

First Coast Fly Fisher

First Coast Fly Fishers

www.fcff.org

January 2008

New!!
2008 Tides and
Solunar Data at
[http://fcff.org/
tides2008.htm](http://fcff.org/tides2008.htm)

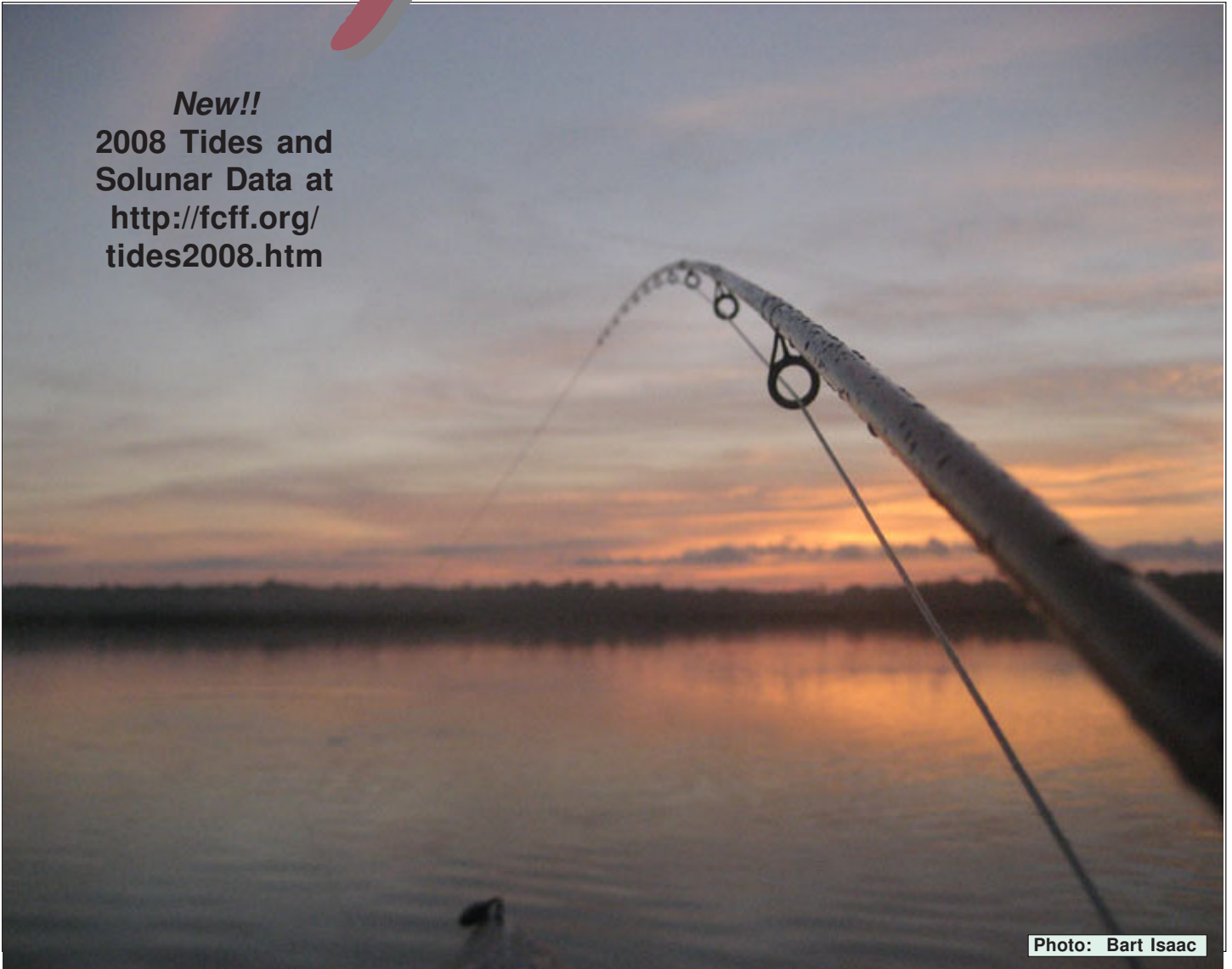


Photo: Bart Isaac

MEETING & SPEAKER

Monday, Jan. 7 – Come learn from FCFFer Dr. Jim McCully, author of *Beyond the Moon*, a no-nonsense book about understanding those forces which bring you daily tides. Jim will talk about our local tides, including how to fish them, what tides are the best, how do we determine tide height. Bring your questions. Casting with David Lambert and Dick Michaelson will resume in March.

COMING EVENTS

New Moon -- Tuesday, Jan. 8; Full moon -- Tuesday, Jan. 22
FCFF Banquet -- Saturday, Feb 2. Featuring authors and fly fishing greats Terry and Roxanne Wilson. Banquet starts at 6:30 p.m. Thousands of dollars of raffles, prizes, and auctions. Sign up on or before the January meeting to get a chance at a very special drawing prize -- a Wilderness System Tarpon 12 Kayak from Black Creek Outfitters. Learn more at the meeting. *Read more -- Page 2 of this newsletter.*
Monday, Feb 4 -- FCFF Meeting. Speaker to be announced.

2007 BANQUET



Wilsons To Teach and Tie at FCFF Banquet Feb. 2

Time again for that biggest of events in the world of First Coast Fly Fishers — The FCFF Annual Banquet Saturday, Feb 2.

As most of you know, this is a weekend where FCFFers get to learn from some of the finest instructors/ personalities in our sport. This year we are pleased to bring in **Terry and Roxanne Wilson**.

For more than 20 years **Terry and Roxanne** have presented innovative, practical fly-fishing methods for largemouth and smallmouth bass, bluegill, crappie, gar, and channel catfish to flyfishing clubs, at national fly fishing shows, and in print. They have published nearly 150 magazine articles and 3 books. Their books include *Bluegill Fly Fishing and Flies*, *Largemouth Bass Fly Fishing: Beyond the Basics* and their newest book, *Smallmouth Bass Fly Fishing: A Practical Guide* released in May 2007.

