

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2008

TROUT TALK

SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN TROUT UNLIMITED



Dedicated to Conserve, Protect & Restore West Michigan Cold Water Fisheries and their Watersheds

DINNER SEMINARS

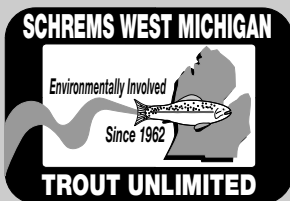
Seasons of the
Pere Marquette

Thursday
January 17, 2008

Reservations Requested
(See page 3 for details)

SWMTU
Board Meetings
1st Tuesday of every month
6:00 PM

E-mail: info@swmtu.org
Website: www.swmtu.org



President's Drift...

Protecting Michigan's Coldwater Resources

By David Smith, President SWMTU

The Michigan Legislature is currently debating several bills that will establish the state's legal protections for groundwater withdrawal for at least the next five years if not much longer. As members of Trout Unlimited, we need to be concerned since our great trout streams here in Michigan are primarily supplied by and cooled with groundwater springs. Take away enough groundwater, and our streams and rivers, and the trout, will pay the price.

There are two main components to these bills. The main part of the legislation is to ratify the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact, which will protect the waters of the Great Lakes from diversion outside of the Great Lakes Basin. Trout Unlimited fully supports the goals of this Compact. The other much more controversial part of this legislation is the implementing rules regulating groundwater withdrawal.

The legislation proposes implementing a "Groundwater Withdrawal Assessment Tool" that would be on the internet and would be used to screen and approve water withdrawal requests. This Assessment Tool is based on the integration of three models that the state has been developing over the last few years. These three models are the Streamflow Model; the Groundwater Withdrawal Model; and the Fish Community Model.

The Streamflow Model describes how much water flow is in Michigan streams and is based on historical USGS and other streamflow data from Michigan and adjacent states.

The Groundwater Withdrawal Model describes how much water withdrawal will reduce streamflow in nearby streams. If there is more than one stream in the impacted area, the model assumes that the reduction in streamflow is apportioned between all the streams.

The Fish Community Model describes how reduced streamflow will affect either the Thriving Fish Population or the Characteristic Fish Population in affected streams. Thriving Species are those fish species present in the greatest numbers for a given stream segment. Thriving species do very, very well at sites of the given stream type; the flows and temperatures are well matched with the needs of these species. Characteristic Fish is defined as "fish species, including thriving fish, typically found in streams with specific flow and temperature characteristics." Characteristic fish species for a given stream segment can be thought of as any species found in

...President's Drift continued on page 2

SAVE THE DATE!

The 43rd annual Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited Fundraising Banquet will be held Thursday, March 20, 2008 at the Elk's Country Club. Don't miss an evening of fish tales, live auctions, silent auctions, a new Chinese auction and great food. An announcement and reservation form will be sent in January.

Our annual banquet is our social and fundraising highlight for the year. The funds raised at our banquet support stream and habitat improvements on the Rogue River, Tyler Creek, Coldwater River, Salmon in the Classroom, Schrems Scholarship Fund, other local watersheds, printing and mailing costs for our quarterly newsletter and provide support for TU's conservation efforts nationwide.

Your attendance at the banquet is a very important way for you to insure that these and similar activities will continue. So, please keep your calendar open and be sure to join us.

Another way for you to assist our fundraising efforts is to take advantage of new banquet sponsorship opportunities. There are a limited number of sponsorship opportunities for you or your company to have a major presence at our banquet. In addition, we rely heavily on the kind donations from our Chapter Membership and local businesses. These donations are tax deductible. Please contact Marc Montpetit at 616-560-8264 or montpetitmc@290signs.com for sponsorship details

...President's Drift continued

above average concentrations as compared to statewide averages. In studies so far, changes in the Thriving Species are a much more sensitive indicator of changes to the aquatic environment than changes in the Characteristic fish population.

