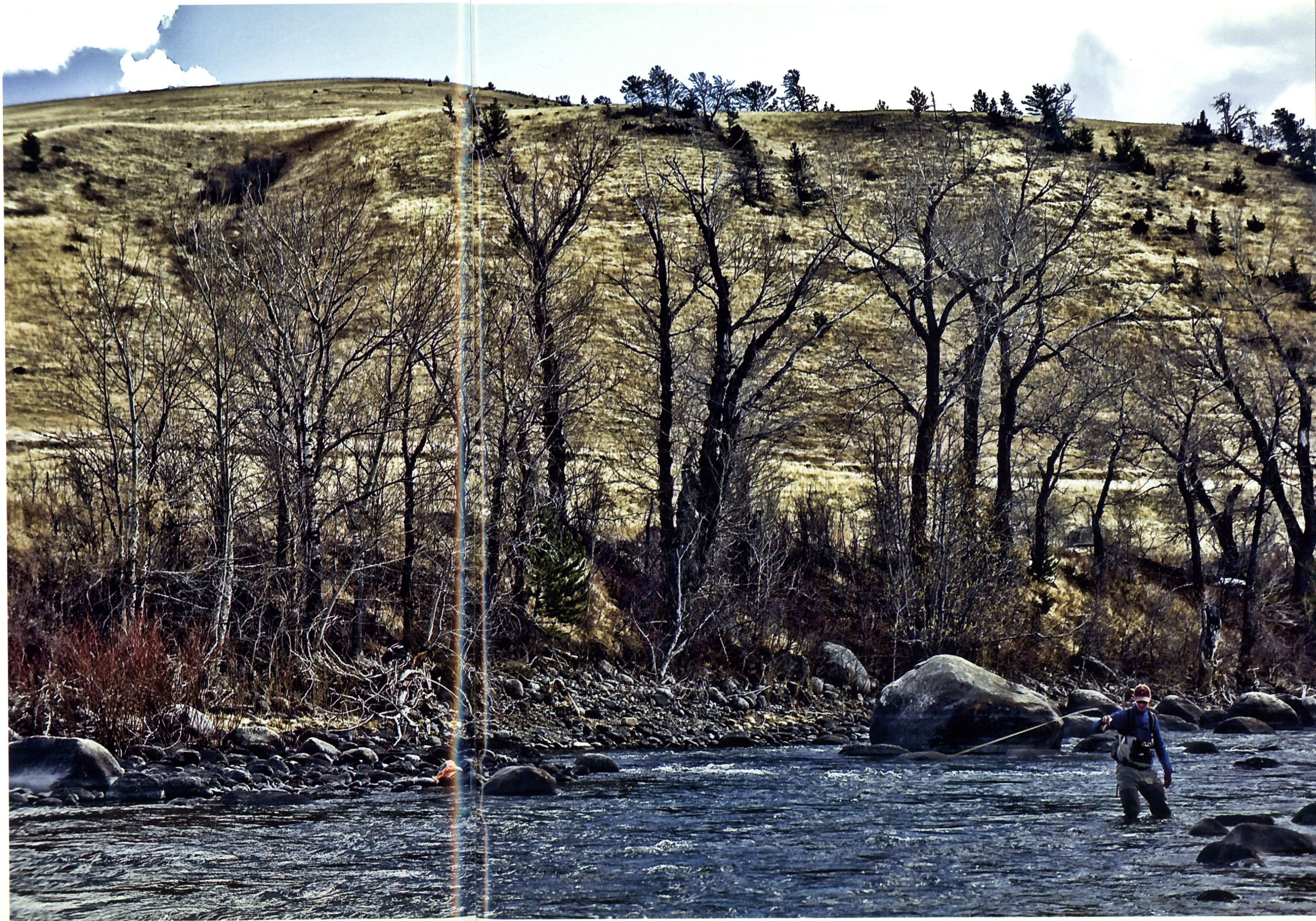
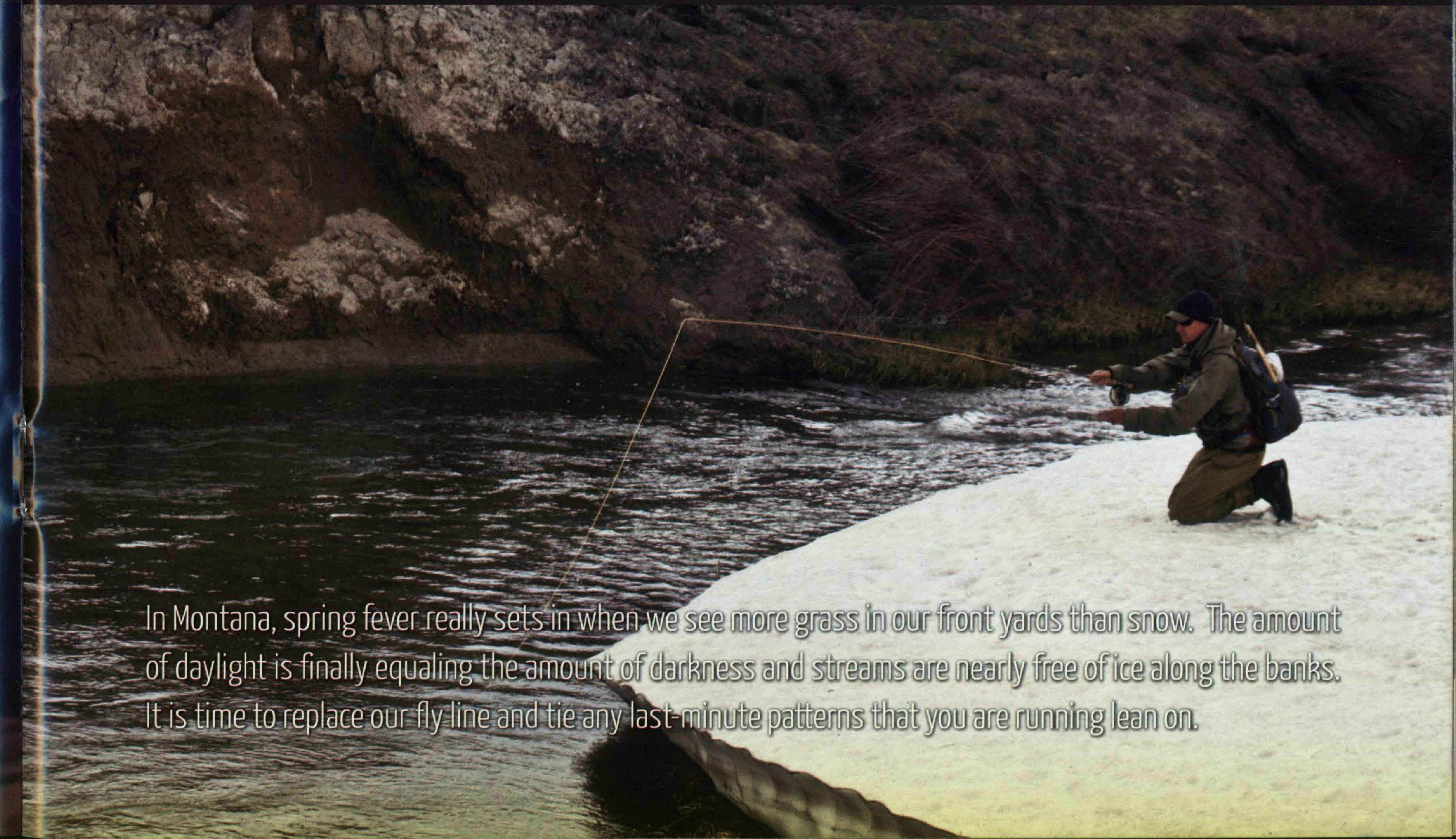


ICE-OUT TROUT

PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOSH BERGAN

For most anglers in northern climates, our rods are put away sometime in October or November. We have either grown weary of fishing with cold hands and feet or the fall hunting seasons were a justifiable distraction. Waders are hung in the garage one final time and we vow to organize our fly boxes and vest some cold winter's day.





In Montana, spring fever really sets in when we see more grass in our front yards than snow. The amount of daylight is finally equaling the amount of darkness and streams are nearly free of ice along the banks. It is time to replace our fly-line and tie any last-minute patterns that you are running lean on.





That first outing of the year is more therapy than the likelihood of a fifty fish day. You tell yourself how much you missed being on the water and any fish landed is strictly icing on the cake. The fish are sluggish, the number of bugs on the water is minimal. After you release your one and only fish of the day, you are satisfied with the excursion and head for home. Besides, your hands are still getting cold and you do need to spend some time on finally getting that fly vest organized.