



# TALE WATERS

A Monthly Publication of  
Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 2222  
Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222  
[www.MVFF.org](http://www.MVFF.org)

October

2020

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Tale Waters Edited by Jim Hulsey — [newsletter@mvff.org](mailto:newsletter@mvff.org)

## Meetings

Editor:—Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Club will hold no meetings in the foreseeable future.

## President's Corner

David Carmichael



Well, it really looks like we're going to be in for the long haul in our efforts to control the spread of COVID-19, develop a vaccine, and distribute it across the nation. It's times like these when I wish I lived within walking distance of a

trout stream. Then the travel restrictions we're living with, which are fully justified, wouldn't prevent me from getting out and fishing. I had been hopeful that if everyone followed the best science-based recommendations from public health specialists, that we might be seeing a leveling off of infections this fall, and an easing of travel restrictions. Sadly, that has not been the case. Not only are infections in southern and southeastern New Mexico increasing, El Paso County is also seeing a fairly dramatic spike. It seems this trend is the combined result of travel and parties over Labor Day. Given that, I was surprised to read that the Whole Enchilada Softball Tournament (which

was moved from Las Cruces to El Paso because of the more relaxed approach to COVID in Texas) has not been cancelled. I imagine we will see further growth in cases among our neighbors to the south in the coming weeks.

I suppose we've all had enough practice using Zoom by now that we might consider whether we should try having MVFF club meetings via Zoom. If anyone has any thoughts about that possibility, please email me and let me know, and I'll take it up with the rest of the board members.



## New Mexico's Water Future

One of the things Miriam and I have been doing more frequently during the quarantine is getting out and putting some miles on our road bikes. I imagine some of you have heard of the annual Chili Pepper Challenge. It's a ride sponsored by the El Paso Bicycle Club that offers several different routes between El Paso and Mesilla, covering distances of from 5 to 100 miles. It was cancelled this year, but when I ride along the Rio Grande, I'm reminded of one of the Chili Pepper rides I had some years ago on the 50-mile route. I was cruising along in a group of riders that formed up because we were going about the same speed. There were several riders who had driven down

from Santa Fe and Albuquerque to do the Chili Pepper, and we were chatting as we rode. After about half an hour together, one rider turned to me and asked, “so, when are we going to cross over the Rio Grande?” I replied, “I hate to be the one to tell you, but we’ve crossed it four times already; it’s often low this time of year, but right now it’s a sandbox.” He was stunned, because he didn’t even realize the river could completely dry out. Where he lives, the Rio Grande actually looks like a river, not an ORV park.

I was making a joke last night when I wrote that and referred to the Rio Grande as an ORV park, but in the paper this morning, I see that

planning is underway to actually use the Rio Grande as an ORV park! The event is called the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual River Run, and organizers are bragging that they expect more than 1,000 participants who will be driving ORVs up and down the bed and corridor of the Rio Grande. Now, I’m new in town, so let me try to get this straight: New Mexico limits the size of public gatherings, so the Whole Enchilada Softball Tournament moves to El Paso, where state COVID mandates are less restrictive. Then, organizers in Las Cruces are hoping to bring thousands of visitors from out of state, during a pandemic, who will need to violate the state quarantine requirements if they participate in the event? Oh yeah, and they will be driving up and down the river, tearing up the banks and vegetation, and leaking petroleum products where public funds have been spent to restore habitat and create wildlife refuges? Piles of trash will probably be left along the banks as well, if the event is allowed to proceed. What am I missing here? How can land use planning be so inconsistent? Perhaps people have simply given up on the Rio Grande in southern New Mexico? I would hate to see that happen.

