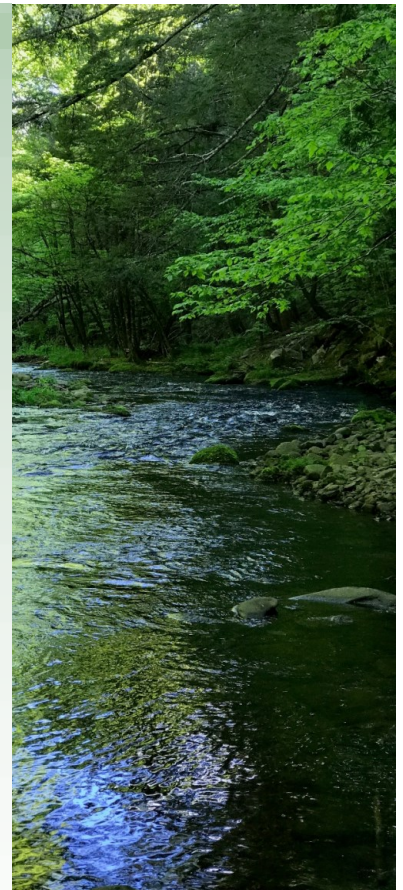




# Riffles

The Monthly Newsletter of  
East Jersey Trout Unlimited

November 2020  
Volume 53, Issue 11  
Please Consider The Environment Before Printing *Riffles*



## **THIS IS STILL URGENT!!!**

### **EJTU Needs Additional Volunteer Leaders Now**

***1st Vice President - Prepare to be President starting in 2022***

***Conservation Chair - Lead Chapters Environmental Efforts***

***Banquet Committee Chair - Run our Annual Banquet***

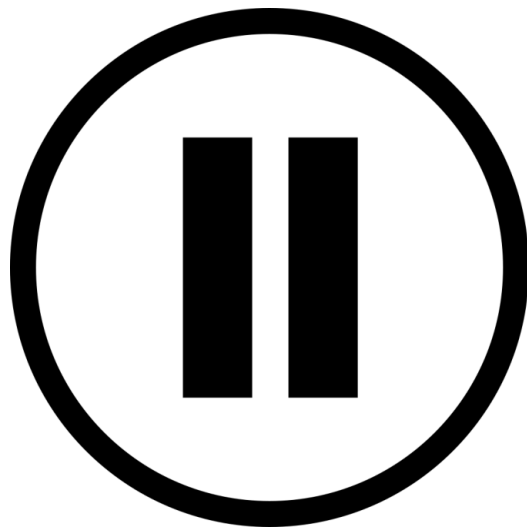
***Community Outreach Coordinator - Lead our fishing derbies and similar events***

***Contact Chris Henrickson to Discuss How You Can Help  
c.henrickson@icloud.com or 347-581-6361***

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## EJTU Is Pausing All In-Person Activities



Sadly, we are going to have to cancel in person meetings again for the foreseeable future. As of right now we are planning on not meeting in November, January, February and March.

## EJTU Board of Directors

### OFFICERS

#### President / Webmaster

Chris Henrickson - Westwood

#### 2nd Vice President / Membership

Elio Chiavola - Lincoln Park

#### Treasurer

Ray Tannberg - Washington Township

#### Secretary

Jim MacDonall - Hasbrouck Heights

### DIRECTORS

#### President Emeritus

Bruce Seiden - Fair Lawn

#### Conservation Chairman

Rich Malizia - Hawthorne

#### Publicity

Bruce Halstater - Norwood

#### Speakers

Ed Janiga - Franklin Lakes

#### Director At Large

Greg Koch - Hoboken

#### Merchandise

Charlie Maccia - Verona

#### Trips

Rom Mroz - Secaucus

#### Education

Doug Penna - Hasbrouck Heights

#### Points

Paul Reithmeier - Ringwood

#### Director At Large

Libby Brickmann - Elmwood Park

#### Director At Large

Igor Zaretsky - Fair Lawn

## Additional EJTU Leaders

#### Strategic Planning

Ken Barile - Montvale

#### Diversity Initiative

Jon Daffron - Ridgewood

#### Riffles Editor

Dino Eftychiou - Montvale

#### Veteran Services / NJ State Council Rep

Vic Mignoli - Little Silver

#### Trout In The Classroom

Jim Piombino - Fair Lawn

#### Youth Coordinator

Jeanne-Marie Thomas - Ridgewood

## President's Beat

By Chris Henrickson



Sadly, we are going to have to cancel in person meetings again for the foreseeable future. With an alarming increase in COVID cases here in New Jersey and the coming cold weather, meeting both inside and outside are currently impossible. As of right now we are planning on not meeting in November, January, February and March. Weather permitting, we hope to have an outdoor meeting at the pavilion in April.

