



# The Landing Net

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Winter 2008

Stonefly Society of the Wasatch

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The temperature read 16 degrees as we headed across the Heber valley on the February morning and I have to admit I wasn't all that excited to fish. I'm still young, but the older I get the less I like the cold. Oddly enough, it wasn't that cold when we stepped out onto the river. The strengthening February sun was pleasant and the good layered clothing made me downright warm. After taking a few minutes and setting up my nephew, I went to a small run that is not obvious to most people, but having done fish surveys with the DWR, I knew it holds fish and some large ones at that. Within about 10 minutes I had my first fish of the day. It was a nice fish, a little bit skinny, but a nice fish for the start of the year.

I'd like to say the rest of the day was fast and furious, but the fishing was slow as it often is on sunny and cold days in late winter, but it was just good to be out. As we drove back down towards Provo canyon I was amazed at the snow that covered the ground. It had been years since I had seen "feet" of snow up in the Heber Valley. My brother in law is a committed conservationist so we were on the lookout for deer. I was also on the lookout for turkeys. A few hundred yards from the river road we found both; deer and turkeys in the farmers yard. It was beautiful sight, but sad, as the perils of a rough winter had driven these animals that close to civilization. We were certain they were being fed by farmer. There was too many animals next to this farmers yard, to not be getting some free vittles from somewhere.

How long we will be able to see sights such as this who knows? We were less than a quarter mile from a new development that was aptly named after the river meadows that it was de-

stroying. It shocks me every time I see this valley the development that it going on. Yet, at this location we have less to worry about than most rivers in our state. The river corridor has been bought and although development will encroach over the next few years, it will not destroy this fishery and access will remain.

Unfortunately many rivers in our state will not be so lucky or have not been. East Canyon Creek around Jeremy Ranch is just a shadow of its former self. The Weber lies poised for the same development to hit it's banks in the next few years. If we do not act now. What is special about these streams will be lost forever. It is with this knowledge that Stonefly Society of the Wasatch and cache Anglers decided to donate nearly \$11,000 to the DWR for land acquisition last year. It was the largest contribution by an Angler group for land acquisition ever in this state. While just a drop in the bucket the funds can be leveraged against matching funds to provide even more money for projects

It was a start and what made it all possible was everyone's support of the Wasatch fly fishing and Fly Tying expo and Banquet last year. Your support made this happen. Your support in the future will keep the ball rolling. If you missed the banquet and expo last year, please come and celebrate with us this year. The days are May 2 and 3rd and there will be a variety of classes for all of us. Come enjoy and help us look to the future!

- Dave Serdar  
President

## Entomology Corner

Winter stones...

The winter stoneflies are a fun but often overlooked hatch on many of our waters. While many of us are midging and throwing the occasional Blue Wing Olive, there is a larger, but less common bug on our waters. During a time where not much else is on the water, trout will often eagerly take a meal that makes a midge look like an appetizer.

The family Capniidae are considered the "true" winter stoneflies but the genre in the families Nemouridae, and Leuctridae are often grouped in the small winter stones as they are of similar size and emerge at similar times of the year. These insects are small and slender, brown to black, and can often be found on stream side vegetation or even on the snow, that's where they get their nickname "Snowflies".

Nymphs are small and inconspicuous living among rocks and buried in detritus on the bottom. They are not commonly preyed upon by trout. They emerge by crawling out of the stream on to rocks, or vegetation on warmer days from January through April.

Due to their size, color and the fact that they are

weak fliers, the adults spend most of their time clinging to stream side vegetation or rocks. As a result, they are commonly overlooked, unless they just happen to be crawling around on a snow bank when an angler walks by (which they often do). After mating, the females return to the stream and deposit their eggs. Since they are weak fliers, they often get stuck in the surface film, or just below, when they land on the water. At this point they become an easy meal for a hungry trout.

Tactics for fishing imitating the winter stones includes drifting a size 12-14 Brown or Black Elk hair, X-caddis or other similar pattern close to shore. Since they are weak swimmers, people have also reported success in using soft hackles in orange, or brown or black. For added success try using a dry dropper with both an Elk hair caddis and a soft hackle or a pheasant tail nymph.

So go out and look for this cool little insect this winter. When they are around, they are a lot of fun and a nice change of pace from fishing microscopic flies.

Lonnie Shull.

## Legislative Bills of Interest to Anglers and the Stonefly Society.

The following legislative bills passed the Utah House and Senate in the most recent session. And they have been forwarded to the Governor for signature. Thanks to Timothy Hawkes who now lives back east spent many hours working with various legislators and others to help get these bills passed. He also organized a large numbers of anglers through email to contact representatives, and senators to make our voice heard.

**HB-117:** In stream Flows to Protect Trout Habitat -- passed. This bill allows private, non-profit fishing groups, like TU to lease water for in stream flows from willing water users to protect or enhance habitat for native trout.

