

BERRY ISLANDS, BAHAMAS · SUMMER 2027

Come home knowing the island, not just the fish.

Soul Fly Lodge, Great Harbour Cay. Students from all over fish beside students from the island, some of whom will be the next Bahamian guides.

2027 PROGRAM WEEK

June 25th to July 1st — High School Boys

$4,050

plus guide tips

8 students, 2 trip leaders. Fly to Nassau, then on to Great Harbour Cay.

Not included: flights, guide tips, and a Global Rescue membership, bought at registration.

At a glance

PHYSICAL EFFORT

Active

A lot of wading on foot, plus hikes, cliff jumping and basketball.

FLY FISHING EXPERIENCE

Every level welcome

Our pick for a first taste of saltwater fly fishing. The guides teach the cast as you go.

WADING OR BOAT

Lots of wading

Much of the fishing is on foot, in water sometimes inches deep.

CULTURE AND LANGUAGE

Moderate

Fishing, cooking and camping beside Bahamian students.

A week on the white sand



Eight students, two trip leaders, one week at the first fly fishing lodge in the Berry Islands. Mornings wading white sand for tailing bonefish, or on the bow looking for permit. Afternoons in the mangroves, under the water after lionfish, or out in town. Evenings with the guides and their families. It's the week we recommend for a first taste of saltwater fly fishing.

A handful of students every year are from the Bahamas. In the first season, 2024, three of the eight came from Great Harbour Cay, and the program was set up with the island's own school, its principal and its teachers.

Every day, on and off the water, works on each student's own skills. A stronger cast, tying flies, building a leader, even poling the skiff: ask, and the guides will teach it.

The last night is the Final Fiesta: a fly fishing skills relay, crab racing and a bonfire with the guides and their families.

"We are always looking for ways to engage the next generation in fly fishing."

Alec Griswold, co-owner, Soul Fly Lodge

Read Soul Fly Lodge's write-up of the first Fish for Change week

The next generation of Bahamian guides

The Bahamas has some of the best flats fishing in the world, and it needs young people to guide it. That's why local students are part of every Bahamas week, and why the visiting students fish, cook and camp beside them rather than being guided by them.



The lodge

Soul Fly Lodge sits on the east side of Great Harbour Cay, in the Berry Islands in the northwest corner of the Bahamas. It's 22 feet above the sea, five minutes from the airport, with a 20 by 30 foot freshwater pool for after a long day, a fly shop in the building and a big dining room where everyone eats together.



Everyone eats together.

The island

Most anglers have never heard of the Berry Islands. The ones who have tend to talk about them quietly, because of the big bonefish and permit over white sand.

Students talk with the guides about what keeps a fishery like this healthy and what threatens it, including the cruise ships that bring the islands both money and pressure.

Off the water there are hikes, a blue hole, cliff jumping, snorkeling around the island and basketball most nights.

> "Fish for Change is working one group at a time to build real relationships within communities."
>
> Joe Klementovich, photographer, on the first Berry Islands week

The fishery

White sand flats, turtle grass and a backcountry that holds some properly big bonefish. The nearest flats are about fifteen minutes away by skiff, and a lot of the fishing is on foot, in water that's sometimes only inches deep.

On foot

Bonefish

Big schools on the white sand, packed tight or spread out so far it feels like hunting singles. Lead them, keep quiet feet, land the fly without spooking the school.

All chain

Permit

From the north end of the Berrys to the southern tip, on the right tides. Challenging, and attainable. Every guide at the lodge is a permit nut.

Bonus

And more

Tarpon, barracuda, triggerfish and mutton snapper, from the bow or wading.



A Goombay Slam: bonefish, mutton snapper and permit in one day. In the first season Wanny, one of the Great Harbour Cay students and a guide in training at the lodge, poled Dre David to one. Dre was a Fish for Change student himself once, and now captains and guides in Bimini.

Bonefish & Tarpon Trust Citizen Science: students acquire data on fish caught throughout the week, so every fish they land helps scientists understand the species.

Any level is welcome. The guides meet each student where they are. Want a stronger cast, or to learn to cast at all? Want to tie flies, build a leader, try poling the boat? Ask. The best preparation is casting practice before you come.

Your trip leaders

Leaders who know the island and the water, plus the Soul Fly guide team.

