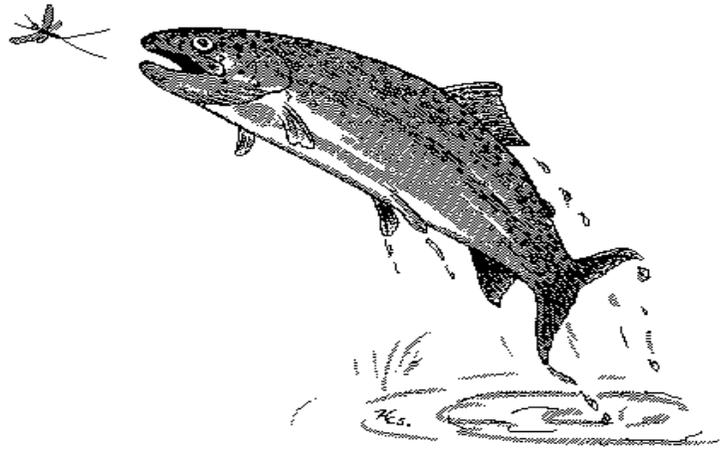


The Evergreen Trout



January 2008

The Newsletter of the Evergreen Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Vol. 26 No. 1

Bear Creek Update

After a careful review of data from the past two years on fish counts and an analysis of newly collected information on bug life in Bear Creek, ETU and Colorado Trout Unlimited have decided to not contest a proposal by the state to remove the stream from those listed for "monitoring and evaluation."

In a filing with the state Water Quality Control Commission Jan 3, ETU and CTU cautioned, however, that they remain concerned that the underlying temperature issues in the stream have not been solved and that problems could easily recur if those concerns are not addressed.

Several times in recent years, stream temperatures have exceeded the normally accepted standards for trout over short periods, even though those temperatures did not violate current state standards.

Nevertheless, ETU and CTU agreed that the trout population has shown substantial improvement since 2004, when the stream was first listed for monitoring and evaluation. One site showing significant improvement is O'Fallon Park, where ETU conducted a major stream improvement project four years ago.

In 2004 and again in 2006, ETU and CTU argued that Bear Creek should be placed on the even more restrictive 303(d) list as an endangered stream because the data showed it had not recovered. Though the state rejected that argument each time, choosing instead to list the stream only for "monitoring and evaluation," the EPA overruled the state and placed the stream on the 303(d) list.

This year, the EPA has also indicated it will accept a downgrading of the listing because of the improvements shown in the stream.

Meanwhile, ETU continues to pursue other projects that might help the stream. The week of January 21, a group from ETU and Evergreen Metro District is scheduled to survey possible sites for a silt trap on Cub Creek as a

way to reduce the amount of silt being dumped into Bear Creek below Evergreen Lake.

Also, late last year, as a result of a proposal from ETU, Evergreen Metro District agreed to consider an engineering study to determine the viability of a by-pass to move cooler water from Upper Bear Creek to the stream below the lake in an effort to offset the impact of warm lake water going over the dam on particularly hot summer days.

- Karen Christopherson and John Haile

The Evergreen Trout Fishing Report

Where have YOU been fishing lately? Let Mike Goldblatt know at mike@lamtree.com or give him a call and let him know about your latest trip.

For the next three months there isn't much to report about here in Colorado except for tailwaters. So we'll profile one tailwater each month and maybe examine a warmer destination as well. This month, let's look at Cheesman Canyon on the South Fork of the South Platte River and at Mexico's Yucatan Peninsula.

Cheesman Canyon

Cheesman Canyon is a world famous trout fishery that most front range anglers have fished many times. If you are new to the area or have just never made it up there, it's 55 minutes, if you drive as fast as I do, from Evergreen to the Gill Trail parking lot. From the trail head, it's about a mile hike to the river. Once at the river, there are about three miles of water available to the angler, from Cheesman dam down to the private waters of the Wigwam Club. The trout of Cheesman Canyon are notoriously picky about what they eat. Generally you will be nymph fishing with flies in the #20 - #24 range, usually midge and mayfly imitations such as RS2's, Mercury Midges, Blood

The Evergreen Chapter of Trout Unlimited meets the third Wednesday of the month at Beau Jo's Pizzeria in downtown Evergreen (across from the Little Bear). Join us for Dinner/Chapter Business/Classes at 6:30pm followed by the program at ~7:00pm. We look forward to seeing YOU there!

