

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited April 2019 Newsletter



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A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Jackie Greene is tied up this month as planner for the Hall of Fame Event that took place this weekend, so we'll just make a few announcements in lieu of her column.

A big thank you to everyone who showed up at the March panel discussion about the loss of public access to our waters. There were a lot of good discussions regarding what may be causing this and what we might be able to do about it. Please see Joel Miller's column for a recap. As Joel mentions in his column, this meeting is only the spark to get things moving and from here we need to lay out a plan and put it into motion. If you have any comments or suggestions, or if you would like to be included in a group to help carry this forward, please let us know at HkyNCTU@gmail.com.

Please be sure to join us at our April meeting for a discussion on what we are doing to help our veterans. Having worked with veterans and their families several times at the Eagle Rock Camp retreats I can't say enough about the program. After a little time teaching casting we take everyone to the lake to cast a fly. Seeing the happiness on child's face when they pull in that first fish on a fly rod is something you will never forget and the result from the adults is just as exciting. Please join us at the March meeting and also mark your calendar for Thursday, May 23rd and try to join us at the next Eagle Rock Camp retreat. Details are in the newsletter.

The tug is the drug,
Jacqueline Greene
HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com

NEXT MEETING

When: Tuesday, April 16
Where: Market on Main Cellar
Across From 325 1st Avenue SW, Hickory
Time: 5:30 Optional Buffet Dinner (\$10.00)
6:30 Program
Program: TU Veteran's Programs
Speaker: Lynn Marilla

Open to the public

Note: You must park across the street or you may be towed. Only handicap is available at the building.



Lynn Marilla, Chief Executive Camper: Born in Alabama, grew up in Michigan and raised her children in Southwest Virginia. Lynn built an award winning career in the Staffing Industry. As an Adecco Franchisee, she quickly became

the largest female owned and second Lynn Marilla, Chief Executive Camper: Born in Alabama, grew up in Michigan and raised her children in Southwest Virginia. Lynn built an award winning career in the Staffing Industry. As an Adecco Franchisee, she quickly became the largest female owned and second largest franchise group in the company, with over \$18m annual revenues, 8 offices in 7 markets and 1700 temporary associate employees working on daily assignments.

Lynn comes from a multi-generational military family: Her father served in the Army Air Corps during WWII and her son served in the Navy during the Gulf War. Her non-profit work includes serving on or Chairing Non-Profit Boards that include Chambers of Commerce, American Diabetes Association, Workforce Development Committees and the Executive Board Committee of the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation. Currently serving on these Boards: Patriots Path (post military career transition training), Trout Unlimited.

Through the illness and loss of her husband at a young age and her brother becoming a quadriplegic at the age of 18, Lynn understands the special needs, respite and support families and individuals need to live a fulfilling life while coping with their unique daily challenges. These life experiences combined with her patriotism, are what lead Lynn to create Eagle Rock Camp, hosting holistic retreats for military families, at no charge to them.

The Mission is: *Eagle Rock Camp, through faith in action, brings military families together to heal, reconnect in their communities, restore their hope and emerge as an empowered, purpose driven unit. Saving Families. Saving Lives.*

The Vision is: *That all military families heal from the hidden wounds of war.*

May: Tips to Prepare for that Saltwater Fly Fishing Trip, including gear, clothing, and getting your body ready.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The streams of the mountains please me more than the sea."

.....From the Song *Guantanamera*

DELAYED HARVEST

The April stocking at Wilson Creek will be taking place on Tuesday, April 2. If you would like to help with the stocking, be at the handicap lot at 9:30 AM.

Fly Fishing Tips for Stocked Trout



My first memory of bringing a trout to hand with a fly rod took place back in the spring of 1990.

It was on a seasonal trout stream, located 45 minutes north of Atlanta, GA. It was a far cry from a trophy trout at 10-inches, but that freshly stocked rainbow trout, touched my eleven year old fishing soul to the core. I'll never forget the excitement I felt watching that stocker chase down and eat my olive woolly bugger at my feet. It felt really good for a change, not relying on that plastic blue can of worms to get the job done. From that day forward, I never looked back, and I've moved on to become a respectable trout guide in my area and I've fly fished for trout all over the world.

A lot of fly fisherman would laugh at me if I brought that fishing memory up in conversation. Many wouldn't be able to look past the fact that I was fly fishing for stocked trout that weren't naturally born in a stream or river. If you happen to be reading this post and you're one of those fly anglers that I'm referring to, just remember that we aren't all blessed to have easy access to wild trout. For many of us, wild trout populations are so low (because of poor conservation and land management), it's not even feasible for us to strategically target them, and if it wasn't for stocked trout, we'd have no trout at all. If you're fortunate to be blessed with wild trout populations where you live, don't forget how that special that is, and please don't make fun or belittle others who

take pride in catching stocked trout. You just make yourself look ungrateful and worthy of having wild trout.

Before I get into my fly fishing tips for stocked trout, I'd like to take a moment to mention a couple of reasons I feel stocked fisheries can be good for the sport. For one, they're a great place to introduce kids and newcomers to fly fishing for trout. Timed correctly, an angler with zero experience can have great success catching trout. Secondly, put and take trout waters provide great locations for anglers who like to harvest trout, to do so without having to illegally poach on special regulation or wild trout fisheries.

