

The Cutthroat Chronicles

Official Newsletter of the Snake River Cutthroats

3rd Quarter, 2024

A Message from the President

President's Message, Third Quarter, 2024

Even though it does not feel like it, fall has arrived. It has been a hot dry summer, but the reservoirs are not in too bad of shape as we head into fall. Flows are running around 8500 on the South Fork which makes for pretty fishable conditions. Hopefully, you can get out there and spend some time on the water as the temperatures cool off.

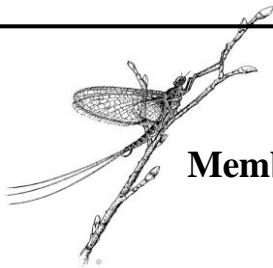
We also had another summer of several conservation projects. Later in this issue you will see some of the hard work put in by fantastic volunteers. Special thank you to Andy Bosworth, our Conservation VP, on organizing and participating in all these efforts. Also, a thank you to those of you that have helped in the cleaning of the Rainey Creek screens throughout the summer.

Speaking of Rainey Creek, we will be installing the last diversion screen on this important watershed this fall. This is the culmination of many years of efforts and partnership. Look for more details on that soon.

Our monthly gatherings will start up in October. As in the past, we will meet the second Wednesday of each month at the Fair Bridge Inn on Lindsay Blvd. At these gatherings we typically feature a speaker that talks to us about fishing or conservation. Watch your email and the SRC social media pages for details. We will also be starting up Tie One On in October as well. This is held the third Tuesday of each month at Tap 'n Fill next to McKenzie River restaurant on Milligan Road. Come on out and watch some great tying and usually some interesting story telling as well.

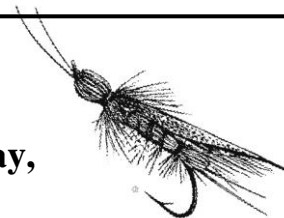
One last very important note, the Eastern Idaho Fly Tying Expo had to be moved up to February 14-15 for this year. If you are looking to get involved, please reach out to Dave Pace, Rory Cullen or Scott Long to get on the planning meeting distribution list.

Tight lines,
Dan Smith



UPCOMING EVENT

**Membership Meetings Will Resume Wednesday,
October 9th
Fairbridge Inn, 6:30 PM, Guest: TBA**



Paul Stembriage's Young Tiers Learning from Jimmy



Starting in October Eagle Rock Middle School will begin the Fly Tying and Fishing Club in the office conference room. Weekly meetings are held on Tuesdays after school and end the last week of April. The club is sponsored by the Snake River Cutthroats (SRC) chapter of Trout Unlimited. Paul Stembriage, a counselor at the middle school and a member of the SRC is the club advisor. The club focuses on basic fly tying and fishing skills for success in local waters. There is a strong emphasis on personal stewardship and a responsibility to maintain natural resources consistent with TU values. Throughout the year various local experts join us and teach students their favorite techniques and tricks. The first few sessions of the club focus on the basic tools needed for fly tying and safety. Students are provided a vice, hooks, and all materials needed to complete projects. The San Juan worm is the first fly because it is very simple, easy to work with, and productive. Students then move on to streamers like the Black Nose Dace, Mayer's Leech, and Thin Mint Woolly Bugger. Intermediate flies include nymphs such as the standard Hare's Ear and Pheasant Tail. The year ends with more advanced flies that require hackle such as the renegade, standard Adams, and Dear Hair Caddis. Students in the club also have the opportunity to volunteer to help other young people at the EIFTE's Tie Your First Fly booth.

Pale Morning Dun (Also known as the PMD)



There are two Ephemera species, the inermis and infrequens, the Pale Morning Duns. They are found in just about every, if not all, of the streams in Yellowstone National Park and surroundings. These are crawler nymphs and prefer slower to moderate water. They are very plentiful in most streams. These range from a 16 to 20 hook size. **This is the most important species of mayfly in the West.** They not only are plentiful, they also hatch over a long period of time. All of the life stages are important salmonid food. Have patterns for nymphs, emergers, duns and spinners in your fly box. The spinners fall both in the mornings and afternoons.

Electronic Newsletters Available

To receive this newsletter via email, please send your email address to Carol Staples, our membership chair, at carolastaples@gmail.com

Fewer mailings mean more dollars for conservation projects. The fish will appreciate your cost-saving efforts.



