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Winter 2012
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Trout Leader Basics
Winter Steelhead on California's North Coast
Southern Oregon's Williamson River
If it is Tuesday it must be The Madison

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photo: David Lass

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A twenty year veteran of the fly fishing community Lance has worked in all aspects of fly fishing. Lance with his wife Kirsten own Lance Gray & Company (www.lancegrayandcompany.com), a full service outfitter. Lance is a master fly tier, guide, instructor, author and travel agent. Lance lives in Willows, CA with his wife Kirsten and their two children Taylor and Garrett.



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Growing up in the foothills on the Sierra, Mikey's early passions were skateboarding and Fly fishing. Along with snowboarding and guiding, video making became his profession. Owner of BURL Productions and producer of FISH EYE and FISH EYE 2, in 2006 he finished his best video, SOULFISH.



From The Publisher

I start this page after just finishing my tribute page (24) for my long time friend, Dick Mobley. His passing has touched so many people in the surf, sail, ski and fly fishing sport, that he will be missed by many for along time. We still have the memories and the pictures to remind us of how much fun Dick was to be with.

This issue marks the end of the fourth year of Sierra Fisherman magazine, and proud to say the interest continues to grow as our subscribers keep coming. I don't know why the Fly Fishing manufactures don't support a publication that promotes their industry and products. Maybe I'm in the wrong business.

Any way. We continue with great stuff from Bill Forward . This time on "Leaders" that are a lot more complicated than you ever expected. Frank R. Pisciotta outlines the winter Steelhead waters in No. California that you probably never heard of. "Beyond the Crest "is back with the Williamson River in Southern Oregon. We have art work in our InSight section from Bern Sundell from Ennus, Montana. There's also a Hatch chart for Crowley and you Eastern Sierra Guys, and all the other good stuff that we do in every issue.

Our cartoonist, Scott Mobley has sent in his last cartoon as he has embarked on another venture. I hope you have enjoyed his work. It was produced exclusively for Sierra Fisherman.

Here's to 2013 and a New Year for all of us. I think it's wonderful just to be here.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Bill Forward".



photo: Chris Maher

SIERRA FISHERMAN

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A smiling man wearing a tan bucket hat, a light green long-sleeved shirt, and a grey mesh fishing vest. He is holding a large rainbow trout with both hands. The background is a forest with trees and a stream.

THE FLY FISHING Show

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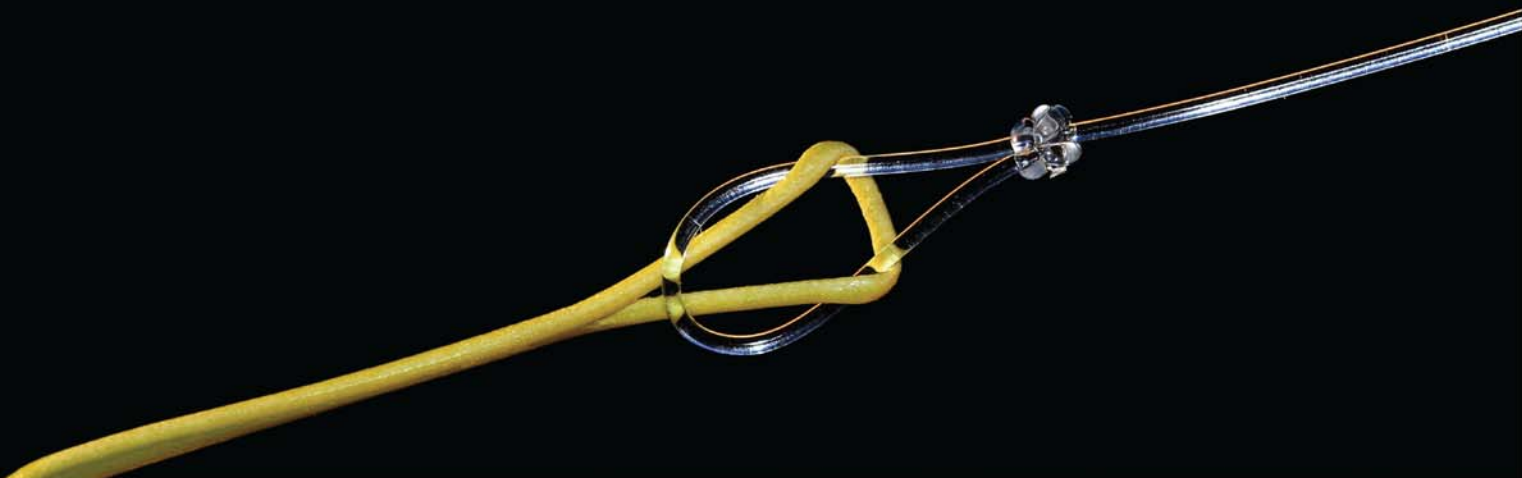
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Trout Leader Basics

By Bill Forward



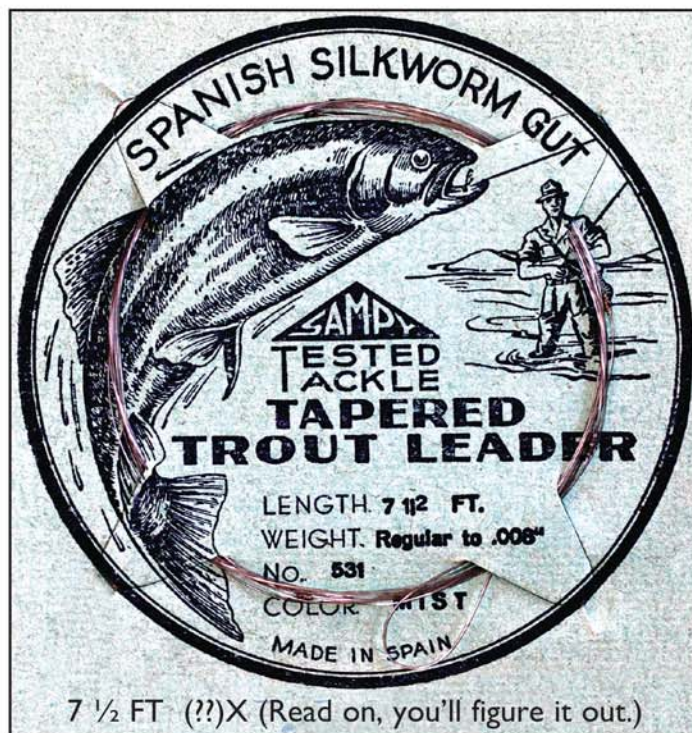
After a long hard day of fly fishing, a four foot section of 3X monofilament goes into a local tavern, climbs onto a barstool and orders a beer. The bartender, pointing to a sign posted on the wall, refuses service, saying that the establishment has a "policy against serving alcohol to tippet material". Humiliated and dejected, the monofilament leaves the bar. Once outside a thought occurs to him. Raveling, coiling, and binding one of his ends, as tippet material is known to do, the monofilament goes back into the bar, hops up onto a barstool and demands a beer. The bartender, looking the monofilament up and down, says "Aren't you the 'tippet' that was in here a couple of minutes ago?!" "No", asserted the monofilament, "I am a frayed knot!"

The days have shortened, we have had our first snow, and it occurs to me that in a distant past, this was the time of year that I would not only be replenishing my fly boxes and attending to postponed equipment needs, but also tying leaders. Regarding the latter, I believe having to research, tie and use leaders of my own construction provided a fundamental understanding of how they function.

Many who have come to fly fishing in the past 15 to 20 years have never built a leader. And that's unfortunate, because just as an understanding of the relationship between shutter speed, aperture and ASA (ISO) provides insight into using a digital camera, understanding the reasoning behind length, taper and materials arms a fly fisher with the ability to analyze needs and purchase an appropriate leader.

Leader Function

Fly fishing is about energy transfer and presenting a fly to its target. The energy put into a cast should travel efficiently from the rod to the line, to the leader, to added tippet to deliver the fly. That is the primary role of tapered leaders... energy transfer. Ideally, that energy should transfer in a straight line. Leaders are also thinner and very transparent compared to the fly lines, two other valued characteristics. Nevertheless, they are also the weakest link between trout and you!

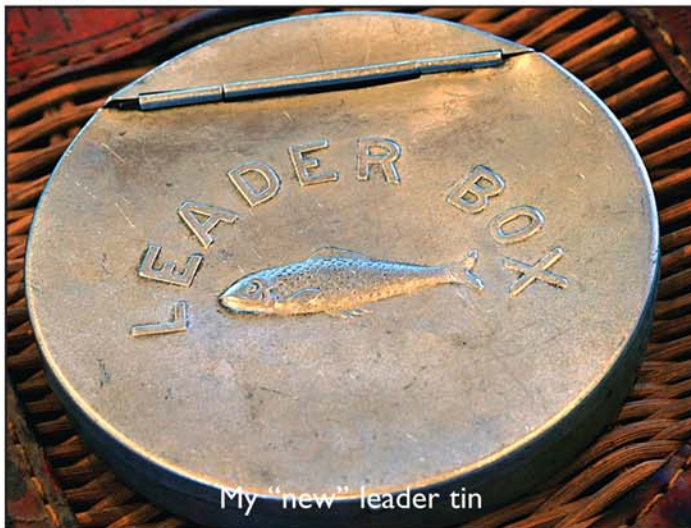


A Little History

I am not advocating returning to the past and making one's own leaders, especially after considering the following excerpt discovered on MidCurrent's website. It is from H. P. Wells's *Fly-Rods and Fly-Tackle* (1885) and describes how silk glands were harvested in the early 1800's to make the esteemed Spanish "Silkworm Gut" leaders.

