



The Barbless Flyer

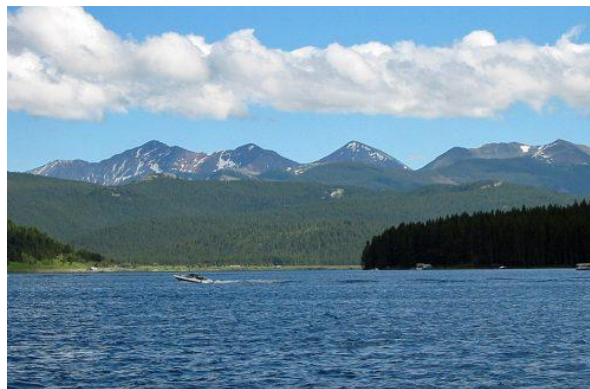
The mission of the Spokane Fly Fishers is to provide a family friendly organization for promoting the sport of fly fishing through education, application, and conservation



Summer Club Outings



May	June
<p>Brown's Lake May 17th</p> <p>Bayley Lake May 30th</p>	<p>Long Lake, Ferry County June 12-14th</p> <p>NF Coeur d'Alene River June 26-28th</p>
July	August
<p>St Joe River July 17-19th</p>	<p>Georgetown Lake Aug 28-30th</p>



Don't forget to sign-up under the Events section on the SFF Website.

Contents

Contents and Calendar	2	Ichthyology	6
Prez Says	3	Book Review	9
Fishing Season is here. Time to Party!	4	Beginner Fly Pattern	11
Outings Committee Updates	5	SFFC Information	12
Kid's Fishing Day is here!	6	SFFC Business Supporters	13

May 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Fly School Casting 10 am
3	4	5 Budget Meeting 6 pm	6 Board Meeting 6 pm	7	8	9 Amber Lake Fly School Outing 9 am
10 Mother's Day	11	12	13 Monthly Meeting Awards Night 6 pm	14	15	16
17 Brown's Lake Outing 9 am	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 Memorial Day	26	27	28	29	30 Bayley Lake Outing 9 am
31						

Prez Says

Al Odenthal

Our General Membership Meeting this month will be to celebrate club awards and the collegiality that comes with a group of dedicated fly fishers within our club. It will be held May 13th at Jack & Dan's Tavern. A no-host bar and menu has been made available while Bill White has a fun program scheduled to make the night enjoyable. Club officer elections will be held at this May meeting. So come enjoy the company of your fellow fly fishers at an iconic Spokane venue and select officers for the next year. Though this will be the last General Membership meeting until September, the fishing season is upon us! Get out there, wet a line, and enjoy the tug at the end of a tight line. Take some photos and help us generate some buzz on our Facebook page.

Thank you to those who have stepped forward and agreed to hold officer positions on our Board of Directors. This is a vital role to keep our club active, changing, but most of all meeting the needs of our members. We still have one officer position to fill at this writing - a Board member who orchestrates our monthly program presenters. If you're inclined to have a voice in selecting the programs our club enjoys each month this is the role for you. Contact any Club Officer for more information and to express your interest. Because these programs are booked well in advance, your timely response would be helpful.

We are blessed to have Chris Bryant agree to chair a rejuvenated **Education Committee** whose job will be to identify and select on-going educational programs for our members. These programs will be in addition to our General Membership presentations and will be held throughout the year to help in skill-building for more success in our fly fishing endeavors. I saw Chris, Judy Kaufman and Bill Wagstaff energetically discussing the many topics and opportunities this rejuvenated program might present. This is a new program based on member input to the At-Large members of your Board and will be implemented this coming Fall 2026. This is going to be a great year for the Spokane Fly Fishers Club.

I'm looking into June on my calendar with a not-so-subtle reminder that June ends our fiscal year and club dues will be due. Your Board of Directors has some ambitious ideas out there that you, the members, have indicated would enhance your club experience. We've been careful with the budget throughout this year and at this point there appears to be sufficient funds for our operational expenses without increasing our rather modest club annual dues amount. So, thank you all for your generous support of our club fund-raising efforts and for the donation of your time and talents. I am truly humbled by the quality of knowledge and character of our members and their willingness to expand our sport.

It has been a joy to serve as your Club President this year. Thank you all for your support and your comradery. I hope to see you on the water this year. Enjoy!

Fishing Season is Here. Time to Party!

