



ANGLERS' EDGE

CONSERVING, PROTECTING AND ENHANCING COLORADO'S COLDWATER FISHERIES THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM, EDUCATION AND OUTREACH

Bi-Monthly Magazine

West Denver Chapter of Trout Unlimited

July 2021, Vol. 27, No. 3

www.westdenvertu.org

Our Mission

To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Our Vision

By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

Who We Are

Founded in Michigan in 1959, Trout Unlimited today is a national non-profit organization with 150,000 members dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Our staff and volunteers work from coast to coast to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain trout and salmon habitat on behalf of today's anglers and coming generations of sportsmen and women who value the connection between healthy, intact habitat and angling opportunity.

From forested rivers like the Farmington in Connecticut to the pristine waters of Alaska's Bristol Bay and all points in between, TU's work spans nearly a million miles of cold water all across North America. TU is the most effective coldwater fisheries conservation organization in the country. Donors invest in TU because we get things done on the ground, in statehouses and on Capitol Hill.

TU has a basic approach to its conservation strategy. First, we use the best available science to protect headwater spawning habitat for trout and salmon. We reconnect tributaries with their rivers to ensure resilience, and we restore waters where development has impacted trout and salmon and the opportunity to fish for them. Second, we sustain our work on the ground by:

- Using the best science to drive conservation priorities
- Promoting and maintaining a strong legal and regulatory framework to protect fish and fishing opportunity
- Connecting with passionate anglers who want to give back to the resource they value so much
- Increasing our ability to engage TU members in conservation by training, educating and building a strong community of angler advocates
- Connecting with generous donors and helping them give to the fish they cherish and the places they love
- Helping members connect and communicate with one another via our website, TROUT Magazine and the TU Blog

From the Penobscot in Maine to the South Fork of the Snake in Idaho and west to the Klamath in Oregon and California, TU and its staff and volunteers work on the ground in hundreds of places, protecting, reconnecting and restoring trout and salmon habitat for the benefit of today's anglers and generations to come. If you're interested in becoming a part of TU and giving back to the fish and the places you value, become a member and help us 'save the world, one trout at a time.'

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Vice President	John Semich
Secretary	Ashley Giles
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Windy Peak	Mark Story
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Chapter Meetings, Fundraising	Tim Toohey
River Watch	Dennis Wiles
Trout In The Classroom	

Anglers' Edge is published six times per year by West Denver TU

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We want your contributions! Send them to the editor via email at <http://westdenvertu.org/resources/newsletter/> Scroll down to submission area.

The Cover:

“Eventually, all things merge into one, and a river runs through it. The river was cut by the world's great flood and runs over rocks from the basement of time. “ Norman Maclean

Photo courtesy of Hester Jennings

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The President's Message

Returning to normal...

We held our first post-pandemic in-person Chapter meeting on June 2nd. Attendance was light, as people are still getting used to the idea of socializing. Lauren Duncan gave a presentation on the mine reclamation work undertaken by Colorado TU. Lauren is the CTU mines reclamation project manager. An excellent presentation! WDTU volunteers are helping Lauren with a mine revegetation project on July 14.



We also held the drawing for the Fantasy Raffle. The winner is Craig Graham, a long time Chapter member who has been buying Fantasy Raffle tickets for 30 years. Second prize winner, Bruce Beck, third prize, Rick Dornfeld. Thank you all for supporting the Chapter with raffle ticket purchases.

Mark your calendar: The summer picnic is back! The picnic will return on Sunday, August 15th. The new location is the Lakewood Greenbelt Park, 2800 S. Estes Street in Lakewood. Great location with a stream and ponds. Bring your fishing rod!

We will resume in-person Chapter meetings at the American Mountaineering Center on September 1, after our traditional summer break (gone fishing).

Thank you for supporting the Chapter by buying tickets, and watch our email blasts for more exciting events coming soon.

Be well,

The West Denver TU Annual Chapter Picnic is Back

by John Semich

Everyone is welcome to attend the West Denver TU annual picnic on Sunday August 15th, from noon until 6 PM. It will be held at the **Bear Creek Greenbelt Park located at 2800 S Estes St, Lakewood**. That is east of Kipling Pkwy, south of Morrison Rd. Set up will begin at 11:00 AM and volunteers would be appreciated.



The facility features a covered shelter with picnic tables, permanent restrooms, and a charcoal grill if you wish to grill your own food. We will supply fried and baked chicken, potato salad and coleslaw, utensils, water, and soda.

An RSVP is not required, but would be very helpful in supplying the food and beverages. Side dishes and desserts are welcome. **Please send any RSVP's and possible sides to be brought to John Semich, email:**

johnsemich@comcast.net or

cell-303-550-1380.

The site has no electric power, but features several horseshoe pits, parallels Bear Creek and the bike & horse trail, along with two small lakes for fishing. Volunteers so far have offered to bring horseshoes, bocci balls, and a corn hole game. There are large grassy fields for other activities. There will be awards for the smallest fish caught, or other criteria.



See you at the Pavillion!