"Their first step is to free the gut from such portions of the ruptured envelope as may adhere to it. Formerly this was done by drawing the gut between the teeth, and thus stripping off this refuse, but chemical processes are said now largely to have superseded this. The eyewitness, to whom I am indebted for this information, describes the old method as a most disgusting spectacle. The rows of women and girls drawing the entrails of this caterpillar through their teeth, their mouths smeared with blood from the cuts inflicted by the thin gut, mingled with the offal scraped from it by their teeth — spitting and drawing, and spitting again — must indeed be far from a pleasant sight."

Though not at its original \$.60 price, the excerpt inspired me to seek out and purchase a circa 1940 Spanish silkworm gut leader. However, as with all silkworm gut leaders, it would be too brittle to cast without an hour of pre-soaking in my "new" leader tin between felt pads.



My "new" leader tin

I later discovered that Wells' next paragraph was, *"I would much rather go a-fishing."* I whole heartedly concur... I too would much rather 'go a-fishing'! All the same, this classic is available online at Google eBooks and will provide you with an very interesting winter read.

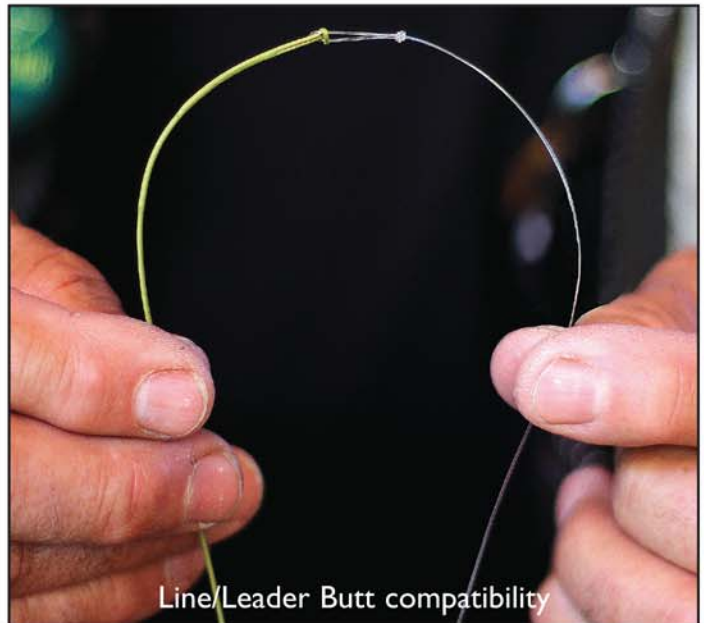
LEADER STRUCTURE

After WW II, Nylon replaced silkworm gut as the materials of choice for making leaders, and in the late forty's, though probably better known for his hotels, fly fishing author Charles Ritz published his 60-20-20 leader formula. Ritz proposed that leaders should be composed of a 60% thick-level butt section, 20% of a rapidly tapering mid section and 20% of a fine tip section... generic, but workable to this day.

The Butt

Ideally, the stiffness of the butt section of a leader should be similar to the stiffness of the end of the fly line. When asked about the consequences of a mismatch, John Harder of Rio Products said, "Trout fly lines are suppler than saltwater lines. Subsequently, trout leaders are made with a suppler material than saltwater leaders. If the stiffness of the leader butt and the line are radically different, the energy does not flow evenly from the line to the leader and can cause the leader to hinge where it is attached to the line, or the leader tip to fail to turn over."

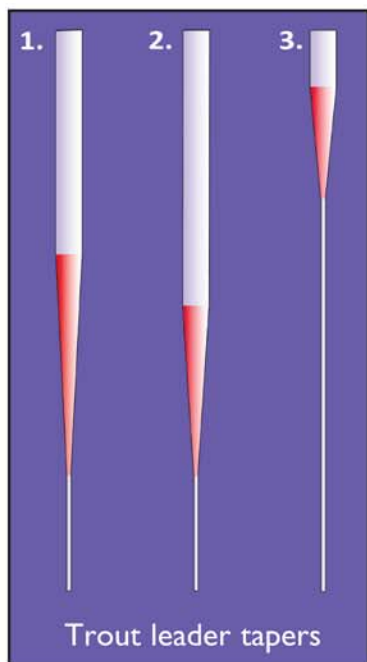
That answer prompted the question: Do butt diameters differ between commercially available 1X leaders and 6X leaders? "Yes," John replied, "the butt diameter varies 0.003" to 0.005" through the range. The reason for doing so is the industry makes the assumption that anglers will be using a heavier weight line with a 0X leader than with a 6X leader so butt diameters are decreased to better match the diameter of the line tip."



Line/Leader Butt compatibility

The compatibility of a line/leader combination is easily tested by holding up the end of the fly line in one hand and the butt section of the attached leader in the other. Hold them in such a way that equal lengths of line and leader form an arch. Good line/leader compatibility results in a relatively balanced and equal curve. Assess all your lines. Secondly, if need be, don't hesitate to take a line or two into a fly shop and compare various brands of leaders. Tell them I sent you... seriously!

The above analysis may also shed light on your leader to line connections. Lines now have welded loops, and because of that the majority of anglers now use loop to loop attachments. Nevertheless, whether by a nail knot or Zap-A-Gap super glue, there is still a significant number of fly anglers who prefer attaching a ten inch butt section (e.g. 30 lb red Amnesia, depending on line wt.) to their fly lines and blood knotting leaders to it.



The Taper

Leader tapers can be designed and situated to turnover a small fly subtly, a big fly aggressively, or a group of flies in a straight line, and manufacturers offer a litany of trout leaders to that aim. Note the position and length of taper in the following scenario/leader examples.

1. A very delicate presentation is needed for dries, nymphs and emergers. Consider a leader of a soft material with a subtle taper, 40% Butt, 40% Taper, 20% Tip.

2. An all-around freshwater leader is needed for dries, nymphs and streamers. Consider a leader of medium-stiffness material and a semi-aggressive taper, 50% Butt, 30% Taper, 20% Tip.

3. When indicator fishing a specialty leader may make the turn-over a lot smoother. Consider a leader of a soft material and specialty taper, 10% Butt, 20% Taper, 70% Tip.

The Tip End

As you know, knotless tapered leaders are marketed in specific lengths and an X factor designation of the tip end, e.g. 9 ft. 4X. What you may not know is that the X designation is a remnant from when the silkworm entrails described previously were woven and drawn through sizing holes, with each successive draw reducing their diameter .001 inches. That is why the higher the X numbers the thinner the tippet. A 3X tippet had been drawn three times, and a 5X tippet had been drawn two more times, subsequently making 5X the thinner of the two. (The letter X was, and is, the mathematical symbol for times.)

The **Rule of Eleven** states that subtracting the X factor number from 11 will provide the diameter of tippet in thousandths of an inch, e.g. 1X has a diameter of .010", 2X has a diameter of .009", etc. Obviously, 11 minus 0 equals 11, so initially silkworm innards were apparently woven to .011"... a 0X tippet. Assuming you don't have the intestinal fortitude to stomach much more silkworm gut nostalgia, I'll stop here.

Between and within manufactures, tippet material varies in strength for identical X factors. However, 3X tippet should have a diameter of .008" no matter what company produces it. That is important knowledge for adding additional tippet to a purchased leader, which we generally do to make our comparatively expensive leaders last longer. Alas, many anglers that transition from spin fishing to fly fishing tend to think and talk in

terms of "lbs. test", an aspect of which fly anglers are aware, but don't brood over.

Understanding that there is inconsistency in strengths within X designations and materials used to make tippets also sheds light on why it is considered wise to match the brand leader with the brand of added tippet. Of course, attaching Fluorocarbon to traditional monofilament may call that point into question.

LEADER SELECTION

Often clients ask, "What leaders should I bring?" That question can be answered for any fly fishing situation by considering the following factors in the sequence they are presented; these are the steps to follow in selecting an appropriate leader.



1. **Length** Choosing the length is the first step. Consider the following:

6 foot Sinking lines (Type 3 thru high speed lines); lakes and small streams; nymphs and streamers.

7 ½ foot Sinking Lines, Intermediates, Sink tips; lakes and streams; nymphs and streamers.

9 foot Floating and Sinking lines; large streams and lakes; dry flies, nymphs, and streamers.

12 foot Floating and Sinking lines; lakes and very clear rivers; small dries, and small nymphs.

There are situations when an angler can get away with using level material, "Po'Boy" leaders as Harder calls them. When using sinking and sinking tip fly lines it is sometimes recommended that the leader be no more than 5 ft long so the fly is presented at the same depth as the tip of the line, e.g. 5 ft. of 1X Rio Powerflex. When using lighter tippets, the angler can make a 2 piece leader, e.g. 2 ft of 3X and 2 ft of 5X of Rio Powerflex.

2. **X Factor** This is very dependent on size of fly and size of trout pursued. Rule of 4 for fatter, heavier flies... dividing the fly size by 4 provides a tippet X factor starting point. Rule of 3 for thinner, lighter flies... dividing the fly size by 3 provides a tippet X factor starting point.

3. **Taper** Select an aggressive taper for heavier loads, and subtle taper for lighter flies and gentle presentations.

4. **Special Purpose** Leaders may be available for your specific need, e.g. indicator leaders.

5. **Material** This is the elephant in the room. It comes down to Nylon monofilament v. Fluorocarbon. Understand the following before committing.

Abrasion Resistance: Fluorocarbon seems to have more abrasion resistance than Nylon mono and that may be one of its greatest virtues.

