

Guadalupe River Chapter Trout Unlimited Newsletter January 2004

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 Editor: Pat Amick Meetings: Fourth Saturday of the above months. [Visit GRTU Home Page](#)

Notice of Annual Winter Meeting

Saturday, January 25, 2004
at the Canyon Lake Recreation Center
Meeting dates and directions inside
9:30 AM Sharp! - One Lease Orientation Available
8:00 - 10:00 AM Registration and Socializing
10:00 - 10:30 AM Chapter Affairs
10:30 - 10:45 AM Program: "So Many Rivers, So Little Time"
by Jeff and Cyndie Schmitt
Photos and stories from America's great western rivers
11:45 - 12:00 AM Raffle drawing, door prizes and auction
12:00 Lunch available for \$7 at 12:00

Enter the Raffle:

**You could win a guided trip on the San Juan River with Fisheads Guide Service
 and 2 nights free lodging at the
 Enchanted Hideaway Lodge!**

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Bits, Pieces and Loose Ends

By Bob Tuttle

River Trash...

There is entirely too much litter, waste and refuse to be seen in the Guadalupe River and on its banks, discarded and left behind by thoughtless persons. One of the most beautiful rivers in Texas is being spoiled. We are an environmental group, so why not take a plastic garbage bag down with you when you go fishing, pick up some of that litter and dispose it appropriately. Just use a stick with a nail or something like an old ski pole to help do the job. With all those aluminum cans it could be a treasure trove for those that collect and sell them. As a bonus it is good exercise after standing in the river all that time. The only persons worse than litterers are poachers.

Odd Facts...

In our lease access permit member list there are a variety of occupations listed. For your enlightenment or enjoyment, here are some results that are not quite up to date:

1 @ each of the following:

Academic Administrator, Accountant, Advertising, Air Force Pilot, Architect, Area Manager, Athletic Administrator, Architect, Area Manager, Athletic Admin, Bartender, Biologist, Biotechnology, Botanist, Buyer, City Mgr, Computer Resource Mg., Corporate Finance, Credit Mgr, Detective, Director, Educator, Electrician, Firefighter/Paramedic, Fly Fishing Pro, Foreman, Freelance Writer, General Contractor, General Sales Manager, Government Affairs, Grad-student, Homicide Sgt, Human Resources, Information Mgr, Journalist, Land Surveyor, Machinist, Marine Transportation, Med Student, Medical Management, Merchant, Network Analyst, Nurse Anesthetist, Optometrist, Outside Sales, Pharm. Sales, Photojournalist, Pilot, Planning, Printing, Program Director, Project Director, Property Manager, Pastor, Printing, Psychologist, Publisher, Quality Inspection, Reg Mgr, Research Assoc, Safety Manger, Scientist, School Administrator, Security Manager, Small Business Owner, Social Worker, Software Developer, Space Scientist, Superintendent, Surgeon, System Administrator, Systems Programmer, Teacher, Tech, Therapist, US Army, USDA-NRCS, Vice President, Videographer, Waiter, Writer 2 @ Air Force Officers, Business Owners, Chefs, Chemists, Contractors, Dentists, Doctors, Electricians, Executives, Home Builders, Law Enforcement, Ministers, Musicians, Students, Woodworkers

3 @ Business Owners, Grouches, Hunter/Gatherers

4 @ Consultants, CPAs, Insurance agents, Geologists

5 @ Investments, Physicians

6 @ Bankers, Professors

10 @ Real Estate

12 @ Sales

14 @ Attorneys

19 @ Engineers

48 @ Retired

100 Plus did not specify any occupation. Do not believe that they are among the unemployed.

Stripers run amok...

And devour our trout. It has been reported by **Bill Higdon**

(noted Guadalupe River guide) that a large striper gulped down a trout while the client fisherman was attempting to put it in his net. Stripers are in the Guadalupe, a result of the great flood. Texas Parks and Wildlife has found some during their recent fish shocking. This is a problem. Spend some time fishing for them when the trout are not biting or you have caught your limit. There are limits to

size but no mention of how fast you have to release the others. In addition there is planned, a Striper Catching Event spearheaded by **James Pelland**, particulars may be found elsewhere in this issue unless it was done in December.

Big Orvis sale...

Most of you know about the Orvis Austin store closing and still hanging on sale. The latest scoop was that the store was going to be an outlet type of operation rather than shutting it down entirely. At the time of this writing, it was open and new merchandise was still arriving and being offered at bargain prices. They have indicated that the store would close for good January 1 but this could change at any moment as it has previously.

Our New Meeting Place...

Note the new meeting spot up the road from the Dam Red Bar, **The Canyon Lake Community Recreation Center**. It is far more couth than our previous spot. We were very fortunate to have this new facility available for the chapter's meetings. Merely one fly-cast (if you're good) south from the D.R.B. There might possibly be a shortage of chairs, so you might bring some for your own use just in case.

Cabela's is Coming...

To Buda which is just South of Austin. The planned opening is April or March 2005. This was announced recently on the first page of the *Austin American Statesman* newspaper. The proposed location is on IH 35 at Loop 4. Another large mall is also planned nearby. Soon, when you buy via their catalog, Texas sales tax will be added along with the shipping charges. Best plan is to favor our advertisers and then everyone wins.

