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News Casters

April 2014

President's Message

by Tom Dyer

It's a Good Day

Last Saturday was our club's first spring outing for 2014. The club decided on Malheur Reservoir as the destination after weighing several other options. As most of you know it is kind of a crap-shoot planning a fishing trip in March. Weather, road conditions and water conditions are iffy at best. For some unknown reason last Saturday, March 22, was a Good Day. The morning started out on the chilly side, 24 degrees here in Cambridge. When Cindy and I arrived at the reservoir I couldn't believe it, the temperature was over 50 degrees and no wind. The rest of the group was already there and fishing. Except for a few bank fishermen we pretty much were the only folks on the lake.

As Cindy and I started unloading the kick boats and stringing up the fly rods I had to chuckle. You know how sound carries on a lake when there is no wind or other distractions? Saturday sounded like a club board meeting with everyone talking at once; Mike giving instructions on fly patterns, Al saying he caught seven but they were all dinks, Jim discussing last night's basketball scores, Bob saying the bites were few and far between and several people asking where Cecil was. We had a good turnout. I think around 12 members were fishing. The weather was beautiful with hardly a breeze on the lake.

I think everyone caught fish. Both Cindy and I were using a sinking line and basically trolled a two fly setup along the shore in about 10 to 15 feet of water. I know some of the others worked in deeper water with similar results. As was mentioned by Al, the fish caught were fairly small, 10 to 13 inches but were in great shape providing a good fight once hooked. I believe Jim Gulu caught the largest fish of the day a nice 16 inch rainbow.

For those of you who didn't make the trip, you missed a fun outing in a nice setting with beautiful weather. I have to admit the best part of the trip is being there with the other club members. You're a great bunch of folks and make the experience a "good day" even if the fish are dinks.

Remember our next scheduled club outing is May 17th and 18th at Mann Lake, south of Burns, Oregon. I hope you can all attend. It should be a real adventure.

Tom

Officers

President-Tom Dyer
257-4225

1st Vice Pres- Ray Perkins
541-889-4441

2nd Vice Pres-Jascha Zeitlin
801-831-9459

Past President-Mark Sands
549-2545

Secretary-Lynette Jones
550-2264

Treasurer-Jim Gulu
549-0796

Board Members

Rod Jones 549-0430

Marv Orwig 484-6837

Mike Thomas 549-2473

Janet Baker 549-3941

Committees

Budget: Jim Gulu, Lynette Jones

Conservation and Youth: Mark Sands, Nando Mauldin,

Education: Perry Kelley,

Fund Raising: Lynette Jones, Sarah Gulu

Historian: Open

Library: Rod Jones, Ken Gissel, Dick Garrett

Membership: Bill Betts plus Board members

Newsletter: Perry & Sally Kelley, Dick Garrett

Outings: Al Sillonis plus Board members

Programs: Tom Dyer

Publicity: Perry Kelley

Join in the Fun!

This Happened To Me !

by Perry Kelley

I remember in my youth when there was no more exciting times than when our monthly magazine subscriptions arrived in the mail. Magazines such as *Look*, *National Geographic*, *Saturday Evening Post*, *Reader's Digest*, and especially *Outdoor Life* and *Field and Stream* were my connection to places such as Alaska, Mexico, Africa and India. The sporting adventures I lived vicariously were incredible. Tiger hunting in India, fly fishing for salmon in Alaska, pike fishing in Canada and—most exciting of all—an African Safari. The magazines took you there and with your creative imagination, the sights, smells and sounds were almost real. Most interesting was getting to know the wonderful writers and columnists, including Idaho residents, Jack O'Conner, Clyde Ormand, and—most important—Ted Trueblood. Unfortunately, these magazines have succumbed to the times. Most of all, the advertising has lost all dignity. Pages and pages of ads for male dysfunctions medication along with the side effects of these medications and cheap tools have no place in a sporting magazine.

One feature in *Outdoor Life* was “This Happened to Me.” This was a story, in picture form, of an adventure, many times a close call, that happened while pursuing an outdoor activity. Examples such as being charged by a grizzly bear, falling through the ice or capsizing a boat were typical subjects. These incidents were scary and almost surreal. I often thought this couldn't happen to me. Well, it did! On Saturday, March 8, 2014, on the Owyhee River. Jim Gulu is my witness—and my lifesaver.