Refractive Index: When light travels from one medium to another it bends. The extent of the bend is called the Refractive Index (RI). For an object to be invisible in water it would have to have the same RI as water, 1.33. Neither Fluorocarbon (RI: 1.42) or Nylon mono (RI: 1.55) do, and therefore are both visible in water. Nevertheless, Fluorocarbon's RI is closer to that of water, and therefore may be somewhat less visible to a trout.



Dispose of all leader material wisely!

Environmental Impact: It is estimated that Nylon mono takes 600 years to biodegrade and Fluorocarbon will take 4,000 years to break down. I believe this is the single best argument for not using Fluorocarbon. Nevertheless, even 600 years is too long. Properly dispose of tippet material.

Specific Gravity: Fluorocarbon has a higher specific gravity than Nylon mono. Therefore, Fluorocarbon will sink faster if the diameters are equal... good for streamers, nymphs and chironomids.

Ultraviolet Degradation: Nylon mono degrades when exposed to UV light, as much as 20% in the first 100 hours. Tippet spools carelessly left in the sun or on lanyards will easily receive that amount of exposure. Fluorocarbon is unaffected by UV light, nevertheless the tensile of both are effected by heat!

Cost: Nylon mono costs up to \$5.95 for a 33 yd. spool of tippet material, with Fluorocarbon costing up to \$15.99 for the same amount.




Tippet ring (3X Tippet)

Lastly, I purchase leaders knowing I am going to add tippet, and I rarely skip over more than one X factor doing so. Regarding the attachment, I use blood knots for adding tippet material larger than 2X and a triple overhand knot for everything smaller. Yes, there are times when I have used small tippet rings. Tippet rings and swivels are great for saving the center pegs on releasing indicators (or attaching Nylon to Fluorocarbon, for those that worry about such things). Unfortunately, trout do strike them.

PARTING THOUGHTS

- If a kinked leader just won't straighten... Change it, and don't store it so tightly on your reel next time.
- If your dry fly and tippet fall back on your leader, and an application of more power would only spook fish... Shorten your tippet by a foot or increase tippet diameter by one X factor.
- If a drag free drift is challenging... Increase your tippet's length, and/or use a reach cast or pile cast.
- If your fly "dumps" or turns over too aggressively (a symptom most often seen when an angler ties on a new tippet to the leader), the problem may be that the diameter of the leader's tip is too large compared to the tippet's diameter. Add an 8" to 10" piece of intermediate tippet to the leader's tip to better balance the system.

I want to thank John Harder of Rio Products for the time he took to answer my questions, and I want to reinforce with you how crucial selecting a reliable leader truly is. Character, consistency, and dependability are essential. Always choose a leader wisely by doing your own research, not allowing another's bias to sway you. You deserve a leader that will be steadfast and true, whether for several months, or four more years. 



Winter Steelhead on California's North Coast

By Frank R. Pisciotta

SawMill Joe, hooked-up at dusk

During winter, when most of us mountain folk's waters are under snow-cover or way too cold for trout...or our liking; there are numerous angling opportunities available if there is a need to wet a line. Seek waters that are accessible; the west-slope or east-side of the Sierra, valley tail-waters or California's north coast steelhead streams.

California fly anglers are eternally hopeful that their favorite steelhead streams will receive sufficient moisture during the winter to supercharge upstream migrations and surges of "bright", sea-run steelhead. We are all aware of the marque waters of the Klamath, Trinity, Eel, Feather and Smith rivers. Less attention is on the lesser-known, smaller streams. For those of us who prefer a more intimate fly angling setting for steelhead; the northern California "coastals" can provide the experience we desire in the middle of winter. Late October will produce the smaller, fall-run fish while the months of December, January and early February will experience rushes of the larger winter steelhead.

These streams can be off-limits at different times due to low flows or the inlet sand-bars being closed. The newly-named "California Department of Fish & Wildlife" will have the openings/closures on its web-site (www.dfg.ca.gov.org). The small streams require barbless hooks, and all wild fish must be released. You can take a hatchery fish if present; look for a fin clip, usually the adipose. I cannot over-emphasize; consult the regulations they are convoluted. Bring a good map to navigate and locate access roads off the one-lane, incredibly scenic Highway 1 which hugs the coast.

The prime window of opportunity can be short-lived, and at times, intense. Being on the water during these optimum times is critical since conditions can change quickly. Ideally one is connected to a local grapevine and has the opportunity to move quickly. You want to be on the water when the migrating runs are moving upstream or "stacking" while awaiting the next freshet; both are occasions when they can be most "grabby".

"Old-style", single-handed rod methods and gear still apply; full sinkers, sink-tips, "integrated" heads, hybrid or modified lines, in densities ranging from intermediate to extra-fast. Indicator fishing is used; dead-drifting a spectrum of flies including traditional Comet-types, drab bead-heads and Glo-bugs.

There is now more use of two-handed rods and the historically traditional wet-fly swing. There are two schools of thought on methods; there is no space to discuss the pros and cons here. One theory...subject to debate...is that steelhead prefer a naturally-drifted item rather than a fly that swings into them, regardless of speed. Also they are less likely to be spooked. Some say the swings works best with "aggressive" fish.

The tips and comments provided in this article would not be possible without the sage advice of my long-time trout fishing buddy David Foster; one of the most complete fly anglers I've ever met. He has lived on the Mendocino coast for the last 40 years; settling in the hamlet of Albion and has been pursuing steelhead with a fly rod on the north coast the entire time. He knows these waters well.

Here's a quick run-down of thoughts and what to expect on the coastals:

ALBION RIVER---The Albion is the quickest clearing coastal stream, contrary to popular belief that the Garcia clears faster. The Albion can be divided into two sections: the estuary, which is best fished from a boat, and the upper reaches, where there is very little holding water. Additionally there is lots of posted private property. When there is no private property, there are few access roads.

BIG RIVER---This stream is best fished from a boat. The bulk of the fish will be encountered in the lower section. The further you move upstream, the fewer fish you will find. There are few riffles; mostly deep, slow pools.

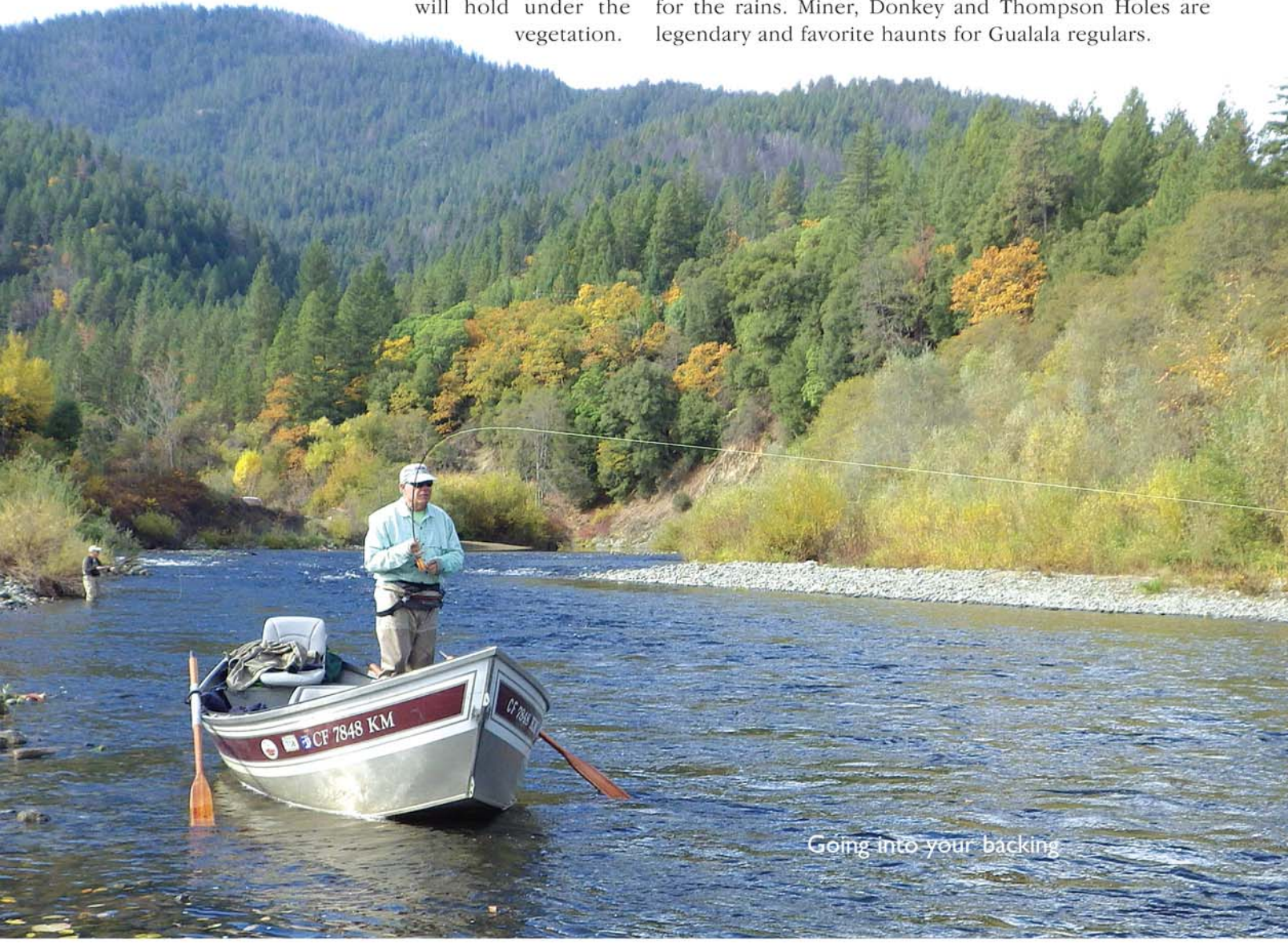
GARCIA RIVER---Here, the water color is the indicator as to when the stream is on the cusp of being fly fishable. The preferred hue is a "grey-green". This tint is also the breakpoint when drifting ceases; within 4-5 days of a storm. Then the stream is suitable for wade fishing. Whether floating or wading, locate bankside willows with 3-4 feet in depth, the steelies will hold under the vegetation.

