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First Coast Fly Fishers

Chronicle

- May Presentation by Chase Hancock
- June Presentation by Jeff Stachowiak
- July Presentation by Hunter Leavine
- Richard Gregg Outing Writeups
- Member Pictures
- Fly Tying Clinic at Camp Weed
- You May Be A Fly Tyer – Dick Michaelson
- Monthly Quote
- FCFF Logo embroidered on your fishing shirt

Educating, Restoring, Conserving through Fly Fishing

First Fork – Sinnemahoning Creek, Pa.

May/June/July 2025

Chase Hancock

Chase Hancock is a fourth-generation Floridian with a lifelong passion for fishing. Growing up on Heckscher Drive, between Browns Creek and Clapboard Creek, he spent nearly every day exploring these waters, often in a 1985 15' Boston Whaler. From floating corks and shrimp to throwing top waters for trout, Chase was immersed in every aspect of inshore fishing from an early age. At 15, he got his first job at Browns Creek Fish Camp and picked up a flyrod, an experience that changed everything. With the right guidance, he focused on mastering his casting first, quickly developing a deep appreciation for the art of fly fishing. Like many, he started with bass in local ponds but soon became obsessed with saltwater fly fishing, shifting his mentality from fishing to hunting.
His passion led him to fly tying, an extension of his love for art. Early on, his flies were rough with too much thread and poorly stacked materials, but with time and practice, his skills evolved. This creative drive carried into business. In 2008, Chase co-founded Skinny Water Culture: Premier Fishing Apparel and Gear, an apparel brand dedicated to the inshore fishing lifestyle. In 2012, he launched Hardcore Fly Tying, a unique blend of instructional fly-tying videos set to metal music, creating a niche following in the fly fishing community.

More recently, Chase and Hunter Leavine founded Drifter Fish Club, an exclusive travel fishing club curating unforgettable trips around the world. Today, Chase continues to serve as Art Director for Skinny Water Culture, runs Hardcore Fly Tying on YouTube, and helps lead Drifter Fish Club. Beyond fishing, Chase is a devoted husband to Kelly and a proud father to Micah (9) and Sage (3). He considers himself incredibly fortunate to have built a life around his passions and remains grateful for every step of the journey.

Chase will be presenting a number of fly-tying patterns that are nearly guaranteed to catch fish in our waters.

Chase Hancock - Presentation

Jeff Stachowiak

Jeff of BattleFish is a retired safety professional from Sunbelt Rentals. And fishes the St John's River exclusively 4-5 days a week since his retirement 3 years ago. We target redfish, mostly over slot and tarpon which range from 10 to 100 pounds. We use 90% artificial baits. Jeff will share what he's learned about fishing this very underutilized resource. We will also introduce you to Garmin LiveScope aka Forward Facing Sonar. Secrets of Fishing the St John's River.

I believe he catches more redfish and tarpon in the St Johns River than anyone around. If you haven't already, you need to check out his YouTube channel, More Tarpon Fishing How to Catch Tarpon St Johns River His videos are spectacular. It is hard to believe this fishing action is happening in our back yard.

Jeff at BattleFish - YouTube

Learn how to catch more fish. Tarpon, Redfish, Flounder, Sea Trout, Bonito, Kingfish. I Prefer artificial lures. Jacksonville Northeast Florida and surrounding areas. St Johns River, Intracoastal ...

www.youtube.com

Jeff Stachowiak – YouTube Presentation

Hunter Leavine

Hunter Leavine is a 5th generation Floridian, conservationist, and founder of the Captains Collective Podcast and Drifter Fish Club. He is the son of a game warden turned fishing guide, a father, and husband. Hunters' passion is to help people experience the outdoors in a way that impacts their lives holistically and helps them better appreciate the world around them.
Hunter has interviewed many fishing legends and will share these experiences with us.

Hunter Leavine - Presentation

FCFF May 2025 Outing Recap
Camp Weed

Greetings FCFF members,

Here's a little update of this past weekend's well-attended club outing at the Camp Weed/White Lake outing near Live Oak, Florida: we had close to twenty participants throughout the weekend, which begin with some of us arriving on Friday morning to wet our flies in the fifty-seven acre lake. Since it was pre-tournament, there was a bit of spinning rod action as well.