Unfortunately, it also looks like the annual Edison show is going to be postponed. We are still awaiting official notification of this. However, please do continue to tie up some flies for us for when the show is rescheduled. Any style of fly such as a streamer, dry fly, wet fly or nymph is fine. Speaking of fly tying, Ed Janiga (last year's contest winner) has selected a cool streamer pattern for the 2021 Frank Hall contest. An article about the 2021 Frank Hall fly tying contest is in this issue of *Riffles* and additional information can be found on our website. We would really like to have a good rate of participation from our members this year, so if you tie make sure to join in.

I would like to thank Charlie Ruzkowski for graciously stepping up to be our new lead *Riffles* editor. I think he is going to do a great job. But we are still looking for more volunteers! We need a Banquet Committee Chair, Community Outreach coordinator and 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President that will be the next chapter President starting in 2022, so please consider filling one of these positions. EJTU has over 700 members and I have been asking for a Community Outreach coordinator for several years now. That's beyond ridiculous! This position does not require a huge time commitment. All it entails is getting the dates of the events we participate in like fishing derbies and making sure we have enough volunteers. Please consider volunteering for it now. I would really like to fill this position by next month. If we don't have someone lead this effort, we are going to stop doing them.

Our Board of Directors has chosen to postpone the 2021 annual Banquet. It will not be held at Biagios in March. We hope to have some sort of banquet at a later date. Lastly, we are currently in the early stages of planning a trip to the Connetquot River in the winter at some point. More information should be available about that shortly.

## Frank B. Hall Memorial Fly Tying Contest

### Entries Due By 02.28.2021

The Frank B. Hall Fly Tying Contest is an annual East Jersey Trout Unlimited event, the winner of which has "bragging rights" as EJTU's best fly tyer. The winner of the prior year's contest, Ed Janiga, selected the fly to be tied for this year's contest and will also serve as the contest's lead judge.

The 2021 contest winner will be announced and recognized at our chapter's Annual Banquet (if possible) and will receive an award plaque.

Entries should be given to any EJTU director. You may submit a maximum of three flies per entrant, but the deadline is February 28, 2021. All entries should be individually packaged with the tyer's name and phone number. All flies submitted for the contest become the property of East Jersey Trout Unlimited.

#### 2021 Fly Pattern: Thunder Creek Streamer - Rainbow Trout

Hook: 4XL straight eye streamer (TMC 9394, Mustad 36620), #6

Thread: White for body, Red for gills

Body: Pearl Krystal Flash wrapped over shank

Ventral Side: White bucktail

Dorsal Side: Olive bucktail

Lateral Side: Pink bucktail

Gills: Red thread

Eyes: White, then black nail polish

Note: Head area is covered with thin epoxy, Hard Head, or similar





# Passing of Mark Czerwinski

By Rich Malizia

I recently read of the passing of a friend. A friend I never met. On Sunday, October 11<sup>th</sup>, Mark Czerwinski passed. Mark wrote the outdoors column in *The Record* for many years. He was a great supporter of all the conservation activities of the chapter. Often, he was kind enough to fill his column with information about EJTU. He became the only outlet about fishing, conservation and environmental programs in any publication that served northeastern New Jersey. Most of our communications were by email, interspersed with the occasional telephone conversation. He would often suggest that someday we should meet on a stream or lake for an in-person discussion of our hopes and plans for those things which consumed so much of our time and energy. Sadly, that never happened. Sometimes I was concerned that I might be taking advantage of his largess by sending him lengthy articles about EJTU. Mark would include it all in his column and at times expand upon the information I sent to him. He would joke that I had written his column for him. Press releases sent to *The Record* about programs which I believed qualified for exposure for the general readership were often ignored. I knew that not all readers bothered with the sports section of the paper. Thankfully, Mark never failed to include information I sent to him about EJTU activities in his column. His column was the only reliable outlet available to EJTU to reach the public.

A little over a year ago, with no explanation to the readers, his column failed to appear in *The Record*. Concerned that he might be ill, I reached out to Mark only to find out that the management of *The Record* decided that there no longer was sufficient readership to justify an outdoor column. My letter imploring *The Record* to reconsider their decision was never responded to. An important and sole source of information for outdoors enthusiasts was gone. In Mark's email to me about the termination of his column, he commented about how sad he was that "it's the end of a 45-year tradition that Don (Ecker) started in 1974". In a year of sadness, his passing deserves special recognition.



