

Creel Notes from the



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



April, 2005

Presidents Riffle *By Bob Birkner*

It's springtime in Eastern Washington, although the wind and low temperature can make you think otherwise. In spite of the coolness, Don Schroder and I fished Lake Lenore, Rocky Ford Creek, and Quincy Lake. Don and I both caught 26 inch Rainbows at Rocky Ford using dry flies. What a great time!

Recently Doug Schaad sent an e-mail reminding us that it's time to make any recommendations for regulation changes to the WDFW. Part of the time at Rocky Ford Creek I was using a dropper and I remembered it was 4 or 5 years ago that I prepared a recommendation to WDFW to allow the use of two flies on Fly Fishing Only waters. The recommendation was endorsed by the WFFC and the northwest flyfishing clubs. The WDFW adopted my recommendation and added an additional rule allowing the use of three flies on Selective Fishery waters.

Why did I make the recommendation in the first place?

1. Many guides were having their customers use droppers.
2. Some individuals were using droppers and others thought they were illegal.
3. Other states such as Montana allowed droppers on their Blue Ribbon streams.

4. When I asked various WDFW people about the legality of droppers they were split just about 50-50 on the issue.

So I thought making the recommendation would at least get a considered decision.

I never liked using a dropper because when using a tag from a blood knot in the leader it often got tangled. Since my rule recommendation was adopted I thought I should at least try a dropper again. Now I tie the dropper tippet to the bend of the lead fly and there are far fewer tangles. Usually I start out using a single dry fly, even if there is no apparent hatch and the fish aren't rising. If that doesn't produce I go to a Stimulator or Grasshopper pattern for the lead fly and an egg or nymph pattern for the dropper. While the dropper takes some fish, it's still far more rewarding and exciting to see a big fish making a wake through the surface as it attacks the dry fly. That's where the real adrenalin rush is generated!

If you've never tried a dry and dropper combination you might consider it. I think it beats staring at a corkie although there are similarities.

As I said earlier Doug sent the reminder that it's time to make recommendations for the next review of the regs. Maybe someone can come up with a recommendation that would get some bigger fish in the Yakima.

FLY TYING ROUND TABLE, ORVIS DAYS, 2005

The Spring 2005 Orvis Days has a three-day run this year, April 29, 30 and May 1. It will be filled with events and speakers all day Saturday and will feature our annual Fly Tying Round Table all day Sunday from 11a.m. to 3:30p.m. It is open to all tiers who would like to drop in with their tools and trappings and tie for an hour, or three hours, depending upon how you feel.

If you enter this event, Orvis Bellevue will give you a one day certificate to purchase anything in the Orvis Bellevue store at 50% discount. You can purchase as many items as you choose. Catalog items are not included.

If you are interested please drop an e-mail to **Les Johnson** at e-mail address: les.johnson5@verizon.net. It would really be nice to have a number of WFFC tiers participate. Thanks.

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NOAA Fisheries Service accepts petition to protect Puget Sound steelhead, begins a biological review

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service has accepted a Washington state citizen's petition to list Puget Sound steelhead under the federal Endangered Species Act, saying that the petition describes significant short- and long-term downward trends for steelhead in a wide range of rivers emptying into the sound.

Although acceptance of the petition doesn't guarantee that Puget Sound steelhead will ultimately be listed under the ESA, it does mean the fisheries agency will conduct its own full-scale biological review of the population and solicit public comment on the status of the stock.

NOAA Fisheries Service is an agency of the U.S. Department of Commerce.

A final decision about whether to propose listing will be made by Sept. 13, the one-year anniversary of when NOAA Fisheries Service received the petition from Sam Wright of Olympia, Wash.

If Puget Sound steelhead are proposed for listing, the listing wouldn't become final until September 2006.

NOAA Fisheries Service last conducted a biological status review of Puget Sound steelhead in 1996. While the agency said at the time that a listing wasn't warranted, it said it was concerned about how healthy summer-run stocks of the fish were and about the harmful effects on wild steelhead of hatchery-reared steelhead.

