

## Chapter 17

**Elk Hair Caddis, Original** (Al Troth)

Hook: 900BL, sizes 10-20

Thread: Tan

Rib: Fine gold wire

Abdomen: Hare's ear dubbing

Hackle: Medium to dark brown, palmered

Wing: Cream or bleached

**Hot Butt® Caddis** (Randall Kaufmann)

Hook: 900BL, sizes 12-18

Thread: Black or to match body

Butt: Fluorescent red Glo-Bug yarn or other color to suit

Rib: Fine gold or copper wire

Abdomen: Peacock herl or dubbing to suit

Hackle: Grizzly, or other color to suit, palmered through body

Underwing: Natural gray CDC tied full and thick

Overwing: Natural gray elk tied sparse

Note: I like a peacock abdomen and fluorescent Antron colors—the brighter the better.



*Underview of Hot Butt® Caddis. The fly should have lots of dense CDC in the wing and very little elk. Spread the CDC wide. This is an important aspect of the fly. Do not treat CDC with floatant. Dry slowly, use a drying agent, or change flies. Good luck!*

## Elk Hair Caddis and Hot Butt® Caddis

Combine the palmered hackle of the Griffith Gnat with the deer hair wing of the X Caddis, and you have an Elk Hair Caddis, which is one of the world's favorite flies. Designed by ace Montana tyer Al Troth, it floats high, is easy to see, and easy to tie. No new techniques, just a combination of those previously practiced that form a terrific fly. We are tying a relatively sparse version for slower water. It is all too easy for beginning tyers to overdress flies, so I stress less is better, and a sparse wing is easier to secure tightly than a heavy wing.

The Hot Butt® Caddis is similar to the Elk Hair Caddis with the addition of a fluorescent butt and a CDC underwing, making it a little more difficult, six-part pattern. I have experimented with fluorescent-colored flies for years, and they often seem to be favored by trout. I rely more and more on bright neon patterns, and many of my favorite Stimulators and other dry flies and nymphs are fluorescent.

Joe Burke, my friend from Jackson, Wyoming, was fishing some of his fluorescent butt nymphs with exceptional results while I went nearly fishless. There was something to those fluorescent tails! It reminded me of the time Dennis Black, of Umpqua Feather Merchants fame, gave me a lesson in New Zealand with flies tied with CDC long before anyone in this country used them. CDC is unique in that individual barbules spiral around the feather stem instead of extending at right angles from the sides, preventing them from clinging or marrying together. This creates space and air pockets, which generate a unique light pattern and water imprint.

I mention this as a brief insight as how various pattern and material ideas from others meld together, helping form new patterns. There are few "new" fly inventions—mostly the reshaping of older ones that incorporate new materials and ideas from others. By combining favorite materials into effective patterns, my fly box always has a "new" appearance, which trout seem to appreciate.

Dense CDC puffs must be used for the Hot Butt® Caddis wing, which should be *thick* and spread *wide*. The elk hair overwing is actually "topping." It helps control the shape and somewhat confines the whimsical CDC puff; it should be *sparse*. Do not treat CDC with floatant because it matts the barbules reducing its floating qualities and uniqueness. Blow it dry, use a drying agent, or tie on a fresh fly. Peacock and fluorescent yellow, orange, green, red, and cerise are some of my favorite colors, but use your imagination.



**Elk Hair Caddis**

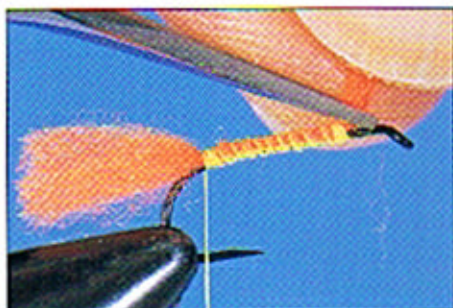
1. Tie in the fine wire rib, construct the abdomen, and tie the palmered hackle in place, dull side facing you, angled off the opposite side of the hook as pictured.



2. Complete the palmered hackle. Bring the rib forward, and trim off the ends of the rib and hackle. By now, these techniques should be second nature—or almost so!



3. Prepare and tie in an elk hair wing (same technique as for the X Caddis), and the Elk Hair Caddis is finished. The trick is to use stiff elk for the wing and to tie it down securely.



**Hot Butt® Caddis**

1. Secure Glo-Bug yarn tail, tapering the end up front and trimming the butt close and even. Then, tie in the fine wire and dub the body, keeping it slender—see next photo.



2. Complete a palmered hackle, which should be easy by now! It should be about 1½ times as wide as the hook gape. Take two turns at the front, then spiral hackle back to tail, secure with wire rib, and finish rib.



3. Pictured is a CDC puff. Note shape and density. Demonstration fly is a size 10, so we need at least two feathers. CDC wing should create the prominent aspect of the fly. See bottom photo on page 66.



4. Pinch CDC with left hand and tie in place. It is standing upright here because of hackle. It will settle, and elk topping helps keep it down. Notice the space left toward eye to complete wing and thread head (see photo 5).



5. Dampen CDC for better control and a clearer view. Trim butt ends as closely as possible. One can only trim materials as close as the scissor blade is thin. Use a thin, fine point, sharp scissors.



6. Select a few elk fibers (about 25 percent of what an Elk Hair caddis would require) for the topping, which helps hold the CDC in place. Even the hair tips in a stacker, which makes a much nicer-looking fly.



7. Measure wing length with hair in right hand. Change hands, pinch in place, and secure. The elk is a "harder" hair than deer, so it is easier to break thread. Make the first turn semi-tight, slowly cinch, then go for it.



8. As you increase thread pressure on hair, it compacts together and compresses against the undersurface of thread. Secure as tightly as possible. Lift butts of hair and finish head and knots underneath and in front of wing.



9. Trim hair butts as pictured in photo 8 and lacquer. Notice proportions. Hackle is 1½ times hook gape. Wing extends to hook bend. Spread CDC until it is very wide.