

The Fly Box by Will Wright

“Wintel’s Western Special”

Hook: 2X-3X Longs, sizes 2-6
Thread: to match colour
Tail: Good hunk of deer hair
Body: Large Black Chenille
Collar: Soft grizzly
Head: Red thread



This month’s pattern comes to you courtesy of avid steelheader **Rick Jones** who every fall spends a lot of time on the Bulkley River fishing for summer runs. He and wife Marg have been going there for years and have become much-respected fixtures on the river.

Legend has it the fly came about as a result of an evening of fly tying over some spirits by three old fishing buds on the Skagit in Washington. Jerry Wintel wanted a simple to tie killer pattern using only three materials and supervised while Bob Arnold was at the vice. The late Jack Vincent would name the result “Wintel’s Western Special” a couple hours and a few drinks later that evening. Rick tells me he has also heard the fly called Wintel’s Western Wizard (WWW for short) and the Spade, but whatever you call it, he will attest to its effectiveness and says it’s the best fly available for summer steelhead, it will out fish all other patterns hands down. “I’ve had steelhead move forty feet to take it”, he says.

Rick has tied the fly with both red and black thread and has found a red head will out produce a black one. He says it’s a very versatile pattern, a few changes or

additions and the result is something very similar to other patterns to use on the aggressive summer steelies. If you add a deer hair wing and a good dry hackle you’ll get a grease liner for some great surface action. Change the tail to that of a pheasant, add a tinsel rib and some more pheasant tail for a wing and the result is the old stalwart Doc. Spratley, a popular pattern on many a steelhead stream.

When asked for advice on fishing strategies and techniques, Rick says “just chuck it out and let it swing into the beach with a floater or a sinker, and hold on!”

TIP:

Phil Rowlely has told me about something he’s been using for such things as coating the bodies of his chironomids, and a couple coats is what I used to get the glossy finish on the head of the fly pictured here. Next time you’re at the local hardware store, look for “Quick Tite Brush on Super Glue” by Loctite. It dries a lot faster than nail polish and is a lot easier to work with than 2-part epoxy. Give it a try!

