



FREE STATE FLY FISHERS NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

President's Message: The Best Fishing Season of the Year



Well, it's Springtime! The best fishing season of the year.

But my heart's a lot lighter going into this Spring season than usual. The lockdowns of Covid are largely over. Vaccinations are becoming much easier to get (I've gotten both of mine). I can stop in at a Royal Farms on the trip home after fishing for a cup of coffee and not worry about what air I'm breathing and surfaces I'm touching.

It's Springtime. We've been chasing Pickerel all winter, but this month, out comes the gear for bluegill, largemouth bass, trout, striped bass, white perch, shad, and...carp (yup, that's what that cicada fly we tied last month is for!).

It takes a bit of time, and a lot of floorspace to get ready for Spring fishing. Especially if you've been a Club member for a few years. When I joined Free State Fly Fishers I had a 6 weight fly rod, a floating line, and a box of bass and trout flies and I was happy. Life was good.

Now, thanks to some unscrupulous members who baited me in with bargain basement prices at club swap meets I have 8 rods—two 4 weights, one 5 weight, two 6 weights, one 7 weight and two 8 weights!! At least my rods have the weight and length permanently printed on the rod.

That's more than I can say for my reels and the "mystery" line wound on some of them. I've now got a pile of reels and spools too. All my flies used

to be in one box. Now I have a room in my house with two shelving systems dedicated to storing fly boxes and fly tying materials. And the floor space I need to lay out the gear for a trip, especially if it's an overnight camping/fishing trip, is truly embarrassing. And a trip hazard.

But, it's Springtime! What else can I say? I wouldn't have it any other way! So I'm sorting my fishing gear, trying to remember which waders have holes in them and where the holes are, getting the kayaks ready (yup, both the paddle kayak and the pedal kayak), greasing the kayak trailer bearings and watching the water temperatures and weather reports (especially wind).

As of this writing the yellow perch have come and gone as have the white perch, but the shad are coming, trout are stocked (what an incredible job DNR did in stocking this year, over 70,000 in one week and over 135,000 trout in March!), pickerel are on the pads, Bluegill are heading for their beds, and the Stripers are on the way. Hooah!

And if that's not enough, Covid lockdowns are being lifted, vaccines are in many arms, and the Royal Farms coffee machine is calling.

So, this is a special Spring. We've made it through the winter, vaccines are here and Covid's on the run. Think of it this year as "Spring Plus". So grab a rod, grab a club member, and get out there and enjoy some Fellowship through Fly Fishing! Hooah!

See you on the stream,

Gary



Coastal Conservation Association's efforts to improve the waters and fisheries of Chesapeake Bay.

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, Tom Parham and Mark Bange. Come join us at 6:30 PM as we start our casting demonstrations and hands-on practicing on the lawn near the clubhouse.

Upcoming FSFF Sponsored Meetings, Events and Activities

Over a year ago now we found ourselves in a position where we could not meet together at our clubhouse due to county and state-wide restrictions. But being fly fishers, we came up with Plan B and continued to get together regularly through our monthly meetings (complete with door prizes, thanks Joe DeMeo!), first Saturday fly tying sessions, Saturday Hands-on Sessions, and even our beer ties. Ok, we did all this virtually, but what a truly outstanding series of speakers, fly tyers, and instructors we were able to schedule through Zoom meetings.

As many of us have been or scheduled for our vaccinations, we are seeing more and more light at the end of this very long tunnel. Please read on to hear about what your club has scheduled for the coming months. More information and updates on the details will be forthcoming via club-wide emails and through the club website's calendar of events.

Wednesday Club Meeting Presentations

May 5 Club Meeting – Dave Sikorski – Striped Bass Regulations and Fisheries Conservation Activities

Dave Sikorski, president of the Coastal Conservation Association of Maryland will be our May meeting speaker. Dave will be speaking about the coast-wide efforts to upgrade striped bass regulations as well the various efforts of the

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 fly casters (Duber Winters), intermediate fly casters (Tom Parham), advanced fly casters (Joe Bruce) and kayak fly casters (Mark Bange)—each led by one of our own club expert fly casters.

- **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.
- **Kayak casters:** members who want to learn how to fly cast from a kayak or further improve their casting skills from that kayak sitting position.

Saturday Morning Hands-on Sessions

Since the club started sponsored our Saturday Morning Hands-on Sessions, with the help of some very talented fellow club members, we have...

- Prepared for cold weather fishing safely;
- Learned about kayak fishing in local waters;
- Improved our fishing techniques for snakeheads;
- Figured out how to pare down our set of fishing tackle;
- Gotten lots of ideas and tips for organizing Your fly fishing everything...tackle, books, flies and fly tying materials;
- Received many insights into shallow-water fishing with demonstration of fishing techniques tailored for these unique habitats;
- Found out how to improve our boat/canoe/kayak fishing success by doing some advance homework;
- Gotten out on the stream for an abbreviated "Trout Fly Fishing 101" class;
- Learned all about catching more shad with flies (using only two flies!!);
- Finally conquered the bending of wire into articulated connectors and how to tie articulated flies; and
- Heard about purchasing/selecting the right fly rod, reel, line and leader for different fishing conditions.

What other fly fishing club offers so much hands-on knowledge to its members? Yeap, just us! Thanks to Joe Bruce, Rich Batiuk, Mark Bange,

Duber Winters, and John Veil for sharing their experiences with their fellow fly fishers. And thanks to Mike Mattia for setting up the Coast Guard Auxiliary for our excellent cold water fishing session.

The great news is we have got even more hands-on knowledge scheduled and still to be scheduled for sharing the how-to's about fly fishing...

