

## wenk-dan-2016-03-31done.mp4

[00:00:10] You know.

[00:00:12] I've been fishing in one form or another probably since almost as long as I can remember started on the on the lakes of my home state of Michigan to the Great Lakes where where I had some great experiences with my father and other family members. You know as as as fishing's evolved I think it's become a little bit of a different kind of experience. It was it was an experience before where it was not about fishing as much as it was about being with my dad and being with my uncles or being with my cousins or being with other family members. I think today fishing is more of an opportunity to get away into and to sort of just have a little emotional renewal. I'm one of those fishermen who does not need to catch a fish to have a great day. I probably do watch more fish than I catch you know in terms of I watch them check out my fly and tell me I have the wrong one you know in their own way. But for the experiences for me or being up in the third meadow of sleuth Creek and and being able to be alone and to be in Yellowstone National Park and just to experience the time the place the surroundings in a way that is very restful and I would say provides great emotional renewal.

[00:01:34] Excellent. I grew up in Wisconsin so just across the lake from. And I'm guessing you started out spinning, was it?

[00:01:41] Well I'd probably say I've probably started out with.

[00:01:43] Bait fishing?

[00:01:43] With a with with a cane pole and an a bobber you know fishing for bluegill.

[00:01:49] Sure.

[00:01:51] And sometimes you would have great luck and other times you know you would just enjoy that you know those those moments. But we did get to the Great Lakes and we you know there's a lot of bass fishing you know on small ponds and lakes you know and in our part of the world and there was there was some of that on the Great Lakes as well.

[00:02:10] Sure.

[00:02:10] Up by Thunder Bay near Al Pino is where. We ployed that. The. The. The recreational effort was was done there.

[00:02:20] I'm guessing walleye, perch, pike, those kind of things a little bit?

[00:02:21] You know we did a little bit of perch on the Lake Erie, in the falls walleye and pike not so much. Wasn't wasn't I mean it was it was it wasn't a passion it was more or less you know it was I actually am convinced that my father.

[00:02:40] Went fishing so he could spend time with us individually as kids you know it wasn't it wasn't about you know catching fish that was the added benefit. It was about just spending time on one of the many lakes that surround our home.

[00:03:00] I think it would probably be my you know my father.

[00:03:04] And it was passion's a tough word that enjoyment. I would say it's more than passion. It was just it was it was not something we had to do or felt compelled to do. But it was it was nice to do. It was just it was just wonderful time. And you know I think there's more of an enjoyment or passion around it now because it's it's it's really about experiencing the rivers the streams the lakes and just the time you know in this environment.

[00:03:43] It's I would say there was nothing natural about my involvement in fly fishing. You know I would also classify myself as a an adequate fly fisherman.

[00:03:55] At best. I'm not you know I'm not a fly fisherman that that you know anyone can catch a fish on a fly in certain seasons in Yellowstone National Park. And you know my I would say I'm more of a person who really I don't know another way to say it. I love being out there I love being on Lake Yellowstone and they're using you know spinning rods and lures and catching you know the lake trout hopefully you know in that situation. But lately I've been catching more cutthroat trout on the Lake Yellowstone and lake trout which is great. Yeah. Which is just the way it's supposed to be. So.