Fishing Report (continued)

Midges, Pheasant Tails and the like. A midge hatch is pretty common in winter during the warmest part of the day, but tie on that #26 dry fly quickly because it usually doesn't last long. These fish have seen it all, so use stealth and 6x - 7x tippet. You'll have the most success if you sight fish. Since the Hayman fire in 2002, there have been silt problems especially after heavy rains. But the fishery continues to recover. There are large rainbows in these waters and a healthy population of browns. Even in winter the stream can be pretty crowded with anglers, but if you hike in a ways, the crowds thin out quite a bit. The canyon is spectacular with giant boulders strewn about the riverbed. Large ponderosa pines line the canyon and bald eagles soar above it. Recent reports indicate a typical winter flow of 50 cfs, with good fishing to those skilled enough to fool these wary trout.

Yucatan Bonefishing

If you've never fished saltwater before, the Yucatan Peninsula in Mexico is a great destination. The main reason is that there are large numbers of bonefish in huge schools; and, if you are a decent caster, you will probably have many hookups. The bones are not known to be very large in this area. I would consider the average bone to be 2-3 pounds in the Ascension Bay area, with some larger of course. Using shrimp patterns such as Crazy Charlies and Gotchas, it is common to be able to pick off bones one after another on the edges of the schools. But you can scare off the entire school if you make a bad cast. Many people prefer to search for a single bonefish or pairs of them because it is more fun and more sporting.

There are also many permit lurking in these waters. Known as "the ghost of the flats" because of their wariness, permit are extremely difficult to catch. On my only trip to this area, I became a little obsessed with landing a permit. I gave up fishing for bonefish for the better part of two days trying to get a permit. I never did. In fact, in our group of fifteen anglers, only one angler landed a permit in four full days of fishing. But the thrill of sight-casting to a fish that elusive, large and beautiful is something you'll never forget.

There is also good fishing for baby tarpon in the mangrove channels as well as a nice spring run of larger migratory tarpon.

The guides are usually very good at spotting fish, but there is often a language barrier. If you can't punch out 40-60 feet of line within a few seconds into the wind and with accuracy, you will have a very animated Mayan guide screaming things at you that you may not understand. All in all, this is a beautiful area that you should consider visiting.

Other diversions

I'm not an ice fisherman, but people I know who engage in this strange behavior report amazing catches at Antero Reservoir. I've seen pictures of fish pulled through the ice recently weighing six, eight, ten pounds and more. The fish in this impoundment grow very rapidly and they are apparently very hungry these days.

I fished the San Juan tailwater below Navajo Reservoir December 29 - January 1. The reservoir had "turned over" just a few days before we got there. This is when the water at the bottom becomes relatively warmer than the surface water and rises up. The water becomes discolored in the process. At least I think that is how it works. The flow was a very fishable 750 cfs, however with the discoloration and moss flowing in mid-current, the only patterns that worked at all were big, bright streamers such as white bunny leaches and pink San Juan worms. Even using these bright patterns, it was not a memorable trip to say the least. It is usually pretty mild in this area in winter, but this time it was 25 - 30 degrees with some wind. Pretty brutal. Next New Year's, I may just hunker down indoors with the sane people.

- Mike Goldblatt

Fly of the Month: Hot Tail Flash Egg

At our November program, we heard the virtues of the egg pattern as the top fly when fishing the Colorado, Roaring Fork, Crystal and Frying Pan rivers. Then over the holidays, I was talking with Pat Dorsey and Steve Parrot at the Blue Quill about the best flies for winter and spring fishing. Suddenly Pat, too, was talking about egg patterns as one of the best when fishing closer to home - the Blue and pretty much anywhere on the South Platte.

So I asked Pat to tie the one he would turn to first. It's our January fly: the Hot Tail Flash. It's simple and quick. And Pat insists it is really effective as the top fly above one of his well-known small midges. You often will see him talking about it in his online fishing reports, so he has to have a lot of confidence in it.

Recipe

Hook: TMC 2487 The one used here is a #16, but this can be tied routinely in a #14 to #18. You could also use a TMC 2457 or 2488 hook. Make the most of what you have.

Thread: Danville's 6/0, orange. Needs to be able to cinch the fluffy foam nice and tight without breaking.

Tail: Pearl Tinsel or Pearl Flashabou Micro. Should you be looking for this at the shop, tinsel comes on a spool; flashabou doesn't.

Egg: McFly Foam, egg color and dark orange. Here, the egg color was used for the outside of the egg because

Fly of the Month (continued)

it was what I had in my pocket that matched the pattern Pat wanted to tie. The dark orange forms the inside of the egg.

Tying Instructions

Like so many of Pat's flies, this one is sparse. He cautions right up front that people too often end up fishing with eggs that are just too big. The goal is a small, tight fly.

