

southern culture
on the fly

the
thaw^{0.5}
issue

A Few Words on Fly Fishing Culture

February is for FishEye

Trout Sets Not Welcome

Profile: Carolina Fly Company

SCOF Tie-One-On-Athon



7 TIE-ONE-ON-ATHON



Wrapping up the first annual Tie-One-On-Athon to benefit Project Healing Waters. Flies were tied, the beer flowed like water, and there might have even been some hugging.

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What the hell is fly fishing culture? According to countless Google searches, "fly fishing culture" is apparently a catch phrase used by the marketing community in an annoying attempt to sell anything related to fly fishing.

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55 TROUT SETS NOT WELCOME



A big winter low country school looks a lot like a raceway at the trout hatchery, a big seething biomass of fin and tail. You throw your first cast to the edge of the school trying to lead them. ...



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S.C.O.F

PREVIEW

ISSUE #0.5

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From the Editor's desk
to Your Bathroom

Spring Preview Issue 2011

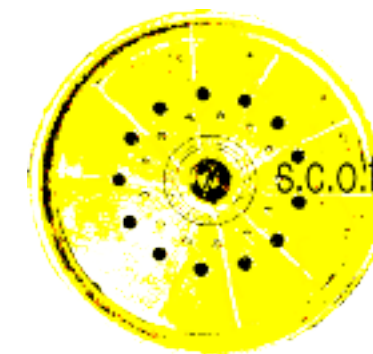
Welcome to our little experiment. We feel that the South has gone under the fly fishing radar for too long, and because of that, we as Southern fly fisherman have never had a publication that solely celebrates what our little corner of the world has to offer. Southern Culture On The Fly was created for just that purpose. Our first full issue will come out this fall. Until then, we decided that there was just too much piscatorial bliss around here not to share some of it, and thus the idea of The *Thaw* Issue was born. This special preview issue documents one of our favorite times to be fly fisherman in the South. All the content for this issue was produced in the months of February and March, when the transition from the silence of winter to the cacophony of spring is best found. We hope you'll like what you see here, and keep coming back for more.

Enjoy the *Thaw*,

David Grossman

Editor/Publisher

Southern Culture on the Fly



teaching is our passion



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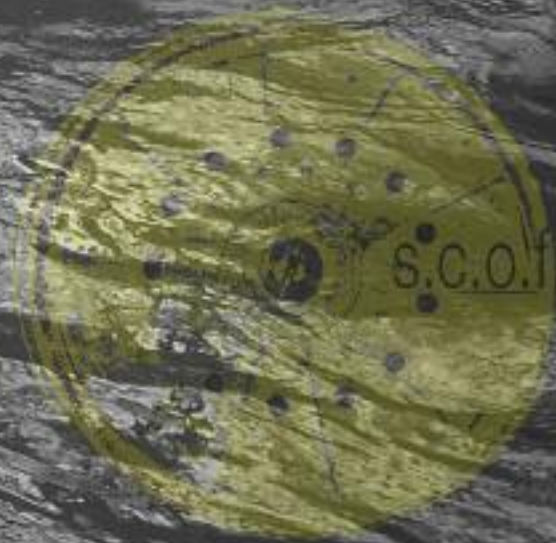
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What happens when you bastardize a tying session with your buddies, a beer tasting, a walk-a-thon, and a little roasted pork on the side...one helluva a good time...that's what. Beyond the fun, the first annual SCOF Tie-One-On-Athon was a complete success, if you count helping out America's veterans a success...which we do. We would like to thank all of our sponsors for helping us make the magic happen, and we would especially like to thank the Western North Carolina Chapter of Project Healing Waters for letting us pitch in a little.
* Wrap your head around this year's event at the SCOF blog.



be very careful of this guy...



www.southerncultureonthefly.com

A Few Words On Southern Fly Fishing Culture

by J.E.B. Hall



What the hell is fly fishing culture?

According to countless Google searches, “fly fishing culture” is apparently a catch phrase used by the marketing community in an annoying attempt to sell anything related to fly fishing. In reality, the term “fly fishing culture” is used to define the customs and social institutions that fly anglers have established to define their sport. Every region of the United States has some sort of distinct fly fishing culture.

The Northeast is known for crabby, gray-haired duffers who live for blitzes on the beach or fishing antique cane rods on exclusive spring cricks. Self-proclaimed experts on everything, Northeastern anglers unabashedly share their forthright opinion at the drop of a Tilley Hat. Summed up in one word these anglers can best be described as "Yankees".



The Northwest on the other hand, seems to be full of spey casting liberals who have trouble putting down the bong long enough to tie a decent fly, much less leave the house. Going weeks on end without landing a fish is the norm for this race of pale, tech savvy hipsters, and somehow, rivers can fish great without a hint of hooking a fish. Northwest fly enthusiasts can best be described as "Stoners".

The Rocky Mountain West is an overplayed dreamland and needs its own special rant in and of itself. Nevertheless, we can all thank these assholes for introducing guided anglers to the checked tablecloth.

So where does all this leave the South? What aspects of our subculture define Southern Fly Fishing? The South actually has one of the most diverse fly fishing cultures out there. Florida, the Low Country and Southern Appalachia all have their own unique version of what fly fishing should be.

Florida should be a sovereign nation. People there are different. Fishing there is different. Somehow guides in Florida have figured out how to rebook clients after eight or nine hours of relentless browbeating and patronizing. Most adults would probably bitch slap their own grandmother for talking to them the way a Florida guide addresses his clientele. Cutthroat fishing tactics and top secret fishing spots that the CIA couldn't find, make Florida, well, Florida.

Then you have the "Low Country". The slow speech patterns that denote the typical Low Country angler can most likely be linked to an appropriately named "Hell Week" while pledging their father's fraternity at a Southern university. Low Country fishing is as much about the look as it is about the actual fishing.





photo by Melissa Markis



The truth be known, most combinations of fur and feathers glued to a hook will catch a redfish - the real trick is figuring out which belt looks best with that new pair of Sperry's. Couple this with managing a perfect hair-to-visor ratio, making sure all your shirts are embroidered with "Capt.", not to mention the chore of fueling up a late model Chevy Tahoe, and making it out of the harbor before slack tide can be damn near impossible.

