

Techniques and Tactical Approaches to Fishing New Trout Waters

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TU MEMBER



Brief Background

- ▶ From Pittsburgh, PA
- ▶ Ordered Airstream trailer in April, 2022 & sold house in July, 2022
 - ▶ Vagabonds - AirBnB's in Pgh, Arequipa Peru and Medellin Columbia
- ▶ Picked up Airstream Oct 18, 2023
- ▶ Started “full-timing” Nov 1, 2023 (never RV'd before)
- ▶ Retired Dec 31, 2023
- ▶ Jan 1, 2024 – 50 States, 50 Trout, 50 Peaks journey began
 - ▶ Mission:
 - ▶ Catch a Trout in every state
 - ▶ Visit the High Point of every state
 - ▶ Figure out where we want to settle down
 - ▶ Stay Married

33ft Classic
Model
BRN - 12350

“House”
Ruth



“Garage”
Lalo

Lift System
for
Flycraft
Frame



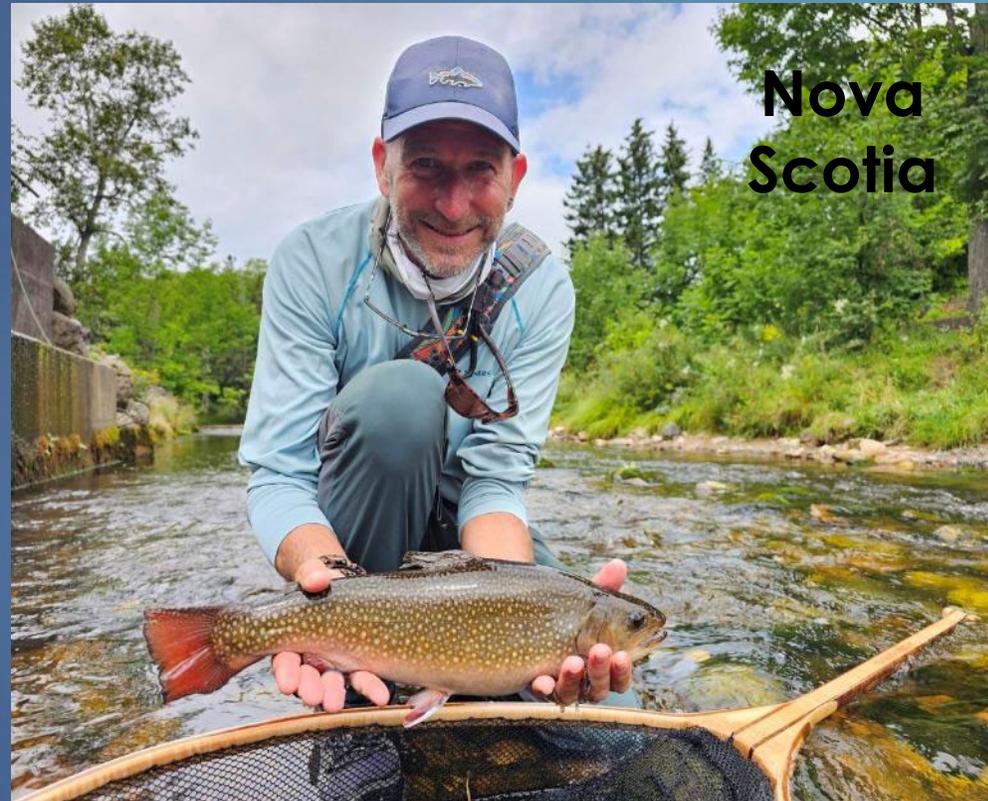
“Man”
Cabinet

Journey to Date

- ▶ Visited **43** states and **6** Canadian provinces
- ▶ Towed trailer **39,000** circuitous miles
- ▶ Stayed in **170** different campgrounds, parking lots, driveways, front yards and cul de sacs
- ▶ Visited **26** national parks along with numerous national forests and state parks
- ▶ “Supported” **183** breweries, distilleries, and wineries (**DON'T JUDGE!**)
- ▶ Since January been living in Alexandria, VA until hitting the road again in August

Trout Journey – 39 states “to net”

- Photos in order of completion – most are the first fish caught in each state
- All DIY – no guided trips