Sadly, a dry river bed in the Rio Grande is an even more common occurrence now than it was a few

years ago. A large part of the reason for that is climate change. Environmental journalist Laura Paskus has a new book out called, *At the Precipice: New Mexico’s Changing Climate*, published by the University of New Mexico Press. She has documented reductions in stream flow in the Rio Grande since 2002, when it dried up completely south of Albuquerque. In her book, she notes that conditions in northwestern New Mexico are a harbinger of things to come, because of the way the methane cloud over the Four Corners region con-

tributes to climate change. That, in turn, is contributing to reduced flows in the Rio Grande, as well as other regional rivers,

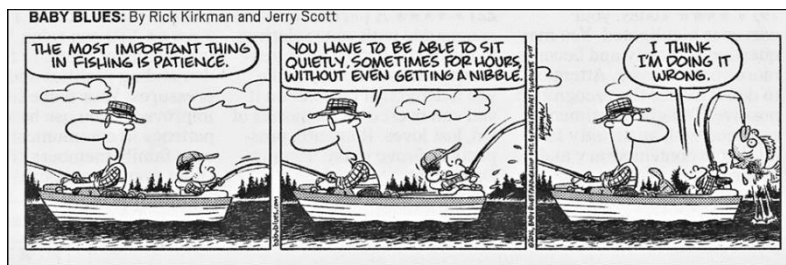
such as the San Juan. Regarding her reason for writing the book, she says this:

*There’s this tendency to think about what’s happening to the climate, or even your favorite places, in an abstract way. I was at a point in my career where I couldn’t see it as abstract anymore. (Laura Paskus, in High Country News interview)*

To read the rest of the interview, and to find out more information about her book, check out this link:

[https://www.hcn.org/articles/south-climate-change-dispatch-from-an-irreversibly-changed-new-mex-ico?utm\\_source=wcn1&utm\\_medium=email](https://www.hcn.org/articles/south-climate-change-dispatch-from-an-irreversibly-changed-new-mex-ico?utm_source=wcn1&utm_medium=email)

While chairing a recent panel on climate change, Dan Gutzler, of the UNM Earth & Planetary Sciences department, emphasized that climate change is already here, and New Mexico’s climate is changing in ways that exceed the traditional historic patterns of variability. The average air temperature has risen 2.7 degrees F since the 1970s. This leads to more rapid melting of the snowpack and more rapid evaporation, reducing the flows in our rivers. It is estimated that there will be a 10–20% reduction in the Rio Grande flows over the next 50 years or so, leaving us with what



would today be considered drought conditions as our new normal. After receiving reduced snowpack last winter, we are on the brink of a profound water emergency. To read more details, and to access related articles, follow this link:

[https://nmpoliticalreport.com/2020/09/19/water-reckoning-looms-in-new-mexicos-future-were-not-prepared-for-whats-ahead-of-us/?mc\\_cid=93cddaf25](https://nmpoliticalreport.com/2020/09/19/water-reckoning-looms-in-new-mexicos-future-were-not-prepared-for-whats-ahead-of-us/?mc_cid=93cddaf25)

There is some good news relating to the environment, watersheds, and fisheries. I am happy to report that NM Senator Heinrich has introduced legislation to protect the upper Pecos River drainage from future mineral development. As you may recall from an earlier newsletter, the Pecos suffered a catastrophic fish kill following the 1990 spill of mine tailings from the Terrero Mine. After spending \$28 million in public funds to clean up after that spill, and with some portions of the watershed still closed because of toxicity, it makes little sense to allow new mine development that will almost inevitably revisit contamination on the fishery and the people who live in and near Pecos. Heinrich's bill will withdraw all federally managed minerals in the Pecos River watershed from future leasing or sale

<https://www.heinrich.senate.gov/press-releases/heinrich-introduces-legislation-to-protect-pecos-watershed-from-mineral-development-in-northern-new-mexico>). This would prevent future mines, mine tailings, and spills, allowing the existing remediation efforts to run their course. If this bill is eventually passed, it will be a real benefit for locals, and for anglers, as it is one of the most popular fishing destinations in the state.

