



FREE STATE FLY FISHERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2020

President's Message

More Hands-on Opportunities! That's what I and the other members of the club's Leadership Team have heard from our members. More opportunities to learn by getting more directly involved. We have heard you and have set up a year-long set of such opportunities!

Starting this January, we are scheduling Saturday Hands-on Sessions throughout the year where the emphasis will be on members interacting with whoever is leading the session.

On **Saturday, January 18th** join us at the clubhouse for the "**Cold Weather Safety While Fishing Class**" presented by the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Herring Bay Flotilla. We are very fortunate to have experts talking with club members who know the challenges posed by cold weather, and how to meet them safely.

And then on **Saturday, February 15th**, our very own Mark Bange, Past FSFF President and Kayak Fishing Author, will be presenting "**Kayak Fishing in Local Waters.**" If you are new to kayak fishing or always wanted to give it a try, this is the hands-on session for you! Even veteran fly fishing kayakers will learn something new so come on out and join us.

From kayak fishing, we move into "**Icelandic Wool, Feathers and Hackle Neck Dyeing**" on **Saturday, March 14th**. This is your opportunity to dye your own fly tying material led by Joe Bruce, a FSFF member and nationally recognized fly fishing author and fly tyer.

Then we move from the clubhouse to a trout stream for "**Trout Fishing 101**", a free streamside class presented by Duber Winters, club member, fly fishing instructor and former fishing guide. So mark **Saturday, April 4th** on your calendar!

On **Saturday, May 9th**, we are back at the clubhouse for "**Tying Clouser Minnows**", another free hands-on session taught by Joe DeMeo, a founding member of FSFF and experienced fly tyer. No fly box is complete without an array of Clouser Minnows in various sizes and colors.

Then our **Wednesday June 3rd** club meeting will be devoted to "**Hands-on Fly Casting Demonstrations**" taught by Duber Winters and Joe Bruce. Club members will be encouraged to bring their own fly rods putting the demonstrated casting techniques into practice.

In the fall, we have Joe Bruce scheduled to teach "**Fly Fishing Knots and Building Leader Systems**" on **Saturday September 19th**.

Joe Bruce is back on **Saturday, October 17th** to show us "**Paring Down Your Set of Fishing Tackle.**"

Finally, Mark Bange and Joe DeMeo team up to demonstrate "**Building and Tying Gary Krebs Foam Poppers**" on **Saturday, November 14th**.

We are planning a diversity of opportunities for learning more about all aspects of fly fishing by doing as well as just listening. Read-on for even more details on how to get involved.

Tight Lines,

Rich



Upcoming FSFF Meetings, Events and Activities

Compiled by Frank Bowne and Rich Batiuk

Club Meetings

On the first Wednesday of every month, except December, July and August, the clubhouse doors open at 6:30 PM for members and guests to mingle and socialize, there is a short club business meeting at 7:00 PM, and the evening's speaker and their presentation begins at 7:30 PM.



Whether you are just starting fly fishing or have been fly fishing your entire life, everyone is welcome to join! See the last page of the newsletter for more information and directions on getting to our (your) club house. Read on for scheduled club meetings, events and activities.

January 8th Meeting: Fly Fishing for Redfish in Texas and Cobia at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel. Our very own Luis Santiago and Mark Bange along with Mark Jacobs and Frank Bowne will share their experiences from their respective fishing trips down on the Texas coast and at the mouth of Chesapeake Bay.

February 5th Meeting: Dave Sikorski of Coastal Conservation Association, Maryland will be presenting on the work of the Association and

updating us on an array of conservation issues facing our fisheries.

March 4th Meeting: Jim Cooper, Heroes on the Water, will join us to talk about their mission working with wounded warriors and other service men and women, introducing them to fly fishing.

April 1st Meeting: Chris Dollar, Capital columnist and owner of Chris Dollar Outdoors, is making a return appearance as a speaker, sharing his shallow-water and kayak-based fishing and guiding experiences.

May 6th Meeting: Donna Cole, Photo Journalist and WNAV radio personality, will be presenting the results of her investigative reporting on bald eagles succumbing to the misuse of pesticides, an important environmental issue with direct implications for the health of our waterways.

June 3rd Meeting: Hands-on Fly Casting Demonstrations taught by Duber Winters and Joe Bruce. Duber and Joe will be sharing their extensive fly casting experiences as club members cast their own fly rods, putting their demonstrated casting techniques into practice.

July and August, 2020: No club meetings these two months, but plenty of club sponsored outings, activities and other events.

September 2nd Meeting: Kaitlin Groundwater, Duberfly, will be speaking about her fly fishing experiences as guide and fly fishing instructor, chasing smallmouth bass in Virginia's Shenandoah Valley as well as Southwest Montana's finest trout fisheries including the Madison, Yellowstone, Big Hole, and Missouri Rivers.

October 7th Meeting: Paul Sporado, Magothy River Association President will speak about MRA's various conservation programs, including its successful restoration of the Magothy River as prime western shore yellow perch spawning site.

November 4th Meeting We'll end the year as we started with member presentations of their on-the-water experiences.

December 2nd Holiday Dinner and Party. Join your fellow members at Mike's Crab House, Riva, Maryland for this long held FSFF holiday tradition. And no, it's not too early to mark this on your calendar (and save up for more raffle tickets!).

Saturday Hands-on Sessions

The following club sponsored events, free to FSFF members, are part of a new series of club-sponsored Saturday sessions focused on hands-on demonstrations of all aspects of fly fishing.



January 18th "Cold Weather Safety While Fishing Class"

presented by the United States Coast Guard Auxiliary, Herring Bay Flotilla.

This class is presentation is geared to those individuals who recreate outdoors in the winter, but is applicable to everyone who recreates near, or on the water, throughout the year. This free class will address the following:

- Cold water survival techniques
- Personal Flotation Devices
- Understanding and treating hypothermia
- Cold water related emergency first aid.

This hands-on session will be held at the FSFF clubhouse from 10 AM to 12 PM.



February 15th "Kayak Fishing in Local Waters."

Mark Bange will present a specially tailored version for FSFF members of his

Kayak Fishing in Local Waters course which he teaches at Anne Arundel Community College.

During his presentation and demonstrations, Mark will cover the following:

- Why fish from a kayak
- Kayak choices—how to select the best boat for you
- Gear—ancillary and tackle
- Lures and flies
- What you'll catch locally
- Kayak fishing tactics
- Safety essentials
- Local kayak fishing areas—specific places nearby where you can launch

This class will be held at the FSFF clubhouse from 10 AM to 2 PM. Lunch, drinks and dessert will be provided to participants (so come hungry).



