



The *Tippet*

November, 2009

Clearwater Fly Casters
www.clearwaterflycasters.com
A Federation of Fly Fishers Club



President's Message

Steelhead are moving up the Snake, Grande Ronde and Clearwater Rivers in near record numbers and providing some exciting fishing. With the colder weather and the deep freeze a couple of weeks ago, the water is cold and the fish are holding close to the bottom and somewhat slow to the take. Nevertheless, in my expeditions to the Snake, the fishing has been excellent. The fish are taking an assortment of flies and some bead heads. The crowds of fishers were quite thick earlier, but they should move out and make it easier to fish the more productive spots.

Our treasurer, Bruce Frazier, is trying to bring in delinquent membership dues and is having some difficulties. Membership dues are vital to club activities. So, if you are in arrears, please pay your dues so we can continue to fund our scholarship and bring in excellent guest speakers.

The raffle at our next meeting will include another raffle ticket for The Federation of Fly Fishers "Five Rivers Sweepstakes". I wish to thank Dave Cuellar from the Fly Shop in Pullman for his contributions to the raffles at our meetings. The club also appreciates the donated items that have been contributed to the raffle, so keep bringing your extra fly fishing materials and art.

We are attempting to compile a roster of members with snail mail addresses and email addresses for better communication. If you have not been receiving email messages, please send me your current email address at muehlbauer406@roadrunner.com and also inform us if and when your email address or home address changes.

I hope to see everyone at our next meeting that will be highlighted by our scholarship recipient and guest speaker, Jens Hegg. Tight lines!

Fred Muehlbauer, President, CFC

The *Tippet* Online

The newsletter editor and the board have developed an alternative way for members to receive our club newsletter. As you may know, *The Tippet* appears each month on the club website. The Newsletter Editor will send an e-mail with a link to *The Tippet* on the club website, where a member could read the newsletter. If individual members 1) want to go to this paperless e-mail system, or 2) if they would like the e-mail reminder in addition to the mailed black and white paper copy, they should indicate this to the newsletter editor (Reid Miller) and provide their e-mail addresses. A list was circulated at the October Meeting, and members attending were asked to check their preferences. If you were not there, and want to receive *The Tippet* through the e-mail link, please sign up at the coming meeting or e-mail the editor at millerre@moscow.com.

Calendar

Nov 11: CFC Meeting, Jens Hegg, "Fall Chinnook: Ear Bone Chemistry and Spawning Destinations"

Nov 19: CFC Fly Tying Night, Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM, Chernobyl Ant

Dec 9: CFC Christmas Party, Gift Exchange

Dec 17: CFC Fly Tying Night, Moscow Fly Shop, 7-9 PM, Bloody Muffler

Jan 13: CFC Meeting, Red-Gold Video

Information

The Tippet is available as a PDF file on our web site. Please submit information to the Newsletter Editor.

Meetings 2nd Wed:

**Wet Fly Hour: 5:30 PM
Dinner: 6:30 PM
(buffet, \$16 per person)
Program: 7:30 PM**

November Speaker – Jens Hegg, “Fall Chinook: Ear Bone Chemistry and Spawning Destinations”

I grew up near the town of Palouse on a farm overlooking the Palouse River. In fact, my first experiences with fly fishing and fly tying, at around the age of 10, were directly related to this ignoble location. Although there is no shame in catching nearly 100 fish in four hours of fishing, and a 15 inch Northern Pikeminnow puts up a nice fight on a light rig, there are very good reasons that pikeminnows and white suckers are not considered sport fish! Since then, I have spent time fishing some of the more scenic and pristine rivers in Idaho and Minnesota with varying levels of success.

I received my undergraduate degree from Macalester College in St. Paul, MN. I realized during my time there that I liked aquatic ecology. I liked working in a system that is hidden right in front of us, almost a foreign world just below the surface of the water that most of us rarely interact with, except from the end of a fishing rod. While in Minnesota, I worked on projects ranging from population studies of endangered river mussels and biological monitoring of non-game fish, to an independent study of mosquito larval control in the Brazilian Amazon. After working in bio-plastics research and medical device engineering to pay the bills, I decided to return to graduate school, get back into ecological work, and pursue my dream of becoming a professor. This has brought me back to the Palouse as a master's student at University of Idaho. To help support my research, I was proud to receive the Bill Alspach and Dave Engerbretson Memorial Scholarship last year.