May 15 -- Experiencing Offshore Fly Fishing—An

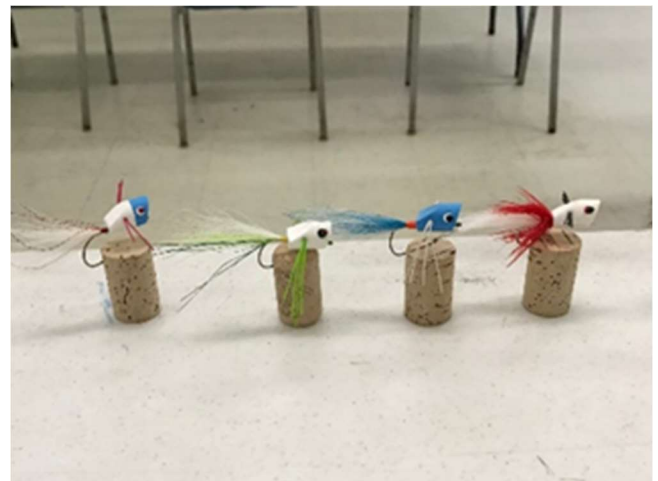


Introduction Have you ever wanted to fly cast to sailfish and other large fish species who call the open ocean home? Join fellow member and experienced offshore fly fisher Ed Waleryszak and find out more about how one goes about casting and hooking

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.





FSFF Sponsored Swap Meet

This year's Swap Meet is open to Free State Fly Fishers members (and family and friends) only with all tables to be located outside of the clubhouse from **9 AM – 12 PM on Saturday, May 8th**. A wide array of fly fishing and other fishing related rods, reels, fly lines, equipment, clothing and books will be available for sale. Fly tying equipment and A LOT of fly tying materials will also be on sale. Please bring cash or checks as we don't have the ability to run credit cards

If you want to sell your fly fishing stuff, please contact Mark Bange or Rich Batiuk so we can reserve you a table. And please join us at 8:30 AM that morning so you have time to set up before we officially open the flood gates!!

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 in the coming months:

- Saturday, May 1st
- Saturday June 5th

Until we are able to gather in person at the clubhouse for our Saturday morning fly tying sessions, 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.

May 1— Wayne Blake-Hedges Tying Flies We will be tying the Triangle bug in both panfish and Bass version.

Panfish version:

<https://www.panfishonthefly.com/blog/2021/1/28/fly-tying-friday-the-triangle-bug>

Bass version:

<https://www.panfishonthefly.com/blog/2020/4/10/triangle-bugs-for-bass>



Club Outings

We are back in business with club sponsored outings this year! Please see the club website's Event page at <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/events-2/> for more details and access to each outing flyer which provides information on date, time, location, recommended equipment, flies and more.

Deer Creek Shad Fishing

When: Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Where: Deer Creek, Harford County, Maryland

Outing Coordinator: Frank

Lenik frank.lenik@me.com 302.740.8120

Annual Bluegill Spawning Outing & Club Picnic

When: Wednesday, May 22, 2021

Where: Trap Pond State Park, Laurel, DE

Western Maryland Outing

When: Friday-Sunday, June 11-13, 2021

Where: Western Maryland, Garrett County, MD

Outing Coordinator: Gary

Grey garygrey74@gmail.com 443.795.1953

Adirondacks Outing

When: June 21-30, 2021

Where: Newcomb, New York (Adirondack Park)

Outing Coordinator: Gary

Grey garygrey74@gmail.com 443.795.1953

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, June 23rd
- Wednesday, August 25th

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!

Club News

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>. There is also a copy of the

2021 membership application included at the end of this newsletter.

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.

2020-2021 FSFF Biggest Pickerel Tournament Current Standings

Here the current standings for the club's 2020-2021 Biggest Pickerel Tournament. The tournament will officially close on April 30th so you still have a few days to land that monster pickerel and submit your entry to Mark Bange.

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



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

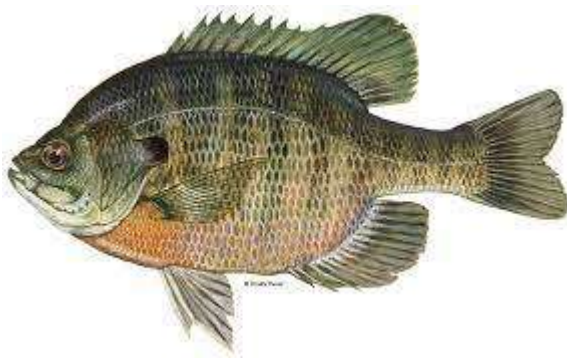




Third Place—John Rentch, 21 inches, Weems Creek, Annapolis, MD, 8 November 2020, Bullet Bullethead Darter.



Fourth Place – Don Vance, 20 inches, Severn River, 9 March, Crystal Bugger.



2021 FSFF Biggest Bluegill Tournament Officially Underway!

Pull out those fly boxes full of your favorite bluegill and other panfish flies and sharpen up those hooks as its started once again—efforts to fool the judges and be the first club member to land a 14 inch bluegill!! (See next page for all the details!)

Biggest Bluegill Tournament Rules:

1. Open to all 2021 FSFF members. (Note: Entrant must be a member on date the fish was caught.)
2. Fish must be caught on a fly via a flyrod. (No live or cut bait may be used.)
3. Fishing may take place in any waters of MD, DC, DE, PA, and VA.
4. For contest purposes entries may be bluegills, hybrid bluegills, or pumpkinseeds.
5. This is a catch and release photo contest governed by the honor system.
6. All fish must be alive when photographed and released thereafter.
7. Entries are to be emailed throughout the year to Mark Bange, mbange54@gmail.com (Note: Positions of entries will be listed on FSFF website throughout year.)
8. The last day to submit entries is Sunday, 15 November 2021.
9. Tie breakers determined by time of entry with preference to earlier entry.
10. Photos must be taken against any standard ruler or measuring device that clearly shows length of fish in inches from tail to mouth.
11. Longest fish in inches wins.
12. Photo should show fly if possible.
13. Entry email must contain following information: name of contestant, body of water where fish was caught, date fish was caught, name of fly used and recorded length of the bluegill.
14. Mark Bange will consult with club officers if necessary, for ruling on close entries to determine length of winning fish.

15. Winners will be recognized and awards presented at the December 2021 Holiday Party.

First place – Personal Trophy and name on Clubhouse Plaque.

