



TALE WATERS

A Monthly Publication of
Mesilla Valley Flyfishers, Inc.

P.O. Box 2222
Las Cruces, NM 88004-2222

www.MVFF.org

November

2021

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Meetings	1
President's Corner	1
Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited	4
MVFF Library	5
2022 New Mexico Trout Conclave	5
Board Minutes	6

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

Meetings

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Club will hold no in-person meetings until early in 2022.

President's Corner

David Carmichael

The River is Resilient



It has been said that one cannot step into the same river twice (Heraclitus ca. 500 BCE). The river is ever changing, and the water one touched before has flowed downstream and is transformed. Similarly, the river bed, its banks, and its surroundings have been changed by the passage of water, sediment, energy and time. Indeed, the changing nature of moving water is the essence of a river, as opposed to any other sort of drainage or water body. And, so it is with our own home waters on the Rio Peñasco.

I visited the Rio Peñasco last week and saw the effects of five major flood events that have occurred during this year's monsoon season. The largest was in mid-August, when the flow rate reached 6000 cfs, and that was followed by a 1400 cfs event on September 4th. The river bed

has been reconfigured, scoured, and cleaned, and in some places, it is nearly unrecognizable. In the area of the former upper bridge, the high-water mark is about 15 feet above the canyon rim, which is itself about 10 feet above the normal water level. That means the water reached a height of about 25 feet above normal flow levels, at least in the upper portions of the lease where flood waters are confined in the canyon.

In much of the upper half of the lease, the river bed has been scoured of vegetation, and clean sand or gravel is visible even in deep holes as far downstream as Cave Hole. Entire trees were uprooted and carried downstream, including a 60 ft. tall cottonwood that was deposited on the bank below the middle falls. In the canyon section, many willows that used to line the banks are gone, some large hardwood trees are laid flat, and dead wood has been swept away, or deposited high in the remaining trees. So, access to the river in the upper portion of the lease has improved somewhat. The area between Cave Hole and the site of the former lower bridge has been largely filled with cobbles and gravel from upstream, forming what the Jensen Fly Fishing hosts refer to as a "gravel sidewalk." Such areas typically have shallow water with flat, mostly featureless bottom structure, and they do not provide good holding lies for trout. Upstream of the lower bridge, the natural gravel dams that had formed where the two major arroyos drain into the river from the south have been breached, and new gravel bars have formed in the shallow waters downstream. Aquatic vegetation is still plentiful in the shallow waters below the lower bridge. I didn't see any trout on the club lease, but there could have been

some fish hiding in the undercut banks, if they survived the floods.



Shallow "gravel sidewalk," MVFF lease

I know none of this sounds particularly encouraging, especially if you want to be fishing the lease right now. Nevertheless, insect hatches are still active, and the water is clean, even if levels are lower than average. The MVFF board is already discussing plans for restocking the lease, both this month, and probably again in March. I expect the upper and lower portions of the lease will fish well after stocking, and we'll keep you posted about when stockings will occur so that members can help with the maintenance and renewal of our home waters.

Speaking of renewal, just so you know that we're not alone, there are many fisheries in the U.S. that require concerted, long-term conservation efforts to maintain their productivity. Here is an interesting story from Sage Fly Fishing about the Androscoggin River in Maine. It has survived industrial pollution, and is now maintained by stocked trout (www.sageflyfish.com/experience/sage-blog/fish-and-forage). Rivers are resilient, and they can often be rehabilitated to support trout fisheries if we give them the chance, and take the time to care for them.

Environmental News

Here are a few short takes about news items that should be of interest to anglers, as the policy changes are likely to affect the quality of fish habitat and the quality of our fishing experiences. New Mexico senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray

Lujan have reintroduced the Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act which is intended to protect the remaining free-flowing portions of the Gila River. [[New Mexico Wild celebrates reintroduction of legislation to protect Gila, San Francisco rivers as Wild and Scenic – New Mexico Wilderness Alliance \(nmwild.org\)](#)]. The MVFF and our local chapter of Trout Unlimited have supported this effort for years, as the designation will provide another tool in the effort to maintain the water quality necessary for successful restoration of Gila trout, the species featured on our club logo (see related stories in the May 2021, July 2020 and August 2019 newsletters).

