



# The *Flyline*

The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association

December, 2021



Congratulations to Tom Murray

Tom was named the 2021 Hagie Heritage Award Winner by the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation.

Joe Jayjack of INHF provided this photo.

See Kate Lodge's article about tom receiving the award on page 6



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# The President's Hatch

## BREAKING NEWS

The 2022 HFFA Annual Meeting and Show has been postponed until the same weekend of March, 2023. That's March 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023. Put this one on your calendar now, as if we have to postpone it again, this country will be in deep trouble.

### The board postponed the 2022 meeting for several reasons:

1. The dramatic rise in Covid-19 infections occurring in Iowa right now
2. We are an affiliate of the FFI
3. We have our insurance through the FFI
4. FFI is recommending against group meetings
5. FFI requires meeting attendees provide proof of vaccination to a club official prior to attending the meeting
6. FFI requires that attendees show proof of a negative Covid test result within the previous 24 hours at the door
7. If these requirements are in effect on March of 2022, that would curtail walk-in attendance, an important factor for the Central Iowa Fly Fishers' show
8. And finally, the Badger Spring Opener (confirmed) and the SWTU Icebreaker (hear-say) in Madison are cancelled for 2022

We were shown a diagram of the HFFA's 2023 Show venue's layout at our recent board meeting, and it looks awesome. It looks like more room than we have ever had, and even has an area for indoor casting demonstrations, instruction, trying out new rods, or even practice. I'm really looking forward to the 2023 HFFA Show for many reasons. The show should be fantastic, but more importantly, I'm looking forward to the world getting back to normal, even if it is a new normal.



John Carl Miller

This decision is very hard on the volunteers of the CIFF, so if you can lend a hand in any way before the 2023 show, I'm sure they would appreciate it.

Now let me tell you about Bloody Run. It's about 20 miles from Elkader, where I grew up, but I didn't fish it until I took up fly fishing in the 1990s. My brothers and I fished, but although we went to the trout hatchery outside of Elkader it wasn't to fish. It was one of the places that we launched our canoes, as we canoed most weekends after we reached Junior High age.

When I did start fly fishing, it became my "go to" stream for weekend fishing trips. I fished it even in the winter if the guides didn't ice over too often. I can show you where I caught my first trout over eighteen inches long, and how I had to fight it to keep it from breaking me off on the ice sheet at the upper end of the pool.

I remember the day I met Brian Larson at Bloody Run and we parked a car at the lower end of the stream, drove up to Spook Cave, and fished our way back to the parked car. It took all day, but we were much younger then (mid 40s). The fishing was good, the scenery great, and the feeling of being all alone in a wilderness area something that one doesn't find often in this part of the US.

I can vividly picture the winter day that I fished Bloody Run alone, something that I don't do now (my youngest brother will be 70 on Friday, and I am the oldest of 4 of us, all born within four and a half years). I was past the third bridge and it was lunchtime. I had a sandwich and then found a comfortable spot on a fallen tree. I was able to recline in the sun, with my bright blue down coat absorbing the sun's rays. It was the most enjoyable nap that I have ever taken.

On one occasion, Gary Woerdehoff and I stood side by side, in a riffle, casting to rising fish. They were small, but we lost count of the number of fish that we caught.

The bottom line is that this is a wonderful fishing opportunity located right in our back yard. We don't have to drive to Montana or elsewhere to find fish and solitude. Remember to support the "Save Bloody Run" campaign as it gets into high gear.

AND, if you do only one thing this year, remember to **renew your membership**. Our voice is much stronger with a large membership behind us.

*John*

### For Sale

Mike Miller HFFA member and new fly fisher passed away this year. His wife donated his nearly new equipment to HFFA. This would have been used in the 2022 show. Now it is being offered for sale with the proceeds going to the general fund.

White Water graphite 8.5 ft.5 wt rod	\$80
White Water reel with 5wt line	\$90
White Water rod caddy for rod and reel	\$30
Frogg Tog chest waders, look unused	\$150
Cabela's wading boots with stud, look new	\$80
Carry Bag for all stuff with vents	\$50
Wading staff	\$10
Landing net	\$10

The prices are estimated value. Asking \$500 for the whole package. Can be separated. Delivery can be arranged.

