Stream Tender Magazine

"Local Trout Stream News and Information"

Articles by Guy Woods

Magazine Mission Statement

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BOW VALLEY HABITAT DEVELOPMENT

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Over the last 40 years, it has been my misfortune to witness the degradation of a number of area trout streams. During that time, I sadly observed the total collapse of two once fine sport fisheries that historically had been well known by many trout fishers.

In recent years, there has been a trend developing towards the protection of what we have left in flowing trout waters, including the habitat and water quality that freshwater trout depend so much upon!

Not only are fisheries managers and sport fishers involved in this growing movement, but also groups and individuals that recognize the importance of these unique stream environments, the inhabitants and the fresh water that they provide!

I am confident that by educating the general public more about the importance of our trout streams, we can further enhance the cause and gain well needed additional support. This magazine was designed for this purpose!

Included in this publication is information about some of the projects that have been completed in this area to protect and enhance our trout fisheries and the important environment on which these sport fish depend upon.

It is my hope that you enjoy the stories and news included in this and f

Guy

To contact us: Email info@streamtender.com

The Jumpingpound Creek

If you have fished the Bow River for a few years and you are familiar with its waters, you have probably heard about the Jumpingpound Creek. Like the Highwood River system, the JP Creek is a vital spawning tributary to the Bow River, between Ghost Dam and Bearspaw Dam.

Before the Bearspaw Dam was constructed in 1954, the JP Creek played a major role in the recruitment of new generations of rainbow trout into the Lower Bow River system. After the dams construction, the downstream migrations of JP rainbows were blocked, but some small trout still managed to pass down thru the dam.

Today, this once numerous strain of JP rainbow trout is still present between the two power dams, but with the Jumpingpound Creek being the only spawning tributary for this run of trout to utilize for reproduction, it is especially important that the creek be protected from any impacts that may threaten the JP strain!

The following story summarizes some of the measures that have been taken in recent years to protect and enhance the Jumpingpound Creek strain of

Read More it.

Above: A Jumpingpound Creek Strain of rainbow trout!

Alberta Native and Non–Native Trout Species Where are We Headed?

First off, let me state that I am one hundred percent in support of our provinces native trout species! I have participated in a number of programs to both enhance and protect both bull trout and cutthroat trout. However, since the protection of the native bull trout movement started to take hold in the province, I must admit that I have become a little suspicious as to how far fisheries managers will take this program!

These suspicions were further heightened when fisheries managers decided to stock Upper Kananaskis Lake with bull trout back in the mid 1990's. The Upper Kananaskis Lake has never had a native population of bull trout and there was no knowledge of whether they would be able to reproduce in any of the tributaries to the upper lake. I had participated in the recover program on the Smith-Dorrian strain of bull trout on the Lower Kananaskis Lake, which was a native strain, but I was totally opposed to the introduction program for the upper lake!

The Upper Kananaskis was the only (big water) rainbow trout lake fishery in the area and now it was destine to disappear! With the nearby Lower Kananaskis Lake bull trout program in fast recovery, was the upper lake stocking necessary?

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Millennium Creek Project

This small stream was brought back to life, after a four year restoration program that started in 2005 and was completed in 2008. Since completion, further spawning enhancement work was carried out in 2010.

In 2004, prior to the restoration and enhancement program, a total of five brook trout were electro fished on the lower 50 metres of the creek. No other trout were captured along the rest of the streams length.

After the project was completed in 2008, a 2009 early spring electro fishing of the small stream, up to Griffin Road culvert, produced the following results: 32 brook trout, 8 brown trout and 7 rainbow trout.

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Fisheries Management - A Slow and Arduous Process!

The health of our trout streams is almost totally dependent on how appointed fisheries managers do their job! You can identify any present day famous trout stream as being well managed, because of that stream's ability to provide good consistent recreational angling!

The most important factor in this formula for maintaining a productive fishery, is maintaining good numbers of sport fish. If a trout stream is open for harvest, over fishing can lead to a total collapse in the population. In the United States, many trout streams are still annually stocked with trout to support this harvesting practice.

In our province of Alberta, most trout streams were stocked with a supply of sport fish up until the mid 1960's. Nowadays, we are almost totally dependent on the recruitment of new generations by natural reproduction in our trout streams, so the lack of control of stream populations makes the job of managing a harvest of trout, next to impossible!

Only in recent years have new regulations been put into place to enhance our trout populations and further improve the quality of everyone's angling experience!

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The Bighill Creek Project

The Bighill Creek Project is a work in progress! This small trout stream flows thru the heart of the Town of Cochrane. With a large portion of the lower reach of the creek located adjacent to urban development, there are a number of negative impacts that threaten the health of the stream and its fishery!

The remediation measures required to sustain this small trout bearing stream, make it an excellent demonstration site. It has the potential to exemplifying how municipal government can cooperate and support the protection and enhancement of such a natural environment.

By identify this objective as part of their governing responsibility, the Town of Cochrane can establish itself as an environmentally friendly community!

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The Not-so-Famous Part of the Bow River

The reach of the Bow River between both the Ghost and Bearspaw Reservoirs is subject to extreme fluctuations in water levels. This is a result of a power demand regime that caters to peak electrical power generation during daylight hours.

From mid-summer until the following spring, depending on how much water is flowing down the Bow River Watershed, the volume of flow can vary from well over 100 CMS down to 8 CMS, all within a 24 hour time window.

This extremity in water level variance in the river, impacts not only the resident trout populations, but this also has a major impact on the invertebrate populations in the river. This vital aquatic trout food population is limited to the permanently wetted zone of the river bed, where flowing water sustains life for the invertebrate food chain.

During the cold winter months, large ice formation in the river channel is left suspended on the stream bed during non-peak demand and when the flow comes up in the morning, the ice scours and disturbs the bed materials daily. This further impacts the aquatic invertebrate populations and makes the shallower areas of the river uninhabitable for juvenile trout!

Outside of modifying the water flows in this reach of the Bow River, there are limitations to what can be done to enhance the fishery! However, some measures have been taken to improve the river's habitat during low flow periods!

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