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JACKSON ADOPT-A-TROUT PROGRAM ENGAGES 200 MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN SCIENCE AND CONSERVATION

JACKSON, Wyoming – Trout Unlimited (TU), the Jackson Hole Trout Unlimited chapter (JHTU), and the Wyoming Game and Fish Department (WGFD) announced today the successful conclusion of the 2016-2017 school year Adopt-a-Trout Program with a field day at the Jackson National Fish Hatchery and activities at the Jackson Hole Middle School.

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, the Adopt-a-Trout Program has worked with over 200 7th grade students at the Jackson Hole Middle School to educate them about fisheries and watershed science through a combination of field and classroom experiences taught by local aquatic and fisheries resource experts and volunteers. Through the Adopt-a-Trout Program, students participate in a study of fish movement by “adopting” and following radio-tagged trout throughout the school year.

“We live in an amazing place with a rich and diverse ecosystem, but surprisingly, many of our students have not experienced it first-hand and know little about its inhabitants. By collaborating with Trout Unlimited, our students have been given multiple hands-on opportunities for exploration of trout habitat, life cycles, migration, and reproduction in real-world settings. The experience is invaluable, one that students recall for years to come, and is a highlight of 7th grade,” said Michelle Reisbeck and Katie Steinberg, 7th grade science teachers, Teton County School District.

The Adopt-a-Trout June field day featured six activity stations including a fish hatchery tour led by the Jackson National Fish Hatchery, a watershed trailer and fish identification station led by WGFD, a “Play, Clean, Go” weed education activity led by the Teton County Weed & Pest District, a fly casting station led by JHTU volunteers, a fly tying and aquatic macroinvertebrates station led by JHTU volunteers, and a fish migration game led by the Snake River Fund and Teton Conservation District. A willow planting activity, originally planned to enhance a recently completed multi-partner stream restoration project of Flat Creek on the National Elk Refuge, was cancelled due to weather conditions. It will be rescheduled for a later date in June, and interested volunteers are invited to join the effort which will allow for riparian vegetation to re-establish on the banks of the stream and provide bank stability, cooler water, and overhead cover.

TU has partnered with WGFD, local school districts, and other organizations to offer Adopt-a-Trout programs in 13 communities across the Wyoming. In addition to its educational benefits, the Adopt-a-Trout Program provides resource managers with valuable data regarding habitat conditions and trout migratory patterns, which in turn helps to identify new stream restoration and reconnection projects, measure the success of completed projects, and validate restoration work. In the Jackson Hole area, past Adopt-a-Trout programs have studied trout movement before and after TU-initiated dam removal projects on Spread Creek and the Gros Ventre River that opened up over 50 and 100 miles, respectively, for native cutthroat trout migration.

This year’s program studied winter habitat use and spring spawning movements of native Snake River cutthroat trout in the Hoback River drainage. Next year’s program will investigate habitat use and movement in the Fish

Creek drainage. “We are always excited to partner with TU for Adopt-A-Trout. It is a great way for us to answer questions about the fishery while providing fun educational opportunities for kids,” said Diana Miller, WGFD fisheries biologist.

The 2016-2017 Adopt-a-Trout Program in Jackson Hole was made possible by funding and in-kind staff support from the Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Jackson Hole Trout Unlimited, the Teton Conservation District, and the Community Foundation of Jackson Hole as well as many community volunteers. “We are grateful to all of our partners and volunteers that make the Jackson Adopt-a-Trout Program possible and inspire the next generation of conservation stewards to take care of the incredible coldwater resources in their backyard,” said Leslie Steen, TU Snake River Headwaters Project Manager.

About Trout Unlimited

Today, Trout Unlimited is a national organization with more than 155,000 volunteers organized into 400 chapters nationwide. These dedicated volunteers are paired with a respected staff of organizers, lawyers, policy experts and scientists, who work out of more than 30 offices. Our mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's cold-water fisheries and their watersheds. Follow TU on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), and follow our [blog](#) for all the latest information on trout and salmon conservation.

About Jackson Hole Trout Unlimited

Jackson Hole Trout Unlimited was formed in 1983 in Jackson, Wyoming, to conserve, protect, and restore Jackson Hole's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. JHTU is one of 15 Trout Unlimited chapters throughout the state that make up the Wyoming Council of Trout Unlimited.