

Creel Notes from the



P.O. Box 639, Mercer Island, WA 98040

Website: www.wffc.com



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President's Riffle

For many of us "fin-natics" these winter months can be tough unless you are able to travel or don't mind freezing your toes off chasing steelhead where they used to live. This year I am in the



latter category so when I got a call in late January to join Bob Burdick and potential member Jim Farr for one last day of fishing the Skagit before it closed for the season.

I drug out my gear and started getting ready. I hadn't touched my Spey rig since fishing the Bandon River in County Cork, Ireland in 2015 and as I was inspecting my fly line for problems it dawned on me how similar a modern fly line is to a fishing club like the WFFC. Many parts; from the Albright knot securing the backing to the reel to the nail knot securing the fly line to the backing all the way to the business end of the tippet securing the perfect fly. All must be tied correctly in order for the various bits and pieces to function as one unified and successful whole.

In like manner, our club has some key elements that must be in place for the organization to run smoothly. While many sections of the club fly line look really good this year, some critical bits are still missing (are you still with me?). We are in dire need of a 3rd VP, a Youth Committee Chairman a Club Photographer and a Creel Notes editor for the summer months.

I put out a call for help in this space last month but so far have had no response. While you all still seem enthusiastic to me perhaps you are thinking that because you served as an officer, committee member or board member in the past you really don't need to worry about stepping up anymore. Nothing could be further from the truth. We have become a very small club over the past several years.

From a recent high membership count of 183 in 2007

we have dropped almost 30% to our current total of 136 members. We need to recycle ourselves in order to remain a viable club. The WFFC really needs your help. None of these open positions require attendance at every board meeting, outing or dinner meeting. Even the 3rd VP (Holiday Party) already has a complete project plan and experienced members waiting for the call from the Chairperson to join the committee. Please consider helping out.

We have a really dynamic team this year and I find great satisfaction working with these folks. Call me if you think you might be able to help. So now that we know what we need to do to sort out the club fly line, what are we going to do about our membership? Like having fish in the river...ok, ok, I'll stop with the tortuous analogies.

We do have good news here however. The new club website is consistently generating very qualified applicants and our 1st VP for membership is contacting all of them as well as others to join us on outings or at a dinner meeting. The Board has set a new member goal of 20 for this year and next. We feel this is a very doable number and have several promotional programs in mind that we hope to role out soon. The biggest impediment to bringing in

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New Members Jerry and Deb

Meet New Member Jerry Kindinger!

I took up fly-fishing about 20 years ago on a sporadic basis. I love the “zen” of this sport and am eager to learn as much as I can about the bugs, the fish and the entire infrastructure that supports and sustains them. I look forward to increasing my time on the water now that I no longer am working full time. The Dinner Meeting on Tuesday the 18th, will be an exciting step on my new fishing adventures.

Meet New Member Debora Katz!

Like a lot of people, the whole ‘fish thing’ probably started for me when I was very young because my father was a self-proclaimed ‘mighty fisherman.’ He never took me fishing, that I recall, but it was a big part of his personality and my early life.

Fast forward to my college years when I spent hours upon hours (and more hours since then!) courting a fine gentleman by sitting on the softest rock that I could find and watching him fish.

As I look ahead to retiring someday from my full time job as a dietitian, I hope to spend many more days on rivers and streams with that same fine gentleman. In the meantime, attending

the casting class and the fly tying class have given me some great baseline knowledge into this ‘mystical craft.’ I’m a ‘baby beginner’ at all of this but eager to learn. The WFFC folks that I’ve met have been so helpful and welcoming and PATIENT. Thank you for the hard work that you all do.

Dry Falls outing next Weekend.

April 15-16 the club returns to business at Dry Falls. Members usually camp at Sun Lakes State Park, with the big RVs taking sites up the hill and those with wanderlust and less affinity for asphalt taking sites tucked into the hillside.

Expect competition in the dwindling waters of Dry Falls. Despite record rain, the southern section of the lake is choked. The north put-in is wide and solid with easy access in all sorts of crafts including float tubes.

