



# The Barbless Flyer

The mission of the Spokane Fly Fishers is to provide a family friendly organization for promoting the sport of fly fishing through education, application, and conservation



# Annual Awards Night

## End of the Year and Season Kick-Off Soiree

May 13<sup>th</sup> at 6pm

Jack & Dan's Tavern  
1226 N. Hamilton St, Spokane



Celebrate the past year. Cast into the new season.

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## April 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Board Meeting 6pm	2	3 Fly School 630pm	4 Fly School Casting 10am
5 Easter	6	7	8 Member Meeting 7pm	9 Fly School 630pm	10	11 Fly School Casting 10am
12	13	14	15 Waitts Lake Outing 9am	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

## Prez Says

Al Odenthal

Our 1st combined Fundraiser (e.g., Raffle & Fly Auction) was a resounding success. It yielded over \$6,000 for our club operations that will take us through our next budget cycle in 2026-2027. Thanks to all of you for your attendance, your generosity, and your enthusiastic response in support of your club. A special note of thanks to our new Raffle/Auction Chairperson & Board Member Cassandra Collings. She'll be quick to thank Keith Kuchner for his outstanding contributions to the success of the event, and I certainly offer my thanks to him also! A lot of volunteers helped make this happen in an organized and orderly way. I'm humbled by the good work a few people put forth to make such an event fun and productive. Thank you all!

The April general meeting of the club will feature a fine presentation arranged by William White. Additionally, we'll introduce you to the cast of potential officers of the club for next year. You'll be asked to vote for those positions at the May general meeting. We are still taking nominations for club officers from the membership. Craig Adams is chairing the Nominations Committee this year. So, if you're inclined to help our club stay active and vibrant, let Craig know your willingness to serve in one of several positions open on the Board of Directors for next year. You do not need to have extensive time with the club to serve as there are several Board members who would be happy to acclimate you to the machinations of the Board, so you'll feel welcome, competent, and productive. If you'd like to nominate someone simply visit the club website and fill out a nomination form. <https://spokaneflyfishers.com/be-in-the-know>



Our May meeting is traditionally our Awards Ceremony, and the formal election of officers takes place at this meeting. Rather than our usual Clear Lake potluck we're following the success of last years' ceremony at a local restaurant/pub. This May we'll gather at Jack & Dan's tavern on North Hamilton street for a no-host meal and drinks (alcohol and non-alcohol). There's plenty of parking (Gonzaga will not be in session) and a separate room (improvement over last year's location). More information to follow. So, plan to be there to honor those who've made our club the dynamic organization that it is and enjoy the company of your fellow fly fishers.



I'm looking forward to the upcoming fishing season but with some trepidation based on our snow levels in Spokane. Montana, however, received nearly 100% of snowpack and Idaho reports are not yet fully calculated. So, enjoy our passion for pursuing trout and other species. Be sure to sign up for the club outings on the club website as Mike Sportelli has put together a great series that will be exciting as the days warm.

I look forward to seeing many of you on the water this coming season. Until then, get your gear ready, your skills sharpened and meet up with some of your colleagues to catch some fish.

# Learn a New Technique

Bill White



Spring has sprung and the second Wednesday of the month, **April 8<sup>th</sup> 2026**, is just around the corner and floating in from Central California is fly fisher extraordinaire, **Mike Pease**. The namesake of Mike Pease Adventures and founder of the Feather River Fly Fishing School, he enjoys taking clients to the Lost Sierra region of Northern California. He will talk about **Float-and-Fly for Bass**, the latest rage, which will focus on float-and-fly techniques targeting suspended bass.

On Wednesday, **May 13<sup>th</sup>** we will be holding our **2025-2026 Annual Awards Night, End of the Year, and Season Kick-Off Soiree** at Jack & Dan's Tavern. This will be our last formal meeting before the summer break. (End of year means 2026-27 annual dues are coming due.) The festivities will be in the banquet room. You will be responsible for your own food, bar tab, and tip. There will be a terrific selection of items on the menu to choose from, a full bar, fly-fishing bingo, and more. Come ready to salute our new award winners, make plans for the heart of the fishing season, and have a memorable good time with great people.



