



Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

- Feb. 07 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area.
- Feb. 21 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

Reminder: DUES are DO - February issue will only go out to paid members. If you can't remember if you have paid your dues contact Lou.

Introduction to Fly Tying and Macro Invertebrates class sponsored by MDC at Maramec Park Museum on Saturday the 28th, was a success with 13 students attending from Springfield to St. Louis county and Jeff City to Sikeston.

Big Rock Candy Mountain Resort located in the upper Current River Watershed is hosting its second annual day before the trout opener event. I will be presenting a tips and tricks program and there will be a chance for participants to tell their own fish stories. The food is outstanding. I highly recommend the Jalepeno burger. 😊

Mark Van Patten Feather Cutter Farm LLC

BIG ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN
CABINS, RV & PRIMITIVE CAMPING
BIG CHILL BAR & GRILL
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2023
BAR & GRILL OPEN 4-9PM

 **FISHING TIPS & TRICKS WITH**
Mark Van Patton 5:30 - 7 pm

BEST FISHING STORY TIME
7 - 8 pm *(Open to all story tellers)*



Big Chill Bar & Grill Open Th 4-9 pm, Fri & Sat 11-9 pm, Sun 11-4 pm
OPEN FEBRUARY THRU DEER SEASON

36225 Big Rock Candy Mountain Dr., Jadwin, MO 36225 | 417-932-1223
www.bigrockcandymt.com | info@bigrockcandymt.com
Just 12 minutes from Montauk, past BO's Hollow COME CHECK OUT THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER!

Fishing Fools

Sam

When I was in my formative years, you know the ones, back when you thought you were invincible. I was glued to the TV on Saturdays watching fishing shows. Back then there were just a few and all of them were about bass fishing. “You gotta have this plug, it’s a killer”. It was about the same time plastic worms started showing up and the beginning of the destruction of some excellent wooden plugs, early plastic plugs and holes melting through plastic trays in tackle boxes. No one knew that the chemical in those worms didn’t get along with paints and plastic. After a few years I had a tackle box stuffed with all the “killer” plugs. You know what, those “killer plugs” that my wife throws, still work today after 60 years. So, the question is, why are we fishing fools buying newer and better? Someone I know when presented with the same question said: “because we can”. “If we had limited budgets and could barely put food on the table, we would still be using those plugs from 60 years ago”. It’s the same story with rods, reels, boats, and all the other gear fishing fools get caught up in. There will always be something better that we just have to have.

I was first exposed to fishing with a fly rod at the age of 17, it was a heavy bamboo production rod. It was the only fly rod my father had and could afford. He bought the rod and reel in Twin Falls Idaho in the early 50s..He also bought a fly wallet and a few flies and shortly after started tying his own flies. We were only a short drive to the Snake River, the Big Wood, the Little Wood and Silver Creek. A fly fisher’s paradise in our backyard. I was too young to use a fly rod, so an old casting rod with nightcrawlers is what I fished with.

The flies my father tied and fished back in the 50s were still in his wallet when I caught a TV show one Saturday that was about fly fishing in Pennsylvania. The curiosity seed was planted, and the old heavy cane rod was dung out of the back of the closet. I beat the hell out of the grass in the front yard that afternoon and finally my father had had enough. After a few lessons I was off to Mill Creek to explore a new world of fishing. The flies in that old wallet are the same patterns I tie, and fish today. Those patterns are catching trout in our blue ribbon waters here in Missouri just like they did in southern Idaho 70+ years ago.

If you flyfish today, there are hundreds of patterns to choose from. If you buy plugs there are hundreds of choices. That old cane rod and automatic reel my father bought is hanging on the wall in the front room, not because it can’t be used, because it’s sentimental. Fishing gear has come a long way from back in the day, but some things still work as well as they did back then. My FE Thomas fly rod was hand crafted in the mid-1930s. My J Young fly reel was built in the mid-1930s. They are both fantastic tools that do an excellent job and the old patterns on the end of the line are still catching fish. So I guess the whole point is that fishing fools don’t know when enough is enough. A good friend of mine asked me “how many fly rods does one man need”? I hesitated with my answer trying to figure out the exact number I actually need when he said “one more than he has”.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are about average for this time of year and water clarity is very good. Tiny Olives, Slate Wing Olives and Midges are still the primary bugs on the water. Small black stone flies should start crawling out any day so that would be another good choice.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

- Feb. 07 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area.
Feb. 11 Tri Lakes Expo in Clinton 9AM – 4PM
Feb. 21 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area
Todd will be presenting his Popper Head Production process. He said he can design any style we want.. So come up with a design you would like to see him make.

Reminder: DUES are Due check with Lou to make sure you are up to date.

Fly Tying at St. James Winery on February 19th



Billy, Sam and Todd participated in the Fly Tying session held at St. James Winery. The turnout wasn't anything like what we had last year. We had a lot more time to ty this year instead of sharing fishing stories with the spectators. We will need to sit down with St. James Winery prior to next year to discuss what we can do to improve on attracting more visitors.

Fishing Report Sam

Usually about this time of year, sometimes a little later depending on the water temps, I find a local pond or lake to fish for Crappie. The water is still cold, but with two or three days of warm sun on the water the Crappie will move up into the shallow warmer water in preparation for the spawn. The males will come in first and start to clear out spots for redds.

They will defend it aggressively if the water is warm enough. If the water is too cool they will still bite, but the take is much softer. Sometimes they will be in less than a foot of water. The great thing about fishing for them when they are shallow, it gives the fly rod fishermen an opportunity they won't get later in the year when the Crappie drop down into deep, cool water.