Second place – Personal Trophy

Third place – Personal Trophy

Fourth place – Personal trophy

[**Editor's Note:** You can now purchase the below "Guaranteed 14 Inch Bluegill Every Time Ruler" from John Rentch for \$19.99 and dated photos of your very own 14" bluegill for an extra \$5.]



More Incredible Door Prizes at Upcoming Club Meetings

Thanks to our very own Joe DeMeo, we will have more of his incredible fly boxes filled with an amazing array of flies tied at his vise as door prizes. All you have to do is guess a number between 1 and 50 at the beginning of the meeting and Joe will determine the winner at the end of each meeting.

For those of us who know Joe well know he is above reproach—who else would use a random number generator prior to each club meeting to pick a number between 1 and 50!



So come join us at our upcoming club meetings with your favorite number...maybe the fly fishing gods will be looking out for you and give you a chance to take home a fly box filled with panfish flies, bass and panfish double barrel poppers, Clouser minnows or articulated crystal buggers!

Where to Fish

Tips for Fishing the Cicada Hatch By Bill May

Why The hatch of cicadas (17-year locusts) is a once in a 17-year opportunity for 4 to 6 weeks of surface fishing action. I've taken bass, carp and bluegills reservoir fishing in 2004 and 1987. This year I plan expand to taking Gunpowder trout and, at Eastern Shore ponds and rivers, hope to take pickerel, snakeheads, channel cats and probably white and yellow perch and other opportunistic feeders.

This is all sight fishing for cruising, feeding fish, similar to red fishing in Louisiana. Fly tackle is ideal but spin tackle works and may be the choice for shore fishing.

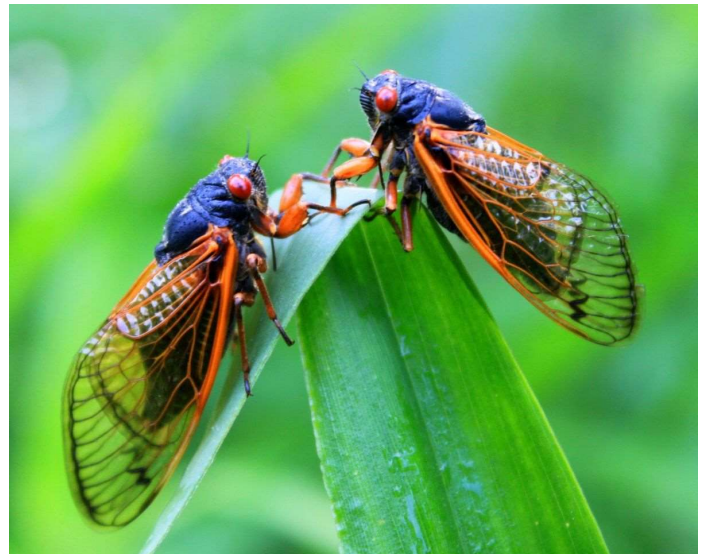
When and Where Any body of water in Maryland, Delaware and beyond with fish and overhanging trees and shrubbery can produce. The hatch is expected to run all of May with perhaps a week or two before and after. It seems to take about a week or so for fish to lock onto the hatch. (I picture a Far Side cartoon with a fish addressing his buddies while holding up a cicada in a fin, “Hey, you know you can eat these things!”) But once they do, it’s “Game on.”

I was awaiting my buddy, the late Harry Pippin, to arrive at the ramp of Prettyboy Reservoir with his boat during the height of the 2004 hatch and watching carp cruising the bank under nearby overhanging trees taking cicadas. So, I began taking fish steadily with a spin rod and Tiny Torpedo. Then there was a brief pause in cicada activity. Within 20 feet from me I saw a carp cruise over, grab a branch hanging into the clear water and shake it. Cicadas rained down and a feeding frenzy ensued.

How I recommend a 7 or 8-weight fly rod, floating line and a leader that can turn over the wind-resistant cicada flies as you drive the cast under overhanging shrubbery.

I like Joe Bruce’s basic leader: 4 feet of 50-pound mono, 2 feet of 40-pound, one foot of 30-pound culminating in a loop knot. A 2 to 4-foot tippet is attached via a loop-to-loop knot. In waters with pickerel or other toothy fish, obstructions, or big fish, 20-pounds or higher may be the choice. For trout streams or clear waters with minimal obstructions, I may go as light as 3X to 12-pounds.

Joe Bruce has sent pictures and instructions for tying a cicada foam fly. He also sells them to order. These would be the clear choice, but, in my



experience, close is good enough. I’ve taken fish on dark hair bugs and short-tailed Gartside Gurglers, and I expect a number of dark bugs will work. Bluegills attack cicadas, tear them apart, then eat the pieces, so smaller dark bugs can take them.

Spin fishing is really basic: A medium weight 6 to 7-foot rod, 12-pound mono and bite leader as necessary. A dark Tiny Torpedo is the only lure you’ll need. Just drop it in front of the fish and work it with an occasional small twitch; the prop gets their attention. For this fishing I remove the belly hook and replace the tail hook with a light split ring and larger, light treble or single hook.

Access and Watercraft There are lots of choices: Reservoir boats (basically dedicated battery barges that can only be used on the 3 Baltimore City reservoirs), boats, canoes, kayaks, float tubes or other inflatables (can’t wait to try) or just wade or shore fish. For kayaks, canoes and small boats, use two good anchors with enough rope to prevent fishing from dragging you into structure. Inflatables could be an adventure; try anchoring.

The phenomenon Enjoy nature’s displays, bugs dropping and buzzing, birds, fish and other critters like foxes feeding on them. Then it’s over for another 17 years.

