**THE CHARLOTTESVILLE FLY FISHERMAN AND COLDWATER CONSERVATIONIST**

**THOMAS JEFFERSON CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED**

**AUGUST 2017 NEWSLETTER**

**VISIT US ON OUR NEW WEBSITE AT: thomasjeffersontu.org**

**TJTU AUGUST MEETING- THURSDAY AUGUST 24, 2017 6 PM**

**Monticello Community Surgery Center lower level conference room**

This will be the last month we’ll be meeting at the MCSC and we send our thanks out to Bill Lucia for lining up this great meeting place for us over the past several months.

Bill will be retiring in September from his position at MCSC and we wish him the best of luck in the future and I’d say it’s safe to assume that he’ll be out fishing a lot more in the future.

This month we’ll be looking forward to the coming fall and the beginning of projects and events with **The Annual Day of Caring on Wednesday September 20, 2017**

Discussion items for this month include Moorman’s River Trout Management Area maintenance work, new meeting space starting in September, TIC this fall, the Garth Run Assessment and other area news.

**TJTU FALL MEETINGS**

**NEW MEETING SPACE FOR FALL MEETINGS!!!!**

**NORTHSIDE LIBRARY RIO RD. WEST**

**Thursday September 28, 2017 6 pm**

**Thursday October 26, 2017 6 pm**

**Thursday November 16, 2016 6 pm**

These three meetings will have us in yet another new space as we continue to look for a permanent/long term home base for our meetings. Beginning with the September 28th meeting we will be at the **Northside Library on Rio Rd West** just a block or so west of the Rio/29 Interchange.

We’ll meet there again in October and November and we’ll plan to go forward with reserving the space into the New Year as well. We’ll meet in the large conference room where we have ample sitting and tables for whatever size group we draw.

Parking at the library is limited out front but there is a bigger lot in the rear of the building and a well-lit entrance as well. Northside Library is quite busy so if either of these lots are full there is more parking along the side of the building The rear entrance has a long set of stairs to the main level but there is an elevator for those of us that need it.

We’ll have more info on the fall meetings coming soon.

The December meeting will as usual be our Christmas Dinner Meeting. We’ll start the discussion about possible locations in September so we can finalize our location well ahead of time.

We’ll be posting a flyer on the Library bulletin board to spread the word about our upcoming meetings so hopefully we can get the attention of other groups and individuals and build on our meeting attendance.

**!!!!!!!! TJTU IS NOW ONLINE AT: thomasjeffersontu.org !!!!!!**

TJTU’S new website went live last week so please go out and take a look at what we’ve posted as we work towards building an informative site that will spread the word about the chapter’s efforts.

You’ll need to use Google Chrome or Firefox as your browser to reach it as I found the regular Google browser doesn’t take you to the right search results to bring it up. Hope this doesn’t cause any confusion so let your family, friends and associates know which search engine to use.

So far we’ve posted basic info about TJTU, how to contact us and upcoming meeting dates and locations. We’ll continue to add info to the site and post updates, newsletters and event notices there as well as on our Facebook page so we’ll reach as many people as possible with our message.

We’ll continue to send email notice out to our chapter email list which contains close to half of our membership so no one misses our notices. We’ll also likely do a postcard mailing to the chapter roster this fall to make sure everyone knows we have the new website up and a Facebook page as well.

As we’ve asked in the past please send us any news that you feel is important to pass on to the chapter to be included in these new avenues of communication.

Please pass the word on about our efforts to those you think would be interested.

**UPCOMING EVENTS AND MEETINGS**

**VA Council of Trout Unlimited Fall Meeting**

Saturday September 9. 2017

Graves Mountain Lodge

Syria, VA.

A great meeting to attend to see what the VCTU is working on. And, the lunch is well worth the drive and the wait. Great nearby trout fishing if stream flows are good.

