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Grant Soukup [00:00:10] A little bit of both, and I think peers are always important mentors in my life. People that I looked up to and as a kid I just liked to fish. There was something about a cane pole. Something about a hook and a worm. And I had a lake near where I lived that we would ride our bicycles to, back in the day where it was 10 miles to the lake. We'd ride our bikes and mom would say just go have fun. You know the morning you'd wake up and you know had breakfast and she said I'll see you at dinner, you know. And kids just went out and did stuff and we fished. I was born in Garrett County, Maryland. So I had the mountains around me, I had brook trout, I had lakes wild, wild fisheries everywhere. Was a wonderful place. Safe place. And, and, the brotherhood and areas where you fish and those kind of spots are generally safe. And we always and you know always introduce a new friends and new kids to the fishing. But Maryland was a was a wonderful place to learn how to fish because you had the mountains. You had Piedmont plateau. You had the Chesapeake Bay which was a it was an estuary. You had the Eastern Shore which.. Each, each area had different ecosystem. So it was like America in miniature. And if you went to the east you had the ocean. So you had really a great place and I think that's why great fishermen like Lefty Kreh and Boyd Fifer, so many of the great fishermen that we know in our in our ranks. That's where they live. And Lefty Kreh lived you know, in Baltimore County where I taught school where I grew up.

Grant Soukup [00:01:32] I did. Lefty was. He was really a great mentor. The first Trout Unlimited in Maryland was, I went to the first meeting. I rode my bike to it because my my parents were busy. My mom didn't drive and so I rode my bike you know 20 miles to go to a library in Towsend, Maryland. And there was Lefty Kreh. And there was Boyd Fifer and there was all these guys, Barry Isaac, all these men. That were really truly different fly fisherman then, than the old men today. And soon, and when, I'm the kid. You know I'm 14 years old. And I go to the Trout Unlimited meeting and want to be part of those activities. And they were talking about their first event was gonna be at Druid Hill Park in Baltimore City, and it was gonna be a fish derby for the kids in the city and it was Catfish. So they stocked catfish and we had cane poles well I was a master with a cane pole. I knew how to do it. I had already created a slip Bobber type deal that I used. So we went down there and they stocked. You know. Channel catfish in these old cement ponds, in Druid Hill Park. Which were actually some of the first trout hatcheries in this, in the country. Where for some of the first trout ever raised was right in Druid Hill Park. And so we had a great experience and I made I got the men pick me up at the house. You know they, they dropped me off my parents trusted 'em, I trusted them. Never had any of that. You know there was a threat of abuse or anything like that. And then those men, they wanted company. You know they needed somebody that when they went fishing up on the Ella breaches or up on those limestone streams in Pennsylvania they wanted somebody to tell their story to. They wanted somebody to just share their life with. And I was always getting a phone call, you know "Grant can you? Yeah. Let me talk to your dad. I want to see you go fishing this weekend." And they picked me up and treat me to lunch and up we go and I remember sitting in a lawn chair in the yellow breaches River at Albury inn waiting for the White Miller hatch to come off. And Lefty took us up on the Potomac. And waiting for those big white millers to come off and fish for small mouth bass all the way up to Cattle Creek in Pennsylvania, and Barry Issac. They were just so generous so kind. And it was never about catching fish it was about everything that surrounded the trout. It was about the ecosystem, was about the entomology. It was about how to tie a fly, how to build a rod how to cast. How to, how to respect the environment, you know? And you might catch a fish. And hear some tricks and tips on how to do it. And that was what was so special. Those men really were sharing. It wasn't the, the fly fishing snob that some people are

familiar with. Where, where the guy's on the river, he doesn't want to see another fisherman. And he doesn't want anybody else to to tread in there and you never kill a fish you know. I remember we ate fish. We had we had them on a camp fire, we had small mouth bass and things like that. So it was very. It was really enjoyable. And as a kid to have those kind of mentors. Was, was powerful. And Lefty was the one that really got me interested in writing. And I never thought I'd write. Because after college, I thought those professors beat writing and reading out of me, you know? It was, I hated it at the end of college. And then I became a teacher. And I'm a biology teacher, I'm a science teacher, so what am I going to bring into the classroom? I'm gonna bring in something I'm good at, something I love, something I want to share with those kids in the way that it was shared with me. And that's what I did. So I brought that fishing and I hooked those kids on learning you know and snag them and rip their lips off, you know. So they'd be excited about hunting and fishing and the outdoors. And as Facebook friends with those kids, I still see them on Facebook and they're still sending me pictures of their fish, and of their children catching their first fish. What a legacy. What a what a great gift that that those gentlemen gave to me, with the understanding that I would share that and give that to somebody else. And I think that was what really was the most wonderful thing about about fishing and fly fishing and Lefty he was not just a fly fisherman. He was great a spin fisherman. He was also a great hunter. Who was also a master Marksman. He was really good with shotgun. You see these guys shoot 10 targets, I watched him do it. He just got, he loved fishing so much. He only had so much time in his life. He had to give up something, gave up hunting you know? And he was, but he was a wonderful hunter as well. And he could tell jokes. He could tell the jokes to the pope that were the most foul disgusting crudest nastiest jokes, and the pope would laugh. And he'd get away with it. And there'd be no idea how he did, it it was always funny. And you better like peanut butter jelly sandwiches. Or peanut butter and pickle. That was, that was his favorite, favorite kind of sandwich. It's funny things like that you remember. So. But, but fishing is such a wonderful metaphor in life. Because there's. Like if, like parents today. I mean you're looking for your kid to grow up and and to be a good kid. Well what does that mean? It means know how to follow the rules and know what your limits are, and know that, know skills and know how to tie a knot and get addicted on something that is healthy. And, that gives you therapy in life. Because when you fish you don't think about the problems, you don't think about other things. You think about fishing. You have to if you want to catch a fish. You know. And, and so parents. That you know there's so many soccer moms and they do that because they can do that, but it's so exciting now to see that women are becoming part of the sport and that you have this... I'd love to see the new Girl Scout move, that boy, they just need to start promoting fishing for those girls. I think girls would sign up right away. Because girls I find are better fishermen than men when I've guided when I've taught people to fish. I can teach a girl faster to fish. Cause you only got to tell them once, you know, guys you're gonna tell them three times and then they screw up three more times and then you finally at some point they get frustrated and you've got a quick window and then they learn, you know? That's guys you know we're just different that way. But once you got it you have it you'd have it forever so it's certainly, certainly a wonderful thing so.

