



# FREE STATE FLY FISHERS NEWSLETTER

Winter 2024

## President's Message: It's Good to Have Options

As we approach the heart of the winter time season here in the Mid-Atlantic, many of us get in to preparation mode for the upcoming fly fishing season. Many do, but not all.

There is no doubt that this season of shorter days can encourage us to dream about our fishing plans for the year to come. This often translates to thinking about where and when we want to fish, putting those plans in to place and taking inventory and preparing our gear accordingly. As fly anglers so many of us love this process! We love our gear and the only thing better than actually using it is getting our hands on it, organizing it, cleaning it up and preparing it with great pride as we ready ourselves to put it to use. This also contributes to convincing ourselves to evaluate the age, value and potential performance of said equipment which may or may not dictate the purchase of the latest and greatest gear to hit the fly fishing marketplace. And for many of us this process is a love, hate, love, love, love thing!

However many anglers look at the January, February and March time frame to get out and fish. This is the busiest time of year for destination trips to tropical climates (for obvious reasons) to chase the glamour species such as bonefish, permit, tarpon, redfish and others. Yet still many anglers are focused on fishing locally and for good reason. We are all well aware of the great pickerel fishing that surrounds us here in the colder months. A brief paddle in a kayak or canoe is all it takes to be in prime position to throw pretty flies in clear water to fly willing fish. What more could one ask for? And for the trout angler a low wind, mid 40's day can produce a great fishing catching day and on streams that see few other anglers this time of year. Drive 5 or so hours north and you can swap out that 4 wt. rod for

an 8 and you put yourself in front of the jumbo version of those rainbow trout, the steelhead.

And yet for those not interested in layering up and braving the elements, the fly fishing industry gives us plenty of opportunities to join together at the various fly fishing shows to get our hands on that new gear, hear what the experts have to say and connect with others.

Fortunately FSFF has you covered on all of these approaches to negate the winter doldrums and keep you connected to the fly fishing world. Saturday January 20<sup>th</sup> is another great Hands on Session at the clubhouse where you will learn and tie every knot you need to know. Saturday January 26<sup>th</sup> we are carpooling to the Edison NJ fly fishing show. Saturday February 3<sup>rd</sup> Luis Santiago leads our next fly tying session. Wednesday February 7<sup>th</sup> is our monthly club meeting featuring Walleye Pete sharing his knowledge on fishing the Tangier Island area of the bay. Saturday February 17<sup>th</sup> is another Hands on Session at the clubhouse featuring Mark Bange offering our most popular presentation "Kayak Fishing in Local Waters" (lunch included); and this followed by a Beer Tie on February 28<sup>th</sup> at the Killarney House. In March we ramp up big time with another fly fishing show carpool to Lancaster, PA and member led fly tying session on the 2<sup>nd</sup>, a club meeting on the 6<sup>th</sup>, a streamside FF 101 class on the 9<sup>th</sup>, a Hands on Session for pickerel on the 16<sup>th</sup> and a trout school on the 23<sup>rd</sup>. We are busy!!

So no matter how you plan on navigating through the winter months, be sure to stay connected with your friends at FSFF and join us at the club, on a road trip or on the water. We are anxious to connect with our great members and share fellowship through fly fishing.

So let's fish!!

*Duber*

Duber Winters, 2024 Free State Fly Fishers President

## FSFF Sponsored Meetings, Events and Activities

As Duber described in his President's message, our club is offering a host of opportunities to continue to learn about all aspects of fly fishing during these winter months. During January through March, 14 different meetings, fly tying sessions, Saturday hands-on sessions, car pools to regional fly fishing shows, fly fishing 101 and guided instruction stream-side classes are being offered to members (and to folks interested in finding out about what Free State Fly Fishers has to offer to them). So when you are not out on one of the many trout streams in our region or in your kayak chasing pickerel, come and join your fellow fly fishers and learn something new about fly fishing.

Just remember, any time, day or night, you can find out what the club has to offer you as members via our club website's events page at <https://fsff.com/index.php/events-2/>. Mark your calendars and come out and join your fellow members. Better yet, subscribe to the club's events so that they automatically appear in your smartphone's calendar.



### Wednesday Club Meeting Presentations

Here's our current club meetings schedule from February through May with our June meeting being devoted to a casting clinic complete with dinner. Meetings are 7:00 PM to 8:30 PM in the club house at 3789 Queen Anne Bridge Road Davidsonville, MD 21035.

Thanks to Gary Grey, our Meeting Speaker Coordinator, for lining up this excellent array of speakers, thanks to Ryan Harvey for working to get announcements about our upcoming meetings in local and regional newspapers and other publications, and thanks to Frank Bowne for updating the club website's calendar with information on these and all other club sponsored events.

**February 7:** Walleye Pete: Walleye Pete is a light tackle fishing guide on the Chesapeake Bay, specializing in fishing the Tangier Sound area of the Chesapeake Bay for Striped Bass and Specs.



**March 6:** Luis Santiago and Gary Grey, both FSFF members, will present on "Budget friendly Northern Pike and Smallmouth Bass fishing in Ontario, Canada and the Adirondacks, New York". They will share their experiences during club sponsored and club member organized trips to both of these fish filled locations.

**April 3:** Mike Slepisky: Mike is a fly fishing guide from the Tightlining MD Guide Service. He specialized in fly fishing for trout in the Central Maryland Area and his presentation will discuss several local streams suitable for fly fishing for trout.

**May 1:** Rich Batiuk, a FSFF member, will present on "The New [Maryland's Fly Fishing Trail](#)". Rich was one of the leaders in developing and creating Maryland's Fly Fishing Trail and will make a

presentation covering the entire aspect of this project including, "Get out there and fish it"!

If you have ideas for club meeting speakers or would be willing to present to your fellow club members, please reach out to me at [garygrey74@gmail.com](mailto:garygrey74@gmail.com).

Gary Grey, FSFF Meeting Speaker Coordinator



### Saturday Morning Fly Tying Sessions

The club's first Saturday of the month club member-led fly tying sessions are scheduled all the way through April this year. Come join your fellow club members starting at 10 AM at the clubhouse at 3789 Queen Anne Bridge Road Davidsonville, MD 21035 to learn how to tie several new fly patterns. In advance of each fly tying session, members will receive an email message listing the member leading that session, what fly patterns will be tied and any materials you need to bring to the session. For most sessions, materials will be provided.

New to fly tying? You have come to the right place as each fly tying session is geared towards teaching fly tyers of all experience levels how to tie each pattern. And there is tying equipment available for use by anyone participating in these member-led sessions including 3 fly tying vises, thanks to Luis Santiago as well as assorted fly tying material in the back storage room available for use by everyone.

**February 3:** Luis Santiago will lead the fly tying session focused on tying his Lost Lake favorite bass flies: foam popper and Olive Peanut Envy.

**March 2:** Mark Bange will walk fellow fly tyers through the steps for tying several of his favorite bluegill flies.

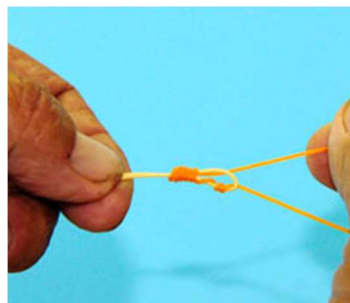


**April 6:** Adam Bange will reveal his secrets to tying (more like creating!) spun deer hair flies so you don't want to miss this fly tying session.

