

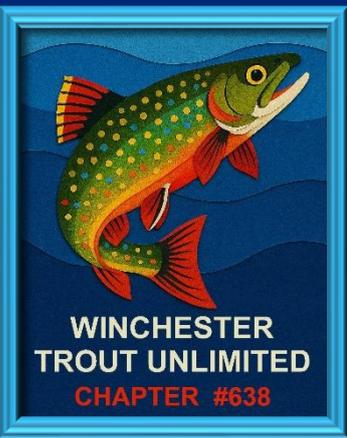
# Lateral Lines

Monthly Magazine of Winchester Trout Unlimited  
Chapter #638

“...to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again ....” Eccl 1:7 (RSV)

March 2026

Volume 31, Numbers 3



Celebrating  
31 Years of  
Lateral Lines

### Winchester TU Meeting

Thursday, 5 March 2026, 7:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

### Winchester TU Priority Waters Meeting

Thursday, 5 March 2026, 6:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

### Project Healing Waters Monthly meeting

Wednesday, 11 March 2026, 6:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

### BarFly

The next Winchester TU BarFly  
Wednesday, 18 March 2026  
7:00 PM at Escutcheon Brewing Co.  
142 W. Commercial Street, Winchester

For complete calendars, please see  
Page 7 for Winchester Project Healing Waters  
Page 3 & 18 for Winchester Priority Waters  
Page 18 for Winchester Trout Unlimited



Bill Prokopchak, Newsletter Editor  
wilpro@comcast.net

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Winchester TU Featured Speaker  
Thursday, 5 March 2026, at 7:00 PM  
Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing  
“Winchester Chapter  
Annual Update - Helping  
Heal Those Who Serve!”  
by Wayne White

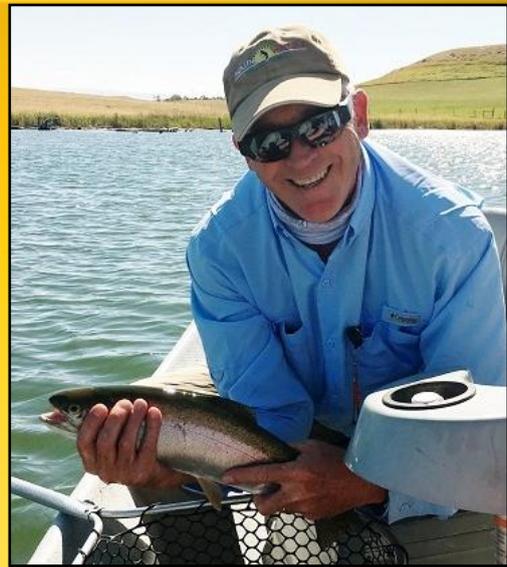


photo courtesy of Wayne White

Winchester TU Featured Speaker  
Thursday, 2 April 2026, at 7:00 PM  
“Luke on Lake Fishing”  
by Luke Robins

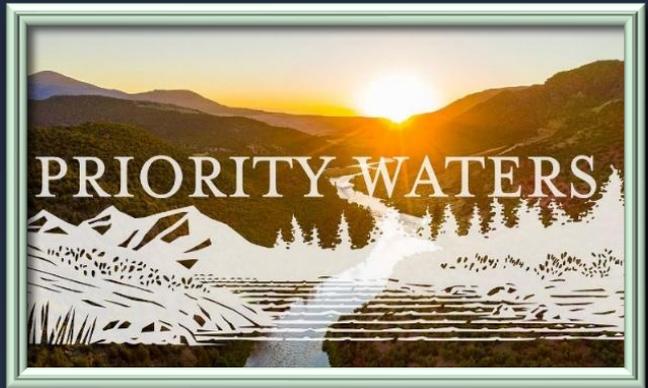


photo by Bill Prokopchak



# Winchester Priority Waters: Eager for Spring

Prepared by the Winchester Priority Waters Team  
Photos by Michael Lawler Smith



A pool on Mill Run in winter. The Priority Waters team is very interested in determining spawning success in this stream which has suffered greatly during two drought summers.

When the Priority Waters team convened Thursday evening, 5 February 2026, prior to the regular Winchester Chapter meeting, the winter was much on everyone's mind. The winter of 2025/26 has been a rugged one, with the greater Winchester area in a two-week long "deep-freeze" and Lake Frederick under thickening bank-to-bank ice. But the participants (Ben Coffman, Tedd Gimber, Dave Juth, Mike Hart, Mike Makufka, Drew Patterson, John Prescott, Luke Robbins) were eager to implement the array of new ideas they had been planning and discussing since the fall.

After team leader Mike Makufka called the group to order, he provided a synopsis of the January meeting minutes and noted that the minutes had been forwarded to each member.

Mike announced that Seth Coffman, TU's field representative for Virginia and an expert on brook trout restoration, will conduct stream electroshocking 6 May 2026 on Little Passage and Mill Run. Mike indicated that Seth had also acquired 2025 electroshocking data from Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) which will prove useful in guiding the team's focus and in creating a resource map of the two creeks. Seth, along with Peter Dalke, will also engage in landowner outreach in both drainages to apprise local residents of the restoration efforts as well as to seek their concurrence on possible deployment of data loggers. Seth additionally advised he will explore removal options for the old USGS stream gauge on Mill Run.

The team spent considerable time addressing future monitoring of the streams. Inclement weather had already caused cancellation of the first slated field outing on 2 February. The main discussion focused on what could be done afield prior to the next water quality assessments scheduled for 1 April 2026. Mike M. noted that "Virginia Save Our Streams" conducts macroinvertebrate training and indicated he would contact them to inquire if they could provide us their on-stream training during March (they can and will, 6 March 2026, at the Forest Service's Elizabeth Furnace site along Passage Creek).

Continuing on the theme of refinement of tasks in 2026, Luke Robbins suggested the group should explore training in deploying Large Woody Debris (LWD), with possible site locations to include Passage Creek, Red Bud Run, and the Shenandoah River. LWD has become increasingly recognized over the past two decades especially as a vital force in enhancing a stream's capacity for self-regulation and self-repair. Public agencies in the US and Canada, as well as private groups like TU (and the Wild Trout Trust in the UK), have been able to demonstrate extraordinary restoration results with this very cost-effective technique.

**“Priority Waters” continues on the next page.**

# Winchester Priority Waters – continues



**Left:** Winter on Mill Run usually means ample flows. The challenge in recent years has been base flow in summer. What can be done to sustain a higher water table in the riparian zone through the warmer months?

**Below:** The Priority Waters team will add the outfall of the Strasburg Reservoir to its 2026 sampling sites. This reach of Little Passage may benefit from some low tech habitat enhancement such as placement of large woody debris.

John Prescott noted the desirability for all team members to become skilled with the use, placement, detection and reading of stream data loggers. In that same vein, Ben Coffman indicated he would like to take the formal Stream Barrier Assessment training. Tedd Gimber and Luke Robbins, both trained in the procedure, indicated they could conduct training simultaneous to the team's ongoing stream assessments or possibly conduct a stand-alone session.



