

# Creel Notes from the



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



April, 2008



## President's Riffle

Fellow Fly Fishermen,

I'm very pleased about the outcome of last month's vote on our initial Home Waters site. Although this is just a first step in our goal of creating a permanent home base, your unanimous support shows we're really on the right track with the whole idea. Soon we hope to be setting up a task force to plan the construction of the shelters, including work parties. What a great weekend that could be—a little hammerin', a little fishin', a little eatin', and repeat... I hope we get a great turnout when it comes time to get to work on this baby. It takes a lot of vision to get behind a project like this, and I thank you all for having it.

When it comes to vision, our guests at this month's general meeting *really* have it. They are the artists of Felt Soul Media, makers of the films *The Hatch*, *Running Down the Man*, and *Red Gold*. I got to see both *The Hatch* and *Running Down the Man* at last year's Fly Fishing Film Tour, and enjoyed them immensely. As a media-oriented person my whole career, and fishing filmmaker myself (see *FlyFishing Northwest*, circa 1996), I have a great respect for the effort it takes Travis Rummel and Ben Knight, Felt Soul's principals, to capture the images and sounds they do. But with their latest film, Travis and Ben's images go from just entertaining and exciting us to inspiring us, and moving us to take action.

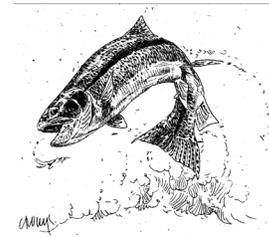
*Red Gold* is about the proposed Pebble Mine in Alaska's Bristol Bay watershed. I'm guessing a fair number of you have fished some of the waters up there, and were rewarded with fabulous scenery and tremendous fishing. One of the most memorable days of my life was spent in that drainage—fishing the Brooks

River with my Dad, and getting intimate with huge brown bears while sight casting to big 'bows. It's experiences like this that we can't let slip through our fingers.

So I hope to see you at this month's meeting, and perhaps you too will be inspired. Let us keep thinking about the projects *we* care about, and let's talk about them. Let me or one of your Board members know what matters to you, and maybe there's something the Club can do about it. As individuals, our potential impact is limited. As a group, we can move (or save) mountains.

Tight lines to all,

Bill Kuper



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## April WFFC Meeting

This month's meeting will be a presentation by Travis Rummel, a filmmaker who specializes in fly fishing films. Travis is one of the founders of Felt Soul Media, along with Ben Knight. Their vision is to "create captivating films incorporating conservation and solid story telling that constantly engage the audience, even if they are about fly-fishing."

Also at the meeting:

- John Schuitemaker will hand out rosters at the meeting. As soon as possible, please check that the information for you in the roster is correct. If your information is not correct, please change it by going to <http://www.wffc.com>, logging in to the Member Area, and clicking "submit change".

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## Sign Up for the June Meeting with Tom Douglas

Sign up on our Web site for the June 17th meeting, which will be the Tom Douglas cooking event at the Palace Ballroom (not the Seattle Tennis Club). Click the "Register to Attend" link under 6-17 in the Event Calendar pane on the left side of the WFFC Web site. This will open an e-mail to 2<sup>nd</sup> VP Keith Robbins. When you fill it out, indicate how many guests will come with you.

This event is a club favorite. Last year it sold out. This year, Tom will be showing us how to cook crab cakes. It is the only meeting that you can bring your sig. other to. The price is \$38 pp., payable at the meeting. If you sign up, you will be responsible for the fee.

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## July Meeting Change

Jamie Howard was originally the speaker planned for the July 2008 WFFC meeting. That has changed, however. Instead, Heather Bartlett will present. Heather is the Salmon and Steelhead Division Manager for the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife. She will provide an overview of the State Steelhead Management Plan. This will be a very informative meeting—be sure to attend.

## 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 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*

As members entered our new home at the Seattle Tennis Club for the March meeting, they found some unusual tactics: free bar (whiskey only) and your place set with five, count 'em 5, glasses of fine American whiskeys. As if that weren't enough, I noticed that a certain type of member was in evidence—that being a more frolicsome type.

Naturally, I looked for a table of Mormons and members in recovery, so that I might have more to sample. In case you wondered, yes, I walked to the meeting.

Another difference you would have noticed is that the meeting started with a toast rather than the standard business. After our President introduced Stuart Ramsey, he had us lift our glasses with Knob Creek and then proceeded to introduce the whiskeys for the night, claiming it a crime to “go without drinking for longer than five minutes.” Amen to that, and so we toasted.

