

On The Fly

Newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers of St. Petersburg

Rainbow Georgia P17



Exotic Florida Glades P11



Tierra Verde Seatrout P20



Glade outing P12



Panhandle redfish P21



10,000 Island Snook P22



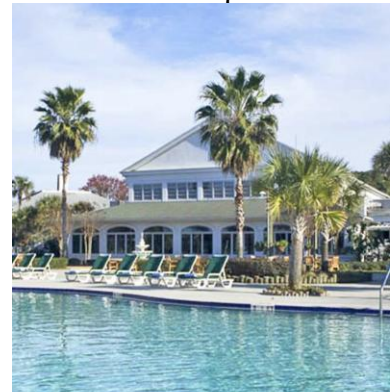
Backyard Bass P21



Salty Skyway Outing P8



FFI Florida Expo P5



President's Message -- May 2026



SFF President David Redd

We had a very successful Hog Roast, and the club is doing very well financially thanks to the generosity and support of our members.

During our last board meeting, we discussed the best ways to use these funds, and there was overwhelming agreement that our first priority should be giving back to the membership.

The outings committee has already discussed bringing back the popular "Low Country Boil" lunch at one of our outings, as well as possibly hosting another pizza night during a member meeting. The board also discussed forming a focus group made up of club members to help gather additional ideas on the best ways to use these funds for the benefit of everyone.

As another small way to give back, we are also bringing back the mystery raffle bucket at our member meetings.

These are just a few of the ideas being considered so far, and I look forward to exploring even more ways to enhance the experience and enjoyment of our club for all members.

David

David

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. 7 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/>

Welcome new members: Bruce Bible

Membership. **Our club now has 110 members including 14 family and six honorary.** Annual membership is \$60 (\$50 for seniors) and \$70 for families. \$25 for youth. \$100 for business. That includes benefits and annual membership in [Fly Fishers International](#) and the [Florida Council](#) of Fly Fishers International.

Paying dues: Dues can also be paid via cash, check or credit card at any club meeting, outing or event. Annual memberships can be paid online through the website -- SuncoastFlyFishers.com -- or by mailing a check to SFF, PO Box 40821, St. Petersburg, FL 33743. You can also pay by credit card by calling Karen Warfel at 813-505-3162.

Suncoast Fly Fishers

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

Club Officers

Pres: David Redd
Vice Pres: Jack Collins
Secretary: Tony Piazza
Treasurer: Karen Warfel

Board of Directors

Quin Berry, Bill Scarola, Bob Burkard, Bruce Evensen, Cliff Nigh, John French, Bill AuCoin, Dennis Mincher, Brian Henderson

Casting: Pat Damico, Dayle Mazzarella

FFI Liaison: Rick Warfel

Conservation: Cliff Nigh

Fly Tying: Bruce Evensen, Bill Scarola, Dennis Mincher

Hog Roast: Jack Collins

Membership: Karen Warfel

Webmaster: Tim Elms

Facebook: Cliff Nigh, Anne Mitchell

Outings: Bob Burkard, David Redd, Bill AuCoin, Quin Berry, Anne Mitchell, John French

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

Succession Plan:

Programs: Board of Directors

Publicity: Bill AuCoin

Social media: Anne Mitchell

On The Fly

Editor Bill AuCoin, Abby Gambrel, Anne Mitchell, Bob Hood, Karen Warfel, Kevin Kelly, Rick Warfel, Tim Elms.

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, May 21 meeting, Rec Center, Walter Fuller Park, St. Petersburg

- Our speaker is Alexandra Aguilar, a scholarship recipient in marine studies at the University of South Florida in St. Petersburg. She is the recipient of an SFF grant of \$2000. Alexandra, other students, and the graduate school administration are now trying to solve the recent lightning fire loss of the USF lab and marine samples. Here is a [link to the webpage](#) explaining what happened and also requesting funding.
- President David Redd and committee chairs will update members on club projects, upcoming meetings and outings. We have two new committees. Tony Piazza is leading the club's new member mentoring program. Bob Burkard will form a committee to recommend a strategy and ways for the best use of club money.
- Bucket raffle. Flies and other gear will be raffled at the close of the meeting. One is the mystery bucket raffle which will include lots of goodies including \$20 gift cards good at St. Pete Fishing Outfitters.

Saturday, May 23, outing -- Sunshine Skyway, North Rest Area

- Fish Lower Tampa Bay from either side of the Sunshine Skyway.
- Members catching the longest snook, seatrout, and ladyfish will win outing gift certificates. Measure. Take a pic.
- Meet up at noon for a picnic at two adjacent shelters marked with the Suncoast Fly Fishers sign.



Saturday, July 10, Fly Casting Lessons, Riverview ECO Camp

- David Redd needs more volunteers. Fly casting instructors needed. Talk to President David Redd at the meeting.
- [Go here](#) for more info on the Eco Adventure Camp.

September 11-12, 2026 Suncoast Fly Fishers Lady Fly Tournament

- The third annual Suncoast Fly fishers Lady Fly Tournament is September 12 with events scheduled at Tiki Docs Skyway at Maximo Marina in south St. Pete on September 11 and 12.
- Samantha Tallyn told the Board of Directors she already has sign-ups or commitments from 13 two-member teams. Register at the following link: <https://www.ianglertournament.com/suncoast-fly-fishers-2026-womens-tournament>
- Samantha will give members an update at the June meeting.

-continued on next page-

Meetings, Outings, and More

Saturday Caster Ready Practice Sessions

- SFF member Tim Elms supervises accuracy and distance fly casting starting at 7:30 on most Saturday mornings at Meadowland Park, 7501 14th Street N., St. Petersburg.
- Stay tuned. A new practice location is under consideration.
- The next sessions are May 23 and May 30 followed by most Saturdays in June, July, and August.
- 2nd Annual Sarasota Games is May 24th Contact Tim to join the fun!
- And if anybody wants to level up their FFI Fly Casting SD achievements that's okay, too.

November 6-7, 2026. Florida Council FFI Expo

- The Florida Council of Fly Fishers International will be hosting the Florida Fly Fishing Expo for members and other fly fishers at the Plantation Resort at Crystal River on November 5-7, 2026.
- The event will feature some of the most talented fly fishers in Florida who will share their experiences and knowledge in presentations, workshops, and demonstrations. Those who attend will learn something that will add to their enjoyment of fly fishing.
- Some of our best fly tiers will be demonstrating how to tie patterns that will catch fish anywhere in the world. Fly casters will have the opportunity to participate in FFI's Fly Casting Skills Program.
- Presentations will be given on FFI Conservation Activities, Biology of fly selection and various fly fishing venues in Florida. There also will be unique events for women and youth fly fishers.
- The new FFI Florida Council newsletter has been posted online. Go to [FFI Florida Council Newsletter](#).



