

# Blue Ridge NC Trout Unlimited



## April 2026 Newsletter

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The purpose of Trout Unlimited is *“to conserve, protect, and restore our coldwater fisheries and their watersheds”*. Since hurricane Helene devastated so much of western North Carolina, our chapters working with companion organizations have performed a tremendous number of events. Just in the past month, Hickory TU, High Country TU, and the TU Southwest project manager sponsored four events planting trees and livestock.

Additionally, many NC chapters are sponsoring Trout in the Classroom programs at 63 schools across North Carolina. This program is teaching the students about the importance of **Clean, Clear, and Cool Water** and on release is introducing many of them to the macroinvertebrates that trout eat by having them go into the river to catch them.

And finally, NCTU each year holds a Rivercourse camp where youth age 13-15 are presented a week long introduction to fly fishing and stream conservation.

We would like to thank everyone who is dedicating some time to these projects and events and suggest that if you have a little time to spare that you step up to help. The present and the future of these programs rely on your support. Check out the Upcoming Events section of the newsletter each month to look for opportunities.

### **PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE**

At our March meeting, we welcomed guest speaker Tyler Dixon from the Heroes Center of High Point. The Heroes Center provides a safe, supportive environment for veterans through programs such as Vet2Vet recreational fishing therapy, Operation Next Step (employer education, job placement, and benefits assistance), and Welcome Home, which offers furniture, household essentials, and community support.

BRTU was pleased to support this important work with a donation. Members interested in learning more or contributing can contact the Heroes Center at [info@heroescenter.org](mailto:info@heroescenter.org).

We also heard from our own Mark Anderson, who shared an overview of Team Rubicon, a leading humanitarian aid organization in the United States. Founded by five volunteers, Team Rubicon has grown to more than 150,000 members and focuses on disaster response and recovery in underserved communities nationwide.

The temperature monitoring project at Stone Mountain, in partnership with Friends of Stone Mountain and NCWRC, continues to progress. Monitoring units are scheduled for installation by April 12 and will remain in place for several years, with data collected twice annually. This effort will provide valuable insight into long-term stream health, with the next readings planned for early fall.

We have a lot of events coming up. Please check out the details in the events section of the newsletter

- Restoration at Green Valley Park in Todd
- Trout in the Classroom Releases
- Spring Balsam Event
- Fly tying classes

BRTU logo apparel is available online and at chapter meetings, including hooded long-sleeve fishing shirts, hats, and gaiters.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the Mitchell River stair restoration project. The completed work is already benefiting anglers ahead of spring stocking.

Finally, please mark your calendars for the BRTU Banquet and Auction on June 16, 2026, at 6:00 p.m. The event will be held at the Paul J. Ciener Botanical Gardens in Kernersville. Dinner will be provided by Second Harvest Food Bank, and Patrick Weaver will return as our guest speaker. The evening will include both silent and live auctions, with an online auction running June 1–10. Ticket information will be available soon on our website.

Happy Spring Fishing

Fred Frank

### **BRTU LOGO GEAR**

Our new **BRTU logo apparel** is now available on our website and at chapter meetings. Items include:

- Gray and salmon long-sleeve hooded fly-fishing shirts — **\$40**
- BRTU hats — **\$25**
- Logo gaiters (tan or green/blue) — **\$15**

You are receiving this newsletter either as a member or prospective member of the Blue Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. If you do not wish to receive this newsletter, please respond by email to [BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com](mailto:BRNCNewsletter@gmail.com) and let us know.

## ARPIL MEETING

**When:** Tuesday, April 21<sup>st</sup>, 6 PM

**Where:** Little Richard's BBQ

109 S Stratford Rd , Winson-Salem

**Who:** Jeff Slevin

**What:** Techniques and Tactical Approaches to Fishing  
New Trout Waters

Jeff is an accomplished trout angler from Pennsylvania who has fished in 39 states and Canada. Jeff has presented to numerous Trout Unlimited chapters across the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast. His presentation, *Techniques and Tactical Approaches to Fishing New Trout Waters*, will cover pre-trip planning, reading and approaching the water, adapting on the stream, rig selection, and confidence flies.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Annual Balsam Trip, April 19-23.** Our annual Balsam trip is one of the most popular trips we do. The cost to attend is \$200, which includes lodging at Balsam Lodge and one day of private water fishing on April 20 or April 21. There is a limit of 18 spaces available. This trip annually fills up fast. Sign up and pay on our website - [Signup and Pay](#)

**New River Cleanup at New River State Park, Saturday April 4<sup>th</sup>, 10-2:30.** New River State Park Rd, Laurel Springs, NC. [Signup](#)

**Trout Unlimited, North Toe River Tree Planting, April 28<sup>th</sup>, 9AM,** 12190 NC-226, Bakersville, NC and on **April 29<sup>th</sup> a Tree Giveaway from 9-3.** [Signup](#)

**Tie-a-Thon, April 18<sup>th</sup> at Patterson School, 9-3.** We'll also be tying some wooly buggers so start practicing. RSVP to Bill Jewett at [theflytyingsanta24@gmail.com](mailto:theflytyingsanta24@gmail.com). Lunch will be provided.

