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*southern culture*  
**on the fly**



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BAPTISMS DON'T TAKE PLACE IN FACTORIES.  
THEY BELONG TO THE WATER. FULL IMMERSION  
IN A BELIEF SYSTEM THAT SAYS A FLAWLESS DRIFT  
WILL RAISE THE LARGEST BROWN. FAITH THAT  
WIND WILL SUBSIDE. THUNDER WILL FIZZLE.  
AND HIGHLY-CONSIDERED GEAR WILL SEE YOU  
COMFORTABLY THROUGH THE BEAT-DOWN.  
RIVERS ARE WHERE WE RECALIBRATE AND  
CONNECT. THEY'RE WHAT WE MAKE OF THEM.  
AND THEY INSPIRE WHAT WE MAKE. SO IT'S NO  
SURPRISE THE WORLD'S BEST WADERS ARE  
HANDCRAFTED BY ANGLERS. BECAUSE IT TAKES  
ONE TO KNOW WHEN THEY'RE RIGHT.

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SCOF fall flubber





Photo: Nantahala River, NC - Fall 2016, Rand Harcz



Photo: Wrightsville Beach, NC - Fall 2016, David Grossman



Photo: *Chiefland, FL - Fall 2016, Steve Seinberg*

A photograph of a shallow water skiff on a wooden dock at sunset. A tent is set up on the dock, and a person is visible inside. The sky is filled with colorful clouds, and the water is calm. The dock is made of wooden planks and has a roof structure. A small boat is docked next to the skiff.

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Photo: Steve Seiberberg

photo: Steve Seiberberg

# S.C.O.F

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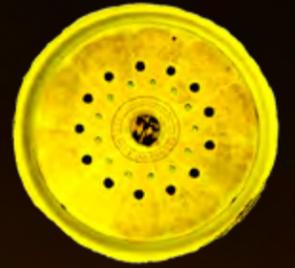
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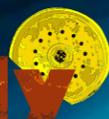


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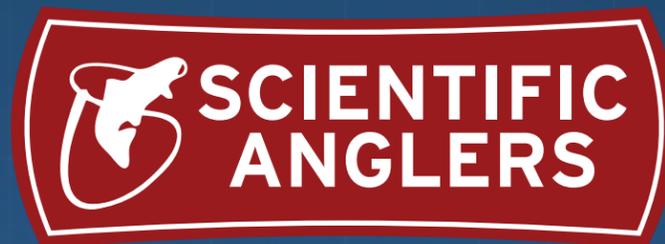


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## Fall 2016

I have lost two dogs in the past six months. One was with us only a short time and the other one was a part of our family since there was a family to be a part of. Needless to say, the last six months have sucked. Sucked so much that there is now a hole in my heart being filled by suck. If you've never loved a dog, your life is most likely already as empty as your soul. For the rest of us, the love and friendship of a good dog is truly one of the most special relationships any of us will ever have. There is a reason no one ever waxes poetically about their cats. Ferrets maybe, but never cats.

Our love affair with our four-legged companions dates back to when Egyptians were actually doing the King Tut dance, and so intense that it is one of the few things that can make men of a certain generation freely shed tears, the other being that scene in the movie *Rudy* (you know the one). I've often wondered where this kind of love in men comes from, as more often than not their children don't yield anywhere close to these kinds of public emotions.

Honestly, dogs can be a pain in the ass, too. Mine have broken rods, destroyed fly tying desks, and on more than one occasion, shat on a friend's bed within

five minutes of being in his house. If humans perpetrated these transgressions, the relationship would be over. In dogs, I not only tolerate them, but I'm smiling as I recount these tales of doggy destruction while sitting at this computer. My dogs weren't perfect, neither am I. They loved me unconditionally in the truest sense of the word. Not a day went by when asses weren't shaking when I came through the door. When I was lucky enough to have them on the boat with me, they were always excited no matter the fish caught or the day had. When I went to sleep at night, the snoring, grunting, and farting were constant white noise that I now find myself wakeful without. I haven't rushed into starting a new canine relationship just yet. I'm somewhere between not being able to imagine going through this kind of heartache again and not being able to imagine my life without another dog in it. I go back and forth every hour it seems, but in the end if I had to bet, I'll have a new boat buddy sometime in the future. Being loved that much by anyone or anything is not something to be taken for granted or denied. So give your buddy a belly rub for me. You know he'll appreciate it.

(STILL FREE)



NO. 1 FALL 2011



NO. 2 WINTER 2012



NO. 3 SPRING 2012



NO. 4 SUMMER 2012



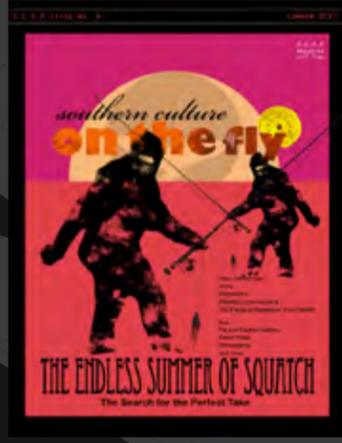
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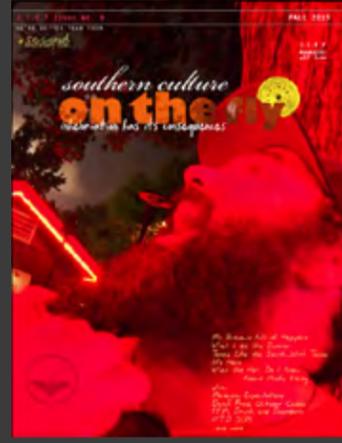
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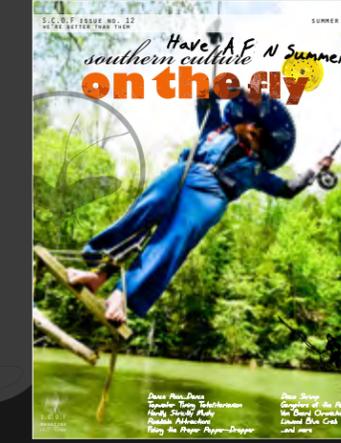
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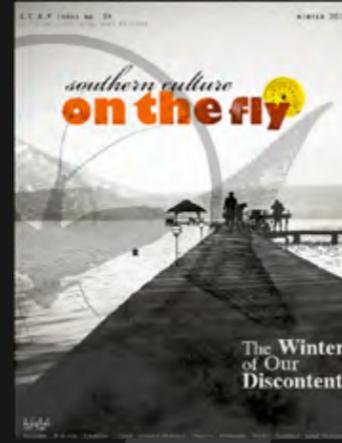
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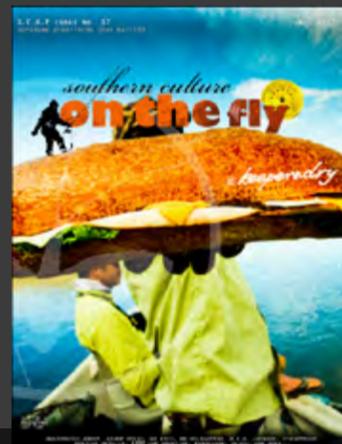
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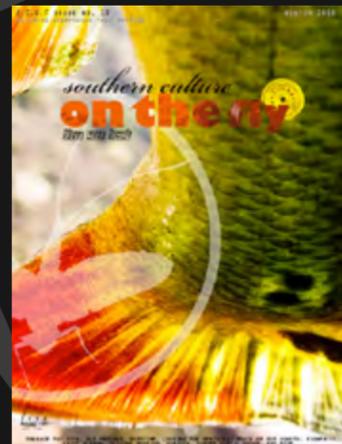
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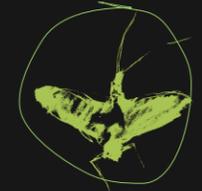
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# Haiku

with Patrick Williams

Parr rushes the fly  
Slides off fingers into gin  
Get bigger buddy



photo: Patrick Williams



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## GUIDED TRIPS AND TRAVEL





# GETTING HARD IN THE GORGE

By David Grossman  
Photos: Rand Harcz

Every once in awhile you hear an idea so stupid that you just have to participate.

This type of thinking has gotten me into horribly awkward conversations with security guards, but occasionally my gravitation towards bad ideas has left me with soggy underpants... in a good way. I only know a handful of guys that have run their hard boats down the Nantahala Gorge. I know of three who did it on a regular basis (tip of the hat to Mac Brown here for being the Original Hard Boat Gangster, OHBG for short). But as of right now there are only two guys running dories down this run on a regular basis -- and they just happen to be friends of mine. YAY me.



H O P P

D R O P



What I appreciate most about stupidity is how inherently unnecessary it is. Running a hard boat down the Gorge is the definition of unnecessary. It's a raft run, as evidenced by the hundreds of slack-jawed googans floating down it wearing the same orange vest, yellow helmet, and death-clutching a blue and yellow paddle that they are more likely to bludgeon their boatmate with than actually move the boat. Most boatmen with their wits about them can row the Gorge in a raft. The

**Let me be clear here, my drift boat does not nor ever will run the Gorge. I like my drift boat.**

cream rises/shit floats rowing test is really only achieved by adding real consequences to the oarsmen strokes. Chines grind, rocks are burrito'd, and Lord help you if you drop an anchor in the wrong place or lose control of an oar at the wrong time. Let me be clear here, my drift boat does not nor ever will run the Gorge. I like my drift boat. But in case any of you don't care for yours, you're still probably disqualified from this run due to your aluminum deficiencies. That's right boys and girls, this a metal boat run, unless once again you really don't like your boat.







This run fishes as fast as it rows, and most days during the summer and early fall you can get away with throwing chubbies and a little dingle-nymph. You are heavily penalized for errant casts and loops that end in tangles, because the guy on the sticks can't really help you out. He's taking a constant barrage of lurkers akin to flying a B-52 over Germany. It's pretty crazy this experience even exists on this side of the country, if only because it is so diametrically different than every other experience to be had in a drift boat on the right coast.

