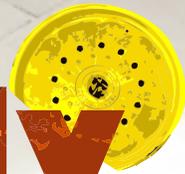
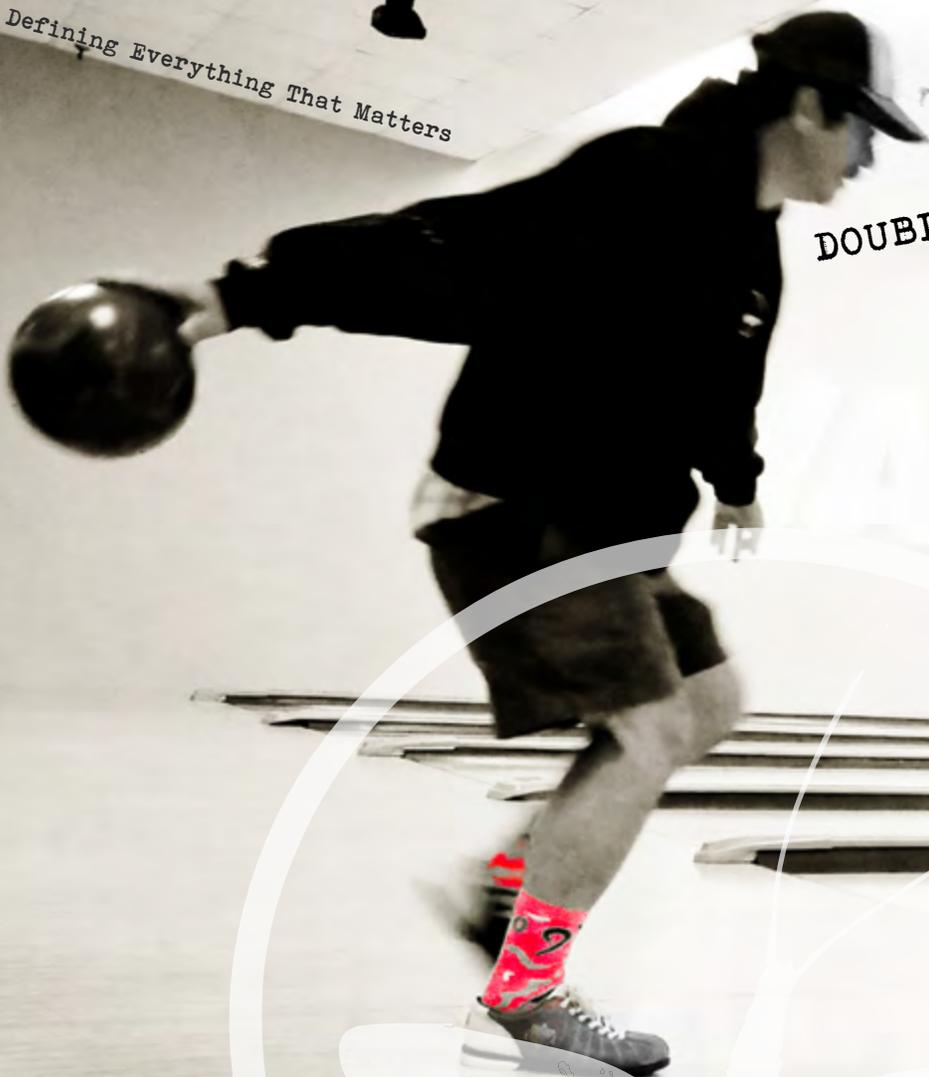


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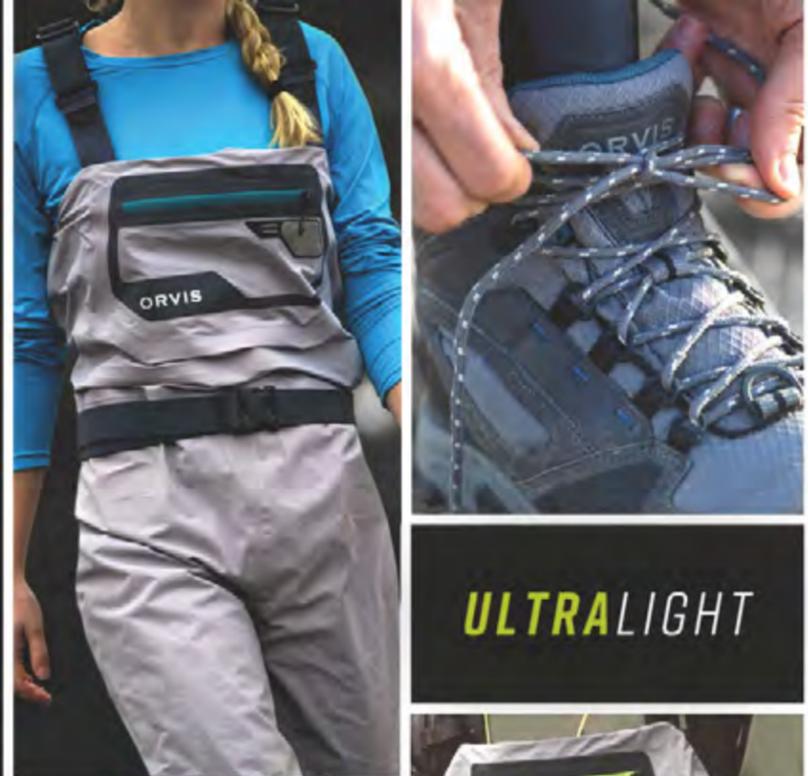
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Photo: Homosassa, FL - June 2018, Steve Seiberg

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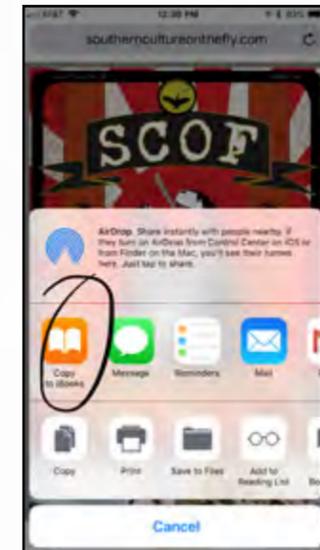
DART | SMALL WATER APPLICATION

Location: Paradise Valley, MT Water Type: Spring Creek Fly: Parachute Baetis size 18 Rod: 476-3 DART



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SUMMER 2018

ISSUE NO. 28
DOUBLING DOWN ON
BAD DECISIONS

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Summer 2018

So here's a thing—fly fishing competitions. Weird, right? I'm not talking about the salt-water tournaments or the *Animal House* weekend you spend every year chasing musky or carp or any other side species. I'm talking about the weird and wild world of competitive fly fishing for trout. I was guiding on a river way back when that just happened to be the site and day of the Team USA qualifiers. I anchored up on the opposite side of a run, and watched one of the competitors straight-line nymph at least 15 fish out of one run, maniacally running each one back to the bank to be judged and measured. It was like someone had just suggested competitive hot yoga; its weird intensification of tranquility was an affront to all of my sensibilities. My clients, whom I had tuned out the second the anchor hit the rock, were beginning to grow antsky and we meandered down stream. The rest of the day has long been filed away with 1000 other days on the water, but competitive fly fishing was now stuck in my consciousness.

I didn't know how to feel. I played sports as a young man and was ultra competitive, but the sense of competition never really crossed into my fishing. It was always the one thing I did where I was able to get over someone doing better than me (kind of). On the other hand, these folks were obviously anglers. They angle the literal shit out of fish. It was weird and conflicting. Might not be my cup of tea, but who am I to judge? So while I no longer think of competitive fly fishing—with 10' 2 weights and Czech nymphs—as an abomination of my beloved pastime, I do feel that if we're gonna do it, let's do it big.

The first thing we're gonna have to change is we need boats. Jet boats. Very dangerous glitter-painted jet boats. Even if we keep the wading aspect of the competition, all competitors will start Basspro-style and jet to their beats. Furthest beat from the start going to last place on the second day, randomly drawn the first day. Drama and NASCAR-style river wrecks are now in play.

