



Fly Fishing for Trout in Southeast Minnesota Streams

Fly Fishing for the First Time?

Equipment

Basics

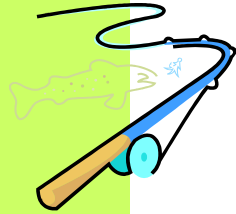
- Mid-weight fly rod, 5 or 6 weight, with fly line to match
- Reel
- Leader
- Extra tippet
- Flies
- Glasses or sunglasses for safety —

polarized sunglasses will help you see fish underwater

Extras

- Box to store flies
- Vest or fanny pack for gear
- Waders
- Nippers or fingernail clippers to cut line
- Forceps or hemostat to unhook fish
- Landing net
- Fly flotant in paste, oil or spray to keep dry flies afloat
- Strike indicators
- Small split shot to squeeze on leader to sink flies deeper

These fact sheets will get you started with information on equipment, basic casting techniques, how to locate trout in a stream, and ways to take care of your favorite fishing spot.



Buying Equipment

Start with a mid-weight fly rod, fly line of the same weight and an inexpensive fly reel. Look for a beginner's package with a rod, reel, line and leader. Beginner's kits start between \$20 - \$60.

You can buy fly fishing equipment at outdoors stores or specialty fly fishing shops in your area.

Additional Instruction

There are many ways to learn more about fly fishing. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources MinnAqua Program and Becoming An Outdoors Woman offer beginning fly fishing clinics. Information is available at www.dnr.state.mn.us or call 1-888-MINN-DNR. Most fly fishing specialty stores offer fly casting clinics or private lessons. Check libraries, video rental or outdoor stores for instructional videos.

Several books, some for beginners, have been written about fly fishing. Outdoor newspapers and magazines regularly contain fishing and casting tips.

Many web sites have information on fly fishing. For more information about trout fishing and conservation, look up Trout Unlimited at tu.org.



Back and Forward Cast

Used when there is plenty of room behind you and when you need to move your fly further out onto the water.

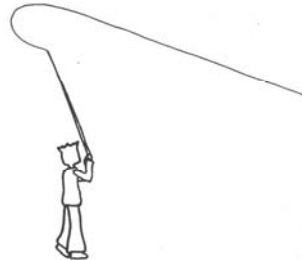
Basic Fly Casting

Fly casting takes a lot of practice. But, you can start to learn the basics in a few hours.



#1

Hold the rod out in front of you and make sure there are no tangles or slack in the line.



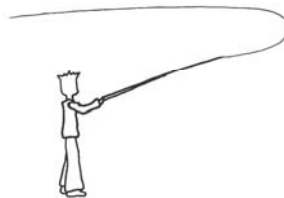
#2

Bring the rod tip back in a swift, steady motion, stopping when the rod tip is pointing up and behind you.



#3

Watch your backcast and wait until the line unfurls.



#4

Just before the line straightens out entirely, bring the rod forward again.

Safety

Wear sunglasses or other eye wear when fly casting so the hook doesn't accidentally snag your eye. Polarized sunglasses will help you see fish, too.

Go with a buddy and wear a life jacket when fly fishing in lakes or streams. Moving water can be especially dangerous, so always be careful when wading.



Roll Cast

Used when there is not room behind you to cast.

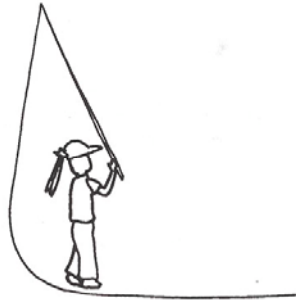
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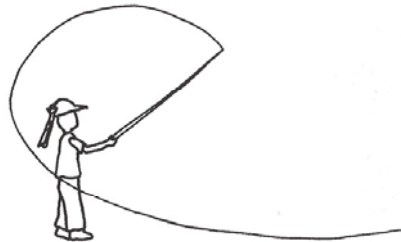
#2

Bring the rod tip back so that a small segment of line hangs loosely behind your casting shoulder.



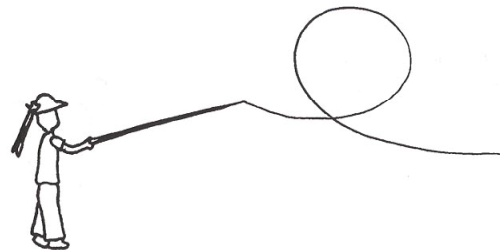
#3

Move the rod forward gradually; slowly at first, then speeding up steadily.



#4

Stop when the rod tip is still pointing slightly upward, and watch the loop unfurl.



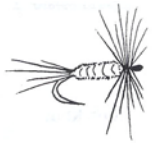
*"Many go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after."
- Henry David Thoreau*



Stream Trout Fishing with Flies

Basic Fly Patterns

There are four artificial lures, or flies, that are typically used when fly fishing for trout.



Dry Flies

Float and mimic adult aquatic insects.



Nymphs

Sink and represent underwater forms of aquatic insects.



Streamers

Sink and look like minnows or small fish.



Wet Flies

Sink and do not directly imitate an organism.

