



## March 2015 Newsletter

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*March meeting – Tuesday March 3rd at 6pm  
BJ's Restaurant – Hamilton*

***"It must, of course, be admitted that large stories of fishing are sometimes told by fishermen – and why should this not be so? Beyond all question there is no sphere of human activity so full of strange and wonderful incidents as theirs"***

***Grover Cleveland***

***22<sup>nd</sup> President of the United States***

### ***The Program***

From Russia to the Bahamas, to Slovenia and places in between, Dan Shepherd from Grizzly Hackle and Wild On The Fly Adventure Travel, will report on fly fishing these exotic fisheries." Dan will reveal the logistics, the expenses and rewards of fishing in Kamchatka and provide some great film footage and slide show of his 2014 trip to the Savan River.

He will also talk bone fishing in the Bahamas! His fall 2014 trip there was amazing and will highlight two lodges that provide world-class service and fishing on both

South Andros and Abaco. Dan will discuss the differences in fishing these two different island fisheries. As a bonus Dan will show a new short film on his 2014 trip to Slovenia and discuss his passion for chasing the exotic Marble trout. You will see some great new footage of this beautiful destination and find out why you need to have this trip on your bucket list.

For those who want to chase giant northern pike, Dan will also give a short presentation on Gangler's Lodge in northern Manitoba and invite you to join the shop on a trip this coming June! Dan will also bring information on other exciting hosted trips coming in 2015 and 2016.

Dan Shepherd has been fly-fishing since the late 1960's. He was taught by the Earl and Verlene Rose family out of North Ogden, Utah. Their sons, Mark and Brett, invited Dan on camping and hunting trips and introduced him to fly-fishing. During college and his early professional teaching and insurance career, he fished often. He started rowing a drift boat more than 27 years ago. He credits Terry Cochran, a savvy fly fisherman from Idaho Falls, with teaching him to row a drift boat. Dan has lived and fished in Utah, Idaho and Montana. He has also fished for trout in South America, Russia, Europe and Alaska. Recently he has also become addicted to saltwater fly-fishing and has fished Mexico, Belize, Christmas Island, Bikini Atoll and the Bahamas.

Dan loves to serve customers in the fly shop. He has made the Grizzly Hackle known as a friendly place that will respect all customers, no matter their skill level, and help you find the gear you need. He also enjoys guiding clients a few days a week. Since 2001 he has been at the Grizzly Hackle Fly Shop as the Managing Partner and is also the Travel Director at Wild On The Fly Adventure Travel.





## ***The Presidents Message***

Well, the long, hard winter is coming to a close and we can see the dry fly fishing at the end of the tunnel (along with the hordes of out of state anglers and guides ready for the elusive skwala hatch). Despite the unusually mild January the snowpack is still setting at 101 percent of normal. With any luck the weather pattern will return to normal so we can maintain the snowpack and don't end up with river closures and smoke in August/September. For those of you that didn't

attend the January meeting - you missed out. Bob Prince did an outstanding presentation of the yearly photos presented by the club members. Hopefully you have spent the winter filling your fly boxes, making plans for the coming year or better yet - spending your days being cold and miserable for a few winter fish. I am looking forward to hearing Dan Shepard at the March meeting. He is an excellent resource for local fishing and adventures abroad.

**GET BENT!**

Chris Andersen

## **Fly of the Month**

### **Bob Prince's Sculpin the Hutt**

Over the past several years I have made it somewhat of a personal mission of mine to create a truly great looking, and fish catching sculpin imitation. This fly has been through several incarnations and if you look in my streamer boxes you can see the progression this fly has made over several winters of experimentation over frosty bottles of micro-brew. I can safely say that the inspiration for this fly has to be the great and unconventional Sheila's Sculpin but at this point I think I've made more than enough changes to call this fly my own.



In my opinion every good sculpin pattern should consist of the following components:

1. It rides hookup. (sculpins live on the bottom of the river, don't want that fly to be hanging up constantly)
2. It has a lighter belly and a dark, mottled top.
3. It have very pronounced pectoral fins
4. It jigs and dives when fished.
5. It get's near the bottom quickly.
6. Is has that beautiful sculpin profile. (flat and wide when viewed from the top)

Through much trial and error, I've managed to create a fly that meets most, if not all, of these criteria. The pectoral fins were the hardest parts to nail down but I think I have something that works really well. In the water this fly really moves and groves, which is critical because I tend to fish my sculpin imitations rather slowly most of

the time. Sculpins, after all, aren't known as great swimmers. This fly tops out at about 1.5-2 inches long, about the size of sculpins found in local waters. Fish Sculpin the Hutt (yeah, I'm a Star Wars nerd) in any stream where sculpins are found (though this fly works just about anywhere). The Westfork, Eastfork, and Blackfoot rivers are prime local sculpin strongholds and fish (especially big ones) eat sculpins regularly. This fly is heavy enough to depth charge down through heavy currents and can be effectively fished on a floating line and long leader or a sink tip/sinking line if you so choose.

