

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited

January 2018 Newsletter



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A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Happy New Year! Hope everyone had a great Christmas and Happy Holidays. Hope you got that fly-fishing gear you just couldn't live without. Better yet, hope you got to go fishing with your new gear and that you caught that trout that we all dream of catching.

It's a new year, so go-ahead and mark your new calendar for our 2018 meeting dates. We will continue meeting the third Tuesday of each month except July, August and December. If you are a member but don't attend meetings, please consider making the effort to attend. You will enjoy it, you may learn a new fishing tip or two, and you may meet a new fishing buddy. For those that attend on a regular basis, I challenge you to bring a guest. We welcome novice fisher people to those considered experts. A little-known fact is that many of our elder fly fishing experts enjoy teaching and helping those new to fly fishing, so it really is a great place to learn and improve your skills. I promise we won't bite but we will help you to get the fish to bite.

The program committee has a good program lined up for the January meeting. Gary Hogue will present "Safety on the River". Very important for these cold winter months when an accidental fall in the water could quickly be life threatening without a few safety tips. Learn how to save yourself or a fishing buddy when the unexpected happens. Every fisher person needs to know as much as possible about "Safety on the River". Hope to see all of you there.

I am still looking for a couple of co-chairs, one for the Conservation Committee and One for Kids Fly Fishing Day. I would like to add a chair for the youth Initiative as well, so if you have any questions or your ready to volunteer, please contact me at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com or 478-284-1224. And in closing, and I will make this offer every month, if any member has any interest in being more involved or if you have a question or suggestion, please feel free to contact me. See you Tuesday, January 16. Zan Thompson

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"Smooth waters, windless casts, drag free drifts and the thrill of life be with you always."

NEXT MEETING

When: Tuesday, January 16

Where: Old Hickory Station
232 Government Ave SW
Across from the Post Office

Program: 6:00-7:00 Dinner/ Raffle Ticket Sales
7:00-8:00 Guest speaker/ Program... Q&A
8:00 Raffle/ Door Prizes... Conclusion

Speaker: Gary Hogue

The January program will feature Gary Hogue, past president of Hickory TU, and will be centered around simple survival tips to prepare yourself to be safe and comfortable on your next winter fly fishing trip.

FUTURE MEETINGS

Meetings are held the third Tuesday each month except July, August, and December. Locations may be changing so keep an eye on the newsletter or website. Spring meeting currently planned are:

February 20 Eagle Rock Camp for Veterans
May 15 Summer Fishing for Wild Trout

If you have a presentation you would like to share or an idea for something you would like to see, please contact Chick Woodward at hkynctu@gmail.com.

New Year Resolution: Spend More Time Fly Fishing

There are always a hundred reasons that you just can't get away to fish: the yard needs mowing, the house needs painting, my spouse has plans, the project at work, I have to take the kids to their games, and on and on. But there are just as many reasons that you should be fishing: a little time fishing is a better stress reliever than a valium, people of all ages can fish so it can become a shared family event, finding someone to fish with can develop long term friendships,

catching a fish can give you a feeling of achievement, and much more. So here are some ways to help get you out there on the water more often.

Teach Your Family to Fly Fish

Growing up many years ago and in a small town kids only had limited activities to join. We had Little League that didn't start until we were eight years old, swimming classes that lasted only a few weeks, and a few park activities. Today there is T-ball starting at five years old, soccer, hockey, martial arts, volley ball, etc., etc. and parents want to fill every spare hour of their child's time with several of these activities. Remember that fly fishing is also a sport and unlike most of the others, one that your child can continue for a lifetime. In addition to learning a sport, this is something that can be done as a family to create a bond that can be shared with your child. Teach your children to love fly fishing and they will bug you until you take them and you will end up with a lot more time on the river. As an added bonus when you get older and your vision and balance start to go, you will have a partner to help you into the stream and tie on your flies for you. No children? Teach you spouse to fly fish. South Mountain State Park has frequent classes in Fly Fishing 101 and while your spouse is in class, you can head over to the Jacobs Fork Creek.

Join TU and Make Friends

I retired about five years ago, but didn't join TU until two years ago. In those first three years, I often thought about fly fishing and it was less than hour to the stream, but I seldom had the incentive to go by myself. After joining TU I found friends who love fly fishing as much as I do and with their encouragement and friendship I find myself on the river much more than I did before. While I'm still in relatively good health I also feel much better having others around to watch out for each other. And maybe the most of all I have someone to talk about fly fishing with when we sit down for lunch or stop to have a beer afterward. Joining TU can get you more time on the river than you can imagine.