Second, while Czech, Euro, Polish, Albanian, and techno nymphing very well may be the most efficient way to catch large numbers of trout, it ranks only slightly above golf on the "I want to kill myself watching this" scale. So point premiums will be given for dry flies. If you catch anything bigger than 20 on a streamer, you win the tournament right there and then. Euro nymph at your own peril.

I've also considered adding a linebacker-type participant to block the angler from the back once a fish is caught, adding some real athletic prowess to the whole affair, but we probably wouldn't be able to hashtag the whole thing #keepemwet. Alternatively, we could hashtag it #badass, so i guess it's a toss-up.

With these changes, we'd definitely be looking to get a TV deal. Not on one of those weird satellite outdoors channels either; I'm talking ESPN3 streaming. The big time. We're all standing on the precipice of something huge here, folks. Professional fly fishing at its weirdest. Who wants to ride? Team USA, I'm looking at you.



Defining Everything that Matters



NO. 1
FALL 2011



NO. 2
WINTER 2012



NO. 3
SPRING 2012



NO. 4
SUMMER 2012



NO. 5
FALL 2012



NO. 6
WINTER 2013



NO. 7
SPRING 2013



NO. 8
SUMMER 2013



NO. 9
FALL 2013



NO. 10
WINTER 2014



NO. 11
SPRING 2014



NO. 12
SUMMER 2014



NO. 13
FALL 2014



NO. 14
WINTER 2015



NO. 15
SPRING 2015



NO. 16
SUMMER 2015



NO. 17
FALL 2015



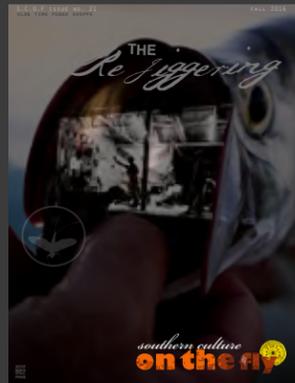
NO. 18
WINTER 2016



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SPRING 2016



NO. 20
SUMMER 2016



NO. 21
FALL 2016



NO. 22
WINTER 2017



NO. 23
SPRING 2017



NO. 24
SUMMER 2017



NO. 25
FALL 2017



NO. 26
WINTER 2018



NO. 27
SPRING 2018



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by jesus
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downstream
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Unhappy Letters to the Editor...

SCOF Spring 2018 - Issue no.27

SCOF,

Have enjoyed your unique young southern perspective, edgy cocky approach, & artsy presentation from issue #1.

Looked forward to Josh Hendry with anticipation for rare bass coverage. Got slapped in the face. Reread looking for an angle or wry approach in order to better understand what he might be getting at. It only hurt deeper.

Josh shows no clue about the history of southern bass fishing with the long rod. I can't afford your salt trips but enjoy them vicariously. Respect those beautiful trout when I can manage a campaign. But bass is what I can do and has been my passion for over 50 years.

From auto reels on glass in the 60's to "modern" specialty equipment. Working out patterns and stacking all that deer hair. The literature and old friends. Humid days in that old canoe on remote waters. Looking back as my life winds down it's all been so good.

Don't piss on the other guys game. Hendry doesn't deserve to catch another one.

Cancel my subscription. I'll be fishing where he can never understand.

-Dan



Dear Dan,

First, Since you have canceled you **FREE** subscription I can only assume you are not reading this. So, How dare you sir! How dare you! Our bass coverage is anything but rare. Commonplace more accurately. How dare you! But affronts aside we are sorry you didn't enjoy Josh's story. I personally saw it as more of a cathartic transformation of a young man and a largemouth bass. I suppose that's why they say that stories about largemouth bass found in **FREE** regional digital fly fishing magazines truly are in the eye of the beholder. I personally look down my nose at the large bass variety preferring the more demure power of the smallmouth. Am I now a horrible person worthy of your vitriol? Perhaps, I am kind of douche. But, I feel there might be hint of reverse racism towards the saltwater crowd going on here Dan. Saltwater racism only serves to further fly fishing stereotypes. Like people who fish musky are slack-jawed masochists. Or that brooktrout enthusiasts smell like cabbage. So in conclusion if for some reason you do happen to read this Dan, our doors are always open and **FREE**, so if you can find it in your heart to forgive we will be here with arms wide open, and consistent bass coverage.

-Dave

the first time
By Clark French





I am watching an undulating blob seep over a map of Charleston County. It is mostly green when the time-lapse starts, but it quickly melts into a yellow and red mess making its way east toward the Atlantic Ocean.

The Doppler radar didn't bode well for a trip out to try and find some fish, but the skiff was new, or new to me at least, and I had a feeling that I was probably, maybe, going to catch my first redfish on a fly rod.

I tell my wife, yes, Rob and I are still actually going, and not to worry; we would be safe. She clearly isn't thrilled about the idea of me being on the water. I head to the garage quickly, knowing further conversation might lead to more rational decisions.

I grab my 8-weight and wading booties and jump into the truck.

I had met Rob through work the previous spring. He was a self-proclaimed redneck (a salty one at that) from Stone Mountain, Ga. He only drank Budweiser and only dipped Copenhagen snuff; everything else was for pussies, or so he told me. We were fast friends as we quickly realized that we had a mutual obsession.





Light rain falls as we motor south down the Intracoastal past Goat Island. By 7 o'clock, we are snaking up the zigzagging creek toward the flat. Despite the storm, we are still a little early. Poling the boat is difficult as the hull drags in the grass. We need to wait for more water, so Rob advises that we stake out. We open a couple of Bud heavies and Rob explains to me how a can of Budweiser has the same nutritional value as a pork chop.

It's hard to see, but it happens quickly and soon the boat is floating a little higher. We hop back into our positions. After about five minutes, a tail breaks the mirrored plane of the blue-grey water and lazily waves at us as a bolt of lightning streaks over our heads spreading out slowly like a spurge weed. We dismiss the lightning despite the fact that we are both holding 10 and 20-foot graphite, and carbon lightning rods.

Rob scurries to the back of the skiff and strips line off of his reel as he tightropes the gunwale. He false casts twice, stripping and shooting more line in the pro-

cess, and lays the fly down in the direction the fish was headed.

The water explodes when the fish bumps into the bright orange floating line. It had cut back and made a right turn toward the boat, making Rob's cast about 10 feet too long. We sulk for a few minutes and then head back to our pulpits. We work into a few more fish, but they all seem to disappear as soon as we come into casting range.

Rob decides he has had enough and just wants to catch a god-damned fish. He trades his fly rod for a spinning rod, grabs a mud minnow, hooks it through the top of its head, and climbs back on the bow.

Another fish slinks through the grass 40 yards away. The fish makes quick work of the mud minnow and Rob lets out a loud yell as he brings the fish over the side and onto the skiff. I smirk at him as I crack a fresh beer and remind him that it doesn't count unless it's with a fly rod. He rolls his eyes as I hand him the push pole and we trade spots.

The wind is picking up, making things more difficult. After a few desperately long casts, it looks as though our night might be coming to an end. The water is draining off the flat quickly. It was a 300-yard pole back to the creek mouth, where we had entered the flat two hours earlier. We don't see any more fish on the way out.

We head down the feeder creek, not much wider than the skiff, feeling satisfied and glad to at least have the skunk off of the boat, even if it doesn't actually count.

There's still some light, so we decide to check out the confluence of three small drainages as they empty off of the main flat and into the creek. The

area doesn't seem to be holding any fish, so we decide to call it a night. I kick the engine on and maneuver the boat out of the grass and back into the creek.

We had only gone about 10 yards when I spot a tailing redfish on a small flat off to the right. I kill the motor and grab my fly rod as the boat slides into the edge of the grass just in time to watch the fish as it pushes across the far side of the flat and out of reach.

The berm separating the flat from the creek is too thick to get the boat through. I sit down and slide myself off of the bow into the knee-high water and begin walking toward where the fish is tailing 60 yards away.





I had only gone a few feet when Rob calls a tailing fish at 30 feet to my right.

A slow wake pushes through the grass lazily heading toward me. I strip off a few yards of line as every poor cast I have ever made to a redfish runs through my head. The fly lands 16 inches directly in front of the fish with a light plop. I hold my breath and twitch my line.