Grant Soukup [00:07:20] I think, I think it's essential. I mean and I don't think just when we're talking about fishing. I think when we're talking about sports in general. I don't want to see sports that are just one, one race. I want to see it celebrate the total foundation of what our culture is. You know I like to see all races, everybody that calls themselves to be an American. That's what American is, where the you know we're the place where everybody came from everybody else everywhere else, to become an American you know. And that doesn't mean you have to be white doesn't mean you have to be a single color. So. I know

back east I started to see more African-American people that like to fish. And when I was running a, I was in charge, the coordinator for an Environmental Science Magnet School. And the magnet school didn't mean you brought in the best kids, it mean you brought in kids that needed the best teachers. And I recruited the best teachers, so I brought in really rough kids and a lot of who were black. They were, and they, those kids. Man, you start talking about fishing. We raised trout in a closet. We raised 75 rainbow trout a year. Start with about 100 you know with a little bit of mortality we'd stock 75 trout, 15 to 18 inches that those kids raised in a closet using a refrigerated system. And those kids loved those fish, you know. And and we. And while we're they're loving those fish we're teaching them water chemistry, how to monitor that, you know the, the temperature. And the chemistry of the water. How much food do we feed the fish. When do you feed the fish. And you know all the diseases and now I mean so you had something that when you're teaching that science, they learn those water tests because if they didn't learn it right, those fish were going to die. You know really need that personal connection. So we had, you know, wet labs that were. We had about twenty seven hundred gallons of water systems you know in that program, it was really really good. And it didn't matter what color the kids were. You know? Kids, kids are kids, there's no kid any any more, any any less important than any other kid and color had no impact. Except that maybe those minority kids got more excited and more enthused and were and picked it up quicker. You know. And they loved the fish. And their granddad's love to fish. And what male relatives they had in their life loved to fish. And when we would have fishing derbies, I would have a derby. I call it a little lunker derby, and I'd stock a pond full of trout. And I'd call the students that were part of that program were invited, if they brought one other kid. I was and they had to bring Mom and Dad or aunt Sue or Uncle Joe. And bring a cover dish know because when we caught the fish we filleted them we had a fish fry to we ate them on the spot. And those kids remember that. Forever. That's the, I mean I can't remember things I did with my wife, she'd probably slap me. But I can remember the first trout I caught, I can remember the first fly I tied. And the first Trout was Rainbow on Owens Creek. Now that I caught on on a royal coachman, the old man mentor Paul Helm taught me how to tie this royal coachman. Took me about 10 attempts to get a raggedy looking fly. But I caught a trout on that fly. Now that's. You talk about invite, invest, and share of ownership. And that's what fishing does. That's what hunting does. That's what sports does. And everybody needs something like that in their life. Not everybody's a fisherman. Or a football player. You know. But the thing about fishing like you said, it's guys like you and I. Fishing is more. More generic. You don't have to be in perfect shape. You can be fat. You can be a woman, you can be any color, you can be anything, and be a wonderful fisherman, and enjoy it. And it doesn't, and, and that's success as a fisherman is not married, measured, by how many fish you catch. That's what I love about fishing. I mean there's a there's a different dosage. That we all get. From the number of fish that we do or don't catch. Because it's not called catching. It's called fishing. You know that's what's so exciting about it.

Grant Soukup [00:11:22] Well as a kid my parents were, my mom was a school nurse. My dad was a math teacher. So we had summers off. So in Maryland, the reason I came to Montana was we spent the whole summer in Yellowstone Park. And we'd move every two weeks. We had like the rules said to enough campground. And you know I remember bathing in the rivers. I didn't know we had the special soaps that you didn't pollute the waters, and we'd jump in the geothermal features that we could find along the rivers, crazy things like that. Yellowstone's changed dramatically. That, the days of the Yellowstone cutthroat. Oh my god I remember the buffalo ford. I remember you couldn't walk anywhere on that on that river without seeing thousands of cutthroat trout, huge trout. And no trout takes a dry fly sexier than a cutthroat. That's just this amazing trout, there's so, such a cool trout. And now to see virtually none. The last time I fished the Yellowstone River in that

