

Hickory NC Trout Unlimited September 2020 Newsletter



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THE LAST NEWSLETTER....FOR NOW

It is with great sorrow that I have to tell you that this is the last newsletter at least for now. As described below by president Jackie Greene the chapter is going into a shutdown mode for reorganization. I would like to say a few thanks to the contributors that have helped make this a great newsletter: Gary Hogue who gave us some great fly casting lessons; Joel Miller who provided some great humor in his column *Tight Lines and Road Kill*; Dave Everhart who gave us some great flies and taught us about a few materials used to tie them; and a special thanks to Charlie Walker who wrote some beautiful fly fishing stories.

I hope to see you all on the other side of this, but until then stay healthy and get out on the water.

Chick Woodward, Editor

A LINE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We the Hickory TU Board of Directors are making changes. I'm not really sure what to call it but we are going into a shutdown mode for renovation. This pandemic is affecting so many areas of what we know and love. Since we cannot socially have meetings it is a good time to revamp our Chapter.

Medically it is said that if a body doesn't change it dies. So change is good for the life of our Chapter.

Things will be different during our shut down mode. This will be the last Newsletter as we know it for a while at least.

We will be contacting you by email and possibly by postal mail. A couple of weeks ago you received by email from TU National. It was a copy of our proposed new bylaws. We will be voting on those after the proper waiting period has passed so please review them when you can.

We will also be voting on new Board positions. This is exciting because with new people there are also new ideas and new life infused into the Chapter. You will be a part of that also.

It is being discussed if there will be a name change for our Chapter. It is a possibility anyway.

The Board will be meeting and working during this shutdown cycle trying and hoping to bring back a new and better TU Chapter for our area.

We cannot change the wind in the storm but we can adjust our sails and that's what we are doing.

Our shutdown mode is expected to last until at least January 2021. So we will not be meeting socially until at least

that date. We want to keep everyone healthy and safe. We will keep you informed. Remember that we will be contacting you by email so please read those and respond if necessary.

Just know that the Board is working on your behalf to make a stronger TU Chapter for the future.

Thank you, stay safe, and if you get a chance go fish!

Jackie Greene

President

RYAN ROWE HONORED



Hickory TU wishes to congratulate Ryan Rowe as Alexander County Schools Teacher of the Year and agree that he is very deserving of this honor. Many of us have been working with Ryan through the Trout in the Classroom program and have seen how dedicated he is to science and to his students. Ryan not only has run a successful TIC program, but has expanded on it with the addition of an aquaponics system to help filter the

water. He spent two years perfecting it with help from his students and when Covid-19 shut down the school, he had perfected it so that he only needed periodic trips to the classroom to feed the fish as the chemical balance stayed in check. You can read more about his aquaponics system in our June 2020 newsletter at <http://www.hkynctu.org/past-newsletters/>



Hickory Daily Record 8/13/2020

TAYLORSVILLE — Sixth-grade science teacher Ryan Rowe of West Alexander Middle Schools is the 2020 Alexander County Schools Teacher of the Year.

Rowe, Jacob Lail, WAMS principal, and Katelyn Nash, assistant principal, were present for the surprise presentation from Jennifer Hefner on Aug. 5 at the school. Due to COVID-19 restrictions and schools closing in March, the district was unable to make the selection in the spring or host the end-of-year celebration.

"I was surprised and honored to be selected as the teacher of the year for Alexander County Schools. There are so many great educators in this school system, and I am

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 and let us know.

humbled to be selected among them. I love this community, and I look forward to serving the district to the best of my ability,” Rowe said.

Rowe is beginning his sixth year as a science teacher at West Alexander Middle. He serves as the chair of the school leadership team. Rowe is often recognized for his real-life application teaching practices.

The school district begins each school year with an opening session to welcome teachers and staff back to school. The teacher of the year is a keynote speaker for the event. This year’s pre-recorded session was shared in smaller groups at the schools. Rowe spoke about two key points — balance and adaptability. He encouraged school staff to seek balance in all aspects of their lives and embrace the ability to adapt to ever-changing circumstances.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH.