Learn to Tie Flies

This may sound counter-productive as it requires time at home to tie the flies, but you can always do this on a rainy or



really cold day or in the evening after work. Learn to tie a few of the basic flies and take them to the river to test. Catching a trout on

a fly that you have tied is a tremendous feeling of accomplishment and satisfaction and will have you back on the river to try out that next fly.



Fish in the Evening

The most productive time on the river is often in the evening when the fly hatches take place. There are several streams within an hour of Hickory. (See the previous newsletters.) If you leave from work you can be on the river by 6:30 and have a couple hours to fish. On the hatchery supported rivers the best time to do this is April, May, and October. There's also a bonus to go along with this. Since this is a time for hatches, you can get in some great dry fly fishing.



Fish Locally

You don't have to go to a trout stream to go fly fishing. Some of the most exciting fishing is throwing a popper at bream or bass. You can do this from shore around most of the launches or get yourself a kayak and head out on Lake Hickory. The shoreline is loaded with bream, especially in May and June when they move up on the beds. At that time of year you can fish them all day long. Other times of the year mornings and evenings are best, but you can still catch them mid day along shady banks with a quick drop off. A good sized bream will put up a fight that will challenge a 15" trout and even that 3" fish that can't even get the popper in its mouth will give you a good tug.



If you've done much fly fishing in your life, you know you are longing to spend more time on the river. Adopt one or all of the methods and you'll find yourself out there much more often and feel the stress of daily life flow into the river and downstream.

May your new year be full of fish as big as your fish tales.

MEMBER BIO - GARY HOGUE

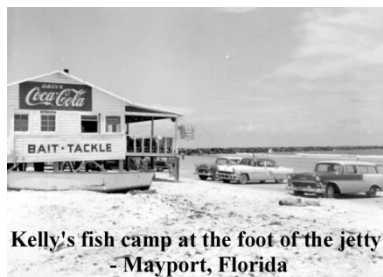
In the December newsletter you were introduced to our new President Zan Thompson. Zan has some very big shoes to fill. Gary Hogue took over the chapter in the fall of 2015 after it had been dormant for several years. In the following two years he built the chapter into what it has become

today. The first membership record we have goes back to early 2016 with 161 members and has grown by 60% to 257. There have been two successful fundraising events that have put over \$25 thousand dollars into our treasury that has been used to set up Trout in the Classroom at three schools, donations to the Casting Carolinas program and Eagle Rock Camp, gear for the Women in TU group, a display at the Wilson Creek Visitor Center and signage at Betsy's, and one of our greatest events this past year with a Kids' Fly Fishing Day at the visitor center. In addition he has helped to arrange that we have excellent presentations at all of our monthly meetings. He has charmed and coerced chapter members to develop an active set of officers and board to assure that things will continue without his direct leadership. We are fortunate, however, that the bylaws will keep Gary on the board as Past President for two more years to help keep us on track. We all owe Gary a great round of cheers for all he has done taking the chapter from dormancy to the vibrant force it is today.



There is so much more that could be said to praise Gary's presidency, but instead let's find out a little more about his life that led him here to us. Gary has been a fisherman pretty much his entire life. He was raised in Jacksonville, Florida where his grandfather had a fish camp on Atlantic Beach and the intra coastal waterway and since his parents were divorced he spent his summers and any other spare time he could manage living there. The shop sold tackle, bait, and food and rented boats. By his late teens, Gary was guiding some of the guests to help them find the best fishing spots. Sometime during his teen years someone handed him a fly rod to try and he instantly fell in love with it and soon bought his own fly rod. In those years he lived on brackish and salt water and his fly fishing consisted mainly of largemouth bass and bream and the other saltwater fish that were there.

After he graduated from college, Gary went to work for the YMCA in Jacksonville where travels to North Carolina got him hooked on fly fishing for trout. After Jacksonville he moved to the New Orleans YMCA and was back on salt water fishing in the bayous. A move to Sumter SC found him developing a keen interest in duck hunting while learning the Sparkle Berry area to fly fish by canoe. In 1995 he had his final transfer to Hickory where he became an avid trout fisherman and active in the local chapter. During his career he managed and directed camping and health and fitness programs, as well as, management and consultant roles for organizational growth and development. He also assisted Outward Bound, American Camping Association and Sierra Club with the development and delivery of outdoor program services. All of this gave him an excellent background to serve as a TU chapter president.



