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Subject: : Beginner Forum

Topic: : Got to use my first hand-tied leader

Re: Got to use my first hand-tied leader

Author: : pcray1231

Date: : 2013/10/3 14:32:20

URL:

Quote:

Does the cost/time ratio balance out?

When you get good at it, you'll be tying blood knots streamside in about a minute. Adjusting that leader, putting new tippet on, etc.

When at that point, making a leader takes about 10 minutes. The materials used will last years. And the back half of the leader will pretty much last you a whole season, but you'll monkey with the front half streamside so much that it occasionally needs "repaired". In a half hour each winter, I can be ready to go for the spring, and then muddle through.

I pretty much carry 4 homemade leaders for the fishing I do.

1. I carry a "jack of all trades" leader. With tippet, it's about 9 ft. It's based on a pamphlet that came with the leader tying kit from a fly shop (fly fishers paradise). But it's pretty much the rule of 3rds. 1/3 butt. 1/3 taper. 1/3 tippet. I actually don't use it much anymore, in favor of the more specific ones below.
2. I carry a "brookie" leader, which is a short butt, short taper that comes out at about 4 1/2 feet (without tippet). With tippet, it makes from a 5 1/2 to 9 ft leader. Most monkeying is with the tippet length/strength only, which I do A LOT based on the physical surroundings of the stream I'm fishing. I lengthen and lighten it for that long slow pool where they're spooky and you can cast distance. I shorten and strengthen it to cast tight up under overhanging objects. The leader itself (butt and taper), though, typically lasts me a whole season.
3. "Dry fly" leader, based on George Harvey's slack line formula. With tippet, this one's usually pretty long, 9-12 ft depending on tippet length. But I monkey with this one quite a bit streamside depending on whether I think I need tighter loops and more accuracy or get a better drift. If I want it shorter, I remove a segment up in the taper somewhere, usually leaving a reasonably long tippet. Only later to have to add a segment, etc. Most of my hatch matching, big stream fishing involves an overnight trip with several days of fishing. The type you plan for and get excited about. In my preparations for such a trip, I construct a new leader. Over the several days of the trip, it gets monkeyed with. Then I leave it in the box, it may get used once or twice again. But for the next "big" trip, I construct a new one.
4. Nymphing leader. I like flat nymph leaders, generally. Gets a better drift. Well, I have a butt and tippet, just no taper really. Might be something like 2 ft of butt section. Then 5-8 ft of 2x or 3x tippet. At the end, I'll add <1

ft of 4 or 5x, while leaving a long tag of the thicker stuff from the knot. Dual nymph rig. Indicator up the line somewhere. Any monkeying typically involves replacing that bit at the end (which shortens the rest a bit). Because I snag a lot and lose length this way, this one needs replaced often. But you never lose the butt. So it's real easy to just construct a new one streamside!

As far as switching, I use the same diameter of butt section for all of them, a section of which is permanently nail knotted to my fly line. Then I take that into account when constructing the leaders. So the butt has a knot with no size change. When switching leaders, I just cut at that knot, and blood knot the new one on. It's quick. No loops or anything. A few times a year I shorten that nail knotted piece too much and have to make a new nail knot, which is my biggest hassle.