

The Hackle Bender

Boise Valley Fly Fishers

September, 2021



50th Anniversary of BVFF

President's Update:

First, from the BOD we hope you all are doing well and looking forward to the proposed BVFF activities as we enter the fall season. This has been the most trying year in the 50 years we have seen, from severe drought to the continued presence of COVID in our communities. We are working to resume monthly meetings, have outings and conservation projects plus plan for EXPO 2022.

We will continue to work to provide you updates via email, the website, the quarterly Hackle Bender plus social media. Our plans change based on the best information we have as a BOD. We continue to need members to work on the various projects and activities we are planning. We look forward to seeing you all at a BVFF activity and continue the work of BVFF as we complete our 50th year.

- Tom Old

Calendar:

Sept. 9, 6:30pm. Club Meeting via Zoom. Fishing the Boise River.

Sept. 17-19. Outing to South Fork Snake river. Sign up online.

Sept. 25. Habitat sign installation, Boise river. Sign up on club page

Oct. 16 Silver Cr. Outing.

Nov. 4 meeting. State of the Owyhee. 6:30, Hybrid Elks AND Zoom.

Jan. 7-8. 2022 Western Idaho Fly Fishing EXPO.



FFi Affiliate Club

GEAR UP!

Check Current Fishing Reports to get the latest:

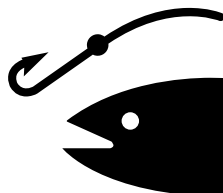
[Idaho Angler Reports](#)

[3 Rivers Ranch Report](#)

[Boise Anglers Reports](#)

[Silver Creek Outfitters](#)

[Henry's Fork/Henry's Lake/HFF Reports](#)



Check current streamflows before you go:

<https://waterdata.usgs.gov/id/nwis/current/?type=flow>



Check current reservoir levels:

<https://www.usbr.gov/pn/hydromet/select.html>



Fill the Net!

BVFF is encouraging everyone to help keep our rivers and lakes clean. Be a good steward of the beautiful waters we enjoy by keeping them clean. Post a picture of your net filled with streamside trash on our Facebook page with the hashtag #fillthenet and we will send you a nifty fly fishing gift!

Recent #fillthenet posts have been made by the following individuals:

Connie Martineau	Jon Fishback	Tim Demarco
Troy Pearse	George Butts	Brian Martin
Scott Blackhurst	Kirk Handley	John Cassinelli
Dave Shuldes	Ted Eisele	Klus Kisman
Kris Rehn (non-member)	Will Fuller (non-member)	

Thank you!



Fall Ants

When I look back at my September fishing logs I can't help but notice how many fish have been caught on ants. Usually the ant was a dropper to a bigger fly like a hopper or an October caddis but instead of trout going for those **BIG MAC MEALS** they wanted the itty-bitty ant—and they often moved a long way to get them!

Ants are terrestrials so it is productive to fish them close to shore and especially near downed trees. Ant patterns are small and not very visible so they work well as a dropper to a larger fly. And it's OK if they sink a bit because ants often get drowned and trout are on the lookout for them subsurface. In fact, sometimes a sunken ant will out-fish one on the surface.



Fish an ant next to downed trees like this.

I usually fish a black or cinnamon color ant in size #16 or #18 but some people swear by a size #20 ant. For years I used a traditional dubbed body ant with black hackle for legs but the last few years I've been using a foam-cylinder ant. They are easy to tie, float well and have a bright indicator built in that make them much more visible on the water. It's also good to have some flying ants in your box as you never know when that hatch is going to happen, and Egan's Bionic Ant is worth adding to your box.

