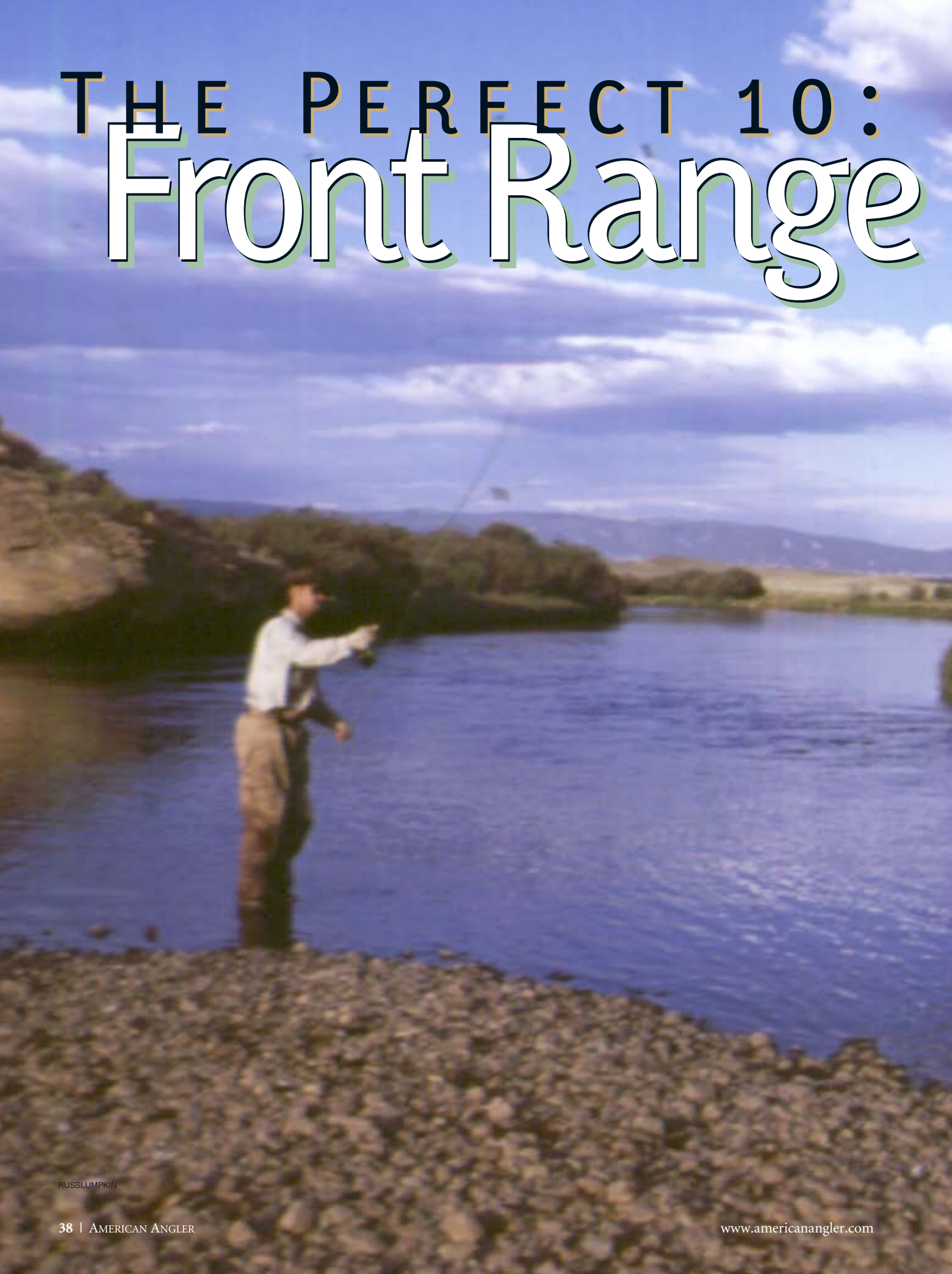


# THE PERFECT 10: Front Range



RUSLUMPKIN

# Favorites

*The eastern slope of the Colorado Rockies is home to a wide variety of trout waters, and these guide-tested patterns will score on all of them.*

