



Box 524 • Lander, WY 82520

ORVIS
ENDORSED
FLY-FISHING
GUIDE

2016 NEWSLETTER

While looking at the calendar for last season, it becomes supremely obvious that we were really busy. We had very nice spring fishing on the Bighorn, followed by a full slate in the mountains during the summer, with a chocolate topping of fun dry fly fishing in the fall. We had a low snowpack, but a very wet spring that got us through most of the summer. Late August and early September found the local streams quite thin, allowing us to explore. After 45 plus years in the area you'd think we had fished everywhere, but that isn't the case and we are thankful.



Fishing with us in the Lander area this last season (meaning with George Hunker, Hank Hunker, and Jim Ferguson) were [Brian Dellett](#), [Steve Benjamin](#), [Jim Dunn](#), [Sherre Storm](#) and her family, [Art and Marie Wirtz](#), [Rachel Haymon](#) and friends [Tom and Sarah Faldetta](#), [Rich Amerian](#) and [Steve Alexander](#), [Fred Mueller](#), and [Mike Vandierdonck](#).

Spring was excellent for our floats on the Bighorn. We had [Mike Morton](#) from Sheridan. Fishing must have been good enough that [Billy Taylor](#) and [Patrick Akers](#) (also from Sheridan) came the next week. We also guided [Ron Felz](#), [Bill and Pam Bryan](#), and [Peter McClean](#) with local son-in-law [Leif Petersen](#) and friends [Peter Dodds](#) and [John Hess](#). Late May brought a ton of rain. There were landslides in Wind River Canyon which closed the road for three or four days. The river was affected and Boysen Reservoir had to start dumping water, peaking at 7400 CFS. By July, however, it was back to fishable levels for a quality day for [Sue Swan](#)

and [Jeff Adams](#). We only did a few floats in the main summer since we were full out in the mountains. These trips were with [Fred Caslik](#) and [Susan Hassett](#) and [Rob and Landon Wyatt](#), [Rachel Haymon](#) with [Tom and Sarah Faldetta](#).

Our mountain season was particularly busy in July. Jim did a shorter trip with [Gene Wilson](#) and [Don Smith](#), a single overnight with [Clark Wagner](#), and a horse trip with [Brad Johnson](#) and his young son [Tyler](#). Hank and I were in with [Bill and Pam Bryan](#) and their almost family [Melissa Frank](#) and her children [Karina](#) and [Jack Mudd](#). These guys all like fishing and wild country so much that it makes "our work" not so. We then did a major golden trout foray with photographer [Gary Kramer](#), his friend [Dan Connelley](#), and [Bill Lipe](#) and [Rob Toole](#). Gary worked very hard for his golden photos. His photos are amazing. You see many in this newsletter. Look for his article that is to appear in the May/June issue of *American Angler*. We enjoyed a group instigated by [Margie Taylor](#) (on Paula's Board of Trustees



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for WY TNC), the board chair [Anne Pendergast](#), and friends and relatives, [Gay Barclay](#) and [Susana and Dave Meyers](#). All except Gay are from Sheridan and have the goal of fishing in a different Wilderness Area each year (2014 was the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act). We have been the beneficiaries, above almost all, of this foresight. Hank took [Joe Brereton](#) on another long, solo backpack, while [Joan Hamre](#) and I escorted [Harry Flavin](#) and lots of his grandchildren on an epic fishing adventure. This crew included Harry Sr.'s son [Meade Flavin](#) and grandson [Harry](#), son-in-law [Steve Crawford](#) with daughter [Cloe](#) and niece [Camille Wills](#). The kids lashed the water with tenkara rods (with amazing results) while Harry Sr. broke both his and my Orvis Helios 2 rods on the same day. We had a good laugh especially after I used the parts of both to get one fully functioning rod together. I don't think Harry will live that day down. I then took [Chris Malgee](#), [John Longest](#), and [Eric Adams](#) for John's mountain bachelor party. These guys loved it, even though they were a bit liberal with the gear

they took. Hank and I finished up the summer with [David and Lucy Fitch](#) and their son [David](#). We watched young David revel in the tenkara rod. He counted caught trout to 350. I asked if he deducted for the ones that got away. Jim Ferguson finished up the mountain summer with the return of his niece [Anna](#). Together they produced a memorable experience for [Barbara and Clint Wasser](#).

We were ready to relax after the blistering pace and could do so with laid-back [Mike Vandierdonck](#), the hopper fanatic. We fished the Bighorn and Mike's local favorite. As the fall came on we floated the Bighorn with [Karla Pendexter](#) and [Penny Halvorsen](#) from Jackson, and just kept rowing with [Rich Amerian](#) and his boyhood friend [Steve Alexander](#), [Christie and Terry Kirk](#), and [Nancy Leon](#) (who had to leave husband and dry fly fanatic, [Charlie Thomson](#), behind). Hank had a [Fred Mueller](#) fix for a week including the Bighorn and some days in the Dubois

area. We finished up the season on the Bighorn with an overnight campout on Halloween with [Jim Knippen](#), his son [Ebben](#), Jim's cousin-in-law [Jay Snyder](#), and their friend [Bob Hutchinson](#).

All in all, Hank and I and Jim loved every minute of our guiding. We certainly enjoy seeing people learn and seeing that our teaching is paying off. This is our real reward, and to watch those, like Bill Bryan, be so moved by the mountains that they don't really even have to fish.

It was a big year for our family in general. I (George) was awarded the 2015 Orvis Endorsed Guide Lifetime

Achievement award at the Orvis Rendezvous in Missoula in April. The whole family snuck in without me knowing. I was so surprised that I couldn't speak and tears welled in my eyes. Later, as I accepted this award, I remember clearly stating that there are really only two things that I have done well and that is to laugh and hug. Another milestone for the year was September 26 when Paula and I celebrated our 40th anniversary. Wow...we really couldn't have done it without each other (whatever IT is).

Well...here's to another year with good friends, hugs, laughs, and time! The wonder of water, mountains, and wild trout.

George Hunker

