

Backcasts

Newsletter of the
North Eastern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers

September - October 2007

Joe Loughran Honored for Service to NEC



Long time NEC Director Joe Loughlin of Maine was awarded the FFF Council Award by NEC. In commenting about the selection, NEC President, Robert Ford, said, "Joe has singlehandedly taken the FFF message and NEC's mission to fly fishing shows and groups throughout Maine. Joe has been NEC's representative to the Maine fly fishing fraternity and has donated untold hours of his time to fostering the goals and mission of FFF." Congratulations Joe, this is a well deserved recognition.

NEC Events Already Scheduled

Many of you frequently ask where **NEC** will be representing FFF and spreading the Federation's message of Conserving, Restoring and Educating Through Fly Fishing. Even though it is early, NEC is already committed to the events listed below. Want to help out at any of them? Email flytyer07950@verizon.net and volunteer. NEC is successful because its members believe in the FFF Mission and willingly give their time to the "All fish, All waters" mission of the Federation.

- Daniel Webster BSA Event - Manchester, NH - Oct 6, 2007
- Jersey Shore BSA Event - Barnegat, NJ - Oct. 20, 2007
- BSA Fly Tying - Somerset, NJ - Nov. 17, 2007
- International Fly Tying Expo - Somerset, NJ - Nov. 17-18, 2007
- BSA Fly Tying - Marlboro, MA - January 19, 2008
- Marlboro Fly Fishing Show, Marlboro, MA - January 18-20, 2008
- BSA Fly Tying - Somerset, NJ - January 26, 2008
- Somerset Fly Fishing Show, Somerset, NJ - January 25-27, 2008
- LL Bean Fishing Expo - Freeport, ME, March 14-15, 2008
- Kittery Trading Post Show - Kittery, ME - March 20-23, 2008
- Canadian Fly Fishing Forum - Burlington, ONT - April 11-13, 2008
- West Point BSA Camporee, West Point, NY - May 3, 2008



**A Scout's first hackle wrap!
Completed at NEC BSA Event**

Have You Taken the Clean Angling Pledge?

"I pledge to inspect, clean and dry my gear. I am committed to protecting our fisheries resources from invasive species." We asked you this last issue. If you have not, go to <http://cleanangling.org/partners.php> and take the FFF endorsed pledge.

Another Reminder from the Summer BackCasts



FFF Life Member Promotion – July 1, 2007 until December 31, 2007

For individual Life membership - At a price of \$750 it will include for a new life member or existing member who upgrades to life membership a choice of a Sage 590-4 Z-AXIS Series Rod in 5 wt or a Sage 890-4 Xi2 8 wt. This is a great deal. The Z-Axis 5 sells for \$585 and the Xi2 sells for \$660

For couple life membership – For the husband and wife who fish together, receive 2 rods and membership at the price of \$1,250.00 - Fantastic way to own top of the line rods, become life members and support FFF. Mail a check to: FFF – 215 E Lewis St.– Livingston, MT 59047 or call with a credit card 406-222-9369 ext 106

Another membership special - Members of Affiliated Clubs can get a one year membership for \$15 if the application is signed by the club president. Call FFF at 406-222-9369 for more information.

Stripers Forever Decries Reopening of Massachusetts



Commercial Striper Fishery

Editors note - This is a press release from our affiliate group - Stripers Forever (www.stripersforever.org)
The recent decision by the Massachusetts Department of Marine Fisheries (DMF) to exploit the wild striped bass by reopening the commercial striper fishery for two days in order to account for “declining catch rates” during the regular commercial season flies in the face of good management of a public resource, according to Brad Burns, president of Stripers Forever.

“When populations of wild game and fish like whitetail deer, brook trout, redfish, or waterfowl are in decline, as striped bass stocks are along the Eastern Seaboard, it is common conservation policy to adjust the recreational harvest accordingly,” says Burns. “Unfortunately, in Massachusetts that sensible approach does not apply to the commercial striped bass fishery which targets the same large breeding stripers that are in such short supply all along the Atlantic Coast.”

Stripers Forever, an internet-based conservation organization with more than 10,000 members, advocates for closing the commercial striped bass fishery along the entire east coast and managing the wild striper as a game fish for the 3 million anglers from Maine to North Carolina who spend upwards of \$2 billion annually angling for stripers.

“Six coastal states already manage the striped bass as a game fish,” says Burns. “Massachusetts had an opportunity to take a leadership position and set an example for the other coastal states who still allow stripers to be fished commercially. Instead, the DMF decided that a bounty on the head of a wild striper, for a very limited commercial benefit, is more important than recognizing the far greater social and economic value of managing the resource for the recreational fishing public.”