All three models are linked through a geographic information system (GIS), which associates information from these models with specific stream segments in Michigan. The proposed groundwater withdrawal is characterized as falling into one of four Impact Zones, from Zone A (minor impact) to Zone D (notable replacement of the Thriving Species). One of the proposed definitions floating around of an "Adverse Resource Impact" is when a specific stream segment moves into Zone D or when notable replacement of the thriving species occurs (this might be as much as a 50% reduction in the thriving species population density based on the type of stream involved).

During a special meeting of the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited on December 14th, 2007, we heard presentations from several sources regarding the pending legislation. Included was Paul Seelbach of the Department of Natural Resources who was instrumental in developing these models. Paul's personal estimate of the current accuracy of each component was 90-95% accuracy for the Waterflow model; 70-90% accuracy for the Groundwater withdrawal model; and 70% accuracy for the Fish Community Model. Even taking Paul's most optimistic estimates for the individual models accuracy, the total system accuracy would be less than 60% ($95\% \times 90\% \times 70\% = 59.85\%$).

In order to protect our coldwater resources against possible errors and uncertainty in these models, I am recommending that we push for the following principles that should be integrated into the legislation regarding groundwater withdrawal:

- *An Adverse Resource Impact should be defined as ANY predicted reduction in the Thriving Species (greater sensitivity to ecological change).*
- *The Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and / or the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) should have the ability to remove a stream segment from consideration for groundwater withdrawal if the segment is critical for the protection any endangered or threatened species.*
- *Public involvement needs to be maintained in this process until such time as the model matures and its accuracy improves and its effectiveness is proven. The level of public involvement needs to increase as the Impact Zone moves from Zone A to Zone D.*
- *The DEQ should have the ability to require large volume water withdrawers to install stream-flow monitoring equipment and periodically report on the results to the Department and the public. This information will be critical in order to improve the accuracy of the Water Withdrawal Assessment Tool over time.*
- *The DNR and DEQ should be fully funded to support and enforce this legislation by a fee on the withdrawal of any water used primarily for consumptive purposes that is not principally returned to its original watershed. The state has long recognized that "the waters of the basin are precious public natural resources shared and held in trust by the states." If we allow our water to be consumed and shipped out of the Great Lakes basin, then the public should be fairly compensated for this loss.*
- *The DEQ should have more flexibility to require restorative measures, especially for stream segments in Zones C and D. Funding to support restorative projects could come in part from the water consumption fee described previously.*

Please contact your state legislature to let them know how you feel about the pending groundwater withdrawal legislation and what principles that you consider important.

For further information on the Groundwater Assessment Tool, check out Paul Seelbach's presentation to the Michigan Council of Trout Unlimited on our web site at www.swmtu.org.

How SMWTU can Communicate with You

By Dave DeJonge

Did you know that our chapter has traditionally spent \$2,500-\$5,000 annually for newsletters? While it's hard to argue the validity and quality our Trout Talk newsletter, it's easy to argue that the money spent to create, publish, and mail Trout Talk could be better spent on our coldwater resources.

In this year of a tight budget, we do not plan to eliminate Trout Talk, but will pair it back to 2-4 issues.

At the same time, we've refocused our efforts on faster electronic communication. Here's what you can do to stay in touch with what the Chapter is doing.

Join the Email List - <http://www.swmtu.org>

The easiest way to stay informed is to sign up for the email list. About half our 800 members are on the list, are you?

The list is used every couple weeks to let you know about things as they come up. No more waiting for a newsletter every couple months!

Your email address is secure with us – we won't use your email for any other purpose. The list is powered by the industry leader

Constant Contact. They have a very strict policy about spam and unauthorized addresses.

River Currents, the SWMTU blog -- <http://www.swmtu.org/wordpress>

In the spirit of keeping communication two-way, we've introduced a blog on the SWMTU website.

