

# Hickory NC Trout Unlimited August 2020 Newsletter



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## USE YOUR STIMULUS CHECK WISELY

I'm sure by now most of you have received your economic stimulus check. And I'm sure that many of you were financially sound before you received it so that there is nothing you really need to spend it on except maybe some more fishing gear that is already filling a lot of your closet. Here is a suggestion on how you may get that money into the economy and do some good with it at the same time. Donate it to one of the charities that our chapter is supporting.

### Eagle Rock Camp



Eagle Rock Camp is a veteran program, but it is unique in that rather than only support the veteran, it supports the veteran and his whole family. The program is designed for families that are near break up and councils them on how to survive. They have had a remarkable record of bringing families back together and keeping them that way. Fly casting is a part of the therapy program and participants receive a free membership in TU at the end of the camp program. To make a donation or learn more about the program, visit <https://eaglerockcamp.org/>.

### Casting Carolinas



Casting Carolinas is a program for women who have or are recovering from cancer. The program teaches fly fishing including fly tying, casting, and the last day on the river with TU members coaching them. Participants receive a free membership in TU and the Hickory Chapter has several current members from the program, including Jackie Greene

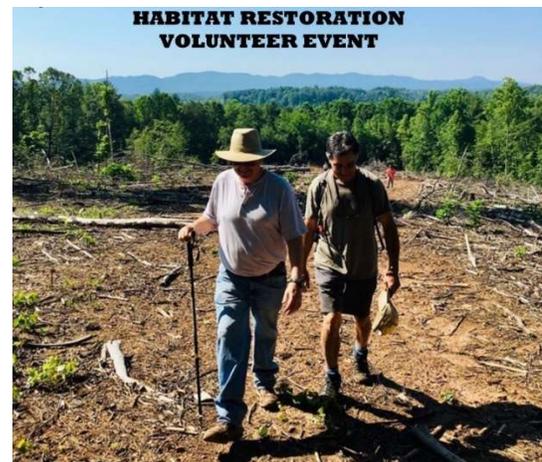
our current president. To learn more about the program and make a donation visit their website at: <https://castingcarolinas.com/>.

### A Clean Wilson Creek



Many of you have met Bruce Gray, the owner of Betsey's Old Country Store up at Wilson Creek. Many years ago, he took it upon himself to use his employees and make regular runs along the creek to clean up the mess left behind by inconsiderate visitors. Due to his efforts we are able to see the creek in its clean beauty. The program was a heavy cost that Bruce financed mostly out of pocket. A couple years ago the program was formalized and expanded to help cover the costs. They met and joined with the Forest Service and Caldwell County to expand the efforts and help improve the situation along the creek. Please visit <https://acleanwilsoncreek.org/> to see more about what the group is doing and to make a donation.

### Foothills Conservancy



Foothills Conservancy is a land trust that serves our region by purchasing and managing land that is available for public

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Hickory NC Chapter 032 of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to [HkyNCTU@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) and let us know.

use. To date they have protected over 60,000 acres of land of which nearly 52,000 acres have been turned over to public ownership. Our chapter first became involved with them when we learned that a large percentage of the Wilson Creek delayed harvest area was purchased by them to make it possible. They have also purchased a great deal of land which has become part of South Mountains State Park and are now working to obtain property along the Henry Fork in Catawba County that is to become a future state park. If you would like to learn more about their program and make a donation, please visit their website at <https://www.foothillsconservancy.org/>.

In these crazy times with all that is going on in our world, these organizations could use the help of caring people like you. These nonprofits will struggle or at least need to scale back on what they do that makes them so special. Let's help them stay afloat and moving forward.

## CHAPTER MEETINGS

The Hickory Chapter of TU takes a break in July and August. The next chapter meeting will hopefully be this fall. Watch in the newsletter, on Facebook, or our website for details.

## ESSENTIAL WORKERS FREE MEMBERSHIP OFFER

We wish to extend our heartfelt thanks to all those workers on the front lines keeping us safe, treating the sick, delivering necessities, and feeding our nation. If you are an essential worker who loves to fish (or wants to learn) and cares about conservation, we invite you to enjoy a free one-year Trout Unlimited membership.

