

Creel Notes from the



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



March, 2011



President's Riffle

I see light at the end of the tunnel. It's mid-March and I know we are still in the middle of it, but at least this beast of a winter can't go beyond April ... can it? I still haven't pruned my fruit trees, a chore that is usually completed by now.

But I know that Dry Falls, Chopaka, Blue, and others will be in prime time before I know it. But I tell you, this has been a long, wet, cold winter and I can't wait for spring.

I plan to kick off the lake fishing season at our **annual New Members outing** on March 12th and I hope to see many of you there. It is also a joint outing with our brothers at the Whidbey Island Fly Fishing Club. They are all good dudes. My deadline for submitting this *Riffle* was prior to the event, so I cannot report on numbers of fish or people ... or the size of the fish (or the size of the people). The next outing, following Lone Lake, is the Dry Falls trip on the weekend of April 16th—17th. That is always a good trip ... with the club picking up the steaks, beer, and wine. Saturday night around the fire is always good for a laugh or three. Last year, **Crowley** was reciting a poem and lost his cigar in mid sentence, producing howls from the entire group.

Call for duty!!! I need to find a volunteer to help **Dick Brening** on our Youth Committee. It is a great way to get involved in the club, and it is easy. Dick is a great guy and easy to work with. I am looking for a newer, younger member to help Dick. Call me if you are willing to help on this committee.

Don't forget about our **new guest promotion contest**. Every time you bring a guest to an outing or a club meeting, you will get credit for one ticket that will go into a special drawing at the Christmas party at the end of the year. That drawing, for a new fly rod, will only be eligible for those with those special tickets. If you bring,

say, eight different guests throughout the year, you will get eight tickets into the hopper for the prize. This is a terrific incentive to bring a guest. Be sure to tell the Ghillie, **Jim McDonald**, or me, if you have a guest on hand.

The March membership meeting looks to be very informative and timely. **Bob Jateff**, WDFW Regional biologist for the Okanogan area, will be on hand to discuss this season's prospects for our lakes and other issues. Just in time for our spring lake fishing season.

Just like last month, I want all of you to think about a good fishing story ... true or not ... funny or sad ... skunked or several. Last month, we had three good stories told at the top of the dinner meeting and I would like to do that again. I look forward to seeing all of you at the March meeting! Until then, get your lines cleaned, your flask flushed, and your cigars fresh!

Your WFFC President for 2011,
Rocco Maccarrone

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This Month's Meeting

March 15 - Bob Jateff of WDFW presents Okanogan Lakes

Fly tier: Bob Burdick

2011 Meeting Programs

by Mike Wearne, 2nd Vice President (Programs)

The following programs will be presented at the WFFC general-membership meetings for the rest of 2011:

April 19 - Doug Rose presents Olympic Sea-Run Cutts

Fly tier: Jim McRoberts

May 17 - Ray Gould presents Kamloops Lakes -

Fly tier: Dick Brening

June 21 - Donn Mills presents Methow River Secrets

Fly tier: (tbd)

July 19 - Dec Hogan presents Steelhead Fishing

Fly tier: (tbd)

August 16 - Heather Bartlett presents Hatchery Reform

Fly tier: (tbd)

September 20 - Outing at our Yakima Home Waters site

Fly tier: (none)

October 18 - (to be announced)

Fly tier: (tbd)

November 22 - Jack Berryman presents WFFC Heritage

Fly tier: Jim Macdonald

December 13 - WFFC Annual Christmas Party and Auction

Meeting tier: (none, buy raffle tickets for fantastic flies tied by your fellow members)

The Creel Calendar

New Members Outing, Lone Lake, Sat., March 12th

Dry Falls Lake, Sat., April 16th, and Sun., April 17th

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

Rocco Maccarrone opened the meeting in the usual manner to copious applause and immediately launched a new contest – best fishing story (true or not). That got the usual tellers of tall tales out of bar and entertaining the throng with tales of flipping planes, kicked out windows, rouge Argentinean men chasing red-blooded American women, and flies named “black and blue.”

Next, a healthy number of guests were introduced, including our two inductees, **Art Alton** and **John Prudden**.