FFI Florida Council Expo is November 6-7 at Plantation Resort at Crystal River.

New member mentoring

- Our club has a new member mentoring program. Club members will work one-on-one with new members to help them take advantage of all the club's benefits.
- Volunteers are needed. If you can help, text Tony Piazza at 314-249-8762.
- If you are a new member and would like to be mentored please let Tony know.

###

2026 Meetings and Outings

(Details subject to change)

Year	Month	Meeting Date	Speaker / Meeting	Outing Date	Outing	Target Fish	Fresh or Salt	Lunch
2026	May	5/21/2026	Alejandra Aguilar Scholarship Recipient	5/23/2026	Fishing along Skyway Bridge - North & South Lunch at Skyway Rest Stop North	1. Longest Snook 2. Longest Trout 3. Largest Ladyfish	Salt	Sandwiches
2026	June	6/18/2026	Samatha Talyn - Lady Fly Overview & Andy Austin (not confirmed)	6/20/2026	Dock Lights & Beaches for Friday & Saturday Lunch at War Veterans Memorial Park	1. Most different Saltwater 2. Most different Freshwater species	Salt & Fresh	Lunch at Local Restaurant
2026	July	7/16/2026	Joe Mahler	7/18/2026	Upper Tampa Bay or Alligator Lake Lunch at Philippe Park	1. Longest Snook, 2. Longest Trout 3. Longest Black Bass	Salt & Fresh	Lunch TBD
2026	August	8/20/2026	TBD	8/22/2026	Fort DeSoto	1. Longest Snook 2. Longest Trout	Salt	Summer Brisket, Ribs, and Pulled Pork BBQ
2026	September	9/17/2026	Cliff Nigh - Latest Fly fishing Equipment update from ICAST & Fly Typing Tables - Organized by Dennis Mincher & Brian Henderson Pizza Party	9/19/2026	Skyway Rest Stop North with Mangrove Club	1. Longest Ladyfish	Salt	Skyway Rest Stop North - Sandwiches and sides
2026	September			9/12/2026	Lady Fly Annual Tournament			
2026	October	10/15/2026	Member Panel for Fishing the Hillsborough River	10/17/2026	Hillsborough River - Carl Hanson	1. longest Bass 2. Most Blue Gills	Fresh	Tampa Bay Club turn for lunch
2026	November	11/19/2026	SFF Open House, SFF Fly Market & Pizza Party	11/21/2026	Upper Tampa Bay and Alligator Lake	1. Longest Ladyfish 2. Longest Black Bass 4. Longest Trout	Salt & Fresh	Lunch at the Bar Fly Restaurant in Safety Harbor
2026	December			12/12/2026	Christmas Party - St Jeromes			
2026	December		No Meeting	12/19/2026	Ft DeSoto - Member Tribute Outing	Longest Fish on a Fly	Salt	Our Annual Chili Extravaganza

Bob Burkard: Can you say WalSemTay?



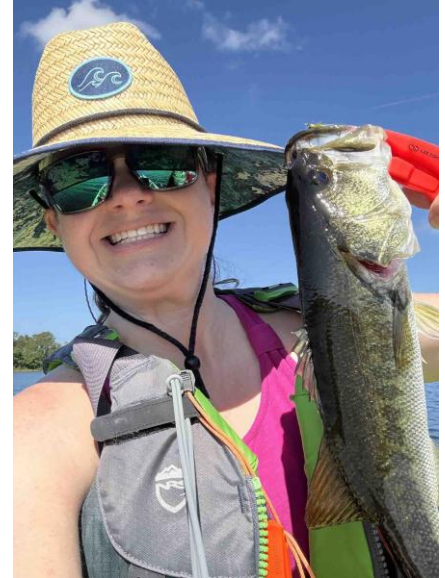
Bob Burkard, meetings-outings committee chair

Our April 18 freshwater outing on Walsingham, Seminole, and Taylor Lakes -- AKA *WalSemTay* -- was a good one.

Bream and bass cooperated. Sort of. Kevin Kelly won applause for grilling the burgers and hog dogs at our shelter -- Pavilion #7 on Taylor Lake.

Abby Gambrel fished Lake Walsingham in her kayak and caught an 18-inch black bass on an olive wooly bugger. Ted Rich fished Taylor Lake in his kayak. He caught the most bluegills -- four

-- so he wins the gift certificate for that category.



It's a winner -- Abby Gambrel and her winner, an 18-inch black bass she caught on an olive wooly bugger fly.



John French took this picture of almost everybody in attendance. Good burgers. Good hot dogs. Good fun.



Mike Nolan waits for Kevin Kelly to finish grilling his burger

Bob Burkard: May 23 Sunshine Skyway Outing



Bob Burkard, meetings-outings committee chair

Fish either side of the Sunshine Skyway, north or south. If you're fishing from a boat just make sure the skyway is in view.

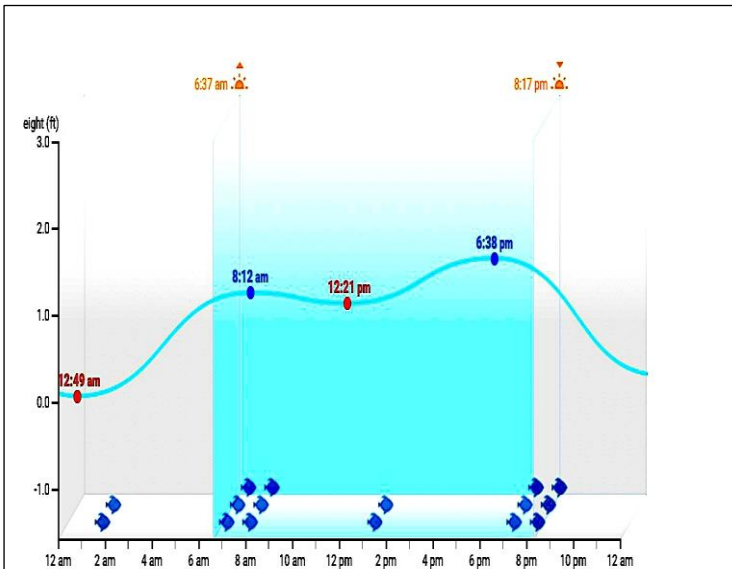
We'll award gift certificates to the members catching the longest snook, longest seatrout, and longest ladyfish. Be sure to measure them and take a picture. Also measure and take pictures of your longest redfish because it could take the lead in the 2026 Outing Trail contest. (See the chart below).

