

# Hickory, Table Rock, High Country Trout Unlimited July 2026 Newsletter



Teaching your children to fish is something you are likely to never regret. I started my son fishing when he was young and got him into fly fishing in his teens. When he went to APP State I rigged him up with gear. He took the fly fishing gym class and spent a lot of his time on the nearby rivers, especially in the Watauga Gorge which was public at the time. We began taking trips together in the late 1990s and now we continue to take 3-4 trips together every year. Teaching your children can become a life-long relationship.

But you have to do it right. I took my older son fishing at age 4. As soon as we got out on the lake he wanted water which we hadn't brought. It really upset him and has never learned to love fishing. From the first time, you need to make it a fun experience and that's what the newsletter is all about this month. Summer is a great time to get started.

If you'd like a little help with teaching the kids, check out the family fishing classes by Wildlife Resources listed below.

## HIGH COUNTRY TU MEETING

No meeting in July because it is too close to the 4<sup>th</sup>.

## HICKORY TU MEETING

Thank you to everyone who attended the June meeting for the great attendance. We're on break for the summer with the next meeting September 16<sup>th</sup>. 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.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Tie-a-Thon For Casting Carolinas, Casting For Hope, Reel Recovery, and Mayfly Project** July 18<sup>th</sup> at Patterson School. We will be tying Walt's Worm, Squirmy, and Egg Fly. Material is provided. If you can, bring your own tying equipment but a few sets are available. If you can, tie some flies up before you come and bring them along. If you can attend, contact Bill Jewett at [jewettwg@gmail.com](mailto:jewettwg@gmail.com).

## REEL RECOVERY FALL RETREAT

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

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](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.com) and let us know.

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*“There is no greater reward than teaching your child to fish. When he was young, I took him fishing. Now that I am old, he takes me fishing”.* ...Chick Woodward

## NCWRC FLY FISHING CLASSES

<a href="#"><u>7/2/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/17/2026 - Basic Fly-fishing Workshop</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/18/2026 - Warm Water Fly-fishing Workshop</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/24/2026 - Catfishing Basics</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/25/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/25/2026 - Western Region Volunteer Fishing Instructor Orientation and Training</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>7/31/2026 - Soft Plastic Rigging &amp; Presentation</u></a>
<a href="#"><u>8/1/2026 - Basic Fly-fishing Workshop</u></a>

## JAKE RASH JOINS TU

In April of this year, Jake Rash joined Trout Unlimited (TU) as its new Southern Appalachians Program Director. He has spent over two decades supporting coldwater conservation through his work at the NC Wildlife Resources Commission and partnerships like the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, where he served as Chair. In his new role at TU, Jake will be working with TU staff and chapters, state and federal agencies, private landowners, and numerous other partners to help the trout resources of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Tennessee. He is excited about this opportunity to work with everyone in expanding coldwater conservation efforts here in the Southern Appalachians.

Please feel free to reach out to Jake and share any updates or questions that you may have. He can be reached at [jacob.rash@tu.org](mailto:jacob.rash@tu.org).

## THE CASE FOR FLY FISHING

*“Today, America’s kid’s are caught up in one of the mass migrations in humanity: the movement indoors.”*

..... Ken Hewitt

More and more children today have less and less contact with the natural world. And this is having a huge impact on their health and development. We as parents and fly fishermen have the ability to change the course of this movement and give our children a better life. Fly fishing has the ability to improve both the physical and mental health of your child and at the same time improve the bonds that will make you a closer and happier family.

## HEALTH

A lot of people don’t realize the extent of the exercise provided by fly fishing. For the older readers you probably think you get a day’s exercise just by putting on your waders and boots, but you get a lot more than that. Fly fishing is a full body sport. The illustration shows how fly fishing effects

every part of your body and four hours of wading in strong current and balancing on slippery rocks can burn up to 1000 calories.

But fly fishing doesn’t just improve physical health, it has a positive effect on mental health as well. The Recreational Boating and Fishing Foundations describes fly fishing as a natural stress reliever because fly anglers are surrounded by nature, unplugged from electronics, and distanced from the so-called real world. In other ways, fly fishing has been compared to meditation in that fly fishers perform a simple, repeated task, often for hours on end. “The motion of fly fishing is part and parcel of the activity itself and may contribute to its calming effect,” says Benson. “Besides, it’s achieving

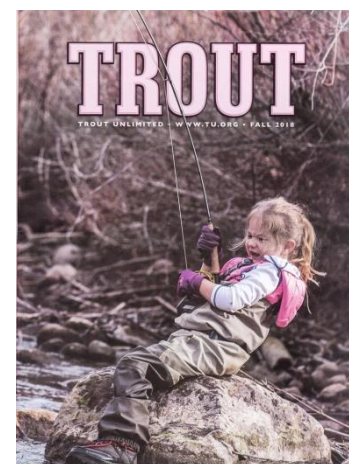
something—you might catch a fish!”

