



April - May - June
2006

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Murfreesboro, AR 71958

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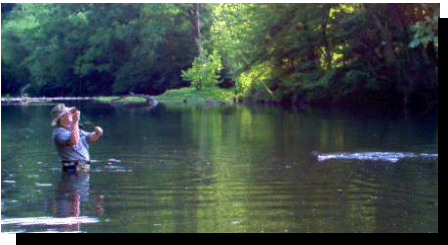
An Actual Newsletter

'Bout time don't you think??? Sorry about taking so long to get something like this done, but that's been my world this spring! Ill try to do better. And since that's the case, I'm sending this to everyone who has ever been on our mailing list, not just currently paid members! If you are one of those who has been wondering what was going on with The Friends I hope this helps a little! And we'll start to get things cranked up a bit more this year! And if you haven't re-joined for 2006, we certainly hope you consider doing so!

June 10th BBQ at River Ridge - Noon!

Well, the May gathering at Riverside just kind of fizzled as it appeared that there were going to be just too many people who could *NOT* be there that we decided to move the gathering out a month to June 10th - the next most probable date!

However, the Pavilion at Riverside was already reserved for that Saturday. So let's try it at River Ridge under the little pavilion there! After all, it was I who suggested to the AGFC and Weyerhaeuser that they put a pavilion there to begin with. I think we should use it!



Mike Duggan (*at left* - 318-221-2804) offered to bring some ribs, etc... which instantly made him the *Food Chairman!* I think everyone should bring the extras and beverages that they want to consume themselves. And, by all means, feel free to bring a little more if you want to share something special!

Most of you know that there's no chairs or tables at River Ridge so bring your lawn chairs. I have a small table I can bring. Anyone else have a portable table? I also have a very small grill that I don't think is going to be of much help.

Anyone have something large but reasonably easy to transport? I doubt that we need anything on wheels for example, but I'll leave that up to you.

I would like to have a stream clean-up at every event we have. Johnny Mc J (870-287-4362) has volunteered to coordinate that?

See ya'll at River Ridge!

Low Water Bridge Access To Be Closed

The City of Murfreesboro is at odds with a new landowner who bought the property on the east bank at Low Water Bridge. For decades the access has remained available to the public at the discretion of the city government even

though this is the site of Murfreesboro's drinking water intake.

There has been a clause in all the contracts on the said property that there be a "buffer zone" surrounding the intake and that only timber activity be allowed within the buffer zone. Apparently the new owner wants to parcel out the land right down to the water's edge, which could open up the runoff into the buffer zone to septic systems, pesticides, herbicides, etc...

This intent has pretty much forced the city to enforce the buffer zone agreement and restrict "all" activity within 300 feet of the intake. The buffer zone affects up to 9 acres, most of which is on the east bank, but will likely result in the closing of the little parking area on the east bank and restrict activity in and around the river.

I just (5-30) talked to City Water Manager, Randy Miller, and he says they are still waiting to get the property surveyed, but *the city is* going to purchase the buffer zone acreage! That will give the city control of the buffer zone outright, however they do plan to close it off in the future once the transaction takes place.

Down the road there may be the possibilities of opening the access on a limited basis during "trout season" but that is still very much up in the air! There's still a lot of "ifs" ahead.

Here is an excellent web-site that Jim Roat called to my attention: www.NationalRivers.org The site explains a lot about US Constitutional river access law.

Low Water Bridge →

Generally speaking the public has the right to move about within the high water lines of any navigable stream. You cannot, however, gain access to a stream through private property, but you can go on private property within reason to "escape" a river!



I did find one section that, as I read it, gives local governments the right to protect the public water supplies. So, it would appear, that the City of Murfreesboro has every right to enforce the closure of the access.

It's a difficult situation and the city is between a rock and a hard place on this. No one *wants* to close Low Water Bridge - it has been a *Summer Swimmn' Hole* for, literally, generations and a trout fisher's access as long as I can remember!

Our mayor is Jim O'Neal, and he's really a pretty good and reasonable person. The mayors office is 870-285-3732.

The address is: Murfreesboro Municipal Building
204 East Main St.
Murfreesboro, AR 71958

Summer "Delayed Harvest" on trout is in effect!

For eight years, now, there have been very successful Summer "*Delayed Harvest*" (as AGFC Trout Program Biologist Darrell Bowman prefers to call it) regulations in place. With the exception of last summer when, due to the work being done on the #3 generator at the Narrows Dam Powerhouse, the regs were lifted - the *Delayed Harvest* has been in effect from May 1st to October 15th each year.

Before the *Delayed Harvest* was put into place, trout populations dwindled to virtually nothing by early to mid summer! Common thinking said that the trout died off in the hot weather. Hardly the case. They were simply caught out. We have always been able to find a few trout left over in the river somewhere.

The second biggest trout I've personally caught here was one just shy of 20", on a Labor Day Weekend at Couch Hole Shoal (River Ridge Access) about ten years before the River Ridge Access was completed! Locals will tell stories of trout up to 7 pounds! Of course these were few and far between, but the fact remained that trout do indeed "hold-over" in the Little Mo'!

