

FIRST COAST FLY FISHER

WWW.FCFF.ORG

MAY 2009



Woody's Big Blue,
Caught Wed April 29
Photo: Don Edlin



John Adams Ties His Famous Adams Ant Before Recent Lott/Adams Outing

Annual Lott/Adams Outing

Fine Food, Great People, and Quality Fishing, Too

New to the club and want to get to know some of the great people who are our members? Or, do you just want to catch some fine fish and eat some exceptional lunch? Either way, come to the Annual Adams/Lott St Johns River Bass and Bream outing Saturday, May 21, for great camaraderie, top-shelf cuisine food, and lots of fishing and friends.

In previous years members have fished the mornings, lunched long and hard, then fished afternoons before returning to the boat ramps to load up for the ride home.

Last year's best-producing fly was a brown Gurgler variation tied by St. Johns River resident John Adams. Ask nicely and he may have a few extra at the May meeting — or we may entice him to bring his tying stuff and show you how to tie it before the meeting. How 'bout it John?

This is a truly special event. Please let Bill or Ann Lott know that you plan to attend so they can get a head count for food. **See page 5 for more photos and a map to the Lotts house.**

Monday, May 4 - FCFF Meeting. Casting 6 p.m., meeting 7 p.m. Speakers: Our own John Adams, Bill Lott and Capt. Mike McQuiston tell us how, when, what flies, and where to catch those fine bream and bass on the St. Johns River near Toccoi. Ask John to tie his highly regarded Adams Bream Fly, one of the catching-est bream flies on the market. All this in regards the May Outing, the Annual Lott Lunch and Bream/Bass Fishery. See below

Saturday, May 9 - Annual Lott Lunch Outing and Bream/Bass Fishing Outing on the St. Johns River near Piccolata. This is an especially well attended full on banquet lunch and bream bass fishing outing. It is always our best feast of the year in a lovely riverfront surroundings of the Bill and Ann Lott's home. We usually have 50 or so people show up for this, so please call Ann Lott and give her a heads up and bring a covered dish or dessert. More3 this at the April and May meetings. Please coordinate with Ann annlott@aug.com

Saturday, May 23 - Wading Outing for Blues, Reds, Ladyfish and Jacks - Blues, Reds, Ladyfish and Maybe jacks - Wading Outing 8:30am High and 2:30pm Low. Veteran FCFFer and fly angler Don Edlin to lead two outings both outings in May. for the South East (ocean)End of Amelia Island for on the fly rod or spinner. Tides for the 23rd are: Park at the bridge and walk in or if you have 4 wheel, drive in.

Saturday, May 30 - Wading Outing #2 Fish Surf fishing for Ladyfish, Jacks - Wading Outing for Ladyfish. Meet at 8:15a.m. North of Simpson's Creek on Big Talbot Island. The BIG ladies are there on the incoming tide. Don Edlin has graciously agreed to head this outing, as well. Bring your five weight for this one. Tides: 9 a.m. Low and 3pm High. This is about a 2-mile walk into the wading area, or boats can get there.

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Brownlining

Fly Fishing's Newest Frontier?

by **Dana Griffin III**

Owning up to the darker side of what you do (or might do) could have cathartic potential, and that applies to fly fishers about as much as to anybody else.

All right, some will protest that fly fishing is anything but dark, and it surely isn't weird. Indeed. Have you heard of brownlining? No? Then welcome to the dark, if not the weird, side of this noble sport.

Brownlining is one of those "exciting" new frontiers in fly fishing practiced chiefly by urbanites with access to brown waters. Some, like Tom Teasdale of Englewood, Colorado, have a favorite honey hole just below a drainage pipe that, in turn, is positioned just below a waste water treatment plant. The coliform count of these waters could cause an ER intern to blanch.

What's Tom after, fishing this spot? It's carp, and he's caught quite a few. He's rarely crowded by other anglers; however, he does pack his Glock 9mm to deal with any twolegged problems that might show up. At least one longrodder with entrepreneurial instincts has opened up a web site (roughfisher.com). Jean-Paul Lipton of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota will not only sell you his special brown water flies, but will guide you to the best spots (current fee: \$250/day).

Other web sites help to keep the brownliner on top of his sport. Bring up troutunderground.com or www.singlebarbed.com from time to time. At these sites you'll get the latest news from the brownlining ramparts.

Okay, so you're just not up to dunking your \$60 fly line into liquid filth (one brownliner confirmed having seen pass in front of his spot a succession of used diapers, the carcass of a goat, and some other items best left out of this article). How about fishing alleys?