While there may be a soothing effect from the repetitiveness of fly fishing, it also exercises the brain by continual need to make decisions. When you arrive at the stream you must decide whether to fish dry or wet and which fly will be best for the day. When you arrive at the stream you must analyze the stream currents and structure to determine where to fish and with every cast calculate the angle and effort to land the fly in the appropriate spot. Studies have shown that war veterans experienced lower levels of the stress hormone cortisol for as long as three weeks after a weekend fishing trip.

## FAMILY BONDING

Children today are often shuffled constantly to soccer, T-ball, swimming classes, piano lessons and a myriad of other organized activities. These are good activities and much better than the child sitting at a computer game, but about the only bonding time with parents is a short trip in the car and perhaps some cheering from the sidelines. Fly fishing is not a team sport and so has not become an organized activity. It requires

that the parent spend time with the child teaching the fundamentals and sharing the time together on the river. The result often creates a bond that can last a lifetime. While it often doesn’t seem like it, children do have the desire to do things with their parents. There is a big difference in the result between the statement “Why don’t you go fishing” and “Let’s you and I go fishing.” If the teaching is handled in a way that catches the child’s interest, it won’t be



handled in a way that catches the child’s interest, it won’t be

long before the child is asking you to go fishing. My son is in his 40s and lives an hour away, but I often get calls to head up to the mountains together and last summer we spent a few days in Yellowstone at his request. And fly fishing is not just a father/son adventure. Young girls and women are becoming regulars on the stream that can make this a family event or vacation.

So help put a stop to that mass migration indoors. Teach your child to fly fish and while you are at it get the whole family into the sport. You will all experience greater physical and mental health and have a whole lot of fun while you're at it.

See you on the water.

[Flymen Blog](#)

### **3 IMPORTANT THINGS TO TEACH YOUR KIDS ON THEIR FIRST FLY FISHING TRIP**

by Bret Oeltjenbruns



*Photo by Chris Fowler.*

#### **How We Can All Contribute to the Next Generation of Fly Anglers**

When we take our kids on their first fly fishing trip, we generally think about things like which areas to fish, what gear we need, and what weather conditions are best, but there are other important things we should be considering as well.

Here are 3 important things to teach your kids when bringing them out fly fishing for their first time...

#### **1. Have Respect**



*Photo by Grant Moxley.*

Teach your kids the value of respecting nature by having them help you pick up trash when any is found. Let them know the importance of leaving the area better than it was when you arrived.

Set a good example for your kids on how to interact with other anglers. Not every outing will be a solo adventure, so it's

valuable for our kids to see us as anglers respecting other anglers when we're out on the water.

#### **[Introducing Your Kids to Fly Fishing: 4 Tips for Success](#)**

Some anglers believe it's good luck to kiss the fish goodbye after catching it, and they thank it for the sport. Teaching something like this to your child may foster an appreciation for the fish and how we should be respecting others and all living things in our local fisheries. This also a perfect time to talk about how and why to properly handle fish.

#### **2. Have Fun**



*Photo by Chris Fowler.*

Hooking a fish is always a thrill, but if fishing is slow, you can find ways to keep your kids interested.

Try taking photos of different aspects of the experience: loading up the gear, tying their first clinch knot onto a fly, casting practice, nearby nature, family selfies, and any opportunity you can take advantage of to capture valuable moments that you and your kids will be able to fondly look back on.

Flip rocks to find out what bugs are in the area at that time. It keeps things interactive, teaches them about bug anatomy and what flies you should be using, and generally maintains children's curiosity.

#### **[Teaching fly tying to kids: Where to begin?](#)**

When the dog days of summer kick in and fishing slows, look for a good swimming hole and take a dip. Sometimes it's nice to take a mental break from constantly focusing on trying to catch something.

#### **3. Have Patience**



*Photo by Chris Fowler.*

Look back at your first fly fishing experience and ask yourself how that went. Did you feel overwhelmed and want to give up? I know I did. Even when things are going wrong, you want your kids to feel encouraged.

We want to make sure our kids are engaged and want to do it again in the future. Maybe they missed the fish of a lifetime, but it's important to be patient with them and reassure them that it will make catching the next one that much more meaningful.

### [Bluegill: Fly fishing's little magic bullet](#)

It may go without saying, but it's equally important to exhibit patience as a parent while fly fishing as well. With every tangle, every tree caught, and every fly lost, we need to be lenient on ourselves. We're all going to make mistakes, and there is most likely something to learn from whatever that mistake was.

### [When to take your kids fly fishing](#)

Lastly, don't be afraid to not catch fish, because there's so much more to fishing than that. It's so important to appreciate the fact that you and your family are taking time away from busy day-to-day life and just enjoying the outdoors.

