

November 2002



# Flylines



*The newsletter of the Black Hills Flyfishers*

The Finest In Angling Literature

## Rapid Creek Low-Down

The BHFF will hold their November meeting at 7 p.m., Thursday, November 14, at the Children's Science Center (515 West Blvd. in Rapid City).

As many of you know, Dr. Scott Kenner of the South Dakota School of Mines recently conducted a study of the upper Rapid Creek watershed, to determine the limiting factors that affect this fishery. Most of us have held the belief that the presence of bog-iron is the culprit, but this scientific study was intended to identify the problem in a very specific way. The

BHFF, SD Game, Fish, and Parks, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources all contributed to the cost of the study.

Dr. Kenner will be our featured guest, and will outline the results of the study, and the remedial action (if any) that can be taken to improve the quality of this fishery. This promises to be an interesting meeting, and Dr. Kenner is an enthusiastic and dynamic speaker. Be there!

## The 'State of the Fisheries' Is Good

Ace fisheries biologist and all-around-good-guy Jack Erickson of the South Dakota Game, Fish, & Parks Department graced our presence at the October meeting, held at the Children's Science Center, 515 West Blvd. in Rapid City.

Jack presented the annual "State of the Fisheries" address to the Black Hills Flyfishers membership, and led a discussion on which streams are doing well (Rapid Creek), which are not doing so well (Spring Creek), and his expectations for the future. The presentation included a very interesting discussion about the GF&P's efforts to make Pactola Reservoir a trophy lake trout fishery.

This is always an interesting meeting, and this year's well-attended version was no exception. If you missed this - well, what can I say? I'm guessing the television wasn't nearly as interesting.

Don't make the same mistake again. Attend the November meeting. Details in the story above.



This photo makes sense after you read Juan Lennon's story on page 2.

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# All We Are Saying... By Juan Lennon

You know, sometimes you just have to blow out of town and go on a big-river trout jag. And so it was with me. I'd spent the summer working my tail off, watching my retirement savings evaporate, and not fishing nearly enough. My "spare" time was spent on home improvement projects, or trying to teach our Labrador pup the basics of responsible dog behavior. I've got to tell you. At times, a shock collar capable of lighting up an entire city seemed like a sound investment at ten times the price.

Traditions, of course, are to be honored, and for many years the original "Cliff" (Matt Cassel of Casper-based Cliff

Outdoors), Greg "Big Cliff" Chytka of Laramie (we met as Boy Scouts from different troops, and it took less than thirty seconds for us to get into a fight), and myself have gone on a fishing trip, which is sometimes referred to as the "Cliffatarian Rendezvous". Together, we've terrorized trout on rivers throughout Montana and Wyoming. It's an annual event that I always look forward to.

This year, the tradition was nearly broken. Big Cliff was having some health problems (Good God, we're getting old), and I was burdened with responsibility. The months flew by, and still no trip. There was the occasional phone call, but no plan of action.

Fortunately, Greg got the ball rolling by suggesting a weekend floating the North Platte near Casper. Together, we've fished the Platte many times over the years, and caught some really remarkable (up to 28" inch) fish on this river. I also knew that the trout population on the Platte has quadrupled over the past seven or eight years, and that the word out of Wyoming was that the Platte was fishing better than at any time in the past thirty years.

Unfortunately, Friday night I had to entertain a business associate and his family from Minneapolis, which meant that I didn't get on the road until 10 pm. At 1am Saturday, I pulled into Gillette, 3½ hours past my bedtime, and decided to spend the night. Up again at 4:45, I dashed to Casper, where I met up with my old cronies, and we headed for the river.

Now there are two areas of the Platte that are relatively

famous. The "Miracle Mile" and "Grey Reef." Both are tailwater fisheries, and both harbor some exceptionally large trout. The Mile is a longer drive, and is absolutely treacherous to wade.