They were presented with the **Federation of Fly Fishers Don Harger Memorial Award** in 1996 for their contributions to the sport of fly fishing. Roxanne was named **1994 Woman of the Year** by the Federation's Southern Council. Their flies are sold by Orvis and Pacific Fly Group.

Learn more about the Wilsons on their Website. www.thebluegillpond.com

Here's the banquet lineup:

Saturday: 8:30 - 12:30 - Meet at UNF for talks and slide presentations on warmwater fishing.

Saturday 1 - 3 p.m. - *Fly Tying Seminar with Terry Wilson*. Learn to tie some of the nation's most effective flies for warmwater species with one of the nation's hottest tiers. Bring your tying equipment.

Saturday: 6 p.m. - Annual Banquet at UNF University Center, which is the old Conference Center. Lots of drawings, raffles, and a huge silent auction. We have nearly **\$7000 worth of items for you to win**, including at least 10 guided trips, and two river trips. If you attended last year, you know the banquet was a bang-up success; the food was great and the prizes were exceptional.

Larry Holder is the banquet chair this year. He's done a great job working with the national vendors and local shops to bring in lots of top quality merchandise for raffle and auction. Mike McQuiston worked with the guides to get so many great trips. Great job guys. Give 'em an attaboy when you see them. Look for your banquet sign-up sheet in .pdf format at www.fcff.org/banquet

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The Creeps



Photo by Rob Benardo

by Bruce Richards

A recent week of trout fishing with some friends reminded me that a chronic problem many casters have when fishing is rod 'creep'. Nearly all of us creep now and then, and it limits distance, accuracy, and causes lots of leader tangles.

