



## PRESIDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

(The following article appeared a little over a year ago on the National TU website. Chris Wood is the President and CEO of National TU)

**Like your first kiss, no one ever forgets their first native trout.**

*Chris Wood (TU), Feb. 7, 2024*

*FVTU President Wade Fredenberg*

The memory is as searing as the sun's reflection off snow through a windshield. My friend and fishing mentor, Bill Sargent had pointed me to a small and little-known stream in the Green Mountains to fish for native brook trout.

Bill explained to me that "brookies" were almost extirpated from Vermont when the forests were cleared for agriculture, but the forests were coming back, and a few strongholds of native brookies persisted on national forest lands in the Green Mountains.

This was perhaps a few months after having caught my first trout on a fly after a dozen or more unsuccessful outings. I caught that rainbow after it hooked itself while I was untangling a knot in my fly line as my "Zug Bug" dangled 20 feet behind me in the water.

Fortified by having actually caught a trout, I walked up the creek a mile or so from the pull off—past the obvious holes (along with the worm containers, beer cans, etc.) and places others could easily fish from the road. I threw an elk hair caddis on the water perhaps a half dozen times—a slash on the surface, and it was gone! I pulled that little brook trout in and marveled at its colors and the wonder of God's creation.

According to the State of the Trout report prepared by the TU science team, of 28 native trout species and subspecies, three are extinct and six are listed as threatened or endangered. Excluding the extinct trout, more than half of remaining trout species occupy less than 25 percent of their historical habitat and are at high risk from at least one major threat. Nearly all native trout — 92 percent — face some level of risk.

Yet, native trout and salmon are remarkably resilient species. Give them half a chance and they will respond.

My mom always says, “thoughts are nice, but action makes the difference.”

Your actions and support of TU are helping to recover our legacy of native trout, salmon, and steelhead.

*As President of Flathead Valley Trout Unlimited, I can boast that we are so fortunate to live in a place where native trout are not only common, but in fact native Westslope Cutthroat Trout represent the most common species in the Flathead River drainage. May it always be so! The actions of FVTU have always been geared toward the protection and enhancement of this precious resource. One of the ways you can show your support is by turning out and spending some cash at our Annual FVTU Fundraising Banquet on May 17<sup>th</sup>. If you can't join us in person, please register on Givergy (details elsewhere in this newsletter) and show your support for FVTU and for native trout!*

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## UPCOMING EVENTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

FVTU is looking for volunteers to help teach a group of Kalispell Middle School students how to fly fish. You can read about this volunteer opportunity on our website - <https://flatheadtu.org/2025/03/28/volunteers-needed-to-help-teach-kids-to-fish/>

There is a signup link on the blog, or you can scan this QR code. This is a great opportunity to help local youngsters get started on the right foot in regard to fly fishing, the environment and conservation.



**Read and sign up – NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY**, Just a desire to help our local kids get into fly fishing.

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### Earth Day Expo – April 19<sup>th</sup> at Flathead Valley Community College

Celebrate Earth Day at the **2025 Earth Day Expo** on Saturday April 19 from 9 am to 3 pm at Flathead Valley Community College. This free all-ages event brings together local organizations, businesses, and community members for a day of hands-on exhibits, family activities, and inspiring speakers – all focused on this years theme: **Healthy Planet, Healthy Community**. Don't miss keynote Mariah Gladstone from indigkitchen, the electric vehicle showcase and many interactive activities for kids and adults alike.



Details can be found at: <http://www.citizensclimatemt.org/earth-day-flathead-valley-montana>

## UPCOMING FVTU MEETINGS

**Tuesday, April 15<sup>th</sup>** will mark the final general membership meeting before our annual banquet. Then we head off for a summer of fishing. These are not your grandfather's FVTU meetings. We meet at Sacred Waters Brewing north of Kalispell where you can have a great dinner and enjoy a cold brew while seeing some great presentations.

We're seeing more and more families, so don't hesitate to bring the whole clan. The April meeting will feature Thompson Smith, historian for the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes. His presentation will cover the history and cultural significance of bull trout to the Tribes.



**2025 FVTU Annual Banquet** - Our annual banquet will be held Saturday, May 17, at Grouse Mountain Lodge in Whitefish. This is THE big event of the year. There'll be a live auction, silent auction, multiple raffles, door prizes, great food, and excellent camaraderie. It's also the night we announce the winner of our raft raffle. Raft raffle tickets are on sale now from board members or venues around the valley.



## Scan QR Code to Purchase Banquet Tickets

[Visit our website](#) for more information on our banquet. Scan the QR code to purchase tickets at our partner site. Remember, banquet **TICKETS WILL BE AVAILABLE ONLY ONLINE**. Bidding for the online auction begins May 12.

*As we are about to "give birth" to the 20225 Fishing Season, this sage advice seems appropriate:*

**Start Early** – "Important steps that can be taken by couples hoping to raise an angler: First, try to conceive the child during a fishing trip. How could it hurt? Next, because positive in utero influences have salutary effects, I cannot see the harm in the following prescriptions: Expose the fisherperson-in-progress to the sounds of water; babbling brooks, pounding surfs, waves lapping against canoe sides, etc. Exposures to the sound of a screaming reel, shouts of "One on!" and the general sort of fishing chatter that accrues during a day on the water might give the tyke a leg up on angling jargon later on."

See you at the banquet - *Wade*



*By Beth Gardner*

## North Jewel Lake

I'm sure everyone has heard of the Jewel Basin hiking area. You will find beautiful mountains, sparkling lakes, and tourists with bear bells. It's just like Glacier National Park but without the vehicle reservations. Yet once you get past the Swan Crest the crowds thin out and a fishing paradise awaits you. Let's take a closer look at the Jewel Lakes themselves, for whom this area was named.

There are four Jewel Lakes that go by the clever names of North, South, East and West. East and West are too shallow for fish but still lovely gems. The South Lake was stocked years ago but last time I was there, I sure as heck didn't see any. But North Jewel Lake holds trout. Previously it was stocked with Rainbow Trout but shifted to Cutthroat Trout in recent years.

This 5-acre lake has no natural production and the fishery is entirely dependent on periodic stocking.

Hiking trail #119 runs near the East shoreline and there is only a short scramble to the water. The lake is surrounded by subalpine fir but there are small gaps where you can cast without getting tangled in the branches. Unless it is windy. Heaven help you then.

There is also a small bay across from the hiking trail that is easier to cast, but more stealth is required because the fish can see you. There are multiple sizes to the trout. The smaller ones readily take a dry fly. Watch carefully and you will see some big submarines cruising slowly along the bottom. That's a good time to get out the scuds and nymphs. This high elevation lake takes a long time to warm up in the summer so don't bother going until July.

This lake can be enjoyed with a reasonable day hike from Camp Misery trailhead. It is about 2 miles up to the Swan Crest, then drops down to Picnic Lake, then another 2 miles to the Jewel Lakes. Trails are well marked but you should still carry a map. The most dangerous part of this adventure is the road to Camp Misery. This steep, windy mountain road was not built to handle all the traffic it receives. Even with periodic blading, the road quickly gets covered with washboards. Drive defensively and be alert for the idiot driving too fast.

*-Beth*

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*aày is the Salish word for bull trout. This newsletter is a quarterly publication of Flathead Valley TU and does not necessarily reflect the views, agenda or policy of Trout Unlimited.*