



## ***The November 2023 NEWSLETTER***

**Northern Arizona Flycasters**  
**An active member club of the World Wide organization**  
**“Fly Fishers International”**  
**“Conservation, Restoration, and Education through Fly Fishing”**  
<http://nazflycasters.com>  
**POB 50517 Parks, AZ 86018**

**We support active involvement in cold water fisheries conservation. We work to insure that Arizona’s habitat is not degraded and in the development and maintenance of fly fishing opportunities.**

**We support the practice of “catch and release”, the use of barbless hooks, and quick and harmless release practices. Fish should never be kept out of the water for over 60 seconds.**

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Northern Arizona Flycasters meets the first Wednesday of the month at the Arizona Game and Fish Regional office at 3500 S. Lake Mary Road, Flagstaff. Meetings start at 7 PM with a board meeting at 6:00 PM.  
The meetings are free and the public is invited.

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### **PRESIDENT’S DRIFT :**

Gavin Ferguson will give a presentation on his late-summer fly fishing trip to Wyoming, Utah, and Northern Nevada. This will be a very good program. Gavin is skilled outdoorsman and avid fly caster. The presentation will be at the regular meeting time of 7 pm at the Game and Fish offices.

#### **Reminders:**

**Club Dues-**

**\$40.00 Family**

**\$30.00 Individual**

**\$10.00 Student**

**Reminder, our Post Office Box has changed.**

**New Post Office Box is: POB 50517 Parks, AZ 86018**

Facebook search under Northern Arizona Fly Casters.  
AZ Daily Sun, web edition, under Events.  
Website:<https://nazflycasters.com>

## **EDUCATION –**

### **Tips for Safe Wading in Moving Water**

Orvis Outdoor Writer, Registered Maine Guide

I'll never forget the first time I waded into a river to fish. With my new waders and boots, I felt almost invincible as I strode into the cold water completely dry and protected. In reality, I was participating in a potentially very dangerous activity. The false sense of security the waders afforded was made apparent the first time I fell in a river – which I also will never forget.

Ironically, that first fall happened in a very slow eddy close to a bank in about a foot of water. I was fighting a fish and began to back up in order to coax the salmon out of the current. I did not look behind as I moved and tripped over a single rock and fell hard. Very hard. I also lost the fish. I never, ever walk backwards in a river any more.

Often you'll get wading advice about deep water and fast currents. This is valuable, but I find it's when I think I'm safe in slow, shallow water that I get in trouble. It's because I'm not being as vigilant. There is absolutely no situation when you're wading in moving water that you can let down your guard.

Any guide will tell you, it's not if you'll "take a swim," but when. Here a few safety tips for wading in moving water, some learned the hard way, that I hope will help you avoid the soakings I've taken.

## The Wading Gear

In addition to waders, here are the [fly-fishing wading gear and accessories](#) that make wading safer and more enjoyable:

### Wading Boots

Felt is a longtime favorite [wading boots](#) sole material, and is very secure on slippery surfaces. However, felt soles take a long time to dry and tend to pick up and help spread invasive species of plants. Felt soles are illegal in some states. Check local regulations.

The latest technical rubber soles, often referred to as “sticky rubber,” are a great choice for all-around boots particularly in mud and sand. They are the most comfortable for hiking to remote fishing spots. For extra traction that’s excellent on slick surfaces, choose rubber soles with metal studs.

### Wading Belt

A belt is included with most [waders](#). Wear it, especially if you’ll be wading in deep water. If you happen to fall, you do not want your waders to fill with water, which will cause you to sink. Even if the water isn’t particularly deep, it’s amazing how much water can get into your waders during a quick dip. Wet clothes often mean a trip back to the car or lodge—not a good use of valuable fishing time.

### Wading Staff

There’s no better way to improve your safety while wading in moving water than to use a [wading staff](#). It improves stability and allows you to feel around and check water depth and the softness of river bottoms. Folding models can be stored neatly in a sheath that hangs from your wading belt and easily deployed when needed. A good substitute is a sturdy stick you find along the riverbank.

Regardless of whether you are right- or left- handed, always hold the wading staff on your downstream side so that it can offset the pressure of the current.

### **Walking and Turning in Moving Water**

Freshwater current and depth can be deceiving. Fast water does not have to be deep to pull your feet out from under you. As I pointed out above, looking where you are walking and proceeding cautiously will help tremendously in keeping you upright. Take your time and never shift your weight from one foot until the other is firmly planted and stable. Be aware of how much the current is pushing you as you go along. Turn back if you feel uncomfortable.

Be particularly careful in shallow water. A fall in deep water will get you wet, but a fall on stream-side rocks can cause serious injury and break bones. The slippery bottom combined with the current can make regaining your feet a real challenge.

When turning around, particularly in fast water, always pivot on an upstream direction. Rotating while facing down stream will allow the current to push you forward, possibly into a deep hole.

Never walk where you can't see where you're stepping. If you fish until dark be sure to use a headlamp and make sure you're familiar with the area.

### **Crossing the River**

Reading the water will not only help you find fish, it will also guide you when crossing a wide section of river. The safest areas are usually the tail end of a pool or the head of a wide riffle where the water is usually shallower. Always angle your path upstream. If at some point you realize you can't go any farther, you can always retrace your steps. If you angle downstream, the power of the current may not allow you to retrace your steps, pushing you into unknown territory and possibly a deep section.

### **Situational Awareness When Wading in Moving Water**

A couple of years ago, I was wading in a wide section of a big Maine river when I started to struggle to keep my feet. I thought I was just getting tired. I was making my way to the bank when a large tree trunk passed by. Suddenly, I realized that the water was rising. That's why wading was becoming harder. I made my way to the shore and crawled up on a boulder anxiously waiting for my husband who was fishing downstream. When he finally joined me he was visibly ruffled. The rising water had caught him off guard as well.

It turned out that the dam upstream had been opened but the operator had failed to sound the warning alarm. When we returned to camp, many fishermen had had close calls.

This is not an exhaustive safety list, but I hope it gives you a good foundation for safe freshwater wading. Fishing is a lot more fun with both feet firmly on the ground.

### **NAF EVENTS SCHEDULE**

#### **Under discussion by board**

Fishing outings to local lakes

Fly casting sessions on a regular basis.

Work project with game and fish

**The Board welcomes suggestions from members.**

#### **NAF CLUB OFFICERS/COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

President	Charles Simpson
Vice-President	Tom Hudnall
Secretary	Mac McIlwaine
Treasurer	Denise Dean

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PO Box 2924  
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