

# Blue Ridge NC Trout Unlimited



## January 2024 Newsletter

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*Congratulations to Jon Pershke, the winner of the flies tied by Dave Everhart and given away with his article in December. Thank you Jon and thank you Dave. It's always nice to know that someone out there is reading the newsletter.*

*For many of you who would rather sit at your fly tying table than brave the cold this time of year we thought it would be a good time to discuss a few topics to help improve your time tying those flies. A few ideas are discussed in the newsletter, but for even more ideas, don't forget that every Wednesday at 6 PM our professional tier Rusty Berrier teaches class at South Fork Community Center.*

### **PRESIDENT'S CORNER**

I am relatively new to fly tying, having started only a few years ago. In the beginning it was a way for me to learn more about flies. I attended an Orvis fly tying 101 class, and then started talking to other BRTU members. They were all happy to help and offered me advice and encouragement. Once I understood the tools needed, I purchased a Rosetti traveler vise and Doctor Hook's fly tying kit. I initially worked on simple flies like the mop flies, then I learned about frenchies and pheasant tail flies. Soon I added rainbow warriors, hare's ears, zebra midges, egg patterns and recently DNA worms. I now have a healthy collection of flies at my disposal.

Once you start down this path you will find your fellow anglers sharing their favorite and new flies, along with the materials needed to tie them. One of the best ways to get started is to attend our fly tying class every Wednesday night at 6:30pm at the South Fork Baptist Church. We have

everything needed to learn to tie flies. It's a great way to broaden your knowledge about fly fishing in general. I encourage everyone to give it a try.

Fred Frank

### **QUOTE OF THE MONTH**

*The best thing about fly tying is that you can learn new things every day. ....Abimbola Joseph*

### **JANUARY MEETING**

**When:** Tuesday, January 16, 6 PM

**Where:** Little Richard's BBQ  
109 S. Stratford Road

**Who:** Chris Barclay, owner Barclay Fly Rod Co.

**What:** Fiberglass rods and small stream fishing.

Join us on January 16<sup>th</sup> to learn more about building fly rods with Chris Barclay, a renown fly rod builder from Winston Salem.

### **UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Fly Tying Classes:** At 9 AM on Wednesdays Project Healing Waters will host fly tying classes and at 6 PM on Wednesday evenings Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited will host classes. The classes will be held at the South Fork Community Center at 4403 Country Club Road in Winston Salem. The classes are free and all are welcome - from beginners to advanced. No need to sign up, just come join us. If you have specific questions about the evening classes, you can contact, Rusty Berrier at [rustyberrier@outlook.com](mailto:rustyberrier@outlook.com).

**Elk Creek Stream Planting:** We had planned a restoration event for February 3<sup>rd</sup> at Elk Creek. Unfortunately, the group we were working with did not get their USDA grant for the project. We are looking for an alternative location and the date may change.

**Spring Balsam Trip:** The Spring Balsam trip has been arranged for April 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup>. Balsam lodge can support 16 people. We are requiring payment at sign up. Hopefully this will make the payment process easier and reduce last-minute cancellations. See the link on our website for details and sign up.

We have also arranged for private water fishing with Headwaters Outfitters on Saturday April 13<sup>th</sup>. This will be

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on a private section of the East Fork of the French Broad River. It is limited to 10 people. Headwaters gives us a deal on the pricing. There will be two river keepers to help out with fly selection and rigging. See the link on our website for details and to sign up. We are also working on arranging a wade trip with Brooking Anglers for the other folks attending Balsam.

The sign up should be on the BRTU website soon. Check it at [www.blueridgetu.org](http://www.blueridgetu.org).