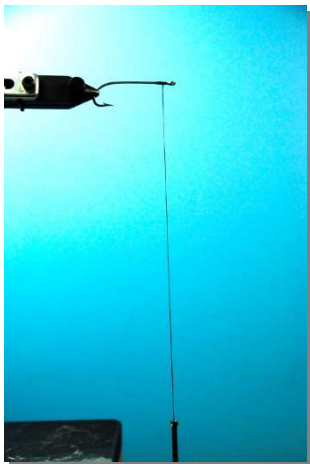
How to Fish Even Better

Learn How to Tie a Hand Whip Finish

By Joe Bruce

I have been using a hand whip finish to complete the fly for over five decades. It should be mastered. I have tied flies for myself, my fly shop and commercially, tying a quality and quick fly was a must for me. I didn't want to waste time looking for a whip finisher tool buried somewhere on my tying desk, plus sometimes a pattern is tied in steps or finished not at the hook eye. A whip finisher may not reach the tie down point.

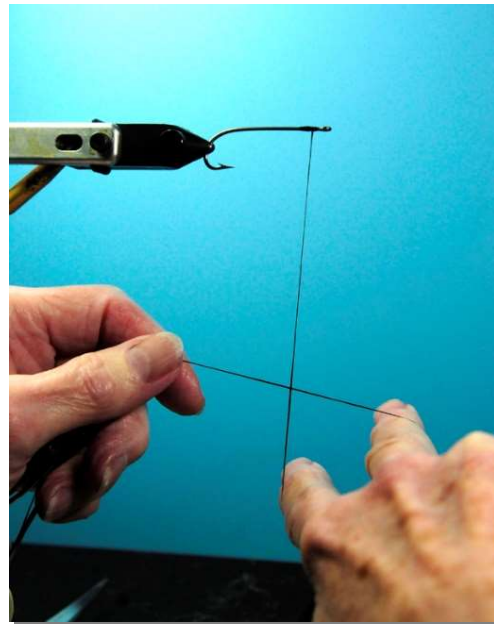
It should be practiced and practiced until it is second nature, it isn't that difficult to accomplish. After you master it, you can give your whip finisher tool away.



second nature, it isn't that difficult to accomplish. After you master it, you can give your whip finisher tool away.

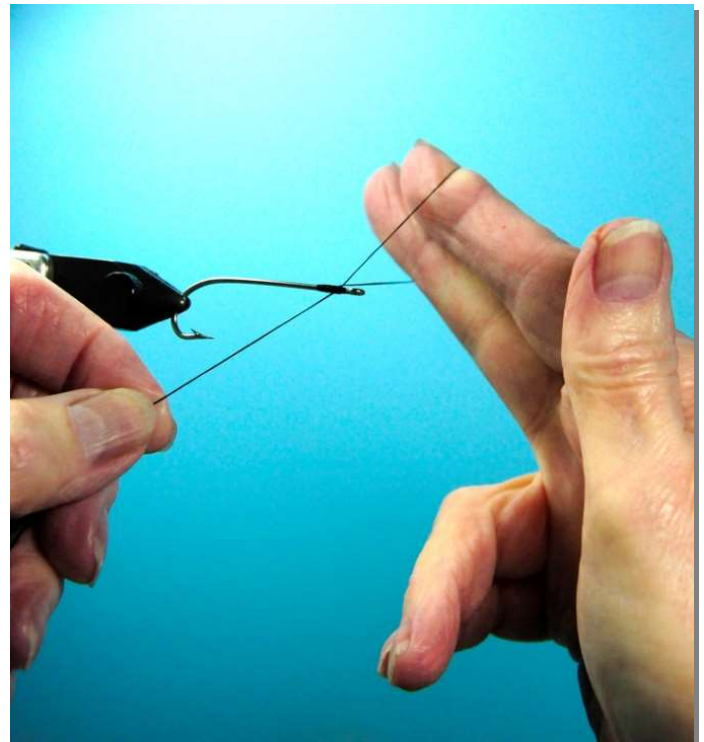
Tying Steps

1. Pull nine to ten inches of thread from the bobbin.
2. Using the back of your index and middle fingers come from underneath the thread.

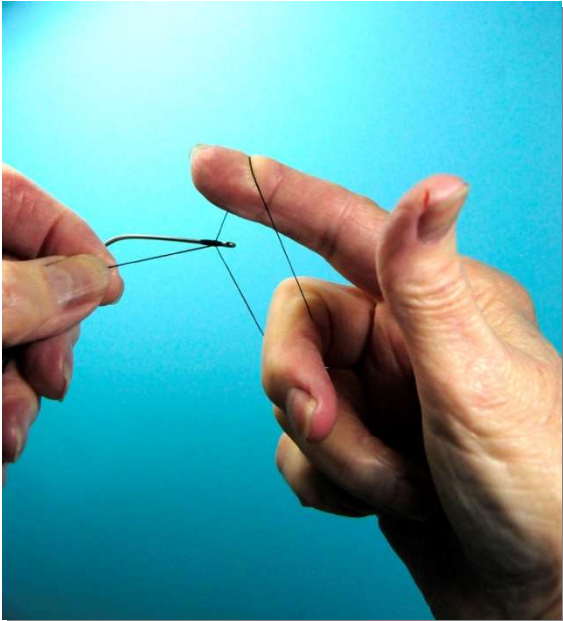


3. This is the trickiest part to the tie; rotate the two fingers up over the thread, rotating them back to a vertical position in front of you. You will notice you have formed an upside-down figure four.

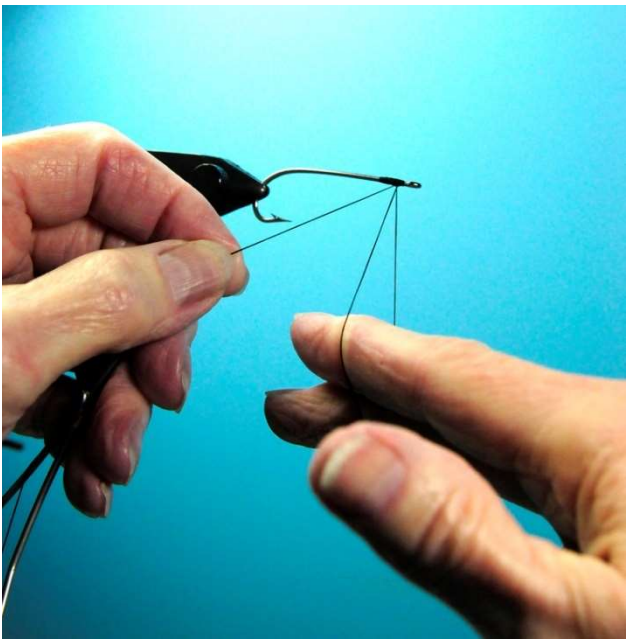
4. Slide the bobbin close to the fly, while keeping your hand with the invert four stationary.



