

Creel Notes from the



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



What I Will Always Remember

The following are several of my WFFC memories that will last forever.

1. Once, at the Cloud Room, **Gordy Young** came over to speak to me. I was a new member and he specifically wanted to talk to me! I was pleasantly shocked and will never forget how kind and thoughtful he was to me.
2. I remember when **Kris** assumed the presidency of the club and wore the stove pipe hat.
3. I remember watching **Ron Mazurek** at Dry Falls Lake, standing in his canoe, wearing a cowboy hat and looking, for all the world, like the Marlboro Man. He was casting as well as I have seen anyone cast. I remember listening to the sound of his casts. The sound of the casts was as magnificent as the loops.
4. I will always remember my interview for club membership with **Greg Crumbaker**.
5. I remember the sense of hospitality by club members at my first and subsequent outings to Dry Falls and Lake Chopaka.
6. I remember the resonant voice of **Walt Walkinshaw** when he called about some issue or suggestion.
7. I remember going to the old Elliott Bay Bookstore with a buddy to hear **Steve Raymond** give a reading. The room was filled with groups of readers who were readers and fishing buddies.

Mike

December, 2012

They were there to share the experience of listening to Steve read from a new book.

8. I remember speaking with **Hu Riley** at a club meeting. I was a year from even being born on D-Day.
9. I have several memories of watching **Per** and Gary tie flies. The thoughtfulness and patience on the part of Per is inspirational.
10. I receive the board meeting minutes the next morning from **Ron Tschetter**. Frankly I think I receive the minutes before I get home!

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2013 Dues by 1st VP for membership, John Gravendyk

The idea of a possible dues increase for 2013 was taken up at the most recent WFFC Board Meeting. After a lively discussion—including a look at our current financial situation—it was decided that there would be no dues increase for the coming year! As the collector of said dues, I have advertized to the Board that this decision will be welcomed by the membership and make dues collection very much easier in 2013. Please signal your support of this decision by paying your dues as soon as they are due (January 1st) either by sending them in via snail mail (see the “Dues Notice” registration elsewhere in this month’s Creel Notes) or on line via Pay Pal after January 1, 2013. A new feature this year is the ability to make a contribution to the club over and above your membership dues for the “good of the order”. Thanks gentlemen!

Fly Tying Classes Starting by Jim Higgins

Only a few shopping days left until Christmas. Our fly tying class would make a great gift for that special someone. The class starts on Thursday January 3, 2013, and goes for eight Thursdays. It will be held at 6:30 pm at Mercer Island Covenant Church located at 3200 78th Ave SE on Mercer Island. Our gifted instructors start with the basics and lead you through some of the more advanced tying steps by teaching you to tie 15 different patterns, “the ones that catch fish”. This would be a great time to restock the fly boxes and learn to tie a new pattern or two. I am sure you know someone who would benefit from this class: kids, grandkids, or **Bob Burdick?** Only \$50 to register. For more information, call **Jim Higgins** at 253-350-5085.



Creel Notes

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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.

On the Fly by David Ehrich

Mike Wearne opened the meeting with a hale and hearty hello met by rousing applause, the introduction of a few guests, and a “come-and-get-it” for the wreath sale and holiday party. The good time was shattered with **Jim van de Erve**’s imminent retirement from his long-standing and outstanding job as editor for our Creel Notes. He’s looking for the right person who combines an interest in angling and writing to step up to the plate.

Fishing reports started with some positive numbers and good times from Joemma SP and the WET-BUNS outing. A late report took us back to Alaska in the summer for limits on salmon, then back to real-time skunks on the John Day river, and twilight fishing at Texas Ponds. **Greg Crumbaker** arrived with a salvaged pair of **Mike Wearne**’s waders and a positive report of a Casting for Recovery fishing trip.

From there, Greg segued into the nomination slate for next year. Many of this year’s board agreed to serve again, speaking well of the good mood enjoyed at this year’s meetings. New folks stepped up and veterans returned. As things work around here, announcing the slate is the same at electing the slate. For the list, see the January Creel Notes.

Bob “Number One in the hearts of his countrymen” **Burdick** introduced Kurt Beardslee to explain “A Strategy to Restore the Legendary Elwha Chinook.” After several disclaimers, he did own up to being co-founder of the Wild Fish Conservancy. Kurt gave us a view of the Elwha past: fish the size of a man, 100 pounds raised over many seasons in cold water with big rivers to fight up. With the destruction of the damn dam, anglers the world over look forward to the return on these storied salmon. But as Kurt informed us, sadly, not exactly.

