

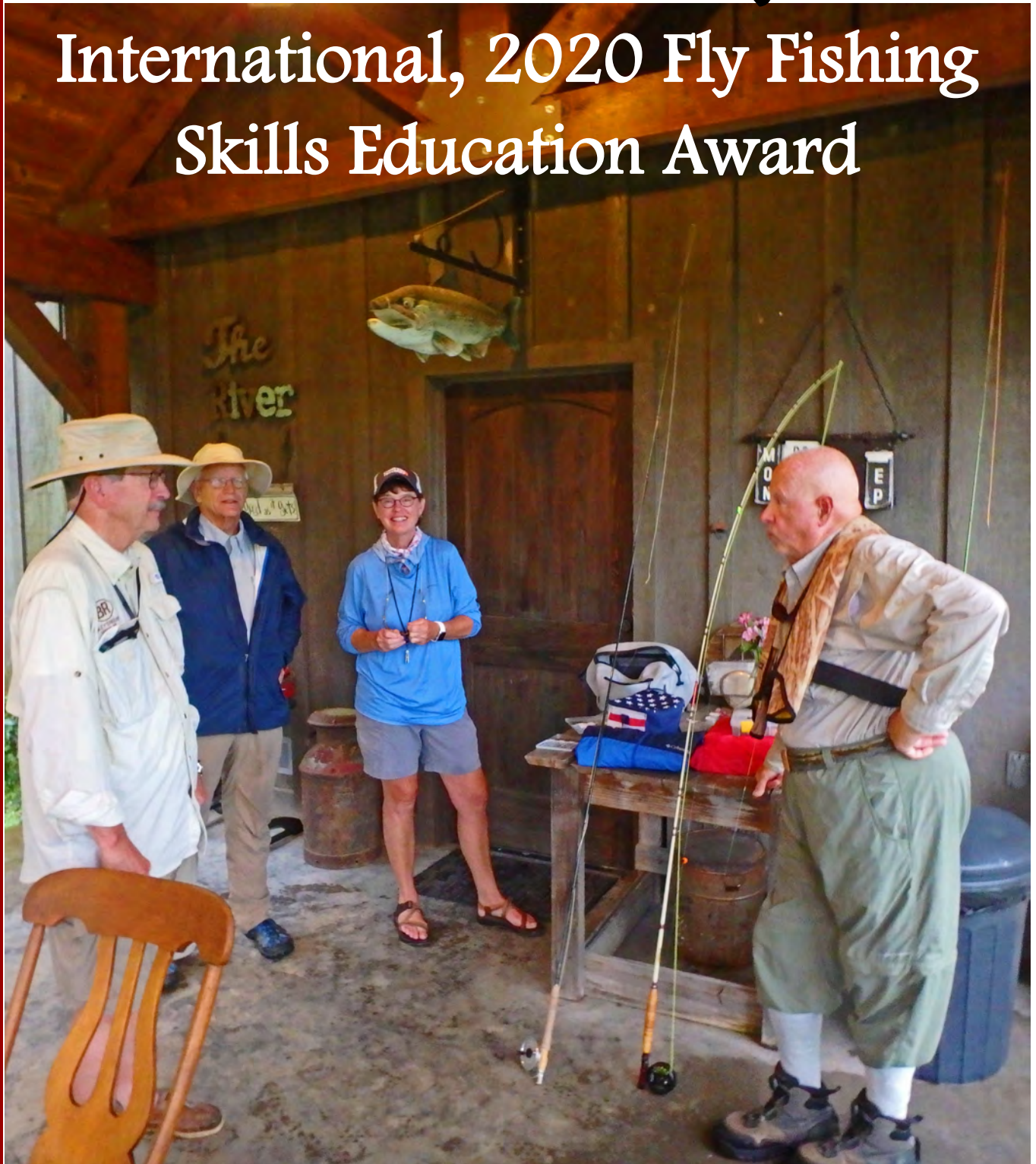
# *The Creel*

A Publication of Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers



July 2020

## Mike Arnold Wins the Fly Fishers International, 2020 Fly Fishing Skills Education Award



## Mike Arnold Recognized with Fly Fishers International's Highest Award for Education

*Mike Arnold is always teaching.*

In 1986, Mike Arnold brought together a small number of fly fishers in Northern Kentucky to talk about organizing a club. In 1986, there were only a handful of fly fishers in the entire state of Kentucky, much less the northern 3 counties which comprise Northern Kentucky. In 1987, Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers (NKFF) was officially formed and that continued a lifelong pursuit and dedication to fly fishing education for Mike .

Mike has been a member of Fly Fishers International for 38 years and has been a lifelong proponent of the notion that the linchpin of ensuring the legacy of fly fishing for all fish in all waters is education and sense of community. Mike is a forward thinker and continuously asks the question, "How can we attract people to the sport of fly fishing and then keep them interested as a lifelong learning experience".

From the very beginning, Mike began establishing relationships with community organizations in Northern Kentucky such as county libraries and talked to them about offering fly fishing classes. The first reaction from almost everyone in these communities was, "Fly fishing is a sport meant for trout fishing and it is very expensive. Why would we want to offer education in fly fishing in an area where there are no trout and that consists of a population of modest means"?