The weather was pretty good for the most part, with the exception of the winds picking up during the day. Warm temps into the nineties were the norm with dry conditions prevailing. The angling started out a little slower than last year but but improved at various times throughout the weekend. Topwater fishing was hit and miss but could still produce so-so results with various flies. I personally did better below the surface than with topwater. The Friday anglers wielded spinning gear baited with worms and lures with moderate success.

On Friday evening a group of ten had an early dinner at The Brown Lantern in Live Oak. The food was very good and it's a good thing we got started at 4pm: it got quite busy at 5pm. Afterwards, the Friday attendees returned to the lake for some late afternoon, early evening fishing ending at sunset.

Saturday's sunrise brought out the boats and kayaks occupied by eager anglers hoping to land and photograph their glorious catches of bluegill, crappie, and bass. Still a little less productive than the May 2024 outing, we all had some decent catches. The bluegill were as feisty as ever making for an entertaining challenge to bring in. For those participating in our yearlong tournament, Charlie Newton ruled the day, from what I heard, with numerous catches of sizable fish. Guy Sanders is maintaining a chart of tournament outing results throughout the year. The tournament ends before next year's Rendezvous.

After a lite lunch, a group of twelve met up at another local restaurant, Big Wood BBQ. Surprisingly, we still had to wait nearly thirty minutes for tables, even

FCFF June 2025 Outing Recap

Bing's Landing

FCFF members,

It's time for a quick recap of this past weekend's outing on the 14th, as well as a slight update to the yearlong tournament.

The day began at the crack of dawn with a typical late spring humid morning at a very busy boat ramp. Our hopes of catching some nice reds, trout, and snook ended with very limited results. We had four members participating and one guest. The attendees were myself, Guy Sanders, Charlie Newton, Bill Loffer and his son. The first three were on the water by six-thirty and Bill and his son launched shortly thereafter. Two kayakers and two boats hit the water pedaling and motoring in search of our elusive prey, redfish, trout, and snook. Although we were armed to the teeth with our fly fishing gear of choice, the fish were just not too interested with what we had to offer. Charlie Newton did manage a little red of 8.5 inches, which won the day. Guy Sanders nearly landed a good-sized snook, but it got away. I was "O" for the day, as usual. At least we got our participation points in the tournament bank!

We fished the outgoing tide to start and slack and incoming tide until around eleven. A lot of baitfish and mullet moving around but not much else. With warming temps and very little success fishing, I exited the water around 1030am. The parking lot was at full capacity with more recreational boaters coming in. Charlie and Guy followed during the next thirty minutes or so. Hit and miss showers were looming on the horizon. From what I could tell on the radar, the gully washers came later that afternoon.

The three amigos had lunch at Captain's BBQ at 1130am, which is their opening time, by the way. After licking our wounds and our BBQ-sauce-laden fingers, we headed back north through the hit and miss showers and on to our respective abodes.

Next month's outing is scheduled at David Lambert's riverfront property on the Withlacoochee River on Saturday, July 12th. A write-up with more details will be put forward in the coming weeks. It's a beautiful, spring-fed river that begins in south Georgia and winds its way into Florida, ending at the Suwannee River near Ellaville.

The first fly tying class at Camp Weed Summer Camp was deemed a success and we had good participation from members and campers. If able to assist in future classes and spread the interest of fly tying to young minds, please contact David Lambert to offer your help. You can also make it a fishing day for yourself on the lake, before and after class.

Thanks again for the club members who participated this past weekend. Hope to see you all at the next monthly meeting on July 7th. The prez should be back from his trip up north and will be back at the podium with a few fishing stories to relate to us from the northern lakes.

Richard Gragg

VP of Outings

FCFF July 2025 Outing Recap
Trout Creek

FCFF Anglers,

Our July 2025 Trout Creek outing pretty much lived up to its non-productive reputation for fly fishing anglers. What looked to be a promising morning of clear skies and flat surface water yielded poor results, again. After entering the water at the ramp and making my way into the creek, I snagged a little shell cracker within the first five minutes. Hoping it was a good omen for the morning, it wasn't to be. Some caught a few fish here and there and one caught a turtle and a forty-two inch alligator, accidentally. Since our success at TC has been limited, I decided last week to make it an anything-you-catch-on-the-fly-rod-counts day!

