



President's Message

We are coming to the end of our 53rd year as a fly fishing club! From my perspective, the last year was a very strong year for the club and our future looks to be filled with even more great opportunities to fish and learn. Personally, I fished new waters with the club last year, returned to some of my favorite places to fish, and along the way caught some really nice fish. We already have a strong line up of programs in the wings for next year and will again be holding a meeting in January to work on our outings schedule. Once again there will be fly casting instruction to support our outings, another Introduction to Fly Fishing class, and just maybe a special event. In addition, this winter we will continue to offer a variety of opportunities to learn and practice your fly tying. I'm excited about next year and I hope to see many of you at our Holiday meeting and celebration.

Clubs like ours exist because of participation by our members. Let me know if you are willing to help our club in any of the following ways:

1) Our Board is wondering if anyone has storage space to hold club equipment and donations so we can avoid paying for storage. We are looking for approximately a 5'x7' space that can be accessed periodically. I can provide more details if this might be an area in which you can help. Some compensation is a possibility.

2) We are tentatively planning to hold our next club auction in the spring of 2027. It is best if we have an Auction Chairperson in place a year in advance and we are seeking someone to be the next chairperson. We have a strong auction support system, a fair number of donations already, but need someone to lead this important club function. Please let me know if you are interested.



Presidents Message (continued)

3) Now that our club Articles of Reorganization have been completed, we will be updating our club bylaws and policies and procedures. If you would like to know more about this or participate on the committee, please let me know.

-Mike Riber

Join us for our Holiday Celebration!
Saturday December 20, 2025
Holiday Inn Suites, 4260 Mitchell Way

5:00 - 5:30 Social time with no host in-room bar. (Photos from 2025 Events Projected)

5:30 - 6:30 Dinner (and more socializing) with choice of entrees: either Chicken or Pork

6:30 - 6:45 Dessert and Year in Review

6:45 - 8:00 Raffles

• 2025 Meetings Raffle

- Raffle ticket stubs from 2025 meetings are exchanged for tickets for this raffle.*
- Remember to bring your 2025 Stubs!*

• Attendee Raffle

- This is our main raffle, with every holiday meeting attendee receiving only one ticket.*
- Additional tickets cannot be purchased.*
- Each person can win only one gift.*
- Any exchanges with others are separate from the raffle and dependent on your negotiating skills!*

• Grand Prize Raffle

- Tickets for this raffle are sold at \$20 each.*
- There is no limit to the number of tickets you can buy.*
- The grand prize is a \$550 gift certificate at The Confluence Fly Shop in Bellingham.*

This event is open to all members or prospective members and their guests. The cost for each attendee is \$50 per person. The overall price is greater than this but 4CFF is covering part of the cost to limit the cost to \$50 per person. See email invitation for sign up details.

4CFF Calendar of Events

December 9: Fly Tying Night 5:30 - 8:00 PM. Focus: Ed Ruckey demonstrating his dry fly the Beartracks Divisible, and Steve Hiller demonstrating the Mikulak Sedge and Denny Richard's Seal Bugger #4

Holiday Inn Suites, Boundary Bay Conference Room, 4260 Mitchell Way

December 20: General Meeting / Holiday Celebration 5:30 - 8:30 PM.

Camaraderie, Dinner, year-end reflections, and three Raffles.

Holiday Inn Suites, 4260 Mitchell Way

January 6: Board Meeting 6:30 - 8:00PM.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 119 Texas St. All club members welcome.

January 22: General Meeting 5:30 - 8:30 PM. Bruce Richards "Fly lines and Casting." Bruce retired as Scientific Anglers fly line designer, is a casting expert, and still consults on fly line design and manufacturing.

Holiday Inn Suites, 4260 Mitchell Way

February 3: Board Meeting 6:30 - 8:00PM.

Trinity Lutheran Church, 119 Texas St. All club members welcome.

Don't miss this annual fly fishing event with demos, classes, and product vendors!



Tickets and Info:

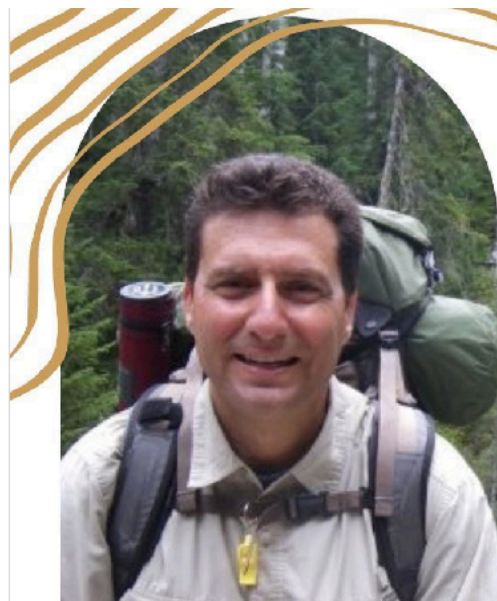
flyfishingshow.com/bellevue-wa/



Club Meeting Report

George Pess (in-person presentation)

By John Boblett



George Pess

presents

**Ecosystem response
to the removal of the
Elwha River dams**

The guest speaker for our November meeting was Mr. George Pess, an associate professor at UW School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences and an employee of NOAA for over 27 years. He presented a program about the removal of the Elwha Dams on the Elwha River. It was a project that we all knew about but did not have much of the information George presented. He

provided a history of the dams and the impact the dams had on the surrounding environment and fishery. This led to his discussing the decision to remove the dams, the process for the removal, problems and issues, and finally, the outcomes that have resulted from the river running "wild" once again. The removal has affected not only the river itself but all the surrounding environments. Overall, the program has been a success and is serving as a model for how dams on other rivers can be removed (though not without controversy).