The Council will be preparing for the National Meeting September 27- 30, 2017 In Roanoke

**Annual Day of Caring Wednesday September 20, 2017 9 AM- Moorman’s River Trout Management Area**

Mark Andrews again has us on the list. We’ll talk more about plans for this years’ event at the August meeting. We typically do trail and structure maintenance in preparation for the fall season.

**National Trout Unlimited Annual Meeting September 27-30, 2017 Roanoke, VA.**

More info will be out after the September 9, VCTU Meeting. A great event and Virginia’s first time as host state. You can also get more info by checking out the VCTU website at vctu.org

And the National TU website at tu.org

**Garth Run Project Assessment Summer 2017**

Plan is to have the assessment done before summer weather moves into early Fall conditions to get the most complete look at summer’s effect on the stream.

We’ll pass on more info once we have more.

**Trout in the Classroom Programs:**

Schools are opening up around the area and the annual TIC program will begin its next season in early October with egg deliveries to local participating classes. We’ll pass on more about this years’ program in the local area in a few weeks as schools get underway and set up for this years’ program.

**Moore’s Creek Project:**

The Rivanna Conservation Alliance has been working with VDGIF and the City of Charlottesville to remove old dams and repair stream channels on Moore’s Creek. Back in May they removed the Fry Springs Dam , an old dam and pump house on Moore’s Creek that was about 28 feet long.

The stream channel was restored through the area and the project will have a great effect on the streams environment. You can check out RCA on Facebook and online at **rivannariver.org**

**Sentara Martha Jefferson Hospital Magazine- Summer 2017 Edition**

A great article in this edition about this years’ Spring Fly Fling back in April. You can see it online on their website at- **sentaramarthajeffersonmagazine.yourwebedition.com**

**MOORMAN’S RIVER SPECIAL REGS SECTION AUGUST UPDATE:**

If you’ve been out to the Moorman’s this summer swimming or wet wading you may have noticed something that is good news for the hold over trout in the section.

Reports from folks is that the water is cold, definitely colder than usual and with polarized glasses and with a quiet approach and observation of the stream it’s obvious that again trout have held over through the summer.

Some have continued to fish there through the summer and reports of Brook Trout being caught there have been coming in regularly and on a recent visit to check on project possibilities for the fall we found water temperatures at 63 degrees in early August.

We saw trout in several places in the section and there are some really nice sized Rainbows still around too. In past years I’ve found water temperatures at this time of year in the low 70’s which is close to the top of the range in which trout can tolerate.

Seventy degree water temps will sustain trout as long as there are adequate oxygen levels and with decent flows dissolved oxygen has been adequate to allow trout to hold over through the summer for several years now.

The increased outflow from the reservoir of an average of 1 million gallons per day in the section over the past few years has helped matters greatly. This increased flow out of the pipe at the base of the dam is dumping oxygen enriched cold water into the section below the dam and the gradient drop in downstream areas also aids in oxygen infusion.

So far this summer heavy rains have fallen in the watershed several times and kept the reservoir near full pool but low enough not to release water over the top of the dam which is a good thing in summer months.

The reason is that if the reservoir is full and constantly flowing over the top of the dam it is dumping surface lake water into the downstream section which has been heated by the sun and likely warmer than trout can tolerate. This occurring for long periods makes for higher water temperatures in the downstream section and would likely bring conditions up to unfavorable levels.

In past years during the summer when walking along the section large numbers of Bass and Sunfish were quite obvious to an observant eye and this year it seems numbers of Bass are definitely lower due to colder water temperatures.

Sixty–three is on the cool end of the scale for Bass in the summer months so its likely most have moved downstream to find better conditions.

As long as we can stay away from having extremely hot, dry summers in coming years the section should continue to hold trout over and possibly maintain a decent year round population.

We are in the beginning stages of planning new projects on the stream section and we’ll pass on our ideas as we get closer to making them become a reality.

The first stocking of the Fall is only about 6 weeks away and as usual we will announce the date ahead to the membership.

