

Hickory, Table Rock, High Country Trout Unlimited August 2026 Newsletter



When you've purchased new equipment that can be very true, but over time if you don't care for it, the reel may not work smoothly, the ferrules become hard to separate, and your waders can start leaking. That's not happiness. This month we'll discuss proper gear maintenance. The autumn delayed harvest season will be coming soon and it should start with happiness.

Watch those water temperatures and read the article on how to revive a trout.

HICKORY TU MEETING

We're on break for the summer with the next meeting September 16th. Hopefully a lot more of you will return to our meetings in the fall. In the meantime, enjoy the summer on some high mountain trout streams.

I need a list of new members for the past year in Table Rock for the newsletter, but Alan Clark won't reply. Can anyone else help with that?

UPCOMING EVENTS

Riverkeeper Beer Series Clean-up with AMB near Boone, NC August 15th. 12:30-4:30 PM. Join MountainTrue for a river cleanup with an after-party at [Appalachian Mountain Brewery](#). Exact location will be sent to those signed up before the event. [SignUp](#)

REEL RECOVERY FALL RETREAT

It's that time of the year to start planning for the 2026 Spruce Pine, NC Reel Recovery Retreat. Last year's retreat

was an outstanding success. With your support, volunteering as a buddy, this year's retreat will be every bit as beneficial to men living with cancer participants.

"The mission of Reel Recovery is to help men cope with the impact of cancer by introducing them to the healing powers of the sport of fly-fishing, while providing a safe, supportive environment to explore their personal experiences of cancer with others who share their stories." The 2026 retreat has a full complement of participants (14) with several in reserve. So, if you are aware of anyone else that would like to volunteer as a buddy please pass this information on to them.

Below is the Reel Recovery volunteer information and form. If you have all ready volunteered, prior to receipt of this email request, thank you very much. <https://www.reelrecovery.org/volunteer>

Special request! We are in need of a Reel Recovery Coordinator for the NC chapter. If you are aware of someone that can be of assistance please pass this information on to them.

This year's retreat will take place at Spruce Pine, NC starting 4:00 PM Monday October 5 thru 2:00 PM Wednesday October 7. Springmaid Mountain 2171 Henredon Rd. Spruce Pine, NC 28777. George Reed, from Tulsa Oklahoma, has volunteered to be the Spruce Pine Interim Coordinator. He is the current Oklahoma State (Broken Bow) Reel Recovery Coordinator. We are very fortunate to have him volunteer his services. Please contact Shiloh Price, Program Director, if you decide to volunteer or for additional information. Her contact information is; Shiloh Price Program Director | Reel recovery shiloh@reelrecovery.org 254-979-6617

Note: If your organization has an upcoming event and would like it in the newsletter, send it to HkyNCTU@gmail.org.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A rainstorm on the river is not the time to discover your gore-tex jacket needs restoring. Check it out before you go"

.....Chick Woodward

NCWRC FLY FISHING CLASSES

8/1/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 9:00am - 2:00pm (Cherryville)
8/14/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Equipment, 6:00pm - 8:00pm (Marion)
8/21/26 Warm Water Fly-fishing Workshop, 6:00pm - 8:00pm (Marion)

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to HkyNCTU@gmail.com and let us know.

8/22/26 Fly-Fishing Instructor Training, 9:00am - 4:00pm (Marion)

8/28/26 Catfishing Basics, 6:00pm - 8:00pm (Marion)

8/29/26 Family Fishing Workshop, 9:00am - 12:00pm (Marion)

9/4/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 10:00am - 1:00pm (Black Mountain)

9/18/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 6:00pm - 8:00pm (Marion)

9/19/26 Family Fishing Workshop, 10:00am - 1:00pm (Marion)

2026 DELAYED HARVEST STOCKING WEEKS

NC WILDLIFE RESOURCES COMMISSION

COUNTY	STREAM	WEEK OF											
		3/2-3/6	3/9-3/23	3/26-4/3	4/6-4/10	4/27-5/1	5/4-5/8	5/11-5/15	5/28-6/2	6/5-6/9	6/12-6/16	6/19-6/23	6/26-7/1
Ashe	Hellon Creek	X					X		X			X	
	Trout Lake	X					X				X		X
	Big Horse Creek	X						X		X		X	
	South Fork New River	X						X			X		X
Burke	Jacobs Fork	X					X			X			
Caldwell	Wilson Creek	X					X				X		
Clay	Fires Creek	X					X		X				
Graham	Big Snowbird				X		X					X	
Haywood	West Fork Pigeon River	X				X				X			
Henderson	North Fork Mills River	X				X			X				
Jackson	Tuckasee River	X					X			X			
Maxam	Namacha	X					X			X			
Madison	Big Laurel Creek			X			X					X	
	Shelton Laurel Creek			X			X					X	
	Spring Creek				X		X						X
McDowell	Curtis Creek		X					X		X			
	Mill Creek		X					X		X			
	Catawba River		X					X		X			
Mitchell	Cane Creek		X					X		X			
	North Toe River	X					X				X		
Polk	Green River				X		X						X
Surry	Ararat River	X						X			X		X
	Mitchell River	X					X		X			X	
Swain	Tuckasee River			X			X					X	
Transylvania	East Fork French Broad River	X				X				X			
	Little River			X			X						X
Watauga	Watauga River	X					X				X		X
	Lake Coffee	X					X				X		X
Wilkes	East Prong Roaring River	X				X			X			X	
	Stone Mountain Creek	X					X		X			X	
	Rodders River	X				X			X			X	
	Elk Creek	X				X			X			X	
Yancey	Cane River		X					X		X			

Dates listed are subject to change due to unexpected events, such as snow. Changes will be announced through press releases, Twitter, Facebook and on ncwildlife.gov.

