

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

A Legend has Passed



Feb.17 outing. Redfish anyone?



Our February meeting speaker



Members tour USF's research vessel



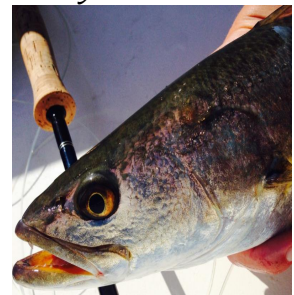
Trash n Treasures



Smitty's Shrimp Fly and More



Ray's 26 -incher





President's Message: February 2024

February is usually the last of the cooler months on the Florida fishing calendar. It is a great time to look for negative low tide redfish opportunities.

Our outing this month will be at Cypress Point Park which is one of the local hot spots for this type of fishing. The fishing can be challenging, and success is not guaranteed however, Anne and Robert Mitchel are cooking hamburgers and hot dogs, so a great lunch is a sure thing.

Our speaker at the February member meeting will be Jill Thompson-Grim. Jill is a graduate school candidate in USF's College of Marine Sciences and was the recipient of the SFF Scholarship a few years ago. She has become one of our members and is a welcome addition to our club. She is excited to share her academic insight with us. (You actually can get too much of a good thing when they serve red snapper to you every day while you're at sea on a research vessel).

On March 16th Dayle Mazzarella will conduct a special casting clinic entitled "Presentations on a Trout Stream". Some of us are planning to travel to North Georgia to go trout fishing on a trip organized by Cliff Nigh and St. Pete Fishing Outfitters. The trip is scheduled for the first week in March. When I go to Dayle's clinic it will be nice to learn everything that I should have been doing to catch trout shortly **after** I should have already been doing it.

The Hog Roast will be on April 6th. We will be having a combined banquet with the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club again this year. This is not only the club's premier social event, but also our primary fundraiser for the year. We earn money from the event by offering merchandise raffles and silent auctions. You can help us out by donating items that might be of interest to our members and non-fishing guests as well. Member tied flies are always very popular.

Get your tickets at our next club event or buy them on the SFF website.

Don't forget to renew your membership. You can pay by cash, check or with credit card and you can renew on our website SuncoastFlyFishers.com. If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Karen Warfel, ph. 813-505-3162, email kmwarfel@yahoo.com.

Thanks. Stay safe and keep fishing!

Rick

Rick Warfel

We are Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Aims and Purposes

The Suncoast Fly Fishers, Inc. (SFF) is an organization of fishing enthusiasts who love fishing with the fly rod. We welcome all people of all ages with similar interests, regardless of their fly-fishing skill level. We enthusiastically teach those that wish to learn or improve their fly casting, fly tying and related fly-fishing skills. SFF meets monthly where we talk fly fishing, tie flies and most months feature a speaker with a program highlighting local fly-fishing opportunities.

Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF) is a non-profit 501 (c) 3 organization. SFF is a charter member of the Fly Fishers International (FFI). SFF is a member of the Florida Council of FFI. SFF supports the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

Monthly Meetings. Guests welcome.

Third Thursday of every month (except December) at St. Pete's Walter Fuller Park Rec Center, 7891 26th Ave. N. 6 to 8:30 pm.

Directions to our meeting at Walter Fuller Park.

From 22nd Avenue N turn North on 72nd St. N. Turn left (West) on 26th Avenue N. Then turn right into the rec center parking lot.

Monthly Outings

Club members meet up every month for a fly-fishing outing and lunch. Usually it is scheduled on the Saturday after the monthly meeting on the third Thursday of every month.

Contact us by mail: Suncoast Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 40821, St Petersburg, FL 33743-0821

Visit our website and Facebook pages, too

SuncoastFlyFishers.com

[Monthly Calendar](#)

[Facebook.com/scff2020](https://www.facebook.com/scff2020)

Online Pay Portal: Pay dues, donate, purchase

<https://suncoastflyfishers.com/eshop/>

Membership

Suncoast Fly Fishers now has **138 members including 22 family members and 6 honorary members**. Dues are \$50 (for individuals, \$40 for seniors, and \$60 for families. That includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

Please welcome new members:

Don Cantin, Belleaire; Dennis Mincher, Tampa; John French, Seminole.

Suncoast Fly Fishers

P. O. Box 40821
St Petersburg, FL 33743
www.suncoastflyfishers.org

Club Officers

Pres: Rick Warfel
Vice Pres: Quin Berry
Secretary: David Redd
Treasurer: Karen Warfel

Board of Directors

Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Ryan Sollars, Cliff Nigh, James Davis, Bill AuCoin

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Pat Damico

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Myron Hansen

Hog Roast: Open

Membership: Karen Warfel

New Members: Rick Warfel

Webmaster: Tim Elms

Facebook: Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin, Quin Berry

Outreach, shows: David Redd, Bob Burkard, Bill Scarola, Tom Gadacz

Succession Plan: Rick Warfel

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

Social media: Anne Mitchell

On The Fly

Editor Bill AuCoin, Anne Mitchell, Bob Hood, Tim Elms, Marshall Craig, Kevin Kelly

Committees--Members are encouraged to serve on one or two committees. Do you? If not, speak to one of the officers at the next meeting.