I fished Dry Falls last weekend and found some good action trolling in deep water with a sink tip. Fish were 20” plus.

Those anchored and fishing chromids seemed to be catching more fish. I even saw a little dry fly action around 4 PM.



Callahan, Ballard & Brening (r to l) show why we enjoy meetings

Creel Notes

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Pete Crumbaker '16 Ron Little '16
Hugh Clark '17 Robert Birkner '17,

Club officers and chairmen can be contacted by logging in the WFFC website in the roster area.

Dear Members,

The Bendzaks still have the week of June 11 to 18 open at Hi-Hium for cabins Eagle Bay #1 & #2. That is the time window our group was there last year. Each cabin can accommodate a group of 6 or 5 people respectively on the main floor.

For those of you who are new to this experience – you as a group must bring your own food,

Missy can be reached via the following ways: PO Box 8 Savona, BC VOK 210 Canada Or (250) 373-2636, -- or -- mbendzak@hotmail.com

On the Fly

The Meeting in Reel Time

by David Ehrich

Our March meeting started with the usual pounding of gavel and the ruckus of knives and forks as unlucky members and guests fought a rather tough chicken dish – unnamed as a courtesy to the bird. With a good crowd they must have run out of the A-list dishes. But don't worry, one can always hope for the cookie plate.

Rich Gaspar introduced five perspective members Phil White, Jerry and Marcia Kindinger, Chris Stiemert, Deborah Kate and Sam Riggins as well as one guest. Then we voted to give the board a blank check to redesign the prospective membership process. We were led to believe that they would simplify the process. The proposal passed by voice vote with one vote in the negative. [See page ??????]

Fishing reports moved into high gear with a trip to Florida that netted only a Skunk hat for Jim Goedhart. Rich and Bob Young did better on the South Sound. Native nets blocked



Rocco, but there weren't enough skunk hats to go around. Bob, "World's Greatest Fly Tyler" Burdick introduced our speaker, Joseph Bogaard, executive director of Saving Our Wild Salmon (SOS), to speak on solutions to declining Steelhead and Salmon returns in the Columbia basin. Bob's introduction turned into a speech of his own and I wasn't sure Joe would have anything left to talk about, but he gave it a good try.

Joseph brought an immediate cloud over the room with news that the Washington House and Senate are currently moving a bill out of committee to permanently block the discussion of dam removal all together. And the zeitgeist out of Washington DC is not encouraging.

Yet Bogaard is optimistic. Salmon are iconic in the Northwest. The economics favor salmon. And the tribal authority is a strong trump card, pun intended. The upstream waters of the Snake River could open back up unprecedented acres of habitat. At 2% of former numbers, dams, the warmer waters they produce, and their vast hydrology that impedes salmon are the principle drivers of decline. The 20th c. promise that hatcheries could fill the gap did not come true.

The situation today proves what SOS said decades ago - dam removal is the best way to protect salmon. The ESA has stepped in and required mitigation, yet many years of research, much taxpayer money, and many hopes and dreams have created five plans, each rejected.

Good news. The upstream habitat is well protected, unpopulated, and vast. Also to our favor, the tonnage of Snake River freight has gone from 6700 tons in 2000 to 2716 in 2011. Expanded rail, as predicted, has driven decline. So the only market force purportedly justifying the dams is limited, aging and soon to be outdated hydro plants. Market forces, according to Bogaard, favor salmon.

Legally, local judges have squeezed

the Feds. Patience in the EPA to put a legitimate solution in play wears thin on both sides of the bar. Judges and advocates for salmon both insist on more action, more transparency, and timely action. "Timely" is in the eye of the beholder and each new judgment pushes back the study-proposal-solution cycle five years at a time. Yet, Bogaard believes, as Sam Cooke once sang, "A change is gonna come." Even the city of Lewiston started to imagine in the Environmental Impact Process what the city might need to mitigate dam removal.