**New River Cleanup: Castle Ford to Green Valley; Apr 25 10-2:30.** 3896 Big Hill Rd, Todd [Signup](#)

**New River Cleanup; Milton Moretz to Castle Ford; Apr 18 10-2:30** 4500 Castle Ford Road, Boone [Signup](#)

**New River Cleanup; Green Valley to Big Hill; May 2 10-2:30** 3896 Big Hill Road, Todd [Signup](#)

**Maggie Valley Fly Fishing Show, May 22&23.** We are assembling our team of fly tyers. Last year we had 52 tyers from four different states, and this year will be even bigger as we move into a more public area of the festival. If you are interested in demonstrating flies or helping teach, please RSVP to Bill Jewett, [theflyfishingsanta24@gmail.com](mailto:theflyfishingsanta24@gmail.com) so we can plan the tying schedule.

*Note: If your organization has an upcoming event and would like it in the newsletter, send it to [HkyNCTU@gmail.org](mailto:HkyNCTU@gmail.org).*

## NCWRC FLY FISHING CLASSES

<b>4/1/2026 - Fly-fishing Basics: Wading Safety &amp; Etiquette - Virtual</b>
<b>4/2/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience- Jacob Fork</b>
<b>4/9/2026 - Intermediate Fly-tying Workshop - Morganton</b>
<b>4/10/2026 - Basic Fly-casting - Black Mountain</b>

<b>4/11/2026 - Fly-fishing Basics: Selecting Equipment &amp; Making Connections - Marion</b>
<b>4/12/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience - Catawba Greenway</b>
<b>4/15/2026 - Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual</b>
<b>4/17/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience - Catawba Greenway</b>
<b>4/18/2026 - Basic Fly-Casting Workshop Lenoir - Patterson School</b>
<b>4/24/2026 - On the Water Fly-fishing Experience - Catawba Greenway</b>
<b>4/25/2026 - Fly-Fishing Instructor Training - Marion</b>
<b>5/1/2026 - Soft Plastic Rigging &amp; Presentation- Marion</b>
<b>5/2/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop</b>
<b>5/9/2026 - The Fly Angler's Next Steps: Trout Bugs &amp; Fly Patterns Streamside - Lenoir</b>
<b>5/13/2026 - Springtime Tactics for Crappie - Virtual</b>
<b>5/16/2026 - Family Fishing Workshop - Marion</b>

## QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"One who plants a tree, plants a hope."...Lucy Larcom

## 2026 DELAYED HARVEST STOCKING WEEKS

COUNTY	STREAM	WEEK OF							
		3/2-3/6	3/9-3/13	3/30-4/3	4/6-4/10	4/27-5/1	5/4-5/8	5/11-5/15	
Ashe	Helton Creek	X						X	
	Trout Lake	X						X	
	Big Horse Creek	X							X
	South Fork New River	X							X
Burke	Jacobs Fork	X						X	
Caldwell	Wilson Creek	X						X	
Clay	Fires Creek	X						X	
Graham	Big Snowbird				X			X	
Haywood	West Fork Pigeon River	X				X			
Henderson	North Fork Mills River	X				X			
Jackson	Tuckasegee River	X						X	
Macon	Nantahala	X						X	
Madison	Big Laurel Creek			X				X	
	Shelton Laurel Creek			X				X	
	Spring Creek				X			X	
McDowell	Curtis Creek		X						X
	Mill Creek		X						X
	Catawba River		X						X
Mitchell	Cane Creek		X						X
	North Toe River	X						X	
Polk	Green River				X			X	
	Ararat River	X							X
Surry	Mitchell River	X						X	
	Tuckasegee River			X				X	
Swain	East Fork French Broad River	X				X			
Transylvania	Little River			X				X	
	Watauga River	X						X	
Watauga	Lake Coffey	X						X	
	East Prong Roaring River	X				X			
Wilkes	Stone Mountain Creek	X				X			
	Reddies River	X				X			
	Elk Creek	X				X			
Yancey	Cane River		X					X	

## WHY DID I JOIN TROUT UNLIMITED

By Paul DiPrima

Northeast Georgia Trout Unlimited Ch. #692

I have been an outdoors person all my life. Even during my days as a musician, sound engineer and stage manager I usually had a fishing rod with me and if time allowed, explored and fished the area. I saw lands shaped by glaciers and deep valleys that were converted to lakes. I waded the shallow swamps of South Georgia and the shorelines of the Great Lakes. I fished creeks in southern Ohio that looked much like

creeks in Floyd County but the Ohio creeks were void of fish. I was in Cleveland not long after the Cuyahoga River caught fire. I waded the tailrace waters of western dams and visited the pacific shoreline in Santa Monica back when Santa Monica discharged 400 million gallons of partially treated sewage daily at the Santa Monica Bay Pier. I found myself in the Florida Keys at a time when the Keys looked much like the sleepy little towns of 1950's Florida and had not yet turned into a tourist trap of high rise condos, hotels and subdivisions overtaking the mangrove islands. The Keys have changed now.