Kelly's fish camp at the foot of the jetty - Mayport, Florida



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Jacksonville he moved to the New Orleans YMCA and was back on salt water fishing in the bayous. A move to Sumter SC found him developing a keen interest in duck hunting while learning the Sparkle Berry area to fly fish by canoe. In 1995 he had his final transfer to Hickory where he became an avid trout fisherman and active in the local chapter. During his career he managed and directed camping and health and fitness programs, as well as, management and consultant roles for organizational growth and development. He also assisted Outward Bound, American Camping Association and Sierra Club with the development and delivery of outdoor program services. All of this gave him an excellent background to serve as a TU chapter president.

What is Hickory TU doing best? I believe the best thing we are doing is the Trout in the Classroom program at our local schools. I believe environmental education of youth is the most important thing we do.



How could Hickory TU improve? As I said, environmental education of youth is the most important thing we do, but we need to do much better. I would like to see more interaction with the teachers and students between the time we deliver the eggs and the time the fry are released in the spring. Through these visits and interviews we can assure that the youth are learning the importance of a clean environment and maintaining the bio system. I believe we also need to look into other programs to reach out to more youth.

What is your best fly fishing memory? Hands down it was a backpacking trip to the Bob Marshall Wilderness area in Montana for fly fishing the South Fork of the Flathead River and climbing the Chinese Wall. The beauty of the area, bears, big trout, and learning to share the trail with pack horses was totally a new playground. Also, the Buckhorn Bar in Augusta, Mt was very interesting.

What is your favorite stream? Of course the easy answer to that is Wilson Creek, but we have many very beautiful streams nearby and I truly love fishing all of them.

What are your favorite flies? That is completely dependent on where and when I am fishing. In the summer my favorite would be terrestrials, in the winter it would be a nymph, and if there is a great hatch going on it would be the fly that is hatching. My favorite truly would be the fly that is catching fish at the time I am on the river.

Do you tie flies? I've been tying flies for about ten years. This allows me to tie or modify flies that seem to be more effective on the streams I am fishing.

What events would you like to see us take on? I believe that we need to set up regular classes in beginning fly fishing and fly tying. The introduction to fly fishing will get more people interested in the sport and consequently increase environmental awareness and in addition membership in our chapter. Learning fly tying causes people to become more dedicated to the sport. Once you've tied a fly you want

to go fishing and try it and in tying different flies you learn a little more about ecology.



As stated in the opening paragraph, we all owe a great deal to Gary for the time and effort he put into making our chapter what it is today. Please come to the next meeting and take some time to thank him for

all he's done.

TROUT IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

By Charles Ebbert Craddock,
"Forest & Stream Magazine", July 15, 1886

I was recently browsing through back issues of *Southern Trout Magazine* and ran across this story. It wasn't just a great trout fishing story, it was a story about our part of the Appalachian Mountains, particularly the area around Grandfather Mountain. The relevance to my world touched me and I hope you will enjoy it as much as I did. With all the cold weather, I've had more time on my hands to search the web and this newsletter was getting a bit lengthy. Therefore, you will find the story published at the end of the newsletter.

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 that you can sign up for by going to <https://business.landsend.com/>. To access the account go to: <https://business.landsend.com/store/hkynctu/>

We now 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

JANUARY FLY PATTERNS

January-February - As far as weather goes, these are the two roughest months of the year, a time when we get the most cold weather, snow and ice.



Trout don't move around much, nor do they feed often, especially when temperatures are at the freezing or below freezing level. Look for trout in deep pools and get nymphs down deep by adding extra weight and bump them along the bottom.

Good patterns for top water are No. 16 Dark Caddis, No. 14 Black Stone, No. 16 Blue-Winged Olive, No. 20-18 olive Midge, No. 16-14 male Adams and No. 14-12 Quill Gordon. For nymph fishing, go with a No. 10 Dark Stone, No. 10 My Pet, No. 14-12 Pheasant Tail, No. 14-10 Hare's Ear and No. 12-10 Prince.



