



Cross Currents

April, 2003

M i d - M i s s o u r i C h a p t e r , T r o u t U n l i m i t e d



Missouri Governor Bob Holden and First Lady Lori Hauser Holden taking their sons Robert and John D fishing at Bennett Spring State Park on March 1st. This year marked the third season opener the First Family has spent at Bennett.

SPRING IS A GREAT TIME TO TAKE KIDS FISHING

In this day and age, it is more important than ever to introduce kids to fishing while they are young. Experts tell us that if a child does not fish by the time they reach the age of ten, then they will likely never fish

in their entire lifetime. Finding the time in our busy schedules to take kids fishing is not easy, but it's very important.

Here in Missouri, we have some terrific places to take kids fishing. Some of the best are our state's trout parks.

In addition to Bennett Spring, Maramec Spring, Montauk, and Roaring River, there are several less well known privately-operated trout fishing areas in Missouri. These include Crystal Lake Fisheries, Crystal Springs Trout Farm, Dogwood Canyon Nature Park, High Adventure Ranch, Rainbow Run Trout Park, Rainbow Trout Ranch and Gun Club (Rockbridge), Spring Valley Trout Ranch, SpringRise at Westover, Troutdale Farm (currently being renovated), WindRush Farms Trout Stream, and the YMCA Trout Lodge. All except Crystal Springs and Spring Valley have Web sites, so more information about them is as close as your computer.

A special day coming up that you may want to make plans for is May 17th. That is the day Bennett Spring, Maramec Spring, Montauk and Roaring River will be celebrating "Kids' Fishing Day." Volunteers from the Maramec Spring Trout Fishermen's Association and other groups will once again be joining with the Department of Conservation to make this annual event a very special time for young people. On that day, kids 15 and under will receive a free daily tag, and "Kids Only" fishing areas will offer kids an excellent chance to catch their first fish.

Whether it's a visit to one of the trout parks, one of Missouri's other fine trout areas, or just a local bluegill pond, plan now to take a kid fishing soon.



SPENCER TURNER'S RETIREMENT A BUSY ONE

Last November, Spence Turner wrote a fascinating article for our newsletter. In it, he revealed how he was able to bring about the winter trout park catch-and-release season during his years with the Missouri Department of Conservation. That article left many readers wanting to learn more about Spence's career. Recently I had the opportunity to visit with Spence and discuss both his career and his retirement years.

When Spence started with MDC on February 7, 1969, trout fishing in Missouri basically consisted of eight months of put-and-take at Bennett Spring, Maramec Spring, Montauk and Roaring River. Today, Missouri also has trout management areas, special trout management areas, winter urban trout areas, and wild trout management areas. The trout management areas are on Capps Creek, the Current River, Eleven Point

River, Little Piney Creek, Roaring River, Roubidoux Creek, and Stone Mill Spring. The special trout management areas are found on the Current River, Lake Taneycomo, the Meramec River, Niangua River, the North Fork of the White, and Roubidoux Creek. The urban winter trout areas are various lakes located in Kansas City and St. Louis. The wild trout management areas are on Barren Fork Creek, Blue Springs Creek, Crane Creek, the Eleven Point River, Mill Creek, the North Fork River, and Spring Creek. And, of course, we have the wonderful catch-and-release season at the trout parks during the winter now. When you compare the "before" picture to the "after" picture of Spence's career, the difference is striking. Although he will be the first to tell you that he didn't accomplish all this single-handedly, it is certainly safe to say that if Spencer Turner had chosen to take a job with a different state back in 1969, we would not have nearly the trout fishing opportunities in Missouri that we enjoy today.

Growing up in Wisconsin, Spence loved wild trout from the earliest years of his childhood. When he came to work in Missouri, he had a hunch that our state might have potential for wild trout. It wasn't long until his hunch was proved to be correct.