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[shiloh@reelrecovery.org](mailto:shiloh@reelrecovery.org) 254-979-6617

## **FLY FISHING MERIT BADGE**

The Boy Scouts of America have developed a great program for teaching kids to flyfish through their merit badge program. The merit badge takes you through all of the things you need to know from casting, wading, fly tying and much more. You can find all of the merit badge requirements and videos to help learn them at [fly-fishing-merit-badge](http://fly-fishing-merit-badge).

*"Never teach your wife fly casting. A casting instructor is much less expensive than a divorce lawyer."*

## **ON THE FLY SOUTH**



By Capt. Scott Swartz

Casting and teaching are two different things

Scott Swartz founded the Atlanta Fly Fishing School, which began in 1999. It is the largest such operation in the Southeast and the only Trout Unlimited "Gold Endorsed" school in the United States. His Florida Fly Fishing Schools started in 2008, helping anglers learn to successfully fly fish in saltwater.

Many new fly rods appear in December brought down chimneys and left under trees. With the new rods come questions of "How do I learn to cast?" or "How do I teach my (spouse, child or friend?)."

For the "How do I learn?" folks, there are online videos from individuals, fly shops and organizations like Fly Fishers International. Many have good suggestions to get you started. Those who struggle can benefit by finding an instructor. If you are not progressing, chances are you do not know what to change to improve, and feedback helps learning go much quicker.

Trying the "throw" the line just results in big open loops. Photo by Polly Dean.

For the "How do I teach?" folks, please understand that knowing how to cast and teaching casting are two entirely different things. I recall trying to teach before I learned how. It was a train wreck. Effective teaching includes having the ability to analyze a cast, prioritizing what needs to change, and being able to describe and demonstrate the changes 11 different ways until it clicks with the student. Quality instruction also takes into consideration individual learning styles of visual, auditory and kinesthetic types to help the student in the way they learn best.

A fun way to get started, whatever your learning style, is not attempting to cast at all! Before starting any regimented casting drills, spend a few minutes playing instead. This non-structured play time is the fastest way to get the feel of a rod pulling line.

Start with the leader and 15 to 20 feet of line out of the rod tip and try making circles overhead. We call this "helicopters." Make circles clockwise and counterclockwise. Make big circles and little circles. You can even make figure eights. The line will follow the rod tip. Eventually graduate to long skinny ovals with the line traveling farther in front and behind than to the sides. Now that you're pulling fly line, simply add a stop at the end of a forward stroke. Stopping the rod crisply lets the fly line pass the rod tip, thereby forming a loop.

Congratulations, you just cast a fly rod!

The benefit of starting with this technique is that there is no attempt to “throw” the fly. Beginner casters trying to throw tend to make big sweeping arcs, resulting in huge loops with the fly going nowhere. Most students making helicopters automatically keep the rod tip fairly level overhead, creating a narrower loop with a stop, which projects the energy forward and sends the fly farther.

Fly casting is not hard, it is just different. Most things we throw have follow-through, but when fly casting, we must stop the rod to form a loop, which seems counter intuitive.

You will know you are getting it right when you realize how little effort you can use to make a cast. Let the rod do the work for you. That is what that new fly rod is designed to do.

Send casting questions or comments to:  
scott@AtlantaFlyFishingSchool.com.

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## **TROUT TIPS: KIDS TEACHING KIDS**

Whether you’re introducing a new angler to fly fishing or thinking about picking up a fly rod for the first time yourself, Trout Tips: Kids Teaching Kids is the perfect resource to up your basic fly fishing knowledge. With video topics ranging from casting technique to reading the water, the Trout Tips video playlist is a great one-stop shop for all things beginner fly fishing. Videos made by Trout Unlimited in partnership with Yot Full Circle Foundation, Fly Fishers International, and Michigan TU. [Kids Teaching Kids Videos](#)

*Editor’s Note: If you have attended one of our Tie-a-Thons you have probably tied a Walt’s Worm. This is the history behind it. If you want to learn how to tie it, join us at the July 18<sup>th</sup> Tie-a-Thon at Patterson School.*

## **ON THE FLY SOUTH**

### **THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF WALT’S WORM**

by Steve Hudson

#### “Who’s Walt?”

That’s the question I was asked recently while talking about nymphing at a local Trout Unlimited meeting. The program was “Nymphing 101,” and we were at the part where I talk about favorite patterns for southern trout. The list included the usual suspects – Gold-Ribbed Hare’s Ears, Pheasant Tails, and so on.

But it also included Walt’s Worm.

#### So who’s Walt?

Walt is Walt Young, a Pennsylvania fly fisher., and Walt’s Worm is an easy-to-tie non-specific imitation of nymphs, larvae, or various worms. Appearing in the 1980s, it soon developed a local following among Pennsylvania anglers and eventually came to national attention as fly fishers far and wide discovered just how well it works in all sorts of subsurface fishing situations.