The Reef is fairly close to Casper (just below Alcova), easy to wade, and is an area that we have fished many times over the years.

Pulling into the boat launch at the Reef, we were appalled at the number of Colorado license plates. Appalled, you ask? Why yes. You see, the three of us attended the University of Wyoming at the same time, and we have mostly negative things to say about those from South of the Border. In partic-

ular, those sorry idiots who cheer for Fort Fudd's Colorado State University are held in deep (really deep - think Davy Jones' locker) disdain. There. I sugar-coated it as much as I possibly could.

"Forget the Reef," Greg said, and we headed back downstream to Government Bridge. Our new plan was to float from Government Bridge to the Sechrist access. Now we knew that this section of the river probably didn't hold quite as many fish. But we also knew that there wouldn't be many anglers, and that it would be interesting to float some new water.

It was an incredible bluebird day. No wind whatsoever, which is unusual for this area in which the trees tend to grow sideways. The bright sun meant that we probably wouldn't see a lot of Baetis, but we were not deterred, as we began our float in Greg's very cool wooden driftboat.

I started nymphing with two split-shot and an old reliable fish-finding combo - the SJ worm with a mayfly nymph trailer. Virtually right off the bat - KAPOW!!!! HOG ON!!!! Did we hammer them all day long? Well, not really. But we probably caught at least twenty fish, most of which were 15" to 17" rainbows. All were very hot fish for their size. Some trout that might have been much bigger were busted off.

This was a great float, and offered significantly more wading opportunities than are available floating below



Juan Lennon displays one of the beauties he hauled from the Platte River on a recent excursion.

See "Lennon" on page 3

## “Lennon” from page 2

Grey Reef. The water is also more diverse, as a lot of the river below Grey Reef could best be described as “frog water.” The Reef holds some very big trout, but it’s not particularly interesting to fish. The float below Government Bridge offered lots of islands and riffles, and some very deep pools. The fish were not spread throughout the river (which was very low at 500 cfs), but congregated in pools and below ledges. If you found the right water, you would also find fish.

Our only real error on this day was not realizing how long of a float this was, particularly with the low flows. As the sun set, Cliff said “I think we’ve got another mile or so.” After another mile or so of semi-darkness, he restated his expert opinion that we had another mile or so. After that mile passed, he offered “I think we’re getting close.” At that point, Greg and I prepared to spend the night sleeping on the floor of the boat, or as an alternative, simply floating another twenty miles or so into the city of Casper. We found the takeout at dark-thirty, which is not unusual for Cliffatarian combat fishing adventures.

The next day was much the same. Absolutely beautiful. Sixty-plus degrees and no wind. This time we decided to float from Lusby to Government Bridge, another section of the river that was new to us. The day was much the same. Same flies - same results. If anything, we caught more fish. For a change of pace we stripped streamers while floating through the froggy sections of the river, and caught several nice trout doing this as well.

As the day wound down, we came across hundreds of rising fish just above Government Bridge. They were all 4” long, so we didn’t pursue them too hard. Nonetheless, we’d had a great weekend, and a great weekend of fishing.

Over the years I’ve fished well over 100 days on the Bighorn, and can tell you that the Platte is a solid alternative. Although the Bighorn’s a fabulous fishery, I’m not always up for battling the crowds. The Platte probably gets one-tenth the traffic of the Bighorn, and has bigger fish.

Although the Platte does not have as large a trout population, I still managed to hook approximately twenty-five fish in two days, which would be a respectable outing on the Bighorn. Beyond all of that, the accommodations in Casper are a lot nicer than the accommodations in Ft. Smith. And they sell beer!

There is, however, a significant difference between the two rivers. On the Bighorn you can wade anywhere. Not so on the Platte. Landowners own the stream bottom, and there are areas in which you can’t get out of the boat (or, for that matter, anchor the boat) without trespassing. To deter gunplay, there are signs along the riverbank that let the oarsman know which areas can be waded, and which areas cannot.

