

OPTU NEWS

Old Pueblo Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited Chapter 531 www.optu.org Editor: John E. Murphy 520-299-3278

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Past President's Report

Clay is taking this month off from the President's Column to give a chance to our former president to talk about his activities at the 50th Anniversary Convention of TU.

Greetings Fellow TUers:

It is a good 50th Anniversary conference here in Michigan. I thought I was going to be able to bring back some anniversary goodies, but they are rather expensive and not much is available. The items are actually cheaper and more of them are available on the website. Fred Fillmore and I are on our last terms as Council Chair and NLC and we have some people attending from Arizona who are taking our positions, so we've been training them on what needs to be accomplished and also meeting different people. I got some great contacts for the Boy Scouts, Trout in the Classroom, Adopt a Trout, Casting for a Cure and Healing Waters. They all put on great presentations.

The Conservation tour was very informative. Tonight is the banquet and there are several Bamboo Rod makers here. I'm hoping to leave town with one. There is a raffle for a Bamboo fly rod that is a one of a kind, 50th anniversary special production, valued at \$5,000. I wonder

what the warranty is on breakage? I fished my 3 weight earlier this week and caught lots of small trout; no bragging rights. I'll be meeting with the VP for conservation tonight in hopes of attaining money and backing to delist Apache Trout within 5 years. I am also reviewing an MOU (memorandum of understanding) with the agencies on Apache and Gila Trout recovery in Arizona. I will also be meeting with Jennifer Martin (AZGFD Commissioner) on Native Fish in Arizona. Also, John Rohmer left me a voicemail and wants to discuss developing trophy trout lakes in Arizona. Apparently a committee is formed to designate some of the Arizona lakes to trophy trout. AZGFD is open to this but would like to see a plan.

I would like to discuss the following topics at the upcoming board meeting including Banquet, Halloween event, Family outing, October workday with Healing waters, and Holiday party. I will be contacting Julie Meka and Jason Kline (AZGFD) about upcoming work for next year and possibly another grant. I want to send the workdays out early for 2010. We need also to discuss liability insurance (which we have through TU) and medical (which we don't) for our workdays. I'll have some info which I learned about at this meeting.

Jeff Collins



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Theme photo for 2009 - Foggy morning
at the J-hole, Kenai River, Alaska

Calendar

Sep 2: Regular meeting at 6:30

pm. Speakers Jeff Collins and Joe Fagan on Trout in the Classroom (and perhaps a fishing story or two). To be held at the offices of Scott Kuktavy, 1836 S. Research Loop.

Sep 16: Lie and Tie (6:30 pm); Dry Creek Outfitters, 5420 E. Broadway, Suite 254. Call Eric at 326-7847.

Sep 23: Board meeting at El Charro Restaurant - 6 pm - Speedway and Swan. Everyone is invited.

Oct 7: Regular meeting at 6:30

pm. Speaker TBA. To be held at the offices of Scott Kuktavy, 1836 S. Research Loop.

Oct 21: Lie and Tie (6:30 pm); Dry Creek Outfitters, 5420 E. Broadway, Suite 254. Call Eric at 326-7847.

Oct 28: Board meeting at El Charro Restaurant - 6 pm - Speedway and Swan. Everyone is invited.

Oct 31: Halloween event from 10 am to 4 pm with Ed Engle. See description of activities in OPTU board meeting minutes.

Nov: Our regular meeting will not be held due to the event on October 31.

CONSERVATION OFFICER REPORT

I'm presently at the TU National Conference in Traverse City, Michigan. It is the 50th anniversary of TU. The meetings haven't started but we already went on the conservation tour and had conversations with other states. The AZ Council invited new Chapter President of Payson's Gila Chapter, Bob Youtz, to this conference. We discussed the issues on Gila trout in Arizona. We both plan to meet with the New Mexico Council since they already have some Gila Trout in their streams and discuss certain issues. On the Conservation tour, we visited work on the Betsie - dam breaching, and the Au Sable - tree planting. Both interesting problems. We also looked at a storm drainage issue in Grayling in which water washed up during storms was entering the Au Sable carrying street grease and grim. They came up with a solution of

installing drains that centrifugally churn the water, separating grease and oils to the top and grim and sand to the bottom. The water is released through a middle drain pipe. The drains are cleaned periodically by the city. This prevents the pollution from entering the stream. I thought this would be a topic for Sedona, as I have witnessed this same issue there flowing into Oak Creek.

