NEWSLETTER

wmflyfishingclub.com

Established 1996 P.O. Box 2187, Pinetop, AZ 85935 November, 2026



PRESIDENTS COLUMN – November 2026

Well, we finally got some rain, hail, winds and even a tornado. We must be careful what we wish for. Our back yard weather station recorded 21.11 inches of rain since we installed it last May, certainly needed it and welcomed it.

What started out as an idea and wishful thinking for a Fly-Fishing Expo in our area has grown into a major event to be held at the Hon-Dah Casino Resort in May of 2027. We have had so much interest from several businesses and other like-minded organizations that it has, at times, been a bit overwhelming. We formed a 3-person steering committee to review the different aspects and assignments, and it is coming together very well. We have received several very good ideas and suggestions from you, the membership, and they are greatly appreciated. It is refreshing to have your participation.

Our November meeting will feature several of our members tying their 2 favorite fly patterns as our main feature of the meeting. The focus will be on patterns for the lakes in our area.

We plan to have more educational, teaching and learning opportunities at our future meetings. So, if any of you have a specific topic, procedure or method that you would like to see, please reach out to a board member with your ideas or suggestions.

Our ranks have thinned quite a bit with the annual migration to the warmer climates as Winter approaches. We wish you all safe journeys, Happy Holidays, stay well and please keep in touch, you are important to our club.

Tight Lines,
Mike Whitney
Your Club President

Meeting—November 18th

Held at White Mountain Nature Center

425 S. Woodland Rd. Lakeside 5:30 raffle and chatting

Tying Special Lake Flies-come get some great ideas.

Still doing card raffles on a rod and reel and

X Diamond Ranch Fishing

Fall Fishing Outings Lift the Spirits of AVFF Veterans and Volunteers!

by Rich Simmons, President

As you all know this summer has been tough on fish, and fly fishing. Low water levels resulting in high water temperatures and algae in many waters have shortened some trips and cancelled others. But late September and October have made up for it!

Our annual outing to X Diamond Ranch and Silver Creek for the opening of the catch and release season and the opening of the upper section of Silver Creek was challenging, to say the least. Heavy rains days before these events threatened to cancel the activities at Silver Creek with AZGFD, but it was held with minor inconveniences. We were able to fish the Bunch, Tunnel and River reservoirs in Greer with vets catching a few yellow perch at River, which was so high that water was cascading over the spillway! The event at Silver Creek with AZGFD was not approved until the day before. We were at the gate early and led into the upper section via the dirt road that goes to the hatchery. The only parking was about ¼ mile from the upper most section known as the "hog pen". One of our veteran participants, Justin Ellenberg, new to fly fishing, caught 3 huge rainbows with each being over 24 inches. They were all caught on a black wooly bugger he tied during one of our fly tying classes the previous week! Other participants caught a few smaller rainbows, and one Apache trout made it into the net. Overall, the catch rate was smaller than previous years. The AZGFD Silver Creek staff did a great job under difficult conditions and Cinda Howard lent a hand with fly selection, rigging and coaching our vets. Our thanks to all of them for a great event!

We made a last-minute decision to put in another appearance at Silver Creek in the last week of the month and that trip was another success story! It was a one-night trip that resulted in most of the members catching fish, some in the 4–5-pound range and setting some personal bests like biggest trout ever caught and the first fish caught on a fly rod! It was another great trip funded by Flo's Foundation and led by Glenn Davis.

And if that isn't enough, we had fly tying classes and education classes too! We also had an Introduction to Fly Fishing class with the Ability 360 Rehabilitation organization. Things will be a little less busy in November, and we start off the month with a trip to the Green Valley Lakes in Payson next week!

We are always looking for disabled veterans to join our program and with our busy schedule we are actively looking for volunteers to support the program. We can use your help, so please contact me if you would like more information about the program and how you can help! You can email or call me at the number below or visit the AVFF website at: www.azveteransff.org

Tight lines and blue skies,

Rich Simmons, President
Arizona Veterans Fly Fishing
Richbs67@outlook.com 480-268-4297









Opening Day Silver Creek





Fly Fishing and Getting Old by Jim Strogen, Journalist and DFC member. Writes for Payson Roundup

My wife made my grandkids and their parents chuckle when she showed them how she has to sometimes hold her iPad out at arms's length *like* an old person. Even though I too got a smile out of her assumption that she isn't quite old yet, I am three years older than she is and still like doing stuff I have done my whole life.

I love fishing and hiking along Rim Country streams, and am always happy after a great day on the water; but I am usually a bit stiff the next morning. As I have gotten older, I spend as much time as possible fishing from the bank to avoid slippery rocks, and I have been using a wading staff every time I stream fish for probably twenty years or more. That third leg is just as helpful on the bank as it is in the stream.

Like my wife, and even though I wear bifocals, I too have some vanity about my eyesight. So far except in really poor light, I have resisted adding a second pair of magnifiers to my hat to help me tie on my flies. Instead, sometimes I have to shift my position to get the light just right, or to find a dark background to complete the knot.

