



TIGHT LINES

July 2020 Newsletter of the Rabun Chapter (522) Trout Unlimited

The mission of the Rabun Chapter of Trout Unlimited is to conserve, protect, and restore Northeast Georgia's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

[CLICK HERE](#)

to visit our Award Winning Website!



July Chapter Meeting

"Meet Your Game Warden"

Tuesday, July 21 at 7:00 pm

To be held using Zoom video conferencing.



The GA Department of Natural Resource's new Rabun County game warden is Ethan Franklin. He's got a great pedigree! A native of Habersham County, Ethan has done DNR tours as a brook trout intern for Leon Brotherton, a wildlife technician, and finally as a DNR Law Enforcement officer. And his mom, Shari, was Jeff Durniak's office manager.

Come and learn more about Ethan's hunting and fishing heritage, his commitment to conservation, and his desire to have your eyes and ears helping him to protect our natural resources.

Final program details and a meeting password will come soon, so consider joining our video conference and virtually reuniting as Rabunites.



Forward Casting - Important Dates for the Next Two Months

July 7 (Tues) Annual Chattoga River Sampling—Spoonauger. Meet at Burrells Ford Bridge at 8:00 am. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. **CANCELLED**

July 14 (Tues) Annual Chattoga River Sampling—Ellicott Rock. Meet at Burrells Ford Bridge at 8:00 am. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information. **CANCELLED**

July 16 (Thur) Rabun Chapter Annual Family Picnic. 6:30 pm at Kellys Water Fall Park in Dillard, GA. Contact [Jeff Durniak](#). **CANCELLED**

July 18 (Sat) Stream Conservation Project at Wilks Creek. 8:30 am. Sponsored by the US Forest Service, GA WRD and the [Upper Chattahoochee Chapter](#). [CLICK HERE](#) for more info and to sign up.

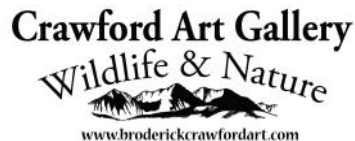
July 21 (Tues) Rabun Chapter Monthly Meeting. 7:00 pm by Zoom conferencing. Final program details and a meeting password will come soon. Contact [Jeff Durniak](#).

July 28 (Tue) Rabun Chapter Board of Directors Meeting. 6:30 pm by Zoom conferencing. Anyone can attend. Contact [Jeff Durniak](#).

Aug 19-23 (Wed-Sat) Trout Unlimited National Meeting. Bangor, ME. [CLICK HERE](#) for more information.

Sept 12 (Sat) GA Council TU Quarterly Meeting. 9:00 am at Rabun Gap Presbyterian Church. Anyone can attend. Contact [Kathy Breithaupt](#).

Click on the Images and Visit the Websites of our Sponsors



Thank you, Sponsors! We appreciate your support of the Rabun Chapter!

All donations to Rabun TU (a Federal Tax Exempt 501(c)3 non-profit) are tax deductible.

JULY Hatch Chart

<u>The Bugs</u>	<u>Time of Month</u>	<u>Time of Day</u>	<u>Suggested Flies .</u>
None at all	All Month	All Day	Dredging Nymphs:12-16 Prince, Hare's Ear, Zugbug, Pheasant Tail
Golden Stonefly	All Month	E am	8-12 Ginger Stimulator 6-10 Golden Stonefly Nymph
Brown Stonefly	All Month	E to mid am	10-12 Brown Stonefly Nymph
Light Cahill Mayfly	All month	E to L pm	12-14 Light Cahill 12-14 Light Cahill Nymph
Trico Mayfly	Mid-Late	Mid am	20 Parachute Trico
Trico Spinner Fall	Mid-Late	Late am	20-22 Polywing Black Spinner
Midges	All month	All day	18-20 Griffiths Gnat 18-20 Midge Pupa
Terrestrial	All month	All day	Ants, beetles, crickets, inch worms, etc.

Fly of the Month

By Terry Rivers

Foam Beetle

HOOK: Dry Fly Hook #12

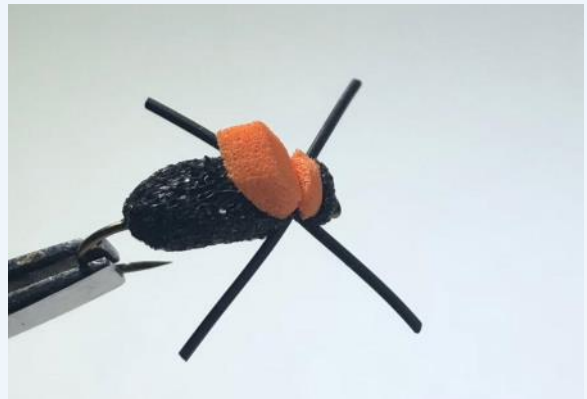
BODY: Peacock Hair

BACK: Foam Rubber

LEGS: Medium Leg Material

POST: Orange Foam

GREAT FLY TO HAVE DURING THE SUMMER MONTHS .