We had a total of 13 participants, with four kayakers, four boats, and one shore fisherman. Some headed up the creek and some went out into the river and beyond. Paul Hutchins and Bill Loffer caught some bass while the rest of us struggled. Guy Sanders will tally the results for the yearlong tournament.

Afterwards the plan was to meet at Woodpecker's BBQ, but with its popularity on the weekends and small building we made the decision to head to Bono's on Racetrack in Fruit Cove. It was a wise decision. More room for the large group we had. After filling our hungry bellies with BBQ and enjoying some good conversation, we headed home.

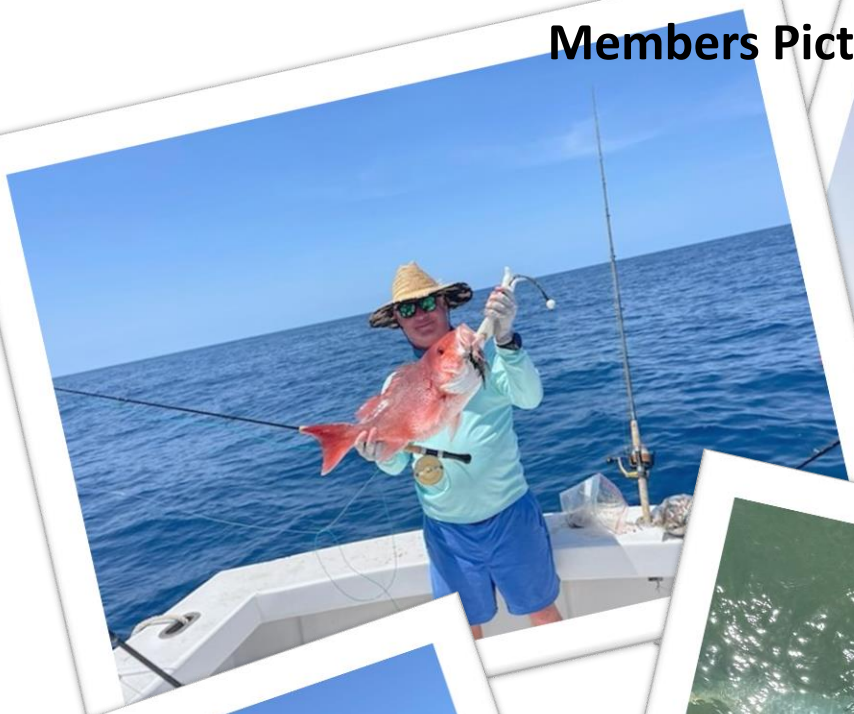
Our next outing in August has another change of venue. On the schedule is Camp Weed. That will be changed to a nearby location, Suwannee Lake, a short drive from Camp Weed. I will do a write-up announcement with details in the coming weeks. The reason for that change is that two events are booked for the weekend of August 23rd and there will not be any rooms available for overnight stays. Dick Michaelson and I checked out the Suwannee Lake ramp site this past week and it looks promising. I don't want y'all getting bored with Camp Weed anyway! Look for that announcement letter and in the meantime check out Suwannee Lake on YouTube. It is one of the lakes the FWC is experimenting with by adding rainbow trout in the cooler months to feed and hopefully increase the size of trophy bass.

