

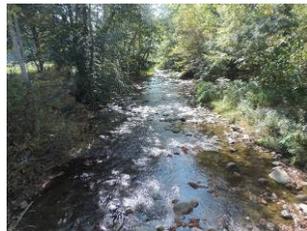
This month's featured stream is Helton Creek, just north of West Jefferson and near the Virginia border. There are a couple reasons I waited until October to feature this river. First I have been posting streams in the order of distance



from Hickory and this one is almost two hours, but the biggest reason is the beauty of the color on Helton Creek in the fall. I'm not completely sure why, but to me Helton

Creek is the most beautiful stream I have fished in NC. I think perhaps it might be that the valley is a little more open than others like Elk and Wilson Creeks so that you get a little larger vista, especially in the fall when in full color.

They have extended the delayed harvest section all the way to the Virginia state line since I had fished there before, so we started our tour at that end. I was very disappointed that most of the river up that way seemed to be private. There were only a few pull-offs where you might be able to access it for fishing. The stream is also a bit smaller up in that area. If you are going to fish Helton Creek I would recommend you start at Highway 16 and work your way upstream from there. The best fishing is up to where Helton Creek Road intersects with Hwy 194. At that point there is again a great deal of private land. The other thing you need to know about the Helton is that there are only about a half dozen really good fishing spots. If you go there on a weekend in good weather, it can be difficult to find a place to fish.



There are few spots you will want to check out while you are there. The first is right at the beginning of the section above Hwy 16. Between the Hwy 16 overpass and the first bridge is a stretch of moderate water that can hold a lot of fish. My son and I spent a couple hours there one day casting at a small pool of about 30-40 fish. They were spooky, but eventually we managed to get their interest and land a few. Maybe a quarter to half mile beyond that bridge the road makes a sharp turn to the left. There is a deep hole that runs for a few hundred feet on that corner that holds a lot of fish. Just below the Helton Creek Campground is a small pool by a large rock that is another great place to fish. It's one of the prettiest holes on the creek. There are a few more places that you can find by exploring, but if the water is up a little



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from the day we were there, you can find fish on most of the stream. Helton Creek is at a relatively high elevation of about 2700 feet, so even in the summer the water stays fairly cool so that the fish tend to survive. We did our photo shoot the last week in September and we were still able to spot several trout in the creek. This might be a good place to spend an early morning or late evening with dry flies. Of course that's a tough drive that early or late from Hickory so if you're a camper, you might want to check out the Helton Creek Campground. They are first come first served. You can find information about them on Facebook. And of course if you're looking for a more comfortable stay, you can bid for a cabin at Helton Creek in our silent auction. Dave Jones has two cabins on Helton Creek that are just downstream from the delayed harvest area. Not only will you enjoy a fully furnished cabin, but when you aren't fishing the delayed harvest area, you can fish the private stream in front of your cabin that is stocked with some trophy rainbows. One other place you might check out while you are up there is the delayed harvest at the park in the town of Lansing. I haven't been there, but Dave assures me that they have a truly architectural stretch of stream that they have developed there. While the trout fishing is the prime reason to visit Helton Creek, as a former Wisconsin Cheesehead, I must report that a major highlight of visiting the area is stopping at the Ashe County Cheese outlet. I spent quite a bit of time in southwestern Wisconsin sampling the great cheese made there and I truly believe it's the best in the world, but Ashe County cheese is just as good. Perhaps that's because the company was



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founded by a cheese maker who moved there from Wisconsin. Perhaps one of their most unique cheeses is their Carolina Bleu. It's unlike any other bleu I've ever tasted. So after your day on, Helton be sure to stop in downtown West Jefferson and bring home a big bag of cheese.



