

November 2001



Flylines



The newsletter of the Black Hills Flyfishers

The Finest In Angling Literature

Tie-Fest Better Than Father's Day

The Black Hills Flyfishers will meet at 7 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 8, at the Surbeck Center on the campus of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology in Rapid City. The program? IT'S THE ANNUAL TIE-FEST!

During this amazing event, you will:

- MARVEL as ace threadmeister Hans Stephenson of Dakota Angler whips out creations that you and I could only dream about!

- SWOON as Jim "The Duke of Dubbing"

Smoragiewicz maintains his fly-per-minute pace!

- SHRIEK as Dave "The Dean of Deer Hair" Gamet lets his famed mouse pattern loose!

The annual TIE-FEST is a smorgasbord of new patterns and new techniques! The catch? Of course there's a catch! Every other fly that's tied will be thrown into a kitty. Those flies will then be raffled and auctioned. Bring your checkbook. We've been receiving calls from Texas oilmen and Arab Sheiks - and you know how much they love to fly-fish. Bring your tying gear! Try a few new patterns! Other than the auction, this promises to THE Social Event of the Year!



Jim Smoragiewicz, the one on the right who looks like Dee Snider in some acid-induced nightmare, will amaze you with his fly-tying skills at the BHFF's Nov. 8 meeting. Don't miss the event. He is pictured here with his wife, Julie, before heading to confession.

Bies Trout Grow Quickly; New Dam Soon

Travis Bies called the BHFF on Oct. 25 to say that the additional work to repair the dam on his property has been completed.

As you may recall, our organization previously struck an agreement with Travis that exchanged fishing access for various improvements to be made on his property. The improved dam is 4 feet higher, and the outlet works are 2 feet higher. This additional two feet of elevation should enlarge the overall size of the pond fairly significantly.

Travis also indicated that, at his own expense, he is going to pursue another dam near the existing dams our organization funded. This dam should be the largest of the three, and will probably be stocked with fingerlings next spring.

Fingerlings that were planted in the past have grown to a legitimate 14 inches. Travis indicated that his kids caught

a 16-inch trout on the larger pond within the past week. In all likelihood, we will have 20-inch or bigger fish on this property by next year.

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From the President's Desk By Paul Stabile

TEAM* Black Hills Flyfishers

One of the first things I learned when I joined the U.S. Navy (no, I was not a seaman on Noah's Ark) was that even though you served on the fastest, most efficient state-of-the-art ship, it would never reach its potential without having a crew that worked as a TEAM.

We have many members who are always there when we need them, and I say BZ (Bravo Zulu) to them, which is another sea term meaning Outstanding Job, Well Done.

Our board of directors has had some serious discussions on how to improve the BHFF, and here are some options that were shared:

1. Increase membership by 50%. This would insure additional hands for things like our annual auction and field trips in support of stream habitat; our youth program, etc.
2. Increase attendance at BHFF meetings.
3. Increase BHFF get-togethers, such as our annual picnic.
4. Increase female participation in BHFF, casting clinics, outings, etc.

These are not certainly the end of the idea chain, however they are a start. I would very much like to hear from you TEAM BHFF, your thoughts on these ideas and any others you may have to improve the BHFF. My E-mail address is pstabile@bhws.com. I look forward to meeting you on the stream.

* Together Everyone Achieves More.

October Meeting Sheds Light On Youth Program and Rapid Creek Study

The Black Hills Flyfishers held their October meeting Thursday, Oct. 11, and were graced by the presence of two speakers that evening.

Oct

First on the agenda was Jim Phoenix, who outlined his plans as it respects the BHFF youth program. As most of you know, the BHFF board has budgeted an expenditure of \$2,500 in support of this program. These funds will be used to make various equipment purchases for the program.

Our old friend (well, he's not that old) Dr. Scott Kenner of the South Dakota School of Mines and Technology, then described his study of the upper Rapid Creek basin, which will attempt to determine the limiting factors of this fishery. Scott and his associates will conduct extensive surveys of bug life, water quality, and geological factors, in hopes of identifying ways to possibly improve many miles of stream.

Anglers have long speculated that the presence of bog-iron in this stream has kept Upper Rapid Creek from becoming a quality wild-trout fishery. Scott's study will confirm whether the bog-iron, or some other problem, is the limiting factor. The BHFF board has donated \$2,000 to help fund this study. Besides the BHFF, other participants include the Dept. of Natural Resources and the SD Game, Fish, and Parks Department. Special thanks for Scott for his outstanding presentation. Scott's enthusiasm is infectious, and I'm willing to bet his students at Tech view him as a particularly outstanding professor.

