

DFC BULLETIN



Published to communicate & stay connected with our DFC Trout Bums Friends during the pandemic times we live in.

UPDATE: MAY 15, 2020

CANCELED DFC OUTINGS

Seneca Lake
Saturday, May 16, 2020

Big Lake • FIR Campgrounds
Friday, June 12
Sunday June 14, 2020



Joe Staller

The Go-To Outings
Chairman Guy
joestaller@yahoo.com

In the meantime, I can report that some of our DFC members have been able to access Becker and Big Lakes, and they are reporting good fishing. I can personally report that the pike, walleyes and crappies are on the prowl at Upper Lake Mary near Flagstaff, and can be caught by wading the shoreline and casting streamers on a floating line. So, even though we can't go out as a group, I encourage you to practice some social distancing at the nearest fishing hole!



Fishing- April 28 and 29 at Woods Canyon and Canero Lakes

By Carl Rutherford- DFC Trout Bum

Catch Carl at: carlruthe@gmail.com

Woods Canyon is less than 2 hours from my home. I have fished this lake a few times before this during the virus problem. I got on the lake at about 9am. There were a lot more campers on the way in since the last time. The temperature was also 10 degrees warmer. However, on the lake, there were just a few boaters like before. The water temperature was between 61 and 63. I have found that the flies that worked at Christmas Tree Lake work here. A dark brown Woolly Worm and a Woolly Bugger (red plastic bead, black tail and hackle, crawdad chenille) work well. Using a type 3 sinking line I fished the points to the right of the ramp toward the spillway. I started at 10-15 feet and ended with over 20 smallish fish. The largest fish was less than 15 inches. I did change to a depth of 30 feet later as the temperature increased and the bites slowed down. The fish started biting again. There was a moderate amount of shore fisherpersons. Most everyone was keeping their fish. Two highlights of this day: I caught my first Tiger Trout (see picture). Although it did seem to fight harder than the other fish, it might have been because it was fatter. The second event was later in the day. I had just caught a fish and was reaching for my hemostats to release the hook (I did not use my net once because the fish were small). The fish was flopping on the surface at my feet. An Osprey hit the water where my fish was. But the fish must have seen the bird because when I lifted my line it was at the end under the water. A few minutes later I had another fish on my line in the same place. I looked up to see where the birds were. Two were diving for the fish with their wings tucked. I watched in amazement as one bird snatched the fish and broke my 5x tippet with ease. I remember the large yellow talons vividly.



The next day I arrived at Canero Lake early since I had to leave early for a 4 hour drive home. It was a slow day. There was only one other person fishing on the lake. It stayed that way the whole day. There were a few campers near the put-in area. The lake was between 59-61. After fishing the entire lake, I found the deep spots were only 6 ft. I used a type two intermediate line. I caught only 2 fish in 5 hours on two bites. I changed my flies many times. I caught another Tiger. Both fish were caught to the left by the islands. I was constantly cleaning my flies from the weeds on the surface and below. I ended up using unweighted flies to keep from fouling so much. Also, the weeds were spread out throughout the lake, there were no places that were free of them. I tried every color of simi seal leech I had without success. A small Black Woolly Bugger and a damsel caught my fish. I think that fishing here will become more difficult later in the spring.

Day trips to places like Woods Canyon are safe and easy. They are relaxing and help to ease the boredom of the virus problem.

Stay safe. We'll stay connected.

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DFC East Verde River Stream Improvements

by Jim Strogon *Jim Strogon, Writer/Columnist - Life on the Fly - Payson Roundup Newspaper • Catch Jim at: jimstrog@gmail.com*

I am always excited to see stream improvement devices when I fish. My success seems to greatly increase near them because the trout are attracted to these structures.

They not only provide cover for trout, but are critical tools for stabilizing banks. Many structures are designed to narrow stream channels to help them be deeper and cooler for trout.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) in cooperation with Natural Channel Design and the United States Forest Service (USFS) have completed stream improvement work within the stream channel at 2nd and 3rd Crossing on the East Verde River.

In addition, the project included work at Flowing Springs to remediate for bank erosion and provide safer access to the creek in high use areas; but stream channel improvement was not done at that site.

There is also a plan for stream improvements within the channel at Washington Park on the Upper East Verde sometime in the future.

AZGFD has spearheaded similar projects in Rim Country to benefit fish and fishermen over the years. This has included structures in Canyon Creek, Haigler Creek, and Tonto Creek. They have also done extensive bank repair on Christopher Creek and Haigler Creek to help with safe entry to the creeks.