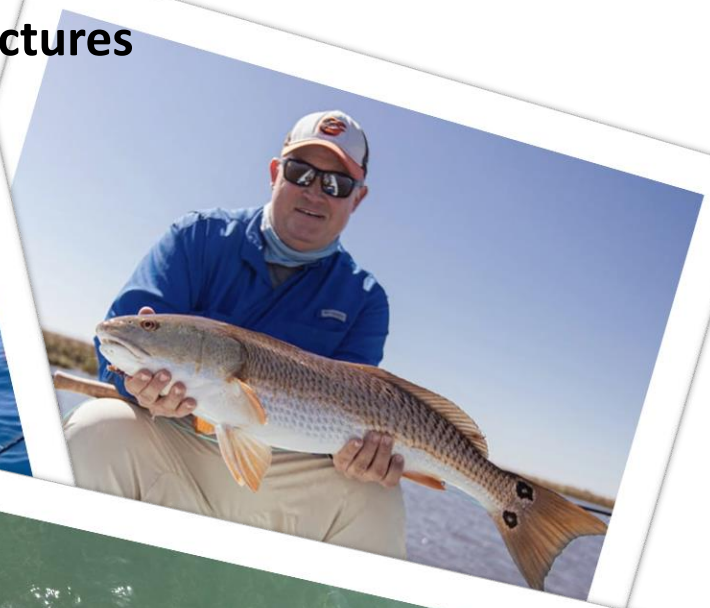
Thanks to all who came out for Saturday's outing even though our results weren't great. I will cross that location off as a future sight for outings. It just doesn't produce for fly anglers. Hopefully Suwannee Lake will be better. Flood tides are not too far away on the calendar!

