



Cross Currents

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January 2016

In This Issue

Notice

Meetings & Events

President's Corner

Winning Picture

MMTU Facebook

Spencer Turner

MMTU Officers

Meeting Place & Time



A runner up picture in the Photo Contest. Thank you Richard Mendenhall.

Notice: eNewsletter Editor Wanted

A volunteer to assemble our Newsletter on Constant Contact is needed. No special computer skills or article writing required. If you can help, we can train. Contact Michael Riley at rileym@missouri.edu or 573-808-4828 or Ryan Verkamp at ryan.verkamp@gmail.com or 573-201-7044.

Meetings and Events

Tuesday January 5, 7:00pm MMTU Monthly Meeting at Jack's. Mike Kruse will present on World Youth Fly Fishing Championships.

Friday February 26, 2016: MMTU Conservation Banquet at Stoney Creek Inn, Columbia, MO. Contact Ryan Vercamp at 573-201-7044 or ryan.vercamp@gmail.com for tickets. \$35 before Feb 12.

Call for flies. Flies to auction and give away to youth are needed for the upcoming

conservation banquet. Contact Michael Riley at rileym@missouri.edu if you can tie flies. I can provide fly boxes

Sept 3rd George Daniel will be giving a special presentation on Streamer Fishing.

President's Corner by Ryan Verkamp

This newsletter is my first as the MMTU president so I would like to apologize upfront for the next two years regarding the humdrum print that will be found in the "President's Corner". I am sure many of you will soon learn to breeze through this portion of the newsletter as I try each month to knock the dust off my typewriter. You see I would much rather be found holding on to a 5 wt. or a crying toddler outdoors (later happens more often than the former unfortunately for me the past few years) than staring down a computer. I will do my best to get better each month.

I would like to take this opportunity to say THANK YOU to all our outgoing Officers for their past years of service to our organization. Collectively, they have left this organization in great shape and healthier than how they found it. There are also several long time members that are not currently Officers that do a tremendous job enhancing this organization so kudos to everyone that is involved in MMTU's efforts.

As Scott noted last month, MMTU donated \$19,000 of raised funds towards conservation with some of those donated dollars having matching donations from partner organizations as well! Specifically, here are the groups that received, or are to receive, the dough:

- St. Vrain Anglers Trout Unlimited to support the Buttonrock Preserve Restoration
- Orvis/TU 1,000 Miles Campaign
- Embrace-A-Stream
- Reeling & Healing
- Missouri Conservation Heritage Foundation Coldwater Fund
- Scenic Riverways Horse Trail Remediation (Earmarked for future donation)

Very exciting times at MMTU as we were able to support six wonderful different causes while funding some local conservation efforts.

Well now that we have depleted our bank account for these great causes, it is time to think about raising some more funds so we can do it all over again during 2016.

Right around the corner in February is our largest fundraiser, our dinner banquet. I would encourage all members to get involved in any way, shape, or form. If you can't make it to the banquet, you could always buy tickets as a donation, help with fundraising, donate auction items, etc. Please reach out to Curt at cmorgret@gmail.com if you would like to help.

I look forward to leading this organization as President the next few years and as always, please feel free to reach out to me with any comments or suggestions.



Winning Picture of 2015 Photo Contest. Congratulations John Meyer.

MMTU Facebook by Dean Rapp, WebMaster

November marked a major mile stone with 100 likes on our Facebook page. For those that have not yet done so, please like us on facebook at www.facebook.com/MidMOTU/. If you have trouble finding us please e-mail me at Dean@AFSnow.com

As you know we are a volunteer organization and need to spread the word. When you see something posted on our Facebook page don't just like it...."Share" it for all of your friends to see.

Also, do not forget that our upcoming Calendar of Events can be found at www.MidMOTU.org. And if you have something to share with the group I encourage you to do so, either through our Facebook page or the Shoutbox at www.MidMOTU.org.

Thanks!

Spencer E. Turner: Iron Man in Chest Waders by Jim Low (reprinted with permission) *Everyone leaves tracks. A few blaze trails and open new frontiers.*

Anyone who has attended an annual conference of the Outdoor Writers Association of America knows that it is a group of memorable characters. The

Communicators' craft demands a capacity for attracting attention. When an author types "end" at the close of his or their career, they have left tracks in the sand. Not all blaze trails, however, and fewer still will be able to look back and see, as Spencer E. Turner can, that they opened new frontiers.

Spence, as his friends know him, took a while to find his calling. Before, during and after serving the U.S. Air Force, he attended various universities, starting out as a business major. But while stationed in Alaska he studied at the University of Alaska and decided he needed to be outdoors, not behind a desk. Accordingly, he changed his major to fisheries science, eventually earning a bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point. He says he struggled with some of his fisheries classes, but he went on to earn a master's degree from Colorado State University. His thesis topic was Microhabitat of Hatchery Rainbow Trout. On the strength of this work, in 1969, he landed a job with the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), where he would spend his entire career.