Jim and I left Weiser early trying to get ahead of the mob east of the Snake River from Ada and Canyon Counties. We patted ourselves on our backs until we went through the tunnel. From then on it seemed that every hole and run was occupied. Our goal was the *Pipe Hole* below the bridge going into the village. Our spot appeared to be vacant. As we were getting into our waders, a fisherman magically appeared at our spot. There was still a lot of river, and fish were occasionally rising. The first spot looked productive, but the willows behind me were ravenous, eating my flies on practically every backcast. After replacing half a box of flies I decided to find a more “cast friendly” place. Not far downriver was a shallow flat that looked like easy access, and fish were beginning to feed. I walked down and waded out to a good-looking spot and began casting away. No action, however. Jim came below me and waded to the other side of the river. I was near the center and Jim was on the west side of the river. We were perplexed; fish were feeding but we were not catching. At this point in time, we were trying all different tactics and fly patterns. Nothing!

Let me mention that I am what is known as chronologically challenged. I am 76 years old, my balance is not particularly good, and my physical strength is waning somewhat. I was wearing denim jeans, polar fleece sweater, fishing shirt, fishing vest with several fly boxes, net and net lanyard, wading staff with retractable cable on a fishing belt and waders. The long winter and lack of activity took its toll.

I felt a little cold and tired, so I was in the process of returning to shore. I brought a portable stool with me and left it on the bank. I was backing up to turn myself around to walk back to the shore. I did not have my wading staff in my hand.

All of a sudden I lost my balance and fell backwards into the river. The water was about 12-14 inches deep. I landed flat on my back. My legs were tangled in my staff and lanyard and I immediately

felt wet all over. The water was incredibly cold. I immediately felt panic, and my whole body began to shake. I yelled to Jim who was going downstream to find a spot to cross. There were other fishermen above us but they did not respond to my panic. My body did not become numb; it just seemed to get colder and colder. I tried to turn over and stand up, but I was completely helpless. Finally I was able to pull myself toward the bank with my right arm which was also holding my rod. I was moving at a snail's pace. I have never before felt panic like I did then. The progress of getting to the bank was painfully slow. By the time Jim reached me, I was pulling myself on the bank, but I still had no control to untangle my legs and try to stand up.

Jim was very calm and professional. He removed my wading staff, vest and rod. He helped me sit up and eventually stand. I was able to walk to my pick-up. Jim picked up all of my gear while I removed my wader boots and waders, socks and polar fleece. I had no change of clothes. My jeans were completely soaked, my shirt was wet but already started to dry (good stuff) and it felt as if my whole body was shaking. Jim changed out of his gear and we were on our way home. The hour and a half drive seemed 10 times as long. We had the heater on as high as it would go and I still shivered. When I got home I took a hot shower, got a hot rice pack and several blankets, and it was evening before I finally felt warm.

Now I am not trying to dramatize my experience. I hope by reading this narrative that all of you will realize the potential danger in wading and prepare yourselves for the worst. First, I am thankful the water was not deep and not moving. I am also very thankful that Jim was there to help me in such a professional way. I made some mistakes. I hope all of you take this list to heart; it may make a big difference some time for you.

1. Always bring a change of clothes.
2. Wear quick drying fishing pants and shirts
3. Get a quality wading staff and use it!
4. Don't wear too much gear.
5. Never fish alone. Use the buddy system.
6. Try to stay in shape. Know your physical limitations.
7. Wade slowly. Carefully plan each step. Always be aware of your balance. Use the staff as a third leg. Use your *rod* to get the fish, not your waders.
8. Invest in a good wading belt.
9. Don't let this or your own bad experiences discourage you. Fly fishing is still the greatest outdoor activity yet.

Latest Snow Pack Information for the Weiser River Drainage

- ✎ Placer Creek on Cuddy Mtn. Normal is 5 feet of snow. Feb. 26th we had 26 inches.
- ✎ No Business Lookout normal is 10 feet of snow. Feb. 26th we had 43 inches.
- ✎ Mann's Creek Drainage normal is 28 inches. Feb. 26th we had 15 inches.
- ✎ Mann's Creek Reservoir is a little over 20% full as of March 11th

Remember—May 17 and 18 are the dates of the next club outing.

Below is an article that recently appeared in the Idaho Statesman describing the Mann Lake and its reestablished fishery for cutthroat trout.

Kind of makes you want to go, doesn't it?

Mann Lake – BURNS, Ore.