“To go fishing is the chance to wash one’s soul with pure air, with the rush of the brook, or with the shimmer of sun on blue water. It brings meekness and inspiration from the decency of nature, charity toward tackle-makers, patience toward fish, a mockery of profits and egos, a quieting of hate, a rejoicing that you do not have to decide a darned thing until next week, And it is discipline in the equality of men – for all men are equal before fish.”
....Herbert Hoover

GREEN RIVER RESPONSE

By Joel Miller

Editor’s Note: Joel responded to last month’s article on the Green River in Utah. I described fishing there in July during three hatches, but mentioned it’s a great year long fishery. Joel supports that with his response.

Enjoyed your article about the Green. Amazing fishery! Sam and I spent a week there maybe 15 years or so ago. We went in Sept. and enjoyed C Section most because, by then, the big browns were laying next to the banks eating terrestrials. We caught lots on each section, but hammering the banks with hoppers for the big browns was amazing. One of my favorite visual memories came from seeing a 20+ brown turn downstream and nail my hopper that had just passed over him. You’re right, though, doing that from a drift boat for 10 hours will wear you out.

It’s the most productive place I’ve ever fished. Still, though, catching the big Yellowstone cuts above Buffalo Ford on small dry flies makes that my favorite place of all time.

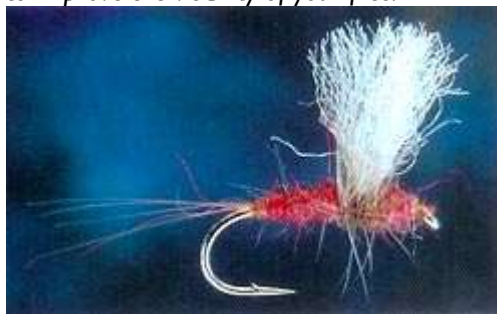
EYES ON THE DRYS

<https://midcurrent.com/>

By: **Rick Kustich**

Editor’s Note: In the trip to the Green River written in the newsletter last month I referred to the fact we were fishing #16 dry flies and at quite a distance from the boat since the water was so clear. Our guide has his flies custom made and uses very large white wings on his patterns. With my old eyes it is often difficult

to see small flies, but these were terrific. Here is an article on how to improve the visibility of your flies.



Thorax Dun

DRY-FLY DESIGN has been the subject of many discussions with one of my longtime fly-fishing partners, Nick Pionessa, who is a full-time fly tier. His flies end up in some of the better-known shops in the country. We agree that perhaps one of the more important aspects of a dry fly is how visible it is on the water. Not only does this let you see when a fish takes the fly, but it allows you to see how the fly is drifting, as well.

A drag-free drift is often essential to fool a discriminating trout. Unless you can see the fly clearly, it is difficult or even impossible to tell whether you are making a good dead drift. A poor drift results in more refusals than does poor fly selection, so you need to be able to follow the path of the fly to read the impact of the subtle currents that often cannot be seen just by looking at the water’s surface. This is especially true when you are making long casts. Being able to see the fly lets you make adjustments to your presentation or position to obtain the proper drift. With a high-visibility fly — one you can see from a long way off — you can easily track your drift and see whether the trout that just rose ate your fly or a natural drifting alongside it.

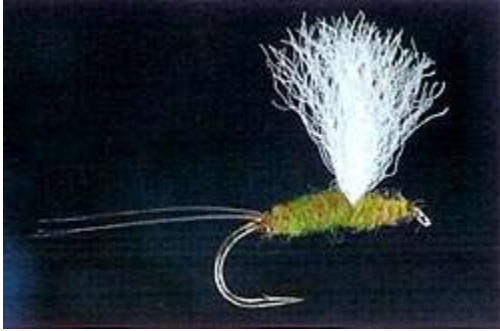
The challenge is to produce flies you can see from a distance, but without compromising their realistic appearance. Happily, the fly needs to look like a natural insect only from the fish’s point of view. This usually allows for some flexibility on the top of the fly. Highly visible wings, posts, or small pieces of foam tied in on the top will dramatically improve how easy it is to see the fly. At the same time, the fly’s key elements — such as the body, tails, legs, or shuck — can still offer an impressionistic look from underneath.



*Light Elk Hair Caddis
Hi-Viz Mayflies*

For convenience, I split my mayfly patterns into three categories—duns, emergers, and spinners. Let’s take a look at how to enhance the visibility of each of these types.