FLY PATTERNS

BIONIC ANT: [HTTPS://WWW.FLYFISHFOOD.COM/BLOGS/DRY-FLY-TUTORIALS/BIONIC-ANT](https://www.flyfishfood.com/blogs/dry-fly-tutorials/bionic-ant)

FOAM CYLINDER ANT: [HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=GV_UKMEI99M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GV_UKMEI99M)

—Troy Pearse

Bug Corner



Streamer strategies for Southern Idaho by Dave Shuldes shuldesd@gmail.com

“The only size fly you’ll ever need for South Idaho reservoirs is #10.” The year was 1991 and I was standing in the back room of Intermountain Arms in Meridian during a break in one of Marv Taylor’s series of classes on aquatic entomology. Marv made that comment over my shoulder as I was looking over a set of his fly boxes that contained dozens of streamer varieties; Canadian Mohair leeches, Stayner Ducktails, Wooly buggers, Marabou Muddlers and other patterns; all tied by Marv. If a cell phone existed I would have taken pictures. I was learning from the master and I wanted every detail.

In the years that followed I learned his patterns, his equipment, his technique, his locations, the seasons and what he was seeking to imitate. My goal in this writing is to share what I learned from Marv plus a bit of my own experience fishing streamers in our Southern Idaho waters for these past 30 years.

Over those years I’ve used the streamer patterns mentioned above and experimented with many other patterns. I gradually developed a “comfort fly” in the streamer category – a fly I trust above all others. I have said before if I had to survive on eating trout and had only one pattern I could use – hands down it would be a variant of the Gartside Sparrow or “G-Sparrow”. I’ve had more bent rods and tight lines using this pattern than any other. Tying fundamentals are available here: <https://www.jackgartside>

The G-Sparrow seems to imitate it all. I make up that it moves like a leech and baitfish simultaneously. It creates fins and gills that “breathe” in the water. It also imitates large underwater nymphs like damsels. Most importantly, trout and bass seem to hammer it in many seasons and settings but especially in Idaho stillwaters – particularly our alpine lakes and reservoirs. The details of my custom variant are beyond the scope of this article but I will post them on the BVFF Facebook group.

My rigging is the same in almost all applications. This is a heavy streamer. I use a 5-weight fast rod for casting backbone. I will use type 6 fast full-sinking line if the water depth is more than 6-8 feet. If in shallower stillwater or rivers, I use a full floating line. In either case I attach a 9-foot 4X fluorocarbon leader and a nested nail knot to 4-6 feet of 4X or 5X tippet – depending on water clarity, and the potential size and “wisdom” of the fish targeted.

Unless sight fishing a target visually, I will initially cast as far as my rod and arm allow. I will even back away to add more line if fishing from a boat. I will then pause to let the fly sink for perhaps 10 seconds. The effective retrieve is a short stripping motion, a few 6-inch jerks at a time followed by a pause, then repeat. Be particularly ready for a strike on the pause. If I am fishing a streamer up in the alpine lakes, I will cast beyond visible underwater structure such as boulders, trees or ledges and then work to strip the fly behind or along the structure. Typically the deeper the retrieve the better. The G-Sparrow is extremely effective for hungry high altitude fish June through September.

Where and when to fish streamers like the G-Sparrow? Alpine lakes for brookies, browns, cutthroat, goldens, grayling & rainbows. Duck Valley (all reservoirs) in both spring and fall. All reservoirs or sections of the Snake River for both smallmouth and trout. Deadwood, Magic, Little Wood, Lost Valley, Horsethief and Sagehen reservoirs. Warm Lake and Stanley area lakes in the summer and fall.

And rivers? On 7/20/21 I made a run over to the Owyhee – I had heard it was fishing well. I arrived just before 6:00am and tied on a #10 G-Sparrow with 12 feet of 4X leader/5X tippet from a floating line. I waded to the middle of the river and quartered upstream into a deep run next to the river bank. Twitch, twitch, hold... on 3 consecutive casts, large browns hit my fly. My day was made before 6:45am.

Other than the G-sparrow specifically, I owe most of the above to Marv’s coaching, experience and knowledge. Most of what I’m passing along is from his teaching and I’ll be forever grateful to him!

