

The Fly Line

Monthly Newsletter of the North Louisiana Fly Fishers

March 2018

Volume 4, Issue 3



North Louisiana Fly Fishers
Established in 1984

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March Thoughts

April showers bring May flowers is the saying. It may be good for the land in gardens and flower beds this spring, but the recent February record rains are good for the areas water levels. The rising levels will give back the fishes normal shallows for spawning while not leaving them open to predation by having to spawn in less protected areas.

While the record February rainfall has been a pain to most area residents, it is returning many lakes and rivers to better water levels. One of my go to rivers for a day of kayak fishing, Big Cypress Bayou in Jefferson, TX, was so low that the river boat tours were suspended and fishing was terrible. It seemed that the fish moved on to find cover as their normal habitat was left high and dry. Right now the river is 10-12 feet high and not fishable, but that will change when the water returns to more fishable (and navigable levels).

Our home waters, the Little Missouri river in SE Arkansas, was host to our annual Frozen Chosen outing in February. The fishing was better than many of us have seen in a long while.

In October, the Corps of Engineers began work on the Narrows Dam generators. When there is no generation, a small amount of water still flows through

the dam maintaining some flow on the river. However, while the generators are being renovated, the Corps is releasing more water, resulting in a flow that is some 6 to 8 inches above the trickle amount.

This has resulted in conditions that are much better suited to trout. There is flow across most sections of the river, not just the main runs and the river is "buggier" than I can remember. I experienced stronger fish with brighter colors.

Unfortunately, if you didn't get your fill of fishing the Little Mo' during the Frozen Chosen, the river will be unfishable for up to 2 months due to flooding on Lake Greeson. The lake levels went from 10 feet below normal to more than 15 feet above pool as of this writing. Even though there is no generation at Narrows Dam due to renovations on the generators, the Corps has opened two large valves on the dam to relieve some of the flooding due to record rains. And it will take a while to lower the lake level back to normal pool. At least the torrential rains seem to be gone for now.


You may need to look closer to home for some good fishing action. All indications say that great fishing is just around the corner. I, for one, am heading out at my first opportunity.



Chili & Flies Meeting - Cook-off and Iron Fly Winners

We had a great turnout at our ever-popular Chili & Flies meeting in February. We had some fantastic chili recipes this year, eight to be exact. The competition was closer than in years past. But in the end, newcomer to our chili cook-off, Vicki Thibodeaux, to the honors. She received the “unofficial” club title of Queen of the Chili and a Bass Pro Shops gift card for her efforts. With the newcomers and past contestants bringing their “A”, all entrants will need to bring their “A+” game next year.



Don Lawler put together an iron fly contest different from last year's. Previously, tyers were presented with an array of tying materials from which to construct a fly. This year, a bag of materials was presented to each tyer. Their fly had to consist of a piece of each material. Brett Rowell took the honors this year in what was as close a contest as the chili cook-off was. He earned the title of “Not Being Able to Say that He is a Terrible Tyer”. Oh, and Brett also won a Bass Pro Shops gift card. 

2018 NLFF Executive Board

| | | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| President | Chris Pierce | 318-347-0494 | cpierce213@hotmail.com |
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| Member at Large | Joe Linder | 318-245-9385 | toothpick1936@gmail.com |
| Member at Large | David Gilbert | 318-458-9450 | hdgilbert850@gmail.com |



**North Louisiana Fly Fishers
6th Annual Masters Series
Proudly Presents:**

Kelly Galloup

Kelly Galloup started his fly fishing career at the age of 13, tying flies for the local tackle shop and has over forty nationally recognized fly patterns. He started guiding at the age of 16 and is still guiding to this day some 30 years later. Kelly owned and operated the Troutsmen fly shop in Northern Michigan from 1981 to 2002. In the spring of 2002 he sold the Troutsmen and moved to Montana where he and his wife Penny bought the Slide Inn lodge on the Madison River.

Kelly has written two books *Modern Streamers for Trophy Trout* and *Cripples and Spinners*. Kelly has been published in nearly every major fly fishing periodical in the country and is now one of the Editors-at-Large for *Fly Fisherman* magazine. Kelly was also one of the hosts of *Fly Fish TV* on the *Outdoor Life Network*. In 2004 Kelly was nominated and received the Living Legend award by the Federation of Flyfishers, now Fly Fishers International.