5. Spread you two fingers and throw your index finger over the top of the hook shank.

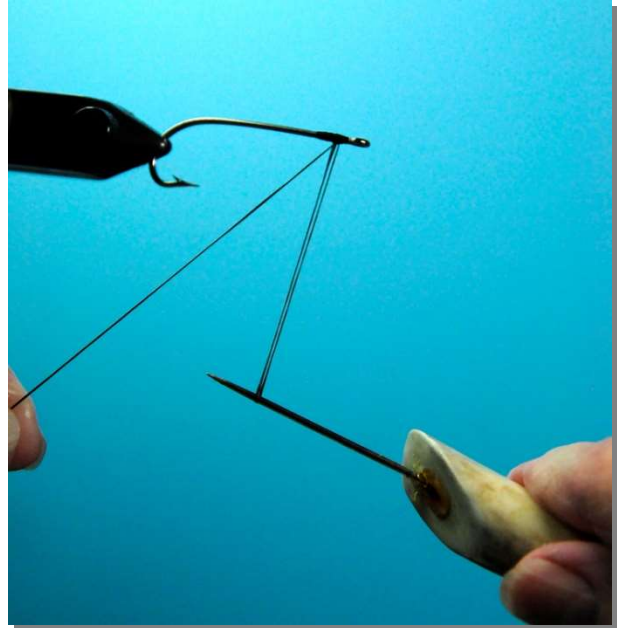


6. Slide your middle finger under the hook shank and join the index finger on the other side of the hook. Your hand needs to do a slight twist to get the fingers together on the other side of the fly.

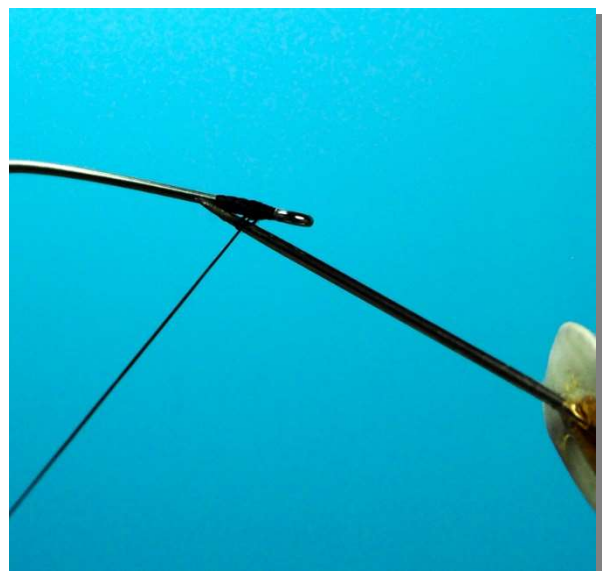


7. Bring both fingers back under the hook shank to their original position and repeat Steps 5 and 6 seven times.

8. Slide a bodkin in the loop formed by you two finger and pull the loop up by pulling on the thread bobbin to pull the knot tight.



9. Cut the thread at the hook shank and you have completed the hand whip finish. Piece of cake!!!



Featured Fly: Bluegill Flies Recommended by Fellow Free State Fly Fisher Members

Here's a series of bluegill fly patterns recommended by your fellow members...just in time for our 2021 Biggest Bluegill Tournament. Each of these are guaranteed to yield a 14" bluegill! (Talk with John Rentch for details.)

Black Ant

Hook: #10 wet fly hook
Body: Black tying thread, 210 denier
Legs: Black Hackle

Black Foam Ant

Hook: #10 dry fly hook
Thread: 6/0 black thread
Body: 2 mm black foam, approximately 3/16" wide
Under body: Peacock herl
Legs: Black hackle

Foam Green Beetle

Hook: #10 Jig Hook or #10 standard dry fly hook
Thread: 6/0 Chartreuse
Body: 2 mm green foam, approximately 3/16" wide
Under body: Peacock herl
Legs: round white rubber

Gurgler

Two hook sizes, 6 and 4, for bluegills with Mustad 3366

Mad Scientist Fly

A dragon fly imitation. Size 8/6.

Bumblebee

Size 10

Bugglebug Popper

Size 10—this is killer in orange, yellow and white.

KC Creature Grasshopper Imitation

Size 8. Bonus bass really like this one as well.

Slumpbuster

Size 6/8

Feature Article: First Trout on a Fly!

By Kristi Drake

Before the Middle Patuxent River outing, my wife and I had tried to fish Morgan Run and the Little Patuxent River 3 or 4 times and hadn't even had so much as a bite or a fish sighting on those outings. I thought to myself, if my wife doesn't at least get a bite this time out, she might never go fishing again.

So, I set her fly rod up with the mop fly since I only had the one that Duber Winters gave me and I set mine up with a zebra midge. She started fishing and I watched her for a little bit to make sure she was getting a good drift. She was, so I started fishing with my setup just downstream of her. I started casting my line and low and behold I got tangled. I was working to untangle my line for a few minutes and then start fishing again.

Three casts later and I was tangled again. This happened 2 more times. I remember thinking...I'm done fishing for trout; I'm tired of messing with split shot and adjusting "bobbers" (I wasn't going to give it the sophisticated name of strike indicator at this point) AND trying to untangle all of that. I was done.

As I was untangling my mess, my wife had two strikes. I was happy for her. I tried to coach her on setting the line and pull the fish in, but she lost the first decent size fish before I got over to her so I went back to untangling my line.

