PERSONAL CONSERVATION MODULE
The FFI Learning Center is a primary source of educational and instructional materials, to meet the needs and interests of the fly fishing community in the areas of FLY FISHING SKILLS, FLY CASTING, FLY TYING, and CONSERVATION. The Learning Center is a combination of annual in-person workshop instruction and downloadable instructional materials found on the FFI website.
» www.flyfishersinternational.org
» Nonprofit, national governing body
» Only organization to focus on the fly angler: “All Fish, All Water”
» Founded 1965 in Eugene, Oregon
» Fly Fishing Skills, Casting, Fly Tying, Conservation
» “Educating, Conserving & Restoring through Fly Fishing”
To paraphrase Terry Pratchett, “This presentation was assembled using 100% recycled words.”

Even though the words are recycled, I hope that the quotations, ideals, photos and background will combine in a way that provokes thought ... and action.
CONSERVATION

1. the act of conserving; prevention of injury, decay, waste, or loss; preservation: conservation of wildlife; conservation of human rights.

2. official supervision of rivers, forests, and other natural resources in order to preserve and protect them through prudent management.

3. a district, river, forest, etc., under such supervision.

4. the careful utilization of a natural resource in order to prevent depletion.

5. the restoration and preservation of works of art.

www.dictionary.reference.com/browse/conservation
The Federation of Fly Fishers was an early advocate for catch & release. Support continues as the FFF became the IFFF and now FFi.

1960s FFF Patch Promoting Catch and Release
CATCH AND RELEASE TIPS

» Basics for Fish Release
  » Use barbless artificial flies
  » Land fish quickly
  » Minimize time out of water
  » Handle fish gently
  » Back the hook out with a hemostat
  » Support fish facing the current until it swims away

» Handling Your Catch
  » Minimize the time your fish is out of the water
  » Keep fingers away from gills and eyes
  » Wet your hands when handling your fish
  » Never squeeze your fish.
FFI HAS A CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP WITH KEEP 'EM WET

» Keeping fish in the water as much as possible
» Holding fish gently in or slightly above the water with wet hands
» Handling fish as little and as carefully as possible

www.keepemwet.org
“The finest gift you can give to any fisherman is to put a good fish back, and who knows if the fish that you caught isn't someone else's gift to you?”

- Lee Wulff

Keep fish in the water until ready to photograph

Support fish until it swims away
“Fishing is not an escape from life, but often a deeper immersion into it...”
- Harry Middleton
“One thing becomes clearer as one gets older and one's fishing experience increases, and that is the paramount importance of one's fishing companions.”

- John Ashley-Cooper
“Nothing makes a fish bigger than almost being caught.”
- Author Unknown

“The one that got away” — aka Long Line Release (A Mastered Technique)
CHOOSE GEAR TO MINIMIZE INJURY TO FISH OR ENVIRONMENT

» Barbless or pinched barb hooks
» Single hook flies
» Circle hooks
» Net designed for catch & release
» Equipment sized to land fish quickly
» Lead-free weights
NET WITH SILICONE RUBBER BAG

Soft, fish friendly, does not tangle with hooks—excellent choice
NET WITH C&R WOVEN BAG

Soft, no knots, supports fish well
NET WITH KNOTTED NYLON BAG

Stiff, abrasive, tangles fins—poor choice for C&R
“Man is a complex being: he makes deserts bloom — and lakes die.”
- Gil Stern

Sad Sights: Mishandled Trout & Bass Targeted on Spawning Bed
PACK IT OUT

» Take nothing but pictures. Leave nothing but footprints. Kill nothing but time.” –Motto of the Baltimore Grotto, a caving society

» Collect all used monofilament

» Pick up all empty zip lock bags and packaging

» Remove everything you brought and maybe some items left by others
PACK IT OUT – TO A COLLECTION STATION

Materials List
» 4”x30” abs pipe
» 4” abs 90 degree elbow
» 4” abs cleanout
» 4” abs plug (with ½” hole drilled in bottom)
» 2 Sammy screws 3/8” bolt size for wood or steel
» 2 3/8”x 1” hex head bolts
» 2 3/8” flat washers
» Abs glue
» Recycling decal, FFI logo decal, club or sponsor decal

Tool List
» Hacksaw to cut abs pipe
» Drill motor with ½ inch drill bit
PACK IT OUT – STREAM CLEAN-UP

Photo courtesy of Udo Lindemann
PACK IT OUT – STREAM/ACCESS CLEAN-UP

» Picking up trash at the Access or along the stream can help relationships with land owners (and their neighbors)

» Prevents trash from reaching the stream

» Improves appearance for when you return (gift to yourself)

» Use a “grabber” or wear leather gloves for safety.