It was a very well-presented program. George took questions both during and after the presentation. It was a great topic and most excellent presentation for our club, and a great story about the effects of humans on our world. Much food for thought.

Dean with a Skagit Pink



Bob's Pass Lake Brown



Steve with a Skagit Bull



4CFF 2026 Speakers (last updated 12/11/2025 by John Sanders)

<i>Date</i>	<i>Status</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Category</i>
1/22	Confirmed	Bruce Richards	Fly Lines and Casting	Equipment
2/25 (Wed)	Tentative	Rachel Vasak	Whatcom Land Trust	Local Conservation
3/26	Confirmed	Phil Rowley	Attractors for Stillwater	Fishing & Fly Tying
4/22	Confirmed	Leaf Seaburg	Methow River & Tributaries, Area Lakes	Fishing
5/28	Confirmed	Rick Hafele	Deschutes River Alliance, Impact to Fishery	Regional Conservation
6/25	Confirmed	Steve Hiller & Bruce Aigner	Fishing Patagonia	Fishing & Travel
Jul TBD	Pending	Pending Outing Meeting Date Decision	Methow Classic	Fishing and Socializing
Aug TBD	Pending	Pending Location Availability	Annual Picnic	Socializing
9/24	Confirmed	Bruce Richards	History and Development of Modern Fly Lines	Equipment
10/22	Confirmed	Internal Sharing Meeting	Open to all topics	Fishing & Fly Tying & Equipment
11/19	Pending	TBD	Fly Tying & Fishing	Fly Tying & Fly Fishing
12/19	Confirmed	Year in Review	Holiday Meeting/ Celebration	Socializing

***Mike Brings One Into the Shallows******Lin Swinging a Fly in Kelly Creek***

A Fly Tying History

Editor's Note: Long before we had mobile phones, a variety of titanium weighted sinking lines, a huge assortment of synthetic and holographic fly tying materials, there were fly fishers who tied using available materials (including road kill) and were happy to share that knowledge with others. This story is about Boyd "Doc" Aigner, father of 4CFF's Marion Hiller and Bruce Aigner, and an award he was given. Boyd was a 100+ days per year fisherman.

Boyd Western "Doc" Aigner, the 1980 recipient of the prestigious *Wayne Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award* from Fly Fishers International, always said he really didn't know why he was so honored. But those who knew him understood that tying and teaching were his way of life.

The Buszek award is presented to tyers who have made significant contributions to the art of fly tying, demonstrated the highest skills in fly tying, including creativity, innovation, and teaching abilities, that are considered exemplary by his/her peers, and have made significant contributions to the preservation of the artform of fly tying.



Mitch Mikulak Left, Boyd "Doc" Aigner Right

Boyd received the Buszek Award due to his tying skills, and in part, because of his remarkable ability to share information about fly tying. As a teacher he instructed with great clarity, with patience, and willingness to work with tyers of all ability, levels, and all ages. Virtually everything he learned about technique he willingly shared as "payback" to those who shared techniques with him.

He gave credit to a lot of different people for showing him how to tie flies, not in the feathers and thread sense, but rather in the craft itself, especially to Dawn Holbrook, Walter Johnson, Ralph Wahl, Wes Drain, and Charlie Schroeter in the Seattle area. He credited Cliff Wyatt of Santa Monica "who taught me the basics of the dry fly...its size, configuration, and beauty."

Boyd would casually admit to spending "over 100" days a year fishing, especially in British Columbia, and Montana, and has said, "I have two flies which I consider mine: the Chopaka May, and my Deer Hair Sedge. I have never named a fly after myself and consider it an individual choice."

For Boyd, fly tying was really a way of life. He often referred to the concept of "The Well-Tied Fly." A fly, like life, must be well put together, and is something to strive for. There must be quality in technique and material, an eye for the insect being represented, and an affinity for the fish being stalked. An awareness of these parts makes the whole of fly fishing real and meaningful.

A Fly Tying History (continued)

This is why Boyd won the *Wayne Buz Buszek Memorial Fly Tying Award*. Also, in the years following his passing the Washington Fly Fishing Club has honored Boyd by hosting a yearly *Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition*.

Visit FFI to read more about Boyd's story:

https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Portals/0/FlyTyingGroup/FTGDocuments/Buszek/1980_BoydAigner.pdf

Learn about FFI's fly tying group and resources at:

<https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Fly-Tying-Group>

Casting Corner

By Marion Hiller

Why does my fly line end in a pile or crash?

THE STOP MUST BE ABRUPT

The caster must accelerate the rod smoothly, and at it's fastest point, stop the rod. Think of the stop like your hand knocking on a door. The stop must be abrupt, sudden, and instantaneous, meaning it ceases movement. The stop allows the energy that was stored in the rod to transfer into the line and form the loop. If the stop is too gentle, is slowed down, or has no real stop, the loop lacks the speed to fully unroll, it looks lazy, and the cast does not end well. Failing to apply an abrupt stop is like rolling through the stop sign when driving a car. An abrupt stop can eliminate a pile or crashed line. Thank goodness we can't get a ticket for a bad stop in our cast.

