



Cross Currents

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June 2016

Announcements

Tuesday June 14 Hot Dog Burn at Gordon Shelter, Stephens Lake Park, at 5:30. NOTE: DATE HAS BEEN CHANGED. This is the **second Tuesday** of the June, instead of normal first Tuesday. Please bring covered dish, MMTU will provide Hot Dogs. 3 Creeks Outdoor Group will have lots of equipment to try out.



Jeff Witten admires Roaring River Spring

Reprinted from Sunday, May 22, 2016 at 12:00 am JEFFERSON CITY (AP)
 Additional comments from Wallis Warren, a commissioner on the Clean Water Commission and member of Gateway Trout Unlimited.

Clean Water Commission Revamp Awaits Governor's Action

Agriculture and mining industries could gain more influence over Missouri's water regulations if legislation awaiting Gov. Jay Nixon's signature becomes law. Lawmakers voted in May to allow industry representatives to replace commissioners who are supposed to represent the general public on the state's Clean Water Commission, which sets the state's water quality standards. Those standards guide investigations into illegal contamination and determine which waterways need additional ecological protections.

The proposal, which was sponsored by the GOP but received bipartisan support in the Senate, came in response to the commission drawing attention for invoking a power in February it seldom uses: the authority to strip a large-scale animal feeding lot of its permit. The move unsettled some in the agriculture community who said the decision had no basis in laws or regulations, but it was heralded by farmers who were worried about the environmental effects of the proposed site in north-central Missouri.

The Clean Water Commission includes four representatives of the general public, two representatives of industries and one person with a background in publicly owned wastewater treatment works. All seven commissioners are serving on expired terms, so if Nixon does not appoint new commissioners by the time he leaves office in January, the bill would allow his successor to draw more commissioners from the industries they

regulate.

The Missouri Department of Natural Resources has granted or renewed permits for 521 concentrated animal feeding operations, or CAFOs, since January 2010. CAFOs store thousands of animals and can generate millions of gallons of waste a year; waste is typically stored on-site, but can pose a threat to wildlife if it spills into a stream or river. Large CAFOs "easily equal a small city in terms of waste production," the Environmental Protection Agency wrote in a 2004 report.

Of the 521 permits, two have been challenged and brought before the Clean Water Commission; only the permit for the site near Trenton, about 50 miles from the Iowa border, was revoked. The operation would generate more than 90 tons of manure each year along with millions of gallons of wastewater, according to its permit application. The commission revoked the permit on a 4-2 vote, saying the limited liability corporation behind the application had not proven it had the assets to maintain the facility or pay to clean up any accidents; the Midwestern-based company is appealing that decision in court.

Ashley McCarty, a commissioner who is executive director of the farmers' interest group Missouri Farmers Care, said the CAFO met permitting standards, and nothing in the law called for the commission to consider the applicant's assets. She sees the bill as a "fairly minor modification that allows the governor some flexibility."

Sen. Brian Munzlinger added the proposal to another bill rather than having a public hearing. He said the commission's vote sent ripples beyond Trenton.

"We in the agriculture industry and mining said 'Hey, this' " decision " 'could affect a lot more than agriculture,' " said Munzlinger, a Williamstown Republican who owns a farm.

Others on the commission see the legislation as retribution.

"The audacity - how can you say 'We don't want public representation?' commissioner Wallis Warren said, adding that public is already underrepresented and that citizens have to take off from work to come to meetings while corporate applicants usually dispatch attorneys.

Residents who opposed the CAFO pooled their money and hired an attorney to challenge the permit, said John Rice, a farmer in the Trenton area. Opponents of the project aren't "tree-huggers," or "trying to get CAFOs out of Missouri," Rice said. "We're just trying to keep them far enough away from people's houses."

It's "standard operating procedure" for agriculture corporations to increase their influence on a regulatory body after it begins standing up to them, said John Crabtree, media director of the Center for Rural Affairs, a Nebraska-based not-for-profit that advocates for family farms and monitors agricultural affairs.

Wallis Warren Regarding HCS/SCS 1713

This bill has passed and is at the Governor's desk ~ there is no line item on this legislation, so if no action is taken it will automatically become effective, so we simply put need him to VETO this bill.

