

## My Favorite Trout Rod — is a Trout Spey!

By Ken Louko

[www.SpringCreekAnglers.com](http://www.SpringCreekAnglers.com)

### What is a Trout Spey Rod?

Basically, a Trout Spey rod is a very light weight (2, 3, or 4 weight) two handed Switch rod. The closest comparative rod would be a single handed Euro Nymphing rod. Typical Trout Spey rods are 11 to 11-1/2 feet in length. However, both rod types are built to different industry standards!

Since there are two industry standards, the lines types supported are not the same. Likewise, casting is not the same. Adding a “second casting hand” requires some additional casting skills to energize the “D” Loop to take full advantage of a Trout Spey rod. The Trout Spey adds two handed casting techniques such as a Snap T, Single Spey, Double Spey, and Snake Roll into your arsenal of available casts. These are the same casts that are used to fish for Steelhead and Salmon with heavier 7 or 8 weight Switch and Spey rods.

A Trout Spey is the baby of the two handed casting world. Learn on a Trout Spey and have the ability to easily migrate to larger rods at a later time as your fishing and species pursuit requires. As with single hand rods, I would not recommend using a lightweight #3 Trout Spey to pursue Stripers in the Chattahoochee River.



### The Myth

Many people think that anything associated with the word “Spey” in the fly fishing world is about long casts and big rivers. That is a marketing myth from years of exposure to that artful vision of what we think a Spey cast looks like. And then think, “why would I ever use a Spey rod for chasing trout? “I don’t fish those ‘Big’ waters”; and, “I don’t need to make long distance casts”.

That got me to thinking... why does it seem that everyone wants to make those long distance casts with a single hand rod when fishing their local stream or river? They are really not necessary to fish most trout waters.

Enter the newest phase of the two handed “Spey” market... the Trout Spey. As it’s name implies, it is geared toward chasing Trout. Trout that live in much smaller streams and rivers than the storied big rivers of British Columbia, Alaska, and Scotland.

### **My favorite Trout Rod**

This is the best trout rod that I have ever owned — and, the most versatile trout rod that I have ever owned:

#### **Redington Hydrogen #3 Trout Spey (11’-3” long)**



I paired the rod with a Redington Rise reel. The reel itself can be any matching reel that supports sufficient line capacity. In some cases, it might be more practical to have two reels. One for fully integrated lines such as a standard single hand fly line (that comes straight from your current single hand rod); and, one for a weighted head set up that includes a running line, weighted head, and a choice of tips (both sinking and floating).

There are many Trout Spey rods on the market in both #3 and #4 weight. They all function in a similar fashion and come at a variety of price points. The Redington Trout Spey rod is one of the more affordable rods in a market that is getting more and more crowded with choices.

To achieve maximum utility of a Trout Spey, it is important to note the additional casts that are possible with this type of stick. Two handed rods have an extension below the reel seat that is “pulled” as your top hand “guides” the rod. Instead of inducing power through speed to load the rod, two handed casters need to slow down and tighten up their casting movements. Aggressive single hand casters often have great difficulty adapting to this slow down movement as the rod loads. Slow-w-w is good!

The ability to anchor your fly and load the rod via an energized “D” loop unlocks the true power of a Trout Spey rod. In single hand casting mode, the Redington Trout Spey is a rocket; however, casting with an energized “D” loop, following the 180 degree rule, will transcend you into

effortless presentation — while also keeping your fly out of trees and shrubs behind you. The single hand caster has to rely on stopping the rod (to induce a bend in the rod) for rod loading. When using two handed casts, you use an energized “D” loop to load the rod.

**Bottomline...** a Trout Spey rod is **really two rods in one**. It is a single hander when you want it to be; and a two hander that can perform all two handed casts including a Double Spey, Snap T, Single Spey, and a Snake Roll. It's the best of both worlds if you fish for Trout.

Line Choices

Other than purchasing the #3 Trout Spey rod itself and (optionally) outfitting it with a slightly larger capacity reel, the **most important part of setting up the rod involves line choices**. Fishing applications drive specific line choices. These, in turn, drive flexibility when it comes to setting up your rod for any given fishing scenario.