Bill White

May 13th Meeting - Last for 2025-2026 Season:

The “Award Night, End of Year, and Season Kick-Off Soiree” is just around the corner. On Wednesday, May 13th at 6:00 pm our last meeting before the summer break will be held at Jack & Dan’s Tavern banquet room, 1226 N. Hamilton St, Spokane. (Free parking at the rear of building.) We will be handing out awards, including Fly Fisher of the Year, Lambert Award, Founders Award, and Chris Lunde Conservation Award.

Please register on the Spokane Fly Fisher website if you will be attending Awards Night so we can get a headcount and plan accordingly.



You will be responsible for your own food and bar tab, along with a tip. There are about a dozen items on the menu, ranging from chicken strips, fish & chips, french dip, reuben sandwich, to taco salad, quesadillas, and garden salad. There is also a full, no host, bar. Brian Soth will be conducting two games of Fly-Fishing Bingo with prizes for the winners.

Come ready to raise a toast to our award winners, holler BINGO, make fishing plans for the summer, and have a great time with great people. Bring a smile, good humor, a hankering for good pub food and a parched mouth. 😊 Fish on!

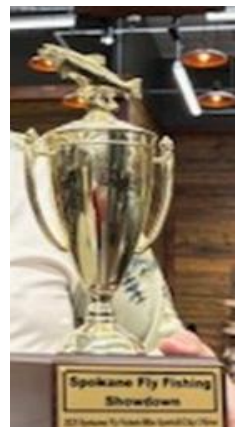
Annual Dues – 2026 - 2027 annual dues are coming due on June 1st. Spokane Fly Fishers may be the best deal in all the land! \$30/individual and \$35/family, a bargain at twice the price.

Next Club Meeting - Our next Club meeting will be Wednesday, Sept 9th at 7pm at St. Francis of Assisi cafeteria. We are lining up speakers and activities at this very moment.

Member Input - If you have ideas for speakers or events for the upcoming season, pass them along to me. We are here to make the Club as useful and enjoyable to members as possible. Please keep in mind that our financial resources have limits, but we'll do our darndest to get the best presenters and venues we can.

Spokane Showdown 2026 - Chapter II is moving forward this Fall, and we need to defend our inaugural victory by Chip O'Brien and Mike Sportelli. The trophy and bragging rights belong in our Club. A date is being finalized and will be announced soon. Start lining up your two-person teams early.

Wear your Club Badge - As always, wear your Spokane Fly Fishers name badge with pride to meetings. Help those of us with aging memories. We can only fit so many penguins on that iceberg we call memory. We are a club dedicated to fly fishing, family, friends, and FUN.



Outings Committee Updates

Mike Sportelli

The weather is getting good, where should I go fishing ... hmm. So many choices here in the Inland Northwest. There are close to 200 lakes within a 2 hour drive of Spokane, take your pick!

Large rainbows at Coffeepot? Yes. Really nice browns at Waitts and Jump off Joe? Yes. April weather has been a mixed bag. We saw our first day over 70 degrees this April, but unfortunately that was not the case for the day of our scheduled Waitts lake outing. The Outings Host made the call to postpone the outing on April 15th, and it was a great call, it rained all day with no breaks and although we have all fished in the rain by chance, maybe not on purpose. May is sure to provide us those much desired pleasant days, and we have many opportunities to get out on the water next month.

- If you want to volunteer and take SFF students out on Amber Lake, May 9th is the date, see Bill Wagstaff for details.
- Bill White will be hosting both May outings on the calendar: Browns Lake on May 17th and Bayley Lake on May 30th. Go to the website for details and to sign up.
- For local river access mark your calendars for the Spokane River to re-open on May 23rd.



I have been anticipating warmer days because that in turn will warm the cold waters of Lake CDA. As of this writing, the surface temp is still hovering at 48 degrees. Once it gets just above 50 degrees it will be time to go and hunt some of the lakes big smallies. If you have not flyfished for smallmouth there are lots of opportunities locally and they are a blast to catch on the fly. There are some smaller venues for warm water species locally, if interested see me at the next meeting and I can share intel to get you pointed in the right direction.

Excited for the graduating class of this year's fly school - that means some new faces out on our club outings.

Enjoy your spring fishing guys! I will see you out on the water.



Kid's Fishing Day is here!

