



On-Stream Manners

By Steve May

Nothing that can ruin a great day on the water quicker than a conflict with another angler. So it is helpful to know what to do when you come across another person fishing in “your secret spot”. A few simple “Rules of the River” should help make everyone’s day more enjoyable.

GOLDEN RULE:

On stream manners usually come down to common sense and communications. If you follow the golden rule of “Treat other anglers like you would like to be treated yourself.” Your time on stream should be enjoyable. There are local variations on what is acceptable, but, these basic guidelines will help you on the water.

Right of Way

The first angler on a pool has the right of way. If you want to fish the area too either wait your turn or ask them how you can fish without disturbing them.

Casting room

Give other anglers as much room as you can so you don’t disturb them or the fish they are working. On many rivers you can have a whole pool to yourself and on popular waters you will need to learn how to share. Try to give another fly fisher at least the distance of a good cast, this includes positioning directly across from someone on a smaller river.

Leave the other guys fish alone!

If an angler is fishing a spot try your best to avoid spooking the fish and never start fishing the fish without first getting the OK from the them. Communications and being polite can go a long way. I have often had other anglers say “ I can’t catch that fish...why don’t you give her a try?”

Boats

Fishing from a drift boat give you an advantage in terms of the places you can fish and the amount of water you can cover. In most areas boats should try to give wading anglers as much room as they can. BUT, wading anglers should also respect boaters as other anglers. If they treat you with courtesy please respond in kind.

Among friends

When I fish with close friends we often do things that we find acceptable and fun that others might not. A couple of my angling friends are left handed, so I often move in and fish right next to them because we can work an area comfortably and safely while standing only a couple of feet apart, we also regularly cast to across each others lines to fish the other person is working, drift nymph rigs past them and hoot and holler making and add competitive taunting and insults to the conversation. These friendly faux pas are not something to share with strangers.



When in doubt...Ask!

Striking up a conversation on the river can help avoid misunderstandings and you might learn about the fishery, effective fly patterns and make on stream friends. But, if the person is not talkative, seems upset or tells you to move on, just walk away and find another spot to fish along the river there is usually another spot not too far away.

Share your success

There are times when one honey hole is producing most of the fish. If you are the lucky angler be sure to share your success with others. I really enjoy seeing others have success and a great time on stream. This is because I know that creating a passionate fly fisher can only help protect the future of our rivers and fishing resources.



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For more information contact:
Grand River Troutfitters
(519) 787-4359
www.grandrivertroutfitters.com