

MAY 2020

FORWARD CASTS

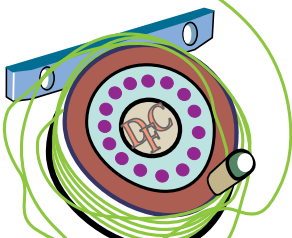
OFFICIAL DESERT FLY CASTERS NEWSLETTER



MAY
Wednesday,
May 13, 2020

**MAY
DFC CLUB MEETING
CANCELED**

West Chandler Blvd.
Chandler, Arizona 85224



President's Drift

Frank Schettino • May 2020



Welcome to May. I hope this finds you, your families and all DFC friends well and healthy. The global Covid-19 pandemic continues. Our state and the nation continue with the social distancing measures and more. The health and well being of our members and their families has always been and will continue to be a priority. So with this in mind we must cancel the May meeting. I know you're all saddened by this as am I. It brought tears to my eyes knowing I was going to miss our much heralded guest speaker, the one and only Joe Staller. Fret not DFC'ers. Joe has provided us with an article in this newsletter. Its not the same as being able to heckle him during his presentation but it will have to do until we can hold meetings again. Joe always provides up with top notch information.

Keep your eyes open for another bulletin coming to your inbox. I'm working on a fly tying contest. As soon as the details are worked out you'll get an email with all the details. We didn't forget about the membership rod raffle. It will be held when we have our first meeting back.

I want to send a big shout out to our newsletter editor Bob McKeon. Bob has come through with some great graphics, articles and ideas for the newsletter and bulletins during our unplanned hiatus to keep the members informed of whats going on. Thank you Bob. So sit back, grab a coffee or another enjoyable beverage and read the finest newsletter of any fishing club. Take care of yourselves, safe safe, stay healthy.

Tight lines, Frank Schettino



Joe Staller speaks Bass...

Join in with Trout Bum, Joe Staller who was to be our guest speaker at the May club meeting. Joe has prepared some keen awareness, as he travels the Arizona waters for fly fishing bass. Thanx Joe, the written words are treasured with the season's of your bass fly fishing you've experienced and passed on for us. Pages 4 & 5



Every big trout is boss man in his pool and he has a particular feeding-resting-observation station all his own.



DFC MISSION STATEMENT

To advance the sport of fly fishing in Arizona through education, conservation and community outreach efforts by:

- Providing Education classes and clinics on fly fishing, fly casting, fly tying, rod building and other associated skills
- Committing to conserve, restore, and enhance local and regional fisheries
- Making fishing approachable, enjoyable and safe in family friendly environment
- Promoting responsible angling practices

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Editors Notes an' Ramblings...



Bob McKeon,

DFC Newsletter Editor, Graphic Guru,
Head Wrangler of Stuff, Certified
Lawn Tosser of Old Rods an' things.
Questions/Comments?
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All my Reels and Putters.

Okay, stuck here in the house I decided to pull out my fly fishing reels (...and a few bait casting & spinning reels I use for "target tournament casting."), I've accumulated over the years (a rather small collection). Mind you I'm not a collector, but more of a tinkerer of reels and stuff. My go to favorites are the reliable, Orvis 3/4 Battenkill and an older Hardy 5wt (plus an extra reel). Both disk drives. The Battenkill I want to pair with a nice easy 3wt rod if I ever run across one. As for the Hardy I've used this on my bamboo rods and a Winston, 8.5 ft over the years. The Hardy has some Sage line on it seems for ever. I might have bought the line during the Clinton years. Still supple and in beautiful condition. I've kept all my reels out of the summer heat- never stored them the garage. I take time to clean the lines, even stretch them out due to reel storage and check for lubricant that might be needed. Then find a grassy spot near by and do some serious lawn tossing, or better yet a small neighborhood pond. They all work right when I show up for some of club's Casting Meet-Ups on Saturdays.

I've never paired any reels for balance with the fly rod itself. Although I do have a couple of the old automatic reels that are heavy giving the rod an odd feel and balance, its something one has to adjust to. Yet with what I've seen in today's market you gotta love the light weight rods and light reels any fisherman would love to have in his trek on the streams. I'm still a believer that a fly reel is used to only hold the line. I've never let a trout take me to my backing- and never retrieved by the reel alone. Yes, I realize this might be challenged at some point with personal practices.



As for a few other reels from the closet...A Martin 67ss (6wt line), 2 Pfluger Medalist (5wt- WF & DT lines), and an assorted famous named automatic fly reels such as, Shakespeare, Heddon, and Phluger. The auto-reels have a great history dating back to before the late 40's. As with the small collection of automatic fly reels, I did some research and found a gentleman in France, **Pascal Grillot**, who wrote an extensive book detailing the auto-reel period (see: [DFC Newsletter-March 2018, "Fishing with the Automatic Fly Reels"](#))

Also among my small collection, is a vintage 1930 Pflueger Summit bait casting reel that I've had fun with for some comical target casting moments in my back yard.

The Summit reel, I've learned to take apart in order to dislodge line caught in the casing plate sides and spool, making it impossible to cast and retrieve. Not exactly a "rats nest," as we know it with this style of reel, but maddening to say the least. And, as I fiddle-fuss with this vintage 1930 gem, I still know all the cuss words one has accumulated over the years. Don't think I'd have this line trouble if I stuck to perhaps 12# or 15# test line. My muddled mess, me thinks, is asking this vintage beauty to come to life with 4# line for target casting.