Meetings, Outings, and More

Thursday, February 15 meeting: Jill Thompson-Grim, USF Marine Science Graduate School, Walter Fuller Park. 6:30 to 8:30

- Jill will update the club on her work with USF Marine Sciences and NOAA marine fisheries and what she has learned.
- Master Casting Instructor Steve Smith will explain FFI's Fly Casting Skills Development program. Here's a [link to FFI's website learning center](#).
- Members of the Nominating Committee will unveil their recommendations for new officers and board members. We vote at the March meeting.
- Buy tickets for the April 6 Hog Roast.
- Buy one of the new fishing hats with the SFF logo. Baseball caps are \$25. Bucket style hats are \$30.
- Want to put the SFF logo embroidered on one of your shirts? Bring it to the January meeting. It costs \$15 per embroidered logo.
- Bucket raffle: \$1 per ticket, \$5 for six tickets. \$5 for the 50-50 raffle with half going to SFF.



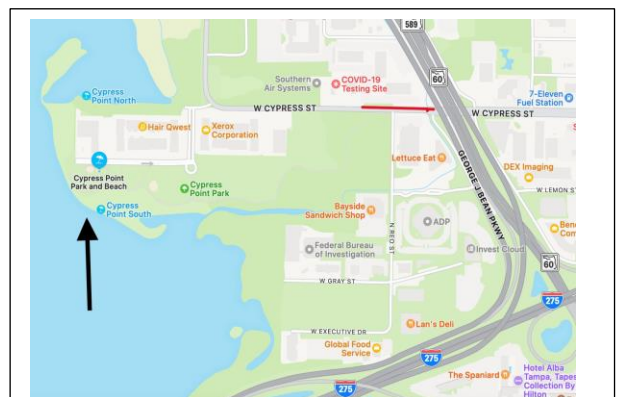
February speaker Jill Thompson-Grim with a large Gulf grouper that was boated on a 2023 NOAA population inventory research expedition

SFF officers and board vacancies

- Bruce Evensen, Bill Scarola, Bill AuCoin, and Bob Burkard have completed their current terms as board members and are eligible to run again. All have agreed to run for reelection.
- Rick Warfel and Quin Berry have reached the end of their second two-year term and are not eligible for reelection in their current positions. Rick Warfel and Quin Berry are eligible to serve in any position on the board except President and Vice President, respectively. Alternatively, Rick Warfel may be invited to continue serving for one year as past president in a non-voting position.
- David Redd (Secretary), Karen Warfel (Treasurer) will be completing the first year of their current term. Board member Ryan Sollars has not been able to participate and will not complete the second year of his term.
- At the February meeting the Nominating Committee will unveil their recommendations for new officers and board members and invite members to make additional nominations.
- Members vote at the March meeting and the 2024 - 2025 officers and board members assume their duties immediately

Saturday February 17 outing, Cypress Point Park, Tampa

- Fish anywhere around Cypress Point Park. The member catching the longest redfish will win a \$10 gift certificate and takes the lead in the annual outing competition.
- If you want to wade fish with other members meet up with Bill AuCoin at the park at 8 am.
- This is also a popular kayak-fishing location and there's a kayak launch site, too.
- We'll have a picnic lunch at one of the pavilions in the park. Anne and Robert Mitchell are grilling burgers and hot dogs.
- This is also a popular spot for our friends from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. President Walt Durkin and other TBFFC members will be invited to join us.



Navigating to Cypress Point Park can get a little tricky. Be sure to check the directions on your smart phone. (Apple Maps)

Meetings, Outings, and More

Upcoming meetings

- March 21: SFF Elections. Speaker, Capt. Ray Markham
 - April 18: Eglades outing panel
 - May 16: Speaker TBD
 - June 20: Speaker, member Mike Larkin PhD, update on Florida inshore marine fisheries
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Upcoming outings

- March 23: Fort DeSoto Park
 - April 20: Hillsborough River, Trout Creek Conservation Park
 - May 18: Picnic Island Park
 - June 21-22: Docklights
-

Saturday, March 16, specialty casting clinic with Dayle Mazzearella

Topic: *Presentations on a Trout Stream.* Location Egan Park, St. Pete Beach

8 am to 3 pm

- Dayle and Capt. Pat Damico will be leading on Saturday March 16 at Egan Park in St. Pete Beach, 9101 Blind Pass Road
 - This is a listen-and-learn meeting. Topics covered include gear you need, how to read the water, what fish see, how to fish streamers, nymphs, etc., leaders and knots, and much more.
 - Dayle encourages everybody to bring a lawn chair.
 - The club will provide a free picnic lunch.
-

Youth Fly Fishing. March 28, June 11, and June 25

- David Redd reports that our club will again participate with Hillsborough Parks and Recreation in youth fly fishing sessions. We will have one session on March 28 from 5:15 - 6:15 pm. This will be at the Carrollwood Village Center in Tampa.
 - Two other sessions will be held in Riverview at the Balm Park Recreation Center on June 11th and June 25th. Both sessions will be from 9 - 11 am.
 - If you are interested in helping with any of these sessions or have any questions please contact David Redd at redfish68@yahoo.com.
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April 6: Hog Roast. Save the date

- This is our big, fun, fund raiser for the year. We'll co-host with the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club.
 - It starts at 4 pm and runs until 8 pm at St. Jerome's Catholic Church in Largo.
 - Buy your tickets at the February or March meeting to avoid lines at the event.
 - Hog Roast tickets are now available online on our website, suncoastflyfishers.com
 - Please bring your donations and member-tied flies to our next meeting or event.
 - Speaker TBD
-

April 13: FFI Florida Council, Cast and Tie, Orlando Bass Pro Shops

- So-long, covid. The Florida FFI chapter is planning several in-person events this year including possibly, a major statewide convention like the one at Plantation Inn in Crystal River in 2018.
 - On April 13 FFI members are invited to one-day event with fly tying, fly casting, raffle, and auction.
 - FFI Board Chairman Dave Peterson is coming in to update members on FFI and new conservation initiatives.
 - Dave Olson, Florida Council President, said this will be the first of several regional Council meetings for the year.
 - Silent Auction for guided trips, flies, products, and more. Volunteers needed.
-

The Passing of a Fly Club Legend



Layne Smith, who always went by the name "Smitty," died at home on January 29.