**Teaser ....** The Spokane Showdown 2026 is coming again this Fall, and we need to defend our inaugural victory – thank you Chip O'Brien and Mike Sportelli - and keep the trophy and bragging rights in our Club. The Premier Fly-Fishing Club!!!

As always, wear your Spokane Fly Fishers name badge with pride, mingle and meet new and old members, you just may find someone who double hauls as shaky as you. Smile! We are a club dedicated to fly fishing aka FUN.



# Membership News

Brad Collins

Let the numbers do the talking!		
New members this month	New members this year	Total members
3	16	286

## New Members

Please welcome all the new members and participants of the 2026 Fly Fishing School!

Emmett McCowan	Len Bramble	Brittany Tolleson	Mike Sanders
Pearl Druffel	Monica Bramble	Monte Koch	Zach Gilker
Thomas Sanderson	Gregory Cover	Emma McIntyre	Bob Sanders
Zachary Sanderson	Ryan Cover	Travis Thiede	Debbie Sanders
Craig Tonin	Brad Stewart	Matthew Allen	Bruce Millsap
Nick Little	Lynn Boes	Justin Tolleson	Chris McCowan
Steve MacDonald	Hannah Williams	Ira Gardner	Chris Schilbe
Ronald Friedly	Martha Morrison	Patricia Wiseman	
Steve Vining	Landon Morrison	Sarah Aho	
Steve McMullen	Jacob Larson	Stephen Crooks	

## Member Spotlight

Let's give a warm welcome to Michael & Monya Hoerner to the Spokane Fly Fishers. And congratulate them on their new purchase of a super groovy Flycraft raft. Something tells us that boat is going to see plenty of action, and we're looking forward to the many impressive fish stories (and retrieves) that are sure to come from it.

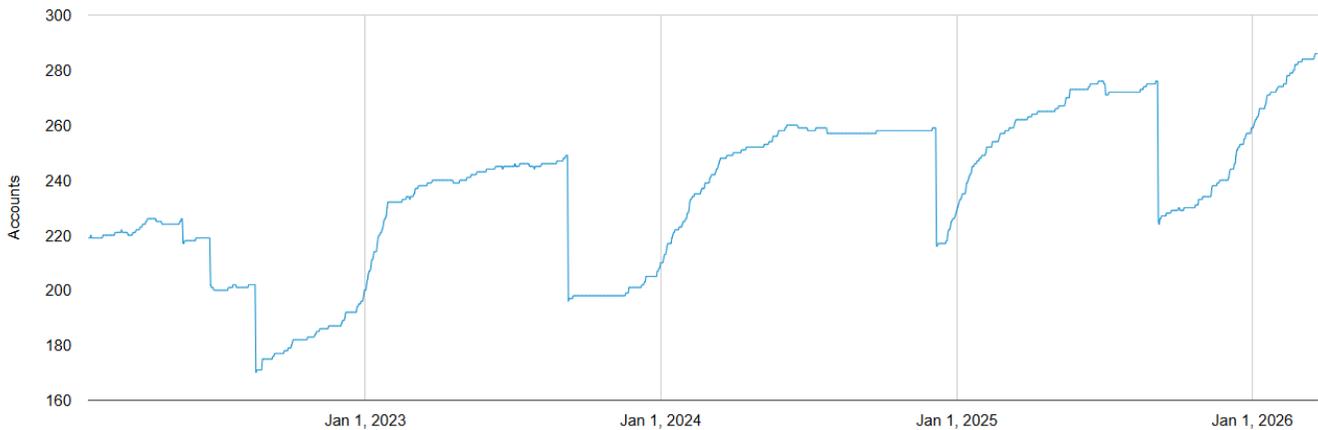
Glad to have you both with us! (Credit: Cassandra Collings, Director at Large)



### Membership Trends

Here is a graph that shows our growth over the last four years. The numbers represent the total number of accounts, including individual members, family members, honorary members, and lifetime members. We are definitely headed in the right direction, and our club continues to grow and prosper!