Start by tying your thread about one-third of the shank length back from the eye of the hook, working your way back to an equal distance from the bend of the hook. Now tie in a length of the thin tinsel or flashabou that's about $1\frac{1}{2}$ times the length of the hook. Work the thread back forward, stopping in the middle of the hook.

Now take two fairly thin strips of the egg-colored McFly foam and form it like a hot dog bun around an even thinner strip of the dark orange-colored McFly foam and lay all of that length wise right on top of the shank of the hook. Just bring your thread up and over and tie it all down right across the middle with three or four tight wraps, making each wrap just a little tighter so that it cinches up nicely. There are no fancy figure eights or any other unusual wraps here. It is really simple. Lift your thread up and over and move it forward, and tie off.

Next, pull the foam straight up and cut off with some really sharp scissors or a razor blade. Use an arching motion to help create the rounded egg shape. The size of the egg will be determined by how close you make the cut. The foam should then fluff out into pretty much the egg shape you are looking for, but not quite. Take your fingers and move the foam around to make sure it goes completely around the hook. Now take your sharp scissors or razor blade and trim the foam to smooth it out to get the finished look you see in Pat's pattern.

- John Haile



Lay down a thread base and tie in the tinsel.



Tie in the McFly foam.



The finished Hot Tail Flash Egg.

CTU Hopes to Expand, Bolster Colorado's In-stream Flow Program

(Reprinted from CTU Currents)

Within TU we hold this truth to be self evident: "Fish need water every day." Unfortunately, Colorado in the 21st Century feels the drag of a 19th Century mindset. If enough people demand all the water they're entitled to at the same time, fish lose. And, as we saw during recent dry years, fish are left with only enough water to keep the stream barely alive - if that.

The obvious solution to these problems is to keep more water in streams. More water means a cleaner, colder stream and healthier riparian habitat.

Since 1973, one state agency, the Colorado Water Conservation Board (CWCB) has had the authority to acquire water for instream flow purposes. The CWCB has filed for more than 2,000 instream flow rights since then, but they are almost all junior rights that can be meaningless if a stream is over-appropriated - and most are. The CWCB also has the authority to lease and purchase senior water

from willing sellers, including - under a law championed by CTU a few years ago, the ability to dedicate water to enhancing aquatic environments, not just providing bare minimum flow. But leases and acquisitions have happened all too rarely, for a combination of reasons:

- CWCB has not secured funds for such acquisitions in its budget;
- Even for donors of water, the costs of going through water court to transfer water into a new instream flow use can reach into six figures;
- For those who lease water, Colorado's use it or lose it doctrine means that they risk diminishment or loss of their water if they lease it to the CWCB for an instream flow; and
- There has been a lack of political will within the CWCB to encourage such acquisitions.

There are a few simple solutions that could go a long way toward strengthening Colorado's instream flow program and put water back in our streams. And come January, CTU and its partners - including Environmental Defense and the Colorado Environmental Coalition - will try to convince the Colorado General Assembly to give those solutions the force of law: First, create tax credits - similar to those for traditional conservation easements - that would encourage water rights holders to donate water for instream flows. Second, appropriate funds for the CWCB to acquire water rights and assist with transaction costs. And third, eliminate the use-it-or-lose-it deterrent for instream flow leases, so that those who provide water to help the state and their community are rewarded instead of punished. We hope you'll join us and lend your support to this effort. Stay tuned.

Colorado Supreme Court Rules in Favor of TU

(Reprinted from CTU Currents)

In October, the Colorado Supreme Court ruled in favor of Trout Unlimited (TU) in an important case challenging water rights for a proposed municipal water system in Archuleta County. The case started in December of 2004 when the Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation and San Juan Water Conservancy Districts filed for conditional water rights for the proposed Dry Gulch Reservoir and Pump Station. The reservoir, which would be constructed on a small tributary to the San Juan River, would store 35,000 acre-feet of water, and the pump station would divert as much as 200 cubic feet of water per second from the San Juan. The water was requested to serve population growth in Archuleta County through the year 2100, but far exceeded reasonable projections of what would be needed

for the area's growth.

Concerned that the diversion would significantly impact San Juan River flows, TU's Colorado Water Project challenged the application, arguing that the districts did not need the amount of water they claimed. The Water Division Seven District Court ruled in favor of the project, and TU appealed to the Colorado Supreme Court, alleging the districts' claims were speculative.

