



# NEW MEXICO TROUT

March/April 2008

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## N.M. Game Commission Notes february 21, 2008

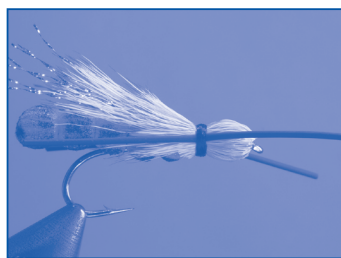
*by: Don Hurst, Program Chair*

New Mexico Trout members were blindsided by this action, and until I began receiving emails about two weeks ago, we had no idea this statewide change in regulations was being considered.

We urge you to table this action until the problem can be studied, and good data generated showing the extent and seriousness of the problem. This change in statewide regulations can have far reaching implications.

*continued on page 6*

## fly of the month - rogue stone



*Fly and photograph by  
Jeremy Barela*

- Hook:** 3x Long nymph hook, size to match hatch
- Thread:** Black 6/0, Black 3/0 to spin deer hair
- Body:** 1/8" Rainy's Evazote Sheet Foam colored with black marker
- Underwing:** Copper Krystal Flash
- Overwing:** Deer hair
- Head:** Deer hair, tied in bullet style
- Legs:** Black rubber legs
- Collar:** thread

- Take sewing needle and place in vise. Cut foam about 1/4" thick and 3" long. Fold in half and stick needle through halfway point of foam, sliding foam onto needle. Start thread on right side of foam, fold foam over and make first section of the abdomen, place half hitch. Fold foam back, advance thread 4-5 wraps on the needle, pull foam back and create second section of abdomen, place half hitch. Repeat this step one more time, create half hitch, trim thread and slide abdomen off of needle. Place hook in vise, take abdomen and place on top of hook and create two more sections on abdomen. Trim access foam.

I have found this to be the best stonefly pattern to use on the streams of New Mexico when fishing the stonefly hatch. It's very realistic on the water and can be fished dead drift, skated across the river at an angle or slowly stripped up stream. Also, because of the floatability of this fly, tie a nymph off the back and fish those deeper holes.

# new mexico trout volunteer projects 2008

## **April 26th, 2008**

Rio Guadalupe River and riparian corridor campsite clean up and restoration:  
Fire ring clean up and removal of debris; removal of multiple fire rings from campsites;  
river and riparian trash brigade; Contact: Amanda Webb (USFS)

## **May 10th, 2008**

Annual BBQ! Upper Rio Cebolla Kiosk Installation; Upper Rio Cebolla gates,  
signage, and three miles of fencing repair/maintenance;  
Contact: Amanda Webb or Kimberly DeVall (kiosk) or Derek Padilla (fencing) (USFS)

## **June 21-22nd, 2008**

Mushroom Basin Fencing Project; Contact: Derek Padilla (USFS)

## **July 12-13th, 2008**

Rio de las Vacas stream restoration and exclosure project  
Contact: Julie Walker, NMENV (505-476-3069)

## **July 26th, 2008**

18th Annual Kid's Fishing Day at the Seven Springs Fish Hatchery;  
Contact: Kimberly DeVall (USFS)

## **August 2-3rd, 2008**

Rio de las Vacas stream restoration and exclosure project  
Contact: Julie Walker, NMENV (505-476-3069)

## **September 27th, 2008**

Oat Canyon Erosion Control and Stabilization; Contact: Jo Wargo (USFS)

TBA: Installation of remaining kiosks and interpretive panels along Rio Guadalupe  
and Rio Cebolla

TBA Spring/Fall 2008: Willow Planting Demonstration Projects

TBD/TBA: Buck and pole fence and exclosure building for riparian wildlife habitat (New  
Mexico Jumping Mouse) that also supports motorized vehicle closures on Rio Cebolla

TBA: Elk exclosure construction and riparian restoration projects on Comanche Creek

## **Contacts**

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# letter from the president

Mike Maurer, NMT President

## March/April 2008

Well finally a little warm weather!!! As I write this, it has climbed into the 60's and I'm suffering from a bad case of spring fever. Actually I have been able to keep my resolution and I got a day of fishing in both January and February. Although stream fishing looks iffy this spring, at least we are going to have plenty of water this year.