We'll all meet up for the picnic at noon at one of the north skyway shelters. You'll see the Suncoast Fly Fishers signs.

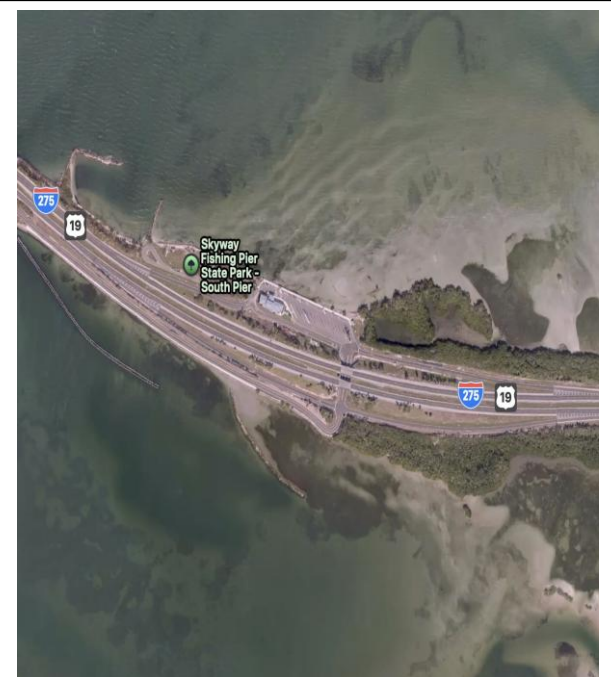
Bob



North Skyway Rest Area. Picnic at noon. This rest area is also known as the Blackthorn Memorial Rest Area



Morning tide flow isn't strong but we'll have a major solunar from about 6:30 until 9:30. Go for it.



South Skyway usually has good shoreline fishing on either side. There's a DOT "No Fishing" sign at the rest area but you can park there and walk to the water.

Bob Burkard: May 18 Everglades Outing,

Fishing the Everglades canals for both natives and exotics is always a great experience, and this year my trip was even better since I fished with my brother Allan visiting from South Dakota and my SFF friends Mark Hays, Annie Mitchell, Alan Sewell and Ted Rich.

We fished the canals along Interstate 75 near Route 27. Fishing was more challenging than in previous years due to some of the “exotics” dying off during last winter’s freezing temperatures and the windy conditions we experienced on our first day. However, we still caught fish and had a great time. Fishing with Mark, Alan, and Ted is always a learning experience and they generously share their knowledge and help me catch more fish.

My brother Allan caught his first exotic, a Jaguar Cuapote

After having no luck fishing a floating white spider, I switched to a sub-surface fly and was able to catch a wide variety of fish including, Mayan cichlids, oscars, largemouth bass (all small), bluegills and stump knockers.



My brother Allan Burkard and a jaguar cuapote



Ted Rich, Bob Burkard, Mark Hays, and Alan Sewell. Annie Mitchell took the picture.

We celebrated the end of our fishing adventure at a great Italian restaurant near our hotel.

The outing gift certificates will be awarded to members catching the most bream (Mike Nolan), longest black bass (Bill Scarola), and most cichlids (me). Apparently nobody caught a peacock, the fourth category.

Bill Scarola fished with a group north of where I fish, “The Clewiston Group”, and he is taking the lead in two categories in the annual outing tournament. His 9-inch bluegill is the longest so far this year.

Friday afternoon was interesting, to say the least. We got a call that Ted Rich fell and cut his leg while he and Alan Sewell were launching Ted's boat. Apparently the bleeding was pretty bad so an ambulance was called and it took him to the ER. Doctors attended to Ted's injury and then he invited and treated all the other Fort Lauderdale-area anglers to dinner.

Bob

Annie Mitchell: May Everglades Outing,



Annie Mitchell with a two-fer, bluegill and oscar.

This wasn't quite the trip to the Everglades that I had been envisioning for the last two years. The last time I picked up a fly rod was the 2024 Everglades trip. A week after that I found out I was pregnant with Bobby. Then morning sickness, raising a rambunctious baby, and wrangling a toddler-saurus got in the way of fishing.

My dad, Mark Hays, and I were so hopeful for this trip. Florida has been in a historical drought for months. The canals should have had almost no water which is the ideal condition for Everglades fishing. This one trip was supposed to make up for two years of no fishing.

We should've known something was askew in the universe when we had to go to a different hotel in a different city from the one we always stay in. The corpse of Bruce Springsteen was performing in Sunrise, Florida that weekend so we had to stay at a La Quinta in Coral Springs. Reason number 312 Led Zeppelin is my favorite band of all time is that they has the decency to call it quits when their drummer passed away in 1980. They did not desecrate their legacy with endless reunion tours, crappy new music, or by wading into politics. Anyways, Coral Springs appeared to be a short distance away from Sunrise on my iPhone so I assumed it wouldn't be too inconvenient to stay there.

Our group consisted of Dad and I, Bob and Allan Burkard, and Alan Sewell and Ted Rich. Bob's brother Allan, whom I referred to as Brother Allan so as not to confuse the two, was visiting from South Dakota. He doesn't fly fish, nor does he as a Midwesterner put ranch dressing on everything as I had assumed. But he was a good sport for the whole trip and it was lovely to meet him.

We all launched our boats on Thursday afternoon at the Miami canal. Normally we always fish the first boat ramp from Naples on the afternoon we drive down because the only way to access it is on the eastbound side of Alligator Alley. However, the wind was blowing like a hurricane through that canal and my dad was the only person who was willing to risk the kayaks capsizing. Since he was not in a kayak he was overruled. I don't know what the Army Corps of Engineers was smoking. The Miami canal was as high as we've ever seen it, but the canal next to it was so dry they closed down the boat ramp.