Permit Paradise

by Scott Ferguson



For those of us that work, play and call the fly fishing industry home, Spring is often filled with child-like excitement and anticipation for longer warmer fishing days, float season is right around the corner, and dry flies and big bugs are starting to show up for hungry trout. Accompanied with the excitement and rejuvenated attitude for another great fishing and guide year, we're also dreaming of warmer climates, and saltwater fly fishing destinations. Anglers everywhere have spent valuable time during winter months planning saltwater fishing trips, tying flies, building leaders, buying new gear and practicing

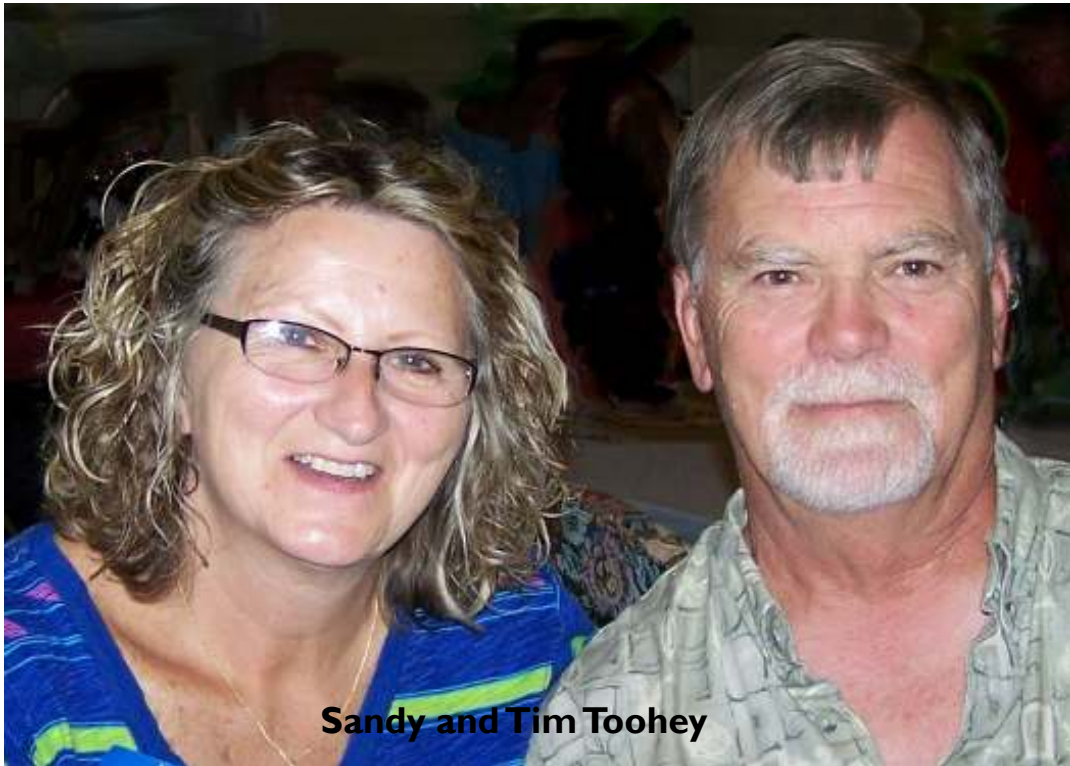
double-hauls to head south to fish and enjoy the warmer climates these destinations offer. Whether you are new to the saltwater game or a seasoned veteran, planning and prepping for these trips is exciting.

My love for saltwater flats fishing has led me to a number of different places in the Caribbean. In my pursuit of fish that are happily feeding on shallow flats, I have had the opportunity to spend an extended amount of time fishing in Guanaja, Honduras with Fly Fish Guanaja.

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Farewell to Tim Toohey

By Jon Weimer



Sandy and Tim Toohey

When I was asked to take over the West Denver Trout Unlimited Presidency in 2010, I hemmed and hawed—I wasn't sure I wanted that responsibility, given that I was involved with some other organizations. I decided to take that position *only* after I had received assurances from Tim Toohey that he would be my Vice-President.

I'm ruminating over that situation now, having recently learned that Tim and his wife, Sandy, are leaving us for the sunny beaches of Florida. I had worked with Tim in the past on a number of projects—notably the Fantasy Raffle, and I valued his creativity and work ethic. I thought we would make a good team—and, I think we did. Under our reign, we moved the newsletter from a postal-mail to an electronically-disseminated missive; we initiated a new set of by laws; we initiated the Chapter's website; we oversaw two Clear Creek restoration projects; we received National Trout Unlim-

ited's "Silver Trout Award which designated WDTU as the best chapter in the Rocky Mountain Region (the last time a State chapter received such an award). After I "retired" from the Presidency, Tim gravitated to that position and, as expected, did an excellent job.

Tim has been a long-standing member of WDTU. His first job, I understand, was running the bucket raffles at the Chapter's meetings. He helped with the Chapter's old auction and ran the giant bucket raffle at the Fly Tying Clinic. He's been involved with the Clear Creek clean-ups, the Wheat Ridge Auto Show fund raiser, Joseph's Journey, the Chapter Picnic, Windy Peak, the Bass Pro Cook-out fund raiser and the Fly Tiers' Night Out event. He was recipient of WDTU's In-Chapter Award in 2008, and selected as Colorado Trout Unlimited's "Volunteer of the Year" in 2018.