I'll have more to report when I return. I hope to get some info on Trout in the classroom. I'll be in a presentation tomorrow on Healing Waters; which I believe will be beneficial.

I fished a creek called the Jordan river; Lots of small browns.

Jeff Collins, AZTU Council Chair



At the center of TU's efforts to raise the profile of coldwater conservation is the **Grassroots Activist Network** - TU members who have volunteered to contact their members of Congress, Governors, members of state legislatures and natural resource agencies on issues of importance to trout and salmon.

Grassroots Activists receive brief summaries or Action Alerts of issues pending before government decision-makers that could harm or help coldwater fisheries, and guidance on how to be an effective voice for trout and salmon.



DEDICATED TO RESTORING THE APACHE TROUT IN ARIZONA

The Old Pueblo Chapter has worked over the years to remove Apache Trout from the endangered species list and also is focusing on restoring the Gila Trout. We exist to promote wild fish and the joy of fishing.



The Why and How of Crayfish Eradication

In the August issue of the *OPTU Newsletter*, both Clay Hernandez (President) and Jeff Collins (Conservation Officer) commented on our July *Family Campout to Eradicate Crayfish*. For September's Newsletter I thought I'd explain why we wiped out nearly 4,000 of the crawdads and how we do it.

Trout Unlimited is dedicated to improving habitat of trout. The Old Pueblo chapter has been working on doing that for the Apache Trout in the west fork of the Black River up near Big Lake in the White Mountains. In past years a huge amount of effort has been done to improve the physical construct of the stream's bank by placement of rocks and logs. Effort has been made to make the channel of the stream meander, form riffles and pools, and to preserve embankments.

Unfortunately, crayfish is an invasive species in Arizona. They were introduced to Arizona in the 1940's probably by anglers. Crayfish are very good fishing bait. (The Rainbow Trout caught by Jeff Collins at Big Lake during the Campout, to demonstrate how to fillet, had a crayfish in its stomach.) Crayfish can now be found throughout most lakes, ponds, rivers, streams and creeks of Arizona. They are most harmful in riparian habitats for a variety of reasons.

Since we want native Apache Trout to breed in their habitats, we must try to reduce the concentration of crayfish in those habitats. We will probably never be able to completely eliminate the pest. Trout lay their eggs in pebbly gravel. Crayfish pick through the gravel to find trout eggs to eat, among other food items. When the surviving

trout eggs hatch to alevins, the crayfish catch them easily to eat. Crayfish can also catch trout fry with their claws to eat the young fish. In fact, the crayfish will eat any small vertebrate that they can catch, viz. snakes and turtles.

The crayfish will eat macroinvertebrates, viz. aquatic worms and insects. These are the food for the trout in the streams. Crayfish may out-compete trout for available food.

Since crayfish are omnivorous (they eat plants and animals) they will also eat the aquatic plants. These plants help oxygenate the water and provide habitat for the aquatic invertebrate to live and reproduce. In addition, the plants anchor the clay, silt, and sand so that the stream does not erode and wash away with the current.

The crayfish burrow into the embankments to further erode the streams. They cause embankments to collapse. A pristine riparian stream rich in aquatic life will ultimately turn into a relatively straight, barren, muddy creek, with only the crayfish left to cannibalize on each other. In spite of all the hard physical labor to improve the structure of the west fork of the Black River by OPTU volunteers in the past, the crayfish are destroying the trout stream.

So, today's volunteers are trapping the crayfish during every set of work-days during the summers to reduce the great numbers of crayfish. We use a variety of traps and nets.

The simplest type is a long-handled dip-net of the type used for keeping swimming pools cleared of debris. Young and elder volunteers enjoy catching individual crayfish they can easily see in the streams. During our last eradication effort Caroline Hernandez reported that when she netted a targeted, large crayfish, she often caught several

other small (1 inch long) baby crayfish with the larger animal.

We set a couple types of traps out for long periods of time, perhaps overnight. That type of trap does not need constant attention. We put them into deep pools of water. They have cords attached with either a fishing float attached or with the cord attached loosely to vegetation at stream-side. Using the cords we can pull the traps out of the water without having to wade in the water to retrieve them. (It is curious that most of the crayfish trapped over night, about 75%, are males.) The traps are baited with raw pieces of chicken-wings. One type of trap is a box trap and another is a minnow trap (cylindrical). In addition to catching crayfish, both types of traps tend to catch speckled dace that live in the stream. During the last trapping effort we even trapped an Apache Trout fry. Of course, we release alive as many of the fish as we can. We have never trapped any other animals in the traps. The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) instructs to leave one end of the traps in the air so that if any air-breathing animal is caught, they won't drown before they can be released.

