

PENNS CREEK GUIDES

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2015 Holiday Newsletter

Season's Greetings from Penns Creek Guides!

And welcome to those of you receiving this infrequently published missive for the first time. It is my hope that you will find the Newsletter informative and enjoyable. Please do get back to me with any comments or suggestions. The Holiday Season is here. The New Year is just around the corner. You may have noticed the absence of any missives from PCG during the angling season. And as usual, the newsletters have been way past due, though not for lack of motivation. I've been very busy guiding (and fishing), with my last trip of the season on the second Saturday in November, an excellent run by any measure!

I'd like to take this opportunity to extend my sincerest gratitude to all my clients for making the past trout season so successful and enjoyable, beyond anything I could have anticipated. The memories of days on the water, trout landed as well as those lost, the laughter and fellowship, the sheer joy we shared on the water fills me with satisfaction and has me anticipating the advent of another season. It has been great fun meeting new friends, teaching and learning from you while we were on the water. How I love this "job!" Again, I'd like to say Thank You. I am looking forward to sharing the 2016 season with you.

2015 has been quite a year! Good weather, excellent water levels, hatches occurring about when they were expected, trout willing to play, most of the time... Above all, wonderful clients who enjoyed the experience of fly fishing the exceptional limestoners and angling for the wild trout of Central Pennsylvania.

Fishing guides get to experience new waters too. This year for me that was the rivers and streams of northern New Mexico. Trout fishing and New Mexico seldom appear in the same sentence, the exception perhaps being the San Juan River. Do some research and you'll discover the northern quarter of New Mexico offers tremendous opportunities to fly fish for trout. My trip took me to the northeastern corner of the state. The Rio Chama, Rio de los Pinios, Red River, Columbine Creek, the Upper Pecos River and my favorite, Costilla Creek kept me busy for several weeks.

Costilla Creek was cutthroat (Rio Grande cutts to be exact) heaven! It's considered to be the best cutthroat stream in New Mexico. Flowing through a broad meadow high in the Sangre de Cristo mountains, this medium size stream is about the size of Spring Creek in central PA. The 9,000 foot altitude was not much of a problem and the scenery was spectacular. The cutts weren't pushovers though. These trout would ignore anything but a drag free drift. The wind at that altitude was a major challenge as well.

In September I spent 10 days with friends fishing the Pere Marquette River for fall salmon. Bright sun, skinny water and warm water temperatures made fishing for Kings quite a challenge. It was a spate of warm fall days and gorgeous displays of autumn colors a great time to float the PM River. We did manage to put a few salmon in the net but only after floating many more miles of river than usual. A guide and long-time resident of the area observed the fall run (up until that time in the season) had the fewest salmon he'd ever seen. The salmon did trickle in, most arriving after I'd returned to PA. "Just after you left..." we've all heard that I guess.

During this past trout season I've been using furred leaders when I fish and when I'm on the water with clients. I have found this type of leader most useful for nymph fishing, swinging wet flies and for fishing streamers. To me these leaders offer several advantages over tapered monofilament. One big advantage is that they don't tangle nearly as much as mono and are easier to untangle when they do get knotted. Fewer tangles eliminates one frustrating aspect of nymphing. Another plus is cost savings. A 6' furred leader costs \$7 to \$12; compare this with the cost of a 3 pack of tapered leaders. The furred leaders I began using at the beginning of this very busy season show no signs of wear or fraying. They will be used in the 2016 season too.

For nymph fishing I use a 6 foot furred leader (it's tapered) with a 2mm black tippet ring on the end. It's rated for use with 5 and 6 wt fly lines. The length is extended with 3 to 4 feet of the appropriate tippet, depending upon stream conditions, usually 4X or 5X. Only rarely is 6X used. Most strike indicators work well with the furred leaders I use.

The only downside with this type of leader, at least the ones I've tried, is when using one with dry flies. Even with a generous application of dressing they just don't seem float as well as a tapered leader. When fishing on top I just switch to a tapered mono leader. Furred leaders have a loop at the thick end so making a loop to loop connection with the fly line is easy and fast, even when standing in the middle of a stream during a hatch or spinner fall. I'd like to hear about your experiences and thoughts on furred leaders. Many thanks in advance.

During the winter's slow fishing time I like to put together new trout fishing presentations on Central Pennsylvania limestone streams and revise ones already completed. It's difficult for me to take good photos when I'm on the water with clients. That being the case, I'd like to ask that you send me any digital photos of your fishing experience with Penns Creek Guides you'd like to share. Also, I would also need your permission to use the photos in my presentations. Your help with this project is appreciated.

In this season of presents and gift giving, I'd like to provide a gentle reminder: it's not too late to give the gift of a guided excursion with Penns Creek Guides. Gift Certificates for full and half days are available. And while it won't fit in a 'stocking hung by the fire' a Penns Creek Guides wading staff makes a wonderful gift for the angler or hiker on your list. To order a gift certificate or wading staff please contact me via email at pennscreekguides@yahoo.com or via phone at 814-364-9142.

Again thank you so much for making 2015 a bountiful and enjoyable year. Wishing you Happy Holidays and best wishes for the New Year.

I look forward to being on the water with you in 2016.

Tom

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