

TALE WATERS

A Monthly Publication of Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 2222 as Cruces, NM 88004-2222 www.MVFF.org

2022

Meetings

The next meeting of the general membership will be on Monday, September 12. Jeff Arterburn has arranged for Craig Springer to be our guest speaker. Craig works for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in Albuquerque, and he has written extensively about wild trout in New Mexico. See the President's Corner for additional Info.

The next meeting of the MVFF Board of Directors will be on September 19, at 7pm, via Zoom.

President's Corner

David Carmichael



Club News

It is my sad duty to report the passing last month of avid fly angler and long-time club member Walt Kowalski. Although Walt worked in aerospace engineering

before relocating to Las Cruces, you may remember him as the founder of W. Kowalski Fine Woodworking, a popular source of fine cabinetry and furniture used in homes and businesses throughout Las Cruces. His daughter, Rachel, contacted me shortly after his passing, and indicated that the family wanted to set up a link on the MVFF webpage so that friends and family members can

make donations to the club in Walt's memory. She asked that any donations received would be earmarked to support lease stocking and restoration efforts on the Rio Peñasco. The club's Board of Directors enthusiastically embraced the idea, and a link has been created on the MVFF home page (www.mvff.org) where donations can be contributed via PayPal. If you open the web page and

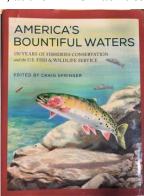


cannot see the link, try using a different browser, like Chrome or Edge. I appreciate that Rachel and her family have designated the MVFF as a worthy partner in honoring Walt, and thanks go out to Jim Hulsey for getting the link up and running

on short notice. Gifts may also be donated to another organization, A Living Tribute (www.alivingtribute.org) which will plant trees in the Sacramento Mountains in Walt's memory.

The next meeting of the general membership will be at 7 pm, September 12, at the NMDGF facilities

at 2715 E. Northrise Drive. Our guest speaker will be Craig Springer, staff biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. He will discuss his recently published book, America's Bountiful Waters: 150 Years of Fisheries Conservation



and the USFWS. He will also share some newly

discovered insights about the trout fishery in Las Animas Creek near Kingston, NM. I believe he will have some copies of his book available for purchase at the meeting, but if you miss out there, the book is available through his website at Craig-Springer.com. This should be a great presentation to kick off our fall return to in-person meetings. Hope to see you there!

After many months of discussions with the NMSU Foundation, the club finally has in place a new, revised agreement for the management of the Mabie Legacy Endowed Scholarship. The club did not ask for a new agreement, but when the Board voted to change the name to reflect both Norm and Donna Mabie's legacy (previously known as the Norm Mabie Memorial fund), the Foundation required that a new agreement be signed. The new agreement lists the fees that are charged by the Foundation, information that was not included in earlier versions of the agreements. The Board learned that the Foundation charges a 5% gift fee on every donation received, and an annual management fee of 2% of the market value of accounts. Also, 4% of the account value (not earnings) is distributed yearly to various programs across the University. It seems these fees have contributed to the slow growth and odd scholarship award amounts we have seen in our account in recent years. The Board voted to continue to support the Mabie Legacy Scholarship, but going

forward, we ask that donations be made directly to MVFF, not the NMSU Foundation (see Board Meeting Minutes in Nov 2021 newsletter). Instructions for contributing to the scholarship will be updated

Jemez Waters: Trout Fishing

Jan
Feb Mar
Apr
May
Jun
Jul
Aug
Sep
Oct
Nov
Dec

— East Fork Jemez River — Jemez River — Rio Cebolla — Rio San Antonio

NMDGF data on fishing Jemez waters, showing lower success during July and August.

in the newsletters and club website.