For duns, I use three basic design types: thorax dun, parachute, and Comparadun. For the wing on the thorax dun, I use a reflective material that's stiff enough to stand as the wing. Aero Dry from Umpqua Feather Merchants works great for this. It comes in a variety of colors for the mayfly color schemes most of us work with. For example, the medium-dun Aero Dry has the natural appearance of a mayfly wing, but the sheen allows it to show up well when there is any daylight. For angling in very low light, I prefer a lighter wing. However, if there's glare on the water, oftentimes a black wing shows up better than a light one.



Micro Comparadun

Parachute-style flies tied with a wing post made from light synthetic materials or white calf tail show up very well on the water and allow the fly to ride low. I prefer white to fluorescent colors because the white seems to stand out best against the water's surface. I also tie many of my Comparaduns with wings made of a light synthetic or light deer hair. However, I have found that fish sometimes shy away from Comparaduns with bright wings. Since a portion of the wing is riding on or even in the water, the fish may get too good a look at it and decide it doesn't appear natural. The answer to this is to keep the wing small. This is especially important on small mayfly patterns such as Baetis imitations. Scaled-down versions of each of these patterns can be quite important to meet this hatch.

Mayfly emerger patterns seem to work best with wings made from natural, as opposed to synthetic, materials. Since the fly rides low in the water, natural deer and elk hair seem to do a better job of fooling a trout. The key here is to use a light deer or elk, representing a wing that is just unfolding. The best possible solution is to find hair with small, light tips and darker butts that match the color you want.



Nick's Hackle Spinner

Spinners are among the most difficult flies to see on the water, which is why I tie them with a high-visibility post. Unfortunately for us, most spinner falls take place in the low light of the evening. A trout is usually not going to move far for a spinner, so you must drop your fly near its nose. If you

can clearly see your fly, it greatly improves your accuracy and your ability to tell when the fish has taken your fly.

But synthetic-wing spinners may not work well on finicky trout. A hackle spinner tied parachute-style is the perfect solution. Difficult fish seem more likely to be tricked by this style of pattern, which displays a spent-wing profile from below while providing you with a high-visibility post above.

A pattern that works for little spinners such as Tricos is simply a minute Comparadun tied with white Aero Dry for the wing. It is quite visible for a very small fly and, despite its simplicity, has fooled some really nice fish for me over the years. When you're dealing with tiny flies in low light, any edge you can get is important.



Nick's Emerger

Caddisflies and Terrestrials

Most of my caddisfly imitations are tied with light elk hair, which shows up remarkably well under most conditions. I usually use a darker elk when tying gray or black caddis, but in general fish do not seem to shy away from light elk wings.

If I feel the wings need to be darker, I will add a white post or a tuft of white fur just behind a hackle collar. This trick works especially well on patterns such as a Slow-Water Caddis tied to imitate one of the dark species. For example, imitations of the little Mother's Day caddis tied in the Slow-Water style can be almost impossible to see at any great distance, but become easy to spot if you just add a wing post.

I also use light elk on my caddisfly emerger imitations. The Lafontaine emerging caddis is one of the most productive caddis patterns that I have used. Dressing it with light elk regardless of the body color makes it easy to see the fly even while it rides low in the surface film.



Foam Beetle

Tufts of yarn or foam can be added to just about any terrestrial pattern, including ants, beetles, and hoppers. In general, the darker and smaller the pattern, the greater the benefit of adding some high-visibility elements.

In late summer, flying-ant falls start in the midafternoon and continue into the sunset. A flying-ant imitation with a

white post will allow you to fish longer into the evening and still be able to make out the whereabouts of your fly. And since this is the hour for some of the biggest fish, it is important that you can stay on the water.

Another good place to fish a high-visibility terrestrial would be a deeply overhung grass bank. On a late summer afternoon, drifting a grasshopper or cricket imitation through one of those dark tunnels can get a rise from some surprisingly big fish. Being able to see your fly because you have tied it with a bit of bright foam at the head lets you set the hook when the big one eats it.

Be Prepared

My approach is to carry both visible patterns and those that have more of a realistic design for each hatch that I fish. If the lighting lets me see the realistic patterns, then I will fish those. However, when the lighting demands greater visibility, then I am ready for that challenge, as well.

