

WINTER 2020 FFB NEWSLETTER



President's message

Hi folks,

SNAFU, for those of you not familiar with this military acronym, "Situation Normal all Fouled Up". I hope that you are all staying safe within your core of friends and family. The club is still in existence however we're in a sort of stasis. Our board will meet in December for a short time to determine our future but it looks as if we'll continue to wait until this nationwide crisis is somewhat contained. If you would like to participate in any of the FFB's activities or volunteer to be on the board of directors, please notify me. The December board meeting will elect new and continuing members and we need your help and input.

We will lose our newsletter editor, Estelle Shuttleworth. She is retiring after being our "Rock" for quite a while now. Thanks to Estelle. She's a trooper...

We will lose our outings guru, Ed Gannon. He's stepping down too after a couple of seasons of great trips. We'll miss his great stories and sense of humor.

We will continue to advertise impromptu trips for those who would like to get together in safe situations such as camping where we can easily practice social distancing. Call me if you have a destination in mind that might

interest our fly-fishing group. I think one of the places we will visit in the future will be the CDA river in Idaho. I've personally been there and I was suitably impressed.

As you might imagine, I've been fishing. If you frequent Facebook, you'll see a plethora of shots of some of the people I have been fortunate to be able to share a day or more on a river. We recently floated from Hannon to Darby, and caught some really nice fish but the highlight of the day was to see two beautiful fluffy River Otter. I was able to get pretty close and take a video of the two. We'll get some days in the high thirties and even forties with a little cloud cover or even sun and those are the days I watch in order to hit the river. You can self-shuttle to stay safe, or walk and wade. Give it a shot. One of the benefits of going out at this time of year is that you will catch larger fish. I don't know where they go in August, but they sure can be caught in the late Fall and Winter. I caught one the other day that was easily nineteen inches. I got a picture of him in the net, but John Bundy gave him an early release as I was about to do my "Kodak Moment". I think he was Jealous (John).

So, the club maintains. We'll keep an eye on the recent development of vaccines and hopefully be able to get our lives back next year. Keep safe and call me if you would like to volunteer. Again, there's not much to do at this time, so it would be a good time to participate and learn about the club.

Phil Romans

BOARD NOTES:

Report from the Dec 14, 2020 Board meeting.

In lieu of a general membership annual meeting, your Board met and is pleased to say that most of the 2020 board members will continue to stay on as 2021 Board members. It is critical that we all keep communicating with each other, even if we don't have the opportunities to spend as much time together as we once had. Having said that, Estelle has agreed to produce a FFB "news notice" at least every other month. The Board wishes to keep you up to date in all things FFB.

President Phil notified the membership that dues paid in 2020 would cover 2021. Even with no income expected in 2021, our Treasurer, Ken Q. reported that the club is financially stable to weather this bump in the road.

The Board has set a goal to have our first in-person club meeting in October 2021. Hopefully by then the fears & traumas of a Covid world are no longer in control of our lives. Remember, this is a goal. If we need to change it, we will....

As information & news becomes available, President Phil will be sure to keep you informed.



2020 Spring, Summer and Fall Camping. *by Greg Chester*

With Covid dramatically altering our normal mix of international and domestic travels we opted to take advantage of our motor home and all that Montana's back roads have to offer. Early on we would take frequent 1 or 2 day trips utilizing the endless number of dispersed camping areas, often completely alone except for curious animals.

As spring progressed a few National Forest campgrounds started to open and again we could select any site we wished. These areas included the Wise River corridor, West Fork of the Bitterroot, the Big Hole and Beaverhead River area, the Locksa River canyon, the Belt River and the Clearwater River near Seeley Lake. As the weather warmed fishing picked up and early season Baetis and midges risers became of interest to the trout. The biggest surprise came from the Locksa where I landed several fish pushing 20" on nymphs and Green Drakes dries. Very tough wading, even with a wading staff.