Luis Santiago, FSFF Fly Tying Sessions Coordinator

### Saturday Morning Hands-on Sessions

Thanks to our fellow club members' willingness to share their experiences, we have scheduled Saturday Hands-on Sessions through May covering an incredible array of topics. All Hands-on Sessions will be held on the third Saturday of the month at the clubhouse at 3789 Queen Anne Bridge Road Davidsonville, MD 21035 from 10 AM to 12 PM unless otherwise noted.



**January 20:** Joe Bruce and Duber Winters' "Tying Fishing Knots for Every Fly Fishing Situation".



**February 17:** Mark Bange's "Kayak Fishing in Local Waters" class 10 AM – 2 PM (includes group lunch).

**March 16:** Joe Bruce's "Everything You Need to Know About Fishing for Pickerel".



**April 20:** Joe Bruce's "How to Attack the Pads and Catch More Fish".

**May 11:** Joe Bruce's "Using Different Fish Catching Retrieves with Your Fly Rod" (everyone should bring a fly rod with reel and line to practice the retrieves).

The club website's calendar of events will also include one page flyers on each session with descriptions of the session and any additional logistics information you will need to join your fellow club members.

We are starting to develop the September 2024-May 2025 calendar of Saturday Hands-on Sessions so if you are interested in sharing some aspect of fly fishing with your fellow club members, please contact me at [richbatiuk@gmail.com](mailto:richbatiuk@gmail.com).

Rich Batiuk, FSFF Saturday Hands-on Session Coordinator

### **Casting Clinics**

We are in the process of planning for this year's series of casting clinics in terms of dates, locations and approaches—the back lawn of the clubhouse as well as on-water casting. I welcome input from fellow club members on what works best for them.

Please reach out to me at [trudemeyer@gmail.com](mailto:trudemeyer@gmail.com) with your suggestions.

Tim Ruthemeyer, FSFF Casting Clinic Coordinator



### **Wednesday Night Beer Ties**

Thanks to Frank Bowne, we're continuing another long held club tradition...Beer Ties at the Killarney House located at 584 W Central Avenue in Davidsonville.

And yes, this is just an excuse for club members, friends, family members and guests to gather together to drink adult beverages, eat bar food, talk, share fishing stories...and, oh yeah, tie flies.

The club sponsored Wednesday Night Beer Ties at



6:00 PM are on the fourth Wednesday night of every even numbered month throughout the year:

- February 28<sup>th</sup>
- April 24<sup>th</sup>
- June 26<sup>th</sup>
- August 28<sup>rd</sup>
- October 23<sup>rd</sup>

So bring your fly tying material and equipment and a good appetite and join us for good food and great conversation!

## Club Sponsored Outings

**April 18-21, 2024 Western Maryland Outing:**

<https://fs-ff.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/FSFF-Western-Maryland-Outing-2024-April-18-21.pdf>

**May 18, 2024 Club Picnic and Outing:** Trap Pond State Park, Laurel, Delaware.

**June 21-25, 2024 Adirondacks NY Outing:** For you long-term planners in the club, next year's Club Adirondacks trip will be June 21-25, 2024. Block those dates out on your calendar now! More details to be provided later by Gary Grey, the outing coordinator for this club sponsored trip.



### **Carpooling to Winter and Spring Fly Fishing Shows**

We are fast approaching fly fishing shows season, so be sure and sign up at an upcoming club meeting, fly tying session or Saturday Hands-on session. Or email Rich Batiuk at [richbatiuk@gmail.com](mailto:richbatiuk@gmail.com) and let him know which fly fishing show you want to car pool to.

The club will be sponsoring carpooling to the following fly fishing shows:

Edison, NJ Fly Fishing Show on **Friday, January 26, 2024**

Lancaster, PA Fly Fishing Show on **Saturday, March 2, 2024**

Once you sign up, you will receive emails with all the logistics information including where to meet the morning of the fly fishing show(s) you have signed up for.

Rich Batiuk, FSFF Fly Fishing Shows Carpooling Coordinator

### **Stream-side Fly Fishing 101 Classes**

Here's your opportunity for hands-on fly fishing instruction on the water thanks to your fellow club members. Our next stream-side fly fishing 101 class is scheduled for **March 9, 2024** from 8 - 11 AM on Catoctin Creek. More details will be shared along with circulation of a sign-up sheet at upcoming club meetings.

Duber Winters, FSFF Stream-side Fly Fishing 101 Coordinator



## Club News

### **2023 Bluegill Contest Winners**

At our December 6<sup>th</sup> Holiday Party, the top five finishers in the largest fish category each received a plaque commemorating their catches. And the top entry in the smallest bluegill category also received a plaque.

**First** – Larry Oakey, 10 inches, 7/11/23, Biltmore Estate, Ashville, NC, Blue popper

**Second** – Amy Holstein, 10 inches, 8/2/23, Private Pond, Enoree, SC, Golden Retriever (tied by Joe DeMeo!)

**Third** – Pat Brophy, 9.5 inches, 6/3/23, Alpine Lake, Terra Alta, WV, Hopper

**Fourth** – Mike Nichols, 9.5-inches, 7/5/23, Private Pond, Kent County, MD, Blue popper

**Fifth** – Rich Batiuk, 9.375-inches, 5/12/23 Ingrams Pond, Millsboro, DE, Yellow girdle bug

**Smallest** – Andy Grosko, 2.5 inches, 6/25/23 Upper Patapsco River, MD, Bead head nymph

Congratulations to each of the award winners above and to everyone who entered this year's event.

The following FSFF members entered 27 fish into the contest creating numerous leaderboard changes throughout the year:

Larry Oakey, Amy Holstein, Pat Brophy, Mike Nichols, Rich Batiuk, Randy Wolf, Andy Grosko, John Rentch, John Keough, Mike Mattia, Frank Bowne, Ryan Harvey, and Rich Galena.

Nine of the fish entered were 9 inches or larger, a first for our contest. Plus, we had entries caught in five states: MD, DE, WV, NC and SC. They came from such diverse locations as a pond on the luxurious Biltmore Estate in Ashville, North Carolina to a small pond at a golf center in Glen Burnie, Maryland.

And before you know it, we will be starting up our 2024 Biggest (and Smallest) Bluegill Contest. So check out the contest rules on the club's website at <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/bluegill-tournament-2023/> and starting tying up your favorite bluegill flies.



Mark Bange, FSFF Bluegill Contest Coordinator

### **Fly Fishing Shows are Back!!**

Tis the season for fly fishing shows. Here's three shows in our region. The largest is up in **Edison, NJ Fly Fishing Show** on Friday, January 26, 2024 followed by the **Lancaster, PA Fly Fishing Show** on Saturday, March 2, 2024. As seen on page 5, the club is providing for carpooling opportunities to both shows.



And then even closer to our clubhouse, there is the **Maryland Fly Fishing and Collectible Tackle Show**. As always, the show's primary objective is to shine a spotlight on the exceptional independent vendors who offer top-notch fly-fishing products and services. If you have participated in previous shows, you know that their vendors are true craftsmen. From bamboo, glass, and graphite rod makers to dealers of classic collectible tackle, specialty fly-fishing products, local and regional fly shops, gifted fly tyers, artists, and expert guides spanning the east coast, this event celebrates the best in the business.

The show will take place on Saturday, March 23, 2024, from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., at the West Village Commons, 424 Emerson Drive, Towson, MD. Free State Fly Fishers will have a table at this fly fishing show so come on by and say hello to your fellow club members. We can help disguise your purchases so fellow family members won't see you bringing home even more fly fishing stuff!



### **Time to Renew Your Club Membership**

Yep, the New Year is here and that means we all have the golden opportunity to renew our club memberships. We are talking \$15, the price of one of those fancy drinks at Starbucks (and one of those delicious cinnamon buns!). Thanks to Frank Bowne, we can now renew our membership electronically on-line on the club's website at: <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/join-or-renew-membership/>. (Apologies to Ryan Harvey as now he doesn't have an opportunity to write another check in 2024!)