By any measure, Walt’s Worm is an unassuming little fly. The original was nothing more than some dubbing on a hook, wrapped to form a cigar-shaped body. It’s about as humble as a fly can get and still be called a fly. It’s far from an exact imitation of anything. But it does look a little like a lot of things – and that’s what gives it such near-universal appeal. It’s an impressionistic pattern that simply works, especially on streams where trout can’t be too picky and where being buggy is often all it takes.



The original Walt’s Worm.

#### Materials and variations

The classic Walt’s Worm uses only two materials – some sort of textured dubbing (often tan, brown or olive) wrapped over a few turns of fine weighting wire to form a cigar-shaped body. That’s it, and that is enough.

But fly tyers rarely leave well enough alone. For example, most Walt’s Worm tyers add a beadhead. While brass has long been the standard, I think it’s safe to say that most of the Walt’s Worms you see today are tied using tungsten beads. That helps the fly sink quickly, a definite plus – particularly if the flies will be used for Euro nymphing, a technique for which Walt’s Worm is exceptionally well suited.

At the other extreme, glass craft beads can be used too. They’re available in every color imaginable and yield light-weight flies that are great for use as droppers below a high-floating dry. Such dry-dropper combinations are especially effective when there’s a hatch going on and emergers are active.



The beadhead version of Walt’s Worm.

Another area for experimentation is body dubbing. The only real requirement is that it should be somewhat textured. Any number of dubbing blends fill that bill, so don’t hesitate to try various blends.

Experiment with dubbing color too. Though the originals had brown or tan bodies, other colors work well too. Pink is popular, for example, especially on freshly-stocked trout. Try different colors and see how your local fish respond. The only requirement is that the dubbing has plenty of texture.

Try different thread colors too – for example, bright red or orange, which you can use to add a sight-spot-style collar at the

rear of the bead. This modification is a common one, and it does appear to make this already productive fly even more so.

### What about ribbing?

The classic Walt's Worm does not use ribbing. However, many tyers like to add ribbing using fine wire. Most choose wire that matches the bead color. You can also use a complementary wire color to add visual interest.

For that matter, you can form that ribbing with a single fine strand of flash. Wrap the strand so it lays flat on the body, and leave enough space between turns for the dubbing's texture to come through. This approach to ribbing is a key element of the variation known as the Sexy Walt's Worm.

Whether you use wire or flash for ribbing, it may be helpful to brush the body of the finished fly to further pull out the body fibers.

**Recipe and Tying Instructions**

**Hook:** Nymph or jig hook, size 10-16.

**Bead:** Gold, copper, silver – or try other colors such as hot pink. Glass, brass, or tungsten beads can be used. If tying on jig hooks, use slotted beads.

**Thread:** 6/0 or 8/0 black...or red or orange if you want to add the thread collar as a sight spot.

**Body:** Relatively coarse brown or tan dubbing with some texture to it. Favorites include various muskrat or hare's ear blends; you can also blend your own to get the color and texture you desire.

**Sight spot:** A few turns of red or orange tying thread directly behind the bead.

**Tying Instructions**

- 1) Place a bead on the hook and slide the bead forward to the eye.
- 2) Start thread behind the bead and wrap to the hook's bend.
- 3) Apply dubbing sparingly to thread. Dubbing wax may be helpful.
- 4) Use the dubbed thread to wrap a slightly tapered body forward to the rear of the bead.
- 5) If using red or orange thread to form a sight spot behind the bead, do so at this point. The band of color should be relatively narrow.
- 6) Tie off thread, apply head cement, and go fishing!

### How to fish Walt's Worm

Walt's Worm should be fished just like you'd fish any other nymph or larva imitation. You can, for example, fish it below an indicator as a single nymph or as one of several nymphs. If fishing multiple nymphs, consider a tungsten bead Walt's Worm as the "point" fly to help get all of the flies down in the water column

You can also fish it as a dropper beneath a high-floating dry fly, but you may need to use brass or even glass beads to keep from sinking the indicator dry. This is a great technique to try if you are seeing fish jumping out of the water. Those jumpers may well be chasing emergers, and a Walt's Worm can do a good job as an impressionistic emerger when that's what's going on.



Walt's Worm tied on a jig hook.

Interestingly, but not surprisingly, Walt's Worm works in warm water situations too. For instance, many pond fishermen get good results using a Walt's Worm as a dropper about 2 feet

beneath a popping bug. Some even upsize the fly in this application, going as large as size 8 or 6 or even 4 and using a light-weight glass or plastic bead. I've found this to be particularly effective in the evening.

Here's one other situation where Walt's Worm can shine. On water where San Juan Worms used to work but where the fish have learned that "SJW" stands for "Sore JaW," try a Walt's Worm instead. It resembles a San Juan Worm enough to catch the eye of fish, but it's also different enough that it offers them something new. Try different colors until you find the one that works best.