Continued next page

Farewell to Tim, cont'd from p. 7

Tim is a friend of mine. We've been fishing a number of times (not enough!). Two of my most memorable fishing trips were with Tim—a week in Idaho and a week in New Mexico. I've had the privilege of knowing his wife Sandy, his daughter Colleen, and granddaughter Kristina.

As you might guess, I view Tim's departure with mixed emotions: I'm going to miss him (he's one of the more

unpretentious guys I know), but I'm glad that he and Sandy are eagerly looking forward to opening the proverbial new chapter in their lives. Reflecting your ancestral roots, Tim, may the luck of the Irish be with you!

Jon Weimer is a past president of West Denver Trout Unlimited and former editor of Anglers' Edge Magazine.



Tim receives a plaque recognizing his over 25 years of service to West Denver TU

Caddis Hatch

By Randy Hanner

I will never forget my first blizzard caddis hatch. It was also the first time I had ever been in and fished from a drift boat. There was something magical about that evening on the Animas River and it's a fishing trip I'll never forget.

I moved to Durango, Colorado in 2006, 3 months after I graduated college. Originally, I had made the trip out to visit one of my best friends and fish in Colorado. I walked into The Caddis Company (now the San Juan Angler) and talked with the owner, Brian. He offered me a job on the spot. I couldn't believe it. I was actually going to be a fly fishing guide.

Fast forward a few months. Just as runoff had started to level off and the water started to turn from chocolate milk to an olive-green color, the caddis started to hatch. I had always heard about the famous Mother's Day Caddis, mostly on the Arkansas River, but the same species is prevalent in all of Colorado's trout streams. As soon as I had seen the first few bugs flying around, I quickly called Brian and let him know that the caddis hatch was on. We immediately planned for a float from the 32nd Street bridge to 9th Street. While Brian and his buddy Steve were running the shuttle, I stayed with the boat and rigged our rods.

Since I had never been in a drift boat before, Brian and Steve switched off on the oars and they were kind enough to give me the front of the boat for the entire float. The first fly I tied on was an obvious choice; a tan elk hair caddis. I managed to land a few rainbows and browns but quickly started to get refusals.

When we first started the float, there were plenty of



caddis around, but as the sun started setting in the sky, the numbers of caddis exploded. I had caddis flying in my face, crawling in my ears and nose, and even down my shirt. I had to keep my mouth shut and breath out of my nose, so I didn't eat any.

With this explosion of adults, the reason for the refusals became plain as day. There were simply TOO MANY caddis for the fish to key in on. My fly was getting lost amongst the naturals.

I needed to change something, and I had an idea. The adults that were flying around were a size 14-16. I said to myself, "What would happen if I went bigger?" I decided to try a size 10 orange stimulator. On my first drift with the new fly, I immediately hooked up and landed a fish. Again on the second and third drifts.

Continued next page

Caddis Hatch, continued from p. 9

By *unmatching* the hatch, I gave the fish something that they weren't seeing, and it allowed me to start catching fish again. The stimulator stood out from the crowd and was large enough to entice fish to eat. If you're eating a bunch of potato chips and a steak comes floating by, you aren't likely to pass it up. By fishing a larger fly, I was also able to keep track of the fly better because it wasn't getting lost with the naturals.

We ended up floating every evening for the next 4 days until the catch rate dramatically decreased due to the fish having gorged themselves for the previous few days. The blizzard hatch continued on for another week and each night after I was done guiding and had closed the shop, I would walk down to a secluded spot on the river, sit on a rock, and watch the waves of adult caddis fly upstream.

The next time you're out on the river and encounter a hatch of any kind, try thinking outside of the box if you're getting refusals. This won't always be the case, but many times, it could save you a blank.

Randy Hanner is a WDTU volunteer, former Fly Fishing Team USA member, Umpqua Signature Fly Designer and extraordinary photographer!



Fighting the Good Fight Wellness Retreats

By Jennings Hester

You know your successful neighbor? The guy with a VP title, massive salary, and a seemingly perfect life. Behind that mirage is a man battling mental health challenges silently. Maybe he's stressed because he's not going to hit this year's sales quota or maybe he's depressed from the lack of social interaction over the past year amid the pandemic.

Men commit over 83% of suicides. We are 8X more likely to take our own lives than women. It takes an average of 10 years from experiencing symptoms of mental illness to seek help. The stigma surrounding men's mental health is real and the silent crisis is a massive problem in the US.

Our organization was founded to make all lives better by serving men facing mental health challenges. Here in Colorado, we have one of the highest suicide rates in the country. Thankfully, we have incredible access to the outdoors and the respective therapeutic activi-

ties like fly fishing.