Craig Adams

May 9th is the day. The Air Force Resort at Clear Lake is the location.

Directions: I-90 exit 264, turn right, take the next immediate right, follow this road to the Air Force resort on your left.

Volunteers are needed from 7:30 am until 3:00 pm to help with fishing rod handout, fishing, processing fish, and net removal. Volunteers are definitely needed for net removal at 3:00 pm

Come out and have a great time with the kid's! It is organized chaos, but you will have a great time. When you look back on this event you will realize that it was one of the best fishing days of the year.

Contact Craig Adams if you have any questions (509) 999-5660 or craigflyfisher@gmail.com



Ichthyology

Ken Moore

“To the angler, this is the most interesting of natural sciences.”

Thaddeus Norris, 1864

The American Angler's Book

Fly fishing is a sport that will never end. Like a well-lived life, there is always more to know and more to do. In our sport, it may be a new knot to tie, a new fly to create, an adjustment to a casting problem that you had on the river, or new journeys to new locations. The quest to conquer fly-fishing never ends. But one area I often fall short in is truly respecting the trout that I catch, and I don't blame you if you also fall short in this area too. It is easy to believe that we outsmart the fish we catch. We might observe it in the net or even take a photo of the fish, and then it's on to the next fish. Then on to the next destination on the lake or river. My hope after reading this article is that, at some point, when you catch the next trout or char, you reflect on what truly resides in your net.

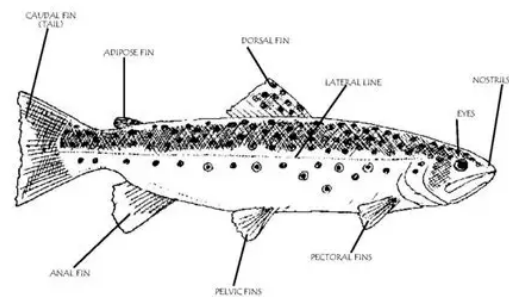
Trout and char are both members of the family Salmonidae.

- Examples of trout include the Rainbow, Brown, Cutthroat, and Steelhead.
- Examples of char include the Brook Trout, Bull Trout, Arctic Char, and Dolly Varden.



Trout and char are ectothermic stenotherms. Ectothermic means they rely on the surrounding environment to regulate body temperature, and stenotherms require a narrow temperature range to function. While some variation exists between species (char tend to tolerate colder water than trout), most salmonids function best in water temperatures ranging from about 40 - 60 degrees Fahrenheit. When it is too warm, they may seek out cooler lies near ground springs, shaded pools, or the confluence of a cold-water tributary. When it is too cold, they may seek out sunny lies or pod up in deeper water where temperatures are more stable. Trout will also migrate up and down a watershed to find the right temperature when necessary. On the Green River in Utah, a series of hot springs sits where the walls grow steep. In the heat of summer, few trout are found in the otherwise promising pockets below the hot springs. Fish density may be as low as 50 fish per nautical mile. When temperatures average below freezing, fish density may grow as high as 5,000 per nautical mile. We see similar behavior on the Spokane River with cooling ground springs in the summer heat.

Form follows function in nature, and clues to things like preferences in water type and feeding mode are reflected in the form of trout and char. Salmonids have multiple sets of fins that provide varying degrees of freedom of movement. The caudal fin, or tail fin, is the primary source of thrust. Angulated tails, like those of the rainbow and cutthroat trout, are better suited to hold in fast current, while square tails, like those of the brown and brook trout, are better suited for bursts of speed needed to ambush prey. The adipose fin reduces drag by delaying the separation of smooth water flowing over the trout's streamlined body. The remaining fins allow the fish to control yaw, pitch, and roll in a three-dimensional aquatic environment. Gills not only allow trout to breathe but also reduce drag by opening side channels that let water slip through. A mucosal layer over their skin further reduces drag and provides a protective barrier against disease. Jaws that extend well behind the eye open wide for ambush feeding, while jaws that end near the eye are all that is needed for drift feeding. Both are delicate compared to the jaws of many warm-water game fish; removing a hook from a trout's mouth requires careful handling, with the weight of the fish supported.