It allows board members to quickly and easily post information as soon as they can. It then allows people – Chapter members and the general public -- to comment on those posts and start a discussion on them. Basically it's an area where multiple writers can all contribute in the same place.

If you'd like to be a blog author, let me know and I can arrange it.

SWMTU Photo Gallery -- <http://www.swmtu.org/gallery>

We've added a place where you can share your photos of great fish, conservation projects, or member outings.

Take a tour and you'll see the wide variety of photos already posted.


from the Riffles...

Flies for fish other than trout

By Dick Smith

The modern trend in fly fishing for trout is to learn the approximate hatching dates of the major insect hatches, and to try to be on a good trout stream at the right time with the right flies. Matching the hatch is now considered one of the keys to having good fly fishing for trout. There is no similar system to follow when it comes to getting started fly fishing for other kinds of fish. It can be a lot harder to figure out what fly you should use, so I have put together a brief list of a few flies that have worked very well for me for species of fish other than resident stream trout. There are also a few suggestions for how to fish some of those flies.

Almost all of the biggest largemouth bass I have caught have been taken on chartreuse poppers. That may be because when I fish for bass with poppers, I use chartreuse more than any other color. But I use that color for bass because it really works good. My second choice for a surface lure is a frog popper with a yellow belly and a green back. I use the frog on those rare occasions when chartreuse doesn't seem to interest the bass. Most fishermen want to start retrieving a popper right after it hits the water. I like to leave it where it landed for as long as I can stand it. I am not overly patient, but I always try to wait at least until the little waves the popper made when it landed completely disappear before I move it. I have caught some very nice bass on poppers that were just sitting motionless at the edge of some lily pads. A good tactic is to move the popper just a little, and then let it sit for another ten or fifteen seconds before you start it coming back.

The best subsurface lures I have used for largemouths early in the season have been imitations of leeches. A black rabbit strip leech is a good fly early in the year, and so is a black woolly bugger. A white or yellow streamer about three inches long is a good standard minnow imitation, and one or the other of those two colors usually works.

It is not a good idea to try to cast big bass poppers or streamers on the light leaders that are suitable for trout. I normally use OX tippets when I am fishing for largemouths. The knot at the hook tends to weaken quickly when you are casting big flies, and it should be checked regularly.

I like to use a Duncan Loop Knot for tying poppers or streamers to heavy tippets. If the knot is kept a little ways away from the hook eye, so there is a small loop, it seems to give the lure a little more life in the water. There is not as much stress on the knot from casting when you have a loop at the hook eye as there is when you use a tight knot. A properly tied Duncan Loop will tighten itself against the hook if you hook a heavy fish. The Palomar Knot is a good second choice for poppers and streamers.

My first choice every time for smallmouth bass is a bucktail with a yellow wing and some gold flash. My second choice is a bucktail with a white wing and some silver flash. I generally tie them so they are about three inches long, on standard size two, 4X long streamer hooks. Most of my fishing for smallmouths is done in rivers where streamers work better than poppers. But chartreuse poppers will catch a lot of smallmouths too. I like them to be slightly smaller than the large, heavy-bodied poppers that work so well for largemouths. Good smallmouth poppers should be about two-thirds the size of those used for largemouths. Smaller poppers seem to be more attractive to the average smallmouth, and they are easier to cast. When it comes to choosing the best color for poppers for bass, always remember the southern bass fishermen's advice, "If it ain't chartreuse, it ain't no use."