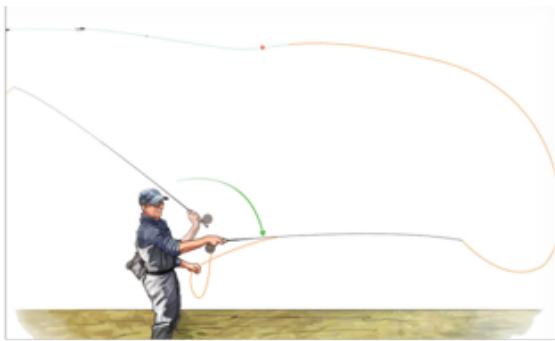
THE ROD TIP MUST STOP HIGH

Many casters stop their delivery cast with the rod pointing at the target, which in many cases is really too low. If a stop is too low, the loop opens up, decelerates the line, and can certainly end in a pile. The solution is to stop the rod a bit higher than your head. Generally, when casting to a target with about 30-40 feet of line, think of stopping the rod about 90 degrees to the target instead of pointing at it. Another way to think of it is stop at 10:30 on a clock face. Where the rod should stop is higher than most casters think. See the illustrations below.

Casting Corner (continued)

AFTER THE STOP AND PAUSE, DROP THE ROD TIP

What you do with the rod after the stop can also cause your line to pile. Many casters finish the cast with the rod tip hovering several feet above the water. The cast should finish with the rod tip a few inches above the water. However, the timing is critical. After the loop has unrolled, float or follow the line to the water's surface with the rod tip at the same speed as the falling line. If the rod tip drops faster than, or slower than, the falling line, or if it stops feet above the water, the fly line can land short of the target and in a pile. How you drop your rod tip to the water's surface at the end of your cast can effect how the line and leader lays out.



A low stop opens the loop



A high stop creates an efficient loop

STILL ENDING UP WITH A PILE OR CRASH?

You can get away with a lot if you have a good stop and drop. If you apply these tips to your cast, but still your line continues to crash or pile, perhaps you might be throwing tailing loops, casting out of plane, double hauling from the hip instead of from the base of the rod, shooting line without a good stop, applying insufficient acceleration in the casting stroke, stopping the rod so the casting arc does not match the bend of the rod for the amount of line beyond the rod tip, just to mention a few. If you are not satisfied with your cast, contact a casting instructor who can help you find solutions (there are several in 4CFF, including the author).



Welcome New Member John Connel:

My name is John Connell. While growing up in Mount Vernon, I met the love of my life, Sharon, our senior year in high school. We went on to university and graduate school and for a short time I taught philosophy at Skagit Valley College. In the next 25 years we opened Paul Bunyan Home Center in Oak Harbor, raised our two sons Travis and Caleb, and were deeply involved in coaching Premiere and High School boy's soccer. Moving on from there we bought the Nevada Bar (built in 1890) in La Conner, converting it into The Next Chapter Bookstore and Coffee House. The La Conner years were deeply enriching as they gave us more time and opportunity to intimately engage with others and to assist in numerous arts, poetry, and musical productions. It was only after moving to Bellingham to be closer to our families, and being fully retired, that I took up fly fishing. I am a novice fly fisherman with just enough experience to be addicted to the tug, and acquire an appetite to learn the artistry, and to build friendships with its artists. I'm grateful to be part of 4th Corner Fly Fishers as I continue my journey, and for the welcoming and hospitality I have experienced while getting to know fellow members and participating in truly awesome club outings.

John Connel



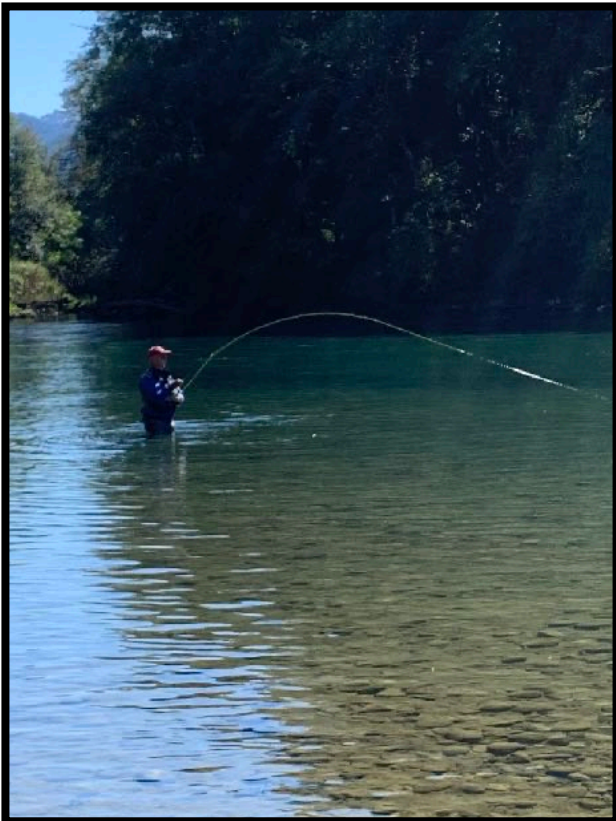
Welcome New Member Rick Lingbloom:

About thirty years ago a friend took me to the Bitterroot River for a guided fly fishing trip. I was hooked (pun intended) on fly fishing. Soon after, I took a fly tying class with Steve Hiller. And then it fizzled. Life got busy. I'm married. I have two boys. I went through phases of mountain biking, long distance trail running, and paddling/racing my surfski. I was a volunteer firefighter/EMT for 25 years, and I was a second-grade teacher. Fly fishing was relegated to the back burner.