The December and February meetings were a big hit and we are going to continue the same series, i.e. fishing the streams close to us. Last month's stream was our home stream the Rio Guadalupe and it sure attracted a lot of interest. In March we will talk about the Rio San Antonio. Jerry Burton will lead us on a tour of what's there, how to get there, what the stream looks like in different stretches (the San Antonio has a terrific variation in types of structure from rough and tumbling canyon to pastoral meadow), how to fish it, different types of rigs, you name it , we'll take it on. He is also planning to talk about the Rio San Antonio in the Valle Caldera. He and I will answer any question you can think about on fishing in the Jemez. Jerry can also talk about how to get in the Valle Caldera to fish the San Antonio. There has also been some consideration given to opening the East Fork for fishing and if we have any updated information, we will pass it on. Remember the only bad question is the question not asked, so please don't be bashful; we were all dumb as rocks about this sport at one time.

Last month, Wes Bigney won the 2 weight pack rod! This month, we thought we would do something a little different: We are going to raffle a high end Sage Evolution 0 reel for 2-3-4 wts. This is a gorgeous reel and it will go beautifully with your little light weight rods. Retail on this beauty is close to \$300.00!

Our conservation project season is fast approaching, our calendar is listed in this issue, and we would sure like to see you at one or all of these very worthwhile outings. But if you can only make one, be sure it's the Bar-B-Que on May 10th. We will be installing the new informational kiosk outlining our participation in the "Bring Back the Natives Project" on the upper Rio Cebolla, as well as repairing the fencing we installed about 3 years ago along the valley. The Bar-B-Que is always first class and we have a great time.

We have added July 12/13th and August 2/3rd for working on the lower Rio De Las Vacas building in stream rock structures and enclosures. Plus we will still be adding at least one weekend for working up on the Valle Vidal. Great places to work and great places to fish, there will be plenty of both!

For more information: [www.newmexicotrout.org](http://www.newmexicotrout.org)

President: Mike Maurer, at 505-892-4092

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## 2007-2008

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# Tips from the Experts

*By John Gordon*

My good friend and author Rick Takahashi of Fort Collins is in the process of writing what will be the most comprehensive book ever written on midges. He has already collected over 700 fly patterns from around the world. I gave Rick some of my flies, and over dinner he asked me to write a few fishing tips for the "Tips from the Experts" section of his upcoming book. The book is due to the publisher in Sept 2008, so it's at least a year before the general public will view it. I'm not sure if any of this will make it past the editors and into the actual final print, but I thought it was good information to share. I was limited to one page so this is what came to mind.

-The single biggest piece of advice I can give is this: Downstream hook sets increase hook up ratio dramatically. This pulls the hook into the fishes mouth and not away. Always try to set the hook in a downstream manner.

-My belief is the most common mistake nymph fly fishers make is failure to adjust their depth and weight. A lot of fly fishers will set up for the day and not adjust the weight or depth they are fishing. They will change flies like crazy but not take depth and weight into consideration. As you move up or downstream, be aware of your surroundings. Make note of changes in the water depth, structure type, and current speeds. Lengthen or shorten your leader accordingly. Add or reduce weight to give you a proper drift. Always keep in mind that the speed of the water will be different at the surface compared to the deeper water you are fishing below.

-Keep an eye on what the fish are doing and where in the water column they are holding. This will give you valuable information. When fishing midges in the early morning, you will be fishing Larva type patterns and the fish will usually be holding

close to the bottom. When a hatch is starting, you will see the fish move up in the water column and stage in the middle to the upper section. At this point you will want to be fishing midge pupa patterns, and when the fish are feeding in or near the surface film, emergers or dry flies.

