

Fisherman making waves

CFI Global Fisheries working to create fish habitats

By Pat Ferrier

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Question: What does CFI Global Fisheries Management do?

Answer: CFI is a full-service river, lake and pond fish habitat design, restoration and management firm.

Q: Who are your clients?

A: Mostly ranch owners across North America that have mediocre or degraded rivers and streams on their property that they want to be very high-quality fisheries. They hire us to come discover, evaluate and enhance these amenities, and develop land practice, irrigation and livestock grazing strategies that will maximize efficiency while ensuring these fisheries sustain very productive and thriving ecosystems.

Q: What is the condition of most of the rivers you work on?

A: We work on rivers that need complete channel modifications and full restorations, to rivers that need just a little habitat tweaking and a pat on the butt to get them squared away and functioning correctly.

Q: How did you come to open the business in Fort Collins?

A: We love the outdoors and all of the recreational opportunities in this area. We have a lot of good friends and it's a great place to raise my kids.

Q: How much do your services cost?

A: Full-scale river restoration services range from \$250,000 to \$1 million per mile, depending on the type of stream, the severity of degradation needing remediation, and the overall client goals.

Q: Where have you worked?

A: All over North America and Hawaii, however, most of our work tends to be in the west due to the historical ranching lifestyles and the extreme importance for water efficiency and conservation.

Q: What local projects have you done?

A: Miles and miles of stream restorations, wetland creations, waterfowl habitats and subsequent land practice programs for farmers and ranchers on the Front Range and northwestern Colorado.

Q: How long do your projects general take?

A: Projects range from six months to three years but



Shannon Skelton, founder of CFI Global Fisheries in Fort Collins, is a senior fisheries and aquatic biologist and avid fisherman. COURTESY OF SHANNON SKELTON

CFI - GLOBAL FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

» **Name:** Shannon Skelton
» **Business:** CFI – Global Fisheries Management
» **Title:** Senior fisheries and aquatic biologist; president
CFI – Global Fisheries Management
» **Age:** 37
» **Business Address:** 181W. Boardwalk Drive, Fort Collins
» **Family:** Wife, Sharon Skelton, children: Christopher, 17, Mariah, 15, Tanner, 13, Isiah, 12; three bird dogs, two English bulldogs, one

ranch dog, three roping horses, a bunch of roping steers, and a grip of chickens running around the family ranch
» **Number of employees:** Five fisheries professionals and two key administrative employees
» **Business contact:** (970) 207-9110
» **Website:** www.cfglobal.com

most take around 10 to 12 months.

Q: What's your favorite river in Colorado to fish?

A: Too many to choose from. Big water, small water.. I love to fish! I really love to sight fish the intimate small streams with long leaders, tiny flies and really one shot at making the right cast.

Q: What's your favorite

river in the U.S. to fish?

A: The Madison River (Montana). My wife and I have spent a lot of time fishing that river, and it is pretty special to us. She is a phenomenal angler and my best fishin' buddy.

Q: How many jobs does CFI do in a year?

A: We do 30 to 40 small projects a year, and four

to six large-scale river restorations per year.

Q: How long has the company been in business?

A: I started this company in 1997 with a vision and a home computer I bought from my brother.

Q: I understand you've done work for some pretty famous people. Who's the most famous and what did you do for him/her?

A: We get to meet a lot of amazing people. All of them have very interesting stories. Some are very private and low key, and some are household names. We recently completed a 3-mile river restoration project for Under Armour co-founder Ryan Wood. We also recently finished a 1.5 mile river restoration for legendary pro golfer Greg Norman. Both are Great guys, and very down to earth. You wouldn't know either of them had two nickels to rub together.