## Mike Arnold Recognized with Fly Fishers International's Highest Award for Education

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That response didn't deter Mike at all. He simply recognized that he had to back up a few steps and provide some higher level education before he started to actually teach the sport of fly fishing. He convinced the libraries and other community organizations that fly fishing was a sport not meant only for trout but for warm water species as well and that it could be just as much fun on a farm pond or lake for bass and bluegill as it was in a cold water stream for trout. He also presented them with many examples about how getting into fly fishing could be very affordable at the start and that people didn't have to spend lots of money to get started in the sport.

Mike convinced the club to buy some starter fly rods and reels and informed the community organizations that Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers would supply all the equipment for the classes and that the classes would be completely free.

So in 1988, Mike personally began offering classes in each of the 3 counties in Northern Kentucky. Mike insisted that these classes be fly fishing classes and not just fly casting classes. "People need an introduction to everything from backing, line and tippet, to gear and accessories, to fishing the water columns, to knot tying and casting," he would say. And that's exactly how the classes were planned.

Every 6 hour class was meticulously planned. He would arrive a couple of hours ear-



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## Mike Arnold Recognized with Fly Fishers International's Highest Award for Education

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ly and set up easels with the class outline and objectives as well as some with illustrations of water columns, tip-pet/fly tables, reels with backing, line, leader and tip-pet and even fish identification. Then he'd take the class outside and begin casting instruction. You could see the smiles on the faces of people some of whom had never even heard of fly fishing back in the late 80's and none of whom had tried it before.

After a session of fly casting instruction, it was time for knot tying. Mike had everything need to practice knot tying neatly organized into plastic bags so that no time was wasted on setup. Then a little more practice fly casting. By the time people finished these first classes, they had a real taste of what the sport of fly fishing (not just fly casting) was all about and they wanted more. Today, Mike conducts 8 of these free fly fishing classes every year not only in Northern Kentucky but in remote communities as far away as 120 miles.

Mike realized that there was not time to cover fly tying education in these fly fishing classes, so he went about fixing that. The fly fishing classes were taught spring through late summer, but the winter months had a gap. So Mike organized NKFF's first free fly tying class that began the first Sunday after Super Bowl Sunday and lasted for 6 consecutive Sundays into March. This strategy worked. It got people out of

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their houses and built upon the fly fishing education that they had receive the previous spring and summer. At the end of a six week fly tying class, people could really tie flies and felt an accomplishment like none other in their early experiences as fly fishers.....being able to catch a fish on a fly they tied themselves. These classes continue to be one of NKFF's most popular educational offerings.

Mike then organized a rod building class. "Why not give people the opportunity to catch a fish on a fly they tied and a rod they built?" he wondered. Mike never wonders too long, so he organized NKFF's first rod building class. Today, Mike organizes 8 rod building classes every year. Again, these classes are free and extremely popular.

Mike realized that in order to keep people interested in fly fishing, they needed to get out on the water and fish. So Mike began the process of developing map books that educated people in community served by NKFF of all the available fishing opportunities that existed within Northern Kentucky and a reasonably short distance of the region. Today, these map books are broken up into 2 volumes. The first volume is of



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## Mike Arnold Recognized with Fly Fishers International's Highest Award for Education

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waters in Kentucky and Ohio within 2 hours of Northern Kentucky. The second volume is of waters in Indiana and more remote locations like North Carolina. Both of these map books were created entirely by Mike and an example of them may be seen on the NKFF website at <https://nkff.org/where-to-fish/>.

Mike recognized that the average age of those who were taking advantage of the educational offerings of NKFF was an older part of the population. So he wondered how we could get younger people interested in fishing. Again, Mike established partnerships with parks, baseball organizations, cub scouts, church groups and other community organizations and convinced NKFF to support free kids fishing derbies throughout the spring and summer of every year.

NKFF owns and maintains 150 rods and reels supplies the volunteers and gets kids and their families out fishing. Mike's efforts gets more kids out fishing than any other organization in the entire region of Kentucky, Ohio and Indiana. Annually, that amounts to about 15 derbies a year and a total of 1,500 – 2,000 kids plus their families out fishing every year. Mike's philosophy is plant the seed early and get the entire family involved and you just might establish a culture of fishing.