same area I saw seven trout, I caught six. You know I spent a good day looking for trout and the ones I caught were in a unique spot, that I don't think other people would have would have noticed. But pelicans god I see so many more pelicans, I see so many more raptors. You know those those are all things that the deal with the mortality. The salmon fly hatch, from lions bridge on the Madison River, down to Makati. I saw more boats. I don't know why you'd want to float it. There's a boat every hundred fifty yards, you know? And stacked up and where there's a good place and if you're a bank fisherman they just run you over that you know there's no respect and guides are coming from, you got to. It's like a line of trailers and boats from West Yellowstone from, from Idaho. We get a whole slew of people. We're loving the resource to death. And I know that people need to make a living. I know as a guide I know it was hard to make a living as a guide, so you have more days you get more money to make. But. It's, it's, it's, it's dramatically different. As a kid I remember they stocked trout. I was on the Gallatin river as a kid, and I remember a truck pulled up and they stock huge trout. I mean monster trout. There was one trout in a bucket kinda trout you know. And I remember there was a monster pool right there on the Gallatin, and I stocked I didnt stock the golden. There was a orange trout. I put it in and it was like when I was a kid. And I know it's natural fishery now, but it was stocked fish then. And I fished for four days. For I put six of them big monster trout in that pool. And I could see them and I knew they were there for four days my dad dropped me off at that pool. I caught other trout. I never caught one of those monster pigs that I had stocked in there. It was pretty cool. But I didn't see many fishermen. Then the rivers were never crowded in Yellowstone Park, if you the buffalo ford it was a circus. But. 95 percent of the guys didn't know what they were doing. Five percent of the guys catch 95 percent of the fish. You know? It's that way. It's still that way today. So when I go to like Reynolds pass for the salmon fly hatch, there was a lot of people there. There's an outhouse now. When I first camped there and I guided out of that that that fishing access that was the group it was a gravel pad. There was nothing there. You know now it's developed and now there's limits and rules and you know where you put your fires and that god we just get rocks make a ring, and that's where we you know. We. And I'd spend the summer there guiding, guiding out of that spot. But in that day of salmon fishing or salmon fly fishing. I got. I think I netted like 15 big trout probably lost 15. And all the fish that I netted had hook scars. Every one of them. And I only saw one other fisherman. And there was probably 50 to 75 fishermen. I saw one other guy hook and lose one fish. And when I talked to. You know you get the fisherman lie, I had I had some fun I had quite a few. Usually they get skunked. You know if you get the truth from it. Never caught anything. You know I mean it's us. So yeah the fishing changed not the numbers of fish in the Madison, and if you if the guys do catch 'em they get so excited. I think one of the things that's really screwed up fishing today is a cell phone. Because now I've got a camera on me. So now I catch this big trout, this trout of a lifetime. I've driven that I've come from Australia or Scotland to come to Montana, and I catch this glorious trout. And I've got to take some pictures. And they take pictures and they're holding it and the longer that fish is out of that water after that, that long battle, where they don't have the skills to get the fish in within three or four minutes. So they maybe took 10, 15 minutes to bring that fish in. The fish is on a wing and a prayer now. And now I'm going to take pictures of it for the next 15 minutes. Oh my nets the wrong kind of net. I don't have the rubber net. I've got some kind of a cloth net that's rubbing that the mucus off the side of the fish. And when I dropped it into the sand. Oh, but I got to grab it squeeze it so that I can get another picture or two. And that fish swims away. But the fish is dead. So you'll get that. I think the mortality of fish. Is way up. We don't notice it because. So are the raptors. So are the pelicans. They're cleaning up the dead fish as soon as they're dead. So we don't see that mortality. But what, one hundred seventy five thousand fishing days on the Madison last year were recorded. So it's more than that. You know and they, and if each guy kills one fish. That's one hundred seventy five thousand

trout, and there's only what three thousand a mile, used to be, I don't think it's that high on the Madison anymore. That's a huge mortality that I'm not sure. How that resource is going to recover. So someone's going to have to be impacted. The Missouri's that way, the Big Horn is that way all these great holy waters that we love. We're just loving to death. And I guess that's my point. That's the biggest change. You know and. That, the personality of a fly fisherman is different. I don't see the. The gracious mentors as much anymore. I spent my money on a guide. This river belongs to me. This pool's mine. Get out of my way. I'm not going to tell you. Please tell me what you're using. If you're having success, I'm not going to give any information back. There's a selfishness, that I see today that I did not see. In the past. Then I'm as a guide, I would cherry pick who I would guide eventually. Because I guided women, I guided people who had no idea about fly fishing, that I could mentor. And kids. That, that would become my focus. But the rich guy that had fished around the world that was the expert fly fisherman, they were often rude, selfish and and it was a long day. And they would never. They didn't want to learn a new thing. They wanted to tell me what they knew. But they didn't want to learn a new, new trick. And I was if everybody else is in that river. And they're guiding with a you know with it with a nymph or Hopper dropper, which is coming up, everybody on the river is going to be doing something different. You know that's that's my philo- that's what Lefty Kreh taught me. That's what those old guys taught me. if everybody else is using this, try this. You know if everybody else is really small. You go really big. You know, use a, use the biggest fly you got. If everybody else is using some small because what's the big trout. He's going to eat the burrito. He's not going to eat the grain of rice. He wants to eat something big and that instinctive. Desire to eat something big. Got out of it. It pays off so many times. And when you look at like Charles Brooks who back in the day, Bob Jacklin and those men. They were using floating minnows made out of quills of goose feathers that were three and four inches long. Huge things that you think about the original salmon fly Patterns and Bob Jacklin big you know the big stone nymphs and stuff that he tied big chunks and those guys caught big fish but big fish are rare, now. They don't have they don't get big anymore. Because they're mishandled. Predators. Environmental challenges. Every River in Montana is, people don't realize, is a polluted resource. Between the, because of the geothermal features, anything that comes out of Yellowstone Park. It's mercury, it's lead, It's arsenic, it's it's all that all that pollutes so they're not edible fish unless you know this process in the proper way. Most people don't know how to do that. It's, it's, it's. Yeah it's changed. Things have changed a lot out here. And I think if the next decade, if we don't recognize those changes. That we could lose these resources. You know. Unless we, we get stuck doing dramatic things like, Yellowstone Lake, you know. And we're, we're pulling those lake trout out of there for a million dollars a year, you know. Because of. You know nature finds a way. Those lakers got in there from those other lakes and, you know so just it's just funny how how things have changed, yeah.

