



The *Flyline*

The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association

April 2022



Congratulations to Dale Sanders
Dale received the Bill Scattergood Volunteer Leadership Award from Project Healing Waters
(see copy of the certificate on page 6)



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The President's Hatch

My memories of the HFFA go back to the first HFFA Show that I attended. The speakers were the "Traveling Fly Fishermen," Jack Dennis, Mike Lawson, and Gary LaFontaine. They were my first heroes of fly fishing. They had a ton of information, all new to me, but most importantly, they were genuine people. (BTW: I'm now reading Lawson's book, "Spring Creeks," dedicated to Gary LaFontaine, who passed away just before the book was completed)

As I got to know the people of the HFFA, I found that they were "real people" too, and maybe that's the most important thing that the HFFA has to offer; a place where everyone is welcomed and appreciated. Each show is like a reunion, meeting friends that you haven't seen in a year, talking about their fishing adventures, and, after you have known them for a few years, talking about family and mutual friends. The show is also where I get to meet some of the people that I have been in contact with for various reasons as the president of the HFFA. Its always nice to put a face with a voice or a correspondence.

The tying room is always a good place to sit down, watch someone tie a fly, and talk about fish, fishing, and the big one that got away. I enjoy meeting people any time I am walking around the show. I especially enjoy talking to some of the "Old Guard" of the HFFA, especially Dean Elder. He has been very supportive to the HFFA through the years, and especially to me, in my role as president. I look forward to seeing the regular vendors and meeting new vendors. Mike Jacobs and Garylee Thurm have been at every show that I can remember. I think Garylee has quit the shows, but still sells from home. I miss seeing Bill and Dawn Sherer of the "We Tie It Fly Shop" out of Boulder Junction, Wisconsin. Leta and I always tried to have breakfast with Bill and Dawn, and Bill took me down that dark road to single malt scotch. Our show conflicts with his time in Florida, so he doesn't make it any more. Tim Landwehr, of the Tight Lines Fly Shop, has been a real supporter as of late. Mat Wagner and Geri Meyer have been at most of the recent shows, but now that they are world travel-



John Carl Miller

ers, guiding fly fishing trips all over the world, they have missed many of our last shows. Geri has been a great help in getting my granddaughter, Lyly, and many other women set up for a pleasant fly fishing experience. One of the newest vendors to come to our show is Adam Zins and his wife Tanja. His art work is amazing and Tanya is the only person that I have ever met that actually knows anything about Formula 1 racing, having been brought up in Europe (France I think).

The auctions are always fun. I was lucky enough to get a Salmon Fly that was tied by Jeff Moore and framed on a fish carved by Lance Zook. It sits on my desk in a prominent place to this day. I have a Scott Sanchez Bass fly that is in a shadow box. Both of these were obtained at the voice auction. I have never had very good luck with the silent auctions, but I still try.

People who regularly attend auctions do so to save money. Not at the HFFA Auction, they want to buy items that represent the people of the HFFA and sometimes items that just speak to them. But, the overall motivating factor is to make a contribution to the HFFA. We have some of the finest people in the world in our club and they support our club at the auction every year (of course, except the Covid years).

We have booked a venue for the 2023 HFFA show that is huge. We may be able to have activities that we have always wanted to have, such as indoor fly casting. It is an exciting opportunity for the HFFA. Mark your calendars for the second weekend in March of 2023. It will be held in Ankeny, so there should be easy access from anywhere in the state. We have members from all over the state, so the central location may prove to be a real plus.

At the HFFA board meeting held March 5, 2022, the board discussed ways to improve our membership responsibilities. We haven't made any decisions yet, but are looking for ways to allow individuals to become members or renew on-line. We are also looking for some type of recognition when dues are paid, such as a membership card. Ron Stahlberg, Willa Campbell, and Hank Moeller comprise a working Membership Committee. Let one of them know if you have any suggestions or are willing to work with membership in some way.