The most productive traps we use are open hoop-nets. They do not actually trap the crayfish since there is no enclosure. Arizona fishing regulations require them to be less than 3 feet in diameter. Ours are about 30 inches in diameter. Cotton netting is attached to wire hoops. Three strings are tied, evenly spaced, to the outer circumference of the largest of two concentric hoops in each trap. The ends of the 3 strings are tied and attached to a fishing float. The center of the net has a raw, chicken wing-bone wired in place. The trap is placed in the stream, not so deep as to lose sight of the float. Many crayfish are quickly attracted to the raw meat. By the time a dozen hoop traps are

set into a section of the stream, the first hoop traps placed into the water have already attracted a dozen or more big crayfish if the section had not been trapped recently. If only a few crayfish are attracted, it is a good sign that most crayfish, by comparison, have been removed previously.

The hoop trap strings are caught by a long-handled hook. As the trap is raised, a large, long-handled, dip-net is moved to underneath the hoop trap to catch crayfish that fall through the trap's mesh and/or when the trap tips. This trap does not catch small crayfish. A stream section can be worked by 2 or 3 volunteers until the traps stop catching many crustaceans for the effort (about 3 or 4 passes). The traps do not have to be rebaited unless the wired in-place, wing-bone falls off or gets carried away. Sometimes pet dogs attending the trapping can't stop themselves from sneaking a treat from an unattended trap out of water. The trapping team moves on to another "fresh" section of the stream.

The crayfish are dumped into a 5-gallon bucket. Several buckets may be needed in a morning's work of 2 or 3 hours. A 3/4th filled bucket holds about 400 crayfish. One morning on the last campout we trapped 3 buckets of crayfish! That's 1,200 animals! The AZGFD instructs us to dispatch (kill) the animals before we move them from the stream-side. We are advised to put the animals under a couple bags of ice. "Temperature shock" (abrupt temperature change) will kill the animals, though gradual change to freezing in winter will not kill them. They may then be transported back to our camp for measuring and food preparation.

Traps are cleaned of bait at the end of trapping each day. AZGFD advises traps to be sterilized of invasive species by using bleach water and drying in the UV light of

the sun. This is imperative if the traps will be used at different bodies of water. We do not sterilize the traps when we are using them in the same stream for week-long trapping efforts. Traps are stored dry for at least 3 weeks before using them again by OPTU in Burro Creek.

We transport the crayfish to camp because to collect data (carapace length and sex) we have shade and protection from rain since data collection for a single bucket of crayfish takes about 45 minutes. We usually have 2 or 3 buckets of crayfish for a morning's work. We measure the carapace (combined head and thorax) in millimeters.

Sex of the crayfish is quickly determined by an experienced volunteer doing the measuring. Males have a couple pairs of larger swimmerettes pointing towards their "thorax" for depositing sperm into the females round genital opening in her ventral "thorax." Sexual appearance is readily noticeable with the described characteristics. However crayfish can be "soft-shelled" after a recent molting and be more easily sexed, whereas crayfish with aged "shells" are darker and more "cruddy" making it more difficult to determine sex. Sexing 500-plus crayfish makes one become an expert no matter what condition the "shell" appears.

Data is recorded for the AZGFD along with GPS location and other features of the collection sites; other animals seen and physical appearance of the stream. The AZGFD also wants to have photos of the streams to determine what effect there may be over the years as we continue trapping crayfish.

The crayfish are killed, if not by temperature change caused by ice, but also by having their tails torn off from the carapace. Those crayfish 45 mm or longer have their tails saved for eating. We remove the large intestine from the tail (abdomen) by twisting the tail

flippers (telsons and uropod) 90 degrees and pulling the flippers away. The intestine comes out still attached to the flippers.

Usually, the tails are dropped into boiling water for about 5 – 10 minutes. After they are cooled, the "shell" is peeled off of the tasty meat. The tails are then cooked in a variety of ways. Traditionally, the cooked tails are further simmered in Maranara sauce for a spaghetti dinner. I like the raw tails wrapped in aluminum foil with a dab of butter to be cooked on campfire coals and then eaten as appetizers as we sit around the evening campfire while swapping stories.