Photograph of the Month:  
"Dragonflies" by Dino Eftychiou

## Contact EJTU

**Website:** [www.eastjerseytu.org](http://www.eastjerseytu.org)  
**Email:** [eastjerseytu@gmail.com](mailto:eastjerseytu@gmail.com)  
**Instagram:** [@eastjerseytu](https://www.instagram.com/eastjerseytu)  
**Facebook:** [eastjerseytu](https://www.facebook.com/eastjerseytu)  
**Twitter:** [@EJTU1](https://twitter.com/EJTU1)  
**YouTube:** [EJTU](https://www.youtube.com/EJTU)

### Mailing Address:

East Jersey Trout Unlimited  
P.O. Box 366 Ho-Ho-Kus, NJ 07423

### General Membership Meetings:

Second Wednesday of the month.  
Doors open at 7:00 PM. Meetings start at 7:30 PM

The American Legion Hall

33 West Passaic Street  
Rochelle Park, NJ 07662

[Directions](#)

### Board of Directors Meetings:

Last Thursday of the month at 7:30 PM

Fair Lawn Athletic Club

14-19 Parmelee Ave  
Fair Lawn, NJ 07410

201-796-9771

[Directions](#)

### Conservation Committee Meetings:

Second Thursday of the month at 7:00 PM

Louis Bay 2nd Public Library

345 Lafayette Avenue  
Hawthorne, NJ 07506

[Directions](#)

## About EJTU

East Jersey Trout Unlimited (EJTU) is a community of more than 750 anglers in the greater northeastern New Jersey region who are dedicated to cold water conservation and the stewardship of our local watersheds.

Our members work to protect, reconnect, restore and sustain trout habitat for anglers today and for the next generations of sportsmen and women who value the relationship between clean, healthy waterways and sustainable fishing.

# Conservation Notes

By Rich Malizia



If you have ventured out to any of our parks recently, you most likely found crowded parking areas. In many cases people were turned away because the park's visitor capacity had been reached. Lack of space available to the public should be addressed. The pandemic has made it more obvious. We need more public space. The reported population shift from the cities to the suburbs will only make the situation worse.

The efforts to stop the construction of Pebble Mine seem to have achieved some success. Both Alaska's Senators, Murkowski and Sullivan, had long been silent about this project. Recently, both Senators have expressed their opposition to Pebble Mine. However, Pebble Mine lives on. While it appears that some previously issued permits have been withdrawn by the EPA, the door is still open. Currently, the proposal is being reconfigured and the Pebble Mine owners have not gone away. TU continues its opposition to the mine and I hope our members have expressed their opposition. Visit the TU National web site where you can sign a petition expressing opposition to Pebble Mine.

Recently the Highlands Council approved several projects to protect water resources. It is important to note that these are only studies. No funds were allocated to correct current problems or restore any watersheds. Several studies include waters in West Milford which hopefully will result in corrective action in the near future.

NJF&W has completed all fall stocking of streams and ponds. Only the winter stocking of major lakes remain to be done and is scheduled for November 23 and 24. Reports from anglers indicate the size of the trout is impressive but catches have been limited in numbers. It is good to know that there are trout to be targeted and that time spent on the water would result in an enjoyable day. All stocking has been done by NJF&W personnel without assistance from volunteer groups like EJTU. A directive from NJF&W precluded any participation by EJTU or other groups. We await information about spring 2021 stocking plans.

Many of us are spending more time at home due to restrictions resulting from COVID-19. It is an ideal time to familiarize ourselves with the multitude of conservation related matters which can and do impact water quality. There are many informative web sites available to anyone interested in getting information about the issues threatening our water resources. Why not spend some time familiarizing yourself with the issues that threaten our watersheds?

Toxic algal blooms were a problem again this year. There was little public discussion because so many people who usually recreate in the affected waters were sequestered at home. The problem did not go away. It just didn't get the attention it deserved. The pollution which causes these blooms may have been exacerbated. As people remaining at home did more gardening and lawn care, they could have easily increased the nutrient load. More people at home also increased demands on septic systems. Just because it is not in the news doesn't mean the problem has gone away.

TAKE TIME TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

## Autumn Fishing In North Jersey



Autumn is not just a great season for trout fishing; it's also a time to get on the water and catch some salmon and muskie. The Hackettstown Hatchery has been stocking northern New Jersey lakes with these game fish throughout October. Many of these lakes are less than an hour's drive from Bergen County.

For more information click on these links:  
[https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/salmonstock10-20.htm?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/salmonstock10-20.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)  
[https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/muskiestock.htm?utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_source=govdelivery](https://www.njfishandwildlife.com/news/2020/muskiestock.htm?utm_medium=email&utm_source=govdelivery)

### New EJTU Members

Colin Fink, Elizabeth Rottinger, Benjamin Tycko, Brian Feury, Kai Stendel, Mitchell Donato, William Speleman, Kevin Osborne, Robert Watkins, Frank Petronio, John Dalgakiran, Austin Roberts, Matthew Bottge, Walter Wozney, Edward Janusz, Chris Scrittorale, Daniel Naiman, Edward Ortyl and Charlie Ruzkowski

Welcome and thank you for helping us to protect northeastern NJ's cold-water resources. We look forward to meeting you at one of our upcoming conservation projects, meetings or fly fishing trips!