The petition has new information that says there may be "significant interbreeding and competition" between hatchery and wild steelhead in spite of efforts by the state's Department of Fish and Wildlife, which operates the hatcheries, to isolate the two.

According to biologists, the salmon species known popularly as steelhead has the most complex life history of any Pacific salmon. If it remains a permanent freshwater resident, never traveling to the ocean, it's known as a rainbow trout. If it migrates to saltwater, it's called a steelhead, but it can spend up to seven years in freshwater before its trip to the Pacific, where it can remain for three years. And unlike any other Pacific salmon, it can spawn more than once. The offspring of steelhead can be rainbow trout; the offspring of rainbows can be steelhead.

For more details see <http://www.nwr.noaa.gov/1salmon/salmesa/stllhpug.htm>

Creel Notes

...is the official publication of the Washington Fly Fishing Club. Subscription is free with membership.

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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 work to the outlawing the use of salmon eggs in any form during the regular trout season.
3. To promote and work for the betterment of trout streams and lakes.
4. To encourage and advocate the conservation and increase of trout in state waters.
5. To promote a campaign of education against pollution in streams, lakes or Sound waters of the State of Washington.
6. To encourage and assist boys — particularly of high school age—to become fly fishermen and true sportsmen.

Grande Report, Oct. 2004 *by Dave Hawkinson*

Grande Ronde fishing report; 3 days rain, 1 fish for four guys, a long way to go for no fish, should have stayed closer to home.

I've been thinking about that report from last fall for a few months. I wish I could take it back.

Have I become that jaded from good fishing on this side of the mountains? Was it a bad trip with no hook-ups? When I was younger, it was the simple pleasure of being out in the fresh air, experiencing something new on every trip and relishing the simple fact that I had found time just to be out there.

Times have changed, with the go-go pace of business and responsibilities and having to make bigger bucks just to break even each month, time outdoors has become precious. It was a simpler life back in the 20's/a truck, tent, cheap rod, and not much more than a few cans of beer and beans and a few boxes of flies on the dashboard, and me wet wading without a vest, without a care in the world.

I had never been to the Grande Ronde before this trip. The sense of discovery, reading new water, seeing new scenery, dry cattle country desert, rattlesnakes and sagebrush down low with the small river oasis running through the dry stark canyon, more mule deer than mice running through camp, and dark shaded timber with elk bugling up high. Other fishermen came into camp saying, "You should have been here last week before the rain when everyone was hooked up on holding metalheads."

The fact of the matter is I had three days on the river, getting to know a member of the club better, that I had only infrequent contact with in the past

and two of his best friends who I ended up having a lot in common with besides flyfishing (motorcycles, traveling the world, antiques etc.)

The pleasure of hashing over the day with new found friends around a blazing campfire with steaks sizzling, good cigars and a great bottle of porto that I was saving for just this kind of occasion made the long hours drive worth it.

It took a downpour for us to reluctantly move to the motorhome for cribbage that lasted into the wee hours after the rain came down hard enough to put out the campfire.

The only steelhead hooked and landed those three days was by the one guy who had never caught one before. "His first steelhead." As excited as he was, we were just as excited for him, maybe even more, that he was lucky enough to be the one who hooked up. It was the kind of excitement and energy that reminds you of the surprise and joy of your first bicycle or BB gun at Christmas. Just watching him jumping up and down with glee on the gravel bar with that 8 lb. fish in the shallows at his feet was worth the whole trip.

To quote John Gierach, "I've learned that the trick to being a happy fisherman is to be easily pleased." I had forgotten that somewhere along the way, so I am revising my report and hope that I will think things through in the future before my next report.

In conclusion, I saw beautiful new country, turned acquaintances into friends, laughed more than I had in a month, had relaxing days streamside, and witnessed the birth of a steelheader.

IT WAS A GREAT TRIP!!!