A Fly To Tie

From the bench of Hans Stephenson

Materials

Thread: Moser Power Silk Black

Bead Head: 1/8 -3/32 Gold Bead Head

Hook: Standard nymph 2x long 14-18 or Partridge K14st Oliver Edwards' Nymph Emerger Hook 14-18

Tails: Brown Goose Biots

Abdomen: Ultra Wire Red

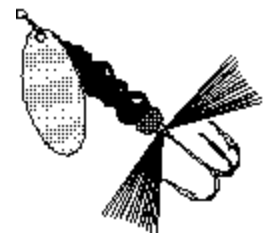
Flashback: Stalcup's Flashback Peacock

Thorax: Peacock or Peacock Black Ice Dub

Hackle/Legs: Partridge Feather

Tying Steps

1. Attach thread near the bend of the hook. Tie in two goose biots with the curve splaying outward.
2. Tie in wire at the base of the tails.
3. Advance thread and wrap wire to the 3/4 point of the hook.
4. Tie in flashback facing backward.
5. Dub forward to form the thorax, leaving a thumbnail's width behind the hook eye.
6. Tie in the partridge feather, in "soft hackling position."
7. Wrap at least 2 turns of the partridge in front of the thorax.
8. Pull the flashback over the thorax and legs. Tie it down, snip off the excess, and tie off.



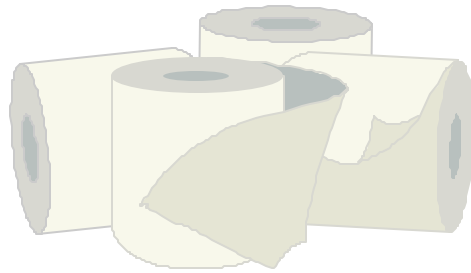
Red Copper John

Lighter from page 3

We loaded Whit's antelope and continued our hunt.

A short time afterwards, we then saw another antelope herd, and crawled to the top of a distant ridge to glass them. One buck was clearly the herd-buck, and was running off the smaller males that were trying to entertain his does. Our stalk was successful, although my friends had concern that (even in the strong wind) the antelope would catch my scent. There was even some mention of my killing the entire herd without firing a single shot.

Ignoring all of this, I settled into the prone position over the top of the ridge, and squeezed off an accurate shot. I was pleased with our hunt, but now my digestive system was starting to sound like a distant thunderstorm. My friends could hear this too, and they were clearly worried. We loaded the truck again, and cracked open a couple of cold beers to celebrate. We'd had an outstanding hunt.



Cliff was working on a crow sandwich because of his "sheer speculation" remarks, when it started again.

This time it sounded like an oncoming freight

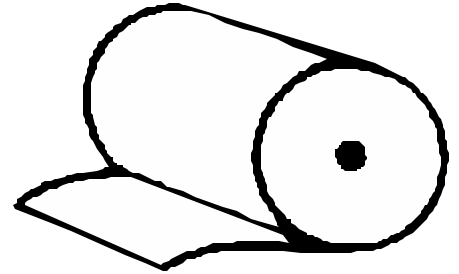
train. It sounded like a B-1 at takeoff. It sounded like you were inside a tornado. It didn't sound good at all. My friends had gone from being worried to being panic-stricken. There was fear in their eyes as I shrieked...

"STOP! STOP RIGHT NOW! GIVE ME THE TOILET PAPER NOW!"

Only in Wyoming can you do this sort of thing on the side of the road without having to worry about offending someone. And my goodness, I did feel a lot better. The problem, however, is that I'm not, by nature, a litterbug. I'm a conservationist. And there was soiled toilet paper

strewn across the prairie, blown there in a nano-second by the 80-mile-per-hour wind. The logical thing would be to leave it, hoping it decomposes quickly, and try to blame it on a group of hunters from Colorado if somebody else drove up. So I got back in the truck, feeling some guilt, but otherwise OK with the litter issue.

