

## JJ Stakeholder Perspective

I appreciate the opportunity to share my perspectives as a stakeholder.

Along the way I hope to change or adjust some assumptions that may exist concerning the position I occupy. I am ably supported by Jerry Myers and together we are the representatives for recreational fishing.

Fishing and rafting are the two slots allotted to recreational interests and along with the two environmental groups, Desert Wild lands Council and the Grand Canyon Trust we occupy a slightly different place than the balance of the AMWG membership that are affiliated with Federal, State and Tribal organizations.

Jerry and I are also here as part of the small group of the membership serving as volunteers on our own time. **Our reward is in the satisfaction that is received from doing things we really enjoy related to something we really value.**

When the allocation for fishing was made an organization was required for recommending for appointment. The organization chosen was the Federation of Fly Fishers. The why and the how of that happening is unknown to me.

A bit about the Federation: 47 years old started in the early 1960's. International Organization. Over 10,000 members. **Conservation, Restoration and Education.** Sponsor local fishing clubs: AFC, WMFC, NAFC, DFC, etc. Casting certification programs. Support conservation programs through funding in AZ WForkOakCreek, Fossil Creek. Adopt a Stream Program.

While appointed by the Federation we are for the most part unsupervised and potentially loose canons on the deck.

**So the assumption that we only represent the Federation and fly fishers is only a part of the picture. Most of the representation here is specific to a unique organization or entity we see ourselves as generic representation for all who fish.**

My selection rather than from a rigorous process was the result of the first four people that were asked saying no. I was invited to lunch by a friend who said he thought I would enjoy being involved with this group that he wasn't sure of the exact name but had something to do with the Grand Canyon or the Colorado River and had one or two meetings a year that I would sit in on. He is still my friend.

This general lack of awareness in the fishing community was a task for us to change. We have set out to broaden the organization and fishing community's knowledge of the Adaptive Management Program and all its parts and pieces.

Trout Unlimited task one. Trout Unlimited nationally shares similar goals and objectives. Here is a bit about TU: Started in 1959. Over 400 Chapters. Members devoted over 500,000 hours each year on conservation projects for rivers and streams and their watershed. Three chapters and a state council in AZ, along with the Payson and Tucson fly casting clubs.

We have integrated these TU organizations into our AMWG activities along with FFF our responsibilities.

The next step has been to reach out to the State fishing clubs to encourage their involvement. Jerry's home club is White Mountain Fly Casters, mine is Arizona Fly Casters we have made informative presentations to other clubs about the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program and all that it includes. And brought factual presentations of current and planned actions related to the fishery.

The fishery below Glen Canyon Dam is also fished by non fly fishers with spinning gear. Rather than only representing the FFF and fly fishers our responsibility is to represent all fishing organizations and all fishers. So we are targeting those groups next.

There is another group of fishers out there. Chatting with Dave yesterday he mentioned encountering a fishing group on his trip down to Bright Angel creek. They were successfully fishing with bait. Now that's part of the fishing world that we probably won't be reaching out too considering that bait fishing is outside of the regulations.

**Every dog has his day and every fish has his home. Somewhere in some location every fish even trout have a spot where they are the Native Fish. The ESA listed Gila Trout and the Apache Trout call Arizona along with New Mexico their Native home.**

**Another assumption is that we recreational fishing representatives have a single focus on fishing in our roles both inside and outside of the AMWG. I'll personalize this with a bit more about why I said yes to being appointed after I found out about what AMWG was all about.**

Recruited by the conservation chairman of my home club AFC to participate in Flagstaff meetings on the reintroduction of ESA listed Gila Trout in the west fork of Oak Creek. This was a project initiated by FFF and financially supported by them to work with Federal and State agencies. From those meetings I came in contact with the AZGF native trout recovery program. There is a challenge in identifying suitable locations where native fish reintroductions can be considered. Through good fortune we had become owners of a ranch property that controls head water access for Haigler Creek, a stream under AZ's Mogollon rim. I encouraged the consideration of Haigler as a potential native fish recovery stream and utilizing our property as the location for the essential fish barrier location. That process is ongoing, but at some point the proposed reintroduction of both head water chub and Gila trout will occur. When that happens we will relinquish the current opportunity for catching the existing wild RBT and BT on over half of our property.

Jerry's home club White Mountain Fly Casters has been supporting and working with the successful expansion of Apache Trout moving towards their eventual delisting.

These examples set the stage for the position that: **The greatest single threat to the future of Colorado River resident trout population emanates from the Native Fish in the River: It's the native fish, HBC in particular that caused MR. It's the native fish that drive one scheme after another to reduce the trout population.**

**The only way to deal with that threat is by restoring, maintaining and building the healthiest and the happiest populations of Native Fish that are possible. The future of the trout population is intertwined with the future of native fish.**

Martha Hahn has presented an update of the Park Service plan to prepare and initiate a comprehensive fishery management plan for the River. A concept whose time has come and with the pending LTEMP process that time has become now. There is the recognition that the generally disconnected actions, whether science or management need to be improved upon.

To bring order to the chaos that has existed, well intentioned as it may be, to do something about the fish in the River.

There has been the appearance of “We gotta do something” instead of coordinated planned goal driven actions with.

**Why a Blue Ribbon fishery:** The term Blue Ribbon fishery is a term recognized by all recreational fishers, fly fishers and spin casters alike. It means a premier fishery with a unique experience both from the setting and the fish to be caught; a destination fishery that is on most fishers to do list and worth traveling across state and national lines.

The Lees Ferry fishery was once such a fishery. When fishing on the water and chatting with other anglers it was common to meet folks from California, Utah, New Mexico, Tennessee, New York, Connecticut, England, Germany, Japan and more. Those days have past us by.

The restoration of the Lees Ferry to Blue Ribbon status is a key to the economic success of the local area. Many people derive there livelihood from the Fishery. Those affected include guides, restaurants, lodges, Native American craftsman. The lodge and restaurant draw from 55% to nearly

85% of their employees from the local Navajo community. The local economy has been a on a slide for ten years which is tied to the loss of the fishery's Blue Ribbon designation.

**Comprehensive plan with everything on the table for discussion.**

**Compromises available through a plan that are not available outside of a plan**

1. Flow managements
2. Brown trout management
3. Tributary restorations, Bright Angel
4. On the other hand opening up side canyon NA Guided Fishing trips
5. NA participation in RBT removal bounty program

In closing I have my own personal Desired Future Condition that isn't part of the formal document but would be a grand condition to arrive at:

**An AMWG meeting where there is only a passing reference to HBC, trout or any other Native Fish because a comprehensive fishery management plan has been designed and implemented with such success that the issues have faded from the headlines.**