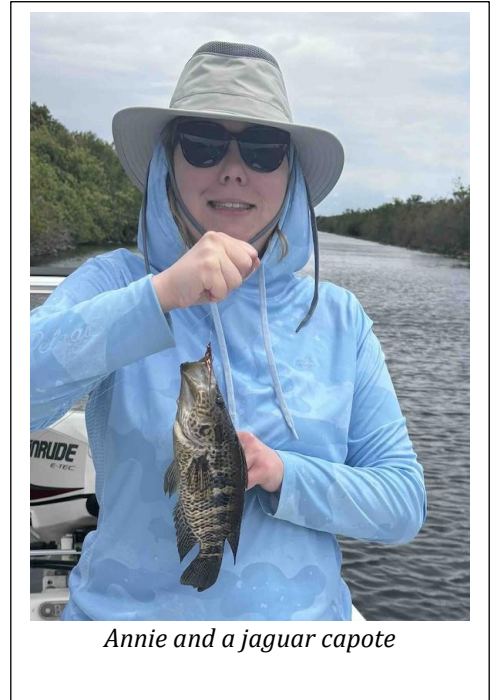
That's a biggie. Mark and a fat Jaguar

P2/Anne Mitchell: May Everglades Outing,

We all started fishing on the left side of the canal, but no one did well. That canal is home to an airboat tour company. Dad and I wished we'd fished out his earplugs that he'd packed for sleeping at the hotel. Also, the fish were not coming up out of the rocks. The only flies that worked at all were white Muddlers in number 6 and 8, which sank as low and as fast as possible.

After we ate our Pub Subs, Dad and I went to the right side of the canal. The further down we went, the more fish we found. We didn't catch a ton of fish, but most of them were large by Everglades standards. We got some decent Mayan Cichlids, Bluegill, Jaguar Guapote, and Oscars. Unfortunately no one else in our group had as much luck that day.

The additional drive to Coral Springs added an extra 20-30 minutes each way through horrendous South Florida interstate traffic. When we got to the hotel, we realized that everyone except Alan and Ted had arrived at the wrong La Quinta. They're like gas stations in that they try to build hotels very close to each other so that if one is booked up they can fill the other one. By the time we found the correct hotel and checked in, we had no choice but the go to dinner without showering. Thankfully no one had caught many fish so no one smelled like fish slime, and the food was incredible. We had burgers that were half ground lamb and half beef with honey goat cheese and berry glaze on top, and the best French fries any of us have ever eaten.



Annie and a jaguar capote

The next morning we decided to go back to the same canal as the previous day with Bob and Brother Allan. We figured since we'd cracked the code the day before we could at least catch some fish today even if it wasn't as many as we were used to. Plus most of the ramps don't have bathroom facilities so that gets a little dicey after a few hours. Sadly, Dad and I were mistaken. We barely got any fish that morning even after trying a handful of flies each. Just like the previous day we used the larger Muddlers, but to much weaker effect. We caught some, but certainly not what we were expecting. Thankfully though, Bob and Allan discovered that worms were the secret. No, not live ones. Brother Allan had a rubber one on his spinning rod and I trust Bob used a worm fly, but I have no way to confirm.

Just as we were finishing lunch, we got the dreaded call no one wants to get. Ted and Alan had gone to Markham Park, and Ted had slipped and fallen at the boat ramp when they were getting ready for lunch. Thank goodness some kind strangers and a chocolate Labrador named Pandora helped Ted up, called 911, and moved the boat and truck for Alan. Ted ended up needing nine stitches, and he was released just in time for dinner that evening.

Ted was so happy to be sprung from the hospital that he showed up to dinner in his blood spattered clothes. We dined at the Italian restaurant that Alan and Ted had found the night before. I guess they left such a nice tip that they didn't ask any questions when we stinked up the joint that night.

Calamities and lack of fish aside, at least I got to hold a fly rod again, I remembered how to cast, and we got to spend a few days with wonderful friends and great food. After all, the Suncoast Fly Fishers are an eating club with a fishing addiction.

Annie

Brian Henderson: Clewiston Group in the Everglades



Brian Henderson

The Clewiston group hit A1 Equalization Basin all weekend. Fishing was slow with low and silty water. The group included Bruce Evensen, David Redd, Tony Piazza, Tom Trukenbrod, Bill Scarola, Jack Collins, Brian Berry, Quin Berry, and myself.

Bass seemed to be at the end of the spawn but cichlids and oscars were nowhere to be found, until Jack Collins found them, lots of them, on the last day, in the backwater amongst the rock piles and he caught them on a small bunny leach. There were small fry everywhere and small minnow flies seemed to be what was targeted more consistently.

Everglades first-timer Mike Nolan reported that he only managed 2 bass on the fly but he did catch 22 bluegills and had a ton of misses. Jack Collins caught the most cichlids so we wins the gift certificate for that category.

Bill Scarola hooked a 19" bass on a mylar Clouser. I landed the two biggest bass at 19 1/2" each on a spun deer-hair mouse and my biggest bluegill at nearly 9" long was a tad short for the outing and tournament trail. I caught it on a small popper.

Weather was hot during the day but pleasant in the evenings. Winds were howling to start the weekend but laid down and allowed the heat to settle in. Overall, the trip was as good as it always is. It was hot and the fish made us work for it but the comradery, stories and bottles passed around the picnic table at night were worth it.



Mike Nolan caught the most bluegills (22) plus some black bass but Brian Henderson landed the longest black bass, 19.5-inches.

<i>Leaders on the 2026 Outing Tournament Trail</i>			
Species	Winner	Length	Outing (Month)
Longest bream	Bill Scarola	9-inches	Everglades (April)
Longest black bass	Brian Henderson	19-.5 inches	Everglades (April)
Longest Peacock Bass			
Longest redfish			
Longest snook			
Longest seatrout	Mike Nolan	19-inches	Fort DeSoto Park (March)
Longest ladyfish	Bill AuCoin	19.5-inches	Weedon Preserve (January)

Brian

Watch Out Fishes. Here Comes Urban Angler Tim Elms

Tim Elms fly fishes from shore 300 days or more a year. He catches more than 200 juvenile tarpon every year on the fly. From the shore and/or seawalls. And lots of bass, too. Over the years he estimates he has caught more than 1,000 largemouth bass fishing from shore on a fly.

Tim was our April meeting speaker and shared his insights into catching those juvenile tarpon and largemouth bass as well as all the other freshwater and saltwater gamefish (including peacock bass and other non-natives) available to Floridians. Tim has been a Floridian for some years but he has been an urban fly fisher since his earlier days in Colorado. Shoreline fishing has been his thing for a long while.

But why not fish from a boat? You don't need a boat. Park and fish shorelines (and seawalls) give you access to much more water. You'll learn fish feeding and movement patterns.