Finally, if you like to dredge the depths – for example, when Euro nymphing – a tungsten bead version of Walt's Worm should definitely be in your box. Drift the fly through those tantalizing deep holes and mysterious runs – and hold on!

TROUT UNLIMITED

## **TEACHING KIDS TO FLY FISH: THE FIVE GOLDEN RULES**

by Kirk Deeter

There is nothing more rewarding in the fishing world than teaching a young person some basics and watching that pilot light catch. I'll trade a blanket *callibaetis* hatch and hundreds of popping fish heads for one pond-eat of a grasshopper fly cast by a little partner with a Snoopy rod, any day, any time.

I often get asked about things like, "What's the right age to start fly fishing?" and "What's the best gear to begin with?"

My answers to most of those questions follow a similar track... It depends on the kid! Play it by ear. You know what they like, and how long their attention spans last. One of the greatest lessons an angler can embrace is to not try to set an agenda and enforce that on the fish; instead, be patient, watch, and let the fish, or the water, tell you what's going on and what should happen. Well, it's the same with teaching little folks about fly fishing. The more they're involved in the plan, the better.

There are, however, a handful of golden rules I've adopted over the years, and I'll share them here to help those who are interested in the mentoring path. I'm also very interested in hearing *your* tips and advice, because one can never have a mind that's too open when it comes to this topic.

1. **Success fuels interest** — There's nothing like the tug of an actual fish to get a young angler fired up about this whole deal. So fish where you know there are fish, and fish where fish eat flies. Save the "fish of 1,000 casts" for us warped old steelheaders and musky people. Try to find the "fish of 10 casts."

2. **There is no such thing as a "bad" cast** — Only casts that catch fish, and casts that don't. Most of mine don't. And some of my ugliest casts have caught big fish. Sure, you want to teach good technique, but Rome wasn't built in a day, and at all costs, I'd steer away from words like "wrong" or "bad," especially when I'm casting with a young person... or my wife.

3. **Let them choose their gear** — Bright colors, fun looks... something is going to jump out at them, so let them run with it. If you show them options (well, maybe don't show them a fancy split cane rod for starters, you get the drift), they'll take ownership in things they pick up, more than things that are

handed to them. To borrow from Harry Potter... “The wand chooses the wizard”.

4. **It's never too early for a conservation ethic** — If you see trash, pick it up, and explain why. Handle fish gently, keep them wet, and release them. If you're out to catch dinner, great, but do that within the regulations and be reasonable. I'm constantly amazed by just how strong the natural stewardship ethic is in young people... I think they're born feeling that fish are beautiful friends, more so than mere “objects.” It's good to keep that attitude alive.

5. **Let them teach you** — I can't count how many times I thought a fish might be in one spot, only to watch my son drop a little cast in a place I had written off, and score. Maybe crack open the old fly box and let them pick the pattern. It will likely be gaudy, and fuzzy, and you'll think it hasn't a prayer (and so what if it doesn't... you can always change, right?) but when that lucky bug does the trick... man, what that does for enthusiasm and confidence! Sometimes, you'll be amazed by what a 10-year-old beginner can teach you about catching trout on flies.

— Kirk Deeter

## FLY BOXES FOR THE MAYFLY PROJECT

The Mayfly Project takes foster kids flyfishing to help and planned to provide fly boxes to them. Bill Jewett was contacted to see if flies could be provided to fill the boxes. Bill posted a note on Facebook. Chick Woodward saw the note and contacted Bill and then an email was sent out to the members of Hickory, High Country, and Table Rock Chapters of TU. In two days volunteers had stepped up with each person providing 28 flies, 2 each of 2 sizes for 7 kids.

Wynn Parrish sent the following email to thank everyone:

*We had fly boxes made, customized with the Mayfly Project logo, and an arrangement with a fly manufacturer to provide the flies. Unfortunately, that arrangement fell through, leaving us with boxes but no flies.*

*I mentioned this to Bill and Marty at the Maggie Valley Fly Fishing Festival a few weeks back, asking if they would be able to reach out to the fly tying community to help produce the flies for our mentees to fill these boxes for the end of season gift for the kids.*

*Little did I realize the rapid and overwhelming positive response that we would receive from the fly fishing community.*

*I plan to relay this community response to the kids, when I give them the boxes at our final season outing in August, as an opportunity to highlight what we have been teaching them all season...that fly fishing is not just about catching fish - the benefits go much further.*

*Thank you all for being the embodiment of that lesson.*

### Thank you to the volunteers

- Marty Moose – Pat's Rubber Legs
- Chick Woodward – Chernobyl Ants
- Kevin Yarborough – Elk Hair Caddis
- Jack Patterson – Sulfur Comparadun Flies
- Tom Adams – Bead Head Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear
- Tom Adams – Blue Wing Olive Parachute
- Darrell Olson – Pheasant Tails

