



# ALAMO FLY FISHERS

October 2009

San Antonio, Texas

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## AFF MEETING

TUESDAY, OCTOBER  
20TH  
ALAMO HEIGHTS  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH  
DIRECTIONS ON PAGE 2

## FIRST IMPRESSIONS...

BY ROB BURLINGAME

The fall air is slowly consuming more and more of each week. The summer heat still sneaks into the afternoons, but it quickly gives way to cooler evenings. As the weather begins to soften in South Texas, some amazing things happen in the fly fishing world. That is why this time of the year has to be my absolute favorite in terms of saltwater adventures.

### WHAT'S INSIDE

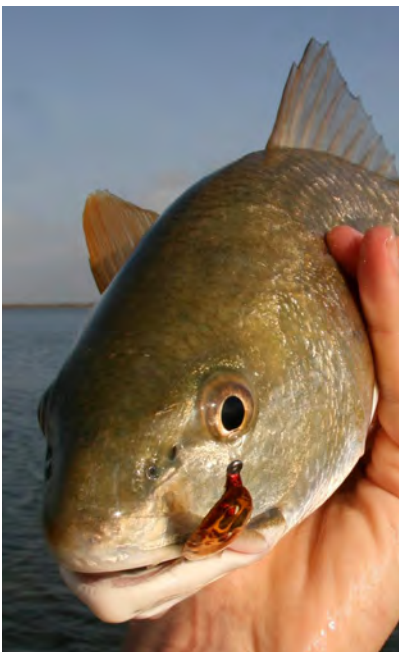
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If you haven't been to the coast during this amazing time of the year, you are missing out. You see, for us the cooling of the weather is a welcome relief...for some fish, it is a signal to begin their annual winter vacation in tropical waters. Head to the flats and you should see hungry redfish packed in large pods. Head down Padre Island National Seashore [PINS] during the next month and you can see a bait fish road trip first hand, and all the excitement that comes with it. You will see small bait in the first and second guts of the surf, chased by bigger bait, chased by bigger fish, and so on. It is the natural food chain unraveling right before your eyes. And fish that spend their time in deeper waters come in close, in large numbers, to get their share of the easy prey. It's an adrenaline rush just waiting for a place to happen.

I will digress a little to describe my past weekend. During dinner Friday night I came up with the idea that our family needed to take a spontaneous trip to PINS, starting that next morning. I admit, it was a little crazy, especially since we were taking along our nearly 4 year old twins. They love the beach and fishing though, so I spent the night packing and finishing up some last minute work assignments to head out the next morning.

On the trip down, my wife and I came to realize that the last time we were on Padre Island as a "family", my wife was pregnant with the twins. In discussing this, a small voice from the back seat chimed in to remind us that they "could not see anything that trip because Mommy's tummy was in the way!" You never know what little minds will come up with, but I have to admit it was a good point.

On the way down, I decided to call the PINS conditions number and see if the recorded voice had any insight to share about what was in store. Nearly through the recording, the operator added "Sharkathon is this weekend so expect a heavy crowd. Good luck



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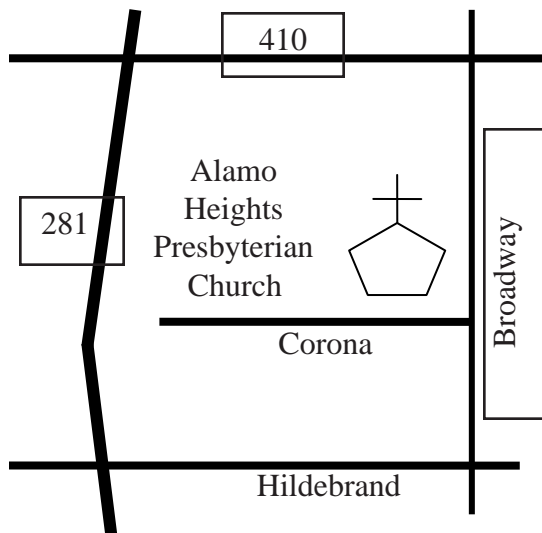


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## REGULAR ACTIVITIES

- Meetings are held the third Tuesday of every month, 7 p.m. at Alamo Heights Presbyterian Church, 6201 Broadway.
- Fly tying sessions are held every Tuesday at 7 p.m., with the exception of meeting night. Bring your vise and tying gear or just come and share in the discussion.