Wise River was fun to fish with light equipment and no crowds. Lots of skinny water but a little walking yielded many nice pockets and runs. Nice campgrounds as well

As the year progressed we ventured more into the Yellowstone area. We were lucky enough to be in West Yellowstone when the Park opened up on June 1. We were the 6th car into the park and were treated to phenomenal numbers of animals and zero crowds – what an eerie but absolutely enjoyable experience. The Firehole fished great swinging White Miller and PMD soft hackles through riffles.

Hebgen Lake tributaries out of the park like Duck and Grayling Creeks were full of big spawners eager to take egg and worm patterns at first, then Pat's Rubber Legs and pink San Juan worms as the early season progressed. All told either on my own or camping with Jean we made it into the Park 5 times this year. There'll be a time soon that RV travel within the park will be too crowded or restricted so we decided to go often while we can.

In late June I met a bunch of fishing friends for 4 guided days around West Yellowstone. As always we were treated to fantastic fishing. From Hebgen and Quake to the Firehole and Gibbon we had excellent fishing on a multitude of hatches. When they left I stayed on for a few days and fished the Harriman Ranch section of the Henry's Fork with fantastic fishing and minimal crowds. Lots of Green and Brown Drake activity and eager, hungry rainbows gobbling up the adults. What fun fishing with 3X and big flies for a change. The Brown Drake hatch near the Millionaire pool was truly epic! Very large #8 adults fell victim to equally large rainbows. I had my tying kit in the car and tied up a few in an attempt to match the hatch. The patterns I brought were way too small. Although not a great match to the naturals they were good enough to fool 4 in the morning and 5 later in the day. When they quit rising I moved to just below the log jam and scored again with #10 Green Drakes. Best trip ever to the Ranch.

Throughout the summer I solo fished our Bitterroot waters and I'm sure like all of you found the fishing to be terrific. Once again I fished for 10 days in late September in and around the Park. I started with the Livingston Spring Creeks fishing Armstrong and DePuys before meeting friends again for 4 days in and around the Park hunting for Hebgen Lake runups. Although we had some success the major push for the runups is a little later after the weather has cooled a bit. However we had super fishing on Quake Lake for Baetis emergers on 6X – what a thrill!. We also spent several days fishing the Lamar region. It still amazes me what nice fish come out of Slough, Soda Butte and The Lamar. The water was low making it easy to find holding water but despite what people say about cutthroats being easy to catch that's not the case in the fall. We had success but often went a few hours without interest.

So overall Jean and I made the best of the Covid circumstances and discovered many new back roads, campgrounds and streams.

Here are 2 drake Mackerel patterns that are unique to the Lamar area in the fall that you might like to try sometime.

Drake Mackerel



Sparkle Dun style

Thread -8/0 brown

Hook - #14 Standard dry fly hook (TMC 100) Shuck - Brown Zelon, about ½ length of shank

Ribbing -Heavy brown thread or single stand of brown Pearsall silk. Dubbing -Tan or gray

Wing - Dark sparkle dun deer



Cripple Style

Thread - 8/0 brown

Hook - #14 Standard dry fly hook (TMC 100) Shuck - Brown Zelon, about ½ length of shank

Ribbing -Heavy brown thread or single stand of brown Pearsall silk. Dubbing -tan or gray

Wing - Dark deer or deer dyed dark brown. Tied in leaning forward, retain short tuft of butts when trimming

Hackle -Brown-dyed grizzly or dark grizzly. Trimmed flat on bottom, even with hook point.



19 inch from Slough Creek, caught on a Drake Mackerel cripple

THE WAY IT WAS: Testament of a Fisherman

"I fish because I love to;

Because I love the environs where trout are found, which are invariably beautiful, and hate the environs where crowds of people are found, which are invariably ugly;

Because all of the television commercials, cocktail parties, and assorted social posturing I thus escape;

Because, in a world where most men seem to spend their lives doing things they hate, my fishing is at once an endless source of delight and an act of small rebellion;

Because trout do not lie or cheat and cannot be bought or bribed or impressed by power, but respond only to quietude and humility and endless patience;

Because I suspect that men are going along this way for the last time, and I for one don't want to waste the trip; because mercifully there are no telephones on trout waters;

Because only in the woods can I find solitude without loneliness;

Because bourbon out of an old tin cup always tastes better out there;

Because maybe one day I will catch a mermaid;

And, finally, not because I regard fishing as being so terribly important but because I suspect that so many of the other concerns of men are equally unimportant-and not nearly so much fun."