Kayak and San Juan River Trip to be Raffled

Raffle tickets will be available for purchase at the January meeting for two great prizes. Lucia Branning, a GRTU member from San Antonio, has donated a flyfishing adventure on the San Juan River. The package includes one day of wade or float fishing for one or two people with Fisheads Fly Fishing Guide Service (lunch included), and two nights accommodations at the Enchanted Hideaway Lodge outside of Farmington, New Mexico. The total value of the package is \$410, and it will be awarded after the presentation. Tickets will also be available for the Perception Kayak's Illusion, a \$700 value, donated by John Van Ness of Austin Outdoor Gear and Guidance. The kayak will be awarded at the April meeting.

Several other items will be awarded as door prizes or available for auction after the presentation. Make it a point to arrive early to check out all the items and catch up with your fellow members.

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Meeting Program

By Jimmy Moore

"So Many Rivers, So Little Time" will be presented by Jeff and Cyndie Schmitt. The presentation features photographs and stories of adventure from their 4-year "mid-life break" visit to the great rivers of the Western US, Canada and Alaska. The material is presented in the form of captioned PowerPoint slides designed to both entertain and educate on western flyfishing opportunities. This is the perfect presentation if you're just planning your next summer vacation. Featured rivers will include the Gunnison, Green, Big Horn, Colorado, Yellowstone, White and Mountain Fork Rivers; the Skeena River system in British Columbia; and several Alaskan rivers. Self-outfitted adventures on over 20 rivers will be covered. A special set of slides have been prepared just for this meeting and will feature photos of several GRTU members who have joined Jeff and Cyndie on their adventures, including photos from this past summers' adventure down the Middle Fork of the Salmon River in Idaho.

Jeff and Cyndie Schmitt live in Austin, Texas and are long-time GRTU members and avid flyfishers. Jeff is a past president of GRTU and Cyndie has served as chapter secretary.

The presentation will follow general meeting business beginning at 10:00 AM. There will be one lease-access orientation beginning promptly at 9:30 AM. After the presentation, a delicious barbecue brisket lunch will be available for \$7.00. Please note the new meeting location at the Canyon Lake Recreation Center next to the spillway overflow near the base of Canyon Dam. Driving directions will follow this article. Don't miss out on the opportunity to get great information on western trout streams.

Directions to the Canyon Lake Recreation Center

>From NORTH or SOUTH: Just North of New Braunfels on I-35 take Exit 191,(Canyon Lake Exit), which is FM 306 and go WEST, about 14 miles to Sattler (Canyon Lake area). Go past the traffic light at FM 2673 in Sattler for about 2 miles, (through Canyon

City) and turn left at the blinking caution light and small road sign marking the South Access Rd. Follow the South Access Road for about two miles, passing below the dam and across the spillway. The Canyon Lake Recreation Center will be on your right.

>From the WEST: From US 281, turn EAST on FM 306, which is between Twin Sisters and Spring Branch. Drive about 16 miles to the blinking caution light (just before you enter the area called Canyon City). Turn Right on South Access Road and follow the directions above.

>From the EAST: From I-10, take SH 46 to I-35. Go North on I-35 to Exit 191 (Canyon Lake Exit), which is FM-306. Go west, (Left), on FM306, and follow the directions for North and South above. Of course there are other routes, just check your Texas map for other ways that might be better for your travel.

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Flow Report January 2004

By David Schroeder

GRTU celebrated the conclusion of the first year of the flow agreement with Guadalupe-Blanco River Authority on October 30th. This agreement doubled the amount of minimum flow from Canyon Dam for the benefit of the trout fishery. It kept trout alive down to the vicinity of the 3rd

Crossing according to the reports of those who fished the river all summer and fall. The TPWD electro-survey in late October found trout in sections of the river that would not normally produce a single trout before the flow agreement was implemented. The TPWD surveys did not show large numbers of trout, but that may be from the consequences of the 2002 flood. Aquatic insect populations appeared greatly reduced after the flood, but it is encouraging to see large numbers of insects hatching out this fall. The 2002 overflow likely boosted the striped bass population in the river as they left Canyon Lake; they are well-known trout predators who will diminish a trout population over time.

The consequences of the great flood are not permanent. Nature is like a pendulum, insect populations are on the upswing, and I am quite sure they'll go from lean to abundant. The stripers will go from many to fewer in number, because they don't have much success in reproduction in this environment and anglers will harvest them from the river. One striper harvested, many trout saved. The river is still rebuilding.

Canyon Lake has now `turned over' in its fall cool-down cycle which means the surface temperature of Canyon Lake has gotten colder than the remnant of the dense, cold water at the lake's bottom that sustained the trout fishery over summer. The colder surface water sinks to the bottom and bottom water wells up to the surface in a great mixing operation. This benefits the water quality of the river because the water exits the dam from the bottom of the lake. Another cycle of replenishing the cold, winter-chilled water for next summer's trout fishery is well underway.

