

Spring Newsletter - 2011

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This is a wonderful time of year on the Big Horn River. The weather has taken a hint from Punxsutawney Phil and we can feel a hint of spring. Just yesterday the call of the fish and the incessant clamoring of my fly rod in the closet forced me to stalk the elusive trout. Fishing was good and springtime on the Big Horn, even better.

The Big Horn River Alliance is currently embarking on our annual membership renewal and new member drive. I would like to take a moment to thank all of our existing members for your continued support. In the past two years Alliance membership has increased from 141 individuals to 432, an increase of 206%. With these funds we have been able to accomplish many projects, both small and large and have a little fun along the way.

The side channel restoration project, detailed in this newsletter by Dennis Fischer, is a win /win situation for all involved. The increased habitat for spawning and rearing fish will be invaluable for this rivers health and future. This is only the beginning project plans are laid and volunteers are working hard organizing the summer's projects. All of these great projects will be detailed further in this newsletter. I would encourage all of you to participate in these events if you are in the area.

The one real downside to 2010 was when our President, Clint Krumm found it necessary, for personal and family reasons, to resign from the Board and from his position as President of the Alliance. Clint's leadership and refreshing outlook will be missed. I have agreed to serve as interim President until our Annual meeting in May.

I think you will find that the membership renewal and new member drive has an exciting new twist, raffle tickets for FREE four nights lodging, meals and 3 days of guided fishing for two people. This is a terrific opportunity to support a group dedicated to the enhancement of The Big Horn River and perhaps win a vacation to one of the finest rivers in North America.

I would like to thank you all in advance for your continued support. The Bighorn River Alliance is dedicated to preserve, protect and enhance the River. We will continue to work on your behalf to achieve these goals.

Zoe Opie
Interim President

Big Horn River Alliance

MEMBERSHIP AND FUND RAISING

RAFFLE

THREE DAYS GUIDED FLY FISHING FOUR NIGHTS LODGING AND ALL MEALS

Outfitting Provided by: Kingfisher Lodge, Lodging Provided by: Absaraka Cabins, Meals Provided by: Big Horn Trout Shop. (Value of trip \$ 2,050.00)

Drawing to be held July 8th at Carp Tournament Festival. Need not be present to win. Trip must be booked no later than September 30, 2011 and used by October 1, 2012. Dates subject to availability. Winner will be notified by telephone.

For the first \$ 20.00 membership donation you will receive a one year Alliance membership and five raffle tickets. Fill them out and return to us along with the membership brochure. For each additional \$ 5.00 donation you will be given one additional ticket. These additional tickets will be filled in by our Treasurer, Roger 'Thor' Hile and entered in drawing

Don't miss this opportunity: Big Horn River Alliance Membership and an opportunity to win a **FREE BIG HORN RIVER FLY FISHING TRIP FOR TWO ANGLERS.**

THE YEAR 2010 IN REVIEW The year 2010 was the best year ever for the Alliance. All aspects of our organization thrived and prospered.

The Carp Festival which was held in July was a great success. The major Carp prize went to the team of Joe Caton and Seth Byler. A good time was had by all.

The "Dam Run" which was an event organized by Keri McMeans (the better half of Board Member Matt McMeans) was so successful that she was able to donate to the Alliance over \$ 1,400.00 to be used for our youth activities. .

In June we had our second Big Horn River Youth Adventure where we hosted twelve young people from all across America for four days of fly fishing and fly tying education and adventure. This is an activity that we've become very proud of. Other angling groups from across the country have come to us with the question: "How can we do that?"

WHAT'S UP FOR 2011?

April 2 – River clean up day Members and friends from Magic City Fly Fishers of Billings and the community will meet at the Big Horn Trout Shop at 9:00am for instructions and trash bags. We hope to have enough volunteers so that the clean-up areas will be fairly small and there will be plenty of time for the participants to get in some fishing. We will also work with the Park Service and do a clean-up of the Three Mile Fishing Access area. At 4:00pm Carlo and Janel Boshoff will host a BBQ and get to gather of all the participants at Big Horn River Lodge. Thanks Carlo and Janel.

May 17 - Annual meeting of Big Horn River Alliance All Alliance members are encouraged to attend the meeting to be held at 7:00pm at the Big Horn Baptist Church. Election of Directors and Officers will be held at this time.

June 12 – "NOT JUST ANOTHER DAM RUN" This event, organized by Keri McMeans as a fund raising benefit for the Big Horn River Youth Adventure will feature a 10K run as well as 5K walk/run. 8:30am starting time in down town Fort Smith. We thank Keri for her efforts on our behalf. For details and entry information please go to www.bighornriveralliance.org and click on calendar.

June 23 – 26 – Big Horn River Youth Adventure We bring 12 youngsters from all across America for 4 days of fly fishing education and Fly Fishing Adventure. It is all free for the kids thanks to our great angling community members. For more information go to the web site. www.bighornriveralliance.org Click on NEWS and look at the several articles regarding the activity.

July 8 – "King of the Carp" Tournament This year we will have a true tournament. Entrees from across the world are encouraged. For details, schedule of events, contest rules and entry information please refer to the web site calendar.

BIG MONTANA THANK YOU'S !!!