- Bill Jewett – Black Zebra Midges
- Jon Pershke – Bead Head Prince Nymphs
- Andy Commer – Squirmy Worms
- Doug Wells - Parachute Adams
- Dave Everhart - Royal Wulff

*Editor's Note: The following article was much too long to include in the newsletter, but if you want any information about what to look for when buying fly fishing items, the items in the table below all link to the article. If you want to go directly to the article, the link is [Complete Fly Fishing Gear List - Essentials for Beginners](#).*



## Fly Fishing Gear List - Essentials for Beginners (Complete Checklist)

by [Bob Hoffmann](#)

*Everything you read here is written by real anglers. Call us old-fashioned, but AI doesn't fish — and it doesn't learn on the water.*

There are few greater pleasures in life than watching a big old trout sip your fly off the surface, followed by 10 minutes of an adrenaline-fuelled fight!

Fly fishing is exciting and one of my favorite ways to fish. If you are just getting started, you'll need a list of essentials to start you on your journey.

Well, I've got you covered.

I'm going to give you a complete fly fishing gear list to help you on your way.

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- **Basic Fly Fishing Tackle for Beginners**

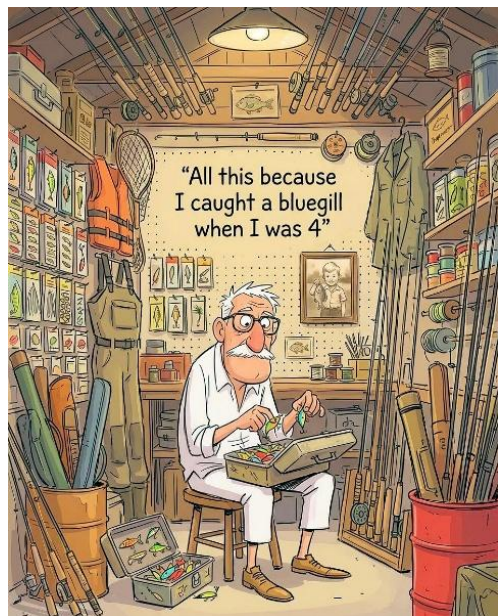
- Fly Fishing Rod
- A Good Fly Fishing Reel
- The Best Fly Fishing Line
- Fly Fishing Leader
- Flies and Fly Boxes

- **Fly Fishing Clothing**

- Baselayers
- Waders
- Boots
- Jacket
- Vest
- Fly Fishing Pack

- **Other Tools and Equipment for Fly Fishing**

- Fly Fishing Landing Net
- Fly Fishing Nippers
- Fishing Pliers
- Fly Floatant
- Polarized Fishing Glasses



## USE BARBLESS HOOKS

When I was five years old my Grandfather took me down to the dock one morning and showed me how to cast a fly. Later that day a boy who worked for them took me out in the boat and on the first cast I buried the hook in the crown of my head. I ended up in the emergency room to have it removed. While I didn't give up fly fishing, the memory is still with me today and might cause some kids to give it up.

I have almost no experience with barbless hooks so I reached out to Wynn Parish who mentors foster kids at the Mayfly Project. He has asked us to provide flies for them, all on barbless hooks, to see how he felt about using them. Here is his response.

*First, conservation is a large part of our mentee curriculum. We teach proper fish handling and catch and release. Barbless hooks are a foundation of those concepts.*

*Second, we are working with young kids. While we strive to avoid it, getting stuck by a hook is inevitable. Barbless hooks are much less of an issue, both in clothing and in skin.*

*Third, in my experience hook sets are better on barbless hooks. First because barbless hooks are often sharper and have longer point tappers. Second they usually have wider hook gaps. This is especially important when fishing size 18's and below.*

*Fourth, a fish, properly fought on a barbless hook, will come to the net just as on a barbed hook.*

*The kids know nothing other than barbless hooks and I will say we have never had any problems hooking or landing fish. Also, while I have never asked, no one has ever complained or blamed a tough day on the water on barbless hooks. If the fish are willing we land plenty and the kids leave smiling.*

If you use barbless hooks, I think there is one point he makes that is important, that they are often sharper, have wider gaps, and longer tapers. I've been tying a lot of barbless hooks for our tie-a-thons and have noticed that difference from the standard barbed hooks. I would suggest that it is important to

use barbless hooks rather than crimping the barbs on standard hooks to give you greater success in landing your fish.

## Northeast Georgia Trout Unlimited Ch. #692 SHARING YOUR FISHING SECRETS

By Paul DiPrima

Fisherman have secrets. Secret fishing holes, secret flies, secret shortcuts to special places, and even some secret knots. These and many other secrets often go to the grave with the old anglers, never to be shared with others. Truth be known, those secrets are probably common knowledge to many other anglers who fish the same holes, tie the same flies, use the same knots and know the same shortcuts. You may not know those who share your secrets and they may or may not know you and you will never know until you both show up at "your" secret hole at the same time.