I like to use very big bucktails for pike and muskies. I like bucktails that are at least six or seven inches long and have a little bulk to their bodies. I prefer bucktails to feather-winged streamers because bucktail is at least as attractive, and it is far more durable. A six inch bucktail on a 1/0 saltwater hook is about as big a fly as most people can cast comfortably with an eight weight rod and line. A lot of anglers who are used to casting small dry flies with a light fly rod will be tired and frustrated after an hour of steady fishing with a seven inch bucktail. Yellow is a good color for streamers for all species of fish that feed heavily on minnows, and if I was limited to only one color for streamers it would be

yellow. But white is probably just about as good. I use those two colors most of the time when I am fishing for pike or muskies during the early part of the season. After the Fourth of July, I usually start with a pale olive bucktail that has some coppery flash. Pale olive seems to work better later in the summer, and sometimes it is the only color streamer that I can get a pike to take late in the summer. Streamers that are five or six inches long will catch some pretty big pike and muskies, but when you are fishing specifically for them, it is a good idea to use the largest bucktails you can cast reasonably well. I always use a wire leader with a good strong snap swivel when I am fishing for pike or muskies. The large ones are inclined to inhale a fly, so the hook will often be deep inside the fishes' mouth. Without a wire leader, a lot of the largest fish will cut even a heavy monofilament shock tippet. I have lost a few pike when the snap swivel on the wire leader popped open and the fly came off. Normally the snaps on wire leaders that are twenty-seven pound test or more are strong enough to hold even the biggest fish, so eight inch long, twenty-seven pound test wire leaders are the size I use.

I never fish for pike or muskies without a good pair of long nose pliers and some good jaw spreaders. Forceps are generally out of their league if you have to get a fly out from deep in the throat of a big pike. If possible, it is best done while the fish is still in the water. It is surprising how powerful a big pike or musky is when it is out of the water. Having a big one that is out of control, and thrashing around in your boat can be one of the most unpleasant things that ever happen to you while you are fishing. I don't bring a big pike or musky into my boat if I think I can unhook it while it is still in the water. When you unhook a pike or musky that is in the water, be sure the fishes' head is pointed away from you. Both of them are inclined to jump when you first pull the fishes' head out of the water to get at the fly, and if you are looking down its throat when it happens, the fish will jump right in your face.

An ordinary yellow rubber spider will work very well for both bluegills and rock bass. Yellow and white are the best colors for the little cork-bodied poppers meant for bluegills. One or the other of those colors always works. If I was only fishing for rock bass, I would use a small chartreuse popper. A six inch rock bass will happily take a popper that is just the right size for a sixteen inch smallmouth. A very slow retrieve will take the most big bluegills. It is a good idea to carry a fine set of forceps when you are fishing for bluegills, and a good idea to flatten the barbs on poppers and spiders meant for bluegills. A bluegill can inhale a fly deeply enough so the hook will be down in its throat even if you set the hook the instant you see the fish take the fly. There is not much room for manipulating forceps inside the little mouth of a bluegill, so a bent down hook barb will make it a lot easier to get the hook out. I have used ordinary trout flies like Hendricksons, Adams, and Quill Gordons for bluegills, and they work even better than rubber spiders and poppers do. But bluegills wreck trout flies in a hurry. Rubber spiders are cheap and they will catch hundreds of bluegills. Good trout flies take time to tie, and they are expensive to buy. Ten little bluegills can make a mess out of a good trout fly.

The best steelhead fly I have ever used is a dark-bodied imitation of the *Paracapnia opis* stonefly nymphs that emerge in March and April. I tie them on salmon fly hooks in sizes six, eight, and ten, and even the tens are generally bigger than the naturals. I tie them all so they are a little small for the size of the hook they are on. They look somewhat like the low-water salmon flies that A.H.E. Wood used with such great success for Atlantic salmon on the Dee in Great Britain. They sink well without being weighted when they are tied that way. When I tie the size six flies, I tie them with the hackle palmered the full length of the body, and a small chartreuse butt under the tail, like the butt on the Black Bear - Green Butt salmon fly. I use the larger fly with the green butt when I'm randomly fishing the holes and riffles, searching the water for steelhead. I use the smaller flies when I know where the steelhead are. A simple, small, orange egg fly will catch a lot of steelhead. For some reason, I have caught a lot more females than male steelhead on egg flies, but I don't know why. When steelhead are very active, they will often take a streamer, and a good smelt imitation about two or two and a half inches long is a good steelhead fly. A fly that is white on the bottom with a little silver flash and a gray squirrel wing makes a good smelt imitation.