First in Flight

10-16

FISHTACO

FISHTACO

NORTH CAROLINA





As we took the boats out in the middle of the tourist boat circus, I was reminded how weird this all was when one of the raft guides assigned to roping in the sheep -- before they missed the takeout and died in the next class four -- started harumphing in our general direction about the fact that we were clogging up the ramp with trailers. "You guys really don't belong here," he said. Which I retorted, "You're right man, but that's why it's fun as shit." Take the stupid road every once in awhile. Most times it leads straight to Badassville with only a slight layover in county lockup.



*I would like to say a special thank you to Zach Bassett and Anthony Esposito of the **Asheville Fly Fishing Company** for giving a 38-year-old a completely new experience in his own backyard. These are two of the best watermen in our region and y'all sucker MC's best recognize.*



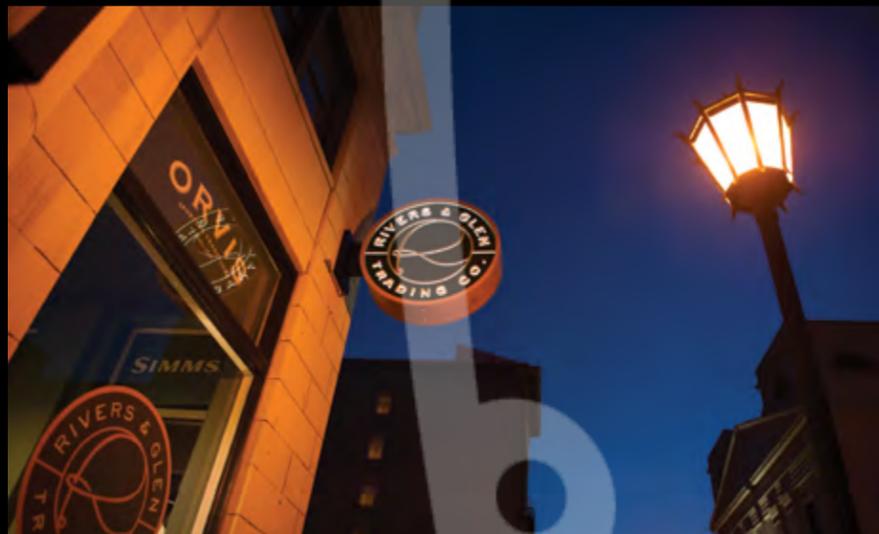
# Howler Bros

## BROS





LIVE LIFE IN THE CURRENT



SAVANNAH - AUGUSTA  
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Initial Skiff Layout



PLOR Chapter 1 arrival



PLOR Chapter 2 gathering



PLOR Chapter 3 collection



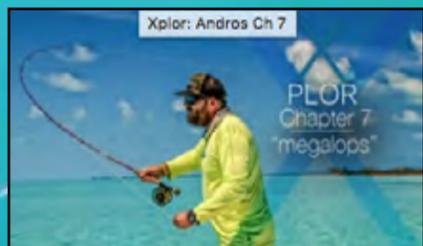
PLOR Chapter 4 capture



PLOR Chapter 5 "the wheels fell off"



PLOR Chapter 6 "thou giveth"



Xplor: Andros Ch 7

PLOR Chapter 7 "megalops"



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# Mixed Mullet Media

Photos: Steve Seinberg and Louis Gaudet  
Drone video and stills: Stephen Ferrell



Nothing gets my adrenaline flowing more than watching 60-100lb-plus tarpon blasting through mullet along the beach. The mullet run of the fall is an incredible sight to see even if you're not fishing, but I would suggest never walking the east coast beaches of Florida without a rod in hand and a few flies in your pocket.

Every fall we get a front-row seat to the beauty and mayhem of nature. Thousands of mullet migrate down the beaches with tarpon in hot pursuit. From first light until last light, this plight of survival unfolds. The mullet do everything they can to stay alive, while predators from below and above feast. As you look out over the ocean, the mullet will start to ball up in a tight group. Then as you see a silver flash cut through the middle of the ball, they have nowhere else to go except out of the water in a last ditch effort to survive. As the mullet scurry across the surface in desperation, the silver king rockets out of the water after them.

When going for a walk with your significant other on the beach, if you were smart on your way out the door, you grabbed your 10wt, three or four large baitfish flies and some 50lb bite tippet. As the drama unfolds right off the sand, keep your nerves in check, pick your shot and remember to always bow to the king.



CLICK TO VIEW  
RUN, MULLET RUN!



By Stephen Ferrell











A red rectangular logo with a black square at the top containing a white stylized fly. Below the square, the text "PREMIUM FLY FISHING PRODUCTS" is written in white, bold, uppercase letters. At the bottom of the red box, the word "HATCH" is written in white, stylized, uppercase letters. On the right side of the red box, the website address "HATCHOUTDOORS.COM" is written vertically in white, uppercase letters.

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# SUNKEN BLACK STONE



Josh Gannis

## SUNKEN BLACK STONE

With the cooler temperatures approaching (hopefully), our possibilities for dry fly fishing will decrease dramatically depending on where you're fishing. Even though there is still a fair amount of insect activity, both on the surface and below, fish will be doing calorie counts on their food sources to make the most of their energy expenditures. In other words, fish are going to eat what's in their faces as opposed to fighting currents to get to the surface to collect nature's tiny adult insect offerings.

As we know, many of the insects will fail on the journey to adulthood for a number of various reasons. Currents, wind, their own exoskeleton and fish can all cause these insects to meet their demise before reaching the surface or bank to fulfill their destiny. Even the lucky ones who do make it free of the water and its surface film can still meet an early fate and find themselves back in the water from which they came. One of the major movers in the mountain freestone rivers in the South is the little black stonefly. Also known as the needle fly or winter stone, these insects can be found consistently through the cooler months and even into early spring. The flying ability of these insects resembles a hot air balloon more than a fighter pilot. Their horrible aim and landing skills land them on your head and neck and back in the river alike.

This fly looks to take advantage of both the exposure of the fish to this insect during the winter months, but also throws in some attention grabbers through wing movement. It is super versatile in the sense it can be fished under a dry, on a deep nymph rig, or even swung like a soft hackle. Also try in rust brown. Enjoy!



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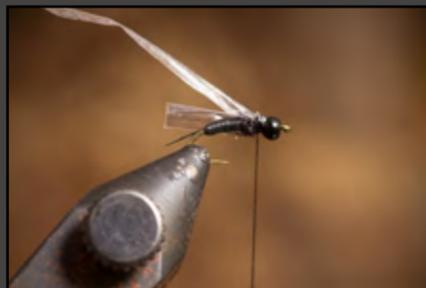
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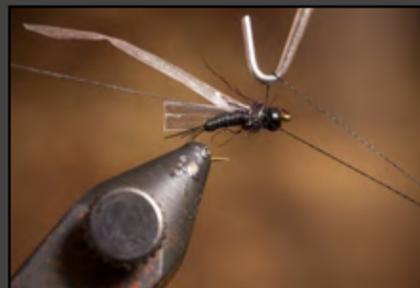
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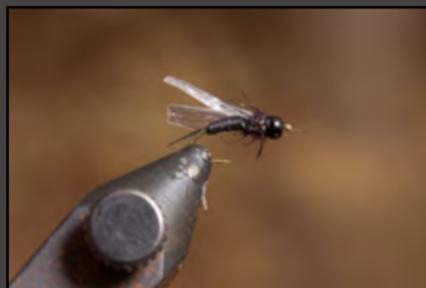
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12



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### **Materials List:**

Hook: Tiemco 200R

Bead: Black 5/64

Thread: Veevus black 16/0

Tail: Black Pheasant tail

Abdomen: Black Spanflex

Wing: Spirit River Wings and Things

Thorax: Black UV Ice dubbing

1. For this fly I like to use a TMC 200R (size 19-20) or similar hook and a black tungsten bead (5/64). The extra shank length allows the fly to look more natural.

2. Using black 16/0 Veevus Thread, anchor your thread to the hook. Stopping your thread slightly behind the start of the bend of the hook.

3. Trim 3-5 fibers of black pheasant tail and make sure the tips line up. Tie in at the thread stopping point slightly behind the bend of the hook.

4. Tie down pheasant tail up the hook shank about half the length. Trim excess pheasant tail material to keep the body of the fly thin.

5. Tie in one strand of black Spanflex material wrapping down to your tail tie off point. Stretch the Spanflex and palmer it up the shank of the hook. Make sure that each wrap touches the one before but does not lay on top. Once again we are trying to keep the profile of this fly on the tin side.

6. Tie off Spanflex ¼ of an inch behind the bead.

7. Cut one piece of Spirit River's Wings and Things into a 3 inch long strip approximately ¼ of an inch wide. You will not use this total length of material but, the extra material will make it easier to work with and around in the next couple of steps. Tie in material with about 1 inch of material hanging over the recently wrapped Spanflex.

8. Apply a small amount of UV Black Ice dub to your thread using your dubbing wax of choice. Once again keep thin profile in mind.

9. Make 2-3 wraps with the dubbing at the most. Make sure the wraps are close but overlapping.

10. Pull the extra piece of Wings and Things over the bead and hook eye, back towards the bend of the hook and tie in with 2-3 wraps.

11. Apply a small amount of dubbing to your thread with dubbing wax, keeping it thin, and make two wraps forward towards the bead.

12. Whip finish and trim thread.

13. Trim Wings and Things pieces to slightly past the Spanflex abdomen. Even slightly shorter than in this picture, but not too short. The movement of the wings is part of the attraction of this fly.



