



# CREEL ZERO

**A flyfisher's approach to  
selecting streams, flies  
and tactics for the four  
seasons of the year.**

**By Eugene V. Giza**





### **Gene Giza**

I have read somewhere and I concur that “reading, listening, seeing, experiencing, and above all, thinking, are the methods by which one ensures having something to say”. This is essentially true about fly fishing.

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# Dedication



**Gayle Giza**

Who has been by my side for 50 plus years and never tires (sometimes) of exploring new territory.

# Creel Zero & Catch and Release

The title of this book is Creel Zero, which is my interpretation of catch and release practices. When parked along various fly fishing waters, anglers will see my CREEL ZERO license plate and ask the meaning. I find it curious that only a few anglers have guessed the catch and release theme. I take this opportunity to reinforce my belief to them that a trout is too valuable of a resource to be caught and killed. So why catch and release a trout if it dies because of incorrect handling? A significant number of studies are recommending general guidelines to be used to reduce catch and release mortality for most species. Some of the guidelines cover angling techniques, landing a fish, handling and photographing a fish, unhooking a fish, depressurization (if required), and revival.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission covers the subject of catch and release guidelines very well in its summary of fishing regulations and laws booklet and on their website at <http://fishandboat.com/fishpub/summary/release.html>.

On page 74 of this book I point out the benefits of catching and releasing steelhead in our Lake Erie tributaries near Erie, PA. With good catch and release handling practices, we fly fishers become instrumental in protecting the life of a trout that is caught and then released. Make catch and release part of your fishing practice. It is the right thing to do!

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# Introduction

Make no mistake about it, this is a book of “fish and tell” which covers destination and local fishing trips, catches and releases of all species of trout as well as surface and subsurface fly patterns that work during the four seasons of fly fishing.

It all started about 1955, when a neighbor loaned me the use of a three-piece bamboo fly fishing rod with an automatic reel. Back then, such a combination was used to fish minnows in mountain streams. Our nearest clean stream which held trout was aptly named Mountain Branch. This stream was a two mile hike from my hometown of Morann, Pennsylvania, through the woods and across numerous surface coal mining obstacles. At night, I would fall asleep to the thud and grinding noises of the 24-hour a day coal mining operation. Currently, the surface scars from these mining operations are still evident and run off from those mines continues to pollute what could be one of the finest trout streams in Pennsylvania, the Moshannon Creek. It became necessary to switch from minnows to flies due to the coal mining pollutants killing the aquatic critters in the nearby small creeks and consequently minnows were unavailable. On Friday evening it was customary to shop in the nearby town of Houtzdale and I would head to the hardware store to salivate over the fishing and hunting equipment that was for sale. The fly display held my particular interest and, for the grand sum of two flies for fifteen cents, I bought my first flies, a Scarlet Ibis and a Royal Coachman. Little did I know that switching from minnows to flies would launch a modest interest in fly fishing that would grow to epidemic proportions!

Unfortunately the trout fishing season was too short. The anglers in my hometown area would mothball their fishing equipment in mid-May because of the onset of hot weather and the scheduled trout stockings were over for the season. My uncle, Doctor Michael Nemish, a veterinarian officed in Virginia, but born and reared in Becceria, Pennsylvania visited often. On one of his visits he wanted to see Fisherman's Paradise on Spring Creek near Bellefonte, Pennsylvania. We loaded up my borrowed rod and reel and two flies, and set off in his Packard to explore new territory. I had no idea that so many fly fishers were in this world and it seemed they were all fishing on the Fisherman's Paradise section of Spring Creek. Imagine yourself as a kid 58 years ago walking into a Walmart Super Store. That is exactly how I felt that day years ago on Fisherman's Paradise. Thus began my lifelong interest in fly fishing and fly tying that eventually grew into fly fishing the four seasons!

Good luck in leisure and remember to keep a tight line and a sharp mind.

Gene Giza



**Involve the Younger Folks.**

# Forward

My first reaction when Gene Giza asked me to write the Forward for his book was to comment that he should ask someone well known in the field of fly fishing and fly tying. I definitely don't meet those qualifications. Gene is acquainted with many well known fly fishers who would have gladly written this, and I am honored that he insisted that I do it.

Gene and I have been friends and fly fishing buddies since 2006. We both worked for the former Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources for many years, but in different programs. Gene was Chief of the State Parks Operations Section while I worked in the water pollution control program. Although we were aware of each other's existence, our paths never really crossed until after our retirements. Had we been aware at the time of each other's enthusiasm for fly fishing and cold water conservation, our friendship would have started much earlier.

One day during the winter of 2006, my wife Gloria and I drove into the parking lot at a local gym. In the lot was a pickup truck with Four Seasons Fly Fishing Guide Service on the back window and a license plate that proclaimed "CREEL 0". My first impression was that here was a person who's thinking was a lot like mine. The gym was not very crowded and there was only one person whose appearance fit my concept of a fly fishing guide. He also looked vaguely familiar. I asked him if that was his truck and he said that it was. We introduced ourselves and then the recognition hit. It had been many years since we sat through some management training sessions and labor contract briefings. By the end of the workout session, we were planning some fly fishing outings. We met Gene's wife, Gayle, and the four of us soon began planning trips to fly fishing destinations that included Bed and Breakfasts, arts and craft stores and other shopping opportunities. This has resulted in trips to a number of Pennsylvania destinations and also the Adirondacks.

Gene's home is in an ideal location for a fly fishing guide and fly tying innovator. His backyard includes a portion of the famed Catch and Release waters of the Yellow Breeches Creek, across the stream from the Allenberry resort. This stream is fished hard by some of the world's outstanding fly fishers, and the resident trout have seen just about everything that could be thrown at them. These highly educated trout are Gene's laboratory subjects for testing new fly patterns and tweaking existing patterns. Those proven fly patterns and fishing methods are specified in this book. We have found that if a fly works in Gene's backyard, it will work just about anywhere that similar conditions exist.

There are many examples of Gene's dedication to the goals of Trout Unlimited and Cold Water Conservation. As a member of the Board of Directors of Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited, he has worked extensively on conservation measures. As chairman of CVTU's Stream Access and Improvement Committee, he has coordinated a number of significant habitat improvement projects on the

limestone streams of the Cumberland Valley. These include a number of dam removals and restoration of degraded riparian zones. He established the Feet in the Stream Gang (FITS), a group of CVTU volunteers, to conduct habitat projects and other activities to enhance our fishing opportunities. Gene also serves on the Board of Directors of the Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp, held annually at Allenberry. Over the years, this organization has trained hundreds of teens in both conservation and fly fishing.

Among the important things I learned from Gene is that a person can survive indefinitely while fishing on a diet of thick oatmeal, bananas, PB&J sandwiches, box wines and an occasional trip to the nearest Subway. Here is to many more years of fine dining, and even finer friendship and fly fishing.

Ken Okorn

# Introduction to Spring, Summer, Fall and Winter

During the decade after retirement, I could often be found somewhere on the water, fly fishing and gathering information for this book. This is almost equal to the amount of time spent prior to retirement working full time. How was that possible? The national average for paid holidays vacation and sick time for full time employees is 37.5 days. I worked an average of 260 days per year, but take away the national average holiday, vacation and sick days and the work days per year shrink to 222.5 days. I noted in this book that I was fishing between 175 and 200 days the first two years of retirement and averaged over 125 days the remaining years. During that time frame of fly fishing, I clocked a substantial number of fishing trips in Pennsylvania and other states.

I selected what I thought as interesting reading and included the trips from that decade. It may seem that some of the trips overlap somewhat in information, but all of the trips offer either a new insight or new information that may benefit the reader. Actually, one becomes a good fly fisher by repetition and paying attention while on the water because it is a daily learning experience. If you are not learning while on the water fly fishing, then you are not paying attention. Recall what I mentioned earlier..... “reading, listening, seeing, experiencing, and above all, thinking are the methods by which one ensures having something to say”. This is essentially true about fly fishing!

Good luck in leisure



*Several knowledgeable fly fishers and skilled fly tyers holding an informal “class” in the parking lot at Yellow Creek.*

# Chapter 1

## Spring

### Mid March/Mid June

March came in like a lamb with moderate temperatures and lots of sunshine. However, PA trout fishing in approved trout stocking waters went out until the official opening day of trout season. The improving weather in March and the closing of approved trout stocking water across the Commonwealth tends to place additional fishing pressure on project waters like the Yellow Breeches. Every March, I will notice a few anglers fishing the Yellow Breeches below the end of the catch and release section. When I remind them of the closed period, they first get this quizzical not me look, and as the realization sets in, their face color turns to a ghostly ivory pallor before the red flush of embarrassment takes hold. They ambulate to shore at a brisk pace, risking tripping and a cold water plunge.

March should also be the month to assess your fly inventory and organize the

flies you have tied up in the last two months. Chris Zalesky and his sons, Christopher and Patrick, spent a Saturday at my then (Gayle and I have since sold the property) stream side house on the Yellow Breeches, refreshing their fly tying skills. The event coincided with a major sale incentive at our local fly shop and the Zaleskys were able to purchase a nice selection of fly tying tools and materials at a reasonable discount. We capped the day with a late afternoon fishing jaunt



*Enhancing fly tying skills*

to the stream to try out some of the newly tied flies. Unfortunately the trout were not amenable to all the new flies, but Patrick was successful in luring a nice size rainbow to a sucker spawn fly fished on the bottom. The rainbow hit hard, came to the surface and rolled. Patrick's shout of glee caught everybody's attention and we were fortunate to catch sight of the broad side of the big fish with its impeccable bright colors just before it threw the hook. Tying a fly and then catching a fish on it is a fantastic experience. Catching a trout on a fly other than your own isn't quite as rewarding as catching one on your own fly, but then catching a trout on any fly is not too shabby either!

March is also the month to douse the cabin fever doldrums of winter by getting out to fly fish. Several of us did just that in early March and trekked over to the Yellow Creek Fly Fishing Only section. The air temperature was a balmy 60 degrees, the water temperature was 42 degrees and overhead the sky was cloudless.

The water was almost gin clear with only a hint of the yellow clay mixer that gives this creek its name.

When I fished Yellow Creek a week prior to this trip, water conditions were similar but the air temperature was 40 degrees on a partly cloudy day. This type of day was conducive to the appearance of Little Blue Wing Olives, about a size 24, and Little Black Stoneflies, about a size 22. The naturals lasted from noon to 5:00 p.m., albeit sporadic at times. We caught and released nineteen fish while fishing dry flies. A few fish were caught on nymphs but, when fish are working the surface, even sporadically, it is difficult for me to continue nymph fishing. The black stonefly patterns, in this book, worked well. I was pleasantly surprised when fishing the larger Size 16 stonefly adult, that trout would leave a holding area in a feeding lane, and move as far as five feet to target the fly. Ken Okorn, my fishing buddy of many years, had success with an uncomplicated (simple tie) size 24 hackled LBWO. The major difference from the October Olive listed in this book is that Ken uses 8/0 thread body in lieu of the dubbed body. I watched one huge brown trout come up and sip Ken's simple LBWO and thought I best tie a few for future trips. Sometimes the slightest change in a fly pattern can make a difference. Ken had tied two of the flies the morning of the trip to Yellow Creek and while carpooling to our fishing destination, he showed me the LBWO's that he was going to experiment with that day. Unfortunately he lost the first fly almost immediately. You know the scenario, small hook, small diameter tippet material can add up to a large disaster. Ken was not about to give up the last fly to a fishing buddy. I could not fault him as I have done the same thing in the past. The fish were not overly interested in my parachute LBWO presentation so I switched to the stonefly offering and had a much better day of fishing. A few days later, I returned to Yellow Creek as the cabin fever doldrums still lingered. LBWOs appeared for a brief time shortly after the noon hour and the fish were very selective to my offerings.



*Small nymphs equal large trout*

I only saw a few Little Black Stoneflies and they were in the air. It was a blue bird day with a clear sky and warm air temperatures. So without any supportive surface activity from the trout, I switched to nymph fishing. The small nymph I selected accounted for several large rainbow trout. The photo of the largest rainbow caught needed to appear in this book because I was using a 6X fluorocarbon tippet and hooked, fought and released the huge bow in a timely manner.

A fly fisher from Johnstown told me he was not leaving Yellow Creek until he saw the fly that I was using. I showed the fly fisher the size 24 Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph and he softly cursed that the dang thing was too small for him to tie, let alone tie it on a

tippet. I have used the small nymph on many streams in Pennsylvania, New York and Montana with success. The nymph is especially useful on our Commonwealth limestone streams during all of the four seasons! For example, I don't fish Spring Creek in the State College area without a good supply of these big fish takers.

Not a vehicle was in the parking lot when I arrived on the Wiconisco Creek a hundred yards or so from the beginning of the Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only (DHALO) section. This special regulation section is situated mainly on the former Ned Smith Center for Nature and Arts lands. I read a piece in the paper that the center now has a new name, the Ned Smith Gallery Presented by the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Ned Smith was a staff illustrator and wrote a monthly column for the Commission. The Gallery is ideal for a family visit and some good early spring fly fishing.



So after months of surface fishing to rising trout taking a size 24 midge and the randomly occurring size 22 Little Blue Winged Olive, I was on the hunt for the first large bug appearance of the new year. It was the middle of March and I expected to see a good number of anglers because the approved trout waters closed on March 1. The Wic, as known to those that fish it regularly, has a special regulations area that is open to fishing year-around. Because it is a freestone and tends to warm up, trout can be possessed from June 15 to Labor Day. If in doubt about regulations that apply to locations where you fish, contact the nearest Fish and Boat Commission office. Another reason I expected to see other anglers on the Wic was the possibility of size 16 Early Black Stoneflies and size 16 Early Brown Stoneflies. Mix in a good supply of midges and Little Black Stoneflies and a fly fisher has the recipe for some surface dry fly excitement. Weather conditions impact on the appearance of the Little and Early Black Stoneflies and other bugs, as well as the stream conditions. This particular winter, our snowfall and rainfall had been below average compared to majority of past years and the same is true for air temperatures. I expected the Wic to be low, clear and COLD and I was not wrong. About 2:00 P.M., which is usually the warmest part of the day, the fluttering stones were present in decent numbers but the lethargic trout showed no interest. I did not have my thermometer with me to take the water temperature but I suspect it was in the high 30's. According to my Wic notes, the stoneflies seem to be very active when water temperatures are in the mid to high 40's. Several days of daylight air temperatures in the 50+ range and night time temperatures in the mid to high 30's will springboard the dry fly fishing with stonefly patterns to its zenith. In my opinion the freestone Wic has one of the best stonefly hatch in the Har-

risburg and Carlisle areas. I walked slowly along the Wic and scanned the water surface for over an hour and half and only saw one surface rise. Disappointed in the lack of surface activity, I removed the Early Black Stonefly and I re-rigged to fish subsurface using a tandem of Small Back Stoneflies. Eight hookups and six releases later, I exited the cold water and walked back to the truck in the parking lot which now contained three other vehicles. I expected to return to the Wic in two days and find trout up and taking the decent hatch of stoneflies. The weather was to be spring like conditions and all looked good. My only concern was that the head cold would lessen for my return. I certainly had the desire to fly fish!

The head cold improved and I was anxious to fish the Wiconisco Creek. It was the day before the spring equinox, and the weather was perfect for fly fishing. Upon our mid morning arrival, the air temperature was 58 degrees and the water temperature was a half dozen degrees less. Ken Okorn and I observed minimal black stonefly activity until we fished the riffles, and from about noon to five in the afternoon, we caught and released a combined total of 29 trout. Many more trout were hooked but came free for various reasons. As a fly fisher you know that happens. This day the stones were not overly abundant but typically the females were dropping to the surface to dislodge egg sacs and then skittering across the riffled water surface. The majority of female black stoneflies made the shore or lifted off the water. Several were hammered by the trout so we switched to burly dry flies like a size 14-16 Griffith Gnat and the late Fran Betters' size 10 Ausable Bomber. Fran Betters was known as a fly fisher, a fly shop owner and as "the ambassador for the Adirondacks waters." Fran was particularly fond of the West Branch of the Ausable River.

Skittering our flies to imitate the naturals resulted in 19 of the 29 fish caught. This type of surface fly fishing can be high maintenance. For example, add additional lifelike skittering action by rubbing a quality floatant to the tippet, leader and junction where the leader is tied to the fly line. A shake of the rod tip and the fly seemingly jumps across the surface. As I am not a fan of liquid or gel floatant on a dry fly, I liberally and often (about every six or so casts) brush fumed silica, known in the fly shops as Frog's Fanny, into the hackle and on the body. When the fly shows signs of absorbing water and plowing instead of skittering across the surface, I remove the water with a piece of chamois and then recharge the fly with the fumed silica. Fish slime can penetrate the fly after several hookups and render the fly non-floatable, so changing to a new fly is advisable when this occurs. When it appears that natural stoneflies are popping/emerging to the surface and skittering to the bank, pay close attention and you will observe the stone fly dropping to the water surface, not emerging as many think. I refer to this as a false hatch, so don't be tricked into fishing subsurface with an emerger pattern. Previously the black stonefly nymphs had crawled along the bottom of the stream and exited the water via stones and sticks near or on the bank. There they emerge from the shuck as adults. The adult stonefly exhibiting the false hatch is most likely an exhausted female that has shed its egg sac and is struggling to reach the stream bank. Thus, the natural skitters across the water surface to the bank.

On a past fishing trip I was in midstream and observed a black stonefly drop to the water, about a foot away from me, and release its egg sac. I was able to immediately catch up the egg sac with my hand and examine it closely. The sac was chartreuse in color and slightly larger than a number 6 split shot. I have had stoneflies in March drop egg sacs in such numbers that the trout would swirl the surface eating the eggs and not zero in on the skittering stoneflies. I have experienced the same phenomenon in April with trout eating the caddis fly egg sac and mistaking the split shot on my tippet for the green egg sac of the caddis fly. A tandem rig of appropriate color thread egg sacs on #24 curved hooks, like the TMC 2488, will take trout under these egg laying circumstances when the trout forgo the bugs and feast on the egg sacs.

The next day I was fishing the Yellow Breeches with Bruce McFate. We both retired from the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources after several decades of service in the state park system. Bruce, anxious to begin fishing, arrived at my house early at 9:00 AM. We walked out back to look at the stream conditions and noted several fish up sipping midges and the occasional hearty splash that indicated a big bug being taken off the surface. We suited up for fishing and soon were standing in the front row of aquatic action as fish and Grannom caddis played out the natural sequence of the hatch. The Grannoms, it appeared, survived to continue the reproduction of its kind only through sheer numbers as the trout gulped Grannom after Grannom. The Grannom caddis continued to flit about and soon a few Hendricksons appeared (the first of the year that I had seen) and joined the spectacle. The trout were slashing the surface whenever a Grannom did its up and down jitterbug dance along the water's surface. We fished with the standard tan caddis fly with minimal results, until we tied on the fly that I had used the previous day on the Wiconisco and our hook up ratio greatly improved. Properly prepared with floatant applied to the tippet, tapered leader and first few feet of fly line and employing the technique of skittering, we caught and released a good number of trout. Later that evening when the Grannom action slowed, I went subsurface and had good results with the Illegal Nymph. Read the account of the name of the fly in the Subsurface Fly section of this book and you should get a chuckle. Most importantly, the Illegal Nymph is another fly pattern that I have used with success year after year! My advice is to be observant of the stream, the hatches and the trout. Don't get caught up in the need for a different fly for each occasion. Revert back to your old patterns, modifying as needed. Above all, enjoy the day on the stream.

In mid March, Ken and I accessed Interstate 81 South at Carlisle and were planning to be on the South Holston River near Bristol, Tennessee approximately seven hours later. Joe, Mac and Jeff were to meet up with us at the Farmhouse, our lodging for the next few nights. Mac and Joe had fished the South Holston River for years with Jeff Wilkins, professional fishing guide and they had finally convinced Ken and me to make the trip to Tennessee. When you live in the Cumberland Valley, with all the storied waters to fish, leaving the area takes some convincing. Our arrival time was off a bit as a result of road construction and a minor

vehicle accident. However, the biggest delay occurred when we arrived at the local fly shop and found it closed. The sign read the crappie fishing was good in the lake and the shop attendants were out doing their best to catch some for dinner. The second setback was learning, that even if the fly shop would have been open, fishing licenses were not sold at the establishment. Bummer! A nearby neighbor to the fly shop advised us to obtain our fishing licenses at The Store, appropriately named for the area. That was the name of the mini mart type establishment and, so after getting the necessary directions, we were on our way to buy our TN fishing licenses. The Store also had a number of shelves of fishing supplies, mostly catfish baits. It appeared that trout were not a priority among local anglers. We found that the folks in TN are friendly and go out of their way to be helpful. Just a word here regarding fishing licenses and the delay we encountered. I wanted to buy the licenses on line prior to the trip, but Ken felt we needed to support the local fly shop by buying our licenses there and perhaps a few other items like flies, fly tying items etc. in the shop. I agreed, as it is important to support fly shops in the area that one fishes.

We learned that the South Holston River emanates from the South Holston Dam and flows approximately 14 miles into Boone Lake, near Bristol, Tennessee. The primary purposes for the dam (completed in 1950) were power production and flood damage reduction. The resulting tailwater below the dam just happened to provide a spring creek quality with cool waters flowing over white limestone. Although the tailwater has a limited number of insect orders and species, the quantity of those limited insects is impressive. The Sulphur hatch can begin in late April and continue through Thanksgiving Day or beyond, depending on the severity of the weather. The Blue Wing Olive also plays an important role when the Sulphurs are not available. Midges and black flies are ever present and provide an endless fish food source. Not to be overlooked, which often happens when the major league hatches of Sulphurs (sizes 16-18) and Blue Wing Olives (sizes 20-22) appear, are the sculpins, scuds, sowbugs and craneflies. The black fly, size 22-26 and midges, size 22-24 are available year round and give additional value to the Zebra midge dropped under an indicator surface fly like a size 12 parachute Adams or Ausable Bomber. We found that employing a foam or plastic type strike indicator was not as receptive as a yarn indicator or dry fly indicator. An important element is the special trout regulation that specifies that trout within the 16 to 22 inch range are protected. Ken felt that the special trout regulation protected the prime spawning age trout and the genetically superior trout. Our catching a good number of trout in that slot limit range bears out his thinking. It was interesting that we were fishing at times alongside bait and spinner fishers, many of whom had stringers of fish. Most of the fish on stringers were rainbow trout. Some of these trout were impressive in size since you are allowed one trout over 22 inches. The daily allowable creel limit is seven trout and so one wonders why there are so many remaining trout in the water. The abundance of food and the protection of trout in the 16 to 22 inch range must be the answer. It is noteworthy that all brown trout are stream bred and rainbows are introduced as fingerlings.

WHAT a successful formula!

Our fishing plans began with a check of the water release schedule for the following day. This can be done by calling 800.238.2264, or accessing on line [www.tva.com/river/lakeinfo/index.htm](http://www.tva.com/river/lakeinfo/index.htm). This schedule is normally available after 6:00 PM of the current day. We would then plan to fish the following day on the upper river if, for example, the water release was stopped by 8:00 AM. If the water release was prolonged, we would fish further down stream as much as seven miles. The distance would allow the water to “soften”. Consequently, wading was normally possible with less water height and flow push. Once on the water, an indicator fly such as the Adams with a Zebra midge suspended about sixteen inches would take a fair number of wild browns and rainbows. I would look for a rise form and cast to the target. At times, it was necessary to throw a long line of 50 plus feet to take the feeding trout because of the low clear water. The majority of the times, a stealthy low profile approach would not disturb the feeding fish and an accurately placed cast would result in a hookup.



*Guide Jeff Wilkins netting one of many wild trout caught and released.*

Ken was limited in casting because of upcoming shoulder surgery and was relegated to fishing the riffled water. Also, he is right handed and the shoulder to be repaired is on that side so he was forced to polish his left handed casting skills on this trip. Amazing how rapidly he adjusted to the lefty approach. Ken caught a respectable number of trout and many were in the protected slot of 16 to 22 inches. To minimize the need to cast, Ken’s method was to concentrate on riffles where the trout could be approached closely, and fish an Al’s Rat or Zebra Midge under an Ausable Bomber. One of the locals saw him catch several doubles, and commented that he had never seen anyone fly fish with a trot line. I believe that if he were casting as he normally does with his right hand, he would have been expelled from the state for catching too many trout! When in another state or fishing outside your normal waters, it is prudent not to show up the local fishers! Our favorite location on the South Holston River soon centered on the grates because of Ken’s shoulder situation. The grates stretch across the South Holston River approximately 250 feet. The series of grate steps allows for anglers to fish from a chosen elevated position and view the fish below that seem to feed the entire day. I would at times fish from the first or second grate steps until the sun rose higher in the sky and the glare increased. I would then move up a step or two. I was fishing from the first grate step as the angle of the sun rays penetrated the water, I noticed numerous feeding trout from hand size to well over a foot

long almost at my feet. I gingerly moved up a step or two and began to cast the indicator fly, usually a Parachute Adams large enough to support a size 20, Mustad 3906 hook with a 1.5 mm diameter black nickel Tungsten bead dropper fly. The cast would be diagonally about 15 to 20 feet to my right and to my left. Somehow, dropping or dangling the rig at my feet did not seem sporting. Make no mistake that catching these fish was not a cake walk as the fishing pressure from the grates is akin to the daily fishing pressure the trout experience in the vastly popular Run at Boiling Springs, PA.

As the morning unfolded, the trout would shift from bottom feeding on black fly larvae to surface sipping pupa emergers and adults. We had good results subsurface fishing the Zebra type midge pattern when the adult black fly emerged from their pupal shuck by expanding their wings and floating to the surface in an air bubble. A thumbnail biology lesson is probably needed at this point to indicate why we tie certain flies to catch fish. First, a black fly undergoes complete metamorphosis from egg, to larvae, to pupa to adult. We centered our fishing on the pupal and adult life stages as the emerging black flies rose to the surface via the air bubble balloon. Black flies require swift current to filter and collect food for subsistence, which is probably the reason the area below the grates harbored an impressive number of large trout. I also suspect that any smaller trout venturing into the feed zone would likely end up in the gullet of the larger trout. The slot protection of trout in the 16 to 22 inch length range was another reason for the impressive number of large trout not only at the grates, but elsewhere in the river. Seeing anglers with a limit stringer of 7 trout with one of those trout over 22 inches took some adjustment, especially when they were fishing next to me! I am sure they were equally amazed at my catch and release philosophy as I was at their catch and keep.

One fly fisher from the Boiling Springs area fishes the Watauga River with its Quality Trout Fishing Area from Smallings Bridge downstream to the CSX railroad bridges. This is the only stretch of water designated as Quality Trout Fishing in the entire state of Tennessee. Quality Trout regulations permit a 2 trout creel limit with a 14 inch minimum length limit (trout less than 14 inches may not be in possession), and prohibit the use or possession of any bait. I plan to include the nearby (about 15 mile drive from the Weir Dam on the South Holston River) Watauga River in my next trip to fish the South Holston River.

When fishing a tailwater like the South Holston River or the Watagua River, be keenly aware that water release schedules often change without notice due to unanticipated changes in weather conditions and power system requirements. Water may be discharged without warning at any time. Your safety depends on obeying all posted safety regulations and warnings, and being alert for any increases in flow.

Many streams around the country, especially tailwaters like the South Holston, are affected by the invasive Didymo, also known as Rock Snot. Didymo has gotten a lot of attention in the fishing community because of its presence in many waterways that fly fishers frequent. New York and Maryland are examples

of states that have Rock Snot present in several of their waters. Pennsylvania has also reported some waters with Didymo. Rock Snot has taken over much of the bottom of the South Holston River. The aquatic algae looks like what has been



described as brown or white fiberglass. I had the thick gooey growth stick to the bottom of my felt wading shoes and, as I moved about, especially near the edge of the river, the matt-like material built up on the felt soles much like when snow builds up on your hunting boots. I sent an email to the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency asking if the Rock Snot presence is limiting the organisms that trout

feed upon. My second concern was the year round water release and the results on the organisms and trout in the river. I received the following information:

“We have had didymo (rock snot) in South Holston River for several years. Fortunately, and to our surprise, we have not observed any negative effects from the didymo on the trout populations in the South Holston River. In fact during that same time we have observed an increase in the abundance of naturally reproducing trout in that river. The only problem that we might have at this time is that there are too many trout. It would be helpful if more people kept the smaller fish below the slot limit. It is possible that the didymo could be altering the benthic insect community, but the trout do not seem to be effected.

Frequent fluctuations in water flows as observed below dams can have negative effects on aquatic organisms. The weir dam at South Holston helps dampen these fluctuations. South Holston tailwater flows and habitat support all life stages of trout, so it is clearly adequate on some level. All brown trout in the South Holston are the result of natural spawning. And the South Holston has the most abundant population of wild trout in state, possibly in the southeast.

I do not think TN would benefit from banning felt soled shoes, it a false sense of security. There are too many other potential vectors for didymo: shoe laces, wader creases, boats, anchor lines, line, big flies, etc.... I would be concerned that anglers would assume that they have done all they need to do, just by not wearing felt. Even if felt was banned we would still want to see everyone follow the cleaning steps. The presence of didymo is a serious problem because it could create serious ecological problems in the next river it invades and it makes fishing very difficult where it is found. Right now, the data suggest that it is not negatively affecting the trout in the South Holston River, but it is affecting anglers. Unfortunately there are no mechanisms to treat it.”

I was due a replacement pair of wading boots so I purchased a pair with easy to clean surfaces to prevent the spread of invasive species and the soles are of a grippy rubber plus studs for greater traction. I dedicate those wading boots and a

pair of waders to only waters containing Didymo. Fly fishers and any other water recreationists are encouraged to follow a “Check, Clean and Dry” format to limit the spread of Rock Snot and other invasive species. A search of “Check, Clean and Dry”, through Google for example, will provide the necessary step by step instructions.

We all had a very good fishing experience on this trip. The local fishers insisted that “we ain’t seen nothing yet.....wait till you all fish the sulphur hatch on the South Holston River between the months of May and October. The thought boggled my mind and return trips were a must!

The harbinger of spring hatches arrived this particular year on March 26 in the Cumberland Valley, specifically on the Yellow Breeches. It was a Saturday afternoon and I was completing a carpentry project in the house. On one of my trips out to the garage to get materials, I heard a fish splash the surface in the nearby Yellow Breeches Creek. I tried to ignore the surface disturbance because I wanted to complete the home improvement project. But, on the way back to the house, I heard another splash. This one got my attention and I ventured to the nearby water. After a few minutes another fish splashed the surface and I saw the reason for these water disturbances .....Hendricksons floating high on the water surface! I immediately placed the home improvement project on hold and slipped into my waders. One of the benefits of living close to the stream is the ability to drop what one is doing at the house and go fishing when it is warranted. I often think what a great fly fishing clubhouse location this property would make for a group of flyfishers that want to get away from the corporate world and have easy access to great fishing on the renowned Yellow Breeches.

Previously, I sorted my spring hatch flies into several fly boxes and knew exactly which fly box to put in the chest pack. I caught several fish using the appropriate Hendrickson (female) or Red Quill (male) flies. But it was the March Brown Flymph that provided consistent results. The flymph was fished on the surface when a fish was observed taking duns and when the surface action was dormant the flymph pulled under the water produced good results. The March Brown Flymph had been productive for a few of us on Pine Creek in the Slate Run area for the last two years. Interesting that the flymph works well on large mayfly bugs in late March and early April. And like the Money Fly, the Flymph is another Cover it All (CIA) fly that catches fish whenever mayfly hatches are on. I called the local fly shop to pass on the good news of the appearance of the Hendricksons. However, the cold and then cool weather slowed the Hendrickson hatches and as a result, every three to four days, the hatch appeared in mid afternoon and lasted to about 5:00 PM. Then on April 2, the Grannoms appeared mid morning and increased in numbers with fish aggressively taking them off the surface. The mid afternoon rollover hatch phenomenon of Hendricksons and Grannoms combined to drive the trout into a feeding frenzy. Gratefully, I was in the middle of the rollover hatch activity and showed great poise under pressure, adjusting promptly and calmly to the change. I remained in solid control and caught fish. Talk about demonstrating coolness under stress! The rollover hatch continued to April 15th

when a huge rain event blitzed the Cumberland Valley with five plus inches of rain in a short period of time sending the Yellow Breeches into the highest level that I have seen in the past seventeen years that Gayle and I have lived here. Results.....another segment of water in the lower level of our house. Fortunately, we had been through floods before and have a system of recovery in place that puts us back in control of our life style in a matter of days. The rains continued on and off for the next week and the Yellow Breeches remained in a condition of over the top or at the top of the bank hampering any fishing attempts. The Hendricksons and Grannoms simply made their departure for the season without undue harassment.

Now, back to the fishing prior to the disruptive high water. I will not go into the life cycle of the Grannom caddis, but will relate to you what Grannom fly patterns work for me. The Grannom flies that I use with satisfying results are the Emerger, Adult and Egg Laying Versions. The adult Grannom is straight forward, meaning see the splash and place the adult fly pattern nearby. The result is usually a hookup. The Emerger and Egg Layer fly patterns offer more of a challenge and thus get my vote for exciting spring fishing.

Here are a few observations while on the stream during the Grannom and Hendrickson roll-over hatch activity. Cold weather will prevent the Hendricksons from taking flight so they would listlessly float on the water surface with the obvious "Tall Ship" silhouette. However, the Grannoms would pop to the surface and flutter/hop a few inches above the surface and the trout would key in on them with a splashy rise. Any Grannom within two to three feet of the feeding lane were taken. A placid Hendrickson on the surface outside of the trout's feeding lane (say a foot or so away) would not draw a take. The mallard ducks and the phoebes, an enjoyable sounding early spring arrival bird in this area, took the rigormortis phased Mayflies with gusto. This was possible because of the lack of mobility of the flies due to the cooler air and water temperatures.

The Grannoms taken off the surface with a net revealed a chartreuse color woven into the body. My recollection of the Grannoms from the previous year did not contain the chartreuse tone in the body. I may not have been as observant then and the chartreuse tone escaped my attention. I now rib the Grannoms with 6/0 chartreuse thread. The results are amazingly close to the natural's body.

I fish the four seasons of the year. Obviously, trout feed less in the winter, so when spring approaches, my hopes and expectations rise. That was the case when I ventured to Penns Creek in mid April. The conditions on Penns in the Catch and Release section near the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission cabin were promising. While walking to the creek, I met four of my fellow Cumberland Valley Chapter TU buddies on their way out from the creek. They expressed sorrow because they were leaving Penns Creek after several days of fishing, and informed me that some Hendricksons appeared the previous afternoon. They felt the Hendricksons would appear in increased numbers about mid to late afternoon. I thanked them for the update on the hatch and joyfully headed for the water. The CVTU fly fishers were correct as the Hendricksons broke forth about 3:30 PM

and lasted until about 5:30 PM. To be on the cusp of a major early spring hatch is beyond description. Also, I only encountered one other fly fisher that afternoon and evening. Looking around, I wondered, am I in the right place? How lucky can one get!! Added to the joyous fly fishing day was the sighting of a few Grannom Caddis. The following day, I was scheduled to guide two anglers on Penns Creek. What timing for the roll over hatches of Hendricksons and Grannoms. I wondered if my clients will realize how lucky they are to be on Penns with great hatches? That evening I noted what I had observed on Penns Creek. I always look forward to looking back on notes taken during the four seasons of fly fishing. Those notes help prepare me for the upcoming hatches. Planning your fishing trips around the weather and pending hatches is a great idea, especially in early spring.

Such planning paid off on a follow up trip to Penns Creek when three of us fly fishers set out for a day trip of fishing. Upon arrival at a convenient parking lot near Cherry Run, we were astonished to see one vehicle in the parking lot. Commenting that this could be a sign from heaven or hell, we strung our rods and proceeded to our favorite sections of stream. Terry Taterius took Ken Chase in tow and would be his guide for the day, because this was Ken's first trip to Penns Creek. Ken had just retired from the Navy and relocated to the Cumberland Valley. I dropped off at what I call the junction pool and immediately saw several trout rising to the surface. I checked my watch and it was 9:30 AM. The Grannom hatch was under way! I tied on a Grannom fly pattern that I used on the Yellow Breeches with success two weeks earlier and several hours later, I had released a total of 15 trout. Amazingly, only three of the fifteen trout were less than twelve inches. The other trout caught were in the 14 to 18 inch bracket with chunkier size girths. All of this action was without moving from the junction pool. Amazing! I thought this has got to be one of my more memorable fishing experiences on Penns Creek. But hold on, the afternoon challenge was about to unfold. Returning to the junction pool after a nourishing lunch at the truck, I observed a younger fly fisher casting to a myriad of rising trout. I asked if he minded my fishing about forty yards upstream of his position and he was agreeable, stating that the company was welcome.

Our conservation followed the usual lines when trout are up but not taking what was pitched at them. What they are taking? We wondered for the next hour and a half, because we tried the obvious pupa, emerger, and adult patterns with no luck. Finally, in some degree of frustration, my young fly fisher excused himself because he had to go home and prepare dinner for his working wife. I tied on a tandem of size 16 Grannom emergers tied with snowshoe rabbit foot hair and cast upstream, allowing the tandem to slip just under the surface and success! The tandem rig seemed to be the trigger because from that presentation on, I eventually hooked and released fourteen trout. The cast upstream would often result in what appeared to be a snag and, upon raising the fly rod, a respectable size trout would be on the line. The photo opportunity was excellent with Grannoms in the shrubs and trees along the bank and clinging to the exposed portions of boulders in the

creek. Wave after wave of Grannoms would fly upstream and the fish would come to the surface. The Grannoms were in some peril, but so were the fish. An osprey would fly over, and on one occasion, dove into the water not far from me and came up with a good size trout.



*Resting Grannoms*

Mixed with the Grannoms were a few March Browns and Gray Fox. The Grannoms were the principal insect this day but the random appearance of either a March Brown or Gray Fox would result in a splashy take of the naturals. The rollover of hatches would occur in a few days with the decline in Grannoms and the increase in March Browns and Gray Fox taking center water. Several of us planned to

be on hand for the upcoming evenings of spinner fall. And, as an extra bonus, the Green Drake hatch on Penn's was only weeks away!

I have been guiding the Chris Zalesky family members for many years. It is amazing how quickly Chris's sons have grown. The guided trips to fly fish covered some major trout streams in the Commonwealth. This particular year, Chris's sons would not be involved because of school commitments, but other family members would. Jim Zalesky from the Chicago area joined his nephew, Chris and his brother Bud, who is Chris's father. They fished the area surrounding Pine Creek known as the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania. It was nearly the third week in May and the weather was cold for that time of the year.

The drive up the Pine Creek Valley on Route 44 and then Route 414 is one of negotiating the winding road while attempting to view the many mountain and valley landscapes. The road parallels Pine Creek in many places and the temptation is to look for rising fish or watch the numerous haunts that trout occupy. Another feature of the Pine Creek Valley is the bike trail that meanders along a significant portion of the Pine Creek Valley road. The bike trail can also provide miles of access to Pine Creek that otherwise would not be accessible without a long hike. Our destination on Pine Creek was the Hotel Manor at Slate Run. A delayed harvest area begins in the Slate Run area and extends downstream to near the Naval Run area. A benefit of staying at the Hotel Manor is to arise in the morning, have the self-serve breakfast, suit up for fishing and walk a very short distance to the stream and catch (hopefully) some big German Brown Trout.

The weather was unusual with rain, sleet and gusting winds and we were the only anglers on the stream when the March Browns and Gray Foxes lifted off the surface. The harsh weather conditions did not deter our catching some fine trout, including one German Brown Trout approximately 20 inches long. Local anglers informed us that the hatches were 7-10 days late because of the weather. We realized we were on the cusp of some great dry fly fishing and we

were not disappointed!

The black bear highlight of that trip involved my pickup truck. Overnight, a smallish black bear scampered up on the hood of my PU and made its way across the roof (all this took place on the passenger's side of the vehicle) onto the fiberglass covering over the bed of the truck. Then turned around and proceeded up over the cab again, but this time on the driver's side where it slid its greasy butt down the windshield, leaving a wide mud and grease patch. The bear then left the vehicle via the hood. The muddy foot prints and greasy bum slide were highly visible and I received many comments from fellow fly fishers as a result of the bear's trek up and over my vehicle. The windshield was cleaned with an anti-grease solution, but streaking still occurred on the driver's side of the windshield when the wipers were activated during rain events for many days. I later learned the bear foiled the lock system on the dumpster at the Hotel Manor and feasted on the contents. The result was a furry hide covered in grease and other discards from the hotel.

March Browns and Gray Foxes were our main hatches because the Green and Brown Drake hatches were delayed due to the untimely cooler weather conditions and resulting colder water temperatures. The fly fishing, combined with the bear sightings, overflights of an occasional eagle and the great food menu at the Hotel Manor provided the Zalesky family members with an enjoyable trip to the area and an enjoyable mini family reunion.

Shortly after the Zalesky departure, Gayle and I returned to the Pine Creek Valley with six other couples from the Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter. This was one of several Chapter fishing trips. Again, we were not disappointed with the lodging accommodations, fishing and, most importantly, the water level and weather conditions. As an added bonus we were entertained with 10 different black bear sightings. Fortunately, none of the bears clambered over my pickup truck! Several members of our CVTU Chapter caught a good number of the large German Brown Trout that have enhanced the desire to fish the Slate Run area of Pine Creek. One late evening the fish were up working the surface with splashy rises and it was obvious they were taking emergers. Casting a March Brown or Gray Fox dry fly pattern resulted in a few hookups. I tied on a March Brown nymph, lathered it with floatant and cast it out to the nearest rising fish. The take was almost immediate and, several releases later, night had set in. I made a note to modify the nymph and fish it as an emerger.

Early the next morning a father and son team was on the water and the son began to catch and release some impressive size fish. I asked the father what the son was using and he responded a Flymph. A Flymph! The father gave me as much information on the size and tying of the Flymph as possible and upon my return home, I set out to gather Flymph information. I started at the local fly shop and soon had a lead on the subject. One of the regular visitors to the fly shop offered to loan me a book on fishing the Flymph. I accepted his offer. James E. Leisenring and Vernon S. Hidy co-authored a book on the subject many years ago and I now had the needed background on tying the Flymph. I did not realize that

it would take a couple of hatch seasons to develop such a Flymph.

On a side note, upon our return from Pine Creek a friend called and advised that the first of the Green Drakes were on Penn's Creek in the Poe Paddy area. It is an exciting experience to venture through the old abandoned RR tunnel at Poe Paddy and fish the late evening/night Green Drake Spinner fall. Now here is where the extra excitement enters. Although catch and releasing several wild big browns is exciting, the return trip through the tunnel after dark is reminiscent of an excerpt from an Edgar Allen Poe novel. The haunting feeling of the close dark, dank RR tunnel walls, coupled with water dripping from the stone arch ceiling, can conjure up some eerie thoughts of Ichabod Crane. Another adventure is to avoid stones on the tunnel floor that occasionally have fallen from the arched stone ceiling. Just a bit of advice, be sure to have a flashlight, a very bright flashlight!

The Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources has recently closed the Poe Paddy Tunnel because of deteriorating structural conditions. Falling and loose overhead rocks forced the closing of the structure that passes through West Paddy Mountain along Penns Creek and close to Poe Paddy State Park, Centre County. The historic 250-foot long tunnel is part of the Mid-State Trail and former Cherry Run Railroad bed. The tunnel was used frequently by hikers and biking enthusiasts as well as anglers who use the tunnel to access two different stretches of Penns Creek, a premier trout fishing destination. Repair work and duration of the closing are contingent upon emergency funding.



*Historic tunnel closed*

Now, back to the development of the Flymph pattern. The following year, we once again ventured into the Pine Creek valley at Slate Run. Pine Creek is big water with a background of big mountains. Framed between the water and mountains this morning was a big bird. It was a Bald Eagle being hurried upstream by an attacking crow. Usually, it is the crow that harasses the discovered owl, but this was the first time I witnessed a crow harassing an eagle. The eagle appeared only slightly agitated as the pair flew by about 100 feet above water level. I yelled to Clark Hall who was 200 feet below me on Pine Creek and we both watched the airborne pair continue their flight upstream toward Slate Run and the entrance to the Grand Canyon of Pennsylvania.

