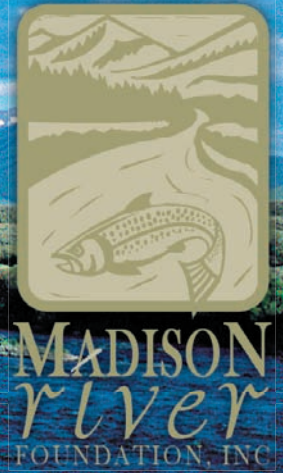


MADISON RIVER *currents* WINTER 2008 NEWSLETTER



MARK YOUR CALENDAR SAVE THE DATES!

~ AUGUST 29-31, 2008 ~
FLY FISHING FESTIVAL

~ JUNE 27, 2008 ~
GALA BANQUET &
ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

The 2008 Ennis on the Madison Fly Fishing Festival again will be held over Labor Day weekend, August 29-31, 2008. The Foundation's annual Gala Banquet will be held on June 27, 2008 in conjunction with the annual membership meeting the same day in Ennis. The banquet will be held on the banks of the Madison River at Buffalo Jump on Sun Ranch, just off Highway 287 in Cameron near the West Fork.

"After much consideration we've decided to make the Foundation's annual Gala Banquet a stand-alone event on the same day as the annual membership meeting," said executive director Richard Lessner. "Traditionally the banquet has been held during the fly fishing festival. We believe holding the Foundation banquet as a stand-alone event in June will allow us to make it an even more enjoyable experience for our members and friends. And moving the membership meeting from May to June to coincide with the banquet will allow more Foundation members to attend."

Building on last year's success, the 2008 festival will feature a half-day of events on Labor Day Sunday. The banquet site for this year also is very exciting. The Sun Ranch property on the banks of the river at Buffalo Jump is a truly spectacular setting.

FOUNDATION STANDS IN THE MAINSTREAM OF CONSERVATION EFFORTS

BY RICHARD LESSNER

Last October, I attended the International Wild Trout Symposium in West Yellowstone, the ninth such meeting since 1974. More than 200 biologists, academicians, fish & wildlife officials, representatives of angling and conservation organizations presented papers and results of scientific studies and research projects.

Paul Schullery, author of more than 30 books on the history of conservation and angling, closed the symposium with some intriguing observations. The former official historian of Yellowstone National Park and past curator of the American Museum of Fly Fishing drew three main conclusions that reinforced the work of your Foundation:

- 1 Stream restoration, improvement, and enhancement are on the cutting edge of wild trout conservation efforts. Conservation of wild and native trout species (such as Montana's state fish, the Westslope cutthroat) has moved from a focus on angling regulations to a focus on habitat preservation and restoration. Conservation efforts now encompass the totality of a watershed – tributaries and related riparian environments - - not just the main stems of major rivers such as the Madison.
- 2 The new model for wild trout conservation and management is a cooperative approach that strives to involve all interested parties and to build strategic partnerships. This model is replacing the older adversarial approach that relied heavily on lawsuits and confrontational tactics.
- 3 Conservation of wild trout cannot rely solely on anglers and sportsmen. We need new partners and a broader public base. In Professor Schullery's words, "we need to unhitch from the perspective that only anglers care about wild trout."

The Foundation stands squarely in the center of these major trends in wild trout conservation with our focus on tributary stream restoration and recognition of the importance of the entire watershed to the health of the main stem of the Madison River. We seek to build strategic partnerships with all who have an interest in the river. And we recognize that efforts to preserve, protect and enhance the Madison River require a broad public base beyond just the angling community.

“BUCKET BRIGADE” RESCUES 2,500 TROUT

In November, volunteers from the Foundation and around the Ennis area pulled on waders and rubber boots, grabbed nets and buckets, and rescued more than 2,500 trout from the west Madison ditch.

Led by Foundation secretary Dave Bricker of Ennis and Pat Clancy of Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, more than two dozen “bucket brigade” volunteers returned trout to the Madison River from an irrigation ditch where they were stranded when the water was shut down for the winter. Volunteers also came from the Madison-Gallatin Chapter of Trout Unlimited and Headwaters Fly Fishers. Local fly shops joined the effort, including MRF board member Nancy DiMeola of Madison River Fishing Company in Ennis. MRF director Sunni Knapton carried her baby in a backpack while wielding a net to save

as many fish as possible from suffocation.

Fish rescued ranged from two inches to a 24-inch whopper brown trout. Fish & Wildlife conducted ditch shocking over the summer in an effort to learn when and how many fish are getting into the 15-mile long canal that runs along the west side of the Madison from Eight Mile Ford to Valley Garden. The rescue effort works closely with the ditch managers who provide advanced notice of plans to shut down the water. Local landowners also grant permission to access the ditch on their properties. And the willingness of volunteers to come out on a cold November weekend, slog through mud and muck to rescue fish demonstrates the passion people have for the Madison River and its wildlife. Want to help? Contact us about joining the 2008 Bucket Brigade.



DICK M^cGUIRE MEMORIAL FUND

The Madison River Foundation in cooperation with Blue Ribbon Flies of West Yellowstone, Montana, has created a special conservation fund in the memory of longtime guide and wild trout advocate Dick McGuire.