The legislation, introduced by Senator Munzlinger (long known for introducing anti-conservation legislation) would modify the selection of commissioners for the Clean Water Commission (CWC) from a mandatory 4 representing the PUBLIC to NO requirement for public representation. This would then become a decision between the Governor (appointment) and Senate (confirmation) as to how many, IF ANY, commissioners would represent the public's interests. This was added at the last minute to another bill, with NO public comment or advance notification. The irony of that fact is hardly lost based on the content of the legislation.

Munzlinger, and those instrumental in introducing this legislation, were opposed to the Commission's requiring additional documentation to support an entity's 'Continuing Authority' when applying for a permit. When a permit is applied for by an entity to build a CAFO (confined animal feed operation) they must be a 'Continuing Authority' - however, in the past, that has only meant that they go to the Secretary of State's website and apply for a document as a 'legal entity' ~ this generally is less than \$100.

Several members of the Commission felt that this was insufficient proof of an entity's ability to construct, maintain, modify and be financially responsible for any contamination

that might occur during the life of the operation. Many, if not most, of the applicants are not even Missouri based operators and can simply close the doors and leave any mess to the taxpayers. Keep in mind, these are NOT small family farms, but large industrial operations, typically housing 10,000 hogs or 100,000 chickens at a single facility. Small operations are not even required to have a permit in Missouri, and even these very large industrial operations have minimal requirements to meet (and no inspections by a State agency).

As it stands now, speaking from not only my 6 years on the CWC, but the several years prior to my appointment serving on stakeholders groups regarding In-Stream Gravel Mining Regulations and Classification of Intermittent and Ephemeral Streams, the public is sorely underrepresented. These meetings, lasting several hours to the majority of the day, require regular attendance (typically in Jefferson City) in order to track what regulations are being established or changed. The majority of individuals attending these stakeholder groups and commission meetings are staff (DNR, MDC) or paid representatives from industry, agriculture and municipalities. This is part of their job description, or as I call it, 'billable time', so it really doesn't impact them to the extent it does an individual that has to take the time to travel and participate AT THEIR OWN EXPENSE. Months, years, can be a challenging commitment, and depending on the importance of the issues being addressed, often there are NO representatives of the public present. This allows for undue influence in the development of regulations. There is a public comment period required for regulations to take effect, and while this comment period is important, often it is so far down the line that to try to change anything at that point is impossible.

A comment made to the press by one of the paid industry representatives (one of the 'regulars' at the commission meetings) said she was a member of the public, so her presence should be considered public representation. My response is that she represents the name at the top of her paycheck ~ unless she can show which meetings she attends on her own time.

It is frustrating at best to see how often the legislature will take retaliatory action when an agency or their representatives work to reflect the public's interests ~ either by introducing this type of legislation or denying funding in order to push their agendas. It emphasizes that much more how important groups such as TU and other conservation groups are needed to offset the inordinate influence of these interests that jeopardize the minimal protections given to our natural resources.

Youth Turkey Hunt Dean Rapp Reporting: A.K.A. A Turkey Hunting Maniac

A guided Turkey hunt was one of many items auctioned off at this year's fund raising banquet. Todd Allison won the trip for his two boy's, Mitchell age 16 and Marshall age 12. In case you didn't know he raised his hand, via proxy, more than the rest of you in attendance, so we graciously provided him with the hunt in exchange for a check.

As the volunteer guide for this trip I was beyond excited when I discovered we would be guiding two youth on their very first Turkey hunt. I can think of no better way to ensure we have future generations of conservationist than to instill in them the passion we all have for the great outdoors.

The hunt was held on the Riley Ranch near Alma KS, an area many of you know as the Flint Hills. I had spent several weekends on the farm this year just scouting for Turkeys. OK, I actually Coyote and Crow hunted too. Oh Yeah! On a side note I ate crow and actually liked it. Now back to the story.

I arrived at the HH four days early to ensure I knew just where all the big gobblers were

located. The HH (Double H) is the moniker given to the Riley Residence located on Hessdale Road just south of Alma, KS. For those that don't know it is a beautifully restored 1881 school house.