Contact Dean Elder  
641-752-4840



**Help Support  
Port-a-Potties at N&S Bear Creeks  
Go Fund Me**

<https://www.gofundme.com/port-a-potty>

# Contacts & Meetings

## 2020 Board of Directors

### John Miller, President

1890 Wood St.  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
dbqflyfisher@mchsi.com

### Ron Stahlberg, Vice President

1412 Pine Ridge Lane NE  
Swisher, IA 52338  
flyfish@southslope.net

### Dave Jones, Secretary

2672 Becky Thatcher Rd.  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
dave.jones@kentww.com

### Brad Mullin, Treasurer

P.O. Box 8145  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408  
mullinb1427@yahoo.com

### Kate Lodge, Past President

209 S. Vail  
Genesco, IL 61254  
katelodge25@gmail.com

### Willa Campbell, Director

7701 Goodman Dr.  
Urbandale, IA 53022  
willacamp@gmail.com

### John Channon, Director

582 Belmont Rd.  
Riverdale, IA 52722  
jc.channon@mchsi.com

### Mike Stallsmith, Director

6520 Kingsley Ct.  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
decoydux@gmail.com

### Martin Acerbo, Director

3114 34th Place  
Des Moines, IA 50310  
macerbo@iastate.edu

### CR/IC, Director

Vacant

### Hank Moeller, Work Day Contact

hankjmoe@gmail.com  
319-389-1334

### Davis Horton, Conservation Chair

dhorton@hardincountyia.gov  
515-577-6619

### Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

Meets 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of Month  
7 to 9 pm

Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Iowa Chapter

7025 Hickman Road Ste #1  
Urbandale, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders  
iaflyfisher@q.com

### Quad Cities Chapter

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday Every Month  
6:00 pm to 8+

QCCA Expo Center  
2621 4th Ave. Rock Island

Contact: John Channon  
jc.channon@mchsi.com

### Dubuque Fly Fishers

Meets 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 7:00 pm  
October to May

Swiss Valley Nature Center  
13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Dubuque,  
IA

Contact: Mike Stallsmith  
president@dubuqueflyfishers.org

### Central Iowa Fly Fishers

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday 9:00 am Sep-  
tember to May

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart  
Church

510 East 1<sup>st</sup> St., Ankeny, IA

Contact: Kirk Rosenow  
kcrosenow@gmail.com

### Iowa City Chapter

Contact: Ryan Maas  
maas\_ryan@yahoo.com

### Cedar Rapids Fly Fishers

Contact: Lance Zook  
l.a.zook@mchsi.com

### TROUT UNLIMITED

#### NORTH BEAR CHAPTER

Meetings held second Thursday  
of month

September – May, Starting at  
6:30 pm.

The Tavern Pizza & Pasta Grill  
1755 50th St.

