



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

Issue 302

September 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 Sept. 2, 2026

September Agenda

6:30-7:00	Welcome
7:00-7:15	Club business and Fishing Reports
7:15-8:15	Guest Speaker – Kevin Stertz, ODFW: Coho Runs Above Willamette Falls
8:15-8:30	Raffle, Door Prize and adjourn

President's Message

September, 2026

September is one of my favorite fishing months. Steelhead would start on the Deschutes, fall would be in the air with the beginnings of turning colors, fall smells, birds on the wing, school starting, and all the things that bring fond memories of life long pursuits. This year unfortunately, one of the cornerstones is likely not going to happen. Steelhead fishing on the Deschutes and North Umpqua is closed due to low numbers of wild fish. It is possible it might open if enough fish come over Bonneville Dam before the end of August, but as I am writing this, we need about 9,000 more fish with only 12 days left. Now, I support wild fish and the waters in which they live and I support fair closures to help them. I do believe there is some question as to why closing one river in the Columbia basin seems to be a good way to help these important fish. All of the rivers on the Washington side are open and, except for the Deschutes, all of the rivers on the Oregon side are open as well. Granted, the Deschutes is near the top of the list in terms of both spawning and sanctuary rivers for wild steelhead, but it seems that a basin wide plan, and perhaps closure, would be a lot smarter and fairer way to manage the resource. Ok, I'll get off my soap box and look for trout, bass, sea run cutthroat and other alternatives for the fall.



September will be a busy month for the club. We have a great speaker for September 2. Kevin Stertz of ODFW will be speaking on Coho runs above Willamette Falls - where they are and how to fish them. Those runs are in record numbers territory. We will also start a 4-part fly tying class near the end of the month and into October and possibly early November. Watch for announcements. We will also schedule a fly-casting class covering the physics of casting and the fly rod. There is also an outing (informal) at East Lake

September 7 – 13. You can fish one, some or all the days. Camping is available as are some cabin rooms at the resort. Check with Mark Bray for details - bakerbray@comcast.net. As always, we will have breakfast at the Peppermill the third Saturday, Sept. 19th.

We had a great picnic in August. 32 people showed up and enjoyed burgers and brats along with a raffle and silent auction. We raised over \$400 for the club. We got very positive feedback and will do it again next year.

Enjoy fall, be safe and avoid the smoke!

Tight Lines,

Rick Pay, President



Washington County Fly Fishers

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

Club Calendar

- August
 - 8 – Club Picnic
 - 12 – Casting Clinic – Hauling – Marc Williamson
 - 15 – Breakfast – Peppermill Lounge
- September
 - 2 – Club Meeting – speaker Kevin Stertz – ODFW
 - 19 – Breakfast – Peppermill Lounge
- October
 - 7 - Club Meeting – speaker Brian Bangs – US FWS – Willamette Valley Non-game Species and their interaction with game fish
 - 17 – Breakfast – Peppermill Lounge

- November
 - 4 – Club Meeting – speaker Jennifer La Follette – Golden Trout at June Lake
 - 21 - Breakfast – Peppermill Lounge
- December
 - 2 – Christmas Dinner
- January
 - 6 – Club Meeting
 - 16 – Breakfast
- February
 - 3 – Club Meeting and Annual Meeting/Elections
 - 20 - Breakfast
 - 27 – DRA Auction

How to practice fly casting

An easy-to-follow, effective casting practice regimen for freshwater or saltwater

Hatch Magazine by John Juracek - Saturday, Aug 15th, 2026

Having complete control over our line, leader and fly makes the process of fly fishing a whole lot of fun. It also contributes significantly to our angling success. If you're happy with the current state of your casting, read no further. Simply enjoy your time on the water. But if you sense that your casting experience could be more rewarding—in tactile pleasure as well as in catching more fish—here are some thoughts on advancing your skills.

Practice is essential to improving any physical skill. We don't often think of fishing as requiring practice, but the fact is it's no different than any

other sport. Becoming a competent fly caster requires time and repetition, and sound fundamentals should be at the heart of any casting practice regimen. *If you're unsure what efficient casting fundamentals look like, or feel like, I suggest seeking professional instruction before spending time practicing.* There's little future in reinforcing inefficient mechanics, because at some point those inefficiencies always come back to haunt us.