Trout and char are also physostomous fish: their swim bladder is connected to their gut, allowing them to “gulp” or “burp” air to adjust buoyancy. The air in their swim bladder is susceptible to changes in atmospheric pressure. When the pressure drops, the air in the bladder expands, helping trout maintain buoyancy and swim. When the pressure rises, the air in the bladder contracts, and the trout must exert more effort to remain buoyant and swim. Trout and char sense these pressure changes in the walls of their swim bladder and make buoyancy adjustments accordingly. Some anglers say this physiological mechanism is the reason for apparent changes in trout feeding patterns during weather fronts. While there might be some truth to this, physostomous fish, like trout and char, are very good at quickly equalizing pressure in their swim bladders. At the depths where stream-dwelling trout are most frequently found, it seems less likely that buoyancy changes are directly responsible for changes in trout behavior during barometric pressure shifts. This is not true for trout in lakes, and barometric pressure may affect them.

Trout and char also use specialized senses to monitor a variety of other environmental variables. Among those senses of particular interest to the angler are sight, sound, smell, taste, and oral mechanoreception, and pressure or vibration via the lateral line system.

Sight. The primary sense used in feeding and a primary means of detecting threat. Color perception is greatest in red and blue. Trout distinguish many more shades of red and blue than the fisherman, and the inclusion of hues from the red or blue end of the spectrum in artificial flies can serve as an effective trigger.

Sound. Trout have an inner ear to detect sound. Since the density of a trout's body is similar to the density of water, sound passes easily to the inner ear. Sound travels five times faster in water than in air, and hearing appears to play a significant role in predator-prey response. If the angler thinks the sound of splashing footsteps on a gravel bottom doesn't matter, think again.

Smell. Smell plays a role in behaviors such as food location, family recognition, and territorial responses. Salmonids have a keen sense of smell, with amino acids topping the list of attractive scents. Amino acids are the building blocks of protein. Salmonids rely on proteins as a primary energy source by breaking down their amino acids into glucose through a process called gluconeogenesis, and most of their favorite prey items contain significant protein stores. Aquatic insects, such as mayflies, secrete a sticky substance with their eggs. This substance is high in amino acids, and smell appears to play a large role in triggering trout to key in on food sources like the hatch of egg-laying mayflies. To understand the raw power of a trout's sense of smell, consider the following example. Anadromous steelhead migrate from saltwater to freshwater to spawn. More specifically, they return to the exact same watershed where they were born. How? By imprinting the smell of that watershed in a sort of olfactory maritime map, then following the scent home.

Taste. Fish have the most taste buds of any animal, and salmonids are no exception. Trout and char have a very large number of highly sensitive taste buds. Like smell, taste can be either an attractant or a deterrent. While smell triggers trout to search for food, taste preferences are narrow and species specific, but very stable among members of the same species, regardless of where they live. Deterrents include many compounds we would describe as bitter or sweet, such as those found in coffee, gum, tobacco, and sunblock lotions. Trout will spit food with bitter or sweet tastes. It's good practice to clean your hands of any residual scent by washing them in the stream on arrival, and to save the cigar until the fishing is done.

Oral mechanoreception, or mouthfeel. The mouthfeel of prey items helps determine palatability. Rainbow trout, for example, are known to spit out a scud if it is not oriented properly for easy digestion. Scuds have prickly back legs that poke when eaten from the backside first. Trout learn to ingest scuds headfirst or to spit them out and reorient them for a headfirst swallow. Pause to consider how that information might influence fly design and the timing of the hookset.

The lateral line system. Many anglers are familiar with the presence of pressure-sensitive lateral lines along the sides of trout. Fewer know of a mask of similar lines that encompasses the gills, eyes, and snout. Embedded in each line are exquisitely delicate, hair-like neural sensors that displace with the slightest disturbance of water. These sensors monitor flow patterns and differentials, sound waves, and the movements of fish and other aquatic life, among other things. They orient trout to surrounding objects, allowing them to ride currents with minimal effort, and inform them of potential threats. In theory, they can detect the struggle of the hasty escape of a large stonefly nymph. Because of these sensors, trout can determine the most efficient lie within a given current, swim in formation, and alert to the movement of both predators and prey. Eliminating unnecessary movement is an important part of the stealthy approach to a spooky trout. Adding some movement to the fly, on the other hand, can often trigger takes.

Salmonids even monitor **magnetic fields**. A concentration of magnetite exists in the nose of both sea-going (anadromous) and stream-dwelling (fluvial) salmonids that allows them to orient in a magnetic field. Detecting magnetic fields is thought to assist migration. The utility of this last sense to the angler may be limited. I am not aware of an elite fly fisher checking his compass to locate fish or modifying the magnetic properties of his flies. But this knowledge certainly does not reduce the natural wonder of a trout in the angler's eye.