There is an enjoyment I've found in taking some of my reels apart and just fussing. I've had to rely on contacts such as **Jonathon Kring** (Librarian for Old Reel Collectors Associates, see: [DFC Newsletter, November 2018, "A Collector of Fishing Reels and Other Memorabilia."](#)) to bail me out with some parts a few times. Guess that's part of the hobby. And again, I'm always looking for another reel to acquire to keep the fun going. Over the years, I've enjoy the history part of these reels as well. I treasure my reels...and I do give 'em some love. I know I could show up on the stream or lakeside with any of my reel and rod combination (remember, they just hold the line) for a moment in time as my rod bows with excitement and fill my net with memories.

Now for all my putters. Over the years I've gathered maybe 6 putters, (or at least that's what I've told my wife) in my quest to better my chances of earning a card on the senior tour. This is just a part of being a golfer is to get a new putter...then, another new putter. All of my putters are banished in the darkest place of my garage. And they'll stay there, forever. Simple. No card. No tour. That's my story of all my putters and I'm sticking to it!

Stay safe. We'll stay connected.

R. McKeon, Editor

BALANCING A FLY ROD

by Rob Fightmaster

Every year, it seems every fly rod company comes out with a new rod that is not only supposed to cast itself, but is substantially lighter than its predecessor. As a matter of fact, the average graphite rod today is probably about 1/3 the weight of the average graphite rod of 30 years ago. And that difference is far more substantial when you start comparing the weight of today's graphite rods to the bamboo and fiber-glass rods that your father or grandfather may have used. But none of this matters if your rod is not properly balanced by your reel.

It's a phenomenon called "levered weight." If you carry two 20lb. buckets of water, one in each hand, it will feel more comfortable than carrying just one 20lb. bucket of water in one hand. One side balances out the other. The same concept applies if you have the lightest fly rod on the market but have a reel on it that is too heavy. It will feel heavier in your hand than a heavier rod that is properly balanced by its reel.

When it comes to trout fishing and really, most freshwater in general, your reel does not play a very significant role. Unless, you just have to have "the best," it is not necessary to sink a lot of money into a reel. However, just because it may not be the most important piece of equipment, doesn't mean you shouldn't put some consideration into things like its size. It needs to be big enough to comfortably hold the fly line and appropriate amount of backing, and it needs to balance the rod. In most cases, a rod and reel are balanced if it will self-balance when you set it on one finger positioned near the tip of the cork grip.



Pretty well balanced rod

In the picture above, the reel is just a little too heavy for the rod. I prefer the balance point to be just a little closer to the tip of the cork. But it's close enough to not feel uncomfortable.

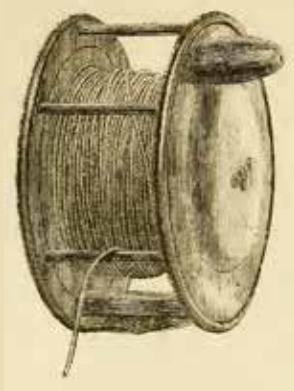


A very well balanced rod

Most companies will designate specific reel sizes for specific line and rod sizes. If a reel is for 4 – 6 weight lines, it not only means it has the capacity to store those line sizes, but it should balance most 4 – 6 weight rods. Of course, things like the material from which the rod is made and the length of the rod can determine if it actually falls in the "balance range" of that particular reel. If your rod is a short, super light 4-weight, you may want to bump down to the next smaller size. On the other hand, if your rod is a 6-weight bamboo, you may want to bump up to the next larger reel size. The design of the reel seat on the rod will also be a factor. Almost all modern graphite rods have an uplocking reel seat, which positions the reel just behind the cork grip. Some bamboo rods may have a downlocking reel seat, which puts the reel almost right at the butt of the rod. The latter can help when trying to balance a heavier rod.

As reels become lighter and lighter, it has become far more difficult to find appropriate size reels to balance bamboo rods. However, one reel manufacturer, Ursus, has designed a reel that has removable brass plates on the interior. The weight of the brass plates help to balance heavier bamboo rods. When using the reel on a lighter graphite rod, the plates can be removed. Pretty cool. In any case, no matter what rod you fish with, keep this in mind when selecting your reel. It will greatly reduce casting fatigue and result in much more enjoyable days on the water!

Many thanks for this article, and author, Rob Fightmaster, from the February 2020 newsletter, *The Creel*. And, the Creel editor, Tim Guilfoile, with the Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers.