The Supreme Court reversed the lower decision, instructing the water court to reevaluate the districts' future water needs. The Supreme Court established a new standard for water courts to apply in determining the water amount to which a municipality is entitled for future growth. That standard prohibits a water utility from claiming water rights to serve growth too far into the future, requires the utility to substantiate its population growth projections, and mandates that the water court consider the reductions in water demand that would arise from water conservation.

The San Juan is a 400 mile long tributary of the Colorado. Its headwaters are in southwestern Colorado near Wolf Creek Pass, along the southern slope of the San Juan Mountains.

The proposed site for the Dry Gulch reservoir is 60.5 miles east of Durango and 1.5 miles north east of Pagosa Springs.

"This decision is significant not only because it will help to protect the San Juan River, but because it establishes a precedent throughout Colorado that municipal water providers cannot claim water rights for which they do not have a clear need," said Drew Peternell, Director of the Colorado Water Project and the attorney who handled the case.

Already the Supreme Court's new standard is having an impact on other water providers' plans. Just a month after the Supreme Court ruled in TU's favor in the Dry Gulch case, Denver Water agreed to abandon a portfolio of water rights for the proposed Eagle-Piney Project. The project would have diverted enormous quantities of water from the Eagle and Piney Rivers to the Front Range, depleting high quality West Slope trout fisheries. Peternell posits that Denver, facing a court challenge to its Eagle-Piney Project, had no choice but to relinquish its Eagle-Piney Project water rights: "The Supreme Court decision in the Dry Gulch case was a clear signal to Denver that it could not justify on any legal grounds the Eagle-Piney water rights."



EVERGREEN TROUT UNLIMITED MONTHLY PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 16, 2008

LOCATION: BEAU JO'S
(Downtown Evergreen, 303-670-2744)



DINNER AT 6:30 P.M., CHAPTER BUSINESS AT 7:00 P.M.

FREE PRESENTATION AT 7:15 P.M. www.evergreentrout.org

FEATURING NOTED AUTHOR AND FLY FISHERMAN,

RON BELAK,

“An Unbiased Guide to Fly Fishing Alaska”



Have you ever thought about going to Alaska to catch some really big fish? Interested in pursuing rainbows, dollies, silvers, steelhead, and grayling? Join us on Wednesday, January 16 when ETU member Ron Belak will present a slide show on "Fly Fishing Alaska -- A Coloradan's Perspective." Contrary to most programs on Alaska that hard sell a particular lodge, Ron will share tips on an assortment of locations and their timing from the perspective

of a Colorado fly fisherman. Even if you are a veteran Alaskan angler, you will enjoy the program because the next best thing to fishing in the Last Frontier is talking about it.

Besides being an outstanding volunteer for Evergreen Trout Unlimited, Ron is a noted author and photographer whose work appears in Colorado Outdoors, American Angler and Fly Fisherman magazines.

??? What's Happening ???

January 2008

- 9th (W) **ETU Board Meeting**
6:30p Beau Jo's
- 16th (W) **ETU Chapter Meeting**
6:30p Dinner and chapter business
7:00p Prog. - Ron Belak

February 2008

- 13th (W) **ETU Board Meeting**
6:30p Beau Jo's
- 20th (W) **ETU Chapter Meeting**
6:30p Dinner and chapter business
7:00p Prog. - To Be Announced

Chapter Contacts

President	Open	
Vice President	Ken Wilbert <k_wilbert@msn.com>	674-5162
Treasurer	Steve Murray <murray_sp@msn.com>	670-7942
Secretary	John Haile <johnhaile@aol.com>	679-3262
Progs/Members	Randy Huiting <rhuiting@comcast.net>	670-5083
News Editor	Tim Stechert <tstechert@wispertel.net>	674-1337
Special Projects	Hugh Gardner <hughgardner@gmail.com>	697-5876
Youth Ed	John Ellis <jellis@enbcolorado.com>	674-1017
Youth Ed	Jim Wilborn <jpwilborn@hotmail.com>	670-3306
At Large	Mike Goldblatt <mike@lamtree.com>	674-7122
At Large	Wayne Kosloske	674-4092
At Large	Rich Reynolds <MDIRich@msn.com>	674-4861
At Large	Tim Haller <troutguy@speedtrail.net>	674-5426
At Large	Len Wheaton	674-4243
At Large	Phil Waters <philh2o@aol.com>	670-1344
Webmaster	Karen Christopherson <kc@coloradofishing.net>	674-0252

CTU Office Very nice folks 440-2937

All phone numbers are area code 303 unless otherwise noted

On the web: www.tu.org www.cotrout.org www.evergreentrout.org
Contact any of us with questions, suggestions, or spare time.

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Evergreen Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 1974
Evergreen CO 80437-1974



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