

Blue Ridge NC Trout Unlimited



December 2021 Newsletter

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Merry Christmas



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

The days are getting shorter, the leaves are about gone, and the holidays are just around the corner. So please join us on December 9th at the Fiddlin Fish brewery for some holiday cheer. We will usher the holidays in with a Christmas fly ornament contest that we will judge that evening. So, start tying those red and green flies. This social is for members, friends, and families. We will observe social distancing to keep everyone safe as well as masking when not sipping on a beer. The details are listed below.

On December 2 we will be distributing the eggs to the schools for Trout in the Classroom. We need a few more people to help with the delivery to the schools. Please see the details below to volunteer.

Robby Abou-Rizk

CHRISTMAS ORNAMENT CHALLENGE



We have a special event planned for December. On **Thursday, December 9th at 6:00 PM** we will meet at **Fiddlin' Fish Brewery, 772 Trade St NW Winston-Salem, NC 27101** (Parking is available on the street or across 8th Street) A food truck will be present, social distancing and masking will be observed when you are not actively eating or drinking.

For those of you who love fly tying, you might enjoy tying up an ornament for your own tree or to give to some of your

fly fishing friends. You should be able to find clear glass globes in any craft store. They come in two sizes, but the larger (2.5") may be best for the task. From that point onward, it's up to you where you want to go with the ornament. See the [September Newsletter](#) for more information. If you are unable to attend, Take a picture of your ornament and send it to blueridgetuws@gmail.com along with your name and phone number.

NOVEMBER MEETING

We had our first in person chapter meeting on Nov 16th at the Sixty-Six Grill and Tap house this year. It was great to see old friends and new members. We had about 15 people attend to enjoy dinner and a brew. The presentation that night included BRTU's annual business meeting as well as our Board elections. The list of officers and board members for the coming year is at the end of the newsletter. We also had a good discussion on what members want to see happen next year.

TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

On Dec 2nd Tom Jackson will pick up the trout eggs from the Marion Hatchery and will meet with volunteers around 10 AM in Mocksville to distribute the eggs as quickly as possible to the schools. We need volunteers to deliver the eggs to schools that hopefully are close to where the volunteers reside. This is a delicate operation and requires commitment and timely delivery to the schools. Please contact Tom Jackson to volunteer and pick a school to deliver to. We will list the schools on our website that are participating. Tom Jackson (336) 239-0697, email: t5video@yahoo.com.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"The charm of fishing is that it is the pursuit of what is elusive but attainable, a perpetual series of occasions for hope."
.....John Buchan

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

Fly Tying classes: Classes have resumed at the South Fork Community Center every Wednesday from 9-12 am. For more information about the classes email to blueridgetuws@gmail.com.

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 BRNCNews@gmail.com and let us know.

Elk Creek bank restoration, January.
Mitchell River bank restoration, February.
Ararat Stream Clean, March.

January Meeting: The new Yadkin River Keeper: Edgar Miller

February Meeting: DEQ Presentation on trout water violations

A GIFT FOR YOUR FLY FISHER



Last year we discussed stocking stuffer items for your fly fisher. If you want to go that route this year you can go back and read the article at [Stocking Stuffers](#). But this year let's discuss some things you can buy to make the person a better, safer, or happier fly fisherman. No matter how many years the person has been fly fishing there is something to help them in those regards.

Let's start with the person who is relatively new to fly fishing. A guided trip is always a good way to learn more about fly fishing. Even after 50 years of fly fishing, I learn a little more with every guided trip I take. These people are professionals and will look at your technique and let you know how you can improve. A good way to find a guide is to visit a nearby fly shop or talk to someone from a local chapter of TU. If you're in the Winston-Salem area you can reach them at <https://www.blueridgetu.org/>, go to the Contact Tab. A full day guided trip normally ranges from about \$400-\$600. While you're at it your fly fisherman can learn a lot by attending the TU meetings, so give a membership in TU www.tu.org. Annual TU membership is only \$35.

