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



*Dad said the most relaxing thing he ever does is at the fly tying table. Lefty Kreh*

I've reached an age where I still actively work around the home and yard but it often takes several breaks to complete a project. I have found that I can still be productive by sitting at my fly tying table and producing some flies. I tie a great many more flies than I could use in a lifetime, but I tie up most of them for the raffle at our TU meetings and as a donation to the tie-a-thons for our Southern Fly Tyers Guild.

Now with winter arriving and the temporary reduction in stocked trout on our delayed harvest streams, sitting down and tying flies in a warm house is a great way to pass the cold days ahead. We will dedicate this newsletter to some flies, materials and skills for you to work on. And if you really get into it and tie more than you can use, consider donating some of them.

## HIGH COUNTRY TU MEETING

**When:** Thursday November 5th, 6:00 PM
**Where:** South End Brewing
747 N. King Street, Boone

## HICKORY TU MEETING

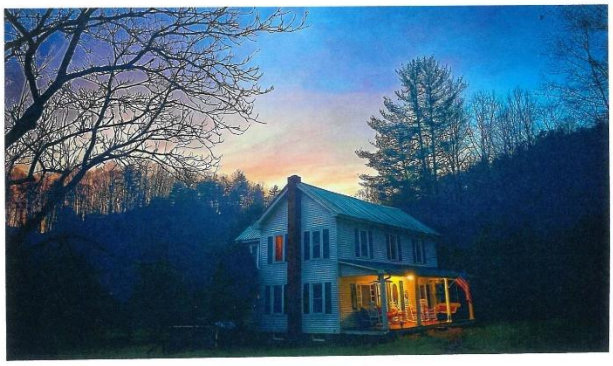
**When:** Tuesday November 17th, 6:30PM
**Where:** American Legion 2nd Floor
70 Lakeside Ave, Granite Falls
**Who:** Andrew Bofto
**What:** Wilson Creek Bank Repair

Our chapter is fortunate to have Andrew as a member since he has made a career in riverbank restoration. He took the lead on the successful planting at Wilson Creek last year and has been scouting the creek to determine where continued planting is needed. He will be presenting his findings.

*Note: There is no dinner at the meeting, but drinks and snacks such as corn dogs are available.*

Oak Hill Park Tree Planting, Morganton, Nov 7th, 9 AM. For details and to sign up go to Oak Hill Park Tree Planting

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



**Helton Creek**
**8652 Highway 16N, Grassy Creek, NC 28631**
**(photographs on Zillow and Realtor.com)**
***Walk-out basement to creek *850'+ creek frontage**
***4 BR 3 full baths *Fully furnished *garage & barn**
***7.9 acres *New furnace & water heater**
***Finished basement *Water wheel**
**Offered by Eric Brooks, MountainScape Realty**
**828-773-8887**



## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

*"Nothing could have prepared me for the grandeur of those waters* ....In memory of Tom Skerritt in A River Runs Through It

## NCWRC FLY FISHING CLASSES

| |
|---|
| 11/06/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 10:00am - 1:00pm (Black Mountain) |
| 11/06/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Equipment, 2:00pm - 4:00pm (Black Mountain) |

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.

| |
|---|
| 11/07/26 Introduction to Fly-tying, 9:00am - 4:00pm (Cherryville) |
| 11/14/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Selecting Trout Flies, 10:00am - 2:00pm (Lenoir) |
| 11/17/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Equipment, 10:00am - 12:00pm (Hendersonville) |
| 11/17/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Hendersonville) |
| 11/21/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 10:00am - 1:00pm (Shelby) |
| 12/11/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Equipment, 10:00am - 1:00pm (Hendersonville) |
| 12/11/26 Learn to Fly-fish: Casting, 1:00pm - 3:00pm (Hendersonville) |
| 12/19/26 Introduction to Fly-tying, 10:00am - 4:00pm (Mills River) |

## REVISED STOCKING SCHEDULE

| County | Stream | November |
|---|---|---|
| Ashe | Helton Creek | 2 |
| | Trout Lake | 12 |
| | Big Horse Creek | 3 |
| | South Fork New River | 12 |
| Burke | Jacob Fork | 4 |
| Caldwell | Wilson Creek | 4 |
| Clay | Fires Creek | 3 |
| Graham | Big Snowbird | 5 |
| Haywood | West Fork Pigeon River | 9 |
| Henderson | North Fork Mills River | 3 |
| Jackson | Tuckasegee River | 3 |
| Macon | Nantahala | 4 |
| Madison | Big Laurel Creek | 5 |
| | Shelton Laurel Creek | 5 |
| | Spring Creek | 5 |
| McDowell | Curtis Creek | 5 |
| | Mill Creek | 5 |
| | Catawba River | 5 |
| Mitchell | Cane Creek | 9 |
| | North Toe River | 13 |
| Polk | Green River | 10 |
| Surry | Ararat River | 12 |
| | Mitchell River | 6 |
| Swain | Tuckasegee River | 4 |
| Transylvania | East Fork French Broad River | 10 |
| | Little River | 10 |
| Watauga | Watauga River | 10 |
| | Lake Coffey | 10 |
| Wilkes | East Prong Roaring River | 2 |
| | Stone Mountain Creek | 2 |
| | Reddies River | 3 |
| | Elk Creek | 3 |
| Yancey | Cane River | 9 |

