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[00:00:10] Yes. I think fishing to me has evolved over time you know since I was a child. I think since I, I went to college. For degrees in fisheries, biology, wildlife biology so I think my, my understanding and appreciation for the sport and for that connection to, to Mother Nature has really changed and I think now it is more of a true appreciation and a participation in something that Mother Nature has to offer. You know, I think it's very challenging now with so many human impacts to the fisheries within the United States and around the world. So I feel like it's, you know, it's in decline regardless of what we do. So you know we are just doing our best to be able to maintain what is still available and to participate in, uh, what's there and to be able to share that with future generations so that hopefully we can prolong, you know, the lifespan of our fisheries and that opportunity.

[00:01:10] So it has been something that has been in my family since as long as I can remember. My great grandfather was actually one of the first game wardens or D.W.M's that were in, in Colorado and he started out in the San Juans in southwest Colorado. We actually have old milk cans that say Colorado Division of Wildlife that they used to pack on mules and take up to high elevation lakes to stock brook trout. So it's been something that has been in my blood and it has always been an outlet for you know peace and tranquility, and to be able to get back to you know what I've always grown up doing.

[00:01:50] You know, I've introduced my girls to it and you know a lot of people and, and I think just being able to share and show appreciation of what's there and what's possible has been very important to me. You know, I think that's a very challenging question. First of all obviously we need to protect what is native and what is, you know, natural to this to this area. However it's also challenging trying to maintain a healthy population. Like I said, you know, so much negative human impact, you know, from highways and dams and, you know, chemicals being released into the waterways, you know, to be able to maintain those populations of fish but then also being able to protect what is you know native. So I think you know obviously to be able to to quarantine you know the native drainages and native species but then be able to effectively and intelligently manage the populations of fish that sportsmen and anglers you know target and, and it's also the populations that we try to in essence sell to the next generation of anglers and users of those those waterways.

[00:03:12] Yeah I think national parks are a huge impact. You know from a positive side showing what you know geography used to look like you know what it originally started out as. And to be able to have a comparison of what it looks like now. You know it's very tough and it's very hard to swallow sometimes when you look at you know if so many of our stream systems that run next to highways, specifically interstates, you know they have massive dams ahead of them. You know their, their

[00:03:41] their stream flows are altered by you know it might be the dam itself or from you know cross continental pipe systems like you know similar to the Robert's Tunnel or the Moffat's Tunnel that bring water in and alter the natural flows. So I think it's important to maintain and protect that obviously from a fishery standpoint just for educational purposes to be able to show that next generation because you know the generation coming up after me and then beyond that, they're not going to know this you know,

[00:04:14] you know what's going to be you know the norm is you know for example the South Platte and downtown you know the closest they get to a river is going through you know Invesco Field where the Broncos play or Elitch's or right downtown and so many

people don't make it to the mountains. So to have that resource so close to Denver and to be able to see you know what Teddy Roosevelt was able to see and protect is very important and powerful for future generations.

[00:04:45] I think absolutely, I think sportsmen you know sportsmen fund conservation which has been a model for many different organizations. And I think you know a better understanding of a hunter, of an angler for the general public is important because you know some you know hunter might just be somebody that's a killer or whatever but they don't understand the true appreciation of, of someone that is out there enjoying the outdoors and the respect they have for the animals. You know the public lands and the same goes for anglers as well. So I think to be able to spread that knowledge and to be able to give support not only from the sportsmen themselves but then also the voters that are coming up that are going to help protect public lands. Yeah I absolutely think it's, it's in jeopardy. And you know it's, it's very scary to see you know that the level of recruitment. And I also think the challenge is the amount of public lands available. So you know in essence we're trying to recruit more people to experience the outdoors and protect it. But then we're also losing the wild lands at the same time.

[00:05:52] So it's it's it's a very tough challenge. You know and I think you know so many of the competitors for use coming up today to experience the outdoors whether it is hunting, fishing, you know, birding, hiking, mountain biking. You know the list goes on but I think you know I think the, the competitors have not been properly identified. You know I see that the the competitors as the XBoxes as the face spot, or the Facebook. You know so many social media technology based companies that are drawing the attention of the youth and you know preventing them from experiencing the outdoors.