West Des Moines, IA

Website: tu-northbear.org

Jason Hochstetler - President  
president@tu-northbear.org

### TROUT UNLIMITED

#### DRIFTLESS CHAPTER

Meets the first Thursday of the  
month October through May @

7:00 pm in the basement of  
T-Bocks Sports Bar and Grill,

206 Water St. Decorah

www.iadriftless.org

### Iowa Women Fly Fishers

Beginner or Skilled

Meet other Women Fly Fishers

Des Moines or North Liberty

katelodge25@gmail.com

willacamp@gmail.com

### Trout Unlimited

#### Spring Creeks Chapter

Ray Thys – President

Check Their Facebook

www.facebook.com/springcreekstu

### Iowa's Coldwater

#### Conservancy

Tom Murray

jandtmurray@gmail.com

# Event Calendar

<p><b>Check with local contact on events</b></p> <p><b>January 2022</b></p> <p>January <b>Cancelled</b>  <b>Southern Wisconsin TU Icebreaker</b>          American Family Insurance          Madison, WI          www.swt.org</p> <p><b>February 2022</b></p> <p>February <b>Cancelled</b>  <b>Badger Fly Fishers</b>  <b>Fly Fishing Spring Opener</b>          American Family Insurance          Madison, WI          www.badgerflyfishers.com</p> <p>February 22  <b>Wisconsin TU Council Banquet</b>          Oshkosh, WI          Scott Allen          jscottallen12@gmail.com</p> <p><b>March 2022</b></p> <p>March 11 - 13  <b>HFFA Annual Fly Fishing Show</b>  <b>Cancelled</b></p> <p>March 18 - 20  <b>Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo</b>          Hamline University          St. Paul, MN          info@greatwatersflyexpo.com</p> <p>March 24,25,26  <b>Sowbug Roundup 2022</b>          Baxter County Fairgrounds          Mountain Home , AR          tipton1064@gmail.com</p>	<p><b>April 2022</b></p> <p>April ?  <b>Driftless TU Work Day</b>          9:00 AM to noon          1280 Quandahl Rd          1 mile East of Highlandville          Steve Perry          641-423-7655</p> <p><b>May 2022</b></p> <p>May ?  <b>HFFA Bluegill Outing</b>          Dan Peterson          319-931-2630</p> <p><b>June 2022</b></p> <p>June ?  <b>Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics</b>          wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com</p> <p><b>July 2022</b></p> <p>July ?  <b>FFI Fly Fishing Fair</b>          www.flyfishersinternational.org</p> <p>July 31  <b>Deadline for State Fair Tying Contest</b>          State Fair Administration          P.O. Box 57130          Des Moines, Iowa 50317</p> <p><b>August 2022</b></p> <p><b>September 2022</b></p> <p>September ?  <b>8th Annual Brule River Spey Day</b>          Lake Superior Steelhead Assn          Brule River @ McNeil House, Brule, WI          www.steelheaders.org</p>	<p>September 30 - October 2  <b>2022 Casting for Recovery IA</b>          Camp Ewalu's Stone Retreat          Strawberry Point, IA 52076          Applications after January 2022          jknorris57@gmail.com</p> <p><b>October 2022</b></p> <p>October ?  <b>6th Annual Driftless Flyathon</b>          Yellow River State Forest          flyathon@driftlessonthefly.com</p> <p>October ?</p> <p><b>November 2022</b></p> <p><b>December 2022</b></p>
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The Flyline is the official publication of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. It is published in April, June, September, and December. The HFFA is a chapter of the Fly Fishers International. Articles may be submitted as MS Word or as a text file. Typed, printed or clearly handwritten documents are also accepted. Photos can be submitted digitally. Send original jpeg. Deadline is one month before publication. Send all materials to:

Don Otto, The Flyline Editor  
 hawkeyeflyfisher@gmail.com  
 641-230-1468

**Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association  
 Membership Application**

New                       Renewal                       Change of Address Information

Check Membership Category:                      Conservation Contribution:

\$25 Member                                               \$10 (Glass)

\$10 Youth Member (18 and under)                       \$20 (Graphite)

\$15 Senior Member (65 or older)                       \$30 (Boron)

\$45 Family Membership                                               \$..... (Cane, over \$50)

\$300 Life Member

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to & mail to:  
 Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association  
 P.O. Box 8145  
 Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

# HFFA Business Report

## Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association Board Meeting

November 13, 2021

Notes from John Carl Miller

In attendance

President – John Carl Miller

Director at Large – Willa Campbell

Director (QC) – John Channon

Director (CIFF) – Martin Acerbo

Director (IC/CR) – Ron Stahlberg

Conservation - Davis Horton

Coordinator of Fisheries and Environmental Protection - Steve Veysey (reported by phone)

Approval of Minutes **Waived reading of minutes**

Financial Report **Copies for all: some slight clarifications**

2022 Show discussion **SHOW POSTPONED UNTIL MARCH 10-12, 2023 by unanimous vote (Covid-19)**

1. Names and addresses (w/phone numbers) of all committee members and their title

a. Committee chair: Martin Acerbo **resigned as chair, but will continue to help. Willa will communicate with President, John Miller, and the HFFA board.**

b. Committee members: Mike Schrader, Kirk Rosenow (**President of CIFF**), Jesse Bainter, Ben Olson, Mike Brodel, Domoto, Paul A, Chip Hildebrand, Willa Campbell, Davis Horton **Postponing may cause some restructuring**

c. Donations chair: Name: Davis Horton

2. Cost of venue **Cost is appropriate for area and amazing extent of the venue**

3. Motels with competitive prices (list and prices) **Higher priced ones are within walking, others 1 mile, shuttle may be available Food Trucks may be available for lunch on the premises.**