If you go, call ahead to some of the fly shops in the area to get some inside information. And if at all possible, bring a boat, or make arrangements to rent one. Given the trespassing restrictions, you really need a boat to access good areas to wade. My recommendation? Give it a try! It’s only a 4 ½ hour drive. Maybe I’ll see you on the Platte at next year’s Cliffatarian Rendezvous.

# From The President’s Desk By Paul Stabile

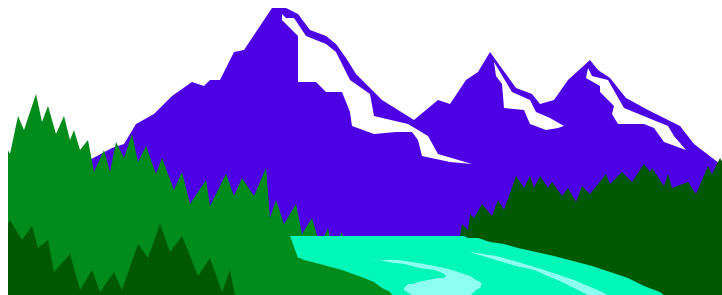
In my opinion, winter has come early. I don’t know about you, but I really miss those spectacular colorful days and warm fall fishing.

Kicking off our BHFF meeting season, I should share that your board of directors has been busy focusing on ways to improve the BHFF, by increasing membership for men and women, focusing on a women in fly-fishing program, and applying for and receiving our tax exempt status, which will, among other benefits, allow for a donation to the BHFF to be

deductible.

The youth program will continue to flourish again this year as well. Shortly, we will be appoint a board development committee to seek new board members. If you are interested, or know of some one who may want to joining a great team of folks, please let me know.

Tight Lines,  
Paul



# A Fly To Tie Shop News

From the bench of Hans Stephenson

## Hidden Bead WD-40

### Materials:

**Hook:** TMC or Targus 2457, TMC or Targus 2487, or Daiichi 1130 size 18-22

**thread:** Dark Brown or Olive 10 or 12/0

**Tail and Wingcase:** Nature's Spirit Mottled Turkey hackle or Mallard flank dyed to match natural

**Abdomen:** Thread

**Thorax:** Black 5/64 tungsten bead and dubbing to match natural

### Tying Procedure:

1. Thread bead onto hook until it butts up against the eye. Start the thread behind the eye and wrap back to the bend.

2. Select a clump of turkey hackle or mallard flank (about a dozen fibers). Tie in the clump, using the fine tips as tails. The tails should be about  $\frac{3}{4}$  the length of the hook. Do not clip off the excess.

3. Wrap thread forward over the excess tailing material until you have covered the rear  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the hook shank.

4. Use a couple wraps of thread to make the excess tailing material lay back. Then apply a small ball of dubbing in front of the excess tailing material.

5. Slide the bead back until it butts up against the dubbing.

6. Transfer your thread to the other side of the bead and apply another small ball of dubbing in front of the bead. You should now have the bead sandwiched between two balls of dubbing.

7. Pull the excess tailing material over the thorax and tie off. Clip of the remainder.

8. Whip finish.

9. Fish.

There's always lots of great stuff happening at Dakota Angler and Outfitter in downtown Rapid City. The shop is a great supporter of the Black Hills Flyfishers. Show your appreciation by supporting the shop. For information about any of the following events, call the shop at 341-2450.

**Fly-Tying Class:** Another beginning class will be starting soon. We need at least two or three students to start the class. Please call Dave at the shop ASAP. 341-2450

**Intermediate Fly-Tying Class:** For those tyers looking to step up to the next level, we would like to start an intermediate class in mid-November. This class will focus on mid-level techniques and apply them to practical patterns. Please call Dave or Hans at the shop to sign up.