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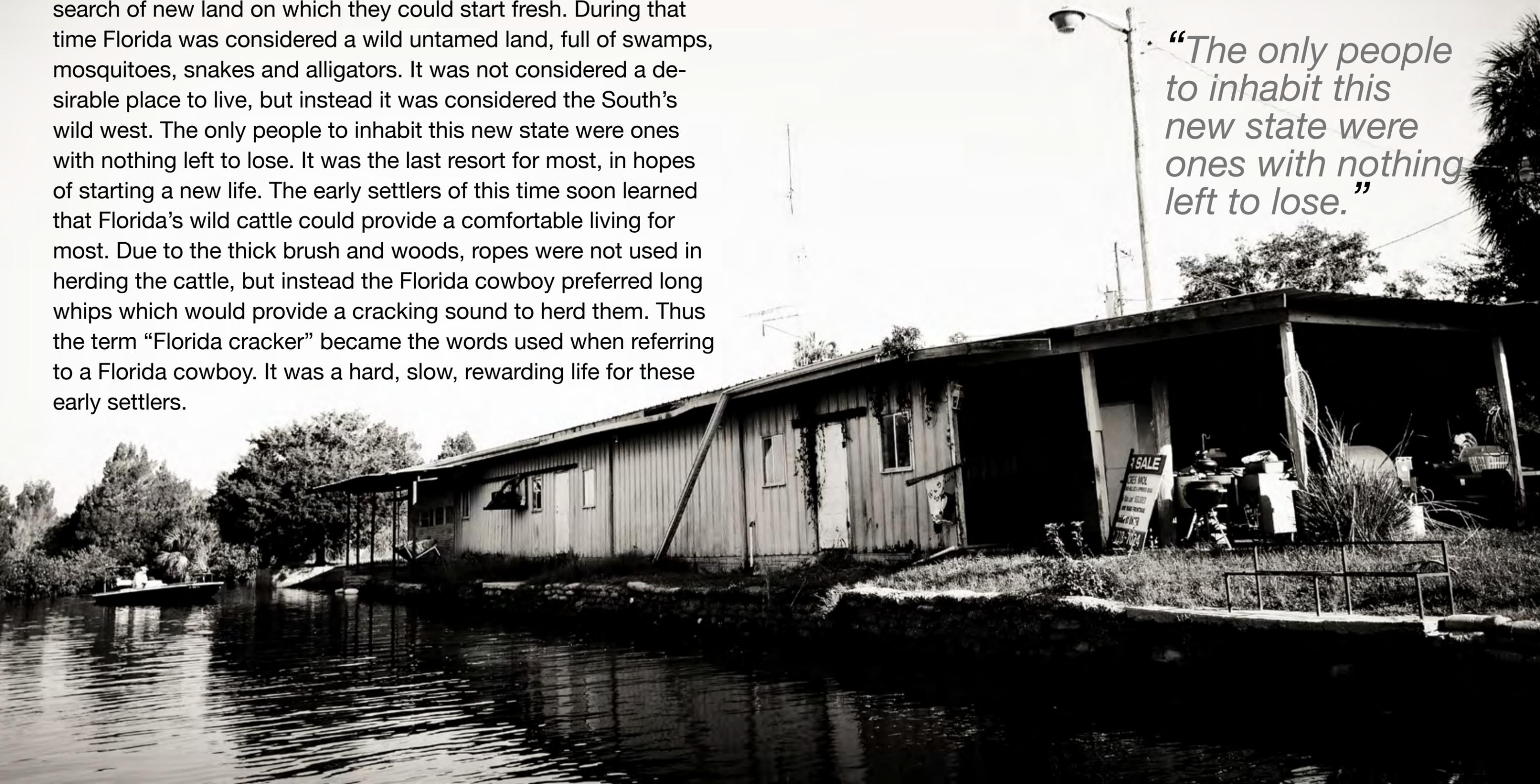
By Gray Drummond and Lacey Kelly  
Photos: Steve Seiberg

W  
O  
R  
L  
D



My family moved to Florida from South Carolina in the early 1850s, and settled on a piece of property near the Suwannee river between a small town called Chiefland, and the coastal island town of Cedar Key. Like most of the early settlers of that time, my family were poor farmers, who were in search of new land on which they could start fresh. During that time Florida was considered a wild untamed land, full of swamps, mosquitoes, snakes and alligators. It was not considered a desirable place to live, but instead it was considered the South's wild west. The only people to inhabit this new state were ones with nothing left to lose. It was the last resort for most, in hopes of starting a new life. The early settlers of this time soon learned that Florida's wild cattle could provide a comfortable living for most. Due to the thick brush and woods, ropes were not used in herding the cattle, but instead the Florida cowboy preferred long whips which would provide a cracking sound to herd them. Thus the term "Florida cracker" became the words used when referring to a Florida cowboy. It was a hard, slow, rewarding life for these early settlers.

*"The only people to inhabit this new state were ones with nothing left to lose."*





16 Point Buck Dad  
EHS



Only a few miles away from where my ancestors settled was the island town of Cedar Key, which was quickly becoming Florida's primary port on its Western coastline. Commerce and trade were beginning to thrive there. It was not until a hurricane hit Cedar Key in the late 1800s, from which the town was unable to recover, did Tampa become Florida's primary western port, turning it into the large metropolis it is today. I'm sure at the time my family and other inhabitants around their area viewed this as a devastation. But today I see this as the beginning of the preservation of the Florida I love, which is part of the state that is now known as Florida's "Nature Coast."



The Nature Coast, compared to most of Florida has changed very little over the last century in terms of its ruralness. It encompasses eight different counties, over 900,000 acres and the entire Big Bend coast line. The culture here is very southern when compared to other parts of state. Here, fried mullet, swamp cabbage, hush-puppies and cold beer are still considered a delicacy, and can be found in almost every hunting and fishing camp on a Saturday night.









The coastline on the Nature Coast goes for miles before you see any sign of development, and when you do, it is one of the small quaint fishing communities (such as Cedar Key) in which the majority of its income still comes from the water. A few miles inland from the coast, you will find a diverse landscape, which ranges from flat woods, to live oak hammocks, cypress swamps and natural springs. Whether you want to catch record tarpon on the fly, paddleboard on the river, or hunt the oak hammocks, the Nature Coast can provide it.







Florida is known as a very diverse state. When most people think of Florida, they think of its beaches, its theme parks, or Miami. They do not think of the undeveloped natural woods and waters that I do. If this natural landscape is not taken care of, it will be lost forever. I have always felt that in order for someone to truly appreciate something they must experience it. For this reason, I started Florida Outdoor Experience. My goal is to provide a place for people to come and experience Old Florida, with the hope of them leaving with a real appreciation of its natural beauty, and the importance of preserving it through conservation.

So before you book your next Disney World trip, consider stepping off the grid instead. Come visit the Nature Coast and see the real Florida. The Florida that its first settlers saw. The true, wild Florida.



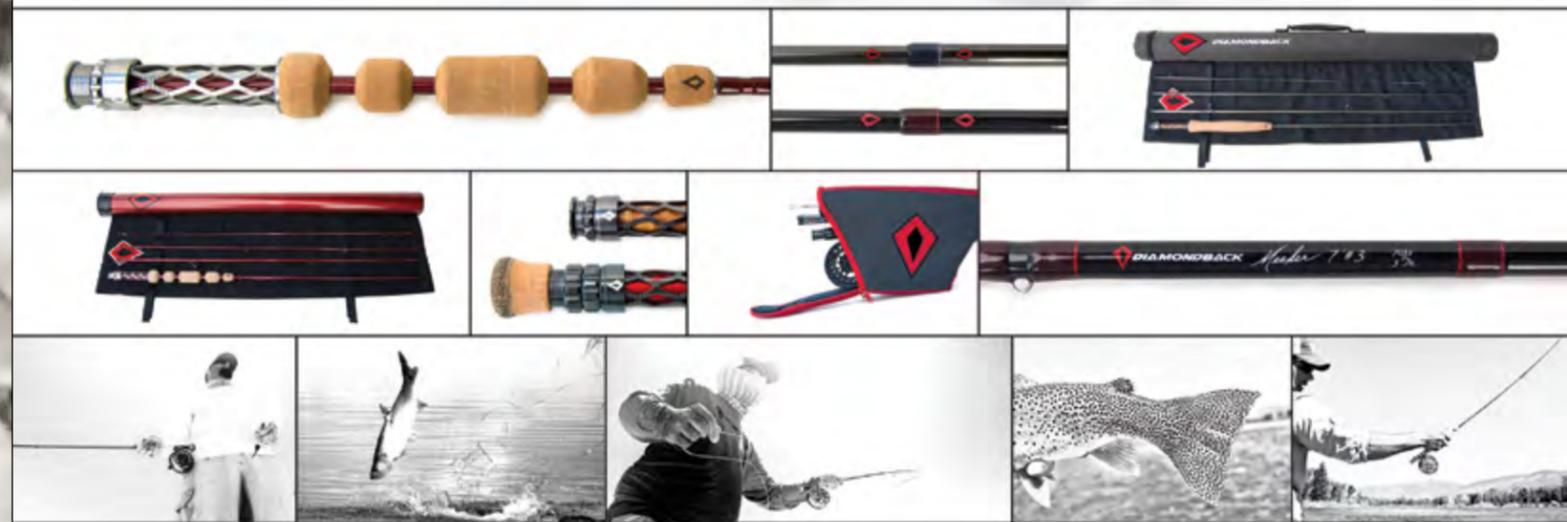
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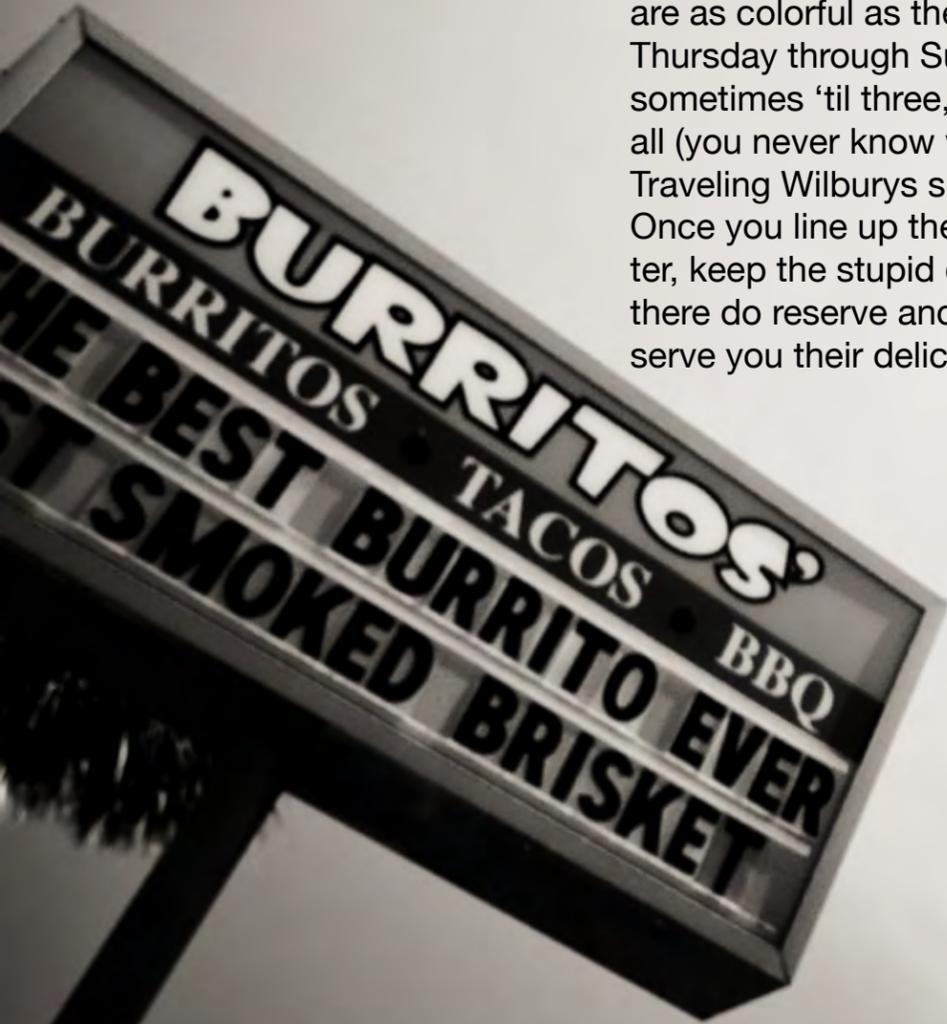
**ROBBURRITO'S**  
315 Ocean Ave.  
Melbourne Beach, FL