[00:04:43] Well you know there were some things that we've talked about. Well let's talk about some of the big issues. You know native fish restoration throughout this park on whether it be the Lake Yellowstone or the rivers and streams and deep drainage is are all incredibly important to us as you know there's more miles of rivers and streams with non-native fish and Yellowstone National Park than there were with native fish when the park was established. You know but there's a lot of forces that are at play out there that I think we have to be very cognizant of and we have to really understand the impacts of those rivers and streams and the fisheries if you will in terms of the the overall health of Yellowstone National Park certainly the greatest example of that is what's happening on Lake Yellowstone with the lake trout and the cutthroat trout and the really the the devastating effect that lake trout had on the cutthroat trout populations on Lake Yellowstone. The efforts I think the concentrated efforts of the last five years have had some really good impact. And we're seeing a recruitment of of young cutthroat trout you know that it's rebounding at a very high level. But we know we're not that job's not done. You know we know how important lake trout. Excuse me. We know how important cutthroat trout are to the ecosystem. I've got a bumper sticker in my office. I think that says lake trout kill elk. You know it and it's and it's it's acknowledgment of the fact that grizzly bears are no longer being able to fish the streams surrounding Lake Yellowstone and have get the kind of values uh nutritional values that they they were getting from the fish, from cutthroat trout. So now they're killing calf elk. You know in the area. So there is there's a direct you know as a direct relationship between those things the fact that you have so many different species that feed on or use cutthroat trout you know what. Eagles, osprey, otter you know et cetera et cetera that don't. That lake trout don't make themselves available in the same kind of way. So it's. So you look at the number of osprey nests around Lake Yellowstone and the decline you know that coincides with the growth of lake trout and the reduction of cutthroat trout and in Lake Yellowstone it's very easy to see those relationships. So you know. That's sort of first and foremost but then start to look at what we've been able to do in places like Grayling Creek you know with the reintroduction of fluvial Arctic grayling and and the elimination of the non natives and the building of the barriers you know to so we can keep the non natives out and we have a chance to put back a stream the way it was in 1872 when the park was established. You know look what we're doing up at Soda Butte Creek you know trying to remove the non-native sand and once again building the fish barriers and they're projects that are that are incredibly beneficial for for the eco system of Yellowstone. But then look beyond that and look at the

kinds of things that we're doing that for example up on the Gibbon River on the Gibbon river right now around ice lake and Wolf Lake and Grebe lake areas that were fishless you know but they can serve as an area that we can we put natives back into that as climate change and other impacts you know on this environment happen. We can still preserve those native fish and basically in their native environment but we're we have to help. And those things are incredibly important. You know some of the greatest fisheries you know Slough Creek that you know people from around the world come to fish Slough Creek and you're you're seeing hybridisation and and rainbow trout you know up in the third Meadow now that you never used to see before. So if we can if we can sort of stem that tide where the non natives continue to to take over more and more territory I think that's incredibly important. Our conversations that we've had over the last few years with with the angling community you know to you know probably the catch and release may have been you know that that whole ethic may have been if not introduced in Yellowstone but certainly I think grown, grew greatly in Yellowstone maybe it was introduced I don't remember in Yellowstone but that whole ethic is something that's hard. But we need help getting rid of the non natives. You know there's some places that we've sacrificed. I mean you know what are we ever going to do on the Madison River? We're probably never going to do anything on the Madison River.

[00:09:14] You know and and you know what should we do above the Firehole Falls? Once again you know that that falls was a barrier for a long time but we do have fish there. So a lot of questions I think we're answering them correctly. I think our native fish conservation plan that we came out with in 2010 or 2011 provides a great blueprint or framework for us to move forward to to really maintain a vital healthy fishery in Yellowstone National Park. And I guess one of the other things I'm very proud of is we're not doing it alone. We're doing it with great partners whether it be Trout Unlimited or the state of Montana or the state of Wyoming or you know everybody you know we're working together to make these things happen.

[00:10:05] We've had to enhance natural barriers. I mean I think there are areas you know there are streams within Yellowstone that we're you know we're not trying to remove all the non natives and so it preserves you know as as some people in the ecosystem talk about as wild trout versus native trout. I think that fishing experience is is available for people who want to preserve the er excuse me pursue those species of fish. But when we deal with an ecosystem with a part of the ecosystem like Lake Yellowstone. Where we literally see that we have.

[00:10:41] A system out of balance. If we don't attack the non natives now do we know we're never going to get the last two. Lake Trout. Yes. We're never gonna get the last two but can we continue to drive down the population so that with different techniques we can just maintain the number of Lake trout at a level that will not be will not damage the environment in that cutthroat trout have a opportunity to take their place back in the ecosystem in terms of their use of the rivers and streams and making themselves available to Grizzly Bear and the other species that use them I think. I think we can. But you know we're we're not looking to eliminate all. We don't think we can eliminate all the non natives you know throughout the park but where we can where it makes sense that we can do it and where we can put those those rivers and streams back into the condition they were. I think it's important that we we try.