Tip 1: Big flies and bright flies are generally the best choice for freshly stocked trout

If I knew I was going to be targeting freshly stocked trout (within a week or less of being stocked) I should really only need three types of patterns. The first would be a big Stimulator dry fly. Since stocked fish are conditioned to eating fish food pellets on the surface in the hatcheries, anglers can regularly take them on the surface with big dry flies. A dead drifted dry works really good, but sometimes, twitching or skating it at the end of the drift will also work. If the stocked trout aren't liking your dry flies, I'd next try stripping a black or olive woolly bugger. A large profiled fly with an erratic action will really get the attention of freshly stocked trout, so much in fact, that they often will swim several feet to eat a big fly like a woolly bugger. And if the woolly bugger isn't working I'd next rig up a tandem nymph rig and tie on a bright san juan worm or egg pattern off the back. Fluorescent colored flies are very hard for stocked trout to pass up, and they're usually the ticket until most of the stocked trout have been landed on them multiple times. Try these tactics above for freshly stocked trout.

Tip 2: Don't move, change your flies first

Don't always think the fun is over after a few fish. Many anglers move on to new water when all they need to do is change out their flies to something different to continue to catch stocked trout. This works really well when you've got crowded water and equally well when you've got kids that aren't very mobile.

Tip 3: Search out the slower moving water like pools and deeper runs

When trout are first stocked they often search out slower moving water. I think most of the time this is because they're trying to match the slow moving water that they grew up in at the hatcheries and it's more comfortable to them. If you know the DNR recently stocked you should first check out the pools and deeper slow moving runs and bypass the fast moving pocket water. These places you should find pods of trout hanging out and easy to catch.

Tip 4: Go natural with fly choice after the trout have been around for a while

Eventually stocked trout will get conditioned to seeing those big woolly buggers and bright attractor nymphs, and you'll find it much harder to get them to eat them. When that happens, anglers should start fishing fly patterns that are more natural looking and less gaudy and flashy. This is the time that soft-hackles and your traditional nymph patterns (prince nymph, hares ear nymph and pheasant-tail nymphs) really shine. I often will tie on a fast sinking copper john and drop one of the traditional nymphs off the back.

Tip 5: Hit the pocket water and riffles

The longer the stocked trout have been in the stream or river, the more they will start to spread out and move around. This is when I'll leave the big pools and runs for other anglers and focus my attention fly fishing the pocket water and seams of riffles. You'll find the trout here less pressured, easier to catch and you should also be able to find some water to yourself.

Tip 6: Swing your flies

If you're on the water and you can't get the stocked trout to eat your dead drifted flies, try repositioning yourself so you can swing your fly patterns in front of them towards the end of your drift. Sometimes, this can be the most effective way to catch stocked trout that have been in the water for a while.

Tip 7: Go tiny and downsize your tippet

Over the years, I've witnessed and fly fished to stocked trout that were unbelievably difficult to catch. Some of these stocked streams get pounded daily with anglers, and eventually the trout get super spooky and selective. When I see this on the water, it makes me want to round up all those stocked trout haters that think all stockers are a joke to catch and watch each one of them get their egos checked. If you're going to be fly fishing for stocked trout late in the season after they've had lots of education, you should be ready to downsize your tippet, micro-nymph, and fish tiny dry flies if you want to consistently catch trout. Yes, I'm talking about 6x-7X tippet and fly patterns down to size 24.

That's some of my tips for fly fishing to stocked trout. Please drop me a comment if you have any to add.

Keep it Reel,

Kent Klewein

Gink & Gasoline

www.ginkandgasoline.com

hookups@ginkandgasoline.com

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 also 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 (note: this site requires a minimum of 12 items)

Tight Lines & Road Kill

Reality, Money, and Influence



The panel discussion about public access to trout waters certainly generated great interest and comment. I think there was a beneficial exchange of feelings and information both from panel to audience and vice versa. However, I think this session just scratched the surface and we have a long way to go.

I came away with a lot of thoughts, as it seems did everyone else. My takeaways fall into three categories: realities, money, and influence.

First, the realities. Here are the ones I discern:

- The problem is very real! We are losing places where the public can catch trout.
- The rate of loss appears to be accelerating, although I could never get anyone on the panel to say so with certainty.
- The problem will also worsen because of the increasing popularity of fly fishing.
- The North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) does a good job with what they have.
- They have far too little!!!
- Officials of the NCWRC are very receptive and responsive to the concerns of their constituents. In large part, that's us.
- They probably cannot solve the access problem with their current resources.

- If we had more miles of public water, there wouldn't be enough hatchery capacity to put fish into those miles.
- Groups like Foothills Conservancy are a little-known blessing when it comes to protecting our natural resources.
- We are spending far too little money on our wildlife resources!
- Other states have dealt with similar problems with some degree of success. There are approaches out there that might work here.
- Our legislature, as a whole, has little understanding of the access problem.
- We, as TU members and anglers, do far too little to make our needs known.