From the shoreline, and not a boat, you're less likely to spook fish. Be prepared: Be rigged and ready, of course, and before you make your first cast observe the water. See anything. Fish surfacing? Baitfish? Pushes? Now, plan your cast. Your first cast is often your best kick at the cat, so to speak. So, if the fish get a little nervous, just walk to the next spot. You don't need to unstick the anchor pole and restart the trolling motor. Tim volunteered dozens of other insightful tidbits including some of his juvenile tarpon tips like keep your hooks sharp, dammit. Sharp! His go-to flies include, a Muddler Minnow Variation, Crazy Charleys and Dahlberg Divers.

Tim fishes his 8 weight for these tarpon and he nets them as quickly as he can for a quick selfie and then returns them to the water to fight for another day. "I'll be back buddy," he is thinking. Tim, is that you? He uses a 6-weight for peacock bass which he catches in the canals near Naples.



Tim Elms catches 300 or so juvenile tarpon a year fishing urban tidal creeks and salty ponds.



The Muddler is one of Tim's favorite flies for redfish, snook, and juvenile tarpon.

Juvenile tarpon like dirty water; that is, water with lower oxygen saturation, because predators are less likely to share that water. Tarpon, unlike other fish, can breathe with their lungs, too. If they're rolling, look for "high and happy."

He likes to fish the negative low tide after a cold front and, if possible, he'll fish where the saltiest water meets the freshest water.

Other nearshore gamefish? Tim targets snook at night. He goes "up the creeks" to find redfish.

Whatabout sharks, catfish, snakeheads, and mullet? Fuhgeddaboutit.

###

Mike Nolan: Bedding Tilapia on the Fly



Mike Nolan

My initial fly fishing experience was fishing cold water streams in the Northwest for trout. More recently I have explored inshore saltwater fly fishing but have almost no experience with warm freshwater species. So when Tim Elms imparted some of his warm water fly fishing knowledge at the last SFF meeting I listened intently. Fortunately, I had the opportunity to test out some of his tactics at the Taylor Lake outing last month.

On the way to the lake I decided to try out the canal just east of Lake Seminole Park. As advised, I had all my gear prepped so I was able to head to the canal as soon as I was parked. I stayed about ten yards from the shoreline until I spotted a nice sandy nest at the edge of some lily pads.

As I slowly approached I was excited to see a large tilapia guarding its territory. After a couple of attempts I was able to land my fly on the nest. This of course spooked the fish but after several minutes it returned.

Eventually my target started fanning the nest and clearing out debris. I was shocked when I saw the fish actually pick up my fly. As it moved to the edge of the nest I did my best strip-set and promptly pulled the fly from his mouth and watched my quarry dart away.

I eventually moved on to Taylor Lake and repeated the process after finding another nest. This time I got a strike and momentarily had a fish on but was unable to land it. Although the fish won that day it was still exciting to put what I had just learned into practice. Evidently I'll have to spend some time working on my strip-set!

Mike



Chris O'Byrne: Tug-of-War Tilapia



Suncoast Fly Fisher Chris O'Byrne with a tilapia. He recommends slow, sinking retrieves with wooly buggers and Clousers.

Tilapia is a by-catch, but they are fun. They put up a strong tug-of-war fight.

We find them in clean water with very little movement, some structure, 3 feet deep or so.

They take gently on sinking flies presented slowly. Wooly buggers, Clousers, or unicorn Clousers do the trick.

Chris

Jack Collins Blue Ridge, Georgia Rainbow Trout Trip

It was another well-organized north Georgia fishing trip to Blueridge, Georgia at Laughing Bear Lodge thanks to Cliff and Linda Nigh, and Cor, through St. Pete Fishing Outfitters. This expedition was in late April. Cliff's team arrived before us to prepare the lodge for the week of fly fishing ahead.

After settling into our assigned rooms, we greeted the other fly fishers as they arrived, renewed old friendships, and made new ones. Several of us meandered down to the sounds of the flowing river to enjoy the sights and sounds of Fighting Town Creek which flows along the edge of the property.

The evening meal brought us all together for a buffet style feast, which provided additional time to share the excitement and strategies of the weeks fishing ahead.

After dinner Cliff called the group together for a preview of the week ahead and river assignments. He also presented any last-minute safety details and house rules to the sixteen guests. After a good night's rest, we had breakfast which, by the way, was served with a different combination of goodies each day -- scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage, blueberry quiche, fresh fruit and coffee. We topped off our engines for the day ahead.



Jack Collins with a hefty rainbow he caught on Fighting Town Creek.



Group laughter at Laughing Bear Lodge in Blueridge, Georgia in late April.

Fishing was very exciting. I landed some of my largest trout ever. Of course, like most fly fishing, there were rewarding moments of exciting runs from heavy fish mixed with frustrating moments of missed hook sets and broken tippets.

The river has a variety of water to fish including fast, rocky runs, deep pools, and sections of wide, shallow, and easy to wade sandy bottoms. At times spotting fish was quite nerve racking as we sometimes failed to connect with these beautiful, oversized shiny rainbows that glided just a rod length away of our knee-deep position while ignoring our artfully-tied nymph offerings under a strike indicator.

P2/Jack Collins Blue Ridge, Georgia Rainbow Trout Trip

One memorable section narrowed and cascaded over a rocky bottom that emptied into a large deep pool. Bill Scarola was first up with a long cast across current followed by a quick upstream mend to prevent drag. Bill mastered the cast after some coaching and was rewarded with several oversized fish on his 5X tippet. While Bill was busy in his spot, I fished the deep pool with a nymph on a long leader with several nice hookups and some giant rainbows.

The four days of fishing was organized with two guided wading trips, and either an optional float trip or two self-managed trips on local water. Each morning started with each pair of buddies driving to meet up with their guide for a short run to one of three rivers.

One of the first rivers was with guides from Bowman Fly Fishing in Dahlonega. Once at their shop and after introductions to our guide, a short ride brought us to a wade-in section of the **Etowah River**. This section is referred to as the winery because the river land is owned by Montaluce Winery and Restaurant.

Our second river was **Fighting Town Creek** with Cohutta Fishing Company, Blueridge, GA. Most of the water level was low due to little rain in the area this spring; however, there were plenty of fish in several of the deep runs to provide a challenge.

The early morning glare filtering through the canopy obscured some of our first takes on the rippled runs. Casting was clear of most snags except for the occasional overhanging, fly catching, spindly branch. Aaarrrrgh! With the water level being low this year, our best action came in deeper runs and pools. With some coaching from our guide and more accurate casts, our offerings turned near misses into flashes of silver and the highly anticipated tug and hook-set on some nice fish. With better line management and little luck we were soon rewarded with several beautifully colored large rainbows. As we worked our way upstream, we were further rewarded with several smaller parr-marked native fish.

