



## News Release

Medicine Bow-Routt National Forests &  
Thunder Basin National Grassland  
<http://fs.usda.gov/mbr>

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### **TU's Brian Hodge Honored with USFS Rise to the Future Award**

**(STEAMBOAT SPRINGS, Colo.) February 18, 2016** – U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Routt National Forest (RNF) have announced that Trout Unlimited's (TU) Brian Hodge is among the recipients of the 2015 Rise to the Future Awards for excellence and leadership in Fisheries, Hydrology, Soil Science, and Air Programs.

Hodge received the Partnership Award for his watershed resources work with the RNF. He is an aquatic restoration biologist with TU's Western Water and Habitat Project. Hodge works out of Steamboat Springs in the Yampa and White River basins with the primary goal of restoring healthy stream flows and habitat.

Brian has been involved in nearly 20 aquatic habitat and riparian restoration projects on the Routt National Forest and adjacent private lands. His efforts have restored native Colorado River Cutthroat Trout, contributed over \$785,000 to projects, developed new partnerships, and implemented handicap-accessible trails. He has led large-scale river restoration projects benefitting recreational fisheries and ecosystem function. Those projects have resulted in 12 miles of habitat restored, 13 miles of habitat connected, 165 acres of watershed improvements, three barriers constructed, and helped improve habitat and populations for seven Regional sensitive species.

"Since he arrived in 2010, Brian has become an integral advocate, partner, and colleague," said Rick Henderson, Routt National Forest Fishery Biologist. "He has been involved in 19 stream and riparian restoration projects either on or immediately adjacent to the Forest, represented Trout Unlimited on numerous teams, and become a recognized leader in aquatic restoration within the region."

"Brian is one of the real stars of Trout Unlimited's Colorado staff," said Drew Peternell, the director of TU's Colorado water program. "An outstanding biologist and project manager, Brian is making a big difference for fisheries in northwest Colorado. He understands that collaboration and building partnerships are key to getting conservation work done on the ground, where it counts."

Examples of Hodge's accomplishments include:

- Hodge has fundraised for, and contributed towards, the design and construction of 10 aquatic passage structures benefitting Colorado River Cutthroat Trout and Mountain Sucker.
- Hodge is working with several water right owners on ways to increase summer streamflows, improve irrigation infrastructure, and reduce fish loss into ditches.
- Brian provides useful comments on USFS projects, is a member of the local watershed council's technical steering committee, represents TU on native species recovery efforts, and works with the TU Science Team to provide guidance on local issues.
- He is an advocate for conducting post-restoration effectiveness monitoring and is actively involved in funding, designing, implementing, and publishing these studies.

According to the Forest Service, much of Brian's value comes from his collaborative efforts working with existing partners and finding new ones. He has served in a partner coordinator role, actively pursued new

partners, been a behind-the-scenes catalyst, served as a liaison with adjacent landowners on projects that cross ownership boundaries, and initiated discussions with partners on new or potential projects.

Hodge has the unique ability to understand each agency/organization's mission, strengths, and limitations, and then determine how TU can best help in achieving goals. Most importantly, he has the ability to know how to best work with project partners to achieve the desired outcome.

Hodge will be honored by the U.S. Forest Service at the annual awards ceremony to be held on the U.S. Department of Agriculture Whitten Patio in Washington, D.C., on May 17, 2016.

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