When planning a fishing trip or arriving to a new fishing location, there are three main pieces of intel everyone seeks out first: Where to fish, what flies to use, and sometimes most importantly, where to eat. If you find yourself fishing on the space coast -- especially in the Melbourne Beach area -- do yourself a favor and check out Robburrito's on Ocean Ave.

Walking into Robburrito's is pure sensory overload. The walls drip with vintage concert posters and schlock, the air hangs heavy with the smell of smoke and salsa, and the voice you hear behind the counter oozes with Southern charm earned from years spent in Georgia and Tennessee. No north-of-the-Mason-Dixon transplants in this burrito joint. As BBQ as it is Mexican, Robburrito's menu swings both ways. The brisket has the best of Texas written all over it, and the pork is more East Tennessee, but once you throw some burn-your-butthole sauce on, it all just seems to make sense. The service and the hours are as colorful as the food. Robburrito's is open Thursday through Sunday sometimes 'til seven, and sometimes 'til three, and every once in awhile not at all (you never know when a random bird attack, or a Traveling Wilburys show might come through town). Once you line up the stars and make it to the counter, keep the stupid questions to yourself. The folks there do reserve and often execute the right not to serve you their delicious smoked meats.

Don't mistake this intolerance for bullshit for being inhospitable, because Rob and Glenn are some of the nicest folks you'll meet in Florida, and are always willing to take a minute to chat you up.

Robburrito's is definitely one of the best kept local secrets on the space coast. My suggestion is the Monster pork burrito with BBQ sauce, or the beef brisket with the creamy chipotle. It's one of the last cash-only businesses you will find and that makes me like them all the more. It's a trifecta of great personalities, old school feel, and amazing food. Be sure to check them out if you're in the area.



# NANTAHALA BREWING COMPANY

61 Depot St.  
Bryson City, NC

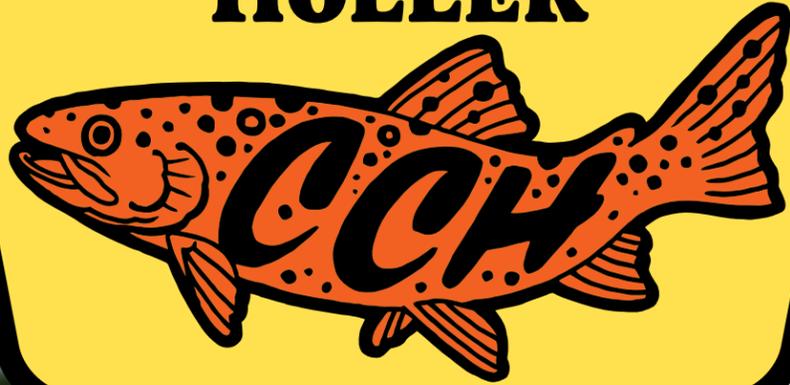
Drinking in Western North Carolina has turned into a full-time profession. If you really want to drink all the great beer the region has to offer, you better be dedicated. No calling in sick, no half-assing. Don't treat it like your day job, this is your drinking job -- way more demanding. While Asheville is still the hub, Johnny Barley Seed has been roaming the countryside spreading good beer in every little town on the edges of the frontier. One of these satellite breweries just happens to sit in what I consider to be the best base-camp in the smokies: Nantahala Brewery in Bryson City, NC.

Bryson City is in no way a city. Bryson Awesome Little Town would be a more apt name. The fishing reminds me of the adage, "You can't swing a dead cat without hitting a live trout." But after you've rassled the local trouts, there's

no better place to pull up a pint glass than the tasting room at Nantahala Brewing. My favorites include the Dirty Girl Blond when I'm feeling like a dirty girl, and the Nantahala Brown when I'm feeling like a cabana boy. With a full lineup of seasonals, high gravity, and barrel-aged beers on tap at any given time, Nantahala can accommodate even your nerdiest beer friends (you know the ones, they used to be wine drinkers). Between the beer, the town, and the wilderness just past the sidewalk, it's hard to think of a better place to drink and be merry. So get your drinking asses over to Nantahala Brewing in Bryson City, because we take drinking seriously and we expect the same out of you lady-boys.



**CROOKED CREEK  
HOLLER**





# DICAPRIO THE DESTROYER OF FLATS HABITATS

By Alyssa Arceo  
Photos: Steve Seinberg

Blackadore Caye, Belize, is a sliver of an island in the middle of a vast sand flat in northern Belize – located about halfway between Ambergris Caye and the mainland. The flats surrounding the caye have been an important location for flats fishing since the earliest days of the fishery. Multiple generations of flats guides have now poled these flats in pursuit of bonefish, permit and tarpon.

Damage to flats habitats – whether from dredging, construction, pollution – have immediate and long-lasting impacts on the fish that live there. According to Aaron Adams, Director of Science and Conservation at Bonefish & Tarpon Trust (BTT), tag-recapture data from research sponsored by BTT underscores how important habitat conservation is to a healthy fishery. Most of the tagged bonefish were recaptured within 1 kilometer of where they were tagged. Same goes for tagging studies in the Bahamas, Cuba, Belize and Florida. This means that bonefish have small home ranges. So if a habitat is damaged or destroyed, those bonefish become homeless, and the damaged location may never harbor bonefish again. Ongoing tagging research of permit suggests they also have home ranges, though not as small as bonefish.

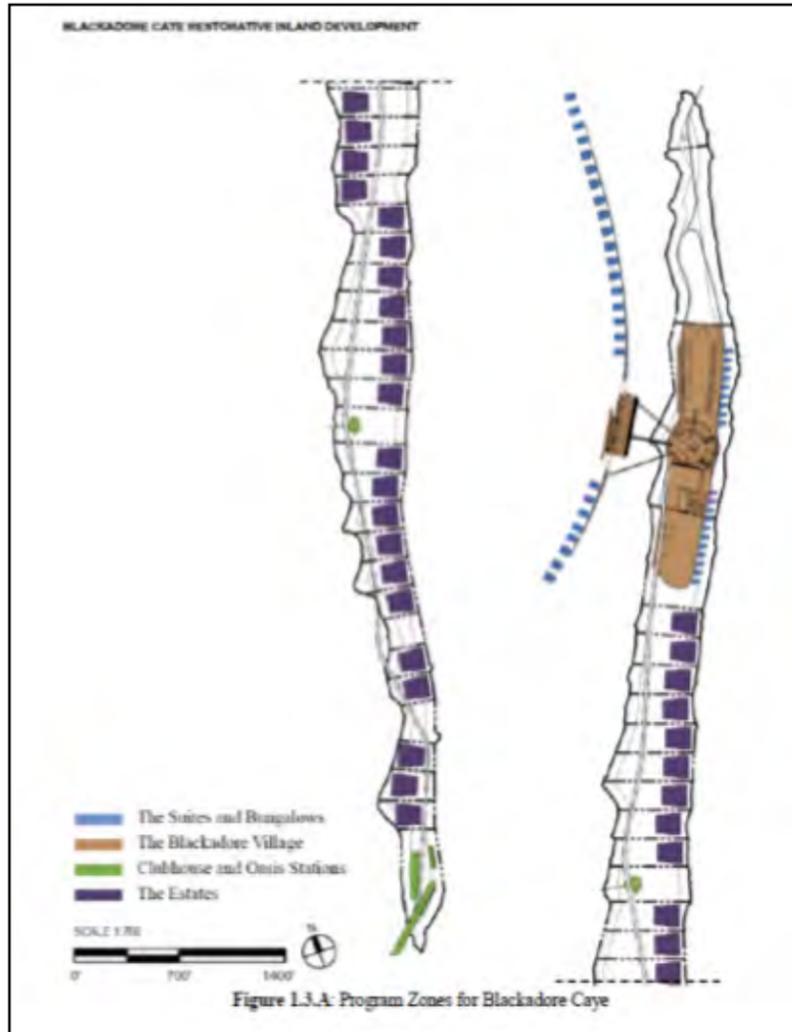




WITH SUCH A FORWARD  
LOOKING APPROACH,  
THE FUTURE OF THE FLATS  
FISHERY LOOKED GOOD.  
THEN EVERYTHING CHANGED.

