

President's Message

by Mark Borsierine

Club Generosity

Due to our members' continuing generosity our Club is blessed with the ability to help worthwhile projects. This year, we chose to help fund the purchase of a mile of Mill Creek in central Missouri for the Department of Conservation. We feature an article by Spence Turner about this remarkable resource and its remarkable history in this newsletter.

Your generosity has made it possible to purchase fly tying kits and rod/reel outfits that we are even now using in Seminars at Cabelas and to teach in the

Women in the Outdoors program sponsored by the National Wild Turkey Federation.

Your generosity allows us to offer exceptional programs at our meetings. I am proud to say that as I talk to other club Presidents around the Southern Council, I find that while the HOAFF is certainly not the largest club in overall membership, we consistently have a very high percentage of our membership at our meetings.

An acquaintance of mine once said it very well: "no money,

HOAFF Meeting

Monday, March 19 - 7:00pm

Montana Fly Fishing Guide

John Bell will host a
discussion about Montana
Fly Fishing

no mission". The HOAFF is truly lucky to have the funds to provide our members and our community with excellent programs and support for projects. Thank You!

Were We Crazy?

by Steve Jenkins

Okay. I've fished in hot weather before. I've even fished for trout in hot weather – hot weather just can't get in the way of fishing. In these "modern" times, we go fishing when we can, and if the weather cooperates, so much the better. Actually, I enjoy bass fishing in the hot weather, especially if I'm wading in the creek in my overalls and jungle boots. The creek just seems more intimate – I feel closer to the surroundings. And if it is 90 + degrees, that's okay. But, trout fishing is somehow different. Sure, there is the wading wet aspects of trout fishing, too. However, if it is June, and I'm in Vermont, it just shouldn't be 90 + degrees for

days on end!

Doug and I had met via the Internet several years ago. We both share a passion for the Battenkill and the sad state of the fishing situation there, both in Vermont and New York. He has a good relationship with the State of Vermont's top trout biologist, works closely with the state and US Forest Service soil conservation folks and is active in a local Trout Unlimited chapter. Several years ago I joined him and the TU folks, planting willow saplings in many spots along the Battenkill and some of its main tributaries, working the morning and fishing the afternoon. Another time, when I was visiting family, we

fished over a great Hendrickson hatch near Shushan, NY, and were dismayed that we caught no fish – didn't even see a rise, in spite of the near blizzard-like presence of these mayflies.

We had tentative plans to fish the Battenkill together this year, when I would again be in Vermont visiting family. The fishing plans were tentative because, sadly, Doug has to work and my weekends are to be filled with family stuff. Miraculously, I was able to get clearance to fish on the appointed Saturday afternoon. But, little did we know that the weather would turn so blistering. Doug made the drive from his home in

eastern Massachusetts, and I would be coming down from northern Vermont – about 100 miles over Vermont's primitive road system. When we talked Friday evening, we quickly decided to work the headwaters, where hopefully the water temperatures would be lower. Doug reported some success about three weeks earlier with a surprisingly strong spinner fall of grey drakes. He had caught numerous fish, and about 70 % were brook trout. The Battenkill is almost totally void of rainbows.

On the drive south, my car thermometer was registering mid-90s. In Rutland, it showed 96 degrees! And, this is Vermont! Were we
continued on p.6

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Special Membership Meeting in March

by Bill Brant

A special meeting of voting members will be held at the club meeting March 19th. The purpose of the meeting will be to vote on club directors and to conduct any other club business that is of interest to the members.

Current Directors are John Bell, Tom James, and Bill Brant. The slate of new Directors includes Jim Jorgensen and Cliff Cain. Nominations from the floor for Directors will also be accepted.

Once the new Directors are elected, they plan to vote to elect this year's officers. The proposed slate of officers.

If you are interested, we would be glad to have your help. If you want to provide any input on the running of the club, feel free to contact any of the Directors before the March meeting or attend the March meeting and speak your mind.

Refund for Annual Banquet

Members who paid \$15 each for the Annual Banquet can request a refund from now until the April member meeting. After that the funds will go towards the Mill Creek purchase. Contact Paul Bennetts, Treasurer.