I noticed that when man left the natural areas as they have always been and didn't overwhelm nature, nature took care of itself. The growing population requires increased energy and food production, waste disposal, along with road and home building all of which degrades nature. Nature took care of itself until man decided he would alter it to fit his need. When I came home to Rome, I told myself to fight to keep nature natural.

By 1982, I returned to being a full time NW Georgia resident and I fished a lot. I waded or floated every creek or river around. I fished a lot of lakes and usually found my way to the dams and fished the creeks below those dams.

I saw pollution, whether simple pollution such as trash and junk going into the streams or pipes coming from nearby homes draining wastewater into streams. I also saw homes built near the streams. The homes didn't bother me but when they cleared all the vegetation along the shoreline, I knew that heavy rains would send the dirt downstream to Lakes.

Floating the Etowah I saw stoves and washing machines in a deep gully joining the river and named it "Appliance Gulch". Upstream of the "gulch" the shoreline was relatively clean but downstream, trash bags, diapers, rags and anything that floated hung from roots and branches. On an Etowah high water trip, we were able to paddle far up the gulley and found a huge garbage dump in a deep ravine. Every imaginable type of waste from motorcycles, sofas, syringes fertilizer bags and plain household trash was there. When the river ran high, water would flush more trash from the gulch. I knew something had to be done. I reported this to Georgia EPD. Game wardens came, saw what was there and told the landowner that he must stop. I later asked if he was fined or had to clean it up and the answer was no. I asked if I could do a cleanup. I got the landowners permission. Richard Grant donated the use of his crane truck, the Rome and Floyd County public works dropped off a sway car and dump truck and I rounded up volunteers. It took two days to remove the major items and all the floatables from the site. A few river trips afterward we gathered what trash we could from the trees.

This was around the same time as some of my trout fishing friends told me about Trout Unlimited. There were some TU Chapters in and around Atlanta, but none near Rome. I said, ask lots of questions and see what it takes to get a chapter started. John, Andy, Keith, Miles, Bill, Bobby and others finally put all the "ducks in a row" in 1987 and we had our first preliminary meeting. Someone from an Atlanta chapter came, we filled out all the papers and the Coosa Valley Chapter was official. I served in many positions in the chapter including president in 1992-1993.

The Coosa Valley Chapter hit the ground, or should I say water, running. We established Kids Fishing Day in Cave Spring and it is still going strong. I volunteered for as many stream enhancement workdays as possible whether our chapters' or not. I attended the Council meetings. These veteran TU members had a wealth of knowledge. Even though I had fished many places in Georgia for trout, my knowledge was limited. I asked questions, learned things and passed on the info. Join a TU chapter. When you join a TU chapter, ask questions and learn. TU has worked since 1959 to keep nature natural and restore what man has damaged.

That is why I joined TU.

## **TROUT UNLIMITED IN NORTH CAROLINA**

Trout Unlimited was founded on the banks of the AuSable River in Michigan in 1959. It was first introduced to North Carolina when Phil Bracewell and Tom Reese led the establishment of the Northwestern Carolina Chapter in Hickory in 1963, the 32<sup>nd</sup> chapter in the nation. The Chapter started with only 8 members, but later through a strong membership drive grew to 350 members.



The chapter was very active and had several events over time. One of its greatest accomplishments was the construction of a first of its kind in the nation, a handicap fishing pier on the Boone Fork Creek. In cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service, NC Wildlife Resources, and Blue Ridge Electric Coop they completed it in the late summer of 1987.

In another very unusual project in partnership with Hickory Police and Fire departments and each kid had to participate in the D.A.R.E program. In the fall they drained a local swimming pool in Ridgeview, filled it with fresh water, and stocked it with 100 trout. Each child was allowed to take home two fish.



Other unique projects were the reintroduction of brook trout into several high elevation streams where they had disappeared. Several volunteers packed 8 gallon buckets of fish to stock the remote streams. And they funded a project at the Hickory Science Museum titled "Anglers All" for the creation of awareness clean, clear water.

They did many other projects during the several years of the chapter's life. They were able to fund these projects by annual banquets that were so successful that they received a gold and several silver Trout Awards from the national TU organization who made a video titled "Anatomy of a Banquet" based on the success and distributed it to other chapters. In about the year 2000, like many other organizations across the nation, participation waned and the chapter went idle. At that time, they had accumulated \$100,000 from the banquets. They donated the funds to the NC Community Foundation. The

annual funds from the NC Community Foundation have been contributing for 26 years to the Tom Reece School of conservation at LRU in honor/memory of Phil “Silver Fox” Bracewell. Our founding fathers.