In 2021, we have expanded our programming to help more men and build stronger communities. In May, Fishing the Good Fight hosted its first Wellness Retreat in Lake George, Colorado. Five men, none who had ever met, joined together for two days of fly fishing instruction, mental health sessions and comradery. All on a beautiful stretch of private water with scenic mountain views.

How would you feel in a mental health session, next to a stream in Colorado, with a group of guys you have never met? Dressed in waders, feeling the sun and wind on your face, listening to the moving water. Would you open up and share, listen to others or completely tune out?

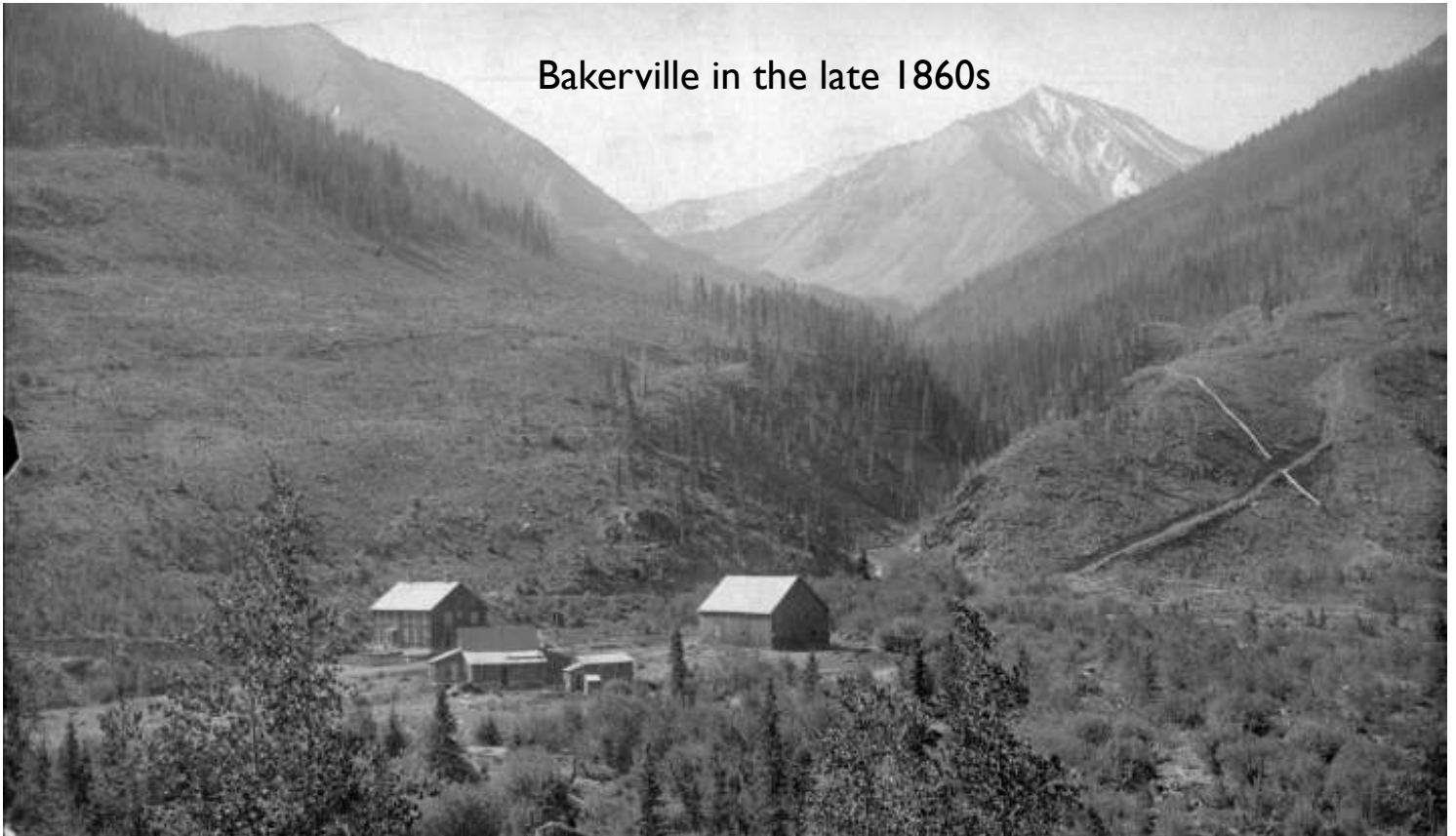
To flip the script, more men have to be vulnerable and willing to share their stories and feelings.

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The Greenbacks of Bakerville

By Josh Musa



Bakerville in the late 1860s

About Bakerville

The majority of people in Denver have passed by Bakerville without any idea. Bakerville is a ghost town on the west side of Silver Plume, roughly an hour drive west of Golden on I-70. Bakerville is located where Quayle Creek flows into Clear Creek. Originally, Bakerville was settled as a mining town, in 1865, by John Baker, William F. Kelso, and Dick Irwin. Both the town and the mine were named after Baker, while the surrounding mountain was named after Kelso. By 1870, Bakerville was home to multiple log cabins built from the trees logged off of Kelso Mountain.