[00:11:41] Yeah, it seems like national. That's one of the real great goals that national parks can play it's kind of that last sanctuary oftentimes for native species maybe not the last but a sanctuary.

[00:11:51] It it's absolutely a sanctuary.

[00:11:53] And and you know the pressures on those native species I mean I worry about you know climate change. I worry about the warming of rivers and streams. I worry about how long ice is on the lake. I worry about you know what happens. You know sort of as it as you go through that whole whole system of things that are happening.

[00:12:13] But you know there's lots of places you can fish for browns and brookies and rainbows. It doesn't have to be Yellowstone National Park certainly not in all rivers and streams. We're saying it will be continue to be and many rivers and streams but there's some places where we should restore it to what the native species were. Well. You know there's a history there's a history there that. I'm not sure how to answer this question exactly but I think the value. We only regret what we haven't preserved. You know whether that be pieces of land or pieces of history you know in. And I think the value is to to a= is obviously to the future as people want to understand what we did when we did it why we did it the purposes we hope to achieve. Did it work. Didn't it work. You know what should we have done different. Because people are going to continue to make decisions. About managing fisheries you know throughout throughout this country throughout the West. And I think those kind of collections help inform the future in terms of in terms of how we should proceed and what we should do. And what can work.

[00:13:32] That's great.

[00:13:38] Well they've done everything from helping raise money to help us look at different suppression techniques on Lake Yellowstone with lake trout to literally volunteers who come out and help us with our angling program to help us understand what we have in our rivers and streams and to literally helping us with uh restoration projects. You know in terms of boots on the ground you know. So I think they've they've really have covered a gamut.

[00:14:05] And also probably even more importantly is they've been an incredible advocate you know with you know with their members and nonmembers about why fisheries are important and why it's important that we all work together to protect these places.

[00:14:23] You know it's it's it's a privilege to be in this position. It's an honor to be in this position. It's someplace. I don't think many people who are superintendent of Yellowstone ever expected to be. You know it's there's so many different variables that even give you the chance to be the superintendent of Yellowstone. You know I really do stand on the shoulders of my my predecessors. I mean I've known I've known probably almost half the park's superintendents. I met Jack Anderson. I worked for John Townsley and followed him I worked for Bob Barbie. I've had the chance to know and collaborate with Mike Finley and Suzanne Lewis and and now I'm here. And you know we all build on each other's successes. We all have the opportunity to tweak each other's initiatives where appropriate. But you know we didn't start lake trout suppression or native fish conservation you know when I got here. You know there was a document that was ready for me to sign when I walked in the door. So it was important to my predecessors. You know that we that we do this. You know there's probably you know we often talk about the dual mission of the National Park Service which is preservation of resources whether they be natural or cultural resources and or and visitor use and enjoyment. But one thing that's very clear to me is there is a predominant value in our mission of preservation and use and that predominant value is preservation of these resources. Probably as I make decisions in

Yellowstone National Park. I certainly hold that as the highest value. Do I care about the angling public that enjoys catching a fish and wants to have that experience you know out on the Madison River the Firehole River or. Or.

[00:16:16] the Yellowstone? Yes I care about that. But do I care more about what the long term implication is of what the fish are and how that affects the ecosystem? Absolutely I care more about that. And.

[00:16:30] And that's why it's not a hard decision for me to to to go to a situation from catch and release to must kill. You know in terms of non-native species those are relatively easy decisions because the long term.

[00:16:45] Preservation of this park I think depends on you know thousands of small short long term decisions not short term decisions and how it affects the fisheries the wildlife the visitor experience.

[00:17:00] But I always know that the preservation of resources is the paramount job that I think I have to do as superintendent.

[00:17:13] Well you know the least studied the least studied mammal in Yellowstone National Park is the human. And.

