



TALE WATERS

A Monthly Publication of

Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 2222

Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222

www.MVFF.org

July

2017



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Tale Waters Edited by Jim Hulsey — newsletter@mvff.org

Welcome New Members

Lisa Meyer & Rick Wessel	Pecos, NM
Joe & Jeanna Burton	Alamogordo, NM
Vance & Kim Dewbre	Clovis, NM
Lowell & Kandi Dickinson	Albuquerque, NM
Dan Bryan	Hobbs, NM

Membership Meeting

There will be no MVFF general membership meeting in July. Many members will be fishing and the rest of them should be. The next meeting will be in September. See you then.

Executive Board Meeting

There will be no MVFF Board meeting in July. The next meeting will be in August. See you then.

Liars and Tyers

Liars and Tyers will not meet in July. The next meeting will be in September. See you then.

President's Corner

David Carmichael



The weather and water conditions in New Mexico have been pretty intense and variable over the past month. We've seen above average snowpack and massive spring runoff well into June in the northern parts of the state. Miriam and I had plans to meet friends for some camping and fishing near Coopers on the Chama River during the second week in June, but as the dates approached, I called Noah Parker at Land of Enchantment Guides to get an assessment of the water conditions. He said the Chama and Brazos were both dangerous and unfishable. Due to the large snowpack in southern Colorado, the spring runoff is a month late this year; the Chama was flowing at 3,000 cfs below Vado Dam, and flood waters were up into the trees along the lower Brazos.

In the southern portions of the state, there was below average snowpack and negligible runoff, at least in the Sacramento Mountains. But it seems we are already seeing the onset of the summer monsoons about a month early, with massive and intense thunderstorms hitting the Gila Mountains and the Sacramentos. Just a few days ago, Bob Silver alerted us to a runoff spike of 79 cfs measured at Hope, NM a short distance downstream of the club lease on the Rio Penasco; that's roughly 4 times greater than the typical flow for this time of year. We can only hope that the trout recently stocked by the club are still between the banks and within the lease boundaries. If anyone gets a chance to fish the lease in the next few weeks, please let us know about your results.

Although heavy winter snowpack is probably better for the mountains and fisheries than intense summer thunderstorms, the Southwest certainly can use all the moisture we can get. Even so, it is nice that we have ready access to a variety of fisheries on public lands so that we have options when local conditions are unfavorable on some of our favorite waters. The smaller headwater streams are often fishable even when the larger downstream systems are not. My daughter and I recently had the opportunity to visit one of the smaller fisheries in our region, and we had a great time catching Gila trout.

Hidden Waters Notebook: Sapillo Creek

At the general membership meeting last November we heard a presentation by Jill Wick, NMSGF trout biologist, about the status of the Gila trout recovery and opportunities to fish for Gila trout. In the January 2017 newsletter, Craig Springer of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service contributed an article on the stocking of Gila trout in Mineral Creek. The restoration of the Gila trout to fishable status is a testament to the success of the Endangered Species Act, and the concerted efforts of federal and state land management agencies, agency scientists, and volunteers. Nevertheless, it may be that many area anglers don't realize what a special opportunity we have in our ability to fish for Gila trout, a species that we came so close to losing.

Some fly anglers from outside our region do recognize the significance and value of seeing, catching and touching Gila trout, treating them as trophy fish.



Sapillo Creek inside the Gila Wilderness

This sentiment is expressed by editor Kirk Deeter in the most recent issue of TROUT magazine:

I've probably caught several dozen browns that weighed five pounds or more. But I've only caught a few Gila trout. In my mind, catching any native fish, touching it and returning it to the water is nothing short of sacred. There is no greater "trophy" to be had, in my mind, than the simple understanding that I have tricked eons of instinct, especially in a native's place, and kept only the knowledge that that fish is still alive

and swimming today. (TROUT: the Journal of Coldwater Fisheries Conservation, Summer 2017, p. 8)

My daughter Andi and I recently had the distinct pleasure of angling for Gila trout on Sapillo Creek, an experience that provided solitude, immersion in the



Andi's 12 1/2" trophy Gila trout, caught on a #14 red stimulator

immensity that is the Gila Wilderness, and the chance to catch and release many Gila trout whose beauty is at once striking and subtle. I know a guide at High Desert Anglers in Santa Fe who once told me, "you can often tell who the really good fly anglers in New Mexico are, because their knees are

wet and muddy, or they are wearing kneepads." What he meant of course is that on many/most streams, pursuing native trout means being stealthy, crawling on hands and knees, ducking under vegetation, and casting from a kneeling position. All of these tactics are appropriate for Sapillo Creek.