At the November meeting, I will present some background on the history of Fall Chinook in the Snake River Basin, the current state of the population, and some of the interesting results of my research. I am using the chemistry of Fall Chinook ear bones to reconstruct their spawning location and migratory habits as juveniles. Understandably, this probably sounds yawn inducing and esoteric—typically academic. But this esoteric investigation of tiny chemical patterns has big implications for fly fisherman. The miniscule chemical patterns in salmon ear bones, measured in parts per billion, represent how a salmon moves through thousands of miles of river and ocean. These movements affect the success of our management efforts to restore Fall Chinook, which in turn are affected by the environmental changes caused by dams, deforestation, and possibly even climate change. This is only the second year in 30 years that we've had a Fall Chinook fishing season on the Snake River. In a sense, understanding these tiny chemical patterns affect how likely it is that you or I, our children, and our children's children will get to feel a Fall Chinook on the end of their line.

Backcast to October Meeting: Fishing Reports

Cliff Swanson described trying his first steelheading and claimed he was doing it all wrong, but he will try again. He caught some nice cutts in clear water up on Marble Creek, up to 15 ½ inches. Gary Evers had only one hit on a riffled fly on the Clearwater, but he had some recent activity on a high-country lake using #18 flies. Gerry Vidergar talked about spey casting for the first time, above Cherry Lane, and he had two hook-ups, one in the cheek and one in the thumbnail.

Jim Palmer said there were unbelievable crowds at the mouth of The Ronde, but almost nobody fishing on the Oregon side up near Troy. A license can be obtained at the Shilo Inn in Troy. Jim highly recommended a DVD by Ed Ward, “Skagit Master Featuring Ed Ward: The Casting Revolution that Changed Fly Fishing Forever”, which is described and can be purchased at the following web site: <http://skagitmaster.com/>. It was filmed on the Sauk, Skagit, Grande Ronde and Kanektok Rivers.

A visitor (with Dale, didn't get his name) described a recent trip to Kelly Creek, where he caught a brightly-colored 16 inch cutt. Lynn Youngblood also reported fishing Kelly and the North Fork, with cutts landed to 15 inches. Dave Stiller caught some big fish on the St. Joe. Dave Tharp fished the Clark Fork and caught a variety of nice trout. Doug Young reported fishing in the Glacier Peak Wilderness, catching as many small fish in lakes as you wanted to, but you had to use a black nymph.

October Speaker – Jim Neiberger – “Fishing the Colorado River”

Jim described with words and pictures fishing on the Colorado River from near its headwaters in Rocky Mountain National Park downstream to Newcastle below Glenwood Canyon. He provided club members with detailed maps of four

sections of the river: Granby to Kremmling, Kremmling to State Bridge, State Bridge to Dotsero, and Dotsero to New Castle. These maps (see following pages) show fishing access points, river mileposts, boat launches, campgrounds, adjacent roads and other useful landmarks. He talked about good areas for wade fishing and good areas for floating, with a keen eye to private land that is fenced off or otherwise should be avoided. In Colorado, you are trespassing if you touch the bottom or any fence across the river, and the landowners have their sections patrolled and will take you to court.

The fishing country described ranged from small meandering streams in the headwaters, to run and riffle sections, to tail-water fisheries on three small reservoirs, to roaring canyon sections. The park section of the river is a great dry fly fishery, with brookies and small browns and rainbows all found during the warmer months. The lower sections contain larger fish, both rainbows and browns, and they can be fished most all year.

The pictures and descriptions of the flies, fishing techniques and fish caught at different times of the year were quite detailed and very well organized and presented. Jim described a typical rig he uses most of the year. He uses a strike indicator well above two small shot, above where the tippet section is tied on. On the tippet section, he uses an egg attractor pattern with a midge dropper, tied eye to eye, rather than to the bend in the hook of the first fly. Of course, he substitutes other attractor flies and dropper flies on this basic rig. He finds that the egg-pattern attractor is effective, whether it is spawning season or not. Jim says you are never lonely on the river, although the numbers are lower in the winter. In spite of this, there are wonderful fishing opportunities all year long, except when the river is frozen for a few months in mid-winter. Just before or after ice-out can be a very good time to be on the river.



This picture of Jim and his steelhead was taken on the Clearwater the day after his presentation to the club.

