

FLY FISHING



project healing waters

Project Healing Waters began in 2005 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center serving wounded military service members returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. It has since grown to become a national non-profit organization with over 200 programs serving disabled veterans and disabled military personnel from all 50 states. The local program is supported by the Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited Chapter and was started by Roy Davidson and Ron Zambor.

Why fly fishing?

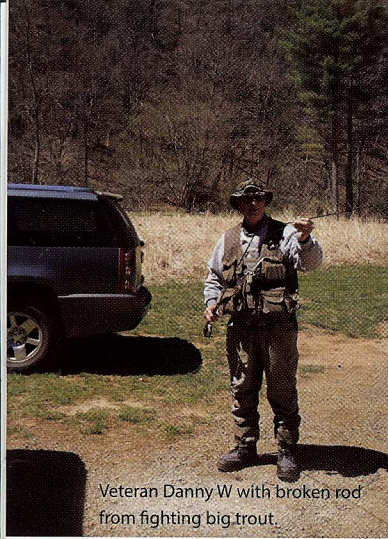
Project Healing Waters volunteers and participants have learned that our program provides a unique, natural way to heal the body and spirit. Our's is not a one-day outing; it is a year-round program of support, classes and fishing. It is an extended commitment because our veterans and military personnel are dealing with permanent or long-term in-

juries. The Volunteer's role is to be their coach, mentor, companion and friend on a journey of healing. All the veterans' equipment, materials and trip expenses are paid for by Project Healing Waters. Five Points Restaurant (Jack and Pam Welker and Gallins Foods) through their Celebrity Dinners have helped us raise some of the funds needed to make these purchases. Our local program works with 25 to 30 Veterans that come from as far away as Troy and Boone to participate in our group.

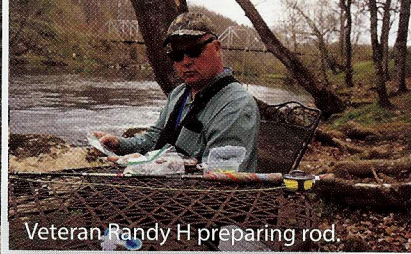
Local Volunteers (including Buena Vista residents, Bill Britt, Ed Graham and Richard Weinberg) help the veterans learn to cast a fly rod, tie knots, build a leader, tie their own flies and build their own fly rod. Two of our local veterans have won the national rod building competition – a testament to their determination and willingness to learn and the skill and instruction provided by a talented team of volunteers.

But the program isn't just about classes and skill development, it's also about fishing. Veterans in the local program can go on 20+ trips a year (many of these are organized by Bill Britt). One of their favorite trips is to Frank Armstrong's cabin in Virginia. Frank (also a Buena Vista resident) has two miles of beautiful water that he stocks with rainbows and browns that give the guys quite a fight! It is great day of fishing, stories about fishing (exaggerated, of course) and friendship.

Veterans in Project Healing Waters can also participate in National Destination Trips at no cost to the Veteran or spouse. Members of our group have gone on week long trips to Alaska, the Florida Keys, the Au Sable River in Michigan and the Smith River in Montana. Several of our Veterans have also participated in the Albacore and Red Fish Festival at Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.



Veteran Danny W with broken rod from fighting big trout.



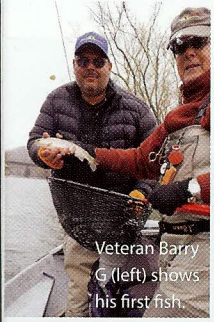
Veteran Randy H preparing rod.



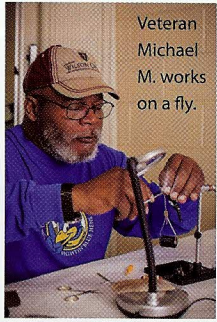
Veteran Keith H. and his service dog, Elliott.