The weather finally looks promising, so I have made a resolution to get out fishing more often this year. I still have to buy the trout stamp, but I'm probably going to get the lifetime version, so that I don't take the chance of forgetting some year. After all, I do keep getting older (thankfully).

John



**Help Support
Port-a-Potties at N&S Bear Creeks
Go Fund Me**
<https://www.gofundme.com/port-a-potty>

Contacts & Meetings

2021 Board of Directors

John Miller, President

1890 Wood St.
Dubuque, IA 52001
dbqflyfisher@mchsi.com

Ron Stahlberg, Vice President

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flyfish@southslope.net

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Muscatine, IA 52761
dave.jones@kentww.com

Brad Mullin, Treasurer

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willacamp@gmail.com

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Riverdale, IA 52722
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Dubuque, IA 52001
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Martin Acerbo, Director

3114 34th Place
Des Moines, IA 50310
macerbo@iastate.edu

CR/IC, Director

Vacant

Hank Moeller, Work Day Contact

hankjmoe@gmail.com
319-389-1334

Davis Horton, Conservation Chair

dhorton@hardincountyia.gov
515-577-6619

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing

Meets 1st & 3rd Tuesday of Month
7 to 9 pm

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Iowa Chapter

7025 Hickman Road Ste #1

Urbandale, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders

iaflyfisher@q.com

Quad Cities Chapter

Meets 3rd Thursday Every Month
6:00 pm to 8+

QCCA Expo Center

2621 4th Ave. Rock Island

Contact: John Channon

jc.channon@mchsi.com

Dubuque Fly Fishers

Meets 2nd & 4th Monday 7:00 pm
October to May

Swiss Valley Nature Center

13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Dubuque,
IA

Contact: Mike Stallsmith

president@dubuqueflyfishers.org

Central Iowa Fly Fishers

Meets 3rd Saturday 9:00 am Sep-
tember to May

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart
Church

510 East 1st St., Ankeny, IA

Contact: Kirk Rosenow

kcrosenow@gmail.com

Iowa City Chapter

Contact: Ryan Maas

maas_ryan@yahoo.com

Cedar Rapids Fly Fishers

Contact: Lance Zook

l.a.zook@mchsi.com

TROUT UNLIMITED

NORTH BEAR CHAPTER

Meetings held second Thursday
of month

September – May, Starting at
6:30 pm.

The Tavern Pizza & Pasta Grill
1755 50th St.

West Des Moines, IA

Website: tu-northbear.org

Jason Hochstetler - President

president@tu-northbear.org

TROUT UNLIMITED

DRIFTLESS CHAPTER

Meets the first Thursday of the
month October through May @

7:00 pm in the basement of
T-Bocks Sports Bar and Grill,

206 Water St. Decorah

www.iadriftless.org

Iowa Women Fly Fishers

Beginner or Skilled

Meet other Women Fly Fishers

Des Moines or North Liberty

katelodge25@gmail.com

willacamp@gmail.com

Trout Unlimited

Spring Creeks Chapter

Ray Thys – President

Check Their Facebook

www.facebook.com/springcreekstu

Iowa's Coldwater

Conservancy

Tom Murray

jandtmurray@gmail.com

Event Calendar

April 2022

April 9

Fly Fishing Film Tour

Sponsored by North Bear Chapter of TU
Limited Tickets
president@tu-northbear.org

April 16

Driftless TU Work Day

9:00 AM to noon
1280 Quandahl Rd
1 mile East of Highlandville
Steve Perry
641-583-1604

May 2022

May 20 - 22

HFFA Bluegill Outing

Lake Wapello
Drakesville, Iowa
Dan Peterson
319-931-2630

June 2022

June 15 - 17 & 17 - 19

Wisconsin Women's Fly Fishing Clinics

Intermediate and Basic Courses
West Fork Sports Club
Vernon County, WI
wisconsinwomenflyfishing@gmail.com