Tickets: \$40 each

***Early Bird Special: \$35 each
(if purchased before June 1st)***

Where and When:

***Red River NWR
150 Eagle Bend Point
Bossier City, LA 71112***

***July 28, 2018
9:00am - 4:00pm***

For More Information:

**Contact Scott Irwin
318-469-0854**

New for 2018: Flies & Fleas Outing

Announcing a new outing for 2018! To be held the weekend of May 5th at Purvis Creek State Park in Eustace, TX.



This Texas State Park has nice campsites for RVs, very shaded with natural barriers giving some privacy. Lake is very accessible by



9.5" Redear

kayak and fishing is great. The lake is completely encompassed by the park so with paid admission, no TX fishing license is required. Great news for our club members. Fishing and taking catfish and panfish is good fun and great eating. However, bass fishing is catch and release only at this lake. There are some monsters to be caught. A ranger told me that at the last creel count, there were two large-mouth bass specimens that would have taken the current Texas state

record!

Steve and Virginia Oliver stayed at this park last summer and said the fishing was very good. Hiking trails are well marked and there is a abundance of wildlife. Park is pretty well quiet in the camping area as the day use area is on the other side of the lake. The park is also well-patrolled by Park Rangers.

Similar to the Frozen Chosen, we will have a club cookout at the park pavilion. This will be dinner instead of lunch, however. The idea is to fish in the morning and shop Canton in the afternoon. Hence the name Flies & Fleas. Get It!

This outing coincides with the First Monday Trade Days



A Nice Bunch of Large Bluegill

the weekend of May 5th and is only about 20 minutes away. After a day of shopping, we will gather for a hot dog and hamburger cookout provided by the club. Club will provide drinks, just bring a side and/or a dessert.

Whether you bring your camper or stay at a nearby hotel, or just come in for the day, you are sure to have a wonderful time with the whole family! Make your reservations soon. Don't worry about a particular site as there are a limited number of them with good wa-



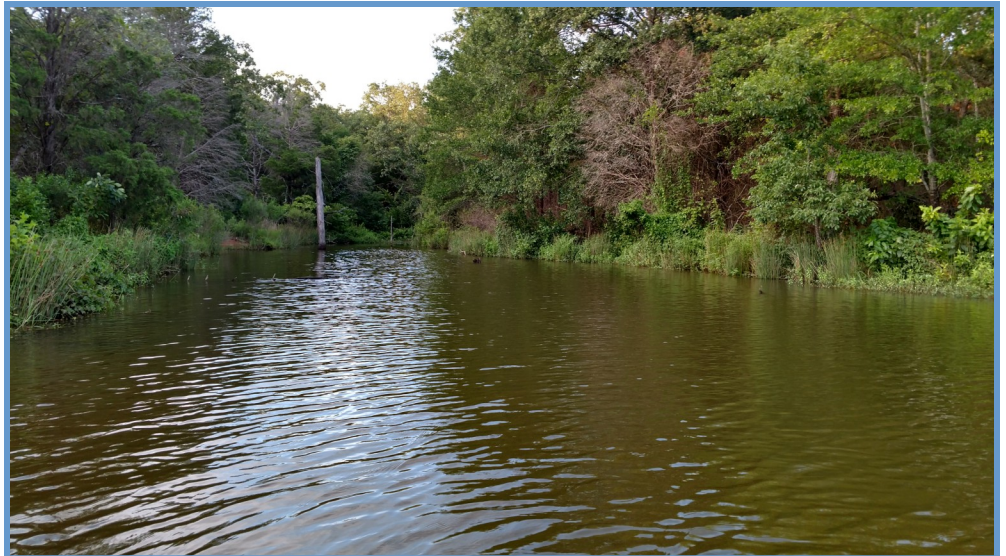
New for 2018: Flies & Fleas Outing - Cont.



(Continued from page 4)

ter access. Steve and Virginia are going over early in the week to get a good water spot that can act as a base for your boats/kayaks so it won't be necessary to launch and take out every time.

Mark your calendar today, make your reservation, and plan to have a great time!



