

# Willoughby: Virtual fishing guide helps South Platte anglers pick bugs

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When was the last time you spent \$3.99 on a fishing guide? Seriously, and not counting beverages.

While the notion may sound preposterous, that's the going rate for the virtual fly-fishing guide recently released by Ron Hilton that is designed to take the guesswork out of fishing the South Platte River. Hilton's [Virtual FlyBox](#) app appears at first glance to be among the rare instances when digital technology and fly-fishing merge with some genuine benefit.

This clever little [download](#) for iPhones and iPads is designed to help anglers select the right flies to use based upon the location, time of year and time of day. That means the types of bugs a fly-fisherman is most likely to encounter on the water, the stage of their life cycle and the proper size and pattern to effectively imitate them.

Fishing Spinney Mountain Ranch at midday in March? The Virtual FlyBox recommends a brassie (midge pupa) in sizes 20-28, RS2 (emerger) sizes 20-28 or scuds in sizes 12-18, none of which is a bad idea. It then goes on to display a picture of each fly and offer an entomology overview to help anglers decide how to fish it.

Yeah, you're still going to have to untangle your own line and tie your own knots, but for the confused fly-fisherman trying to make some sense out of ever-changing aquatic entomology, simply digging the phone from your pocket may serve as the next best thing to a guide with an actual pulse.

Currently the app only offers suggestions for fishing the various reaches of the South Platte River, but Hilton said other editions are forthcoming. You'll need an iPhone (or iPad), of course, but you won't need to take any calls from the office. Maybe the best feature beyond the bargain price of the Virtual FlyBox is that it doesn't require cell service. It even runs in "airplane" mode.

Check it out at [Thevirtualflybox.com](http://Thevirtualflybox.com) or search the [iTunes App Store](#).

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