### **Nature Bites Back**

Well, here's something you don't see every day. In fact, no one's *ever* seen it before. There are multiple reports of groups of Orcas surrounding and attacking sailboats in the Straits of Gibraltar. In some cases, they have rammed the keel, disabled the rudder, and nearly capsized the vessels. It is unclear why the whales are engaging in such behavior, but it has been hypothesized that they

may be stressed because of noise, pollution, and a reduction of their food supply, bluefin tuna, as a result of overfishing by humans. Here is a link to the full article: <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/13/the-tale-of-the-killer-whales?utm>.

### **Pebble Mine Update**

And now, in the "just when you thought you'd heard it all" department, there is some pretty shocking news about the ongoing saga of the proposed Pebble Mine in the Bristol Bay region of Alaska. On September 21, the non-profit watchdog group, Environmental Investigation Agency (EIA) released recordings they had made of a series of discussions with executives of the Pebble Limited Partnership and Northern Dynasty Minerals, the companies behind the proposed Pebble Mine. Investigators from EIA posed as potential investors and recorded meetings with mine proponents; excerpts from "The Pebble Tapes" may be accessed here: <https://eia-global.org/reports/20200921-the-pebble-tapes?>.

There are two main revelations that may have an impact on whether or not the mine receives a Clean Water Act permit from the Army COE. First, the mine proponents have lied about their long-term plans for the mine. The executives were caught on tape admitting that they have misrepresented to regulators and the public the true size and life span of the mine. Rather than conducting a small scale, twenty-year excavation, they actually plan to develop a 180-200 year mine that could cover 425 square miles, and join up with other projects such as the Donlin Mine located 175 miles to the north. Second, the mine proponents claimed to essentially have Alaskan elected officials and senior representatives of the COE in their pockets. That is, they claimed that the officials are turning a blind eye to their efforts to ram through the permitting process despite the many substantive problems with the proposal.

As you can imagine, Alaska Senators Murkowski and Sullivan were not happy about those statements that claimed they are surreptitiously abetting the permitting process, and both have

pushed back publicly on social media. As a result of that pushback, a few days after the tapes were made public, on September 24, Tom Collier, CEO of Northern Dynasty resigned in disgrace (<https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/politics/pebble-mine-ceo-resigns-over-secretly-recorded-comments-about-government-officials/ar-BB19mjkn?li=BBnbcA1>). Thus, it would seem that Collier will not be receiving his \$12.5 million bonus for getting the Clean Water permit completed before the November election (see May 2020 newsletter for full background discussion). However, it remains unclear what effect his resignation will have on the schedule and success of the permitting process. I invite you to visit the Trout Unlimited website action page for the latest updates and actions. (<https://www.tu.org/conservation/action-center/>).