PATTERSON VOICES IN THE VALLEY

Patterson School in Happy Valley is hosting its annual Voices in the Valley event on Saturday, October 3rd. This year they have invited the Southern Fly Tyers Guild to join in the event and we are looking for volunteers.

We are looking for 20-25 tyers and a few people to demonstrate casting. Most tyers will be in the two classrooms, but a couple will be out in the vendor tents to promote those inside. A tyer will have a table with 3-5 chairs for visitors to sit, watch and interact with the tyer.

The Patterson School Foundation needs an accurate list of participants so it can prepare campus lanyards and passes. Only those who RSVP by email will receive a pass for campus admission; everyone else will be required to pay at the gate.

To volunteer for fly tying, contact Bill Jewett at theflytying-santa24@gmail.com. To volunteer for fly casting contact Alen Baker at alenandscottie@aol.com. If you would like to present as a vendor, go to [VendorRegister](https://www.vendorregister.com).

The Southern Fly Tyers Guild will also be donating to the raffle fly fishing items and a good number of fly boxes with flies. We have several fly fishing guided trips if there is a silent auction.

For more details on the event, visit [Event Details](#).



TOTAL GEAR MAINTENANCE CHECKLIST

Protecting your investment, one season at a time!

THE FLY LINE: The Delivery System

[] Strip and Soak: Strip the line into a bucket of lukewarm water with a drop of mild dish soap (Dawn). Avoid harsh detergents or any cleaners with alcohol/solvents.

[] The Cleaning Swipe: Pull the line through a clean, lint-free cloth with firm pressure to remove algae, "pond scum," and abrasive "boat floor" grit.

[] Inspect the Finish: Feel for nicks, cracks, or "rough" spots (radial cracking) in the first 30 feet of line where the most stress occurs.

[] Connection Audit: Inspect welded loops and nail knots for signs of fraying, "hinging," or cracking in the PVC coating that could lead to failure.

[] The Dressing: Apply a manufacturer-approved line dressing (like Rio or Loon) to floaters to maximize buoyancy, or use water-based cleaners for sinking lines. II.

THE FLY REEL: The Braking System

[] The Pre-Rinse Tighten: Ensure the drag is tightened before rinsing to compress the internal components and keep water and loosened grit out of the housing.

[] Freshwater Flush: Rinse the exterior and the spool-gap thoroughly under cool tap water to dissolve minerals and lake slime.

[] The Storage Reset: Loosen the drag completely before putting the reel away to protect the internal washers and prevent springs from taking a "set."

[] Spool Cavity Check: Remove the spool from the frame and use a soft toothbrush to flick out any sand or debris hiding in the frame-gap.

[] Screw Audit: Ensure the handle screw and reel-seat screws are snug, as they can vibrate loose over a season of travel and use.

[] Lube (If Applicable): If your reel is an unsealed system, apply one drop of oil to the spindle. If it's a sealed system (like Orvis Mirage/Hydros), skip the oil! III.

THE FLY ROD: The Engine

[] **Ferrule Wipe:** Use a dry, lint-free cloth to clean the male and female ends of all joints before every assembly to prevent



grit from scoring the graphite.

Ferrule Wax: Apply a small amount of paraffin or ferrule wax to the male joints twice a season to ensure a snug, twist-free fit and prevent stuck sections.

[] **Guide Scrub:** Use soapy water and a toothbrush to remove the abrasive "crust" from the stripping and snake guides that can saw into your fly line.

[] **The Q-Tip Test:** Run a Q-tip through the guides to find hidden burrs or cracks. If it snags, the guide needs repair to prevent damage to your line.

[] **Reel Seat Lube:** Apply a tiny drop of reel oil to the locking nut threads if they feel "crunchy" or stiff due to mineral buildup.

[] **Cork Care:** Use a Magic Eraser or soapy cloth to remove fish slime and oils from the handle to maintain grip and aesthetics.

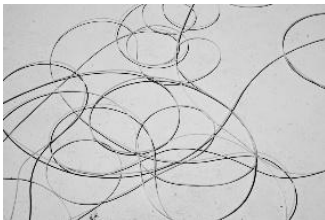
[] **Air Dry:** Never store a rod in a cordura or aluminum tube while damp. Let it breathe overnight to prevent mold and finish damage.

PRO TIP: "Grit is the enemy. Whether it's the floor of your boat or the minerals in the water, a clean setup casts farther, drags smoother, and lasts a lifetime." - BCFLYGUYS



HOW TO CARE FOR AND MAINTAIN YOUR FLY FISHING GEAR.

By Bradey Hall



Fly fishing is an investment • both time and money, and keeping your gear in top condition key to ensuring it lasts for many • seasons of successful fishing. Whether you're casting on a quiet stream or tackling a big

river, your rods, reels, waders, and other equipment need to be cared for properly to ensure their longevity. Regular maintenance not only helps you avoid costly repairs or replacements but also keeps you out on the water. Here's how to properly care for and maintain your fly fishing gear so it stays in top shape for years to come.