As I approached retirement in 2020, after 30 years of teaching, I mentioned to a parent of a student in my class that I was hoping to start dabbling with fly fishing again. As an avid fly fisher and former guide, he began to organize the other parents. At the end of the year they presented me with an Able reel as a retirement gift. At about the same time, Marion Hiller, who I have known for many years, approached me and asked if I would be willing to volunteer some time to allow her to practice her teaching skills as she prepared to become a Master Casting Instructor. Uh ... yes please! And so it began.

The past few years, I've fished a bit on the Skagit, a couple of our local lakes, a few lakes on Whidbey Island, a little stream here and there, and even the infamous Chopaka Lake (infamous to me in that my success there has not been as advertised). As a new member of the 4th Corner Fly Fishers, I eagerly look forward to meeting new people and to enhancing my knowledge and skills regarding all things related to fly fishing.

Rick Lingbloom



December 9 Fly Tying Event

By Bob Jorgenson

Outings Chair Angus MacArthur and Education Chair Mark Munn organized another great evening of tying instruction at the Holiday Inn.

Ed Ruckey led the first session. It was great to see experienced and novice tyers coming together to learn and share skills in fly tying. Ed Ruckey's generosity in giving away his flies and making everyone feel capable of tying quality flies is truly commendable. Such events help foster a sense of community and passion for the hobby. He tied his dry fly, the Beartracks Divisible, that works well on the Upper Skagit, Methow, and Kelly Creek. Everyone left the class not only with new flies but also with the confidence and appreciation to continue tying for years to come. Thank you, Ed, for sharing your skills and passion for tying flies. Many club members have been lucky enough to win one of Ed's special boxes of tied flies at our outings. We certainly thank Ed for his generous gifts to club members.



After a short break for dinner and refreshing drinks Steve Hiller taught two flies: the Mikulak Sedge, and Denny Richards Seal Bugger #4. The Mikulak Sedge fly pattern shines when the trout are chasing and slashing large Caddis adults. The hackle and trimmed deer hair at the

front of the fly were a challenge for those who had not worked with the materials before, but by the end of the class everyone could work with a hair stacker and tie in Moose hair. The second fly taught was the Seal Bugger #4 created by Denny Rickards in the 80's. Many in the class had worked with Marabou, but learning how to wrap Seal Buzzer to make the thorax rib and weave wire forward to a more durable fly was new for beginners. Steve combined his tying with history and use of the flies and that added to the enthusiasm.



***Mikulak Sedge, Beartracks Divisible,
Seal Bugger***

Creation of the Mikulak Sedge

By Steve Hiller

In the mid-1970s, Boyd Aigner and Arthur (Mitch) Mikulak met in British Columbia and became lifelong fishing friends. Mitch and Boyd were focused on tying a fly that imitated the big Traveling Sedge. A Sedge is a Canadian Caddis which hatches around the first of July on the Canadian lakes. The hatch continues at Duck Lake, Montana, where the two anglers spent the rest of their summer. What drew them to this hatch was that the fish went berserk in their attempts to gorge on these insects. They discovered a problem; the insect was so large that traditional Caddis patterns were not working well. The standard Elk Hair Caddis only survived a fish or two because the wing would be so mangled that the fish would then ignore it. The wing along the back stood up and no longer imitated the "little pup tents" running around on the surface of the lake.

Their first attempt to correct the problem was to use a turkey wing section to imitate the wing. It was folded over the body so that when on the water it looked very much like the Traveling Sedge that it was supposed to imitate. An issue they ran into was that when it was cast, the wing often didn't survive the casting forces. Although when the wing survived the cast successfully, the fish loved the fly. They were onto something but needed to make the fly more durable.

Their next attempt was to spray the underside of the turkey feather with automotive upholstery glue. This allowed the fly to be cast without destruction, but unfortunately, the wing did not survive contact with hungry fish. With their supply of flies destroyed, Mitch and Boyd headed back to the camp, enjoying their success. There, they enjoyed rum and coffee and tied more flies. Mitch tied his supply of flies in half an hour, where it took Boyd at least an hour and a half to tie his. After several afternoons, this was making Boyd crazy, so he asked Mitch how he tied his flies so quickly. Mitch answered that he just tied new wings on the old flies! Boyd, being embarrassed, confessed he tied entirely new flies. Tying new wings on old flies became the program for the rest of the summer in British Columbia and at Duck Lake.

During the winter they thought about how to create a more substantial sedge pattern and shared their flies back and forth in the mail between Calgary and Seattle. During this time Mitch thought about how resilient the standard Elk Hair Caddis was for smaller size flies, and wondered, what if he added several elk hair wings on the hook to appear like a longer wing? What if instead of a hackle tail he used elk hair so the tail looked like part of the body? But there was a problem as the elk hair was hard to control to imitate the streamlined appearance of the Traveling Sedge. Being a creative pipe fitter by trade, Mitch invented a technique to align the elk hair into a curved wing. This was a real breakthrough as it helped control the tendency of the elk hair to flare. The Mikulak Sedge was born out of creativity and experiments to effectively fish the Traveling Sedge hatch.

While at Duck Lake I learned about this special technique only three months before Mitch died, when I was summoned to spend time with Mitch, our next-door neighbor. I learned a lot in those four hours that afternoon. I am thankful for all I have learned from both Mitch and Boyd, who willingly spent time sharing their fishing and tying skills with me. Both of these gentlemen are greatly missed by an engineering geek and their families.

Tying a Mikulak Sedge

by Steve Hiller



Materials

HOOK: Standard (or fine) wire, 2X long, sizes 12 to 6. I usually use TMC 5212, 2 X long, 1 X fine.

