

WACO FLY FISHING CLUB

August, 2014 www.wacoflyfishingclub.org Volume XX: No. 8

Next Meeting:

Tuesday, August 12, 2014

Location:

Waco Wetlands Center

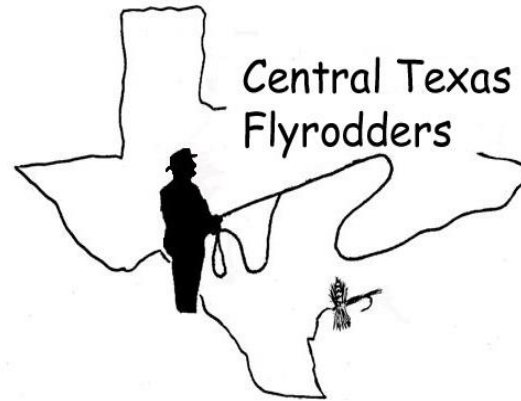
Program:

Fly Fishing the Texas Hill Country
Guide & Author Kevin Hutchinson

About 7:00 pm

Fly Tying and Tall Tales

About 6:00 p.m.

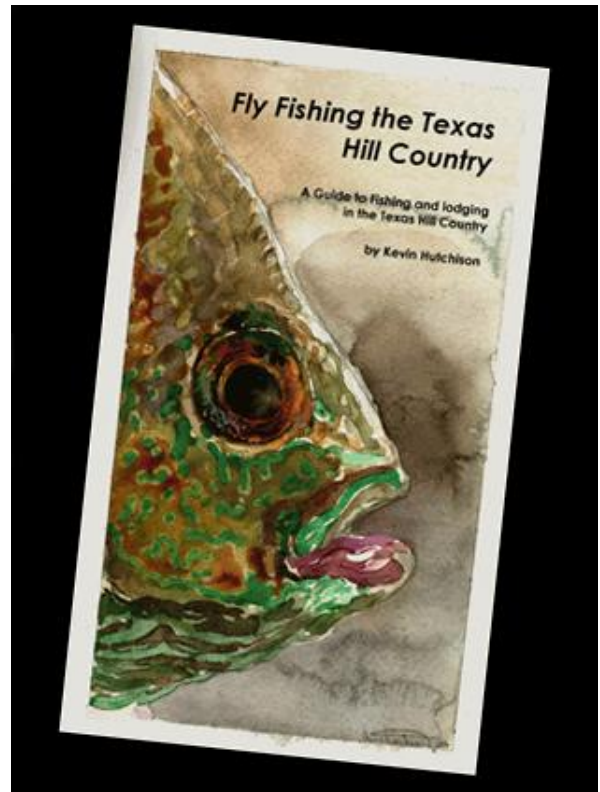


FLY FISHING THE TEXAS HILL COUNTRY - GUIDE AND AUTHOR KEVIN HUTCHINSON

Kevin Hutchinson did not write **THE** book on fly fishing the Texas Hill Country, but he was honored by the original author's widow with the responsibility of updating it. Of course I'm talking about *Fly Fishing the Texas Hill Country* by Bud Priddy. Kevin has confirmed all of the access points in the book and has recently added GPS coordinates. Kevin also added color photographs of recommended fly patterns and expanded the book to include the Devil's River. It has become his book as much as it has been Priddy's.

Think of this book as a bucket list. It would be an enjoyable quest to check off each access point in the book. This will require you to take good care of yourself so you can live long enough to fish the length of some of the best streams Texas has to offer, from the Blanco to the Llano to the Devil's. We have asked Kevin to bring a few copies. You just might be able to buy a copy.

Kevin is going to talk about those wonderful Hill Country streams and how to fish them. It is entirely possible that some of his advice will apply closer to home, like deploying Kevin's Llano Bug on the Middle Bosque (see Trip Reports).



JULY PROGRAM - FISHING THE GUNNISON AND THEREABOUTS - DALE CONNALLY AND BOYD CONNALLY

There is a downside to attending our programs, particularly one as outstanding as the talk Dale and Boyd Connally gave on fishing the Gunnison and thereabouts - your bucket list gets too long. If it is true that a day fishing does not count against your allotment maybe a lengthy bucket list is a good thing. A topic to discuss with Coach Menefee who celebrated his 93rd birthday, in part, at our July meeting.



Although locally renowned as the Trout Whisper, Dale does not rely on chance. He does his homework. For this trip Dale studied (and recommends) Colorado's Best Fishing Waters published by Wilderness Adventures Press; Colorado's Best Fishing Waters by Marty Bartholomew; Flyfisher's Guide to Colorado, and Michael Shook's Fly Fishing Guide to the Gunnison River Drainage (out of print).