My attention returned to fishing because several good-sized fish were working the surface within casting distance of my four-weight fly rod. Clark had several fish working the surface near him and soon he was fast to one of those big fish. That fish turned out to be one of the large German Brown trout that are stocked

in the stream. This is made possible by sponsor money and purchases of trout stocking Gold Member pins by anglers, the majority of which are fly fishers. The pins were available from Wolfe's General Store and Orvis Fly Shop at Slate Run. Owner Tom Finkbiner has had the program in place for several years and the response from the fishing public has been positive. The Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only Section of Pine Creek at Slate Run was reminiscent of a western stream and has generated a western type fishing atmosphere with the combination of big fish, big water and big mountains. Sixteen of the fish purchased and stocked were in the four to eight pound range and lengths were 24 inches and longer. Steelhead sized fish on Pine Creek? You bet! The majority of the fish bought and stocked were in the 16 to 19 inch range.

During this stay we did not see as many bear as in the past but we saw a huge bear and two little guys or girls that we fondly described as little black bowling balls with ears.

Memorial Day was a week later this particular year and the hatches were a week or so earlier. As a result, the bugs were different than past years. For example, past years we could expect hatches of March Browns and Gray Foxes, Olives, Green and Brown Drakes and the failsafe Caddis. However, on this trip there were hatches of a size 22 little Blue Winged Olive in the morning and again at noon, supplemented with a size 16 Blue Winged Olive in the afternoon. Random appearances of the Slate Drake, the Sulphur and the Light Cahill rounded out the other offerings. A smattering of Gray Fox bugs were also noted. The USGS gauge at Cedar Run was reading 1.94 feet upon arrival, which is low by Pine Creek standards, and continued to drop as the trip unfolded. Water temperatures in the Slate Run area ranged from a mid day high of approaching 70 degrees F. to a morning low in the mid 60 degrees F. Successful anglers from our group reported taking trout off the surface with the two sizes of Olives, the Slate Drake in parachute style, CDC Sulphur Cripple/Emergers, tied V Midge style, Porcupine Quill, and the ubiquitous Flymph. Those anglers fishing subsurface reported good results with the Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear in various sizes, as well as the Pheasant Tail, egg fly, pink worm and Woolly Bugger. All in all, it was a very productive and enjoyable trip.

I made some additional improvements to the Flymph fly over the winter and was anxious to try the personalized Flymph fly on Pine Creek's large German brown trout. Soon it was time for our CVTU group to return to Pine Creek Valley. Now remember, this is the third year our group has spent four days fishing the Slate Run area in late May. Our Cumberland Valley TU group of sixteen arrived in the Slate Run area under weather conditions that warranted the wearing of rain gear while out and about. Fortunately, the rain remained light and intermittent through the remainder of the fishing trip. However, the conditions did bring out a better showing of hatches than I have seen on Pine Creek in many years. The Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures Only section of Pine Creek, from the confluence with Slate Run downstream 1.2 miles to near the confluence with Naval Run, is big water and continues to remind me of a western stream found in Montana. The

scenery surrounding the project water is impressive for both the mind and the spirit. In April, this section of water received a stocking of 250 German browns



*Also impressive are the feisty trout.*

that ranged in size from 15 to 20 inches. The fish were again purchased with funds donated by visiting anglers and corporate interests in the Pine Creek Valley. While inquiring about the big trout stocking process with project coordinator, Tom Finkbiner of Wolfe's General Store and Slate Run Tackle Shop, members of our group did not hesitate to each donate \$20 to the fund. We had donated to the fund in the past and felt that we received full value from catching

and releasing many feisty German brown trout. These trout are purchased from a private hatchery, and seem to adapt very quickly to life in the stream. It does not take long for them to become wary and selective in their feeding.

It was time to give the Flymph fly a workout! Early Wednesday morning, several of us were on the creek in the light rain. Blue Wing Olives, Gray Fox and March Browns were visible on the water surface. Fish were favoring mid stream and the far bank near the paralleling bike trail. Wading to about mid chest level and THEN a long cast were necessary to reach the surface feeders. It was obvious that some huge fish were working the surface and an accurate cast with the Flymph fly resulted in a hookup or a miss. Patience after a miss was necessary to allow the fish time to gain confidence and resume surface feeding. Often, another fish was surface feeding outside the feeding zone of the "put down" fish and casts could be made to that fish. Standing in moving water that is mid chest high is a challenge. Then add long distance casting to the equation, and some talent and luck are necessary. The resulting casting is generally not artful, resembling more of a heave or fling, but what is lost in art form (style, grace and technique) is made up in efficiency and effectiveness when the Flymph fly softly rides through the feeding zone and the surface boils with the take. The resulting hook up hisses the fly line across the surface as the huge and powerful German brown torpedoes its way downstream and then, as the line backing begins to show, the fish suddenly turns and zooms toward you! At times like this, a larger than traditional arbor reel is worth having. In short, the German Browns on Pine Creek are hard-running game fish that have similar fighting qualities similar to the fall steelhead in the Lake Erie tributaries. Overall, I noticed that the Flymph fly takes were aggressive even when the trout appeared to be sipping the naturals at the surface. At the terminus of a long distance cast and float through the feeding zone, the take at the surface was easily seen as the undisturbed surface erupted into highly disturbed water!

Yes, the Flymph fly improvements were effective, and Ken and I tied up several while at Pine Creek to give to other anglers in our group. When nearby anglers asked what fly we were using we would tell them the Flymph and the usual response was, "What's that?" We would explain that the Flymph was a floating nymph type fly pattern and not difficult to tie. There was no need to tell them the fly was effective because the results were obvious!!

It was the last week in May and Gayle and I were on the South Holston River in the Bristol, Tennessee area. This was Gayle's first trip to the SoHo, the term used by the local folks to refer to the South Holston River tailwater that emanates from the South Holston Dam. The earth and rock fill dam is an impressive 285 feet high. The impounded water fills up many valleys in parts of Tennessee and Virginia with a water surface of 7,580 acres. The SoHo dam tailwater and the resulting great trout fishing area are located in TN. When wade fishing was limited due to water releases from the dam for the purpose of generating electricity, Gayle and I explored the area and found many scenic vistas, picnic areas and many other points of interest, including one such picnic area and scenic vista that required the driving across the breast of the dam to the other side. It was quite an amazing experience. The exceptional view of the water and valleys and mountains etched in the background almost took one's attention from the knee knocker boulders that were the only barrier between the vehicle and a plunge of hundreds of feet to the water below.

Hydroelectricity is not only one of the cleanest sources of energy production, but also is reliable and cost effective. This was the primary reason for creation of the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) and its many dams. The SoHo dam construction was completed in 1950. However, the trout fishery there and at other TVA dams was negatively impacted by two major problems existed for many years. Operating practices of the hydroelectric facility had a devastating impact on the tailwater by reducing the oxygen level and drying out the riverbed downstream of the dam.

In 1991, TVA set about to do something about these problems. I suspect pres-



*Overflowing Weir Dam*

sure from the general fishing public and Trout Unlimited were the driving forces. TVA constructed weirs, which are in essence small dams downstream of the main dam. After the labyrinth style weirs (think of the winding passages cut in a large field of corn to create a maze) were installed, the dissolved oxygen level and water flow downstream of the hydroelectric dams greatly improved. The weirs consist of concrete piers with wooden walls of interlocking timbers in a

zigzag design, hence the maze appearance. The water gains oxygen as it plunges 7.5 feet over the weir wall. The water then flows over a series of iron grates that also help aerate the water. Gayle and I and other fly fishing friends can vouch for the great trout fishing that can be had at the foot of the grates. Prior to the weir dams, the stretch of river below the hydroelectric dam was nearly dry when the turbines were not operating. The weirs operate by holding back some of the water during generation and slowly releasing it afterwards. The weir dams help maintain a minimum flow of 150 cubic feet per second during April through October. This changes to 90 cubic feet per second the remainder of the year. Water is released or pulsed through the weir twice a day in order to fill the weir pool. The water is gradually released from the weir pool through pipes with float valves between periods of power generation.

Why the dissolved oxygen problem and the need for weir dams? During the summer months, water in the reservoir above the dam separates into layers. The warmer surface water is well oxygenated, but the bottom layer of heavier cold water has little oxygen because of the decaying matter on the bottom of the lake. The layers don't mix due to the temperature difference. Therefore oxygen in the bottom layer is not replaced and by the end of summer, there is very little oxygen at the bottom. Production of hydroelectric



*Downstream view from Weir Dam.*

power draws water from this oxygen deficient bottom layer, passing it through turbines, and discharging it downstream. The result was a decrease of water quality due to low oxygen content and a compromise of the aquatic life and fisheries located downstream of the dams. An interesting website for SoHo information is <http://www.hookemnow.com/lake/south-holston-lake?section=facts>.

The trip from Boiling Springs, PA to the Bristol, TN, area, according to our OnStar unit, covers 418 miles and a driving time of 6 hours, 17 minutes. This doesn't factor in stops for fuel or rest breaks. Compare this to a trip from Boiling Springs, PA to the Erie, PA area, which is a distance of 278 miles (East side of Erie in the 16 Mile and 20 Mile Creeks area), which takes approximately the same amount of time. The drive on Interstate 81 through the Shenandoah Valley is pleasing and a legal speed limit of 70 miles per hour most of the way moves one along in a hurry. On the way down, we took a side trip on part of the Skyline Drive through the Shenandoah National Park and spent one night at the Skyland Resort. At 3,680 feet, we expected exceptional views of the Shenandoah Valley. We found this to be a pleasant stop over in spite of arriving in the fog. We would have otherwise had an extraordinary view from our room and the dining area. We had

plans to travel the Skyline Drive for approximately 64 miles the following AM, but because of dense fog that prevented any viewing from the scenic areas, we opted to return the shorter distance we had traveled the day before and continue on I-81. Traveling on the Skyline Drive in the fog can be disconcerting as well as hazardous since the animals seem to like playing on or near the roadway and it is most difficult to see them. We had to dodge four deer on our way up Sunday evening and three young bear cubs on our way down the following AM.

Upon arriving at the SoHo the next day, anxious to begin our fly fishing experience, we drove to the weir dam parking lot and were disappointed to find the water level quite high and rushing due to a water release for generating electricity. No wade fishing for us, but the guided and private float boat trips were active.

We decided to check into our lodging for the next few days. We stayed at the Farm House, which is a quaint place to be sure. It consists of a log cabin, which has several additions and attests to the many generations of the family that settled there some 100 years ago and still farm the property. The current owner was born and raised there and now lives in a modern house on the hill. The Farm House is filled with beautiful antiques and it is quite interesting to walk from the very modern kitchen into the formal dining room and then into the living room that has the original walls made of log. There are many photos, including tintypes, of the previous occupants, their activities and the evolving of the generations. The property is still being farmed and has several horses, cattle, including a huge black bull, 3 cats, 2 dogs and a flock of wild turkeys that appear on occasion. It consists of some 90 acres but the owners also grow hay on several other properties. A common thread in this area is the presence of friendly, honest, trusting, hard working people. This is a beautiful area in a lush green valley of the Appalachian Mountains. Having the SoHo so close is an added bonus.

On Gayle's second trip to the South Holston River in early June, we discovered the river level beyond safe wading so we checked into the Farmhouse. After calling the 800.238.2264, TVA, South Holston Dam "latest information water release line", we secured the flow schedule for the following day and prepared for our fishing trek accordingly. The water release schedule for the next day is usually available by 6:00 PM. As noted previously water release schedules can change with out notice due to unexpected weather changes and electrical power needs. Be alert when fishing near the weir dam and on the grates. Obey all posted safety regulations and warnings.

At the farmhouse, we noticed a familiar sound from the surrounding wooded area. Cicadas? You bet! The critters were out in good numbers. The next morning we had a cicada exoskeleton and in a few cases, the live cicada exiting the exoskeleton on our truck tires. Exoskeletons were on the porch posts, trees and outbuildings, just about everywhere you looked. My anticipation of an exciting cicada fishing event mounted. Visiting the nearby fly shop, I was surprised that the cicada presence was a non-event for the fly fishers in this area. Here in PA, when the cicada are present, many fly fishers experience a 50+ trout day. I had my traveling fly tying kit on this trip but was not prepared for the cicada appearance

so I rummaged through the fly shop and could not find the necessary materials to tie the imitation. I was convinced Gayle and I were missing out on some fantastic cicada fly fishing until the next day, when on the water, we saw the significant sulphur hatch that erupted from noon until late in the evening. I'll get right to the point and specify that a sulphur money fly was the magic fly the majority of the time and teamed with a downstream recoil or slack cast was the winning combination. At times a recoil cast of five yards caught trout and other times a recoil cast of fifteen to twenty yards was necessary.

Prior to noon, Gayle and I would fish the grate area downstream of the weir dam with a few fly fishers and several bait anglers. Remember, TN does not have many project waters and as a result, fly fishers and bait fishers fish side by side in a cooperative fashion. Keeping an ear open for the siren that announced an unscheduled water release we ventured out onto the grates in the early morning where Gayle would put on a catch and release clinic. The first morning she caught and released seventeen trout in two hours before the sirens went off alerting us and others to a pending water release. Catching a nice sized trout on your first cast as she did, drew some veiled attention from the bait fishers. The neat thing was the bait fishers applauding her as she released her fourteenth or fifteenth fish. I looked up and realized that her fishing position was nearer the bank where the majority of bait fishers were fishing. They had a great spot sitting on their five gallon buckets watching Gayle catch and release numerous trout. She was fishing the lower edge of riffled water as it came over the grate. What was the fly for this event? None other than the Ray fly. The Ray fly, fished under a yarn strike indicator or indicator fly, was most effective until about eleven o'clock. After that time, we would move downstream and prepare for the consistent sulphur appearance.

One of the days, the water release prevented our fishing the grate area in the morning, so Gayle took the day off and I headed about seven miles downstream, where the access was a bit more challenging than she felt up to. I was able to fish for several hours before the released water arrived. The sulphurs were not overly evident so I fished an indicator size 12 Adams fly with a pheasant tail dropper. After several fish I noticed trout rising against the far bank and eased deeper into the river. What was happening? Bending at the waist and looking across the water's surface, I was able to cut the water's glare and realized a blue winged olive hatch was underway. I tied on a vertical olive in size 20, which I thought was too large, but it was the smallest size I had in my fly box, and was astonished that the trout readily took the offering. The olives gradually gave way to the sulphurs and I made the necessary adjustment to the modified (sulphur color thorax) money fly. Upstream was a boulder that had about a foot of exposure. I would catch and release a trout and turn upstream to check the water level on the boulder. I knew that a water release was in progress and not knowing when the rising water would arrive at my location, I had to be alert. Fortunately, I was able to fish for another hour before the boulder gradually disappeared because of the rising water. I was on the far side of an island and knew that I needed to cross the island and ford a narrow but deep channel to reach my vehicle. I wanted to stay and fish to the

rising fish taking sulphur emergers and duns off the surface but knew that the channel on the far side of the island would be treacherous with rising and swift flowing waters that could sweep my feet out from under me. Perhaps thirty years ago I would have played my fishing cards out to the last possible cast and then escaped the scene. Fortunately, much time has passed and a comprehensive knowledge of appropriate judgment has given me a new perspective on keeping alert to current (no pun intended) hazards.

All in all, the South Holston River was a great destination fishing trip from March to June. Will we return? You betcha! We returned in July as covered in the Summer section of this book. It is difficult to find a more scenic area, great accommodations and excellent fishing all in one place.

Now let's move on to a big water fishery that is not well know across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. The fishing formula was straight forth, several friends of Gayle and I wanted to catch Montana sized trout without traveling three and a half days to get there. We focused on Ridgway and the Clarion River, which is part of the National Wild and Scenic River System. The drive was approximately three and half hours from the Carlisle area, and the trout were Montana size. The smallest Brown we caught was a 15.5 incher and the largest (verified) was 22.5 inches long. We were on the money as the Green Sedge hatch appeared the day we arrived and continued for only four days. It is rewarding to pinpoint hatches and come away with great satisfaction in the number and size of trout caught. We stayed at the Towers Victorian Inn and the accommodations were excellent. Although a group of fly fishers was not the ordinary type of guests at this retreat, the innkeeper did respond well. Equipment was spread out in the back yard, parking lot, bedrooms and social room. I produced my collection of Sedge flies, both surface and subsurface varieties, and spread them out on one of the Victorian style end tables in the grand size social room. The gang picked and chose sedge bugs for the next day's fishing. Credit to the Innkeeper, who kept an understanding composure and humor throughout our stay. The Clarion River water level was low which made for comfortable wading and any fish spotted dimpling the surface was catchable with a stealthy approach. Ahh the fishing was great!! But so was the kayaking on the Clarion River from Ridgway south. The wives hiked nearby Brush Hollow Trail in the Allegheny National Forest. They reported a fantastic morning of hiking along a pristine, gurgling stream to a scenic outlook and, as an added benefit, were able to identify some unique wildflowers blooming along the trail. There is always the hope of seeing elk in the nearby forests. Why is the Clarion River obscure to the fly fishing community?

Today's angler is well traveled, well equipped and stream knowledgeable. Sometimes a stream like the Little Juniata River that is smacked with pollution drops off the destination list for anglers. As decades pass and the pollution decreases for what ever reasons (most often the prime reason is economics) the stream gradually becomes fishable. Soon the established access areas and foot-paths are showing signs of renewed use. Good size trout and impressive hatches become the talk of the fly fishing community. Lodging, restaurants, gas stations

and other businesses begin to notice the influx of outside the area fly fishers. Another example of a “comeback” body of water for fly fishing is the Clarion River. This river has made an impressive comeback from a stranglehold of pollutants generated by years of industrial waste which had devastating impacts on the resource. Much like the rejuvenated Little Juniata River. The Clarion River can boast of impressive wild brown trout, and although it is not entirely nestled in an area of unforgettable beauty, it is unique with the occasional sighting of an eagle or elk. The wildlife, hills and valleys make a statement that the Clarion River, with its energized tributaries near Ridgway, is worthy of continued resource respect and recognition of a unique heritage. It was with that mixture of industrial factory remnants, combined with an emerging natural beauty of the countryside that greeted our large group on our second trip to fish the Clarion River. The people of Ridgway were eager for us to share in their pride of redevelopment and projection of the early 1800 lumber heritage that boasted of nineteen millionaires in the small town. This pride was obvious in the folks that operated the restaurants, stores and lodging that we utilized. Most of the buildings had been restored to their Victorian era appearance utilizing some of the same furniture and decorative themes popular during that time. The water source that years ago transported goods to markets downstream now commanded our complete attention. Impressive numbers of varied mayflies and caddis flies flitted above the water drawing magnificent wild brown trout to the surface along with some stocked brook trout that meandered in from the tributaries. Dry fly fishing was the game and the fishers from our group rose to the challenge, taking several wild brown trout over twenty inches. Actually the smallest wild brown trout was about eleven inches with the majority of the wild browns in the 15 to 19 inch bracket. The river water level was well below normal and the bulk of surface activity occurred in the morning and again in the evening. Easy access is limited on the 8.5 mile Catch and Release All Tackle section, but with some walking effort, our experienced fishers had virtually unlimited river to fish. The Clarion River, with its remarkable size brown trout, has got to be Pennsylvania’s best kept secret!

I guided a couple on the Little Juniata River that had never fished the stretch of stream that I normally take my clients on, so they were enthused to learn more about another of the Commonwealth’s outstanding limestoners. Until a dozen years ago not many anglers knew about this limestoner and those of us who were born and reared near Tyrone remembered the Little “J” as a highly polluted stream. The stream is now a quality brown trout fishery and deserves the fine reputation it has garnered. This has happened due to the efforts of concerned Pennsylvanians to upgrade or eliminate pollution sources in the Tyrone area. A major upgrade was a sewage treatment plant. The river is not a long one, approximately 12 miles (from Tyrone to Frankstown Branch of the Juniata) and has a width of about 100 feet give or take according to where you are fishing. Many small limestoners flow into the Little J and help sustain good summer fishing. Spruce Creek is a contributor of additional cool water.

Wading can be difficult when the USGS Spruce Creek Station is reading

above the 2.5 feet mark. The day we fished, the reading was 2.24 feet and the water was slate green in color. This allowed us to see most of the stream bottom as we waded. Wading staffs and felt soles eased our foot movement over a rocky bottom. We accessed the riffles and glides and could wade almost to mid stream, but we were able to only wade a third of the way into the pools because of the deep water. Naturally, the trout in the pools were up most of the time and out of normal casting distance. We did fare well in the riffles and glides. The action began at 10 AM with a fine hatch of March Browns, Gray Fox, Sulphurs, Light Cahills and Caddis which lasted to early afternoon. We used the appropriate dry flies on the surface and later went subsurface with a Pheasant Tail wet fly both in single offering and in a tandem offering using the Copper John as the dropper. The largest catch of the day was a 19 inch Rainbow Trout on the Pheasant Tail. If fishing big water like Penns and Pine Creeks is to your liking then consider fishing the Little "J" and don't be embarrassed when a hog size trout runs downstream with your fly and doesn't stop!!

What appeared as a tan color Caddis, about a size 18, was abundant the last week in April and into early May on the Yellow Breeches. They appeared early in the morning and continued throughout the afternoon and into the evening. From a distance the Caddis appeared to be tan, but a day earlier, I waded out and netted several for a close examination. I found the Caddis were not tan as they appeared to be, but were actually a green color. That evening I tied a dozen green colored Caddis to replicate the ones I had taken in the net. On a whim, I tied a dozen Caddis wet flies with a green or amber glass bead, a body of Hareline Ice Dub Caddis Green dubbing and a collar of medium dun hen soft hackle.

The following day, I guided two young men on the Yellow Breeches. The fish were up as mentioned previously and taking the naturals off the surface. However, the takes were of naturals that were hopping along the water surface prior to taking flight. The Caddis would emerge, hop, well, actually skip about one to two inches above the water surface. The trout were keyed in on the hop/skip activity and motionless Caddis went unscathed. Mimicking the hop/skip of the naturals by twitching the fly brought several fish to the net but my gut feeling was that trout were actively taking Caddis Emergers prior to the naturals reaching the surface.

Yes, we could have concentrated on the trout taking naturals off the surface and continued to take a modest number of trout. But early in the afternoon, I recommended tying on a tandem of Caddis wet flies that I tied the evening prior. One split shot carried the tandem of flies just under the surface and the serious action of catching trout began. My clients caught numerous trout with the tandem wet flies and after several savage strikes resulting in rip offs; they used up the quantity of wet flies I had tied the night before. I excused myself and walked the short distance to my house and sat down at the fly tying table. In twenty minutes I had tied several Caddis wet flies and returned to the stream. My clients tied on the freshly tied flies and the action resumed. An hour later they ran out of flies. So once again, I returned to the tying table and tied up another half dozen flies. The

total catch and release of trout from the surface and later subsurface over the eight hours of fishing was impressive. What a day of fishing! I followed this schedule and enjoyed some exciting Caddis action. Near mid morning the fish could be seen as they aggressively took Caddis Emergers a foot or so under the surface. Shortly before noon the Caddis could be seen popping to the surface and, with the hop/skip motion, fly off after traveling 3 or 4 feet. Caddis activity would extend to early evening. I would fish the Caddis adult with some degree of movement across the feeding lanes. Occasionally I would pull the adult style Caddis under the water and slightly twitch it for some smashing action! Caddis fishing at its best!

I like to fish Penn's Creek for Green Drakes when the word is out that the drake hatches have quit or diminished for the season. We had two great evenings one year near Coburn with a late burst of coffin flies and minimal anglers on the stream. Scott, a fishing friend from Virginia, and Terry, another fishing friend from nearby and I headed to my camp above State College. The plan was to fish Spring Creek and the mountain creek of Black Moshannon during the day, catch an early dinner, and then fish Penn's from 7 PM to dark or longer if conditions were favorable. Surprising what a huge white deer hair fly will dredge up after dark when the coffin flies are still about. We did well on the surface and below the surface on Spring and Black Moshannon Creeks. One fly was exceptional below the surface and I am using it with equal success across the Commonwealth. The tie is simple with dark or light dun soft hackle and a dubbing collar added to the standard pheasant tail design. If it is sulfur, olive or caddis time, I dub the collar appropriately with sulfur orange, pale olive or Adams gray. The coffin flies were sparse on Penns Creek the late evening of June 6 and virtually nonexistent on the 7th. Both nights ended with no takers on the coffin fly. However, the fish were up on some insect. After an hour of fishing and minimal takes, I went subsurface with the ginger nymph and caught trout. Unfortunately my supply of ginger nymphs was limited because of several days of guiding and I provide the flies when I guide. Noticing an angler a short distance downstream who was doing quite well I decided to mosey down and chat with him, but stay a reasonable distance so as not to interfere with his fishing. The angler was fishing underneath with a size 12 long shank march brown that appeared to have a soft hackle and he told me that, when the coffin flies are sparse, the subsurface approach proves effective. I agree because the ginger nymph was effective until I lost the few I had with me. Well after dark Terry, Scott and I all met at my truck and compared notes. I relayed my results and the success the angler below me had on the march brown emerger type fly. Don't let green drake mania cloud your fishing intelligence to other bugs that might be playing key rollover parts. For example, Terry and Scott were speculating what may have had the trout working the surface beside green drakes, when another fishing friend from Bellefonte, Dick, walked up from the stream and said the trout were taking olive spinners. The spinner was a size 18, black short body, abdomen nonexistent from egg laying, crystalline (clear and transparent) wings. The consensus of the group was a gray fox spinner was also a major player this evening. The black caddis naturals were also abun-

dant but the fish did not appear to be interested in them. The next night we caught fish on the gray fox and olive spinner patterns. On the last morning of the trip we stopped at Penns Creek hoping to find remnants of the olive spinner, but the spinners were not there. Scott, remembering the abundant evening black caddis, tied on a tandem of pupa and emerger and did real well. The emerger was a size 16 with a bubble of tan or ginger Antron pulled over the top and tied off at the eye. The brown shuck was accented with a tan body. The size 16 pupa was a La-Fontaine Sparkle type with black dubbing body and ginger or tan Antron pulled over the top and tied in at the eye. Two or three mallard barbules are added for the antennae. The sink and swing technique caught fish equally on the emerger or pupa flies. Just a side note, the water was thin on Penns and Spring Creeks but the temperature was holding in the low to mid sixties so the fish were feisty!

The hunt for the Green Drake (almost sounds like a movie title) took several of us to new waters. A dedicated cadre of fly fishers travel the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fishing to the green drake hatches, that fortunately appear at different time sequences on varied waters. However, some of these fly fishers have been stricken by what many refer to as Green Drake Mania. I am not quite in the mania stage regarding green drakes but could be close to it. For example, on May 15, The Green Drake activity began on Yellow Creek. Mike Kaufman and I were fortunate enough to be on Yellow Creek the 20th and 21st and caught several fish that were taking Emergers and Duns. The hatch activity had a window from about 2 PM to 6 PM. Unfortunately the evening was sour, without an abundant appearance of green drake spinners commonly known as the Coffin fly. The locals said the cold spell that gripped the area while we were there was the reason for the lack of Coffin flies. They felt spinner activity would improve in a few days, as the weather was to turn much warmer. On May 30, 31 and June 1, Gayle and I and Cass and Jay Dunn returned to the Pine Creek Valley for what has become an annual fishing event. I guided Jay several years ago on Pine Creek and he really liked the area. Thus the reason we were back in the reaches of Pennsylvania's Grand Canyon. We were lodging at the Hotel Manor and upon arrival, Gayle noticed and captured a mayfly that was flitting in the parking lot. She called this to my attention and upon inspection of the mayfly I noted that it was a Green Drake! We planned this trip just right. Mark Kauffman, proprietor of the Hotel Manor, verified the presence of the Green Drakes a few days prior to our arrival and produced his laptop PC to show us several photos of hundreds of Green Drake Spinners on the huge picture windows of the hotel. Mixed in with the Green Drakes were Brown Drakes. What a bonanza for fly fishers! The Drakes on Pine Creek are a smaller version of the Drakes found on Penn's Creek and Yellow Creek and that evening the fish on Pine Creek were up on green drake spinners but would not take our over sized Penns Creek/Yellow Creek green drake spinner offering. Unfortunately, I had left my fly tying travel kit at home this trip, a real no-no, so the next morning, we made the short trip across the creek to Wolfe's General Store and the Orvis Fly Shop to purchase the necessary sized flies. As usual, Debbie and Tom Finkbiner, owners of the general store/fly shop, were their amiable selves and, after

extensive conversation regarding fly fishing and riding horses (they own three horses), we were equipped for the evening spinner fall. We were the recipients of having a fully functional fly shop in the area and when you have the opportunity, stop in at the fly shop in the area you are fishing and buy something. Your support is necessary to ensure that fly shops will continue to remain in business and provide assistance to visiting fly fishers. We went onto a fine evening of fishing and that is attributed to the flies bought at the fly shop. A few days prior to the Pine Creek trip, I was fishing a stream near the Maryland state line and caught several trout over 20 inches. The ensuing fight was impressive but the event was mainly a tug of war, while the trout of Pine Creek went berserk and cleared the surface with tail dancing maneuvers and zigzagging up and down the stream, all the time exerting impressive pressure on the rod and tippet. Fish the Delayed Harvest area at Slate Run and if you enjoy the same quality of fishing as we did, contact the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on line at [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com) and express your support for many more project waters in the state. Your support for additional project waters is needed! Remember, a trout is too valuable a resource to be caught and killed at any time!

The next day we had the opportunity to meet a couple from Chatham, Illinois that was fishing many of our fine streams in PA but now staying at the Hotel Manor. They had fished Yellow Breeches, Clark Creek and currently Pine Creek but were planning to fish Little Pine Creek and then move onto Spring Creek at State College. Now I know there are a fair number of German Browns not only in Pine Creek but Little Pine Creek and our friends hit the apex of the fish activity on Little Pine. The following is an account of that morning on Little Pine and next day effort on Spring Creek provided by Kathy and Chris Mehuys:

*Gene,*

*On Thursday morning at the parking lot for the Delayed Harvest area at Little Pine Creek, a spin fisher was leaving as we were getting ready and reported fish were starting to feed on the surface, so it was time for him to leave and the dry fly fishermen to go to work. At around 9 we walked in, following the directions you provided, found fish actively feeding on the surface and Wow, what a morning! We evenly split 8 lunger browns; one 17" and the rest 16". Kathy stayed on the big fish in the slower water; I also hit the smaller fish up in the faster water and caught and released some smaller browns, 2 rainbows and a brookie in addition. The majority were caught on slate drakes, the last two big ones on red fox squirrel nymphs fished wet fly style when they quit hitting the adults.*

*Friday morning, we tried Spring Creek at the Benner Spring Hatchery and I worked hard for a 13" fish. Kathy also caught one that size, both on the BWO parachutes you gave us. There were a lot of guys working a section closer to the bridge, where I caught a 10" brown and Kathy her larger one. We took another brown from a nice stretch of water further downstream that had good drop for*

*about 200 yards with faster water, shade, lots of wildflowers and more productive looking pockets than the area upstream everyone was pounding. A couple of fish showed themselves on the far bank but the other one missed the take.*

*Thanks for the flies and maybe we'll catch you guys again next year.*

*Chris*

When Gayle and I travel to other states to fish we appreciate fly advice and direction to the better spots on the streams we are visiting. There are times when fly shop owners will not share local stream information advocating the purchase of flies and guide service and the “get lost” attitude when you are not reaching for a wallet (you will not find that attitude at the fly shops in the Pine Creek valley). I believe we are all of a fly fishing community and, if we can help out another fly fisher, then we should be more than happy to do so. To assist non residents in fishing our trout streams successfully is always a good thing. We are all ambassadors of our great Commonwealth and the above comments are what Kathy and Chris will take back to Illinois and share with others.

No early spring fishing is complete without a trip to the Erie area to fish for steelhead. My first steelhead trip to Erie usually takes place in mid March, if stream conditions permit, i.e. NO ICE! The lower sections of the Mile Creeks on the East side of Erie were occupied with more than sufficient anglers so I decided to walk upstream in the hope of finding steelhead occupied water without many anglers present. I selected Twentymile Creek because I hold both a PA and a NY fishing licenses. The walk entailed several miles through some rugged areas with cliffs that towered approximately 60 yards high in some places. Fortunately when the creek meandered close to the base of the towering cliff on one side, the other side cliff was situated far enough away from the creek to allow me to cross over and continue my fishing journey upstream. I snapped forty or more digital photos and could have taken many more as the wind and water erosion processes over the eons of time have sculpted some impressive sights. For example, mature trees on the precipice held upright by what appeared to be just a few roots was astonishing. The creek side root system was fully exposed and the tree appeared to be hanging in mid air. Looking up and through the network of exposed roots makes one fully aware that at any time the tree could come plummeting down. One pool had a clump of birch trees that had done just that, falling down the 60 yards or so cliff face and, at the bottom on the creek's edge, had landed upright with sufficient shale and dirt to continue growing. I wondered if the next high water event would sweep the oasis away. That pool held some steelhead and the Titan Minnow accounted for two hookups. However, I began to realize that when a new pool or likely holding spot was approached, I usually caught one steelhead. Repetitive casts with the Titan Minnow or replacement fly yielded no further hookups. So my approach upstream was to fish a likely holding area, catch a steelhead, make several more casts just in case and then move on. This approach allowed the

covering of a lot of water.

All of the steelhead caught were nicked in some way from what I perceived to be ice out damage. Looking at the huge cakes of glacial like ice that remained along the creeks edges one could see how a fish could be in harm's way when the ice broke free due to warming temperatures and high water. I did not encounter any fresh fish that would indicate that the spring run was on. Furthermore, the spring run activity seems to be more concentrated from Route 20 and Route 5 bridges to the lake. Lake Erie did provide some fine sunset photo shooting opportunities. It was remarkable how fast the lake ice split and moved over the several days I was in the area. An area that appeared solid with ice would suddenly become open blue water depending on the direction the wind was blowing and the wind intensity.

March is a good time to fish for steelhead in the Erie area. Past years' steelhead fishing experience has the month of November ranked at the top and the month of March ranked second, so don't neglect to make spring plans to fish steelhead.

Not every late winter/spring are you going to find steelhead above the Route 5 bridges, on the West and East sides of Erie. On a late March trip, the bulk of the steelhead were concentrated from the bridges to the mouth of the popular fishing tributaries. Pairs of sexually active steelhead wound their way upstream with one or two young "jack" rivals harassing the male steelhead accompanying the female. The mature male would run the interlopers off while the female searched for a spot to deposit eggs. The harassment by the jacks played well for those fly fishers that could accurately cast a Woolly Bugger or Emerald Shiner to the agitated male steelhead. The same accurate cast to the female, utilizing the Woolly Bugger, often resulted in a hookup as she instinctively attacked the imitation as a threat to steelhead eggs. This approach may hint of unsportsmen like conduct but fishing to spawning steelhead is legal. Why? Because high summer water temperatures and unfavorable spawning habitat negate natural reproduction in the Erie area tributaries.

Because of an incident that occurred on that trip, let's look at angler etiquette and the rules of engagement while fishing steelhead in tributary streams. Seems the only steelhead fishing rule of engagement honored (well almost) is the release of foul hooked steelhead. Intentional foul hooking is illegal regardless of fish species, so if a foul hookup does occur; release the fish as soon as possible. Other rules of engagement promoting sportsmanlike conduct amongst anglers appears to be limited. Fly fishers, on the most part, are congenial, and I don't mean to stereotype anyone, but more often spin fishers seem to lose sight of simple stream etiquette. For example, a good number of spin fishers will fish up to your elbow and toss the spinner into or at the fish you are working. It appears that they believed this is acceptable behavior. On one occasion, after a large steelhead snapped my tippet and I was tying on a replacement fly, one young, perhaps thirty something, spin fisher actually side stepped past me, all the time tossing the spinner to the fish I had been working. I must admit he was polite while he did so because

he turned his head over his right shoulder and looked me in the eyes and asked “how’s it going?” while he continued to fish downstream. Interestingly my two fishing buddies, both big guys, were about 35 yards downstream. When the spin fisher reached their position he did not fish in front of them but moved behind them and continued fishing downstream. I deduced my almost 70 years of age, white beard and slight (wishful thinking) gray hair would have provoked some respect but evidently brawn and not respect for your elders was the driving force for this particular young man. Just remember, when fishing the Erie tributaries or any other stream for that matter, keep your smiley face on and don’t allow the angling low lives to ruin your day.

Interested in fishing for spring run steelhead? If so the following is an Erie destination steelhead fishing trip plan that can be modified according to your particular needs, number of fish available and weather conditions.

After checking with two of the bait shops (one on the East side and one on the West side) of Erie, and then the extended weather forecast for the period we would be fishing, our trip was on. Chet and I arrived on the west side of Erie after a five and one half hour drive. We immediately checked in at our lodging, which was located near the town of Sterrettania, at the intersection of Route 832 and Interstate 90. The refurbished inn offered a discount room rate to anglers (large room with two queen beds), and includes a breakfast ordered from the menu. Most importantly, Elk and Walnut Creeks are within convenient driving distances. If Elk and Walnut are not fishing well, access I-90 East and 30 minutes later you can fish the tributaries east of Erie. Creeks like Twelvemile, Sixteenmile and Twentymile are prime steelhead tributaries and frankly my favorites! Need lodging on the East side? Then stay at one of the many motel and cabin accommodations near Northeast, PA. Many of the units are available with cooking facilities. However, a great eatery is the nearby Freeport Restaurant, which allows anglers to park and access Sixteenmile Creek from their parking lot. After fishing, and in need of food, simply walk in, waders and all, and enjoy a meal.

I have a hint for those of you who have not had the pleasure of fishing for spring run steelhead in the past. Steelhead search out well-oxygenated water for spawning purposes, so look for them in rapid or riffly waters. We saw steelhead in the pools but they would not respond to egg flies, Woolly Buggers or nymphs. However, they did respond to fly offerings in the moving water. Steelhead are large fish but not always visible to the angler. Just because you can’t see steelhead in the riffled waters, it does not mean they are not there. Remember that



*Hearty appetite.*

steelhead are sensitive to increasing tributary water temperatures and will depart for the depths of Lake Erie, so plan your spring steelhead fishing trip accordingly. On the trip mentioned above, the water temperature was averaging 44 degrees. I have heard reports that steelhead are inclined to leave the tributaries when the water temperatures are in the mid 50s.

Also of interest on past trips, we encountered large numbers of recently stocked 5-6 inch juvenile steelhead called Smolt. The future steelhead population was aggressive and would attack flies intended for the spawning steelheads. We tried to release the Smolt as carefully as possible without any harm. It was amazing to see a 5 to 6 inch Smolt with a three-inch Woolly Bugger in its mouth. The number of Smolt stocked in the Erie tributaries and Presque Isle Bay is determined by the rate of return, angling pressure and fishing access. Smolt imprint themselves to the specific tributary where stocked and after leaving for the lake waters, will return to their imprinted tributary in the fall. This process could go on for 6-8 years, if the life span is not preempted by non catch and release anglers or nature.

Fall is a great time to fish for steelhead and winter steelhead fishing can be a challenge, but doable depending on the severity of the weather. Ice on the tributaries in winter is about the only discouragement that prevents my fishing for steelhead at that time of year. See the Fall and Winter sections in this book on steelhead fishing for details.



**It's the reel thing.**

*Fly Fishing*

# Chapter 2

## Summer

### Mid June/Mid September

A wetter than normal spring set record water levels in April and May. The combined total of 14.8 inches of precipitation in April and May sent the majority of our trout streams into flood or bank top conditions. This unfortunate condition not only hit the Cumberland Valley but many sections of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Needless to say, streams like Penns Creek, Pine Creek, Spring Creek and Yellow Creek ran high, keeping anglers off the waters and raising havoc with the bugs that inhabit the creek bottoms. The Hendricksons and Grannoms that appeared in late March and early April did hit a brief window of opportunity to hatch as the big rain event in March was the 10th and 11th and the second big rain event in April was the 16th and 17th. The rain event in April deposited 5 inches of rain in a 24 hour period that resulted in the third highest water level (14.75 feet, registered at the USGS Camp Hill gage) in the Yellow Breeches since Tropical Storm Agnes in 1972. The mid point between the two major flood events saw the Yellow Breeches at a tolerable wading level and the appearance of the Hendrickson and Grannom roll over hatches. Good stuff, since many fly fishers were eager to return to the waters. However, as mentioned above, the record precipitation and resulting near bank top water limited the opportunity to fish and, most importantly, may have had a drastic impact on follow up hatches such as the Caddis and Sulphurs and the upcoming Hexagenia and White Fly, due to severe stream bottom scouring. This spring was not your normal break away from the winter blues to get outdoors fly fishing. The fly fishers were daunted and so were the macro-invertebrates that trout feed upon under normal spring conditions. Fortunately, the summer fishing improved!

One hatch that appeared in moderately good numbers after the devastating rain events was the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun. Some of the common names fly fishers apply to this bug are Blue Dun, Blue Quill (probably the most common), Summer Quill and Iron Blue Dun. The second hatch, formerly Cornuta (now Drunella) or Blue-Winged Olive, also appeared in good numbers on Penns Creek and I was told the Little Juniata River. First, let's look at the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun, examine its positive values to the fly fishers and try to bump this bug up a notch or two on the fly fishing hatch charts. The first question asked of me is what color is mahogany? The abdomen and thorax color of the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun resembles dark-colored hardwood. More specifically, check your house, a friend or a relatives house, for instance your grandparents, for mahogany furniture and you will grasp the color of the small, size 18-20 dun. As with genuine mahogany hardwood, the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun is a quality insect that is worth your effort to duplicate and fish. The Slate Winged Mahogany Dun is slightly larger than the Trico and can be found on many streams from

May to September. Mid June seems to be a favorable time frame for the smallish bug. However, unlike the Trico that appears at first light and vanishes about mid morning, the spinners of the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun can be seen undulating in a near straight up and down line from about 10:30 AM to noon and then again toward evening. These spinners are the result of emergence that took place a few days prior. I have followed the Mahogany Dun action on streams like Yellow Creek and the Yellow Breeches and even on a medium size freestone stream high on a plateau many miles west of State College. I have been frustrated with the airborne critters as they lower to the water's surface and only a few trout seem to notice when they finally spin out. Another frustrating factor occurs with the spinners. Depending on the air temperature, which varies from May to September, the spinners may spin out any time from about noon to early evening. May, June and early July the spinners can be seen just prior to noon and again in the evening. Hot summer temperatures limit the spinner appearances to the evening, while the fall temperatures bump up the appearances from late morning to late afternoon. The spinner fall usually occurs over riffles, pocket water and heads of pools. I now concentrate on subsurface fishing when the emergers are active from about 9:00 AM to about noon. I have observed that one section of a popular spot on Yellow Creek has a combo of vegetation cover and backwater which is particularly difficult to fish subsurface or surface because of the fast flowing currents that are jettisoned from a thirty foot narrow chute formed by a high ledge on one side and large boulders on the opposite side. No easy midstream, minimal current hatching for these bugs! Why is the spot popular? Because the water softens about half way through the 200 foot glide and fish tend to stack awaiting the arrival of food. Now let's look at the tough spot in this popular glide that the majority of fly fishers shun. A good portion of the food does not reach the stacked fish because of the recycling effect in the backwater, therefore those fish that work the backwater eat hearty and those fly fishers that are very good at casting a distance and mending fly lines over several current speeds do well. The rest of us watch our lines go sweeping by, dragging the fly in tow, counteracting what any sane trout would recognize as potential food. Remember, fishing to the emerging duns is best done with a dead-drift slightly below or in the surface film. Overall, these bugs tend to prefer fast water for hatching and then later, they lay their eggs over fast water. So tuck this information away for future reference and perhaps you will be successful fishing the Slate Winged Mahogany Dun hatch.

