

### Letter from Bill Sherer

I'm sitting in the Bozeman, MT airport waiting for my flight back to Wisconsin, I have been here for 5 days and it's time to get back home. I was here for the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF), International Conclave (Meeting). Along with teaching fly tying classes, I was also able to demonstrate my fly tying skills in the "Gallery". 115 of the worlds best fly tyers are invited each year to Tie and Teach at this very special event - it is the pinnacle event of the fly tying world, I am honored to be asked and fortunate to be able to attend.

While fishing out here in some of the most famous trout streams in the world, my thoughts kept going back to Miminiska and the very special trout fishery that exists there. It is truly one of the best trophy Brook Trout fisheries on the planet! I enjoyed the fishing here very much and I caught a lot of fish and some very handsome Cutthroats, but they pale in comparison to the beauty and strength of the fish I recently caught on the Keezhik and Albany Rivers. I want to continue to help you protect and preserve those fish, and still keep a viable fishery for anglers to enjoy, but not exploit.

Here's a list of fly fishing gear to bring to Miminiska - I thought this (along with the lists from the other instructors) would serve as a starting point for our "Students":

Nine foot 9wt and 7wt fly rods - I would bring 2 nines and one 7 with perhaps an 8wt as a back-up rod:

Have a Floating Line and a 10' Type 6 Sink Tip Line for your 7wt. I actually had my 8 wt rigged with a Floating line and my 7 wt rigged with the Sink Tip when I went down the Keezhik. I used the 7 wt most of the time, and I used the 8wt for a shot at some of the monster Pike that ruled the slow areas of the pools below the Brook Trout. I could have used it for dry flies if I had remembered to bring some along (more about flies in a minute)!

On the Nines I would have a clear Intermediate Line (like a Cortland Little Tunny or a Rio Aqua-Lux Striper) and a Full Sinking 325 to 400

grain 15 foot Sink Tip line, (I prefer the new Cortland Lines, they cast much easier than other brands due to their advanced designs). Shooting Heads and Full Sinking Lines will also work well, they are just a lot more difficult to cast when using larger flies. I would carry along a Floating Line as well - just in case the Pike decide to get shallow, but I don't expect it. Most of the water we will be fishing in less than 15 feet deep so a Type 6 sink rate will do nicely and I fully expect to be using the 15 foot Sink Tip Line the most.

Leaders: I hand tied my leaders for the Brook Trout because I wanted to get the fly down quickly to the bottom of the runs. My leader design was rather simple: Nine inches of .023 Stiff Mono, twelve inches of .017 Stiff Mono, and 24 inches of 3X (.008) Nylon Mono Tippet for a total length of about 4 feet (a shorter leader will keep your fly in the same depth range as your line, a long leader will allow the line to sink, but the fly will rise up toward the surface defeating the purpose of the sink tip line). I loop connected the tippet to the leader butt and loop connected the butt to the fly line. I used 2X Tippet on the same leader butt section for the Brook Trout fishing in the Albany. One spool of 2X and one of 3X will do.

I do not recommend and highly discourage the use of Fluorocarbon lines for all fishing - the environmental implications of the discarded or lost portions are astronomical! Fluorocarbon lines last somewhere around 100,000 years in the environment - that's excessive and it's not worth the risk to our precious fisheries. Hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions of fish have been successfully caught on standard Nylon monofilament lines, (Nylon mono lasts about 3 years in the environment before it breaks down), I can live with that. I recommend you ban all use of Fluorocarbon line especially for the trout.

There are all kinds of wires available for bite tippets for Pike, from tie-able to the ones you crimp, some are good. I like the new tie-able Titanium wire the best. It takes a little more work to get it prepared for a fly fishing leader, but once you have it prepped, it is unsurpassed in it's performance. I used 20 and 30 pound test while I was at Miminiska and found very little difference between the

two, (the 20 pound was a bit easier to tie the fly to). I made a leader butt section of 2 to 6 feet long (depending on the depth range of the line I was fishing - shorter for deeper running lines), and loop connected this to the fly line and the bite tippet which I made from about a foot of 30 pound test shock and 2 feet of Titanium wire connected together with a reverse Albright Knot (very easy to tie). I was then able to loop this to my leader butt for the whole outfit, (I made several of these up ahead of time and had them with me in the boat just in case I needed a new one while afield). One package if this should be plenty.

Flies:

I am a very "traditional" fly angler when it comes to trout, so I used classic hair wing and feather wing streamers - Cary Stevens Style. The Hairwing Baby Brook Trout was by far my most effective on the Keezhik. I also used a Hairwing Royal Coachman and Featherwing Light Spruce and Gray Ghost streamers. I recommend sizes 6 and 4. I used an Olive/White weighted Double Bunny on the Albany in a size 4 as well. I will return with Cone Head Albino Muddlers and Albino Zonkers in size 4 along with an array of Olive, White, and Brown Cone Heads for the fall fishing - all in a size 4.

I will bring several styles of Dry Flies as well, Blue Winged Olives, Midges and Caddis will top my list. I saw rising trout taking a small Caddis (size 16), and wished I had brought some with me! I suspect most of the hatches will be over by the time we return, so I will concentrate on the streamers primarily.

My Pike flies are anything but "traditional", I mostly used a new pattern I designed exclusively for the fishing at Miminiska, the TS Crusher was a fantastic fly for both Pike and Walleyes. I used primarily two colors, White with Gold Flash and Orange with a Yellow head and Gold Flash, they were outstanding, and very durable. I think I caught somewhere around 200 or more Pike and about 100 Walleyes while I was there, I only used 3 flies the entire time! I expected the Pike fishing to be slow in July, so I did not try out a bunch of different patterns, but the fish told me everything I needed

to know for my return trip. I can bring along some of these as well, same as above.

#### Other Stuff:

A good, strong jaw spreader and heavy needle nose pliers are essential. I know all the fly fishing guys like to bring those fancy pliers that all the saltwater Guides use, but a good pair of needle nose will serve them better up there! A Mitten Clamp will do well for the trout, these are stronger than a hemostat and do a much better job of pinching down the barbs on the hooks - which should be required by all the Guides.

There is a non-adhesive tape that is used for finger protection - I'll bring along several rolls of it with me when I return, it is essential! I have used several types of finger protection and the tape works the best - especially if it is colder, the spandex types hold too much water and make your fingers very cold, and the gloves can get too wet and cold as well.