



# *The Flyline*

*The Newsletter of the Hawkeye Fly Fishing Association*

*September 2022*



Fish of a Lifetime, 20-1/4" River Smallmouth  
Bryant Otto, Conway, AR one of HFFA's newest Life members  
With Nate Sipple of Tightlines Fly Fishing Company, DePere, WI  
Photo by Don Otto



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# The President's Hatch

The 2023 show is looking like it could be a really fine show. The facility, being the FFA building on the DMAC campus, is really large and offers many options that we have never had in the past. I'm most excited about having a casting area within the facility. I'm also excited about the possibility of seeing many of the HFFA members that I have been missing for the past "Covid" three years. Nothing better than spending time with a group of "like minded" conservationists.

My philosophy has always been that everyone should give something back to organizations or causes that they believe in. For some, that means donating money to organizations. For others, that means donating time and effort toward the causes that they believe in. And, for another group, that means donating time and money.

That said, we are always looking for new people in the HFFA organization. Right now, we have a volunteer for the position of "Board Member At-Large," but still need someone to be the Work Day Coordinator. I've seen many positive comments lately about how impressed they are with HFFA. That gives me new enthusiasm to



John Carl Miller

keep things moving in the direction that they are going.

The board voted to contribute another \$2,000.00 toward the Casey Springs project making our total contribution \$6,000.00 towards that project. There are a number of projects on the wish list, including more work on North Bear. I'm looking forward to having the HFFA be a working partner in this and several other projects.

Charlotte, our quasi-mascot, has been in hiding throughout most of the "Covid" years. She did go on a road trip to

the Ada Hayden Heritage Park where we received donations for the upcoming HFFA show. She wasn't too happy to share the ride with our three dogs (now two). She has been wanting to get out with me on my new kayak, but that opportunity hasn't presented itself yet. She is now sitting on the stern of the kayak in a pleading stance. Have to feel for her.

From all reports; its "Hoppportunity Time," so get out there and try some terrestrials.

See you all at the show.

*John*



Jim Black & Charlotte  
Show Donations



**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**

1412 Pine Ridge Lane NE  
Swisher, IA 52338  
flyfish@southslope.net

### **Dave Jones, Secretary**

2672 Becky Thatcher Rd.  
Muscatine, IA 52761  
dave.jones@kentww.com

### **Brad Mullin, Treasurer**

P.O. Box 8145  
Cedar Rapids, IA 52408  
mullinb1427@yahoo.com

### **Kate Lodge, Past President**

209 S. Vail  
Geneseo, IL 61254  
katelodge25@gmail.com

### **Willa Campbell, Director**

7701 Goodman Dr.  
Urbandale, IA 53022  
willacamp@gmail.com

### **John Channon, Director**

582 Belmont Rd.  
Riverdale, IA 52722  
jc.channon@mchsi.com

### **Mike Stallsmith, Director**

6520 Kingsley Ct.  
Dubuque, IA 52001  
decoydux@gmail.com

### **Martin Acerbo, Director**

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

### **CR/IC, Director**

Vacant

### **Davis Horton, Conservation Chair**

dhorton@hardincountyia.gov  
515-577-6619

### **Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing**

Meets 1st & 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of Month  
7 to 9 pm

Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Iowa Chapter

7025 Hickman Road Ste #1  
Urbandale, IA

Contact: Dale Sanders  
iaflyfisher@outlook.com

### **Quad Cities Chapter**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Monday 7:00 pm  
September to May

Swiss Valley Nature Center  
13606 Swiss Valley Rd., Dubuque,  
IA

Contact: Gary Woerdehoff  
garyruth15@gmail.com  
facebook.com/dubuqueflyfishers

### **Central Iowa Fly Fishers**

Meets 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday 9:00 am  
September to May