Deliverance sets the standard for outsiders venturing into Southern Appalachia, and while the locals may not be toothless sociopaths, the fly angling community here is as backwards as a Walmart bridal registry. Fly vests are still standard attire in the South and the idea of fishing a fly with a bead head remains a novel concept to more than a few anglers. Stocked fish rule here. Southern Appalachian anglers await the arrival of a hatchery stocking truck in the same way children await Santa. They write letters, tell others what their wish is, and in the spirit of one-upmanship, show their peers what they got. In fact, if it weren't for stocked fish, many an Asheville area guide would have been forced into a real job years ago. Southern Appalachia is the only place where anglers judge each other based on how many fish they snagged while "czech nymphing".



The moral of the story here is that "fly fishing culture" is what we make it. Whether you enjoy wearing a new pair of deck shoes while poling your flats boat on the back-side of Folly, or sport four separate chest packs while fishing the "blue lines", what we do while fishing defines Southern Fly Fishing Culture.

Hook Em' In the Guts,

The Angry Hamster

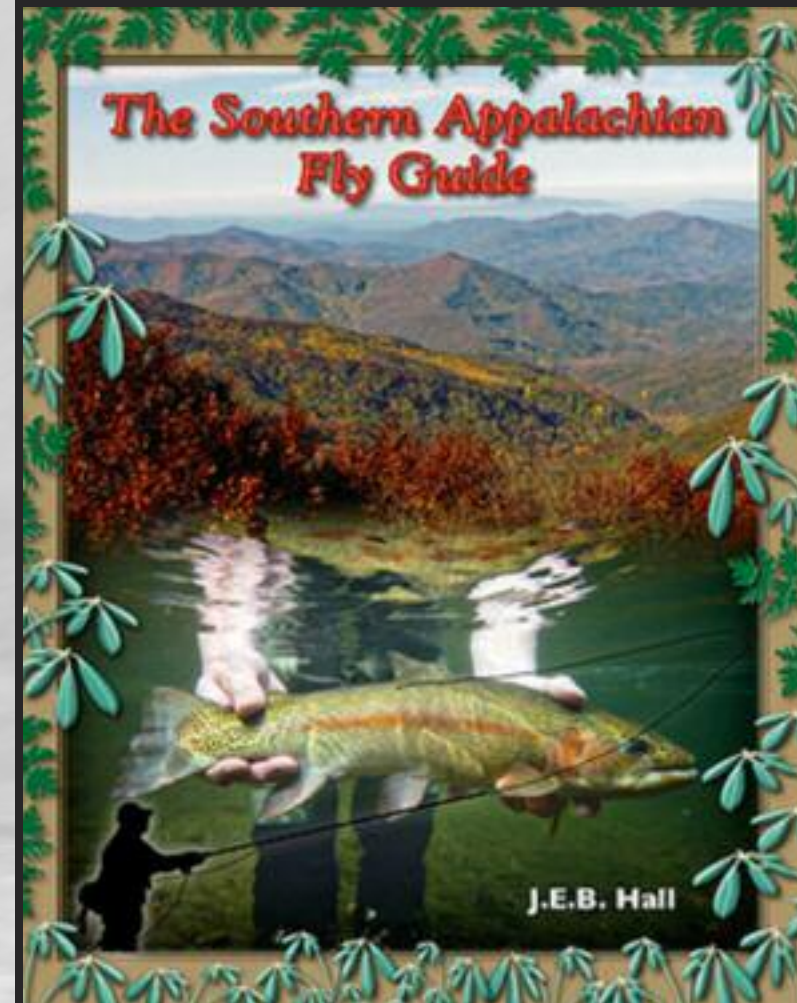
J.E.B. Hall is a guide, author, kayaker, and an all-around Western North Carolina weirdo....which is truley a special brand of weird.



by J.E.B. Hall

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68 • New River

It's always hard to make a definitive statement about a stream or angler (see below). The best, the better, the longer - the the gear on and on. When you follow the waters of the New River they can why say they are fishing the oldest river in North America. Considered by some to be one of North Carolina's best Small trout rivers, the New has the potential to live up to that reputation. When conditions are right this one river can give 10 good miles worth of trout in the 10-15 mile stretch and a few fish that would make those just starting fly fishing on TV turn their heads. While wading fly fishing is possible, the ability to fish another river means that going more far an opportunity to see their fish. The New is beautiful in everything from personal perspective to full size drift boats, and there are no better spots to be found if it the water reaches. The only hazards are low water bridges which should be purged with caution. As the New flows down through NC it remains in a fairly good environment, and the scenery is some of the best you will find on any headwaters flow in the state. A camera is a must, as are a few good flies for "southern." As it turns out, the New has some fly fishing in it.

When and What: The New fishes best from late spring to early fall. Casting flies from water clarity, temperature, and flow are more likely to be in range that are conducive both floating and fly fishing.

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Directions: To reach the King Creek Access from West Jefferson, follow US 221 N for a mile over US 221 to a left turn onto Cherokee Old Road. Go 1.4 miles and turn right onto Georgia Pulp Co. Road. (Cherokee Old Road) until you reach the main and Tennessee Georgia Bridge Road, then turn right across the river onto King Creek Road and take your first left into the King Creek Access.

For the US 221 Access, take US 221 N through Jefferson and turn left on US 221/18 N. Follow 221 for about 8-9 miles, and the entrance to the access is on the right before crossing the New River.

By boat should be best with baitfish presents such as Chironomid Larvae and Caddisfly Larvae. There is a few passing logs for late evening trout for action and the rap of the Double Fall, and you are set for a good time. Bass are more likely to be in fishing spots rather than be totally present and a good way to lose expensive bass flies.

Photo by Houghton.com

© I can hear the screen by Walter Forest

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I have no idea how bass decide which popper to crush, but if it came off Thomas Harvey's vise it's a pretty safe bet that both the bass and the bass fisherman are going to want it. We caught up with Thomas hoping to find out some method behind the madness.

Name: Thomas Harvey

Company Name: Carolina Fly

Hometown: Cary, North Carolina

Favorite Tying Product: I rep that Clear Cure Goo.