[00:17:22] We're trying to change that. You know we're we're putting into place a social science program that really started about three years ago and we now have. We had a postdoc help us set it up and we now have Dr. Ryan Atwell. He's helping us implement a social science program so we can really understand our visitors their motivations their expectations and what they expect and want out of a visit to Yellowstone National Park. My belief is that some people don't want to get more than 100 feet or 100 yards or a quarter mile off of let's let's call it the built environment because I think you know in the Old Faithful area I think a lot of people tour the Old Faithful geyser basin or Midway geyser basin in Grand Prismatic spring or fountain paint pots or you know tour around the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone so many people use the front country you know extensively not a lot of people use the backcountry. In Yellowstone you know two and a quarter less than just under two and a quarter million acres. There's a lot of backcountry. Isn't it great to know that you can be farther away from a road in Yellowstone National Park than any other place in the lower 48? If you go into a thoroughfare area of the park. Isn't it great to know that you're seeing and experiencing something that may have been seen and experienced. You know 150 years ago by some of the first people who traveled through the area or the native Americans as they were experiencing it. So. I think we're trying to accommodate people in the front country. I think we're not trying to push people on the back country. A lot of people aren't prepared to be pushed into the back country of Yellowstone. It's not a it can be a dangerous place. You know we're we're launching a new campaign this year. You know a bear doesn't care. If you're just out for a hike. Or you're just out for a fish or you've hike that trail 20 times before or you know or that you're you know the superintendent of Yellowstone National Park. You know if you're not careful and do what you're supposed to do in those environments it can be very harsh. You know in terms of what happens. A lot of people aren't prepared for it. What is it, 16 or 18 percent of the people carry bear spray that go into the back country of Yellowstone.

[00:19:37] That's not we have to change those kind of things. So. I don't know that I'm trying to push people out there. I want people to basically have the kind of experience they want to have. For some people being in the front country seeing the thermal features

having perhaps the greatest wildlife display that they've ever had in terms of whether it be grizzly bears or wolves or elk or deer or whatever they can and bison whatever they can encounter is enough. And that's that's what they need to take away. Others want to experience this park on their own terms and on the park's terms.

[00:20:12] And for them you know a great safe experience on a backcountry campsite or a you know a full day hike you know on a loop trail is is something that they relish. It's not the majority of people. I doubt that it's ever been the majority of people but each person is going to take away something from their visit to Yellowstone National Park about the natural environment. And that may be enough.

[00:20:44] You know I think this is since it's unattainable.

[00:20:49] I'll tell you the transboundary wildlife issues in this park are probably the most complex issues that that we have to deal with in terms of the long term health of this park and those transboundary wildlife issues play out, you know, in the spring with bison, you know as they move as they migrate to lower elevations. It plays out with grizzly bears. You know in the fall as they're going through hyperphagia we have it and we have hunting that surrounds the park and and they can get themselves into danger. And as now we're looking at de-listing and grizzly bears which I think is appropriate from a population level. But I think people don't relate to grizzly bears on a population level. They relate to them on an individual level. And therefore I think we have to be concerned about where and how grizzly bears are, are hunted. You know if they are going to be hunted as part of the delisting process you look at Wolves and you look at you look at the fact that we have you know approximately 100 wolves is becoming a pretty stable population at Yellowstone National Park. And you look at. Where those wolves travel and how they travel and there's no such thing as a Yellowstone Wolf but there's wolves that live primarily in Yellowstone National Park. And you know what's the discussion we have with states in terms of how once again how and where they're hunting. Do you do you allow the limits on wolves to actually wipe out a whole pack? Certainly hunting can disturb the social structure of a pack. So what I would really like. To have an impact on my time here is is how do we create the kind of relationships that we need to have with the state Fish and Wildlife Agencies they all have a different name as you surround the park whether it be Montana Wyoming or Idaho. How do we keep create the kind of relationship of respect. For not only the conservation you know in terms of managing wildlife on a population level. But but also the the other values that we're here to protect in terms of visitor use visitor enjoyment visitor appreciation visitor understanding of wildlife where where visible wildlife the most while the most watchable wildlife or excuse me watchable wolf population in the world is probably here in Yellowstone National Park.