The river is presenting the best fishing conditions in many years. We've missed the flooding rains that normally come in the fall (so far!), flows are low and wading is great. We've haven't had these favorable conditions since 1999-2000 during the last major drought. The lake is almost at full capacity. When we have a rain, it is likely to trigger the flow agreement for 2004. Each year Canyon Lake must exceed full conservation capacity for at least one measurement to trigger the flow release for the summer period. Nothing is assured until Mother Nature produces the water, and I would bet that we'll see the trigger pulled.

There are still outstanding legal issues surrounding the GBRA water right to Canyon Lake. The Friends of Canyon Lake is suing the Corps of Engineers in federal court alleging that a proper Environmental Impact Study was not performed before granting GBRA its new water right. FOCL exhausted its legal avenues in State court, and now they are taking it to federal. FOCL's attorney publicly states that he is optimistic of an injunction against the water right. It's hard to predict, but it seems like a high hurdle to get an injunction. We still have the Guadalupe Defense Fund and our attorney, Stuart Henry, to protect our interest should it come to that. Our contract with GBRA was implemented when the state supreme court finalized the matter.

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Fisheries Report

By Mark Marmon

By the time you read this, we will have stocked almost 8,000 rainbow trout on the leases. I can't thank everyone enough for helping. These are you fish and I appreciate the concern and high regard each of you have had in handling this task. We've got a couple more stockings scheduled and I'll post information a little earlier next time. We've also got a load of Brown Trout coming in near the end of February. The TPWD is putting around 4,500 below the dam, at Whitewater Sports, Rio Raft, and the first and third crossings.

In the past we've advised members not to fish on stocking dates because of stressful conditions to the fish, and they usually won't feed until they become acclimated. I don't see a problem with that now. The fish hit the water and acclimate within 24 hours. Several

reports coming in note trout taking dry flies within several hours of stocking. No one has reported any floating fish after the last two stockings. If you get the fish in and release it carefully, there shouldn't be any problems. Always fish catch and release, and try not to handle the fish without wetting your hands or net first to keep from removing their protective slime. Do not use pliers or hemostats to shake fish off your hook! If you use barbless hooks, then you can easily remove them without injury.

By the way, we should be voting on the barbless requirement at the next general meeting. I've yet to have anyone approach me without supporting this issue.

I'm up on the river several times each week and still don't see a lot of members utilizing the leases. Remember that Kanz is not open until February 1st! Rockin' R (next to Rainbow Camp) is open and there is a great stretch of water from there down to Guadalupe Landing. There's been 800 fish stocked there. Thanks again for all of your help. Get out and go fish!

Lease Etiquette:

Try to visualize that when you're using one of the leases, you should conduct yourself as if you were the lease owner. Would you like someone pulling into your property in the early morning hours making loud noises? Slamming car doors? Yelling at their partners to hurry up and get ready? Leaving trash around their vehicles? Slamming port-a-potty doors? Driving fast enough to raise dust that blankets everything on your property? Of course not! You would want these visitors to be responsible and concerned about where they were, and why they were allowed to be there. We are guests of these landowners. One inconsiderate person can jeopardize these relationships we've established over the years. Let's help each other out and try to be a good neighbor while we're on the leases. One member called me straightaway after backing over one of the lease signs. I appreciate anyone contacting me with pertinent information. I've had to replace locks on a couple of other leases, too. Let me know what you need and I'll try to take care of it ASAP. Thanks, and see you on the river.

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On-Line Membership Application A Success

By David Schroeder

The new, web-based membership application seems to be increasing membership, and I am sure it is a lot more convenient than handwriting an application. Already by early December, GRTU's lease membership has exceeded the prior year's total. Some have encountered glitches: The biggest problems seem to be with Trout Unlimited's membership rolls. First of all, for some unexplained reason, TU increased the id number from 8 digits to 9, and did not tell life members about it. It caused a lot of confusion when life members tried to join the lease program using the 8-digit number on their card, and the validation said it could not find their TU number. But I guess TU is ambitiously planning to increase its membership beyond the 100 million members (let's wish) that was the limit of the 8-digit number!

Also, it took at least a month for TU to update our chapter's rolls with new and renewing member information for those who joined through TU. We use these rolls in our database to verify information. For those people who joined TU directly and recently, it caused problems because we require our members to be TU members at least through April of each year. It often kicked them out because TU's membership data was not up to date.

If you've encountered a problem in completing the on-line application, please contact webmaster@grtu.org stating what the problem is. Do not mail it in error. The problem is almost always resolved in a satisfactory manner, allowing the application to be completed correctly. It becomes a big deal with our Treasurer and how the money is divided among accounts. If you haven't joined the GRTU/Lease Access Program, do so today at: <http://www.grtu.org/grtjoin.html> . We believe this is going to be the most error free membership ever at GRTU!