The flats fishery is also extremely economically important to Belize. According to an economic report by Dr. Tony Fedler, the flats fishery has an annual economic impact that exceeds \$100 million Belize dollars. The fishery supports thousands of jobs, and has become a family affair with multiple generations of families working as fishing guides. The government of Belize recognized the importance of the flats fishery when they made bonefish, tarpon and permit catch-and-release-only – the first nation to do so.

Residents of northern Belize also know the importance of the fishery and of the habitats that make the fishery so successful. That's why they worked to expand the Hol Chan Marine Reserve to encompass much of the flats habitat in the region. With such a forward-looking approach, the future of the flats fishery looked good. Then everything changed.



## Bad Acting

In 2005, Hollywood actor Leonardo DiCaprio and an investor purchased Blackadore Caye. As the story is told, they envisioned the island as a good location for a resort. Although the purchase and general intent were well-known locally, there was no official word on plans until 2015, when the original development proposal was re-released. The development proposal called for extensive docks to be built over the flats. The docks would support houses. Under the docks would be constructed artificial reefs to attract colorful reef fish.

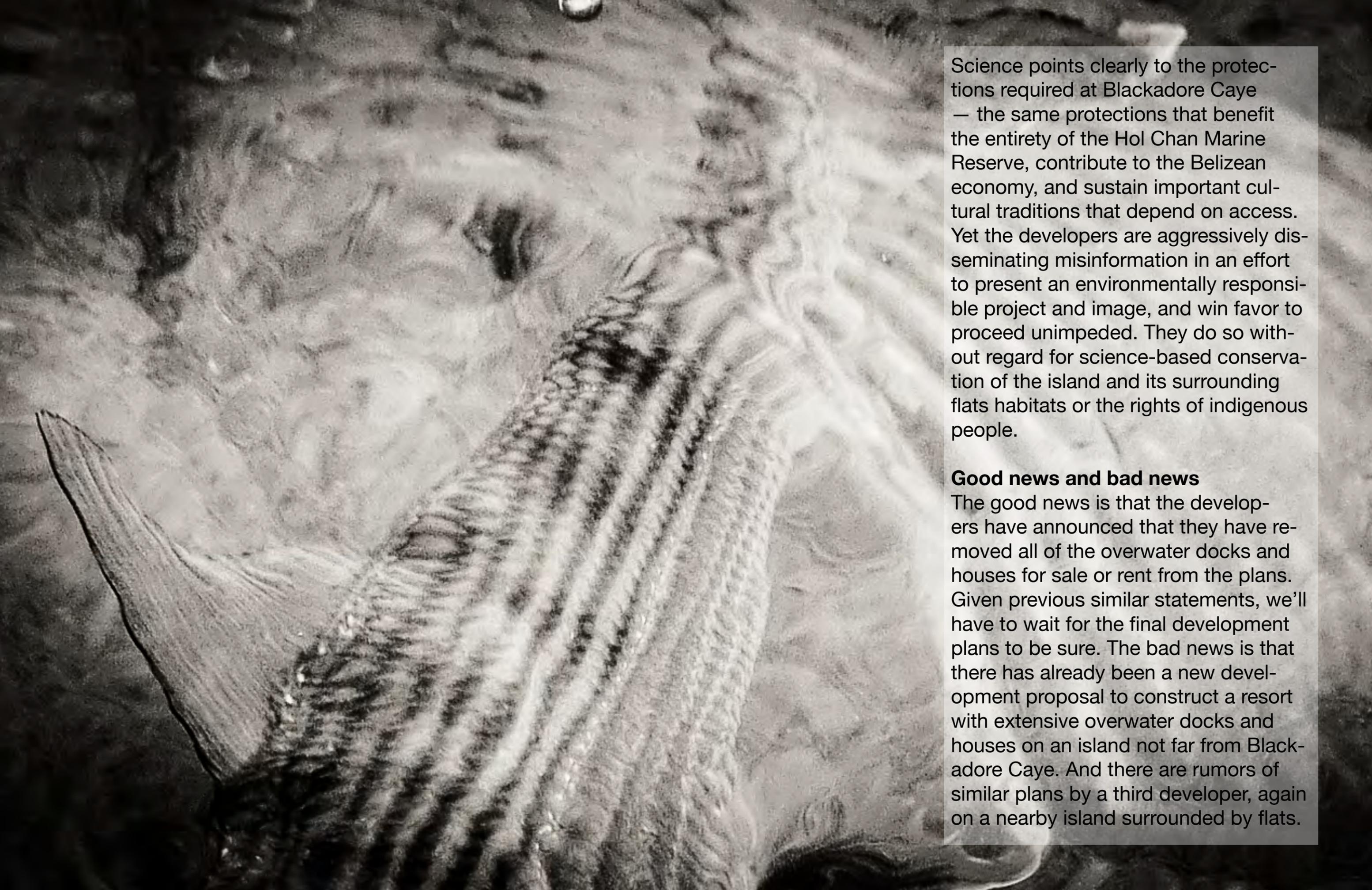
The proposal was met with strong opposition. Despite a law that gives Belizeans access to all shorelines, the developers wanted a no-go buffer around the island to protect the privacy of the guests. This would make much of the flats unfishable. The artificial reefs that the developers planned to build were intended to attract juvenile reef fish. They claimed this was a good thing because it would attract reef fish to the island. This is just plain wrong. The species that naturally live on the flats (whether the ones we fish for or those we don't) depend on the open habitats. Building artificial reefs on sand flats is like planting a forest in the African savannah and wondering where all of the zebras and other savannah animals went. Arguably some of the best bonefishing in the Atlantic and Caribbean is on the vast sand flats of Bahamas. Just because they don't make for good snorkeling doesn't mean that sandflats are bad habitats. They are, in fact, essential. And Blackadore Caye is located within the Hol Chan Marine Reserve, which is in place to protect marine habitats.



\* Photos collected from the Google



According to Aaron Adams of BTT, there is another problem with the artificial reef idea. The developers claimed that these reefs would be fish nurseries – this is also not valid. Aaron explains that most marine fish (including most reef fish) spawn using a method called “broadcast spawning,” where groups of mixed males and females get together and eject eggs and sperm into the open water. The eggs are fertilized, and once the larvae hatch out of the eggs they drift in ocean currents for weeks to days (depending on the species). The lucky larvae survive and drop out of the water to the bottom at the end of the larval stage, wherever the currents have taken them, and begin their juvenile stage. This might be on the main reef, on a patch reef or on an artificial reef near Blackadore Caye. Once the juveniles get to a certain size, they try to migrate to the adult habitat on the reef. For juvenile habitats that are close to the reef, this migration is successful enough of the time to keep the population healthy. But the farther the juvenile habitat is from the adult reef habitat, the less likely the juveniles will survive the migration. Blackadore Caye is at least 15 kilometers from Belize’s barrier reef. Based on scientific research (some of it done in Belize) the chances of juveniles from Blackadore Caye making it to the reef are zero and none.



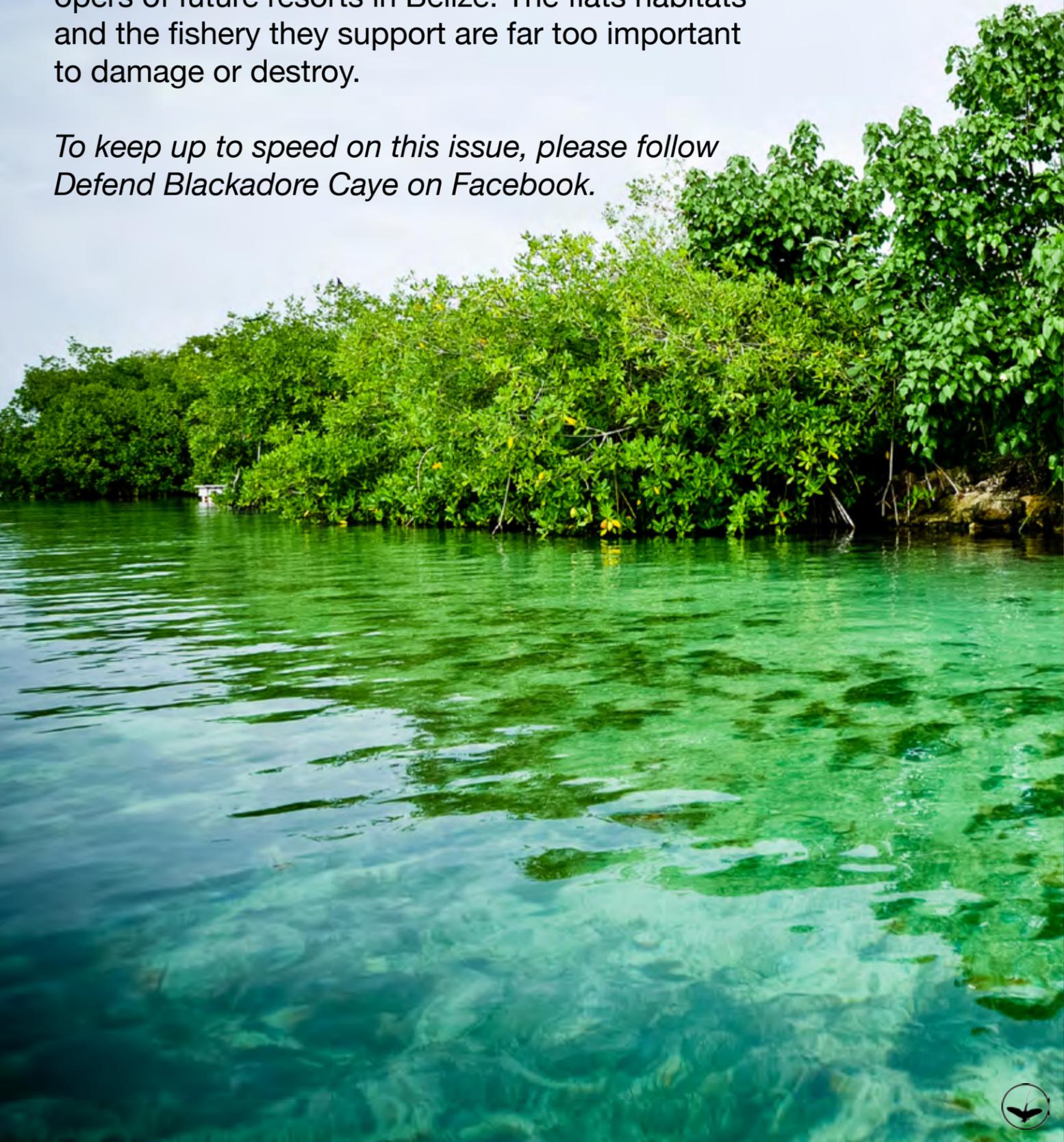
Science points clearly to the protections required at Blackadore Caye — the same protections that benefit the entirety of the Hol Chan Marine Reserve, contribute to the Belizean economy, and sustain important cultural traditions that depend on access. Yet the developers are aggressively disseminating misinformation in an effort to present an environmentally responsible project and image, and win favor to proceed unimpeded. They do so without regard for science-based conservation of the island and its surrounding flats habitats or the rights of indigenous people.