The starting fisherman will typically already have the basic gear needed of rod & reel, waders, boots, and some type of carry pack. But people new to fly fishing often haven't learned of some of the more specialized fly fishing gear.



One of the most important items is a quality pair of polaroid sunglasses. These cost in the range of \$150-\$250 with most people settling on the middle of that range. My personal favorite color is amber, but others prefer the green, and some prefer the blue. The best way to give the person the right gift is to give them a gift certificate so they can go to the local fly shop and determine what is best for them.



Speaking from experience, a lot of beginning fly fishers, and especially younger ones, invest cheaply when they get started. In doing that they often make the mistake of not buying breathable waders. Even in colder weather the moisture builds up inside them, dampens your clothing and

makes you cold. Breathable waders are going to make fly fishing a much more pleasant experience. Breathable waders range from \$150-200.



The same is true of a wading jacket. Nylon does not breathe and in the process soaks your clothes with moisture that is uncomfortable in the summer and cold in the winter. Gore-tex lets that moisture out, keeps the wind out, and keeps you warmer. Good wading jackets are in the price range of \$200-300.

If the person you are buying for age 50 or more, the North Carolina Lifetime fishing license is *now* half price for persons between 50 and 69. The lifetime hunting and fishing license (excluding coastal waters) is \$212. That's quite a deal since the annual rate for this license is \$53. If your fisherman also fishes saltwater, you can include that in the combined license for \$358 (annual \$69). There are additional discounts for disabled veterans. You can buy the license on-line at [Buy License](#) or at most sporting goods stores.

From the beginning fly fisher to the experienced, a school can improve their fly fishing. The beginner can always use the guidance for casting and finding fish. For the advanced trout fisher it can provide a whole new adventure to fly fishing such as Pacific steelhead spay fishing to salt water fishing for bonefish and reds. All of these require a new set of skillsets that can best be learned in a school. For basic learning it would be wise to start by checking at your local fly shop. Some of their classes may actually be free. But for more advanced training, [Orvis Schools](#) has many schools all over the world where you can learn these skills from basic trout fishing in Asheville to bonefishing in Belize. Another good source is [Yellow Dog Flyfishing](#) with many schools to offer. Prices for schools can range from a few hundred for short beginner schools to a few thousand dollars for schools at lodges.



Learning to tie trout flies can bring a lot more fun and knowledge to the fly fisher. One of the most exciting things is catching a fish on a fly you just tied. As you tie the different flies, you'll learn more about the species of insects fish eat, when to fish a nymph, and when there will be a dry fly hatch. Beginner kits range in price from \$50-150. It is not important to buy a top of the line kit for a beginner as the basic tools work well. If the person becomes more serious about fly tying, he'll become aware of more advanced tools like rotary vises and can purchase those separately.

Phone service is not available on many trout streams as you head up farther into the mountains. That means if your fly fisher is out there alone there is no way to contact emergency services. A satellite tracker works everywhere



and in case of an emergency it is normally just the push of an SOS button on the device to get help. These devices have a price range of \$250-300. It is likely there will be a monthly service fee for the device, so check into that when purchasing one.



When I was a young fly fisherman I was of course invincible and just headed into a stream with no worries. With time and a few soakings from slipping and tripping I learned that a third leg made wading much safer and easier. Looking back, it would have been much wiser to add a wading staff to my equipment list years earlier than I did. Wading staffs are available in a price range of \$25-100. For more information about wading staffs, see the article about them in last month's newsletter [Nov21 Newsletter](#).

These are just a few ideas from my experience over many years of fly fishing, but you may find some even better ideas by visiting your local fly shop and talking to them. Help your fly fisher have a very merry Christmas.