Effective retrieve styles for sculpins include a strip, strip, pause retrieve. A jig aka smallmouth bass retrieve (channel your inner bass fisherman). The "fluff" (talk to me about this one). You can even dead drift this bad boy under an indicator in off colored water. This fly is also very effective when back dredged in seam lines, and in deep slots or around boulders.

Hope you enjoy tying and fishing Sculpin the Hutt. Let me know how it works for you!

## Recipe

### Bob's Sculpin the Hutt

Hook: Allen size 8-12 B200 (get this hook at [www.allenflyfishing.com](http://www.allenflyfishing.com))

Thread: 3/0 Olive

Tail: Black barred olive rabbit strip

Body: Butter Belly Bruiser Blend (Get this stuff at [www.flyfishfood.com](http://www.flyfishfood.com))

Body #2: Senyo's Laser Yarn in Sculpin Olive

Pectoral Fins: Black Barred Mini Marabou Quills treated with Loon UV Resin

## Instructions

### Step 1:

– Place the Sculpin Helmet on the Hook by sliding it over the eye. Start your thread directly behind the back of the sculpin helmet. This gives me a gauge so I don't put the fins too far forward on the fly. This will prevent the pectoral fins from swimming correctly.

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Step 2:

- Pierce a strip of bunny through the hook-point and tie in. Remember this fly will ride hook up. Three or four solid wraps are enough to secure the bunny.



Step 3:

- Tie in a clump of butter belly bruiser blend that extends to the back of the bunny strip.



Step 4:

- Make a dubbing loop and fill with several small clumps of bruiser blend. Spin up the bruiser blend and wrap forward. Tease out the dubbing with a dubbing brush or a piece of Velcro. Wrap the body to about the mid-point of the hook.



Step 5

- Tie in a clump of Senyo's Laser Yarn on each side of the fly. The goal is to build up bulk horizontally and not vertically. We want that wide sculpin profile after all!

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Step 6:

- Tie in 2 (close to) matching mini marabou feathers in on both sides of the hook with the tips of the feather facing forwards towards the hook eye.

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Step 7:

- Pull back marabou feathers and make a thread dam in front of them. The feathers should now be sticking out at a roughly 90-degree angle from the hook.

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Step 8:

- Take some Loon UV Flow resin and place a thin line of resin along the base of both marabou feathers. This creates a little more stability, durability and springiness to the feather. Cure with a UV light. If you do this correctly the feathers when pinched with the fingers lay flat against the hook and then pop back out straight when you let go. They will do this in the water also. Just like a real sculpin!

Step 9:

- Tie in one more clump of Bruiser Blend on the bottom of the fly.

Step 10:

- Pull over the bunny strip and tie off slightly forward of the last clump of bruiser blend.

Step 11:

- Whip finish and coat the thread thoroughly with super glue.

Step 12:

- Put the sculpin helmet back on the hook. I coat the inside of the helmet before placing it on the hook. This helps keep it secure.

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Step 13:

- Tie in a thread dam in front of the sculpin helmet to keep it from sliding off and whip finish. Coat the thread with super glue.



You're Done!



***“If you can avoid drag, you have at least an outside chance of a fish, no matter what other errors you make”***

**DATUS PROPER**  
***WHAT THE TROUT SAID***

## **‘The Streamer Project**

I’m a streamer junkie. Yes, I admit it. If there was a “Streamers Anonymous” I’d be a charter member and attend meetings faithfully, promising to swear off “Chuckling and Ducking “ and “The Tug is the Drug” forever. Of course, I know, deep down in my soul, that I wouldn’t have a prayer of keeping such a foolish promise. What’s the harm in throwing a streamer occasionally? My fishing partner refuses to fish streamers, likening the technique to bait fishing or “snagging”. His narrow minded view I attribute to an unhappy childhood or to a mild case of PTSD acquired during a brief military career running the Post PX.

Other junkies I have met wax eloquently and enthusiastically about the thrill of the take and the size and girth of the fish they have subdued. Eventually, when enthusiastic streamer fishermen discuss their passion the conversation comes around to fly patterns – whereupon they produce a fly box the size of a small steamer trunk literally brimming with pounds of fur, feathers, hooks and enough sparkle and tinsel to decorate the White House Christmas Tree. The merits of each pattern are discussed in detail including weather and water type that most favors each pattern (this process is nearly as precise and obsessive as the agony of choosing the proper golf club for that critical chip shot you need to birdie the 3<sup>rd</sup> hole at the local golf club).