#### **Good news and bad news**

The good news is that the developers have announced that they have removed all of the overwater docks and houses for sale or rent from the plans. Given previous similar statements, we'll have to wait for the final development plans to be sure. The bad news is that there has already been a new development proposal to construct a resort with extensive overwater docks and houses on an island not far from Blackadore Caye. And there are rumors of similar plans by a third developer, again on a nearby island surrounded by flats.

Now that the Blackadore Caye developers have agreed to act responsibly and remove the overwater structures, the next logical step is to denounce the construction of overwater structures by developers of future resorts in Belize. The flats habitats and the fishery they support are far too important to damage or destroy.

*To keep up to speed on this issue, please follow Defend Blackadore Caye on Facebook.*



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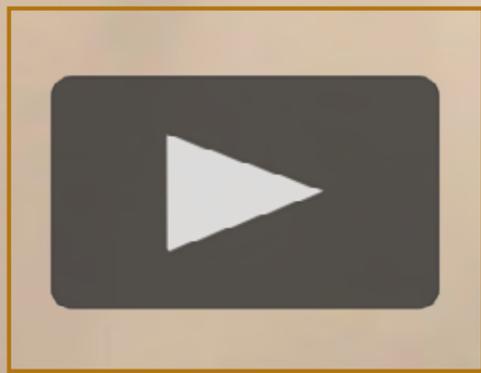
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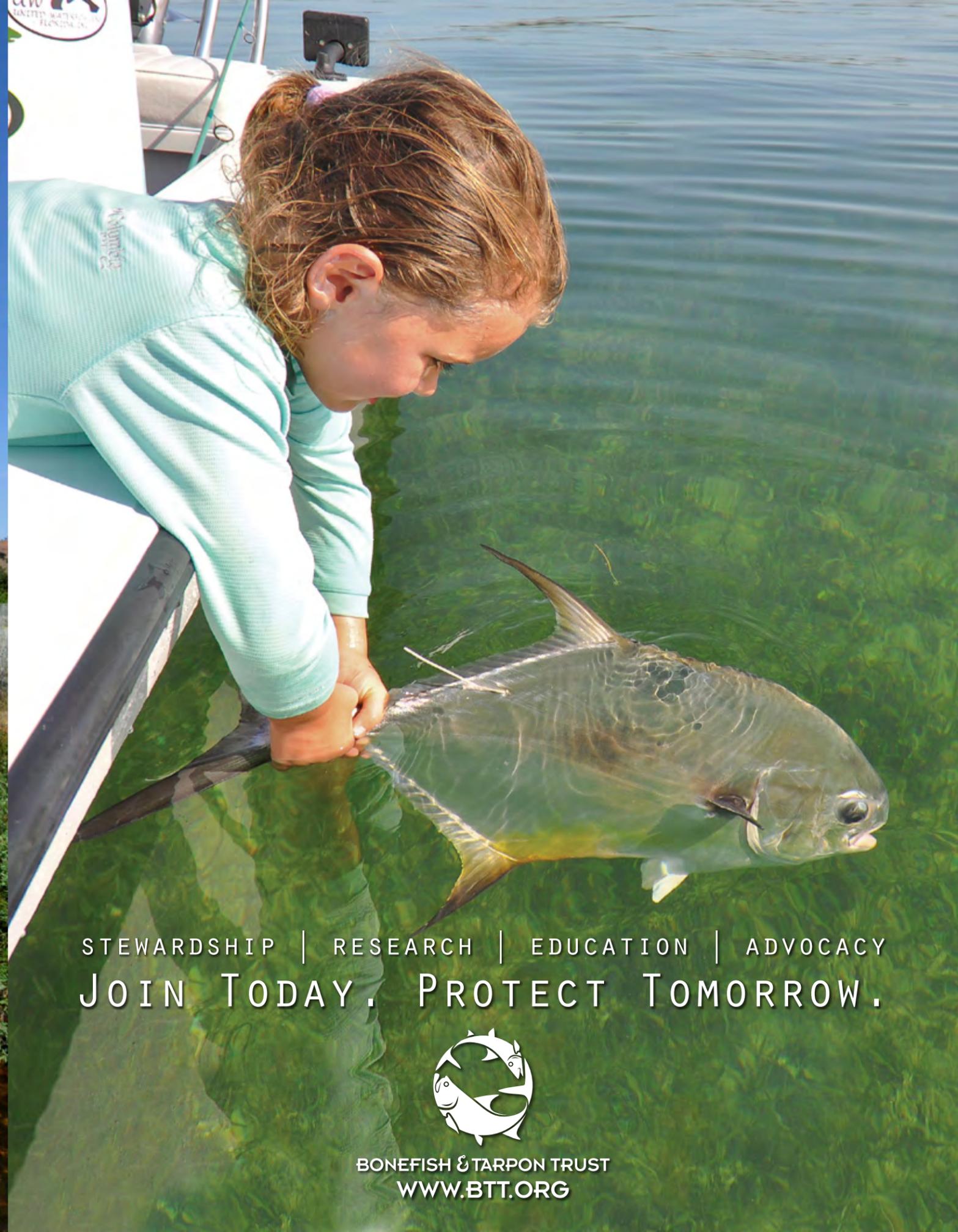
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# PNTNGONIN'S

By Allen Gillespie

# BOX

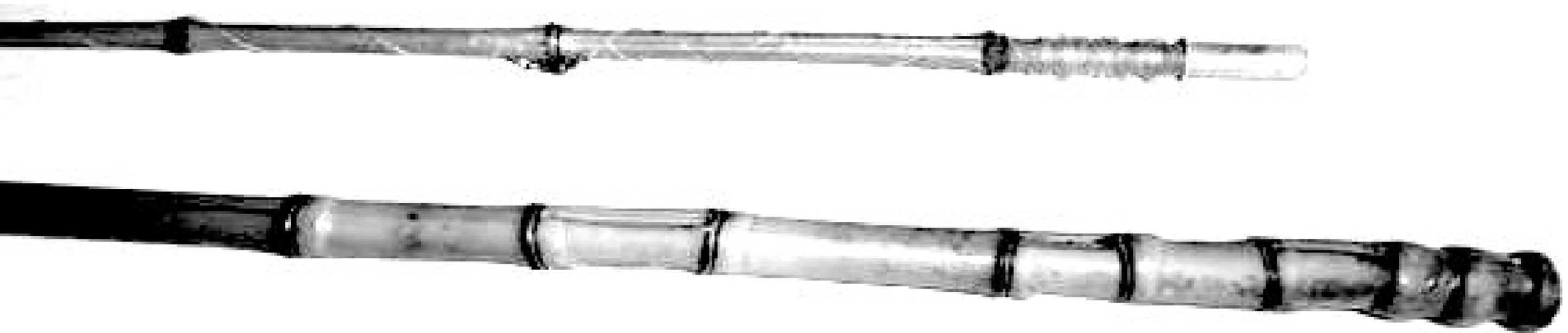
AND ITS METAPHORICAL IMPLICATIONS



“Modern-day fly fishing, like much in life, has become exceedingly complex, with high-tech gear, a confusing array of flies and terminal tackle, accompanied by high-priced fishing guides,” *Chouinard et al. 2014.*



When it comes to discussing tenkara, I'm a tad dubious. What could I possibly have to say on the subject? I own three boats, four boat bags, and 20 some-odd fly rods. I've spent the last 20-something years assembling and refining my arsenal of equipment, knowledge, and abilities for better or worse. I am of course familiar with the concept of tenkara. I grew up in the South on the banks of the Tennessee River, and the first fish I caught was likely on a cane pole which is, if we are being honest, not entirely dissimilar to a tenkara. But along the way, cane poles gave way to spinning rods and rooster tails and ultimately a fly rod. Today, I am a self-professed big fish junkie, and I giggle like a small child when I feel a fish pull the line through my hand as it steams in the opposite direction. While not a casting aficionado, I can cast a long line and I enjoy doing it, because more often than not, longer casts result in bigger fish. Tenkara, while having some obvious benefits for fishing small streams (of which we have in abundance here in East Tennessee), doesn't in any way fit the style of fishing I love to do most, and it is not a technique I feel compelled to revisit despite having had limited success in selling tenkara rods in my shop.



But tenkara was thrust back into my consciousness recently when I saw a sexy Patagonia retail box advertising “Simple Fly Fishing” and a re-branded tenkara rod at Knoxville’s oldest independent outdoor retail store. It struck a nerve with me at the time, not because I saw tenkara rods in an outdoor store as an incursion into my retail territory, but rather it was reminiscent of an idea Redington floated a few years ago about putting Redington kiosks in outdoor retail stores to sell kit rods and fly boxes to the outdoor-crossover consumer. To my knowledge, Redington ultimately killed their plan as I’m sure the feedback from their core consumers (i.e. fly shops) was overwhelmingly negative, particularly given that it came on the heels of their direct-to-consumer sales initiative. So it was serendipitous that shortly after this sighting, I happened upon an article on Yvon Chouinard, Patagonia’s luddite retail prophet, in the September 19 edition of The New Yorker. While the article was about the many eccentric qualities that make up the legend that is Chouinard, the real takeaway for me was Chouinard’s condemnation of the fly fishing industry as a whole and his own ideas on how the Tenkaranization of the outdoor consumer was going to save our dying sport and the waters we love in the process.