Time on the water can provide refuge, joy, healing ... and hope, which is so important during difficult times. We offer camaraderie and good times along with the pleasure of being part of a community that is dedicated to a brighter future for America's rivers, streams and fish. Our 300,000 members and supporters are joining the conversation online right now while our local chapters plan for when we are all able to be together again.

If you are new to Trout Unlimited, we hope you will accept this free invitation. Join us today. Together, we can look to the future with hope. Sign up at:

[https://gifts.tu.org/essentialworkers\\_join](https://gifts.tu.org/essentialworkers_join)

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"I could tell you that the flies were *Ecdyonurus dispar*, or *Soumatti meddup*, but I'm hopeless at entomology. Conclusion? 'Little brown things fluttering above the water.'"*

— Fennel Hudson, *Fly Fishing - Fennel's Journal - No. 5*

## THE RIGHT HAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

On a recent guided float trip I got some information from the guide that I had never considered before. The underside of the brim on your hat should be black to prevent glare. If it

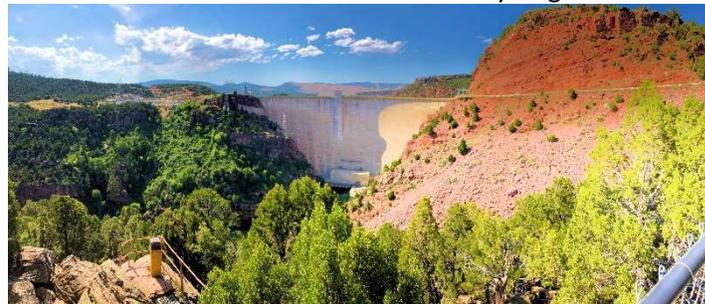
is light colored, the sun will reflect off the water to the brim and then from the brim to your eyes. The other thing I've read recently is that your hat should have a long brim to help reduce the glare. Next time you are buying a hat, consider the long brim with black underbrim. On the other hand the outer side of your hat should be a light color to help reflect the sun and keep your head cooler.

## THE GREEN RIVER IN UTAH IS AN ABSOLUTE BUCKET LIST ITEM

My son Michael and I just got back from the Green River in Utah this month and we both are awe stricken from an amazing trip. Not only is the scenery beautiful along the way, it is the most fantastic trout fishing we have ever experienced in the lower 48. These are large wild trout and there are a lot of them. And we caught most of them on a dry fly.

The trip started last year in an article I read about the top fly fishing destinations in the US. The more I read about it, the more it seemed we needed to give the Green River a try. In my research I learned about the cicada hatch being phenomenal. That appeared to peak in June, but we were unable to make it then so picked early July in hopes we could catch the tail end of it. A little more research led me to book our trip with Old Moe Guide Service. While we were there we discovered that Old Moe is not the owner, but is a very large brown trout that no one was ever able to catch. We booked early and were teamed up with Brenton Kuhn as our guide.

Brenton turned out to be one of the best guides my son and I have had over several fishing trips. He has a real talent for helping you be a better fisherman and in coaching you in catching fish. He has an amazing ability to spot fish and put you on them. Throughout the drift he would continue coaching both my son and I with a typical message of "strip-strip-strip, pick up and cast about 5' right." I'm sure without him our catch would not have been nearly as great.



The Green River we fished is the tailrace of the Flaming Gorge Dam which keeps the river temperature in the 50s throughout the heat of the summer. The river is sectioned into A, B, and C. A is seven miles long, B is 9 miles long, and C is 14 miles long. You will get a full drift of the A & B sections, but will likely be shortened a little on C. The most massive numbers of fish are in section A below the dam with up to 20,000 fish per mile. As you move down stream the estimates vary along the way at 14,000 to 8,000 fish per mile. The

scenery along the way was described as beautiful so my son and I planned our three day trip with day one sections A&B, day two sections B&C, and because the best fishing was reported to be in A we took a shorter trip there the last day so we could get back to Salt Lake City to catch our flight early the next morning. If you have more time, you might want to do A&B again on the last day as the fishing in B was very good.