Rocco gave us the lowdown on a couple “things we need to know.” Brace yourself for innovation: no more mass mailing of Creel Notes. Make sure your membership information includes your latest email. Next, your club needs you. Get involved. At the very least, all members should help **Mike Santangelo** find donations for the Christmas Party. If you know people who will donate artwork, gear, and services, please get in touch with him. Mike warned members that our December meeting will be on the second Tuesday (12/13). We’re booked at Urban Feast.

Don’t forget to follow **Dave Schorsch** to Lone Lake for the New Members Outing on March 12th. Take the Mukilteo ferry across to S. Whidbey, and an easy drive. Dave wants all new members and their sponsors up at Lone Lake for a nice lunch and good fishing. Bring a selection of bead heads and an intermediate line for casting to shore and stripping as well as a deep line with big ugly nymphs for trolling.

And finally, members should know that for every guest you bring to a meeting, you will get a special raffle ticket to a special members-only drawing at the Christmas Meeting. Rocco promises a nice rod and reel outfit for the special winner.

Mike Wearne first heard our guest speak on the Lower Yakima, David Williams. Little did he know that he specialized in species other than trout. In fact, David likes to hit the shores for a number of different species, including the mother of all disrespected fish: carp. Setting the record straight, David pointed out that tarpon and bonefish were once considered trash fish unworthy of serious attention. But now these “exotic” game fish draw anglers from around the world to spend thousands of dollars to

catch them. Logically speaking, carp are the new bonefish; the worm has turned.

Speaking of worms, the dang carp were first imported to solve the impending food shortage in America. Those 500 made like the venerable fish and barley loaves, and today are numbered in the millions. Some Eastern Washington farmers had a few in a pond, it flooded over and just as fast as you can say bottom fish, carp got into the Columbia River system where they grow into small giants.

But dumb as they might look, they are not all that easy to catch. Two things a carp has over you: a great sense of smell and good sense of hearing. Don’t smoke around your flies, and keep quiet on the water. They are stronger than steelhead and they move in groups and seem to share knowledge. (Overhear: “That guy in the gray boat smokes menthol and talks about his wife’s cancer too much.”)

Carp are in the minnow family. In other words they are the world’s biggest nymph. They vacuum food off the bottom indiscriminately and discharge uneatable material after immediately sensing tasty versus terrible. Thus your well-placed nymph might not be in the mouth long enough to lift the tip.

They exhibit, while eating, five types of behavior. Tailers are actively feeding, head down, tail up. Your cast has to be precise. Your target is 3” in diameter. You cast right in front of its mouth, the fly drops into the vacuum area. You will feel a soft resistance. Pay attention to your leader, if it wanders, you have a strike. Also, if the tail of carp wags, you have a strike.

Cruisers make a circuit to likely food sources. Know the pattern and put the fly on the flight path. Drop the fly to their level of intercept. You can also cast beyond the cruiser and give it a lift just before she moves by. Tight lines are key.

Cloopers are top fishing carp that “cloop” at surface food. They eat dandelion seed, cottonwood seed, mulberry seeds, surface bugs, and small children. Match the hatch, get in the travel zone, and hold on. Talk to your wife before using the neighbor kids as bait.

Baskers just hang out like a day at the beach and look like they are sleeping. Conserving energy, these carp are the hardest to catch and only attract people who know more than you do.

Slackers hang out near moving water in the slack water just off to the side. Williams’ advice: “Sight-

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fish big sinking nymphs on short leaders with about five feet of line. Keep a keen eye on the fly. If it disappears, you've got a strike."

Banks Lake, despite being a deep hole into which Eastern taxpayers pour federal money, is also a good starting place for carp. Sight casting works better than zone fishing. Look at the weeds in shin deep water. Lots of different habitats and conditions make it a good place to start. Otherwise, look for full parking lots of trucks with no fly fishing-specific bumper stickers.

Or try Green Lake, because despite the high real estate prices, it's a prime habitat. If you hear Russian spoken, you are close. What did you think those guys with strange accents are fishing for?