-Photos by Dave Shuldes





FALL CONSERVATION PROJECTS

Boise Valley Fly Fishers has a series of conservation projects this fall. Please volunteer if you are able to help. <https://www.bvff.com/BVFF-Events>

1. Trout Habitat Sign Installation

Our Trout Habitat sign for the Boise River gravel augmentation is ready and we need some help installing it. Installation is scheduled for Saturday September 25th.

2. Boise River Brown Trout Redd Protection

We are working on a project to identify brown trout spawning areas on the Boise river to help the Flood District avoid them during their winter river maintenance work. We will be floating sections of the Boise River from Glenwood Bridge to Star. Volunteers will need a fish-cat or other low-water craft and know how to use a GPS. Floats are planned on Saturday October 23rd and Sunday October 24th.

3. Owyhee Redd Counts


We are helping ODFW do redd counts on the Owyhee river, Saturday November 6th and Saturday December 4th. We also plan to be scouting the river for possible gravel augmentation opportunities.

BOISE RIVER SIDE CHANNEL UPDATE

Last winter, Boise Valley Fly Fishers completed its first gravel augmentation project on the Boise river. We chose a side-channel between Glenwood Bridge and the head of Eagle Island which is a section that IDF&G's trout fry surveys show is under-performing compared to upstream sections where Trout Unlimited has added gravel in years past. Our plan is to adopt this side channel and continue to work to improve spawning habitat as well as installing a Wild Trout Habitat sign. The sign installation is set for September 25th. If you can help, please sign-up at the www.bvff.com events page.

Because of the low snowpack last winter, the flows on the Boise River were too low to attract rainbow trout into the side channel to spawn, but we do expect brown trout to spawn there this Fall, if it has enough flow. Unfortunately, the public has put rocks and logs across the entry to the side channel to make it easier to cross which is reducing the flows and impeding fish passage. We plan to work again with Mike Dimmick from the Boise Flood District to clear the channel this Fall and look for ways to make it easier for the public to cross without obstructing water flows and fish passage.

Wild Trout Habitat Improvement

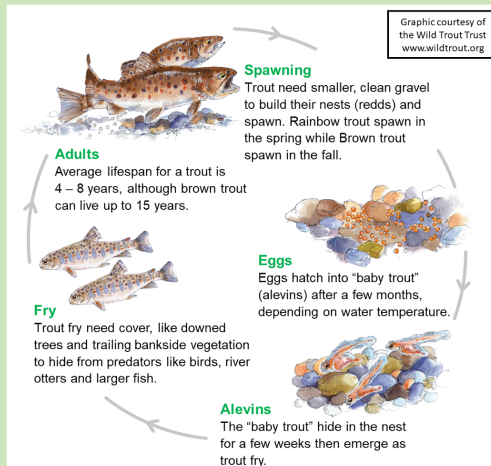


SIDE CHANNELS

Side channel habitat is an important component for the spawning and early growth of wild brown and rainbow trout that live in the lower Boise River.

Because the lower Boise River is fed by a system of large reservoirs, natural inputs of fresh gravels from high spring runoff are limited. Boise Valley Fly Fishers and their partners periodically add gravel and woody-cover to this side channel to improve trout spawning and rearing conditions, and provide habitat for future wild trout reproduction.

TROUT LIFE CYCLE



Spawning
Trout need smaller, clean gravel to build their nests (redds) and spawn. Rainbow trout spawn in the spring while Brown trout spawn in the fall.


Adults
Average lifespan for a trout is 4 – 8 years, although brown trout can live up to 15 years.

Eggs
Eggs hatch into "baby trout" (alevins) after a few months, depending on water temperature.






Fry
Trout fry need cover, like downed trees and trailing bankside vegetation to hide from predators like birds, river otters and larger fish.

Alevins
The "baby trout" hide in the nest for a few weeks then emerge as trout fry.

Graphic courtesy of the Wild Trout Trust
www.wildtrout.org



A conservation project by Boise Valley Fly Fishers. Thanks to our project partners:



PROTECTING BOISE RIVER BROWN TROUT SPAWNING AREAS

Last winter, Boise Valley Fly Fishers added 15 cubic yards of gravel to a side channel of the Boise River to improve trout spawning habitat. That is a lot of gravel to move with a wheelbarrow, but the heavy equipment provided by Boise Flood District 10 significantly reduced the time and effort.