Our Lady's Immaculate Heart  
Church

510 East 1<sup>st</sup> St., Ankeny, IA

Contact: Kirk Rosenow  
kcrosenow@gmail.com

### **Iowa City Contact**

Contact: Ryan Maas  
maas\_ryan@yahoo.com

### **Cedar Rapids Contact**

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](http://tu-northbear.org)

David Klemme - 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](http://www.iadriftless.org)

### **Iowa Women Fly Fishers**

Beginner or Skilled

Meet other Women Fly Fishers

Des Moines or North Liberty

[katelodge25@gmail.com](mailto:katelodge25@gmail.com)  
[willacamp@gmail.com](mailto:willacamp@gmail.com)

### **Trout Unlimited**

#### **Spring Creeks Chapter**

Ray Thys – President

Check Their Facebook

[www.facebook.com/springcreekstu](http://www.facebook.com/springcreekstu)

### **Iowa's Coldwater**

#### **Conservancy**

Tom Murray

[jandtmurray@gmail.com](mailto:jandtmurray@gmail.com)

# Event Calendar

## September 2022

September 10

### **Dubuque Heritage Classic Youth Day**

Dubuque Pheasants Forever  
Isaac Walton League, Peosta, IA  
Dubuque Fly Fishers to Demonstrate skills  
Free  
Must preregister!  
Bob Moldenhauer  
prepmoldy@yahoo.com

September 10

### **8th Annual Brule River Spey Day**

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

September 23 - 25

### **HFFA Trout Outing**

Upper Iowa Resort & Rental Campground  
578 Lonnings Dr.  
Dorchester, Iowa 52140  
Dan Peterson  
dpeterson578@gmail.com

September 29 - October 1

### **FFI Southern Council Conclave**

Baxter County Fairgrounds  
Mountain Home, AR  
Ffisoc.org/conclave

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 1

### **Driftless TU Fundraiser**

Winneshiek County Fair Grounds  
900 East Main  
Decorah, Iowa  
12 - 4PM

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

January ?

### **Southern Wisconsin TU Icebreaker**

American Family Insurance  
Madison, WI  
www.swtu.org

## February 2023

February ?

### **Badger Fly Fishers Fly Fishing Spring Opener**

American Family Insurance  
Madison, WI  
www.badgerflyfishers.com

February ?

### **Wisconsin TU Council Banquet**

Oshkosh, WI  
Scott Allen  
jscottallen12@gmail.com

## March 2023

March 10 - 12

### **HFFA Annual Meeting & Show**

FFA Enrichment Center  
1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway  
Ankeny, IA 50023  
Kirk Rosenow  
kirkrosenow@gmail.com  
Willa Campbell  
willacamp@gmail.com

March 17 - 19

### **Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo**

Hamline University  
St. Paul, MN  
info@greatwatersflyexpo.com

March 23 - 25

### **Sowbug Roundup 2023**

Baxter County Fairgrounds  
Mountain Home, AR  
www.sowbugroundup.org

## April 2023

April ?

### **Driftless TU Work Day**

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

## May 2023

May 10 - 12

### **HFFA Bluegill Outing**

Lake Wapello  
Drakesville, IA  
Dan Peterson  
dpeterson578@gmail.com

## June 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 August 6, 2022 Swiss Valley Nature Center**

Meeting called to order by President John Miller at 10:15 AM

Attendees: John Miller, Ron Stahlberg, Martin Acerbo, Kate Lodge, Willa Campbell, Mike Stallsmith, Mike Schrader, Don Otto and Dave Jones