Herman Gulch Trout Salvage Project

In 2015, 24 volunteers from the West Denver TU and the Greenbacks chapters partnered with Colorado Parks and Wildlife, at Herman Gulch. The objective was to catch and relocate all resident trout from Herman Gulch in to Clear Creek. The resident cutthroats had a mixed lineage, and were relocated as part of Dr. Bob Behnke's effort to restore native greenback cutthroat trout. Once the resident trout were relocated, Herman Gulch was stocked with greenbacks that were the most genetically similar to the native Front Range specimens from the 1800s. If you want to learn more about the Herman Gulch Project, feel free to check out the article *Herman Gulch Trout Salvage Project*. (<https://westdenvertu.org/projects/herman-gulch-trout-salvage-project-09-2015/>) Continued next page

Bakerville, cont'd from p. 13



Fishing at Bakerville

In 2010, Clear Creek County added a paved bike trail that runs from Bakerville to the Loveland Ski Area.

The addition of this trail also added extremely easy access to roughly 10 miles of Clear Creek. The best time to fish this area is during the summer and fall. If you bring a bike, you could easily spend the whole day fishing this large remote stretch of Clear Creek. It is also a great spot to stop on your way back to Denver from the mountains.

Bakerville offers one of the coolest fishing experiences along Clear Creek. The beavers have dammed up the creek in multiple spots, which created a beaver pond. Bakerville has rainbow, greenback cutthroat, cutbow, and brown trout. The trout in this area are very curious and quick to approach your fly. However, they are

extremely spooky to both people and indicators. I started the morning nymphing the moving water downstream from the beaver pond. As I worked up-stream, I caught a couple of cutbows, but no luck on a greenback cutthroat. Once I reached the pond, I switched from a nymphing rig and started stripping a large prince nymph at feeding trout. The trout were quick to attack my prince nymph, resulting in a handful of greenback cutthroats. I have caught many cutthroat trout, but this was my first time catching a greenback. Whether you are looking to add this species to your list or just looking for a peaceful area to fish, I would recommend stopping by Bakerville to wet your line.

Josh Musa is a West Denver TU Chapter member and a frequent contributor to Anglers' Edge



Riverside Reader

HOME WATERS

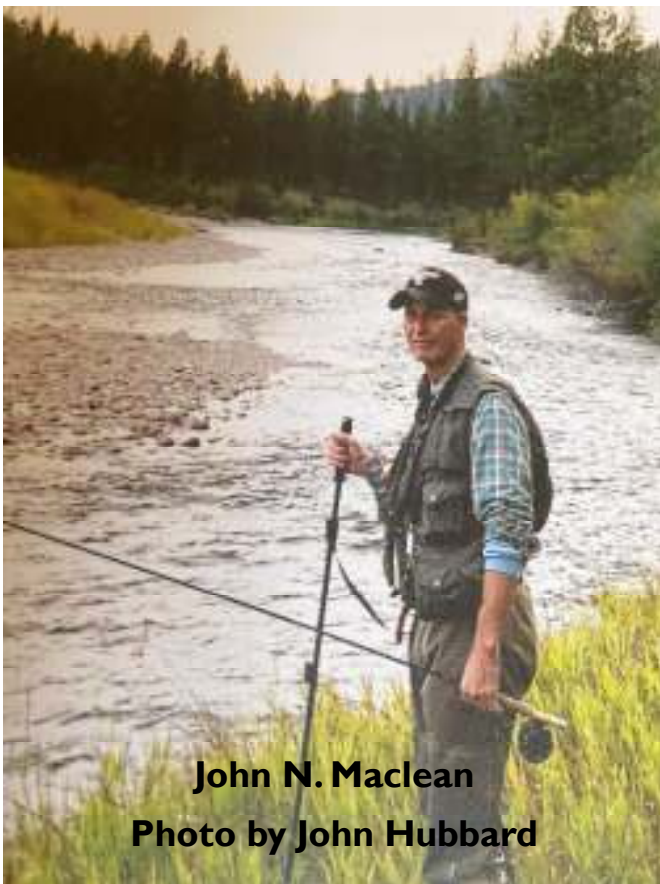
A Chronicle of Family and a River

John N. Maclean

Non-Fiction

“ Memory can and should be more than a bridge to the past. It’s also a way to see yourself as a thread in a broad fabric in the making. “

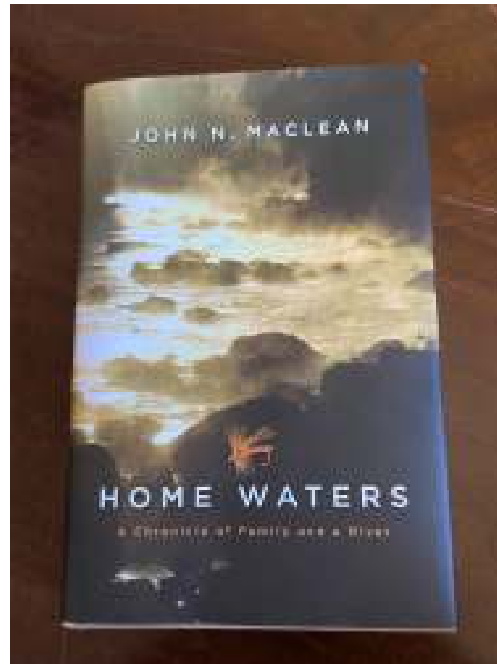
John N. Maclean, *Home Waters*



John N. Maclean

Photo by John Hubbard

With the simplicity of a well-executed roll cast, John N. Maclean shares the story of the generations of his family, their love for each other and the land they call home. *Home Waters* provides background, context and in some ways “closure” to *A River Runs through it*, the classic novella by Maclean’s father, Norman