Nov'26

Jan'27

Jan'27

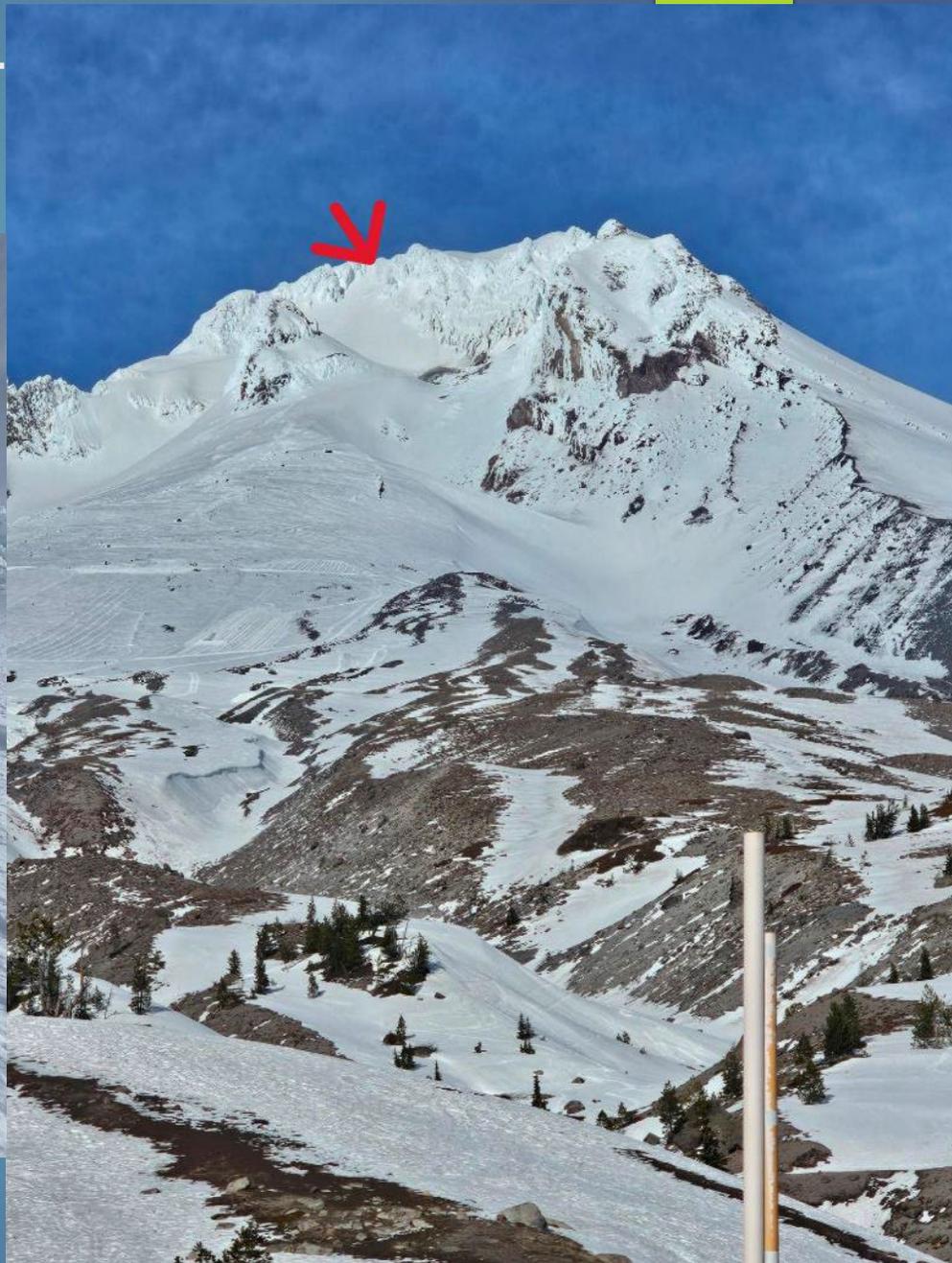
Jan'27

Mar'27

* Bought a non-resident fishing license in every state

* Most photos taken using a BT clicker to keep fish out of water only a few secs

High Point Journey – 41 st



 7% involved assisting/rescuing another hiker

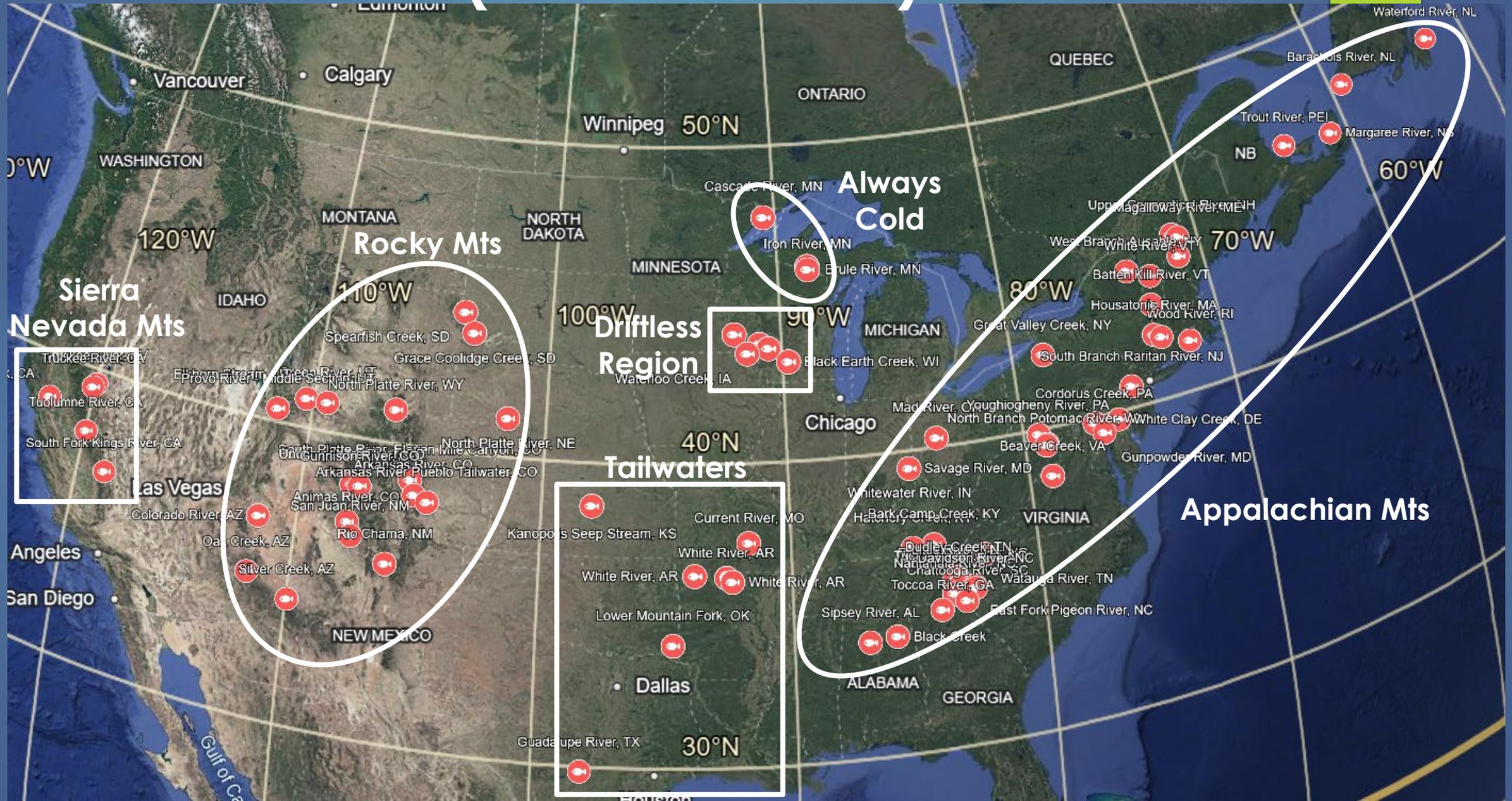
Fishing Journey – 97% Success Rate

- ▶ Fished **77** different streams in 47 states and 10 Canadian provinces
- ▶ Successfully caught trout in 47 states and 10 Canadian provinces
- ▶ “Skunks” – Kansas and North Dakota
 - ▶ Fished both for only a few days
 - ▶ Later learned fished wrong (no front-end research) and returned on a later date
- ▶ Not counting fishing for sea trout in Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida
 - ▶ Knew LA stocks a few ponds
 - ▶ Have since learned the following:
 - ▶ MS – DNR stocks one pond in late December
 - ▶ FL – Doctor outside Tallahassee stocks a pond in December
 - ▶ The 47 other states have stocked or wild trout in at least one stream

Trivia:
What 3 states
don't have any
trout survive in
streams through
the summer?