1. Welcome from John Miller
2. **Approval of minutes:** Minutes from March board meeting accepted by unanimous approval.
3. **Financial Report:** Brad Mullin reported that the current checking account balance is \$52,130.34.
4. **Website Update from Don Otto:**
  - a. Website soft launch has been completed and initial errors have been corrected.
  - b. Website membership processing for new or existing members is now active. Membership payments will be processed thru PayPal or credit card. Members will receive immediate application confirmation. Brad & Don will receive update on each renewal or new membership application and payment.
  - c. \$20 annual membership or \$300 lifetime membership.
  - d. Don Otto is waiting for show information to post to the website.
  - e. Don Otto will post future event content on the website.
  - f. Annual website support cost has been authorized at \$600.
  - g. Future membership applications will be processed on website only after December newsletter.
  - h. Ron Stahlberg agreed to send personal letters via email to those individuals with lapsed membership asking them to consider renewing their club membership
5. **2023 Show Update from Willa Campbell, Martin Acerbo, & Mike Schrader:**
  - a. 3 day show format with banquet
  - b. Friday night - family focus
  - c. Saturday - regular show format
  - d. Still working on speakers; one warm water & one coldwater
6. **Membership Committee Report:** Ron Stahlberg proposed that we consider an incentive to attract new members.
7. **Elections:** John Miller led a discussion regarding elections of officers
  - a. Kate Lodge is willing to serve as next QC director replacing John Channon.
  - b. Still looking for At Large director.
  - c. Mike Stallsmith willing to continue serve as Dubuque director.
8. **Awards:**
  - a. John Miller led a discussion regarding award recipients
9. **Possible Conservation Projects:**
  - a. Iowa Driftless TU chapter is seeking additional contributions to support Casey Springs Creek project. HFFA has already contributed \$4,000 to this project, but will consider additional \$2,000 because matching funds are needed. Motion made and unanimously approved to contribute additional \$2,000 toward this project.
10. **Meeting Adjourned**
11. Submitted by Dave Jones, August 6, 2022

*Dave*



# *HFFA Member Activities*

**Save the Date**  
**HFFA Annual Meeting and Show**  
**March 10, 11, & 12th, 2023**  
**FFA Enrichment Center**  
**1055 SW Prairie Trail Parkway**  
**Ankeny, IA 50023**  
**Kirk Rosenow**  
**kirkrosenow@gmail.com**  
**Willa Campbell**  
**willacamp@gmail.com**

## **2022 Fall Trout Outing** **September 23,24, & 25th**

We are going to have a fall Trout Outing this year. A good time to fish some favorite driftless water before winter arrives. We have done this in the past and have had some great outings. Let's keep it going. It seems like attendance at these outings are getting pretty lean. Let's get back together and enjoy some great camaraderie with fellow fly fishers and tell of the great fishing trips of the summer.

We will camp at the Upper Iowa Resort & Rental at Dorchester on the Upper Iowa River. Meals will be on your own so you can spend as much time fishing as you want. There will be an evening campfire at site 10 and all are welcome. Come spend the weekend, a day or just an evening around a campfire.

If you have any questions you can contact me.

**Dan Peterson**  
**Dpeterson578@gmail.com**

**Upper Iowa Resort & Rental**  
578 Lonnings Dr  
Upperiowaresort.com  
563-568-3263

*Dan*

## **Iowa State Fair HFFA Fly Fishing Demonstration** **DNR Courtyard August 11, 2022**

HFFA sponsored a fly fishing demonstration and information presentation at the Iowa State Fair on August 11, 2022. Kirk Rosenow acted as master of ceremonies. Marty McVey used his skill as a FFI Certified Casting Instructor to discuss fly rods, fly lines, and associated equipment. Ryan Koch used his knowledge as a fly fishing guide in Des Moines to discuss warm water fish and fly fishing opportunities. Mike Schrader added his knowledge of fly tying. I tried the best I could to cover cold water fishing in NE Iowa and the DNR pond stocking in the winter.