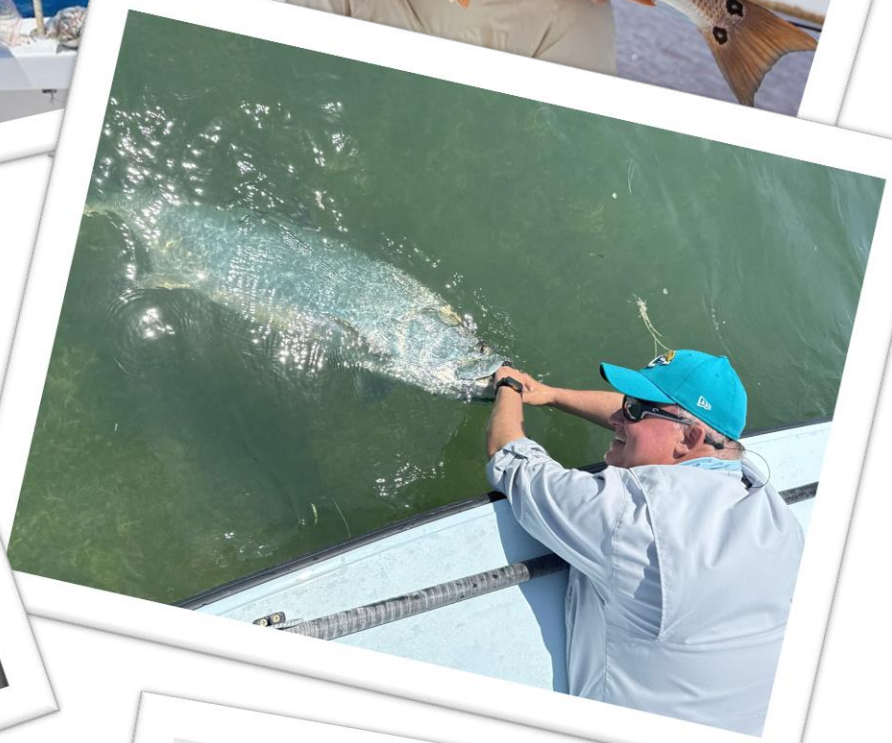
Richard Gragg

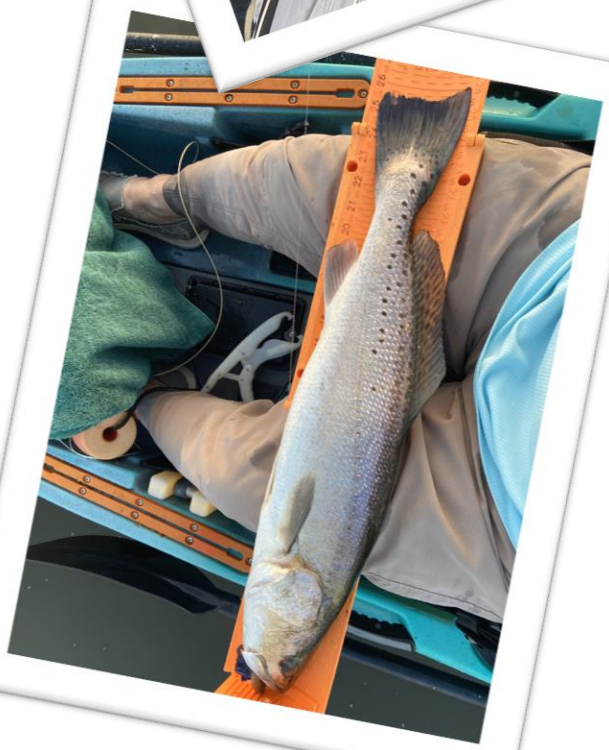
Outings

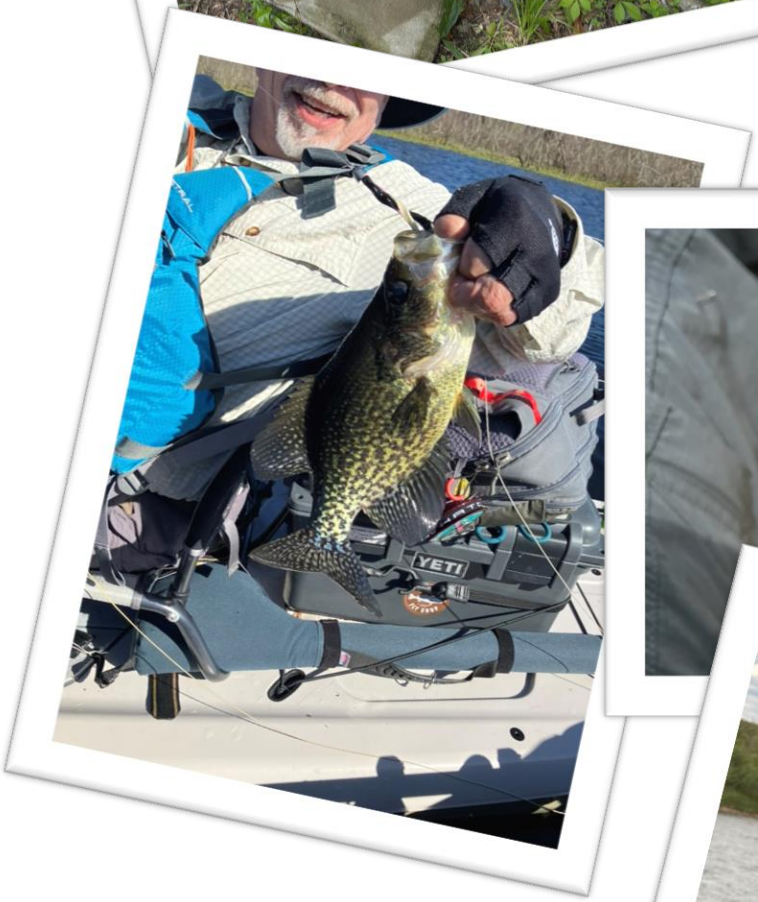
Members Pictures

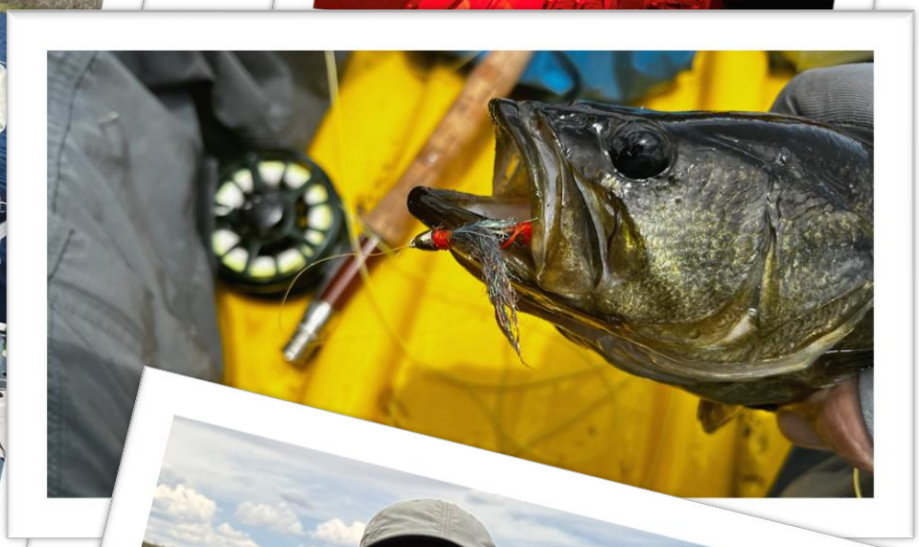












[April 2025 Everglades Trip Photos]