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Fly Fishing for Bass (and their Cousins!) in Arizona



by Joe Staller



Seneca Lake Bluegill • April



Red Ear sunfish Lake Havasu • May

For many people, "Fly Fishing" conjures up a vision of wading in a spring creek, casting traditional Catskill dry flies upstream on a classic bamboo rod to rising fish...but for me, that vision might also include plopping a deer hair popper next to a submerged tree at a desert reservoir in hopes of getting a blow up from a largemouth bass, or throwing a shad imitation on a fast sinking fly line in open water for a schooling striped bass. So here are some obvious questions and my answers to those questions:

Why fish for bass (and their cousins) with a fly rod? For one thing, it will dramatically open the seasons and times you can realistically fish. With the exception of Lee's Ferry and the Salt River, it can be pretty difficult to get to a trout stream in the late fall to the early spring in Arizona, and reasonably expect to catch any fish. And, while the bass fishing in the winter close to Phoenix might not be considered the fastest fishing, you can almost always catch some bass. What kind of fish can I expect to catch? That's a great question. The reservoirs, lakes and ponds in central Arizona contain striped bass (Lake Pleasant and the Colorado river reservoirs) Largemouth bass and bluegill (practically every warm water lake and pond in the state) Smallmouth bass are in all of the Salt River reservoirs (Roosevelt, Canyon, Apache and Saguaro) as well as all of the Colorado River lakes (Mead, Mohave, Havasu). Yellow bass can be found in pretty good numbers in Saguaro Lake, and white bass are abundant in Lake Pleasant. If you include crappie in this list, you can't go wrong trying Roosevelt, Alamo, (or in wet years) San Carlos on the San Carlos Reservation.

What kind of gear do I need to fish for bass? The good news here is that you can probably use your standard trout gear to get started in warm water bass fishing, especially at the smaller urban waters in town. A 5 or 6 weight rod with a floating line is perfect. You probably want to beef up your leaders to 2X or 3X so that you can turn over the larger flies often used for bass. After your appetite is whetted, you will probably want to expand your arsenal to include a 7 or 8 weight rod, and a selection of sinking lines to get your fly down in the water column. If you want to chase bass in the larger reservoirs, you will want to include a float tube, kick boat or kayak on your equipment list. If you get really serious about it, you will find that a depth finder can be indispensable to finding fish or structure.

What flies do I need? Some of your trout flies will do double duty for warm water species as well. Bass love wooly buggers and leeches, although you will probably want to move to somewhat larger sizes. Large trout streamers will work well. There are some specialty flies however, that you will want to purchase or tie. Deer hair or foam bass poppers can't be beat when bass are in the shallows or close to the bank. I was just at Alamo Lake in late April with some DFC club members, and the largemouth bass there were looking up the first few hours of the morning and the last hour or two before dusk. One of the great thrills in angling is having a largemouth bass engulf a popper that you are slowly chugging back to the boat...I would also recommend getting some larger Clouser minnows (Chartreuse and white, black and white, all white, all black.) For bluegills, red ears and assorted sunfish, it's hard to beat a size 14 chartreuse colored rubber legged bead head like the "Little Guy". Finally, if you want to catch some of the largest bass available all year, put some very large, heavily weighted, brightly colored "bed" flies in your box.

Spill the beans! What lakes should I target, and when? OK, I knew you were going to ask that one. This is where you will find me fishing as the months progress.

December: You will find me chasing stripers at Lake Pleasant or Havasu. I'll be in my kick boat, fishing 20 feet of water with a 300-400 grain line, 1X leader and a shad imitation (a 3" long helmet head, to be specific)

January: Still chasing striped bass, but I'm also exploring for crappies at Roosevelt, Alamo or San Carlos. For the crappies, I'll be using an intermediate line and a size 10 peacock leech. I'll try to find the "armadas" of conventional crappie fisherman who are fishing with minnows to suspended crappies in 25-20 feet of water. Some years, Saguaro Lake already has bedding bass by the end of January.



Saguaro Lake Bed bass • January

February: Still fishing for crappies, but I'll also be checking out the Colorado River Lakes for bedding small mouth and largemouth bass. For the bedding bass, I use a 5 weight rod, and an intermediate line. The bass are going to be in shallow water, and you need to put the fly right on their bed in order to trigger a strike. If I can't make the trip out to Lake Havasu, I'll probably check out Apache Lake for smallmouth bass what are hanging near the shore in 8-12 feet of water. They'll often take a leech or small Clouser.

March: The fish are turning on everywhere. Bedding bass are a sure bet Lake Havasu. Smallmouth and largemouth are taking streamers at all of the Salt River lakes. Urban lakes are likely to have some bedding bass.

April: Coming to the end of the spawn. Post spawning bass are aggressively feeding. Toss streamers at the bank on the Salt River Lakes. Use poppers at dawn and dusk at Roosevelt and Alamo, focusing on submerged brush close to shore or on shallow flats. Fish for bluegills at Seneca.

May: Although trout are starting to get top billing, I'll still try to make a trip over Havasu to fish for the big red ears that are spawning at the back of coves. Bluegills are starting to get aggressive at Boulder Cove in Canyon Lake. For both of these opportunities, it's hard to beat chartreuse flies with rubber legs. Hope to see you on the lake!



Largemouth, Lake Havasu • March



Lake Pleasant stripers • December



12 pound Havasu Striper • December



Apache Lake Smallmouth



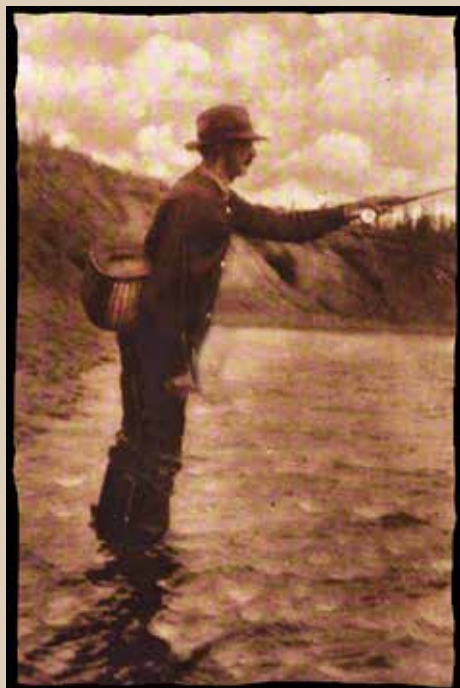
Carl Rutherford- *DFC Trout Bum* adds this story from one of his fly fishing friends in Montana.