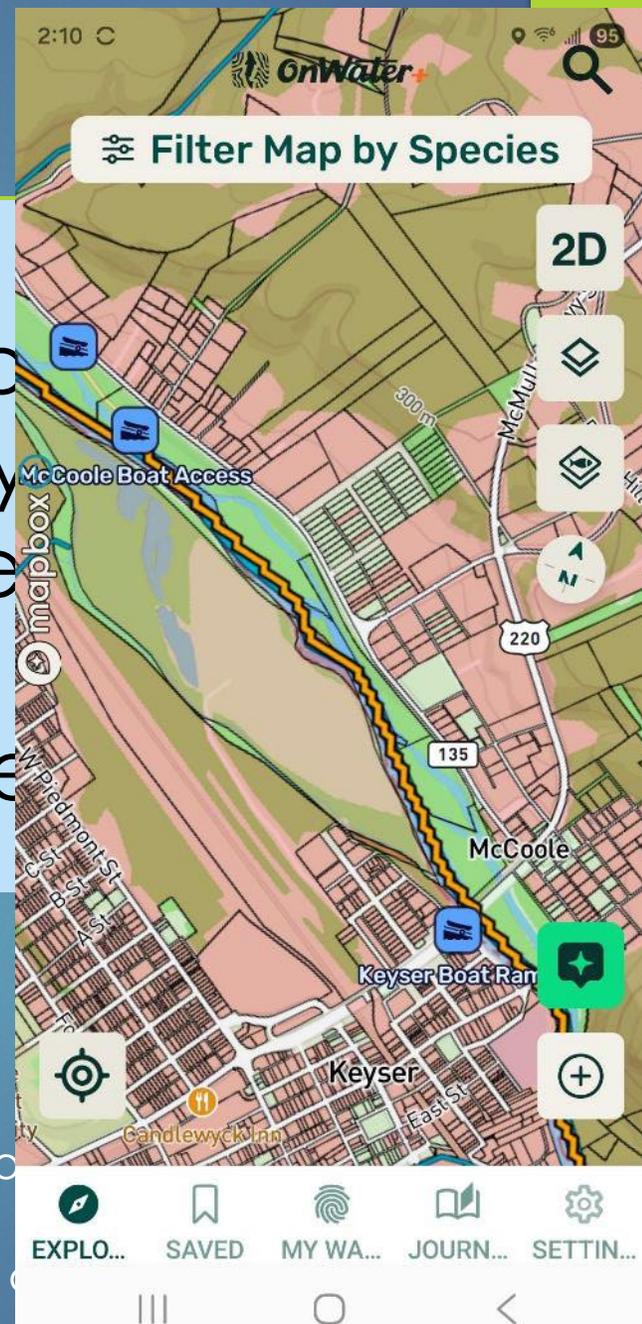
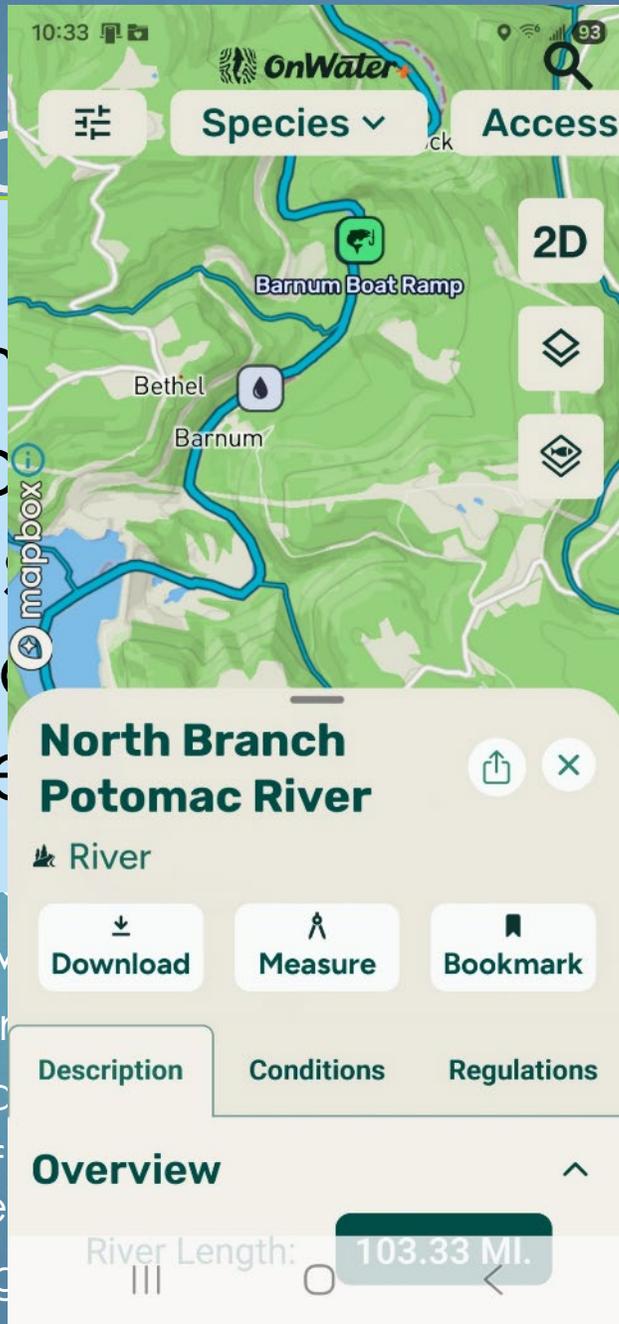
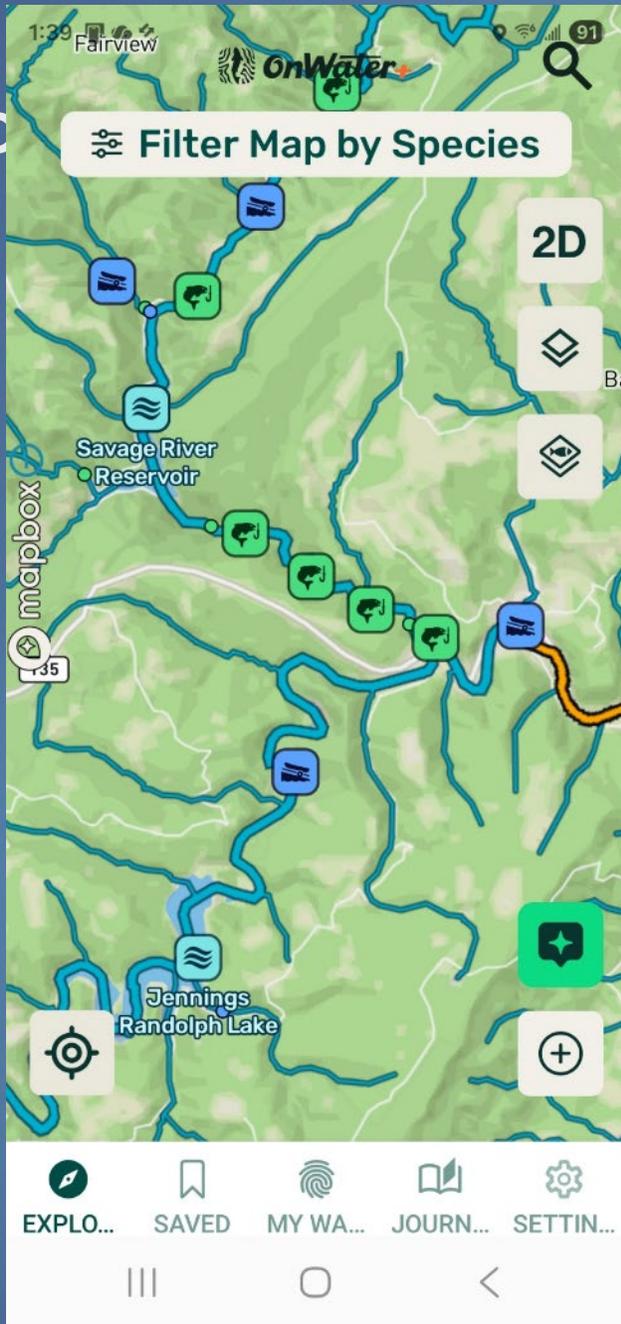
Delaware, Illinois, &
North Dakota

