

RiverGirl Fishing Co. celebrates 20 years

RiverGirl Fishing Co., a popular fishing outfitter located beside the South Fork of the New River in the small town of Todd, is celebrating 20 years of guiding anglers, boaters and floaters on journeys that go deeper than just an outdoor experience.

On a RiverGirl adventure, you'll certainly catch some fish or relax as you drift or paddle down the New, but you'll also find a deeper, spiritual component under the surface. The journey is as much about connecting with nature and each other as it is about recreation.

RiverGirl, founded by fisheries biologist Kelly McCoy in 2006, is a full-service fishing and rental shop that occupies a historic train depot in Todd, on the border of Ashe and Watauga counties, where Elk Creek flows into the South Fork of the New. McCoy and co-owner Renata Dos Santos said RiverGirl's goal is to help customers enjoy the river by providing quality education, equipment and guidance. It offers personalized instruction and rentals of boats, tubes and bikes, as well as fishing and eco tours.

RiverGirl's services include:

- **Fly fishing** tailored to customers' needs, including fly fishing lessons, guided fly fishing float trips, guided fly fishing wade trips, fly fishing equipment sales, fly-tying and fly rod-building classes;

- **Boating**, with options including single kayaks, tandem kayaks and canoes; along with paddles and safety equipment;

- **Tubing**, which offers lazy floats on tubes with backrests and cupholders. There are floored tubes for the little ones, and cooler tubes to float with you along your journey to keep hydrated along the way;

- **Biking**, along what once were the railroad tracks of the Virginia Creeper that meandered

the South Fork of the New River. They provide high-quality mountain bikes, helmets and other equipment, and a bike trailer is available for one or two small children; and

- **Eco Tours**, with guides who are experts in the local ecology and wildlife, and are passionate about sharing their knowledge and expertise with visitors.

In addition to fishing experiences in the area's scenic rivers and streams, RiverGirl offers a chance to let stress wash away. This year, they started their "River Reset" trips — small floats on quiet stretches of the river, which McCoy calls a type of "river therapy" for mental health.

RiverGirl isn't just a business — it's also helping the hard-hit Todd area stay afloat economically in the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, and building a support network to help the area recover from future disasters by serving as the coordinating hub for community resources and services. RiverGirl's other charitable efforts include the Mayfly Project, a youth mentoring program for foster children; and participation in the Make-A-Wish Foundation's "Casting Hope: Fish for a Wish" program.

Another unique offering is their "Trade Thursday" initiative, where they offer boat, tube or bike rentals in exchange for items or services. On the second Thursday of each month, you can trade anything from gas cards, used bikes and cases of water to services like carpentry, painting or landscaping.

RiverGirl Fishing Co. is at 4041 Todd Railroad Grade Road in Todd, N.C. It is open daily from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. For more information, call 336-877-3099 or visit rivergirlfishing.com.



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