On October 7, the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ), the executive branch office formed to oversee federal agency implementation of NEPA, began the process of reinstating several key requirements of NEPA that were removed or modified during the previous administration. The move would allow project proponents to consider a wider range of actions, including ones that minimize impacts to the environment and local communities. It would also restore the requirement that agencies analyze the indirect and cumulative impacts of a project, and reinstate the environmental standards by which projects will be reviewed ([Hold that Road! | Audubon Alaska](#)). If you have been following the Pebble Mine proposal over the years, it should be clear that the changes made last year were intended to grease the sled for a very unpopular project that would have been highly destructive of the world's best sockeye salmon fishery. The current revisions will bring the NEPA process back in line with the original intent of the law as it was passed by the Nixon administration.

On August 31, the previous administration's Navigable Waters Protection Rule, enacted in 2019, was overturned by a federal court in Arizona ([A Court Just Invalidated Trump's Water Rule | Outside Online](#)). That rule would have removed clean water protections from about 60% of the nation's streams, and 110 million acres of wetlands. In New Mexico, that rule would have eliminated protections from pollutants for essentially all our

rivers and drainages. (See discussions of the water rule in January and April 2019 newsletters for further details.) Six Native American groups and Earthjustice sued to reverse the rule because it ignored the scientific consensus on the functioning of watersheds, and threatened access to clean drinking water that is guaranteed by federal law. The fates of the development projects that were underway pursuant to the now-vacated law are uncertain.

Diversions, the Good Kind

My stepmother once caught two peacock bass on a single cast while fishing on the Amazon. She wasn't fishing with a fly rod; she was using a spin casting outfit and throwing a large topwater lure like one would use for musky fishing. Two peacock bass hit the same lure at the same time, one at each end. It was something of a world record for a time. Anyway, we don't really think about peacock bass being a species one can target in the U.S., but apparently it is. Peacock bass were introduced into Florida in 1984 to help reduce the population of non-native tilapia that were apparently released into the wild by aquarium owners. The tilapia count is down, and the peacock bass are thriving. Anyway, here's a story about the angler who recently broke the state record with his 9 lb., 23-inch peacock bass caught in a Broward County pond. [Florida Angler Catches Monster State-Record Peacock Bass \(msn.com\)](https://www.msn.com/en-us/news/entertainment/florida-angler-catches-monster-state-record-peacock-bass)

As some of you may recall, my fishing vehicle is a Toyota FJ Cruiser sporting a roof mounted rod rack and a variety of fish decals. I know, a bit corny, but kind of fun. I often notice other vehicles with similar decorations reflecting our sport, but my little fish decals were put to shame the other day on the way to work. While commuting to El Paso in the morning, I saw a semi-truck rig with a big fish on it. I had never seen that logo

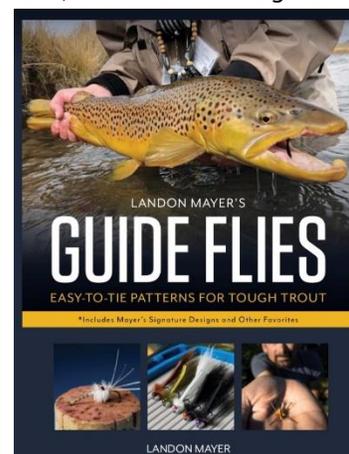
before, so I looked it up when I got home. It is the logo for Trout Trucking Company, which is highly visible on the side of a tanker rig. I don't know the story behind the company name or logo, but that's one huge trout. More the size of a great white shark?

