



FREE STATE FLY FISHERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2021

President's Message: We Made It to 2021!



Happy New Year! Wow, we made it through 2020! I don't need to list all the problems, challenges, and hardships we faced due to the

Pandemic in 2020; we know them and it was a difficult and awful year for everyone.

One of the silver linings to the storm clouds, however, is that if you were a fly fisherman, it wasn't so bad. While the country dealt with social distancing and wearing masks if within 6 feet of someone outside, we found we could stay hundreds of yards apart in kayaks on lakes or waders on streams and still pursue our favorite hobby safely. Maybe you can't go to the gym, but you can get in the car and go scouting some streams.

For example, I toured "Gunpowders", i.e., I now know the difference between Upper Gunpowder Falls, Lower Gunpowder Falls, Little Gunpowder Falls, and Little Falls (all have separate trout stocking schedules!) and the tidal section. Same with the Patuxent catch and release (C&R) area, Middle Patuxent delayed harvest area, Little Patuxent 2 per day area, the Patuxent C&R below Brighton Dam, and the Patuxent Laurel put and take area! We can walk along the stream banks and learn where the new promising pools are in the creeks and rivers this year.

With all the lock down, quarantining, and social distancing, how do we pass the time at home? Well, Free State Fly Fishers have their hands full.

Want to learn more about fly fishing? We've had recent Virtual club speakers on local trout fishing, Adirondacks Pike, Great Lakes Salmonoids and much more.

Fly tying? Got the Shad fly and Cicada fly (when was the last time you tied one of those?) patterns coming up. Why is that? Well, the annual Spring procession of local anadromous fish starts in a couple weeks: yellow perch, white perch, shad, and striped bass. We'll be ready for them! By the way, we have a session on how to fly fish for Shad coming up too! Also have a Virtual trout class coming up and a couple local on-stream trout trips.

Our monthly fly tying sessions continue on line, too. More experienced members helping out the new tyers learn the hobby. That's what we're all about. I'm a beginner, but learned Mark Bange's articulated crystal bugger, tied my first 5 flies ever on my own, and caught a pickerel and bass on them last week!

So, participate in our club's great programs and put it to use. The pickerel are biting right now. 2021 trout stocking has already started.

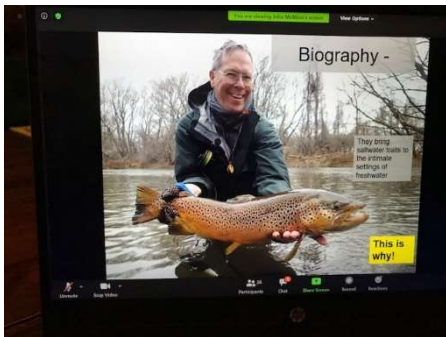
Let's grab our newfound knowledge and put into practice our club motto "Fellowship Through Fly Fishing": call a fellow club member and go throw the long rod. With some minimal precautions we can pursue our hobby, put our new skills to the test and stay safe from the Corona virus while doing so.

See you on the stream,

Gary

Upcoming FSFF Sponsored Meetings, Events and Activities

As we continue to meet virtually, thanks to Mark Bange and Rich Batiuk, we have Wednesday night club meeting speakers as well as Saturday morning hands-on session presenters scheduled well into 2021.



We still need to get to the next stage of reopening in the county before we can get back together again at the clubhouse. Until we do, we **will** proceed forward with all our club meetings with speakers, our Saturday Hands-on Sessions and all of our fly tying sessions virtually via Zoom. Information on each club sponsored meeting, event and activity will be posted on the club website's calendar of events and described in our week-in-advance automatic email messages along with the Zoom meeting connection information.

Wednesday Club Meeting Presentations

February 3 – Tom Parham – Maryland Department of Natural Resources' *Click Before You Cast* Website Tom, a Free State Fly Fishers, works for the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Tom will show and demonstrate the incredible array of tools and information now available through the *Click Before You Cast* website.

March 3 – John Neely – Coldwater Fishing Opportunities in Maryland John, a Free State Fly Fishers member and chair of the Maryland Sport Fisheries Advisory Commission, will be talking about some of the amazing cold water fishing opportunities in Maryland, with a particular focus on our native brook trout.

April 7 – Donna Cole – Bald Eagles: Pesticides are Still a Threat to Our National Bird Donna is an Associated Press and Society of Professional Journalists award winning journalist. She hosts 1430 Connections, a weekly radio show on WNAV. She will present an informative slideshow on how bald eagles are still succumbing to misuse of banned pesticides. Her reporting on this topic led the State of Maryland to change its pesticide licensing procedures.

May 5 Club Meeting

June 2 – Joe Bruce, Duber Winters and Tom Parham – Fly Casting Demonstrations with Members Bringing Their Own Rod to Practice Join us for our June Club meeting and learn from casting experts and fellow FSFF club members Joe Bruce, Duber Winters and Tom Parham. The evening will start at 5:30 PM with a club sponsored group dinner at the FSFF clubhouse. Then at 6:15 PM, we will start our casting demonstrations and hands-on practicing on the lawn near the clubhouse.



We are asking club members to bring their own fly rods so you can not only watch how to cast better, but you can also try out what our fly casting leaders are recommending to improve your cast. We will break up into a set of self-defined groups—beginning casters (Duber Winters), intermediate casters (Tom Parham) and advanced casters (Joe Bruce)—each led by one of our expert casters.

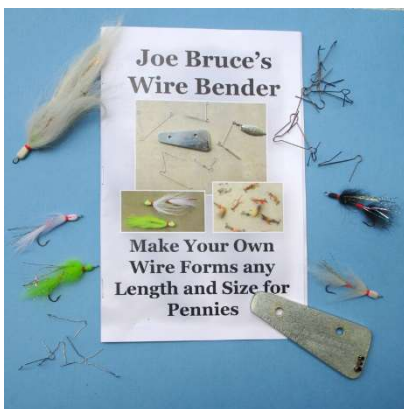
[*Editor's Note:* The June 2 group dinner and casting demonstrations and hands-on sessions are dependent on the status of the Maryland state and Anne Arundel County COVID restrictions pertaining to group gatherings.]

- **Beginning casters:** members who have either never cast flies or are still in the early stages of fly casting.
- **Intermediate casters:** members who have been casting for a while, but know they could use some advice on how to make longer and more accurate casts.
- **Advanced casters:** members who have been fly fishing for many years under a wide variety of conditions and are looking to refine their presentations and add distance to their casts.



Saturday Morning Hands-on Sessions

We are continuing our Saturday morning hands-on sessions...virtually for now. And yes, our sessions which truly depend on participants actually engaging on truly hands-on activities (e.g., Icelandic wool dyeing session) will be scheduled for the clubhouse or stream-side after the county and the state lift COVID related restrictions on the gathering of groups.



Here's our current schedule for club sponsored hands-on sessions scheduled through June. And no worries as Rich Batiuk has enough Saturday hands-on sessions to fill up the club's

calendar through at least the end of 2022!