Nearby Still Waters Managed by IDF&G to Produce Trophy Trout

What do Daniels Reservoir, Treasureton Reservoir, Springfield Lake, and Twentyfour Mile Reservoir have in common? Idaho Fish and Game manages them as trophy trout waters in the Southeast Region which means:

- Trout limit is 2, none under 20 inches
- One line only when ice fishing
- No bait allowed, barbless hooks required.

These waters are popular destinations for those seeking large trout, but in recent years anglers have expressed concerns about the quality of these fisheries to staff in the Southeast Region. In June of 2023, our fisheries management team sought to answer whether these waters were still performing well under the trophy regulations. Our surveys used our standard “lowland lake” gears of gillnets, trapnets, and boat electrofishing at Daniels, Treasureton and Springfield while only gillnets and trapnets were used at Twentyfour Mile due to the absence of an improved boat ramp.

Daniels Reservoir

The 2023 survey of Daniels Reservoir resulted in 217 rainbow trout sampled with an average size of 17.5 inches and 1.8 pounds. These averages have increased since the electrofishing survey completed in 2017 when the average length of rainbow trout was only 14.7 inches and average weight was 1.3 pounds. The largest rainbow trout in 2023 was 19.6 inches and weighed 2.7 pounds. While it appears that the rainbow trout fishery at Daniels Reservoir is on the right track and fish are getting larger, no fish sampled in either the 2017 or 2023 survey had achieved the harvestable size of 20 inches.

To assess the level of harvest and angler catch rates, our fisheries management team is also conducting a creel survey at Daniels Reservoir this year. This creel survey will continue for 12 months (May 2023 to May 2024) to encompass both the open water and ice fishing seasons.

Treasureton Reservoir

Rainbow trout as well as rainbow trout x cutthroat trout hybrids, commonly called hybrids, were captured at Treasureton Reservoir in the 2023 survey. Twenty-seven rainbow trout were sampled with an average length of 18 inches and average weight of 2.5 pounds. These averages have increased since the 2017 electrofishing survey when rainbow trout averaged 15.8 inches and 1.7 pounds. The largest rainbow trout captured in 2023 was 25.6 inches and weighed 5.75 pounds.

Our survey also captured 21 hybrids with an average length of 16 inches and average weight of 1.8 pounds. The average size of hybrids has decreased since 2017 when average length was 19.8 inches and weight was 2.8 pounds. The largest hybrid captured in 2023 was 21.8 inches and weighed 4.3 pounds. Harvestable trout were more numerous in Treasureton Reservoir than Daniels Reservoir with 27% of the sampled trout measuring 20 inches in length or greater.



Treasureton Reservoir was treated with rotenone in 2018 to eliminate largemouth bass. Our survey did not capture any largemouth bass, which is good news for the trout fishery. Treasureton Reservoir also has an additional regulation with no size or bag limit on bass species to help prevent their establishment. However, we did capture 363 green sunfish with an average size of 4.8 inches. This species was likely illegally introduced to Treasureton Reservoir sometime after the 2018 rotenone treatment. Fisheries managers will be watching this population closely to determine if it may negatively impact the trophy trout population in Treasureton Reservoir.

Springfield Lake

Prior to the 2023 lowland lake survey, Springfield Lake had not been surveyed since 2008. In this year's survey, 15 rainbow trout were captured with an average length of 17.8 and an average weight of 2.2 pounds. The largest rainbow trout measured 23.5 inches and weighed 4.3 pounds. Harvestable trout were present in Springfield Lake with 33% of the rainbow trout sampled measuring 20 inches in length or greater.

Springfield Lake also had numerous nongame fish present with 452 Utah chub and 251 Utah suckers captured. Future management of this lake may include reducing the densities of Utah chub and Utah suckers to promote trout growth. Over the past three years, we have significantly increased hatchery stocking at this fishery. Despite these efforts, our results suggest that trout fishing at Springfield Lake will be challenging until limiting factors have been addressed.

Twentyfour Mile Reservoir

At Twentyfour Mile Reservoir our crew captured one rainbow trout, three hybrids and 18 Yellowstone cutthroat trout. The rainbow trout was 19 inches long while the hybrids averaged 10.3 inches. The Yellowstone cutthroat trout averaged 14.1 inches long. This species' average length is similar to that of the 2016 gillnetting survey when the average length of Yellowstone cutthroat trout was 14.7 inches. About 14% of the population sampled was legally harvestable, exceeding 20 inches in length. Anglers venturing to Twentyfour Mile Reservoir should also keep in mind that no motors are allowed on this small waterbody.