Now to money. Whenever anybody says it's not about the money, IT'S ABOUT THE MONEY! Trout fishing generates a ton of money for the North Carolina economy. The figure quoted is in the neighborhood of 1/3 of a billion dollars! Yes, with a B. Far too little of that is invested back into the sport. Our hatchery system is outdated and unable to supply enough fish. The NCWRC is trying to renovate the current hatcheries, but when it takes several years to upfit just one, the money available to do so is insufficient. We have inadequate numbers of enforcement officers to protect the fisheries we do have. I've fished regularly -for over 40 years and NEVER had my license checked! Fish are poached from our catch-and-release streams daily and the perpetrators are rarely apprehended and even more rarely successfully prosecuted.

Private landowners here have no financial incentive to allow fishing on their land. Giving a landowner a free fishing license for opening his land would cost next to nothing. Other states lease access rights from landowners. Some states compensate them if their property is damaged by hunters or anglers.

Make us pay more to support the system! You can buy a license to catch trout in NC for \$25 a year! Flies and lunch for one day on a stream will cost you more than that. We all have a rod that cost us more than we've paid in NC license fees our whole lives. Charge guides and outfitters much more for the privilege of making money off our wildlife resources. We all have to pay to play.

Most importantly, influence. Until we're heard by those who make laws, levy taxes and fees, and decide on state expenditures, nothing will change. As a minimal first step, we have to bring our local legislators to a chapter meeting for a discussion about public access and funding for our resources. NCTU should also organize an annual day for members to go to Raleigh while the legislature is in session just to visit legislators and tell them our concerns.

Influence and money comigrate! TU has been very hesitant to delve into the political realm for fear of losing its nonprofit status. Yes, we have to do it right, but it's not brain surgery! I'm not a lawyer, but I've been through this process with the NC Ob/Gyn Society. You have to create a separate entity that is not supported by dues or other funds from the parent organization, i.e. a separate PAC. I'd gladly contribute to an NCTU PAC that would address such issues on the state level. Legislators listen if you talk to them; they listen far more acutely if you contribute to their reelection campaign! A fact of life!

We'd rather just go fishing and not deal with such unpleasant things as money and politics. Unfortunately, if we don't buy some influence, we'll lose even more of what we have. Yogi warned us: nobody goes trout fishing anymore, it's too crowded — and there are no fish!

By Joel Miller

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APRIL FLY PATTERNS

www.flyfishingnc.com/fly-fishing-in-the-spring

A few helpful tips for fly fishing in the spring...

1. Be aware of water levels. This time of year yields more rain, thus more water. Spring time in NC means severe thunderstorms. If you hear thunder or see lightning, stop fishing and wait for it the storm to pass. Often, thunderstorms that occur well upstream will send water They sit in the calm, slack water, adjacent to the faster water, we're food concentrations are higher.
2. If the water is stained or muddy, use heavier tippet (2-5x depending on clarity of water)
3. 90% of a trout's diet consists of nymphs, so you are more likely to catch a trout on a nymph vs. a dry in most situations.
4. Try a new fly that the fish have not likely seen yet.
5. In high, stained water during and after spring rains, use big #4 Zonkers, Woolly Buggers, and Zoo Cougars fished down stream.
6. Fish the seams (where moving water meets slack water.) Trout are often found waiting in seams for passing food.
7. Most rainbow trout spawn in the early spring, so try using an egg pattern. Spring in NC can be spectacular to say the least. Fishing is usually excellent with abundant hatches, warm temperatures, and plenty of hungry fish. Take advantage of the optimum weather conditions spring commonly offers.

Written By: Tyler Legg
Email- wncflyfishing@gmail.com

For more information on fly hatches and patterns, visit our website [helpful links page at http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/](http://www.hkynctu.org/helpful-links/) and look for the NC Fly Hatch Chart.

TIP OF THE MONTH

UPSHOT ON SPLIT SHOT

New Fly Guy

By Steve Moore

Southern Trout Magazine February 2019



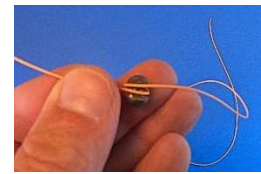
Here's an interesting question. What's more important? The split shot or the nymph. If you cannot get the nymph to the proper depth, the fish will ignore it. Therefore, selecting the right amount of split shot and positioning it correctly on the leader is more important than the actual fly! Now, as soon as I state that opinion, I also need to recommend it's best if you can avoid using split shot at all – no need for extra hardware from banging around.

To keep from using split shot, pick a fly with enough weight to get down to the bottom. However, in a fast current, that may result in a huge, unrealistic fly bouncing along. As a new fly angler, it is crucial to understand that the current must move the fly naturally. To solve the problem, use a tandem rig with the weighted nymph as the first fly (basically duplicating the function of the split shot) and the light fly as the trailer. Most anglers tie the trail fly off of the hook bend of the lead fly and this puts tension on the lead and reduces its natural movement. To address this, more anglers are tying their tandem rigs using a tag dropper since it allows both flies to operate independently without the lead fly being impacted by the trailer or vice versa.

