

## Our Community in the Times of COVID 6-1-20

Mother Nature has a way of letting you know just what you do and don't have a say in. Yesterday morning I took advantage of a bit of free time and headed to Spring Creek to see what had changed in the last eight months since I fished there last. According to the USGS hydrological information service flows were at nearly record highs; which had me curious. The weather was perfect when I left the house with Sunny and Buster. I was ready to re-hone my dry-fly casting skills. As we arrived the breeze picked up as did the temperature. Little, about 1/8", black mayfly were dancing over the water, fish were rising while I got into my waders. As I strung up my rod and tied on a Trico spinner the breeze picked up to a light wind from the north sweeping the insects from the water and the fish quit rising to what was no longer there. Just in case I waded out to a likely casting position and waited. The wading was tenuous as the increased flows equated to about an additional foot of water; once easily waded areas now difficult and not entirely safe. Sunny, my 4 month old lab, swam out to me, but subsequently learned the meaning of the command "out." A few small fish were rising to sunken spinners but I could not reach them without water topping my waders. Fishing was over. Mother Nature has a way of telling you things.

That evening was the class of 2020 graduation at the Robert Brulotte football field. I very much appreciated the words and bits of wisdom imparted by Halle Romero, Katia Sanchez, Trevor Povey and Marializ Barrera. Believe it or not they do grow up to make you proud to have had some small part in their development as a young adult and an essential part of our future. Severe thunder storms were forecast during the ceremonies and the following parade; and while the wind picked up to a gale briefly Mother Nature held off on the rain for the entire evening. Perhaps, she was telling the class of 2020, "I gave you COVID-19 to deal with I won't ruin your entire graduation too." Again, congratulations class of 2020!

Fly-fishing to me is like meditation or yoga to others; it allows me to focus, center and think. While I was standing waste deep in Spring Creek for some reason my thoughts returned to COVID-19. Since Stage 2, and now Stage 3, the average number of cases per day has increased statewide and here in Southeaster Idaho and Power County. Folks, it is not over. And, while I am glad that businesses are open and life seems to be returning to what normal used to be the primary danger of the disease is still very real. Those who were most susceptible three months ago are still so today. There is no vaccine. There is no therapeutic treatment. There are now six cases in Power County and 27 in Bannock County. Mother Nature has a way of telling you things aren't conducive to particular courses of action or behaviors. PLEASE maintain social distancing and hygiene. I know it is so easy not to. It is so easy to revert back to the good ole days of four months ago; but I ask you, is the potential cost worth it. I don't want to go back to March and April, I don't want to teach school online again, but I fear it's coming if we, all of us, can't do what was proven to flatten the curve initially. Or, we can ignore what Mother Nature has shown us works and she will cull out the least fit to adapt to COVID-19 among us. It is how things have always worked.

City Hall will be open Monday. Wear a mask if you are coming inside. Napkins will be available for you to use to open the doors. Maintain six feet of separation; if that is not possible wait outside until it is. Do not touch surfaces unless absolutely necessary. Thank you.

Also on Monday you will notice if you have walked the Willow Bay trail recently that stationary exercise equipment is being installed. That installation will be completed on Monday. The giant Monkey Bars at Willow Bay Park will be painted next week but can be used now. My thanks to Mr. Heikkila, Jackson Beck, Braedan Ralphs and Juan Ramirez for their work on the construction of the equipment and to Mike Whitaker a former welding student of mine and AFHS alumni for painting it. The new playground equipment for Lee Street Park will arrive Monday as well and with some luck be ready for use next week.

Enjoy the summer! Do your part in keeping the COVID curve flat and the most susceptible among us safe. Get out and enjoy Mother Nature as much as you can and take time to listen to what she says; it will be better for all of us.

Until next week...