**Free Fly-Tying Seminars:** Beginning Saturday, Nov 16 and continuing through December 7, there will be free tying seminars from 10 a.m. to noon. Each week will cover a specific bug group: Mayflies, Stoneflies, midges, etc. Feel free to come and watch and down a couple cups of joe. Material sheets will be provided for each pattern tied.

### The Schedule:

- Nov. 16: Midges from top to bottom
- Nov. 23: Mayflies from top to bottom
- Nov. 30: Caddis from top to bottom
- Dec. 7: Hoppers and Attractors

## BHFF Board Elections Approaching

There will be a few seats available on the BHFF Board of Directors when elections are held in December.

If you would like to be considered for one of those positions, contact Mark Vickers or Steve Buchholz. A nominating committee committee will pour over the piles of expected resumes and submit a slate of candidates to the Board for consideration.

# Fishing By Design by Bradee Beard

I started fly fishing in 1978, while living in the Pacific Northwest. My father's Army buddy, whose three sons were about as interested in fly fishing as I was in cross-stitch, had taken pity on me and taught me the sport. In any event, I was a willing student. Our home river was the McKenzie, east of Eugene, Oregon. For the seven years I lived there, I was busy catching wild Rainbows and Dolly Vardens in Oregon's coastal rivers, and Brookies and land-locked Atlantic Salmon in the mountain lakes. In Oregon, catching a Brown Trout was a rare event, something to be savored. I also fished for (but did not catch) steelhead, but that's another story for another article.

It wasn't until my family and I moved back to South Dakota that I began catching more than a small handful of Browns in a year. It took a while, but it finally sunk in that I had fished all this time and had

been denied a couple of salmonid species. I guess it was because I was learning the ins and outs of fishing for Browns while un-learning about Rainbows and Dollies that I forgot all about Cutthroats for a lot of years. More or less by accident, I learned that Wyoming's Tongue River holds fine populations of Snake River Cutthroat trout. Two years ago, I finally caught my first-ever Cutt, a beautifully colored and marked 14-inch male from the North Tongue River, just west of Burgess Junction. Only later that day did it dawn on me that now, I had now caught four of the five "major" North American trout species. I know, I know - Brookies are char and not trout. And I left out the Lake Trout on purpose. (It's a char, too, and besides, except for keeping them from eating all the Cutthroats in Yellowstone Lake, who gives a s\_\_t about Lakers?)

Artfully dodging the inevitable discussion of whether it's actually a Rainbow or a Cutthroat subspecies (that's yet another article for yet another

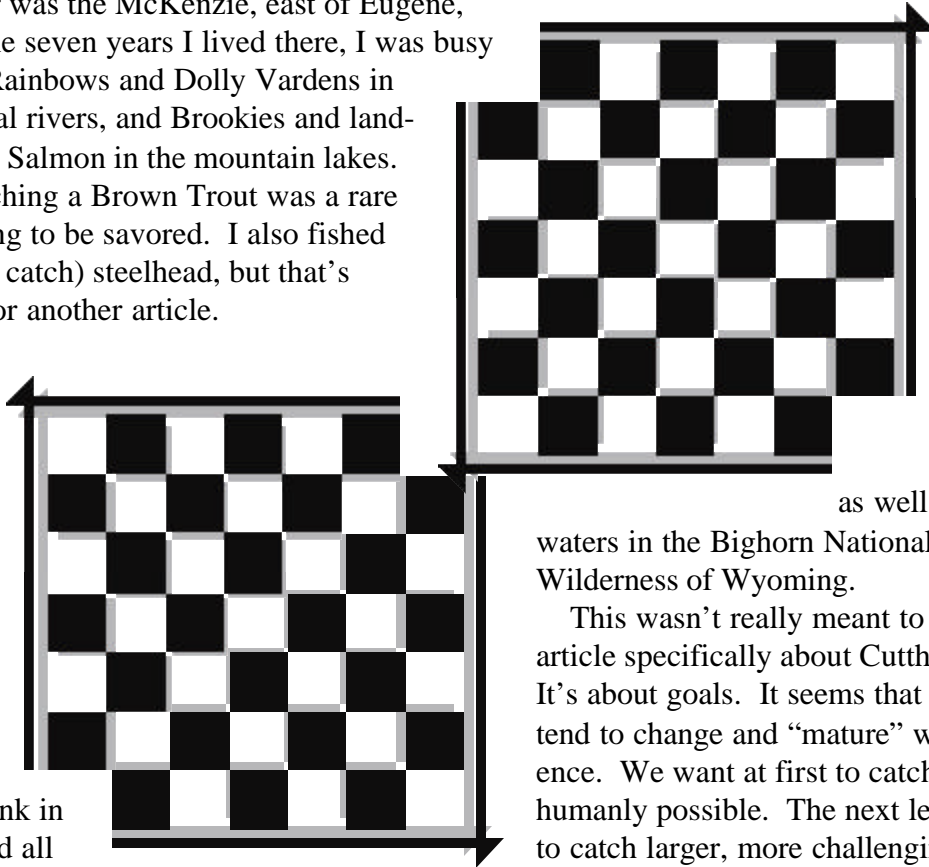
time), my one remaining uncaught member of the "Big Five" is the Golden Trout. I never would have guessed that Golden Trout could be as near or as accessible as they are to us here in Rapid City. Even if you're like me and can only afford "roll your own" outfitted