Bass Back in the Salad

Learning the Tricks for Catching Largemouth Bass

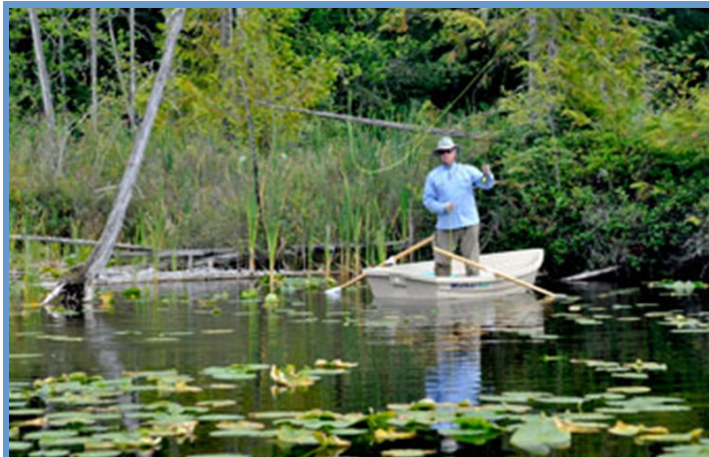
I remember my first time fly fishing for largemouth bass, back in my mid teens, as...tricky. Frustrating too. Tangled milfoil grew in mats along the edges of the little lake and brush and tree branches hovered just above much of that. So I tossed my cork popper within inches of the greenery and limbs and tried to draw the bass out with a teasing retrieve of the fly.

I did okay.

Sometimes there was a channel cutting into the lake plants and that was particularly good. But I knew there were far more bass back in the salad than the relative few I was pestering along its outer edges

I can't recall if I first tied a fly with a snag guard or purchased a fly already carrying one, but I do remember inspecting the clear, thick, strand, squeezing it down and feeling its stiff resistance, and deciding it must surely protect the fly from snags... and bass.

I really couldn't imagine the thing letting me hook a fish.



Bass back in the salad - the author casts his bass bug among lily pads and fallen trees - that's where the fishing is trickiest but the bass are often most abundant.

It took me a while to get the hang of it, but I eventually learned to:

- **tease** the fly lightly over a lily pad or a log
- **drop** the rod-tip
- **grip** the line
- **rear back** when a bass took

At first I was stunned that the snag guard actually worked. Soon I trusted and relied on it.

So, your first order of business for tackling largemouth bass back in the salad is to tie your floating and diving largemouth-bass flies with snag guards, or buy them that way.

You can always cut a snag guard off if you don't need it, but there's no way I know to add one out on the water when you

Snag Guards: Too Good to be True?

Sometime later I read about the monofilament snag guard, looping just outside the hook's point.

It was a revelation.

Still, I'd seen the snag guard endorsed in print several times, and I was anxious to reach back into the weeds after all those bass that taunted me, all those bass back in the salad.

Tips for Successful Fishing with a Snag Guard

do need it.

No doubt part of my problem long ago with accepting the snag-guard and tossing my snag-guard flies back to the bass back in the salad was:

I knew trout, not bass.

(Continued on page 7)

Bass Back in the Salad - Cont.



That heavy monofilament curving around the hook's point is a snag guard - the snag guard revolutionized bass fly fishing and is critical for those bass back in the salad.

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Trout vs. Bass: Big Differences When You Fish with a Fly

Even by the age of 13, I'd spent a lot of hours on trout streams and lakes. If you're a trout fly fisher, even a good one (perhaps especially if you're a good one) you'll have to let go of many precepts about even the most essential principles of fishing a fly if you're going to succeed with bass.

The Importance of Cover

Largemouth bass are cautious in the shallows - they know they're

exposing themselves to predators there. But that risk never seems to deter them - bass spend a lot of time in water from four feet deep to so shallow it barely covers their dorsal fins.

All they require in order to visit the shallows is overhead or side coverage.

Overhead Cover vs. Side Cover

Overhead cover includes not just water-plants such as lily pads, but fallen timber and brush, docks, even anchored boats.

Side cover is anything a bass can hold next to and sort of blend with, or dart behind. Flooded timber in reservoirs, boulders, and pilings left from old docks all make good side cover.

Overhead cover in particular calls for tactics that keep bugs from snagging.

Stumped? Try Floating Hair Bugs or Poppers

Most fishing in heavy bass cover is about floating hair bugs and poppers. They're typically easier to fish in cover than sinking flies because the strike is visual - with sinking flies the strike must be felt, and that's tricky when the line is dragging across vegetation or

wood.

I no longer hesitate to toss my hair bugs back over logs or among lily pads or anything else that might hide a bass.

But I'm always thinking as I'm retrieving the fly.



A good largemouth Skip hooked in and then hauled out of reeds and a tangle of milfoil. Typical for bass back in the salad.

I try to avoid that "V"-shaped indentation in a lily pad - once a bug goes up that "V", a snag is almost inevitable, snag guard or no.

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Bass Back in the Salad - Cont.