- **Alec Griswold**Bahamas program director, co-owner, Soul Fly Lodge
  Founder of Elevate Youth in Boston, which gets young people outdoors. He runs the week as a mentor.

Off the water

Ten service hours over the week, signed off for school, and a lot of reasons to care about the flats they've been fishing. It's more than the hands-on work: the conversations that take place after are what awaken something in the students' minds.

Fish data
Taking fish data with Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, so every fish they land helps scientists understand the species.

Coastal clean-ups
Pulling washed-up fishing nets out of the mangroves. Small, hard, useful work they can see finished.

Survivor
After a day of bottom fishing and diving, students split into groups of two on a deserted beach with one simple task: fillet your catch, build a fire and cook a meal. The judges (your trip leaders) grade on taste, aesthetic and creativity. May the games begin!

Curiosity board
Students write 100 questions they have for the island: the people, the history, the fishery. Then they spend an afternoon walking around town, building confidence talking to strangers and sparking curiosity as they answer all their questions.

Guide relays
To wrap up the week, a skills tournament with the guides: everything from knots and casting to tying flies out of ocean trash, fire building and beach races.

Fishing off the town pier

Final Fiesta
The final-day relay, ending with a big beach bonfire and a closing circle.

Mangrove planting
With Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, collecting mangrove propagules to rebuild the nursery grounds that feed the flats. They see where the bonefish they've been chasing start life.

Diving for lionfish
Lionfish are invasive to the Bahamas. Students spend an afternoon bottom fishing and diving, shooting lionfish with pole spears along the way. We enjoy them for dinner, along with conch salad.

Guide dinners
Once in the week, small groups eat with the guides and their families in their homes. The guide from the morning becomes a dad, a neighbor, a cook.

Scavenger hunt
Small groups sent through town to understand the community. It turns curiosity into conversations with strangers.

Basketball
In town, in the evenings.

Bring Your Kid to Work Day
One day each week the guides bring their kids fishing or to the lodge. It's a chance to get to know their families better and inspire a new generation of fly anglers!

Group circle
Next to the sunset or under the shooting stars, we dive into conversations led with vulnerability about our experience and personal growth.



Collecting mangrove propagules for planting.

> "When I first agreed to send Jack off when he was 14, I was really thinking of it more as a fishing opportunity for him than anything else. As a Dad, I feel blessed that your organization has given him the perspective of how other people in the world live."
>
> Rich Millar, Fish for Change dad, three summers in

Getting there and home

Students fly into Nassau, then take a short flight on Lee Air to Great Harbour Cay. A trip leader travels with the group between Nassau and the island and helps with every check-in.

Arrival day

1. Meet the group in Nassau (NAS) **by 2:00 pm**.
2. Book the **4:30 pm** Lee Air flight to Great Harbour Cay (GHC).
3. Five minutes from the airport to the lodge.

Departure day

1. Book the **8:00 am** Lee Air flight to Nassau.
2. Book your flight home from Nassau **any time after 10:00 am**.
3. A trip leader helps everyone check in.

Packing list

Sunscreen and lip balm should be chemical-free and reef-safe.

Essentials

- [ ] Passport, and a copy of it
- [ ] Important numbers: the lodge's direct line and your emergency contact
- [ ] Flight itinerary
- [ ] Cash, about $200
- [ ] Any medication you need
- [ ] Journal, for the evening writing prompts
- [ ] Camera or phone camera
- [ ] Waterproof backpack or boat bag — Fishpond
- [ ] Water bottle — Yeti
- [ ] Toiletries, reef-safe sunblock and lip balm — Stream2Sea
- [ ] Bug repellent — Stream2Sea
- [ ] Snorkel and mask
- [ ] Speaker — Turtlebox

Clothing

- [ ] UPF long pants and shorts — Duck Camp
- [ ] UPF long-sleeve fishing shirts — Duck Camp
- [ ] Swimwear
- [ ] Hat — Duck Camp
- [ ] Lightweight rain gear
- [ ] Buff and sun gloves
- [ ] Comfy clothes for after fishing
- [ ] Socks and underwear
- [ ] Sandals and tennis shoes
- [ ] Wading boots
- [ ] Two pairs of polarized sunglasses