fishing trips, Golden Trout are still within a day's drive plus a 2- to 3-hour hike. There are a couple of chains of lakes in Montana's Gallatin Valley, just northwest of Yellowstone Park, that hold Golden Trout,

as well as more than a dozen waters in the Bighorn National Forest/Cloud Peak Wilderness of Wyoming.

This wasn't really meant to be a travelogue, or an article specifically about Cutthroats or Golden Trout. It's about goals. It seems that our goals as fly fishers tend to change and "mature" with time and experience. We want at first to catch as many fish as humanly possible. The next level is usually the desire to catch larger, more challenging, "quality" fish, then to catch as many "quality" fish as humanly possible. Usually, my only "goal" when fishing is to enjoy myself - something I pretty much always accomplish when I go fishing. But I must admit I do have one other goal I'm working to achieve, and that is to catch at least one member of each of the major trout species.

I've been so blessed to have caught so many fish and so many "quality" fish over the years it would be nearly sinful to ask for more. Yet, even with this in mind, and even at the risk of being drummed out of the Sons of Piscatorial Piety, I truly am going to feel deprived until I catch my first Golden Trout. So, on those days when it's too cold to be fishing in the Hills, I'll be at home poring over my Montana and Wyoming maps and guide books, planning which water to ply and when, so I can achieve this "newest" goal that began with my first fly-caught trout. I daresn't even think of what my next goal after that might be!



# Angling Report

By Dakota Angler and Outfitter

## Rapid Creek:

Baetis have been hatching fairly thick on overcast days. Size 18 sparkle duns have been the best producer on top; fish small baetis soft hackles and WD 40s (18-22s) below the surface to imitate the emerging nymphs. Midges continue to hatch. Cream Brook's Sprout midges are working for fish feeding on emergers. Nymph fishing has also been productive with small flashback pheasant tails, WD 40s, and glass bead midge pupa.

## Spring Creek:

Spring creek has been troubled with low and warming water. Fishing has

Been poor. The water levels have come up a bit and some parts of the creek are fishable. Most of the rainbows left are currently spawning. (Yes, the rainbows are spawning, the GF&P stocks a fall spawning strain.)

They seem to like black wooly buggers or small red copper johns.



## Castle Creek:

Standard nymph patterns fished deep should be pro-

ductive. (Size 16 pheasant tails and prince nymphs are catching the most fish.) The brookies aren't too particular. Dry flies should continue to work on warmer days. Try attractor dries like Wulff's and stimulators followed by a pheasant tail dropper. Using a dry/dropper rig can be very productive.