The small lake I like to fish produced well yesterday with 10.5-11.5 inch slab males.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are about average for this time of year and water clarity is very good. Tiny Olives, Slate Wing Olives, small Stone Flies and Midges will be giving way to some larger macros this month. Look for those nasty rainy windy days- “Baetis days”, to produce some excellent Tiny Olive hatches.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

March. 04 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area.

March 18 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

Reminder: DUES are Due check with Lou to make sure you are up to date.

Fly Tying with 4H club at the Rolla Fair Grounds

Todd and Sam presented a fly tying session with the local 4H club on Saturday the 25th. The main topic was chicken feathers and how we use them for tying flies. Attendance was minimal and probably because the meeting took place during the school spring break. The three club members that attended the meeting, tyed their own flies with a little helpful supervision.





River Conditions:

Stream flows are presently above average. The heavy rain we received the week of the 21st is still receding and should be back to normal by next week. Water clarity is very good for fishing but a little cloudy for sighting.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

- May 02 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area.
May 13 Mark Van Patten HOF induction
May 16 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

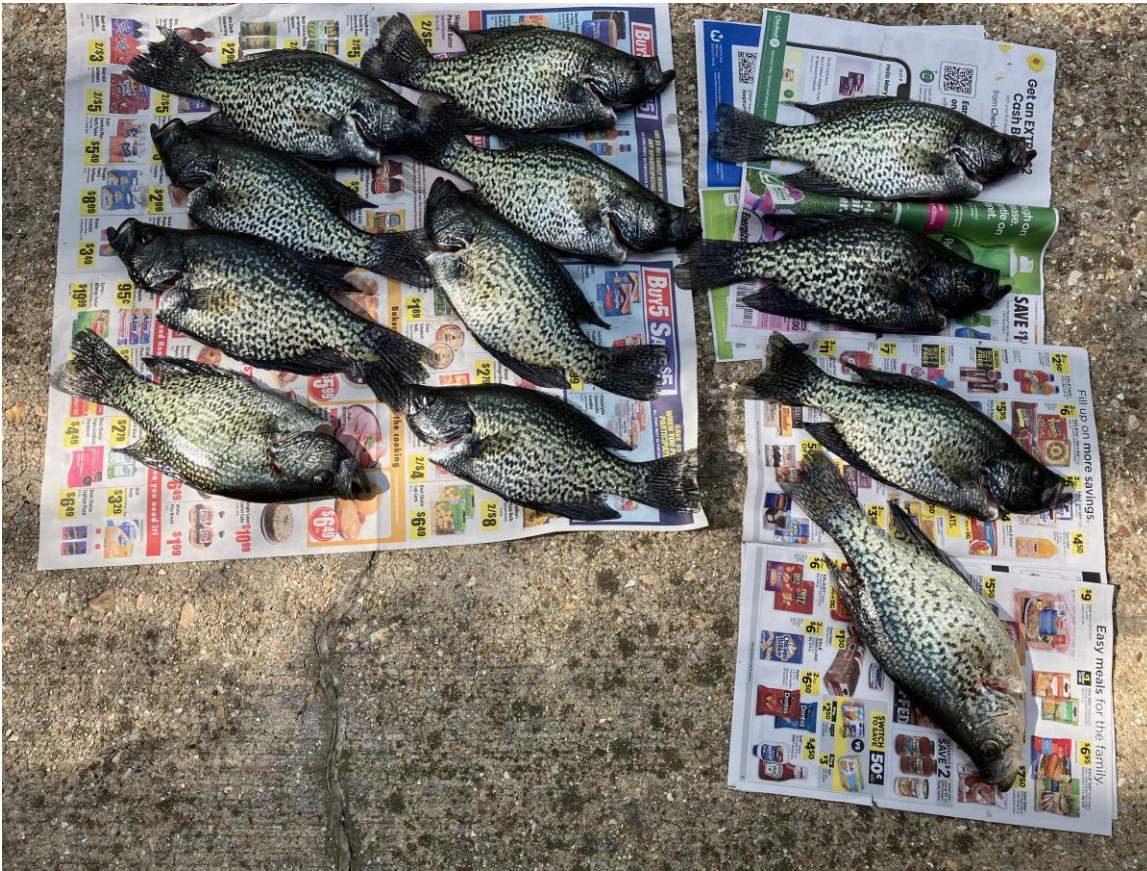
May 13th Mark Van Patten will be inducted to the National Freshwater Fishing Hall of Fame. The presentation will take place at the Big Rock Candy Mountain near Montauk State Park. Bill Cooper will make the presentation at approximately 6:30. There are festivities all day as a celebration of the upper Current River communities. Mark said there will be lots of vendors and demonstrations and even an old moonshiner. If you need an address for your GPS in the car: Big Rock Candy Mountain Dr, Jadwin, MO 65501

MAP: <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Big+Rock+Candy+Mountain/@37.4232517,-91.6265758,13.13z/data=!4m18!1m8!3m7!1s0x87da6dbb1d22f0eb:0x4885c5b954e8c177!2sJadwin,+MO!3b1!8m2!3d37.4867641!4d-91.5737736!16zL20vMGM5bWg0!3m8!1s0x87ea12385a454ba1:0x1c0f27b0da6eef73!5m2!4m1!1i2!8m2!3d37.4089293!4d-91.6289846!16s%2Fg%2F1hc2x6kdm>

Big Rock Candy Mountain website: <https://bigrockcandymt.com/>



Butterflies are a common site along the streams in our area on gravel bars and stream banks. Butterflies and sometimes honeybees are attracted to scat or bird droppings. This group of various swallow tails were gathered on this splattering of a Great Blue Heron dropping. There were honeybees on another dropping a couple of feet away, but I didn't take a photo. Otter scat piles are another location you can find butterflies gathered for a snack along the streams. They will also sit and sip on human urine they find on the ground. Apparently, the butterflies are attached to these various excrements because they contain various minerals.