For those members who have been practicing casting in anticipation of future fishing adventures, or for the newbies in the club, one of the problems that often seems to creep into our casting is the dreaded tailing loop. It is one of the most common ways to mess up one's cast, and it becomes even more problematic when it is windy, as it often is this time of year. So, here is a quick tutorial or reminder of how to fix tailing loops, courtesy of Trouts Fly Fishing ([Trouts Fly Fishing | Two Tips To Fix Your Tailing Loops](https://www.troutsflyfishing.com/two-tips-to-fix-your-tailing-loops)).



Landon Mayer has a new book out, titled *Guide Flies: Easy to Tie Patterns for Tough Trout*. I have several of Landon's books, and they are generally

well written, well-illustrated and highly informative. I haven't seen this one in person yet, but I have tied one of the patterns that is featured in the book and illustrated on the cover. I can assure you that the Mayer mini-leech is a great pattern; a small unweighted streamer that has



worked very well for me in the Gila Mountains region. For Mayer, it's a go-to pattern for large trout in southern Colorado. Check it out, and maybe provide a review for a future newsletter. [↑](#)

Gila/Rio Grande Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Gila/Rio Grande Chapter (780) of Trout Unlimited

Jeff Arterburn, President



GRG-TU for MVFF November 2021

2021 Legislation introducing the M.H. Dutch Salmon Greater Gila Wild and Scenic River Act

U.S. Senators Martin Heinrich and Ben Ray Lujan have introduced legislation this month to designate portions of the Gila River watershed and other rivers in the Gila National Forest as Wild and Scenic Rivers. This designation recognizing outstanding characteristics of Wild, Scenic and Recreational value that are found in our southwestern NM watersheds, and allows all of us who enjoy and appreciate this tremendous resource to pursue our interests while ensuring that these special places will be there for future generations to experience. The link below to Senator Heinrich's announcement provides access to a copy of the bill, fact sheets, frequently asked questions and maps of the identified river sections. Please take a look at these resources to help understand what the legislation is all about, why this is important, and why this WSR designation deserves your support to pass in Congress! Let your representatives know that you support Wild & Scenic for the Gila! <https://www.heinrich.senate.gov/gila>

Strategic Planning for Priority Watersheds in Southern NM

We will be meeting with a group of TU representatives from the other TU Chapters in NM (Bosque, Truchas, & Enchanted Circle) and TU-NM Staff for a Council Retreat in Glenwood during the first weekend in November. For many of them this will be their first visit to the Gila! One of the major tasks we have will be working to identify and prioritize specific waters in southern NM where we will focus our work and collaboration with partners on projects involving native and wild trout over the next 5 years. Our GRG-TU Chapter's

work in the **Gila River Headwaters** will continue with increasing emphasis on **major habitat restoration projects** in Willow Creek and Black Canyon, **initiating new surveys and expanding habitat monitoring** to additional watersheds holding Gila trout, and working with agency partners to **improve access** to Gila trout fishing waters that are blocked by private property. The goals are to identify priority watersheds across the state where TU can help most, so look for more information as we attempt to complete this first stage by January 2022.

We will be conducting stream habitat monitoring at Willow Creek November 8-10, mapping pool/riffle, residual pool depths, discharge and substrate along with cross section measurements and participate in training from experts at Natural Channel Design to learn about some new methods that we will be implementing. We are waiting optimistically to hear about the final funding decisions for a major proposal we submitted for habitat restoration work, so keep your fingers crossed!

Contact Jeff Arterburn for more info and to sign up for the next volunteer event or be more involved in our conservation efforts: 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: <mailto:jeffgilatu@aol.com>.



Green logo on ivory



Peanut butter logo on black

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*.



It's time for the

2022 New Mexico Trout Conclave!

Don't miss this great opportunity to help preserve the sport of fly fishing for future generations, as well as to have your company's name, products, or services in front of hundreds of fly fishers.

October 12, 2021

New Mexico Trout is an independent, all-volunteer, nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of trout fishing in New Mexico's waters. We have no paid staff and the money that we raise through member dues, donations, and our annual Conclave is spent in New Mexico on conservation and education projects that directly benefit cold-water fish and their habitats. Most of our yearly budget comes from a raffle of donated items at our annual Conclave, which, in turn, supports specific conservation and education projects as listed in the examples below.