John Voelker (aka Robert Traver), 1964

John Voelker (1903-1991) was a Yooper, the term that Michiganders apply to residents of the U. P. (Upper Peninsula). After law school, he spent several years as an attorney in Chicago before returning to the friendly environs of the U. P. where he served as a county prosecutor. He also was a Michigan Supreme Court justice from 1956-60. We know Voelker for three fly fishing books that he wrote under the pen name Robert Traver, but he also was a novelist and wrote for magazines such as Life as well as for sporting journals. His novel, Anatomy of a Murder was a best seller, and the subsequent movie was an academy award nominee, which allowed Voelker to retire. He wrote eleven books under the name Robert Traver, three that dealt with fishing: Trout Madness, Anatomy of a Fisherman, and Trout Magic.

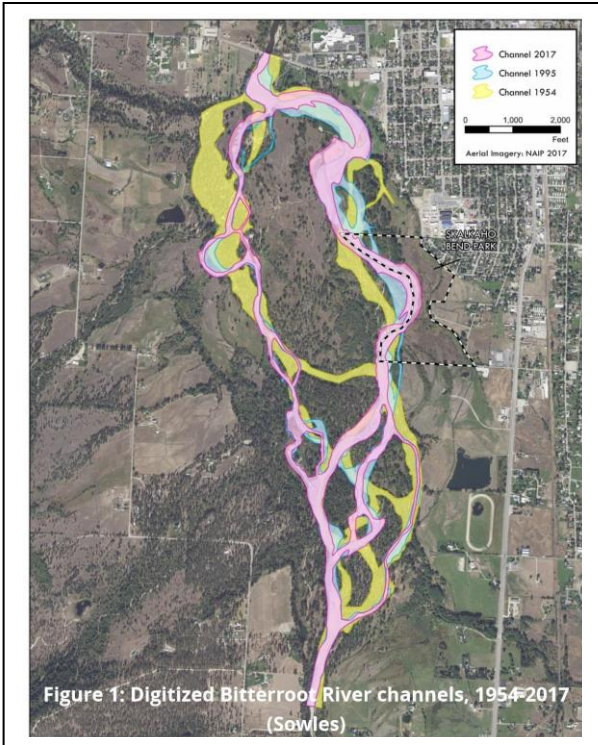
He was by all accounts something of a character. He once said, "Fishing is such great fun, I have often felt it really ought to be done in bed." He called wild brook trout "Mermaids," and while he shared his fishing spots with close friends, he sought to protect them from the general public. He once wrote, "Never show a favorite spot to any fisherman you wouldn't trust with your wife" and was known to sweep away his tire tracks so he couldn't be followed.

He often fished with small flies and tried unsuccessfully to convince one tier to tie some on size 32 hooks. In 1962 he ordered 4 dozen Adams (size 24-28) from a Michigan tier who charged \$2.50 a dozen. Voelker paid him twice that and wrote, "Your Adams is by all odds the best fly in my kit. It works even when prayer fails."

If you are unfamiliar with Voelker's three fishing books, they are available through our three valley libraries under the authorship of Robert Traver. So, too, are several of his novels. Arnold Gingrich said of his writing, "He gives you that wonderful, relaxed, lazy, unhurried and unflustered, comfortable 'old shoe' feeling page after page.



Roots Against Erosion



The Bitterroot River is one of the most dynamic rivers in Montana. This means the channel “migrates” or moves back and forth within its floodplain. This meandering can create new channels and braids.

You can see the results of channel migration at Skalkaho Bend Park. The River has been moving to the east—and because the Park lacks riparian habitat, like woody shrubs—eating away at the open grass area, eroding the stream bank.

The image to the left shows movement over the last 25 years and projections for the future. Over the past few decades, we’ve seen the river bank erode away about 5 feet every year. That means that every 5 years, we lose an acre of park land.