CLEAN YOUR FLY ROD

- **After Each Use:** Rinse your rod with fresh water to remove any salt, dirt, or debris. Grit and salt can cause corrosion and wear over time, so make it a habit to wash your rod after each fishing trip. This is very important if you fish salt water.

- **Deep Cleaning:** For a deeper clean, use a mild dish soap and warm water solution, along with a soft cloth to wipe down the rod. Pay special attention to the ferrules (the joints where the rod sections connect) as they can accumulate dirt. Dry the rod thoroughly before storing it.

- **Inspect Regularly:** Look for signs of damage, such as cracks, nicks, or loose guides. If you notice any issues, it's best to have your rod repaired promptly to avoid further damage. Accidents happen and having a rod break while fighting a fish is not fun.

REEL CARE: KEEP IT SMOOTH AND FUNCTIONAL

- **Rinse After Use:** Just like your rod, your reel needs to be rinsed with fresh water after each fishing session. This is especially important if you've been fishing in saltwater, as salt can quickly corrode the reel's components.
- **Dry Thoroughly:** After rinsing, make sure to dry the reel completely. Saltwater or moisture left behind can cause rust and erosion, leading to costly repairs.
- **Lubricate the Reel:** Periodically, you should apply a small amount of reel lubricant to the moving parts to ensure smooth operation. Avoid over-lubricating, as this can attract dirt and debris.

- **Clothing and Gear Bags:** If you use a fishing vest, jacket, or gear bag, regularly inspect them for wear and tear. Wash them according to the manufacturer's instructions, and store them in a dry place to prevent mold or mildew from forming.

- **Tippet and Leaders:** Make sure to replace tippet and leaders that show signs of wear, such as fraying or stretching. Store them in a cool, dry place to prevent them from weakening over time.

STORING YOUR GEAR: KEEP EVERYTHING PROTECTED

Proper storage of your fly fishing gear is just as important as cleaning it.

Rods and Reels: Store rods in a rod tube to protect them from damage, and keep reels in a padded case to avoid bumps or scratches. Make sure rods are stored upright or horizontally, avoiding any weight placed on them that could cause bending.

Waders: Hang waders by the boots, and avoid folding them to prevent creases that could damage the waterproofing. A wader hanger or a dedicated drying rack works well for this.

General Storage: Keep all your gear in a cool, dry place—away from extreme temperatures or direct sunlight. Avoid storing gear in damp areas, as moisture can damage your equipment over time.

- **Inspect the Drag System:** The drag system is the heart of your reel's performance, so it's important to check it regularly for smoothness. If the drag feels sticky or uneven, clean and lubricate the internal components or have it serviced by a professional.

WADER MAINTENANCE: KEEP THEM LEAK-FREE AND DRY

Waders are your protective shield when fishing in cold or deep waters, so ensuring they stay in good shape is vital to your comfort and safety.

Clean After Every Use: Wash your waders with fresh water after every use to remove mud, sand, debris and invasive species.

cies. Avoid using detergents as they damage the waterproofing on your waders. Washing your boots at the same time is incredibly important as it helps stop the spread of invasive species.

- **Dry Thoroughly:** Always hang your waders to dry after use. Avoid folding them up while they're still wet, as this can cause moisture to seep into seams and zippers. Hang them upside down by the boots to allow air to flow through the legs and boots.



- **Store Properly:** Store your waders in a cool, dry place. Avoid leaving them in a hot car or in direct sunlight, as heat can degrade the waterproofing materials over time.

CARING FOR YOUR FLY BOXES AND FLIES

Your fly box keeps your collection of flies organized and accessible, so taking care of it ensures you'll always be ready for any situation on the water.

- **Keep Your Flies Dry:** Always make sure your flies are dry before storing them in your fly box. Damp flies can rust your hooks.
- **Organize Your Flies:** Keeping your flies organized by



type, size, or color helps you quickly find the right fly when you need it. This can also prevent unnecessary damage to delicate flies. A good fly box can make all the difference in

the world.

CARING FOR ADDITIONAL GEAR

- **Fly Fishing Nets:** Clean your fishing net after every use to prevent the buildup of dirt, algae, or fish slime. Wooden nets should be oiled occasionally to prevent cracking. Rubber nets are easier to clean but should still be rinsed and dried thoroughly.

PROTECT YOUR INVESTMENT FOR YEARS OF ENJOYMENT

Fly fishing gear is a significant investment, and properly caring for it will help you get the most out of your equipment. By cleaning, maintaining, and storing your rods, reels, waders, and other gear with care, you'll ensure that they perform at their best for years to come. A little time spent on maintenance will go a long way in preserving the functionality and longevity of your gear, allowing you to focus on what matters most: enjoying your time on the water.

By taking these steps, you can maximize the lifespan of your gear, reduce the need for replacements, and keep your fishing experience smooth and successful season after season. So, next time you pack up your gear, remember that proper care today means more time spent fishing tomorrow!

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

It's been a long hot summer thus far, and I've tried to lay off the trout and chase some smallmouth instead, although the Catawba has been providing a very nice mixed bag this summer.

I've been focused on fishing classic style wet flies this year, and I carried that on into this summer with some Spey inspired streamers. These are not only easy to tie, but have been effective on the bass as well as the trout as a baitfish imitator.