The 2022 Conclave will be held on Saturday, February 19 from 8:30 AM until 5:00 PM at UNM Continuing Education building in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The featured speakers are Devin Olsen, longstanding member of Team USA and renowned fly fisherman, and Jen Ripple Editor-in-Chief of the women's fly-fishing magazine, Dun Magazine. Each will give a series of talks throughout the day. Jen Ripple's presentation will focus on topics particularly of interest to women. The Conclaves often include clinics on beginning and advanced fly-casting, fly tying demonstrations, and split bamboo fly rod building. Visit our web site at www.newmexicotrout.org for the Conclave agenda and details.



MVFF Board Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, October 27, 2021

Submitted by David Carmichael

Meeting was called to order via Zoom by David Carmichael at 7:00 pm, but a quorum was not achieved until 7:20. Board members present were Robert Ardivino, David Carmichael, Chuck Mueller, Jim Hulse, George Sanders, and Helen Zagona.

1. Approval of minutes. There were no minutes to be approved, as the board did not have a quorum at the last meeting, so no official actions could be taken.
2. Treasurer's report. Chuck Mueller presented the treasurer's report and check log. Current available balance of the club account is \$13,556.16. Contributions are still being accepted for the Sidney Ellett assistance fund, and those are deposited in a separate account. The report was approved as submitted.
3. Membership report. No official report presented, but membership continues to grow, and is about 350.
4. Gila/Rio Grande Chapter, Trout Unlimited. Jeff Arterburn, local TU chapter president, was not in attendance because a TU meeting was scheduled at the same time as the board meeting. However, earlier in the day he forwarded an email describing an upcoming kid's fishing event involving TU. See details under New Business.
5. Old Business
 - a. Mabie Legacy Scholarship issues. We have been trying for several months to finalize the revised scholarship agreement with the NMSU Foundation, but the documents we have received have not been responsive to the statements and priorities articulated by the board. The new documents focus instead on the ways in which the Foundation can control the use of the funds, and on the fees they charge. It is unclear whether these fees have contributed to our low earnings in recent years, but the board is convinced they are not in our best interests going forward. The NMSU Foundation charges a 5% fee on every donation as it is received. They also charge an annual management fee of 2% of *the market value of accounts* (not account earnings). On top of that, another 4% of the account value is distributed each year to units and programs across the university. It is not clear how long these policies have been in place, as we have never received a detailed breakdown of the fees before. But, they seem to explain the seemingly odd amounts awarded to students over the years, as opposed to the round figures the board has intended.
 - b. After considerable discussion about how the club should proceed, it was decided unanimously that we should discontinue making further gifts to the NMSU Foundation. We will complete the revised Foundation documents, and award whatever amount of earnings we receive each year, as we have in the past. But instead of making another contribution to the Foundation to bring the scholarship award up to \$750 (which would be subject to a 5% gift fee), we will instead present a check for the difference directly to the student. As in recent years, the faculty members in the Fisheries program will select the recipient, and then inform the board of the results. Going forward, the board may decide, depending on our financial situation, to award a different dollar amount, or more than one award in any given year.
6. New Business
 - a. Conditions on the Rio Peñasco on the MVFF lease. David visited the Peñasco

