



# MONTANA

## SPORTING JOURNAL

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ELECTROSHOCKING AND FISHERY MANAGEMENT

WADE FISHING DESTINATIONS

THE FIGHT FOR MONTANA'S PUBLIC LANDS

CANYON FERRY RESERVOIR - TROPHY WALLEYE AND TROUT

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A DAY ON THE UPPER MADISON spent fishing is an experience to be cherished anytime under any conditions. All along its banks are stories to be told. In more recent times it's the anglers who have floated by numerous times, each on their own special journey downriver. There was a time when the stories were those of the pioneers who settled along the river attempting to scratch out a living in conditions that could be harsh and unforgiving. It's easy to miss such stories amidst the flotilla of modern drift boats, 21st century automobiles, and tech-clothing clad fishermen of today. There is a place, however, where modern angling and the Madison Valley's past meet and make the angler feel as though they've found a new home. Welcome to the Old Kirby Place (OKP).

Place. This was the first bridge built across the Madison and functioned as a toll bridge. Later sold to the Hutchin's family, the property and bridge took on that name until they sold it. In later years, it became a base of operations for a hunting outfitter. As the Madison River became a fishing destination of national repute in the 1950s, angling heritage began to firmly establish itself. Fishing lodges have long been a staple along the banks of this river. What makes the OKP unique is its history and the fact much of its old character is still intact.

The pace of fishing is left up to the angler. OKP staff coordinate with a local guide service or the angler can make their own fishing arrangements. There is no lack of reputable guides in the area. After a day of guided fishing the diehard can wade the river a very short walk from their cabin or try their luck in the onsite private

pond fed by nearby Papoose creek and several springs. A few lunger trout reside there and were seen. Hooking one proved difficult for this scribe. If one wishes a freelance day of wade fishing to slow the pace they are more than welcome. Some anglers fish entirely self-guided during their stay. One group of fire fighters returns annually for their week-long stay. Most times they take over the kitchen doing their own cooking and spend all day wading the river. Whatever your plans the OKP can fit to suit.

Bruce Alverson, proprietor of the OKP, has only one rule not subject to negotiation: relax and have fun. The carefully restored and well-cared for guest houses combine comfort and nostalgia maintaining their early 19th century look with modern

amenities. The main guest house, where dinner is served is also a good place to unwind. One can relax in cozy leather chairs and enjoy a tome from the well-stocked library of fishing literature. The bar is always open of course. Through summer the center of social activity is the Caddis Shack. Situated feet from the river, a pergola



In existence since 1885, the OKP has seen distinct eras of the Madison River. It saw the pioneers when hardy men and women made their living off the land logging, mining, and running cattle. Mathew Dunham built the cabin and bridge on the Madison which still exists today where it is now known as the Old Kirby

covered deck and Adirondack chairs beckon to river weary anglers (if there is such a thing). Here they gather before and after dinner to share stories from the day, marvel at the evening hatch, and enjoy a Montana sunset over the Gravelly Range.

Meals are prepared family style and all guests join each other in the main cabin for meals each day. Brent Alverson, Bruce's brother runs the kitchen and makes sure guests do not go hungry or thirsty. Breakfast is ready for anglers before they depart for their day of fishing. Meals-to-go for lunch can be prepared as well. After relaxing at the Caddis Shack for a sundowner or two following a day on the river, Brent sounds the triangle summoning all to dinner. Typical of the menu is a healthy steak, twice baked potato and salad followed by dessert.

After a long day of fishing one would be hard pressed to find lodging that knows anglers' needs as well as The Old Kirby Place does. When it's time to hang the rod up for the day and retire to the Caddis Shack, one sinks into an Adirondack and takes in the night sky of Montana summer. With the music of the river and a gentle evening breeze to soothe, a day of fishing can't end better.