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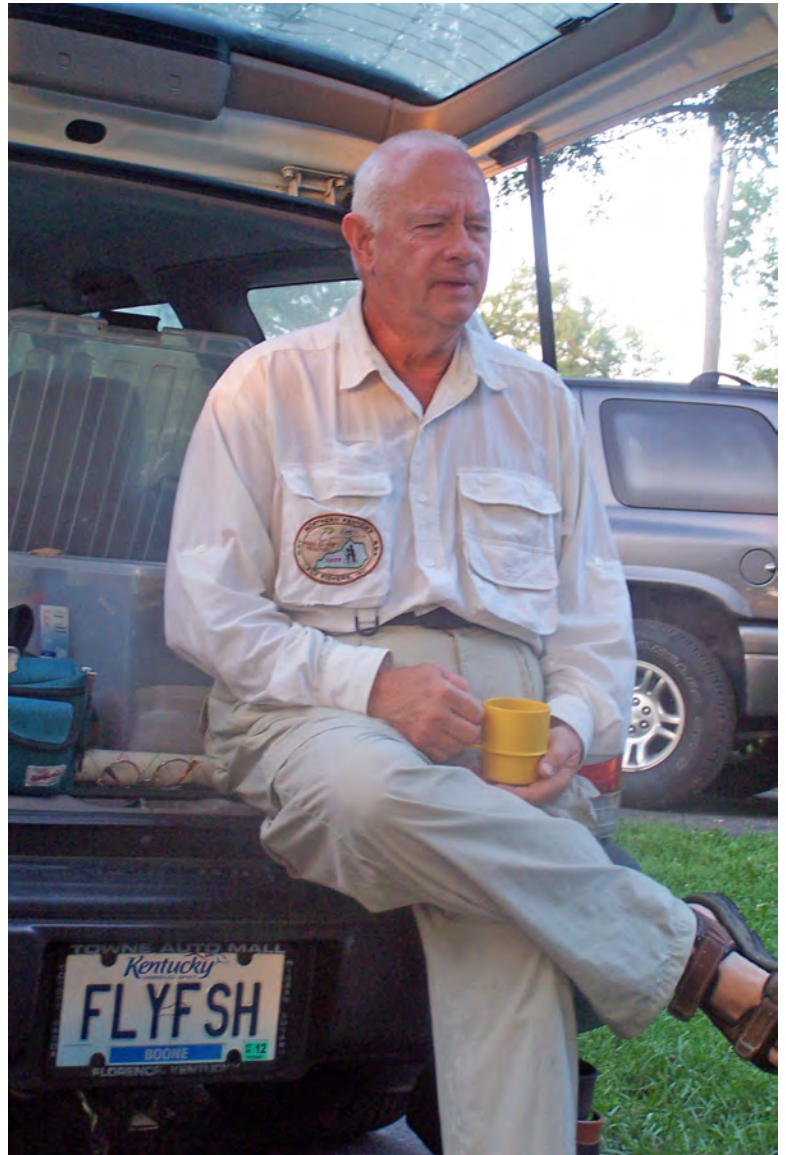


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Mike didn't stop at organized educational classes. He also felt that the monthly meetings of Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers should also have a major educational component. So from the very start, the monthly meetings have included a speaker on some educational component of the sport of fly fishing. Eleven months of the year NKFF meets for dinner and an educational program and today, thanks to Mike Ar-



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nold, the club experiences speakers from across the entire United State and devotes a significant portion of its operating budget to these programs.

Diversifying the participants in fly fishing education has also been at the forefront of Mike's endeavors. Mike recognized that sometimes women want to learn in classes with other women, so he began the process of instituting women's only fly fishing classes and they have been enormously popular. Additionally, the speakers at NKFF's monthly meetings are about 50% women. Mike has committed himself to training women instructors as well. Therefore, the number of women in NKFF has grown from close to zero to about 35% of the membership and continues to climb.



Mike has also been very active at the regional level. He was a member of the South Eastern Council of FFI for 21 years and the last 10 of those years he was Vice President of Education. The contributions he made to the region were significant including getting clubs in KY, TN, NC, SC, AL MS, GA and FL to join what was then FFF as Affiliated Clubs. Mike was able to demonstrate the value of the FFI model of educa-

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## Mike Arnold Recognized with Fly Fishers International's Highest Award for Education

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tion and community to the sport of fly fishing to everyone he touched.

The cumulative effect of Mike Arnold's lifelong, continuous and prominent effort promoting comprehensive fly fishing education are not only superior and conspicuous in relation to others and consistent with the philosophies of the FFI, but they are measurable. With over 30 years of fly fishing, fly tying, rod building and on



the water education, Mike has taught nearly 3,000 adults and nearly 36,000 children and their families. He changed the age distribution of fly fishers in our population from an average age of 65+ to an average age of about 40. He has pursued the inclusion of women into the sport and has measurably increased the membership of women in NKFF to about 35%. Additionally, about 25% of the membership of NKFF are family membership demonstrating that Mike's commitment to family participation has worked.

And finally, Mike's dedication to fly fishing education was the impetus for founding and building one of the finest and largest FFI Affiliated clubs in the United States. His educational endeavors attract new people to the sport every year and we do measure the impact of these classes and outings on our community. Today, NKFF has a 3 state reach and 270+ members. NKFF has an attendance of between 70 and 90 people at its monthly meetings. NKFF is growing every year. And all of this in a region where there are no natural trout streams.

Mike is the quintessential winner of the FFI Fly Fishing Skills Education Award and he makes us all proud to know him.

## Banquet 2020 Update - Josh Lillard

It is hot and humid and COVID-19 is still raging out there. Some people are getting out fishing either individually or in small groups, but most of NKFF's organized events are being cancelled as we try our best to be responsible citizens.