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sharkers!” I don’t travel in the shark fishing circle, so this was a big surprise. It turned out to be a huge group of people scattered along the beach, but they were all pleasant and courteous.

As a fly fishing addict, as soon as we hit Malequite to sunscreen up and rig the rods and truck for the beach haul, my heart was thumping. I needed a fishing fix! Before we left the parking lot, the twins started asking if they could swim. “Of course...as soon as I find a bait ball and hook a few knuckle busters in the surf!” was my first thought. Then Todd’s article from last month rang in my head to “keep it fun”. After all, this was their first trip to PINS and this time of year is especially exciting for first timers!

As we traveled down the beach, I realized that I have started to take for granted some of the amazing things we see while out fishing. I had seen it many times before, so the shock value was diminished. Remembering the sage advice of one of our club’s long timers, I had to slow down a little and take in everything around me. Besides, we had a couple passengers that had not seen any of it before. The trip then turned into a look and see adventure for the kids. I even gave them a job to keep them entertained on



the drive. They were the bird spotters, searching for a big group of birds diving in the water. After the first 15 miles, they became seagull experts and were consistently spotting the flocks hovering above the skipjack war zones. We would stop when they told us to and would let them swim amongst the clouds of rain minnows. I even had to catch a few reel screamers so that...um...they could see what the big fish that are the little fish looked like. After admiring and petting the fish, we released them back into the buffet line. My wife showed them how you can “stir”

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# Bill Higdon, President GRTU

## Getting Ready for Trout on the Guideline

Trout season is nearly here and there's no better way to get started than hearing a local expert tell us about the annual GRTU trout stockings, techniques, flies, gear, river safety, and the other tidbits of information we need to know to have a successful trout fishing season.

Bill Higdon has been guiding on the Guadalupe for 10 years after retiring from Dell Computers. Bill is President and VP of Fisheries for GRTU and knows the fish and waters better than anyone. For those who do not know, GRTU is the largest chapter in Trout Unlimited in the country. Who knew Central Texas had the largest concentration of trout bums?

Bill is a 58 year old hill country guide who began flyfishing these waters over 16 years ago. Bill offers guided excursions for rainbow and brown trout on the tailwaters of the Guadalupe River, below Canyon Lake dam. Fish can be caught up to 18 inches with a few larger specimens being hooked every once-in-a-while.

Bill's knowledge of these waters has put him in several magazine articles and TV shows over the years



which has helped promote his guide service and increase his reputation as a top notch guide on these waters.

Bill is owner and guide of Inn of the Hills Fishing Excursions. His website is [www.inthehillsfishing.com](http://www.inthehillsfishing.com) if you would like to book a uided fishing trip with Bill. Bills guide service utilizes the drift boat technique often found in

Western fisheries – but is quickly finding favor in our part of the world. His two boats of preference are a Clackcraft Drift Boat and a Aire Fishing Raft. Bill is a licensed guide (# 944) who is responsible and personable.

Please welcome Bill Higdon for a round of Guadalupe River Trout Fishing knowledge which you will not want to miss.

Fish-On!





# A Season of Change

CAPTAIN SALLY

The absolute wonder of the change of seasons was the quick transition from summer to fall that happened this year in just one week. From hot to downright cool, from south to north winds, from low water to high water, from drought to rain, the flip of conditions will put the fish on notice. All summer long, redfish in the shallow water have had nothing to worry about. Water temperatures dropping ten degrees will certainly change their mind! Get ready for an onslaught of redfish and eventually some great trout into to back lakes and marshes. Dropping water temperatures are the catalyst to ramp up fish feeding activities after a long, hot summer.



Cooler nights and early mornings drop shallow water temperatures dramatically. The fall Equinox is bringing in tons of extra water to flood grasses and dislodge more food. A new shrimp migration will be entering the estuaries,

giving fish even more of a choice. In the fall, bait of all shapes and sizes are the prey of redfish roaming the shallows. Expect to see pods of tailing fish dislodging shrimp from the grass still thick on the bottom. Watch for smaller groups ranging along the edges of the flooded grass, hunting for crabs and killifish. No mullet, pin perch, glass minnow, shrimp or crab is safe in the fall, as all bait is fair game and in a big way. Predators turn on their competitive spirit and eat voraciously as water temperatures stay cool, in preparation for the upcoming winter.