The sharp drop offs that occur every year are when we purge the non-renewed memberships in September. Most of these non-renewals are people who participated in the previous year's fly school and opted to not continue with their membership.



If you have any questions regarding membership, please contact Brad (Membership Committee Chairman) at [membership@spokaneflyfishers.com](mailto:membership@spokaneflyfishers.com)

# Outings Committee Updates

Mike Sportelli

Well, it's officially spring, and I don't know about you, but I can't wait to welcome the weather and fishing opportunities that come with it. The first round of Eastern Washington lakes opened on March 1st and in just a couple of weeks another round of lakes will open giving us plenty of choices while spring runoff does its thing as we wait for local rivers to come into shape for the late spring.

Outings attendance is up! We had 12 signups and 8 in attendance at Dry Falls on March 16<sup>th</sup>. We absolutely hit it perfectly with weather in the high 50's and virtually no wind. We made it out on the water in the morning, shared a BBQ lunch, and got some more fishing in after lunch. Although the numbers caught amongst members was not high, the size of the fish did not disappoint. Dry Falls is well known for holding some of the largest trout in Eastern Washington.

Last weekend on March 21<sup>st</sup> was our first Coffeepot outing of the year, (we have a second outing scheduled in the Fall). We had over 14 signups and I was able to connect with about 8 members out on the water. The day started out cold and we had to deal with some high winds. Members with boats fared well by spending some time searching for fish. The upper reaches of the lake ended up revealing the most marks on sonar, although fishing started out slow it really took off mid-morning with reduced wind gusts and non-stop action through early afternoon. I know of 2 boats that landed well over 20 fish between those onboard. Balanced leeches for the win with Phil Rowley's Vampire mini leech being the top producer. The quality of the fish was even better than expected. It appeared that the holdover fish had grown 1"-2" since last fall and they came in looking very healthy. We are so lucky to have such a quality fishery close to Spokane! If you did not make the outing, I would keep coffeepot a must hit fishery this spring before it starts to warm up too much.

Next up is Waitts Lake hosted by Brian Soth on April 15<sup>th</sup>. Waitts Lake is very easy to get around on in a float tube, pontoon, or boat as it has a very well maintained public launch area.

Hope to see continued participation as we have some great spring lake outings coming up. Check out the website and sign up today!



## Kid's Fishing Day is Back!

Craig Adams

It's that time again. Time for the most fun you'll have this fishing season! Children aged 5-14 are eligible to participate. Rods, T-shirts, and possibly other goodies for every child who signs up.

Sign up online at: <https://wdfw.wa.gov/fishing/contests/youth.html>

If you want to help to put the rods together that happens on April 30<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm at the Inland NW Wildlife Council (6116 N. Market). Other volunteer opportunities include installing (and filling ) the net pens on May 8<sup>th</sup>, helping the kids fish on May 9<sup>th</sup> (this is the most fun) and taking down the net pens (hard work) after the event ends.

This is a super fun event; you can come for a few hours or spend the whole day. The event will be from 7:30am to 5:00pm.

Questions can be directed to Craig Adams at (509) 999-5660 or [craigflyfisher@gmail.com](mailto:craigflyfisher@gmail.com). More information to follow at the April club meeting.

## Fly Fishing School

Bill Wagstaff

The Fly Fishing School will be holding its first Student Outing at Amber Lake on May 9<sup>th</sup> from 9am to noon. **We could still benefit from volunteers for the event.** Ideally volunteers would take 1-2 students out in their boat for 1-2 hours to help students rig their equipment and apply the various still water techniques covered in class. This is a great way to support the club and some of our newest members.

Contact Bill Wagstaff at (509) 951-6697 or [bwagstf@hotmail.com](mailto:bwagstf@hotmail.com) to volunteer and for additional information.

## Reminder – Bamboo Fly Rod Raffle

Dan Ferguson

Greetings! When our prior president, Kevin Brannon, passed away last year his family gifted two bamboo fly rods to the club. These extraordinary rods were built by Chet Croco, former owner of Bellinger fly rods. The rods are of unmatched quality and construction. Genuine heirloom quality items!