While working on the project we asked Mike Dimmick Flood District Manager, about how they navigate their large machines through the river and if they are able to avoid brown trout redds. Mike said they run them throughout the Boise River in the fall and winter to remove accumulations of woody debris, and that whenever possible they avoid driving in the river channel. But unfortunately, they don't know where the trout spawning areas are located. However, Mike said, the Flood District wants to avoid damaging trout spawning habitat and would be willing to try and avoid the spawning areas if they knew where they were. BVFF ran a quick trial project to identify "redd zones" in a short stretch of the Boise River and the Flood District reported that they were able to use the information to avoid them. Based on the success of that trial, BVFF will be expanding efforts to create a map of brown trout spawning areas on the Boise River for the Flood District to use during their winter river maintenance work.

We are looking for volunteers to float the Boise River on Saturday October 23rd and Sunday October 24th to identify active brown trout redds. If you are interested in participating, please sign up at www.bvff.com. Volunteers need to provide their own float-craft and have some experience floating low rivers as well as know how to use a GPS. If you have questions about the project reach out to Troy Pearse at conservation@bvff.com.

MEMBER PHOTOS:



Marsh Creek outing. Jim Kazakoff on the water.

Brook trout from Marsh Creek outing. Courtesy Troy Pearse.



Silver Creek outing. New member Chuck Brill mouses up a fish at night.

Submit photos for the next newsletter to the editor:
teisele44@gmail.com



ALONE

Ted Eisele

I love standing alone in a trout stream in autumn. The trees and stream side bushes show off a wide palette of colors, from rich reds to stunning golds. There is so much

beauty around that I just want to drink it in. It's the end of another season of fly-fishing. Yet another season of rich experiences to remember and dream of through the winter.

It had been a wonderful year. There had been a 25-inch brown trout. He came up in slow motion, his pike-like jaws slowly swallowing the small phony mayfly I had tied on. It replays like a movie in my mind. I am quite sure I'll never forget it. And yet, there was much more to the season than fish.

There were sandhill cranes with their trilling voices. And coveys of quail and chukars exploding from the brush. There were western grebes doing their mating dance, a spectacular half-flying, half-paddling dance across the water's surface that made it look like they were running on the surface of the water.

And each day on the stream included a free movie of light and shadow, rock and water. The sun's movements through the day constantly painting a new picture in changing colors, bookending them with memorable sunrises and sunsets. My wife thinks I am crazy for staying until dark after a long day on the water. I wish she could see what I see.

There are people who never fish by themselves. The social aspect of fishing is the most important part of it to them. Don't get me wrong, I've had fun days on the stream with family or friends, but in many ways, it keeps you from really noticing things. Does that make me asocial? Maybe, but my most spiritual moments have often been when I've been alone in nature.

Then I found some rising fish. Taking a step closer in the muck I had gone so deep that the cold water came in over my waders. But there was no way I would be leaving soon. The water was cold, but I never felt better. I left without catching those fish, but my time had not been wasted. I had had the time of my life.

Keats said, "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth, and all ye need to know." An intriguing thought, but I don't fully buy it anymore. Beauty begets caring and love. Without those, beauty is wasted.

The beauty of this stream at this moment wasn't lost on me. I wonder if it's knowing this is the last trip of the year that makes each moment so meaningful to me.

Is the last Golden Delicious apple crop of the year the best because we know we will have to wait a season before the next one?

For that matter, how do we know we'll be around to enjoy the next season? Unfortunately, I don't think the Grim Reaper practices catch and release. My high school held a reunion not long ago. The reunion organizer sent us all a list showing where the classmates were these days. It was a bit shocking to see how many classmates had passed on.