A crucial but rarely talked about aspect of practice involves vision. Developing the ability to watch our line unroll as we cast it (on every forward stroke and occasionally on the backcast) is essential to making progress as a caster. That's because the shape and behavior of the unrolling line provide the clues necessary to judge the integrity of our stroke, and inform us of the exact adjustments to make if something is off. Learning to hold and quickly shift our gaze between the unrolling loop and our target is *vital*ly important to becoming a proficient caster.

Given an understanding of efficient mechanics and control over where we're looking, how might we go about practicing? I suggest beginning with sessions of 10-30 minutes, a couple times a week. (Three sessions is better than two, one better than none.) If time is a constraint, a session as short as 5 minutes is still valuable—it's amazing how many reps you can make in just 5 minutes of concentrated practice. When practicing, if you find you're having so much fun (you should be) and feel that longer or more frequent sessions are productive, please have at it. And practice at whatever time of day suits you best.

Use the most visible fly line you can find for practice. Bright orange works well under most light conditions (and is perfectly fine for fishing). Take pride in the leader you use—it should be a professional design, identical to what you will use for fishing. Tie some yarn or a fly with the hook cut off to the tippet. Saltwater anglers should practice with a fly similar in size and weight to what will be fished, minus the hook.

Devote a few minutes at the start of every practice session to reinforcing good fundamentals. Casting in a vertical or near-vertical casting plane, 20-40 feet, into the wind, straightening out line and leader completely and turning your fly over a few inches above the grass/water, false casts included, will always test your fundamentals.

The most productive practice sessions are variable, mixed up. This means making different kinds of casts at varying distances, at all angles to the wind, with the rod held at various angles to the ground on both sides of the body. This mixed up practice, with no more than a few minutes devoted to any one type of cast, keeps our interest from flagging and is far more enjoyable than blocked practice (doing the same thing over and over and over). And it's been proven to improve learning. Plus, the real world demands that our strokes constantly adjust in order to deal with whatever conditions we find ourselves fishing in.

For trout anglers a practice session could incorporate any combination of the following:

- Straight line, vertical plane casts at 20, 30, 40, 50-foot targets of various sizes. Practice each distance individually, and practice extending and shortening line between these distances via false casting.
- Straight line casts with the rod held at various angles to the ground, from horizontal on the casting arm side, through vertical, to horizontal on the opposite side.
- Straight line casts at all angles to the ground in headwinds, tailwinds, sidewinds.
- Reach casts, at various distances and wind directions.
- Pile casts, incorporating slack of varying amounts, at various distances.

- Weighted streamer/nymph casting at different distances and with changes of direction.
- Roll casts, at various distances and angles to the grass/water.
- Where appropriate, false casting/shooting line/double hauling can be worked into many of these casts.

Saltwater anglers might consider the following:

- Straight line casts from 20-80 feet, at a target, while changing distances and direction with as few false casts as possible. Make sure to practice with the rod canted at various angles to the grass/water.
- Straight line casts, 20-80 feet, *starting each cast with fly in hand*, and minimizing false casts. Vary the angle of the rod to the grass/water, and practice slight changes of direction while false casting (to simulate leading fish as they move).
- Practice varying the trajectory of your forward casts. Trajectory controls how your fly impacts the water.
- Understand the mechanics behind hauling and practice double hauling extensively. Practice shooting a controlled amount of line, on the backcast and forward cast, while hauling.
- Practice stripping, both for speed in order to pick up and make a new cast, and for refining various fly retrieve patterns (slow, fast, long, short, jerky, etc.).
- Practice all of the above in the wind. *Strong wind*. Headwind, tailwind, sidewind—it's important to be able to handle any of these on a second's notice at varying distances.

Whether you fish freshwater, saltwater or both, not every practice session needs to include all of the above. Just be sure to mix it up, constantly. A small amount of extra time spent working on the casts you use most, and the ones you find hardest to accomplish, will prove beneficial. Regardless of how you structure any given session, pay attention to your mechanics.

Those should never go astray, no matter what type of fishing you're doing.

John Juracek is an instructor at the renowned School of Trout. To learn more about the school and its programs, head [here](#).

The Casting Arc - The MYTH of 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock

Posted by Rick Beare - 2026-07

[Triangle Fly Fishers - 2026-07 - Casting Corner](#)



Up to now we have focused on how to get a line to form a loop and how to begin to control the casting loop.