July 2022

July 31

Deadline for State Fair Tying Contest

State Fair Administration
P.O. Box 57130
Des Moines, Iowa 50317

August 2022

September 2022

September 10

8th Annual Brule River Spey Day

Lake Superior Steelhead Assn
Brule River @McNeil House, Brule, WI
www.steelheaders.org

September 30 - October 2

2022 Casting for Recovery IA

Camp Ewalu's Stone Retreat
Strawberry Point, IA 52076
Applications after January 2022
jknorris57@gmail.com

October 2022

October 1

6th Annual Driftless Flyathon

Yellow River State Forest
Limited Registration April 16th
flyathon@driftlessonthefly.com

October ?

Driftless TU Work Day

9:00 AM to noon
1280 Quandahl Rd
1 mile East of Highlandville
Steve Perry
641-583-1604

November 2022

November 4 - 6

FFI Fly Fishing Virtual Expo

www.flyfishersinternational.org

December 2022

January 2023

February 2023

March 2023

March 10 - 12

HFFA Annual Meeting & Show

FFA Enrichment Center
1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway
Ankeny, IA 50023

April 2023

The Flyline is the official publication of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. It is published in April, June, September, and December. The HFFA is a chapter of the Fly Fishers International. Articles may be submitted as MS Word or as a text file. Typed, printed or clearly handwritten documents are also accepted. Photos can be submitted digitally. Send original jpeg. Deadline is one month before publication.

Send all materials to:

Don Otto, The Flyline Editor
hawkeyeflyfisher@gmail.com
641-230-1468

Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association Membership Application

New Renewal Change of Address Information

Check Membership Category:

- \$25 Member
 \$10 Youth Member (18 and under)
 \$15 Senior Member (65 or older)
 \$45 Family Membership
 \$300 Life Member

Conservation Contribution:

- \$10 (Glass)
 \$20 (Graphite)
 \$30 (Boron)
 \$..... (Cane, over \$50)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

TELEPHONE: _____ EMAIL: _____

Make checks payable to & mail to:

Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association
P.O. Box 8145
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

HFFA Business Report

Minutes of HFFA Board of Directors Meeting March 5, 2022 Manchester Fish Hatchery

Meeting called to order by President John Miller at 9:05 AM

Attendees: John Miller, Ron Stahlberg, Kate Lodge, Martin Acerbo, Ryan Maas, Willa Campbell, John Channon, Davis Horton, Don Otto and Dave Jones

1. Welcome from John Miller

2. **Approval of minutes.** Minutes from August board meeting were accepted by unanimous approval.

3. **Financial Report.** John summarized the current checking account balance at \$57,621 and reported that commitments to the Iowa Driftless TU and for Bassmaster's booth fees were recently paid.

4. **Chapter Status.** John inquired with board members regarding the status of the 501c3 designation, treasury functions, meeting schedule, officer positions and dues requirements for each of the five HFFA chapters.

5. **Bluegill Outing.** John reported that the Bluegill Outing to be held May 20 - 22 at Lake Wapello will be organized by Dan Peterson.

6. **Future Shows.** Ron Stahlberg led a discussion of potential changes regarding future annual shows. The board has decided that no official decisions regarding show changes will take place until after the 2023 Annual Show in Des Moines. The possible changes discussed included; central location, programming changes, show duration and ways to attract new and younger members.

7. **2023 Show.** Martin Acerbo led a discussion regarding planning for the 2023 show to be held in Des Moines.

8. **Membership Report.** Ron Stahlberg and Willa Campbell led a discussion on the challenges with the current method of processing new member applications. After much discussion, the board concluded that a possible website redesign could address some of the shortcomings of the current process.

9. **Website/Social Media.** Ryan Maas presented a proposal to transition the website administration to a third party who would likewise redesign the current website. The board concluded that the project scope should also include features to accommodate online membership, renewals and dues payment. Jansen Products from Elkader and McNary Marketing and Design from Cedar Rapids both submitted bids that were reviewed by the board. After further discussion, Dave Jones made a motion that was unanimously approved to accept the Jansen bid modified to include online membership and dues payment features at a cost not to exceed \$4,500. Don Otto volunteered to lead the website transition project with support from Ryan Maas, Ron Stahlberg and Willa Campbell.