## THE TROUT STREAM ADVOCATE

### DECEMBER CHILI COOK-OFF



On a very wet Sunday on December 10<sup>th</sup>, chapter members gathered at Fiddlin' Fish Brewery for their first Chili Cook off. The gathering was a great success. We had over 20 members attend in addition

to new people who came to see the event and joined after tasting the chilies and checking some photos of big fish caught this year. Six crockpots filled up long tables with homemade chili with a variety of fixings including buffalo, venison, chicken, beer, and coffee. This was accompanied by toppings galore and washed down by some good brews from Fiddlin' Fish. Patrons were invited to join with the tasting and vote for the best chili.

Around 6 pm the winners were chosen. In first place was Abbi Jackson's chili represented by husband Tom. Abbi won a \$25 gift certificate from Fiddlin' Fish. Second prize went to Page Frank represented by Fred Frank for a \$15 gift certificate from Fiddlin' Fish. Third prize went to Keith Kolischak winning a \$10 gift certificate from Fiddlin' Fish. We want to thank Abbi and Page for making those great chilis and we hope there was enough dollars left on those Fiddlin' Fish gift certificates by the time Tom and Fred got home.



We want to thank all the members who joined us and a special thanks to Tom Jackson who organized it and all the volunteers who helped set up, cook, and clean up.

I started fishing as a kid and like most kids, catching fish, many fish, big or small brought a lot of joy. Worms and dough balls were the choice bait. In my college years a buddy of mine introduced me to spinners. I spent a good deal of time spin fishing with him for trout in West Virginia and Pennsylvania. My most memorable fishing was for brook trout in small isolated mountain streams. Panther Martin spinners were the golden standard at the time.

We caught a lot of brookies in those days. However, it always amazed me how many abandoned oil wells and coal mines were strewn all over the mountains. Orange water seeping out of mine opening or rusted old pipes was everywhere. I did not understand what it meant at the time, but it seems every year we fished those brook trout streams there were less and less fish to catch till some disappeared completely.

Later I learned the orange water was bringing acid into the streams and the rain was bringing acid (acid rain) from coal burning in Ohio and other states every time storms came through and traveled from industrial states eastward. What I did not realize was the effects of our progress and industrial revolution will impact the streams for a lifetime.

I fished many of those streams after college, but most were dead. This was the first lesson I learned about our impact on our environment. Mother nature gave life to these streams for thousands of years, but we managed to destroy them over a few decades. That was the beginning of my advocacy for clean water, clean streams and trout habitat.

I hope this resonates with many of our members who grew up in the Appalachian mountains. If you have similar stories, please write them down and send it to our newsletter editor, Chick Woodward at [BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com)

Robby Abou-Rizk

### ADD SOME FISH APPEAL TO THOSE OLD FLIES

By Justin Pickett



A recycled Bugger

**We all have one.....The box full of rejects, misfits, oddballs, freaks.... deplorables.**

These are the flies that have been bought by you. Given to you. Found by you. Or, likely, tied by your own hands... possibly in a bourbon-fueled rage the night before a trip while listening to some OCMS. Or maybe that's just me... As I scanned through one of these very fly boxes one day, I wondered if there were any flies that might be salvaged, and, if there were, how might they be resurrected? I was looking at dozens upon dozens of flies that weren't being used. Hooks that were being wasted. Some of them were surely defunct and irredeemable, but I knew I could modify many of them enough to make them fly patch worthy. And, as it turns out, there are several ways to turn an old, dull looking pattern into something new-ish, and might even put some fish in your net!

1. **“Pop” Your Collar** – This is a simple modification you can make to most nymphs (beaded or non-beaded), and even some dry flies. For collars, you can add some pizzazz by simply tying in a “hot” collar with some fluorescent orange, pink, or red thread. You can add dubbing in a contrasting color, or maybe some CDC or partridge feather to add some movement. The same can be done to small streamers as well. I'll often tie in a hot spot on the nose of my clousers and woolly buggers, especially when I know I'll be fishing off-colored water. The same applies to the thorax. Switch up the dubbing. Hackle some feathers. Experiment! Just make sure to keep the correct profile and proportions as you add material. You'll likely need to remove the existing material to be sure things don't get too portly. I can't tell you how many flies I've done this to, and it can really make a big difference in the appearance of a fly.
2. **Show Some Leg** – Another thing that I'll do to a “boring” fly is add some legs. This is another quick and easy way to add some attention getting features to an otherwise uninteresting fly. On beaded nymphs, I'll tie in the legs just behind the bead and add a small pinch of dubbing to help keep the legs separated. I tie legs into dries quite a bit as well. Mostly on terrestrial-type flies, and typically only because the original legs were chewed off