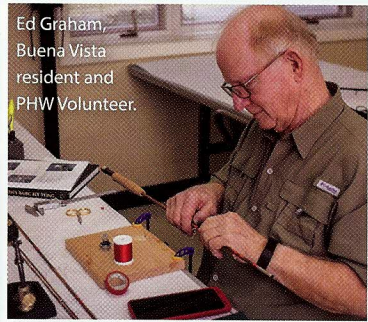
The group prepares to take to the river.



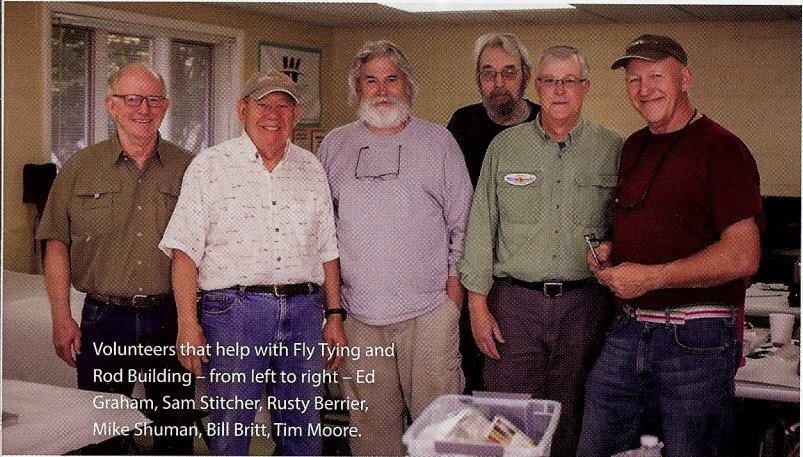
Veteran Barry G (left) shows his first fish.



Veteran Michael M. works on a fly.



Ed Graham, Buena Vista resident and PHW Volunteer.



Volunteers that help with Fly Tying and Rod Building – from left to right – Ed Graham, Sam Stitcher, Rusty Berrier, Mike Shuman, Bill Britt, Tim Moore.



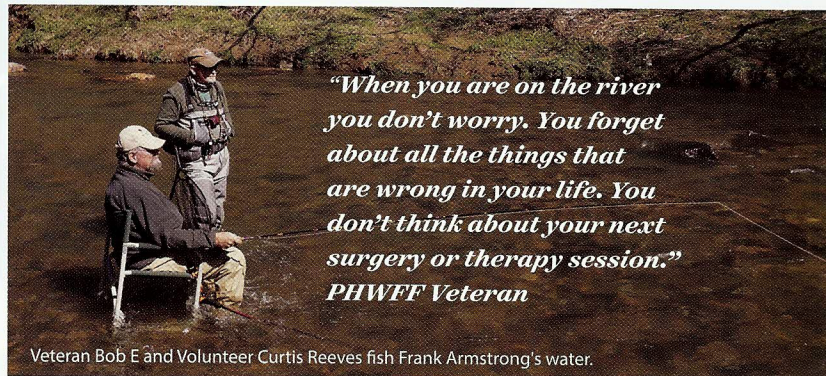
Bill Britt (seated) with Duke Ison, his granddaughter and Michael M. (Veteran).

Learning new skills and catching fish in beautiful rivers are only part of the reason our program is successful. The other part is the camaraderie that is created among the veterans and the volunteers. As stated by a PHWFF Veteran, **“We lose that feeling of isolation when we learn other people care about us. The volunteers show they care in lots of ways and we look forward to being with them and other members of the group.”**

If you would like to learn more, please visit projecthealingwaters.org

If you would like to contribute please send a check to:
Project Healing Waters – Winston Salem Program
P.O. Box 695
La Plata, MD 20646

If you would like to volunteer, please contact Roy Davidson at 336-909-3215



“When you are on the river you don’t worry. You forget about all the things that are wrong in your life. You don’t think about your next surgery or therapy session.”
PHWFF Veteran

Veteran Bob E and Volunteer Curtis Reeves fish Frank Armstrong’s water.

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