



## Winter on the Henry's Fork

The temperature was 13 degrees below zero at 6:00 a.m. in Chester this morning. In the pre-dawn light, the packed ice in the Fun Farm backwater looked like an old black-and-white photo from the Endurance expedition. It was hard to imagine anything having survived the night, but the swans were there, hunkered down along the river's margins, and our front yard was filled with deer tracks.

It was hard, too, to imagine any fish surviving in the flowing slush that I could see in the sections of river that were open. Fish do, though, especially if there is enough water in the river. This has been a good winter so far, with above average snowpack and reservoir levels in the upper Snake system approaching full. Even in non-drought years, though, the Henry's Fork Foundation is able to work with our partners to shape flows to provide the best possible conditions for juvenile wild trout to make it through the long, cold dark of winter.

Not that long ago, winter flows would have been kept low well into the winter, and then raised at a date, and to an appropriate level, based on anticipated irrigation needs. This winter, as in past "normal" winters, the Foundation and the Idaho Department of Fish and Game worked with the Fremont-Madison Irrigation District and the Bureau of Reclamation to raise flows early to provide a buffer against low early winter air temperatures. This scenario was a modest gamble that assumed continued precipitation, but it paid off; more importantly, the drought management planning process once again provided a forum in which conservation interests work with water managers to find the best flow scenarios to suit the many demands that the Henry's Fork's precious water serves.

In Harriman State Park, skiers this winter have been surprised to see a tent among the trees and snowdrifts lining Thurmon Creek below the Silver Lake Dam. HFF biologists, assisted by a crew of hardy assistants (notably Trouthunter guides Jake Chutz and Jim Mullen), are manning a fish weir on the creek,

*(continued on page 3)*

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## Message From the Chair

—Layne Hepworth



HFF friends,

I hope that all of you are having a happy and productive 2011 so far. I am lucky enough to spend most of my time in Last Chance and around the watershed in general, and I can attest to the fact that despite the cold and the snow, the life of the Henry's Fork Foundation is a busy and full as ever.

By the time you read this the HFF Board of Directors will have had its first meeting of 2011, in Salt Lake City. That meeting marks the start of our annual round of membership events, beginning with our Salt Lake City reception in March and continuing to our Boise event (April 9), Henry's Fork Day on June 18 on the river, and ending in San Francisco in the fall (date TBD). The Board, staff, and many volunteers work hard to make these events the highlights of the year, and we look forward to seeing all of you there.

Just a few days ago we were saddened by the loss of two staunch supporters of the HFF: Ralph Moon and Nancy Byers. You will find memorials to these great friends of the Foundation in this newsletter.

Thank you for your support, and I hope to see you in a few short weeks on the Henry's Fork!

*Layne*

## Staff News

The HFF is pleased to announce its newest member of the staff. Laverne Judge joined the staff in December as the office assistant. She will assist with fundraisers as well as other administrative duties. Laverne recently moved to the area from Colorado and she brings with her, many years of experience working in non-profit organizations. Laverne and her husband, Rev. Leslie Judge, enjoy music, their two dogs, hunting, and many outdoor activities.



## Thurmon Creek fish trap numbers at-a-glance:

- Currently only about 350 yards of creek habitat are available to trout between the Henry's Fork and the impassable barrier at the Silver Lake dam.
- Between November 18, 2010 and February 10, 2011, 1,507 trout have been captured and tagged at the HFF weir as they move upstream. Most of these trout are young-of-the-year juveniles of approximately 3-7 inches.
- Fewer than a dozen downstream migrants have been captured to date; the outmigration is expected to begin in the spring.
- 162 tagged trout have been released into Silver Lake to monitor their movement in and out of the lake habitat.
- The Foundation is monitoring dissolved oxygen levels in Silver Lake.

*(continued from page 1)*

capturing, recording, and tagging (in the relative protection from the elements provided by the tent) juvenile trout that are using Thurmon as winter refuge. The Foundation is also monitoring winter conditions in Silver Lake; all of this work is unlocking the secrets of trout use of tributary habitat in Harriman State Park, and pointing us towards a fish passage project that will provide access to overwintering trout all the way to Golden Lake. Stated differently, winter survival of juvenile trout is the critical limiting factor affecting the wild trout fishery in the Caldera, and better flows and greater habitat availability are answers to that challenge.

