



Cape Fear Flyfishers Meeting Minutes—21 August 2019

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Prior to the meeting, our two featured speakers from Hunter Banks helped casters practice their skills at the St. James Community Center ponds.

President Ed Smith called the meeting to order and asked guests to introduce themselves. In attendance were Jim Grever, Kevin Millard, Terry Howell, and Tom Duym.

Treasurer Scott Ewing announced that we have \$3,863 in the treasury.

The fly drawing was won by Ray Kozen.

Joe Rinaldi won the drawing for a video donated by Diane Wyte.

EVENTS CALENDAR & MEETING TOPICS

- 18 September – Local guide Judson Brock will discuss fall fishing in the Cape Fear region
- 16 October – Elections and 2020 planning. The October meeting will be a trip planning session for 2020. Please bring your suggestions for trips and meeting topics next year to the meeting. We will also hold elections—please consider volunteering for an officer position
- 20 November – Topic is fishing through the winter
- 7 December — Holiday banquet at the Members Club in St. James. No formal club meeting

UPCOMING TRIPS

Waynesville NC--Our annual fall spousal trip and Jim Larson is coordinating. Fishing will begin on Monday, October 7 and most people will fish four days. Jim announced that ten rooms are being held at the Waynesville Inn and Golf Resort until September 7 for those who need accommodations. Jim added that each party must call the Inn to confirm their room and suggested mentioning either Jim Larson or Harry Oakley to help identify our group. Those attending must also call Hunter Banks to confirm their fishing preferences and pay for their guide(s) service. Shane is the Hunter Banks contact.

Morehead City NC—False albacore fishing in October or November with more details to follow. Richard Winter is coordinating the outing. If you have a boat on a trailer, around 22' or longer and could take a few people on your boat, please contact Richard Winter.

Wrightsville Beach NC—Local fishing for albies during October and/or November. Boats are needed to make this trip a go. Please contact Jim White if interested.

***If you're interested in fishing for albies, please keep in mind that local guides Judson Brock, Allen Cain, and Seth Vernon are available to take anglers on guided false albacore fishing trips.

Florida Fling 2020—The Spring 2020 FL trip seems to be heading towards a "fishing tour of FL", most likely beginning near the Ft. Pierce/Stuart area of Biscayne Bay for tarpon and snook, and then possibly driving south to the Keys to again target tarpon and snook. From the Keys, one possibility is to drive west on the Tamiami Trail which cuts through the Everglades from Miami to Naples. This roadside has fishable canals where a wide variety of fish are available by walking or kayaking. The trip would most likely wind up near Sanibel and Captiva Islands to target redfish and snook. The flexibility of this trip allows people to join in and fish the areas that appeal to them most. So far six to eight members are interested. If you are interested in attending or have knowledge about fishing Florida, please inform coordinator Nancy Fuller.

NEW BUSINESS

President Ed proposed changing our monthly meeting schedule to the following:

Meetings in January, February, March, and April; a May gathering at The Woodlands Pond in St. James for casting practice and fishing followed by a short meeting; our picnic in June; eliminate meetings in July and August; meetings in September, October, and November; and,

our banquet in December. Ed also suggested holding the picnic in May and taking off from meetings in June, July, and August.

OLD BUSINESS

Thanks to Diane Wyte for coordinating the June picnic. Attendance was down this year for the picnic. Diane took the extra food to hospice.

TRIP REPORTS

New River smallmouth trip—this trip ran two consecutive weeks. The first week was redirected to Bristol TN due to bad weather, but ultimately turned into a successful trout fishing trip. Three anglers fished the second week at New River and reported that several 18" smallmouth were caught along with a 21.5" citation fish. Attendees also reported that they had a great trip and enjoyed the camaraderie of their fellow club members.

FEATURED PROGRAM

General Manager Patrick Brady, and Lead Guide Miller Watson of Hunter Banks Fly Shop in Asheville NC were our featured speakers.

Miller began by explaining the components of a traditional nymphing rig, commonly used for trout fishing in the mountains of NC and by most guides at Hunter Banks. Components include:

Rod
Reel
Floating line
Leader
Tippet
Indicator (glorified bobber)
Split shot for weight
Two flies below the weight

Rods used for nymphing are generally 8 ½' to 10' long. Miller likes a 10', 5 wt. rod which helps to make it easy to move the fly line around and position it correctly. The most common nymphing rod is a 9' rod in either 4 or 5 weight, although a 6 weight can be used successfully (6 weights are usually used in Western states where there is more wind and faster water currents).

Reels are the most insignificant part of the nymphing rig.

Matching a proper floating line to your rod is important. Too light of a fly line will not let the rod load properly and too heavy of a line will load the rod too firmly and can actually break the rod during the cast.

When using slow action rods (more of a noodle feel as opposed to a fast action rod with a broom stick feel), stay away from aggressive shooting head lines as you will lose the feel of the rod. Slow action rods typically use a "trout taper" fly line. A weight forward floating line is what's traditionally used for a nymphing rig, although a double tapered line can also be used. Miller added that the floating fly line is probably the most important part of your entire rig.

