



NEWSLETTER FOR APRIL, 2009

THE MEETING

We will meet Tuesday, April 7 at BJ's restaurant, located at 900 N. 1st Street (that's Highway 93 folks) in the thriving metropolis of Hamilton. General fish tales start at 6:00 pm and the program starts at 7:00 pm. Dinners and your favorite libation are available. As a rule, the Club meets the first Tuesday of every month except for the months of July and August. But there is a **CHANGE** for July. See below under "July Pig Roast."

THE SPEAKER

This month's speaker is Chris Clancy, Fisheries Biologist, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, Hamilton. Chris is well known for his work on monitoring the status of the Bitterroot River and its tributaries and for enhancing the fisheries in these waters. For many years Chris has been monitoring the trout populations and his data give interesting insights into the numbers and size distributions of the different species and the dynamic nature of these populations. He has been active in conservation efforts in the Bitterroot River corridor and has received awards for his work from the Five Valleys Conservation Roundtable and the Western Division of the American Fisheries Society.

THOSE WHO SPAKE

Jeff Abel gave an excellent presentation at the March meeting on the innovative fly-fishing products he is developing. In addition to his measure nets that keep us all truthful he demonstrated his self-assembling fly rod. Now if Jeff could just come up with a self-stringing fly rod that doesn't miss guides. That is a problem I regularly have! Jeff's philosophy gives him a focus on designing cost conscious products that make it easy to outfit a fisherman for travel or local fishing. Jeff also covered his interesting ideas on how to involve others, especially youngsters in fly fishing and the importance of these efforts for the future of the sport. Thanks Jeff.

THE (VICE) PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The skwalas are coming, the skwalas are coming, or by the time you get this they will be here. I can feel the excitement in the air because of the anticipation of the excellent fishing—or is that from watching the last of the snow melt off up here in Darby. Speaking of snow, the snow pack in the Bitterroots is close to the long-term average in terms of water content. That is not as good as last year but still very good as compared to most years in the recent past. If we do not get any really warm spells in May or early June then we should have another good water year in the river.

I heeded the call for instructors for the Bitterroot Buggers on March 10 and had a blast. The room was full of very enthusiastic kids of ages 9 to 13 or so with their parents. I am not sure I was all that good an instructor but they all seemed to catch on and develop some basic skills. One girl at my table applied dubbing like a pro. By the time you get this newsletter the fly tying sessions, for which instructors are most needed, will be past. But remember it for next year and try and contribute. You will find it a most rewarding experience.

We had another successful spey-casting clinic on March 15. The clinic was organized for the Club by the River Otter Fly Shop in Florence. Keith is an excellent instructor and I think we all came away with improved skills. Now it is a matter of committing it to muscle memory through practice, practice and of course fishing for the elusive steelhead.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Fly Tying:

Wednesday evenings, several members of the club gather at the Brewery in Hamilton, 5:30 pm to 8:00 pm for a fly tying session (and beer and vittles). Greg Chester and Phil Romans are usually there and other excellent tiers are likely to show up. Bring your fly tying stuff and join in or just come and observe. This is an excellent chance to observe how some of the patterns that are successful on our home waters are tied and to learn some techniques. We hope to see you.

Rod Building:

If there is sufficient interest Phil Romans will offer a rod building class. If you are interested please contact Phil (promans@aol.com, 373-0744).

Bitterroot Buggers:

The Bitterroot Buggers fly fishing class sponsored by TU and FFB meets biweekly from Late January to mid April from 6:00 to 7:30 at the Slack Barn, Teller Wildlife Refuge. The last fly tying session is on March 24, and fly casting plus fishing for trout specially stocked in the pond is on April 14. The enthusiastic kids and parents make being an instructor a very uplifting experience. Instructors are especially needed in the fly tying sessions so keep it in mind for next year. You will find the experience to be very worthwhile and you will be helping the next generation of fly fishers.

Fly Fishing Clinic:

The Bitterroot Chapter of Trout Unlimited and The Fly Fishers of the Bitterroot will run a fly fishing clinic on four Wednesday evening in May (May 6, 13, 20, 27) from 6 to 9 pm. This clinic is for beginner and intermediate fly fishers, ages 16 and up, who would like to learn or improve their fly-fishing skills. The instructors are local experts and pros that will share their skills to make sure that all attendees will go away with a new confidence in this fun and challenging sport. The clinic will be held at the Corvallis Middle School Cafeteria and Angler's Roost. The cost is \$50, which includes a membership in one of the above organizations, and many other prizes and items to be given away and raffled. Enrollment will be limited to 20 students. When: Four Wednesday evenings in May from 6:00 PM to 9:00 PM (May 6, 13, 20, 27). Deadline for sign up is April 28. Sign up at the Fishhaus (Bill Bean 363-6158), or at the Fly Fishing Center (Dick Galli 363-3801) in Hamilton.