...continued on page 4

Flies for fish other than trout- by Dick Smith

The only two steelhead I have taken that were over seventeen pounds were both taken on rainbow smelt streamers. The farther upstream I am, the slower I tend to fish my streamers for steelhead. As a general rule, the closer you are to the lake, the faster your retrieve should be.

Picket Pins and small crayfish flies are good flies for carp. I don't know what it is about the combination of peacock herl, brown hackle, and gray squirrel that they find so attractive, but both carp and rainbow trout seem to like Picket Pins. I tie my crayfish flies on keel hooks, so they ride upside down, and I can hop them along the bottom in shallow water on sandy flats. An ordinary wet fly hook can be made to ride upside down by adding lead wire to the hook shank near the bend of the hook. Carp like to get in on the big mayfly hatches, and they feed readily on Ephemera simulans and Hexagenia limbata nymphs. The nymphs and duns of those two flies look so much alike, that big brown drakes are often mistaken for hex flies. A large nymph with an amber spun fur body, a dark brown wing case, some brown hackle, and a few brown hackle fibers for a tail will imitate either one and catch carp.

I have not caught any Atlantic salmon outside the state of Michigan, but I have caught quite a few from the Boyne River, Gull Lake, and the Saint Marys River. I caught most of those fish on two flies, a size eight Black Bear- Green Butt, and an inch and a half long rainbow smelt imitation. At Gull Lake, the little smelt streamer would catch Atlantic salmon when nothing else would, and the Atlantics in the Saint Marys River like it too. I tie it with a body of silver tinsel, and a wing of white bucktail with a few hairs of pink bucktail on top of the white, and some green bucktail on top of that. I also caught five or six Atlantic salmon on size ten gold-ribbed hare's ear nymphs with no hackle on them. They were tied like grubs, with nothing but a fur body ribbed with thin gold wire.

I have taken about a dozen memorable king salmon by fishing to them the way I fish to steelhead or Atlantic salmon, but I have failed to interest hundreds and hundreds of others when I was fishing that way. The only fly that has really worked with any regularity for me when king salmon were on the redds is an egg fly. Small orange eggs, or small pink eggs work best. They have to be down on the bottom, and it is a good idea to fish the fly well past the fish if there is any dark water below the redd, because I have taken some awfully nice trout by doing that. When they are in the deep holes or the dark water, king salmon will often take a streamer. I like to use a fairly large one, either a smelt imitation or an all black streamer, and the best way to fish it is to let it swing in front of the fish and let it hang there. Then back it down near their faces. If the fly is just in front of a fish, and slightly above it, a king salmon will often move a little and take it. If the fly comes near the salmon moving faster than the current, they usually just move out of its way. The largest king I ever caught was a bright, twenty-eight pound female that took a streamer that was backing slowly down to her.



WINTER SEMINARS • 2008

Our winter seminars are back and they promise to be extra-special. A great turnout at both will help ensure we can continue to put on these events.

Seasons of the Pere Marquette

Location: Hilton Hotel at 28th Street and Patterson in Grand Rapids

Date: Thursday, January 17, 2008

Time: Cocktails at 6. Dinner at 7. Speakers at 8.

RSVP: By January 12 or info@swmtu.org
call Gregg Start at 616-481-1042

In January, we'll be hosting Steve Fraley and John Karakashian. You might know them from a little-known place called Baldwin Bait & Tackle. They're bringing with them a wealth of information about fishing the Pere Marquette all year long.

Steelhead season is with us for months to come and Steve and John are excellent resources for learning how to target the silver bullets. Patience and knowledge of the river go a long ways toward your success.

Brown trout and the PM go hand-in-hand. Besides tempting these big fish with dry flies and streamers, more people are beginning to fish with mouse patterns at night when the browns throw caution to the wind.