See you on The River! Terry

Fishing Reports

Brian Weeks, July 2

I'll let you know at the start, I only caught one fish. It was a North Georgia native brookie. So, at least I didn't get skunked, and it was a pretty fish. But it was on the hike back to the truck when the real adventure began.

I'll also let you know up front that I used my bear spray for the first time that day. But let me start at the beginning.

After work on Friday a few weeks ago, I drove up to the North Georgia wilderness and camped overnight in the back of the truck. After pitching a tarp over the bed of the truck, and laying out a sleeping mat and bag in it, I hit the rack.

The next morning I woke up good and early, broke everything down, and hiked about three hours to the little stream. The water was 57F and the flow was good - not too much, not too little, and ever so slightly dirty. I worked that water hard, trying different flies, both dries and nymphs, as well as a variety of approaches, both dead drifted and skittering some of the dries, but kept coming up empty. I fished a lot of water that should have held fish, but I was getting nothing.

Finally, I caught a lone brookie while skittering a dry. Now, the energy of this one fish made up for all of the others I didn't catch. And after a quick pic, she was back in the water.

After a half a day of hard fishing - as in the hardest pushing through brush I've ever had to do - I figured I'd call it a day and start heading back to the truck.

Now, I'm way back in the woods. I don't expect to see or hear anyone for pretty much my entire hike back to the truck. But about a half an hour into the hike back, I hear a couple of dogs up ahead. And then I see them. And then I realize, they aren't dogs. They're wild boar. And they are running full bore (pun intended) right at me. I mean flat out.

And this trail is thick on both sides. There is no just stepping off to the side. There's brush going uphill to my right, and brush downhill to a stream on my left.

The first thing I thought was, "Man, this is not good." The second thing I thought was, "I have a knife, a machete, and some bear spray." And then I thought, "I'll use the bear spray because I don't want to wait until they get close enough to use the machete on them. Plus, there are two of them, and one could get me while I whack the other, if I could even get one good whack in at all. Plus, I don't want to get blood on my clothes." All of that thinking happened in about 0.5 seconds.

So, I take the bear spray out of the holster (something I had to do for the first time last summer while hiking in Yellowstone and becoming closely surrounded by elk - another story for another time), I take the safety off (again, something I had to do for the first time in Yellowstone with those elk last summer), and I get ready. When those two boar got about 25 feet from me, I gave 'em a dose (something I did not have to do last summer in Yellowstone). I didn't need to empty the can because the moment the cloud met their snouts, they both immediately and with commitment shot off the trail at a 90-degree angle to my left, and I heard them barreling down through the brush, and then splash into the stream down below.

Needless to say, I was very relieved. "Whew. What in the world just happened? Thank God I'm safe."

But short-lived it was, because no sooner than they hit the water down below do I look back up at the trail ahead of me to see a fully grown black bear about 100 feet in front of me walking toward me. I truly couldn't believe my eyes. The first thing I thought was, "This cannot be happening." The second thing I thought was, "God, please let there not be any cubs behind me." I took a quick glance and, thank God, I didn't see any. But she was still walking right toward me looking right at me.

Now, like many of you, I've encountered black bears before in North Georgia. But usually when they see you, they just kind of turn around and slowly head the other direction. Not this one. She kept coming. Thankfully not with the same relentless charge as the boar, but coming nonetheless.

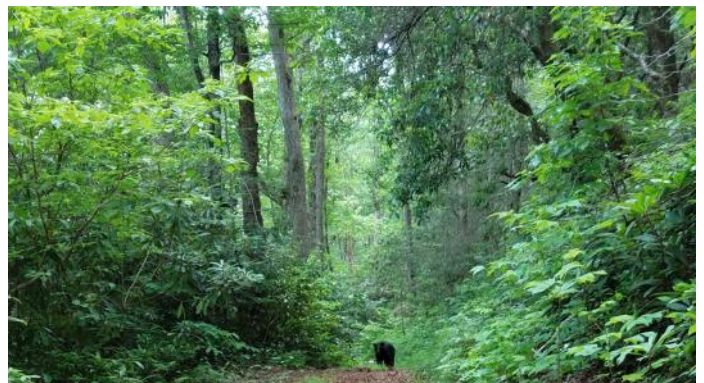
So, I recalled what I was trained to do when one encounters a black bear - stand your ground and yell to tell it to leave. And even though I had at least half a can of the bear spray left, the bear was too far away to use it on her. So, since I had some time, I figured I'd get some video. So I got my phone out and started rolling.