99 Problems but (on 77 Streams) a Trout Ain't One



Tactics for Approaching New Water

- ▶ Prepare but Don't Plan
- ▶ Confidence (Setup), Confidence (Flies), Confidence (Approach)
- ▶ Keep it Simple
- ▶ Adapt Your Approach
- ▶ Power of Observation



BUT DON'T PLAN – decisions on flies, tippet, maybe even rod selection waits until you see the actual water

Confidence, Confidence, Confidence

IN YOUR SETUP

- ▶ Mono Rig – Troutbitten (Domenick Swentosky)
 - ▶ Rod - 10ft 3 weight Echo Shadow II
 - ▶ Reel – Reddington Tilt
 - ▶ Leader – cross between formulas of Troutbitten and Devin Olsen (Modern Nymphing video, i.e. before he went lighter/micro)
 - ▶ 25ft of 20lb (.017in) Maxima Chameleon
 - ▶ 36" of 12lb (.013in) Amnesia Suffix
 - ▶ 26" – 30" of .012in two-tone Cortland indicator material
 - ▶ Tippet ring (1 or 2mm) and Tippet – based on water conditions, flies, and fish but usually 5X
 - ▶ Fly Line – Weight Forward Floating (no Euro fly line)

Keep It Simple

- ▶ Allows me to fish any style with minimal changes to the setup and any changes can be made quickly
 - ▶ Tight line (Euro) nymphing
 - ▶ Indicator – Pat Dorsey Yarn Indicator, Air Lock, Float the Sighter
 - ▶ Split shot – occasionally in lieu of changing bead size or in addition
 - ▶ Streamers (approx. size 8 or smaller) – often dead drift like a nymph
 - ▶ Dry Dropper – dry on the tag end
 - ▶ Dry flies
 - ▶ On shown mono leader for sporadically rising fish and casts under 30ft
 - ▶ If risers are prevalent/consistent, take off leader and put on a standard 7.5 – 9ft leader, loop to loop on the WF floating fly line