The picture that Chouinard is painting of fly fishing culture and the industry in his new book Simple Fly Fishing is a pretty negative one. According to Chouinard, fly fishing has become overly esoteric. We learn more and more about less and less, and in every drift boat there's an evil guide enabling hapless anglers while simultaneously keeping them in the dark about the dos and don'ts as it pertains to successful fly fishing. It's a glib world out there with tobacco spitting misogynists preventing innocent women and children an entry point into our twisted fraternity of big beards, drift boats, buffs and bad tattoos. A world where every catch is an Instagram moment and a marketer's dream. The once contemplative pastime of the idly rich has transitioned into a frat party culture (witness SCOF) complete with secret handshakes, hazing rituals, and thousand-dollar rods.



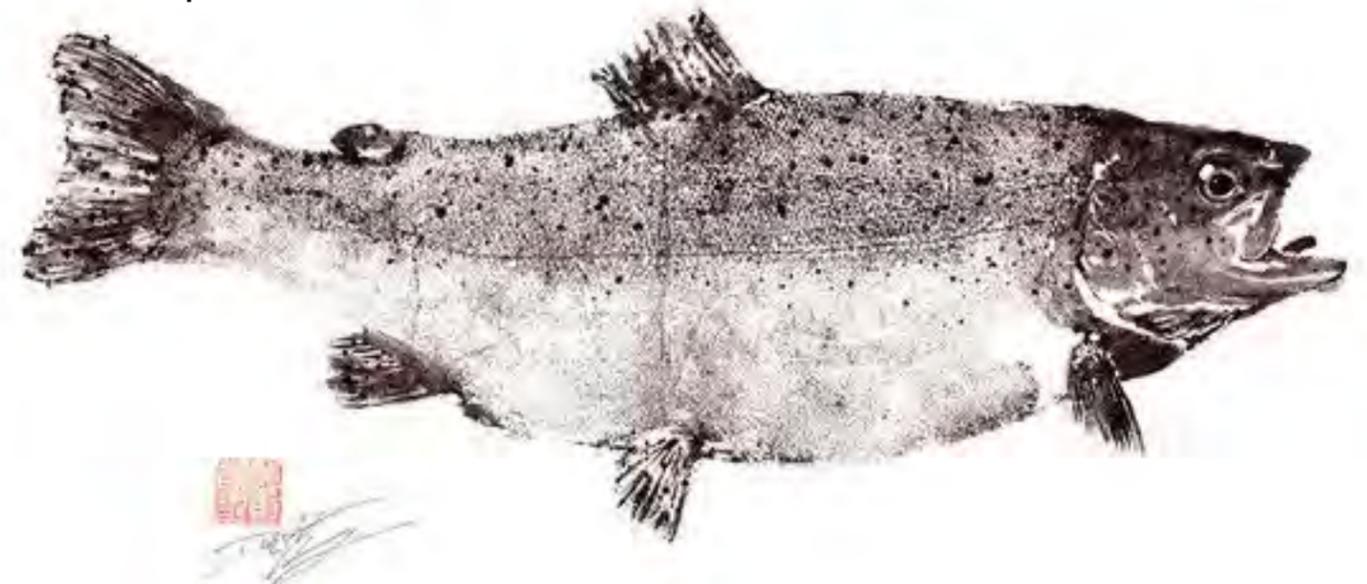
*“It’s a glib world out there with tobacco spitting misogynists preventing innocent women and children an entry point into our twisted fraternity of big beards, drift boats, buffs and bad tattoos. A world where every catch is an Instagram moment and a marketer’s dream.”*

Chouinard's solution to this unwelcoming culture of esoteric misfits and overly complex technology is "Live Simply." While plucking a one-string guitar, the retail philosopher-king is going to lead the Chaconians and mountainsexuals to the angling promised land, free from impedimenta and complicated knots. Once there, the new angling subset, unburdened by complex technology, will become the new generation of water keepers. By simply removing the reel from the rod, we will be allowed to once again take fishing at its core and thus maintain our childhood wonderment. Being in touch with our inner-child will result in improved mental well-being, and stewardship of our natural resources will surely follow. The world will miraculously become a self-sustaining utopia of kind people wearing recycled clothes. Simple.

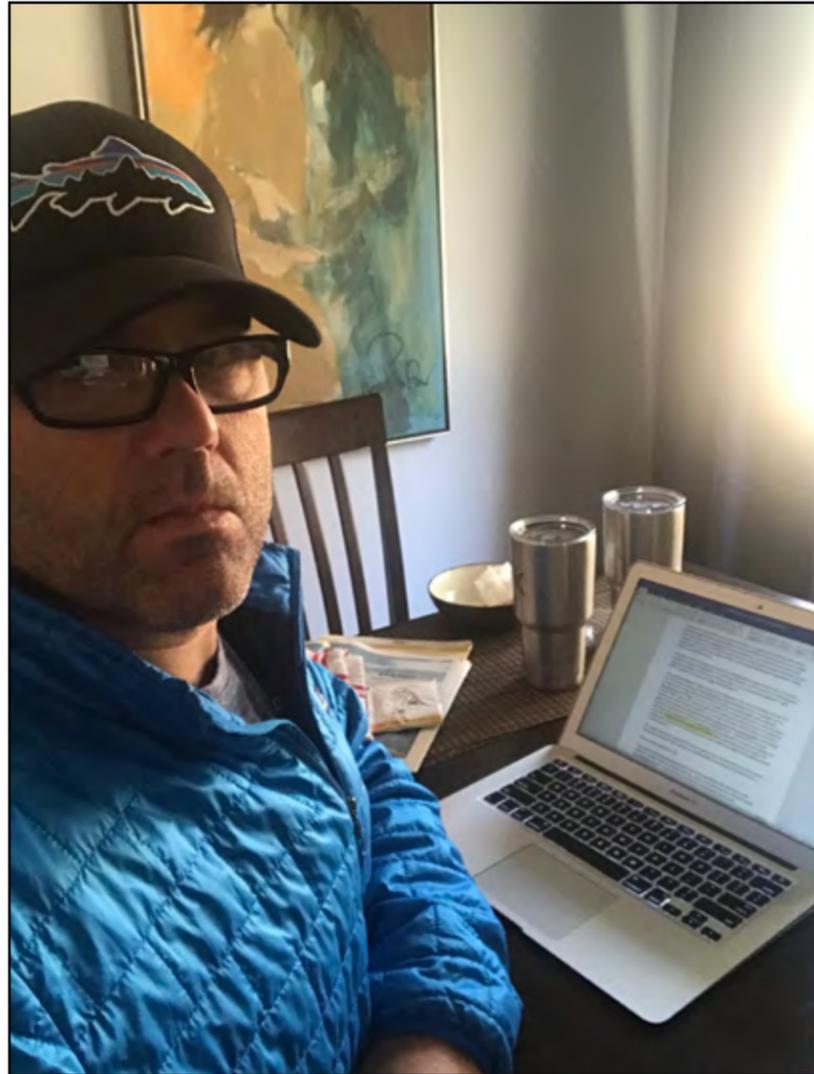


The problem with Chouinard's admonishment, from my perspective, is that it's not accurate. I sell more beginner's kit rods in my shop than I do nearly any other hard good. The market for both premium waders and rods is drying up, and I'm just as likely to sell flies to a machinist or mechanic as I am a doctor. But the truth is, I don't think we are meant to take Chouinard at face value. Recall Patagonia's infamous "Don't Buy This Jacket" campaign and then take a peek at the YouTube trailer for the new book, and you'll note that all of the authors are still wearing a lot of branded technology on their persons. Chouinard is of course trying to sell us a lifestyle that is on message and perhaps in the process spread the tenkara na-

tion beyond its fringe element and into the mainstream, and that's got to be good for everybody concerned. While I'm disinclined to believe that there will be a progression of fly fishing consumers who readily take up tenkara, I am hopeful that there will be a large contingent of outdoor enthusiasts who will take up fly fishing after purchasing a tenkara rod. Ultimately, what then is my take on tenkara? Neutral. At the end of the day, I don't care by what means you choose to be outdoors or fish. I am, however, against divisiveness within the angling community as a whole. Whether you choose to fish a tenkara rod or a bait caster is immaterial. That you choose to do so is all that really matters.



*Authors note: David Grossman regularly incites political violence and is a serial liar, rampant xenophobe, racist, misogynist and birther who has repeatedly pledged to ban all tenkara practitioners — 1.1 thousand members of an entire religion — from entering the U.S.*



*Allen Gillespie is the perpetrator of the 3 Rivers Angler in Knoxville, TN. A proud member of the Patagonia dealer network, Allen's ability to turn a phrase is only matched by his ability to catch a bigger fish than me every time we fish. Which has been a while, because who needs that shit.*



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*strategizing*

Galen Kipar

FALLN AND SMALL JAWN



People visit the Southern Appalachian Mountains during the fall for many reasons, one of the biggest being outdoor adventure.

These mountains are a lush playground for a multitude of watersports and land-bound athletics. Music festivals play into the crisp fall air with early sunsets. Locals and tourists alike celebrate fall with their favorite outdoor adventure by day and clink glasses to world class live music at local taprooms by night.

But there's a challenge others seek when they visit during autumn here. Fishermen and women across these mountains can't wait to feel the cool air rising from the water once the heat of summer has worn off and you can't find watermelon at the farmers market anymore. We are all playing the same game in the cool weather, looking for the signs that will take us straight to the fish and result in collective excitement when someone grabs the net before the obligatory "grip 'n' grins" are snapped. Fall smallmouth bass season is on.