SCOF: *At 22 years old you are putting out flies that make most tiers 20 years older than you are pretty jealous. How long have you been tying and how did you get into it?*

TH: *I started tying and fly fishing in late 2008, but really fell in love with it last year. I was (am?) a broke college student walking through the Bass Pro Shop in Charlotte with my fiancé who lived there at the time. She saw me eying a \$35 fly tying kit; you know the kind in a felt-lined wooden box that comes with everything you need to tie your very first "Wooly Booger". Well my pockets were empty so we left the store. On our way to the car she says, "Oh, I forgot something." She ran back into the store and came out with fly tying kit. And so it began ...*



SCOF: *What's your process for coming up with innovative patterns?*

TH: It usually starts in the shower. No, but really things just kind of happen at the vise. I spend a lot, I mean an unhealthy amount of time reading and "researching" (at least that's what I tell the lady). I'll see something from here and take something from there. But nothing is new... That's one of the first things I learned about fly tying. Everything "new" is simply an evolution or improvement on something that is already out there.

SCOF: *I have noticed that while you create some sick new patterns, you also give a nod to the traditional way things were done, tying modern variations of really old classic patterns. Who are your bass tying influences and who would you point people towards, in the form of old guys, to learn the craft?*

TH: I draw a good deal of my inspiration from classics; I have sort of fallen in love with the history that surrounds the flies. Maybe it's the nostalgia of it all, maybe it's that many people have forgotten about them, or maybe it's the fact that they still catch fish. Guys like James Henshall, Ernest Peckinpaugh, Cal McCarthy, Tom Loving, and Dave Whitlock did all the hard work... I'm just I lucky enough to come after them.



SCOF: *What bass triggers do you think are most important when designing a new pattern?*

TH: Honestly, I have no clue. Some people say it's the eyes, others say the silhouette. I haven't been doing it long enough to give you a clear-cut answer. For what it's worth when I design a pattern I focus on color and shape.

SCOF: *So, why balsa?*

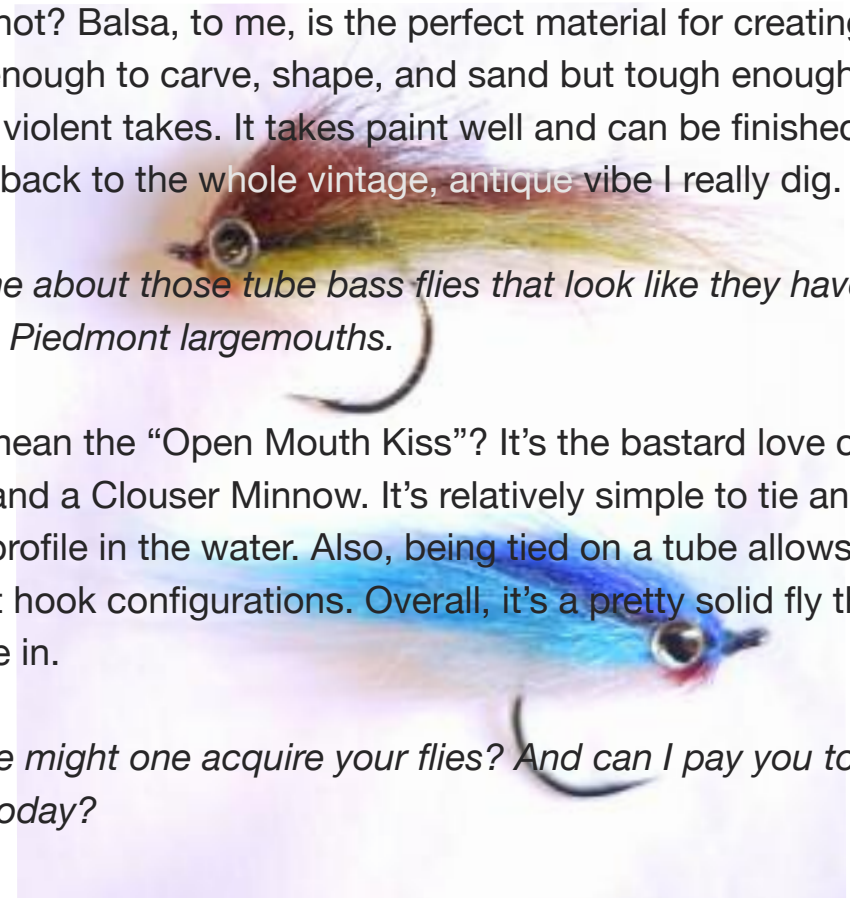
TH: Why not? Balsa, to me, is the perfect material for creating bass bugs. It's soft enough to carve, shape, and sand but tough enough to hold up to the fish's violent takes. It takes paint well and can be finished like glass. Also, it goes back to the whole vintage, antique vibe I really dig.

SCOF: *Tell me about those tube bass flies that look like they have been tearing up those Piedmont largemouths.*

TH: You mean the "Open Mouth Kiss"? It's the bastard love child of a Temple Dog and a Clouser Minnow. It's relatively simple to tie and creates a nice, slim profile in the water. Also, being tied on a tube allows for a bunch of different hook configurations. Overall, it's a pretty solid fly that I have confidence in.

SCOF: *Where might one acquire your flies? And can I pay you tomorrow for some flies today?*

TH: From a guy who knows a guy that got them when they fell off the back of a truck. No, but really all of my flies are on the Carolina Fly Facebook page. If you see something you really gotta have you can shoot me an e-mail.



SCOF: *When are you planning on breaking into the trout world?*

TH: Soon, very soon. That was actually my New Year's Resolution.

SCOF: *What is on the horizon for Thomas Harvey and Carolina Fly?*

TH: Fish and flies. And lots of them.