The river can be divided into two sections. First is the lower portion from the Highway 1 bridge to the ocean; a bit more than a mile before it slows and loses river characteristics as it enters the estuary. Here the tides affect the movement of the migrating fish. They pause and acclimate to the water chemistry while high tides move fresher salt fish into the system. They will head upriver when the rains commence.

The upper part of the river is from the Highway 1 overpass to the "gravel plant". Access is limited in this area. If you park at the gravel plant, get a parking permit at the plant office. Display it in your vehicle or risk the displeasure and inconvenience, of being towed to a bum@#\$\$ storage yard somewhere along the coast.

David suggests you use your favorite pattern, but make sure it incorporates ginger colors. Add sparkle-dubbing or Krystal-flash of that hue. This suggestion is most important in the tidal area.

GUALALA RIVER---When there is a high-wave surge on this stream, the mouth of the river will plug-up with sand. The ideal scenario is high-tide with LOW swells. Then the fish surge into the tidewater, acclimate to the chemistry of the freshwater, shake-off sea-lice, and wait for the rains. Miner, Donkey and Thompson Holes are legendary and favorite haunts for Gualala regulars.



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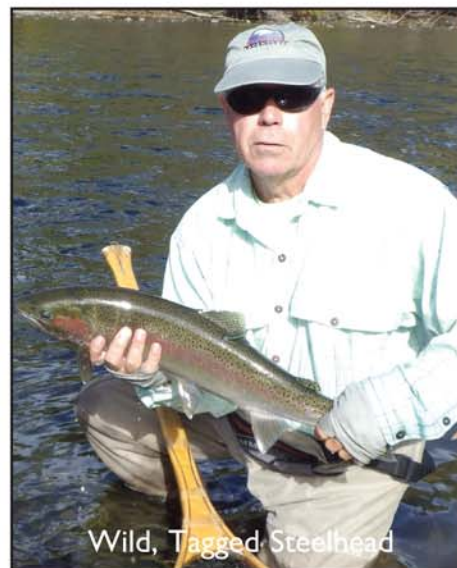


Hatchery Steelhead

Please note that floating devices are not allowed below the North Fork to the Highway 1 Bridge from November 15 to February 28.

MATTOLE RIVER--The Mattole is free-flowing, there are no dams. Further, all its steelhead are wild. There is ZERO kill on this water. There is very little angling pressure here because the watershed receives copious amounts of rain; making it the least fishable of the coastal rivers. A reliable contact is advised if one intends to be on the water at the precious prime-times.

NAVARRO RIVER---Of the north coast streams, the Navarro is the least affected by official closures. The entire river is accessed from Highway 128. The fish in the system can be



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spooky because of the easy access to the runs and pools and the general clarity of the water. Look for the classic green coloration 3-4 days after a good downpour. Then the ironheads are then more approachable and less skittish.

NOYO RIVER---There is little sustained angling on the Noyo. The upstream runs come in short 1-2 day bursts. If you are not here when it happens, "forgetaboutit". Consequently, most of the fish are hooked and landed by locals who are connected to the grapevine. If not connected, prospect the tidal area which is strictly a boating proposition. Fresh steelies will hold here longer than the other north coast streams.

Wading anglers use a unique access vehicle here: the "Skunk Train" which travels the entire Noyo Canyon. It picks up and drops off anglers at any spot along the river. Good areas are below the tributary inflows such as Hayshed Gulch, Little North Fork and the South Fork. The fish will stack-up at the tributary inflows before ascending into their natal waters.

REDWOOD CREEK---This stream, which is south of Eureka, lost its productivity since the bulk of funding decreased for its hatchery program in the mid-90's. There are wild fish here, but not many. If they are present, ply the few miles between Prairie Creek and tidewater. The migrating steelhead will hold in this area acclimating while awaiting higher flows. Timing is more critical on this small waterway than the other coastal because of the extensive logging-related erosion and concurrent turbidity factor.

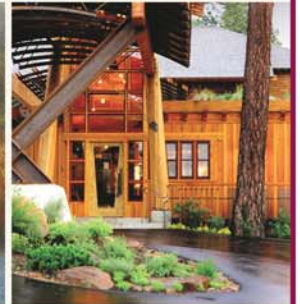
Like all our pursuit of steelhead, if our timing is dead-on, it can be Nirvana.



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Southern Oregon's Williamson River

By Chris Renzullo



Oregon's Williamson River is probably one of trout fishing's best kept secrets. If you are looking for the opportunity to catch a trophy trout of a lifetime, then this river in the Klamath River Basin will not disappoint. Each year the Williamson gives up multiple fish with weights in double digits to fly fishermen willing to put in the time. Located approximately 30 miles north of Klamath Falls, the Williamson River flows through the town of Chiloquin and into Upper Klamath Lake.

I went to school at Oregon State University in Corvallis, Oregon where I became an avid fly fisherman. I had heard stories about this mysterious river, its large fish, and challenging fishing. But the lack of public access and a boat kept me away. Two states and ten years later, I found my back to southern Oregon and I have finally become acquainted with the river where fly fishing legends like Polly Rosborough and Bob Quigley have fished before me.

The Williamson River runs cool and extremely clear, resembling many spring creeks. Anglers are required to make long casts, with long leaders to even have a hope of getting a strike from the Williamson's large but spookable fish. Persistence is the key, as well as a general knowledge of the area.

Chiloquin to Water Wheel Campground

The four mile stretch of river from the public boat launch downstream to the Water Wheel Campground is possibly the best known, and most productive, stretch of

the river. As Klamath Lake heats up and the weeds begin to grow, the lake's large fish begin to push into the river. These fish are commonly twenty inches or more, with some easily weighing over ten pounds.

You can access and wade the river at the public access, but this stretch is best fished from a boat since the river is banked by private property. A word of caution; the public launch is by no means an easy launch. The ramp is no more than a worn spot on the bank that drops about six feet. Back your trailer to the edge and slowly, back it down the bank. You will then need to set your parking break as you lower your boat to the river.

The river above the launch is broken up by underwater ledges and as the season lengthens, fish migrating from the lake will rest in these pools as well as below the riffle about 150 yards upstream. The Sprague River enters the Williamson just south of the center of Chiloquin. Early in the season, and depending on the Sprague River's flow, there will be a constant barrage of green muck floating down the river. As the flows in the Sprague decrease, so does the muck. There are no rapids on the river but you will have to maneuver around and through some ledges and boulders, as well as a few riffles. Look for fish in these areas, along with the deep pools, and along the edges.

The fish in the Williamson River are large, and therefore they are looking for a large meal. Streamer patterns that resemble leeches, sculpins, crayfish, and chubs, as well as wooley buggers in black, olive, and

brown are recommended. As already mentioned, the likelihood of hooking a trophy sized fish is high, so 5wt, 6wt, and 7wt rods are the norm. When fishing streamers, an intermediate sinking line and a long leader, sometimes 12 to 15 feet of 5X fluorocarbon, are used. If you do not have a sinking line, you can get away with a floating line but remember to use a long leader. And that because the Williamson is extremely clear and slow, these fish have plenty of time to thoroughly inspect your offering. Make your cast quartering downstream and then retrieve it with short strips, allowing enough time for your fly to drop.

The lower end of this stretch of the river is known for its Hexagenia hatch. The Hexagenia mayfly, or Hex for short, begins to show up around the Fourth of July, but it depends on water temperatures. You will find these large mayflies emerging where the river bottom is mud and silt. A floating line, and a strong 2X or 3X leader will do. The Hex hatches well into the evening, so you can fish with a heavier leader without spooking the fish. Cast towards the bank, and intermittently twitch your fly. If it is dark and you cannot see your fly, listen for a take that sounds like a five gallon bucket scooping water where you would expect your fly to be, set the hook, and be prepared for a large head shake.

Besides streamers and the Hex hatch, you will find PMD's, caddis, Tricos, midges, and terrestrials throughout the river system. When casting to these fish do not be surprised if you have to drop to 6 and 7X tippet. Make your casts well above the rising fish and try to get as dead a drift as possible. This can be tricky on the Williamson because there seem to be numerous currents at play. If you put the fish down, do not get too discouraged. Give them a few minutes and more than likely they will begin to rise again.

Collier Park to Chiloquin

The Williamson River from Collier Park to Chiloquin is approximately a three mile float. There is no public boat ramp but anglers can access the river at Collier Park and launch pontoons. Making this section of the river

difficult to fish is the lack of public property. You cannot fish from a flotation device on this section of the river and there is no public access downstream, so it is extremely important to have a takeout planned before you float this section.

When the Williamson River opens in late May, the water in this stretch of the river has a tea color to it. This allows for anglers to use a heavier tippet than during the summer months when the Williamson reverts to its spring creek resemblance. There are a number of resident fish in this stretch, but the later part of the season sees the influx of the large, lake fish.