4. Last date that we can cancel without losing a lot of money **Postponing may cost HFFA \$250.00**

Future Shows

1. Compile requirements for each show **(did not discuss)**

2. Discuss one day show **ZOOM meeting in January (coordinated by Ron Stahlberg) to discuss what the HFFA board or others can do to help with the 2023 show, and to discuss the possibility of making it (or one to follow) into a Mega-show. Follow up meeting (maybe in person) to be held April 2, 2-22.**

3. 2023 Iowa City (Stahlberg)

**John Miller will inquire to the FFI (insurance division) as to whether HFFA board members are indemnified against lawsuits (brought up because of the Covid-19 requirements/risks).**

Elections: **WITHOUT the Annual Meeting, no election will be held. Therefore, those on the board will continue to serve unless they opt to give up the position.**

1. Quad Cities chapter: John Channon has served 4 years, the maximum. **John wishes to resign, so it is up to the Quad Cities Chapter to appoint a replacement.**

Awards: **Because we need to keep the conservation effort in front of the members (and others), the board decided to give out 2022 awards.** (since these are supposed to be a surprise I deleted this part, editor)

**Membership Committee Report:** Ron Stahlberg, Willa Campbell, Hank Moeller

**MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS: Due to the postponement of the 2022 Show and Meeting, membership renewal is still needed to continue doing the conservation work that we have been doing. John Miller will develop a renewal request, including a list of conservation spending from recent years, for the March (or closest) HFFA Flyline.**

**Web Site:** Ryan Mass; Web site Manager and Facebook (Hire someone) Report via e-mail. Web domain is secure through April of 2022. **Ryan has a meeting with a Marketing Company next Friday, but wants to be relieved of Web duties by January of 2022. The club need someone to step up to manage the web site and face book.**

**Save Bloody Run Campaign:** Steve Veysey will report Steve reported by phone:

Supreme Beef still has only 800 cattle in the first confinement building.

All regular water testing has been completed: 4 or 5 sites were high in E. coli and ammonia.

Just did emergency testing after the rain event on Thursday, 11-11-21.

The lawsuit is being re-filed in Polk County after being rejected in Clayton County. Should hear within 20 days.

Big Question: Will the judge allow expanded evidentiary records?

The committee is working on a Government Ethics complaint because of the interference of Sen. Dan Zumbach.

Confirmed that dynamite was used to build the sewage lagoon (illegal in Karst Topography) (they hit bedrock)

HFFA MEMBERS CAN HELP: With letters to the editor: with calls or letters to legislators.

Editors Note: John modified his agenda to provide information to the members of the board meeting.

# Items of Interest

www.SaveBloodyRun.org

November 2021

The effort continues to prevent an 11,600-head cattle feedlot from polluting Clayton County's Bloody Run Creek, a premier trout stream that also is designated an "Outstanding Iowa Water."

The Iowa Sierra Club has sued the Iowa Department of Natural Resources (DNR) for approving a nutrient management plan (NMP) to apply manure to dozens of crop fields, many of which are highly erodible. The Sierra Club charges that the DNR and Supreme Beef LLC ignored DNR regulations and under-calculated the amount of nitrogen and phosphorus in the manure. Thus, Supreme Beef LLC does not have adequate cropland for the crops to use the manure's nutrients. This will lead to over-application of manure, and to runoff and water pollution. This threatens not only Bloody Run, but also North Cedar, Sny Magill, Roberts Creek, and other Driftless Area waters.

In addition, the 39-million-gallon lagoon in which the manure will be stored was designed and given a DNR permit to hold wastewater from methane digesters – not as a manure storage basin. When the facility began construction in 2017, it was called Walz Energy, with a plan to use manure from 10,000 cattle, along with food waste from convenience stores, to produce biogas in methane digesters.

Now the methane digester idea has been abandoned and Walz Energy has become Supreme Beef LLC, with the number of cattle increased to 11,600.

Although construction of six barns and the lagoon has continued since 2017, the only cattle on site so far are a few hundred animals that have been fed in an existing building for a number of years. Start-up of the new operation apparently has been delayed by financial and legal problems. Walz/Supreme has been assessed DNR fines for several environmental violations.

The ad hoc Committee to Save Bloody Run, headed by long-time Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association leader Steve Veysey and Clayton County environmentalist Larry Stone, has done water testing in Bloody Run and several other streams. The data collected will provide baseline information to help monitor the potential impacts of future manure application on water quality.