*I recently discovered a source of 400 pieces of peacock herl for $8. This is one of my favorite feathers for tying flies as I believe the fluorescent green is a major attraction to trout. From there I decided to look for the variety of flies that use it. Another very simple fly is the Red Tag. A small red yarn tail with a peacock body and brown hackle.*



HATCH MAGAZINE

## THE MYSTICISM OF PEACOCK HERL

And the flies it makes great

*by Chris Hunt - Thursday, Apr 4th, 2024*



A good friend of mine from Fredricksburg, Texas, proudly wears the mantle of “former biology nerd.” Now and again, Mick McCorcle pulls out one of his microscopes and takes a detailed look at various fly-tying materials.

“One cold winter day,” he told me, “I pulled out some peacock herl and began to examine it under increasingly higher magnification. At each level, the herl was iridescent. As the magnification got higher, the field of view got smaller, but the iridescence was still evident. No matter how high the magnification, the iridescence never dulled.”

Most seasoned fly anglers, particularly those who appreciate more traditional patterns that aren’t named after nuclear accidents or anabolic steroids, know that peacock herl possesses a bit of inexplicable mysticism. Fish, particularly trout, seem to really love it.

And it’s a staple among the tying community. It usually turns up in its natural “insect green” color, but tyers often use dyed versions of the long, supple feathers in all kinds of patterns. I’ve seen peacock herl show up in all kinds of flies, from revamped stimulators to long, snaky pike patterns. But there are a handful of flies where the herl is considered more of the main event — the ingredient upon which the rest of the pattern is based.

Here are five well-known flies that use peacock herl as a foundational material. And, given the iridescence of the peacock herl that McCorcle describes, it’s safe to say that the flies are common because the herl makes them work.

**THE ROYAL COACHMAN**



-How to make your own killer fly

-A down-and-dirty nymph with a royal name

First tied as a wet fly (and I still tie a wet Coachman today — it seems to open trouty lips that might otherwise stay closed on rivers like the Firehole and the Gibbon in Yellowstone National Park), the Royal Coachman today is generally considered an attractor dry pattern.

The fly, according to *Favorite Flies and Their Histories* by Mary Orvis Marbury (1892), was first tied in 1878 by John Haily in New York City. The fly features upright wings (either white calf tail or white hen neck, hackle points … anything that can be tight upright and easily seen by the angler), and a half-dozen wraps of tight brown or red-brown hackle. The tail is usually golden pheasant fibers, but I've seen it tied with elk hair, deer hair or even hackle fibers.

Flytying a Royal Coachman

But it's the distinctive body that never changes. According to Haily's description of the fly, he used peacock herl because of its appeal to trout, and he secured the delicate herl using a few wraps of red silk to make the fly more durable for an angler heading to the North Woods in search of brook trout.

A lot of ingredients have found their way into the Royal Coachman over the years, but the use of peacock herl is required. Without it, the fly is not a Royal Coachman. Some tyers substitute yellow or orange floss in for the wraps of floss to secure the herl, but the herl is what makes the fly the Royal Coachman.

**ROYAL WULFF**



This is a very similar fly to the Royal Coachman, but it's tied Wulff-style with a hair wing. It bears Lee Wulff's name — the famous fly fisher collaborated with Dan Bailey in the 1930s on a host of hair-winged flies. Bailey encouraged Wulff to give the various patterns his name, so flies like the Gray Wulff, Black Wulff and White Wulff all use the hair-wing tying method.

Flytying the Royal Wulff

But the Royal Wulff is distinctive in that it features the telltale green peacock herl secured to the hook shank with a dividing section of red silk. The fly's tail can be anything from elk hair to hackle fibers, but the peacock herl is the foundational ingredient in the fly tied to float high and proud on western trout rivers.

Like the Royal Coachman, the Royal Wulff is still a staple in dry-fly boxes the world over.

**GRIFFITH'S GNAT**



This uber-simple dry-fly pattern is perhaps the most-famous midge cluster pattern ever tied. First tied by Trout Unlimited patriarch George Griffith in Michigan, the fly really only has two ingredients and is usually tied on hooks ranging in sizes 18-22.

Flytying the Griffiths Gnat

The body of the fly is tightly wrapped peacock herl secured with equally tight wraps of grizzly hackle. It's meant to imitate a group of floating midges that "cluster" together on the surface, and it's a staple for dry-fly anglers who fish midge hatches on trout rivers everywhere.

Again, without the peacock herl, the fly is not a Griffith's Gnat.

**THE PRINCE NYMPH**



First tied in California in the 1930s by tyer Doug Prince, this attractor pattern has endured some evolution from its early iterations. First tied without a bead and meant to imitate caddis or larger mayfly larvae, the Prince is now a staple in nymphers' fly boxes.

