



Cultivating the art of fly fishing through a spirit of fellowship and resource enhancement”

washingtoncountyyflyfishers.com

Issue 297

April 2026

Meeting Location

Westbrook Club House

14255 SW 6th Street (one block east of SW Murray)

Beaverton, OR 97005

Next Meeting Date and Time: Wednesday April 1, 2026

April Agenda

6:30-7:00	Welcome
7:00-7:15	Club business and Fishing Report
7:15-8:15	Guest Speaker – Marc Williamson
8:15-8:30	Raffle, Door Prize and adjourn



President's Message

April 2026

Our April 1 meeting will feature another of our own, Marc Williamson talking about fishing still waters. His presentation is The Art and Science of Reading Still Water. This is perfect timing for our spring outings as we have several lake outings on tap and Marc's teaching will help prepare for successful trips.



Also, in April we have breakfast at the Pepper Mill Pub on the 18th, the Sandy River Spey Clave at Oxbow Park on the 24th and 25th, and two outings currently planned for Vernonia Pond on April 10 and Lost Lake Clatsop County on April 23.

We are planning fly tying classes in April and May. We will have five classes tying five different patterns, one each class, taught at the club house on selected week nights. The club will provide a kit for each fly containing everything you need to tie up to 10 of the flies; hooks, thread, materials, etc. There will also be a recipe page. We are asking for a contribution of \$10 total when you sign up for the set of five classes. The cost of the kits and the rent for the club house are covered by a grant from ORCFFI. The kits are provided with the help of Royal Treatment Fly Shop.

The club now has an official hat! We have worked with a company in Wisconsin for hats with our logo. They will be ready by the next meeting and will cost members \$20 each. We have 24 of them on order so if you want one, get in line early. Cash only please.

Quick note – we are planning a Deschutes trip with Rob Crandall on July 9, 10, 11. More to follow but save the dates. If you want to go, let Galen Flinn know as soon as you can.

Don't forget your dues are due if you haven't paid yet. \$30 cash or check at the next meeting. Also, we do have the life time membership for \$300 if you are so

inclined. If you miss paying your dues, in May you will be dropped from all announcement lists for the newsletter and outings.

It's time to start tying flies for the summer. Right now, I am focusing on Elk Hair Caddis and Caddis Emergent Sparkle Pupa. I am also making sure my boxes have plenty of leeches and other lake patterns such as thin mints. I learned several patterns at the Expo in Albany the weekend of March 13 and I will be tying those as well. If you missed the show, it was really good with over 150 tyers on hand and a number of vendors.

Tight Lines,

Rick Pay, President



Washington County Fly Fishers

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Club Calendar

- April
 - 1 – Club Meeting – Marc Williamson – Still Water
 - 10 – Outing Vernonia Pond
 - 18 – Breakfast meeting
 - 23 – Outing – Lost Lake Coast
 - 24-25 – Sandy River Spey Clave – Oxbow Park
- May
 - 6 – Club Meeting – Speaker - Chris Wilson – John Day River
 - 16 – Breakfast meeting

- June
 - 3 – Club Meeting – speaker Josh Linn – Equipment and flies for summer vs winter steelhead
- July
 - 1 – Club Meeting – speaker TBD
 - 10,11 – Deschutes fishing with Rob Crandall
- August
 - 8 – Club Picnic
- September
 - 2 – Club Meeting – speaker Kevin Stertz - ODFW
- October
 - 7 - Club Meeting – speaker Brian Bangs – US FWS – Willamette Valley Non-game Species and their interaction with game fish
- November
 - 4 – Club Meeting – speaker Jennifer La Follette – Golden Trout at June Lake
- December
 - 2 – Christmas Dinner

GEAR SPOTLIGHT: HOW TO CLEAN, ORGANIZE, AND PREP FOR SPRING SUCCESS

BY JH FLY CO – JACKSONHOLEFLYCOMPANY.COM



Winter is here, and while some anglers brave the cold for icy streams, many of us are cozying up indoors, dreaming of spring hatches and rising trout. But just because your rod is resting doesn't mean you should be! The off-season is the perfect time to give your gear some TLC, organize your fly boxes, and sharpen your skills. Here's your ultimate guide to making the most of the downtime so you're ready to hit the water when spring arrives.