When we arrived around noon, the water was slightly low and very clear, calling for a stealthy approach. In many places, willows line the banks and hang over the waters. Between the willows and alders, there is often little room for back casts and exuberant hook sets, so casting from one's knees is often useful for several reasons. We both used March Brown, Ltd. adjustable backpacking rods assembled in the 6 ft. long configuration. This size rod worked much better than the 9 footer I used during my first visit to the Sapillo last autumn.

The water and air temperatures were both a comfortable 64 degrees, until the rains came and lowered the latter by 10 degrees. There was no hatch in evidence, so we used two different attractor dry patterns (#14 red stimulator and #14 gold Madam X), with pheasant tail or San Juan worm droppers added for the deeper pools. We fished leisurely for about four hours until we were driven out by an intense thunderstorm with rain and hail that lasted at least 5 hours (by which point we and most other people we saw broke camp and headed home). However, in the few hours we did fish, we caught 48 fish, most of which were Gila trout; a few were rainbows or rainbow/Gila hybrids. Andi caught a few more fish than I did, and she also caught the largest Gila trout (12 ½ inches) with a nifty cast into an eddy that was very well protected by overhanging willows.

The color of the Gila trout we caught seemed lighter than what is sometimes depicted in books: very light yellow with small black spots and a faint pink tinge along the lateral line... almost like a stick of butter

with pepper sprinkled on top. Although the new regulations allow anglers to harvest two Gila trout, we didn't keep any. If anyone is interested in eating fish around the campfire, I recommend harvesting the rainbows and hybrids from the Sapillo, rather than the Gila trout.

Many anglers enjoy catching large trout, and perhaps that is one reason that small waters are often overlooked. We understand that smaller waters harbor mostly smaller fish, espe-

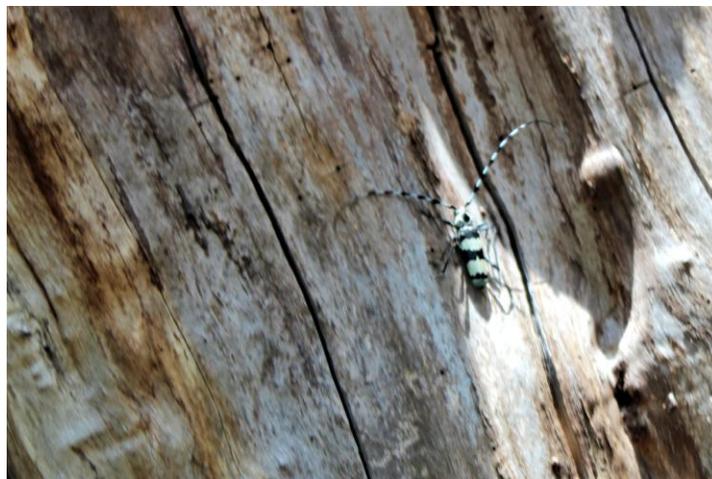
cially threatened natives in headwater streams. But Robert Behnke (*Trout and Salmon of North America*, pp. 123-124) has some things to say about Gila trout that makes me appreciate them all the more, despite their relatively small size. Although large Gila trout occur in some lakes, and some hatchery raised fish in

the 20 inch class have been stocked in Lake Roberts and several streams in the Gila, the size for most wild Gila trout is from 5 to 9 inches. Their life span is typically 4 years, with some known to reach 6 years. In small streams where growth is limited, Gila trout generally spawn for the first time at three

years of age, and because the Gila trout is slow growing, they may be only 5 inches long by that age. So, while larger females produce more eggs than small ones, a 5 inch female can nevertheless be sexually mature. The small adult size of Gila trout seems to be an adaptation to habitat and food limitations, as well as the relative instability of their native waters. Therefore, it seems likely that even the smallest Gila trout we caught (6 inches in length) were likely al-



Rainbow/Gila trout hybrid (?), Sapillo Creek



Banded Alder Borer (Rosalia funebris) observed along Sapillo Creek

ready reproducing adults, and a 12 inch fish really is a trophy in such a small stream.