As soon as I pick up my rod, I hear her say "I got another one! It's a minnow!" I look over and sure enough she had a tiny fish on the hook. I tell her to raise her rod tip and pull in the line but she says "I feel bad for it! It's just a baby!" and before she can get it close to the net it shakes the hook.

It's getting late by this point so we decided to start walking downstream to where we started. We stopped at one of the pools we didn't get to try when we first arrived (there was another angler

there at that time). One last cast before we headed home to see if we could land a fish.

My wife was sweet and said to try her rod so I did and two casts later I hooked that fish and she landed it. After catching that fish, I changed my mind about not fishing for trout anymore.



I learned two things that day: No. 1. My wife's fly line was smooth through the guides and mine was not. I concluded that my fly rod either needed new line or it needed a good cleaning. No. 2. Goodbye to split shot and bobbers. I'm going to fish for trout Euro style from now on! HAHA!

[**Editor's Note:** This story started as an email shared with all club members from Kristi. I asked her if she allow me to share her story and photo through the newsletter, so she shared a more detailed version of the first trout on a fly.]

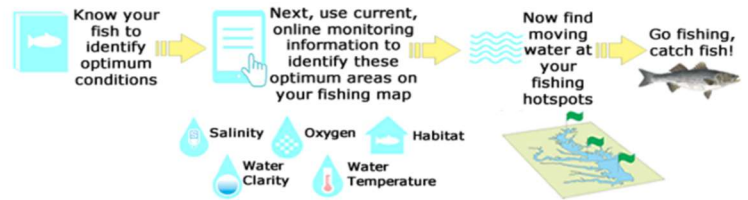
Feature Article: Click Before You Cast: Using Online Fishing Resources to Catch More Fish

By Tom Parham

"Where are the fish?" It is an age-old question many Chesapeake Bay anglers ask when searching countless tidal creeks, rivers and bays stretching over 4,500 square miles and averaging 21 feet deep. We all understand that fish are influenced by food, shelter, and water conditions. So where do we find this information?

The answer is just a few mouse clicks away. Maryland, Virginia, and the federal government

Follow these steps to find where fish are likely to be present on your next fishing trip:



agencies like the U.S. Geological Survey, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and collect and post online a variety of environmental monitoring data to help us better understand our waters so we can protect and restore our critical natural resources.

This goldmine of monitoring information can also provide you with powerful tools that can help you eliminate unproductive waters, save you fuel, and up your chances of fishing success. When combined with the popular [Maryland Fishing Report, Click Before You Cast](#)," provides bay anglers key information to make their next fishing trip a success.

The [Click Before You Cast](#) website is set up to allow you to follow different paths to find out the level of information you need to be successful.

Path 1 – Read the [Maryland Fishing Report](#) for a brief summary of fishing related Bay conditions

Path 2 – Read the detailed [Weekly Fishing Conditions Forecast](#) at the top of the Click Before You Cast website

Path 3 - Follow the series of [Click Before You Cast](#) steps to help you find where fish are likely to be present on your next fishing trip. At each step, you are guided through the relevant links, key thresholds, and tips for using the information.

Step 1 - "Think like a fish": Understand water conditions and habitat areas your target fish prefers

We provide you information about several Chesapeake Bay gamefish that will show you where, when, and how to find and catch them. Once you understand their favorite seasonal haunts, pull out your charts and get ready to start zooming in on productive spots for your next fishing trip.

Step 2 - Eliminate areas outside preferred salinity range

Some Chesapeake Bay fish are better than others at surviving over a range of salinity conditions. For instance, striped bass are found anywhere from freshwater to the ocean. For the fish with limited salinity ranges such as largemouth bass, their habitat will expand or contract with changing bay salinities. However, bay salinities in any spot, will vary greatly due to the amount of rainfall entering through the bay's rivers. During years of low rainfall amounts, saltier conditions will move further up the Chesapeake Bay. If you know what salinity your target gamefish prefers and compare it to current salinity maps, you can eliminate unproductive water.

Step 3 - Eliminate poorly oxygenated areas

Fish need dissolved oxygen to survive. During cooler months, there is plenty of oxygen in most areas of the Chesapeake Bay. However, when the waters warm, there are large areas of the Chesapeake Bay's deeper waters that have very little or no oxygen. This is caused by the dense, salty, deeper waters inability to be recharged with oxygen from surface mixing. In addition, algae blooms also cause low oxygen levels at night through respiration or when they die and decompose. In general, avoid fishing in waters with less than about 3 mg/l of dissolved oxygen.

Step 4 - Eliminate areas outside of preferred temperature range

Water temperature greatly influences the seasonal distribution of Chesapeake Bay gamefish. Each type of fish has a preferred temperature range where cooler than normal temperatures will slow them

down and warmer temperatures will increase their activity. Some fish will avoid high water temperatures and in summer, often move as deep as possible to areas that still have adequate oxygen levels.

Step 5 - Eliminate areas with poor clarity

Poor water clarity can make it hard for fish to find and capture food. Water clarity is impacted by amount of suspended sediment and algae in the water. Excess sediment carried into the Chesapeake Bay by large rains or re-suspended by wave action can reduce water clarity and result in coffee-colored water. While fish will avoid high levels of suspended sediment, they will often feed in or near the edges of this coffee-colored water because these areas often contain food. In addition, large algal blooms can often color the water various shades of green or brownish red. In some cases, fish will avoid areas with dense algal blooms because the algae can be toxic or cause low oxygen levels at night or when the algae die and decompose.

Step 6 - In the remaining area, identify preferred habitat

Fish need places to live, eat, and reproduce. Due to constantly changing Chesapeake Bay conditions, preferred fish habitat for any type of fish can vary greatly throughout the year. Experienced anglers know that gamefish will often congregate on or near areas where relatively deep water is near shallow water or habitat edges. Typical areas include points, drop-offs, channel edges, flats, grass beds, and oyster bars. In the remaining areas on your chart, mark areas with these types of features preferred by the type of fish you are seeking. The best fishing areas often include a combination of several key habitats, such as oyster bars or grass beds near channel edges, etc.