Back to split shot. The first rule of using split shot is it is better to use a more massive, heavier shot than multiple small ones since a single shot is more comfortable to cast. One way to keep the size smaller (and reduce the corresponding splash) is to use tungsten shot instead of lead. Tungsten packs more weight into a smaller form factor with the added advantage of being better for the environment. An alternative to traditional split shot is putty. Putty comes in a blob, and you pinch off what you need. After massaging it to warm it up, form it onto the leader in a football shape, and it should stick to that spot while also allowing up and down adjustment. Unlike split shot, putty is reusable until it loses the ability to adhere to the line.

For fly fishing, split shot comes in sizes ranging from nine, the smallest at 0.05 grams, to ridiculously huge weights. The "BB" size being the largest practicable one for most fly fishing. Frankly, if you need more than the "BB" size, consider using a sink tip. If you buy a pre-loaded split shot dispenser, it will contain the most popular sizes. Frankly, I find the teeny tiny sizes eight and nine to be unusable, but that's just me as a result of my aging eyeballs and fat fingers. Unlike putty, split shot clamps onto the leader and is not inherently sticky. When attaching, avoid squeezing with tremendous force since that crushes and weakens the leader. And, since you cannot just mash the heck out of it, it will slip.

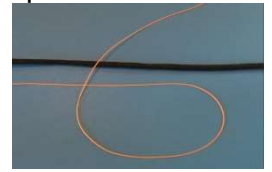
Here's an interesting question. What's more important? The split shot or the nymph. If you cannot get the nymph to the proper depth, the fish will ignore it. Therefore, selecting the right amount of split shot and positioning it correctly on the leader is



There are different ways to prevent split shot from sliding on the line. The worst solution is to tie a blocking knot below the split shot because knots weaken the line. Since the fly fishing leader isn't very strong to begin with, the induced weakness could be the difference between catching and losing a beautiful fish. A better method is to wrap the leader back through the split shot. This puts a loop around the shot, providing more surface area for the split shot to grab on.

Another option is to tie a snell directly to the leader. Once tightened, the snell blocks the shot from moving.

Tying the snell is simple – grab another section of tippet and make a loop and wrap the tag end through it as many times as needed for grip and tighten. Put the split shot above the snell. You can quickly move both to adjust the shot to the right depth.



Another increasingly popular option is to avoid putting split shot on the leader at all. Instead, attach the split shot to a tag hanging off the leader.

This allows the fly to move more naturally with the split shot hanging independently on the tag. To keep the split shot from sliding off the tag, tie a knot at the end.

Final question – how much weight do you really need? The rule of thumb is the distance between the indicator and the fly should be 1.5 times the depth. Obviously, you must play a bit to figure out where the fish want to see the nymph – especially since trout like to look up at their food. Be prepared to add or remove weight to achieve the right balance.

Check out Steve's YouTube channel at [KayakHacksFishing](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCkayakHacksFishing) for more on this topic.

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ADVICE FROM THE VISE

It's finally April and time to start putting these flies to good use on the water. This month I thought we could introduce some things to your tying and build upon the pheasant tail nymph from last month.

Taking the base model, if you will, this month we will add some accessories and get you introduced to 3 new materials; beads, flash and one of my favorite materials - soft hackle.

The addition of a bead to the nymph gives it a couple things: a bit of weight on the front end to counteract current and get the fly into the feeding column, as well as a sparkle to catch the fishes attention. Brass gets it down, tungsten gets it to the bottom. I tie both and select based on water depth or current rate.

A flashback across the wing case of the nymph is the next generation of sparkle and shine to catch attention of both anglers as well as fish. It looks very slick and the science of fish looking at shiny objects holds true.



Soft hackle harkens back to the roots of fly fishing. Wrapping a feather around the front of the fly adds some “life” by moving it the water. It’s that movement, independently, that sparks the predator instinct to eat it. The basic difference is that soft hackle fibers are longer and not stiff as a dry fly hackle would be and won’t support the weight of the fly on the surface. Game birds (partridge, quail, pheasant, grouse) and hen backs are primarily the best sources for soft hackle.

Combining the silhouette of the nymph, weight to get it where the fish are, with a bit flash for attention and soft hackle for strike enticement seems, at least in theory, a sure thing.

So here’s the basic recipe-with these additions.

Hook: 2X long Nymph Hook (As big as a 10 and down to an 18)

Tail: 5 Natural Pheasant tail fibers

Rib: Copper Wire BR size

Abdomen: 5 Natural Pheasant tail fibers

Thorax: natural peacock herl x2 strands

Wing Case/Legs: 10-12 Natural Pheasant tail fibers

Flashback: Mylar Pearl Flash

Thread: 6/0 Danville Black

Bead: Brass or Tungsten, up to yourself.

Soft Hackle: Partridge

Dress the hook with a swipe of tying wax on your thread when you lay down the base layer. I make my own wax from resin, beeswax and castor oil. It was something I picked up in the UK and I think it makes a big difference is giving a little tack for materials to hold more securely. I will use another swipe on his fly to hold the partridge tip in place as well.