FLY ROD & REEL MAINTENANCE

Your rod and reel are the heart of your fly fishing setup, so keeping them in top shape is crucial.

- **Clean and Inspect Reels:**
Start by removing the spool and gently cleaning the reel with warm, soapy water. Check for grit or salt buildup (especially if you've been fishing in saltwater). Lubricate the drag system and spindle with a drop of reel oil, and test the drag to ensure it's smooth and responsive.
- **Inspect Your Rod:**
Carefully examine your rod for cracks, loose guides, or worn cork handles. Run a cotton ball along the guides—if it snags, there could be a burr that needs filing. Tighten any loose guides and clean the rod with a soft cloth.

FLY LINE & LEADER CARE

A well-maintained fly line can make all the difference in your casting performance.

- **Clean Your Fly Line:**
Use a mild soap and warm water to clean your fly line, removing dirt and grime that can affect its performance. Rinse thoroughly and let it dry before storing.
- **Check Leaders and Tippets:**
Inspect your leaders and tippets for nicks, abrasions, or signs of aging. Replace any that look worn—you don't want a snapped tippet ruining your first spring outing!



FLY ORGANIZATION

The off-season is the perfect time to sort through your fly boxes and restock for spring.

- **Sort and Organize:**
Dump out those fly boxes and sort through your patterns. Toss any damaged or rusty flies, and reorganize by type (dry flies, nymphs, streamers).
- **Restock Essentials:**
Make a list of flies you'll need for spring—think nymphs like Pheasant Tails and Hare's Ears, or streamers like Woolly Buggers. If you tie your own flies, now's the time to stock up!

WADER & BOOT MAINTENANCE

Don't forget about your waders and boots—they need love too!

- **Check for Leaks:**
Fill your waders with water (or use a flashlight in a dark room) to check for leaks. Patch any holes with a wader repair kit.
- **Clean Boot Soles:**
Scrub the felt or rubber soles of your boots to remove dirt and debris.

This helps prevent the spread of invasive species when you hit the water again.



KNOT TYING PRACTICE

Winter is the perfect time to brush up on your knot-tying skills. Here are a few essential knots to practice:

- **Improved Clinch Knot:** Perfect for securing flies to tippet.
- **Surgeon's Knot:** Great for joining two pieces of tippet.
- **Loop Knot:** Adds movement to streamers and poppers.
- **Blood Knot:** Ideal for connecting similar-diameter lines.

PLAN FOR THE UPCOMING SEASON

- **Research New Locations:** Explore potential fishing spots you'd like to visit in the spring. Consider factors like fish species, regulations, and accessibility.
- **Set Goals:** Whether it's mastering a new technique or targeting a specific species, setting clear objectives can enhance your fishing experience.
- **Stay Informed:** Keep abreast of any changes in fishing regulations or local conservation efforts to ensure compliance and support sustainable practices.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIVITIES FOR THE OFF-SEASON

If you've already prepped your gear, there's still plenty to do to stay connected to fly fishing during the winter.

- **Read or Watch:** Dive into a new fly fishing book or documentary.
- **Plan Spring Trips:** Research new destinations or revisit old favorites.
- **Attend Events:** Fly fishing expos, tying workshops, and seminars are great ways to learn and connect with other anglers.

YOUR OFF-SEASON MISSION

Use this off-season to take stock of your gear, clean and organize your setup, and sharpen your skills. When spring rolls around, you'll be ready to hit the water with confidence and ease. By investing time now to maintain your equipment and refine your techniques, you'll set yourself up for a smooth, successful, and enjoyable spring fishing season.

EARLY SPRING FLY BOX ESSENTIALS: WHAT TO CARRY, WHAT TO CUT, AND HOW TO ORGANIZE IT

BY JH FLY COMPANY – JACKSON HOLE WYO.

Most experienced anglers don't need more flies. They need fewer — organized better.

By the time early spring arrives, your boxes are probably a graveyard of last summer's patterns, half-tied droppers, and hoppers that won't see water for another three months. The window before runoff is short, and the anglers who fish it well aren't the ones who packed the most — they're the ones who packed smart.

