide the land-use planning process that our national forests undergo every 15 or 20 years.

Now we have the ability to shape fisheries and aquatic management on a forest-wide basis.

In the Northern Sierra region, Lahontan cutthroat recovery is the critical challenge. Additionally, we are taking a close look at opportunities to improve the Carson River watershed fisheries as well as protecting the Upper Truckee River system.

What are the long-term issues facing your region?

The long-term issues are probably the same issues we're dealing with right now – leveraging scarce resources to realize greater conservation successes, resolving protracted litigation over scarce water resources and ensuring healthy fisheries. In the near future, forest planning is a big issue having huge geographical implications, which is why we're investing so much time being part of the National Forest planning process (which will affect fishing and also grazing, fire fighting, meadow restoration, water management, etc.).

Our focus is on both the short-term immediate needs and the long-term health of fisheries in the Eastern and Northern Sierra regions. I am optimistic we can achieve both.

Mark's interview concludes at top of next page

Mark Drew Continued:

Tell us about your favorite place in your region.

Just one? I spend a lot of time in the outdoors, so a lot of the Eastern Sierra seems special to me. The East and West Walker, Kern Plateau's Golden Trout, and the Devil's Postpile are all places I'd visit in a heartbeat. They're beautiful and very special, even if you don't fish. ■

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www.flyfilm tour.com



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Buy tickets (\$20 each) at www.flyfilm tour.com (select "2013 Tour Schedule") or call Lisa Clarke at CalTrout, 415.392.8887 x102

Look out for **Enough is Enough**
CalTrout's film about the McCloud River

CalTrout co-sponsors the 2013 F3T in California with local fly fishing retailers

All proceeds from these shows go to CalTrout:

Thursday, February 7, 7:30 pm
Laemmle Playhouse 7

PASADENA: 673 E. Colorado Blvd.

You are invited to a pre-film event!
Call Fishermen's Spot, (818) 785-7306.

Friday, February 8, 7:00 pm
Barracks 17 at Liberty Station

SAN DIEGO: 2710 Historic Decatur Road

You are invited to a pre-film event!
Call So Cal Fly Fishing, (619) 224-4000.

Thursday, February 28, 7:00 pm
Crest Theatre

SACRAMENTO: 1013 K Street

You are invited to a pre-film event!
Call Fly Fishing Specialties, (916) 722-1055.

Thursday, March 7, 7:00 pm
Orinda Theatre #2

EAST BAY: 4 Theatre Square, Orinda

Tuesday, March 19, 7:00 pm
Lark Theater

MARIN: 549 Magnolia Ave., Larkspur

You can also catch F3T at a non CalTrout-sponsored screening, including February 27 in Redwood City, CA or February 28 in Ventura, CA. Complete schedule at www.flyfilm tour.com.



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Streamkeeper's Log

SAVE THE DATE



CalTrout Benefit Gala & Auction, Friday, May 10, 2013
Four Seasons Hotel, San Francisco

Be part of the cause. Be part of the fun.

**Trout
Camp
2013**