To Join EJTU or Renew Your EJTU Membership

Visit TU National's membership page at [gifts.tu.org](https://gifts.tu.org). Remember to choose to be assigned to "East Jersey Chapter - 091".

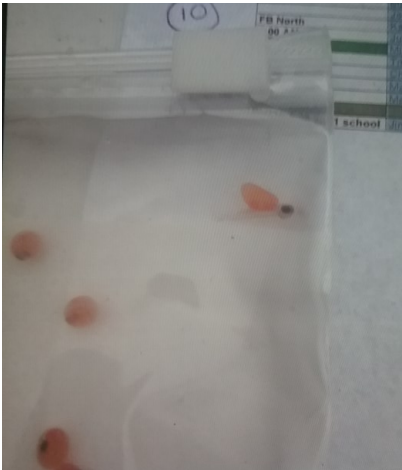


# Trout in the Classroom

By Jim Piombino

Hi, guys and gals, hope you all are well. Here is a brief summary of the Trout in the Classroom egg delivery. On a foggy Tuesday morning two members of our club took a ride to Pequest Fish Hatchery to pick up rainbow trout eggs for the Trout in the Classroom Program. Only two members were needed because the number of schools participating had dropped from 24 schools last year to only 6. This was because of the coronavirus sending so many schools into remote learning mode. Members could not enter any of the schools, so teachers left coolers outside the school's main entrance for the deposit of eggs.

Schools were given around 50 eggs each, much less than years in the past. The few teachers that we talked to were still very excited about receiving their eggs. They were looking forward to the eggs hatching and all the different projects they and their students would be doing related to raising the trout. The eggs were a little more mature than in the past, with eyes developing and some with tails wiggling. All totaled, members drove over 165 miles to deliver the eggs. Special thanks to Mike Capizzi for all his help with the egg delivery.



Pictured: Eggs from the hatchery, and Jessica Griglak hatchery supervisor.

## Musconetcong River Wildlife Management Area Adds 37 Acres



The Division of Fish and Wildlife, in partnership with the [New Jersey Green Acres Program](#) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service's [Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program](#), recently increased the size of the Musconetcong River WMA through the acquisition of 37 acres in Mansfield Township, Warren County.

This purchase will protect the existing WMA against the impacts of future development and increases wildlife associated recreational opportunities near one of Warren County's most populous towns. It also preserves critical habitat for species of greatest conservation need as identified by the Division's [CHANJ](#) project.

The Green Acres Program was created in 1961 to meet New Jersey's growing recreation and conservation needs. Together with public and private partners, Green Acres has protected over half a million acres of open space and provided hundreds of outdoor recreational facilities in communities around the State.

The Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration Program (WSFR) provides annual grant funding to the New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife and other state wildlife agencies for projects to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, their habitats, and the hunting, sport fishing and recreational boating opportunities they provide.

# CDC Micro Caddis

By Dino Eftychiou



This is a pattern that has saved me from being skunked a couple of times this year. The most recent was a couple of weeks ago on the Farmington River. I was standing in the Greenwoods section of the river right behind Legends Lodge, where my wife and I were staying. I'd waited to fish here until late in the afternoon because I'd experienced hatches and rising fish in the past at just about dusk. For the first hour I saw nothing happening. I tried the recommended nymph and streamers for that time of year and water conditions. Nothing worked. Around 5:00 PM I started to see soft sipping rings. The trout were feeding on something, but I could see no flies anywhere. When this happens, I look for the smallest dry flies that I carry. I tried Griffith's Gnats, Griffith's Gnat Emergers, Midge dries and emergers, small BWO dries and emergers, and all kinds of ants; nothing could entice the fish to even take a look. Finally, I looked in my caddis box and saw my size 22 CDC Micro Caddis flies. I carry them in a number of sizes, but I chose the smallest one I had, a size 22. In the next hour, I hooked 3 Browns and netted two. Had we not had dinner reservations that night, I would have fished another hour or so more and perhaps might have hooked a few more.

I've been tying this Tim Flagler pattern since I discovered it online back in the spring. It's a very simple pattern to tie with only thread and two different CDC feather colors for materials. I carry about a dozen of them in sizes 18-22. Because of the CDC feathers, you'll be changing these flies often. Loon makes a floatant called Lochsa that works on CDC, but even after I apply it on the fly I still find myself periodically replacing it with a new one. You also can extend the serviceability of each fly by shaking it in some desiccant powder. An added benefit of the powder is that it makes the fly easier to see in low light and to a trout it might resemble the bubbles of an emerger.