The water boils as the fish flares his gill plates and sucks up the black and purple fly. As my line begins to tighten, I pull once to set the hook and again to ensure the fly buried deep in the fish's mouth. The set is followed by a strong burst of energy as the fish realizes something is not right. It turns and heads toward a patch of taller grass. I stumble after the fish, doing my best to stay light on my feet and not sink too deep into the pluff-mud.

Just as the fish is about to swim into deeper water, my right leg sinks up to the knee. The fish abruptly changes direction and starts heading toward me. I flail wildly, doing my best to keep the pressure on while trying to free my submerged leg. The line goes slack for a half-second. I reel as fast as I can, fearing the fish has bested me, but then the tension comes back. The fish breaks into the deeper water, and the hard part is over.

"I strip off a few yards of line as every poor cast I have ever made to a redfish runs through my head."





The skies open up and rain begins to pour down as I reach into the water to lift up the exhausted fish. I stand on the edge of the flat, 50 yards from where I had started.

Soaking wet and covered in mud, gratitude floods through me as I look into the fish's bright yellow eye. Its amber gold scales give way to a bright white underbelly. The deep black spot is complemented by an iridescent purplish blue lining the tip of its tail. The fish is gorgeous, and I am not sure I will top the way I feel in this moment.

The rain passes and the orange skies give way to the blue black of night. Hoots of elation ring out across the water as we speed down the Intracoastal toward the ramp.

This is Clark's first story for SCOF, and I doubt it will be his last. Recently, Clark gave up the redfish of the lowcountry for the brook trout of the Shenandoah. Weird. But to each his own, I suppose. We're just happy he makes better decisions with a camera in his hand than he does when confronting major life choices. Our copy editor applauds his life choice and told us to suck it. clarkfrenchphotography.com



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GUIDED TRIPS AND TRAVEL



Aunt y J.



Louis Gandet
Aunty J.

August in most fishing communities means terrestrial season is in full swing. This is a time of year when you can tempt trout to the surface with large obscene-looking dry flies.

I'm a big fan of terrestrial fishing most of the year to be honest, especially ants. Large carpenter ants often get overlooked as a food source because of all the other hatches with fancy Latin names in the spring, early summer and fall. Even during warm stretches in the dead of winter you can find ants scurrying around the banks of your local trout waters. I have successfully fished ant patterns in the dead of winter. The biggest reason I like to use these type of flies is that they force a trout to make a decision about a lot of calories. Trout live in a moving environment where they are constantly swimming and burning up energy. So when a trout gets presented with a large, high-calorie meal, more often than not they will eat. They almost have no choice, especially in times when no other food is readily available; they must take in the calories to survive.



Materials List:

Hook: SZ 14 2x
Thread: Veevus 12/0
Body: 2mm Black foam
Underbody: Purple Senyo's Laser dub
Legs: Purple/black sili legs
Wing: White EP fibers

1



2



3



4



5



6



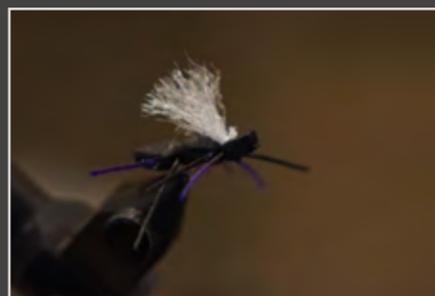
7



8



9



Step 1: Place a #14 2x long hook in your vice and attach your thread, wrap back to the bend of the hook.

Step 2: Cut a piece of 2mm foam into a rectangle 1.5 times the length of your hook and about 2mm wide. Then cut each end of the foam to a point and tie your foam onto your hook.

Step 3: Take a rubber leg and tie it in alongside the foam body halfway down the leg, so you're left with two legs. Then repeat this process on the opposite side.

Step 4: Pick a dubbing color that you like and dub up the shank of the hook until the dubbing is one hook eye length back from the hook eye. I used Senyo's laser dub in purple.

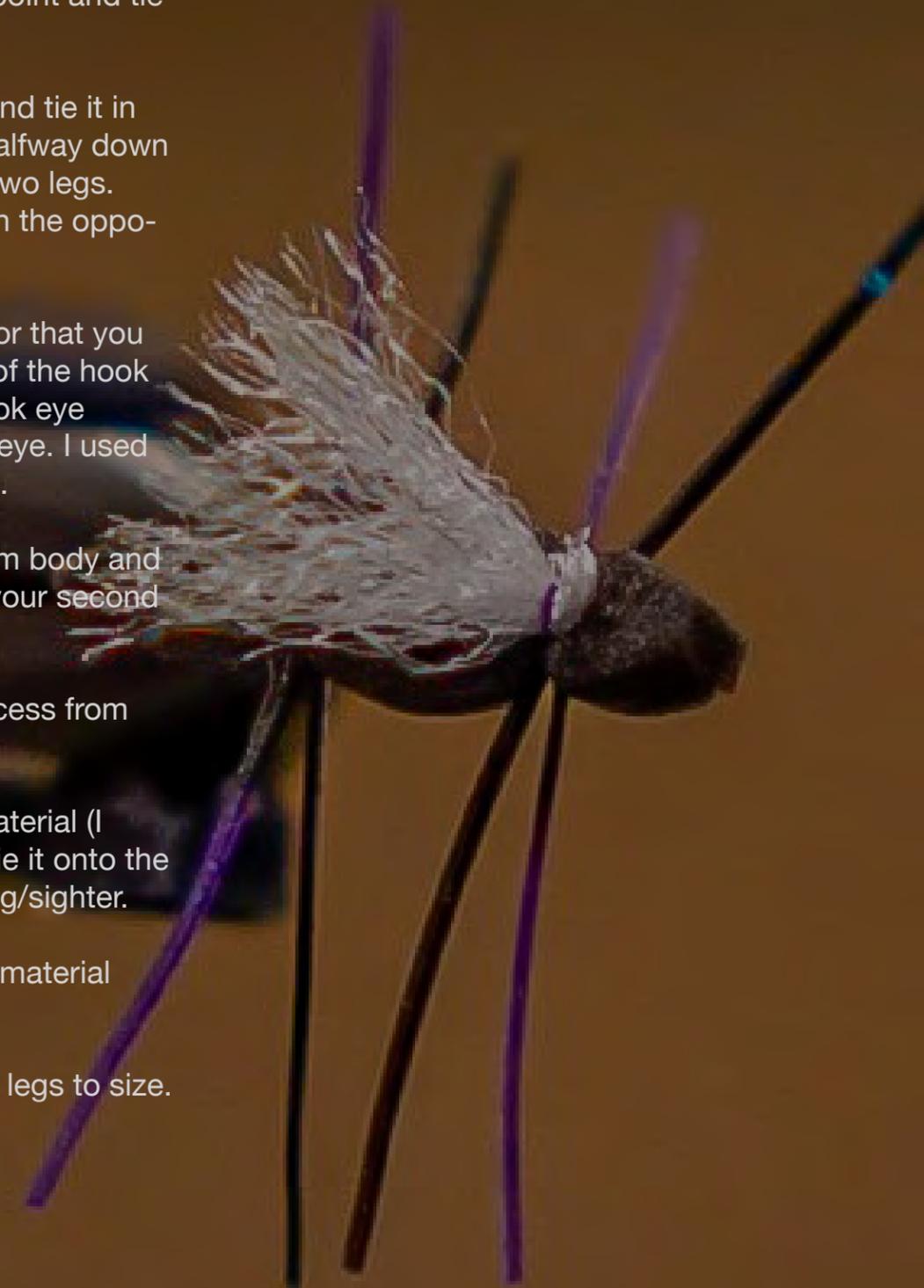
Step 5: Pull down your foam body and tie it to the hook, creating your second body segment.

Step 6: Repeat the leg process from step Three.

Step 7: Take a synthetic material (I used white EP fibers) and tie it onto the top of the fly creating a wing/sighter.

Step 8: Fold the synthetic material back on itself and tie off.

Step 9: Trim your wing and legs to size.