Late summer brings the King salmon back to the PM. What a thrill it is to hook into a fresh 15 pound Chinook in such a small river.

And while Steve and John are around, be sure to ask them about their fishing trips to Alaska, Argentina, Belize and more.

February Social & Intro to fly-fishing

Location: Hilton Hotel at 28th Street and Patterson in Grand Rapids

Date: Thursday, February 7, 2008

Time: Cocktails and hors d'oeuvres start at 6.

Evening concludes at 9.

RSVP: By February 2 to info@swmtu.org
call Dave DeJonge at 616-437-0472

In February we're going to try something new. Keeping with theme of getting new members more involved with the chapter, we'll hold an informal "Intro to Fly Fishing" evening. Instead of a sit-down dinner, expect a mix & mingle evening of finger foods, drinks and good company.

We're encouraging anglers of all levels to come and share their experiences and adventures. This is going to be a great opportunity to get your friends, kids or significant other involved in your passion!

We'll have multiple areas set up where people can learn about different ways to rig rods, tie knots, tie flies, find spots to fish, and cast. Several members have come forward to offer to help demonstrate their talents; maybe you can too?

The even may also include a gear swap. So if you've got some old equipment you'd like to part ways with, hold onto it for this February event!

I'll get by with a Little Help from My Friends

Submitted by Ron Barch

So what do you do if you're a Trout Unlimited Chapter without a trout stream? How do you solve the problem of being an advocate for coldwater resources in an area of warm water streams and lakes? Simple, you borrow, share or adopt a trout stream!

The Oak Brook Chapter of Trout Unlimited was in that situation but that didn't stop them from getting involved and making a difference. Over the past 35 years they have found lots of rivers and streams to work on. We here in West Michigan are fortunate to have them on-board for restoration work on Tyler Creek and the Coldwater River. Over the past few years a large contingent of Oak Brook members have made the early morning drive from Chicago to West Michigan to donate time and effort for stream projects. They work hard and always say they'll be back.

As a way of recognizing and thanking them I'd like to share a little of their history and activities. They are a great bunch of anglers who come a long way to help protect and restore our local cold water resources. The following comments are from current president, Marv Strauch.

The Oak Brook Chapter of Trout Unlimited was formed in February 1973 in order to provide a suburban Chicago location of Trout Unlimited. Since then we have grown to be the largest TU chapter in Illinois, currently with 670 members covering west &

south suburban Chicago. Some of the founding members are still active in the chapter, including Dave George, Joe Hammon, and Gerry Reich and Doug Vanerka.

Oak Brook Chapter meets on the 3rd Wednesday of every month at the Oak Brook Park district shelter building. Being a predominantly urban chapter, we have mostly partnered with Wisconsin, Michigan, and Iowa chapters on their local stream projects. We are quite proud to have been lead TU Chapter in 2001 on a project building spawning habitat at the Jumbo River in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

We are extremely pleased with our developing youth education program. Now completing its 3rd year, we have helped over 150 Boy Scouts earn merit badges in fly fishing. This summer, our members led by Greg Prosen & Phil Young organized the first Fly Fishing High Adventure Camp for scouts that had completed the merit badge program. This program is intended to continue our involvement in the development of fly fishing and conservation efforts of our young people. As well, Oak Brook Chapter is taking the lead role in organizing an Illinois Council TU Youth Camp.

We appreciate the welcome extended to us by Schrems WMTU members. It has been fun learning about the Coldwater River watershed, and we hope to continue as partners in your restoration efforts.