Layne (Smitty) Smith, one of the founders of the Suncoast Fly Fishers and our club's longtime fly tying guru, died peacefully at home on January 29. Funeral services were Tuesday, February 6. A visitation gathering was the night before at Memorial Park Cemetery. Many members of the Suncoast Fly Fishers and the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Clubs attended.

There have been many expressions of sadness by club members.

Rick Warfel: Smitty was a founding member of SFF and one of the sweetest people you

could ever meet. He will be sorely missed.

Tom Gadacz: Smitty was a great fly-fisher and a contributor to the art and science of fly fishing. He made many great flies and was always tying at our meetings. He shared his knowledge and was always very positive. We will miss him and he leaves a great legacy.

Toni Fernstrom: That's very sad news.. I remember Smitty as being very open and welcoming when I joined SFF, and the two of us bonded around our interest and passion for fly tying.

David Redd: He was truly a mentor.

Bill AuCoin: Smitty was like the glue for our club" He would set up and tie flies at every meeting. And we all learned so, so much.

Smitty was born November 20th, 1945, in Clarion, Pennsylvania. He moved to the Tampa Bay area with his family while a teenager and attended Dixie Hollins High School.

In 1970, his future wife Basia, then living in New York, was introduced to him by her mother Josephine. Their relationship blossomed through heartfelt letters exchanged during this time, and they were married in 1971.

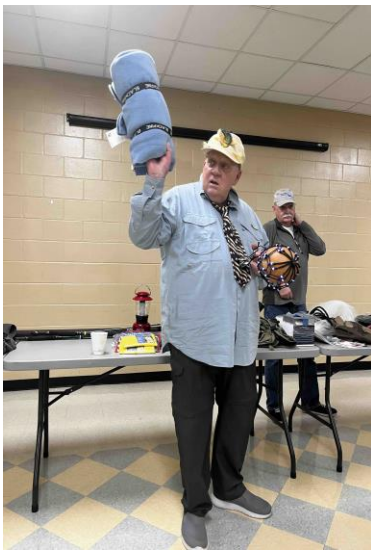
Layne embarked on various career paths, including roles as a ballroom dance instructor, stage magician, shipping director, and postal worker. He was also deeply passionate about fly fishing, frequently sharing his expertise as a keynote speaker, exhibitor, and teacher at local fly fishing events. One of his proudest moments was having his fly pattern published in a dedicated fly tying magazine.

The family requests donations be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Oldie but goodie. Back in 2013 Smitty presented Robert Fischer with this trophy topped with a 14/0 hook version of Smitty's golden eye shrimp fly. Word got around and Smitty sold lots of them. This was Smitty's big thank-you to Robert for encouraging him to tie this fly.

Bill AuCoin: Trash 'n' Treasures. Another Winner.



Alan Sewell once again served as our treasured auctioneer.

This was one of the best Trash 'n' Treasures meetings ever in my experience. Lots of good deals. Lots of laughs. And lots of money was raised to help fund meeting cookies and coffee, outing picnics, and much more.

Thanks to Auctioneer Alan Sewell and his assistants -- Quin Berry, David Redd, and James Davis. And thanks also to Rick and Karen Warfel for logging the purchases and handling the checks and credit card payments. Karen reported that the club raised \$1,030 which makes it one of the club's most rewarding Trash 'n' Treasures auctions.



Capt. Ken Parker got a real good deal on this inflatable boat and 4hp outboard motor. \$200. He'll use it guiding fly fishing clients on North Georgia trout rivers.



Jill Thompson-Grim shows off her new hat and two PFds, She also scored good deals on a lightweight fly fishing vest and a Keurig cup coffee maker.



Wes Tallyn scored this fly tying table for wife Samantha.



Big-time Griller Bob Burkard loves his sophisticated grill cleaning tool.

1	Saltwater Flies - 3 boxes	Smitty	\$62	\$62
2	Net	Smitty	\$8	\$8
3	Light/poncho/tarp	Smitty	\$14	\$14
4	Travel Spinning Rod PD. - NOT REC.	Smitty	\$14	\$14
15	Rod Cart	Smitty	\$5	\$5

January's Trash 'n' Treasures meeting was Smitty's last meeting and he had a laughingly good time. Here are his winning bids. Did he get to take the travel rod with him to the pearly gates?

Bob Burkard: January 20 Outing at Weedon Island Preserve



*Bob Burkard,
chairman, outings
committee*

Well, as usual, the fish didn't cooperate as we had predicted. I thought ladyfish were going to be on a winter high and would gobble up every sinking fly know to Suncoast Fly Fishers. But....nooooooo.

