

Tight Lines

August 1996

President
Tom Landreth
706-746-2295

Vice President
Russ Burken

Treasurer
Mike Hogelin

Newsletter Editor
Sharon Wilson
706-782-3320

August Program to Focus on Brook Trout

As always, **Dr. Russ Burken's** program in July was informative and entertaining. The one tip that I might pass along to those of you who couldn't make the meeting : keep your tetanus shots up to date. It is a relatively easy thing to do and it might save your trip if you get injured on a rusty hook or knife.

The speaker for this month is **Mitzi Pardue, Forest Fisheries Biologist on the**

Chattahoochee National Forest. **Mitzi** wants to discuss some of her ideas on improving the brook trout population in north Georgia. **Mitzi** has a lot of energy and enthusiasm and looks forward to discussing her ideas with us.

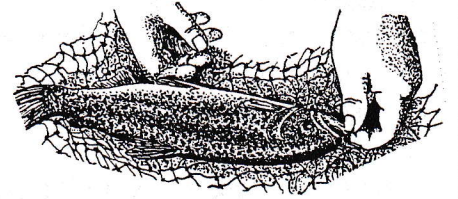
The meeting will take place at the **Rabun County Library** on **Tuesday, August 20th.** Refreshments at **6:30pm,** meeting begins at **7:00pm.** Please plan to join us.

September's Work Project and Campout

If you have not already put our work project on your calendar, please make a note on **Friday, September 13, and Saturday, September 14.** The project for the day will be maintenance of the existing structures on the south fork of Moccasin Creek. The work project will began at **8:30am** Saturday morning.

Details about the "campout" are incomplete at this time. Prez **Tom** is going to check the layout and we will have details in the September addition of

Tight Lines. Please note the dates on your calendar and plan to join us!



**Looking To Try
Something New...How
'bout electro-fishing on
the Chattooga?**

Volunteers are need to help with sampling on the Chattooga River. If you are interested, the first day will be August 27. Fisheries specialist will be sampling the area around Big Bend. Plans at this times are to meet at Stumphouse (Andrew Pickens District Ranger station) at 9am. On August 28, the group plans to sample in Bad Creek and there is the possibility that sampling may continue into the 29th on the East Fork. If you want to try something different and can get off work that day all hands will be welcome and put to work. **Contact Dave Deavours at the Forest Service Office, 782-3320.**

President's Corner

The Interstates between Rabun County and points west have been crowded over the last few weeks; but, now only a couple of stragglers are still to go and perhaps a repeater. Hope the trout cooperated and the runoff was in it's last days where you were.

Mitzi Pardue, Fisheries Biologist, USFS, will be on hand at our August meeting to field questions and listen to your suggestions on Brook Trout habitat and its' improvement, protection and enhancement. That is, after all, what TU is about isn't it? Chapters in other areas of the southeast, especially Tennessee, have become involved with some success.

I'm pleased to announce to the Chapter that Lonice Barrett, Commissioner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources has accepted our invitation to be our speaker at the Rabun Rendezvous. Some of you may have met Commissioner Barrett at public meetings over the last year regarding closure of the federal trout hatchery and at the hearings to determine the direction of Duke's Creek Conservation Area.

See you on the 20th at the library.
Tight lines!

Tom

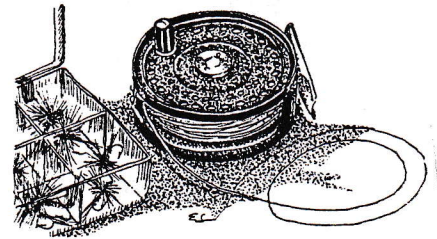
U. S. Forest Service Plan

The revision of the Land and Resource Management Plan for the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests has officially begun. If you wish to make personal comments on the plan and have not received the public letter dated July 30th, you should call the District Office at (770) 536-0541 and request a copy. You can be sure that members of every environmental and conservation group will make their individual thoughts known in addition to the organization itself. We will be discussing the Forest Plan and its' effect on the water shed and the trout fishery.

Foothills Chapter Work Project

Winkley Branch/Dover Creek is the site of the Foothills Chapter/USFS project on Saturday, August 24th. Doug Watson says the work will range from spreading a little bark to installing a couple of cover logs, if the manpower warrants, and finally a little electro-fishing to check on the

Brookie population. If you can lend a hand, meet at the small roadside picnic area next to Chattahoochee Bar-B-Que in Robertstown about 8:30 AM on the 24th. Want to fish afterwards? You're right there at Upper Chattahoochee, Dukes Creek and Bear Den Creek.



Sage Promotion

Sage has announced it is again offering their rods and reels to TU at wholesale prices. The Chapter chose not to order these for auction at last years' Rendezvous, questioning whether or not we would get our money back. Two members of the Chapter took advantage of the offer. This year, as a for instance, Sage is offering a 8' 6", five weight rod that retails for \$420 at a promotional price of \$252. There are, of course, many rods, from 2 weights to 10 weights. The list will be at the meeting in case you or the chapter is interested.

