INTRODUCTION TO FLY FISHING CLINIC

Presented by the Southern Oregon Fly Fishers

Dave Grosjacques, Larry and Bobbie White, John Graves, Rich Steed
Motivation – Why do we go fishing? / What is special about FLY FISHING?

Fishing is an activity that can be a good workout, it usually is done in beautiful settings, and it gets us close to nature. We are lucky in Southern Oregon to have many streams, rivers, lakes and ponds that have fish populations. There are many places in our area to buy fishing gear, get expert advice and even hire a fishing guide.

Fly fishing has a special place in the hearts of those who fish. The sport of fly fishing has a rich history, and the rods, reels and flies we use have a certain beauty to them. A good fly caster or fly tier is an artist. A fly fisher never stops learning about the habits of fish, the insects they like to eat and the lore of fishing spots that he has heard about but not yet tried.

CLINIC SCHEDULE

We will have 4 time blocks of 1 ½ hours, two before lunch and two after lunch. The items covered and time schedule are on the back of this packet. The longest time slots are for knots and for casting, two skills that take a lot of practice!

SAFETY

Safety should always be a first consideration when you go fly fishing. Knowing the risk factors and being prepared are vital.

Hooks- You should always wear sunglasses and a hat when fishing. These will protect you from a fly hook if your cast gets blown into you. Know the two methods of hook removal, should you hook yourself.

Waders and Walking Staff – Waders must be tightened enough at the top so water will not fill them up if you fall into the water. Use a belt or straps to keep them snug around the top. Use a wading staff or a walking stick to keep your balance on slippery rocks. Wading boots with small spikes on the bottom help you keep your balance. When wading, take small steps and lower your body a bit by bending your knees. Wear a life jacket with pockets for flies and leader.
Lines, Leaders, knots

Fly fishing is different from gear fishing in the types of fishing lines used.

Fly Line – This is a type of fishing line that is thicker and more expensive than regular fishing line. It can be used for years, and has certain characteristics that help you cast and get the fly to the proper depth. Most are 90 feet long. A floating line will float on top of the water, an intermediate sink line will sink slowly, and a full sink line is made to sink quickly and go down deeper.

Backing – This is fishing line that is tied directly to the spool of an empty fly reel. The normal setup is to have 100 yards or more of backing on the reel, then to tie the fly line onto the end of it, so that it is under the fly line on the reel. Heavy braided line or even regular monofilament is used for backing.

Leader – The leader is tied onto the end of the fly line. It is regular monofilament fishing line, just like what is used in gear fishing. The easiest setup is to buy a tapered leader and attach it, loop-to-loop, to the end of the fly line. Tapered leaders are made of heavier line on the end that attaches to the fly line, then taper down to smaller diameter line at the tip that it tied to the fly. This taper makes it easier to cast the fly and get it to land on the water properly. Regular mono is also used, and some fishermen tie their own tapered leaders.

Butt Section – Many fly fishers tie a short, heavy piece of monofilament onto the end of their fly line, then tie the leader to it. This helps the line roll out on a cast, and allows you to tie the leader to the butt section of mono instead of to the fly line. This is more often used when long casts are required, or when the loop at the end of the fly line breaks. It is easier to tie leader to this butt section than to the fly line.

Tippet – The tippet is a 2 or 3-foot section of very light line tied onto the end of the leader and then to the fly. Fishermen use a tippet in very clear water for wary fish. Heavy tippets are also used when fishing for species with sharp teeth.

KNOTS – See the next page (front and back) for some fishing knots.
Fly Fishing Knots – SOFF Fly Fishing Clinic  Dave Grosjacques

All of these knots are explained and illustrated on the website netknots.com.

KNOT SUCCESS – Knowing the knot is the first thing, how much line to put through the loop, how many wraps to take, and so on. But equally important are two other things: how to hold the line in your fingers, and how to properly tighten the knot.

Terminal knots – For tying a hook or fly to the leader.

1. IMPROVED CLINCH KNOT – put the line through the eye of the hook, then make 5 or 6 wraps around the standing line. Then put the tag end through the loop above the hook eye and also through the big loop made by the tag end off of the standing line. Tighten by pulling the standing line tight as you snug the tag end.

