

Trout

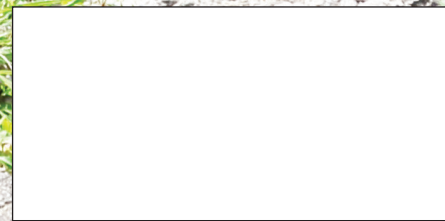
Talk



JULY 2020

Relaxing at the spring

Page 3



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Escape the stress of the world at Bennett



Jim Cook, of Manhattan, Kan., fishes at Bennett Spring State Park on a hot June afternoon. Cook has been trout fishing at the spring since he was a young boy.

Trout Talk photo/Laura Valenti

LAURA VALENTI FOR TROUT TALK

Despite turmoil across the country and the world in recent months, Bennett Spring State Park is still a place to find some peaceful relaxation on a sunny summer afternoon.

Jim Cook, of Manhattan, Kan., fell in love with Bennett Spring as a child, coming with his uncle.

"I try to get down here two or three times a year," he shared while fishing at the head of the spring on a hot, muggy day. "Things have changed a lot here over the years, so many improvements in the park. There's more camping spots now and when I first came here, the old park store was closer to the bridge."

Cook works for the county appraiser's office in his home area in Kansas but says he really enjoys the peace that trout fishing and Bennett Spring offers.

"It's just such a good chance to get

away from everything," he said.

Marci Coons, of Springfield, Mo., also comes to Bennett Spring two or three times a year.

"Sometimes, my fiance, Bruce Robbins and I come just for the day and sometimes, we come and stay in one of the cabins for a night or two," Coons said. "I went fishing as a kid and then got away from it but have now taken it back up as an adult. I'm not really a flyrod fisherman, like Bruce. That's more detailed than I can manage right now."

Coons works for a bank and credit card company and loves being on vacation at Bennett Spring.

"It is such a beautiful peaceful place and lets me get away from everything including technology. There's also the camaraderie here of the other fishermen. It's special that we are all here, just fishing, no matter where we come from, no matter what we do," she said.

See 'ESCAPE'/ page 5



Marcia Coons, of Springfield, Mo., comes to Bennett Spring two or three times a year to go trout fishing.

Trout Talk photo/Laura Valenti

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Escape

from page 3

Sgt. John Schruga, a Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. drill sergeant, and his 5-year-old son Jacob were enjoying their first trip to Bennett Spring on this summer day.

While dad was concentrating on the trout fishing, Jacob was fascinated by the tiny frogs and tadpoles he found along the wing dam where his father was fishing.

"Look at these!" Jacob shouted with glee as he showed off a handful of little frogs.

Still, he took time to help his dad pull in the trout he caught that afternoon.

Originally from Michigan, the sergeant is more accustomed to fishing for walleye and perch as well as duck hunting up north, rather than trout fishing.

"We've been fishing on base at

Miller Springs and also at Maramec Spring State Park at St. James, near the fort, but this is our first trip to Bennett. It's great! I have also been duck hunting up near Kansas City, since moving here almost a year ago," he said.

Shruga, who works training combat engineers, and his wife have three small children, including another son, Reese age 3 and a daughter, Caleigh, age 4.

"We've been busy during all of this lock down just trying to keep them busy, taking the three kids to the river, whatever we can do!" he added with a laugh.

A day at Bennett Spring State Park keeps everyone busy in the very best and relaxing way in the tumultuous days that have become the year 2020.



Trout Talk photo/Laura Valenti

Jacob Schruga, 5, of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo., shows off some frogs he caught while his dad, John, was fishing.