At Chester Dam on the lower river, work is poised to begin on the fish ladder that will connect – from a trout's perspective – the Fall River watershed and the Henry's Fork up to Ashton dam to the rest of the Snake River watershed for the first time in eighty years. That, combined with fish screens on the Last Chance, Cross Cut, and Dewey canals, is the most significant

that we hoped and worked for, but it is far better than some of the potential worst-case scenarios that had concerned us (and which had been openly discussed) over the past year. Here is a synopsis of the ordinance:

Positive:

- The ordinance protects the Henry's Fork from the Mack's Inn Bridge to Vernon Bridge – about 55 miles of river, including the Box Canyon, Harriman State Park, Mesa Falls to Ashton, and the critical stretch between Ashton Dam and Vernon Bridge – from all motorized use.
- The ordinance protects all Henry's Fork tributaries, and all running waters outside those on the mainstem Henry's Fork on which motors are specifically allowed, from all motorized use.
- The ordinance bans jet watercraft and personal watercraft (jet skis) from all running waters in the County.

Negative:

- The ordinance allows 15 horsepower motors above the Mack's Inn Bridge (an existing use), and allows them from Vernon Bridge downstream to the Independent Canal diversion (near the St. Anthony cemetery below town), with the exception of a ban on motors on the Fun Farm backwater.
- The ordinance allows for unrestricted horsepower use downstream of the Independent Canal diversion.

*(Continued on page 8)*



Top) Powerhouse and future tailrace area, looking "upstream". The fish ladder is located to the photo left of the powerhouse. The old Cross Cut Canal headgate is covered under plastic as work progresses on it to prepare for the fish ladder exit which is situated within it. The temporary coffer dams are in place alongside the project above and below the Chester Dam to allow work to take place.

Right) Fish weir on Thurmon Creek

step forward for fish conservation on the lower Henry's Fork in a century.

My article in the last newsletter left readers hanging regarding the outcome of the great Henry's Fork motorboat debate. We now have an answer in the form of the new Fremont County Waterways Ordinance, adopted on January 3. The ordinance is not everything



# 2011 R&R RAFFLE



**Grand Prize—Fall on the Fork**  
Six days of fly fishing in the fall  
on the Henry's Fork and South  
Fork of the Snake River

September 5 - September 12, 2011

**Second Prize—Cottonwood Camp**  
Overnight Fishing Adventure with  
WorldCast Anglers

**Third Prize—Two Nights at Elk Creek**  
Ranch

**Fourth Prize—\$100 Certificate**  
towards HFF Attire or Merchandise

**Fifth Prize—\$50 Certificate towards**  
HFF Attire or Merchandise

**THE SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION FOR RAFFLE**  
**TICKETS IS**

**\$10 PER TICKET OR TEN TICKETS FOR \$80**

The drawing will be on **May 20, 2011**.

If you would like raffle tickets, please call 208-652-3567 or email  
[hff@henrysfork.org](mailto:hff@henrysfork.org). You may also order online at [www.henrysfork.org](http://www.henrysfork.org).

## THANK YOU 2011 RAFFLE SPONSORS

AmeriTel Inn  
TroutHunter  
Three Rivers Ranch  
South Fork Lodge  
WordCast Anglers  
Elk Creek Ranch



Thanks for the Memories!

I was the 2010 Henry's Fork Foundation Grand Prize Fall on the Fork raffle winner; my daughter Nicole accompanied me.

August 31 2010; Our room at the AmeriTel was quiet, well sized and very nice; their check-in, check-out and breakfast staffs were very friendly.

Day One on the South Fork; what more can you say when the last cutthroat of the day was landed while a cow moose watched from 50 yards.

Day Two on the South Fork; my daughter Nicole caught the biggest fish of the day (and her life) a gorgeous 19" brown.