I usually just bring home 8 Crappie, but we were getting a little low in the freezer, so I decided to keep an extra 4, which is an extra meal for the two of us. All but one of these were males and they all ranged from 10.5 to 11.5 inches. When the males are on the banks preparing nests, like these were, they are aggressive and easy to catch with a fly rod. Just about anything that gets close will be attacked. I use a tinsel fly that sinks slowly and has a lot of flash. The fly can be fished in a foot of water, which is perfect. I'm not sure that a fly must have this much flash for a male Crappie to clobber it, but the fly gets their attention, and it has worked for me for several years.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are presently about average. Water clarity is still very good for fishing.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

June 06 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area.
June 20 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

Article in Venturing angler where I advertise:

<https://venturingangler.com/2023/05/26/supreme-court-rules-against-clean-water-wetlands/>

This was passed along to us **by Todd:**

<https://www.outdoorlife.com/fishing/world-record-lake-trout/>



If real, that is a huge trout, but in my opinion it's about as ugly as the former world record Brown caught on the Little Red River in Arkansas.

Fringe Benefits

Earlier this month Augy Knickmeyer contacted me about seeing a sturgeon on a shoal in the Meramec river. I told him I was floating that section in a couple of days and that I would look for it. We did see the sturgeon, fished for it, hooked it and straighten a hook. I was not sure if it ate the wooly bugger or was foul hooked. I reported the lake sturgeon to Nick Gironde and Jen Gironde. I was told to contact the state fisheries biologist in charge of sturgeon. He asked if I had photos or video to verify the sighting. I told him I have seen several lake sturgeon in Wisconsin and that I was 100 percent sure this was indeed a lake sturgeon. A few days later I

floated that same stretch and took video and photos, but I was by myself trying to keep the boat in position with a breeze down the river and a little chop on the water, so the photos and video were not clear. A couple of days later Jen Girondo saw the sturgeon and confirmed that it was a lake sturgeon. It is officially the furthest up river that a lake sturgeon has been recorded on the Meramec river.



On that same float further down the river we came across a hooded Merganser with ducklings. She was the first and only hooded Merganser I have seen, this far south. I had never heard of anyone ever telling me about or seeing one. I told Nick Girondo about it, and he told me he saw one on the Current River several years ago and was told by a state biologist that it wasn't possible. Sometimes mother nature throws a curve ball. Anyway, this momma put on the most outrageous show of an injured parent that I have ever seen. She went all the way across the river and back three times. Two float trips later she was almost 4 miles further down stream from where I first saw her. Assuming the rarity that it was the same duck.

After fishing the Current River with a client, I was on my way home going around a curve, just outside the Montauk state park boundary where the church is at the top of the hill, a deer was standing in the middle of the road. I stopped and the deer ran down the hill. Sprawled out laying half on the shoulder of the road and half downhill off the road was a newborn fawn. I put on the flashers walked across the road and picked it up so it could get on its feet and pointed back down the hill toward its mother. It wobbled legged down the hill and laid down. I pulled out my phone took a short video and photo and left it there.

Being out in nature and getting to see things like this makes me glad that I live outdoors and have these opportunities of interaction with nature that most people only get to see in a video. Floating on the river and seeing Mink, Muskrat, Great Blue Herons, Deer, Turkey, Eagles, Osprey, the occasional Otter, all sorts of turtles and snakes and birds.... it never gets old and I hope it never does.



River Conditions:

Stream flows are about average. Water clarity is very good for fishing.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

- July 04 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area
July 18 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

Fishing Report from Lou:

There is something invigorating about flying across a big bay in the predawn hours and the only light is just a little bit of pink of the sunrise and the screen from the navigation screen. Wait... are those skull & cross bones? Why yes, yes they are. "Hopefully not from crashes" I thought to myself nervously. Captain Shultz had insisted Sharon and I be ready to go by 0515. That's up, cleaned up, coffee upped, gear gathered and breakfast at 0500 sharp.

We were all in!!

The first two days were tough. It was a different captain, different mindset. We tried fly fishing the first day and it didn't work. Day two we actually switched to the spinning rods hoping to hook into something. Nope, nada, big fat goose eggs for both of us.

The lodge we were at had the captain eat with the clients they were taking out the night before which is a great idea unless you don't hit it off like us with our first captain. Like I said the first two days were tough.

The last two days though were wonderful! Our second captain was a whole different story. Lucky for us after talking a bit at dinner we began to jive with Cpt Cameron Schultz. He had guided fly fishers in Alaska for 4 years and both Sharon and I had taken trips there. He let us know we were there at the wrong time of year for fly fishing. We took his advice and switched to the spinning rods. That third day (this was a 4 day fishing trip) it made a world of difference! We both had sea trout and Sharon even caught a gator trout! And yes she out fished me that day.



Day two we were up early again and heading across the bay to a different area. Same thing again fish after fish after fish were brought to hand and when the fishing got slow we moved.

