

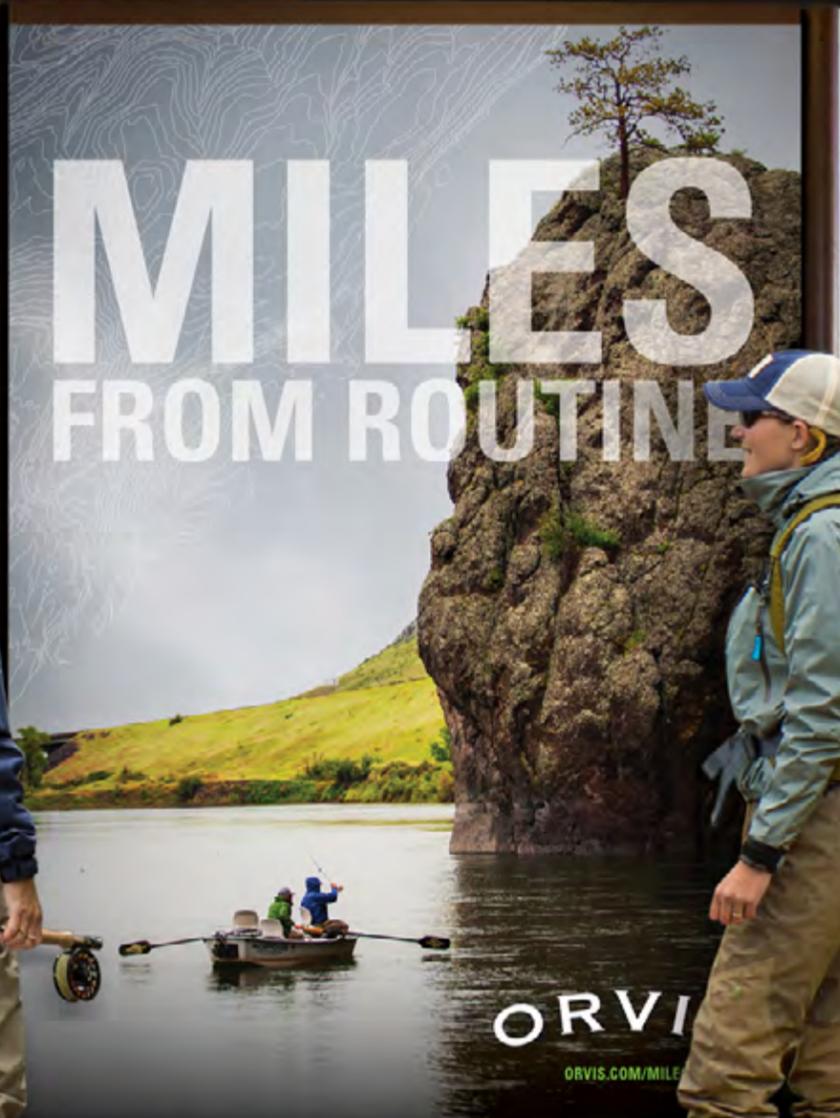
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The Winter
of Our
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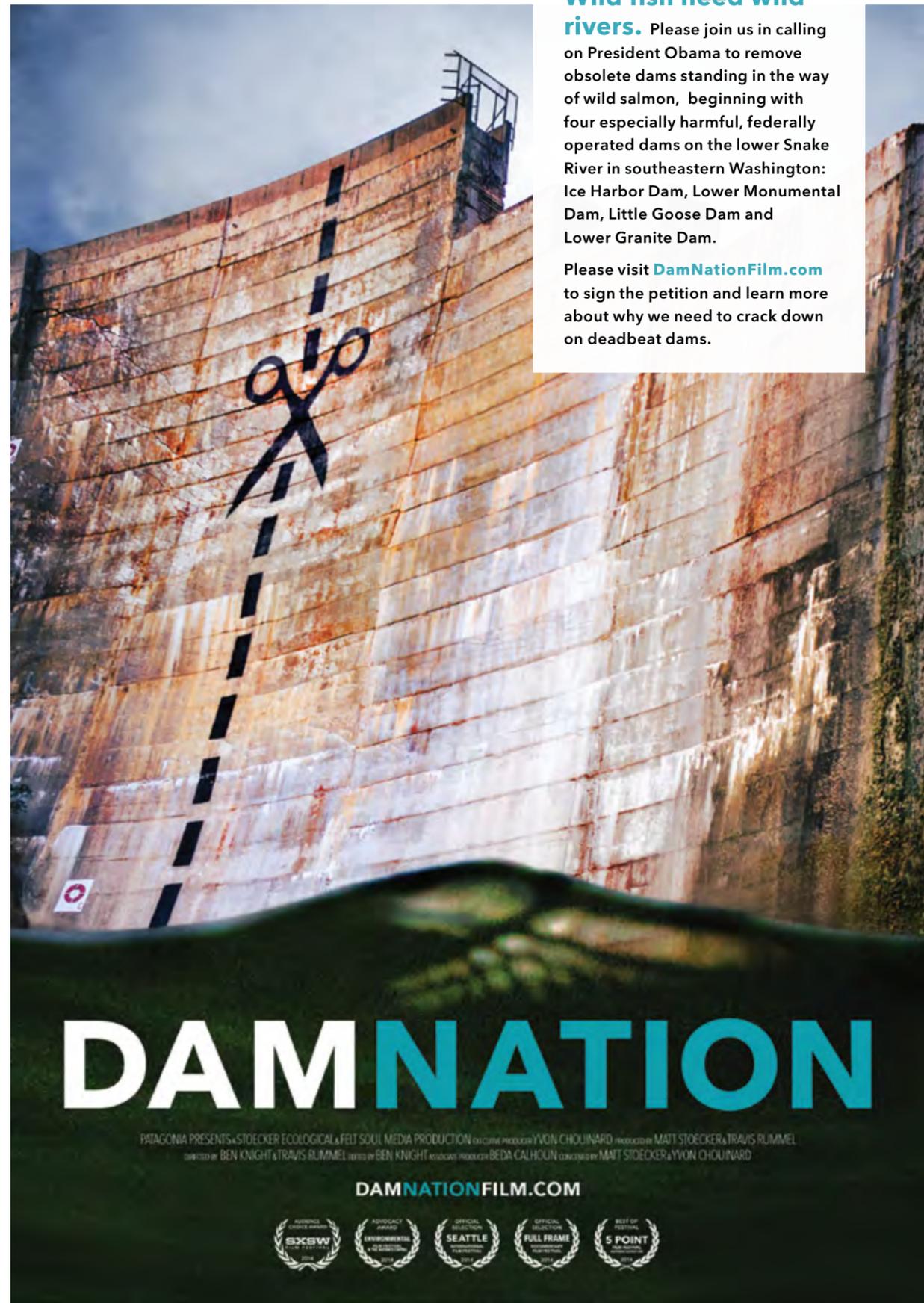
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Watch Out Rosenbauer, 2014, Thomas Harvey



FEATURES

NO. 14



- 30 BELIZED
PHOTOS: STEVE SEINBERG
COMMENTARY: DAVID GROSSMAN
- 68 TRACKS
BY MIKE SEPELAK
PHOTOS: DARRIN DOSS AND MIKE SEPELAK
- 80 ON THE ROAD WITH THE FIREGIRL
BY JESS MCGLOTHLIN
- 102 RE-BUILD
PART TWO: METAMORPHOSIS
BY DAVID GROSSMAN AND STEVE SEINBERG
PHOTOS: STEVE SEINBERG AND PAUL PAYNE
- 144 ITCHY TRIGGER FINGERS
BY OWEN PLAIR

DEPARTMENTS

- 8 SCOF WINTER FLUFFER
- 20 FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK...
.DAVID GROSSMAN
- 24 HAIKU
.LARRY LITRELL
- 64 FUR AND FEATHER MATINEE
.HOME INVADER - BRIAN WISE
- 76 AN OPEN LETTER
PAUL PUCKETT'S PUGLISI FETISH
.THOMAS HARVEY
- 98 MOVING PICTURES
.STRANDED - DOUG ROLAND
- 120 CONSERVATION
.STEALING THE NOLICHUCKY - DAVID GROSSMAN
- 132 STRATERGIZING
.TIDES - SCOTT DAVIS
- 160 BENCH PRESS
.CLAWDAD - CHUCK KRAFT
- 168 THE BACK PAGE
.PAUL PUCKETT