In 2015, the chapter was restored under the guidance of Gary Hogue. It went idle briefly during Covid but then continued under Jackie Greene. The chapter has continued with several conservation projects of knotweed removal at Wilson Creek visitor center, bamboo removal at Wilson Creek, and recently tree and livestock planting on a bank at Wilson Creek badly eroded by hurricane Helene. And best of all promotion of conservation among children through Trout in the Classroom and sponsorships to Rivercourse.

## TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM RELEASES

Some of the most enjoyable events of the year are coming up in April .... Trout in the Classroom Releases. It is so much fun to see the kids come to the river to release the fish, explore the river for bugs, learn fly casting, and more. This is a program that introduces the kids to river conservation that many may carry with them the rest of their life and is perhaps the largest impact that we have on the future of our streams.

The releases start at about 9 AM and run until about 1 PM. They take place at the parking lot where the park road changes from pavement to gravel. The releases this year will take place on April 14<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, and 21<sup>st</sup>.

We have the staff and instructors in place for the programs this year, but we can always use a few more to help watch over the kids and it's just so much fun to experience it. If you can attend, please sign up at [TIC - BLUE RIDGE NC](#)

If you want to get an idea of the event, you can see a video of the release at [TIC Release Video](#). Please consider joining us for the event and if you can, consider making a donation to the Blue Ridge Chapter to help keep the program alive.

## STAIRS AT MITCHELL RIVER

While there were no plantings this month, the Blue Ridge TU chapter has been working with the New River Conservancy with plantings, most recently on the South Branch near Todd. They did, however, had a project of their own this month restoring the stairs at the Mitchell River.



In 2019 the chapter provided funding and labor in the erection of four sets of stairs along the river. The access to the river is rather steep and people fishing were creating access points that were beginning to cause erosion. Over the last seven years the stairways were showing some wear and needed some work.

On Saturday, February 28<sup>th</sup> an event was held to restore the stairway and 18 volunteers showed up. They cleaned the brush from around the stairs, stained the railings, added additional rock, and one or two more steps at the bottom.

Thanks to everyone who attended and helped get the stairs back into not only working but even better condition.

The chapter has also had 20 people step up to help out the NCWRC with temperature monitoring of nine streams at upper and lower elevation locations at Stone Mountain State Park. They are installing the monitoring systems now and then will go back to get the information in September. This will continue each year until the program ends. The information from the study will provide NC Wildlife with critical temperature data to guide long-term management and restoration decisions.



## RIPARIAN RESTORATION IN NORTH CAROLINA & UPCOMING TU EVENTS

by TJ Hawkins

TU North Carolina Project Manager



Trout Unlimited is committed to recovery efforts following the effects of Hurricane Helene in September 2024. With thousands of trees planted in 2025, staff and volunteers at TU have set their sights on a goal to plant more than 10,000 trees

across western North Carolina in 2026.

The importance of trees (and why we at TU love them) cannot be emphasized enough when discussing riparian restoration efforts. A healthy buffer of native trees and vegetation on our streams not only looks aesthetically pleasing but provides shade and temperature regulation, reduces bank erosion, filters and stores stormwater runoff, slows flood stage water flows, and creates aquatic and terrestrial habitat.

A full list of planting events and tree giveaways taking place in North Carolina can be found at [www.tu.org/events](http://www.tu.org/events). TU staff are hosting two of these spring events to provide an awesome opportunity for staff, grassroots members, and communities to come together and help restore our watersheds. The two events will include a combination of tree planting and community giveaways in the Armstrong Creek and North Toe River Watersheds.

