

**BENDIGO
& DISTRICT FLY
FISHERS INC.**

Inc. No. A00 043 73B



September 2016

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Diary Dates:

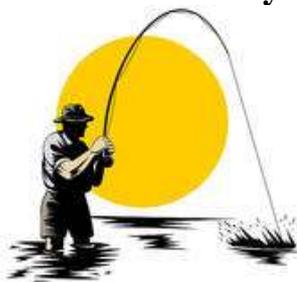
- 6th Oct 2016 Committee Meeting
- 13th Oct 2016 Fly Tying
- 20th Oct 2016 Fly Tying
- 27th Oct 2016 Gen Meeting

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Annual Christmas Dinner

Thursday 10th November at
Kangaroo Flat Sports Club

6.30 for 7.00

Numbers to Jeff Willey



2016 Wastell Shield

To be held Sat/Sun 15th/16th
October.

Call Jeff Willey for accommodation
details



Club Championship for 2016/2017

1st Round

And Sat/Sun 29th/30th October at
Barkers Creek



PRESIDENT:

Damian Keegan Phone 0400 168 483

SECRETARY:

Jeff Willey Phone 5447 1449

TREASURER:

Tom Charles Phone 0431 981 190

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Bendigo & District Flyfishers Inc.
Minutes of Committee Meeting Thursday 1st September 2016
At Brennan Park Clubrooms

The President opened the meeting at 7:35pm.

Present: J. Willey, A. Chisholm, S. Charles, A. Jacobs, D. Keegan, G. Hellsten and T. Charles.

Apologies: R. Garlick, R. Booth and L. Crimeen.

Minutes of the previous meeting were read and confirmed a true and accurate record with changes.

Moved: T. Charles 2nd: G. Hellsten **Carried**

Treasurer's Report: The Treasurer reported that a full three monthly report will be presented at the next committee meeting.

Correspondence:

1. Bank statement;
2. Flyer – Calder Fly Fishing Club, Open Day 16th October;
3. Email – Wastell Shield; and
4. Raffle tickets – Wangaratta Fly Fishing Club.

General Business:

1. The Rise Film Festival was another success. There were 71 tickets sold and the event was well received by all attending. The President expressed a special thanks to Greg Hellsten for all his efforts in helping arranging the event. He also would like to thank Tom & Christine Charles for their efforts with the raffle and arranging the tea, coffee and biscuits.
2. The President thanked all those who assisted with the annual Pie & Pastie Night that also coincides with the visit from Gav Hurley and Alex.
3. Al Chisholm reported that among other local waters, Lake Eppalock will be stocked with 100,000 brown trout fingerlings and Barkers Creek Res with 10,000.
4. Al Chisholm also reported that the annual Midlands Shield will be hosted by our club at Tullaroop Res on Sunday the 13th November. More info to follow.
5. Tom Charles reported that Barry Burrett has offered to host club members at his property which he has stocked with trout. All thought this was a generous offer and the club will liaise with Barry to set a suitable date.
6. The Calder Fly Fishing Association is conducting an Open Day on Sunday the 16th October 10am to 4pm at Buffalo Stadium, Woodend. Visit calderflyfishing.com.au for more details.
7. As part of a submission for a grant the club received, the purchase of a bigger TV or projector must be fulfilled. After some discussion it was decided that Tom Charles will investigate further and supply a number of quotes.
8. Tom Charles also asked if the monthly newsletter could be in pdf format on our website. Steve Charles to action.
9. Greg Hellsten purchased a signed copy of Greg French's latest book, *The Last Wild Trout*, for the club.
10. Greg Hellsten reported that the 1st draft of the report on Barkers Creek from the ARI is due on the 5th September.
11. After some discussion it was decided to hold a native fish day at Kow swamp. More info to follow.
12. A reminder to all members that the fees for 2016/17 season are now due. There has been a small increase and the fees are as follows: \$50 for adults, \$15 for juniors and \$55 for family membership.

There being no further business the President closed the meeting at 8:40PM.