The Sierra Club and the Committee to Save Bloody Run are not anti-agriculture. But Supreme Beef LLC is in the WRONG PLACE. Karst topography, with cold-water streams, sinkholes, springs, and fractured limestone conduits into the aquifer, is not the place for 11,600 head of cattle. If we cannot protect an "Outstanding Iowa Water," what can we protect?

For The Committee to Save Bloody Run  
Larry Stone - lstone@alpinecom.net  
Steve Veysey - sveysey@gmail.com

*Larry*

## 2021 Lawrence & Eula Hagie Heritage Award

The Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation is proud to recognize Tom Murray with the 2021 Lawrence & Eula Hagie Heritage Award. This award honors Tom's outstanding commitment to conservation, particularly protection of coldwater streams in northeast Iowa.

The Hagie Heritage Award was established in 1989 by Jan Shindel of DeWitt, Iowa, and Ila Jeanne Logan of Merville, Iowa, in honor of their parents, Lawrence and Eula Hagie. It is awarded to Iowans who demonstrate extraordinary personal service and commitment to improving the quality of Iowa's natural environment and who encourage others to do the same.

Tom was nominated for his work in protecting and expanding access to coldwater trout streams throughout Iowa. He's involved with many local conservation groups, notably serving as the first Board President of Iowa's Coldwater Conservancy. He played a crucial role in fundraising, improving diversity on the board and helping landowners and conservation groups understand threats to local streams such as runoff from surrounding properties and the loss of public access to cold water trout streams in Iowa. Tom is a founding member of the Driftless Chapter of Trout Unlimited and a board member of the nonprofit Friends of the Decorah Fish Hatchery. He also served on the Winneshiek County Conservation Board for two terms.

As a member of Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association, Tom has helped HFFA to serve a key role in of many of these projects. A number of HFFA members were able to attend the presentation of the award to Tom at the Decorah Fish Hatchery on a beautiful fall afternoon on October 17, 2021.

Submitted by Kate Lodge

*Kate*

## PREMIER TROUT STREAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

# SAVE BLOODY RUN

- OUTSTANDING IOWA WATER IN THE DRIFTLESS AREA
- HOME TO REPRODUCING BROWN TROUT
- STOCKED WITH RAINBOW TROUT



- TOURIST AND ANGLER DESTINATION
- IN GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT BIRD AREA
- DIVERSE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



## MEGA-FEEDLOT PLANNED FOR BLOODY RUN!

- 39 MILLION GALLON OPEN PIT LAGOON
- 11,600 HEAD OF CATTLE
- MANURE APPLIED TO CLAYTON AND ALLAMAKEE CO CROP FIELDS
- LOCATED IN SINKHOLE AND KARST TOPOGRAPHY—EXTREME GROUNDWATER THREAT



## YOU CAN JOIN THE BATTLE FOR BLOODY RUN

### VISIT and LEARN

[www.savebloodyrun.org/](http://www.savebloodyrun.org/)

- Why Bloody Run is special
- The politics behind Supreme Beef LLC
- Iowa DNR failure to protect public land
- DNR permitting ignores the law

### DONATE

- Via credit or debit card or PayPal at [www.savebloodyrun.org/donate/](http://www.savebloodyrun.org/donate/)
- Via check "Save Bloody Run"  
Clayton Co. CAN, PO Box 252 Elkader, IA 52043



# *Trout Fishing in the Big Horns*

*Two Versions by Ray Thys & Mike Jacobs*

In July, Mike and Carol Jacobs invited my wife Pam and I to go out to Wyoming to do some trout fishing in the Big Horns in September. While Carol and my wife Pam do not trout fish, the scenery and solitude was enough to keep them appeased while Mike and I did daily treks into the Wyoming back country in search of Brook, Brown, Rainbow and Cutthroat trout. With 6 days of fishing ahead and the prospect of dry fly fishing for the first time, I was grateful to have a seasoned veteran like Mike showing me the ropes. Here is a day-by-day breakdown of our adventure.