Back in the eighties I began fishing the Etowah River regularly. It was like my own personal, fifty mile long fishing hole. Rarely did we see other people. My friends and I fished from the Thompson Weinman Dam, all the way to Rome catching lots of fish. My friends would say, "if average folks knew how beautiful the Etowah is, they would be here every chance they had". Spotted bass and stripers were caught on most trips and many of these fish were bragging size. In fact, I recorded a fly rod world record striped bass on one trip. Friends caught some large ones with many catching 25 pound stripers. I shared lures, I shared my rods, I shared my technique and would let others make the first cast. Since then, the Etowah has gained notoriety as a striped bass destination for guide boats and trophy hunters and river lovers having fun in their kayaks.

I kept a few secrets but never kept the river secret and the Etowah is now plastic kayak heaven on pretty weekends and a location of paid striper trips that probe the river. The word got around and now instead of having the river as my secret fishing hole I am happy to share it with hundreds of others.

Trout Unlimited has lots of veteran anglers who know a lot more about fly fishing than I do and most of them have secrets. Some of these guys will go to the grave never revealing their secret locations, flies, knots and techniques. But many TU members are like me, anxious to teach the young anglers. Most of the TU members are avid fishermen and fisherwomen. Some are skilled at casting and some are master fly tyers. It is rare that any TU member will flatly decline to pass on their knowledge to others but these great fishermen may never take the opportunity or just cannot find the time.

Over the past few years, the average age of a Trout Unlimited member has increased from 58 to 62 years old. Members between the ages of 18 and 34 make up approximately 5% of Trout Unlimited's total membership. 35 to 54 years old is 40% and 55 to 64 years old is 30% of the membership. Basically, 55% of TU members are over 50 years old. Many TU chapter are not active in stream enhancement projects and fund raising events because these older members just don't have the good health, energy, stamina or ability to get out and work.

There are over 3.8 million fly fishing people under the age of Thirty Five in the United States. Many younger folks want to learn fly fishing but don't know anyone who can teach them. These young fly anglers and would-be fly anglers would jump

at the chance to have someone who has many years of experience to teach them. Someone to guide them and give them some secret information that will make them better trout anglers.

As an example, Floyd County Georgia has approximately 14,000 students enrolled in the local colleges, universities and technical colleges. If the Coosa Valley Chapter would reach out to this group of potential TU members and only get ONE PERCENT to join the chapter through the Costa 5Rivers Fly Fishing clubs the Coosa Valley chapter would more than double in size and the average member would be half as old and ready and willing to work. I recently spoke with a Coosa Valley chapter leader who said that no one in the chapter is willing to even try to start a 5Rivers club at local colleges. Every chapter in the country should reach out to the local colleges, share their secrets with the youth. It is not a difficult, labor intensive job to start a 5Rivers club. Just get permission to put out fliers about starting a fly fishing club, invite students to TU meetings and guide them in starting a 5Rivers club.

It is not a big task.

## HOW TO START A COSTA 5 RIVERS FLY FISHING CLUB

Starting a **Costa 5 Rivers** (TU Costa 5 Rivers) fly fishing club is a great way to combine the sport of fly fishing with conservation and community engagement. The program is a national network of TU-affiliated college clubs that promote coldwater fisheries and outdoor recreation [Trout Unlimited+1](#).

### Step 1: Build Your Core Team

- Gather **3–5 friends** who share your passion for fly fishing and conservation [Trout Unlimited](#).
- Choose leaders with strong communication, organization, and outdoor skills.

### Step 2: Learn About TU and 5 Rivers

- Understand **Trout Unlimited's mission** and the **5 Rivers program goals** [Trout Unlimited](#).
- TU Costa 5 Rivers is the capstone of the TU Headwaters Youth Program, focusing on engaging current and aspiring anglers [article.wn.com](#).

### Step 3: Get University Approval

- Contact your **university's student organizations office** to start the process [Trout Unlimited](#).
- Complete all campus requirements for new student clubs (bylaws, dues, insurance, etc.).
- TU Costa 5 Rivers clubs must be **registered with the university** and affiliated with a local TU chapter [Trout Unlimited](#).

### Step 4: Connect with a Local TU Chapter

- Use the **TU chapter finder** to locate the closest chapter [Trout Unlimited](#).
- Partner with them for:
  - Fundraising
  - Guest speakers
  - Event planning
  - Conservation project support

### Step 5: Secure Access to Water

- Identify **private or public water properties** with fishable streams [anglerpass.com](#).

- Approach landowners with a clear plan for:
  - Liability protection via club insurance
  - Controlled access for vetted members
  - Conservation stewardship (habitat work, stream improvements)
  - Revenue sharing (lease fees, per-rod payments) [anglerpass.com](#)

### Step 6: Recruit Members

- Start with **10–20 founding members** who are committed to the club's mission [anglerpass.com](#).
- Use campus events, fishing trips, and social media to attract new members.
- Offer perks like discounts from local fly shops [Reddit](#).