2. TRILENE KNOT – Put the line through the eye of the hook twice, then make 5 or 6 wraps around the standing line. Next put the tag end through both of the loops that are through the hook eye. Tighten by pulling the standing line and snug the tag end.

3. SURGEON’S LOOP – Double the line over itself so you have about 4 or 5 inches of doubled line. Make a loop of the doubled line, and make one overhand knot with the end of the doubled line through the loop. Then make a second overhand knot through the loop. Tighten by pulling on the end of the loop and the standing line.

4. NO-SLIP LOOP – Make a loose, overhand knot in the line with about 4 or 5 inches of tag end sticking out. Put the tag end through the hook eye, then back through the loop made by the overhand knot. Put the tag end through the loop the same way it came out. Then make 4 or 5 wraps around the standing line, then back through the loop. Tighten by pulling on the hook and standing line first to tighten up the loops, then pull on the tag end and standing line.

LINE TO LINE KNOTS

5. SURGEON’S KNOT – Overlap the standing line and leader ends by about 4 inches. Make a loop with the doubled lines. Then take the end of the standing line and the entire length of the leader together and make an overhand knot through the loop. Pull them all the way through the loop once, then through the same way again. Tighten by pulling on all four ends, the standing line, the leader, and both tag ends.

6. BLOOD KNOT – Overlap the standing line and the leader by about 5 inches. Make 5 or 6 wraps with the standing line around the leader, then run the tag end through the “Y” created by the lines. Then make 5 or 6 wraps of the leader around the standing line the same way, and run the tag end through the “Y” the opposite way. Tighten by pulling
slowly on both tag ends first to tighten the loops, then pull on both lines and both tag ends at the same time.

7. NAIL KNOT – Using a nail knot tube, lay the tag end of the fly line on the tube from the left, and the mono on the tube from the right. The fly line tag is even with the right end of the tube and the mono should have about 4 or 5 inches of tag end beyond the end of the left side of the tube. Take the tag end of the mono and, starting from the left and working to the right, make 6 or 7 wraps around the tube, mono and fly line. Hold the wraps with the fingers of your left hand as you go. Change the finished wraps from the fingers of your left hand to your right, then slowly pull out the tube from in between all the wraps. Continuing to hold the wraps with your right hand, slowly tighten the tag ends of the mono on both sides to cinch up the wraps. Then pull on the mono and the fly line to finish tightening the knot.

8. PERFECTION LOOP – Make a simple loop about the size of a nickel, with the tag end behind the standing line as you look at it, and the tag end sticking out with about 4 inches of line to your right. Make another loop the size of a dime with the tag end around the first loop and the standing line. Lay the tag end down in between the two loops and hold it with one finger as you hold the loops with another finger. Then reach into the first loop from behind and pull the second loop back up through the first loop. Tighten by pulling on the loop and the standing line first, then by pulling on the tag end.
Fly Rods, Reels and Fly Casting

Modern fly rods are almost all made of a graphite composite, making them light and strong. The common length is 9 feet, with rods for special situations as short as 7 feet or as long as 14 or 15 feet.

Most fly rods are 3-piece or 4-piece rods. The short sections make them easy to store and travel with. Some rods are still made as 2-piece rods, with a longer case. The rod case is very important, a good case will protect the rod from being damaged. You can make a cheap rod case with 3 or 4 inch PVC, with a cap glued onto one end and a threaded cap on the other.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A 7-WEIGHT ROD AND A 3-WEIGHT ROD?

Fly rods are classified by a number that indicates the weight and strength of the rod. The lighter rods for smaller fish are 3-weight, 4-weight and 5-weights. Intermediate rods for large trout and even steelhead are 6-weights and 7-weights. Heavier rods for larger fish are 8-weight, 9-weight, and up to 12-weight.

THE FLY LINES ARE MADE TO FIT THE WEIGHT OF THE ROD. If you buy a 5-weight rod, make sure you match it with a 5-weight fly line. Complete outfits with matching rod, reel and line are available in some sporting goods stores.

REELS – Fly reels are made so that a certain reel could be used for trout fishing, for example, on any rod from a 3-wt. up to a 5 or 6-wt. Make sure to buy a reel with a good, smooth drag. For steelhead and larger fish, large-arbor reels are made so that there is a lot of room on the reel for more line.