Step 7 - Find moving water

Once you have identified your fishing spots, find moving water by checking the on-line streamflow, wind, wave conditions and tide charts. Finding

moving water is important because it can funnel baitfish and crabs through the prime habitat areas where gamefish feed. Rising tides can move fish into shallower areas while falling tides can pull prey out of the shallower areas into deeper channels where gamefish will feed. Some areas fish better on falling water and other areas fish better on rising water.

Wind direction, duration and speed can also mean a big difference to your fishing day. Not only does wind oxygenate the water, but winds blowing against the tide can often produce larger waves than normal and can slow tidal flushing. Winds blowing in the same direction of the tide can speed up tidal flushing.

Increased flows can improve fishing by cooling and oxygenating the water and dislodging food, but when flows get too high, they can quickly alter conditions by decreasing water clarity and salinity.

Step 8 - Go fishing and catch fish!

The whole purpose of this process is to help you find the best places to fish.

1. First learn about where your fish live and preferred conditions.
2. Next, pull out your Chesapeake Bay charts and a marker.
3. Now visit your regional websites with current oxygen, salinity, temperature, and water clarity conditions.
4. As you move through each step, continue to cross off unsuitable areas on your chart.
5. Now in the remaining areas on your chart, begin highlighting prime habitat.
6. At this point, find moving water by checking your tide charts, wind conditions and flow at these prime areas.

You have now identified the best places to find fish right now, not last week or last month, but **right now**. The last step, and most fun, is to go fishing and catch a bunch of fish!

Protecting and restoring your local waterways

As avid anglers, your voice is important to make sure that we all have clean and healthy waterways to explore, enjoy and experience great Chesapeake Bay fishing. When you work together with other anglers, everybody wins - the fish thrive, and we all get more chances to make more of those magic moments on the water.



Report a Bay Problem in Maryland: 1-877-224-7229

- Boating accident or reckless activity
- Floating debris that poses a hazard to navigation
- Public sewer leak or overflow
- Oil or hazardous material spill
- Critical area or wetlands violation
- Fish kill or algal bloom
- Illegal fishing activity
- Suspicious or unusual activity

If you have questions using this site, give me a call (Tom Parham) at 443-534-8717 or rplx2009@gmail.com. I am always glad to help.

[Editor's Note: Thanks to Tom for his willingness to share this newsletter article following up on his excellent presentation at our February 3rd club meeting. *Click Before You Cast* is a great on-line resource all of us should take full advantage of...we can all use some help increasing that cast to catch ratio!]

Feature Article: Who is a fly fisher?

By Mark Bange

Life's experience tells us is that there are very few absolutes. Math and physics may be exceptions to that observation but in general, especially when it comes to human behavior, failproof predictability is a fallacy.

Nevertheless, I believe there are certain commonalities among fly anglers. Here are a few of my observations on that matter gained through more than a half century of fishing and over three decades of fly fishing:

1. Fly anglers are concerned more with how, than how many. Very few of my fly-fishing friends are score keepers. They know in general numbers how many fish they catch on a given outing. They won't greet you and immediately state the count. Usually, they characterize a particular trip as a good one or one with a tough bite. They leave it to you to fill in the blanks. They know they can catch more fish and even larger fish with conventional tackle using lures or live bait. But they don't care. They prefer to catch fish on the fly. The how is key to them. The tactile nature of fly fishing is very important to them. The fact that they give action to their artificial offerings with their hand without benefit of the gear ratios of reels, and then retrieve most of their catches likewise manually is what they enjoy. They feel the exact moment of the strike in their fingertips. They feel the power, every dive, jump and headshake of their catch directly. Those moments are not muted by any mechanical interventions, just the rod, line, leader and hook between them and the fish.
2. Fly fishers are excellent stewards of the environment. Because they often fish in small creeks, ponds and shallow waters,

they see the environment of their prey up close. They walk the waters they fish. Or they use kick boats or kayaks. They are in direct personal contact with those waters. They get wet. Typically, they are not speeding by in a powerboat. They are literally immersed in the same environment with the fish they seek as they meander along on foot or float with the current in a small vessel. They see firsthand the impact of litter – bait containers left on the shoreline, beverage bottles, coils of deadly monofilament discarded by less caring anglers. They see the growth of algae enhanced by too many nutrients seeping into the waters they fish from agricultural and residential excesses. Many join organizations like Trout Unlimited or the Coastal Conservation Association because they believe deeply in the goals of those organizations to preserve and enhance our waterways. Also, I believe they are more apt to engage in "Catch and Release" fishing, using barbless hooks and rubberized nets even when not mandated to do so. In fact, the MD DNR will attest that the "Catch and Keep" portion of the Gunpowder River, largely fished on the fly, shows little evidence of fish being removed by anglers.

3. In line with the both points above, fly fishers appreciate the outing and the stage on which it occurs more than the catch. The proverbial "skunk" on an outing is of no concern to them. They stay late on the water for the joy of fishing and the surroundings, not to finally catch a fish on an otherwise slow bite day to avoid being skunked. Catching a fish is of secondary importance. There is so much more to interest a fly angler than actually hooking a fish. The very act of fly fishing is its gratification. The cast—watching a line unfurl in a tight loop toward a distant target with precision is one of the joys of fly

fishing. It requires a degree of manual coordination and timing. But it's easily mastered in time. When it all comes together, it's a beautiful thing. When I am fly fishing with others, I often pause to observe their casts. I marvel at the beauty of the act. I can take as much joy at a well-placed side-armed cast under an overhanging tree as a hookup. Curving fly line around a protruding rock or downed log with a twist of my wrist is both fun and effective. It's something that's darned near impossible with conventional tackle. Floating a dry fly next to a seam in the water with no drag is a special skill as is drifting a nymph through a deep pool. Again, when done well those activities in themselves are the reward. Fooling a fish in the process is merely an additional benefit.