HICKORY NC TU LOGO GEAR

The Hickory Chapter has an account at **Lands' End** for clothing and other items with our logo. There are frequent discounts available you can sign up for by going to <https://business.landsend.com/>. To access the account go to: <https://business.landsend.com/store/hkynctu/>

This month we have a second option for logo gear that Zan's wife Peggy has set us up with. Check out the following website: www.companycasuals.com/hickorytrout/start.jsp

2017 FLY FISHING FILM TOUR

Plans are being developed to host the annual Fly Fishing Film Tour (F3T) at our annual fund raiser this fall. The program will be held at the SALT Block in Hickory on



Monday, October 23. The program will begin with refreshments in the Art Museum. You will have a chance to socialize with fellow fly fishermen and to view the special

exhibit of Joel Sartore. *Through his images of the Earth's creatures, Sartore's artwork illustrates both the beauty and the tragedy of animal species threatened by extinction, demonstrating that photography matters. In the finest documentary tradition, Sartore passionately captures striking artworks to help viewers understand the importance of saving these unique animals, while also ultimately saving ourselves. Sartore writes, "...every species is a work of art, created over thousands or even millions of years and each is worth saving simply because it is so unique and priceless."*

After the reception we will move to the Drendel auditorium for the movie. The film includes a series of shorts on fly fishing adventures from Kamchatka, Mexico, and all corners of the US.

During the reception you will have a chance to enter the silent auction for many fly fishing related items. We are currently gathering items for the auction and if you have something you would like to offer, please contact Joel Miller at hkynctu@gmail.com.

Tickets can be purchased on our website at www.hkynctu.org or at Casters Fly Shop.

PLEASE SEND YOUR FISHING PHOTOS. We will have a photo slide show again this year at our fund raiser. We will include photos of all our events, but would like to include all of your great fishing photos from this year as well. The ladies have been doing quite well sending in photos, but the guys need to get in gear and send theirs in. Please send your photos to hkynctu@gmail.com.

SILENT AUCTION ITEMS

A feature at the event will be a silent auction and we have a great list of items lining up for your bidding. Here's what has already been donated. Watch our website for additional items.

WATER COLOR PAINTING BY ZAN THOMPSON—Zan is donating an 11x15 (16x20 framed) fly fishing painting titled *Battle of the Sexes for Big Fish*. You can see some samples of his works at www.zanthompson.com/.

GUIDED TRIP BY DAVE HISE—Dave is an Orvis Endorsed Fly Fishing Guide and owner of Casters Fly Shop in Hickory. <http://www.orvis.com/p/david-hise-nc/8c98>

LITHOGRAPH BY BILL ELLIOTT—Bill is donating a 15x18 framed pencil litho of a brook trout leaping for mayflies. Bill is a renowned wildlife artist whose paintings have appeared in many publications. For more information on Bill, check out our August newsletter or <http://www.tight-lined-tales-of-a-fly-fisherman.com/2012/02/fish-art-bill-elliott-wildlife-art.html>

A FULL WEEK IN A HELTON CREEK CABIN (Wed-Wed)—Dave Jones has donated a week in his five star cabin on Helton Creek, right on the creek which is stocked with trophy trout. If you've never been to Helton Creek, it is one of the most beautiful delayed harvest streams in North Carolina and is the feature river in this issue. For more information on the cabin, visit <https://www.vrbo.com/488543>.

TENKARA ROD—Dave Jones has also donated a DRAGONtail Shadowfire Tenkara 12' rod to our auction. Information about the rod can be found at: https://www.amazon.com/DRAGONtail-Tenkara-Shadowfire-Complete-Starter/dp/B00N36YYIO/ref=cm_sw_em_r_dp_dc_D5uYzbPRVA65A_lm

2 DAILY ROD FEES ON PRIVATE TROPHY WATER IN VIRGINIA—Riverbound X-Stream has donated a day of fishing on private water in any of their four streams in southern Virginia. You will be accompanied by a member who will provide transportation and lunch. The rod

fees will be awarded separately. For more information visit: <https://sites.google.com/site/riverboundxtremesite/Home>.

GUIDED TRIP BY STARR NOLAN—Starr is with Brookside Guides in Asheville and is well known to many of us in the Hickory Chapter through her participation and leadership in Casting Carolinas. You can find more information about Starr at:

<http://www.brooksideguides.com/our-guides/>.