Fishing

- [ ] 8 weight for bonefish — Orvis
- [ ] 9 weight for windy days — Orvis
- [ ] 10 weight for permit and barracuda — Orvis
- [ ] Saltwater reels with backing — Orvis
- [ ] Floating tropical flats or bonefish lines to match the rods — Scientific Anglers
- [ ] Tippet, 12 and 16 lb — Scientific Anglers
- [ ] Bonefish and permit leaders, barracuda leaders — Scientific Anglers
- [ ] Hemostats or pliers, and nippers
- [ ] Fly box
- [ ] Flies: EP Spawning Shrimp #2 to #8, Craven's Bonefish Junk #4 to #8, Mantis Shrimp #4 to #6, Gotcha #2 to #8, Flexo Crab #2 to #4, Strong Arm Merkin #2 to #4, Casa Blanca Crab #2 to #4, a barracuda needlefish fly — EP Flies

Want to support an alum? Ask us and we'll point you to a former student who ties flies for trips.

Brand links go to gear from companies Fish for Change works with. The Stream2Sea link is an affiliate link: Fish for Change earns a small commission when you buy through it.

Scholarships

We never want these programs to be cost-prohibitive. Aid runs from $500 to a full ride and is decided on need and drive.

Sep — Financial aid applications open each September.

A cover letter (500 words minimum), a one-minute video, a letter of recommendation, the questions on the application, and your family's financial information. Allow about two hours. Nothing is shared outside the team.

Feb — Deadline is the last day of February.

Shortlisted candidates do a video interview with Fish for Change.

Mar — Decisions by early March.

Book flights, check your passport, practice your cast.

Questions parents ask

Who leads the week?

Alec Griswold, Bahamas program director and co-owner of Soul Fly Lodge, runs the week as a mentor, with the Soul Fly guide team.

How safe is this?

Every student has a Global Rescue membership for emergency rescue and medical evacuation, bought at registration. Trip leaders are First Aid and CPR certified, and several of our leaders hold Wilderness First Responder certification. Every location has an emergency action plan and an accessible clinic. More on how we keep students safe.

How much fishing experience does my kid need?

Any amount, including none. The guides teach to each student's level all week. Practice the cast before you come and you'll get more out of every shot.

Can I reach them during the week?

There's no wifi at any location, on purpose: disconnect to reconnect. Trip leaders collect phones at their discretion, and they're only for music and photos. You get a message when they arrive, a direct line to staff for updates, and photos on Instagram from that day.

What if my kid has never flown alone?

Most of them haven't. A trip leader travels with the group between Nassau and the island and helps with every check-in. If you'd like a travel companion, we can arrange for a trip leader or another student to fly with yours from the States.

Where do they sleep and eat?

At Soul Fly Lodge, two or three to a room, and everyone eats together in the big dining room.

What if we don't have the right gear?

No problem. Every lodge has backup rods and reels. Terminal tackle is the student's responsibility. If you're short a rod or reel, tell us before the trip and we'll make sure it's there.

Is there a cheaper way to do this?

Aid runs from $500 to a full ride, and students fund their trips in all sorts of ways. Financial aid applications open in September and close the last day of February. Here is the process.

Do they get credit for the service work?

Ten volunteer hours per program. Bring the school's form or email it afterwards and we'll sign it.

What is the drug and alcohol policy?

Zero tolerance. Students sign a form before the program and are sent home at their own cost if they break it.

Is this a good first saltwater week?

It's our pick for a first taste of saltwater fly fishing. The guides teach the cast as you go.

A day in the Bahamas

6:30 am — **Up at 6:30. Music, then the megaphone.**

Breakfast together, every day. We discuss our game plan for the day over pancakes and bacon. Then off to go have the best day ever, yet again!

8:00 am — **Six hours on the water.**

A different boat, guide and partner every morning. That is how you learn to read a flat.

2:00 pm — **Conservation and community time.**

Taking fish data with Bonefish & Tarpon Trust, planting mangroves, coastal clean-ups. Or community time: the curiosity board, a scavenger hunt, guide relays.