10. **Bloody Run Campaign.** John reported that Steve Veysey has provided a written report highlighting the financial condition, outreach efforts, litigation status and water testing progress for the campaign to "Save Bloody Run".

11. **Elections.** A brief discussion was held concerning current and future officer roles and board positions. John Channon shared plans to resign his board position representing the Quad City Chapter and that a search has begun for his replacement.

12. Meeting Adjourned

Submitted by Dave Jones, March 5, 2022

Dave

(note Bluegill Outing date changed by the editor)

Items of Interest

Dale Sanders Awarded Bill Scattergood Volunteer Leadership Award

(Copy of certificate Dale received)

Dale Sanders, Project Healing Waters Fly Fishers, Program Lead for the Midwest - Des Moines Program, was recognized for his service by receiving the Bill Scattergood Volunteer Leadership Award.

The Bill Scattergood Volunteer Leadership Award is established as an annual award presented to a volunteer from the Midwest Region. This award acknowledges an individual's volunteer leadership and commitment to our participants as well as best exemplifying Bill's leadership traits and principles. The following was excerpted from Dale's recognition letter:

"During the pandemic, Dale was instrumental in getting programs up to speed with technology. He answered every question with patience, understanding and kindness. He was a valuable and reliable resource during every phase of the re-engagement plan because he went over and above to fulfill and maintain the organization's virtual, healthy community. While the rest of us were struggling to reinvent ourselves, Dale calmly reached out and offered to share fly patterns or woodworking plans to enhance the PHWFF Core Program. Dale has a heart of gold and his willingness to set others up for success exemplifies exceptional leadership, which is what the Scattergood Award is all about."

"On behalf of Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing and the Midwest Region, I would like to congratulate you as the recipient of the 2021 Bill Scattergood Volunteer Leadership Award! I know you never met Bill, but I can tell you that he, and now his family, have made a lasting impression on Project Healing Waters just as you have and will."

Jeff Reinke

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing
Field Advisory Council Chair-Trustee
Midwest Regional Coordinator
Program Lead - North Chicago

For more information on Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, please visit our website: www.projecthealingwaters.org

Bluegill Outing 2022 – May 20-22, Lake Wapello, IA

We want to make sure everyone is safe so the food thing will be a little different. If you bring food please provide a serving utensil. Dan Peterson is going to ask for 2-3 people that have been vaccinated to be servers; he will provide gloves and masks for servers.

You will provide your own drink, Steve and Dan will still cook all your fish you catch and clean

Let's have a good time and be safe.

Spring Creek Trout Unlimited Raffle For the Preservation of Bloody Run

A very nice 8 foot, 3 piece with two tips bamboo rod. This rod throws a 4 or 5 weight line. Includes a rod sock and tube.. (Original retail \$700) This quality rod will be paired with a Hardy Ultra lite CADD 4/5/6 reel and premium WF5F fly line. (Original retail \$869) This rod is handcrafted by Dave Kemp and is built to Granger Favorite specifications. (Total package \$1569)

Grand Prize will be drawn on April 30, 2022

Raffle tickets are \$2.00 per ticket or 12 tickets for \$20.00. Make checks payable to Spring Creek TU and mail ASAP to Mike Jacobs 117 E. First Street, Monticello, Iowa 52310. Mike's cell phone is 319-465-4704. Tickets must be received on or before April 30, 2022 to be entered in the drawing.



HFFA's 2022 Dues are due Now

by John Carl Miller, President of HFFA

The HFFA 2022 show has been postponed until March 10, 2023 through March 12, 2023. Most of our members renew their membership at that time, whether while registering for the show or just sending in their dues on the show registration form.