I would like to thank all of those that have made donations to our banquet, we realize during these uncertain times that how and where you choose to spend your money has been limited and you are probably focusing more on your sav-



ings (wish I always did that) right now. We are still taking donations, if you would like to help us meet our goal by September. We currently only have \$8,500 left to reach our goal!

To be honest, we don't know at this point if we will actually have a banquet that resembles previous events. However, we have to do some sort of fund raising. The banquet represents about 65% of our operating revenue and although our costs are down, we will have to generate some revenue from sources in addition to membership dues.

I'd like to remind you that you can donate a prize as well, please just contact me first so we can discuss it.

Please help our fund raising efforts where you can.

Thank you.....Josh Lillard



## NKFF 2020 Banquet Highlights

**Banquet Date:** Saturday November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2020

**Offsite social hour:** 5:00pm – 6:00pm (TBD Location)

**Banquet Start Time:** 6:15 pm

**Banquet Location:**

St. Barbara's Sterling Event Center

4042

Turkeyfoot Rd.

Erlanger, KY 41018

**Keynote Speaker:**

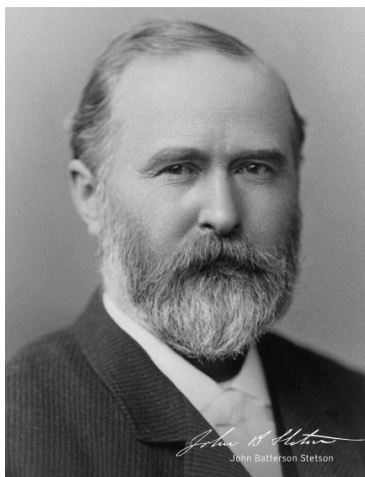
Karen Waldrop, PhD,  
National Conservation Director  
Ducks Unlimited

**Prize Highlight:**

A \$200 gift certificate for:

# STETSON

Hats, Boots and Outerwear for Men and Women



Founded in 1865, Stetson was born from the spirit of the West and grew to become an American icon. John B. Stetson's friendly gesture towards a wayward traveler on the new frontier gave birth to what is now known, the world over, as the "cowboy hat."



## A Message From The President

**By Sheila Meyer**

We are all very proud of Mike Arnold for being recognized by Fly Fishers International with the 2020 Fly Fishing Skills Education Award. It is important to note that this award is not given out every year but when it is given only one person per year receives it. It is very likely that everyone who has ever been a member of NKFF has benefitted from Mike's instruction as some point in their learning process. If you would like to send him a note of congratulations, you can do that [HERE](#).



We had great attendance at our May and June virtual meetings with 2 excellent speakers. We are sorry that our July virtual meeting did not materialize, but we are learning from our mistakes.

The August 6th Virtual Monthly Meeting should be a good one especially for those who want to learn more about waters close to home such as the Elkhorn Creek, the Little Miami River and the Whitewater River. You can get link to the virtual meeting and also register for the meeting [HERE](#). You do not have to register, but if you do you will be eligible for door prizes.

If you have thoughts about what criteria should be met before we get back together for our face to face monthly meetings, please let me know by emailing me at [sheila@nkff.org](mailto:sheila@nkff.org). Also, what about our local fishing outings and our educational classes? Please let me know your thoughts.

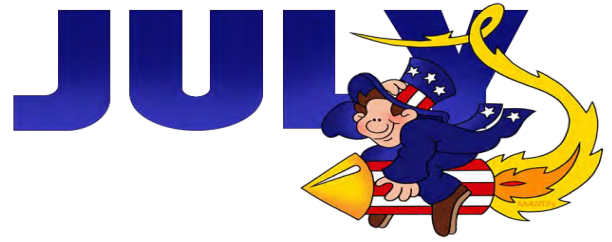
What else can we do? I would like your ideas for other things we might do in a virtual way until we can get back together face-to-face. Please contact me at [sheila@nkff.org](mailto:sheila@nkff.org).

Take good care of yourselves and your families and wash your hands !!





# July Calendar Highlights



## July

1-4 Wed-Sat Signups for 2<sup>nd</sup> Rod-Building Class of 2020 – working sessions to be finished by August 31

2 Thu NKFF Meeting @ Florence Lions Clubhouse in Florence, KY - 5:30-9:30 – NKFF's Annual CHICKENDINNER and all the fixings - Pro-grams TBA

7 Tue Fly-Fishing Summer Camp Day for Boone County Conservation District – 8am – 4pm - we need several NKFF experienced fly fish-ers to guide-summer camp youth fishing gunpowder creek – box lunch pro-vided by NKFF (NKFF Educators)

8 Wed BUFF meeting @ VOA Metropark Pavilion in Mason, OH – NKFF members invited

9 Thu NKFF Bullock Pen Lake Boat/Canoe/Kayak Float & Fish – 4:00pm – dark (J Lillard)

11 Sat NKFF Wading Day Trip to the Stillwater River in Dayton, OH in the Englewood and / or Twin Creek

Metro-Parks – 8am – 6pm (M Arnold) – meet at Staples/Shoe Carnival parking lot across from Florence Mall at 6:45am