Of course, high-visibility flies are not just for low-light conditions. Often the longer the cast, the more difficult it is to see the fly. So I tend to use more visible patterns when fishing bigger waters.

CHEAP FLOURESCENT PARACHUTE POSTS

By George Emanuel

Fly Tying Tips on <http://www.flyangersonline.com/>

While tying recently with a group of members of South Jersey Fly Fishers, Dick Eppinger an avid fisherman and Past Mid Atlantic Council President of the Federation of Fly Fishers, pulled out of his kit this static synthetic feather duster. He attached this as you would any parachute material to his hook, and proceeded to tie the below-pictured fly.



GET YOUR GEAR READY FOR TROUT SEASON

Tips for making your gear last through this season and beyond
by Chris Hunt - Wednesday, May 6th, 2020

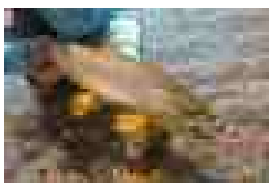


Photo: Chad Shmukler

One quick glance at the high peaks of the Caribous is all any backcountry trout angler in my neck of the woods needs to come to the realization that it's going to be a while.

Snow cornices still grace the tops of Red Ridge, and Fall Creek is running dirty. Getting up high to the cutthroat water is weeks away. And I'm sure I'm not alone as I struggle with my impatience. Backcountry trout anglers all over the West are fighting itchy trigger fingers, just like they do almost every year at this time. Winter hangs on in the Rockies. It's a fact of life, and all we can do is wait.

But for lower-elevation trout water here in the West, the "season" is underway. In the Midwest and along the Eastern Seaboard, trout season is already full go. And if you're like me, you might be a bit behind when it comes to getting gear ready for fishing season (although, for me at least, I still have some time, given that, while tailwaters are fishing well, runoff is just getting started up high here in the Rockies).

If you're behind the 8-ball on preparation, now's the time to take inventory of needed flies and stock up on any needed items, or make any repairs to rods, reels, waders and such.

Over the years, I've developed a pretty simple checklist that helps me prepare for trout fishing here in the Yellowstone region, but my list might be a bit unusual, given that I tend to combine my fishing list with my camping list — my conduit to backcountry trips usually involves using my camp trailer as a "home base" for off-the-beaten-path trips, and a lot of the gear and equipment lives in the camper all summer long. In a few weeks, I'll drive right by the big water and drift boat hatches and start chasing high-country trout.

More Like This

[Winter fly fishing: A different world](#)

[Stand up paddle board fly fishing](#)

[Why Let a Little High Water Stand in Your Way?](#)

That said, fly-fishing gear for trout is generally universal, with the obvious caveats that rod weights may vary as will tippet sizes and flies. Here are the basics.

- **Rods**

It's probably been months since you've pulled your favorite fly rod out of the closet. If you're like me, and you're into "gear overkill," you might have a couple of rods (maybe even three, if you're a drift-boat angler and like to have set-ups for dry flies, nymphs and streamers) that you take with you on every trip. Take the rod out of the tube and sock, and make sure it's sound — ensure the feet of the snake guides are still firmly attached to the rod and that the thread wraps aren't failing or the finish isn't crazing. Double-check the security of the cork grip and look for cracks or splits at the ferrules. Wipe the rods down with a moist towel and make sure they're good and dry before you put them back in the sock and tube.

- **Reels**

Same deal. It's been a while since these things have seen use. Take the reels apart and make sure the "guts" of the implement are clean. I like to take some warm water with a bit of dish soap mixed in and go over the innards of the reel with a toothbrush. When you're done cleaning, make sure it's good and dry, and apply some thin oil (like [sewing machine oil](#), for instance) to the moving parts. Most fly reels for trout amount to line holders — I've never seen my backing while fighting a cutthroat, but that doesn't mean I don't take care of

the gear. You'll still want to get bigger fish on the reel, and you'll still be stripping line off the reel for casting. It may seem like overkill to focus so much time on the reel, but doing so will help them last years longer.