Today, it's almost always tied with a heavy brass or tungsten bead, brown and white goose biot fibers and, of course, peacock herl for the body. Most Prince Nymphs are also weighted by lead or tungsten wire wrapped around the hook shank before the other ingredients are tied in.

Flytying the Prince Nymph

In larger sizes — sizes 8-12, for instance — the Prince is an impressionistic stonefly imitation. In smaller sizes, its bright ingredients are attention grabbers, and it's a solid option for nymphers who use it as a searching pattern as the lead fly in a two-fly nymph rig.

I've used larger sizes for everything from Henry's Fork browns and rainbows, and even for steelhead on the Salmon River in central Idaho. Like the other flies listed, the peacock herl is the staple ingredient, although, interestingly, the fly was first tied using ostrich herl.

**THE PEACOCK AND PARTRIDGE**



This venerable wet fly is tied in the soft-hackle tradition using a Hungarian partridge feather preened and wrapped rearward over a body of peacock herl. It's a simple fly that's been used for generations, and it's fairly easy to tie at the vise.

Flytying the Peacock and Partridge

In sizes 14-18, it's a killer soft-hackle on my home rivers here in eastern Idaho. The native cutthroat trout in the South Fork of the Snake love to hit soft-hackles, and, when tied with just a bit of weight in the form of thin, brass wire, the Peacock and Partridge swings out and up in the water column. If it's going to get eaten, it'll happen just as the currents starts to swing the leader, and the fly starts to move up near the surface.

Again, the peacock herl is the main ingredient, and always has been on this wet fly.

**THE SHINE AND THE SHEEN**

To my knowledge, it's never been proven, save for countless anecdotal examples from fly fishers everywhere, that peacock herl is a fish attractant. I do know that I've flies tied with peacock herl work when others simply don't, but that's hardly scientific.

I do believe, though, that McCorcle is onto something with his microscopic work. Peacock herl glows like no other ingredient. The fact that it's found its way into so many patterns — and the fact that so many patterns use it as the lead actor — is enough for me to confidently claim that it just works.

Maybe it is the shine and the sheen. Or maybe it's just that it's buggy as hell. Either way, it's a staple on any tying bench, and its time-honored use in countless fly patterns is likely all the evidence the average fly fisher needs.

*Chris Hunt is an award-winning journalist and the author of several books, including "The Little Black Book of Fly Fishing" and "Catching Yellowstone's Wild Trout." He splits his time between eastern Idaho and northern Florida.*

## A BANNER YEAR FOR FLY TYING

Thank you to each of you who has helped make 2026 a meaningful year for the **Southern Fly Tyers Guild**. Your time, talent, donations, and encouragement have helped put the Guild in the spotlight and demonstrate what we can accomplish together. Our hope is that our work inspires other organizations to join us by volunteering their time and donating flies.

In the spirit of complete transparency, we want to share what we have accomplished.

**2026 Fly Donations**

- January: 2,350 flies
- February: 3,140 flies
- April: 2,000 flies
- July: 1,800 flies
- October: 2,100 flies
- Additional flies donated by others: 7,000

**Total donated for 2026: 18,390 flies**

**Estimated value at $3 per fly: $55,170**

Every one of those flies represents someone's generosity and a chance to support the people served by our recipient organizations.

To our Guild members, donating tyers, volunteers, leadership, and friends at The Patterson School Foundation: thank you. Whether you tied flies, donated materials, helped with meals, organized an event, or worked behind the scenes, you helped make these results possible.

See next month's newsletter for the tying events for 2027.

## HELP PROVIDE TYING MATERIALS

The Southern Fly Tyers Guild has been holding six tying sessions per year to provide flies to charitable organizations. That requires a great deal of material and if you are a hunter, you can help us out. If you shoot any birds like turkey, quail, pheasant, ducks, or geese save the feathers. Not sure if any of you hunt peacock, but it's one of the greatest. I'm told we have plenty of deer hair, but if you have elk, the fur is a great material for tying flies as elk hair has a hollow core that makes it float and rabbit fur is great, especially the face mask for tying the hares ear fly and the body for Zonkers. If you shoot any other animals or birds you can check on line if the materials are used for fly tying

We only ask that you properly preserve the material to prevent rot and eliminate insects. Here is a website that can give you instructions on how to prepare and preserve the materials. How to Clean and Preserve Natural Feathers and Furs for Fly Tying - Dark Skies Fly Fishing.

In addition to feathers and fur we have to provide many more items like flies, hooks, wax, copper wire, and more if you would like to make a donation to the guild you can do it at this site. Southern Fly Tyers Guild Donation

## BUYING HACKLE



I've been fly tying for over 60 years and very seriously for the last 30. Over that time I've accumulated several capes and much of them have become useless. When you buy a full cape you get a lot of individual feathers. Buying a full cape is much less expensive per feather, but you're going to find out that the majority of those feathers are either too large or too small for the flies you are tying. If you tie very few flies that may be OK, but if you tie more over time you're going to find that it is a lot more practical (and less expensive) in the long run to purchase hackles for the size of hooks you are using.