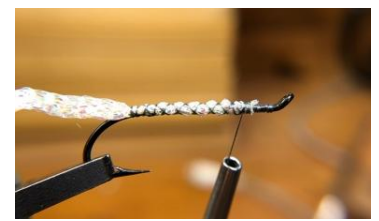


The hook can be any 3XL streamer hook. Anything from a #10 to a #4 works here. I fish these on a swing without any weight and slow strip them back in. The take seems to occur at the end of the swing and just as the fly begins to rise in the water column. Depending on current, you may certainly add some body weight to match conditions you are expecting. A split shot also works well on this pattern at streamside. The body is flat wrap pearl braid, but you can substitute flat tinsel or even chenille for the body. The underbelly is bucktail, the flank feathers are grizzly hackle tips, and the back is blood quill marabou- and your choice of color. I am always amazed how a simple color change can heat up the bite again- so after a few fish, don't be afraid to change out.

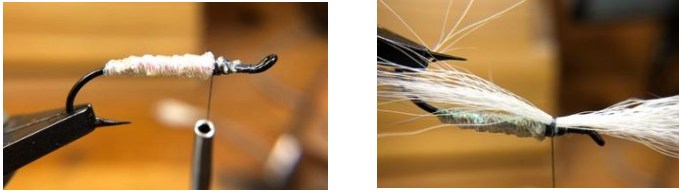


I'm using a Mustad salmon hook for a couple reasons. I like the up eye as it keels nicely on the retrieve and I have several boxes of them sitting around from years gone past.

I'm using a heavier thread, Danville Fly Master, which I learned will no longer be available. You can really torque it and it builds a nice head. Dress the hook from eye to bend with an even foundation.



Tie in the body wrap the length of the shank, again to keep a smooth foundation. Take touching turns from the bend to the eye and tie it off behind the eye, leaving about an eye length to tie in the bucktail.



Pinch wrap a clump of 20/30 fibers so that the ends extend just past the bend. This forms the belly of the fly. Trim out the ends and tidy up wrapping from the eye to the body to form a tapered head.



Select a pair of hackle tips that are evenly sized and pinch wrap them to the head. The tips should line up with the ends of the bucktail. A little wax here works wonders as you are lining them up to be parallel with the shank.

Lay the marabou out so the ends extend just a bit beyond the bucktail. When it gets wet, it has this great flowing action that gets attention.

Secure all that inside a built-up thread head that tapers from the eye to the body.



Finish the fly with a couple coats of black UV resin to on the head.



Please don't hesitate to contact me at Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com with questions or to just talk tying. Please follow along on Instagram check out some current ties @ Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

TRIP TO CALGARY AND THE BOW RIVER

Editor's warning: As my son has become very proficient in AI, the photos may or may not reflect reality. 🤖



Two years ago my son Michael and his wife took a trip to Calgary and to Banff. A regular part of their trips is for her to take a spa day and him to take a fishing trip with a guide. He had a great day on the Bow River south of Calgary and wanted to try it again this year. He really liked the guide so booked the trip with him again, but to be sure he wasn't pre-booked, we booked well in advance. There is always a risk in doing that as problems can occur and for this trip it did. The mountains near Calgary had way above average snow causing a large melt and major rain occurred causing it to be even larger. The Bow River was blown out with high water and silt. It was beginning to decline when we arrived. The cold water coming down from the mountains also delayed much of the golden stonefly hatch as well.

On day one the upper portion in the mountains was clearing so we drifted there, starting later in the morning giving the water a little time to warm, and met our guide at 2 PM. As you can see in the photo, the Bow is a large river, even as it comes out of the mountains.



The water was getting clear, but still not quite there. As a result, the fishing was slow during most of the day, but as we reached the end of the trip later in the evening it picked up and that's when my son and I got a double shown in the first picture. By the end of the day I had three fish and he had two. I felt great because he is an awesome fisherman and I rarely beat him.



In spite of the slow day of fishing, it was still a great day on the water. The scenery of course was beautiful there below the mountains, the weather was warm, and we saw a great deal of wildlife including bald eagles and at one point a pair of mink scrambling up the bank right next to a large beaver lodge which was even a surprise to the guide.

That evening our guide checked with another that had been to the lower Bow just south of Calgary and was told the water was looking good. That turned out to be a misguided report. When we arrived, the water was still quite silty with visibility only to about a foot. (Of course in Canada we were



told about a third of a meter or perhaps 30 centimeters.) We had a long drift that day from 8 AM to about 5 PM. At the end of the day my son had one fish and I had none. This is the same water my son had fished two years ago and caught about 30 including many very large brown trout. I assume you have heard of the four stages of a fly fisherman:

1. I want to catch a fish
2. I want to catch a lot of fish
3. I want to catch a big fish
4. I just love being on the water, fish are a bonus



Both my son and I are stage 4 fishermen and it was still a great day just being on the water and again the wildlife was amazing. What was really amazing to us is that there were flocks of white pelicans and cormorants way up there into Canada. And to top that off, as we were tied tight to the shore to rig a rod, another mink just *walked* about 20' behind us.

The third day had been planned to drift another section of the lower Bow river, but clearly with the results of the prior day that was no longer an option. The guide offered us two options for day 3. The first option was a stream about 2 hours to the south that we would have to wade. At 80 that was no longer an option for me. The second option was Burnstick Lake about 2 hours to the north and fly fishing for northern pike. I spent many summers in Michigan's upper peninsula, including five years in college there, and had always loved pike fishing, but had never flyfished for them before.



