

WWNRT NAMES TROUT UNLIMITED PARTNER OF THE YEAR FOR 2011

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WWNRT Chairman Delaine Roberts presents the Partner of the Year Award to Corey Toye, Wyoming Director of Trout Unlimited, with WWNRT Board and TU Staff at the Platte Valley Community Center in Saratoga.

SARATOGA, WY.....The Wyoming Wildlife and Natural Resource Trust has named Wyoming Trout Unlimited their "Partner of the Year" for 2011. Presenting the award at today's meeting of the Board in Saratoga, Chairman Delaine Roberts, Etna, said the group had "done incredible work for several years, but this past year has been something out of this world."

"This group has helped to reconnect more than 500 miles of stream habitat for native fish throughout the state," Roberts said, adding that TU had worked in most of the major drainage basins in the state. "They have also helped to restore wetlands, improve irrigation efficiency for landowners, and keep fish out of irrigation ditches and canals."

"The work they did on Spread Creek alone was monumental," said Steve Meadows, Jackson. "That is a great fishery and adds 40 miles of spawning habitat from the Snake River. When I looked at what they had planned, it blew me away." The Spread Creek project involved removal of a 20-foot high concrete dam, and replacement with irrigation diversion structures that allow fish to move up and down the stream.

Pidge Fulton, Powell, agreed with Meadows. "Their work on the Greybull River drainage has allowed fish access to more than 150 miles of streams previously blocked, and it is staggering to see this work take place."

Other board members cited the partnerships created as a key reason for the award.

"I like the relationships we see being formed," said Gwyn McKee, Gillette. "They work with private landowners, irrigation districts, conservation districts, local fishing groups, schools, agencies and others. They get projects done quickly, and they are really good at finding matching dollars, which helps our local economies."

In the past two years, Trout Unlimited has undertaken more than 20 projects throughout the state. Voting for the annual award is done each year after board members nominate outstanding partners. Roberts said Trout Unlimited was named on eight of nine ballots, either as the first or second choice.

"They are truly an outstanding partner for us, and for the State of Wyoming," Roberts said.

Other groups nominated for the annual award included Wyoming Stock Growers Agricultural Land Trust, Wyoming Game and Fish Department, Wyoming Land Trust, Saratoga-Encampment-Rawlins Conservation District, and The Nature Conservancy.

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