Clearwater Fly Casters' Fly Tying

A group of six Clearwater Fly Casters met at the Moscow Fly Shop October 15th for a fun night of flies, lies and food. The flies being tied were generally variations of the stonefly featured in last month's *Tippet*. The food was courtesy of Northwest 2 Degrees, which had an artist's opening that same evening in the store. And the lies ... about what you'd expect from a group of fly fishers! It was an enjoyable night and a chance to watch others tie and to pick up tips. Dave Stiller let the group in on his tip to keep his hair stacker quiet by tapping it on a large flat pencil eraser, and Cliff Swanson wowed everyone with his green muddlers. We were also joined by Will, a student at the UI, Mark Brownell, and Dale Coryell.

The group will meet through the winter every 3rd Thursday at the shop, 7-9 pm. Plans to have a featured fly demonstrated by a member or other local tiers is in the works. All skill levels are welcome! Don't tie but want to learn? No worries, there's plenty of help available and spare equipment to get you started. If you would like more information or just want to keep abreast of what the group is doing, send your email to tcavi@uidaho.edu and I'll put you on the list. Hope to see you there! Tim Cavileer

Chernobyl Ant

Hook: 3X Long Nymph, Size 6-10

Thread: Orange 3/0

Body: Black closed cell foam, trimmed

Legs: Black round rubber legs, tied "X"

Indicator: Yellow closed cell foam

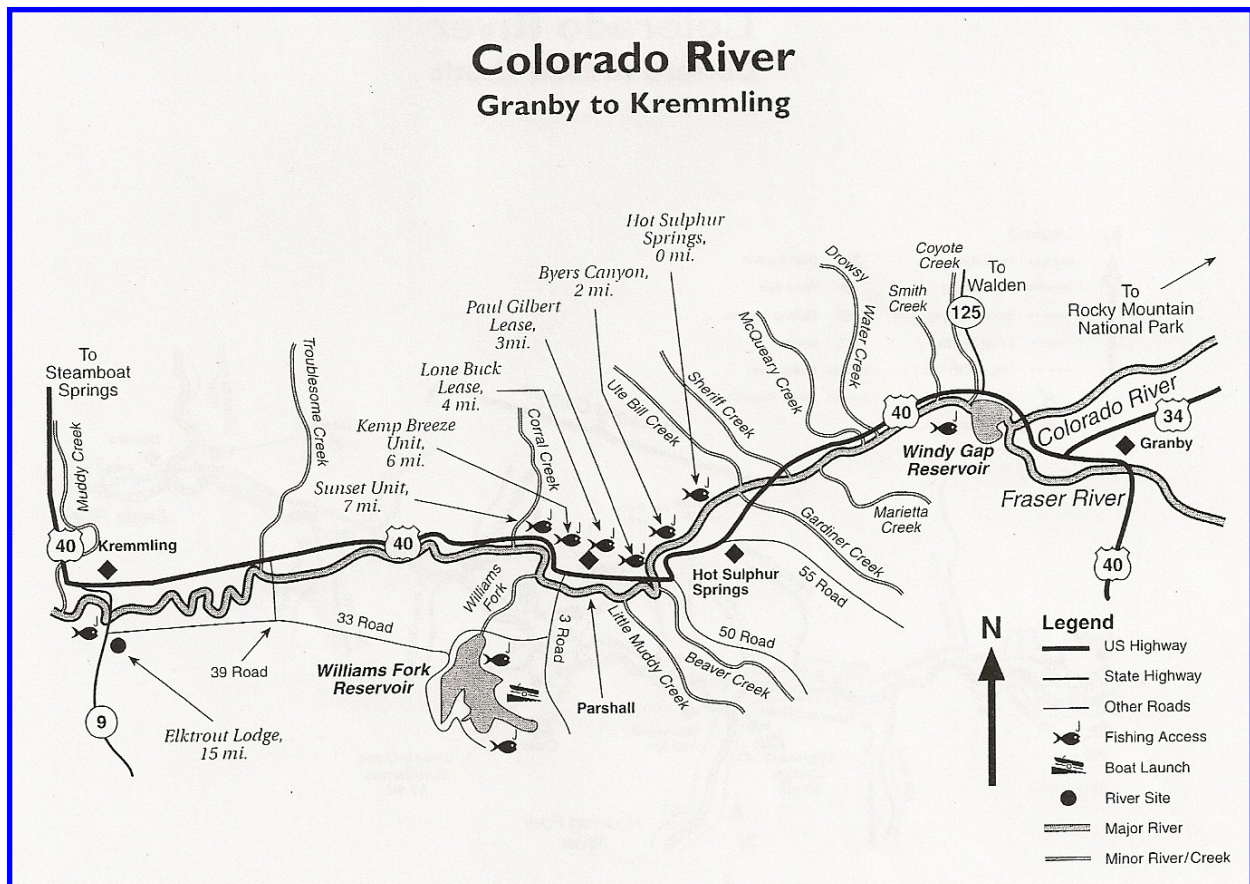
This pattern is used alone for trout and bass, or as an attractor with a dropper. Here is a very simple one. This fly can be modified by using an underbody of another color foam or a wrapped flashy material. The indicator can be any color easily seen on the water. The picture is from the website: www.danica.com/flytier/dsmith/chernobyl_ant.htm