Permits are on sale at the Albemarle Angler and are available by requesting them by contacting us via our email at [thomasjeffersontu@gmail.com](mailto:thomasjeffersontu@gmail.com)

Thanks for everyone’s continued support!!

**AUGUST TROUT FISHING UPDATE**

Mountain Streams:

Stream flows continue to be decent for August and as reported last month this can vary from watershed to watershed as summer rains tend to come in the form of thunderstorms with a hit and miss way of bringing rain.

Follow the weather and keep watch on the weather radar as to keep up with those areas that are getting the summer storms and plan your trips to streams in these areas for the best conditions.

Increased flows from summer storms can only last a day or two so get out while the getting is good to get the best opportunity to take advantage of higher flows.

As I wrote last month the mid and upper reaches of the larger east slope streams in the Shenandoah National Park will be the best bets for those looking for a day out in the mountains.

Terrestrials are a still a huge part of a trout’s diet at this time of year so when fishing the mountain streams for Brook Trout virtually any type of ant or beetle pattern fished in the correct size and manner should produce well on the surface.

Being summer stream flows are typically low and clear so using 9 foot leaders tapered to 5 or 6 x and Beetles in size 14 and 16 and Ants in sizes 16/18/ and 20are a good bet. Inchworms and other terrestrial insects such as bees are prevalent along the streams too and the trout will be on the lookout for whatever comes their way.

You’ll need to be quiet and approach carefully watching the water ahead in these conditions. Walk the banks rather than wading and sloshing around and don’t clank the rocks along the bank either as you sneak up to make a cast.

Keep your profile low and try not get too close to the water you are targeting. Trout at this time of year have typically seen a lot of traffic since late winter and they are smart and spooky.

Right Sporty as John calls it, the ability to catch the larger trout in these mountain streams in summer comes from patience and stealth. Pretend you’re a ghost, sneak up and surprise a big one.

**Stocked Streams /Special Regs Water**

As in last month’s report the larger streams such as the Jackson River offer good summer trout fishing with several miles of good water to search.

The upper Jackson above Lake Moomaw in the Hidden Valley is one such place and searching the water early and late in the day when the air is cooler and the sun is low can bring good success to the summer trout fisherman.

Fishing upstream look for deep runs and riffles dumping into pools where oxygen levels are high and water is cooler to find trout and just as on the small streams keeping low and approaching quietly will help you catch more and larger trout.

Overhanging trees and shrubs along the banks will hold trout feeding on the terrestrials that fall in the river and watching ahead as you fish for signs of rising trout will pay off well.

Fish the deep water with big stonefly nymphs and the dry fly water with terrestrial patterns on the surface. Appropriately sized hoppers and crickets for the time in the season are good big trout attractors and if they’re picky, small ants size 18 or 20 may be the trick.

Below Lake Moomaw in the cold water tailrace the section from the base of the dam downstream the first half mile can be a great place to fish in summer.

It can be quite chilly early and late in the day in the shade in this section even in summer at the top of the hill at the campground area it can be hot and muggy but down the hill in the river it will be cool wading the section found there. Standing in 56 degree water even on a hot day can bring on a chill so wet wading isn’t always a good idea and waders feel good and keep you comfortable.

Several years ago when floating a section below there between take outs at public access areas in early September we were cold and miserable all day without waders with cloudy conditions and air temperatures in the 70’s and passing rain showers. It caused us to call it a day early so be prepared, you can put on waders and other clothing if you got it but if you leave it home or in the car it won’t do you any good.

Tricos are still coming off early in the day and the spinner fall brings the trout up so look for sipping rises and throw them a Trico spinner in sz 22. I tied some up for a friend several years ago who had trouble seeing them on the surface with a yellow upright post. Try trailing a small black nymph, a Trico nymph or black midge larva behind it and see what happens.