BY VINCE WILCOX

Colorado's Front Range—which features many kinds of trout water, from high mountain lakes and streams to freestone rivers and tailwaters—has something to offer every kind of trout bum. The cold, clean Rocky Mountain run off provides lots of oxygen and an abundance of aquatic life, and rivers such as the Big Thompson, Colorado, Cache La Poudre, and the North and South Platte make the region a fly-fishing wonderland.

Coming up with just ten flies to accommodate the extremely diverse conditions found on these waters is no small task. (Although I cheated, and you can find two bonus patterns at [www.americanangler.com](http://www.americanangler.com).) New patterns are being designed at an astounding pace these days, and there are literally dozens of flies that could have been included. But few have gone through my personal battle testing like this collection. Carry each of these patterns in several size-and-color variations, and you'll have success across the Front Range. >>>



## FOAM SALLY

**HOOK:** Mustad C53S, sizes 12 through 16.  
**THREAD:** Yellow, 8/0.  
**EGG SAC:** Red Midge Diamond Braid.  
**UNDERBODY:** Dark brown Midge Diamond Braid.  
**ABDOMEN:** Orange Micro Tubing.  
**UNDERWING:** Medium brown CDC puff.  
**WING:** Wilcox's Wing Foam.  
**ANTENNAE:** Brown Micro Centipede legs.  
**HACKLE:** Grizzly dyed March brown.  
**THORAX:** Light yellow UV Ice Dub.

## LOW RIDER

**HOOK:** Mustad C49S, sizes 14 through 20.  
**THREAD:** To match the abdomen, 8/0.  
**SHUCK:** Brown stone, olive dun, or burnt orange Antron.  
**ABDOMEN:** Gray, olive, or pheasant tail Micro Tube.  
**UNDERWING:** CAPS Pearl Rainbow Thread.  
**WING:** CDC puff, colored to match abdomen.  
**POST:** CAPS Float-Vis, multi-colored strands.  
**THORAX:** UV dun, light olive, or olive brown Ice Dub.  
**HACKLE:** Grizzly or to match abdomen.

## PARA-VARIANT

**HOOK:** Mustad 94840 sizes 12 through 18.  
**THREAD:** Black, 8/0.  
**TAIL:** White kip tail.  
**ABDOMEN:** Pheasant tail Micro Tubing.  
**POST:** Float-Vis, multi-colored strands.  
**HACKLE:** Furnace.  
**THORAX:** Olive brown Ice Dub.

## AC CADDIS

**HOOK:** Mustad C49S, sizes 14 through 20.  
**THREAD:** To match the body color, 8/0.  
**SHUCK:** Midge Diamond Braid, to match the body color.  
**BODY:** Olive, gray, or pheasant tail Micro Tube.  
**WING/POST:** Elk hair.  
**HACKLE:** Grizzly or to match the body color.  
**THORAX:** Olive brown or to match the body color Ice Dub.  
**ANTENNAE:** Two elk hair fibers pulled forward prior to trimming the post.

## VW HOPPER

**HOOK:** Dai-Riki 280, sizes 6 through 12.  
**THREAD:** Orange, 6/0.  
**UNDERBODY:** Orange, tan, or yellow 2 mm foam.  
**HACKLE:** Grizzly dyed brown.  
**BODY:** Red, orange or chartreuse Midge Diamond Braid.  
**OVERBODY AND HEAD:** Brown 2 mm foam.  
**UNDERWING:** Pearl Rainbow Thread.  
**WING:** Elk hair.  
**LEGS:** Medium Centipede legs, to match underbody color.  
**INDICATOR:** Vince Wilcox's Psychedelic Foamicator.  
**HEAD WRAPS:** Rusty brown Ice Dub  
**EYES:** Stick-on 3-D eyes.

