

MRRR Newsletter

Madison River Ranch Association

Spring, 2012

Fishing Report...

By Gene Welch

Hebgen Lake: Productivity, Quality and Fisheries

Hebgen is a large, nearly 13,000 acre reservoir that is productive, but not nearly so productive as to cause poor water quality. Page 6

Safety at MRR

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Automatic Gates, Mailboxes**
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Stream Access Revisited

By John Clark

I have been asked by some members of the Association to review Montana's stream access law and the Association's covenants pertaining to access of the Ranch's common area and easements. Page 5

Introducing... The Carpenter Family

Mike, Kim and daughters Anna and Rachel were camped at Cliff Lake Campground in the summer of 1992. Page 4

Where in the world do all the property owners live when they are not at Madison River Ranch? Page 7



From the President's Corner

By Mike Wells

Greetings from blustery southwest Montana! It's Friday, March 16 and the wind has been howling around 50 mph for most of the last 5 days. For the past 2 weeks daytime temperatures have been in the upper 30s to lower 40s and the nighttime temperatures above freezing. The combination of wind, warmth and rain instead of snow is making short work of the snowpack on the Ranch. It seems spring doesn't want to wait until mid-April this year. It will be interesting to see over the next 4-6 weeks if spring wins out or if winter keeps holding on. Jodi and I are hoping for spring – we saw the first Mountain Bluebird of the season today!

I took a scouting trip to the highway on the snowmobile yesterday to assess whether we would be able to join friends in town for green beer, Irish whiskey, and corned beef and cabbage for St. Paddy's Day...made it down and back OK, then buried the sled in 2' of slushy snow in front of my garage and had to spend an hour digging it out. This time of year is always a crapshoot as far as conveniently getting in and out but we feel it's a small price to pay for the beauty and solitude.

The average annual snowpack in the mountains has been reported at nearly 90%. The Ranch made it through this relatively mild winter in

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great shape. Most of the wildlife that inhabits the Ranch stayed around through December before leaving it to the ravens, foxes and coyotes for the coldest and snowiest months. Snow conditions were good for the typical winter activities: snowmobiling, cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

The Board of Directors has been working over the winter on maintenance and improvement projects to enhance our quality of life on the Ranch. These projects and other issues will be discussed in detail at the **next Annual Association Meeting on Saturday, June 30, 2012 from 1-4 PM** at the Madison Valley Rural Fire Department building just north of the junction of Highway 287 and the Wade Lake Road. This spring you will receive ballots to vote on an amendment to the CCRs and to vote for members to fill open seats on the Board of Directors. Please remember to make your voice heard by voting on the ballots you receive, and contacting the current Board of Directors about any issues you think are pertinent.

On **Friday, June 29, 2012 from 5-10 PM, we will have a Pot Luck Social** in the Common Area. Come on down and party with your friends and neighbors! This event is open to all association members and their guests. The Association will provide a tent and portable toilet. Bring your own food, beverages, grill, plates, tables, chairs, etc. If you're especially proud of your culinary talents you may want to bring enough of your grub to show off and share. There will probably be some trout bums around that have been on an extended chip and soda diet that would appreciate any bones they get thrown. Also, don't forget to put your brains and/or body to work for the common good at the **Annual Association Work Day on Sunday, July 1, 2012 from 12-4 PM**. Please check our website @ www.madisonriverranch.org for upcoming events and other information you may want. Happy Trails!