Blue River Cleanup

Saturday, March 31, 2007 – 8:00AM

by Bill Brant
& Kevin Carril

Come join your fellow fly fishers the morning of Saturday, March 31st for this year's annual Blue River Cleanup! As in previous years, we will be coordinating our efforts with the Lakeside Nature Center's Project Blue River Rescue.

Our site this year will be located along Blue River Road, under the I-435, bridge. To get there, take I-435 to Holmes (2 miles east of State Line), go south on Holmes 1 mile, turn left (east) on Red Bridge Road and go 1 mile, turn left (north) on Blue River Road.

Go north ½ mile and park in the gravel lot at the Alex George Lake. Since there is a limited amount of parking at the

location where we will be working, we plan to meet at the Alex George Lake parking lot and shuttle the short distance to the clean-up site.

Our part in this stream restoration effort will include picking up trash along this stretch of the watershed. In addition, for those so inclined, we will be cutting the invasive Asiatic honeysuckle.

Wear your work clothes and we'll provide the snacks, gloves, trash bags and great company! You can sign up for this worthwhile event at the March meeting or by contacting Kevin Carril at 913-362-9379. (You are welcomed to attend even if you don't sign-up ahead of time).

HOAFF Apparel is here

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Now you can get a T-shirt or a fishing hat with the new Heart of America Fly Fishers Logo.



Whitecaps on the White

by Mark Borsierine

YES! The weather gods continue to follow the HOAFF with a vengeance. We had 30mph winds and comparable wind chills at our Outing at White River Trout Lodge on March 2,3,4. However, this time, our members did not flee the onslaught of nature; they held their ground and fish were caught!

Unfortunately we missed the peak of the Shad Kill but some good trout were caught as you can see in the accompanying photos. Bob Valentine holds up a nice brown for the camera while whitecaps break behind him – yes, whitecaps! A nice, nice photo of Darren Watson's brown; Darren's net is 22 inches long! Nice catch, Darren.

Fortunately, good companionship and comfortable accommodations added to the enjoyment of the barbecue on Saturday night. Clint Wilkinson and his fiancé, Danielle Rogers joined us for the evening and Danielle demonstrated some of her signature flies for the members (photo). The barbecue was a great success and our members went to bed with happy tummys to wake to much improved weather on Sunday morning.

Despite the weather and missing the shad kill, everyone caught some fish, everyone enjoyed themselves and the intention is to make the outing an annual event.

Recommend you check out White River Trout Lodge; the accommodations and rates are great and the location is outstanding! The Narrows is quite simply one of the best spots on the entire Bull Shoals Tailwater. White River Trout Lodge's ad is in our newsletter, stay there and I guarantee you'll return!



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Start of the Rainbow

Mill Creek's trout history began late in 19th century.

by Spencer E. Turner, Special to the Columbia Daily Tribune

Mill Creek near Rolla has a self-sustaining rainbow trout population, but it wasn't always that way. In the 1880s, trout were introduced to Missouri streams.

Last month, the Missouri Conservation Commission approved establishing the Bohigian Conservation Area on Mill Creek. This new 437-acre area includes more than a mile of Blue Ribbon trout stream and connects two other segments of Mill Creek owned by the U.S. Forest Service. This conservation area opens the upper end of Mill Creek from Wilkins Spring downstream approximately six miles.

Mill Creek is located southwest of Rolla and just south of Newburg. It was one of four original streams with wild rainbow trout populations designated as Blue Ribbon trout streams in 1982. The other streams designated for wild trout

management included Spring Creek, Blue Spring Creek and Crane Creek. Wild trout management, or what is now called Blue Ribbon management, means that the streams contain self-sustaining wild rainbow trout

populations. Anglers can harvest only one trout of at least 18 inches each day using artificial lures. All other trout must be released unharmed.

Purchase of this new trout area was leveraged with help from the Missouri chapter of Trout Unlimited, the Missouri Council of Trout Unlimited, the Missouri Cold Water Conservation Fund and individual donations from trout anglers. Those are the facts. Let me add some additional historic information about this unique stream and some conjecture about what took place 127 years past. Trout are not native to any Missouri streams. The only evidence they once lived in the region came from a a highway dig near Mammoth Spring, Ark., where fossilized fish bones including some belonging to a char - brook trout fall into the char family of salmonids - dating back 13,000 years or so.

As the climate warmed and glaciers receded, trout disappeared from the small, cold-water refuges. Missouri streams became too warm to support salmonids.