March 14th Icelandic Wool, Feathers and Hackle Neck Dyeing Session. Joe Bruce will lead this club sponsored event, available to FSFF

members for \$20 fee to pay for the Icelandic wool hides. All participating members will be actively involved in the dye mixing, cooking, cutting, dyeing, combing and drying processes. Everyone will end up with A LOT of Icelandic wool for tying an array of flies, including one of the club's favorite, the bullethead fly.

Icelandic wool strips will be provided to participants—bring your own feather and hackle necks for dyeing. Sign-up at an upcoming club meeting, pay your \$20 and you will be all set to learn about the dyeing process. Joe is planning on creating dyes for the following colors: chartreuse, yellow, light olive, orange, purple (Go Ravens!), dark olive, and silver gray. This year, Joe will also be ordering a natural black hide as well. You can't buy this range of colors for this price! So come on out and join us for a morning of dyeing and fellowship. This hands-on session will be held at the FSFF clubhouse from 9 AM to 12 PM.

April 4th Trout Fishing 101 Duber Winters will teach a hands-on, streamside class on the basics of trout fishing on the shoreline of one of Maryland's



top-notch trout rivers located close to many club members.

Never fly fished for trout before? This is

the perfect opportunity to learn directly from a former guide right on the water. Been trout fishing on the Gunpowder and other trout streams and rivers, but have not caught much? Your luck will turn into new skills to hook into trout after taking this FREE streamside class. (Did we mention this class is free?!? Ok, then no excuses—join us.)

During this hands-on, streamside class, Duber will cover the following trout fly fishing related topics:

- Fly fishing equipment you will need for trout fishing
- Casting techniques
- Wading techniques
- Choosing the right flies for the stream conditions and time of year
- Reading the water and knowing where to cast
- How to handle your fly line depending on whether you are casting dry flies, nymphs, streamers or terrestrials
- Being safe when fly fishing a trout stream

Just sign up at an upcoming club meeting and you will receive more logistics information. This hands-on session will be held at the Gunpowder Falls Catch and Release Trout Fishing Area in Monkton, Maryland.



May 9th Tying Clouser Minnows Joe DeMeo will teach club members how to tie one of the most effective fly fishing patterns—the

Clouser Minnow. You will be taught how to tie Bob Clouser's Minnow, from start to finish. Joe is an

experienced fly tyer and one of several founding members of our club.

During his presentation and demonstrations, Joe will cover the following:

- Choosing the right hook for the different types of fish you are targeting
- Where to place the barbell eyes to get the right balance to the fly
- Tying on the barbell eyes so they will not move or come off the fly
- Selecting the best bucktail fibers from your deer tail
- Determining how much bucktail to cut off and tie onto your fly
- Properly tying the bucktail onto your hook
- Finishing off your Clouser Minnow
- Different color patterns which work for different species of fish

To work effectively, this fly pattern must be tied right—Joe can teach you how to do so! Join us at the clubhouse for this hands-on session from 10 AM to 12 PM.



June 3rd Hands-on Fly Casting Demonstrations

Duber Winters and Joe Bruce will be sharing their extensive fly casting experiences as club

members cast their own fly rods, putting their demonstrated casting techniques into practice. Recognizing each of us is varied on our level of casting abilities, we will be self-organizing this hands-on session into at least two groups.

- Duber will be leading casting demonstrations with members who are just learning how to fly cast.
- Members who have been casting for a while but want to learn some new techniques will be led by Joe who will be demonstrating casting techniques to get you hooked on more fish.

Additional fly rods will be available for members who don't have their own fly rods or just want to try casting with a lighter or heavier weight fly rod.

Join us at the clubhouse at 6:00 PM for a group dinner and dessert provided by the club. At about 6:30 PM, we will assemble on the hill outside of the clubhouse and start the casting demonstrations.



September 19th Fly Fishing Knots and Building Leader Systems

Joe Bruce will walk participants through how to tie the handful of the most

important fly fishing knots...so you won't lose fish due to poor knots. He will then share his method to building leader systems to fit the full array of fish and fishing conditions you will encounter.

During this hands-on demonstration, Joe will cover the following:

- How to tie the essential set of fly fishing knots: tying your fly to your leader tippet and tying different sized leader materials together
 - How to set up a leader system approach to making your own fly fishing leaders
 - How to tie up a range of leaders for different fishing conditions following a series of 'leader recipes' that Joe will hand out at the session
- Leader building materials will be provided to the participants. Come join us at the clubhouse from 10 AM to 12 PM.



October 17th Paring Down Your Set of Fishing Tackle

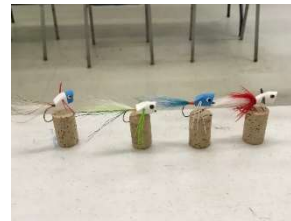
Joe Bruce will walk participants how to reduce down all the fly fishing tackle you end of bringing out on the stream and in your kayak, canoe or boat down to the essentials.

All of us know we bring way too much fly fishing tackle with us whenever we step out the door to go fishing. We don't want to find ourselves without the right tackle to help us catch fish. If you are guilty of this (and everyone is), well come out and learn from the master on paring down!

During this hands-on demonstration, Joe will cover the following:

- What are the true essential sets of fly fishing related tackle and other 'stuff' that we really need to catch fish
- How to par down your tackle and select what you really need to bring
- How to pack EVERYTHING you will need to fish for an entire day, including your lunch, into a small hand held pack.

Join us at the clubhouse for this hands-on session from 10 AM to 12 PM.



November 14th Building and Tying Gary Krebs Foam Poppers

Mark Bange and Joe DeMeo will teach club members how to use Gary Krebs jigs to

shape and tie simple, yet very effective fly fishing popper patterns using foam cylinders. Mark and Joe have different techniques to share so you can stop buying expensive popper patterns and start tying them yourself.

During their joint hands-on demonstrations, Mark and Joe will cover the following:

- Choosing the right type of foam material as a starting point
- Using foam cutting jigs of various sizes to cut out the foam bodies
- Selecting the right hooks for the size and type of poppers you want to tie
- Different techniques for placing the foam body on the hook
- Adding rubber legs to your foam body popper

- Making choices about what types of materials to tie in the tail of your foam body popper and how to finish off your popper

Join us at the clubhouse for this hands-on session from 10 AM to 12 PM.

Beer Ties We will be in the porch area at Killarney House restaurant located at 584 West Central Avenue Davidsonville, MD 21035 on the fourth Wednesday of even numbered months, alternating with FSFF's Movie Night. You can check out their excellent menu at <http://killarneyhousepub.com>. This is a chance to socialize, eat and drink in a restaurant while tying flies and talking fishing from 6:00-8:00 PM.