[00:23:21] How does that how do we protect about that value and still work with the values of the state and with with the sporting community that that sees a that has a desire to hunt wolves. How do we balance that? How do we balance that between agriculture interest and preservation interest around, around bison? How do we how do we try to get bison on a larger part of the Western landscape and other public lands especially tribal lands where the bison are so critically important to their culture?

[00:23:57] You know I used to compare many of the of the issues and projects in Yellowstone National Park to math you know and use in my example would be you know native fish restoration of Lake Yellowstone a simple map you get rid of the non natives you subtract the non natives the natives grow. Things like winter use. Was that where algebra

you know where I used to call bison management calculus but no I understand its fourth order partial differential equations which you know.

[00:24:31] We'll explain. You know well. For those of anyone who knows what a fourth order partial differential equation is knows that it's probably the most complex.

[00:24:43] Kind of math you can do. There are so many variables there's so many stakeholders there's so much public interest that in order to figure out how to work with the preservation community the environmental community the agricultural community and and the different politics of all those communities to allow bison to to remain a free roaming herd of bison to the greatest extent possible subject to all the environmental stressors so that you actually have and continue having a naturally evolving herd of bison. It's not easy. And and you know hopefully we will continue to make progress. You know there's been progress on grizzly bears are now the number that I think there are sufficient to be delisted. But as I said earlier. People don't relate on a population level as an individual level. So how and where and when grizzly bears are hunting does matter. Same thing with wolves.

[00:25:51] You know I think the biggest challenge that we've got right now is we saw a 17 percent increase in visitation last year.

[00:25:58] How do you how do how do we manage this park in a way that we assure that we're managing unimpaired for future generations. And at the same time visitor use and enjoyment. You know we often talk about values and conflict within our within our mission of the enabling legislation for the National Park Service it is preservation in use. And so. I think the biggest challenge is going to be is what do we do with that.

[00:26:32] You know do we. There's there's two solutions. And certainly there's going to be dips in the curve in terms of visitation growth in Yellowstone National Park. There has been historically. But it's still an upward. There's still an upward curve in terms of visitation to Yellowstone National Park. So what are we willing to do. What are we willing to do as a society to protect this place. Are we willing to make the decisions if that decision means we have to limit visitor use? And how do we limit visitor use if we limit it to. Do we look at it that was a daily capacity? What's the monthly what's a weekly what's a yearly capacity?

[00:27:13] How do we do it?

[00:27:14] And how do we how do we get support for those kinds of things? I mean we've started to have conversations in local communities. I've started to have conversations within within the region or with state governments about what do we do to assure that we protect this place. I want my grandchildren and their children to come to Yellowstone National Park and say Wow. You know just like people do today that we had the foresight as a nation to protect these place. Then we also had the the will the political will and maybe even the economic will.

[00:27:51] To say we need to keep protecting this place. So I think that's the biggest challenge is how do we deal with the stresses that are placed on Yellowstone National Park from visitors? But I would also add to that the stresses of what happens in the ecosystems surrounding Yellowstone is at the core of of the the largest nearly intact ecosystem in the temperate zone in the world.

[00:28:18] Are we willing to deal with the issues of mining which we see constantly we have we have threats of mining on the on the boundaries of Yellowstone National Park? Are we willing. What are we gonna do about climate change? And that's a bigger question than Yellowstone but what is what are we as a nation willing to do about things like climate change? What are we willing to do about transboundary wildlife issues? Are we willing to manage holistically you know grizzly bear and their de-listing the the.