I feel not only lucky, but blessed, to have these rich memories of yet another wonderful year on the stream. I may have been alone, but I had not been lonely. And I can hardly wait to see what unfolds next year.

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BVFF Supports Boy Scouts

Well done BVFF!

This summer, BVFF again, supported the fishing programs at the camps of the Mountain West Council, BSA. (<https://www.mountainwestcouncil.org/>) The camps opened this year as resident camping was allowed within the COVID guidelines. Over 50 youth took advantage of the various parts of the program from merit badges to outpost fishing.

BVFF provided an equipment grant in 2021 to update the fly fishing program. We also loaned 10 fly tying kits and material plus onsite instruction. This July we held a weekend outing at the Bradly Scout Reservation. The 18 members who attended helped the program team survey the waters around Cape Horn, on Marsh Creek plus Valley Creek to help identify good locations for the scouts to go on outings.

When the scouts were surveyed on what merit badge or program, they like best, the answer was clear, "I just want to go fishing". Sounds like we have some future members of BVFF. Thank you BVFF for your support of this program.

On the club's Facebook page:

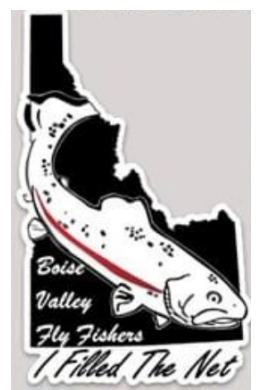
Take the BVFF Bug ID Challenge!



Copyright Ted Eisele

What's this bug? It was on a window near the Boise river.
Put your answers on our Facebook page!

Fill your net with trash and put a photo of it on our
Facebook page and get our latest window sticker!



Interesting Fly Fishing Links:

Want an adventure? How about trying for 20 species in 12 states? [20 species challenge](#)

Do you carry your rod pointing ahead or behind? [The Great Debate](#)

Ever hear of a “rod glove”? [Rod Gloves](#)

Pink salmon in the Atlantic? This has biologists worried. [Check it out.](#)

How about a place where you can fly fish for Atlantic salmon, Chinook, Steelhead, and Pink salmon in the same river? [Here](#)

Sorry, but there’s yet more bad Idaho steelhead news. Don’t shoot the messenger! [Here.](#)

And we’re not the only ones. Oregon closes the Deschutes and other lower Columbia drainage steelhead seasons. [Read it here.](#) And [here.](#)

Recycling Your Old Waders

BVFF board of directors member Ralph Stark pointed out a site that will recycle your old waders so they won’t end up in a landfill. They can also take them and repurpose them into a variety of products for you, including a hat, a wallet and a hip pack as well as other options.

The board is looking into possibly doing a fund raising effort with them.

Check them out here: [Recycled waders](#)



*The 2022
17th annual
Western Idaho
Fly Fishing EXPO!*

Mark your calendars:
January 7 & 8

Presenters will include Stillwater guru Denny Rickards, as well as Joe Rotter and many more. Also more than 40 fly tyers will demonstrate their skills in small group settings. Indoor Fly casting pond presentations, vendors and exhibits will fill the floor. The club has used the funds from the Expo for conservation and philanthropic efforts across the northwest. See you there!

eFishing 4.3



EDITOR'S NOTE: Over the past year we've spent a lot of time celebrating the first 50 years of the club. Now it's time to look at the next 50 years and what fly fishing might look like then. This piece probably sounds judgmental. It isn't meant to be judgmental; it's just one scenario of where fly fishing COULD be in the year 2071. There have been a lot of changes in the last 50 years. The gear has become far more sophisticated. And more expensive. The flies have gone from being fairly standard to evolving constantly and even regionally. Even today there are traditionalists in England who believe it is unsporting to drift a fly downstream. Others believed it was not right to tie a fly with anything but natural materials. How many flies today are lacking in synthetic materials? So the question remains: What will fly fishing look like in 2071?

Kerj and Dresh had made plans to catch some fish. Kerj made sure he had his gear and then got on his hoverbike to meet up on the stream.