The Elwha is a test cast, costing \$25 million so far, with the world watching. We have no choice but to get right. The Elwha has all the elements available: no dams, lots of habitat, and no hatcheries. But removing the dam does not necessarily promise the return of giant fish because getting rid of the dam does not get rid of the harvests.

After establishing his hook, Kurt retreated to the long history of salmon destruction, sadly well known to all members of this club. What’s consistent in this saga is hatcheries: hatcheries to mitigate for the dams, hatcheries to mitigate the destruction

of the dams. News flash: they didn’t work in 1900, they won’t work in 2012. Science has never supported hatcheries.

Back to the Elwha. The tribes have insisted, despite all evidence to the contrary, on the introduction of hatchery fish of all sorts to the river. This appears to be a harvest-only effort, aimed at supporting native fishing rather than native fish. The Conservancy had hoped this restoration effort would use the National Park excuse to create some leverage with the tribes, given that this dam removal opens up mostly public lands. But science seems to fall on deaf ears to Tribal fish management. He could not explain the reason the Tribes have taken the upper hand, because everything happened behind close doors, science be damned.

Take the post-Mt. St. Helens example of the Toutle river. After a cataclysmic event without equal, the lower river fish came back with a vengeance. Since no one was managing the river, the fish came back. Thus, the more management, the less fish. The silting of the Elwha has had much less impact than the silting of the volcanic eruption. The lower Elwha fish survived and, he believes, are ready to thrive.

But if you are starting to have hope, hold off. Our speaker added insult to injury by delivering a litany of well-known bad news: overfishing the smaller fish who make it past the nets and dig smaller redds and lay smaller eggs and do so in warmer water. If you want more bad news, read on. Now we have southern orcas heading north to fish smaller, more defenseless fish. Data, too numerous to record, ensued. End of story: management policy has to look at the science of the fish. The conservancy’s ideas for recovery are:

- Healthy habitat means healthy fish.
- Reductions in catch across the board
- Hatchery reform
- End the mixed stock ocean fishery and get back to selective gear.
- Fish closer to the natal rivers, letting the fish get big, return, and then the winners will get to the prize insuring big eggs in deep redds.

So, as you might have guessed, if you had hoped the dam removal on the Elwha would magically

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bring back giant salmon, you need to stop smoking the legal stuff. It's more complicated than that.

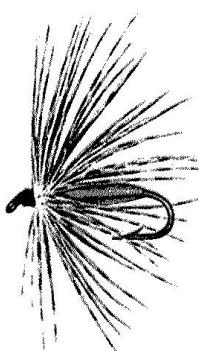
Well, we can't all resign from fishing just because a little bad news, so members banded together and nominated **Charlie Davis** to membership. Recommendations were glowing and the vote followed suit. While chads were hung, the **Hawk** put together his last raffle (since no one has stepped up to replace the chief of giveaways).

That was my cue, time to head home.

Bruce Staples by Bob Burdick, Program VP

Bruce Staples, the Idaho Falls writer, tyer, and fly fisherman who spoke to us at our October meeting has agreed to return next August to give us a presentation on fly fishing opportunities in Yellowstone Park.

In the meantime he writes: "August 20th it is, Bob! Pass on to WFFC members that at least bi-monthly through the winter, I will write features on Jimmy's web site (jimmysflyshop.com) on high-quality waters some folks may want to visit in the Greater Yellowstone Area. These features will give info on location, suggested flies and equipment, hatches, hosted trout, fishing strategy, etc. Purpose is to provide info for planning visits to the area."



Crooked Island 2112 by Gene Gudger

For some years now, my wife Marcia, another couple, and I have made an annual pilgrimage in search of our favorite combination of warm weather and bonefish. Trips have typically been to lodges at areas such as Ascension Bay, Los Roques, Belize, and for the last decade, to the waters of the Bahamas, including Deep Water Cay, North Riding Point, the Freeport area, Abaco, Exuma, and Eleuthera. Most have been quite good, offering nice accommodations, sometimes excellent food, good numbers and size of fish, but expensive and often frustratingly guides of questionable quality. A good bone-fishing experience often boils down to weather and the guide ability. This being the case, we began hiring guides we knew and arranging our own accommodations.

