

FIRST FLY FISHING EXPERIENCE – A DAUGHTER’S PERSPECTIVE

(This report is from Kathryn Roberts on her first time fly fishing with her father, Bill, in eastern Idaho. That’s Kathryn in the photo with one of her first ever trout.)



I remember being surprised when my dad suggested a fly fishing trip for my birthday present. It's hard to believe that it's been 10 years since my last major camping trip, and my dad and I have never vacationed with just the two of us. I was thrilled at the opportunity to fly fish, to visit Idaho for the first time, and to spend some time with my dad.

Do you know that line from Paulo Coelho where, when you want something, the entire universe conspires to help you? That's a little how this trip felt for me. We had the good fortune to have the head guide, Doug, pick us up from the airport.

When he found out it was my first time fly fishing, he offered to give both of us a lesson on dry land. That afternoon I learned the basics of how to cast, how to tie knots, and how to mend (although that part didn't make much sense until I actually got on the river). I also got my first taste of the spectacular Idaho landscape. Three Rivers is in an absolutely beautiful location. It compels you to be outside exploring.

The next morning I turned up to meet my guide... and discovered that there is a dramatic difference between "water resistant" jackets and "water proof" jackets. Do your research, folks! Luckily, Three Rivers has an Orvis shop right on sight. Lonnie took time out of her busy morning to help me pick a fleece and a waterproof jacket that would work with the waders, and explained to me the particular intricacies of wearing waders as a woman. I felt so cared for and reassured by her.

Our guide, BJ, was simply top-notch. He's an accomplished angler, as you'd expect, but also a very good teacher. His feedback was positive, encouraging, and he also understood that the best way to learn is just to do it on your own; that words simply don't teach as well as experience. So the first day we just kept floating and fishing, floating and fishing. Of course, my dad and I both caught about 10 fish apiece, so we were delighted by the positive feedback the river gave us.

On the second day my dad and I had enough of the feel for fishing that BJ could start telling us where to cast and what to look for. We really benefitted from his (not inconsiderable) knowledge of the rivers and the behavior of fish. He never got frustrated with untangling knots or pulling my hook out of trees. And he did a great job of picking trips for us that would yield plenty of fish in beautiful country. And he also treated us to huckleberry milkshakes, an Idaho institution!

In addition to the marvelous time we had fishing, the other anglers on vacation at Three Rivers were absolutely a delight. They were personable, charismatic, and fun to be

around. And every single person came up to me after my first day to ask how it went. Every single one of them. I've never experienced anything like it. They also made sure to encourage story embellishments. After all, part of good fishing is making sure everyone knows that every fish you catch is humongous :)

My companions were also very forthright about why they chose Three Rivers, which centered largely on the kindness and team-oriented nature of the staff and the number of fishing permits and variety of trip options. These are things I would never have known to consider, and it was helpful to hear what fishing might look like at other lodges. Of course, there were also a few people who started at Three Rivers and never deviated. If it ain't broke, don't fix it.

Overall, I loved this fishing expedition, as I knew I would. I didn't realize how much I missed being outdoors, and I think fishing is a profoundly beautiful way to see the world. Idaho is magnificent, and I wouldn't mind using fly fishing as an excuse and activity to see more of the United States, other continents, and even more of Western PA, where I live. I'm so glad my dad suggested this trip, and I really have to thank you, Don, for suggesting such a wonderful trip. I'm looking forward to next year!

Some comments from father, Bill:

We had a great time. My daughter caught the first fish, the most fish, and the biggest fish. The accommodations were excellent. The staff was all focused on making sure everything went smoothly. The cabins were very nice.

Our guide, BJ was perfect. He was a great teacher. Patient, knowledgeable, and focused on making sure we had a great time. This was Kathryn's first time fly fishing and she loved it. It was just a great all around experience. All of the staff set a very professional tone.