The Winter of Our Discontent

S.C.O.F
WINTER 2015
ISSUE NO. 14
THE WINTER OF
OUR DISCONTENT

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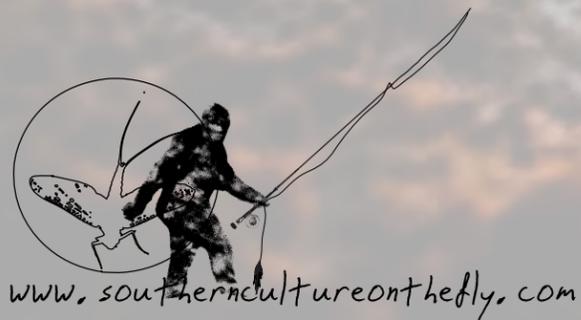
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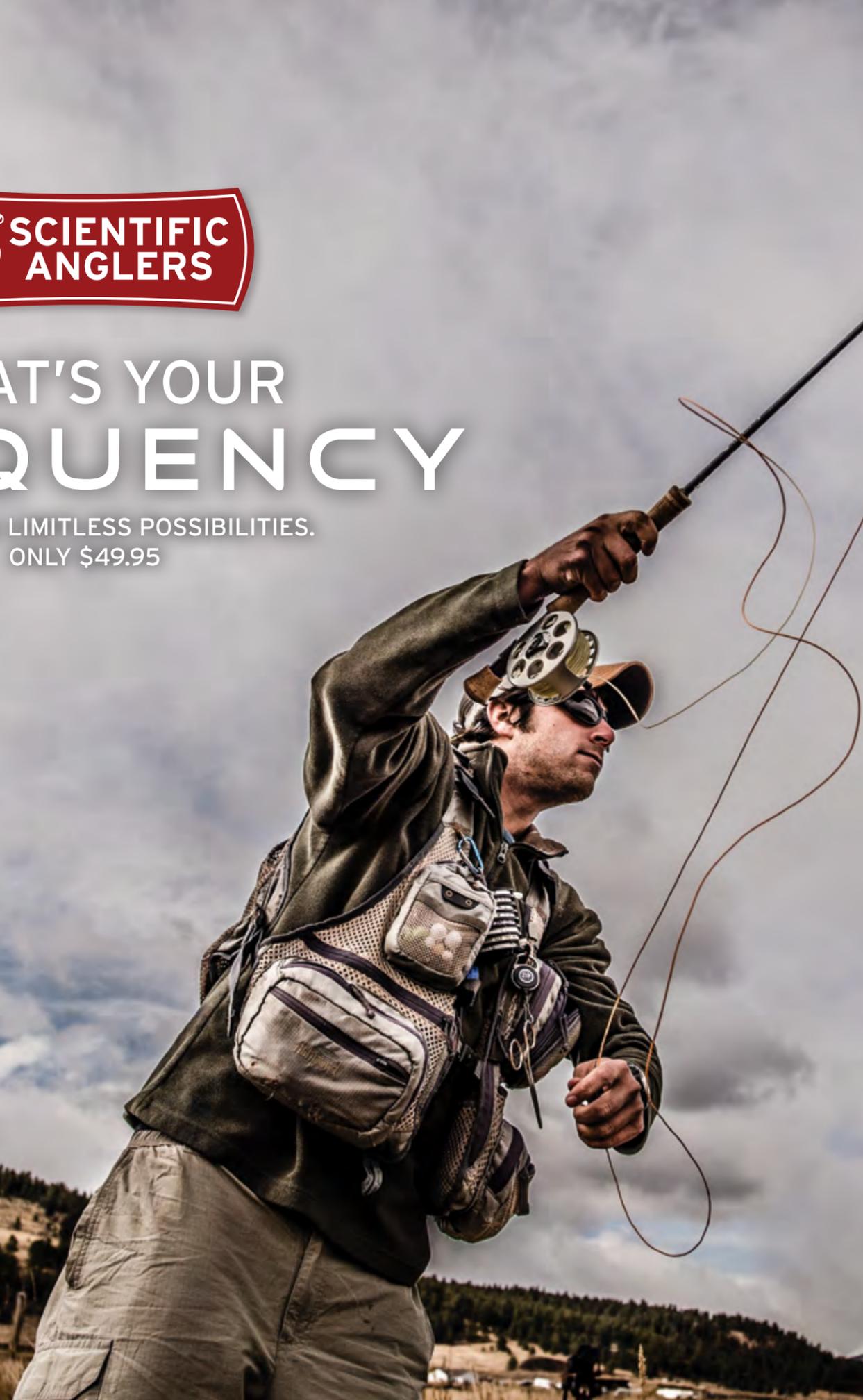
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A man in a light blue shirt and dark shorts is washing a white boat with a high-pressure hose in a cluttered workshop. The workshop is filled with various tools, equipment, and materials. A sign on the wall reads "REMOVE BEFORE FLIGHT". The scene is lit with natural light from the open garage door.

**A MAN HAS HIS
PRIORITIES.**



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From the Editor's desk...

to your bathroom.

winter 2015

Life has finally tracked me down and pounced on me like I was a gazelle. At 36 years old, with three businesses, two kids, three dogs, and a tractor...I give up. I have lost the ability to do whatever I want, whenever I want to do it. I admittedly had a good run, made possible by a better-than-good wife. I fished hard and often. I chased the hot bites, hatches and my next PBR all over the country. I drove seven hours for eight hours of fishing at the drop of a hat on a regular basis. I made my meager living guiding and working in a shop and living my love 24/7. I now live my passion more like 1.75/.2. What I didn't realize was that while I was chasing fish, my life was chasing me. I'm not sure I ever even saw it coming. Trying to hold on to the past is a moot point. I've got 20 years of grind looming on my horizon and no rich, sick uncles I know of.

I'm not saying that I would trade my life now for my life back in the day. No, the honor of raising a couple of kids in my image is something I wouldn't trade. The privilege of seeing them discovering the world around them with a fly rod in their hands is absolutely the most exciting prospect in my life so far. But still, I had a LOT of fun up until now. I'll still eek out a few trips and do a lot of fishing close to home with the kids. But there will be a lot less "I" and hell of a lot more "we" in the next 20 responsible years of my story.

My wife has often compared me to a caged gorilla, always planning my escape and going ape shit when the door is opened and I'm free to roam. (I'm also quite hairy.) I guess the whole point of this is, the old silverback has finally been broken -- for at least a little while.



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Haiku

with Larry Littrell
@saltbum



Frost clings to the beard,
Over high mountain, I see
Redfish tails waving.

Photo: Ben Sittig



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FALL 2011**



**ISSUE #2
WINTER 2012**



**ISSUE #3
SPRING 2012**



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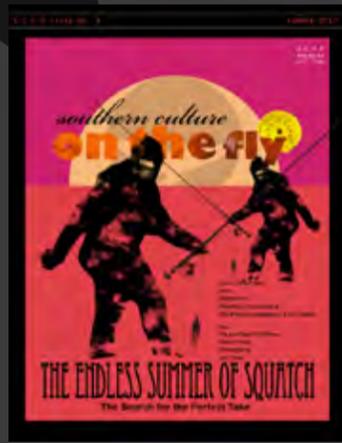
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FALL 2012**



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SUMMER 2013**



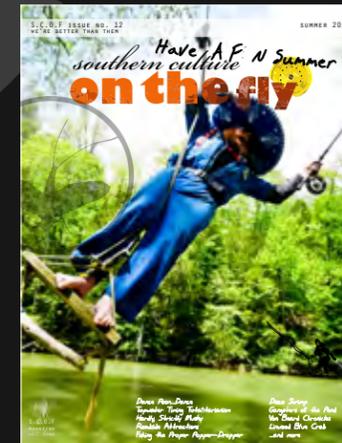
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FALL 2013**



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WINTER 2014**



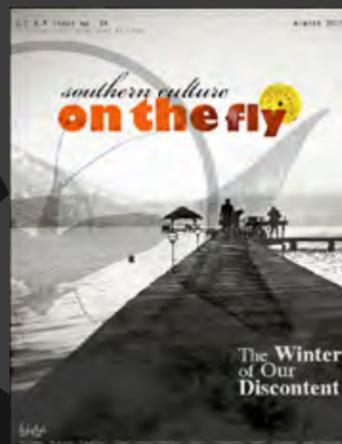
**ISSUE #11
SPRING 2014**



**ISSUE #12
SUMMER 2014**

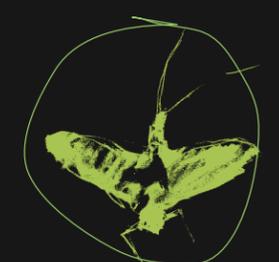


**ISSUE #13
FALL 2014**



**The Winter
of Our
Discontent**

still free... whenever you need 'em



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Belize

Photos: Steve Seiberg
Commentary: David Grossman

For as long as I have been a consumer of fly fishing media, all of the essays, videos and photos have been from the perspective of those lucky individuals that were actually there. Well screw that. Welcome to a magazine feature told by the poor, sad sap that didn't get to go.



Steve was invited to El Pescador Lodge in Belize for their 40th anniversary party and Jim Klug's book release. Notice how I said Steve was invited, not "we" were invited. Nope, nobody invites writers places, just glamour boy photographers. So for all you aspiring fly fishing media types, put down the pen and pick up the camera. We are a society of lookers now, not readers, but I digress.

When you don't go on a trip that your buddy gets to go on, it's kind of like mourning a loss. There are seven stages of grief I'm told:

Shock: "You get to go where? You son of a bitch"

Denial: "There is no f'n way you're going to Belize, you son of a bitch"

Anger: "I will kick you in the dick if you catch a permit, you son of a bitch"

Bargaining: "Maybe I could hide in your luggage, or be the towel boy at the cabana, you son of a bitch"

Guilt: "Maybe if I was nicer, or bathed more, you son of a bitch"

Depression: "I just want to be left alone, you son of a bitch"

Acceptance: I have no familiarity with this concept





So, like most trips (not that I would know) to Belize, Steve's was awesome. Hanging out with a lot of media folks, great food, cold Beliken, and of course, the fishing. I was not forced to kick him in the crotch as he did not catch a permit, but the bonefish were plentiful, which is more than I can say for my couch, where there were no bonefish.

But quite honestly, the worst thing about staying at home while your buddy goes fishing...in Belize...are the post-game replays, and replays, and replays. It's human nature to carry your exaltation home with you from far-flung fishing destinations. To a certain degree it can't be helped. On the other hand, none of us want to hear about it, you son of a bitch. I don't care who you met, what you caught, or how awesome the whole thing was. I gathered that from the texts you sent me during the trip, asshole. It's a little thing called sportsmanship. You don't talk shit to the team you just beat back into the mercy rule. Win with class, and keep your mouth shut.