This isn't another survey of every fly that works in March and April. You already know what works. This is about building a disciplined, ready-to-fish setup across three boxes, understanding which patterns actually belong in the water right now,

and knowing what to pull out until conditions call for it. Get this right before the season opens, and you'll spend more time fishing and less time digging.

THE EARLY SPRING BOX SYSTEM: THREE BOXES, ONE SEASON

The core idea is simple: one box for nymphs, one for small flies and emergers, one for streamers. Each box has a specific purpose, a specific form factor, and a specific set of patterns it should hold right now — not eventually, not in two months, but *now*. When you build your setup around this system, you're not just organizing flies. You're making decisions on the water faster, wasting less time between rigs, and fishing with more confidence because everything in your vest has earned its spot.

BOX 1: THE NYMPH BOX

Nymphs are the backbone of early spring fishing. Trout are subsurface the overwhelming majority of the time in March and April — cold water keeps them low, hatches are sparse and unpredictable, and nymphs represent the most reliable, calorie-dense food source available. If you only have time to dial in one box before the season starts, this is it.

The mistake most anglers make here isn't carrying the wrong patterns — it's carrying too many different ones in not enough sizes. Three sizes of a Pheasant Tail will catch you more fish than eight different mayfly nymphs in a single size. Depth coverage and size flexibility matter more than variety. Build around four core patterns and invest in having each of them in the sizes you actually need.

Gold Ribbed Hare's Ear Nymph (#12–#16): The most versatile nymph in your box, full stop. The buggy, impressionistic profile imitates mayfly nymphs, caddis larvae, and scuds without committing to any single match. That versatility is exactly what you need in early spring when you're not always sure what's on the menu. Fish it as your lead fly through riffles, seams, and deeper runs. Carry it in at least three sizes — the water will tell you which one to use.

Pheasant Tail Nymph – Natural or Flashback (#14–#18): Your slim-profile mayfly imitation. Where the Hare's Ear is broad and buggy, the Pheasant Tail is precise and subtle — a closer match for smaller mayfly nymphs like Baetis and early-season Ephemerella. Drop it in as your trailing fly 12–18 inches behind a heavier anchor pattern. In clear water, go smaller. In slightly off-color flows, step up a size.

Tungsten Bead Perdigon Jig (#12–#16): Your fast-water workhorse. The tungsten bead and slim coated body get it to depth quickly, which matters when flows are elevated and you need to punch through the current column. Fish it tight-line on a Euro rig or as your heavy anchor fly under an indicator. The Perdigon doesn't imitate any single insect perfectly — it imitates "food at the right depth," which is often exactly what cold-water trout are looking for.

Kaufmann's Stonefly Nymph (#8–#12): Your anchor pattern for freestone water and high-gradient rivers. Big, heavy, and bulky — exactly what you want when you need the fly to get down fast and stay there. Run it as the lead fly in a two-nymph rig with a smaller trailer. On rocky rivers where stoneflies are present year-round, this is one of the most productive patterns you can throw from March through runoff.

□ **Pro Tip**: Stock your nymph box with 3 of each pattern in each size you carry. You'll lose flies to fish, snags, and bad casts — running out of a critical size mid-session is avoidable. Two-nymph rigs are standard in early spring: anchor fly (Perdigon or Stonefly) plus trailer (Pheasant Tail or Hare's Ear), 12–18 inches of separation.

BOX 2: THE MIDGE & EMERGER BOX

This is the box most anglers don't have — and it's the one that will cost them the most fish in early spring.

Midges and emergers don't belong buried in your nymph box. In March and April, they're the most-reached-for patterns of any session. Midges hatch year-round and dominate the diet of trout in tailwaters and spring creeks throughout the early season. BWOs start showing on overcast afternoons as water temps nudge past 48°F. The emerger window — when insects are trapped between subsurface and surface — is often the most productive feeding period of the entire day, and most anglers fish through it with the wrong fly.

Small flies also have a retention problem in foam boxes: they pull out when you don't want them to and slip into cracks. Magnetic retention is the answer. That's why this category gets its own dedicated home.