OK, what is creep? Creep is a term instructors use to describe forward motion of the rod that happens after the backcast stops, but before the following forward cast starts. What this does is effectively shorten the stroke on the forward cast. During false

casting this may not cause a big problem, but most casters add a little extra power to the final cast and this extra power, applied through a creep-shortened stroke, will cause problems.

The first, most obvious, visible sign of creep is a tailing loop. Tailing loops are more wind resistant than good loops with parallel top and bottom legs. This extra wind resistance will reduce total distance cast, and will often also prevent the fly and tippet from delivering as it should. Tailing loops will also often foul tangling the leader and/or causing 'wind knots' that will weaken your leader.

OK, so how do you know if you are creeping, and what do you do to fix it? First, if you see that you are throwing tailing loops it is very likely that you are creeping, especially if you are an average or better caster. You can also watch the butt of your rod while casting. If you are casting properly there should be a noticeable pause in the motion of the rod after you have stopped it to form the back loop. If you see that your rod starts to move forward immediately after the stop, you are creeping.

The creep can be difficult to analyze; you must watch the butt of your rod closely. Any forward motion of the rod before

you are ready to make the next cast will cause trouble. Remember that the rod is a long lever, a small amount of motion at the butt translates into a much larger motion at the tip.

Curing the creep is a big step in becoming a better caster, but there is a further step that can help even more, especially if you need more distance and/or it is windy.

If a little forward motion too early causes trouble it would seem that a little motion in the opposite direction might be helpful, and it is. This is called '*drift*' and is a technique all good casters use to make their best casts. After the rod has stopped on the backcast allow the rod to move backward slightly by moving your hand and arm back a little or by bending your wrist a little more moving the rod tip back and down a bit. By adding a slight drift to your cast you will be able to add extra power to the delivery cast without throwing tailing loops, resulting in more distance and better fly delivery. So, trade in your creep for a drift and you'll be very pleased with the results.

For a short cast the delay will be short, for a longer cast, longer. It is important that the rod not start to move forward AT ALL until the back loop is nearly straight. When the loop is nearly straight the forward cast can be started with a slow, smooth rod acceleration. It is unusual for casters to creep on the backcast.

Bruce Richards is the Chairman of the Casting Board of Governors. This article is reprinted from Fly Fish America with permission. The article also appears in the Master Study Guide printed materials.

Thoughts From The Tying Bench

by C.W. "Don" Coleman - from the Mangrove Coast Fly Fishers newsletter

POLARIZED LIGHT— Scientific studies have proved that fish can see polarized light—a particular characteristic of Ultra Violet light which humans cannot see. Nearly all insects, zooplankton, crustaceans, and baitfish reflect polarized light. Many marine species use this ability to navigate and detect prey. The amount of polarized light refracted into the water is greatest when the sun is about 30 degrees above the horizon. When polarized light is reflected by baitfish or crustaceans it causes them to become luminous and more easily seen and identified as food by predator fish. Incorporating materials that can reflect polarized light in our flies may be as important as behavior, size, and shape to our success as fly fishers. Thomas J. Sholseth, in his new book *How Fish Work*, shows us how to determine which fly tying materials are capable of reflecting polarized light.

Tape a linear polarizing filter (from a camera shop) over a flashlight lens. Wear your polarized sun glasses (a must) and go into a dark room with the materials to be tested. Wait until your eyes become adjusted to the dark. Then shine the flashlight on the material to be tested. Rotate the flashlight to see if the material "lights up" at 90 degree positions. If reflectivity remains the same in all positions, the material does not reflect polarized light. There are not many materials suitable for fly tying that can reflect polarized light. Peacock Herl and Polar Bear Hair are two materials that do. Saddle Hackles, Bucktail, and most Mylar flash materials do not. Unfortunately, polar bear hair is illegal in the U.S. and when it can be obtained from Canada is very expensive. Fortunately, Peacock Herl is readily available and makes an excellent topping on baitfish



FCFFer Bob White With Winter Trout

Photo: Woody Huband

imitations. Look at the success of Leigh West's Green and Gold.