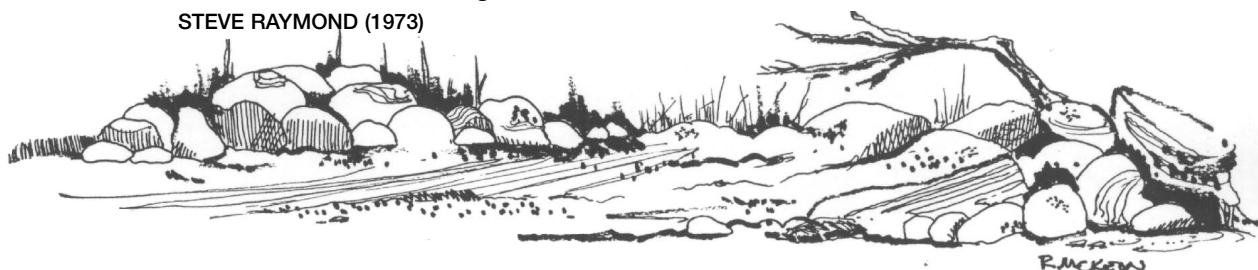
More info: <http://www.obtu.org/>



Tyler Creek Project - July 2007
Four Trout Unlimited Chapters worked together on Tyler Creek in July 2007. Volunteers from Lansing, Kalamazoo, Oak Brook, IL joined the Schrems West Michigan chapter in the work

In their old age, rivers- again like men- grow ponderous and portly, spreading out and slowing down, always moving but somehow more reluctant now to go to their destiny. But finally the river flows across the last bar and is swallowed in the sea, quickly lost in all the waters that have gone before.

STEVE RAYMOND (1973)



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MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, protect and restore West Michigan's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds and to provide a forum for the exchange of information concerning coldwater fisheries and the techniques and the sport of trout fishing.

SWMTU EVENT CALENDAR- 2008**Seminar**

January 17, 2008 • Thursday
Steve Fraley and John Karakashian from BBT

Seminar

February 7, 2008 • Thursday
Intro to Fly-Fishing and gear swap

****Annual Fundraising Banquet****
March 20, 2008 • Thursday

June 19-22, 2008

Wa Wa Sum Annual Membership Meeting

Random Thoughts From The Tying Bench

By C.W. "Don" Coleman - Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishers Newsletter

DON'T FORGET – You are free to agree, disagree, or interpret my opinions in any way you see fit. There are no fly tying police or fly fishing police. Don't be afraid to think for yourself or differ with the "experts." But do be polite about it. There are not many things you can do today that leave you completely free to do as you wish. Even take a fish home to eat once in a while—as long as it is legal to do so. Sometimes we take this ecology bit too far.

FIGHTING FISH – Suddenly you have a fish on. What do you do now? First of all I hope you struck the fish with a slip-strike and lifted the butt of the rod instead of jerking the rod tip up. The rod tip is for casting and the rod butt is for fighting fish. Most of the inshore fish wading fly fishers catch can easily be handled by stripping in the fly line with your line hand. Don't adhere to the old adage to "keep the rod tip up and get the fish on the reel." A lot of fish are lost because of that poor advice. You cannot put much pressure on a fish with the rod tip and you can blow it all trying to reel in loose line instead of fighting the fish. If you do have a large fish on, let it run and put itself on the reel. I hope you didn't set the drag up to 3 or 5 pounds as some "experts" recommend. If you did a sudden jolt will occur when the fish comes tight against the reel and that jolt could pull the hook out. Keep just enough drag on the reel so that when you jerk on the line it will not backlash. If you need more drag during the fight, use the palming rim. Fight large fish by keeping the rod tip down and pointing at the fish and fighting with the first stripping guide. It's called fighting "down and dirty." The old timers used to say "give them the butt." Even with a 12 weight tarpon rod you can only exert about 3.5 pounds on a fish with the rod tip. Whereas you can exert up to 12 pounds on a fish when fighting "down and dirty."

Don't fight a fish by pumping the rod and reeling in the line you gained. When you pressure a fish it tries very hard to fight back. You can gently apply even pressure and practically lead most fish wherever you want. Often you can remove all pressure and the fish will simply stop and wonder what's going on. Only pump the rod when you cannot move a very large fish any other way. And fly rods are not built to do this successfully.

"Stay informed- join the Email list at www.swmtu.org!"



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