GUIDELINES AND IDEAS FOR STARTING AN IFFF CHARTER CLUB
Updated January 2014

The International Federation of Fly Fishers has prepared this information to help you start your own IFFF Charter Club. The IFFF stands ready to advise and assist you in any way possible in your efforts to get started.

GETTING STARTED

Often flying fishing clubs are not started they just seem to grow from a casual association of angling companions. But there is a difference between a casual association and an active club that has made a conscious decision to seek more members and work to accomplish specific goals.

The goals of a club may take many forms, but experience has shown that some set of objectives is necessary if a club is to survive and grow. One of the advantages of starting an IFFF Charter Club is that the club has a basic set of goals and objectives that mirror those of the IFFF and its Councils:

A. To provide members with a forum for education and resource stewardship through the sport of fly fishing;

B. To promote fly fishing through education as the most enjoyable and sporting method of fishing, and the method most consistent with the preservation of conservation - wise use - of our fishing waters and game fish;

C. To provide assistance, advice, and suggestions to other angling groups to help them become more important and effective in their areas;

D. To publicize the best practices and techniques of fly fishing, fly tying, casting, and other related subjects;
E. To be the local voice for organized fly fishers as part of the Federation, maintaining liaison with other conservation and sporting organizations, and with the governmental agencies involved in so many aspects of our sport.

F. To carry out the objectives and purposes of the Federation in their respective localities.

IDENTIFY YOUR GOALS

In addition to promoting the goals and objectives of the IFFF, many Charter Clubs have been founded for specific reasons such as working to have a local stream set aside exclusively for fly fishing and have gone on from there. Some clubs exist for the purpose of teaching fly-casting, fly tying, or both. A common goal is organization as a fly tying club. Others were formed to work on conservation problems involving angling resources. Larger clubs often have all of these objectives.

The important thing is that members must have a sense of participation in something worthwhile to themselves and the community. Clubs that meet just to have a good time usually don’t last long; successful clubs work on beneficial projects and have a good time too. So, first of all, decide what it is you want your club to do and stick with it.

MEMBERS

If you are a single individual or a small group trying to start a club, you will want to seek out other persons with similar interests as prospective members. There are various ways in which this may be done.

First, once you have decided what it is you want your group to do, plan an organizational meeting. You should set a definite time and place and, to stimulate attendance, it may be helpful to invite a speaker or some prominence or arrange for a program of interest to local anglers.

When these arrangements have been completed, get the word out. This may be done through advertisements or new briefs in local newspapers, radio programs, or television stations. It helps to spread the word in as many places as possible, such as community bulletin boards, church bulletins, other sports clubs, or sporting goods stores. Contact clubs@fedflyfishers.org to obtain our Club Media Guidelines, which can help you create effective news releases.
ORGANIZATION

FINANCES

The dues of members usually are the primary source of income for the club. Projected operating expenses should be estimated and the dues schedule adopted so that the per capita dues will provide sufficient income to meet those expenses.

Major club expenditures usually include publication and mailing of a club newsletter, dues in other organizations, contributions, and expenditures for trophies, equipment and fees for speakers.

There are other sources of funds that also may be tapped. Auctions are popular fund-raising events and items usually may be solicited from members and merchants. Many clubs have raffles at meetings and this may also be a powerful attendance builder. Contact the IFFF at clubs@fedflyfishers.org for our Fund Raising Manual. Many clubs also hold self-sustaining events such as outings in which the cost is divided equally among those who attend.

PROGRAMS

The success of your programs will go a long way toward determining the success of your club. Good programs keep members coming back and entice others to attend. It is a good idea to have a membership meeting once a month. This gives members something to look forward to and establishes a pattern.

One of the most successful and humorous features of a fly fishing club meeting are fishing reports, a designated time in which members relate their angling experiences. This often is the highlight of the meeting.

Sources of good programs are innumerable. State game agencies usually are able to provide interesting speakers or videos. Other government agencies or conservation groups are excellent program sources. Often a club will have within its own membership experts on a certain angling technique or certain waters, and these members can provide entertaining programs. Other clubs will offer the same opportunity. Once or twice a year, you may wish to pay expenses and bring in a big name expert to speak to your group.

After the program, it is time for any regular business that concerns the membership. If you have a raffle or auction, save it until later as it will keep the audience from leaving earlier.

Most clubs like to have at least one annual meeting a year. This is the time when you pull out all the stops, put on a big feed, and invite everyone. It is also a good time to present the club’s
major awards. You may also want to hold an auction or some other fundraiser that will increase the club’s ability to work on projects.