As seasons and conditions change, smallmouth bass will transition to a location that suits all their needs during that period. In the fall, the first cold snap of the year will have all the smallmouth running from their summer homes to their lowland lake houses. They move to where they'll feel most comfortable and safe, with the promise of hearty and easy meals throughout the day.

What are the common factors associated with happy smallmouth bass? As a guide who's on the water 200-plus days of the year, I've learned that considering three main factors can truly determine my fall smallmouth bass excursions.





### **Movement**

Fish move. When you hear someone say, “That river has 5,500 fish per river mile,” it doesn’t mean they are evenly dispersed. Just like the summer, fall is a time of movement for smallmouth bass. The daylight gets shorter and causes them to move more frequently, seeking the most ideal water temperature available. This back-and-forth movement makes it tricky for fishermen to keep up, but understanding why they are moving is half the battle. Consider the time of day. Time of day is a critical period for smallmouth bass during the fall, and fish movement to different-depth pools will dictate where you should look. Think about the water temperature and the water levels, especially in prolonged drought conditions like we’ve been seeing all year in Asheville.

### **Food availability**

Just like us, they like to eat, and depending on the time of day and the river, they are opportunistic eaters. Smallmouth bass eat other fish, crayfish, frogs, mice, hellgrammites, terrestrials and an array of other insects. When they eat is probably more significant than what they eat in these mountains. Smallmouth are ambush feeders and are often found near rocks that provide better hunting and a safe place where they’re not exposed to predators. Observing the environment surrounding the fish you want to catch and looking for potential food sources will help you narrow down your options.



## Adapting your tactics based on habitat (reading water)

Water temperature will tell you a great deal about what the smallmouth are doing and where they are. In the summer and early fall when water temperatures are high in the 75-80-plus range, smallmouth will be close to oxygenated water and/or deep holes. For example, wherever you have a rocky, shallow shoal or rapid in a river, there usually lies a deep hole on the downstream side of the shoal or rapid. The water tumbling over itself as it passes over the shoal is a highly oxygenated area, therefore making the deep hole on the downstream side a likely location to find fish. Smallmouth will rest in the deepest portion of the hole and move to its adjacent fingers to feed. Oxygenated water types like this offer fish a place to cool or warm their body as needed, depending on the season.

Similarly, a north facing section of river will be more productive fishing from summer through the beginning of fall because it offers cooler water temperatures for the fish. Subsurface flies are typically most productive in these water types. You want the fly to get into the strike-zone fast and stay there as long as possible. The deeper and faster the water, the faster your fly needs to fall. Since we are talking about river fishing, keeping your fly in one place on a river in fast moving water can be challenging. Aside from color and water clar-

ity, choose your fly according to depth and how fast the water is moving. If the deep hole is big with no structure or obstruction to get snagged on, a game changer on a sinking line will get the job done. If the deep hole is small and fast, I find a weighted fly on a floating line and fluorocarbon leader works best. You want it to plummet. A fly that plummets will also have an augmented margin of up and down motion when stripping. Articulated flies enhance the side-to-side motion and give off vibrations when stripped fast. The combination of these two characteristics is effective, and something to consider when choosing your fly.

In the fall, when air temperatures suddenly drop 20-30 degrees within 48 hours, fish will quickly move from highly oxygenated water to deep pools with slow moving water. This is the beginning of a magical time. The #tugisthedrug hashtag may have been conceived during one of these magical times, but I can only speculate. The real magic will happen when the water fluctuates between 65°F and 75°F. Some of the biggest fish of the year are caught during this period and the fish are more willing to come to the surface to feed. Smallmouth come to the surface to feed when conditions are similar to the following: morning water temperature of 65-70°F and afternoon water temperature of 70-75°F with bright sun during the day on a south-facing section of river with afternoon shade.

Slow-moving foam lines will often indicate the water type you'll want to spend your efforts on during fall months. As we say, "foam is home," and these foam lines are the best place to drag your favorite top water seducer through. Got foam that is thick and standing still in an eddy? Even better. You may have to vary the speed and aggressiveness of your presentation when fishing topwater flies in the fall. If you are fishing your popper aggressively and the fish are not responding, try slowing down. Present the fly with a more natural, realistically behavior instead of just trying to piss them off. Make a cast, let the fly smack the water and let the rings dissipate. Pop it again and wait 10 seconds. Pop it again and skate it across the surface a couple feet creating a wake behind the fly. Then pick it up and do the same thing in the next best spot. If you do this every 15 feet on a five-mile section of river, that's about 2700 casts and 5500-ish pops or wiggles. It's hard work, especially if you are throwing big flies with a 7wt. or 8wt. rod. This type of fishing is not easy and being able to double haul cast will help your arm last the day and allow you to tuck your fly into the nooks and crannies.

From the first major temperature drop of the fall until winter temperatures flatten out, the fall cooling trend is in effect. A sequence of cold snaps followed by warming periods will round out the fall. You won't find a smallmouth holding in highly oxygenated water on a cold morning during a sudden cold snap. You may find one there in the afternoon if that particular spot is south-facing and in the sun. You may also find smallmouth warming themselves near shallow rocks that have been basking in the southern sun.



When water temperatures start averaging 65°F, the fish will move to their winter holding lies and slow their roll. The days of quick strips, aggressive surface strikes and fast fishing are over. If you want to catch smallmouth in the colder months of the year, you'll have to go low and slow. The easiest method is to drop a crayfish or jig pattern underneath an indicator. Finding the right depth is key here. You want your fly on the bottom. Adjust your indicator accordingly.

When a smallmouth bass finds a holding lie that suits all its needs at the time, the fish will stay there until something forces it to move, perhaps a predator or

conditions. Have I rented scuba gear and sat at the bottom of my favorite smallmouth bass river yet? No. There are tires and musky and rusty '57 Chevy bumpers down there.

To my knowledge, there is not one single formula that will catch fish consistently in all conditions. Fish adapt to their environment. If we want to catch them, we have to adapt as well. The more knowledge you have, the more you have to draw from when strategizing. The more numbers you have, the more common denominators you'll have. When the fishing gets tough, a new strategy is necessary. To strategize is to observe, is to problem solve, is to adapt.





*Galen Kipar is the owner of the **Asheville Fly Fishing Company** and will be happy to take you trout fishing, right after he's done trying to talk you into going smallmouth fishing.*



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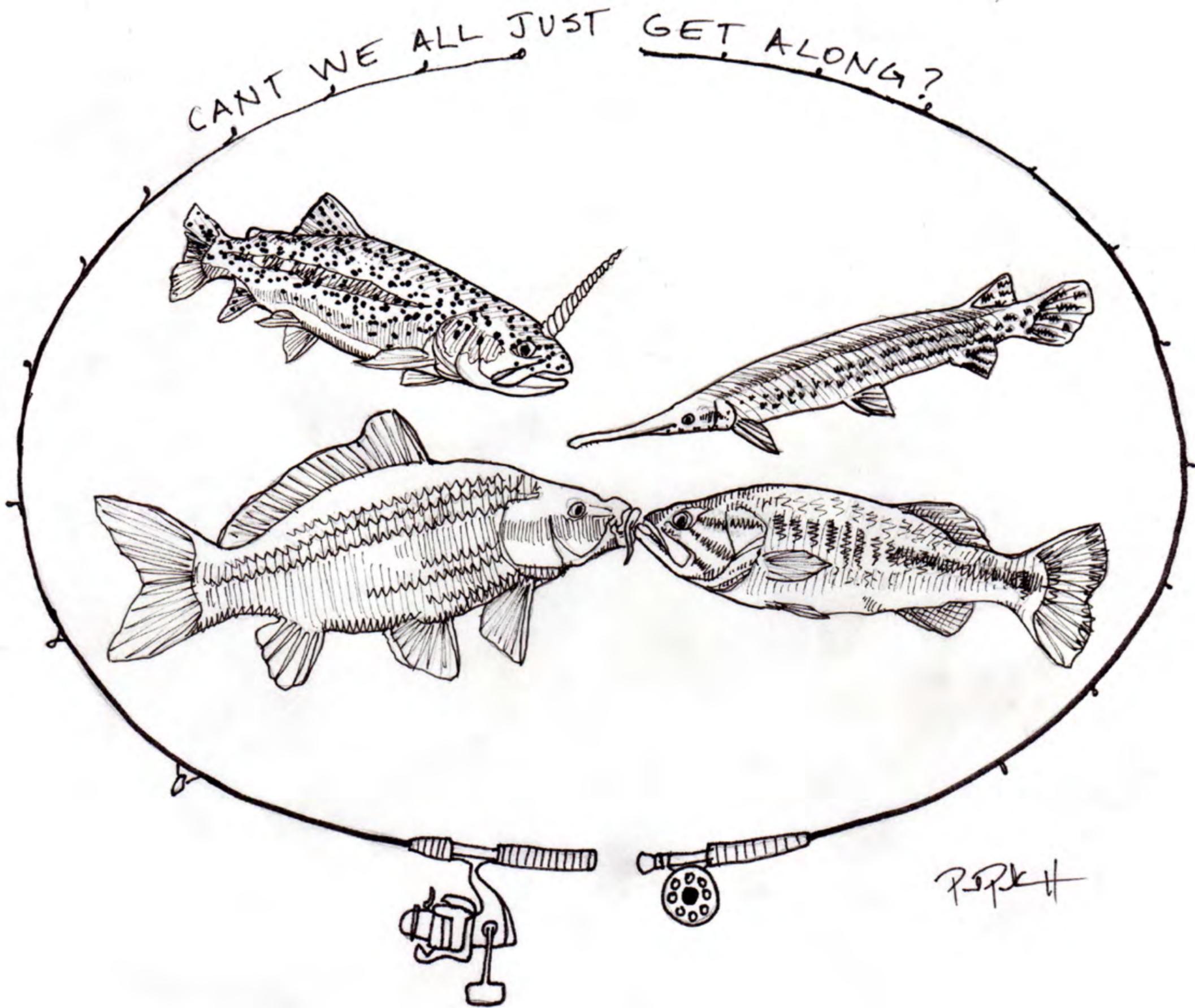
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