In late summer on many days you can see caddis skimming the surface at times and if this is occurring try a size 12 or 14 tan body Stimilator with a dropper about 18 inches long trailing a size 14 or 16 tan caddis larva or simply put a Hares Ear and search the water thoroughly.

With a larger river to cover you can fish a small section of river for quite some time to cover it thoroughly and put flies in front of as many trout as possible.

Late in the day such as the last hour before dark can be quite good, most folks don’t stick around to see it but many evenings there are trout rising all along the tailwater section.

The short section below the dam is a good place to try, although short it is broad and has many good spots to fish. Flows below the dam at or below 200 cfs are easiest to maneuver and fish.

In higher flows try throwing a heavy white steamer and running it along the banks to find willing trout. Rainbows will average 9-14 inches and be strong and full of fight. Browns run in the same size class in smaller numbers and there are good numbers of big trout there as well. 20 inch trout are frequently caught here.

**Spring Creeks**

Spring creeks stay cold all summer long and are good places to concentrate your summer trout fishing efforts. With the typical clear water and low summer flows found in spring creeks quiet, low profile approaches and presentations are necessary for good success.

**Mossy Creek** has long been one of my favorites and the public section there offers plenty of water to search and decent numbers of trout.

Searching with beetles and ants can bring trout up to the surface and learning where the trout are and being patient are the best pieces of advice I can give to those who plan to fish at Mossy.

Take your time, fish the likely spots thoroughly with the right flies in the right manner and you can be successful at Mossy. Check the weeds along the banks to see what’s crawling around in there and look closely at the size of the crickets, hoppers and beetles you find and fish appropriately sized patterns to match them.

Over the years I’ve caught many a good trout there with black parachute Ants in size 16 and 18 and Beetles size 14 and 16 just by searching the likely spots.

Move slowly and quietly and make your first cast a good one to have the best shot at bringing a trout up for a take. The undercut banks at Mossy can go in several feet from the bank edge and give the Browns plenty of cover and unfishable water to feed in.

Running a drowned hopper, beetle or ant down under an undercut can take some good trout for those willing to recognize these spots and put a fly in there. It’s tough but it can be done and again patience is the key.

Using a long rod helps leave the short Brook Trout Rod at home and use the 9 ft. 4 or 5 weight to help reach over the stream edge weeds. Tenkara rods are good for this as are conventional fly rods such as the 9’6 5 wt I use or even one of the 10 foot or longer 5 or 6 wts on the market today.

**Buffalo Creek** near Lexington is another spot for summer trout anglers where the same game plans work but there for me a deeply fished stonefly nymph or a Xmas Tree seldom fails to bring in a big one.

**Spring Run**- One of my favorites but can be really tough when the weeds get thick. Sowbugs, craneflies and small inchworms/aquatic worms are all I typically use there.

**South River – Waynesboro-** On the Special Regs section on the south side of town many of the before mentioned tactics will work there as well with terrestrials being high on the list of flies to use.

Here you need to look for the best holding water to find trout and concentrate your efforts on these areas. Areas with a silty bottom are less likely to hold trout so find those cleaner bottom areas with cover and you’ll find trout.

Shade and moving water are keys to catching trout here as in any place you plan to fish in summer so think before you fish to up your chances at success.

In the in town sections the upper area below the old dams where there is moving water and shade are good places to try out. Downstream below Dupont its more open and sunny so plan to hit these spots early and late in the day when its cooler to find active trout.

Summer trout fishing conditions will continue into early October so go throw those terrestrials while you can as we wait for the cool weather and improved flows of Fall to return.

Unknown to most the Special Regs streams usually get their first stockings of smaller trout, those in the 6 to 9 inch range in mid to late August into early September. I’ve often come across large numbers of these smaller willing trout in the South River and at Mossy this time of year and they’ll often take anything you throw at them until they wise up and spread out.

Coming across this scenario can make for a very successful day on streams such as these and save the day when conditions are tough and the bigger, smarter trout aren’t as willing.

**PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

**THE CONTINUING SAGA-ON THE WATER AGAIN**

**RECOVERY PART 3**

Well as month 3 gets underway in my continued recovery and return to the water I went to my spine surgeon’s appointment wondering just where I stood at this point and what was next.

So far it has been quite an ordeal especially the month of May and into mid-June where the pain levels where quite high and I missed out on a lot of sleep being unable to lie or sit comfortably in any position.

The first two weeks after the surgery where the most miserable time in my life that I can remember and weeks three and four were just slightly better an experience I wouldn’t wish upon anyone.

New xrays, questions and examinations and other than still degenerating hips the spine repairs and hardware installation is doing well as all parts are still in place and holding steady. I’ve listened well enough to the rules so far and haven’t jarred anything loose so as long as I don’t revert back to thinking and acting like a 30 year old I should get some good use out of my hardware.

I certainly hope so as returns are not accepted and repairs can be painful and costly and they didn’t put in that zipper I requested so being opened up again like I was to do the install is far from being a route I’d like to take again.

I briefly looked at a U-Tube video before the surgery and when I saw what they would do to get in there, it looked like a deer being reverse gutted through the back and as soon as I saw it I clicked back and tried to erase the image from my mind.

Man that’s gonna hurt was all I could muster to say about it and I was right it did hurt quite bad and was long lasting as so you’ll not soon forget. If I had just listened when I was 18 or many years later when Granny made that comment about what she had envisioned about my health. She had a way with things like that just as her daughter, my mother did and always seemed to be able to look ahead know what was down the road.

One day near the end of her long life, she barely missed her 100th birthday, she looked at me with those eyes full of wisdom and love and said, “Chubby, are you still working yourself to death like usual?” “Yes I said I have to keep up and make the best living I can so hopefully someday I can take it easy.”

“I know” she said, “You know I see things, I can see ahead and know what the future holds and if you don’t back off learn to relax the future will be tough for you.” “The strenuous, physical work you do will be your downfall, mark my word.”

She didn’t say any more about it, and it never came up again and although she knew what lay ahead for me she couldn’t elaborate and tell me what she saw. I had to live my life my way and those words of wisdom were my warning shot and I had to recognize where I was heading and learn to make the adjustments needed to change the way my middle age years would unfold.

I still remember that that conversation quite well and still see the look of concern and love on her face when I think of her. I left not really taking it to heart but frequently that conversation popped up in my mind as time went on as I guess she was trying to make me take notice even though it wasn’t through spoken words.

She had that way about her, she was a special person, I miss her, we all do but she’s still there watching over us in her own way even though she’s been gone for nearly 15 years now. Gone, not dead just gone away and moved on to the next destination in the passage of time, still watching and guiding us in her own way until the day we cross paths again.

One day just a couple years after that conversation her vision came true. I pulled up on one of my building projects to check on my crew and upon stepping out of the truck out of nowhere a piercing pain struck in my left hip and lower back just as my feet touched the ground.

So intense it was scary and for a moment I couldn’t walk I stood there holding onto the truck door hoping it would pass and I wouldn’t fall and after a few minutes it backed off enough to move and I walked around the house in a level of pain I had never experienced before.

After some time I finally made it to the doctor and the x-rays revealed the beginnings of hip and spine arthritis and thus began a 17 year long struggle with pain and disability that continues today and will for the rest of my life.

You learn to cope, learn to work around it and hide it until the bad days come more frequently and then you pay for the inability to take those words of wisdom you failed to listen to earlier in life and you realize that no matter your mindset your physical youth doesn’t last forever and slowly disappears as we age.

Well, some good things did come about with all that I’ve endured as soon afterwards some parts of my life did begin to change. Although they were subtle changes at first their significance slowly came to light and led me here to where I am today.

I walked into the house one Sunday afternoon returning from a bass fishing trip on a local private lake with a friend and the bait casting equipment and the box full of lures went into the closet where they still set today some twenty years later.