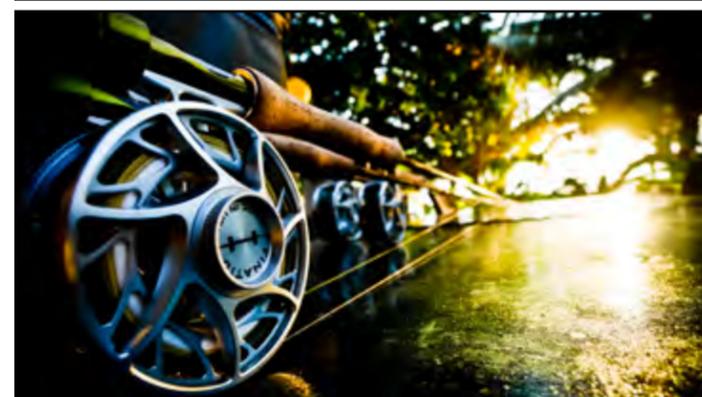
















I blame a lot of people for me not going on this trip, far too many to be listed here. I harbor what some might consider equal opportunity anger at this point. I have spread it far and wide and yet I still sit here dreaming of warm locales with silvery fish with hate in my heart. I hope this has at least given a voice to those among us that up until now have had no voice. And I think I speak for all of us to all of you travelers when I say, "Suck it."



I (Steve) need to thank Ali Gentry (and her entire family), Jim Klug (Yellowdog Adventures), Lori-Ann Murphy, and every one at El Pescador for an amazing week away from ice and snow (and Dave). For the record, there were several writers (great writers) there with me that were much nicer (and did bathe). Also, my guides did give me several shots at huge schools of permit... but lucky for Dave, I did not make one eat.

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A person wearing a green jacket and a hooded sweatshirt stands on a railway track. The track is covered in fallen yellow and orange leaves. The background consists of a dense forest of bare trees under a pale sky. The overall mood is quiet and somewhat somber.

TRACKS

By Mike Sepelak

Photos: Darrin Doss and Mike Sepelak



Slate grey ballast, like the fragments of my life, myriad and sharp edged, interlock underfoot, puzzle-pieced, and holds solid. It only turns to loose, jagged scree when I step beyond reasonable limits, which, sad to say, is often.

There's a mile of track down to Trestle Pool. A mile of rail along which place and time and perception are transformed. A modest mile, a pittance on the map, but a light-year for the continece. I could dip into this tailwater from a county's-worth of trail-heads, turnouts, and small streamside church gravel lots, but I almost always start my day here; not because the fishing is good or it's an easy way in, for neither is

particularly true. I walk these tracks because they change me in ways that I need to be changed.

When I time it just right, I arrive as the turbines two miles upstream stop spinning and the reservoir's release is pinched to a trickle. The sparks they've spun out have sped down the lines into town where there seems not enough happening to consume them. It's hard times in these hills.

I park the truck and rig up in the small clearing next to the mill. Nerves still jangling from roads and cities and modern adult life, I try to take it slow, but can usually be counted on to miss a snake guide in my industrial haste. It's the hurry in me that breaks and forgets things. It's the hurry in me that I need to shake.

And it's the hurry that sends ballast stone tumbling as I climb to the tracks and start downgrade. Awkward steps, the ties at odds with my gait, lengths too long or too short, never just right. Lengths somehow indivisible by stride. Short, short, long. Long, short, long. Short, stumble, shit! It feels like life. I'd balance the rail like a gymnast's beam but for the carbide studs in my wading boots. Walk the line. In time, as the river bends to come alongside and I find a rhythm, the cadence becomes obvious; obvious, once I've stopped trying to think about it.

The gates have been closed but the water's still up and roars in concurrence with that which I've brought to this place; the pressures of progress and expectation and want. The 10am freight creeps up behind, crawling along at notch 1, adding its rumble to the din and moving me from the tracks. It trundles by and I pitch my frustrations into the open boxcars, sending them like hobos to parts unknown. The temptation to join them is strong.



But as I approach the trestle, the clamor falls away, trains and waters and pressures alike, and recedes into the background as gentle white noise. The frenetic fluid surges, the coal-driven horsepower, the dammed up tensions are no longer required to drive amp or ambition and a natural quiet settles in. I leave it all on the tracks, all the crap, all the churn, and carefully climb down along the trestle's edge, down along the wetbranch feeder that it sturdily spans, and find my feet at the edge of the pool as the waters fall away and the river is revealed, as am I.

I walk these tracks because they change me in ways that I need to be changed. Just a mile. Just a precious mile.

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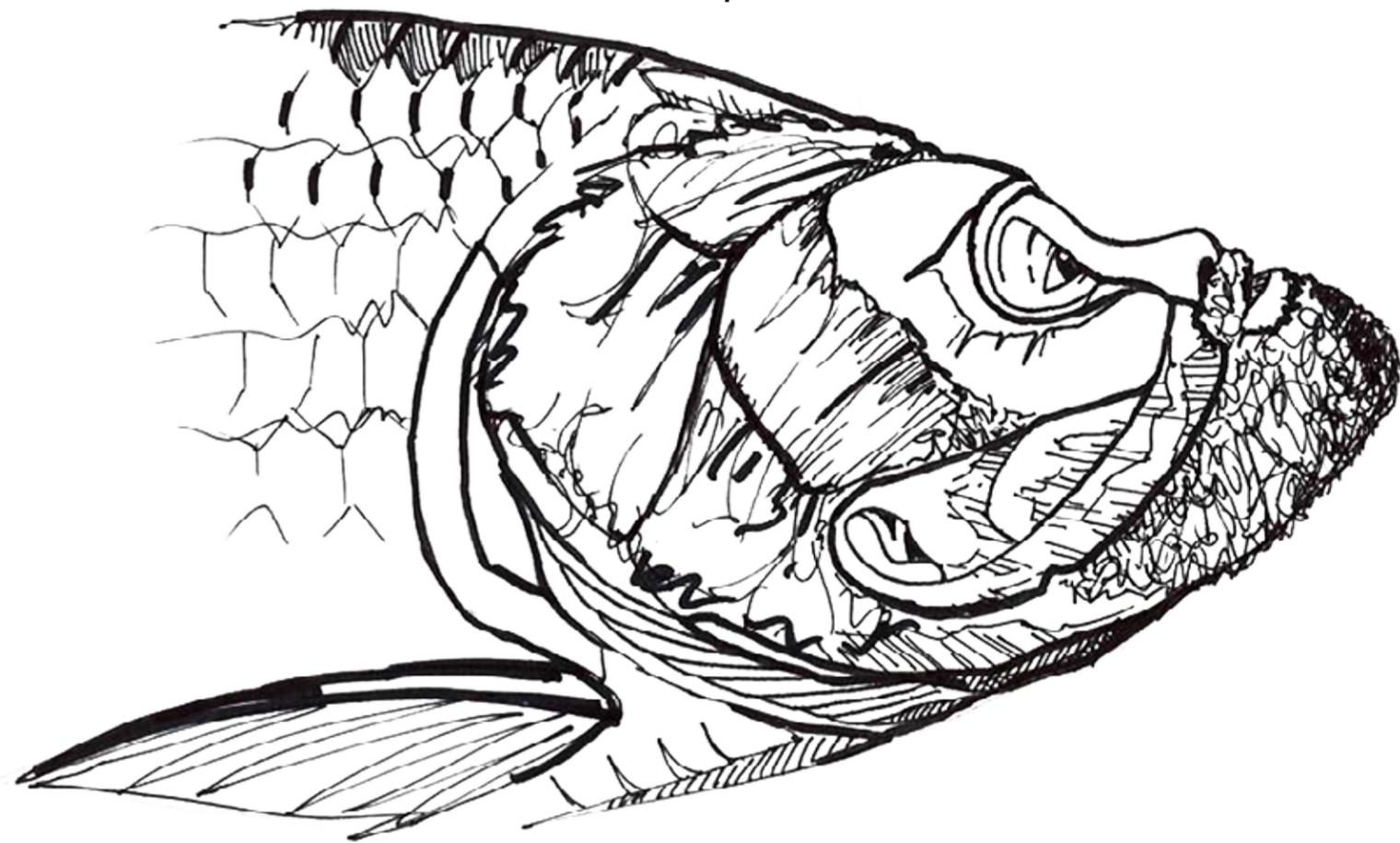
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Paul Puckett's Puglisi Fetish – An Open Letter



I'm worried about Paul.

It's the kind of sudden terror that hits you when you're grocery shopping and realize you left your wallet at home just as the oddly attractive grocery store clerk wearing skin tight khaki pants and sporting a fresh wrist tat rings up the last item in your cart -- a family-size box of mac and cheese.

Paul's problem is not drugs, booze nor women. Paul's problem is Puglisi.



For the last year, my friend has fished just one fly. A monkish oath to a Puglisi pattern that would soon spiral into a sinfully synthetic obsession. At first I thought the dedication was darling. At first...

"I have decided that I am going to fish nothing but one fly for the whole year of 2014, and it shall be the Everglades Special. This fly is so diverse, through its shape and color, it can mimic so many different creatures that make up fresh and saltwater fish's diets." His words. Not mine.

The honeymoon stage was swell, and the two were a perfect match with the redfish and the bass and the boorish fish, too dull to discern between soul and synthetic. The sort of boyish infatuation with Puglisi was bearable, even charming. But as the months passed, delight turned into delusion as Paul Puckett packed for the Palometa Club.

"I think it could trick a permit in a schooling situation, but not so much a tailing permit, but then again, you never know with those bastards!" His words. Not mine.

You see, a sane sportsman, sound in his understanding of the mythical permit, would pack accordingly: Merkins, Avalon and Borski crabs in varying weights and sizes. Paul Puckett made it to Palometa with Puglisi in tow and for three days caught two fish--fish, not permit. The final day of the trip Paul had a brief moment of clarity inspired by Alonzo, his Mexican guide and bilingual voice of reason.

"Alonzo threw the white Raghead crab at me, and said, 'you must use this fly, you must... other fly no work, never will.' So, at some point it's not just my fish anymore, it's the guide's, the team's fish also. I gave in, without a whole lot of fight, and threw the non-Everglades Special fly into the school, and bam, full rod tilt."