Further discussion yielded the agreement that Tedd and Luke would devote the 5 March meeting to stream barrier assessment and data logger training. It was further agreed that all should review the LWD presentational materials that Mike M. had posted to the group's Google drive, and this too could be reviewed at the March gathering.

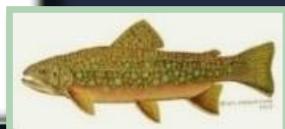
Tedd Gimber reported he has been in communication with Peter Dalke, a board member of the group Friends of the North Fork (of the Shenandoah River), and that Peter has been staying up to date on the group's effort via "Lateral Lines." Tedd noted too that Peter knows Seth Coffman and has worked with him on past projects. Peter indicated his eagerness to work with us and that his field activities during April and May will bring him into proximity with our activities. He had suggested that he could use his "OnX" app to determine if he knows any of the landowners along Little Passage Creek outside the National Forest boundaries.

The meeting adjourned with Mike Makufka reiterating the agreed-to action items for March (barrier assessment and data logger training; review of LWD materials) and noting that the team will add a new monitoring site directly below the Strasburg Reservoir Dam.

All Winchester chapter members are reminded that the Priority Waters team is eager to engage new members in its field activities. Please feel free to reach out to the team leader or any team member for additional information.

## Dates Scheduled for Winchester Priority Waters 2026 Field Work

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1 Apr 2026	Macroinvertebrate Survey and Water Quality Monitoring
6 May 2026	Tentative for electroshocking with Seth
3 Jun 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
5 Aug 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
7 Oct 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
2 Dec 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment





EST. PROJECT 2005  
HEALING WATERS

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS

### Chapter Begins Fourth Year with Growing Membership –

### Winchester PHW February Meeting Features Multiple Activities

by Wayne White



The Winchester PHW Chapter featured several fly-tying and educational classes, resulting in another big turnout of participants and volunteers at the February monthly meeting. To provide ample space for the 30 attendees and the separate instruction, classes were held across multiple rooms at the Shenandoah Lodge.

In the intermediate fly-tying class, Dave Harrelson and Jim White led the instruction for the group on tying a green caddis pupa. The quiet instruction in Rachel's Kitchen allowed for more detailed technique training, resulting in some very impressive imitations of the smaller fly.

**Above:** Dave Harrelson, top left, guides the advanced fly tyers in preparing materials for the green caddis pupa.

**Right:** Dan Soper, holding white board, instructed the beginner fly tiers on his special Mop Fly in the Skyline Room. The Shenandoah Club graciously provided the additional space to accommodate the large turnout at the meeting.

photos this page by Mike Smith



Meanwhile, the Mop Fly was the focus of the beginner class in the Skyline Room, where Dan Soper, again using his whiteboard and "sign language," led the larger group through the basic approach to tying the sub-surface fly. With the help of several experienced Volunteer fly-tiers, the group managed to master a couple of the flies during the class.

With the recent increase in new participants, Jackson Dierberg led an introductory fly-fishing class in the Lodge's downstairs library, starting with the anatomy of the fly rod. This beginner class focused on the components of the fly rod, its unique characteristics, and its differences from conventional spinning and bait-casting rods. The class is the initial presentation of the Chapter's program of instruction, which includes modules covering basic fly-fishing information and skills required for beginner fly anglers.

Away from the other classes in the Arts and Crafts room, Phil Stevens assisted Warren Dudenbostel in finishing his fly rod build by epoxying the guides. Warren was able to leave the rod on the turner overnight for the adhesive to properly dry.



**Left:** Jackson Dierberg (r) begins removing the 9ft/5wt fly rod from the carrying tube as he prepares to explain the anatomy of the fly rod and how it's different from conventional spin and bait casting rods to new participant Ann Wolf (l). Seated are Mike Hyams (c) and Volunteer Eric Custer.

**"Winchester Healing Waters" continues on the next page.**



EST. PROJECT 2005  
HEALING WATERS

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS

### February meeting -- continued



To help the other builders complete their rods a week earlier, Luke Robins hosted the final session in the basement at his house, where the rods received their final epoxy treatment and were left to dry there overnight. Finishing rods during this session were Charles "Doc" Smith, Heather Wright, Cole Bradshaw, Erwin Casto, and Eric Bradley. Upon completing the rods, each builder received a rod tube and a new fly reel with backing and line.

In the final event of the evening, Burr Tupper presented his "Bakers Dozen" of flies for trout, pan fish, and small-mouth bass. His basic list of go-to flies includes the Adams, Elk Hair Caddis, Klinkhammer, Griffith Gnat, Hare's Ear, Pheasant Tail Nymph (PNT), Zebra Midge, Copper John, Chubby Chernobyl, Golden Retriever, Woolly Bugger, and Black and Golden Stones. Some of these flies have already been featured in Chapter tying sessions, and others will be the focus of future classes.

**We want to thank Andrea Moxie, Lifestyle Director at Shenandoah Club, for arranging additional rooms and space within the Lodge to accommodate the various classes, making for a very informative and successful evening.**



**Top Left:** Warren Dudenbostel lays out his rod before finishing epoxying the guides. He arranged with the Shenandoah Club to leave the rod on the turner to dry overnight.