Please bring your vise, lamp, materials and tools. Join us for beer, food, fly tying, and a lot of talking on Wednesday:

- February 26th
- April 22nd
- June 24th
- August 26th
- October 28th
- December 23rd

Come and join us for the beer ties even if you don't plan to tie flies or if you want to start to learn—several members do so every time. For more information, or if you need us to loan you some fly tying tools for the Beer Tie, please contact Frank Bowne at 410-798-5474 or fsbowne@verizon.net.



Spring 2020 FSFF Swap Meet will be held on Saturday, May 2nd so mark your calendars and start gathering all that fly fishing stuff you have three too many of. There will a lot of rods, reels, fly fishing related equipment and fly tying materials for sale. Look for more details in our Spring 2020 Newsletter or contact Luis Santiago at lmsantiago05@yahoo.com or Mark Bange at mbange54@gmail.com for more details.



Fly Fishing Shows are scheduled for January 24-25, 2020 at Edison, New Jersey and March 7-8, 2020 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. Once again, the

club will be sponsoring carpooling to both shows. Sign-up to share a ride with your fellow members at the upcoming January and February meetings. We will plan to carpool to the Edison, New Jersey show on Friday, January 24th. For the Lancaster, Pennsylvania show, we will be carpooling on Saturday, March 7th. For both shows, we will be meeting at the parking lot at the Cromwell Light Rail Station in Ferndale, Maryland at 6 AM. Contact Rich Batiuk at 410-268-5226 or richbatiuk@gmail.com for more details.



Club Outings are all led by Free State Fly Fisher members. All club sponsored outings are open to all members and their guests. Details and all necessary logistical information on each outing are posted on the club's web site and emailed in advance to all members.

Gary Grey, our club's Outing Coordinator, is ready to work with you to get you set up to lead an upcoming outing. We know you have some favorite places to fish—please share them with your fellow members by leading an outing. Gary is working to pull together the club's 2020 outings schedule—when he comes and asks you to lead an outing, please say "Yes!"

September 25-27, 2020 Janes Island: Luis Santiago has already set the dates for next year's club sponsored outing back to Janes Island for some outstanding fall rockfish, sea trout and white perch fly fishing. Mark your calendars now and make your campsite or cabin reservations and join your fellow fly fishers on a great trip fishing the flats and marshes of the lower Maryland Eastern Shore. Contact: Luis Santiago 209-485-5315 lmsantiago05@yahoo.com.

As we add more and more outings onto the club's calendar, please look for the details on the club's website at <http://fs-ff.com/> as well at each monthly club meeting during the business portion of each meeting.



Movie Nights On the odd-numbered months in which we don't have a FSFF sponsored Beer Tie, the club will be hosting fly fishing Movie Nights on Wednesday nights. Join us at 7 PM in the club house for drinks, snacks, popcorn and some very cool flicks that highlight fly fishing across the country and around the world on:

- January 22nd
- March 25th
- May 27th
- July 22nd
- September 23rd
- November 25th

And Movie Nights at the clubhouse just got even better! In addition to the snacks and drinks to enhance your movie experience, Luis purchased a BIG screen TV complete with cart and DVD player for the clubhouse this past fall. The picture and sound quality are much improved—see the photo on next page for proof! Now if only Luis could find some of those movie theater seats for the clubhouse that lean back into a very comfortable reclining position, complete with cup holders and somewhere to put our popcorn and other snacks for the duration of these flicks....

Luis continues to find some truly incredible fly fishing videos, usually 2-3, to show during each Movie Night. Free audience commentary provided throughout the evening! Contact: Luis Santiago at 209-485-5315 or imsantiago05@yahoo.com.

Fly Tying Sessions will be held at the FSFF clubhouse, starting at 10:00 AM on the first Saturday of every month except July and August.



These fly tying sessions, all hosted at the clubhouse, are led by a club member who will teach everyone how to tie 2-3 different flies. The club will provide all the fly tying materials. Members are asked to bring their own fly tying vises and other equipment. If you are new to fly tying and you don't have your own fly tying vise or other related fly tying equipment, no worries! The club has several fly tying vises along with all

needed fly tying equipment available for your use during these fly tying sessions. Just talk with the fly tying session leader for that Saturday and he or she will get you access to a vise and needed fly tying equipment from the clubhouse's back storage room.

These club member-led fly tying sessions are scheduled below for the coming months with the club member leading the session listed:

- January 4th: Mark Bange and Joe Bruce
- February 1st: Dick Friis
- March 7th: Joe Bruce
- April 4th: TBD
- May 9th: Joe DeMeo*
- June 6th: TBD

*This fly tying session is scheduled on the second Saturday in May given the club's Swap Meet is scheduled on the first Saturday, May 2. This fly tying session is also one of the club's hands on sessions.

In advance of each scheduled fly tying session, members will be alerted as to flies to be tied during that session (with accompanying photos), what materials will be used, and which club member is leading that tying session. Those notifications will come via emails to all club members as well as updated postings on the club's web site.

We are now scheduling "**Open Fly Tying Sessions - No Formal Instruction**" for every Saturday from 10am - noon (except the 1st Saturday of the both months as well as January 18 and February 15) at clubhouse during January and February. So come on over the clubhouse on Saturday mornings and join your fellow club members for some fly tying, lots of conversation and fellowship.

Have questions or want more information? Want to know what fly tying equipment is available at the clubhouse for members to borrow? Please contact Luis Santiago at 209-485-5315 or imsantiago05@yahoo.com.

Featured Fly

Mickey Finn

By Luis Santiago



This relatively easy fly to tie is an extremely effective fly which can be used to catch a diverse array of species, from bluegills to pickerel, as well as smallmouth and largemouth bass and trout. It does not represent any specific minnow or stream insect, but its colors and flash work to fool fish into striking. Be sure your fly boxes have the fully array of sizes of Mickey Finns.

Material List:

Hook: Sizes 2-10, 4X long (Mustad 9575, TMC 300)

Thread: Black

Rib: Oval silver tinsel

Body: Flat silver tinsel

Wing: Yellow over red over yellow bucktail (or calf tail depending on the size of the hook)

How to Tie This Fly:

1. Start the thread at the bend of the hook and tie in a length of oval silver tinsel.
2. Wrap the thread forward to a point about 1/8 inch behind the hook eye and tie in a length of flat silver tinsel. Wrap the silver tinsel down the hook shank to the bend of the hook and back to the tie in point.
3. Wind the silver oval rib tinsel forward to just behind the eye of the hook and tie off and trim excess.