### **Sign Up for Duberfly Trout School**

This year, Duber Winters is offering two dates, Saturday March 23 and April 13, 2024, for club members to sign up and participate in the Duberfly Trout School. This comprehensive, on the water, interactive program offers trout fishing basics to the beginner as well as technical techniques and information for the seasoned angler. Presentations on streamer, dry fly and nymph fishing as well as on stream entomology basics are included. Guided fishing on premium private trout water accompanies instruction with a focus on reading water, fly selection, knots and proper catch and release techniques. Morning coffee, and lunch are provided. Trout School is located at Double Spur Outfitters Star, Tannery, Virginia from 7:30 AM-3:00 PM both days at a cost of \$250.



And yes, you are never too young (or old) be a FSFF member and renew your memberships. And we welcome you signing up husbands, wives, partners, daughters, sons, grandchildren, people you meet on the street!

### **Our Very Own Chesapeake Bay Fly Fishing Guide**

In the clubhouse we refer to him to Scott, but during the day out on the Bay, we will call him Captain! Captain Scott Barmby, fellow FSFF member, runs the Orvis Chesapeake Bay Fly School. You can find more information about his fly school at [www.flyschoolusa.com](http://www.flyschoolusa.com) and more information about his Chesapeake Bay guide service at [www.fishrockon.com](http://www.fishrockon.com). You can also reach Scott at 240-372-1864 and [scott@fishrockon.com](mailto:scott@fishrockon.com). Thanks to Scott for his donation of guided trips on the Bay to the club's Holiday Party raffle. Scott is one more example of the talented and experienced fly fishers who call Free State Fly Fishers their club!



Club members are welcome to sign up for both dates. Members can contact Duber directly via

email at [Duberfly@gmail.com](mailto:Duberfly@gmail.com) to sign up or sign up at an upcoming club meeting.

### **As Seen in Fly Fisherman Magazine**

Here's great advice from a Simms advertisement which all of us fly fishers can agree with and work hard to carry out to the fullest extent possible:

**"You got one life. Fish it well."**

## **2023/2024 FSFF Pickerel Tournament**

Our 2023/2024 FSFF Pickerel Tournament started back on November 1, 2023 and runs through April 15, 2024 and the leader board is already filling up. But more on that in a moment.

There are two changes to this year's contest. First, we have expanded the waters where chain pickerel entries may originate. All East Coast states from Maine to Florida including the District of Columbia are included. Also eligible are the resident states of participating FSFF members not included in the East Coast list. The goal here is to make the contest available to our members who live beyond the Delmarva region.

Second, we will have three award categories this year. We will continue our Largest Fish category and our Smallest Fish category. Additionally, we have added a third award category – Largest Duo.

*LARGEST DUO: Participants may enter two chain pickerel catches in the Largest Duo category. The lengths in inches of each fish will be summed. For example, during this contest if a member catches two chain pickerels that are 23 and 21 inches respectively, their Largest Duo entries total 44 inches. Members may add to the combined length of their entries during the contest with additional catches to increase their total inches. But their Duo may contain only two fish. The winner of the Largest Duo category will receive a personal plaque. Note that the largest fish in their Duo may also be entered in the Largest Fish category.*

Also, we are still waiting for our first entry in our third category, the **Smallest Fish**. (Rumors that Andy Grosko, winner of the Smallest Bluegill prize this past year, has been seen casting his winning smallest bluegill as bait using his fly rod on unnamed ponds on the Eastern Shore seeking BIG pickerel have yet to be confirmed!)

Just a gentle reminder – well focused photographs that clearly show the length of entries with the fish

laying on top of the measuring device make my job as contest coordinator enormously easier. Also, please remember to include in your submission the date you caught your entry, the fly you used (with photo if possible) and the state and the body of water you where you caught it.

A copy of the updated rules can be accessed at: <https://fs-ff.com/index.php/pickerel-tournament-2023-2024/>.

And please be aware of several club sponsored Saturday Hands-on Sessions scheduled in the months ahead which can help you prepare to catch and bigger pickerel guaranteed to raise your entries in the tournament standings:

- **February 17:** Mark Bange's "Kayak Fishing in Local Waters" class.
- **March 16:** Joe Bruce's "Everything You Need to Know About Fishing for Pickerel".
- **April 20:** Joe Bruce's "How to Attack the Pads and Catch More Fish".

### **Biggest Pickerel Tournament Standings Largest Fish Category**

**First:** John Rentch, 21.5 Inches, Millsboro Pond, DE, December 4, 2023.



**Second:** Adam Bange, 20.75 Inches, Cockey Creek, December 2, 2023.







**Third:** Chris Presley, 20 inches, Severn River, MD November 15, 2023.



**Fourth:** Rich Galena, 19.25 Inches, Severn River, MD, December 2, 2023.



**Fifth:** Pat Brophy, 18.75 inches, Severn River, MD December 2, 2023.

### ***Largest Duo Category***

**First:** John Rentch, 41.25 Inches (21.5 Inches + 19.75 Inches – Each caught 12/4 in Millsboro Pond, DE).

**Second:** Adam Bange, 38.75 Inches (18 inches caught 11/24 + 20.75 inches caught 12/2 – Each caught in Cockey Creek, MD).

**Third:** Rich Galena, 38.5 Inches (19.25 Inches caught on 12/2 + 19.25 Inches caught on 12.4 – Each caught in Severn River, MD).

Thanks in advance to our tournament participants and good luck to all.

Mark Bange, FSFF Pickerel Contest Coordinator

## **How to Catch More Fish: Joe Bruce's Chain Pickerel Cheat Sheet**

### **By Joe Bruce**

1. They can be social—sometimes you will find one and there will be more around.
2. They “like a roof over their head.” Can be wood or pads.
3. Winter—fish the shore that has a two to three foot depth.
4. Always check both the shore and flats—if no fish, MOVE!!
5. Pickerel love the pads and will relate to them even in colder months.
6. The best winter pad flats are 2 ½ to 3 ½ feet deep.
7. Pickerel are apex predators; they will show themselves on the first cast.
8. No evidence of fish? Move on!!
9. Pickerel are not fond of wind. Fish the leeward side first.
10. They can be caught in the wind—go to an intermediate line to get under the waves.
11. Floating lines are the main stay. Intermediate lines are usually number two.
12. Basic leaders can be 5 to 7 ½ feet long, tapered down to 30 to 40 pounds for the bite tippet.
13. Basic flies—size 1/0 or 2/0 white, yellow or chartreuse streamer style flies. Keep a couple black flies handy as well.
14. I like articulated flies for the main reason the fish has lost its leverage when hooked.
15. Adding weed guards helps fishing open pad fields. Bendback style flies can be good, but

offset the hooks a shank thickness off center for better hookups.

16. Always use a loop knot to connect your fly to your leader—use a non-slip loop knot or Homer Rhodes knot.
17. Use a two prong attack. It can be a fluke/lure and fly or two fly rods with different flies. I use the fluke in open water as my search pattern.
18. When fishing the shoreline do the TCS sequence to increase your numbers. First cast, **T**en to **T**wenty feet from the shore, next cast **C**loser, next cast on the **S**hore.
19. Right hand casters, go down the shore with your left shoulder facing the shore. Just the opposite for left hand casters.
20. Fish into the wind so if you hook a fish you won't be drifting over new water you haven't fished. Or, use an anchor. In wind and large flats, it is good to anchor and fan cast the area.
21. Vary your stripping cadence until you get a strike and remember what you did and repeat it.
22. Sometime an ultrafast retrieve will work even in the colder months. Prey doesn't wait to become a meal.
23. Look around for activity.
24. Please remember no pickerel has read what they should and shouldn't do and they especially haven't read this cheat sheet.