Louis has once again gone migratory. We've heard of a spotting in Montana. If any of you see Louis, please tell him we love him, we miss him, and all we want is for him to come home safe and sound. It's not as fun here without you.

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A landscape photograph capturing a sunset. The sky is a vibrant mix of orange, yellow, and teal, with wispy clouds. In the foreground, the silhouettes of three wind turbines and a large rectangular sign are visible against the bright sun. The ground is dark, and the overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

The SUMMER
of Dave
Road Trip Journal

As we made one fruitless cast after another, we discussed how the last moments of Steve's life would play out.



photos: Steve Seinberg

Vignette 1: Steve Must Die

Lower Ausable River, Michigan



We couldn't quite grasp Au Sable smallmouth on this bright July day, but we had a firm handle on the fact that Steve had to die. Watching him exist on the boat downstream sealed his dark fate. One way or another we would have to kill Steve. As we made one fruitless cast after another, we discussed how the last moments of Steve's life would play out. Drowning? Too loud. Perhaps a cartoon rock? Maybe beat him to death with my oars? It turned out the "how" was less entertaining than the "why." Reasons were numerous and just. He catches fish when we have given up. He catches fish when we try and can't. He's wearing a shirt. His face just looks like that. I bet his genitals are massive. Another mile passed and Steve caught more fish. What would we tell his wife and daughter? He gave his life protecting us from street toughs in rural

Michigan? That seemed unlikely in Steve's case. He would run, which we figured was another bullet point on the "reasons he had to die" list. Maybe we tell them he just disappeared without a trace. How much could they really miss him? He's Steve, and he has a date with his maker.

One more mile to the takeout. We both make sure we're just kidding about killing Steve. Neither of us are. We tell Steve as much. He doesn't hear us because he is hooked up again on what must be his 50th smallmouth of the day. He hasn't rowed once because he never bothered to learn. Steve is so smug. He won't be smug for long. Because we are going to kill him, and now he knows it. Man might be the most dangerous game, but Steve is more akin to cattle. This will be easy. The ramp is right around the corner...

"Probably" was turning into a problem one oar stroke at a time.



Vignette 2: The Complete Lack of A Shuttle

North Platte River, Wyoming

The kid at the shop told us there was no shuttle on the "Miracle Mile." We had no one to blame but ourselves for our situation. The immediacy of the shuttle had happily stayed in the background most of the day. But the unknown of getting the truck was starting to gnaw at me a little.

There's always people camping down there. Someone will probably give you a ride.

"Probably" was turning into a problem one oar stroke at a time. Nick was the only one that had ever been here, and all his experience was sans boat. So the blind were being led by a man with severe cataracts. The last campsite we passed was now quite likely the last campsite we would pass. The presence of the lake a clear indicator we had gone too far. By some sort of serendipity a 60 mph wind was blowing straight up stream allowing for the boat

to defy all of nature's laws and be rowed up the last run. Once we had defeated physics, we decided Nick to be the least threatening amongst us. This qualified him to beg the last camp on the river's inhabitants for a ride. Crying a little would not be looked down upon today, in fact it might be the only thing to save us from sleeping in the windswept brush that night. From where we were anchored, we could neither see the camp nor the takeout. Nick was supposed to walk back into site and let us know everything was good. The signal never came. After about thirty minutes we pulled anchor and floated down to the takeout with no ride and no Nick. The loss of Nick was largely overshadowed by the loss of hope for a ride. When we were on the precipice of the abyss the truck came wheeling around the corner. We celebrated the truck. Nick's resurrection was not mentioned.



Pulling onto the property no one talked to me sensing the seething cauldron of rage and shame that was my face.



Vignette 3: Jed's First Fish

Green River, Utah

Why does everything suck when I need it to be good. All I needed was one spot to show some life. This vacation had been originally planned on the basis of getting Jed his first trout on fly with no help from me. I barely remembered the delayed harvest googan rainbow that first ate a fly for me. I wanted his to be special. On the path to special the trip had changed from its original form into a littering of family and friend obligations. Fleeting opportunities had fluttered away with low/hot rivers, and fires that were plaguing Colorado this summer. Little time was left in the schedule for special. This was my shot. The

fish gave zero fucks. With weather moving in, and a strong desire to turn the next days fishing into a visit to see dinosaur bones, I reeked of defeat. My second shuttle kerfuffle in as many weeks did nothing to lighten my mood on the drive towards our rental yurt for the evening. Pulling onto the property no one talked to me sensing the seething cauldron of rage and shame that was my face. But little did I know over the next rise laid salvation. Salvation in the form of a small yet overstocked pond where special would get one more shot, and my son would catch his first googan stocked rainbow with no help from me whatsoever.

It was at this point that I realized that if enough people break down in Childress to warrant a special at the hotel that I could only be dealing with some sort of mystical mechanical vortex.



Vignette 4: There is Something Rotten in Childress Texas *Hampton Inn, Childress, Texas*

I had never driven through Texas. It was always a state that was defined by its natives' love of being from there, in an annoying way. The other route would've taken me within a mere two hours of the house before making a right at Knoxville for another 10 hours to Florida and the annual International Convention of Allied Sportfishing Trades (ICAST). The truck had gotten me from my home in North Carolina, to Michigan, then onto Colorado. It would make it no farther than Texas. Childress, Texas to be exact. I would not be going to ICAST. The engine was high in miles, but I was told it was as bulletproof a workhorse as Toyota had ever created. It was no match for Childress, Texas. I had a bad feeling when the check engine light came on. The code said it was a misfire. As I went down the list of possible causes, I was assured by the O'Reilly's shop employee that it was an

ignition coil or a spark plug nine out of 10 times. Once the car started shuddering 30 miles down the road, I feared that this was the tenth time. The mechanic couldn't see me until the morning and suggested I stay at the Hampton Inn, and to make sure I ask for the breakdown special. It was at this point I realized that if enough people break down in Childress to warrant a special at the hotel, I could only be dealing with some sort of mystical mechanical vortex. In my mind, the truck had already been abandoned for dead. The next morning at the mechanics was a mere formality. We went through the motions of changing the ignition coil, then the spark plug, and then the final compression test to tell me what I already knew. The bulletproof engine was no more. I said to the mechanic, "Seems like a lot of people breakdown in the town. You know the breakdown special and all."