Jim Neiberger's River Maps

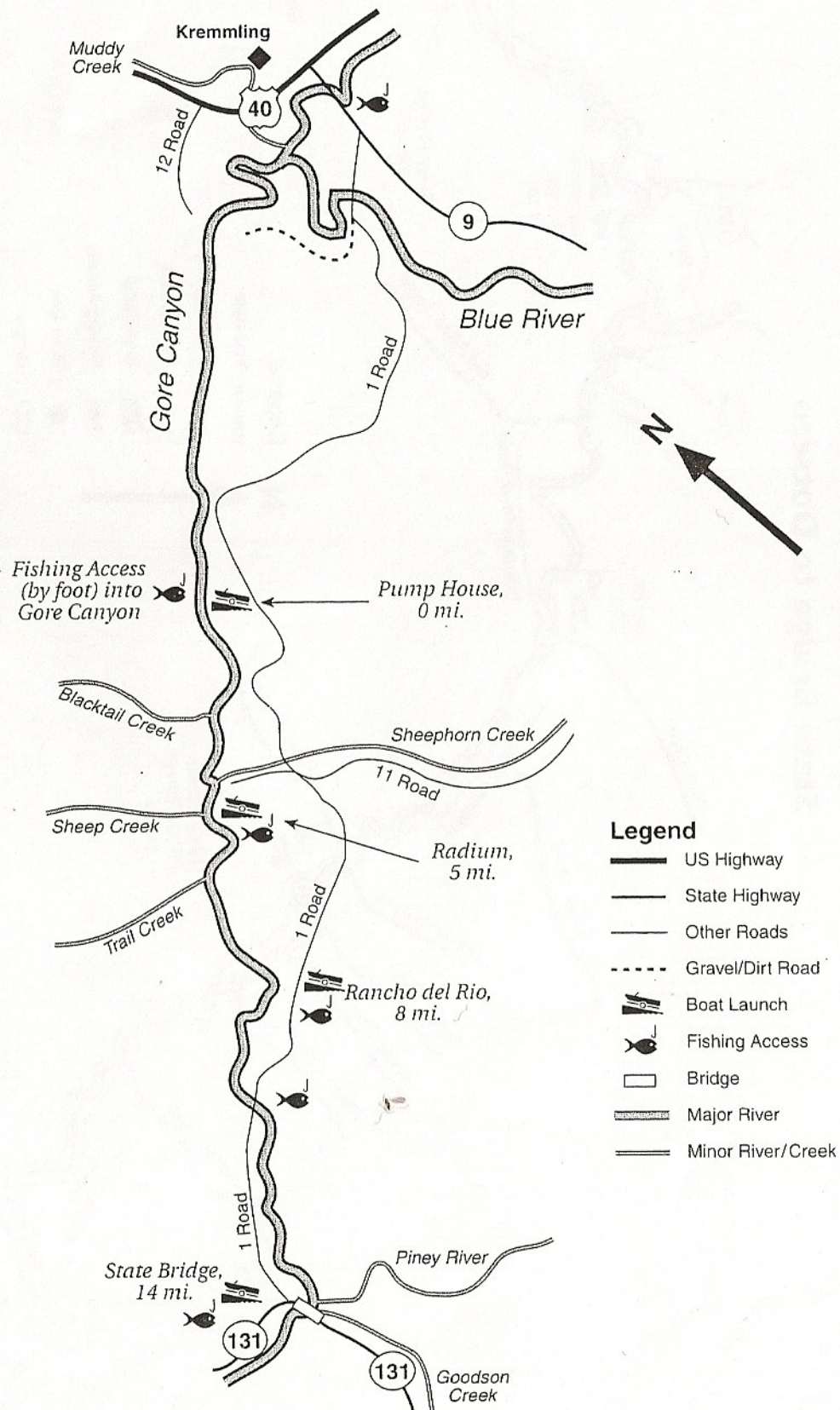
The river above Kremmling is a designated Gold Medal Stream. It has runs and riffles, and is the most popular wade fishing area, being only two hours from Denver. From Kremmling to State Bridge, there is no access to the upper canyon section, although one can walk up the railroad a ways from the bottom end. There is a famous and well-used float section from the Pump House down to State Bridge. Although only Class II and III rapids, people do die floating through there. He recommends using three nymphs, and catches 14 inch rainbows and browns, as well as many whitefish. There is an RV park with shuttle service at Rancho Del Rio, above State Bridge.