A Baltimore newspaper recently reported on an innovative new style of urban fly fishing. The genius we're indebted to for this creative variation is a young Baltimore attorney who had such a burning need to fly fish that he dedicated part of his lunch hour to the sport. His downtown office was nowhere near fishable water, but that didn't deter this creative barrister. He discovered that by impaling a strip of raw bacon onto a hook and casting the morsel down the alleyway behind the building where he worked that rats – make that large Norway rats – would lunge from their moldy hiding places and strike.

Rat on! Rats and lawyers enmeshed in the same game – it's almost enough to force a snicker onto some faces.

So, dead goats and live rats aren't doing it for you? Very good. I have one other variant to offer up. One fine June morning, I found myself fly fishing the surf along Florida's Atlantic coast (this was in the Melbourne area). Snook were on the day's agenda, and the companions I was with assured me the fish would be there, as in fact they were. Several were caught before the bite was suddenly off. This very specialized fishery occurs mainly in June and almost entirely at dawn.

Once the sun is high enough to send streams of light through the rollers, the snook hightail it back into the creeks or out into deeper water. They have good reason to leave. Sharks patrol the near shore waters and snook apparently feel especially vulnerable once they are illuminated by the rising sun. So, I figured we three fishers would decamp to a diner and some long overdue breakfast. In this I was wrong.

My buddies were just getting started on their fun-filled day at the beach. "Have you ever fly fished for crabs?" one asked me. I replied that I hadn't but that a lump crab meat omelet sounded like something I could really tuck into.

"Later," they said. "Breakfast can wait. You need to hone your crab catching skills." So, we began. The game this time consisted of casting your fly (patterns don't matter in this specialized sport) down the beach and retrieving it past the burrows of ghost crabs.

Getting the speed right is critical. If a crab was in residence, he'd dart out to investigate this potential meal, sometimes follow up on the retreating fly and occasionally make a grab for it.

After about an hour of this unparalleled fun, I'd had it. My more skilled friends had managed to hook up a couple of the crabs which were released with much snapping of claws. Not enough meat on these beach dwellers to even think of an omelet. I said goodbye to my hosts and started the long drive back to Gainesville. What had I learned from this morning on the Melbourne beach? For one, I learned a little bit about the behavior of snook, and for another I learned, again, that flyrodders with no fish to catch and time on their hands can be quite creative. They may even venture to the weird, if not the dark, side of this sport.



Photo: Dana Griffin

Springtime on the Ocklawaha

by Dana Griffin III

My first experience floating the Ocklawaha River was a memorable one. It was over forty years ago, but I can still picture the hatch of big *Hexagenia limbata* mayflies that floated alongside my canoe. Now and again a bream would quietly sip one off the surface or, in the case of a noisy diner, make a splashy production out of taking one of these battleship sized bugs. These mayflies have an inch-long body and can be imitated on a size 10 hook. Doesn't sound like much perhaps, but compare that with the size 16 hook you'll need for a blue-winged olive adult.

So, I've been making a tradition out of a float trip each spring on this storied river. Springtime is the time to go. The weather is generally cooperative, the more noxious insects are not around in any numbers and the fish are in the mood to strike – that should be an appealing combination in any flyrodder's book.