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October Meeting Raffle and Door Prize Winners

Bill Wiese, a new member, won the raffle for the Great American Bass Club membership, donated by the Great American Bass Club. Michael Wright selected a box of hooks donated by the Dallas Area Flyfishers. Ed Morgan, William Franks, Keith Barnes and Kathy Nesbitt each won shirts donated by Gruene Outfitters. Merrill Good won a thermos donated by Bob Tuttle. Valerie Crowe won a free night's lodging at the Enchanted Lodge on the San Juan River, donated by Gretchen Lee and delivered by John Smith. Jeff Hoelter won a selection of Frog Hair tippet donated by Barkley Souders. Don Robb won a color map of the Guadalupe River donated by The Guadalupe Fly. Clint Barton and Phil Dposon won fly selections tied by James Pelland. David Simms won a fly line and David Schroeder donated his prize of the creel cooler to the son of the reporter from the Times-Guardian. Congratulations to all the winners!

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Sattler: Cultural Center of the Universe

By Mark Marmon

Many folks ask me where to stay or dine while up on the river. Here are a few suggestions. In Sattler are several very nice eating areas. Breakfast at the Old Sattler Bakery is wonderful, a good hot breakfast to prepare yourself for a hard day's fishing. Don't forget to pick up some "egg bread" to take home for the rest of the family. They're also open on Friday and Saturday nights for dinner, and Sunday brunch, too. They have an excellent wine list and great fish dishes. Lunch at the BBQ on the triangle across from Sac-N-Pac has the best sweet potato stuffed with chopped beef. Their combo plates will fill you up. Dinner at the Blue Moon Cafe will complete your day with fresh soups and entrees. The poblano soup is incredible, as is the "coco loco" sauce on the seafood dishes. They have a great wine list and good desserts, too. Other options I've tried and recommend include Sweetie's Donuts (fresh each day), Cedar Swing Breakfast Tacos, Ninfa's Tacos on 306, and Roberto's Mexican Food near the Super S. You don't have to drive all the way into Gruene or New Braunfels to get a good meal.

As for lodging, Maricopa Lodge is newly renovated and continues to make improvements. Rio Raft has several cabins you can rent for the weekend plus RV sites. Several GRTU members utilize this option. Lazy L & L is open 365 days a year. They have primitive camping and RV sites. Whitewater Sports also has campsites available. The Summit is a time-share project that several members have joined. They can use it when they're on the river and utilize the nationwide affiliates when they travel. Cliffview allows overnight camping with an additional fee. Farther down is BK's Tubes, which has primitive camping. Past the second crossing is River Road Camp, which has RV and campsites available. Remember that these locations will charge fees for the overnight camping and you need to check in with them before setting up camp. Always conduct yourself as you would on the leases.

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Lease Orientation Class Schedules

At General Meetings

January 24, 2004 _ 9:30AM

April 24, 2004 _ 9:00AM and Noon

Austin

Presenter: Steve Stilp

[Austin Angler](#)

312 ½ Congress

Thursday, January 15, 2004 _ 6:30 PM

Gruene

Presenter: Hyl Karbach

[Gruene Outfitters](#)

Wednesday, January 14, 2004 _ 6:00 PM

Wednesday, February 11, 2004 _ 6:00 PM

Houston

Presenter: Shelly Marmon

[I Fly, the Angler's Edge](#)

Post Oak and Westheimer

Wednesday, January 14, 2004 _ 7:00 PM

Tuesday, February 10, 2004 _ 7:00 PM

San Antonio

Presenter: Scott Thompson

The Tackle Box

6330 North New Braunfels

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You Mean Fish Need Water Too?

By Brian Sybert

Those of us who cast our flies to bass and trout in the gin-clear rivers and streams of the Hill Country probably understand one simple fact. In order to catch fish there must be freshwater flowing in the river. No water means no fish _ you can't say it any more simply than that. Just as important to those of us who cast our flies along the coast in hope of hooking a big redfish are freshwater inflows from rivers into our coastal bays and estuaries. Without freshwater flowing into our coastal bays in sufficient quantities and at the right times of the year we would see a major decline in the health and productivity of our coastal fisheries. There is no doubt that a significant reduction in freshwater inflows to our bays and estuaries would result in a dramatic decline in redfish, sea trout, and a whole host of other saltwater game fish that anglers pursue in Texas' coastal waters.

As the human population grows in Texas and urban demands for freshwater increase, no decision will impact the survival of fish and wildlife, as well as angling and hunting, more than how we manage freshwater flows in our rivers and bays. In the spring of 2001 the Rio Grande dried up and stopped flowing into the Gulf of Mexico for the first time in recorded history, and in the spring of 2003 it completely stopped flowing through Big Bend National Park. Will this be the fate of all Texas Rivers? Will our productive coastal fisheries crash beyond restoration? Without appropriate action by Texas' citizens and elected officials bone-dry riverbeds and sterile bays are definitely in the cards for Texas' fisheries.

Ecological and Economic Value of River Flows

Obviously, flowing freshwater is the most basic and important component of the river ecosystems. Adequate freshwater flows create and maintain habitat in rivers for aquatic organisms such as fish, invertebrates that fish feed on (such as caddisflies, stoneflies, mayflies, and dragonflies), mollusks such as mussels and snails, and crustaceans such as crayfish and river shrimp. Important game animals such as deer, waterfowl, and wild turkeys also depend on the water and habitat provided by river systems. Rivers are not just water flowing down a channel. Rivers include complex food webs and nutrient cycles that operate within their beds, banks, pools, and wetlands.