TU'S PRIORITY WATER INITIATIVE

A main part of Trout Unlimited's new strategic plan is the identification of a national network of shared priority waters. In every state where TU has a presence, TU staff and grassroots members will use the best scientific data to identify large, intact native and wild trout habitats where our work can compound on itself and ensure resilience in the face of a changing climate. From this ecological importance, the group will look at potential opportunities to make an impact and incorporate interests of local communities. Using these filters, TU will have a set of locations within each state that everyone values and sees the potential to make a positive impact for native and wild trout.

The North Carolina Council of TU wants to make sure all our membership is represented in this process. To achieve this, **NCTU is seeking a volunteer from each chapter to participate in the Priority Waters Planning Group.**

Bob Lasseter will be the Blue Ridge Chapter Priority water representative to the NCTU Council. However, if you would like to add your nomination for priority waters based on TU's criteria, please contact Bob by email at rhlassiter@gmail.com to discuss your nomination.

For more information about the TU Priority Waters Initiative visit [Priority Waters](#).

ADVICE FROM THE VISE

Seems like the year just cannot be coming to a close, but the weather never lies. It's been a superb fall this year and hope you found some great fall days on the water to talk about around the fire, as winter runs all the sensible people indoors. I'm not among them, I love fishing in the winter.

Something about the stillness that comes in the woods this time of year. We are fortunate to have so much DH water within an hours reach here in this part of the state, it would be a shame to not to enjoy it.

Here we are in December, and I go back to my UK memories this time of year and swing some classic wets. The water is often gin clear, calling for longer casts and dropping wets on the bank to those semi hibernating fish is a great way to get into their limited feeding lanes.

While these flies have origins in the British Isles, they have been effective for me on this side of the pond in all kinds of water. They are one part nymph, one part streamer and one part emerger. I always feel like I summon the ancients when I pull out that vintage Wheatley box I keep my stash of wets in. As it's the holidays, I thought that I'd pick one that was keeping with the season, color wise anyhow. I give you the Grizzly King.



Originally credited to Scottish angler James Wilson in 1840, it was included Mary Orvis Marbury's 1892 text. That classic work became the encyclopedia for US trout flies. I highly recommend adding this one to your fireside reading, it's been a favorite reference of mine for years. I love reading the history of flies.

The recipe for this fly has several variations, and for this one I'll use the one passed down to me- spruce green floss body, red hackle tail, flat gold tinsel rib, grizzly throat hackle, and a gadwall vice mallard flank wing, black thread of your choice. I'm tying this on a barbless #8 wet fly hook like a Firehole 618, with a 2X length is preferred, but suit yourself as to the length.

Start by dressing the hook from the eye to the bend, and tie in the tail. The tail is composed of a dyed red CDL.



Select a clump of several fibers and pull them straight from the quill to align the ends, and tie that in on the top of the hook, wrapping to the eye to keep a level body.

Follow those wraps with the flat gold tinsel, and the spruce floss and wrap for the eye to the bend and back to ensure a smooth body.



Tie in the green floss at the bend and return the thread to the eye. Before I wrap floss, moisten it and it will fray less and lay flatter. I keep an old time porcelain stamp wheel on my bench. I've licked too much squirrel fur over the years, and find this a way more effective method for just a tiny bit of moisture when dubbing.



Take touching turns with the floss, building up a slim carrot shape for the body. Secure that in at the eye and wrap the tinsel in as shown.



Once the tinsel is wrapped in, clean up and form the head by taking wraps from the eye back about an eye length. Tie in a piece of grizzly hackle, and wrap that just behind your head.



Now a bit of old school magic. Using your thumb and index finger pull the fibers back and slightly down to form the throat and take a couple securing wraps. And trim out any fibers still on the top.



Fold the gadwall flank fiber and stroke that to marry the fibers into a cohesive wing. Tie that in at the back of the head and trim out the butt end.



Build up a thread head, and coat with your favorite head cement- I love the black UV resin over my old lacquer finish



these days.