I want to introduce to you what are known as the five essentials of fly casting developed by casting instructor Bill Gammels.

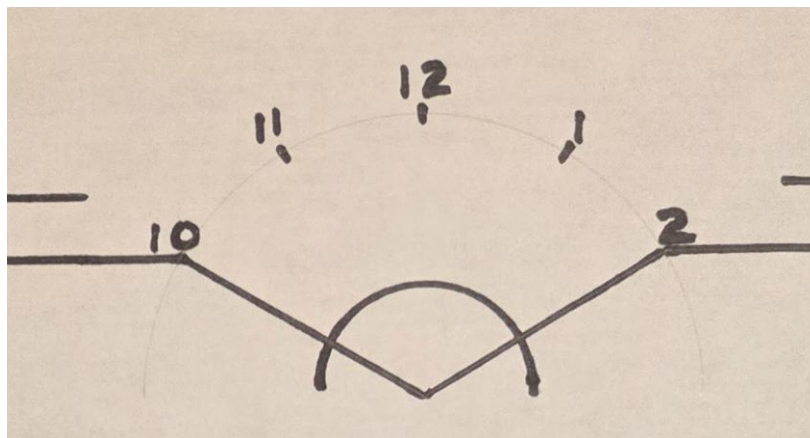
1. Eliminate slack Line; keep your rod tip low or in the water to eliminate all slack in a straight line before beginning the cast.

2. Vary the Casting Arc; Short cast, Narrow Arc, Medium distance cast- Medium arc, Long distance cast- longer arc.
3. Timing: Short cast short pause to allow the line to straighten, Medium cast Medium pause to allow the line to straighten, Longer cast longer pause to allow the line to straighten before changing the direction in exactly the opposite direction to begin #4
4. Proper Application of Power; Gradual acceleration of the rod ending in an abrupt stop to form the loop
5. Straight Line Path of the Rod Tip; the fly line follows the rod tip.

Here is a link from a New Zealander named Carl McNeil that outlines the five essentials developed by Bill Gammels.

[Fly Fishing - The 5 Essentials of Good Fly Casting](#)

While we have mentioned the casting arc, note we have not discussed the casting arc in terms of 10 o'clock to 2 o'clock as taught in numerous casting articles.



While the concept is valid to illustrate the point where the back cast ends and the forward cast end. A casting stroke from 10 to 2 o'clock is actually 120 degrees far too wide for a short distance cast. The only reason this 10 to 2 is used is illustrate a straight-line path of the two ends of the casting stroke where the abrupt stop occurs for both the back cast and forward casting stroke.

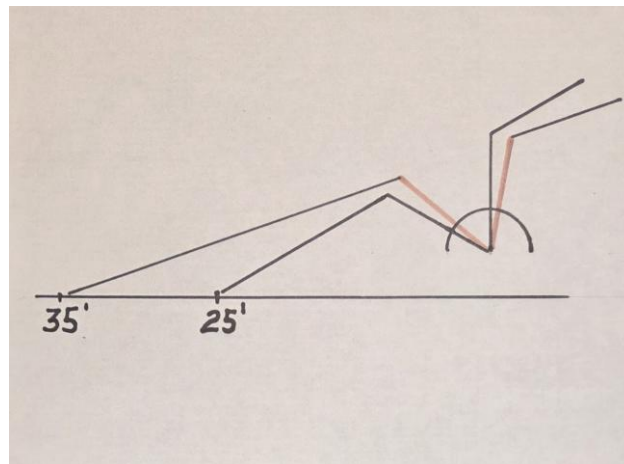
A casting arc of 120 degrees wide is used to make longer cast and the casting plane is totally on a horizontal plane. When you consider the height of the angler the length of the rod the casting plane is now over fifteen feet in the air not towards the water below, nowhere near the fish we seek.

A horizontal plane is ideal to dry out the fly or perhaps make a slack line presentation to produce "S's" in your leader to extend a drag free float on a stream. This horizontal casting plane is ideal for casting in a plunge pool to the run just above where you are positioned. The

"Horizontal" casting plane places your fly line high in the air allowing the wind to alter the direction speed of your cast.