[00:28:47] Confidence I take from that is with wolves. Each state manages separately in terms of wolves and the de-listing. Right now Wyoming there it's still listed. They've been de listed in Wyoming but Montana and Idaho and when they were delisted and they were operating independently. Grizzly bears, there's a coordinated effort between the three states. And it's an equal ecosystem based management which I think is critically. And it's critical and it's important to the future of grizzly bears and keeping them off the list and having a helpful healthy sustainable population. But those are. Those are hard fought things that we we've gotten to through lessons that we've learned and so are we willing you know around this park you know invasive species and I'm not talking about just non-native fish species I'm talking about plant species, etc. Climate change has caused I mean cheatgrass never used to be in Yellowstone National Park. Cheatgrass is as I can show you places where it's you know. It's in high. There's a lot of it. You know in the park. It doesn't have the same kind of nutritional value for the ungulates that are in this park. So it's it's. It'll never be a dull day for a future superintendent in Yellowstone. You know and my advice is this it's hard hard lessons learned and whether it be about fish. Whether it be about wildlife or whether it be about visitor use in terms of winter use you have to have the science you can't make a decision that you hope to be a sustainable decision. Unless you have the science to as the basic foundation for any decision that you make. And the other thing you have to do is you have to bring the stakeholders into the process early. We made some mistakes when we changed the regulations on fishing or angling in the park. We did not bring those stakeholders in to help them understand why we were making the changes early enough. And we paid a price in terms of their understanding and their support for the new regulations we had. And I think that same thing is true with any of the other weather whether it be. Building new visitor accommodations or the preservation of grizzly bears or any anything else that we do. You have to have the science and you have to bring your stakeholders into the discussion early.

[00:31:34] You know I think they do. I think unfortunately.

[00:31:41] Well look I mean all you have to do is look at the discussion that's going on in this country around climate change. And look at the politics of climate change. So science doesn't always win. You know I have many people in the National Park Service says I have a prism of decision making. And I would tell you that that the three things that we look at in trying to make decisions that affect Yellowstone National Park are the best available sound science, fidelity to the law, regulation and policy and long term decision making. Short term decisions oftentimes feel good but they're not the best for the long term preservation of places like Yellowstone National Park. So if we're using those those. That prism of decision making I think we have a great chance that we're going to preserve this place. Now you have to couple that with you know how do you understand the long term public interest? You have to talk to the public. You have to talk to the stakeholders. You have to understand those things. So it's not those things aren't done in a vacuum. But we understand the law and we're not talking about. We're talking the best available sound science. We'll never have all the science. We never have all the science you need to make a decision. There's always something else you can. You can get.



[00:33:03] You can understand another facet you can study but you have to have you have to use the science you have to make that decision. You might have political battles you're going to have to fight. But if you've got those things if you've got fidelity to the law if you've got science and you've got long term public interest it's an easier battle to fight and to win.

[00:33:32] I think that there's a bigger disconnect today than there was I think. I think that for many. Many politicians they're more concerned about how the decision will affect their future than a principled decision on the preservation of a place. I've been very opposed to legislation that was introduced on paddling in Yellowstone National Park. And the question I kept asking the representative who introduced that is what's in this for Yellowstone? There was nothing in it for Yellowstone. Now there was something in it for a very small. Segment of a visiting public who's been excluded from. Kayaking pack rafting on rivers and streams in Yellowstone National Park. But in terms of long term public interest. Once once they would be introduced into the rivers and streams and Yellowstone National Park. Look what it took to us to regulate and to deal with winter use and snowmobiles and access so that we were preserving we knew we were hurting the environment. We knew we were disrupting wildlife. We have no science that tells us that kayaking rafting pack rafting. Inner tubing on the rivers and streams would not be disruptive. To the ecology of those rivers and streams. We should allow it because politically it makes sense for someone to serve a small constituent group when the implications to Yellowstone National Park. And the rivers and streams of visitor experience are unknown. No we shouldn't and I will continue to fight that. Hopefully we'll be successful. I made just an interesting sidelight. I made an offer. To the proponents not the not the political entities but the proponents of that legislation that I said if we study the rivers and streams. If we go out and engage the public in terms of what is in the long term public interest and we come up with a solution that doesn't give give you everything you have in the legislation. But maybe would open some rivers and streams.

[00:35:59] Would you accept it? They told me no they won't. They want what they want. Well. I probably the favorite places is. Is actually the.

[00:36:17] The third meadow of Slough Creek and maybe even beyond the boundaries of Slough Creek, beyond, beyond, beyond the boundaries of Yellowstone on Slough Creek. I think that. Especially beyond the boundaries you know you you really are. You can be alone. You know for.