After a half a minute or so of her continuing to slowly walk toward me I thought, "I'd rather not wait until she's close enough to use bear spray, so I'm going to try to scare her away." So, while she was in mid-stride, I looked right at her and yelled "GET BACK!" At that, she turned straight around, ran down the trail about 50 feet, turned to the right, and ran up the mountainside through the brush.

At this point, I was again relieved, but not naively. I turned to look to see what other threats might be coming up behind me. Thankfully, none. But, I wasn't about to put the bear spray back in its holster. I decided to carry it in my hand all the way back to the truck because I thought, "Heck, after what just happened, who knows what could happen next? At this rate, I wouldn't be surprised if I run into Bigfoot."

The rest of the hike back to the truck was, well, what a normal hike that normal people have is like.

And just for the record, if I had run into Bigfoot, I had already resolved that I wouldn't spray him with bear spray. Rather, I would try my best to get some really good pictures of him. Then, just before he attacked me, I would throw my phone away from the fight so that, in the event I didn't make it, someone would hopefully find my phone and humanity would finally have some good, clear pictures of Bigfoot.



Fishing Reports, cont.

Jeff Durniak

Casey at the Bat, Again

At least fifteen years had passed, but the memory of that June game long ago still haunted Casey. It was a special day with best friend Michigan Ski, who had traveled south for a short reunion and much-needed hydrotherapy. But the hits were scarce, as to be expected in June on The River. The duo still picked up a fish here and there and the warm sun and cool water were a welcome relief from the real world of responsibility. But in the last inning, near the end of the day, young Casey took one last swing. It was near the bottom of a long boulder field. As the #16 caddis larva dredged its way right alongside a rock with a shadowy undercut beneath it, the strike indicator stopped. Casey instinctively set the hook, on a rock. Then the rock moved. Game on!

The brute brown rolled and Casey gasped. He shouted for Michigan Ski to run upstream and witness the epic battle. Big Boy soon took off downstream through the riffle to the next pool, with Casey in tow, hi-sticking his line to protect the flimsy 6x tippet. Both fish and batter made it safely, and Casey felt like he had made it to second base. The gator thrashed, rolled, and took off on another downstream run, with Casey hot on his trail. It was a tough fast-wade through the Tooga's slippery riffles, blinding in the glare of the late-day sun. Big Boy paused and then surged to the far side, into a back eddy. Of debris! Oh no, Casey thought, as the fish wedged himself in the flotsam and the tippet got tight. Casey waded in and gently followed the tippet a foot underwater until he felt a slow tail wag. He gently circled a massive caudal peduncle with the thumb and forefinger of his free hand and slowly backed the fish out of the sticks. My Gawd, he hollered at Ski, "that's gotta be a two-footer. His dorsal's as big as a dollar bill!" (Now ole Casey's a charter Rabunite and, as such, is known to stretch the truth a bit. But he had spent decades fondling Tooga browns up to 27 inches with his buddy, South Carolina Dan, and their deadly bait, 'lectricity. So he knows a real good'un when he sees one.) Ski witnessed and agreed: helluva fish. And somehow Casey backed ole Dollar Bill outa the debris jam, and the fight was back on. The fish began to tire and slow his tail wags. Casey felt like he touched third and was heading toward home plate. Just a little longer and Dollar Bill would be in his net for a grip-n-grin moment of a lifetime, a real home run for Casey!

And ole Bill took one last tired, half-hearted lunge to the far bank, at the tail of that pool. Casey lost his tail wags in the afternoon glare of the mirrorlike pool surface. And then he lost the rhythm of the wags. He surged across the pool and followed the leader then tippet down, into another, unseen debris jam, to its frazzled end. Ole Casey was tagged at the plate. He was OUT!

Casey went to the bench, slump-shouldered and broken-hearted, and was welcomed by teammate Ski. After a good ten minutes of pure depression and consolation, the duo arose, toasted The River, and said the usual stuff about a great day being together, outside, with fly poles in hand. Just like the old college days, they said. But they were haunted. Ski got over it, but Casey did not. For several years Casey went back to that address where the caddisfly stopped, but Dollar Bill never chose to play again. River 1, Casey 0.