Our third trip was in a drift boat on the cool, clear, dam-controlled, **Toccoa River**. The day started a little cool as we launched but warmed quickly as the sun hit the water. The cool clear swift moving river has a rocky bottom with a mix of shallow wide sections and narrower deep runs. A common maneuver on our drift was to glide over low rocky falls then pull up behind the fall and cast up-stream into the faster water then allow the fly to glide into the deeper seam.

A mix of roll and overhead casts into the faster moving water with a Chubby Chernobyl and nymph dropper was the formula for success. It wasn't long before we were rewarded with some nice rainbows. We also caught several trout in other sections of our drift including a nice sized brown trout by Bill Scarola.

Our week came to an end on Friday with smiles all around. We were very pleased with water selection, where very professional guides with excellent coaching skills and fly selection provided memorable fishing experiences. Our casting arms and shoulders had been tested with giant fish. Our reflexes were improved with some very selective trout.

Many thanks go out to Cliff, Linda and Cor who were outstanding hosts. They had arranged fantastic fishing opportunities, spacious and comfortable accommodation along with superb meals at Laughing Bear Lodge.

Jack

Cliff Nigh North Georgia Rainbow Trout Expedition

For the past six years, St Pete Fishing Outfitters, aka St Pete Fly Shop, has sponsored an all -inclusive Rainbow Trout trip to North Georgia. The trip included lodging, meals, guide services, and private water access.

As you can see, SFF was duly represented again this year. Some of our members have been on all six trips!

This was a challenging year in that North Georgia mirrored Florida with its lack of rain. Waters were clear and low and the fish were picky and "soft" SFF members rose to the challenge, however, as evidenced by these photos. The 2027 trip is already in the preliminary planning stages.



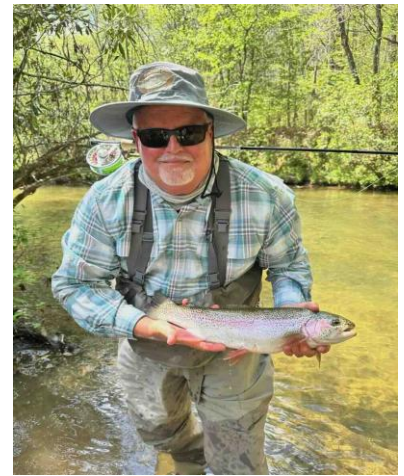
SFF member Cliff Nigh of St. Pete Outfitters



Florida FFI Council Pres. Rick Warfel



SFF Treasurer Karen Warfel



SFF President David Redd



Bill "Scar" Scarola



Yaquelin Gonzalez-Mas



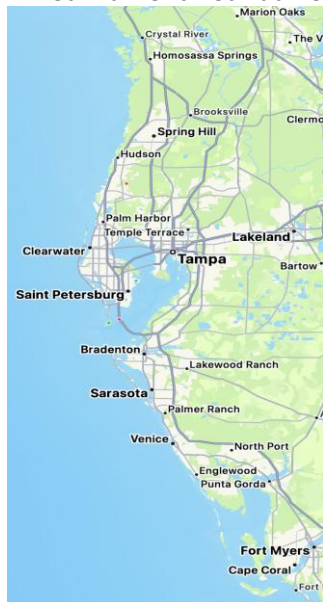
Brian Shoyer, not an SFF member, with a trophy rainbow.

Suncoast Fly Fishers' Lady Fly Tournament



Founder and director Samantha Tallyn has announced the details for the 2026 Suncoast Lady Fly women's fly fishing tournament. This year's competition, September 12, is the third annual and increasingly successful event. The Captain's Meeting is at 6 pm on September 11, and the Awards Banquet is at 6 pm on September 12th. Both events will be held at Tiki Docks Skyway in South St. Pete. Bob Branham and his daughter, are guest speakers and will lead a panel on their father-daughter fishing experiences.

Tournament Boundaries



Boundaries: Crystal River to Sanibel Island. (Apple Maps)

The winner will be the angler(s) catching the two longest gamefish (total inches)-- snook, redfish, and spotted seatrout -- and they must be caught on the fly on Florida's west coast. The north boundary is the south edge of the Crystal River Power Plant channel. The south boundary is the southern tip of Sanibel Island near Fort Myers Beach.

Additional cash prizes

- Top 3 teams for longest length measured (\$1,000, \$500, \$300)
- Team closest to 24 inches (\$250)
- Smallest trout measured
- Largest pinfish measured
- 1st and 2nd Place Youth Teams
- 50/50 Calcutta Ladyfish
- Largest Ladyfish, \$50.



Samantha Tallyn, founder and director of the Suncoast Fly Fisher's Lady Fly women's fly fishing tournament.

Tim Elms certified as an FFI Casting Instructor



Tim with his FFI certification advisors, Jeff Ferguson and Dave Baron

Suncoast Fly Fisher Tim Elms has passed all the tests and Fly Fishers International has certified him as an FFI Casting Instructor.

As a certified instructor Tim joins a global network of professionals committed to teaching safe, effective, and enjoyable fly casting techniques.

This is the globally-recognized standard of excellent in fly casting instruction. Candidates must have advanced casting skills, understand the mechanics of fly casting, and be able to teach anglers of all skills levels. The certification process includes both written and demonstration examinations.

The FFI Casting Instructor and Master Casting Instructor programs are widely respected for maintaining high instructional standards and advancing the sport through education.

"Earning my CI certification is something I've worked toward for a long time," said Tim. "There is a very big casting scene on the west side of Florida and I'm proud to be listed with some of the best. Being able to share that knowledge with others—especially in a way that helps them succeed on the water—is incredibly rewarding."

In addition to being a member of Suncoast Fly Fishers, Tim is an active member of Tampa Bay Fly Fishers and Sanibel Fly Fishers. Tim said with the CI certification he will continue to teach and to bring more opportunities for fly fishers to make longer and more accurate casts so they can enjoy the casting process and also catch more fish

On most Saturdays Tim regularly leads "Caster Ready" accuracy and distance casting practice sessions starting at 7:30 at Meadowland Park in St. Petersburg. at 7501 14th Street North in St. Petersburg. Elms and Joe Mahler, who leads a Ft. Myers practice group, started a new 8-weight fly rod casting tournaments so Meadowland Park practices will include preparing to score well in that event, too.