When I heard the news that Paul's affair with Puglisi had hit a rough patch, I was filled with hope. I wasn't raised to root for infidelity, but I somehow found myself cheering on patterns like the Clouser Minnow and the Drum Beater, secretly hoping they'd work their way first into Paul's heart and then back into his fly box. But like all true addictions, Paul's passion for Puglisi was far from over. He heard the Sirens' call, and for the next few months, continued his ménage à trois.

The tryst went on until Paul's commitment was tested once more in Florida while chasing tarpon. For three days, Paul wanted nothing more than to tempt a tarpon with his beloved fly bride. But for the second time, Paul Puckett, a victim of circumstance, cut his loop knot and his ties to Puglisi. "The fact that the 'worm hatch' is very rare and very selective made me decide to give way to the worm fly and set the Everglades Special aside for these evenings. The fact that I had caught my tarpon and was in a very selective situation, I didn't feel too guilty about the decision." His words. Not mine.

Then came Park City, Utah, where Puglisi took a back seat to big bugs and trout slime.

At this point, my panic had subsided. It was June, and Paul had forsaken Puglisi not once, not twice, but thrice. His mind was clearing from the delusion that one man could fish one pattern for one year. After straddling the line between functioning fly fisherman and intervention, I

felt Paul was on the straight and narrow. Then Alaska happened...

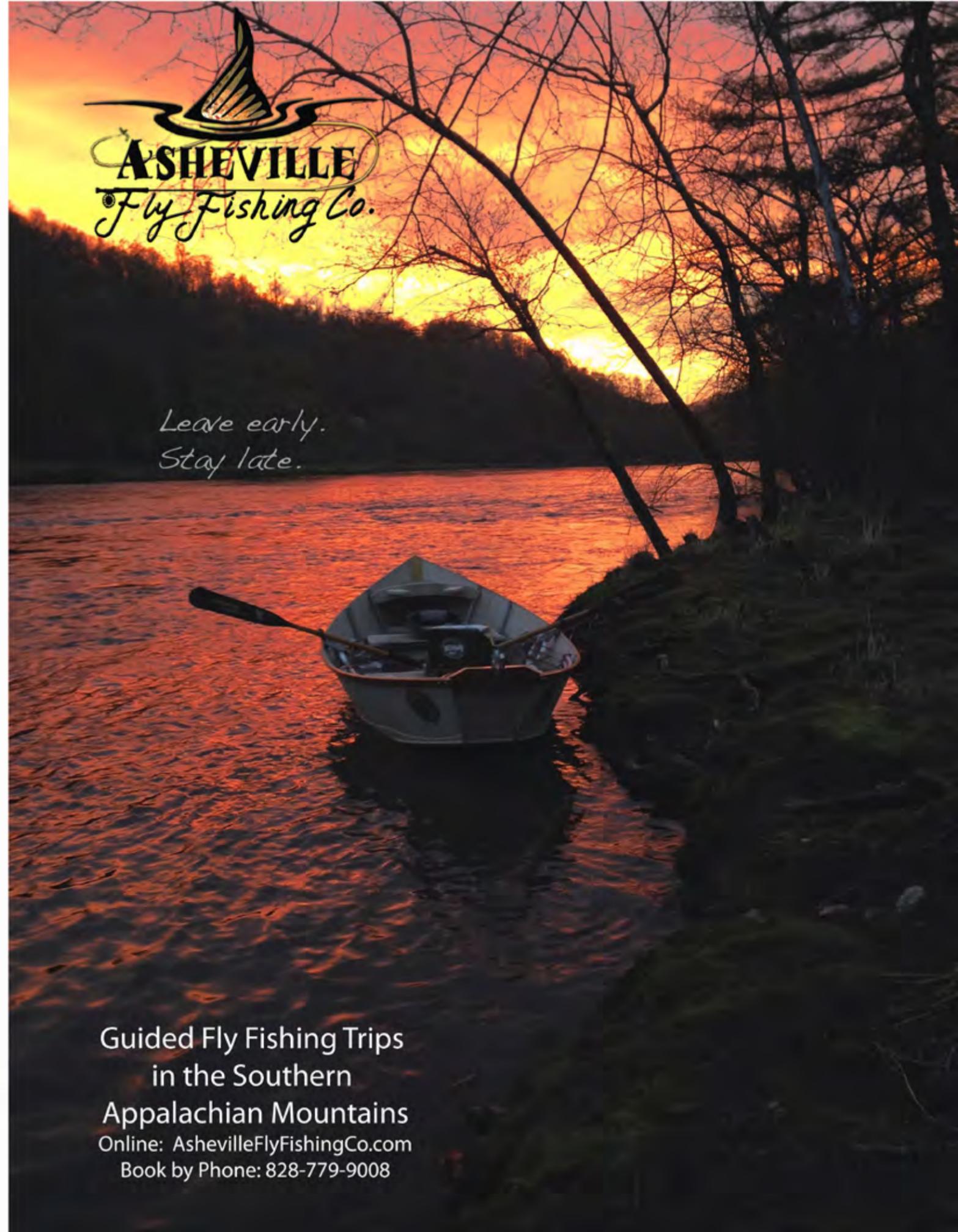
Like a swift kick in the dick, Paul Puckett and Puglisi set off for Bristol Bay like two newlyweds madly in love and unabashedly affectionate.

"I went to battle again in cold water country with my Everglades Special box, and only that." His words. Not mine. The proud decree of a delusional man cemented by the naiveté of native fish. Three rainbow trout, two chum salmon, two dolly varden, countless grayling and a sockeye; like a census of senseless dupery, Paul fell madly in love with Puglisi again.

The seasons changed, the spartina grass flooded, and Paul's leader was never nicked. It's December 31, and I can only pray the one-year pledge to Puglisi will end today.

"It was fun, but glad to be done." Paul's words, not mine.

Thomas Harvey
December 31, 2014



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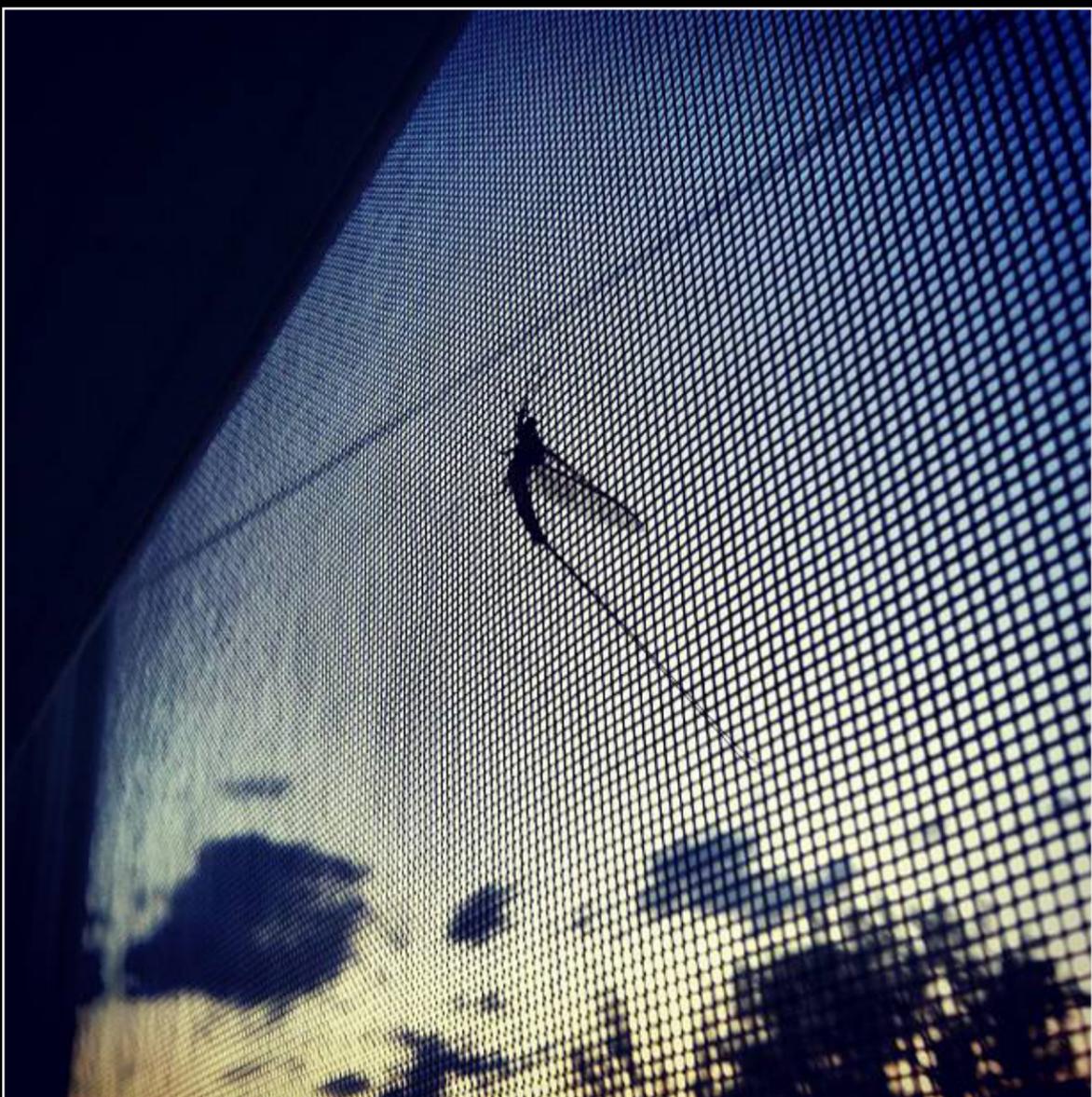
By Jess McGlothlin

The life of a photographer/writer is not nearly as glamorous as it would seem. And the life of a fly fishing media person (because journalist/writer/photographer is just awkward) is even less so. It's a lot of long nights hovering in front of the computer, sleeping in the back of a Subaru surrounded by camera bags and finding that stray Purple Haze now handily embedded in my hip when I roll over in the