CASTING – Casting a fly rod is an art. It takes practice. There are some simple types of casts that will work in many fishing situations. There are rules to keep in mind as you learn to cast. One is to avoid slack line. Another is to keep the fly out away from you as you start your forward cast, so you don’t hook yourself. A good caster uses smooth acceleration, and has an abrupt stop on the backcast and the forward cast, and starts the pickup of the line with a low rod tip.
PLACES TO FISH/ FISHING REGS/ HANDLING FISH

In Southern Oregon, choosing a fishing spot will depend on what species you are going after, what equipment you have, how much time you have and what time of year it is.

TROUT – There are several lakes in our area that are good spots for trout fishing.
- Galesville Reservoir- Between Glendale and Canyonville, north on I-5.
- Lake Selmac – Near Selma, on 199 toward Cave Junction
- Lost Creek – On highway 62, between Medford and Prospect.
- Howard Prarie and Hyatt Lakes – up in the mountains east of Ashland.
- Diamond and Lemolo Lakes – up in the mountains, east of Roseburg.

STREAMS FOR TROUT – Butte Creek and Little Butte Creek – east of Medford.
- Upper Rogue – east of Medford, along Highway 62 above Prospect.
- Williamson and Wood rivers – Near Klamath Lake.

FISHING REGULATIONS

It is up to you to get an ODFW fishing regulations booklet. They are free and are available at most sporting goods stores. Make sure to check the dates, many of the lakes in the area are open all year, but the streams that you are allowed to fish open Memorial Day weekend and close in October. Also check gear and bag limits for the area you are fishing. Make sure you have a fishing license.

HANDLING FISH – If you are going to release a fish, the best way to do it is to keep it in the water and quickly remove the hook. If you have to handle the fish, sometimes turning it upside down will calm it enough so that you can remove the hook. If you hold it in the water a bit the fish will revive and swim away. If you use a net, the cloth and rubber types of nets are best because they do not remove slime from the fish as much as nets with nylon mesh. Always have a good set of hook pliers ready to use to get the hook out.
Aquatic Insects / Types of Fishing Flies

The following page (front and back) shows drawings of some of the insects and other aquatic animals that fish eat. Many of the flies used to fish for trout imitate a certain life stage of three insects: Mayflies, Caddisflies and Stoneflies.

Mayflies – These are found in streams and lakes. Drawings of the nymph stage of this insect are shown by #5 on the next page. A mayfly nymph is a small, flat insect that lives in the water and breathes with small gills. The insect “hatches out” when it comes to the surface and turns into the adult stage. An adult mayfly is a delicate insect with upright wings. They will always be found near water.

Caddisflies – Caddis are found in streams. Most species of caddis build a case out of sticks or small rocks. The larva lives in the case and crawls along underwater sticking it’s legs and head out of the case. When they hatch, the adults will be seen flying in a darting motion above the water. The wings of an adult at rest fold together like a small tent over the body. The drawing on the next page is #2.

Stoneflies – These are found in streams. Drawing #1 on the next page shows the nymph stage of these large insects. The nymph stage of this insect can be 2 inches long. The adults are also large, and at rest fold their wings down flat over the body.

Damselflies and dragonflies – The damselfly nymph is shown in drawing #13, the dragonfly in #17. These are both found mostly in lakes and ponds. The nymph stage is what fish are interested in as food. Many flies that work well in lakes and ponds resemble the nymph stage of these insects.

Midges or Chironomids – These are small insects found in lakes. The pupa is very small, and the adults look like very small mosquitoes.

**TYPES OF FLIES**

Dry Flies – These flies have bushy hackle to make them float. You can also add a waxy material to the feathers to help them stay afloat. They usually are made to imitate the adult stage of an insect that is on the surface.
Wet Flies / Emergers / Nymphs – These flies are made to be fished under the surface. They imitate the nymph stage of an insect, or an insect on its way to the surface to hatch.

Streamers – These flies are usually a bit larger and imitate a small fish.

Terrestrials – These flies are made to imitate an insect that lives on land and has fallen or flown into the water. A grasshopper is a good example.

Steelhead Flies – These are often larger flies with some bright colors, tied on larger hooks. Some are tied to imitate aquatic insects, with darker colors.