Possible
"Indy" Water

Wading

Keep It Simple

- ▶ Allows me to fish any style with minimal changes to the setup and any changes can be made quickly
 - ▶ Tight line (Euro) nymphing – tag and point flies
 - ▶ Indicator – Pat Dorsey Yarn Indicator, Air Lock, Float the Sighter
 - ▶ Split shot – occasionally in lieu of changing bead size or in addition
 - ▶ Streamers (approx. size 8 or smaller) – often dead drift like a nymph
 - ▶ Dry Dropper – dry on the tag end
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Confidence, Confidence, Confidence

IN YOUR FLIES

► Confidence Box

- Keep it in my wader chest pocket for fast access
- Contains approx. 17 patterns for quick decisions (still too many)

HOWEVER

Unless a there is specific reason to use something different,
e.g. midges on a tailwater, no matter the stream,

I almost always start with two out of the same three patterns

- Pink Hot Spot Frenchie – on tag end 
- Walt's Worm – point fly 
- George Daniel UV Polar Streamer – point fly 

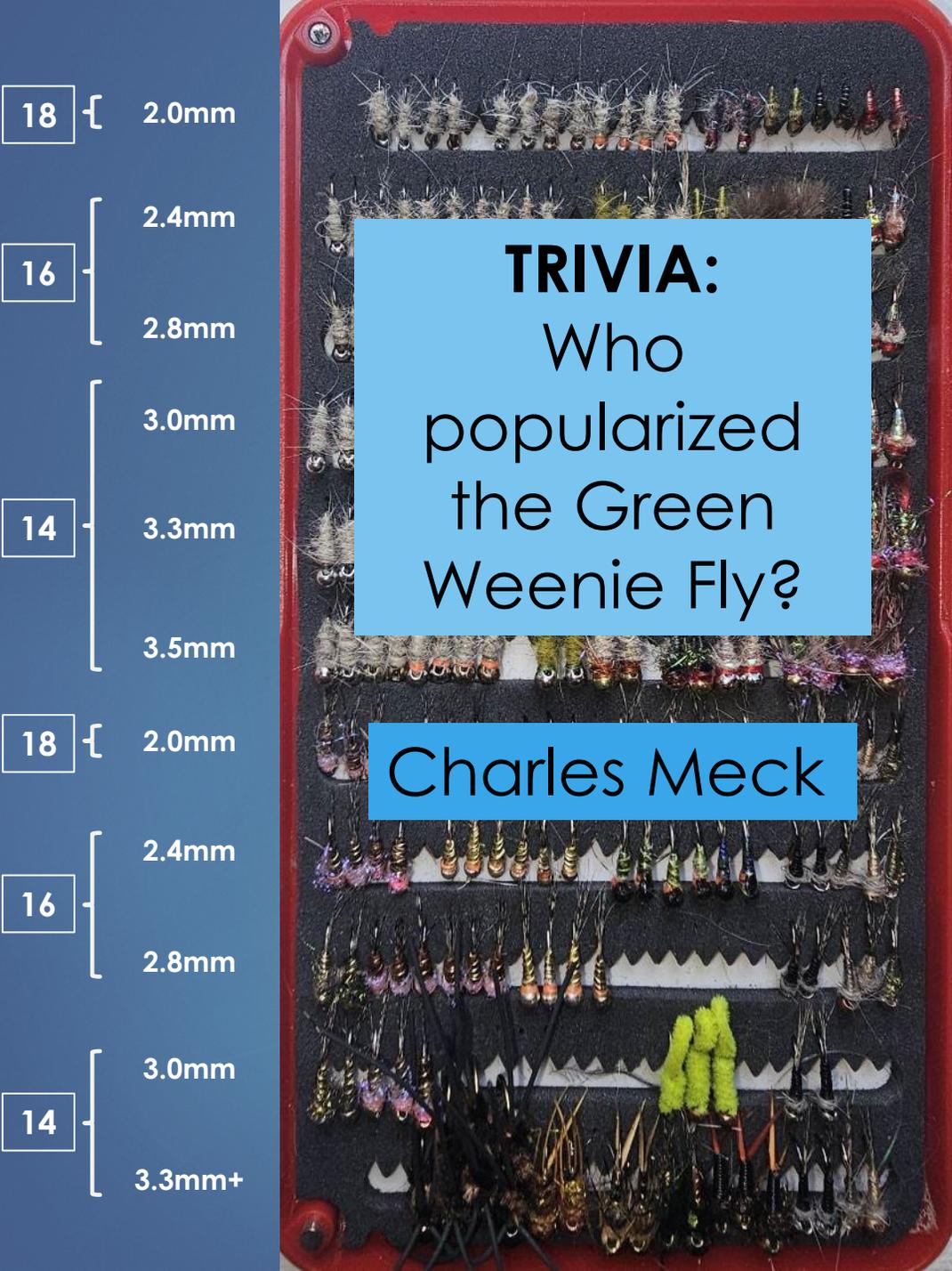
BUT EARLIER YOU SAID DON'T DECIDE ON FLIES BEFORE YOU SEE THE WATER!!!