Summer Repairs to Three Dollar Bridge:



Montana FWP will be doing improvements at the Three Dollar Bridge access this summer. The improvements will include enhancing the entrance road, graveling existing parking areas on both sides of the river, improving a designated trail to the water on both sides of the river, and adding a new precast-concrete latrine on the west side of the river. Worn signs will be replaced and a new informational sign added. The email link to the FWP environmental assessment for the project is :

[file:///localhost/http://fwp.mt.gov/fwDoc.html%3Fid=54580](http://localhost/http://fwp.mt.gov/fwDoc.html%3Fid=54580)

Cooking with Martha

By Martha Crawley

Greetings from the gypsies. Dave and I were in Southern California – Coronado Island -- what a great place to spend the winter! We were here from Jan. 1, to April 1, then moved to Bainbridge Island near Seattle for a month. Then we'll attempt to get into the ranch. With the warm winter we've been hearing about in the North, we may not run into too much snow. Anyway, we've had a lovely winter, and hope you all have too. My recipe this time is for an appetizer. Our daughter Jill, a fabulous cook, gave me this recipe.

Roundup Okra Piggies

A jar of pickled okra (get the "mild")

Cream cheese

Prosciutto ham, sliced very thinly (you can get this in the deli section of your market already sliced in a package, or if you have them slice it for you, be sure it's as thin as they can get it while still holding a slice)

Cut a slit in the side of the okra, without extending the cut all the way to either end. With a table knife, start carefully stuffing in the cream cheese, a little at a time. Get as much in as you can without making the okra split open. Wrap the stuffed okra with a piece of the prosciutto (it should just stick on its own). Repeat until you have as many as you want. Chill before serving.

That's it! These are delicious, easy to make, and always a hit.

Hope to see many of you at the ranch this summer. Martha



Dave Crawley

Hi again folks – I took up a lot of space in the fall issue of the newsletter with two main safety issues – bears and fires. I'll keep it short this time, but as we all return to the ranch for another summer season, it is a good time to review the responsibilities each of us has in keeping the ranch safe for everyone to enjoy. So, it might be a good time to re-read the fall issue.

A quick review of the bulleted items is appropriate as we start repopulating our ranch for the season.

BEAR SAFETY –

PLEASE –

- Store your garbage properly – in a building or in an approved and tested bear-resistant container.
- Keep all food – including pet food – indoors or in an approved and tested bear-resistant container.
- No bird feeders (bird seed attracts bears).
- Clean barbecue drip pan and burn off residue after cooking on an outdoor grill.
- When you go for a walk – whether on one of the roads or in the woods – carry bear spray, walk in groups (four or more is safer), and make noise.
- If you encounter a bear, move slowly out of the area. Do not run or scream.

Bear-resistant trash containers are available through “Humans and Carnivores,” a non-profit organization based in the Madison Valley. There are a certain number of FREE containers available, although a contribution to the organization would be appreciated. Contact Steve Primm at (406) 600-9481 for information.

WILDFIRE SAFETY –

- No outdoor burning or campfires. Campfires are allowed on the ranch per the covenants if you have an approved fire ring and *running water*. HOWEVER, the fire department wants us to discourage campfires altogether, and requests that you contact them for a fire permit in the event you do plan to have any type of outdoor fire. The MRR Board of Directors agrees with these recommendations and discourages outdoor fires of any type. The financial and legal liability incurred should a fire you started get out of control should be kept in mind.
- Establish a safe zone of at least one hundred feet around your house and other structures by removing vegetation (trees, brush, etc.) and keep grass closely mowed and watered within this zone.
- Monitor outdoor barbecues closely during cooking and make sure fire is out when finished.
- Have a properly charged fire extinguisher readily available in each building and especially near the kitchen in the home.
- Make sure all smoke detectors are installed according to the local building code requirements, change batteries annually, and test monthly.
- Report any fire immediately by calling 911. Do not assume you can control it yourself.

MRR Mailboxes are still available for a one-time fee of \$110 to cover the cost of the box itself and installation materials. Dave has the keys at the cabin. Automatic Gates... See page 7

Introducing... The Carpenters, Lot 40

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One day they decided to fish down on the Madison River but the road was blocked by a gate with a sign proclaiming "Private Property." As Mike concluded his rant about these rich so and so's blocking his access to the river, he couldn't help but notice a nondescript sign that simply said "Land For Sale" and a number to call. They called and subsequently closed the purchase of their MRR slice of paradise three months later at their campsite, again at Cliff Lake Campground.