Besides magnifiers on the bill of a ball cap, there are a few other tools that can help if the eyes of the hook seem to be getting smaller. A handy tool that I have on my lanyard is a magnetic fly threader. There is a channel for the tippet to run in that lines up with the hook eye that is held in place by the magnet in the device. Another tool that works well for me are the preloaded posts of small flies in my dry fly box. There are several flies on each of the built-in fly threaders in the fly box to choose from. I simply have to pass my tippet through the large threader hole, and pull the fly off the threader post and it is ready for me to tie a knot.

I like to use two flies when I fish and there are times that size and color of the flies I use make a huge difference in my ability to see the flies and set the hook properly. I will often tie on a light colored fly and a dark colored fly. In a forested stream setting, the dappled light makes one or the other fly more visible even in the same drift.

Then there are times that the fish require a long cast and will only take a small dry fly. In those situations I often will tie on a larger, more visible fly as the dropper with the smaller, darker fly as the trailing fly. Sometimes the larger fly will get grabbed, but more often, I look for a rise about two feet behind my dropper fly to set the hook.

Most fly fishers are familiar with using an indicator on an upstream cast into a run or pool and watching for the indicator to pause or dip indicating that a trout has grabbed the wet fly drifting under the surface. This technique has helped me catch a lot of trout.

I often use an indicator when I fish downstream, especially when the typically dark fly be comes too hard to track the farther it drifts below me. I really like to use this strategy when I want to dance my wooly bugger or leech in front of a log jam or sweeper that would normally be a hazard if I didn't know exactly where my fly was. Using an indicator downstream lets me know that my indicator is three feet above my fly so I can work my fly within inches of the snag and feel confident that I will not hook up on the brush.

Indicators work well in lake settings too, but there are times that I can accomplish the same thing without an indicator by tracking the end of my fly line. This technique works very well off of a dock when the fish are eight or more feet deep. For it to be effective, it is important that you keep the fly line, leader and tippet in a straight line while it sinks. This allows you to see any quick movement at the fly line to leader connection point. If it moves differently, set the hook.

Moving the fly along the
Fly Fishing and Getting Old continues….,

dock in a straight line at the desired depth and pausing occasionally will allow you to continue to track that fly line to leader connection point and be ready to set the hook.

Besides failing eyesight, another factor that contributes to knot tying trouble is lack of practice. Take the time to practice at home under good light. You can even make it competitive to help you work on your dexterity for when you get out on the water. I have taught my grandkids a variety of fly fishing knots and they like to see if they can tie the fly to tippet and leader to tippet knots quicker than me. No grandkids to race? Time yourself and try to beat your time.

Imagine the trout starting to rise, and you need to rig your rod and securely tie on your fly as quickly as you can before the hatch ends. With colder weather, this is a great time to get quicker with your knot tying at the kitchen table.



Magnetic fly threader



Magnifiers on the bill of hat



Threading posts in dry fly box
Photos by Jim Strogen

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Rod Buchanan from DFC wrote to New Mexico to get honest scoop.

I sent the following email to Kirk Patten who is the Chief of Fisheries at the State of New Mexico Department of Game and Fish:

Hi Mr. Patten, my name is Rod, Buchanan, and I am the conservation chair for Desert Fly Casters. We are a fly fishing club in the Phoenix Arizona area with about 260 members. We heard a rumor that New Mexico Game and Fish might be starting an effort to decrease the brown trout population in the San Juan. Could you please let me know if this is true and/or provide any additional information you are able to share? We bring dozens of anglers annually to the San Juan, including Veterans, so we have an interest in knowing what is happening there. Thanks, Rod Buchanan

And this is his response:

Hi Rod. No, I am not aware of any effort to reduce the brown trout population in the San Juan tailwater. If you have any additional questions, let me know. Kirk

Arizona Stocks 350 Microchipped Gila Trout in Grapevine Creek

- *October 26, 2026*

Arizona Game and Fish Department (AZGFD) staff carried 350 hatchery-raised Gila trout in buckets into a remote part of the Bradshaw Mountains on October 8 and released them into Grapevine Creek.

Fish biologists retrieved the Iron Creek lineage of Gila trout from southwestern New Mexico after the Sacaton Fire in 2026.

Before turning them loose, biologists measured each fish and implanted a microchip tag so they can track how the trout grow, survive and spread through the watershed, according to the department's release. Emily Keister, a senior native trout and chub specialist at AZGFD, said stocking hatchery-raised fish is "really important for conservation," and that "for these recovery efforts to be successful, we need to better understand how they are adapting to wild environments." Crews also stocked Chase and Bonita creeks along the Mogollon Rim in October.

Grapevine is one of two Arizona recovery streams open to Gila trout fishing, along with Dude Creek, and both run under seasonal catch-and-release rules. AZGFD first stocked Gila trout there in 2009. After the 2017 Goodwin Fire burned through the creek, the department stocked 19,000 eyed eggs in April 2019, and Grapevine opened to catch-and-release angling in 2021, according to a 2022 Desert Fishes Council abstract Keister co-wrote with Zach Beard. AZGFD asks anyone fishing for Gila or Apache trout to fill out a survey after each trip, and a map of Gila trout waters is on its Arizona Trout Challenge page.