THREAD: Black 6/0 or 8/0.

TAIL: Natural light colored elk hair (the tail is really part of the wing).

BODY/WING: Sections of dark-green buoyant synthetic or natural dubbing separating bunches of natural colored light elk hair.

HACKLE: One brown hackle, with fibers trimmed flat on the bottom.

HEAD: Whip finished head.

Tying Instructions

- 1) Crimp down barb first, as doing it on the stream can be disappointing if the hook breaks!
- 2) Install hook in vice.
- 3) Lay down a solid thread base for the entire length of the hook to keep the fly from rotating on the hook.
- 4) Special instructions for this fly on stacking the hair for the wings: when you stack the elk hair you will notice that the hair in the stacker is omni directional. The secret to this fly is to allow about 3/8"-1/2" of the elk hair to extend beyond the stacker. Then gently tap the side of the stacker with your finger until all the hair curves in the same direction (as shown in the second photo below).



- 5) Tie in the tail with the elk hair curve going *up*. The length should be about half the length of the hook shank.
- 6) Decide if you are going to use two or three wings. This will depend on the length of the hook you choose to use. Then dub in the body from the tail to the position of the first wing section.
- 7) Tie in the wing with the curve pointing *down* and with the end of the wing about the middle of the tail. Do not apply too much thread tension as it will flair the elk hair, which is undesirable.
- 8) Dub in more body to the next wing position. If you are using only two wings this will be the last wing, but if you are using three wings repeat steps 7 and 8.
- 9) After tying in the last wing, leave enough length of hair forward of the thread to form the head when trimmed. Alternatively, trim the hair and whip finish the head after step 11.
- 10) Tie in the brown hackle and make 3-4 wraps and then tie off.
- 11) Trim the bottom of the hackle flat.
- 12) Tie off the fly head and put a spot of superglue on the thread.
- 13) If using an elk hair head, trim the butts of hair facing forward to form the head.

Note: Your fly should look like a mini pup tent.

Fishing Instructions

To fish this fly, it is best fished during the Traveling Sedge hatch (Sedge is a Canadian term for Caddis, and a Traveling Sedge is a particularly large Caddis). When you see a fish rise, cast to the ring and drag the fly with an arm-long pull. It should create a V shaped wake in the water. The takes can be aggressive, and fish will usually turn to follow and eat your fly.

Bragging Rights

By John Egbert

*The Henry's Fork soothes the evening
like apple cider flowing to the Snake.
I've pulled up my waders, tied my boots,
stepped down the grassy bank to fish.
I meet a man casting black midge flies to rising trout,
trying out several rods lined up like shotguns
on the tailgate of his yellow, four-wheeled buggy.
He tells me he is searching for the rod
which best lays down
a feathered fly like a dimple on a dime.
The fisherman splashes words on me
as if we were chatting at the kitchen sink,
as if fishing the Jordan,
cold water swaddling him after strokes and cancer.
He raves about his nephew playing
baseball for Idaho, "And can he hit!"
His daughter has a new baby.
His son "sets the world on fire"
selling ads for Google.
Downstream, a football field away,
a truck pounds the boards on the steel bridge.
"Galumph, galumph, rat-tat-tat."
A pair of silver cars roll into the starting gates,
rev their engines, "Vroom, vroom."*

Chester, Idaho 2014

The History of Bamboo Rod Building in Bellingham Part 3

We certainly hope that you have enjoyed Hugh Lewis's "History of Bamboo Rod Building in Bellingham." The third installment will be included in our next newsletter, and then all three installments will be posted on our Website.

Musings of a Knot Nut – Part 1

By John Sanders

There are hundreds of different knots to tie just about anything together. In this series we are going to focus on knots used in fly fishing applications. These can be categorized into the following types of knots, starting at the fly and ending at the reel:

1. Connecting Flies to Tippet
2. Connecting Tippet to Tippet or to Leader
3. Connecting Leader to Fly Line
4. Connecting Fly Line to Backing
5. Attaching Backing to Reel

I like to think of everything involved in fly fishing (water, weather, flotation device, fly fisherman, rod and reel, casting motions, line, leader, and tippet) as a "fly delivery system." That system is very complicated, but it only exists to deliver a fly or flies where and when you want them in the manner you intend. Once you have dealt with the details and aggravation of that complex system it is really a simple proposition – you are trying to deliver a fly someplace where you think fish are. Knots are a very important part of that system.

Parts of a Knot

There are three common descriptive terms for the parts of any knot. The rope / line / string / monofilament you are working with is called the "Standing Line" or "Standing End" or "Main Line." The very end of the line that you are manipulating to create the knot is called the "Tag End" or "Bitter End." I will use "Standing Line" and "Tag End." And, finally, there is the resulting "Knot."

Connecting Flies to Tippet

Connecting Flies to Tippet is the most interesting category of knots and in my opinion and is certainly where fly fishermen spend most of their knot tying time. There are two broad types of knots for attaching a fly: those that *jam* themselves against the eye of the hook or the shaft of the hook (jam-type knots), and those that *clinch* themselves to the tippet rather than the hook (clinch-type knots).

Note: throughout this series, for each knot I will include a snapshot of tying instructions for the knot along with a photograph of the knot taken with my digital microscope. I am using 8# Berkley Trilene XT Solar because it is a high visibility green color that makes it easy to see each knot's features. The hook eyes are from size 14 streamer hooks. If available, I will also include a link to a YouTube video (preferably from our friend Tim Flagler at Tightline Productions who presented at our June, 2025 meeting). Simply click on the bold blue name of the knot and you will link to a video.