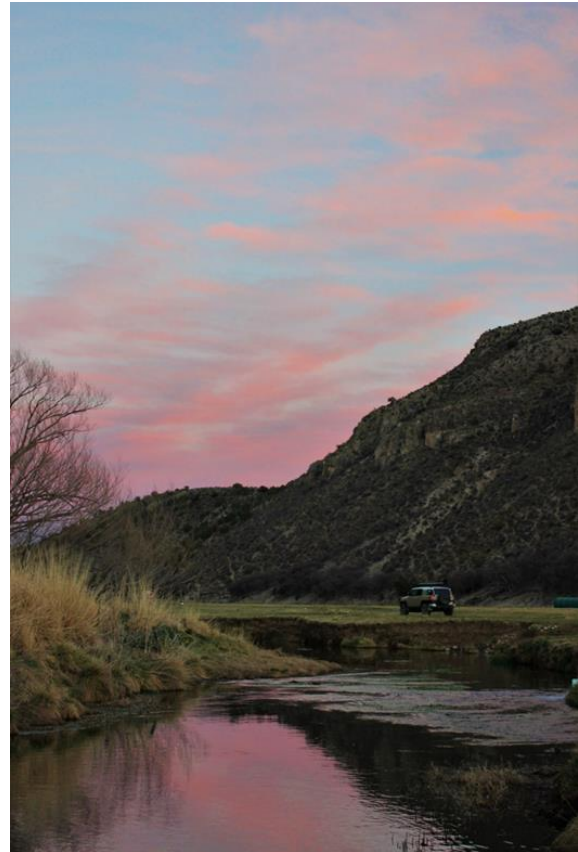
### Diversions, the Good Kind

One of the good kinds of diversions are dams that are being breached and dismantled to facilitate river and fisheries restoration. Ever since I've been traveling to the state of Washington, I've been looking forward to eventually fishing the Elwha River in Olympic National Park. The two dams were removed a few years back, but fishing has been on hold until the river drainage becomes stabilized and the salmon and steelhead are securely reestablished. There is good news: the salmon are returning. Here is a link to a trailer for "Return of the River," a video about the efforts to remove the dams and restore the river

([https://www.outsideonline.com/1869431/return-river-elwha-flows-free?utm\\_](https://www.outsideonline.com/1869431/return-river-elwha-flows-free?utm_)). Once you have viewed the trailer, you should have access to a link that will allow you to purchase the full video.

I'm actually running out of fishing videos to watch, and perhaps some of you are as well; I've still got a few more fishing books to read, but I've worked through most of my library too. If you're in the same boat, you might be interested to know that Mark Dankel, who manages the MVFF library, has offered to provide Las Cruces curbside delivery of any of the books in the collection. A list of the holdings can be viewed in the November 2019 newsletter. There's some real classics in there,

ranging from John Gierach humor to technical "how to" books, and everything in between. If you're interested, contact Mark at [mpdankel@msn.com](mailto:mpdankel@msn.com).



*Just so you don't forget what the Rio Penasco looks like...*



## Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Gila/Rio Grande Chapter (780) of Trout Unlimited

Jeff Arterburn, President



### Colorado Trout Unlimited 2020 Free Virtual Meeting Starts October 12<sup>th</sup>

Colorado TU's 2020 Rendezvous will be held as a virtual meeting, and they have made the event open to everyone free of charge. Live sessions will be held on Zoom beginning October 12, 2020, with weeknight sessions starting at 7pm each evening with some

sessions starting at 8pm. The weekend session will be held during the day. The live sessions will be recorded and made available for viewing afterwards to everyone who has registered.

Colorado TU will be holding its annual Rendezvous over a series of multiple sessions. Trout Unlimited Chapters are very active throughout Colorado, doing great work to conserve, protect, and restore cold-water fisheries and their watersheds, improving native trout populations and enhancing fishing across the state. Here are some highlights of the session topics and times that you might be interested in:

- October 12, 7 pm: State of Colorado Trout Unlimited
- October 13, 7 pm: Centering black, Indigenous and people of color in Coldwater Conservation
- October 14, 7 pm: Engaging with Colorado's Water Plan
- October 17, 9 am-1 pm: Special half-day session, Colorado Trout – Today and Tomorrow with Panel Sessions on Native Trout, Gold Metal Fisheries, and Climate Change impacts.
- October 19 – 7 pm: I didn't know Trout Unlimited did that ...Abandoned Mine Land Edition
- October 20 – 7 pm: Successful Grassroots Advocacy: lessons learned
- October 21 – 7 pm: Youth Education Opportunities

Submit your free registration at the link below, they will email your login details so that you'll be able to access the live and recorded content:

<https://coloradotu.org/events-calendar/2020/2/2020-annual-rendezvous>

### GRG-TU Seeking Board Members

While we all do our best to make it through 2020, with hopes that the new year will achieve control of the pandemic and ensuring the health of the entire population that will allow us to get back to important work in our southern NM fisheries, this is time to **get involved with your local Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of TU!** We are looking at both

continuing and new projects that involve exciting opportunities for native trout restoration, and new streams open to fishing for Gila trout. For example: the NMDGF treatment of the Whitewater Creek was successful and Gila trout stocking has



The Incomparable Gila Trout.