Catch Carl at: carlruthe@gmail.com

**In the
Missoulian
Newspaper
recently.**

**But we step aside and
turn this over, intact,
to the whopper of fish
tales from 1897.**

**And please,
no jokes about a lawyer
named Prince.**



This ran on June 5, 1897

On the bank he sat and bobbed for whales today. A minnow – a pound trout – caught on and was gathered in. This did not please the fisherman, none other than Attorney P.Z. Prince who cast his fly upon the waters of the Rattlesnake and Missoula river combined. To the fly which caught the trout he added a worm. The worm pleased a denizen of the not vasty deep. He was a bull trout.

“So pleased was he with the acquaintance of the worm that he invited it to explore his internal arrangements. There was a rush, a snap and some fish ohmyzes. The hook, a No. 2 coachman fly, interfered with mastication and subsequent deglutition, or words to that effect. Mr. Prince had made a strike. He had a good thing. He wanted to save it.

“He allowed his catch to have its own sweet way. It reared, and plunged, and bucked, and cavorted, and jumped, and pirouetted, and laid down and sulked, and charged, and retreated, and jumped sideways, and turned handsprings, cart wheels and somersaults, and, in short, acted up as badly as a glass eyed cayuse fresh from the range when first saddled and mounted. (Don’t know about the fish, but we’re out of breath just reading that paragraph).

“P.Z. held on. His fishship became as gentle as the animals which are to be led by the kid in the glucose subsequent. (Huh?) He led it quietly from the current into the eddy, from the eddy to the shore where as soon as it made its appearance a big six foot companion leaped astride its back, hooked his fingers in its gills and whistled ‘I Want You Ma Honey.’ (We looked up the lyrics. You don’t want to know.) “Mr. Prince knocked off work and called it a day. He brought the fish downtown and had it weighed – six pounds four ounces. Then he took it around and exhibited it to the natives. They admired it – alive and raw; roasted, Mr. Prince will adore it. He proposes to have a hot time at his house tomorrow with tartare sauce on the side.”

Ohmyze.

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2020 DFC OUTINGS SCHEDULE



Joe Staller

The Go-To Outings
Chairman Guy
joestaller@yahoo.com



Month	Location	Date	Host
May	Seneca Lake	Sat • May 16	Joe Staller
June	Big Lake, Fir Campground	June 12-14 <i>Campground reserved</i>	Linda McAteer
July	Becker Best	July • 10-12, <i>Aligned with WMLF</i>	Gentry Smith
Aug	Utah, Boulder Mountain	Aug • 14-19	Dick Brooks
Sept Sept	Links at Queen Creek San Juan	Sept • 12 Sept • 21-26	TBA Billy Wingo
Oct	White Mountains	Oct • 15-18	Joe Staller
Nov	Rocky Point	Nov • 4-9	Vince Deadmond
Dec	Something Local	December 12	TBA



NOTE: Both of these dates are considered a "GO" as of this date: May 1, 2020
Both are subject to change...We will stay in touch with any up-dates with a special
DFC BULLETIN direct to all members to keep you informed. Your health is a priority.

SAN JUAN RIVER TRIP

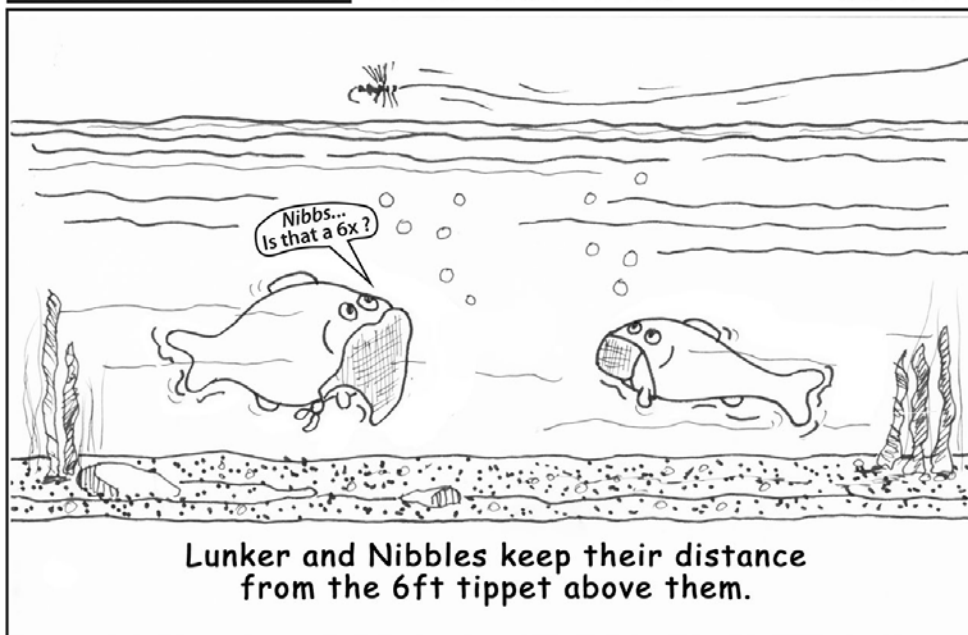
Hope everyone's health is good during this crisis. Hopefully we should be ready for a big break in September. I will put more info next month but be thinking how nice it would be on the river, the trip will be during the week of **September 21 to September 26 and two groups again.**
Think of big fish and fun.