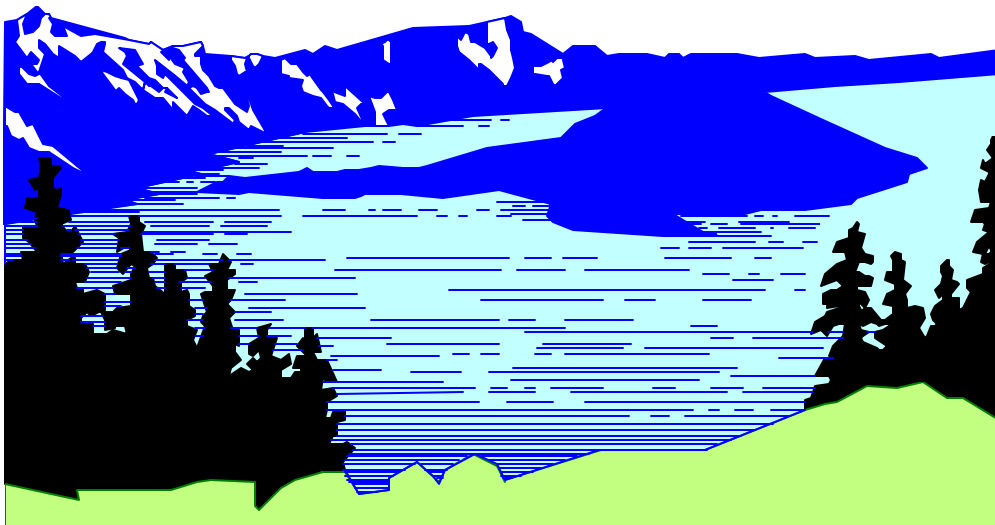
Not so with Cliff. "That's bull----!", he proclaimed. "Some rancher's going to see that and he'll be hot! Get out there and clean that up!" It was serious gut-check time. I weighed the risks, taking into account the fact that I was Cliff's guest, and that I'd like to go on this hunt again. The down-side, obviously, was that in the strong wind I was sure to be pistol-whipped by dirty toilet paper.



I chose to make Cliff (and the unknown rancher who can't take a joke) happy. Picking up dirty toilet paper in a freakin' hurricane. A no-holds-barred wrestling match with a toilet paper octopus. I won't go into all of the sordid details. Suffice it to say that it was far worse than you can imagine. So while Outdoor Life can write about grizzly attacks and gunshot wounds (It Happened to Me!), those episodes simply pale in comparison to what I had to do out on the Wyoming prairie.

Well, this is a fishing rag. The finest in angling literature. So, I should probably tell you about our morning on the North Platte. Whit landed a few. I think Cliff may have caught a few. I hooked three (all nice), but didn't land any of them. The Platte hasn't changed. It's a dynamite river, although we didn't catch it on its best day.

The moral of the story? Bring a lighter with you on all sporting adventures. You never know when you might need to torch some toilet paper. The alternative is not something that you even want to contemplate. I know, it happened to me.



Youth Program Needs Stuff

As reported previously, BHFF board member Jim Phoenix will be starting a youth program in the near future, in conjunction with the YMCA and various youth organizations.

In September, the BHFF board decided to make an initial contribution of \$2,500 in order to get this program off the ground.

If you have any old equipment you're willing to part with (even fly-tying thread), call Jim Phoenix at 341-0088.

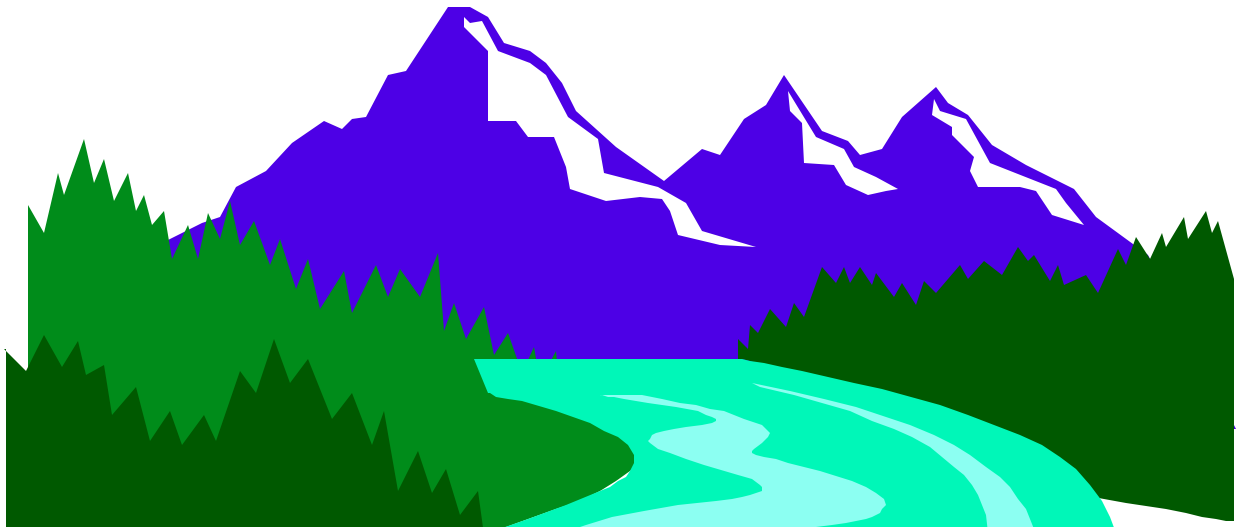
This is a worthy program and worth our support, so please give freely. As Jim has said, this is our way to give back to the community and groom a new generation of fly-fishers.