4. Select a bunch of yellow bucktail and tie in over the body.
5. Select a bunch of red bucktail of the same size and tie in over the yellow bucktail.
6. Select a second bunch of yellow bucktail (about equal in size to the combined red and yellow bucktail already tied in) and tie it on top of the second red bunch.
7. Trim butt ends of the bucktail so as to create a taper toward the head. Whip finish the head, apply head cement and go fishing!

Check out the history of the Mickey Finn here:

<https://flyfishersinternational.org/Portals/0/FlyoftheMonth/PreviousIssues/2000-12%20December%20-%20Mickey%20Finn.pdf?ver=2012-03-12-225822-000>

And here's the Mickey Finn YouTube tying video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gzS4LjZ5Zj8>

How to Fly Fish Even Better

Consistency in Fly Tying

By Joe Bruce

When I'm teaching fly tying, I always tell my students, "When you are tying a number of the same fly pattern and they all look alike, then your tying skills have been achieved." This does take some time to master and the more time behind the vise will start to produce a quality fly and proper use and sizing of material. But, you can help yourself along the way, with the help of a "Cheat Sheet." This isn't really cheating, but when tying a number of flies of the same pattern in different sizes, we all can't remember the exact proportions for each size fly, especially when you are setting down to the vise and tie a fly you haven't tied in a while.



I have index cards made up with the proper proportions, not only including the lengths of material, but the position the material extends on my vise. Now I just have to look at my card and extend the materials per the card and I achieve consistency in each and every fly.

This isn't a big task, just measure the length of each material and also note where this material extends on your vise and jot this information on a card and no matter how long you have been away from the vise, your flies will be exactly like the first fly you tied of that pattern. This is just like writing down a material list for a fly pattern, but instead of the description of the material, you will just include the length of the tail, tinsel, wings, etc. and where these components hit on your vise. A very simple tool for fly tying, but one that will allow you to achieve the consistency that we all strive for in tying flies.

I'm sure there are many ways to accomplish this, but I have found it works well for me, and as I get older I rely more and more to spark the brain to produce the fly. If I haven't been at the vise for a while I will sometimes even forget the exact order of my certain pattern, but these cards jog the old memory and I can get the job done.

Club News

2019 FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament winners

After much controversy about is a live worm is considered a fly, trash talking and several attempts at buying off the tournament judge with an extra dozen flies, the winners of the first of many Biggest Bluegill Tournaments were announced at the club's December 2019 Holiday Party.



In first place, Mike Mattia brought in a 9"+ beauty. Very close behind was Frank Bowne for second place. Mike also had the winning entry for third place. And the club awarded John Rentch an Honorable Mention given he was in third place up close to the end of the tournament, before being knocked out by Mike's 3rd biggest bluegill.

Look for a more detailed descriptions of the tournament and the rules for submitting your entries in the club's spring 2020 newsletter. And use these upcoming colder months to whip up some bluegill flies that will entice a nice 10" fish on your line this coming year. We all know that they are out there!

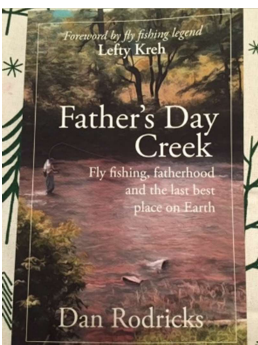
Free State Fly Fishers Hits the Big Screen! Well, close. The big screen has come to the clubhouse. Thanks to the efforts of Luis Santiago, we now have 24/7 access to a very big screen TV complete with a wheeled cart, DVD player, and a remote video camera.



As pictured above, during fly tying sessions, members can easily see the details of the fly tying techniques being taught by fellow members. This is not a recognition that all of us are getting older and the ole sight ain't what it used to be—it's part of an ongoing effort to provide higher quality hands-on experiences by our members.

In addition to club sponsored Movie Nights and Fly Tying Sessions, we are going to use the big screen TV set up for other Saturday morning hands-on sessions scheduled for members. For example, during our September 19th "Fly Fishing Knots and Building Leader Systems" hands-on session, all the participants will be able to see Joe Bruce up close and very personal as he shares his techniques for tying up his leader systems.

The investment in the big screen TV, cart, DVD player and remote video camera is just another example of where we are investing the club's financial resources—providing members with opportunities to learn more fly fishing techniques.



Ordering A Copy of Dan Rodrick's Book At the club's November 6th meeting, members were treated to an outstanding presentation by Dan Rodricks on his book "Father's Day Creek: Fly Fishing, Fatherhood and the

Last Best Place on Earth." Given a number of members asked where to buy the book, Dan says he refers people to their favorite book stores and directly to the publisher's web site at Loyola University. Here's the URL link to the publisher's online bookshop:

https://aerbook.com/maker/productcard-4655808-4208.html?brand_id=176254

[Editor's Note: Santa delivered my copy of Dan's book under our family's Christmas tree. Highly recommend this book. It goes beyond fly fishing, but it's a great reminder of why we enjoy and celebrate this fine sport together as a club.]

Safety Information on Cold Water Immersion (i.e., capsizing your kayak in water temperatures below 60 degrees) At a recent club meeting, I pointed out that local water temperatures have now dropped below 60 degrees which is the normal benchmark for kayakers and other small boaters to initiate their plans for protection from cold water immersion. This is relevant to our club as many of our members kayak fish throughout the winter.

Below is a link to the National Center for Cold Water Safety, which contains excellent information on the risks of cold water immersion, methods for kayakers to safeguard themselves, myths, consequences, and case studies. It is a good review for the well experienced kayakers in our club, and extremely important reading for wintertime kayakers unfamiliar with these hazards. <http://www.coldwatersafety.org/>

Please take the time to familiarize yourself with these hazards and put together a plan to ensure your safety this winter kayak fishing. I know I'm very much looking forward to chasing our long, skinny, toothy fish friends in the Eastern Shore ponds this winter, and I want to make sure all our members are safe out there when doing the same!

Thanks, Gary Grey, Club Outings Coordinator

Flybrary at the Clubhouse To the left of the front door to the clubhouse heading out, thanks to Luis Santiago, you will find a “Flybrary”.



Yep, a Flybrary. Go ahead and Google it—you will find hundreds of links! Need a fly? **Take one.** Have an extra fly that has been catching a lot of fish? **Leave one.** Just like your local library, you can check out flies or add them to the collection. That’s what Fellowship Through Fly Fishing is truly all about—helping others enjoy this incredible sport that brings us all together in the first place.