**HB-238 (Second Substitute):** Aquaculture Revitalization Act -- passed. This bill changes the composition of the Fish Health Policy Advisory Board to reduce representation by the Department of Natural Resources and the Department of Agriculture (one slot moves (in essence) to the Farm Bureau for selection, while the other goes to anglers, preserving the rough current balance of the board). It also changes the requirements for Certificates of Registration (CORs) for private ponds in a way that should provide the DWR with better monitoring and better information. The bill puts the burden on fish producers to do a lot of this monitoring and verification, but they have the incentive to do so because, if they don't, they risk losing their license. As previously stated, this bill is neutral to positive for anglers, and the bill's sponsor, Rep. Mike Noel, worked with us to address angler concerns about the bill and to make it acceptable to us.

**SB-238:** Invasive Species Interdiction Act -- passed. This bill gives the DWR additional authority to stop and inspect boats moving in and out of state waters to prevent the spread of the Quagga Mussel and other invasive species. It also provides a funding mechanism for that program.

## Foamerger

For the typical midge fisherman, there's nothing quite like targeting big trout lazily sipping small bugs off the water in the dead of winter. There's something about dry fly fishing in the winter with small bugs that gets the heart pumping. Those that have ventured out in these frigid temperatures and tracked down the midge hatch from time to time are also acutely aware of the frustration of fishing a heavy midge hatch and coming up short on the catching end of things. Refusals are the soup of the day and you go through every damn fly in your box only to have the fish continue to give you the fin.

Being the analytical person I am, when I first got the midge fever years ago and experienced the frustration common in midge fishing, I decided to get down and figure out what the hell was going on. I knew the fish were eating and I knew they weren't eating my fly. Something had to give.

My "a-ha" moment came one day on the Green River in the middle of January. I was fishing a phenomenal midge hatch and after three hours of fishing my traditional midge patterns, the score was: Picky Trout -- 1000; cold dumb midge fisherman -- 1. I landed only one fish in three hours. As I packed up and picked the pieces of my ego up from the rocks, a dude comes walking along the trail, sees the rising fish, takes one cast and nails a fish. Must've been luck. Next cast: fish on. I suck.

As I walk by, he actually strikes up a conversation and I came to find out he was fishing a fly his son had given him and he wasn't sure of the name. It was a variation of a palomino midge and it was designed to sit in the surface film.

With new hope of redemption for my next midge encounter, I got busy trying to understand what it was about that style of pattern that made such a difference. I came to understand, as a lot of people already know, midges have a tendency to hang vertically in the surface film as they struggle to emerge from their pupal stage to an adult. With this in mind, I sat down at the vise to figure out a pattern that fit the bill. The palomino was ok, but when I tried to get it to float vertically, it didn't look much like the pictures of real insects I was looking at. After a bit of trial and error using different materials and patterns, I found one that floated vertically and resembled the bugs. I tied up a few more and set out for the Green the following week.

The fish gods were smiling on me that day as my new little midge invention did the trick. I fished the same hole and came up with much different results as I lost track of the number of fish I hooked that day. The fly was dubbed the "Foamerger" and earned a permanent spot in my midge boxes from then on.

**Hook:** TMC 2488 #18 - #32

**Thread:** UTC 70 Denier Black

**Shuck:** Micro-chenille in black or brown

**Thorax:** Gray or Black dubbing to match natural

**Head:** Gray or Black open cell (or Evazote) foam

**STEP #1.** First, tie in the thread just before the eye of the hook (enough space to tie on the foam later). Tie in the micro-chenille at that point.

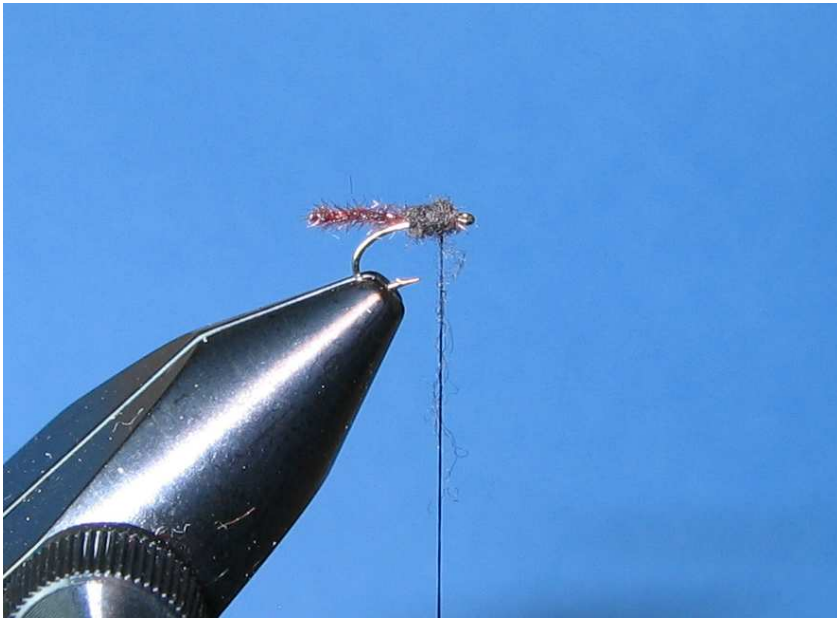


**STEP #2.** Next work the thread back to the spot on the hook just above the barb. Dab on a small amount of the dubbing (less is more in this case).