Grant Soukup [00:20:07] But you know those pelicans too, and nobody talks about them, and their unique bird. As a kid, at Fishing Bridge, when that bridge was shoulder to shoulder with Fishermen and you could look off that bridge and there was 10,000 trout. Yeah. It was amazing. It was a boat ramp. There was a boat dock and motor boats that you could rent right here. I remember as a kid the stone flies came, all the small stones. I went, got a fly rod, fishing right by the float where you rented the motor boats and. The hundreds of people on Fishing Bridge. And I'm spanking. I'm catching trout after trout after trout. I was amazed. It wore me out. I had to stop, I couldn't catch any more fish kind of a thing. It was just phenomenal. And I saw maybe one pelican. You. It was cool because you never saw one. You thought it was a pterodactyl, you know they were rare. How many pelicans you see now? And how many trout does a pelican have to eat a day? You know. And lake trout aren't on the menu because lake trout are deep in the lake. But cutthroats

are, so. So that's another. You know, and I know that it's important to the grizzly bear, and I know it's important to the ecosystem, but the ecosystem has changed too. There wasn't the pelicans there, there wasn't the grizzly bears. As, as many back you know 30, 40 years ago as there are today. So. So there's only so much food in that carrying capacity. And we constantly need to tweak it. And I think right now, our fishing our fisheries need need tweaked. And and who's to say who, who gets first dibs, or you know do the guides get all the access? Does the average man working here, or woman here get it? Do, you know, can tourists fish or not? I don't know. You know, but. We're gonna have to. There's gonna have to be some some limits here. Sadly.

Grant Soukup [00:21:48] You know. I don't know how they can't. I think they all do. And the thing that I've learned, it's never one thing. You know that the one thing is that it's not one thing. You know that, that yeah there's fishing pressure. Gold mining is a challenge. You put a gold mine on Yellowstone River, it leaks. You know it's going to be a problem. There's, there's already other viruses and bacteria and things that are impacting the fisheries over there. Farmers have their impacted cattle livestock. You know that that goes into that into it as well. Air pollution, global warming, the water temperatures are going up. I mean right now looking at the Fire Hole River and I used to fish in the Little Firehole, all summer long, when I was a kid. It stayed cold enough, I remember fishing all the way up the Morning Glory pool and end of summer using hopppers in August, you know late, in the late summer. You don't do that anymore those trout are not there anymore. Trout are migrating, trout adapting. Trout are evolving they're, they're changing. Trout that live in the Jefferson, maybe in the winter, end up in the east Gallatin in Bozeman, up by the golf course. That's a long migration but that's what they're doing to make make a difference, if you go up the Gallatin, all the way to the Yellowstone Park you'll find pods of fish. 75 to a hundred fish in areas up near the headwaters. Those fish all migrated up out of the Missouri, and you know right up through Three Forks, and all the way up the, you know where the water's still, still kind of cold. But then all the forest burn up. You know, they're burning up now the Bacon Rind, it's burning up now. So it's it's constantly changing and I think, as resource managers, as fishermen as Trout Unlimited as all of us that love this resource, if we're not educated and knowledgeable about what's going on. And we're not trying to make an impact. No, it's not going to exist in the future. You know we're not going to have it. It's not going to be part of the discussion. People are going to come first. You know. Where am I going to live? You know. And I think that's wrong because trout are such symbols of a healthy environment. Trout are symbols of, of, nature doing things right. You know? I just think if we lose that, we lose ourselves. Because that. That. You, why do you stock trout in a river. Because we cleaned it up, we got it finally to a point where there's trees along the side, and you know shaded enough and it stays cool enough, and we can support a trout population. That's, that's like the Washington Monument. That's, that's a symbol of doing stuff right. And that's why I think, right now we're at a turning point here in Montana. Where we have, I think, the best fishing in the world. You know, year round hands down. You know, any kind of trout fishing that you want to consider. There's certainly other destinations that are exciting. And neat, for salmonoids and salmon and when they're spawning runs and and different kinds of things and unique vistas and unique areas. But I think we have the opportunity to set the stage for the rest of the world right here, because we're bringing that clientele into the state it's attracted to come to this place. If if we could leave, have them take a message with them. Back to their ecosystems and continue to manage New England and Scotland and Turkey and you know all the other places in the world where there are trout too, that we don't, that we kind of don't think about. What's healthy for trout's healthy for humans.

Grant Soukup [00:25:22] You know, and it's it's funny how they, when you look at the list the National Park Service I think it has you can research the things that they've stocked in Yellowstone Park, just the things they've put it into the lake, striped bass, you know whales. I don't know if it swam, they put it in there. You know back in the day. Because they were trying to make a recreational resource out of all that. Brook trout are now considered a trash fish. And yet Grizzly Lake and some of those headwater, I mean you know god they were all so wonderful brook trout fisheries. Now we're killing them all, trying to restore them back to the, to the cutthroat and I don't know if that's always the best idea, the best plan. The nature of nature does what nature does and you know I think as soon as humans try to intervene, I think you know we end up doing more damage than good. I think if you keep the habitat, you keep the resource healthy, the fish will take care of themselves that's what that's what the hope and the plan is. But Yellowstone still it's still the same park ironically. And then we had these huge motor homes going on these roads that are the same width they were when I was a kid. And the camp sites are still the same number campsites at Madison Junction and you know Canyon Village. But everybody wants to bring their monster fifth wheels, and all this. You know I don't know. I mean, we are loving it too much. And I want to protect it. I think it's symbolic of the wealth of America the wealth of, of, it people that love the environment. It's a symbol of things going right. You know and healthy and pure and it's so beautiful and you can see things in the park that are so, you know the critters and the flowers and it's so unique. And you know we need to we need to protect it. We need to to maintain it you know. But what Yellowstone is actually, was actually we don't own it. My understanding is that the Herriman family gave Yellowstone Park to Ulysses S. Grant, to the government, to the people of the United States, for a fee of a dollar a year. They they lease it to us for a dollar a year. But that was what I heard. And you could read, research that I when I visited the Harriman ranch, that was the big, the, the person that was leading the tour. That was what they were talking about. They have a ceremony each year where the United States government writes them and gives them a dollar bill, every year. So that we have the park. The buffaloes that are in the park are the DNA descendants of the few last buffaloes that were at the Harriman ranch, which is down there by, in Idaho you know down by the Tetons. The. Teddy Roosevelt, the big buffalo that's in the Smithsonian Institute, was shot there on that property. And you know when you do the horseback ride through the property, they'll show you right where that place was, where some of the mule deer and all these critters came from was right, right in that area. So. But but you know we're gonna have to, I think it's going to be sad and people are really angry, but. Are we going to have to start to go into the park like we do with snowmobiles in an organized fashion. In, on a bus, in a snow coach. You know not having the freedom. To take fifth wheels and motor homes and huge huge campers into the park. Are we going to be allowed to camp in that park. You know what, what is, the fishing is changed so dramatically, the whole Madison really doesn't get cold enough. For a really great trout fishing anymore until really below Hepgin Lake. I mean I know there's trout in Hepgin Lake, and there's trout through the resource, but they're not in, like the Barnes Holes, and those holes up to the Madison Junction. The density of trout in there is way down from what it was 20, 30 years ago. That water's gotten hotter. You know all through there too, so that, that that ecosystem's changing. The Firehole is changing, the Gibbon has changed, the forest fires burned you know, caused the water temperature to go up too, so. I think things are constantly changing. I think we're looking at some hard decisions in the future how we let people into the parks. It's not a zoo. The people that are rude to the animals, that are, there's a thing on Facebook this week about the idiot that's trying to stimulate the bull buffalo to attack him, know you know. I'll show it to you on Facebook, crazy. The guy's waving his arms, and the bull charges him, you know? And I'm rooting for the bull. But it's times, times have changed. And we're just, we're loving the park to death, we're loving fisheries to death. And I, I think that, that's

