



Record size fish caught in Wyoming

By Jeff Obrecht
The Laramie Post

On April 15 Mike Laursen went 15 rounds with a heavyweight fish, possibly the biggest ever hooked in Wyoming outside of Flaming Gorge Reservoir and Jackson Lake. Due to his fishing savvy, after 60 minutes in the Sloan's Lake ring, Laursen won the match with the Asian opponent.

The thrill of victory was tempered later the next week, when Laursen was informed he was disqualified from being awarded the state record title on an inadvertent technicality.

Laursen won the match that morning with a grass carp, a sterile import with a voracious appetite for

aquatic vegetation, weighing in that day at around 36 pounds. But he's not getting the state record for the species. He inadvertently snagged the fish, a detail the veteran Cheyenne angler readily volunteered about the feat.

"We commend Mike for his honesty about the fish being snagged or 'foul hooked,' but state record fish must be hooked in the mouth," said Mike Stone, fisheries chief for the Wyoming Game and Fish Department. "We also recognize his fishing skill to be able to battle a huge fish like that with 4-pound test line for an hour and get it landed. That was an amazing accomplishment."

Laursen, 62, was using a small Swedish

Pimple, an elongated spoon equipped with just a No. 12 treble hook. "Whether the big fish brushed my line to make me think I had a strike or if I missed the strike of a trout or crappie and hooked the big fish that was laying nearby, I'll never know," Laursen said.

Prior to the battle, Laursen landed two pan-sized cutthroat trout and a largemouth bass he estimated at 1 1/2 pounds. If a game fish, such as a trout, bass or walleye, is inadvertently snagged, it should be returned to the water immediately. It is unlawful to intentionally snag game fish.

The tiny treble hook was imbedded where the last of the grass carp's muscle meets the tail. That



Photo by Ted Brown

Mike Laursen caught a grass carp, a sterile import with a voracious appetite for aquatic vegetation, that weighed around 36 pounds.

contributed to the physics enabling the fish to drag Laursen the length of the 29-acre lake's north shore.

Laursen estimates the 42-inch grass carp ran out at least "a football field" of his line and the

strain forced him to frequently shift the rod to his left hand to let his right arm to recover. "It was literally a whale by the tail," he mused of the fish sporting a 25-inch girth. "A big fish like that goes anywhere it

wants to go." On April 16, the career U.S. Air Force veteran brought the fish to the Game and Fish office where it officially weighed in at 34 pounds 6.5 ounces. That would have beat the old record.

UW students begin conservation work

By Mike Martinez
The Laramie Post

University of Wyoming students in the new Wyoming Conservation Corps have started work on projects ranging from trail construction in Curt Gowdy State Park to cleaning and rehabilitating a state land section west of Casper and surveying for noxious weeds in the Osage oil field near Newcastle.

The Wyoming State Legislature this year approved a three-year, \$312,000 appropriation to incentivize the establishment of the WCC to meet some of the labor-intensive conservation needs of state and federal agencies, says WCC director

Nicholas Agopian, a recent UW College of Law graduate who proposed establishing the WCC in Wyoming. The WCC is also supported with a \$15,000 Wyoming Community Foundation grant and a \$30,000 program planning grant from ServeWyoming, the state's Americorps state commission.

This year, 16 students will complete approximately 8,000 hours working on projects, and the number will increase to 24 participants and 16,000 hours next year and 64 participants contributing 32,000 hours in 2009.

Additionally, he says participation in the WCC introduces UW students to hands-on natural resources and environmental issues faced by Wyoming's land managers.

Adding sprinklers to college dormitories

By Jeff Obrecht
The Laramie Post

Less than 26 percent of the dormitory space in Wyoming's community colleges and at the University of Wyoming is protected against fire by sprinkler systems -- an issue that has gained new urgency since a fire gutted a dorm at Northwest College in

Powell.

Putting sprinklers in the rest of state dormitories would cost up to \$7 million, State Fire Marshal Jim Narva said Friday.

Narva said his office and the Wyoming Community College Commission have been studying the subject.

The commission hopes to work with engineers over the next few months.

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