**STEP #3:** Work up a thorax to just before the eye of the hook. Don't crowd the eye too much, but since we're going to tie off the fly at this same point, it's not a huge deal.

- Curtis Fry



**STEP #4:** Grab a small strip of foam (cut evenly into strips about the same size as the hook gap) and tie it in just in front of the thorax with the tag end of the foam heading towards the tail. Pull the tag end tightly and clip right at the tie-in point. Pulling tightly will stretch the foam to cut down on the bulk and help taper the foam head for better floating position. Whip finish *right over the foam* and trim the head to an appropriate size.



Fish the fly with a dab of floatant on the top of the foam. It should suspend vertically in the surface film. I usually do well fishing the Foamerger trailing a midge cluster pattern that is more visible.

Dear Fellow Fly Fishing & Outdoor Enthusiast,

The Stonefly Society and Cache Valley Anglers, chapters of Utah Trout Unlimited, are pleased to announce the Second Annual Wasatch Fly Tying & Fly Fishing Expo. The Expo will be held Friday & Saturday, May 2-3, 2008 at the Karen Gail Miller Convention Center, Salt Lake Community College, 9750 South 300 West, Sandy, Utah.



**May 1-3, 2008**  
**[www.wasatchexpo.com](http://www.wasatchexpo.com)**

This two-day Expo will feature fly tying demos from some of the best fly tiers in Utah, casting clinics, fly tying and fly fishing workshops, activities for kids, prize raffles, exhibitors, and more. Last year's inaugural event was a great success and we anticipate this year's Expo to be bigger and better. Saturday evening we will conclude the Expo with a banquet and auction featuring renown author and fly shop owner Kelly Galloup ([www.slideinn.com](http://www.slideinn.com)) as our keynote speaker. Expo activities on Friday will go from 4 p.m. - 9 p.m. and on Saturday from 8 a.m.- 4 p.m. The banquet Saturday evening will start at 6 p.m.

The goals we have are threefold: 1) raise funds for future conservation projects for Utah's streams, rivers, and lakes, 2) celebrate fly tying and fly fishing in the state of Utah, and 3) have some fun.

In addition to the Expo event, we are pleased to announce the first annual Wasatch Fly Fishing Film Festival which will be held on Thursday May 1st, 2008 at 7 p.m. The film festival will feature 5-7 mini fly fishing film segments of 2008. We hope to make this an annual event that will draw some of the best fly fishing film producers from around the world. It will be held at the Miller Free Enterprise Center in the Auditorium, Salt Lake Community College, 9750 South 300 West, Sandy, Utah. Tickets will be \$8 per person, \$10 at the door. We will be giving away some great door prizes and holding a few raffles. It should be a great event.

The workshops, classes, and casting clinic schedules will be posted on the Stonefly Society website soon. Check the website often for updates and announcements. ([www.stoneflysociety.org](http://www.stoneflysociety.org)) The expo website has a downloadable Raffle and Banquet package list along with an RSVP form Check it out. ([www.wasatchexpo.com](http://www.wasatchexpo.com)). (RSVP's for the banquet are due April 15th)

If you would like to be a volunteer fly tyer to exhibit your fly tying skills, please contact Curtis Fry via email at [frito1@gmail.com](mailto:frito1@gmail.com).

Thank you for your support.

Jason Haslam  
Expo Co-Chair

## MEMBERSHIP DUES REMINDER

When is the last time you paid your annual Stonefly Society dues? If it's been awhile, it's time to sit down and write out a check! . Annual dues collected from members are used to help offset the costs of printing and mailing the quarterly newsletters and periodic event-reminder postcards. So please check your status and renew your membership if due. A form is included below for your convenience. For those of you who are current with your dues, please make an effort to recruit one of your fishing buddies!

### Stonefly Society Membership Application and Annual Dues Renewal

Name: _____	Type of Membership:
Address: _____	Youth (under 18) \$10.00
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____	Single \$15.00
Phone: _____ Fax: _____	Family \$25.00
	Lifetime \$250.00
	Corporate \$100.00
	Additional Donation
	\$ _____
E-mail address: _____	Total enclosed \$ _____

Mail to: Stonefly Society of the Wasatch  
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