-In regards to sight fishing keep the sun to your back. Wear a hat with a wide brim. Look ahead in the water as far as you can and then scan back to you, take a few steps and repeat. You will see more by being out of the water. Use a high vantage point from which to observe. Use shrubs, trees and rocks to break up your silhouette. Don't wear brightly colored clothing. Use a low profile to fish. Be cognizant of your shadow and movements. Don't look for the whole fish; learn to look for parts, movement or flash of a feeding fish. Look for movement of just the fins or tail, the triangle shape of the head, and for shadows on the river bottom. Be patient and methodical in your approach.

-Be observant when fishing. Learn to locate and watch your flies in the drift and then observe the targeted fish. Look for gill flare, flash, white of the mouth, or any movement that would indicate a strike.

-Watch the water currents (fast, slow, eddies, etc.) and really think about which way you need to mend to get a good drift.

-If fish are feeding on emergers try swinging your flies at the very end of your drift. This is done by slowly raising the rod tip to allow the flies to rise up through the water column.

-THINK LIKE A FISH!

# World Class Fly Fishing in the Heart of a Volcano

*By: Dave Menicucci*

There are few places in the world where one can experience the array of outdoor sporting activities found in the Valles Caldera National Preserve. Lying serenely in the Jemez mountains of Northern NM, just to the west of Los Alamos, it beacons to all who wish to experience true natural splendor.

To those who spend winter's leisure hours tying flies and dreaming of trout fishing in the wild, the Caldera offers a challenging experience that rivals the best that can be imagined. In an average day on the Rio San Antonio, one of the two trout streams on the Preserve, a good angler can hook 30 or 40 trout. The costs are modest and the fees are used to maintain this pristine land for generations to come.

The boundaries of the Preserve encompass the remnants of a group of major volcanoes that erupted a little over a million years ago. What remained after these massively violent events was a huge crater, or Caldera, with a soil constitution that has fostered grasses and resisted trees. Today we see the crater as the grassy Valles Grande.

The area has been coveted by people since the earliest Indians. In the late 1700s Spanish explorers claimed the land for grazing and shortly thereafter the land was officially granted to the Cabeza de Baca family. After changing hands several times over eight generations, the federal government bought it in 2000. Its manager, the Valles Caldera Trust, is working to bring the Preserve to self sufficiency by 2013.

The headwaters of the Rio San Antonio and East Fork of the Jemez River are located in the heart of Caldera. Both are fed by natural springs, which produce cool water year round, perfect for the Brown trout that dominate these wandering streams. Although the waterways are small, rarely wider than 10 feet and sometimes as narrow as 24 inches, they are replete with fish. Many are seven to ten inches long, but occasionally a twelve or thirteen incher can be taken from some of the deep, cold pools.

Fishing is allowed on Thursday through Monday from late May through September. To reserve a place on the stream,

you must purchase lottery tickets for specific dates. Winners are selected by a random drawing. You can apply via a toll-free number (1-866-382-5537) or the web: [www.vallescaldera.gov/reservations/reservations.aspx](http://www.vallescaldera.gov/reservations/reservations.aspx)

Every lottery winner is allowed to bring up to three guests, each of which will pay an access fee. Each fishing party is assigned to a section of the river called a beat. Caldera drivers provide transportation to and from the stream. All anglers must possess a valid New Mexico fishing license with a habitat stamp, and everyone is restricted to barbless, single hooks with artificial lures.

The Rio San Antonio meanders through a huge meadow with knee-high grass and no trees or other natural cover to conceal your presence from the fish. What's more, the water is typically clear, except following a shower. Part of the East Fork mingles through forest land, but much is similar to the San Antonio. However, the East Fork is not yet open for fishing.

If you win an opportunity to fish on the Caldera, careful preparation will help ensure a successful outing. Dress for changing weather, 30-40 F temperature swings during the day, and very high UV radiation conditions. Bring plenty of water, at least a quart, as well as food. Insect repellent and a first aid kit should also be in your bag.

