



The nice thing about fly fishing in general and north shore fly fishing in particular is that it can be as simple or as complicated as you like.

Going from your hands to the hook, here is a basic set up that will serve you well on Minnesota's North Shore or any other Midwestern steelhead fishing destination. Don't worry if some of the language doesn't make sense. If you bring this list to any decent fly fishing shop they will be able to set you up.

Rods:

Ideally a strong 8 weight fly rod preferably with a fighting butt, however if you already have a fly rod in a 6, 7 or 9 wt, don't despair. It will work just fine until, or if you decide to expand your rod collection.

Reels:

A fly fishing reel matched to the rod and handedness of the fisherman/woman. This reel should also have a good strong drag (for big strong fish) and big knobs that can be used with gloves on.

Line(s):

Some Fisherpersons use straight monofilament fishing line on their reels, while others use floating fly line with a monofilament or even fluorocarbon leader. Both set ups have their place and either will work on the North Shore. If you are purchasing items specifically for one of our seminars, the mono is more economical, while the fly line will give you more options.

To accommodate both setups we list out both from the fly reel spool to the end of the tippet

Mono:

- 100 yards or more of 20 – 30 pound fly line backing
- 100 – 200 yards of 12 to 18 pound monofilament (high abrasion resistance)
- Micro swivel (20-50 pound test)
- 18 – 36 inches of 8 to 10 pound fluorocarbon tippet

Fly line:

- 100 or more yards of 20 – 30 pound fly line backing
- Weight forward floating fly line (sized to match the fly rod)
- 9 – 25 feet of monofilament line (can also use tapered leader here) in 10 – 12 pound test
- Micro swivel (20-50 pound test)
- 18 – 36 inches of 8 to 10 pound fluorocarbon tippet

Part of the “charm” of fishing the North Shore is that the numerous rocks, branches, and other sub-surface features of the river will provide you with numerous opportunities to change the line, flies, and weights of your offering, ie you will get snagged a lot and have to re rig. Both of the set ups outlined above are designed to minimize two things: the overall amount of equipment you lose and the time it takes you to re-rig. That last part is important because you can’t catch fish if you aren’t fishing!

We have covered what you want to start with, now we will cover what you need to bring along to keep fishing after you have encountered a rock, branch, tree, etc. and have to replace what has been lost.

- 8 - 10 pound test monofilament leader material (30 – 100 yards) **for fly line rig only**
- Micro swivels (one to two dozen)
- Sinkers (lead or non-toxic in assorted sizes)
- 30 yards of fluorocarbon or monofilament tippet
- 12 to 24 #6 octopus hooks (barbed or barbless) for use with soft plastic eggs
- Thingamabobber or similar strike indicator
- Fishing forceps with or without scissors (for cutting line, removing hooks, pinching sinkers)
- Nippers (also for cutting line)

Flies:

Our website has a great selection of recommended flies for the North Shore, but the following will provide you with more than enough for your first few weekends

- 3 Pheasant tail nymph (beadhead and/or unweighted size 10-12)
- 3 Prince nymph/purple prince nymph (beadhead and/or unweighted) size 10-12
- 3 early black stoneflies size 10-12
- 2 Soft hackle wet flies or nymphs (ask your fly shop guy/gal) size 10-12
- 4 Woolly Buggers (black, brown, olive, white) size 6-8
- 3 Egg sucking leeches size 6-8 (black or purple) size 4-8
- 12 – 24 egg flies or soft plastic (scented) eggs in various colors/combinations
 - Steelhead orange
 - Chartreuse
 - Pink
 - White
 - Cerise

And finally a few last items to help you to make the most of your time on the water

- Waders – Lightweight, breathable stocking foot with your choice of added boot style
- Sunglasses (especially polarized lenses)
- Clothing, gloves and hats to accommodate varied weather conditions
- Net (to safely restrain and release the fish you catch after you finish the clinic and are fishing on your own)

This may seem like a daunting list, but you will be surprised how compact the whole kit turns out to be. A fishing vest or small pack can easily handle everything you need.