The Board of Directors would like to thank the many people who helped to make 2010 such a successful year for our organization. Just saying thanks does not seem like enough – but here goes:

All the many volunteers who worked so hard on the Big Horn River Youth Adventure and other projects. Some \$ 17,000.00 worth of goods and services were generously donated by the Fort Smith angling community.

Keri McMeans for creating the "Not Just Another Dam Run" and the contribution of more than \$ 1,400.00 for the Youth Adventure.

Dennis Fischer for his relentless work on the Side Channel Restoration and Invasive species removal project. The project has funding and on this project will begin in March 2011.

John Sindland for his gigantic membership effort as well as the organization of the 2010 Carp Festival.

Doug Haacke for his expertise and organizational skills in dealing with the Bureau of Reclamation and the Draft Management Criteria for Big Horn Lake.

Ken Frazer and Mike Ruggles, Biologists for Montana Department of Fish Wildlife and Parks. For their many efforts to preserve the Big Horn River as "The Last Best Place".

TO ALL OF YOU AND MANY OTHERS WE SAY: THANK YOU !

OUR MEMBERS, DONORS AND SUPORTERS.

Your generous support and membership is greatly appreciated. In that end we would like to recognize those persons who have each donated \$ 250.00 or more to the Alliance.

George and Christine Fielding
Mike Parnell
Doug Gouge
Jim Orr (Bighorn Club)
David Thiemann
Joe DiPaulo
Gerald Hinds
Joe Boehm
Ron and Nancie Congemi
Bob and Joyce Everitt
Richard Finlon
Jack Fisher
Don Garrett
Robert F. Gosman
John J. Harnish
Wilford Johnson
Frank Johnson
Thomas Lang
Dr. Flynn Sherick
Mike Lee
Selmer Lutey
Robert Markstein
Mike and Vicky McMeans
Keri McMeans
Rich Perez
Harry Piper
Robert J. Rice
John Shirley
Rick and Shauna Williams
Fly Fishing Outfitters of Montana

BIG HORN RIVER FLOWS FORECAST

by Doug Haacke

Snowpack in the Bighorn Basin and surrounding drainages is excellent for this time of year! Snowtel sites indicate the Bighorn Basin itself sits at a healthy 105 percent of average, while the Shoshone is slightly under average at 97%, but with the Wind River holding at 102 percent. Back in November, the Bureau of Reclamation chose to ignore NOAA forecasts calling for a wet winter with above average precipitation, and set river releases 130cfs below the recommended minimums of 2,500cfs. River releases remain at 2,370 as of this writing. Lake elevations remain above 3,620ft, and barring any highly unusual weather events, will most likely not go much below 3,618ft before runoff begins. Once again, this means there will be inadequate storage available when runoff begins, and several weeks of high river releases are very likely. However, those who have been on the river to fish during those high flows know the angling often reaches epic proportions, including some of the best dry fly fishing in a decade. We'll be on the river and we hope to see you there, too!

BIGHORN SIDE CHANNEL PROJECT TO BEGIN

By Dennis Fischer

The Bighorn River Side Channel Restoration Group has received funding and has secured all permits needed to proceed with its pilot project. The project will remove invasive plant species and sediment deposits that have resulted in the disappearance of the side channels of the Bighorn River. The project will reestablish fish habitat, angling opportunities, and help preserve the local, fly fishing destination based economy. Two of the larger and longer of the river side channels known as the Picture channel and Cline's channel were selected as the project areas because they will have the most impact in reestablishing habitat. The work in these side channels is set to begin as soon as the weather allows.

The fishermen have lost the use of the side channel areas that once provided extraordinary dry fly and nymph fishing opportunities. The loss of the side channel spawn habitat and fish rearing areas for the development of young trout has been detrimental to the health of the Bighorn River's fish population. The degradation of the fishing experience has an impact on the entire economy of southeastern Montana. The hydrology of the Bighorn River has been changed by the loss of the side channels as the main stem of the river must carry all of the river flow. The increase in the velocity of the main stem has caused major bank erosion particularly during high spring flows. This

project will reestablish the side channels to help spread out and slow the river.

The invasive Russian Olive and Salt Cedar are known to be very inefficient users of water and quickly become so numerous that the use of the land for agriculture and grazing is lost. Fishermen cannot walk the riverbanks because they are blocked by thorny barricades and bird hunters cannot penetrate the dense growth. The invasive species will be physically removed from the side channels to stop river current restriction and sediment deposition. The sediment and river materials that restrict river flow in the entry areas of the side channels will be excavated. The effects of the project work will be part of a continuing Bureau of Reclamation river flow study and future side channel projects are planned.

The participants in the Bighorn River Side Channel Restoration Group include the Western Area Power Administration agency of the US Department of Energy. The WAPA schedules the electricity generation at the Yellowtail Dam, is dedicated to water conservation and has provided project funding. The Bureau of Reclamation has engineered the side channel sediment removal. The USDA Natural Resources and Conservation Service quantified and mapped the invasive species removal areas. The Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks have helped to acquire funding and permits. The Bighorn County Conservation District Council brings expertise in technical, permitting and funding issues. The Bureau of Indian Affairs has participated as the project area lies entirely within the boundaries of the Crow Indian Reservation. The Great Plains Fish Habitat Partnership may also help with project funding.



Don't forget to fill out your raffle tickets and return them with the completed brochure..