Hope you consider tying and swinging some wets this winter. Find a host of patterns and recipes at <https://globalflyfisher.com/patterns/classic-wet-flies>

As and always, I'm honored to answer questions, give a lesson, or just talk fly fishing. Don't hesitate to contact me at jacobsforkflytying@gmail.com or check out some of my current ties on Facebook and Instagram at Jacobs Fork Fly Tying.

Dave Everhart

2022 VIRGINIA FLY FISHING & WINE FESTIVAL

If you're looking for a good winter indoor activity, the Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival will take place in Doswell, VA on January 15 & 16. Check out the details of the event at [Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival](https://www.virginiaflyfishing.com/).

5 TOASTY TIPS TO STAY WARM THIS WINTER ON THE WATER



By [Lexy Quinn](#)
December 19, 2019



Let's just say that wintertime fly fishing is not for everyone, it takes a little more to get motivated to go stand in a cold river in below-freezing temperatures. But for the anglers that do get after it here are a 5 Toasty Tips to Stay Warm this Winter on the Water.

- Tip 1. Bring a hot coffee or tea in your favorite [Yeti Rambler](#)! If you're adventurous pour some whiskey in there too!
- Tip 2. Bite the bullet and get [battery-operated heat socks](#), it will change your life!
- Tip 3. Some good wool gloves or some fishing-specific ones like the [Simms Fishing Half Finger Fishing Gloves](#).
- Tip 4. You can't go wrong with [hand warmers](#) or [feet warmers](#)!
- Tip 5. Last, a *Wym Hoff mindset* – the cold is all in your head. Focus on the fish, tight lines and embracing every second you're out there.

You might also want to check out [Trout Fishing in Cold Weather | How To Dress for Cold Weather Wading - YouTube](#),



HOW TO CHOOSE BASE LAYERS



If you want to put together the ultimate layering system, then start by focusing on the foundation of that system—your

underwear (aka “base layer”). Comfort in the outdoors starts with the layer that touches your skin.

You have three key considerations in choosing a base layer:

1. **Material matters:** Fabric is your most important decision. Whether you go with a synthetic or a natural one, you need it to wick well (move sweat off your skin).
2. **Weighty decisions:** It's pretty much “lightweight,” “mid-weight” or “heavyweight,” with thicker fabrics laying down a little extra warmth.
3. **Fit factors:** A wicking fabric has to be in direct contact with your skin to do its job, so you want a snug fit.

Shop Base Layers and Underwear

If you're new to the layering game, you should also read [Layering Basics](#).

Underwear Fabrics

As long as a garment was designed to be a base layer, you can assume that its fabric does a decent job of wicking moisture. If you don't have a strong preference already, then consider the following attributes of each type of base layer fabric:



Synthetics

One of the most common synthetic fabrics for long underwear is polyester. You might also see nylon, polypropylene or rayon, or a blend of fabrics. Fabrics that include spandex offer comfortable stretch and can fit snugly without feeling constrictive. Synthetics have the following characteristics:

- **Super dry:** Synthetics excel at wicking and dissipating sweat, so they give you the driest feel of any type of fabric.
- **Durable:** No base layer is invincible; if you're looking for your most durable option, though, then synthetics are your best bet.
- **Odor retention:** Some synthetics add a finish that inhibits the buildup of odor-causing bacteria, which helps. If you'll be going multiple days between washes, it helps to have some tolerance for stinkiness.



Merino Wool

This is not your grandparents' itchy woolies. Merino wool has almost completely replaced traditional wool thanks to its soft, ultrafine fibers. Wool can also be blended with other fabrics, like spandex to enhance fit and flexibility. Merino wool has the following characteristics:

- **Wicks well:** Some moisture in wool is retained in its core, which won't chill you, but wool will not feel quite as dry as a synthetic fabric. It will also take longer to dry when it gets wet.
- **Cools, too:** That moisture in the core of its fibers releases when temps heat up, which can offer a little bit of cooling in warm weather.
- **Moderately durable:** Wear it under other layers and enjoy a long and happy life together; as a standalone top under heavy pack straps, it won't last as long because the constant rubbing can wear through the fabric. You can also opt for a base layer that blends synthetic and wool for increased durability.
- **Odor free:** Even if you don't believe wool fanatics who report endless days of sweaty wear without a discouraging whiff, it's absolutely true that wool is highly resistant (and naturally resistant) to odor-causing bacteria.