by ravenous trout. This gives you a plethora of color and material options while providing some wiggly deliciousness.

3. **Light It Up** – This is super easy and a great way to add some dimension to a fly. Many nymphs are finished with an epoxy back before they hit the bins. For those that aren't, adding one takes five seconds. Grab the UV epoxy of your preference and add a dollop to the top of the thorax to create a little flashback. You can even toss in a little piece of flashabou to give it a little more shimmer. A few seconds with a UV torch and boom! You don't have to be limited to the thorax of nymphs though. You can cover the entire fly with epoxy to make a super streamline fly that will cut through the water column. Use it to build new heads and add eyes to streamers. Or you can just use it to reinforce the fly itself. I'll often add some hard UV goo at the bottom of my jig flies in order to protect the material and increase the life of the fly. As for the amazingly annoying fly buzzing around my laptop.....He just got a judo chop to the face!
4. **Be Articulate** – Are you uninspired by your box of woolly buggers? Well, a woolly bugger is a great starting platform for making an articulated streamer! Just tie one into a larger hook with some wire and finish that bad boy off with some dumbbells, big feathers and some fluff and you'll be on your way to becoming the next streamer freak in your neighborhood. You can accomplish this with just about any unweighted streamer, and it's possible to accomplish this with some smaller beaded streamers. But the fun doesn't even stop there! You wanna get real crazy and catch some weird looks from your fishing pals? If you have an unweighted, articulated streamer just lying around collecting dust, go get that sucker and tie that thing into some kind of double articulated craziness and go dinosaur hunting! It's a ton of fun experimenting with this!
5. **Color By Numbers** – Painting the beads of your nymphs is just another easy trick that I'll do from time to time. Sure, you can buy a pack of twenty colored beads for seven bucks, or you could buy a couple cans of spray paint and paint beads for days. For painting beads on the fly, use a small paint brush and spray a good amount of paint on something disposable (i.e. paper plate, cardboard) so you don't poison your precious flies with chlorofluorocarbons. Go with a more subtle, natural color tone, or go bling with some platinum, chartreuse, or neon pink. I know of a few anglers that will use paint to indicate how heavily a nymph is tied. If they don't want to paint the entire bead, they just add a dot of paint on the top of the bead so it can be easily identified while in the fly box.

It's a lot of fun to experiment with patterns while sitting at the tying bench, but it can be equally as fun to search through a pile of unwanted flies and create ways to make them better, or at least more attractive. Plus, there are those feelings of satisfaction and accomplishment that come along with

bringing a fly “back to life” and catching some fish on an otherwise undesirable pattern. On top of all that, it’s super easy and the possibilities are infinite. You just might create your next go-to fly! Now go dig through that old, zombie-filled fly box and take it with you the next time you head for the vise!

Justin Pickett

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**Fly tying tip:** *Keep your tools clean and sharp. Bucktail and many synthetic materials dull your scissors blades quickly. Dull scissors make for a frustrating tying session. A small ceramic sharpening stick works great for honing your scissors.*

### ADVICE FROM THE VISE

A new year and that can only mean new fishing adventures over the next 12 months. Here we are in the depths of winter, but still there are plenty of fish in the DH waters that are just waiting for a great nymph drift and wild fish that will still eat a dry in January-so in some of these fair days, get out there.