We had a good turnout. Ten fly fishers, If I'm recalling correctly. And a good time was had by all. Even the fish. Well, except for the puffer that I caught and the 14-inch seatrout landed by Tim Gibian. Alas, he didn't get a picture of it so we it doesn't take the seatrout lead in the outing tournament.

It was a cold day. And north wind was howling. It was hard to cast into the

stiff winds at Riviera Bay so most fishers waded in and fished the waters north and south of the Weedon fishing pier. James Cass launched his 'yak and expanded his horizons but he had no luck either.

Even Tim Elms was scoreless. He actually fished Riviera Bay at daybreak. He left early and caught a baby tarpon at a place that will remain nameless.



Rick and Karen Warfel cast to the boat channel drop-off near the Weedon Island Preserve fishing pier.



That's Walter Dill (l) and Tim Gibbons wading in. Later the muck trapped one of Walter's boots. He took a knee and water got into his waders. He went home to get into dry clothes and later he and Mrs. Dill joined everybody for lunch.



Crab Shack Restaurant served its amazing fish, oysters, crab cakes and more. Also lunching were Rick and Karen Warfel, Tony Piazza, James Cass, and Bill AuCoin.

Bob

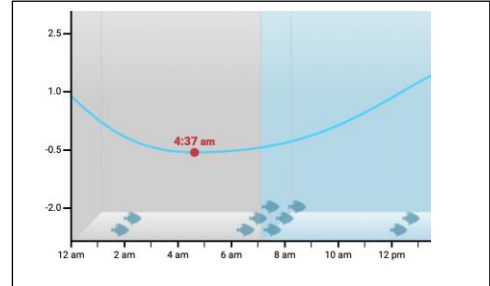
Bob Burkard: February 17 outing, Cypress Point Park



Bob Burkard, outings committee chair

I'm really looking forward to this month's outing at Cypress Point Park. It has a firm-footed flat with lots of migration channels and drop-offs that fish like. And, with a low, incoming tide, I'll be ready to cast to redfish moving onto the flat to feed.

Yes, redfish is, as Alan Sewell used to say, the "designated species." The member catching the longest one wins the outing gift certificate. Be sure to measure it and take a picture, too. That's why it's helpful to have a fishing buddy nearby, somebody you can help when they catch a fish.



We'll start with a negative low tide and an incoming flow that speeds around the Howard Frankland bridge. (Tides4Fishing)

Remember to measure and take pictures of other inshore gamefish that you catch -- seatrout, ladyfish, snook -- because those catches might take the lead in the annual outing tournament. See the opportunities in the chart below.

Bill AuCoin has designed himself as the official wade-fisher. If you are not familiar with this flat and want to wade fish with other members meet up with Bill AuCoin at the park at 8 am. This park also has a kayak launch site.

We'll have a picnic lunch at one of the pavilions in the park. Anne and Robert Mitchell are grilling burgers and hot dogs, I'm told. I'll bring cookies.

This is also a popular spot for our friends from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club. President Walt Durkin and other TBFFC members will be invited to join us. Be sure to read Walt's tips on how he fishes this park. Go to pages 10 and 11.



That's Ken Moser of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club with a large redfish he caught on a very low tide at Cypress Point Park in the winter of 2022. (Walt Durkin photo)

Bob

Leaders on the 2024 Outing Tournament Trail

Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream			
Longest black bass			
Longest exotic			
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest seatrout			
Longest ladyfish			

Walt Durkin's tips for wade fishing Cypress Point Park



Walt Durkin with a redfish. Cypress Point Park and other flats like this are his favorites.

(Editor's note: Walt Durkin, president of the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club, loves to wade-fish Cypress Point Park, which is the location of our February outing. Here are some of his secrets. Redfish are his favorite because they often travel in schools.)

Walt's take on Cypress Point Park: "The park opens at sunrise and you can park in the main lot. Straight off the western sides of the beach are numerous deep holes.

Fish Clouser minnows deep along the bottom for snook, trout and lady fish. However, the best sight fishing is to the North on both sides of the sand bar. Wade near the sand bar going north in shallow water and look for fish.

On negative low tides the reds will wait in schools for the tide to come in. They will be spooky and hard to catch so make the most of

your first presentations. As the tide comes in the reds will move over the bar onto the grass flats. Here they will spread out and tail at times. Wade slowly and let the fish come to you.



Walt's bonefish bitters fly

1. Favorite flies. Walt's Rat Fly is probably his favorite but he's ready to throw crab and shrimp patterns. Match the fly color with the bottom color. Clouser minnow is good when the water is deeper (like 3 feet-plus) . Have weedless flies ready if you're picking up seagrass. Gurglers and spoon flies are great, too, depending on how the fish are feeding.



Walt's rat fly in the water

2. Fish low tides in the winter. The water's clear and you can do more sight fishing.

3 Watch for tails. Those fish are feeding or looking for food. You can cast close to the fish when its head is down and tail is up. Throw a crab fly.

4. Wade and wait. Start in about 12 inches of water. Stop and watch for five minutes. Gamefish often travel with mullet. If you don't see any mullet, baitfish, or other sea life, move on.

5. Stay safe. Wear a whistle in case you need help. Shuffle your feet to warn-off sting rays. Avoid oyster beds which can throw you off balance. Wear sunscreen. Have bug spray ready, too. If a shark comes near slap the water with your rod tip and it'll rush away.