12 Sun NKFF BOD Outing – Dutchman's Rod & Gun Club

13 Mon Boone County T-Baller's Fishing Derby @ England-Idlewild Shelter #1 and the two upper ponds (6pm-8pm) (D Bottoni)

14 Tue NKFF Monthly Fly Tying at various locations TBD – 6:30pm – 8:30pm (R Arnold)

15 Wed NKFF On-Stream Bug-Identification Clinic – Gunpowder Creek at Camp Ernst Rd– 6:30pm – dark –(NKFF Educators)

18 Sat NKFF Local Fly-Fishing Introduction Day Trip to Bullock Pen Lake – learn to catch bluegill and bass from a canoe, kayak, float tube or boat (prior watercraft coordination required)

21 Tue Dinner and Shore Fishing at Gallatin County Fairgrounds ponds – Yum Yum Shop (truck stop diner) at 6:30pm - fishing from 7:30pm– dark – (M Arnold)

25 Sat ? Gallatin or Grant County Fly-Fishing Class @ ?????? County Library (???????, KY) 9:00am –

3:00pm (NKFF Educators)

28 Tue 5th District Federation Meeting – Boone Lake Club in Walton, KY - 6pm

# August Calendar Highlights



## August - The Wyoming Trip is on

- |              |  |   |
|--------------|--|---|
| 1 Sat        | Boone County Fair Kids Lake - 1:00pm-3:00pm – (D Bottoni)  | Fishing Frenzy – Fairgrounds  |
|              | Volunteers Needed  |   |
| 2 Sun        | 5 <sup>th</sup> District Federation Fair Fish & Pfferrman Gun Club   | – Campbell County Game &  |
| 6 Thu        | NKFF Meeting @ Flor-Florence, KY – Annual & roasted corn dinner - Lee another Blue Water Trail location  | ence Lions Clubhouse in Fish Fry, tomatoes McClellan speaking on  |
| 8–16 Sat-Sun | NKFF Fly-Fishing Trip to Wyo-commodations, food, guides and eight (8) days and seven nights. camp in the Shoshone National Cody, WY - hard to beat at this | oming - \$600 gets you ac-local transportation for Staying at a boy scout Forest about 30 miles from price.                     |
| 11 Tue       | NKFF Monthly Fly Tying at vari-8:30pm (R Arrowood)   | ous locations TBD – 6:30pm –  |
| 15 Sat       | Indiana Kids Fishing Derby State Line Rd, Bright, IN) – 9am-noon - volunteers needed   | – Casey's Outdoor Solutions (21481  |
| 19 Wed       | NKFF BOD Meeting – 6:30pm change Blvd #170 in Erlanger,  | – Emerge ITS at 1895 Airport Ex-KY  |
| 22 Sat       | NKFF Local Fly-Fishing Intro-to Lower Gunpowder Creek – from a canoe, kayak, or boat quired) or bywading the lower liamson Road                            | duction Float or Wade Day Trip learn stream fishing for bass (prior watercraft coordination re-Gunpowder Creek off of Dale Wil- |
| 25 Tue       | 5th District Federation Meeting – Pendleton County Sportsmans Club (Lock Rd in Butler, KY) - 6pm   |   |
| ? 29 Sat     | Campbell County Fly-Fishing Class @ Campbell Cty Library (Newport Branch) 10:30am – 4:30pm(NKFF Educators)   |   |



# Fly Fishing Lingo 101

By Dan Zazworsky

When you walk into a fly shop or a gathering of fly anglers for the first time, often times the confusing aspect of the sport isn't the gear or the fishing, it's the lingo. Often times sounding like a completely foreign language, "drop this off that", "dead-drift it" to a new angler's ear this all sounds like nonsense. Previously, that lingo took time to learn and under-



stand, but we're here to curate a constantly growing, quick-reference guide of some of the most common fly fishing words or phrases that may leave a new angler scratching their head in bewilderment.

## "Headwaters"

Definition: "a tributary stream of a river close to or forming part of its source."

Any time an angler refers to fishing the headwaters of a river or stream, they're usually referring to poking up small tributaries on the hunt for wild fish, usually trout! It's an easy term to use to avoid giving away a favorite tributary of a river while explaining where you caught that huge wild trout!

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## Fly Fishing Lingo 101

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### “Tailwater”

The term “tailwater” usually refers to a creek, stream or river that is flowing out from a dam. Many tailwaters are phenomenal fisheries, as the temperature of the water leaving the reservoir is typically temperature stable, creating the perfect opportunity for trout and other fish to feed year-round and grow large!



### “Strip-Set”

Used whenever you are fishing streamers, a strip-set is a method used to hook a fish once it eats your fly. All you have to do is keep stripping in your fly in with the rod low, pointed towards the fly until you feel the weight of the fish throbbing at the end of your leader. A strip-set ensures that you pull the fly horizontally through the trout’s mouth and buries the hook in the corner of the mouth.