We have an 8 ft 2/2 5wt and a 7.5 ft 3/2 5wt. We're doing a pick-a-square raffle for the 8ft rod first.

We have a grid board with 225 squares sold at \$10 per square. The board is half full now and it'd be great to sell out by May! The squares aren't numbered until they're sold out. The board will be numbered completely randomly by column and rows and once completed we will draw for the corresponding square.

Members can purchase a maximum of five squares at each meeting. Accepted forms of payments are cash, checks and credit cards. We will allow proxy purchases and phone orders are available via text.

Contact Dan Ferguson at (509) 251-7235 to arrange your square purchases.

# How Fish Eat & Minimizing Short Strikes

Ken Moore

As a fly fisherman, your first job is to get the fly into the fish's mouth, but that is not as easy as one would think. Even when the trout wants to eat your fly, there is a lot that can go wrong. This month, let us take a closer look at how fish eat and why casting with plenty of slack in your line and tippet makes sense to prevent a short strike.

## How Fish Eat:

For this discussion, let's imagine a dun after it has emerged, and its wings are drying as it floats down a lazy river on a nice sunny day. To take a natural fly at the surface, the trout has to position its nose underneath it or just downstream, and suck the fly in. It will open its mouth and close its gills. At the same time, it will expand its mouth cavity by extending it downwards, with the pleated under-chin opening like a pair of bellows. This sucks water and the fly into its mouth, then closes it. A transient twin-lobed suction trough will form on each side of the trout's nose and sometimes a portion of its head. The result you see on the surface is a double whorl in the shape of a kidney. The trout will press the fly against the roof of its mouth with its tongue, close its mouth, and hold the prey (our mayfly dun) there while it opens its gills and expels the water. Simultaneously, it will be testing the fly for signs of inedibility, and if it doesn't feel right, it will release the object with its tongue, keep its gills closed, open its mouth again, and expel the fly forwards with the water- instantaneously and by instinct. This happens faster than you can blink.



If the fly is accepted as edible, the expulsion of water takes place backwards through the gills as the trout turns down to return to its feeding lie. This may be another cause of a kidney-shaped surface whorl. The trout knows from experience that the suck will have to be a good, strong one because it must overcome the resistance of surface tension and pull the very lightweight, hydrophobic fly down through the water's meniscus. If it were not for the suction, the fly would be missed, pushed aside by its emerging snout, and carried away by the stream. We observe a similar scenario when mousing for trout; quite often, the trout's snout and the emerging wake of water push the mouse away from the hungry trout's mouth. Some rises are grabs of course, but suction is always a part of the eating process.

## Dissecting The Short Take:

So, what is the physical problem? Well, our fly is tethered. Our tippet has to bend around the trout's nose to let the fly into its mouth. And more than that, it has to be pulled over the skin of the trout's nose so as to allow the fly to travel to the center of the mouth and be pressed against the roof of the mouth by the tongue. Often this does not happen easily, and the trout will instantly and instinctively distrust the unexpected behavior of its hoped-for prey and eject it. Or the hook will catch on the bony outer jaw instead of the soft inner jaw (which is better for the trout). The angle of pull on the hook will be less favorable to the angler, and the fish will get off more easily.

## A Possible Fix:

The solution is to cast a looser tippet and maintain a longer drag-free drift. Or fish downstream and keep feeding your line at or faster than the river's speed. When dry fly fishing, have your tippet land with slack in a pile of whirly gigs, or in a serpentine fashion; the current will straighten out your tippet, and from that point forward, you will have drag on your fly. That's ok, the lack of drag will make the fish want it more. The secret in the fly cast is to stop your rod tip during your forward cast. By stopping the tip of the fly rod high, you let

the tippet bounce or pile into a mess. I know it is the opposite of everything you have been taught. We also repeat this same type of rod stopping while nymphing to drive your nymph deep into the river. We call this a dump cast while nymphing. Remember- drag gets refusals ten times more than a drag-free tippet.