Walt Durkin: Low Tide Redfish at Cypress Point Park



Walt Durkin and the redfish gripper.

I have struggled to find good weather days to fish the Cypress flat, so when I saw bright skies on Saturday (20 Jan.) I told my wife I wanted to give it a try. She helped me get ready and sent me off with a peanut butter sandwich about 9:30. It was a bit of a late start as the tide was low about seven, but I hoped the strong NE wind would keep the tide low.

Few cars were in the lot and none of the usual suspects that I could tell. Approaching the flat on the north side, I could see only one angler out there braving the 15 to 20 mph wind and the tide was still very low with the bar showing. I walked along the bar and eased out about 100 feet from the other guy. He was facing my direction and making a few casts, so I was confident he was seeing fish.

Sure enough, after a few minutes I spotted the school making nervous water and heading toward me. I tried a left handed cast into that wind, but came up short several times. I can cast pretty good left handed, but not so well into the wind. Anyway, the school turned and went back toward the other fisherman whose name I found out was Matthew.

So, I eased back out to the bar and circled around him and went down the flat about 75 yards to fish back down with the wind. I did not see any fish as I worked toward Matthew, but he was still casting, so I knew the fish were still in his vicinity. He was stationed about 2/3 of the way down the flat in a sweet spot with a little deeper water.

I set up again upwind from him this time and about 100 feet away. He started casting straight out and then towards me a little. Soon, I spotted the school, maybe 50 reds heading toward me. I laid out a left handed cast about 60 feet and 30 feet in front of the fish. They kept coming and when they got around the fly I started bumping it. I try to move it an inch or two, stop a couple of seconds and repeat. After 10 tense seconds, I felt the take and set the hook.

I was fishing a new rod for me at least, a 7-weight Sage One. This is a classic rod with 10 year old technology, but still one of the best sticks around. After setting the hook, the rod bent in a beautiful arc and the fight was on. This was a strong 26 inch red that I played carefully for 10 minutes as I wanted to land him.

We had not eaten a red fish in six months and I told my wife I would bring one home. After confirming he was in the legal slot (18-27 inches) I put him on my fish gripper on a tether and he stayed with me all morning awaiting his fate. The fish had eaten a Bonefish Bitter fly I had tied a couple of days earlier. I went on to catch five reds that morning and Matthew did the same, including a couple of doubles.

Walt



Walt's Bonefish Bitter Fly

Cliff Nigh: Vessel Tour of USF's *Western Flyer*



On January 27th, 12 intrepid Suncoast Fly Fishers went to sea. Well, kinda-sorta.

In appreciation for the club's support and annual scholarship program, the USF School of Marine Sciences lowered the gangway and gave us a tour of *Western Flyer*, its new and largest research vessel, one of four used by [USF's Florida Institute of Oceanography](#).

Capt. Quentin Lewis' affection for his ship and the expanded capabilities it will provide to the school is readily apparent. He shared where the ship had been, things it had successfully accomplished, and planned upgrades.

The vessel is capable of housing, deploying and operating small and large submersibles up to the size of a mini-van! Quentin relayed how they were able to hit the center of one of the Gulf's Blue Holes to take core samples...from two miles up from ocean bottoms. The submersible drone pilot area, although undergoing remodeling, was like something out of the movies. We were introduced to the laboratories, the vehicle launch area, and sophisticated equipment used.



This is the submersible launch area. The crane lifts weight as heavy as a mini-van.



Suncoast Fly Fishers got a great tour of USF's new marine research vessel. It's new sonar scans gulf and ocean bottoms two miles deep.

And, we got a look at life aboard the ship including the mess hall and living quarters (much nicer than any of you Navy vets would have seen). We visited the bridge and, I for one, was amazed at the technology employed by the ship to accomplish its missions.

Howard Rutherford, our USF liaison for the club and Jill Thompson-Grim were in attendance and Jill was able to enhance our tour with real-life experiences in regard to at-sea living and research.

All in all, it was a morning well spent and provided insights into the types of research Suncoast Fly Fishers financially supports. You should all take a bow for what your club is supporting and the work it is doing. To further support the work of the *Western Flyer*, use the QR code in the photo to learn more about that.

Cliff



Tim Elms: Find the warmth (water and soul)

Howdy! WOW what a winter so far in St. Pete. I've never been colder. All kidding aside (not really), my Tarpon quest in the year 2023 ended quite well. I caught 132 juveniles. Since January of this year I've caught 24. (24+ when you read this).

Wind out of the north keeps a lot of our hot water friends down deep. But there are a few tricks to help find what to look for.



Tricky spots

awesome fly fishing is to thousands of kids who have been dealt some not so great hands. Scott Russell and I are looking for a couple of more mentors to help out with our chapter.

If you or someone you know would like to volunteer five days with us we would love to have you help. For more info check out www.themayflyproject.com Our chapter is the only Florida/Hot water project. We have several amazing partners that help us out, including Hardy Rods, the IGFA and even the man Andy Mill! Contact me if you are interested!

Also, 2024 is the year that I have decided to work for my FFI casting instructor certification. This will most likely take most of the year with my mentor and I'm really excited to help even more people in the future with tossing floss.