Freshwater flows into coastal estuaries maintain low salinity nursery habitats that are utilized by juvenile fish and shellfish such as redfish, spotted sea trout, crabs, oysters, and shrimp. The freshwater flows also supply coastal estuaries with the nutrients and sediments that bays need to be productive. The sediments build delta marshes and provide a floor for marsh plants and sea grass beds. The marsh plants in turn provide cover and shelter for juvenile crabs, fish, and shrimp. The sediments and nutrients also feed plankton that is eaten by oysters. In turn, the oysters build reefs that provide more cover and shelter that protect fish and crabs from their predators. The migrations of many types of saltwater fish are tied to freshwater flows into bays and estuaries. Without adequate amounts of freshwater flowing into our bays and estuaries at the right times of the year, this complex dance of life would come to a crashing halt. Ending this watery dance between the rivers and bays would mean a sad end to that thrilling sensation we coastal anglers get when a large redfish hits our fly.

Rivers and bays not only produce fish for anglers to catch, but they also drive the segments of the economy that are based on outdoor recreation. According to studies conducted by the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department and Texas A&M University, fresh and saltwater fishing together generate \$4.6 billion dollars annually, which supports approximately 41,000 jobs. Hunting generates \$3.6 billion, and wildlife viewing generates \$2.7 billion annually. In regards to tourism, coastal destinations account for approximately 30 percent of travel in Texas, which translates into \$10 billion in economic benefits each year. Without freshwater flowing through our rivers and into our coastal bays, these economic benefits and the communities that depend on them would simply cease to exist.

Action Needed to Protect River Flows

During its 2003 regular session, the Texas Legislature passed Senate Bill 1639, which placed a two-year prohibition on water right permits for river flow protection and created the Study Commission on Environmental Flows. The prohibition on permits for river flow protection was the result of an intense lobbying effort by river authorities and other water developers, who wanted to prevent water rights from being issued to conservation organizations.

However, the bill did not place a two-year prohibition on new water rights for agricultural, municipal, and industrial use. As a result, many people fear that water developers will apply for all remaining water rights before the study commission makes its recommendations, thus leaving no water for fish and wildlife conservation. The passage of Senate Bill 1639 was in direct response to the San Marcos River Foundation's water right application for 1.3 million acre-feet of water to protect freshwater flows from the Guadalupe and San Marcos Rivers into the estuary in San Antonio Bay.

The study commission will consider and make recommendations to the legislature on how to maintain river flows and freshwater inflows into our bays. Governor Perry, Lt. Governor Dewhurst, and House Speaker Craddick appointed the fifteen members of the commission. The recommendations of the Study Commission could lead to real progress for river and bay protection in Texas, or they could set the stage for the disastrous ecological and economic ruin of our precious rivers and bays.

The Study Commission will hold public hearings in various regions of the state. Participation by anglers, hunters, and wildlife watchers in these public hearings will be critical to ensure that the Study Commission develops balanced recommendations that truly protect river flows and the recreational businesses that depend on them.

Solutions For Protecting River Flows

A solution the Study Commission should seriously consider is establishing a formal system for reserving water for river flows and freshwater inflows to bays and setting it aside from the normal water rights permitting process. The Texas Parks & Wildlife Department should be assigned explicit responsibility for managing the reserved water to ensure that it is used for the maximum benefit of fish and wildlife resources. In addition the Texas Water Trust, which is now housed at the Texas Water Development Board, should be moved to TPWD. Rights to the reserved water would be held by TPWD in the Texas Water Trust. TPWD should also be provided with sufficient funding to purchase water rights from willing sellers in order to protect river flows. Since TPWD's mission is to conserve the natural resources of the state and provide fishing, hunting, and outdoor recreational opportunities, it only makes sense that TPWD should play a much larger role in the protection of river flows for fish and wildlife.

The future of our fresh and saltwater fisheries hangs in the balance. Anglers, hunters, wildlife watchers, and the businesses that cater to these activities have more to lose than anyone else. When the time is right, we must voice our support for protecting freshwater flows to the Study Commission. We are a strong constituency for river flow protection. We just need to make sure our voices are heard.

We are at a truly critical juncture in Texas history. With the participation of anglers, hunters, and wildlife watchers throughout the state, we can make the Study Commission a productive endeavor that will lead to real progress for river and bay protection in Texas.

[Brian Sybert is a member of GRTU and The San Marcos River Foundation, and can be reached at 512-477-1729 or briansybert@earthlink.net.]

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TPWD Trout Stocking Schedule

TPWD

2003-2004 Trout Stocking Schedule

Stocking dates may be subject to change.