The show is one of HFFA's fundraising events, and without it, it is especially important that you renew your membership so that HFFA can continue with the conservation activities in Iowa. Opportunities to purchase stream easements or do in-stream restoration work can come up at any time, and HFFA needs to be ready to act at that time. Listed below is a summary of HFFA's recent conservation work. **Please renew your 2022 membership.**

Recent HFFA Conservation Actions

2017:	Start-up check to Iowa's Coldwater Conservancy	\$ 5,000.00
	o Part went to the Casey Springs purchase in HFFA's name	
2018	Iowa Driftless TU: Waterloo Creek restoration	\$ 1,000.00
	o Iowa Driftless TU: N-S Bear porta-potty chemicals	\$ 200.00
	o IDNR/City of Ames: low head dam removal	\$ 1,000.00
	o IDNR: Project Aware	\$ 500.00
	o NE IA RC&D: Allamakee Co. Trout Maps	\$ 500.00
2019	Donation to ICC (to match 3 TU chapters) Up to	\$ 5,000.00
	o Iowa Driftless TU: N-S Bear porta-potty chemicals	\$ 385.00
	o Printing of Clayton County Trout Maps	\$ 2,000.00
	o "Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation acquiring land along North Bear Creek ."	\$ 500.00
2020	Land acquisition on Bloody Run that provided 0.6 mile of stream access	\$ 750.00
	o Land acquisition on Ten Mile Creek providing 1000 feet of stream access	\$ 5,000.00
	o Yellow River Easement: Dianne Rissman Water Quality and Angler Access Easement	\$ 2,000.00
	o Maquoketa River Fencing/Grazing Project	\$ 1,250.00
2021	Yellow River Easement: Dianne Rissman Water Quality and Angler Access Easement for 0.69 miles of the Yellow River (Partnered with 3 TU chapters)	\$35,935.00
	o North/South Bear Porta-Potty support.	\$ 440.00
	o The HFFA board unanimously approved contingency funding not to exceed \$1,000 to cover the cost of open records request and possible experts in the review of the Nutrient Management Plan for a potential feedlot development near Bloody Run Creek .	\$ 1,000.00
	o HFFA contributed money for in-stream work on the restoration of part of Little Paint Creek that lies within the Yellow River State Forest Campground	\$2,150.00
	o HFFA contributed money to the " Save Bloody Run " campaign for water testing equipment and legal fees	\$4,000.00
2022	HFFA board voted to be a partner in a stream restoration project on North Bear	

Editor's Note: Lisa Davis modified the renewal form, find enclosed on the next page

HFFA's 2022 Dues are due Now

by John Carl Miller, President of HFFA

**Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association
Membership Application**

- New** **Renewal**
 Change of Address Information

Check membership category:

- \$25 Member
 \$10 Youth Member (18 and under)
 \$15 Senior Member (65 or older)
 \$45 Family Membership
 \$300 Life Member

Conservation Contribution:

- \$10 (Glass)
 \$20 (Graphite)
 \$30 (Boron)
 \$_____ (Cane, over \$50)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

ZIP: _____

Telephone: _____

E-mail: _____

Email is required to receive HFFA Newsletter

Make checks payable to Hawkeye Fly
Fishing Association and mail to:
Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association
P.O. Box 8145
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408

PREMIER TROUT STREAM NEEDS YOUR HELP!

SAVE BLOODY RUN

- OUTSTANDING IOWA WATER IN THE DRIFTLESS AREA
- HOME TO REPRODUCING BROWN TROUT
- STOCKED WITH RAINBOW TROUT



- TOURIST AND ANGLER DESTINATION
- IN GLOBALLY SIGNIFICANT BIRD AREA
- DIVERSE AND SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT



MEGA-FEEDLOT PLANNED FOR BLOODY RUN!