Maclean, but it is in no way a sequel. Fly fishing, of course, plays an important role in the author’s family, their past and perhaps their future. Even if you have never held a fly rod and have no interest to do so, *Home Waters* is a journey well worth taking.

Read any good books lately? Fly fishing, nature, environment all good! Please share your recommendations to Mark Shulman at Anglers Edge.



Permit Paradise, continued from p. 6

In my time there fishing with and learning from the local guides, I've done my best to soak up the wealth of information these guys have to offer. Knowledge comes to those, who are willing to embrace the unknown. Fly Fish Guanaja's inception was in 2008 by good friend, mentor, and fellow guide Steve Brown, while he and friends were exploring the bay islands, in search of a new fishery. What they found is a Permit paradise. The pristine flats, lagoons and coral reefs in and around the island of Guanaja offer some of the best fishing for Permit in the Caribbean. Our location is more remote than other fisheries, but certainly worth the trip. This means our fishery see slightly less pressure than others. This certainly does not result in



easier fishing, but it does mean you will not see other Panga boats out on the flats. These are still Permit, and anybody who knows Permit fishing will tell you they can be spooky, weary, unpredictable and downright

stubborn fish on any given day. When fish move onto shallow flats to feed on various crustaceans, they may become more aware of their surroundings as they are exposed in more shallow water. Other times schools of Permit and Bonefish will be feeding so hard, or "mudding" it's seems as if they can't be bothered. Chasing these fish takes teamwork from everyone, as we are nearly always fishing from a Panga boat.

Every set of eyes scanning the water for tails breaking the surface help. Listen to your guide, be prepared and keep your eyes peeled for tailing fish. Permit fishing is not easy. Asking your guide questions will help you tremendously as well. Fly fishing is an ever-evolving and

changing sport, therefore we should always continue to learn and grow. Guiding Permit fly fishing on shallow flats is definitely one of the most difficult kinds of guiding being done today. These guys know exactly where to find fish, and are extremely seasoned and well trained at what they do for a living. It's imperative that you, your boat partner and your guide are all working in harmony to find fish. Be ready and be prepared, when your guide says, "Permit!! 60'!!, 2 o'clock!! to get that fly in front of those fish as quickly as possible.

Guanaja is a place everyone should experience. If you love casting to tailing Permit and Bonefish, Fly Fish Guanaja is where you want to be. The culture, community and warm embrace you are greeted with and feel from all the locals throughout your stay, is truly a unique and special experience. Everyone is always smiling, with kids laughing and playing on the beach and the

docks. The island also boast a beautiful landscape of lush green mountainous hillsides, with a number of different nature hikes, many ending in cascading waterfalls.

Continued next page

Permit Paradise, from p. 15

Situated at the southern end of the Mesoamerican Barrier Reef, also known as the Great Mayan Reef, Guanaja also offers incredible snorkeling and scuba diving opportunities. All of this, coupled with a luxurious lodge and prime fishery, will make for an absolutely unforgettable experience.

Whether it's buying new gear (now you can justify that new 10wt. rod to your wife), tying crabs and shrimp



patterns, practicing your double-haul casts, or building leaders, all this planning culminates into pure satisfaction, when you cast to your first tailing fish! These are the trips you daydream about for months leading up to departure, the ones you practice that cast a little longer for, or the reason you swim test those flies you tied. Permit, Bonefish, Triggerfish, Tarpon and Snook dominate many flats throughout the Caribbean, and are generally the most sought after species. Years ago, when I fell in love with saltwater fly fishing, it was about bending a rod, and catching anything. The first time I felt that adrenaline rush of casting to a school of tailing fish, I was HOOKED. I love catching all fish on the flats, but

Permit undoubtedly have my heart. They are the “Queen of the Flats”.

When planning these destination saltwater trips, often our minds become flooded with thoughts of what and how much gear to pack. There are many items that vary in need and desire from angler to angler, such as clothing, lucky hats, cameras, sunglasses. Then there are the staples, or core items. The gear we need to

make that sixty foot cast to a school of Permit. These core items are rods, reels, fly lines, leaders, tippet, flies and sunglasses.

Continued, p. 8 These seven pieces of gear are the foundation of any fly fishing trip. Seeing as I am discussing chasing Permit, Bonefish and other fish targeted on the flats, I will briefly discuss gear I believe necessary for your best opportunity at success when your guide says, “Permit, sixty feet, two o'clock”! I won't discuss specific brands, as I know everyone has their personal preferences on what works best for them.