You need: 9-foot fast-action rod, 7-8 weight with floating line, a 9-foot leader, and 2X-0X fluorocarbon tippets. They eat almost everything except fish. Try crayfish, aquatic insects, terrestrials, leeches, and vegetation. They don't have teeth, but they can grind up hard things in their gullet. The most successful fly is probably the black woolly bugger. Stick with soft body flies made of natural fibers made in scent-free environments and touched only by vestal virgin fingers.

Bring polarized glasses and all the same sun gear you'd need in the Caymans. You can fish from a pontoon, but it's harder to see and remember, sight fishing is where it's at. I bet it won't be long before we have guides in pink shirts taking clients out on Banks Lake with carp-specific casting platforms mounted on fancy boats.

Prime water temperature is 60 – 75 degrees. They fish in cold water, but they are lethargic. So when the trout streams shut down for heat, head for the carp water and make sure your cooler is full of ice. But when they spawn, forget it. They are the porn stars of fish and just can't be bothered by fancy rod flippers, no matter how precise. Even on a good day, a carp won't chase a fly more than a few inches; in spawn, all bets are off.

The ferocity of the questions during and after the talk indicated interest, or at least shock and awe. By the time the crew was done, nary a detail about angling for these recently made precious prey was missed.

After the break we honored the new membership of Art and John. We also voted in new member **Mike Moscyński** after he enjoyed lavish praise in absentia.

Craig Crumbaker described the great success of Casting Forward, the Thursday night fly tying with the homeless. Some of the men have experienced profound personal turnarounds with the attention of club members.

From there, we moved on to regular business including the vote on our new budget. After several deficit years, the board offered a trimmed budget with a goal of increased fundraising at the Christmas event that will leave us dead even at the end of the year. Members asked informed questions fielded by Treasurer **Don Barton**. Some of the questions required technical answers and might lose readers, but suffice it to say, cuts were across the board and the board looked for bargains. Passed without opposition.

Committee reports. The **Reel Recovery** Retreat will be on the 2nd or 3rd weekend in September, look for notices to firm up that date. **Jim Higgins** reported that **Casting Classes** start in the first Thursday of April and go for 6 weeks (\$45), and the advanced class begins the first Wednesday and goes for 4 weeks (\$50). A new committee is looking into restoring water levels at Dry Falls after completing some research.

New Members Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

Outing is March 12th, with the club and guests gathering at the park in the morning as they show up. No specific start time, pretty lazy fishing this time of year. Compare notes and learn how to fish the lake. Lunch will be ready around 1:00 under the canopies. This is a chance for new and prospective members (and guests) to learn how to fish one of our favorite local waters. Food and beverages will be provided by the club, so sign up on the outings page of the web site or call one of the outing chairs to get on the list for head count. It's a "boat" water, so float tubes, prams, and pontoon boats are most useful. I'd probably leave the Boston Whaler at home. Sinking and intermediate lines work well, with buggy nymphs and black leeches being most popular (especially bead heads). Later on, when the water's warmer, dry flies and chironomids can be very good. Catch the Mukilteo ferry and head north about 15 minutes to the lake, it's easy to find on any map. Most of all, have fun! **Dave Schorsch** at 206-227-6134 and **Mark Pratt** at 425-488-9862.

Spring Dry Falls Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

Our annual spring trip to Dry Falls Lake is April 16th and 17th at Sun Lakes State Park. We have reserved sites 26 and 27 for the club shindig Saturday evening. It's located in the back of the campground with a little cover for wind. You can reserve sites in advance through the Wa. State Parks site, or just grab one when you get there, there's always lots of room. We also choose this location because there are hookup sites just across the road, so you can park your "Mastodon Mobile Manor" right close to Billy Backpacker's blue tarp. Everybody's welcome! (There are cabins for rent at Sun Lakes Resort if that floats your boat.)

The club will be hosting the usual happy hour around the fire starting about "5ish". We will set up the club grill, and provide steaks, so you can grill 'em like you want 'em. Make sure to sign up for an accurate head count! As always, bring your favorite happy-hour snack or appetizer to share! Anything goes, with hot stuff really popular this time of year. The club will provide pop, beer, and some wine.