Photos below left to right: Mike Schrader, Kirk Rosenow, Marty McVey & Ryan Koch

*Don*



## 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/](http://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/](http://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 Results

*By Larry Murphy*

## Junior Division

### Open Category

1st Place	Cruz Coorough	Red/White Popper	North Liberty
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### Streamer Category

1st Place	Cruz Coorough	Bunny Leech	North Liberty
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## Adult Division

### Dry Fly Category

1st Place	Kevin McVey	Moose Mane Mayfly	Ankeny
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2nd Place	David Weesner	Griffith Gnat	Ames
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3rd Place	Richard Zieger	Paraloo Adams Variant	Lamoni
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### Wet Fly/Nymph Category

1st Place	Mark McConnell	Christmas Rib Caddis	Pella
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2nd Place	David Weesner	Bead Head Prince	Ames
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3rd Place	Mindi Skjoldal	Tuscadero Worm	Des Moines
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### Open Category

1st Place	David Weesner	Red Robin	Ames
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2nd Place	Adam Weber	Gurgler	Des Moines
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3rd Place	Kevin McVey	Bronze Goddess	Ankeny
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### Streamer Category

1st Place	Kevin McVey	Fighting Crowdad	Ankeny
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2nd Place	Mark McConnell	Marabou Meat Whistle	Pella
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3rd Place	Adam Weber	Sculpin	Des Moines
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## Expert Division

### Dry Fly Category

1st Place	CJ Klenske	Purple Parachute	Dubuque
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2nd Place	Larry Niday	Deer Hair Caddis/CDC	Knoxville
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### Wet Fly/Nymph Category

1st Place	CJ Klenske	Big Easy	Dubuque
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2nd Place	Mike Jacobs	Pink Princess	Monticello
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### Open Category

1st Place	Larry Niday	Hellgrammite	Knoxville
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2nd Place	CJ Klenske	Fat Angie	Dubuque
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### Streamer Category

1st Place	Larry Niday	Black Cat	Knoxville
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2nd Place	CJ Klenske	Kreelex Minnow	Dubuque
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Judges Keith Wunder, Paul Domoto, &  
Dave Rosset on left

Dave Weesner's Red Robin on right





# 2022 HFFA Bluegill Outing

*by Dan Peterson*

The Bluegill outing was held at lake Wapello this year. 11 people showed up and had a great time. The weather threatened to keep us from getting on the water but other than a few sprinkles before lunch it did not hamper the outing at all. By the time we started cooking the rain went away and we all enjoyed a nice meal together. The fishing was excellent. You could not keep the fish off your line. Lots of bluegill and crappie made the meal. Cheryl made her famous onion paddies, Lance and Lori brought a fruit salad, and Steve brought a Chinese noodle salad and caught a lot of the fish. I made Bourbon baked beans, a rhubarb crisp and a blueberry cobbler. It was enough to fill us all up. My 7 month old granddaughter Alice came and loved the bluegill. She even got dressed up to go fishing for a little bluegill with the help of Steve. I hope she will take up the sport of fly fishing in a few years. All in all we had a great time. I wish more people would show up for this, at one time we had 60 people at the outing, lets see what we can do to get people back into coming. Some of the new members need to experience this fun.

We are going to attempt to have a Trout Outing this fall Sept 23-25.. It will probably be held at the Upper Iowa Resort and Canoe Rental campground at Dorchester. That used to be well attended also, lets see if we can get some people to come this year. There is no special meal everyone just cooks their own food. But we do have the "Big Liars" contest around the evening campfire. Lets get back to spending some time with friends and enjoying the great fishing in NE Iowa. It's there for us to enjoy. See you then. Watch for updates on the Trout Outing later in the summer.

*Dan*



Pictured above is Alex Peterson, Steve Anderson, John Channon and Lori Zook

Below left to right, Cheryl Channon, Alex and Alice, and a end to a wonderful day



# *Fish Tales*

A Fish Story  
From the Journal of Henry David Thoreau Jan 4, 1856  
Submitted by Frank Potter

A clear, cold day. To Walden to examine the ice.

Some fishermen had, apparently by accident, left two of their lines there, which were frozen in. They had apparently, taken no fish for, they had no well to put them in. I cut out the lines, the ice being about an inch thick around them, and pulled up a fine yellow pickerel which would weigh two pounds or more. At first I thought there was none for he was tired of struggling, but soon I felt him. The hook had caught the outside of the jaws, and the minnow hung entire by his side. It was very cold, and he struggled for a short time not being able to bend and quirk his tail; in a few minutes became quite stiff as he lay on the snowy ice. The water in his eyes was frozen, so that he looked like he had been dead a week.