INSTANT WEED

GUARDS — You have been fishing open water with your favorite fly, but now you start hanging up on weeds, wrack, or oyster bars. Rather than changing the fly to a bend back fly or a fly with an attached weed guard, simply add an Instant Weed Guard to the fly you are already using while it is still tied to your leader. Here is how to prepare Instant

Weed Guards.

Make a 5 turn Uni-Knot Loop in the end of some 20 pound monofilament (Not hard Mason). Tighten the knot until you can just pull on the standing part and adjust the size of the loop. Store several of these loops in a small plastic bag for use on the water. When you need a weed guard, simply take one of the pre-tied Uni-Knot Loops and slip it over the fly and tighten around the head of the fly. Use pliers to tighten the knot under the shank with the two "legs" of the knot projecting down to form a double weed guard. You may need to pull and tug the legs into position. Clip the legs to the length required. When you no longer need a weed guard, simply clip it off and discard—in your pocket please.



Mike McQuiston's Late Dec Red

FCFF Guides Offer Advanced Fishing School

Learn How To Fish the First Coast From the Experts

Advanced Inshore Fishing Techniques

Spend two full days with professional guides, John Bottko, David Borries, Larry Miniard, and Tony Bozzella

Receive hands on instructions

January 17th & 18th

Topics include

- Tackle & Technique (spin & fly)
- Knots & Rigging
- Reading water & structure
- Boat Handling & Poling
- Seasons, Tides, & Species

Limited to 12 people

Contact John Bottko at (904)645-8998
www.saltyfeather.com

Come learn virtually everything you need to know about fishing our area from the who's who of Northeast Florida's inshore fishing captains.

Captains John Bottko, Larry Miniard, David Borries and Tony Bozzella have teamed up to present North Florida's first inshore fishing school. Between them, they've amassed 100 years of fishing experience in inshore and backcountry, light tackle fishing.

This is a 2-day school. Day 1 you'll learn tackle and technique — how to use the tools from rods to trolling motors. Here the instructors will tell you the tackle and technique secrets it took them decades to learn – what they use, what they recommend, and why. Day 1 you'll get casting and retrieving lessons from the best of the best and plenty of one-on-one time to get all your questions answered.

On Day 2 you'll learn when, where, and how to find fish in our area. You'll learn cover structure and reading the water, techniques to use when the temps hit 95, and when they fall into the 40s. You'll learn to read the tides and use them to catch fish. You'll learn tips on fish varying water clarity and salinities. At the end of Day 2 you'll know what is biting, how to find them, and what to use to bring them to the boat for each of our 12-month fishing season.

Day 2 will even touch on cooking and cleaning what you catch. And of course there will be plenty of time to get all your questions answered.

The seminar will be held at Deep Creek Lodge, located just south of Jacksonville on the ICW. This pristine setting will allow both *classroom and on-the-water instruction*. We'll even

have kayaks for you to use after class, so you can try out what you've learned.

The 2-day seminar is limited to 12 students. Participants will see what's in each

captain's tackle bag and how they rig their boats. We'll break many classes down into small groups with two captains teaching six students.

Cost is \$550. Lunch and munchies will be included. Class is limited to the first 12 paying students. Call the Salty Feather at (904) 645-8998 or (888) 847-2589 to speak with Capt. John Bottko to reserve your space.



Polar Hair Mud Fly From The Tying Bench of Bart Isaac

Tides and Tidal Terms

Knowing When Is As Important As Knowing How or Where

Knowing when to fly fish is as important as knowing how or where. The 'when' implies that you have at least a working knowledge of tidal action (for saltwater fishing) and atmospheric conditions, for all types of fishing.