It was there and then that somehow out of the blue I decided at that moment for the rest of my life I’d pursue my real passion in fishing and I’d spend the rest of my fishing days with my fly rod in hand chasing trout and thus another journey began.

And since then other than a couple charter trips for Stripers and King Mackerel and few Bass trips on local rivers since that day of reckoning when I stored the casting gear away fly fishing for trout has been my passion and it continues still today.

The next thing that soon came about was my sudden desire to find a way I could make a difference and give something back to society and help others in some way. Although not what I was thinking at the time as my way to make a difference my love for trout, the places they live and the feel of a fly rod in hand would put me on the path I wanted to take and although I’m slower at it now then I was back then I’m still heading in that direction and it put where I wanted to be and doing what I wanted to do.

One night in 2000 I went on to the National TU website to check them out, I joined and here we are today. I joined mainly to find others that shared my passion as my friends were bass and fair weather fishermen and most had seldom if ever fished for trout and none that I knew of other than Tim even owned a fly rod.

The desire to write I had earlier in life returned, I started tying flies with a vice instead of vise grips and soon began designing my own patterns. Next I was teaching others to fly fish for trout as I did for Bass over the years and I was doing things, meeting people and visiting places I never really thought I would.

It was a welcome change in my life, a positive one that was giving me new drive and desire and although at first I didn’t realize it a sense of urgency had also developed as I set about pursuing my newest quest.

That sense of urgency probably had a lot to do with the degeneration of my spine and hips and looking back over the years the amount of miles I put on my body trekking through the mountains of Virginia and eventually other states coupled with the miles I put on as a builder and an athlete took their toll and I wore myself out years before I should have.

Another reason for such quick and devastating degeneration was likely the round of 30 radiation doses I took in the winter of 1979 for cancer treatment at UVA. That saved my life but likely aided in the degeneration as the area the radiation was focused on was my lumbar spine, lower abdomen into my left hip which now features a femur ball that has been re-surfaced twice and has worn out again just over a year after the last surgery to repair the joint and stave off replacement an inevitable outcome I’m facing sooner than I’d like.

Granny was right but like most youngsters I didn’t listen to that sweet old ladies words of wisdom so here I am today fully and permanently disabled at 56 and wondering about my future mobility and my ability to reach those places that trout live that I’ve trekked to in the past and long to visit again.

I’m getting better, slowly recovering and trying to see the light at the end of my tunnel, somedays it’s bright and drawing me to its source and other days it’s dim and distant and seemingly out of reach well beyond my outreached arms and fortunately those days are gradually becoming less frequent.

As times has gone by I’ve come to realize new things that will be affecting my life as I go forward and one day while I was on the VDGIF website a couple weeks before surgery I found out something that would be a big help in the long run.

Well, what I found was VDGIF offers a lifetime state fishing license to disabled folks with the proper documentation of their condition so I had one of my doctor’s check out the form and he said I’d qualify as far as he could see and he filled out and signed his portion. I went home and put it away until my current license expired. Not being in a hurry to mail it in with the surgery fast approaching as I had no clue nor did the doctors as to when I’d be able to fish again.

Finally a few weeks after surgery my license expired and I sent the form in and after a few weeks I checked my VDGIF account online and there it was approved and posted and as soon as my recovery reached a certain point and the doctor said ok I was set to go fish again with my new designation.

I renewed everything else I needed printed it off and when looking at the license’s on the print out I noticed the expiration date for the lifetime license said 2018? Oh, well I guess you have to renew it each year too so when I came back with scissors to cut off all the unnecessary edges of paper surrounding the license I looked again at that expiration date and it was **2218 not 2018!**

Wow! I said to myself this thing is good for 200 years guess I’ll have to stick around and use these years up! Maybe they know something I don’t or possibly it was Granny who knew back in the time she told me of her vision letting me know I had another 200 years to go so I’d better take care of myself so I could fish those years away.