The Carolina Sportsman "A trout fly for every season"
by ROBERT SATTERWHITE December 26, 2006

TIP OF THE MONTH



Our Top 10 Tips for Fly Fishing with Nymphs in the Winter Months

November 19, 2009 By [lan](#)

Winter is among the toughest times of year to catch trout in streams. Water temperatures are cold and a trout's metabolism is slow. Even though a fish doesn't need to feed as much in cold weather, they will eat if given a chance. Fly fishing in the winter is different than spring, summer, and fall. Nymphing skills are more important now than any other time of year. Here is our best advice for catching trout on nymphs in the winter.



1. Fish the middle of the Day – Fishing is rarely very good before 9:00 AM in December, January, and February. In fact, fish may not be moving around much until 11:00 AM or noon. Trout will move most after water temperatures have risen a few degrees. Aquatic insects also move around a little more when things warm up a bit and

Even waterfalls start to ice up when the water is 32 degrees. Fishing is guaranteed to be slow when the water is this cold.

this gives the fish the best reason to clock into work. Fishing often slows down by 3:30 or 4:00 but can continue

to be good right up until dark on unseasonably warm days.

2. Choose the Water you Fish Wisely – Any angler who is skilled at reading the water will always outfish another who isn't as discriminating. This becomes even more important when fishing in the winter. Shallow riffles and long stretches of pocket water don't give up trout as generously in the winter as other seasons. Skip swift water lies in favor of slower flows. Trout move to the swifter water when food is more plentiful, but lie in slower water when insects aren't very active.

One of the best spots is the point where a shallow riffle transitions to deeper, slower water. Cast the fly into the riffle so it has time to sink and falls naturally into the deeper water.

Also keep an eye out for slow pockets in stretches of pocket water. Not all pockets will be productive, but some might give you the best opportunity of the day. Patches of dead water framed by swift water are prime.

Watch for Stretches of water that receive plenty of sunlight. Direct sunlight provides a little extra warmth to get both

bugs and fish moving. We often spend winter days chasing sunny spots and will occasionally find a few rising trout.



Fish during the warmest part of the day and try to find sunny spots where fish may be more active

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3. Plan Your Fishing Around the Weather – Most anglers fish when they can and squeeze a day into a busy schedule when possible. Keep an eye on the

extended forecast during the winter months and try to hit the water on a day that will optimize your chances for success. A string of cold nights with temperatures in the teens and daytime temperatures that struggle to rise into the mid 30's are sure to provide slow fishing.

Water temperatures in freestone mountain streams will often plunge right down to the freezing mark. This is sure to produce a "lockjaw" pandemic among the trout population. Trout are only marginally active when the water gets below 40 degrees. We see the biggest activity swing between 40 and 42 degrees. Fishing is pretty good at 42 but noticeably slower at 40. Get down to 38 or 39 and fishing is extremely slow.

One of the best weather features to watch for in the winter is a period of rain when the overnight temperatures stay in the 40's or barely dip into the 30's. A rainy 45 degree day brings relatively warm water into a stream and can get fish and bugs moving. This can jump start a stream after a long cold snap and even keep a stream warm for the first day after temperatures have made a sudden dip.

4. Use Split Shot – No other piece of equipment is as maligned by fly fishers as split shot. This is in spite of the fact that we find it more useful than almost anything else in the winter. A \$5 – \$10 investment in split shot will go much further toward catching trout in cold weather than a much pricier investment in rods or reels.

We typically use shot in sizes 4, 6, or 8 depending on the depth and velocity of the water. Pinch it on your tippet 6" – 8" above the fly or in between two nymphs tied as a dropper. This will ensure that your flies sink to depth quickly. A fly that sinks quickly is a fly that is in the strike zone sooner and stays there longer.

5. Use the Best Strike Indicator For the Job – Expect subtle takes from the fish. This requires a strike indicator that can support the weight of heavy nymphs. If you use a strike indicator that sinks under the surface on every other drift you're very likely to miss a soft strike when a trout does eat. You might even realize it was a fish, only too late to get a good hook set.

Yarn can be a good choice but be sure it's a big piece. Foam footballs and other indicators made from high floating materials are the best choice. Sticky pinch-on indicators don't allow for depth adjustment and are sometimes too small to float a heavy rig.

6. Try Fishing Without a Strike Indicator – Many fly fishers are surprised to hear us say that no strike indicator might be the best way to go. This isn't a technique we recommend for inexperienced anglers, but those who are already skilled at high stick nymphing with a strike indicator may be surprised at how effective this can be. Strike indicators place a limit on just how deep your nymphs can go and might place a limit on just how effective you can be.