Cruises:

Our cruise director, Pierre Satkowiak, has arranged for a 5-day float trip on the famed Smith River through Joe Sowerby's Montana Fly Fishing Connection. Joe presented an excellent program at our January Meeting as you may remember. The launch date is May 13 and we will be pulling out May 17. The trip is semi-guided in that a guide will go ahead with a raft carrying the camp gear, set up the camp and cook the meals but we will be unguided in the boats. In other words we will have to take turns rowing! The cost is \$1200, which is only about 1/3 of the cost of a fully guided trip. To date, 11 have signed up leaving one space still available. So if you are interested please contact Pierre to sign up. This could be the trip of a lifetime—and at a bargain price. See Joe Sowerby's web page for more information (www.montanaflyfishingconnection.com).

A club trip to Georgetown Lake is also in the planning stages for early June. This will involve camping in one of the several campgrounds surrounding the Lake and possibly a side trip to the nearby East Fork Reservoir that is also excellent fishing. For the best fishing success a float tube, pontoon boat or regular boat is needed. More information will follow.

July Pig Roast:

After discussing the matter, the Board decided it would be a good thing to throw a pig roast in July this year. It will be held Saturday, July 11th at Lake Como. There is a perfect picnic spot with five tables (some of us will bring extra folding tables) and more benches and fire rings. We will stake it early. (Somebody has to sacrifice, sitting in the sun all day, drinking beer and watching the pork turn.) We will endeavor to sing a little piggy and provide Prez Couchman's famous (deservedly) Dutch oven baked beans and, perhaps, a keg or two from the Hamilton Brewery. We will pass the hat, asking for a donation, probably in the \$5.00 range. In addition, we will ask that you bring a dish to share or something to quaff if suds doesn't do it for you. Dorreen asks that not all the potluck dishes be desserts (i.e., bring salads or cornbread). This will be our new July meeting for those earning a perfect attendance badge. Oh, yeah, we plan on having casting contests (distance and accuracy) and perhaps a bamboo vs. graphite casting. Subject to further review I'm making this up as I type.), we'll start at 5:00 pm except for those benighted souls who will have started the pig (and kegs) at 8:00 am.

September meeting program:

I know it seems early to be bringing up the September meeting but there is a reason for it. Traditionally the September program has been a "what I did over the summer" program of members fishing stories and pictures. We will continue along this tradition but hopefully improve on it by assembling member's pictures into a slideshow. You can send me your pictures and I will transfer them to a CD. Digital camera images are best and can be emailed to me (or given to me on a CD) but I can also scan prints and return the originals to you. Just be sure I get your name and address. We will expand the

program to cover not just the summer but rather the past year and maybe even a little further back this time if you have some especially good pictures. With your help and contribution we will have a really interesting and fun program.

So what you need to do is take lots of pictures and email or otherwise get them to me. My email address is rwpearcy@gmail.com. Later on I will be reminding (bugging) you via email about sending pictures.

River Cleanup:

The 2009 Bitterroot River cleanup is scheduled for September 12. Don McGourty Jr. is taking over the reins this year from Phil and Dorreen. You can contact Don at (406) 363-3146 or at d_mcgourty@yahoo.com for further information. The cleanup effort involves the entire river, so there will be plenty of opportunity to clean your favorite section and partake in the festivities. Additional information will be posted when it becomes available.

New Members

David and Jennifer Cowardin and Brent Greenwell joined with us at our March meeting. Sue Maffei and Michael McKee have also just recently joined. Seek them out and say hello.

The Author

Ok I am just a substitute by virtue I guess of being the Vice President. Rich, once he returns, still gets to do this newsletter and you, ... you don't. If you don't like it, you can do it. Or you can simply not pay dues in September (or before). Only Club dues paying members will receive this timeless ode to failing memory and poor attempts at humor after September. You can reach me at 406-381-5611 or rich@rkymtn.net. I encourage (I'm going to regret saying this) newsletter ideas or even your original writing (short). Thanks to the computer wizardry of Leon Powell, this newsletter will henceforth be sent in pdf format. For those still mired in 19th century dialup Internet, you can thank Leon.

Bob Pearcy