

Mending Lines

January—March, 2017

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UPCOMING EVENTS

January 19, 2017
Club Meeting
at Classic Cafe
Jeff 'Bear' Andrews

February 1, 2017
Board Meeting
Kaysan's 5th Down
6:45 PM

February 16, 2017
Club Meeting
Classic Cafe
Project Healing Waters

March 1, 2017
Board Meeting
Kaysan's 5th Down
6:45 PM

March 16, 2017
Club Meeting
Classic Cafe
Club Auction

April 1, 2017
3RFF Fly Show
Classic Cafe

April 5, 2017
Board Meeting
Kaysan's 5th Down
6:45 PM

April 20, 2017
Club Meeting
Classic Cafe
Members Favorite Fly's

May 3, 2017
Board Meeting
Kaysan's 5th Down
6:45 PM

Don's Den

January is here and I am working on my calendar for the new year and yes it is getting full. Starting in January the Fort Wayne Sports show is on and I plan to be there at least one day. Next there are two classes on fly tying at Pro Tackle Outfitters March 18th for gill flies and March 25th for streamers that I will be teaching. April 1st is the club fly show and the last week of April I am planning on being in North Carolina chasing trout. May is Big Brothers Big Sisters June July and August are the three club outings. Late summer I will be heading to Grayling Michigan for a week again for trout. Along with this there will be a few trips to Sugar creek to fish with my friend Jerry. I will be fishing the local lakes and rivers and plan a trip or two to the White river for small mouth.

With that in mind it is time to start checking my gear, clean line and reels always check your backing at least once a year. Check your leaders and tippet and take a close look at your rods for any damage that might have occurred over the last season. Don't forget your waders and boots and check any used flies for rust and make sure that the hooks are sharp and replace the flies that you are running low on.

Opening day is when the ice goes off the lake or when the rivers are safe to wade. Don't forget that the best way to catch a lot of fish is to fish a lot. I hope to see you all on the water this year.

Don

FINDING A LOST TREASURE,

Or Is It Just River Junk?

By: Lynn W. Burry

Over the years fishing Michigan's Big Manistee River, my fishing partner, Joe Geisler and I have found one or two lures (LOL) that were lost by other fisherman. Many of the items we retrieved were designed specifically to circumvent Michigan's "No Snagging" laws. A practice that has been illegal for years. They were found hanging from trees, on underwater structure and from time to time, still stuck to a fish's tail or one of its fins. They all had anywhere from a few inches of light mono to many feet of a very heavy test weight braided fishing line attached to it. Some of the items were brand new while others had been in the river for some time. These lures could cost upwards of \$10.00 when purchased new. We would average three or four items a year when we decided to start collecting them.

Our find this year was an exception. This was the first year for my boat on the river and as such we retrieved over 50 lures and other pieces of tackle and a very large ball of line with hooks, beads, a float, lead sinkers of various sizes and shapes and wire leaders in three fowled up messes. The saddest was the pile found on a fish we landed this fall. Joe hooked a King Salmon hen. Just as he was ready to break it off I spotted what looked like a large spoon hanging from her gill plate. We decided to land the fish to retrieve the lure. Imagine our surprise when we put the fish in the boat. I should have taken a picture with the mass of stuff hanging off the fish but we were more concerned with returning the fish back to the river, sans all that junk stuck in her, so she could complete her life cycle with some dignity.



This a picture of the stuff we retrieved from the gill plate of that King Salmon hen. After releasing the fish I spent almost 45 minutes getting the tangled mess cleaned up to what you see. Note the seven "lead spiders". While they do somewhat resemble a lure body shape and the hooks swing freely, the body is solid lead and weighs over an ounce. Thankfully they were finally declared illegal to sell and fish in Michigan last year. The spoon on the Dardevle on the far right measures over 3 ½ inches long.



