

# NEWSLETTER

*wmflyfishingclub.com-flyfishingwmclub.com*

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

PRESIDENTS COLUMN – February 2026



Amazing how time flies, here we are into February with lots of plans for 2026 in progress.

I am attending the Denver Fly Fishing Show on February 6,7,8 at the FFI booth. I got a call from the President of the High Plains Drifters fly fishing club in Denver (Charter member of the FFI, I am also a member of the HPD) asking me to tie flies with kids at the show on Saturday at the FFI learning center. It is always fun to teach kids. Rick Buchanan from our WMFFC will also be joining me at the show at the FFI booth. I am rewriting my donation request letter for our annual banquet and will have several copies with me at the show to solicit vendors I know for support of our banquet.

I must give a shout out to our newest WMFFC board member, Andy Rybolt for his outstanding work on getting speakers for our monthly meetings. He created a spreadsheet for the board to follow and for inserting in our monthly newsletter. He will also be introducing the speakers and their bio at our meetings.

Speaking of our annual banquet, now is the time to begin soliciting for donations and support for the upcoming July 18, 2026 banquet. Gary Miller, our banquet chairman, will be giving updates at our meetings up until the banquet date. Your assistance and support is needed to have another successful banquet.

I am really looking forward to our “Outings” in 2026 to get to learn our lakes and streams. If anyone is headed out on a fishing venture and wouldn’t mind some company, please email me and I will put out the word to the club (unless you have a secret hot spot) then I will keep it to myself!!

Tight Lines, Mike Whitney

***Meeting—February 18th***

***Held at White Mountain Nature Center***

***425 S. Woodland Rd. Lakeside***

***5:30 raffle and chatting***

***Program:***

***New Fundraising Raffle—Rod and Reel***

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# THE DAY THE RIVER TAUGHT ME PATIENCE: a Flyfisher's Lesson on Stillness and Success

Taken from "Hooked on Fly Fishing"

There's a sound the river makes when it's perfectly still—not silent, but alive in a way only fly fishers truly understand.

That morning, the air was cool, the kind that smells faintly of pine and cold stone. The sun hadn't yet reached over the ridge, and I was knee-deep in the Little Red River, trying to pretend I wasn't frustrated.

For over an hour, I cast into what I thought was the perfect run. My loops were tight, my fly landed soft, my drift flawless—at least in theory. But the fish didn't seem to care.

Upstream, another angler was having the kind of morning that tests a man's humility. He was hooking trout after trout, each one flashing silver in the low light like a taunt. I swapped flies. I lengthened my leader. I even whispered a prayer or two that probably sounded more like complaints. Nothing

That's when I stopped.

## Listening to the Water

I reeled in and took a breath. The river gurgled softly around me, like it was trying to tell me something I'd been too stubborn to hear. For the first time that morning, I didn't cast—I just watched.

A few moments later, I saw it.

Just twenty feet downstream, beneath a fallen branch, trout were quietly sipping midges from the surface—small, deliberate, and completely out of my casting lane.

I hadn't been fishing wrong.

I'd been fishing impatiently.

I moved carefully into position, swapped to a smaller midge pattern, and waited until the river felt ready to receive my cast. The first drift passed cleanly, and the water barely rippled—then it came alive.

The line went tight, and the rainbow danced across the current like it had been waiting for me all along.

## The River's Quiet Lesson

That day changed how I fish—and how I live

Because fly fishing, at its core is a study in **patience**.

You can't force a bit You can't rush the drift.

You learn to match the rhythm of the water, not your own schedule.

(continued on page 3)

## (Hooked on Fly Fishing)

Here's what that moment taught me:

### **Patience Outperforms Pressure**

When the fish aren't biting, frustration pushes us to do more-cast faster, change flies, move spots. But sometimes, the best move is to pause. Let the river teach you what it's doing before you try to change it.

### **The Fish Don't Rush-Neither Should You**

Trout don't feed out of impulse; they feed when the current and light align just right. Life's the same. Sometimes, the season you're in isn't about catching-it's about preparing.

### **Stillness Reveals a Pattern**

When you stop thrashing the surface, you start to see the water's secrets-subtle seams, quiet eddies, small rises. Stillness gives you clarity both on the water and off it.

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## **A Practical Takeaway for the Next Trip**

If you ever find yourself stuck in that same rhythm of unproductive casting, try this:

**Step back. Watch the water. Count to sixty before your next cast.**

You might notice a shift in feeding behavior, a rise pattern you missed, or even realize your position's all wrong. Observation often outperforms aggression in fly fishing.

Switching to a smaller fly or softer presentation may help, but more often than not, the real *adjustment* happens inside you.

### **What the River Really Teaches**

That rainbow wasn't the biggest fish I've ever caught, but it might've been the most important.

Because the river didn't just give me a fish that morning-it gave me perspective.

Very cast since then has felt different

More patient. More aware. More grateful

The river doesn't reward impatience.

It rewards presence.