This month I want to tie one of my favorite mid-winter patterns. Midge larvae or chironomids are one of the most steady food base of our NC trout population. They are in the water year round, and while very small, they are very available, and a pattern to keep in your box.



While the Zebra Midge is the classic pattern, there are so many variations on this basic tie, it makes it an excellent starter pattern. Let’s walk through the steps for this fly, as once you have the basics, you are limited only by your imagination.

Hook sizes can vary from a #24 on up to a #16, and most patterns use a bead head. This is a pattern that is sub surface,

but not hugging the bottom. That’s the zone the larval and pupal stages of this bug hang out.

For the classic Zebra Midge, I’m using a #16 hook, a thread body, a 2.0 silver brass bead and some x small silver wire for the rib.



I’m using red for this one- any color you want to try will most probably be effective on any given day. When they go off one color, try another. Start with the thread behind the bead and wrap to the deep part of the bend. Tie in the wire to the very end of the thread wraps and lay done successive touching turns.



Form a fairly level body with it expanding just behind the bead. I tie mine with extra small wire so I can use a lot of wraps. It segments the body to a more realistic look to me.

I’m including a few Antron fibers behind the bead to give it more of a pupal dimension. It’s a good variant to the pattern, in case one is not working, try the variant.



I double this over the thread and place it right behind the bead. Grab both clumps and traction them backwards,

wrapping over to for, a single wing. Trim that out to the desired size. I use the bend of the hook to guide the wing length, but, cutting it shorter is also purely acceptable. Lots of variations can give the angler a great day vs a good day.



There's no end to the variants you can tie with this design. A shorter wing in black as shown above or change up the bead to a glass bead as seen in the beginning picture.

These are using sexi-floss for the body rather than thread, and some different bead colors.

There's also plenty of flash material, D-rib, tubing, pearl



ribbing and other materials available, and they all build on this fundamental pattern.

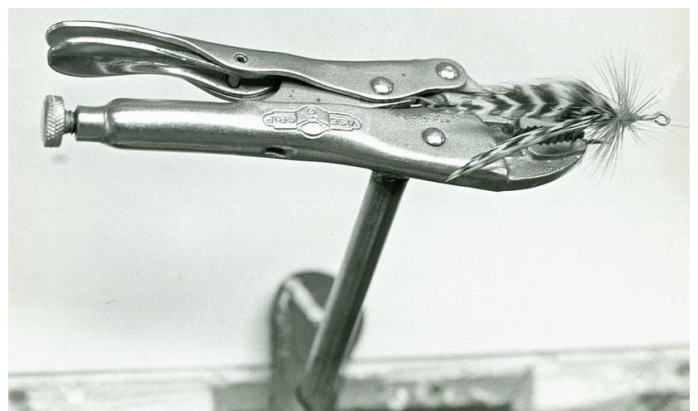


I got carried away with tying some variations for this article and had a dozen different patterns ready to go before I knew it. So, much like last month, let's get these into a someone's fly box. First email wins the dozen for your winter box!

If you have a pattern you would like to see in the column, shoot me an email and we can feature that in an upcoming month. As always, I'm honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly tying and fishing. Don't hesitate to contact me at [Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com](mailto:Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com) Please check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

### LEFTY KREH FLY TYING VISE



Lefty Kreh was not just an innovator on the water, he was also an innovator in fly tying. The above is on display at the American Museum of Fly Fishing. [www.amff.org](http://www.amff.org)

*Editor's note: If you haven't tried UV glue for tying your flies, read below and get it. I started using it a couple years ago and it's the greatest thing for fly tying since the hybrid chicken feather. It comes in thin and thick and there even is a version for use on your leader knots called Knot Sense.*