You'll need good equipment and the skill to use it. A short rod with light line, leader, and tippet works well on the small stream. Be sure to pack extra fishing equipment; for once you are on the river, you can return to your vehicle only in an emergency.

Upon arrival at your beat, it is wise to check the bug population and select a fly that resembles what is moving about. In general, grass hoppers, black ants and caddis flies are good bets in the warm months. The river's meanderings provide many quality places to land your dry fly, including tight bows where deep water rolls through a turn and then morphs into swift riffles.

Perhaps the most important guiding principle to Caldera fishing is stealth and suave. The resident trout are wily, cautious, and skittish. They can be easily spooked and scattered, but will return 10 or 15 minutes later, providing that you settle yourself and sit quietly. By maintaining a low profile, walking softly and slowly, and whispering, you will maximize your chances of success.

Usually the fish are facing into the stream-flow waiting for food, so approaching them from the rear provides some advantages. When you first draw near to the bank, crawl on your hands and knees. When you are close enough so that the end of your rod is just over the bank, flip the fly onto the water. You will not be able to see the action so listen for the take and then set the hook with an upward motion.

After you have caught a fish or two from your crouched position, you can settle into a spot on the bank from which you will cast upstream. It is especially advantageous to work a bow in the river with a deep bank where you can nurse the fly through the turn and onto a riffle.

The presentation is extremely important. The fly should lay itself out onto the water at the end of a line roll. Be sure to tend the line downstream and mend it as needed to maintain a natural appearance. When the fish are active and you have presented the right fly, they will take it almost immediately as it hits the water.

Teamwork is also important. It is a good idea to rendezvous with your mates at regular intervals to share intelligence i.e.,

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*N.M. Game Commission Notes continued from page 1*

Many, many fly fishers and our membership use three flies, the well known Dr. John Barr, the retired dentist and fly designer, has popularized the Hopper/Copper/Dropper method using three flies. The time honored method of wet fly fishing going back hundreds of years uses a "cast" of flies, normally 3 or 4.

This action would make immediate outlaws of many NMT members and the general fly fishing public who use more than two flies. Plus you need to consider the added burden put on game wardens trying to enforce this regulation statewide.

An analogy to think about might be to consider deer or elk hunting. We have all heard of the poor unfortunate animal, gut shot, sometimes dragging an arrow to die in someone's front yard. This may not happen often, but it does happen, yet no one is considering eliminating archery as a method of hunting.

the kind of bugs that have been effective, where the strikes have been made, and what presentation is most effective.

It is up to you how many fish you take (within the limit allowed by the Preserve). In any case if your day is even marginally fruitful, you will be returning many fish to the stream. These trout are a treasured resource and it is essential to avoid harming the ones you return. It is best if you can keep them at least partially in the water when you are removing the hook. Never touch them with dry hands and if they are limp in your hand after being worked to shore, revive them by holding them lightly with their snout into the flow until they swim off. If they have taken the hook deeply or you cannot remove it without damaging them, simply cut off the line at their mouth and return them to the river. The hook will dissolve in a few days. The Valles Caldera Natural Preserve is a jewel of nature. The abundance of wildlife in the area offers fishermen and women and other outdoor activists challenges and experiences the likes of which they have scarcely imagined. If you properly prepare, your fly fishing trip on the Preserve will be an event that you will savor for life. Barbed hooks with the barbs fully smashed down are also acceptable.

"Mending" adjusts the line so that fly and the line flow at the same speed. Without mending, the line's flow will change the fly's direction on the water, disrupting the natural appearance of a free-floating fly. Mending also minimizes slack in the line, thus allowing for quick setting of the hook.

*Copyright © April 18, 2007 by David Menicucci*

One of our board members, Jerry Burton, a retired fisheries biologist with the Fish and Wildlife Service, could not be here today but asked me to relay this message and it sums up our position;

"I do believe that before the Commission makes any decision on this subject, they should first have research done to determine the extent of the problem. And if so, how does the mortality factor compare to other factors such as handling stress, deep hooking, old age, disease, and egg retention? There is a good amount of data available on these factors and these should be studied."