Tides are the results of the gravitational effects of the sun and moon pulling on the waters of the Earth. When the sun, moon and earth are aligned (in a straight line), gravity pulls strongest most and the tides will fluctuate most. These higher tides are called spring tides and they happen twice a month, during a full moon and then again on a new moon. The term *spring tide* has nothing whatsoever to do with the seasons of the year.

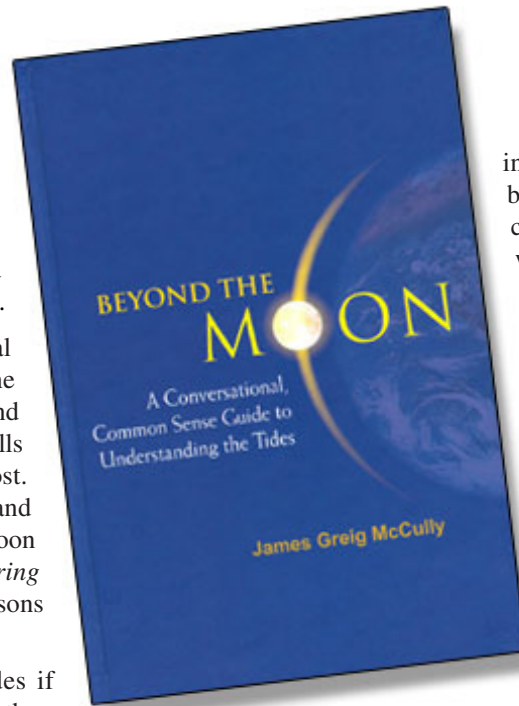
The terminology used in discussing tides is pretty much self-explanatory, but we'll discuss them quickly:

Tide stages—What the tide is doing at certain times. Tide stage terms are rising, flooding, or incoming; slack; and falling, ebbing, or outgoing; high water or low water.

Tide height—This is the vertical amount the ocean and marsh waters rise or fall as a result of the movement of the tides. Tide height is usually described as 'feet above or below mean low water' as predicted on the nautical charts. A good high spring tide for chasing reds and sheepshead on the grass flats in fall might be described as a 5.9 tide (in Duval and St. Johns Counties, FL). This means that the tide is predicted to be 5.9 feet above mean low water as indicated on the nautical charts. Locally, tides for Mayport and areas south to St. Augustine run less high than tides to the north of Mayport, into Nassau County. A high tide for the Mayport area may be 6.0, but a high tide for Nassau County might rise 7.5 or 8 feet above mean low water.

Tidal range—Simply the range of difference between high and low tide, this important index is often overlooked by fishermen. Tidal range predicts the volume of water that will move between high and low tide. *Fish feed based on how much bait or food is swept along the currents of the tide change.* Large volumes of water movement produce much food (and generally better fishing). Conversely, smaller volumes of water will generally produce lesser quantities of food movement, thus poorer fishing.

While tide predictions are based on astrological alignment, the gravitational pull of the sun and moon on the waters of the earth, other influences affect the tides to a degree that the predicted tides will not be as high or low as the actual tides that occur. These two



influences are the size and shape of the body of water and meteorological conditions, like barometric pressure and wind.

The Atlantic Ocean has large a surface area and contains huge volumes of water. It produces big tidal changes. The Gulf of Mexico, on the other hand, is relatively small and shallow, containing relatively less water. Smaller water volumes result in tidal changes which are not as dramatic as in the Atlantic.

Wind affects the volume of the tides by pushing water in the direction it is blowing, an influence that will either increase or retard the

flow. A 20-knot offshore wind that blows for 8-12 hours will lower both the high and low tide. An onshore wind, which blows the water toward land, will increase the heights of both high and low tides.

Remember, wind always pushes the tide in the direction it's blowing.

Another meteorological phenomenon which affects tides is barometric pressure. It is defined as the amount of pressure the atmosphere exerts on the surface of water and land. Air has weight, the more it weighs the harder it pushes down on the water and the earth.