Following are examples of popular knots from each category:



Jam-Type Knot: The "Clinch Knot"

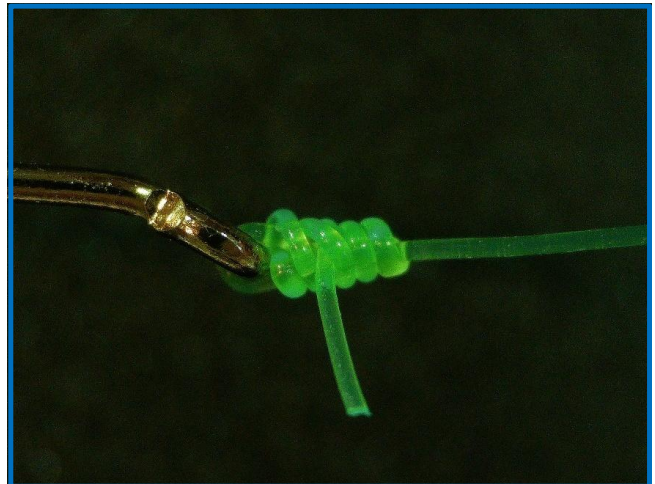
Clinch-Type Knot: The "Uni Knot"

Don't let a knot's name deceive you into thinking that it is the kind of knot that it is. The poster child for this is the extremely popular "Clinch Knot" shown above, which is a perfect example of a jam-type knot because it secures itself (jams) to the hook eye!

From the perspective of the fisherman and how we want the fly to *behave* on the end of the line we tend to think of knots as those that securely fix the fly to the tippet without allowing much fly movement, and those that tie the fly to the tippet and allow the fly to move freely. You can tie the tippet to the fly with the intent of not allowing much movement using *either* a jam-type or a clinch-type knot. If you want to tie the fly to allow movement you nearly always need to have a loop on the end of your tippet and you will need a clinch-type knot to create the loop (there is one other specialty type of knot that allows movement and we will address that in an upcoming installment).

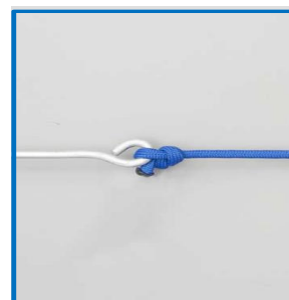
Examples of Jam-Type Knots

The most common jam-type knot, by far, is the [Clinch Knot](#) shown above, or its close relative, the [Improved Clinch Knot](#) (which leaves the tag end long and tucked under the line so the tag end can slip through the knot further before the knot fails). I suspect one of these was the first knot nearly all of us learned when we took up fishing.



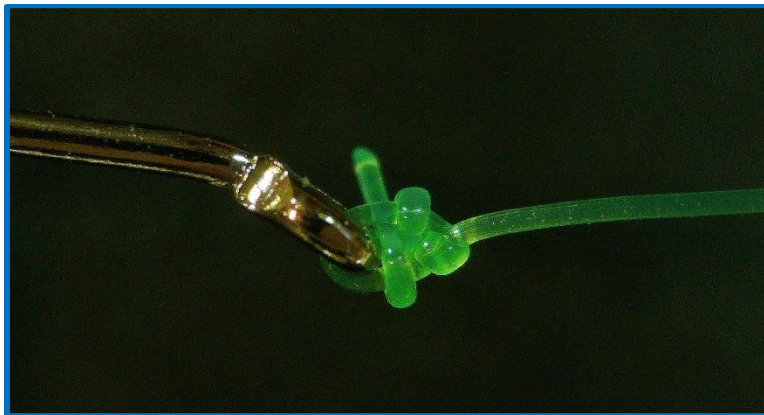
The "Improved Clinch Knot"

Another great jam-type knot is the [Davy Knot](#), invented by Davy Wotton, who grew up in Wales and is now a guide on the White River in Arkansas. He taught himself to fly fish and didn't know any knots, so he messed around with the line until he came up with this simple knot that worked! It is an important knot for all of us because it is the smallest knot you can tie that is a known good reliable knot. If you are fishing a technical tailwater river like the Taylor River in CO with a size 26 thread nymph, you cannot have a huge knot attached to it and expect to fool a wary trout (do not ask how I know this). Because the Davy Knot is so small it also happens to be easy and fast to tie, both *very* important factors. Learn this one if you don't already know it!



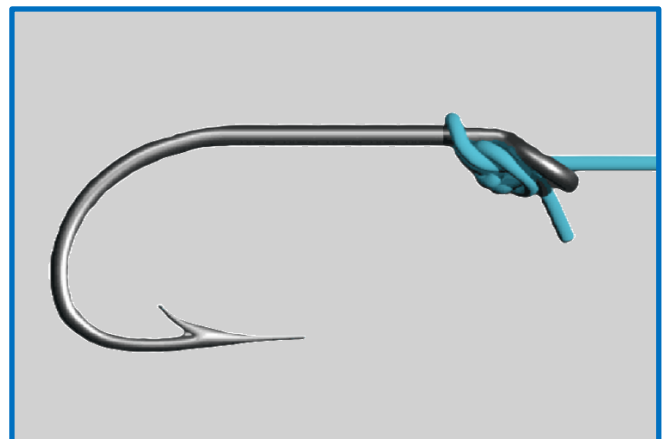
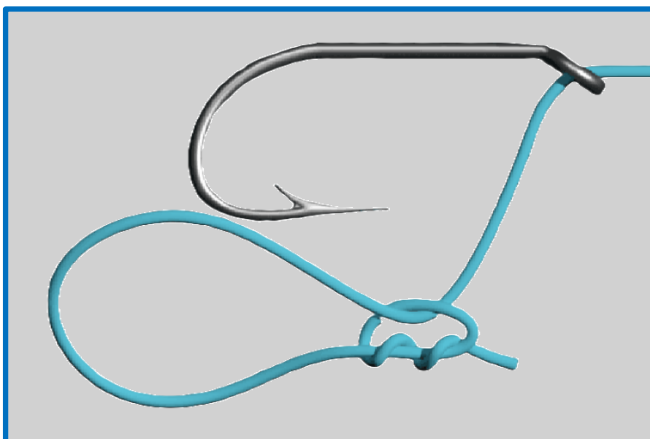
The "Davy Knot"