I was recently tying up several Griffith's Gnats that use grizzly hackle. I was at a point that my remaining feathers were either too short to cover the hook or too long that they extended well past the bottom of the hook. I trimmed off the tips of the feathers to shorten them, but then the hackle sticking up at the top seemed very out of balance. I trimmed that top hackle, but then there were stubs rather than tapering to a point and it just looked wrong. They might work on the water, but my ego was a bit hurt for people to see what I had tied.



Most flies we tie for trout are size #12 and smaller with probably the bulk of them in a size #14. There is a better solution to this problem. Purchase your hackle feathers in a size that matches your hooks. It's a bit more expensive that way, but if you tie a lot of flies it will be less expensive in the long run. You can buy a Whiting pack of 100 of these flies for as little as $25. If you tie only a few flies, I have seen these from Metz with only a few strands for as little as $13.

The 100 pack claims you can tie 100 flies with it. If you are tying something like a #12 Griffiths that has hackle the full length of the body I would wager you could get 3 to 4 files from each strand. If you are only tying a hackle around the neck of the fly, maybe double that.

Most of us would never use a full 100 pack of these hackles, so here is a suggestion that could save you and your friends a lot of money. Buy them by the pack and then split up the strands between a group of you. If there are four of you that will reduce the cost to just over $8 each for a pack of 25 that can keep you tying for a long time.

*"Nothing is quite like the joy of fly tying and capturing a beautiful new pattern that you can use to catch fish. Nothing can compare to the thrill of seeing your new fly on the water, drawing a fish in, and seeing it leap from the water, desperate to land on your hook."*

## ADVICE FROM THE VISE

The weather has finally turned, and I've been watching the water temperatures following suit this week, so it is a perfect time to get out on the water in the afternoon and evenings.



This month, I tied up a wet fly variant of the honored Coachman fly. This pattern came from England around 1830. About 50 years later, an American wrapped a red floss band on the peacock and called it royal. The intent was to create a more durable fly, but that red and peacock green really became iconic.

Wet patterns are my go-to patterns the fall and winter. A pair on a slow side swing or just cast to the head of a pool and slowly stripped back can produce excellent takes from skittish fish in chilly winter water.

A couple substitutes on the materials list for this one. I'm using standard ringneck pheasant for the tail rather than golden pheasant tippets; and wraps of hen saddle for the wing rather than duck quill. This gives it a bit of motion in the water. The body is wrapped peacock herl, and the band is sexy floss rather than traditional acetate. It keeps the red color better when wet.





Thread color is your choice; it mostly matters for the head. I'm using red here, but brown, black, or olive, all work fine. The hook is a Firehole 633. I am a fan of the wide gap, and a heavier wire to get it down without adding weight.

Dress the hook from eye to bend and use 6 or 8 pheasant tail fibers about 2/3 of the shank for proportion. From the eye, tie in 2 peacock herls from the stem side. Remember to use the whole shank to keep the foundation to keep the body level.

Tie in the floss about midway, with the tag forward. Wrap the herl up to the floss, and tie that in. Then wrap the floss backwards and then forwards, forming the middle third "royal" spot. Secure that he floss and trim out the tag end.

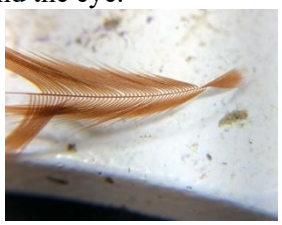




Wrap the remaining herl up to the eye, secure it in and trim the tag end of the herl.



The first hackle will form the throat, prep the feather, like all soft hackles by grabbing the tip with hackle pliers and stroking the fibers down. Trim the tip into a triangle shape and tie it in behind the eye.





Wrap the hackle and secure it, trim the tag. Trim out the top of those fibers and you have the throat completed. Leave room behind the eye for the head.





Prep the next hackle the same way and tie it in. Wrap it, stroking the fibers back, and secure it in. Finish wrapping thread by building a head behind the eye, and whip finish. Trim out the fibers that are below the shank to form a wing.





I keep several of these in my wet box ranging from #10 to #14 and fish them in tandem with another pattern or with varying sizes. is a nice attractor to move those sluggish trout out of hiding and into the feeding zone.



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.

Dave Everhart

### FLIP PALLET WILL BE MISSED

I'm sure that many of you have heard that Flip Pallet passed away on August 26th this year. You can read an article honoring his life at A Call to Conservation: Honoring Flip Pallot. In that article they provided a video that should inspire all of us to work hard to inspire the next generation to the conservation of our environment. Please view the short video at the end of the article.

Here at TU we are actively engaged with that activity through Trout In The Classroom, Rivercourse, and supporting the Boy Scout Merit Badge in the above link. Please stay actively engaged with your chapter to assure that these programs continue to inspire our youth for the future.

# Flylab

### REVOLUTIONARY PSYCHOTHERAPY CURES URGE TO BUY TROUT PATTERN MERCHANDISE

FLYLAB AND HANDS JACKSON



*You don't need a brown trout toilet brush. Just let it go.*

It's not that everything in Kyle Sheldrake's Provo, Utah, home features a trout pattern that's so jarring. I'd seen photos of the interior before I arrived. I knew what I was in for. What has me flummoxed is that all these trout pattern wares exist in the first place: coasters, mugs, throw pillows, light switch covers and area rugs. I understand–they're a dime a dozen. But I couldn't get my head around why a trout pattern saucepan, mini blinds, egg timer and hamper even exist, let alone where you'd procure them.