Contact for Carolina Fly: www.carolinaflycompany.com



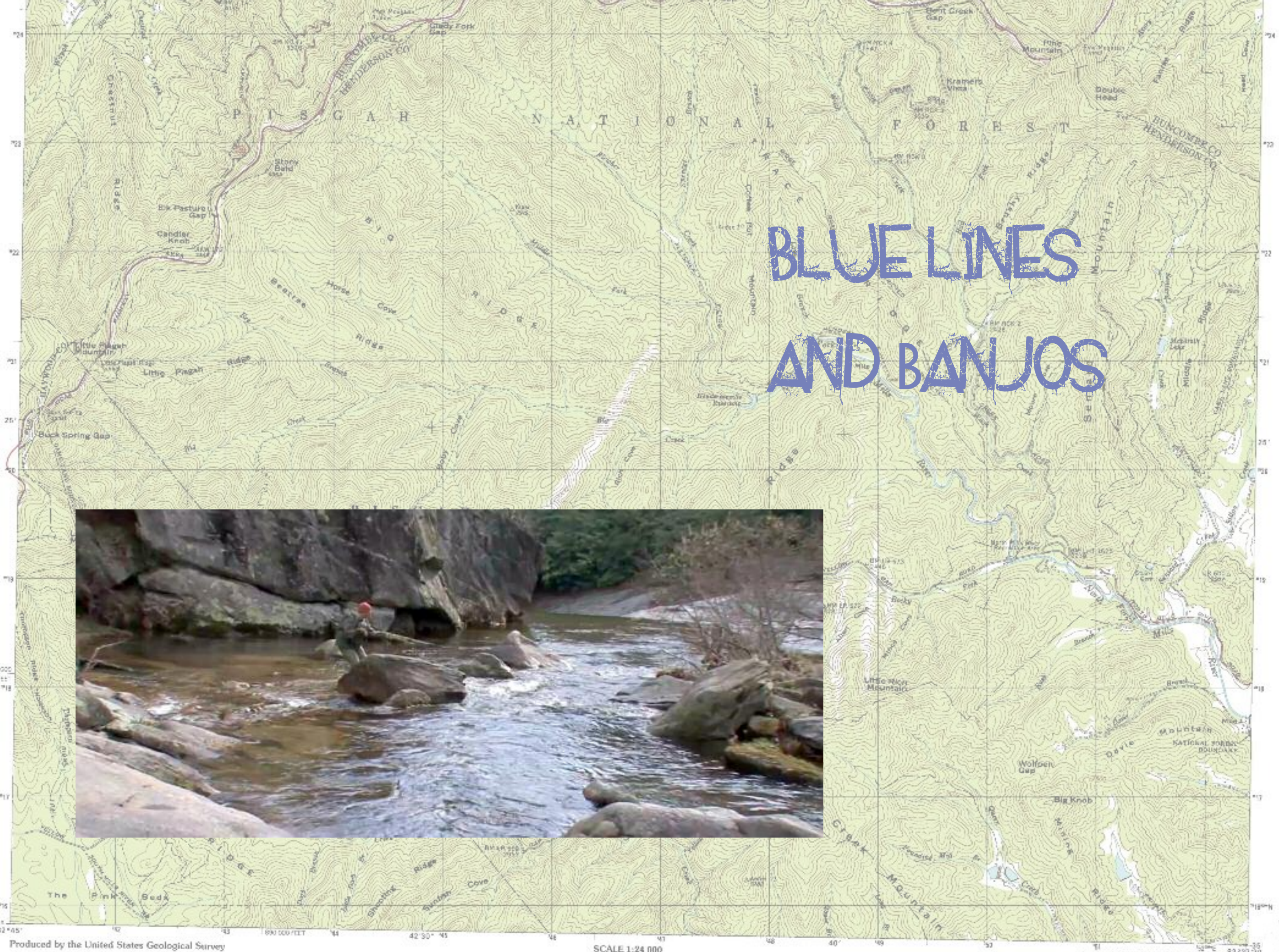
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video



BLUE LINES AND BANJOS

BY RYAN DUNNE





FEBRUARY IS FOR FISH EYE

by David Grossman
photography by Steve Seinerberg



Nothing brings out the cold hard realities of February like a cheap fisheye lens adapter.

The blur around the edges extends from the pictures to my head after a three-day February fishing bender... but there is something to be said for staying sharp in the middle. February is the month before the casual fishermen start flocking back to the water and when those who fish hard fish their hardest, because the promise of solitude is at least another nine months away. So we go out rain or shine, with wives bitching and responsibilities piling up. We go out because there have to be winners and losers in the game of life, and once in a while there's an epic break in the winter weather when everything wakes up and realizes it's time to eat.









When the Going gets Spooky

By Kent Klewein

Photography by Louis Cahill

Do you ever find yourself sight fishing for trout in big flats on the river? It's as clear as water can get, and as flat and calm as can be. There are plenty of visible trout, but they're super spooky. What can you do to increase your odds at catching trout in these situations? **Try these six tips that should stack the odds in your favor.**