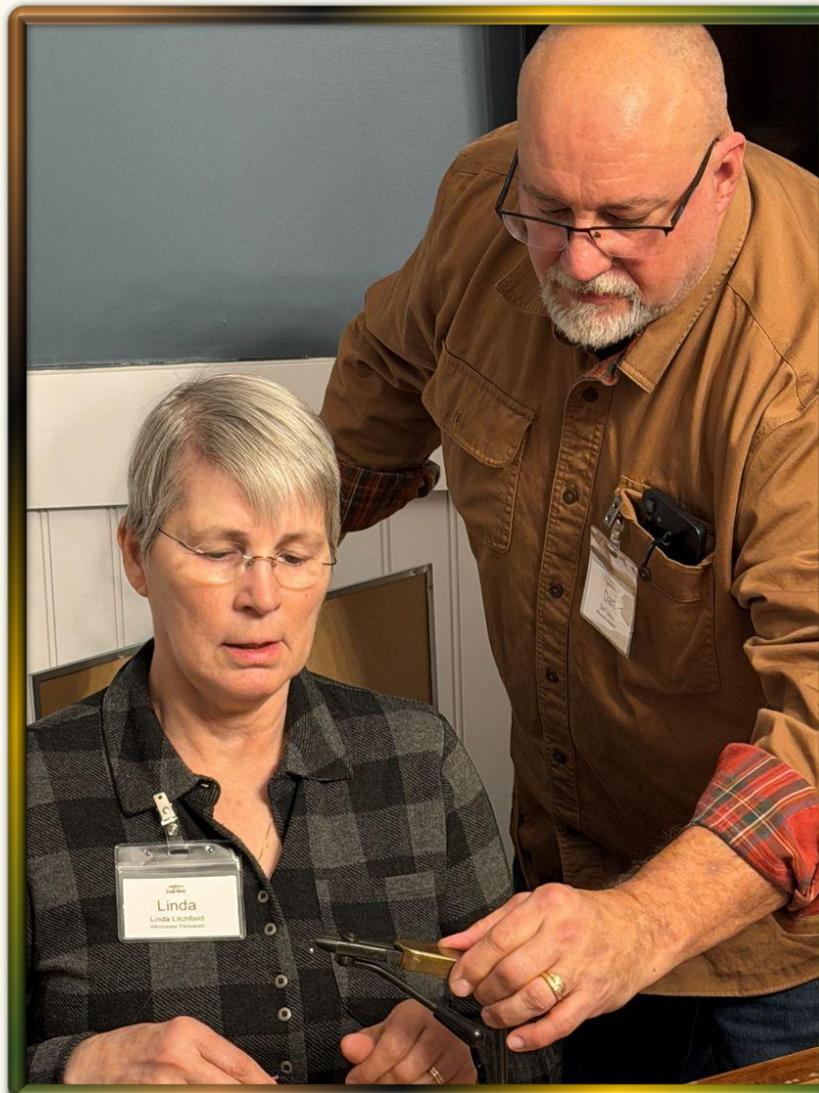
photo by Mike Smith

**Middle Left:** The cold weather forced the rod builders to finish their projects in the basement at Luke Robin's house in Winchester. From left to right are Cole Bradshaw, Erwin Casto, Eric Bradley, and Mike Hyams. The others who finished rods, but were not available for this photo, are Heather Wright, Warren Dudenbostel, and Doc Smith.

photo by Luke Robins

**Lower Left:** Linda Litchfield gets a helping hand from Dan Soper as she begins setting up the hook and thread to start her first mop fly.

photo by Mike Smith



**"Winchester Healing Waters" continues on the next page.**



EST. PROJECT 2005  
HEALING WATERS

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS

### Winchester and Fredericksburg Chapters Represent PHW at Rapidan Fishing Show



Winchester and Fredericksburg PHW Chapters participants and volunteers joined forces to represent Healing Waters at the Rapidan Fishing Show at the Highland School, Warrenton, Virginia, on Saturday, 14 February. It was the 36th anniversary of the Rapidan Show, an annual fundraiser for the local Rapidan TU Chapter.

The show featured a wide variety of fishing vendors, guide services, and fishing organizations from across Virginia, as well as Pennsylvania, Maryland, and North Carolina. Vendor and participating organizations donated equipment and other items for raffles throughout the day. Virginia DWR and other professional groups held a full schedule of information presentations during the event.

Winchester and Fredericksburg PHW Chapters featured fly-tying and rod-building demonstrations and provided patrons with information about the Healing Waters mission, Chapter activities, and events. The Chapters offered those younger patrons and future fly anglers the opportunity to tie their own flies.

The Winchester Trout Unlimited Chapter was also well represented, with Nick Brognano, Fred Boyer, and Stan Ikonen visiting the Healing Waters booth. In addition, Mike Smith split duties between the PHW booth and working with patrons at the Native Fish Coalition stand, while Virginia Conservation Officer Jackson Dierberg attended to patrons at the DWR desk and helped answer questions about PHW.

**Many thanks to Dave Ward, Fredericksburg PHW Chapter Lead, for organizing and coordinating all the support for the PHW participation. We also want to thank Winchester volunteers and participants for helping with booth duties, including Jim White, Luke Robins, Jeb Stewart, Mike Hart, Eric Custer, Jessica Michie, Ryan Sheehan, Eric Bradley, Jim Galvin, Heather Wright, Linda Litchfield, Doc Smith, Warren Dudenbostel, and Erwin Casto.**

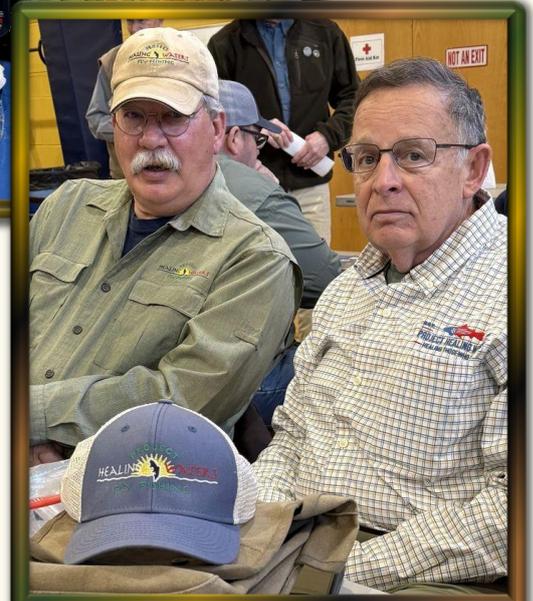
**Clockwise from upper left:**

Luke Robins (r) helps a new fly tyer complete and proudly display his first Golden Retriever. Luke, Jeb Stewart, Jim White, and Erwin Casto patiently instructed many enthusiastic new tyers during the show. photos this page by Wayne White

Fredericksburg participant and Navy Veteran Maritza Marquez explains her rod-building process and materials to an inquiring patron at the Rapidan Show. Her meticulous and detailed approach is evident in the quality and uniqueness of her finished rods.

Fredericksburg Chapter Lead Dave Ward (r) and Mike Weiss take a break from fly-tying to discuss the turnout at the show and their donated items for the raffles.

Warren Dudenbostel (l), Winchester PHW Chapter Participant, learns about opportunities with the Native Fish Coalition from Mike Smith (r).





# WINCHESTER CHAPTER UPDATE – MARCH 2026

by Wayne White

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS MARCH – JUNE 2026

### March

- 11 – **Monthly Meeting.** 6:00 PM, Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick
- 14 – **Fly-Tying at JBT**
- 18 – **Casting Clinic with Terry Cummings, FFI Instructor,** Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick
- 21 – **(T) Winchester Day Outing at Lake Neff Izaak Walton**
- 28 – **PHW Fly-Tying Marathon at the USMC Museum, Quantico, Virginia.** Annual PHW event to tie flies with Veterans from other chapters. All flies will be distributed to local Chapters around the country.

### April

- 8 – **Monthly Meeting.** 6:00 PM, Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick
- 22 – **Double Spur Outfitters.** Winchester Fishing Outing at Cedar Creek, Star Tanery. Limited to six participants and six guides
- 22 - 24 -- **River Bound.** Virginia Regional Fishing Outing, Lebanon, Virginia. Winchester has slots for one participant and one guide.
- 24 - 26 – **Virginia Elks Youth Camp (VEYC) Overnight Fishing Outing,** Millboro, VA, with PHW Fredericksburg. Winchester has slots for three participants and three guides.
- 30 – 2 May -- **Back Creek.** Virginia Regional Fishing Outing, Bath County. Winchester: one participant and one guide.