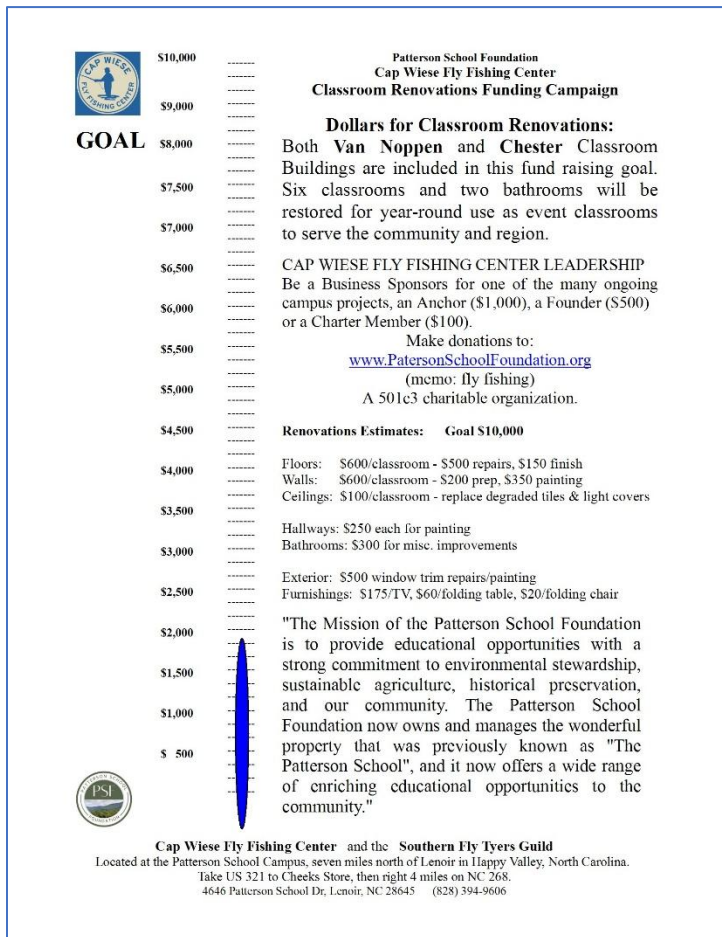


Armstrong Creek, a coldwater trout stream and tributary of the Catawba River, originates in the Grandfather District of the Pisgah National Forest near Marion, NC. Flooding and numerous landslides occurred during Helene within the watershed, stripping streamside vegetation and altering the channel and surrounding landscape to the point it was unrecognizable in areas. Located within the headwaters of Armstrong Creek, the state-operated Armstrong Creek Fish Hatchery suffered significant damage and lost over 600,000 fish during Helene. The

hatchery was closed following Helene and has only recently reopened in 2026 to support stocking efforts in NC while the Bobby N. Setzer Fish Hatchery undergoes renovations.

In partnership with the North Carolina Wildlife Habitat Foundation, TU has secured grant funding to focus on streamside restoration on Armstrong Creek and its tributaries at the Armstrong Creek Fish Hatchery. In addition, through support from the Truist Charitable Fund and Arbor Day Foundation, TU will be hosting a volunteer tree planting and giveaway event (800+ trees) to be held at Turkey Cove Baptist Church on April 11, 2026 starting at 9AM. The planting will focus on several tributaries of Armstrong Creek including Roses Creek and Three Mile Creek. The Turkey Cove Baptist Church is located at 3146 NC-226A in Marion, NC 28752. If interested in volunteering, or picking up some free trees to take home, please register using the TU Events Center.

The tree planting and giveaway event (1,000+ trees) for the North Toe River Watershed will be held at the Buladean Community Center located at 12190 NC-226 in Bakersville, NC 28705. The tree planting will start at 9AM on March 28, 2026, and the giveaway will be held from 10AM to 3PM on March 29, 2026. Similar to the event in Armstrong Creek, please register using the TU Events Center and share with your friends! I look forward to seeing you there.



## ADVICE FROM THE VISE

Spring is finally here in earnest, and it's time to turn over the rocks and see what is under there that will make up the mast for the summer diet of these fish.

In turn, that gives the fly angler some simple insight to what patterns need will prove most effective in the coming months. This month, I thought I would tie up a great searching pattern by Lance Egan, the GTi Caddis. According to Lance, GTi stand for Go-To-imitator, and while it is not an exact imitation of a hydropsychyche, I have found it to be an excellent producer in the spring when waters warm up to that magic 50 degree mark that really kicks feeding into high gear.

Having a bit of weight, this fly is ideal for tight lining, under an indicator, dry drop, swing nymphing or even euro nymphing.



In my box, it's right up there with the Walt's and tungsten surveyor and Taz, when it comes to searching patterns in waters you may not be familiar with, or the start of the season when you are scouting.

I have incorporated a couple variations to my version, in the form of a pronounced longer tail and peacock ice on the collar. The tail came about then I first tied this, I left it long with the intention of sniping it down at stream side if it failed to produce. I think peacock herl is a magic all around anyhow, But the fly produced, so the tail stayed, and the ice collar sets off with that longer tail.

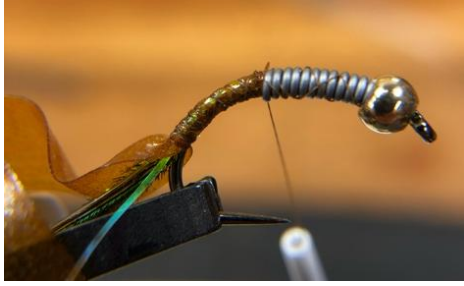
Starting off with the hook, this is a #10 Saluda Beads 302 with a 3.3 gold tungsten bead. A dozen wraps of .020 lead free wire behind the bead, 6x tippet, small mirage tinsel for the rib, and gold bug back for the shell.

The tail is 3 matched strands of peacock herl, and the collar is peacock ice dub. A peacock herl collar is just fine, it just doesn't take the beating like the ice does.