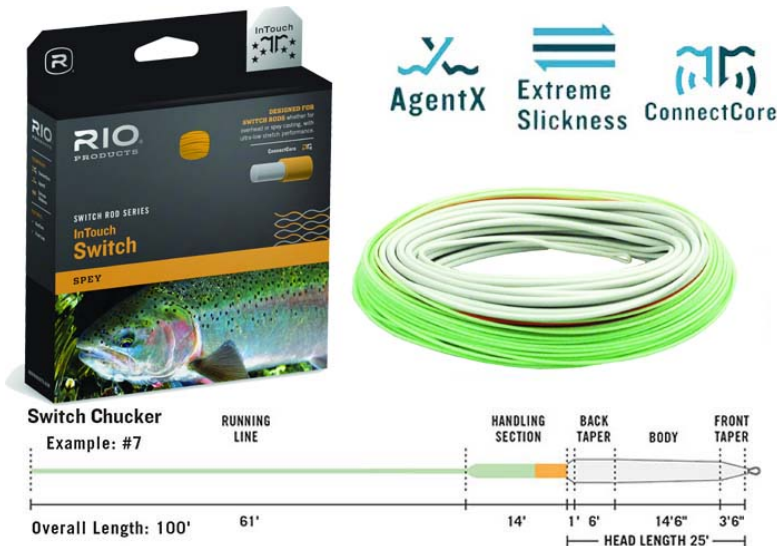
**Dry Fly fishing:** The line of choice for this rod is a standard integrated single hand WF-Floating 6 weight fly line. This line should be sized 3 line sizes higher than the weight of the Trout Spey rod (#3) due to the industry standard differences between single hand rods and two handed rods.

Casting Style...	Overhead	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
	Reach Cast	WF-6F	(Single Handed)

**Nymph fishing:** Use the same weight forward floating fly line that's used for dry fly fishing. This is especially true if you are fishing dry-dropper set ups (including fishing with midge droppers).

Casting Style...	Overhead	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
	Reach Cast	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
	Belgian Cast	WF-6F	(Single Handed)

Another line option for nymph fishing is **Rio's Switch Chucker** integrated line which is designed for nymphing; however, the weight of the line is determined by the carrying grain weight of the Trout Spey rod. Grain weight ranges are printed on the rod itself with modern two handed rods including Trout Spey, Switch rods, and Spey rods.



<b>Casting Style...</b>	Overhead	Switch Chucker	(Single or Two Handed)
	Reach Cast	Switch Chucker	(Single or Two Handed)
	Belgian Cast	Switch Chucker	(Single or Two Handed)
	Double Spey	Switch Chucker	(Two Handed, Waterborne)
	Snap T	Switch Chucker	(Two Handed, Waterborne)
	Snake Roll	Switch Chucker	(Two Handed, Airborne)
	Single Spey	Switch Chucker	(Two Handed, Airborne)

**Hopper fishing:** Again, use the weight forward 6 weight floating fly line. When fishing grasshoppers, the cast is one that drives the fly to the water surface creating a “splat” which imitates the hopper being either blown into the water by wind or just falling off a less that supportive piece of stream side grass.

<b>Casting Style...</b>	Overhead	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
-------------------------	----------	-------	-----------------

**Streamer or Woolly Bugger fishing:** The standard weight forward 6 weight floating integrated fly line (WF-6F) can be used but other line options also exist. Rio’s Switch Chucker line could be used to **strip** flies like Woolly Buggers.

<b>Casting Style...</b>	Overhead	WF-6F	(Single or Two Handed)
	Reach Cast	WF-6F	(Single or Two Handed)
	Belgian Cast	WF-6F	(Single or Two Handed)

Other options for Streamer or Woolly Bugger fishing is to use a different line set up. One uses a **mono running line and an OPST Commando head); plus, a user selectable tip (floating or sinking)**. Another is to use an integrated **OPST Commando Smooth** line. Flies like Intruders can also be **swung** (another presentation style) to trout and Smallmouth Bass.

<b>Casting Style...</b>	Skagit	OPST	Waterborne Anchor Casts... Double Spey & Snap T
	Scandi	SA Spey Lite	Waterborne Anchor Casts... Double Spey & Snap T
		SA Spey Lite	Airborne Anchor Casts... Snake Roll Single Spey

**Wet Fly/Soft Hackle fishing:** Any set up that supports a down and across presentation can be used. This could include a fully integrated line such as a WF-F 6 weight (sized for the #3 Trout Spey rod); an integrated SA Spey Lite Scandi line; an OPST Commando Smooth (Skagit) line; or, a running line; plus, head and tip set up like the OPST Commando Head & Tip system.



<b>Casting Style...</b>	Overhead	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
	Reach Cast	WF-6F	(Single Handed)
	Belgian Cast	WF-6F	(Single Handed)

<b>Casting Style...</b>	Overhead	SA Spey Lite	(Single or Two Handed)
	Scandi	SA Spey Lite	(Two Handed)

Two Handed Airborne and Waterborne Casts:  
 Single Spey or Snake Roll (Airborne Anchor)  
 Double Spey or Snap T (Waterborne Anchor)

<b>Casting Style...</b>	Skagit	OPST Integrated Commando Smooth; or, OPST Commando Head + Tips
-------------------------	--------	---

Two Handed Water Born:  
 Double Spey or Snap T (Waterborne Anchor)



## Recommended Lines

**Rio Gold WF-6F (6 wt) fly line** (Nymphing, Small Buggers, Streamers, Dry Fly, and Dry-Dropper rigs including midges). The rod itself is extremely light in hand allowing all of these applications.