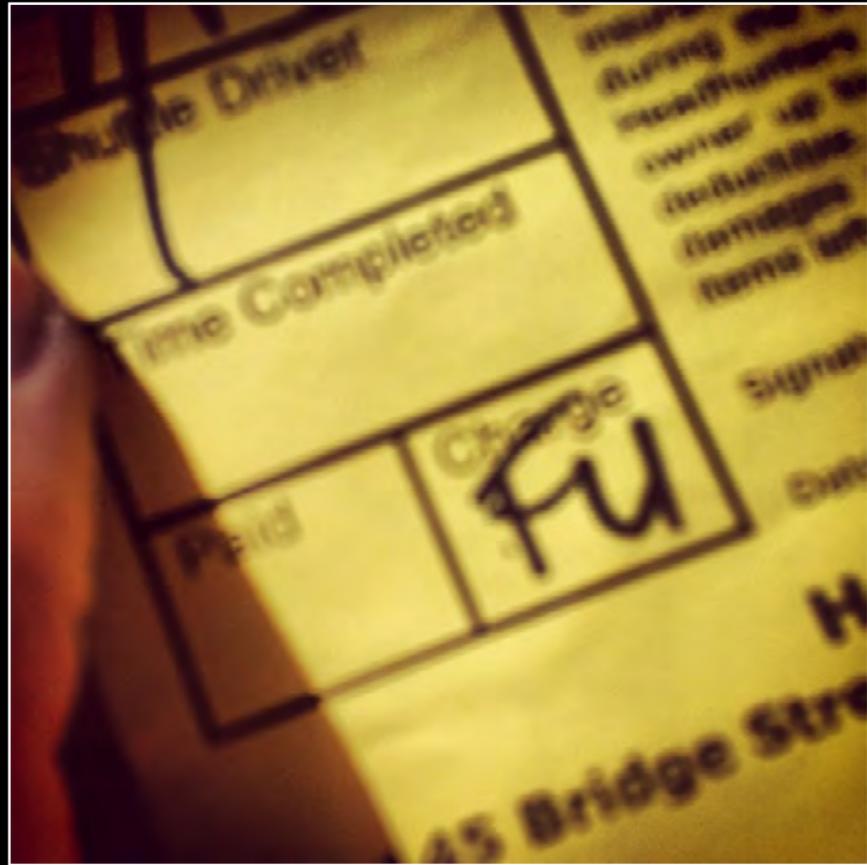
middle of the night, and mad cross-country drives spent fervently hoping the car survives the journey.

It's also the best damn job you'll ever have. Rivers make me happy—they have since childhood. Exploring them with cool folks who can cast (really cast, mind you) makes me even more happy. Despite the sleepless nights, rough-out living quarters and Clif Bar meal plan, life behind the lens can't be beat.















Jess McGlothlin comes from a fishing family, the Fishin' McGlothlin's. Proving that you goitta hustle to make it in this world, Jess is a contributor to just about everything out there, but spends her days at the Orvis Mothership in Vermont convincing us to buy more stuff. Find her work at firegirlphotography.com



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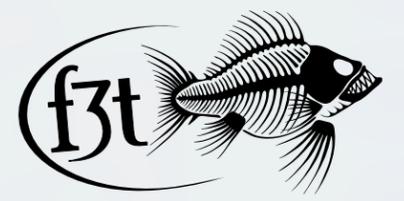
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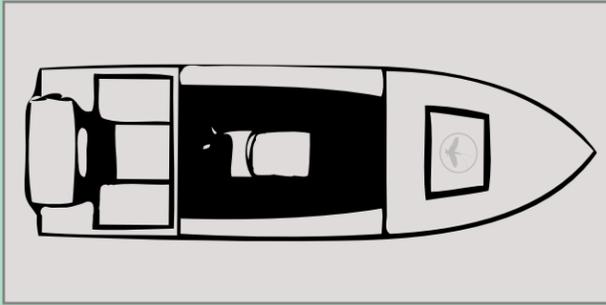




rebuild

PART TWO : METAMORPHOSIS

Steve Seinberg and David Grossman
Photos: Paul Payne and Steve Seinberg



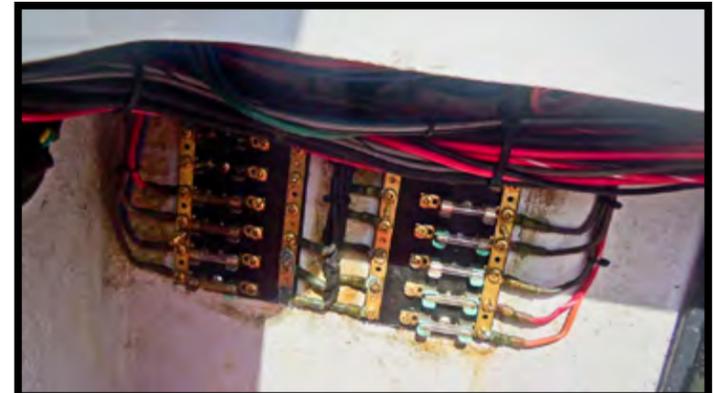
It turns out buying a used skiff (which took about a year to find*) is a hell of a lot easier than restoring your used skiff. There is nothing quick and easy about fiberglass, wiring, paint and trailers. That is why it is especially fortuitous that we have a relationship with the fellas at Hell's Bay (thanks, guys). I cannot say this loud enough -- if you are anything like us, don't plan on restoring a boat that must be seaworthy by yourself, unless you like sinking, which we do not.

Fact: Boats look their best in the parking lot when you're buying them surrounded by buddies full of helpful advice. It's not until you get the boat stripped out and put under the magnifying glass of professionals do you realize what you've done. That kick to the nuts, my friends, is normal. Expect it. Happens to all of us.

*See Part 1, SCOF Fall 2014



The fiberglass on our 2003 Hell's Bay Whipray Pro was in worse shape than we had ever imagined. The electrical system looked like a rats' nest, and the Ram-lin trailer needed new everything. What we figured out was this is pretty typical for a 12-year-old boat that actually gets fished. The fiberglass, gel coat and non-skid were the first items on the agenda. The boat got flipped, patched, sanded, gelled and buffed. Way better treatment than I get around here. The guys at Hell's Bay were rad enough to throw our logo in the two-toned non-skid for a classy touch (maybe the first ever mayfly on a flats boat, I might add). Next came wiring and rigging. We reused all the hardware (hinges, cleat, grab rails and the such) saving some serious money in the process. The console was completely rebuilt with a new throttle control, new gauges, switches, and a Raymarine touchscreen GPS, which is especially choice. (If you have the means I highly recommend picking one up.)



The electrical system had its ups and downs. Most of the wire was good, it's where those wires terminated that things went horribly awry. A monkey fonicating with a football comes to mind. The guys hacked through the crap like a hot knife through butter. Glass fuses were abandoned and electrical system lemons were transformed into Mike's Hard Lemonade.









The trim tabs, rub rail, boat cushions, poling platform with integrated back rest/step (because Steve's old) all got swapped out, and with it the SCOF old skiff was like brand-spanking-new awesomeness.

My mother taught me not to talk about money in public, but even with all the work that had to be done and without any of the favors or hook-ups that we obviously had to call in, we still came out way better than buying a brand new boat -- and look what two schmoes like us get to tool around in. (Seriously.)







We really appreciate the incredible experience that we had working with Hell's Bay Boatworks on the restoration. Thank you to everyone at Hell's Bay who helped with this project especially Todd Fuller, Paul Payne, and Dan Hunt. This skiff is far beyond what seemed possible.



CONSERVATION

Stealing the Nolichucky

By David Grossman
Aerial Photos: Travis Fraser

After living in Appalachia for the last five years, I am a true believer that to you have to be from here to truly understand these mountains. My neighbor from Miami is as clear a portrait of this as I could ever hope to provide. Life is and was always harder in these hills. From the winters to the almost complete void of well-paying jobs means you have to really want to live here and be willing to sacrifice for a way of life. Not helping matters much is a clear and delineated history of corporations treating the abundant natural resources that we are blessed with here, as their own personal playground, to do with what they please, when they please, and with no real compensation for what they use, or more accurately abuse. From coal, to timber, and everyone in between, corporations have been able to get away with too much in our little neck of the woods.

The reasons for this profit-making free-for-all are many but can be boiled down to one pervasive theme: Poverty. When people are worried where their next meal is coming from, or how they are going to put a roof over their heads, a job is a lot more valuable than a scenic view or clean water. The problem here lies in the fact that the companies providing these jobs are the same companies keeping the wages low so as to keep the people poor and quiet. The bullshit transpiring on the Nolichucky River, as I write this, is just one more instance of a long line of crap the people here have been expected to swallow. The only difference is that this time US Nitrogen is the company holding the spoon.



Here's a little recap to get everyone caught up. US Nitrogen manufactures explosives, mainly used in mining applications, one of which happens to be mountaintop removal (I know, the irony is thick here). In 2010, US Nitrogen selected a site on Pottertown Road in Greene County, Tenn., for a new liquid ammonium nitrate plant. The industrial process required to make liquid ammonium nitrate requires vast amounts of water, more than a million gallons a day for this size facility. Originally, water was to be provided by Greene County through existing water systems. The sticking point in this plan was the rates US Nitrogen would have to pay for this water. No agreement could be reached, so US Nitrogen began negotiations with the state of Tennessee, the Industrial Development Board of Greene County, as well as other various boards and agencies to construct a double pipeline extending from the Nolichucky River to the site of the plant 12 miles away.