Of Journeys and Speed Bumps

I have a friend who, whenever we talk about fishing trips, always asks how many fish I caught, and how long I fished. He has completely given in to the idea that the relative success of a fishing trip can be usefully measured by how many fish are caught per hour. In fact, if fish aren't caught at the rate of about one every 20 minutes, he considers the trip a bust. I guess this is the angling version of the "time is money" mentality that seems to dominate so much of our society these days. It assumes that success is defined by catching the greatest number of fish in the shortest period of time. I have never felt this way about fly fishing, because it is, at least for me, a process, a lifestyle, and a journey, not an event or a Bassmaster tournament. Even on the rare occasions when I've been involved in harvesting fish (such as when I took my daughter fishing for ahi and wahoo off the Kona Coast), it was not about how many fish we could catch, but rather, about how many were enough for our Native Hawaiian skipper. That is, whether the overall experience has been meaningful in ways other than a body count. Landon Meyer refers to difficult days on the river as "paying your dues," and this is also the way I prefer to think of challenging fishing days. The idea is that difficult days and challenging trips are part of the journey, and as long as we learn something about the fishery, or practice our skills, the trip is worth it. I was reminded of the wisdom of

> this perspective when I took a short trip to the Jemez Mountains and the Valles Caldera last month. know, it's risky to schedule a fishing trip to the northern New Mexico high country

during the monsoon season (see chart), but I really needed to get out of town and visit some cold-water streams.

<u>Fishing Conditions & Trip Planner - New Mexico</u> <u>Department of Game & Fish (state.nm.us)</u>

I'm not surprised when I encounter a few unexpected challenges, or speed bumps along the way, but given the relative simplicity of the plans for this short 3-day getaway, there were a surprising number of potential setbacks. I arrived in Jemez Springs just as the late afternoon rains began, and the lodging was disappointing. I won't name names, but the place had no TV in the room, and not even a radio. There was one mini-fridge on the front porch, to be shared by the occupants of the entire motel, and there was a microwave sitting atop the fridge, where the wind-driven rain was splattering onto it. Only two eateries were open, but one closed five minutes after my arrival. None were open the following Wednesday morning. Glad I thought to bring tuna packets, fresh fruit, and plenty of ice in my cooler.



Sunny morning at the entrance to the Valles Caldera

In the morning, Plan A was to drive up to the Valles Caldera National Preserve and fish San Antonio Creek in the back country. The early morning was gorgeous, sunny and full of promise, but the gates don't open until 9 am, and after checking in, getting permits and making the hour-long drive into the back country, it was already beginning to rain, and the winds were gusting about 30 mph. The good news is that despite heavy rains the night before, the water was in good shape: normal depth, clear, cold, and fishable. Also, the rain dappling the surface of the stream made it easier to approach the fish than might otherwise have been the case. Nevertheless, the wind made it much harder to cast 40 feet into a narrow

channel flanked by tall grass. I got to practice making high back casts and shooting tight loops into the wind and putting flies into small holding lies. The downside was that I was only able to fish for two hours before the arrival of thunder and lightning. In the Valles Caldera, the rules (and common sense) dictate that anglers pack up and leave the area when there are thunderstorms. You know, standing in a wet meadow waving a lightning rod really isn't an adaptive strategy.

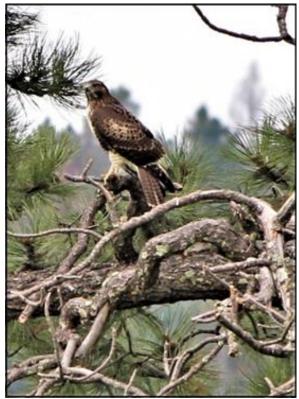
For the record, I caught some fish, but more importantly, I learned a few useful details. I had a couple of bites on a foam beetle pattern, but the water was so dark under the cloudy sky that I couldn't see the fly on the water. I switched to a yellow hopper, but of course, there were no hoppers out in the rain, so that fly served only as an indicator. What really worked was a small, 1 ½ inch weighted San Juan Worm. All the fish were caught on that pattern, including the largest, a 12-inch brown. That was unexpected, as I've never caught fish on a SJW in the Valles Caldera before. I thought perhaps the rains might have washed some worms into the stream, and it turned out to be a good pattern to try. In contrast, small nymphs and a Mayer's mini-leech got no takers. These and other observations are now duly noted in my fishing journal.