That sealed that option and it turned out to perhaps be the best day of the trip.

When we arrived I saw a massive amount of water lilies with the yellow flower. I had grown up on a lake in Michigan that had these and it brought back great memories of fishing the lily pads there. We launched, took a few casts on the channel heading out and then started trolling to the other side of the lake. We hadn't trolled a minute when my son hooked the first pike, about 24" long. We continued mainly casting, but a little trolling between spots. By the end of the day my son had caught six pike. I had caught and landed one, but had also hooked three that had gotten off the hook. Our guess was they were biting short of the hook on the fly material.



In many ways this was the best day of the trip and if you head up to Calgary I would recommend you make this one of your days. Not only was the fishing good, but again the wildlife was amazing. I grew up with the sound of loons in

Michigan's UP and have even heard one on Lake Hickory one winter and love their sound and there were several on the lake and were just now raising their young. Most of the time the mother was with the young while the father was out hunting for food. If something happened the mother would begin calling out for the father to return. At one point a bald eagle landing in a tree above the mom and chicks. She started calling out and the dad came running. At another point there was a duck was too close and the dad chased it away. And perhaps the best of all was a lady in a kayak taking photos and got too close to the mom and chicks. Mom was really ticked and attacked her.



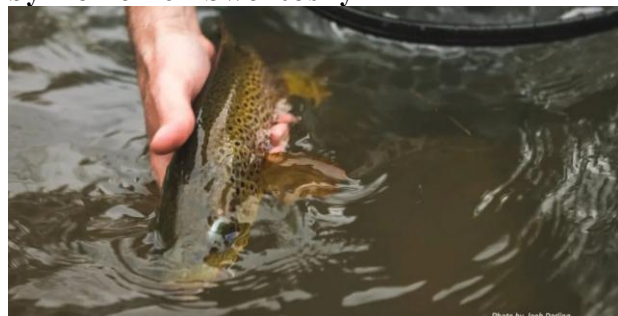
I need to add that flyfishing is not the only reason to take a trip up to Calgary. Banff National Park is only an hour and a half away and is one of the most beautiful parks in North America. We booked an AirBnB in the town of Canmore, just a few minutes away from Banff and you would be amazed at the availability of places to stay. It is very close to the section of the Bow that we fished the first day and in the evenings after fishing it is close enough to spend a little time in the park. And if you have the time, take a few extra days and spend them in the park and perhaps also visit Jasper National Park about two hours to the north, a beautiful drive up through the mountains.



As I mentioned before, you generally need to book early to get the guides you want and that can result in unexpected conditions, but if you truly love being in the outdoors and on water, you can still have a great trip. We asked our guide when he thought was the best time to schedule a trip to Calgary and the Bow River and he suggested September. If you'd like to talk to him about a trip there his name and email are Curtis Lawrence, curtis@bowriverflyfishing.com.



IF YOU HAVE TO REVIVE A TROUT IT'S PROBABLY TOO LATE
by Domenick Swentosky



Science and Reason

I'm not going to make a long and detailed argument about this. No, I don't have a scientific study to back my claim in full. And I don't really know that any have been done. But there's enough science out there regarding lactic acid in a stressed trout. So have a good read, if you like. (Go [HERE](#).)

Has anyone tracked trout that go belly up the first time you release them to see if they make it very long after a revival and a second release? I doubt it. But do we really need that study? Doesn't it make sense to play the trout hard and fast in the first place? Shouldn't we choose water that's cold enough for trout to make it through the process of catch and release? And can't we limit the unhooking and handling time to a minimum? —

Yes. We can do all of that. And if we do, we will rarely push a trout to the kind of exhausted state that threatens its life. — *** Fish cold water, Fight 'em fast. Handle gently. Release quickly ***

But what's all this about a trout revival anyway?

Reviving a Trout

There's a lot of nuance to a topic like this. So here's what I mean by reviving a trout . . .

If a fish released back to the water cannot support itself upright, then reviving it might be necessary. If it falters from side to side or cannot swim properly, then it needs more recovery time before heading back to the kinds of currents that most river trout live in.

First, I'm making the argument that we should avoid exhausting a trout to the point where they need such a recovery time.

But when bad things happen, here's how to revive a trout:

— Keep the trout in the net (a good one), or cradle the fish under the water. Never squeeze a fish.

— Hold the trout with its nose facing upstream, in clean, cold water with some flow.

— Watch for the trout's gills to work. Don't allow the net to block the gills or place your hands over those gills.

— Support the trout gently, so it doesn't tilt and falter side to side or go belly up. This is really your main job — to help the trout hold a position long enough to recover.

— Watch and feel for signs of the trout recovering. And when it attempts to swim away, let it go.

After that, all you can do is hope for the best.

Do not push, pull or pump the trout through the water during revival. Trout don't need water going backward through their gills. They just need clean, cold water going into their mouth and past their gills to extract the needed oxygen.

Exhausting Them?

Remember this: You do not have to exhaust a trout to land it.

Sure, the bigger ones may need to tire a bit, before they cooperate enough to guide them into the net (especially on lighter tackle.)

But experienced anglers routinely land top tier fish (Whiskers and Namers) in well under a minute — often under half a minute. No I'm not exaggerating. It's really all about fighting fish fast. It's a mindset.