Kim, Mike and the girls have been members of the MRR since purchasing their property. Mike and Kim live in Idaho Falls, Idaho. Anna graduated from the University of Idaho in 2009 with a BS in Bio Chemistry. She now resides in Orange, California, where she has been a research scientist at Phenomenex, a global leader in development of analytical chemistry solutions relating to separation and purification challenges. She is planning to enter a Masters/PhD program in the next year and a half. Rachel is currently a student at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music where she plays and studies Violin. With one more year to go, she is currently 2nd violin in the conservatory's orchestra. Rachel will continue her Violin with Masters studies likely in Europe after graduating from the SFCM.

Kim owns Sandcreek Echo Inc., a company that provides cardiac diagnostics services (echocardiograms and others). The doors have been open since 2000 and she loves it. Perhaps her biggest joy of the year, besides her daughters and her husband, is when she and her employees review the accounts-receivable ledger to research truly needy and deserving people to send a Christmas card informing them that their account is paid in full. It's usually a hard working single mom who shows up every month to pay even \$5 n her account with many daunting years looming until payoff.

Mike is Program Manager at the Idaho National Laboratory and sits on the National Board of Directors of the University of Idaho Vandal Scholarship Fund. Mike's work at the INL involves working with Department of Homeland Security, EPA, DOD and other federal agencies to improve national response to bio-terrorist events: mitigation of human health effects, event bio-forensics, technology assessment and recovery of physical assets affected by such an event. Mike is an avid fly fisherman and he and Kim are frequently at their cabin three out of the four seasons.



Please mark your calendar:

Fri. June 29	5:00 – 10:00 pm	Pot Luck Social
Sat. June 30	1:00 – 4:00 pm	MRR Association Meeting
Sun. July 1	12:00 –4:00 pm	MRR Work Party

Don't forget...

The gate code is
1004

Stream Access Revisited. by John Clark

Continued from page 1

A few years ago the abuse of the stream access law and trespassing on the common area got to a point where the Board decided to take a proactive approach to address this issue. It was rare when you could go onto the common area river access during the summer fishing season and not have trespassers on it. The trespassers included guides and their clients as well as fishermen who were illegally parking at the disabled parking area by our lower gate and then transiting the common area. The Board decided to post signs at both boundaries of the common area informing fishermen they were entering private property and asking them to observe state law and stay below the high water mark. Letters were also sent to the local outfitters asking them to honor our private property and to obey the state laws regarding stream access. I also met with local game wardens to discuss how to deal with trespassing situations and with Montana Trout Unlimited concerning the disabled access gate. Those of us who fish regularly were concerned about the abuses. We did not want to become a law enforcement agency but felt that if there was not a group effort to control the trespassing it would continue to increase. The initial efforts over the first couple of years did yield some positive effects; the number of trespassers did decrease, especially the guides who were abusing the access. However this past summer did see an increase in traffic. I am not sure what the cause was, maybe the higher water this season drove the fishermen to the wade section or they decided just to ignore the signs.

Montana is unique among other Western states and most states in general. In 1984, the Montana Supreme Court held that any river or stream that has the capability to be used for recreation may be so used by the public without regard to the ownership of the land underlying the waters. It also stated that recreationists could use rivers and streams up to the **ordinary high water mark**. Anyone who wants to fish the Madison along the common area boundary has every right and opportunity to do so as long as they stay below the ordinary high water mark as defined by state law. Montana state law describes the ordinary high water mark as: **“The line that water impresses on land by covering it for sufficient time to cause different characteristics below the line, such as deprivation of the soil of substantially all its terrestrial vegetation and destruction of its value for agricultural vegetation. Flood plains next to streams are considered to be above the ordinary high mark, and are not open for recreation without permission.”** (In other words, the river bank below the vegetation line.)