Thank you for your consideration.

# About Trout - a book review

*By Jerry Burton*

I had not heard of Robert J. Behnke prior to moving from the Pacific Northwest to the southwest. I should have however, since I was a fisheries biologist who had been working with salmon and steelhead in the northwest and trout in the southeast. Then in 1977, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) decided to try a different way of doing business and established Area Offices in Arizona and in Texas. This was during a period when the Service was gearing-up to implement the Endangered Species Act. Each Area Office was staffed with a fisheries biologist who would be the coordinator for both the Service's Fisheries programs and Endangered Species programs for a two state area. I applied, and was selected, for the Phoenix office. Thus began my time in the southwest and getting to know the man all us fisheries biologist knew only as "Behnke".

Most of my association with Behnke took place while I was attending the meetings of the various professional organizations we both belonged to. My fondest memory was when at a meeting of the Desert Fishes Council in Death Valley, an intense debate was going on between several university researchers concerning the use of various genetic techniques for identifying species of fish. In the heat of the discussion, Behnke gets up and tells this story: He is going duck hunting and he goes to get his Labrador retriever only to find that the dog is sick and can hardly stand up, so he goes next door to his neighbor's house and asks his neighbor if he can use his dog to go duck hunting. His neighbor says, "Are you crazy, my dachshund isn't a duck hunting dog!" The researchers knew they had been trumped, because in spite of all the genetic tests that could be done, they could not determine any genetic difference between a Labrador and a dachshund.

Behnke's latest book, [About Trout](#), is a selection of articles he wrote over the past 25 years for Trout Unlimited's magazine Trout. Any serious trout angler should have a copy of this

book because the articles he has selected to include in the book combine the science and the practical aspects of trout and salmon fisheries management. He explains in an easy to understand manner why trout and trout fisheries are the way they are. I believe even the beginner trout fisher would have much to gain from reading the book. It would provide that individual with a wealth of information about trout and how they grow, what they eat, how long they live, and how we, through our actions, can affect their survival.

I must confess that since obtaining the book only a few weeks ago, I have not read all its 245 pages. Like several really good things to eat, I want to take my time and enjoy each bite. Being an old retired fisheries biologist, of course the first things I read were those articles that dealt with the native Gila, Apache, and Rio Grande cutthroat trout that I had worked with over the years. Since some of these articles were written several years ago, Behnke has included at the end of each article an update on the status of the various species, both the good and the bad.

I especially enjoyed the piece titled WE'RE PUTTING THEM BACK ALIVE. The sub-headings in these piece include: Special Regulations Defined, Why the Controversy, The American Phenomenon, A Rallying Cry, Death by Worming, Varying Vulnerability, Their Daily Ration, Death in Winter, Barbless Doesn't Matter, Death by Warming, and Ordering Our Priorities. If a subheading like Death By Worming or Barbless Doesn't Matter doesn't get the attention of a fly fisher, then I don't know what will.

The trout and salmon illustrations by Joseph Tomelleri are one of the great features of the book. Nowhere can you find illustrations of trout and salmon that come anywhere near the perfection of his. He is truly in a class by himself as is Behnke.



visit our website:  
[www.newmxicotrout.org](http://www.newmxicotrout.org)





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## quote of the month

“It has always been my private conviction  
that any man who pits his intelligence  
against a fish and loses, has it coming.”

*-John Steinbeck*

## editor's note

When submitting articles for the newsletter, please remember to include a TITLE, YOUR NAME, and the DATE.  
DEADLINE for next issue entry is APRIL 15, 2008

We prefer MSWord, but can read most any file format.  
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New Mexico Trout is dedicated to the preservation and enhancement of trout fishing in New



Mexico's waters through restoration of riparian habitats and through the education of the public about trout fishing and the value of trout habitats. New Mexico Trout is a 501-c3 non-profit organization, and we welcome your tax deductible contributions.