Another Regional Fly Fishing Show From a recent email message to entire membership: I worked the Virginia Fly Fishing and Wine Festival representing Orvis for 7 years doing seminars and running the booths and it remains my favorite show to attend now as a customer and patron. The show coordinator is Beau Beasley and his focus is on providing a great experience for the entire family as well as activities that include interactive gear testing, and a wide range of outfitters and seminars for the beginner and expert fly anglers alike.

Beau is a world class angler and a true gentleman and the show reflects his passion for fly fishing and outdoors family fun. The food and wine are excellent. This show is fun and I will definitely be there!

<http://www.vaflyfishingfestival.com>

Thanks, Duber Winters

More Upcoming Local and Regional (Fly) Fishing Shows Beyond the national Fly Fishing Shows scheduled for January 24-25, 2020 at Edison, New Jersey and March 7-8, 2020 in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, here’s other shows focused on fishing which includes fly fishing:

- Frederick Saltwater Fishing Expo in Frederick, MD-January 11th
- Heroes on the Water Flea Market in Odenton, MD-January 18th
- Richmond Fishing Expo in Richmond, VA-January 17-19th
- Great American Outdoor Show in Harrisburg, PA-February 1-9th
- Philadelphia Fishing Show in Philadelphia, PA-February 21-23rd
- Lefty Kreh Tie Fest in Linthicum Heights, MD-Feby 22-23rd
- Saltwater Fishing Expo, Annapolis, MD Feb. 29th
- Maryland Fly Fishing and Collectible Tackle Show, Towson, MD March 14th

Club Hats, Mugs, Patches and Stickers for Sale

Better than bling, you clearly need this Free State Fly Fishers ‘gear’ to fill out your fly fishing equipment. A hat to protect you from the sun, wind and other elements. A patch to show your fellow fly fishers that you belong to the best fly fishing club ever. A fly fishing mug filled with coffee for those early morning starts for getting out fishing. And a sticker for your kayak! See Frank Bowne to make a purchase of your club gear.



New Chairs and New Bulletin Boards—More Improvements to our Clubhouse! Thanks to Tom Gooding, we now have new chairs at the clubhouse. They are padded metal folding chairs, just perfect for how we use, then store, then use again, then store again our chairs. These are literally the first new chairs for the club—our current chairs were used when we procured them decades again. And before that, we were using small wooden chairs in the library of Hillsmere Elementary School!



And thanks to the idea by Luis Santiago and thanks to the woodshop at Rich Batiuk's house, we have two new large size bulletin boards at the clubhouse.

The large bulletin board next to the front entrance will be filled up with notices of upcoming club sponsored meetings, outings, hands-on sessions, fly tying sessions and other events and activities. The bulletin board next to the back door to the clubhouse will be used to share the latest photos, newspaper and magazine articles of interest, and news about individual club members.

We are planning more investments and improvements to the clubhouse in the coming months to enhance your enjoyment of the diversity of activities and events planned at the clubhouse. Look for more details on improvements to the clubhouse in the club's spring 2020 newsletter.

Fly Fishing Equipment

Making Better Choices on Fly Rods

By Rich Batiuk

Determining what fly rods you need are probably the most important decisions you will make given the rod in your hand influences your entire fly fishing experience. Here's some things to consider as you are making your next choices on which fly rod to invest in.

First, and most importantly, you need to figure what type of fishing to you want to do and which species of fish you plan to fish for the most.

Are you planning to fish for trout on small streams and rivers? Then you might want to focus on lighter, 3 to 5 weight, rods. If you are going to be doing a lot of nymphing, then consider purchasing a 9' length rod versus a 7' rod to help you reduce the drag on your line before that 16" brown trout sees your nymph coming down his feeding lane.

So you want to fly fish on Chesapeake Bay? That's just the first step in determining the right fly rod for the type of fishing you want to do. You could easily catch white perch all summer in the tidal waters with a 5 weight rod, but chasing striped bass in the Eastern Shore marshes, tossing weighted Clouser Minnows against the wind, reach for a 8 weight rod with a solid backbone.

As you get more and more into fly fishing then, like me, you will find yourself purchasing multiple fly rods of the same weight. Why? Think in terms you are fishing on a boat, a canoe or in/on top of a kayak. Unless you are fishing in a pool with fixed depths and straight shorelines, you will need to fish different flies and different depths. For example, when I float fish the South Fork of the Shenandoah River, I bring a minimum of 4-5 fly rods to match the fishing conditions I will encounter throughout the day. Big poppers, small poppers, just below the surface streamer patterns, deep pools with heavy Clousers or crawfish patterns...

Feeling inhibited by the prices of some fly rods? Consider purchasing a used rod. You will find many fly rods for sale by their owners don't have many stream miles on them. A great place to purchase used rods is at the club's Spring Swap Meet, held at the clubhouse Saturday, May 2nd this year.

So if you are thinking about buying a fly rod, but still not sure of exactly which rod you need, I strongly recommend you team up with a fellow club member to help you work through this process. Not sure which club member to approach? Talk with me and I will set you up!

[Editor's Note: We are starting a new newsletter column devoted to fly fishing equipment. In upcoming quarterly newsletters, we are planning to get members to write about making choices about reels, fly tying vises, kayaks, leaders and tippet materials, waders, wading staffs, fanny packs, nets and much more. Being fly fishers, we do like to collect and use a lot of equipment!]

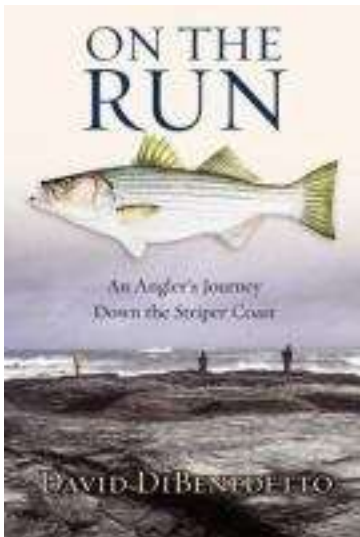
Featured Article

Joe Bruce's Chain Pickerel Cheat Sheet

This 'cheat sheet' is from the last March 23rd 'Everything You Need to Know About Fly Fishing Pickerel' session lead by Joe Bruce. Given we are in the midst of prime winter fishing season for pickerel, thought we should circulate these 23 tips for catching more pickerel to fellow club members.

1. They can be social-sometimes. Find one and there will be more around.
2. They like "a roof over their head." Can be wood or pads.
3. During winter, fish the shore that has a two to three-foot depth.
4. Always check both shore and flats- if no fish MOVE!!
5. Pickerel love pads and will relate to them even in the colder months.
6. The best winter pad flats are 2 ½ to 3 ½' deep.