They (Tricos) are back and are providing some early morning fishing excitement. The recently completed PA Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp held at the Allenberry Resort Inn and Playhouse facility on the Yellow Breeches saw the Tricos appear on the morning of Thursday, June 21. Many of the Camp students that got up at the crack of dawn to fish soon learned that I had a good selection of Trico flies. I was referred to as an on the water fly shop and soon my vest, with a good supply of Trico flies, became lighter.

Tricos appear in good numbers on the Yellow Breeches from late June through early November when the first heavy frost of the fall occurs. Tricos have

appeared as early as May on the Yellow Breeches but trout do not seem interested in them at that time. The best fishing is usually from mid July to early September. That time frame may vary according to weather conditions. For example blowtorch type weather can reduce the number of Tricos in August. The Yellow Breeches water temperatures can go up several degrees and might contribute to a decline in Trico numbers. Tricos need cool streams and good but not great water quality to flourish. They seem to do best in cool, fertile streams with a slightly silty substrate. What other mayfly hatch offers 120 plus days of consistent dry fly fishing opportunity!

I need to emphasize the advantage of being the first fly fisher on the water in the morning. If that was not possible, then definitely, be the second. Trico fishing is a morning event. In June and July, first light to about mid morning are the action hours. Arrive well after first light and the best fishing spots are usually occupied, so get there early. Watching others catch trout after trout in the best feeding lanes is not a pleasant way to spend the morning. As the Trico season progresses into late July and early August, the trout become more active about 7:00 a.m. Remember first light gradually occurs later, hour wise, as late summer and fall approach.

The question is often asked if the size of Tricos vary during the summer? The naturals may not vary in size but the fly you present

needs to do just that. Early on in late June and early July, a size 22 and size 24 Trico fly will be accepted by the trout. Why? Because trout are focused on the naturals and feed voraciously. Your oversized fly is readily accepted because the fishing pressure has not been overwhelming. Also, the slightly larger version of the natural bug is easier to see and this results in the fly fisher's increased confidence, thus more fish are caught and released. As the trout are caught and released (a good practice where ever you fish) and the fishing pressure mounts, they become more aware of size, presentation and fly tying quality.

Hopefully by now, the fly fisher has the confidence to downsize the fly. Otherwise it is going to be a limited or fishless morning. Mid August is the time for the size 26 fly that better resembles the natural's size. However, presentation remains paramount. I remember the first trip Gayle and I took to Montana (September, 2003) and while fishing the Big Horn one early morning, we discovered a carpet of Tricos in the area we were fishing. Retrieving a few naturals from the water's surface, we realized that our Trico flies that we used back East were too small. The naturals were a size 20 and in some cases, a size 18. That evening at Fort Smith, MT we tied flies to match the naturals and were on the water the following morn-



*Grandfather and granddaughter success.*

ing at first light. Our success that morning reflected paying attention to the size of the naturals on the Big Horn and tying the appropriate size flies.

Why do Tricos provide 120 plus days of mayfly fishing? Are Tricos multi brooded? According to my fishing buddy, Ken Okorn, there is contradictory information from various sources on the specifics of the life cycle of Tricos. We compared that information with our own observations and the observations of other fly fishers and biologists. Some references state that Tricos are multi-brooded. This term is generally used to describe those insects that produce more than one generation in a 12 month period, such as some species of *Baetis* and *Isonychia*. We were unable to document that this occurs with Tricos. Those other species generally have a distinct interval between broods, while the Trico emerges continuously for three to four months. We must keep in perspective that none of this matters when it comes to actually catching trout. There is general agreement on the basic life cycle of Tricos. Male Trico duns emerge overnight and do not provide much of an opportunity for fly fishers. They probably molt into spinners in streamside vegetation. Females emerge at or shortly after first light and fly to streamside vegetation to molt into spinners. Male spinners form swarms over the water, or sometimes over land near the stream bank, often in sheltered areas and are then joined by the females. After mating, the male spinners fall spent on the water. It is believed that the females briefly return to the streamside vegetation to provide an opportunity for the fertilized eggs to “ripen”. The females then return to the stream to deposit their greenish egg masses. After egg laying, the female spinners fall spent. All of this takes place relatively early in the day. Tricos are small, dark bodied, and spend a lot of time in the air. This combination would result in dehydration if the cycle extended into the heat of the day.

Ken further notes that the daily Trico cycle can be broken down into four major fishable events:

1. Emergence of the female duns in the early morning. They have olive or green abdomens at this time. The emergence generally occurs later in the morning as the summer progresses.
2. The male spinners form a swarm and are soon joined by the females. After mating, the male spinners drop to the water, and the females briefly return to streamside vegetation. The male spinner fall is often the major fishable event of the day.
3. The females return from streamside vegetation, lay eggs, then fall spent. Once the egg laying is complete, the abdomen is white in color.
4. The spinners float for a while then eventually sink. Once the fish have stopped rising, good fishing is often still available by fishing a subsurface Trico pattern. Charlie Meck has written extensively about this often over looked opportunity.

It is important to note that the above fishable events often overlap. One of the challenges of fishing Tricos is determining which stage the fish are feeding on at the time. There is also contradictory information on how Tricos emerge. Some references state that they emerge in the manner of most mayflies, struggling from

the shuck on the surface. Others say that they become duns under water, coming to the surface as fully formed duns like the Quill Gordon. We have not observed shucks on the water during a Trico emergence, nor have we seen Trico duns stuck in the shuck. However, Thomas Ames, Jr, in "A Hatch Guide for New England Streams", states that Tricos emerge both on and below the surface. We have tried various Trico emerger patterns on our local streams without much success.

In summary, the nymph and the male dun are not important to fly fishers. Fishing an emerger pattern during the female dun emergence is said to be effective, although we have not found this to be the case. The female dun, the male and female spinner, and the drowned spinners seem to be the most important stages for fly fishers to match.

Remember these important points:

1. Be the first on the water, if you can't be the first fly fisher on the water, be the second!
2. Don't step on the biggest fish of the morning by rushing into the water. Good feed lanes are found near the stream banks and big fish target those areas so don't be in a rush to reach mid stream.
3. Match the naturals with the proper sized fly. Use hooks in sizes 26-24 with wide gaps. The wide gap enhances hook ups. Use the 24 size hook in the early part of the Trico season and then use the size 26 hook in mid summer and early fall.
4. Avoid micro drag by using shorter casts and a long, light tippet.
5. Target a single feeding fish and time the arrival of the fly as the fish resurfaces to sip a natural. Do not toss the fly into the feeding pod of fish and hope for a hookup.
6. At times, the double Trico hackled or spent wing fly pattern on a single hook works. If the hatch is heavy, trout will make the most of a surface effort by gulping two or more naturals.
7. Keep the fly floating by applying a generous amount of fumed silica powder better known as Frog's Fanny. A high floating fly also helps with visibility and results in increased hookups.
8. Use 7X or 8X fluorocarbon tippet material. 6X fluorocarbon will suffice in ripply water.
9. Trim the bottom hackles on hackled duns. Flush floating flies seem to be more effective.
10. 2, 3, and 4 weight rods in 8 to 8.5 foot lengths and medium action do a nice job when fishing the Trico hatches. The important thing is to use a rod that allows the user to present the fly as drag free as possible.
11. Cast downstream to feeding fish using a recoil, slack or other method that allows the fly line to land on the surface in a serpentine pattern. These types of casts eliminate micro drag and fish respond to the fly first approach.
12. Tapered leaders and tippet materials absorb water so treat occasionally with a liquid floatant.

13. Unsure if a stream has Tricos, check nearby spider webs. Nature provides a batteryless natural gismo that is fool proof.
14. Do not leave the water after the surface activity stops. Rig a tandem of spent spinner male spinners and fish them as drowned Tricos. Another excellent tandem rig is a bead head green weenie with a spent spinner dropped off the bend of the hook. The nymph fly fishers should excel at this.

Gayle and I and several of our fishing friends spend time in the Bristol, Tennessee area fishing the South Holston River tailwater. On one of our visits that Gayle and I made from June 30 to July 4, we noted several vehicles with PA license plates parked along the 14 mile stretch of tailwater between Boone Reservoir and South Holston Dam and in the main parking lot at the weir dam. We stopped at the nearby fly shop and asked if many anglers from PA visit the shop or fish the tailwater and the answer was “yes”. It seems a good number of PA anglers like the guided float trips that are outstanding trout producers when the South Holston Dam is releasing water for hydroelectric purposes. They also respond to the wide window of Sulphur mayfly hatches that can occur over a seven month period!

The South Holston River is known for its abundant wild trout population. The fish are strong fighters and remind me of the fighting quality of the brown trout in Penns Creek, one of my favorite trout waters in PA. A 16 to 22 inch protected slot has been in effect on the South Holston since 2000. The slot limit and the ending of brown trout stocking in 2004 appears to be responsible for the wild brown trout success. Also, two major brown trout spawning areas were put off limits to fishing in the months of November-January. The result has been substantial natural reproduction of the feisty, fighting brown trout.

However, there is a down side to the attributes of the South Holston River and that is the presence of the invasive species, *Didymosphenia geminata*. I first heard about Didymo or Rock Snot while fishing upper New York State many years ago. Since then, Didymo has appeared in numerous other states, including PA. Recently it was detected in a portion of Pine Creek, the stream associated with the Grand Canyon area of PA. Really not good news! So, what can be done to retard the spread of Didymo? Gayle and I clean our equipment as recommended and dedicate use of that equipment only to waterways that have reported presence of Didymo. Perhaps, you should do the same.

Interesting that a research project (spring, 2009) at the University of Colorado at Boulder discovered that high water flows greatly decrease the amount of Didymo in the system. This control method is still being researched and is not yet proven. I noticed an abundance of Didymo on a March 2012 trip to the SoHo, while on subsequent trips, there appeared to be less. The SoHo area had received high water flows over that time frame. On one of our trips, the SoHo area received about nine inches of rain over a two day period. The river was swollen and off color like I have never seen before, and we were unable to fish it.

Bottom line, fishermen should take the following precautions after fishing in Didymo infested waters. These methods will help reduce the spread of Didymo.

**Check:** Before leaving the river, remove all obvious clumps of algae from your waders, boots or wading shoes and then look for hidden clumps. Leave them at the site, preferably in the sun to dry. If you find clumps later don't wash them down the drain or sewer. Treat them with the approved methods below, dry them and put them in a rubbish bin.

**Clean:** Soak and scrub all items for at least one minute in either hot (140 degrees Fahrenheit) water, a 2% solution of household bleach or a 5% solution of salt, antiseptic hand cleaner, or dishwashing detergent. Freezing items until solid will kill Didymo.

**Dry:** If cleaning is not practical then, after the item is completely dry, wait an additional 48 hours before contact or use in any other waterway.

Your help is needed to prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species like Didymo. These relatively simple precautions can be a great help in stemming the spread of this nasty invasive species.

I would like to emphasize the importance of not overlooking winged ants and having a good selection of winged ants in the fly box.....just in case! I was packing the pickup truck for the 100 mile trip to our camp near Snowshoe when I noticed numerous flying ants on the hood. It was early in the morning and I also wanted to check the Yellow Breeches for Tricos. Walking the short distance to the stream I saw numerous trout up and decided that the trip to camp was on hold. The trout were taking male Trico spinners but were also consuming the flying ants that were littering the water surface. The swarming flying ants tend to appear in the summer and again in the fall, usually after heavy rains. The swarming phenomenon is associated with the mating process and consequently the establishment of new colonies. Fortunately, I noted in the past that winged ant size and color varies with the ant species, so I carry an assortment (size and color) of winged ant imitations. The black flying ants this day were slightly larger than the Trico spinners and were more obvious to my eyesight, so it seemed the trout were taking more ants than Tricos. I tied on a size 20 black flying ant pattern that closely resembled the natural, and as my fishing buddy quips when he is having a great day on the stream, "lost count after releasing three fish." Interesting, later that day, while fishing Black Moshannon Creek near camp, I saw several same sized black flying ants. Perhaps when flying ants swarm, it is a regional event?

The highly successful Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp ([www.riverscamp.com](http://www.riverscamp.com)), sponsored by the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited and hosted by the Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited (CVTU) Chapter, is held at the Allenberry Resort on the banks of the Yellow Breeches. The Rivers Camp, the first in the nation, was initiated in 1995 and is held annually in June from Fathers Day to the following Friday. The Camp has been emulated in approximately 18 other states from the Cumberland Valley in Pennsylvania to Maine, to Tennessee, to Arkansas, to Oregon and to Montana with more states looking to launch programs. The Rivers Camp is coed for individuals ages 14 to 17. Approximately thirty-two students are enrolled and spent the time in a college residential atmosphere learning ecology, aquatic biology, entomology, stream

hydrology and a host of other college level classes. Coupled with the classroom requirements is the participation in a hands-on waterway conservation projects. Other interesting and fun events are fly tying, fly casting and prime morning and evening fly fishing on the Yellow Breeches. The students are given personalized fishing instruction by volunteer CVTU ghillies (guides) who do not carry rods, but do carry a selection of favorite flies that aid the students in catching trout. I volunteer as one of the many 5 AM. ghillies to help advise and assist the young fly fishers. Also, I was a member of the Board of Directors and chaired the Stream Habitat Project Committee for five years. I enjoyed the ghillie duties. At 4:50 AM, I would leave the house and wade across the Yellow Breeches at the “Big Bend” while wearing my well traveled head lamp and utilizing my trusty wading staff. The birds would be in their territorial “here I am” song, as I moved through the understory of bushes and tree trunks toward the Allenberry pavilion. In the meadows, the cardinals, warblers and other early risers chirping sounds would welcome me to a new day. The ghillies would greet one another near the pavilion and receive last minute instructions/updates from Chief Ghillie, Clark Hall. We could count on Clark to be on the stream bank behind the pavilion prior to our arrival, sorting through tippet material and various flies that the students might need for the early morning fishing/instructional session. Soon after the usual exchange of fishing suggestions, the students would appear on the far side of the meadow as though guided by the spirits of the dedicated flyfishers and camp founders, the late Dr. John “Jack” Beck and Enoch “Inky” Moore, Jr. They would make their way through the early dawn gray mist to meet the challenges of the wily trout in the Yellow Breeches. Hopefully, they will continue with fly fishing as they progress through the various passages of life, and look back on those pre-dawn decisions to voluntarily get out of bed and meet the challenge of the Yellow Breeches Creek and life! It was remarkable to see the improvement in fly casting these youth displayed as the week unfolded. A bug would lift off the water and shouts of “there goes such and such a mayfly” could be heard, attesting to paying attention in class. Immediately after identifying the natural, heads would go down and a search of the vests for the right fly box would take place, resulting in a suitable fly eventually attached to the tippet. In most cases, the fly attached to the tippet was one tied by the student. A resulting successful hook up with a nice trout on that fly brought an extra wide smile on the face of the young angler. Moms would appreciate seeing thirty two pairs of waders and hip boots along with supplemental wading belts, socks, wading shoes, and other paraphernalia, placed along the wall near the entrances to the classrooms and dormitory. Felt



sole boots can soak up and distribute a lot of stream water to class or dorm rooms if permitted inside. A pleasant surprise to the early morning fishers is the frequent presence of Trico mayflies in large numbers. The spinners are on the surface about 5:30 AM and offered some action packed fly fishing for those youth who elect to fish the diminutive sized spinner imitation.

As mentioned, the in stream habitat projects are part of the curriculum and here are two examples. One of the Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp habitat project is located on the Allenberry side of the Yellow Breeches immediately below the dam. This project provides stream bank erosion control and fish structure. Hardwood logs, 15 feet long and approximately 8-10 inches in diameter, were placed two abreast along the face of the stream project and provided a canopy for fish to seek shelter/protection from the elements (flooding) and predation (herons). The first evening the logs were in place, a fly fisher was fishing the dam area and, while passing a nymph along the face of the logs, caught a trout. Several of the Camp students were fishing in the same area when the fly fisher caught the trout and a feeling of pride was evident when the stu-



*Team effort.*

dents related the story. Another Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp habitat project is on the opposite bank (South side) of the dam. So when crossing or fishing the Yellow Breeches Creek in the Allenberry Dam area, take time to notice and appreciate the fine work these Camp students have accomplished for you and the stream.

During one of the advanced fly fishing classes for the students of the 2013 Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp at the Allenberry Resort Inn and Playhouse on the Yellow Breeches, I presented a subsurface segment on tight line nymphing. Seeing confusion on the faces of several students, I thought, “Why do we make tight line nymphing so difficult?” We employ at least two monofilament pieces of different colors for enhanced visibility. We watch the angle of the monofilament sections slightly above and below the water surface for movement resulting from trout taking our fly offerings. We try to lead the two or three nymphs through the current maintaining a subtle but taut connection between the tip of the fly line and the length of monofilament to which the flies are connected in order to “feel” trout as they take/hit the offered flies. We usually tie two or more knots that provide the tag end for the nymphs. Knots, such as the Dropper Loop Knot, can be both difficult and frustrating to tie and, remember.....we don’t fly fish to be frustrated. To reduce some of this frustration, we tie in tippet rings in lieu of difficult knot construction and add short pieces of monofilament

for the tag ends. However, I have found that anytime you have a tag end off the main trunk of monofilament you lose sensitivity and consequently you lose fish. Was that a strike or was it imagination?

The leader formula I use is simplified somewhat by eliminating the majority of the difficult knots and tag ends and I catch trout! I am not degrading the myriad of leader formulas presented in the many writings on leader construction, but try the following and see what the results might be. Combine the simplified leader construction with some of your favorite subsurface nymphs, fish the faster moving water, and enjoy some summer tight line nymphing. After all, trout tend to move into faster water for the increased oxygen and lower temperature benefits in the summer.

This is how it is done. Connect the leader butt to the fly line with your preferred method (loop to loop, nail knot, etc.). I use Varivas tapered leader in 4X, 7.5 feet length because the butt section is darker in color and the tapered section is lighter in color. When the darker butt section is attached to Czech nymphing bicolor strike indicator monofilament, the florescent orange and florescent chartreuse colors are easier to locate. My eyes are drawn to the bright bicolor strike indicator material. Adjust the nymph rig to the water depth by simply raising or lowering the bicolor strike indicator monofilament at the water surface. This keeps the flies near the bottom and increases the possibility of more hookups. I use four feet of the dark Varivas butt section and attach a sixteen inch section of bicolor strike indicator material using a tippet ring. The sixteen inch section should be evenly divided between the florescent orange and chartreuse and in 0.35 mm diameter which translates to about 20 pounds test breaking strength. Attaching either the orange or chartreuse end to the dark Varivas butt section is user preference. I prefer the chartreuse because it is easier for me to see in the surface film when fishing water deeper than two to three feet. Attach a tippet ring to the other end of the bicolor material and then add the remaining three feet clearer section of Varivas material. I don't like to waste material. Attach a third tippet ring to the clearer section of Varivas and then attach a two foot section of 5X. I tie my subsurface flies (midge larvae, nymphs, etc.) directly to the two foot section of 5X tippet using an in-line clinch type knot. The first fly is threaded onto the tippet and slid up to within six to 8 inches of the tippet ring and knotted. The second fly is positioned a dollar bill length or about 6 inches from the tippet tag. THIS is very important, tie an over hand knot at the tag end and add two number four split shots. Add additional split shot if not touching the bottom after allowing the rig to sink before leading the rig through the water. I find two number four split shots adequate the majority of the time even during summer months. Using a weighted point fly does not afford the ease of adjusting for varying water speeds and depths as the split shot method does. Besides, I have found that weighted point flies tend to hang up on the bottom more often. If you are not bumping the bottom consistently, you will not be catching nearly as many trout. I also find two midge larvae to be consistent trout takers in the summer months because of the lower stream water levels. The rig consists of a size 22 midge larva tied six inches

above the split shot, with another size 22 midge larva about a foot above the first fly. During the four seasons of trout fishing, select flies according to the hatch chart in your area. Here in the Cumberland Valley and other limestone streams outside the area, the double midge larva rig is productive and best of all, the midge larva fly is easy to tie! When water depth permits, I use a three fly rig. At times it seems that we fly fishers have a subsurface Plexiglas water wall between the trout and our flies. The above rig and fly selections can easily remove that imagined wall. Oh, when the fish start taking naturals off the surface, simply remove the subsurface rig from the lowest tippet rig and replace with the appropriate tippet weight and length. Add the appropriate surface fly and before casting, treat the 18 inch bicolor material with a liquid/gel floatant for added buoyancy. You are adequately prepared for surface dry fly fishing. Pretty simple!!

The majority of trout that I catch result from feeling the trout take the subsurface fly. The direct on-line fly attachment provides good messaging or sensitivity to the person holding the rod. I am working on sight detection of the bicolor strike indicator monofilament material suddenly moving upstream or suddenly stopping and thus setting the hook. Reading and talking to George Daniel, author of *Dynamic Nymphing*, the sight detection aspect is more akin to flies that are free floating and not anchored by split shot on the tippet tag end. Additional fishing will be required on my part to experiment with the free floating theory and the use of a weighted point fly in lieu of split shot. Another very legitimate reason to go fishing! Not that we need another good reason but it sounds good!

The water level was typically low for early August and clear. I waded in immediately below where the Run enters into the Yellow Breeches to fish the fast, rippled cooler water. I tied on a size 24 micro tan caddis, that I call the "Comet Caddis", after a friend's West Highland Terrier named Comet. She travels about in a backpack type pet carrier on her owner's shoulders while David fishes. I met Comet and David one evening as he moved down the center of the Yellow Breeches, casting to rising fish. Comet's head appeared above David's head and she greeted me with a snarl. Comet is a feisty mooch. I offered to allow Comet to run on my property, which is adjacent to the creek and David accepted. However, to avoid a possible mishap with vehicles on the nearby road, David showed me how the carrier can also serve as a kennel. Comet was happy with the arrangement and so was David as he went onto catch several fish. This arrangement was repeated many times when David would stop to fish for an hour or so during his trips from his home in the Catskills to one of his places of business in Virginia. Gayle would enjoy the visit because it provided the opportunity for her to walk Comet down the road to meet the neighbors while David and I fished out back. Now, back to the Comet Caddis fly. The little caddis, being tossed about as it bops up and over the riffles, appears energized as does the Terrier, Comet, when frolicking across my lawn. I tend to personalize the flies that I tie by modifying the color, style or material used and then name them accordingly. For example the flashy Purple Pearl Fly sounds more interesting than a mere midge emerger fly!

The Comet Caddis is exceptionally effective in rippled water, not only in the

Yellow Breeches, but also other waters like sections of Spring Creek in the State College area, Yellow Creek near Bedford, and the Little Juniata near Barree, PA. Interesting that this fly will take fish in thin rippled water. It is surprising how many fish hold in this type of water in the summer. Most anglers wade through the thin water to reach and fish deeper water. I'll look at thin water and the bottom appears fishless, even with the aid of polarized glasses. The fish are there!! Float a choice fly over thin ripply water and see the results for yourself. The following is a brief overview of the approach and technique for fishing thin rippled water. Wade fish out 15 to 20 feet from shore and face downstream. Be prepared to remain in that spot for several minutes while trout acclimate to your presence. I tend to fish downstream and have improved my ability to take fish with a long slack line presentation. I don't cast to a downstream feeding fish that is 40 or more feet away because the extra line necessary to reach the fish in thin water usually lands hard on the surface, putting that fish down and spooking any others in between. A short cast, well above but in line with the trout, is paramount. Allow the fly line and leader/tippet to follow the natural flow of the stream to the feeding trout and you will be successful. The following are comments from anglers that have observed my fishing technique or benefited from a one on one streamside conversation.

Angler: "Was that you who was fishing in the long pool in front of Castles on Friday afternoon? The gentleman had a beard and was casting left handed so those are certainly signatures of you, but he appeared to me to be not nearly as big as you and not wearing the hat you usually wear. But he was using a technique that interested me in that he was stripping line but at the same time was kind of mending it and throwing loose coils on the surface and casting straight down stream or down and across. So that made me wonder what in heaven's kind of insect would behave like this or was he streamer fishing, in which case I'd never seen a stripping action like that."

"I have been thinking about all this and it is now making sense to me. I remember stripping out line and "throwing" it in loose coils to extend a float under an obstruction or into an eddy, or to get a longer float. The lighter tackle would be an obvious enhancement for this."

Another Angler: "You gave me a size 24 Micro Caddis and instructions how to fish it a few weeks ago. I finally got a chance to go fishing at the end of July and tied up some Trico spinners and Micro Caddis the night before. I headed to the section upstream of the bend at your yard and put eight to hand Wednesday morning, half on the Trico Spinners and half on the Micro Caddis. I didn't get much life out of each Micro Caddis so I tied up more with twice the CDC and also purchased some of the dry float powder that you recommended. I went out the next day and caught four on the Trico spinners and four on the Micro Caddis.

"I cast the Micro Caddis to rising fish, but I also had a lot of action using it as a searching pattern. It is very easy to see for a #24 and the fish seem to hit it pretty aggressively. I had several fish follow it for a foot or two and I expected them to do the typical rejection, but to my surprise, quickly turned and hit the fly (it is

convincing even after close inspection). Thanks for the fly (that I used as a pattern to tie more) and the streamside instruction.”

I gave the angler the following testimony and instructions on tying a secure Comet Caddis.

The Comet Caddis is most productive after the Trico hatch is over in the morning. I stood in the middle of the pool just upstream from the Allenberry Meadow Pavilion and at noon, caught and released nine trout. Other anglers in the area had the best spots, but it seemed the Comet Caddis brought fish out of nowhere. CDC is subject to loss unless extra attention is given to the thread wraps around the feather. After winding the tying thread around the CDC tightly, I then pass the thread two times under and in front of the CDC just behind the hook eye. This tends to anchor the CDC in place. Also the CDC is subject to slippage when removing the hook from the fish's mouth with forceps, so care is necessary.

The Hexagenia hatch is early! All the major hatches have been a week to ten days early this year. I suspect the White Fly hatch will also be early. The summer premier roll-over hatch on the Yellow Breeches is the appearance of the Hexagenia and White Fly hatches. Fly fishers equate the arrival of the White Fly hatch with as much anticipation as they do the opening day of trout season, but many ignore the Hexagenia. The Hexagenia appear about a week to ten days prior to the White Fly and are present about a week to ten days beyond the White Fly.

Let's concentrate on the Hexagenia hatch. The first sighting of the Hexagenia mayflies is usually the first week in August at about 8:00 PM. The Hex, as many locals call the big bug, provides excellent fishing weeks before, during and after the White Fly hatch. For example, by mid August the Hex had provided over a week of great late evening fishing and will provide another week of great fishing before the first sighting of the White Fly hatch. On one occasion in mid August, I entered one of our local fly shops and was immediately asked the status of the fishing on the Catch and Release section of the Yellow Breeches. I gave a summary of the previous day's early morning fishing which consisted of a good number of Tricos, followed by mid morning to mid afternoon Micro Caddis and Terrestrials, and later in the evening, an abundance of Hexagenia. Unfortunately, NO White Fly Activity! The reply was that the shop had about 25 calls that day alone regarding the status of the White Fly hatch. I asked if any callers were inquiring about the Hexagenia activity and the reply was negative.

Regardless, the Hex does have a “bleacher bum” following of fly fishers. It is heartening to see a few serious fly fishers show up late in the evening in early August with LED headlamps or smaller LED lights clipped to hat brims. The light is a sure sign of the serious Hex fly fisher because they know that the large mayfly, about 1 to 1.5 inches long, dun and spinners phases are about to appear. Add the tail length and the Hex looks immense. The tail is paramount in determining if the dun or spinner bug is a Hexagenia or Brown Drake. The Hex has two tails and the Brown Drake has three tails and is usually much smaller in overall body size. Fortunately, the Yellow Breeches Catch and Release section has two prime areas that provide superb bottom conditions for Hexagenia nymph development. A sig-

nificant area immediately upstream of the Still House at the Allenberry Dam provides excellent Hex fishing as does a sizable area upstream of the lower end of the C&R section. The Hex nymphs are burrowing critters and well equipped for the task of forming U-shaped tunnels in the soft mud like bottom. I have surmised that Hex nymphs rise to the surface at night, because in almost twenty years of observing and fishing the Hex hatch, I have yet to see a Hex pop to the surface. I believe the dun then rests in the shade of the nearby vegetation and upon reaching mating maturity, mating occurs aerially late in the evening. The females return to the water to deposit eggs and both male and female Hexagenia die shortly thereafter. The resulting spinner fall at dusk offers the fly fisher excellent fishing and the trout a hearty meal.

About fifteen years ago I caught several duns and spinners to examine prior to tying the patterns I use for fishing the Hex hatch. The body color of the dun is greenish yellow with distinct yellow ribbing while the spinner is a brownish yellow. I then tied several patterns and placed a natural among the patterns. The visual result was encouraging and later that evening, after numerous hook ups and releases; I had the dun and spinner patterns that I continue to use to this day. However, after years of fishing the Hex hatch, the dun pattern has emerged as my ace fly. My eyesight has lessened over the years and changing flies at dusk or after dark is a challenge so I favor tying on a fly that will catch fish during both the dun and spinner activity. Also, during the roll-over hatch with the huge number of White Flies, this versatile Hex dun pattern continues to account for frequent hookups. My rod preference while fishing this pattern is a three-weight rod with a 4X tapered leader that is 7.5 feet in length. While fishing flat water a 5X tippet about 18 inches long is added to the tapered leader and, for ripply water fishing, I use the 4X tippet material same length. When guiding, I advise clients to bring a rod they have confidence in and give them a window of 3, 4, or 5 weight. The dusk and early night fishing plays out as follows: On the stream and set up for the Hex appearance at 7:00 p.m. However, into the third or fourth week of the six weeks of Hex fishing, trout will take a Hex dun pattern about an hour before the first naturals appear. I suspect we are fishing to the trout's memory bank. All too often, fly fishers leave the stream prior to the arrival of the Hex. I can only surmise they are not aware of the vigorous Hex hatch that is about to unfold. The first Hex to appear streak up the stream, at times smacking into rods and often the fly fishers hands and face. These critters are on a mission to mate and later deposit eggs. Splashy takes begin to pop around the fly fisher as the trout grab the meaty morsels. The action continues until dark. Hopefully by this time, several trout have been caught and released because the fishing is about to get tougher! During the spinner phase of night fishing one hears the sound and perhaps sees the whitish remnants of water and foam as the fish recovers for the next surface take of a Hex. The casting distance is mentally calibrated and after one or two trial casts your fly is in the feeding zone. It is surprising the number of fish that can be caught by sound placement of the fly. Fortunately, the sound placement zone after dark is usually a casting distance of about 10 to 20 feet.

After dark, fish working the surface, coupled with the night sounds of the crickets, katydids and other night insects overhead and on the surrounding stream banks, make the fly fisher one within the eco-system. The feeding frenzy subsides about thirty minutes into the night and now it is time to carefully work one's way to the parked vehicle. The light that was a must to assist in changing flies, untangling line messes and at times releasing the occasional bats that get caught on your fly, becomes invaluable. Sage advice is to carry a spare light or batteries just in case of an emergency. At this time of the night, after successful Hexagenia fishing, it is hard to fathom that we are in the doldrums of summer fishing!!

After the Hexagenia hatch has been underway for about ten days, the White Flies normally appear on the lower section of the Yellow Breeches's catch and release stretch. The roll over hatches of Hexagenia, Light Cahill and White Fly make for some challenging fly fishing. Why? Because it is difficult to determine which of the big three flies the trout are taking. For example, several fish are thrashing the surface with splashy rises and, covering the fish with the Hex Fly may not immediately elicit a strike, so the tendency is to change flies. Several casts with a White Fly may not result in strikes so another change is made to the Light Cahill and a fish is caught. Several more casts with no takes and the temptation to change the fly re enters the mind. Remember your performance evaluations from the work world? Phrases like the following: 1) makes effective use of peak time period; 2) uses time productively; 3) maintains control over interruptions and, how about this one, avoids confusing activity with accomplishment. So what is the solution?

Consider this.....the Hexagenia appears about 7:45 p.m., spinner activity occurs about fifteen minutes later and lasts about 20 minutes, so cover the splashy rising fish with a Hex spinner pattern. Pitch to the steady risers with an accurate cast. If after three or four accurate pitches and no takes, switch to another riser and so on. You will catch fish. About 8:15 p.m. the White and Light Cahill flies take over in large numbers. The White Fly far outnumbers the Light Cahill but the trout may be taking the less abundant Light Cahill, preferring the slightly larger fly. To compensate for this possibility, I tie on an all purpose fly for the White Fly and Light Cahill roll over hatches. I call this fly the One Fly White Fly. I mitigate the size difference of the naturals by using a 14 2X long hook because past experience shows the fish favor the flies tied on the larger sized hooks. Simply put, the larger fly stands out in the mass of White Flies on the surface and is the primary reason trout will take this fly out of a raft of White Flies and lesser number of Light Cahills. August is not a dull month for fly fishing!

The latter part of August I guided Nick Brognanodo, from Virginia, on the Letort Spring Run. Following is Nick's interesting narrative of that fishing event.

#### FISHING THE LETORT

"I first fished the LeTort many years ago and walked away with a broken rod and a creel full of frustration and no fish. I was much younger back then and was just beginning to learn how to fly- fish. The long rod was difficult to handle in the

thick cover beside the stream. Why go back then, and how did the second experience compare to the first? The answer is found in the following narrative:

Last month I was in Carlisle with my wife who was shopping. I noticed a small, clean stream meandering behind the store. The store employee said it was the LeTort. I promptly left the store and walked to the stream I hadn't seen in years. Looking down into the water from the small wooden bridge I could see him lying there facing up stream. It was a nice size Brown Trout inviting me to test my skills. I scouted the stream a little more and ran into a fly fisherman from Ohio. He said he had just caught "a nice one" and showed me the home made fly he had used. That did it; I could not let the trout season go by without trying the LeTort once more.

I contacted Gene Giza, a guide referred to me by a fishing buddy. I met Gene and we drove to the stream. As we were standing by our cars and getting ready to go in, something unforgettable and unexpected occurred. A fisherman was leaving the stream and spent a few minutes with us. He said he had several "chases", a term I had never heard used in that context. "Chases" was all he was after since he intentionally fished with a broken hook. I had never met a fisherman who fished this way and I initially thought it to be odd. However, once I got into fishing this beautiful little stream I could better understand and appreciate the broken hook technique. A few minutes later a second vehicle pulled up and out stepped a living legend. It was Ed Shenck, an author of several popular fly-fishing books and a lifelong caretaker of the Le Tort. Ed is now in his 80's and is soon to be recognized for his lifetime work with induction into the Fly Fisher Hall of Fame. Gene and I spent some memorable moments with Mr. Shenk. As we talked I learned to better respect the hard work and dedication that goes into preserving a small, clean, clear stream such as the LeTort. Ed now visits his boyhood stream; not to fish, but to simply walk it and reminisce. He continues to look for ways to preserve and protect something near and dear to him. As we walked toward the stream I thought of the first fisherman we met who had no intention of catching anything and of Mr. Shenk's love for this water. I began to feel as if I was about to enter a fly-fisherman's sanctuary where habitat and fish are treated with tender loving care.

I had my favorite 4 weight rod and Gene supplied the flies. The first spot produced no fish but I was pleased nevertheless because I did not get hung up in any trees or bushes and so far I lost no flies. My fly-fishing skills had improved over the years. As I quietly walked alongside the running water I could see evidence of long hours spent in protecting the stream from erosion and sink holes. Sand bags and logs had been strategically placed along the banks and now looked as natural as if they had always been there. More casts were made with the same negative result. While I saw fish I couldn't draw their interest. We moved on.

It was at this new spot that Gene introduced me to two other legends I had heard so much about in relation to the LeTort. Two stone monuments were standing side by side. One dedicated to Vince Marinaro and the other to Charlie Fox. What a fitting place and deserving honor to two fellow outstanding anglers.

Seeing this shrine convinced me I was on hallowed ground. The anticipated excitement of catching a trout was beginning to mellow. After all, where else are you going to run into monuments like this on a trout stream? It would not surprise me if more homage was paid to these two stones than to most family monuments. As we walked down to the water I began to sense the spiritual presence of Vince and Charlie.

It was time to try a different fly. Gene tied on a black ant. I literally approached the quiet flowing stream on my knees so as to not spook George, the granddaddy trout Ed Shenk had named and often mentioned in his writings. Neither George nor any of his relatives came out of their cover to chase the little ant. It didn't take us long to see that nature was providing a food source much more succulent. Fat, chunky caterpillars were falling from the overreaching trees into the stream. What hungry trout would go after a small, skinny ant when there were juicy caterpillars to choose from? As we walked to another spot Gene pointed to an old mailbox standing in the middle of nowhere. He said it had been put there years ago by someone and it was customary for fishermen to write a note in one of the old black books kept inside the mailbox. For some strange reason the old black metal mailbox triggered a flashback to my youth and I recalled the biggest fish I had ever caught up to that point in time. Somebody was playing with my mind. This is what I wrote:

"I was 13 when I landed that big Carp. It had to have been huge because its tail kept getting caught in the front wheel spokes of my bike as I hurriedly peddled home to show off the prize to my father. With fish in hand, I asked my mother where my father was. She said, "he is sleeping." I was overwhelmed with excitement and didn't stop to think as I rushed into the bedroom with a beat up, smelly, carp on a stringer. I woke him up holding the fish about a foot from his face. I said, "Dad, Dad, look at this!" He rolled over, opened his eyes, and shouted, "Get that thing the hell out of here." That is when I learned what to one is a heavenly dream can be a nightmare to another." This old memory had nothing to do with the LeTort and I don't recall reliving that moment of long ago ever before.



*Letort heritage.*

After I wrote that note a few more casts were made with the same result, no fish, but I didn't really expect to catch anything on this trip anyway. I did get hung up in a tree once and Gene showed me how to get out of such a mess without losing a fly. He instructed me to point the rod toward the fly and "make the sign of the cross" with my rod. It worked! The fly became untangled and fell out! I am now curious to see if this "religious" technique will work elsewhere where high

level spiritual presence may be absent. I can honestly say I left the LeTort in a prayerful state of mind. It made for a perfect end.

While I love the sport of fly-fishing I realize the skill required to catch a Le-Tort trout may be beyond my level. Nevertheless, I immensely enjoyed the folks I met, the conversations we had, and the beautiful, quiet, clean, stream. I surmised that the wild excitement of my youthful fishing days have been replaced with a more subtle, mature contentment of simply being grateful at 70 years of age to be able to enjoy getting out and trying my luck at such a unique and historically important trout stream. I can't think of many places where I can honestly say I had a wonderful time even though I caught no fish."

I had heard good reports on the West Canada Creek near Utica, New York and since it was near the route we usually take to the Adirondacks, Gayle and I made the necessary trip preparations to scope out the new water. Gayle and I tend to concentrate on project waters, so our first quest was to contact the NYS DEC, Region 6 office to inquire about fishing the West Canada Creek. I spoke with a helpful aquatic biologist. An hour later, I electronically received a map and four web site listings from him. The map provided the location of the Catch and Release project water and the websites provided fishing and lodging information. An important part of the information is that NY has permanent easements along select streams and this allows anglers to walk along the stream banks for the sole purpose of fishing. However, the easements may be along one or both banks and this is the importance of the maps to prevent trespass. The easement purchases also allow designated parking areas and footpaths leading to the stream. Since the West Canada Creek was new to us and we did not want to tarnish the image of anglers by trespassing on private property the information was greatly appreciated. Gayle and I rented a lake view house on Hinckley Reservoir, a huge body of water, about six miles from the C&R area. The drive was pleasant through horse country to the designated fisherman's parking, which is near the Trenton Falls Scenic Trail. A short walk over a bridge to a path to the stream gives one a majestic view of this large stream. The West Canada Creek conjured up an image of big water like Penns Creek and Pine Creek in Pennsylvania. But this is a tail water stream with water temperatures in late August and early September ranging from 62 degrees F in the morning to 68 degrees F in the late afternoon, much like the same time frame water temperatures on the C&R section of the Yellow Breeches.

I tend to ask questions of the anglers that are fishing the stream. For example, I arrived at the West Canada Creek Catch and Release section in the evening and fortunately met Tom, a retired detective from Albany, who had moved to the area to be close to the creek. He was compassionate and willing to share information about the stream. He felt the West Canada Creek was the top stream in NY and wanted to fish it as often as possible. Tom elaborated on the hatches and reached into his vest and offered me four flies that he had success with recently. He also pointed out various sections of the stream to fish. Later that evening after dusk, I met Tom and two other fly fishers back at the parking lot and we exchanged information on each other's fishing success. Since I would be fishing at first light the

next morning, the gracious fly fishers gave me suggestions and recommendations. Exchanging fly fishing information in a parking lot after a day's fishing is like having a fly shop handy. Little blue winged olives and tan caddis were on the following morning, but the big attraction was a foam beetle. I met a fly fisher about 9:00 that morning who was using a #16 tan beetle, and he was doing quite well. He advised me to forgo the tan caddis and use a beetle fly. I did and I caught fish! Why the beetle fly was so effective early on in the cool morning was a mystery to me. The West Canada Creek is a must destination in May when the abundant hatches are on. According to the fly fishers in the parking lot, Quill Gordons, Olives, Hendricksons, Caddis, and March Browns will be big ticket items.

The beginning of autumn was over two weeks away but the early September weather in the Adirondack High Peaks area was cold. One morning the temperature bottomed out at 28 degrees F. The average daytime temperature was 55 degrees F and the three major hatches for that time of year did not seem to mind. I know from living in the six-million acre wilderness area many years ago that many residents boast of having the longest foliage season in the Northeast. That thought crossed my mind as I left the roadside parking spot and followed a thin trail into the dense forest of evergreen and deciduous trees. Many of the deciduous trees (trees which shed their leaves annually) were showing signs of the upcoming fall foliage color spectacle. About a hundred yards from the West Branch of the Ausable River, I was forced to crawl through a blow down of evergreen trees and could smell the scent of the seedling and sapling size balsam fir trees mashed by the blow down. Love that deep forest smell! Upon exiting the tangle of evergreens and overlooking the inviting deep pool of water on this remote section of the river, I knew it was time to fish.

The three major hatches at this time of year in the Lake Placid area of the West Branch of the Ausable River are Tricos from first light to mid morning, Little Blue Winged Olives from early afternoon to mid afternoon and Isonychia or Slate Drake from mid afternoon to about 7:00 PM. The cold weather stymied the Trico appearance until late morning and the bugs were active well into early afternoon. The bad weather Baetis or Little Blue Winged Olives appeared later as a roll over



*Time to fish.*

hatch with the Tricos, and then integrated with the Isonychia in mid afternoon. This was the first time in my 60 years of fly fishing hatches that I encountered three major species of mayflies in a tri roll over hatch. Amazing!! The female Trico dun, along with the female and male Trico spinner flies that I use in the Cumberland Valley for Tricos proved successful. The combination of Little Blue Winged Olive dun (replicated by



*Adirondack trout.*

the Mosquito Olive fly) and Blue Winged Olive nymph (replicated by Blue Winged Olive Biot fly) also provided numerous hook ups. The biggest surprise was the Hendrickson fly, which mimics the female of the Ephemerella subvaria hatch. It wreaked havoc during the Isonychia or Slate Drake hatch. I only had four of the flies in my fly box and after three days of numerous hook-ups, the flies showed fair wear and tear, but still remained

inviting to the trout. I have fished the major rivers near Lake Placid since 1964 and have not encountered the outstanding fly fishing that I did on this trip. The other waters that I fished were the Middle Branch of the Saint Regis River, near Paul Smiths College and The North and South Branches of the Saranac River, near Clayburg. The South Branch of the Saranac River drops rapidly near Clayburg with Class I through III rapids so be careful fishing near ledges, drops and hydraulics. While fishing near one of the ledges, the first three casts produced three hookups. All three trout were rainbows, and were stained a tea color from the tannic acid in the area. Tannic acid is common in the Adirondack area, and results from twigs of trees like Chestnut and Oak decomposing near bodies of water. This process can turn water a murky, brownish color (the swampy look) limiting water depth visibility. The hatches on these waters, except for the South Branch of the Saranac River, were not as consistent as on the West Branch of the Ausable River, so I fished the Platte River Carey wet fly with good results. I tied several of the Platte River Carey Specials after Ken Okorn, Terry Taterus and I retreated to my fly tying station after dinner with our wives Gayle, Gloria and Kathy. Ken's fly tying of the Platte River Carey was superb and I made a mental note to tie a few for upcoming fishing trips. I did and it paid off while fly fishing in the Adirondacks. Wet flies seem to be the staple in spring but the action on the Platte River Carey indicated that it could be a four season fly! Demonstrations of spinning soft hackle, a technique required for this fly, are available on You Tube.