On Thursday morning we met Brenton at 7 AM and headed down to the launch right below the dam. We had agreed ahead of time that our first love was dry fly fishing. He told us the cicada hatch was over and that

every year is good, but the cicada hatch is on a 17 year peak. While it is good and a fun time to fish each year, last year was the peak of the cycle and it was unbelievable. If you are young enough, you might want to mark your calendar to be sure and be there in 2036. He told us that there is good dry fly fishing from March into November, that we had hit the best time for hatches. The caddis, PMDs, and yellow sallies were all hatching right now. The last day, the yellow sallies were so thick that in some areas they were pelting us like a hail storm.



The hatch varied throughout the day and Brenton kept his eye on the water and changed us out as he saw the hatch and monitored whether that fly was catching. Morning typically started out with PMD and caddis and evolved into yellow sally as the day progressed. Most of the flies were a size 16.

On the first day fishing A&B, Brenton rowed us a way down the river before throwing out our flies to time us with the hatch locations and get us ahead of the crowd. We started throwing out maybe halfway down A and immediately started catching fish that were rising across the stream. We fished on down to a location where there were fish rising everywhere and sallies hatching in mass. We started catching



fish almost continuously and they were all large fish in the 14-16" size with a few going up to 18". At the beginning we were catching a mix of rainbow and browns, but as we moved downstream it was mostly brown trout. By the end of the

day Michael had an 18.5" rainbow and I had an 18.5" brown, though Michael smashed me with numbers. Of course, it may have been because I gave him the front seat, but then it also could have been because he's become a much better fly fisherman than me. He probably had 20 fish that day, while I only managed about 4.

The scenery was spectacular on the A section starting in a very deep gorge that continued much of the way down the stream. We remained in a gorge all day, but it got shallower



as we worked our way downstream. Part of my college education was in geology, and the variation in rock types and the angular uplifts fascinated me. Brenton was able to lend a lot of interesting information regarding the rocks and areas where they have discovered many dinosaur skeletons. We saw several herons and osprey, some feeding on fish.

The second day we headed down sections B&C. Again there were hatches happening everywhere and we continued to catch large fish. Brenton started coaching me a little more and my skills improved greatly. I manage about 6 fish the second day, while Michael probably landed another 20.



The highlight of the day was at the top of section C I landed a 20" brown, the biggest of the trip so far. I also got a 22" whitefish on the fly which I am told is a very unusual feat as they are normally bottom feeders. That turned out to be the biggest fish of the trip.

On our final day we started out at 6:30 in order to beat the crowds. We found that on Saturday the rafter hatch came out in force. Our early start got us a lot of fishing in before the rafters started to show up, but even with the hoards, it didn't interfere a great deal with our fishing. We had heard marvelous reports about nymphing, but the night before Michael and I agreed that the opportunity to dry fly was too great to switch over, so we again started out on dries. I'm getting a bit long in the tooth and found myself feeling the effort of two very long days, so was sitting out parts of the



trip and watching Michael fish. He was doing well with about 8 fish (including a 21" brown to beat mine), while I had none to that point. Brenton was aware of how I was feeling and said we were switching to

nymphs. I really owe him for that. He started us in a sluice below a rapids and in the first four drifts I caught four fish over 17" and the largest being an 19.5" rainbow. I now had the largest rainbow for the trip. A few minutes later Michael

pulled in a 20" rainbow, beating me in every category on size and quantity. Except the whitefish.



In the last couple hours of the day we caught probably a dozen more fish each and at least four doubles. I truly recommend that if you go that you

take some time to do a little nymphing. I promised our guide I wouldn't quote numbers but if you and your guide are up to it, the numbers can be extraordinary.

The amazing thing to both my son and I was the size of the fish over the three days. This is a wild trout stream and most of our fish averaged 15-17" with no trout less than 12" and 4 over 20". Between us we landed probably 70-80 fish and missed that many more. Between the unbelievable fishing and the dramatic scenery, at the end of the day, Michael and I agreed that the only way to describe it was **WOW!**

Our sincere thanks to Old Moe Guide Service and especially to Brenton for a trip that will be regarded as wonderful and stay in our minds forever. This is a trip that must be on your bucket list.

### Planning Your Trip

We flew into Salt Lake City with about a 3.5 hour drive up to Dutch John. We did learn there is a United flight that comes into Vernal, but if you include flight and driving time, it's a little faster through Salt Lake City from Charlotte. Dutch John, Utah is a very small town with very few amenities. There is no grocery store in town, so if you plan to bring some food and drinks you need to pick them up along the way.