Dale's photography caught the beauty of this part of Colorado and the diversity of the waters. Of particular interest were the photos of the Trout of this region, mostly Browns, which were all about as colorful as Brown Trout get. You know, that buttery yellow with bright red spots circled in a pale blue ring, all highlighted with those big black spots on the top half of the fish. The Rainbows weren't bad either, with all that silver and pink.

Dale headlined the program with Boyd filling in with details and color commentary, especially about the creek fishing. That is one of the benefits of fishing in the Gunnison area. There are not only



bigger waters like the Gunnison itself, but also smaller waters like Brush Creek and the streams in the Coda area.

By the way, Dale is hosting a retreat in the Bozeman Montana area that will feature the Madison River and the Gallatin River. The retreat is very affordable and is set for September 14-18, 2014. For more information, contact Dale Connally. His contact information is at the end of the newsletter.

TRIP REPORT - MAINTAINING A TRADITION

Many years ago, when my girls ranged from toddler to adolescent, my wife and I found ourselves alone one Fourth of July. We had successfully pawned the girls off on my wife's family for the holiday. Finding myself with nothing to do I took this then rare opportunity to take my fly rod on a wade down Hog Creek. This was back when Lake Waco was at the old level and McLennan Crossing Road actually had a low water crossing through Hog Creek. And the county had not yet abandoned the stretch of the road that gave us easy access to the creek.

The result was one of my most memorable mornings of fishing. Nothing big, but good numbers. I even caught one little Bass twice or, I should say, hooked him twice. The first time, I was working my way downstream. He broke off keeping my Clouser, at least for a little while. On my way back upstream I hooked and actually landed a little Bass in the same area which just happened to have my Clouser still hooked in his mouth. A cooperative fish. To maintain this favorable trait in the gene pool I was extra careful with the release.

I decided to make this trip a Fourth of July tradition. Unfortunately, the County abandoned the road and some authority decided to raise the lake level so this wade trip is no longer possible, at least not at normal lake levels. As an aside, there is a super secret way to walk into the Hog Creek area. If you want to know, catch me at a meeting. It is need-to-know information, not to be put in print.

More often than not I have managed a Fourth of July fishing trip. This year I waded the Middle Bosque upstream from the 3047 Crossing. Actually it was on July 5 due to attending the parade in Valley Mills on the morning of the Fourth, but traditions should be somewhat flexible as to date as well as location.

On the morning of the Fifth, I had the river to myself with flows about 45 CFS. It has been years since I had seen this much flow. The water was not crystal clear, but close - plenty clear enough to allow for some sight fishing.

The water near the bridge is universally shallow so I started off Perching with a Stimulator. Upstream a ways I switched to a Llanolope when the Stimulator got water logged and the river began to offer some deeper water. The Llanolope got sacrificed in short order to a nice Bass. There was an explosive take, the feel of weight and then nothing. By that point I was thinking grasshoppers and tied on one of Kevin Hutchinson's patterns, a Llano Bug. This fly has a foam

body and continued to float well even after getting mauled by many fish, mostly Bass. The Bass were really hungry and very fit with no quit. A lot of fun on light tackle.



This Bass was a little above average in size, but not the biggest.

When I had reached the first good pool I could see Bass following the fly but without much effort to take it. I have learned that you can sometimes trigger a strike from followers by making a rapid retrieve like a baitfish or bug trying to escape. I think many Bass get overwhelmed with the urge to eat the thing trying to get away and cannot help but make an attack. You reduce your Perch numbers with this type of retrieve, but if the Bass are hitting that is okay with me.



The limestone slab, a good place to rest and change flies.

I worked up to that big slanted slab of limestone that acts as a dam. I enjoyed the scenery and the sound of water rushing through the channel in the slab while I changed to a woolly bugger for the wade back to the bridge. The top water action had been exciting but I wanted to show the fish something different on my way downstream. It turned out that the action on the bugger may have been even better, which is pretty amazing given that I had worked the holding water pretty

hard with the Llano Bug wading upstream. In fact, the biggest Bass of day took the bugger like he hadn't eaten for days. By then I had exhausted my camera battery, so no picture.

None of those storied Hill Country streams have anything on our Middle Bosque, it is a beautiful little stream. One word of caution - the self rock that forms parts of the riverbed can be extremely slick even when recently scoured by high flows. When the self rock is uneven or buckled it can be downright hazardous. A wading staff is really an essential piece of equipment. You can wade the slick rock without a staff, but at best you will be slowed down while you slip and slide. If you need a wading staff, they can be found at a cost well below an appointment with orthopedic surgeon at The Bear Mountain or Living Waters.

ADDENDUM

About a week later I decided to go back to the Middle Bosque for another Saturday morning wade.. First I had to go back to the house after breakfast in Crawford because I had forgotten my wading staff. That added about thirty minutes of driving, but the delay was offset by easier and faster wading. And no need for an ER visit. The self rock is not as bad as it gets, but I did hit one slick spot and managed to remain upright thanks to the wading staff.