This report is about a somewhat different experience we've had at Crooked, which was recommended to us by a long-time friend, fishing companion, and fly shop owner. Crooked is in the SE corner of the Bahamas, a little over an hour flight out of Nassau. It hosts a population of about 300 people in eight settlements. There are six guides on the island, and with the possible exception of one, all are excellent. The fisherman has the option to select any guide for the entire trip, rotate through all, or any combination of the above. We made arrangements for guides, accommodations, airport transportation, and meals with a delightful woman on the island who owns a





Bonefish feed on full moons and tides are extreme on full and new moons. Both are bad as high water provides more access for fish to feed in the mangroves. Neap tides are far better and the best fishing will usually be had the three hours before and after low tides, and when the sun is highest for visibility. We found our fishing slower than usual this year, as there were not only spring tides, but also extreme spring tides (during the year when the moon is closest to the earth – proxigee). Fishing was good nevertheless. Crooked is worth a look if bone fishing is your thing.

restaurant as well as the island bus. Accommodations were directly on the beach and within walking distance of the restaurant. The guides both picked us up and dropped us off with flats boats on the beach in front of our cabin. A week's fishing here costs half, or less than half, of most trips, adding up to about \$2,000 per person per week, inclusive of all meals, boat, guide, and accommodations, but exclusive of tips and plane fare.

If there is a down side to Crooked, it is that fishing concentrates on the "Bight of Acklins", which contains flats between Crooked and Acklins Islands, and is a 40- to 50-minute boat ride on the lee of the island from accommodations. There are very few cars on the island, no banks, and two grocery stores in the settlement we were in (both about 8 x 12 feet). One should bring your own bottle as natives are Seventh Day Adventists, don't support much in terms of liquor stores and don't fish on Saturdays (travel days). As with most bone-fish trips, weather and tides are very important. Sun is the single most important element, but cannot be controlled (hurricane season excepted as in Sandy and Irene). Last trip taught us that tides need to be considered carefully.



Fishing Reports by Joe Decuir

First report: East Fork of the Alsek River

Northern Lights Haven Lodge

Vern Schumacher et al, July 25-30

This is the high point of the year for us. We load up and fly on Alaska to Yakutat, then Yakutat Coastal Air to the resort.

We go as a team: **Dave Round** (father-in-law, WFFC member), his brother Bill, Bill's son Mark, Mark's son Peter, and myself.

We fish for sockeye with 8wt or 9wt rods, in estuaries near the lodge. Being sockeye, they are not aggressive; you have to get right in their faces. Also, as sockeye, they fight ferociously once hooked. For me, a typical fish provided tight lines for 15 minutes at a time. I think the average was 8-10 pounds. In five days of fishing, I ended up with 42 sockeye and a few others (e.g., pinks); we caught our limits and threw the rest back in with sore mouths.

Second report: North Fork of the Stillaguamish

Preston Singletary, August 31

I won this trip as a bid at the Christmas Party. I brought Dave Round. I like learning new places to fish locally.

We met **Preston** at 6 am at a diner. We loaded up two cars and went to launch his boat at an old quarry. We then used two cars to move his truck to the takeout point.

We spent at least 9 hours drifting and fishing for sea-run cutthroats. I used a 6wt rod. As always for me, fishing is a way to be out on beautiful water. Preston did not consider this a busy year; I think I caught a dozen, and threw them all back. As usual, there were more that got away (long release). We had a great lunch somewhere along the way.

We got our money's worth. Someone else should bid on this for next year.

Membership Report: Charlie Davis

by 1st VP for membership, John Gravendyk

While not exactly overwhelmed with new members in 2012, those who did join our ranks are all enthusiastic fly fishermen passionate about our sport and dedicated to supporting the mission and goals of the WFFC. Our last new member for 2012 is **Charlie Davis**, voted in at the November dinner meeting. Charlie certainly fits the enthusiastic and passionate label as the membership committee learned during our candidate member interview. Here is a little of Charlie's background in his own words:

"I grew up in northwest PA. Many of us no doubt have memories of hunting and fishing with our dads and I'm no exception. In Warren County, where we lived, outdoor sports were a big deal. Case in point: school was always closed on opening day of deer season. Later, in 1973 and 1975, I "sat out" two fall semesters of college to fish a river about which I had read in sporting magazines, loaded my dad's station wagon, and with summer job money in hand headed to the Kispiox. While there I met and spent a good deal of time with a fellow, a good fisherman although neither of us were yet fly fishers. He had what I thought an unusual calling for a sports fisherman: paid his bills by operating a gillnetter in Bristol Bay. It came to be that I worked as a puller on his boat the summers of 1977, 1978, and 1979. Couldn't believe it, but that paid for law school. Then, in 1980 I convinced my bride, Julie, to move with me to Seattle from New Orleans (though it took several years to quell thoughts of moving back to the southeast).