Tim Flagler's Video: <https://news.orvis.com/fly-fishing/video-tie-cdc-micro-caddis>

## **Materials**

**Hook:** Standard dry-fly hook (sizes 18-22)

**Thread:** Tan (Tim recommends a Veevus #16)

**Body:** Wood duck, tan, light gray, or cream CDC feather

**Wing:** Cahill cream CDC feather

# Murphy Administration Announces \$11.2 Million Available to Help Fishing Businesses Impacted by COVID-19

## *Assistance Is Part of the \$300 Million Federal CARES Act*

**(20/P41) TRENTON** – The Murphy Administration is making \$11.2 million in financial assistance available to commercial and recreational fishing businesses impacted by the COVID-19 public health emergency, Governor Phil Murphy and Department of Environmental Protection Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe announced today. The funding is available as grants to eligible businesses that document a 35-percent loss in revenues as a result of the pandemic.

“Fishing is an integral part of New Jersey’s identity and a critical component of our economy”, said Gov. Murphy “This grant program will help these businesses recover losses they have incurred during very difficult times. And we can all play a role in supporting New Jersey’s fishing industry by buying from local seafood suppliers and enjoying fishing through charter boat operations and bait and tackle shops.” “The DEP is pleased to assist in bringing this much-needed financial support to New Jersey’s valuable fishing industry and communities, which have been hard hit by the COVID pandemic,” said DEP Commissioner Catherine R. McCabe. “We are especially grateful to New Jersey’s legislative delegation and our federal partners at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for their support of this program.”

The funding comes from a \$300 million allocation for fishing industries in coastal states provided by the federal Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act. This assistance is made possible through the collaboration of the Atlantic States Marine Fisheries Commission and the members of the New Jersey Marine Fisheries Council. The New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife’s Marine Fisheries Administration will review applications and administer financial assistance to eligible business.

Estimates place the economic value of commercial and recreational fishing in New Jersey at some \$2.5 billion annually. As part of its efforts to assist the commercial industry, the DEP and New Jersey Department of Agriculture have launched a Support New Jersey Seafood website. It provides the public and consumers with information and an interactive map of businesses that sell seafood products that have been landed, grown or harvested in New Jersey. A similar on-line tool is being developed for recreational fishing businesses.





# Brandywine River Museum

By Bruce Halstater

In a February around the turn of the 20th century, my wife and I visited the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. The museum is hard by the Brandywine River, about 13 feet from water's edge. The River is about 20 - 30 feet wide at the museum, with a fair flow and was filled with varying sized snow clumps. Two days earlier there had been a very substantial snow fall, leaving about 12 inches of snow on the ground. We were on the 3rd floor looking out the windows and we could see trails on both sides of the river. I was curious as to where they went, so I took the trail upriver. I couldn't go down river because the trail was closed off. My wife didn't feel like trudging through the mud and snow, so I headed out by myself. East Coast weather is nuts as it had warmed up quickly to 60F and walking was mess.

After trudging about 15 minutes, I saw a road and a bridge. Just below the bridge in the water were 2 fishermen. Their backs were to me, but it appeared one was a woman, the other a man. I don't remember how far out they were but they were both crotches deep in the water. I was looking at them trying to figure out what was wrong with that picture of the two of them out in this bitter cold water with snow clumps floating by. After a minute or two I realized there was no evidence of chest high waders. The only thing I could see were the tackle they were using. After about 15 minutes I decided to head back to the museum when they decided to call it quits. So I watched them approach right where I was standing. I was right, it was a woman and man.

As they came out of the water it became very obvious that they were in the bitter cold water bare legged and bare footed. I was incredulous. How do you do that in bitter cold running water? I talked with them a few minutes; she said the cold didn't bother either her or her son, they fished as often as they could, and lived down the road a piece. We said goodbye and off they went down to the road, bare legged and bare footed.

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## We are TU: Kelly Buchta

by Jenny Weis

Originally posted by tu.org at: <https://www.tu.org/blog/we-are-tu-kelly-buchta/>

*We care about clean water, healthy fisheries and vibrant communities. We roll up our sleeves to volunteer, we sit on our boards, and we strategize as members and leaders of staff. We want you to join us. For a discounted first-time membership, click here: <https://gifts.tu.org/we-are-tu>*

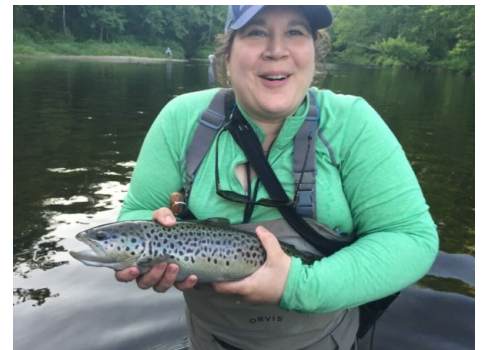
*The aim of this blog series is to highlight our friends, in hopes of making many new friends of broad stripes. In this series you'll meet people of diverse communities— our good ideas, what we have in common, and where we differ. Know someone we should feature? [Nominate them here](#).*

*Since it's not possible to sit down and have coffee or spend an afternoon on the river to show you what we're up to, a blog post will have to do. As you read, we hope you'll consider joining us. We need your ideas to help make a bigger impact.*

*Together, we'll help protect the special places we love.*

Kelly's nomination talked about her energy and enthusiasm for fostering inclusive community within TU's conservation mission. It said, "By creating space, supporting diverse representation and asking tough questions, Kelly has encouraged chapters and councils to better reflect their communities across the country."