Man, in an attempt to improve



Photo courtesy of Spencer E. Turner

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fishing, changed this beginning in 1878, when the U.S Fish Commission and the Missouri Fish Commission teamed up to stock Pacific salmon in the Missouri River and a few tributaries. The salmon eggs came from the Russian River in California and were transported by train to Missouri's first fish hatchery located in St. Joseph. The eggs hatched, and the fish commission stocked the fry in the Missouri River to create a salmon migratory run from Missouri to the Gulf of Mexico and back.

It didn't work.

However, in 1880, the U.S. Fish Commission sent eggs collected from rainbow trout spawning at the McCloud River egg-taking station, located north of Redmond, Calif., to the St. Joseph hatchery. Rainbow trout eggs from this collection station were sent around the world, establishing many of the great rainbow trout fisheries we enjoy today. Missouri received some of the first rainbow eggs.

The Missouri Fish Commission loaded the fry and fingerlings in milk cans along with ice and transported them by train to be stocked in streams between St. Louis, Springfield and Joplin. The train stopped at river

crossings and the crew emptied a milk can of fry to the river below.

Missouri Fish Commission reports document trout stockings in Meramec River, Spring River and Crane Creek. In 1882, Missouri rainbows were reported spawning for the first time in Crane Creek and Spring River.

This information comes from U.S. Fish Commission and Missouri Fish Commission reports and the archives of the Neosho Federal Fish Hatchery built in 1889.

Now let me add some speculation about Mill Creek to the mix.

The railroad line that carried those first rainbows in milk cans ran through Newburg. At that time, Newburg served as a major railroad center, where train crews changed and engines were turned around in the round house. The railroad yard and tracks ran alongside the Little Piney River. Mill Creek joins the Little Piney River at the western edge of the railroad yard, and Spring Creek flows just over the hill to the west.

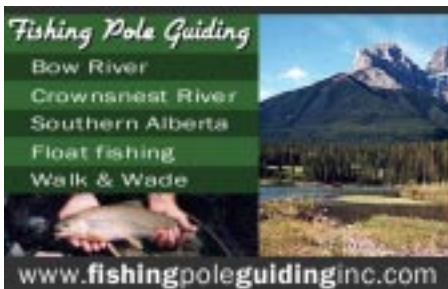
Now, if you were a train crewman asked to stock some trout at crossings along the track, would you save a can or two for your home creeks? I think so and suspect Mill Creek, the Little Piney River and Spring Creek were all stocked

for the first time in 1880 and have had reproducing wild rainbows since about 1882. In addition, the records show that Missouri received several shipments of rainbow eggs from the McCloud River station between 1880-88. It's not clear where the trout were released, but I suspect some of the same streams that received rainbows in 1880 received additional trout during this period.

I had the privilege of knowing Lilly and Clarence Hudgen, whose family homesteaded the Mill Creek Valley in the 1800s. The Hudgen farm is part of the Bohigian Conservation Area. Clarence remembered catching spotted fish with his mother in Mill Creek in the late 1800s.

I suspect these were rainbow trout from that early 1880 stocking. Both Lilly and Clarence are long since dead, yet their legacy lives on in the Bohigian Conservation Area.

Dr. Bohigian - an eye, ear and nose physician from St. Louis - purchased the Hudgen farm from Lilly's estate to add to his original purchase along Mill Creek. As a conservationist, he realized the value of this unique wild trout population and protecting this cold-water stream.



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Were We Crazy?

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crazy? Doug and I agreed to meet at the Orvis store in Manchester Center before 5 PM. He was checking out the casting pool when I got there. After a quick look through the fly bins and the bargain table, it was time to get at it, 90 + temperatures or not! In the parking lot, Doug gave me a couple of flies – Vermont caddis, in size 16, with a dubbed hare's ear body and cree hackle. This was the key fly in his prior trip. He also muttered something about grey drake spinners.

Our first stop was the West Branch of the Battenkill. It meets the East Branch in Manchester, but parallels VT hiway 30, between Manchester and Dorset. Access is not a big issue because of the crossing roads and turn-outs along hiway 30. The West Branch is a tight casting situation, rarely over 20 feet wide and generally less. Overhanging trees and limbs in the creek make very challenging casting.