### “Trout-Set”

A trout-set refers to when you simply lift your rod above your head once a fish takes your fly. Often times you hear someone say “Why did you trout set?” when you lose a fish on a streamer.

### “Hopper”

No, we’re not talking about David Harbour’s character in Stranger Things. “Hopper” refers to any time you are fishing a dry fly that mimics a grasshopper. Often used in the phrase, “Hopper-dropper” which refers to when you suspend a nymph below a

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## Fly Fishing Lingo 101

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bushy dry fly.

### **“Dropper”**

Refers to any time that you suspend a nymph below a dry fly, one of the most effective ways to cover water anywhere trout swim.



### **“Dead-Drift”**

A dead-drift is any time that you allow your flies to drift freely in the current. Used whenever another angler is describing how they were fishing their flies.

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## Fly Fishing Lingo 101

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### **“Dry Fly” v. “Wet Fly”**

While seemingly easy to differentiate, dry flies float and wet flies get wet, this is one of those little nuances that may be difficult to understand out the gate, especially if you are speaking to an older angler. “Wet flies” typically refer to unweighted emerger style flies swung across the current, as opposed to any fly that gets wet.

### **“Articulated”**

When referencing streamers, “articulated” simply means that the fly is made up of multiple sections connected by wire or linked in segments. Articulated streamers have more movement than their single-hooked compatriots.

### **“Meat”**

If you hear another angler referring to the big brown trout they hooked while fishing “meat,” they’re bragging about fishing streamers, not throwing actual meat into the water, although we think that might work too.

We’ll be updating this list regularly, so be sure to check back in anytime you run into a fly fishing turn of phrase that doesn’t make sense to you, and please toss any terms you’d like us to define in the comments!





*Editor's Note: NKFF member Linda Franklin took this amazing picture of a stonefly recently. Linda was a professional photographer. I'd say she's still a pro.*





## Brookville Tailwater Fishing

**By Phil Pursley**

The first two important things to do when you get up in the morning is to Make coffee and to check the water level on the BTW. Today the water was at 3.7 feet deep, not bad for wading. After cereal and coffee I packed up and headed to the river. Living 20 miles from this trout stream is kind of a blessing and kind of a curse. This short distance enables my trout addiction.

While driving down IN 252 I saw this little tortoise trying to cross the road. The road is pretty wide just before getting to the tailwater so I decided to give the little guy some help to crossing the road. Only two minutes to help him and I hope it extended his life. There are lots of these little guys this year. I found one on the street in front of my house. That little guy is now living in my woods.



When I got to the river, there was only one other fisherman in the water. My first rig was an indicator with a "stimulator" fly followed a black soft hackle. During my third drift I hooked up. That is I hooked a small twig on the bottom of the stream. That's OK, I know that I'm about the right depth for this water. As I carefully moved down stream with my flies still in the water, I felt a hit. Good, that means some fish like my flies. When I got a serious hit, my thought was , "game on". After pulling my line in

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## Brookville Tailwater Fishing

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to check my flies, I discovered that my soft hackle dropper was wound around my yellow indicator. This was decision time. Did the fish attack the yellow indicator or the black soft hackle. My thought was since the flies had been removed from my line, "why not try my new yellow sally pattern?". After tying on a size 16 yellow sally, my question was soon answered. The browns loved my new pattern. After things slowed down, I tied a midge dropper. No Luck.

It was time to add another fly to my line. My dropper this time was a second dry fly. It was a parachute adams. I now tie my parachute adams flies with an extra long parachute and this one had an orange

parachute. The orange color and the added length allowed me to see the fly much easier in the water with sun light shimmering on the surface. The browns like having a choice between yellow sallies and adam's flies.

It was a good day on the water.