### May

- 2 -- (T) – **Lake Neff,** Winchester Day Fishing Outing, Izaak Walton, Winchester.
- 3 – (T) -- **Beaver Creek,** Winchester Day Fishing Outing – Limited to four participants and four volunteer guides.
- 13 – **Monthly Meeting.** 6:00 PM. Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick
- 27 – **Rose River,** Winchester Day Fishing Outing, Rose River Farm, Syria, VA – Six participants and six volunteer guides.
- 30 – **Leetown** Fish Hatchery, Winchester Fishing Outing, at USGS Science Center, Kearneysville, WVA. Open to all participants and volunteers.
- 30 – **South Fork Fly-Fishing Tournament, Shenandoah River State Park.** The Winchester Chapter will sponsor three Veteran Participants.

### June

- 6 – **Thornton River,** Winchester Day Outing, Sponsored by Turkey Mountain Fly-Fishing Club (TMFFC), Sperryville, Virginia. Limited to six participants and six guides
- 10 – **Monthly Meeting,** 6:00 PM. Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick
- 27 – (T) – **Annual Smallie Challenge,** Cool Spring, Shenandoah University, Parker Lane, Bluemont, Virginia.

Wayne White  
Program Lead  
[Wayne.White@projecthealingwaters.org](mailto:Wayne.White@projecthealingwaters.org)  
703-919-2952



Jim White  
Assistant Program Lead  
[Jim.White@projecthealingwaters.org](mailto:Jim.White@projecthealingwaters.org)  
703-650-8696

## Barbara's Books

Series created by Barbara Gamble

### **Rivers Always Reach the Sea: Angling Stories**

**Author:** Monte Burke  
**Print Length:** 208 pages  
**ISBN-10:** 163936899X  
**ISBN-13:** 979-1639368990  
**Publisher:** Pegasus Books  
**Publication Date:** 3 June 2025

The thirty-one pieces in **Rivers Always Reach the Sea: Angling Stories**, as well as profiles of some of the biggest names in angling, including Lefty Kreh and Andy Mill -- take the reader from the rainforests of Chile to the windswept tundra of Russia, from the remote mangrove-choked basins of Florida's Everglades to the congested littoral zone of New York City, and to many places in between.

The quarry includes trout, Atlantic salmon, tarpon, bonefish, and striped bass, but the real quest is for something else entirely.

Told in a voice described by the novelist, Carl Hiaasen, as "funny, wistful, and wonderful," the stories in **Rivers Always Reach the Sea** keep the focus on the "why" of the sport of fly fishing, and not the "how."

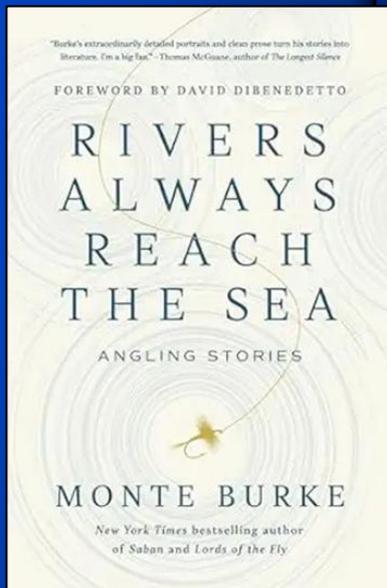
"A writer at the top of his game.... Burke's propulsive writing is an enduring gift to the reader." — *The Virginia Sportsman*

Monte Burke is the author of *Lords of the Fly: Madness, Obsession and the Hunt for the World Record Tarpon*, and the *New York Times* bestseller, *Saban: The Making of a Coach*, a biography of Alabama head coach, Nick Saban.

He is also the author of *4TH And Goal: One Man's Quest to Recapture His Dream*, which won an Axiom Award for biography, and *Sowbelly: The Obsessive Quest for the World Record Largemouth Bass*, which was named one of the best books of the year by *Sports Illustrated* and Amazon, and was chosen for Barnes & Noble's "Discover Great New Writers" program.

After a 14-year stint as a reporter, staff writer and editor at *Forbes*, he is now a contributing editor at the magazine. He is also a contributing editor at *Garden & Gun* and *The Drake*.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers



### **Every Cast: Chronicles of a Deeply Hooked Angler**

**Authors:** Stephen Sautner  
**Print length:** 252 pages  
**ISBN-10:** 1493092324  
**ISBN-13:** 978-1493092321  
**Publisher:** Lyons Press  
**Publication Date:** 3 February 2026

For more than three decades, Stephen Sautner has quietly pursued a fishing addiction while writing about it for *The New York Times*, *The FlyFish Journal*, *The Drake*, *Hatch*, *Anglers Journal*, *Patagonia*, and other publications.

His latest book, **Every Cast: Stories from a Deeply Hooked Angler** gathers more than 60 essays, blending previously published work with more than a dozen new stories.

Whether fly fishing for trout, salmon, or bonefish, surfcasting for striped bass, ice fishing for perch, or remembering lost fishing friends, Sautner's insightful, sometimes poignant, and often humorous observations underscore what Thoreau meant when he wrote: "Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after."

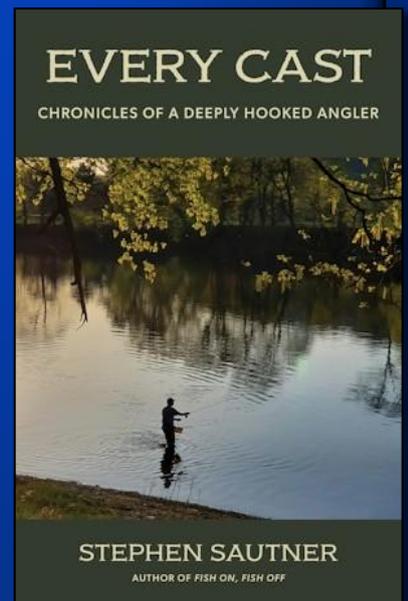
The far-reaching stories in **Every Cast** include casting for wild trout in the familiar Catskill Mountains -- the birthplace of American fly fishing -- to more exotic locations such as the Alaskan backcountry, Canadian Rockies, and even the Panama Canal. Sautner casts and writes with equal enthusiasm, whether stalking bonefish on a lonely Bahamian flat or chasing schools of striped bass on a beach crowded with scores of his fellow anglers.

His stories are not only about angling adventure, but also what can happen between casts: dealing with a surly fishing guide, insect hatches declining on a favorite stream, even witnessing a drowning on a river.

The essays in **Every Cast** will resonate not only with fellow anglers, but anyone who appreciates well-crafted writing by a master storyteller.