FLY FISHING LESSONS BY REBECCA HART--

HANDMADE FLY FISHING QUILT-Our own member, Cathy Starnes, has crafted a fly fishing quilt for our auction. We haven't seen it yet, but judging by the Casting Carolinas quilt she donated at the September meeting, you better bid high to win.

ABSTRACT FISH PAINTING—A 6x6 (12x12 matted) watercolor titled *Fish on the Rise* by Lynn Marilla.

HELIOS 3 SWT ROD—Here is your chance to own one of the newest and finest rods on the market touted as *the world's most accurate fly rod*. For more information, see the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lduVzB-h6Ao>.

ADDITIONAL AUCTION ITEMS:

- Hardy Marquis Reel
- Women's Encounter Waders & Boots
- Encounter Fly Fishing Outfit
- Pink Net & Sling Pack
- Yeti 64 oz Rambler Bottle (by Outdoor Supply)

Those are the items currently on our list, but there are more to come and we would be thrilled to have you donate high value fly fishing items as well. If you have something you would like to offer, please contact Joel Miller at jmiller1948@icloud.com. Watch our website at for additional items.

TIP OF THE MONTH

When I started fly fishing very many years ago, life was much less complicated. I bought tapered leaders and as they got shorter, I would finally clip it off and replace it with a new one and they only came in nylon. As time marched on I begin to discover that not all leaders (let's call it tippet now) are created the same.

In the early days all my fishing was dry fly, but now most is wet fly or nymph. I learned there are two types of tippet material, nylon and fluorocarbon. Nylon tends to float and fluorocarbon tends to sink so of course as I moved to underwater flies I switched to fluorocarbon

which also has more invisibility. This is because light passing through the fluorocarbon has the same wavelength as light passing through water. Sorry if that's confusing, but the engineer in me has to throw out things like that.

As I mentioned, I had always purchased tapered leaders, but I discovered that the fluorocarbon variety was very expensive, so as they got shorter I would tie on a piece of tippet to extend the life of the leader. The best knot to use is the nail knot, but my old eyes and hands find that rather difficult. My choice is a surgeon's knot which is a bit easier and serves the purpose.

All that said, and there is a lot more that could be, there are some real advantages to tying your own tapered leaders. If you want to know more about it, here is a good article to start with:

<http://www.hatchmag.com/articles/understanding-leaders-and-tippets/7711248>.

So just a little more basics. Tippet is labeled by diameter rather than breaking strength and the higher the number the smaller the diameter. The strength varies by manufacturer, but they are similar and here are the strengths of Orvis super strong nylon for the most common flies we use on the trout stream:

| | Diameter | Break Strength | Fly Size |
|------|----------|----------------|-------------|
| 3.5x | .008 | 8.5lb | 6,8,10 |
| 4x | .007" | 6lb | 12,14,16 |
| 5x | .006 | 4.75lb | 14,16,18 |
| 6x | .004 | 3.5lb | 16,18,20,22 |

I would only add one comment to this chart. I generally relate my tippet to the size of the fish I am after. On Wilson Creek I use 5x for everything including a #6 woolly bugger hook. On a trophy stream I fish, I use only 3x, but that does make it difficult to tie some of the smaller flies.

I hope all that didn't complicate your life too much. I can just say that if you can afford it, buy tapered leaders and use them until they get too short. As a small modification, buy some tippet to add to the tapered leaders as they do get too short. If you want to go crazy and build your own tapered leaders, go out to the internet and educate yourself. Happy Fishing.

BOOK REVIEW by Holly Cole

Trout Tips edited by Kirk Deeter

The book provides more than 250 fly fishing tips from members of Trout Unlimited and is a great resource for people starting out in fly fishing. It includes casting tips, fly selection, reading the water, things you should know about flying presentation, general tips and tricks on landing and handling fish and paying it forward (tips on being a tryout mentor). The book is free with a \$50 donation to TU at www.tu.org or can be purchased on the website for \$16.99.