The economics break down into predictions of costs of removal, loss incurred and expected economic gains. All require speculation, deep digging and some faith. But intelligent people have gone on record with figures such as this: removal would cost ratepayers \$1 a month. What gains are well imagined by anglers who spare no expense to catch (and often release) a trophy salmon.

Beyond that simple equation, I'll admit, the argument got esoteric and pretty speculative. But hey, "Voodoo Economics" is back in style. Who knows? Restored salmon runs and wild free-flowing rivers might feed and clothe way more folks than hauling barges of chips, generating power, and allowing still water activities. Imagine a wild Snake cutting through the Palouse as opposed to hundreds of miles of still water abutting wheat lands. Imagine salmon instead of carp or bass, imagine a river-rafting trip instead of watching barges waddle by. Imagine.

Q&A showed active interest among the members. Nothing Joseph said however made me feel much better. Doug Schaad tried to finish off all remaining hope by invoking the name of Lonesome Larry, the last wild Sockeye. Yet hope remained in our speaker's tone.

Key word: resilience! Plus, he doesn't have a job if he gives up!

Club Aims and Purposes

The purpose of this club shall be:

1. To improve and increase the sport of Fly Fishing in the State of Washington.
2. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
3. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout, steelhead, and salmon in state waters.
4. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
5. To encourage and assist others — particularly young persons of high school age—to become fly fishers and true conservationists.

Coastal Oregon Steelhead

by Scott Hagen

Years ago, when there were wild steelhead in the Skagit and Salk rivers, and you could fish for them in March and April, I used to take a few trips up there each Spring. There weren't a lot of fish, but they were big and strong, bright and wild. Since I can't fish there anymore and I am not willing to participate in the zoo that the rivers on the Olympic Peninsula have turned into the last few years, I have been fishing the North Oregon coastal rivers, the Wilson, the Trask, the Nehalem, the Nestucca, and the Kilchis.

I usually take my camper and stay at the "Big Spruce" campground, north of Tillamook. On my way there, on the afternoon of March 12th, I could look down on the Trask River and see that it was totally blown out due to heavy rains the last few days. After getting the camper set up, I met my fishing partner, Mike Stevenson, guide Chris O'Donnell and his wife Cairn for drinks and dinner. Chris told us that everything was blown out except the Kilchus, but it would be fishable.

Chris picked us up at o'dark thirty and we set off for the Kilchis in the rain, arriving just after it

got light enough to see. We did a half mile walk through a faint trail and then skidded down a muddy bank to the river at a lovely pool, big enough to split up. We spent a couple hours there, both of us going through the pool twice. It really looked fishy, but nobody was willing to come up and play. We spent the next two days walking into spots along the river, fishing some good looking water, and never got a touch. In the afternoon of day two, the rain changed from regular rain to a downpour and the Kilchus started to rise and get dirty. The next morning, Wednesday, Chris called and said the river was totally blown and there was no sense trying to fish, so Mike and I packed up, had a big breakfast, and headed home. It took two days to get my clothes and gear dried out!

The next Sunday, March 19th, I drove to Oregon City, just south of Portland, and followed the directions to the "Clackamas River Lodge". It turned out to be a brand new two story, five bedroom house, right on the river, and very nice-

ly furnished. There I met the two guides, Barrett and Mike, the chef Mark, and the three other guests, Gordon, David, and Tony. At 76, I am used to being the oldest, but not this trip. Tony is 87 and in better shape than me!! The river was one to two feet higher than optimal, with knee deep visibility, but fishable. We used jet boats to run up and down the river and swung through as nice of runs as I've seen anywhere. I would love to fish this river again when water levels were optimal. Nobody touched a fish on day one, but the great meals and good company made up for it. Day two, David hooked a fish and had it on for a few seconds, long enough to see it jump and know it was a steelhead. Day three, fishing just above the lodge, David hooked and landed a wild hen. It fought well but was pretty chewed up by a sea lion. Later that afternoon, fishing just below the lodge, I hooked a steelhead out in mid swing. Terrific fight, several jumps and runs, long enough for guide Mike to run up to the boat and get his landing device, called a cradle. It's two three foot long sticks with a piece of netting fastened between them. Anyway, we landed a "teener" wild hen. She had one scar on her belly from a sea lion. The next day we saw a sea lion about a mile below the lodge. This is all the way up the Columbia to Portland, up the Willamette several miles and then up the Clackamas for several miles!! That explains the bite marks.