COMMITTEES

Committees consist of people who get things done. They are charged with working to accomplish the goals of the club under the direction of its officers. There is no limit to their number or function, but a typical lineup in a large club looks something like this:

Membership: Encourage new membership by mailings and exhibiting at local sport shows. Keep records of membership including current names, addresses and dues.

Conservation: Represents the Federation and club’s position on conservation at meetings of local government and DNR agencies. Recommends conservation projects to the club. Sets up meetings and workdays for the approved conservation projects. Coordinates workdays with other clubs or government agencies. Keeps membership informed of current issues and policies from IFFF and the Council.

Education: Responsible for the club’s education services, such as classes in fly tying, casting, or rod building. May put on public classes or work with young people to further interest in fly fishing. The IFFF provides materials and sources for teaching many kinds of classes. IFFF would be happy to mail your club a copy of this informational binder.

Programs: Plan and arrange club outings and programs for meetings.

NEWSLETTER

A club newsletter is a tremendous help. Often it serves as the glue that keeps the membership together. It may range from one or two photocopied pages to an elaborate production, but the important thing is that there be one. It is a good idea to have a monthly newsletter that comes out shortly before meetings. The newsletter then carries information about the forthcoming program and other club activities. An enterprising newsletter editor will also include fishing reports, maps, anecdotes and news of general interest to the membership.

To help your editor the IFFF has web-based archive of club newsletters called the ClubWire. It was developed to assist editors who may have trouble finding enough contributing writers with news items, humorous articles and interesting tidbits of information that may be reprinted.
The IFFF encourages clubs to submit their newsletters electronically so they can be published on
the website at:


In addition to the electronic copy (PDF) of the newsletter the IFFF also asked the editor to give a
30-40 word synopsis of the important information in the newsletter. Please ask your editor to
contact our ClubWire editor at clubs@fedflyfishers.org with the name of your club, the editor's
name and e-mail address so communication can begin.

MISCELLANEOUS

There are many other things you club can do. A number of clubs have established their own
book and video libraries for members to use over the years. Others have produced their own
videos, for their own use or to aid in conservation projects. Some clubs have published
magazines and books. There is literally no end to the number of ways clubs can provide service
to their members and communities.

MEMBERSHIP IN THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS

The strength of the IFFF is in its members and clubs, and it was founded to do those things on a
national and international level, which individuals and clubs cannot do by themselves. These
include:

Publication of an international magazine, *Flyfisher*, with articles of interest to all fly fishers and
news from other clubs and councils around the nation and the world.

The IFFF Web Site has a wealth of angling information. All of our clubs are listed to assist in
attracting new members. There are pages on casting, tying, education, and conservation subjects.
Also listed are Retail Shop/Outfitters and our Sustaining members. A calendar of events and
everything you would need to know about becoming an IFFF Certified Casting Instructor.
Joining or renewing with the IFFF has been made easy through our web site. Information on
Councils and a link to their web sites is also there. Take a look, you may be pleased at what you
see at www.fedflyfishers.org.

ClubWire, a web-based service to all clubs providing articles and items of interest from the
International Federation of Fly Fishers for use in club newsletters.

A coordinated position on conservation matters, providing assistance and direction to regional
councils and individual clubs.

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Establishment of IFFF regional councils of members and clubs to work together in common effort to solve problems within their areas.

Assistance to clubs and IFFF regional councils in putting on programs and providing information for educational opportunities in fly casting, fly tying, fly fishing and conservation

A National effort to promote the sport of fly fishing and its literature and traditions and to preserve the archives of the sport.

An annual fly fishing show at which member may have the opportunity to meet and learn from leading experts in angling and conservation.

**ORGANIZATIONAL STEPS**

1. Ask yourself why you want to start a club? Ask who will help and get a core group of 3-4 people. Clubs with a focus such as a fly tying club, casting club, species of fish club, seem to be a good place to start and they are not overwhelming.

2. Put out notices for an informal meeting: Anyone (men, women, youth, recommend 18 years or older unless accompanied by an adult) interested in forming an IFFF Charter Club, will gather informally when, where. Put notices in:
   - A. sport shops
   - B. Other clubs, bass, canoe, white water
   - C. Town hall notice boards, libraries, retirement communities
   - D. Local newspapers
   - E. YMCA, YWCA, fitness clubs
   - F. Hospitals, support groups
   - G. Professional groups, ABA, AMA, nurses assoc. vets.
   - H. Churches
   - I. Bars, stores, restaurants
   - J. Website
   - K. Local cable TV

This meeting will give you an idea of the initial interest in your area. Have a sign-up sheet, phone, address, email. For further meeting notice. If you do not have an initial core group....say 5 to hold an organizational meeting, you can ask for a couple volunteers from this group. Schedule an organizational meeting (over dinner, lunch, burgers, etc.) with a small core group. Organize the Charter Club with this group.