**[Newsletter Editor's Note:** This cheat sheet was first shared with club members years ago when Joe first hosted a Saturday Hands-on Session devoted to fishing for pickerel. Join us on March 16 for Joe's "Everything You Need to Know About Fishing for Pickerel" Saturday Hands-on Session to learn more about catching these freshwater barracudas!]

## Places to Fish— The Gunpowder River in Northern Maryland

**By Scott Hipple**

The Gunpowder River, in northern Maryland, is a tailwater trout stream that is open all year. Water is released from the Prettyboy Reservoir and carves its way through a valley that beautifully showcases all seasons before flowing into the Loch Raven Reservoir. The Loch Raven Reservoir is the primary source of water for residents in the Baltimore, Maryland region.



The Maryland Department of Natural Resources is responsible for allocating resources to maintain the watershed as a state park. There are also several environmental groups which are committed to keeping the river and surrounding landscape clean and safe. Outdoor enthusiasts of all kinds appreciate the lushness of the flora throughout the watershed. Hiking the trails along both sides of the river is popular, but it is the fishermen and women chasing wild trout who really benefit from this stretch of water.

Stream-bred trout thrive and reproduce best in cold, clean water and that is exactly what is released from the Prettyboy Reservoir into the Gunpowder River. The water dropping from the lower gates remains a consistent average of 55°F.

This is a perfect temperature for the brown, brook and rainbow trout to reproduce and flourish.

The upper Gunpowder, which is the first 7.5 miles, is catch and release. Fly fishers can use only artificial flies with one hook (barbless hooks encouraged) and no bait is allowed. This regulation allows for successful reproduction and survival of the young ensuring good fishing for future generations.



There is no shortage of food for the resident trout.

Mayflies, caddis, midges, terrestrials, sculpins, and dace are plentiful and can be found along the entire stretch of the Gunpowder River. However it is the distinctly yellow and orange "sulphur" species that emerge in late spring that delight the fisherman and women who regularly fish the Gunpowder River.

### **The Lower Gunpowder River:**

Statewide wild trout regulations (2 trout/day, no size or bait restrictions) apply from Blue Mount Road downstream 4.2 miles to Corbett Road. The remaining 6.1 miles from Corbett Road downstream to one mile below Phoenix Road are stocked with hatchery trout. This stream section is stocked in the spring and fall and provides a popular put and take fishery with a five trout/day limit and no bait restrictions. There are closed periods during the spring to allow for stocking.

### **Getting to the Gunpowder:**

Points East of I-83: Take exit 27 for MD 137/Mount Carmel Road and head east.

- For Blue Mount Road, turn right on York Road. Turn left on Monkton Road. Turn left on Blue Mount Road at the fork.
- For Big Falls Road, turn right on York Road. Turn left on Monkton Road. Turn left on Big Falls Road at the fork.
- For York Road, turn left on York Road.
- For Bunker Hill Road, turn left on York Road. Turn left on Bunker Hill Road.

Points West of I-83: Take exit 27 for MD 137/Mount Carmel Road and head west.

- For Masemore Road, turn right onto Masemore Road.
- For Falls Road, turn right on Evan Road. Turn right onto Falls Road.

### **Access Points:**

- Bridge crossing at Blue Mount Road ([39.599422,-76.626293](#))
- Bridge crossing at Big Falls Road ([39.60941,-76.635331](#))
- Bridge crossing at York Road ([39.61401,-76.659141](#))
- Dead end at Bunker Hill Road ([39.612032,-76.672759](#))
- Bridge crossing at Masemore Road ([39.611276,-76.682775](#))
- Parking lot 1 along Falls Road ([39.61467,-76.69640](#))
- Parking lot 2 along Falls Road west of the bridge ([39.61751,-76.69292](#))

### **Highly Recommend Prior to Starting Out:**

Two local fly shops, Backwater Anglers and Great Feathers, can provide great suggestions on where

to fish and what patterns are working. They'll also make recommendations on where to fish based on how much water is being released from Prettyboy Reservoir. Purchase something to support the shop and they will happily direct you. Both shops also offer guide services and the fees are reasonable. Utilizing a guide can go a long way in helping to figure out where and how to fish the Gunpowder.

Backwater Anglers 16829 York Road Monkton, MD 21111 410-357-9557

Great Feathers 14824 York Road Sparks Glencoe, MD 21152 410-472-6799

## Featured Fly: Pickerel Hackle Flies

By Joe Bruce

Hackle flies have been around for years and they have always been an effective fish producer. I used them many times on the Potomac River for smallmouth bass and chain pickerel are fond of them too.

There is no limit on any color combinations of tail and hackle. Some favorites are white/red, red/black, and yellow/red. They can also be tied in natural colors to represent a bait fish.

### Material:

**Hook:** #3366, size 1 or 1/0

**Thread:** Fire orange 3/0 flat waxed nylon

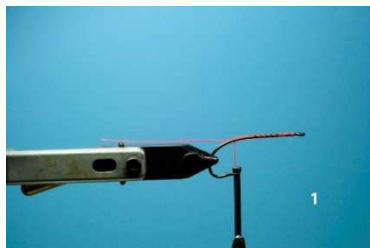
**Hackle Skirt:** long webby hackle

**Tinsel:** Holographic silver

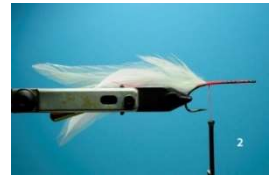
**Tail:** 6 Prepared saddle hackles, 3 1/2" long.

### Tying Instructions:

1. Start your thread on the hook shank behind the eye and take a few wraps rearward before snipping off.



2. Prepare 3 1/2" long, six saddles, attach three to each side of the hook shank.
3. Attach six to eight silver holographic tinsel to each side of the saddles. The tinsel should be about 3/4 the length of the saddles.
4. Tie in the remaining bundle of tinsel in front of the saddles.
5. Prepare the webby saddle hackle and tie it in front of the tinsel. Depending on your hackle length you might need to tie in another down the shank.
6. Wind the tinsel behind the saddle and wrap around the hook shank to the back of the hook eye and tie off.
7. Spiral the webby saddle around the hook shank to back of the eye and tie off.
8. Finish the head and apply head cement.



Some possible color combinations to consider. As I stated before, the combinations can be endless.



## Feature Article: Chesapeake Fly Lunacy By Capt. Tom Weaver and Capt. Joe Evans

We can talk about this, now that it's temporarily over.

As happens among fanatics, the two of us impulsively decided to abandon domestic obligations in favor of a late-March mission to fool and measure an enormous striper using only fly tackle before Maryland's early catch and release season would close for April.

We knew where they should be, and we can affirm that catching big fish right there that time of year with heavy jig-heads and plastic baits on conventional spinning gear is quite doable. We've done that.

But, could we dial in an effective fly pattern, achieve the perfect drift, and get the nearly



weightless fur, feathers and wide-gape hooks down in the rip-current to where the fish were hunkered? There was only one way to find out.

With more enthusiasm than preparation, we rigged 300- to 450-grain Orvis Depth-Charge sinking lines and straight, 30-pound-test leaders on nine- and 10-weight rods, kissed our wives and children goodbye, and ran a Jones Brothers skiff down the Western Shore to a Flag Harbor Marina slip for the duration.

At first, we mostly got skunked—just a few young fish but nothing to phone home about.

