

WOMEN TROUT FISHING



photos-Kandy Weader

by Jessica Welshans

With a quick motion back over her shoulder and a sweeping cast forward, Kandy Weader wets her line and reads the water, waiting for that bite. The quick colors of the Rainbow Trout flash in the stream.

Fly fishing in the local trout streams has brought clarity to Weader's life and introduced her to a passion, which she loves.

"We are very blessed to have close proximity to some of the best trout fishing on the East Coast," said Weader. "Our fisheries are diverse with spring creeks, limestone streams, along with small native Brook Trout waters."

Good fishing access, high-quality fish, long fishing seasons and prolific hatches—tied with good habitat for natural reproduction of wild fish—is just a short list of why Weader loves fishing in Pennsylvania.

The wild trout streams that swim with native Brook Trout keep Weader's love alive.

"It's nice to catch a fish that has lived its entire life in that stream," said Weader.

In the last two years, after discovering a natural ability to fly fish, Weader has taken to the water more and more.

She thrives on fishing, but between being a single mother of two teenage daughters and working full time as a commercial realtor in the State College area, life can get stressful and become cumbersome.

In fly fishing, she has found a way to get through the stresses that can be a part of life.

Stepping into the cool water, fly fishing gives her a chance to connect with nature and clear her mind, letting the stresses of the day wash downstream.

Fishing was a healthy outlet for Weader while she was going through a difficult time in her life. Fishing helped her find peace and happiness. She also believes it has led her to become a better mother to her children as well as a better employee.

"I was a busy working mom and never took the time for myself, always something to do, and I put my hobby on the back burner," said Weader. "There would be days I know I would leave the office and need a break or need a break from the house. So, I would take an hour to wet a line and rejuvenate myself. It makes me a better mom and employee. Lets me refuel."

As she found herself more and more involved in the fly fishing sport, Weader felt there seemed to be something missing. It dawned on her that there was a lack of female anglers, especially in fly fishing.

She feels women may be reluctant to find that "new thing," a hobby, because there is a thin veil to have to break through. Weader hopes to encourage them to take on something new and maybe start with fly fishing for trout.

“Stepping out of your comfort zone can be difficult for women, but I know first hand how having courage to accomplish a goal can be rewarding,” said Weader. “Fly fishing has been primarily a man’s sport, so women can be intimidated to give it a try.”

Her belief is that the finesse and grace that comes naturally to women can easily be applied to fly fishing, making it almost natural to a lot of females.

“What is great about fishing is that fish don’t care about what gender is on the other end of the rod, so women can be just as competitive on the water as males,” said Weader. “Successful fishing is more about knowledge, technique and persistence than gender. Women account for more than 30 percent of the angling community. It’s exciting to see more female anglers accomplish what their male counterparts did previously.”

Weader said women can easily hook into fishing and not have to be overly competitive or involved. They will quickly see the benefits and enjoyment that can come from it.

“They can just enjoy going out with their spouse to wet a line and have a picnic dinner at sunset by the water,” said Weader. “Or, they can instill an appreciation for the outdoors in their children by fishing from the dock for panfish.”

Her love of fishing has interconnected her to the fishing community, allowing her to build great friendships.

Weader said that her first experience fly fishing for trout has now pushed her to travel and chase all kinds of species of fish. She has honed her skills, so she can log experiences on other waters.

“I have worked hard improving my casts, along with using different sized rods, weighted lines and techniques,” said Weader. “My persistence has paid off, as this fall, I logged a Women’s World Record on the fly for a Brown Trout caught on a tributary in New York, and I hope to have more of these opportunities on the water in the future.”

As she continues to make her mark in the angling community, she wants to encourage women to find the passion and peace she has found in fishing.

“I want to encourage women to step out of their comfort zones to find their passion in whatever it may be,” said Weader. “It just may be fly fishing.” ☐

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photo-Kandy Weader

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