Dresh was already there, and had started to get ready. Dresh had decided to use a favorite MuddlerMotor Minnow. He programmed it to display a glowing silvery finish that might match the baitfish in the stream. Then he connected it to the Camo Polymer line and threw it in the stream. Snapping his View Goggles into place, he watched the point-of-view camera in the Motor Minnow as it swam out into the river.

Kerj hurriedly got his gear prepped and then launched a larger Motor Minnow with a mottled brown display. As it swam through the shallows, he saw little schools of rainbows, along with the various types of Koi that had become so common. Going deeper, he spotted a big silhouette that could be a fish. Getting closer, he could tell that it was a fish, but he wasn't sure exactly what kind it was due to the cloud of debris swirling around down there. The fish was fairly active, opening and closing its mouth and taking in some little tidbit or other. Kerj saw his opportunity and drove the motor minnow right into the fish's mouth, then back out through the gills, finally using the auto connect feature to attach the minnow back to the line. Once connected, the line motor started towing the fish in to Kerj. Kerj could vary the speed of retrieve so that a smaller fish could be "water skied" in to the shore, while a larger fish could be brought in more slowly so that the line wouldn't break (although he knew today's polymers were quite strong, so it would really be a rookie mistake to lose a fish this way.)

Once the fish was on the bank, Kerj heard his favorite sound: "SCORE! 12 points!", said the announcer in his goggles. Dresh knew he was already behind and cursed quietly. But it wasn't long until he, too, was connected. It wasn't quite as big, but he had lassooed it in front of the tail fin and brought it in backwards, which he knew was worth bonus points. "SCORE! 15 points!" This was going to be a good game, they could both tell.

Dresh had tied on a Feinman's Cranefly Buzzer, which used nano technology to skitter across the surface. Through the voice control interface, Dresh could direct the Buzzer to cover the exact spots where he

thought fish might be. The buzzer's wings were powerful enough to lift it off the water momentarily just like a real crane fly. It drove fish crazy.

Not to be outdone, Keri swam his Muddler Motor Minnow toward the far side of the stream, thinking that they had probably already worked the close water pretty thoroughly. He saw what appeared to be 2 wooden posts standing vertically in the water and thought they were natural ambush points for a fish. Even while exploring them, he heard Dresh SCORE! again. Then to his surprise he saw one of the posts move.

Throwing back his goggles, Keri saw an old man standing in the water on the other side. He had a long staff of some sort in his hand and was using the to rhythmically work a thick line around as if he were weaving the line into some invisible fabric. He waved at the boy and Keri realized he must be practicing fishing the way it had been done long ago. He watched as the old man waved the staff back and forth over and over. He wondered what he was trying to accomplish. He wondered what the allure was to the old man. It didn't look very exciting. He didn't even have an opponent to compete with. What a waste of time! How will the guy ever feel the satisfaction of winning?

Dresh had realized that Keri wasn't playing and had flipped his goggles up, too, watching the old man. It didn't make sense to either one of them. Dresh said the man was "faded," the current term for something or someone who was worn or out of touch. The man was now up near the beach, turning rocks over and examining them closely for some reason. As he finished with each rock, he would carefully put it back in its place, as if reassembling a giant jigsaw puzzle.

As they watched, an alarm went off in their View Goggles, and the boys realized the game was over.

—by X. Nostradamus

Editor's Note: It has always been my intention to make the Hackle Bender a collaborative effort. I want to thank members like Troy Pearse, Dave Shuldes, George Butts, Jim Kazakoff, Austin Browning, Duane Marler, John Moen, Mark Aldridge, Linda Butts, Al and Gretchen Beatty, Tim and Tom Old and X. Nostradamus.

Please continue to send me your contributions! In particular, I would like to see members' fly tying tips, as well as more of your fishing photos, funny anecdotes, reviews of new fishing gear and feedback of what you want to see in YOUR club newsletter.

Thank you to our sponsors!



Submit items for the next newsletter to the editor: BVFFeditor@yahoo.com

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