Start out by trying this technique in slow pockets with short casts. Be sure your rod tip is downstream of your nymphs. Use only the minimum amount of line necessary. There should be no extra line on the water. Move your rod tip downstream at the same speed your nymphs drift in the current.

Most fly fishers are shocked at how obvious the strike is. Your leader and the short amount of fly line you are using will twitch or even jump upstream. Another benefit is that you can actually feel your nymph bouncing along the bottom. Just a little practice with this technique will make any fly fisher more effective with nymphs.

7. Use Heavy Tippet – Some fly fishers are extremely conscientious about using the lightest tippet possible so fish won't see it. This is fine when fishing tiny midge patterns to cautious tailwater sippers in slow water. Light tippet has no benefit in cold mountain streams. Most fish eat size #8 – #14 flies better than those in the range of #18 and smaller. This is probably because the fish are opportunistic and they see the larger patterns better.

Heavier tippet casts heavy nymph rigs better than light tippet. A leader with two nymphs, a split shot, and a strike indicator is naturally clumsy to cast and stiffer tippet helps it turn over better. We generally use 3X on flies down to #8 – #12, 4X on sizes #12 – 14, and 5X on sizes #14 – 16.

8. Use a Dropper Rig – If the fishing will be slow you should do everything to maximize your chances for a hook up. One of the best ways we know is to fish two flies.

There are two big advantages associated with fishing a couple of flies. The first is that you can fish two different flies to a single fish with one drift. Sometimes fish will have a definite preference for one fly over another.

The second advantage is that you can fish two flies at different depths on the same drift. We like to fish a #8 – #10 stonefly pattern on bottom and a smaller beadhead on top. This allows you to present a fly deep for the fish glued to the bottom and another fly higher in the water column for those fish watching for emerging mayflies or caddis.

9. Try Fishing a Streamer Like a Nymph – This is something that doesn't require a new skill set for fly fishers but is rarely done. You can simply fish a Woolly Bugger or Muddler Minnow under a strike indicator or add a new dimension to your tight line nymphing without an indicator.

We're strong advocates of putting action on streamers, but they will do better in the coldest conditions with little to no action. After the dead drift you can allow the line to come tight and fish the swing.

Those who opt to use the tight line nymphing method should consider giving the streamer a slight twitch with the rod tip when they feel it tap bottom. Most strikes come when the streamer shows a small sign of life.

10. Stocked Trout are Far More Active in the Cold than Wild Trout – We're sure there's a biological reason for this, but stocked trout will continue to feed in the coldest water when wild trout have completely shut down. Our best theory is that stockers don't have as much survival savvy. They continue to forage for food even when wild fish seem to know it's a waste of energy when there are no insects moving about.

We're strong advocates of fishing for wild fish, but if you can only get out during the coldest weather you're going to have better opportunities to hook some fish on a stocked stream.

TU WOMEN'S INITIATIVE

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

UPCOMING EVENTS

Atlanta Fly Fishing Show
February 2 & 3, 2018
Infinite Energy Center
<http://flyfishingshow.com/atlanta/>

EAGLE ROCK CAMP

The spring veterans event is the week of April 8 at the YMCA camp east of Lenoir. Our role in the program is generally on Thursday or Friday. Exact details will be sent out as soon as they are available.

Eagle Rock Camp is dedicated to support of veteran families. If you would like to learn more about Eagle Rock Camp or make a donation, you can visit their website at <http://www.eaglerockcamp.org/>

CASTING CAROLINAS

The spring retreat will be at Lake Logan, March 23 thru 25th. The opening day for registration for Cancer Survivors is Jan. 1st 2018 on the CC website.

The Alumni Retreat will be April 27th. Thru 29th. In Spruce Pine.

The events can always use more volunteers to support the program. If you would like to join the next event, go to <http://castingcarolinas.com/community/volunteer/> and sign up.

VISIT THE FLY FISHING MUSEUM



When it's too cold to head out to the river to fish, spend a day at the Fly Fishing Museum of the Southern Appalachians in Bryson City. The museum is open weekdays from 9-5 and Saturday from 11-5.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

The chapter website is constantly 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.