Edwards presentation a true "Masterclass"

The old adage is true - if you snooze you lose. You really should have been at the September meeting. Thanks to the efforts of Dakota Angler's Hans Stephenson, the BHFF hosted Oliver Edwards of England at its September meeting.

Who's Oliver Edwards? Well, he's one of Hans' "fly tying heroes," and author of "Flytyers Masterclass." Being Hans' fly-tying hero says a lot, because Hans is an artist at the vise. The program for the BHFF pertained to a week-long trout-fishing adventure that Oliver enjoyed on a brawling river on Russia's Kola Peninsula. Although primarily known as a salmon fishery, the Kola Peninsula has outstanding trout fishing as well. Oliver presented an excellent slide show, and was a very entertaining speaker to boot. Most of us won't have the opportunity to fly helicopters to angling hot-spots around the globe. Nonetheless, this was an interesting and entertaining program.



Angling Report

By Dakota Angler and Outfitter

Temperatures are dropping, and the fish soon will slow down their feeding. According to my Page-A-Day fly-fishing calendar, "Once streams get close to freezing, trout go into a dormant state, eating little until spring, so they need to pack in all the calories they can before that." So, get out there and fish, damn it.

Rapid Creek: The work on Pactola Reservoir's dam valves has been completed and flows are back at their normal rate. The nymph fishing has been very good, however mind spawning browns on their redds. Overcast days have brought BWO hatches, remember the fall species are always smaller. Size 18-22 Comparaduns should do the trick, also try a size 18 brook's sprout emerger.

Spring Creek: The water level is a bit low. There are tons of fish congregated in the larger holes. Small Pheasant Tail Nymphs and brassies have been catching fish. As the weather cools, streamers and wooly buggers should begin to catch the "big 'uns."

Spearfish Canyon: The fall colors are fading fast, but the fishing activity isn't. Nymphing has been very good. Try size 18 Rubber Leg Prince Nymphs or Copper John's near the bottom. You can expect a few Baetis hatches on the over-cast days.

Box Elder Creek: The water is low, really low. It is probably best to avoid this creek until spring, and we all are hoping for rain and snow.

Smart Guys Bring a Lighter

By R. Wulff

Editor's note: The author, who wishes to remain snonymous to avoid embarrassment, dedicates this story to the memory of the legendary Johnny D.

Back in the Hills. Back alive. I thank God each and every day that I survived this ordeal. You've read of similar adventures, I'm sure. Sitting in your barber's chair reading *Outdoor Life*, and you come across the "It Happened to Me" page. You know the story. The guy gets mauled by a grizzly, then gored by a stampeding buffalo, and finally his broken body is swept downstream over an 80-foot waterfall, where his scent is picked up by a pack of rabid wolves. After killing the wolves with his wool socks in a fierce battle, he then manages to crawl to his pickup and drives to the hospital. By the skin of his teeth, he lives to hunt and fish another day.

Now, my Wyoming adventure didn't start with grizzly bears. In fact, my Wyoming adventure started innocently enough. Cliff, Whit, and me. A three-day weekend in Wyoming, with the first day in Laramie watching the UW Cowboys vs. the New Mexico Lobos on the gridiron. We were living large, hanging out in the Cowboy Joe Club tent eating a free (and unlimited) supply of wings and pizza, while swilling down pre-game cold ones. Little did I know what the next few days held in store for me.

The homecoming football game wasn't the reason we came to Wyoming. No, we came to fish the North Platte River, and hunt antelope in the Shirley Basin. And that, my friends, is where the trouble began.