photo: Steve Seimberg



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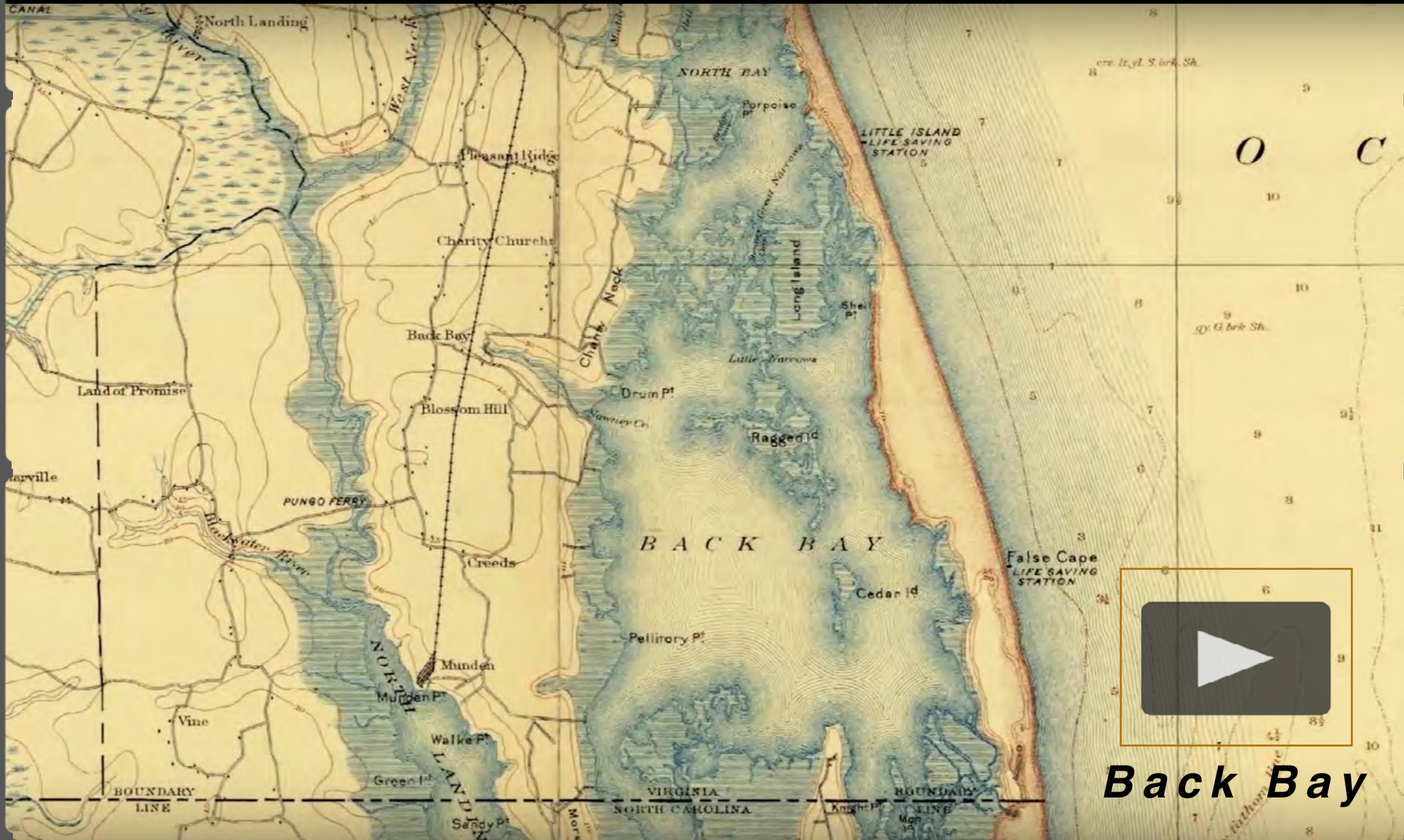
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Back Bay



ATONEMENT

By Louis Cahill

It was the mid of summer, and the old people said they could not remember one hotter. The man's work was hard and honest. He toiled like a revenant with the pressure washer as if, along with the soot and grime, he might also wash away his sins and be clean. He thirsted but he did not drink. He hungered but he did not eat. He had spent the whole of the night before arguing with the woman. She was angered by his fishing and could not understand his helplessness in the situation, nor that fishing was a thing he must do and had no choice in. Today he would fish again, and tonight the woman

would again be angry. On the boat his stomach growled and was empty but only whisky did he offer to quiet his troubled gut. He explained, at great length, to his companion about the woman's unreasonable nature and how she loathed the fishing, and the more he explained the less he understood and the more he looked to the whisky for answers. There came a time when he had done so much explaining that he could no longer cast the rod he held and thought his drunken hands best put to work pulling the oars. He sat in the rower's seat with the whisky and he pulled both on the

oars and the bottle until all was black, and in fear of his life, and what might become of the vessel, his companion had to run back and drop the anchor. He was not small of stature and his companion, thinking he would move the man to another seat, managed only to place him over the cooler, his face against the hull and his haunches thrust to the sky. At the takeout, his companion thought of moving him from the boat, but feared he might only drown the man in some unholy baptism and so left him there, hailing an Uber to where they had left his rig. If upon his return, the man was still intact, and his pants undisturbed, he would tether the boat and wench it with the

man aboard. So it was done and he took the man to his house where he would rest fitfully upon the couch and dream of fishes. In the morning he would awake with suspicion and regret about his actions. He would make apologies to his companion's wife and he would make the long drive home in silence, thinking of the cruelty of time in its persistence and how he must make a full accounting of his actions, first to the woman and again to his employer. He would set about atoning for his sins and he would promise not to fish and not to drink, though he knew he would do both.

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TAMPA FLY

Photos: Steve Seiberg





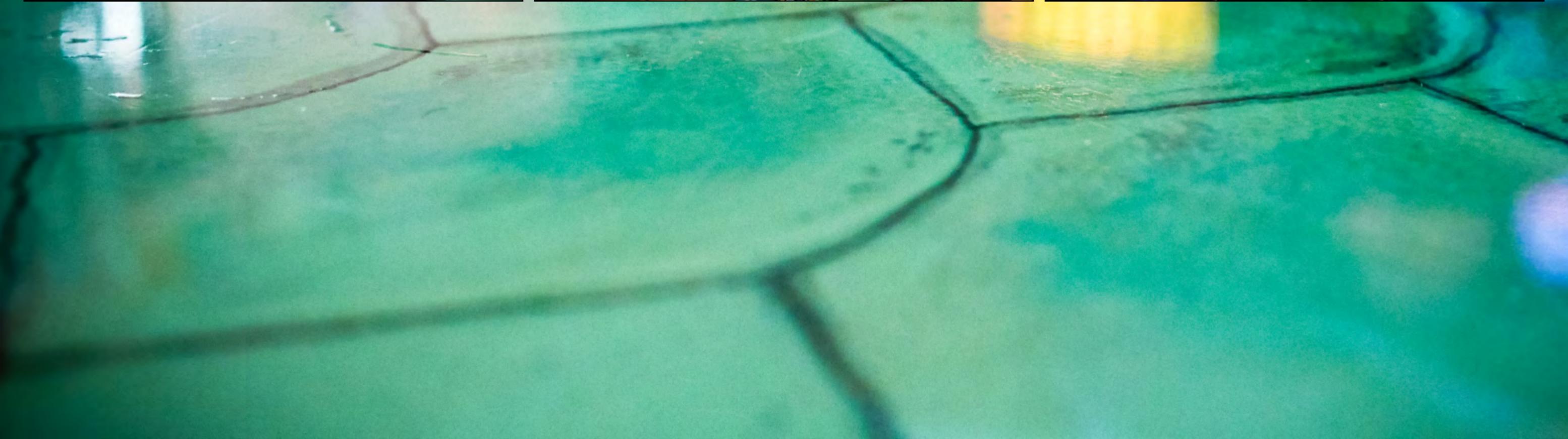
When it comes to fly fishing, Tampa is a town of grinders. They don't get the press, the accolades, or the cover photos the rest of Florida seems to so easily rack up. No, nobody in Tampa is looking to get famous. Everybody just goes out and grinds on a fishery where fish see more bait than flies on any given day, earning them a reputation of "smarter than your average fish." Not that big days on the water don't exist, but you better be there every day if you wanna see one. It is by no means a "show up and be a hero" fishery. That's ok with the folks who fish there, because they realize that victories are hollow when they're common, and strong communities aren't built on easy. The harder the existence, the more each little win is celebrated by everybody. This hard scratch can be seen in one of tightest southeast communities out there. Whether it's monthly fly tying nights at Barfly (yes, an actual fly fishing-based bar) or Florida Cracker Tap Room, or the annual Christmas bash hosted by Skinny Water Culture, the community that supports each other on the water, hangs out together off the water, too. Fishing Tampa might not make everyone's "top five places to fish in Florida" list, but hanging out on and off the water there should probably be first off the bench. That's the spot reserved for grinders.