PHOTO OF THE MONTH



JUST ANOTHER TYPICAL NC BROOKIE

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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Trout in the Classroom

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Editors Note: This is one of the oldest published articles about fly fishing in the highlands of western North Carolina. While the byline is Charles Egbert Craddock, in reality, this is but the pen name of Mary Noailles Murfree. 1850-1922. Murfree was born on her family's cotton plantation, Grantland near Murfreesboro, Tennessee, a location later celebrated in her novel, **Where the Battle was Fought** and in the town named after her great grandfather, Colonel Hardy Murfree. We hope you find it as fascinating as we do. FYI, Forest & Stream Magazine launched in 1879, and many years later was renamed Field & Stream Magazine.

TROUT IN WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

By Charles Egbert Craddock,
"Forest & Stream Magazine", July 15, 1886

I am seated in a log cabin that has withstood the storms for over a quarter of a century, in view of that huge archaean pile, Grandfather Mountain—summit of ranges that never disappeared during the convulsions of millions of years—and at the foot of the knoll on which this cabin stands are the lovely meadows through which ripple the pellucid waters of Elk River after its animated descent. Down it has come from its source in the foothill of Grandfather, over boulders and beneath blooming laurel (rhododendron), with banks bordered and pools shaded by ivy (kalmia) and honeysuckles (azaleas), pausing here and there to afford shady retreats for its royal inhabitants, and again dashing over rocky impediments until it reaches the pebbly channel of the Banner Meadows. Through these it sings and laughs, hiding its "beauties" under an occasional clump of laurel until it reaches the rocky rapids that lead on down to Soky and Scaly mountains. And every pool at foot of rapids is alive with trout—a fish that above all others that swim, can thrill the nerves most deliciously when struggling on a brown hackle that has hooked him securely. And this Elk is but one of three limpid rivers whose sources are found in that foothill a couple of miles beyond the meadows.

This charming spot, with its sublime mountain surroundings, five or six thousand feet above the tide, and forest-clad on their tallest summits, is never visited by anglers from the North because Bohemians have defamed and ridiculed these mountains out of consideration. Never was a greater wrong done to fishermen. For eight years successively and in the month of June the anglers of our city have gone to Banner's Elk, and been welcomed with a hearty, simple, dreamy hospitality found nowhere else out of these mountains; have been fed on well-cooked and wholesome food at Mrs. Louis Banner's and have caught thousands of trout ranging in weight from six ounces to one pound. True, these pink-dotted darlings are not so large as can be found in some streams of the North, but they are just as gamy when hooked and just as delicious when lifted from the frying pan. Banner's Elk, headquarters for movements on the Elk, Watauga, and Linville rivers is reached by the East Tennessee, Virginia & Georgia Railway to Johnson City, twenty-five miles south of Bristol and about 200 miles northeast of Chattanooga. The East Tennessee & Western North Carolina Railroad connects at Johnson's and will transport you to Cranberry, thirty-five miles distant in the mountains, where there is a gem of a hotel kept in Northern style. From Cranberry you go in a hack or on horseback, as you prefer, to Banner's Elk, eight miles distant. At Banner's Elk you can be accommodated at S. M. Dugger's who keeps a regular boarding house or at his father's, a farmer who takes in fishermen. Our club, including our ladies, always stop at Mrs. Louis Banners, but as only ladies compose that family they are sometimes timed of entertaining those they do not know, realizing, no doubt, that few strangers turn out to be angels in disguise. Board is one dollar a day, and it is excellent for the mountains of any part of the country, railway ride from Johnson's to Cranberry carries you through the Great Portal—the Doe River Gorge—into the Alleghenies. This gorge pierces the mountain that swings from the pillar of the Smokies—Roan Mountain—and latches on the pillar of the Blue Ridge—Grandfather Mountain—both of these lofty elevations entering the clouds 6,000 feet above the sea. The Doe has ground down a channel through this rocky spur, in places 1,000 feet deep, and alongside its rushing waters the railway ascends up grades 300 feet, and around curves as short as 20°. Now it is on a level with the stream, again it is 100 feet above; now the iron horse pants so close to the rear coach you can almost toss a cigar to the engineer five car-lengths away, again it dashes into a short tunnel that pierces a section of the Potsdam vertebra. The peaks reach up into the clouds, usually clothed in pines, maples, beeches, linnis and balsams, but occasionally exposing bare piles of rock hundreds of feet perpendicular, which at times shut in our train as securely from sunbeams as if it was in the bottom of a deep well. Over the clear, cold water project fringes of blooming laurel, ivy and honeysuckle.