It will be up to all of the landowners to help to continue to protect our interests. Confronting trespassers can be uncomfortable depending on the individuals involved, but a kindly reminder or a little education of what the ordinary high water mark actually is may be all it takes to keep a trespasser from returning. We all know the 55 acres of common area along the Madison is the most precious asset to our Association and anything we can do to protect it will help maintain its value for all of us.

The other issue that has been brought up concerning Ranch access is whether or not guests need to be accompanied while on the common area or using the easements through the Ranch. The covenant (4.1, last paragraph) states: **“No property owner may give permission to allow transit across the ranch or to access the national forest or adjoining lands to any outside person or entity other than their personal accompanied guests without express written permission of the governing body of the Madison River Ranch Association.”**

When the covenants were amended a few years ago, this statement was added with the intent to preclude owners from allowing individuals (i.e., guides, friends, etc.) from outside the Ranch to have access to the common area or easements for fishing, hunting, etc. The Board agrees that the intent of the covenant does not mean that if you have family or personal guests staying with you that the owner has to accompany them at all times. Individuals who are not personal guests staying with you are not allowed to access the common area and easements without being accompanied by the owner. This also includes any renters of Ranch properties. Also, don't forget to display your parking hang -tag while parked in the common area.

We will address these issues at the annual meeting and everyone's input is encouraged. If you would like to let me know your thoughts on these or any other Board-related issues, please contact me through the Ranch web site: <http://www.madisonriverranch.org> (“contact us” tab).

Gene Welch: Hebgen Lake

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In fact, Hebgen is a high quality water body that averaged 17 feet of transparency during the summers of 2009-2010.

Lowering a black and white disc into the water and noting the depth of its disappearance determines transparency. Transparency predictably decreases as the amount of algae in the water increases. While higher forms of fish food are dependent on algae, too much algae can cause adverse water quality problems. Hebgen may have been more productive during a 1964-1965 study when transparency averaged 11 feet. Nevertheless, those transparencies convert, respectively, to 35 and 42 on an index scale of 0-100 where above 65 is considered the start of poor lake quality due to too much algae.

Hebgen does have small "blooms" of blue-green algae, which are buoyant and can accumulate near or on the lake surface. For this and other reasons, these algae can be a nuisance to recreation if present in high concentrations. Although a thin surface film of these blue-greens can be seen infrequently during late summer on Hebgen, their small water column concentrations do not represent a nuisance.

Oxygen also indicates that Hebgen is only moderately productive. The lake thermally stratifies during summer due to density differences caused by radiative heating that warms the surface waters. That results in a warm surface layer to about 30 feet, below which is a transition interval to about 40 feet, and below that is colder water to a maximum of 80 feet at the dam. Hebgen's average depth is 30 feet. Stratification lasts from late May/early June to early September. During that time the bottom colder water continues to lose oxygen at a rate that depends on the production of algae in the surface layer. More algae produced means more organic matter falling into the bottom layer to be decomposed by bacteria using up oxygen. Hebgen's oxygen depletion rate indicates only moderate productivity and rates in 2009-2010 were no different than those from a study in 1964-1965.

Animal plankton, about 1 mm long, were much more abundant in 1964-1965 than now (2009-2010), indicating greater productivity then, as was the case with transparency. A friend and colleague who studied the Madison in the Park in the 1960s remembered human sources of nutrients entering Hebgen, but phosphorus concentrations determined in 1964-1965, although high, were not much different from recent MT Dept. of Environmental Quality data. So whether Hebgen is less productive now than 50 years ago is unclear, but it is productive enough for an excellent trout fishery and without aesthetically objectionable water quality problems.

Fisheries:

Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MTFWP) has conducted annual gillnet surveys on Hebgen for the past 30 years. For example, 25 nets were set overnight during a three-day period in spring 2010. The nets are 25 feet long with variable mesh size; some positioned at the surface and some at depth.

Maintaining a consistent number of net sets and time can show trends in fish abundance, size and composition.