What can be done to slow this process and improve habitat? Roots against erosion!

Vegetation along streams helps to hold streambanks together and provide wildlife habitat. To protect the Park against

erosion, the Water Forum will plant thousands of plants, whose roots will grow into a strong web that will strengthen the banks and improve habitat.

To allow vegetation to establish, planting areas will be set back from the bank, giving the plants the time they need to grow. A dense row of plantings will slow river migration to help protect the banks.

A depression will be created to make it easier for the plants to access the water table. Native shrubs and trees like willows, dogwood, and cottonwood will provide roots against erosion and provide habitat for fish and wildlife!

How can you help?

There will be opportunities to help over the next few months:

- FALL - [drop off logs and branches/Christmas Trees](#)
 - WINTER - help collect willow cuttings
 - SPRING - help plant in the park

“The trout glided near my feet in the shallows. It was a brown, its nose hooked and its red spots glowing. When I released it, just at the moment when I ceased to hold it and it became wholly part of the stream again, I was washed by the surety that it would be the last fish I would see from this stretch of river until after a long, windy winter covered the stream with ice, held it white and silent and still.” Jeff Hull, *Streams of Consciousness*, 2007

BITTERRROOT WATER FORUM [BRWF] "INFO" BRIEF

Restoration can be a general term and mean different things to different people. For the Water Forum, our on the ground restoration projects aim to improve water quality.

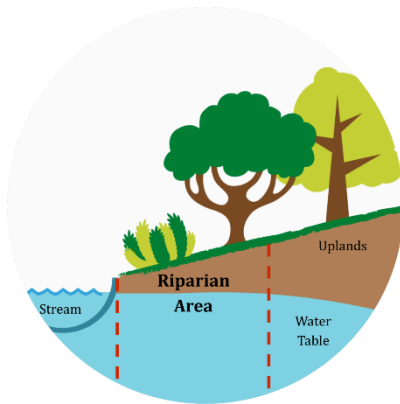
In the Bitterroot our water quality issues mainly come from nonpoint source pollution. That is to say that you can't point a finger at where the issue is coming from.

The Montana Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) has listed 34 streams in the Bitterroot watershed as impaired, meaning they don't meet state standards for at least one; drinking water, recreation (swimming), aquatic life, or supplying water for agriculture and industry.

The primary issues in the Bitterroot are:

- **Temperature** - the water in some areas is too warm, this causes issues for aquatic life
- **Sediment** - there is too much fine dirt. Some sediment is natural but it can cause problems when more than natural amounts are getting into streams.
- **Nutrients** - levels of nitrogen, nitrate, and phosphorus in the water. Again, these occur naturally but can be elevated by human activities.

The Water Forum's restoration projects focus on rebuilding the riparian area - the strip of willows, cottonwoods, and other plants that naturally provide a buffer between the stream and the uplands.



Riparian areas provide:

- shade to the stream
- strength to banks through their roots
- filtration of pollutants
- habitat for birds and wildlife
- food for aquatic life

In 2021, we will do even more to combat nonpoint source pollution:

- planting and protecting native shrubs on the Burnt Fork
- addressing sediment issues and fish passage on Three-mile Creek
- doing revegetation work along the main stem of the Bitterroot at the Skalkaho Bend Park
- and more!

We're excited for what the new year will bring. Thank you for helping make it happen.

Happy Holidays, Katie, Communications+ Outreach Manager

The river carries a history of the land and the people who live on the land, stories collected from a thousand feeder streams and recorded in pockets of sand, in the warm and cold currents, the smells of the water, the mayflies." Kathleen Dean Moore, River Walking 1995

THE ELWHA RIVER, THE DESTRUCTION AND RECOVERY OF A FISHERY

The Elwha is not a large river. It flows northward for about 45 miles, mostly in Olympic National Park, and enters the Strait of Juan de Fuca just west of Port Angeles, Washington. Small though it is, it once was an important fishery with 10 different runs of anadromous fish: five species of salmon, native char (bull trout and dolly vardens), winter and summer steelhead runs and sea run cutthroats. It hosted some of the richest salmon runs outside of Alaska, and was known for chinook over 100 pounds. An estimated 400,000 fish regularly returned to the Elwha in the early 1900s.