From Cranberry the road ascends on the bosom of the mountain that bounds Cranberry River on the south, affording snatches of lovely mountain views. After three miles you ford the Elk and then you ascend that river. If you come in June,

not only will the oaks, the maples the hickories, poplars, chestnuts, cherries, linns and beeches and balsams clothe Smoky and Scaly, but the laurel will have on its glorious white plumes, the ivy its delicately tinted and dotted clusters, and the honeysuckle the great redly golden blossoms that are the glory of the mountain sides all through Western North Carolina. For over three miles you will ascend through bough-embracing forests, along the bosom of the mountains at whose feet the Elk tosses, bumbles and swirls, the water of which is clear as crystal, cold as ice and filled with speckled trout. Only the young and agile fishermen venture on these boulders and they are always repaid with creels full of the largest fish found in this section of the mountains.

In the low mountain, three miles from Banner Elk—a foothill of Grandfather—rise the Elk, Watauga and Linnville and the springs of their sources are not a thousand yards apart. The Watauga leaves the feet of Grandfather, flows on by Valle Crucis to the Tennessee and thence through the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico. The Elk commingles in the same flood. The Linnville, however, pours down through a deep rift in the Linnville range, and after tumbling over a precipitous ledge one hundred feet perpendicular, it hurries on between the gloom wall of a deep canyon to the valley and thence to the Atlantic Ocean. I am told by those who have followed the course of the Linnville from its source and gazed upon its rapids, pools, falls, carious and beetling cliffs, that there is no sublime scenery to be found anywhere on the continent.

It has been a wet June all over the country and these mountains have not been exempt from the discomforts of showers. We reached Banner's Elk on June 13 for dinner, and at 5 that afternoon began our first assault upon the gamy inhabitants of the Elk. Only three of the four men were in the first engagement and one of these was hampered by the presence of ladies who attempted the sport for the first time, yet when darkness fell, after two hours of whipping, there were discharged from the three creels upon the floor of the porch seventy-five toothsome beauties, and over twenty had been thrown back to gro larger by next year. From that evening on we found the brown hackle and the king of the waters or the coachman the most attractive flies. We never caught a large trout on a miller, though sometimes a little fellow would rise to it. Tuesday we fished with three flies on a six foot leader, a brown hackle always at the tail, then a king of the waters or a coachman and a miller or another hackle.

From Banner's Elk and excursion is made through the McCandless Cabin Gap to the sources of the Watauga and Linnville. It is for a while up the Elk, then through the dense laurel and up the precipitous face of the foothills, with a soil of leaves and woods decayed during the centuries. Twelve inches deep, covered with trees of fifteen feet girth, and ferns and mosses that are as beautiful as found anywhere else on earth. There is excellent fishing in the Watauga beginning a little after you leave Callaway's, a mile or so below the source of the river. At Callaway's you can ascend to the summit of Grandfather, from which can be obtained and almost limitless view of mountain scenery. From Callaway's you can fish down to Shull's Mills, where the river makes a short turn to flow out into the valley of Valle Crucis. That journey will be an unalloyed delight—mountains, valleys, laurels, ivy, honeysuckles, dancing rapids, flower shaded pools, trout large and plentiful. At Shull's Mills is Boone Fork, full of trout, and Joe Shull's residence, a reasonably comfortable lodging place. It is better to take lunch from Banner's and avoid the wretched cooking at Callaway's.

Returning from Shull's Mills along the highway you enjoy the scenery to the full. After passing Callaway's you reach the Linnville, and in about three miles excellent fishing. You fish on down to Webb's Pond and spend the night at Estes, af half mile beyond; reasonably fair entertainment. In the morning you can go to Linnville Falls, then across to Martin Banner's for dinner, where you will get an excellent meal. You will now be only five miles from your feather bed and big wood fire at Mrs. Banner's, at Banner's Elk. One pressed for time can fish the Watauga to Shull's Mills, ascend to the summit of Grandfather, so down the Linnville to the falls, and be back to Banner's Elk within three days, after having a bushel of sport and a barrel of enjoyment.

There are other streams in Western North Carolina where trout are as plentiful and perhaps larger—as, for instance, the Nantahala, Toe (Chestatoa) and Pigeon—but my heart turns lovingly to the Elk, Watauga and Linnville and my homelike home at Banner's Elk. My residence is in Chattanooga, Tenn., and I will cheerfully answer all letters of genuine anglers who may wish to learn more of these arteries of the heart of the Alleghania.