A flat horizontal casting arc allows the wind to blow your line and fly in all directions before reaching your intended target. It is not the desired casting plane most casters need for a more precise and accurate fly presentation. This is the "Myth of the 10 to 2 o'clock casting arc."

In reality the casting arc could be illustrated with any combination of numbers on the face of the clock like 10 to 1 or 11 to 12 o'clock. For the beginner the shorter narrower casting stroke is all that is needed to cast a fly line a distance of 30 to 50 feet. The narrower angle also allows for more control of the loop and the gradual application of power from the beginning point of the back cast to ending point of the back cast. Remember, it is the application of acceleration to the abrupt stop that forms the loop.



Exercise one; practice a shorter casting arc paying special attention to the application of power, accelerating to the ending point of each arc. Focus on making a sudden stop at the end of the arc to allow the fly line to un-roll to form the loop in the back cast. Once the line has straightened behind you (turn your head to watch it to see the line straighten behind you). When the line straightens begin the forward application of power accelerating to the point on the clock to make the abrupt stop to allow the line to form a tight casting loop. Only after the abrupt stop does the rod tip follow through downward towards the target.

A more efficient casting arc is narrow for shorter distances done with minimal power in a narrow casting arc on the correct casting plane. A narrower casting arc will help the fly angler to become a more efficient caster with accuracy learning the fundamental skills to begin to cast longer distances without the use of single or double hauls.

Mastering these fundamentals will help you to learn the basics. Practicing short distances with precision technique will make the transition into the longer distances, bigger flies with sound casting technique instead of muscle power easier.

Good fly-casting technique should look effortless and in control, allowing the lever of the fly rod to do the work instead of your brute strength which typically introduces casting flaws into your casting style causing frustration as you attempt greater distances.

Begin with a wide casting arc to practice the acceleration stop to form the loop and attempt to slow the stroke down and narrow the casting arc to 90 degrees then 60 degrees and then 30 degrees.

Next, apply the casting plane to be higher on the back cast and lower on the forward cast. In this exercise, let's start our back cast stopping point at 1 o'clock and the forward cast at 10 o'clock. This casting arc is now 90 degrees wide but note the back cast is directed to the sky and the forward cast is pointing towards the water. What a concept, a forward cast directed at the water at your target.

As you progress you will learn that you can narrow the casting arc smaller say 10:30 to 12:30 now your casting arc is only 70 degrees wide. The point of these exercises is to make your casting stroke as small as you can while making a gradual acceleration to the stopping point with the casting plane going in opposite directions always in a straight line and the forward casting angle pointing towards your intended target or just above the water to make a nice delicate accurate presentation. The ultimate result is nicely formed loop that transfers the energy all the way to the end of the tippet and fly.

The "myth" of the 10 to 2 o'clock casting arc is simply an illustration of the points the angler needs to stop the back cast and the forward cast to form the loop. In fly casting to catch fish we are actually casting in angles upwards on the back cast and downwards on the forward cast to have more loop control in the wind for greater accuracy in the presentation.

Another exercise to see this angle in practice place tape measure in front of you with the wind to the side about 90 degrees from the direction of your cast. In this way the wind will only affect your cast from the side not directly in front or behind your casting stroke.

Now place a target at a distance of 25 feet and 10 feet to the left of your measuring tape and place another target at 35 feet and 10 feet to the left of the measuring tape and a target at 40 feet on the measuring tape. Begin a casting plane higher in the back and low on the forward cast towards the 25 foot target. Do not let the yard indicator on the end of your tippet touch the target or ground while false casting before making your presentation cast.

Once mastered then begin to practice your casting stroke on the non-dominant side of your body and do the exact same thing now at 11 o'clock then 10 o'clock and finally at 9 o'clock to do a forward cast on your non-dominant side.

You can continue the pursuit of this by then starting all over again this time making the cast as a back hand casting stroke in all positions. Yeah, these casting strokes will take some disciplined practice at home at a short distance before we should venture into attempting to make these more advanced casting strokes on the water and with loop control to achieve distance and accuracy.

Keep your stroke as slow as possible so you can see the loop form and the yarn indicator approach the target. Once you have mastered this distance with the fewest false casts make a presentation cast to see how close you come to your target. Practice this at each distance and target to do it with the fewest number of false casts as smoothly and effortlessly as possible. Focus on the 5 essentials.