last weekend and walked most of the lease except for the area near the lower waterfall. He reported that much of the Runyon portion of the river has been re-configured by the series of recent floods. In the area downstream of the former upper bridge, the high-water mark is about 15 feet above the canyon rim, which is itself about 10 feet above the normal water level. So, at least in the upper, narrow portions of the lease, the water was about 25 ft above normal, at least for a short while. Entire trees were uprooted and carried downstream, including a 60 ft. tall cottonwood that was deposited below the middle falls. The upper half of the lease waters have been pretty well scoured of aquatic vegetation, at least as far downstream as Cave Hole. Willows, weeds, and other bankside vegetation have been thinned considerably, so access to the river is easier than in recent years. The area between Cave Hole and the former lower bridge has largely been filled in with silt and gravel from upstream, so most of the water in that stretch is shallow with a flat bottom and little holding structure. The natural dams that had formed where the two major arroyos drain into the river from the south have both been breached, and new gravel bars have been formed downstream. Thick aquatic vegetation is fairly prevalent in the area of the lower bridge. The lower waterfall was not visited, but no fish were observed elsewhere on the lease. Because the water was so clear, and the river bottom so clean, it is possible that some trout could be avoiding the stream bottom and major holes, and instead hiding along undercut banks, but none were observed. It is unlikely that many survived

the most recent flood. Insect hatches are still active.

- b. Stocking the lease. River and substrate conditions suggest that it will be useful to restock the lease in the coming months, but the middle portion of the lease is probably not suitable to hold many fish. David will make another visit to assess the conditions at the lower waterfall, which may have been reconfigured again. He will also ask Bob Silver to check with Parker to see what size of stockers he has available. The board discussed stocking a smaller number of fish, but larger fish, as we did in May. Decisions about when and how many will be decided after more information is available about the conditions at the lower end of the lease.
- c. NMDGF and TU event at Alumni Pond. Jason Amaro contacted Jeff Arterburn to request TU and MVFF assistance with a kid's fishing event at Alumni Pond on December 4th. The pond will be stocked with trout the night before, and Santa Fe staff from NMDGF will be bringing fishing gear. Food and logistics are already taken care of. COVID protocols have limited the event to only 10-12 campers (or families), so it's not clear what specific sort of help the organizers will need. David will contact Jason for more details and email the board about whether and how to assist.
- d. Board membership. It seems there will be at least one, and perhaps more openings on the board for the upcoming year. David and Chuck will make inquiries to verify this, and then we will discuss the makeup of the board for the coming year. Any club members wishing to join the board next year should contact David or Jim Hulsey.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 pm.



Quick Look Contact Information

2021 Officers of the Club	
Officers	
• President:	David Carmichael (915) 204-7558
• V-Pres.:	Taylor Gobble
• 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) 524-1880
• Position 5:	Robert Ardovino (575) 589-0653
• Position 6:	Chuck Mueller (575) 647-4045
• Position 7:	George Sanders (575) 527-5536
• Position 8:	Dillen Martinez (505) 401-3640
Newsletter & Web Page Editor	
• Jim Hulsey (575) 524-1880	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 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.

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.

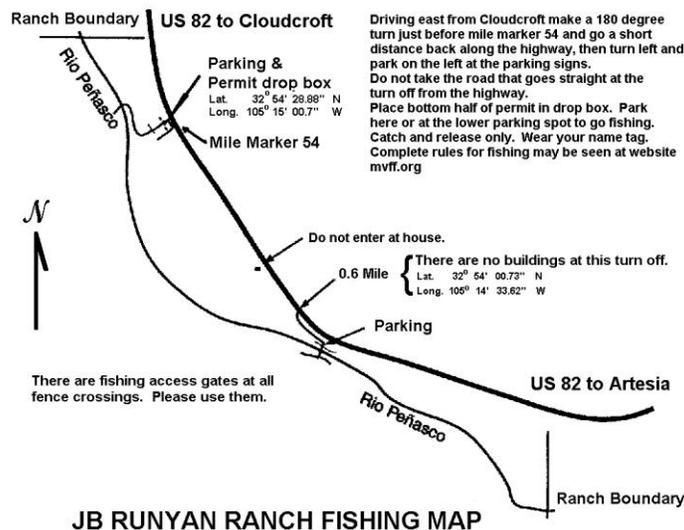
1 Year	\$20	Individual
	\$25	Family
3 Years	\$50	Individual
	\$60	Family
Life	\$400	Individual
	\$500	Family

Lease Information

Permits to fish the Club leased waters on the Rio Peñasco can be obtained from Jim Hulse (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.