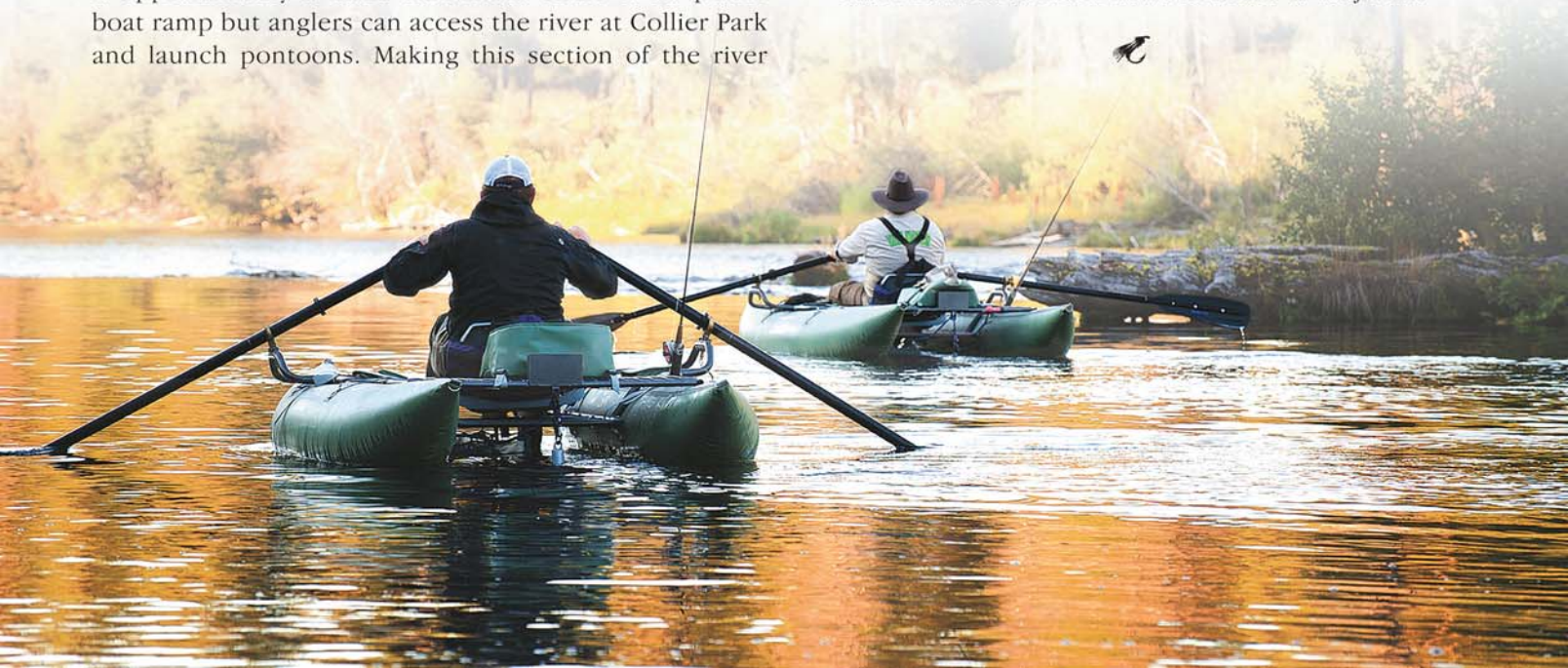
The Upper Williamson River above Klamath Marsh

From the head of the river to the Klamath Marsh, the Williamson River is a relatively small to medium-sized spring creek. There are approximately two miles of public water to fish in the upper river around Deep Creek. This section of the river is not navigable, so be aware of your surroundings and pay attention to private property signs. You cannot wade through private property. The Upper Williamson River is well known for its Black Drake hatch and spinner fall. You can also find Hexagenia, PMD, caddis, and Trico hatches.

If the allure of trophy sized trout and challenging fishing are what you are looking for, then the Williamson River in southern Oregon's Klamath Basin is the place for you. Chiloquin's elevation is 4217 feet, so if you are staying in the Chiloquin area, you can expect the summer temperatures in the afternoon to range between 70 and 80 degrees. The morning lows are in the 40's. Be prepared for possible thunder showers in the afternoon and evening and bring plenty of sunscreen. There are two small grocery stores, a gas station, and a hardware store in Chiloquin.

Chris Renzullo

Currently guide for Tailwater Fisheries in Oregon on the Williamson and Wood rivers as well as on the Yuba River in California.



The River by Night

by Jacob Bradshaw

"This is a stonefly. See the forked tail? Oh look. Here're some caddis cocoons. Oop and there's a caddis nymph. Right there. Right There. See that Jake?"

I pick up my own stone out of the river. The water is cold, and the early evening breeze only makes my hand colder. I flip the smooth river rock over. A few bugs slither to the underside. Apparently trout eat them.

"Yeah. I see em. Can we go soon?"

My dad catches fish by imitating the stuff that trout eat. And now he is showing me what they eat. It is getting late and I am cold. He continues to make casts. The rhythm is broken by a sudden tension on his line and his brief whoop. He has hooked one. After a short fight and even shorter de-hooking, he releases the rainbow trout into the cold river. The trout gasps for air while resting in my Dad's muscular hands, then shoots back into the current.

"Dad? Dad? Can we go? I'm gettin' hungry."

"Just a few more casts," he assures me, "Just a few more."

My dad parks his Range Rover on the shoulder of the road. The rocks crackle as the tires displace them. The SUV is always full of his fishing gear. He carries a duffel bag full of waders, boots, extra flies, fly line, reels, and jackets. He leaves three rods assembled with nymphing rigs set up. He fishes all the time: before he goes in to the hospital for work, after he leaves, and if he took a lunch break, he would fish during that too. He is always stressed; fishing relaxes him.

I now love going out on the river, especially late in the evening. It is not a particularly rural area: the lights and sounds of trucks rolling down the highway are always noticeable, but

the natural beauty of the river is not smothered by the human developments. At that time of night, the river gradually becomes black. The only way I know it is there are wakes that the boulders make in the flow. Only that and the occasional hatching fly and the rise of a rainbow trout distinguish the river from the sky. A warm breeze from the east shakes the willow trees that grow in abundance near the river.

When I fish at night, I can only hear and feel. I cannot see the trout take my fly. I can hear only the slight slurp of the rise, and the tension on the fly line. I can feel the rocks underneath my feet. They are not slippery, but they are round and often shift under my weight. My father is usually upstream from me; he fishes much more slowly than I do. I admire his patience. He fishes every ripple, every sinew in the river; deftly mending and meticulously casting to every different current and eddy. He can x-ray the water, CAT scan it even, to find the pockets of still water created by the protection of a boulder; pockets where his Bead Headed Prince Nymph is likely to be eaten by a strong, oblong, rainbow trout with a big hooked lip.

I look back up the river. I see the silhouette of my Dad, belly-button-deep in water, His left hand extended as high as possible to maintain tension on the line, right hand dipping down into the water to slide under the belly of the trout and gently raise it out of the water in order to remove the barbless hook and release it. We have been fishing for thirty minutes. He always catches more fish than I do. Always.

An hour and a half later, I still haven't caught a fish. I try not to get frustrated, but it is hard when I hear a short holler from upstream every fifteen casts. I know the fish are there, just underneath the surface of the obsidian water.

"Shall we?" I hear from upstream, "I'm gettin' tired."

"Just a few more casts, Dad. Just a few more."



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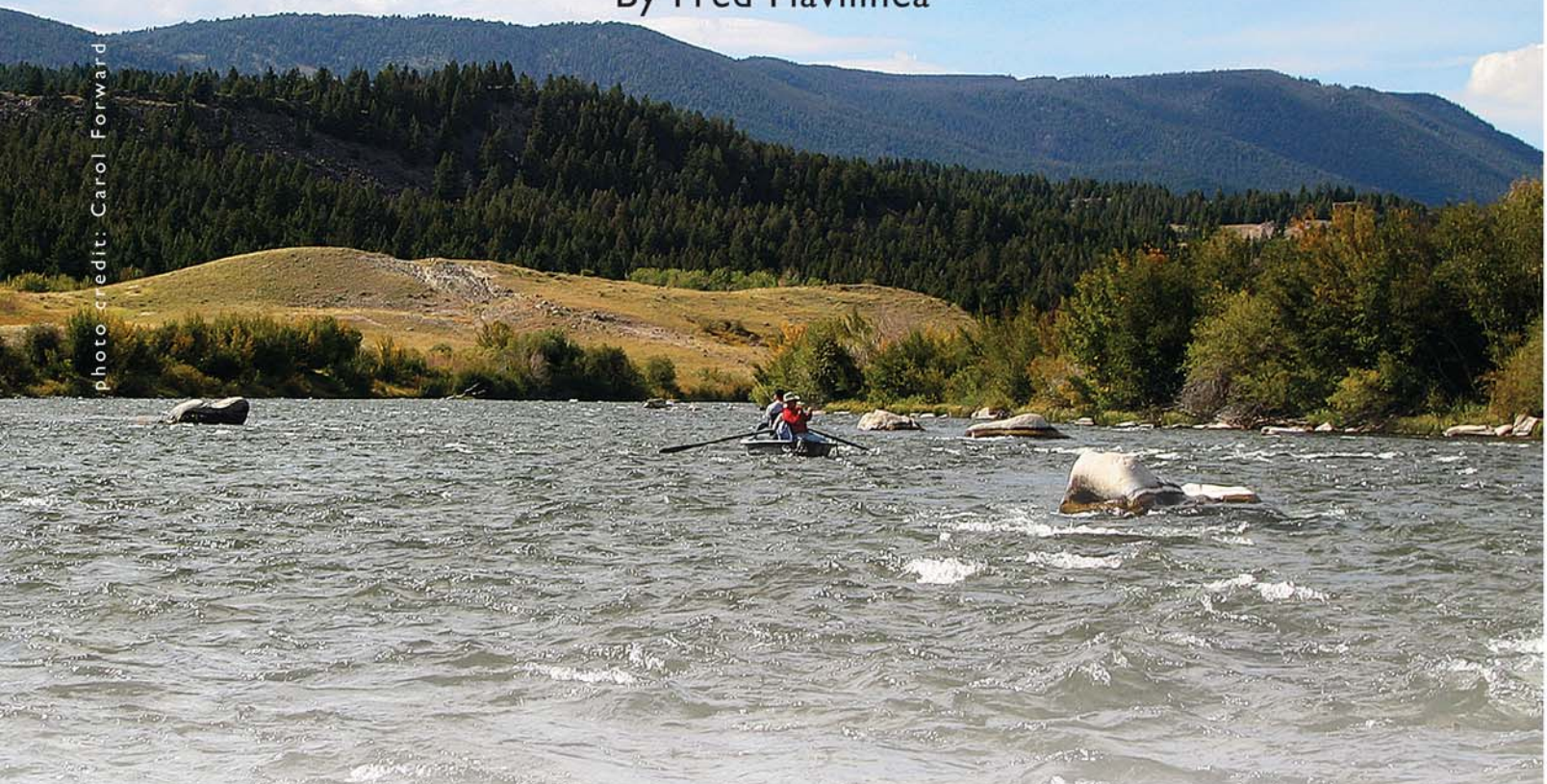
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If it is Tuesday it must be The Madison

By Fred Flavilinea

photo credit: Carol Forward



I almost got a divorce on my honey-moon.