Stephen Sautner is the author of the acclaimed *Fish On*, *Fish Off* and *A Cast in the Woods*, and edited *Upriver and Downstream*, a collection of "Outdoors" columns from *The New York Times*. He continues to write for various angling publications between casts.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers



# My Trout Fly Box

## Pheasant-Tail Jig

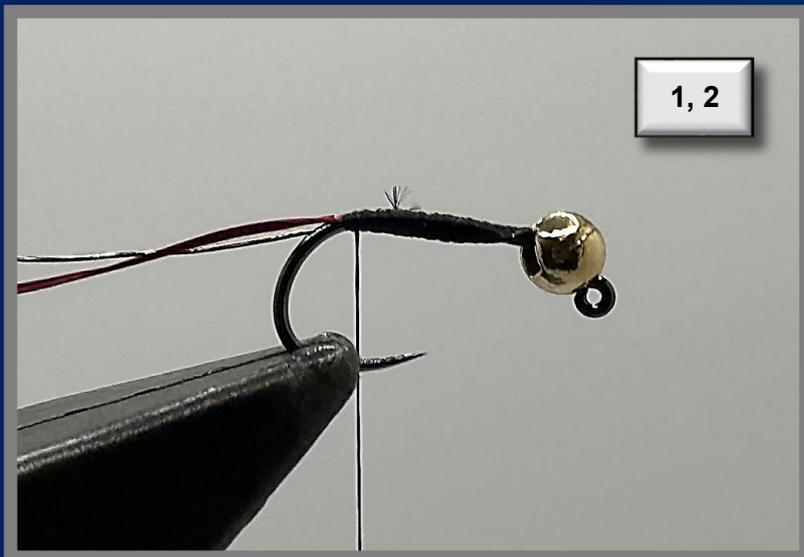
article and photos  
by Burr Tupper

Last month I tied a fly from the book *Pheasant Tail Simplicity* that is authored by Yvon, Chouinard, Craig Mathews, and Mauro Mazzo.

I am going to be trying a number of flies from this book over the next several months. This month I am going to tie my own version of a pattern from the nymph section, the Pheasant-Tail Jig.

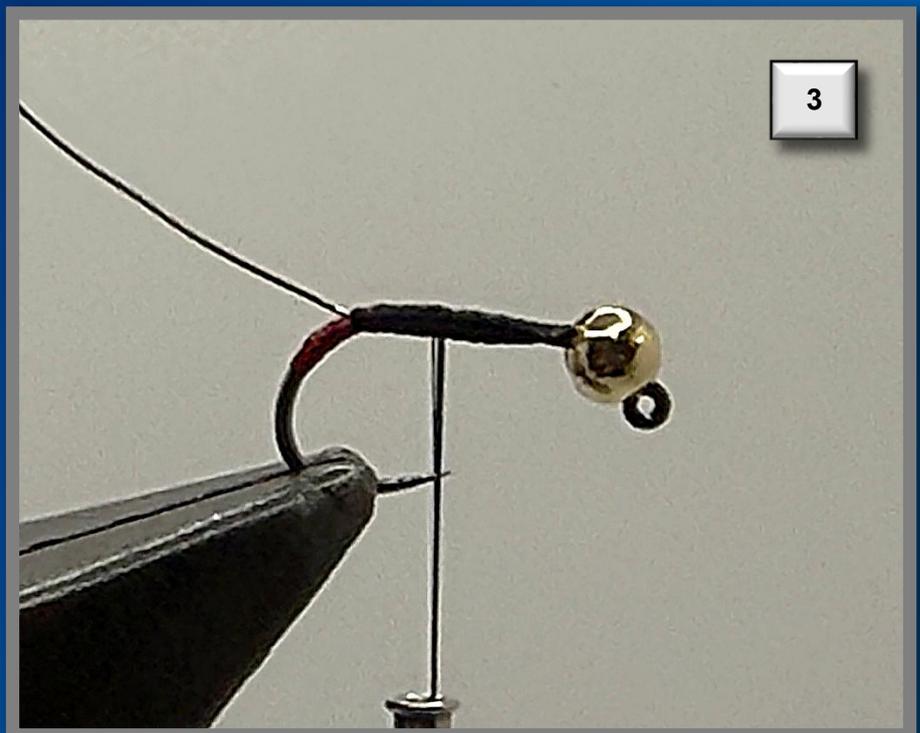


The Pheasant-Tail Jig



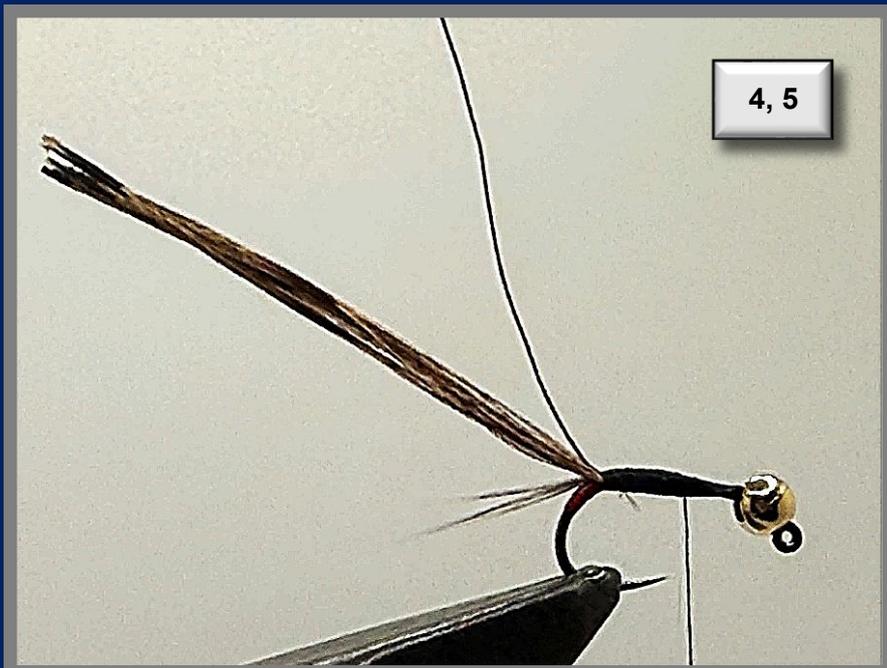
### Materials List

- Hook: Umpqua 400BL #10-16 or equivalent
- Bead: Gold or Copper
- Thread: Black
- Ribbing: Fine Copper or Gold wire
- Tag: Fine to medium red holographic tinsel
- Tail: 6 to 10 coq de Leon grizzly barbs
- Body: 4 to 8 pheasant tail barbs
- Thorax: Ice dub (green)
- Hackle: Cul de Canard feather, natural dun