7. Pickerel are apex predators; they will show themselves on the first cast. No evidence of fish, move on!!!
8. Pickerel are not fond of wind. Fish the leeside first.
9. They can be caught in the wind, go to an intermediate line to get under the waves.
10. Floating lines are the main stay. Intermediates are usually number two.
11. Basic leaders can be five to 7 ½' long, tapered down to thirty or forty pounds.
12. Basic flies—1/0 or 2/0 white, yellow, or chartreuse streamer style flies. Keep a couple of blacks handy.
13. I like articulated flies for the main reason the fish has lost its leverage when hooked.
14. Adding weed guards helps fishing open pad fields. Bendback style flies can be good, but offset the hooks a shank thickness off center.
15. Always use a loop knot- non-slip loop or Homer Rhodes knot.
16. Use a "two prong" attack. It can be a fluke/ lure & fly or two fly rods. I use the fluke in open water as my search pattern
17. When fishing the shoreline do the TCS sequence to increase your numbers. Ten to Twenty feet from shore, next cast Closer, next cast on the Shore.
18. Right hand casters go down the shore with your left shoulder facing shore, just the opposite for left hand casters.
19. Fish into the wind, if you hook a fish you won't be drifting over new water you haven't fished. Or, use an anchor. In wind and large flats it is good to anchor and fan cast the area.
20. Vary your stripping cadence until you get a strike and remember what you did and repeat it.
21. Sometimes an ultrafast retrieve will work even in the colder months. Prey doesn't wait to become a meal.
22. Look around for activity.
23. Please remember no pickerel has read what they **should** or **shouldn't** do and they especially haven't read this cheat sheet.



Featured Article

Book Review

By Mark Bange

“On the Run – An Angler’s Journey Down the Striper Coast” by David DiBenedetto

You know right away that *On the Run* is going to be a good read when this is the first sentence: “I

don’t advise peeing in your wetsuit ... you’ll get a mean rash.” It got only better from there.

Author David DiBenedetto is a dedicated striper angler who took his passion to the extreme. For three months he followed the fall migration of striped bass from their summer haunts along the Atlantic coast. He traveled with the fish from the rocky shorelines of Maine to the beaches of North Carolina as they refueled by crashing baitfish in the surf during their long journey. Along the way he introduced us to a fascinating cast of characters in each coastal state who disrupt their normal daily routine during these blitzes to chase stripers day and night, literally around the clock.

We are introduced to fly anglers, charter captains, those who toss hardware from rocky jetties, surf fishermen working topwater plugs, and striper enthusiasts who prowl flats and sod banks on our own Eastern Shore. In each venue these folks have one goal: to catch large stripers. In fact, they consider the 24-inch fish we relish here in the Chesapeake as “schoolies”. Their quest is the 30, 40 and 50 pounders that take part in the annual migration.

A very interesting chapter in the book is devoted to the story of a 78.5-pound world record striper caught in 1982 from a New Jersey jetty within sight of Atlantic City’s casinos. The fish brought

notoriety, \$250,000 in prize money and some would say ruin to the angler who caught it.

A good deal of the book is devoted to fly fishing for stripers. DiBenedetto himself picks up the long rod at every opportunity catching stripers along the entire migratory path. We meet fly tier Jack Gartside who developed the Gurgler. There is mention of Bob Popovics, noted saltwater fly tier. Indeed, I was surprised at the emphasis on fly fishing in the book.

But there’s another story too. *On the Run* is not a new book. It was published in 2005. At that time, roughly 20 years after the striper moratorium of the 1980s many thought stripers were back for good. We know now that their biomass has been declining to the point that regulatory action is expected in 2020 by all coastal states. Even in the book, DiBenedetto cites people noticing the decline in big stripers 14 years ago. It’s no wonder. Each fall, the fish run a gauntlet of thousands of coastal state anglers egged on by tournaments, prize money and the notoriety among their brethren that comes with catching large cow stripers. Too much of a good thing can be bad. If DiBenedetto were to write a postscript to his book, I think that would be the message. Nevertheless, *On the Run* is a fascinating look at very popular fishery and the folks who enjoy it the most. Let’s hope his book is not merely a history lesson but a look at what can be again.

On the Run is available in the Anne Arundel County Public Library. It’s also still in publication and can be purchased on Amazon.

[Editor’s Note: Thanks to Mark for his contributions of now three Featured Articles. Members are strongly encouraged to share an article for publication in our quarterly newsletter. It’s just another way you can share your experiences with fly fishing with your fellow members. Learning from our fellow members is just another benefit of being part of Free State Fly Fishers.]

Where to Fish

Patapsco River

By Gary Grey

When I want to go fly fishing for trout, my favorite local spot is the Patapsco River in Avalon or Daniels. I like it because it is heavily stocked (about 4,600 trout per year at Avalon, and about 5,100 trout per year at Daniels), it is a big flow (162 CFS (cubic feet per second) long term average), wide river (averages 40-50 feet wide in these areas), allowing ample room for fly casting, and plenty of shallow areas for easy wading, and lots of access points. To illustrate these characteristics, two other popular close by fly fishing for trout rivers are the Patuxent River Catch and Return area in Montgomery County and Morgan Run catch and return area in Carroll County. The Patuxent has an average flow is 30 CFS, is very narrow (maybe 15 feet wide average) with briar bushes seemingly everywhere and lots of low hanging trees over the stream making any fly casting very difficult, is stocked with 3,000 trout/year, and wading is difficult (small pools, generally unproductive riffles); Morgan Run has an average flow is 27 CFS, is wider than the Patuxent (maybe 20 feet average), has many boulders and pools making nymphing easy, but long casting opportunities are few. Morgan Run is stocked with 2,250 trout/year and wading is relatively unnecessary as the pools are smaller and many can be accessed without wading. I don't want to disparage the Patuxent and Morgan Run areas, they have their benefits, and I have fished both many times, but contrasted with the flows, stocking level, castability, and wading ease of the Patapsco Avalon and Daniels areas, the Patapsco is by far my favorite.