# Add movement to mimic subsurface insects

By Jim Stroger

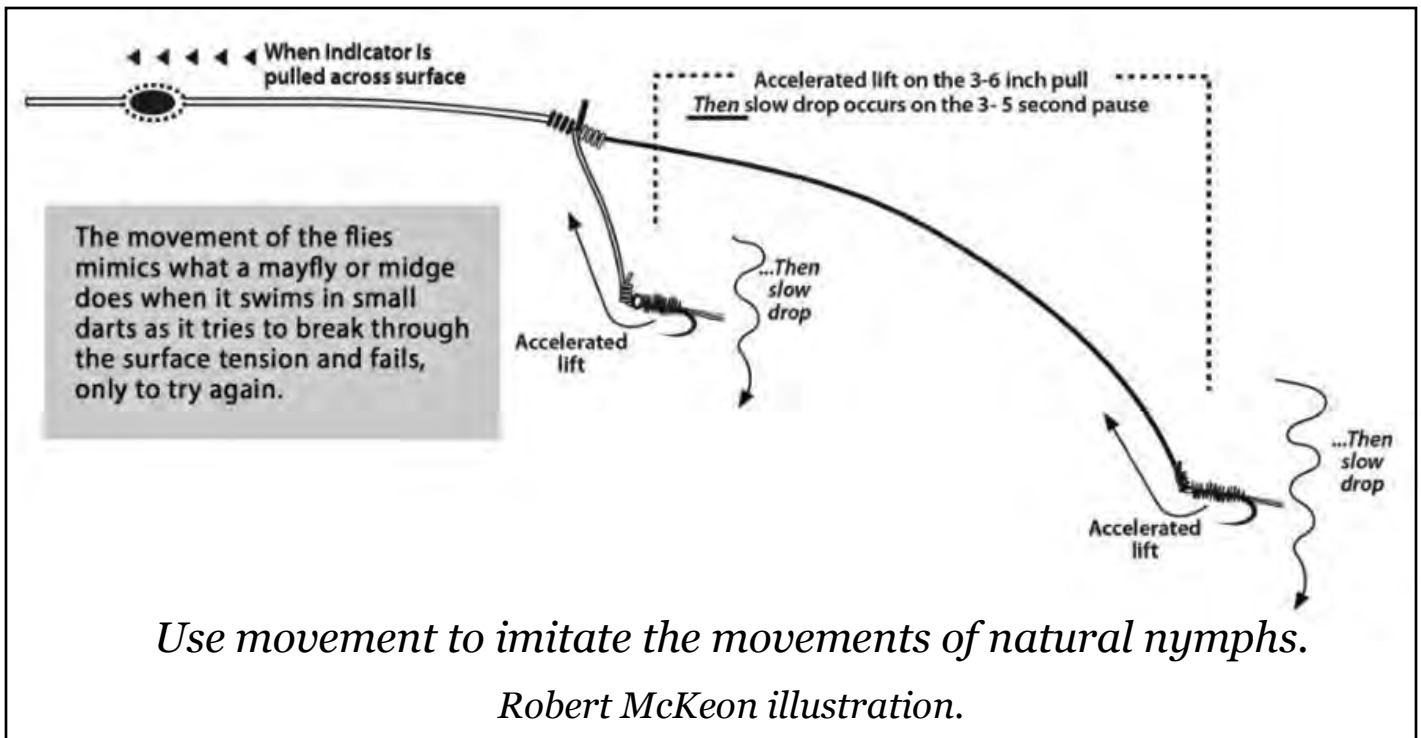


***Jim Stroger's setup for finding bugs in the rivers***



We all know the value of matching the hatch, but often that thinking seems more focused on dry fly fishing.

I prefer to fish under the surface. I know that the “bugs” are in front of the fish in their aquatic stages much longer, sometimes a year or more, than during their relatively brief winged phases. As a wet fly fisher, I also try to match the size, shape, and color of the aquatic insects that I am trying to mimic. These bugs are either actively



swimming through the water column, or struggling in the drift. This movement facet of imitation is often missing from a fly fisher’s bag of tricks.

Many of us turn over rocks in the riffles to get a sense of the types of bugs in the stream. If you are unfamiliar with how these insects move, a white dishpan is a handy tool.

I will put a pair of pantyhose that I’ve cut to fit over my landing net to help me capture a sample of insects from rocks that I have kicked just upstream of the net in the riffle. Then I position the net, bug side down, over the dishpan and pour a jug of water through the net. The insects in the dishpan reveal details about their movement that I can then include in my presentation.