I use seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven weight rods when fishing these saltwater flats. The seven and eight weights are primarily for Bonefish and Triggerfish, and I use nine and ten weights strictly for Permit. I recently added the eleven weight to my rod quiver this past March for Tarpon, and it is a very welcome addition. When choosing rods,

it's most important to choose one that suits your casting abilities, but also a rod that can shoot line through a 20mph head wind when necessary. If you are buying new rods, practice cast all the rods that interest you if you are able. Just because one rod costs more than another, does not make it a “better” fly rod. The best fly rod is the one you cast the best, and feel most comfortable with in your hand. It is not always the one you spent the most money on.

For reels I use larger arbor reels. I find the extra spool width helps to keep the fly line from coiling and holding memory.

Continued next page

Permit Paradise, from p. 17

Most of the reels on the market today that are used in saltwater are large arbor reels, mainly because of the amount of line and backing that needs to fit on the reels for fighting these feisty fish. Most saltwater fly lines out there today, range in length from about 90'-110'. Put this together with 300yds. of backing, and you will need big reels. There are plenty of quality reels out there to choose from, and you will need a reel with a quality drag system. These fish will take you into your backing. The blistering sprints and runs that Permit and Bonefish make, will put your reel to the test, and so make certain you have a reel you trust.

As for my leaders, I prefer to build my own, as opposed to buying pre-made tapered leaders. I find that by building my own leaders, I can create a leader that turns my fly over better at longer distances. When using pre-made leaders, I have found the leader is not as stiff as I need it to be all the way throughout the leader, resulting in a flimsy tippet section that does not easily turn over a heavy crab or shrimp fly. There's a basic formula I start with, then make adjustments as needed around it. Here is my formula: 5' of 50# > 3' of 30# > 2' of 20# > 2' of 16-20#, and I use all fluorocarbon for leaders and tippet, as it's nearly invisible underwater. For tippet I carry spools of 10#, 12#, 15# and 20#.

For fly lines you will want corresponding lines to match the rods you will be fishing with. Most circumstances will call for a weight-forward floating line, but you will want to look into what is recommended by the lodge and for the location you will be fishing. Many fly lines on the market today are built a line size heavier than what they are labeled as, so be sure of the exact line size you are purchasing. For example, a seven weight line will have the grain weight of an eight weight line. These heavier designed lines are to help in loading the rod when casting larger flies.

For sunglasses, you will definitely want a quality pair of polarized lenses, as they are very helpful in seeing fish in the water. I like my lenses in a blue or green tint, as

it helps to block the sun more. I would recommend having a couple different options in lens colors, to be prepared for all light conditions.

Flies for your saltwater adventures can vary slightly from place to place, so it's important to do some research on what fly patterns are recommended for the location you are traveling to. Depending on the location you are fishing, you may or may not have flies and tackle readily available to you, should you run out. I always bring more flies than I need, in more color variations than necessary. The last thing you want is a look of disappointment from your guide, as he glances over your fly boxes. I always have a wide variety of crabs, shrimp and bait fish patterns, in varying sizes and weight. A couple of my go to flies for Permit and Bonefish are Avalon Crabs, Kung Fu Crabs, Raghead Crabs, Mantis shrimp and Spawning Shrimp.

Travel to Guanaja is quite easy, with daily flights from many U.S. cities to the island of Roatan. From there it's a quick two hour boat ride over to the island. A sense of calm and relaxation sets in as you near the island and get your first glimpse of the pristine flats that Fly Fish Guanaja calls home. Guanaja is a fly fisherman's paradise that should top the bucket list of every angler who loves to chase fish on the flats. If you would like additional information on this incredible fishery, or are interested in book your next saltwater trip to Fly Fish Guanaja, I can be contacted directly at fergination76@gmail.com, I would be happy to assist you in planning. The Permit are waiting for you!

Scott Ferguson is a professional fly fishing guide and part of the Trout Trickers professional guide team.

Trout Trickers Fly Fishing | Fly Fish Guanaja

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Wellness Retreats, from p. 11



More often than not, the person their sharing with is experiencing some of the same challenges and just needed to hear someone else verbalize it first.

At Fishing the Good Fight, we're doing just that. Sharing our stories and helping more men feel comfortable to do the same. Our retreats provide a safe setting to share things that have been weighing on men for years, and sometimes decades. Divorce, job anxiety, family stress, substance abuse. The list goes on and on and everyone has different stories to tell. These deep routed emotions that men let build over years have significant impacts on their coworkers, family and the community. They have harmful impacts on relationships with partners, decrease work productivity and often times lead to self-harm. That is why we strive to make all lives better.

The comradery and sense of community that is built among the participants is unexplainable. If nothing else, they walk away with a new group of fishing buddies or someone they know they can call when they're strug-

gling.

All experience levels are welcome to attend our retreats. Whether you've never touched a fly rod or fish every week, you'll learn about yourself and pick up some new tips and techniques for success on the water. Each participant is paired with a volunteer to fish with throughout the weekend. Our volunteers are experienced anglers that bring a wide range of expertise from Euro Nymphing to Fly Tying to Streamer Techniques.