Sounds good to me so that’s what I’ll shoot for and with the way medical science is advancing who knows I may just make it. So please pass this story along to your children and ask they pass it on to their children and their children’s children so if they come across an exceptionally old man a hundred years from now plying the waters of the Moorman’s River they’ll know it’s me still casting into the currents in my journey upstream.

As statements started coming in and the actual cost of my surgery came into view you begin to realize just how much such procedures cost. Thank God for insurance and when looking over one such statement the cost for one item, surgical instruments, the cost was $125K.

Surgical instruments, hmm, oh the two titanium rods, connectors and 18 screws I now carry around. Wow! Musta been gold plated too at such a cost. Then it hit they’re bound to be recyclable so I called for Judy to come hear my newest discovery.

Well, I said, titanium especially at that cost is bound to be recyclable so be sure to tell the undertaker to remove them when I pass on to the big trout stream in the sky and see what you can get for them.

Another insurance policy we didn’t even realize we had and although it may not be worth the original price at that time, especially if I live out the expiration date on my license it probably ought to at the least pay to put me away and who knows two hundred years from now it could be worth a whole lot more.

Well if nothing else at that cost it had better last as long as a normal lifetime and not wear out anytime soon. Twenty–five or thirty years at least I’d say would be good and the plan is to make sure they get the miles I deserve.

I see no use in throwing such expensive materials away or burying it away with me on a hill overlooking the Rivanna River for eternity when it could again be put to good use. If nothing else she could sell in the yard sale she’ll have after I’ve moved on to sell off all my leftover junk. Probably worth a few bucks wouldn’t you think?

Well getting back to the results of that appointment the doctors said to take it easy and keep doing what I was doing and all would be well in the long run, I just needed to be patient and let things take their course. The healing was going good and I was ahead of most after such a surgery and other than hip pain my back was looking good and soon I should be feeling better.

The doctor turned and headed out the door just as one more question came to mind and fortunately I caught him before he got away to ask. “When can I go fishing?” His eyes opened wide and he looked away to ponder as he asked “You fly fish…… for trout right?” “Yes I said I won’t plan to catch any over eight pounds so I don’t go over the weight lifting limit restrictions and I promise if they’re any bigger I’ll pass the rod off and let someone else bring him in.”

“Yeah right” he said, “ok gentle, gentle fly fishing is ok.” “Give yourself a little more time before you go and stay away from rough terrain and wading, don’t get into situations where you could fall and you should be ok, gentle just remember that is the key, be gentle at whatever you do.”

Great! that’s all I needed to know and now all I got to do is define gentle on my terms and I can go fishing and we all know how good that type of therapy is. Then I began thinking about how and where and if Judy would even let me go.

Next came the follow up appointment with the hip doctor that had been put off since last summer when the extent of my spine issues was determined and changed my course of action. Since the recent x-rays showed continued degeneration of both hips and the earlier examination by pain management doctors showed as we knew very limited and decreasing range of motion in both hips so what do I do next?

That day the x-rays focused on the hips showed all that we knew was wrong plus the beginnings of cam impingement in the right hip the same condition that brought on the open hip surgery to repair the condition on the left hip four years ago which was lessened but still is there.

Space in the joints is ok until I walk and the left femoral head just re-surfaced again a year ago this past April has again deteriorated and looks like a squirrel chewed on it and both are aggravated by sockets full of arthritis that can’t be removed.

The doctor said you need to get further past the spine surgery to do anything aggressive for the hip problems. You need to heal more and for now we can only offer injections to help with pain but as we know one’s in the past have not worked well if at all.

“Your choices are injections for now and down the road living with it or replacement is next but now’s too soon to take that route.” ” **Gentle** is the key you need to be **gentle** whatever you do for the sake of your spine repairs and on your hips.” ” Neither can take the strain you’ve been putting on them any longer, **Gentle**, just be **gentle** and that’s it.”