Just five years after being devoid of fish; Mann Lake has re-established itself as the only place in Eastern Oregon to catch trophy-quality cutthroat trout. Located beneath Steens Mountain, the remote lake had long been known as a destination for catching stocked trout heavy with Lahontan genetics, a large desert subspecies that was native to the area before poor water practices drove the local population to presumed extinction. But the fishery collapsed in the mid2000s thanks to a destructive villain: the lowly goldfish. Presumably escaped from live bait fishermen, the goldfish multiplied rapidly and nearly exterminated the resident trout. In 2010, when Malheur district fish biologist Shannon Hurn and her crew poisoned the lake to kill all the fish in it, they collected the carcasses of roughly 10 trout and 170,000 goldfish. A productive, unique fishery filled with a rare subspecies of trout was wiped off the map for Oregon anglers. Until now, after five years of selective stocking and breeding, large cutthroat are flourishing again in Mann Lake. And luckily for Eastern Oregon anglers staring at swollen and off-color rivers, they are biting like mad. The picturesque desert lake is located east of Steens Mountain, just 20 miles from the Alvord Desert and about 80 miles south of Burns. It is chock-full of freshwater shrimp and a number of macro-invertebrates that trout feed on with gusto, allowing the predatory fish to grow quickly and then grow some more. Landing a 16-inch cutthroat in the lake won't impress your fishing partner, but a 20-incher will – and that is well within the realm of possibilities. Cutthroat trout up to two feet in length are present in Mann Lake in good numbers for the first time in a decade.

I visited in early March and the lake was already free from ice. The cutthroat, readying to spawn, were cruising 3-10 feet off shore in the shallow and murky southeast end of the lake. The real skill of wade fishing for lake trout is timing. If you are there when the bite is on, there isn't much to it. I rigged a basic set-up and proceeded to slay fish for the better part of the day. I used an 8weight rod and with a size 12 pheasant tail nymph weighed down with a heavy, fluorescent orange bead head. Using a lighter 5/6 rod sure would make the catching more fun, but a larger and more stout stick makes casting into the all-coming wind much easier. Yet on my trip there wasn't much need for big casting. I caught fish close to the bank with a slow retrieve method that featured plenty of long pauses. The goal when fishing near the bank during spawning season is simple: Choose something heavy enough to get near the bottom, if not on it. Once you are there, it's a patience game. For fly fishermen, streamers could work well and even Callibaetis nymphs, too. Dry fly fishing can be had in the late summer and fall, though hatches are infrequent and don't last long, according to Hurn. When traveling to Mann, fill your vehicle with plenty of artificial bait options. There are no bait or fly shops nearby. Hurn said fish will go off the bite during the height of spawning season, when they have more pressing needs to attend to. But early summer fishing can be excellent before petering off under the height of the desert heat, then improving again in the fall. Ice fishing is allowed, but generally is a hit-

and-miss game, said Hurn. Overall it's a tremendous fishing opportunity, but it is important to remember how remote and susceptible to the elements Mann Lake is. Humility and respect are required when fishing desert waters. A long day in the sun can be brutal to the skin and eyes and Hurn warned of whole campsites being ripped away by the notorious wind that curls along the base of Steens Mountain. Don't skimp on water and gasoline; the closest convenience store is more than 50 miles away and, depending on which direction you go, more than half of that distance must be traveled over washboard gravel roads. There are two boat launches on the lake that are in excellent shape and motorized craft are allowed on the water. The limit is two fish per day larger than 16 inches, fewer than the normal limit in rarely visited and rarely fished southeast Oregon. That means there are plenty of trout for plenty of anglers, but still the possibility for a fresh-caught dinner at two of the free campgrounds that rim both sides of the lake. Live bait is prohibited, obviously, after the goldfish debacle. Although Mann is a long way from everywhere, fishing it is worth the tank of gas (or two, or three) it takes to get there. Being a long way from everywhere is one of its charms, in fact. Five years after it would have been like fishing in your kitchen aquarium, the lake is once again the only one in Oregon filled with trophy-quality Lahontan cutthroats. Now is the time to get there, before it's back on the radar of Oregon anglers willing to travel for a thrill.

SOME POSSIBLE ACCOMIDATIONS NEAR MANN LAKE

Steens Mt. Wilderness Resort (541)493-2415

Hotel Diamond (888)309-7518 or (541)493-1898

French glen Hotel (541)493-2825

Fields General Store, Motel and Cafe, Rv park (541)495-2275





P.O. Box 734, Weiser, Idaho

The following members have April as his or her due-date for renewal of membership. Please see Jim Gulu and pay ASAP so he doesn't have to sick Sara on you.

All dues are current as of April. Way to go fly-fishers.

Don't forget the membership meeting Tuesday, April 8. That may be tomorrow, today or next week, depending on when you get around to reading this rather late edition of the *Flycaster*.

Sorry it is so late.—Dick

Coming Events

April 1—IFF Board,
7 pm
Idaho Pizza,

April 8—IFF Membership
6:00 pm—Social Hour
7:00 pm—Meeting
Idaho Pizza,

April 15—Fly Tying,
7:00 pm
Weiser Library

April 17—Fly Tying,
7:00 pm
Cambridge Library
"Tying a Bass Fly"

APRIL 2014

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 IFF Board Meeting	2	3	4	5
6	7	8 IFF Member Meeting	9	10	11	12
13	14	15 Fly Tying Weiser	16	17 Fly Tying Cambridge	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	27	29	30			