6:30 pm — **Dinner with the guides.**

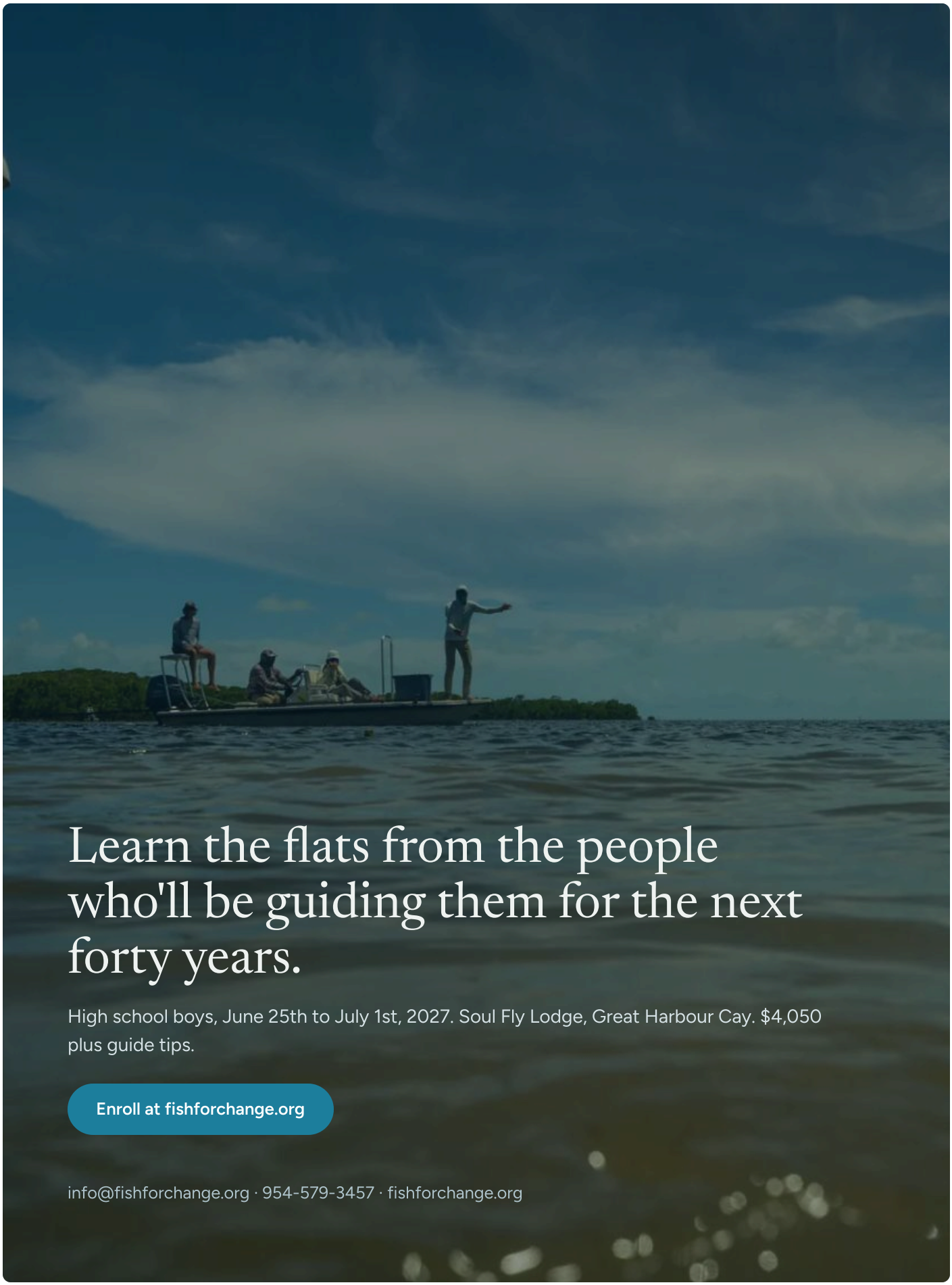
Dinner happens at the lodge most nights, and all the guides join for dinner! Outside of that, we go to dinner in town once, and we have dinner at the guides' homes once.

8:00 pm — **Basketball, or the town pier.**

Evening basketball in town, and fishing off the town pier.

9:00 pm — **Circle and free write.**

One thing you're grateful for, out loud, to people you met this week. Five minutes of writing that runs to fifteen. Kids who won't speak at the start of the week are leading the circle by the end of it.


Learn the flats from the people who'll be guiding them for the next forty years.
High school boys, June 25th to July 1st, 2027. Soul Fly Lodge, Great Harbour Cay. $4,050 plus guide tips.
Enroll at fishforchange.org
info@fishforchange.org · 954-579-3457 · fishforchange.org