But, fishing small creeks has its own joys. Getting into the fishing suit was a trial. Sweat had me totally drenched – not a dry stitch in my shirt. Doug was wading wet. I rigged up my 7 ft., 2 in. five weight rod. But, Doug had the prize for the stream – a five-foot bamboo, one-piece rod that loads a five-weight line. This little wand was a dream. It was beautifully finished with a cork reel seat and gold and medium green wraps, the product of a local rod-builder. And, to see how well Doug worked this tiny rod on the little creek was almost worth the trip in itself.

Downstream from the bridge, we were in the water in a flash. Doug pitched his Vermont caddis into the foam below a small man-made rock dam, but got no response. After several casts, he tried the slow-water area above the dam and immediately had a good strike. I moved downstream, tied on a size 18 Adams and went to work on a

faster run about 20-yards below. At first, there was no response – then, the first strike. I missed the fish. But, I stood my ground and saw numerous looks and refusals while casting over this faster water. Finally, I had a hook-up and landed the first fish. These brook trout, in their native habitat, were very colorful and frisky. I stood in that one spot, with my shadow broken by a bank-side tree, and took three more brookies.

Doug had moved upstream and was out of sight because of the stream-side brush. I crossed the stream, found it to be at 69 degrees, and went downstream about 50-yards to where it turned to the right below a riffle and deeper pool. Small streams can be surprisingly deep, and the West Branch was no exception. Before getting into a good casting position, I waded through water almost four feet deep. The bank near this pool was deeply



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undercut, and I could visualize a big brown trout hiding safely there. The pool above was not that deep, but through a fast tongue of current I managed to snag another bunch of brookies on the Adams. But, the sun was getting lower and the glare was increasing. Changing flies to an Ausable caddis, size 18, didn't diminish the action and it was a bit easier to see.

Doug wanted to show me another spot, upstream, so off we went. About a mile upstream, at a road side turnout, we began again. This time, we hop-scotched upstream. He continued with his size 16 Vermont caddis and I used the Ausable caddis. After catching a fish, we switched places, and thereby worked upstream several hundred yards, catching more brook trout. Doug had taken some browns along this run previously, but not today. His little rod worked wonders – he handled it well. These caddis imitations also

worked well fished downstream, sunk like a soft-hackle.

The evening spot was to be the East Branch which parallels (historic) hiway 7A, north of Manchester. We drove several miles and finally stopped at a bridge where access was simple. Doug now produced two more flies – a grey drake spent spinner, size 12 and a similar fly with upright wings. I stored these away and mounted a size 16 grey fox, a classic, conventional dry fly. Using the hop-scotch approach, we worked up stream. Here the water was 63 degrees (Doug got into his waders for this spot.) We alternately fished through several runs and pools, but there were no takers. So far, we had seen very few bugs over the water.

At one spot Doug's turn ended with a fly in a branch and I took over. Finally, I caught the first trout – a brookie, similar to those on the West Branch. As we moved upstream, we

were each taking more fish, on our turn. After releasing my fly against a large tree root where there should have been a brown trout, Doug moved ahead for a couple of fish. Soon, I noticed some spinners dancing in the air. They were not abundant, but active. Perhaps this is what was triggering the action. Doug had noticed them, too. While he was changing flies to his grey drake pattern, I moved ahead, toward a gentle bend where there was a nice run and pool against the far bank. I now began to take fish regularly. The grey fox did its magic.

The fish we took were all brook trout. They weren't selective, taking all we offered. And with 90 + degrees in Vermont, and after driving over 100 miles, were we crazy? I caught more fish – over 20 – but they all were between seven and four inches long! Were we crazy? You decide.



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Upcoming Events & Programs

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| March 19, 2007 | Cliff Cain & John Bell with Montana Guide |
| March 31, 2007 | Blue River Cleanup |
| April 16, 2007 | Brent Frazee |
| May 21, 2007 | Norm Crisp: Traveling & Trout Fishing |



Sister Carol Anne Corley



Sister Carol Anne Corley works with a Catholic elementary school in Hot Springs where she teaches fly casting for physical education and fly tying for art. To assist with her fly tying classes, she needs fly tying materials. We need to gather our extra materials, feathers, thread, dubbing, whatever we have that we can spare and bring them to the March member meeting. Mike George will collect the items at the March Meeting to send to her.

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