Place the bead on the hook (small hole goes on the point) and wrap the tag under nearly the length of the hook to ensure a solid fly. If you wanted to weight the fly a bit more a few wraps of lead free wire can go on behind the bead.



I will skip ahead now as the steps are the same as last month. You will note that I have the butt ends of the tail still attached. Those will fold back and be the wing case covered by the flash.



With the ribbing completed, tie in a 2-3 inch piece of flash.



Now bringing the butt ends of the tail fibers back on top of the flash, wrap that back to the body



Tie in the peacock herl for the thorax

Now, wax your thread- the pheasant fibers, can come over and get a couple securing wraps.



Then bring the flash over and secure it down. Take a loose wrap, pull it taught then a tight wrap. Pull it backwards and secure it with two wraps and snip the tags off. The wax gives that little tack to hold everything in place.



Now for the soft hackle. This is a partridge shoulder feather. A good partridge skin is a bit pricy up front, but you will get a better quality and quantity of feathers for years to come, with the whole skin option. Prepping the feather is shown below.



Strip the fluffy off up to the point where the stem gets really small.



Stroke back the fibers until you are left with a “spade” at the end. Using English hackle pliers to hold the tips at the point is helpful.



Once you have the spade, nip off the tip of that so you have a clean tie in without any extra fibers sticking out.



Another point to wax, and tie in the spade with two or three wraps.



Grab the stem with your hackle pliers and gently take counter wraps. Only one or two turns is plenty, catch the stem with your thread and secure it with a couple wraps.



Little head cement on the thread, whip finish and you are complete.

Partridge is notoriously brittle, so don't be discouraged if you break and have to start over. It takes practice and a delicate touch, but the rewards of fishing soft hackle flies are usually worth it. I like this fly as part of a double nymph rig or as a dropper, it will fish just fine on its own.

As always I'm happy to answer any and all questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly fishing. Don't hesitate to contact me at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

By Dave Everhart

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TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

Last year a lot of you signed up with Southern Trout Magazine and helped us win a beautiful Thomas & Thomas fly rod worth over \$800. We are having a raffle for the rod to raise money for TIC. Tickets are \$5/each or 5 for \$20. Bring your checkbook to the meeting to get your tickets.

A big thank you to Lynn Marilla for the donation of a used laptop. Ryan Rowe has set up 24/7 viewing of the fingerlings in their tank, but since it was on his personal computer, he frequently had to take it down to use his computer. Now he can keep it up all the time with the computer donated by Lynn. It is taking longer than expected to get the donated computer accepted into the Alexander County system, so we will notify you when it finally is set up and on-line.

TIC RELEASE-RIVER BEND MIDDLE SCHOOL



On March 15, students from Mr. Stoney Turner's science class gathered at South Mountains State Park and released 77 healthy rainbow trout fingerlings into the Jacobs Fork River.



The forecast for the day had not been promising with thunderstorms forecast for the entire morning.

Apparently, God smiles on the Trout In The Classroom program as there was no rain when the students arrived. There were just a few sprinkles toward the end of the release and when everyone moved into the picnic pavilion for lunch the rain came down hard.



Everyone gathered streamside and under the direction of



Cathy Starnes they the students one at a time took a cupful of trout and released them into the river as Wes Starnes and Chick Woodward took photos and videos of the event, Wes

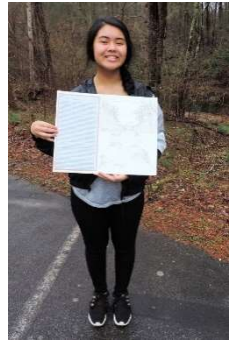
using an underwater camera. The finished video of the event and all of the photos can be seen on our website at:

<http://www.hkynctu.org/chapter-activities/trout-in-the-classroom/2019-river-bend/>.



After the release everyone moved up into the picnic pavilion for lunch and a drawing of some Tshirts as prizes for students.

After lunch and drawings we were again blessed with dry weather. The students led by Wes Starnes headed down to the river for a fly fishing demonstration. Wes put out several casts and worked a little upstream when he had a nice rainbow take his nymph. He landed the trout and held it up for the kids to see. It was a highlight of the day and he was awarded with cheers.



Mr. Turner added an additional program to the TIC program this year. He asked his students to prepare a project related to trout history, habit, ecosystem, and several other possible themes. The winning project was submitted by Ms. Haley Soukthavone, who presented a paper that would be worthy of a college student studying the

sciences. If only a small percent of today's students understand a cold water ecosystem like she does, our future is in great hands. For her efforts she will be awarded a \$50 gift certificate at the upcoming awards ceremony. Her paper is attached at the end of this newsletter. Please take a look at the paper and if you can attend the awards ceremony, please join us in giving her a standing ovation.

Newton Connover was unable to have a release this year so they gave them to Mr. Turner to release with his fish. When he got them he discovered they were so large that they might eat his fish. Principal Chip Cathey from River Bend took them out to the Jacobs Fork and released them separately.

If you were unable to enjoy the excitement of seeing how much fun a release can be, you have another chance on Friday, April 12, again at South Mountains State Park. West Alexander Middle School will be coming out to release their fish. We hope to see you there.