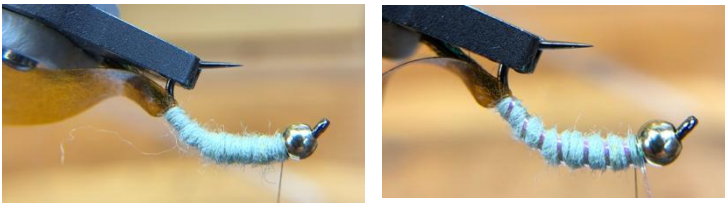
*"The preservation of clean, clear, and cold water in the river is the preservation of life" .....Chick Woodward*

Once you get the hook and bead on, I take a dozen wraps of the lead-free and wrap that into place and dress the hook down to the center of the bend. Tie in the herl at the joint, that starts making a smooth foundation for the body.



Tie in the next 3 components in the order they go on, with the old adage the first shall be the last. In this case, the tippet will rib over the bug back, the bug back over the tinsel and the tinsel, over the dubbing.

In doing this, you see that there is not a slight taper, but a good foundation for the dubbing. This is a less is more situation, and you want the body dubbing sparsely and tight. I'm using Electric Wool in Fairies Breath- which is hard to find, but any superfine dubbing will work.



Make a thin noodle after waxing the thread and form a tapered body. Rib the body with the tinsel and secure it with some wraps behind the bead.



Stretch the bug back out pretty taut and secure that with several tight wraps behind the bead. Trim off the tag and wrap in any excess.



Last, wrap in the tippet rib to segment the body. Trim off the tag and securely wrap it in place. I think it really looks like a bug at this point! Again, sparsely dub the thread with some peacock ice, form a collar and whip finish.

I have tied these down to a #18 and up to a #6, and they seem to work no matter what size. They make an excellent double midge rig in the smaller size with a zebra- or a pair

ticking the bottom or under an indicator. Give these a try this spring and see how they work for you!



Please don't hesitate to contact me at [Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com](mailto:Jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com) with questions or to just talk tying. Please follow along on Instagram and check out some current ties @ Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

## BOBBY N. SETZER STATE FISH HATCHERY RENOVATION SCHEDULED FOR 2026



Setzer produces the majority of trout for the agency's trout stocking program. Beginning in 2026, the Setzer Hatchery will undergo a major renovation that will result in a reduction in trout stockings during the 2026, 2027 and potentially 2028 trout stocking seasons. We will continue to provide updates during this important process, which ultimately ensures the sport of trout fishing will robustly continue in North Carolina for future generations.

### Setzer Construction and Expansion Project: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

- **How big of an impact will the hatchery's temporary closure be for anglers?**  
While the hatchery is under construction during 2026 and 2027, we anticipate a significant reduction in the number of trout available to stock. Our goal is to provide trout angling opportunities at all Public Mountain Trout Waters (PMTW) locations while renovations are being conducted, using a reduced schedule.
- **Will stocking occur during the hatchery construction?**  
Yes, all current Hatchery Supported and Delayed Harvest waters will be stocked. Reductions will be spread equitably to all locations; however, the number of trout stocked, frequency of stockings, and species ratios will be

modified. The annual stocking schedule dates will be posted on this website.

- **When will the number of trout being stocked return to normal?**

Renovations are scheduled to be completed by late 2027 or early 2028. It will take time to ramp back up to full production to allow for eggs to be hatched and fish to grow to catchable size. While the number of trout stocked and the frequency of stockings will begin to increase back to normal in 2028, it may be 2030 when the hatchery is completely back to normal production.

- **Can I still fish for trout in stocked waters during that time? Will there be any additional restrictions? Is trout fishing discouraged during this time to help with the reduced population?**

Trout fishing in stocked waters will be allowed during the appropriate Hatchery Supported or Delayed Harvest seasons. There are no additional restrictions anticipated. Trout fishing in stocked waters is still encouraged, but we ask that anglers be aware that the number of trout to be caught will be reduced.

- **I've already made plans to trout fish during this time. Should I cancel my trip?**

We encourage anglers to check the annual stocking schedule once posted to ensure that trips coincide with dates the waters are stocked. Wild Trout Waters are another option to consider as well.

- **What is being renovated and why?**

- **What:**

Majority of the facility, including the hatchery building and raceways, will be demolished and replaced in their current footprint.

State-of-the-art design and equipment will result in a more efficient use of water throughout the facility.

Additional flood resiliency will be incorporated into the facility design.

Raceways will be covered to reduce water temperatures for trout which will improve water quality in the facility and in the Davidson River.

- **Why:**

To ensure consistent trout production and stockings of PMTW into the future.

To provide enhanced water conservation and improved water quality at the facility and in the local watershed.

The facility has failing infrastructure that requires replacement before a potentially major failure. It has been in operation since the late 1950s, originally as the Pisgah National Fish Hatchery. The NCWRC has operated it as a state fish hatchery since 1983, and it is the NCWRC's largest trout hatchery.