February 20 Bending Wire Into Articulated Connectors and Tying Articulated Flies Joe Bruce will work through the steps for bending wire into articulated connectors and then demonstrate how to tie articulated two-color Bullethead Darters.

By building an articulated connector into your flies will greatly increase the fly's action not only during your retrieve but also when the fly has paused between line strips. Join us and learn how to bend your own wire articulated connectors and then how to tie articulated flies.

March 20 Catching More Shad with Flies

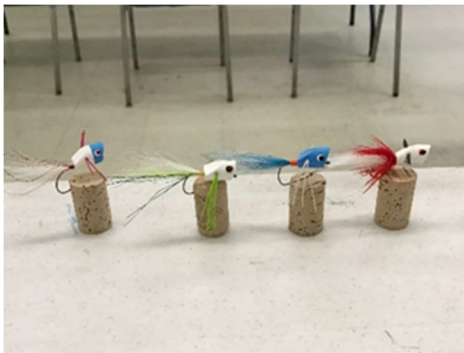
Fly fishing for shad brings its own set of challenges as well as some incredible rewards. You will need to bring a different set of flies as well as some different fishing techniques to improve your number of hooks-up of these exciting spring spawners. Joe Bruce will present a series of techniques for helping you catch more shad.



April 17 Selecting/Purchasing the Right Fly Rod, Reel, Line and Leader for Different Fishing Conditions Finding the right combination of rods, reels, fly fishing lines and leaders when there are a seemingly unlimited number of options can be downright frustrating and confusing. How do you balance performance with cost with what set of gear do you really need given the type of fly fishing you are comfortable with? How can you find a balanced rig at a reasonable cost? Duber Winters will present how to select (and purchase) the right rods, reels, lines and leaders for the type(s) of fly fishing you enjoy.

May 15 Experiencing Offshore Fly Fishing—An Introduction Have you ever wanted to fly cast to sailfish and other large fish species who call the open ocean home? Join fellow member and experienced offshore fly fisher Ed Waleryszak and find out more about how one goes about casting and hooking up some strange looking and extremely big fish. Ed will introduce us to the different unique aspects of fly fishing for offshore ocean fish species and share his decades of experiences.

June 19 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 (hopefully at our clubhouse as this session needs to be in person!).

Saturday Morning Fly Tying Sessions

Join us on the first Saturday morning of every month from now through June for our club member led fly tying sessions. Wayne Blake-Hedges, our FSFF Fly Tying Coordinator, will share the upcoming schedule of fly tying sessions via email and postings on the club’s website letting everyone know which club members are leading which sessions and which fly patterns they plan to tie during their session. Our club member-led fly tying sessions (whether in-person or virtual) will start at 10 AM on the following dates:

- Saturday, February 6th
- Saturday, March 6th
- Saturday, April 3rd
- Saturday, May 1st
- Saturday June 5th

Until we are able to gather in person at the clubhouse, we will be using the club’s Zoom account to enable club members to connect in, watch each fly pattern being tied, and ask questions of the fly tying session leader.

February 6—Rich Batiuk Tying Shad Flies We will be tying three different flies, two shad fly patterns given shad season is coming up in March and one very effective fly pattern that is back due to popular demand (courtesy of your club president).



Bruce’s Hickory Shad Fly



Bruce’s White Shad Fly



Modified Girdle Bug

Wednesday Night Beer Ties

Our club tradition of gathering together on the fourth Wednesday of every even numbered months for beer ties continues...currently virtually via Zoom meetings on:

- Wednesday, February 24th
- Wednesday, April 28th
- Wednesday, June 23rd

This is your chance to socialize, eat and drink with your FSFF fellow members while tying flies and talking fishing from 6:00-8:00 PM. Even if you don't plan to tie flies, please join the rest of us for the conversation, laughs, fly tying tips and, of course, the fellowship. It's worth much more than the price of admission....free!

How to Fly Fish Even Better

Working with Epoxy

By Joe Bruce

Sooner or later if you tie flies you will be working with some kind of two-part epoxy. The following tips will help to make the job easier.

When mixing epoxy, never use wood, such as a Popsicle stick, as a mixing tool. Likewise, don't mix it on cardboard or colored paper. The epoxy will turn yellow from the chemical processing of the Popsicle stick or cardboard. Mix your epoxy on white index cards, aluminum foil, or similar products, and use a plastic coffee stirrer or bent paper clip to stir the mixture.

Even if you are a trout fisherman, some fly patterns use epoxy in their recipe. An example, the late Joe Brooks had a fly called the Lacquered Ant, but with the use of modern-day products, epoxy is the answer. This fly is a great early spring pattern for trout. Applying the epoxy to a fly this small can be difficult. A simple, but effective, holder is your hemostats. Just hold the hook with the eye pointing down and, grasping the hemostats, just catch the hook eye in the jaws.

Turn the fly for a minute or two on your rotatory vise if working with five minute epoxy or put the fly on a drying motor. By holding the fly by the hook eye and the hemostats, it is a simple task to pull the hook point into the cork or foam on the drying motor.



The chemical reaction created when you mixed the two parts of the epoxy is heat. If your epoxy seems a little thick coming out of the bottles or tube, blow on the mix. This does two things; makes mixing easier and eliminates bubbles.

When adding epoxy to a fly head with paste-on eyes, the eyes tend to want to move around. A simple solution is to first apply the epoxy to the areas between the eyes on the top and bottom, and then apply it over the eyes last. The viscosity of the epoxy will hold the eyes in place.

I hope these tips help you when epoxy is a necessary part of your fly tying. Also keep in mind you can apply epoxy to existing flies to increase their durability. I have been doing this for years on flies that you wouldn't feel it was a necessity to do, but it really helps to prolong the fly's life.

[Editor's Note: Joe contributes a new column for every newsletter, providing fellow club members with ideas on fishing even better. Thanks Joe!]

Club News

New Club Leadership Team

Members voted in the club's 2021 officers during the November 4th club Zoom meeting:

President: Gary Grey

1st Vice President: Duber Winters

2nd Vice President: Luis Santiago

Treasurer: Mark Jacobs

Secretary: Frank Bowne

One Director is the Immediate Past President, that being Rich Batiuk, and Mike Mattia was selected as the second Director by the newly elected Officers.

Please Renew Your 2021 Club Membership Now

You can access the club's 2021 membership application along with the liability waiver on the club's website at <http://fs-ff.com/index.php/join-or-renew-membership>. Please fill out your application, sign and date your liability waiver and mail both along with your dues to Frank Bowne at the address on the application.

- Frank Bowne

2020 FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament Final Standings

First Place – Rich Batiuk, 10.75 inches, Unicorn Lake, Millington, MD, 29 May, on a Bluegill Bully dropper

Second Place – Rich Gallena, 10 inches, Fawn Lake, Lackawaxen, PA, 9 May, on a blue foam popper

Third Place – Mike Mattia, 8.5 inches, Smithville Lake, Federalsburg, MD, 8 May, on a black foam spider

Fourth Place, John Rentch, 8.25 inches, Smithville Lake, Federalsburg, MD, 13 May, on a black wooly bugger

Photos of their winning fish can be seen via this link: <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/bluegill-tournament-2020/>

Our top catches each occurred in May this year. Last year, Mike Mattia caught the largest entry in November. Also, Maryland waters were well represented in 2020 with 3 of the top entries coming from our home state. Finally, thanks to Rich Gallena, we had our first ever contest entry from Pennsylvania. It was an impressive 10-inch bluegill.

