

# Angling for knowledge

## Students in SEEDS program catch early case of trout fever

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Contributing Writer

RAPID CITY — Budding fishermen in the SEEDS After School Program at Rapid City Elementary have an early case of trout fever. The locally acclaimed fishing season may still be over a month away, but these first- through fifth-graders are getting a head start in preparation with lessons on habitat, feeding habits and fly-tying.

Frank Simkins and Greg Miller, directors of the Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited, visited the after school program on Feb. 22 to give hands-on instructions on fly-tying.

"I think it's good for the kids to know about the streams, habitats, insects and fish in the streams," said Simkins.

The workshop lasted for 90 minutes, and each student left with their own woolly buggler that they created. According to the workshop, woolly bugglers are artificial flies that imitate a wide range of game fish prey.

In order to create their woolly bugglers, students individually worked with kits that included the delicate materials they needed —



Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited director Greg Miller assists Heston Krogel, 9, with his yellow woolly buggler during the recent fly-tying workshop at Rapid City Elementary.



Frank Simkins, a director with the Adams Chapter of Trout Unlimited, opens the fly-tying workshop with a lesson on the habitat and feeding habits of game fish.

such as beads, hooks, copper wire, chenille, and hackle feathers.

The SEEDS After School Program at Rapid City Elementary invited the chapter to teach the workshop because its students have shown an interest in the outdoors and nature.

"Our kids here are very interested in our local woods and water," explained SEEDS staff member Brett Bontrager.

"Last year, SEEDS at Rapid City Elementary ran a successful fishing club during the spring and summer, but fly fishing was outside of my wheelhouse. The kids are crazy about wanting to catch trout and I wanted them to have a chance to learn about flies and fly fishing from some experts."

Bontrager also shared that the students' interest in nature has allowed the program to provide other lessons and activities on the topic. These include — but are not limited to — units on the Great Lakes watershed, local

zoology, animal and plant identification, and ecosystems. The after school program has also recently acquired water quality testing kits and children-sized waders.

"SEEDS After School loves to find any opportunity to connect its students with the great outdoors. We so appreciate community members willing to expend time and resources working with children on activities like this," stated Tara Ward, program director for SEEDS After School.

The directors from the Trout Unlimited chapter and the staff at the after school program both agreed the recent workshop was a success and that the students did a great job

paying attention to detail, despite the wide range of ages.

The chapter has done family fly-tying workshops in the past, but this was the first time they came to a classroom. Many of the materials for the workshop were donated by outdoor stores such as the Northern Angler and Streamside Orvis.

"It was fun; I had a good time doing it. I know the kids around here like to get outdoors," commented Simkins.

"The Trout Unlimited directors did a great job with the kids," added Bontrager. "I would like to have them out again, and maybe this time bring their rods to demonstrate and teach fly rod casting."

**Tylar Shepherd, 10,** focuses in on his artificial fly as he carefully wraps its body to imitate the segments of a live insect.



Photos by Elizabeth Dunham