Field and Stream Magazine

In the "First Shot" section of the April issue of Field and Stream, there is a two-page spread photo taken by club members, **Earl Harper** and **Ed Sozinho** of a motley gang of flyfishers including fellow member, **Leland Miyawaki**.

The caption reads: *THE GANG'S ALL HERE. "We usually catch 20 fish and have four cigars every day," says Ed Sozinho (leaning against the shutter) of the annual trout fishing trips he and his nine friends have been making to this cabin in Sun Valley, Idaho for the past ten years. Gourmet cooking is also on the schedule: "We all leave about 10 pounds heavier."*

For more on this trip, see Leland's article on page 6.

2004 AWARDS ADDENDUM

By Bill Neal, Awards Committee Chairman

David Ehrich wrote a fine article that appeared in last month's Creel Notes and reported the activities at the January Awards ceremonies. I want to add to that report by recognizing **Greg Crumbaker** as recipient of the Empty Creel Award, for service to the Club, including two terms as President, many years as Creel Notes editor, long range planning, and many other activities, and **Steve Sunich** as winner earlier in 2004 of the Boyd Aigner Flytying Competition.

New Member Candidate, Bill Deters

Bill has been tying flies since he was nine years old. His first contact with the Club was at one of our Green lake flycasting clinics in 1968 where he bought his first tapered line from Don Holbrook out in the parking lot out of Don's trunk.

It wasn't until 1974 that Bill attended his first WFFC meeting. He also went on outings to Jupiter, Hosmer, Pass and Leech lakes where he met **Ed Foss**, **Gordy Young** and other members. During the 80's, Bill became active in climbing, skiing and scrambling with the Mountaineers where he is currently on the Board of Trustees.

Bill and his wife enjoy bicycling, backcountry travel and kayaking. He is a member of TU, the Sierra Club and Cascade Bicycle Club. His favorite places to fish are the Deschutes, the waters of Yellowstone, and some secret high mountain locations.

Bill would like to bring his perspective to some of our conservation and recreational issues we face today.

Bill's sponsors are **John Gravendyk** and **Don Simonson**.

New Member Candidate, Chris Bentsen

In 1993, Chris moved to Washington from Delaware with his wife and three children. He works at Genetic Systems, a biotech company in Redmond. Chris began fishing at the age seven when he was introduced to the sport by his uncle. He picked up his first flyrod, a fiberglass Shakespeare Wonderod in 1968.

Chris has been an active member of TU for many years including President of the Delaware chapter of TU in 1991. He is a past president of the Overlake Fly Fishing Club and a member of the FFF.

Chris' job allows him to travel to many parts of the country where he always takes his rod and reel with him. He has combined business with the piscatorial pleasures of Texas, Florida, San Francisco and Chesapeake Bay to name a few.

Chris would like to help with outings, fly tying, beginning fly casting and raffles.

The sponsors of Chris Bentsen are **Les Johnson** and **Bob Young**.

New Inductee, Joe Decuir

Joe is new to flyfishing but has a long-standing interest in water sports and outdoor activities. He likes the outdoors and fishing even if the catching is slow. Joe has been fly fishing for four years now, ever since he married one of Dave Round's daughters and joined the family interest in fly fishing. He has a job with lots of travel and a home on a lake. Joe has practical experience in club and organizational support that might be of particular benefit to the Club.

Joe's sponsors are **Dave Round** and **Dave Schorsch**.

Griffin Creek Work Party

30 April 2005 8:30 - 12:30

Once again, the WFFC will assemble along the banks of Griffin Creek to hack-away at encroaching blackberries and other invasive species. King County will be providing the hand tools that are required, you need only provide gloves and person-power. That said, motorized brush/string cutters can be particularly effective.

At last report, King County was hoping to showcase the WFFC endeavors as a model of cooperation between a conservation-minded organization and the investments of the citizens that provided bond funding for the purchase of this riparian zone. In that regard, there may be some media coverage which can help to spread the legacy of the WFFC and riparian restoration.