- 39 MILLION GALLON OPEN PIT LAGOON
- 11,600 HEAD OF CATTLE
- MANURE APPLIED TO CLAYTON AND ALLAMAKEE CO CROP FIELDS
- LOCATED IN SINKHOLE AND KARST TOPOGRAPHY—EXTREME GROUNDWATER THREAT



YOU CAN JOIN THE BATTLE FOR BLOODY RUN

VISIT and LEARN

www.savebloodyrun.org/

- Why Bloody Run is special
- The politics behind Supreme Beef LLC
- Iowa DNR failure to protect public land
- DNR permitting ignores the law

DONATE

- Via credit or debit card or PayPal at www.savebloodyrun.org/donate/
- Via check "Save Bloody Run"
Clayton Co. CAN, PO Box 252 Elkader, IA 52043



2022 Iowa State Fair Fly Tying Competition

By Larry Murphy

The Iowa State Fair will be held August 11 through August 21, 2022. We will be holding the Fly-Tying competition once again this year. I am sure everyone has practiced tying their favorite flies and are willing to enter them in the state contest.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will again be sponsoring the Fly-Tying competition at this year's Iowa State Fair. The competition is supported by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa State Fair. The goal is to provide an opportunity for the public to view the art of fly tying and to promote fly fishing in Iowa.

The fly-tying display will be in the DNR Building on the Fairgrounds during the fair. The judging is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, August 10^h at 1:00 p.m. in the DNR Building.

Fly entries need to be received at the Fair Administration post box by July 31, 2022.

There are three divisions:

- Adult division is for anyone **17 years of age and older.**
- Junior division is for anyone **16 years and younger.**
- Expert division for tiers who have **sold flies.**

There are four categories for each division:

- Dry Fly
- Wet Fly/Soft Hackle/Nymph
- Streamers
- Open Class

You may enter in each of the categories, but **only one fly for each category.** **No flies smaller than size #18. No flies larger than size #2.** **To enter, please provide the fly tier's name, the division to be entered, the category to be entered and the name of the fly.**

You must be an Iowa resident to enter or a member of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association. If you have **ever tied flies commercially or sold the flies that you have tied, you must enter the Expert Division.** If you won a blue ribbon for one of the categories last year, you are not permitted to enter the same category this year.

The Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association will provide judges for the competition. Ribbons will be given for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners. Each fly will be judged in its category. In our contest, a panel of judges will choose the places in each category and division. The visitors to the state fair will see the flies displayed in the DNR Building

Flies must be sent to the Iowa State Fair Administration Office, P.O. Box 57130, Des Moines, IA 50317 and **received by July 31, 2022.** Each fly entered must have the **Fly Tier's name, address, telephone number, name of the fly, division to be entered and the category.** **Junior division entries must state the age of the fly tier.**

Keith Wunder, Paul Domoto, and Dave Rosset judging flies see below



Perch on the Fly in Northwest Iowa

by Davis Horton, IACCB Naturalist

Pike fishing slowed down in early November thanks to loads of cold snaps, late season wind, and even some rain. While things settled out on the toothy fish front, I needed to find another species to preoccupy my time. I'd often pondered fishing some of the natural lakes in northwest Iowa where yellow perch were abundant. Perch had peaked my curiosity from time to time, but were just far enough out of the way that I'd never tried to target them on the fly. With ice soon to be on the lakes, I decided to invest a day into targeting yellow perch for the first time on November 15, 2021.

It was a balmy, 35 degree day with a mild east wind and overcast conditions, that perch often favored. The time was right to make the venture from my home to the lakes of northwest Iowa. I geared up with a fast action 4wt. rod, a floating line, light tippet, and a small box of clouser minnows. A dozen of my best streamers were tied on beautiful, high carbon steel, black finish bonefish hooks (size 8). Micro lead eyes added a slow sink rate, allowing for more time in the strike zone for cold water conditions. As is always the case in the Great Plains, I stumbled into some lovely 30 mile per hour gusts as soon as I arrived at my first destination. Trouncing through the brisk water, knee deep mud, and white caps, I contemplated my choice to go fishing that day. Probably not the wisest of decisions, but I was there for the long haul. An hour passed and there were no perch to be found. The water looked ideal. Incredibly clear and cold, there was plenty of life in the shallows in the form of baitfish and bugs. Frustrated at the lack of action, I waded back to the shoreline and hoofed it to the truck.