A tapered, clear monofilament leader is used between the floating fly line and the tippet. Knotless, tapered leaders are useful for nymphing. These leaders go from about a 25 lb. butt section down to a very thin diameter line. These leaders typically come in 7 ½', 9, and 12' lengths. As a general rule, a 7 ½' rod would use a 7 ½' leader, a 9' rod would use a 9' leader, and so on. A longer leader can also be used when dry fishing on waters where the fish are particularly spooky.

Understanding the fishery you are fishing in is key to determining the strength size of the leader. Try to match the leader tip to the size fish you are catching, e.g., if you are targeting 6 lb. fish, use a 6X leader. In this case, Miller recommends not going above a 6X leader or much below a 6X. Exceptions to this would be when using extra long rods with very light tippets. Leaders for nymphing are generally 9' 4X(7.5 lb) to 6X(4 lb). Select the leader that is the best fit for your rod and fishery.

When building your own leaders, make sure to use very gradual decreases in the pound weight of the lines, perhaps in two pound decreases. The reason for this is that lines with vastly different weights will not make strong knots when joining them together.

Tippet is added to the end of the leader and flies are tied to it. In selecting the right tippet size, it is helpful to know the breaking strength and the size of the average fish in the stream. Tippets for nymphing are commonly 7X (2.5 lb) to 4X (7 lb). A 5X tippet is a good starting point. As an example, if you are using a 9' 5X leader, you should have a spool of 5X tippet to tie to the end of the leader, about 1' at a time. This method preserves the original taper of your leader. Fluorocarbon is the preferred tippet material as it has a thinner diameter, is denser so it sinks better, and has superior breaking strength and clarity. Monofilament tippet is better for dry flies as it floats higher, is less dense, and has a thicker diameter than fluorocarbon. Knowing the breaking strength of your tippet is important. For example, you wouldn't want to use a 4X (7 lb) tippet in a small creek where the fish are 4 to 6" long and are spooky. Instead you should try a 7X (2.5 lb) tippet. Generally a 5X or 6X tippet is a good choice for trout fishing.

Tippet has an expiration date. In general if your tippet is a year old it should be replaced.

There are many different types of indicator systems, e.g. Air-Lock, Thingamabobbers, New Zealand Wool System, Lefty Kreh's Indicator Yarn, pinch on foam indicators, and football indicators. Miller prefers the Air-Lock and New Zealand yarn indicator. The Air-Lock is easily adjustable, floats very high, and is very durable for bouncing off of rocks, etc. while the yarn indicator lands very softly on the water, its size can be easily adjusted, and it can take floatant very well. Typically, a very small indicator would be used on smaller streams and a large indicator used on tailwaters, etc. In addition to Air-Lock and yarn indicators, Miller also likes football and the New Zealand style indicators.

When rigging indicators, dialing in the length from indicator to your split shot and flies is very important. As a general rule for a steady mountain current, the distance between the indicator and the split shot should be 1 ½ times the depth of the water. For example, in a 2' deep run you should use a 3' long dropper. Sometimes the length of the line from the indicator down to the flies may differ depending upon the speed of the current and where the fish are actively feeding, but generally the distance should increase as the current increases. However, if you see your flies bouncing on the bottom, pull your indicator up 6 to 12 inches and that should put you just above the bottom of the stream. When nymphing, the focus should be on the bottom 25% of the water column. If the fish are feeding above 25%, you should fish emerging bug patterns. Miller said that he prefers to keep his indicator to split shot distance short and if he needs to be down more, he prefers to add split shot instead of lengthening his indicator/split shot distance. In general, try to keep the tippet system under your leader as short as possible.

Knots are extremely important. Make sure to moisten the line before tightening the knot and pull the line slowly. The most common knots for attaching flies to your tippet are the Clinch knot and the Improved Clinch knot. Miller likes to use six wraps on the Clinch knots. The Double Surgeons knot is very useful for tying line together on leaders and for leader to tippet.

Split shot for trout fishing should mostly be AB and BB size. Miller likes to have his first fly about 6" from his split shot and his second fly about 6 to 8 inches from the first fly; this allows the flies to unfold easily during the cast. Miller likes Dinsmores Egg shot as it is coated and non-toxic.

Flies should match the hatch in the area you are fishing. Miller suggests buying a hatch chart for where you are fishing and learning the common bugs in that area. He also suggests having a variety of flies and also different sizes of flies common to your fishing area. Using a red worm as an attractor fly with a small size 20 or 22 midge or baetis right behind it works well on the South Holston. Another idea is to weight the attractor worm and eliminate the split shot. Chartreuse, hot orange, and red are good colors to use for attractor flies.