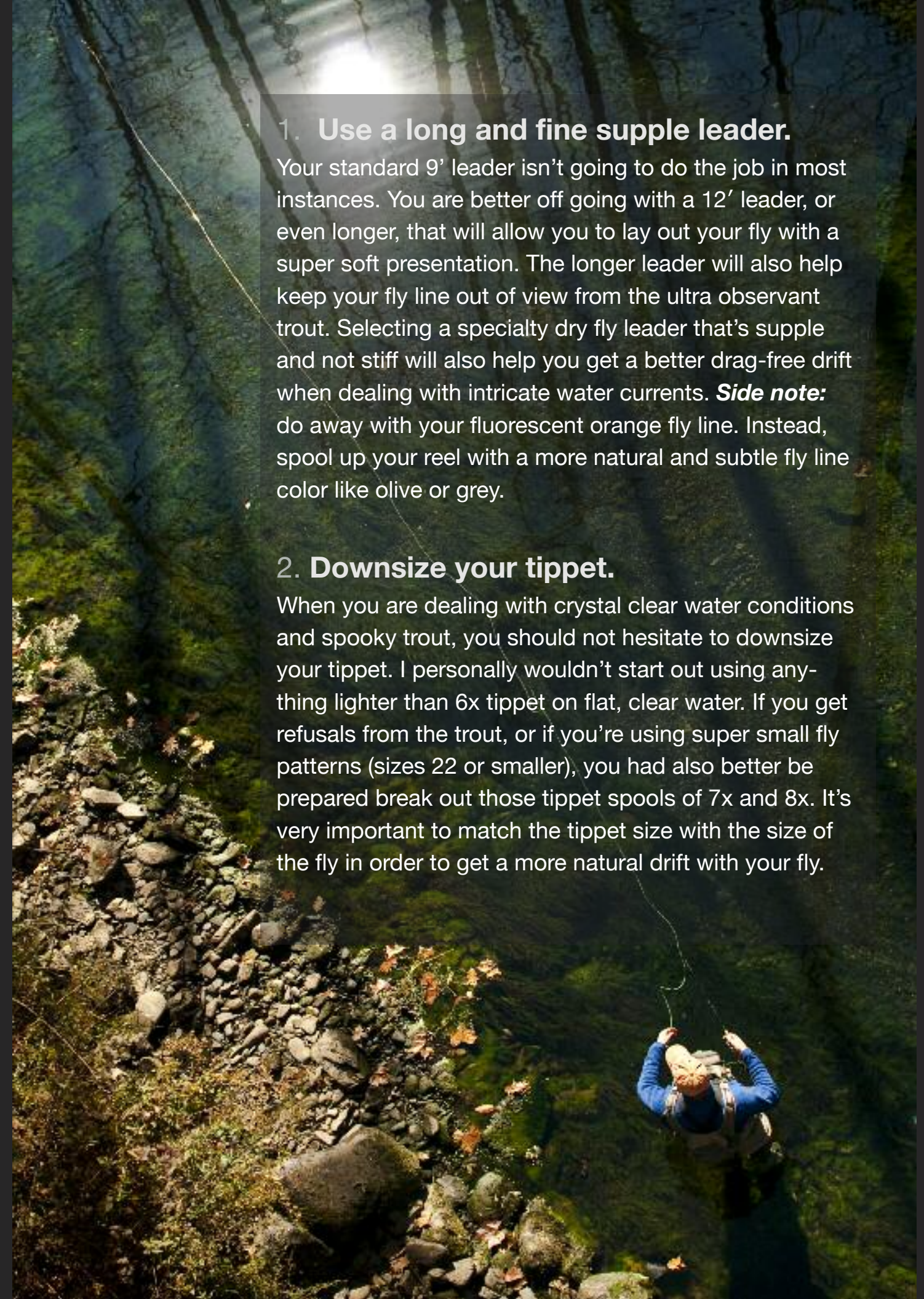


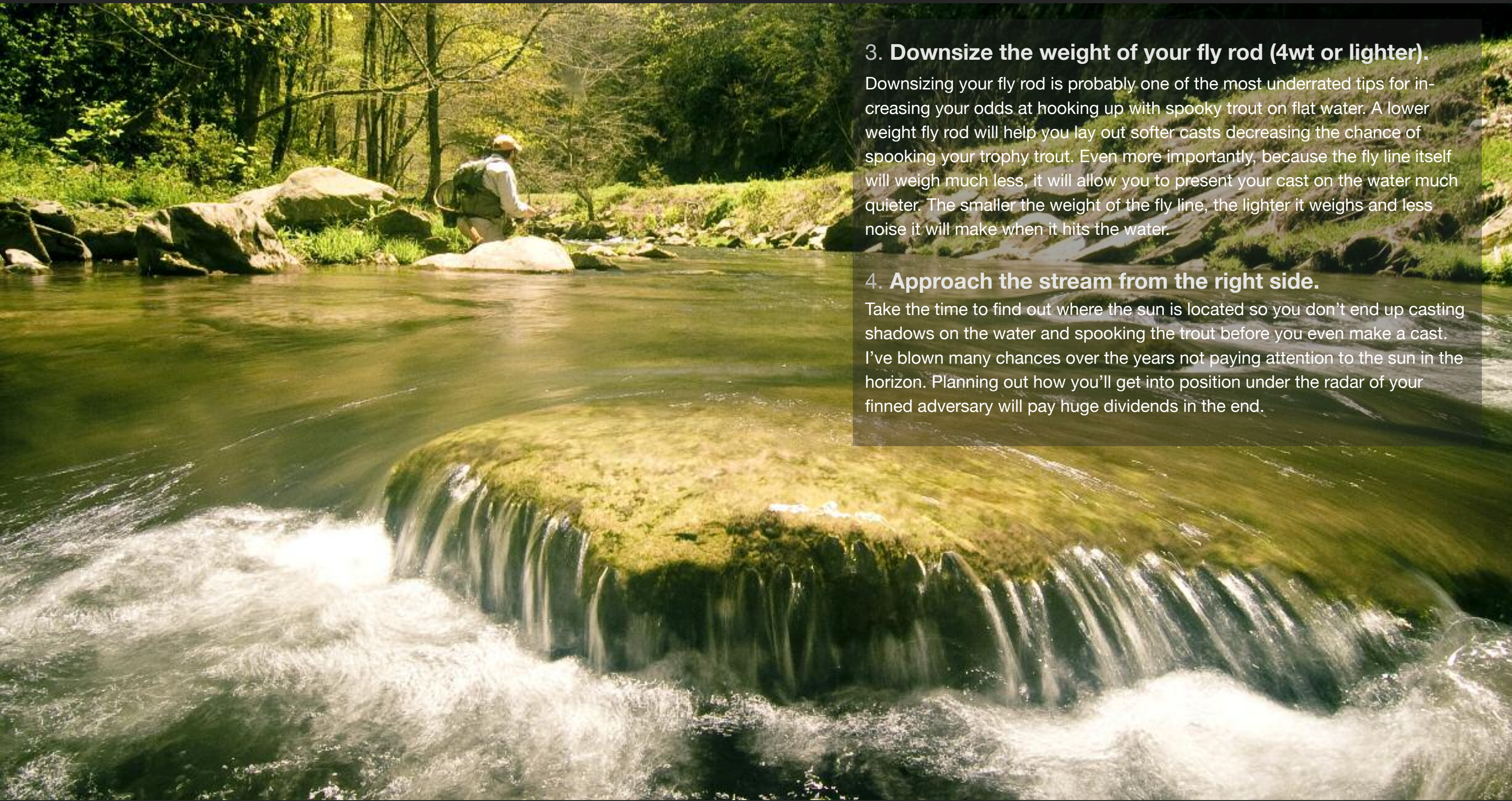
1. Use a long and fine supple leader.

Your standard 9' leader isn't going to do the job in most instances. You are better off going with a 12' leader, or even longer, that will allow you to lay out your fly with a super soft presentation. The longer leader will also help keep your fly line out of view from the ultra observant trout. Selecting a specialty dry fly leader that's supple and not stiff will also help you get a better drag-free drift when dealing with intricate water currents. **Side note:** do away with your fluorescent orange fly line. Instead, spool up your reel with a more natural and subtle fly line color like olive or grey.

2. Downsize your tippet.

When you are dealing with crystal clear water conditions and spooky trout, you should not hesitate to downsize your tippet. I personally wouldn't start out using anything lighter than 6x tippet on flat, clear water. If you get refusals from the trout, or if you're using super small fly patterns (sizes 22 or smaller), you had also better be prepared break out those tippet spools of 7x and 8x. It's very important to match the tippet size with the size of the fly in order to get a more natural drift with your fly.





3. Downsize the weight of your fly rod (4wt or lighter).

Downsizing your fly rod is probably one of the most underrated tips for increasing your odds at hooking up with spooky trout on flat water. A lower weight fly rod will help you lay out softer casts decreasing the chance of spooking your trophy trout. Even more importantly, because the fly line itself will weigh much less, it will allow you to present your cast on the water much quieter. The smaller the weight of the fly line, the lighter it weighs and less noise it will make when it hits the water.