Despite its moderate productivity, Hebgen's trout populations are robust. Gillnet catches found that brown trout averaged between 17 and 18 inches during 2001-2010 and rainbow between 16 and 17 inches during 2005 - 2010. Earlier, back to 1995, average size was less; browns 15.5-17 and rainbows 14.5-16. Since 2005, about 80% of the rainbow catch has averaged over 14 inches. While Hebgen was stocked with rainbow fingerlings, at an average of 140,000 annually during 2005-2008, injected markings showed that fish of hatchery origin made up only ten percent of the catch. Duck Creek and South Fork of the Madison furnish thousands of young wild rainbow and brown recruitment to Hebgen.

Two other species were also abundant. Mountain whitefish represented a substantial part of the catch - about equal to rainbow, although about half as abundant since 2002 as previously. Utah chubs were by far the most abundant fish, but have decreased from 90 percent of the catch in 2002 to averaging 60 percent over the past five years. In 2010, chubs were 30 percent of the fish mass caught - equal to brown trout. Chubs averaged 10.8 inches. They are a significant competitor with trout for animal plankton food, but juvenile chubs, in turn, also serve as food for large trout.

Summary:

Hebgen is a moderately productive, high quality water body with robust, largely wild trout and white fish populations. Water transparency and animal plankton abundance indicate a slightly more productive lake 45 years ago, but not productive enough of algae to cause poor water quality. Nevertheless, there are bloom-forming algae in the lake that may accumulate in a thin green film on the surface during calm days in July and August, but not in enough abundance to cause a nuisance.

References used are listed on page 7.



AUTOMATIC GATES
By Dave Crawley

Another potential safety issue that needs to be addressed concerns the three automatic gates. You might not be aware that none of these gates has a safety device to prevent a gate from coming down on top of a car or a person. They work strictly on a timer. Please keep this fact in mind whenever you drive in and out through any of the gates and avoid tailgating.

The board is planning to have safety devices installed on each of the gates this spring to reverse the gate to an open position if an obstruction is detected. These new devices will raise the level of safety and help to avoid personal injury, damage to a gate, or damage to a vehicle. I recommend, however, that everyone continue being cautious even after the installation is complete. In other words, don't test the limits of this system.

Gene Welch: References - Hebgen Lake information:

Martin, D. B. 1967. Limnological Studies on Hebgen Lake, Montana, Ph.D. Dissertation, Montana State University.

Clancy, P. and Lohrenz, T. 2011. Madison River Drainage Fisheries and Westslope Cutthroat Trout Conservation and Restoration Program Annual Report, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Ennis

Madison River Ranch Property Owners are from all over the United States, Canada and Wales

Alabama	1	Montana	16
Alaska	2	Oregon	6
Arizona	2	Nevada	4
California	27	New York	1
Colorado	6	New Jersey	4
Connecticut	1	North Carolina	2
Florida	5	Pennsylvania	4
Georgia	2	South Carolina	1
Hawaii	1	Tennessee	2
Idaho	8	Texas	3
Illinois	5	Utah	4
Indiana	1	Washington	11
Maryland	1	Wisconsin	1
Massachusetts	2	Wyoming	1
Michigan	2	CANADA	1
Minnesota	1	WALES, UK	1

MRR Association

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- Frank Davis, Secretary
- Gene Welch, Outgoing Secretary
- John Clark, Treasurer
- Paul Schirmer

Webmaster, Marv Gibbs

<http://www.madisonriverranch.org>

Newsletter Editor, Ann Costello

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Come and get it!

Dave and Martha Crawley have lots of Aspen wood - down on the ground and standing dead. You cut and haul. Lot 126, 1 Dutchman Trail (The Four Lazy C).

Links

<http://www.madisonriverranch.org>

PLEASE, if you haven't signed up for electronic delivery of the MRR Newsletter (in living color), go to the Madison River Ranch web site, click on the "Contact Us" tab, and sign in.