Jeremy Johnson, who attended the first retreat in May, had this to say about his experience. "It's an experience where you can come learn friendships again and learn about yourself. Whether through the group sessions or fly fishing itself, you discover a little bit about who you are and what you enjoy".

Jeremy had never fished before but ended up bringing 8 fish to the net through the help of the volunteers fishing with him. He's since purchased his own fly fishing gear and is eager to continue his fly fishing journey.

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Wellness Retreats, cont'd. from p. 18

Jeremy went on to say, “I really encourage anyone to give it a try. Come out, you get to mentally unwind, make new friends and if nothing else, just enjoy this beautiful countryside. The best part about it was mind was clear. My favorite part is standing in the river when you get a good cast and you sit there and wait for the drift. You don’t have to do much else, just sit there and enjoy the drift.

Subscribe to Fishing the Good Fight’s mailing list for updates on future events at www.fishingthegoodfight.org.

Jennings Hester is a WDTU member and founder of Fishing the Good Fight, a Denver based non-profit which supports men’s mental health through fly fishing and fly tying.



The Drift

Ritual is an important part of fishing for me. I like to lay out my clothes the night before a trip to the river. Fly boxes are looked at more times than needed. I always check to see that my father's old Swiss army knife is in my waist pack, even though I rarely take it out. The late spring opening of our 100 year old summer cabin is a much anticipated ritual and usually the first springtime entry into Rocky Mountain National Park after winter. This year I knew would be different.

My son and son in-law and I had visited Grand Lake in early winter, but did not enter the national park. We drove through East Troublesome Creek burn areas, mostly without talking. After the routine cabin check we drove home. Confronting burn within the park boundary could wait.


June 4 arrived warm, with turquoise skies and clear water rushing down the Colorado River headwaters. I entered Rocky Mountain National Park shortly after 7 Am., heading for a favorite spot just beyond the Onahu trailhead. Burn engulfed me on both sides of the road. I had seen wildfire burn before, Hayman on the South Platte, southern Colorado and northern Idaho. This felt different. This was Rocky Mountain National Park. One of our nation's sacred places. The park service says some 30,000 acres were burned. If the earth could weep, this is what it looked like.

Ritual requires that certain activities are repeated even when conditions change. And so, I pulled off the park road at the usual spot. Shrugged into waders and boots and lined out the 4 weight. Following the river bank upstream I encountered the contrast of a small stand of burned trees amidst untouched forest and a snowcapped peak of Never Summer

Range. A few moments after taking the photo below, an adolescent moose stepped out from the stand of trees a few feet from me. Fortunately, she was focused on getting to the water and grazing and allowed me to back down the river bank trail. Returning to my truck, I sat on the tail gate, ate my usual riverside banana and peanut butter sandwich and watched the young moose claim this portion of park as her own. After the moose moved on, I returned to the river. Much in the park has changed. Thankfully, much hasn't.



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ABOUT TU

Trout Unlimited

“Founded in 1959, TU is the leading conservation organization dedicated to conserving, protecting, and restoring, North America’s trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Our 100,000 members are organized into 450 local chapters nationwide. These volunteer chapters are the “watchdogs” of their local rivers and streams. They conduct stream restoration projects, monitor legislation, and fight for “fish friendly” policies with state and local officials. Through its Washington DC-based national headquarters, TU conducts valuable scientific and economic research to foster more enlightened trout and salmon management practices, lobbies to strengthen environmental legislation like the Clean Water Act and Endangered Species Act, and provides a voice for its 100,000 members.”

West Denver Trout Unlimited

The West Denver Chapter, Trout Unlimited (WDTU, TU chapter #130) is a member-driven 501(c)(3) organization whose mission is conserving, protecting, and enhancing Colorado’s coldwater fisheries through volunteerism, education, and outreach.

WDTU was founded in Colorado in 1974, and now has over 1,100 members across western metro Denver, including Lakewood, Golden, Morrison, Englewood, Littleton, Wheatridge, and Arvada. Our conservation and community outreach projects include the development of a Stream Management Plan for the Clear Creek watershed, water quality and temperature monitoring, Jefferson County Outdoor Lab programs, Trout in the Classroom, and other youth fishing programs. WDTU’s governance also relies directly upon its members, who generously volunteer their time and effort to achieve the chapter’s mission. The WDTU Bylaws provide details on the chapter’s governance. The chapter’s Board of Directors has a board meeting every month (separate from the chapter meeting). Members are welcome to attend board meetings and are encouraged to volunteer to be an Officer or Director.



www.tu.org



www.westdenvertu.org



www.coloradotu.org

A Note About Email Address Changes

Please notify us whenever you change your email address, snail mail address and/or telephone number so we can communicate with you quickly and efficiently.

Linda Miyamoto sullimoto@gmail.com

WDTU Chapter/ Board Meetings

Chapter Meetings In-person meetings will resume on September 1 at the American Mountaineering Center. Chapter meetings are held on the first Wednesday of the month from September through June.

Board Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month via Zoom.

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