Jeff Willey Sec

2016 Commonwealth Championships “Bronzed Aussies

When we found out the Commonwealth Fly Fishing Championships were in Eastern Canada (the Quebec/Montreal side). Jenny and I took the opportunity to visit a part of the world we had not been before. The Commonwealth Championships are held every two years and are competed between teams from Commonwealth countries. There were teams from, Canada, Australia, South Africa, Northern Ireland, England, New Zealand, Scotland, Isle of Man, Wales, Malta, and 3 Women’s teams (from South Africa, England, and Scotland)

The competition was based in Mont Tremblant, A beautiful location in the mountains. It is a ski resort in winter. The competition venues were the Diable river (French for “Devil’s river). In parts it was slow moving, in others a very boisterous, boulder strewn fast flowing river with a very rocky bottom. When we arrived the Aussies described some of the river beats as “scary”. Some had already been for unplanned swims in the river. The lakes were; DesIlse, Barriere, and Renversie. From the names you can see it is in the French speaking part of Canada

At the official opening of the competition, the Canadian organisers asked if we could be controllers on the river beats. They thought they might be short of controllers. Of course we said “Yes”.

After a very close competition, the Australian Gold team was announced the Bronze medallists at the final dinner. The Gold team members were Glenn Eggleton, Stewart Dick, Josh Flowers, Michael Nolan and Tim Strong. The Aussie Green members, Steve Chatterton, Craig Dawson, David McCallum, Craig Coltman and Geoff Naylor with Shane O’Meara as emergency. A loud cheer went up for the teams when the results were announced at the presentation dinner (Canada Red 1st, Scotland 2nd and Aussie Gold 3rd.) Ivo Balinov, from Canada, won the individual gold medal. Best placed Aussie was Ballarat’s Craig Coltman who came about 8th overall. Craig also won a casting accuracy competition that was held in conjunction with the championships – A great result.

Joe Singe
September 2016



CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016

In the Weekly Times newspaper, July 2014, appeared an article: 'Trout in trouble'. In this report, former Fisheries Victoria Recreational Fishing Manager Ross Winstanley blamed climate change 'exacerbated by the removal of willows' for the loss of high country trout. 'We are fighting against nature' Mr Winstanley said. 'The best we can do is hold off the impact of climate change, reduce it, or slow the impact.'

Along our trout streams and creeks in northeast Victoria, the grim picture is made even worse by the deliberate human intervention of removing crack willow trees, on the basis that they are 'an environmental weed', as labelled by CMA and conservationists; a view even supported by Fisheries Victoria.

The Talk Wild Trout 2015 Conference in Mansfield was rated a success, with 200 people attending. Habitat was a key aspect of most presentations, and I presume that to mean 'good habitat' for our beloved trout. Discussion during Theme 2 – 'Climate and habitat' led to work carried out by Goulburn Broken CMA, mainly willow removal and re-vegetation, along sections of key NE Victorian streams. At one point, when describing willow removal on the lower Howqua River, the presenter added: '...and besides, this is marginal trout water anyway.'



Thowgla Creek January 2000. A good example of willows providing top habitat for trout.

CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016

Dedicated trout anglers (the emphasis at the conference was to improve trout fishing for all anglers) know that willow trees grow mostly along the middle and lower reaches of our trout streams and creeks, and typically these sections are 'the best holding water' for mature trout, and they are for a reason because willow-lined pools are invariably deeper than the upstream forested catchment, and contain in-stream woody debris, providing refuge and sanctuary not only for fish, but all manner of aquatic creatures. These types of places are also a magnet for platypus, native water rats and waterbirds.

But during the summer months the streamside willow makes the most valuable contribution to good trout habitat by providing dense canopy shade, which on some of our smaller creeks can mean total shade above key trout spots.

Many crack willow trees actually grow out of the stream bank, and I know places where mature trees grow directly from the channel bed. Nothing beats this type of in-stream shading. Willow foliage on a mature tree can be dense just above the water surface, and the proximity of branches close to the stream current is a position from which a log jam can start which in turn becomes the best possible 'cover' for brown trout. A well developed 'log jam' can become impenetrable for anglers and other predators, an invaluable contribution to the overall habitat of the stream.

At the Talk Wild Trout 2015 Conference, some key findings were expressed regarding CMA removal of willows:

'Willow removal is unlikely to have caused the observed declines in trout because it has neither been extensive enough, nor occurring in the upper parts of the catchment where the majority of stream shading should occur.'

This view differs from that of Ross Winstanley, so someone is incorrect. The presumption here is that upper catchment stream flows are cooler being mostly shaded by natural forest and the removal of downstream willows (being only a small percentage of riparian vegetation) plays only a minor part in the overall impact (adversely) on trout and aquatic habitat.