Tall grass, aquatic vegetation, wind and rain on the upper San Antonio

Plan B was to spend the afternoon, or the next day, to fish the upper Jemez River, but to my surprise, and the chagrin of a dozen other anglers I encountered, the river access points along the entire drainage, from Jemez Falls down to the Jemez

Pueblo reservation, were closed to the public, because of concerns about runoff from the burn scar of the Cerro Pelado fire last spring. The closures were marked on signs at the access points, but I could not find that information on the USFS web page prior to my trip.



Red-tailed hawk perched in front of "Longmire's cabin, Valles Caldera

Plan C was to drive up from Jemez Pueblo the next morning, along the Rio Guadalupe, to fish the brown trout water near Porter Landing. However, when I arrived at the Gilman Tunnels, the road was closed due to concerns about rainwater seeping into the tunnels. The closure notice had been posted just two days before, while I was driving up from Las Cruces. The Rio Guadalupe itself was a little high and off color, but fishable. However, the accessible lower portion is heavily fished by bait anglers, and is usually cleaned out immediately after stocking, so all I did was wet a couple of flies and enjoy the wildflowers. To reach the upper Rio Guadalupe would have meant a 50mile, 2-hour drive back upstream to Cueva, past Fenton Lake, and then down the Rio Cebolla. And I would need to retrace that route later in the day before driving back to Las Cruces. I decided to save that for another trip, and instead visited the cultural center at Jemez Pueblo. Met some nice people, talked about blue corn flour recipes and their experiences fishing in, and cultural connections to the Valles Caldera. A fun trip during which I got to see wildflowers, loads of bluebirds and other songbirds, hawks, coyotes, prairie dogs, and practice precision casting in challenging conditions. Sounds like a successful trip to me!



Valles Caldera prairie dog wondering what to make of a fly angler interrupting its lunch

Environmental News

Speaking of the Valles Caldera, the property was recently transferred to the National Park Service, and the agency is working on preparing a Master Plan for how the preserve will be managed. It will be kept as a preserve, not a national park, as that status allows for the continuation of traditional uses, such as hunting, cattle grazing, and logging (which was underway during my most recent visit). Bicycling may be allowed in the future as well. The National Park Service is interested in obtaining public input on issues such as where trails should be developed, and where wilderness might be designated within the preserve. Here is a link to the page where you can comment on the

wilderness eligibility assessments: www.nps.gov/vall/learn/news/2022-08.htm.

More than 50 groups of water users and stakeholders, including local governments, community leaders, Native American pueblos, acequia members, water conservation groups and outdoor recreation advocates are celebrating the recent designation of portions of seven watersheds in northern New Mexico as Outstanding National Resource Waters (ONRW). On July 12, the New Mexico Water Quality Control Commission (WQCC) approved the designation which is intended to maintain traditional water uses while prohibiting new pollution of streams and wetlands. The designation includes 179 miles of streams in the Pecos River watershed, and 125 miles of the Rio Grande, Rio Hondo, East Fork of the Jemez, San Antonio Creek, and Redondo Creek drainages. The designated portion of the Pecos is the 2nd most popular fishing destination in the state (after the San Juan), and Rio Grande and Jemez waters are the 4th and 6th most fished streams in the state, generating significant outdoor recreation income to the regions in which they flow. [Local Communities Applaud Lujan Grisham - Our New Mexico Waters (ournmwaters.com)]

The streams nominated for outstanding waters protection in Taos County and the Valles Caldera represent some of the best fly fishing in New Mexico. Our fly shops in Taos and Santa Fe probably wouldn't be in business if we didn't guide to the Rio Grande and Jemez Waters. (Nick Streit, owner, Taos Fly Shop and The Reel Life)

Finally, in another piece of good news, it seems that restoration projects involving native trout and grayling in Yellowstone National Park have come through the massive flooding that occurred this past June relatively unharmed. The main exception seems to be in the Slough River drainage, where a bypass channel connected to a fish barrier failed during the flooding. There is no indication so far that any rainbows moved above the barrier into the cutthroat habitat. Barriers on the Gallatin River and Grayling Creek were found to

be intact following the flooding. The removal of invasive lake trout from Yellowstone Lake continues to be successful, with efforts shifting to target areas where telemetry has identified lake trout spawning grounds. The average size of lakers being caught in gill nets continues to decrease, and the numbers and sizes of Yellowstone cutthroats are on the increase. [Yellowstone Wild Trout Populations Still Healthy After Floods | Outdoor Life] This is good news for club members who enjoy fishing in Yellowstone country. Might be a good time to start planning a club trip to the area, if anyone is willing to take the lead on planning such an adventure.



Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Gila/Rio Grande Chapter (780) of Trout Unlimited





For MVFF - September GRG-TU Intro to Fly Fishing for the Gila River Festival Sunday September 25th.

We have been invited again this year to host an "Introduction to Fly Fishing Field Trip" for the Gila River Festival on Sunday September 25th. We will teach the basics of fly-fishing with instruction covering set up and overhand and roll fly casts, pairing up participants in small groups with mentors for individualized instruction and, if it all works as planned, some hook-ups! Experienced members who would like to participate as instructors/mentors are encouraged to contact Jeff for more details.

GRG-TU habitat restoration work on Little Turkey Creek November 3-6

We have scheduled a volunteer work project for the Little Turkey Creek tributary of Willow Creek in the Gila National Forest. This project site is located entirely within designated Wilderness and involves using natural materials and hand-built construction techniques. We will be doing willow pole and bundle plantings and constructing rock dam structures. We'll all work hard but will also enjoy great camaraderie and delicious group meals. Your participation will make a difference! This will be a great opportunity to meet new friends who share our dedication to native trout and healthy watersheds.

Please stay tuned for additional announcements as we begin to schedule volunteer events, and we hope to see you at one of our volunteer projects or elsewhere on the water!

Contact Jeff Arterburn for more info and to sign up for the next volunteer event or be more involved in our conservation efforts: jeffgi-latu@aol.com.

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





Green logo on ivory

Peanut butter logo on black

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: mailto:jeffgilatu@aol.com.

If you are a current or former TU member looking to renew your membership please use the standard renewal form on the TU website: https://www.tu.org/trout-unlimited-3/ or call 1-800-834-2419.

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.

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



MVFF Board of Directors Meeting

Monday, August 15, 2022

Submitted by Jeff Arterburn (Secretary)

The MVFF was called to order by David Carmichael at 7:07 pm, via Zoom. Board members present were Jeff Arterburn, Jeremiah Blount, David Carmichael, Robert Kopczyk, Chuck Mueller, Jim Hulsey, Bob Silver and Helen Zagona. Not present: Robert Ardovino, George Sanders.

- Approval of minutes. The minutes of the previous Board meeting held May 16, 2022, were approved as published in the June newsletter.
 No Board meeting was held in July of 2022.
- 2. **Treasurer's Report**. Chuck Mueller presented the Treasurer's report. The current available balance of club accounts is \$ 14,043.22. The report was approved as presented.
- 3. Announcements. A front-page article in the August 13th Albuquerque Journal titled "A Trying Time for Trout" features an image of a Rio Grande Cutthroat trout rescued from Alamitos Creek. The article describes some of the impacts of the 2022 fires on native RGCT and Gila trout. The link below can be used to view the article: https://abqjournal-nm.newsmemory.com?clip_article&to-ken=0MDH2N%252FW29vStafL4dfX3Mjbg5eToJOmo-ZJzccLcyM6gl6GGlZuflNeZkXFxkqSZkqCYpoGWnKeOqpuUb3I%253D

- 4. **Membership**. Bob Silver reported that he will send an updated list to the Board.
- 5. Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Jeff Arterburn reported that the chapter was invited again this year to host an introduction to fly fishing field trip for the Gila River Festival on Sunday September 25th. Experienced members who would like to participate as instructors/mentors are encouraged to contact Jeff for more details. The NM-TU State Council will meet in Taos October 28-30. Several National TU Staff are expected to attend, and the agenda will include planning for the TU Western Regional Meeting that was delayed by the pandemic but will be held in 2023. Jeff summarized the ongoing process of developing TU Priority Waters for the Gila which at this stage has generated a first draft of conservation strategies to be implemented over the next 5 years. TU will advance policy and funding initiatives to protect the Gila Headwaters region while collaborating with agency partners to increase the pace and scale of habitat restoration projects that benefit the region's native species, including projects in fire-impacted watersheds.
- 6. Upcoming Speakers and Events. The next inperson meeting at the NMDGF Conference Room is scheduled for Sept 12, 2022, and will feature Author and USFWS Staff Craig Springer. The presentation will focus on his recent edited book "America's Bountiful Waters: 150 Years of Fisheries Conservation and the USFWS" summarizing the history of the USFWS with archive images from New Mexico. He will also share the interesting results and his conclusions from his research of historical records on the trout fishery in the Las Animas Creek watershed. Several possible speakers for future meetings were discussed, with well-known individuals such as Craig Matthews and Pat Dorsey suggested for the Annual Banquet in January 2023. David will follow up on those and Jeff will contact NMSU faculty and graduate students who are conducting fisheries research. MVFF members

