



## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*"I thought I voted for the legislature to be in session 2 days every 90 years..."*

*W. B. Short, Lewistown, MT, 1972*

Ready or not, the 2021 Montana Legislative Session is now underway and Montana Trout Unlimited will be our voice in Helena. As much as I would like to help our native trout and their habitat by on the ground projects, the reality is that public policy decisions have an outsized influence on the quality of our fishing. For this reason, trout need our voice to be heard in Helena if we are to promote the good bills and stop or at least mitigate, the bad ones. Clayton Elliot is MTU's conservation director and boots in the hallway in Helena so he will be bird dogging what needs to be done in Helena. My request of all chapter members is to help Clayton make sure our message is heard.



First way to help is to become familiar with what bills MTU is following and why. Please, take a little time every few days to pull up the [MTU Legislative webpage](https://montanatu.org) at montanatu.org and click on the 2021 Mt Leg Session link in the upper right hand corner. This page will show you what bills MTU is monitoring, supporting or opposing.

The second way to help is by staying up to date. At the bottom of the 2021 MT Legislative Session page is a place to sign up for Clayton's email updates that come out every other week. Please subscribe to these updates and take a moment to read them to stay abreast of what is going on in Helena.

Third, and maybe the most important, is to pay attention to action alerts. This is when our collective voices need to be heard. The action alerts are very specific about what to say, who to say it too and how to contact the legislature.

Again, my ask is for all chapter members to be involved this session. Go to [montanatu.org](https://montanatu.org), check out the 2021 MT LEG SESSION link, sign up for Clayton's updates and answer the call when an action alert comes our way. An active, informed and involved angler is a powerful angler!

*Stay well!*

*Dan Short*

*FVTU Chapter President*

## START PLANNING NOW



Last winter I put together a plan for angling once spring arrived. During spring run-off and when the river is a rodeo of other users, I often visit stillwaters. You know the ones...everybody knows the ones, it's the same ones. But here's the twist. What I did prior to spring was to open Google Maps and the fish stocking data page of the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks on the computer. I noted the named lakes within 40 miles of my home and then checked that against the FWP stocking data for those lakes. It was quite revealing. I ended up fishing five new lakes last year, most within 35-40 minutes from my home. Almost every time I was the only angler there. And while some lakes gave up their occupants more readily than others, the change in scenery and sense of adventure was worth the time spent on the

computer. An online resource that I recently discovered is the [stocking report for the Creston National Fish Hatchery](#). From that I've circled several new stillwater locations that I'd like to check out in 2021.

To look up stocking plans for your favorite waters check with Montana FWP: <https://myfwp.mt.gov/fishMT/plants/plantreport> – Tim Joern

## SPECIAL SAUCE

I was fishing Clark Canyon Reservoir south of Dillon and the other boats around me were hooking fish while I bobbed about dumbfounded. Broken, I finally asked and was told, "a purple leech." Of course, I had no purple leeches. While I never saw this gentleman's pattern, I was given a verbal description of it. I finished the rest of my stillwater season almost exclusively using the version described below. One of my buddies who witnessed its effectiveness claimed that I must have dipped it in a "Special Sauce", so we call it that. It is one of the simplest flies you'll ever tie.



I use a 2x long standard nymph hook in sizes 8 and 10. I add a little 0.015 lead wire for weight. Tie in a purple marabou tail. Make a dubbing loop and insert a very sparse amount of dubbing. I use Ice Dub UV Dun but there's lots of other "purplish" colors out there. Your spun dubbing noodle should be thin with fibers poking out. There's lots of short, YouTube videos on how to make a dubbing loop in case you've never used this technique. Wrap forward along the shank of the hook to the front and make a thread wrap head. Finally, trim down the longer fibers all around the body. That's it. I'm going tie some Special Sauce flies in other colors and try them out next season. But I will never again be without some purple ones. – Tim Joern

## SMITH RIVER PERMITS 2021

The Smith River lottery application opened on January 4, 2021, and will be closing on February 15, 2021. The drawing for the permits will be held on Tuesday, February 23, 2021. Because of the current health concerns, choosing campsites will be done over the phone and there is no overnight camping at Camp Baker. Details

about the Smith River Private Float Permits and the Super Permit Lottery can be found at:  
<https://fwp.mt.gov/stateparks/smith-river>

## GLACIER NATIONAL PARK: NATIVE FISH UPDATE

By CHRIS PETERSON - Hungry Horse News

A project to rid a couple of high mountain lakes in Glacier National Park of non-native fish and replace them with native species was a success, Park fisheries biologist Chris Downs said.