The survival of a trout after you put them back has everything to do with the speed that it's landed and released. Speed is the critical factor. Minimize your time with the trout.

READ: Troutbitten | Category | Fighting Big Fish

Photo by Bill Dell

What Exhausts a Trout in the First Place?

If we wish to avoid the need for revival, then let's avoid the following things that push a trout too far.

Fishing in water that is too warm. As water temps rise, so does a trout's demand for oxygen. And yet, there's less dissolved oxygen in warm water. Keep that in mind.

Overplaying the trout. Don't have it strung out on a line too long. Extended fights exhaust trout. So fight 'em fast.

Poor handling. Squeezing is always bad. And I've written previously about the inexperienced angler's bad habit of squeezing the heart. (It's extremely common in photos.)

— **Unhooking troubles.** A lot of over-exhaustion happens while removing the hook. We simply must be ready to quickly dispatch the hook from the trout. Keep it barbless. Have hemostats at the ready, and get that hook out efficiently. (Try inverting the trout to keep it calm.)

Too much air time. Limit the trout's time out of the water. Try for hook removal under the water when possible. If you opt for a picture, aim for just five seconds out of the water. Again, I'm not exaggerating here. Keep the trout in the net with its gills moving in cold water, while you prepare the camera. Get set, lift the trout for five seconds and put it back.

*** Fish cold water, Fight em fast. Handle gently. Release quickly ***

Given that all of these principles are followed, there is nothing wrong with a five second photo shoot.

Furthermore, trout landed within these guidelines have no need for revival. Instead, they swim away quickly upon release.

READ: Troutbitten | Are We Taking the Safety of Trout Too Far?

READ: Troutbitten | Their Heart in Your Hands
PODCAST: Troutbitten | S1 Ep2 How To Handle a Trout — Safe Catch and Release

Lastly . . .

When trout come to the net exhausted, there's every reason to believe that these fish don't make it — yes, even after we spend time reviving the trout and watch them swim off. (Look up the lactic acid factor again.)

Of course we *will* revive a trout in the unfortunate circumstances where it's necessary. Bad luck happens. But we should avoid any need for revival.

I'd much rather fight a fish fast and hard, even risking break-off, than risk the health of a top tier fish.

I'm not saying don't revive a trout. I'm saying that if reviving a trout is part of your regular process, you're probably doing something wrong.

Fish hard, friends.

Enjoy the day.

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TIP OF THE MONTH-RESTORING GORE-TEX



A few years ago at Yellowstone, we were caught in a heavy rain that lasted about an hour and at the end my Gore-Tex jacket was soaked through. I did a bit of research when I got home and found the following advice.

There are several products out there, but my jacket was several years old and had never been cleaned, so I decided on the Nikwax and purchased both the detergent and the spray on repellant.

I followed the instructions with a wash and drip dry and then soaked it with the repellant. After letting it dry I ran it through the dryer for 20 minutes as recommended. They didn't give a temperature so I used permanent press.

A few days later we had a heavy rain so I donned the jacket and went out to stand in the rain for several minutes. The water beaded nicely and I came back in perfectly dry. In reading the literature they also suggested the water repellant could also be used on waders. My feet have been a bit damp lately so I coated the booties, dried them, and then heated it to activate the repellant, it was successful.

What is DWR?

To prevent wet out, all GORE-TEX shell fabrics are treated with an ultra-thin treatment called DWR, a durable water



repellent polymer that is applied to the outermost fabric layer. DWR penetrates the fibers and lowers the surface tension of the fabric, causing water to bead up and roll off this outer layer of fabric, instead of

being absorbed.

DWR is not permanent, though. Regular wear and tear, plus exposure to dirt, detergents, insect repellent, and other impurities can shorten its lifespan. The good news is that restoring the water repellency of your GORE-TEX shell is extremely easy.

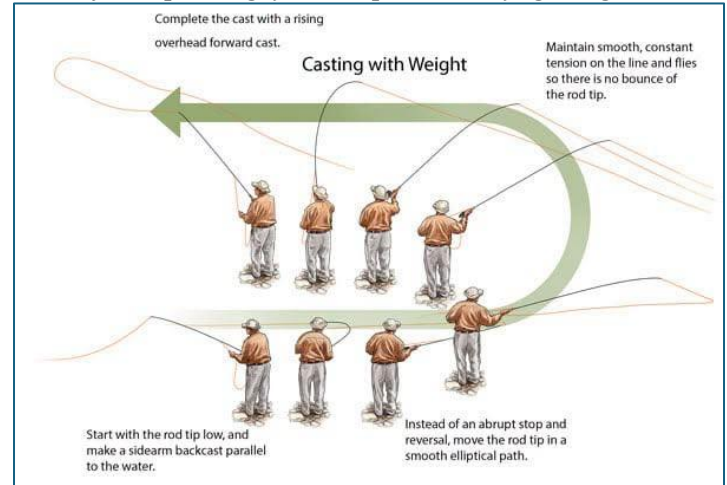
How to Restore Water Repellency to GORE-TEX Outerwear:

- Machine wash your garment as described in the wash instructions. Line dry your garment, or tumble dry it on a warm gentle cycle.
- Once it is dry, tumble dry your garment for 20 minutes to reactivate the durable water-repellent (DWR) treatment on the outer fabric.
- If unable to tumble dry, iron the dry garment on gentle setting (warm, no steam) by placing a towel or cloth between the garment and the iron. This will help reactivate the DWR treatment on your garment's outer fabric.
- When the factory applied treatment can no longer be reactivated, apply a new water-repellent treatment available as a pump-spray or a wash-in product to the garment's outer fabric.