"Amazon and Temu, bro," 34-year-old Sheldrake tells me. "You can get anything you want in a trout pattern including band aids. I just ordered a fresh box."

Sheldrake's rainbow trout pattern sweatsuit blends almost seamlessly with the cutthroat pattern blankets covering the couch, making him look like a head floating in thin air. "Of course, the fridge, Roomba, bannisters and a ton of other things I had custom painted," he adds. "As you can see, my guy's style matches Derek DeYoung's pretty closely."

If the HOA would allow it, Sheldrake would have the exterior painted like a trout, too. He's been fighting with them for months and losing because they already hate his Dolly Varden mailbox and the Loch Laven brown Bronco II in the driveway. But Sheldrake claims he's ready to end his obsession with trout patterns. In a few weeks, he'll be starting an intense psychotherapy program designed specifically for people with his addiction. My goal was to understand the process and see how Sheldrake–who's believed to have one of the most severe cases of trout pattern psychosis ever recorded–fared on the other side of treatment.

**Catch & Release**

The room in Hawthorne Hall at Dartmouth University has been staged to feel cozy and relaxing. I'm sitting in the darkest corner, so my presence doesn't distract the fifteen participants who file in and fill plush chairs arranged in a circle. Dr. Claus Von Strublehamer, the head of the psychology department, is already seated. He's a thin man wearing a black turtleneck, tight black slacks and sporting a waxed mustache that ends in sharp, curled points.

"Okay, let's all get settled, take a deep breath and begin," he says in a calm, warm voice. He looks at the man to his right, a newcomer to the group, and gestures for him to start.

"Wow, okay," the young man begins. His voice is trembling. "Well, my name is Danny and I…"

Danny is suddenly overwhelmed by emotion. He drops his head into his hands and begins to sob.

"It's all right, Danny," Von Strublehamer assures. "You can do it."

Danny snaps out of it.

"Yeah. I can," he says with renewed confidence. "My name's Danny and I do not need an iPhone case that looks like a West Slope cuttie."

"Wonderful," Von Strublehamer replies with a smile. "You are already starting to heal."

The young woman next to Danny pats his knee and mouths "good job" before saying, "My name is Madison, and I do not need a Kamloops-strain rainbow pattern leatherbound dream journal."

"Excellent," the doctor says. "Good for you!"

She grins with pride.

Next up is Steve.

"Hi, I'm Steve," he begins, then hesitates for a moment before adding, "And I do not need Vans slip-ons painted to look like tiger trout."

"Well done, Steve," Von Strublehamer says with a sterner tone. "I think you are getting back on track."

And around it went, each patient denouncing everything from shoehorns to ironing board covers to beach umbrellas with varying degrees of poise and confidence.

**Flight Patterns**

Following the session, I meet the doctor for lunch at a Subway just off campus. After he orders his 6-inch turkey on wheat with nothing but alfalfa sprouts and a drizzle of olive oil, he tells me Steve has been his toughest case so far. He'd signed up for the program to save his marriage. His wife had kicked him out after he gave her an Apache trout pattern chip-and-dip bowl for her 35th birthday. It was the final straw.

"Steve's progress was splendid," says the doctor. "But then he relapsed. We allowed him to leave for the weekend and he

was seen wearing a performance sun shirt with brown trout sleeves at a Gymboree party he attended with his 3-year-old daughter. We basically had to start over."

Von Strublehamer kicked off the program in 2025 thanks to funding from a wealthy university donor whose 24-year-old son tragically could not be saved from trout pattern psychosis. After disappearing for a week, the young man returned home tattooed head-to-toe with a chrome phase steelhead pattern. His parents didn't want another family to ever have to experience that level of disappointment.

Most interesting to me is that despite there being no shortage of merchandise featuring striped bass, smallmouth, musky and redfish patterns, just to name a few, it's only people addicted to trout patterns who attend Von Strublehamer's program.

"It's actually rather fascinating," he explains. "What we've learned is that while plenty of other fish pattern fly boxes, belts and shirts are available, most of the people who buy them are satisfied with one item featuring that pattern. A diehard striper fly angler, as an example, might own one set of anodized striper pattern pliers, but he doesn't need everything in his life to look like a striped bass. The fish isn't part of his core identity like we see with trout fly anglers."

Later that afternoon, I'm sitting in the quad enjoying a boba tea and a round of Fruit Ninja on my phone when out of nowhere, Steve plops down next to me.

"Hey, man," he whispers. He's clearly very nervous. "Can you help me get out of here?"

I'm shocked and don't know how to respond.

"It's not what you think," he continues. "They make us sit in a dark room for nine hours a day while trout patterns whiz by crazy-fast on a movie screen. They put these horrible clips on our eyelids so we can't close them and the whole time they're blasting Billy Strings music backwards through a Turtlebox. I just wanna go home and see my Sage X, man."