In November the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club hosts the *Big Gun Shootout* at Picnic Island Park in Tampa. St. Pete practice for this event will begin in late summer. Who won it last year? That's right. Tim

ICYMI

Tim launched a super-long fly cast last month, his best ever. And How long was it?

Answer: **135 feet**

One on one lessons available

As an FFI-certified casting instructor Tim is available to help individuals take their casting skills to higher levels. Email Tim at

tim@haulinfoats.com.



Tim and Joe Mahler (who leads a large group in Fort Myers) have branded their events as Florida Fly Casting Games, sometimes abbreviated as FlaCast. Tee shirts, sweatshirts and other items can be purchased on [ETSY](https://www.etsy.com).

###

Tony Piazza: Tierra Verde Super Seatrout

Tom Findlay, a new member, invited me out for a day of fishing near Tierra Verde.

Fishing was slow but we did manage to bring in a healthy sea trout.

Tony



Tony Piazza with a sooper-doooper speckled trout he caught fishing with Tom Findley near Tierra Verde.



Amanda Bottenberg with a 33-inch, 9 pound IGFA record gator trout she caught on the fly with 6 pound tippet in the Indian River Lagoon near Titusville. (Credit: Coastal Angler magazine)

World Record Spotted Seatrout

The all-tackle world record spotted seatrout weighed 17 lbs, 7 ounces. The IGFA's world record spotted seatrout on the fly is 15-lbs, 6 ounces. It was caught in Port Isabel, Texas.

Here are all the IGFA spotted seatrout world records:

[IGFA World Records for spotted seatrout](#)

Mark Hays: St. George Island, Walter Fuller Park, Dock Lights



Mark Hays with a nice redfish he caught on the annual vacation on St. George Island in the Florida panhandle.

And here are a few photos from the last week-long vacation Mark and Maryann took on St. George Island in the Florida panhandle.



The best way to end the day is to sit on the third floor porch and watch the sun sink in the west.

Bass in Walter Fuller Park Pond

On May 3 I fished the pond where our club meets -- Walter Fuller Park. It was cloudy and windy and I caught 3 bass in 30 minutes on a brown muddler fly, #4. hook. We don't have to travel far to catch fish in St. Pete.



Mark Hays with a bass he caught on May 3 in the lake at Walter Fuller Park in St. Pete.

Dock Lights at Midnight

I got out last week and fished some dock lights around midnight. I caught most on a white bucktail deceiver. I was back in bed by 5 am.

- 3 mangrove snapper - largest 15"
- 7 trout 14" to 19"
- 2 snook landed - 20-24"
- 1 snookzilla lost



Mark caught his bass on a muddler minnow.



Mark with one of the three bass he caught on May 3.

Kevin Kelly and Bruce Bible Fly Fish the 10,000 Islands

New member Bruce Bible and Kevin Kelly took a quick 3 day trip to Everglades City in April. We hired a guide, Capt. Scott Taylor, for Friday and Saturday because we wanted to fish the 10,000 island area where a guide is more of a necessity than a luxury. (You need to find your way home, you know.)

We had great weather both days with 2-6 mph winds, just enough to keep the mosquitoes to a minimum.

We were targeting Snook and we did catch a fair number of fish though not in the trophy category. We also lost a few bigger fish. There was a fishing tournament going on out of Chokoloskee which made finding fishing sites a little more competitive.

Our stay at the Ivey House was both comfortable and convenient since Camille's Restaurant was a short walk out the back. Not fancy but good food.

All together we had an enjoyable trip and look forward to going back soon.



Kevin with a fight-worthy snook.



Bruce told this little snook to be more careful next time.



Kevin places his fly near the mangrove island shoreline.

Bruce Evensen / Bill Scarola Host Monday Fly-Tying Classes Open to All

Bruce Evensen: Bruce's Worm Fly



Bruce Evensen

Robert Fischer led fly tyers through the steps at Bruce Evensen's fly tying studio on Monday, April 20

SFF members and guests are welcome to come to Bruce's fly tying studio and tie flies every Monday starting at 6 pm. Come early to get a good seat. No charge. Bruce's studio is next to his house at 531 80th Ave. N. St. Pete. Materials and vises are available if you need them.



Bill Scarola

Bruce's Worm Fly..meet at 531 80 ave. no. St. Pete in Bru's studio next to his home. we start at 6 pm

MATERIALS:

- a- Worms, provided by Bruce. Bring your own if you like.
 - b- Head, Marabou, pick your favorite colors.
 - c- Hook, size 4 or 2 hook. bru doesn't show it but I Believe a Bend back hook will also work here well !
 - d- Eyes, Bead chain and barbell eyes. sizes to match hook size.
 - e- Thread, matching color to your marabou.
- Bruce shows two styles of worm with the attached marabou.. mixing and matching colors will give you some diversity!!



Bruce's Worm Fly

John Connolly: JC's Clouser Special

John Connolly created this fly and he led fly tyers through the steps on April 13.

MATERIALS:

- 1- Tail, fibers of your choice, Steve Farrarh, EP, Rope fibers, etc.. keep in mind that SF fibers have flash built in..
that's what John used in the pix.
- 2- eyes, medium barbell tied clouser style.
- 3- head- any brush materials in your choice of colors,
- 4- Dubbing- any color you choose, I might suggest Shaggy dubbing would work well here. It will give a bit more action to the fly.
- 5- Legs, silly legs in any color.
- 6- Hook- 3407 size 2



Bruce Evensen / Bill Scarola Host Monday Fly-Tying Classes Open to All.
Mondays at 6 pm. 531 80th Ave., North. St. Petersburg



Bruce Evensen



Bill Scarola

Brian Henderson: Deer Hair Mouse

Brian Henderson led fly tyers through the steps on May 4

MATERIALS:

1. Hook: B10S, 4107 or another standard type hook. Brian likes size 2 but says smaller or larger hooks work also.

2 Thread: Tan or brown 210 flat wax

3 Body Top: light brown, dark brown or natural deer body or belly hair. Brian has some and will share!

4 Body Bottom: white or the same/lighter color as the top, deer belly or body hair - again, Brian has some and will share.

(Note on deer hair: Deer belly is easier to flare but deer body hair also works. - Do not use buck tail. Use a razor blade to shape the body.)

5. Tail: Thin Rabbit Zonker, not crosscut, brown or black. Could also use a thin strip of leather or some small chenille in similar colors.