A little background here would be helpful. I'm a regular guy. Every morning at 7 a.m., as a matter of fact. Couple cups of coffee and it's automatic. You could set nuclear clocks by it. For some reason, however, when I travel I tend to get thrown off, and it builds and builds until (usually three or four days later) it's a friggin' emergency. Of course, the situation isn't helped by the fact that Cliff is a superb camp-cook, and I can pack away the groceries with the best of them. Anyway, this peculiarity of mine has resulted in more than one desperate set of circumstances in my sporting life.

On Saturday evening, we traveled north out of Laramie to Medicine Bow, a spot on the road best known for its prominence in Owen Wister's classic western, *The Virginian*. From Medicine Bow, we got on a gravel road and immediately started seeing antelope. Herd after herd.

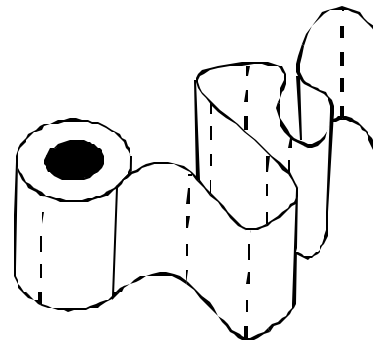
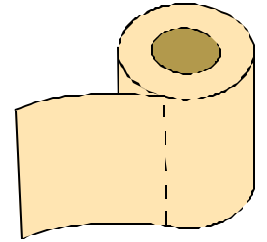
Buck after buck. There were horns everywhere as darkness closed in. Despite the fact that we could have shot ten antelope that evening ("sheer speculation," said Cliff, calling into question the marksmanship of the Carlos Hathcock look-alikes from South Dakota), it was too easy for us. We are, after all, sportsmen. Without having to crawl over cactus on your belly, without a fair chase, what fun is it?

Saturday night we parked Whit's classy '67 Forester camper beside a small lake, deep into the Wyoming prairie. The stars shone bright, and we ate king-sized sirloins before setting out on a late night jackrabbit hunt. For those of you who have never experienced the thrill of jackrabbit hunting, you really don't know what you're missing. I think this must be primarily a Wyoming thing, as many other friends of mine from Wyoming enjoy this as well. Halogen headlights are a must, and (to keep it sporting) a .22 revolver.

Whit offered his observation that, growing up as a boy in eastern South Dakota, the knowledgeable, more mature jackrabbit hunters would work the muskmelon patches. This is clearly a regional difference in hunting styles, similar to comparing our local deer-hunting methods to those found in Texas, where hunters stand on top of tall ladders to spot game.

The morning brought clear skies, and the usual stiff Wyoming wind. We eyed several antelope, and Whit finally broke the ice with a fine shot of at least 250 yards. Although (due to our age and ample girth) Whit and I adhere to the notion of a "gentlemen's hunt," this antelope was obtained only after a grueling, crawl-on-your-belly approach.

My stomach was starting to rumble about this period of time, and it was imperative to leave the windows rolled down while in the pickup. I've always felt that strange and odious smells were a key part of a manly hunt. What the hey, we're not listening to Elton John, are we? My friends, however, were complaining. A lot. Still, everything seemed cool, and I figured I had at least another day to go before they really needed to be nervous.



See Lighter on Page 4

Flylines

Published infrequently at the editor's whim, *Flylines* is the voice of the Black Hills Flyfishers. Our editorial policy is to print the news, a portion of which will inevitably be true.

Opinions expressed in *Flylines* are those of the editor or contributors alone, and do not necessarily represent the views of the Black Hills Flyfishers. Opinions held by the Black Hills Flyfishers or its board will be clearly designated.

Comments or questions regarding this publication, or requests for additional information pertaining to the Black Hills Flyfishers can be directed to one of two newsletter lackeys:

- Mark Vickers, PO Box 8124, Rapid City, S.D. 57709. Call him at (605) 342-4769.
- Steve Buchholz, 10530 Nemo Road, Rapid City, S.D. 57702. Call him at (605) 355-9508.

Black Hills Flyfishers Membership Application

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

BHFF annual dues are \$15 for a regular membership, and \$30 or more for a contributor level. An envelope is attached to this newsletter for your convenience. Please make checks payable to Black Hills Flyfishers.