So with that in mind, some of us pushed really hard for at least a seasonal Catch & Release area up at Riverside Park. The first two years showed that the fish did quite well in that initial half mile zone, delineated by the little Mill Dam at Riverside Cabins. In fact, on August 31, 1999, I managed a fat 20 incher just upstream of Copperhead Crossing! The

success of the seasonal regs prompted AGFC to extend the zone downstream to the Pipeline Crossing and create the Permanent Catch & Release Area that now exists!

From a personal standpoint, I most likely wouldn't be in Murfreesboro writing this for you if it were not for the Catch & Release regulations we now have!

At any rate, there is still the issue of keeping the fish that we *DO* have within the C&R Areas properly protected during the May 1 - Oct 15 period. There are a lot of people who truly don't know the regs and head to Riverside Park during the summer with bait and stringers. There are also a lot of people who *know* the regs and just don't care!

I've heard some good ones... Like the woman who sat down at The Flat with, honest to God, a Hill's Brothers coffee can of worms and prepared to land one in the river! When I told her what the regs there were she told me, and I quote, "*Oh! I'm not fishing for trout!*"



And the guy two summers ago at the Wall who had a bunch of fish on a stringer. As I approached them, his 10 year old son had quite a sheepish look on his face. He knew he was in the wrong, and I looked like someone pretty official in my summer attire!

I had just explained to a couple who were throwing PowerBait what the story was and they happily complied and reeled in. This guy said he thought it was from May 15th to October 1st. I finally got him to pack up. As he headed to his van, I realized that he was parked right in front of the Seasonal Sign!

← *Yours truly with a really nice summer fish!*

Then the first couple (from way up north somewhere) said that the guy had told them that the Catch & Release regulations *ONLY APPLIED TO THE PEOPLE OUT WADING IN THE RIVER!!!* If they had told me that first I believe I would have nailed the guy!

We all need to be diligent in educating people on the river. It is very simple. If you see someone throwing bait or planning to keep fish in the Delayed Harvest or Permanent zones all you need to do is explain the regs to them with a smile and tell them that they can head downstream to any of the other accesses. River Ridge will be their best bet. It is scheduled to be stocked this May and June, by the way! If you approach the conversation that you are doing them a favor they are usually pretty grateful for not getting hit with that \$150 fine!

The same goes for smallmouth on the entire river of course! The lower Little Missouri is strictly Catch & Release (currently) on all smallmouth bass! The AGFC is planning to implement a one fish over 18" per day reg, probably next January 1.

The State of the River - May 7

from Johnny McJunkins

I was fortunate to be able to get to the river a few times this past week. Tuesday afternoon was a hot day with clear skies, yet the fishing was quite good until dark. At the wall hole at Riverside Park and just upstream from it, I fished alone for an hour and a half without another vehicle even circling through the park area. On our Arkansas tailwaters, I'm constantly amazed at how cool it seems on the river no matter how hot the day.

This past weekend was cooler and overcast, with some rain, yet the fish remained active through the weather and its changes. I'm quite certain that at various times Friday and Saturday I observed March Browns hatching as well as small light colored caddises and various midges.

There were quite a few people fishing Saturday, and most seemed to be having some success. During the early morning with no companions other than the rain and the herons, my mind wandered through a variety of thoughts concerning the healthy condition of the river and it's future that I would like to share with you.

Jack Simmons with a Little Mo' White Bass →

Water temperatures are running quite well. Tuesday afternoon, the water was 60 degrees at the Wall Hole on the warm side of the river. The fish kept me too occupied to remember to check the temperature elsewhere, but Jeff reported temperatures in the 50s in the shallow water above the park on the west side later in the week.



With all generators back in working condition, the rise in the river's water level is an asset as

warmer weather approaches. I believe there are more fish in the area above the park than at the same time in recent years. The lake is at a good level, and this bodes well as higher levels during the hot months help keep water temperatures down in the river. I'm actually surprised that we've had no generation over the past two weeks. My speculation is that with continuing rains, it may be necessary for them to bring levels down to create a buffer zone so that future rains won't be a problem. Some generation will actually be a benefit in clearing out algae and other debris.

We have a good number of fish left in the upper river area. With catch and release now back on in the park area and all generators working, we should be able to keep a good number of these fish as well as new fish from the remaining two scheduled stockings. The summer will see a gradual diminishing of fish due to a variety of causes such as herons, other predators, and mishandled fish. Yet I'm anticipating a really good summer for fishing.

Saturday morning, Gary Hall and I watched a heron struggle as he attempted to swallow a trout that we estimated to be between twelve and fourteen inches. He struggled as the fish fought hard, but the bird finally won out. I wonder if he caught others or was through eating for the day.

With the interest the AGFC is showing in river improvements and their in-progress work on the river's management plan, I think things are looking positive for the future. It has been fun being involved. If anyone questions the purpose or influence of The Friends of the Little Missouri, I can assure you that as a group we have a voice in areas that count.

I really enjoy summer fishing on the Little Missouri! If you've never tried it, you don't know what you're missing. See you there!

A couple more thoughts...

What do ya'll think about creating little business cards showing the Catch & Release Areas, seasons and C&R tips just to pass out when needed? Can't hurt, easily done...

I've talked to Ned Hollenbach, Lake Greeson Project Manager, about the possibility of planting some trees in the open area at Riverside Park and clearing the path up the east bank a little bit. Both are on the table. Ned said he didn't see any problem with trying trees, they've just had trouble getting any to take in the past. I'll see if I can develop details before the 10th!

The Friends of the Little Missouri
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