Congratulations to all who participated this year trying their best to catch a worthy bluegill to enter. I certainly tried but could not crack the 8-inch barrier. (They pull hard and look big in the water until you actually measure them.)

Special recognition goes to Rich Batiuk who will have his name engraved on our clubhouse bluegill tournament plaque as our official 2020 winner. In addition, he, Rich Gallena, Mike Mattia, and John Rentch will receive trophies for their efforts.

- Mark Bange

2020-2021 FSFF Biggest Pickerel Tournament

We already have several entries for the club's biggest pickerel tournament:



First Place—John Rentch, 23 inches, Shady Lake (Severn River) Annapolis, MD, 9 November on an articulated Crystal Bugger.



Second Place—Mark Bange, 23 inches, Tar Hill Cove, Magothy River, Pasadena, MD, 29 November, articulated Red Crystal Bugger.



Third Place—Mark Bange, 21.5 inches, Rock Creek, Pasadena, MD, 6 November, articulated Crystal Bugger.



Fourth Place—John Rentch, 21 inches, Weems Creek, Annapolis, MD, 8 November 2020, Bullethead Darter.

You can find the full set of tournament rules on the club's website at:

<https://fs-ff.com/index.php/pickereel-tournament-2020-2021/>

Clearly it's time for more tournament entries—this is not the “John then Mark then Mark again, and then John again” tournament!! We all know there are 24 inch and bigger pickerel out there just waiting for your fly to be cast in their vicinity!!

- Rich Batiuk



Looking for an Easy Way to Help Out the Club? Lead a Fly Tying Session!

Looking for a way to get involved in the club? Get to know some new members? Are you real busy and don't have much time, especially for an ongoing commitment? How about leading a Saturday Virtual fly tying session from home?

We really could use a few more leaders. No special computer equipment is needed—you can use your laptop at home. What's involved? Pick out two or three flies you can tie (they don't have to be difficult or special flies). Commit to lead a session on a first Saturday of the month and distribute a materials list to the club a month before your session so members can acquire the materials. A lot of your fellow club members are fly tying beginners and would love your session.

- Gary Grey

[Editor's Note: If Mike Mattia can lead a fly tying session using materials purchased at Michael's Crafts stores to tie effective flies, SO CAN YOU!]

Featured Fly: Panfish Fly Patterns

By Joe DeMeo

Black Ant



Hook: Mustad R50X-94845, barbless, size 10

Thread: Danville 210 black

Body: Tying thread, black, coated with Sally Hanson

Legs: Black hackle

Crappie Bugger



Hook: J2 604 Jig Hook, size 10 (J. Stockard)

Thread: Veevus 6/0, silver dark blue

Tail: Calf tail, white with Hareline Loco Legs, gray

Body: Standard (15mm) Estaz, Pearl

Bead: Hareline cyclops brass bead, gold, 5/32"

Mini Gurgler



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 8

Thread: Danville 210 black

Foam: 2mm closed cell foam, black

Visibility: 1mm closed cell foam, orange

Body: Petite Estaz, black

Tail: Calf tail, black

Mini Gurgler with Rubber Legs



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 8

Thread: Danville 210 black

Foam: 2mm closed cell foam, black

Body: Petite Estaz, blue

Tail: Calf tail, blue

Legs: Hareline round rubber legs, fine, white

James Woods Bucktail Fly



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 8

Thread: Veevus 6/0 silver dark blue

Wing: White bucktail or calf tail splayed around the hook shank

Body: Hareline medium chenille, yellow and steelie blue

Everett's Fly (Bully Bluegill Variant)



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 10
Thread: Veevus 8/0 yellow
Bead: Hareline cyclops brass bead, gold, 5/32"
Wing: Hareline round rubber, fine, white
Body: Hareline medium chenille, yellow

Foam Spider



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 10
Thread: Danville 210 denier, black
Body: Rabbit dubbing, pale orange
Legs: Chicone's Crusher Legs, blue/clear
Foam: 2mm closed cell foam, blue

Bead Head Nymph, No Name



Hook: Mustad S82-3906B, 2xl, size 8
Thread: Danville 210 red
Tail: Hareline round rubber legs, white, fine
Body: Petite (10mm) Estaz, black
Bead: Hareline cyclops brass bead, gold, 5/32"
Legs: Black hackle

Bead Head Nymph Jig



Hook: J2 604 Jig Hook, size 10 (J. Stockard)
Thread: Veevus 6/0 Blue
Tail: Hareline round rubber legs, white, fine
Body: Chenille, medium, yellow and blue
Bead: Hareline cyclops brass bead, gold, 5/32"

Foam Black Ant



Hook: Mustad R50X- 94845, barbless, size 10
Thread: Danville 210 black
Foam: 2mm closed cell foam, black
Body: Foam placed over tying thread and tied down at back and front
Legs: Black hackle

Where to Fish Severn River Tidal Creeks and Ponds By John Veil

Introduction

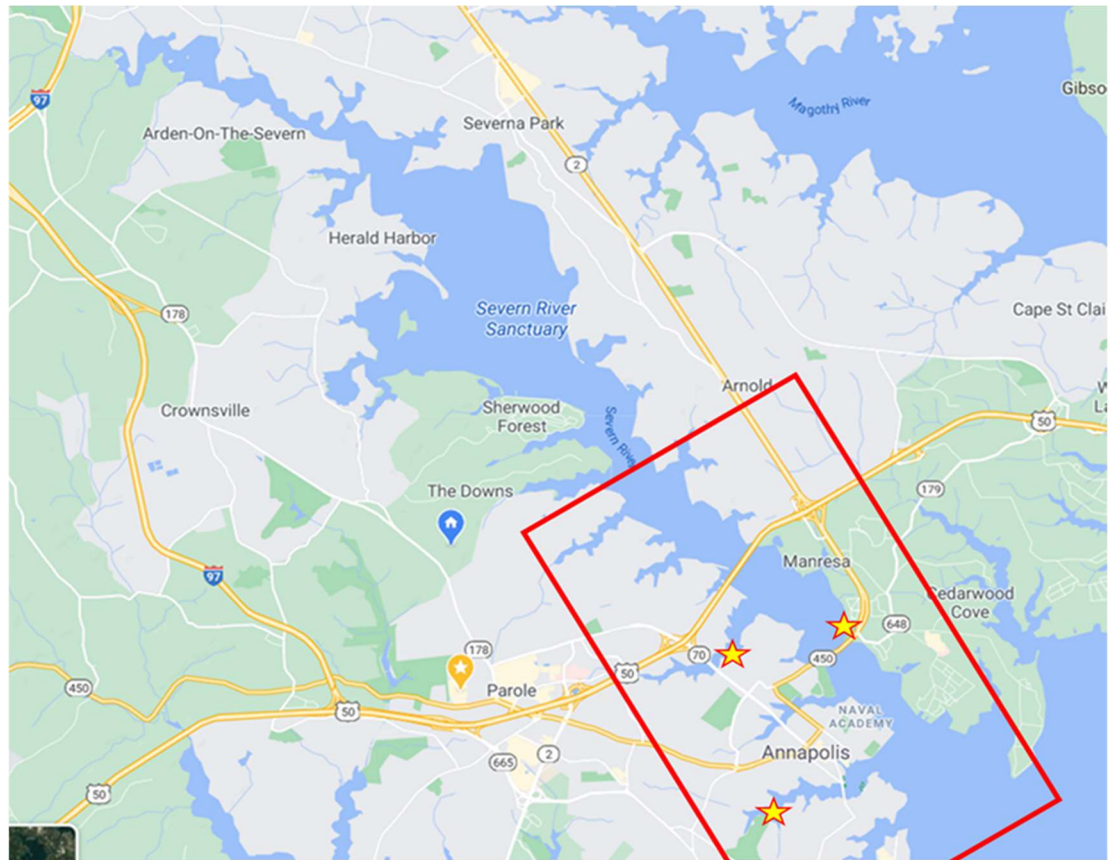
I have lived in Annapolis for nearly 30 years. During that time, my interest in fishing has grown, with a strong preference for fishing in tidal waters. Although I do travel often to different Maryland locations and to Florida (in non-COVID years) to fish, a large percentage of my fishing trips are made in my “home waters” – the Severn River. I am fortunate to have a short drive of only 10-15 minutes