The proposed pipeline would extract approximately 1.4 million gallons of water a day from the river, returning 45,000 gallons of “treated” water to the river after evaporation losses in the manufacturing processes were accounted for. These negotiations were not held in public, and no meetings were scheduled to gather input from other stakeholders and landowners along the Nolichucky. This deal was done behind closed doors by US Nitrogen and the public officials residents expected to represent their best interests. Sadly, the interests of the residents of Greene and Cocke Counties were never even brought up in anything other than in terms of dollars and cents. To top off the good ol’ boy back room dealings, was the fact the state rights of way needed for the project could not be conveyed to a corporation other than a utility. So instead of giving up on the idea and actually paying for their water, the Industrial Development Board (IDB) stepped in and made itself a utility. I once made myself He-Man by coloring my tighty-whities brown and fashioning a sword. Unfortunately for me, this didn’t make me He-Man, just a jackass in brown tighty-whities. The whole approval process for a 12-mile pipeline through various public and private property, benefitting no one but US Nitrogen, took less than six months to get approved. It takes most people longer to get a paint color approved by their neighborhood association.



All hope is not lost, however. In this story, the people of East Tennessee are standing up and saying "enough." Once Nolichucky landowners -- some of whose family have owned land on the river since revolutionary times -- got a rotten sniff of what was transpiring, they banded together grassroots-style to form the Save The Nolichucky organization. They immediately filed injunctions and lawsuits against all the major players, and in a sad prophecy of what might become of the mighty Nolichucky, held a funeral for the river. The hearing for temporary injunction will be held in the Greenville, Tenn. Chancery Court on January 22 at 9 a.m. I for one plan on being there and having my voice heard, and I hope to see some of you there. This aggression on the Nolichucky will not stand.

This is an editorial. The author has no claims to actually know what he's talking about in terms of facts, figures and dates. So don't email him. Seriously, don't. Instead please use that time to garner your own informed opinion based on the facts. For more information, please visit savethenolichucky.org. Send all angry letters, calls, threats, and burning bags of poop please visit usnitrogen.com.



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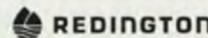
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Tides

Tides can be intimidating if you're new to the briny, water but they can be learned quite easy. They go up and down every day on the same cycle, and can be read well into the future. These are predicted tides. Wind plays a role in the tides' height and, as we know, water conditions can't be forecasted until days prior. So what to do, where to start?



Charts

Tide charts are everywhere -- in print and online. Look up the dates and place you want to fish, and you'll have the tide chart. Take redfish for example: From spring through fall, they tail and patrol grass flats during high tides. The higher the tide, the more water floods the banks. This not only gives you more places to hunt fish, but it gives you more time on the flat. In Charleston, S.C., a 6-foot tide is about average for most grass flats to flood. If I were planning to fish, I would look for any tides on the charts from 5.8 feet, upwards. If it's 6.7 feet to 7.1 feet, this would also include my prime time at 6 feet. It will happen an hour or two before high tide and can be found on the curve on the tide graph. The same goes for low tides: An hour or two before the actual dead low and and an hour or so on the rising are prime times. Winter redfish are mainly a low tide game and since heights are not important, just that it's low water, we can look only at the time.

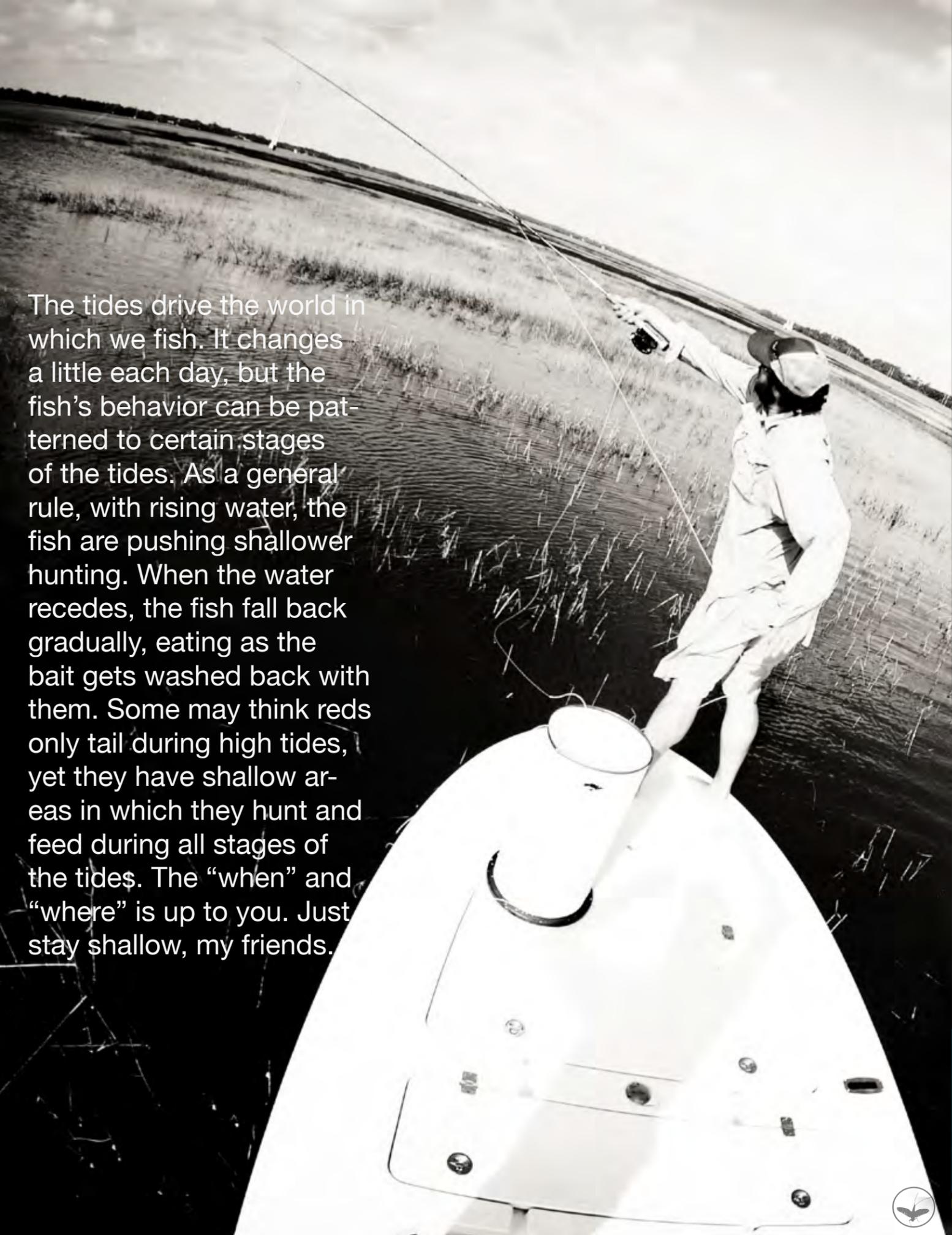




Tide stations are placed in different places along different stretches of several rivers in this area and the tide readings will be off for each spot. Again, let's use Charleston as an example. If I read the Charleston tide chart at 6 feet at 12:00 p.m., it is giving me the reading from Charleston harbor. If I'm fishing up river on the Wando, the height is roughly 7.3 feet at 1:35 p.m. It might be earlier and lower in other spots. When you are doing your research, the time of the tide will be important, but the height of each station is irrelevant if you base it all on the knowledge that a 6-foot (in the harbor) will flood the flats. By doing this, you stay sane, since you won't have to know the actual tide height at each location -- just what time it's going to happen.

Wind

If you look at websites such as NOAA, they provide a graph of "actual" vs. "predicted" tides so you can see how they are trending. Wind (depending on its direction) causes the tide's height to be "tweaked" either by a few inches or often over a foot. In South Carolina, a stiff North-east wind will push more water into the rivers and flats. In such fabled waters as Mosquito Lagoon in Florida and much of the Gulf, the wind might be the only force that moves water since the tides are so small. Just an hour south of Charleston, Beaufort has 9-foot tides when we have 6 feet in Charleston, so everywhere is different. But research can go a long way with just a computer and a tide chart.



The tides drive the world in which we fish. It changes a little each day, but the fish's behavior can be patterned to certain stages of the tides. As a general rule, with rising water, the fish are pushing shallower hunting. When the water recedes, the fish fall back gradually, eating as the bait gets washed back with them. Some may think reds only tail during high tides, yet they have shallow areas in which they hunt and feed during all stages of the tides. The "when" and "where" is up to you. Just stay shallow, my friends.



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Itchy
TRIGGER FINGERS By Owen Plair



There are not many times in your life when you get to catch fish on the fly and blast birds with a shotgun; let alone on the same boat, in the same day. Take a few seconds to imagine the idea of shooting a bird on the bow of a Maverick flats boat then laying down your shotgun, picking up your 8wt, and casting to a tailing redfish. You might miss the bird or hit the fish on the head with the fly in a matter of minutes between the two, but it's pretty damn fun either way. Cast 'n' blast is the name of the game here and one hell of an experience for any outdoorsman who likes to fish and shoot birds in the Lowcountry of Beaufort, S.C.





You might be wondering by the photos what the hell kind of birds are these? The people with a college degree call them clapper rails but as a local here I call 'em marsh hens. Marsh hens are like a quail and woodcock that forgot to use protection on the first date. They are big, brown/tan, have long beaks, chicken-like feet, and fly slower than just about anything with wings. Marsh hen hunting originated back in the day when plantation owners wanted to mix things up a bit from quail, dove, or ducks, so I guess you could call me a 20th century indentured servant poling the skiff around in the marsh shooting birds. It's a bird that you never see because they live in the tall spartina 95% of the time, and you only get the opportunity to hunt them during the 10-20 big tides during the season every year. When one starts chattering, it sounds like a chicken that already had its head cut off, which I'm sure you've heard if you have ever fished the east coast marsh lands from Northern Florida up to North Carolina.