Getting to the creek can be a little bit tricky. If you go, be sure to park at the "ghost bike" memorial, or descanso at the junction of NM Hwy 15 and 35. Walk across the bridge over the creek and continue past the barn and around the bend. The owner of the barn seems to believe she owns the roadside in that area, so don't park there. When you reach the yellow warning sign for the next bend in the road, drop off the pavement to the right, cross the arroyo, and find the well-defined trail on the other side of the arroyo. Follow the trail through a pretty meadow, down to the creek and through the willows. Continue for about a mile and a half, an easy half hour hike, to the green gate that marks federal property. The private land-owner allows access through the property, but don't start fishing until you reach the public lands. From there, you have access to several miles of the creek, containing gravelly riffles, undercut banks and deep pools, enclosed by vertical rock outcrops that provide a sense of solitude. Enjoy the hike, catch some trophies, and remember to appreciate our public lands.▲



Ron Bellerose
PHW Coordinator



Project Healing Waters is on vacation for the months of July and August due to lack of participation, volunteers and heat. We will have a couple of evening fly tying classes this summer and we will start up strongly in September.

For more information about PHWFF see www.projecthealingwaters.org. Contact Ron Bellerose (575-680-5516), flyfishnh@hotmail.com if you wish to volunteer to help out. ▲

Letter of Appreciation Received

Board member Bob Silver recently received a letter of appreciation from Jennifer Frey of the New Mexico State University student chapters of the Wildlife Society and the American Fisheries Society. MVFF donated \$200 to the student's restoration project of Willow Creek in the Gila National Forest. The goal of the fundraiser was to collect \$500, but they more than doubled that goal receiving over \$1,000 in donations. The funds are being used buy tools for the students to use in the restoration work. The first work project was held May 18-21 to plant about 1,000 willow cuttings along Willow Creek to stabilize the creek bank and help to provide shade once the cuttings mature. More projects will follow next fall. ▲

Fishing Report

Blaine Goss

Went to the Lease yesterday (6/27/17). Water was brownish and high. Saw evidence of a recent 4-5 ft blowout. It didn't affect my fishing as I caught three 12-14" and lost 3 others of the same size. Caught some chubs but not a lot. The murky water made it so the fish could not see me. They were not rising. I fished with wooly buggers most of the time. ▲

Club Outings Planned

The board is now discussing possible future outings and would welcome suggestions from members. Where do you want to go? Let them know. If you have comments or suggestions for additional trips pass them to any of the Board members. Trips now in the planning stages are:

- October 1-5—Lady Anglers trip to the Gunnison area of Colorado.
- Autumn—Club trip to the San Juan.
- Autumn—Club trip to Kodiak, AK. ▲

MVFF Board Meeting Minutes

The Executive Board did not meet in June and therefore there are no minutes to report. The next meeting will be in August. ▲

Quick Look Contact Information

2017 Officers of the Club	
Officers	
• President:	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• V-Pres.:	Tom Johnson (417) 684-7075
• Secretary:	Jeff Arterburn (612) 720-3456
• Treasurer:	Gary Mann (575) 521-7793
Board Members	
• Position 1:	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• Position 2:	Tom Johnson (417) 684-7075
• Position 3:	Jeff Arterburn (575) 524-0773
• Position 4:	Evan Claassen (402) 239-1289
• Position 5:	Will Lubenau (575) 442-1912
• Position 6:	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
• Position 7:	Bob Silver (575) 522-6325
• Position 8:	Gary Mann (575) 521-7793
• Position 9:	Dennis Lanpher (575) 649-2946
Newsletter & Web Page Editor	
• Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880	newsletter@mvff.org
Membership Committee Chairman	
• Tom Wobbe (575) 522-5437	membership@mvff.org

Norm Mabie Scholarship Fund	
Market Value as of 30 June 2014	\$11,487

Norm Mabie Scholarship Fund

The Norm Mabie Memorial Scholarship Fund is an endowed fund at New Mexico State University which is funded by MVFF member donations. Earnings from the fund are used to provide scholarships for students at NMSU majoring in fisheries or related fields.

The recipient of each scholarship is determined each April by the MVFF Board with the award being made for the fall semester.

Even though the fund is endowed additions can be made to it at any time. The larger the fund, the more earnings are available for award. If you are interested in contributing please make checks out to the **NMSU Foundation** and on the "for" line of the check, identify "Norm Mabie Memorial Scholarship Fund for deposit only." All contributions are tax deductible. For any questions please contact one of the Officers or Board members. If you have not made a donation to the fund please give consideration and help honor Norm.

Current Email Addresses Needed

Many of the email addresses in our files are not current as members change to other internet providers. These addresses will not be distributed, but will only be used to relay club information or reminders for club meetings and other club events. Please send your address changes to membership@mvff.org.

Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout Print

Help support the MVFF Habitat Restoration Projects and purchase a limited edition "Rio Grande Cutthroat Trout" print. This beautiful printing of an original watercolor of our native state fish is a limited series of 150 high quality 12 x 18 prints that are numbered and signed by New Mexico artist Michelle Arterburn. The cost of each individual print is \$25.00, with the proceeds dedicated towards habitat restoration projects. If you live out of town and wish the print mailed to you please add \$5 for postage. See the MVFF website for purchase.



******* REMEMBER *******
MVFF MEMBERSHIPS & NM FISHING LI-
CENSES EXPIRE ON 31 MARCH

Membership Information

Membership is open to anyone who supports the activities of the club. Membership fees are shown below. Members are provided with the opportunity to attend informational monthly meetings, purchase fishing access permits to the MVFF leased waters on the Rio Peñasco, and participate in other Club activities such as a summer picnic, annual awards banquet, casting clinics, fly tying classes, and Club sponsored fishing trips.

There are several options for the payment of dues. A family is defined as a club member, their spouse and all children 17 years of age or under.

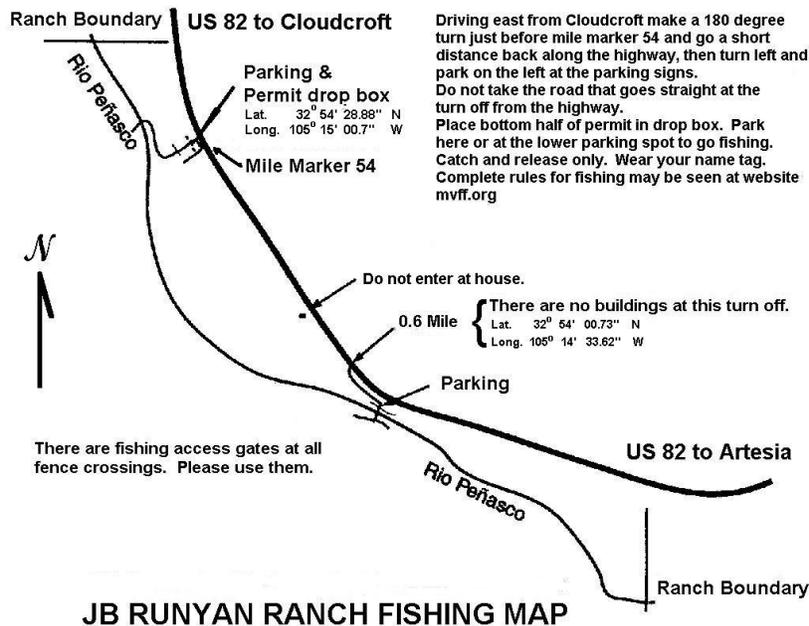
1 Year	\$20	Individual
	\$25	Family
3 Years	\$50	Individual
	\$60	Family
Life	\$400	Individual
	\$500	Family

Lease Information

Permits to fish the Club leased waters on the Rio Peñasco can be obtained from Jim Hulseley (575-524-1880), Tom Wobbe (575-522-5437) and Donna Mabie (575-522-3810) in Las Cruces. Permits can be obtained from the land owner, but you should phone (575-687-3362) the night before to ensure someone will be there to sell them to you. Permits can be ordered through the club web page (mvff.org) by filling out the form and mailing as directed. Cost is \$25.00 per day. Kids under 18 fish free but must be accompanied by an adult club member with a permit. You must be a current member (current dues have been paid) of MVFF to fish the lease. Please wear your MVFF identification badge while on the property. New or replacement badges can be obtained by contacting Jim Hulseley. In addition, members can purchase a one-day, one-time permit for guests.

Directions to the Lease:

Follow NM 82 east from Cloudcroft, NM or west from Artesia, NM. The turn off to the lease is located on the right side of the road about 100 yards before mile marker 54 coming from Cloudcroft or 100 yards on the left past mile marker 54 coming from Artesia.



MESILLA VALLEY FLYFISHERS, INC.

PO Box 2222

Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222

Membership and/or Permit Application

(Please Print Clearly)

Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Work/Cell Phone: _____ Home Phone: _____ email: _____

Are you a current member? _____ Yes _____ No

Do you need a name badge? _____ Yes _____ No

New Membership _____ or renewal _____?

Membership Categories: Individual Family Circle the one desired.

1 Year \$20 \$25

3 Years \$50 \$60

Life \$400 \$500

For family membership: Name of spouse _____ No. of children _____

Note: All memberships expire on 31 March. New memberships received on or after 1 January will expire on 31 March of the following year.

Membership fee if applicable \$_____

_____ Adult Permits @ \$25 per permit = \$_____

Total =\$_____

Send remittance with this form to the address shown at top of page.