The additional scouting paid off as locations that held large quantities of birds in years past were void of them this year. The night before the hunt was quite an experience for me with Turkey's all around and Coyotes yipping, growling and howling so loud and so close I was wishing I'd taken a pistol. The good news was I knew exactly what tree the big boy had roosted.



With track meets and social functions the boys did not arrive at the Double H with their father until well after midnight. Michael Riley greeted them and showed them their accommodations while this exhausted guide, me, got his beauty sleep (editor's note: it didn't help any).

The morning came early and Michael ensured we all had plenty to eat. Meanwhile I walked around clucking, yelping and purring like a Turkey while the others gathered their gear. As we headed out the door and faced extremely high winds, even by Kansas standards, I changed tactics and decided to sit in the valley instead of the ridge top.

We were setup well before daylight and a deer serenaded us with his snorting while some raccoons serenaded us with their chatter. It was not long after that when the gobblers sounded off and I couldn't resist hoot'n like an owl so the boys would learn just how much that can fire up a big old tom.

I suspect we had ten hens to every gobbler I had located, so I wanted to ensure the gobbler thought I was the first hen on the ground. That was in hopes we would entice him to come straight to us. I executed the perfect fly down cackle with my trusty mouth call, all while flapping my ball cap and rustling leaves so as to pretend I was a hen hitting the ground. I've never seen a Tom drop to the ground as quick as he did that day; unfortunately, he went up to strut instead of down. I should have kept my original plan of attack.

I hustled the boys and their father up a very large hill we like to refer to as the canyon. Climbing that hill is a rather good work out for those in need of one. With the Turkey's clearly moving away from us I decided to take one of the boys, Mitchell, and try and do a spot and stalk. Mitchell did an outstanding job and we came within 40 yards before we were busted.

The winds continued to pick up which made for a very difficult day of hunting, but the boys stayed strong and never appeared to be discouraged. They understood that they call it hunting and not killing for a reason. Michael of course cooked us up a fantastic meal about mid-day and the boy's father decided to get in a little fishing in while I took the boys for the evening hunt.

We positioned ourselves that evening between two areas I know to be strut zones for the gobblers as well as prime roosting locations. With the extremely high winds one could barely hear himself think so I only did minimal calling. As darkness was soon approaching I started to shift gears from hunting to thoughts of scouting for the next morning. I was packing up decoys as I occasionally let out the yelp of a hen when Marshall spotted a Tom coming towards us. But it was not one tom, it was four nice birds. They were soon within 20 yards of us. I counted to three and the boys blasted away, dropping 3 of the 4 birds.

With smiles about the boys had officially bagged their first birds and I felt a great amount of relief in knowing I had a part in making it happen.

The next day all but me slept in while I did some more turkey scouting. Michael later took them to see some amazing history around the Alma area, including an arched cave on the premises. They even had a chance to get some fishing in that afternoon.

Reactor Eddiy Catfish by Alex Primm

The friskiest catfish I've ever seen swim through a platter of chili oil and scorching spices in Sichuan province at the foot of the Himalayas in southwestern China. These steaming treats seem alive because fiery peppers made everything beginning with my mouth then eyes finally cranium pulsate. Few critters have been so real as those catfish.