During an early visit to Spring Creek, he was sitting on a Sycamore tree root wad watching the water for quite some time. Then, to his surprise, a 20-inch trout came out. It was soon followed by others. A while later, a fisherman came walking down the stream. When the fish became aware that the angler was approaching, they all quickly disappeared. "I wish they'd stock more trout here," the angler remarked before moving on. Fifteen minutes after the fisherman left, the fish all reappeared. Spence was intrigued. No one at MDC knew anything about the trout that were living in Spring Creek. When he later researched the history of Spring Creek, he learned that trout had once been stocked there. However, no stocking had taken place in over twenty years. What Spence had discovered was a self-sustaining wild trout population right here in Missouri. The ramifications of that discovery were not lost on Spence.

What we trout anglers see today in Missouri are the results of his life's work. Looking back on his

career, it is easy for us to consider Spence an inspired visionary. However, he is very humble and insists that he was merely a typical state employee just doing his job. Be that as it may, to his everlasting credit Spence had the ability to recognize potential in our coldwater resources and to develop it. Back in the years 1971-76, he was able to put some very positive things in motion for us and later to bring them to fruition. His attitude was, "We can have it all with good management." Over the years, this eventually came true for us. Today, through good management, we here in Missouri do have it all.

Although Spence is now retired, his work is being carried on by a very worthy successor. This, too, is a credit to Spence and is something we all owe him a big debt of gratitude for. Spence has always done whatever he could to help educate the public about trout and coldwater conservation. Years ago, after one of Spence's presentations at an elementary school, a student came up and spoke to him. "I want your job," the young man said. Spence smiled and the two quickly hit it off as friends. Later, Spence became a mentor to that student and one day he actually did get Spence's job. That young man's name was Mike Kruse. He, too, is working hard to improve trout fishing for us in Missouri and is having a brilliant career of his own.

As Mike carries on at MDC where he left off, Spence is thoroughly enjoying his retirement years. He is a proud grandfather and devotes much of his time to his family. He continues to fish when he can, and occasionally takes trips to destinations like the San Juan River. Spence is a gifted writer and continues to write articles for game and fish magazines like *Outdoor Guide* and *Mid West Fly Fishing*. He is an officer of the Outdoor Writers Association of America and a key member of Trout Unlimited's national Embrace-A-Stream Committee. And, of course, he is a very active member of Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited.

"I'm having a ball," Spence says about retirement. Because of the many things he accomplished during his career, we Missouri trout anglers are having a ball, too. Thank you, Spence!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Spring Is Here

Isn't it great? Why are you reading this when you could be doing your spring-cleaning? Clear windows help you see the beautiful outdoors. There are two kinds of fishermen, those that get their chores done before go fishing, and then there are the others.

I hope you are planning your next trip. If you attended the Banquet, you had a good time. The change of venue was a big step up, food was good, music was a little loud, auctioneer was exciting and the room was almost full. The Chapter's net income was up more than 20%.

John Meyer and his team did a very good job. We all owe a big *thanks* to all of them. But what they would want more than that would be more of your involvement next year. To be successful we can't leave people in the same role of responsibility too long or they burn out. It happens.

I can tell you that being involved is fun and rewarding. You get to know other people a lot better and you'll find that to be special. Enough said.

At the April *Fool's Day* meeting we will be entertained by Dr. Kleopfer and a slide show of a recent trip. **This will also be a trade/sell equipment meeting.** Bring what you want to trade or bring some spare money.

See you there.

Jeff Witten

MMTU CALENDAR

April 1, 2003 Dr. Lynn Kleopfer will present a slide show about a recent cuthroat trout fishing trip he took to the Middle Fork of the Salmon in Idaho.

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Cross Currents, the Mid-Missouri Chapter of Trout Unlimited newsletter, has a circulation of approximately 300. Regular chapter meetings are on the first Tuesday of each month, except for July. The meeting place is usually the Missouri Department of Conservation Fisheries Research Facility at Stadium and College in Columbia, Missouri. Meeting time is 7:30 p.m. See the newsletter for any changes.

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