already started; this promises to be an outstanding fishery in the near future and you can help make that happen. **We need your help as volunteers and leaders** as we develop a new strategic plan, and work to support conservation projects and educational outreach activities. Members wanting to get involved in Trout Unlimited and interested in helping out on projects are asked to contact Jeff Arterburn by email at: [jeffgilatu@aol.com](mailto:jeffgilatu@aol.com)

### GRG-TU Logo T-shirts to support local trout restoration and conservation efforts.

Our beautiful T-shirts with the GRG-TU logo in colors: green-on-ivory, and peanut-butter-on-black are sold as part of our fund-raising for trout restoration and conservation efforts. These are great looking, well-made shirts for a great cause at only \$20 each. Please include \$5 for shipping if you want the shirt(s) mailed. Contact Jeff Arterburn to get yours, and to sign up for the next volunteer event: [jeffgilatu@aol.com](mailto:jeffgilatu@aol.com).



Green logo on ivory



Peanut butter logo on black

## Rio Peñasco Fishing Report

Submitted by Blake Swanson

Ok Jim, here's your fishing report from the Lease, 9-26-2020.

The water is about a foot and a half low from what I would call normal, most of the deeper runs are now just ankle deep. The water is crystal clear, even in the deep pools you can easily see the bottom.

The Chubs are plentiful and the trout are sparse. I caught 4 about this same size mostly in the deeper upper runs. I had to sight fish them from down river as they cruised out from banks and cover. The first one I caught came darting out of some floating muck after a 6-inch Chub on my line. He grabbed the Chub sideways in his mouth and started to swim away but I yanked the Chub loose and removed it from the fly, the trout swam off and looked mad. Then I immediately threw back in right in front of the floating muck and BAM he came out like a shot and attacked the olive Zonker I was using. I got him all the way to the net but couldn't quite reach him because I was up on a high bank. I tried to lift him with my 10 ft 4 wt but he wiggled his way off the Zonker and was gone. It was about a 3- to 4-minute battle up until that point. If I was guessing he was slightly bigger than the one in the picture.

Then I went down river all the way to the washed-out bridge and even a little below to that tree, no success. I saw one on my way down but he wasn't taking, yet. On my way back up I caught the one I saw coming out from under an overhanging bush on my way down. He was about 13 inches. Then I saw a little deeper run by some cat tails and I saw a nice rainbow cruising and feeding. Tossed to him about 3 times with what I can only describe as a two-bit hooker in olive that looks like it has a dubbing body (bought them at Cabela's in Colorado a couple years ago...we should tie that one at the meetings...it works really well at the lease) and he took it as it slowly came to him and was on for about 3 minutes until I netted him. That's the one in the picture, he would go about 15-16 inches and very thick.

Then back up in the upper canyon runs I picked up another nice one about 14 inches. Of course, the Chubs were there all the time and a bit irritating at times. I saw about 2 other nice ones hanging out right on the edges but they weren't taking at all. I didn't see any others anywhere. The deeper sections by the upper water fall were empty except for Chubs. All the upper water above the washed-out bridge to the fence ... no takers, I didn't even see any in any runs or pools, just Chubs.



I fished from about 8am until 2:30pm. It was a good day out on the river but it would have been better with more trout caught and water a little higher.

I'm heading for the San Juan this weekend Oct 1-5. The trip to the lease was a little tune up after the COVID break of no fishing all summer. Thanks for emailing me the permits and hopefully we will be back to normal before too long.



## 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.

After many years of organizing trips, Chuck Mueller is stepping aside, and we really need other volunteers to step up and take on these projects. Maybe you have a trip you would like to head up. Please think about it and let David or Chuck know if you can help out.

No trips are currently being planned.



## MVFF Library

MVFF has a considerable library which is now in the custody of Club member Mark Dankel. Mark would like to make these books available to members. If you wish to borrow any of these books let Mark know and he will bring them to the next membership meeting. Mark can be contacted at [mpdankel@msn.com](mailto:mpdankel@msn.com).