FLY FISHING MERIT BADGE

Saturday March 9 dawned foggy with a threat of rain by mid-day, but in spite of that Troop 275 from Bethlehem, NC showed up at Wilson Creek with 10 scouts and several adult leaders to complete the final piece of their Fly Fishing Merit Badge. Bruce Gray at Betsy's Ole Country Store had loaned us his pond for the boys to catch, clean, and eat a fish.



The day actually began at day break with a Hickory TU chapter biggest fish contest, the winner receiving a free dinner at the March meeting. Holden Johnson killed it with a 23-1/2" rainbow out of Wilson Creek. Holden is a recent teen member of our chapter.

Our work with the boys actually started back in October and November when we met at the troop meeting with an introduction to fly fishing and a knot tying event. From there we made arrangements for the troop to travel to Asheville to the Fly Fishing Expo in Asheville where they had a lesson in fly tying from Hill Top Fly Tyers and then pond casting with the TU Youth and a roll casting lesson with Mac Brown. While there, wildlife officers from the NCWRC also gave them a presentation on the rules and regulations of trout fishing in North Carolina. The trip to Wilson Creek and the pond at Betsy's Old Country Store was the finale of the final items needed to complete their Fly Fishing Merit Badge.



When the boys arrived, they were handed the rod and reel and asked to string them and tie on a fly. With only a brief coaching, the boys remembered their clinch knot even though it had four months since they were taught.



Then we all headed down to the pond where Wes Starnes gave them a refresher course in roll casting and the boys took their turns casting for the trout. There the team of Wes Starnes and Brandon Harrison helped the boys with their casts and showed them how to work the lures to catch the fish. We had high hopes that with a stocked pond everyone would quickly get their fish and then move on to the cleaning station, but it was not to be. Fortunately the forecasted rain never arrived because we spent almost three hours casting for the fish.



As each boy caught his fish he took it over to the cleaning station to prep it for cooking. Only a few had ever cleaned a fish before so it turned out to be quite an experience for them. Some found it a bit repulsive just to hold a slimy and slippery trout, let alone reach into the cavity and pull out all the interior parts. Somewhere along the way the tradition of cooking trout with the heads on has disappeared, so Chick Woodward restored the tradition and had them leave them on, except for a few that were too big for the pan.



After cleaning, the best part began. Cathy Starnes had a couple propane burners rigged up and had the oil sizzling when the boys arrived with their fish. She showed them how to coat them in corn meal flour and slide them into the pan. After browning the first side the boys had to learn to turn

them over on the other side without them falling apart and when done slide it out of the pan and onto a plate. This wasn't all that easy with the large trout the boys were catching, most over 12" and one was a whopping 16".



Once the fish was on the plate they headed to the sides bar.

Jackie Greene had arranged for some potato salad and cole slaw to balance out the meal and some cupcakes smothered in frosting for dessert. Then at the table it was time for Chick to show the boys why trout should be cooked with their heads on. Behind the gill plate is a delicacy called cheek meat. It's a piece of meat about the size of a small pea, but worth all the effort as it is the tastiest piece of meat in the whole fish.

The forecast had been threatening, but the rain stayed away and it turned into a great day for everyone with the boys completing the remaining items on their fly fishing merit badge list.

RIVERCOURSE

Rivercourse is a high quality experience for boys and girls between the ages of 13 and 15 and takes place in the heart of the Appalachian Mountains at the Lake Logan Event Center near Canton, N.C. This pristine setting includes a section of the West Fork of the Pigeon River, which is privately owned and stocked with trout for the use of the camp.

While fly fishing is the camp's primary activity focus, campers get to enjoy some other unique, often once-in-a-lifetime experience, like releasing a raptor (like a hawk) and catching it when it returns, a campfire, outside games, visits with conservation officials, fish sampling and many others.

During the week, sessions on a variety of topics are mixed into the day. Geology, fish and insect sampling, scientific and natural encounters; all things related to the things in the natural world around us and cultivating a better understanding of them and how precious they are.

And throughout the camp there are plenty of sessions where we just have fun fishing together and getting to know each other and building enduring friendships, gaining a deeper appreciation of the majesty of nature while learning to love a sport that can be enjoyed for a lifetime.

If you know of a child who is interested in attending, please have them complete the application at <https://www.rivercourse.org/apply/>. Subsidy for the tuition may be provided on a need basis.

A CLEAN WILSON CREEK FLY FISHING COMPETITION

On Saturday, March 23, 2019 professional fly-fishing sponsor Team Nymph Master, the nonprofit organization ACleanWilsonCreek.org, and Bruce Gray of Betsey's Ole Country Store in Mortimer, N.C., hosted a 20 team fly-fishing competition on Wilson Creek, a National Wild and Scenic River. This competition promises to be an exciting and

hopefully, groundbreaking event for our shared wilderness area. The idea for this event began at the annual Oyster Roast Fundraiser for ACleanWilsonCreek.org last October via a conversation involving Brandon Harrison, a local fishing guide, Wes Waugh of ACWC, and Bruce Gray, owner of Betsey's Store. The concept was to promote a river



Alleigh with a Rainbow Catch and Release

conservation mindset with the quickly growing outdoor recreational sport of fly-fishing in Caldwell County. A team participant in this event was Alleigh Raymond, a young lady from Hendersonville, N.C., who is quickly gaining ground and recognition in the arena of competitive fly-fishing. Alleigh was recently

selected to represent the national organization Trout Unlimited in the T.U. Youth Leadership Program in Washington, D.C. Here, Alleigh shares some highlights of the event.