The Adirondack area provides many great outdoor activities in addition to the fantastic fly fishing experiences. We combine it with our annual canoe trip with friends and hiking the high peaks for those with knees that will tolerate that level of activity. The magnificent views of the high peaks make the trip worthwhile regardless of your other activities. But, for goodness sake, don't overlook the fantastic fly fishing opportunities!



*Does not get much better than this*



**Steelhead in net (almost).**

# Chapter 3

## Fall

### Mid September/Late November

The Yellow Breeches Creek provides great fishing in mid to late September for those anglers that have not put away their fishing equipment. At our mid September Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter Members meeting, several of us were discussing why the number of anglers on the Yellow Breeches was low. A few thought the fall activities such as football and school activities that involve families were to blame. I'm not sure this is the real reason that anglers retire or semi-retire the fly rods in early to mid September. WHAT IS THEN? I believe it is simply that fly fishers believe the start of fall is the end of fishing season. Many are unaware that the Trico hatch is heavy in September and that fish are gorging on food to help sustain them over the coming months when food is not as abundant.

So, what are some features to consider when fishing the Trico hatch in September? Air temperatures are a key element in determining when to be on the water for the Trico hatch. Chet Hagenbarth and I teamed up for a morning of Trico fishing and discovered not a fish up, nor a Trico spinner in the air. The water temperature was a cool 56 degrees and the air temperature was much colder at 42 degrees. Interesting that the fish took their respective pecking order in the pool about a half hour before the first Trico spinner fell to the surface. All the fish were about a foot or less under the surface and looking up. During that time, I tried what I think could be called a Trico emerger with out success. I tried terrestrials like the ant, inchworm and cricket to trick the up-looking fish, but again no takes. The fish were locked on the upcoming appearance of the tiny mayfly and were not interested in any other offering. The Tricos appeared in the air about 9:00 AM and the fish were up feeding on Tricos about a half hour later. The outstanding bug/fish/fishing action continued to noon. A recent YBAC trout stocking enhanced the number of trout sipping Tricos, and with the clear water, it was a joy to watch the surface activity.

More about air temperatures.....the previous two mornings the water temperature was 57 degrees but the air temperature was in the low 60 degree range and the Tricos were out and about in good numbers by 7:30 AM. The first day of fall is just around the corner. Soon a killing frost will occur and our Trico fishing will be but memories until next June. I hate to see my favorite small mayfly hatch disappear. No complaints because since late June the Trico hatch has provide many rewarding and many frustrating mornings of fishing.

Signs of fall continued with brisk morning temperatures and more colorful leaves. However, the Yellow Breeches continued to fish well during the latter part of September with early morning surface activity from Tricos, Little Blue Wing Olives, Little Black Caddis, Midges, Micro Caddis and small Craneflies. Add the bonus of the random appearance of small black winged ants and it was a treat to

be on the stream. Having the correct size and color of the winged ant presented an enjoyable fast hour or so of fine fishing. Unfortunately, on a glorious fall day, I was guiding two anglers from the Boiling Springs area on Yellow Creek (about 90 miles from Boiling Springs) and size 24 black winged ants were on the water the majority of the day, but none of us had winged ant flies in our possession. I have a good amount of fly boxes and my fly box with the winged ants somehow got left behind. Ouch! So I know what it is like to be on a stream with fish taking winged ants and not have the flies to match the hatch. As I noted previously, when winged ants appear and take center stage, the trout will key in on them and almost entirely avoid the other bugs on the surface.

This is how I learned that fall means small. Many years ago, I was fly fishing using size 18 and larger flies with mediocre results. As October passed and November set in, I discovered that the trout became ultra selective of their food source. The exception was an October Caddis tied on a size 14 hook that I will cover shortly. I started downsizing my surface fly offerings in October with a size 24 midge and Little Blue Winged Olive with success. However, about the middle of the month the number of fish caught dropped sharply but I rebounded by reducing my flies to size 26's. Near the end of the month, and early November, I needed to downsize to a size 28 to catch trout. Couple the small flies with competition from gusting winds, a flotilla of leaves on the water surface, and air and water temperatures in the 40+ degree range and you have a challenge. Also, add the glare on the water when the leaves are not covering the surface, and you can imagine how frustrating fall fishing can become. As one flyfisher blurted out to me "If I wanted to rake leaves, I would have stayed home!" But would I not at least give it a try? You bet! Any day without fishing is a day unfulfilled.

The October Caddis fly is productive in September, October and November. Chet Hagenbarth a fishing buddy and I were using the October Caddis as late as Thanksgiving Day on the Yellow Breeches. We were using the large caddis as an indicator fly because of its size and burnt orange color, which enhances visibility for those of us with aging eyes. The other important reason was that the October Caddis attracts fish. Blue Winged Olives were starting to lift off the water so we were dropping a size 22 olive biot nymph that a fishing buddy from Virginia highly touts. That fly is covered in the fly section of this book. The combination of October Caddis and olive biot nymph fished in shady spots under overhanging brush and trees proved successful that afternoon. Interesting fishing watching the October Caddis indicator fly and not knowing if the fly would disappear in a splashy surface take or simply disappear under the surface. We had good action on and below the surface with the tandem rig. When the blue winged olives are not present on the surface, I fish only the October Caddis under the vegetation along the stream banks. Why the renewed interest in the October Caddis? Ken Okorn and I fish together often, but come October my fishing on local streams wanes because of archery deer hunting and steelhead fishing in New York. Ken was on several fishing outings with other fly rod anglers and reported having good to excellent experiences with the October Caddis that he tied.

As the fall early morning fishing wanes, surface fishing continues on the Yellow Breeches and most other streams from mid morning to late afternoon with beetles, foam ants, caterpillars, grasshoppers, crickets, small Caddis, small Cranflies and the larger October Caddis. Subsurface fishing with the ubiquitous Green Weenie and a dropper produces excellent results. The dropper can be a San Juan Worm, drowned Trico (earlier on in the mid morning), Pheasant Tail, Hare's Ear, Zug Bug, Caddis Emerger or any of your favorite subsurface patterns not listed here. If the standard size nymph pattern is not working, try nymph droppers in a smaller size.

Evening surface fishing begins with the fish leaping out of the water to catch the low flying Little Black Caddis. Anyone having a technique to catch trout that are keyed on Little Black Caddis and willing to share the information should contact me! I have been trying for years to perfect a sane approach to catching fish that are exhibiting this behavior. The occasional late summer Light Cahill brings the trout to the surface and a CIA fly in size 18 or 16 is the "go to" fly. Slate Drake Spinners are present and a huge yellow mayfly similar to the Potamanthus occasionally appears. My first impression of this fly is that it is the Potamanthus, but it normally appears in late July and early August on the Yellow Breeches. However, I have said it many times that fishing a limestoner like the Yellow Breeches, you can throw out the book. Remember, when on the stream, the goal is simple and that is to catch fish and enjoy the moment. So don't complicate the outing by being overly concerned with the proper name of the fly or actually having the fly that is hatching. Just tie on the fly that approximates the bug's size and color and go for it! You can tie or purchase the look alike fly later.

In the late summer section of this book, I highlighted the West Canada Creek, a tailwater fishery, about a six-hour drive from my home town of Boiling Springs. My first encounter with the West Canada Creek was positive considering the limited time available to fish. The few fly fishers on the stream that trip were friendly and provided helpful information. There are times when you fish new water that a bond forms immediately with the stream and one can't wait to return to learn more about its features, i.e. hatches, holding areas, riffles and pocket water, depth and hopefully spunky trout receptive to timely fly patterns.

The second opportunity to return to the West Canada Creek arrived and with the hint of autumn foliage on several trees along the stream bank, Ken Okorn and I quickly donned our fishing gear and eased into the 62 degree F. water. We had our wives with us on this trip and they were gracious enough to prepare dinner early, allowing Ken and me time to fish. I made a mental note that Ken and I should spend some time shopping with the wives as a token of our appreciation for getting us on the water timely. It was early evening and the trout were up taking caddis flies. Tom whom I met on the previous trip to the West Canada Creek, was relaxing on the opposite bank talking with a friend. Tom informed us that the caddis had been active all day. Tom likes to use a Klinkhammer style caddis fly when the trout are actively taking caddis naturals. I made a mental note to tie a few and add them to my caddis fly box. I had moderate success with a size

18, X Caddis fly, but Ken caught more and bigger fish on a Parachute Slate Drake. Ken was fishing about fifty yards upstream of me where the water tumbled over good-sized boulders and then suddenly slowed because of the boulder-less and scalloped bottom. The water depth at the base of the boulder-less transition area was four to five feet deep. Overall, the trout were up in the rapidly moving water that was two to three feet deep where I was fishing but they were in the 10 to 12 inch range. Ken was fishing in the deeper, less turbulent water and catching trout in the 11 to 14 inch range. All the trout we caught were chunky, reflecting the abundance of food available to them. Tom and the few other fly fishers I talked to on the stream reinforced the presence of 14 to 17 inch trout that they have been catching on the tailwater stream. I thought that the next trip should be of several days duration and not the evening and next morning fishing blitz on the way to fish the West Branch of the Ausable River.

I always thought of the Slate Drake as a noon to evening bug in late May and early June and again in mid September to mid October. Ken and I had only a few hours to fish the following morning before packing up and heading to our next fishing destination, the West Branch of the Ausable River. The Slate Drake offering turned out to be just the ticket for early morning fishing on the West Canada Creek. That short fishing excursion solidified the Caddis and Slate Drake as must have patterns in the fly box!

The next morning Gayle and I and Ken and Gloria arrived in Lake Placid. Shortly we were settled into the village house we were renting. Our plans for the next three days were to fish in the morning and again in the evening and in between spend quality time with our wives. We would canoe the Saint Regis Wilderness Canoe Area, walk the picturesque three mile hike around Mirror Lake, visit the numerous quaint shops on main-street of Lake Placid, check out the 1980 Winter Olympic facilities and memorabilia and enjoy some fine dining. One evening, while returning from fishing near the Ausable Forks, and driving through Wilmington, we noticed that Fran Better's fly shop was open. Fran, as usual, was at his tying station tying flies for the numerous walk-in and mail order customers. Fran was congenial considering the late hour and shared with us his thoughts on catching Ausable River trout. He generously offered stream access tips. As mentioned previously, I always feel it is polite and respectful to make a purchase at away fly shops and so Ken and I bought two-dozen of Fran's innovative and effective flies. Between Fran's Isonychia version and Ken's Slate Drake pattern we did OK. I find the Genus Isonychia confusing because the Slate Drake (common name) from what I have read depicts the body as reddish-brown but Fran's and Ken's patterns incorporated a dark gray dubbing material. Fran uses muskrat dubbing that he has carefully selected for color and texture and Ken uses a poly dubbing. Unfortunately, I was unsuccessful in capturing a natural, which would have been beneficial, since it is from observing the naturals that I work up my patterns for dry fly fishing.

Ken and I continued fishing the lower reaches of the West Branch of the Ausable River because the upper reaches near the Olympic ski jumps were murky

with drifting aquatic weed parts and silt buildup. At the local fly shop in Lake Placid, we learned that a pond in the headwaters of the West Branch of the Ausable River was being drained into the river and DEC was investigating the matter.

A good formula for September and October fishing of the West Branch of the Ausable River is to drive the road (River Road and Route 86) that parallels the stream from the Olympic ski jumps to Wilmington, a distance of about 13 miles, and look for rising trout. Numerous pullovers are present and a stealth approach to the rising trout will put you in position to catch them. The stream does meander from the road at times and, again, find a pull over and follow one of the paths to the stream. Select a pool or pocket water stretch and observe for naturals and tie on a similar fly pattern. Fran Betters suggested four flies for that type of fishing. Of course those four flies are the ones he has perfected over the years and they are the Dun Caddis, the Stimulator (yellow stonefly), the Ausable Bomber (Fran refers to it as the money fly when searching for big trout), and the Haystack (*Isonychia*). Besides the Slate Drake that Ken tied, we also caught fish on the size 16 CIA fly. I would be remiss not to recommend that on your initial trip to the West Branch of the Ausable River, contact one of the fly shops and hire a guide for the day. A guide will help eliminate some of the trial and error pitfalls that consume so much valuable time while on a destination fly fishing trip to unfamiliar waters.

Looking back on some notes, I find that I have fished for steelhead as early as October 2nd. It is always exciting when the first report of steelhead in the Erie area surfaces, and the fervor for the big trout of Lake Erie begins! Steelhead are a migratory strain of rainbow trout native to the west coast of the US and Canada. They are similar to salmon, in that they spawn in fresh water rivers, migrate to the ocean to grow and mature, and return to their home river to spawn. Unlike the Pacific salmon, steelhead don't die after spawning, and may return to fresh water to spawn several times. Years ago, west coast steelhead were successfully introduced into the Great Lakes, where they adapted well to living in a fresh water environment. They retained their migratory tendency and make annual spawning runs into the Great Lake tributaries. These fish are very silvery or chrome like in appearance when they first enter the tributaries from the lake. Once entering the stream, their color gradually darkens and the prominent lateral pink stripe characteristic of the rainbow trout often develops. The length of the average steelhead is in the 24" to 28" range, but those that survived to make more than one spawning run can reach a length of 30 inches or more. Several of us from our local Cumberland Valley TU Chapter (CVTU) were on Elk Creek soon after the reported first run and caught steelhead that were taped at 27 to 29 inches and weighed 8.5 to 10 pounds. An assortment of flies, like the pumpkin picker, veiled blue egg, sucker spawn and small nymphs were successfully used. Albeit the weather played a major role in reducing the number of steelhead caught. This is how that trip unfolded. The 10 day weather forecast called for several days of significant rain and then intermittent showers in the Erie area. The significant rain was received and showers were to follow on the days our CVTU Chapter members would be fishing

for steelhead. The stage was set for some good fishing, so we thought. The significant rain permitted the steelhead that had been bumping at the shale barrier dams formed at the mouth of the tributaries, from Lake Erie wave action to move upstream into the tributaries. Anxious steelhead fishers look for a major rain event in early October to send sufficient water down the tributaries to break through the shale dam obstacles that prevent steelhead from entering the tributaries for their journey upstream for spawning purposes. That event was unfolding with help from a tropical storm off the east coast. We were on our way to Erie!

The plan was to arrive at our lodging at 1:00 PM, have lunch and go fishing. We would fish the nearby Elk Creek the remainder of the day, and the following day fish the Mile Creeks on the East side of Erie. Upon our arrival at the Quality Inn we learned that Elk Creek, the largest of the Lake Erie tributaries in the Erie area, was up and off-color. However, we learned (cell phones have improved the communication amongst fishers) that Twelvemile Creek, Sixteenmile Creek and Twentymile Creek were in better shape. We decided to forgo fishing Elk Creek and fish the Mile Creeks on the East side of Erie. The showers forecast for that day turned into a steady rain, heavy at times, and the water levels at Sixteenmile and Twentymile Creeks were on the rise. Our group of ten fishers split into two groups with Tony Dranzo directing one group and me directing the other group. Tony's group fished Sixteenmile Creek below the Freeport Restaurant near Route 5 and then moved on to Twentymile Creek. My group remained on the middle stretch of Sixteenmile Creek between the Freeport Restaurant and the Three Falls area. The visibility into the water was becoming poorer as the afternoon unfolded. The rain continued to come down hard.

Jim Ritter of my group was the first to hook into a steelhead. Pictures were taken and the steelhead released. Phil Snyder then hooked in to a steelhead and during the maddening dash, the steelhead managed to free itself from the wooly bugger. Examination of the tippet material showed the pig tailed curl of a knot that failed. Sorry Phil, but we have all experienced that fate at one time or another while fishing. It happens to all of us! I eased into the water and was fishing between Phil and Jim when a steelhead took my wooly bugger with gusto and the fight was on! The steelhead tore downstream came up and thrashed the surface within reaching distance of Jim Ritter. Unfortunately during the foray in front of Jim, the hook released from the fish's mouth. Jim with his raincoat hood up yelled to me through the falling rain that the steelhead was a dandy.

Later, Bob Thompson and I went upstream to fish a good pool near the falls. We waded a good distance before we could cross to the other side. Fishing this particular pool is best from that side. The crossing was difficult, and I mentioned to Bob that I would keep an eye on the rising water level because the walk back to the truck would be a couple of miles with a steep uphill climb to Route 5 if we were unable to re-cross the creek. Twenty minutes later with the on going late evening downpour, the creek level marker I was observing disappeared. I shouted to Bob that we needed to leave as the water level was becoming a serious issue. We attempted to cross the creek at the same spot we crossed earlier, but the rush

of water over the shale bottom would have swept our feet out from under us if we ventured much further out into the creek. We decided to pick our way downstream on the left bank. About a hundred or so yards downstream, I knew of a possible crossing that did not have the usual V bottom slate washout. We carefully angled out into the water and with the aid of our wading staffs, slowly made our way across the roaring tabletop rush of water. Bob and I have been caught up in several dubious wading situations in the past and we pride ourselves on our ability to adjust promptly and calmly to unexpected and potentially volatile situations. Remember that safety is paramount when on the water, so do not over reach your wading ability.

Later that evening we watched the weather channel and saw the radar images of the storm event that had stalled over the area from Cleveland through Buffalo. Erie was about centered in the stalled storm and projections were for one to two more days of rain because of lack of winds to move the storm out of our fishing area. The consensus of the group was to go home since the creeks were unfishable, and to formulate plans for a return steelhead fishing trip in November. On the way home, I kept thinking about the excellent steelhead fishing that would be present when the tributaries returned to fishable levels. The steelhead would be higher in the tributaries and the anglers would have more fishable waters, thus lessening the fishing pressure. A win-win situation for the steelhead fishers. I have to add that in spite of the streams being in a nearly unfishable condition, our group still caught fish and large ones at that. Upon returning home, I was lamenting to Gayle just how good that trip should have been and she reminded me that, unfortunately, the weather is not something we can control. I guess we all need to remember this and realize, that no matter how carefully we plan fishing trips Mother Nature has the last say!

On a return steelhead fishing trip, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission parking lot at Twentymile Creek near the Route 5 Bridge was near parking capacity. A quick read told me that the steelhead were in the tributary from the mouth of Lake Erie to the Route 5 Bridge. Why? Because on my drive to the PFBC parking lot, no cars were parked along Middle Road that parallels portions of Twentymile Creek from Route 5 to Route 20. It looked like the same ol' same ol' as past years, too many anglers and not enough steelhead upstream to spread the fishing pressure. I left the area and went back to camp to prepare for the upcoming New York archery season. Fortunately, the drive to camp was only eight miles. The next day, I met a fishing buddy that lives in the Erie area and he suggested we venture upstream from the parking lot at Twentymile Creek. It turned out that his game plan was a winner as several pods of steelhead had moved higher up stream that evening and overnight. We were below the I-90 Bridge and the fishing was exceptional. Now, let me make this clear that the area we were fishing required physical stamina to access the stream. Thousands of years of erosion created cliffs over 200 hundred feet high and access to the stream is limited due to the posting of property. When not posted, this section can be accessed by swales that can tear the best quality waders while the angler is stumbling and hand picking his way to

the stream. Waders intact, we reached the stream and were greeted with a pod of steelhead in the first pool. The Eyebrow Streamer and Emerald Shiner contributed to the good number of steelhead caught and released that day.

It was early November and I was in the Erie area soon after Super Storm Sandy pummeled the area. The Lake Erie tributaries were at bank top and hindered steelhead fishing. The lack of vehicles in the Twentymile Creek PFBC parking area, off of Route 5 near the town of North East, is always an ominous sign that the steelhead fishing is poor. Seems the “once-in-a-century” storm is now becoming a series of such storms in shorter intervals of time. Could it be climate change resulting from the burning of fossil fuel and the concentrated heat trapping carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? Climate experts have been advising us that in the future, major storms will occur more often and increase in intensity. It appears they might be right.

Enough of national weather extremes, let’s look at the steelhead fishing. The results of Super Storm Sandy allowed steelhead access to spawning grounds further upstream. Anglers reported many fish in the holding areas from the mouth of Twentymile Creek to and beyond the New York border. When the steelhead move further upstream, most of the anglers tend to follow the fish and consequently the fishing pressure is spread out. This does make for a more sporting event by eliminating some of the shoulder-to-shoulder concentrated fishing. Keep moving upstream and you will undoubtedly find fish. Steelhead tend to stack in holding areas, so if you spot one steelhead it is possible that several others are nearby. Do not pass by riffled areas that provide a low head dam effect. The riffled water may conceal steelhead from the angler’s vision but casting a fly into the area can result in a surprising number of hookups.

I am noticing more and more steelhead being killed on the Lake Erie area tributaries. Hopefully the fish are being consumed and not discarded because the taste of the cooked fish might not be what one expected. Remember that steelhead, unlike salmon, do not die after their spawning run. They return to Lake Erie where they continue to grow. Adult steelhead will continue to return annually for several more spawning cycles. Catch and release is a practice that will lead to more and larger steelhead in the future. Please do not get the impression that natural spawning contributes to the fishery. The amount of successful spawning is near zero in most Lake Erie tributaries. Even if the fish are released, there is no suitable spawning habitat on most streams. The real benefits of catch and release on tributaries are:

- 1) Individual fish remain in the stream to provide additional fishing opportunities.
- 2) More large fish. Fish that survive the spawning run return to the lake and continue to grow.
- 3) They will be several pounds heavier when they run the following year.

Practice catch and release not only on the Lake Erie tributaries but elsewhere. It just might be the right thing to do!!

The steelhead fishing continued with the lowering and clearing water requiring a modified approach to hook up with the steelhead in a pod. Distance fishing was required with minimal wading. At times, one stood on the creek's edge while casting in order to avoid spooking the pod of steelhead. Those anglers that waded into the holding water fished to a nervous, alert and often non-cooperative pod of fish. Casting into the pod of fish resulted in scattering the critters. A good technique was to cast the fly line with about 18 feet of tapered leader and tippet material up and across of the fish. It is essential the fly lands about 8-9 feet on the far side of the pod and the remaining 8-9 feet of monofilament is on the side of the pod facing the caster. This approach did not spook the fish and as the fly drifted downstream the resulting arc would, as planned; allow the fly to pass through the pod. The leader and tippet material would be nudged by the finning action of the trout in the pod, signaling a possible take, and if one set the hook in response, a foul hook-up could occur. Sight fishing or a strike indicator reduced the possibility of foul hookups. Sight fishing is self-explanatory, see the fish take the fly and set the hook. When sight fishing was not possible I attached a strike indicator several feet above the fly. As the fly moved through the pod, I was alert for double taps. Steelhead mouthing the fly would often result in the double tap movement of the strike indicator coupled with a slight upstream movement and repeat double taps. This is the time to set the hook. Steelhead brushing against the leader will result in the subtle movement of the strike indicator, but not the fly in the mouth double tap mentioned above. Do not attempt to set the hook for there is a high probability of foul hooking the fish.

For a fantastic fishing experience, plan a steelhead fishing trip to the Erie area. If you want good information check the PFBC web site at [www.fishandboat.com/steelhead](http://www.fishandboat.com/steelhead).

A large part of success in fishing, regardless of the species, is knowledge. Unfortunately, I missed out attending the Great Lakes Steelhead Expo that was held on a Saturday in November at Rainbow Gardens in Millcreek Township, close to the entrance to Presque Isle State Park. The Expo was held by the Pennsylvania Steelhead Association and is projected to be an annual event. I hope to be in attendance next year and enjoy what the 40 or more exhibitors have set up for the steelhead anglers. Steelhead fishing is a challenge, to be sure, but one you won't soon forget!

Something happens to a good number of fly fishers in September that ignites a feeling to travel west. There's something appealing about fishing streams in states like Montana, Wyoming and Idaho. Casting to large trout taking Western Green Drakes off the surface in September is only one of the attractions of going WEST! Several folks have questioned going west when we have so much good fishing opportunities in Pennsylvania and other nearer states like New York and Tennessee for example. Those that do go west do so out of an inner feeling that does not easily translate into words. Norman Maclean wrote about a Montana River in his small but widely read book *A River Runs Through It*. A featured film was produced based on this book. Most fly fishers feel a kinship to a part of that

same experience and travel west.

This is how Gayle and I formed our kinship with many of Montana's rivers.

Soon after Gayle and I retired from our full time work, we packed up the 4WD pickup truck and headed to Montana for a planned September and part of October fly fishing trip. Our plan was to leave Montana and return home when the new snow on the rugged mountain peaks finally reached the river valleys, usually about mid October. We wanted to thoroughly enjoy rivers that run through Montana like the Bighorn, the Boulder and the Missouri and as much of Yellowstone National Park as possible. However, while fly fishing Yellowstone National Park (about a thousand miles of streams in this national park jewel), we learned of Hurricane Isabelle and its track to PA. Living on the Yellow Breeches, we had experienced a couple of floods that resulted in several inches of water in the lower level of our house, so the tough but sensible decision was made to return home. A wet home interior demands immediate attention to forestall further deterioration as a result of mold and bacteria. Remember Hurricane Katrina's flooding and destruction in Louisiana that showed just how short a recovery time you have before buildings and homes become uninhabitable? Fortunately, Isabelle tracked further west and left moderate high water in the Cumberland Valley. This caused little damage from high water and moderate damage from the accompanying winds. Other than a large tree limb in the driveway, we were pretty much unscathed. We were determined to return to Montana in the future and decided to do a trip out west every other year in September and return in early or mid October.

The time soon arrived for the next trip out west and coincidentally the staff at the Yellow Breeches Outfitters was planning a sojourn to Montana. We were asked to join them for the last week of their two week stay at Dome Mountain Ranch, a fly fishers haven, which is located about 19 miles outside of Gardiner, MT. The frontier town is the northern and original entrance to Yellow-



*A fly fishers haven.*

stone National Park. This certainly sounded like a great opportunity for us to join a knowledgeable and compatible group of fly fishers from our area so we signed on. However, we planned to be in Montana for an extended period of time, so we left the Boiling Springs area in early September. We added a few extra days of travel to take in some of the sights we had missed on our last trip west. Traveling I-90 our first stop was the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota. It has quite an interesting history and, in brief, it is a huge structure that resembles a palace, St. Basils in Moscow comes to mind, but the entire outside is covered in various colored corn cobs and corn stalks. It is actually a giant paint by number utilizing

the various colors and textures. Our second stop was the Badlands National Park in South Dakota. We hadn't planned on this stop, and unfortunately were unprepared for the interesting hiking trails that were available. We did do a short walk and were totally amazed by the magnitude and intricacies of the stone structures. It was also 100 degrees or better that day so a hiker would have to take serious precautions if they planned a hike of any length. The air out west is extremely dry and Gayle equated being in the Badlands that day with feeling like an egg being fried on the sidewalk! After an overnight in Rapid City, we went to Mt. Rushmore the following day. This too was an incredible experience and certainly well worth the time and effort invested in the visit. I tend to use the word amazing frequently but there is really no other way to describe the gigantic busts of Washington, Lincoln, Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt that are carved on that mountain. The story of how this was accomplished is equally amazing, especially when you learn that dynamite was instrumental in the carvings!

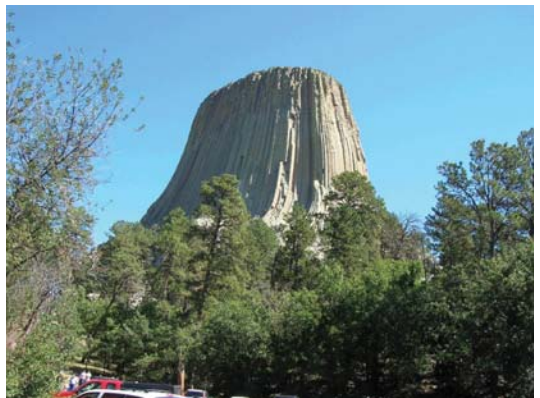
Taking a side trip off of I-90 in to northeast Wyoming, we visited Devils Tower. This too is truly spectacular. Devils Tower was formed by the cooling of molten magma from the core of a volcano that fractured into columns as it cooled. Millions of years of wind and rain erosion exposed the tower as we see it today. It stands some 867 feet from its base and the area



*Worlds only Corn Palace.*



*Mt. Rushmore.*



*Devils Tower.*

of its teardrop shaped top is 1.5 acres. There are those folks who scale the Tower, but it is closed to climbing the month of June in respect of the Native Americans who hold the Tower sacred. We then continued into the town of Buffalo, WY, which is quite an interesting little town and hosts some fine trout streams, some originating in the Cloud Peaks Wilderness. We stayed the night before traveling on to Fort Smith, Montana and our fishing experiences on the Big Horn River.

Sightseeing in South Dakota and Wyoming was enjoyable but now it was time to settle in and fish the first of many notable streams of Montana that were on our must fish list. We had reservations at the Absaraka Fishing Bear Cabins, near Fort Smith, on the Bighorn River and upon our arrival, owners Zoe and Dave informed us that the Carriage House was available for our use. The Carriage House was the residence while Zoe and Dave built a magnificent home on the property. We hurriedly unpacked the truck and set up the Carriage House with our belongings. Storm clouds gathered and rain soon began to fall, as well as the temperature. One hour later we were on the Bighorn at Three Mile Access. The rain was intense and as a friend of mine often says there is no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear. Once again, we thanked the fishing gods for Gortex rain gear. It was 4:30 PM and the Baetis and the fish were up. The little critters, about a size 22 to 24, blanketed the water surface, so I selected a size 20 Olive Parachute with a white Antron post for sight purposes and cast to the nearest rising fish. The driving rain pelted the surface and the raincoat hood made me feel like I was looking through a tunnel when the olive disappeared in a surface swirl. After traveling three and a half days and well over 2000 miles, I had a fish on! A gallon of gas was near the four dollar mark and the high cost of this trout flashed through my mind. I chuckled out loud and noticed Gayle looking over at me, probably wondering why the outburst for a foot long fish! We fished for two hours, covered approximately 50 yards of river, caught and released more than a dozen trout



*Big sky over Bighorn River.*

each. However, the trout ranged from seven to thirteen inches long. Not an encouraging start for a river known for its tackle stressing trout. We fished three more days, wading around the islands at Three Mile Access, catching an average of 30 trout each per day but disappointed that the largest fish was fourteen inches. The bulk of the fish remained in the seven to twelve inch range. I did a lot of fly research prior to fishing the Bighorn and tied an assortment of flies.

Here are the ones that connected, along with the time sequences: 1) size 22 BWO spinner (morning), size 22 BWO Dun, size 24 Iron Gray and Cream Midges and size 22 male and female Tricos (noon to mid afternoon), size 20 Olive parachute

and size 18 egg laying Black Caddis, with small olive sheen egg sac (mid afternoon to dusk). I was impressed with the number and variety of float boats on the Bighorn. Many were private individuals in canoes, Jon boats and pontoon style boats. The river was flowing at an average 2250 cubic feet per second the days we fished, which made for comfortable wading and evidently personal pontoon boat float fishing. The water temperature averaged 60 degrees F. Other factors, besides boat traffic, that impact on fishing the Bighorn in September are winds from noon to 6 PM that cause havoc with casting (a five weight rod would be minimal), the hot sun rays, and floating aquatic plant material that seemed to me a result of the many oars in the water tearing loose the stuff that grows near the water surface. The afternoon temperatures were in the 90s and a wide brim hat, sunscreen and drinking water are important. The next four days of wade fishing resulted in locating and catching several trout of the size that makes the Bighorn a destination fishing location. Accesses like 3 Mile and Afterbay below the Yellowtail Dam became our favorites and a tandem rig of brown San Juan worm and a zebra type midge or Ray Charles fly was a winning combination. Our next stopover was the Stillwater River near Columbus, Montana. This river is a drive by for most anglers, but you will want to place it on your must fish list and I will tell you why!

The Stillwater can be accessed from Columbus, which is located approximately 43 miles from Billings on I-90 W. Exit onto Sheep Dip Road (great name for a road), cross the Yellowstone River and follow Routes 78 and 420 for some expansive Big Sky scenery. Our lodging for the Stillwater River fishing was the Bucking Horse Bunkhouse on Bridger Creek. Gayle wanted to work a cattle drive and get some horseback riding in, so I elected to drive the extra distance to fish. I was reaching the Stillwater River from Bridger Creek, my preferred route, because the scenery is outstanding and remoteness is my bag. I found those thirty miles of dirt roads more demanding of my driving skills because of the tendency to look away from the road and gaze upon the mule deer, the huge cattle ranches that are present, and the vistas that stretch for miles. There is no sight quite like wild horses grazing in the hills. The Stillwater River reminds me of the Boulder River which is in the next valley toward Big Timber. Great pocket water can be found on both rivers. Stillwater is a misleading name because of the pocket water and numerous boulders but there are long deep glides that warrant skipping the pocket water and enjoying casting to numerous pods of sipping trout. As with the Bighorn, we found the majority of trout in the 8 to 14 inch range. The upper reaches of the Stillwater are in the Absaroka Beartooth Wilderness and wild animals such as grizzly bears and mountain goats



*BWOs and Stillwater River.*

inhabit the area. I kept a watchful eye for rattlesnakes but did not see any of the critters. The Gallatin National Forest to the west and Custer National Forest to the east provide adequate solitude for the fly fisher. Pick a stream that flows into the Stillwater and set afoot for some excellent scenery and fishing. The route from the Bucking Horse Bunkhouse brings one out near the Cliffswallow access area which is about as good as fishing water comes on the Stillwater. The swallows nest on the cliffs and when a hatch is on, the swallows go off like an alarm clock, leaving no doubt that you better get prepared. Reminded me of fishing the Yellow Breeches in the evening when the White Fly hatch is on and bats are zigzagging across the water surface. The mornings on the Stillwater started with a size 22 Tricos present until 1 PM. Interesting, most literature and stories about Montana Tricos state the size of the fly as a size 22 or larger. It was much later when we finally saw the larger size Tricos and they were on the Missouri River. Blue Wing Olives appeared from 1 PM to 6 PM and with them comes the chattering and diving swallows. The BWOs ranged from a size 24 light colored olive to a size 18 dark olive. However, the fish really responded to a light colored parachute olive fly in a size 20. We spent two days fishing the Stillwater and the parachute olive was the most productive fly. The access is good with numerous Forest Service parking areas on the stream and a few campgrounds. The Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks also offer many access sites for parking and camping. The general rule is camp for up to seven days and then move on. We fished through rain, wind and occasional sunshine and caught trout in the pocket water and glides. A good day was thirty or more trout. The water temperature was around 50 degrees F. and the air temperature during the afternoon was a comfortable 54 degrees F. when it was not raining.

Gayle and I enjoyed a great trail ride with Wyoma Terlund, co owner of the



*Relaxing before cattle round up.*

Range Riders Ranch near Bridger Creek. Wyoma, along with her husband Terry, work an 11,000 acre cattle ranch and always enjoy having visiting riders along for a cattle round up and drive or just to enjoy a scenic trail ride. Gayle enjoyed a day helping work cattle and ultimately rounding up some 800 head of cattle and moving them five miles or so to a new pasture. She reported that it took them two hours of hard riding just to locate the cattle.

Wyoma was short of help and since she and Gayle had worked together on a previous trip, Wyoma felt comfortable having Gayle work as a regular cowhand and needless to say, Gayle was in her element. She had a great day and I do believe that was probably the highlight of her trip. She certainly enjoys fly fishing but her first love is horses and riding (after me, of course)! As Gayle has reminded me on

numerous occasions, no hour of life is wasted that is spent fly fishing or horseback riding. Our next venture was wade and bank fishing on the Mighty MO (Missouri River) near Craig, Montana. The fish were many and large!!

It was time to leave the Lewis and Clark Trail signs. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark traveled more than 8,000 miles on foot, on horseback and by boat across a large portion of the Western United States. More than 2,000 of those miles were in Montana, as they traveled west and then again east, across Big Sky territory. The result is many portions of Montana's State, U.S. and Interstate highways are on actual L&C trail routes. We left Interstate 90 at Big Timber and headed north through mountain ranges with names like Crazy, Big Snowy, Castle, Big Belt, Little Belt and Highwood. The locals tell stories of the movies *A River Runs Through It*, *The Horse Whisperer* and *Jeremiah Johnson* being all filmed in the area in and around Big Timber. However, to avoid the notoriety and the resulting influx of tourists, the movies credits identified other areas for the location of the films. The Crazy Mountains had snow on higher peaks and thoughts of Jeremiah Johnson trudging through the snow, starving and nearly frozen, seemed very real. We then passed through little towns with names like Two Dot and Checkerboard, and clapboard sided coffee stops in remote areas brought the image of the western gunslinger era to mind. Jehosaphat, this territory appealed to us on a deeper level than we imagined possible! Gayle's father worked cattle ranches as a young man in Montana and he might have trekked through Two Dot and had lunch and drank coffee in the same place we had lunch. The place looked that old.

We arrived in Great Falls on September 19th and again were inundated by Lewis and Clark Trail information. The Lewis & Clark National Historic Trail Interpretive Center and Giant Springs Heritage State Park are not to be missed. As prearranged, we stayed with Matt Marcinek, a friend who worked with me in the Pennsylvania State Parks system and who is now Park Manager of the Giant Springs Heritage State Park Complex. One last bit of L&C information and then onto fishing the Missouri River. Matt owes his lively hood to William Clark who discovered the giant spring while portaging around the Great Falls of the Missouri River. This 18 mile portage was not a simple task as we learned from excellent interpretive information in the Center. Gayle and I were part of a small group that made two canoe/camping trips into the Quetico Provincial Park area in Ontario, Canada years ago. On one of the trips we portaged 32 times over a two-week period. One of those portages was over two miles long. We carried our supplies and a 42 pound Kevlar canoe and thought we had accomplished something really big. But then again, Lewis and Clark were much younger than we were! The Missouri River is dealt a swift kick in the pants just east of Great Falls. The Mighty Mo is thwarted at one of the falls, forming Rainbow Dam. The dam diverts water from the river into two tubes that go to the powerhouse below Crooked Falls, which is about 1/4 mile downstream. When PPLM needs all the water for electricity production, the entire Missouri flows through the pipes. By license they have to "spill" water on summer weekends and holidays. The rest of the time they can divert the Mighty Mo, leaving about a 1/4 mile of ancient riverbed EMPTY!

My fishing partner for the day was Jeff Peters, an employee of the Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Department. The section of the Missouri River we fished was from above Craig to Cascade. This stretch of approximately thirty miles is reputed to contain the highest concentration of trout per mile on the Missouri. The road that parallels the Missouri River from Cascade to Craig (actually keeps going south past Wolf Creek) is now called Recreation Road. It was originally U.S. Route 91, but I-15 replaced it. There is a strong effort underway to do a rail trail conversion of the railroad from Helena to Great Falls, the greatest stretch being in the canyon along the Missouri from Wolf Creek to Cascade. If it happens, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks will manage it. It will be the first major rail trail conversion in Montana. You'd be able to ride your bike along the trail to access lots of great fishing spots now only accessible from boats. For more information access, <http://www.greatfallsbicycleclub.org/pages/railtrail.htm>.

We were bank and wade fishing and river access was very good with numerous state fish, wildlife and parks parking areas. Some of the areas were large enough for camping. We would park in one of the state provided parking areas and slip through a cattle guard, walk a short distance and begin fishing. I noticed the float boats were favoring the roadside of the river we were fishing. The occupants of the boat would cast a time or two and regroup, but by then, they had drifted thirty or more yards down river and would need to repeat the process. You hit a fish or you moved on. When the river is running high, a drift boat is the ticket for good fishing. The river flow was favorable for us as bank and wade fisherman with flows in the 4700 cfs range. The advantage of bank fishing was the ability to cast numerous times in one location to pods of fish. We would catch two or three big rainbows or brown trout without moving. When the pod was put down, we would move a short distance, locate another pod and repeat the catch and release process. Rainbows were more numerous than browns and averaged about sixteen inches. Jeff waded out about 50 yards to a small island and worked his way to a run at the tail out of the island. I was a hundred yards down river and when I looked upriver (I was not having much success at the moment) I would see a bend in Jeff's rod. It seemed Jeff would catch and release and hook up



*Unusual but effective approach.*

immediately. After several more fish, he yelled for me to come up river and then he yelled something about Tricos! I waded out to the island and Jeff, being the gracious host, moved out of the tail out and I moved in. It was late morning, it appeared the Tricos were a size 20 and the fish were up. A half hour later the flotilla of Trico Spinners diminished and we moved downstream several miles. Jeff left the best and toughest fishing for

last. We were standing on a huge bolder outcrop, just above a bend in the river, looking down about 35 or so feet to the edge of the river. The water was moving rapidly in the main stream but was placid at the foot of the boulder outcrop. Jeff explained our mission was to cast at a slight upstream angle as far as possible into the water. As the offering of a size 16 Pheasant Tail and a size 14 Caddis Pupae washed by the placid water below us, Jeff said to be aware of a subtle strike and do the following! Set the hook and carefully move between the boulders, holding the rod high, keeping the line off the boulders and continue to work the downward angle to the water's edge where the net was located. What excitement as we took turns casting, hooking up and carefully navigating the distance down to the long handled net! The outcrop, the cast, the hook up, the dash, the netting, and release were exciting but it did not happen if the wind factor was not taken into consideration. Throwing a long length of fly line into brisk wind can be a challenge, so imagine standing on an open boulder balcony and casting into a stiff breeze and as the fly line goes out, the wind blows it back at your feet. The ticket was to wait until the wind gusts subsided slightly and make the cast. Great fishing does come with a price tag because misjudging the wind speed would result in the line blown back onto the boulders, and picking up the line to recast would at times result in line friction on a boulder and resulting wear on the line. A side note: while I was enjoying the day on the Mighty Mo, Gayle, Matt and Jeff's wife, Janet had a fantastic horseback riding experience in the Rockies. One more day on the Missouri River and we would move onto the well-known Rock Creek near Missoula.