Following spray application, tumble dry your garment for 20 minutes to reactivate the durable water-repellent (DWR) treatment on the outer fabric.

CASTING WITH WEIGHT

On my recent trip to Calgary, we fly fished for northern pike with very heavy streamers. A normal cast overhead and that heavy fly is likely to whack you in the back of your head. To avoid that, try casting as shown below. *Note...If you are in the front of the boat, do not do this to the right as your fly will be casting over your guide rowing or the caster in the back of the boat....just speaking from experience of getting whacked.*



JULY 18TH TIE-A-THON



What an incredible Tie For A Cause 🇺🇸❤️

A huge THANK YOU to the 24 talented fly tyers who came together to tie flies for four amazing organizations that are making a difference through fly fishing:

- ✂️ The Mayfly Project
- ✂️ Reel Recovery
- ✂️ Casting for Hope
- ✂️ Casting Carolinas

The room was filled with laughter, great conversations, and a shared passion for giving back. Days like these remind us that a simple fly can become a tool for healing, hope, and creating lifelong memories for someone else.

A special thank you to Jacob's Fork Fly Tying for providing lunch, and to Stray Dogs for the delicious hot dogs that every-

one enjoyed. Your generosity helps make these gatherings even more special!

We would also like to extend our sincere appreciation to The Southern Fly Tyers Guild for organizing another outstanding event and to The Patterson School for graciously providing the beautiful facilities that allow us to gather, learn, and give back to our community. Your continued support makes these events possible.

I also had the opportunity to distribute the flies from our recent National Tie-A-Thon, ensuring they continue on their journey to those who need them most.

Our next Tie For A Cause event will be October 3rd in support of Voices in the Valley at the Patterson School and the Appalachian Fly Tying Gathering coming to Maggie Valley on October 17th.

Thank you again to everyone who donated your time, talent, and heart. Together, we're proving that fly tying is about much more than fishing—it's about changing lives, one fly at a time.

HATCHERY UPDATE

Setzer Hatchery Renovation Begins, Stocking Numbers to Dip Through 2028

Long-delayed renovations at the Bobby N. Setzer State Fish Hatchery near Brevard are now underway. The roughly \$40 million project will replace aging infrastructure at the facility — which has operated continuously since the 1950s, first as a federal hatchery and since 1983 under NCWRC — and add flood safeguards after Setzer's neighbor, the Armstrong State Fish Hatchery in McDowell County, was nearly destroyed by Helene.

Because Setzer normally supplies more than three-quarters of the state's stocked trout, anglers should expect reduced stocking numbers through the 2026, 2027, and potentially 2028 seasons. NCWRC has purchased the Glady Fork Fish Hatchery in Transylvania County and is buying additional fish from private growers to soften the gap. The agency says wild trout management and delayed-harvest programs remain a priority throughout the renovation, which is expected to take about two years.



TIPS FOR THE TRAVELING ANGLER

Preparing for your next big (or small) trip

by Bob White - Friday, Jul 10th, 2026

The morning had started off well. I was helping one of my fishermen attach a new leader to his fly line, and before the drone of the departing floatplane had drifted away, the other had hooked a bright salmon.

"I'm almost into my backing!" he shouted above the scream of the reel as the ocean-fresh fish ran toward the estuary it had left just an hour before.

"Don't try to hold him," I coached. "You should have plenty of backing—let him run, or you'll break him off for sure!"

The taut line angling off the high rod tip turned from green

to orange as the powerful fish ripped into the backing. Then it went sickeningly slack, and we collectively moaned as the Dacron fell to the water. We were all surprised to find that the backing knot had failed, as evidenced by the tight pigtail at its end.

"No worries," I said. "Let me have a spare fly line, and I'll get you rigged up in just a few moments."

"A spare line? I have spare rods... but I never thought about bringing spare lines."

"Here... use my spare reel," his friend offered, rummaging through his bag and finally producing an old reel with an ancient, cracked floating line—four weights too light.

It would have been a long day of sharing one rod if I hadn't brought a spare. "Here," I said, handing it over. "Use mine."

Most fishermen carry more gear than is comfortable—but it's often not what they need. Here are some thoughts and suggestions that may be helpful as you prepare for your next fly fishing trip.

If you have questions that aren't answered in the material you've received from your outfitter or lodge, contact them for more specific information. If you've chosen well, your outfitter wants you to have the best experience possible. While they'll have spare equipment for you to use, they'd much prefer that you arrive prepared.

When you bring the right gear, you'll likely travel with less of it and be better prepared. Anyone reading this column probably has a good idea of what to bring on a fishing trip, but here are a few additional thoughts to consider:

- Are your rods in good shape—no missing guides or tip-tops? If you're taking a rod caddy, are you sure what rods are in it? Play it safe and check them thoroughly.
- Are your reels well lubricated, and do they match the rods you plan to bring? Many of us have more rods and reels than we'd like to admit, and it's easy to mix them up.
- How fresh are your fly lines, leaders, and tippet material? These are all perishable items. While a tapered leader may last a year or two, it's a good idea to replace tippet material annually. Is it time to buy new fly lines? If not, it still pays to clean them before you leave. If you do purchase new lines, clean your old ones and keep them as spares. Coiled securely in a small zip-lock bag, they require little space, are easy to carry, and might just save the day.
- It's also a good idea to stretch your fly lines when you arrive at your destination. It may have been a while since they were last used, and coils that have set on the reel can make them difficult to cast.