We would like to think that the big fish just weren't there, but scattered success of other anglers fishing spinning gear and massive jigs didn't support the excuse. So, a succession of midnight fly-tying sessions ensued interspersed with scrambles to find longer-shanked hooks, various shades of feathers, bucktail, flash, and whatever we could scrounge to improve our chances. This was going to be harder than we imagined.

We fished continuously each day when the weather allowed, and we didn't for a moment consider that this might be foolhardy, even as the detritus of peanut bar wrappers, empty Gatorade bottles, shredded tackle, and anguish accumulated in the scuppers.

We lost some pretty good-looking flies to the rocks where the fish hid. We broke two rods by setting the hooks on those rocks and fighting them mightily—thinking it was the big one. We bumped up the schedule to make predawn treks before other boats arrived, which bought us time and room to drift without getting in the way of more sensible anglers and the long reach of their heavy metal. The action improved, but feeling a bite and setting a hook on a long fly line in deep water is like fishing with bungee cord. We learned how the surface current swirled while the deep current flooded at different speeds and directions depending on the drift, the tide, and the shifting wind. We persevered knowing that it might take only a split second for the fly and that fish to cross paths with the very attitude and reaction to turn the trick. Blind faith and Ibuprofen became important parts of our inventory.

All we felt we really needed then was serendipity, but they don't sell that at the 7-Eleven at 3:00 a.m..

Windy, blowout days interrupted the campaign, and we sulked.

Our last shots before the closure followed a two-day cold front—time enough to tie a batch of 12-inch hollow-tied bucktail flies with extended mono-supported tails to imitate the soft plastics that the conventional anglers were throwing around. It takes about 20 tedious minutes and half a tube of Crazy Glue to tie one up.

The system started to work for us as we extended our drifts into slower water, reduced our line stripping to the minimum to keep the hooks just above the rocks, and we developed the kind of



stoic patience that the lack of warm food, sleep, and normal human contact brings.

For the most part, anglers on the other boats tolerated us and our peculiar lunacy. They laughed at us, and even

cheered us on. We thank them for that.

With one day to go before the closure, we finally felt like we had cracked the code, our luck changed, and we lost count of the fish we caught, revived and released. But we did not bring the big one to the boat.

We are pretty sure that several of the hits and sudden losses could have been what we wanted—just a nice fish in the 35- to 45-inch range. That's all.

But, the snags and sudden, head-shaking runs might just have been another rock.

At the end, we looked up to see that the fleet had left for home, allowing us free reign to run, set up,

and drift. We agreed eight or nine times to make just one more pass as we continued to catch medium-sized fish and the predicted southerly piped up toward 20 knots. The forecast for the last legal day was terrible.

The wind built and shifted to the southeast, and the view across the Bay began to look like a buffalo stampede. It was a brutally wet and bumpy trip home, and we considered how we might pull it off another time, another place.

Special thanks to Flag Harbor, the other guides who shared updates, and the anglers who tolerated us.

We'll be back.

**[FSFF Newsletter Editor Note:** This story was shared with fellow FSFF members who participated in the recent January 3<sup>rd</sup> club meeting so I thought all of our club members would enjoy reading it as well. Thanks to Gary Grey, our FSFF Meeting Speaker Coordinator, for scheduling these two Chesapeake Bay fly fishing guides to share their experiences with us. If you are interested in a guided fly fishing trip on Chesapeake Bay with either of these two characters, here's their contact information and the club's special thanks to you for supporting our local fishing guides:

Capt. Joe Evans [joeevansfishing.com](http://joeevansfishing.com) 410-440-5495

Capt. Tom Weaver [fishwithweaver.com](http://fishwithweaver.com) 410-533-0928]

### **Fly Fishing Essentials: Planning For And Going On Fly Fishing Trips With A Guide By Duber Winters**

As many of us look to broaden our fly fishing experiences we often consider destinations both near and far. Motivation to fish various locations may be driven by the specific area, waterway or species in these locations. Whether we are thinking about driving 20 miles to fish somewhere

new to us or to fly around the world it is always our hope to create the best opportunity to catch fish. Enlisting the services of a fly fishing guide is the most common and effective way to do just that. For some it is common practice to book guides however for others the DIY method is preferred. As with most aspects of fly fishing, the good news is there is no right or wrong approach here. That said, most seasoned anglers will agree that if you want to catch fish in areas that are unfamiliar the most effective way of increasing your chances is to gain local knowledge of the area, fishery and species to be fished. And this is why many anglers hire a fly fishing guide.

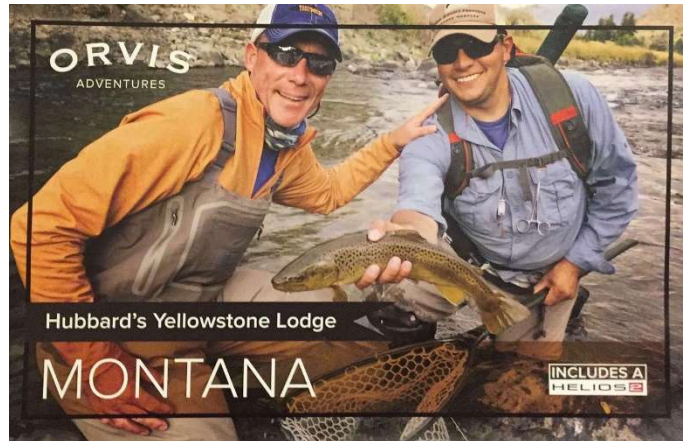


I have been a fly fishing guide for most of my adult life and have had the good fortune of fishing with many different anglers that came with varied levels of skill and abilities. And when I travel or plan on fishing water or species that are “new to me” I almost always try to book a guide. Here are a few key points to consider when utilizing the services of a fly fishing guide.

First things first... DETERMINE WHERE YOU WANT TO FISH AND WHAT YOU WANT TO CATCH THEN DECIDE IF YOU NEED OR WANT TO HIRE A GUIDE. In addition these are other possible reasons to book a guide:

- Lack of water way knowledge
- Lack of target species knowledge
- Lack of boat

- Lack of access
- Limited time
- No gear
- Thirst of knowledge/to learn
- Efficiency/productivity
- Fishing partner needs guidance



Where to find a guide??? Sometimes finding a good guide is easy and other times not so much. While there are many factors that contribute to the process, here are some resources to consider.

- FSFF (e.g., a trusted fly fishing group or club)
- Word of mouth/referrals/friends
- Your Local trusted fly shop
- A fly shop in the area you are going to fish
- Fly fishing podcasts
- Internet search/Google
- Magazines, fly fishing publications
- Orvis.com, Yellow Dog, FFI, TU

And once a guide is located, consider these thoughts to select and book the best guide for you.

- Research the guide and read the reviews
- Call the guide and ask key questions:
  - Will you be wading, drift boat etc.?
  - How far will you be walking?
  - When is the best time of year to fish?
  - What is typical weather when you are fishing?
  - What is cancelation policy?
  - How many hours in a ½ or full day?

- Is gear and or flies provided?
- Is lunch provided?
- What gear do you need to bring?
- How does the guide prefer payment?
- Be up front with your expectations...do you want to learn or just catch fish
- Are you booking an independent guide or through a shop or service
- Be transparent with the guide about your skill level and experience
- Convey your goals
- Tell the guide where you will be staying. Ask where and what time will you meet? Consider all logistics and convey them to the guide.



Select the guide based on the answers you receive and how they align with your fishing style. For example:

If a guide tells me that we will be walking a lot on a wade trip this could indicate that he/she is motivated to catch fish. This would be opposed to fishing most of the day near to the car or meeting place. Ask yourself the question, do you want to walk to fish water that sees less anglers or fish close to the access point.