### Step 7: Plan Activities and Events

- Organize **fishing trips** (local and regional) [Reddit](#).
- Host **conservation projects** (stream cleanups, habitat restoration) [article.wn.com](#).
- Invite **guest anglers and TU leaders** for talks and workshops [Trout Unlimited](#).
- Create a **social and educational environment** to make fly fishing fun and accessible [Trout Unlimited](#).

### Step 8: Maintain and Grow

- Keep bylaws and conservation rules clear [anglerpass.com](#).
- Track dues, bookings, and member communication.
- Expand partnerships with TU, local businesses, and other clubs.
- Document successes and share them to build momentum.

**Tip:** The Costa 5 Rivers program values creativity and fun—your club should be welcoming, engaging, and rooted in conservation [Trout Unlimited](#).

By following these steps, you'll be well on your way to launching a Costa 5 Rivers fly fishing club that benefits both the sport and the environment.

## RIVERCOURSE 2026



Rivercourse 2026 was held at Lake Logan in Canton, NC (June 14-19). Camp combines the excitement and challenges of fly fishing with a focus on stream ecology and cold-water conservation. 22 Campers attended Rivercourse and included boys and girls ranging in ages 12-15 yrs old.



The campers spent the week exploring the West Fork of the Pigeon River as well as sections of the Lake. Activities for the week included fishing the river and lake, stocking the Pigeon River, learning aspects of a fly rod and reel, casting the fly line, finding aquatic bugs, reading the water, participating in the electroshocking of the river, reviewing the species of fish found in the river, planned conservation endeavors and many much The Trout in the Classroom Kids often shared what they learned while participating in the program. They often expressed the excitement of being involved with the processes for the caring, growth, and life cycles of growing eggs to the release period of the fish.

Several of the campers expressed an interest in learning more about Trout in the Classroom as well as learning about possible future careers in conservation. All Rivercourse campers learned that it is not all about fishing but nurturing the lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship and enjoying the great outdoors.



**ADD A LITTLE LIFE TO YOUR FLIES**

by Justin Pickett

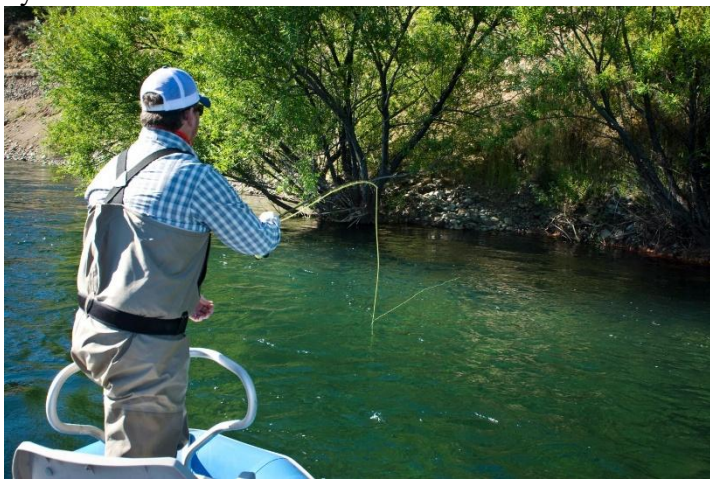


Photo by Louis Cahill

**“TWITCH, TWITCH, STOP!”, EXCLAIMS MY GUIDE, EDUARDO.**

I’ve heard these words all week and now it’s just become second nature for me as soon as my dry fly hits the water. I have to admit though, it’s been extremely effective.

We’re taught as newbies to focus on presenting our fly on a drag free, dead drift and that’s great. It’s good to start with the fundamentals. It’s one of many pieces of the puzzle that sets a

foundation for us to build from as we progress as fly anglers. Sometimes the situation calls for a little persuasion. A little twitch, jiggle, shake, or twerk is just what we need in order to entice a strike.

Movement helps imitate life. Think about it for a second. How often do you see a caddis, or stonefly, or a hopper sitting perfectly still as it floats along the water’s surface? Sure it happens, but the vast majority of the time they are kicking those legs and their wings are fluttering frantically. It may as well be a dinner bell, screaming “come and get it!”

Adding even just a very subtle amount of movement to your fly can help those trout tap into that primal, predatory instinct and devour your fly. I’ve had trout come back for a second look after twitching the fly when they initially refused it. Just a little wiggle of the rod tip, or jigging the fly line with your free hand, is typically all you need to impart some movement.

**So next time you’re out chucking dry flies, try adding a little “twitch, twitch, stop”. You might just find yourself hooked up more often!**

Justin Pickett

**Gink & Gasoline**

[www.ginkandgasoline.com](http://www.ginkandgasoline.com)

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