Host & Guide: Billy Wingo • billy.wingo@phoenix.gov • (602) 262-4406

SOCIAL REMOTENESS

LUNKER and NIBBLES

R. McKEON



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Trout Season is Here, But Take Precautions

by Jim Strogen



Health advisories on permissible activities outside the home are being updated daily. We all need to take precautions to remain safe and healthy. At this point, we can still get outside to stay active as long as we maintain social distancing.

The streams are a great place for folks to spread out and enjoy some time fishing, but it is important to remain separated from other fishermen. As long as we are acting responsibly, the fish will be stocked and provide a great diversion for us. If trout stocking increases the social contact on streams and lakes, then it would be entirely understandable to curtail stocking to avoid the increased risk to our collective health.

The Arizona Game and Fish Department has begun their spring stocking in Rim Country lakes and streams as well as at their regular locations across the state. AZGFD is counting on us to be responsible as we enjoy the fish that they are stocking for our benefit.

That means that we must keep social distance where we park and where we fish in the National Forests. Full parking lots and the possibility of folks overcrowding some popular spots in the National Forests has prompted the US Forest Service to close campgrounds and even many popular day-use areas.

These days, folks are just looking for an opportunity to get out in nature and avoid going stir-crazy. Places like Water Wheel on the East Verde River are often overrun with cars and hikers that flock to these beautiful pools. That is the kind of situation that the USFS is trying to manage for our common good.

If these day-use area parking lots are closed, it is important that barriers are not removed and that access to fishing along the vast stretches of the stream is done in a responsible way. That would mean that we must abide by the parking restrictions and maintain social distancing. Parking along the road in safe pull-outs is acceptable, but not if there are already other cars there and it causes congestion and traffic safety issues.

Even fishing in town has the potential to pose undue risks to each of us. I like to spend time at Green Valley Lakes, but I turned around and headed home after a recent drive to check out the lakes. I was surprised and discouraged by the number of folks that were using the lake and park. Many were on the docks and along the shore in relatively close proximity, and the parking lots were full.



Somehow I think we feel protected living in an isolated community. We see other places on the news having serious health issues and believe that because we only have two confirmed cases in Gila County as I write this, that somehow the coronavirus has not gotten to us yet. It has! We just don't know how widespread it is.

If we do not take full measures of caution and choose strategies to better protect ourselves and our community, we will soon find that the medical services in our isolated community will not come close to meeting the needs of our residents.

Even if you are using an area that is still open, please consider the risks to yourself, to others that you might meet in the woods, and the potential burden that you could cause to an increasingly fragile health care system if you were in need of emergency assistance.

I am a big advocate of allowing adequate space between anglers on streams and lakes anyway. One of the things we've always talked about in my elementary and middle school after school classes is fishing courtesy. The kids are taught that if a person has selected a fishing spot on a lake, you need to be sure that you are not encroaching on the arc that they might potentially cast to.

On a stream, that translates to not fishing the same hole and in fact, taking care to allow for movement of the other fisherman. For me, that means that I will generally be a couple hundred feet upstream or downstream from a fisherman that I know is likely to be on the move after they leave the pool they are fishing. That way, by the time they get to water I fished, the trout have had a chance to rest and get back into their feeding routine.

These forms of courtesy are perfect for the social distancing that we need to practice now. Please consider what you can do to help the Rim Country community to best manage this pandemic and reduce any undue stressors to the system.

Jim Strogen, Writer/Columnist - *Life on the Fly*
Payson Roundup Newspaper
Catch Jim at: jimstrog@gmail.com

Fly Tying Corner

Watch for bulletin to notify if we will have tying session at McQueen Recreation Center. Thanks go to Mike Styvaert for the patterns this month. The flies streamer and Midge have been working in White Mountains for last several years.

May Flies of the Month



Styvie Bright Streamer

Hook: Daiichi 1760 Sixe 8
Thread: Uni 11ack Barred Bunny strip (BSR71 Orange) Krystal Flash – KF194 Peacock/ Pearl
Body: Dubbed Prism SLF Ruby Brown
Beard: Optional Orange hackle fibers.
Wing: Bunny – same as Tail,d 4 fibers Krystal Flash.
Head: Wrap black or red thread head and whip finish



Styvie Mop Fly

Hook: Jig hook #14-16 (#14 used in photos)
Bead: Silver (or black) tungsten sized to match the hook (3.3 - 2.5 mm)
Thread: Any color
Tail: 8-10 Coq de Leon Pardo fibers
Body: Rainbow Nymph-It thread or similar (Flashabou)
Collar: Hot Orange thread Body
Coating: UV-cure resin -- an easy flow version
Wing Case: Black Nail Varnish Final Body Coating: Clear Nail Varnish (Hard as Nails)