That coastal region also was home of the Lower Elwha Klallam Tribe until the arrival of Governor Isaac Stevens in the mid-1850s. Stevens was responsible for treaties with tribes from Montana to modern day Washington and Oregon, including the infamous Hell Gate treaty in western Montana. It wasn't long before the Lower Elwha Klallam people were landless. In the 1930s the US acquired some land for the tribe and eventually established a reservation of about 1,000 acres in 1968. The tribe has lived by the mouth of the river for thousands of years. One site shows 8,000 years of habitation, and another, discovered in the city of Port Angeles in 2003, is loaded with artifacts and hundreds of human remains and is 2700 years old.

The Elwha River ecosystem changed in 1910 when construction began on a dam five miles above the mouth of the river. Upon completion in 1913 Elwha dam was 108 feet high. The Glines Canyon dam, also built to provide power, was 210 feet high and was completed in 1927. The dams blocked fish migration, disrupted flow of sediment downstream, changed the landscape where the river met the strait, and flooded the historic homeland and cultural sites of the tribe.

Fortunately for all, the tribe retained fishing rights through the treaty and court decisions and late in the twentieth century began to agitate for dam removal and threatened legal action. In 1992 Congress passed the Elwha Ecosystem and Fisheries Restoration Act, which authorized the Secretary of the Interior to acquire and remove the two dams and to restore the ecosystem and the native anadromous fisheries. It helped that the dams no longer were worth the cost of maintenance and repair. Dam removal--the largest in the world to date--was completed in 2014.

The impact of dam removal was instantaneous. The first chinook were seen passing the dam site three days after removal, and more than 4,000 chinook spawners were counted above Elwha dam the first season after it came down. About 32,000 outgoing coho fry were identified in 2014. Sockeye salmon were identified, perhaps coming from landlocked kokanee in the former reservoirs. The bull trout population doubled. The count of rainbows jumped from 3,218 in 2008 to 24,896 in 2019, and many were going to sea. The return of summer steelhead was startling because it was not expected, and the Elwha now has the largest population of summer steelhead in any river in Washington. Speaking of steelhead, a steelhead science director for Trout Unlimited, commented, "This is as close to Lazarus as you can get."

Currently the Elwha is one of the most studied small rivers in the country. Scientists are using snorkel surveys, radio telemetry and sonar imagery to study fish. Others use the otolith bone from the ear of fish to identify the age of the fish, how many times it has gone to sea, and whether it is a hatchery fish. While there is some disagreement over the use of hatchery fish in the restoration of the Elwha fishery, there is agreement that much has been accomplished. Fish populations and runs have increased, the shoreline on the strait has improved with the deposition of river silt, causing shellfish populations to increase, and the entire ecosystem has improved. However, don't run over to the Elwha with your fly rod because the river still is closed to fishing

Dams have been removed recently from Maine to Washington, including one on the Rattlesnake in Missoula. Dam removal has been approved for the Klamath in California and other rivers are so targeted. For example, in the Okanogan country of Washington, the Colville tribe is pushing for the removal of Enloe dam on the Similkameen River. It hasn't produced electricity since 1958 and provides no benefits for irrigation or flood control but blocks 348 miles of river and anadromous fish runs. We also can expect continued controversy over the four dams on the lower Snake.

Madison River new rules

The following comes from the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana via the Blue Ribbon Flies Newsletter of Nov. 19.