As noted, the late September wind tends to blow with authority on the Missouri River, near Craig, from about 11:00 AM to about 6:00 PM. The wind was several hours earlier and gusting on the last day that Gayle and I planned to fish the Missouri River. We decided to forego fishing the Mighty Mo and leave out for Rock Creek, our next leg of the fishing trip in Montana. Our first fishing stop was the Rock Creek Fisherman's Mercantile and Motel, which features a surprisingly well-equipped fly shop. The fly shop is located about twenty-two miles east of Missoula off of Interstate 90, near the town of Clinton. Owners Carolyn and Doug Persico (Doug has since passed) helped orient us to fishing the nearby prominent Rock Creek. Doug was known for his terse personality, seeming disinterest in winning any fly shop owner hospitality award, and most importantly for the fly he perfected over the many years he has been at the Mercantile. That fly is the Wonder Bugger. When we met, Doug was tying a dozen Wonder Buggers for a client and he took the time to show Gayle and me the tying process. So much for the terse personality. Briefly, the tying



*The late Doug Persico tying Wonder Bugger.*

process and materials are a Spirit River Rainbow Lite Bright body with an olive Marabou tail, thread is .045 Stainless Steel wire and a gold or silver (nickel) cone. The stainless steel wire and Rainbow Lite Bright is woven using a wooden Nor vice. We left the Mercantile armed with a few Wonder Buggers and a key to one of Carolyn and Doug's cabins. We moved our gear into the cabin and because of the lateness of the day, decided to drive about twelve miles on a road that parallels the creek. We were tempted numerous times to pull over and fish because this section of the creek reminded me of the biggest and best pocket water fishing to be found in Montana. It also reminded me of the Black Moshannon Creek in Centre County, Pennsylvania. Both resemble a classic mountain creek but Rock Creek is bigger in size and harbors additional animals such as mountain lions, moose, elk, sheep and mule deer. The next day we found out why Rock Creek got its name. It has huge boulders, both in the water and along the banks, resulting in lots of riffles and runs. At times Gayle would disappear from sight even though we were only fifty or so yards apart. That's how high and huge the boulders were along the shore. The boulders in the creek provided excellent habitat for the trout. Water would swoop over and around the rocks and tail out in a large pool where fishing the Baetis hatch was magnificent. We were fishing such a tail out when a moving shadow over the water caused me to look up and see a Bald Eagle fly to a nearby pine tree and land on one of the branches. The eagle was watching us fish and appeared unafraid of our presence, so I got out of the water, climbed the 30 foot bank to the dirt road that makes up part of the Dallas Campground and walked to within 30 yards of the perched bird. Just as I aimed the digital camera and was about to snap several photos, the eagle flew up stream. Not all was lost because as I looked down at the creek, I saw a piece of driftwood that was well bleached out and in the shape of a Blue Jays' head. Our camp in central Pennsylvania is called the Blue Jay Camp and this piece of driftwood would add a nifty reminder of our Montana trip and enhance the existing sign on the front of the camp. We fished Rock Creek for two days, concentrating on the Dallas area because of the deeper pools and the possibility of catching Bull trout there. We were interested in a grand slam of trout (brook, cutthroat, bull, brown and rainbow). We came close to fulfilling the slam requirements, but the Bull evaded our offerings. We were aware the Bull trout was listed under the Endangered Species Act and were prepared to identify the fish as a bull trout and not mistake it for a brook trout which is often done by anglers. The Bull has white leading edge on the lower fins as does the brook trout, but the key is no markings on the Bulls dorsal fin. The average size of the Bull trout according to the Montana fishing regulations booklet is 16 to 22 inches, while the average size of the Brook trout is 6 to 12 inches. The sad news was that whirling disease hit the area hard in the early nineties, but the good news is the creek is making a substantial comeback. Often we caught fish in the 8 to 16 inch size. The bigger fish were taken on streamers and Doug's Wonder Bugger. The majority of trout in the 8 to 12 inch size were taken on Baetis. We caught a huge number of Mountain Whitefish in the 12 to 16 inch range. The Mountain Whitefish is native to Montana and is classified as a game fish. The fly combi-

nation for the Mountain Whitefish was a tandem rig of a size 16 Copper John with a size 24 bead head brown Zebra Midge as the dropper. We took Mountain Whitefish readily until boredom set in so we would change to a streamer and move downstream. I'm not sure what importance Mountain Whitefish play in the Montana scheme of fly fishing, but they do add rod bending qualities, good runs and excitement up to the point when you realize that it is a Mountain Whitefish, not a trout, and then a measure of disappointment takes over!

We were to meet a group of Cumberland Valley anglers the last week of September at the Dome Mountain Ranch near Emigrant, Montana, so it was time to move on. The ranch location was excellent because we had ranch access to four miles of the Yellowstone River. Accommodations at the Elk View House were superb. The northern entrance (Gardiner) to Yellowstone National Park was only a twenty five-minute drive. The group consisted of 10 fly fishers and 1 fly fisher/equestrian. Gayle searched out horseback riding in each of our layovers to fish and was quite successful. Dome Mountain had suspended trail rides up in the highlands since hunting season was in, but she was successful in wrangling a ride through some beautiful country. The ranch was situated in a great setting and provided unobstructed views of some of the most spectacular sunrises and sunsets any of us had ever seen. The bedroom assigned to Gayle and me was luxurious and had a fantastic Jacuzzi in the bathroom. Our view opened onto the horse corral, which Gayle enjoyed to the utmost. Speaking of views, we had some great camera shots of a group of 7 antlered mule deer on the nearby hillside outside the dining room window. We could also enjoy watching a herd of elk in the pasture beyond the horse corral. No trip is complete without good food and we were not lacking in that department. Our resident chef, Paul Klivington, left no stone unturned in his quest to provide us with nourishing and tasty meals. One thing we learned early on was that when Paul is in the kitchen, it is his domain. The first night we were there he drew an imaginary line on the kitchen floor and dared anyone to cross it for any reason. We did pitch in with cleanup but had no desire to interfere with Chef Paul's meal preparations and no need to for that matter. I think we all left Dome Mountain a few pounds heavier! As an added bonus, the group was very compatible and that contributed to a relaxed week of camaraderie and fishing. The day usually began with a glorious sunrise that was viewed from the table as we ate breakfast. Fishing plans for the day would be finalized and Paul Klivington made sure each angler had a fulfilling boxed lunch for the stream. Yellowstone National Park is contained in an area of about 2.2 million acres, close in size to the 2.7 million acres of state owned Forest Preserve in the Adirondacks. The advantage goes to Yellowstone because of the minimal amount of private in holdings while the Adirondacks, in addition to the state Forest Preserve, has about 3 million acres of private lands in the Adirondack Park. Both offer some of the finest recreation, watershed, flora & fauna and geology in the US. Mention the Ausable River of the Adirondacks or the Madison, Gallatin, Slough or Firehole of the Yellowstone National Park and the pulse quickens because fishing is at its zenith in memorable territory. Boats and float tubes are tightly regulated in Yellow-

stone National Park and I did not miss the added congestion and marketability of the fly fishing industry on the rivers and streams.

However, the Yellowstone River as it exits the park takes on considerable competition and pressure from the addition of drift boats. Unfortunately drift boats and occupants added a clatter and a clutter that is objectionable after fishing the pristine Yellowstone River in the park. The section of Yellowstone River that flowed through Dome Mountain Ranch provided some respite from drift boats because upstream of the ranch boundary whitewater flows through the scenic Yankee Jim Canyon discouraging drift boat entry. The drift boat activity picks up at a launch ramp four miles downstream of Dome Mountain Ranch. The serene stretch of the Yellowstone River on Dome Mountain Ranch provided some excellent Mountain Whitefish in the 14 to 17 inch range, along with robust brown and rainbow trout.

Of all the streams and rivers we fished in Montana and in Yellowstone National Park, I will remember

Slough Creek most vividly. Gayle and I concentrated on the Slough, even though it was a 47 mile drive from the ranch. I would like to relay two unique experiences we had on the Slough. The blue wing olives would appear about 1:30 PM and sometimes last to 6:30 PM.

The flies of choice in order were: Suspender BWO, size 20 until 2:30 PM; Mink Emerger, size 22 from 2:30 to 4:30 PM; Parachute BWO from 4:30 to 6:30 PM or

BWO dun, size 20 tied with dun color turkey flat wing. The Gray Drake, size 12, appeared randomly and when it did, we would hurriedly change flies and put on the Gray Drake. We could count on the surface riding natural Gray Drake ending up in a swirl ring and an immediate cast to that fading surface ringlet with our Gray Drake fly would produce a second swirl and a solid hookup. This was a prime example of double jeopardy and we took advantage whenever we could! Of the flies mentioned above, the Mink Emerger was the most productive fly during its window of use, which was about two hours. This is how it came about. The fish were porpoising and the BWOs that caught fish earlier were not working. So falling back on my guiding experience I raked my fly boxes for emergers and none worked until I tied on a size 22 mink nymph and fished it as an emerger in the surface film. Three good sized cutbows later, I knew this was the fly and the technique for the porpoising trout. One glitch, I had but three of the flies and gave the other two to my fishing partners, my wife Gayle and good friend Diane Dougherty. After a fair amount of releases, and unfortunately, several hard takes on the 6x tippet material, our prized flies were history. I had a fly tying outfit at



*Gayle's favorite Slough Creek.*

the ranch but no mink fur. On the return to Dome Ranch, we began a frantic search for mink fur. We checked the fly shop in Gardiner and no luck. We spread out and searched the gift shops in Gardiner looking for a swatch of mink fur attached to a hat, spear, war bonnet, etc., still no luck. We checked the big name fly shops in Livingston, no luck. By this time we covered 100 miles looking for mink fur. Finally at 10 PM (midnight back home), I called my fishing buddy, Scott Douglas in Virginia and asked/pleaded with him to overnight mail a swatch of mink fur to the Dome Mountain Ranch office. Scott is my source for mink fur because one day while we were fishing the Yellow Breeches, he had excellent results using a mink nymph and he offered to send a swatch to me upon his return home. Scott has his grandmothers' mink coat and is kind enough to share the prime fur with fellow anglers. A day and \$34 worth of mail service later, the swatch of mink arrived. Tying the mink nymph/emergers is relatively simple and a dozen flies later, we were equipped and returned to the Slough for excellent fishing. The catch of the day was a 29 inch cutbow on the mink emerger. We caught fish using the other flies mentioned, but we caught three times the fish during the emerger window using the mink emerger. Gayle nicknamed the mink nymph/emergers as the Grandma Douglas fly. Later we just referred to it as the GD fly! The second unique event was the back to back days of swarming winged ants on the Slough. The winged ants would appear in the early afternoon and the fish would forego the Baetis and Drakes and concentrate on the carpet of size 14 winged ants. Again, the tying kit saved the day and we indulged in the unexpected spectacle of swarming winged ants on the Slough. The tying match for the winged ant was a size 14 curved caddis hook, 6/0 camel thread, mixed dirty scud and ginger dubbing for the large lower abdomen and thorax with natural or smoke CDC wings and a few turns of hen soft hackle in ginger and brown. At times, we would share the water with bison while they crossed the creek, but in minutes the trout would be up working the myriad of olives, sporadic gray drakes or flying ants. A steady breeze stirred the few remaining golden leaves in a nearby quaking aspen tree, reminding us that it was time to depart the grandeur of this wild country and pack for the return trip to Pennsylvania. Also, the snow that was only on the mountain peaks had made its way to the valley and more snow was on the way. Indeed, it was time to return home. Some evenings while at the fly tying desk, I can virtually put myself in a mild trance and imagine the topnotch fishing we experienced at the Bend On Slough Creek.



*Chet Hagenbarth with one of 30 steelhead caught and released.  
Fabulous yet unbelievable day of winter fishing.*

# Chapter 4

## Winter

### Late November/Mid March

It was mid week as I left camp and the snow and 32 degree weather at Black Moshannon, near Snowshoe, PA. Two and one half hours later I arrived at Boiling Springs, about 6 PM and found the temperature to be a balmy 44 degrees. It was good to have the ground covered with snow at camp and I started to get in the cross-country skiing mode. Oh well, we usually enjoy a winter of several months duration, so Gayle and I will have ample opportunity to ski. I was archery hunting and fly fishing on this trip and had positive results. I had a huge four point buck under my tree but it did not meet the antler requirements of “three points on one side” so I watched it tear up a scrape site and move on. I managed to get a few photos of the event and found it to be a very interesting and rewarding experience. A friend of mine, when he heard the story, likened my buck experience to a hunter’s version of “catch and release”. The fishing went much better as the trout were hammering my offering of the size 20 Prince Nymph on Spring Creek. I was shocked with the stream alterations resulting from a flood in the State College area. The Little Juanita had similar changes with debris in bushes and trees from the same flooding. After a couple of hours fishing on Spring Creek, I returned to camp at the top of the mountain to catch the mid afternoon Midge and Little Blue Winged Olive activity on Black Moshannon Creek. Again I was not disappointed as the fish were receptive to my size 26 LBWO Dun. A friendly couple, who were spin fishing the same stretch of water with me, looked surprised as I released my first fish. She noted, as I was playing the fish, it’s size and that it would make good eating. I practice catch and release and, as I slid the trout back into the tannic colored water, I could feel the disbelief from the couple that I “threw” a fish back. There are some parts of the Commonwealth where releasing fish is not understood and this is one of them! I consider the Black Moshannon area as my home area since I was born and reared not far from there, and the vast majority of fishers in that area are of the hook ‘em and cook ‘em mind set. Basically they practice catch and eat and see no valid reason to catch and release a fish! I went on to catch and release two more trout in quick succession and by then I had the full attention of the couple. They wanted to know what I was using and more about fly fishing. I did my best to describe what I was doing to catch trout, and why I practice catch and release. The look of disbelief on their faces told me that more work was necessary so I went into more catch and release detail. They marveled that I was catching fish on such a small fly and made their exit. The last thing I heard as they walked up the path to their truck was “don’t that beat all”.

On the return trip home from a multiple day deer hunting adventure at our family cabin in the Moshannon State Forest near Snowshoe, PA, my plans were to fish the recently opened Spring Creek Canyon Cooperative Management Area

near State College. Spring Creek is known as one of the best wild brown trout streams in Pennsylvania. Typical of other limestone waters in Pennsylvania and elsewhere, limestone springs keep the water cool in the warmer months and warmer in the colder months. Big plus for those fly fishers that fish four seasons like I do. If you want to experience unique fly fishing in the winter, visit one of the many limestone streams that offer a special regulation catch and release section. For more information visit [www.fishandboat.com](http://www.fishandboat.com). Spring Creek is listed as a Class A Wild Trout Water and, as expected, the trout caught (if you are knowledgeable and perhaps lucky) are WILD! The bend in the fly rod and reluctance of the critter on the end of the fly line to come to hand will attest to just how feisty these wild trout tend to be. Between the Catch and Release-Fly-Fishing Only, and Catch and Release-All Tackle Areas, one can fish approximately 17.3 miles of prime wild trout water on Spring Creek.

So, how did the Canyon area open to general public access? Visit [www.Spring-CreekCanyon.com](http://www.Spring-CreekCanyon.com) for interesting reading and splendid photographs. Importantly, the end result of the acquisition and partnership of the ~1,827 acres is the protection of the land and water from development and the valuable access for public passive recreation such as hiking, biking, jogging, even cross country skiing when it snows. Somehow the fly fishing activity remains one of my favorite “passive” recreational activities. Although, at times I return to my vehicle a sweat ball or in the colder months frozen to the core. So much for passive recreation! Add the benefits of conservation and environmental education that the area offers and it is a huge win-win package for the public.

When I arrived at the parking lot and trail entrance to the Canyon area and was preparing for a morning of fishing, a fly fisher pulled in next to my vehicle. We exchanged the necessary pleasantries and I could tell he was not in a hurry



*Parking near the Canyon entrance.*

to fish. He was retired and fished Spring Creek several days a week. Also, he was knowledgeable of the Canyon area. He felt the newly opened area spread out the anglers and that was a huge benefit. What surprised me was that he concentrated on fishing the water immediately downstream of the Benner Spring Fish Hatchery area and rarely ventured into the Canyon. His theory was the larger fish were nearer the hatchery, reaping the benefit of nutrients that exited

the hatchery. He was a trophy fly fisher and the catching and releasing of large trout was his game. The other hatchery on Spring Creek at Fisherman’s Paradise provided similar opportunities for large fish. However, he stated that having the large fish nearer the hatcheries was short lived because the Pennsylvania Fish and

Boat Commission made major renovations in the past year or so to both hatcheries. According to PFBC information, micro-screen filtration systems and water re-circulation systems were installed to greatly reduce the amount of pollutants leaving the hatcheries and entering Spring Creek. This will result in improved water quality in Spring Creek, end welfare for a few big trout and support an even better wild trout population. The



*Future Canyon trophy.*

hatcheries are operating under restrictions in the poundage of trout they produce because of the pollution they were causing. These changes should allow the PFBC to produce more and larger trout for stocking. We parted company as I headed downstream to check out some of the water that I had not before fished. It was difficult passing some of my favorite spots that I had fished for many years but new territory was beckoning. The image of fishing water that was not open to the general public since about 1912, when the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania started purchasing land surrounding Spring Creek, was foremost in my mind. As the first cast lightly settled on the water, and the tandem offering of Mini Money Flies slowly descended into the milky colored water, I thought, "Good job all you cooperative management folks". Now it was time to catch a few Canyon Wild Trout!

Numerous small wild brown trout were caught and released in the Canyon. Note in the photo the red spots on the side, the red adipose fin and the blue spot behind the eye, all signs of a wild brown trout. Also, note the fading parr marks. Great fishing future in the Canyon!

The combination deer hunting/steelhead fishing trip to the Erie area the second week of December was interesting. First, my fishing buddy from that area had an outstanding day of steelhead fishing using a nickel Cyclops style bead on a size 16 hook dubbed with purple Antron. Nothing fancy, but productive. He dropped a small Glo Bug, which is usually successful, off of the purple fly but it was the purple fly that received the action. However, all the action was the day prior to my arrival. The next day on Twentymile Creek, after his better than average day (you know the saying, you should have been here yesterday!), I caught and released a few steelhead on the Royce Shiner. My fishing buddy also caught steelhead on the Royce Shiner, but only one on the purple nymph. A weather front was moving into the area and that condition may have altered the steelhead activity. I wanted to end the day deer hunting during the regular season in New York. So after steelhead fishing from about 10:30 to 2:30, I returned to camp, as the clouds gathered. The drive from Twentymile Creek to camp was a short one. The weather front hit about an hour later as I was in a tree stand overlooking the edge of a forested thicket with some scattered wetlands and watching two bucks approach. The

snowflakes were quarter size and I gazed nostalgically as the large flakes drifted down. It conjured up images of the upcoming Christmas season in my mind. The bucks moved slowly in my direction and separated well within shooting range with the smaller of the two (antler wise) stepping into a small clearing. Visibility was lessening and the larger buck seemed to be content foraging for crabapples on the forest floor. Besides, the understory between the canopy and forest floor was more or less a netting cover of various size limbs that presented a dicey shot. Decision time! I brought the rifle up, finding the heart and confidently pulled the trigger. The four point buck (NY has no point restriction system) dropped immediately in the little clearing. Now the work began as I field dressed the critter and hauled it to camp. Processing of the deer would take place after returning home. I now had two solid days to concentrate on steelhead fishing with a fellow worker who is also retired.

Bruce and I were PA State Park Managers for a total of 77 combined years of service. I retired before Bruce and now that he has retired, fly fishing is steadily becoming a passion with him. Bruce was one of the lucky ones that took the fly fishing course offered by Penn State University and taught by none other than George Harvey. Harvesting the buck mentioned above now allowed more time to



*George Harvey would be proud.*

fish the next day when Bruce was scheduled to arrive. We met in the PFBC parking lot off of Route 5 at Twentymile Creek at 10:00 AM. The lake front snow storm had dropped the morning temperature to 15 degrees F. with only a few inches of snow close to the lake. A few steelhead were in the stream from the Route 5 bridge down to the lake so we drove to the parking access on upper Middle Road. The snow mixed with ice on the trail leading into the Gulf made footing

treacherous. We slipped several times on our way to Twentymile Creek. I mention the difficulty that can be encountered when steelhead fishing in December and later months because of the weather, so use good judgment when planning a trip. Some of the access areas can be challenging. Bruce caught a good sized steelhead while learning a section of Twentymile Creek for future fishing trips and as I took several digital photos of the event, Bruce was looking proud. While on the job as a state park manager, Bruce has always been exceptionally willing to take on new assignments as an opportunity for growth and I could see that same approach and commitment as he broadened his fly fishing skills.

So let's fast forward to the end of the day and our climb out of the Gulf to the access point where we left our vehicles. We were unprepared for the gut wrenching sight we were to encounter, one that does not promote harmony and

teamwork between anglers and landowners. It was after dark when we arrived at our vehicles and only one of the nine other vehicles that were present when we first arrived earlier in the day was still there. The other vehicle was a pickup truck parked about thirty yards or so from us. I paid no attention to the two individuals that moved about the vehicle because it was cold and I wanted to get my wading shoes off my feet before the laces froze. Those of you that have fished for steelhead in the winter know that upon leaving the water in subfreezing weather, wet wading shoelaces can freeze in a hurry. On occasion, I have spent time with my wading shoes on in front of the vehicle heater thawing out the laces. While removing my wading shoes and putting other fishing gear away, the pickup truck in front of my truck pulled away from the road berm parking. Bruce and I planned to meet here in the morning for fishing. I got into my pickup and as I put on my headlights, I noticed a pile of steelhead remains where the previous pickup truck had been parked. Unbelievable! The general regulations noted in the Pennsylvania Fishing Summary regarding field dressing and disposal of fish are specific and leaving fish remains on the side of the road, which happened to be at a farmer's field, is illegal. Bruce and I collected and properly disposed of the steelhead carcasses and parts thereof. I mention this because many good access areas are being closed to fisherman by landowners for this very reason. Unfortunately, there are those individuals out there who call themselves sportsmen but have no respect or regard for others.



*Illegal disposal of fish remains.*

If you are a Pennsylvania resident, or live outside the state but fish here, you are probably aware that Pennsylvania has two separate opening days for trout fishing. The reasoning is based on water conditions, i.e., water in the southeast and south central regions of the Commonwealth tend to warm up earlier than do the waters in the remainder of the Commonwealth. Hence, the opening day was bumped up two weeks earlier in the southeast and south central regions.

However, those of us fortunate to live in the Cumberland Valley, and having the opportunity to fish the dependable and adaptable Yellow Breeches Creek, have known for years that there is a third trout opener. It is not officially connected to the regular opening days for trout statewide. It is, however, the highly anticipated, highly participated first weekend in January. Weather permitting, the Yellow Breeches Anglers and Conservation Association (YBAC) performs its annual winter stocking of trout along an approximately 13-mile stretch of the Yellow Breeches. This is the first of many stockings conducted by this organization over the course of the year. The YBAC is a Cooperative Nursery, and one of the



*Volunteers in action.*

largest in Pennsylvania. Cooperative nurseries are conservation organizations that raise trout for stocking in waters open to public fishing. The PA Fish and Boat Commission provides fingerlings and technical advice on raising the fingerlings to a catchable size. The cooperative nurseries are responsible for construction and operation of their nurseries and providing food and care for the fish. Most cooperative nurseries hold various

fund raising events to cover the considerable expenses associated with raising and stocking their trout. The neat thing is the majority of fish are placed in the Yellow Breeches via float stocking, except for Children's Lake. Traditionally, Children's Lake, the Run, and the Yellow Breeches Creek catch and release areas are stocked the day (Friday) prior to float stocking (Saturday) other reaches of the creek. The trout stocking exception is Children's Lake if a water draw down of the lake is scheduled in early January. There just aren't enough daylight hours to complete the trout stocking in one day. This is the ultimate win-win situation for anglers and the best way to take the edge off of winter's predictable cabin fever. Somehow, seeing the flashing amber light atop the green truck with the yellow aeration tanks and large YBAC stenciling moving through the Boiling Springs area summons up the urge to go fishing, and provides fresh insight that winter should not mean the disappearance of the angling spirit. The YBAC is a significant driving force displaying a spirit of determination to maximize fishing opportunities for all anglers residing in and outside the Cumberland Valley. Its members volunteer for extra work and demanding assignments that go beyond what is expected to



*Great job YBAC.*

operate a cooperative nursery that annually raises and stocks over 36,000 trout. A membership is reasonably priced and maximizes the four season fishing opportunity for all anglers!! The website is [www.ybacnursery.org](http://www.ybacnursery.org).

The winter trout fishing is cranking up with improvements in the weather (The January thaw is early and lasting for a week or perhaps longer) and the YBAC trout stocking in the Yellow Breeches Creek. As usual, I started the New Year off with my traditional day of fishing and unfortunately did not catch a fish.

The change this year was the selling of our property along the Yellow Breeches and the purchase of a town home with a view of the Letort Spring Run from the deck. Naturally, on New Years Day I fished the Letort Spring Run. I worked the surface with midge patterns that have proven effective during winter weather conditions on the Yellow Breeches and not one of the prized wild brown trout opted for my offerings. Oh well, several prime college bowl games were about to begin, so thumbs down to the fish as I headed for the warmth of the town home.

One year after assisting with the annual trout stocking event, a few of us did some kick sampling of the Yellow Breeches' bottom utilizing a D Ring net and were astounded at the number and variety of bugs collected. The bugs consisted of an inch and quarter sized stonefly, Hendrickson nymphs, Sulphur nymphs, Blue Winged Olive nymphs, one Trico nymph, scuds, and an impressive number of free-living caddis larvae. The free-living larvae like caddis critters can't swim but can move about by use of the front legs. These predatory caddis larvae are found under riffle rocks where they crawl about searching for their food, other insect larvae. Tie up a few and try your luck while winter fishing. Refer to the subsurface fly section for general tying instructions. We then moved about 40 yards downstream into quieter water and retrieved a short piece of waterlogged tree branch. We found numerous cased Grannom caddis attached to it. The rich combination of Hendrickson nymphs and cased Grannom caddis will provide some interesting and exciting rollover hatch activity in late March and early April.

I chose the name Four Seasons for my fly fishing guide service for a reason. I truly enjoy the four seasons of fly fishing available to us and would like to suggest you get rid of the winter doldrums with a fun day on the stream!

I watch the weather during the months of January and February for an extended warming period and then make plans to fish for steelhead in the Erie area. I call or email one of my fishing buddies in that area to double check that fishing is a possibility with some open water available. The following is an overview of such a recent contact.



*Letort in Winter.*

This information was provided by one of those fishing acquaintances that logs a considerable number of winter hours fishing for steelhead on Twentymile, Elk and Walnut Creeks. He noted that until the previous day, the tributaries were all open and running freely. They had some snow but it all melted and fishing has been good. That particular Thursday night, a cold front came through and the temperature dropped from 43 to 17 degrees overnight and it started snowing. It snowed all night and all the following day. He said the slush was so thick on Elk Creek that the water was the consistency of a Slushy. He decided to go to the mouth of Walnut Creek, which was a little

better, and managed to catch one starving fish. This was no small miracle since both his egg and nymph dropper were little ice cubes. His line, leader and indicator were, of course, coated with ice. The temp was 21. He normally does not go fishing when it is 20 degrees or colder. Hey, 21 degrees, well that's doable. He did not have any digital photos to send me but his description of the recent fishing event is more than ample. It is supposed to reach 40 degrees this week in the Erie area, and if it does, the streams may open for a day or two and you can bet that he will be out there steelhead fishing.

Just a quick note on flies that he has been having success with recently on the steelhead tributaries. The purple fly noted previously is holding it's own and it now has a companion fly in blue. According to my fishing buddy, all this proves almost nothing except that steelhead do not have very discriminating taste. Ken Okorn, another fishing buddy of mine notes that almost all trout that he has caught on blue eggs have been rainbows or steelhead. Thinking back to his spin fishing days, he used to do well with silver Fjord or Little Cleo spoons with a blue stripe along the margin. He doesn't remember any other trout species going wild over blue. He also points out that two theories are at work here:

- 1) Rainbow trout like blue.
- 2) Show the fish something they have not seen before.

There is definitely winter fishing to be had for the hardy individual. I do suggest that if your winter fishing plans include a trip to the Erie tributaries for steelhead fishing, do your homework ahead of time because the weather in that area can be brutal.

# Surface Flies

<u>Common Names</u>	<u>Page</u>	<u>Spring</u>	<u>Summer</u>	<u>Fall</u>	<u>Winter</u>
Ausable Bomber	101-102	X	X	X	
Black Flying Ant	103	X	X	X	
Char Cat	104-105		X	X	
CIA Fly	105-106	X	X	X	
CIA Green Drake	107-108	X			
Comet Caddis	108-109		X		
Early Black Stonefly	110-111	X			X
Egg Laying Grannom	111-112	X			
Grannom	113-114	X			
Hackled Trico	114-115		X	X	
Hendrickson	116-117	X			
Hexagenia Dun	117-119		X		
Iron Gray Midge	119-120	X	X	X	X
Ken's Pick	121-122	X	X	X	
Late Season Cricket	123-124			X	
Little Black Stonefly	124-125	X			X
March Brown Flymph	126-127	X			
Mini Money Fly	127-129	X	X	X	
Money Fly	129-130	X	X	X	
Mosquito Olive	131-132	X	X	X	X
October Caddis	132-134			X	
October Olive	134-136			X	
One Fly White Fly	136-138		X		
Porcupine Quill	138-139	X	X	X	
Red Quill	140-140	X			
Slate Drake	141-142	X	X	X	
Stonefly Stimulator	143-144	X	X	X	
Sulpher Money Fly	144-145	X			
Trico Spinner	146-147		X	X	
V Midge Emerger	147-149	X	X	X	X
V Midge Hammer	149-150	X	X	X	X

# SubSurface Flies

Common Names	Page	Spring	Summer	Fall	Winter
Bead Head Black GR Hare's Ear	151-152	X		X	X
Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph	152-153	X	X	X	X
Bead Head Zebra Midge	154-155	X	X	X	X
Black Tetra	155-156	X	X	X	X
Blood Dot Egg Fly	157-158	X		X	X
Blue Winged Olive Biot Nymph	158-159	X	X	X	X
Caddis Wet Fly	160-161	X	X	X	
CIA Aquatic Bug	161-163	X	X	X	X
CIA Nymph	164-165	X	X	X	X
Copper Caddis Fly	165-166	X	X	X	X
Creek Muddler	167-168	X	X	X	X
Czech Style Pheasant Tail Nymph	168-169	X	X	X	X
Eyebrow Streamer	170-171	X	X	X	X
Free-Living Caddis Larva	172-173	X	X	X	X
Grannom Emerger	173-174	X			
Illegal Nymph	175-176	X			
Midge Larva	177-178	X	X	X	X
Pheasant Tail Wet Fly	178-179	X	X	X	X
Pumpkin Picker	180-181	X		X	X
Purple Pearl Midge Emerger	181-183	X	X	X	X
Ray Fly	183-185	X	X	X	
Royce Bugger	185-186	X	X	X	X
Royce Shiner	187-188	X		X	X
Snowshoe Rabbit Foot Emerger	188-190	X	X	X	
Soft Hackle Porcupine Black Caddis	190-191		X		
Split Back Sulphur Nymph	192-193	X			
Titan Minnow	194-195	X		X	X
Ugly Bugger	196-197	X	X	X	X
Unusual Fly	197-199	X		X	X
Veiled Blue Egg	200-201	X		X	X
Wiggle Body Nymph	201-203	X	X	X	X
Y2K Fly	203-204	X	X	X	X

# Introduction to Surface & Subsurface Flies

After over a decade of both developing and personalizing fly patterns to improve my catch and release ratio, I now feel that I have the necessary fly patterns to confidently and successfully fish all four seasons.

During that time frame, I fished between 175 and 200 days the first two years of retirement and averaged over 100 days the remaining years. Gayle and I were fortunate to own 485 feet along the Yellow Breeches Creek in the Boiling Springs, PA area. The walk from the house to the lower end of the catch and release section consisted of approximately 65 steps. Not always a cake walk as one winter I was forced to wear snowshoes on my waders to access the creek because of the three foot plus deep snow. I would not count a day of fishing unless I was in the water



over three hours. Between the Yellow Breeches Creek and numerous destination fishing trips I chalked up considerable wear and tear to a number of hip and wader boots. Fly fishing the four seasons in PA has merit with an excellent selection of limestone and freestone trout streams and steelhead loaded Lake Erie tributaries. The limestone streams provide open water flyfishing during the fall and winter months and flow

through picturesque areas like our Cumberland Valley with its Letort, Big Spring and Yellow Breeches Creeks, the Juniata Valley with its well know Little Juniata River and the Happy Valley of State College surrounding Spring Creek. Toss in the Lake Erie tributaries that feature exciting steelhead fishing from early October to stream freeze up sometime in January, and then spring steelhead fishing from when the ice vanishes in February until their return to the lake in April. The PA fly fishing package is unbeatable.

Keep a tight line and a sharp mind.

Gene Giza



**TU cold water conservation warriors on Letort Spring Run.**

# Chapter 5

## Surface Flies

### Ausable Bomber

Ken Okorn has used the Ausable Bomber successfully on a number of trout streams, so I asked him to share his information and the result is as follows. The fly pictured is tied by Ken Okorn and photographed by me.

“Gene Giza and I stopped in Fran Betters fly shop a number of years back for some information on fishing conditions. Fran was always more informative if a purchase was made, so we both selected some flies. Before ringing up the items we purchased, Fran added a couple of very large and strange looking flies to the collection, noting that these were the “money” flies.

Several days later, Gene and I were having some slow fishing on West Canada Creek. Looking through his fly box, it was hard not to notice Fran’s large and gaudy creation. Gene tied it on, made a cast, and promptly lost it to a large trout that darted out from a rock ledge. I wouldn’t use mine, because I wanted to have some of Fran’s flies for my fly collection. That left us wondering if the fly was that good, or that was just a coincidence.

During an early June trip to Mark Campbell’s cabin on Penns Creek, nice browns were rising each evening to the large adult stoneflies that were returning to lay eggs. A size 8 Bomber skittered over the riffles at the head of the Blue Stone pool accounted for a number of these fish when nothing else worked.

The next day, I fished Weikert Run in the afternoon and found that a dead drifted size 12 version was very effective on wild browns and brookies. It was also very visible under typical mountain stream conditions of a broken water surface and mixed sunlight and shade. I rarely fished anything but an Adams on small mountain streams, but now the Bomber has become my first choice. Several trips to East Licking Creek further convinced me of its effectiveness.

October or pumpkin caddis appeared on Big Spring, the Yellow Breeches, and Yellow Creek in the fall. Although there were very few flies on the water, the trout rose readily for a skittered size 12 Bomber on all of these streams. The buoyant fly supported cress bug and scud patterns on droppers.”

Unfortunately Fran Betters passed away before Ken and I were able to pass along our thanks for a great fly. I have found the Ausable Bomber, when used as a dry fly indicator, visible and buoyant, scares less fish and provides the opportunity to catch a fish on the indicator.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** 2X long dry fly, sizes 8 - 16.

**Thread:** 8/0 Fire orange

**Wing:** White calf tail for large sizes, white calf body hair for smaller sizes.

**Tail:** Woodchuck hair

**Hackle:** Dry fly grade, one brown and one grizzly, sized to hook gap.

**Body:** Dull orange dry fly dubbing.

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb if the hook has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and starting behind the hook eye, wrap thread back to 1/3 point, then forward, stopping 1/8" behind the hook eye.
- 3) Comb and stack a bundle of calf hair, and tie in on top of the shank. The tips should extend out over the hook eye approximately shank length.
- 4) Trim the hair butts on a taper and wrap the thread back to the hook bend.
- 5) Tie in the woodchuck hair tail, approximately the length of the hook shank.
- 6) Tie in the hackle feathers by the stems, concave (dull) side facing the tier.
- 7) Dub the body material lightly on to the tying thread, and wrap forward to behind the wing.
- 8) Palmer the hackles over the dubbed body, one feather at a time, and tie off just behind the wing.
- 9) Apply a small amount of the dubbing to the tying thread and wrap it just ahead of the wing to brace the wing on a 45 degree angle out over the hook eye.
- 10) Finish the head



# Black Flying Ant

The swarming flying ants in summer and fall bring trout to the surface, so tie several and carry them in your fly box. Swarming usually occurs several days after heavy rain and may last only an hour over a stream. The appearance of swarming flying ants is not predictable and usually catches the fly fisher by surprise.

## Recipe:

**Hook:** TMC 900BL or Mustad, size 20

**Thread:** Black, 8/0

**Body:** Black thread

**Hackle:** Dark dun or black

**Wings:** White CDC

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) Build a segmented abdomen and tie in two CDC feathers by the tips ahead of the abdomen to mimic the four wings of the natural.
- 3) Tie in a small hackle at the abdomen to mimic the legs and then build a thorax. The hackle is optional as I find it makes little difference.
- 4) Half hitch and cut the tying thread!

Note: UNI-Floss 1X in black makes an excellent ant body but can be difficult because as floss it tends to “get away” from the tyer. Maintain tension on the floss while tying and the resulting ant is life-like.



Black Flying Ant

## Char Cat

Most fly fishers tend to not fish terrestrial patterns after the autumnal equinox in the latter part of September. However, late September through the month of October and even early November are excellent times to fish the chartreuse caterpillar as a terrestrial. Prime times are from mid morning to late afternoon. Another variation of the caterpillar is the typical reddish and black/brown wooly bear caterpillar that we see at this time of year. Often we hear comments like a harsh winter is in store because of the amount of black on both ends. What this means is the more black on the ends, the harder the winter. However, the chartreuse caterpillar that I dubbed the “Char Cat” has replaces all other caterpillar patterns in my fly box. The chartreuse caterpillar attracts fish both in riffled and pool waters. Trout will move several feet from a holding area to investigate the fly and often the end result is a take and hook up. The Char Cat is to surface fishing as the green weenie is to sub-surface fishing. When purchasing the dyed spinning deer hair in fluorescent chartreuse color, make sure it is brightly colored. I find the majority of dyed spinning deer hair marked as fluorescent chartreuse dull in color. The approach to using the Char Cat starts with a 3x tippet and plopping the caterpillar on the water surface. Be alert for a crushing take. If the take is not immediate, allow the bug to float and mend the line often. The mending gives the caterpillar movement and often results in a vigorous take. At times, trout will follow the Char Cat for a distance and then hit it on the swing. Because of the chartreuse color, the Char Cat presents minimal or no visual problems. The brightly colored fly is a great advantage over olive or darker caterpillars that may be hard to see on the surface. Clip the deer hair short on the bottom at the hook bend to facilitate a good hook up.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831, size10, 2x fine

**Thread:** Chartreuse 6/0

**Body:** Chartreuse deer hair

**Head:** Optional black marking with permanent marker.

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and lay down several snug turns of thread at the hook bend. Spinning deer hair is generally easier on a bare hook.
- 2) Cut a small bundle of the brightly colored deer hair and wrap the thread tightly around the middle of the bundle flaring the deer hair around the shank.
- 3) Push each bundle tightly against each other. About five or six stacks of deer hair will cover the shank of the hook.
- 4) Form a thread head and half hitch.
- 5) Trim the body to the desired shape. It is important to trim the hair tightly on

the bottom to facilitate hook up. Also, mark some of the stacked deer hair with a black sharpie type marker to enhance the head area.



## CIA Fly

About 20 years ago, Terry Taterus, a fishing friend of mine introduced me to a uniquely tied fly that worked well on the March Brown and Gray Fox hatches. On a side note, most entomologists now consider the March Brown and the Gray Fox to be the same bug, the only difference being the size. Does not matter what the bug folks say and write, because the fly my buddy Terry introduced me to while we were fishing Penns Creek caught fish. I have found this fly, which I dubbed the “Cover it All” (CIA) Fly to be successful on all the Mayfly hatches. Simply adjust to the correct hook size, match the body color, and select the appropriate color hackle. The fly depicted is deadly when bugs with a yellowish or cream body color are emerging. These include, but are not limited to, Sulphurs, March Browns and Gray Foxes along with the Avaria’s and the Light Cahills. When I fish to the early spring hatches of the Hendrickson, Red Quill, etc. I make the major adjustments noted above while tying up a half dozen or so flies and go fishing. The CIA style fly is my Adams fly but covers a wider variety of Mayflies. Tie a few and you will agree the CIA fly is a keeper. Fish this fly in the surface film as an emerger/crippled dun.

## Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad 94831, size 12-16

**Thread:** light cahill, 6/0

**Body:** light yellow polypropylene yarn or dubbing.

**Rib:** camel thread, 6/0

**Hackle:** ginger with barbules no larger than 1.5 times the hook gap.

**Secondary Hackle:** partridge feather from the head area.

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye and lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) Tie in the ribbing material and poly. Return the thread to 3/16th inch behind the eye.
- 3) Tie in the ginger and partridge hackles and then advance the poly to form the body and then rib.
- 4) Wrap the ginger hackle and tie off. Next wrap the partridge hackle through the ginger hackle and tie off.
- 5) Whip finish the head.



# CIA Green Drake

During the Green Drake season this particular year, we were fortunate to be on Yellow Creek two days during the third full week of May, and during the last week of May, to be on Pine Creek at Slate Run for two days. The Green Drake fishing on both waterways was impressive! Penns Creek and a few other streams that offer fine Green Drake hatches were not on the fishing radar screen because of guiding commitments.

The Green Drakes on Yellow Creek and Penns Creek are larger than the Green Drakes on Pine Creek, so it is necessary to tie patterns according to the size of the Green Drake a particular stream offers up. Fishing large size Green Drakes on Pine Creek will leave you frustrated. Remember the statement I use often when writing updates on my website and other correspondence.....KEEP A TIGHT LINE and A SHARP MIND! I might also add "a sharp eye"

## **Recipe:**

**Hook: Mustad, 94831 size 12 or larger**

**Thread: Olive dun, 6/0**

**Tail: Dark dun and ginger hackle tips**

**Rib: Yellow kevlar thread**

**Body: Medium olive polypropylene**

**Hackle: Dark dun and ginger**

**Wings: NONE**

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) Tie in one each dark dun and ginger hackle tips for the tail. Tie in a four- inch piece of Kevlar thread. Tie in one ginger hackle by the tip. On size 12 and 10 hooks, the barbules should be about 3/8 inch in length. Finally tie in the piece of medium olive polypropylene. Return the tying thread to near the eye of hook and tie in one each large dark dun and ginger hackles. On size 12 or 10 hooks, the barbules should be about 3/4 to 7/8 inches in length.
- 3) Wrap the polypropylene forward and tie off at the eye. Wind the tying thread to behind the large hackles and then spiral the Kevlar thread forward to form the rib. Tie off the Kevlar thread behind the large hackles. Next spiral the smaller ginger hackle forward and tie off behind the larger hackles.
- 4) Move the tying thread to behind the hook eye. Spiral the dark dun hackle forward and tie off. Repeat the process with the ginger hackle. The spiraled hackles should form a dense thorax. No need for a wing on this fly and best of all, it will float well! An application of a permanent waterproofing liquid is optional.
- 5) Now is the time to half hitch and cut the tying thread!



## Comet Caddis

Dwayne, a fly fisher from nearby Mount Holly Springs, occasionally fishes in my back yard and when he does, we usually have a conversation that centers on fly fishing. This particular morning the Tricos were on and Dwayne was in the ideal spot so I ventured upstream to fish the next pool. Fortunately, the popular pool was open and I settled in for what amounted to three hours of prime fishing. The Trico activity was heavy, as it usually is on this pool in the morning, and the fish brought to hand were better than average size. About 9:00 a.m. the Trico activity dwindled and I tied on my favorite fly at this time of year, the Comet Caddis. The morning fishing continued to be productive. However, it is important to tie a durable fly. The CDC is susceptible to loss unless extra attention is given to the thread winds around the feather. After winding the tying thread around the CDC tightly several times, I then pass the thread two times under and in front of the CDC just behind the hook eye. This tends to anchor the CDC in place. Also the CDC is susceptible to slippage when removing the hook from the fish's mouth with forceps, so extra care is necessary.

**Recipe:****Hook:** Mustad, Curved Caddis, size 24**Thread:** Camel, 8/0**Body:** Natural Hare's Ear**Hackle:** Cul-De-Canard (CDC) Natural Dun**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Build a slight to moderate body with the natural hare's ear dubbing.
- 4) Tie in a single CDC natural dun feather behind the eye of the hook. The CDC should extend slightly beyond bend of hook. Reread above tips for securing the CDC. IMPORTANT...one CDC feather can be used for 2-3 flies.
- 5) Whip finish behind the eye of the hook.



## Early Black Stonefly

The Early Black Stonefly or Early Brown Stonefly, whichever name you prefer, makes no difference because most Aquatic Entomologists feel they are one and the same. I would like to emphasize that there are times when a fly that is commonly tied to represent one insect can be effectively used to represent a totally different insect by varying the size or color. This fly is basically an oversized Griffith's Gnat. The Griffith's Gnat was originally tied in size 20 and smaller to represent midge adults. George Griffith's fly pattern has served many of us well over the years and he continues to deserve the credit for his timeless fly innovation. Incidentally, George Griffith was one of the founders of Trout Unlimited. The oversized Griffith's Gnat is by far the most effective early black stonefly patterns I ever used. On moderately warm (air temps above 35 degree F and water temps above 40 degrees F.), bright sunlit afternoons from late December through March, the females can be found ovipositing on the stream surface and skittering to the bank and safety. However, not all of the skittering females make safe harbor and are at times intercepted with a splashy surface take. Carry several of the stoneflies and when you see this occurring, tie on a size 16 palmered stonefly, grease your leader and 4X tippet, skitter the fly across the surface with a zigzag rod motion and prepare yourself for some cabin fever busting dry fly action!!