There are four restaurants including two to the west at lodges. There are several lodges, but space is limited and it is a good idea to plan your trip several months in advance. That is also true of guide service. Our guide Brenton said he is already half booked for July of 2021 so plan early.

You will see a lot of beautiful country along the river, but take a little time in the evening and along your drive to see some scenery. Two spots we truly enjoyed were the Red Rock Canyon Overlook and Sheep Creek Geological Loop, both just to the west of Dutch John. You'll be in awe of what



Mother Nature can do with a little shaking of the earth.

### THE TROUT PELLET FLY

On a recent trip we stayed at a lodge that had a small lake with trout in it. When we arrived I stopped at the lodge desk and asked them the best fly for fishing in the lake. They



pointed to what they called a trout pellet fly. It has taken me some time in my life to adjust to the squirmy, Y2K, and trout beads, but this one really took me to a whole new level. But after a little time and rationalization in my mind

I accepted that if it works, try it. For all of you purests out there, this fly floats, so just think of it as a dry fly. I have no idea what the little red dot is for.

### HOW TO PLAN A FLY FISHING ADVENTURE

If you've been following the newsletter for the last few years you've seen reports of adventures I've made to Alaska, Yellowstone, Michigan's Upper Peninsula, Belize, the Bahamas, and this month the Green River in Utah. So far these trips have been made with only one hitch, but that's due to two things: A lot of planning and the fact I am retired and have time to do the planning. Honestly, it is not too difficult. If you're traveling to a lodge, their website will generally tell you everything you need and if it's out of the way, how to get there. But there are a few things you need to work out to make sure you have a great trip.

#### Where to go?

Deciding where to go is your first major decision. There are some simple decisions like "I want to go to Alaska", but once you've made that decision, you have an almost infinite number of choices on types of trips (lodge, or float) which lodge and in which part of Alaska. If you are going with other fishermen, you can often get a recommendation from where they have been or what they have heard from others. Much of my travel is with my son and for the first trip to Alaska he had already been to Intricate Bay Lodge and wanted me to go back with him. It was a great choice.

The second trip to Alaska was to Prince of Wales Island at the lower end of the peninsula. I don't recall for sure how we decided this, but we did a lot of research on the internet to decide which lodge and when to go. The lodge was great and timing would normally have been correct, but just before we arrived there were days of warm drenching rain. Some things you just can't predict. The rain quit when we arrived, but the fish didn't start up the swollen streams on schedule. The worst part of the trip was not mentioned on the internet. The trails into the creeks were long, marshy, and full of fallen trees to climb over. This was not anywhere on the internet research and since none of us had been there before it was an unexpected surprise.

With that in mind, here are my recommendations for choosing a location for your trip:

1. Go to a place that someone in your group or a friend has been before and recommends.
2. Search the internet for recommendations and then find out everything you can about it. Websites like Yelp.com have become great for travel. Read both the five star and one star reviews to get a balance.
3. Find a fly fishing travel planner who will arrange the trip for you.

Check with your local fly shop. They may have trips scheduled or know of others who do. Go to the internet to find one. Orvis plans several trips during the year, Yellowdog Fly Fishing is a major planner, and many fly shops around the country can set you up. At both of our bonefish trips there were groups from fly shops. On our trip to Belize we met a group from Front Range Anglers in Boulder Colorado <https://fronrangeanglers.com/> that plans trips all over the world. You can occasionally get special discounts for the trip and in one case an Orvis trip gave you a Helios 3 rod with the regular lodge rate.

### When to go?

Clearly you don't want to go for salmon in Alaska in the winter and you are taking a risk if you plan a trip to the Caribbean at the peak of hurricane season. Often the best season to go is very clear by the rate increases at the lodges. Again, the best source is through travel planners and advice from people who have been there, or even a call to the lodge may give you the advice you need. But if you want to research on your own, there is a great deal of information on the internet.

Check out the fish schedules. If you're headed to Alaska to go salmon fishing you'll find a lot of charts on when each species arrives at the rivers. Reds, silver, and kings all run at different times in the summer.