The wading was wonderful – a nice hard bottom however, being the shorty in our little group of three there were a few places that it got a little deep for me, LOL!!

And then we had our chance. We were hunting bigger redfish than the one Sharon had caught in Florida – which wasn't very big. SO about mid- morning Cpt Shultz asked if we wanted to head to the Laguna Madre to hunt for redfish. Again we were all in!! Seems down there the redfish hadn't come up into the bay yet. (Just our luck we were really too early for them too fly fishing or not, LOL!) SO why did he ask? Because our first location was a 30 minute boat ride across the bay. The Laguna Madre would be another 30 minutes to the mouth of Baffin Bay. That is equal to an hour boat ride back with a good possibility of choppy water which isn't a whole lot of fun. We didn't care and after securing gear we were off!

The way we were going to fish the Laguna was fishing the pot holes. The wind pushes the boat along and we hit the potholes with our lures. Except when we arrived there was no wind. The water was glass smooth.

We went on the hunt. We went shallow and there were no backs, tails or any other part of a fish above the water. No nervous water. And for awhile no bait fish jumping. But then we started seeing nervous water. And saw a few bait fish jump. And then some more jump. We did see a few redfish and cast to them.

Then it happened. As we were eating lunch thinking about heading back to the dock when Cpt Schultz saw a wake of fish. We all thought the dolphin we saw were pushing bait fish. Nope. It was a big school of bull reds. Captain estimated around 100 or so pushing a wake in front of them. It was almost like a fire drill on the boat. Sandwiches and chips went flying everywhere while Cpt Schultz was handing us rods and we were trying to remember how to cast them. All three of us had hook ups for about 30 seconds then Sharon's came unbuttoned. I held tight and Capt Schultz kept his on too. Man o man what a fight! I can't imagine one of those on a fly rod. They got some SHOULDERS!!



We brought them to hand and got a bunch of pictures then watched as they slide back into the Laguna Madre none the worse for wear.

All too soon it was time to head back and our trip although not over (one more stop in Texas but that's a whole 'nother story!) was done in Baffin Bay. A big THANK YOU to Captain Cameron Schultz for turning it into a great trip!!

Gardner Camp by Sam

A friend of my daughter-in-law is the director of the Gardner Camp in Hull Illinois. Two weeks ago, she was talking to Jodi (my daughter-in-law) about needing to replace a fly fishing instructor that backed out on her for two upcoming camps and didn't know where to find a replacement. You can guess what Jodi told her. I was contacted by the camp director, and I said I would do it if the dates were open on my schedule. Fortunately, they were and now all I had to do was come up with enough rods and reels. I only have four rods I would let an 8 year old practice with so I called Herb to see if I could use the club rods for the camp. The camps were limited enrollment and lucky for me RFFA had enough rods to help match the enrollment, but not enough reels. Our club needed more reels to go with the rods and I needed reels for the camp so the logical thing for me to do was buy enough reels to satisfy both needs.

The first camp was an intermediate camp ages 8-15, with fishing experience. At first this was going to be a two day camp with them learning the first day and practicing fishing the second day, but then it was changed to two one day camps. Which meant I had to teach them the basics of fly casting, setting hooks, and landing fish in about an hour and then help them fishing for the next 90 minutes. Talk about a crash course. The original enrollment would have maxed out the gear and me, but for one reason or another, mostly sport camp conflicts, it was down to 4 ten year old boys. It worked out great. The second day the enrollment was down to 7 and a group of 12 year olds.. That day also worked out great because the older kids could actually do more by themselves.



I am headed back up there July 10 and 11 for a two day camp with older campers learning about fly tying, aquatic insects as well as casting and fly fishing techniques.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are low. Water clarity is very good for spotting fish and for the fish to spot you.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

August 01 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area
August 16 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area

Fishing Report from Lou:

Ahhh Texas - Where Everything is Bigger

May I recommend visiting the Texas Fresh Waters Fishery Center in Athens, Texas. (<https://tpwd.texas.gov/spdest/visitorcenters/tffc/>) the next time your in the area?

Here is a little known secret about Texas – when you pay your entry fee for a State Park that has a body of water on it you can fish that body of water without buying a Texas fishing license. This does not apply to historical sites, monuments or some other areas. Check the park regulations! This DOES apply to the aforementioned Texas FWFC.

Another little known secret about Texas is they actually work at growing LARGE largemouth bass! How large? Oh about 24” or 8 pounds qualifies an angler to participate in the Texas Sharelunker (<https://texassharelunker.com/>) program and qualify for the Lunker badge. Elite level is 10 lbs plus and Legend is 13 + pounds. Legacy is where it’s at. Catch one of those 13lb + during January, February or March and they can use it in the selective breeding program which happens to be located at the Texas Fresh Waters Fishery Center. But just like our fish hatcheries they do not allow fishing the rearing ponds, LOL!!

And to really see the program at work requires a visit in January, February or March. Pictures or weigh ins qualify for the Lunker, Elite and Legend receive badges. The Legacy level program (if the bass is caught between Jan – March) the fisher can “loan” it to be used for selective breeding to grow more bigger bass.