Abilene: Elm Creek Buffalo Wallow 13-Jan-04
 Abilene: Nelson Park 18-Dec-03
 Allen: Bethany Park Pond C 12-Dec-03, 8-Jan-04
 Alto: Rusk State Park 1-Feb-04
 Alvin: Resoft Park Lake 7-Dec-03
 Amarillo: Martin Road 9-Dec-03
 Amarillo: Medical Center North 6-Jan-04
 Arlington: Mark Holtz Lake 7-Feb-04
 Athens: TFFC Casting Pond 4-Dec-03
 Bandera: Bandera City Park Lake 14-Dec-03
 Beaumont: LNVA Barrier Pond 18-Dec-03, 29-Jan-04
 Belton: Nolan Creek 17-Dec-03
 Blanco: Blanco State Park #4 5-Dec-03, 28-Dec-03, 16-Jan-04, 19-Feb-04
 Brady: Richards Park-Upper 16-Dec-03
 Canton: Two-Acre Lake 15-Feb-04
 Carrollton: Ken Good Park Pond North 22-Jan-04, 19-Feb-04
 Castroville: Landmark Inn State Park 1-Feb-04
 Centerville: Fort Boggy State Park 14-Jan-04
 Claiborne: Claiborne West Park 13-Jan-04, 6-Feb-04
 Cleburne: Cleburne-Hulen Park 23-Dec-03
 College Station: Central Park Pond #1 3-Feb-04
 Colleyville: Colleyville Nature Center Pond 4 22-Jan-04, 29-Feb-04
 Conroe: Carl Barton Jr. Park Pond 15-Jan-04
 Coppell: Andy Brown East Park 7-Mar-04
 Corpus Christi: Waldron Park Pond 22-Jan-04
 Dalhart: Rita Blanca Kids Fishing Pond 18-Dec-03, 10-Feb-04
 Dallas: Fox Hollow Park 02-Feb-04
 Dallas: Kidd Springs Park 18-Dec-03, 12-Feb-04
 Denison: Waterloo Lake 11-Jan-04, 15-Feb-04
 Duncanville: Lakeside Park 12-Feb-04, 19-Feb-04

El Paso: Ascarate 22-Dec-03, 14-Jan-04, 10-Feb-04
 Flower Mound: Flower Mound Rheudasil 24-Jan-04, 9-Feb-04
 Fort Worth: Greenbriar Park 22-Jan-04, 19-Feb-04
 Fort Worth: Trinity Park (Clear Fork Trinity River) 9-Jan-04, 5-Feb-04
 Friendswood: Centennial Park Lake 3-Feb-04
 Gainesville: Keneteso Pond 12-Jan-04, 23-Jan-04
 Georgetown: Blue Hole Park Lake 11-Dec-03, 18-Jan-04
 Gonzales: Palmetto State Park To be announced
 Grafard: Possum Kingdom Tailrace 4-Dec-03, 22-Dec -03, 2-Jan-04, 6-Feb-04,
 5-Mar-04
 Grand Prairie: Mike Lewis Park 15-Jan-04, 29-Feb-04
 Harlingen: Harlingen Sports Complex Pond 10-Feb-04
 Hearne: Hearne Eastside Park Pond 12-Feb-04
 Houston: Eisenhower Park Pond 8-Jan-04
 Houston: Herman Brown Park Pond To be announced
 Houston: Mary Joe Peckham Park 15-Jan-04
 Houston: Tom Bass III 20-Jan-04
 Hurst: Hurst Chisholm Park 16-Jan-04, 13-Feb-04
 Irving: Northwest Park Pond 20-Jan-04, 21-Feb-04
 Jacksboro: Fort Richardson State Park 13-Dec-03, 15-Jan-04
 Jasper: Boykin Springs 13-Jan-04, 6-Feb-04
 Jasper: Jasper City Park Pond 11-Jan-04
 Junction: South Llano River State Park 18-Dec-03, 3-Feb-04
 Keller: Bear Creek Park 24-Jan-04, 22-Feb-04
 Kennedale: Kennedale City Park 8-Jan-04, 9-Feb-04
 Kerrville: Louise Hayes Park 15-Jan-04, 19-Feb-04
 Lamesa: Lamesa 9th Street Park Lake 7-Dec-03, 3-Feb-04
 Lampasas: W.M. Brook Park Lake 7-Dec-03
 Llano: Llano River (Grenwelge Park) 15-Feb-04
 Longview: Teague Park 8-Feb-04
 Lubbock: McCullough 12-Dec-03, 3-Feb-04
 Mansfield: Rose Park 15-Jan-04
 Mathis: Lake Corpus Christi 12-Feb-04
 McGregor: Amsler Park 16-Dec-03, 13-Jan-04
 McKinney: Towne Lake 8-Feb-04
 Meridian: Meridian State Park 11-Jan-04
 Mesquite: Mesquite City Lake 6-Jan-04, 10-Feb-04
 Mexia: Springfield 25-Jan-04
 Midland: Beal Park Lake 10-Dec-03, 15-Jan-04
 Midland: C. J. Kelly Park Pond 10-Dec-03, 15-Jan-04
 Missouri City: American Legion Park Pond 11-Jan-04
 Missouri City: Bates Allen Park Pond 22-Jan-04
 Missouri City: Blue Ridge Park Pond 3-Feb-04
 Monahans: Monahans Perch Pond 4-Dec-03, 6-Jan-04
 Mount Pleasant: Bob Sandlin State Park 29-Dec-03, 18-Jan-04
 Nacogdoches: Lakeview Park Pond 18-Jan-04
 Navasota: Hillside Street Pond To be announced
**New Braunfels: Canyon Tailrace - Guadalupe River 18-Dec-03, 30-Dec-03,
 15-Jan-04, 20-Feb-04**
 New Braunfels: Landa Park 14-Jan-04, 20-Jan-04
 North Richland Hills: Green Valley Community Park Pond A 13-Jan-04, 26-Feb-04
 Odessa: Comanche Trails Park 16-Dec-03, 20-Jan-04, 10-Feb-04, 4-Mar-04
 Pampa City: Pampa City 9-Dec-04, 17-Feb-04
 Pasadena: Burke-Crenshaw Lake 25-Jan-04
 Pittsburg: Pittsburg City Lake 15-Dec-03, 29-Feb-04
 Quanah: Copper Breaks State Park 6-Jan-04
 Rosenberg: Seabourne Creek Park 8-Feb-04
 San Angelo: Oakes Street 11-Dec-03, 8-Jan-04
 San Antonio: Brackenridge Park 13-Jan-04, 19-Feb-04
 Sherman: Pickens Lake 12-Dec-03, 9-Jan-04, 13-Feb-04
 Smithville: Buescher State Park 17-Dec-03
 Spring: Bane Park Lake 23-Jan-04
 Spring: Burroughs Park Pond 16-Jan-04
 Stanford: Meredith Stilling Basin 4-Dec-03, 25-Mar-04
 Sugarland: Eldridge Park Pond 4-Feb-04
 Sulphur Springs: Sulphur Springs City Park 8-Feb-04
 Temple: Temple Lion's Park Lake 23-Dec-03
 Texarkana: Spring Lake Park 29-Dec-03, 26-Jan-04
 Tyler: Faulkner Park Lake 18-Dec-03
 Tyler: Tyler State Park 5-Dec-03, 2-Jan-04
 Waco: Buena Vista Park Lake 21-Dec-03, 5-Jan-04, 3-Feb-04
 West Columbia: First Capitol Park Pond 7-Feb-04
 Wichita Falls: Plum Lake 9-Dec-03, 8-Jan-04, 5-Feb-04, 6-Mar-04