to get to several good launch points. I can fish for a few hours and still get home for lunch.

All of my Severn fishing is done from my kayaks. Nearly all the fishing I do is light tackle spin fishing using lures, which bears some similarities to the fly fishing that FSFF members enjoy. The Severn River offers abundant habitats for fly fishermen.

The Severn River

The Severn River is a tidally influenced river near Annapolis. It runs southeasterly from just east of Route 97 to the Chesapeake Bay. As the map shows, there are many small arms that branch off of the main stem. Depending on their length and the size of their openings/mouths, they can be considered as tidal creeks or tidal ponds. The Severn normally contains water with low to moderate salinity. However, water conditions (e.g., salinity, temperature, dissolved oxygen) fluctuate throughout the year. Aquatic species can adapt to changing conditions or can migrate in and out.



Map of the Severn River. My preferred kayak launch spots are shown as stars, and the range of areas I fish is delineated by the red box.

Overview of Fishing Spots and Target Species

There are many miles of wooded shorelines, riprap, and grassy edges that serve as good fishing habitat. In most cases, the water near the shoreline is shallow (less than 5' deep) and serves as a good spot to target white perch during the warm months and pickerel during the cooler months. Slightly deeper water toward the middle of the creeks and ponds often holds stripers.

I also often troll light tackle from my kayak in the deeper parts of the creeks and in the main stem of the river and catch many stripers (with a personal best kayak striper of 37" in front of the David Taylor Research Center). This year has brought other species into the Severn. During 2020, I also caught speckled trout, redfish, channel catfish, snakehead, pumpkinseed, bluefish, spot, croaker, and yellow perch in Severn waters.

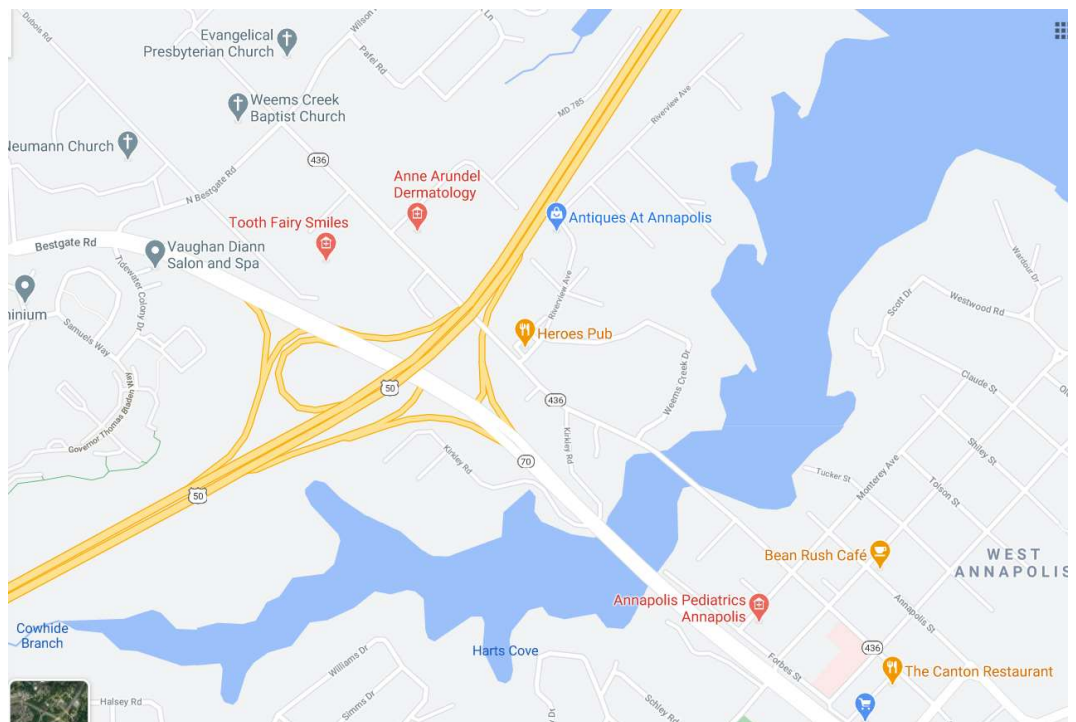
How to Get on the Water

Since I do not live in a community with water privileges, I need to seek out public launch spots. The location where I launch most often is the Tucker St. ramp in West Annapolis, which puts me into Weems Creek. It is easy for me to load and unload close to the water. There is parking there for about 10 cars, but trailers cannot be parked there unless you are a resident of Annapolis and have a special permit for your trailer. I also launch less often at Jonas Green Park where Rt 450 crosses the Severn (no trailers allowed) or at the Truxtun Park boat ramp in the headwaters of Spa Creek. From these launches, I am able to paddle upstream, downstream, and across to the opposite shoreline in a range of about 2 miles. The red box on the first map shows the approximate range in which I fish. There are various other access points in Spa Creek and Back Creek that are less convenient or at Smith's Marina in Crownsville, which charges a launch fee. Or even better, get to know a resident of one of the many water-privileged communities.

Focus on Weems Creek

Of all the spots I fish, Weems Creek is the one I visit most often (from June through mid-November this year, I fished there more than 40 times). I can launch at Tucker Street (this is just to the right of the southern end of the Ridgely Ave bridge on the map) and turn right to head toward the main river. Or I can turn left and head under the Ridgely Avenue and Rowe Boulevard bridges to fish the upper portion of the creek.