We quit a couple hours early on Thursday so I could drive home in the daylight. This was a great trip. The guides were very good, the food and its presentation were right up there with the best, the water was very nice to fish, and I even landed one. I will do this one again.



Scott Hagen holds a trophy on the Clakamas River in.

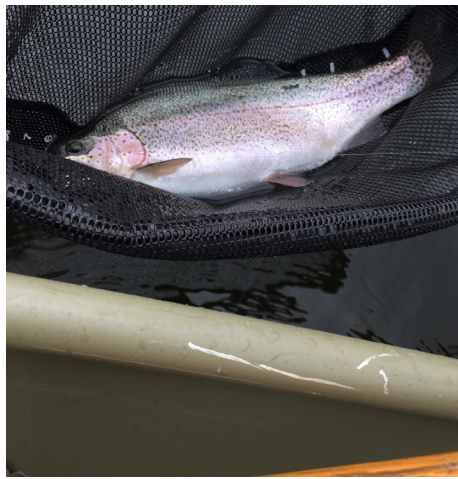
Fishing Reports

Lake Nahwatzel Fishing Report by Jim Young

The rain came. Then hail clattered like BBs in the bottom of the boat. This did not stop the excellent fishing outing coordinated by Dave Schorsch. A sinking line and a dark leach pattern, either trolled or cast, was all it took to land several very large trout. The hardware trollers in their big boats started to take notice with all the bent fly rods along the shoreline.

Pass Lake, 3-28-17 by Doug Mollet

I spent a cloudy, cold and a bit windy Tuesday on Pass lake last month. This was my first outing on the lake. Using chironomids and streamers I was unable to bring a fish to the boat. Most of my limited action was on the streamer. It appeared from the other 4 or 5 anglers on the lake that I wasn't the only one having a slow day. I was told the best fishing was in the area near the road where I did see a couple catches however I couldn't convince myself to fish next to a main highway. Pass lake is probably not a good choice if your wanting quiet with jet airplanes, cars and trucks. I did enjoy watching the eagles.



Jim Young nets a nice 'Bow

Quail Lake, 4-6-17

I arrived at Quail lake last Thursday about 8:30 AM from my Othello hotel. Hauling a pontoon boat on the ½ mile dirt road/trail, crossing over two cattle gates is quite a test. The lake was fairly calm and quiet except for the birds. My first fish came on a black and silver mini leach pattern, a very nice brown. The next catch was a dark rainbow taken while striping in towards shore. My third and final fish, a nicer looking rainbow was caught on a small olive scud. The smallest of the three fish was 17". I was the only one on Quail lake that day, well worth the extra effort. Having a companion on this trip would be helpful for getting the boats in and out.



Quail Lake hold big trout who like little scuds.

Member Notification

Due to the current urgent need to increase WFFC Membership and in support of the Boards goal of 20 new members this year, the following motion to amend the bylaws was adopted at the WFFC Board Meeting on April 4, 2017.

Article II, Section 5 of the Amended and Restated Bylaws of the Washington Fly Fishing Club is deleted in its entirety.

The intent of this amendment is to prevent an arbitrarily low number of New Members to be admitted to the club in any one month.

This amendment will be voted on by the membership at the May 2017 Dinner Meeting.

President's Riffle ***continued***

new folks is our extremely lengthy vetting process. I'll need your help and support to suspend some of these procedures for awhile in order to get our numbers back where they belong. Hope you will support if these plans end up requiring a membership vote.