In times of low pressure, which are lower barometric numbers, the air weighs less and it puts less pressure on the surface of the water. As a result, the tides can rise higher, meaning a higher high tide and a higher low tide than might have been predicted.

During a high, barometer readings are higher, and the air weighs more, which means that it pushes harder on the surface of the water, thus reducing the high tides and lowering the low tides.

Typical barometric pressures in Florida range from a -low of 29.9 inches of mercury, to a high of 30.3 inches of mercury. *When the barometer says 29.9 and rising, break out your fly rod!*

We know that pressure changes affect the tides by increasing or reducing the volume of water movement. - And we know that fish seem to feed better when the volume of water movement is greatest (because this moves more bait around the water column). The general feeling among fisherfolk is that fish feed better just before a low pressure front and then as the barometer rises, then they turn off as it begins to fall.

(continued on page 7)

March 30 in Lakeland

FFF National Fly Expo Features FF Greats Plus Seminars, Classes, Clinics



Photo: Bart Isaac

The Federation of Fly Fishers will hold the “The FFF National Fly Fishing Exposition” March 28 through 30, 2008 at the Lakeland Center in Lakeland, Florida. There will be over 100 vendors and national fly fishing manufacturers and their

dealers. **Lefty Kreh, Diana Rudolph, Bruce Richards, Jon Cave, Nick Curcione, Dave Whitlock and Oscar Felieu**, plus many other notable fly fishers from around the world will demonstrate the skills you need to catch more fish.

Open seminars covering fly fishing around the country, fly tying and bamboo rod building will be going on all day every day. Sign up for special workshops with the experts. How about knot tying with Lefty, saltwater fly tying with Oscar and Dave and Nick Curcione’s rigging class. Don’t miss Jimbo Meador’s kayak class. Local experts will help you find more fish in Florida and will guide you to the best water. When you need to relax, visit the Fly Tying Theater where a dozen tyers will be demonstrating every conceivable pattern.

Attendees will also be able to view the educational and conservation programs offered by the Federation. In keeping with the Federation’s policy of “All Fish, All Waters,” we will feature tying and fishing programs for warm and cold water species, saltwater fishing and related

subjects. Don’t miss the social side, the Saturday night “Tarpon Hop” where you can eat, drink and rub elbows with fly fishers from around the globe. Oh, and dance!

The Lakeland Center’s 28,262 square foot Exhibition Hall will feature two indoor casting ponds, a seminar stage and over 80 vendor booths. Attendees will be able to try out the newest rods, get instructions from the best in the business and talk to the best known experts in the fly fishing world. Special prices will be offered for multiple day attendance, hotel accommodations, theme park tickets and local nature tours. Lakeland, Florida is centrally located between Tampa and Orlando. There is easy access to 100s of lakes, west coast and east coast saltwater fishing and the Everglades. Non anglers will be able to enjoy the many theme parks in central Florida, dozens of golf courses, super restaurants and the best beaches in the world.

Watch for the National Fly Fishing Expo web site coming soon. There you will be able to register for seminars and special events, find info on accommodations, view the programs and sign up for the Saturday night Tarpon hop dinner dance. It all happens at the Lakeland Center in March. See you there.

Tides -- Continued From page 6 To predict how much different the actual tide will be from the predicted tide, use this formula. Barometric pressure is rated in tenths of inches. If the pressure drops two-tenths of an inch, multiply that by 13 to get the corresponding height in inches that the water will vary from the predictions. For example, 2/10s x 13 = 26/10s or 2.6 inches. We know that low pressure means higher highs and lows, so the tides will likely be 2.6 inches higher than the predicted high.

If you plan your fishing for the year, remember that weather in Florida changes on the average every six days in the winter and every 13 days in the summer. Plan accordingly.



Porter Collier's First Fedfish Comes With A Smile Nearly As Big As His Fish

Photo: Chris Collier

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