In keeping with our ongoing equity practice, the "We are TU" series is focusing more directly on the need to foster a more equitable, diverse and inclusive fishing and conservation community. We have updated the questions as such. If we are to protect, conserve and restore our rivers and streams, we will need all voices at the table and all hands on deck.



### Introducing Kelly Buchta: (@kebuchta)

Trout fishing is only part of TU. The larger work is the conservation end. All communities have water in their backyards. We need to do better to partner with all communities, offer assistance when needed and show up to uphold the organizational mission to protect cold, clean fishable water. - Kelly Buchta



**What's your hometown and current town?** Hometown: Norwalk, Conn. Current town: Roscoe/Livingston Manor, N.Y.

**What's your history with conservation?** An innate connection to water since I was a kid. A passion to protect and preserve our resources for the future.

**What is your history with fishing?** Been fishing my whole life and fly fishing for over 15 years. My father, Milton F. Buchta, (a Mianus TU member) has been my go-to source for angling adventures and conservation education. I currently co-own a fly shop (Dette Flies), so fly fishing is my life!

**Our membership and representation aren't reflective of the diversity in the fishing and river-loving communities. How has the lack of diversity in fishing and conservation impacted your enjoyment of those activities?** I am fortunate enough to have the ability to enjoy fishing and the outdoors. I see the TU membership as caretakers to ensure that membership grows in a way to reflect the current population, with no boundaries based on ability, age, economics, race or gender. We have not always taken on this role in the past, and it is necessary for TU members to reflect on their path to angling and conservation and understand that not everyone has walked similar paths and act on ways to help clear the paths for others.

**What does 'giving back' mean to you?** Giving back is making sure others have an equal or better experience than you had.

**What was your first job?** My first job was in a public library — my fiance Joe Fox calls me a literati as I continue to be enamored with books!

**What's your favorite book and why?** *A Sand County Almanac* and *Hamlet* — both are critical books about our connection to the environment, our connection with each other and our place in the world.

**Optional: Are you willing to share ideas for ways your average TU member can show up as an ally to communities that are traditionally underrepresented in the fishing and conservation world?** The average TU member can be understanding to the paths of others and not make assumptions of people. It's not how a person arrives to the organization, but that they are there, to be included and involved — that is the most important. This is where some of our long time members get hung up. Trout fishing is only part of TU. The larger work is the conservation end. All communities have water in their backyards. We need to do better to partner with all communities, offer assistance when needed and show up to uphold the organizational mission to protect cold, clean fishable water.

**What is an example of something awesome you've seen that helps make conservation or fishing more inclusive to new groups of people?** The changing faces of angling and environmental stewardship are empowering to all folks. We relate to seeing ourselves in others, and when there are more sizes, shapes, colors, abilities and ages to encompass many faces, it becomes easy to advocate and get behind it.

**Name a person you admire. Why do you admire them?** My mother, known as Memere. She is the embodiment of grace, diligence, strength and beauty. We are total opposites in many ways such as style and tastes, however the more I move through our world, I see how we share the same principles of understanding, empowerment and support. She is probably flabbergasted at reading this — surprise — but in many ways I strive to have her grace and her business sense.

**Why Trout Unlimited?** TU utilizes the efforts of members who care for the places they love, the sport they engage in and work to make it better for the next generation. The ability to be involved on so many levels — members, volunteer leader, office position as well as a variety of activities, like clean ups, community events and social activities are available to members to take part and make a difference.

**If you want to join Kelly and grow the community and work of Trout Unlimited, we encourage you to join us!** For a discounted first-time membership, click here: <https://gifts.tu.org/we-are-tu>

# Playing the Odds or Increasing the Odds

By Ron Mroz

It takes about one-and-a-half hours for me to get from my house to the Flat Brook, which is my “home” water. That means at least three hours of my time that is allotted to fishing is wasted on not fishing. I usually start fishing at first light and I don’t have the luxury to wait around for a hatch to occur and the hatches that do come off don’t last that long. So, I decided years back to increase my chances by playing the odds. In case you are in a similar boat as I am (or should I say waders?), I’m hoping to share with you a few ways to increase your success rate at the trout casino by putting the odds in your favor. But, first keep in mind that the only thing that is certain in fishing is that nothing is certain and these suggestions are only a guide.