- **Does the hatchery need to be completely shut down?**

Most of the existing infrastructure will be demolished and replaced in their current footprint, which requires the entire facility to close during construction. This short-term impact ensures the long-term sustainability of widely popular and economically beneficial fisheries.

- **Where will the trout stocked in 2026 and 2027 come from if Setzer isn't operating?**

The NCWRC's other primary trout hatchery, Armstrong State Fish Hatchery, will be restored from Hurricane Helene and will provide most of the trout stocked. The Marion and Table Rock state fish hatcheries will also support trout production efforts during construction. We are working to purchase trout from private facilities. While we have secured commitments for 2026 from local and out-of-state private trout facilities, the limited number of trout available for purchase on the open market will only partially mitigate the needed reduction in the number of stocked fish.

- **Once completed, will this project increase the number of trout being stocked?**

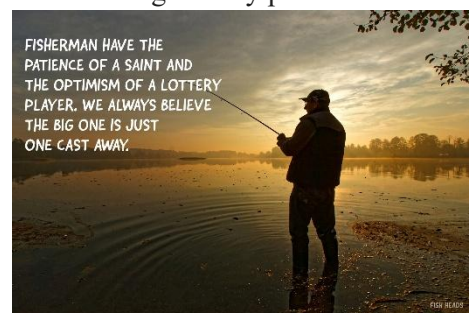
The primary purpose of this renovation project is to address the aging infrastructure, significantly reduce the risk of failure, and ensure trout are available to support the NCWRC's PMTW program. Enhancements throughout the facility will result in more efficient use of water, better water quality, lower water temperatures, and some additional raceway space. As a result, we expect the facility to ultimately produce and grow additional trout. However, it is yet to be determined the full extent of any increase. Staff will update the N.C. Trout Management Plan and incorporate angler input during this temporary closure to better define and direct future use of potential expanded capacity.

## History

Located in Transylvania County in the Pisgah National Forest near Brevard, the Setzer Hatchery was built in the late 1950s by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and was operated as a national fish hatchery for more than 20 years. Since 1983, the Commission has operated and maintained the hatchery for trout production and distribution.

## Hatchery Operations

Setzer Hatchery is the state's largest trout hatchery. The facility consists of a hatchery building with 16 indoor rearing tanks and 54 outdoor raceways. The water supply for the hatchery comes from the Davidson River and Grogan Creek, which supply about 3,500 gallons per minute of cold mountain water year-round. Setzer Hatchery maintains its own strains of brook and, brown trout broodstock. These fish supply the fertilized eggs used to produce successive generations of trout. Mature broodfish are spawned during October and November, and the fertilized eggs are maintained in incubators until hatching, usually 30-40 days. Fish are fed a prepared diet daily, and grow at a rate up to one inch per month. 10-inch "catchable" fish are generally produced in 12-16 months.



*Editor's Note: If you're coming to the April Tie-a-Thon you'll be using Maribou feathers for woolly bugger tails. Here's some advice on handling them.*



Taming Marabou Tails  
By Bob Reece



Photo by Bob Reece

**As we move toward spring, the presentation of streamers increases for many fly fishers.**

For those of us that tie our own, the use of some materials is far more common than others. Marabou tends to be one of those materials, particularly in the tails of many bugger style streamers.

The underwater effectiveness of this material cannot be denied. However, for the time invested behind the vise, marabou can be an unruly material to work with. It has the ability to fly, float and crawl its way throughout any available surface. This attribute can often slow down the tying process and impact the efficiency of the tier.

When sitting down to tie any pattern, I try to make the most of my tying time. When creating patterns with marabou tails, I use a simple trick to mass produce them prior to tying. As I cut off the allotted amount of marabou for one tail, I hold the separated material in my left hand. I then moisten my thumb, index and middle finger of the right hand. Using my right hand, I twist the butt ends of the marabou together and set the tail off to the side. This moistened twist hold the fibers together, even after it dries, until I'm ready to tie them in.

Life is chaotic and busy. Your tying time spent behind the vise shouldn't be. Next time you sit down to tie with marabou tails, use this quick tip to improve the quality of your tying experience and increase the number of bugs you produce.

[Prepping Marabou Tails Video](#)

Bob Reece

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ON THE FLY SOUTH

**ARE YOU READY FOR SPRING?**

The Casting Connection

March 2026

By Capt. Scott Swartz

Scott Swartz founded the Atlanta Fly Fishing School, which began in 1999. It is the largest such operation in the Southeast and the only Trout Unlimited "Gold Endorsed" school in the United States. His Florida Fly Fishing Schools started in 2008, helping anglers learn to successfully fly fish in saltwater.

With winter behind us it is time to gear up for spring fishing, but this does not require a trip to the fly shop. Like any sport, fly fishing places demands on your body. You may not notice in the first few casts, but picking it up again after not fishing much all winter or heading out on an exciting trip that requires casting all day could cause unnecessary problems.