EVENT RECAP

By - Alleigh Raymond (@reelgirlonthefly)
Photos by: Connor Parton Photography

Wilson Creek, a nationally recognized wild and scenic river, saw its first competitive fly fishing event in January of 2015. With a complete sheet of ice that covered the river was challenging to fish, but session counts exceeded fifty fish in many cases. The competition was hosted by Scott Enloe from Hudson, North Carolina who was at that time, a Team USA fly fishing member along with Hunter Enloe, who would go on to take Gold in the Youth World Fly Fishing Championships.



Recently, Casting For Hope has been holding competitions to raise money for Ovarian and Gynecologic Cancer survivors annually in the fall and most recently held the First annual "Wilson Creek Clean Up" in which anglers from all over the South East



came to compete for cash and other prizes. The event was created and managed by the competitive fly fishing team, Team Nymph Master, and sponsored in part by Betsy's Ole Country Store, Master Nymph premium fly rods, Kelly's Sports and Awards, and a number of other local sponsors.

If you ask me, one of the things that made this event particularly unique and special was the diversity of competitors and volunteers, some who traveled far and wide to partake in this event and I would like to recognize a few of those anglers worthy of accolades:



*Levi Watson is a microbiologist from Lenoir, North Carolina and started competing in the fall of 2018. Finished in first place.

*Holden Johnson is a high school student from Lenoir, North Carolina who started competing early in 2018 and has impressively enough taken a couple of podium spots at specific tournaments and finished 14th in the 2018 Youth National Championships.

Finished in second place.

*D. Levi Ladlee is a full-time fly guide at Rivers Edge Outfitters and is new to the competition scene and is currently sitting in first place in the South East Fly Fishing League.

Finished in third place.

*Michael Bradley is from Cherokee, North Carolina and is a full-time fly fishing guide and has been competing since 2012, Michael is also a member of the USA Fly Fishing Team.

*Jonathan Clark is an attorney from Spartanburg, South Carolina and has been fly fishing for seven years, competing for three years.

*Eli Buchanan is a high student from Sylva, North Carolina and works at Rivers Edge Outfitters and is the current Youth National Champion.

*Chris Smith is the Director of Solutions Engineering for Instructure and currently resides in Forth Mills, South Carolina. Chris is a former coach for the USA Youth Fly Fishing Team, a competitor for Team USA and Team North Carolina and has overall competition experience of ten years.

*The author has also partaken in this competition and has fared very well.

Protecting and conserving North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds doesn't always have to be a big ordeal. Conservation, by definition, means, "prevention of wasteful use of a resource" and that is exactly what tournaments like this one aim to achieve. Being able to witness and be a part of an event that brought so many different people from a vast variety of communities for such a positive purpose was really inspiring and I think a valuable lesson can be taken away from this competition; preserving treasured places like Wilson Creek is not a "one and done" job, taking care of something requires dedication and upholding a standard for future generations of anglers and conservationists is a mission I will invest in wholeheartedly.

Now, what about you?

To make a donation to the Wilson Creek Clean Up Fund, visit <https://acleanwilsoncreek.org/>

EAGLE ROCK CAMP

The spring retreat fly fishing day has been scheduled for Thursday, May 23. Gary Hogue will be the coordinator for the event so if you would like to participate, please contact

him at gamaho@charter.net and let him know. Gary will provide the fly rods for the event, but participants are asked to bring a few panfish and bass flies for the participants to use. Be sure to crush the barbs on the hooks.

CASTING CAROLINAS

RETREAT: The first retreat for 2019 is scheduled for April 12-14 at Lake Logan Center in Canton, NC. To apply for the retreat visit: <https://castingcarolinas.com/retreats/>.

VOLUNTEER: Volunteers are always needed and appreciated. To sign up to help with their programs: <https://castingcarolinas.com/community/volunteer/>

THE HICKORY CHAPTER NEEDS YOU

The revived Hickory Chapter has now been back in existence for three years. Many terms on the board of directors are retiring soon and we need new members to step up and help continue our programs to keep the chapter going. If you would like to help out as either an officer or volunteer, please contact President Jackie Greene at HkyNCTUpres@gmail.com.

CHAPTER WEBSITE

Has Dave Everhart's column on fly tying inspired you to get started or to get more advanced with fly tying. Visit the Helpful Links page on our website. There are links to beginner, intermediate, and advanced fly patterns that include detailed tying instructions. Do you think you're really good. Check out the link to Graham Owen's website and see if you can match his realistic flies. You'll find these and a lot more tips on our site at www.hkynctu.org. And if you have a favorite site that's not on our list, let us know about it.

