

## Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited



# Cross Currents

June 2005

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## President's Message

At Little Dixie Lake the other day I had just made a cast when a muskrat decided to cross my line. I tried to roll cast the line away, but merely succeeded in hooking it near the mouth! Frankly, the muskrat didn't fight as hard as I had expected and I soon had it up by the bank. Once I had it "to hand," I wasn't sure how to release it. I didn't want to leave the hook in, but I certainly didn't want to reach down near his mouth to remove the hook. Somehow, the hook finally came out (I was fishing a barbless fly), to his relief I'm sure and certainly to mine. He didn't appear any the worse for the experience. Other than some smallish bluegill, the muskrat was the only thing I caught that afternoon. I don't recommend fishing for muskrat as they don't fight well – I had no difficulty playing it with a 3 wt rod - and releasing them can be problematic. Is there a slot limit on muskrat?

May has been pretty good for panfish and bass. I had the opportunity to fish some private ponds with lots of bluegill, crappie, and bass. I can also report that Dairy Farm # 1 and South Farm have been fishing well for bluegill. The last time I was out in a belly boat last year, both my tube and my waders leaked. I don't know if any of you have tried to propel a sinking belly boat from the middle of the lake to shore while your waders are filling with water, but it's not fun. It must be another variant of Murphy's Law that your float tube won't start to leak until you are as far as possible from shore.

Jon Deal.

## May Chapter Business

- The board voted at the end of April to move the chapter's website hosting from COIN (Columbia Online Information Network) to VERIO based on a recommendation from James Washabaugh.
- The Arkansas Fish and Game sent us a letter requesting an endorsement for eliminating double-crested cormorants in areas where they believe the birds are negatively impacting fisheries.

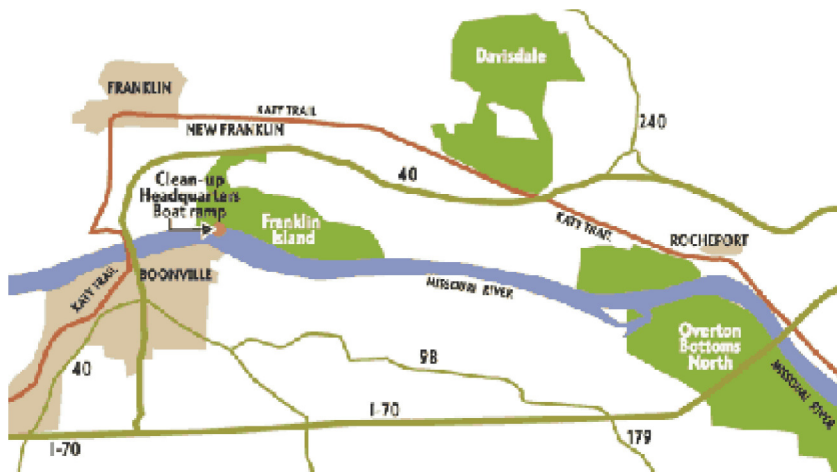
## MEETING NEWS:

**May 3:** Lisa Hoffmann and Jim Karpowicz from Missouri River Relief presented information about a Missouri River cleanup between Rocheport and Jefferson City scheduled for May 14. Volunteers at the next scheduled cleanup will tackle the river between Rocheport and Booneville on September 24 (see article below). Other scheduled events can be viewed at <http://www.riverrelief.org>.

**June 7:** Next meeting is the annual Bethel "Hot Dog Burn", Tuesday, June 7<sup>th</sup>. Cooking will begin at 5:30pm at the Bethel Park pavilion. The chapter will provide the dogs, brats and drinks, bring a side dish or dessert and your own beverage if you want something more than a soft drink. Also bring your fly rods for bluegill fishing and casting games. Everyone is welcome. This is always a fun time.

**July:** No meeting, *go fishing!*

## September 24 - River Relief Clean-up



Missouri River Relief will break new ground again this year by concentrating on the Booneville to Rocheport reach of the river. Lynne Hooper is the event coordinator. This section will add mileage to River Relief's total of 195.5 miles of river that we've cleaned from 2001 to 2004.