I have led a lot of trips and have seen some almost ruined by failure to prepare physically. Injuries like blisters on the casting hand and raw stripping fingers can be dealt with, but repetitive stress injuries to the shoulder or elbow can make casting painful. Some things are hard to prepare for, but getting your casting shoulder ready is not one of them. It only takes a few minutes of simple stretches and strengthening.



*It's time to shape up for spring fishing.*

You'll want to address both muscles and joints, but conditioning muscles and conditioning joints is done differently. Whether you have been on hiatus all winter or you are preparing for a trip, stretching and strengthening can prevent injury.

**STRETCHES:** There are four that cover the basics. Just think "up-down-right-left", and it is easy to remember. Reach up over your shoulder and touch your back, reach down and around to touch your back, pull your arm across your chest to one side then reach your arm out to the other side behind a door frame and lean in. Hold each position for ten or twenty seconds.

**STRENGTHENING:** Joints are different. Muscles benefit from heavy weight and low repetitions while joints benefit from light weight and high repetitions. Joints themselves do not get stronger, but the tissues surrounding them do, and this improves stability.

Elastic bands or tubing are perfect for simulating casting. They allow for light resistance and high repetitions in a near perfect motion. They are inexpensive, light weight, and commonly sold in drugstores.

An effective way to use these bands is to anchor them at shoulder height. I put one end through a door and close it. Some brands offer door anchors, but it is easy to tie a knot or use a dowel to keep the band from slipping through. Facing away from the door you can push, simulating the forward cast. Turning to face the door you can pull, simulating the back cast.

How many repetitions should you do? Bands vary in strength, and so do we, so start with a few and work your way up.

Before becoming a spring fishing machine get your arm and shoulder ready for action. It is easy to do and only takes a few minutes.

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 <b>Patterson School Foundation Cap Wiese Fly Fishing Center Southern Fly Tyers Guild</b> 		
<h2>Annual Calendar of Events</h2>		
<b>January</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Non-profit organization retreats CFFC, FFI, Trout Unlimited</div> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Southern Fly Tyers Guild TIE-A-THON (materials &amp; lunch provided)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>February</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Non-profit organization retreats CFFC, FFI, Trout Unlimited</div> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Southern Fly Tyers Guild TIE-A-THON (materials &amp; lunch provided)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>March</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">HEROS FOR HEROS Project Healing FF - Wounded Warriors (Thur-Sun Retreat)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>
<b>April</b> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Southern Fly Tyers Guild TIE FOR CHARITY (materials &amp; lunch provided)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>May</b> <div style="background-color: #FF00FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Best NC Wild Stream Fly Fishing</div> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">SFTG - Maggie Valley FF Festival</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">YADIN R. CANOE TRIPS Smallmouth</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>June</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">LATE-SPRING OUTING Casting Carolinas (Thur-Sun Retreat)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">YADIN R. CANOE TRIPS Smallmouth</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>
<b>July</b> <div style="background-color: #0000FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">YADIN R. CANOE TRIPS Recreational</div> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Southern Fly Tyers Guild TIE FOR CHARITY (materials &amp; lunch provided)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>August</b> <div style="background-color: #0000FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">YADIN R. CANOE TRIPS Recreational</div> <div style="background-color: #FF00FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Fishing &amp; Fly Fishing Merit Badge Scouting America</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>September</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">HEROS FOR HEROS Project Healing FF - Wounded Warriors (Thur-Sun Retreat)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>
<b>October</b> <div style="background-color: #FF00FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Best NC Wild Stream Fly Fishing</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>November</b> <div style="background-color: #0000FF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">VOICES OF THE VALLEY Patterson Alumni Event</div> <div style="background-color: #FFFF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">CWFFC SFTG Sheep Fly Festival DEMONSTRATION FLY TYING TIE FOR CHARITY (materials &amp; lunch provided)</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>	<b>December</b> <div style="background-color: #00FFFF; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">Non-profit organization retreats CFFC, FFI, Trout Unlimited</div> <div style="background-color: #00FF00; padding: 2px; font-size: small;">NC WRC Fishing Topic Class FREE</div>
<p><small><b>Note:</b> Fly donations are directed to the National Tie-A-Thon (broad distribution), Project Mayfly (foster kids), Project Healing Waters (veterans), Wounded Warriors (veterans), Reel Recovery (veterans) Casting Carolinas (women &amp; cancer patients) and Casting for Hope (women &amp; cancer patients) and other non-profit fly fishing organizations.</small></p> <p><small><b>2026: SFTG Tying Events</b> - Jan 17, Feb 21, Apr 18, May 22-23, Jul 18, Nov 7</small></p> <p><small><b>2027: SFTG Tying Events</b> - Jan 16, Feb 20, Apr 17, May 21-22, Jul 17, Nov 6</small></p> <p><small>NCWRC classes: Access online at <a href="https://www.ncwrc.gov/education">https://www.ncwrc.gov/education</a>, search for Fishing classes and Patterson,NC location.</small></p>		