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Once the Charter Club is organized, others can then join. The requirements for joining are any club dues required and IFFF membership. You will find that the requirement to be a member of IFFF will be a non-issue as this is a IFFF Charter Club and part of basic membership requirements. Most fly fishers are familiar with this concept because it is the same requirement with other like-organizations, e.g. TU, Ducks Unlimited and NWTF.

Review and familiarize yourself with the organizational packet available from IFFF that contains Charter Club organization procedures, standard Articles of Incorporation, Bylaws for Charter Clubs, application information for Employment Identification Number (EIN) (needed to open bank account and 501(C)3 status) and other documents needed to organize as a Charter Club. Some modifications can be made to meet local requirements and desires. The IFFF legal counsel is available to assist in preparing the documents.

At organizational meeting decide:

1. Where to meet
2. When to meet, how often and length of meetings
3. Where to bank
4. Club address: (Recommend a P.O. Box as it is a permanent address)
5. Club e-mail address. Please do NOT use a personal e-mail for the club’s e-mail address. You can easily set up a GMAIL, HOTMAIL or YAHOO account for free. This e-mail will be used consistently and passed from president to president. Otherwise, your club e-mail address will be changing every time you have an officer change.
5. Dues, how much does the club need to operate.
6. You can start with the Charter Club standard Constitution and Bylaws to meet the Charter Club requirements until you are able to incorporate. Discuss size of board (five to seven is recommended for a small club) and any other organizational matters.
7. Select some interim officers

Charter Clubs can achieve a 501(C)3 status under the IFFF’s Group Exemption if you want that status. Donations to your club are tax deductible. Whether or not your club has to pay taxes depends on club income and state laws. Please contact the Operations Manager at the IFFF office for further information.

If your club covers a large geographical area, make sure you have a number of directors that can meet a quorum. People willing to come to meetings. Hold them near good fishing at the right time of year. An odd number of directors is desirable.

Officers: President, Secretary and Treasurer are required. Other possibilities for officers or chairpersons are:

    VP Communication (newsletter)

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One thing you probably should accept up front is that 20/80 rule that 20 percent of the people do 80 percent of the work. Actually in most clubs, it is about 4-6 people who do most of the work. Tell directors you expect them to be involved.

WHY PEOPLE JOIN A CLUB

Reasons why people join clubs vary widely. Below are some reasons that the club may encounter. The club leadership should determine why your members have joined. Taylor your programs and club activities to keep the members coming back time and time again.

- Want to learn about the sport
- Share/teach
- Civic duty
- Political reasons
- Health reasons
- Social needs, recognition, validation
- Some just want to be entertained
- FUN...keep it fun
- Conservation issues

People want to have fun. Programs, games, challenges, contests, family events, outings, etc. keep the interest up. But keep the thank yous flowing. A good public relations person can do wonders. Sometimes the only thank you people get is to see their name in print.

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IFFF's problem of member retention: It is difficult to keep them coming. Many times once a person has learned the sport, they disappear.

When people ask what do I get for my $35, you should be prepared to answer that question quickly and without hesitation. The answer to those people is: For one thing, this club! An opportunity to become a part of an organized voice for the sport of fly fishing. The IFFF is your only organization that is an advocate on the National and Regional level for the sport of fly fishing. Also, you will be surrounding yourself by some of the most talented anglers on earth.

Then: You can list the patch, magazine, club and council newsletters By joining the IFFF you become part of an amazing network of knowledge, and you are surrounding yourself with like-

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minded people who care about the earth and its resources. We need all the help we can get, and I am sure you would like to contribute any way you can......

It is hard to meet the needs of everyone but if you have a variety of program and activities, it helps a lot.

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EXAMPLES OF IFFF’S CHARTER CLUB SUPPORT & BENEFITS

Group Insurance for club at reasonable rates
Filing of tax return (club is required to provide yearly financial information to the IFFF)
501(C)3 status immediately upon acceptance into the IFFF
IFFF ClubWire
IFFF Products
Web page and links
Membership tracking
Legal support
Fair and Expo events at the National and Regional Level
Casting Certification Programs
Fly Tying Resources
Whitlock Vibert box for egg planting
Action Alerts
Educational materials
Loaner equipment program (rods, reels, fly tying vices, etc.)
Rod Incentive program (one credit for each new member, 12 members and club can order a rod)

SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Website: www.fedflyfishers.org

IFFF Contacts:

Rhonda Sellers, Operations Manager, 406.222.9369 X101 rhonda@fedflyfishers.org
Jessica Atherton, Education Coordinator, 406-222-9369 X107, clubs@fedflyfishers.org
Jim Schramm, IFFF legal counsel, 231.869-5487, jdschramm@oceana.net