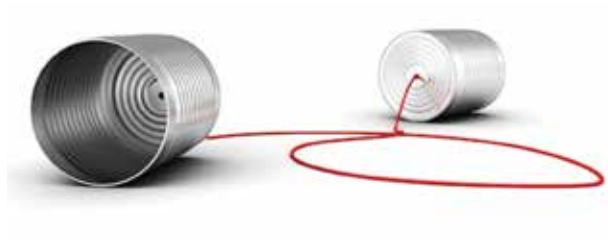
Styvie Midge



Hook: Daiichi 1760 size 12
Thread: Uni 136D 6/0 Black
Tail: 4 strands Crystal Flash(KF194) Peacock /Pearl
Body: Tie I Ultra wire gold Medium or French Tinsel 4 Peacockherls tied in at back

and wrapped forward as rope Counter spiral wire back to front
Beard: Orange Hen Saddle Fibers tied in under eye with length to touch hook point.
Head: Form thread with black tying thread and whip finish.

For more information or to sign up, send email to:
Bob Harrison harrn7963@aol.com or call/ text to: 480 735 9743



**"They bring a joy, a healing power
that shines out far and wide.....
The ever patient, faithful friends
to keep watch by your side!"**

John McLeod

It's a been awhile...I'll phone an old friend today and stay connected.



Charlie Rosser

Charlie picked up the phone after 2 rings with an up beat in his voice. And, as us two old geezers talked, Charlie brought me up to date with recent health issues, not related to the coronavirus we live in. Charlie has a comical sense about all of this and it made me chuckle to myself, as the conversation went on, I felt like the "Tin Man," from the Wizard of Oz, needing a little oil too. Charlie sounded positive and all was on the mend. He's kept himself busy and eagerly told me of the mask he recently constructed to keep up with social distancing. A few hours after our conversation, Charlie e-mailed me this scary photo. Outstanding, Charlie, I'm sure you'd be admired on any post office wall.

I guess this is the way he dresses to approach the day while shopping and going out and about. I used my imagination on how he might look setting out on a day of finding toilet paper and perhaps his favorite bourbon.

Don't know if he'll catch many trout wearing this hollowed head dress though. And, if he treks around the woods like this, even Big Foot would stay his distance. We'll keep connected, Charlie. Thanx for the humor you've found in all of this. Take care.

Thanx Charlie. Great hearing your voice. Your input and leadership with the DFC Trout Bums is well appreciated. You're a scary dude! R.McKeon



Rocky Minster

I found Rocky and Joannie living in Paulden, AZ. They moved up to this location about 3 years ago full time. Rocky told me he went to school in Paulden when he was 6 years old. They are familiar with this part of Arizona, many of their neighbors are friends and relatives from back in the ranching days. When I first told Rocky who was calling, and asked how they where doing, he spent a full 3 to 4 minutes (plus) describing the beauty of his place. As I listened how well he described his surroundings I was taken back by the calm demeanor in his voice. He sounds happy.

Home is a 2 bedroom house trailer along with a barn and plenty of wild life (bobcat, fox, mountain lion among others). Rocky and Joannie enjoy wonderful sunsets on the back deck. They have 7 acres to themselves and share their life with 2 of their own dogs and are baby sitting 2 other dogs, 3 goats, one rescue horse and another rescue horse is to find their hearts at the end of the month.

Rocky is busy with old customers applying his trade in saddle and leather goods. Some of the ranchers in the area and families go back to 1925. In fact Rocky mentioned he's working on a project for a grand daughter of a rancher near by. Rocky has a lot of cowboy in him, don't think he's ready to retire. Why? He loves his saddle work and still keeps at it!

They both admitted, however, they've only fished once in the last year or so. Nice time on the phone, with Rocky and Joannie. We'll stay connected.

Thanx Rocky. Great hearing your voice. You're well remembered for all the mentoring you've done introducing fly fishing to many new enthusiast along with our DFC club. R.McKeon



Jimmy Fraijo

My phone call to Jimmy was rewarding for both of us. Don't think I've talked to him in maybe 3 years or when I last saw him at our August Swap Meet. Jimmy quickly brought me up to date. It was nice to hear his voice. He's still very busy with making his Kachina dolls, he's famous for. In fact he mentioned with pride he's now also doing some dolls for the Apache Tribe. This was all new to me and Jimmy explained a special 4 day ceremony regarding this particular Apache doll he's working on.

Jimmy lives alone and he's at peace with himself. As I talked to him I never realized how religious he's been. Mornings are filled with prayers at St Thomas Catholic church. I admire this about him as how he goes about his days.

Things that take up some of his time now? He's building a 10 ft 5wt rod he always wanted. He referenced some of Dave Weaver's rod building classes came to mind as he works on the rod. Jimmy mentioned the times when he gets up to the reservation to see his podiatrist friend for monthly check ups also includes fishing together. And, just recently he acquired a large collection of fly fishing magazines from an estate, he's slowly going through. And, Jimmy still ties flies as I remembered.

