

# MITFORD TROUT PONDS

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### Special points of interest:

- A look back at the pond deepening project in 1999.
- Using wheat grain to enrich a newly excavated trout pond.
- Introducing young people to fishing by running fishing clinics.
- Upper pond is sealed to hold water over the winter months.

### Fishing Regulations for Mitford Trout Ponds Program:

1. **Fishing licenses are not required to fish in the Mitford Trout Ponds.**
2. **Angling in the ponds is for Town of Cochrane residents and their guests only.**
3. **Young anglers of 13 years of age and under are allowed to use bait and keep one trout only, per day.**
4. **All other anglers are required to use single barbless hooks on their lures (no-bait) and release their catch.**
5. **There is no ice fishing allowed on either ponds.**

## WHAT HUGE MONSTER TROUT LURK IN THE DEPTHS OF MITFORD PONDS?

There are rumors about that some very large rainbow trout are living in Mitford Trout Ponds! Rumors are rumors but I know "First Hand" that this bit of information is true!

I have seen these big trout! While fishing the ponds, especially in the spring when the trout are spawning. Just recently, I caught a glimpse of a trout that was approximately 24" long, just below the spawning channel in the lower pond.

Last summer, assistant program manager of the Mitford Trout Ponds fishery, Andy Degraw, caught a 22" rainbow trout that would have been around 6.lbs in weight.

Some of these big trout are earning nicknames such as "Big Jake" and "Grandpa". Trout with names like that are known to break lines or spit out hooks, making them more elusive than most normal fish.

Why are the trout in Mitford Ponds growing so big? A combination of a good food supply and stocking the right num-



bers of fish have helped develop this great fishery.

The enhanced spawning channel allows big mature trout to spawn and then they can get back to eating and growing. If trout don't have the opportunity to lay their eggs, they will suffer a less than healthy life span. This affects their growth rates.

In my opinion, it's just a matter of time before some

lucky angler hooks into and lands an 8-10.lb rainbow trout at Mitford. From the looks of some of the trout congregating below the spawning channel this spring, it could happen this summer season.

If it's you that catches that big trout this year, I would sure like a picture of the fish for the newsletter! Give me a call at 932-4467 (Guy).

## MAINTENANCE CONTINUES AT MITFORD SITE

Additional spawning gravel was added to the spawning channel, just above the lower pond this spring. After last years spawn, the gavel that had been altered by the trout needed some maintenance.

I plan on improving the inflow spawning area, on the

upper pond, this summer. There were spawning fish using this upper site for the first time this spring. More fish will be spawning there in future years.

Last years weed control program was major success. Only one weed removal pro-

ject was completed on the lower pond.

The Chara weed that was introduced after the pond deepening in 1999, has taken hold in the lower pond. The introduced chara is crowding out some of the long time troublesome weed varieties.

# 1999 POND DEEPENING PROJECT, WORTH WHILE!

When the Mitford Trout Ponds stocking program was first initiated, a fishing derby was held every fall. The idea of such a derby was to catch as many trout from the ponds as possible, before winter ice covered the surface.

The objective of this event was to remove trout from the ponds before they winter killed, over the winter months. To improve the over wintering capabilities of the lower pond, a deepening project was planned.

The project would create a deep water refuge for trout during the winter. The excavated area of the lower pond

would also work as a cool water thermal storage area for warm summer days.

In 1998, a drill truck was brought in to take core samples of the pond bed. This sampling would ensure that there was enough clay to line the excavated area and retain water from seepage.

The core samples proved that there was an excellent quantity of good quality clay, up to 15' below the surface of the bed. A plan was made to bring in heavy equipment in 1999 to excavate the lower pond.

In total, 200 truck loads of clay were removed from the



In 1999, heavy equipment was brought in to excavate the lower Mitford Pond. An area on the north end of the lower pond was deepened to a depth of 13 feet.

lower pond. This created a good deep water area on the north side of the lower pond. With a steep drop off on the south side of the excavated area, the slope would provide shade for trout.

*“Trout require cool, clean water in which they live, the oxygen levels must be high enough to let them survive the winter months”*

## WHEAT GRAIN WAS USED TO ENRICH THE DEEPENED AREA.

In order to enrich the newly excavated area of the lower pond, a proven method of getting the aquatic food chain off to a good start was used. Five bushels of wheat grain was used to seed the bottom of the freshly disturbed clay.

The grain would germinate and provide a good forage for a number of different aquatic

invertebrates. This would in turn produce a quick supply of insects for trout food.

It may be interesting to note that I conducted a stomach pump sampling of trout in the pond that spring. I found a wheat grain in a trout's stomach. Maybe the trout liked a little "fibre" with its protein diet!



## HOW DO YOU BAIT A MAGGOT ON A FLY HOOK. CHECK THIS

Not only are maggots a good bait for young kids to use on Mitford Trout Ponds, they are also a common bait on the Bow River, during the late summer and fall fishing season.