- **Fly line**

Fly lines can last for years if you take care of them, and it's not an onerous process. It's particularly important for light-weight fly lines used for smaller rods in backcountry situations, as it's usually thinner, lighter and, given the terrain you'll be fishing, more prone to getting snagged on rocks and branches. For starters, strip the line off the reel and dunk it in warm water mixed with some mild dish soap. Agitate and then dry it with a dish rag or even a paper towel. Then apply a fly-line dressing, like [Scientific Anglers' Fly Line Cleaner](#) or even just a line-cleaning "towelette" that multiple line manufacturers include with the line. The best way to do this is to hold the reel in your right hand and pinch the line between the towelette with your right thumb and forefinger while you reel the line in with your left hand. This will keep the nylon from cracking and splitting, and add seasons to your fly line.

- **Flies**

First, do you have enough, and, second, do you have enough of the patterns you're likely to use more than others? Since I tend to fish more in the backcountry, I like to tie attractors, like Adams, Stimulators, Wulffs, grasshoppers, Prince Nymphs, San Juan Worms and the like. Big-water fly fishers might be more prone to articulated streamers, big stonefly nymphs and high-floating Chernobyls that can do double duty as an indicator. It's not too late to hit the vise and crank out a couple dozen before high season is underway in earnest. I make it easy — I pack a travel vise and basic fly-tying material in my camper. If I run low, or find that the fish are on a particular bug, I can tie flies during the evening (usually over a tumbler of [good Irish whiskey](#)). Go through your fly boxes and remove any flies with rusty hooks, splayed hackle or thread that's about to unwind. I like to "start over" at the beginning of summer with a freshly stocked fly box, knowing full well that by September, the box is going to look like something the cat coughed up. If you fish a lot of dry flies, now is the time to do any pre-treatments with fly floatant. Letting the flies "marinate" for a few days is preferable. For a few weeks? Ideal. And, it saves you time on the water later.

- **Waders**

I usually only don waders early in the summer fishing season. I prefer to wet-wade most high-country trout streams, but in June, that water is downright frigid (as are early season tailwaters). So check for leaks. Here's how: Turn your waders inside out and get your hands on some rubbing alcohol. Put it in a spray bottle and spray the waders, a section at a time with. Dark spots that show up after you spray the material indicate small holes (you might be surprised at how many little pinhole leaks there are). Get a popsicle stick or a tongue depressor, along with some [Aquaseal](#). Apply a pea-sized dollop of Aquaseal atop each little leak, and spread it out evenly with your depressor. Hang your waders and let the patches dry. Then you're all set.

Wading boots

If your boots are leather or have leather components, and they've been sitting in a closet all winter, you're likely going to need some [leather conditioner](#) (I get mine at Boot Barn, but it's also available online). Apply the conditioner liberally and work the boots until they're flexible again. To avoid having to spend too much time doing this next season, do this step in the fall, too. Check your soles — are they separating? If they have felt, is the felt lifting from the sole (if so, [Shoe Goo](#) is a magical thing)? If they're studded, are you missing studs (quarter-inch sheet-metal screws are excellent replacements, and they're cheap)? Check the laces. If they're frayed, replace them before you hit the water.

Vests and/or packs

Thanks to a sketchy back, I've reverted from using my trusty sling pack to a good, old-fashioned fishing vest. But the process is the same. Do you have a few packs of tapered leaders (or the material you'll need to craft a leader)? Several spools of tippet, ranging from 3x to 6x (you likely won't need anything lighter than that unless you're fishing over picky fish in a spring creek)? Are your nippers rust-free and sharp? Hemos or mitten clamps still work? Do the zingers still ... zing? Indicators? Lead-free split-shot? A small pocket knife? Make sure you're stocked and ready to go, and don't forget the stuff that's really important — the summer sun can be vicious when you fish, because you get the rays from the sky, and the reflection from the water, so a small tube of sunscreen is necessary. It's also not a bad idea to include some sort of insect repellent, even if it's just the little wet-wipe pads. Early in the season, when the mosquitos are particularly bad thanks to all the standing water, I've taken to carrying a [Thermacell](#) on a belt clip. This little butane-powered concoction is a godsend. And, of course, make room in your vest or pack for at least one or two face/neck gaiters. Chances are, in the backcountry, you're not going to encounter too many other anglers, so the real purpose of these garments is for sun protection. But, if you're fishing with a buddy during the viral pandemic, it's never a bad idea to add a layer of protection between you and your fellow angler.

