



NEWSLETTER
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www.wacoflyfishingclub.org

OCTOBER PROGRAM - FISHING AT LATHAM SPRINGS
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2015

Given the size of our club and our distance from most of the acknowledged fishing hotspots in Texas it is sometimes difficult to schedule speakers for our monthly meetings. In fact, I struck out for October. Fortunately, we have a little known fishing hotspot nearby - Latham Springs. I was in New Mexico (see trip report below) during our September outing at Latham Springs so I am definitely ready to fish for those big Latham Springs Perch with a few Crappie or Bass thrown in.

The Outing will be on our regular meeting night, Tuesday, October 13, 2015. We will start fishing about 3:00 pm and fish until about sunset. Somewhere around sunset will cook up some hot dogs and links so be sure to work up an appetite.



Feel free to invite a guest so we can use the excellent fly fishing at Latham Springs as a recruiting tool.

Directions from Waco: IH 35 north to the FM 2114/Downtown West exit 353. Then turn west onto FM 2114. Proceed west for approximately 12 miles and turn onto the camp road by the Latham Springs Baptist Camp sign.

Bob Hanley

NOVEMBER PROGRAM - DAKUS GEESLIN - GUADALUPE BASS

Dakus Geeslin is a bug guy with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and has put together a program on our state freshwater fish, the Guadalupe Bass. Dakus has presented this program at other Texas fly fishing clubs and gotten excellent reviews. Dakus will showcase several of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department conservation efforts aimed at protecting and enhancing Guadalupe Bass and their habitats and how you can help. Learning about Guadalupe Bass, how to protect them and how to catch them on a fly sounds like a great way to spend a November evening. Sure beats sitting home watching TV.

DECEMBER PROGRAM - CHRISTMAS PARTY

Planning is underway. Our Christmas Party is one of the best things we do. It is the perfect way to wrap up our year. Be sure and mark your calendar for Tuesday, December 15, 2015.

JANUARY PROGRAM - FISHING THE BRAZOS

Anybody that has been a member of our club for any time at all knows that Pat Vanek can definitely catch White Bass. He has presented his White Bass Program at our club and other Texas Clubs. Well, Pat also knows the nearby Brazos River and will share this knowledge with us at our January meeting. A great way to start 2016.

SPEAKING OF LATHAM SPRINGS

Billy Whitehead and I completed our second Waco Fly Fishing 102 class at Latham Springs, teaching the basics to five new fly fisherman. The fishing was as hard as it gets for Latham Springs, but Billy figured out that the fish were looking up which is a little unusual for this lake. Everybody switched to topwaters and everybody caught fish. This is Travis with his very own Latham Springs Perch, his first on the fly.



This is Chad with his first on the fly.



And the youngest fly fisherman, Christian, with a very nice Latham Springs Bass.



SOME HAVE "LAID ASIDE BUSINESS AND GONE A'FISHING"

RETURN TO THE SAN JUAN

As I missed another strike, I decided I better start getting in harmony with not catching a Trout on my last morning at the San Juan. I only had another hour to fish before I had to get on the road. I had been fishing size 24 dry flies on 7x tippet for the last hour or so with a fair amount of action, but nothing to the net. I had the usual tangling problems messing with that 7x, missed strikes, fish that missed the fly a time or two and the one hooked fish threw the hook just as I thought it was about tire.

Since I was in Navajo country, a mile or so from my camp on Navajo Lake, the idea of harmony came to mind. Over the years I have read all of Tony Hillerman's novels which are largely set on and near the Navajo Reservation. Hillerman had taught me a little about the Navajo concept of Hozho which best translates to harmony with the world around you. As Hillerman explains, during a draught Christians pray for rain. Navajos seek harmony with the dry conditions.

I was fishing the upper flats for the third time that week. My first attempt at fishing this stretch of the river was two mornings earlier in the trip and it was a bust. I got there before there was enough light to see into the water. In the past I had nymphed this water so that's how I started. When the sun made it over the canyon wall I could see many big Trout in the crystal clear water and they could obviously see my leader and strike indicator, shying away whenever my rig floated near. They were also feeding on the surface. This was not a problem because I was equipped with fresh 7x tippet and a box of tiny dry flies, I thought. I had the tippet all right, but my fly box was gone. A time for seeking Hozho and a reminder that fly vests come with zippered pockets for a reason.

I returned the next morning with a supply of store bought size 24 Adams and my own freshly tied thread midges. A thread midge is much easier to tie than a parachute Adams especially in that small size. As the sky brightened, conditions were again ideal and I put myself to the test of presenting tiny dry flies to big fish. This was sight fishing and was on the cutting edge of my ability to fly fish. Even with 7x tippet you have to present the flies to the fish ahead of the tippet. One peak at the tippet and your target fish will shy away. Fortunately, San Juan Trout are accustomed to anglers (that's why the Trout see tippet as a danger) so they don't bolt for another part of the river, but once it sees the tippet you are not going to catch that trout, at least not for a while.