During the hundreds of trips I have made in Weems Creek over several decades, I have fished on nearly



Map of Weems Creek.

every 100-foot section of the creek's shorelines. While the fish tend to congregate in certain areas more than others, I have caught some fish nearly everywhere along the shorelines at one time or another. One key tip for summer perch fishing is to seek out shaded areas – they out-produce sunny spots dramatically. Surprisingly, this fall the pickerel bite has been stronger in shaded areas too. That may change when the water temperature cools off.

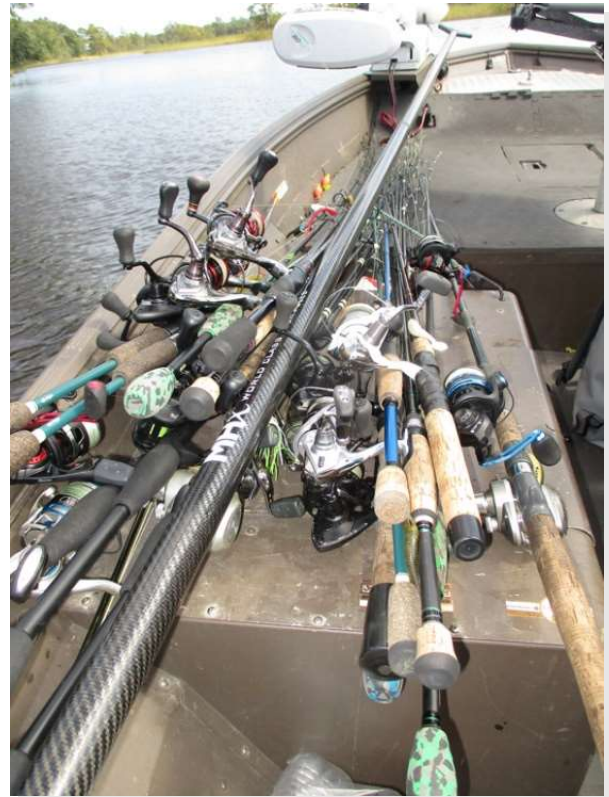
My most common route is to launch from Tucker Street and fish the southern shoreline heading upstream in Weems. I have favorite shoreline segments that I always visit, and often make a few casts to other spots that have potential. The very back end of the creek ends up underneath Rt 50 (shown as Cowhide Branch on the map). When the water level is high enough, I can paddle all the way back there. I don't catch much that far back (this area gets a lot of stormwater runoff from the Annapolis Mall and Rt 50, and probably does not have ideal water quality). On the way back, I work along the northern shoreline, which is less developed than the southern shoreline.

Food Options

There is no shortage of places to eat around Annapolis. Before COVID introduced the term “social distancing” a group of us would often fish for several hours in the morning then head to the Chinese food buffet at the Canton Restaurant (shown at the bottom right corner of the Weems Creek map) for a tasty, filling, and remarkably inexpensive lunch. Hopefully we can regather there later in 2021.

More Information

This short article gives some general information about the Severn River. Several years ago, I gave presentations about Fishing in the Severn by Kayak and Fall and Winter Fishing in the Severn to several local groups. These go into much more detail and have many colorful photos. If anyone is interested in getting copies of these presentations, please contact me at john@veilenvironmental.com.



...versus...

Feature Article

Paring Down Your Gear

(If you have to weigh it you are in trouble!)

By Joe Bruce

There are many things we can do to trim some of the tackle we take fishing, particularly if you are fishing from a kayak, canoe or another type of boat. Even if you are wade fishing or casting from the shore, these products and techniques will help you pare down your gear you are bringing.

Advantages

- Lightens tackle load
- Eliminates spending time worrying about changing flies or lures
- More room
- Makes you think about what REALLY is needed for the day
- Less fumbling around in bags & crates





Key First Steps

There are two key first steps you need to take before you start to consider

products and techniques for paring down all that gear. First, stop taking the “possible bags”. Possible bags are the bags you have been taking out to the vehicle and loading in the boat trip after trip and not use eJUST IN CASE YOU MIGHT NEED IT. Second, try to eliminate the crates—use rod holders. The crates are hard to find anything in them because they are behind you and your rods are vertical which can be broken when casting and don’t allow you to get tight to shore where the fish are.

Product and Techniques

I have some products and techniques I have been using for years to lighten my load.

1. Repackage hooks—there is no need to carry two or three bags of the same hook, so put them in one.
2. The same thing goes for plastic baits. They come ten in a package—you can easily load three packs into one bag.
3. Buy some 2 x 2 zip lock bags to store miscellaneous items.
4. I have 1 1/2 “plastic sleeves I put my flies in. It keeps them organized and wet ones will not cause others to rust.

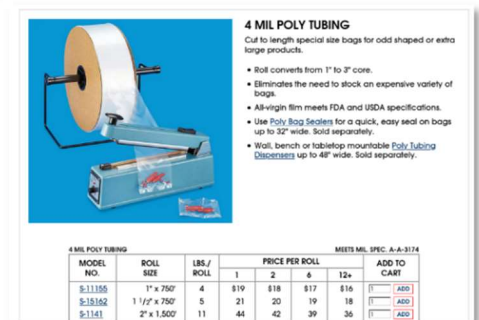
Products for Scaling Down

For my flies, hooks and small items I use **micro mesh bags** in two sizes. The small bag is 7 3/4” x 4”, this is for my hooks and small items and a 7 1/2”x 3” x 5” gusseted bag for larger items. Both of these bags can be purchased from The Container Store. There are two ways to get **poly sleeves for flies** both can be bought from Uline Product, one is buy ready-made bags, unfortunately they start in 2” width. I feel they are a bit too wide; I prefer 1” to 1 1/2” width. To make these sleeves in this width will



require you to purchase poly tubing and a sealer to close whatever length you want to make.

If you are anal like me, you will purchase these items for yourself or you can get a couple of the club members to join together and buy the product and share.



Another must is the 2” x 2” Ziplock Bags also available at Uline.

Techniques for Scaling Down

I have **reduced the number of leaders** I need for a trip by following my Quick Success Leader System. The heart of this system is a series of butt sections and a corresponding series of tippet sections. Every possible leader for all fishing conditions you will encounter is all contained here. No need for bulky leader wallets and or six spools of different tippet material—less to bring out with you fishing. I will teach



club members about this system again at an upcoming Saturday Hands-on Session once we are able to meet at the clubhouse again.



I store all my **flies in plastic slides** as described above and store them in a mesh bag. I have eliminated the need for bringing and then finding

somewhere to store a host of fly boxes.

And into a **separate mesh bag, I store my extra hooks, my fish license and any other tools** I know I will need. This mesh bag also holds my packaged plastic baits into their own Ziploc bag.



Not only does all this help you pare down what you bring fishing with you, it **helps you get ready to go fishing** and ensures you are bringing the right flies,

lures and tools with you for the fish you are targeting. This photo shows how I store my mesh bags, organized by whether, for example, I am targeting pickerel or panfish. I save time in preparing for a trip AND I reduce the times I forgot to pack essential items.