Assuming you've done your research and have the right flies, I find it most efficient to bring large "inventory" boxes. After talking with the guides and getting a feel for what's working, load smaller "day" boxes.

Speaking of fly boxes, I've taken to drilling small holes in the lids of my day boxes to let used flies breathe and dry out after fishing. This may not matter in dry climates like Argentina, but just across the mountains in Chile, it can be a very different story.

If your guide offers you flies, it's always a good idea to open your box and offer one of yours in return.

- I suggest putting together a personal first-aid kit that's so small and unobtrusive you forget it's in your vest or backpack until you need it. Include a simple assortment of bandages, tape, small individual doses of antibacterial cream, and your painkiller of choice. I've found that a container of kitchen matches can also be useful—though you may need to pick those up at the lodge due to travel restrictions.
 - You might also consider bringing a small repair kit. Like your first-aid kit, keep it compact so you're more likely to carry it. It should include an assortment of tip-tops and some Fuji melt (remember those matches?), a small tube of reel lubricant, a small patch of Scotch-Brite, and—if you don't already carry one—a Swiss Army knife or Leatherman tool. A small roll of duct tape and a wader repair kit can also come in handy.
 - Always include a waterproof daypack in your gear. Boat bags are nice—particularly clear ones that let you see what's inside—but backpacks are far more versatile, especially if you plan on walking or hiking. Whichever you choose, compartmentalize your gear in Ziploc bags. They'll keep everything organized, easy to find, and dry should a waterproof zipper fail.
 - Check local regulations regarding felt soles on your wading boots—they may be prohibited. While studs make wading easier and safer, they can wreak havoc on boats and floatplanes. Don't be that guy. If rubber-soled boots are required, a collapsible wading staff that's compact and easy to deploy can be a game changer.
 - It's been a long time since I've traveled with two-piece rods; a bag of them counts as a piece of checked luggage. If you have favorite two-piece rods and you're traveling by vehicle, by all means bring them and let them sing. With advances in technology, the action of three- and four-piece travel rods is indistinguishable from older two-piece rods. They're easier to travel with and more convenient to carry in a boat or on a floatplane.
 - I'm often asked whether it's safer to check fishing gear or carry it on. It might be safer if you can carry it on—but there's no guarantee you'll be allowed to. My experience is that while one X-ray operator might chuckle at what half a dozen reels and several hundred flies look like on a monitor, another might call security and demand a closer inspection. I always check my gear and (knock on wood) have never had a problem.
 - One creative solution is to ship your gear ahead of time. Unlike airlines, shippers allow you to use a sealed container, insure the package for its value, and track it in transit. It takes planning, but it can work well in some situations.
 - When you return from a trip, take a few moments to go through your gear and set it right. Replace what you've used from your first-aid kit and fly boxes, patch any tears in your waders, and open your rod caddy to dry and wipe down your rods. A friend of mine forgot to do this after a trip to Christmas Island and was shocked to watch the gelatinous, septic remains of a land crab tumble onto the carpet of his den while preparing for a trip to New Brunswick six months later.
- One last thought: since this column is about tips—if your guides do a good job, tip them well. If you're unsure how much

to leave, remember that when the amount starts to hurt, it's probably about right.

Author Bob White is one of the instructors at the renowned School of Trout. To learn more about the school and its programs, head here.

MAKE YOUR OWN DUBBING WAX

I tie a lot of flies and many of them use dubbing wax. Recently I ran out so went online to replace it. I ordered a tube of the wax for \$10 and received a tube the size of chapstick.

Dave Everhart, our fly tying author, makes his own and had shared some with me a while ago and it was very good. I asked him for his recipe and he sent me the following:

- 7 parts pine rosin
- 2 parts bees wax
- 2 parts olive oil

I went online to Amazon and was able to buy 8 oz of pine pollen and 2 oz of bees wax for \$16. I had the olive oil. Here are the instructions to make it

1. **Rosin:** This is the primary ingredient that provides tackiness. It can be found in various forms and colors, typically used by musicians for string instruments.
2. **Beeswax:** This ingredient helps to soften the rosin and makes the wax easier to handle. It can be purchased at craft stores or online.
3. **Oils (optional):** Some recipes include oils like olive oil or fish oil to enhance the wax's properties and make it more pliable.

Simple Recipe Instructions:

- **Melt the Beeswax:** In a double boiler, gently melt the beeswax until it becomes liquid. (*I used an empty can in a pan of water*)
- **Add Rosin:** Gradually add the rosin to the melted beeswax, stirring continuously until it is fully dissolved. (*Use a popsicle stick or handle end of a wooden spoon*)
- **Incorporate Oil:** Slowly add the fish oil (or olive oil) while stirring to combine all ingredients thoroughly.
- **Pour and Cool:** Once everything is well mixed, pour the mixture into a container and let it cool until solid



Editor's Note: I stirred for a long time and it seemed like it took forever for the pine rosin to melt. It was a little too thick so I added the olive oil sooner. Eventually it was all melted and I poured it into six 2 oz plastic cups to cool.

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