In other news, Montana's Fish and Wildlife Commission unanimously voted yesterday to adopt several new rules for the Madison River. These changes are outlined as follows, courtesy of the Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana (FOAM):

New Rule I:

- **Madison River Special Recreational Use Permit (SRP) holders will be assigned a number of trips that they may operate in a season equal to their highest number of historic use of trips in the 2019 or 2020 season.**
- **New Rule I will be implemented, January 1, 2022.**

New Rule II:

- **Rest and Rotation will be implemented from June 15 - September 30.**
- **On Saturdays, June 15 - September 30, from Reynolds Bridge to Lyons Bridge will be open to noncommercial float fishing and closed to commercial float fishing.**
- **On Sundays, June 15 – September 30, Lyons Bridge to Palisades Fishing Access Site will be closed to commercial float fishing.**
- **On Sundays, June 15 - September 30, Reynolds Bridge to Lyons Bridge will be open to all float fishing.**
- **New Rule II will be implemented June 15, 2023.**

New Rule III:

- **Ennis to Ennis Lake, will remain as status quo, allowing boats to be used for access for fishing, but not allowing fishing from a boat.**
- **Quake Lake to Lyons Bridge will remain as status quo, allowing boats to be used for access for fishing, but not allowing fishing from a boat from October 1 – June 14.**
- **Quake Lake to Lyons Bridge will remain status quo, allowing boats to be used for access for fishing, but not allowing fishing from a boat, Monday – Friday, June 15 to September 30.**
- **Quake Lake to Lyons Bridge will be open to fishing from a boat on Saturdays and Sundays, June 15 - September 30.**
- **New Rule III will be implemented, June 15, 2023.**

SHIELDS RIVER UPDATE

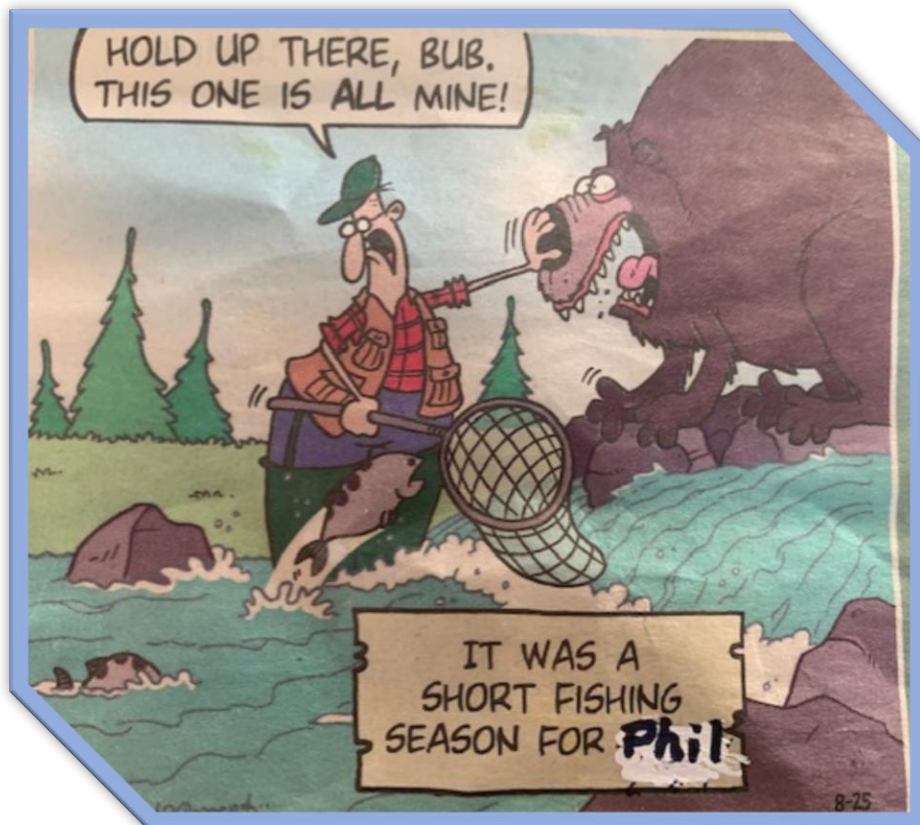
The October newsletter reported that the Fish and Wildlife Commission would consider a proposal to ban motorboat use on the Shields River, a small stream that flows south to the Yellowstone River near Livingston. There was a 10-horsepower limit already in place, but jet boats that met that limit had begun to appear on the river. The proposal to ban motorized watercraft was submitted by landowners along the Shields.

