

NEWSLETTER

wmflyfishingclub.com

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PRESIDENTS COLUMN – MAY 2026

We are back from our very successful Green River trip and look forward to a power point presentation to our club in the near future. Needless to say, it was great to have Andy and Larry from our club travel to Dutch John Resort and meet my friends from Denver and Sheridan. The camaraderie was outstanding and all getting together for a resort dinner was a lot of fun. We caught a lot of fish in rain, snow, sleet and windy conditions as fronts

passed through, but the weather was good for the most part.

Gary and Scott have been working hard on getting our club trailer in shape for our Willow Springs outing this month. Really looking forward to this first club outing of 2026. Hopefully, we will have a trip every month if the weather cooperates and gives us some moisture to prevent any closures.

I will have the sign-up sheet for the Willow Springs outing at our meeting this month for those who missed it last month. We need an accurate count so we can prepare for a BBQ lunch. Members bring chair, chips, drink, potato salad, cookies etc. I will be sending out a reminder of the outing to our membership.

Tight Lines, Mike Whitney – Your President

Meeting—May 20th

Held at White Mountain Nature Center

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

Speaker: Emerson Craig, White Mountain Apache Tribe

New Fundraising Raffle—Rod and Reel

***Remember, dues are from January to December. Due in
January to Marcie***



SPEAKER OF THE MONTH FOR MAY

“EMERSON CRAIG OF THE WHITE MOUNTAIN APACHE TRIBE”

We're excited to have Emerson Craig as our guest speaker this month. He is a fly fishing Sensei/Designer Fly Tyer. Craig's angling success is generated by his addiction to trout waters only and has been pursuing large trout for over 59 years since he was 7-8 years old. Craig aims to use dry fly patterns on rivers only and small flies on lakes using 3-5 weight equipment.

Craig has been teaching and demonstrating his techniques to blue and white collar professionals in the White Mountains since 1979, but enjoys teaching young fly anglers the most. Craig's

techniques are used on rivers and lakes using in-depth personal knowledge for stalking, hooking, and handling selective trout.

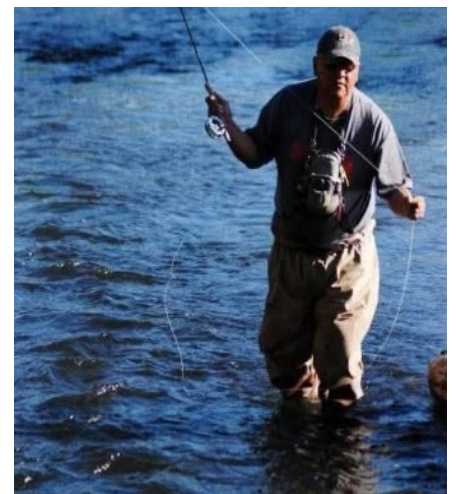
Craig's passion for fly-fishing has allowed him to make noteworthy contributions to this sport on and off the water. This has included fly fishing the whole Southwest from all fabled rivers to unknown waters, as well.

Craig has fished with some of the best guides of the Southwest and has taught them some of his own techniques when stalking trout, but willing to learn how they approach trout as well.

As an ambassador to the White Mountain community in his home, work and fly fishing, Craig represents the White Mountain Apache waters mostly. Craig is originally from New Mexico and his home waters are the great tail water fishery of the San Juan River in northwest New Mexico. This river has been his stalking grounds since 1968 to the present. The San Juan River is known for using small flies on a strike indicator (bobber) rig but Craig will only use dry flies to fish this river except for winter time when waters are very cold. He left New Mexico and moved to Arizona when he was 20 years old.

As Craig has said, he has been here since 1979 and has been fishing full time every chance he gets. Craig in his younger years, fished more than guided in the White Mountains and Southwest. He resides in Hon-dah, land of the White Mountain Apache Tribe, with his wife, J.R. and his four children, now all adults.

Craig invites you to fish with him if you can catch up with him.



WINTER FISHING



The irony wasn't lost on me. Putting waders on with cars driving past, skis attached to their roof racks. It made sense. It's the middle of winter and just down the road, a ski resort beckons with fresh powder and tree lines for days. But the powder I decided to chase is a solitary type this time of year. The kind that crunches under the footsteps of deer, bighorn sheep, moose, and other animals. Not of the skier or snowboarder. That same powder however melts and creates the rivers we fish. Most anglers prefer to ski this time of year, but I like to wade through the thigh-deep powder to cast rather than sit in a chair lift and ride someone else's coattails.

The challenge is serious however. Starting the car in the morning with a thick coating of ice on the windshield, the last thought is to put waterproof leggings on essentially and stand in the near freezing water all to get a glimmer of a fish you have caught months prior in shorts and a t-shirt. But that ode to solitary bliss is one filled with eager trout and a river devoid of humans, for good reason.

Winter fly fishing in Montana gives an excuse to sit in a heated car for a little longer than normal. Let's me drink warm coffee and tea while I gaze out the window and admire the sheer silence of the river. Watch animals thrive without the worry of fellow anglers. Feeling the tips of toes and fingers slowly go numb. But the time had come when the soul is filled and the sunlight begins to shine on a beautifully lit canyon and the prettiest green water. With the crunch of snow beneath my feet as I step out of my car, knowing the first tracks on this stretch of river are my own, and a great day on the river in winter is in the forecast.

