

PENNS CREEK GUIDES

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Penns Creek Guides 2015 Early Spring Newsletter

Dear Friends of Penns Creek Guides,

The fly fishing show 'season' has concluded for another year and like you, I'm eagerly awaiting the spring thaw so I can get onto the water again. Officially spring is less than two weeks away; Opening Day of Trout Season a month beyond that. Fortunately, on the limestone streams of Central Pennsylvania one only has to wait for a break in the weather, not Opening Day, to go trout fishing. On the fifty seven miles (yes, *57 miles!*) of limestone streams within a forty minute drive of State College trout season is open year 'round! So much trout water, so little time...now if the damn ice would just melt.

While I wait for the melt to happen I'd like to thank everyone who stopped by the Penns Creek Guides booth to share fishing stories and learn about the terrific fly fishing opportunities presented by Penns Creek, Spring Creek, the Little Juniata River and Big Fishing Creek. To everyone who is receiving this newsletter for the first time, Welcome! I strive to make the newsletter informative as well as entertaining. Your comments are most welcome as well. Even though the newsletter is being sent through Gmail, to contact me via email please use the pennscreekguides1@yahoo.com address.

Even though there is not much fishing to be had in sub-zero temperatures, a lot is going on with Penns Creek Guides and in the Penns Creek Watershed. First, I want you to know Penns Creek Guides now has a Facebook page. You can find us there at Penns Creek Guides and do let your angling friends know too. After a 'brass monkey' hiatus, Penns Creek Guides wading staff production has resumed. As the temperature warms, I can varnish this batch and the staffs will be ready for trout season. To order a wading staff please give me a call me at 814-364-9142 or send an email.

In the conservation arena, Penns Valley Conservation Association has received a \$43,000 Growing Greener grant for watershed education and outreach. Currently projects of the PVCA Watershed Committee, of which I am an active member, include agricultural BMP's, stream bank fencing, and riparian buffer planting. For the last three years we have been monitoring water temperatures at 17 strategic locations in Penns Creek and on important tributaries using in-stream data loggers. We also plan to continue efforts to locate sites for buffer improvement and to assess impacts of our completed projects. In addition, the Young Forest Initiative is ongoing with participating landowners enrolling 1,100 contiguous acres in the project. Removal of invasive species, planting native trees and shrubs combined with woodlot management and selective timber harvest helps landowners to renew their acreage to the 'young forest' successional stage so beneficial to wildlife. Through our involvement with organizations like PVCA, we are committed to improving water quality of the Upper Penns Creek watershed.

In other conservation news, DCNR announced construction is set to begin on the Poe Paddy tunnel and trestle upstream of the Poe Paddy Campground along Penns Creek. Anglers use the tunnel to access two remote and outstanding stretches of Penns Creek. The hundred yard long tunnel straddling the Centre-Mifflin County line has been closed since 2013 resulting in an unpopular detour. A physical barrier will remain in place until work has been completed; estimated to be late October of 2015. Come next fall anglers, hikers and bicyclists alike are eagerly anticipating light at the end of the (Paddy Mountain) tunnel.

Winter fishing usually means streamer fishing with sinking/sink tip lines in deep holes and slow moving slots. As the water warms (have faith, it will) I'd like to suggest a method of fly fishing I use successfully in the early season and in fact throughout the year: swinging a cast of wet flies through riffles and faster runs. Wet fly fishing is a method not often used by today's fly anglers, although it should be. Fishing with wet flies, or 'spiders,' as they are called across the pond, predates both nymphing and dry flies. They're also known as soft hackles in some angling circles. Wet flies are simple to tie, easy to fish (across and down) and there is no mistaking the strike on a downstream swing! A small wet fly makes a great dropper behind a dry fly too. For the sake of simplicity I usually fish two wet at a time instead of the traditional cast of three. Literally, *volumes* have been written on the subject. Rather than reinvent the wheel, I'll refer you to several books I have in my library and found most helpful for learning how to tie and fish wet flies and soft hackles.

The first book that comes to mind is *Wet Flies* by Davis Hughes. Another classic book on wet fly tying and methods is *The Soft Hackled Fly and Tiny Soft Hackles* by Sylvester Nemes. Nemes has written several books on wet flies and soft hackles, some now out of print and becoming increasingly expensive. Another excellent work if you can find it is by Rodger Fogg: *Wet-Fly Tying and Fishing*. This book is published in England and not many have made it to the US. You may have to contact a book dealer specializing in fly fishing literature to obtain this one. Give the wet fly methods a try throughout the season, you may be pleasantly surprised.

There is a season full of promise ahead and reservations are steadily coming in. At this juncture some dates for trips are still available. Please keep in mind at Penns Creek Guides our commitment is to the angler, guided trips are tailored to your requirements. For additional information about booking guided excursions on the limestone waters of Central Pennsylvania please visit my web site at www.pennscreeguides.com or give me a call at 814-364-9142.

See you on the water.

Tom