This picture shows all the lures and stuff we retrieved from the King and from two tree branches protruding from the river bank. I threw away the mangled wire leaders, broken hooks and junk line in the trash. Some notable examples of obvious modifications to circumvent the no snagging laws are seen in the small Dardevle in the upper left corner. In over sixty years of fishing I have never seen any Dardevle that came with two treble hooks. They all had one treble hook about half the size of the hooks on this example. All the beads were from pinned egg rigs. While it is currently a legal rig, I personally do not like them. There are a large number of flies that were snagged in the line balls. Kind of like the Zebra Mussle. Once one attaches to a rock it becomes a magnet for other junk. It is not long before you have a whole ball of them. Another interesting lure is in the bottom right corner. It was constructed using a size 1/0 treble hook with a piece of egg yarn attached. This is a popular west coast style yarn fly. What makes this rig really interesting is the way the large split shots are crimped onto the yarn to add weight. The west coast yarn flies are un-weighted. The big float had a pinned egg rig attached to it. Pinned egg rigs are very popular in Alaska. I have observed more and more pinned egg rigs on the Big Manistee in recent years. Especially among the winter angler that fishes them under a float.

The last picture is the display board of what I have collected over the years. Some of the spinner lures had the blades cut-off so they would go through the water better and would snag on the body of the fish. The spinning blade gets in the way impeding the snag. That is why they are cut-off. It is technically still a lure but has been modified for an unintended purpose. I have seen a good number of these lures stuck in various parts of fish being landed. However, I have never, ever observed one hooked in the fishes mouth. The other sad thing here is that my fishing partner, Joe, has a similar board at his cabin with just as many finds. And even sadder is the fact that this is just a fraction of what is still in the water. I could take you on a short float trip on the Manistee from Tippy Dam to the "Tunk Hole" and show you submerged logs and other underwater obstructions that look like Christmas Trees because of all the stuff that the structure snagged and broke off. When you realize that this is just from one short section of one Michigan River and multiply it by all the other Salmon and Steelhead rivers in Michigan, you can soon get a concept of the scope of this mess. The good thing is that we have at least made this section of the river a little cleaner.



Is there any real solution to stopping this? Probably not. I am willing to bet that some of the lures, flies and rigs pictured were lost by true anglers legally fishing them in the way for which they were designed. However, it is also my opinion, based on years of personal observation and in the way many of the rigs were modified, they were lost by the slob trying to use them. And to this I say, "Way to go Mr. Tree. Is there anything I can do to help?" Any real hope of minimizing the impact of this issue is that there are a few other anglers out there that, like me, have, or will start a similar hobby. Calling the MDNR's TIP Hotline and turning in some of these slobs is another technique to help reduce this pollution. And by all means continue to encourage the MDNR to outlaw this type of tackle is another way to reduce this trash. The less junk that can be taken to the water means less junk that can be lost in the water.

My upside here is that I have a neat one of a kind conversation piece hanging on my tying room wall. When you add the great story it tells, while enjoying a nice extra hoppy IPA or single malt whisky with a friend, always ensures interesting evening. And if nothing else, I could always start a used tackle shop.

So what is the answer to the question presented in the title of this article? It is probably a little of both. It just depends on whether you help by cleaning up such a mess when you find one or you choose to leave it hang.

See you on the water and ...

"May the inside of your waders (or boats) always be dry!"

Lynn

Volunteer Opportunities

The club needs volunteers for the following events:

- At the club booth during the Fort Wayne Sports Show on January 27, 28, 29.
- On March 31 for setup for the 3RFF and during the show on April 1.
- On April 20 at the DNR Free Fishing weekend at Moser Park in Columbia City.
- For the club's Big Brother/Big Sister fly fishing event in May.

We are also looking for new tiers for the Members Favorite Fly's meeting in April.

These events are good opportunities for community outreach and to meet other club members. You might even find out about the latest fishing hotspot. Contact a board member if you are interested in any of these opportunities.

For Sale

Canoe Leg T-type canoe carrier for pickup truck bumper hitch. \$75. Contact: Dave Shideler, 260 579 8672.

Mending Lines is looking for additional member content!

Some suggestions are:

- Pictures of fish caught by members, families, friends...Look at the fishing pictures in the local papers for ideas.
- Pictures and notes from trips. Your notes do not need to be a final article. Your notes can be tuned and reviewed before inclusion in Mending Lines.
- Items for sale
- Fishing and casting lessons learned.
- Favorite Web sites
- Short Stories, Fact, or ????
- Book reviews

Membership Rates:

Dues are for one year beginning January 1 through December 31.

Individual Rate: \$25.00 per year

Family Rate: \$35.00 per year

Junior Rate: \$ 5:00 per year membership 18 or younger and not part of a family

Corporate Rate: \$50.00 per year

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