

## **Artificial Intelligence (AI) Usage Policy for Robert Traver Award Contest Submissions**

All entries submitted to the 2025 Robert Traver Fly-Fishing Writing Award contest must be the original work of the author. Writing contests celebrate human creativity, insight, and voice with an emphasis on multi-layered storytelling, originality, and emotional resonance. While AI-generated work can mimic these to some extent, the use of AI tools conflicts with the spirit of the contest among a global community of anglers and readers.

Most computer programs and apps for writing, such as MS Word or Grammarly, have AI embedded in their basic functions. While the use of AI tools for spelling, grammar correction, and minor editing assistance is permitted, the core writing—including ideas, narrative voice, style, structure, and word choice—must be entirely the author’s own. By submitting their work, entrants certify that their entry was not generated or substantially composed by AI tools. Failure to adhere to this policy may result in disqualification.

Disqualification of a story is **the sole discretion of the contest judges, based on our reading of the story**. We reserve the right to determine if a story sounds or appears to be AI-generated. If so, it will not advance in the contest. If a story is disqualified, the entry fee will not be refunded.

We recognize that it is entirely possible that an AI-generated, or partially generated/assisted, entry could unwittingly be named a finalist or winner. If at any time the contest administrators or judges determine or learn that an entry violated this policy, the entry will be declared disqualified and any prize or recognition will be forfeited.

### **Ethical and Permissible Use of AI Tools**

AI tools can assist writers in refining sentence structure, using alternative phrasing, or even generating ideas for a story, much like friends, instructors or editors can help while reviewing drafts of a story. In fact, we encourage writers to share drafts of their stories and re-write them based on feedback from readers; this is a normal writing process. However, over-reliance on AI (or other help) may dilute an author’s own voice and style, undermining the spirit of a creative writing contest.

Therefore, we encourage transparency. If, in advance of submitting an entry, the author wants to disclose if and how they used AI tools (or human editors) in their writing process, we will accept questions about whether an entry is permissible and issue a determination. Whether an entry is determined to be acceptable after such disclosure **is the sole discretion of the contest administrators and judges**. When in doubt, please do not submit an entry that could violate the spirit of the Award.

We also recognize that AI technology is evolving rapidly, and what seems like a clear policy today might be outdated next year. Therefore, we reserve the right to amend this AI policy at any time.