photo: Vince Stegura



photo: Vince Stegura



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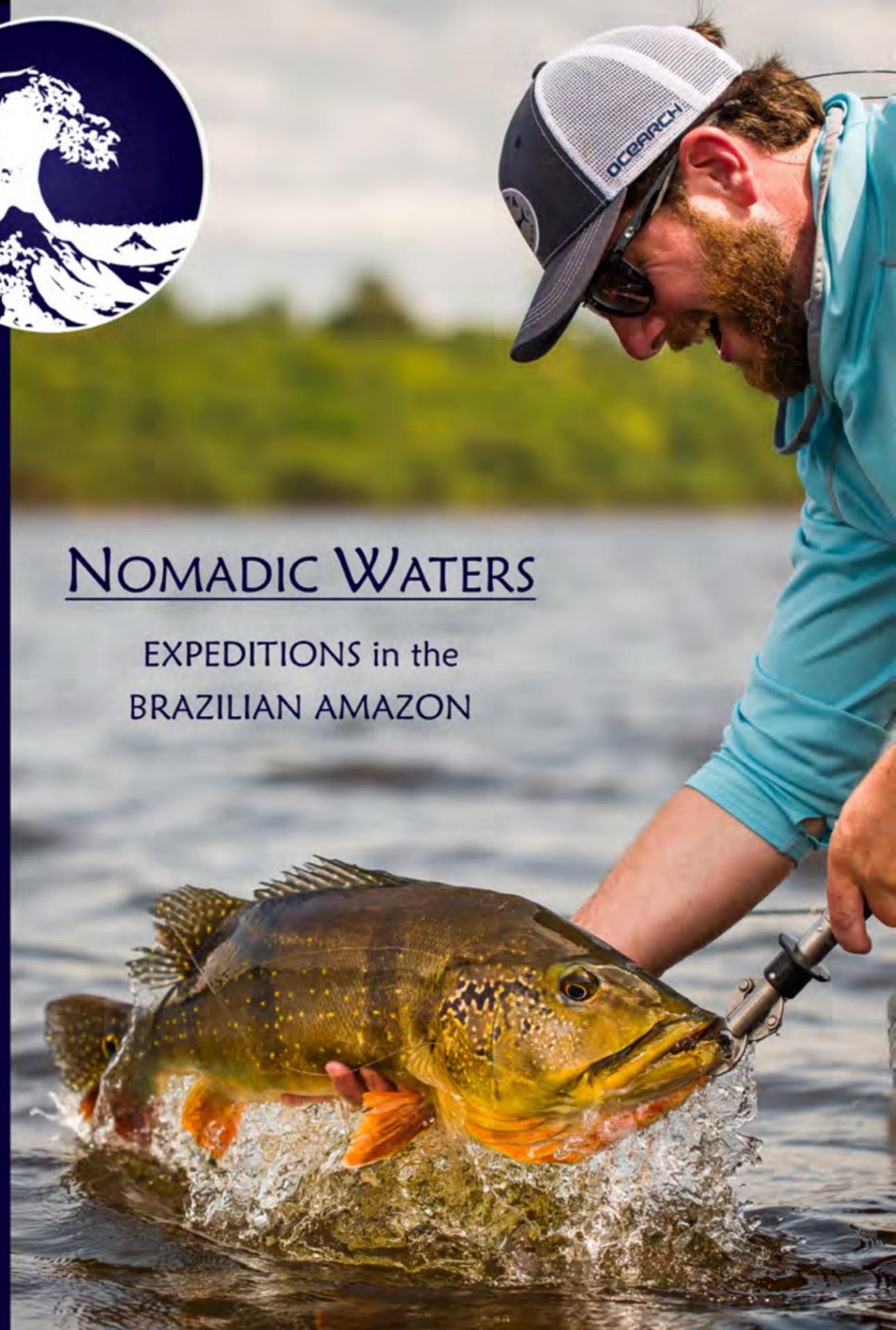












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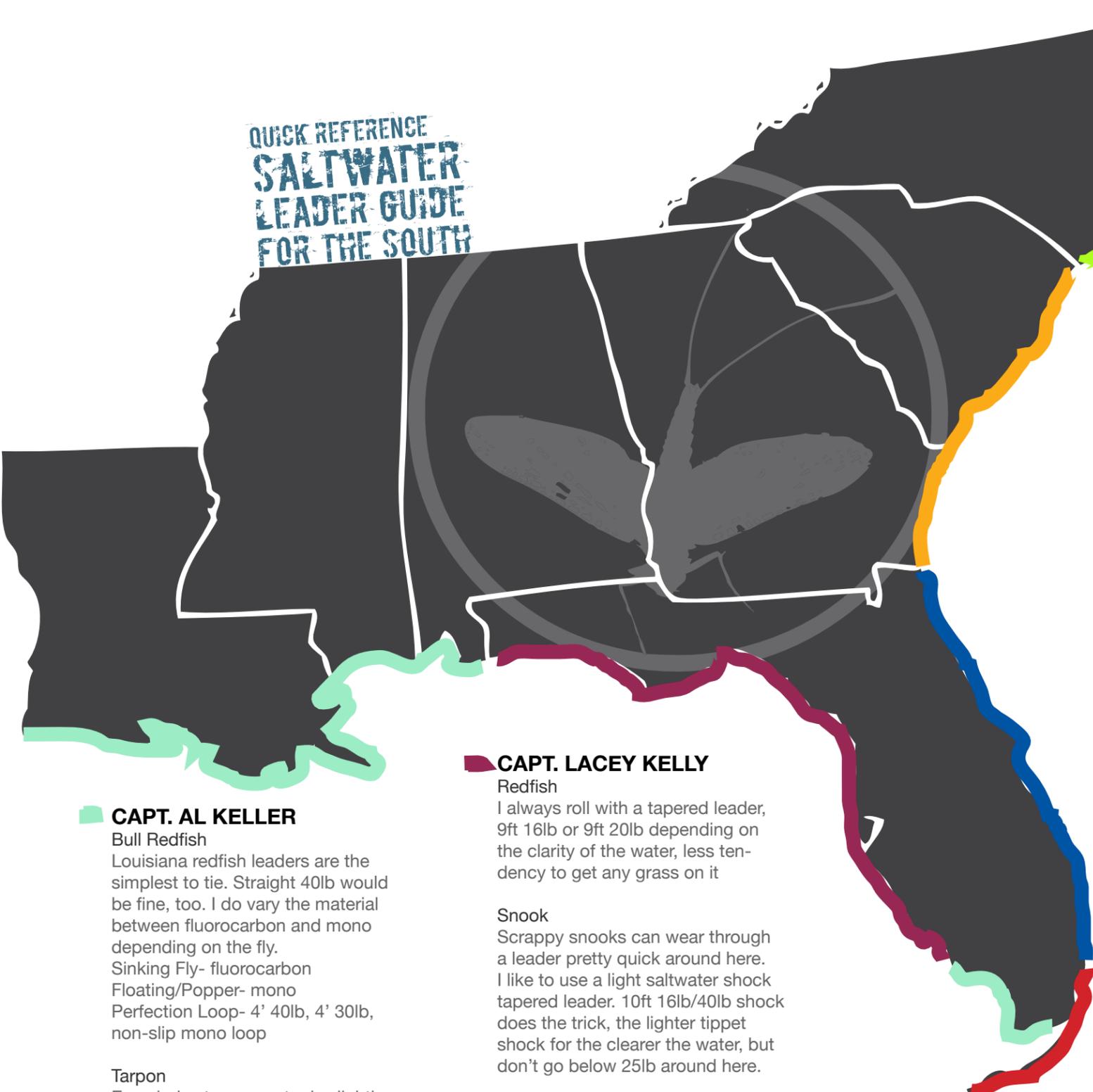
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CAPT. AL KELLER

Bull Redfish
Louisiana redfish leaders are the simplest to tie. Straight 40lb would be fine, too. I do vary the material between fluorocarbon and mono depending on the fly.
Sinking Fly- fluorocarbon
Floating/Popper- mono
Perfection Loop- 4' 40lb, 4' 30lb, non-slip mono loop

Tarpon
Everglades tarpon water is slightly stained. Tarpon are sometimes not as leader-shy as in other places. I use fluorocarbon for all my tarpon leaders because of the abrasion resistance over mono.
Perfection Loop, 4' 40lb, bloodknot, 4' 30lb, figure 8 knot, uni-knot, 2' 60lb, non-slip mono loop.

TIP: Use the same material throughout the whole leader. Don't mix different brands because the chemical composition might not be the same and can cause knots to fail.

CAPT. LACEY KELLY

Redfish
I always roll with a tapered leader, 9ft 16lb or 9ft 20lb depending on the clarity of the water, less tendency to get any grass on it

Snook
Scrappy snooks can wear through a leader pretty quick around here. I like to use a light saltwater shock tapered leader. 10ft 16lb/40lb shock does the trick, the lighter tippet shock for the clearer the water, but don't go below 25lb around here.

Tarpon
Straight 60lb?! Just kidding. But maybe, not really. I dig the RIO Tarpon Pro leader as of late.