The Dolsero to New Castle section has larger fish, to 20 inches or more, and both rainbows and browns. October is the prime month, with the last two weeks usually spectacular, with the fall colors, clear water and fish feeding up for the oncoming winter. It was interesting to see the fishing in Glenwood Canyon, right under I70, which is built over the river in long sections. This is a big rafting area with deep water and some excellent fishing. Some side streams, such as the Frying Pan and Roaring Fork have big fish.

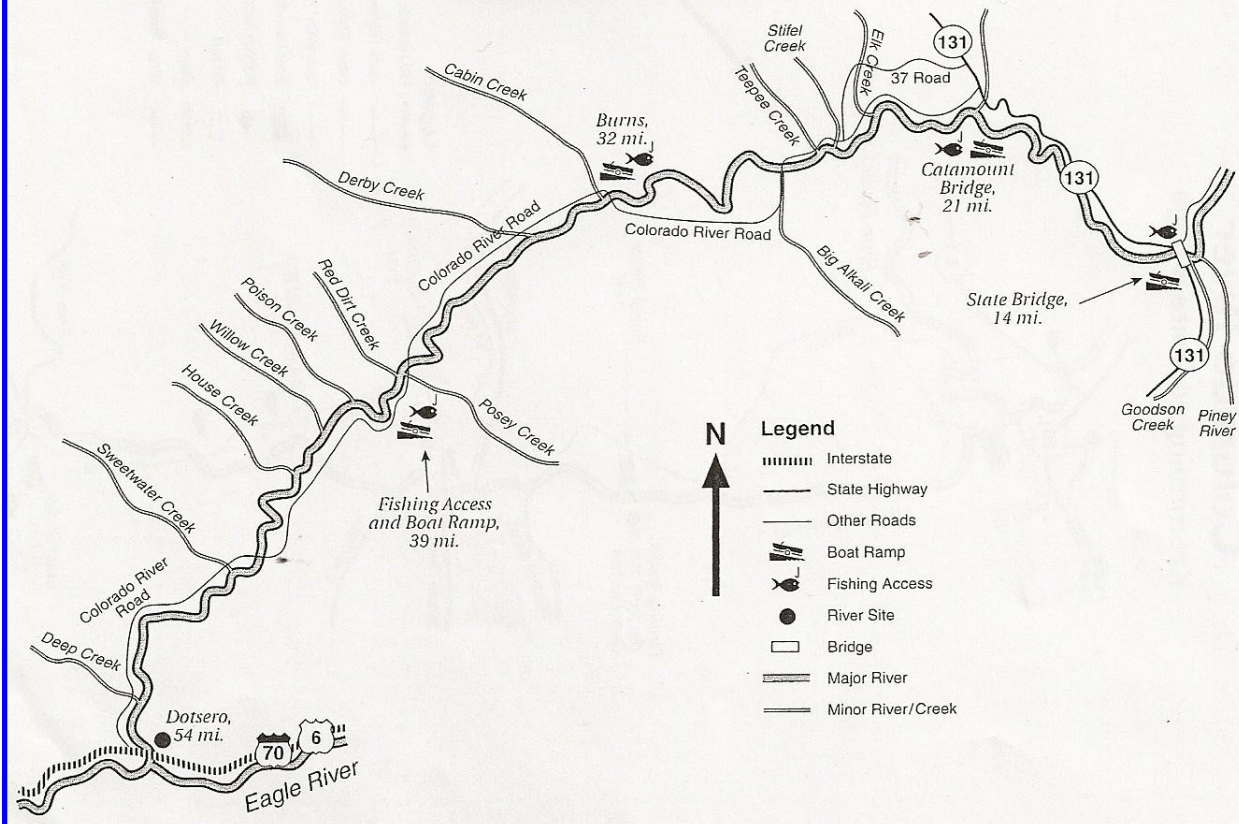


Colorado River

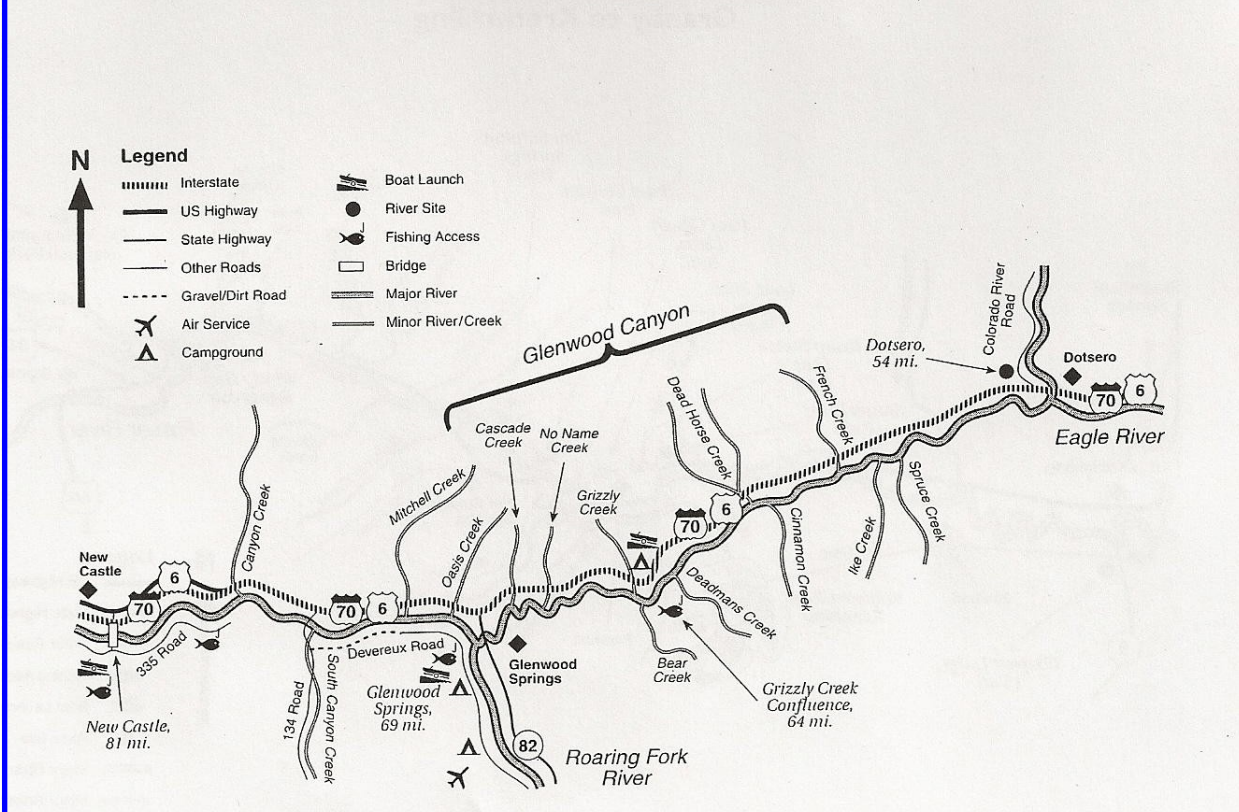
Kremmling to State Bridge



Colorado River State Bridge to Dotsero



Colorado River Dotsero to New Castle



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Clearwater Fly Casters

November, 2009

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CFC membership dues are \$20/yr for individuals, \$30/yr for families, \$10/yr for students, \$50/yr sustaining, \$300/lifetime. Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday, September through May, at the Best Western University Inn, 1516 Pullman Rd, Moscow, Idaho. Wet Fly Hour 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM and Program at 7:30 PM.