- are encouraged to suggest speakers they would be interested in.
- 7. Rio Peñasco Lease. a) Reports from fishing the lease have included catches of small apparently stream born rainbow trout. A series of recent flood events have occurred in the watershed and are ongoing. The need to stock the lease this Fall was discussed, and Bob will contact Bill Parker to determine the availability of fish. b) The family of an MVFF member (Walter Kowalski) who recently passed would like to have donations earmarked for lease stocking, restoration, etc. on the Rio Peñasco lease routed directly through MVFF. The board discussed and agreed to proceed to setting up an active donation link on the MVFF website.
- 8. Old Business. Mabie Legacy Scholarship. David is continuing to work with the NMSU Foundation to update the scholarship description. Communications from the foundation have not been timely, and there is still a question of if an award was made this past Spring Semester? The need to revise the descriptions/instructions associated with the scholarship in the MVFF newsletter and on the club website was discussed, and Jim Hulsey will make these corrections.
- **9. New Business**. The smaller rental storage unit is now costing \$80/month and it was suggested that this price is in line with rates for similar storage units. David polled the board for interest in hosting a Kid's Fishing Clinic during the upcoming school year, and enthusiasm was expressed for Spring 2023. A question of who the current NMDGF outreach/education coordinator is at this time, and Jeff noted that Jason Amaro had been contracted last year and he would follow up with Jason to confirm the status. The guestion to identify MVFF members currently involved in public schools who may be helpful for contact principals, teachers, and other community groups who could help make this a successful event was raised.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:23pm.

Quick Look Contact Information

2022 Officers of the Club Officers President: David Carmichael (915) 204-7558 V-Pres.: Vacant Secretary: Jeff Arterburn (575) 649-9729 Treasurer: Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045 **Board Members** Position 1: David Carmichael (915) 204-7558 Position 2: Helen Zagona (575) 532-5668 Position 3: Jeff Arterburn (575) 649-9729 Position 4: Jim Hulsey (575) 635-5381 Position 5: Robert Ardovino (575) 589-0653 Position 6: Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045 Position 7: George Sanders (575) 527-5536 Position 8: Jeremiah Blount Position 9 Robert Kopczyk **Newsletter & Web Page Editor** Jim Hulsey (575) 635-5381 newsletter@mvff.org Membership Committee Chairman Bob Silver (575) 642-5865 membership@mvff.org

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 donated 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.

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.

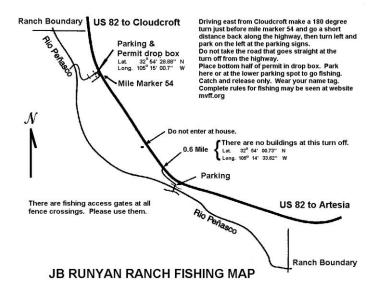
1 Year	\$20	Individual	
	\$25	Family	
3 Years	\$50	Individual	
	\$60	Family	
Life	\$400	Individual	
	\$500	Family	

Lease Information

Permits to fish the Club leased waters on the Rio Peñasco can be obtained from Jim Hulsey (575–635–5381) 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:					
				Zip:	
Work/Cell Phone:		Home Pho	ne:	email:	
Are you a current mem	ıber?	Yes 1	No		
Do you need a name b	adge?	Yes 1	No		
New Membership		or renewal _	?		
Membership Categorie	s:	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 1 January will expire o	-			ips received on or after	
Membership Adult Permi	-	oplicable per permit =			
			Total =\$		

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