

A Day on the MADISON RIVER

— LARRY'S SHORT STORIES #205 —

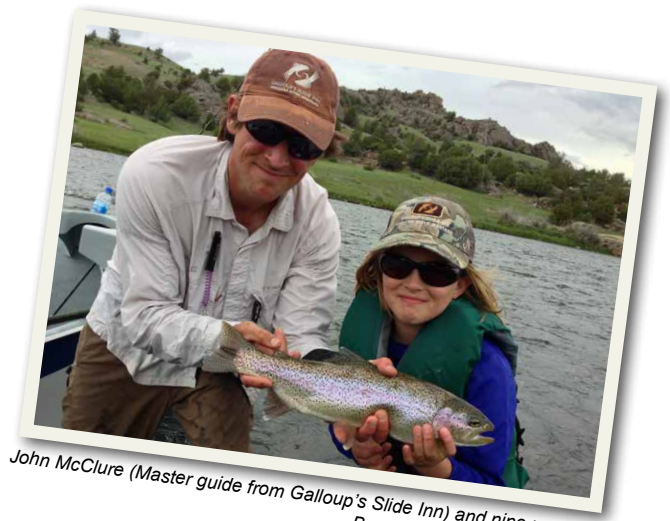
If you aren't a trout fisherman, or a student of the Lewis and Clark expedition of 1804-1806, you may have never heard of the Madison River. It flows west, then north out of Yellowstone National Park and joins the Jefferson River 183 miles downstream, just north of Three Forks, Montana – where the combined rivers become the Missouri. The Gallatin River joins just a mile downstream. These three rivers are the headwaters of the Missouri, and provide the name for Three Forks, Montana.

Lewis and Clark camped at the fork of the Jefferson and Madison rivers for a few days in late July 1805. According to Lewis' journal of 27 July, they

named the three rivers – the Jefferson (after President Thomas Jefferson), the Madison (after Secretary of State James Madison) and the Gallatin (after Secretary of the Treasury James Gallatin). You might note below that Lewis misspelled Madison as Maddison.

"The Middle fork we called Maddison's river in honor of James Maddison the Secretary of State."— The Journals of the Lewis and Clark Expedition

Although there were no rainbow trout in the river in 1805, the Madison River of today is a renowned blue ribbon trout stream, home to more than 1000 fish per mile, in many places. We fished the upper waters, just outside of Cameron, Montana. Drift boats, with guides allowed us to concentrate on fishing — and fishing the right flies in the



John McClure (Master guide from Galloup's Slide Inn) and nine-year-old Benjamin with a nice rainbow.

right places. It was just a few minutes from the fly shop to the launch; the guides seemed to know every rock and eddy in the river, and were always offering advice. The river was very special and the scenery of the surrounding country was amazing, when we took the time to look up from the water.

Brenda and Benjamin fished together in the morning, while

"... reported it to be a 50 fish day..."

Russell and I worked from the other boat. After lunch, we switched; with Benjamin and I fishing together, using our 5-weight fly rods and throwing a variety of flies provided by the guide.

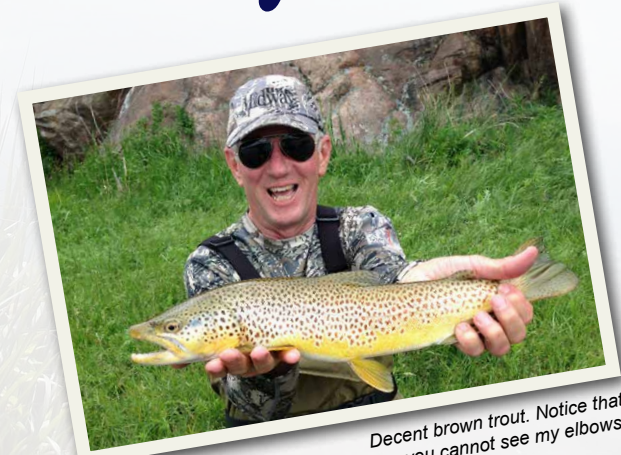
We caught many fish that day, mostly rainbows with a few browns; fifteen inches was a nice fish, with a few a bit larger — all catch and release. Benjamin, with his mathematical mind, was able to keep count of his landed fish and reported it to be a 50 fish day, which was also my guess. The Madison River was a wonderful experience and definitely a place worth returning to.

USA
Midway

Larry Potterfield
The Madison River
Cameron, MT
24 June 2013



Russell and son Benjamin posing for this picture, standing near the bank of the river.



Decent brown trout. Notice that you cannot see my elbows.