Places like Estes Cove, the Lighthouse Lakes, South Bay and the Brown and Root Flats, with easy access to all kayakers, waders, drifters and polers, act like a staging area for large groups of feeding fish. With easy access in these areas, fish move back and forth from deep to shallow water, cruising and feeding.

St. Charles Bay and the lakes and shorelines of Carlos

and Mesquite can be productive fall destinations that should be explored. Some places fish a north wind better than others, so analyze, on a map, how the wind will blow across and through your fishing spot.



Look for jumping mullet and large pushes of water, diving birds and wading birds to locate more productive fishing places within your shallow water location. Shallow water fish like to feed into a current, whether wind blown or tidal, so plan your search accordingly. If it gets too windy, fish may fall into the deeper potholes in the flat. It's time to change your thinking along with the conditions. Unlike summer, fall serves up a wide range of winds and temperatures. Adapt and read the conditions for best fishing success.

Fly anglers toss that popper, clouser, crab and add a big ugly fly for big reds or trout. The fall is the time to throw just about anything.

Right now, besides the legendary fall fishing of Rockport, my mind is consumed with dove hunting and the prospect of the upcoming duck season. With my black lab pup, Kelly, I've had the opportunity to add some cast and blast trips to my repertoire. Kelly is a little over a year old now, and she has proven herself to be a fine dove dog on opening day, retrieving nearly 30 dove for our hunters. Working with Capt. Aubrey Black on Baffin Bay, this endeavor has been new, fun and productive. My Curlew is the perfect Baffin boat - no worries about those pesky rocks, not to mention the unmolested shallow shorelines and the magical Nine Mile Hole. If you would be interested in a dove or duck cast and blast in Baffin, just let either one of us know, there are lots of affordable custom packages to choose from which include food and lodging.

See you on the water!

Capt. Sally

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## Outings Outlook....

TODD FLEMING, AFF OUTINGS DIRECTOR

It's here! It's here! It's here! October, the best fishing month of the year, is finally here! Heaven forbid, if you could only fish one month in Texas, October is your month. There are more opportunities for successful fishing trips all over the state this month than at any other time of the year. Saltwater or freshwater, flat water or moving, you will not make a bad choice. The worst thing that could happen is to do nothing and let this month pass without wetting a line.

If you prefer saltwater, the conditions are never better than right now to use the fly rod on some big bruising fish. Your biggest decision will be where to fish – flats fishing or surf. Both are excellent this time of year. The winds at the coast are light, the water is clear, and the fish are big and feeding in large groups. Want to catch a bull red, or a tarpon, or even a trophy speckled trout? Try fishing the jetty passes and surf. Follow the huge bait migration down the beach. Recent rains have even improved the beach driving at Padre Island to access premier water on the coastal bend. But, don't overlook opportunities for casting to schooling and podding fish on the flats. Spotting redfish on the flats has never been easier or more fun than right now. They are feeding in groups in shallow water, and eating anything that moves!

If you prefer freshwater fishing, Fall in Texas is destination quality. Our hill country lakes, rivers, streams, and even stock tanks provide quality fishing opportunities. Friendly fly fishing water is only a short drive from town. Go for a few hours, a day, or the whole weekend. Enjoy being outdoors in Texas!

Last month we made an exploratory day trip to Nine Mile Hole with fly gear and kayaks aboard Tom Callahan's 24' Carolina skiff. We had a very successful day catching many redfish and black drum. My largest redfish was 27" and biggest black drum was 24". Nine Mile Hole is remote and difficult to access, but well worth the effort to get there with a kayak. If you are interested in taking kayaks to the "Hole" for fishing, contact Capt. Tom Callahan (210-213-1111) for arrangements. You will not be disappointed in this trip.