A long drive around the lake revealed some interesting information. First, most of the aquatic vegetation had died off for the season except for some remnant lily pad fields near shore that were a sad, green color. The pads were obviously in the process of dying, but not entirely dead yet. Second, there were no other anglers on the lake this particular day. Not a great sign, but the conditions were also brutal for most weekend warriors. Lastly, the wind had stirred up the western portion of the lake thanks to a straight east wind. This made a very small portion of the lake slightly stained, whereas the rest of the lake was tap water clear. Often times, the really tough days require some adjusting. In spot number one, the focus was on clear water, dead vegetation, and places that were out of the wind for my comfort. It became very clear that, in order to get bites, I had to do a total 180. The next stop was the windiest part of the lake, with the cloudiest water, and some of the remaining live vegetation. On the first cast, a beautiful perch came to hand with an olive and white clouser minnow. A few casts later, his twin hit the net.

Realizing I was on to a bite, the rest of the day was fairly easy. Cast into the dying lily pads, let the fly hit the bottom, and make a couple of short, sharp strips to entice the perch to bite. If the water was clear, the perch weren't there. So reading the water and making sure it had the proper stain was also important.

At the conclusion of the day I'd netted over 40 yellow perch. It was a great introduction to fly fishing for the species and I can certainly say I was spoiled with how fantastic the bite was. For anyone looking to target these fish with a fly rod, give it a try. While they may not be the best fighters, yellow perch are fun to target, willingly take streamers, can be caught year round, and provide some excellent table fare. I'd ice fished this particular lake in the past, so I knew what I was getting into for the most part. There were lots of small fish with every 5th or 6th fish being "eating quality." The small ones don't fight much, but the big ones can have some attitude. Any rod from a 1 weight up to a 4 weight would work beautifully for yellow perch in Iowa. Fish them similarly to how you'd fish bluegills, but be a little more aggressive with your streamer tactics.

To receive information on lakes that have sustainable populations of perch, check out the natural lakes of northwest Iowa using the Iowa Department of Natural Resources lake summaries and maps features. Most of the lakes north of highway 20 and west of I-35 will have yellow perch. New features on the lake summary pages allow you to look at fish sampling survey data (i.e. how many perch are being collected in electro fishing surveys, the size of those individuals, and their overall abundance). It's a great resource and may lead you into a fun day on the water!

Davis





Late Emerger

by Brian Hill

"I think it would be cool to try fly fishing." I didn't say it to anyone in particular, but not much gets past my daughter. I was gazing at an Instagram picture of a guy with a huge beard in a flat billed hat. Kneeling in a pristine mountain stream, his head was bowed as if in prayer so I could only see the sides of his polarized sunglasses. The brightly colored logo of his cap and the huge but-tery brown trout were front and center. It takes two hands to hold up this brute, and a beautiful fly rod with a fluorescent pink reel is perfectly balanced over his flannel covered shoulder.

A few weeks later it was my 43rd birthday. My wife and kids presented me with a large package that turned out to be a Martin Complete Fly Fishing Kit. Tearing open the gift unleashed an obsession the likes of which I have never experienced. As the last colorful scrap of paper hit the living room floor my wife realized she had unleashed yet another hobby.

I started binging on YouTube and found not only were there uncountable videos on fly fishing related topics, but for a complete "noob" there were uncountable things to learn. Roll casts, reading the water, mending, euro-nymphing and fly tying. Fly tying. Here was a hobby I knew absolutely nothing about until I tore open that birthday present. It was also a hobby I could start right now in the middle of winter. I decided if I was going to fly fish, I was only going to fly fish with flies that I had tied. Could I take a hook and random craft store items and fool a fish into eating? The next day I picked up a Wapsi starter kit, but within two weeks my Renzetti Traveler showed up on the front step. Every few days I would make a run to the local sporting goods store to buy some more dry fly hooks or marabou. At least once a week a package would arrive on the front step with a new bobbin or a hair stacker.