Streamer patterns are like belly buttons – every body’s got one and their personal favorite is a “killer” pattern. Well it turns out that much of the time their favorite pattern IS a killer – otherwise why would it have become a “favorite”.

So let’s cut to the chase... All you streamer aficionados out there, the world wants to discover your FAVORITE STREAMER PATTERN. Well maybe not the whole world but at least a good percentage of the members of the FFB!!

Here’s the deal – you provide a sample of one or more of your favorite STREAMER PATTERNS and the pattern recipe (nothing fancy - recipes scrawled on back of cocktail napkins are acceptable and encouraged) and include a few words describing how you fish it. Put both in an envelope with your name and phone number on the outside and drop it off at Stranahan’s Fly shop or at The Freestone Fly Shop. I’ll pick up envelopes on Monday March 16. If you can’t get to Hamilton to drop off your envelope mail it to Dennis Westover, 4580 Klahanie Drive SE, PMB 301, Issaquah, WA, 98029.

I’ll photograph each pattern, credit you as the originator or contributor and publish the photos along with the pattern recipes in a future FFB Newsletter for all to tie and enjoy...Ed

## Potential river closure

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) is proposing an annual rule regarding the potential closure of all or a portion of the Bitterroot River from FWP's Woodside Fishing Access Site (FAS) downstream to Tucker Crossing (West) FAS in Ravalli County. The rule would allow for timely decisions on closures to protect public safety, and would also provide information and publicity needed to help keep the public safe.

The proposed rule, along with supplemental information explaining the issue and the opportunity to comment online, is available on FWP's website at: [http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/fishing/pn\\_0039.html](http://fwp.mt.gov/news/publicNotices/fishing/pn_0039.html)

Comments may also be mailed to Sharon Rose, Region 2 FWP, 3201 Spurgin Rd., Missoula 59804; phoned 406-542-5540; or emailed to [shrose@mt.gov](mailto:shrose@mt.gov).

**Comments must be received by 5 p.m. on March 9, 2015.**

## Smith River Raffle

Come to the March meeting with at least one twenty-dollar bill so that you can get on the board for our Club's Smith River Raffle. This is the float trip of a lifetime. Five days and four nights on the most scenic river in MT - and potentially some very good fishing! The entire board must be filled for the raffle to be validated. Come with CASH and do your part!!!

See <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/fullscreen/37033598/winter-2015>  
For more photos and additional information on the Smith River.





***Most of us know how to fish the Skwala hatch, but do we really?  
I asked our own Chuck Stranahan to toss a few pearls of wisdom  
concerning the Skwala and other spring hatches...Ed***

## Skwalas, and...

The skwala hatch on the Bitterroot River is an all-time great Western fly-fishing phenomenon. There, I've said it. But let's not get stuck there. Like most super hatches, this one needs to be seen in perspective.

The skwala hatch doesn't occur in a vacuum. Nor is it one-dimensional. The angler who goes out with the "hot" skwala pattern may hit it lucky and score big one day, and miss some equally good fishing on something else the next. The problem is that the easy "good days" are frequent enough to produce a mental lull. You end up thinking "they just weren't hitting" when they could have been caught.

There is no shortage of skwala dry fly patterns out there, with more hatching from the vises of inspired fly tiers every Wednesday evening at the Brewery. I prefer patterns with sparse hair wings, peacock herl for the egg sac, and multi-colored natural-looking bodies. I want the fly to look alive.

Instead of searching for the "hot one" as if it were an angler's Holy Grail, get two or three that fill specific needs. One might have a dark olive-brown body, another might have a pale olive dun-colored body, and the third might fall somewhere in between.

All three should ride low in the surface film, and at least one of them should fish well when pulled slowly across the surface in a start-and-stop retrieve. Sometimes that motion is the ticket. I carry these flies in #8 and possibly #10.

A dark #8 stonefly nymph tied to wiggle even when fished on a dead-drift will often get you more fish than the dry. And don't bypass the opportunity to fish that fly on a slow retrieve in slow moving water along the inside edges. Don't worry – you'll detect the strike just fine with no indicator.

Pre-runoff water temperatures will move fish toward those nondescript inside edges. Look for water that is moving about one to two feet per second. Fast-moving water has a chill factor for trout; the swift current along the outside bank that fishes well in July might be fishless for now.

Trout in slow-moving edge water are instinctively paranoid. Approach that slow-moving water as if it were a quiet mountain stream. Heavy footfalls and cowboy yee-haw slap-the-water casting will spook those skittish, vulnerable fish.



## ...Other stoneflies and...

Preceding and overlapping the skwala you might see the #14 nemoura (gray) and #18 capnea (little black) stoneflies. The wading angler will find more use for that

little black one than the float tripper; isolated pods of fish will sometimes key on localized egg-laying swarms of those teeny little black stoneflies (called snowflies in other places) and if you're carrying some and a spool of 6X, you can score.