Redbreast sunfish



Redbreast sunfish



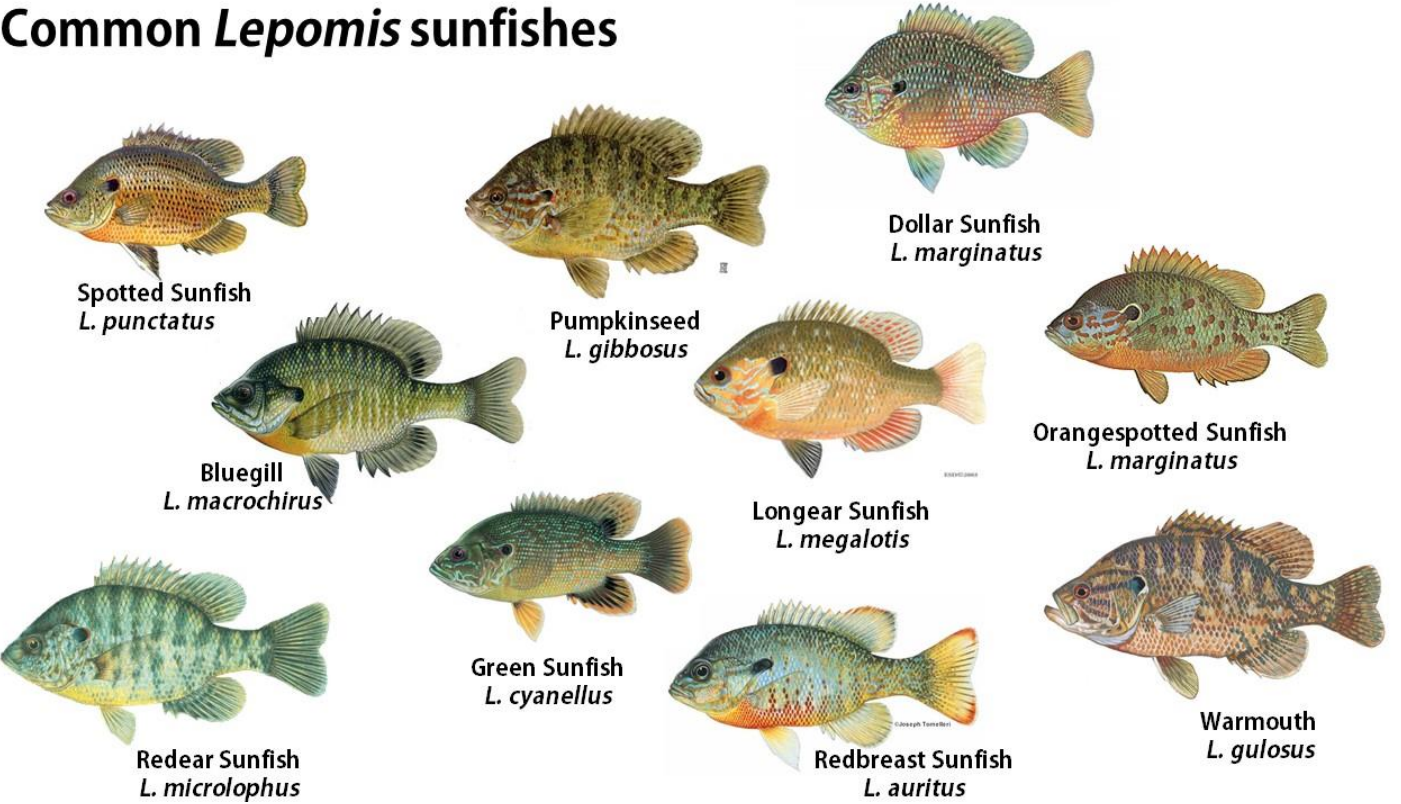
Coppernose Bluegill



Redbreast Sunfish

Every time I am in the area I will try to spend at least a day. They have displays of various fish native to Texas PLUS they have a few ponds and a nice creek they allow fishing in. When Sharon and I left Baffin Bay we stopped by there and spent a wonderful day chasing our finny friends. The only thing really challenging our casting was a few children running around that we had to avoid with our back casts!
Largemouth bass, catfish, bluegill, redbreasted sunfish and a few coppernose bluegill were brought to hand through out the day.

Common *Lepomis* sunfishes



Spotted Sunfish
L. punctatus

Pumpkinseed
L. gibbosus

Dollar Sunfish
L. marginatus

Bluegill
L. macrochirus

Longear Sunfish
L. megalotis

Orangespotted Sunfish
L. marginatus

Redear Sunfish
L. microlophus

Green Sunfish
L. cyanellus

Redbreast Sunfish
L. auritus

Warmouth
L. gulosus



Gardner Camp

18h · 🌐

Sam Potter, from [TightLine Fly Fishing](#), returned to Camp on July 10th & 11th for a two-day Fly Fishing Clinic. On Day One, they received instruction on fly tying and each Camper made three of their very own. On Day Two, they received casting instruction and got in lots of practice. It was a great event for these young anglers. The expert instruction they received should give them the confidence they need on the next fly fishing trip with the family... they may even be able to teach their elder angler relatives a thing or two!! 🎣 Thanks to the [Illinois Conservation Foundation](#) for sponsoring our Wildlife Encounters series of programming!



River Conditions:

Stream flows are good and fishing has been good, IF you hold your mouth right.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

September 05 Fly Tying 6:30 Bray Conservation Area
September 19 Meeting 6:30 Bray Conservation Area
October 03 Meet & Greet Phelps Health at Shirley Day Conference Center in the
Delbert Day Cancer Institute. Time to be determined.

Fishing Report from Sam:

Brett and I took another trip north to Wisconsin last week chasing footballs on the North Fork of the Flambeau River. The stream was at its lowest since 2014 when the USGS installed the first stream gauge for the river. Needless to say we did our share of walking the raft through several riffles.