Patrick Brady spoke about European nymphing which is a direct and accurate presentation of a nymph within the active feeding lane of a trout through the use of specialty leader systems. It uses an upstream presentation with an active retrieve to a transition downstream to maintain tension and puts the fly in a precise location. So basically it's tight line techniques where instead of casting out 25' to 30', you actually work the water within a 25' to 35' arc from where you are standing without having any fly line touching the water.

There are five styles of European nymphing. Czech is the most common style which concentrates on picking out various characteristics of the water and strategically fishing that spot to catch as many fish as possible. It involves a short, upstream presentation transitioning downstream. Czech nymphing has the indicator built into the leader. This style of nymphing complements pocket water such as the Tuskasegee River in western NC. This style also can involve multiple flies or as many as the fisherman is comfortable in throwing, even up to ten. There is no additional weight added to a Czech nymphing rig. It's all about managing slack and tension in the line.

The French and Spanish style concentrates on high mountain, small, gin clear cold streams fed by glaciers and snow pack where the leaders are very long, commonly up to 35'. This helps the fly land softly without ripples on the water so as to not spook the fish. This also involves working the line far away in front of the rod and presenting very small nymph flies in size 18 and 20 with one usually being a bead head fly. This style uses a direct upstream cast. There is no false casting.

Patrick commented that when dry fly fishing and your fly will no longer float, even after dressing it with floatant, dress the first three to four feet of your leader. Dressing the leader is also used in the French/Spanish style of Euro nymphing.

American nymphing is basically high sticking, pioneered by Joe Humphries, a Penn State coach. This style involves watching for when a fish has eaten, usually indicated at the fly line/leader junction. Sometimes you dead drift in this style or you can actively pull the fly to maintain tension. This technique is good for ripple and pocket water. This style can use an off-the-rack leader and be false cast.

Still water nymphing amplifies every movement and mistake. It's important to stay low and slow and be very purposeful in this style of fishing.

X and Y style fishing involves considering the movement of the water not just on top but also throughout the water column. This style of fishing lets you know the movement of the line without necessarily looking at the line and requires an extremely sensitive rod and setup.

In European nymphing, rod selection involves length, flex, and action with length being the most important. Patrick said he uses 10 and 11 foot, 2 and 3 weight rods so they are extremely sensitive. He also uses larger reels. Fly lines are straight 20 lb. coated lines as opposed to

weight forward lines used in traditional nymphing so the flex of the rod is what carries the line through the cast.

Patrick uses fluorocarbon leaders when nymphing because they don't stretch as much as nylon or monofilament and they become nearly invisible in the water due to their multi-strand construction.

Patrick said the Improve Clinch knot is strong and easy to tie but creates a large profile on your fly. For leaders, he prefers Uni to Uni knots because they are very strong but they are time consuming to tie. For quick leaders, he uses double surgeons knots but they leave a large profile which can hang up in the guides. Patrick also likes the Wotton or Davy knot which is quick and easy.

Body position is extremely important and should always be in relation to the water flow and obstacles. Rod position should be in relation to the body and the water flow. Always be at the ready and ask yourself if you are in the right position to set the hook. Patrick suggested keeping the fly line between your index and middle fingers because the back of your index finger which is touching the line is way more sensitive than the front of your finger so you will feel the action of the fish sooner.

The lift and lead technique allows the fly to sink very briefly followed by lifting the rod tip with the shoulder and then using the wrist to begin the retrieve, transitioning into using the elbow. This action creates a smooth drift without disturbing the fly's intended path as it drifts downstream.

The dry dropper method targets both the surface and subsurface water with the dry fly acting as a strike indicator. The setup uses a weight forward line with a long rear taper. Leader lengths and weights depend upon the pattern being used, but are tapered nylon with fluorocarbon tippets. The dry dropper method is used when there is a high probability of a surface eat, or during a hatch, or typically during fall, spring, or summer.

Patterns for dry dropper rigs change with the seasons. Typical winter patterns are small patterns, i.e. midges, BWO, and small black stoneflies. Spring has an influx of baetis, i.e. BWO, Hendrickson, sulphurs, March browns, midges, caddis, and some stone flies. Summer patterns include terrestrials along with sulphurs, midges, and stone flies. Fall patterns include baetis and midges.

Dry dropper techniques can be used almost anywhere but are ideal on areas with heavy fishing pressure, on still water, spring creeks, tailwater fisheries, drift boats, and in windy conditions.

Patrick concluded his presentation with slides of several of his favorite fly patterns which include: Polish nymph variant, Frenchie, Woven Pupae/Caddis Larvae, CC Pliva Perdigon, Iron Lotus Variant, Split Wing case PMD Variant, Rowley Stone Variant, Chubby Chernobyl,

Olive or Tan CDC Sedge, Purple Haze, and Foam Stone aka the Gypsy King. The commonalities between the patterns are a bead head and similar profiles. Patrick uses size 8 through size 20 barbless hooks and tungsten beads.

During the winter, Hunter Banks has monthly fly tying classes and can also arrange for private tying lessons.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Fuller
Secretary