The CMA describes willow removal 'as affecting *local scale* shade, habitat and food for trout, but on a *river scale*, the impact from willow removal on trout pales into insignificance against the broader catchment issues like *climate, drought, bushfire and topography*.'

CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016

These catchment issues are set in place by nature and not easily controlled by CMA managers. Combined, they determine the health of a trout stream, good or bad, and no CMA activities are likely to change this. But the deliberate removal of willow trees is human intervention. The CMA recognise that ‘willows are removed by managers because they are a major environmental weed’, but follow this up by stating: ‘but his removal causes a very obvious change to the local stream amenity for trout anglers. It is acknowledged that willows can provide shade, habitat and food at a local scale.’

In north east Victoria, the act of willow removal is supported by re-vegetation of base stream banks, but not always. The new vegetation consists usually of small gum trees housed in tubes, supported by sticks, and planted adjacent to where the willow trees once were.



Thowgla Creek, March 2015. The trees have been ripped out and replaced by rocks to stabilise the bank. But no shade remains, and new trees planted will only ever provide sparse canopy shade and water temperatures will increase in summer to lethal levels for trout.

CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016



Thowgla Creek, again in March 2015. This pool was once shaded by several willows. Now, thanks to “stream improvement” by the CMA an attractive and productive trout habitat has been totally destroyed.

‘Rocking up’ to help stabilise denuded banks often completes the work. Often the rock fill contains a lot of soil and clay, and assorted debris, which contributes to streambed siltation. Very large rock sections require in-stream machinery to facilitate the work, thereby damaging the streambed and invertebrate communities.

We are led to believe re-vegetation of willow cleared banks replaces the shade value of the so-called ‘major environmental weed’. Gum trees growing back from the bank edge will never provide the shade value of a willow, or its lower canopy (over the water), or the potential to develop ‘log jams’, cover and refuge at the base of these trees. ‘Rocked up’ banks deny trout of good habitat, only contributing to increasing water temperature during north eastern Victorian summers.

CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016

On my last visit to the Little Snowy Creek in January 2016, I was keen to inspect the area affected by willow removal, a distance of about 3km above the Eskdale Camping Ground. Every willow had been removed, and the adjacent areas replanted with gum trees. There were some rocky areas too. The gum trees had grown well, some to a height of 8 metres, but there was not shade anywhere over the stream, as they were planted back from the creek edge, and even at full maturity I doubt if the shade capacity could match the in-creek willows.

I took my Loomis rod and searched with my ever-reliable Keam's Autumn Hopper. Not a single response over 500 metres. This was the same stretch of creek that produced fantastic hopper fishing in January 2004. It was then I measured the water temperature, to find it a staggering 29°C! No fish, no aquatic creatures, nothing to suggest any form of life in that once beautiful little creek.

My wife and I drove upstream for about 5km to where the creek emerged from bushland. Here the water temperature was 24°C, hot water by trout standards, but trout can survive in 24°-25°, though it is rare for them to feed and act freely at that temperature.

Removing willow trees from the middle and lower reaches of north east Victorian streams allows summer heat to increase water temperature beyond what is safe for the survival of trout and other aquatic creatures. I fear Ross Winstanley's observations are meaningful. Global warming is increasing our alpine river temperatures, and any intervention to remove shade trees in lower catchments can only have an adverse impact on quality trout fishing. It might result in no fishing at all.

Willow density:

Most trout anglers would know the term: 'choked with willow'. This situation can occur when willows in some areas are left to multiply into impenetrable foliage along riverbanks, such as along the Campaspe River below Kyneton, and the Jacksons Creek below Gisborne.

CRACK WILLOW TREES: IN DEFENCE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO TROUT HABITAT

Robert Roles, July 2016

The approach to willow removal presently is to 'clear-fell' whole banks of trees, usually at public locations that can be viewed easily from a bridge. The CMA is then seen to be doing something. The 'thinning out' of willows, if adopted, could be a tool for relieving congestion while retaining key trees in important locations. This would require supervision by a person who is able to identify the value of certain trees in relation to protecting trout and aquatic creatures' habitat. These trees should be clearly marked for the machine contractor to avoid easily made mistakes.



Thowgla Creek 2015, willows left in place stabilise the bank and provide cover and refuge for fish and other aquatic animals

Revegetating between willows with native vegetation will contribute towards soil stability, and the marked willows will continue to provide valuable shade and habitat for trout and other in-stream creatures. Let's hope common sense prevails.