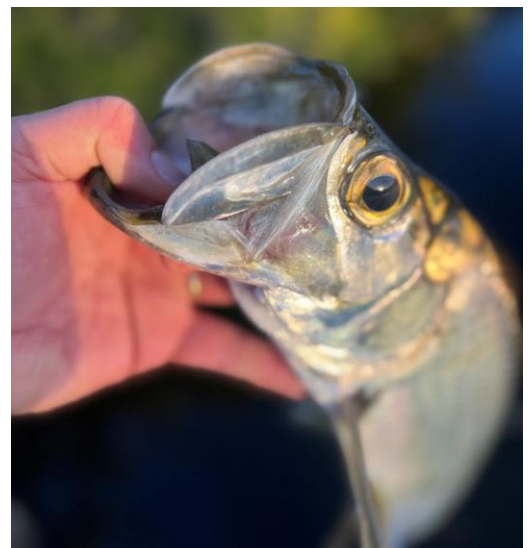
Dark bottom waterways stay a bit warmer over night and so do deeper cuts and holes. Seawalls, concrete structures, and city drainage all keep the temp a little warmer. Try to plan your adventure on a higher tide and where the water is warmer. Get em!

With the passing of our dear friend Smitty, life on the water always lets me reflect on the good and the bad. His legacy as a fly tying master instructor has had influence on so many of us with helping others and our fly passions. Godspeed sweet man!

If you are unaware of The Mayfly Project, I urge you take a look at what the program does for foster children and fly fishing. I have been a mentor with the St. Pete Chapter for four years now and there is nothing more rewarding than giving back to our community with a hobby we love. This nationwide program has shown how



Bundle up!



Cold weather Tarpon

Strip Strip Strip---Tim

Ray Markham: 26-inch seatrout

I caught and released this 26" trout I caught on a Chartreuse and White Clouser Minnow while wade fishing near the Skyway bridge.

Ray



Tim Gibian: 19-inch ladyfish



This won't count but I fished off DeSoto Park by boat (out by the channel) and was hitting ladyfish hard last week. This one was about 19-inches and took a Clouser that I tied. It was, like, on my third cast.

I scored a nice speckled trout about 14-inches at the Weedon Island outing but no ladyfish.

Tim

Borski Redfish Slider Bruce Evensen & Bill Scarola



Bruce



Jack Collins joins Bruce and Bill are leading members through the steps for tying the Borski slider at Bruce's fly tying studio on Monday, January 12. Jack said he caught a dozen seatrout on this fly at Fort DeSoto Park about two weeks ago.



Bill

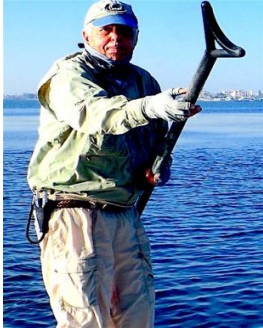
Materials

Eyes: medium bead chain or barbell eyes
Tail: Tan color extra select craft fur
Collar: Strung neck hackle, light brown (OPTIONAL)
Body: Deer body hair (not bucktail)
Glue: Your choice, Superglue or UV epoxy
Flash: Gold Flashabou (OPTIONAL)
Hook: 3407 or stingers, sizes, 1, 1/0, 2 and 4 for smaller sliders
Thread: Flat waxed, tan or brown
Markup: Brown permanent marker



Steps

1. Wrap hook shank from eye to bend, THEN rotate vice to attach the eyes.
2. Add your eyes about 1/4" to 3/8" from the hook eye, depending on hook size on the hook shank top, Clouser style.
- 3: Attach a clump of craft fur in front of the bend. then mark 3 to 5 bands on both sides with a brown marker.
4. If adding hackle, attach it on top of the fur tie in and palmer several wraps forward 1/4-inch and tie off. The hackle extends below the hook, not the deer hair.
- 4b: Add first pencil sized clump of deer body hair in front of the hackle if used but behind the eyes. Pinch the body hair on top of the hook shank and apply two soft thread wraps, then pull it tight to spin the hair forming the head and throw two more wraps on spun hair.
- 4c: Add a second smaller clump of deer body hair in front of the eyes to the hook eye as above.
- 5: Trim the head, either with a razor or scissors, as shown. Be sure to expose the eye and leave the rear strands of hair reaching the hook point. This can act as a weed guard. And, be sure not to cut the hackle collar. When trimming the body hair, flatten the deer hair on the bottom, while rounding off the head.
- 6: Option: add several strands of gold Flashabou slightly longer than the tail craft fur after you put on the craft fur tail.



Capt. Pat Damico: Captain's Corner

Notify your guide well in advance

An issue that will improve your fishing charter's success is to notify your guide well in advance and give him or her what days you will be available. Calling and saying I will be in your area this coming weekend and can only fish on Sunday morning will greatly affect your trip outcome. The date may already be booked, the weather could be terrible with rain and strong winds, the water may be muddy with the temperature dropping suddenly, and tides may be very poor. Wind direction alone can determine many of our fishing locations. We fly fish in relatively shallow water so reckless boat and jet ski activity is getting to be much more of a hazard as well as a safety concern. Weekends usually begin midday Friday and extend well into late Sunday. This is why weekdays are always preferred. Rather than multiple emails and text messages, a phone call soon after your initial contact will give both of you some time to get to know how realistic both expectations are. Telling me you want to catch a 100-pound tarpon in the middle of winter with no saltwater fly fishing experience is not going to happen. I always encourage people to bring any equipment they may already own which can often be the cause of many of the problems they have experienced in the past. Several fly rods completely rigged are always with me to cover multiple situations.