### Recipe

**Hook:** TMC 900BL, size 16

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Body:** Peacock herl

**Hackle:** Grizzly, tied palmered style

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Occasionally, the hook will break when pinching the barb so it is better to have that happen prior to spending time tying the fly.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws and attach the thread behind the eye. Lay down a base of thread from the eye to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in three peacock herls and a quality grizzly hackle at the bend of the hook.
- 4) Wrap the herl forward to the hook eye and tie off.
- 5) Palmer the grizzly hackle forward and take two additional turns at the eye and tie off.
- 6) Build a small head with the tying thread and half hitch or whip finish.



## Egg Laying Grannom

The Egg Laying Grannom is an important fly to have in your Grannom fly collection. At pre-dusk, the surface action begins and it is time to tie on the Egg Laying Grannom. Remember, prior to this we were using the Grannom Emerger in the morning and then using the adult Grannom from about noon to mid afternoon. Now as evening approaches, it is time to use the Grannom Egg Layer to close out the day. To recap, the rollover hatches of Grannoms and Hendricksons usually occur from about 2:00 to 5:00 PM and then the egg laying Grannom caddis provides the incentive for the evening fishing. What a great way to enjoy the first major hatches of the spring season.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad, 94840 or TMC 900BL, size 14-16

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Body:** Charcoal gray or black pseudo seal

**Rib:** Chartreuse, 6/0 Uni-Thread

**Under Wing:** CDC black or baetis

**Wing:** Gray natural deer hair

**Egg Sac:** Chartreuse 6/0 Uni-Thread

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook. Tie in two four inch pieces of chartreuse 6/0 thread at the bend of the hook. Use one of the pieces to form the egg sac.
- 3) Select the charcoal gray or Pseudo Seal black dubbing and form a body. Next rib the body in a counterclockwise direction with the remaining chartreuse thread. Leave enough room behind the hook eye to tie in the CDC and deer hair materials.
- 4) Select two matched CDC feathers and tie in behind the eye of the hook. CDC fibers should extend to the bend of the hook.
- 5) Tie in the gray natural deer hair, which closely resembles the natural's wings. Three or four soft turns and several tight turns with the tying thread will prevent the deer hair wing from overly splaying. Lift the deer hair butts, take four turns of thread around the hook shank and half hitch.
- 6) Form a slight head and half hitch or whip finish.



# Grannom

On April 1<sup>st</sup>, as I fished the Yellow Breeches, an adult Grannom fluttered past me. Ten minutes later a second adult Grannom fluttered past. I made a mental note to log the sightings on the calendar. Good notes are a necessity and pay good dividends in fly fishing. My earlier reading of previous year's notes alerted me to the possible showing of Grannoms soon. Most hatches seem to occur generally within the same time frame year after year. Weather variations can slow or speed up the hatch timetable by a week or two. A splashy rise and my attention immediately focused on the far bank where the water stalls out and trout gather to take the naturals that ride high on the slower moving water. The natural I spotted on the surface was not a Grannom but a Hendrickson. Soon it is gone in the wake of a splashy rise. Hurriedly I tied on one of my Hendrickson patterns and hooked the fish on the first cast. Soon a second hook up and subsequent release followed and next I experienced two nicks, resulting in short hookups and the fish escaping. Working an additional fifty yards of the far bank proved negative. Oh well, with Hendricksons in their second week of hatching and Grannoms beginning to make appearances on the Yellow Breeches I thought we should be subject to darn good early spring fishing. I want to shout cabin fever be gone for spring has truly arrived! The adult Grannoms that I observed have a distinctive chartreuse rib on the abdomen. The addition of the chartreuse 3/0 thread, as a rib, has had a major impact on the number of takes. The chartreuse rib is one more trigger that elicits a fish to take a hand tied Grannom as a natural. Time to tie a batch of Grannoms!

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** TMC 900BL, size 16

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Rib:** Chartreuse, 3/0 Uni-Thread

**Body:** Charcoal gray or black pseudo seal

**Under Wing:** CDC black or baetis

**Wing:** Gray natural deer hair

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook. Tie in a four inch piece of chartreuse 3/0 thread at the bend of the hook.
- 3) Select the charcoal gray or Pseudo Seal black dubbing and form a body. Slightly build up the area near the hook bend and taper to about 1/8 inch distance from the eye of the hook. After forming the body, rib the chartreuse thread forward and tie off.

4) Select two matched CDC feathers and tie in behind the eye of the hook. CDC fibers should extend to the bend of the hook.



## Hackled Trico

Most fly fishers, including me, only think of tying and fishing the male and female spinner phase of the Trico hatch. For years, I neglected the dun phase because fishing to the spinner phase yielded moderate returns. The occasional voids during the morning Trico activity were justified with casting practice and the hope that the next cast would result in a hookup. I must admit the voids did improve casting accuracy. However, my approach to Trico fishing was altered when a few of my fishing buddies started using a hackled Trico. We went on to catch more trout with the hackled Trico in the morning after first light and also, a fair number of trout using the hackled Trico even when the male Trico spent spinners were on the surface after 9:00 A.M. The males usually spin out about that time and the fishing can be good. Now my fly box contains hackled and spent wing versions of the Tricos. I normally tie both versions on size 26 wide gap hooks and take a fair share of the feeding/sipping fish on the Yellow Breeches and other waters that feature the morning appearance of the Trico hatch. The hackled Trico in conjunction with an early morning trek to the stream and a good presentation establishes a sound platform for some outstanding summer and early fall fishing.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Any wide gap in sizes 26 - 24

**Thread:** Black, 8/0

**Tail:** None

**Abdomen:** Black thread

**Thorax:** Black dubbing

**Wing:** White, light blue dun, medium dun, smokey dun or grizzly hackle  
(I tie a selection of different wing colors and change flies when the action on one fly ceases.)

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Tie in the hackle of choice next, bend the stem back, and wrap over the stem to the bend. The hollow stem adds some additional floatation, plus it doesn't bulk up the head.
- 3) At the bend of the hook, spin the bobbin clockwise to tighten the twist in the thread, and use the twisted thread to form a rib. Half hitch the twisted thread at the front of the abdomen, after wrapping the rib, to maintain the tight twist.
- 4) Dub a black thorax around the hackle. Wind the hackle forward to the eye and tie off.
- 5) Build a thread head and half hitch or whip finish.
- 6) Clip the bottom hackle fibers for a flush floating appearance.



# Hendrickson

Many fly fishers tie a Red Quill to mimic the male and a Hendrickson to mimic the female of *Ephemerella subvaria*. Both the Red Quill and the Hendrickson are known as the Hendrickson Hatch, according to the authors of *Hatches II*. My copy of *Hatches II* was obtained from a small book store in Eagles Mere, Pennsylvania many years ago while Gayle and I and another couple were cross country skiing in the Endless Mountains of Pennsylvania. The price of the used book was well under ten dollars and has been one of my 'go to' books for well over 15 years.

The following pattern, based on the naturals I captured from the Yellow Breeches in late March of 2006, has been a keeper. I have found for many years now that this pattern continues to be successful on the Yellow Breeches and other streams that harbor the Hendrickson in early spring.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831, size 16

**Thread:** Iron Gray, 8/0

**Tail:** 3-4 wood duck barbules

**Rib:** 6/0 light cahill thread

**Body:** Silver olive dun, Hobbs Ever-Float # 66

**Hackle:** Dark dun and natural hungarian partridge

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Select 3-4 wood duck barbules and tie in as the tail. Tie in a four inch piece of 6/0 Light Cahill thread for the rib.
- 4) Dub a body of Silver Olive Dun Ever-Float material and rib with the Light Cahill thread.
- 5) Tie in the Dark Dun hackle approximately 1/3 behind eye of hook. Tie in the Hungarian Partridge feather (select a small feather from the head section) by the tip immediately behind the eye of the hook and cut the surplus tip material. The tip should face the bend of the hook.
- 6) Wrap the Dark Dun hackle forward and tie off at the partridge feather.
- 7) Wrap the partridge feather, toward the bend of the hook, two times and tie off. The partridge feather should slightly penetrate/overlap the front of the Dark Dun hackle.
- 8) Form the head and whip finish.



## Hexagenia Dun

On August 7, I was on the Yellow Breeches fishing to rising trout taking midge adults. It was about 7:15 p.m. and the midge fishing was going about as well as could be expected. You know how it goes, a few hookups but many missed takes because of the minute fly (size 26). The fly seemed to pass through the deepest shaded section under the overhanging branches when the resulting swirl of the trout's hit and spit action would occur and seeing this was next to impossible. The resulting uptake of the rod tip always seems to be an instant too late to hook the trout.

Twenty minutes later, I noticed a large bug fly by but could not readily ID it because of the same shaded/dark patches that were hindering the visibility for the midge fishing. A minute later another large bug flew by much closer to me, and I was able to positively ID the bug as a Hexagenia. The flight of the large bug was slight in numbers for about the next ten minutes or so, but by 8:00 PM a good number of Hexagenia were passing by my position in the water. I quickly re-rigged my rod to support the larger hand tied Hexagenia Dun fly and headed for faster moving water.

When fishing to the Hexagenia, I only use the Hexagenia Dun fly. Years ago I sifted through the various spinner fly patterns but found that the dun with the

hackle clipped on the bottom was my cover it all fly pattern. Why waste time changing fly patterns in low, to dim, to no light when fish are abundant and active? Additional Hexes continued upstream to the riffled water and as I waded into position, the first of many splashy rises occurred. I targeted what appeared to be a good sized fish and the large fly landed exactly where I wanted it to land. The take was so savage that I was startled, but fortunately the fish literally hooked itself. No "hit and spit" occurred as when midge fishing, because now the fish were working under the cover of pre darkness. As their confidence increased, they took the flies with reckless abandon, becoming the ultimate predator. I welcome the several weeks of Hexagenia pre-dusk fishing prior to the appearance of the White Fly hatch. The Hexagenia and White Fly hatches roll over for an additional two weeks of pre-dusk/dusk fishing frenzy. Five weeks of Hexagenia activity is extraordinary for a mayfly, but the extend hatch period is a fly fisher's joy.

**Recipe:**

**Hook: Mustad 94831, size 10 or larger**

**Thread: Olive dun, 6/0**

**Tail: Dark dun and ginger hackle tips (optional two dark dun or black microfibetts)**

**Rib: Yellow kevlar thread**

**Body: Medium olive polypropylene**

**Hackle: Dark dun and ginger**

**Wings: NONE**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) Tie in one each dark dun and ginger hackle tips or dark dun or black Microfibetts for the tail. Tie in a four- inch piece of Kevlar thread. Next tie in the piece of medium olive polypropylene. Return the tying thread to near (1/4 inch) the eye of the hook and tie in one each large dark dun and ginger hackles. On size 10 hooks, the barbules should be about 3/4 inches in length.
- 3) Wrap the polypropylene forward and tie off at the two tied in hackles. Spiral the Kevlar thread forward to the tied in hackles to form the rib. Tie off the Kevlar thread. Next wind the remaining polypropylene through the tied in hackles to form the thorax and tie off at the eye.
- 4) Spiral the ginger hackle forward and tie off at the eye. Next spiral the dark dun hackle forward and tie off at the eye. The spiraled hackles should help form a dense thorax. Trim the hackles on the bottom for flush floating in the surface film. No need for a wing on this fly and best of all, it will float well! An application of a permanent waterproofing liquid is optional.
- 5) Now is the time to half hitch and cut the tying thread!



## Iron Gray Midge

I stepped into the water above the Allenberry dam and was pleased to see only one fly fisher well above the area I intended to fish. It was mid afternoon and the fish were up sipping midges. The number of fish working the surface was impressive for the last week in December. It was another “gift” of a day, weather wise, and I was privileged to be on one of the finer limestone streams in PA. The majority of fish were working the flow line along the bank closest to the railroad which was unusual because, normally, the fish sip along the opposite warmer water bank and out toward the middle of the stream. Fifty plus degree F water from the Run enters the Yellow Breeches and flows along the Allenberry side. In winter the few degree warmer water attracts and holds fish. I adjusted my upstream approach, got into casting distance of a pod of sipping fish, fine tuned my tippet to 8X and attached a #32 Iron Gray Midge. I cautioned myself to look for a telltale sip near where I thought the minute fly would be. Three casts and a hookup later I thought “YES” the minute midge was close enough to the natural midge to warrant takes. My internal fishing radar zeroed in on the feeding fish and the remainder of the two hours of daylight zipped by. This is four seasons flyfishing at it’s best and extremely challenging.

## Recipe:

**Hook:** TMC, 518, size 28-32

**Thread:** Iron Gray, 8/0

**Body:** Iron Gray thread

**Wing:** Mottled Cul De Canard (CDC) light dun

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook. Next, spin the bobbin clockwise to tighten the twist of the thread to enhance the appearance of the rib. Return the twisted thread rib to the eye of the hook.
- 3) Select 5-6 fibers from the bottom of the mottled CDC feather and tear them off. Lay the middle of the bundle of fibers on top and in line of the hook immediately behind the eye and secure with 2-3 thread wraps. Fold the forward facing bundle fibers over the hook and over the rearward facing fibers toward the bend of the hook and form a thorax at the fold with 2-3 thread wraps. Clip the fibers at an angle to form the wing. Note: Several flies can be tied with one CDC feather using this method. Upon using up the larger fibers, one can then use the CDC tip for the last fly. Most tiers use only the tip and toss the remaining fibers. Be a smart tier and use up the whole CDC feather. CDC feathers are too expensive to waste!
- 4) Half hitch or whip finishing will form the head.



## Ken's Pick

Ken Okorn and I frequently fish together on numerous waters within Pennsylvania and in other states. I ask Ken to guide with me when a booking entails three or more clients, so between fishing together and guiding together, I get to see Ken on the water using some interesting flies that he ties. Ken has a fly that has had impressive results, not only when Ken fishes it, but when I and a few other fishing friends have fished it. Ken got the idea for this fly by watching Tom Baltz, another well known guide, and a respected and accomplished fly tier, tie his para-nymph. Tom's para-nymph is like a hare's ear nymph suspended under a parachute. Ken tied some and they worked very well for him. Ken thought that if a hare's ear works, why not a pheasant tail. Made sense since the hare's ear and pheasant tail are probably the two most popular nymphs. Ken tied the pheasant tail version and first fished it one November day on Clark Creek. It worked very well, especially on wild browns and brookies in the riffle areas. He tried it on the Yellow Breeches and Yellow Creek, and caught a good number of trout on it well into December. He thought his success with the fly was outstanding, because there were no significant hatches present. If fish were rising, it was to midges or small BWOs. Casting the emerger to the sipping trout would often result in an aggressive take and solid hookup. Another fishing friend, Doug Matty, also caught trout with Ken's Pick this past November on Yellow Creek and the Yellow Breeches. It appears that the basic pattern has the potential to work during many hatches by varying the size, and the color of the thorax and hackle. Plans for future spring and following dynamic fishing months are to have a supply of Ken's Pick flies in Hendrickson, March Brown, Sulfur, Olive and Slate Drake versions. The variety pack of flies should provide interesting surface fishing not only when trout are surface active but especially when trout are not surface active.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Size 14 Dai Riki 135, or any curved scud or caddis hook.

**Thread:** 8/0 fire orange Uni-Thread

**Post:** White calf body hair

**Hackle:** One reddish brown and one grizzly

**Tail:** Woodchuck or fox squirrel guard hairs (I have also used olive brown Antron as a shuck with good results.)

**Body:** Natural pheasant tail fibers

**Rib:** Fine copper wire

**Thorax:** Muskrat belly fur

**Head:** Tying thread

### **General Tying Instructions:**

1) Bend down the hook barb and place hook in vise.

- 2) Start the thread behind the eye and wrap back to the midpoint of the hook, then about three or four turns forward. This forms a base for tying the post. It also helps to place a half hitch at this point to help keep the post in place.
- 3) Stack the calf hair to even the tips. Tie the calf hair on top of the hook shank with the tips of the hair extending forward. Take several turns of thread around the base of the post and stand it upright, bracing it with thread. Trim the butts of the hair on a taper towards the hook bend.
- 4) Tie in the two hackle feathers at the base of the post with the stems down and concave sides towards the post. Make several thread wraps to secure the stems to the post.
- 5) Bend the ends of the hackle stems back along the hook shank and wrap thread over them to a point well around the bend of the hook. Cut off the excess stems.
- 6) Tie in the guard hair tail, copper wire rib, and several pheasant tail fibers where the thread wraps end, and bring the thread forward to the base of the post.
- 7) Wrap the pheasant tail fibers to the base of the post and tie off.
- 8) Counter wrap the copper wire rib to the base of the post and tie off.
- 9) Wrap four turns of each hackle around the post, parachute style, and tie off.
- 10) Apply a small amount of muskrat belly fur to the thread. Wrap one turn of the dubbing behind the post and several turns in front. Use care to ensure that there is no gap in the dubbing under the post.
- 11). Whip finish the head, and apply head cement. Also apply a drop of head cement to the base of the post at the point where the hackles are wrapped.



# Late Season Cricket

The crickets observed along the stream in late September and into October are usually large in size. Depending on weather conditions, crickets can be an important offering while fishing not only for trout in our favorite streams but also for steelhead in Lake Erie area tributaries.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831 size 10

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Body:** LAFONTAINE'S tri-lobal yarn black

**Overlay:** Bill Skilton's hard shell stretchy foam

**Legs:** Black hackle tips

**Hackle:** One each black and brown

**Antennae:** Brown goose biots

**Saddle Sight:** Orange foam (optional)

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Occasionally, the hook will break when pinching the barb so it is better to have that happen prior to spending time tying the fly.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise, attach the thread behind the eye and wind back to the bend of hook. Tie in a strip of foam about twice the length of the hook shank and about the width of the hook gap. Cut one end to a point for ease of tie in. Point should face toward eye of hook.
- 3) Tie in a four-inch piece of yarn at hook bend and wind thread only from bend of hook to mid shank.
- 4) Tie in two black hackles for legs at mid shank. Each hackle should extend out to the side about an inch.
- 5) Wind thread to eye and tie in two brown goose biots for antennae. The two brown goose biots are optional because they tend to break off. I have noticed no major difference in hook ups with or without the biots.
- 6) Tie in one each brown and black hackle about quarter inch behind eye. Wind and weave yarn forward and tie off at eye. Palmer hackles forward to eye, tie off and then clip top fibers.
- 7) Overlay foam, make sure legs are out to the side and tie off. Tie in orange foam at tie off spot. Cut black and orange foam to form head and sight indicator. Trim edge of black foam to give head distinct shape. Whip finish at tie off spot.



## Little Black Stonefly

The air temperature was in the high teens, the sun was shining brightly at high noon and the wind was not blowing, it was time to go fishing. A wave of cold blustery weather held the Cumberland Valley captive for well over ten days and it was time to shake off the onset of cabin fever. As I suspected, the trout were up sipping midges. The number of fish working the surface was impressive for all the cold/frigid days and nights we experienced. I saw a rise form and cast a size 24 midge emerger a few yards upstream of it. The drift was good and the fish took the midge. After a better fight than I would have expected in 34 degree water, I had the frisky 12 inch brown trout within arm's reach. Grasping the lower jaw with my thumb and index fingers and using a device for safely removing the recently ingested food from the trout's gullet, I released the trout and then placed the gullet sample in a small plastic container that I carry while fishing. I normally fill the plastic container with creek water and swirl the gullet contents for ease of identification. The air temperature was nasty so I left the stream, hurried back to the house, got out of my waders and multi-layered outerwear and soon was at the kitchen sink. I was about to see what the fish had been eating within the last hour. My wife, Gayle, stood by with a saucer filled with cold tap water while I removed the sample matter from the small plastic container. I stirred the gullet sample in the saucer of water and we were surprised to see several midge pupae, alive and wiggling vigorously, among what looked like 50 to 75 dead midge pupae. Other interesting items contained in the gullet sample were numerous pale yellow pupae midge shucks floating on the surface of the water, a small mayfly nymph, adult

midges and four Little Black Stoneflies about a size 22. The little stoneflies intrigued me because I normally see stoneflies in a larger size during the winter. A few days later, after lunch, when the sun was bright and the winds low, I was fishing the Yellow Breeches with a small black stonefly. The flies were easy to tie and closely resembled the naturals. The greased tippet floated the fly just under the surface and the trout responded. When using this fly be alert to any surface disturbance near where you think the fly might be and set the hook. You will be surprised at the number of trout caught.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94840, size 22

**Thread:** Black, 8/0

**Body:** Black thread

**Wing:** Black hackle

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook and half way back to the eye.
- 3) Select two small black hackles and tie in at the half way point with tips extending approximately a quarter inch beyond the bend of the hook. Cut the stem on one of the hackles and wrap the remaining hackle forward.
- 4) Half hitch or whip finish to form the head.
- 5) Clip the hackle barbules off the top of the hook shank.



**Little Black Stonefly**

## March Brown Flymph

I cover the March Brown Flymph history in the Spring fishing section of this book. Writing that particular segment was a joy based on years of flymph fly trial and error tying styles during our many latter part of May trips to the Slate Run area on Pine Creek.

I was not satisfied with the Flymph fly until attending a past Eastern Sports and Outdoor Show. A CVTU acquaintance, who is an excellent fly tyer, suggested I look at a March Brown emerger that was being tied by one of the fly tying exhibitors. He was tying an interesting style of emerger but what caught my attention was the one-piece shuck and wing tie in method. Immediately I knew what would enhance the March Brown Flymph that I was planning to use on an upcoming trip to Pine Creek. See below for the general tying guidelines and the enhancement gleaned from the fly tyer at that sports and outdoor show.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad 94831 size 12 or 10.

**Thread:** Camel 6/0

**Shuck:** Enrico Puglisi's tan sparkle material or tan Antron if Puglisi's material is not available.

**Abdomen:** Beaver dubbing dark tan or Superfine Mahogany

**Rib:** Kevlar thread Light Cahill color or similar yellowish color.

**Thorax:** Ginger dubbing

**Underwing:** Same as shuck above

**Wing Collar:** Hungarian partridge and ginger hackle

**Head:** Camel tying thread

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a three-inch piece of sparkle material for the shuck and the underwing. The underwing end of the sparkle material should extend an inch beyond the hook eye and the shuck should extend  $\frac{3}{4}$  inches beyond the hook bend.
- 4) Tie in the ribbing Kevlar thread at the hook bend.
- 5) Dub the abdomen to within  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch of hook eye and rib with the Kevlar thread.
- 6) Fold the sparkle material that is protruding over the hook eye, over the abdomen and take two to three turns of tying thread to hold it in place. The underwing is thus formed.
- 7) Tie in the partridge hackle and the ginger hackle. Dub in a small amount of the ginger dubbing to form the thorax. The dubbing should slightly overlap the front portion of the underwing.

- 8) Individually wrap the partridge and ginger hackles, two to three turns and tie off.
- 9) Trim the wing so it does not extend beyond the bend of the hook and trim the shuck to length if necessary.
- 10) Form the thread head, whip or half hitch the head and apply a few drops of cement.



## Mini Money Fly

I was one of eleven Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter volunteers serving as ghillies for the fourteen youths involved in the second annual Cumberland County Youth Action Team program entitled Street to Streams. The event consisted of an introduction to fly fishing, fly rod casting, and fishing in the Yellow Breeches Catch and Release Section at Allenberry. The event lasted two days and was a huge success. On the second day while fishing downstream from the Allenberry Pavilion, a fishing friend of mine who resides in Virginia and fishes the Yellow Breeches quite often, approached me with a question. He had recently been spending some time fishing Yellow Creek and the outline of his question unfolded as follows: He and his son and later with a fishing buddy noted a smallish mayfly in large numbers and fish up working the surface. They initially thought the

mayfly was a Trico. But the up and down mating flight pattern belied the bug as a Trico. Tricos mate in an oblong mass that often resembles the outline of a huge football that can be twenty feet long and four feet high. Besides as he noted, it was too early in the season for the appearance of Tricos. They tried numerous small flies without success. On return trips to Yellow Creek, they encountered the same scenario. On the last trip they observed another fly fisher taking a few fish with the Blue Quill fly. It appeared to them that the fish were taking the naturals in the water not as a drifting dun but as a collapsed cripple. With that background the question was asked.....what was the bug?

I informed him that I had been experiencing similar scenarios on Yellow Creek with the same mayfly and a capture of several live specimens revealed that they were Slate Winged Mahogany Duns. I was fortunate to see spinner activity around noon and again in the late evening, and ON the same day! But not having rousing success with fishing a dry fly spinner pattern, I concentrated on fishing with an emerger pattern. I tend to think that after the spinner activity, the bugs fly to nearby vegetation where the females ripen their eggs and the males die. Perhaps the females deposit their eggs after dark? Any way, with the good results fishing the emerger pattern, the Mini Money Fly was destined to become an addition to my fly boxes. The Mini Money Fly, when presented as an emerger, also works when midges and small BWOs are evident.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** TMC 2488, size 20-22

**Thread:** 8/0 Uni-Thread, black

**Wing:** Coastal deer hair, natural

**Dubbing:** Rumpf, beaver dark tan

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise, attach the tying thread behind the hook eye and wrap over the hook shank to the hook bend.
- 3) Return the tying thread to near the hook eye and tie in a small bundle of coastal deer hair, with tips extending over the hook eye. Here's how...pinch the bundle about 3/8 inch from tips and tie in about one eye width behind the hook eye with about 8-10 snug wraps.
- 4) Trim butts of deer hair and wrap thread over any butt remnants.
- 5) Dub the thorax over the thread wrapped deer hair butts.
- 6) Lift wing and half hitch behind the eye.



## Money Fly

The Money Fly has a unique background and provides interesting pre dark fishing on Penns Creek. I would like to add that it is paramount to treat the calf hair portion of the Money Fly when it no longer floats high on the water's surface. The calf hair is the beacon that shows up so nicely at dusk and again when darkness overtakes the creek. The drying agent I use is fumed silica or Frog's Fanny that is available in fly shops.

I could call this fly the CIA (cover it all) Emerger because it works just as well in the evening for any large mayfly regardless of the dun's body color. After all, all mayfly bugs exhibit pretty much the same dark tan color when emerging. I have been fishing the Money Fly on the Yellow Breeches with excellent results. The fly works well throughout the summer months because this water harbors a grand selection of large mayflies. If any emerging mayfly activity takes place in the evening, the Money Fly is my fly of choice.

One last note, when trout hit the Money Fly it is no subtle take. The take can be so forceful and splashy that it surprises the angler, and in that split second, the instinct to set the hook is too late. After the first two or three surprisingly splashy takes one is then prepared to immediately respond to future takes in the waning light.

## Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831 2x long, size 14

**Thread:** Uni-Thread 6/0 fire orange

**Body:** Rumpf beaver dubbing dark tan

**Wing:** White calf body hair

**Head:** Fire orange thread

**NOTE:** This is a simple fly to tie, which makes it one of my favorites.

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one and secure the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Attach the thread behind the hook eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Dub a tapered body to within a quarter inch of the hook eye.
- 4) Tie in a clump of calf body hair with the tips extending over the hook eye. The extending calf body hair (over the hook eye) should equal the hook shank. Calf body hair is fairly straight and easier to stack than curly calf tail hair. Calf body hair makes a nicer wing.
- 5) Cut and dub over the calf body hair butts, completing the body.
- 6) Lift the calf body hair extending over the hook eye and form a thread head behind the hook eye.
- 7) Half hitch the thread head and apply a few drops of cement.



## Mosquito Olive

Blue winged olives have been a mystery to me for years. I have been on streams when big or small sized olives were present and caught a few fish. I have never caught an extraordinary amount of fish that would allow me to feel as though I was in charge. I have tried various patterns from emergers to duns with limited success and could never quite figure out what was happening.

During a late October trip to Yellow Creek, size 24-22 olives were present for a period of time that allowed me to experiment with the assortment of olives that have accumulated in my fly box. Again, I caught a few fish but was disappointed. A few days later, after returning home, I ventured into the Yellow Breeches Creek and while surveying the surface activity, a mosquito landed on my right hand. I thought why not combine the features of the mosquito and the olive into one fly? When olives are active, usually, so are the mosquitoes with winter being the exception in most parts of my home state. I returned to the house, which is a stone's throw from the creek, and tied what I call the Mosquito Olive. Returning to the stream I caught and released eight sipping trout. Satisfaction maximus!! The following afternoon the fish were up sipping what appeared to be olives and again the Mosquito Olive fly distinguished itself by attracting an exceptional number of trout. I may have partially solved the olive mystery that has challenged me for years! A fishing trip to the West Branch Ausable River in the Adirondacks further proved the Mosquito Olive fly as a producer during the little blue winged olive hatch. The fly is versatile when tied slightly larger for use during larger olive hatches.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94840, size 24 or larger depending on season.

**Thread:** Camel, 8/0

**Shuck:** Dark brown Antron yarn

**Body:** Beaver dubbing olive

**Post/Wing:** Dark brown Antron yarn

**Hackle:** Dark dun

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb if the hook has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Cut a two inch piece of Antron yarn, separate in half, length wise, and tie in one of the Antron pieces as the shuck. The shuck should extend beyond the bend of the hook about 1.5 times the width of the hook gap and the remainder of the Antron should extend over the eye of the hook.
- 4) Grasp the opposite end of the Antron and with the Antron stretched along

the hook shank, secure with thread wraps to within 1/3 distance of the hook eye. Loop the Antron into the post/wing position and tie off and clip the tag end. The loop should be equal to the length of the hook shank. Now dub the body.

5) Tie in a small dark dun hackle behind the loop post/wing and take two to three turns (parachute style), tie off and clip excess.

6) Form the thread head, half hitch and apply head cement.



## October Caddis

The October Caddis fly is productive in September, October and November. Chet Hagenbarth, a fishing buddy, and I were using the October Caddis as late as Thanksgiving Day on the Yellow Breeches. We were using the large caddis as an indicator fly because of its size and burnt orange color, which enhances visibility for those of us with aging eyes. The other important reason was that the October Caddis attracts fish. Blue Winged Olives were starting to lift off the water so we were dropping a size 22 emerger type fly that a fishing buddy from Virginia highly touts. The combination of October Caddis and olive emerger fished in shady spots under overhanging brush and trees proved successful that afternoon. It was interesting fishing to watch the October Caddis indicator fly, not knowing if the fly would disappear in a splashy surface take or simply disappear under the sur-

face. We had good action on the surface and below the surface with the tandem rig. When the blue winged olives are not present on the surface, I fish only the October Caddis under the vegetation along the stream banks. The other common names in this area for the adult October Caddis are Pumpkin Caddis (Yellow Creek) and Cinnamon Caddis (Penns Creek).

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Any #14, 2X long dry fly hook

**Thread:** 6/0 orange Uni-thread

**Body:** Burnt orange dry fly dubbing

**Hackle (Optional):** Ginger, dry fly grade, sized to hook gap

**Wing:** Golden brown deer body hair

**Head:** Burnt orange dry fly dubbing

This fly is tied similar to an Elk Hair Caddis or Deer Hair Caddis. Note that the hackle is optional. If the fly is skittered on the surface, the hackled version works better. If the fly is dead drifted, the version without the hackle is better. I recommend both versions in your fly boxes.

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch down the hook barb and place the hook in the vise.
- 2) Start the thread about 1/16" behind the eye, and wrap back only to above the hook point.
- 3) If using the optional hackle, tie it in by the tip at this point with the concave side facing the tyer. Apply dubbing to the thread and wrap forward to 1/4" behind the eye.
- 4) Palmer the hackle feather forward over the dubbing to where the dubbing ends and tie off the feather. The hackle should be wrapped sparsely at the rear and more heavily at the forward part of the body.
- 5) Cut a bunch of deer hair slightly less than 1/4" in thickness at the base. Comb out the underfur and stack the hair. Tie in the hair on top of the shank, with the tips extending back beyond the bend. The overall length of the fly should be at least 1". Do not allow the hair to spin around the shank. Work several turns of thread through the hair butts to seat it firmly on top of the shank. At this point, place several half hitches in front of the deer hair to keep the thread tight.
- 6) Trim the hair butts to a rounded shape.
- 7) Work the thread back through the hair butts to the point where the deer hair was first tied in. Apply some dubbing to the thread and wrap forward, covering the hair butts.
- 8) Whip finish behind the hook eye.



October Caddis

## October Olive

The early October day was typical, colorful leaves on the trees and a good showing of spent leaves on the ground. The day was further fortified by an abundance of sunshine and air temperatures in the low 60s. Most importantly to the fly fisher, many bugs were in the air and the fish were up taking those bugs that were on the water. The majority of the bugs were Little Blue Winged Olives in size 24 and smaller. I had tied several experimental October Olive flies in a size 26 a few days earlier and now was the time to test them out on the rising fish. Larry Roscoe was fishing above me, and after I released three fish he asked what I was using. I waded upstream and gave him two of the three October Olives I had tied. Since Larry does not tie flies, the extra October Olive was to be given, as a model, to his friend that ties flies. Larry said the buddy would then tie up a dozen or so for him. After a short while and another couple of releases, I lost the October Olive. Shortly afterwards, Larry lost his October Olive and decided to tie on the remaining October Olive, which he later lost. As Larry trudged off the Yellow Breeches to return home, he asked that I put the October Olive on my website as the Fly of the Week and I agreed.

I continued to use the October Olive with success, not only on the Yellow Breeches, but also on Yellow Creek and Clark Creek. However, it was necessary to downsize the October Olive to a size 28 for the finicky trout in the gin clear Clark Creek water.

I ended the month of October fishing the Yellow Breeches with Joe Knisely. Joe is a well traveled fly fisher and wears a well traveled (faded) Four Seasons Fly Fishing cap. The trout were up sipping midges and Little Blue Winged Olives among the mat of floating autumn leaves. We caught and released more leaves than fish, and the results would have been better with fewer leaves on the water. The method employed was the recoil cast that I had highlighted in an article that appeared in an issue of the Mid Atlantic Fly Fishing Guide. The October Olive was a size 26 coupled with 8X fluorocarbon tippet. One last item I should mention. Substituting beaver dubbing in dark tan for the beaver dubbing in light olive seems to mimic the spinner version of the Little Blue Winged Olive natural. I have switched to the dark tan version in mid afternoon when supposedly the spinners are not about and have taken fish. Be flexible with the light olive and dark tan versions of the October Olive. Remember, the month of November will offer some fine fishing days when the little olive bugs appear. Only then we will have to call the October Olive fly the November Olive fly!

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Quality dry fly, sizes 24-26

**Thread:** Olive 8/0 (Camel, 8/0 for spinner version)

**Tail:** Wood duck flank feather barbules

**Rib:** 8/0 Olive dun thread

**Body:** Beaver dubbing, light olive (beaver dubbing dark tan for spinner version)

**Hackle:** Smoky dun

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb and secure the hook in the vise.
- 2) Lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook and tie in 2-3 wood duck flank feather barbules as the tail. The tail should extend beyond the bend of the hook about 1.5 times the width of the hook gap.
- 3) Move the tying thread to slightly beyond mid hook shank and tie in the Smoky Dun hackle.
- 4) Dub the body with the beaver light olive. Use the beaver dark tan dubbing for the spinner version. Also when tying the spinner version, use Camel 8/0 thread.
- 5) Rib the abdomen with the olive dun thread.
- 6) Wrap the hackle three times around the dubbing, do not overlap but space out the turns, then tie off.
- 7) Form the thread head, half hitch and apply head cement.



October Olive

## One Fly White Fly

Unusual name for a White Fly but this versatile fly pattern negates the need to change fly patterns during the White Fly hatch. The White Fly males appear near dusk, briskly lift off the surface and later are joined by the White Fly females. After the short span of time necessary for the mating process, spinners softly fall to the water surface. During the emergence, and later the spinner fall activity, the water surface is constantly disrupted with fish taking the abundance of naturals.

My technique for fishing the One Fly White Fly is to be in position prior to the first sighting of the White Fly. I add two small split shot about 12 inches above the fly and then a strike indicator, two or more feet above the split shot. Depending on water depth, the strike indicator may be higher on the tapered leader. The One Fly White Fly is fished near the bottom as a nymph. Continue to fish the nymph phase until the first of the White Flies are spotted and then remove one of the split shot and fish the fly as an emerger. The fly should be about mid level in the water column. If not, remove the second split shot and after casting, pull the fly under the water. Maintain a vigil on the strike indicator for the fish are aggressive as they take emergers. The next step is individual preference because, as the fish begin to work the surface with splashy rises, one can continue with the strike indicator and the fly in mid water column, or remove the strike indicator and false cast/air dry the fly and present it as a White Fly emerger or dun. This is important.....a subtle twitch of the rod tip will give the action to the fly which is needed

to trigger impressive takes from the trout. As darkness settles in, the spinners fall to the water's surface and the sipping begins. Again, dry the fly but add a drying agent like Frog's Fanny and settle in for the challenging attempt to hook a fish using primarily your ability to hear the fish take the fly. Occasionally the eyes will provide some assistance by observing the faint white bubbly surface disturbance of a fish taking the fly, but mostly, it is sound fishing after dark!! This can be challenging to beginner anglers but, with a little experience, it is a rewarding fishing technique.

I have just taken you through an hour and half of White Fly fishing using the unique One Fly White Fly and, most importantly, there was no need to change flies. My eyes are not as sharp as they used to be and changing flies at near dark or after dark is now a challenge. The One Fly White Fly can add some years to your ability to fish at this time of the evening and can add extra enjoyment to one of our exciting August hatches.

**Recipe:**

**Hook: Mustad 94831, size 14**

**Thread: White, 6/0**

**Tail: White calf hair**

**Body: White calf hair**

**Rib: Danville's White flat waxed nylon**

**Hackle/Wing: White calf hair and white hackle**

**Head: White thread colored black**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 2) Tie in a four inch section of white flat waxed nylon thread for the rib.
- 3) Tie in a long section of white calf hair. Extend the tips of the hair about  $\frac{3}{4}$  inch beyond the bend of the hook for the tail.
- 4) Spiral the thread over the calf hair to approximately  $\frac{1}{3}$  behind the eye of the hook, forming the body.
- 5) Spiral the white flat waxed thread forward as the rib.
- 6) Lift up the butt ends of the calf hair and build a thread dam. The thread dam at the base of the calf hair should flare the hair.
- 7) Tie in a white hackle and flare it through the calf hair. The calf hair and hackle combine to provide the enhanced fly sight.
- 8) Form the thread head and finish with whip or half hitch knots.
- 9) Take a Sharpie type fine point permanent marker and color the thread head black.



## Porcupine Quill

In our travels to trout streams outside of the Cumberland Valley, it is common to see porcupines that have been killed by vehicular traffic on many of the secondary roads. My hunting and fishing camp is located near Snowshoe, PA in a remote area. The 2.5 mile drive from the hardtop is via a dirt road and the occasional road kill porcupine supplies me with ample guard hairs to tie the quill body of the Porcupine Quill Fly. Also, a source of material is during the porcupine hunting season that extends from September 1 to March 31, except overlap with the regular firearms deer season.

Blue Quill, Slate-Winged Mahogany Dun, and Blue Dun are all common names of the same mayfly species. It first appears in early spring, and continues to be found throughout the summer and as late as October. I have used this fly with success on the Black Quill and even on the smallish Black Caddis in late summer. The Porcupine Quill does an admirable job of replication and trout do respond. The added value of the porcupine guard hair for the body of the fly is excellent buoyancy and durability. Also, the slender off white tip of the porcupine guard hair can be used for the abdomen of the female Trico. It may be prudent to clip the bottom half of the dun hackle when fishing for trout that are fished over heavily. The resulting flush floating image can be surprisingly effective.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** TMC 100 bl (barb less), size 18

**Thread:** Uni-Thread iron gray, 8/0

**Tail:** Dun feather barbs

**Body:** Porcupine guard hair

**Hackle:** Dun # 1 grade

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb and secure the hook in the vise jaws. Attach the tying thread behind the eye and lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) The tail consists of 4-6 dun barbs selected from the mid section of a large feather. The tail should approximate the length of the hook shank. Maintain a uniform body base by covering the tail butts with thread to the hook eye and clip the surplus. The larger number of barbs enhances floatation and can mimic the remains of a shuck.
- 3) Place the tapered end of the porcupine guard hair on top of the bend of the hook, facing the eye and tie in. The tie in point is where the dark portion meets the off white portion. Wind the thread and then the guard hair to the eye and clip the surplus guard hair.
- 4) Select a hackle that is 1.5 times the hook gap and tie in, approximately, one third the distance behind the hook eye. Tightly spiral the hackle to the hook eye and tie off.
- 5) Form a neat thread head and finish off the fly with several half hitches, or
- 6) whip finish. Applying cement to the head is optional.



Porcupine Quill

## Red Quill

The top fly in the photo is the Red Quill. The bottom fly in the photo is the Hendrickson. Many fly fishers tie a Red Quill to mimic the male and a Hendrickson to mimic the female of *Ephemerella subvaria*, the Hendrickson Hatch. The Hendrickson pattern has generated positive comments and has resulted in the request for a Red Quill pattern. The following pattern is based on the Red Quill naturals I captured from the Yellow Breeches. I am confident that the pattern below, which has worked well for me over the years, will catch fish on the Yellow Breeches and other streams that harbor the Hendrickson in early spring. When using the Hendrickson or any other dry fly, I dust the fly with fumed silica. Most fly fishers know it as Frog's Fanny.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831, size 16 or 14

**Thread:** Camel, 8/0

**Tail:** 3-4 Wood duck barbules

**Rib:** 6/0 Light cahill thread

**Body:** Root beer (Sonychia), Hobbs Ever-Float # 34

**Hackle:** Dark dun and natural hungarian partridge

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Select 3-4 wood duck barbules and tie in as the tail. Tie in a four-inch piece of 6/0 Light Cahill thread for the rib.
- 4) Dub the body and rib with the Light Cahill 6/0 thread.
- 5) Tie in the Dark Dun hackle approximately 1/3 behind eye of hook. Tie in the Hungarian Partridge feather by the tip immediately behind the eye of the hook. Select a feather from the shoulder area. Cut the surplus tip material. The tip should face the bend of the hook.
- 6) Wrap the Dark Dun hackle forward and tie off at the partridge feather.
- 7) Wrap the partridge feather, toward the bend of the hook, two times and tie off. The partridge feather should slightly penetrate/overlap the front of the Dark Dun hackle.
- 8) Form the head and whip finish.



## Slate Drake

The West Branch of the Ausable River and the West Canada Creek, both in New York, provided some interesting Slate Drake fishing for Ken Okorn and me. Our wives were occupied with walking, shopping, and good conversation. They displayed a tolerant attitude toward our early September week of fishing. Ken had tied several parachute Slate Drakes for the trip and, true to form, the repeat generation of *Isonychia*, often referred to as Slate Drakes, made their September appearance. I have fished to the Slate Drakes that appeared on several of our PA trout streams in late May and early June, but had forgotten about the reappearance of the bugs in September. Ken saved the day by having tied extra Slate Drakes for the New York trip. This is another benefit of having an experienced fly fisher friend on fishing trips that require traveling hundreds of miles from home. Some how we always manage to forget to pack all that we need on such trips and having a savvy friend along is very beneficial. This is a good time for Slate Drakes, not only in New York, but also in PA, so tie up a few and look for the size 12 or 14 bugs on your favorite stream from about noon to late evening.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad 94831, Sizes 12-14

**Thread:** Gray, 6/0

**Tail:** Dark dun

**Body:** Dark gray muskrat

**Post or Wing:** White Antron

**Hackle:** Grizzly, tied parachute style (wound horizontally around base of post or wing).

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread and attach the tail.
- 2) Tie in the white Antron to form the post and then tie in the grizzly hackle at the base of the post.
- 3) Wind the thread to the bend of the hook, tie in the tail, affix the dark gray muskrat dubbing and form the abdomen.
- 4) Leaving the thread at the base of the post, wrap the parachute hackle around the post and tie off.
- 5) Form the thorax with the dark gray muskrat dubbing.
- 6) Build a small thread head, whip or half hitch, and coat thread with cement.