CAPT. SCOTTY DAVIS

Redfish
I prefer a knotless leader since even small knots can hang up in the shallow grass. I prefer 9' 20lb.

Big Jacks
We call them "commitment" rigs, because if your rod breaks, you're still committed. With a straight 6' piece of 60lb fluorocarbon, that leader ain't breaking.

Sharks
Abrasion tough leader material for a 6' butt section (80lb, their bodies are gonna be rubbing it all fight long), followed by single strand wire in the 80-200lb range. Coated "knottable" wire is fine for bluefish and barracuda, but single strand for big sharks.

CAPT. JOEL DICKEY

Tarpon
For 11-12wt setups, I use a tied tapered leader with 60-80lb hard mono butt section that is at least 60% of the leader length tapered down to 20-30 lb "class section" with a 60lb fluorocarbon bite tippet.

Bonefish and Permit
For an 8-9wt setup, I use 40lb hard mono that makes up at least 60% of the total leader length stepped down to 16lb fluorocarbon tippet

Permit
For a 10wt setup, I use 50lb hard mono that is at least 60% of total leader length stepped down to 16lb fluorocarbon tippet.

CAPT. ALLEN CAIN

Redfish
Our water is typically stained/dirty summer and fall, so I usually use a 9ft leader tapered to 20lb fluorocarbon. I use 20 due to the amount of oysters we have...prevents some break-offs. Winter and early spring, the water is very clear so I use 9-11ft leaders depending on how spooky/pressured the fish are, usually tapered down to 15lb fluorocarbon.

Albies
For floating lines, I typically fish 9ft leaders and for intermediate lines with clear tip, I'll fish 5-6ft leaders. For early season albies that are eating tiny bait, I'll use 12-15lb fluorocarbon, and late season when they are eating bigger bait, I'll fish 20lb. fluoro so anglers can put more heat on the bigger fish.

CAPT. WILLY LE

These are the recipes that I like to use.
Redfish
6ft 40lb, 3ft 30lb, 16" 20lb, 20" bite of 16lb or 12lb (all fluorocarbon)

Snook
6ft 40, 3ft 30lb, 16" 20lb, 20" bite of 30lb or 40lb (all fluorocarbon)

Tarpon
(10-12wt) - 5ft 50lb, 3ft 40lb, 18" 30lb, 12" 16 or 20lb (hard mason), 18" 40lb, 50lb, or 60lb (all fluorocarbon except for class)



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A Legacy of Pines
By Grant McClure

THEN: 1960-2004

When I ask my mother how my grandfather, Hughesy Trowell, inherited about half the pine trees and black water swamp between Jasper and Hampton Counties in South Carolina, she says “with love, affection, and a dollar.” Sometimes he outright bought the land. One time he even traded a beach house on Hilton Head Island for a couple hundred acres. With his reserved personality and cunning business skills, my grandfather, affectionately called Oppa, gained the rights to three tracts of land in the southwest corner of The Palmetto State totaling roughly 1600 acres. There, he farmed loblolly pines in long, narrow rows, which he cut for their timber. In the ‘70s, he dug a pond that he stocked with largemouth bass and slimy channel catfish. He set out traps for snapping turtles, which he boiled into cooter stew, sometimes keeping the empty shells to show off to his buddies like “Employee of the Month” plaques.



When she was a girl, my mom used to tell Oppa she wanted to be a farmer when she grew up, and he would laugh. In 2004, he died of lung cancer, leaving the land to my mom and her sister, Katrina. Although my mom had long abandoned her dreams of becoming a farmer, she suddenly found herself in possession of more sandy fields and scraggly pines than she could handle. The pond was dry, littered with the bones of redbreast and warmouth. The water would not be full for another two years.

Managing the farm from Charleston, about a two-hour drive from the property, was straining on top of a full-time job and raising three children. In 2006, my mom and my aunt started Trowell Farms LLC, and began leasing the land to the Youman family. The Youmans clear cut the sad loblollies, replacing them with slow-growing longleaf pines, perfect for harvesting pine straw. With my mother’s approval, they built a well for an irrigation system and cleared an expansive field of the property for cultivating sod. Around the same time, two hunt clubs started leasing the property to hunt white-tail deer in the fall, and wild turkeys in the spring. The Youmans built a new spillway for the pond, which quickly filled with tannin-stained black water swamp and steady summer rainfall. That must have been around the time I first visited.

NOW: 2007-2016

When I was 10, I helped re-stock the pond with bass not much longer than my pinky finger. I scooped them out of a paint bucket by the handful, felt them squirming and thrashing between my palms, eager to return to the water. Some would die, traumatized by the trip from hatchery to pond, floating belly up in the water, or swimming upside-down near the surface. Others grew into five- maybe six-pound fish, happily smacking the water's surface at brazen damselflies and drowning wasps.

I started fishing at the pond about

two years after the stocking. My dad taught me how to fly fish at the grassy lot behind our house in Charleston. I'd spend hours out there perfecting my cast, letting the fly line slide out of my hands, unravel in front of me in a tight loop. People would walk by with dogs and ask me if I'd caught anything. I usually ignored their jokes and stuck to practicing. But paddling around the pond in an outboard-less aluminum jon boat was where I really gained my skill and fell in love with the sport. My dad and I would paddle around the perimeter of the pond on a warm spring day, casting hair bugs



parallel to the bank, anticipating the explosion. No matter how many times you fish, I'm convinced, the shock of that initial take never gets old—watching the line come tight, feeling the resistance, the fish zigzagging through the stumps and weeds.

The fishing has always been steady at the pond, but not without proper management. Fishing with a couple of friends, we discovered a five-foot alligator had taken up residence in the pond. The alligator aggressively chased down flies, hungry for anything that moved. Seeing an animal that predatory and ancient was like going

back into a prehistoric time. A trapper removed the gator soon after, but with the fall of the reptile came the rise of the beavers, who happily damned up the spillway, chomping down cypress trees for their homes. At least until they met the end of Mr. You-man's rifle.

I'm reminded of John McPhee's essay "Atchafalaya" from *The Control of Nature*. In the essay, McPhee documents how the Army Corps of Engineers fights to stop the Atchafalaya from capturing the Mississippi despite record-breaking floods. In the same way, nature is constantly trying to reclaim Trowell Farms.

No matter how many times you fish, I'm convinced,
the shock of that initial take never gets old...



Around puberty, I started getting interested in hunting, and my dad took me out to the property on the designated youth hunting day in January. We left home hours before dark, suiting up in our newly purchased camouflage jackets and flame orange caps. There was no one on the road besides the two of us in Oppa's old extended-cab Silverado, the world zooming by nothing but blackness and the reflection of yellow pavement markers. It was freezing. As the morning fog lifted, wood ducks and mergansers landed on the pond behind our deer stand. I loaded the double-barrel 12-gauge and waited. The gun rested heavy against my shoulder, and I practiced lining up the iron sights on pinecones, one eye closed—but no deer came.

Just the sound of an armadillo scuttling through the pines, a few squirrels. A hen turkey trotted up to the stand, not more than 10 yards away.

Had we seen a deer, I'm not sure I would have had the heart to kill it. It's difficult for me to imagine a reality where I could kill something of that magnitude without any feelings of guilt. Would I second guess myself squeezing the trigger? Maybe I would have reverted to my "pitiful, cruel, and primitive" instincts like the fishermen in Robinson Jeffers' poem "Salmon Fishing." I can't help but wonder, had I killed a deer that day, would I be a different person today? Having crossed some right of passage, would I be more or less of a man?

LATER: 2017-2050

I visited the farm in April only to find the pond blanketed by algae, making fishing nearly impossible. The spillway was clogged with green slime and broken branches, causing the pond to overflow and kill several pine trees, drowned by the high water. The effects of Hurricane Matthew were still noticeable six months after the storm. Fallen limbs blocked the dirt roads. Primor-

dial hardwoods split in half by the wind. Other trees uprooted, unable to stay vertical in the saturated soil, slowly tipping over like fallen monuments. It was sad to see the place in disarray. Had my mother felt like this when she first inherited the land?