Keep It Simple

- ▶ Semantics? Maybe - but I consider differing aspects of the same pattern to be “different flies”
 - ▶ Bead colors
 - ▶ Bead sizes – for weight (but not all beads of same size are same weight)
 - ▶ Hook (Fly) sizes (generally in concert with bead size)
- ▶ After observing the stream, I go through same KISS decision tree:
 1. Point fly - Polar Streamer or Walt’s Worm
 - ▶ If Polar Streamer, tie it on...If Walt’s Worm, then
 1. Regular or Sexy
 2. Bead Color (silver, copper, gold or rose) and Bead Size (weight)
 2. Tag fly – Bead size of Pink Hot Spot Frenchie (still use even with Polar Streamer)
 3. Tippet size
 4. Rod extension – keep at 10’ or add 6” or 12” of extensions for larger rivers

Keep It Simple

- ▶ If catching fish, GREAT!!! Keep fishing...
- ▶ If not, fished enough to make sure flies were in the feeding zone?
 - ▶ Types of water, e.g riffles, tailouts, deeper pools, etc.
 - ▶ Proper depth
- ▶ Only after that, do I then consider changing flies
 - ▶ With Walt's worm, I'll often change bead color before changing pattern
 - ▶ Have a consistent starting point from which to base decisions
 - ▶ Different color body, more natural, more flash?
 - ▶ Mimic a different bug, e.g. stonefly?
 - ▶ Etc, etc, etc, but rely on flies in my Confidence Box



TRIVIA:
Who popularized the Green Weenie Fly?

Charles Meck

- Starters**
 - ▶ **Walt's Worm & Sexy Walt's** – Orvis tying video
 - ▶ **Frenchies** – Orvis video for core and others for variants
 - ▶ **WD40** – Store bought

< 18 & Emerger

TRIVIA:
What fly did the US Youth Fly Fishing Team use to win their first World Championships in 2011?

Staple

- Egan Specials**
 - ▶ **Perdigons** – Variety of videos
 - ▶ **Squirmy Worm** – Lance Egan pattern
 - ▶ **Tungsten Surveyor** – Lance Egan pattern
 - ▶ **Red Dart** – Lance Egan pattern

- Others**
 - ▶ **France Flies** – Josh Miller pattern (testing the pattern)
 - ▶ **Green Weenie** – Variety of videos (sentimentality)

- Stones**
 - ▶ **Pat's Rubber Legs** – Adapted own from videos
 - ▶ **Zone Stone** – Josh Miller pattern
 - ▶ **Misc Stone Fly Patterns** – Store bought

The Fly

UV Polar Jig Streamer

George Daniel pattern

Fulling Mill tying video

- Size 10 jig hook
- 4.3mm black nickel longstem bead
- Black Marabou
- Streamer straggle
- Flash
- Rubber Legs

Also tie in

Swing, Strip, Jig, Dead Drift, Twitch, Flip the Head

TRIVIA:

If I could fish only one fly, what would it be?

UV Polar Jig Streamer

WHY?



Adapt Your Approach

- ▶ Hierarchy of trout (easiest → hardest to catch)
 - ▶ Stocked → Holdover → Stocked Fingerlings → Wild

HOWEVER

While stocked fish are easier to catch,
fishing for stockies can actually be harder

- ▶ In general, a stream with holdovers, stocked fingerlings and wild fish will have fish spread out relatively proportionately up and down the stream, i.e. more concentrated in prime spots but throughout length of stream
- ▶ A stocked stream might have trout sitting where they were dumped, or close to it, particularly if recently put in or no high water event to cause them to move.
 - ▶ Plus, they are used to being next to each other

Approach Differs by Trout Dispersal

- ▶ If fish are likely spread out, hit A and B spots
 - ▶ May also hit C water (cover all water types thoroughly), especially if short stretch of water to fish, e.g. posted land ahead, expect to be high holed, other people already fishing upstream, etc.
- ▶ If stockies are likely “holed” up, then hit only A spots until finding a pod of fish. Then fish them hard, really hard...
 - ▶ I like to move a lot when I fish, i.e. can't stay in a pool/run for too long doing drift after drift, changing out flies.
 - ▶ One exception is if stockies are holed up. In this scenario, don't leave fish to find fish. They will eat something...
- ▶ As long as not ruining holes for anyone else, will sometimes walk through a pool/run to see if I scatter fish