(Continued from page 7)

Over branches and logs I work the bug with particular care and patience as these are also likely places for it to snag - but when my packed-hair fly drops on the near side of a floating log and a bass that's been stalking it

Usually it's metal barbell eyes mounted atop their shanks that make these flies flip over (the Clouser Minnow, for example). But increasingly, it's the use of jig hooks (as is the Grim Reaper) that insures the flip - jig hooks include sharp bends in their shanks up near their eyes that

salad.

This snag-guard matter also depends on how carefully you work a sinking fly.

You can:

- strategically **work the rod** tip side to side,
- **speed or slow** the retrieve, and perhaps avoid snagging in serious weeds with no snag guard.

This is a real challenge, though, with sinking flies as you can't really see what's down there to avoid.

Trout vs. Bass: Setting the Hook

Setting the hook on a largemouth, especially with a snag-guard

fly, has nothing to do with the trout-fisher's light tugs - you drop the rod tip, lean back a little - smack the hook home.

But there's a little more to it than that.

If your fly is hard, such as a cork popper, your time to strike is short - the bass will expel the rigid little

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Four fine flies for bass fishing in deep cover, tied by Skip. From left to right: Dahlberg Diver in frog colors, Foamtail Super Worm, Messinger Bucktail Frog, Meat Whistle.

slams it down, I figure the reward is well worth my efforts. And for bass back in the salad, this is a classic scenario.

Flies that Sink

It's common to throw sinking flies back into brush or weeds too, but many sinking bass flies have a twist that floating bass flies lack: they ride upside down.

really raise their centers of gravity.

An inverted fly tends to avoid snags, but in the thick stuff that largemouth like, it may not be enough, so even flies that flip over are sometimes tied with snag guards.

But where the obstacles are spread out a bit, a snag guard may not be required... unlike floating flies for bass back in the

Bass Back in the Salad - Cont.

(Continued from page 8)

imposter in a blink. If your bug is foam or, better yet, packed hair, the bass may chew on it for several seconds, giving you plenty of time to set the hook (though I wouldn't advise dawdling).

Slack in the line can kill your hook-set—you waste most of your rod-swing just taking out that slack.

So as you drop the rod's tip, draw in all the line you can without putting any pressure on the fly - even the slightest pull will tell the bass to let go.

Once the extra line between you and the fish is in, slam the snag-guard fly home.

Make sure you really clamp down with your line-hand too - if the line slips, the set weakens.

Fishing in the Salad - The right Tackle Matters

Regarding largemouth-bass tippets and leaders: go stout. I never go under 3X tippet for largemouth anyway, but with snag guards and any chance of hooking a bass over about two-and-a-half pounds I don't go under 2X, and 1X or even 0X are on the table.



Skip, fishing on foot, hooked this big largemouth bass back in the vegetation of a Texas pond. The fish was raised briefly for photos and then released.

Heavy tippets are for more than smacking home snag-guard flies - you may be dragging a five-pound largemouth - vexed and violent - quickly out of crowded lily pads - imagine the strain that puts on a tippet .

Regarding lines, those nose-heavy bass-bug tapers offer advantages with the big and sometimes wind-resistant flies bass love. With small bass, a six-weight can serve, but a seven-weight is better. For big bass an eight-weight

line may be best.

Rods for bass, especially bass in thick cover, need power. Of course power in a rod is largely about line weight; a rod that can shoot out a seven- or eight-weight line must possess good power, making it suitable for casting big flies and the general mayhem of a bass's muscular fight.

So the only point I'll make here is that while powerful rods are best for largemouth bass in general, power becomes even more important when they're rods for snag-guard flies and heavy cover.

Playing those Deep-Undercover Bass

If your idea of playing a fish is coaxing in a brown trout on 6X tip-pet in the open water of a stony river, please abandon that notion - this is **bass fishing**.

The moment when you set the hook, you have the element of surprise on your side... briefly. Use that second to your advantage by pulling hard, immediately. Try to drag the bass as far as you can before it

(Continued on page 10)

Designing Flies that Move, Part 4 - Throwing Loops to Jaws, Cont.

(Continued from page 9)

can react. With luck, you'll get the fish clear of trouble before it explodes. Typically, you'll get the fish halfway out of trouble before it explodes - but halfway can help a lot.

With weeds in particular, the

trick is to get the bass' head up out of the water and keep it up: this allows you to slide the bass quickly in across the top of the weeds and makes it difficult for him to do much of anything except thrash.

Holding the rod high and maintaining serious pressure on the fish are critical here.

All in all, you'll need some serious re-schooling if you're a trout fisher taking up largemouth bass - especially largemouth bass back in the salad.