As we all know fly fishing can be a detailed endeavor. As always it is best to be prepared.

- Know what the guide is providing and what you are responsible for...rods, leaders, flies, sinking or floating lines, lunch, water, fishing licenses, sun block, rain gear, change of clothes
- Do you want to keep fish?
- Are there restrooms?
- How much room is there for your gear?

- What type of polarized lenses?
- Weather conditions?

Tipping is always an X factor that always seems to be an unknown part of the process. When in doubt, 20% of the cost of the trip cost per person is standard.

- Compare rates of other guides in the area.
- Expect to tip 20% of the cost of the trip. More if appropriate.
- The tip amount should not be based on the number of fish caught.
- Ask the guide ahead of time “cash or \$ transfer?” Fly shops take credit cards but most guides do not.
- Will you pay for flies?
- Bring cash

Few guides retire wealthy. Guides have extensive expenses that contribute to the rate they charge:

- Insurance
- Weather
- Seasonality
- Gear
- Boats
- Bait

Some other considerations...

- Listen to your guide and heed his or her recommendations.
- Show up with the gear that you need but don't bring too much.
- Book a guide to learn and catch fish, not to save money.
- Do not ask if the guide guarantees catching fish. If a guide guarantees catching fish be skeptical.
- Pay attention to the weather forecast for your fishing day and pack and prepare accordingly.
- Guides don't treat all customers the same. Be courteous and respectful and you will likely be treated the same and have a great day.



## Kayak Fly Fishing: Finding Fish without a Fish Finder

By Mark Bange

I used to have a fish finder on my kayak years ago but gave up on it because I thought it was more trouble than it was worth for my preferred style of shallow water kayak fishing – not to mention the added weight of the battery and the unit itself. Also, as the article says, a little homework online or with nautical charts will reveal the locations of key underwater features for most bodies of water. Then it is just a matter of using your eyes looking at the scenery that surrounds you above the surface to determine likely spots where fish reside. That includes:

- **Visible structure**—downed wood, riprap, seawalls, points, pilings, vegetation, etc.
  - Regarding **vegetation**, especially pads and spatterdock—knowing where it was on the surface in warmer months will help you find fish in colder months when the surface plants have disappeared. The roots and stems and other residue of those plants are still present underwater. They continue to hold bait fish which attract the fish we are trying to catch.
  - The **slope of the shoreline**—is the gradient steep? If so, the water near the shore is probably deep while a relatively flat bank means shallow water.
  - **Current or tidal flow**—especially the source of water (feeder creek or inlet in tidal water) that fills a millpond or tidal pond. Fish are attracted to the conveyor belt of food supplied by that current and will orient themselves accordingly. Also, seams in current flows, clearly visible on the surface, are great places to target with casts.
  - **Shade**—very important when fishing in warm weather.
- The **activity of surrounding wildlife**—are ospreys circling, songbirds active, squirrels rummaging in leaves on the shoreline? Those are good signs that fish are also likely feeding.
  - **Experience and time on the water**—no fish finder can compensate for that. Areas that held fish in the past are likely to continue to do so. Retrieval techniques and flies that caught fish in the past in those areas are likely to work again.

Kayak trollers may rely on fish finders to follow trails that were successful on past outings. Or they use them to precisely locate a deviation in bottom contours, like the edge of a channel that may hold fish. I have heard them say that they are fishing blind without a fish finder. But for target casting in shallow water of say 8 feet or less, like I do for most of my kayak fly fishing, I rely on my eyes and experience and the "fish finders" that nature offers rather than spend my outing staring at a small screen.

Between my iPhone and laptop, I do that enough anyway! Fishing for me is a way to get away from the pull of electronics.

**[Newsletter Editor's Note:** This article was based on Mark Bange's reply to an email message from Ryan Harvey sharing the following article with fellow club members:

[https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/finding-keepers-fishing-without-a-fish-finder/.](https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/finding-keepers-fishing-without-a-fish-finder/)]

## Book Review: Fly Fishing the Tidewaters of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay (A Calendar Year of Stories, Spots, and Recipes)

By Mark Bange

Each of the books I have reviewed for our newsletter can be found in the Anne Arundel County Library. That is the case for Fly Fishing the Tidewaters of Maryland's Chesapeake Bay, A

Calendar Year of Stories, Spots, and Recipes by Brett Gaba which I will review below. However, I also own a copy of this title. In fact, the author inscribed it to me when I met him at a fly fishing show on Kent Island in the winter of 2016.

I read the book then and I liked it. It's precisely the kind of fly fishing book I wish I could write -- not a "how-to book", but one that describes the joys of our sport and the wonders of the environment in which it occurs. It sat unopened on my book shelf for six years until I picked it recently and read it again. And once more I realized what an excellent fly fishing book it is.

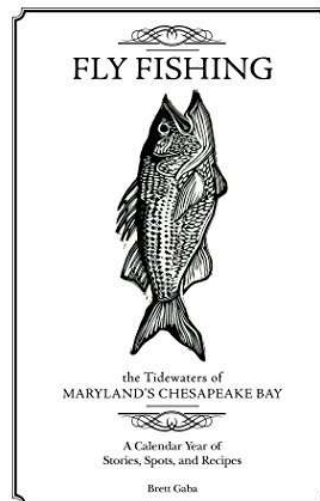
In fact, it resonated more with me on this reading because I have had first-hand experience fishing at many of the local areas Gaba describes since I first read his book. From fall trips to Janes Island and winter pickerel fishing at Tuckahoe Lake to charter trips to "The Rips" at Calvert Cliffs with Captain Pete Dahlberg, I could relate to each of those experiences because I have done them. (I caught my personal best striper at 29 inches at "The Rips" with Dahlberg.) I could even identify in my memories the precise areas where Gaba cast his flies in his vignettes about Janes Island and Tuckahoe. And I could certainly appreciate his descriptions of Captain Dahlberg's feisty demeanor having personally been a target of Pete's verbal jibes.

But that's not all. Gaba speaks of filling fly boxes in the winter for use the rest of the year. He describes our heightened anticipation for the arrival of yellow perch and then white perch in our tributaries in spring. He explains the simple joys of catching bluegills on the fly later in spring at Unicorn Lake, a favorite destination of our club members. And he offers us an engaging tour of the Wye River in early summer to catch stripers.

The book is organized by the four seasons of a calendar year. As we know, unless ice covers our waters, fishing here can be pursued throughout the year. Gaba's annual goal was to catch fish locally in each month of the year, again something I can relate to. Each chapter is about a specific river, creek or region of the Chesapeake Bay. I believe you will precisely recognize many of the areas Gaba writes about down to specific holes, channels and unique structures that hold fish in those waters. It's an intense local flavor often lacking in typical fly fishing anthologies, many of which concentrate on western trout and steelhead rivers. We need more of these kinds of books about Chesapeake fly anglers.

So, even if you are familiar with Brett Gaba's book, I urge you to read it again. The stories I mentioned

above are just a sample. There are many others. And each chapter ends with a recipe of Chesapeake table fare. Also, the book is liberally illustrated with photos of the Bay from the A. Aubrey Bodine collection. It's a real gem for those of us who fly fish



Maryland waters for stripers, pickerel, bass and panfish. It's like having a friendly conversation with someone who has the same fishing interests in local waters as your own.

The book is 255 pages and published by Schiffer Publishing Ltd., Atglen, PA. Again, it is available for checkout in the Anne Arundel County Library.