"My biggest fear is that when I die my wife will sell my fly fishing equipment for what I told her I paid" author unknown

NEC at a Glance

For those who enjoy numbers, here are some facts about NEC and FFF

- **15** – the number of councils that make up the Federation of Fly Fishers
- **11547** – total membership of FFF
- **918** – total membership of NEC
- **5.28%** - membership growth of NEC during the past year
- **3rd** - NEC rank in size of all councils
- **1540** – members in the Southern Council - FFF's largest
- **146** – number of Life Members in NEC
- **16** – Number of clubs in NEC- 3 charter clubs and 13 affiliated clubs



2008 Consumer Fly Fishing Show Schedule To Help you plan - Here's a partial listing of shows on the East Coast

Show Dates City State Show Location Show Name

Jan 11 -14 Timonium MD Maryland State Fairgrounds 23rd Annual Fishing Expo & Boat Show
Jan 18 - 20 Marlborough MA Royal Plaza Trade Center Fly Fishing Show East - Marlborough
Jan 25 - 27 Somerset NJ Garden State Exhibit Center Fly Fishing Show East - Somerset
Feb 8 - 10 Charlotte NC Charlotte Merchandise Mart Fly Fishing Show East - Charlotte
Feb 8 - 11 Worcester MA DCU Center Eastern Fishing & Outdoor Exposition - Worcester
Feb 8 - 11 Worcester MA DCU Center Eastern Fishing & Outdoor Exposition - Worcester
Mar 1 - 4 Suffern NY Rockland Community College Field House World Fishing & Outdoor Exposition
Mar 16 - 18 Somerset NJ Garden State Exhibit Center The Saltwater Fishing Expo
Mar 16 - 18 Somerset NJ Garden State Exhibit Center The Saltwater Fishing Expo
Jun 8 - 10 Long Island NY Soundview Hotel, Greenport Salty Flyrodders of NY 2007 Conclave
Sep 13 - 15 Arlington VA Trout Unlimited National Convention

For a complete listing of shows nationally, go to the [FFF website](#).

"Angling may be said to be so like the mathematics, that it can never be fully learnt." -Izaak Walton 1653

Invasive Algae Found In Northeastern Rivers-- The Federation of Fly Fishers and Trout Unlimited Join Together and Call for Action in Fighting Invasive Species

The Federation of Fly Fishers and Trout Unlimited challenge every angler to join the fight to help prevent the spread of invasive species in our country's waterways by committing to cleaning their fishing equipment after each use.



Recently, **didymo**, an invasive algae that is sometimes called "rock snot" has been discovered in several NEC area rivers - the Upper Connecticut River in New Hampshire and in Vermont's White River and the Batten Kill River. The algae, which thrives in clean, cold waters, attaches itself to gravel and rocks at the bottom of the river bed. When the algae blooms, it forms massive mats which create a barrier for native organisms and may result in their decline.

Although not a health hazard to humans, the effect of this invasive algae on native insect and fish populations has been documented in rivers and streams in Quebec, New Zealand and South Dakota. Studies suggest that wild trout populations could be severely affected.

"What we need right now is for every angler to understand that they are part of the issue of invasive species, but more importantly, we need them to be involved," challenged Leah Elwell, of the Federation of Fly Fishers.

"From New Zealand mudsnails to exotic mats of algae, invasive species are blanketing our nation's riverbeds at unprecedented rates," said Dr. Jack Williams, Trout Unlimited's senior scientist. "These invasives are causing wholesale damage to local stream ecology and fish populations."

Although it may seem like a hopeless battle in protecting our lakes, streams and rivers, it's not. "To get involved in this fight against invasives means cleaning your gear after a day of fishing as part of the routine. The good thing is, it's actually easy," said Elwell.

