



# PENN STATE UNIVERSITY FLY FISHING CLUB

*by Gino Bartolini*

**A** student studying finance at Penn State University, I grew up in the small rural town of Saltsburg, Indiana County. Fly fishing has always been a passion of mine, but it was challenging to learn. Living in an area that lacks high-quality trout streams made it extremely difficult to practice outside of the springtime months. Over the course of time and after countless hours of watching fly fishing YouTube videos, I eventually learned to become a skillful fly angler.

Growing up, my goal was to go to college at Penn State. While education should've been my main focus, one thing was always in the back of my mind. Central Pennsylvania is a true "Fisherman's Paradise" and home to many world-renowned trout waters. In addition, Penn State has its own fly fishing club as well as the Joe Humphreys Fly Fishing Program. During my time at Penn State, I have fished some legendary trout streams. I have also met some of the fly fishing industry's finest anglers. One of these people is my professor, George Daniel.



photos-courtesy of Gino Bartolini

After my first year of college, I was able to take over as the president of Penn State's fly fishing club. The fly fishing club is a great resource for any student who is interested in fly fishing. We have students from all over the country with different levels of experience. While our goal is to improve our skills, we also focus on being involved in conservation. Our group meets weekly to either tie flies or spend time on the water. Being the club president has shown me that I'm passionate about sharing and teaching my knowledge of fly fishing. For those who fly fish, we know the sport is extremely technical, and there are a lot of different factors that determine our success. This is especially true for the wild trout that inhabit central Pennsylvania, as they often require a perfectly presented fly in order to entice a strike. Aside from the actual mechanics of using a fly rod to catch fish, it is a great place to learn about the stream ecosystem. Due to the unique limestone geology of these streams, a wide variety of aquatic insects live and thrive in our waters. For this

reason, we are able to see exceptional hatches in the springtime. The hatches make for unforgettable fly fishing experiences. With a collective group of young fly anglers within the club, we are leading and growing the next generation of fly anglers. It is important for those who are skilled and experienced to pass their knowledge onto new anglers both young and old.

The fly fishing community shares the common values of conservation and preservation of our natural resources. Without conservation efforts, stream health will suffer, bugs will die and our high-quality trout waters will cease to exist. For this reason, clubs and organizations are vital to the sport of fly fishing by spreading knowledge and promoting conservation. With this in mind, I encourage all who are interested in fly fishing to join a club or organization. Our wild trout waters are a precious thing. It is our job as the next generation of fly anglers to protect our natural resources and spread our passion for fly fishing. ☐



Club members fishing in Milesburg, Centre County.



George Daniel gives a casting demonstration for Penn State's fly fishing club.



Club members during their weekly fly tying.