[00:06:35] So what we've done are company and products has has worked hard to do is work with realtors and land acquisitions to be able to help identify potential for, for land, trans... Transactions. So we will actually approach realtors or land purchasers and say hey here's what you have. You know here's what you know you can do. We've worked with a lot of owners that have reversed gold mining operations, gravel pits. You know in areas and in severe neglect and being able to restore it to an estate that Mother Nature can then take over and try to bring it back to as natural a state as possible and even deeper it is to be able to provide a direct impact to fish and wildlife. And I'd say more than just fish but all aquatic species. So we worked really hard to you know, find properties with waterways or streams that have potential. And to be able to you know show them you know hey here's what proper macro invertebrate habitat looks like here's a proper spawning habitat. And to be able to start from the ground up as opposed to you know purchasing a property and developing into a subdivision or turning it into you know ponds or step pools or something that's more motive of big fish but not a self-sustaining fishery. Yeah I think so. I think you know growing up I grew up in a rural community so I have a full understanding of you know the ranchers and their priorities but then also from a biological standpoint understand what the end product. You know in essence should look like. To be able to allow Mother Nature to take back over and do what she needs to do to be able to provide us with a great natural resource. Yeah I think ah you know our most impactful project that we have has been in Lincoln Hills Valley so what started out in the early nineteen hundreds as a gold mine, transitioned into a gravel mine was greatly negatively impact by channelization from Denver Water and the railroad and they came through in the early 1900s you know back then the priority was water to civilization and not so much water for aquatic species. So we've actually over the course of about four or five years reversed that. So you know we we reestablish all the soil horizons within the valley. We created wetlands, riparian areas and also adjusted the stream system to allow for a more or less naturally reproducing

population of trout and aquatic insects and also restored a natural flood plain to the drainage. So not only did that help accept high water season much better but it also allowed for year round survival of a variety of fish sizes all the way from you know three or four inches to to over 20 inches.

[00:09:42] So things are coming back and it's an improvement. Are you seeing a marked increase in biodiversity and wildlife?

[00:09:48] Yes we are. You know we've seen some great aquatic insect hatches that you know every year continue to evolve and get more abundant. We've also seen a fish population that has done some incredible things. When we first took over the property you know we were looking at under 300 fish per mile due to the lack of habitat in the largest fish were in the 10 to 12 inch range. And they were very few and far between. So now we're looking at roughly 3000 fish per mile you know catchable fish sizes obviously for about four to over 20 inches and every twice a year we actually take electro fishing samples and we've identified about 58 percent population fish that have been born in the river. So which has been very cool to see. And and also that stream system has a lot of impact from the Western Slope. So a lot of the water is brought over and has altered the the natural flows within the drainage pretty dramatically. So it's been, it's been a very cool project to be able to participate in that and to bring back a fishery that not only has direct impacts on the private land where we've done all the work but also I would say within two or three miles of the property boundaries out onto two other properties and public land. That's wonderful. What type of Trump are we are in that. So we have everything we have actually pretty much all species brown trout, brook trout, cutthroat, cut bow and rainbow trout. And we've also been seeing a number of tiger trout this year which is very interesting. You know the likelihood of a brown brown and a brook trout spawning successfully in the wild is pretty minimal. But we've been seeing them you know often enough to where it's, it's pretty exciting. And if I recall tigers are... They don't, won't breed them. So yeah the odds of them naturally reproducing themselves is almost nonexistent. I don't like to say impossible because there's been some interesting things we've seen but. I doubt it. I mean absolutely. I think you know that the whole end goal was to be able to create a fishing product that not only we could sell for revenue generation but to be able to sell to create revenue that would then support a non-profit program to use that property in fishery indefinitely. So we were able to successfully create a small business model that supports the staff, the property and all the facilities which now opens it up to youth angling programs, to uh, wounded veteran programs to you know cancer survival. We work with Craig Hospital who is big on brain and spinal cord injury and the Boys and Girls Club. So you know the programs are endless but the goal is to be able to share that experience with everyone and show them what the potential is and and hopefully to protect that from you know a big picture stance.

[00:12:54] That's great. Now there's nothing, there's nothing better than, than seeing and seeing a kid or somebody who's been injured or a veteran what have you kind of get into that first fish.

[00:13:04] Oh absolutely amazing. Absolutely. You know how I can't tell you how many times we've had people come up and say 'My goal is just to catch one fish' and then six fish later they're just in shock you know they're able to see them and they're able to see the bugs they're able to see them you know subsurface and hatching in the air and then you know we have a crew of incredible guys that are very knowledgeable and and to be able to explain what you know our participants are experiencing,

[00:13:30] and I think that just really adds to the experience and it's just so over the top. And that was our goal you know and now we have a lot of kids that are there to protect the water resources not only from our drainage and our property but from you know a state wide and you know countrywide perspective. Yeah I think you know we talk about this a lot and there's different stages you know and we joke about the first stage is you want to catch as many fish as possible.