Trout and Char are amazing creatures. I fully recognize they do deserve my respect and gratitude each time they honor me by taking my fly. I suggest that the next time you catch a trout, examine what you did that made that fish interested in taking your artificial fly. Which of the senses above led that fish to grace you with its presence? Respect the fish by not exhausting it as you bring it to the net. Respect it as you remove your barbless fly from its mouth, and if you have to handle the fish, please make sure your hands are wet. And then, when you do release it, reflect on what a remarkable species you just had the luck to encounter. And oh, here is the best part: share your knowledge of the family Salmonidae species because you are an Ichthyologist.

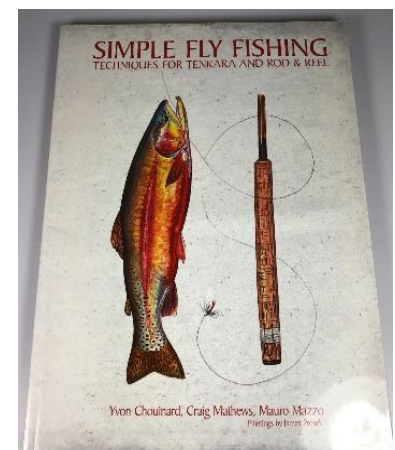
Book Review

Larry Ray

Yvon Chouinard. You have heard or read of him if you have been involved in the conservation movement, in climbing, or studied how to blend capitalistic business practices with conservation. Or, if you have ever shopped for fine outdoor clothing. I know that opening is a mouthful! But Yvon Chouinard means a lot of things to a lot of people involved in those pursuits. If nothing else, you probably know of the Patagonia clothing line. The company was founded by Chouinard, who grew it into a multinational firm marketing rugged, yet comfortable, outdoor apparel. Only then to shock the business and conservation worlds by giving it away. If you want to know more of this fascinating man, read David Gelles's *Dirtbag Billionaire* or Chouinard's own biographical *Let My People Go Surfing*.

For our purpose here I am reviewing his latest book which, fortunately for us, deals with fly fishing. *Pheasant Tail Simplicity* is Chouinard's effort to simplify the sport by reducing the necessary flies to a select, effective few, all of which are based on one material: pheasant tail or, more specifically, the barbs from the tail swords of a Chinese cock pheasant. Most tyers are familiar with the material. Indeed, the pheasant tail nymph, in its basic form, is one of the most utilized patterns for introductory training in fly tying, as well as on the water. Chouinard, though, along with co-authors Craig Mathews and Mauro Mazzo, raises the material to a new level with patterns that cover the spectrum from soft hackles and nymphs to dry flies and then to flies intended for anadromous and salt-water quarry. All utilize pheasant tail barbs, most commonly in the tails and abdomens, but occasionally for thoraxes and wings as well.

This is not Chouinard's first foray into fly fishing writing. He, Mathews, and Mazzo previously wrote *Simple Fly Fishing*, published in 2014. In it, they took a simplified approach that is supported by a clean, concise instructional style. *Pheasant Tail Simplicity* is a continuation of that approach that could remedy the backaches and confusion caused by over-stuffed fishing vests (now in which pocket did I put the emergers...?). There have been other fly fishers who have challenged the perception that one needs a multitude of flies and materials to tie them. The soft-hackle crowd seems to have reduced their load by adapting basic soft-hackle tying and fishing strategies to fit most situations. As far back as 1975 Sylvester Nemes wrote of such efforts in *The Soft Hackled Fly* and continued with *The Soft-Hackled Fly Addict* in 1981. Morgan Lyle, in *Simple Flies*, took a minimalist approach to fly patterns and their creation. His ties employ no unnecessary elements – no needless tails, hackles, or antennae on dry flies, no fancy artificial legs or other synthetics on nymphs. Leonard Wright, with his *Fly-Fishing Heresies*, is almost savage in his



attacks on some of fly-fishing's conventional wisdom, including exacting imitation in tying, which he felt limited or even eliminated natural movement.

Interesting, as well: Both Chouinard and Lyle express their appreciation of Tenkara's simplicity – Chouinard shows a photograph of himself taking a salmon with a Tenkara rod in *Simple Fly Fishing*.