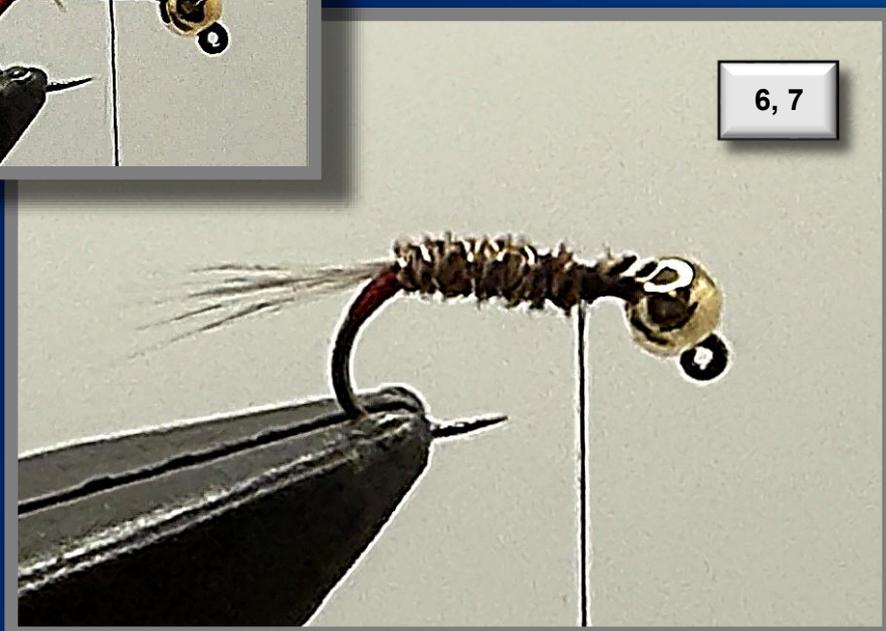


Burr's "My Trout Fly Box" continues on the next page.

## My Trout Fly Box -- continued



4, 5



6, 7

### Instructions

1. Begin by sliding the bead on and forward to the eye of the hook.
2. Tie on thread and then tie in wire and tinsel
3. Wrap several turns of the tinsel on the hook shank above the barb to make a short tag then tie off and trim.
4. Tie in 6 to 10 coq de Leon barbs for the tail.
5. Then tie in 4 to 8 pheasant tail barbs by the tips to make the abdomen.
6. Wrap the pheasant tail barbs forward three-quarters up the hook shank and tie off.
7. For the rib, wrap 4 to 5 turns of the wire and tie off and trim.
8. Dub in the Ice Dub.
9. Now tie in the cul de canard (CDC) feather and wrap one to two turns for the legs. The legs should extend back to the bend of the hook.
10. Tie off behind the bead and whip finish.



8



9, 10

**Editor's Note:** Remember to fish with barbless hooks or bend down your barbs, especially when catch-and-release fishing.



# ANGLER REFLECTIONS

## АНГЛЕР РЕФЛЕКЦИИ

### Winter Winnows

reflections by Michael Lawler Smith

Many winters ago, when I was quite a young man, I had the good fortune to be a staff writer for a state wildlife agency. In preparation for a January issue (if I recall correctly), my editor assigned me the topic “wildlife in winter.” Piece of cake. After all, I was a freshly minted Master on Conservation Communications, and by my own assessment, a font of knowledge on that (and sundry other wildlife topics). Yes, this was a few decades before Messrs. Dunning and Kruger arrived on the scene. Not that they could ever have disabused me of the certitudes I could spout, like a garden fountain.

I recall my opening lede: “Winter is nature’s winnowing process...” And I proceeded to pronounce and boldly hold forth. A David Attenborough’s tone would have been stammering diffidence in comparison.

But in the five plus decades that have transpired, the swirls of the earth have flung off some of my unshakeable “facts.” And some verities in time have emerged. Happily, I can claim authorship to none.

The current winter has likely wrought what winters always have: sickened, starving, weakened, and wounded creatures have perished. I am always shocked, often distraught, by the volume and visibility of roadkill in this short-light season.

Now in my eightieth year, I know at last that faith in the arrival of spring will never be blunted. Recalling an oft-heard line from my youth in the Ohio Valley, “when the red bud bloom, the bluegill will bite!” It held an almost incantational power for me.

That spring brings new life is axiomatic. Less intuitive is that its gifts may arrive on a sliding time scale. I recall a February of unusual warm rains, soft events that prompted me to drive to Shenandoah Park one afternoon to visit a stream I loved and beheld my first *Epeorus pleuralis*, the Quill Gorden, of the “spring.” By March they were gone. And somehow April snow can be bitter of taste. Anomalies abound in nature; “average,” “normal,” and “usual” are the shibboleths our species clings to and vainly seeks to apply to what unfolds in our outer worlds.

I have heard it said that time to a youngster is like water to a fish; it is so pervasive as to be invisible. But time, not unlike winter, winnows in its own way as well. Mortality lurks. And as one ages, mortality’s garb changes, from subtle camouflage to a stark hunter orange.

I have spotted that hue increasingly among the ranks of my friends over this past decade (nearly all of whom were fly anglers ... coincidence?). As time claims them, I mourn. Yet in that very brutal toll that time exacts, it can allow for a deepening gift: gratitude that the decedent could and *did* call you friend, and you in turn could mirror that accolade back.

A dear friend passed out of my life recently. He was an angler’s angler, having chased and subdued almost every glamour species our planet provides: Atlantic salmon, dorado, permit, snook, tarpon – and many others that could nearly fill in that alphabetical list. We had been members of the very same TU chapter (National Capital in Bethesda) nearly thirty years ago but met in the most unlikely of circumstances – the baggage claim at Balmaceda Airport in Patagonian Chile. We were friends from the outset, the bond strengthening over time via lunches at Clyde’s in Chevy Chase, MD., where our fish grew ever larger, and our next fishing adventure would be the “very best yet.”

Scott introduced me to steelhead fishing over a dozen years ago. That first trip I was convinced would be luckless. But Scott knew better. He shared his extraordinary guide to mentor my early, clumsy efforts. That and all subsequent north country outings with him were successful. Sometimes dazzlingly so.

Our last steelhead trip was over two years ago. Our last lunch at Clyde’s last May. His health was already in its slow, inexorable decline. And then, this February, he passed on. To a realm of unfished waters. He will find the very best guide available there. I am sure of it. As I am sure of this: I am so, so grateful that he counted me a friend. I resolutely count him a friend all the balance of my days. Some realities will never be winnowed away.

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# ANGLER REFLECTIONS



## Unpredictable Erie reflections by Nick Brognano



Here I sit indoors in a small room staring at fly-fishing paraphernalia while my buddies' fish outdoors enjoying the real thing. Yesterday I received an on-site Erie, PA, fishing report from Fred. It is his second day fishing with Mike and Bob. So far, the news is disappointing. Fred's report is much like what Elmer, and I had experienced a couple of weeks earlier. All five of us had intended to fish together but Fred had been informed by Pastor Mark that the streams were without water and religiously, as always, advised Fred to stay home. Fred is a religious guy. I, nevertheless, devilishly told him Pastor Mark is not the Pope, but he didn't buy any of that.

This was not a stupendous spiritual Oral Robert's like "vision" Pastor Mark had experienced while praying at his church some 450 miles from Erie. It was very real and material. Pastor Mark and his dad had fished in Erie a week before any of us and had no success because there was no water.