My breath can be seen while I pull the rod tube out from the back and assemble it, feeding the line through the guides. Grabbing the Chapstick and making sure I put some on the guides so the line doesn't freeze them shut. The wool socks are difficult to feed into the thin foot liner of my waders but necessary to maximize time on the water. Coupled with long underwear and a pair of pants, the legs are difficult as well. The boots slip on but the shoulder straps and belly section of my waders give me grief as well with the numerous layers of base layers, shirts, and sweaters to keep my core warm.

Possibly the most challenging part of fishing this time of year up here isn't the cold, but the weather. A bright sunny day often screams like the temperature will be warm, but it is quite the contrary. Sunny days are often the coldest as the pressure gradient is high letting atmospheric temperatures descend upon the earth, cooling the ground to a level of frozen in winter that stuns trout. But that doesn't mean they aren't any less hungry as the warmer overcast days. The weather, however, dictates the pattern, and a dropper nymph rig is often the go-to for sunny, clear, and cold days.

Between work and other obligations, my choice of weather is either overcast or a snow day. Meaning the sun is blocked and the temperature can be controlled. The cloud cover holds the temperature and warms the days allowing the trout to open their range from an appetite of nymph rigs, to slowly swung streamers or even some dry fly action with midges buzzing the surface of back eddies and slow moving water.

Regardless of the weather, presentation is everything. The trout are as slow-moving as you are and despite the need for insects to survive until more food is present, you must dangle your flies with the utmost of perfection. Making them open their mouths to feed. Fishing the slow and deep pockets on the edges of light where shade darkens the water, creating a habitat for trout to hide and camouflage with little to no worry.

The takes also differ from other seasons. Though some hook sets can be with the viciousness of a salmon fly hatch, most are a subtle dip in the indicator, a sip of a midge from the surface, or a gentle tug from the swung streamer. Even the fight could be misleading as it usually isn't long or hard-fought. But with each trout brought in to shore, the smile is the same. Though handling the fish should be at a minimum, even less so than any other season, you can still take in the colors and admiration from the shallow water running through their gills.

Nevertheless the day, temperature, or time, the worry of other anglers crowding a spot or the holes of overpressured fish become moot. As the only angler is typically you and the overpressured fish are in their own solitary confinement without so much as a worry of an insect disguised with pheasant hair or shines of fluorescent garments. They go undisturbed throughout months of ice-laden riverbanks and hours of darkness.

But it is in these few hours a day where sunlight shines in Montana, that the solitude of the driven angler can not just find peace on the river with the animals and trout, but a season of fly fishing that, on its day, can match any other season of the year.

Article and photos from Sean Jansen, follow along with his adventures at [@jansen_journals](#).

The PDF titled “**Why Trout Refuse Your Fly – Your Drift Isn’t Natural**” explains that most anglers mistakenly believe success in trout fishing depends on choosing the right fly pattern. The author argues that the real issue is **the drift** — how the fly moves through the water.

Here are the main points: **Fly choice isn’t the main factor.** Even a perfect fly in the perfect spot can be ignored if the drift looks unnatural.

- **Trout reject unnatural movement, not the fly itself.** They respond negatively to motion that doesn’t make sense in the water.
- **Drift matters most during active feeding seasons** like spring, when fish are selective.
- **90% of missed catches result from poor drift, not fly choice.**
- **Color, size, and brand are secondary.** The key is how naturally the fly drifts.
- **Fixing your drift improves everything else.** If you don’t, nothing will work consistently.

In short, the piece emphasizes that mastering a natural drift is far more important than obsessing over fly patterns or brands. Would you like me to outline practical techniques for improving drift next?



LARRY KIVELA
MIKE & PEGGY WHITNEY
ANDY RYBOLDT
Green River 2026

LARGEST FLY IN WORLD!
DUTCH JOHN, UTAH

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.

**APRIL WMFF
MEETING**



Please look this link up—your president asked me to put this in all newsletters.
<https://freemergencycontactcard.com/>

White Mountain Fly Fishing Club Board—2025-2026

President:	Mike Whitney	(541) 390-5389
Past President:	Barry Curseaden	(623) 398-5242
Vice President:	Gary Hall	(480) 510-6362
Secretary:	Kitty Wiemelt	(480) 329-6996
Treasurer:	Marcie Greenberg	(480) 993-4623
Board Member at Large:	Andy Rybolt	(541) 281-2011
Board Member at Large:	Gary Miller	(602) 478-0883
Board Member at Large:	Margie Dennis	(602) 203-6414
Board Member at Large:	Jon Wallace	(480) 694-9865
Membership Chairman	Marcie Greenberg	(480) 993-4623
Conservation and Community Projects Chairman:		Unfilled
Education Chairman/Banquet:	Gary Miller	(602) 478-0883
Newsletter Chairman/Website:	Kitty Wiemelt	(480) 329-6996
Speaker Chairman:	Andy Rybolt	(541) 281-2011
IFFF Representative:	Gary Hall	(480) 510-6362
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Inventory Chairman	Scott Dennis	(602) 339-7518