Day Three on the Teton River; the fish were very generous and constant with their time, with Nicole landing the largest and also losing the largest (21+) right at the net.

Day Four on the South Fork; This float fishing is exciting; fishing on top was consistent most of the float and we keep missing cocktail hour!

Day Five on the Henry's Fork; You gotta love Idaho in September; the day's high was 58, and was 44 degrees at takeout. The wind ultimately blew us out of our float. Kudos to our guide Phil, he called for an early pickup and we then floated the Box Canyon. Fishing actually was consistent the entire day despite the wind.

Day Six on the Henry's Fork; cold morning but we still stalked big fish holding tight to the banks, they swirled, bumped and teased us unmercifully. I was able to land a 22" rainbow, my only fish of the day, allowing me to keep up the appearance to Nicole that I can fish.

My daughter Nicole and I would like to thank these four businesses; AmeriTel, South Fork Lodge, Three Rivers Ranch and Trouthunter for donating their lodging, services and meals to the HFF. It shows their dedication to the Henry's Fork and all of us who support the HFF. We especially want to mention our guides, who were tremendous; Lennae and Chuck at South Fork Outfitters; Cliff at Three Rivers Ranch; Phil and Marty at Trouthunter. We hope they had as great a time as we did—we truly had a trip of a life time.

Rob Murdoch  
Boiling Springs, PA

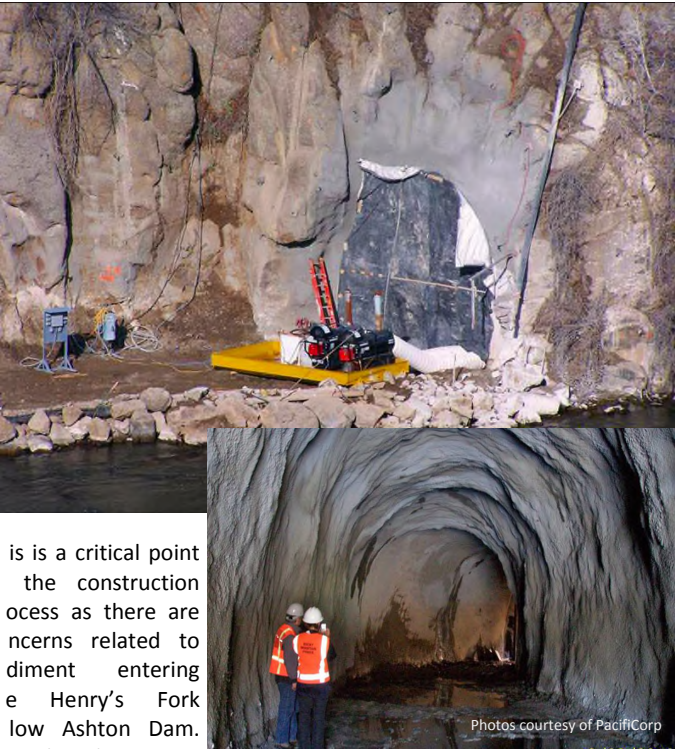
(Photos by Rob Murdoch)



# Riffles

## Ashton Reservoir Drawdown Postpone

PacifiCorp recently announced that the construction schedule for the Ashton Dam remediation project has been revised. The "tunnel tap," (connecting the outlet tunnel with the reservoir) has been postponed until September 2011. The tunnel tap will involve lowering Ashton Reservoir to the lowest level it has been for nearly 100 years.



This is a critical point in the construction process as there are concerns related to sediment entering the Henry's Fork below Ashton Dam. The drawdown was postponed to address some worker safety issues as well as to avoid any problems in the river as the flows fluctuate during the tunnel tap process. This will also allow PacifiCorp and its contractors to take a closer look at potential mitigation measures if sediment does mobilize during the tunnel tap. Construction crews have continued working throughout the winter on other aspects of the project. The overall project remains on schedule, with project completion expected by late 2012.