The problem can lie in the way in which you hook the bait onto your fly pattern. It is very important that you don't kill the maggot in the process. The larva must be able to wiggle while hooked, thus

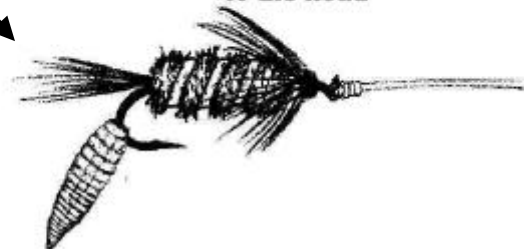
enticing a hungry fish to bite.

If you plunge a hook thru the middle of the bug, you'll make a mess. Just hook the maggot thru the skin, on the flat end of the larva.

This is actually the head of a maggot. They travel backwards when they crawl, pointed end first. This is a little confusing to an angler but once you get the knack, fish will bite your bait.



Hook maggot just thru the skin at the corner of the head



# TODDLER FISHING CLINICS TO BE HELD!

In my trips to the ponds, I have on occasion observed parents with young children fishing along the shoreline. Some parents would like to provide their kids with an opportunity to enjoy recreational angling.

With the Mitford Trout Ponds situated at such a convenient location in the Town of Cochrane, this opportunity is easy to experience.

For some parents, they just don't have any idea of what method of angling is best suited for the rainbow trout living in the ponds. They are often faced with the question; What kind of bait should we use, etc?

There is a need for some kind of educational event that will introduce both parents and their children how to go about angling with a better than average chance of success.

The managers of the Mitford Trout Ponds Program have therefore decided to organize some fishing clinics to promote and provide an introduction to potential beginners out there.

The clinics will be scheduled to take place this summer in July and August. They will run on weekend mornings, to catch the morning bite. A lunch of hot dogs etc. will be part of the package.



Trout ponds are a great place for young people to learn how to fish.

A small fee of \$5.00 per fisher will be charged to cover costs (bait, equipment, lunch, etc.). Keep watch for dates listed in the paper and on posters placed around town, prior to the clinics being run.

*“ It is important that children catch fish or even get bites on their first trip to catch fish; this will justify their efforts and get them interested in the sport!”*

# TROUT ARE SPAWNING IN THE ENHANCED SPAWNING CHANNEL ABOVE THE LOWER POND

For the last few years, since the channel has been enhanced for spawning, trout have been doing their thing, just above the lower pond.

This spring, the activity continues, with some very large fish digging nests (redds) in the gravel bottom of the flowing water, in the chan-

nel.

The objective is not to reproduce trout for the ponds stocking. However, the chance to spawn will allow these fish to get rid of their eggs.

More work on the spawning enhancement will continue into the future. Especially on the upper pond inflow area.



# CHIRONOMIDS (MIDGES) ARE A GOOD FLY PATTERN TO USE.



If you're a fly fisher and you like to fish still water for trout, a chironomid fly pattern is an excellent choice. These midge pupa imitations are a primary fly pattern for experienced lake fly fishers.

They appear to be quite small and simple compared to other fly patterns. However, the insect that they imitate is often overlooked in its importance, as a trout food.

The adult insects are quite similar to mosquitoes in their

appearance and they are common along the banks and shorelines of lakes and streams.

When the pupa is transforming from a larva life stage, they drift slowly to the surface of the water to hatch into an adult. It is at this time that they are vulnerable to feeding trout.

Even very large trout make a meal of these tiny aquatic insects. I have seen huge trout cruising the bottom of

lakes in search of the chironomid pupa. The fish move rapidly, gulping midges as they swim.

If one of those food items happens to be your fly pattern, the trout will hit it fast and hard, so be prepared. With the speed that trout will take a midge, you don't have to set the hook, just lift your rod.

Mitford trout ponds has a good midge hatch, starting in the spring!

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on the Town of Cochrane  
website at [www.cochrane.ca](http://www.cochrane.ca).

#### **Bow Valley Habitat Development**

*Fish Habitat Enhancement - Stream  
Reclamation - Consulting*



*The Managers of the Mitford Trout Ponds Fishery Program would like to acknowledge and thank all of the supporters that have made this program a success. They include the following:*

***Town and Country Auto***

***The Town of Cochrane, Operational Services***

***TransAlta Utilites Corporation***

***Canadian Tire***

***Home Hardware***

***Spray Lakes Sawmills***

***The Jumpingpound Chapter of Trout Unlimited Canada***

***Bryant Construction***

***Deluxe Bobcat***

## UPPER POND SEALED TO HOLD WATER



Since the ponds have first been constructed, the upper pond loses water over the winter months, thru seepage at the outflow area.

This last year, Drew Ramsey of the Town of Cochrane,

Operational Services Department, sealed the outflow area with some liner clay to fix this problem.

I am pleased to report that the problem has been solved!

The upper pond maintained good levels this winter. The oxygen readings recorded in the upper pond kept up to reasonable levels for trout survival as well. This will produce larger trout in the future!