Unfortunately we (...more likely me) selected Yellowstone Park as the venue for our first extended traveling trip together as a newly-minted, married couple. We both loved the outdoors and nature, so it seemed a likely place to visit since neither of us had been there. An added attraction was fewer crowds during early Fall. Per Karen's tacit approval, I brought a minimal amount fly fishing gear...just in case. At the time I was unaware of the potential collateral damage Yellowstone Park could possibly provide to my new marriage.

Karen and I were so much in love. Of the two of us, just I was in love with fly fishing. We married during my early, obsessive immersion into fly fishing. Matter of fact, all three of my new brothers-in-law were into fly fishing; such eased my transition and acceptance into my new extended family. During our courting, the ladies played games while the men indulged in their passion of pursuing trout with a fly rod.

I had a voracious appetite for reading anything related to trout fly fishing. At the time there were few video tapes available (VHS is what they were called) and similarly few of the audio-only variety. So I read a lot and lived vicariously in the famous waters, of which Yellowstone Park was a major, fly angling fantasy destination.

My first inkling of being conflicted was when we stopped for a snack and drinks at a grocery store at Island Park, Idaho. Up the road was a bridge crossing over the Henry's Fork of the Snake! Geez; visions of big, bank-feeding rainbows, smashing hopper patterns at the surface on slow, flat-water got my adrenalin pumping. It was noon and I made a feeble request to my new partner that I'd like to stop at the bridge, wader-up, walk the half-mile upstream and fly fish famous Harriman Ranch area for a couple of hours. It did not fly (no pun intended); Karen wanted to get to West Yellowstone, get settled into our reserved motel room and stroll around town before dinner.

The early arrival worked just fine because we had an opportunity to walk around the center of town; where most of the fly shops were located; Bud Lily's, Blue-Ribbon Flies and Pat Barnes's Fly Shop; three nationally known fly shops. Karen was being really patient since we had spent more of our time in the fly shops than the various other tourist attractions in town.

As we walked back to our motel we came to fly fishing guide Bob Jacklin's small store. With a quizzical, brief expression of "not another fly shop?!" on Karen's angelic face, we entered, hand-in-hand, briefly browsed, and I purchased the current issue of Fly Fisherman magazine. On the cover was a beautiful image of a fly angler

gracefully casting a fly in the Firehole River in the Park. The feature article was "Fall in Yellowstone Park"...I read it intently.

The essay spoke of the Madison River being productive water to fish streamers for aggressive, pre-spawn, early fall-run browns. According to a printed map accompanying the writing, the Madison's "Barn Holes" were located just inside the park boundary. Our motel room was within a mile from the Park's entrance gates. Really early Tuesday morning, while my spouse was blissfully sleeping, I jumped out of bed...as quietly as possible... and entered the Park. I fished streamers for a couple hours, not a touch. I then returned to the motel to awaken the bride.

That morning we had breakfast in town, entered the Park at its West entrance and drove to the Park's Old Faithful Inn; a Depression-era CCC work project. Getting there we drove past the Madison, the junction of the Firehole and Gibbons rivers, then along the Firehole. The panorama had my mind wandering as I attempted to stay on track of our oohs and aahs conversation as we passed the beautiful scenery.

The hotel lobby was magnificent, constructed with huge, timber supports and rafters and several massive fireplaces, surrounded by second floor balcony with gnarled, polished wood railings. Floor to ceiling was at least 80 feet; immense and impressive. Exiting from there into the room area was not as awesome. The hallways were a soothing colored lime-green; the sort of hue they have in mental institutions. Being a medical professional, Karen concurred and stated that the transition from lobby to room seemed like swift change from rugged nostalgia to a therapeutic mental asylum. The room was Spartan. We did not care, all we needed was a conjugal bed.

The Inn is at the center of the most noted geothermal area of the Park; featuring its name-sake Old Faithful geyser which was situated right behind the hotel. This became our base-camp for the next four days. I was thinking of when my next opportunity of wetting a line, diplomatically, would present itself.

Wednesday was a touring day; driving to Yellowstone Lake, walking through the "village" area and sighting the numerous Cutthroat from the bridge that spanned the outflow creating the headwaters of the Yellowstone River.

That Thursday, after viewing the geological wonders in the Mud Volcano area we had an al-fresco lunch at the Buffalo Ford picnic area right at a river-side table... perfect. This provided a seamless opportunity to slip into the Yellowstone for an attempt at fulfilling a "must do"; fooling a Yellowstone Cutthroat. I settled-in at a comfortable distance from other fly anglers plying the same long riffle. Here I experienced a "first" in my fly angling career; several large trout idly swaying side-to-side, below my downstream wake, feeding. These fish were acclimated to, at the time unbeknownst to me and

later coined the San Juan Shuffle, of buffalo crossing the water, none were present. Oh, Buffalo Ford...duh.

Eventually I fooled, hooked and landed one at 18 inches. I was elated; mission accomplished. That evening at the Inn we had at a romantic supper, cuddled in front one of the huge fireplaces, and went to the asylum area for some frolicking and restful sleep.

On Friday I bargained for some mid-morning fly fishing on the Firehole; downriver of the Inn where the geothermal heating had less effect. Later we would enjoy a nice picnic along-side the tree-lined Nez Perce Creek; the Firehole's main tributary.

The Firehole was low and crystal clear. I quickly noticed that stealth was needed because as I walked-out into open meadow, cautiously away from the high banks of the meandering stream, trout scurried away. This was not going to be easy. I saw a pod of rhythmically feeding surface-feeders. A down-stream presentation wasn't going to work; the trout were too wary. Being a lefty and on the left bank, I had to make a long, upstream, negative-curve cast, a skill that I was not proficient with at the time. I attached a flush-floating BWO pattern. I tried and tried; no luck.

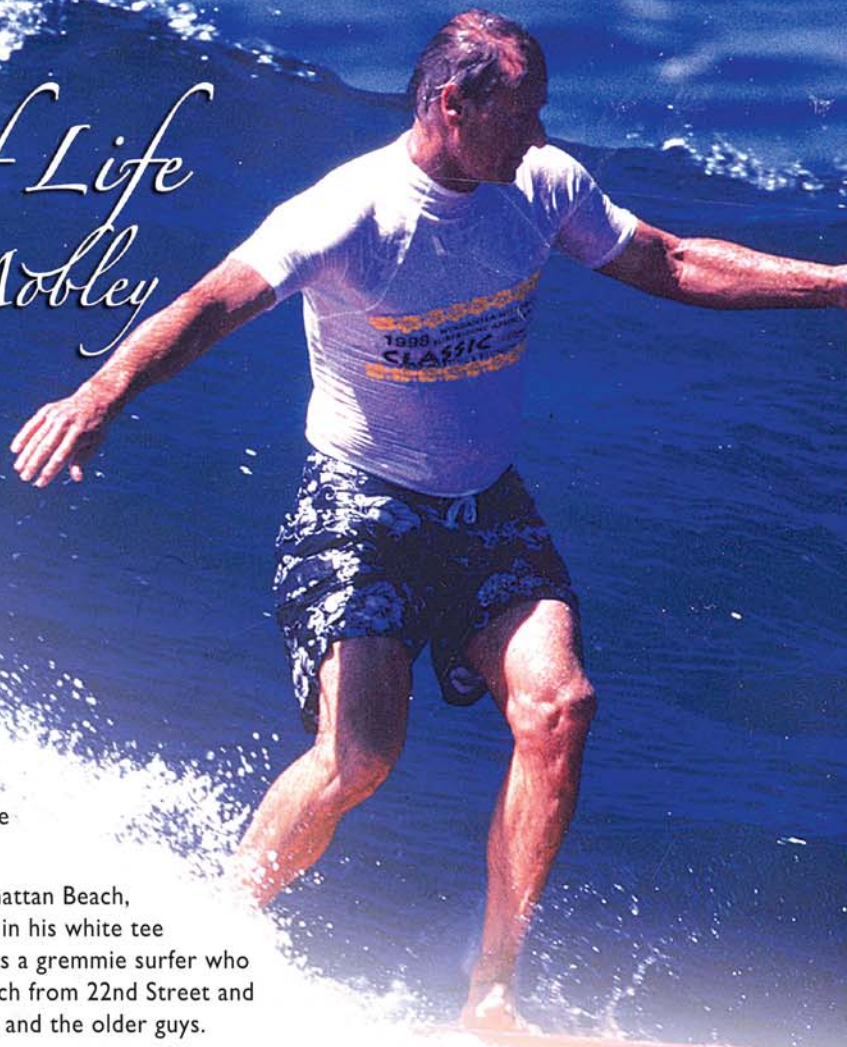
We had a pleasant lunch at Nez Perce Creek. The fly rod was left in the car; intentionally. At times I was a bit distracted by good-sized browns in the riffles and pools. Saturday was a travel day; we left the Inn and headed for Mammoth Springs Hotel near the North Entrance to the Park. On the way we passed the Gibbon River; I got a "hall-pass" to fish there, briefly. As I geared-up I noticed gigantic bull-elk with its harem and across the same meadow was another bull-elk of like-size, bugling. I decided I didn't want to get in between the two. We drove on.