Jimmy wants us to stay in touch with him, even though he doesn't have an e-mail. He gets calls from some of the past club members, and mentioned this is how he heard of Doc's passing- *from a friend who stayed connected.*

Thanx Jimmy. Nice to catch up with you and all you're up to. Your friendship and the experinces you've shared with us is admired...We'll stay connected. R.McKeon



Gila Trout on the East Verde River

by Jim Stroger



*Gila resting at my feet after release.
Love how well it blends in.*

The East Verde River was stocked recently for the first time with Gila trout. Actually, that is not entirely true, as Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) stocked about thirty Gilas last year to determine their movement after stocking compared to the data that they already collected on rainbow trout movement.

They plan to stock the East Verde weekly with Gila trout from the Canyon Creek Hatchery throughout the spring and summer. Gilas are one of two threatened Arizona native trout species. They were historically found in many of the streams in Rim Country.

Canyon Creek Hatchery is well on its way to raising and maintaining their own brood stock of Gila trout to be able to produce fertilized eggs for continued production for anglers to enjoy catching in Rim Country for years to come. The efforts of the Canyon Creek Hatchery not only provide a fantastic recreational benefit to anglers, but will also create a separate viable stock of these valuable fish that have only been raised from brood stock at the Mora National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico prior to the Canyon Creek Hatchery production.

I've had the great pleasure of visiting the Canyon Creek Hatchery and getting to see the devoted staff work through many hurdles in raising these fish. Gila trout behave in ways that require totally different feeding and care than the rainbow trout that are also at the hatchery.

While rainbow trout have been raised in hatcheries for well over a hundred years, Gila trout still retain much of their wild disposition. Rainbows are very comfortable with the hatchery staff cleaning their tanks, and eating soon after a tank cleaning. In the raceways, they actually anticipate being fed, and come up to take the pellets within sight of the staff.

Gilas are frightened by a number of things that don't seem to faze a rainbow trout. Gila trout will stop feeding for hours at a time if their tank is cleaned. Initially, the staff had to throw pellets across a rainbow trout raceway to the Gila trout, because close human proximity would cause them to stop feeding. Recently, automatic feeders were installed to reduce human contact. They also covered large sections of the tanks to provide the fish the cover that they seemed to desperately want.

Canyon Creek Hatchery now has several large circular tanks that keep the Gilas swimming. These tanks also hide the staff from the fish, allowing them to empty the waste through the middle plug in the center of the tank where the water swirls and the debris is quickly eliminated without distressing the trout.

Their efforts have really paid off to the point that they have enough fish to stock the East Verde this year. As they expand the efficiency of their operation with these challenging trout, they anticipate the ability to eventually provide Gila trout to other waters in Rim Country.

According to AZGFD research, soon after rainbows are stocked, they typically remain in or very close to the same pool that they were stocked in for days or even weeks. They seem quite comfortable in close proximity to one another just as they did in the hatchery.

Gilas seem to prefer more personal space. After being stocked, they are more apt to travel around the pool, and are less likely to stack up in a tight pod like rainbows will do sometimes. The preliminary data from a limited amount of observations on Gilas in Arizona streams also seems to indicate that they may travel quite a distance from their original stocking point.



If you are fishing in the middle of the day, look for Gilas under cover. My first Gila didn't grab my fly until it was completely under the grass hump.



If you can find this spot on the East Verde River, there is a nice Gila ready to give you a thrill!



This desire to move will serve us well. In the short term with the Coronavirus pandemic and our need to separate when we fish, we are more likely to find Gila trout greater distances from their original stocking points throughout the stream.

The real advantage to this propensity to move is that unlike the stocked rainbow trout, an introduced species, that are required to be infertile triploid trout, the Gila trout as a native fish, are being stocked with the ability to naturally reproduce in the stream. The more fish that are released by anglers after being caught could mean a larger spawning population and years of great fishing throughout the East Verde River.

I certainly am no expert in catching Gila trout, but I am thrilled to report that I have already caught four Gila trout from the East Verde after their first week of stocking. My observations at the hatchery provided me with some important insights on how I intend to fish for Gilas as opposed to how I have fished for the stocked rainbows in the past.

Gila trout are very sensitive to movement and will seek cover at the first sign of danger much like the wild rainbows and brown trout in some of our smaller Rim Country streams.

I am careful to approach slowly, and remain as far from the creek as possible when I am surveying a pool. Since they are also sensitive to being exposed in the light, I look for them in water that seems suitable that is also shaded.

If it is sunny, then target them near rocks, logs or undercut banks that provide cover. Be sure that your shadow does not land on the water while you fish.

Using the knowledge of my success with wild brown and rainbow trout, a delicate approach is important as well. Instead of larger bead head flies that could create a splash in a pool, I use unweighted wet flies or small bead head zebra midges in sizes 14-18. A dry fly drifted through a pool or run provides a light landing on the water and would be effective for Gilas like it is for wild rainbows and browns.

The introduction of Gila trout to the East Verde River is a fantastic gift from AZGFD. It is important to bring these native trout back to Rim Country. They are a thrill for fly fishers like me to catch, and will no doubt bring many anglers wanting to add Gila trout to their catch list from all over the state and country. They will be a nice economic draw after the effects of the pandemic subside.