WHEN TO COME - WEEKLY FISHING CHART												
	JUNE			JULY			AUGUST			SEPTEMBER		
King (Chinook) Salmon												
Sockeye (Red) Salmon												
Chum Salmon												
Pink (Humpback) Salmon												
Silver Salmon												
Rainbow Trout												
Arctic Char												
Dolly Varden												
Arctic Grayling												
Northern Pike												
Lake Trout												

Charts like this are a good start, but there is still more you need to know. For instance when we went to Lake Iliamna for rainbow, we went the end of August. By that time the reds have laid their eggs and the rainbow have gorged on them. You'll catch your biggest rainbows at that time. Another thing we have learned is that over fishing of Kings has lately caused Alaska Fish & Game to close the season early. If you scheduled your trip in late July, you may not be able to fish for them.

We've learned this only because we have been there and learned through experience. And because we've been there news items like the closing of king season have caught our eye in the news. As before, people who have been there may be your best source for timing.

For our trip to Belize, we were also able to find charts that showed us the best time for bonefish, permit, and tarpon.

If you are headed for trout, one of the major things to look for are fly hatches. If you are headed to Michigan, there are often massive mayfly hatches the first couple weeks of June. The salmon fly hatch on the Henry's Fork in Idaho runs late May through June. The cicada hatch on the Green River in Utah is best for early June. All of this information is easy

to access on the internet. But this is not a guarantee as weather can play a major impact on the timing. Last year my son went to the AuSable in Michigan in early June. The few days before his arrival there were massive evening hatches, but the day he arrived a cold front moved in and the hatch was greatly diminished. If you are going for a hatch try for an extended trip to limit weather effects.

If you are headed to the Rocky Mountains or Sierras to fish, there is a major snow melt that can blow out rivers in the early part of the year. These generally will be over by mid June, but on a trip to the Frying Pan in Colorado a few years ago a heavy snowfall and cool spring still had the streams overflowing on July 4<sup>th</sup>.

All that said, great planning will help to assure a great trip, but cannot guarantee it.

### What to take

Clothing is obviously contingent on where you are heading. If you're going to Alaska, you should expect some cool and rainy days. If you're headed to a Caribbean trip you should plan for heat and sun, though winter can occasionally bring some cool weather to the northern regions. You should always check the long term forecast a few days before you leave to confirm it. A big thing to remember is that sitting in a boat for 8 hours a day under the sun can bake you. It's often better to stay with breathable long sleeve shirts and long pants under the hot sun.

As far as gear goes, be sure to discuss it with your outfitter and review their website. When we went to Turneffe Flats, there was a rather significant extra charge for rods and reels so we brought our own. When we went to the Green river we were told not to bother with our own rods and reels as the guide would have his own all pre rigged and ready to go. He also told us we would not be wading so don't bother to bring your waders. Be sure to confirm if felt soles are allowed as many states have banned them.

I highly recommend that you purchase a 4 piece rod for your trips. A 2 piece rod might not fit in the overhead bin and the way airlines operate today, you could pay a significant extra charge to check it. And be sure your name and address is taped to the rod case. One thing I have done to make life easier is to purchase a 28" suitcase that allows me to pack my 4 piece rod in it. A 29" bag may be legal, but when looking at the dimensions it appeared to be a bit iffy for oversize charge.

Should you bring flies? I am a fanatical fly tyer and have tied up over a hundred flies for most of our trips. If you plan to do some fishing on your own, you certainly need to take some flies along. If you are fishing with a guide it's not likely he'll use them. Guides tend to have preferences on the best flies and no matter how hard you research, it never seems to be the right thing.

Below is a packing list I have used for most of my trips. I have included things I would need for both fishing with and without a guide. You will need to refine this list based on your planned destination and activities. There is a fine balance between over packing and missing an item when you get there. Often there will be no available shopping nearby when

you get there to get that missing item you need, so plan carefully.

#### **FISHING GEAR**

fly rod & reel (Spare optional)  
Fanny Pack w/tools, leaders, flies, etc.  
Fishing Net  
Bug Spray with DEET  
Rain Jacket  
Wading Boots  
Wading Socks  
Wading Staff  
Yellow Sunglasses  
Amber Sunglasses  
Croaker  
Fishing gloves  
Baseball cap  
Insect Net

#### **OTHER**

Camera  
Tablet  
Reading glasses  
Alarm Clock  
Binoculars  
Suntan Lotion  
Lip Balm-SPF  
First Aid Kit  
Waterproof fanny pack

If you are preparing for that lifetime fishing trip, the most important thing to remember is to take your time with the planning to try and assure that you have chosen the right place, right time, and have what you need to make it a great trip. Talk things over with your trip partners and guide service. If you take the time and do it right you'll have a wonderful time to remember.....and when it's over, put together a story about your trip or at least some photos to share in our newsletter.