At each of these fisheries, we also placed T-bar anchor tags into trout to improve fisheries management. Reporting these tags helps biologists understand harvest, survival, growth, and migrations. If you catch one of these fish, please report it to the Tag! You're It! website or call 1-866-258-0338.



Conservation and Remediation Efforts on the Rainey Creek Drainage
by
Andy Bosworth

“The South Fork Snake River is home to the largest population of native Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout in Idaho. Tributaries of the South Fork like Rainey Creek provide critical spawning and rearing habitat for these trout. Although Rainey Creek is the largest of the four major South Fork tributaries, it is the least productive spawning creek for wild and native trout, including Yellowstone Cutthroat Trout.”(Henry’s Fork Foundation website, 2024)

Anecdotal evidence from long term residents of Swan Valley suggests that Rainey creek was at one time an exceptional fishery. Data from Idaho Fish and Game shows that the lower reaches of this drainage have been severely impacted with fish returns varying from zero to as many as 145 fish per year returning to spawn from the South Fork. Trout Unlimited, Idaho Fish and Game, the US Forest Service and the South Fork Initiative all are working to remedy this decline in this important nursery to the South Fork. It will take time, money, and hard work, but the necessity of restoring this reach is undeniably worthwhile.

The following represents various projects that have either been completed or are ongoing on Rainey Creek.

- Our own Matt Woodard began working on Rainey in 2007 while working for Trout Unlimited. His efforts included significant numbers of tree plantings and fence building, and the installation of seven irrigation screens.
- Two years ago SRC worked cooperatively with other groups including East Side Conservation District, West Side Conservation District, and the South Fork Initiative to replace one of those screens that was not functioning properly.
- This fall through efforts by SRC and others the final irrigation ditch on Rainey Creek will have a screen completing the effort to prevent adult and juvenile fish from becoming entrained in ditches.
- Matt, while at TU, also relocated part of Rainey to its original creek channel and incorporated improving fish passage.
- A water gap was constructed (with volunteer help from SRC) allowing livestock to water on the creek without causing bank erosion and sedimentation.
- In 2018 the Henry’s Fork Foundation formed the South Fork Initiative. Their goal for this project includes restoring the lower five miles of Rainey Creek in the next ten years.
 - Their projects to date include restoration work on Third Creek (a tributary to Rainey), the Bridge to Bridge Restoration and USFS Workstation Restoration. Each of these projects required significant instream modification to reestablish functional floodplains and improve habitat. Many volunteer hours were contributed to these projects by SRC members planting trees and building fences. I would encourage you to visit the Henry’s Fork South Fork Initiative Story Map <https://tinyurl.com/Rainey-Story-Map> for more extensive information about these restoration efforts.

- Higher up on the Creek in the National Forest a large group of volunteers assisted the Forest Service and Idaho Parks and Recreation with the installation of four bridges crossing the stream (a fifth is planned in September). These bridges will eliminate sedimentation and bank erosion associated with recreationists crossing the creek. A diverse group of stakeholders (SRC, ATV, Mountain Bike, Motorcycle) worked together on this project demonstrating just how much can be accomplished when we all work together on a common goal.

While speaking with Brett High from Idaho Fish and Game I was encouraged to hear him say that he is optimistic that in time Rainey Creek can become a viable fishery supporting the cutthroat population in the South Fork of the Snake River.