I even have a system when I **pack for a multi-day fishing trip**. I pack and organize my gear according to the related

items I am going to need throughout my trip. This way I always know where I have packed specific

items and don't waste time digging through multiple pockets trying to find what I need next. A bit of extra planning saves a lot of time and frustration in the field.

Finally, I use a **pair of saddle bags in my kayak** so that all my flies and related tools are literally right

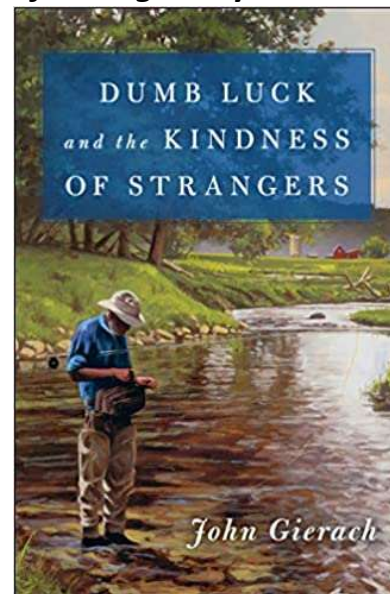


at my fingertips while I am fishing. No twisting my back to try and reach back to a crate and find the right or a new tippet—it's all right there, accessible without me moving around in my seat.

Try these products and techniques—save time, prevent frustration and enjoy the benefits of more time on the water focused on fishing.

[*Editor's Note:* This article was based on Joe's outstanding presentation at the club's October 24, 2020 Saturday Hands-on Session. His recommendations and approaches to paring down all the fly fishing tackle, fly boxes and much more that we lug around with us every time we go out needed to be shared with all our members!]

Book Review: *Dumb Luck and the Kindness of Strangers* by John Gierach



Since 1977, John Gierach has written 22 books about fly fishing and co-authored 4 others. Also, he has written numerous fly fishing articles for magazines and newspapers. Most of his books follow a Gierach formula of distinct vignettes for each chapter

highlighting a specific location, species, fly-fishing topic, or angler friend. It's a very successful approach that resonates well with his fans. In his latest offering, *Dumb Luck and the Kindness of Strangers*, Gierach provides 22 chapters in 225 pages that recount varied fly fishing experiences. Although he is a trout-centric fly angler who resides in Colorado, his latest book takes us muskie fishing in Wisconsin and Canada, Atlantic salmon fishing in Scotland, steelhead fishing in the Pacific Northwest, bluegill and bass fishing in Colorado mining pits, and cutthroat fishing in Nevada. Those are just a few of the locations in this book. Gierach is well traveled.

Other chapters are topics tangential to fly fishing. There is a humorous chapter on fishing lodge dogs he has encountered – from exceedingly friendly canines like the St. Bernard whose idea of a welcome is to gently hold your hand in his mouth, to the annoying ones that bark incessantly and jump into the water to “help” you land your fish. There is a poignant chapter about a good friend's last trout caught near the end of his terminal illness. There is an interesting chapter on fly fishing in a desert lake from a ladder...yes, that's correct. Anglers waded the lake with the aid of a stepladder to rise above the water for long casts to reach a productive drop-off.

I believe Gierach's success with his fans is that as he recounts his experiences, they trigger similar memories in his readers. For example, his discussions of fish camps, lodges and traveling to distant locations with his friends, reminds of my own fishing trips. I could relate to the lively banter he describes among fishing buddies traveling together, the communal meals during trips and interpreting the sometimes-vague instructions of guides.

The title of this his latest book comes from a chapter where Gierach describes how he finds prime fishing locations. Essentially, his success is

due to the generosity of others with some good luck thrown in. I can certainly relate to that. By far, Gierach's prime appeal is his good humor and ability to turn a phrase. He is an excellent writer. Here are a few examples:

About Colorado, his home state:

“When I bought my first Colorado resident fishing license in 1969, I asked the man behind the counter when the season opened. He said, “It never closes. You can fish any day of the year you can stand to be out there.” I'd never heard of such a thing but it seemed like a crucial element of the hippie utopia we envisioned back then: no Big Brother telling you when you could and couldn't go fishing.”

About Bella, a yellow lab fishing lodge dog that jumps into the water to retrieve your catch: “From Bella's point of view, we human fly fishermen are inefficiently catlike; pointlessly toying with our prey using light tippets and small flies instead of going for the quick kill the way a self-respecting canine would.”

On hooking a muskie:

“The trick they say is to wait until you feel the weight of the fish (there'll be no mistake about that) and then with the rod still pointed at the fly, strip set by yanking as hard as you can with your line hand and then set as hard as you can with the rod. And I mean hard. To make the point, one of the guides said, “First you try to break the line; then you try to break the rod.”

There are many other examples I'd like to share but space prevents me from doing so. Besides, it's better if you read them directly from the book within the context of their chapters. If you do, I think you'll enjoy the book immensely. And you'll learn about fly fishing for various species in multiple locations in an entertaining way, not by dry, rote instruction.

Dumb Luck and the Kindness of Strangers was published in 2020 by Simon and Schuster. It is available from online sellers and several copies are on the shelves of the Anne Arundel County Library system.

- Mark Bange

Feature Article

Improving Your Fishing Success by Doing Some Homework

By John Veil

Most of my fishing is done from kayaks in tidal waters. Kayaks offer many advantages, but unless you use an electric motor on your kayak, you are limited in the distance you can travel in a trip while trying to find fish. For me, as a senior angler, I rarely paddle more than 7 miles in a trip, and often cover less ground than that. I am normally on the water for 3 to 4 hours in a trip. Further, in a kayak, you are totally exposed to the weather and the waves. If winds shift unexpectedly, or a rain shower pops up, you just grin and bear it. I have found that spending some time the day before on your computer to collect and evaluate relevant information can definitely increase the odds of finding fish and of being as comfortable as possible in the kayak. In the following paragraphs, I talk about some of the websites and information resources I use to help me plan when and where I will launch and what locations or routes I will target for fishing.

I study several websites before heading to the water. Often I will do this the day before to develop a tentative plan. I try to make a last minute check on wind forecasts just before leaving home in order to make additional adjustments. The examples I give below are the full websites I view on my laptop at home. I rarely look at the same types of apps on my cell phone. When I talk about tabs or options, they may not be the same when viewing on your phone app.

Here are some of the types of information I study. There is no substitute for having personal knowledge of the waters where you plan to fish, but knowing how the conditions are likely to be may influence where you launch or in which direction you travel during a trip. The website examples I use work for me, but often there are other websites that offer similar information. Feel free to use different websites that work better for you.

Geography. Much of my kayak fishing is done relatively close to a shoreline. Take a look at Google Maps or Google Earth for the areas you are considering. By looking at the screen in Map View, I can see the general layout of the land masses and how far it is from my launch point to different locations where I may fish. By studying these maps along with wind direction forecasts, I can look for spots where I can tuck in out of the wind, if necessary. You can use the Satellite View to get a closer look at the shape of shorelines, any small tidal creeks or ponds that might be worth exploring, and sometimes even channels or depressions in shallow water areas. If you are using the more comprehensive Google Earth, you may be able to look at different seasonal images that show more detail when leaves are off the trees.