"These days when I can I fish for trout in the northwest—primarily the Yakima, Methow, Deschutes, and upper Thompson. For many years this has been strictly fly fishing. It was probably instruction from a talented guide on a client-funded trip that pushed me over the top. It didn't make me expert or even very good at this by any stretch, but I finally shunted my spinning rods to an untouched corner of the basement. Also, every July or August, sure as rain after all these years, I start planning another trip to the Skeena system. Then in the late fall, sometimes much earlier, weather and work permit-

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ting and if Julie looks not to be too pissed off about the timing, I head north.

"I'm delighted to be a member of WFFC. One thing I would dearly like to gain from knowing you guys is proficiency with a spey rod—this to graduate from the CCWASC. I know that if the Can't Cast Worth a Shit Club thereby loses a member, there will be others to follow. On the "what can I offer" end of things, while I need to learn more about club activities and needs, at present I have an interest in assisting with membership activities, community outreach, and conservation programs."

- Charles Davis

The 2013 Northwest Youth Conservation & Fly Fishing Academy

by Mike Clancy

As we approach the holiday season, now would be the time to be thinking of gifts for your children, grandchildren, and any other youth you think might like to learn about fly fishing and conservation. To qualify for The Academy, the applicant, boy or girl, 12-16 years old, must write an essay explaining why they would like to attend The Academy. A letter of recommendation is also required, written by their science teacher or school counselor.

The dates for the WSCFFF and WCTU sponsored event are Sunday, June 23 to Saturday June 29th. The weeklong event is hosted by the Olympia TU Chapter, South Sound Fly Fishing Club, and the Puget Sound Fly Fishers of Tacoma. The Academy will be held again at The Gwinwood Conference Center on Hicks Lake in Lacey, WA. The youth reside in cabins with Ghillies (counselors). Fly fishing gear is provided along with fly tying materials, all meals are included. Cost for the whole week is \$275, and there are sponsorships available. No one will be turned away because of funds. To learn more about the Academy, go to www.nwycffa.com or our Facebook page. The application is available on our Web site, or contact Mike Clancy at nwycffa@comcast.net

This is a life-rewarding experience for our youth to learn conservation and the basics of fly fishing.

The youth of today are the guardians of the future of our sport of fly fishing.

Creel Notes Editor Wanted

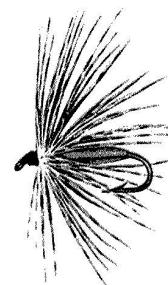
by Jim van de Erve

I've had a great run as Creel Notes editor, and had a lot of fun doing it. There are few better ways to serve the club. You get to meet other members and the officers. You get to work with great writers and great fishermen. You get to read all the Creel Notes articles, and of course, put your stamp on them. It's been a lot of fun.

But I've got to pass it along to someone else. Between my real job, the editor duties, and my other responsibilities, something's got to give. (Unfortunately, my day job won't give...) So I'm looking for a member to join the Creel Notes committee and assume the editor role. Preferably, more than one. There's article selection, editing, paste up, and publishing to be done. It would work best to have two or more people share those duties. I'll provide history and guidance when they will make the transition easier.

So, please consider joining the Creel Notes committee. In doing so, you'll have fun and serve the club.

And thank you all for the great articles you all write.





Washington Fly Fishing Club
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Stamp
here

December, 2012

Meeting Announcement



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

The Wet Fly hour begins at 5:30 PM and dinner is served at 6:45 PM.

This month:

...was the Christmas Party on December 11th. No meeting on the third Tuesday of this month.



Washington Fly Fishing Club

WFFC Membership Dues Notice

**2013 Dues are due on January 1...
Let's all renew by the end of January!**

Online payment (preferred), or mail this form with your check

| Type of Membership: | Dues Amount: |
|--|--------------|
| <input type="radio"/> Regular | \$ 70* |
| <input type="radio"/> Associate | \$ 45* |
| <input type="radio"/> Senior or Honorary | \$ 0 |
| Contribution to club (voluntary) | \$ _____ |
| * Reinstatement fee after February 28 | \$ 30 |
| ===== | ===== |
| Check amount | \$ _____ |

Please fill out completely, and circle anything that has changed:

Last name _____ First name _____

Spouse or partner name _____

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State _____ Zip _____

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Work/mobile phone _____ - _____ - _____

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