Though the brisket has not yet begun its slow-BBQ, I anticipate serving a lunch of same. Add some fresh fruit, a few chips and cold beverages, and we should have a decent lunch.

As you look at your calendar, you will note that April 30th is also the opener for lowland lakes. I'd suggest you skip the hassles of the early am launch, join us for a couple of hours of physical activity, grab a lunch and then move on to the waters devoid of fishermen. While there are numerous lakes in the immediate area, none of them are known for their wilderness experience, or exceptional trout. My sons and I have often fished Lake Margaret the day after the opener and done very well on fish from 8-15 inches. In our experience, the key has been a full-sink line. Beyond that, the pattern (as long as it includes red) doesn't much matter. You'll know when you've hit one of the mature native cutts that reside in the lake.

Hope to see you on the 30th. - The Conservation Committee





New sign showing WFFC participation

Comments before the House Resources Committee

Delivered by Former State Senator John Peavey of Carey Idaho February 23, 2005

I come to you as a farmer-rancher and former state senator who spent most of my legislative career working for solutions to the water issues of the state. I support the bill before you but strongly urge negotiations continue to address what I consider to be the critical issue: Why is Idaho water being used to defend four dams in Washington State?

Over 400,000 acre feet of water owned by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation is to be drained from the upper Snake River basin to flush young wild salmon downstream through these full dams. Flushing the fish to save the dams has been tried and failed for many years. The wild fish are still in serious decline.

It is extremely important to keep this water in Idaho if an economic Armageddon is to be avoided. We have over developed our deserts and over appropriated our water resources. Hundreds of thousands of acres of productive farmland could easily revert to sagebrush. The 400,000 acre feet of Bureau of Reclamation water should be used to quiet farmer verses farmer lawsuits. It is imperative that large amounts of

mitigation and aquifer recharge water be found and found quickly.

The four Washington State dams are the problem. Our ranch had a U.S. Forest Service sheep allotment on Marsh Creek years ago. It was a major salmon spawning stream and tributary of the Middle Fork of the Salmon River. When I was young and was taking care of a band of sheep there in the 50's and 60's, I saw more salmon than I could count when they returned to spawn in their birthplace streams.

After the four Snake River dams were built, the fish all but disappeared. Today there are no cow allotments and only one band of sheep in the Marsh Creek area and still there are also precious few fish. Clearly the grazing had nothing to do with the demise of the fish yet with the building of each successive dam, the numbers of fish returning each year has dwindled.

The solution is obvious. Take the dams down and you can save the fish and there will be no need for "flush" water from southern Idaho or Dworshak. Take the dams down and you can save the economy of the whole state and the farming economy of southern Idaho.

Perhaps there will be a need for further discussion with the Nez Perce tribe. But it is my understanding that if the fish are its primary interest, it would be to everyone's benefit to remove the dams, see the fish return and save the water.

Back to the original questions, "why should Idaho water be used to defend Washington state dams? Why are Idaho's people who caused none of the problem being asked to shoulder the entire burden of bringing the salmon back?"

I asked these questions in a large water meeting of farmers last year and one of Idaho's leading water experts responded that President Bush would not approve of breaching the dams. I was startled by his candor at the time. Perhaps if the issue has become so political, our own leadership should go to Washington, D.C. and remind the powers that be that Idaho is a red state and Washington state is a blue one.

History will not judge us kindly if we lose our farmers and our small towns, ruin the state's economy and lose the salmon too. I am afraid that is where we are headed.

Clearly these goals are in the best interest of all parties to this agreement and should be a part of any final settlement. I urge you to consider this action.

Bottom line is pass this legislation but work for solutions that will truly save our farms, small towns and the fish

"Don't Forget the Red Light" *By Leland Miyawaki*

Larz flew into San Diego from Hawaii where he was picked up by Harry who drove the first leg north to Idaho. Dave and Carl had already begun their journey from Los Angeles a few hours earlier. Fellow club members, **Earl Harper**, **Ed Sozinho** and I began our 14-hour drive east from Seattle late Friday night. John and Knox had the shortest drive from Sun Valley to the Bar4D. Dick and Thad arrived on Tuesday as did Rick from Seattle. Cass dropped by for a day to fish his cabin water and Dick's wife, Julie came over Friday afternoon. The gang's all here again.