“Dick passed away in July while fishing Ennis Lake,” said Craig Mathews of Blue Ribbon Flies, a longtime friend. “Dick had a lifelong love affair with the Madison River, which he fished for almost 80 years. Dick was most proud of his conservation work. He almost single-handedly introduced the idea of managing the Madison for wild trout. His efforts, supported by the research of state biologists, led Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to stop planting hatchery-raised trout first in the Madison and eventually in rivers statewide.”

“We can think of no more appropriate way to honor the memory of Dick McGuire,” said Foundation President Storrs Bishop. “The foundation is grateful to Craig and Jackie Mathews for taking the leadership role in founding the memorial fund and providing the seed money to get it started,”

“Dick stepped up to the plate many times on behalf of the Madison River,” said Craig Mathews. “We hope Dick’s many friends will step up to support this fund to continue the work he believed in so passionately. We can stand for the things Dick stood for and support projects to preserve and protect the river he loved.”

The Dick McGuire Memorial Fund will be managed by the Foundation and will help finance worthy projects aimed at conserving the Madison River and other wild trout waters in Montana. Tax deductible contributions should be sent to the Dick McGuire Memorial Fund c/o The Madison River Foundation, P.O. Box 1527, Ennis, MT, 59729.

MRF IN ACTION: PROJECTS IN 2008

The coming year promises to be a busy year for your Foundation with some important projects underway. You'll be reading more about these projects in coming issues of the MRF newsletter, but here in brief are some highlights:

~ River User Survey MRF in partnership with Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks will conduct a survey of recreational users of the Madison River from Quake Lake downstream to Black's Ford. This survey will provide invaluable data on river use needed to craft future management plans.

~ Wigwam Creek The Foundation and its partners will repair and install new fences to exclude cattle and protect the restored section of this important Westslope cut-throat habitat on a tributary of the Madison. MRF has been working for three years to improve this stream in the Gravelly Range.

~ Lake Creek Removing a small dam and creating an alternative watering source for a nearby grazing allotment will open up this tributary of the Madison's West Fork to the upstream migration of spawning trout. MRF and the U.S. Forest Service are working together on this project just below Wade Lake.

~ River Guide Seminar & BBQ In May, MRF along with Sun Ranch Institute, Headwaters Institute and Moonlight Basin will host a day long program for Madison River fishing guides. The program will focus on some highly controversial issues – such as limiting the number of guide boats on the river -- as well as information on the biology, geology and wildlife of the greater Madison ecosystem.

DILSCHNEIDER JOINS MRF BOARD



Joe Dilschneider of Ennis was elected the ninth member of the MRF Board of Directors in December. Joe is an outfitter and owner of Montana Trout Stalkers. He has been a professional guide for 15 years and has called Ennis home since 1995. A native of St. Louis, MO, Joe holds a degree in environmental studies from the University of Colorado. Joe is U.S. Coast Guard licensed charter boat captain and a regional director of FOAM, Fishing Outfitters Association of Montana. He is married and has two daughters Welcome aboard, Joe!

DOUBLE YOUR CONTRIBUTION!

ASK YOUR EMPLOYER ABOUT MATCHING GIFTS

You might be able to **double** the value of your donation to the Madison River Foundation. Many companies offer their employees matching gift programs. Ask your employer about matching gifts to qualified non-profit organizations. The Foundation also is qualified to receive gifts of stocks, bonds or other securities. For more information on matching gifts or donations of securities, call us at 406-682-3148.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION & DONATION REQUEST




~ 2008 ~

MADISON RIVER FOUNDATION

Our Mission

WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO PRESERVE, PROTECT AND ENHANCE THE MADISON RIVER ECOSYSTEM FOR THE MUTUAL BENEFIT OF WILDLIFE AND ALL PEOPLE WHO USE IT BY EMPLOYING PROFESSIONAL EXPERTISE AND ADVOCATING WORTHY PUBLIC POLICY TO ENSURE THE FUTURE WELL-BEING OF THIS VALUABLE RESOURCE.

Would like to become a member for 2008 with full rights and privileges at the level noted below:

		Fill in Amt Due
	Lifetime	\$1000 _____
	Royal Wulff	\$100 _____
	Stonefly	\$50 _____
	Caddis	\$25 _____

In addition, I wish to contribute:
\$ _____

I am a current 2008 member of the foundation and wish to contribute: \$ _____

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION \$ _____

MEMBERSHIP FEES AND CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX DEDUCTIBLE

_____ FULL NAME

_____ ADDRESS

_____ CITY STATE ZIP CODE

_____ PHONE NUMBER

Please mail this form, with your check to :
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PO Box 1527 · Ennis, MT 59729



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2008 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

FEBRUARY 18TH

Board of Directors Meeting

MAY 9TH

River Guides' Seminar & BBQ

MAY 10TH

Adopt-a-Highway Varney Road Cleanup

MAY 19TH

Board of Directors Meeting

JUNE 27TH

Annual Membership Meeting & Gala Banquet

AUGUST 9TH

Adopt-a-Highway Varney Road Cleanup

AUGUST 29TH - 31ST

Ennis on the Madison Fly Fishing Festival

OCTOBER 11TH

Adopt-a-Highway Varney Road Cleanup

DECEMBER 15TH

Board of Directors Meeting