

# Flies & Lies

NEWSLETTER OF THE FLYFISHERS  
OF NORTHWEST FLORIDA  
JULY 2009

THE FLYFISHERS OF  
NORTHWEST FLORIDA  
PO BOX 1041  
PENSACOLA, FL 32591  
www.flyfishpensacola.  
com

## PRESIDENT

Larry Goodman  
(850) 433-5135  
trakr1@aol.com

## VICE-PRESIDENT

Jerry Giles  
(850) 994-9946,  
FlyFisherman1942@aol.com

## SECRETARY

Bob Willice  
(850) 934-6586  
lastboat3@msn.com

## TREASURER

Larry Sisney  
(850) 474-1433  
lsisney@cox.net

## NEWSLETTER

Jerry Aldridge  
(850) 478-9255  
jamayfly@yahoo.com

## MONTHLY MEETINGS

Meetings at Miraflores Park  
17th Avenue between  
Belmont and LaRua

**BUSINESS MEETING**  
1ST TUESDAY, 7 PM

**BULL SESSION**  
2ND THURSDAY, 6:30  
PM

**CASTING & TYING  
CLINIC**  
3RD SATURDAY, 9 AM

## *Appalachians Smallmouths and Trout Fishing* *Tom Regina*



The fly fishing for smallmouth bass, rainbow, and brown trout in the Southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and Tennessee was mighty fine; as fine as any western trip I have experienced... no, not as fine - finer. In three days of fishing, I caught and released well over 100 fish. Some small, some larger, and a few larger yet. This trip, one could say, started in October 2008. I make an annual trip to Maine in October to fish for landlocked salmon and brook trout from the East Outlet, Kennebec River, in the Moosehead Lake Region near Greenville, ME. On my return from Maine last year I had scheduled a float trip on the New River in Virginia with Judson Conway, owner of Elk Creek Outfitters located in Boone, NC. The night before the New River float, I called Judson to make final arrangements. Judson said, "We have had two cold days and nights and the water in the New River has cooled and put the smallies' off the bite. I could take your money and do the float but you probably won't catch any bronzesbacks". Most guides would have made the float and said, "You should have been here yesterday/last week", and pocketed the money. Because of Judson's' honesty and attitude I rescheduled the trip for June 2009.

I was to leave Pensacola on Friday June 5 and drive to Atlanta and on to Independence, VA on the 7<sup>th</sup>. 2:30 PM, June 4, email from Judson "New River Warning. The New is muddied up and likely will not clear for 7 to 10 days - if the rains keep away". However, Judson has another plan. We can float the Nolichucky and Toe Rivers in North Carolina, the Holston, South Holston, or the Watauga River in Tennessee. I am on my way and will end up fishing the Nolichucky, Toe, and Watauga Rivers.

Continued page 3



## Appalachians Smallmouths and Trout Fishing.... Tom Regina



The North Toe River heads up (headwaters) east of Minneapolis, NC, near Newland, NC. The North Toe flows south through a mountainous area then turns west entering the Toe Valley. Below the junction with the South Toe River, it gets considerably wider and becomes known as the Toe River. From the Toe's confluence with the Cane River near the community of Hunt-dale, NC, the Nolichucky River is born. The North Toe, Toe, and Nolichucky Rivers form a boundary between Yancey and Mitchell Counties, NC. The Nolichucky River eventually enters Unicoi County, TN.

On days one and three, with Elk Creek Outfitters guide Drew Scharns at the oars of the most comfortable inflatable I have ever fished from we drifted down the Toe and Nolichucky in North Carolina. The raft has no casting braces or ridged inside frames, the seats are mounted high on a ridged top frame so one can cast and fish all day from a sitting position. The 8-mile float took us over slow water, fast water and through many rapids, adding to the thrill of the fly fishing adventure. During each day's float, I caught lots of smallmouth bass, some spotted and rock bass, and several types of sunfish or *brim*. The smallmouth bass ranged in size from about 10 inches to 19 inches. Spotted and rock bass were smaller, ranging 7 to 10 inches and the brim smaller at about 3 to 6 inches. All the fish were taken with a surface popper. The largest and all but two bronzebacks were taken tight to the bank, as were the spotted and rock bass and the brim. On day one, I caught well over 20 fish and on day three more than 50 thanks to the expert tutelage of Drew.



Tucked away in the northeast corner of Tennessee is the Watauga River. According to Judson Conway, and others, the Watauga is one of the southeast's "Best kept secrets". The Watauga heads up on the slopes of Grandfather Mountain in Watauga County, North Carolina. The river then flows across the Tennessee state line at Johnson County. The word "Watauga" comes from the Cherokee and is believed to mean "the land beyond". However some interpret Watauga to mean "beautiful water" or "beautiful river". It is a beautiful river.