## Feature Article: “You can observe a lot by just watching.”

By Mark Bange

I am old enough to remember Yankee great Yogi Berra as an active ballplayer. I was five years old in 1959 when my dad took me to see the Orioles and Yankees at Memorial Stadium in Baltimore. It was likely my first time attending a major league baseball game. I saw Yogi in person and I was thrilled. At that time, his unique name attracted my attention more than his tremendous baseball talent.

The Yankees were the class of baseball then. From the late 1940s through the early 1960s with Yogi as their catcher, they won 14 American League Pennants and 10 World Series. Berra played on more Pennant winning and World Series champion teams than any other major leaguer – a record he still holds.

But what most people remember about Yogi is not his prowess as a Hall of Fame player. They recall with fondness his famous quotes. His “Yogi-isms” delighted sports writers and their readers in that era. Here are a few:

- It ain’t over till it’s over.
- Baseball is 90% mental and the other half is physical.
- We made too many wrong mistakes.
- The future ain’t what it used to be.

His phrasing may have caused English teachers to shudder, yet his thoughts were remarkably logical. We knew exactly what Yogi meant.

And my favorite: “You can observe a lot by just watching.”

I believe the above Berra quote has application beyond baseball. It is germane to fishing, especially shallow water kayak fly fishing. Indeed, our observations of the sights, sounds and

happenings around us on the water will increase our angling success if we respond accordingly to them. So, join me on a typical outing and allow me to explain.

### *The Launch Site*

We arrive at the ramp and there are two things to observe – the wind and the water level. Prior to departing from my house, I had already checked the wind forecast on the internet. I knew the projected direction and speed of the wind. In fact, the body of water I selected to fish was based on that forecast and the availability of leeside protection at my chosen site.

My goal was to avoid the wind dangerously tossing my small craft around on the water. At the ramp, my first observation, therefore, is to determine if the wind forecast is correct. Are the leaves gently rippling in the breeze or are the treetops bent by the force of the wind? Are there whitecaps on the water? In short, are water surface conditions safe? If they are, I will proceed.



As I launch, I will also take note of the water level. Pond levels are usually static unless there was a downpour

the night before or the water was deliberately drawn down for dam maintenance. Both of those scenarios are rare. However, tidal water changes levels four times daily (on most days) in our area with two low tides and two highs. The degree of those changes is also different with each tide. So, just as I checked the wind forecast before arriving at the ramp, I had also checked tide predictions online. Wind and rain can wreak havoc with tides. Tide charts can be wrong. Only by onsite observation will you know the actual tide.



My preference is to fish a falling tide. And my ideal scenario is to arrive at a high falling tide. I like a high tide because it gives me more water to fish – more areas to target with casts. However, some say a low tide concentrates the fish, making them easier to catch. That is not my experience in our creeks and rivers here in the Mid-Chesapeake. Water that is quickly moving from high to low dislodges natural foods for fish from their hiding spaces. With more food available, fish become more aggressive and easier to catch. That is the foremost reason I prefer to fish on a falling tide.

However, here is the real story. While I may try to fish my ideal tides, I take what is present when I arrive at the launch site and deal with it. In other words, I fish when I can, not solely dependent on tides.

Next, I look at the surface of the water. Is it calm or rippled by the wind? Some fish, like chain pickerels and white perch will go deeper in wind-blown water. If so, I will dismiss top water and shallow water fly offerings and fish deeper with intermediate fly line or by adding a sink tip to my floating line. So, the condition of the water surface dictates not only what flies I use, but how deep I fish them.

### ***On the Water***

Once I push away from the launch, I get other important readings from observations. In tidal waters, dock pilings always tell a story. Are barnacles exposed? If so, I am fishing a low tide. Is the piling dry or wet immediately above the water line. If it is dry, the water is rising; wet, it is falling. Another way to determine the stage of the tide is to look at the water ripples around the pilings. Are there ripples behind a piling heading in the direction of the mouth of the creek or river? If so, the tide is going out. If the reverse is true, the tide is coming in. No ripples at all on the pilings? The tide is slack which usually means a difficult bite. By the way, water rippling behind a piling is a good target area. Predatory fish will wait behind structure for the current to bring food to them. That food will flow around the piling to a hungry waiting fish. Cast your fly into those ripples.

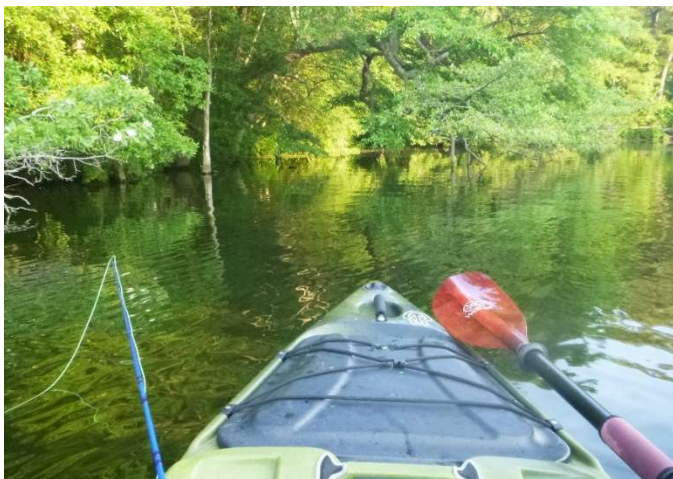


### ***Shorelines***

As a kayak fly angler, I am rarely far from a shoreline. I fish that way not only for my personal safety but because my target fish enjoy the structure of shorelines. In ponds, deadfall (downed trees near the shore) provides excellent cover underwater for baitfish and other small creatures. Predatory fish are frequent visitors to those submerged branches. Shorelines also anchor living trees in tidal waters and ponds. Their leafy

branches extend over the water offering shade and cooler water in summer to my target fish species. Furthermore, those live branches are often dripping (literally) with fish food.

I encourage you to take Yogi's advice when fishing near overhanging branches. Stop casting long enough to observe what falls from the trees. Beetles, green worms, caterpillars, mulberries, etc. It should come as no surprise that foam beetle flies, green weenies, wooly buggers and red crystal buggers catch bluegills, shellcrackers, bass, and pickerels under those branches.



Back to tidal waters. Look closely at riprap on a low tide. It is darkened by algae in the areas normally below the waterline. The darkened riprap is a wall of feeding opportunities for my target species. Biologists refer to the crevices and small caves in the riprap as "microhabitats". A riprap wall is home to invertebrates and other tiny lifeforms which draw minnows and predatory fish to the smorgasbord. An outgoing tide flushes those morsels of food from the riprap. It is the same as humans waiting at vending machine for the bag of potato chips to drop to the bin. However, the fish did not have to insert coins into a machine for the privilege to eat. They just had to be at the riprap when the tide turned. And they will be. Their survival depends on it. If we arrive there at the same time, our chances of catching stripers or white perch also increase.



### ***What's Happening Above***

Look skyward while fishing. In tidal waters it is easy to spot breaking stripers. Gulls and terns will be diving madly into the surf. If you can reach that carnage in your kayak before power boat anglers in the area you are extremely fortunate. You will have a better chance if you stop and watch the feeding frenzy to determine which direction it is heading. The stripers will continue on a set path as they feed on the school of doomed menhaden. Paddle toward the area where you think they will rise again. I have used this tactic successfully at Bodkin Point in the Patapsco River and actually gotten a crack at the stripers before the motor boat anglers arrived.



On creeks, pay attention to ospreys circling overhead. When I see one crash to surface and rise

with a white perch, that osprey just located a school of fish for me. And while not as dramatic, and not seen by looking skyward, a cormorant that suddenly disappears from the surface is an indicator that fish are nearby. A blue heron at the waterline is looking for a meal. When it stops moving and becomes a statue-like, it has fish in sight. Again, these are good signs to observe from our “feathered fish finders”.