6. Eyes - 1mm or 2mm stick-ons.

7. Ears-Foam or leather



Abby Gambrel: Clawsome

Abby Gambrel led fly tyers through the steps on Monday, May 11

MATERIALS:

1. Hook: Sizes 1-4, Mustad 3407 works fine

2. Tail: Ultra chenille in tan

3. Fluff: Tan marabou

4. Flash: a few strands of gold or pearl flash

5. Body: EP Tarantula Hairy Legs Brush 1" (brown/tan pictured). It's okay to use any brush, or longer Palmer chenille, or maybe a shaggier dubbing...anything to give some body and movement)

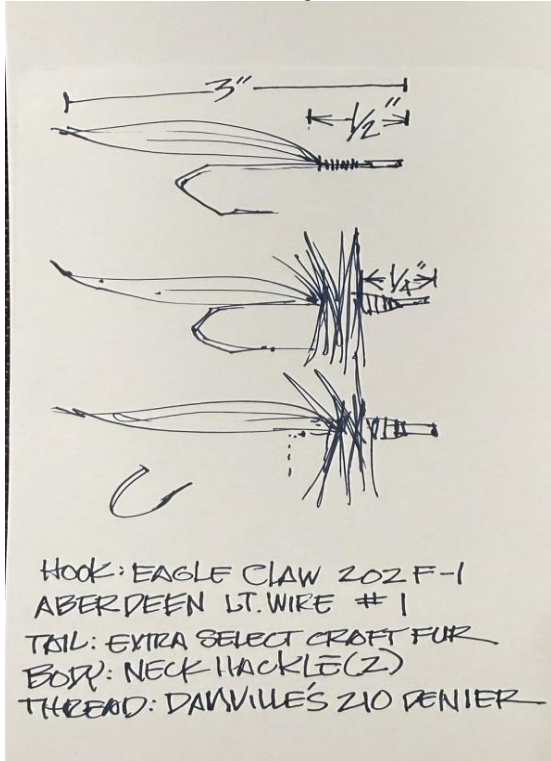
6. Eyes: Barbell eyes for some weight. Optional: LEAD wire to weight body more.

7. Thread: tan or corresponding color

Colors? Try other colors for different parts. Keep same color, or mix and match.



Joe Mahler's Casting Practice Fly



A slice of truth and a smile



Used Gear for Sale

Ted Rich is selling his Gheenoe and trailer

Package includes an 8hp Mercury outboard and a trolling motor. hel\$ Email Ted at kjortr@gmail.com just listed it on Craigslist for \$3,000. It comes with a number for things. If you want to add to the newsletter, just say Gheenoe with Mercury 8hp, trailer and trolling motor. For the club, I will ask \$2500. If anyone is interested, they can call (house number 941-764-8089) or email me.



Bill AuCoin: Flyfisher Flyover



Post-spawn bass fishing. --Bass spawning is pretty much over in middle Florida so this new article by editor/writer Marshall Cutchin is very timely. He writes think of post spawning as three overlapping daily fish behaviors calling for three overlapping strategies and fly pattern categories. ([Midcurrent](#))

Did you hear about the new rock mine in the Everglades? -- There's a plan for a rock mine excavation inside the U.S. Sugar agricultural area the everglades. Fishing guides aren't happy about it. Recently the parties agreed to reduce the size of the initial excavation from 2,242 acres to 1,337 acres. Something to keep our eyes on. ([Midcurrent](#))

America's dirtiest river? Today it's probably the Potomac River since the break of that big sewer pipe a few months ago. Here's a list of some of the most endangered rivers with a plea to start paying attention and...HELP! ([American Rivers](#))

Tariffs affect fly gear, too, you know. Orvis has been downsizing to adjust for the lower sales caused by tariffs on foreign-made fly equipment. A lot of employees have been terminated. Thirty-one stores and five outlets are closing. ([Hatch](#))

Go West young man. West Marine may be filing for Chapter 11 bankruptcy. Debt, high rents, and other expenses are the issues. There's are West Marine stores in Tyrone Mall and on Gulf to Bay in Clearwater. ([Soundings Trade Only](#))

First liar doesn't have a chance -- It's okay to lie, but be sure to say that your fish was smaller than it actually was. Hmmmmm? Karma? ([Hatch](#))

Can you tie the cigarette butt fly? Fish are dumb. They eat cigarette butts, bare hooks, gravel. Even our flies don't look like real flies. Is this a joke? ([Flylab](#))

###

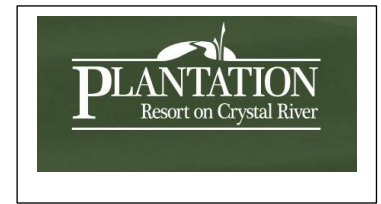
Six 90-minute Zoom sessions scheduled through August and open to all FFI members and council or club volunteers. Fly Fishers International is offering free online Fly Casting Skills Development (FCSD) Facilitator Training sessions in 2026, giving FFI members and council and club volunteers the tools they need to launch or strengthen FCSD events in their communities.

<https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/News/free-online-training-for-fcsd-facilitators-now-availabl>

ORVIS[®]
www.orvis.com/



www.stpetefishingoutfitters.com



www.plantationoncrystalriver.com/


FLY FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL
www.flyfishersinternational.org/



www.etsy.com/shop/PoppaBrucesFlies



www.billjacksons.com

CORTLAND 
WORLD FAMOUS FISHING LINE   SINCE 1915
www.cortlandline.com



www.thomasbruce.com/

Fly Fishing Charters St. Petersburg/Tampa Bay
Captain Andy Austin
Phone: 954-821-1390
Email: andyaustin519@gmail.com
Website: andysfishingcharters.com
U.S.C.G Licensed and Insured
Full & 1/2 Day Trips
Inshore and Near Coastal



Tarpon, Snook, Redfish
Speckled Trout & More



www.flyfishingwesternwyoming.com/

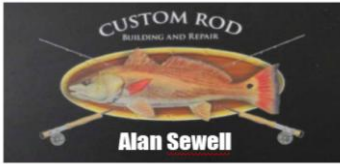


TOM DEBELLA
BROKER - REALTOR
SOUTHLAND REI

727-481-6056
tom@tomdebella.com
tomdebella.myhome.hq.biz



*Special Friends of
Suncoast Fly Fishers*



Email Alan Sewell
sewellalan@yahoo.com



**BRUCE EVENSEN
CUSTOM FLIES**



Email
Evensenb@gmail.com



www.nighflyrods.com



Email Jim Swann at
jalswann@aol.com



www.bobleestire.com/



www.carbonmarine.com/



www.metalfab-inc.com