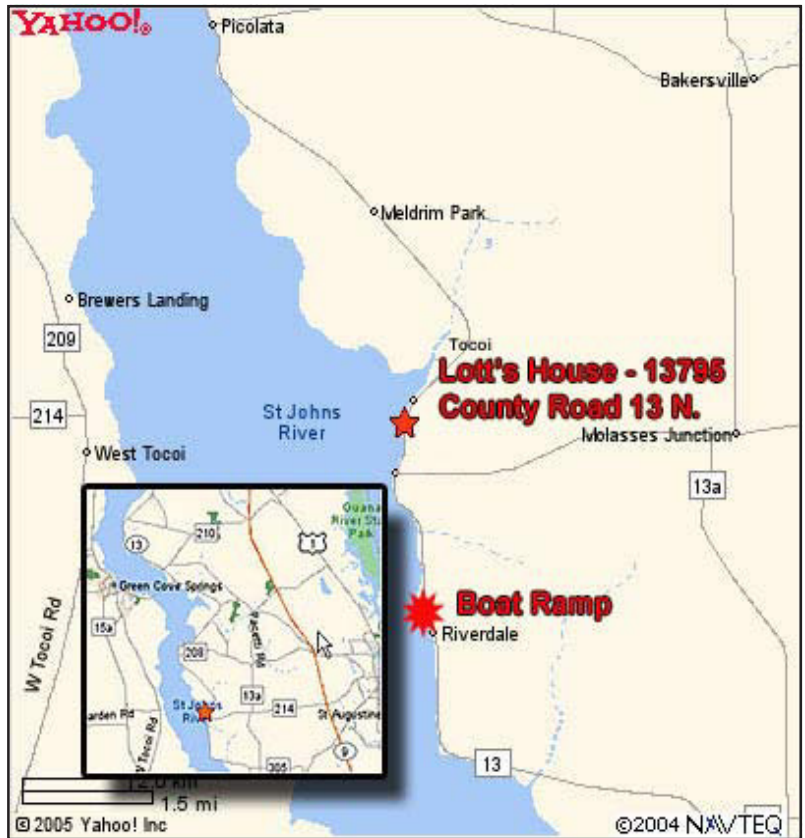
This year's trip was particularly pleasant as I managed to somehow talk my wife to take on the paddling chores while I got to occupy the bow seat and cast to likely looking spots. Yes, the payback for this generous gesture is still being calculated. While you can work any part of the river and likely have luck with the fish, our favorite section begins at Gore's Landing south of Eureka. It's an eight mile trip back to the take out at the Eureka bridge. That makes for about 5 hours on the river which isn't so long that you're left exhausted nor too short that you don't get multiple chances to try out your flies and hook up with any of a half dozen species of fish.

If you have a second vehicle and can arrange your own pick up and return, then go for it. Our preference is to rent a canoe or kayak from the Canoe Outpost in Eureka. They supply the transportation up to Gore's Landing. You leave your car or truck at the Outpost and simply float down river to the pull out just north of the river bridge.

Our trip was in late March. The water temperature was 71 degrees, and I had no trouble enticing fish to bite. One wants to throw toward the bank – either bank – and, if you're after bream, stick with size 8 or 10 flies. The patterns probably don't matter in any serious way. A fly that worked well on this trip is something I concocted using a bead at the head, some salmon colored dubbing for a body, a bit of crystal flash in the tail position, chartreuse marabou as a wing and a partridge hackle up front. The first strike came within 50 feet of our launch and it turned out to be a 14 inch golden shiner. This fish was followed by a mix of bluegills, stumpknockers (a.k.a. spotted sunfish) and red-bellies. One bass responded when I switched to a small white streamer. All in all, it was a typical and entirely satisfying fishing trip on one of my favorite Florida rivers.

One added note is directed to those with motorized craft. Don't even think about putting in at Gore's Landing for a down river trip. The upper four miles of the run are a navigational nightmare for any boat with a lower unit. This snag and log rich section is fine for canoes and kayaks, but power boats should stay out.

You can use your motor boat on the lower 4 miles of the Gore's Landing to Eureka bridge section, but you'll have to put in at the Eureka boat ramp and travel up river.



*Photos and Map
from Past Lott/Adam
Outings. Join Us.*





Casting Practice Tips From The Pros

Casting Practice from Bruce Richards

Flyline designer, Scientific Anglerwrs,

Author, *Modern Fly Lines*

FFF Casting Board of Governors

Positive practice. The thing I stress most regarding [casting] practice is to key on one thing at a time, and build additional skills on top of those already perfected. For example, until good, consistent loop control is automatic, it is difficult to effectively work on other skills. For example, if a caster can make occasional perfect loops, but many others are mediocre, it is difficult for them to make real progress on other casts, like delivery casts, or more distance, etc. Once a caster has developed good loops as their standard cast, committed to their muscle memory, being consistent with any other cast can't be done (except maybe pile casts!).

Most casters will want to move on to other things before good loop control is automatic, and that shouldn't be discouraged, but they must watch their loops and when they see them deteriorate as they work on something else, they need to take a step back and fix the loop before continuing. This process doesn't really change much as they improve, even expert casters can have bad days when they can't hit targets well, or get usual distance, and the problem almost always relates back to something about their basic stroke and loop shape. Once that is fixed, everything is OK again.

One good way to help with loop analysis is to always cast to targets when practicing. If some days hitting targets consistently is easy, others it is not, odds are that basic loop control is the issue.

