



When maintaining the minimum distance isn't an option, speak with the other anglers on the water and ask them which direction they are fishing and where they would be ok with you crossing. While they will most likely ask you to cross downstream of them, extend them the simple courtesy of asking them where they would like you to cross. It will help to ensure that you don't splash through their next fishing hole as well as safeguard your vehicle from having an obscenity keyed onto its hood back in the parking lot!

### 5. Assume the Best

We don't know whether the person approaching us on the water has been fly fishing for decades or days, if they have been fishing this river their whole life or are visiting from out of state, or if they are on the water to cap off a great week or to forget a particularly hard one. A safe assumption is that they are seeking escape, excitement, connection (with nature, themselves and possibly others), and that they share your love of fly fishing! What it is not beneficial is to assume that they are intentionally using the river in a way that is harmful or inconsiderate.



Photo Credit: Danny Frank

When we see these behaviors, this is our opportunity to engage in conversation and kindly let them know which way we are planning on fishing or to ask them if they are open to shared insight. If welcomed, it helps to pair advice with humor and humility. "Hey, mind if I give you a quick tip? Wet your hands before handling a fish. Unfortunately, I killed a few in the past and it's always bummer." Or "I didn't see it initially when I got here this morning, but if you see that bright patch in the gravel right there with the big rainbow trout on it, that is actually a spawning trout on a redd, so I'm giving her some space."

By practicing these **Five Fly Fishing Rules of the Road** we should be able to not only weather the growing community of fly fishers on the water, but be an active part of guiding and encouraging the new generation of anglers as we share and enjoy the river together! The team at Ascent Fly Fishing wishes you many tight lines and we hope to see you on the water.

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*Fly of the Month · June 2021*



As the sport of fly fishing explodes in popularity and tens of thousands of new anglers look to wet a line, the question that the fly-fishing community needs to answer is, "**How do we equitably and sustainably share the water?**" Back in March, I asked the Ascent Fly Fishing community of more than 60k anglers to join us in forming a **New Anglers' Ethic**, outlining how best to share the water and keep the peace as so many new anglers have begun to join us on the water.



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## FLY OF THE MONTH • MISSING LINK CADDIS • SIZE 12

The Missing Link Caddis has a complicated family tree. The love child of a caddis and a mayfly, this crossover pattern fishes just as effectively as an emerging or adult caddis fly as it does a drifting mayfly or spawned out spinner. When you want to cover and fish more hatches with fewer flies, this pattern is a deadly weapon to have in your fly arsenal!



**Dry/Wet:** Dry | **Fly Category:** Attractor Pattern  
**Family:** Caddis | **Species:** Little Brown Sedge,  
Northern Caddis, Spotted Sedge | **Life Stage:** Adult

## The 5 Fly Fishing Rules of the Road

By: Peter Stichter - Ascent Fly Fishing

Whether you've been fishing for decades or are just getting your feet wet for the first time this spring, you have either felt the frustration of encroaching anglers crowding you on the water or the sting of scorn from other anglers directed at you due to some unspoken offence. Just as the yearly spring runoff changes the contours of the river and how we fish, so too must the rising flow of anglers to our local waters change the way we fish and share the river.

The response and feedback of the community was overwhelming when asked to be a part of the solution to help us form an angler ethic that we can all embrace and commit to sharing with the new generation of anglers.

After reading scores of emails, Facebook and Instagram messages, and posing this question to countless anglers in the shop, the consensus of the community was uncannily aligned! While we are not looking to carve a rigid 10 Commandments of Fishing Ethics in stone, I believe that these simple **Five Fly Fishing Rules of the Road** are ones that we can all stand behind and will allow us each to enjoy the river and the sport of fly fishing while maintaining peace within ourselves and with each other.

### 1. Signal Before You Merge

The universal consensus of the community was that anglers need to speak to each other on the water in a give-and-take exchange to determine how we are going to share the water. Just like when someone is looking to merge into a crowded highway, it is appreciated and space more graciously given when someone uses their blinker, makes eye contact, and signals their intent instead of just squeezing in front of you and forcing those around them to slam on their brakes and make room. We've all been there and dislike thoughtless drivers like that!

When you encounter other anglers on the water, cordially engage them. Ask them which way they are heading, if and where it would be ok for you to merge onto the water and wish them luck! Not only will this keep the anglers on the water from having to slam the breaks on their fishing, it will enable you to help keep the peace on the river and maybe even gain a little intel on which flies are working well or possibly even gain a new fishing buddy!

### 2. Maintain a Minimum Space

Nothing will raise our communal blood pressure as fast as someone riding your bumper or having someone cut you off on the road! When other anglers crowd us on the river (which typically only happens if the first Fly Fishing Rule of the Road isn't followed) tempers flare, people get defensive, and no one has a good time on the water. So, let's agree to keep a minimum distance when fishing. On crowded waters **close to the city, 30 yards is a reasonable minimum distance.** That will keep people from tangling lines, while allowing you some space to breathe. If you've made the effort to get out of town to **more secluded waters, moving upstream a quarter of a mile from an established angler or out of sight around the next bend** will help to maintain the peace and seclusion that you both were looking for by getting off the beaten path. If there isn't enough room on a specific stretch of water to keep this minimum distance between yourself and other anglers, take a walk upstream, chat with the anglers you meet along the way, and merge back onto the stream where there is space.



Photo Credit: Danny Frank

### 3. First in Time = First in Line

Line up like when merging into traffic on the highway, the vehicles merging from the on-ramp need to yield to the cars already on the road. The same is true on the river. The anglers who got up and early, rigged their rods in the dark, and are drifting a particular run have the right to fish that water and not be encroached upon or rushed. But, if you speak with them and discuss which way you are both heading and where you would like to fish, not only will you both share a good day on the water, but you might also even get invited to join them for a bit!

### 4. Be Mindful Where You Cross

Often times we need to wade across the river to get to a particularly sweet looking piece of water, but when doing so we need to be respectful of the other anglers on the water. Whenever possible, try to maintain the 30 yards of minimum distance between yourself and others when crossing the river.

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