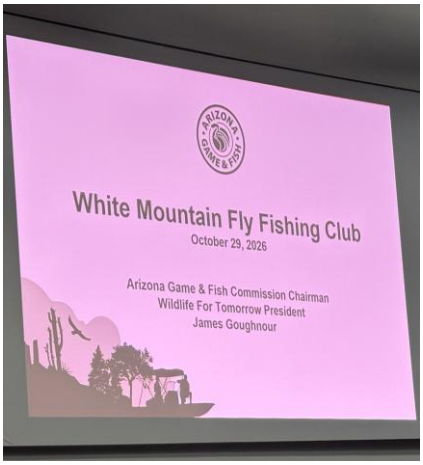
The Grapevine fish came from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Mora National Fish Hatchery in New Mexico. This summer, Mora also took in 78 wild Gila trout from Iron Creek in New Mexico's Gila Wilderness, home to a genetically distinct lineage, after biologists flew into the Sacaton Fire zone by helicopter to net them before forecast rain could wash ash and debris into the creek, the Service reported in September. The plan is for their offspring to go back into streams in New Mexico and Arizona, mainly for recovery, though anglers may get a shot at them too.



AZGFD staff return Gila trout to mountain streams



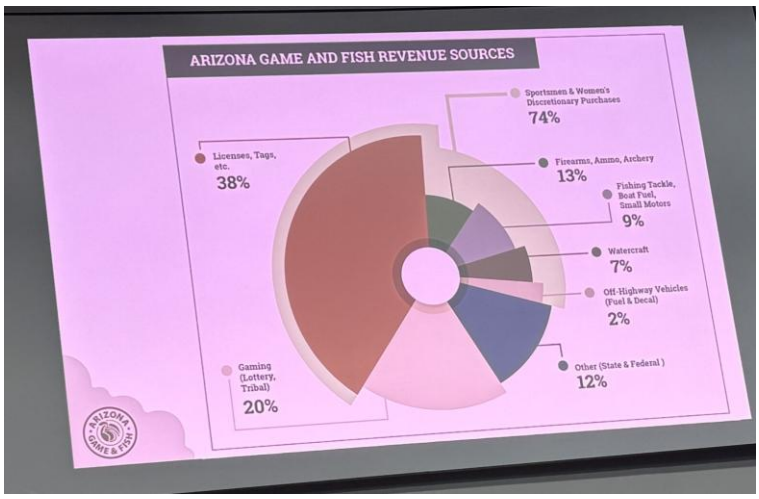
October General meeting –
Moved from normal meeting time to one day later







Jim Groughnour, Chairman of the AZGFD Commission.





CLEAN WATER ACT from the RETROSPECT

On October 18, 1972, the Clean Water Act became law in the United States.

Following centuries of reckless treatment of America's bodies of water, the act placed strict regulations on water pollution and enacted quality controls for the nation's water for the first time in history. The legislation followed several horrifying revelations about the state of U.S. waterways in the 1960s, including a 1968 survey that revealed pollution in the Chesapeake Bay had resulted in millions of dollars of lost revenue for fishermen; a 1969 study that showed bacteria levels in the Hudson River were over 170 times greater than the legal limit; a 1969 revelation that pollution from local food processing plants killed 26 million fish in a single lake in Florida; and the infamous fire on the Cuyahoga River near Cleveland, which was caused by an oil slick.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) was established by President Nixon's administration in 1970, but despite a positive environmental track record, the president originally vetoed the Clean Water Act after both houses of Congress approved it by a wide margin due to cost concerns. The legislature overruled his veto the following morning and the bill officially became law on October 18, 1972.

The act mandated the protection of waterways with a "significant nexus" to navigable waters; established a framework for identifying, licensing, and enforcing standards on originators of single-source contamination (such as factories or sewage treatment plants); and included many additional provisions for identifying and cleaning up water pollution. Most actions related to the Clean Water Act were carried out by the recently formed EPA. Since the Clean Water Act went into effect in 1972, levels of water pollution in the U.S. have greatly decreased, but there is still more work to do today as many American waterways still do not meet quality standards.

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Which fly should it be? November meeting is all about fly tying – Don't miss it. November 18th – this will be a learning meeting. Lots of chatting

Pheasant Tail

Wooley Bugger



Zebra Midge

Parachute Adams

Elk hair Caddis

WMFF MISSION STATEMENT:

The Mission Statement of the White Mountain Fly Fishing Club is: "To assist in the development and maintenance of fly fishing opportunities and to promote and participate in fly fishing in its many forms."






Steve Berry-Montana; Hudson, Silver Creek; Mike Styvaert's fish/guide; Kitty Wiemelt/guide San Juan

White Mountain Fly Fishing Club Board—2025-2026

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