the next cutting edge thing, I think. We're going to have to be looking at. You know? Fly fishing's still the same. That's, that's why. It never changes. There's always a new pattern. There's always a new something you know? You get a better rod but bamboo is making a return you know. I mean. That's what's wonderful about fly fishing, and it's it's been around for thousands of years. And we're still doing it. You can certainly get a new hat. You get a new, you know, new kinds of line, you don't have to make your line out of horse, horse tail anymore, you know? Beeswax. But, but really the presentation of the fly, the concept of fly fishing, is so simple and so pure and so basic. It's never changed. That's what I love about it. But if we don't have a resource in the future, to practice it on, then it's going to die. Then we'll lose it.

Grant Soukup [00:30:34] Well you know I'm a biologist so you know my degrees in biology, master's degree in education, Doctorate degree in education. It's about water. You know that humans as an organism, as a, you know we're bags of water. That's what we are. We're very fragile creatures. We're made up of elements that are very common and basic in nature. You know that we you know so we've kind of come from the ecosystem in our unique biological, kind of people we are. But there's something about our senses that, when we fly fish, it's one of those places where you go, where you hear, you, you see, you smell. You process, you think. You use all of your senses. To catch a fish. You know? And everything has a different odor. Everything is different sound. And that sound of water is just, just magical. When I would come out in the summer, to guide in Montana, I'd record a cassette tape, that you know, or an 8 track tape back in the day. And it was to the river of Madison River. I'd go right at Reynolds pass, because that's where I camped. Or on the Big Horn you know where I guided. And I'd just record a whole tape of water. And when life would be stressful and you know as a teacher, and I was hating life or something, I'd put the tape on. And, and it was like just that background noise that constantly just relaxed me and soothed me and reminded me of who I was, and where I came from, and the things I love to do in life which was something as simple as trying to catch a fish. That is you've spent so much money, so much effort, so much energy so much time. And then you catch this great fish. And then you release it. I mean how cool is that. You know the first, the Trout Unlimited video that they made for their, it was called The Way of a Trout. I don't know if you ever saw it. God, I love it. You know, and it's got the old guy goes up the creek, you know, and he's. I mean I can see that so many times, they filmed a trout jumping. As a schoolteacher I showed that every spring, when I did my you know a couple two three days on trout, you know fall I do a deer hunting, I do. You always do like a Mr. Soukup had to have is his time too. And those kids would watch that and they still talk about The Way of a Trout, you know? And how we would go, I'd take them all trout fishing. You know? It was, we'd leave the classroom, and go into the ecosystem, and go to Little Falls or the Gunpowder River, you know near where I was teaching. And I'd meet the stocking truck then, because it was stocked fish. And those kids carrying those fish down and releasing them. Yeah. That's powerful tool. And I know that some people don't like stock trout. I know some people think that's inappropriate. But, but any way that we can legally, honestly excite and addict children to trout. I don't have a problem with. You know if it's within limits and rules. Why not? Because it's got to start somewhere. It can't start with, you know, a size you know 20 jacet on Lature River in Pennsylvania. That's not where you start. You'll you'll never fish again if you go there and you try to learn to trout fish on the Lature. You never will. You know it's worth. That's where you go when you're really. When you really want to challenge yourself because that's always fisherman you get better. As a human, we have to. We have to find things to make us better the things that we can't do, you know? That become a part of it. Because fishermen evolve. Fishermen start off as like every fisherman you just want to catch fish any fish any way anyhow. But then you want to catch a lot of fish. You know. Same idea. Then you want to