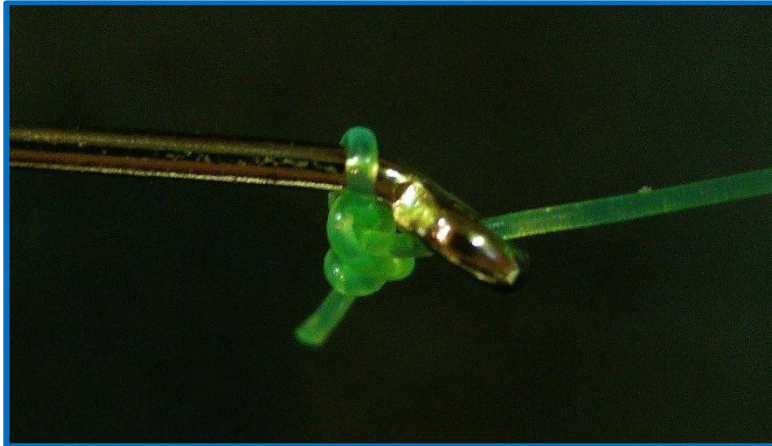
FYI, the Davy Knot is actually a single turn "J Knot" which we will introduce in a future installment. If you want a slightly stronger, but slightly bigger knot, there is the [Double Davy Knot](#) which uses two turns to create the knot (it is a 2-turn J Knot).



The "Double Davy Knot"

Another jam-type knot that is important in the history of fly fishing is the [Turle Knot](#). There were generations when this was *the knot* for fly fishing. Unlike the Clinch or Davy knots, the Turle doesn't just jam against the eye of the hook. It goes through the eye but secures itself against both the shaft and the eye of the hook. It is typically used on hooks with upturned or downturned eyes.





The "Turle Knot"

Examples of Clinch-Type Knots

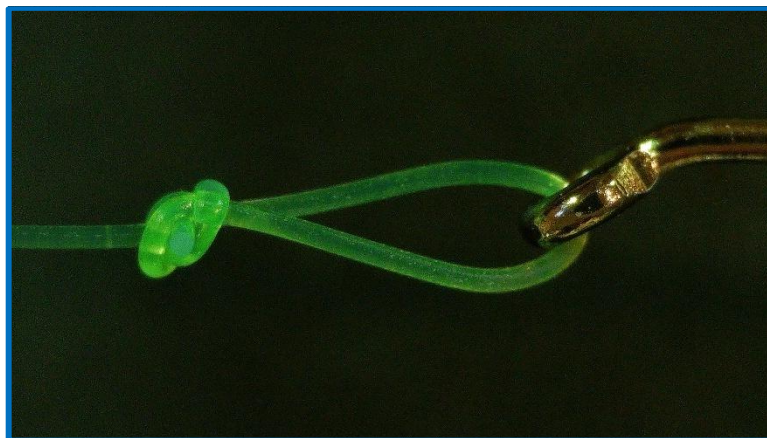
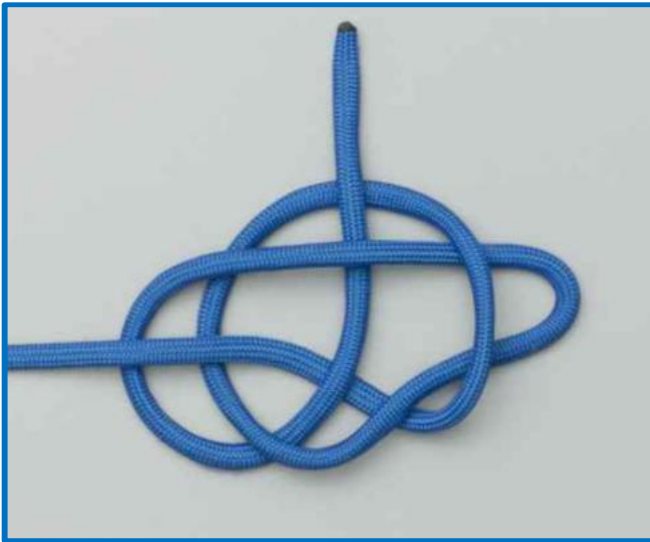
The other broad category of knots is those that become secure by seating themselves to the standing line, rather than to the eye or shank of the hook.

A very popular clinch-type knot is the **Uni Knot**, or Universal Knot, shown in the beginning of this article. It can be tied with just a couple of turns of the tag end, making it small, but not very strong, or it can be tied with many turns, making it larger, but stronger. In fact, if the Uni Knot is tied with just a couple of turns it will slip when pressure is applied to it (think large fish). It will slip until it seats itself against the eye of the hook, at which time it essentially becomes a jam-type knot!