We checked in the hotel and got info on touring the immediate area and, of course, fishing. The Gardner River was recommended for both. That evening we looked at a map and decided on an excursion to a meadow area of the river. On Sunday morning we read a bulletin-board alert of a sighting of a momma grizzly and two cubs in that area; the day before! We both agreed we were not going to that area and opted for a safer tour of the local geothermal activity and scenery...with-out a fly rod.

Monday we left the Park and headed back west to California to start our new life together. I survived, being a congenial partner without going totally berserk having suppressed a seemingly uncontrolled urge to fly fish the myriad Park waters. I vowed I'd return one day; alone or with another fly fishing junkie. I never have, although I have fly fished other noted waters throughout Montana, parts of Wyoming and Idaho. Actually I'm proud to say our relationship has survived, we are still married and I still fly fish.



A Celebration of Life *Richard "Dick" Mobley*



This past summer, my old friend, Dick Mobley passed away after a long fight with cancer. I have never written a page like this for any publication, but I thought it would be a nice tribute for a man that was loved by everyone he touched.

In 1959, I was a freshman at Mira Costa High School in Manhattan Beach, California. Dick was a senior then and I'll always remember him in his white tee shirts and Levi's with surf sandals. He was really "cool" and I was a gremmie surfer who wanted to be like him. We surfed a couple blocks down the beach from 22nd Street and then in my senior year, I was accepted into the lineup with Dick and the older guys.

I can't forget the day we were surfing a huge day at Salt Creek and I lost my board and was getting pounded in the impact zone by a monster set of waves. Dick saw my desperate situation and paddled over to me, loaded me onto his board and paddled me in. I think he saved my life.

Dick was shaping surfboards for most of the board builders in the South Bay until he started making boards in the "Mobley" brand. He was shaping boards upstairs in his shop and I was selected to sand his boards in an unventilated garage in the neighborhood. We were skiers then, so we started selling our used skis and equipment downstairs in his shop and The Ski/Surf Shop was born in Manhattan Beach.

Dick married Vicky Mobley and they lived on their 44 ft sailboat in Redondo Harbor, splitting their time with their Mammoth home. They also ran the most successful independent ski shop in the South Bay.

Dick's favorite sport became fly fishing and he was a regular at Hot Creek. He fished with his buddies, Ron Bushman, Mike Henry, Laird Stabler, Henry Lowe, and Bill Nichols to mention a few. He would come home from a typical day at Hot Creek and I'd say, "How'd ya do?" His usual reply was "Oh, I caught 8, or I caught 10." His expression told me he would rather fly fish than anything else.

Last year, Dick joined some of the biggest names in the surf industry when he was inducted into the Hermosa Beach Surfers Walk of Fame. There was a celebration and paddle out for Dick at the Redondo Harbor and another one at Hot Creek this past summer. He lived and worked in the lifestyle he loved. No one did it better.

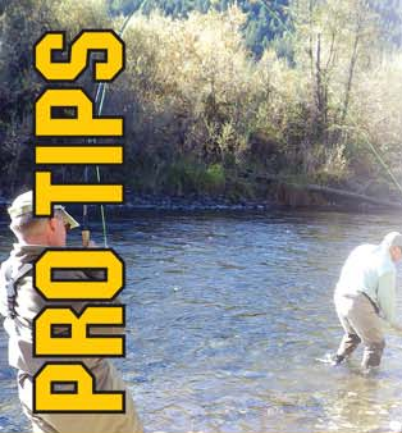
Bob Leonard/Publisher

Vicky Mobley (center) with fishing buddies at Hot Creek "Celebration of Life"



Hot Creek fly selection





Winter time is most assuredly here, what with the snows in the mountains, extended freezes in the foothills and valley plains. The rains are starting to lash the north coast. The inland fish hopefully are bulked-up for a few months as they have anticipated sparse forage. The populations of sea-going, migratory, steelhead and salmon are following urges to pro-create and extend their genetic pools for the benefit of hard-core fly anglers. Sierra fly fishers are fortunate. As trout angling ebbs, the steelhead season, which started with the fall runs, promises the largest metal-heads of the year during the winter. Trout can be difficult this time of year, but not impossible. One can still find eager fish in the lower west-slope foothills of the Sierra or even the high desert chaparral of the east-side, such as Pyramid Lake or meandering, slow-moving water such as the Owens River. For the next few months our sport will be accompanied by unpleasant weather and an unpredictable bite. Nevertheless serious anglers will enjoy the season if they have a strong resolve, leak-proof raingear, and a firm grasp of the where, when and how to pursue winter fish...most notably the renown steelhead. Below you will find some great tips on fly angling for steelhead; advice that can improve your success.

Frank R. Pisciotta

STEELHEAD PRO-TIPS

When chasing Steelhead, a longer rod comes in very handy for those long roll casts and stack mends. It is hard to believe how much of a difference there is in a 10-foot rod compared to a 9-foot rod. That extra foot makes it so much easier to pick line up off the water and either fire a long roll cast or stack a big mend. Also, make sure that you are packing enough rod. Don't underestimate the power of a fresh chromer just in from swimming ocean currents. If you are fishing nymphs under and indicator a 10-foot 7 weight is great but if you are swinging with a weighted line you should consider using at least an 11-foot switch rod or a 12-foot two handed spey rod. Be careful, this is a VERY addicting sport!

-Kevin Peterson , kevin@hotcreek ranch.com

For those new to fly angling for Steelhead; I'd like to proffer some basic tips which I've gleaned from my recent, early 2000's immersion into this specialized sport:

- 1---Once hooked, give them their head on the first surge
- 2---Put them "on the reel" as quickly as possible
- 3---Keep them off-balance moving your rod in the opposite the direction of their moves
- 4---Lower your rod when they go aerial
- 5---When netting, be sure it is their head-first; not from behind them
- 6---Enjoy the moment; there may be few opportunities.

-da Dean , www.flyfishingcalifornia.blogspot.com

Battling the elements in the dead of winter is always a factor when fishing for steelhead. Most of the time you have rain, snow, or sleet hitting you directly in the face, with no shelter in sight. Layering for winter angling is very important. Once you get cold, it's hard to warm back up without the help of coffee or a hot lunch. A good pair of waders is key for wading. Even if you have a small leak, you will feel miserable once the water gets to your feet.

There are three layers that will keep you warm on the river, but wearing an extra layer or two can't hurt. The base layer's purpose is to wick moisture away from your body, so you don't sweat. Good material for a base layer is capilene or merino wool. The second layer is the mid-layer to provide insulation. Something like a down jacket or fleece will help regulate your core body temperature. Last but not least, the outer layer - or shell. Personally, I like to wear a gore-tex shell that prevents any moisture from getting to my layers underneath. Once you get wet, it's hard to get dry.

The feet, hands, & face tend to get cold quicker than other parts of the body, due to the lack of blood flow. With this in mind, always wear some type of head warmth like a beanie or balaclava. Wearing gloves is a personal preference to some, but others will tell you about the fish that got away because they fumbled with gloves on. I like to wear two pairs of socks, as long as my feet aren't crammed in my wading boots. With extra room in your wading boot you will have better circulation in your feet. Cotton, once wet is very heavy and hard to dry. "Cotton kills," is a common saying that should always be remembered. If in doubt, wear an extra layer, because it is always easier to take a layer off than to add a layer once on the river.