Silk

Silk's legendary softness belies the fact that it's a viable base layer option for low-key activities, like an easygoing fall hike or an evening concert outdoors. Silk has the following characteristics:

- **Moderate wicking:** If you don't push your heart rate out of your target zone, you should be fine; some silk underwear has an added finish to improve wicking.
- **Suppleness:** Invariably available as a lightweight option, silk slips easily under other layers; the flipside is that it's not especially durable.
- **Odor retention:** Silk is not naturally odor resistant, so it needs to be laundered every time you wear it.

Ceramic/Wool

Wool that's embedded with ceramic particles is an emerging technology in base layers designed specifically for hot weather. The ceramic attracts body heat, then dissipates that heat quickly to help cool your skin.

Underwear Weight

You don't have to overthink this, but you do need to consider both your metabolism and activity level. If you're always "the cold one" in your group, then go with a heavier weight. If you're training for the Olympic Nordic ski team, then go with a lighter weight.



Here are your three basic weight options for long underwear:

- **Lightweight:** Moderate to cool temps.
- **Midweight:** Cold temps.
- **Heavyweight:** Below-freezing temps.

You might also see "ultralightweight" or "featherweight" or other similarly gossamer descriptors. Those happen when brands try to push the envelope on the light end of the fabric spectrum. On the heavier side of things, you might see alternative terms like "expedition weight."

Remember, too, that your base layer's main job is moisture management. Heavier base layers can certainly add some warmth, but it's your insulating middle layer that's the primary keeper of your body heat (not your base layer).

Underwear Fit

To be able to wick sweat efficiently, your next-to-skin layer needs to actually be next to your skin. So a comfortably snug fit everywhere is your goal. Don't rely solely on marketing terms like "athletic fit," though: Try it on to be sure.

Some people prefer a loose fit in a warm-weather base layer. Their logic is that they'll enjoy better air circulation and cooling. With a loose fit, though, you sacrifice wicking efficiency. In addition, some warm-weather base layers spread sweat out over a large surface area, which cools a large area when evaporation takes place.

Editor's note: I learned several years ago that Merino wool is the best long underwear. What I own is almost as thin as silk yet keeps me toasty and warm in freezing weather. And it doesn't itch like most of us learned about wool. This article tells you why it is such a great material.

HOW WOOL WORKS FOR YOU

WOOLX JOURNAL

July 05, 2017



There's a good chance if you're reading this you're already a believer in the superiority of wool over other fabrics when you need to stay warm, dry, and comfortable in the great outdoors. Wool is one of the warmest, strongest, best smelling, and most breathable performance fabrics out there, but how does wool do it?

Warmth and Temperature Regulation

Wool is the ultimate insulator, it kept early polar explorers and mountain climbers warm and safe from frostbite long before synthetic fabrics were invented. But lightweight wool can also keep you cool on a hot day, how can one fiber do so much?

Merino Wool uses a process called "heat of sorption" to absorb and release moisture. As wool absorbs moisture from the atmosphere a natural chemical process in the wool releases heat, warming the wearer. In cold weather the natural crimp in wool fibers creates tiny pockets of trapped warm air that act as insulators, holding in heat next to the body. This same process has a cooling effect in warm weather, as wool releases moisture it absorbs heat from the wearer and the tiny pockets of air created by the crimp in the fiber trap cool air and insulate the wearer from warmer outside temperatures. As wool pulls moisture away from your skin to evaporate you feel cool and dry even in hot weather.

Moisture Wicking and Breathability

Nothing will keep you dry and comfortable in wet conditions like wool, but how does wool wick moisture away from the wearer without relying on the chemicals used in synthetic fabrics?