[00:14:01] You know and then once you have mastered that the next step is you want to catch big fish and only big fish. And then once you've gone beyond big fish then you want to go out and catch one specific fish. Your of, you know. Specifically exactly how you want to catch it on your terms and you might spend all day doing it once you measure that. The next is just enjoying the outdoors in the water and most people don't even fish. They just sit next to the river and they might cast a little bit but it's more just to experience and take it all in.

[00:14:37] Absolutely so Flyfisher group was started by Matthew Burkett over 10 years ago and it actually started from the ground up from the fishing industry.

[00:14:46] He purchased the Flyfisher guide service and from their transition into a university which was a school specific to teaching people how to fish and you know what was possible. Beyond that he started to Lincoln Hill's Fly Fishing Club and then Angling Aquatics which is a consulting and construction company specific to streams and wildlife habitat. And as that began to evolve as an entrepreneur at heart you know his ability to identify and profit opportunities and to be able to build contacts you know from fishing gave him the opportunity to move on to other things such as accounting and finance, I.T. software development and design. We have a family office so we manage assets for high net worth individuals. And that ballooned into the fly fisher group which is a small private equity company that buys, builds and sells small companies a lot of which are within the recreation industry.

[00:15:54] So that is it in a nutshell. So I think the things that I liked most are

[00:16:04] the changes and the challenges.

[00:16:06] I'm not one that likes consistency and doing the same thing over and over so to be able to do something new, you know almost monthly is something that keeps pushing me forward and I think helps me become a better employee and better personally and uh, constant challenge. So I think those are right on a higher level you know. Also being able to you know fish and spend time outdoors on a regular basis and not just in Colorado and freshwater but we travel all over the world and fish. And obviously that's that's a huge part when you get to do that on the clock. Yeah. And I think you know just interacting with people and hearing the stories.

[00:16:49] You know I've found that over the last couple years that I think the thing that I'm most interested of is hearing other stories and how they got to where they are today.

[00:17:04] I think that is a great question. So I actually have, I have a couple of different answers for that. One I say yes absolutely. And I think it is far beyond the borders of the U.S. I think it's kind of a worldwide understanding from an English perspective and I think it is a great connection.

[00:17:22] And it's almost you know like an instant opening of someone's soul to say hey here's who I am and what I love to do. I you know I understand this about you that you love to fish as well you know and it's automatic. The common grounds for great conversation and great acceptance. The second question is is more within the U.S. borders. And I think that the understanding and ability to connect with other anglers and other sportsmen is very difficult. You know we've identified that sportsmen as a whole are the worst, or the poorest organized group. Possibly. You know because it's interesting how,

[00:18:05] the bamboo fly anglers can look down upon traditional fly anglers or fly fishermen and spin fishermen don't see eye to eye similar to our tree hunters and muzzle loaders or rifle hunters or duck hunters you know so so on so forth that these these small cliques within the industry that make it very challenging to unify the voice and to help protect you know what we all participating in and and hopefully hoping to have for our children. So I think,

[00:18:36] that is one of the biggest challenges of my generation and I think that generation's now trying to protect that resource is it's coming together and understanding, you know everybody's side of the story and working towards a goal and not fighting within our you know our small cliques. Into trying to protect it from you know mother nature and wild resource standpoint. Right. I think they're very important. I think that's a great step in order to try to unify the voices. And. I think the challenge is is the those that are not involved and do not have a similar understanding or presentation of their information. I think that's what makes it challenging you know. So I think that one of the largest challenges for an organization such as those are how do you. Help those that are not affiliated with you pass the same message along. It's having a unified voice kind of thing, a unified message. Exactly. You know and with a more or less shrinking population of participants. You know how do you create a bigger voice. Because you know at the end of the day, money, politics and technology is winning over national parks and national refuges and state wildlife areas. And you know all those things that sportsmen need to be able to do what they want to do. I absolutely think it is. And I think that's a, that's a challenge. It's very unfortunate. But you know if everybody you know loved what they originally loved and protected it we would still have eight tracks and everybody would still be listening to vinyl. You know. I think there's an evolution there. So those that want to hang on to that are there to protect it. And I don't think it's going to get any easier. It's just going to get more difficult. But I think people are going to go down kicking and screaming making sure they can protect public lands for fishing, for hunting and for everything else outdoors.