[00:36:35] For a long time. It's it's you know it's incredibly tranquil. That's probably my favorite place to.

[00:36:45] To fish and I'm not giving away anything away there in terms of the the the 100 best the least fished areas in Yellowstone National Park. You know there's some you know you walk down into the black in the Yellowstone you want to catch some fish you can catch them down there. But you know you're gonna have you're going to work for it. And that's OK.

[00:37:05] Sure.

[00:37:06] And I mean it's wonderful. So. So just in terms of you know what I get out of fishing you know being being by being relaxed a little emotional renewal, being out in the environment. Probably my favorite place is up Slough Creek.

[00:37:21] Excellent.

[00:37:29] I think so much work is going into cutthroat trout. Cutthroat trout is my favorite.

[00:37:41] Boy what have we gained.

[00:37:48] You know what. I'm.

[00:37:53] I have that's a hard question for me.

[00:38:00] I think I don't know how to answer that question. What do we gain? I'm struggling and you get to edit this. You know I think I think there's a lot of work.

[00:38:16] That's done on fisheries now that I don't I. Maybe it was maybe it was all out there before but.

[00:38:25] But there are places. I mean we're working on you know. Arctic grayling really clean and a restoration. They were basically extrapolated exterminated from the park. I mean that's a gain to be able to put a species like that back. You know you look at places like you look at places like Olympic National Park and the Elwha Dam and know removal of dams and restoration of. Fisheries. You know the runs. You know that that we knew we're still going to happen and restoration of a fishery like that is is absolutely incredible. You look at the sensitivity I think of people understanding the impact of their their actions on rivers and streams and and not thinking you know that it's sort of dominion over you know we have dominion you know that we have to be more sensitive to to the fish species whether it be because of of you know the cultural significance of some of those things to Native Americans and their reliance on some of those streams in the West or or just because it's the right thing to do. So I think those are gains in terms of our understanding and appreciation for the impact that we can have on on fisheries. You know the losses I think I think some of the losses just I I speak to Yellowstone National Park is it's. A place like Yellowstone. You know initially you know when. When people were stocking what three hundred and ten million fish were stocked in Yellowstone National Park in the, in the late eighteen hundreds in the early nineteen hundreds. There. It's okay to have a fishless lake. It is ok not to have every stream that can support fish to have fish. And that wasn't the view at that time. So is. Is. That a gain? Maybe it's a gain that we have an appreciation that just because a fish can live there. It. Doesn't have to live there.

[00:40:40] You know it takes a lot.

[00:40:42] It takes a lot of work you know to support it. You know I don't know what's happening. I know what's happening in Yellowstone in terms of you know we never used to charge for for fish permits in Yellowstone and we've changed that. You know that fee structure a lot and you know I think we collect about eight hundred thousand dollars a year now in, in license fees you know in Yellowstone National Park that that goes back to the fisheries. I don't know what's happening to that number of sort of nationwide. I don't know that that the fisheries will have the financial support especially through through the anglers you know to support the kind of work that has to happen. So I think I see that as a threat in our our state legislators or state governments going to find the resources necessary. And you know how does is the angling community just going to be continuing to be asked to support more and more.

[00:41:38] I probably see that as the biggest threat. You know in terms of just the resources that we need to manage to manage these fisheries.

[00:41:53] You know the question is is is when did we come to it. You know when did when did most of those people you know I agree with you in terms of what the population of fishermen look like or anglers look like out there. But when did we come to it, you know, is is you know that's a question about the about public lands and and outdoors. That's not just being asked about angling but you know we have a campaign now. You know the Centennial campaign that's focusing on Millennials because they don't have a relationship with the outdoors has become more and more urban population. What does that mean? So you know I don't know if I'm worried if if people start to come to this come to fishing and understanding some of the values that they can receive out of the experience whether that be recreation relaxation renewal or whatever if they come to it in their 40s. Is that a problem? I don't know but the question is will they? Because my you know we said as we said earlier you know mine goes back to you know. Probably you know my memories go back probably to five or six or seven years old about fishing with my dad. There's a lot of kids that will never have that memory. And the question is is will they start to create some of their own? I have friends who who are professionals you know lawyers accountants etc who didn't start and now avid anglers who really didn't start down that path till their early 40s.