My second day of fishing in the Southern Appalachian Mountains found Drew and me in a drift boat floating the Watauga River in Tennessee. At the boat launch, a heavy layer of early morning fog obscured the beauty of the river. Bending low you could see under the thick fog layer. Standing on a seat in the boat you could see over the fog. We started fishing in the fog, but within minutes the fog had lifted and the exquisiteness of the Watauga River scenery was exposed. The characteristics of the Watauga are similar to the Toe and Nolichucky; slow water, fast water, and rapids. However, the water is cold and clear - unlike the warmer stained water of the Toe and "Chucky".



## *Appalachians Smallmouths and Trout Fishing... Tom Regina*

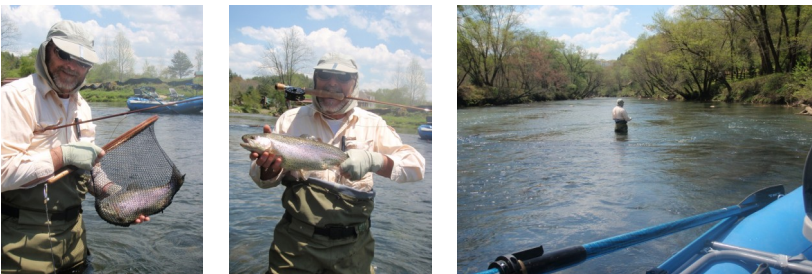
The Watauga supports a vast number of rainbow and brown trout with the smaller trout holding in slow deep water, which we passed over in favor of the generally larger wild fish. My first fish was a 16-inch bow. Then more rainbows in the 10 to 14-inch range, and some smaller browns, 7 to 10-inches. My last fish was a healthy and strong 20 inch rainbow on 6X tippet. Drew has to get on the oars and chase the fish down. Another mighty fine day of fly fishing in Tennessee with more than 20 trout brought to hand and released... but who is counting and measuring? Not me. It must be Drew.



My new strategy... more fishing for bronzebacks. More trout fishing too. In fact, I plan a return next year in May to the Toe, Watauga, and Nolichucky and other rivers with Elk Creek Outfitters. Perhaps I will get to Virginia's New River... finally.

As you probably conclude from the forgoing I had a mighty fine time fishing with Elk Creek Outfitters (ECO) and highly recommend them. ECO offers float trips, wilderness walk/wade trips, overnight trips, and fly fishing schools. ECO even offers guided float trips for musky. That's right Muskeg-lunge... native to parts of Tennessee and North Carolina. For more information and rates and dates Contact Judson Conway at Elk Creek Outfitters, 828-264-6497 or email to [info@ecoflyfishing.com](mailto:info@ecoflyfishing.com) or [Judson@ecoflyfishing.com](mailto:Judson@ecoflyfishing.com). Also check out the web site at [www.ecoflyfishing.com](http://www.ecoflyfishing.com).

## *Around the Bay... and Further Away*



**Bill Locher on the Toccoa River in northern Georgia with his new cane rod and a football with fins**

**From Milt Mays in Colorado**....Hope all is well there. I miss the salt water fishing, but not the humidity and hurricanes. Things are beginning to heat up here after a very wet June. All the reservoirs are full and just about every river is unfishable due to heavy runoff. In the past the tailwaters have been a pretty safe bet, but this year they have even increased almost every one of them. I tried the Frying Pan River last week. Unfortunately they doubled the flows from 325cfs to 650cfs three days before I got there. So, I didn't get the great dry fly fishing the Pan is famous for. I did hook the biggest rainbow I have ever seen at the Toilet Bowl Hole, just at the dam outlet. I had 4x on and was able to pull him up enough to see the full size of him. Must have been easily a yard long and, like all the fish in that first mile, very thick from eating mysis shrimp. He looked the size of some of the big redfish I used to catch in February there in Pensacola. I estimated about 20 lbs. But, after that little teaser he decided to get back into the 600+ cfs current and flipped his tail and broke me off. I caught a couple of 16 inch browns before him and they were as fat as footballs and so firm and muscled that I barely got them in. Next time I go with a bigger net and a buddy to net them and put on 2x.

I was wondering if anyone is coming out to the FFF National conclave held here in Loveland at the end of July? If so, let me know. Perhaps we can get together.

Also, I'm curious about the Yellowstone trip this year. Lynn and I were thinking about somewhere around 13-19 Sept being in Madison and then Slough Creek. If anyone is coming out, it'd be good to see you and maybe do some fishing or have a beer or whatever. Hope the fish are biting and all goes smoothly without any...you know...don't really want to say the H word....Milt Mays