

# The Northwest Waker

By Joe Fitzpatrick

It was a beautiful September morning on the Clearwater and I had just landed a nice 7 pound hen steelhead using a wetfly. As I was sitting there, trying to reduce the adrenalin flowing through my veins, I was watching a fish about 100 yards downstream sipping the surface. Could this be a trout or a steelhead? I thought as I stood up and tied on a tube fly muddler that I tied for the trip.

I started casting out short lengths of line, as I worked out my comfortable casting length. As I got closer and closer to where the ripples were, the anticipation was killing me and I actually could feel my breathing increase and my body shake.

The water here was fairly smooth, walking pace water with riffles scattered around rocks that were under the water. From everything that I read, this was perfect skating water. As I watched my fly swing at a steady pace, it would disappear frequently, making me lose concentration because I could not see the fly. This ultimately would be my demise.

As the fly swung into the zone, it disappeared under the riffle and then suddenly, a huge splash of water and a flash of silver encompassed where my fly was. I felt tension on my line as the loop was ripped from my fingers. I was in such shock that I practically ripped the lips off the fish with my "Tarpon" hook set. "You gotta be kidding me!" I couldn't believe that I made such a rookie mistake.

I was hooked though. I was determined to create a floating skater that would not sink. There was one caveat though. It had to be a tube fly.

My good friend and fellow Eumer Pro Staff Tier Paul Jacobsen was with me on this trip and we both decide to put our heads together and create this fly. It was actually an astonishing event how this fly came to us. We were e-mailing back and forth for a few days, talking about how we were going to do this. Then it happened. I went to the vice and came-up with the Northwest Waker. Paul and I had been talking about this and when I e-mailed the picture his jaw dropped in amazement. He said "Holly Cow!! That's the exact same thing I came up with". He sent me a picture of his and I couldn't believe my eyes. The "Northwest Waker" was born.

The concept is really easy. The front of the fly is melted in a way to create a ramp that pushes water out of the way. Then holes are melted on the sides of the tube to create "Hitching" holes. The leader is placed in the hole on the side of the fly facing upstream, just like when you tie a hitch onto a standard hooked fly. I know this can be a little confusing so let me explain more. Take your fly and face to upstream. Put the leader

though the hole on that side of the tube and make sure it comes out the back. Tie on your hook and you are in business.

It will amaze you how well this fly floats. It floats better than anything I have ever tied and it is incredibly easy to tie.

## **Northwest Waker tube**

1. Cut a 1 inch piece of large plastic tubing
2. Place the end of the tube in a pair of smooth jawed pliers. You want the end to be flush with the side of the pliers and perfectly perpendicular to the jaws of the pliers (See image 1 and 2)



(IMAGE 1)



(IMAGE 2)

3. While lightly grasping the pliers, take your thumb and push the tube up at a 45 degree angle. (See Image 3)



(IMAGE 3)

4. Apply heat from a lighter to the flushed end of the tube, flicking it back and forth. DO NOT apply direct heat or you will melt the tube too much. Place very light pressure upward with your thumb as your doing this. You will feel the tube move upward easily, this is your cue that the plastic is heated up enough. Check it until you get the angle you want.

5. This is what it will look like. The end with automatically close from the heat melting the end of the plastic tube. (See Image 4)



(IMAGE 4)

6. Take a bodkin and heat the tip. You will then sear the tube all the way through about a half inch back from the bend. It's important that this hole is level with the tube. This will be your hitching hole. (See Image 5)



(IMAGE 5)

6. Take a large straight eye hook and wrap thread behind the eye. This will be your vise. The thread should be about the diameter of the eye. (See image 6)



(IMAGE 6)

7. Place the tube onto your new hook vice. You want to push it forward to just behind the hitching hole.(See image 7)



(IMAGE 7)

8. Place your thread between the front of the tube and the hitching hole. (See image 8)



(IMAGE 8)

9. Tie in some crystal flash and fold it over. You want to then taper cut the flash. (See Image 9)



(IMAGE 9)

10. Tie in deer hair for the wing and clip the ends. (See Image 10 and 11)



(IMAGE 10)



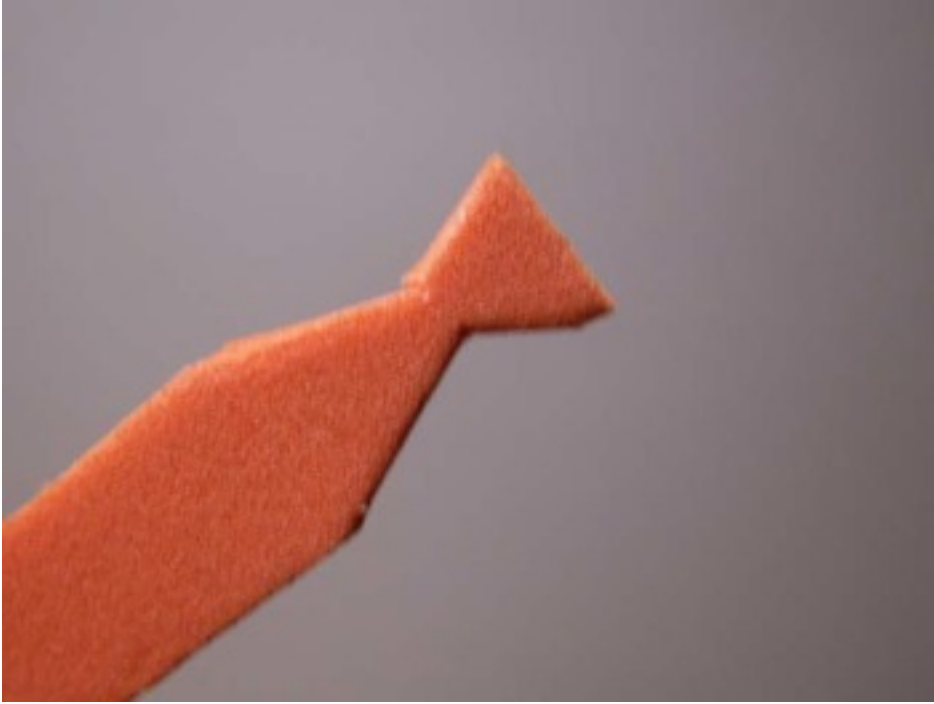
(IMAGE 11)

11. Turn the vice over and tie in a smaller clump of deer hair under the fly with the tips facing forward. (See Image 12)



(IMAGE 12)

12. Clip a piece of orange foam like the picture. (See Image 13)



(IMAGE 13)

13. Tie in the foam with the short section facing forward (See Image 14)



(IMAGE 14)

14. Turn the fly back over and fold the collar back, tying it down (See Image 15)



(IMAGE 15)

15. Turn the fly back over and fold back the foam toward the rear of the tube fly. You want to push the foam a little forward so it fills up the flat section of the tube. (See Image 16 and 17)



(IMAGE 16)



(IMAGE 17)

16. Wrap thread around to secure everything and use head cement on the underside and sides of the thread wraps. Cut the back of the foam and your tube fly is complete...



The finished tube fly