About fifteen minutes after, thinking of what I heard about fishes coming to life again after being frozen, on being put in the water, I thought I would try it. This one was to appearance as he had been dead for a week. I stood him up on his tail without bending it. I put him into the water without removing the hook. The ice melted off, and its eyes looked bright again and after a minute or two I was surprised by a sudden convulsive quirk of the fish, and a minute or two later by another, and I saw that indeed it did revive, and drew it out again. Yet I do not believe that if it had been frozen solid through and through and thought it would be revived, but only when it is superficially frozen.

*Frank*

A Memory from Dean Elder

Craig needed a trip. He needed to get away.

Peter Mink had invited us to fish Robinson Creek which is near his shack in southern Wisconsin. The shack is near Black River Falls and Camp McCoy. We left Waterloo in somewhat of a hurry that day, leaving Bob in charge of Craig's place. It's August.

Pete's place is made of concrete block, has a flat roof and only a very few small windows. So the temp is in the 90s and the humidity is very high. We went to a local bar for our dinner consisting of beer, and a sandwich. Craig's favorite, hard fried walleye, a brick. You don't sleep well in an unventilated concrete building after an evening meal like that. A restless night. No sleep.

The morning was beautiful, clear blue sky with a few fluffy clouds. Robinson Creek was clear and covered by a huge caddis hatch. The sky also was full of dragon flies chasing caddis.

I was busy watching a "Jaws" like wake in the water coming for my fly. On second look my fly was gone. Not in a trout's jaw but in the mouth of a large dragon fly at about three feet of altitude. I still cannot believe it. I'm not sure that Craig ever did or does to this day.

Another great day trout fishing. I would not change a thing.

*Dean*

The Killer Fly  
By Don Otto

I promised the guy that gave me three flies two years ago, I would write this up some day. Since they were dry flies and I usually fish streamers and nymphs they rode around in my waist pack for a year. I was fishing Otter Creek having some success with a hare's ear nymph, but nothing great. It was getting toward sundown when I worked my way back to the bridge where the car was parked. I noticed there was not a path on the river-right below the bridge. I crossed the stream below and made my way to within casting distance of the pool just below the bridge. I decided to try one of my friend's dry flies just for fun. It looked like a caddis to me. I really had not noticed any activity on top, but what the heck. On the second drift a stocker sized rainbow took it and I brought it to hand and released it down stream. I dried the fly off and gave it another try. Once again on the second or third drift another stocker rainbow. To shorten this tale up a little, I stood there for an hour and a half catching fish after fish. When upstream seem to slow, I would let it drift down stream, which was also successful. Even skating the fly back toward me worked once or twice. It was fun and I suspect DNR dumped a load in, while I was downstream. Thanks Dale T.! See photo of the fly after the workout below.

*Don*



# *Nancy's Waders*

*By Larry Niday*

Nancy sat on the tailgate and looked at her new neoprene chest waders. The trip across Nebraska had been long and monotonous and gave me time to convince her that she needed to try wade fishing, something she really had no interest in. She loved fishing but wanted to do it from the top of the water, not in it. That was for the fish, not her. Her plans for the trip had been for two back-to-back days floating down the North Platte in a drift boat, possibly the most relaxing and carefree way to fish for trout in any environment, not hiking through sagebrush and splashing through the water. After convincing promises of fishing at an altitude above the snake line, or so I had been told, she reluctantly agreed to the waders and we had stopped at Cabela's in Kearney Nebraska to fit her with the gear she needed for this new adventure.