# 1 Foam Sally

The Foam Sally imitates the little yellow stoneflies, better known as yellow Sallys, but you can also use this pattern in larger sizes to match Golden Stoneflies, as well. The wing material is easy to see on the water and gives the fly enough buoyancy to stay afloat in the fast water and riffles that stoneflies inhabit. I like to add a size 18 chartreuse Little Green Machine as a dropper, and then work the riffles and pocket water carefully. The Foam Sally works well from mid June until October.

# 2 Low Rider

The Low Rider is a fantastic little Baetis pattern that can be fished as a cripple, emerger, or an adult. By simply matching the size and color of the pattern to the hatch you are fishing, you can effectively imitate a range of Baetis hatches through out the season. I've fished a Low Rider during a caddisfly emergence with outstanding results, too, and since Baetis and caddisfly hatches often overlap, this pattern is a must-have from April to October.

# 3 Para-Variant

The House and Lot Variant was one of President Eisenhower's personal favorites for fishing in Colorado. (The section of Highway 34 running through the town of Loveland and along the Big T is even named after the former President.) This very buoyant and durable parachute version of that venerable classic is my top choice for the high mountain lakes and streams along the Front Range. From July through October, the attractor pattern works well for large fish.

# 4 AC Caddis

The Anything Caddis is named for its ability to truly cover any caddisfly species, as well as any stage of the hatch. When the fly is riding on the surface, the shuck hangs in the water, imitating an emerging caddis or a female returning to lay her eggs. I have also fished this pattern in sizes 18 to 20 and fooled wary trout during Baetis emergences as well. From mid April until run off begins and from post run off well into October, the AC Caddis is a killer.

# VW Hopper

There are few things I enjoy more than watching a trout rise off the bottom of a stream bed to crash a big dry fly on the surface, and judging by the vast numbers of fly fishermen who race around the West trying to find green drake and salmonfly hatches, I'm not alone. When the farmers cut the wheat in North Park along the North Platte or any other river (usually sometime in July) these gigantic morsels are a prime target for feeding trout. But this hopper pattern may also be taken for a stonefly or salmonfly, which are active as early as late April. Try drifting this big boy along the banks early in the season when the snowmelt begins its descent from the high country. Use the VW Hopper as an indicator while you're nymphing, and you'll be surprised by how many fish will skip the subsurface appetizer in favor of big meal on the surface.

# Microstone

Golden Stoneflies are abundant in Front Range waters, and their hatches often coinciding with those of several other species of stoneflies. A Microstone used as the point fly on a double-nymph rig makes an excellent searching pattern. The pattern is particularly effective along the bottom in riffles and in the pools below. Stoneflies are available year round as a food source trout, although they are most active from June through August.

# Superman

There is an added element of fun on the water when your partner yells across the river "What did you get 'em on?" and you get to reply "SUPERMAN!" Created as a mayfly-like attractor pattern, the Superman crosses entomological barriers—working well during caddisfly and stonefly hatches, too—and it's virtually bulletproof. On cloudy days or when the water is off-color as the result of runoff and or a rainstorm, a blue version work best. The pheasant-tail Superman is my favorite pattern for fishing in Rocky Mountain National Park.

# T.N.T.

The T.N.T. represents an emerging caddisfly pupa and is an offspring of Gary LaFontaine's  
*(Text Continued on page 57.)*

## MICROSTONE

**HOOK:** Mustad C53S, sizes 10 through 14.  
**HEAD:** Gunmetal, brass or tungsten.  
**THREAD:** Black or to match the abdomen, 6/0.  
**ANAL GILLS:** Pale yellow CDC.  
**TAIL:** Black micro rubber legs.  
**RIB:** Hot yellow Ultra Wire, brassie size.  
**ABDOMEN:** Pheasant tail Midge Tubing.  
**WING CASE:** Natural mottled Thin Skin, coated with epoxy.  
**LEGS:** Brown Centipede legs, medium.  
**THORAX:** UV Ice Dub, black.  
**COLLAR:** Rusty brown Ice Dub.