We have just returned from an overnight outing to Fence Lake. We knew the weather forecast would not be ideal, but I am always the optimist. High water, sustained winds, and cloudy skies are tough conditions for the fly fisherman. Nevertheless we still made the trip with eleven, and seven came with gear to stay all weekend. We made camp on a shell reef, and high ground for tents was a precious commodity. We all survived and even managed to catch a few fish. I'm not complaining about the weather because we desperately need the rain, but with lighter winds and more sun, I'm certain we would have been able to spot more fish. We'll be back soon to try it again.

Saturday October 10<sup>th</sup> is the 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Redfish Rodeo in Rockport. This fly fishing tournament for two-person teams is sponsored by the Texas Fly Fishers. A new twist this year will include a club competition to see which club has the best fly fishermen. The more participation we have from Alamo Fly Fishers will help us win the club trophy and bragging rights for a whole year. More information and entry forms are available at [www.texasflyfishers.org](http://www.texasflyfishers.org). Registration is also available in Rockport Friday evening at the new Orvis shop – 1723 Cherry Street. Dave Hayward, Orvis proprietor and general manager, will also be on hand to referee any debate on which fly club has the best fisherman – a debate that will surely be settled on Saturday.

Saturday October 17<sup>th</sup> plan to be in Junction for Oktoberfisch sponsored by the Fredericksburg Fly Fishers. This event actually starts on Friday and features a whole weekend of events including transports upstream to float and fish the Llano River. It all takes place at Morgan Shady Park on the river in Junction. This is another well organized event at a premier, clear water, fly fishing destination. Go to [www.fredericksburgflyfishers.org](http://www.fredericksburgflyfishers.org) to register and get more information.

Save Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup> to see Brian O'Keefe at the GRTU meeting in Sattler. Brian is a renowned outdoor writer, photographer, and fly fisherman. He is the GRTU featured speaker, and well worth giving up a morning of fishing. Brian O'Keefe co-produces a free electronic fly fishing magazine with Todd Moen called "Catch Magazine" which is unlike any magazine you have ever seen. Check out [www.catchmagazine.net](http://www.catchmagazine.net) to see the latest issue with award winning photography. Visit the GRTU website [www.grtu.org](http://www.grtu.org) for more meeting details.

If you are looking for another saltwater fly fishing tournament, you may consider the Laguna Madre Fly Fishing Association Invitational Fly Fishing Tournament on Saturday October 24<sup>th</sup> from South Padre Island. Log on to [www.lagunamadreflyfishers.com](http://www.lagunamadreflyfishers.com) for more details and registration.

I'm considering an exploratory outing to the Devil's River State Natural Area on November 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> or 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup>. Another outing to the Devil's River area could be planned for next April. Let me know if you are interested in either or both.

Try to invite a friend or family member to join you on your next outing, and remember to make it fun for the younger generation – your future depends on it. It's not always just about the fish! Be safe. I hope to see you on the water!

Todd Fleming  
AFF Outings Director – 2009





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# SCOUTING REPORT

BY CLAY GILL

Howdy and welcome to the Alamo Fly Fishers. A family oriented organization; we promote conservation of our natural resources and provide instruction for those who may wish to learn about fly fishing. Everyone is welcome and you will not meet a stranger.

Todd Fleming has some great activities planned for the fall and some will actually take place about the time this goes to print. An overnight Redfish trip by kayak is one of the exciting outings that will be conducted soon. Another great weekend outing is the October Fisch in Junction Texas. If you want a little competition the Redfish Rodeo in Rockport will also happen soon. Check the web for details on the web site and be sure to make plans for the ones you like soon. Fall is a great time to get out before the cold weather coming soon.

Water temperatures will cool very soon. It is time to get out. The fall top water blitz fishing will be somewhat stymied by lower freshwater water levels. The usual patterns will prevail, but the typical locations may change due to low lake and river levels. It will be interesting to fish the same old spots adapting to low water this year. Popper fishing is always a hoot this time of the year, -fresh and salt! Now is the time! It is the month to fish the surf!

Tarpon and Redfish have been thick at the Port Aransas jetties. Some people lately have been taking dozens of oversize Reds daily and releasing them to spawn. Tide flows have them tight in the channel feeding on bait in the outflows. The Tarpon are thick in the "rip" just outside the ends. By boat they are most easily seen and approached. They roll on the surface there, and can be found in great numbers on the right tide situations.