[00:20:54] I think my most concerning is lack of information lack of understanding you from those that don't participate. I think it's fine that you know people don't experience the outdoors. But I feel that they should be educated to the point, so when you know, votes need to go in that they're helping to protect that resource does like you just said that resource cannot be brought back you know once it's gone it is truly gone. And the rate at which humans are consuming natural resources on the planet are scary. And and to be able to protect certain areas to be able to have those experiences and share that knowledge and information is hugely important.

[00:21:42] I would say it changes with the season. I think wintertime, fall,

[00:21:49] you're going to have to go to the Gulf. The Mississippi Delta you know the Venice, Hopedale area for redfish, sheepshead, speckled trout. You know I think it's just

an incredible fishery and an ecosystem. You know I've really grown to love everything about it down there. You know the culture, the food is incredible. The people are very nice and genuine, and the fishing is just outstanding and, and to see the impacts that have you know,

[00:22:21] down there are just crazy. I mean they go out and fish in the bays and look at endless rows of.

[00:22:30] oil rigs. I mean it's just I mean I understand that you know we use that. I drove to get here so I can't say too much but to be able to see that you know those human structures in such a natural habitat is very tough and it makes you kind of rethink what you do every day.

[00:22:45] Well and the dead zone in the Gulf right. Right. So I mean so that's. Very sobering and really helps you think about everything I think. Spring is definitely you know Rocky Mountain states and trout fishing I think spring is you know by far the best time. You know from April through to runoff and Summer. Summer. But still stay in the Rockies for the dry flyfishing.

[00:23:21] I think I think something that I would really like to experience is barramundi in Australia. It's, it's just. Out there. It's not something that's overly talked about. But just to give that, give that a shot. You know I've got a lot of different species on a fly rod from you know salt water to cold water. So I think that would be something that's. Very fun and challenging. You know I've hosting trips to the Caribbean a number of times and and taken anglers down there and you know we were trying to find some of the you know off the beaten trail islands and places to fish. So we stayed on our Great Harbor Key several years ago before there were any fishing outfits out of there and we actually had guides that were coming in from other islands. So we would say out there and we would we would take our clients out to probably the biggest flats I've ever seen. You know we were getting dropped off on one end and we were walking for six hours in a straight line and they would pick us up on the other end. So it was just an incredible experience. I say the one downside was that the guides weren't overly fishy. They had a boat and they knew where the fish were. They didn't know what flies to use they didn't know how to catch them. So as the chaperone I would come in kind to help you know everybody get set up and send them off in their directions. And one of the challenges was every time you took a bone fish these sharks would show up and they would show up aggressively. So I think you know being on a flat with people that you were quote unquote responsible for or at least responsible for their you know their experience to be able to hook these fish with your guide. Several miles away in a boat and you're knee deep in the water with no land in sight. And to have you know half a dozen to 10 sharks within a rod's length trying to unhook or take a picture of somebody's biggest bone fish was was very interesting you know and it started out with asking the guy like hey what happens when the sharks come in. He's like, oh no problem, he's like just bend down and get a ball of sand and throw right in front of it. And the sound and the turbidity will scare the shark off. So I did that first time scared the shark felt tough. I was pretty excited hooked up hooked a very large bonefish in the client's like See I got to get a picture. He's like I've never caught a bone fish you know this close to 10 pounds we're like, great great, shark show up. And throw the sand scare him. Great. And then bone fish gets closer as we're fighting the fish. Sharks start to get more aggressive in swimming faster threw a sand ball in front of the largest shark. We had a black tip coming in and swam right through it like nothing. So I went from about this big to about that big and half a second. So so yeah I'd never you know use my fly rod for keeping sharks at bay

but that day I did. You know if you take the tip section off of an eight week it pokes sharks much better than if you leave it fully intact.

[00:26:32] No. I mean I you know just. The uh the the information and understanding that I have of this project is great. You know to be able to collect the voices the stories to be able to help protect what we have and what we cherish is is very important and I think that's something that's very admirable and something that I think needs to gain more traction not from you know just universities or from yourself but just from you know a sportsman alike you know and to be able to help push things forward to

[00:27:03] protect that resource.