**Identity Crisis**

The encounter with Steve left me rattled. I wasn't sure whether to believe him or not, though it did make me concerned for Kyle Sheldrake, who entered the program soon after my visit to Dartmouth. I kept in touch with Von Strublehamer via email, and every time we corresponded, he assured me Sheldrake was doing very well. Finally, after nearly four months, the doctor informed me that Sheldrake was cured and being released. I gave him another month to settle back into normal life before returning to Provo for a follow-up visit.

The first thing I noticed at Sheldrake's house was that a white Toyota Camry had replaced the brown trout pattern Bronco II in the driveway. The Dolly Varden mailbox had also been swapped for a plain white model. When I enter the home there's not a trout pattern in sight, but now everything is so light, clean, sparse and organized it almost feels like a sterile environment. Sheldrake, wearing a light blue button-down shirt, khaki shorts and white terrycloth slippers, sits across from me at his new white kitchen table.

"Well, Kyle. It looks like the program really worked for you," I say. "I'm really proud of you, my friend."

"Yes. Thank you, Hands. I'm much better now," he replies without a stitch of emotion or expression. His eyes are wide and haven't met mine once since I arrived. He just fixes his gaze on the freshly painted white walls.

"So, what was the hardest thing for you to part with?" I press. But before he can answer, I hear a faint droning sound. I look over Sheldrake's shoulder and see his custom-painted brook trout pattern Roomba roll into the back hallway.

Sheldrake lunges from his chair, grabs me by the collar, and slams me into the wall.

"You didn't see that!" he screams. "Please don't tell them! Please don't tell them you saw that!"

The man is wildly enraged. Terrified, I wriggle from his grasp and make a break for the door. I'm desperate to reach the safety of my rented Mini Cooper, but Sheldrake is only a few steps behind.

"Hands!" he bellows as he stumbles across the front yard. "I just need a little taste! Anything! A brown trout Buff, a bull trout sticker. Anything, Hands! Please!"

I've been a professional journalist for 45 years. I've seen many things, but no image will haunt me more than Sheldrake on his knees in the street screaming "I don't know who I am anymore!" in the tiny rearview of that Mini Cooper.




# Georgia Fly Fishing Show

*Editor's note: If you look on-line you can find several hunting clubs in North Carolina that shoot pheasant and quail. I've talked to one club in Statesville that has agreed to donate them to the Guild with the tail feathers from a major hunt in December. If you check around you may be able to get pheasant, quail, and perhaps turkey feathers from a club near you. Here's what to do after you get them.*

## HOW TO CLEAN FEATHERS FOR FLY TYING

**Properly cleaning feathers for fly tying removes grease, debris, and odor while preserving their natural color and flexibility, ensuring they last for years in your tying projects** Dark Skies Fly Fishing+1.

**Step-by-Step Cleaning Process**

**1. Separate and Prep the Feathers**

- If you have a whole tail (e.g., pheasant, grouse), pull each feather loose from the bundle or clip at the base next to the skin
- Remove any small clumps of meat or fat from the base; this prevents greasiness and odor
- Keep breast and rump feathers intact on the cape for easier cleaning

**2. Initial Rinse**

- Place feathers in a bucket of cool, clean water.
- Gently agitate to loosen dirt and debris.

- Avoid soaking for too long to prevent water damage or mold.

**3. Wash with Mild Detergent**

- Use a small amount of mild, pH-neutral dish soap or a dedicated feather wash.
- Swirl gently in the water, then rinse thoroughly until no soap remains
- Do not scrub harshly—feathers are delicate.

**4. Optional Deep Clean**

- For stubborn odors or grease, you can add a small amount of white vinegar to the rinse water (1:10 ratio) to neutralize smells
- Rinse again with clean water.

**5. Drying**

- Shake off excess water and lay feathers flat on a clean towel in a single layer.
- Let them air-dry in a well-ventilated, shaded area—avoid direct sunlight to prevent fading
- Ensure they are completely dry before storage; moisture can cause mold or mildew.

**6. Preservation (Optional but Recommended)**

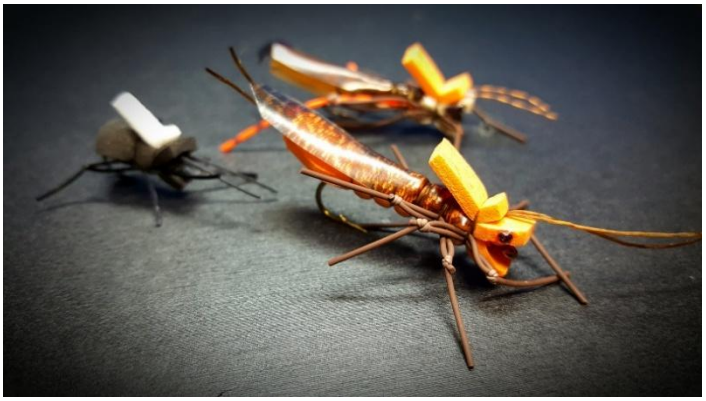
- Once dry, you can lightly dust with talc or cornstarch to absorb residual oils, then store in airtight containers
- For long-term storage, some tyers use a light coat of beeswax or a commercial feather preservative