[00:43:29] They and and they brought their kids to it. One of them Heather as a beautiful young daughter who will who put would put me to shame you know fly fishing and and you know.

[00:43:41] What a catch right?

[00:43:43] That's great.

[00:43:44] So it's it's it's I don't know how we deal.

[00:43:48] That's a bigger problem than angling as a problem that deals with the out of doors appreciation for public lands. And how do we if we don't get people to appreciate them and understand their value how can we expect support?

[00:44:00] You know public support as well as congressional support which means financial support because our friends in Congress are always going to support the things that are important to their constituents.

[00:44:11] So it has to be important to their constituents.

[00:44:21] I don't think we can do it just through encouragement. I think we have to demonstrate it. You know I think the reason people come to it is because because. Because I talk about it or you talk about it or their friends talk about it or there is some enjoyment that they get out of it it's a better option for them to do than than. Whatever else they might do on that particular day. I don't know how you do it. I think there is I think there is an initial perhaps some economic barrier for some. I think I think the general that the Millennial Generation I almost you know we talk about it too much perhaps. There's so many distractions in the world.

[00:45:02] I don't know how you get them to take the you know the two to six hours you know to to go and do that.

[00:45:13] And that that's probably that's probably way too little on a minimum. You know it's probably even more than that. I mean how do you get them to invest? They're really talking about investing their time.

[00:45:26] They can probably fish a mean, you know there must be an angling app.

[00:45:30] Oh I'm sure there is.

[00:45:32] They can probably do a great job. But you know. I don't I just think it's a bigger problem with looking out of doors. It's it's it's you know I know you know hunting licenses and things like that are going down. I have you know. Our family has uh hunting land in northern Michigan. And. It was it was something that once again you know we did all the time you know we went up. You know it wasn't just November 15th at the opening of white tailed deer season.

[00:46:05] You know we were up there you know all the time and I knew those acres like the back of my hand. And we still have it. I haven't been for a couple of years since my dad died. But. The last trip I took with my dad was one of the most special trips I'll ever have to that piece of our lives. And I just don't know in our world today that people have those that kind of grounding with you know with place that we once had. That they've. There was that that special stream that special hunting area you know that place where you know you've, you've pheasant hunted you know forever or fished forever or whatever. I'm not sure how how grounded we are in those particular places in today's society.

[00:47:03] The struggle is the struggle to get good at it is don't let it. Don't let it deter you. I mean it's not easy. You know you learn. Find somebody good who's a good teacher.

[00:47:19] And listen to what they have to say.

[00:47:21] Excellent.

[00:47:22] And then practice.

[00:47:33] I think that just for me it's they're just they're just good to be around. You know they're you know they take joy and they take joy in their own success and they take joy in your success.

[00:47:56] Because you can get away from the crowds. You can take that two mile hike and have a river a section of river to yourself. And if you don't you can move and you can have another section of river for yourself.

[00:48:09] You can go down and you can fish to the south arms of Lake Yellowstone and you can have you know you can catch some incredible fish incredible size that that you may not be able to. In other places. You know you have. Well and just in it's the surroundings. There's no question about it to be standing in. The middle of the back country with surrounded by eleven and twelve thousand foot peaks. Watching you know elk walk by.

[00:48:46] You know it's pretty special and at the same time understanding you have to be aware of what else can walk by. You need to be prepared for it for the the other predators that are out there besides yourself as you're as you're trying to land a fish.

[00:49:10] You know it's the only thing I would say is we have an incredible staff here at Yellowstone whether it be you know starting with Todd and Pat and then their staffs. You know they've been doing an extraordinary job. They're committed to restoring the fisheries here in Yellowstone and. I mean I'm incredibly grateful. For what they do every day for.

[00:49:39] For all of us.