### IS 5-MINUTE EPOXY A THING OF THE PAST?

By Kent Klewein



Clear Cure Goo. Photo By: Louis Cahill

**I CAN'T REMEMBER THE LAST TIME I HAD TO BREAK OUT MY SMELLY TWO-PART EPOXY BOTTLES AT THE TYING BENCH.**

For several years, 5-minute epoxy was a mainstay in my fly tying. It worked great for molding my streamer heads, coating my popping flies and equally well for putting my finishing touches on the backs of my nymph patterns. Fast forward to present day, however, and epoxy has quickly become a thing of the past. In the eyes of most legitimate fly tiers, epoxy is nothing more than an old school tying material and technique that has become outdated. Innovative fly tying companies like [Clear Cure Goo](#) have taken the idea of epoxy and reinvented the wheel by introducing a full line of UV curing products. They serve the same purpose as epoxy but are less messy, more efficient and easier to work with at the vise. After using them, I now look at my life long stash of epoxy bottles on the bench and wonder if I shouldn't just toss them all in the trash. I could use a little extra room on my tying bench anyway and I'm tired of looking at dried up epoxy patches with wooden stirring sticks adhered on scrap all over my work area.

If you haven't yet tried or bought into the hype of Clear Cure Goo products, I suggest you test them out. Clear Cure Goo calls their UV curing products "*the cure to epoxy*", because you'll no longer waste time prepping your two-part epoxy for each fly you're tying, you won't feel rushed and you'll have zero waste. Go ahead and keep that 18 rpm epoxy fly and jig turner around if you want just in case, but I'm putting mine on ebay for a few extra bucks towards purchasing more Clear Cure Goo products.



Hotspot Zebra Midges coated with Clear Cure Goo Hydro.  
Photo By: Louis Cahill

Since I'm slapping around epoxy, I thought I'd throw a few slaps Sally Hansen's way, pertaining specifically to her "Hard as Nails" nail polish. I started using Sally Hansen's back in the day for coating my tiny midge larva, trout beads and other tiny nymphs to provide that life like shine. It was a breeze to work with and it gave me that great shine in the water, but its one down fall was it didn't last very long before it started cracking and coming off. Clear Cure Goo "Hydro" serves the same purpose, but the UV curing process makes it super tough and much more durable than the nail polish. It's not just good for coating flies, it's perfect when you're tying flat wing or other multi-layered streamers and want them all to lay out nice and stay in place. Take peacock herl for instance, which is a staple for finishing off many baitfish pattern recipes. I always have a problem with keeping it all together on top of the fly. **Andy Bowen**, from [Cohutta Fishing Company](#), showed me all you need to do to fix this problem is brush the Clear Cure Hydro along the peacock

herl, hit it with the UV Light and it will lock into place. So simple, yet genius. Clear Cure Goo gets emails all the time from fly tiers around the world with new ideas and uses for their products. We've only begun to scratch the service on their products capabilities and I'm looking forward to seeing all the cool fly patterns that are invented because of them.

**Bowen's Baitfish Minnow**

**Warning:** Be aware of your battery power levels in your UV Light. When the batteries get low they don't always provide the necessary power needed to cure the UV products completely. Also be aware that some of their thicker UV products dry with a slightly tacky touch. Lastly, experiment with the optional applying tips that come in the Clear Cure Product package. These will provide you with much more control in the amount of UV product you apply and where you apply it. For more information about Clear Cure Goo, go to their website and watch their product videos to find out all about them.

**Have you found a niche way of using Clear Cure Goo Products in your fly tying? Please drop us a comment.**

Keep it Reel,

**Come fish with us in the Bahamas!**

*Kent Klewein*

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**Fly tying tip:** Flatten hackle quills before tying them in on the side of a streamer. Crimp the quill with a pair of flat blade, duck-billed pliers. The quill of a hackle is oval, not round, and often when you tie it in place it turns sideways under the thread torque instead of lying flat against the fly. Flattening the quill prior to tying eliminates this annoying problem. For many more tips visit [20 Fly Tying Tips](#).