HICKORY HIGH FLY FISHING CLUB

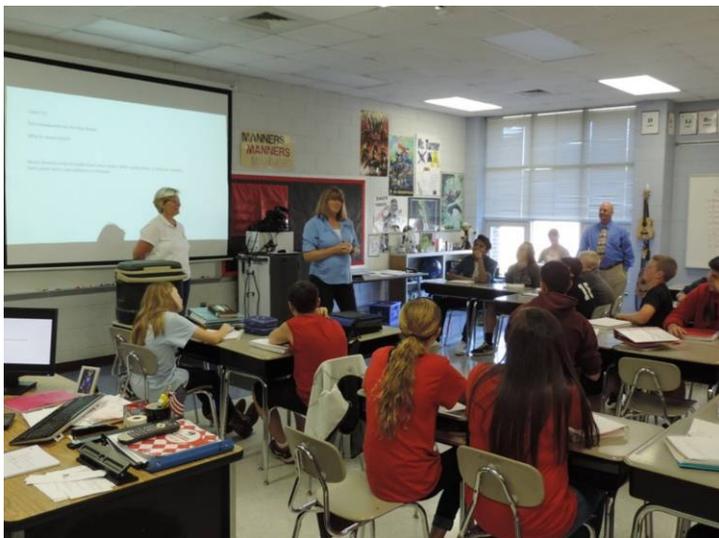
Please welcome the Hickory High School Fly Fishing Club and visit their very impressive website at:

www.hhsflyfishingclub.com

The club is teaching fly casting and fly tying to its members, but is drastically short of equipment. If you have fly fishing or fly tying equipment and supplies that you can donate to the club, please contact Lisa Barron at hhsflyfishingclub@gmail.com or call 828-234-3956, drop them off at the HHS front desk, or bring them to the monthly meeting and we will see that they get them.

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

The Hickory Chapter of Trout Unlimited was honored to award 2 new schools with the Trout in the Classroom (TIC)



Cathy Starnes of Hickory NC Trout Unlimited explains the Trout in the Classroom program to the students.

projects for the 2017-2018 academic school year. The chapter also renewed River Bend Middle School's application



University Christian High School
Cathy Starnes(TU), Isaac A., William G., Derek Chase(Science Teacher),
Reece L., Ava G., Lena H., Jenna C., Jackie Greene(TU), Gary Hogue(TU)

for TIC. The new schools added were West Alexander Middle School and University Christian High School. Teacher

Derek Chase from UCH and Ryan Rowe from WAMS submitted applications to Hickory TU in June. The Board approved the applications and purchased chiller aquariums for the two newly approved schools. On Thursday, September 21, TIC Chair, Cathy Starnes drove to the



West Alexander Middle School
Cathy Starnes(TU), Cecilia T., Lane T., Madison S.,
Ryan Rowe(Science Teacher),
Charlie H., Marcie G., Jackie Greene(TU)

Marion Hatchery and transported approximately 160 trout eggs to each school. The children at all 3 locations anxiously awaited the delivery. Cathy Starnes also serves on the Catawba County Board of Education. The photos attached show each schools new banner, also provided by Hickory TU. The trout raised by all 3 schools will be released into local streams in March 2018.

TU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

Check out <https://www.meetup.com/WomenOnTheFly/> for the latest women's events.

WIN A THOMAS & THOMAS FOR THE CHAPTER

If you haven't signed up for Southern Trout Magazine, you are missing an opportunity for some great articles aimed at our part of the world and now a chance to win a Thomas & Thomas fly rod as a chapter prize. The magazine is a free digital issue and all you have to do is go to www.tushootout.com and sign up to help us win.

UPCOMING EVENTS

WNC Fly Fishing Expo

December 1-2

WNC Agricultural Center, Asheville, NC

Regional speakers, beginner fly fishing classes, fly casting instruction, gear demos, fly thing clinics, fly fishing films and more. \$15 at the door, free for children 16 years and younger. Friday Noon-7 pm, Saturday 9 am – 4 pm. The Center is a 1301 Fanning Bridge Rd in Fletcher.

OPENING DAY ON WILSON CREEK

The first day of the 2017/18 Delayed Harvest Season begins on October 1. The first stocking will take place on Wilson Creek on Tuesday, October 3. If you'd like to be there to lend a hand, be at the handicap area between 9&10 AM. Stocking at Elk Creek will take place the next day.