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

I'm sure many of you will be taking trips to Montana, Alaska, or many other places this year. Take some great photos, put some words to them and submit it to the newsletter. Your adventure may inspire others to start planning their own trip for next year. Send it to us at HkyNCTU@gmail.com for consideration of publication.

CHAPTER FACEBOOK PAGE

We welcome all of our members to post on our Facebook page, however, the way it was originally set up you must be listed as an Editor to post. If you would be willing to search out and find things worthy of being posted, please let us know at HkyNCTU@gmail.com. To find our page, search for **Hickory NC Trout Unlimited**.

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Ms. Haley Soukthavone receives a certificate for her winning TIC paper at the Catawba School Board Meeting

Haley Soukthavone
February 22, 2019
River Bend Middle School
The Impact We Leave Behind

“Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything.” As small as it may seem, it's important to notice the details that make up the environment we live in. The life we are given needs a sense of purpose and in order to feel that, we need to take care of the ones on our planet. Notice how visible the options in front of us can be. How simple a cause and effect reaction can be taken into place? To be part of a much larger ecosystem rests a heavy weight on the shoulders of organisms alike. We rely on each other to live, and when the system is unbalanced, we all fall apart. For example, change your perspective into the point of view of trout. On a larger scale, there are three major species of trout here in North Carolina alone. There are far more, others worldwide ranging in either saltwater or freshwater. Likewise, the conservation of trout affects not only the fish itself but the things that surround it. Having a sustainable habitat for the fish maintains a steady livelihood here where we live as well as places we don't. In order to demonstrate the importance of trout, we need to understand the life cycle of the species, where habitats are located, and how we manage the threats that surround the fish.

Trout have similar life cycles to follow through with and having the knowledge benefits us into providing positive changes throughout its life. We start with the eggs and go from there. The reproduction varies between the species but likely the cycle is seasonal. Eggs will usually be laid during the fall and winter to hopefully hatch in March and April for a plentiful amount of food available or vice versa. Using a tail fin, a place for the eggs are made known as a redd. Milt from the male will then cover the eggs in order to fertilize the fish. Depending on water temperature, the days leading up to

hatching can range from forty four days to one hundred forty four days. The tadpole like fish stay close to the ground away from predators until old enough to swim to higher ground. Any indication of spots from juvenile years will disappear and the trout become adults. Features specify the type of trout and with this information, we'll know how to aid their lives. Details like color of scales, certain fins, and the way a fish carries itself throughout its life are demonstrations of how anatomy affects the livelihood of the trout. This cycle of reproduction repeats and gives a healthy population for numerous streams.

The location of trout plays a significant factor in the adaptations the fish can make. The surroundings determine how the trout reproduce and if the offspring will survive. The habitats trout occupy are cold water streams that support them from predators. The area surrounding the stream, known as the watershed affects the lives of the trout. As a working ecosystem, everyone affects everything and it's important to know what benefiting and what's not. For example something that happens outside of a stream will most definitely affect the organisms inside the stream. If we discover the disadvantages in an untimely manner, the ecosystem will be unbalanced. The water most trout occupy are rocky streams that flow into tributaries. The new source of water then carries sediment and soil particles into the stream. Chemicals like oil and fertilizers can affect the fish in a negative way. Notice how details like water flow can uncooperatively influence the lives of trout. Of course adaptations can be made if the environment is incorrect, but only so many changes can be made. Trout simply can be designated as a single piece in a machine. All the pieces must work together in unison. If a piece is missing or fails to support the other, the machine breaks and in this case, the ecosystem becomes disturbed.

Through reproduction and protecting the ecosystems that have been made, to conserve what we have will truly benefit everyone in the days ahead. There is no higher bar when asked the question what's more important in the ecosystem trout are a part of. Conservation is supported by so many because of how easily an impact can be made. Knowing what you have will improve your discoveries as you help your environment. Simply going to a stream and cleaning litter from the land surrounding it benefits the organisms in the waters and out. Along with that, conserving water plays a major role in trout ecosystem and serves as a everyday purpose. The water we have on Earth is all we have left. The streams the trout occupy are homes providing shelter and life. If you take it all away, the fish will not survive and other animals that consume fish won't thrive either. Change is bound to happen and nothing will prevent various outcomes. If a contrasting concept can counteract these changes, negative outcomes can be prevented. It's only a matter of choosing to conserve or change previous actions. By consistently following through with conservation strategies, a positive impact will showcase itself in the days to come.

In order to demonstrate the importance of trout, we need to understand the life cycle of the species, where habitats are located, and how we manage the threats that surround the fish. An outline for a plan starts somewhere small and becomes a collection of ideas to follow through with. A happy medium can be found when an ecosystem becomes balanced. By paying attention to the fish in its environment, we know what to protect and determine actions leading up



A Trout Stream by Haley Soukthavone

to new decisions. Everything that is done leaves an imprint on our planet. Almost like a timestamp, scientists can look back on what we once had. Decisions correspond to what already is known. So many will convince you to spark a change, but you have to embark that choice within yourself. The livelihood of trout is far greater than just another species in an ecosystem. Small details make up various habitats, biotic or abiotic. We need distinct details like this to see the entire view and we just have to be willing enough to look.

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