The Christmas party is coming soon. If you can help us with donations and guided trips or accommodations, we would greatly appreciate this. We can promote your service or organization in the newsletter and this event is our big fund raiser of the year. Even a box of flies helps and any product or service is welcome. Contact a club officer to arrange transfer of the item or certificate for the silent auction and raffles. The party is better every year due to the generosity of our friends who support us so well. We want to say thanks for all your help.

Another interesting semi-annual tournament you might be interested in is the Plantation Cup Fly Fishing Tournament on Oct 27. See our newsletter and web site for details or call the Plantation Suites in Port Aransas for details at 877-8363866. This is a new tournament and is shaping up to be very popular. The timing is very good for fishing the coastal area during the most productive time of the year. This is a really nice package deal.

Be sure to clean your fly lines for best results. If your line is grinding through your snake guides--clean it. The rig will work like new again and shoot line as it should. Another advantage you can acquire easily is to employ intermediate sink lines or shooting heads.

The bountiful fall fishing should continue right up to the first nasty cold front. When it gets colder be prepared for the quick drop in temperatures and have appropriate safety items. Don't take chances with the weather. Carry a space blanket and spare food and water.

Getting stranded without a float plan (reliable notification backup), can be dangerous. Extended exposure to a cold front while wet is a deadly combination. You might also want to vacuum pack a fire starter kit that many of us carry in boats for an emergency or overnight stay in a back bay. A charged cell phone in a zip lock bag could save your life. If you cannot hit a cell tower, -try climbing up on a hilltop on rivers, or a tall sand dune at the beach. The Coast Guard could be your salvation! Don't take chances. Have a plan-and be well prepared!

Be sure to check our web site for club activity and schedules. Try to attend some of the great outing activity planned soon. Get out before the cold weather sets in. This is the very best time of the year to fish. Everyone is welcome to attend our outings and instruction sessions. There is almost always a mentor to help you get started with safety in numbers.

Winter Trout fishing on the Guadalupe will start in a month or so and we will be reporting on that activity as it gets a kick start. We hope for decent flows in the river.

Come join us soon for some great times outdoors together.



# Just One More Cast



By Clay Gill

## END OF THE ROAD

As we sit in the airport terminal in Providence reflecting on the past week in the Northeast, the voyage could be best described as eat eat eat! We came on a photo tour and fishing trip and all we did it seemed was eat. These people really know how to make the best seafood in the world. It is hard to walk out on the beach and fish when everywhere you go it smells like a kitchen. Chowders, fish, Lobsters and the most amazing array of goodies you can imagine. It is all about grabbing the tourist money before the freeze, but you feel sorry for them! So we tied on the bib and picked up a spoon like everyone else.

Cape Cod is so nice once the summer season is over.

It is like Port Aransas at Christmas. The fishing is the very best. You walk to points of sand similar to our "big Shell" beach where washout holes are created. In these holes is an amazing array of the abundant life that exists in this region. Various Seals, (several species), and birds signal a concentration of bait that is certainly in harm's way. The Predators that roam the first gut on the beach are

vicious. Bluefish and Striped Bass are feeding constantly and it is not always obvious. At times they are deeper and if the birds are diving for leftovers you get a tip on the school location. If it is slow, get a drink and maybe a snack before the next show time. The Blues seem to be the most consistent and active. They are not shy and hit most anything presented as they feed. All the predators come in waves by the millions! The baitfish get crushed!

There are hundreds of beaches and all have strange and catchy names. You park in a lot and walk a boardwalk or sand trail to the steep ever eroding beach where a steep wall is being cut back a foot or two each year. All of this

amazing majesty is the result of an ancient glacier that overran this area several times before it made up its mind. The big hook in the Cape Cod landscape is the result of one of the lobes of the huge sheet of ice. It actually pushed up the island as we know it and allows you to be 35 miles offshore in the Atlantic. Just about anything flashy or bright gets whacked in the surf! The Stripers are a little pickier.

The trip was a photo tour for Elaine, and my wife takes some amazing digital shots. This laptop is crammed with thousands of photos. Where was this technology years ago? It is so exciting to go back and look at almost everything you saw on a bright screen. It was slide projectors and clumsy slide carousels before. Now everything is safely backed on a tiny thumb drive for safe keeping as you travel. Even the cameras are smaller and much better.