The North Flambeau is a typical north woods stream with plenty of boulders and that tannin water that looks like tea. The smallmouth on the Flambeau are the same as all the other river north country smallies, dark, deep and thick. You think you have a nice 2 pounder on and it turns out to only be 12-13 inches. The smallmouth up there are strong to say the least. We didn't catch any bruisers like we have on past trips but there were plenty to eat our flies and a lot of them on top water which makes the fishing that much more fun.

Brett likes to throw streamers and he did for the first two days. It was a streamer that hooked the biggest fish on the trip, but he never boated it and only got a glimpse of how large it was when it rolled and then cut him off. We didn't know if it was a Northern or a Musky but it was one or the other. We saw eagles every day and one day we saw otters crossing the stream. There were signs on the highway to watch out for Elk crossing. We didn't see any Elk but on our way home we did see a Wolverine cross the highway.



Boulders and more boulders hiding just below the surface so it's hard to see them until right up on them. They were all smooth and thankful for that since we slide off of enough of them to cause some damage if they had been sharp or pointed.

The 2 bedroom cabin we stayed in was furnished with everything we needed, clean and private. We agreed that clean was something the residents up there took pride in. Everything was clean. The roadways the villages the homes the farms,, everything. The restaurants we went to all had dead animals on the walls. It must be a local decorating theme. Lots of deer, some Elk, some Bears, some Wolves some Moose and lots and lots of fish.





Antlers covered the ceiling of the Flambeau Forest Inn while a huge bear stood guard in the corner enclosed in a glass case.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are about normal for this time of the year maybe a little higher but still clear.



MEET AND GREET: FLY TYING

The Activities Committee and Mission Possible are teaming up to introduce Phelps Health employees, physicians and providers, volunteers and family members to the craft of fly tying. The world of fly tying can be a bit overwhelming at first with walls full of flash, feathers and hooks.

The Meet and Greet will offer demonstrations relating to everything fly tying and fly fishing, led by the local Roubidoux Fly Fishers Association.

Date: Tuesday, October 3, 2023

Time: 5:30-7:30 PM

Location: Shirley Day Conference Center, Rooms B-E, Phelps Health
Delbert Day Cancer Institute, 1060 West 10th Street, Rolla



If you're interested in learning more about the Roubidoux Fly Fishers Association, scan this QR code.

Light refreshments will be served.

The program is free and open to anyone age 11 and older.

Space is limited. Please contact Crystal Lorah, director of the Auxiliary and Volunteer Services, at (573) 458-7947 or clorah@phelpshealth.org to secure your spot.



Phelps Health

PHELPSHEALTH.ORG





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

November 04 10:00 Survivor Outreach Program Arrive at 0900
November 07 06:30 Fly Tying Bray Conservation Area
November 18 12:00 Meeting FYTO Bennett Spring

From Lou: Survivor Outreach Program

Here are the 5 Ws

Who - Participants will mainly be from the Survivor Outreach Program on Ft Leonard Wood.

What - Very basic Introduction to Fly Fishing and tying (we will let them keep their fly); possibly recruit a few new members.

When - Nov 4th from 10:00 till ?

Where - ACS Building 486 Replacement Ave, Ft Leonard Wood

Why - OK here is my Cliff Notes version - this is an outreach geared towards the male survivor. They have plenty of programs geared towards the female spouse who has lost a loved one but not a whole lot for the guys that have lost their spouse, son, daughter, mother, father. There will be a simultaneous class going on I believe in the classroom next door (something about fixing pots with gold paint?)

FYTO Freeze Your Trout Off has been our November meeting location for as long as I have been associated with the club. Although we have had to make alternate assembly locations in the park due to weather conditions, the tentative gathering location is at the Spring at 12:00. Everyone is encouraged to bring a dish to share. We can discuss it further on Saturday or Tuesday at Fly Tying.

Fishing Report from Sam

Earlier in the month I took a trip to Taneycomo looking for big brown trout that make their way up the lake toward the hatchery on their annual spawning run. Usually, I fish below outlet number 3 near the rebar hole, but they were running too much water when we got there so it wasn't accessible and besides there wasn't any water coming down the hatchery ladder entering the lake so that negated any reason for trout to be in that area. MDC is doing a lot of construction at Shepard of The Hills hatchery and that morning the ladder was shut down.

We talked to a few fishermen that had fished earlier and found out 3 dam outlets were opened about six AM which meant they had been running water around four hours. I told my son to get dressed because I was sure the water was going to drop within the next hour or so and we wanted to be in position when it did. When the water is up several fishermen abandon the stream, but there are a few places available to dunk a fly if you know where they are and when they drop the water you will be in a good spot to fish. I hate combat fishing, but at this time of the year with temps in the 60s and a bluebird sky everyone and their uncle heads to Taney for the big browns. I prefer night fishing, but my son could only fish that day.

We didn't score any 20+ inch trout, but I did manage an 18 and my son's largest was about 15. The rest were in that typical Taney 12–13-inch category. We fished scuds of course in various colors and did most of it sight fishing. Picking out a fish to cast to and letting the fly do the rest and by rest, I mean that literally. It takes a while to get used to that type of fishing and patience is a must, but it produces and it's very rewarding watching the fish take your fly.