TRIPS OF THE MONTH

It was a big month for fishing trips. Jackie Greene was it Montana, Gary Hogue & Chick Woodward were at Prince of Wales Island, AK with their sons, and we are still waiting for Skip Pearce was also out west.

Jackie Greene reported in from



the Big Hole River in Montana. As you can see by the smile



on her face she's had a great time....well, except maybe in the second photo. shooting photos. know when great shot like one. The third nice grayling,



Never stop You never you'll capture a that second picture shows a her first ever.

PRINCE OF WALES ISLAND. Gary Hogue & Chick Woodward



took their sons Gary Jr. and Michael to POW Island this month for a week of salmon fishing.

The rain at the beginning of the week made things difficult, but as the weather cleared, there was some good fishing. They claimed it was an off year for pink salmon, but it was hard to keep them off the hook. But when you got a shot at one of the fresh silvers the battle was on. The first night was spent on Creek Street in Ketchikan where Gary enjoyed some frolicking at Dolly's. A good time was had by all.



PHOTO OF THE MONTH



Hunter Harley is shown here with a Tiger Trout. He and his dad Bill Harley were fishing in private waters up near Boone. Bill has provided several other photos of beautiful big trout

they have caught over the summer.

If you have photos of your fishing trips, please send them to hkynctu@gmail.com. Special photos such as this will appear in the newsletter and all photos will be in the slide show at our fundraising program this month.

EAGLE ROCK CAMP

We are looking for 2-3 fly tiers to help with an Eagle Rock Camp veterans retreat near Lenoir on October 18. The program will work with the children in the morning and then the parents in the afternoon. After tying their flies, the adults will have a chance to try them out on the lake. If you are able to help out, please contact Gary Hogue at hkynctupres@gmail.com.

CASTING CAROLINAS

Casting Carolinas needs volunteers to help with their tournament and their retreats. If you can lend a hand please visit their website and sign up to help.

<http://castingcarolinas.com/community/volunteer/>

CHAPTER WEBSITE

The chapter website has been upgraded and revamped with a lot of additional information about our activities, past newsletters, interesting links and much more. Please check in at www.hkynctu.org and look it over. If there is something you would like see added, please let us know.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

Got a great photo or story from a recent fly fishing trip, a new product you think others would love, or any stories to share with other members? We'd love to hear from you and publish you in the next newsletter. Send it to us at HkyNCTU@gmail.com for consideration of publication.

This month we have a feature article provided by Joel Miller. I hope you enjoy it.

THE BABE'S BEST CATCH by Joel Miller

My greatest catch ever? No doubt about it! Sight fishing on the Bighorn in Montana.

Several years ago, my long-time fishing buddy, Sam, and I flew to Montana for a week of fishing. We spent most of the week at a lodge owned by Dave Couch on the Bighorn River. Dave had a great reputation as a guide and had a great lodge at a great spot on a great river.

Sam and I spent the first couple days fishing with other guides, mostly chuckin' lead (fishing a beautifully clear tailwater with nymphs and lots of split shot to "get 'er down to the fish"). We caught lots of nice fish, but chuckin' lead is just that, chuckin' lead! We had seen no significant hatches and caught no rising fish.

After two or three days of nymphs and split shot (and, don't get me wrong, catching lots of nice fish on a pristine fishery like the Bighorn is hard to beat, even if you have to do it "chuckin' lead"), during dinner at the lodge, Dave said, "You two will be fishing with me tomorrow, and we'll do nothing but sight fish with dries." All I thought was, "Right! I've not seen a rising fish yet!" I just said that to myself! Don't ever make your guide mad before you even get into his boat!