Wool fibers are naturally hydrophilic, meaning water-loving, they attract and absorb water molecules. Wool can absorb up to 30% of its weight in water and still feel dry to the touch. As wool absorbs water molecules it pulls moisture away from the skin to the surface of the fabric where it evaporates. Wool is able to release moisture into the air more efficiently than most fabrics. Not only can wool wick sweat from the wearer, wool can move water vapor before it even turns to sweat! Wool is able to release moisture, not just through holes in the fabric, but through the fibers of the fabric itself. Wool's ability to absorb and release moisture from the air makes it one of the most breathable and therefore comfortable materials available.

Antimicrobial

Wool is the best fabric to keep you smelling good after a long hike or a hot day out in the sun, you can even wear a wool garment day after day without developing a serious stink. What is it about wool that deters odor so well?

The natural wax in wool, lanolin, has antimicrobial properties which kill the bacteria in sweat that creates odors. And because wool manages moisture so well, surviving bacteria don't have the damp environment they need to thrive. Without the buildup of odor causing bacteria wool garments not only smell better at the end of the day, they don't develop a permanent stink that can't be washed away like so many synthetic fabrics are prone to do.

Durability

We all know wool garments are durable and hold their shape far longer than other fabrics, but what is it about wool that resists wear and tear so well?

Wool Fibers are primarily made of Keratin, the same protein molecule that makes up human skin and hair. The interlocking structure of these molecules allow wool to be bent and stretched in multiple directions tens of thousands of times without causing damage. By comparison silk and cotton can only withstand fewer than 5,000 bends without breaking, and nylon only 75! The natural curl of wool fibers also adds to the elasticity of wool garments, they can be worn and washed many times without losing their shape.

Comfort

Merino Wool is one of the softest fabrics available, as comfortable and luxurious as cashmere. But how can wool, a fabric long known for being itchy, now be so soft?

The smaller and smoother the fiber, the softer the fabric. Fibers greater than 30 microns in diameter are stiff enough to poke and irritate the skin. Traditional wool came from sheep with course coats whose wool fibers were thick and rigid, causing itching and irritation. The smooth fibers in the wool from Merino Sheep are considerably different. All Merino wool is considered Very Fine, meaning that the fibers are smaller than 24 Microns in diameter. Superfine Merino Wool, like the tiny 17.5 micron fibers we use to make Woolx, are even finer; creating a fabric that is soft, smooth, and comfortable enough to wear right next to your skin.

The inherent properties of the Merino Wool fiber allow us to create an all-natural material that performs as well as any technical performance fabric. A base layer made from 100% Merino Wool is the ideal performance gear to keep you comfortable, dry and smelling great all day!

PHWFF ROD BUILDING CONTEST

Now in its 13th year, the contest is focused on expanding the therapeutic experience for disabled veterans participating in PHWFF programs by giving them the experience of building their own fly rods to further their physical and mental rehabilitation through the sport of fly fishing. The program also has a fun competition component which gives participants the chance to win prizes for their rod building abilities, skills, and creativity in a fun contest. The Fly Rod Building Competition features three (3) separate judging rounds for Beginner (Category 1), Intermediate (Category 2), and Advanced (Category 3).

Congratulations to Joseph Ashley from the local chapter of PHWFF for being selected as a finalist for Category 2: Intermediate!



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WILDLIFE RESOURCES WOULD LIKE YOUR INPUT

Hello from the NC Wildlife Resources Commission! We are seeking feedback on our Wildlife Education Division to better serve the people of North Carolina. Based on feedback concerning availability, the following listening sessions have been scheduled for our NGO partners.

Tuesday, December 7th 5pm-6:30pm

Wednesday, December 15th 9am-10:30am

Please [click this link to sign-up for the session](#) that best fits your schedule by **Wednesday, December 1st**. We look forward to seeing you (virtually) there!