Wills Point: Pair-a-tree Pond in Lake Tawakoni SP 29-Feb-04

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Fish Stories

Please submit your stories in MS Word format. Pictures are welcome, but are best submitted in a separate file. The editor is very grateful to all who submitted articles and remember, if you don't see your article here, you can look forward to seeing it in the next issue. Enjoy!

A Fly in the Neck

I have co-workers who are members of GRTU that don't know about this story and it would be my preference to keep them guessing.

A Fly in the Neck

Let me start out by admitting that I did not discover the joy of fly fishing until very recently. I have found the sport to be very peaceful and exciting although my wife doesn't really understand my enthusiasm for it. I can still remember the quizzical look on her face when I responded with "none, its catch and release" to her question about how many trout I was going to bring home from one of my earlier fishing trips. Her response was, "What's the point?" I didn't bother trying to explain. After 22 years of happy marriage I know when I'll lose the battle even before it begins.

Now to the story. Last spring I went on a day trip to one of the local lakes to do some fishing for smallmouth bass. It was a typical windy spring day in Texas and the lake didn't have many trees to break the wind. When I got to my spot I started with short casts near the shore so that the wind wouldn't take my line. Throughout the morning I caught a few small perch and bass. Frequently I could see larger fish jumping out in the lake, but they weren't too far. The only problem is that my distance casting skills at this point were bad to say the best. Towards the end of my fishing day I thought I'd try a few long casts for the fun of it. Some casts went well and others weren't so good. My bad ones looked like a pile of linguini as described by Tom Deck in *Fly Casting*. On the last cast of the day, just as I was doing my back cast, a large gust of wind came across me and blew my line all over the place and me. As I was untangling my line from me I couldn't find my fly. I traced the line to my leader then to the tippet and to my neck. There was my fly, with barbed hook, stuck to the right side of my neck. I couldn't feel it at all. I thought, "no problem, I'll just get to my truck and look in the mirror and pull it out". I nipped the tippet, reeled in my line and put my rod away. I sat down, looked in the mirror and began fiddling with the danged Adams Parachute. For the life of me I couldn't get myself unhooked. I tried for a good 45 minutes before my phone rang and my face went flush. It was my wife wondering where I was. My wife freaks out pretty easily, so when I told her I had a fly stuck in my neck she asked if I was going to live. After reassuring her that I would, I drove to the local medical clinic to have my new, and only piercing, removed. The doctor and nurses admired my fishing skills; they said that it had been a slow Sunday. A few minutes later my fly selection was complete again and I was on my way home, but my wallet was a bit lighter. As it turns out this was the most expensive weekend fishing trip that I ever had in one day.

The two lessons that I learned were:

1. fish with a barb less or crushed barbed hook unless absolutely necessary.
2. buy and learn from Tom Deck's *Fly Casting* book about the proper way to cast. My casting is much more controlled now.