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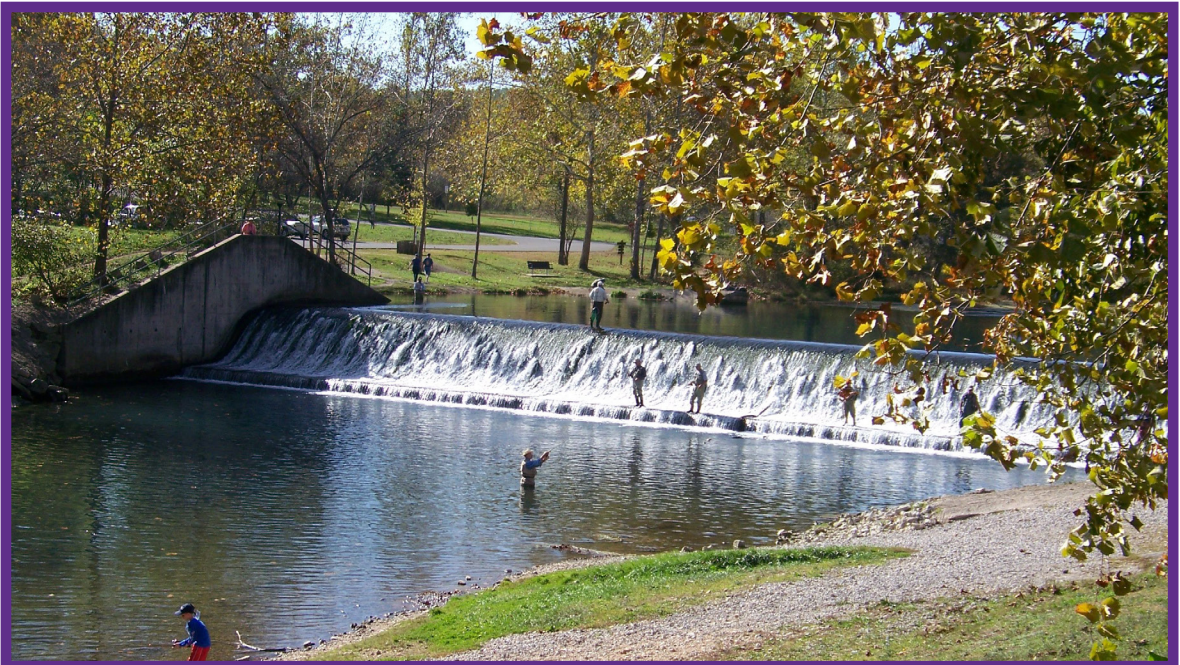
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Discarded fishing line can be a deadly hazard for wildlife

FRANCIS SKALICKY
MISSOURI DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Unfortunately for wildlife in Missouri and elsewhere, fishing line is involved with catching more than fish.

This is the time of year fishing activity increases around Missouri. This year, the stress and worries caused by the coronavirus has also led some people to seek solace by grabbing their fishing poles and heading for the area's lakes and streams. While you're enjoying the great fishing opportunities this state has to offer, one thing that's important to remember: If you have to cut your fishing line because it's knotted or snagged, take those pieces of line with you when you leave. Leaving the line

behind could create a deadly hazard for the wildlife and aquatic creatures that needs your fishing area more than you do.

Discarded fishing line has long been a problem for animals that frequent locations where humans like to fish. Anglers, canoeists and others who recreate along the state's waterways have long been aware of this problem. In recent years, social media's ability to distribute pictures on a broad basis has brought this issue to a much wider audience. As a result, it's easy to find pictures of birds and other animals that have either died or been injured because they became entangled in fishing line.

Humans who discard fishing line

provide the landscape with a lethal device that keeps on killing – studies have shown monofilament line can take up to 600 years to break down in the environment.

Discarded fishing line can pose problems for many types of wildlife. Because a variety of bird species frequent stream banks and shorelines, they are frequent victims and, thus, provide many examples of the problems caused by discarded fishing line. Birds that get tangled in fishing line will struggle and this frequently tightens the line to the extent that it cuts into legs, feet, necks, wings and other body parts. This can lead to serious injury or death.

See 'LINE' / page 9



Trout Talk photo/Fines Massey

A fishing line recycling container is posted at Bennett Spring State Park near the stream. The container was built by the Missouri Stream Team.