Clean-up time: 9:00am to 3:00pm

Clean-up headquarters: Franklin Island Conservation Area located off Highway 40 in Howard County between Booneville and Rocheport

What we're doing: Boats will ferry volunteers to river banks and islands to pick up trash. Other volunteers (including youth groups) will pick up trash along the nearby riverbanks, trails and roads.

## Michigan Steelhead Trip Details

(continued from last month's newsletter)

This trip was a live auction item at February's banquet. Ron Barch put together three days of guided fishing for either steelhead in April or trout in May. Bob Hook, Ken Scott, and I combined our resources, bought the trip, and opted for steelhead in April.

After weeks of talking to Ron on the phone and via email, getting fly patterns from Ron and from the internet, tying dozens of flies, and assembling our gear (we had enough equipment to start a small fly shop), we left for Michigan Sunday morning. It's about a 9 hour drive to Ron's home in Hastings where Ron and his lovely wife, Carol, after serving us steaks from the grill, put us up for the night. We left Hastings early Monday morning and met Dick Smith and Paul Eberhart, two old friends and fellow TU members Ron had enlisted to help out with three complete strangers who were, except for Ken's previous trip a few years ago, novices in steelhead fishing. They did a fantastic job as hosts/guides/fishing companions). You could not ask for three nicer, more helpful and patient guys.

Monday

The Flat River in Lowell is actually a sort of tailwater, and we fished below the dam right in Lowell. Dick was unable to fish due to bilateral shoulder problems and spent the entire day walking the banks pointing out fish to us. The secret to this sort of fishing is to find redds (you can spot them by the bright patches of gravel), look for fish on the redds (you can finally see them after awhile), and make certain that you have enough split shot on to keep the fly on the bottom. If you aren't getting hung up on the bottom, you aren't going to catch fish. Among the five of us who fished, we managed to get 20 hook ups (not counting very large suckers), but landed only 3 steelhead. I hooked three fish and landed two (I am counting a steelhead I never touched, but Paul did while trying to tail it). I am particularly noting that I hooked three steelhead on Monday, because those were the only ones I hooked in three days of fishing. This was considered a very successful steelhead fishing day.



**The Prez with his Prize**

### Tuesday

Tuesday morning we ate breakfast in Croton, where we were staying, at the only place for breakfast I've ever been in which you can't get a fried egg. We fished the Muskegon, also a tailwater, from boats. Ron and I put his drift boat in at the Croton-Hardy dam access; Dick, Bob, and Ken took the cars down river about 8 miles and launched Dick's boat. Although the sun was bright, it was very windy and made the fishing more difficult. The Muskegon is a big river, most easily fished from a boat, and was crowded with boats.

Because of the wind, current, and my lousy casting, Ron and I had a hard time fishing from his drift boat, so he found a good spot and we stopped for lunch and fished a redd with an active hen on it. We spent quite a bit of time casting in that area with a variety of flies but never had a take. Ron once gave up steelheading because he didn't land a steelhead during a seven year stretch. Ron is a great fisherman and pretty caster and since he didn't have a take the whole day, I didn't feel bad about not getting one. The tedium of casting an 8 wt rod and what seemed like a ton of split shot was alleviated when the drift boat somehow broke loose and ended up a mile downstream against the opposite bank. A guide and friend of Ron's retrieved the boat for him... Ron is wondering if he'll ever live that down.

Ken and Bob had a little more success and each of them landed at least one steelhead. Dick did have a little run in with a "famous guide" on the river that resulted in the "famous guide" sending one of his staff up river to run a boat through the area they were fishing. Dick was not at fault and it just

highlights that boorish behavior on the water is not confined to Missouri trout parks.

Since steelhead were hooked and landed, Tuesday on the Muskegon was another successful day.



### **Ken Scott with a Nice Steelhead**

#### Wednesday

We opted to return to the Flat River on Wednesday, but Wednesday was not Monday. The river was a little lower and, although redds were visible all over the river, the steelhead were just not in. Welcome to steelheading. We fished hard but unsuccessfully until mid-afternoon when we decided to visit a local microbrewery. I am happy to report that part of Wednesday was a success!

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