4. Approach the stream from the right side.

Take the time to find out where the sun is located so you don't end up casting shadows on the water and spooking the trout before you even make a cast. I've blown many chances over the years not paying attention to the sun in the horizon. Planning out how you'll get into position under the radar of your finned adversary will pay huge dividends in the end.

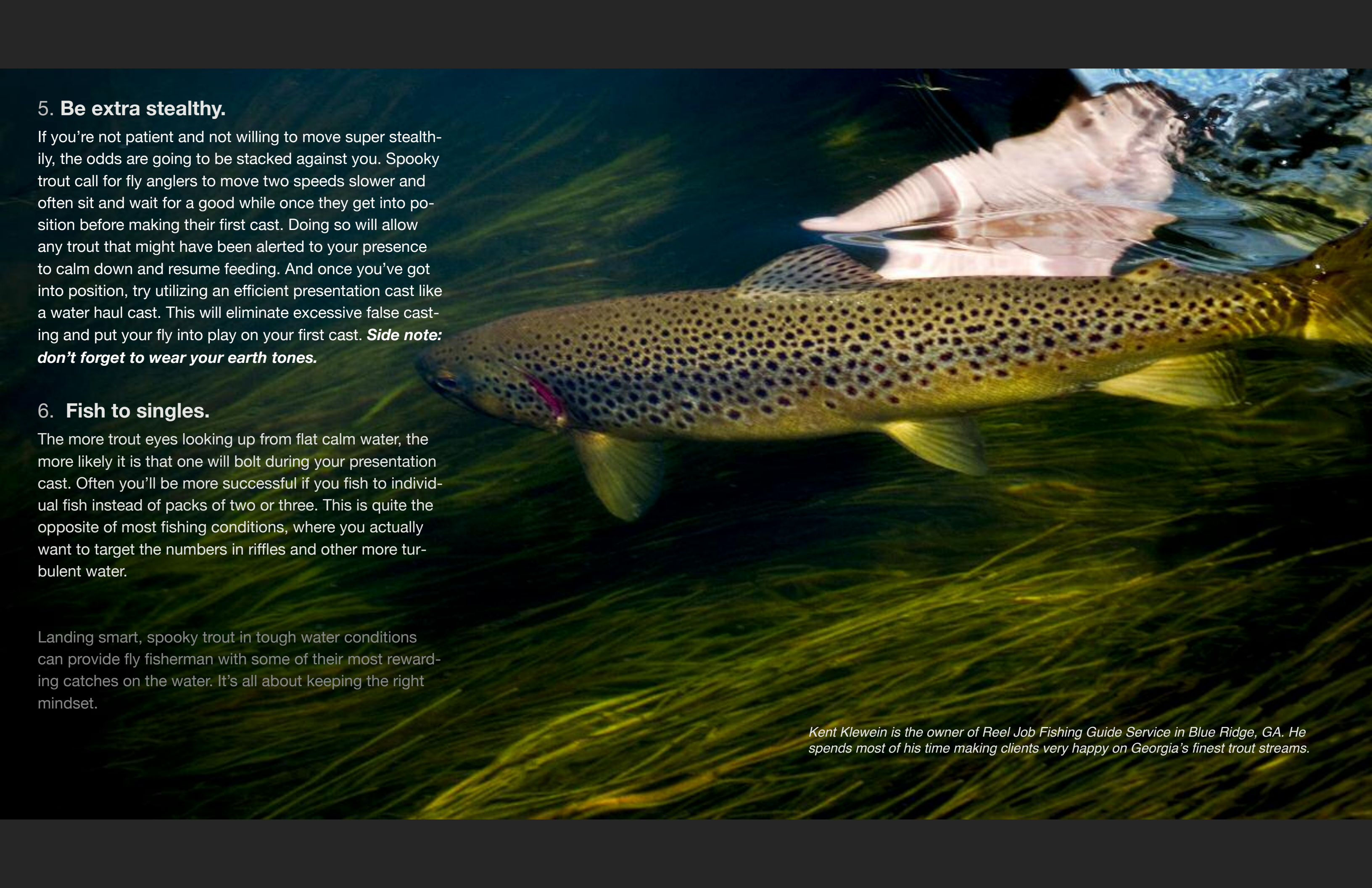
5. Be extra stealthy.

If you're not patient and not willing to move super stealthily, the odds are going to be stacked against you. Spooky trout call for fly anglers to move two speeds slower and often sit and wait for a good while once they get into position before making their first cast. Doing so will allow any trout that might have been alerted to your presence to calm down and resume feeding. And once you've got into position, try utilizing an efficient presentation cast like a water haul cast. This will eliminate excessive false casting and put your fly into play on your first cast. **Side note: don't forget to wear your earth tones.**

6. Fish to singles.

The more trout eyes looking up from flat calm water, the more likely it is that one will bolt during your presentation cast. Often you'll be more successful if you fish to individual fish instead of packs of two or three. This is quite the opposite of most fishing conditions, where you actually want to target the numbers in riffles and other more turbulent water.

Landing smart, spooky trout in tough water conditions can provide fly fisherman with some of their most rewarding catches on the water. It's all about keeping the right mindset.



Kent Klewein is the owner of Reel Job Fishing Guide Service in Blue Ridge, GA. He spends most of his time making clients very happy on Georgia's finest trout streams.

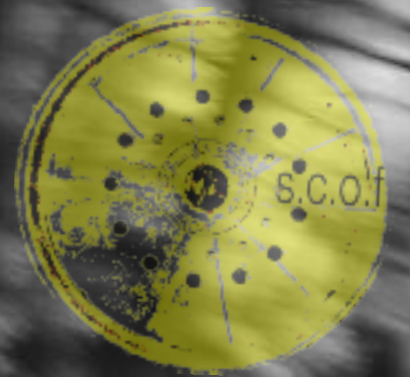
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ROCK YOUR MANTLES





A big winter low country school looks a lot like a raceway at the trout hatchery, a big seething biomass of fin and tail.

TROUT SETS NOT WELCOME

STORY BY DAVID GROSSMAN
PHOTOGRAPHY BY STEVE SEINBERG



Where the hell are we?

I am once again lost on the coast of Charleston doing 40 mph in a flats boat. When you fish a river you start at point A, wade to point B, and then walk back to point A.