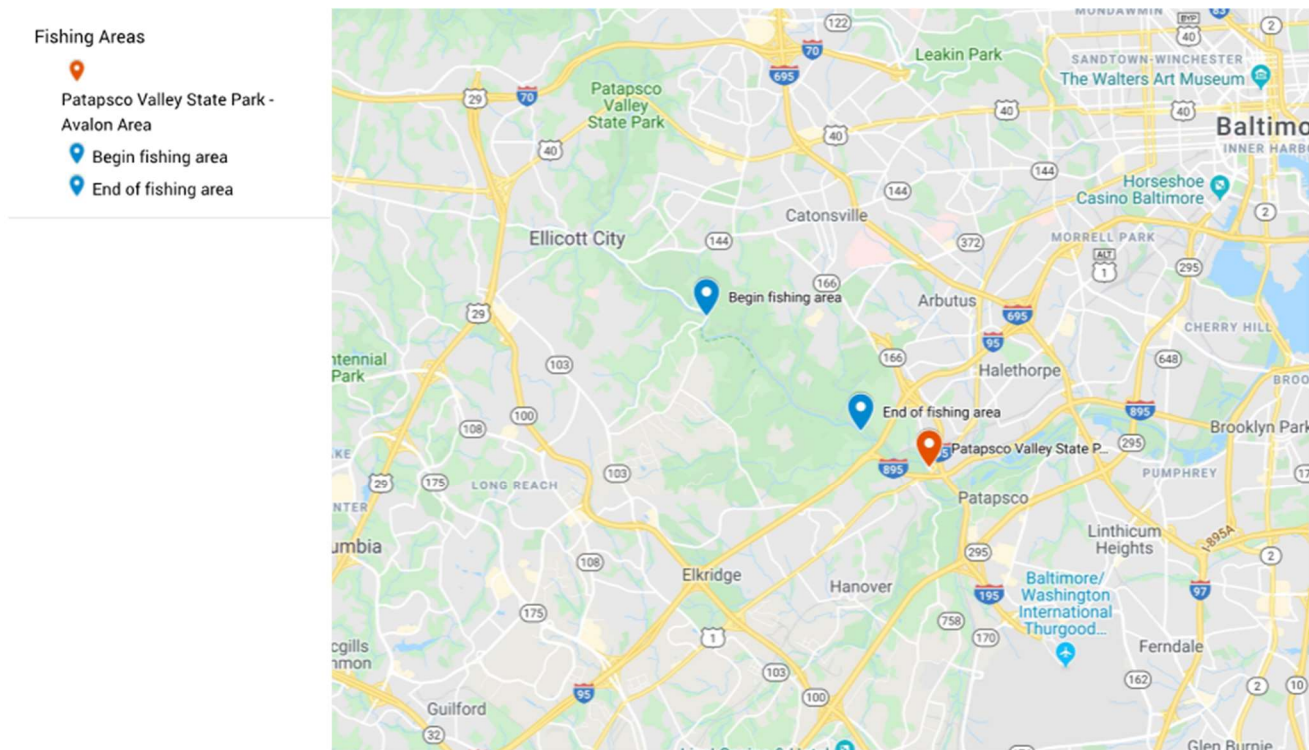
Accessing Patapsco Valley State Park can be confusing because it is not a continuous/contiguous park. There are five sections and each is bordered by private property thus yielding five different sections of the park along the river. There is a Marriottsville area, River Area, Avalon area, Daniels area, and even a tidal area at the mouth of the river entering Baltimore Harbor. To add to the confusion, several of these areas are subdivided and have different names applied to the subdivided areas. This article focuses on the non-tidal Avalon and Daniels areas.

AVALON AREA

As the attached map shows, the Avalon area is accessed off of South St. near the intersection of I-195 and US Rt. 1 (very close to the new Guinness plant in Halethorpe—not that anyone might know where that is....). There are three points marked on the attached map of the Avalon area and the farthest point East is the Park entrance, where a modest entry fee is charged. The Avalon area is famous for its “swinging bridge” and also for its Bloede Dam. The swinging bridge is a suspension cable pedestrian bridge crossing the river and Bloede Dam was a low head dam built in 1907 and was just breached by DNR in September 2018 to allow better access for anadromous fish spawning runs to the upper reaches of the Patapsco river (and other environmental benefits no doubt). Although the entire river is fishable in the park, I like to fish from the upstream Park boundary near Ilchester Road downstream to Gun Rd; both of these spots are marked Points on the map. Some people report success fishing dry flies here, but I've never had much success with dry flies, but the streamer and nymph fishing can be excellent. Green wooly buggers, black wooly buggers, and an assortment of nymphs do very well here. Although it can get hammered pretty hard by the bait fisherman after stocking, there is very little fly fishing pressure on this river, so although the trout stop hitting bait shortly

after stocking as they become educated to it, they continue to hit flies due to their being new and different. This area is stocked with Rainbow and Golden trout, and there is a five trout per day creel limit.

Patapsco Valley Park--Avalon Area



DANIELS AREA

Pretty much everything said above about the Avalon area of the Patapsco river from a fishing perspective is the same for the Daniels area of the Patapsco. Same river, same fishing characteristics (with the exception of a 2 fish per day creel limit), but just a little farther upstream from the Avalon area. A notable "social" difference is that the Avalon section is a developed park with an entrance fee, Rangers, picnic pavilions, lots of cyclists, hikers, and families visiting for the day; Daniels is the opposite: it is pretty much just a natural section of the river open to Public use; there are virtually no amenities for visitors. It is located in the Ellicott City area not far from the intersection of I-70 and US 29. There are three access points, and all three are marked points on the attached "Daniels Area" map: the Daniels Dam parking area (which is the upstream boundary of the fishing area); the Alberton Rocks parking area, and the Old Fredrick Rd trestle bridge parking area. The fishing is good in all three sections, and the river is stocked from Daniels dam to downstream of the Old Fredrick Rd. bridge where I-70 crosses overhead. Two additional bonuses of the Daniels area is that it is stocked with Brown trout as well as Rainbow and Golden, which, you would think would make for good dry fly presentations, but in my experience I've never had much luck with dry flies there (but maybe that's just me), and it is also an excellent Smallmouth fishery. Although the trout fishing generally drops off as the water warms up in June, the Smallmouth action is just starting to peak then.