When I started fly fishing I used to haphazardly flail flies and used flies that looked good to me in catalogs, which were usually larger western fly patterns from Dan Baileys. I stuck to fishing with dry flies longer than I probably should have because catching a trout on a dry fly is exciting, but this wasn’t productive. By simply picking up a rock from the stream every now and then, and turning it upside down, I was able to get a better idea of what my flies probably should look like. You can also use a small white aquarium fish net to see what’s floating by. What I learned was that most of the aquatic creatures were much smaller than what I was used to using so I started down-sizing the flies I started tying. I often read that trout feed below the surface between 80-90% of the time. Also, I learned that worm-like caddis larva and worm-like midge larva dominated most of the food items in most trout stream. Also, midges, which are very tiny, hatch year-round.

One could use a hatch chart to help determine which flies are expected to hatch at certain times and approximate sizes suggested to use, but as mentioned most of the time the hatches aren’t prevalent at the times when I am usually on the water. If you are going to follow a hatch chart, make sure you have more flies of those that are available longer than others, such as a Blue Wing Olive, which has an extended season, has a green-olive body, and blueish-gray wing.

OK so, increase your odds by using flies that actually look like things in your local water, use more subsurface fly patterns that have more of a worm-like body in sizes 14-20 and smaller if your eyes allow. Anything else? I found I could double my odds by fishing with two flies at once. This allowed me to fish with a wet fly and a nymph or a dry fly and nymph or a lighter colored fly and a darker colored fly, with one fly up higher and one down lower. You can do this by tying two flies off a tippet ring with one longer tippet and one shorter or you can tie one fly to the tippet than add a dropper fly off the bend of the hook of the first fly. This enabled me to get a better chance at seeing what the fish want or where they want it. Well, if two flies might double your chances why not use three? Well, you can and in the past most wet fly anglers used three or more wet flies at a time. However, using more than one fly does come with the downside of increased tangles and snags, but I still find it better to use two flies than one while searching for trout.

Here are some more generalizations that I use to put the odds in my favor. As the weather gets warmer, the coolest water temperature is at night. Night fishing is rewarding, but I don’t find it fun or safe fishing alone in the dark. The next best thing is to fish just before dawn while the water is still cool. Larger fish usually hunt at night and very early morning. Knowing that, start with a streamer at first light and slowly transition to fishing with worm-like nymph patterns. As the water warms up a bit, switch to wet flies and emergers as aquatic insect activity increases. Switch to dry flies when you see fish rising. This system is far from fool proof, but remember it is a good generalization for increasing your odds when you don’t know what the fish are taking.

Here are some other tips to put the odds in your favor. Rains wash all kinds of terrestrials into the water so consider them as a fly of choice. When the water is high, fast, and muddy, fish closer to the shore because trout don’t have to fight faster current there as much. Also, you can get away with using short leaders of 3-5’ and heavier tippets. Using larger dark colored flies provide more vibration in the water for fish to key in on and are easier for fish to see.

From mid-May to early September, when it is windy, use terrestrials, such as a hopper, cricket, or ant pattern because many of these land-based creatures get blown into the water and many times this provides a more reliable dry fly “hatch”. If water is low and slow, use long-leaders and lighter tippets to avoid spooking fish.

Next step is to get into position to present your fly in the most natural way. First, wear clothing colors that blend in with the surroundings. Try to avoid flashy items such as a watch, silver hemostats, silver reels, etc. because such flashes put down fish. Move slowly and quietly. Try not to push water when you walk. Fish can not only hear you splashing water and scraping on rocks, but their lateral line can detect vibrations sent out by water being pushed.

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Always consider where the sun is. Is your shadow going to be cast over the fish? Cast to the side of a fish or spot where you think a fish is instead of casting your line directly over a fish, which more times than not will spook a fish. Don't worry about long casts. It is better to make shorter controlled casts that keeps you in contact with the bottom, or you can see your indicator or line twitch, or enables you to get a drag-free drift. The hardest thing that I still struggle with is to get a good drag-free drift so that the fly is seen in a natural way, but practicing doing this is one of the best things you can do to increase your odds at catching trout.

Remember you have a better chance at catching a trout when you fly is in the water than out while you are walking around pool hopping, fiddling with changing flies, or wasting too much time un snagging from bushes and trees. All of this is part of the overall fishing experience, but if you want to optimize more of your fishing time, then find a way to keep your fly in the water more. The best thing about fly fishing for trout is that one will never know everything there is to know about fishing for trout and this keeps the sport forever interesting. However, the worst thing about fly fishing for trout is that one will never know everything there is to know about fishing for trout because there are so many variables. When you are fishing and there are no identifiable hatches, and/or there is nobody else around catching fish to watch or seek advice from, but you want to increase the chances of your limited fishing time, then think of ways that you can put the odds in your favor. Hopefully you find some of the above suggestions helpful.