Feel free to bring your own beverage choices, but be prepared to share the good stuff! Firewood is always needed, you can never have a big enough fire for some folks, so indicate on the signup page if you'll have some. Warning! Storytelling and song singing may erupt under these conditions. Be prepared!

The fishing on Dry Falls in early spring can be terrific, depending on weather. The fish are not selective yet (unless you really neeeeeeed to fish chironomids), and are very bright. Most have never been hooked, and are quick and electric. If the weather is nice, look to the shallows around the sunny edges early, and the shaded edges later in the day. I fish a dry line and weighted nymph when prospecting the shallows, and a clear intermediate with an olive bead head in deeper (5- to 10-foot) water after the sun gets high.

So come join us at Dry Falls! It's a good time! See you there! **Dave Schorsch** at 206-227-6134 or **Mark Pratt** at 425-488-9862.



Rio Grande Trip Report *by Scott Hagen*

Jim McRoberts and I left for our annual pilgrimage to Tierra del Fuego on January 27th, preceded by **Jay Deeds**, who spent a couple of extra days in Houston with his wife Jone and her family. **Dave Wands** met Jay in Houston, and then they traveled on to Buenos Aires where they spent an extra day touring B. A. and living large. The trouble started when we arrived in Houston and were greeted with a sign telling us our flight to Houston had been delayed to 9:00 pm. Then the delay stretched to midnight. At 11:30, we were told to line up to get a voucher for a motel and a cab ride and that the flight would leave at 9:00 am the following morning. After a hair-raising cab ride, we got to the motel in time to get 4½ hours of sleep. The plane finally left at 10:00!! We got to B. A. about midnight, in time to get an hour and a half of sleep before having to get up for the flight to Rio Grande. Once we got there, things took a turn for the better. The river, which had been very high and dirty at the beginning of the previous week, had dropped and cleared.

The fishing was pretty good. I had my best week down there ever, with several fish over 15 pounds, and the largest was a 23-pound hen. Jim and Jay each had fish over 20 pounds, as well. Dave struggled a



Dave Wands on the Rio Grande



Jim McRoberts on the Rio Grande

bit with his single hander in the constant 20 – 30 mph winds, but did get into some fish, the largest being over 15 pounds.

Because the river was still a little high, we had to use very heavy lines and tips in most runs. I mostly used a 650 gr. head, a 10' sinking cheater, and 13' of T-17. After a day of snatching all that out of the water and throwing it 90' to 100', I was hitting the ibuprofen pretty hard. A little of the lodge's excellent wine helped, too.

On the last day, the winds died down in the evening, and I got a chance to skate "The Caped Crusader Skater" for a while. I didn't hook any fish, but I rose four... one of them very large, judging by the hole it left in the water.

The trip home was long, but uneventful. I am already dreaming about next year!

Conservation: A Note of Thanks

by Doug Schaad

As I finished reading the January 2011 edition of The Osprey, I came to the last page honoring those individuals and entities that make the only journal 'Dedicated to the Preservation of Wild Steelhead' a fiscal reality. At the top of the list was the Washington Fly Fishing Club.

While total donations are not listed, thanks are due to WFFC Foundation for support of a redesigned web presence (check out the blog at <http://www.ospreysteelheadnews.blogspot.com>) or the

Osprey page under the Conservation/Native Fish tab at <http://www.fedflyfishers.org>).

As you may recall, the Conservation Committee matches the donations of individual club members in support of The Osprey. For calendar year 2010, the Conservation Committee wishes to thank the following individuals for their support of The Osprey: **Hugh Clark, Scott Hagen, John Jones, Jim McRoberts, and Doug Smith**, as well as those of you who donated as 'Anonymous.'

I encourage your continuing support for The Osprey.

Things I Have Learned About Fly Fishing

by Leland Miyawaki

Thirty-eight years ago, I sent \$75 to L.L. Bean for a "Complete Fly Fishing Outfit" that consisted of a 7½" Fenwick fiberglass rod, 1494 Medalist reel, and weight-forward floating line. The day the outfit arrived in the mail, I set my spinning rod down forever. Two days later, my Orvis fly tying kit arrived. For the next year, I taught myself to fly cast, dress flies, and catch trout. I am a self-taught expert on mistakes.