The fall colors increased as we continued north to Maine. We witnessed locals preparing for the big freeze. They were selling what they had left in shops and stacking firewood. They all seemed to be watching the sea in anticipation of

the first big storm. It really gets cold up in Maine. They say it gets too quiet in the winter and seems to last forever.

Our trip was pleasant but out on a boat watching the Whales you could see and feel the bite as a cold north wind ushered the tides of winter. Wood smoke was in the air by evening, and smells of ever present food cooking was everywhere. These people can't drive

when weather gets bad so they just eat all the time. I wonder if they need help.

One of the most fascinating things for me is Seals. They look like dogs without ears! They are very animated. Often they lie in the surf on their backs flopping around as they languish in the crystal clear water. The water everywhere -is perfectly clear. Way back in a Lobster harbor, even in the backwash, you can see the rocks on the bottom. Huge boulders are everywhere. A swim beach with sand is often hard to find. And everywhere-something is cooking! Boiling, frying, steaming -- it drives you crazy!

Just around the corner from the Kennedy summer home

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October 2009



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in Barnstable/Hyannis is a place where many from Boston and Providence go to play. The Chatham/Eastham area is beaches. If you were to go there to play and fish, I would recommend the Eastham area. A hop by rental from Boston Logan and you are knee deep in the Atlantic catching "Blues".



Specific tides and the dead end -deep holes are secrets locals won't tell you about. How you catch them is not a problem. Any good 8 weight rig is good enough. You will get slammed and Blues will keep you happy until it is dinner time. Cabins and lodges are inexpensive once school starts and the crowds are gone. You can be fishing in a couple of hours and get your fill quickly. There is plenty to do, like Whales, Seals, and all the food.



Our problem now as we watch CNN and await the airplane is the extra baggage we picked up. Not just the extra check bag we bought. It is the ten pounds I lashed on around the middle. When you go to the northeast to fish your plans change. It is best described as a gastronomic feast. In Bean town we overdosed on chowders and Samuel

Adams, and the deserts of Maine are to die for. And who can think about fishing as you gawk at all the fall colors along the roadsides. It is on every dead end harbor road and we drove them all!

I don't want to leave this place now but we know it will be much warmer down in Texas. And we can fish all winter. I can still hear the sound of the tires humming on the big steel lift bridges and see the giant Gulls standing on top of everything as I close my eyes. And best of all--there is always the ever present hint of something cooking. Once you go to this marvelous place and witness it's majesty you are never the same. It gets in your blood!

If I could change anything, it would be to make our water as clear and prolific as the northeast Atlantic. Pray tell these people who manage and protect this treasure continue to do the exemplary job preserving this most amazing American resource. Somebody cares a lot!

I for one am in love with all this beauty and adventure. We highly recommend you treat yourself to a Maine adventure after Labor Day. It is best described by Ernest Hemmingway - ("a moveable feast"!).

Never pass up those dead end harbor roads. They lead to heaven!





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the rain minnows by swirling your hand in the thick clouds of bait that seemed to stretch for miles. They would come running to me, minnow in hand, to show me their prized catches. While originally destined for the Mansfield jetties, we stopped at around thirty miles for some relaxation and fire roasted hot dogs before cramming the four of us into a double tent cot for some well earned sleep. While the fishing time was limited, I

found it refreshing to step into their shoes for just a little while and experience everything for the first time again. The unimaginable swarms of bait, loads of hungry and aggressive fish, bouncing along the beach front for miles and roughing it by the dunes. It was all a new experience for them and we wanted to leave a lasting first impression.

I challenge each of you to slow down a bit the next time you are on a fishing adventure. Remember what it was like the first time you saw whatever it is you are experiencing. Whether a tailing redfish or the gin clear waters of the hill country, a swarm of white bass or a fat Guadalupe trout, a rolling tarpon or a bluegill slurping grasshoppers. Don't lose sight of what fly fishing is all about. It's not the destination that matters or how many fish you bring to hand. It's about the adventure, the appreciation of nature and the sharing of what this world has to offer when you step off the paved roads. Take time to slow down and you will be amazed with what you have been missing.

See you on the water!



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