catch a big fish. Got to get that big one in there. But then you finally get good enough as a fisherman that you want to catch a specific fish. But then that fisherman when you evolve and you don't start at any these places, you start with just catching that fish. But you finally evolved to the place where, where I think I am, and I think you are, and a lot of fishermen are. Where the greatest joy is showing somebody else how to fish. That if you can infect and addict something to that healthy addiction. Now we, we have an, have an army of people that will protect the resource into the future. And that that's what I hope. But, you, earlier you were talking about minorities. Where are the men? Where the dads? Where's the fathers? You know of any color, you know? And our society has changed and we don't have that uncle, uncle Bill, and grandpa. You know the Lefty Kreh's you know he passed. Well. We're losing that those legends of fly fishing. Who, the greatest thing about their legend. I think in your library, when you really read those books, why are these sharing everything they know about how to catch a fish, you know? If they were selfish and greedy they wouldn't tell you. But they're sharing it because they they understand. They finally evolved to that level. That if they don't share it there won't be fish. And the thing that they loved in their life will be gone. You know. And I think that's what we need, that mindset of fishermen to be you know today. That's a Lefty, Lefty did to me. You know? He, we fished on the Honey Creek one day, there was a club called the Maryland Fly Anglers that I was part of. It was Trout Unlimited and Maryland Fly Fishers were two big clubs. And they had it, they'd have a luncheon up there. We do stream clean up and they pick me up. And then Lefty, who was the greatest fisherman I've ever known. Truly. He'd get on the. There was a little canyon stretch below a camp, called Camp Banille. And it was a staircase of pools. And. Lefty said, "So who wants to, who wants to challenge me today?" Well nobody did. Because he was. But I did. I'm 15 years old. You know I'm challenging Lefty Kreh. What do I know, you know? And honestly, I'm catching fish. I'm doing pretty good. You know we had our, I had my lama glass, fiberglass rod that Boyd Fifer helped me build and Lefty, Lefty Kreh helped me measure where the guides went. I took Lefty's rod, and I measured how to space my guides. He showed me how to find that seam on that rod. Cause fiberglass is wrapped, wasn't like the graphite we have today. And how to put the cork on 'em. I used, I glued sandpaper to a paint stick, so I could shape my cork. And and then Lefty, so I'm fishing with my Lefty rod, you know. He's my mentor. And I'm like catching as many trout as Lefty. And then he takes the rod and throws half of it away. He takes the tip off the rod, you know and we're using half a rod because I was doing too good. And Lefty is still catching fish like crazy. And I'm not catch, I'm like, "How do you fish with a half a rod?" But Lefty was doing it. And he said, "Well you've got to make your rod longer." And I said, "How am I going to do that?" It's like you know, it's, you know. And we used seven weights, seven and a half foot. That's what we were used to, I'm like to down to less than four foot a rod. He says, "Well you got to add two and a half feet to your rod." And I said, "Well, how am I gonna do that?" He says, "Straighten your arm." Now my rods two and a half feet longer. And then he starts talking to me about levers. He's talking science to me. What the heck is that you know. And you know about this is your fulcrum. And then when you cast you change the angle of your fulcrum, and that the fly rod's nothing but a simple lever. And it's a tool. And he's telling me about Archimedes, and how if I had a big enough lever I could lift the world, and you know? And he tells me the story about Archimedes and, and the Persian king and the king. He said the Persian King said if you could lift my boat with one hand I'll give you all the jewels you know that you can carry. And he made a big lever, and he made a big fulcrum, and he lifted the boat. He grabbed it with one hand, lifted this boat. And the Persian king threw him in jail. You know, it was just you know, but it was all those things. It's not, it's, you can't. It's not one story, it's, it's not one moment. It's, it's that, that's what the addiction of fishing is. Is that you never get enough. You know there's always one more cast. You know there's always one more stream that you haven't fished, there's always one more, you'll never catch enough trout. You never you never do it

enough. And, and, you know when I see these guys like Lefty Kreh, and you know when we go back to all the great fishermen. It's so exciting that there's a place, where we have a legacy. Because otherwise all that it's gone you know so and I'm so excited to be a part of it and share it and work with you, because, I think that's what every fishermen in their hearts, they want to see fishing in the future.

Grant Soukup [00:38:50] You know I think it's a. You know after teaching for decades you know. Nearly forty years. You have these education skills that you want to you want to keep working at. Once, teacher's an addiction too. So once you're an educator, you know you're never not an educator, you're always teaching and of course I can talk a lot. So there's always certainly always something new to share. And I like. I hated computers. And now I like them. I hated technology, I fought it tooth and nail. Because it never worked. You never could rely on it. It was always broken. You had all these different, but finally technology's gotten to a point where it's so exciting. And I think that, so I start to write as Montana Grant. And I created a website Montana Grant fishing dot com. And I write about what I talk about. I write about what I think is important about fishing, and why we should make we should have it, and I write about how to teach a kid. How to take your daughter, how to take your, your son. How to, you because it's all different. And there, they're just. I write for Montana Outdoor Radio Whow. So I put six posts on Montana Outdoor Radio Show a week. And I write from, when I go fishing I tell a story about the day I went fishing. You know what I did on the Missouri River last week, and the wind was blowing so bad I couldn't. I couldn't fly fish. It was impossible to fly fish. The boat would not go down the river. We're in the strongest current of the Missouri River and we're not moving. You know. But I could spin fish. So I pulled out a spinning rod. And started started catching fish on a spinning rod, and then the article was about take what the river gives you. Because. It's not always dry fly fishing. It's not always nymph fishing. It's not always streamer fishing. It's salmon flies last two weeks. Mother's Day caddis is a short hatch. You know, the PMDs come all. You gotta take what the river gives you, and you have to adapt and adjust and what. There it is. What a great great metaphor for life you know? In your work, in your, as in what you do for a living. If you don't, if you don't get something from what you do, why are you doing it, you know? If you you got to take what it gives you. You got to give what you know something in order to to make it for us, for something to come back so. So it's that's all just it's all part of it. You know this is what makes it so exciting. And I know not everybody's a fisherman. But everybody needs to find that fish fisherman in their life. It's golf. It's baseball. It's soccer. It's. You need that something, you know? Because that's the therapy that's, that's what keeps you from going crazy. That's what keeps, when you have a stressful day. I go on a sleigh ride. So I had a crappy day, and my wife's chewing on me. Dogs barking at me. Every, life's going crappy. I'm going fishing. You know? And I hear the water and I'm looking at the birds, you know, enjoying my time. And it starts and then I take it out on the fish, you know? And I'm gentle to the fish. I mean I'm not ripping their lips off, but I call it a sleigh ride. And I'm gonna tell you, after about a dozen, two dozen trout, I'm feeling pretty good. You know there's nothing in life that I'm afraid of anymore. You know and I didn't think about anything for two or three hours while I'm catching some fish. I mean they want a simple solution. I swear criminals in an inner city, I think if we had more fishing opportunities they need to go fishing. They need to learn how to hunt. They need to learn how to keep busy. Because idle hands get in trouble, you know. But when you're fishing and who. I've never met in my entire life. A person that isn't, that is an anti-fisherman. They hate. You know someone from an organization that's against it. When they catch a fish they smile. They're happy. There's a moment of joy. And when they release it. There's, there's a moment too, you know? Or if they eat it. You know I guess there's the moment of taste that they do. People that are anti-gun, that don't like to shoot. When you put a gun in their hand and they pull the trigger, it's so empowering. It's so.