**Additional Tips to Try:**

- Lighter tippet produces less drag, so sizing down your tippet is always worth trying.
- In an open-mouth rise, the movement of the tethered fly into the trout's mouth can take a second or two longer; reciting "God save the Queen," or any other phrase to assist you in delaying your setting the hook may help.
- While casting, after you stop your rod tip high on the forward cast, wiggle your fly rod from side to side as you lay the line down on the water. This motion forms a wavy fly line and tippet on the water, creating slack in your system. This type of cast is called a wave or serpentine cast.
- George Harvey developed the "Harvey Leader." The beauty of this type of leader is that it lays the tippet down in a serpentine pattern, thus inducing slack as you cast. You can find guidance on how to build this type of leader in a YouTube or Google search. I often use this type of leader with some of my clients.
- Saving the most obvious for last - cast a longer tippet. 12 to 20 feet will assist with not only spooky fish, but it is significantly easier to naturally cast slack to your tippet. You will need to practice casting; 15 feet of tippet is quite a jump from casting a 9 foot tippet. Again, I recommend using YouTube to review videos of casting longer tippets. You can do it, acknowledge a longer tippet as another arrow in your quiver for finding the tug on the end of your line.

The fishing season is finally amongst us, good luck, be safe, and keep the fish wet.

## Fly Casting Fair

Claude Kistler

As a reminder, the Washington Council of Fly Fishers International will be holding a Fly Casting Fair on Sunday, April 19<sup>th</sup> from 9am to 4pm in Issaquah, WA. There will be beginner, intermediate and advanced classes. The event features Maxine McCormick who is a distance and accuracy world casting champion.

Additional details and registration can be found on the WSC FFI Website. <https://wscffi.org>

# Book Review

Larry Ray

## Warm Water Fishes.

A few of you, with the arrival of early spring weather, have turned thoughts toward fishing for warm water species which, during the spring spawn, become more aggressive. We have a few nice warm water options nearby, such as Silver Lake. Anyway, several of you have asked over time what is held in the library with regard to such fishing. I must confess, I never really knew. So, a search of our catalogs and shelves revealed this compilation.

## Fishing

*Advanced Bass Fishing* by John Weiss and the *Modern Book on Black Bass* by Byron Dalrymple barely touch on fly fishing. The most comprehensive book in our collection, devoted entirely to fly fishing for bass and the other sunfish, is *The Sunfishes* by Jack Ellis. Indeed, this book is the one shining jewel in our collection on this topic. It is delightfully illustrated in ink by David Taft. Various waters and cover types in which sunfish and bass are likely to be found are discussed at length. There is an entire chapter devoted to the merits of dry as opposed to wet fly tactics, as well as another entitled "The Bream Fisher's Fly Box." Bugs and flies are discussed in detail, with such comparisons as to how the surface tension is affected by a bullet-head popper as opposed to one with a blunt, clipped deer hair head. The first two lines of the forward say it all – "Selective Bream? Yes, indeed! The only question is, why did it take us fly fishers so long? Why wasn't this book written years ago?" As a quick reference, John Shewey's *Trout and Beyond* contains a chapter on Smallmouth Bass. It is written in a compact, rather compressed form, with more photos than text. Still, if one wants a quick dissertation on smallmouth fishing in area rivers, it is provided here.

## Tying

Our collection contains an ample supply of tying manuals for bugs and poppers. C. Boyd's *Pfeiffer's Bug Making* is probably the most comprehensive and recent (1993). Popper and plug materials from balsa and foam to deer hair, and to hard plastic and epoxy, are all covered. Claiming to provide patterns and instructions for everything from bluegill to billfish, it seems to concentrate on bass and sunfish. There is much black and white, close-up, instructive photography. Meanwhile, A.D. Livingston provides *Tying Bugs and Flies for Bass*. Similar in style to "Bug Making..." but limited to bass bugs, it is still well illustrated with black and white instructional photos. However, the chapter and photos on Muddlers, Spuddlers, and Miracle Bugs might appeal to big trout fly devotees as well. (By the way, Livingston's teaching style is fun, as those of you who have seen his game and fish recipes in past volumes of Gray's Sporting Journal will appreciate.) Two volumes by Dick Stewart, *Flies for Bass & Panfish*, and *Panfish*, round out our collection. *Flies...*, the more recent of the two, is illustrated with nice color photography, with a shot for each pattern. *Panfish*, meanwhile, is illustrated with the more traditional drawings of its day.