Weather. I often check www.weather.com and look at the hourly forecast for the period during which I will be fishing. While not perfect, it gives me some idea of predicted weather conditions and air temperature over time. Recently I delayed a morning launch until 8:30 am to allow some early morning storms to pass out of the area.

Wind speed and direction. I use www.windfinder.com, but other wind websites are available too. Windfinder offers wind projections based on two different meteorological models. The Forecast Tab shows wind predictions for every 3 hours for more than a week in advance. If you plan to take off work on one day during the week, you

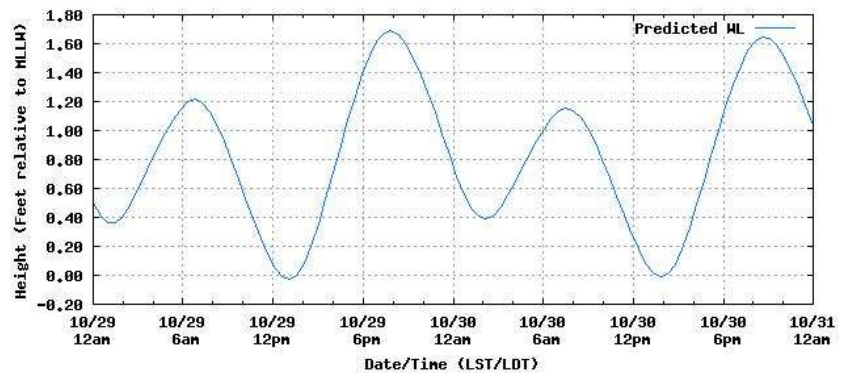
can use this information to help you schedule your vacation day. The Superforecast tab gives hourly data but only looks ahead two days into the future. They often give similar predictions, but sometimes differ notably.

I use Windfinder to help me predict what the wind speed and direction will be at launch time, and how it may change during the several hours I am out there. If the wind is predicted to be above 10 mph, I may not choose to fish in that location or may look for shorelines or sheltered creeks and ponds where I can hide out of the wind. In my kayak fishing trip yesterday morning, the wind had been blowing hard from the southwest on the previous day, but shifted to the north and northwest during the early morning. Knowing the anticipated wind direction allowed me to fish along a shoreline that provided wind blockage. I caught many fish working in calm waters there while other nearby spots were much rougher.

Tides. Many fishing websites provide tidal data. Most of those data are based on NOAA information. NOAA data for Maryland can be obtained at <https://tidesandcurrents.noaa.gov/map/index.html?region=Maryland>. I personally get most of my tidal information from www.tides4fishing.com. It gives tides in both a tabular and graphical format.

I prefer fishing most shallow water spots when the water is mid-tide or higher. A fast moving tidal current usually fishes better than a slow moving or slack tidal current. As a generality, the tidal current will be higher midway between a high and low tide than near the high or the low. To complicate matters, in most parts of the relatively shallow Chesapeake Bay, strong wind can easily overwhelm the natural tidal patterns. Knowing the tidal highs and lows is helpful, but what you observe on the water can be different.

Sometimes the two high tides and the two low tides in a day are not of equal water heights as shown in the figure. You can estimate the strength of a tidal flow by noting the height differential between a high and low tide from the chart. The higher the differential, the more water will move past a spot during a tide. Higher water volume moving through the same area means greater current flow. Looking at October 29 on the example in the figure, the height differential from 12 am to 6 am is only about 0.8 feet. But the differential later in the day, from 12 pm to 6 pm, is about 1.7 feet. On that day, the tidal current should be stronger in the afternoon than in the early morning.



Depth contours and other bathymetric features.

When visiting unfamiliar waters or if I want to explore certain areas more closely, I use the Navionics website https://webapp.navionics.com/#boating@6&key=ylgkF%60y_pM to look at the water layout. There are two different views on these charts. Click on the circle with several wavy lines in the lower left of the screen. The Navionics view gives the standard information. The SonarChart view gives more details. While not necessarily highly accurate for the near-shore shallow areas I fish often, it is useful to study an area in advance, particularly if you do not have a fishfinder/GPS unit on your kayak. You can get a sense of where channels, drop-offs, lumps, edges, and other structural features may be located.

Solunar activity times. The tides4fishing site mentioned above also gives solunar activity predictions. I don't plan my trips around them, but it does not hurt to look at them either. Yesterday's solunar activity prediction called for a period of very high activity from 8:00 am to 10:00 am at the areas where I was fishing. I was mostly in transit between spots from 8:00 am to 9:00 am, but caught many fish between 9:00 and 10:00 during the trip.

The websites I described above can help you gain confidence in where to fish and when to fish. Please keep in mind that they are only predictions, and are not always helpful. But more often than not, they do improve your chances of being where the fish are and staying away from dangerous or uncomfortable conditions for kayak fishing. While this article is written from a kayak fishing perspective, the same principles apply to planning a boat fishing trip too.

[*Editor's Note:* John Veil led the club's January 16, 2021 Saturday Hands-on Session entitled: "Improving Your Fishing Success by Doing Some Homework", giving a truly outstanding presentation. John's presentation in a PDF file format can be accessed through the club's website at <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/past-meetings/>. The above article was based on John's article published previously in the *Fish Talk* magazine.]





Free State Fly Fishers, Inc. Release of Liability, Waiver of Claims, Express Assumption of Risk, and Indemnity Agreement

Read carefully before signing

IN CONSIDERATION of being permitted to participate in the fly fishing and other activities (“Activities”) sponsored by the Free State Fly Fishers, Inc. (“FSFF”), I, for myself, my personal representatives, assigns, heirs, and next of kin, do hereby acknowledge and agree to the terms and conditions in this agreement (this “Agreement”). I understand that the inherent hazards and risks associated with participating in FSFF Activities, the movement of equipment related to the Activities, as well as travel to and from the Activity sites is potentially dangerous and physically demanding and hazardous. I am mentally and physically sufficiently fit to participate in such Activities. If at any time I believe the conditions to be unsafe, I will immediately discontinue further participation, and assume all risks inherent in my decision to do so. I understand that the Activities are dangerous and involve the risk of serious injury and/or death and/or property damage; any injuries may be compounded by negligent emergency response of FSFF; I am voluntarily participating in the Activities with knowledge of these dangers involved; and I agree to accept and assume any and all risks of injury, death, or property damage, whether caused by the negligence of FSFF or otherwise.