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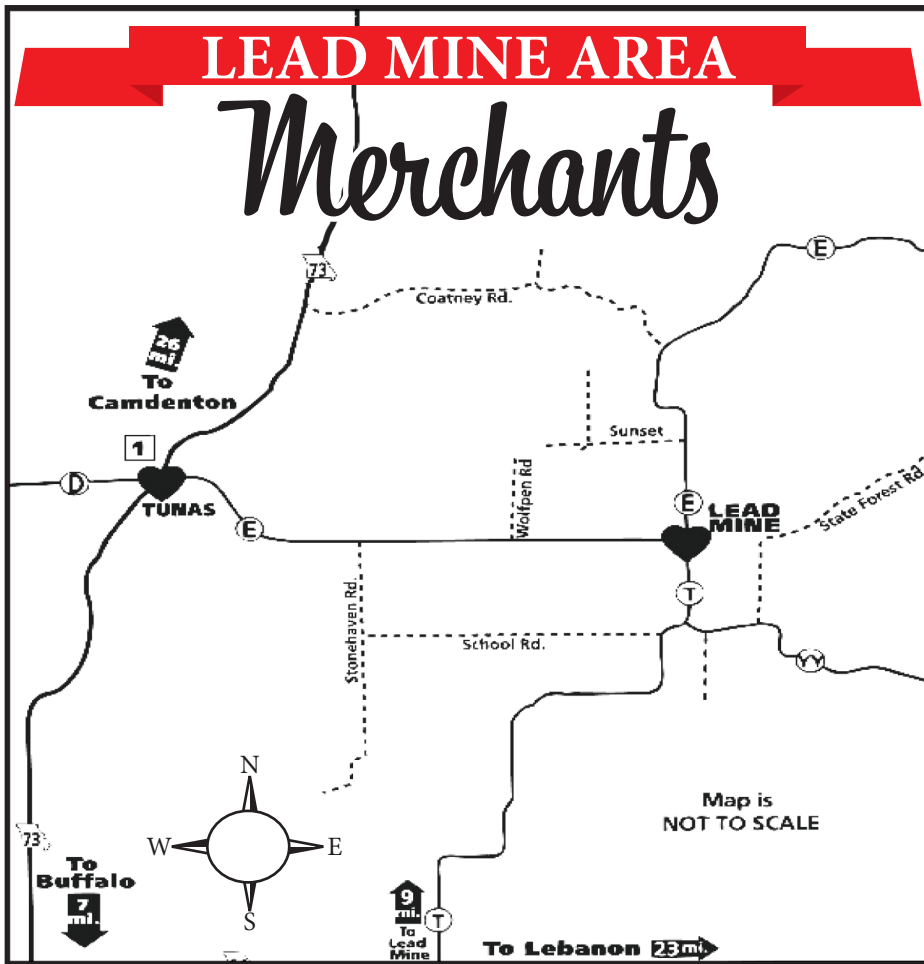
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Line _____ from page 7

Even if the line does not tighten enough to cause serious injury, it can restrict movement by decreasing the range of motion of legs or wings. This can make it harder for the bird to forage and harder to escape predators.

When fishing line becomes tangled around a bird's beak or bill, it can lead to starvation. Birds that ingest fishing line may eventually starve, too, because the plastic in their stomach restricts how much food they can digest. Sometimes birds use fishing line to build nests and this can also have fatal results when the young hatchlings become entangled in the line as they grow and get more active.

Remember, birds, turtles and other animals that live in and around the water don't have hands and fingers and can't use tools to free themselves from fishing line. When they get tangled, they usually stay tangled. If you keep the remnant bits of snipped line that are the refuse of getting hung up, getting tangles on your reel or tying on different

lures; it guarantees that those pieces of fishing line will not pose problems for animals in the future.

Some marinas and fishing areas have receptacles where anglers can dispose of fishing line. Information about where to drop off recycled fishing line can also be found online or at a number of stores that sell hunting and fishing equipment. If you choose to throw your fishing line in the trash at home, make sure you cut it into small pieces first. Incineration of old fishing line at home is another option, just be mindful of the fumes.

Missouri's Stream Team program encourages monofilament recycling and has information about how stream teams can get fishing line recycling bins for their areas. This information can be found at <http://www.mostreamteam.org/mrrp.asp>.

Francis Skalicky is the media specialist for the Missouri Department of Conservation's Southwest Region. For more information about conservation issues, call 417-895-6880.





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BENNETT SPRING STATE PARK AND SURROUNDING AREA



Anglers show off their lunkers

These fishermen have stories and the pictures to prove them!



Photos courtesy of the Bennett Spring State Park Store

Left, Bradley S., of Richland, Mo., caught this 3.5 pound trout using Powerbait in Zone 3. Middle left, Dylon Smith caught this 3.5 pound trout in Zone 2 using a jig. Middle right, Keagan Cramer caught this 19-inch trout in Zone 2 using a brown roostertail. Right, Mark M., of King City, Mo., caught this 3 pound trout in Zone 2.

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