All of us had been nipping at the bit for some time and were ready to start our annual pilgrimage to Erie. We followed daily the weather like Willard Scott, the famous weather man of our time, hoping for rain. What follows is a dual adventure saga resembling a tag team scenario where Elmer and I fished first followed two weeks later by Fred, Bob, and Mike.

As I mentioned, Erie had been experiencing a long drought, and the streams were without much water which meant the fish were still in the lake. When Elmer and I started out, rain had finally been predicted, and it arrived in torrents. The streams were muddy brown and raging from heavy overdue rainfall when we arrived. While Elk and Walnut creek were unfishable on our first day, we fully expected the fish to be coming up from the lake on our second day. We went to bed with high expectations counting Steelheads in our dreams.

With the high water we envisioned the Steelies sitting at the mouth of Elk like a herd of wild racehorses ready to rocket out of the gate and fight their way upstream to our open arms. But unfortunately, on the second day that did not happen. We each felt like a deflated balloon must feel, if it could feel. We checked out Walnut Creek and later scouted several spots along Elk Creek looking for signs of the evasive Steelhead. After much thought and adult conversation, we surmised the fish must have gotten lost or somehow found out we had arrived and smartly decided to safely stay home.

**Above:** "Here I sit indoors in a small room staring at fly-fishing paraphernalia...."

**Right:** "...using the pink worm with a bobber, I landed a beauty...."



**"Angler Reflections" continues  
on the next page.**

photo by Nick Brognano

## ANGLER REFLECTIONS -- CONTINUED

Returning to our hotel, I saw a fellow angler and asked what his day was like. I assumed the fellow was from Michigan because of the license plate on his truck. With a straight poker face the stranger said, "I had the best fishing day ever." Initially, I was stunned because I didn't see anyone having anything close to a good day. He went on to say he had hired a guide and had "Caught 43 Steelhead." Flabbergasted, I said. "What did you use and where did you fish?" Without looking at me, he said, "I used a lot of stuff." He then stated he was new to the area and did not know where he fished. Without saying more, he said a lot.

Now folks, I fully realize how foolish and strange I appear all stuffed up in my old and odd fishing garb and how that may give a false impression of being an escaped lunatic especially when I open my mouth, but I am not one of them, at least not to that degree and at that moment. Only after I told the stranger how I once caught 44 Steelhead barehanded did I turn and walk away with my chin up. I later relayed this tale of B.S. to Elmer.



"The streams were muddy brown and raging from heavy overdue rainfall...."

On our third and last rainy-day, Elmer and I decided to fish upstream from the tubes on Elk creek. With his spinning rod he eventually hooked onto a couple Steelhead residing in the tubes but couldn't land them. While in the tubes Elmer told another angler about the guy who allegedly caught 43 Steelhead. The fellow replied that he is a native of the area and has fished Erie every year and the best he ever did was catch 20 in one day. He asked Elmer if he thought all fishermen from Michigan talked like that.

I found a hole about two hundred yards upstream from the tubes and observed two guys fishing it from each end. They were nymph fishing and frequently hooking up. I decided to stay and fish a little below them and later between them. The hole was long enough to comfortably fit three guys with fly rods. I first tied on a rubber egg then a nymph and after that a wet fly with a nymph dropper, all without success. Eventually, using the pink worm with a bobber, I landed a beauty and the fight was thrilling. Shortly after that I hooked onto another but after displaying a couple of mid-air acrobatic twists and turns he escaped.

Now, back to Fred, Mike, and Bob fishing as I write. Fred e-mailed he lost a 10-minute fight while Bob landed a 23-inch Steelie while fishing at the tubes. Later they tried 20 mile and Fred again emailed: "It was very slow going between the parking lot and the lake. Only saw one fish caught and only saw three other fish in that entire stretch. On the advice of some other fishermen, we moved upstream... Took a chance with an egg sack in the white foam .... Third cast had a hit and landed it with Mike's net help.... Three guys, one in a chair, were using nightcrawlers and having some success.

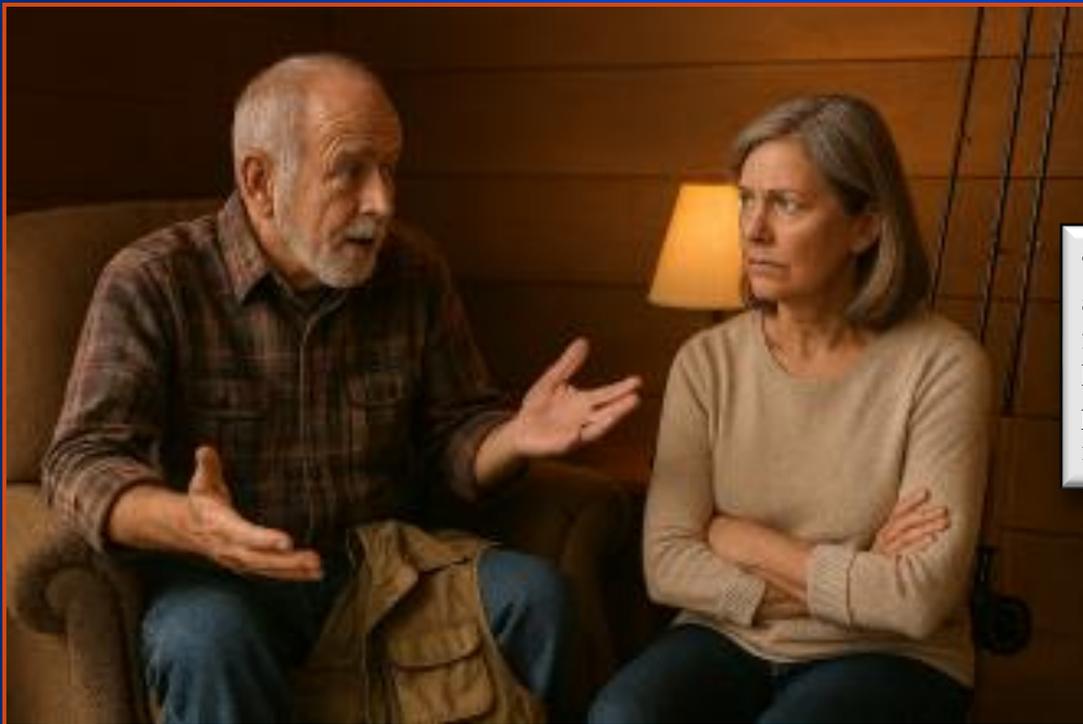
Turns out the hole they were in had a pod of fish.... I'd estimate 30 to 40 fish in the pod. Mike, Bob, and I ended up fishing that hole for several hours. Bob ended up one for one for the day. I ended up two for two." Mike hooked some but no cigar until they tried "Lander's Hole" above the tubes where Mike landed one. Fred said this spot was loaded with fish but there were no takers. To see so many fish and not able to entice one, no matter what is thrown is frustrating, disgusting, tormenting, discouraging, humiliating, and a waste of time and money not to mention an insulting loss of angler prestige. We all agreed men of our high stature should never have to tolerate such a fruitless exhibition

**"Angler Reflections" continues on the next page.**

# ANGLER REFLECTIONS -- CONTINUED

It can also be very discouraging to drive a total of approximately 850 miles, leave the comforts of home for three days, endure rain and cold only to catch one or two fish after flinging a fly rod a few thousand times. But that is not all; trying to explain all this to a spouse who has never fished and doesn't understand how any sane person could possibly enjoy such an outing is folly and a waste of time. I gave up long ago. Like most of my fishing buddies I simply plead insanity and anxiously wait for the next misadventure when I can enjoy the comradery of open minded friends who better understand the fine art and science of fly fishing.