Some of us have been fly fishing with each other for over 30 years. We've fished the Henry's Fork, Green River, Blackfoot Lakes, Mammoth, Crowsnest, and the San Juan, from where Dick made his now infamous overnight, morphine-fueled solo drive home to Ketchum while suffering an attack of kidney stones. Nowadays we all gather at Dick and Knox' cabin, the Bar4D, in an undisclosed location on a secret river somewhere in Idaho two times a year. Fishing this time of year is always good, and like any great trout stream, never ever easy. The river is filled edge to edge with wild rainbows; some of which are in the tailouts preoccupied with the rigors of spawning; the dark skinny kelts are recuperating in slack water lies tipping up on every living thing that floats by; and chrome bright newly arrived "greenbacks" - full of beauty and strength that can only be passed on by countless generations of trout that have never seen the inside of a concrete hatchery pool. Large, handsome trout that can only be brought to hand by a deft touch with a nearly invisible fly, gossamer leader and excruciating long dragfree floats. And yet, the "camp trout" in front of the cabin will greedily outrace each other for Wonder Bread balls slapped into their pool each morning after breakfast. Go figure.

Our mornings always begin the same. John wakes up first at 7am and makes the first pot of coffee and starts the fire. The next person up looks out the window to the west and predicts the weather for the day, which can be fairly obvious if it's blowing, raining or snowing, but like all predictions from television weather bimbos, we're just as wrong. The next few risers sit down at the dining table and begin tying flies. But we're only killing time waiting for Earl and Ed to wake up. Earl and Ed, as you might guess, are the chefs. Not just a couple flyfishermen that can by-the-way cook, but real, honest-to-goodness, more-than-just-competent, extraordinary gourmet chefs that fly-fish (and rather well, I might add). For years past before "the boys" arrived borne by an intense extraterrestrial light one night over the river, we put ourselves

through various forms of gastrointestinal punishment from Dave, John, Knox and myself. But since E&E's arrival, the Bar4D has, bar none, the best cuisine in all of Idaho. In fact, more than a few people have been known to simply drop by with a bottle of wine and hang around waiting for an invitation to stay for dinner.

Did I say "dinner?" Sunday night, "The Boys" served up a simple meal of Peruvian Annoto Barbecued Country Pork Ribs with Chipotle Saffron Corn. They followed up with another dinner of Scallops and Steelhead Caviar in a Saffron Cream Sauce over Angel Hair Pasta and Wilted Spinach Salad with a Bacon and Red Wine Vinaigrette. We were also treated to everybody's favorite; Chicken, Pork, Onion and Tomato Cassoulet. To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, E&E did the traditional Corned Beef and Cabbage with Boiled Potatoes served with Papa Art Harper's Homemade Sweet Horseradish followed by a spectacular, if not illegal, display of pyrotechnics over the river. Larz gave The Boys a couple nights off by deep-frying a turkey Monday and Friday night. But E&E couldn't just sit idly by as they had to make French fried sweet potatoes one day and cream cheese mashed potatoes with pork gravy on the other. Of course, breakfasts from the immaculate duo were the usual Pasta and Sausage Quiche or Baked Carnitas Breakfast Burritos with Hatch Green Chiles. Once again, Larz leaped into the kitchen a couple times for breakfast with his Cinnamon Pecan Sticky Rolls Spiked with Knob Creek Bourbon. Larz' appearance in the kitchen of the Bar4D was indeed fortuitous as Earl had to lay down with a bad case of Seattle flu, which at the end of the week, mutated into the Navy flu as Capt. Larz took it back to his base in Hawaii.