Those little black bugs are hard to see. You'll most likely spot them moving on streamside rocks or patches of snow before you see them in the air. That's your clue as to what those fish rising right in front of you are taking, especially if you haven't been able to get them to take anything else.

Ever been there? Want to be there again? Carry some little black stoneflies. Tie one off the back of a bigger dry, if nothing else, and see what happens. You might be pleasantly surprised.

## ...Spring mayflies

If there's a general rule to scoring on spring mayfly hatches when you set out to fish skwalas, it's this: take the time to re-rig when you see something else going on. Be observant, and believe what you see. Then act on it. And be well armed with the right flies.

The list of hatches is simple enough: March browns, gray drakes, and blue-winged olives. To simplify further, the March browns and gray drakes look nearly alike – enough so that some anglers call them the little March browns and the big March browns.

And to simplify even further, the March brown spinner and fully hatched dun are similar enough to be represented by a single fly. To get in the ballpark, keep it slender and sparse, with the #12 fly for gray drakes a little darker than the #14 March brown – if you want to get picky.



Wet fly fishing can be deadly for these hatches. The gray drake nymph is a free-swimmer that crawls ashore to hatch along the inside edges – more like a stonefly than a mayfly. I tie a Bird's nest variation in #12 that can be deadly when trout are on gray drake nymphs – and it's worth a try any time the surface action is slow. It's a secret weapon of sorts. A #12 pheasant tail soft hackle will get you close and can be effective as well.

March browns think they're caddisflies. Like the caddis, they hatch underwater and swim to the surface at the heads of drop-offs, emerging in mid-pool. They hit the surface and go airborne – unless they can't shake that nymphal shuck. Then they sputter along the surface until they get munched.

Fish a #14 March brown sparkle dun when you see this going on, and don't be afraid to jiggle it a little. Trout tend to attack these sputtering bugs. After the first couple of breakoffs, try not to overstrike.

March brown spinners often hit the water right when those look-alike duns are hatching. A few years back I fished with Greg Chester one afternoon when this combined March brown spinner and dun action was going on. I had recently tied a slender quill-bodied March brown pattern but hadn't fished it.

That afternoon it got spectacular results. At one point I hit five fish on six casts, (missed the sixth) all in the 16-17 inch range. That fly has been a mainstay in my spring dry fly box ever since.

Blue-winged Olives? Carry a dun and a cripple pattern. One of the largest fish ever taken in my guide boat was a rainbow that went about five-and-a-half to six pounds, on a #18 blue-winged olive parachute.

My partner and I spotted the blue-winged olive hatch and I motioned him to pull out so we could re-rig our clients, an older father and his three adult sons. Fishing had been so-so on skwalas. We wanted to get them into fish – especially the old man.

The sons caught some nice trout, and we pulled the boats upriver for another drift through that productive run. That's when the old man hooked up. I still have photographs of his grins as he played that trout, and when he felt the heft of it in the net.


That was the last time he fished with us. The poignancy of those memories has grown over the years, both for this guide and the old gentleman's sons. He probably wouldn't have taken that fish if we hadn't taken the time to re-rig. I'm glad we did.

## ***Youth Expo***

This year's youth expo is tentatively set for the 3rd Saturday in May. It consists of a number of educational booths set up for kids. Instruction consists of basic fly-fishing strategy and fly-casting. Put it on your calendar and plan to volunteer. Call Chris Andersen for more information

## **BLOWOUT SALE**

**All of the FFB Logo items in stock are on sale way below cost plus. Sale items limited to stock on hand. These items will be available at the March meeting, or you may call me (Leon Powell) at 406-360-9743.**

<u>Item Description</u>	<u>Color</u>	<u>Size</u>	<u>Count</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Sales Price</u>	<u>Savings *</u>
<u>Men's Long Sleeve Angler Shirts</u>						
	Blue	2XL	1	\$45.00	Make	Offer

### Men's Wick Advance Tee Shirts



Cool Blue	L	1	<del>\$25.00</del>	<del>\$17.00</del>	<del>-8.00</del>
Cool Blue	XL	1	\$25.00	\$10.00	-15.00
Garden Green	XL	1	\$25.00	\$10.00	-15.00

### Cotton Short Sleeve Tee Shirts



Fool's Gold	L	1	\$25.00	\$12.00	-13.00
<del>Fool's Gold</del>	<del>XL</del>	<del>1</del>	<del>\$25.00</del>	<del>\$15.00</del>	<del>-9.00</del>
Fool's Gold	2XL	1	\$25.00	Make	Offer
Fire Brick (red)	L	1	\$25.00	\$12.00	-13.00
Heather Green	L	1	\$25.00	\$12.00	-13.00

### Men's Snake River Fleece Vest



Black	L	1	\$35.00	\$23.00	-12.00
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