Fly fisherman and casting instructor Pat Damico runs charters in lower Tampa Bay and can be reached at captpatdamico.com and 727-504-8649.

Captain Pat

Fly guide/casting instructor Pat Damico charts "Fly Guy" in lower Tampa Bay. captpatdamico.com and 727-504-8649

Jonas Magnusson: Best fly line when your fly is big and heavy

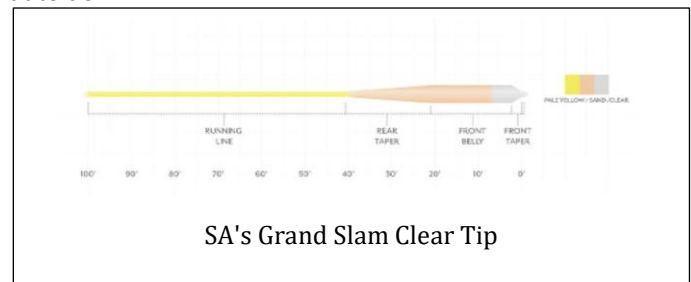


Jonas Magnusson, Fly Fishers International Certified fly-Casting Instructor

Now, some instances demand a big/heavy fly whether we like it or not. You know it's going to be a struggle – so, what to do?

I would consider a line with an 8' clear tip. The tip is intermediate and sinks very slowly. A big/heavy fly will pull the distal part of a floating line under anyway so the lines will be similar.

The advantage of the clear tip is that now you can get away with a short leader. The distal part 8' of your fly line is clear anyway. This line has a short head and is 0.75 sizes overweighted, so it has the mass to deal with a big/heavy fly.



Read more about this on my blog: everyjonahasawhale

Jonas

Bill Scarola: LOL

No man ever caught a fish as big as the one that got away.
You can always tell a fisherman, but you can't tell him much.
The best thing about fishing is that it gives you something to do while you're doing nothing!
Fishing is an idle sport that makes men and truth strangers!
Fishing is sometimes an excuse to drink beer in the day time.
If you accidentally rub ketchup into your eye, you will have *Heinzsight*.
Once upon a time there was a king who was only 12 inches tall. He was a terrible king, but he made a great ruler.
There was the time that fruit of the Loom took Hanes to court. It was a brief case.
My friend said she wouldn't eat a cow's tongue because it came out of the cow's mouth.. So I gave her an EGG.
My friend Jack says he can communicate with vegetables. That's right... Jack and the *beans talk*.
The biggest joke on mankind is that computers have begun asking humans to prove they aren't a robot!
When a kid says, "Daddy, I want mommy," that's a kids version of " I'd like to speak to your supervisor."
I've found it's weird being the same age as OLD PEOPLE! I Thought it would take longer to get there.
You know you are getting old when "friends with benefits" means having someone who can drive at night!
If you don't want ALEXA listening in on your conversation, they are making a male version...It doesn't listen to anything!

Now, go fishing. Bill

Used Gear for Sale

David Redd is selling two Sage fly rods

One is a Sage RPLXi 7weight.. The other is a Sage RPLXi 9-weight. Both are used but in good condition. I'm asking \$250 ea. or \$450 for both. Email David at Reddfish68@yahoo.com. Call or text him at 727-458-8334

Bill Scarola is selling his 12-foot Nucanoe Kayak, \$800

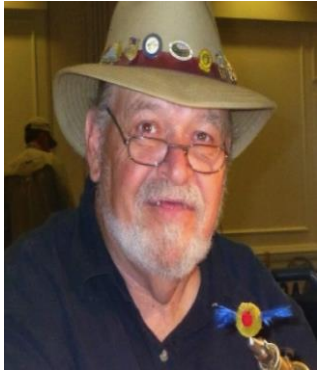
It is 41-inches wide. It has two seats with bases. One double-bladed paddle. not shown, but both seats are very comfortable. and in good condition! The deck is lined with Sea Decking. There are rod holders.

contact: BILL SCAROLA @ 732-740-7538. He will deliver the kayak to you if necessary.

Bill Scarola also is selling a metal rifle and pistol storage cabinet. \$75

It's for rifles, pistols, or whatever. It's 52 inches high by 17 inches wide and 13.2 inches deep. Excellent condition. \$75. Call Bill at 732-740-7538.

Here are just some of Smitty's successful flies



Layne "Smitty" Smith RIP




















We were all saddened to learn that Smitty had died but we'll all remember him fondly by tying and fishing his innovative flies. To learn what materials you need and the step-by-steps go to the fly archives and search for Smitty's flies in the resource pulldown menu on the Suncoast Fly Fishers website. [Here's the link.](#)



Smitty's Club Meeting Flies

Smitty's flies. These are a few of the flies Smitty tied at club meetings over the years. Which ones are your favorites? What are we missing?