Conservation Update
by
Andy Bosworth

Snake River Cutthroats have been busy this summer with a variety of volunteer efforts. We started off in the spring with a roadside cleanup/ picnic that was well attended. Camaraderie and many hands make light work was the mantra for the day. Look for the fall cleanup and spend a day with the club. All summer long a cadre of volunteers have been cleaning the fish screens on Rainey Creek. Early in the year these screens prevent entrainment of migrating spawning cutthroats into irrigation ditches. These fish move out of the South Fork and head up Rainey to spawn. The screens then prevent returning fish from getting trapped in irrigation ditches as well as the year's fry once they migrate back down to the South Fork. This spring the club committed to screening the last remaining ditch. Grants and money from the club will complete this effort that was started by Matt Woodard in 2007. Installation should occur in October. Earlier this summer work was done with Idaho Fish and Game clipping cutthroat adipose fins at the National Hatchery in Jackson Hole. The clipping allows the fish to be used in research studies looking at improving fishing in Palisades Reservoir. SRC volunteers assisted the Henry's Fork Foundation cleaning up public access points both in Island Park and south of Ashton. Our help was greatly appreciated by the staff at the Foundation. A small group traveled to the headwaters of the Blackfoot River to repair fish screens on Diamond Creek. These screens were installed by TU while Matt Woodard was the regional Watershed Coordinator. They truly represent the collaborative effort that is possible between TU and the private sector to enhance cutthroat numbers. During the heat of the summer, it has been a hot one, SRC volunteers again assisted Idaho Fish and Game with gill net surveys on Ririe Reservoir aimed at studying fish populations. Our big event was the weekend overnight effort building bridges over Rainey Creek on the National Forest. In cooperation with numerous user groups (ATV, motorcycle, mountain bike), the Forest Service and Idaho Parks and Recreation the group of 50+ volunteers installed four stream crossing bridges to reduce sediment discharge into the creek. Cutthroat volunteers prepared Saturday night's dinner, thank you Rob Knox for the pulled pork, and cooked breakfast for the entire crew Sunday morning. A fifth bridge will be installed in late September. In tune with national Trout Unlimited goals, our club this summer has been collaborating with other stakeholders to improve the cold water fishery in South East Idaho.



Fly Pattern of the Quarter

Will Godfrey's Willard Fly

Originally this was Will's pattern for a stonefly nymph. He bent the shank to simulate the bend that the nymph assumes when taken out of the water. Will also suggests that this pattern is as effective as any rubber leg pattern when used in the general sense.

- Hook:** Mustad 79580 or equivalent, size 4-12
- Weight:** Turns of 0.03–inch lead free wire
- Thread:** Black, 6/0
- Body:** Black Chenille
- Hackle:** Black saddle
- Collar:** Brown Saddle
- Head:** Tying thread



2024 Calendar

Date	Activity
Tuesday September 3rd	September Board Meeting, The Zone, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, October 1st	October Board Meeting, The Zone, 6:30 PM
Wednesday October 9th	Membership Meeting, Fairbridge Inn, 6:30 PM, Guest: TBA
Tuesday, October 15st	Tie One On, Tap an Fill, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, November 5th	November Board Meeting, The Zone, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, November 12th	Tie One On, Tap an Fill, 6:30 PM
Wednesday November 13th	Membership Meeting, Fairbridge Inn, 6:30 PM, Guest: TBA Tie One On, Tap and Fill, 6:30 PM
Tuesday, December 3rd	December Board Meeting, The Zone, 6:30 PM
Wednesday, December 11th	Xmas Party

Note: Board meetings can be accessed via ZOOM. Visit www.snakerivercutthroats.org or the Cutthroats Facebook page for a link to access membership meetings, outings, and other activities. .Board meetings are open to all members.

Snake River Cutthroats

Club Officers

President: Dan Smith (908-652-1837)
Past President: Matt Woodard (208-221-1353)
Ex. Vice President: TBA
VP Conservation: Andy Bosworth (207-713-3457)
Treasurer: Matt Marotz (414-721-1642)
Secretary: Jeff Armstrong (208-351-1333)

Senior Advisors

Jim Mathias
Jimmy Gabettas
Buck Goodrich
Ron Hover
Scott Long
Dave Pace
Marv Stucki
Paul Patterson

Board of Directors

3 Yr Directors: Ashley Sagrero (208-501-5036), Lane Mortensen (208-970-8859) Kristina Organski (208-412-2305)

2 Yr Directors: Curtis St. Michael (208-520-8369), Eric Berglund, Rory Cullen (208-419-8477)

1 Yr Directors: Steve Moss, Mike Miller (208-357-5569), Stan Weise (562-713-2936)

Committee Chairs

Membership: Carol Staples (208-522-9242)

Historian/Newsletter: Bruce Staples (208-522-9242) (new email bstaples9740@gmail.com)

Education: Ashley Sagrero (208-501-5036)

Expo: Scott Long (208-520-3750), Rory Cullen (208-419-8477), Dave Pace (208-360-5657)

Programs: George Klomp (208-680-2762), Myles Pawlaczyk (949-701-1767)

Publicity: Kristina Organski (208-412-2305)

Outings: Marv Stucki (208-589-9677), Rob Knox (760-419-1682)

Youth: Paul Stemberidge (208-569-2890)

IT/Web Site: Myles Pawlaczyk (949-701-1767)