The early June afternoon of 2020 saw Casey trek up The River trail again, like he had done scores of times over three decades. Some social distancing, exercise, and mental health Rx from this unprecedented year was in order. The River was high and muddy, but not too muddy. It was warm, but not too warm. The cool, wet spring and consistent afternoon storms had extended the season on the river in the wilderness area. Casey stopped to say hello to old friend Griz, the mighty Cohuttan, and then to chat briefly with Rabunite Brother Tom at the bank of the Riffle Pool. He told Tom to be ready for Doug's arrival and have that Light Cahill in hand, with extra floatant, of course. He then asked their spirits for blessings and continued up the trail as the afternoon sun spawned that dreaded glare on the flat water, Casey's nightmare...

But today was a bit different, for Casey carried a bit of hope and a much bigger bat. The hope came from ole SC Dan's text and pic, earlier that week, of a brute brown that his young buddy caught, somewhere in the Upstate, on a big streamer in high, raging yoo-hoo. The bat was Casey's river bass rod, a six-weight tipped with a Rio Versileader, which made it a sink-tip. To the end of the leader was attached four feet of ten-pound fluoro. It ended in a knot to some big, articulated sculpin pattern snatched long ago from the bins of Kelly's shop on the Madison, the Slide Inn. That bug was long-ignored and dusty, but its hook was still razor-sharp. So Casey had vowed to swing for the fences this day, leaving his dries and nymphs at home and tossing this hefty setup into the muddy flows of hope.

And he struck out. Again and again. After three hours of swings and misses, his stripped fly stopped. And it wasn't a rock, for a change. He felt tail wags, and soon a respectable fourteen-inch brown was winched into his net. Hey, at least he had one hit in this game. And a little bit of hope. He continued for another hour, hitless, as the sun set. He turned downstream to head back toward the dugout on BF Road. He tossed a few more times into prime pools as dusk turned nearly to slap-dark. Nuthin'. He was about to reel in and call it a day but, just like a true Rabunite, could not pass up a few "last cast" moments in a big pool filled with much Rabunite lore. He waded over to the far bank and tossed back at the deeper, near-bank, and worked that bug half-heartedly back to him. He was simply going through his "last cast" motions of commitment, with really no hope.

And the line stopped. Then moved sideways. Somewhere in the darkness, the fish surged, then rolled heavily on the surface, and then dove. The stout bass rod bent. Casey thought "OHMYGAWD" and began to pray. For the hook, for the knot ("check your knots" ringed in his ear from all his Adams days), for the leader, and for NO STICKS. The tug of war lasted maybe five minutes, which felt like six hours. Casey knew he had a good fish from the weight on the end of the line and the deep strain on the rod. The darkness hid its size, until it finally came within the rod's length. "NET DON'T FAIL ME NOW." He broke the magnetic hold and flipped his little brookie net around with his left hand, while patiently doing the trout tug-of-war with rod in right. Soon the fish quit bulldogging and let the line lead him. Toward the bank. Toward the net. Toward Redemption.

Swoosh! Casey swiped the brute, head-first, just like he had netted big brood stripers from the Savannah. The net bag strained as the heavy body overfilled it, and the exposed tail swatted Casey's chest as he bear-hugged the whole mess and scurried toward the bank. And exhaled for the first time in five minutes. Or was it six hours? His cell phone clock said 8:54 PM. In the bottom of the ninth, that last swing of his bat had put one in the seats. Into the upper deck in fact. In the light of his headlamp, the nylon sewing tape stretched across 23.5 inches of pure meanness and muscle, the wildness of the wilderness. Touch all the bases, Casey, for tonite the elusive home run has finally come to you. He gently pressed the netful against the bank with his knees and aimed his phone camera into the darkness. He then slowly backed Brutus out of the net, and Brutus took off! Luckily, smart Rabunites leave the hook in the lip until the fondle (photo) happens. Unluckily, the leader had wrapped around the rod tip, and Brutus tried to get even this evening by snapping that tip. Fair trade for the fondle, and the warranty got ole Casey a new bat three weeks later. With the four-now-five-piece rod, Casey coaxed the King of the Pool back to the bank and got the evidentiary photos. He put the cell phone in his vest, tossed the rod on the bank, and cradled The River's Masterpiece in his submerged, open palms. Soon the gills beat a steady rhythm, the tail wagged again, and the heavy shoulders surged forward. Casey watched the giant brown slide quietly into the darkness, as a Lifetime Memory burned brightly into his mind.