Zebra Midge – Red, Black, Olive (#18–#24): The workhorse of early spring subsurface fishing. Carry all three colors — conditions and water type will dictate which one gets tied on. Red is your first call in tailwaters and spring creeks. Black works in lower light and stained water. Olive earns its place during BWO activity when trout are keyed on smaller, greenish nymphs. Fish it dead-drifted under an indicator or as a trailer behind a larger anchor nymph.

Griffith's Gnat (#18–#22): Your surface midge pattern. When trout are sipping midge clusters in calm water — flat tailouts, slow eddies, slick spring creek runs — this is the fly. Its peacock herl body and wrapped hackle create a realistic cluster footprint that sits naturally in the film. Fish it with fine tippet (6X minimum) and a delicate presentation. Don't leave home without at least a half-dozen.

Beadhead RS2 (#18–#22): The bridge pattern between nymphing and dry fly fishing. The RS2 sits just below the surface film and imitates a midge or small mayfly at the most vulnerable moment of its emergence — half in, half out, going nowhere. When trout are rising subtly but refusing your dries, they're almost always eating emergers. This is the answer. Fish it unweighted as a dropper beneath a dry fly or dead-drift it through feeding lanes on its own.

Beadhead BWO Emerger (#18–#22): Purpose-built for the overcast afternoon window when Blue-Winged Olives start pushing toward the surface. BWO emergences in early spring are often the best dry-fly-adjacent fishing of the entire season — trout feed aggressively and the emerger stage is longer than most anglers realize. Fish this pattern in the film during the pre-hatch buildup before switching to a dry. It regularly outfishes the adult pattern by a wide margin.

□ **Pro Tip:** Midges often hatch in overlapping waves throughout the day. In the morning, fish midge larvae deep. By mid-morning, shift to pupae and emergers as activity moves toward the surface. By afternoon, watch for cluster sipping and reach for the Griffith's Gnat. Rotating through the midge lifecycle rather than staying on one pattern all day will consistently put more fish in the net.

BOX 3: THE STREAMER BOX

Here's the honest truth about early spring streamer fishing: most anglers overcomplicate it. They carry articulated patterns, double-hook rigs, and half a

dozen color variations when the water is still cold and trout are not actively chasing. Cold water means slower metabolisms and more deliberate feeding. A targeted, disciplined streamer selection will outperform a packed box of 25 options every time — because it forces better decision-making and better technique.

Two scenarios cover 90% of early spring streamer fishing: dark, natural patterns for clear water, and brighter or larger profiles for off-color flows. Build around that and you're covered.

Woolly Bugger – Black or Olive (#6–#10): The most consistently productive streamer in early spring, and the one you should have confidence in even when nothing else is working. In cold water, the slow strip-pause retrieve — let it sink, strip once, pause, strip again — outperforms aggressive retrieves by a significant margin. Black in clear water. Olive when there's a slight tint. Three of each is not excessive.

Sculpin Pattern (#6–#10): Sculpins don't migrate seasonally — they're on the bottom of cold rivers year-round, and big trout know it. A low-riding sculpin pattern bounced along the bottom with a sink-tip line and slow retrieve is one of the most reliable ways to target large fish in early spring when chasing isn't in the cards. Fish it near structure: undercut banks, large boulders, woody debris.

Black Ghost (#6–#10): A classic feather-wing streamer that earns its place in clear-water conditions and with pressured fish. Its white wing and contrasting dark body create a defined silhouette that spooky early-season trout can evaluate and commit to without feeling rushed. Fish it on long, slow swings in soft pools and deep channels.

Mickey Finn (#6–#10): When the water comes up and visibility drops — spring rain, overnight snowmelt, upstream runoff — the Mickey Finn is your call. The bright red and yellow combination creates contrast and movement that fish can track in murky conditions. Strip it faster than you would a natural-toned pattern. This is your off-color day fly, and it earns its spot in the box precisely because conditions in early spring are unpredictable.

□ **Pro Tip:** In cold water, retrieve speed is almost always the variable — not the pattern. Start with the slowest retrieve you think is reasonable, then slow it down

further. A strip-pause that feels impossibly slow in 45°F water is often exactly right. Trout won't chase in cold water, but they will eat something that stops in front of them.

