

## Paul Eslinger

I was born in Texas and my first memories of fishing extend to dangling worms in the Gulf of Mexico at Corpus Christi but I suspect the fish were safe as I don't remember landing any. As we moved around the world I would see and experience many styles of angling. My angling moved to coarse fishing when we settled into northern Hampshire. Tench were my favourite target species but I enjoyed all of my fishing. One day I walked into a tackle shop and saw my first dry flies, I was hooked. I taught myself to tie flies and built an understanding of my future passion – game fishing.

In the usual fashion I found life hectic and a move to France for business saw me slowly finding my understanding and ability to fly fish catching up with time. In '95 moving back to Hampshire saw me learning and developing my fly fishing. I started perusing fly dressing and became Chairman of the Wessex Branch, the original founding branch, of the Fly Dressers Guild and am a Gold Instructor. I started sharing my growing understanding of fly fishing. I am a Licensed Level 2 Coach in Game Fishing and have been lucky to lead the Angling Trust's Talent Pathway for Game Angling in the South. This saw young people developing the technical, practical and esoteric skills and confidence to compete for places in the under 18 Team England squad. I chair the Angling Trust's South East freshwater forum and have represented the Trust and sat on various other bodies. I believe that we all need to support and help shape the Trust's policy and actions.

It is self-evident to me that the Angling Trust has an agenda which requires far greater input to succeed than the current structure is able to successfully deliver. Anglers have been lucky to have the very professional team at the centre but the team is small. The ability of the Trust to meet the needs of all Anglers requires more resources than the current team will be able to provide. I believe that the Trust is at a crossroads and needs to integrate support from Members, Clubs and groups and bring the experience and commitment of Volunteers into the organisation at all levels to multiply the impact the Trust is able to have in influencing Government, Sport England and other non-governmental agencies such as FIPS. Angling is a grassroots sport, we need young and old from all of our communities involved to ensure the sport prospers and we need to make sure our Trust integrate its aspirations and those of the Members, Clubs and groups into a formidable organisation which wears its passion on its shoulder and carries the will of those Members through to successful, sustainable conclusions.