FLY CASTING:
CHANGE OF DIRECTION

CONSERVATION / EDUCATION / COMMUNITY
WHAT IS A CHANGE OF DIRECTION CAST?
Change of direction casts are exactly as the name implies. They are modifications of other casts that allow the presentation of the fly from a starting position to a finishing position that is generally several degrees to 180 degrees from the starting position. This is measured from the caster with lines to the start and finish targets. For example, a Pick-up and Lay-down cast to the same target would have 0 degrees change of direction. Picking up, false casting multiple times, and moving the target 20 feet to the left, we would measure the angle as a line from the caster to the starting position and from the caster to the finishing position.

PRINCIPLES
There are some guiding principles to casting: Longer stroke – easier cast; fly line follows the path of the rod; and pertinent to this conversation, the 180 degree principle. The first key to changing direction is placing the backcast 180 degrees away from your target. This is probably the simplest and easiest way to change direction. Assuming we have already covered the basic cast, the change of direction is just changing the setup and direction. Let’s use the clock to explain. First, assume you are casting to a fish at 12 o’clock. Suddenly a fish rises at 2 O’clock. You want to cast to this fish because, of course he is hungrier and bigger! To make this cast, your backcast needs to be 180 degrees away from where you want the front cast to go. If the fish is at 2 o’clock, the backcast would need to head to 8 o’clock. When you pick up the line into the backcast, this needs to be toward 8 o’clock. This will set up the forward cast and prevent the line from crossing in the air.

The setup for the backcast on a change of direction can be quite simple. If a small change of direction, it might just be a change of the arm or wrist. If the change of direction is greater or uncomfortable, then it might be necessary to rotate at the hips or change the placement of the feet. As with most casts, it is important to square up to the target with the shoulders as much as possible. This will help drive the cast in the right direction.

CHANGE OF DIRECTION CASTS

1. SMALL CHANGE, PICK-UP AND LAY-DOWN:
The steps of this cast are the same as the Pick-up and Lay-down (see Pick-up and Lay-down Cast module). It requires that the line lies in a straight line in front of you on the water with the rod tip held low. Decide where you want your cast to go and make sure you face the target. Point the rod at the target. Smoothly accelerate 180 degrees away from your target and stop in the backcast letting the loop unroll. Then accelerate to a stop in the front toward the target and lower the rod tip to the water as the fly line falls.
2. ROLL CAST:
Roll casting can be used for small changes of direction (up to 15 degrees) when backcast space is limited (see Roll Cast module). During the set up, form the D-loop 180 degrees opposite your target.

3. FALSE CAST:
False casting can also be used to change direction. False casting is making back and front casts continuously without presenting the fly (see False Casting module). The 180-degree principle applies here as well. When false casting, small degrees of change can be made. The shorter the line being cast, the more degrees of change. With roughly 30 feet of line in the air, cast a degree change of not more than 15 degrees for each false cast. After a forward false cast, the next backcast should be made pointing a few more degrees toward your ultimate backcast target which would, of course, be 180 degrees away opposite your final forward cast target. This should be done until the final target is aligned, and a presentation cast made. This is a great method when fishing to rising fish and can also dry the fly while changing direction, without, of course, casting over the fish.

4. LOB CAST:
Not really a cast at all, but a repositioning of the line to an upstream position. The lob is wonderful when fishing an upstream to downstream position while facing across the river. This is the typical position for fishing nymphs and dry flies with droppers. The lob cast allows the fishing rig to float unimpeded from the upstream delivery position to the downstream recast position.

a. The setup for this cast starts at this point where the downstream position creates tension against the rod.

b. From this point, the 180 degree principle comes back into play. With the line and rig downstream on tension, reposition the hand toward the target.

c. The lob is exactly that. Rather than a regular cast with loop formation the lob is a smooth acceleration, but with a round rod tip. Often this is done with multiple flies and weighted flies and the weight of the flies help facilitate the tension of the line to maintain during the lob.

KEYS TO CHANGE OF DIRECTION
» Back cast 180 degrees from intended target
» Smaller changes are generally easier to control
» Use the appropriate cast to achieve the necessary change

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