» Often a local gas station will allow you to dispose of the filled bag(s)
PACK IT OUT – STREAM/ACCESS CLEAN-UP

Before

After
THE CLEAN ANGLING PLEDGE

» “I pledge to clean, drain, and dry my gear after every use”

» Clean gear stops invasive species from spreading

» Invasive species can harm or destroy our native fisheries by:
  » degrading aquatic habitat
  » competing for available food
  » stunting or infecting fish
Clean boots, waders and gear between watersheds
WADING BOOTS - FELT VS RUBBER

Decision Considerations

» Felt soles are banned (by law) in some areas
  » Holds moisture longer
  » Harder to clean
  » Can transfer invasive species or diseases
» Rubber soles dry faster, easier to clean well
» Rubber soles less risk to watershed
» Rubber soles grip
  » Better on snow and ice
  » Can be slippery on slimy rocks
» Felt soles grip wet rocks better, but rubber soles are approaching equal grip
INVASIVE SPECIES – WATERCRAFT

www.stopaquaticitchhikers.org

Photo courtesy of the Minnesota DNR

Remember: Clean Drain Dry
INVASIVE SPECIES – DIDYMO AND MILFOIL

Didymo (Didymosphenia geminata) aka “rock snot”. Photo from www.invasive.org – T Thorney

Eurasian water-milfoil. Photo from www.invasive.org – Alison Fox, University of Florida, Bugwood.org
INVASIVE SPECIES – ASIAN LONGHORNED BEETLE

» Destructive wood-boring pest
» Have been found in MI and WI
» Attack maple, elm, ash, birch, willow chestnut and poplar families of trees
» Difficult to control once established
  » Treatment possible if found early
  » Tree removal required when established
» Eggs laid in wood (like emerald ash borer)
» Transported in firewood
» Need increased awareness AND reporting to DNR when found

Photo from www.invasive.org – Michael Bohne, USDA Forest Service, Bugwood.org
INVASIVE SPECIES - NEW ZEALAND MUD SNAIL AND ZEBRA MUSSEL

New Zealand mud snails. Photo from www.invasive.org – Mohammed El Damir, Bugwood.org

INVASIVE SPECIES – WILD PARSNIP
OTHER CONSERVATION PRACTICES

Know the special needs of the water being fished

» Are there special regulations or restrictions
  » Hoot owl hours or marginal water temps
  » Diseases or invasives present
  » Endangered flora or fauna
» Non-native fish targeted for removal
» Special permits required
Anglers and other volunteers are additional eyes in the field and the feet on the ground to help the DNR manage the resources.

» We can notify the DNR offices when...
  » Emerald ash borers are seen
  » Asian longhorned beetles are spotted
  » Fish kills are found
  » Unusual odors are encountered
  » Point source pollution or spills observed
  » Changes in fish or insect populations are recognized

» We can help the DNR offices when volunteers are needed for ...
  » Stream rehabilitation efforts
  » Invasive removal
  » Electroshocking or other monitoring
  » Interpretive programs
FISH KILL EXAMPLES

Photos courtesy of Vaughn Snook, Minnesota DNR
PROTECT FRAGILE BANKS

Use existing paths – don’t contribute to erosion

Sandy soil
SPAWNING BED / REDD EXAMPLES

Rainbow trout spawning bed

Sockeye salmon spawning redd
SPAWNING BED EXAMPLES

Smallmouth bass spawning bed

Largemouth bass spawning bed
“The angler forgets most of the fish he catches, but he does not forget the streams and lakes in which they are caught.”

- Charles K. Fox
“The trouble with quotes on the internet is that you can never know if they are genuine.”
- Abraham Lincoln

Many articles and references intentionally push an agenda. We should try to verify that the information is accurate.

FFi Conservation Policy supports biologically sound conservation of wetland and fishery resources.
“In the end, we will protect only what we love. We will love only what we understand. We will understand only what we are taught.”

- Senegalese poet and naturalist Baba Dioum

“Well done is better than well said.”

- Benjamin Franklin
THANK YOU!
FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL has been an organized voice for fly fishers since 1964. We represent all aspects of fly fishing—from the art of fly tying and casting instruction, to the protection of and access to fisheries around the world.

A 501c3 non-profit organization, FFI is driven by three fundamental pillars: CONSERVATION, EDUCATION, AND COMMUNITY. Together, these pillars provide the foundation for our vision of the future of fly fishing—a future in which anglers have access to prime waters and fish can thrive in healthy, protected habitats; in which learning never stops and artistry is not forgotten; and that recognizes the true value of camaraderie. If we want this legacy to be experienced by future generations, we have to work to make that happen.

JOIN FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL TODAY to help ensure that fly fishing can continue to instill the kind of passion it does today in so many of us.

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