Power of Observation – 2 Anecdotes

Too Focused on the 30ft Right in Front



Focusing on the Wrong Things



When All Else Fails – Get a Good Luck Fish

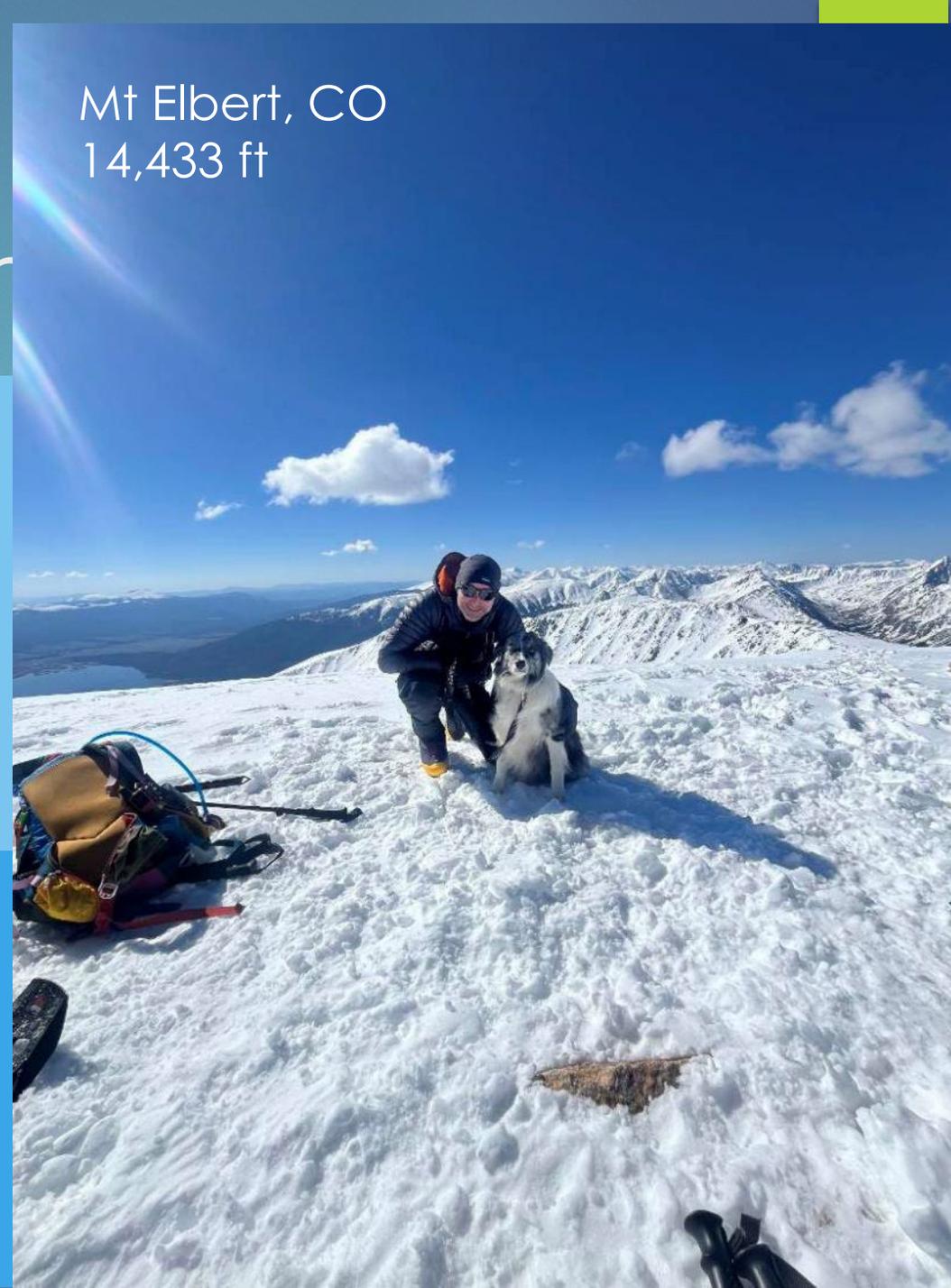
Mt Elbert, CO
14,433 ft

TRIVIA:

How many 14'ers has
Willow climbed?

Three

Including a winter 14'er





Questions?

Handouts with listings of:

-Resources

-Flies

-Streams

THANK YOU!
TIGHT LINES

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“Time is but the stream I go a-fishing in”

-Henry David Thoreau