## SUPERMAN

**HOOK:** Mustad C49S, sizes 14 through 18.  
**BEAD:** Black or gunmetal-colored brass.  
**THREAD:** Black, 8/0.  
**ABDOMEN:** Blue, copper brown, or olive Ultra Wire.  
**WING/CAPE:** Fuchsia holographic tinsel.  
**WING CASE:** Fuchsia holographic tinsel coated with Knot Sense or epoxy.  
**LEGS/ARMS:** Knotted Micro Tube, color to match abdomen.  
**THORAX:** UV Ice Dub, color to match abdomen.  
**COLLAR:** UV black Ice Dub.



## T.N.T.

**HOOK:** Mustad C49S, sizes 14 through 18.  
**HEAD:** Gunmetal glass, brass, or tungsten.  
**THREAD:** Tan, 8/0.  
**VEIL:** One strand of tan Antron.  
**ABDOMEN:** Olive brown, caddis green, tan, Callibaetis, or orange Ice Dub.  
**WING PADS:** Brownstone Antron.  
**ANTENNAE:** Tan or brown Mini Centipede legs.  
**THORAX:** UV Ice Dub, tan or contrast abdomen.



## LITTLE GREEN MACHINE

**HOOK:** Mustad 3906, sizes 14 through 24.  
**BEAD:** Copper.  
**THREAD:** light gray, black, or olive, 8/0.  
**TAIL:** Pheasant tail fibers.  
**ABDOMEN:** Chartreuse, pheasant tail, or olive Micro Tube.  
**RIB (OPTIONAL):** Small Ultra Wire, to match abdomen.  
**WINGCASE:** Pearl Fire-Fly.  
**GILLS:** White Antron fibers.  
**THORAX:** Olive brown Ice Dub.



## LINT BUG

**HOOK:** Mustad C49S, sizes 14 through 20.  
**HEAD:** Black glass, tungsten, or brass.  
**THREAD:** Black, 8/0.  
**FLASHBACK:** Vince Wilcox's Lint Bug Flashback.  
**RIB:** Brown Ultra Wire, small.  
**ABDOMEN:** Center hare's mask, blended with light olive or tan UV Ice Dub.  
**COLLAR:** Black UV Ice Dub, sparse.



# The Perfect 10

(Text Continued from page 41.)

Sparkle Pupa. Because of the abundance of caddisfly species in Colorado, you should always carry a wide selection of different sizes and colors. The T.N.T. is a great all-around tailwater pattern because it also works as an imitation of scuds and sow bugs. Tie a T.N.T as a dropper below a dry fly and allow it to swing at the end of the drift, drift it along the bottom as part of a double nymph rig.

## Little Green Machine

Originally created to solve a BWO hatch on the Green River in Utah, the LGM is one of my favorite flies to fish for any situation. You can use it to imitate midges and Baetis hatches alike by simply changing colors and sizes. Whether you fish it in tandem with another nymph or drop it below a dry this should be one of your go to flies twelve months out of the year.

## Lint Bug

Several years ago, I was facetiously bragging to a friend that I could tie a fly using just about any material; my friend challenged me, and offered up his pocket lint. I sat down at the vise and tied three or four of these patterns to try out the next day, not anticipating much luck. When we fished these new creations on the Big Thompson, we hammered fish all day long. All I could do was laugh! The fly continued to prove itself year-round wherever we went. The dubbing material has changed since its inception but the results are the same, and this pattern has become a go-to fly for many Front Range guides and anglers. The best time to fish a Lint Bug in sizes 18 to 20 is when midges are prevalent and there are few other hatches going on—from the end of August until the the next spring's runoff.



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For more info, go to  
[americanangler.com](http://americanangler.com)