Fishing Report from Sam

Oooh S

Those words shot out of my mouth, and repeated several times, as I watched it drift away. It was the third day of my annual Steelhead trip to Michigan. It was 6 AM, dark and fortunately not cold for a change as we entered the parking lot of the launch. My Michigan fishing buddy, Barry, backed the trailer in a little too fast and stopped a little too sudden and

the drift boat shot out into the river. I'm yelling as he pulls away and I start running, skirting around a patch of trees and brush jutting out, to the next launch pad several yards further downstream. "What happened" he yelled. I'm yelling back, "the boat is drifting down the river." "What"?

The previous couple of days we put the boat in at shallow water ramps, water so shallow that we had to push the boat off the trailer. Obviously, he didn't think of the rope, and I know I didn't think of attaching the launch rope, this ramp was a steeper pad and much deeper water, and it didn't help that he was going a little to fast and way to hard on the stop. Regardless the boat was drifting downstream in the dark.

When I got to the next ramp, I didn't see the boat and I know I ran faster than the current, so where was it? Barry came running with a flashlight and I caught a glimpse of an object on the far bank. It was the boat! I yelled "the boat is down here". He thought that I saw a boat someone put in ahead of us and their boat was tied up at the lower launch. When he got there, I pointed, "there it is across the river". The boat had pushed across the stream and floated along the far bank and got caught up in a bush. I told Barry "I'll drive across the bridge and try to get the boat from that side". The problem was going to be getting to it down the steep bank which was to my estimate to be about a 60-degree angle. I crossed the bridge, parked my vehicle, and started up that steep hill. When I got to the top, I couldn't go fast down the ridge line because I couldn't see well, but finally I saw Barry's flashlight, so I knew I was getting close. Looking down that hill at the river and the boat I was guessing it to be about 150 feet and with that angle I was going to have to do it sitting on my butt, it was way too steep to walk down and too much of a risk of falling all the way down the hill to the river. I tried to go as slow as possible grabbing trees and slowing down with my feet against trees as I slid down. Once there I knew the riverbank below the water was going to be about the same angle and deep. I slowly lowered myself into the water holding on to a bush. It was about waist deep, but I couldn't reach the boat. I pulled on the branches of the bush holding the boat, but the bush was caught on the front seat of the boat, and it served as a pivot point and only caused the rear of the boat to slowly start to swing out. Bad idea, I let go of the bush holding the boat and the boat moved back to where it was. I was going to have to get in deeper and I didn't know how deep it was going to be. Slowly moving my left leg, I slide it down the bank a little further and now I'm chest deep holding on to a bush with my right hand and hoping it holds tight, but the boat is still just out of reach. Taking a chance, I slid a little bit deeper to about 4 inches from the top of my waders and I finally reached the boat with my left hand and pulled it toward me. Now I can step back up a little, reach a log to the left with my left foot and hold on to the boat with my left hand and let go of the bush with my right. With the bush holding the front of the boat and my right hand free I pull the oars up one at a time and slide them in the oar locks and crawl in the boat, As I crawl in the push off to get in changes the angle of the boat the current catches the back of the boat and sweeps us under the bush. My hat gets knocked off, but I reach it in time to save it, but I won't be wearing it today, it's soaked. I row back across the river and we both give out a sigh of relief. Great way to start a 12 mile drift, an hour late, it was dark thirty when we got off the river with just a few fish to show for our effort, but fortunately our largest fish of the trip.



Nice brown trout in spawning colors



Our largest steelhead of the trip

Fishing was the least producing trip up there we have ever had since I started fishing with Barry. Not enough steelhead in the system and too many eggs on the stream floor. The few steelhead that were in the system had full bellies and didn't need to move to feed. Very similar to a Trico spinner fall... just sit and wait for the food to come to you without moving more than two or three inches. We hooked about two dozen between us for the week, which was way down from our average of 60-70 a week over the past 16 years. The trees were beautiful, and the weather was good, too good. It's always better to fish when it rains hard enough to put fresh water in the river and color it up a bit. The rise in the river gets more fish to push up. More fish means they eat most of the eggs and there are more to catch and more that are a little bit hungrier.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are normal and clear. Brown trout are finishing their annual spawning with Rainbows just around the corner getting ready for their spawning runs. Fishing for trout can be tough in these conditions so concentrate on water below the redds instead of the fish that are actually spawning on the redds. Or better yet avoid fishing around the redds altogether





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

December 05 06:00 Fly Tying Bray Conservation Area
December 19 06:00 Meeting Bray Conservation Area

Survivor Outreach Program

Lou, Todd, Sam and volunteer guest Sharon participated in the Survivor Outreach program at Fort Leonard Wood. The objective was to be informative and instructive about our favorite hobby. Although the turnout wasn't up to our expectations, we did manage to open some eyes and provide an opportunity for possible future involvement.



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Freeze Your Trout Off Photos provided by Lou

Lou, Don, Todd and his crew spent their day fishing in and around the Spring at Freeze Your Trout Off. MDC must have dumped a couple thousand trout at the spring because they were so

thick you could have stepped on them. I'm sure Todd must have spent a bit of time helping his "Kinfolk" with flies and suggestions. I spent my day fishing down in zone 3 where there were very few other fishermen to contend with. Everyone caught fish, it was a pleasant sunny day and more than enough food for second and third helpings.



Don tying on the killer fly



Todd helped his brother Jamie land this big one.



Jamie unhooking a bright colored male.



Todd's folks getting ready to hit the water.



Todd and his mom at the Spring.