Slate Drake

# Stonefly Stimulator

The West Branch of the Au Sable River is a perfect place in August to toss the high floating and colorful Stimulator at receptive trout. The water level is usually lower for comfortable wading. Look for stretches of fast moving water cascading around numerous boulders. Ease into the water and position your self several yards off shore, and gradually move across the stream while tossing the stimulator upstream to work the seams between the boulders. One trip across the stream should net several trout. Move up or down the bank thirty or so yards and start fishing back across the stream. Repeat this process and when the time arrives to leave, a good number of fish should have been caught and released.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** 3X long hook, Size 8-12

**Thread:** Orange, 6/0

**Tail:** Deer hair

**Rib:** Brown saddle hackle

**Body:** Green, yellow or orange polypropylene yarn or synthetic dry fly dubbing

**Wing:** Brown deer hair

**Hackle:** Grizzly

**Thorax:** Orange polypropylene yarn or synthetic dry fly dubbing

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) De-barb the hook and secure in the vise.
- 2) Start the tying thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of touching turns of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a modest amount of brown deer hair for the tail. See photo for approximate size.
- 4) Tie in the brown hackle by the tip at the hook bend and then tie in the selected color of polypropylene yarn or load the thread with synthetic dry fly dubbing. Fish tend to favor either the green, yellow or orange body colors. Unfortunately, you won't know the favorite until you begin fishing and that is the reason I carry all three types in my fly box. Wind the polypropylene yarn or synthetic dry fly dubbing forward to the eye and tie off. Next spiral the hackle forward and tie off.
- 5) Tie in the deer hair wing. The wing should extend beyond the hook bend but not beyond the tail. Leave adequate room for the thorax and hackle materials.
- 6) Tie in the grizzly hackle. Next tie in the orange polypropylene yarn or synthetic dry fly dubbing and form the thorax. Wind the grizzly hackle forward with small spacing between turns and tie off just behind the eye. Build a small but tapered head and whip finish.

Note: The colorful abdomen and orange thorax plus the large wing provide a silhouette that is hard for the fish to resist and the flyfisher to miss.



## Sulphur Money Fly

The Sulphur Money Fly is a high maintenance fly because of the Cul de Canard (CDC) feathers which require the treating of the CDC portion when the fly no longer floats high on the water's surface. The CDC feathers act as a beacon that shows up nicely particularly at dusk and even when darkness overtakes the creek. The drying agent I use is fumed silica or Frog's Fanny, available in fly shops.

I could call this style of fly the CIA (cover it all) Emerger because it works well on many waters when the mayflies are emerging. Simply change the thorax color to match the naturals. I have been fishing the Sulphur Money Fly on the Yellow Breeches when the first Sulphurs appeared, with excellent results. It continued to work well throughout the summer as long as the mayflies emerging exhibit a yellowish or cream colored abdomen or thorax. The Sulphur Money Fly was the primary fly used on a trip to the South Holston River in the Bristol, Tennessee area. This river is unique with sulphurs appearing from about April to about November, depending on weather conditions. The traveling fly tying kit came in handy on this trip because of the need for this type of emerger fly, which was not available in the local fly shops.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 94831 2x long, size 14-16

**Thread:** Uni-Thread 6/0 rusty brown

**Tail:** Pheasant-tail fibers

**Abdomen:** Pheasant-tail fibers

**Rib:** Ultra-Wire copper small

**Thorax: Possum creamy yellow dubbing**

**Wing: Premium CDC light dun**

**Head: Rusty brown thread**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one and secure the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Attach the thread behind the hook eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in 4-5 pheasant tail fibers for the tail. Next tie in the copper wire at the hook bend and then wrap the pheasant-tail fiber butts forward to form the abdomen.
- 4) Wind the copper wire up the abdomen in four to six evenly spaced ribs.
- 5) Tie in three CDC feathers with the tips extending over the hook eye. The extending CDC feathers (over the hook eye) should equal the hook shank length. Clip the butts and over wrap with thread.
- 6) Dub a medium thick thorax covering the CDC feather butts, thus completing the body.
- 7) Lift the CDC feathers extending over the hook eye and form a small thread head behind the hook eye.
- 8) Half hitch the thread head and apply a few drops of cement.



**Sulphur Money Fly**

# Trico Spinner

Tricos on the Yellow Breeches appear in good numbers from late June through early November when the first heavy frost of the fall occurs. Tricos have appeared as early as May on the Yellow Breeches, but trout do not seem interested in them at that time. The best fishing is usually from mid July to early September. That time frame may vary according to weather conditions. Tricos need cool streams and good but not great water quality to flourish. They seem to do best in cool, fertile streams with a slightly silty substrate. I must emphasize the advantage of being the first fly fisher on the water in the morning. If that is not possible, then definitely, be the second!

Trico fishing is a morning event. In June and July, early morning to mid morning are the action hours. Arrive well after first light and the best fishing spots are usually occupied, so get there early. Watching others catch trout after trout in the best feeding lanes is not a pleasant way to spend the morning. As the Trico season progresses into late July and early August, the trout become more active about 7:00 AM. Remember first light gradually occurs later, hour wise, as late summer and fall approach.

The question is often asked if the size of Tricos vary during the summer? The naturals may not vary in size but the fly you present needs to do just that. Early on in late June and early July, a size 22 and size 24 Trico fly will be accepted by the trout. Why? Because trout are focused on the naturals and feed voraciously. Your oversized fly is readily accepted because the fishing pressure has not been overwhelming. Also, the slightly larger version of the natural bug is easier to see and this results in the fly fisher's increased confidence, thus more fish are caught and released. As the trout are caught and released (a good practice where ever you fish) and the fishing pressure mounts, they become aware of size, along with presentation and fly tying quality. Tricos are one of my favorite hatches because what other mayfly hatch offers 120 plus days of consistent dry fly fishing opportunity!

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Quality Dry Fly, size 24 - 28

**Thread:** Black 8/0

**Tail:** Optional

**Abdomen:** Black thread for male spinner and Uni-Stretch 1x in Light Gray for female spinner

**Thorax:** Black dubbing for male spinner and dark olive dubbing for female spinner

**Wing:** White Hi-Vis Antron

## **General Tying Instructions:**

1) Pinch the barb and secure the hook in the vise jaws. Attach the tying thread

behind the eye and lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook. As noted, the tail is optional.

2) Return the thread to slightly beyond mid hook and tie in a small piece of Hi-Vis Antron for the spinner wings. I tend to uplift the splayed wings slightly for added visibility.

3) Build the abdomen for the male or female Trico and then build the appropriate colored thorax around the splayed wings. The naturals tend to have a burly thorax so don't skimp on the dubbing.

4) Build a thread head and finish with a half hitch or whip finish.



## V Midge Emerger

Noted fly fisher and fly tier Clark Hall has used a V Midge fly with outstanding success on the limestone streams of the Cumberland Valley and on other waters across the country. He refers to it as the Vertical Midge or V Midge because of the position of the body, not the shape of the CDC wing. The fly rides vertically in the surface film. Surprisingly for the small size, it appears much larger to the fly fisher. The CDC forces the body of the fly into the surface film thus mimicking the appearance of the natural midge emerger. It is important to facilitate the upright or V appearance by wetting the body but not the CDC wing.

The midge in winter is an important food staple for trout on many streams. The following midge pattern is a personalized version of Clark's V Midge. It is good for winter midge fishing, but is not to be forgotten when the major hatches appear in April and May. Ever wonder what the trout are taking while you scan the water for naturals to appear? Why the subtle rises when no big bugs are obvious? For example, prior to the evening appearance of Sulphurs in early May on the Yellow Breeches, the fish are up and close observation reveals midges on the surface. I usually catch several trout before the Sulphurs appear. When necessary, brush fumed silica powder into the CDC to help keep the fly in the vertical position. Liquid floatant on CDC will permanently destroy the ability of the feather to trap air. A commercial powder product found in most fly shops is Frog's Fanny.

The V Midge Emerger can be modified without difficulty, and used when the little blue winged olives are present on the water. With the proper thread color body, the V Midge Emerger becomes the V Olive Emerger. The V Midge Emerger is easy to tie, highly visible and successful on the water so don't hesitate to tie some.

#### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, size 24, or the applicable size for the natural.

**Thread:** Camel, 8/0 or, the applicable color for the natural.

**Body:** Camel thread, or the applicable color for the natural.

**Hackle:** Light Dun CDC

#### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook.
- 2) Return the thread to mid hook and tie in two to three similar size CDC feathers. The tips of the CDC feathers will face over the hook eye. The amount of CDC material overlapping the hook eye will generally equal the hook shank. Snip the CDC butts and build a slight thorax over the snipped CDC butts.
- 3) Return the thread to the eye of the hook and under the CDC fibers to build the head. The head helps uplift the CDC and thus make it easier to thread and tie the tippet material while fishing. Half hitch or whip finish and cement.



## V Midge Hammer

The midge in winter is an important food staple for trout on many streams. Actually the midge plays an important role as a consistent supplier of food for trout throughout the four seasons. I modified the V Midge Emerger and found the modified pattern to provide excellent winter midge fishing for trout. Just as the V Midge Emerger is easy to tie, highly visible and successful on the water, so is the V Midge Hammer. Nothing has changed but the addition of a grizzly hackle tied Klinkhammer style. The attributes of the V Midge remain: the CDC forces the body of the fly into the surface film (to facilitate the upright or V appearance, wet the body but not the CDC) and mimics the appearance of the natural midge emerger. When necessary, brush fumed silica powder into the CDC to help keep the fly in the vertical position. Liquid and paste floatants ruin the ability of the CDC feathers to trap air. A commercial powder floatant product found in most fly shops is Frog's Fanny. However, I have found that catching a few fish out of a pod tends to wisen up the group. The fish will come up and inspect the fly, but not take it. The catching process is stymied and one must move along to find new fish. I dislike leaving fish to find fish in the happenstance that they will be more receptive to the fly I am using. Fortunately, the addition of the hackle behind the CDC butts allows more fish to be caught before moving along the stream. Could it be the hackle adds one more vital part to the fly that more closely resembles the naturals? Or the hackle forces the abdomen lower in the surface film making it more visible (exposed) to the trout? The V Midge Hammer can be modified without difficulty and used when the little blue winged olives are present on the water. With the proper thread color body, the V Midge Hammer becomes the V Olive Hammer. Tie up a few flies and go out and hammer a pod of trout.

## Recipe:

**Hook:** Quality dry fly hook sizes 22-24

**Thread:** Black 8/0 or, the applicable color for the natural.

**Body:** Black thread, or the applicable color for the natural.

**Rib:** Black thread or the applicable color for the natural.

**Wing:** Light Dun CDC

**Hackle:** Grizzly

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a layer of thread to the curve of the hook. Next, spin the bobbin clockwise to tighten the twist of the thread to enhance the appearance of the rib.
- 2) Rib the twisted thread to near the hook eye and tie in two to three similar size CDC feathers. The tips of the CDC feathers will face over the hook eye. The amount of CDC material overlapping the hook eye will generally equal the hook shank. Snip and cover the CDC butts with thread.
- 3) Tie in the hackle over the CDC butts and take two turns of hackle around the base of the CDC feathers.
- 4) Return the thread to the eye of the hook and under the CDC fibers to build the head. The head helps uplift the CDC and thus make it easier to thread and tie the tippet material while fishing. Half hitch or whip finish, and cement.



# Chapter 6

## Subsurface Flies

### Bead Head Black Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear

The Cumberland Valley Trout Unlimited Chapter had a booth at a past sports and outdoor show and the hundreds of flies sold at that event are hand tied by Chapter members. Ken Okorn, a Chapter member and a past Board of Directors member, was responsible for tying dozens of Bead Head Black Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear nymphs. I really did not pay much attention to that particular fly until we were fishing together on one outing and I saw how effective the fly can be in late winter and early March. The black stoneflies are usually active in mid or late February and Ken's fly does take trout when fished at that time. I fish the fly as a part of a tandem rig coupled with a cream egg fly. Suckers will be spawning in the spring and trout seems to key in on the egg fly about the same time the black stones make their presence known. So between the stonefly and spawning activities, the tandem rig is a good one. The following are the general tying instructions that Ken uses. The above photo is one of my hand tied Bead Head Black Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear fly based on Ken's tying instructions.

#### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Size 16 or 14 nymph hook

**Thread:** Black 6/0

**Bead:** 1/8 inch gold

**Tail:** Optional (black hackle fibers)

**Body:** Dubbed black hares mask fur

**Rib:** Ultra Wire gold

**Collar:** Black hares mask, (use loop method with guard hairs aligned)

#### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and place the bead on the hook.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the bead and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in hackle fibers to form the tail (optional).
- 4) Insert the gold ribbing wire under the bead, hold the wire back along the hook shank, and tie in the wire by wrapping the thread up to the bead and back to the bend.
- 5) Cut sufficient hair from the hares mask to dub a tapered body and rib with the gold wire.
- 6) With the thread behind the bead, form a dubbing loop.

- 7) Cut a small amount of fur with plenty of guard hairs from the hares mask. Do not mix or blend the fur. Spread the fur in the dubbing loop with the guard hairs pointing in one direction.
- 8) Spin the dubbing loop tightly. The result is a rough “fur chenille” with many guard hairs protruding.
- 9) Wrap the resulting fur chenille two to three times behind the bead. While wrapping, stroke the fur and guard hairs rearward to form a buggy looking collar.
- 10) Whip or half hitch behind the bead and apply a few drops of cement.



## Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph

This is one of my favorite flies. The BHPT nymph works wonders on a multitude of trout streams in Pennsylvania and in many other states known for trout destination fishing. There are times when I think this little beauty should be known as the Miracle Nymph!!

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Any curved caddis style hook in size 24.

**Thread:** Camel, 8/0

**Tail:** Three or four male pheasant tail barbules.

**Body:** the same three or four male pheasant tail barbules

**Rib:** Very fine gold wire.

**Bead- Head:** 1/16 or 5/64 gold bead.

**NOTE:** The 5/64 gold bead may slip over the hook eye on some hook brands in which case use the 1/16.

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and slip the gold bead onto the hook.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye, build up a dam of thread behind the gold bead, and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in 3 or 4 pheasant tail barbules to form the tail.
- 4) Tie in a four-inch section of fine gold wire for the rib.
- 5) Wind the pheasant tail barbules forward to form the body and tie off behind gold bead.
- 6) Spiral the fine gold wire forward to form the rib and tie off behind the gold bead.
- 7) Whip or half hitch behind the gold bead.



Bead Head Pheasant Tail Nymph

## **Bead Head Zebra Midge Wet Fly**

A father and his young son were fishing the Yellow Breeches in late May and doing well on what was described as a Zebra Midge. The time of day did not fit with the productivity of the midge type fly so I asked to see the fly. It was the standard black zebra midge with a black thread body and gold wire. However, it had a small hen hackle neatly wrapped around the hook behind the gold bead. The fly looked buggy and that night I tied a half dozen. The following day I used the fly on the Yellow Breeches with success in the morning, again in the afternoon and again late in the day. I had a similar experience on Spring Creek and a few other prime trout streams in PA. The clincher was a trip to Spring Creek to fish the waning of the Cicada outbreak. According to the local fishers, the fish had been stuffing themselves with the big bug for the past three weeks. Cicada were not about that particular day, so I decided to use a tandem rig of the size 20 Bead Head Zebra Midge wet flies. I was not overly optimistic, thinking the trout were still lethargic from the steady diet of Cicada. Trout responded nicely to the tandem rig offering and since that day the tandem Bead Head Zebra Midge wet flies rig have become one of my subsurface go to rigs.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad C49S, curved caddis, size 20

**Thread:** Black, 8/0

**Bead:** Gold 1/16, 5/64 or 3/32 sizes

**Body:** Black thread

**Hackle:** Medium or dark dun soft hen

**Rib:** Small gold Ultra Wire

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Slip a gold bead on the hook to the eye.
- 3) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the bead, build up a dam of thread to secure the gold bead and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 4) Tie in the gold wire as ribbing and form a black thread teardrop shaped body and rib with the gold wire.
- 5) Tie in a medium to dark dun soft hen hackle behind the bead and after two to three turns, tie off and clip excess.
- 6) Whip finish behind the gold bead.



Bead Head Zebra Midge Wet Fly

## Black Tetra

Justin Pittman, President of Cumberland Valley Chapter TU and fishing buddy of mine gave me a fly that he has been having good success with on many waters in the Cumberland Valley and on Pine Creek and Kettle Creek. Since the fly had no name and looks like a fish that my wife, Gayle, has in her aquarium, I named it the Black Tetra fly. Justin is a Pennsylvania licensed guide and owns property on Kettle Creek so he spends a number of weekends in that area guiding and fishing. Soon Justin will have cabins for rent and those that rent his cabins will have a short walk to some great fishing on Kettle Creek. Justin maintains an interesting website and if looking for an amiable and knowledgeable guide for the Cumberland Valley and Pine and Kettle Creek areas, Justin is the person. The website is [www.pafinsandflies.com](http://www.pafinsandflies.com) and the phone number is 717.243.7642.

Justin provided the recipe and tying instructions for the fly that was created by his friend Brain Trussell who is also a CVTU member.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Eagle Claw size 6 or 8

**Thread:** 3/0 Uni-Thread, black

**Eyes:** Large Pseudo Eyes Green or Red

**Tail: Black Marabou, Black Barred Rabbit Strip Olive,  
2 Barred Silli Legs, Yellow/Gold Black,  
2 Silli Legs Black/Blue Flake, 4 Strips of Midge Flash  
Body: .025 Lead and Zonked Rabbit Half Skin Olive**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise, attach the tying thread behind the hook eye and wrap over the hook shank to the hook bend.
- 3) Return the tying thread about 3/8 inch behind the hook eye and secure the Pseudo Eye to hook. Be sure to wrap tight.
- 4) Wrap thread to back of hook and secure Black Marabou to shank. Enough to make a tail like a woolly bugger. Then tie on a strip of Black Barred Rabbit Strip Olive over the Marabou of equal length. Add your Silli Legs and Midge Flash all of equal length now.
- 5) Wrap .025 lead from the Pseudo Eye back to the tail and cut off lead. Tie thread all over the lead to secure in place. Return thread to tail. Add a dab of glue to tail area and immediately do step 6.
- 6) Tie on one long strip of Zonked Rabbit Half Skin Olive to the head of the tail area. Return thread to front of hook past the eye. Palmer the Zonked Rabbit Strip to the front of the fly. Go slow and wet fingers brushing the hair back to the tail with each wrap. Stop at Pseudo Eye.
- 7) Wrap the Zonked Rabbit Strip over the Pseudo Eye in a figure 8 pattern. End with strip at front of eye. Tie thread over strip tightly. Cut off Rabbit Strip and make a nice head of thread behind eye covering all the rabbit skin. Whip or half hitch and glue.



Black Tetra

## Blood Dot Egg Fly

The veiled blue egg fly is a good choice for early returning steelhead in clear water. The fly slightly modified with blood red Glo Bug yarn has an advantage over the veiled blue egg fly when the tributary waters are off color. Here is a good example. Scott Douglas fished Elk and Walnut Creeks (I missed seeing Scott on the water by a few days) during a multi day drizzly rain event in the Erie area. He was using a modified blue egg fly with a blood red dot and sent me photos of some huge steelhead caught. As a result I tied a few dozen modified blue egg flies for steelhead trips to the Erie area. Do not be misled that all blood dot egg flies are tied using red yarn. The fly is named after the originator, Jeff Blood, and not the blood red color yarn that makes up the dot. The "Blood Dot" can be cream, chartreuse, orange, etc. However, I have found blood red Glo Bug yarn as the dot successful on many non rainy steelhead trips.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Curved caddis type, size 14-16

**Thread:** Light blue, 6/0

**Body:** Blue Glo Bug yarn

**Dot:** Blood red Glo Bug yarn

**Egg Veil:** Hareline milky white (optional)

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and secure the hook in the vise jaws. Attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 2) Start the egg body using the Egg Gun. After tying the blue yarn to the middle of the hook shank, overlay a smaller diameter piece of red yarn and tie down in the same location. The red yarn should extend slightly beyond the eye and the bend of the hook. Figure eight tie the combination of blue and blood red yarn to the hook shank. Tie off the thread behind the eye of the hook, clip the blue yarn from the egg gun and then clip the blood red yarn flush with the blue yarn forming the egg shape fly. The Egg Gun is a fast and easy way to tie egg patterns and reduces material waste.
- 3) Fold a ¼ inch wide by 1.5 inch long piece of milky white veil material on the tying thread and wrap several times between the egg body and the hook eye. The veil material should overlap the upper portion of the fly and protrude behind the fly. NOTE: The veil is an optional attractant on this fly.
- 4) Tie off the thread and apply cement if desired.



Blood Dot Egg Fly

## Blue Winged Olive Biot Nymph

We were on Yellow Creek and the rain and resulting somewhat miserable conditions rewarded our presence with numerous olives that were appearing on the water's surface. I tied on a tandem set of number 22 BWO nymphs and after a few casts was into a huge brown trout. The fish was in the 17 inch range and I was pleased. Several fish later, with a few in the 20 inch range, I knew the combo I was using was a winner. Fish were now beginning to work the surface and the BWOs that floated by were obviously the main item on the menu. I greased the tandem setup with liquid floatant and cast the pair as dry flies. Again, the fish took the surface floating nymphs. It was great to be able to use the same fly combination for both surface and sub surface fishing. Saves a great deal of time in not having to change the fly.

Want to catch trout on the bottom and again on the surface with the same set up? Then try this duo combination on your favorite stream when olives are evident. I suspect this tandem will work on the larger olives that appear on Penns Creek, so adjust the hook size accordingly. Carrying an assortment of nymph sizes will be beneficial and will allow you to adjust to the size of the natural BWO bugs in the area you are fishing. So far the size 22 and size 16 nymphs have covered the BWO situations I have encountered on many of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania streams.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Size 22 or 16 nymph hook

**Thread:** Olive dun 8/0

**Tail:** Wood duck fibers

**Abdomen:** Olive goose biot

**Thorax:** Blue winged olive dubbing

**Wingcase:** Olive flashabou

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the bead and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in several wood duck fibers to form the tail.
- 4) Tie in a single olive goose biot with the notch down toward hook eye for smooth edge abdomen. Tying the notch up will create a fuzzy edge abdomen. Most nymphs are tied with smooth edge abdomen. Notch up or notch down is your choice.
- 5) Wind the goose biot forward.
- 6) Tie off the goose biot and tie in a single one inch piece of olive flashabou for the wingcase. For the size 16 hook use 2-3 strands of flashabou.
- 7) Form the thorax with the BWO dubbing and overlay with the single strand of olive flashabou.
- 8) Form a thread head, whip or half hitch behind the head and apply a few drops of cement.



Blue Winged Olive Biot Nymph

## Caddis Wet Fly

I was guiding two young men on the Yellow Breeches. The fish were up and taking tan caddis off the surface. However, the takes were of naturals that were hopping along the water surface prior to taking flight. The Caddis would emerge, hop, well, actually skip about one to two inches above the water surface. The trout were keyed in on the hop/skip activity and motionless Caddis went unscathed. Mimicking the hop/skip of the naturals by twitching the fly brought several fish to the net but my gut feeling was that trout were actively taking Caddis Emergers prior to the naturals reaching the surface.

Yes, we could have concentrated on the trout taking naturals off the surface and continued to take a modest number of trout, but early in the afternoon, I recommended tying on a tandem of Caddis wet flies that I tied the evening prior. One nontoxic # 6 split shot carried the tandem of flies just under the surface and the serious action of catching trout began. My clients caught numerous trout with the tandem wet flies and after several savage strikes resulting in rip offs; they used up the quantity of wet flies I had tied the night before. I excused myself and walked the short distance to my house and sat down at the fly tying table. In twenty minutes I had tied several caddis wet flies and returned to the stream. My clients tied on the freshly tied flies and the action resumed. An hour later they ran out of flies. So once again I returned to the tying table and tied up another half dozen flies. The total catch and release of trout from the surface and later subsurface over the eight hours of fishing, was impressive. What a day of fishing!

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, curved caddis, size 16

**Thread:** Olive dun, 8/0

**Bead:** Green or amber glass

**Body:** Ice dub caddis green

**Hackle:** Medium or dark dun soft hen

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Slip a green or amber color glass bead on the hook to the eye.
- 3) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 4) Form a teardrop shaped body with Ice Dub Caddis Green dubbing.
- 5) Tie in a medium to dark dun soft hen hackle behind the bead and after two to three turns, tie off and clip excess.
- 6) Form the thread head and finish with whip or half hitch knots.



## CIA Aquatic Bug

Sowbugs, cressbugs, and scuds are names that are often used interchangeably by newcomers to the fly fishing arena when referring to the aquatic bugs that inhabit freestone and limestone streams. Call them by other names like freshwater shrimp, or side swimmers or aquatic pill bugs, or whatever, but these bugs have a common denominator and that is the color, which is mostly olive gray or grayish olive. These bugs can be found hiding in aquatic weeds and other places that offer concealment. But they all are of importance to trout as a food source because they remain in the water in basically one form (size will vary) year round and fish consume them in good numbers. The distinction that should be made at this point is that scuds and sowbugs (cressbugs) are totally different critters living in a similar habitat, but can be imitated by one fly.... The CIA Aquatic Bug. Sowbugs and scuds are found in productive streams with substantial weed growth. Generally, this means limestone spring creeks. Freestone streams are not generally known for having significant populations of scuds and sowbugs. However, sowbugs can be present in large numbers in freestone streams that are organically enriched by human activity. Greg Hoover, who teaches Entomology at PSU, wrote an interesting article on Aquatic Sowbugs and noted that some sowbugs species do very well in organically enriched conditions. A biologist friend of mine cited the Clarion

River as an example. Many years ago, the bottom of the Clarion River was covered with sowbugs when the paper mill discharge at Johnsonburg was not well treated. Now with improved discharge guidelines, sowbugs are no longer present in large numbers downstream.

Water events like bank top floods will dislodge the critters downstream to waiting fish. One such event happened recently while I was fishing the catch and release section on the Yellow Breeches, albeit not a natural occurrence but the results were the same. A permitted water release of Children's Lake in Boiling Springs was underway one day during the third week in January. I was fishing above the Allenberry Dam and noticed a gradual change in water clarity from gin clear to a spring creek milky hue. Along with the change in water color, free flowing aquatic weed fragments were on the increase. I deduced that the gradual changing stream condition was the result of discharging water from the nearby lake, so I thought there must be some aquatic sowbugs and scuds in the lot. I then changed my fishing tactic from midge surface dry fly fishing to subsurface fishing with the CIA Aquatic Bug fly. Bouncing the fly along the bottom produced four trout and numerous nicks and misses. The aquatic weed fragments were on the increase resulting in the need to remove the green stuff from the tapered leader, split shot and fly. I moved downstream several hundred yards to get ahead of these weed fragments but the fish were not overly interested in the CIA Aquatic Bugs. Conditions were not favorable until the milky water and weed fragments caught up to me. Fishing would be OK for twenty to thirty minutes until the dense weed bits and pieces caused constant line and fly fouling. I would once again leapfrog downstream and wait for the free flowing sowbug and scud banquet to arrive. When the sowbug and scud banquet caught up to me, I would switch to the CIA Aquatic Bug fly and once again the action would be on. One never ceases to learn when fly fishing, so be observant. The unexpected sowbug and scud banquet resulting from the controlled water release from Children's Lake into the creek while I was fishing was one such occasion. Remember when life hands you a lemon, make lemonade or better yet, tie one fly, CIA (Cover It All) style, and use it to mimic a couple or several different bugs. Why carry 4-6 different fly patterns when one will cover it all?

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad C49S, size 14-18

**Thread:** 6/0 Uni-Thread, olive dun

**Ribbing:** Ultra Wire BR chartreuse

**Shellback:** Sow-scut back 1/8" light gray

**Dubbing:** Olive-gray muskrat

**Legs:** See note below general tying instructions

**General Tying Instructions:**

1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.

- 2) Secure the hook in the vise, attach the tying thread behind the hook eye and wrap over the hook shank to the hook bend.
- 3) At the bend of the hook, tie in the chartreuse wire ribbing and the shellback strip. Next with the thread at the hook bend, form a dubbing loop, arrange the muskrat fur into an elongated oval shape, and place the fur in the loop. Spiral the thread to near the hook eye. Now spin the dubbing loop (which was left at the hook bend) to form the fur “noodle” and wrap it forward to just behind the hook eye and tie off.
- 4) Pull the shellback up and over the body, tie off and trim. Next wrap the chartreuse ribbing wire forward creating four or five segments and tie off.
- 5) Form a head and whip finish.

Note: After completing the fly, take a dubbing needle or dubbing teaser and pick out the dubbing along the bottom to mimic legs. This action will favor the scud appearance. Picking out both sides will have the horizontally flattened appearance of the sowbug.



## CIA Nymph

This pattern compliments the CIA (Cover It All) dry fly that is effective on a number of trout streams in Pennsylvania and other states, including out west, especially Montana. As noted in the CIA Fly history, I picked up the pattern's body style from Terry Taterus, a fly fishing acquaintance of many years. Terry's universal dry fly pattern style has resulted in many successful fishing encounters during mayfly hatches. I tied and liked the CIA Fly in the original yellowish body color. I then tied up a few dry flies experimenting with abdomen and hackle colors, and found they worked well as Sulphurs, Craneflies, Hendricksons, March Browns, Gray Foxes, Slate drakes, Green and Brown Drakes, etc., and have since included the CIA dry fly assortment in my fly box. This unique pattern, I believe, mimics the dun phase and most importantly the emerger or flymph phase when it is in the surface film.

So why not build a CIA nymph pattern based on the same principal? Change the basic nymph pattern to reflect the trigger items that induce trout to search out and destroy a fly that is moving through its window of feeding opportunity. Those trigger items are the standards built into all effective fly patterns; size, shape and color. Change the hook size, the abdomen color, the tail material to match other mayfly nymphs and do the same for matching stoneflies. Then follow the CIA Nymph general tying instructions. The results should be more hookups!

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Quality wet fly/nymph hook.

**Thread:** Camel 6/0

**Tail:** Wood duck

**Body:** Ginger dubbing # 43

**Rib:** Ultra Wire gold

**Thorax Bump:** Ginger dubbing # 43

**Wing Case:** Mottled turkey quill

**Legs:** Hungarian partridge (from lower neck area)

**Head:** Camel tying thread

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in 4-5 wood duck fibers to form the tail.
- 4) Tie in the gold ribbing wire at the hook bend.
- 5) Dub the abdomen and rib with the gold wire.
- 6) Tie the turkey quill in front of the abdomen. Dub in a small amount of material to form a thorax bump.

- 7) Cut the tip out of the Hungarian partridge feather, forming a V. Tie the feather in behind the eye of the hook with the open end of the V facing the bend of the hook.
- 8) Fold the turkey quill forward over the thorax bump and between the V, tie off behind the eye of the hook.
- 9) Form the thread head, whip or half hitch the head and apply a few drops of cement.



## Copper Caddis Fly

Caddis are a main food item in most streams. The Yellow Breeches is no exception. During the winter, caddis larva must continue its maturation process called instars. As the cased caddis outgrows its case, it moves about while building a new case. This movement may take place in the immediate area or some drifting may take place. I have pulled the caddis larva from cases and have found them to be grub-like in appearance, with an off white waxy body, a grayish head and dark short legs. I have used several flies that well represent the caddis larva, but the most consistent fish action has been on the copper wire body with a monofilament overlay and dark head. The monofilament gives the translucent appearance that is so succulent and successful in fishing larvae or nymphs. I dead drift a tan-

dem rig with the CIA Nymph as the point fly and the Copper Caddis Larva as the dropper fly with success, and have found my guiding clients do likewise regardless of their skill level. The Copper Caddis Larva fly looks simple to tie but requires concentration to get the proper overlays of copper and monofilament.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad 3906B, size 14

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Body:** Copper wire, medium or Ultra Wire, large

**Overlay:** Stren 10 lbs. test, green tint monofilament

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Occasionally, the hook will break when pinching the barb so it is better to have that happen prior to spending time tying the fly.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws and attach the thread behind the eye. Tie in a six inch piece of monofilament at the eye but leave thread at eye and stretch the remainder of monofilament across the hook and lock in vise spring or clip at the rear.
- 3) Take a six inch piece of copper and wind from bend of hook to eye.
- 4) Wrap the monofilament forward to the hook eye and tie off.
- 5) Build a moderate head with the tying thread and half hitch or whip finish.



Copper Caddis Fly

## Creek Muddler

I tie a limited number of streamer patterns for trout fishing. Years ago I tied about a dozen streamer patterns and at one time or the other I caught a few fish. I prefer streamer fishing in the late winter, early spring seasons. Fish are “eager strikers” at that time and stripping line with a hefty minnow type meal attached is usually received with a line stopping, rod rebelling jolt. Several streams that I fish at this time of year with streamers are the Yellow Breeches, Conewago Creek, Yellow Creek, East Licking Creek and Black Moshannon Creek.

The Creek Muddler has been my fly of choice because Brown, Brook and Rainbow trout attack it. My next experiment, in a week or two, will be the Creek Muddler on Lake Erie Tributaries for the mighty Steelheads. Oh, did I mention the Creek Muddler is a simple streamer to tie?

### Recipe:

**Hook:** TMC 5263 BL or Daiichi 2220 or Mustad 9672, size 12

**Thread:** Camel 6/0

**Tail:** Red calf tail

**Body:** Kreinik metallics gold (silver optional)

**Under Wing:** Fox squirrel

**Wing:** (2) Mottled turkey quill sections about ¼ inch wide.

**Hackle:** Yellowish deer hair spun and clipped short.

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye, and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a tuft of red calf tail at the hook bend.
- 4) Tie in the Kreinik material at the hook bend and form the body.
- 5) About a ¼ inch behind the eye, Tie in a small clump of fox squirrel tail hair that extends about 1.5 inches beyond the hook bend.
- 6) Above the fox squirrel hair, tie in two mottled turkey quill sections that equal or slightly extend beyond the fox squirrel tail hair.
- 7) Spin and clip short the deer hair to form the head.
- 8) Whip or half hitch the head and apply a few drops of cement.



## Czech Style Pheasant Tail Nymph

I have been reading a book entitled *Czech Nymph* by Karel Krivanec and Friends. It is stated in the book that choosing the right pattern(s) (one usually fishes with 2-3 nymphs) and having the ability to detect takes is vital, along with a suitable rod, and a short amount of fly line and leader beyond the top guide. The initial nymph that I tied from the numerous nymph patterns listed was the # 135 Gold-head Pink PTN found on page 93. Some materials listed were not available so I substituted what I felt would closely resemble the original materials. I have used the modified Czech Nymph pattern on several streams with darn good results. Hopefully, I'll have the same results with a few of the other nymph patterns listed in the book. The fishing techniques of Czech Nymphing is interesting reading and warrants more use of the unique nymphing style on several other streams that I fish. The following is the modified version of the nymph that I have been fishing with success.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Any quality wet fly/nymph hook, size 14.

**Thread:** Red 6/0

**Tail:** Pheasant tail fibers

**Body: Pheasant tail fibers**

**Rib: Ultra Wire red, small (medium seems too heavy and bulky)**

**Collar: Ice Dub UV Shrimp Pink**

**Head: 1/8 Gold bead**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Slide the gold bead onto the hook and secure the hook in the vise jaws, build a thread dam behind the gold bead and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in 4-5 pheasant tail fibers near the tips to form the tail.
- 4) Tie in the ribbing red wire at the hook bend.
- 5) Wind the remainder of the pheasant tail fibers forward to form the body and rib with the red wire.
- 6) A short distance behind the gold bead, dub in a small amount of the Ice Dub UV Shrimp Pink to form the collar.
- 7) Whip or half hitch the thread behind the gold bead and apply a few drops of cement.



# Eyebrow Streamer

I could tell from the tight loop and the amount of fly line involved that the fly fisher was Art Rorex. Art is a well-traveled fly fisher and fishes other countries as routinely as the majority of us fish other streams in Pennsylvania. Art's reputation as a well-traveled fly fisher is legitimate. Many of you probably know Art from his time in the Yellow Breeches Outfitters fly shop in Boiling Springs, PA. This day, Art was fishing the Yellow Breeches Creek and having a pretty good outing, catching and releasing several fish that I observed. I questioned Art as to the fly he was using, and he showed me the rabbit-strip fly. The rabbit-strip fly that we refer to as a Zonker streamer is subject to fouling. The tag end of the Zonker strip can wrap around the bend of the hook rendering the fly less effective for catching trout. Art missed his calling and should have been a college professor, as he went into detail describing to me how to prevent the Zonker strip from fouling around the bend of the hook. He covered the aspects of the monofilament loop, the mono spike and soda straw split lengthwise methods. Finally he opened the fly box that contained a zillion streamers and plucked out a dozen flies and handed them to me, saying try these in your fishing travels. End result after fishing the various flies was an olive rabbit-strip Zonker with two different body colors that consistently caught trout. One was tied with a dark olive fuzzy wool yarn and the other was tied with a golden olive pearl chenille. The dark olive fuzzy wool yarn was obtained from a craft store under the Lion brand, labeled Amazing Rain Forest. The pearl chenille in golden olive was obtained from a fly shop. The golden olive body was favored for steelhead fishing in the Lake Erie tributaries. Several of us were fishing Penns Creek when I caught and released almost back to back wild brown trout that were near the twenty inch range. We referred to the Zonker strip fly simply as the bunny fly.

My wife, Gayle, had both knees replaced. While Gayle was in the hospital recovering from her surgery, I would stay with her for eight hours or so a day so I could assist her with her needs. I brought my portable fly tying equipment with me and was tying the Zonker rabbit-strip critter by Gayle's hospital bedside. A woman from housekeeping walked into the room and proclaimed in a high singing gospel like voice "What are those, eyebrows?" and in the same breath, she said "I want a pair, Oh Lordy!" Thus was born the Eyebrow Streamer. The two previously tied streamers were on the bedside table with the Zonker rabbit-strip facing the woman so I can see how she mistakenly thought the streamers were eyebrows. She was quite taken with the whole fly tying/fishing thing and was truly fascinated by the "eyebrows" I was tying.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** # 2-14 standard to 8X long streamer

**Thread:** 6/0 color to match fly

**Body:** Fuzzy wool yarn (color to compliment Zonker strip)

**Wing:** Zonker strip standard or large (to fit hook size) (various colors)

**Throat:** Red yarn, wool or hackle fibers (optional)

**Lead:** .015” - .035” (see note)

**Bead/Cone:** Optional

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb and insert the hook in the vise.
- 2) Tie in the thread just forward of the hook point.
- 3) Tie in the lead wire forward of the hook point; wrap forward to two turns behind the hook eye; wrap back over the initial layer towards the hook bend; stop 1/3 to 1/2 way back to the tie in point; use additional thread wraps to form smooth transitions (cones) at each end of the wire and at the end of the second layer.
- 4) Tie in the Zonker strip at the hook bend; the hair should flow back over the hook bend; spread the hair at the tie in point and tie down only the leather (don't tie down the hair fibers); have no more than 1/4 inch of leather extending back past the bend; fold the remaining strip back over the bend.
- 5) Tie in the wool yarn at the hook bend forward of the Zonker strip (match the cut end of the yarn to the end of the lead wire); wrap the thread back towards the hook bend to make sure the yarn is tied in snug to the Zonker strip (no gaps between the strip and the wool); spiral wrap the thread to the hook eye.
- 6) Wrap the yarn forward in tight wraps towards the hook eye; leave one or two wrap spaces for the head; tie off the yarn and trim the excess.
- 7) Pull the zonker strip forward over the yarn and tie in behind the hook eye; spread the hair and tie down only the leather; trim the excess.
- 8) Form a thread head over the cut end of the Zonker strip; whip finish.
- 9) Use a toothbrush or soft wire brush to “fuzz up” the wool body (optional).
- 10) Note: For bead/cone heads attach the bead/cone as step one and then proceed with remaining instructions; lead wire is optional with a bead/cone head; whip finish behind the bead/cone.



**Eyebrow Streamer**

## Free-Living Caddis Larva

Ken Okorn relayed the following information to me regarding his ongoing experiment with the free-living caddis larva pattern. He and Jim Ritter fished for a couple of hours on the Yellow Breeches catch and release section below the Allenberry Dam. Ken caught six browns and lost about that many more. He fished a stonefly nymph with the caddis larva as a dropper. Five fish were caught on the caddis and one (a little wild brown) took the stonefly. Ken had tied three of the caddis larvae and lost all three of them to fish within an hour. One was really nice because after the hook up, it stayed deep. Ken fought the fish for about 30 seconds and didn't get to see it. Later, he lost a few other fish before he got to see which fly they took. His guess is that they took the caddis larva. Once he lost those three flies, he tied on the conventionally dubbed version that he used without success on the last outing. It didn't work this time either. Ken thinks the appearance of the clipped fur body and /or the muskrat fur in the mixture may have something to do with the effectiveness of the pattern.

Ken is right handed, but that hand was in a cast as a result of recent surgery. His dexterity was limited, but not his fishing. Being able to properly play a fish would have saved some flies, especially since tying flies with one hand during recovery was a chore. Bottom line.....Ken was on the stream, albeit somewhat physically limited, but doing what he likes best.....fly fishing for trout!! On the positive side, he has become reasonably proficient at casting left handed.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** 2X long shank nymph, size 14 or 16

**Thread:** Olive dun, 8/0

**Tail:** Brown olive Antron yarn

**Body:** Haretron dark olive dubbing (75%) and muskrat belly fur (25%) mixed well.

**Rib:** Clear monofilament, 5X or larger

**Head/Thorax:** Dark brown squirrel dubbing

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb if the hook has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a piece of Antron yarn to form a short tail about 1/8" in length
- 4) Tie in the piece of 5X or larger monofilament for the rib.
- 5) Form a dubbing loop and place the body dubbing mixture in the loop. Spin the loop to form a fur chenille. Bring the tying thread to a point about 1/8" behind the hook eye. Wrap the fur chenille to this point and tie off.
- 6) Trim the body into a thin cylinder, with a slight taper at the tail. Spiral wrap the

monofilament rib tightly over the body and tie off.

7) Form another dubbing loop and place the squirrel dubbing in the loop.

8) Spin the loop to form the fur chenille. Bring the tying thread forward to just behind the hook eye.

9) Wrap the fur chenille to form the head and tie off the fur chenille. Trim the head keeping it slightly thicker than the body.

10) Whip finish.



## Grannom Emerger

The Grannom Emerger is one of three fly patterns that has provided excellent results in early April when the Grannoms appear as rollover hatches in concert with Hendricksons. The Grannom Emerger appears from early to mid morning and accounts for a good number of trout, so fish it accordingly. Add this one to your fly box.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Size 14 - 16 curved scud or caddis hook.

**Thread:** 8/0 black Uni-Thread

**Body:** Charcoal gray dubbing

**Rib:** Chartreuse 6/0 Uni-Thread or BR Ultra Wire

**Shuck:** Ginger Z-lon, straight style

**Thorax:** Charcoal gray dubbing

**Wing:** Snowshoe rabbit feet medium dun

**Legs:** Reddish brown hackle

**Head:** 8/0 Black Uni-Thread

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Secure the hook in the vise jaws and attach the tying thread behind the eye and lay down a thread base slightly beyond the curve of the hook.
- 2) Tie in the Chartreuse thread or wire rib material.
- 3) From the hook bend, dub a quarter of the hook with the charcoal gray material
- 4) Wind the Chartreuse thread or wire counterclockwise to form the rib.
- 5) Tie the ginger Z-lon in front of the dubbing so that it encircles the body dubbing and rib and extends well beyond the bend of the hook. Tie an overhand knot of 6/0 thread around the Z-lon about equal to the hook shank length. Cut the thread tag ends. Cut the Z-lon behind the knot approximately one sixteenth of an inch and singe it with a lighter. Super glue the tip if necessary.
- 6) Dub the body forward leaving room for hackle legs, wing and head.
- 7) Tie-in and wrap two turns of hackle.
- 8) Tie-in a wing the length of the body using snowshoe rabbit feet hair. Half hitch or whip finish, snip the butts to form the head and cement.