-Chris Mahers , www.MahersGuideService.com



photo credit: brad@mammothflyfishing.com

Matching Crowley Lake Food Sources - What and When

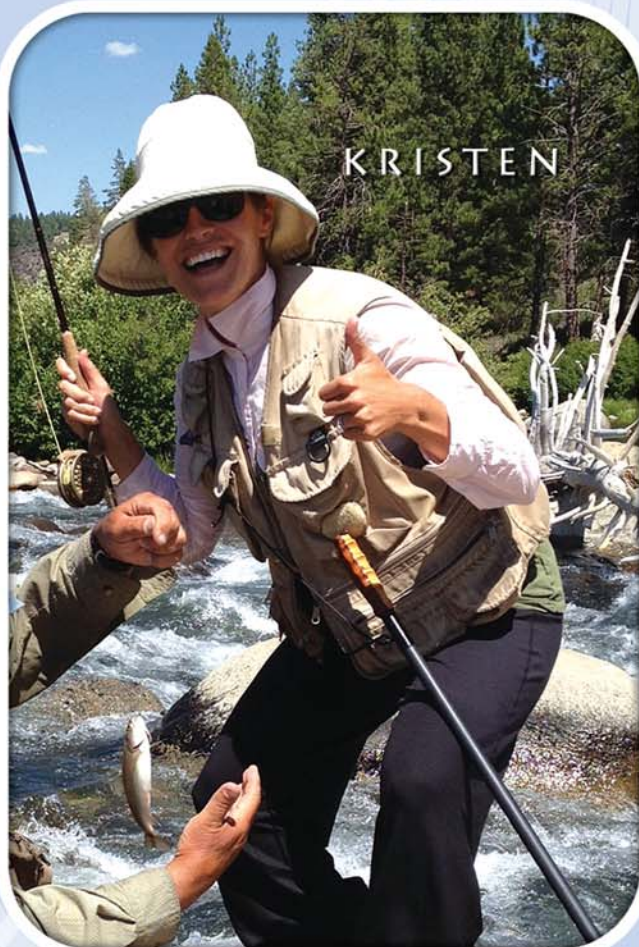
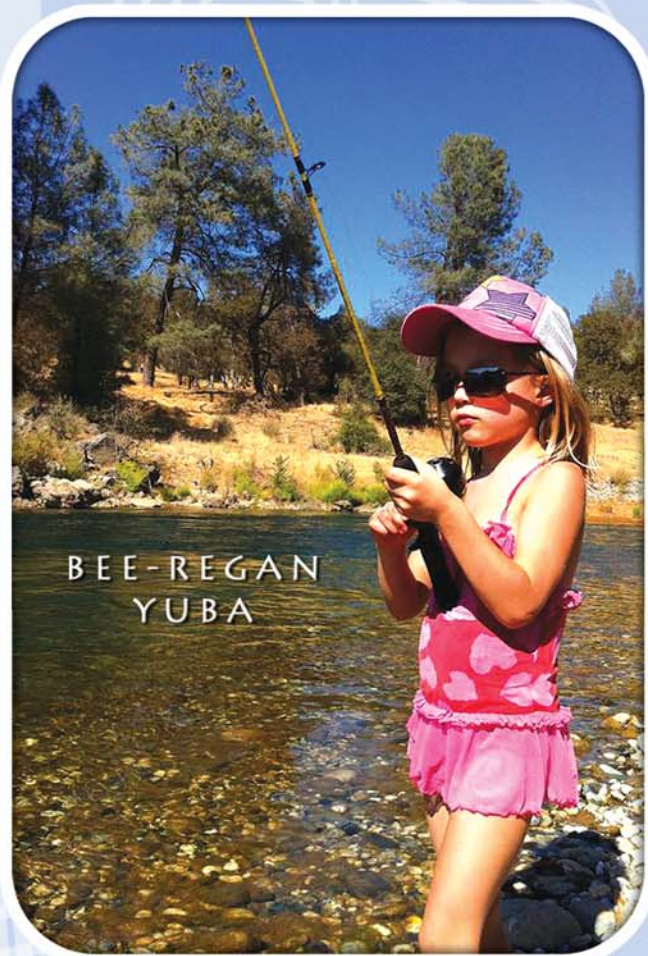
May	June	July	August	September	October	Nov
Chironomids (Midges) - All Season						
Callibaetis (May Fly) Nymphs - All Season When Hatching						
		Small Trout and Tui Chub				
		Snails				
	Damsel Nymphs					
		Callibaetis (May Fly) Dries				
			Tui Chub Fry			
				Perch Fry		
						Leeches

*Precise timing is subject to variation from season to season based on water temperatures.

Notes

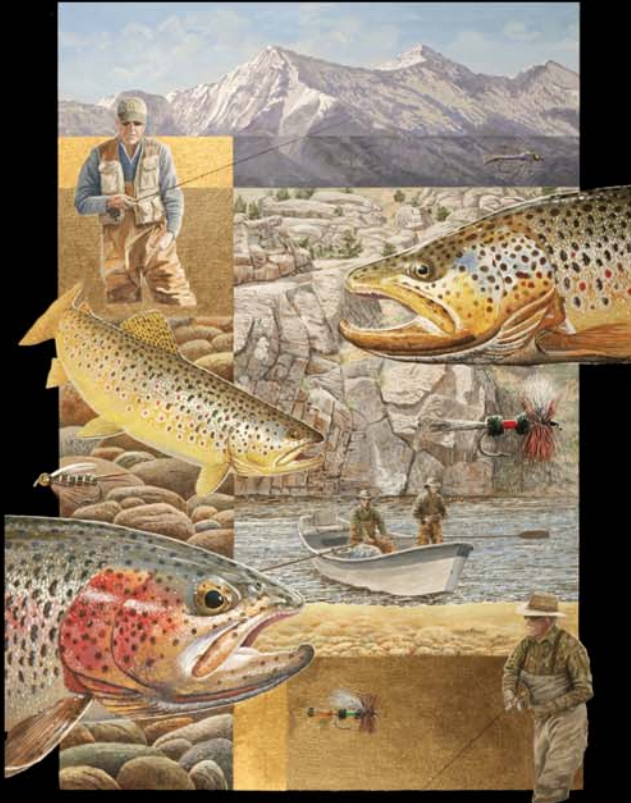
Chironomids (Midges) - Slow strip as trailer or hang under the indicator, using larvae patterns early, pupae later.
 Callibaetis (May Fly) Nymphs - Use as top fly under indicator or as bottom fly when visibly hatching.
 Small Trout and Tui Chub - Big streamers, as in 4" to 6" long, near weed beds at first and last light for big Browns.
 Snails - Hang under the indicator just at top of weeds, no excellent patterns, try small Glo Bug dyed brown.
 Damsel Nymphs - Slow strip or hang under the indicator, tie both knots to eye of hook if top fly.
 Callibaetis (May Fly) Dries - In the shallows at the mouth of McGee Creek or Owens River, also dry and dropper.
 Tui Chub Fry - Up to 1 1/4" long, strip or hang under the indicator using fry patterns trimmed to shape.
 Perch Fry - Up to 1 1/4" long, strip or hang under the indicator using fry patterns trimmed to shape.
 Leeches - Slow strip or hang under the indicator, use marabou patterns for best action, tie both knots to eye of hook.

Fly Girls



In Sight

BERN SUNDELL



RISEING BROOKIE



THE LONG CAST



INDIAN
CREEK
GEM

RAINBOW
WARRIOR



RAINBOW
CLOSEUP



HEADWATERS WARRIOR

READERS WALL

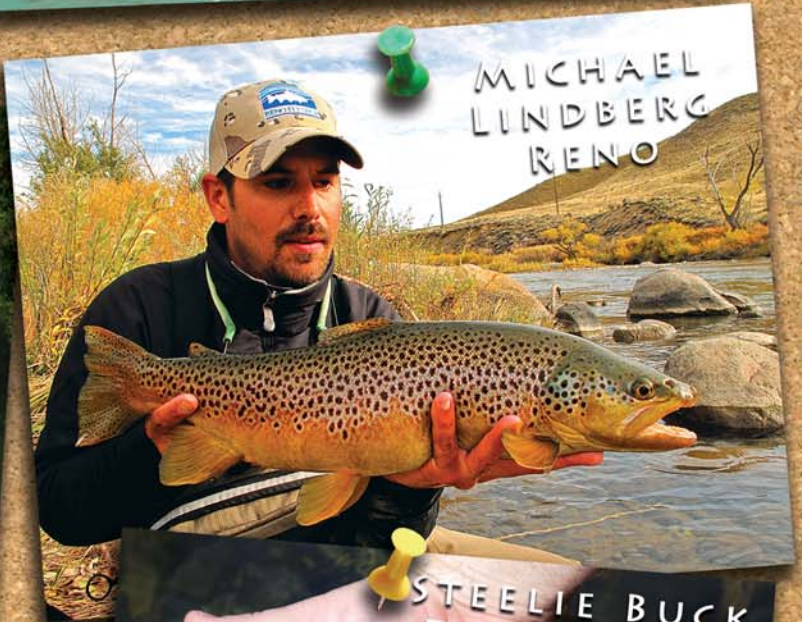
CATHY
BODAINÉ'S
EAGLE



JAKE
AMERICAN
RIVER
STRIPER



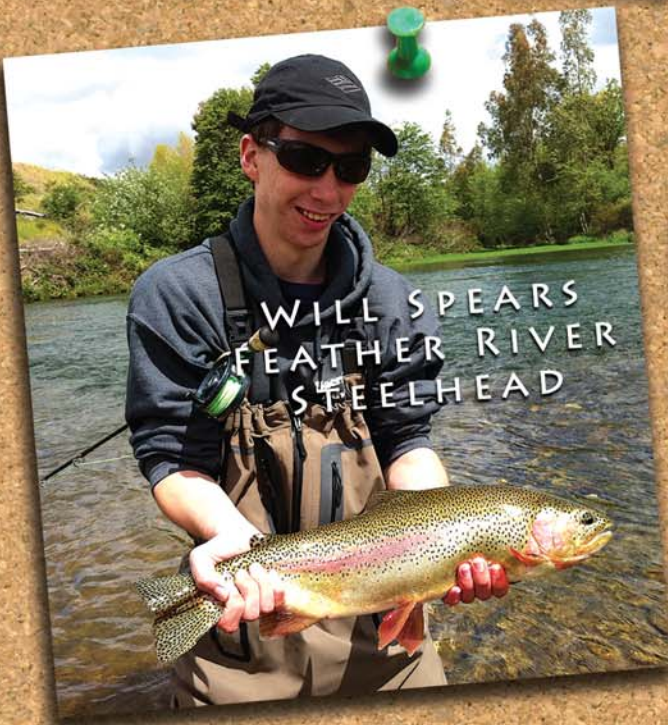
MICHAEL
LINDBERG
RENO



STEELIE BUCK
DAN MAHER



WILL SPEARS
FEATHER RIVER
STEELHEAD



FRED
HIGH
COUNTRY



SO, MR TIPPET,
CAN YOU READ THESE
LETTERS TO ME?

HMMM,
I SEE...
HOW LONG
HAVE YOU
BEEN TYING
YOUR OWN
FLIES?

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EYE CO.

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GOOD
FISHERMAN
READS
SIERRA
FISHERMAN

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