**Tips for Best Results**

- **Work in small batches** to avoid over-soaking.
- **Avoid harsh chemicals** like bleach or strong detergents—they damage feather structure
- **Store in a cool, dry place** away from pests; airtight containers with desiccant help
- **Check for insect activity** before and after cleaning; clean feathers promptly to prevent infestation

By following these steps, you'll have clean, odor-free feathers ready for tying, and they'll maintain their natural look and feel for years to come

Three Tactics for Tougher Terrestrials
BY LOUIS CAHILL

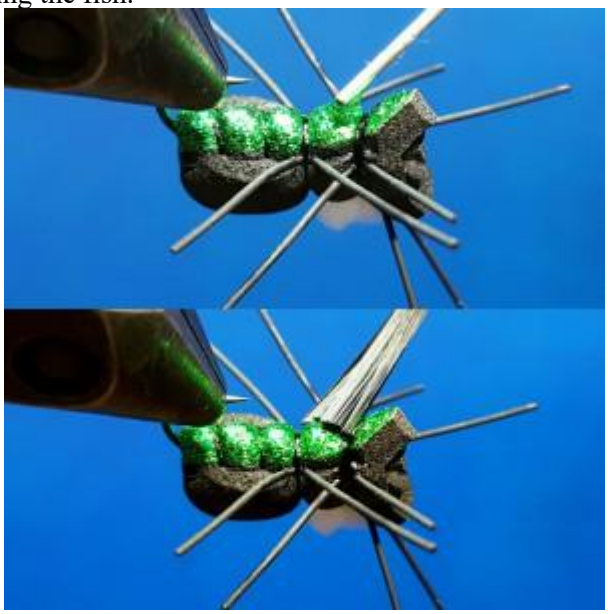


Reece's Beefcake Stone, Beetle and Hopper

**Large foam terrestrial fly patterns have exploded in popularity over the past several years.** Their intriguing aesthetics, all day buoyancy and ability to elicit violent takes have earned them a place in fly boxes worldwide. However, the durability of these high floating flies can sometimes become an issue. The three following tips can help you beef up the longevity of your favorite foam offerings.

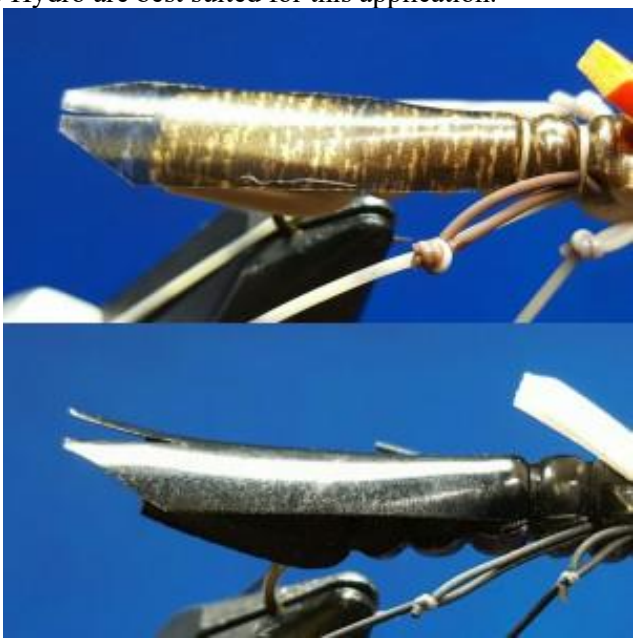


**The use of super glue in the creation of foam terrestrials exponentially increases their lifespan.** When tying these patterns, I follow two rules of use. I apply super glue wherever foam is attached to the hook shank and when two foam surfaces contact each other. The glue applied to the shank inhibits the pattern from twisting loose as it is used. Glue used to bond two pieces of foam together reduces the stretching of the foam. This stretching leads to tears and cuts that progressively weaken the material. In addition to this, a small drop can be placed on each of the tie in points for any rubber legs and antennae. This prevents them from being dislodged when setting the hook and fighting the fish.



**UV clear coats have countless uses in the process of fly tying.** Their cured surface provides an abrasion-resistant barrier for the underlying material. Several of the terrestrials that I tie incorporate Wapsi's Loco Foam on the underside of the

pattern. Brushing on a thin layer of UV cure prevents damage to the metallic covering, as well as the underlying foam. This same technique can also be used to add a slight sheen and protect the bottom of any standard foam pattern. Due to their ease of being brushed out, products like Loon Flow and Clear Cure Goo Hydro are best suited for this application.



**Prior to the use of foam for fly tying, numerous materials were used to imitate the wings of large terrestrials.** As foam began to replace traditionally tied bodies, many of these wing supplies came along for the ride. While traditional elk hair, deer hair and turkey feathers create an effective silhouette of the wing, they lack durability. The substitution of Thin Skin for these customary ingredients solves this problem by creating a bulletproof wing. The material itself will not wear out and also prevents the underlying top of the foam body from being torn by trout teeth. Furthermore, the pattern varieties and sheen of Thin Skin provide an aesthetically accurate imitation of terrestrial wings.