My first flies were god-awful monstrosities, each one with terrible proportions and crowded heads. Patient is not a word anyone in my life would use to describe me, but I stayed with it. The downstairs bar area became my tying bench. I nearly skipped down to the basement every night after dinner to fire up YouTube and pause, start and rewind video after video of wooly buggers and cad-dis flies being brought to life magically by surgeon-like hands. I used four letter words when attempting to master the whip finish. But in the end, after every uncoordinated flurry of machinations, a "finished" fly was hanging in the vise. MY fly.

One early spring morning I pushed play on a Tom Rosenbauer podcast and pointed the truck to the northeast. The entire drive was like waiting for Christmas morning. Arriving at the stream I pulled on my waders with the speed of a firefighter responding to a 4-alarm fire, but without the grace. My best-ever blue wing olive was already tied to the end of the tapered leader. Throwing my new sling pack over my shoulder, I headed down the trail at a walking pace that would make any soccer mom proud. Scrolling through pictures on my smart phone of spring creeks had not prepared me for the full sensory experience of standing next to one. The emerald water flowed from my right to left, racing around rocks and past logs. The bubbling and splashing symphony perfectly complimented the wind through the trees perched high atop the rock wall towering over my head. Watercress gently swayed along with the rhythm. There was a clean feeling breeze on my cheek and a sweet smell I couldn't quite put my finger on. I can't be sure of how long I stood there before it occurred to me that I hadn't yet made a single cast.

Making use of my new sunglasses I scanned upstream looking for any sign of a fish. It blew my mind that I could see the bottom of the stream. That was rarely the case in the muddy rivers of central Iowa I was used to. Even with the clear water, I couldn't make out anything that resembled trout. Having not driven 3 hours to delay any longer, I began stripping off some line from the reel. I lifted the rod and gradually accelerated my arm back to an abrupt stop. After a pause I started to bring it back forward on the same plane. All at once the graceful motion came to a jarring stop. Annoyed, I looked over my shoulder to see my prized creation of dubbing and Cul De Canard hanging miserably in a bush. I looked around instinctively to see if anyone was around to witness the debacle, but thankfully I was the only person on the stream.

After carefully positioning myself and double checking the area behind me, I roughly placed the fly on the surface of the water. My eyes carefully followed as it bobbed and weaved to the end of my first ever drift. As the fly began to drag and I started to lift the line off the water for another go, a fish seemed to magically appear at the surface and make a loud pop as it attempted to inhale my imitation bug. I was in shock. I stood there motionless, the rod hanging at my side. I had no confidence in my skills as either a fisherman or a fly tyer, but here I was standing in the Driftless and on my first ever cast a trout had been fooled!

With my head held high I continued to cast repeatedly into the same general area, but there was no repeat performance. I spent the remainder of the day, hours that truly seemed like minutes clumsily wading up and down the stream. My first blue wing olive and many others were stolen by trees, bushes and submerged logs. My three pack of tapered leaders were relegated to short butt sections. As I sat on the tailgate and yanked off my boots that evening, it occurred to me that it was going to be awkward when the wife asked me how many fish I had caught. Surely after being gone for 14 hours, 6 of which were spent driving, it had been an epic day of angling. And it was. No one likes to be skunked, but there is something about fly fishing that makes a day even with no fish brought to hand just fine.

Some people would have been discouraged. Others would have been down-right mad. In a complete departure from my norm, I was more hooked than ever. I didn't want this to be easy. I found that fly fishing was maybe the only thing I did where I was totally and completely 100% present. I had come to the game late, but it's better late than never.

Brian

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HFFA DVD Library

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