

Trout Unlimited project manager to speak in Sisters

By Craig F. Eisenbeis
Correspondent

He has been described as a man protecting ecosystems “one salmon at a time.” Darek Staab is the Upper Deschutes Home Rivers Initiative Project Manager for Trout Unlimited, and he will be speaking in Sisters next week.

As part of its continuing quarterly speaker series, the Sisters Trails Alliance (STA), will host Staab’s speaking engagement next week. Staab’s presentation is free and open to the public. He has titled his talk “Spring-fed Rivers and Stewardship: Conserving our habitat along trails and streams for our community’s future.”

STA board member Bjarne Holm is the coordinator for STA’s speaker series and invited Staab to address the STA forum. According to Holm, “Darek will share a mix of work he has undertaken on the Metolius and Fall rivers, focusing on outdoor recreation and stewardship and how we can help take care of our waterways and shared habitat.”

Originally from Utah, Staab has worked in the Pacific Northwest for the past 14 years. His undergraduate work was completed in Fisheries and Wildlife Biology at Utah State University, and he holds a Masters of Education in Natural Science Education from Western Washington University. He has conducted research and education projects while studying fish and rivers in the West and Alaska for 22 years.

Trout Unlimited is an organization founded in 1959 to conserve and protect fisheries and watersheds in North America and to foster the goal of ensuring the health and stability of wild

and native trout populations. Among Staab’s credits, he played an important role in the Elwha Dam removal and Elwha River restoration in Olympic National Park. The dam removal, completed in just the last few years, was a landmark river restoration project.

As the project manager for Trout Unlimited’s Upper Deschutes Home Rivers Initiative, Staab has been based in Bend for the last several years. He started a new youth education initiative called the “Spring-fed Rivers Stewardship Program,” which strives to connect elementary and middle school students to their local spring-fed rivers and provide field trips and classroom visits focused on river ecology and watershed stewardship. The program serves approximately 500 students each school year, with students typically taking part in field trips and classroom instruction.

Holm has a vested interest in the region’s unique rivers and streams. As a geologist, he notes that “The Metolius and Fall rivers are unique because they emerge directly to the surface, fed from a plumbing system of faults, fractures and abandoned lava tubes ... other drainages, such as Whychus Creek, are mainly fed directly from rain and melting snow. The

underground storage of water under the Sisters region is not only extensive, but appears, in part, to be fed by water seeping into the ground west of the Cascade volcanoes.”

There were specific reasons why Holm invited Staab to speak. “I have had a chance to work with Darek Staab on a couple of previous occasions,” Holm explained. “Working with the Sisters Science Club, I help to organize the out-of-district companies and organizations for the yearly Sisters Science Fair. Darek Staab has partnered with Michael Riehle, the Forest Service district fisheries biologist in Sisters for the last couple of years, to set up a large fish tank with live trout and steelhead.”

Holm feels that Staab’s experience teaching the region’s natural and cultural history to all age levels deserves an even wider audience. “Darek Staab led a full field trip day for an OSU Master Naturalist Class I was part of last summer. The class spent most of the day in the Camp Polk Meadow Preserve to study the ongoing stream restoration efforts along Whychus Creek. Students examined all the major aquatic insects that were returning to the stream as a result of restoration efforts. Later in the day, the class was introduced by



PHOTO PROVIDED

Darek Staab will talk stream stewardship in Sisters.

Darek to the stream-bank restoration efforts along the Metolius River.”

Next week’s program is the eighth in STA’s quarterly series of free public presentations designed to promote outdoor public recreation and education in Sisters Country. The presentation will be held on Thursday, January 21, in the Sisters-Camp Sherman Fire Station Community Hall

in downtown Sisters at 355 S. Elm St. Doors will open at 6 p.m., and the formal program will begin at 7 p.m. The program is free and open to the public. Snacks and refreshments will be provided.

For more information about STA call 541-719-8822. Additional information about STA can be found on their website at www.sisterstrails.com.

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