## Spearfish Creek:

Try size 18 Rubber Leg Prince Nymphs or Copper Johns near the bottom. Baetis hatches are happening just about any day with a little cloud cover. Size 18 comparaduns, Hairwing Duns, and Brook's Sprout emergers are a sure bet on top. Size 18 flashback Pheasant Tail nymphs in tandem with red midge larva imitations are working well on the bottom. Baetis hatches are really good on overcast afternoons; sparkle duns and Brook's Sprout emergers are the best bet. Fish smaller baetis patterns (20-22s) in the fall, because the species that is hatching is quite a bit smaller than those that hatch in the spring.

## Custer State Park:

Most of the streams are low and fishing poorly.

## Deerfield Lake:

The inlet to Deerfield Lake has been really good. Black and olive wooly buggers are catching some big rainbows. Better hurry up before it is frozen up.

## Black Hills Flyfishers Chases Members

The Black Hills Flyfishers recently launched a membership drive to bring back to the fold the prodigal members who recently left the flock.

Board members Mark Vickers and Steve Buchholz sent letters and brochures to more than 400 people whose memberships have lapsed. The BHFF currently has more than 250 paying members, and Vickers hopes to bump that number as high as possible during the coming year.

"More members means more money for important conservation projects in the Black Hills and more money for education programs," Vickers said.

Vickers encourages all BHFF members to encourage their fly-fishing friends to join the club. If you

know a flyfisher who is not a member, talk to them about the benefits of membership, especially the excellent work the BHFF does to guarantee the future of excellent fishing in the Hills and to create a new generation of fly-fishing enthusiasts.

Vickers and Buchholz are using a brochure the club designed earlier this year. The brochure outlines the history of the club, its mission, and how it goes about accomplishing that mission.

If you would like copy of the brochure for yourself or to give to a prospective member, contact Vickers or Buchholz. Find their numbers on the final page of this newsletter.

# *Flylines*

Published infrequently at the editors' whim, *Flylines* is the voice of the Black Hills Flyfishers. Our editorial policy is to print the news, a portion of which will inevitably be true.

Opinions expressed in *Flylines* are those of the editors or contributors alone, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Black Hills Flyfishers. Opinions held by the Black Hills Flyfishers or its board will be clearly designated.

Comments or questions regarding this publication, or requests for additional information pertaining to the Black Hills Flyfishers can be directed to one of two newsletter lackeys:

- Mark Vickers, PO Box 8124, Rapid City, S.D. 57709. Call him at (605) 342-4769.
- Steve Buchholz, 10530 Nemo Road, Rapid City, S.D. 57702. Call him at (605) 355-9508.

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## The BHFF Board of Directors

Members of the the Black Hills Flyfishers Board of Directors serve three-year terms. The Board makes financial and policy decisions for the BHFF. Direct questions to any of the members. Most of them are good guys.

**Paul Stabile**, President, 343-7864

**Bradee Beard**, 343-9457

**Jeff Burns**, 343-2800 (office)/343-9732 (home)

**Bill Coburn**, 642-7234 (home) / 642-7741 (office)

**Mark Vickers**, 342-4769 (home)/342-7676 (office)

**Ev Hoyt**, 343-2707 (home)/721-2397 (office)

**Steve Buchholz**, 355-9508 (home)/394-6082 (office)

**Jim LaFreniere**, 341-5813

**Harvey Crow**, 343-5416

**Jim Phoenix**, 341-0088

**Bill Potter**, 348-0281

**Bob DeMersseman**, 721-6643(h) / 343-1880 (o)

**Mike DeMersseman**, 343-3130 (h) / 342-2814 (o)

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## Black Hills Flyfishers Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

BHFF annual dues are \$15 for a regular membership, and \$35 or more for a contributor level. Please make checks payable to Black Hills Flyfishers.

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PO Box 1621

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