If you add a boat to the river equation it gets even simpler; you put in at point A, float to point B, and your car is waiting for you. Once you move the game to a saltier venue, it's a whole different story. You put the boat in at point A, push the throttle, and visit points B through Z (and not in that order) before returning to point A. Sure there are landmarks, a bridge here, an island there, but once you get right down to it there are miles of marsh, creeks, and flats that have no distinguishing features... besides being slap full of redfish.

Making the transition from freshwater trout to the salt can be an overwhelming, frustrating, and a truly unpleasant experience the first few times. Weather, tides, redbird bait chuckers, and spooky fish come together to form a cabal of evil that guarantees crap fishing at least two out of the three days you've been able to scrape together on a newly acquired credit card. But like sex, it gets better the more you do it. And it also helps when you have someone there who actually knows what the hell they're doing.

With your very own proverbial Mrs. Robinson on the poling platform, an eight weight in your hand, a vast sea at your feet, and right about now the uneasiness in your stomach kicks in and you start thinking, "Why, in the name of everything holy did I fight my buddy for first shot of the day?" In reality, it is the first shot to prove that you can go from trout fishing bad ass to saltwater asshole in nothing flat, all while your supposed friend texts your failures to everybody you know. You throw out a few loops, get the cast warmed up, and Mrs. Robinson pipes up, "School of reds moving left to right down the bank, 60 feet." Shit.

So at this point you look blankly at the bank, your eyes adjust and fish reveal themselves. A big winter low country school looks a lot like a raceway at the trout hatchery, a big seething biomass of fin and tail. You throw your first cast to the edge of the school trying to lead them. In trying to lead them you actually wind up putting the fly so far off target that you didn't even spook the school.

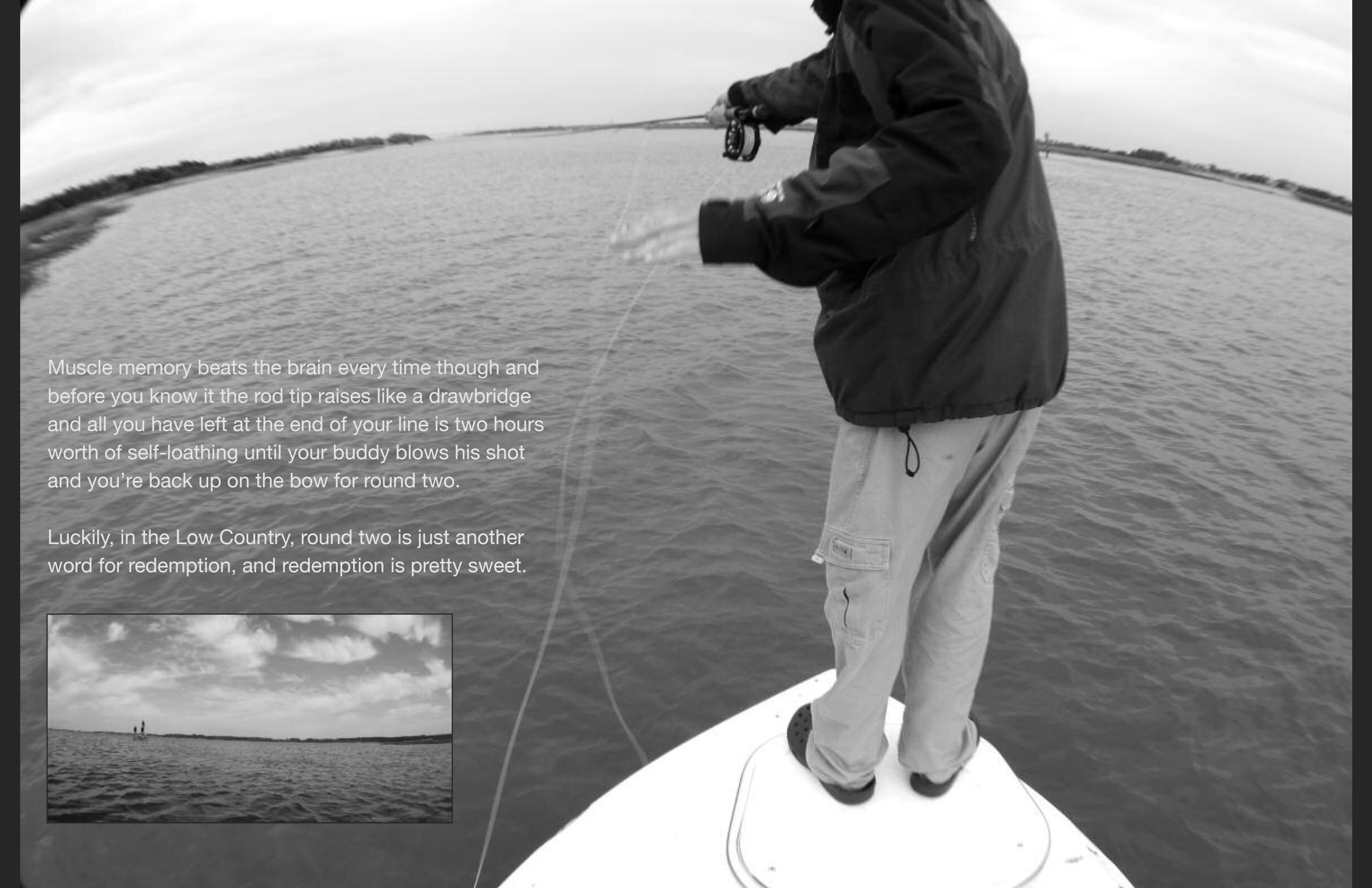


“Cast again at 3 o’clock,” Mrs. R whispers in your ear. Your buddy chimes in with, “3 o’clock this time, not 7:45.” Thanks douche. The second cast lands where it should, and now your brain shuts off and you slip into the cruise control of following orders.

“Leave it...Leave it...Strip...Big Strip...HE ATE.” Intellectually, you know that strip setting is what’s called for, you have been practicing with your air rod on your couch for months now, unfortunately your body has been trained by thousands of trout to lift that rod tip.