When you do get a take you have to set the hook just right, not too quickly and not too slowly. You also have to consider the angle so you don't just pull the fly out of the fish's mouth while trying to set the hook. If you set too hard or too sharply you will break that 7x. I also think the small size of the fly just makes hook-ups harder. The fly is so small it doesn't stick the fish as readily as something bigger. If you blunder into actually hooking a fish you then have a big Trout on 7x.

I made all of the mistakes noted, but, as they say, practice makes perfect or, at least you improve some. I did land two big Trout before the wind picked up to the point that the dry fly fishing was blown out. To get those two fish to net on that second morning up there I had to do everything just right. A little luck might have been involved, but I was still a very satisfied angler.

Thanks to Dale Connally's program at our August meeting, I was alert to the possibility of Cutthroats or Cutt/Bows. I noticed that the first Trout to the net, the fish below, had at least a little Cutthroat - bigger spots concentrated near the tail and a little bit of throat slash.



Also, thanks to Dale I had my best first morning at the San Juan. I usually get off to a slow start while I figure things out, but this time I followed Dale's advice and started the first morning dead drifting red larva patterns. Nothing real big, but I lost count.

I fished dry more than I nymphed, however. Conditions were often just too ideal - crystal clear water, light winds and visible Trout feeding high in the water column. The dry fly fishing mandated the use of 7x, at least if you wanted to minimize spooking fish.

I rarely use 7x and when I think I will need it I buy a fresh spool which is what I did on this trip. The idea is that a fresh spool of 7x will still be as strong as it can be. Even so, 7x is not easy to use, it tangles easily and it is really easy to break. At the beginning of this trip I had more trouble with the 7x than usual. I was breaking the stuff just tying knots, not to mention trying to set the hook. I did land a few recent small stockers, but only one fish of any size. That fish, the largest of day one was so embarrassed when it couldn't break that 7x that it refused to stay for a picture.

The frustration mounted and I began to wonder if the 7x I had just purchased might be defective. Late on morning two I had a nice strike, gently set the hook and broke off barely feeling the fish.

I gave up on attaining Hozho, left the river, went to the other fly shop and bought a different brand of 7x. I could once again tie knots and had a higher success rate hooking and fighting fish. The lesson - tippet is cheap, if in doubt replace it.

Also, the fly shop guy suggested that a go to a lighter/softer rod so I switched to my four weight. I think that helped.

I didn't do as well as Dale on Brown Trout, but the only two I caught were at the same time - one on each nymph. I don't think I have ever done this on Trout before.

On that last morning one of the problems was a light hatch. The fish weren't feeding as actively as the morning before. It had been a good trip and a beautiful morning so I was actually getting into harmony with a fishless final morning, at least a little bit. The problem became moot when I hooked and landed a nice Rainbow. I noticed things had gotten more active and caught a second.



It was already past time to leave the water and I was sorely tempted to keep fishing, but it was one of those times when you attain something like hozho, you know it is time for the fishing to end. Years ago I actually ended a San Juan trip a little early when I had a break-off on a huge fish. It seemed like the time. Ending on a difficult fish in the net with action all around is just as good a time, maybe a little better.

Bob Hanley

HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF FLY FISHING

For the most comprehensive listing of fly fishing events in Texas and detailed information about those events go to the Texas Council website - <http://texascounciliff.com/>

HAPPENINGS IN THE WORLD OF WETLANDS CONSERVATION - WACO DUCKS UNLIMITED BANQUET

Waco Ducks Unlimited has been around for decades successfully raising funds for wetlands conservation. The Waco DU Annual Banquet is Thursday, October 29, 2015 at the Phoenix Ballroom. Tickets are \$50 for a single ticket, \$80 for couples and \$25 for Greenwings, (children, not Teal like the one Puppy Scout is retrieving).



We are planning to donate a club membership to the event along with some flies and a cap. If you tie, make up a few of your favorite patterns to include in the package. Ducks Unlimited deserves our support and by supporting DU we also get to promote our club to the local outdoor community.

CLUB OFFICERS FOR 2015

- **President & Newsletter**
- **Vice-President**
- **IFFF Liaison**
- **Treasurer/Membership**
- **Education Chairman**
- **Webmasters**
- **At Large**

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David Beyer

Bill “Coach” Menefee

Loren Decker, Dale Connally

Billy Whitehead



WAITING FOR YOU AT LATHAM SPRINGS