But it's an education filled with intriguing challenge and just plain fun!



About Skip Morris...

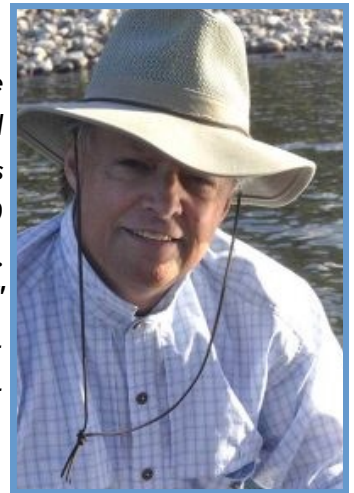
Skip Morris is among the most prolific fly-fishing and fly-tying authors alive—his name is known to anglers around the world. He has written eighteen books on fly fishing and tying. His videos and DVD's range from instruction for tying nymphs, to tying bass flies, to tying and fishing flies for sea-run cutthroat trout. Skip has published over 250 articles on fly fishing and tying in magazines from *Fly Fisherman* to *American Angler*. For three years he was among the hosts of the "Fly-Fish Television Magazine" show. As a speaker and clinician, Skip is well-known as an entertaining, concise, and knowledgeable presenter, with a sly sense of humor and an easygoing manner that draws in the audience.

...and Carol Ann Morris

Skip's wife, Carol Ann Morris, is a photographer, videographer, and illustrator (watercolor, pen and ink, pencil) who works with Skip on his books, magazine articles, and instructional videos. Her photographs and illustrations have appeared separate from Skip's work, in *Gray's Sporting Journal*, the *Yale Angler's Journal*, and *Fly Fishing & Tying Journal*. Carol has presented her power point presentation titled "Fly Fishing Photography 101: How to Capture What You See" at fly clubs and sportsman's shows around the US and Canada.

Skip and Carol live with their black cat Reggie and their little tortie cat Olive, on Washington's lush Olympic Peninsula where the fishing opportunities in rivers, lakes, along the beaches, and out in the open saltwater are varied and abundant.

Read more: <http://www.skip-morris-fly-tying.com/skip-morris.html#ixzz58tXcRp9U>



2018 Kayak Raffle

North Louisiana Fly Fishers

PRESENTS:

2018 KAYAK RAFFLE ASCEND 10T



Drawing Will be at the
June 2018 NLFF Meeting

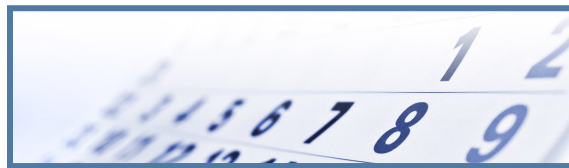
Need Not be Present to Win

Tickets

\$15 Each
Or
3 For \$30

Ascend® welcomes you to the all-new 10T sit-on-top fishing kayak. Its unique tunnel hull design creates impressive maneuverability and a stable platform for standing or fishing. On-deck, the Ascend 10T Sit-On-Top Kayak sports an open design optimized for accessory customization and unique storage opportunities. The suspended seating system presents the ultimate in all-day comfort, thanks to a removable design that lets you use in on the water or onshore. Integrated weather-tight storage provides reliable gear containment, while quick-connect D-ring bow and stern attachments and 3 rails accept virtually all aftermarket rail-mounted accessories. Adjustable foot braces, dual flush-mounted rod holder with rod leash eyelets (leash sold separately), 6 scupper drains with plugs, and bow and stern carrying handles complete this Ascend kayak as the best option for adventurers and anglers seeking performance and versatility. Size: 10' X 31" X 12" (L x W x H). Approximate weight: 67 lbs. Max. Weight Capacity: 325 lbs. Made in USA.

\$549.99 Value

NLFF Calendar

Mar 13th: NLFF Monthly Meeting. Red River Wildlife Refuge, 150 Eagle Bend Point, Bossier City, LA. Social gathering at 6:00pm, meeting starts at 6:45pm and presentation will begin at 7:00pm. Steve Oliver will be giving a presentation on his trip to Alaska. Disclaimer: Sightseeing trip with just a little fly fishing.

Mar 15th: Fly Tying Workshop. White River Fly Shop in Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA., 6:00-7:30pm. Scott Irwin will be tying a version of Doug's Popper.

Mar 27th: NLFF Executive Board meeting. 6:00pm at Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA upstairs in the conference room directly across from the elevator.