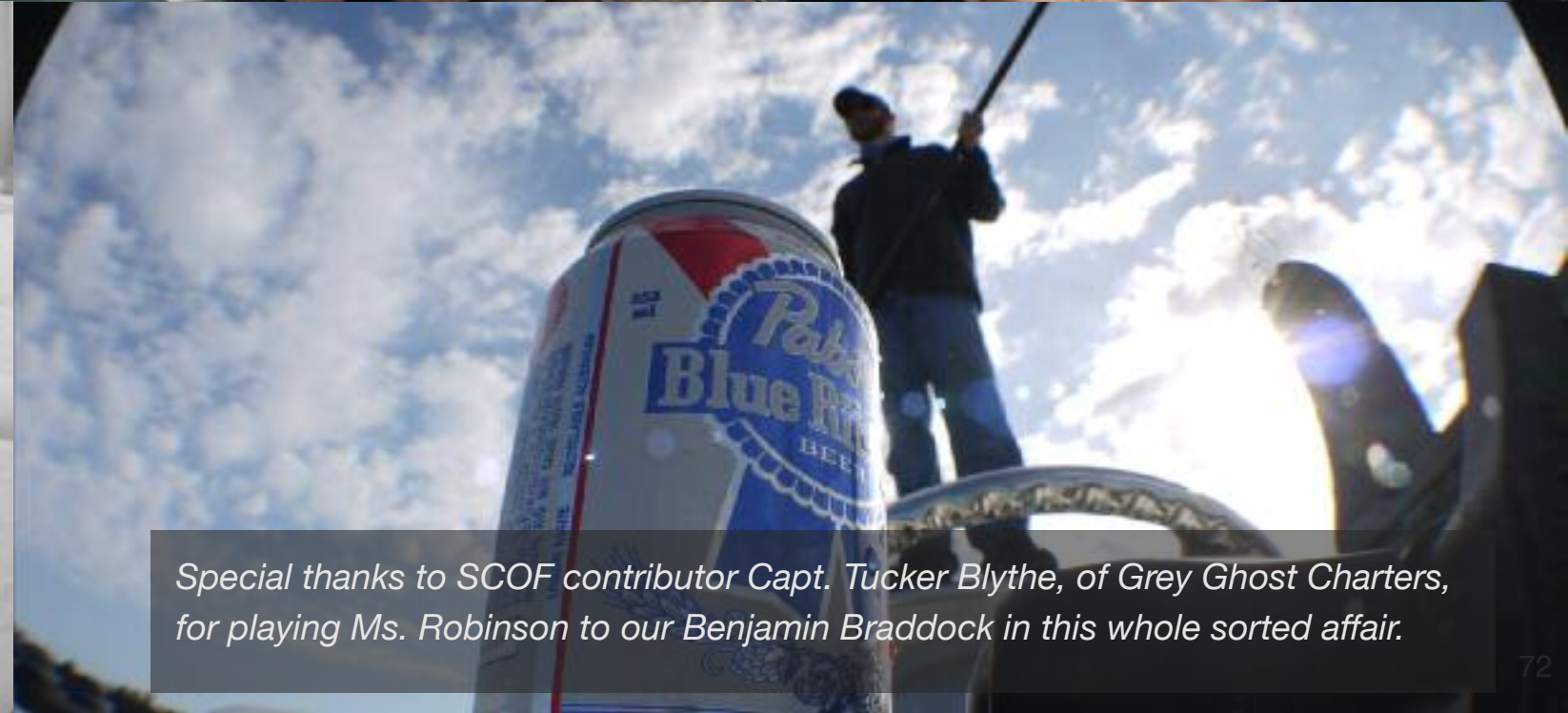




Muscle memory beats the brain every time though and before you know it the rod tip raises like a drawbridge and all you have left at the end of your line is two hours worth of self-loathing until your buddy blows his shot and you're back up on the bow for round two.

Luckily, in the Low Country, round two is just another word for redemption, and redemption is pretty sweet.

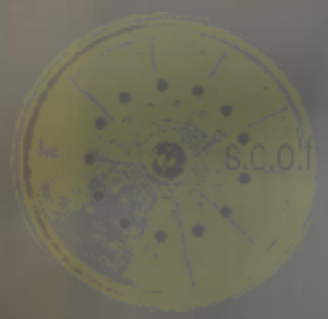




Special thanks to SCOF contributor Capt. Tucker Blythe, of Grey Ghost Charters, for playing Ms. Robinson to our Benjamin Braddock in this whole sorted affair.



get used to it



GET YOURSELF SOME

drink ...

The Wedge Brewery

Beer? Good. Outdoor seating? Good. All-you-can-eat peanuts? Good. Smallmouth fishing in spitting distance of the deck? Frickin' awesome. The Wedge Brewery in Asheville, NC, is all that and a pint of delicious microbrew. Tucked away in a neighborhood of artists' studios, the Wedge has been offering up beer and peanuts to the local hordes since 2008. A no-frills tasting room with outdoor seating that feels more like a buddy's backyard, the Wedge keeps it casual, which includes welcoming foul-smelling fisherman looking for some post-session refreshment. While the scene at the Wedge can be entertainment enough, the beer is what keeps you coming back. Favorites on tap include the Iron Rail IPA, the Belgian Abbey Ale, the Community Porter, and various seasonal brews that the beer loving folk of Asheville dutifully wait for like a bait chucker on opening day. Make sure you either bring your own growler or buy one there, because you can't get the Wedge's brews in stores.

The Wedge Brewery

125 B Roberts St. Asheville NC

Hours: Monday-Thursday 4pm-10pm

Friday 3pm-10pm

Saturday-Sunday 2pm-10pm



and fixin's

Bojangles'

I could easily produce a Ulysses-sized tome concerning my love and devotion to all things Bojangles'. Imagine biting into a cloud of joy, and then fill that joy cloud with the most delicious meats you have ever imagined. If you can imagine that, then you know what Bojangles' is all about. Serving up chicken and biscuits in the South since 1977, Bo's has been a part of my daily existence since I was but a mere lad. In high school, I used to skip assemblies to abscond to the nearest Bojangles'. In college, I drove an hour and a half roundtrip on a monthly basis just so I wouldn't forget what perfection tastes like. When I did my Rocky Mountain West stint, I forced my mother to fly with twenty vacuum sealed Cajun Filet biscuits in her carry-on mule style, and throughout my fishing career most days either begin or end with a Cajun filet biscuit, a steak biscuit, and a sweet tea. Long live my clogged arteries and long live Bojangles'.

Bojangles'

Locations All Over The South

Hours: Everyday 5:30am-10pm

(breakfast served all day)





...watch for issue #1

october 2011