[Florida Rainbow Trout Stocking – Suwannee Lake]

Fly Tying Classes at Camp Weed

[2025-06-12 Camp Weed Fly Tying Class]

[2025-06-19 Camp Weed Fly Tying Class]

[2025-07-10 Camp Weed Fly Tying Class]

[2025-07-31 Camp Weed Fly Tying Class]

photo by Dick Michaelson

You May Be A Fly Tyer

by Dick Michaelson

If you have 10 or more large Plano boxes full of flies you tied then **you are a fly tier.**
FCFF has a lot of people that fall into this category. Since we are a fly fishing club, we can never have too many fly tiers. I know a lot of bait fishermen (myself included) and I enjoy catching fish on light spinning tackle. For inshore fishermen the process is pretty simple. You put the bait on a hook and try to throw it in front of a fish. Fly fishing is a process that I can enjoy even when I am not on the water.

I have been fly fishing since 1996; it can take over you life. You can enjoy fly tying even when you cannot go fly fishing. Fly casting is the first big hurdle you have to overcome in this sport. Once you learn to cast you can start catching fish.

The first fish you catch on your fly rod is a real accomplishment. There are a lot of additional sidelines in fly fishing that are fun and rewarding, among the: casting, rod building, leader construction, rigging from the backing to the fly, fly lines, leaders, knots, Knots and more knots, and lets not forget fly tying.

The very first thing the fish comes in contact with is your fly. The first fish you catch on a fly you tied is a real hoot and you are on you way to becoming a full fledged Fly Tier.

I have done all the above since I started fly fishing. The only thing I have not done on a regular basic is build my own fly rod. If you want to know about rod building ask Bart or Rob, they have built some nice rods

The problem with fly tying is that it can take over you life. . .and a small part of your home. I have a roll-top desk in my room and it makes a nice fly tying station. When I close it up, my room almost looks normal.

For those who do not have a room, there are some nice fly tying stations on the market that you can set up with little effort.

To tie flies you need some material, the more the better. You have three good fly tying sources in Jacksonville. Don Reed's Saltwaterflytiers.com, Salty Feather Fly Shop and Black Fly Outfitters. All of these owners are members of FCFF.

And the club offers fly tying lessons twice a year. Our club has some very good tiers with a lot of talent. In these lessons, the club supplies everything you need to take the fly tying class. All you have to do is show up.

To know for certain if you're a fly tier, take the following test:

YOU ARE A FLY TIER IF:

- ☐ If you give flies away to friends so you can tie more then **you are a fly tier.**
- ☐ If you tie flies during t.v. commercials then **you are a commercial fly tier.**
- ☐ If you break flies off when you hang them on an oyster bed instead of retrieving them, then **you are a fly tier.**