**Gentle,** I’ve heard that word being stressed as the description of the new way I should be living before a couple weeks before at the spine doctor’s appointment.

Guess that’s the term they all use when someone as worn out as me comes along and now that four years has passed since my first surgery and things continue to deteriorate that’s all I can hope for is a **gentle** style of life and fishing.

Well I guess I’ll figure out what gentle means for me sooner or later, no more climbing ladders, getting up on the roof or carrying heavy items. Casting at the most a 5 weight, no trout over 8 pounds and no wading in deep, rocky strong currents to reach that spot on the other side, yeah right we’ll see how that goes I guess.

No cliff climbing, no sliding down into those deep canyons where nobody goes no bar fights no nothing fun and adventurous from here on out. We’ll see about that too.

A week later my first attempt on the water was a couple hours out with my grandkids, Jayden and his twin sisters on the Moorman’s where I spent a while casting to two big, beautiful spooky Rainbows in the Flat Pool.

Stuck the smaller of the two but he pulled the size 22 midge out with a strong run after the hookset so I was happy to just give it a try and watch the girls explore the trail and Jayden fishing while I watched from the bench at streamside.

Jayden turned 13 that day and he’s well on the way to being completely independent out on the water and only needs me to suggest what flies to use and drive him out there. The girls wanted to learn to skip rocks and I was glad to oblige until that first throw I made to show them reminded me of what I was getting over as muscles that hadn’t been used in a while screamed when I did.

I felt that couple of hours for a couple of days afterwards but it was worth it and it’s a good place for **Gentle** fly fishing out there as I did just fine. Never thought skipping rocks would hurt so much.

Last week I made it out again with John over to Mossy Creek one hot morning and we hit the water with Tricos in the air and not a rise to be seen. A few hours and only seeing a couple trout was a little disheartening but it was good to be there.

John got a reprieve and didn’t have to tie my wading boots as I warned him he may need to do during the ride over. I was able to pick my leg up rest my foot on the bumper keep my balance and was just able to reach the laces.

Fifteen minutes out and the fat 18 inch Brown I hooked on a Trico nymph was ready to net but I couldn’t get down the bank to reach him so I gave a yank and pulled the hook so he could swim away. John could have helped with that but I told him earlier I was on my own as I’ll need to learn how to maneuver around the streams again and I’d figure it out.

Never got a rise out of the Trico spinner as no trout showed themselves during the spinner fall and nothing looked at the beetle I cast the rest of the time we fished. Bright, sunny and still as the morning ran into afternoon so we called it and decided there be better days than this and headed home.

I’m back so to speak, and saved some money too. Glad I didn’t buy those boot foot waders. I’ll now put that money into that long handled net that’s going to be a necessity from what I saw that day. My arms grew back as I reported last month just not as far as I need to land trout with a short handled net.

Probably coulda squatted down low enough or sat my ass in the grass and lipped that trout with my tongs had I brought them with me. Soon as I can find a zinger big enough to hold them maybe I’ll give it a try.

Could cause a new gear craze, you never know and maybe my claim to fame.

Also I thought it was the rock skipping that did me in the week before but as I felt the next day casting did a number too as those same muscles were sore for two days again. Hips hurt from walking in swampy terrain and slippery grass as they have been for years, lower back was sore, felt like Roger and I had cleaned out the Bull Moose Saloon the night before in Alpine Wyoming. It was worth it, I’m used to feeling a day’s fishing so it wasn’t nothing new and it won’t stop me from going again and again and again……………………...

No pain, no gain as the saying goes and I’m living proof the statement is true so pain or no pain I’ll keep on fishing as long as I can walk, or someone will carry me out there or until my license expires.

What would one expect? Not one to be wasteful I always get my money’s worth out of my fishing license and we all know how time flies when you’re having fun.

My license expires in 199 years and 345 days if I count it right, may as well get to work the date will sneak up on me before I know it. Where’d I put those tongs?

Chubby

In sight of the light

August 22, 2017