A list of the books can be found in the November 2019 issue of Tale Waters.



## Board Meeting Minutes

There was no Board Meeting in September and, so, no minutes. The Board will not meet in the near future but may arrange a ZOOM meeting. Discussions are ongoing.



**Quick Look Contact Information**

2020 Officers of the Club	
<b>Officers</b>	
• <b>President:</b>	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• <b>V-Pres.:</b>	Jim Sorenson (505) 710-4264
• <b>Secretary:</b>	Jeff Arterburn (575) 649-9729
• <b>Treasurer:</b>	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
<b>Board Members</b>	
• <b>Position 1:</b>	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• <b>Position 2:</b>	Ron Bellerose (575) 680-5516
• <b>Position 3:</b>	Jeff Arterburn (575) 649-9729
• <b>Position 4:</b>	Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880
• <b>Position 5:</b>	Robert Ardovino (575) 589-0653
• <b>Position 6:</b>	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
• <b>Position 7:</b>	Bob Silver (575) 642-5865
• <b>Position 8:</b>	Jim Sorenson (505) 710-4264
• <b>Position 9:</b>	Dillen Martinez (505) 401-3640
<b>Newsletter &amp; Web Page Editor</b>	
• Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880	<a href="mailto:newsletter@mvff.org">newsletter@mvff.org</a>
<b>Membership Committee Chairman</b>	
• Bob Silver (575) 642-5865	<a href="mailto:membership@mvff.org">membership@mvff.org</a>

**Mabie Legacy Scholarship Fund**

The Mabie Legacy 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 scholarship recipient is selected each April by the faculty members of the NMSU Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Ecology.

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 "Mabie Legacy Scholarship Fund, for deposit only." All contributions are tax deductible. For any questions please contact one of the MVFF Officers or Board members. If you have not made a donation to the fund please give it consideration and help honor Norm and Donna Mabie.

**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](mailto: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**  
**LICENSES 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, to purchase fishing access permits to the MVFF leased waters on the Rio Peñasco and to participate in other Club activities such as an 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.

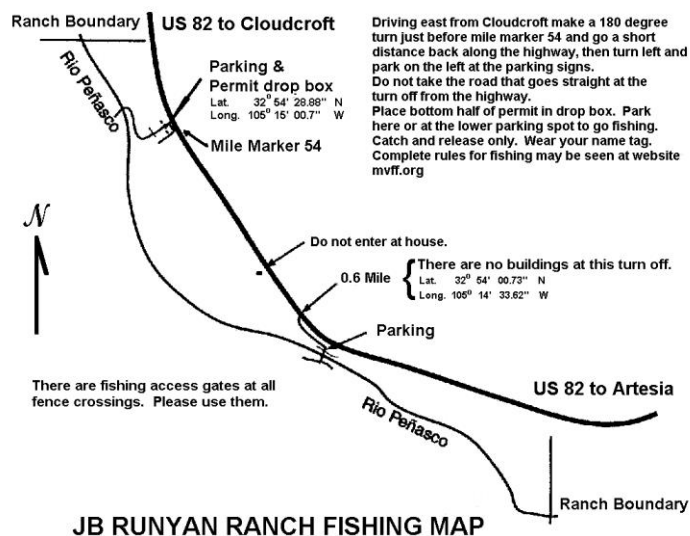
1 Year	\$20	Individual
	\$25	Family
3 Years	\$50	Individual
	\$60	Family
Life	\$400	Individual
	\$500	Family

### Lease Information

Permits to fish the Club leased waters on the Rio Peñasco can be obtained from Jim Hulsey (575-524-1880) or Bob Silver (575-522-6325) 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 or, if you had rather, you may pay through PayPal. 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 Bob Silver. In addition, members may purchase 1-day, 1-time permits for up to 2 guests per trip. Each guest must have a permit. One-time means a person can go as a guest one time only and must be a member to ever go again.

#### 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.