All the books mentioned above can be found in your SFF Library. Check them out and see if you discover a pleasing new form of fishing and tying.

# Beginner Fly Pattern

Chet Allison

## Woolly Bugger by Trident Fly Tying

**Hook:** Daiichi 2461, Mustad 9672 size 8-1/0

**Weight:** 020 lead free wire (optional)

**Thread:** White 8/0 (UTC)

**Tail:** White marabou blood quill

**Flash:** Pearl Krystal flash 3 strands each side

**Rib:** Silver wire, wrap either direction

**Body:** Medium white chenille

**Hackle:** White saddle hackle tie in back by tip



[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4gern5\\_6i0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4gern5_6i0)

1. Put the hook in the tying vise. Wrap the lead wire from the hook point to about 2 hook eye length from the hook eye. Or leave it off, it is your choice.
2. Start the thread wraps behind the lead wire if used or just over the hook point if you don't, wrapping back to the hook bend. Now cover up the lead wire if used.
3. Tie in the marabou just over the hook point and wrap the thread to the hook bend. Longer is better than shorter. The fish will shorten it as they snap at the pattern. Trim off the marabou that is in front of the tie in point. Tie in the Krystal flash on both sides of the marabou tail. Now tie in the wire right on the rear tie in point on the rear side. Now tie in the white chenille. Strip off some chenille fibers so you have thread core to tie on with. It is starting to build up at this tie in point but that is ok.
4. You can tie in the saddle hackle from the back or the front. The front version will come later. For the rear attachment, tie in the saddle hackle by the tip with shiny side to you. Wrap the chenille forward in touching wraps leaving just a little space between hook eye and tie off of the chenille. Wrap the hackle forward in spiral wraps but not big spirals. Tie off the hackle just in front of the chenille 3 wraps over the stem and trim off the extra, there should be a little space for the wire to come.
5. The wire is wrapped forward with a wiggling of the wire as you wrap forward so as to not bind down hackle fibers. Wiggle as you wrap. Take one wrap of wire at the hook eye point. Make some wraps of thread over the wire so you can cut or helicopter the wire off. Build up a small whip finish. Add cement and you are done.

# SFFC Information

## Board of Directors

President:	Al Odenthal
Vice President:	Bill White
Treasurer:	Mike Williams
Secretary:	Keith Kuchner
Sgt. at Arms:	Brian Soth
Director at Large:	Jim Athearn
Director at Large:	Bob Schmidt
Director at Large:	Cassandra Collings
Past President:	Paul Olsen

## Committee Chairs

Programs:	Bill White
Conservation:	Jim Athearn
Outings:	Mike Sportelli
Budget:	Jim Athearn
Membership:	Brad Collins
Publication:	Keith Kuchner
Education:	<i>Vacant</i>
Fly-Fishing School:	Bill Wagstaff
Beginning Fly-Tying:	Chet Allison
Intermediate Fly-Tying:	Brad Collins
Project Healing Waters:	Craig Adams
FFI Liaison:	Claude Kistler
Librarian:	Larry Ray
A/V Coordinator:	David Marshall

### Feedback and Contributions to the Barbless Flyer:

For feedback or suggested contributions to the Barbless, please contact the Editor at [keithkuchner@outlook.com](mailto:keithkuchner@outlook.com). New articles, photos, and content are always welcome.

### Update of Membership Profiles:

Log into the SFFC website [spokaneflyfishers.com](http://spokaneflyfishers.com). After login, the profile form will be visible and relevant membership information can be updated.

### Contact Information:

Spokane Fly Fishers Club (SFFC), PO Box 4141, Spokane, WA 99220  
membership@spokaneflyfishers.com



Website



Facebook



# SFFC Business Supporters



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RYAN STEMKOSKI, MBA  
CREATIVE TECHNOLOGIES

Business Memberships are available for an annual fee or payment in kind. Members and Non-Members interested in advertising, please direct questions to the SFFC website or to a member of the Board of Directors.