The killed crayfish and uneaten body parts are disposed of in the woods away from camp for the wild animals to eat if they want. Usually raccoons enjoy a night-time feast, well-away from camp.

This is what the *Old Pueblo chapter of Trout Unlimited* does when it works on crayfish eradication. Anyone is welcome to join us. You can see dates and locations of our summer workdays on our website. Sign up there to attend and join us camping in the cool of the White Mountains. A valid Arizona fishing license is required to trap crayfish.

Joe Fagan
OPTU Member and
Sport Fishing Education contractor
for The Arizona Game & Fish
Department

PROJECT HEALING WATERS



The link below is to a good article by Jim Williams of Colorado Springs about our Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing trip to Durango. It also has many great photos of the events.

I want to add that I just received a note from General Abizaid, former Centcom Commander, thanking us for our efforts working with the wounded warriors. To all you that have been such a help - many thanks.

Click on the Durango Colorado flyfishing trip link when you get to the website.

<http://www.projecthealingwaters.org/html/eventso9.html>

Semper Gumby,
Robin

NOTES FROM THE FLYSHOP

No message this month.

WIN A HAT

As you know Trout Unlimited is a conservation organization dedicated to the protection and maintenance of our cold water fisheries in this country. Each month we offer one of our newly designed OPTU hats to the member submitting the best water saving tip for use in and around our homes. You can submit the tip to me by email at czhernandez@comcast.net. The winner will be notified by email each month and announced in the next newsletter. The winner will receive their hat at the next monthly meeting.

HELP ON PLACES TO FISH

Names and email addresses of OPTU members who have kindly agreed to share their

fishing waters' knowledge with members who have not fished the particular waters before and are looking for advice is now available for downloading at the OPTU website at:

<http://optu.org/FISHING%20WATERS%20HELP.doc>. A good first lead about where

and when to fish, or where to stay can make the trip easier and more enjoyable. The list is alphabetical by state and several foreign locations are also included. For advice about one of the areas or rivers on the list, get in touch with the named colleague by email and make arrangements to talk to them by phone.

Additionally, courtesy of OPTU flyfisher Don Maggert, there is a disc containing articles pulled from the Web about fly fishing some thirty well-regarded Western rivers (mostly in Colorado and Montana as well as a few from Idaho and Utah). Send me a name of the river and I will check to see if it is on Don's disc and if so, I will forward the write-up. *Stan Vanagunas* vanagunas@msn.com

My Favorite Recipe

No one submitted. Send in your favorites.

Upcoming Fishing Trips

Don't forget there is fun fishing in southern Arizona's lakes. It's always a fun day of fishing with fellow OPTU members locally.

2009 Retirees Trip The retirees' trip this year will be Sep. 14 through Sep. 29. We are going to Redding California for two days fishing for rainbows on the Sacramento River through Redding, with guides and drift boats. We then will go up I-5 to Dunsmuir, California and stay there for 9 days fishing the Upper Sacramento River, the Hat, the McCloud River and the Klamath River near Oregon. Hopefully we'll get into some early Steelhead. Guides for the latter part of the trip are going to be optional and are

not included in the cost estimate. The per person cost for the trip is estimated to be \$1500 which includes transportation, food, lodging and the guides for the Lower Sacramento River through Redding. The trip will be limited to 8 people. If interested contact *John Singley at 318-4791.*

Family OUTING

November 6 - 8, 2009
Dead Horse State Park
Verde River

We have reserved the campground at the State Park for this weekend. The river will be stocked, and life will go on for those of us that can no longer get into the White Mountains after the snow has started. It is a great area within a short drive of Sedona, Jerome, and even Flagstaff if you are so inclined. The park is near Cottonwood, Arizona, about halfway between Phoenix and Flagstaff. We are hoping to entice some of our new brethren from the Payson Chapter of Trout unlimited to join us. We should have more information on our website in the months to come as we do with our workdays. I hope a lot of you will join us this weekend. *Clay Hernandez*

2010 San Juan Trip

The 2010 San Juan trip is scheduled for February 27th through March 4th. The cost of \$400 includes all meals (except in transit) and lodging. The trip is already full but if you wish to be considered as a backup please contact John (or to put your name in for 2011). Full payment is expected in advance, all of which will be refunded if a substitute angler can be found if case of cancellation. If no substitute can be found, \$200 will be refunded. Contact John Murphy if you wish to go on the trip or be a driver. jemurphy51@me.com or 250-4083.