Stream Size...	Any small to medium size stream
----------------	---------------------------------



**Scientific Anglers Integrated Spey Lite Scandi** (Nymphs, Soft Hackles, Streamers and Bugger fishing). This line can be cast overhead as well as perform all water born or air born anchor Two Handed "Spey" casts. The line performs well and the rod itself is light in hand. The line can also be used when fishing extremely windy conditions (15-20 mph) if streamer fishing which I did experience on the Clark Fork in Montana. My fishing partner had to give up using his single hand rod under those conditions while I could cover more water and continue to catch fish stripping and swinging flies.

Stream Size... Any medium size stream or river



**OPST Commando Smooth integrated line matched with either Sinking or Floating Tips** (for throwing bigger, heavier flies as well as smaller flies like swung Soft Hackles). Longer casts can be made with ease due to the matched weight of the Commando head.

Stream Size... Any medium size stream or river



## Line Choice Strategies

**There are lots of set up options dependent upon the particular fishing day.** Usually I will choose just two of the line options per day on the water if fishing a larger stream. I carry an extra reel with me to change out more quickly. However, if only fishing a smaller stream, I will stick with the Rio Gold WF-6F fly line. The Scandi (longer head) and Skagit (heavier head) line set up choices are just too much canon for small and tight trout streams.

**Airflo** also makes some great fly lines and heads so consider them as well. Just stick with the set up guidelines that match your Trout Spey rod and you'll be fine. Going outside of those guidelines, you are headed for trouble where the rod just will not perform for you.

## Casting Skills

I want to emphasis that some additional casting skills are required to take full advantage of the rod. **A Trout Spey rod is NOT just another version of a single hand rod.** Buying all the gear will not automatically make you a better caster or fly angler — but you will look good walking along a stream looking for trout; or, talking with other anglers about your new Trout Spey set up. Learning how to add some “D” loop two handed casts to augment your single hand casts will unlock your full potential. Ultimately, as April Vokey said: “It’s all about the Fishing!”

## Starting Off the Day

So, when I fish with my Trout Spey, I evaluate the day by starting from:

- A. Make the species determination (Trout, Smallmouth, Landlocked Salmon, etc.)
- B. Evaluate the current wind conditions (sometimes the Trout Spey is superior to a single handed rod when it comes to handling the wind). Also, is it blowing upstream or blowing downstream?
- C. Determine the desired fishing style (dry fly, nymphing, swinging soft hackles, streamers, etc.)
- D. Then, I proceed on to my line set up choices dependent upon the type of fishing that I intend to do that particular day. This includes a determination of where I intend to fish in the water column and what action I intend to impart with my flies.
- E. Next, I evaluate my stream approach.
- F. Evaluate my wading risks and lay out a safe strategy. And then...
- G. Choose some flies that I think might work that particular day.
- H. Go fish!

## Fishing Smaller Streams — Non-Trout Spey rod options

You are better off with a standard single hand rod in the appropriate length if fishing extremely small trout streams. However, if you are fishing multiple size stream types in a single day, or trip, carry both types of rods (Single Hand and Trout Spey) for maximum flexibility. Add dynamic “D” Loop casting techniques to your arsenal.

### Spey Casting with a Single Hand Rod...

**Can you Spey cast with Single Hand rod? Absolutely... Even with a WF-Floating fly line!**

Additional line choices that are more dynamic than a WF Floating line are the **Rio Single Hand Spey line (including the new 3D version); and, the new OPST Integrated Commando Smooth line**. These lines brings other casting and fishing choices into the picture for those who already own one, or more, single hand rods — and don't yet own a Trout Spey rod.

**Application...** Fish Buggers, Streamers, Wet Flies/Soft Hackles, and Nymphs. Rio sizes their Single Hand Spey lines precisely to the single hand rod that you are using. So, a 6 weight single hand rod gets a 6 weight Single Hand Spey Line. All Two Handed casting types are supported. OPST sizes the integrated Commando Smooth line to the carrying weight of the rod (for instance, a 9' - 5 weight rod uses a 200gr version).

A **Head and Tip set up choice** lines your single hand rod with an **OPST Commando Head + Floating or Sinking Tips**. Most people prefer to use a mono running line like the OPST Lazer line or Airflo Ridge running line attached to Dacron backing. Up to 10' rods are supported. If you ever wanted to cast big streamers more easily, this line set up will enable you to do so. This is the Head & Tip version of the OPST “all-in-one” integrated Commando Smooth line.

**Application...** Fishing Buggers, Streamers, and Wet Flies/Soft Hackles.

***These single hand rod set up choices are a means to practice your energized “D” Loop casting skills prior to transitioning to a full fledged Trout Spey rod — which just may show up on your Christmas Wish List once you’ve tried one!***