**Fly Tying Material: DMC Embroidery Floss for Midge**

**FLY TYING MATERIAL:**

**DMC EMBROIDERY FLOSS FOR MIDGE**

By Kent Klewein



Fly fishing with midges in the fall and winter can often be the ticket. Photo by Louis Cahill

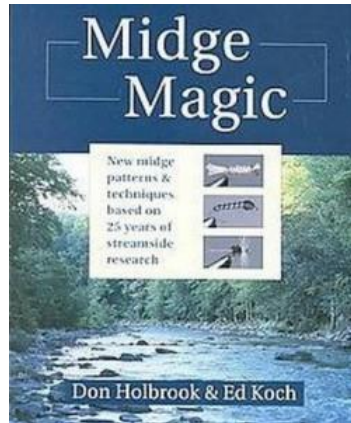
**As we work through fall, and move our way into the winter months, midges will start making up a higher percentage of a trout's daily diet.**

Midges may lack the high caloric value of their larger aquatic friends, but they more than make up for it with their year-round availability, and high densities on the water. Veteran trout bums understand the important role that midges play, especially as a mainstay food source for late fall and winter trout. Tiny midges don't pack a lot of weight on trout, but they do supplement trout enough to help slow up winter weight loss, until the smorgasbord of food returns in the spring. If you went around and snuck a peak in as many hardcore winter trout bums fly boxes as you could find, most, if not all, would be stocked with a nice variety of midge patterns that imitate the three life stages of the aquatic midge (*larva, pupa and adult*).

The past month I've been bulking up my inventory of midge patterns. That way, I'll be ready when the trout start consistently keying in on the tiny stuff. If you know your way around a vise, I suggest you take the time to do so as well. Most midge recipes are quick and easy to tie, and I promise, the time and energy you spend tying them up, will be paid back ten fold on the water. One of my favorite fly tying materials that you can find in your local craft store or Walmart for tying midge patterns is **DMC (Six-strand) Embroidery Floss**. All I can tell you is I flat out love this stuff.



DMC color chart – Use the # to match fly pattern recipes in the book, *Midge Magic*.



I first heard about DMC floss from the book *Midge Magic*, authored by Don Holbrook & Ed Koch. There's a few things I love about this embroidery floss. One, it won't break the bank at \$1 or less per bundle. Two, it comes in a crazy amount of color options, and three, one 8 meter bundle will provide enough ribbing to tie a

gazillion midge patterns.

Some anglers tie midges as small as size 28 with this stuff, but I personally don't go any smaller than a size 24. As Don and Ed recommend in their book, I use one or two strands in the six-strand bundles for the ribbing in my midge patterns. Try using multiple colors to get a nice two-tone look and more accurately match specific species of midges found in your waters.



DMC floss bundles you'll find in your craft store. Photo by Kent Klewein

Pick some of this embroidery floss up, the next chance you get. I'm sure you'll find it to be a great addition to your fly tying materials collection, and it will probably be a one time purchase. Before I go, I'd love to hear about some of your favorite fall and winter midge patterns. I've got a few slots left in my midge box that I'm looking to fill.

Keep it Reel,

**Come fish with us in the Bahamas!**

*Kent Klewein*

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## IMPROVING FLY TYING EFFICIENCY

By Bob Reece



Photo by Louis Cahill

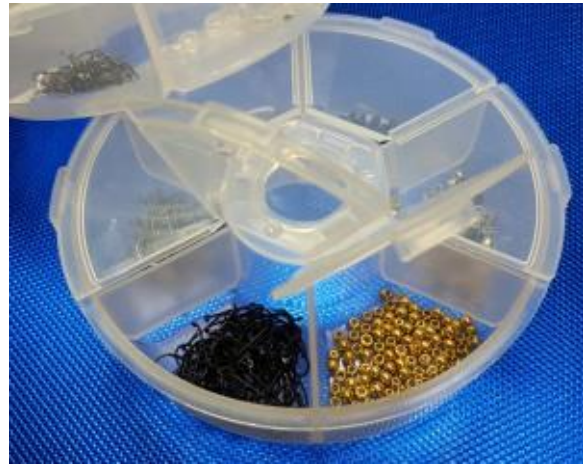
**Many beginner and novice tiers that I've talked to equate improved efficiency at the vise with rushing through the tying process.**

While applying the techniques below can speed up pattern creation, that result is not their sole purpose. The main focus of these tips is to help tiers get the most out of whatever amount of time they do spend behind the vise.