Refresh (or build) your Go Bag

Pull out your [fly fishing go-bag](#) from last season. Make sure that everything in the bag is fresh and functioning. There's no point in having a go-bag if the stuff inside it is broken, dried out or otherwise no good.

Don't have a go-bag? Well, now's a great time to build one. Go-bags are cheap and easy to throw together and will eventually save a fishing trip (or several).

For those of us in the West, now's the time to get ready for the summer season (and if you're in the East, time is short!). If you're like me, and this is your favorite time of the year for fly fishing, there's no reason not to prepare for it.

Getting ready might seem like a significant ordeal, and, honestly, it can be. But if you know what kind of fishing you have ahead of you, you can start tackling the tasks, one a time, so when you hit the water, you'll be the one fishing instead of dealing with gear issues.

A UNIQUE FISHING ADVENTURE



My sister is into pack goats and recently sent me some information about a fellow she knows who does pack goat trips into the high mountain lakes of Idaho to take guests on fishing trips. The goats will carry your load so you will enjoy the hike without a heavy backpack. They bring pack rafts that allow you to float out to the middle of the lake for fishing.

For more details check out <https://packgoats.com/>.

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/>

REALLY OVER THE TOP!



In the August newsletter I wrote about the trout pellet fly I had discovered during a trip to Utah. I thought that was stretching my ability to call it a fly. Well this month someone posted the **Yellow Corn Fly** on Facebook. I think I'm finally going to have to pass, even if it does catch fish.

CASTING CAROLINAS 2020 EVENTS

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.

EAGLE ROCK CAMP

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WHICH FLY IS WEIGHTED?

By George E. Emanuel

<http://www.flyangleronline.com/>

Have you ever been confronted with a situation that called for a weighted fly, and stood in the middle of the stream scratching your head, and hefting flies to see if you could figure out which ones were weighted, and which were not?

Well, many of us have at one time or another. If you are in this game long enough, you may well find yourself among the number of the confused.

But, you need not be!

Now before you take some smug satisfaction in the fact that you never weight flies, and always apply split shot, be aware that in many places split shot is illegal.

No, not just lead split shot, but any split shot period. There are areas where putting weight anywhere but inside of the fly itself will bring down upon you all of the fury the law will allow. Many of our Brothers in the Canadian Provinces can attest to the strictness with which these laws are enforced.

So what do we do with the poor guy standing in the middle of the stream trying to select the weighted fly from a box where they all look the same?

Well I guess we could chuckle at him, but we won't. What we could do would be to reach into our box and in handing him a fly say, "here try this, it is weighted."

Now at this point, before he scratches his head so hard as to bore a hole clean through it trying to figure out how you knew that particular fly was weighted, show him your box. He may or may not observe that some of your flies have brown heads, while others have black heads.

If he doesn't notice you may want to point it out to him. Take a minute to explain to him that while you are at the bench you always finish your heads on your weighted flies with brown thread, while the un-weighted are finished with black thread.

This is a very simple solution to a simple problem. But, this problem can stop us dead in our tracks when we need to execute a game plan with a particular technique and can not identify the tools we need to accomplish it.

You can carry this as far as you like, with one color for un-weighted, another for lightly weighted, still another for more heavily weighted etc. But try not to get too carried away, there are only so many thread colors available.

Remember, white before Easter, or after Labor Day is a definite fashion faux pas!

If you have any tips or techniques, send them along, most of this material has been stolen from somebody, might as well steal your ideas too!

~ [George E. Emanuel](#) (Chat Room Host Muddler)

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS INVITED

If you have a great day on the river, please send us a photo to share at 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.

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THE BIG TWO HEARTED RIVER

BY ERNEST HEMMINGWAY

Editor's Note: In my youth the men of my family made many fly fishing trips to the Michigan Upper Peninsula. We had a pop-up tent trailer and spent many nights along the Big Two Hearted River. There was a sandy road that paralleled much of the length of the river all the way to the mouth at Lake Superior. We would drive along until we found a clearing big enough to park the trailer and set up camp. This became one of my favorite trout streams and when I learned that Ernest Hemmingway had written a short story about it, it became a must read. Because the story was written so many years ago, it is now free on the internet at https://samkoenen.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/big_twoheart.pdf. I've included a brief portion here for you to sample and if you like it, you can get the whole thing on line.