This stream improvement work is fantastic news for those of us who love to fish the East Verde River. Even though the East Verde hasn't been stocked since last September, the crew doing this project noted that fish had already moved into the waters improved by these devices within hours of the work being completed.

This project required a great deal of planning and design, a number of permits, and the acquisition of funds by AZGFD and Tonto National Forest to complete the work to improve fish habitat and fishing. Some of these funds included contributions by the Gila Trout Chapter of Trout Unlimited / Payson Flycasters' Club (GTTU/PFC) and Desert Flycasters' Club.

The work at 3rd Crossing is located near the parking area and is easily accessible to fishermen. The footprint for the old crossing and the placement of the Payson water pipeline has been greatly enhanced by the construction of a deep pool with several boulders to maintain the integrity of the pool and provide cover for trout.

As you move further downstream, those that fish the creek regularly will notice the addition of three large boulders in the center of the pool directly in front of the parking lot.

That seems like a minimal stream improvement, but is actually a feature that trout love! While I was walking the stream to take in all of the work, a trout surfaced right next to this three-boulder improvement. There is another great pool right below these boulders that is designed to remain deep and attractive for trout.

Further downstream, just above the 2nd Crossing Bridge, timber has been used extensively in this section of the creek. Tree cutting of any type is currently restricted

in the National Forests due to a lawsuit making its way through the Courts regarding protection for Mexican Spotted Owls. For this reason, the timber used at 2nd Crossing was transported from the recently purchased AZGFD property at Cold Springs that flows into Ellison Creek.

The timber log barbs at the 2nd Crossing sites serve a couple of purposes. They are anchored into the bank and angled upstream. This provides cover for trout, while protecting the bank that they are embedded in from further erosion.

In addition to these log barbs, there are also a number of pools that have been formed or greatly improved as a result of this project.

At the upstream end of the 2nd Crossing phase of the project, a very large pool has been restricted at the tail of the pool to return the stream to a narrow configuration that runs deeper and faster to benefit trout. There are two sets of rock barbs that accomplish this.

The first is the obvious rock barb at the tail of the pool, but importantly there is another rock barb about one hundred fifty feet downstream that is in the dry creek bed. This second rock barb is designed to encourage the stream, when it overflows, to stay within the desired stream bed and not to broaden, become shallow, and unsuitable for trout.

All of these locations will benefit from the planting of willow saplings that several GTTU/PFC members helped plant about a month after the structures were installed. Members cut, dug holes in VERY rocky soil down to the water level, and planted over 250 willows.

These willow saplings will grow quickly and further stabilize the stream improvement work and the banks around the project to help reduce the impact of high flows on the river channel. The mature willows will produce additional shade and cover for the trout as well.

The work is well-timed as AZGFD plans to stock Gila trout on the East Verde River this spring and summer. Gila trout are one of two threatened trout that were once found in Arizona. Their historic range included many of the streams in Rim Country. Gila trout are currently being raised at Canyon Creek Hatchery with the plan of not only aiding in recovery of this valuable fish, but also to produce enough fish that they can be stocked in recreational locations for anglers to enjoy catching.

Gilas are very responsive to cover, so these improvements will greatly enhance their success in the river. The advantage of Gilas is that unlike rainbows that must be stocked as non-reproducing triploids, any Gilas that are not caught and kept by anglers can potentially serve as the beginning of a reproducing population for us to enjoy catching well into the future on the East Verde River.

Thank you AZGFD, Natural Channel Design and USFS for your efforts to improve fish habitat and fishing on the East Verde River.

And a tip of the hat to DFC for the Club's contribution to this very worthwhile project!



Joe Miller DFC/PFC member and John Green PFC member helping Curt Gill (AZGFD) dig holes, cut and plant willow saplings above 2nd Crossing.



An excavator was used to lock in large boulders to create pools and embed log barbs into the eroding bank to create great habitat, while protecting the bank from erosion.



Something as simple as three boulders attracts and holds fish. I have seen fish around these boulders. Sometimes it was a fish rising next to them, and other times it was a fish ducking under them from upstream when I was not careful enough in my approach.

Stay safe. We'll stay connected.

Questions?..Catch us.... Frank Schettino-DFC President: sketno1026@hotmail.com • 917-414-5428

Joe Staller- DFC V/P: joestaller@yahoo.com • (602) 568-9431