FISHING REPORTS

See the report from the Healing Waters trip.

OPTU FACEBOOK GROUP

I started an OPTU Facebook group. If you add it to your links in Facebook it will help make contacts with members. Joe DeVries jrdaz@cox.net

Great Quotes

"The solution to any problem -- work, love, money, whatever -- is to go fishing, and the worse the problem, the longer the trip should be." -John Gierach-

OPTU Board Meeting

July 22, 2009
El Charro Restaurant, Speedway and Swan
Attending
Mick Fletcher
Clay Hernandez
Mike Mehrer
(No quorum, no votes taken)

The meeting was called to order by Clay Hernandez at 6:00 PM

Membership Participation

Four upcoming events are scheduled. (The Halloween program - Oct., The Family Outing - Nov, The Christmas party - Dec. and the 2010 Annual banquet - (Feb?). We agreed that expanded membership participation should be pursued to guarantee success in these and future activities. Toward that end Clay will look into asking the former Presidents to form a council to consult with us.

Halloween Event (Oct 31st 10AM to 4PM)

Ed Engle will be our speaker. He is a well known author, (Tying Small Flies, Fishing Small Flies, Splitting Cane, Fly Fishing the Tailwaters, and Seasonal: A Life Outside.) and guide and instructor on the South Platte River, CO. We have a choice of presentation topics. The three that seem to be most appropriate to OPTU members are a) Fly Fishing Western Tailwaters, b) A Fly Fishers Life and c) Fishing Rocky Mountain Small Streams. We need to make a decision. All members are invited to comment.

He will also hold a one hour small fly tying workshop. We are also looking for volunteers from the membership to help in organizing/participating in the following activities during the event.

-Dry fly Swap meet

-Fly Rod building workshop

Some lucky member will be chosen to host Ed during his stay with us (two nights). Interested members should contact Mike Mehrer.

<mehrog2@gainbroadband.com>

Cray Fish nets/traps

We noted that votes are being taken by the board by email on a motion by Lauren Lucas to purchase 6 dozen for future workdays and to replenish Joe Fagan's equipment.

OPTU Treasury

Fundraising results at the annual banquet this year declined from previous years (income \$2000?) This is not surprising given the current state of the economy. Future Board meeting will need to discuss the state of OPTU accounts and what future fund raising needs to be scheduled.

TU chapters in AZ

We discussed possible advantages to coordinating activities with our sister AZ TU chapters. this might be a topic to take up with the proposed Former Presidents Council.

Holiday Party Idea

Clay suggested that this year's party might be more fun if we made it a Pot Luck rather than catering. It would reduce cost, might engender more participation, and would vary the menu. We invite members to offer their own thoughts.

<czhernandez@comcast.net>

With no additional topics to discuss Clay adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.

1ST ANNUAL ORVIS BEND NATIONAL CASTING COMPETITION TO AWARD MORE THAN \$10,000 IN CASH AND PRIZES

Competition to be held at The Orvis Casting



Course at the Old Mill - a first-of-its-kind 18-hole fly casting course in Bend, Oregon

From September 18-20, 2009, The Orvis Company and Hutch Hutchinson will host a national fly-casting competition at a new 18-hole fly-casting course in Bend, Oregon. The competition has three open divisions – amateur, advanced, and a women's-only division. The competition will be held on the newly created 18-hole casting course adjacent to the Orvis retail store in Bend. "The casting

course was designed for fun, education, and to provide an opportunity to practice essential casting skills before going fishing or during the off-season” said Hutch Hutchinson tournament caster, course designer and Regional Business Manager for The Orvis Company. During the competition, accuracy and distance skills will be tested at selected holes on the course. “The Orvis Casting Course at the Old Mill is a truly unique place to hold a casting competition,” said Tory Myler, Orvis Retail Marketing Manager. “Competitors will be challenged not only with distance and accuracy casts using a traditional overhead cast, but also with other fly fishing situation casts – roll casts, reach casts, curve casts, and more.” A \$25 entry fee is required for all competition participants. In keeping with the Orvis commitment to conservation, part of the proceeds from the entry fee will benefit local conservation projects in the Bend area. The competition is open to the first 76 entrants in each category. For the entry form and more information about the competition, visit www.orvis.com/bend. Entry forms and the \$25 entry fee must be received no later than Aug. 24, 2009 to be qualified for the competition.



Here's proof they do!