The entrance to the stream was easy to miss, I passed by it the first time even though I knew it was there. It was just an opening in the two-strand barbed wire fence nearly obscured by the tall wheatgrass. The parted weeds gave the only indication of traces of vehicle tracks passing through the gate. I pulled in and backed the truck onto a bare pea graveled spot along the inside of the fence. We crawled out of the truck and looked around the area. A sagebrush covered hill rose immediately on the east side of the parking area. To the south, a wide flat valley stretched to the base of the rocky bluffs in the distance. The only evidence of anyone having been there in the past was a narrow gray dirt path curving around the base of the hill, bordered by tufts of buffalo grass scattered among the knee-high sagebrush. She pulled on the waders and the boots, slid off the tailgate and stared at the path with a look of doubt on her face. I started out first just in case I needed to steer her away from any potential encounter. She followed closely behind, trying not to look down. In that manner, we circumvented the hill, until we were overlooking a riffled stream meandering through the sagebrush covered valley.

This was the lower section of a creek that flowed out of the Sierra Madres. It cut across the flat valley bottoms and under the highway to tumble its way through a canyon before it joined with the North Platte River. We had fished earlier that day in a shallow, wide, briskly moving part of the upper section. The fishing had been slow, but we were completely immersed in the kind of valley reminiscent of the dreams our forefathers brought to our shores. We were wading in ankle deep gin-clear water, carpeted with sand sculpted in waves by the moving water, but what kept our eyes glued to the bottom and forgetting the purpose that brought us there, was the gold flecks of mica that sparkled brilliantly under our feet. The mountains just west of us contained a large deposit of the mineral that washed down the slopes into the waterways. The morning sun, shining through the moving water created a glistening golden carpet that rolled out ahead of us as we walked through the water.

Occasionally, we woke from our reverie and cast at likely looking spots along the banks. On one of Nancy's errant casts, her fly caught in a tangle of willows. Being the consummate gentleman, I stepped forward to untangle it, when I saw a small snake swimming under the branches. I remembered what I had been told about the "snake line". Just a little bit miffed about the misinformation, I had to think quickly before she spotted it. I stepped between it and her and took my time working the fly loose, giving the little guy time to swim away into the weeds along the bank. I was congratulating myself on my quick thinking when she suggested that we move a few miles downstream where we would find deeper, more productive water.

We drove the rough, pocketed, two-track lane over a ridge about three miles to the paved road that led us to this downstream section of the stream. We eventually found ourselves standing in the cold water reaching to our calves. Following my usual habit of being dissatisfied with my first choice of fly, I stopped to change fly's, hoping to find something the fish would like. Looking down at the fly in my hand, I was startled by a water snake between my feet looking up at me. It was hiding under a patch of moss on the gavel bottom with just its head reaching out of the water. It seemed to be engrossed in watching me while I fumbled with these strange feathers in my hand. My heart jumped at the sound of Nancy's voice and looked up to see her splashing through the water towards me. I had kept her away from one earlier and couldn't risk her seeing this one either. So quickly, hoping to send her off in a different direction, I pointed at a pool of slow water to her right and said, "That looks like a good spot". She looked around and immediately turned and walked in that direction. But this was not good either, now she was in the lead and I wasn't able to walk point. I forgot about the fly and hurried to catch up with her. Then, my worst fears came true, she stopped, suddenly, frozen in place. I knew the signs. She could not scream. She could not talk. She could not move. All she could do was hoarsely whisper "Larry!".

I worked my way up to her and just asked "Where was it?". She regained her composure enough to point her rod to the right and whispered, "It swam in front of my knees and went over to that bank". Then she found her voice and turned around to face me. With the indignation of someone that had been talked into something she did not want to do in the first place, she snarled "These waders are for sale!"

I knew our fishing was done for the day and we needed to find the fastest way back to the truck. I looked at the hill and the path around its base. The path would be farther than she wanted to walk and hiking over the top meant pushing through heavy sagebrush. In her state of mind, neither was a good option. Giving her the choice, I asked, "How do you want to get back?" She turned to look at the hill and didn't look back as she answered, "Piggyback comes to mind".

**We sold the waders.**

*Larry*

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