From: Anonymous

I have co-workers who are members of GRTU that don't know about this story and it would be my preference to keep them guessing.

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A Place to Learn

By Dan Widder, Jr.

While most trout fishermen hold their fondest memories of a wide river and monster trout, mine are little more modest, but deep in family tradition. My trout fishing experience began rather later late in life, compared to all my other outdoor sporting endeavors. Although I remember as a young boy sitting on the bank of Pine Creek in Colorado, beneath a spectacular waterfall, and catching tiny brook trout while my dad waded upstream with his fly rod, I never really trout fished until late summer 1990. Perhaps this had something to do with the geography of southwest Kansas, there just seemed to be more pheasants than trout.

I had just moved backed to Ulysses after living in Missouri for several years and found myself able to go with Dad and a family friend, Scott Buchanan, on their annual fly fishing trip to south central Colorado, which they had started a few years before. The last

week in August we headed to the Conejos River, between Chama, New Mexico and Antonito, Colorado. Scott and Dad had been fishing the river with some success but were always looking for new places to go. They were befriended by Louis Howsley, the owner of the Fox Creek Store. Howsley had been fishing the area for longer than he could remember and always gave them tips for catching the big one. The year before he pointed them to a new stream just off of the highway, and we were headed back there this year. Our home base for this trip was in Platoro. A long 20 miles up the hill from the highway and above 10,000 feet, this rustic little town had to have everything shipped in and was closed off to the rest of the world during the winter. Only a brave few with snowshoes and snowmobiles wintered over here. You know you're up high when you start slow cooking your vegetable stew in the morning and the potatoes still aren't done that evening.

I was really looking forward to spending four days in the mountains catching trout, but as I found out, the high mountain trout don't just jump into your creel. Since I had never fly fished before and didn't have a fly rod, I spent a lot of time watching Dad fly cast and the rest of the time I spent in futility trying to hook one using a spinning reel with a spinner bait. I was able to cast and retrieve my lure on the Conejos, but to no avail as after three and half days I was still empty handed. On the smaller streams I couldn't manage to get my lure into the creek without scaring all the fish. On that last day, as I walked back to the truck I crossed a small feeder creek and spotted several little brookies scurrying about. Dad was just a few yards away cleaning his catch for dinner that night, so I borrowed his rod and snuck up on the unsuspecting fingerlings. I managed to flip the fly into a little pool after three or four attempts, and to my surprise one of the voracious little trout took the fly. I jerked that little fish clear out of the water and he landed on the bank 15 feet behind me. There I was, a full-grown man, holding a five-inch fish while jumping up and down yelling like I had landed Moby Dick. Dad gave me one of those looks and a "good job, son" and I could tell, although he was happy for me, he was not impressed. After basking in the glow of my accomplishment for a few seconds, I released my prey and went back for more. I guess I caught five or six more, or maybe it was the same fish five or six more times, either way that brief time with the fly rod catching trout got me hooked.

For Christmas that year I received a fly rod and reel, and every year since I've returned to Colorado ready to catch trout. Louis Howsley passed away sometime in the mid 1990's, but before his death he had directed us to several prime fishing spots as well as giving us tons of advice on tackle and tactics. Scott moved away a couple of years after I started going and for several years it was just Dad and I. Every year I gained more confidence and skill and expanded my fly fishing from trout in Colorado to bass and bluegill in Texas and northern pike in Canada. I even managed to out-fish the old man from time to time. Better than all that was the day I finally got to take my son fly-fishing. Perhaps a little too anxious to get him started, we took Collin right back to where I learned, at the ripe old age of seven. Even the smallest fly vest and irrigation boots I could find were too big for him and he looked like a kid who had gotten into his dad's closet for a day of dress up. As Mom, Grandpa and little brother watched in anticipation we waded into the tiny stream and I began to try to demonstrate how to cast the fly. Kind of like how you help your kid swing at his first pitched ball we attempted a couple of casts. We managed one rise and with all the awkward commotion I'm surprised we got that. We moved up to the next hole and cast again, only this time we struck success landing a small brook trout. After a few more practice trout I helped him cast my eight and half foot rod and stepped back. I'll be darned if he didn't hook his first rise and with a little help landing the frisky brookie, he had his first semi-solo trout. Naturally, I grabbed the camera to immortalize the moment on film. This picture was later used by the Mountain Home Lodge in their promotional brochure. The grin was the same as mine when I caught my first one; only I was thirty years older.

For Christmas that year, Collin got his own fly rod and has gone back for a day each year to fish for the high mountain brookies in Colorado with Grandpa and I. Of all the different places I have fished, I still prefer the solitude of the mountains and the variety of trout you can catch there, not to mention the memories. Where else can you stand in the pool you just fished and cast a fly into a pool above you that is eye level and in a stream no wider than seven or eight feet with rocks and trees all around you. You might think that all you catch are those little brookies, but we have landed 20-inch browns out of those little streams. And it's not just brooks and browns; we have encountered Rio Grande and Snake River cutthroats, and a few Rainbows. So next time you're driving through the mountains and you see a small creek running near the road, remember that there are probably fish there and it's a great place to learn.

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GRTU Newsletter

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