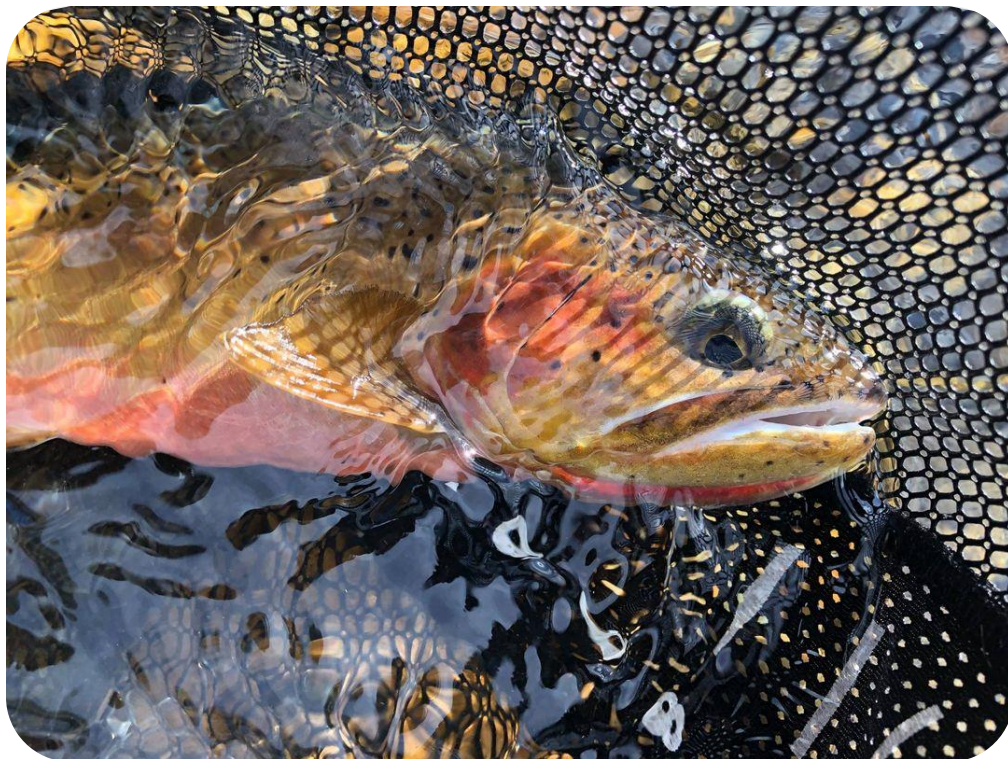
The commission received 51 written comments favoring the ban and 134 in opposition. Opponents argued that low water most of the year prevented the use of motorboats and that the ban would effectively restrict public access to much of the river thereby giving wealthy landowners exclusive use of public water.

On Dec. 10, the commission approved the ban and undoubtedly will consider a similar petition for the Boulder River, which joins the Yellowstone near Big Timber.



"It's a great feeling to cast a fly to a good-looking sport and have a fish take it--makes me feel like I actually know what I'm doing--and when I get a strike from a place where I didn't really expect one, I try to ask myself, , What the hell was he doing there?" John Gierach, Standing in a River Waving a Stick





Above: "Fish portrait" by Peg Miskin

Below: Phil R with a Salmon River Steelhead hen





JOKES

The devil whispered to me, "I'm coming for you!" I whispered back, "Bring pizza."

Me: (Sobbing my heart out, eyes were swollen, nose red)..."I can't see you anymore. I am not going to let you hurt me like this again!"

Trainer: "It was a sit up. You did one sit up."

Having plans sounds like a good idea until you have to put on clothes and leave the house.

It's weird being the same age as old people.

When I was a kid I wanted to be older...this is not what I expected.

Life is like a helicopter. I don't know how to operate a helicopter.

Chocolate is God's way of telling us he likes us a little bit chubby.

It's probably my age that tricks people into thinking I'm an adult.

Marriage Counselor: "Your wife says you never buy her flowers. Is that true?"

Him: "To be honest, I never knew she sold flowers."

Never sing in the shower! Singing leads to dancing, dancing leads to slipping, and slipping leads to paramedics seeing you naked.

So, remember...Don't sing!