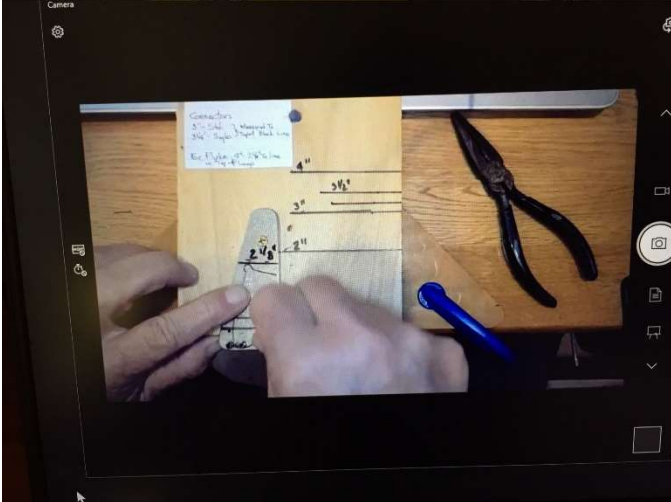
4. As to the stage, what can be more beautiful than the destinations that fly fishers, especially many FSFF members, are so fortunate to frequent? Whether they visit a brook trout stream in Western Maryland, a Delaware millpond, a tidal creek on the Magothy, or the wide waters of the upper Potomac and Susquehanna, each location provides memorable sights and sounds in addition to wonderful fishing opportunities. Turtles, otters, beavers, varied birdlife, interesting trees and other plants, colorful mosses, odd shapes of lichens, rocky cliffs –

nature never fails to impress us. Again, these venues provide diverse environments easy on the eyes and senses in ways that far exceed fish counts at the end of the day. Fly fishers in particular know that.

5. Finally, I believe fly fishers are extremely resourceful. Each of the locations I mentioned above, requires different approaches with fly fishing gear and techniques. Fly fishers adapt to them easily. In fact, most fly anglers switch tactics effortlessly depending on where they fish. Many tie their flies, much more so than conventional anglers make their own lures. Some construct their leaders and some even make their rods. Using their handcrafted creations provides them a special joy. Indeed, fly fishers are resourceful, multi-dimensional anglers.

As I said at the beginning, there is nothing static when it comes to human behaviors. Others surely have different thoughts on this topic of defining a fly angler. I hope I have given you pause to consider your own feelings on the matter. The observations I have cited here have moved me to continue fly fishing throughout the decades. Although I use conventional tackle too, I enjoy fishing the most when I cast a fly rod. That will not change.



[Editor's Note: The above article is an excerpt from a forthcoming book by Mark on kayak fly fishing. So far its filled with over 42,000 words and 120 pages before photos. Look for its release this fall via Amazon. As a fly fishing club, we are blessed to have several active fly fishing book authors, certified fly casting instructors, former fly fishing guides and instructors, as well as fly fishers of all skill and experience levels. But what makes us so unique is the willingness of all our members to share their experiences—from first trout caught on fly to how to whip finish a fly by hand—with their fellow members!]





Hickory and White Shad

Hickory Shad has a projected lower lip



White Shads lip is flush





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](#)

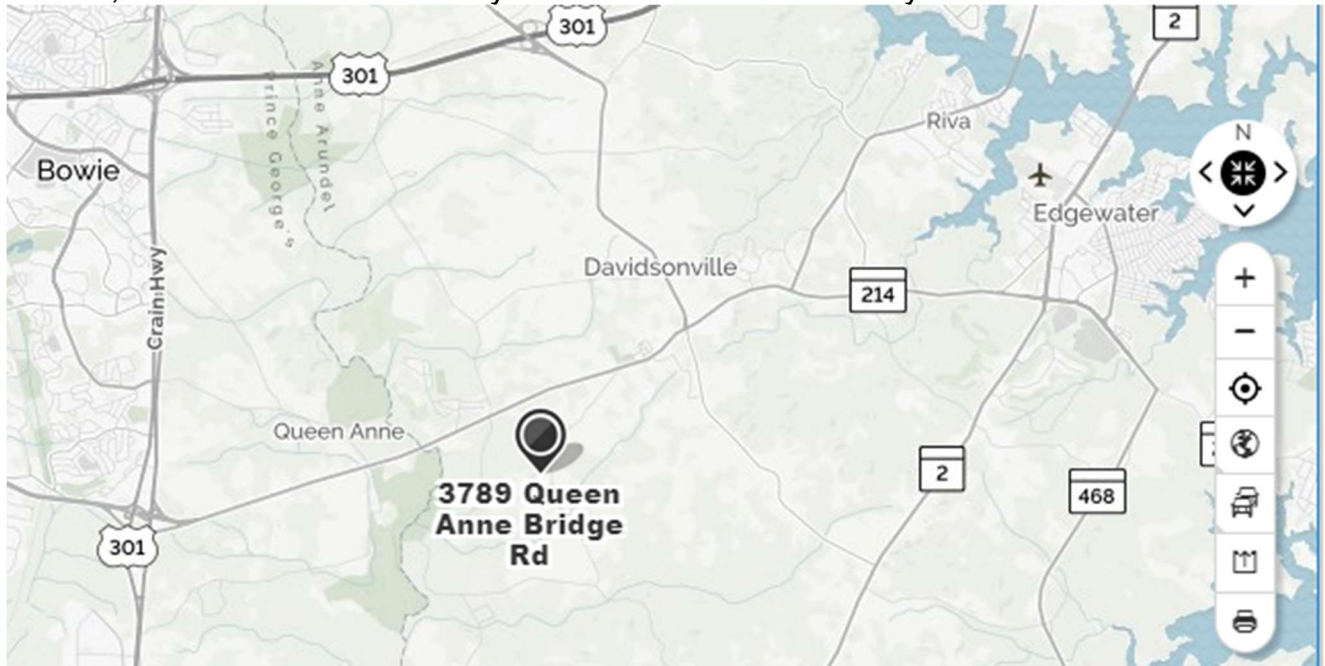
Please contact the appropriate FSFF leadership team member to get answers to any questions about Free State Fly Fishers and upcoming club sponsored events.

“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: <mailto:info@fs-ff.com>