More good news. We concluded the budgeting process at the last board meeting and all is in great shape. The budget will be presented for your approval at the February Dinner Meeting. Should be a great evening as Bill Neal will be presenting the balance of our WFFC Awards followed by Molly Semenik and her talk on 25 Best Off the Beaten Path Montana Fly Fishing Streams.

Spring is just around the corner and I cant wait to see what Outdoor Chairman Dave Schorsch has up his sleeve for our March 25 outing. Wherever it is I'm going and I'm taking a friend!

Tight

Lines, John
Gravendyk



Foundation Update

This is meant to bring the membership of the WFFC up to date concerning what is happening with the Foundation.

The membership of the Foundation Board has changed in that three members had gotten off the board. These are Greg Crumbaker, Dave Ehrich, and John Schuitemaker. Three members have agreed to join the board, Stephanie Hagen, Doug Mollet, and Mike Wearne. Those club members who remain on the board include Gary Bergquist, Hugh Clark and Doug Schaad.

The function and activities of the WFFC Foundation will be discussed in a future article in the Creel Notes. You can expect this in the May or June issue. This will detail where the Foundation is spending money and what activities are expecting for the remainder of the year. Prior to the December issue of the Creel Notes there will be a complete report of the activities for the year with information about the distribution of funds for various activities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact any of the Foundation board members or myself.

Thanks

Mike Wearne



Brening again leads the party with Rich Gaspar and Jim McRoberts

Dear Director Packard and Director Kemmerly:

Those organizations noted below convey a letter to you stating our concerns regarding your recently released recommendation that wild Olympic Peninsula steelhead are a \"Good Alternative\" choice for seafood for the SeaFood Watch Program.

Collectively, we expect that this recommendation will be suspended immediately so that a more contemporaneous and fact-based analysis may be conducted on these populations of wild fish.

Sincerely,
David A. Moskowitz, Executive Director, The Conservation Angler on behalf of:

Pete Soverel, President, The Conservation Angler



Speaking of foundations, Paul Messner and Tom Campbell join Gil Nyerges

Rich Simms, Wild Steelhead Coalition Board of Directors

Al Senyohl, President, Steelhead Trout Club

Mark Sherwood, Executive Director, Native Fish Society

Kurt Beardslee, Executive Director, Wild Fish Conservancy

John Gravendyk, President, Washington Flyfishing Club

NEPA calls for dam removal

TO: The FCRPS Agencies

Subject: NEPA Scoping Comments

A suit by the Idaho Department of Fish and Wildlife and others against the National Marine Fisheries Service in the early 1990's was based on failure of NMFS' Columbia River Hydro System recovery plan to meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act. In March 1994, Federal District Judge Robert Marsh ruled for the plaintiffs, writing in part "the process is seriously, 'significantly' flawed because it is too heavily geared towards a status quo that has allowed all forms of river activity to proceed in a deficit situation—that is relatively small steps, minor improvements and adjustments -- when the situation literally cries out for a major overhaul. Instead of looking for what can be done to protect the species from jeopardy, NMFS and the action agencies have narrowly focused their attention on what the establishment is capable of handling with minimal disruption."

So here we are 23 years later, after seemingly an endless string of law suits by fish advocates, with the plaintiffs invariably winning the suit and the federal agencies doing little or nothing to strengthen the plan until the next suit, and we're still waiting for that major overhaul.

Today we see the financial justification for the four lower Snake River dams dissolving largely into pork. With
Continued on next page

about 4% of the Northwest's power provided by these dams, the recent rapid growth of electricity provided by renewable sources, primarily wind, has grown to about double the four dams' output. River born freight in the Lewiston/Clarkston to Pasco corridor has declined steadily for the last 20 years. Only one of the four reservoirs provides irrigation for agriculture, and this can be provided without dams simply by extending the water pipes to elevation below river grade. These run-of-the-river dams contribute nothing to flood control. For recreational use, the undammed river beats the reservoirs hands down. That's why so much of the fishing and boating communities are on the side of taking the dams down. And as the years go by on this aging hydro system, the maintenance costs on generators, locks, sediment removal, and so on can only increase.