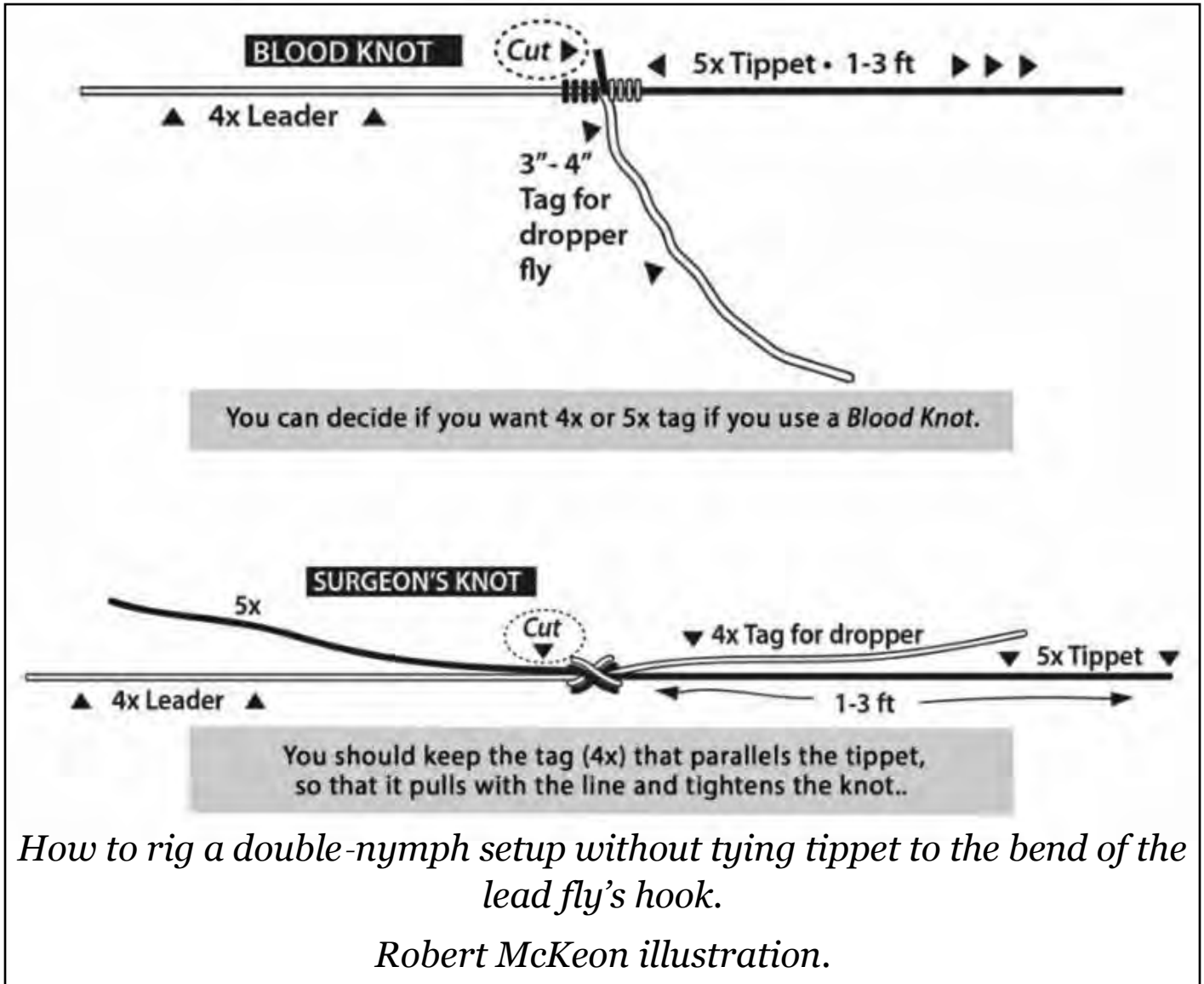
If you try this, you will see that mayflies move quite differently than caddisflies. Crane fly larvae and damselflies are quite distinctive in their movements as well.

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Now that you have a sense of how insect types move differently from one another, the next step is to mimic this in your presentation.

I almost always use two flies when I fish, which is legal in Arizona where I do most of my fishing. While many fly fishers using two flies tie their trailer fly to the bend of



their lead fly, I want my dropper and trailer fly to move independently.

To do this, just cut one tag end off of either a blood knot or surgeon's knot when you tie on the tippet. I often fish with a bead-head as my dropper fly under an indicator.

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My trailer fly is either a smaller bead-head if I want it to cover slightly deeper water than my dropper fly, or an unweighted nymph if I want it to follow in the same plane as the first fly.

Jim Strogen, the author of this article, is the youth education coordinator and conservation chair for the Gila Trout Chapter of Trout Unlimited, Payson, Arizona. The Arizona Game and Fish Commission named Jim Strogen Educator of the Year at its 2020 annual awards banquet in January. Strogen has received far too many accolades to list here, but one that particularly stands out is his selection as a Hero of Public Education by the Payson Unified School District.

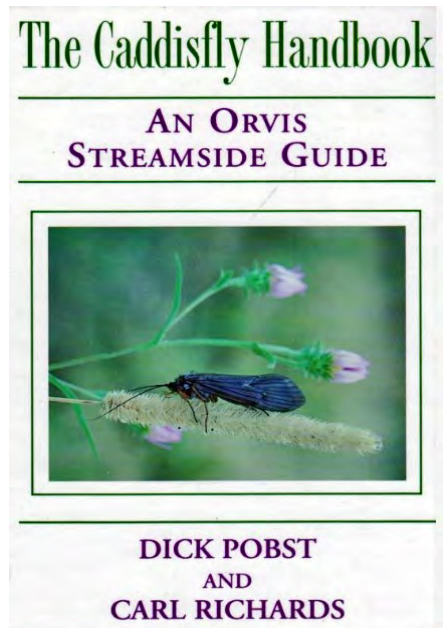


*Jim Strogen, his wife Martha and his grandsons Ayden and Owen*



The illustrations used in this article were drawn by Robert McKeon, the editor of the Desert Fly Casters monthly newsletter, the DCF Bulletin. Desert Fly Casters is located in Chandler Arizona, about 25 miles southeast of Phoenix. Robert is an award winning illustrator who was featured

in an article on page 15 of the [February 2020 issue of "The Creel"](#), NKFF's monthly newsletter. Among other books, Robert illustrated *The Caddisfly Handbook* and one other *Orvis Streamside Guide*. He also edited and illustrated 2 books on bamboo fly rods.



[Jess McGlothlin](#) sees her mission as a simple one: tell stories. She is a passionate writer and photographer who brings a unique, energetic perspective and approach to her work. Check out her fly fishing collection [HERE](#).



The Creel

A Publication of Northern Kentucky Fly Fishers

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<https://nkff.org/>