My wife asked me to take her to one of those restaurants where they make the food right in front of you. So I took her to Subway and that's how the fight started

During the middle ages they celebrated the end of the plague with wine and orgies. Does anyone know if there is anything planned when this one ends?

I don't think the therapist is supposed to say "Wow," that many times in your first session but here we are...

If 2020 was a math word-problem: If you're going down a river at 2 MPH and your canoe loses a wheel, how much pancake mix would you need to re-shingle your roof?

I see people about my age mountain climbing; I feel good getting my leg through my underwear without losing my balance.

We can all agree that in 2015 not a single person got the answer correct to, "Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?"

So if a cow doesn't produce milk, is it a milk dud or an udder failure?

If you can't think of a word say "I forgot the English word for it." That way people will think you're bilingual instead of an idiot.

I'm at a place in my life where errands are starting to count as going out.

Coronacoaster Noun: The ups and downs of a pandemic. One day you're loving your bubble, doing work outs, baking banana bread and going for long walks and the next you're crying, drinking gin for breakfast and missing people you don't even like.

I'm at that age where my mind still thinks I'm 29, my humor suggests I'm 12, while my body mostly keeps asking if I'm sure I'm not dead yet.

Don't be worried about your smartphone or TV spying on you. Your vacuum cleaner has been collecting dirt on you for years.

I'm getting tired of being part of a major historical event.

I don't always go the extra mile, but when I do it's because I missed my exit.

How many of us have looked around our family reunion and thought, "Well aren't we just two clowns short of a circus?"

At what point can we just start using 2020 as profanity? As in: "That's a load of 2020." or "What in the 2020." or "abso-2020-lutely."

You don't realize how old you are until you sit on the floor and then try to get back up.

We all get heavier as we get older, because there's a lot more information in our heads. That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

This is the day dogs have been waiting for. They realize their owners can't leave the house and they get them 24/7. Dogs are rejoicing everywhere. Cats are contemplating suicide.

If you are trying to impress me with your vehicle it better be a food truck.

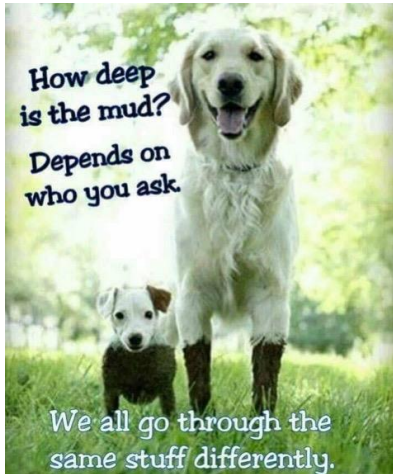


The cats are on day 3,721 of their stay at home quarantine. They have some lessons for us amateurs. Lessons like: Nap early, nap often. Seek out sunbeams. Eat on a regular schedule. Keep yourself clean. And most importantly, it's ok to run up and down the apartment screaming when it all gets to be too much. Just take a nap afterwards.

NEVER BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING NEW. REMEMBER, AMATEURS BUILT THE ARK; PROFESSIONALS BUILT THE TITANIC.

This cleaning everything with alcohol is total bull.
NOTHING gets done after that first bottle.

How deep is the mud?
Depends on who you ask.



We all go through the same stuff differently.

My wife sent me a text that said, "Your great"

So, naturally, I wrote back, "No, you're great"

She's been walking around all happy and smiling.

Should I tell her I was just correcting her grammar or leave it?

WINTER'S COMING...



BE PREPARED

The Official flag of 2020



It took "Click it or Ticket" to get people to wear a seatbelt.

I wonder if "Mask it or Casket" might work?

Donald Ray Whatley

I don't know who did this but I love it!



Such a special year needed a Logo.❤️💜

I DON'T THINK ANYONE EXPECTED THAT WHEN WE CHANGED THE CLOCKS EARLIER THIS YEAR WE'D GO FROM STANDARD TIME TO THE TWILIGHT ZONE

So in retrospect, in 2015, not a single person got the answer right to "Where do you see yourself 5 years from now?"