HOOK SIZES

The numbering system for hooks assigns larger numbers to smaller hooks. So a size 18 hook is a very small hook you would use for trout, and a size 4 hook is a large hook you would use for steelhead. There are different styles of hooks, some are made of thinner wire for dry flies, some have thicker wire and longer shanks for nymphs, and some are much larger and made of thick wire for steelhead. Some hooks have a very short, curved shank and are used to tie a fly that looks like a fish egg.

Examples – For trout flies – sizes 14, 16, 18 are small flies / sizes 8, 10, 12 would be a bit larger / sizes 2, 4, and 6 would be large flies.

For steelhead – small flies would be a heavy wired hook size 8 or 10. Larger flies would use a size 4 or 6 hook, and very large flies would be tied on a size 2/0 or a size 2 hook.

LARGER ➔ MEDIUM ➔ SMALLER

Size 4/0 2/0 2 4 6 8 10 12 14 16 18 20 22
**GROUP ONE TAXA**

Pollution sensitive organisms found in good quality water.

1. **Stonefly: Order Plecoptera.** 1/2" - 1 1/2", 6 legs with hooked tips, antennae, 2 hair-like tails. Smooth (no gills) on lower half of body. (See arrow.)

2. **Caddisfly: Order Trichoptera.** Up to 1", 6 hooked legs on upper third of body, 2 hooks at back end. May be in a stick, rock or leaf case with its head sticking out. May have fluffy gill tufts on underside.

3. **Water Penny: Order Coleoptera.** 1/4", flat saucer-shaped body with a raised bump on one side and 6 tiny legs and fluffy gills on the other side. Immature beetle.


5. **Mayfly: Order Ephemeroptera.** 1/4" - 1", brown, moving, plate-like or feathery gills on sides of lower body (see arrow), 6 large hooked legs, antennae, 2 or 3 long, hair-like tails. Tails may be webbed together.

6. **Gilled Snail: Class Gastropoda.** Shell opening covered by thin plate called operculum. When opening is facing you, shell usually opens on right.

7. **Dobsonfly (Helgrammite): Family Corydalidae.** 3/4" - 4", dark-colored, 6 legs, large pinching jaws, eight pairs feelers on lower half of body with paired cotton-like gill tufts along underside, short antennae, 2 tails and 2 pairs of hooks at back end.

**GROUP TWO TAXA**

Somewhat pollution tolerant organisms can be in good or fair quality water.

8. **Crayfish: Order Decapoda.** Up to 6", 2 large claws, 8 legs, resembles small lobster.

9. **Sowbug: Order Isopoda.** 1/4" - 3/4", gray oblong body wider than it is high, more than 6 legs, long antennae.

---

Save Our Streams
Izaak Walton League of America
707 Conservation Lane
Gaithersburg, MD 20878-2983
1(800)BUG-IWLA
GROUP TWO TAXA CONTINUED

10 Scud: Order Amphipoda. 1/4", white to grey, body higher than it is wide, swims sideways, more than 6 legs, resembles small shrimp.

11 Alder fly Larva: Family Sialidae. 1" long. Looks like small hellgrammite but has 1 long, thin, branched tail at back end (no hooks). No gill tufts underneath.

12 Fishfly Larva: Family Corydalidae. Up to 1 1/2" long. Looks like small hellgrammite but often a lighter reddish-tan color, or with yellowish streaks. No gill tufts underneath.

13 Damselfly: Suborder Zygoptera. 1/2" - 1", large eyes, 6 thin hooked legs, 3 broad car-shaped tails, positioned like a tripod. Smooth (no gills) on sides of lower half of body. (See arrow.)

14 Watersnipe Fly Larva: Family Athericidae (Atheris). 1/4" - 1", pale to green, tapered body, many caterpillar-like legs, conical head, feathery "horns" at back end.

15 Crane Fly: Suborder Nematocera. 1/3" - 2", milky, green, or light brown, plump caterpillar-like segmented body, 4 finger-like lobes at back end.