Recommended Flies for Southeast Minnesota

April and May

- Hendrickson, #12-14
- Blue Dunn (dry), #18

June

- Pheasant Tail Nymph, #16

June, July and August

- Elk Hair Caddis, #14

All Season

- Dark to Black Nymphs, #10-12
- Dark to Black Bead Head Nymphs, assorted sizes

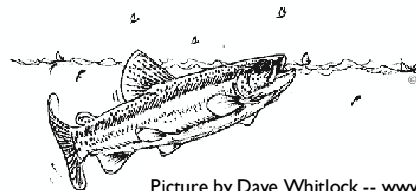
Your First Flies

Purchase a small selection of flies that represent live organisms on which stream trout feed. The most critical factors in selection are size, color, and shape. As you grow in your knowledge of your local stream, add flies that are more precisely matched to locally abundant food organisms, thereby “matching the hatch”.

Many anglers tie their own flies. There are several good instruction books, videos, web sites and classes available.

How to Fish Flies

As the fly drifts along with the current, twitch the line while pulling it in. This action brings the fly to life and attracts the trout.



Picture by Dave Whitlock -- www.davewhitlock.com.



Fishing a Trout Stream

Finding Trout

Trout swim in cold streams in southeastern Minnesota. They feed near **fast water**. Cast for them below choppy shallow water, called a **riffle**. Trout rest protected by the current in places called **lies**, behind a boulder, under a fallen tree, in deep pools or in slow water near a bank, until they spot an insect drifting in the water. Then they can dash into the fast water to grab the food.

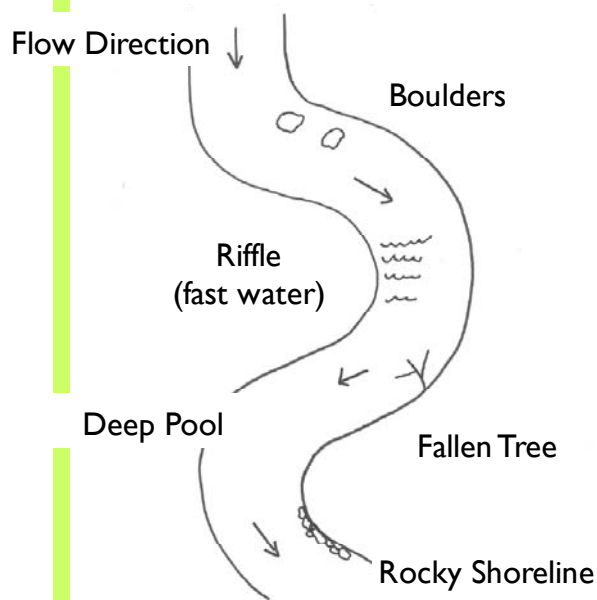
Approaching Fish

When fishing a stream, cast upstream. This way you can sneak up on the trout, which face upstream. Move slowly and stay low. If a trout sees you, it will dart away.

Surface Fishing

If you see a trout rising to eat insects, cast a dry fly a few feet upstream of where the fish broke the water. This gives the trout a few moments to see your fly as it drifts overhead.

Stream Diagram



Underwater

If no trout are rising, they are probably feeding underwater on nymphs. Cast a nymph upstream into the fast water and let it drift naturally back toward you. Because it's hard to see or feel when a trout grabs a nymph, many fly fishers put a small foam bobber, called a strike indicator, on their line. The strike indicator jerks when a trout bites the nymph. Lift the rod to set the hook.

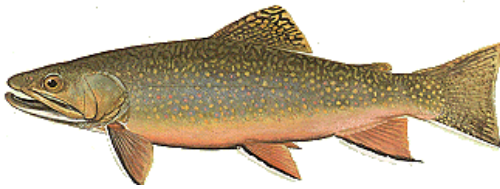
Where Can I Find A Map of Trout Streams?

The MN DNR prints a map titled "Trout Angling Opportunities in Southern Minnesota." Call 1-888-MINN-DNR to order this brochure.



Stream Trout and Conservation

Only one stream trout species, the brook trout, is native to Minnesota. Brown trout were introduced more than a century ago and have become naturalized. Rainbow trout are stocked for additional fishing opportunities.



Brook Trout average less than 10 inches, although some up to 17 inches are occasionally caught. Because “brookies” will tolerate only the cleanest and clearest water, fishing for this species takes anglers to the most pristine and scenic areas of the southeast.



Brown Trout are the most common of all southeastern Minnesota trout. They can live in streams that are too warm for brook or rainbow trout. Brown trout of more than 10 inches are common in southeastern Minnesota. Some exceed five pounds.



Rainbow Trout do not reproduce in southeastern Minnesota and populations are maintained by stocking. Most rainbow trout are stocked between 9 and 11 inches.

Stewardship

- Get permission to cross private lands
- Pick up and take trash home
- Recycle monofilament line
- Follow regulations
- Use barbless hooks

Catch and Release

How you land your catch will determine if the trout is able to survive when you return it to the water. Play the fish quickly and bring it to the bank. Keep the fish in the water and carefully remove the hook with a forceps. Wet your hands before touching or lifting the trout to protect their slime coating. Hold it horizontally above the water for only a short time for viewing.

To release trout, carefully hold it in the water heading upstream until it is ready to navigate on its own. If a trout is hooked deeply, but not bleeding, you can cut the line and the hook will eventually dissolve.