Our address:

Black Hills Flyfishers
PO Box 1621
Rapid City, S.D. 57709

The fish thank you

Dolly Varden Editor's Note by Bradee Beard

Editor's Note: This article originally appeared in the late 1970's in The Nugget, a weekly newspaper in Sisters, Oregon. The author, John Judy, lived on the banks of the Metolius River, near Sisters, for many years and wrote a column for The Nugget. I found this while leafing through my clippings. It was nice to rediscover that our fisheries would be far worse off if conservation and respect for such a remarkable resource were a relatively new concept.

The rainbow will always be the primary sport fish in the Metolius. But the dolly varden resides a king of fish. No one talks about dollies; it is always big dollies. When I see them in the river they look gigantic, a huge, dark shape cruising along or nosing out from under cover. They remind me of baby submarines.

They are very difficult to catch because they are shy and elusive. It is hard to locate them and harder still to make them strike. They probably aren't very good for the river because they are known to eat small fish. But that doesn't matter to me. I like the idea that they are out there. It adds an element of excitement knowing that a little extra luck could bring a dolly on the very next cast. Besides, they are native fish, they belong here.

Early in August, the big fish come from Lake Billy Chinook and out of the deep holes in the river to spawn. During the spawn, the dollies move into the shallows and in the tributary creeks. They are exposed and vulnerable as they are at no other time.

I saw one dolly that weighed in at just under twenty pounds. It was the biggest fish that I have ever seen from this river. Fat, deep-bellied, looking more like a salmon than a trout. A young fellow about 17 years old had taken it on a spoon. And he was proud, justifiably too! It was the fish of a lifetime, something he will never forget.

The boy was in one of the campgrounds with his prize. This fish instantly drew a crowd of gawking admirers. Pride was written all over the young man's face. It was his moment of glory. But what was the cost of his pleasure?

The fish which he killed was a female. The young man carefully explained how and where he had caught her and it was obvious she had come off a spawn bed. As he showed his prize, her eggs - the future of the dolly varden - were spilling out in back of the pickup.

"Oh, bunk!" you say. "What harm can taking one nice fish do? If it is a trophy like that I am going to keep it." What harm? The dolly varden is clearly on the decline. We cannot be completely sure why, because there are so many factors against its continued survival. The dolly has historically been associated with salmon runs. They have long been known to feed on the young salmon fry. When the Round Butte Dam went in and the Metolius was cut off from the sea, an important food link was lost. It had to

make life harder for the dollies.

Because they preyed on the salmon, there was a time when dollies were dynamited off the spawn beds and there was a bounty on them. No telling how effective those programs were at cutting down the population.

In a natural environment, only two out of every 100 fish are expected to make it from egg to adulthood. With such a small survival rate it is easy to see that the existence of all fish species hangs on a thin thread. In the case of the dolly, the problem is amplified by the fact that it takes them six instead of the normal three years to reach spawning age. Just that much longer the fish must live out its life in the wild river exposed to the hazards of a hostile environment before it is mature.

The balance of life for the dolly is very delicate. No one can say for sure what it would take to push that balance over the line and cause the dolly to become extinct. But in a world as harsh as the dolly's the interference of man can only serve to hasten the process.

So what harm did the young man do when he killed that fish? For starters, he removed some 40,000 dolly varden eggs from the system this year. The fish he killed was the queen of the genetic pool. A grand and beautiful specimen capable of creating more fish like herself. Over her lifetime she may have added hundreds of her children to the system.

As a single act, the killing of that female might not mean so much. But as a combined act, it is much more significant. The young man is not the only person who will catch and kill a mature brood fish this spawning season. His will stand as the biggest and best, but there will be others. Each capable of producing hundreds of offspring. Killing brood stock means that not just the 10 or 12 fish that are killed are gone, but their 1,000 or 1,200 children are gone, too.

The moment that the young man will remember is when he brought that fish to bank and first touched it. He knew that he had caught the prize. In six months or a year, the glory of showing that fish to others will fade from his mind. But all his life he will be able to close his eyes and go back to the spot on the river and the moment he landed his biggest fish. He will be able to feel it, it will be just as real when he is ninety as it is right now when he is only seventeen. Showing the prize is nothing compared to those memories.

Which is better, killing the fish and taking our personal glory, or letting it go and knowing all your life that you took the prize and that it is still there recreating itself to catch again and again? Are our egos so important? To kill a dolly, or a rainbow for that matter, is to kill a part of the river that may never exist again. Is our personal pride really worth that much?

Black Hills Flyfishing

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