

Downey Fly Fishers September 2016

Club Meeting: Tuesday 9/13/16 from 6pm – 9pm

**Join us for Debbie Sharpton's presentation on
"Grazing and the California Golden Trout"**



Downey Fly Fishers welcomes Debbie Sharpton

Debbie Sharpton currently holds the positions of Conservation VP of the Southwest Council International Federation of Flyfishers (SWC-IFFF), Conservation Chair for Sierra Pacific Flyfishers (Van Nuys) , and Executive Director of Mountains Restoration Trust, a public benefit land trust in the Santa Monica Mountains. Her work is conservation and fly fishing is her passion.

A southern California native, Debbie's career began in the late 1970's in the real estate development industry working with property owners and development firms on large scale development projects. This work took her to beautiful canyons and creeks that became the impetus to change her focus from development to preservation. Today she is responsible for habitat restoration for and recovery of threatened species, such as the endangered southern steelhead and Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. During the summers of 2010-2014, Debbie assisted Kathleen Matthews, researcher for the US Forest Service, looking at the impact of climate change and cattle grazing on the golden trout in the subalpine streams of Mulkey, Big Whitney and Ramshaw meadows, in the Golden Trout Wilderness, Inyo National Forest. Debbie became interested in the topic of grazing and resource management on public lands, particularly the impacts to aquatic systems and their inhabitants.



The original Inyo National Forest was a small area on the floor of the Owens Valley, created by President Teddy Roosevelt on May 25, 1907. He later combined it with over a million acres of the Sierra National Forest on July 1, 1908. The Inyo Forest now comprises over 2.1 million acres.

The Golden Trout Wilderness (GTW) lies within the Inyo National Forest. Designated by Congress in 1978, The GTW encompasses 304,000 acres on the Kern Plateau, at the southern end of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The area is named after California's brightly colored state fish, which is native only to the waters of the Golden Trout Wilderness. Use of the mountain meadows of the Kern Plateau by livestock has occurred for over 130 years, initially by cattle and sheep in the late 1800s and then exclusively by cattle by the early 1900s (USFS, INF files). By the early 1930s the Forest Service recognized degradation in watershed conditions and began taking action, including reducing the season of use and numbers of cattle, and implementing active watershed restoration projects. Current grazing use is substantially less than historical levels.

In February 2001, Ms. Luci McKee, District Ranger, Mt. Whitney and White Mt. Ranger Districts, signed a Decision Notice that implemented a period of rest on the Templeton and Whitney grazing allotments to allow for the most rapid recovery toward the desired watershed and aquatic habitat conditions. That Decision Notice included the provision that in approximately 10 years, an analysis will be initiated to determine if a proposal should be considered to resume grazing, continue the rest, or permanently eliminate the grazing allotments. The period of rest on these allotments was implemented beginning with the summer of 2001.

Debbie will be discussing golden trout recovery efforts, recent monitoring and scientific research as well as the current status of the resource agencies environmental reviews and grazing permits.