## Sunday

We hired a local guide to show us the area. We fished the South Tongue River that flowed beside our home base of Arrowhead Lodge near Burgess Junction, Wyoming. I must admit dry fly fishing is much more of a challenge than the Iowa nymph fishing I have been accustomed to for 10 years. It requires knowledge of specific dry fly types, matching the hatch, application of floatant, eyesight of an eagle and the ability to cast accurately in a tight area. All of these of which, I am a rookie at best. With the help of the guide and a lot of help from Mike, I was able to land what turned out to be the fish of the week on our very first day. A nice 16-inch brown trout.

## Monday

On Monday Mike and I headed to Shell Creek. It was a beautiful stream and a beautiful day for fishing. My patience was tested several times by my inability to keep my fly out of the trees and sagebrush. I might brag about the fact that my weaving of tippet through sagebrush would make a spider jealous of the beautiful designs I created. Mike's encouragement was a big help. It led to greater success of putting my fly into the stream. However, at times, I also placed the fly high into the trees as well. I did the best I could to cover up my mistakes. I was disappointed when Mike refused to believe me when he asked me what I was doing when he saw me shimmying up a tree. I tried to explain that I was training myself to escape possible grizzly bear attacks. He wasn't buying it, since it was obvious with my fly line ascended 20 feet up in the tree. Too much incriminating evidence for him to miss that! My biggest fear is that the video that Mike took of me will surface someday at the most inopportune time. All in all it was a great day of fishing. Both of us caught a lot of trout.

## Tuesday

We traveled to East Goose Creek. I now understand why it is important to have cleats on my wading shoes. There are slippery rocks in Iowa but in Wyoming, wading over slippery stream rocks would be more accurately described as trying to walk on ice with stilts. I did learn to take the Wyoming guides advice and avoid the dark colored rocks because they are the worst. I did several ballet moves, balance beam stumbles and a couple of spring board flips worthy of Olympic recognition but managed to keep from injuring myself or having a full body bath that day. Another phenomenal day of fishing was had.

## Wednesday

We decided that we just had to fish the Big Horn River. The goal of fishing the Big Horn River was to provide me with an opportunity to catch Cutthroat trout. The road that ran close to the stream was the dividing line for the forest service fire closure line. That road was closed. After reading the notice that violation of entering that road would result in a \$10,000 fine each, we consulted our pockets and collectively had \$1.89 between us. We decided to drive to a nearby road that was open. It provided access to the river. To get to the river from this road required a ½ mile hike. The half mile hike was down a steep hill. That was fine. The walk out was a little more challenging. Looking up from the bottom before we started our hike up and out of the valley, my pickup looked like a Matchbox car sitting on the ridge. Not to say it seemed steeper hiking out, but part way up I was sure we would have to kick mountain goats out of our way, need rappelling ropes or a ski lift to get us to the top of the ridge. We made it out after several stops to catch our breath. An oxygen tank and a helicopter ride would have been okay with me. Just glad we made it out! The river did not disappoint. I landed my first Yellowstone Cutthroat trout along with several more Cutthroats, Brook and Brown Trout.

## Thursday

In the morning, we took a side trip to Shell Falls for some sightseeing with our wives. The falls were impressive. When we returned, we decided we needed to drive into some more remote area to fish. After driving 30 miles on what I considered the Toyota off road test track for Army tanks, we arrived at a camp on a ridge loaded with elk and deer bow hunters. The road ended there and we asked them how the access was to the stream we wanted to fish down below the ridge. Their comment was that no trout would be worth that steep hike down. A decision was made to abandon that adventure so Mike and I went back to the South Tongue River. The fishing was tougher that afternoon with the strong windy conditions. Casting into the wind is a real challenge and I again resumed some sage brush tippet weaving and tree snagging. I managed to land 3 fish that afternoon and a 28-foot pine tree. Mike explored a lot further upstream than I did but thankfully we were able to find each other when it was time to head back to the lodge. A sudden weather change at the end of the day caused the temperature to drop from the high 70's to the mid 40's in the late afternoon. Not to say I was cold but images of turning into a popsicle did pass through my mind. Mike had lighter clothes on than I did and I did hear him comment that he felt like he was somewhere between damn cold and ice. I did not complain for fear he would think I was a wimp. It still was a great day to be outdoors.

continued on next page

Friday

Mike and I decided to return to the East Fork of Goose Creek for our last day of fishing. The road to this location was a breeze compared to the previous days trip to Toyota Test Track hell. We had good success and at 1 o'clock our week-long vacation was gone as fast as a beer at Oktoberfest. Sadly, we loaded the gear up and headed back to the lodge to pack to leave early the next day. Other notable events of the week include observation of many deer, elk and an occasional moose. In fact, at 6 am one morning, Mike was walking his dogs when he encountered a large bull moose next to the lodge. His two Chihuahuas were going to kick that moose's butt. Mike restrained their enthusiasm and the moose ran off.