Casting Practice from Ed Jaworowski

Author, *The Cast*

Troubleshooting the Cast

Here's something I'm adamant about. One of the areas I am strongly at odds with most people is that I believe the forward and back cast should be taught completely separately, as two separate casts, before they are put together. Strikes me ironic that every instructor tells people 'you must have a good back cast before you can have a good forward cast', then proceeds to have them make a backcast, followed by a forward cast. As if

the back cast were perfect. Fact is, people can't throw 2 out of 20 the same. That's why I also insist on learning to cast with the rod to the side, rather than overhead. They can let the line fall to the rear, study it to recognize what's good or bad, and then make the forward cast. It's also more natural and more comfortable. Once they are assured of a consistent back cast (and I have all sorts of ways to assure that), then the two are put together, and if needed, the cast can then be made overhead.

Casting Practice from Brant Oswald

West Coast Orvis Schools Coordinator,

Co-director of Mel Krieger's Fly Casting School

Practice, of course, is the key to achieving consistent accuracy. One way to do this is to incorporate targets into at least part of every practice session. Paper plates weighted with a rock work fine, and fluorescent tennis balls can be tossed to a variety of positions on the lawn. In many cases, there are plenty of natural targets to choose from: a dandelion blossom, a fallen leaf, a bit of foam or floating weed on a pond. To practice "left and right" accuracy, try casting along a straight line target, like the edge of a sidewalk, the sideline of a football field, or a garden hose stretched across a lawn. Be sure to add a piece of brightly colored yarn to the end of the leader for practice sessions. The line and leader will turn over more realistically, and the yarn will allow the caster to check accuracy on each presentation.

Joan Wulff's "pick a leaf" practice is another excellent way to hone accuracy skills. For this practice, Wulff recommends picking a small target, like an individual leaf in a hedge, and trying to touch the target with the practice fly, working in various casting planes, both forehand and backhand, and at various distances. One of the keys to this practice is to concentrate on a pinpoint target.

The ultimate goal for the angler is to reach the point where accuracy is fully integrated with other casting skills, where there is no thought about casting mechanics, no consideration of the line of sight or rod tip path or casting arcs. The angler simply looks at the target, makes the cast, and the fly lands exactly where it is aimed. This requires practice, but the practice has rewards: casting accuracy not only catches a lot of fish, it is one of the most satisfying parts of the fly caster's game.

continued on page 8



NC's Nantahala

Rob Benardo joined Rick and Cheryl Palazzini to fish North Carolina's fabled Nantahala River. Above, Rob surveys the river. L & R, Brookie and Bow from the Nantahala.

Photos: Rick Palazzini

Striper Trek

Maybe it's the distance or maybe it's the economy but attendance for the 9th Annual FCFF Striper Trek to NC's Roanoke River is way down. Veteran fly anglers and Roanoke striper lovers Bud Larsen and DonnMcKinnon leave Tuesday, May 4 for the 9 hour drive. They'll fish through Friday, then return Saturday, May 9. Interested? Call Bud at 724-9187.



Donn McKinnon With Last Year's Striper Award Winner. A Beauty By All Accounts.

Casting Practice -- cont'd from page 6

Casting Practice from Dave Engerbretson

Editor Fly Fisherman

Author, *Tight Lines, Bright Waters*

Physiology Professor

Flycasting is best taught with a small teacher-student ratio, and a class of one to six students is ideal for a single instructor. However, things are rarely ideal, and I regularly find myself teaching twenty-five students in my university class. In one extreme case, I was faced with forty students and I had no help!

My normal procedure, whatever the class size, is to bring the group together to explain and demonstrate the next skill. In explaining the skill, I will stress two or three key points critical to its success. The students then return to their casting positions to practice the skill, while I move among them making appropriate comments and suggestions. When the class is large, however, I find it very helpful to have each student choose a partner and practice in pairs. One student is the caster while the other becomes the coach. Even though the coach may not be an experienced caster, he or she can watch the partner to see if the key points of the cast are being accomplished, and offer suggestions if they are not.

While teaching the single haul, for example, I may holler out to the group, "Now, be sure that the haul is put into the backcast just as the short power stroke is applied with the casting hand." And all of the coaches concentrate on watching that key point and correcting the caster, if necessary.

Then the partners switch and the caster becomes the coach. When all have practiced that key point, I may say, "O.K., now concentrate on making the haul a short, crisp downward tug on

the line, not just a long, slow pull." And, again, the partners coach each other, paying particular attention to the new key point of the skill. Of course, all during this time I move around the group giving individual instruction.

I find that having students pair up is beneficial to both the caster and the coach. While the casters are practicing the actual skill and receiving individual help, the coaches are reinforcing the techniques in their minds and are getting valuable mental practice. The entire learning process is enhanced, and the potential handicap of a large class can be turned into a positive factor.



John Adam's Atomic Ant, for the Lott/Adams Outing



Redbelly
Photo: Woody Huband

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