### Material Prep Work

Some patterns require very little in terms of prepping materials. Others, however, involve shaping foam bodies, knotting rubber legs, cutting wing cases or beading hooks. For these flies it is highly beneficial to prepare the materials in bulk before you start tying. When I tie foam terrestrials, I cut all of my foam bodies and the knot rubber legs that I might need. With bead head nymphs, I bead all hooks that I'll be using as well as cutting any strips of material that I'll be using for wing cases. If all of your materials are fully prepped before you start tying, you'll be able to create a larger number of flies in a shorter amount of time. Prepping your materials in mass also increases the consistency and subsequent quality of the bugs that you'll be offering up to your favorite fish.



### Hook/Bead Storage

Hooks and beads can be two of the hardest materials to handle and keep track of on the surface of a tying table. Hooks of all sizes can easily be brushed under other materials or into the abyss of carpet fibers that sit below some of our tying platforms. Beads are also shifty and hard to handle once they leave the confines of their plastic packaging. To prevent these happenings, I store all of my beads and hooks in plastic compartmented organizers like the one in the picture above. The clip down lids of these containers ensure that nothing escapes. Each compartment also has a curved bottom which makes it easy to retrieve the desired items. The containers that I use can be purchased in the sewing section of Walmart for less than two dollars apiece.

### Pattern Material Kits

How materials are stored matters in terms of efficiency. I use plastic organizers, like the one pictured above, to create material kits for all of the patterns that I tie. Always knowing where specific ingredients are saves a tier the time of searching through bins, drawers and baskets. This type of setup also keeps things clean. When you've finished the desired number of patterns, the materials can be quickly returned to the plastic organizer. This eliminates a desk top covered in packets of materials. Best of all these organizers are cheap. I purchased the plastic organizers that I use for just under four dollars apiece in my local Walmart sewing section.

Life can be a busy and chaotic process from one day to the next. Free time for fly creation is often difficult to find. While these efficient techniques can increase the swiftness of wrapping up a bug, they can also help make the most of your relaxation time at the tying table.

Click here to browse and buy my new 2016 Orvis fly patterns.

<http://www.orvis.com/new-flies>

Click here to view and follow me on Instagram.

[https://www.instagram.com/thin\\_air\\_angler/](https://www.instagram.com/thin_air_angler/)





Click here for other tying videos, fishing techniques and more.

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Bob Reece

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## 2023 WAS A GREAT YEAR AT BRTU

At the end of another great year for the chapter we take time to look back on the meetings, events, and activities. Everything that took place is quite amazing and we take this time here to thank everyone who helped plan and participate. We couldn't have done it all without you.

### Meetings

All of the 9 planned meetings went as scheduled this year and covered a variety of topics on fishing and conservation and a little fun. We all understand the mentality of a fisherman so began the year with a Liar's Contest. Those who volunteered their tales lived up to their reputations.

The February meeting turned to conservation with a presentation by Wes Waugh who had formed a volunteer group called *A Clean Wilson Creek* that is committed to preserving the river in its natural beauty. The program year ended with a presentation by Elizabeth Underwood who is director of *The New River Conservancy* that serves to protect that river.

In June Derek Ware, the timber manager at Duke Energy spoke to the chapter about the importance of streamside buffers along our rivers. This issue has become very important to us with the massive siltation issues at the Mitchell River this year.

We thank these people for what they do and encourage all of our members to support these organizations financially and by dedicating time to their activities.