### ***Wildlife Activity***

Kayaks are quiet unobtrusive vessels that are often ignored by wildlife. River otters have swum beside me for 10 yards in the Severn River as I entered a tidal pond. Turtles sunning on a log let me get very close before sliding into the water. The larger older mossback turtles know I am harmless and will often stay anchored to their wooden perch no matter how close I get.

My point is that kayak anglers are less threatening to wildlife than those who fish in larger vessels. Often animals will not flee from your kayak but remain active in their pursuits. I have noticed that when squirrels are foraging in dried leaves on banks, when deer are eating shrubbery near shorelines and when foxes fearlessly cross sandy beaches in front of you in search of a meal, their combined activity is a sign that fish are also feeding. I do not know why that is. But I have learned that when I do not see active wildlife, the

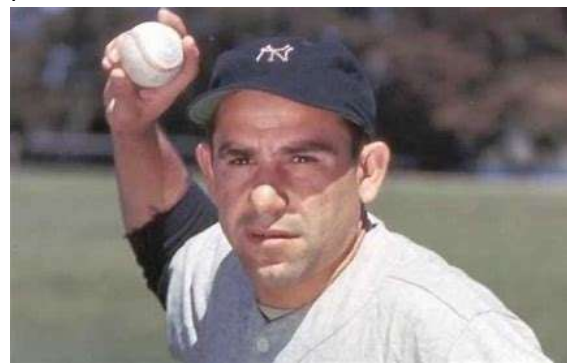
fish bite is usually off. So, when you see other lifeforms busy feeding, remain alert after your cast. The fish below you are very likely to be active too.

### ***More Observations***

There are other things to observe while fishing that will improve your success. They include: locating seams in currents and knowing how fish relate to them; finding a pond’s feeder creek that fish use as a food conveyor belt; prospecting near surface vegetation and knowing where fish orient in it at different times of the day; gauging the depth of water on a shoreline by the slope of the land behind it; allowing water clarity to dictate your choice of flies...the list goes on. But every one of them is something you can clearly see and then act upon accordingly.

### ***The Ultimate Fishing Guide***

So, Yogi Berra’s simple eight-word philosophy about the power of observation applies to us as kayak fly anglers. We can use what we actually see on, above and beyond the waterline while we are fishing to help us catch more fish. And we can do this without relying on electronic fish finders. Yet, I have heard kayak anglers say they are “fishing blind” when their fish finder is on the fritz. If they would take Yogi’s sage advice, they would realize that the answers they are seeking are not on a small electronic screen, but revealed by the entire panorama of nature around them.



Yogi Berra – Baseball Hall of Famer; Philosopher and Fishing Guru.









## **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 equipment. 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.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Printed Name**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
**Date**

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

## FREE STATE FLY FISHERS 2024 LEADERSHIP TEAM

President: [Duber Winters](#)  
First Vice-President: Vacant  
Second Vice President: [Luis Santiago](#)  
Secretary: [Frank Bowne](#)  
Treasurer: [Bill Smith](#)  
Member-at-Large: [Ryan Harvey](#)  
Directors: [Gary Grey](#) (Past President) / [Mike Mattia](#)

## FREE STATE FLY FISHERS COORDINATORS

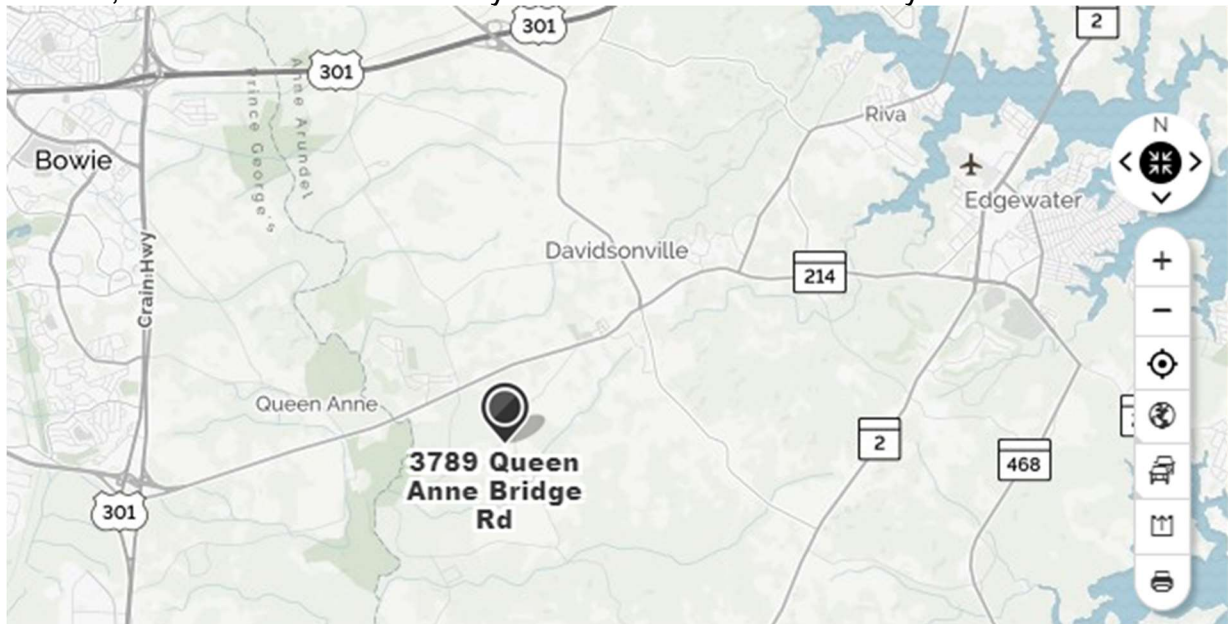
Clubhouse Coordinator: [John Rentch](#)  
Davidsonville Family Recreation Center Representative: [Mike Mattia](#)  
Club Librarian: Vacant  
Chesapeake Council – FFI Delegate: [Frank Bowne](#)  
Membership Coordinator: [Frank Bowne](#)  
Facebook Coordinator: [Scott Barmby](#)  
YouTube Coordinator: [Frank Bowne](#)  
Webmasters: [Luis Santiago](#) / [Frank Bowne](#)  
Group Email Coordinators: [Luis Santiago](#) / [Frank Bowne](#)  
Outings Coordinator: Vacant  
Pond-of-the-Month Outings Coordinator: [Mike Mattia](#)  
Bluegill/Pickrel Contests Coordinator: [Mark Bange](#)  
Meeting Speakers Coordinator: [Gary Grey](#)  
Fly Casting Clinics Coordinator: [Tim Ruthemeyer](#)  
Fly Tying/Fly Swap Coordinator: [Luis Santiago](#)  
Beer Ties Coordinator: [Frank Bowne](#)  
Saturday Hands-on Sessions Coordinator: [Rich Batiuk](#)  
Streamside 101 Fly Fishing Classes Coordinator: [Duber Winters](#)  
Swap Meet Coordinators: [Rich Batiuk](#) / [Mark Bange](#)  
Movie Night Coordinator: Vacant  
Holiday Dinner Coordinator/Raffle Prize Coordinator: [Don Vance](#) / Vacant  
Publicity Coordinator: [Ryan Harvey](#)  
Raffles Coordinators: [Bob Ruck](#) / [Mike Mattia](#)  
Door Prizes Coordinator: [Joe DeMeo](#)  
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/>

**Our YouTube Channel:** <http://youtube.com/@fsffmd>

**Email Us:** [fsffmd@gmail.com](mailto:fsffmd@gmail.com)