And every time I step into that current, I'm reminded that sometimes, the best way to find success-in fishing and in life-it to be *still long enough to see what's already in front of you.*

### **Final Cast -**

If this story struck a chord with you, share it with a friend who could use a reminder that fishing is more than a hobby-it's a teacher (Subscribe to Hooked on Fly Fishing's Substack)

## **A few weeks ago I was sitting on the back of my jeep, prepping for fishing..,**

Just like any other day, I grabbed my rods and rigged them up first and laid them across the roof. I tossed my fly boxes in my chest pack and made sure I had all the tools and tippet that I needed. I jumped into my waders and buckled myself in for the day. Grabbed my left wading boot and slipped it on and tightened it up. I reached down for the right one and began to slide my foot into the boot. Before I could get my foot settled into the boot I felt quite the bulge in the toe of my boot. Not knowing exactly what it was, and knowing what it could be, I quickly kicked the boot from my foot. My wading boot landed on the grass, just a few feet in front of me. I waited a few seconds to see if anything crawled, hopped, or slithered out from it.

Nothing.

**Cautiously, I picked up the boot and held it upside down, and, immediately, something fell from the boot. To my relief, it was not the worst of what it could have been. What fell to the ground was the harmless, petrified corpse of a frog.** While this situation ended in a bit of humor, it could have easily been way worse. I had left my wading boots on the floor of my garage for the summer. I wet wade during the dogdays and wear a pair of Simms Riprap shoes when I'm on the water. Apparently, this frog found comfort inside my stinky boot and never made it back out. It's likely the malodorous fumes that sealed his fate! While I'm glad this situation ended with humor, that frog could have easily been a juvenile copperhead, which would have brought my day to a painfully screeching halt.

It's something so simple, and it only takes a couple of seconds. Maybe the majority of us anglers and outdoorsman do it on a regular basis. Check your boots! Wading boots, tennis shoes, hikers, high heels, or whatever you like to wear. If you leave them out, check them for creepy crawlies before shoving your foot into the unknown! I make more of a habit of checking my boots when I'm out camping, or if my boots get left on the porch overnight. I had never before really checked my boots before putting them on after leaving them in my garage, and I was also a little anxious to hit the water, so I didn't take the extra time to check them. I'll gladly take this gentle reminder to check my boots from now on! You should do the same!

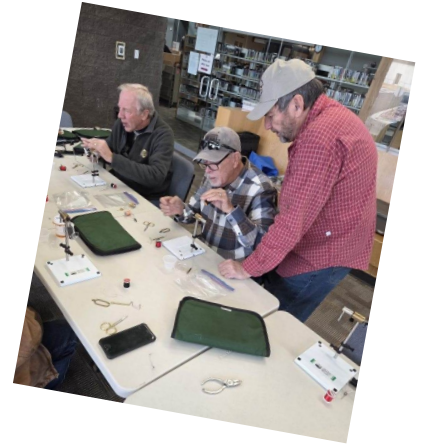
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FLY-FISHING IS SOLITARY, CONTEMPLATIVE, MISANTHROPIC, SCIENTIFIC IN SOME HANDS, POETIC IN OTHERS, AND LACED WITH CONFLICTING AESTHETIC CONSIDERATIONS. IT IS NOT EVEN CLEAR IF CATCHING FISH IS ACTUALLY THE POINT.  
John Gierach Dancing with Trout (1994)

Please look this link up—your president asked me to put this in all newsletters.

<https://freeemergencycontactcard.com/>

**FIRST FLY TYING CLASS OF THE YEAR  
SEVERAL MEMBERS TAUGHT AND SEVERAL VOLUNTEERED AS HELPERS**



**GOOD JOB GUYS**

**WMFFC 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."

We support the practice of "Catch and Release." We support the use of barbless hooks and harmless netting-and-release practices. Fish should never be held out of water for longer than you can hold your breath.

**WOODS CANYON LAKE AND WILLOW SPRINGS LAKE**

I've grouped these two lakes together because they are so close to each other and so similar in their fishing. Both have campgrounds and boat rentals. Both receive a fresh supply of catchable rainbows weekly during summer. Both lakes are accessed by paved roads and together they're the two most heavily fished lakes on the Rim. These lakes are frequented mostly by families wanting to beat the valley heat and get away to the mountains for a few days. Many kids in the Valley of the Sun caught their first rainbow trout on these lakes. I try not to hit them at the –peak of summer vacation, because of the crowds and abundance of stocked trout. But either of the lakes in early spring before the stocking begins and you can catch some nice rainbows cruising the shorelines. The same can be said in the fall, when everyone has put their fly-rods away and gotten out shotguns or deer rifles (or school books) and the big browns are thinking about reproduction. Hit the gravelly shorelines or spots where enough current enters and you can catch some really large trout.

Charles R. Meck and John Rohmer "Arizona Trout Streams and their Hatches"

**White Mountain Fly Fishing Club Board—2025-2026**

<b>President:</b>	Mike Whitney	(541) 390-5389
<b>Past President:</b>	Barry Curseaden	(623) 398-5242
<b>Vice President:</b>	Gary Hall	(480) 510-6362
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<b>Board Member at Large:</b>	Margie Dennis	(602) 203-6414
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<b>Conservation and Community Projects Chairman:</b>		Unfilled
<b>Education Chairman/Banquet:</b>	Gary Miller	(602) 478-0883
<b>Newsletter Chairman/Website:</b>	Kitty Wiemelt	(480) 329-6996
<b>Speaker Chairman:</b>	Andy Rybolt	(541) 281-2011
<b>IFFF Representative:</b>	Gary Hall	(480) 510-7381
<b>AZG&amp;F Liaison</b>	Larry Kivela	(480) 695-5162
<b>Inventory Chairman</b>	Scott Dennis	(602) 339-7518