There's a change that happens in people. And I think when we're looking at. The way our society needs to change, you know, those, those are good examples of ways we can make some people hate less and enjoy more. You know. And it just becomes that great thing, I mean till the day I die, I hope that if I'm landing a big trout on the Madison River and I don't know what happened and I pity the poor guy who finds me you know? You know pick up my rod and carry on. And have it be a wonderful way to go forward in the future kind of a thing. And that's what I write about. You know that's what you want to do my Montana Grant gig. Yeah and I do outdoor shows, you know the different local shows in northwest, and I do fly casting. And when I teach you about the fly casting, I'm trying to as a scout master in town I was scoutmaster of Troop 676. It's about telling stories. You know. Because that person, I want 'em, I want 'em to understand how a cast. But I want 'em to take away how to do it right. You know? I couldn't cast well when I was a kid. Lefty Kreh taught me how to cast. And I was too quick. And I didn't understand the lever, and so when he explained levers and fulcrums. And the thing that I really screwed up with, I couldn't, didn't have timing. I didn't understand timing. So Lefty said, "Well Grant," I'm only 15 years old. he says, "Grant do you like girls?" And I said Yeah. He said, "Do you like pretty girls? And I said Yeah. He said, "do you like girls with big boobs?" And I said Yeah. He said, "I want you to say I like pretty girls with big boobs. And I want you to cast." So he said start. I said I like girls with big boobs. And that was the timing. That was the stroke. So when I do. Casting lessons today, for ladies I do I like men in cowboy boots you know, or for kids, I ask him what kind of candy they like you know Hershey bars or so that you know I like a sack full of Hershey bars you know? And you come up with that and they they take it with them as a mnemonic clue. And every time they get on the river and I'm guiding some guy, you know, "What kind of Hershey bars you like?" Oh I like Hershey bars with [unintelligible]. Well what kind of girls do you like? You know what kind of cowboys do you like? And something that mnemonic you know clue kicks back in. And they've left from an outdoor show in Billings, Montana, listening to Montana Grant B.S. about something, and I've changed the way that person casts for the rest of their life. Great, that's that's cool. And then they're going to do that to somebody else and to somebody else. And that's what I loved about education. I'm the richest person on planet earth because of the ten thousand children I've taught in my life. And each kid's got a story to tell about Mr. Soukup, or Montana Grant, or Mr. Grant. You know that's what I always went by. You know were those those monikers and. I don't know I sleep good at night, knowing that I've made that kind of a positive difference in those people's lives. And the best part is when, so I haven't seen this person for years and years and years, and they come back to a show. And they share something with me. They give me a new fly. You know? They get up there to let me have the rod to say look what I'm doing with the rod. This is something I think, and you know and I got this whole concept of gun sight trigger finger. You know when when you hold the rod correctly, so your thumb is your gun sight. And you're that you have to control the line. And that was a result of some guy coming back who said, you know fly fishing is like shooting a gun to me. You know? And now I use it in every seminar that I do now. That's because people get it. They understand. The gun sights on the top of the gun. Your thumbs on top of the rod. Your trigger finger. That's what's controlling the line. That's what shoots the line. You know you have to control that. When you when you educate people. And you, and you talk to them in words that they understand that they can embrace. And remember. That's when the light bulbs come on. And that that's what it's so much fun.

Grant Soukup [00:46:28] I've actually fished with some unique characters in my life. Hank Williams Junior. Incredible. wanted to catch a whitefish. Couldn't say 10 words without dropping an f bomb twelve times. You know, I mean a crazy man. Loved the outdoors though. Steven Seagal. Met him in Ennis one day, and fished with him. Unique guy. He taught me how to shoot a handgun. You know, we after that after I guided him, he showed