*Jim Strogen, Writer/Columnist -
Life on the Fly -
Payson Roundup Newspaper
Catch Jim at:
jimstrog@gmail.com*

Desert Fly Casters Conservation Corner

MAY 2020



DFC Trout Bum Conservation Chair
Joe Miller

There's a lot of "Buzz" right now about how "We're All In This Together", and that's absolutely true regarding Conservation as well as The Covid 19 situation. A lot of very diverse conservation efforts are going on in Arizona, and some good progress is being made on many fronts. Many Challenges Remain, but here are short updates on topics of interest to DFC Trout Bums about our Arizona streams, fisheries and the forests they're in:

Lees Ferry Rainbow Trout Fishery

BUG FLOWS! Long time DFC Trout Bum Jerry Myers helped start this effort to improve the Food Base in the Lees Ferry Fishery when he was part of the Recreational Fishing Representation on the Glen Canyon Dam Adaptive Management Program. Now the current Recreational Fishing Representation has helped secure a Third Year of "Macro-invertebrate Production Flows (BUG FLOWS)" to run May 1st thru August 31, 2020. These Flows Work! Thanks Jerry and Guys!, and keep up the effort on getting Oxygen Monitoring and Temperature Control Devices at the GCD. We support this effort, sponsored by Fly Fishers International and TU. And fishing's been good at the Walk-In!

High Country Trout Stockings, Especially GILA TROUT on E Verde River

AZGFD IS NOW Stocking trout on the streams of the Mogollon Rim and in the White Mountains. Of special interest, They're stocking Nice Gila Trout from the Canyon Creek Hatchery on some of the East Verde River stream restoration reaches that DFC helped out with just recently. At least a few DFC Trout Bums have made it up there, we hope they did well, and released those gorgeous fish back rapidly. These Gilas are reproducing fish, and hopefully will contribute to many future wild generations!!

Four Forest Restoration Initiative (4FRI) Status

The Forest Service 4FRI Team hopes to finalize the Rim Country EIS and Record Of Decision (ROD) by early next year. Conservation Chair Joe Miller is deeply involved in these efforts, working to keep importance on the Water Resources, as is AZGFD, and a number of other Conservation Organizations. Next Big Milestone is the May 5, 2020 RFP Due Date for

Commercial Timber Cutting & Thinning Proposals all across the Mogollon Rim. It'll take months to know the final answers about that, and alternative means of funding the work are also being considered. We'll keep you posted!

ALERT: National Forest Facility Closures and NO CAMPFIRE

National Forest developed campsites and facilities REMAIN CLOSED across the Mogollon Rim and the White Mountains AND ALL OPEN CAMPFIRE HAVE BEEN BANNED due to Covid-19 concerns. This includes the Tonto, Prescott, Apache- Sitgreaves, Kaibab and Coconino NFs. The forests themselves are open for dispersed camping, but facilities like parking lots, restrooms etc are NOT. PLEASE NOTE: There have already been several fires on the Tonto. Be Careful!!!!

Update: Black River Forest Restoration Project - White Mountains

The Apache - Sitgreaves NF is now convening a mid May meeting for a group of Stakeholders including Joe Miller and AZGFD to work with A - S for proceeding with this valuable project. The project, on the Eastern slopes of Mt Baldy and around the Big Lake area, is to develop an Environmental Assessment to authorize Forest Restoration and Streams Restoration work. The area includes many streams with Apache Trout and Brown Trout. Details of that meeting will be reported in the June DFC Newsletter.

In the Meantime; Stay Safe, Stay Separated, and Fish Well!

Questions? Catch: Trout Bum Conservation Chair Joe Miller at jamiller101@gmail.com Who has indeed caught Fish since the last Conservation report: Gila Trout on E Verde River! Thanks AZGFD!

DFC BULLETIN

We'll stay connected...

Our DFC Board of Directors plan to stay in touch with an extra e-mail regarding updates and club activities. The **DFC BULLETIN** will be published in addition to the monthly newsletter when needed. We'll stay updated. Keep an eye out...



Questions? • Catch: Frank Schettino-DFC President at: sketno1026@hotmail.com
Catch: Joe Staller- DFC V/P at: joestaller@yahoo.com

**2020 DESERT FLY CASTERS
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DATES TO KEEP IN MIND...2020

*** MAY • SENECA LAKE**

Saturday, May 16, 2020

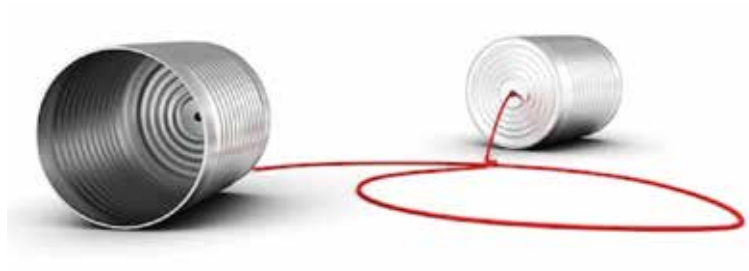
Host: Joe Staller • joestaller@yahoo.com

*** JUNE • BIG LAKE- FIR CAMPGROUNDS**

Friday, June 12 - Sunday June 14, 2020

Host: Linda McAteer • lmcateer60@gmail.com

*** NOTE:** Both of these dates are considered a "GO" as of this date: **May 1, 2020**
Both are subject to change...We will stay in touch with any up-dates with a special
DFC BULLETIN direct to all members to keep you informed. Your health is a priority.



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