Instead of trying to re-state their principles for you, I will simply provide the following quotes from the book:

“Successfully catching fish is less about having a thousand flies in your vest and more about having faith in an all-around fly and fishing it where, when, and how it should be fished. Technique, confidence, and skill trump dozens of fly boxes. In other words, you need to learn to read the water and to match the fly and the technique to each specific situation.”

- Yvon Chouinard

“In traditional Italian cooking we say, “five ingredients, no more.” This is the standard by which a cook's proficiency and the resulting quality of the dish are judged. Limiting your options, whether in cooking or fishing, forces creativity and learning. Do it right and you can achieve spectacular results.” --

- Mauro Mazzo

“(author) Darus Proper Relates that he knows many excellent fly tyers and anglers who simply cannot tie complicated fly patterns. I feel the same. These fine anglers and tyers tend to catch more fish than their peers. They will explain that they see no need to tie difficult, time consuming, complicated flies. Simple, uncomplicated flies, tied with proper materials like pheasant tail, usually allow me to achieve my purpose for tying flies in the first place: to catch fish. Trout aren't impressed or influenced by complicated, artsy flies....”

- Craig Mathews

One of the beauties of the simplicity that the authors bring can be found in their writing styles. All are concise, unpretentious, and so easy to follow. Even if reading in a relaxed fashion, which I think would be how the authors prefer you read it, the entire book can be easily read in half a day. The reader will easily retain most of what is read. Perhaps most importantly, you will gain confidence all the while from the authors' simple consistency.

So, if, like me, you are tired of crammed drawers of tying materials at your bench, of overcrowded vests and the discomfort they cause, not to mention the confusion created by too large a choice in flies, take a serious look at downsizing your collection while improving your tying and fishing techniques.

A word of thanks to SFF member Jim Athearn, who called this wonderful book to my attention.

Note that every fly fishing book referenced above is available in your SFF Library.

Happy reading, tying, sorting, and downsizing!

Beginner Fly Pattern

Chet Allison

Rainbow Warrior by Trident Fly Fishing

Hook: Tiemco 2487 size 12-22

Bead: Nickel Tungsten Bead Sized to Match

Thread: Red UTC 70 or Danville 8/0

Tail: Pheasant Tail

Underbody: smooth red thread wraps

Abdomen: Medium Mylar Tinsel – Pearl

Wing case: end of Abdomen

Thorax: Sow Scud dubbing - Pink



Watch the YouTube video first it will help a lot

www.youtube.com/watch?v=JzsR2a2g_ZQ

1. Place bead on the hook then put the hook in the tying vise. Start the thread behind the bead wrapping a little over the hook bend.
2. Trim off about 6 pheasant tail fibers and measure them to be about the length of the hook shank. Tie the fibers in at the last thread wrap then wrap 2 or 3 wraps down farther on the hook bend, then wrap up to the bead.
3. Now tie in the Mylar tinsel taking wraps back to the tail fibers. Take even wraps of thread up to just behind the bead. Wrap the mylar forward in touching wraps. You will see the red showing through and that is what you want. Tie the mylar off, keeping it to the top of the hook shank so you can bend it back over the mylar body taking about 6 or 7 wrap.
4. With the thread hanging over the hook point prepare the dubbing. You will now wrap the dubbing from the tie in point to the bead and making quite a thick with several wraps of dubbing. Your thorax should be bigger in size than the bead.
5. Pull the mylar tinsel forward over the thorax taking 2 or 3 wraps over the mylar behind the bead. Now pull the mylar back making about 3 wraps behind the bead. Build up a red thread collar behind the bead. Maybe 4 wraps at the most. Trim off the extra mylar and apply a little head cement.

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:	Chris Bryant
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. New articles, photos, and content are always welcome.

Update of Membership Profiles:

Log into the SFFC website 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



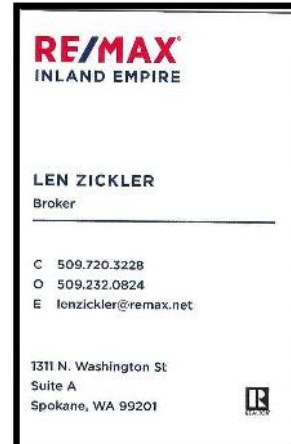
Website



Facebook



SFFC Business Supporters



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.