Biologists last year treated Camas and Evangeline lakes and a portion of Camas Creek above Arrow Lake with Rotenone, a fish toxicant to kill non-native Yellowstone cutthroat trout.

In turn, pure strain westslope cutthroat trout from Hay Creek, which is just outside the Park and North of the Flathead Tributary, were raised in a local hatchery.

Last spring, 1,000 fingerlings were stocked in both lakes. The idea was to establish a sustainable population of pure strain westslope cutthroats in the lakes and the stream.

The upper end of the drainage is protected by waterfalls that keep non-native trout and hybrids such as rainbow and westslope cutthroat crosses from migrating upstream.

The Park eventually will stock bull trout from Quartz lake into those small lakes as well.

It's part of an overall larger effort to preserve native species in Glacier.

Locally, treating streams and lakes to rid them of non-native species is not new — a multi-year project did the same thing in the Bob Marshall Wilderness to preserve westslope cutthroat trout there.

The Park also continues to suppress non-native lake trout in Logging and Quartz lakes, netting the fish with gill nets.

The idea there was to suppress the lake trout population to the point where the native bull trout can rebound.

In Quartz, the effort is working particularly well, Downs noted, though the problem now is finding enough lake trout to catch and while still limiting "by-catch" of native species such as westslope cutthroat and bull trout.

The question in Quartz is how to get the last few remaining lake trout out of the lake. Lake trout, once they enter a waterway, decimate native bull trout, by both eating them and outcompeting them for food.

At Grace Lake, which is just upstream from Logging Lake, the Park has introduced bull trout propagated from stock from Logging Lake. The bulls are now feeding on non-native Yellowstone cutthroat trout in that small lake and there is early evidence that they may be spawning. The hope is they establish a self-sustaining population as they were first introduced in 2017. Today, some of the bulls are 24 inches or longer.

Could the bull trout eat all of the Yellowstone cutts?

"That would be a really good outcome," Downs said. "It would be nice if that worked out as a biological control story."

Grace Lake, like Camas and Evangeline, is protected from upstream migration of non-native fish by a waterfall.



*Most fishermen use the double haul to throw their mistakes further.*

~ Lefty Kreh

The Park plans on continuing its effort to re-establish or in some cases, create completely new refuges for native fish.

As climate change continues to impact the Park, high alpine lakes and streams could prove to be key to preserving and protecting native species.

Downs said the next lake biologists are examining is Gunsight Lake. The high mountain lake is perched just on the east side of the Divide and is fed by Jackson glacier as well as huge snowfields.

But Gunsight isn't formalized, Downs noted. "It's just in the idea stage," he said.

## FILLING TIME 'TIL ICE-OUT



The gray days are on us once again. Winter is the perfect time to tend to your fishing gear. Whether that be replacing line, lubricating reels, reorganizing your vest, or tying flies. It's a great opportunity to remain connected to the sport while counting the days until you can be knee deep in a trout stream once again.

Who knows, messing around with your fishing equipment may get your mind off of 2020, if even for just a short time. See you on the river come the Spring – *Jim Borowski*

## Quinnett's Quips

### STRESS AND FISHING

"People ask me, "Does fishing help reduce stress?" Being a savvy, cautious scientist whose ethical responsibilities include never misleading the public about health research, my answer is always the same: "Not if you're a fish." Does fishing work faster, better, and longer than tranquilizers, even if it costs more? Will angling add days to your life? If you go fishing say, six days a week, will you live almost forever? The answer is "Yes" but you have to remain single, live in a cave on welfare or become a fishing guide."



*Dr. Paul Quinnett from Spokane, WA, is a clinical psychologist and a leading expert on mental health and suicide. In his books "Pavlov's Trout" and "Darwin's Bass" he presents passionate support for the linkage between good mental health and a bad fishing habit. In this and coming newsletters we will share some of his wisdom.*

*òòy is the Salish word for bull trout. This newsletter is a quarterly publication of Flathead Valley TU and does not necessarily reflect the views, agenda or policy of Trout Unlimited.*