A little background on the story. The upper half of Michigan's lower peninsula and the eastern half of the upper was an old seabed and therefore was very sandy and grew a major white pine forest that was logged at the end of the 1800s. There was a law that said you didn't have to pay taxes on land that had a forest fire, so at completion of logging the land was often set ablaze. Hemingway was fishing there in 1919. In the 1950s when I was there it was still mostly an open plain except where the poplar had taken over, mostly near the rivers. The ash had washed away, but the burnt stumps of the big old pine were everywhere. In late summer there were massive numbers of grasshoppers, but they were no longer black from the ash. Blueberries grew in massive numbers through the open fields and we often had them in pancakes for our breakfast.

One final note: Ernest Hemmingway, like most fly fishermen, was a known liar. While he wrote the story about the Big Two Hearted, he was actually fishing the Fox River nearby but didn't want his audience to know it.

PART I

The train went on up the track out of sight, around one of the hills of burnt timber. Nick sat down on the bundle of canvas and bedding the baggage man had pitched out of the door of the baggage car. There was no town, nothing but the rails and the burned-over country. The thirteen saloons that had lined the one street of Seney had not left a trace. The

foundations of the Mansion House hotel stuck up above the ground. The stone was chipped and split by the fire. It was all that was left of the town of Seney. Even the surface had been burned off the ground. Nick looked at the burned-out stretch of hillside, where he had expected to find the scattered houses of the town and then walked down the railroad track to the bridge over the river. The river was there. It swirled against the log spiles of the bridge. Nick looked down into the clear, brown water, colored from the pebbly bottom, and watched the trout keeping themselves steady in the current with wavering fins. As he watched them they changed their positions by quick angles, only to hold steady in the fast water again. Nick watched them a long time. He watched them holding themselves with their noses into the current, many trout in deep, fast moving water, slightly distorted as he watched far down through the glassy convex surface of the pool, its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. At the bottom of the pool were the big trout. Nick did not see them at first. Then he saw them at the bottom of the pool, big trout looking to hold themselves on the gravel bottom in a varying mist of gravel and sand, raised in spurts by the current.

Nick looked down into the pool from the bridge. It was a hot day. A kingfisher flew up the stream. It was a long time since Nick had looked into a stream and seen trout. They were very satisfactory. As the shadow of the kingfisher moved up the stream, a big trout shot upstream in a long angle, only his shadow marking the angle, then lost his shadow as he came through the surface of the water, caught the sun, and then, as he went back into the stream under the surface, his shadow seemed to float down the stream with the current, unresisting, to his post under the bridge where he tightened facing up into the current.

Nick's heart tightened as the trout moved. He felt all the old feeling.

He turned and looked down the stream. It stretched away, pebbly-bottomed with shallows and big boulders and a deep pool as it curved away around the foot of a bluff.

Nick walked back up the ties to where his pack lay in the cinders beside the railway track. He was happy. He adjusted the pack harness around the bundle, pulling straps tight, slung the pack on his back, got his arms through the shoulder straps and took some of the pull off his shoulders by leaning his forehead against the wide band of the tump-line. Still, it was too heavy. It was much too heavy. He had his leather rod-case in his hand and leaning forward to keep the weight of the pack high on his shoulders he walked along the road that paralleled the railway track, leaving the burned town behind in the heat, and then turned off around a hill with a high, fire-scarred hill on either side onto a road that went back into the country. He walked along the road feeling the ache from the pull of the heavy pack. The road climbed steadily. It was hard work walking up-hill. His muscles ached and the day was hot, but Nick felt happy. He felt he had left everything behind, the need for thinking, the need to write, other needs. It was all back of him.

From the time he had gotten down off the train and the baggage man had thrown his pack out of the open car door things had been different. Seney was burned, the country was burned over and changed, but it did not matter. It could not all be burned. He knew that. He hiked along the road, sweating in the sun, climbing to cross the range of hills that separated the railway from the pine plains.