Next day my respect for Dave was exponentially increased. He turned out to be one of the best sight-fish-dry-flies-to-rising-big-trout guides I've ever fished with. He'd meander the drift boat slowly down the river until he spotted a couple or a few rising fish that neither Sam nor I had even imagined could be there. He'd park the boat down current from the fish, one of us would get out of the boat, wade to within casting distance, and carefully cast tiny dries to those risers. We caught some great fish and had a great time doing it. I had brought my 7'9" 3-weight rod, thinking it would be great fun to use it to catch good fish with accurate casts and small dries. Very good choice! Our terminal tackle was a size 20 Parachute Adams with its size 22 twin about 24 inches behind its hook bend, both on 7x fluorocarbon tippet. 3-weight ... oh yea! Hook a 20-incher on that rig and have more fun than anybody deserves!

Now, in addition to being a phenomenal dry fly guide, Dave was quite the clown! He seemed to revel in taunting anglers who were actually competent. I assume he treated neophytes in a better way that might secure a decent tip, but he was brutal to us! We stopped at one pool with several rising fish in the midst of a hatch. At this spot there were enough risers that both Sam and I were out of the boat catching a rising fish on every few casts. Dave had moved the boat toward the bank under a shade tree and was lying back, seemingly overcome by somnolence. Sam laid down a bullseye cast to a rising fish which almost immediately rose

to take a natural bug just an inch or two from his fly. Assured the fish had taken his fly, Sam set the hook beautifully, but the fish took its morsel of natural bug down with him as Sam came up with nothing. Dave sleepily lifted his cap from over what we thought were closed eyes and scoffed, "Not in your wildest dreams!"

It was my turn to fish to the next riser Dave spotted. We came to a fairly large cutout section along the bank such that there was current alongside quiet water created by the cutout. Just at the apex where the calm water joined the current, Dave spotted a rising head. He turned to me and grumbled reluctantly that it might not even be worth the effort, because there was only one fish and, "It didn't look that big." So, he said, "Give it a quick shot, but don't spend much time. We'll move on downriver and find bigger fish."

As I slipped over the gunnel of the boat, I quipped to Dave, "OK, I'll catch him on one cast."

I waded to what was a reasonable 3-weight cast distance downstream from the spot I'd last seen the fish's nose. After a couple false casts, I dropped the size 20 Parachute Adams about 6 inches ahead of that spot. Pleased with my accuracy my pulse began to accelerate. The 20 slowly drifted over where I'd seen his nose ... nothing! A few seconds later the size 22 arrived and a nose appeared just above the surface. After what seemed forever for a mouth to finally open, I lifted the rod tip. Almost like being teleported by Scottie on *Star Trek*, my fly line ripped toward the middle of the river! After several minutes and many prayer petitions about the tensile strength of 7x tippet, a beautiful, fat 25-inch rainbow slid into Dave's net.

"Dave, that's just like Babe Ruth pointing to center field and hitting the next pitch over the wall!"

Dave said nothing!

SPONSORS INVITED

As part of our fundraising, we invite you to post an advertisement in our monthly newsletters and on our chapter website. The newsletter is sent to over 300 people in the Hickory metro area. For \$100, we will post your business card on both locations for twelve months. Please send your business card and a check for \$100 to:

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited 032
2425 N. Center Street #183
Hickory, NC 28601-1320

For more information, please contact us at HkyNCTU@gmail.com.

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Sun Closed

2017



EVENTS

APRIL

1st Opening day of Hatchery waters - bring a picnic lunch!

MAY

13th Disc Archery Shoot. Free lessons for kids & adults. Equipment provided. Please no personal bows! Bring a picnic lunch!

JUNE

3rd Opening day of harvest waters. Trout Fishing Event: Children 16 & under invited to fish trout 6 am - Noon & Adults Noon - 3. Lunch Available!

17th Safety Awareness Day. American Red Cross will teach Wilderness First Aid. Bring swimwear & a picnic lunch!

JULY

1st 4th of July Celebration with music by Bear Wallow Band & food by City Cafe

AUG

12th Heritage Day - Collettsville Historical Society on site with old time train music by Hobo Bill & Kristen

SEPT

16th Goodbye to Summer Event with Hobo Bill & Kristen & food by City Cafe

OCT

21st Wilson Creek Festival of Colors with Bear Wallow Band and food by City Cafe

**ALL EVENTS 11 AM - 4PM
& FREE**