Grannom Emerger

## Illegal Nymph

In early spring about fifteen years ago, I received in the mail a Xerox copy of tying instructions for a wet fly. My fishing buddy, Scott Douglas from the Winchester, Virginia area, fishes many of the popular trout waters in Pennsylvania and had been experiencing good results in the spring with a wet fly known as Steve's Illegal Nymph. He suggested I tie a few and try them when the Black Stoneflies were crawling about in late winter and early spring and again when the Grannom Caddis were hatching in my area which is late March and early April. I had missed the time frame for the Black Stoneflies so I decided to try the new addition to my wet fly box on Grannom Caddis. The only changes to the pattern for the Grannom Caddis were a curved caddis hook and no tail.

I arrived on the fly fishing only section at Yellow Creek and was dismayed to find a half dozen vehicles occupying the limited parking area near the project waters. That has since changed with the construction of a 10-12 vehicle parking lot at the project water site. I knew of a place to park further up the road that would not infringe on private property but would require a hearty walk to reach the fly fishing only project waters. The walk was worth the effort as I later experienced trout that savagely hit the Grannom Caddis Illegal Nymph.

For years now I have used the Illegal Nymph as a mayfly wet fly and as a Grannom Caddis wet fly on most of the big name destination waters in Pennsylvania and in several New York waters with fair to good results. Several years ago, I made an addition to the wet fly by adding a rib. The fine copper wire ribbing listed in the recipe sent to me by Scott, was optional. Also, I used 3/0 chartreuse thread as the ribbing material. I recently changed the 3/0 chartreuse thread for the sturdy and highly attractant chartreuse Ultra Wire in size small. Chartreuse thread in 6/0 is the tying thread and a dam of chartreuse behind the clear glass seed bead adds extra appeal. The tail of Hungarian Partridge fibers on the mayfly wet fly is optional. I do not add the tail when tying this fly, but some fly fishers feel more comfortable with a tail on a mayfly type wet fly. As mentioned above, another benefit of this fly pattern is when tied on a curved caddis type hook it makes an ideal wet fly for Grannom Caddis. The results of the slight changes to the flies are major improvements for fly longevity and for the number of resulting trout hookups.

Several years ago, I was guiding two highly placed individuals in the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission on the Yellow Breeches. It was in the spring and I selected the Illegal Nymph as the fly for the morning. As I was tying on the wet fly, one of the individuals asked what was the name of the wet fly I was tying to the tippet and as I replied the Illegal Nymph. His eyes widened and I quickly explained the benign history behind the wet fly. In short, I reiterated that the tier of the wet fly showed it to a friend and the friend said something to the effect that the wet fly looked so good that it should be illegal. Judging from some of my fishing experiences with the wet fly across various pressured fishing waters, it should be illegal!

## Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad, 9672, size 14 or size 14 curved caddis hook for Grannom Caddis

**Thread:** Chartreuse 6/0

**Bead:** Clear glass seed bead lined with silver, medium size

**Tail:** Hungarian partridge fibers (optional)

**Rib:** Chartreuse Ultra Wire, small size

**Body:** Peacock herl (3 or 4 strands)

**Hackle:** Gray Hungarian partridge and sparse clump of downy fibers (optional) from lower stem area.

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, insert hook through bead and secure the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Attach the thread behind the bead and lay down a single layer of thread to hook bend. Tie in the tail (optional).
- 3) Tie in 3 or 4 peacock herls by the tips, next tie in the rib wire.
- 4) Form the body with peacock herl strands and tie off.
- 5) Counter-wrap the chartreuse wire rib over the body and tie off.
- 6) Tie in the clump of downy fibers (Optional) on top of the hook shank behind eye of hook. Next tie in the Hungarian Partridge hackle by the tip behind the glass bead, make two wraps and tie off.
- 7) Build a dam with chartreuse thread behind the glass bead. Do not go higher than the bead with the thread wraps.
- 8) Whip finish and apply head glue to the thread wraps.



Illegal Nymph

## Midge Larva

Tricos were present nearly every morning since the first week in July on the Yellow Breeches. However they were not nearly in the numbers that were present over the past several years. About 10:00 AM when the Tricos wane, the micro caddis appear and around noon the fish show interest in terrestrials. Hexagenia were currently dominant in the evening and soon the White Fly would challenge the Hex for the evening/dusk roll over hatches. However, the one bug that seems to be omnipresent throughout the day was the midge. I have become keenly interested in tight line nymphing and rely on various sizes of the Flashback Pheasant Tail Nymph. These flies have become a staple in my fly box. I uncovered a packet of Orvis Flexi-Floss while looking for some Hexagenia body material in my fly tying desk and I had an “Ah, hah!” moment. The latex floss should make a great body for a midge larva fly. I tied several midge larvae, and on the first outing at Yellow Creek, I used all the flies. The response to the midge larva was outstanding. I learned that it was not necessary to tie the flies to 6X monofilament and that 5X monofilament with its larger diameter did not deter the fish. Also, lost fish due to the delicate 6X breaking point was minimized with the hardier 5X. Tie up a few midge larvae flies in body thread colors of black or red and follow the tight line nymphing guidelines noted in this book for a good day of fishing during the four seasons.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Daiichi 1270, size 22

**Thread:** 8/0 black

**Body:** 8/0 black thread

**Rib:** Orvis Flexi-Floss white

**Head:** 8/0 black thread, peacock herl is optional but use sparingly

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Attach the tying thread behind the hook eye and wrap over the hook shank to the hook bend.
- 3) Tie in the white flexi-floss and wind the thread to the hook eye.
- 4) Tightly spiral the white flexi-floss to the hook eye. Note the segmented body... the trout do.
- 5) Form a small head with the thread. An optional step, but not really needed is to form a head using Peacock Herl. This is important, after tying in the Peacock Herl, only take one turn of the herl around the hook and tie off.
- 6) Whip finish or half hitch the head and go fishing.



Midge Larva

## Pheasant Tail Wet Fly

I tie a limited number of streamer patterns for trout fishing and the same is true for wet flies. Years ago I tied about a dozen different streamer patterns and about the same number of wet fly patterns. Of the three wet fly patterns that now occupy my fly box, the Pheasant Tail Wet Fly (P.T.W.F.) receives a lot of use. It is the subsurface fly of choice when the March Browns and Gray Foxes are about and again when the Sulphurs are present. Simply vary the hook size for the species of mayflies present. The P.T.W.F. is not difficult to tie, looks good and catches fish!

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Any quality wet fly/nymph hook. I use Mustad 3906 or 3906-B in sizes 14, 12 or 10.

**Thread:** Camel 6/0

**Tail:** Pheasant tail fibers

**Body:** Pheasant tail fibers

**Rib:** Ultra Wire copper

**Thorax Bump:** Natural Hare's Ear Plus

**Wing:** Wood duck flank feather section about ¼ Inch wide.

**Hackle:** Furnace (mahogany to brown colors)

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in 4-5 pheasant tail fibers near the tips to form the tail.
- 4) Tie in the ribbing copper at the hook bend
- 5) Wind the remainder of the pheasant tail fibers forward to form the body and rib with the copper wire.
- 6) A short distance behind the eye, dub in a small amount of hare's ear material to form a thorax bump.
- 7) Tie in the ¼ inch wide section of wood duck fibers for the wing. The wing should extend to the tail.
- 8) Tie in the soft hackle by the tip at the front of the wing and take two complete wraps and tie off.
- 9) Form the thread head, whip or half hitch the head and apply a few drops of cement.



## Pumpkin Picker

The Pumpkin Picker is one of my favorite flies for steelhead fishing. The fly was made popular by Tony Dranzo, who has been fishing the Erie area tributaries for over several decades. I have used the Pumpkin Picker on various steelhead fishing trips to the Erie, PA area. It is an effective fly from the hot/warm days of early October, when the steelhead first entered the Lake Erie tributaries, to the cold/ice forming days of early December. It continues to be effective in late winter and early spring. Fish the Pumpkin Picker as you would a Woolly Bugger. Tony favors the slow sink rate approach to fishing the Pumpkin Picker. With an un-weighted Pumpkin Picker, fish the pools by allowing the fly to sink slowly in front of a targeted fish. As Tony emphasizes, “hang time” is very important. The targeted steelhead usually remains in place while the fly slowly sinks and when the fly is near eye level the steelhead will move the short distance and take the fly. The beauty of this method is that fish see better looking up than looking down. At least that is how one of my fishing buddies sees the scenario playing out.

I especially like the Pumpkin Picker in ripply water. Cast up and across and let the current bring life to the fly as it bounces and flounders it way downstream. A small strike indicator positioned about four feet above the fly will aid in detecting the possible hookup. Steelhead are strong fish but don't be lulled into the mistaken belief that takes will be forceful. Expect your strike indicator to exhibit subtle movements (twitches, hesitations, downward flinch or upstream flinch) when a steelhead intercepts the fly and you react accordingly. The strength of the steelhead is exhibited after the hook is set!!

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad 79580 or 9672, size 6-8

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Tail:** Dyed black marabou

**Body:** Sparkle braid, fluorescent (fl.) chartreuse

**Hackle:** Black , palmered over body

**Head:** Black thread (Optional 4.0 mm hot bead or small fl. chartreuse lead eyes)

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in the Fl. Chartreuse Sparkle Braid (about 4-5 inches long) at the bend of the hook.
- 4) Tie in the black marabou, forming a tail about 1.0 to 1.5 inches long. The stems of the marabou are tied along the hook shank and form the core for the body.

- 5) Tie in the hackle by the tip at the bend of the hook.
- 6) Wind the Fl. Chartreuse material forward to form the body and tie off behind the eye of the hook.
- 7) Palmer the hackle forward and tie off behind the eye of the hook.
- 8) Build a small thread head, whip or half hitch and apply a few drops of cement.



## Purple Pearl Midge Emerger

I guided Steve Parker and Darwin Gaston, both Cumberland Valley Chapter TU fellow members, on the Yellow Breeches. Steve was interested in expanding his knowledge on fishing midge flies and Darwin was interested in expanding his knowledge fishing the then current *Hexagenia* hatch. Darwin was successful during the *Hexagenia* activity that evening using the *Hexagenia* Dun, which is similar to the CIA Green Drake pattern. Both patterns are listed in this book. Steve fished a Purple Pearl Midge Emerger that I had recently been experimenting with on the Yellow Breeches and a few other streams. This has been the ultimate fly during July and August for midges and I wanted someone else to fish the fly. Steve had better than good success with the Purple Pearl but, then again, Steve is modest and won't admit to his ability to successfully fish nymphs. A few days after our session on the Yellow Breeches, Steve sent me the following email:

“I went right out the next day (Saturday) and found the Purple Pearl Flashabou and hooks I needed to tie those awesome little Midges. I tied two types, one with a bead with no wings and one without a bead with wings. That Sunday I was on the water by sunrise, caught two right off the bat. Funny thing, both fish had dry flies in their mouths. Lucky me! I stopped midging because there were so many fish rising around me. I saw only one angler who was catching fish and I was struggling with the dry flies. So I went back to my trusty midges. I noticed a Palomino about 20 feet in front of me so I gave it a cast up stream and wound up hooking up a BIG brown instead, which immediately broke off. My heart was pounding. I re-rigged, same spot, hooked up with a HUGE rainbow that went air borne about 2 feet in the air. And when it came down the splash captured every fisherman’s attention on the stream. Broke that one off too. Heart pounding even harder, re-rigged again. Same spot, only using a single midge, hooked another brown. This time I landed the 20”+ brown! Too much excitement in one day for me, so I reeled in my line and went home. I AM A MIDGE BELIEVER. Thanks for showing me the light!”

**Recipe:**

**Hook: Mustad, 94840, size 24**

**Thread: Black, 8/0**

**Body: Purple pearl flashabou**

**Thorax: CDC dubbing, light gray**

**Wing: Purple pearl flashabou**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a strand of Purple Pearl Flashabou and wind forward to the eye, forming the body.
- 4) Form a small loop with the remaining strand of flashabou above the body and tie off at the eye.
- 5) Dub in the CDC light gray behind the eye, forming the thorax.
- 6) Cut the small loop of Purple Pearl Flashabou so that it extends beyond the bend of the hook equal to the hook gap.
- 7) Half hitch or whip finish to form the head.
- 8) Now contrary to the movie, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, where the phrase is uttered “Take what you can, give nothing back”, practice Catch and Release while fishing. The Purple Pearl to the fly fisher is akin to the Black Pearl to the Pirates of the Caribbean!



## Ray Fly

Our Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited has scheduled numerous trips to fish Penns Creek in the months of April and June. Providing the precipitation is not a problem with water level higher than normal, the fishing is usually very good with impressive hatches for that time frame. Over the last couple of years a few of our gang members have met a nymph fly fisher by the name of Ray. I don't remember his last name as I am pretty sure he has not disclosed that information. My first encounter with Ray was on the Blue Stone Hole just above the confluence of Cherry Run and Penns Creek. Ray only fishes the fast water to the left of the stone that gives the hole its name. This day Ray eased into a seam of slower moving water and, without a strike indicator, cast a nymph rig into the rapidly moving water that parallels the foot of the high wall that contains the namesake stone. About three fish later, Ray had my attention. I felt I was positioned in the best spot to catch the lunker size trout that hole holds. Wrong! The fourth trout Ray caught put an impressive bend in the fly rod and several times the lunker brown trout thrashed and sent water spraying an impressive distance. I congratulated the fly fisher and engaged him in the usual conversation about what fly or flies he was using and any special presentation tactics he had employed. The high stick nymphing tactic was evident but when he described what flies he was

using, now, that really got my attention. Unfortunately the water that separated us was pushing hard and crossing would have been treacherous. Ray went on to catch several more trout and a few were in the lunker size. His walkie talkie crackled and as a result of a short conversation, he made ready to leave to go upstream. Shucks, I really wanted to see those nymphs he was using. A few hours later, as I was fishing around an island upstream, I saw Ray walking towards me. Great! This was my opportunity to see those flies. Not only did Ray show me the flies he normally uses on Penns Creek while nymphing, but he gave me several. The following year I ran into Ray again at the Blue Stone Hole and his performance was a repeat of the one the last time I saw him. I had success on Penns Creek, Yellow Creek and the Yellow Breeches with the flies I duplicated from those that Ray gave me, and told him so.

Remember if you are fishing Penns Creek between Cherry Run and the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission Cabin and notice a fly fisher putting on a fishing clinic with nymphs, walk up and ask if his first name is Ray! Below is my personalized modification of the Ray Fly.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Midge/Emerger curved style, size 20-22

**Thread:** 8/0 Black

**Wing:** White polyurethane packaging foam

**Hackle:** Peacock or dark gray ostrich herl

**Body:** Black Krystal Flash and clear midge Larva Lace

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb if the hook has one.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and starting behind the hook eye, wrap thread back to 1/3 point, then forward, stopping just behind the hook eye.
- 3) Tie in a sliver of white polyurethane packaging foam on top of the shank. The sliver of foam should extend out over the hook eye approximately one hook gap in length.
- 4) Wrap the thread back to the hook bend and tie in the clear midge larva lace.
- 5) Tie in the black Krystal Flash and wrap forward to behind the foam wing.
- 6) Wrap the clear midge Larva lace forward forming tight segments to behind the foam wing.
- 7) Dub the thorax area at the base of the wing with a pinch of fur (optional) or use the method I prefer, tie in a few wraps of peacock or black ostrich herl.
- 8) Wrap the tying thread just ahead of the wing to position the wing on a 45 degree angle out over the hook eye.
- 9) Finish the head.



## Royce Bugger

Royce Terrell and I were fishing the Yellow Breeches between the Christmas and New Years holidays. Royce had success with a Wooly Bugger that he ties and fishes exclusively for trout in the Yellow Breeches and Steelhead in his Erie area tributaries from Elk Creek to Twentymile Creek. A few days after Royce left, a friend of mine who was fishing upstream of Royce asked me who he was because of the large fish Royce caught in the Yellow Breeches. I told my friend that Royce was a guide from the Erie area and that he has unlimited confidence in a wooly bugger he ties. Joe asked me to describe the wooly bugger and I did so. I also posted Royce's wooly bugger as the Fly of the Week on my website and received excellent feed back on the success of the fly, particularly on Lake Erie tributaries while steelhead fishing.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** Mustad 79580 or 9672, size 10 to 14

**Thread:** Olive dun, 6/0

**Tail:** Light olive marabou

**Flash:** Krystal flash or pearl flashabou

**Body:** Light olive rayon chenille (medium for size 10 hooks, fine for size 12-14 hooks)

**Hackle:** Grizzly, palmered over body

**Head:** Green glass bead

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and slip the bead onto the hook.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye, build up a dam of thread behind the bead and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a grizzly hackle (about 2-3 inches long) at the tip.
- 4) Tie in the light olive marabou, forming a tail about 1.0 to 1.5 inches long.
- 5) Tie in one strand of flash material on each side of the tail.
- 6) Tie in the chenille, form the body and tie off behind bead.
- 7) Palmer the hackle forward and tie off behind bead.
- 8) Whip or half hitch behind the bead. Apply a few drops of cement to the thread behind the bead.



Royce Bugger

## Royce Shiner

Royce, my fishing buddy from the Erie area, spends a considerable amount of time on the Lake Erie tributaries steelhead fishing when he is not guiding. The early October trip for steelhead produced good results using his emerald shiner imitation with a modified streamer or wet fly quartering downstream swing and strip technique. Since the water was low and clear, there was no need to use valuable time searching the entire water in the hope of catching a steelhead. The big fish were fairly easy to spot as many were in pods consisting of ten to twenty steelhead. We concentrated on picking a spot for accurate casting and presentation. Once properly positioned, the cast was made several yards upstream of the fish and the necessary maneuvering of the streamer was accomplished with a mend or mends of the fly line, allowing the fly to sink and then to swing in front of the foremost steelhead. Fishing wet flies and streamers on waters such as Penns Creek, Little Juniata River and the Yellow Breeches has helped to provide the experience and skill needed for steelhead fishing. Most hookups occurred when the streamer reached the foremost steelhead and the inherent territorial instinct took control. On those occasions when the streamer passed the foremost steelhead without a hookup, a short but rapid stripping of the fly line often resulted in one of the big ones leaving the pod and attacking the fleeing baitfish, which in this case is the sparsely dressed streamer.

A second and third steelhead fishing trip to the Erie area that October solidified the veracity of the Royce Shiner. It is inspiring to fish with anglers that are innovative and willing to share information.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad, 9672 streamer hook, size 12-10

**Thread:** UNI-Thread 6/0 fire orange

**Head:** Small pearlescent plastic bead

**Tail:** Same material as body

**Body:** Peacock Krystal Flash or similar material

**Wing:** Pearlescent Wing n Flash or similar material, white and olive marabou barbules

**Throat:** Fire Orange thread

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb if the hook has one and slip the plastic bead on the hook to the eye.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise and lay down a layer of thread to the bend of the hook and tie in 6-7 strands of Peacock Krystal Flash to form the tail that is about  $\frac{3}{4}$  length of hook shank in size.
- 3) Twist and wind the Peacock Krystal Flash forward to form the body.

4) Tie in 5-8 strands of the Wing n Flash, 6-10 white marabou barbules and 6-10 olive marabou barbules in that order behind the plastic bead and finish with the fire orange collar.



## SNOWSHOE RABBIT FOOT CADDIS EMERGER

Caddis flies generally hatch in the morning and evening hours. Caddis characteristically come up, pop through the surface film and fly off. They are unlike the popular Mayflies that hatch in large numbers at a predictable time and ride the surface for a distance, thus becoming highly visible to the fly fisher and also the trout. However the advantage of the caddis is its random emergence during the day. It is up and gone in a hurry so trout tend to waste little time hammering caddis that are within their feeding range. I use a tandem caddis emerger rig with moderate to, at times, embarrassing success as a search fly when Mayfly or Caddis fly hatches are not obvious.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad Signature, C49S, size 14-16

**Thread:** Uni-Thread 6/0 olive dun

**Shuck: Ginger Z-lon**

**Abdomen and Thorax: caddis green**

**Wing: Sparse clumps of snowshoe rabbit feet hair, light dun**

**Legs: Furnace or brown hackle**

**Head: Uni-Thread 6/0 olive dun**

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws. Occasionally, the hook will break when pinching the barb so it is better to have that happen prior to spending time tying the fly. Secure the hook in the vise jaws and attach the tying thread behind the eye. Lay down a thread base slightly beyond the curve of the hook.
- 2) Dub slightly more than a quarter of the hook from just below the bend.
- 3) Tie Z-lon in front of the dubbing so that it encircles the dubbing and extends well beyond the bend of the hook. Tie an overhand knot of 6/0 thread around the Z-lon about equal to the hook shank length. Cut the thread tag ends. Cut the Z-lon behind the knot approximately one sixteenth of an inch and singe it with a lighter. Super glue the Z-lon tip.
- 4) Dub a thin thorax to hook eye.
- 5) Tie-in a wing in front of the Z-lon, using snowshoe rabbit feet hair. The hair should extend to the hook bend. Snip the butts to help form the head and cement.
- 6) Tie-in and wrap three turns of hackle for the legs.
- 7) Form a thread head and cement.

**Note:** Rabbit foot hair can be used for tying a variety of flies. The snowshoe hare turns white in winter not only for the benefit of camouflage, but also for extra warmth. A pigment called melanin is removed from the hair and creates empty space inside each hair. The air space acts as insulation and keep the hare warmer during the winter. As the season turns, the pigment gradually returns and the hare turns brown.



Showshoe Rabbit Foot Caddis Emerger

## Soft Hackle Porcupine Black Caddis

The soft hackle porcupine black caddis is not to be overlooked! The dark porcupine guard hair ties into a fine abdomen and the slight bump of black dubbing in front of the dark dun or black hen hackle profiles the natural black caddis pupae nicely when wet. The black caddis in late June and July is a favorite food item of trout. It also appears to be a source of entertainment for the fish as they will leap out of the water to take the natural that is dancing a few inches above the surface. I have been fishing a tandem of soft hackle porcupine black caddis tied on size 20 - 18 curved caddis hook. I am beginning to favor the size 18 version simply based on the number of trout caught. The standard down and across cast presentation has been effective. A few pieces of clam shot weight in a size 8 or 9 are sufficient to pull the tandem offering under the surface. Trout seem to prefer the tandem offering in the dawn to late morning and again from late afternoon to dusk. One last observation, do not bypass thin water without swinging the tandem soft hackle porcupine black caddis through as you might be surprised at the trout lurking there.

**Recipe:**

**Hook:** Curved caddis style. Size to match the natural fly, usually no smaller than a size 20 and no larger than a size 18.

**Thread:** Black, 6/0

**Abdomen:** Porcupine guard hair

**Thorax:** Black dubbing

**Hackle:** Hen, dark dun or black

**General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb and secure the hook in the vise. Attach the tying thread behind the eye and lay down a layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 2) Tie in the porcupine guard hair near the tip. The first wrap of thread will be at the white/black junction. Return the thread to 3/16th inch behind the hook eye.
- 3) Advance the porcupine guard hair in even wraps to form the abdomen.
- 4) Apply a bump (about two/three turns) of black dubbing behind the hook eye, leaving room for the soft hackle.
- 5) Tie in the soft hackle in front of the dubbing bump and wrap with two turns. The soft hackle when wet, folds over the dubbing bump and exhibits the caddis pupa profile.
- 6) Half hitch and cut the tying thread.



Soft Hackle Porcupine Black Caddis

## Split Back Sulphur Nymph

On a Cumberland Valley TU Chapter trip to the South Holston River near Bristol, Tennessee, we observed several local fly fishers catching a good number of trout. The South Holston River is a tailwater and arguably the best tailwater fishing on the east coast. Upon questioning the fly fishers from the local area, I learned that the sulphur nymph they were using was a hybrid of the locally popular Copper Head and Split Wing Case nymphs. One of the fly fishers gave my wife Gayle and me several of the split back sulphur nymphs, and we were impressed with the fishing results. The fishing technique was straight forward. Simply drop a single size 16, 18 or 20 Sulphur nymph near the bottom below a strike indicator. I had purchased the New Zealand Wool Indicator packet from the Yellow Breeches Outfitters fly shop prior to the trip and wanted to give it a try on the South Holston and it worked very well. I found that trout do not shy away from the wool indicator on the surface as can happen with foam and plastic indicators, especially in clear water. Another plus was the ability to adjust the wool indicator to varying water depths with ease. The combination of the wool indicator and sulphur nymphs that the local fly fishers so willingly gave to us was a winning team. Unfortunately, the heavy rains in the South Holston River area and necessary water releases from the dam hindered our fishing time. I have since used the split back sulphur nymph on our Cumberland Valley waters and outside the area waters such as Penns Creek, Yellow Creek and Black Moshannon Creek with good results. Also, a friend of mine reported catching trout on the Letort Spring Run with the split back sulphur nymph that he tied.

### Recipe:

**Hook:** TMC 9300 Size 16-20

**Bead:** Black tungsten size 3/32-5/64

**Thread:** 8/0 dark brown

**Tail:** Lemon dyed mallard flank feather

**Abdomen:** Brown D-Rib or dark brown muskrat dubbing with dark monofilament rib (optional)

**Thorax:** Dark brown muskrat

**Wing Case:** 1/8" Black scud back

**Split Back:** Yellow goose or turkey biot

**Legs:** Lemon dyed mallard flank feather

### General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Insert tungsten bead and secure the hook in the vise. Attach the tying thread behind the bead and wrap over the hook shank to the hook bend.
- 3) Tie in the tail which should be approximately ½ length of hook shank.

- 4) Tie in the D-Rib material and wrap to within 1/3 of the bead, leaving space for dubbing. Result should be a pronounced segmented look.
- 5) Tie in goose or turkey biot just beyond mid shank from hook bend, leaving room for thorax dubbing.
- 6) Tie in scud back just in front of the biot, again, leaving room for thorax dubbing.
- 7) Dub thorax.
- 8) Cut a V notch in the flank feather and tie in the tips as legs.
- 9) Pull scud back material forward over thorax and legs and tie off behind bead.
- 10) Pull biot over scud back and wrap several times behind bead. Bend the biot back and add a few more wraps, then cut tag end. The extra wraps add durability to the biot tie in location.
- 11) Cover the top of thorax area with glue of your choice for durability and nice sheen appearance.



Split Back Sulphur Nymph

# Titan Minnow

Prior to my mid March steelhead fishing trip to the Erie area, Tony Dranzo gave me one of his Smolt flies. The fly was about 6 to 7 inches long and was tied with Holographic Flashabou type fibers in an assortment of colors including but not limited to pearl, silver, light green, silver red and light blue. I also added the Titan Minnow steelhead fly that Tony had given me earlier. A good move on my part as you shall see. Tony ties the Titan Minnow in a variety of colors but this one was copper Flashabou. With the Smolt and Titan Minnow added to my fly box, which also contained Emerald Shiner flies and the standard assortment of egg patterns, I was set for the trip. I lost the Smolt fly early on in the trip when it hung up on the leading edge of a jagged slate ledge. The next fly out of the fly box was the Titan Minnow and on the second cast into the soft water of a large pool I was fast to a respectable sized steelhead. Later, as I worked downstream, the Titan Minnow continued to be productive on the steelhead. Eventually I came upon Ralph Gomora and two of his fishing buddies. Ralph had just lost a fish and offered that I fish the spot while he re-rigged the rod and reel steelhead outfit that he proudly proclaimed he had bought for a few bucks, and had caught lots of fish with it. I thanked Ralph for his kind offer and cast the Titan Minnow into the water at the base of an overflow. The copper colored minnow disappeared in the frothy foam and was swept downstream. The take was obvious, no need for a strike indicator, as the assuredness of the fish sent a jolting tremble up the line to the 9 foot, 6 weight fly rod. I had Ralph's attention, but unfortunately the fish dislodged the fly. The next cast resulted in a hookup, and after the gratifying battle with the steelhead, Ralph offered to net the fish and take photos. Ralph wanted a closer inspection of the copper colored Titan Minnow and I obliged. I would have given Ralph the fly but it was the only one I had with me this trip, and I had two more days left to fish. I explained to Ralph the materials needed and the tying directions needed and then offered to place the fly on my website under the Fly of the Week link. He liked that arrangement. I have found that fly fishers are most cooperative anglers and they rarely hesitate to share information as well as flies.

## **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Mustad streamer type hook, 9672, size 10 - 8

**Thread:** Camel 6/0

**Body:** Copper flashabou (experiment with other colors as well)

**Eyes:** Medium gold bead chain

## **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and secure the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Attach the thread behind the hook eye and lay down a single layer of thread for about ½ inch wide. Tie in bead chain, on top of hook shank, about ¼ inch behind hook eye, forming the eyes.

- 3) Flashabou is about 9 inches long in the packet. Select 40-50 strands of copper Flashabou and cut where attached to packet. Extend Flashabou tips 2 inches behind hook eye and out over bend of hook. Tie in behind hook eye and wrap the thread about 1/8 inch behind hook eye.
- 4) Lay remainder of Flashabou (approximately 7 inches) over bead eyes and tie in with several thread wraps. Fold remaining Flashabou under bead chain and when even with tail of the fly, loop the Flashabou forward and tie in behind bead chain. Cut formed loop.
- 5) Take remaining Flashabou and lay over bead chain and tie in behind hook eye. Fold Flashabou under the bead chain and tie in. Important: All Flashabou is tied down behind the eye of the hook.
- 6) Whip finish and apply head glue to the thread wraps.



Titan Minnow

## Ugly Bugger

A few years ago, the first morning of the Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp held at the Allenberry Resort Inn on the Yellow Breeches got off to a good start with a swarm of size 20 winged black ants on the water at first light. The ensuing mornings that week offered fly selection challenges to the students, but none of the mornings were as positive as the last morning on Friday. The previous evening I had tied four Woolly Buggers and, on Friday morning at first light, I gave the Buggers to the first four students that arrived at the stream. The students have approximately one hour and forty-five minutes to fish in the morning before heading to breakfast. Grant caught seven good sized trout and Chris caught a thick nineteen inch brown trout. All too soon the claxon sounded alerting the students it was time for breakfast. As we left the water, the buzz was about the Woolly Bugger and it's unusual size and shape. I said it certainly looked ugly compared to other Woolly Buggers. As a result of my comment, we agreed to call it the Ugly Bugger. The camp held graduation exercises early Friday afternoon and the students were reunited with their family members and departed. Several days later I received an email from Grant highlighting the success he had with the Ugly Bugger on streams in his area and asked if I would post the Ugly Bugger as the Fly of the Week on my website. He wanted to tie a supply of Ugly Buggers for future use. I did as Grant requested and as a result, he tied up a bunch and reported continued success on his home waters.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** TMC 5263 BL, size 12

**Thread:** Olive dun, 6/0

**Tail:** Olive long marabou

**Body:** Olive long marabou

**Hackle:** Grizzly dyed dark olive, palmered over body

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 3) Tie in a long hackle (4-5 inches) about an inch from the tip. The longest barbs on the hackle will eventually be palmered around the body.
- 4) Tie in the olive long marabou, forming a tail about 1.5 to 2.0 inches long. DO NOT cut the marabou at the bend of the hook!
- 5) Wrap the uncut marabou around the hook shank forming the body. Trim the marabou behind the eye, leaving enough room to form a thread head.

- 6) Palmered the hackle forward and tie off.
- 7) Form the thread head and finish with whip or half hitch knots. Apply a few drops of cement to the head.
- 8) Note: the Ugly Bugger pictured is wet.



## Unusual Fly

Cell phone communication has become a vital part of fishing and here's one good example why. I had just returned to the fifth wheel RV from a morning of archery hunting when my cell phone rang. Thom Livingston was the caller and he was on I-90 at Northeast, PA, about to enter NY en route to steelhead fish the special year round catch-and-release sections of Eighteenmile Creek and Salmon River. Thom brought me up to date on his past several days of steelhead fishing. In PA, Elk Creek held few fish, while Walnut was too crowded but held a large number of fish. Twentymile Creek had a combination of few fish and too many anglers. However, the special year round catch-and-release section on Chautauqua Creek, about a 12 mile drive into NY from Northeast, PA, held a moderate number of steelhead and fewer anglers. Thom advised that Chautauqua Creek would be a good place to begin my steelhead fishing.

Gayle and I are fortunate to have property in NY near the steelhead tributaries, and when Thom called with the steelhead update, he was about five miles from the property location. I knew Thom was on a mission to continue his steelhead fishing, so I did not invite him to stop at the RV and have a mid morning cup of coffee with Gayle and me.

On an earlier steelhead/archery trip I had received permission from a NY vineyard/orchard owner to access Twentymile Creek. The access required some physical endurance to get into the gorge and out again, but that is why I make an effort to stay fit. I wanted to scope out the waters on the upper sections of Twentymile Creek before driving over to Chautauqua Creek as suggested by Thom. I didn't make it to Chautauqua Creek because I found a holding pool of impressive sized steelhead about a mile upstream from the gorge access. Unbelievably, I had the pool to myself! Keeping a low profile I crept to the edge of the pool and cast the first of many tried and true flies to the steelhead holding in the gin-clear water. Lockjaw!! Not a steelhead was interested in any of the offerings. I downsized the tippet to 5X and tied on the last of the flies I tied prior to leaving home. This fly was flashy but scantily tied and I only had one. Most unusual. I carefully cast upstream of the pod of steelhead and as the strike indicator floated over the pod with the fly dangling about four feet below, it disappeared. Remember I am low to the ground and needed the strike indicator to alert me when a steelhead took the fly. Did the indicator disappear because it hung up on the bottom? The rod tip was lifted with minimal pressure because of the 5X tippet and joyfully, I was fast to a steelhead. I stood up and played the steelhead as it dashed and rumbled up and down the pool, coming out of the water several times. The 5X tippet held and the steelhead was released. The pool was rested for ten minutes (something you can't do when other anglers are about) and two more steelhead were caught and released. The forth hookup ended in disaster. The previous runs up and down the pool had chafed the tapered leader and the only fly that was unusual from the batch tied earlier was lost. I chastised myself for not checking the tapered leader while resting the pool between steelhead hookups. Interestingly, had I been guiding a client, I would have checked the condition of the tapered leader after each catch and release and encouraged my client to do likewise when fishing alone. Guess we really need to practice what we preach!

One final note.....this fly does work on other trout in other areas of PA.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Gold jig head 1/124, size 10 (obtainable from Bass Pro)

**Thread:** Uni-Thread fire orange, 6/0

**Body:** Glo Bug micro cream delight or peachy king

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb before securing the hook in the vise jaws.
- 2) Secure the hook in the vise, attach the tying thread behind the jig ball and wrap

over the hook shank to the hook bend.

3) At the bend of the hook, spin the bobbin clockwise to tighten the twist in the thread, and use the twisted thread to form a rib. Whip finish the twisted thread, after wrapping the rib, to maintain the tight twist.

4) Tie in one end of a two inch piece of Glo Bug Micro material about 1/3 hook shank distance behind the ball of the hook eye. Loop a short section of Glo Bug Micro material, tie it down and repeat process to form a second loop. Clip the excess Glo Bug Micro material. The resulting two bumps should resemble an Inchworm in motion.

5) Build a slight thread dam behind the jig head and whip finish.

Note: The hook will be in an upright position when fished, lessening the chance of a snag. The Glo Bug Micro material will be on the bottom of the hook, which seems to enhance the fish's attraction to this fly.



## Veiled Blue Egg

The steelhead fishing trip to Elk Creek near Erie, PA produced some lunkers. The water in Elk Creek was low and clear resulting in the fish being highly alert to anglers. Many offerings were ignored but one fly did elicit a good number of takes. Why? It seems rainbow trout (steelhead is a rainbow trout) like the color blue and in general, show fish a fly that is not commonly used and the results can be favorable.....at least for a day. Thus, Ken, my fishing buddy of many streams, and I concentrated on presenting the veiled blue egg to various pods of steelhead. The result? Many hookups. The egg pattern was most effective when attached to a 5X tippet, and consequently we lost a few fish. Higher, less clear water, would have enhanced our success in the number of fish landed because we would have been using 4X or 3X tippet material. The veiled blue egg is another simple to tie fly and needs to be fished from the “first run” fall appearance of the steelhead right up until the blustery wintry days of January and February.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook:** Curved caddis type, size 16

**Thread:** Light cahill, 6/0

**Body:** Blue glo bug yarn

**Veil:** Orvis halo in white

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Pinch the barb of the hook, if it has one, and secure the hook in the vise jaws, attach the thread behind the eye and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook.
- 2) Construct the egg body using the Egg Gun. The Egg Gun is a fast and easy way to tie egg patterns and reduces material waste.
- 3) Fold a ½ inch wide by 1.5 inch long patch of halo veil material on the tying thread and wrap several times between the egg body and hook eye.
- 4) Secure the thread with half hitch or whip finish ties and then apply cement.



## Wiggle Body Nymph (Hinge Style)

During an October steelhead fishing trip to the Erie area, I met a fly fisher on Elk Creek who was hooking up with large size steelhead on a frequent basis. I worked my way down the creek to within respectable distance of his position. He continued to catch and release steelhead at an admirable pace. I began a conversation with him and soon discovered that the fly fisher was amicable and willing to talk about his obvious fishing success. Elk had a fair number of anglers in that same area and it was obvious that the other anglers were JUST fishing and this fly fisher was CATCHING. I discovered that he was using a size 12 articulated (hinged style) pheasant tail nymph. He would have given me one to try, but he had lost all but the fly on the line. I asked if I could see the fly. Basically it was two pheasant tail nymphs joined together by monofilament tippet material. The fly fisher said he usually had good results with the articulated fly in October and again in March.

A Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission survey shows that the catch rate per hour of fishing for steelhead in March is high. The other highest catch rate per hour fishing month is December. Seems fewer anglers catch more fish per hour in those months than in the other five months of steelhead fishing. The reasons could be there are more steelhead in the tributaries, the fewer anglers could be

more skilled, or the fish are less pressured and more willing to strike. Winter steelhead fishing tends to bring out the veteran anglers. Regardless, a good supply of articulated pheasant tail nymphs will be in my steelhead fly box, not only for upcoming steelhead fishing trips in March, but for those days in February when hopefully the ice loosens its lock on the Erie area tributaries.

NOTE: The following recipe is for the wiggle style Pheasant Tail Nymph but the same hinge style tying format can be applied to other nymph like the Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear, Prince Nymph, etc. Also, the wiggle body hinge nymph can be used not only for steelhead but other trout as well.

### **Recipe:**

**Hook: Mustad, 3906, size 14 or 12**

**Thread: Camel, 6/0**

**Bead: 1/8 inch gold**

**Tail: 4 pheasant tail fibers**

**Rib: Dark grey ostrich herl or gold Ultra Wire**

**Body: Beaver dubbing rusty brown**

**Wing Case: Dark brown turkey**

**Hackle: Dark brown**

**Hinge: 5X monofilament or 5X fluorocarbon tippet material (I use fluorocarbon for its stiffness and abrasion resistance qualities.)**

### **General Tying Instructions:**

- 1) Secure the body extension hook in the vise and lay down a single layer of thread to the bend of the hook. No need to de-barb the hook since the hook point will be clipped near the bend.
- 2) Tie in 4 or 5 pheasant tail fibers for the tail and also tie in a single dark grey ostrich herl as the rib material. Optional rib would be Gold Ultra Wire. Wind the pheasant tail fibers forward and rib with the ostrich herl. Tie off and the extension body is complete.
- 3) Remove the extension body hook from the vise and clip the hook point near the bend.
- 4) Secure a gold beaded de-barbed hook in the vise and tie a 5inch piece of 5X fluorocarbon to the hook shank.
- 5) Insert the end of the fluorocarbon through the eye of the body extension hook and fold over the main hook shank. Wrap with tying thread and cover with Fishin' Glue or other brand of super glue. The finished loop should be large enough to allow the body extension hook eye to move freely.
- 6) Tie in the turkey wing case and brown hackle at the hook bend. Dub the rusty brown body, palmer (three turns) the brown hackle and overlay hackle and dubbing with the wing case. Trim the wing case overhang and then trim the hackle fibers flush with the bottom of the dubbing.
- 7) Tie off the tying thread behind the gold bead and apply a dab of cement.



Wiggle Body Nymph (Hinge Style)

## Y2K Fly

A few years ago I was guiding a client on the Yellow Breeches, and we were not having much luck with catching trout on the slightly high and off colored stream. The client suggested we try a fly that he had purchased while fishing in Arkansas. The fly had an interesting name, Y2K, and I immediately thought of the Y2K software bug hype many years ago. The fly was reportedly originated in Arkansas by Bob Knowles and was an outstanding fly when the water was high and discolored. The Y2K resembles (I think) an egg fly. However, with its copper bead head and yellow and orange colors it may be more of an attractor pattern.

The Y2K may not rank up there with the highly respected flies like the Pheasant Tail and Gold Ribbed Hares Ear nymphs but as I found out that day and even since, the Y2K does catch fish! When guiding and my clients are not catching fish I go to the Y2K. Some fly fishers express disdain for the fly and will not fish it. Colorful flies like the Y2K, Glo Bugs, San Juan Worms, Green Weenies, Honey Bugs, etc. fall into my category of Christmas Flies for obvious reasons.

I want clients to catch fish and when the traditional and highly respected flies are not producing, I go to the Y2K and so should you!!

## Recipe:

**Hook:** Size 12 or 14, Curved caddis style.

**Bead:** Copper 1/8 inch

**Thread:** Light cahill, 6/0

**Body:** Yellow and orange glo bug yarn

## General Tying Instructions:

- 1) Pinch the barb, insert hook through the copper bead and secure the hook in the vise.
- 2) Attach the tying thread behind the bead and form a thread dam to secure the bead to the hook eye. Apply a light drop of Fishin' Glue on the thread dam.
- 3) Optional is several wraps of lead wire behind the bead and then push the lead wire wraps into the crevice of the bead. Follow step 2 next.
- 4) Cut 2 inch lengths of yellow and orange Glo Bug material and split each piece in half lengthwise. Result is four pieces of yarn sufficient for two flies.
- 5) Tie in yellow piece on far side of hook immediately behind the bead. Repeat on near side of hook with the orange piece. Equal amounts of yarn should extend front and aft of bead.
- 6) Wrap thread under and around material front and back to secure yarn to hook and prevent twisting.
- 7) Whip finish behind bead and cut the tying thread.
- 8) Cut rear section of yarn even with the hook. Pull up front section of yarn and cut off at an angle.



Y2K Fly

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Finally I would like to offer a very special thanks to Joe Knisely and Mac Cheek who introduced me to arguably the finest tailwater fishing in the east, the South Holston River near Bristol Tennessee.

I am sure there are individuals that I may have overlooked and that is simply a case of having met and worked with so many great fly fishers and cold water conservationists in my lifetime, it is difficult to account for all of them.

All photos are by the author unless noted otherwise.

# About the Author

**Gene Giza** graduated from Paul Smith's College (PSC) in the Adirondack Mountains of New York state with an Associate degree in forestry and then became the first Forest Technician with the Pennsylvania Game Commission. While attending PSC, he fly fished remote sections of the Middle Branch of the Saint Regis River, the South and North Branches of the Saranac Rivers and the East and West Branches of the Ausable Rivers. He then received a BS degree in forest management from West Virginia University. Gene was a Park Superintendent in various locations eventually working up to the rank of Chief of the PA Park Operations Section. He retired in 2003 and is currently owner/operator of Four Seasons Fly Fishing Guide Service. Gene is committed to being a successful fly fishing guide by always striving to exceed client expectations and provide each with an enjoyable as well as successful fly fishing experience. He has had numerous articles published on fly fishing and has presented numerous fly fishing programs. Gene has maintained an active website ([www.fourseasonsflyfishing.com](http://www.fourseasonsflyfishing.com)) for over a decade with updates on stream hatches, stream conditions and fly fishing tactics as well as general tying instructions for the various flies with which he fishes. Gene was a board member of CVTU for six years and also a board member of the Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp for five years. In 2012, Gene received the Limestoner Award for his passionate leadership and tireless work to protect and to restore the cold water resources of the storied Cumberland Valley. Gene and Gayle live in Carlisle within sight of the Letort Spring Run.

Gene and Gayle co-authored a 37 page booklet while residing on Presque Isle State Park entitled PRESQUE ISLE A Place For All Seasons. The sales from the booklet were instrumental in establishing a scholarship in the name of one of the law enforcement officers that served the peninsula with distinction and loyalty.





**Guide and Author Gene Giza.**



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



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