Fishing Report by Sam

Last week I had a first occur while fishing below Maramec park. I have caught suckers before on nymphs and San Juan worms but never on a woolly. I guess everyone knows that suckers feed on the exact same thing that trout feed on. Mayflies, caddisflies, craneflies, midges, aquatic worms and anything else they can find. The difference is that Suckers spend their time trying to find food and trout wait for the food to come to them. I have caught trout swimming along and feeding on the bottom just like a sucker, but only at Taneycomo. Spent another day on the Meramec today and only saw two other fishermen.



Skittering a caddis was the ticket today and I found rainbows on a redd in the Meramec, which doesn't happen often on that stream.

River Conditions:

Stream flows are normal and very clear today, but that could change overnight. We are supposed to get significant rain tonight. Some of the rainbows are doing their thing now so please avoid the redds or fishing to fish on the redds..The “wild” trout will spawn later on this winter.





Upcoming Events to Note on Your Calendar

January 02	06:30 Fly Tying Bray Conservation Area
January 16	06:30 Meeting Bray Conservation Area
January 27	09:00 Maramec Fly Tying Class

I don't have a fishing report from this month so I thought I would share an article from my website:

“Location, Location, Location”

We have all heard this before; Location is the #1 most important thing about business. If you could consider the location of my guide service in that category, then I have a GREAT location. From my home in Rolla, which is in South Central Missouri, I am 10 minutes from the Little Piney Creek, 20 minutes from Mill Creek, 30 minutes from Spring Creek, 30 minutes from the Meramec River, 30 minutes from the Big Piney River, and 40 minutes from the Current River. I have a GREAT location if you love to fish with a fly rod.

BUT this article isn't about a business location, this is about the location a fisherman chooses to cast from. Upstream, downstream, across, a quarter down are all good if the situation calls for it. BUT I am not going to get into these types of locations either, because they depend on the type of fly you fish, the type of water and the preferred method of each fisherman. I am talking about the fisherman's location according to the sun, the depth of the water, and the bank along the stream.

Location #1:

How many times have you seen fishermen, or put yourself, in a position to cast a shadow on the water. What happened, did you notice any change occurring in the stream? If there were fish around that shadow, they spooked. Why, because a moving shadow means danger to Wild Trout. Osprey, Eagles, Herons, Kingfishers and fishermen hunt fish from above the stream, and the fish learn, especially if they are large fish, that danger comes from above. It is just like Pavlov's theory, ring a bell and the dog salivates in anticipation of a meal. SEE a moving shadow and one of your relatives disappears, or a close encounter with death happens. If you are a spooky fish, you live longer because a shadow means danger.

Approach pools in the shadow of the trees. Make every effort to cast from the shadow of the trees; this type of awareness on the part of the fisherman, kind of goes along with my last article about movement. Take the extra time to observe your surroundings and try to blend in with the natural environment.

Location #2

What does the depth and type of the water have to do with location? The deeper the water is, the larger the viewing window can become for the fish. It depends on the depth the fish is holding. If it is on the bottom in a deep pool the viewing window is greatly enhanced. If it is holding on the top the viewing window is very narrow. It is this location of the fish that we as fishermen, must be observant about. I will not get into light rays, reflections and refraction angles, that is another long article in itself. Noticing the location, and depth where the fish is holding is very important in fishing success. A fisherman can get very close to a fish in fast, tumbling water, because the fish cannot see very well above it in this type of water. This is straight stick nymphing-indicator type of water, where you catch fish at the end of your rod. This is where novice fly fishermen have most of their luck, because it does not require much casting, a fisherman can get close, and the rush of the water conceals movement and noise. BUT if you are fishing a slow pool, your technique needs to change if you want to be successful. Be aware that fish can see much better, so you will have to keep your distance, move slowly and keep a low profile. The shallower the water, the spookier the fish become, because they are nearer the surface, their sight window diminishes and the closer they are to danger. Depth provides protection from above and enhances vision and awareness to danger. The large fish have learned this and obviously have adapted their movements, feeding patterns and such allowing them to survive for a long time. These are the fish you see in the middle of the day at the bottom of a deep pool. Just lying there resting and waiting for the sun to go down for dinner time.

The long and short of this paragraph means: Your location should be a long cast away from the fish you are after, if you are fishing a slow flat pool. Side Castings should be made, if possible, keeping the rod low to the water, where the fish cannot see very well. A rod sticking up in the air and waving back and forth is like a flag, especially if you have that nice bright red fly line.

Location #3

Standing on the top of a stream bank allows the angler to get a better view of the stream below. We can see where fish are holding, how big they are and all those neat things that Polarized sunglasses provide. If you don't own a pair, buy some. It will open-up an entire spectrum of fishing that you have never seen before.

When you are standing on this bank looking at the fish, realize that the fish are looking back at you. Remember what was mentioned about fish vision? The deeper the fish the larger the sight window becomes. Standing on a stream bank places the fisherman very high above the fish, even if the fish is holding at the surface, and provides an opportunity for the fish TO SEE YOU. If you are fishing for Wild Trout and they see you... Good luck catching them.

IF you like to observe fish from the top of a stream bank to find out where they are holding and how big they are, keep a low profile, move very slowly, avoid casting a shadow, and you will be rewarded, especially if you have those polarized sunglasses to help out.

I hope some of this helps improve your fishing success.

“A bad day fishing is still a Great Day”

River Conditions:

Streams continue to remain low and very clear. Midges and BWOs are the primary hatches. Catching can be tough with this type of water condition. I would suggest to continue with the smaller tippet size until we get some runoff and cloudy the streams.