### **Oddball Fly Rod Techniques**

I love trout fishing, but I also love fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass, striped bass, bluefish, striped bass, walleye, catfish, carp and bluegill. Oh, heck, if it's got fins, I want to catch it and the techniques used for all of them are varied, but sometimes what you learn while fishing for other species can be adapted or modified to use while trout fishing. Here are two oddball ways I fish that you might be interested in adopting.

Flobbing – Sometimes while fly fishing there is no room to back cast or I can't get enough distance with my roll cast so I use a technique I call flobbing, which is basically fly and fly line lobbing with a weighted bobber. I do use weighted bobbers with a spinning rod, but in this case I am using them with a fly rod. To do this I use a regular 7.5' or 9' tapered leader, tippet ring, 2-3' tippet and fly. I add a weighted Styrofoam bobber somewhere about 4' from the fly. I am righty, so I hold the fly rod in my right hand and reel with my left. To begin flobbing, I hang the fly with bobber about 5' from the rod tip and gather a few loops of line in my left hand. Now it's just a matter of an underhand or sidearm lob while letting go of the gathered fly line in the left hand. The weighted bobber is heavy enough to pull out the line for the cast. Using this technique isn't recommended for shallow slow moving water because the splash tends to spook trout. Therefore, it works better in faster moving water when flobbed upstream. You can also cast with the weighted float if you water-load your rod, meaning you let you line drift downstream and when there is enough tension on the line to load the rod, then flick the rod and line upstream.

Ronney Rig – I love the idea of Euro nymphing and I have tried numerous leader/indicator systems, but I've run into some problems with doing so until I started using a Ronney Rig, which I will explain. First, if you are not familiar with Euro nymphing, it is a tight line system where you are in direct contact with your weighted nymphs at all time while you short cast upstream and follow it downstream with your arm raised up high as you follow through with the drift. Fly lines designed for Euro nymphing have a smaller diameter than traditional floating lines so they have less belly on the water and give you more direct contact with your flies. Euro leaders are designed to have multi-high-visibility segments to enable the angler to line watch for line twitches indicating strikes if a strike is not felt.

I don't have a Euro rod which is too specialized for me and if I did own one I wouldn't want to run back to the car to fetch it and unfortunately I don't have a caddy to carry it for me when I'd need it. So, I've tried using a Euro leader with my floating line and it works to a degree. But, I find those Euro leaders to be a pain in the patootski because you need to tie in a stiff section of this, a hi-vis section of that with a section of colored mono and then a bi-color tag and a leader to a tippet. Regardless, I don't find them to be flexible enough. What happens when I need to make a quick change to my leader system to go back to fish with streamers, emergers, or dry flies? Also, once I am set up and I'm trying to hold my rod tip up high to keep the indicator above the water so I can detect line movement indicating a strike. Then a few feet later I'm fishing deeper water or shallower water and I need to hold the rod ever higher or lower until I my arm feels like I've been pitching for nine innings.

This is where the Ronney Rig comes in. When I fished in lakes with live herring, I do so with a slip bobber rig that enables me to fish with a float, but I can set the hook below it anywhere from 3' down to 50' or more. So? Well, to tie a slip bobber rig, you need to tie in a slip bobber stop, which is a tiny tube of rubber that stops or fixes your bait at a specific depth and the bobber stop is the heart of the Ronney Rig. I usually fly fish with a five-weight floating line and a traditional 7.5' to 9' leader depending on the circumstances. If I want to Euro nymph with my existing floating line and leader, I simply thread on a rubber bobber stop and insert a 4-6' piece of Rio bi-color high-vis tippet material to it dangles at about 90 degrees from my leader. Now I can simply slide the bobber stop and high-vis material anywhere along the leader so I can adjust to deeper or shallower water a lot faster and I have less arm fatigue.

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If I have to make a quick change to a streamer, emerger, or dry fly, I just remove the bi-color high-vis material, leaving the tiny rubber bobber stop on the line and I'm back to casting as before. Why is it called the Ronney Rig? Because I used to call it the Slip Bobber Nymph Indicator Rig but that was too long to add to my fishing journal so I shortened it to something simpler for me to understand. Feel free to call it whatever you like if it works for you.

Another modification is to swap out the traditional leader with a 12-20' piece of 8-10 pound Berkley Vanish fluorocarbon line to a tippet ring and then a tippet to my fly. In this case, my fly line never makes it through the rod guides, line belly is eliminated, and I'm in direct contact with my fly at all times.



## FISH LOCAL

Stay close to home. Keep your fishing trip short. Avoid high-traffic destinations.



## BE SAFE

Avoid crowds and groups. Keep a distance of 6 feet or more from others, including staff stocking fish. Advise children not to wander into the personal space of other anglers.



## BE ADAPTIVE

Move quickly through parking lots and paths. If crowded, choose a different fishing location or time to visit.



## STAY HOME

If you're not feeling well, stay home.

# 6 Feet of Social Distance



- ONE FISHING ROD LENGTH -



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