As you practice these casting stroke alter the speed of the casting stroke which alters the timing as you change the size of the casting loop. Make these changes at each distance with small loops and larger loops see how the speed acceleration and timing are different. These exercises are the building blocks necessary to improve as a caster to achieve longer effortless casting distance without a single or double haul.

For accuracy, aim small hit small. Focus your aim not on the total target rather than the smallest part of the target. Pick the smallest point of your target, not the entire target. More on accuracy in future editions of the casting corner.

Ideally the fly line will travel in a straight line 180 degrees in the opposite direction from the back cast to the forward cast in the straightest of line-paths with no waves or curves in the fly line when the presentation cast is finally made. Keep in mind that in order to catch fish we need to master the back cast and forward cast minimizing the number of false casts. You cannot catch a fish easily when your fly is spending more time in the air than in the water. This is why practicing at home on the grass helps the fly-casting angler to catch more fish.

The exercises above are taken from some of the FFI Casting skills awards program to help fly anglers become more effective casters and successful fly anglers.

In the next casting corner, we will examine "Tracking" in the casting stroke and the role it plays in the casting stroke to achieve straight line path effects on the casting loop, slack line and distance.

Remember, fly fishing is done at your own pace and only you can determine the level of proficiency you want or need. Our purpose of casting corner is to expose you to some insights, exercises to help those fly anglers looking to explore at their own pace exercises as they choose.

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If you have questions or suggestions for future topics, please let me know what you would like to see more of to help you improve your fly-casting skills. Contact me at; rbeare4492@aol.com

Kaufmann's Signal Light

Presented By Matt Murdough, 7 January 2026

The Signal Light—a classic Deschutes River steelhead fly



Original Wool and Chenille Body



Rayon Floss and UV Ice Dub Body

Hook: Tiemco 7999, Gamakatsu T10-6H, or similar salmon hook, size 4-8

Thread: 6/0 primrose (yellow) rear portion of body, 8/0 black for chenille body and head

Tag: Flat silver tinsel, small, 5 turns

Tail: Purple hackle fibers

Body: Three equal parts, flame (red-orange), fluorescent green or chartreuse, and black; original recipe used wool yarn and chenille, but floss and dubbing are often used today. Some versions also include a short fluorescent red butt or use different proportions ($\frac{1}{4}$ flame, $\frac{1}{4}$ chartreuse, and $\frac{1}{2}$ black is common)

Rib: Silver oval tinsel, small, 5 turns

Hackle/Throat: Purple rooster hackle

Under Wing: 2-4 strands each of Krystal Flash in pearl, wine, lime green, and blue, extending to half the length of the tail

Overwing: Black Marabou slightly longer than underwing but still short of the end of the tail; wing can also be tied with black squirrel tail, bear, calf tail, or similar materials

We'll start the year with the first of several classes on Randall Kaufmann steelhead flies for the Deschutes River. Named after the Union Pacific train line that parallels the canyon, these dark patterns were favorites of Trey Combs and Lani Waller and should be in every steelheader's fly box. First up is the Signal Light, my personal choice for following up on a steelhead that boils a skating dry fly but refuses the take. One of the most exciting moments in fly fishing is that first swing at a steelhead that has shown itself, wants to take, and is just waiting for the right fly! The Signal Light also works well on bright days when

steelhead tend to prefer a smaller, darker fly over a big Intruderstyle streamer or leech. Kaufmann's Train Series flies use commonly available materials and are a great springboard for developing tying skills for more complex steelhead and salmon patterns. In the class, we will work on mounting materials with minimal thread wraps, tying multipart wool or floss bodies with smooth junctions, folding hackle, and matching wing angle to current velocity.

Tying and Fishing Resources:

Steelhead Fly Fishing and Flies by Trey Combs, Salmon Trout Steelheader, 1976

Steelhead Fly Fishing by Trey Combs, The Lyons Press, 1991, pages 321-325

A Steelheader's Way by Lani Waller, Headwater Books, Stackpole Books, 2009

A Passion for Steelhead, by Dec Hogan, Wild River Press, 2006

Flies for Atlantic Salmon and Steelhead, by Trey Combs, Wild River Press, 2023, pages 247-253



Notes:

Deschutes—home of Kaufmann's Signal Light

The Lower

Photos from the picnic Aug. 8



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Saturday morning breakfast club