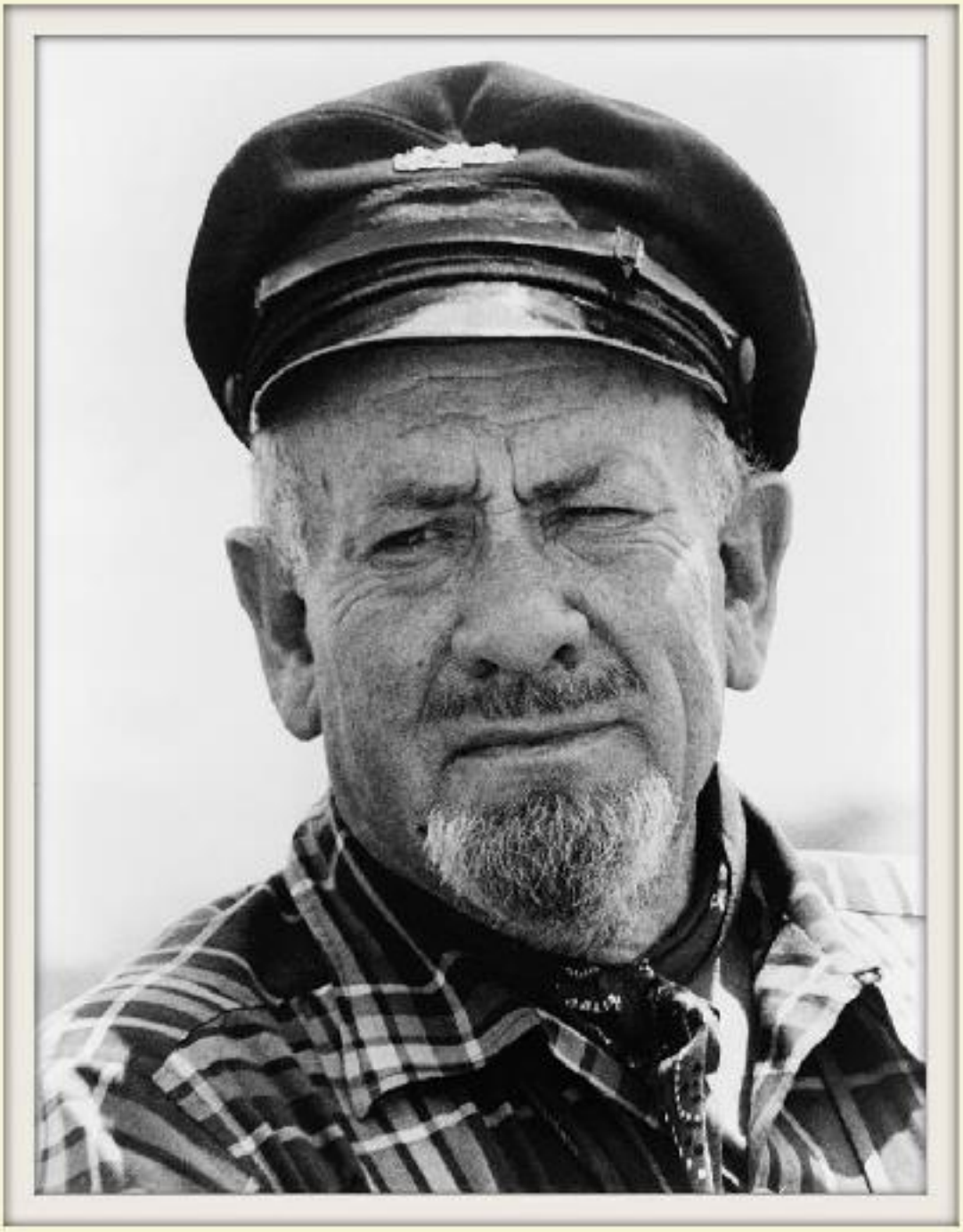
- If you go into a Wallgreens Drug Store and go directly to the nail polish display then
- **you are a fly tier.**
- If you give flies away to a stranger, you met while wading a grass flat then
- **you are a fly tier.**
- If you look differently then you used to at road kill, then **you are a fly tier**.
- If you like to go to the craft store with your wife or girlfriend, then **you are a fly tier.**
- If you are single and like to go to craft stores, then **you are a fly tier.**
- If you look at a women's fur with envy (and not the women), then **you are a fly tier.**
- If you look at packing material and wonder if you can make a fly from it then you are a fly tier.
- See if we can keep this list going. If you have a, "then you are a fly tier", send it to Dick Michaeson for the next newsletter. This could be fun.

FCFF Logo Embroidered

Would you like to have the FCFF Logo embroidered on your fishing shirt?

Stitch by Stitch (904-405-3265), located inside the Orange Park Mall, near Books a Million will do it for $21.

FCFF Secretary, Jon Steinhilber, has graciously paid for the set-up fee. Jon will be more than glad to take and pick up any orders from club members.



It has always been my private conviction that any man who pits his intelligence against a fish and loses has it coming.

John Steinbeck