## **A CLEAN WILSON CREEK**

*A message from Facebook*

Thanks always to [Bruce Gray](#) and Erica Penley for continuing to hold the front lines of protecting this river, day-in and day-out. During these very challenging times, an influx of many new recreational users has resulted in an overwhelming volume of trash. This is often exhausting, physically. Our team is working with the National Forest Service to address these new dynamics, but Bruce and Betseys Store crew provide the daily reports and oversight, and still haul biweekly bed-loads of full garbage bags in Suzie the Ford. We will be holding a major fundraising effort in September through October. A



newer vehicle and small onsite trailer is imperative for next season. Stay tuned! We appreciate all of you who support our efforts in so many ways.

**Bruce Gray** is 🙏 asking for donations.

Now as gently and sweetly as I can, reminding you and Wilson Creek Facebook group, we do keep this Creek clean. If you want Action, please consider donating to A Clean Wilson Creek. If you don't want to donate money think about donation of time. Volunteers are needed as bad as money! Once again thank you to Jim and Patty. True keepers of the Creek.

**To make a donation visit** <https://acleanwilsoncreek.org/>

## **WILSON CREEK BASIN PROJECTS**

An Update From Andy Brown

Greetings Volunteers in the Wilson Creek Community Science –

Andy Brown here just giving you folks a little update as to progress on the Wilson Creek Initiative. We are living in strange times (understatement), and while that has diminished our abilities to do survey work for awhile, I did want you to know that **your survey work has helped me secure funding to put 3 big conservation projects on the ground here in 2020**. I have also cc'd many people who helped us kick start the Wilson Cr initiative with the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Wild/Scenic celebration in November 2018.

1. **Mortimer Campground Bridge** – We are under contract with TAG Construction from Old Fort to build the new bridge (aquatic organism passage) into the Mortimer Campground. This will open up about 1,800 feet of stream for wild rainbow trout and other aquatic and semi-aquatic species. Additionally, it will provide safer and more reliable public access into the campground for the recreational public. Construction starts TODAY! Completion is expected by late fall and certainly by the end of December, 2020. This will be a \$340,000 project and utilizes funding from the US Forest Service, NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund and US Fish and Wildlife Service.

2. **Thorps Creek Stream Rehabilitation and Low Water Ford Removal** – We are under contract with



NorthState Environmental from Winston Salem to remove the old concrete vented low water ford that is a severe barrier for fish passage and a public safety hazard during flooding events. This

project also involves the restoration of the stream immediately upstream of the ford and downstream through the campground to Highway 90. This will be a \$58,000 project and utilizes funding from the US Forest Service and

NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund. Construction starts in the first week of September and will be complete by October 15, 2020

- 3. **Marks Mountain Loop** – We are getting ready to host pre-bid meetings for the rehabilitation of US Forest Service Roads 192 (Mountains to Sea Trail), 4062 (Old House Gap section of Yancey Ridge Trail) and 451 (Marks Mtn Road). This project will address major erosion and sedimentation issues from approximately 9 miles of these highly popular foot, mountain bike and equestrian paths that are adjacent to Gragg Prong, a native brook trout stream and Rockhouse Creek, a wild rainbow trout stream. The project will also address landslides and stream crossings, improving aquatic organism passage. It is likely that two or three different contractors will be utilized to do this work. Due to the fact that we do not yet have bids, I cannot tell you the cost at this moment. But we thank the NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund, NC Recreational Trails Program and US Forest Service for their contributions to this work. This work will begin in the fall 2020 and may last into 2021.

**VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY/NEED** – as part of the Mortimer Campground Bridge and one piece of the Marks Mountain Loop projects, we will be replacing TWO undersized culverts with oversized culverts that will allow us to construct a stream channel inside using cobble, gravels and sand. This essentially will turn the pipe into a natural stream crossing. WE NEED THREE PEOPLE TO ASSIST ME TO INSTALL THESE NATURAL MATERIALS INTO THE CULVERT AS IT IS BEING CONSTRUCTED. IT WILL BE SIMPLE TO DO BUT DOES REQUIRE PEOPLE WITH THE PHYSICAL CAPACITY TO USE A SHOVEL AND PICK UP AND MOVE 20 – 30 POUND ROCKS AND BUCKETS OF SAND/GRAVEL. EMAIL OR CALL ME IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND I WILL GIVE YOU MORE DETAILS.

Thank you again for all of your hard work helping to survey roads/trail and stream crossings. The data you collected has proven instrumental in helping me formulate winning grant proposals. I look forward to seeing you all again soon.

Andy Brown  
Coldwater Conservation Manager  
Trout Unlimited – Southern Appalachians  
(828-674-1067; [abrown@tu.org](mailto:abrown@tu.org))

*Editors Note: We would like to thank Terry Jennings, Mike Waddell and Charles Hefner for their efforts in surveying the Aquatic Organism Passages (AOP) on the Wilson Creek drainage*

*basin. These gentlemen including Andy Brown and Jeff Wright of TU put in a total of 440 hours for the Citizen Science Program.*

## **CASTING CAROLINAS 2020 EVENTS**

**October 9-11 NC Fall Retreat, Lake Logan Center  
October 24 Tie One On Tournament in Cherokee**

Casting Carolinas is a free program for women cancer survivors. To apply for a future retreat or to volunteer to help out, sign up at [www.castingcarolinas.com](http://www.castingcarolinas.com).

### **EAGLE ROCK CAMP**

When you are shopping at Amazon, they will make a donation to the Eagle Rock Camp for Veterans at no cost to you if you access by using:

[https://smile.amazon.com/.../s/V45QZCL3W.../ref=smi\\_cl\\_wl\\_rd\\_cl](https://smile.amazon.com/.../s/V45QZCL3W.../ref=smi_cl_wl_rd_cl)

You can also select Eagle Rock Camp to receive each time you give by going to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com). Where it asks you to select a charity, type in Eagle Rock Camp and select it. For all future purchases from Amazon, enter through [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and it will automatically make the donation.

### **NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED**

If you have a great day on the river, please send us a photo to share at [HkyNCTU@gmail.com](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) If you have success on your trip, please share it with us.

Also we invite you to let us know of your upcoming events related to fly fishing for posting in our newsletter at the above email address.

### **HICKORY NC TU OFFICERS**

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## HOPPERS AND OTHER CREEPY CRAWLERS

Neil Travis - Aug 12, 2013

I have always called August the bug month. August represents the final phase of a movement that started several months ago as winter gave way to spring and all of God's creation began to come alive. Under the warm sun of spring the eggs of insects from the previous season begin to hatch and a new generation is born. By the time we arrive at the late summer days of August those newborns are now full grown. Hoppers are hopping, beetles are crawling, ants are swarming; it's a jungle out there.

While there are still some pretty spectacular aquatic insect hatches that the trout angler may experience in late summer, increasingly it's the land based food forms that bring the most action. Anglers find themselves reaching for their box of terrestrial patterns in an attempt to find some activity on their favorite trout water.

Terrestrial fishing is different from fishing to trout feeding on actively hatching insects or masses of mayfly spinners. Most terrestrial fishing involves covering the water searching for a fish that is interested in eating what you are presenting. The successful terrestrial fisher is normally the one that keeps moving, covering the water with a series of casts and then moving on and repeating the process. In my experience it's a rare occasion when there are enough terrestrials on the water to bring on a mass feeding. Terrestrial fishing involves the angler finding the opportunistic feeder and presenting him with an opportunity to feed.

Terrestrial fly patterns are generally quite simple. In fact, I was looking through some of my terrestrial patterns and I discovered a fly that was given to me years ago by a local angler, David Howe. David has been fishing those celestial trout streams for over a decade now, and I cherish this fly that he gave me.



Howe's Hopper

Here we have a basic hopper that is constructed from mostly native materials. The hook is about a size 12, the body is a willow twig that was split and glued on the hook and then was painted yellow. The brown strip on the side represented the legs, and then he cut a groove around the body and made a couple wraps of grizzly hackle. As crude as it appears it does everything that a good dry hopper pattern should do. It lands on the water with a satisfying plop, it floats without the need of any floatant, and it resembles the real thing.