Safe Release of Fish Eludes Most Anglers

By **Charlie Meyers**
Outdoor Writer for *The Denver Post*

Something here just doesn't make sense.

On one hand we have this assortment of regulations — so many it sometimes makes us dizzy just trying to keep them all straight — designed to limit the harvest of fish. The notion, in those waters where these aims fit the resource, is to keep them alive and well so they either can reach the proper size, be caught more than once or reproduce. Whichever fits.

So far, so good. Limited kill and catch-and-release have become valuable tools in fish management, as well as a growing part of the angling ethic.

But now the wheels start to fall off. Many anglers, maybe most of them, don't have much clue how to release a fish without serious, perhaps terminal, injury. The outright mistreatment of most released fish is staggering. How anyone expects them to survive is beyond me.

If any aspect of outdoor education needs a boost, this is it. Time and again, I've watched fishermen at Spinney Reservoir, or several others with size limits, go through the same charade. Each time they catch a fish approaching the limit, which can be quite often, they drag it ashore where it is left flopping on rocks or filling its gills with dirt and sand. The fisherman

rummages for a tape measure, then subdues the fish by squeezing or leaning on it, as if trying to stretch it another half-inch.

Finally, perhaps after being held aloft for the benefit of everyone in sight, it is tossed ceremoniously back into the lake. Typically, the fish has enough stamina to swim away, but what is its chance for survival? Not much.

Some people don't seem to care how a fish is released. Others are well-meaning, but just don't understand the basics. Trouble is, there's lots of confusion about the proper mechanics, and even those of us who think we have it right may have been doing it all wrong.

Recent studies, as reported in the May issue of "In-Fisherman Magazine," seem to indicate that certain accepted methods for handling fish safely may be deadly instead. A case in point is the time-honored practice of "lipping" a fish, then hoisting it into a horizontal position. Experts have touted this as a means of "paralyzing" the fish so it doesn't thrash around.

Evidence from a Texas hatchery indicates that rolling the jaw downward, particularly with larger fish, causes the jaw to be unhinged or broken, which means it can't eat ever again. The fish swims away to a slow but certain death.

Similar suspicion also has been cast upon other previously accepted methods of handling fish. It is fairly easy to understand that a fish flopping in the bottom of a boat or on other hard objects is likely to suffer internal injuries. But experts now believe the same thing may happen to a fish hoisted vertically for display or a photograph. The reason? Fish swim horizontally and are supported by the water. This vertical position could cause displacement of vital organs, especially if the fish is large and is thrashing about.

Also, the vertical hold tempts the angler to insert fingers inside the gill plate. Bruised or bleeding gills is tantamount to death.

There are other, less-obvious elements to handling fish. Many conscientious anglers who take the utmost care in making a release may be guilty of another sin, that of playing a fish too long. Fly fishermen using very light tippets or who are afraid to pressure a fish often fight it to complete exhaustion. When released, it is left to mumble in the current or go belly-up on the bottom.

The combination of a long fight and photo session can be deadly, causing a cumulative stress that makes the fish susceptible to disease.

This article is reprinted by permission of *The Denver Post*.

Basics of Releasing Fish

The very best way to release a fish is to never take it from the water at all. Simply lead it near shore or boat and pluck the hook out. A hemostat, available at most tackle shops, is a useful tool for doing this, particularly if the hook is deeper in the mouth. For large hooks, other implements are available.

But there are many other elements to consider. Here are a few:

- Most authorities believe the best way to hold a fish is with the hands under the belly, taking care not to squeeze. Keep it close to the water, never over hard objects, in case you lose your grip.
- Wet cotton gloves provide a no-slip grip for handling ease.
- If a fish needs resuscitating, support it beneath the belly without lifting it from the water, gripping it just ahead of the tail with the other hand, until it's ready to swim away. If you tire a fish, you're responsible for reviving it, no matter how long it takes.
- If you plan to photograph a fish, have the camera ready. Rehearse your strategy with your companion to reduce time.
- Boaters in deep water should take particular care reviving fish. When exhausted, they'll sink to the bottom, where oxygen is scarce, and never recover. Many lake trout are lost this way.
- Should a net be required, try to keep the fish in the water while removing the hook. A fine mesh is best in preventing injury to gills or fins.
- In every case, keep the fish out of water only as long as necessary. If you're having difficulty with the hook put the fish back in the water until it recovers again. Just because a netted fish is in the water, don't assume it can breathe. If the net is tight, the gills can't open.
- Never put your fingers in the gills of a fish you plan to release, or squeeze it around the head or eyes.
- If there's trouble with a deeply hooked fish, consider cutting the line unless you're dealing with a large lure.

August
1996

September
1996

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30					

August 20, Monthly Meeting at Rabun County Library. Social begins at 6:30pm, meeting at 7pm.

August 27,28,29; electro-fishing on the Chattooga River.

September 13-14th. Campout/work project on the south fork of Moccasin Creek. Details in September's Tight Lines.

**Tight- Lines - Rabun
Chapter TU**



25614405 RE 522 04 GA 9807
DOUG ADAMS
P.O. BOX 65
RABUN GAP, GA 30568-0065