Toughening up your foam terrestrials saves headaches and time on the water. Take the few seconds required to implement these tying tactics. This small scale investment will pay huge durability dividends.

**Check out custom made fly tying kits for my terrestrial patterns and others.**

**If you're a buyer and not a tier, click here to buy any of my patterns offered through Orvis.**

**Click here for my how to tying videos, fishing tips and more.**

*Bob Reece*

***Gink & Gasoline***

*www.ginkandgasoline.com*

*Editor's Note: From my many years of fly fishing I have found flies that work better than others. Those are flies with bright red (thread) and bright green (peacock herl) and flies with some motion, soft hackle (representing moving insect gills), and legs. The pheasant tail is by far my favorite nymph and the hares ear tied as described below would make an amazing pair.*

Soft-Hackle Hares Ear

BY KENT KLEWEIN



Don't just load up on soft-hackle pheasant-tails, do the same with soft-hackle hares ears. Photo By: Louis Cahill

**Guiding has allowed me the opportunity to examine lots of my clients fly boxes over the years.**

Quite often I open a fly box and just find a bunch of bream poppers and traditional old school attractor wet flies. I know it sounds crazy but it's the reality in my region of work. I pause for a few seconds scanning their box intently, and try to give the impression they didn't waist their money trying to stock their fly box at the local Walmart. I then quickly reply, "No worries, I've got plenty of flies that will work today for you".

Seriously though, even when I actually get an angler with a decent selection of usable fly patterns in his/her fly box, I consistently notice one fly pattern that's absent time and time again. The soft-hackle hares ear is the missing fly I'm referring to here, and although it's just as deadly at catching fish as its cousin the soft-hackle pheasant-tail, for some reason rookie and intermediate level fly fishermen aren't being told to stock them. Try fishing a tandem nymph rig with a soft-hackle pheasant-tail trailed behind by a soft-hackle hares ear next time you're on the water. Day in and day out one of these patterns will be on the trout menu because of their impressionistic buggy features. Once you find out which pattern the fish prefer you can then fine tune your nymph rig further.

Keep it Reel,

*Kent Klewein*

***Gink & Gasoline***

*www.ginkandgasoline.com*



## USING XL TROUT BEADS ATTRACTORS IN YOUR TANDOM RIG

By Kent Klewein



Veteran Alaskan guide, Andrew Grillos from Alaska West – Photo By: Louis Cahill

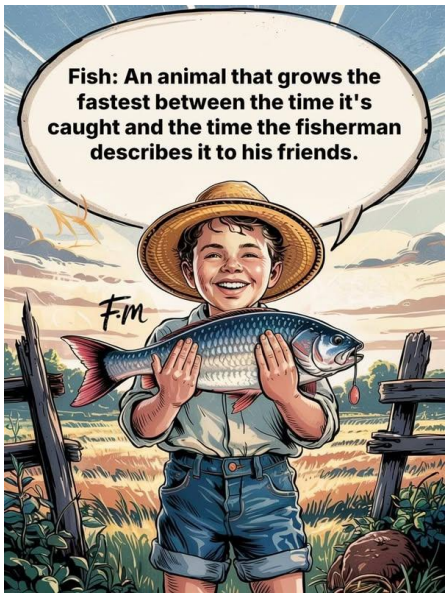
**Back in 2006, I spent a season guiding in Alaska at Mission Creek Lodge.**

It was a great experience and a hell of a lot of hard work, but I held my own and ended up representing well for Southeastern fishing guides. That doesn't make me an expert on Alaska fishing by any means, particularly when compared to bad ass veteran alaskan guides like Andrew Grillos, TJ Zandoli, and Nathan Cornelius. That season in Alaska I was blessed with the opportunity to pick the brains and learn from some of the best bush guides in the area. One lesson I learned right off the bat was using an extra large attractor trout bead as my lead fly in my tandem bead rigs. Point being, matching the hatch and size of the eggs isn't the only factor that plays into getting big trout to eat. The attraction factor you get by using a 10-12mm trout bead often sparks initial interest from big bows, persuading them to move in for a closer look. In most cases they'll end up eating the smaller more appropriately sized bead, but it became very obvious to me how important a role, big attractor beads played in creating hookups.

Since then, I've experimented using big attractor beads on other trout waters in the United States. I often fish a 10mm trout bead in the top position with various nymphs dropped off the back. One of my favorite times to use this rig is when water I'm fishing is high and stained. But this rig also works very well for me in the spring and fall when fish are super aggressive and feeding heavy. If you're interested in purchasing trout beads to fish with visit this site: www.troutbeads.com

Keep it Reel,

*Kent Klewein*
***Gink & Gasoline***
*www.ginkandgasoline.com*




**Chapter Presidents**

Hickory TU President
Gary Schnick garthies007@earthlink.net
Table Rock TU President Open
High Country TU President
Joe Lynch joe@thespeckledtrout.com
Editor
Chick Woodward hkynctu@gmail.com