The following is a short list, in no particular order, of what I have and have not learned to date:

1. If the water is full of naturals, and providing you know what they are, fish a size smaller pattern than what you think.
2. Cast to feeding fish, not the water.
3. Don't cast or fish as if others are watching you. So what if they are, who cares?
4. Don't think the hatch, when it happens, happens everywhere.
5. Use the same length leader for all dry line work. That way you will know where your fly is at all times.
6. If you had buck fever when you began fly fishing, it will never, ever go away.
7. Do not lose the first fish of the day.
8. Slow down.
9. When swinging flies for steelhead, keep a tight line on the hangdown.
10. Don't fish murky water on the beach.
11. Kids need to catch fish.

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12. Before wading and bushwhacking from the car to the river, see if there is a nearby field you can walk through.
13. Never leave fish to find fish.
14. Don't bring a camera with you if you want to catch steelhead.
15. Don't bring a cooler with you if you want to catch salmon.
16. Don't think "barbecue" if you want to land the big salmon you're playing.
17. Always take a crap before a long float trip down the river.
18. If you want to lose weight in the morning, eat greasy bacon.
19. You will always make your worst cast to the biggest fish.
20. Don't promise a fishing report if you want to catch fish.
21. The harder it rains, the more you will have to pee.
22. On a lake, everything you say will be heard by everyone.
23. If you aren't catching fish, you don't have enough lead.
24. There are no wind knots, only casting knots.
25. Use a tippet size that is commensurate with fly size.
26. Only tie and fish your best-dressed flies.
27. Tie soft hackle flies sparse.
28. The best steelhead fly is the one that last caught a fish.
29. Always walk through brush with your rod strung up.
30. Strip set when fishing poppers and streamers.
31. Remove your casting knots when you find them.
32. Always check your leader for knots after throwing a tailing loop.
33. Turning waders inside out will only weaken the ankle seams.
34. When fishing a pool, don't grow roots – keep moving.
35. Always buy something if you want the latest fishing info from a fly shop.

I'm sure there are more, but I'm still learning.

Washington Fly Fishing Fair and Expo

The Washington State Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers will be holding its annual Fly Fishing Fair this 29th and 30th of April at the Kittitas County Fairgrounds in Ellensburg, Washington.

There will be something for everyone at this event: one-hour free seminars, tying demonstrations, casting games, and casting classes. A number of vendors will be on site to show you what is new in the world of fly fishing and the gear that will help you become a better angler. You will see some of the best from the Pacific Northwest show you their skills and help you through the games and classes.

You can learn more if you access the web site: <http://www.washingtoncouncilfff.org/wfff.htm>.

Profits from the fair help with their ongoing conservation and education efforts for the fisheries of Washington State.

Fly Casting Classes Starting *by Jim Higgins*

On Thursday April 7, 2011, we begin our six-week Beginning Fly Casting Class and on Wednesday April 6, 2011, we will begin a four-week Advanced Fly Casting Class. Both classes will start at 6:30 pm at Green Lake Casting Pier. The legendary **Don Simonson** will again be the lead instructor and helped by other members of WFFC. Be sure to remind your friends and family to sign up for these classes, or you can sign up for the advanced class as a refresher. To register or for more information, call **Bob Birkner** at 206-542-4623.

Pebble Mine *by Perry Barth*

Letters and e-mails are desperately needed in the campaign to stop the Pebble Mine. If you didn't know, the Pebble Mine folks want to mine in the head waters of all the Bristol Bay rivers. This is going to be hard to stop as millions (billions) of dollars are at stake. If they get the permit, they will build the world's largest dam to permanently store all the toxic sludge runoff. This in a seismically active area!!!! The EPA is conducting a scientific assessment of the watershed, and letters are needed to support their action. Check out www.savebristolbay.org/takeaction.



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Stamp
here

March, 2011

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:

Bob Jateff of WDFW on Okanogan Lakes