## Henry's Fork Watershed Council News

The Henry's Fork Watershed Council, co-facilitated by the Henry's Fork Foundation and Fremont-Madison Irrigation District, has been very busy this year. The monthly Council meetings are being used as the working group for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation (USBR) and Idaho Department of Water Resources (IDWR) Henry's Fork Basin Special Study. The study evolved from State of Idaho Senate Bill 1511, passed in 2008, which directed the IDWR to complete a study to replace Teton Dam which failed catastrophically in 1976. In 2009, USBR and IDWR signed an agreement to work together on the study, and subsequently approached the Watershed Council to help facilitate the study as the Council has a history of collaborative approaches to potentially contentious issues. In part due to the Council's support, the study was selected in 2010 as one of Reclamation's WaterSMART Basin Studies. The study will be looking at numerous alternatives to address water quality issues in the Henry's Fork Basin, including additional surface storage, aquifer recharge, and water management efficiencies.

Concurrently, Dr. Rob Van Kirk is completing a USDA-funded study modeling surface and groundwater movement through the Basin, information which will be used in the analysis of alternatives. Council attendance has been very high during this process, and has required shifting to a full-day meeting format to keep the study on schedule. This is a reconnaissance level study, not a feasibility study, and is anticipated to be completed in early 2012.

## Grandview Boat Slide Improvements

Two years ago boat access to a very special section of the Henry's Fork, downstream of Mesa Fall, was nearly lost when the Caribou-Targhee National Forest (CTNF) announced plans to close the slide. The Grandview Boat Slide is a steep 1,500-foot user created trail down to the river. Years of sliding and dragging boats down had resulted in severe erosion and vegetation damage. The CTNF felt they had no option other than to close and rehabilitate the trail. In May 2009, the Foundation organized a site visit with the CTNF District Ranger and invited a number of local fishing guides and river users. Ultimately, the CTNF decided to keep the slide open and to stabilize the erosion. They also decided to improve the access road to the top of the boat slide. Although this is a much more expensive alternative, CTNF staff worked hard to develop project plans, and work began in summer 2010. The access road and turnaround has been dramatically improved and can now be used by most vehicles. Construction of water bars on the boat slide was started, and pending funding, will be completed in 2011. Additional work at the bottom of the slide is scheduled for 2012. The Foundation will continue working closely with CTNF on this project, and has committed to helping with maintenance in the future. In agreeing to keep the boat slide open, the CTNF implemented a restriction that allows soft-bottom boats only on the slide. Drift boats are prohibited as the hard sides are believed to have contributed significantly to the soil and vegetation damage. The Foundation recently applied for \$21,000 in grant funds to complete this project.



Boat slide before



Boat slide after improvements

# Donors and Contributors

Thanks to the following friends who have donated \$100+ in the period November 1—January 31, 2011

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Ross Young

## Memorials

Kai Anderson  
Gary Bunger  
Jerry Crabs  
Loan Lansche

## Former Board Member Remembered

I was pleased to work with Ralph Moon as he served as vice-chair of the HFF for the first two years I was its executive director ('91-'93) and he stayed on the board through 1994. Ralph always kept the river and its fishery foremost in our discussions, and he strongly supported our taking a watershed approach to protecting the entire Henry's Fork in the early 90s. His dedication to the sport of fly fishing was widely known and appreciated, especially during all the years he served as curator for the Federation of Fly Fisher's museum in West Yellowstone.

I distinctly remember working with Ralph when I joined the Island Park Hydroelectric Project Advisory Committee as part of my new job. Ralph, along with Mick Mickelson and Mike Lawson, had worked tirelessly for years with Fall River Electric Rural Cooperative to protect the aquatic habitat downstream of the dam, both during power plant construction and over the long term. On behalf of HFF, Ralph and the others insisted on Fall River's installing a water quality monitoring system for dissolved oxygen, nitrogen gas, temperature and turbidity. Interestingly, it was this very monitoring system that, while measuring baseline conditions in the river, documented the rise in turbidity that occurred during the infamous reservoir drawdown of 1992.

Ralph and Pat Moon also were active with the Upper Valley Humane Society in the 1990s and sheltered unwanted cats and dogs in their own home. I am indebted to them as I still have the two abandoned kittens I adopted from them back in 1998. Ralph was honored with the Manlove Award in \_\_\_?\_\_\_ and deserves to be remembered as one of the great stalwarts of the foundation and the Henry's Fork for years to come.