BLAZING TRAILS

Turner belongs to a cohort of resource scientists who entered wide-open fields of inquiry in the mid-20th century. Little was known about the biology, behavior, food habits or habitat needs of fish and wildlife at that time. They plunged into these uncharted fields, exploring the terra incognita of fish and wildlife management. Among the ground-breaking studies Turner conducted were:

- Evaluating the growth and harvest of stocked trout at Lake Taneycomo
- Developing Missouri's brown trout stocking program
- Evaluating effects of artificial lure regulations on trout survival
- Evaluating effects of introducing red-band trout to Missouri waters
- Evaluating the stocking triploid (sterile) brown trout as a strategy for increasing growth rates and trophy fishing potential
- Developing methods of improving trout habitat in unstable streams
- Launching MDC's ongoing efforts to improve smallmouth bass fishing in Ozarks streams

The work of Turner and his cohort created an unprecedented body of knowledge that has served as the basis for managing the fish and wildlife they studied. That was their next challenge. In Spence's case, this meant melding his knowledge of trout and smallmouth bass with stocking/recruitment rates, length and creel limits, fishing method restrictions and other factors to ensure sustainable yields of fish for anglers, then developing management strategies to produce wild and trophy trout and smallmouth bass fisheries.

His research debunked the widely accepted notion that brown trout could not be overharvested, because they were too difficult to catch. His field work demonstrated that under Missouri's then existing regulations, most brown trout were harvested before they reached trophy size. He also demonstrated that use of natural and soft baits resulted in unacceptable mortality of under-sized trout, a fact that led to implementation of regulations prohibiting such baits in trophy trout areas.

Spence's field work also turned up a population of rainbow trout in southwest Missouri that were descended from trout brought to the Show-Me State from the McCloud River in California in the 1800s. This was significant because this strain of trout had been hybridized out of existence in its original home waters. You can now catch pure McCloud rainbow trout at Wire Road Conservation Area in southwest Missouri.

If imitation truly is the sincerest form of flattery, Turner must feel extremely flattered that several Eastern and Southern states have modeled their own fisheries management programs after the ones he devised.

ROCKING THE BOAT

Some communicators are made, while others are born. Turner seems to have been

of the latter variety. In 1977 he sent a memo to the chief of MDC's Fisheries Division, advocating a formal communication plan to ensure continued public support for Missouri's burgeoning conservation program. A few months earlier, Missourians had voted to create a 1/8 of 1 percent sales tax for conservation. The tax hardly had taken effect when Turner received a call from one of the supporters of the sales tax initiative, asking why he had heard nothing about implementation of promised programs.

"I believe this is a symptom of a much larger problem," Turner wrote to his supervisor's boss. "Individuals in our work generally are introverts...we know more about the effects of our programs on the animals than the effects on the people using the resource. We are also reluctant to inform the public about our programs unless specifically asked...we have to become more involved at the grass-roots level and more aggressive politically...The lines of communication from the public to the Conservation Department must be opened."

Turner went on to suggest ways of keeping citizens informed and engaged and advocated offering seminars to build conservation employees' communications skills. He also suggested that public outreach should be included in MDC employees' annual performance evaluations.

Apparently unwilling to wait for others to act, Turner took the ball and ran with it. He organized public meetings, public service announcements, radio interviews, newspaper feature stories, cooperative promotions with the University of Missouri, the University Extension Service, the Missouri Farm Bureau, civic club appearances and PTA presentations. He created an annual Day with Wildlife event to raise his agency's public profile and inform and involve the public in budding conservation efforts. Later that year he corresponded with U.S. Sen. John C. Danforth about potential improvements to a trout stream.

To further build the Conservation Department's public credibility, Turner became a fixture at meetings of groups such as the Ozark Fly Fishers, helped organized Trout Unlimited (TU) chapters in Kansas City, Bennett Spring, St. Louis, and Columbia, and met with the Missouri Trout Fisherman's Association and Conservation Federation of Missouri. These citizen conservationists were eager for knowledge about and involvement in trout management.

When his best efforts were stalled by institutional inertia or politics, Turner occasionally was canny and bold enough to feed inside information and tactical advice to citizen conservationists. These contacts outside government were not beholden to state officials for their paychecks. It may have looked fishy to his supervisors, but Turner's fingerprints were hard to find. Agency leadership might not always have been thrilled to follow Spence's activist lead, but he sometimes left them little choice.

One of the greatest challenges for any fisheries or wildlife research biologist is getting the public to support his or her carefully thought out plans and persuading policy makers to implement them. Spence had his share of challenges in this regard, but he enjoyed more success than many. This was largely because he possessed more than scientific acumen and missionary zeal. He had a gift for framing a convincing argument.



Another runner up picture in the Photo Contest. Thank Dan Zekor.

Mid Missouri Trout Unlimited Officers

President	Ryan VerKamp	573-201-7044	ryan.verkamp@gmail.com
Past President	Scott Gerlt	573-256-9521	gerlts@missouri.edu
Secretary	Curt Morgret	573-446-4776	cmorgret@gmail.com
Treasurer	Mike Kruse	573-875-2033	motrout@socket.net
Banquet	Curt Morgret	573-446-4776	cmorgret@gmail.com
Education	Michael Riley	573-808-4828	rileym@missouri.edu
Membership	Curt Morgret	573-446-4776	cmorgret@gmail.com
Conservancy	Bill Lamberson Sam Potter	573-356-4366 573 465 3556	lambersonw@missouri.edu Sam@TightLine.biz
eNewsletter	Michael Riley	573-817-0631	rileym@missouri.edu
Web Master	Dean Rapp	573-268-5050	dean.rapp@gmail.com

Meeting Place

Mid-Missouri Trout Unlimited meetings are held on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:00pm, except for July and August. The regular meeting place, except June, is in the Wine Room at Jack's Gourmet Restaurant, located on East Business Loop I70, across from the east tide Westlakes Hardware in Columbia, MO.

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Mid Missouri Trout Unlimited | 4625 E Raccoon Ridge Dr | Columbia | MO | 65201-3135