The remainder of the meetings were dedicated to fishing. The March and April meetings were dedicated to the different methods of fly fishing: Euro Nymphing and Tenkara. And then in May with a little twist the presentation drifted from rivers to salt water fly fishing. September and October discussed destination fly fishing at the Green River in Utah and the nearby Smith River.



### Conservation Events

In 2023 we had two stream cleaning events. In June we cleaned up the Ararat River and then in November we cleaned up the Mitchell. At the Ararat we were pleased to have members of the local scout

troop help us out. On the Mitchell we all noticed that the people using the river are leaving much less litter behind.

The sad event of the year was continued sediment flow into the Mitchell River, from agricultural fields that plant to the edge of the stream leaving no riparian barriers between the fields and the river to hold the sediment back. Chapter members, local land owners and farmers were instrumental in collecting data and providing photos of sediment sources. BRTU members also worked to involve Wake Forest University in the sediment monitoring effort. The NC Department of Environmental Quality however does not accept any evidence not collected by its own staff. This massive sedimentation into the river was inspected by DEQ after two years of complaints, submittal of hundreds of photos of sediment sources and turbidity photos exceeding any state water standards. After their inspection, DEQ noted they did not see any violation of the state trout water standards. They deemed all the sediment an act of nature.

### Educational Events

Perhaps one of the most significant educational programs sponsored by the chapter is Trout in the Classroom. This year the chapter sponsored eleven schools representing more than 300 students. The program starts in September when the eggs arrive at the school and ends in late spring with the release of the fingerlings. That release is one of the most awesome events you will see. A video of that releases can be seen at [TIC Release 2023](#). The program is already underway for the 2023/2024 year. The dates of the releases will be published in an upcoming newsletter and we invite everyone to come up to help out and enjoy the fun.



Of course the fly tying classes continued through the year on Wednesday evenings and this year a rod building class was added to the program

from May through July.

In May the chapter set up a booth and assisted in a youth fly fishing program at the Elkin Recreation Park on Big Elkin Creek. About 20 elementary and middle school kids showed up and the volunteers helped them catch the trout that had stocked in the big pool below the spillway.



The final educational event of the year was held at Bolton Park on a Sunday afternoon and was dedicated to helping chapter members become better fly fishers. The event included fly casting, knots, fly types, and an equipment swap.

### Outings

It was a big year for outings. In May the chapter held its annual long weekend at Balsam Lodge. The group fished several nearby trout streams and on Saturday fished the Headwaters Outfitter private river.

In October we joined with the Rocky River TU chapter and went to the Smokey Mountain Retreat in Bryson City. This was a four day trip with lodging, food, campfires and fishing on nearby rivers.

The last outing took place on the first weekend of November at Helton Creek where people provided their own lodging and spent a couple days fishing.

### Other Events

In March the chapter held a fund raiser and auction to raise the funds needed to finance the programs. It was a very successful event raising a record \$8,100. On behalf of the officers and members of Blue Ridge Trout Unlimited we would like to thank our wonderful sponsors for their magnanimous generosity of trips and merchandise for our annual fundraising auction. We would also like to thank the BRTU and PHW officers and members who gave their time and treasures to procure and donate auction items.



And to close out the year the chapter held a Chili Cookoff. Six people showed up with a pot of chili for the taste challenge and the top three won gift certificates.

Overall it was a very active and successful year and support from chapter members made it all possible. We want to thank President Robbie Abou-Rizk for leading the chapter through most of the successful year and the new President Fred Frank who took office in October and is leading us forward to another great year in 2024. Several events are already being planned for the coming year including another tree planting in February and the Balsam trip in April. Watch the newsletter for these and other upcoming events.

And in closing the year we would again like to thank the volunteers who worked so hard to make this chapter fantastic. Without your help none of this would be possible.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!**



*We'd love to hear your input. If there is a topic you'd like addressed or if you have something to share in the newsletter, please contact us at [BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com).*

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