My friend Crawdad holds up what he thinks is a blue catfish. He's excited. We're hiking and biking along a true urban stream known to have "decent fishing." It flows along the east side of Columbia, Missouri, near the university's research nuclear reactor. The stream's not glowing with radiation, all must be safe. We're wading downstream from a four-lane concrete bridge along Providence Road, where the traffic zooms by lightly this Sunday morning. We've peddled paved paths from Crawdad's place in town to stash our bikes in the riparian bushes, then bushwhack upstream. Highway sounds fade as we find our way to a long eddy around a bend. Trees hang low. Bug music reverberates. Time stops. This summer creek becomes all I've ever wanted. "Do you have forceps?" Crawdad hollers upstream to me. That's not his real name, just his preferred lure on most Ozark streams. He's invited me to help test the waters to see what might be living in this ribbon of languid Ozark wildness. I hurry to check out what Crawdad has landed. It's a six-inch fish but the treble hook is near one eye. Crawdad's a spin fisherman most of the time. "Poor little guy!" I say involuntarily. I use barbless hooks, throw everything back. For me it's piscatorial education: I love to see what's in the water, and hope they'll be smarter next time to keep away from ornery meat fishermen! "Ouch!" The little catfish flips its tail one last time as the forceps expertly remove the hook. Crawdad the medic rescues a Salvador Dali look-alike, though the beady eyes are more like Mao. Plop, back into the creek the young blue cat goes. Crawdad smiles and wipes sweat off his forehead. Just bigger than a minnow, he's at least twice as long as those I ate in Sichuan. I was teaching oral history in Mianyang, where the Chinese hydrogen bomb was developed long ago. We enjoyed catfish in a simple café at a village with friends one weekend when canola flower fields turned mountain valleys golden yellow. You'd pinch one little guy with your chopsticks, pop it tail first into your mouth, so the dorsal fin bones wouldn't stab you, to suck meat off its tiny bones. Messy but delicious as chili oil dribbles off your chin into the small rice bowl. Laugh to see this foreign devil sweat like a pig while gobbling up the numbing peppers. This lucky Reactor Eddy catfish

will not end up in the kitchen today. We're catch-and-release guys. Unfortunately no trout, or small mouth bass, in the Reactor Eddy of Hinkson Creek. Luckily not many fishermen either. Would anyone keep and eat fish from the Hinkson? Crawdad thinks it's not so popular among locals because folks worry about water quality.

"It's on the 303d list of impaired streams. No one really knows why it's been declared impaired," Crawdad says as we end our three-hour expedition to the mile-long eddy.

"It may soon be cited as well for high bacteria counts. I didn't think you'd worry about that. It usually only happens in late summer when storm water flushes runoff into the stream. Or sewers overflow. Just take a good warm shower when we get back."

Actually this creek water felt nice and cool today, but looked scummy in spots with clumps of bright green algae where full sunlight reached long stretches. Fishing this here seems so easy. And shallow, my swimming suit's hardly wet. I could walk downstream to roll cast on one side or the other to watch tiny blue gill chase a popping bug fly I was offering almost as big as them. A hundred miles further south into the deep Ozarks along the Jacks Fork River where I lived for a while, some good old boys keep such small catches, especially blue gill. They use worms or canned yellow corn then throw almost any catch however small into a handy five-gallon bucket.

You almost can't blame them. The blue gill is mighty tasty. In China they would all surely end up in a cooking pot. Or in a restaurant's aquarium, a popular feature in many establishments. I wonder, do these crowded tanks offer fish any healthier or tastier than frozen catch? It's fun to pick what to eat. I tended to gag on chopped up pig parts in some places, snoots to tails, all in between neatly laid out on a counter for your choice. Luckily eating fish in China has been all good for me.

Yet the streams seem to have a lot more junk than the Hinkson. Some Ozark creeks are still like that, good places for farmers to pitch stuff. The Hinkson has a lot of frosted glass pieces from old canning jars and pottery shards from ceramic crocks used everywhere a century ago. It's an old town.

By contrast Sichuan has been settled for thousands of years. Most streams I wouldn't want to walk in or even try to fish. The few fishermen I saw in Sichuan sat along riverbank or pond bait fishing with bobbers. These eternal anglers could have been on some river bank fishing for mud cats depicted by George Caleb Bingham in the 1870s, or in a Ming dynasty scroll painting. Big corporate farms now provide most of their catfish. Same same probably in American. Our worlds conflate more than collide in the 21st Century. Plenty of mouths to fill.

This makes little creeks like the Hinkson, especially as it flows merrily through a city, all the sweeter. No wonder so many bikers and runners follow the paths along this stream. Getting out renews everything, especially the appetite for the good life.

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 Hot Dog Burn, is in the Wine Room at Jack's Gourmet Restaurant, located on East Business Loop 170, across from the east side Westlakes Hardware in Columbia, MO.

Mid Missouri Trout Unlimited Officers

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

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

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