This time I went downstream, which has more self rock and bigger gaps between holding water. The flow was down to a little over 20 CFS which is about perfect. The water was clear which made the fish very spooky except in the two most protected pools.

The first of these pools is protected by an overhanging tree. Recent heavy flows have pushed enough gravel into this pool to reduce it in size to about half of what it was earlier this year. What is left is under that tree, but you can use the flow to present your fly and avoid tangling a branch. This pool produced a Perch on each of my first five or six casts.

The next pool down was bigger and also protected by an overhanging tree. This pool produced a small Bass or two in addition to several perch. On the way back upstream I positioned myself to take better advantage of the flow to put my fly all the way under the tree and caught the big fish of the day, a nice river Bass. Big is a relative term on the Middle Bosque, but these Bosque Bass put up quite a fight particularly on the limber glass rod I was using.



Did I mention that the water was clear?

That "big" Bass took the same Llano Bug I used back on July 5. It's a durable fly, but after another dozen fish it is now waiting on my tying bench for a re-tie. I also used a small woolly bugger in spots that offered deeper water and usually after the action on the Llano Bug had slowed down.

One of the attractions of the Middle Bosque are the fossils. Heavy flows had exposed some I hadn't seen before, but it was obvious that someone had already been collecting. For some reason part of a large one was left behind. It was about a mile downstream so maybe whoever pulled it out of the matrix did not want to carry it out.



All in all a perfect morning on a little stream that really is a treasure. Even the half hearted attack by the dog that took up residence under my Blazer while I was fishing did not detract from the outing. Fortunately I had my Lab Sam along to hide behind me until he could escape onto the tailgate when I opened the Blazer.

Bob Hanley

FOLLOWING DALE CONNALLY'S ADVICE IN BRANSON, MISSOURI

A few months back my wife told me that she was planning a trip to a some resort outside of Branson, Missouri with select members of her family. This was not something on my bucket list, but I knew I had no real choice other than going when my wife said, "You don't have to go if you don't want to." Left unsaid was the price I would pay if I didn't.

On previous outings of this sort I have been able to escape from time to time to do some fishing. After a little research I discovered was that Table Rock Lake has created a pretty good tailrace fishery. Dale Williams had even posted a trip report in our December, 2011 newsletter describing the night fishing using lighted strike indicators and recommending fly patterns.

Unfortunately the dynamics of my trip did not allow any night fishing, but I did fish the tailrace on the three mornings I was there. As sometimes happens, my first morning did not produce any fish for me, but I did net a nice Rainbow for a guy fishing from the bank in shallow water. When I first saw this guy I had concluded he obviously did not know what he was doing. He wasn't even properly outfitted. He was just wearing sandals which explained why he was fishing from the bank - the water was cold. After he caught his second fish I walked over to ask for advice and what pattern he was using. It was a scud/sow bug, one of the patterns suggested by Dale Connally and the one pattern I did not have. The water release horn sounded early that morning forcing me off the water before the water came up.

The next morning I was armed with some freshly tied scuds and started drifting one below some type of attracter pattern. I thought these Missouri Trout would not be as smart as my usual tailrace targets out west at the San Juan. I was wrong. The water was as clear as water gets and I could easily see the fish shy away from my flies even though I was using 6x fluorocarbon. Hoping it was the bright yellow and orange strike indicator I changed to a stimulator. That did seem to help, but still no takers.

While I was trying to figure things out, the guy from the day before and his buddy left their spot and told me there were many fish there and that I should give it try. Even though they hadn't landed anything the buddy had managed a brief hookup.

I was about waste deep at the time and getting cold. In addition, every fish in my area of the river was stacked up just downstream of my legs. Every so often one would actually bump my leg to startle me into moving just enough to stir up some bugs from the bottom. This is an effective technique to use against salt water fishermen, getting bumped in salt water really gets your attention. The reaction becomes instinctive. The Trout at the San Juan also do the stack up and bump thing, but most of them stay out where you can actually fish for them.

I moved. At the new spot I was able to see fish close to the bank and fish for them from water too shallow for the fish to stack up at my feet. On my second or third cast I was surprised to see a fish rise to the stimulator. Fortunately my surprise delayed me just enough to not pull the fly out of the fish's mouth. My first and as it turned out biggest Missouri Trout made it to the net. I continued to get action on top and even landed one more before the horn sounded.



This particular tailrace was not crowded, but there were several other fishermen in the area, none of whom had caught a thing. Before I could stop myself I started feeling pretty smug about my success. As you know this frame of mind is almost certain to lead to a humbling. And it did.

The next morning, over a period of hours I watched every fish ignore every fly I drifted by. Late in the morning a guy arrived fished for a few minutes and caught a fish. Humbling. A few minutes later he caught another. Humbling. Then another guy started moving in my direction, casting as he as he walked. In fact, he continued casting until he was right next to me, cast over