Patapsco River Daniels Dam area

Fishing Areas



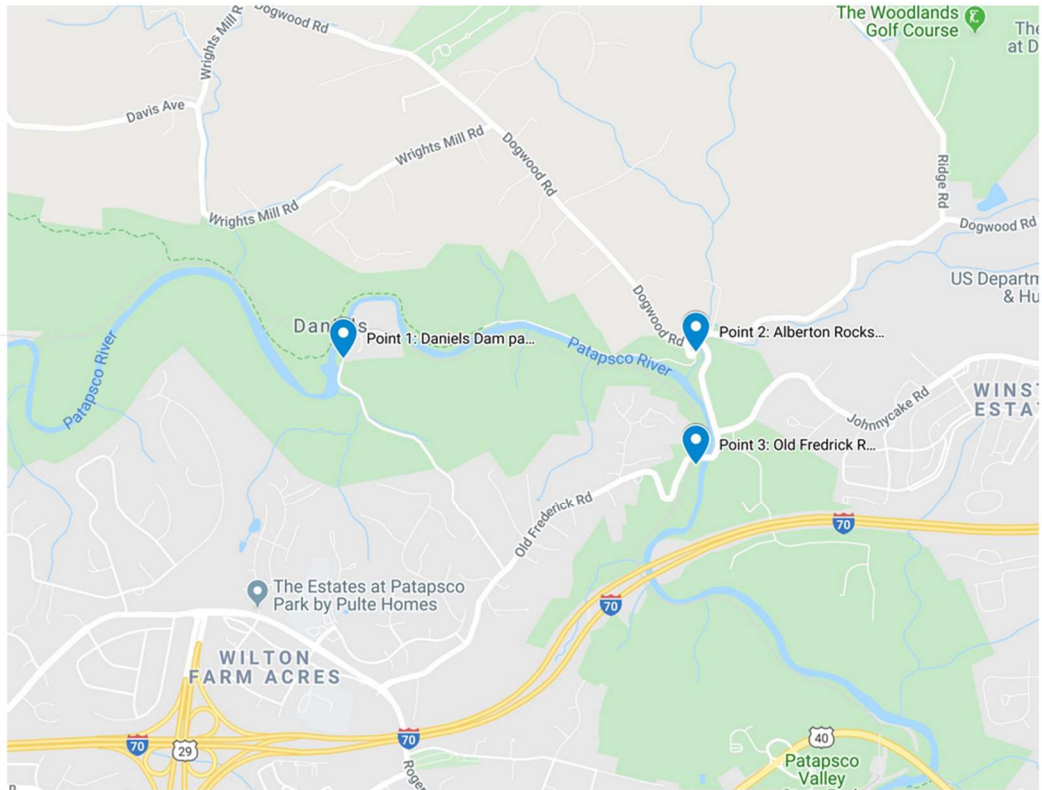
Point 1: Daniels Dam parking area



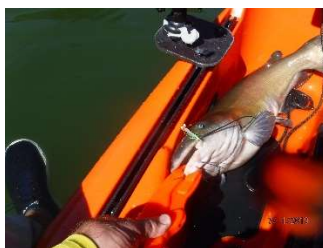
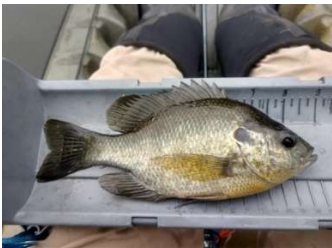
Point 2: Alberton Rocks parking area



Point 3: Old Fredrick Rd. parking area



So if you only have a few hours to fish and want to get some nice wading, longer-casting fly fishing in, give these two spots on the Patapsco River a try!



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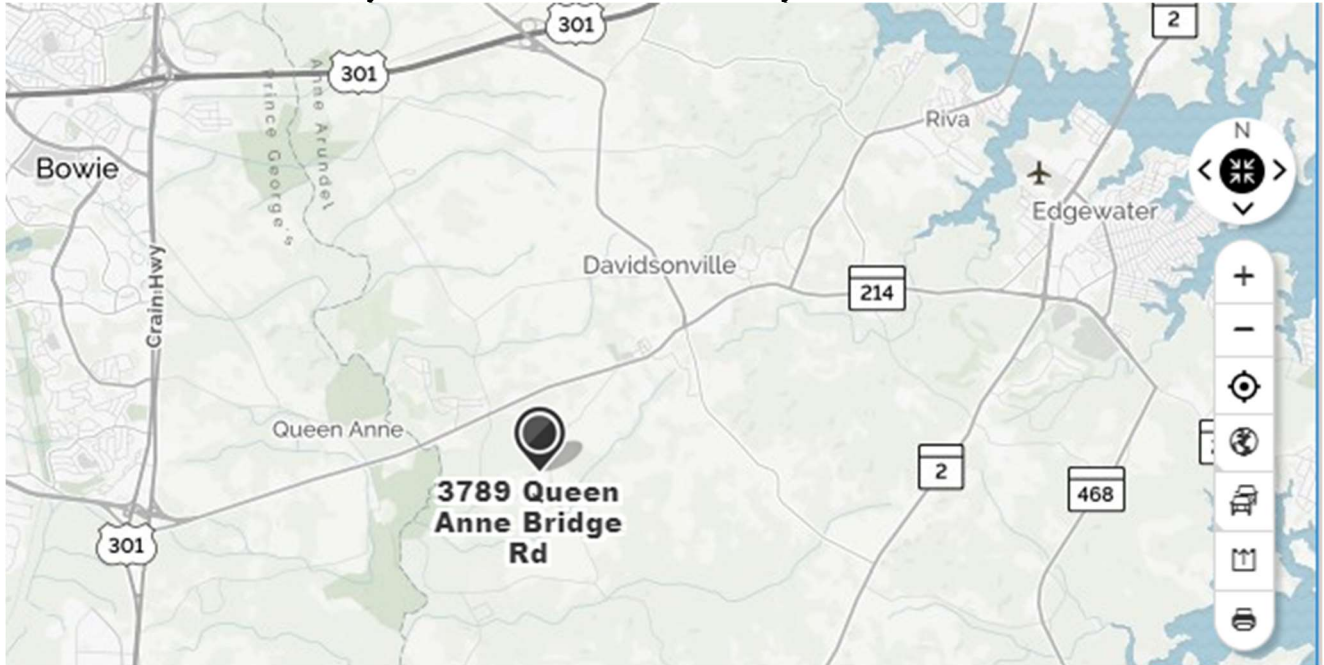
Newsletter Editor: [Rich Batiuk](#)

Please contact the appropriate FSFF leadership team member to get answers to any questions about Free State Fly Fishers and upcoming club sponsored events.

“Fellowship Through Fly Fishing”

Directions to the FSFF Clubhouse

Free State Fly Fishers (FSFF) meetings are held the first Wednesday of the month, September through June (except December), starting at 7:00 PM, at our **clubhouse** located at 3789 Queen Anne Bridge Rd., Davidsonville, MD 21035. The club house is on the grounds of the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center, an Anne Arundel County Recreation & Parks facility.



Directions: From Route 50, take Exit 16 to Route 424/ Davidsonville Road South. At the second traffic light, take a right turn onto Route 214/Central Avenue West and then take a left turn on Queen Anne Bridge Road. Take a left-hand turn into the Davidsonville Family Recreation Center through the open gate. Walk along the

parking lot and around and past Ford Hall to the clubhouse using the above map.

Our Website: <http://fs-ff.com/>

Our Facebook Page: <https://www.facebook.com/FSFFMD/>

Email Us: info@fs-ff.com