It's usually after we have finished eating that Knox will stand up and make sure that we all know what to do when we see the "red light" out the back door. The red light comes on and is soon accompanied by a screeching horn if the light is ignored when the septic tank gets overloaded - for reasons that are particularly obvious to those of us unfortunate enough to be second in line at either of the bathrooms. It should be noted that this spring the red light came on 14 times in only six days.

12 yr old Cragganmore, 10 yr Glenkinchie, 12 yr Tamnavulin, 12 yr Springbank, 15 yr Laphroig, 18 yr Macallan, 10 yr Ardbeg, Makers Mark and Knob Creek bourbons, and, more than what would be considered a "normal" amount of Excalibur II's, Hoyo Montereys, La Gloria Cabañas, and Cuban Cigar Factory El Presidentes were consumed between the hours of 8am and 11pm. Dave and Rick usually timed

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their arrival from Dave's upriver cabin, the "Rise Ring Ranch," when the smoke pollution level in the Bar4D was lowest, usually while we were all eating.

In the absence of all radio, television and newspapers, we had readings in front of the fire after dinner over whisky and cigars. This year we read; "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" by Robert Service; "Waltzing Andy" by Jack Curtis; an excerpt from "All Gold Canyon" by Jack London; A chapter from "Rivers of Dreams" by Lani Waller and "Why I live Where I Live" by Annie Dillard; some letters from Hunter Thompson in "The Curse of Lono"; various outrageous pieces from "When Will Jesus Bring the Pork Chops" by George Carlin were offered up as bridges between readings; and a late night cellphone call from Dave to Knox re: The Red Light. Dave's side of the conversation, from our end complete with his hand to his ear, looked and sounded exactly like an old Bob Newhart routine.

The group photo, which in years past had been lightly attended, took on a whole new meaning when it was learned that the 2003 photo was to be published in the April issue of *Field and Stream* magazine. All but Knox showed up at the diversion for the photo on Friday. Knox had to return to town earlier in the week but was given the assignment of purchasing a dozen copies of *Field and Stream*. But his preoccupation over the red light must have confused him because we heard that he was having a difficult time finding copies of *Sports Afield*. In the end, most of us didn't see the beautiful two-page photo until we returned home, which made it all that much sweeter, because it made the last week feel a little bit longer.—Leland

This month's speaker – John Shewey

Residing in Oregon, John Shewey is a life-long devotee to fly fishing, wing-shooting and other outdoor pursuits. Currently the Managing Editor of *Northwest Fly Fishing*, *Southwest Fly Fishing* and *Eastern Fly Fishing* magazines, John's annual travels take him all around the west and to his favorite haunts from Alaska to Mexico. Having fished for just about everything the west has to offer—from surfperch at sea level to golden trout at 12,000 feet—John still gravitates towards his favorite summer steelhead streams, where he pursues these noble fish with his elegant flies, which have earned him national prominence. John has penned hundreds of articles and published many photographs in various magazines and to date has authored 14 books about fly fishing and wingshooting. Included in his titles are *Spey Flies & Dee Flies, Their History and Construction*; *The Orvis Pocket Guide to Fly Fishing for Steelhead*; *Mastering The Spring Creeks*; *Oregon Blue Ribbon Fly Fishing*; *Washington Blue Ribbon Fly Fishing* and *On the Fly Guide to the Northwest*. John appears frequently as a speaker at club meetings, conclaves and sports shows around the country—begrudgingly so during winter when he prefers to spend his time hunting chukars over his Weimaraner, Jake.



*This is the Idaho gang.
There are three club
members in the photo.
Can you spot 'em?*





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Stamp
here

Meeting Announcement



Meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month at The College Club, 505 Madison St.

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

April Program - Fly Fishing For Summer Steelhead by John Shewey

John will dive headlong into one of fly angling's most magical experiences: the art of taking summer steelhead on a fly. This visually provocative show details the classic methods of fly fishing for these remarkable gamefish on some the most beautiful rivers in the West. He will cover tackle, flies and techniques along with examining some of the region's best steelhead waters. For more about John see page 7.