As a kid growing up, we always shot marsh hen for fun to get warmed up for the upcoming duck season, and little did I know that years later, it's something most wing shooters have never experienced. The season for marsh hen usually opens up for a week in September and goes from sometime in October all the way until the end of December, depending on the yearly dates from the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources. The tides are key for hunting these funky birds because here in Beaufort, you have to have a big tide between 8.9 and 9.5 feet to push the birds out of the spartina grass for a good day of hunting, which is usually 20-30 birds in an hour, with a 15 bird limit per person for two anglers.



It's the easiest bird in the world to hit, so I usually recommend smaller gauge guns like a 20 gauge, 28 gauge, or .410 caliber. If you miss more than three or four birds, then I'm sure your buddy will likely not invite you on any other hunts that year. It's also a great way to get kids or anyone new into wing shooting. They tend to stay in small cubbies between three and 10 birds, which allows for a lot of doubles and even triples at times, because they don't fly very high or very fast. High winds usually make it a little more challenging when the birds can catch a good 20mph gust.



The great part of about the Lowcountry cast 'n' blast is that it's during some of the best fishing of the entire year. Fall is prime time in the LC and brings some incredible action due to cooling water temps, clear water, and tons of shrimp filtering onto the flats. The fish turn on like a light switch in the fall and gorge for weeks, tailing on fiddlers during the floods and chasing shrimp on the lows, which means unlimited action sight fishing with fly. The day usually starts out waiting for the flood tide as the sun comes up and nailing a few tailers to cure your hangover. Then as the tide gets high enough to flush birds, you put down the rod, and pick up the gun. We are poling the whole time for these birds, which also leaves room for sight fishing laid up floaters in the thick grass, or tailers in the shorter stuff. After an hour or so of hunting, we move off the flat, crack a few beers, clean up the blood/feathers, then start working the edges for fish laid up along oysters and white shell as the tide drops. Then, once the tide gets low enough, we switch over to low tide cruisers and schools busting shrimp in mere inches of water, which is some of my favorite fishing here. Simply cannot beat watching schools of fish under birds crushing shrimp on top water.



As a guide, it's always one of my favorite trips to run because hunting marsh hen is something not many people have done or will ever have the opportunity to do. Sharing an old Southern tradition is special to me as a local, and then mixing it up with sight fishing for redfish on fly is way better than any icing on any cake. These birds are also great to eat as long as you prepare them the right way. If you like to fish and shoot shit with a shotgun, and want to do it all in one day on the bow of a flats boat, then come on down for the Low-country cast 'n' blast. Fly rods and shotguns -- 'nough said.

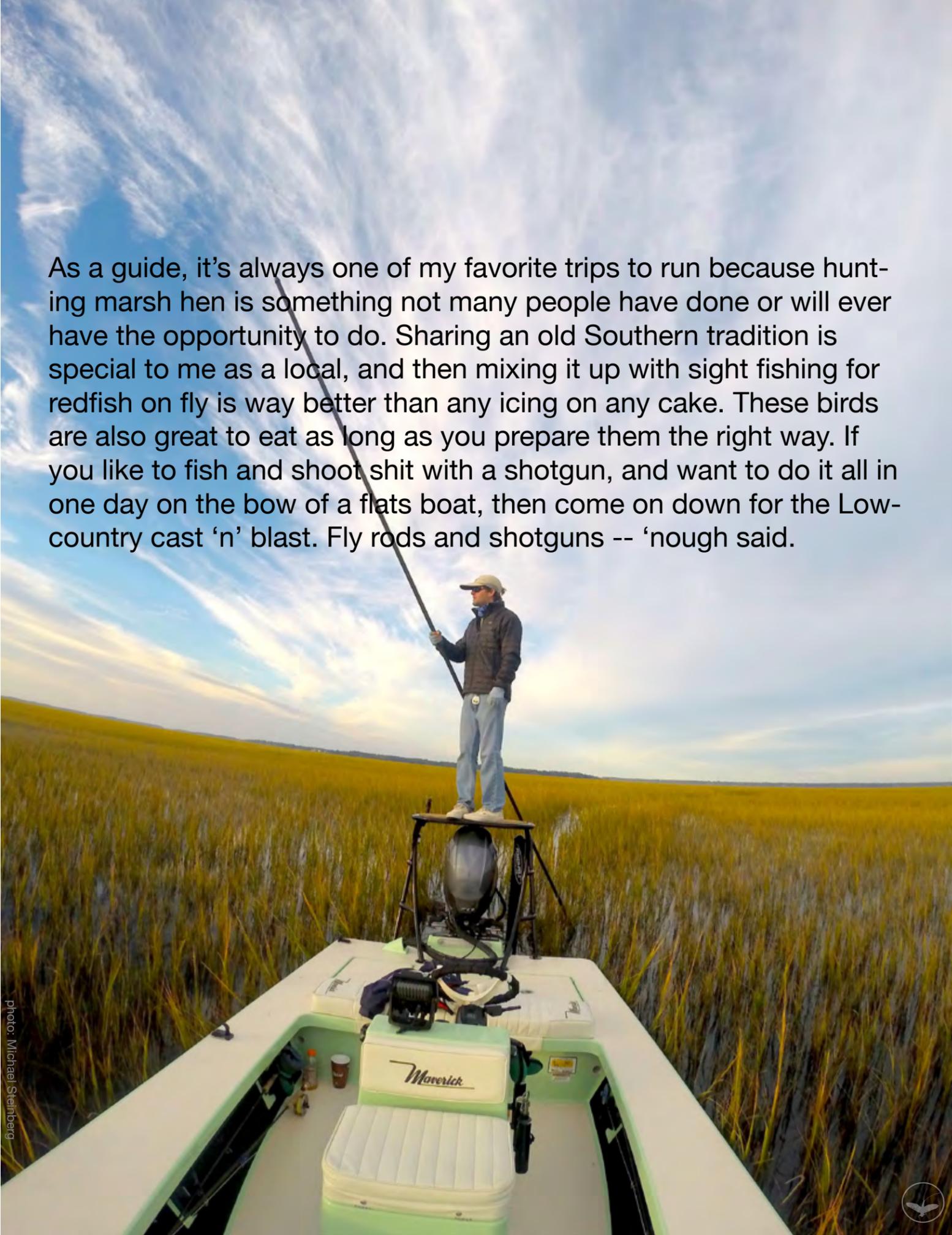


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Chuck Kraft



CLAWDAD

Chuck Kraft CLAWDAD

Chuck Kraft was one of the first fishing guides on the New, James and Shenandoah Rivers in Virginia, and guided their waters for more than 40 years. Chuck is well known for his simple fly patterns that use only three or four materials. As Chuck says, “If you want a fly that works, it needs to look like the bug and move like the bug.”

Many of Chuck’s patterns are go-to flies for many anglers and guides in the Mid-Atlantic. I, myself, and all of Mossy Creek Fly Fishing’s guide staff, fish Chuck’s flies almost exclusively. Chuck’s Clawdad, developed in 1996, is an amazing crayfish pattern. He developed the fly to be a “Pig-N-Jig” for the fly rod angler. It’s simple, built like a tank and extremely effective. Chuck Kraft has had clients catch smallmouth bass up to six pounds with this fly, and trout up to 10 pounds. Colby Trow of Mossy Creek Fly Fishing says, “There is never a boat on our smallmouth floats that doesn’t have a fly rod rigged with a Clawdad.” I myself have yet to find a better crayfish pattern.

Chuck Kraft retired from guiding in 2012, and resides in Chartottesville, Va. He ties flies for Eastern Trophies Fly Fishing and other local fly shops. Chuck has been working with Eastern Trophies Fly Fishing in Alexandria, Va., since 2010 as Tail Designer and Fly Developer.

Materials List:

Hook: 5263 in #6-#2, Mustad R74 in #6-#2, Daiichi 2461 in #1/0-#2/0

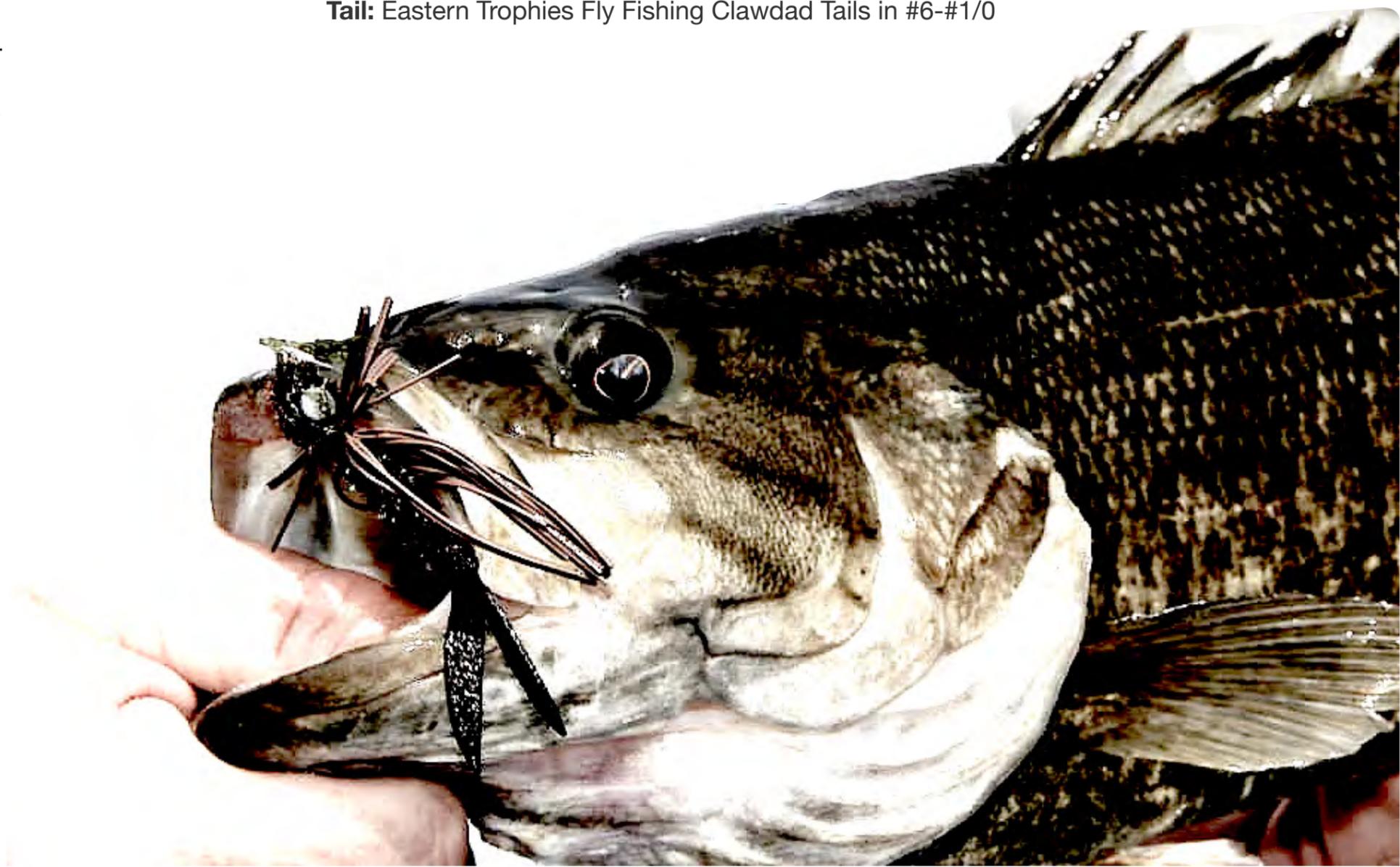
Thread: Color to match

Eyes: Dumbbell Eyes - Small/#6, Medium/#4, Large #2, XL/#1/0-#2/0

Legs: Round Rubber Legs - Medium for #6-#2, Large for #1/0-#2/0

Body: Chenille - Medium for #6-#2, Large for #2-#2/0

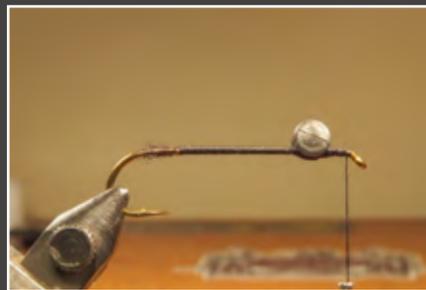
Tail: Eastern Trophies Fly Fishing Clawdad Tails in #6-#1/0



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



1 Start your thread behind the eye of the hook and wrap back to the bend of the hook. Wrap back up to a point one-fifth the length of the hook behind the eye. At this point, make a bump of thread. This will serve as a front foundation point for the dumbbell eyes.

2 Wrap in your dumbbell eyes on top of the hook shank right behind the bump of thread you created. Use 8-10 crisscross wraps in each direction followed by 8-10 securing wraps around the crisscross wraps between the dumbbell eyes and the shank of the hook. Repeat this step again, crisscross wraps followed by securing wraps. You can use a drop of super glue or zap-a-gap where you place the dumbbell eyes on the hook.

Painting your dumbbell eyes is optional but certainly makes a better fly. Use lacquer nail polish and paint the eyes a color to match your body color and/or tail color.

3 Move your thread to the middle of the hook. Pull a few fibers from one end of your chenille to expose the base and tie your chenille in at the middle of the hook. Wrap the chenille all the way back to the back third bend of the hook, holding the chenille straight up as you wrap so it lays on top of the hook shank. Wrap your thread back up the shank to where it drops straight with the hook point.

4 Wrap the chenille around the hook with paltering wraps from the third bend to the point of the hook, carefully making sure that each wrap sits right next to the other. Secure the chenille in right at the hook point with securing wraps. Half hitch at this point.

5 Remove the hook from the vise and slide the Clawdad tail onto the hook. There is a pre-cut hole in each tail. Secure your hook in your vise again.

6 Pull the small tab of the tail toward the front of the hook so the claws of the tail point to the back. Hackle pliers work well if you have large fingers. Wrap in the tab that is being pulled with securing wraps, making sure the tail lines up with the shank of the hook. Wrap completely over the tab and until your thread is just about halfway on the shank of the hook. Wrap the chenille to the middle of the hook and secure with 8-10 wraps. Holding the chenille straight up, continue wrapping it until the chenille is right behind the eye of the hook. This creates a flat area of just thread where you will later place the rubber legs.

7 Leave your thread behind the dumbbell eyes. Crisscross the chenille around the dumbbell eyes. Continue wrapping the chenille to the front of the hook right behind the hook eye, and then back behind the dumbbell eyes. Holding the chenille straight up, do 6-10 securing wraps locking the chenille in place right behind the dumbbell eyes, then trim.

8 Cut a length of round rubber legs the length of the Clawdad tail you are using. Keep them together. Count off 6 legs and separate that "pad" of legs, keeping the 6 legs together. Count off another 7 legs and separate that "pad" of 7 legs. Wrap the pad of 7 legs on top of the shank of the hook behind the dumbbell eyes where the exposed thread base is. The front of the legs should just come past the eye of the hook and the back of the legs should go past the bend of the hook. Turn the hook over and wrap in the "pad" of 6 legs in the same fashion as the first set, just on the opposite side. Do 10-15 wraps of thread once both sets are in place. Whip finish your fly there. Coat the thread wraps with head cement.

9 Separate the legs from one another. If tied correctly, legs should cover the entire circumference of the hook. The angle of the front legs should look like a lion's mane and extend at an angle right in the middle of the dumbbell eyes and the eye of the hook. The back legs should extend past the bend of the hook even with the "V" in the Clawdad tail. Remove the fly from the vise. Pull the Clawdad tail away from the shank of the hook where the bend of the hook is. Place a small bead of gel super glue between the chenille body and the tail. Push the tail back into place. This step keeps the tail in place, which enables the fly to move like a real Crayfish moves.





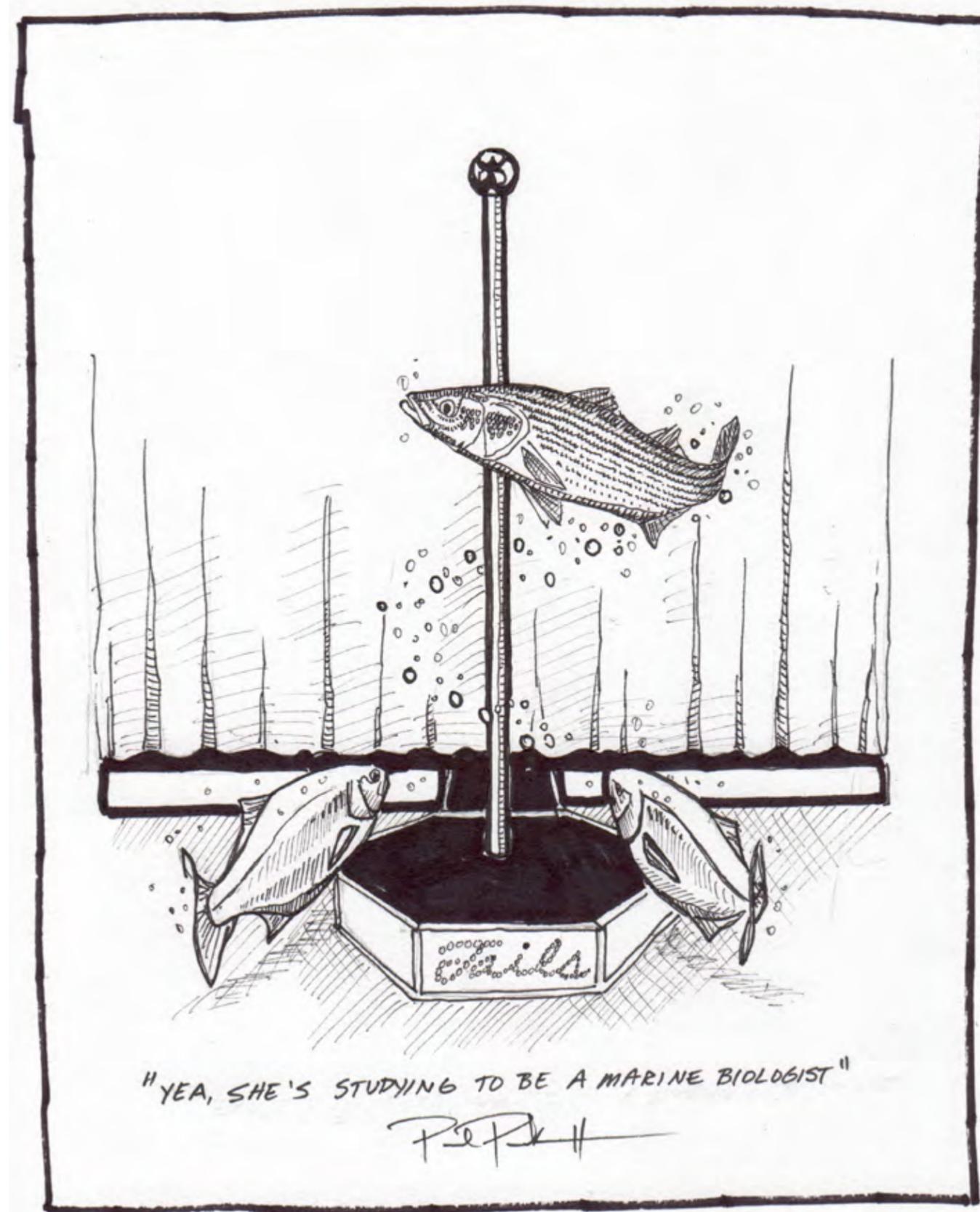
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