Incidentally, I am aware some fishermen drive a much longer distance with the same result, and they do it repeatedly, now that is crazy but then as the late Pope Francis once said, "Who am I to judge?"



"...trying to explain all this to a spouse who has never fished and doesn't understand how any sane person could possibly enjoy such an outing is folly and a waste of time."

Unless otherwise noted, illustrations for this article were created by Copilot with prompts by Bill Prokopchak





**SOUTH FORK FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT**

BENTONVILLE VIRGINIA 2026

**Saturday, May 30, 2026**

884 Indian Hollow Road  
Bentonville, VA US 22610

**DOWNRIVER VIRGINIA CANOE COMPANY STATE PARKS**




**Tournament Overview**

- Competitors must use park-designated access points only
- 6:30 a.m. - Check-in begins
- 7:30 a.m. - Lines in
- 2:30 p.m. - Mandatory lines-out
- 3:30 p.m. - Awards

**Prizes include trophies, gear, gift cards, and more!**



**Scan for information and registration!**



Registration Fees  
Adults \$50  
Youth (ages 10-15) \$25

**Categories**

- ★ Grand Champion
- 🏆 The Lunker
- 🏆 Lady Lunker
- 🏆 Youth Lunker
- The Small Fry
- The Bottom Feeder

Editor's Note: Remember to fish with barbless hooks or bend down your barbs, especially when catch-and-release fishing.

**Scan for information and registration!**



Registration Fees  
**Adults \$50**  
**Youth (ages 10-15) \$25**





Please use the link below for complete information

[2025 American Conservation Film Festival | 2025 American Conservation Film Festival](#)

### Winchester TU Monthly “BarFly” Events

Wednesday, 18 March 2026, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 15 April 2026, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 20 May 2026, 7:00 PM

Escutcheon Brewery  
Commercial St., Winchester, VA



The Winchester Chapter of Trout Unlimited (WTU) will gather at Escutcheon Brewing in Winchester to offer anglers and **non-anglers** in our area the opportunity to learn about Trout Unlimited and to tie fishing flies.

**No fly-tying or fly-fishing experience is necessary.**

All participants under age 21 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.

See you at the next  
Winchester TU BarFly.

photo by Bill Prokopchak



# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bill, Thanks again for all your support! Another great edition! I like the Brookie in the Masthead!

Wayne White  
Winchester Project Healing Waters  
Lake Frederick, VA

Thanks for another outstanding newsletter! AND thanks to the authors of those wonderful three articles and photos. You are all much appreciated.

Fred Boyer  
Lake Frederick, VA

What a great team!! (Referring to the contributors to LATERAL LINES)

Nick Brognano  
Frederick County, VA



## Potomac Interceptor Sewage Spill Data & Updates

### A BRIEF OVERVIEW

On January 19, 2026, a 6-foot wide interceptor pipe, owned and operated by DC Water, collapsed in Montgomery County, MD, releasing an **estimated 243 million gallons** of untreated sewage directly into the Potomac River. This sewage spill has been marked as one of the worst, if not *the* worst, sewage spills in U.S. history. Not only has this event created an on-going regional public health and environmental emergency, but it's threatened our community's dependence on the river – for recreation, for subsistence, and for livelihoods.

Potomac Riverkeeper Network (PRKN) has been, and will continue to, conduct independent water-quality monitoring, provide transparent public updates, advocate for strong public-health protections and accountability, and push for long-term ecosystem restoration. Clean water is a public trust — and protecting the Potomac cannot wait. **NOTE: DC Water has stated that drinking water has not been affected as water intake locations are above the sewage spill site.**

**For Up-to-the-Minute Information about the Sewage Spill, follow these links.**

<https://potomacriverkeepernetwork.org/potomac-sewage-spill-data-updates/>

[Potomac Riverkeeper on Facebook](#)

[Potomac Riverkeeper on Instagram](#)



Images, text, and links courtesy of Potomac Riverkeeper Network



**Poet's Corner:**  
Poems selected  
for the angler

## The Brook

by *Alfred Lord Tennyson*  
1809-1892  
England



ALFRED LORD TENNYSON  
Ink wash by W.M. Prokopchak © 2021  
after a PUBLIC DOMAIN, Wikipedia image by an unidentified artist

I come from haunts of coot and hern,  
I make a sudden sally  
And sparkle out among the fern,  
To bicker down a valley.

By thirty hills I hurry down,  
Or slip between the ridges,  
By twenty thorpes, a little town,  
And half a hundred bridges.

Till last by Philip's farm I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I chatter over stony ways,  
In little sharps and trebles,  
I bubble into eddying bays,  
I babble on the pebbles.

With many a curve my banks I fret  
By many a field and fallow,  
And many a fairy foreland set  
With willow-weed and mallow.

I chatter, chatter, as I flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I wind about, and in and out,  
With here a blossom sailing,  
And here and there a lusty trout,  
And here and there a grayling,

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak  
Above the golden gravel,

And draw them all along, and flow  
To join the brimming river  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.

I steal by lawns and grassy plots,  
I slide by hazel covers;  
I move the sweet forget-me-nots  
That grow for happy lovers.

I slip, I slide, I gloom, I glance,  
Among my skimming swallows;  
I make the netted sunbeam dance  
Against my sandy shallows.

I murmur under moon and stars  
In brambly wildernesses;  
I linger by my shingly bars;  
I loiter round my cresses;

And out again I curve and flow  
To join the brimming river,  
For men may come and men may go,  
But I go on for ever.



# Calendar of Events

See also  
<http://winchester.tu.org/>

## Winchester Trout Unlimited

(For the complete Winchester Project Healing Waters calendar, please see page 7 of this newsletter.)

### March 2026

**Thursday, 5 March 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 5 March 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 11 March 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 18 March 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester

### April 2026

**Thursday, 2 April 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 2 April 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 8 April 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 15 April 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester

### May 2026

**Thursday, 7 May 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 7 May 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 13 May 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 20 May 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester



The opinions expressed in *Lateral Lines* are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of Winchester Trout Unlimited or Trout Unlimited National.

All water sports, including fishing, and stream restoration activities have inherent dangers. Participation in all Winchester Trout Unlimited activities is at the participant's own risk and participants agree to hold harmless Winchester Trout Unlimited and its members. A responsible adult must accompany all minors.

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