I am thankful for Mike and Carol's invitation to Pam and I to join them. It was a trip to remember and we will certainly consider doing it again. I learned a lot about dry fly fishing and the beauty of the western state's trout fishery. My only regret is not doing this when I was a lot younger and in better shape. There is a lot to be said about the exercise you get climbing trees to retrieve flies, dance moves learned while slipping on rocks in streams and trekking up hills meant for mountain goats in thin air that makes you feel so alive. This trip should be on everyone's bucket list.

## *Ray*

### **Mike Jacob's Version**

Ray Thys and I, as well as our wives, arrived in downtown Sheridan, WY. early in the afternoon, under the assumption we could buy our fishing licenses at the Fly Shop of the Bighorns. As it turns out, they don't sell hard copy licenses because most people buy their licenses online. Well, I am a non-conformist who prefers to purchase and carry a hard copy fishing license. This little glitch cost us a little time but turned out to be no problem as they sent us to Rocky Mountain Discount Sports, just a couple blocks away. Ray and I were able to purchase our Wyoming fishing licenses there.

After that stop we were back on the road again for another hour as we made our way to the Arrowhead Lodge near Burgess Junction.

This lodge is perfectly situated for access to many different streams and rivers in the area including the South Fork of the Tongue river.

Ray and I got up early the next day and around 8 AM we headed to the Shutt's Flats area of the South Tongue, which is only a couple miles from the lodge. We hiked a mile or so along a trail, heading upriver, and then made our move through the meadow grass toward the stream.

The river in this area flows through a pretty, pine tree flanked meadow. Trout Unlimited and local TU chapters have spent a considerable amount of time, money and labor on improving habitat in this section but unfortunately, low water conditions in 2021 have left many of the habitat improvements high and dry. There is a good deal of great trout habitat left, and those places are where we concentrated our fishing.

Deeper runs (compared to the surrounding water), riffles and small plunge pools attracted most of our fishing efforts. We drifted small (#16) dry flies like the Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulator and Humpy as well as a larger #10 Black Parachute Madam X. 9 foot leaders tapered to 4X tippet worked well for this fishing.

We caught decent numbers of 8 to 10 inch Rainbows and Browns, plus a few Brookies, but we never connected with the Yellowstone Cutts who inhabit the same habitat. The fish of the day is the 16" Brown trout that Ray sight fished to, and was able to fool. (see below) During our stay we looked at and fished a few other sections of this beautiful stream including along Tie Flume and Dead Swede Campgrounds. Realistically, a person could target nearly any section of the South Tongue and catch trout. The river runs through National Forest grounds and is 100% open to fishing.



continued on next page

## Mike continues at Shell Creek

As low as the water was on the South Tongue, Ray and I quickly discovered that Shell Creek, flowing from a different watershed, was not experiencing any of the same low water issues.

Shell Creek is about 30 miles south of Burgess Junction along Highway 14. The headwaters of this wonderful stream are in the Cloud Peak Wilderness. Normal levels of fast, pocket water flowed along the Shell Creek Campground, and this is the section that Ray and I targeted.

The trout in this stream have very little time to decide whether or not to eat a fly so we fished high floating, easily visible dry flies. Elk Hair Caddis, Stimulators and Humpies were all effective in sizes 14-16.

Shell Creek runs through a tight pine forest that doesn't offer much casting room. It's really not a problem though since most casts to the pockets are the length of your leader plus a short section of your flyline.

The trout in Shell Creek are mostly small, 6-9" Rainbows, Browns and Brookies. What they lack in size is more than made up for by their beauty and their zest for attacking dry flies. In a few short hours Ray and I sampled around 70 of these wild beauties.

If a trip to the Bighorns is on your future agenda, make sure to set aside a day to fish Shell Creek along the campground. Plan to pick some pockets while you're there .

*Mike*



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