WHAT DOESN'T MAKE THE CUT — YET

This is the section most fly fishing content skips. It's also the most useful thing you can do for your early spring setup: pull out the patterns that don't belong.

Right now, today, the following patterns are dead weight in your vest:

- **Hoppers and big foam terrestrials.** Water temps are too cold, trout aren't looking up for large surface food, and these flies will sit in your box for another 10–12 weeks. Pull them.
- **Chubby Chernobyls and attractor dries.** Same reasoning. These earn their spot in July. In March they're taking up space where something useful should be.
- **Heavy articulated streamers.** Large articulated patterns with multiple hooks are designed for warmer water, more active fish, and aggressive chase behavior. Early spring trout aren't in that mode. Leave them home until flows stabilize and water temps climb above 50°F consistently.
- **Late-season Skwala dries and big stonefly adults.** The Skwala window is narrow and specific. If you're not actively targeting that hatch on a river where it's happening, these flies are clutter.
- **Size 8 dry flies of any kind.** With limited exceptions, early spring surface feeding involves small insects — midges, BWOs, early caddis. Big dries wait.

Pull these patterns, put them in a labeled box at home, and bring them out when conditions call for them. The [Loaded Hopper Dropper Box](#) is exactly where your terrestrial and attractor setup will live come summer — fully stocked and ready when that window arrives. For now, it stays home.

A cleaned-out vest means faster decisions, better focus, and fewer frustrated minutes on the bank sorting through flies that have no business being there in March.

PUTTING THE SYSTEM TOGETHER

Three boxes. That's the system.

In your vest or pack, the Slim Magnetic goes in a shirt pocket — quick access, because you'll be in it constantly for midge and emerger swaps throughout the day. The Aluminum Nymph Box goes in a front pocket where you can open it flat and see your full size range at a glance. The Foam Streamer Box goes in a larger rear pocket or pack — you're not swapping streamers mid-riffle the way you swap nymphs, so it doesn't need to be on top.

This isn't about buying more gear. It's about making the gear you have work better through deliberate organization. If you already have fly boxes that match these functions — magnetic for small flies, compartmented for nymphs, slit foam for streamers — use them. The principle matters more than the specific products.

That said, if you're starting from scratch or rebuilding after a season of accumulated clutter, the loaded assortment options let you skip the build-it-yourself phase entirely and arrive at the water with a fully curated, ready-to-fish setup for each category. That's not a shortcut — it's just a faster path to the same place.

THE WINDOW IS SHORT — FISH IT RIGHT

Early spring is one of the most underrated stretches of the season. The crowds haven't arrived, the water is fishable before runoff takes over, and trout that have been in winter survival mode are starting to feed with intent. The anglers who capitalize on it aren't necessarily fishing more — they're fishing smarter, with organized, purpose-built setups that let them adapt quickly when conditions shift.

Build the three-box system. Pull the patterns that don't belong. Get on the water before it comes up.

Fly of the Month

OLIVE SPANISH BULLET PERDIGON

COURTESY OF FLY FISH FOOD



Material List

- **Hook**: Hanak H 400 BL Jig Hook - 14
- **Hook Alternate**: Fulling Mill 5045 Jig Force Barbless Hook - 14
- **Bead**: Fulling Mill Slotted Tungsten Beads - Copper - 3.2mm
- **Bead Alternate**: Firehole Stones Plated Slotted Tungsten Beads - 3.5mm (9/64") - Copper
- **Tail**: Spanish Coq De Leon - Pardo
- **Tail Alternate**: Coq De Leon - Hareline - Medium Speckled Pardo
- **Body**: Semperfli Classic Waxed Thread - 12/0 - Pale Olive
- **Body Alternate**: Semperfli Classic Waxed Thread - 12/0 - Chartreuse
- **Flash**: Veevus Pearl Tinsel - Medium
- **Flash Alternate**: Mirage Tinsel - Opal - Medium
- **Resin**: Solarez UV Cure Resin - Thin Hard 1/2 oz

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