me how to shoot, you know? And I still remember how to cup and saucer you know with a handgun. So of the things I gave him things he gave me, I gave back. Sandra Day O'Connor, Supreme Court judge. You know? All these people from all these different destinations places and they love the fish and here's the president of the United States. And I'm a kid, you know? And we had to take trout up to Camp David. I was working for, it was Beaver Creek trout hatchery then, it's now it's called Albert Pal trout hatchery, and I was a biologist trainee. That was what my dream, I was gonna be. And I worked in a summer. And Howard Steinfeld was my head biologist, he was like the mentor that taught me. And so we loaded up a load of trout. We drove up, Dave Wenucky, who was the head of the DNR. We went up, and they wouldn't let me pass the gate. I didn't have security clearance, so Dave Wenucky drove the truck in. And I just stayed at the gate. And here comes, Jimmy's wife comes up to the gate, and is talking and stuff, and she was talking to me about trout 'cause we were delivering trout. And I told her about trout fishing, and how excited I loved about fishing, and the next thing I know we get a phone call. I was staying at the, actually at the trout hatchery, sleeping at the hatchery for a couple of weeks. When I worked there. That he wanted me to guide him. So I'm going to guide him on Hunting Creek. The holy water of fly fisherman. Thurmont, Maryland. You know, the water coming out of the Catoclin Mountains. That's the glory. You know it's where you want to baptize your baby's in if you're a fly nut. That's where I always wanted to get married. I wanted to get married in a trout stream. You know with the minister in the in the creek, I would, my wife we didn't do that maybe in my fiftieth. But we always wanted to do that. But so I'm waiting for Jimmy Carter to come down, and here comes the limousine of an old company, a big black limousines and a couple suburbans, and out pops the security and so on. So for about a half a mile of water and we really only fished two pools. You know, we had, I didn't have any other fishermen screwing me up. There was, it was the first time I ever fished that water unmolested. And Jimmy was, you know, with many people he was not a very good president, but I will tell you. He. Being with him, he was the most kind, heartfelt, loving person I think I've, I've ever met. He was a good man. You could just feel it. And the way he handled the fly rod, the way he talked, the way he selected a fly. The way he looked at the river, the things that he saw. It, we were there to fly fish but it wasn't about the fish, you know. So here's this man with the burdens of the world on his shoulders. Fishing with a kid. On Thurmont. In a pool with stocked brook trout. They were huge, they were big fat ones, they were really nice brookies. That the Maryland Fly Anglers had put in there. And his wife's sitting on a rock. I mean. He took. In all the stress that he was having in his life. What peace he was having and here I'm showing him how, this is this is like 60, 70 so this is like. I'm showing how to use a balsa wood strike indicator. Nobody used strike indicators. The first place I ever used one was on the Gardiner River right? And I picked up a stick and was playing with a stick, to try to figure out how I could get it to float. And maybe if I could get the stick to bend up it would tell me I had a strike. And I finally found balsa wood floated better, I used my mother's nail polish, because we didn't have sharpie pens and El marcos. We didn't have all that good stuff we have today. And so I created a strike indicator I still use, that when you get a strike, it sticks up. And when it sticks up you set the hook. So the slightest bite you could see it. And there's brook trout in that pool, everybody and their mother fished for those brookies. You know they might've got caught once, you know, but then they figured it out. And then you could see the fly go in their mouth. And they and you know you just couldn't you couldn't do it. But I put these little flies on that I tied, and I got him to make the right presentation and that fly drifted in that little balsa wood stick went up, and Jimmy set the hook. President Carter set the hook. Oh my God. And I'm netting a fish for the president the United States. How cool is that? You know? And his wife's clapping and that even as security guys you know, they got the long coats, and they're like, "Yeah to go. You know way to go Mr. President." You know, I mean. It was just so incredible. That something as simple as the act of catching a trout.

Can make such an incredible difference in everybody's life, in decision making, in the way you deal with thick, with stress and anxiety. There's no chemicals, there's no smoking pot, or to drink there's no drugs. God I mean a good dose of trout fishing? I'll tell you, who doesn't love it? And I mean. And that and that's what it was in every. As a teacher I always said I always wanted the kid, I always wanted the kid right here. You know as a fisherman. I always wanted that. You know. That fisherman at the end of a guide trip or the end of a day. When I have a trout derby, the Little Lunker Derby, and I'd have you know 40 little kids screaming and yelling and they caught their first fish with Montana Grant. You know, I mean. That's what I think is so important. That's you know. It's not what you've done for yourself. It's not the fish that you catch. It's not the pictures of the fish on the wall. It's not the stuffed fish you might have around your house. It's. If you think you're a hotshot fisherman, can you show somebody else how to do that? Can you get somebody else to catch a fish and make a difference in their life. And then the ultimate assessment, can they show somebody else? And then you get that chain. And that's what we've got here. That's what this library is. It starts with Isaac Walton. Who shared something he loved. And then somebody else read it, and then they picked it up and. Daniel Webster, and all the history, people, you know from, from the Romans and everybody that that did the simple act of fishing. Why do we protect Yellowstone Park. Why do we care? You know, why do we care about the Madison and the Yellowstone and the great rivers in our country. You know what. I mean there's plenty of rivers you know why do we care about it. You know cause of the fish, because of a trout. You know because of what a river represents, because of how exciting it is. And I mean. I mean what what a gift. What, what a great legacy for us to have, and to share and things like that, so. That's why I write. That's why fish. You know selfishly I fish for therapy. Don't go to bars I go to the river. You know. I make friends that like what I do. And everything I do, I make a metaphor, an analogy, that fits it. In the fall I go hunting. I do that too. And again it just goes on and on and on. So it's just a wonderful thing. And thank you for, for what you do with this library, and how you're creating this. You know what I mean, what we're recently right now, what is is the football. Everybody's got their gold jackets. I was thinking about that was watching yesterday, and I'm a Ravens fan and nobody's Ravens fan in Montana. But I am, cause I'm from Maryland. And I'm thinking about like you know Ray Lewis, and you know all these players are getting their bust in a library, and, you know there's this this, acknowledgment, this recognition, here is greatest at what you do. You know in your life. And they're great athletes. But. But what I'm more interested, so what did you do for kids? What did you do for a community? What did you do for society? How have you made our planet, our community, and our country better? Through the gift that you had? And fishing and education is my gift. And that's what I serve up, and that's what I give. And I'm a big talker as you can tell. And that's what I enjoy, enjoy doing so. You know when my time on this planet is over, I hope that god's got a nice trout stream in mind for me, someplace, some. There's got to be a better a better place than you know trout are going to be there. They have to be.

Grant Soukup [00:54:52] Now, I think as a teacher, after after so many years in education, I came down to three words. Invite. Invest. And share ownership. And I think when you're trying to teach somebody how to fish, or in anything in your life, a business, you're trying to run a company, you're trying to do anything. I think if your employees, if your audience feels invited to what you're doing, invested, in part of what you're doing, and shares ownership of what you're doing. You'll have it right there.