Learning about invasive species and committing to inspect, clean and dry, are basic things every angler can do. When leaving a river or lake, anglers should check boots, waders, float tubes, boats and other equipment for any plants or dirt. Because the algae cells are very small, they absorb easily into clothing, wading boots, and sandals as well as tick to hard surfaces like tubes, kayaks, and fishing gear. If these items are not cleaned and dried completely, the algae can live and be spread the next time the item is used. These simple measures are part of the new *Clean Angling Pledge* campaign. (www.cleanangling.org)

"There is certainly something in fishing that tends to produce a gentleness of spirit, a pure serenity of mind." -Washington Irving

The Right Fly

Al Himmel of West Seneca, NY again shares some of his fishing wisdom

When trout rise visibly to floating insects, it can be an easy task to collect a sample and identify the insect and select the appropriate dry fly imitation. Unfortunately such ideal situations are more often the exception rather than the rule. A more likely scenario occurs when there is no hatch, no rises and no visible insects to provide clues as to the right fly for the situation. One of the most useful imitations for such conditions is the calf tail Royal Wulff series which seemingly does not imitate any of the common hatches, but almost always is capable of dredging up a fe stubborn trout no matter how impossible the situation seems. It is important that the fly be tied with a sparse tail consisting of squiggly fibers which vibrate in the water as it drifts through the holding site. Fishless days can be converted into memorable event thanks to the mysterious attractive powers of the calf tail Royal Wulff fly.



Of course one fly cannot solve all of nature's seemingly insoluble mysteries, so it is important to have second line of offense when confronted with the no-hatch situation. Since black bodied insects dominate the watery world, a black Goddard Caddis imitation tied in sizes 18 through 22 is never a wrong choice. Obviously, the small versions of this fly present a visibility profile that requires extreme tactics. One solution is to add a small foam bead to the top of the body of the fly to provide the visibility required to successfully fish a tiny black fly. This to provides relief

from nature's seemingly insoluble conundrums, and allows the fly fishing fanatic to achieve success in the face of certain failure. In summary small can always create activity, and black can be wrong, while peacock herl bodies are always right. - *Al Himmel*

SILENT AUCTION OF A WEEK'S STAY IN PRIVATE HOME NEAR LAKE TAHOE BENEFITS PROJECT HEALING WATERS FLY FISHING

FFF is promoting this auction for Project Healing Waters. Get some fishing buddies together and place a bid to benefit Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing! Bid on a six-night, seven day stay in a private home in Truckee, California, near Lake Tahoe. You will be supporting Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing while you fish or ski in this scenic area.

The home is 2500 square feet and sleeps six to seven people. This is not a rental property; it is made available only to friends and family, and occasionally as a donation. To get there, fly to Reno and then drive 35 minutes west to Truckee on Interstate 80.

It is available at any time of the year, as this is both prime fishing water and great skiing country. There are seven ski resorts nearby. Then there's the fishing. Nearby are the freestone Truckee and Little Truckee Rivers. Popular lakes for fishing are the Prosser, Boca, Stampede, David, Donner, Jackson Meadows, Milton Creek Reservoir and a host of others.

This will be sold as a silent auction item with an ending date of Tuesday, November 13 at noon PST. As this goes to press, there is an opening bid of \$1000. Incremental bids must be at least \$200.

To place a bid, call Carole Katz at (714) 731-6044, or email Katzhogan@cox.net before the deadline. She can send you more color photographs of the area, the home, and the fishing waters.

Three-fourths of the Earth's surface is water, and one-fourth land. It is quite clear that the good Lord intended us to spend triple the amount of time fishing as taking care of the lawn . - Chuck Clark

Designing New Fly Patterns

By Mike Hogue - NEC Director and VP Conservation

At last count I think there were something like 85,000 fly patterns. There are even 2 books dedicated to listing the entire set of patterns that exist ("Perrault's Standard Dictionary of Fishing Flies" and Terry Hellekson's, "Fish Flies: the Encyclopedia of the Fly Tier's Art"). Both books have an exhaustive list of patterns, that is in most respects complete. If you started at the beginning and tied each one, I suspect it would be a very long time before you ever got each and everyone completed. So why even bother to create a new fly pattern? Why not simply just look through these books and create another one someone has already figured out? My answer is why not?

Designing and creating your own patterns is the beginning of true creativity. You become able to express yourself and translate your ideas into something practical. Using your talents and abilities to develop something new is a way to expand your imagination and further develop your skills as a fly fisher and fly tier. By creating original patterns you can design, match and structure something to your own situation and own type of fishing. Often, certain colors, shapes or even designs can be tailored to where and how you fish.



Mike's New Pattern Worked!

Fly tyers themselves will often follow a certain path to development. First is the gathering of skills. Learning basic ideas, techniques and skills becomes the first path. Usually, folks are imitative and copy or reproduce patterns that were created by others. As time follows, tyers begin to experiment with colors, materials and textures to enhance an existing idea. No longer is it fun to just make a humpy, now let's make a chartreuse double humpy with a hot wing just to see if it might actually catch fish. Some tyers take this to the extreme and begin making salmon flies or realistic patterns which very likely will never ever touch water.