He turned, picked up the broken rod, retethered his puny net, and slowly waded across the river. He got on the trail and headed toward his wheeled dugout. With perma-grin the whole way. He thanked Tom and Griz for their blessings and Doug for three decades of wise counsel. And on this night Casey finally forgave Dollar Bill for the decades of nightmares. For he was now even.

The River 1, Casey 1.

And ole Casey has an address. For a fish of a lifetime. Its name is...

Homer.



Rabun Chapter Membership Update

Current membership: 186 adult members and 6 Stream Explorers.

Welcome New Members!

Roger Kilby from Lakemont, GA.

Thanks for Re-Uping!

Sid Berkstressor, Ann Christiansen, Ron Michaels, Derek Porter, David Ruth, and Tom West.

Members That Need to Re-Up!

Avril Adams, Don Adams, Eedee Adams, Steven Anderson, Andy Bayles, Cindi Brickell, Bob Bullock, Donald Cyprain, Mike Fuller, Charles Henderson, Amy Hulett, Gerald Hulett, Donald Jones, Ethan Jutz, Bruce Kirkendoll, Jennifer Kwok, Peggy Lambert, Avery Martin, Bill McDowell, Ryan Olschewske, Charles Pennington, Harold Ray, David Rickles, Cody Trautner, Jerry Welborn, Kaleb Welborn, Sarah-Kate Welborn, Canija White-Speaks, and Denise Whitfield..

You are Invited to Join Trout Unlimited!

[CLICK HERE](#) to go to the membership page of Trout Unlimited. Once you join, TU will assign you to the nearest Chapter according to your Zip Code. If you wish to be a member of the Rabun Chapter regardless of your Zip Code, specify Chapter 522 in your application.

If you have any questions, contact the Chapter Prez [Jeff Durniak](#).

We look forward to having you in our Chapter!

Rabun Chapter Leadership Contacts

Voting Leaders

Jeff Durniak	Chapter President
Tammy Hopton	Chapter Vice President
Charlie Breithaupt	Treasurer
Kathy Breithaupt	Secretary
Kent Wilson	Past President
Ray King	Rendezvous Chair
Tony Allred	Director thru 2020
Justin English	Director thru 2021
Terry Rivers	Director thru 2021
Jimmy Whiten	Director thru 2022

Non-Voting Leaders

Michele Crawford	Women's Outreach, Memorials
Jerry McFalls	Scouts Liaison
Pat Hopton	Tight Lines Editor
Steve Perry	Conservation Chairperson

Prez Notes

The BOD and I hope that everyone remains healthy and safe, while celebrating the 4th responsibly. While we are foregoing our traditional July chapter picnic this year, we plan to substitute a Zoom program at 7pm on the 21st. Final program details and a meeting password will come soon, so consider joining our video conference and virtually reuniting as Rabunites.

BOD work continues with our chapter organizational structure. We're planning a team approach to our three core goals: conservation, outreach, and fun, and hope to engage many more members on projects of interest to you. For each of the three teams, we're looking for a team leader, assistant, and members to help with many of our traditional projects and some new ones developed by each team. Many thanks to Steve Perry and Justin English for already volunteering to lead the conservation team. Steve is already drafting a list of conservation project ideas to reinvigorate our efforts there. If you have ideas and/or wanna be a part of that team, give Steve or Justin a shout. The BOD is working on team descriptions and a list of activities that each team will lead. With that information and a "menu" of activities, we hope that many of you members will see a fun, interesting niche that you'd like to fill, and you'll raise your hand to help us either as a team leader or member. For some examples, you might see yourself helping out at a trout stream structure project (conservation), the scouts cookout or kids fishing rodeo (outreach), or the chapter fishing and camping trips (fun). If each of us is willing to contribute a little time to one project dear to our heart, the chapter can accomplish a lot when we can once again gather safely. More details will follow.

Thanks, everyone, for hanging in there while we still socially distance. Physical isolation has been frustrating, but it also has been a great time for "thinking," to shake the dust off our chapter and plan our future. That planning door is open; walk through it any time via a call to me (706-892-6576) while you await our final planning document and menu of great activities to choose from. Also, please consider tuning into our Zoom BOD and Chapter chats to stay in touch while not really touching. Have a great summer, one and all Rabunites. With your help, we're gonna emerge from our foxhole bigger and stronger than before. Hopefully I'll see your smiling faces on my computer screen on the 21st.

Jeff Durniak