- Jan Brown, Former Director of the HFF

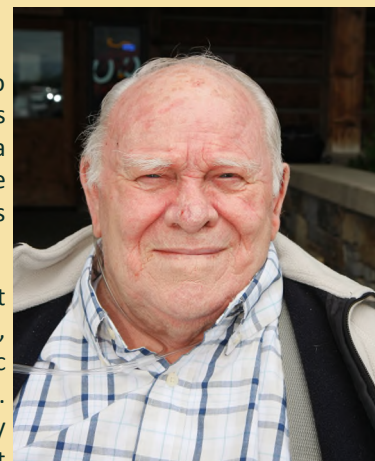


Photo by Susan Quinn

## Nancy Byers Memorial

On January 27<sup>th</sup> the Henry's Fork lost a dear friend with the passing of Nancy Byers. Nancy carried on her late husband, former Chairman of the Board of the Henry's Fork Foundation, Don Byers' legacy with her continued involvement with the Henry's Fork Foundation through the Byers Endowment Fund.

Since Don's passing January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1996, Nancy was a consistent face each year during Henry's Fork Day where she would be on hand to present the Don C. Byers Endowment to young interns who were working during the summer season with the Foundation. Nancy grew to love the river, not as Don did, but in her own special way. It wasn't just the hunt for the rainbows or the bonus of feeling the fight, Nancy had a place in her heart for everything else the existence of the River provides.

Nancy, as Don, recognized that it is the youth and their introduction to the river and all it supports that is, was, and will continue to be a cause for focus. To be able to issue scholarships to the young recipients of the Byers Endowment Fund and know their presence for the summer gave Nancy great pleasure.

Nancy's last visit to the river was celebrated with her immediate family, as she, with the assistance of all of her and Don's grandchildren, awarded the Byers scholarship. As they handed out the award, it gave Nancy great fulfillment as she and their grandkids were together on the Henry's Fork carrying on Don's legacy.

Nancy and her youthful spirit and energy will surely be missed. What was originally Don's place will forever be shared with her memories and her spirit as well.

A memorial service to honor Nancy will be held this summer around the time of Henry's Fork Day.

—Evan Byers



Photo courtesy of Evan Byers

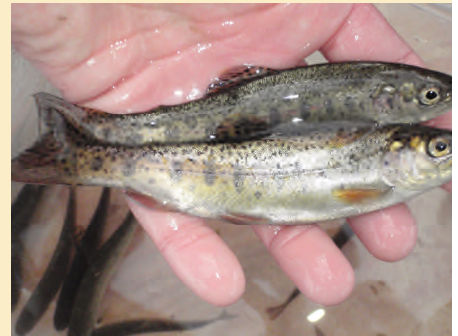


Henry's Fork Foundation  
 P.O. Box 550  
 206 Main St.  
 Ashton, ID 83420

**Address Service Request**

*(continued from page 3)*

Trying to balance the good and the bad, this is a major improvement over the status quo, in which only a random selection of short sections of river were protected. A long and important section of the mainstem Henry's Fork is protected, and the ban on jet motors, and the complete protection of all tributaries, are conservation-oriented measures that are hugely important. On the other hand, the great failing of the ordinance is the fact that in spite of reason, much existing public access, the vast majority of public opinion, upset property owners, and very real conservation concerns from wildlife managers, the County chose to allow 15 horsepower motors between Vernon Bridge and the Fun Farm.



Even in the dead of winter, the life of the Henry's Fork Foundation, and the life of the river and the watershed that the Foundation serves, goes on.



Photo from Member Wildlife Photo Gallery at [www.henrysfork.org](http://www.henrysfork.org)

Yes, I want to support the Henry's Fork Foundation and see this important work continue.

- Enclosed is a check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_.
- I would like to pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_ with payments of \$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly or \$ \_\_\_\_\_ quarterly.
- Please charge my  Visa  Master Card  Discover  Amex \$ \_\_\_\_\_.

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