There are many styles of flies and we can group them into different categories. In "Guide to Aquatic Trout Foods" by Dave Whitlock, he lists 4 groups of flies: suggestive, impressionistic, realistic and exact. Suggestive flies are simple nondescript patterns, impressionistic are suggestive designs, realistic and exact flies seek to copy in detail all of the factors that a kind of fish forage has. Trying to group your pattern into one of these areas is one method to develop a new design. For example see if you can create an isonychia nymph that is one of each. Fish them and see what the fish like best.

Designing patterns based upon a material or a concept is another method. For example, many of Dave Whitlock's patterns have deer hair, Fishy Fullum often uses synthetic materials that originate in the craft store, Harrison Steeves is addicted to foam and peacock herl and the majority of his patterns use either of those. A few tyers like Syl Nemes are dedicated to just one thing (in his case soft hackle feathers), others are like Charlie Chute and Paul Rossman just make one kind of thing: salmon flies. I have heard rumors of one tyer so addicted to Ray Bergman's Wet Flies listed in " Trout" that he has a copy of every edition of the book. This tyer also has a copy that he keeps by his night stand, just in case he wakes up and thinks of a pattern he would like to study or look at in the middle of the night. So you can create patterns just centered around a kind of material or a style.

Another way to develop ideas is observation. It sounds silly but I suspect most people just don't watch, pay attention or look at things around them. Too busy I guess might be the logic. How do fish respond? What are they feeding on? Why does something appear one way and not another? Asking a simple question and finding an answer might be the ticket to developing a new idea. For many years, I fished in the White River system in Arkansas. When I fished the river, I found woolly buggers worked very well to catch fish. I became obsessed with the things. I tied hundreds of them in all kinds of colors, shapes and sizes. Eventually, I found a few patterns that worked consistently and refined those leading to some really great flies. I now have 3-4 patterns that work very well and can be counted on to catch some fish.

Technology is a wonderful thing. As time goes on, we become exposed to many kinds of things that have unexpected benefits. For example man's goal of creating a waterproof, stain resistant carpet led to the development of new fibers that eventually became a fly tying staple: antron. We can develop new patterns just based on a new material. John Barr's Copper John is largely based upon a newer product: colored wire. Without it, the fly might not be the Copper John, just the John? Bob Clouser's flies are largely centered around the lead dumb bell eye, without that single thing, many of his ideas wouldn't have developed. When a new material becomes available, we can work with it to further create new patterns. We expand upon this single idea and create a whole series of things centered around one simple thing.

One area that some people use is to study conventional tackle for ideas. Many of the fancy deer hair flies are nothing more than copies of plugs. One tyer studied the actions, shapes and used this as the basis for his new ideas. Carl Richards told me he once bought the entire banjo minnow set when it first came out and tried to make that idea into flies.

Designing New Fly Patterns continued:

For months, he tossed, dragged and pitched these to understand how weight made the jigs behave. (For those out of the loop, the banjo minnow was this weighted jig that had an unusual action. When retrieved, it would behave in an erratic way. It was advertised heavily on TV and they sold a ton of those jigs.) Richards said he was never has able to duplicate that kind of action into a fly pattern.


One cool plug that no one has made into flies are the Japanese Lo-zori lures. Quite simply these are some of the neatest lures I've ever seen. When these first came out they flew off the shelves and everyone had to have them. (They also cost about double the money of regular plug.) Lo-zuri lures are made using holographic tape and underwater pictures of fish that are fused to the tape and then applied to a plastic lure body to make a very cool effect. I have looked at these many times trying to figure out how I could do the same thing in fly. The fellow that figures that one out IS GOING TO BE THE NEXT HOT TICKET in fly tying and fly fishing.

Still another hot ticket right now is weight. The Czech nymph craze struck the competitive world fishing teams and a whole series of things is based one very simple replica of a traditional kind of fishing-mini and micro jigs. By adding loads of weight, these folks have discovered that you can catch fish. The process basically means that you put the fly in front of the fish. Seems simple enough, why didn't I develop that?

I like to think that nothing is that original. I often take pieces and parts from several places and reassemble them into something new. Take the most attractive parts from one thing and add it to another. Take the collective wisdom from one pattern and fuse it to another. That is a sure method of success. ©Mike Hogue

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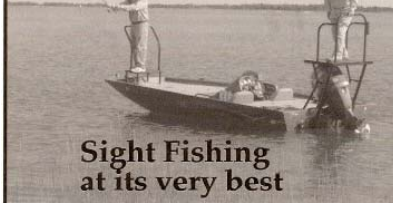
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