In 1996, a three-year effort by 15 outstanding scientists brought together by the National Research Council resulted in publication of UPSTREAM, Salmon and Society in the Pacific Northwest. It is still regarded as an excellent reference on the problems causing on the decline of salmon. The report stayed almost entirely on the science, but did touch on BPA's score keeping for the costs used by the Columbia systems federal agencies....Some things never seem to change. Power generation still ranks first in priority and the fish last.

...It is way past time to address mainstream Snake passage, both upstream and down. The NEPA process must put dam removal on the table and address it seriously with an honest financial case and the most recent science. For the salmon and steelhead runs to reach the target 2% to 6% smolt to adult returns, the dams need to come down.

One more thing; the "open houses" held instead of serious meetings with public testimony were obvious travesties designed to minimize their effect. ...There needs to be serious formal public testimony.

Bill Redman
 wrredman@comcast.net

Puget Sound Fly Fishing Fair

Puget Sound Fly Fishers is celebrating its 60 years in South Puget Sound by hosting a fly fishing fair July 29, 2017 at Pierce County's Environmental Services Building in Chambers Creek Regional Park. The facility has a spectacular view overlooking Puget Sound with the Olympic Mountains in the background.

Our objective is two fold; to introduce non-anglers to the sport of fly fishing, and to enhance the skills and knowledge of current fly anglers. Of particular interest to us is providing particular programs, activities and demonstrations to women, children and families so they can see a way to get engaged in the sport.

There are 13 presentations scheduled including techniques for catching tiger muskie presented by Mike Sturza, topwater tactics with Leland Miyawaki, open water cutthroat skills by Bob Triggs, introduction to fly fishing with Rueben Lamphere, fly fishing photography brought to you by Carol Ann Morris, BC steelhead with April Vokey, panfishing for everyone with WDFW's Bruce Bolding, tuna on the fly with Anil Srivistava, stillwater tactics with Skip Morris, smallmouth fly fishing featuring David Paul Williams, new and exciting information about

Coastal Cutthroat Trout thanks to WDFW's James Losee, and kayak fishing in Puget Sound.

Topics are designed to cover all interest and skill levels from fresh brand-new beginner to the seasoned angler. One of the most rewarding elements of fly fishing is that you can always add to your skill set and your reset your game.

Ask yourself if there is a species you haven't chased, a technique you need help with, a style of fly fishing you haven't tried yet. Be sure to save July 29, 2017 on your calendar to attend our celebratory event.

Like other fairs we will be providing demonstrations, seminars,

kids activities, hands-on practice sessions, industry reps, a silent auction, fly tying demonstrations, casting tips and techniques, and resource personnel from both WDFW and USFWS. As a special bonus we will be holding a swap meet where anyone can bring used gear to buy/sell/swap which could be a great way for new anglers to get into the sport without a huge outlay of cash. We will also be providing a selection of personal watercraft so visitors can see the options available to get out on the water - both fresh and salt.

Put us on the calendar for July 29, 2017, we hope to see you there.





Washington Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 639
Mercer Island, WA 98040

April 2017

Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. E.

This month's program is on April 18. The Wet Fly hour begins at 5:30 PM and dinner is served at 6:45 PM.

This month: Our speaker this month is someone special and I'm really pleased that we've been able to talk him into coming to the WFFC to present "Sustaining Food From the Sea with an emphasis on salmon and Steelhead on the West Coast".

Ray Hilborn has been a professor in the University of Washington's School of Aquatic and Fishery Sciences for 30 years. Over his career, he has studied the global status of marine fisheries, the impact of bottom trawling on the sea floor, and the impact of harvesting "forage fish" on their predators.

Professor Hilborn also coordinates teams of faculty and student researchers studying salmon at UW research posts in Bristol Bay, Alaska. He has co-authored more than 300 scientific papers as well as several books, including "Overfishing: What Everyone Needs to Know," "Quantitative Fisheries Stock Assessment" and "The Ecological Detective: Confronting Models with Data."