The second fly that I found in my terrestrial box was a Green Worm, or, as we called them back in Michigan, a Greenie Worm.



A Greenie Worm

This fly was tied on a long shank hook and consists entirely of deer hair dyed green. The hair is tied in by the tips and the tying thread is wrapped over the deer hair to the bend of the hook. Then the deer hair is pulled forward completely covering the hook shank and the tying thread is spiral wrapped back to the eye and tied off. I also tied a similar fly by spinning green deer hair over the entire hook shank and clipping it into a round or tapered shape. In Michigan, along the Au Sable River the oak trees that grew along the banks in places were normally infested with these green worms and when they lowered themselves down on their silken lines they often would end up in the water. When they were dropping out of the trees it was often possible to find several good brown trout holding right under the trees and eating the caterpillars as they hit the water. Green caterpillars are quite common and many types of streamside vegetation and this is a good pattern to have in your terrestrial box.



Black Ant

Ant patterns are another popular terrestrial pattern and I carry them in various sizes and colors from all black, black and red, all red, and a straw yellow colored version. Unless I see a specific color and size of ant on the water I generally like to use a big ant, like the one in the image which is a size 12. If I want to increase my odds when fishing terrestrials I will often use a dry imitation, like a hopper and trail a wet ant behind it on a dropper. If you encounter a swarm of flying ants simply use an imitation with wings tied spent or swept over the back.



Hopper

One of the problems that I find that anglers have when fishing terrestrials, especially hoppers, is that, since they are not stream born anglers tend to think that one size fits all. They think that bigger are better and so most of the hopper patterns tend to be on the large size. However, hoppers come in a variety sizes and colors, although I tend to believe that in most cases color is less important than size and presentation. The hopper in the picture is tied on a size 14 standard shank dry fly hook. The body is poly yarn, the wing is brown turkey, and the head is spun deer hair. Early in the summer most of the hoppers in our area are small, and I have even used hoppers as small as size 16. It pays to check the streamside vegetation and see how big the majority of the hoppers are before you select an artificial.

Hoppers need to land on the water with a satisfying plop, and unless the wind is blowing hard enough to drop the hoppers out into the middle of the stream you should be fishing your hopper close to the bank. That is generally true for most terrestrial patterns; however, just like with any type of fly fishing you need to be observant.

Certain types of terrestrials, like ants and termites, swarm in late summer to establish new colonies. Males and females [drones and queens] develop wings and they leave their colonies in tremendous numbers. Through some mechanism that we don't understand all of the ants of a given species tend to swarm at the same time. Ants are not great fliers and when the air is filled with flying ants many of them will end up on the water. This may result in a rise similar to a mayfly or caddis fly hatch. During such an emergence it pays to have an imitation that is close in size and color since the trout can become quite picky.

One day in late September I encountered a pod of large cutthroat trout in a large pool. They were leisurely feeding on the surface, cruising just under the surface and sipping in something that was too small for me to see. I slipped into the water where the water from the pool slipped into a riffle and stuck my aquarium net in the water to see if I could come up with what these fish were eating. It took me several minutes but finally I saw something stuck in the surface film and scooped it up. It was the smallest ant that I had ever seen; a tiny yellowish ant with wings. The natural was considerably smaller than a size 28 hook. Needless to say those big old cutthroats continued to feed without any interruption from me.

Fortunately, most terrestrial fishing is not that impossible or very technical. The best flies are simple to tie and easy to fish. This is one time when a bad presentation might just be the ticket to success. Most terrestrial insects do not land on the water very gracefully and a fly that hits the water with a distinct splat is an advantage. There is nothing quite like the thrill of splatting down a hopper and watching a big trout come busting out from beneath a tussock of grass and inhaling it. It's a great way to spend the last days of summer.

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*Editor's Note: If you have not yet visited the fly angler's online website you really need to check it out. This is the most comprehensive fly fishing site I have found. The site has great articles (with a section tailored to lady flyfishers), gear information, techniques, fly tying for all skill levels, cartoons, jig saw puzzles and much more. Take a little time to explore the site and its world of fly fishing.*