



YELLOWSTONE CUTTHROAT IN  
PARADISE VALLEY, MONTANA. PHOTO: PAT CLAYTON

## The lessons of 10 and 2

I hope that you've had some great fishing this season on our nation's beautiful rivers. I always look forward to these updates because I get to show you how your support is improving the health of our rivers and fisheries.

One of my favorite projects in this update is the removal of the Ward's Mill Dam from North Carolina's Watauga River — the stream where my dad taught me to fly-fish years ago. I still remember him saying to stay between 10 and 2. And now the river is reconnected with 140 miles of streams and tributaries.

Thank you for helping improve the health of the Watauga and so many other rivers. Together, we're doing permanent good for the rivers that are important to us all.

*Steve*

Steve White  
Director, Anglers Fund for  
American Rivers

## BRINGING BACK NATIVE FISH — DAM BY DAM

Removing the dam is the single best thing you can do for a dammed river, and the benefits are nearly immediate. The water quality improves, the river is more resilient to extreme weather, and from a fishing perspective, the fish are able to reach their historic spawning grounds. We have seen it countless times, including after these two recent dam removal projects:

### MIGRATORY ALEWIVES RETURN TO THE PATAPSCO

Biologists have caught the first alewife (river herring) seen in more than a century above where Bloede Dam once blocked the Patapsco River in Maryland. American Rivers spent almost a decade working to remove Bloede and two other dams to reconnect more than 65 miles of habitat in the Patapsco for alewives and other migratory species.

### WHITE RIVER SALMON ON THE REBOUND

In Washington, dams on the White River have had a devastating effect on spring Chinook salmon and steelhead runs. American Rivers sued the US Army Corps of Engineers for the dams' impact on a threatened species. This resulted in a Corps plan to construct fish passage facilities to help ensure the survival of Chinook and other salmon and trout species. We are happy to report that the facilities have been completed and the first salmon have passed through.

## FREEING THE WATAUGA

On a sunny day in June, American Rivers removed an unused hydropower dam that stretched across the Watauga River in the mountains of North Carolina, reconnecting 140 miles of habitat for native brook trout. Studying how animals react after 80 years of separation will help us better understand how free-flowing rivers function.



PHOTO: SAIL LAZARUS

The Ward's Mill Dam was the highest-priority dam removal in the state of North Carolina.

## PROGRESS FOR TROUT STREAMS IN IDAHO

American Rivers named Idaho's South Fork Salmon River one of America's Most Endangered Rivers® three out of the four past years to galvanize opposition to a proposed open-pit gold mine in the headwaters of one of Idaho's most important spawning grounds for fish protected under the Endangered Species Act. Last fall, American Rivers and many others called on the US Forest Service to conduct supplemental environmental analysis on account of missing information and serious threats to water quality. The US Forest Service agreed, slowing down the federal permitting process by at least two years.

[AmericanRivers.org/Salmon2020](https://AmericanRivers.org/Salmon2020)

## CLEAN WATER ACT UPDATE

American Rivers has been part of a raft of litigation by conservation groups, tribes and allies aimed at thwarting the prior administration's attempts to strip Clean Water Act protection from streams and wetlands, which would open the door to increased pollution and destruction of critical fish habitat. In our suit, the US District Court for South Carolina sent the rule back to the US Environmental Protection Agency for reconsideration. Fortunately, in a related suit, indigenous tribes won their case, brought in Arizona by the Pascua Yaqui Tribe, Tohono O'odham Nation, Quinault Indian Nation, Menominee Indian Tribe of Wisconsin, Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, and the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. The ruling means that the country will now return to previous water protections while the Biden administration works to put a new, stronger rule in place. American Rivers will participate in the process to ensure vital stream and wetland habitats are included.

## PRIME COHO SALMON HABITAT RESTORED IN OREGON

In the 1960s, a swimming hole was built for visitors who came to soak in Eagle Creek, a tributary to the Clackamas River. With funding and project management from American Rivers, a construction crew removed the unused concrete barrier in September. Adult coho salmon were waiting in pools just below the dam and immediately moved upriver in search of prime spawning grounds they hadn't been able to reach for 60 years.

## HEALTHY MEADOWS BOOST RARE CALIFORNIA TROUT

Home to the rare endemic Eagle Lake rainbow trout, the high alpine meadows surrounding Pine Creek have been damaged by over 150 years of grazing, ditching and road construction. American Rivers worked with Lassen National Forest and other partners to restore the 100-acre McKenzie Meadow, constructing 160 riffles on 2.4 miles of Pine Creek to raise groundwater levels, extend trout-spawning season and help the species recover. McKenzie Meadow restoration is first in a long line of meadow restorations underway in the watershed. Next up: Confluence meadow in 2022 and Logan Springs meadow in 2023. [AmericanRivers.org/CaliforniaMeadows](https://AmericanRivers.org/CaliforniaMeadows)



PHOTO: JACOB DYSTE

American Rivers has restored approximately 730 meadow acres and led more than 15 projects in the Sierra since 2012.

## THE FIGHT FOR THE TETON

Since the Felt Dam was built a century ago, it has prevented native Yellowstone cutthroat trout from accessing the colder waters of the upper Teton River in eastern Idaho. American Rivers led a coalition of conservation organizations to comment on the dam's re-license application. We are advocating for the 12-foot-high dam to be removed if the dam owner refuses or can't afford to install fish passage.

## LEAVE A LEGACY OF HEALTHY RIVERS — AND HEALTHY FISH

If you'd like to establish a legacy of doing permanent good for rivers, adding American Rivers to your estate plans is easier than you may think. Contact me at [SWhite@AmericanRivers.org](mailto:SWhite@AmericanRivers.org) to learn more.



[AmericanRivers.org/Join](https://AmericanRivers.org/Join)

Contact Steve White at  
919-720-2901 or

[SWhite@AmericanRivers.org](mailto:SWhite@AmericanRivers.org)

American Rivers' Anglers Fund is a program for anglers who believe in the importance of healthy rivers. Joining allows you to protect wild rivers, restore damaged rivers and conserve water for people and nature — all of which improve the health of our rivers and the strength of our fisheries. With headquarters in Washington, D.C., and 300,000 supporters, members and volunteers across the country, American Rivers is one of the most trusted and influential river conservation organizations in the United States, delivering solutions for healthier rivers, ecosystems and communities.