Apr 10th: NLFF Monthly Meeting. Red River Wildlife Refuge, 150 Eagle Bend Point, Bossier City, LA. Chili & Flies meeting. Details at the January meeting and in February newsletter. Social gathering at 6:00pm, meeting starts at 6:45pm. A ranger from the RRNWR will be giving a presentation.

Apr 19th: Fly Tying Workshop. White River Fly Shop in Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA., 6:00-7:30pm. Brett Rowell will be tying a grasshopper pattern.

Apr 24th: NLFF Executive Board meeting. 6:00pm at Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA upstairs in the conference room directly across from the elevator.

May 5th: "Flies and Fleas". This is a new outing for our club. Hopefully it will turn into an annual event like the "Frozen Chozen". Details coming in March in the newsletter and on the website.

May 8th: NLFF Monthly Meeting. Red River Wildlife Refuge, 150 Eagle Bend Point, Bossier City, LA. Social gathering at 6:00pm, meeting starts at 6:45pm and presentation will begin at 7:00pm. Art Seale will give a presentation on fishing the Red River.

May 17th: Fly Tying Workshop. White River Fly Shop in Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA., 6:00-7:30pm. Steve Oliver will be tying Todd's Wiggle Minnow but this time with a new twist.

May 22th: NLFF Executive Board meeting. 6:00pm at Bass Pro Shop in Bossier City, LA upstairs in the conference room directly across from the elevator.



NEWSLETTER ITEMS DUE!
SEND ITEMS TO EDITOR:
STORIES, PHOTOS, ITEMS OF
INTEREST ARE ALL
WELCOME!

Upcoming Events

Feb 24th: "Fly Fish Texas". Held at the Texas Freshwater Fisheries Center in Athens, TX. Admission is \$10. This annual event will run from 9am - 4pm and is designed to teach everything from tying a fly to catching a fish in one day. For seminar and activities schedule, go to www.tpwd.state.tx.us/tffc and click on "Fly Fish Texas" link.

Mar 22nd - 24th: "Sowbug Roundup". Event is held from 9am - 4pm each day. The Sowbug Roundup is sponsored by the North Arkansas Fly Fishers club and has long been the foremost gathering of fly tyers in the USA. Every year more than 100 fly tyers from all over North America and Europe meet and tie at Sowbug. There's also seminars, casting instruction, vendors, drawings and auctions. Note: The first \$3000 of revenue from the Sowbug Roundup is used to fund the NAFF Scholarships. Admission is \$5 per person for all three days, under 12 years old is free with adult. For details, go to www.northarkansasflyfisher.org

Apr 6th - 7th: "Lake Athens Fly Fishing Festival". Held at the Lake Athens Marina in Athens, TX. Admission to the festival is free, however, the Big Bass Contest has a \$40 entry fee. Pre-registration is required. All proceeds from the contest will benefit Project Healing Waters - North Texas Patriots. Go to www.johnnyonthefly.com for more details.

Apr 14th: "KFF Fly Fish 101". Held at the LDWF Booker-Fowler Hatchery in Woodworth, LA. from 8:30am - 12:30pm on Saturday April 14th. Admission is free, however seating is limited so pre-registration is required. This is a hands-on event covering the basics of fly fishing and includes an overview of fly fishing, tackle and terminology, knots and leaders, and fly casting. Go to www.kisatchiefly.org for more details.



North Louisiana Fly Fishers

First FFI (formerly IFFF) Affiliated Club in Louisiana

P.O. Box 29531

Shreveport, LA 71149

email: nlffclub@gmail.com

We're on the Web!

www.northlaflyfishers.org

Founded in 1984

Serving the Ark-La-Tex for over 30 years

It is the charge of the North Louisiana Fly Fishers to afford the general public and our members in particular, a better understanding of Fly Fishing, Fly Tying, and Rod Building. We wish to perpetuate the sport as a most pleasurable and exciting fishing method and provide education, instruction and the opportunities for relaxation to the membership.

The North Louisiana Fly Fishers (NLFF) Club serves the Ark-La-Tex area surrounding Shreveport. As the closest cold water fishery, we consider the Little Missouri (Little' Mo) River near Murfreesboro, AR our home waters. We also fish the local rivers and lakes. We even have a growing group of kayak fishermen that, as well as the local rivers and lakes, will fish the gulf coast marshes for some saltwater action!

We meet the second Tuesday of every month at the Red River Wildlife Refuge (150 Eagle Bend Point, Bossier City, LA). Meeting starts at 7pm but come about 6pm to visit, tie flies and practice casting when the weather permits. See you there!