-  Smitty's Monkey Milk grub fly
-  Smitty's two Psycho Flies, white and green
-  Smitty's Green Meany Psycho fly
-  smitty's split tail clouser
-  Smitty's Estaz Crab
-  smitty's whatever you want baitfish
-  Smitty's Electri Bunny pink
-  Smitty's Vlady Worm
-  Smitty's Foxee Redd Clouser2
-  Captain, the bluegill killer (smitty)
-  Smitty's Squirminator
-  smitty's docklighter-foxcicle
-  smittys speedy
-  Smitty's Green Weenie
-  Smitty's Foam Panfish
-  Smitty's Cooks Critter (april '21)
-  Smitty's Glitz and Glitter
-  smitty's Mangrove Snook Fly
-  smitty and mirrolure fly.jpg
-  smittys mirrolure fly.jpg
-  Smittys Hefty Crab.jpg
-  Chocklett's Faux Clouser by Smitty
-  Smitty's crab fly
-  Smitty's shrimp fly 2.JPG
-  Smitty's Glass Minnow.jpg
-  Smitty's Pine Cone Fly.doc

-  F-C Surf Dart
-  smitty's snake fly
-  Smitty's dog biscuit fly
-  Smitty's Gangster Gurgler
-  smittys sand_crab
-  smitty's crab fly
-  Smitty's Mom's cobblers
-  Smitty -Golden Eye Shrimp2
-  smitty's split tail clouser
-  smitty's golden shiner
-  Smitty's jointed pencil popper
-  Smitty's BA Baitfish
-  Smitty's chartreuse mullet, july
-  Smitty's Timbrerwolf
-  Smitty's jawbreaker
-  Smittys Salt and Pepper
-  Smitty's Skull and Bones
-  Smittys Hefty Crab
-  Smitty's bonefish Whisperer
-  Smitty's chili pepper fly
-  Smitty's Squirrel Tail Minnow
-  Smitty's Mirrolure fly
-  Smitty's Whiskaz
-  smitty's Mangrove Snook Fly
-  Smitty's Jointed Pencil Popper
-  Smitty's Faux Clouser
-  Smittys Cruella da Ville (oct 2020)
-  Smitty's Silver-side minnow
-  smitty's redheaded step-minnow
-  The Black Ghost, Smitty's Dec. fly
-  smittys xmas fly
-  smitty's xmas tree fly2
-  Smitty -Golden Eye Shrimp

Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



Some things you probably didn't know about Smitty -- He had several career paths, including roles as a ballroom dance instructor, stage magician, shipping director, and postal worker. ([Memorial Park Funeral Home](#))

Yeah. That was Smitty -- "Layne Smith spends most of his days thinking like a fish. Where most people see a feather duster or a brush with synthetic bristles, Smith sees a lure." NOTE: for subscribers. ([Tampa Bay Times](#))

Our February outing is at Cypress Point Park -- This is an old article but it covers what we all need to know. Redfish is our target. ([Salt Strong](#))

And I think we know why-- Why no birds on Lake Okeechobee? ([Fort Myers News Press](#))

Club members are FFI members, too. FFI offers a lot of opportunities for members to get better at Fly Fishing. Like, you know, tying flies, women's group, conservation, fly casting.. And there's much more. ([Fly Fishers International](#))

Do you like to eat the fish you catch? -- It's time to drill down on 2024 saltwater gamefish seasons and sizes. They're changing all the time. If you haven't eaten snook, put it on your to-do list. They're easy to clean and good to eat. But it's also very hard to catch one in the slot., 28-33 inches. The season starts March 1. ([MYFWC](#))

Tampa Bay Watch is 30-years old. TBW celebrates its 30th year anniversary on Friday, February 16. Accomplishments are plenty. Oyster reefs, especially. But, here's something that we fly fishers can help with -- retrieving monofilament fishing line from those mangrove roots. TBW has recycled 4,000 miles of it ([Tampa Bay Watch](#))

Birds love the Tampa Bay estuary. Except the Tampa Bay area is growing so fast that they're losing habitat and some species are declining, They're also watching manatees, sea turtles, and gamefish. ([Tampa Bay Estuary Program](#))

The digital edition is free -- Honest to goodness, the pictures alone are so terrific they make my day. Also, you'll want to read Chico's big tarpon story. ([Tail Fly Fishing](#))

Accuracy? Distance? Or both? -- Is this the very best fly rod on the market? Can you say Helios? ([Outdoor Life](#))

Another fly fishing legend leaves us -- He started making fiberglass fly rods in 1954. He merged with Fenwick in 1968. He formed Sage rods in 1980. And more. ([SGB Media](#))

Sunshine State Mafia -- Reading this new book by noted Florida sportfisher and historian Doug Kelly is on my to-do list. Did you know that Al Capone had a speakeasy at Jungle Prada? Also, I was told, he had another one on what is now Weedon Island Preserve. And his home in Shore Acres is still there. ([Barnes and Nobles](#))

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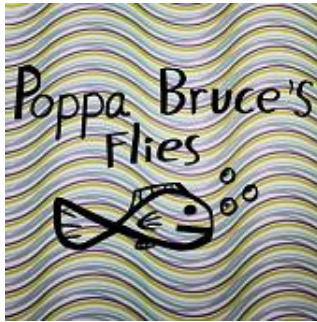


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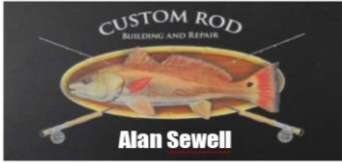
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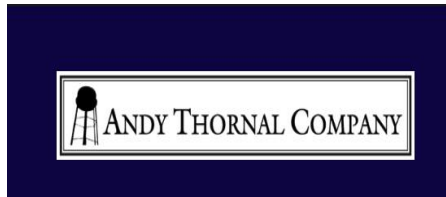
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