Last week I checked my bank account to find a deposit of \$350 from Trowell Farms LLC. Today, the percentages are split between myself, my sisters Lexi



and Eliza, and my cousins Aubrey and Hannah. I am always happy to get my bi-annual percentage. I go buy some new clothes or go out to eat, but in the back of my mind I can't help but wonder—what will become of the farm in the future? As my siblings and I grow older and have children of our own, will the property become more and more fragmented? While I feel connected to the land, there is still a distance that lingers in the

back of my mind. There is no magical world of the pines—no matter how sentimental I feel toward the land. I grew up in the middle of an urban environment where I played pick-up basketball on the street until dark. In college I spend half my days typing on computers. What could I possibly know about how to properly manage 1600 acres of pine trees?

What will happen if the beavers take over, or another hurricane decimates the property?



I don't know what goes on at Trowell Farms on a daily basis. Every time I return it's changed in some way. A row of loblollies has been cut, or the Youmans have planted a new soybean field. I can't say how much longer the farm will last. What will happen if the beavers take over, or another hurricane decimates the property? Will it succumb to the pressure of development? Maybe some ambitious landscaper will build an 18-hole golf course and country club, or a foreign business will build an auto parts factory? Or maybe one of my own family members will refurbish things? But for now, the future of Trowell Farms is nothing but uncertain. It makes me anxious knowing that one day I'll be responsible for ensuring Oppa's legacy of pines lives on. Will I be up for the challenge? Or will I stare down the barrel, unable to pull the trigger? I hope that one day, maybe 10 years from now, I'll be paddling my son around that same pond, dragging poppers between cypress knees.



According to Grant's Facebook page, he has done more than any other college student we know: Alaska guide gig, works for South Carolina Wildlife magazine, and has been published in The Flyfish Journal. We're pretty sure he's coming for our jobs. I'm not sure there's anything we can do stop him.

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- 5 CORDS, BATTERIES, CHARGE
- 6 WALLET, KEYS, PHONE
- 7 CATERED LUNCH IN A BOX
- 8 STUFF THAT MAKES IT FLOAT
- 9 DOUBLE RACKS OF TIPPET
- 10 HAND PROTECTION
- 11 FISH PUMPS
- 12 SKIN PROTECTION
- 13 CLIENT RAIN PROTECTION
- 14 PARDON ME, COMING THROUGH
- 15 JUMP DRAWER
- 16 ALTERNATIVE REEL SELECTIONS
- 17 OOPS I CRAPPED MY PANTS
- 18 BETTER TO STOP YOU WITH
- 19 FOR YOU TO SIT ON
- 20 TORCH
- 21 "SO, YOU FORGOT YOUR RAIN GEAR?"
- 22 IT'S A DRY BAG.
- 23 UTILITY BUCKET
- 24 FOR YOU TO EAT ON
- 25 IT'S A NET STUPID
- 26 TIGHTENING AND SUCH



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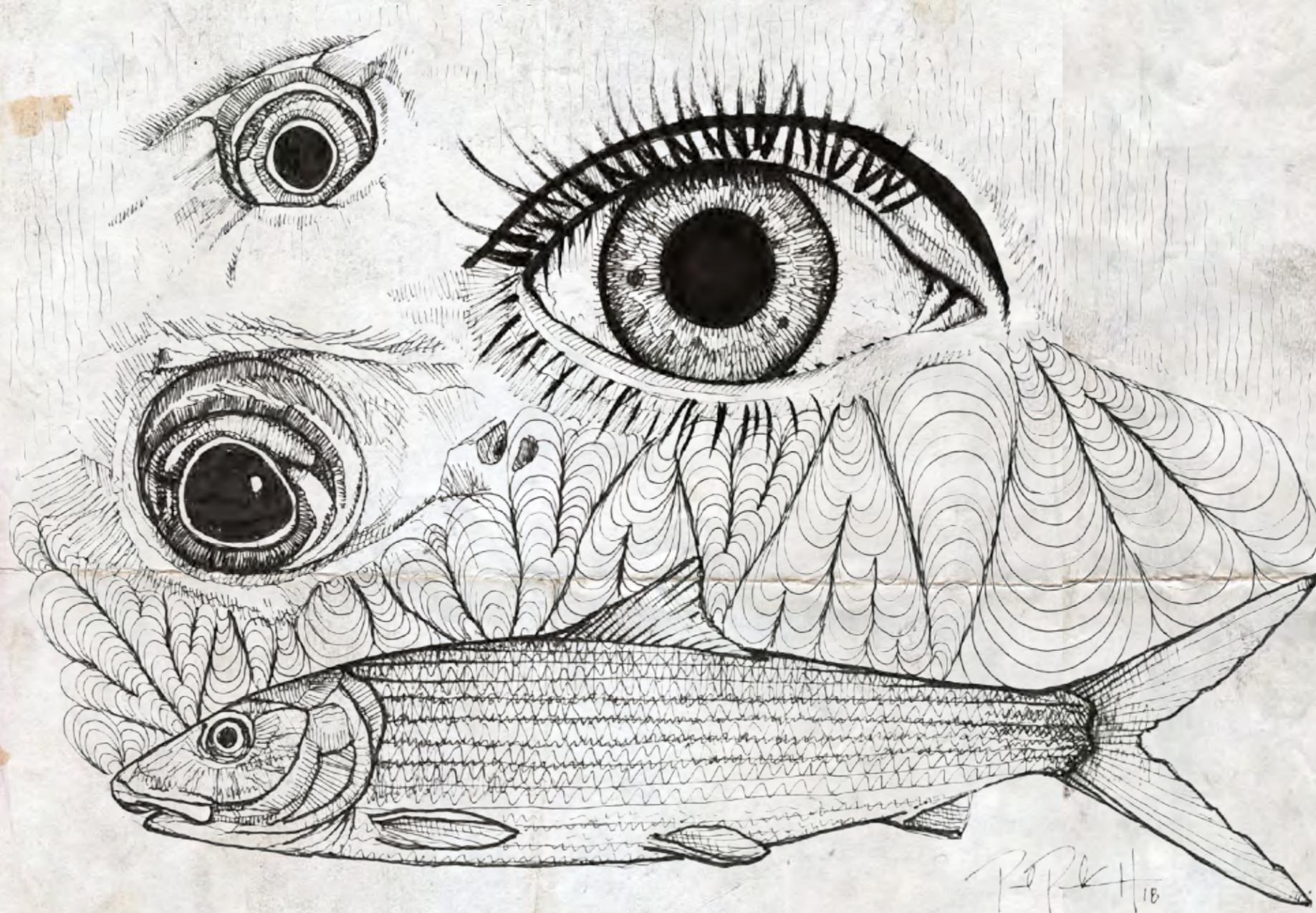


NOV. 2018 - FALL NO. 29



The Back Page Journal
with Paul Puckett and Mike Benson

March 15th, 2015
Somewhere, Bahamas



Laying on my back under a scrubby bush, hiding from the evening sun, waiting for the boat to come back and pick me up has given me time to reflect on my first full day of fishing. We only saw about 40 fish in eight hours of wading. I managed to miss the hook set on one and all the others were either passing out of range, or not interested in what I had to offer. Over all though we saw more fish than everyone else at the lodge combined, it was tough fishing. I keep looking around as I'm wading around or riding to and from the flats on the boat, and it's slowly sinking in just how far out here we really are. Nowadays, the Bahamas isn't really considered "off the grid," in a country that has all but sold its soul to outside interests; worshipping at the altar of the almighty tourist dollar, catering to the cattle on cruise ships thinking that the "straw market" near the pier is an exotic experience. Even here, a person who tries hard enough can still find themselves slightly uncomfortable with the absolute solitude that surrounds them. The boat, an old Boston whaler, is our only way back to a roof, food, or water after we finish fishing, and should that boat die, or otherwise fail to return to pick us up, we would be at the very best, very uncomfortable for some time before we could get any help out here. But nobody sits around telling stories about the times they played it safe. My hopes tonight will revolve around the wind falling, and the boat running. But even if neither of these things happen I still count myself blessed to even have the opportunity for those things to plague me. I am, after all, in the Bahamas, with nothing to do for the week but bonefish.



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