16 Beetle Larva: Order Coleoptera. 1/4" - 1", light-colored, 6 legs on upper half of body, feelers, antennae.

17 Dragon Fly: Suborder Anisoptera. 1/2" - 2", large eye, 6 hooked legs. Wide oval to round abdomen.

18 Clam: Class Bivalvia.

GROUP THREE TAXA

Pollution tolerant organisms can be in any quality of water.

19 Aquatic Worm: Class Oligochaeta. 1/4" - 2", can be very tiny, thin worm-like body.

20 Midge Fly Larva: Suborder Nematocera. Up to 1/4", dark head, worm-like segmented body, 2 tiny legs on each side.


22 Leech: Order Hirudinea. 1/4" - 2", brown, slimy body, ends with suction pads.

23 Pouch Snail and Pond Snails: Class Gastropoda. No operculum. Breathe air. When opening is facing you, shell usually opens on left.

24 Other Snails: Class Gastropoda. No operculum. Breathe air. Snail shell coils in one plane.
EQUIPMENT / FISHING METHODS / READING WATER

STREAM FISHING

You will need to have waders with a belt to keep out water should you fall. A walking staff is very helpful, make one or buy one that extends and has a wrist strap. A life jacket is a must on larger streams, get one with pockets to hold flies, leader and other items. Wading shoes or boots with studs on the soles makes it easier to wade on slippery rocks. Polarized sunglasses will help you see the fish and the bottom, and will protect your eyes from a stray cast. A small net can be helpful in landing a fish, some are made so that you can attach the net to your vest.

Fish in a stream usually face upstream as they feed. You need to approach with some stealth so you don’t scare the fish. A cast across and upstream is often a good method, letting the fly come downstream with the current. Sometimes a cast straight downstream is your only option, feeding slack line to allow the fly to float down without dragging sideways. If you are using a dry fly, the object is to make a cast and drop the fly line on the water carefully so you don’t spook fish. Then it is a matter of allowing the current to take the fly along without any big sideways motion or unnatural pull by your fly line. If you are nymph fishing, the same type of approach will work, allowing the fly line to move with the current so the fly under the water does not move unnaturally in a sideways or upstream manner. Sometimes a small float, called an indicator, is attached to the fly line about 6 or 8 feet above the fly to show you where the fly is and also show you when a fish takes the nymph. Look for trout in a spot where there is some current, and some structure or hiding place nearby. A current seam, or a narrow band of water between faster flowing water and slower water, is also a good place to find fish. Just in front of a large rock, or in the slack water behind a large rock are also places that fish will hold.

LAKE FISHING- You can use the same equipment mentioned above and wade. By far a better option on a lake is a float tube, pontoon boat or larger boat. Casting to rising fish will work with a dry fly and a floating line. If no fish are rising, an intermediate sink line and a nymph will work. Look for fish near drop-offs, the mouth of a stream, or areas around logs, rocks, stumps and other types of cover. Wind drifting is also productive, letting some line out and letting the wind move your boat slowly along as you give the fly some twitches to make it look alive. If the fish are rising for insects on the surface, they are usually cruising along in one direction. A cast out ahead of them will sometimes work, making sure that the fly line does not slap the water hard enough to scare the fish. The retrieve is often important, making small strips or tugs as you bring in the fly line after a cast.

IMITATION-----------PRESENTATION----------LOCATION
SOFF BEGINNING FLY FISHING CLINIC – MAY 18, 2013

8:30 – 9:00 – Setup, Name Tags, Lunch Orders
9:00 – 9:15 – Introductions, Motivation, Schedule, Catalogs & Booklets
9:30 – 10:30 – Lines, leaders, knots

10:30 – 10:40 BREAK

10:40 – 12:00 – Rods and casting (Larry and Bobbie White)

12:00 – 12:30 – Lunch (Sack Lunches delivered to shelter)

12:30 – 1:15 – Places to fish/ Regulations/ Handling and Releasing Fish
1:15 – 2:00 – Intro to Aquatic Insects/ Types of Fishing Flies (John Graves)
2:00 – 2:10 – BREAK
Tubes and pontoon boats/ rods and rod cases/ reels & fly line
2:40 – 3:10 – Fishing Methods and Reading Water
Imitation/ Presentation/ Location
3:10 – 3:30 – Catalogs and getting started in fly fishing without going broke
3:30 – 4:00 – Questions/ Practice/ Contacts/ Cleanup