Some fishermen actually use this feature of the Uni Knot to help indicate which of two flies is working best when they are getting strikes but not hooking fish. When fishing with two flies and you get a strike, you can look at the two Uni Knots used to tie on the flies and see which one slipped, or collapsed, to the hook. That indicates which fly the fish struck.

Tying knots always involves tradeoffs of tying speed, ease of tying, knot size, change in line orientation, and strength. Having several good knots in your arsenal lets you pick the optimum one for the conditions at hand. There are circumstances when the time to tie a knot is the most important thing but other circumstances where the size of the knot, or the strength of the knot is the primary concern.

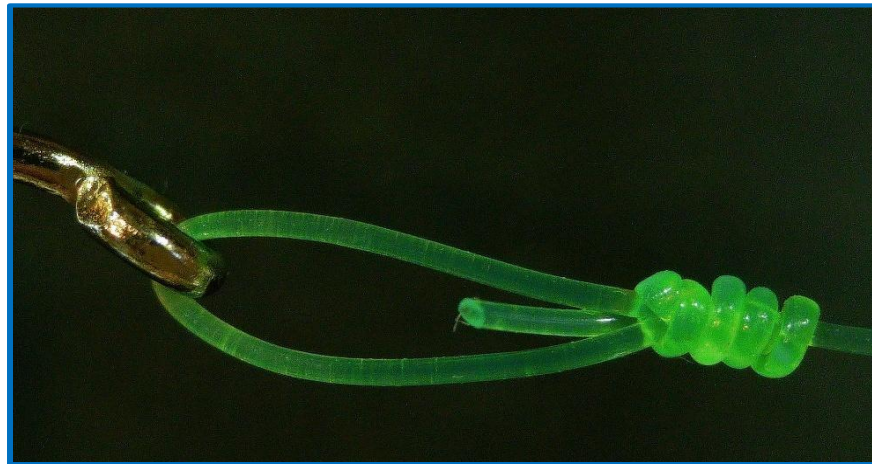
One of the most common clinch-type knots that creates a loop is the **Perfection Loop**. It is fast and easy to tie, is very small, doesn't alter the direction of the line, but has the drawback of not being as strong as other knots. When you were a kid and bought a package of six pre-tied hooks "snelled" to the hook (another knot!) with a 6" piece of monofilament having a loop in the end – that loop in the end was the Perfection Loop. We probably all have fond memories of using one of these pre-tied leaders with a couple of Pautzke Green Label salmon eggs on opening day!



The "Perfection Loop"

The Perfection Loop is a great loop knot where you don't mind losing about 50% of the line strength. A common example of that is if you tie your own leaders, the butt end of the leader will be much heavier than your tippet end, so using a Perfection Loop in the butt section to attach to the loop in your fly line is a good choice because the reduction in strength of the butt section doesn't matter.

A much better loop knot for attaching a fly, because it doesn't sacrifice line strength, is the [Non-Slip Mono Loop Knot](#). This is also known as the "Kreh Knot" after famed fisherman Lefty Kreh popularized it. It is strong and small, but a bit tedious in terms of ease of tying and time to tie and controlling loop size. It also slightly changes line orientation. Nonetheless, this knot is mandatory for your knot arsenal and is the go-to knot when tying on a fly with a loop.



The "Non-Slip Mono Loop"

This knot is used by river fisherman for attaching streamers or nymph patterns that you want to move lifelike in the water. Stillwater fly fisherman use it to create a small loop for attaching Chironomid Larva and Pupa imitations, as well as balanced leech and minnow imitations.

An intriguing side note on this knot is that the two most well-known Canadian stillwater fly fisherman, Brian Chan and Phil Rowley, tie this knot differently! Phil ties it as shown above. Brian, on the other hand, does not initially pass the tag end through the loop when it exits the eye of the hook. He then completes it the same way as shown above, taking turns around the standing line and then passing it through the loop. As much as it pains me to say anything critical about the great fly fisherman and fisheries biologist Brian Chan, the most common way to tie this knot is the way Phil ties it and is shown here. However, this does highlight that there is room for creativity in the world of knot tying, and even the possibility of inventing new knots. In the next installment I will give an example of a new knot that is an improvement on the venerable Non- Slip Mono Loop Knot.

A final thought on this introduction to clinch-type knots – if you have a boating background you may be wondering about the **Bowline Knot** (usually pronounced "bo-lin"). It is a very common boating knot and is a superb example of a clinch knot that creates a loop at the end of the line. However, one of the things that makes the Bowline so great for boating (it is even referred to as the "The King of Knots") is that it can be easily *untied*, even after undergoing tremendous stress. This is a definite detriment in the world of fishing, since the fish is the thing that is stressing the knot! With slick monofilament and an active fish, the Bowline Knot can become untied. For that reason, the Bowline is generally *not* used as a fishing knot.



The "Bowline Knot"

Knot Resources

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. www.animatedknots.com | Used for all tying illustrations except for the Turle Knot |
| 2. www.netknots.com | Used for the Turle Knot illustration |
| 3. https://knots3d.com | Website for Knots 3D mobile app (below) |
| 4. www.proknot.com | Website for Pro-Knot mobile app (below) |
| 5. Animated Knots | Free mobile device app version of animatedknots.com |
| 6. NetKnots | \$3.99 one-time fee mobile app version of netknots.com |
| 7. Knots 3D | Free mobile device app |
| 8. Pro-Knot | Free mobile device app |
| 9. YouTube | Link will search for "fly fishing knots" |

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The following board positions were filled in our November 2025 meeting:

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