I acknowledge and agree that:

1. I expressly waive and release any and all claims, now hereafter known, against FSFF and its officers, directors, employees, agents, affiliates, successors, and assigns (collectively, “Releasees”), on account of injury, death, or property damage arising out of or attributable to my participation in the Activity, whether arising out of the negligence of the Releasees or otherwise. I covenant not to make or bring any such claim against the Releasees, and forever release and discharge the Releasees from liability under such claims.
2. I will wear and properly use all of the appropriate protective and safety. However, I am aware and understand that protective gear cannot guarantee the participant’s safety and gear.
3. I acknowledge that FSFF volunteers who lead FSFF Activities, outings, trips, or workshops are not professional leaders, guides or instructors, nor are they certified by an organization requiring certain skills or knowledge of safety practices. I am at all times fully and solely responsible for my own safety and well-being during trips, classes, courses and events involving fly fishing and related Activities conducted under the auspices, sponsorship or leadership of FSFF, its officers, agents and members, as well as in transit to and from such activities, and that I must consider and evaluate my ability to handle the conditions present at all times.
4. In the event that I am injured during an event, trip, workshop and/or other Activity of FSFF, I give permission for other participants to administer first aid and to seek medical assistance as deemed

necessary. I intend that the releases, waivers, indemnity agreements, and assumptions of risk contained in this agreement shall fully apply to any claim whatsoever on account of first aid treatment or service rendered to me during my participation in FSFF Activities, even if caused by the negligence of releasees or others.

I hereby release, covenant not to sue, save and hold harmless, and agree to promptly indemnify FSFF, its officers, directors, coordinators, outing leaders and other volunteers (“the releasees”), from liability and responsibility whatsoever for any and all liability, claims, demands, losses, injuries, damage to property, causes of action or other damages, including but not limited to the costs of litigation and attorneys' fees, that I, my estate, heirs, survivors, executors, or assigns may have for any and all personal injury, disability, property damage, wrongful death, and/or other losses, damage, and/or claims arising out of or resulting from or in connection with the Activities, whether caused by active or passive negligence of the releasees or otherwise.

This Agreement is the sole and entire agreement of FSFF and me regarding the Activity and supersedes all prior and contemporaneous understandings, agreements, representations, and warranties, both written and oral regarding the Activity. If any part of this Agreement is invalid, illegal, or unenforceable, that shall not affect any other part of this Agreement. This Agreement is binding on and shall inure to the benefit of the Releasees and me and is made pursuant to and shall be governed by the laws of Maryland, without giving effect to any principles of conflict of laws. Any claim or cause of action arising under this Agreement shall be brought in the District Court of Maryland for Anne Arundel County or the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel County, Maryland and I hereby consent to the jurisdiction and venue therein.

I have carefully read this agreement, have been given the opportunity to review it by counsel of my choosing, and fully understand its contents. I am aware that this is a release and waiver of liability to all releasees and that by signing this agreement I am giving up important legal rights.

Signature **Date**

Signed on Behalf of _____ **(Print Name of Minor), as that Child’s Parent or Legal Guardian**

FREE STATE FLY FISHERS LEADERSHIP TEAM

President: [Gary Grey](#)

First Vice-President: [Duber Winters](#)

Second Vice President: [Luis Santiago](#)

Secretary: [Frank Bowne](#)

Treasurer: [Mark Jacobs](#)

Directors: [Rich Batiuk](#) (Past President) / [Mike Mattia](#)

FSFF Coordinators:

Clubhouse Coordinator: [John Rentch](#)

DFRC Representative: [Mike Mattia](#)

Club Librarian: [Luis Santiago](#)

Chesapeake Council – FFI Delegate: [Frank Bowne](#)

Membership Coordinator: [Frank Bowne](#)

Social Media Coordinator: [Luis Santiago](#)

Webmasters: [Luis Santiago](#) / [Frank Bowne](#)

Outings Coordinator: [Gary Grey](#)

Pond-of-the-Month Outings Coordinator: [Mike Mattia](#)

Speakers Program Coordinator: [Mark Bange](#)

Fly Tying Coordinator: [Wayne Blake-Hedges](#)

Saturday Hands-on Sessions Coordinator: [Rich Batiuk](#)

Holiday Dinner Coordinator: [Don Vance](#)

Publicity Coordinator: [Ryan Harvey](#)

Raffles Coordinators: [Bob Ruck](#) / [Mike Mattia](#)

Newsletter Editor: [Rich Batiuk](#)

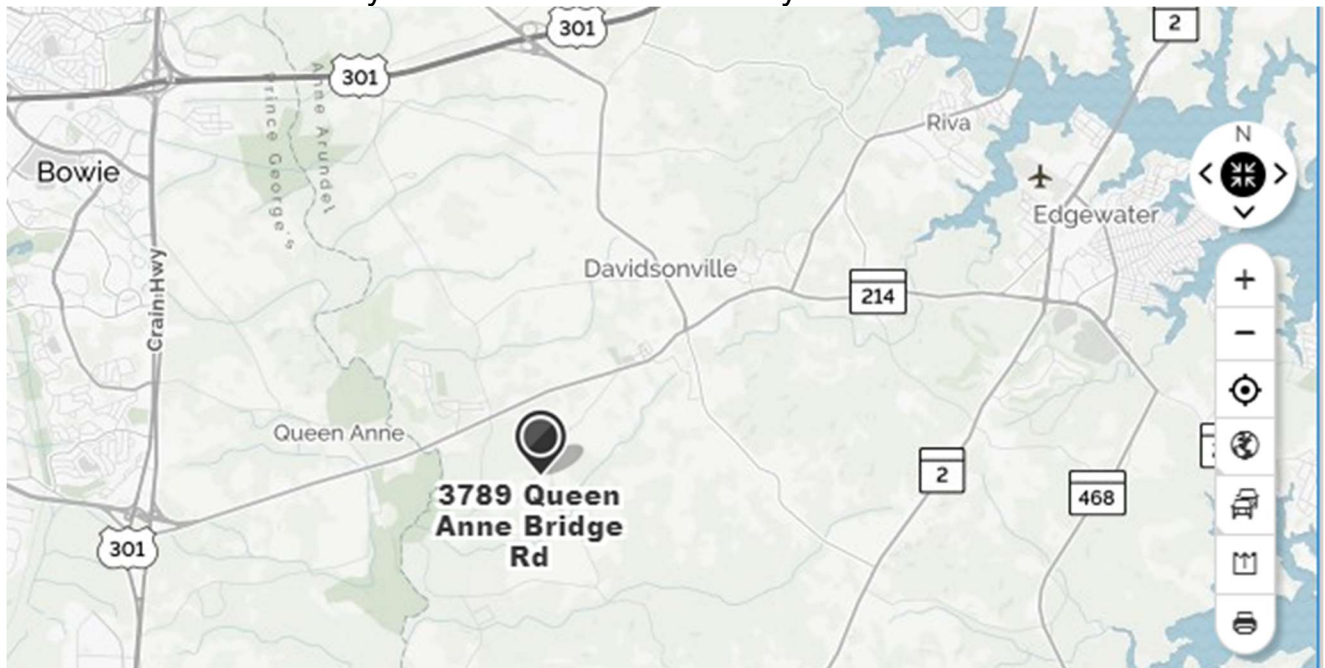
Please contact the appropriate FSFF leadership team member to get answers to any questions about Free State Fly Fishers and upcoming club sponsored events.

“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