Our revelry was broken by guest introductions and fishing reports. We enjoyed many guests and a few fishing reports. Of note, members found slow fishing on the Yakima and skunks on the South Sound. Dyche took the hat just in time to save Rocco the trouble. Rocco managed to smell bad in practically every river on the Olympic Peninsula. For my vote, Rocco should have taken on the Chapeau. We also heard of some good fishing on the Upper Columbia from a member who shared details both cogent and not—perhaps evidence that the whiskey was working. Preston had better luck on the Yakima from a boat, fishing dry stoneflies.



*Guests Dale Miller and Tim Berry with Dave Hawkinson*

Just in time, and well past the Kentucky five-minute rule, Mr. Ramsey took back the mike and told us about Evan Williams, a 10-year old single barrel vintage. I found the Evan Williams a bit mellower and richer than the Knob Creek. My table, at least those who were drinking, agreed. We learned about the bedrock of the whiskey state, the foundation of both good whiskey and good strong bones for thoroughbreds.

Some members, at least those still confident enough to speak, started on the questions. For example, what is “single-barrel” American whiskey. Well, glad you asked. Stuart told us that Kentucky distilleries mature their barrels in multi-storied warehouses, sometimes as high as ten. The whiskey on the middle floors tends to have a full maturation and doesn't get as hot as the upper stories. So, distillers will take a floor from the middle range, blend some of the barrels, and call it a “single barrel.” The smaller the distillery, the fewer barrels that will go into the “single barrel.”

We also learned that such small batches, so to speak, are a recent phenomena because the American whiskey market was set back both by Prohibition and the war effort in WWII. Given that the Scots and Canadians were ready to jump into the whiskey void during both lapses, only since the 1980's have US distilleries been able to capture the new “single malt” market.

Get this, American whiskey is a combination of mostly corn, 10% malted barley, and other “small grains” like rye or wheat. It has to be aged in new charred American oak casks thanks to an enterprising Arkansas politician (not named Clinton) who favored the lumber industry.

We were well past the five-minute rule when we finally caught up with the next selection, a 10 year-old 90 proof whiskey.

For some reason, the President thought it wise to take back the agenda and try and talk some sense into the membership. Announcements are available elsewhere in this fine publication. Don Simonson took the opportunity to call attention to Doug Schaad and the Conservation Committee. Applause was generous. Highlights included success in stopping the Crab Creek dam as well as strong wording by the WDFW in their Wild Steelhead recovery plan.

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Peter Baird gave us a report of members both ailing and recovering. Walt Walkinshaw is confined to a wheel chair. He appreciates your calls. Dick Thompson is in the hospital in Ellensburg after a mini-stroke. First-hand reports note great improvement and reason to believe there will be little, if any, lasting damage. Dick hopes to be released later this week.

Okay, back to the whiskey. Stuart gave us a bit of geography and illustrated the river systems and their impact on history. For example, in the city of Paris, which is in the county of Bourbon, on the Kentucky River, casks labeled "Bourbon County" were sent to New Orleans. Hence the name Bourbon stuck in the American imagination.

Back to business: outgoing Outdoors chair, Ron Dion, got us up to speed with a calendar of upcoming events. Feel free to add outings if you wish.

Before we headed to the Home Waters report, we stopped for a 126 proof whiskey called Brooker's. Water required. A couple of cab companies just made some good fares for the night.

Now for the big event, let's spend some money. Rocco took the helm and told us about the search, the quarry, the hunt, and the kill. Although this proposal from the Home Water committee did not fulfill all the criteria, this opportunity came to the committee and they thought that we should take a serious look at some land on the Yakima River that would amount to an annual usage fee agreement for year-round fishing access for \$2500 a year, with \$7500 in construction costs for shelters, BBQ pits, and other amenities.

Kris Kristofferson reported. The property is just south of Ellensburg in the Upper Canyon, about a quarter mile above the Ringer Road ramp. The riverbank is owned by the BLM and follows a mile of braided river. The river property is adjoined by a single section of private land to which WFFC would have access and the ability to build structures for our enjoyment about 500' from the river. Ed Sozinho showed us the construction plan that includes a wind barrier, shelters, locked storage, and an area for teaching.

Kris showed us a series of frequently asked questions and headed off the bulk of challenges. Kris also took questions from the membership. The answers:

- The annual fee will come out of the general budget
- We will use the facility for a couple of outings a year and some classes.

- Running water is available, showers are not.
- Your RV will be handled like that of any other guest at the property.
- Most, if not all, events by the club scheduled ahead of time will have sole access to the facility.
- This is a three-year trial period for both the club and the property owner.
- Insurance will have to be worked out and may involve coverage by both parties.
- Private organizations, like a fly shop, would have to take up usage questions with the club.
- Vandals would have trouble messing with the property.
- Thirty people could fit on the river with little conflict.
- The RV park is only open April through October.
- Structure permits are straightforward.

President Kuper took over and received a unanimous vote to approve the proposal. I helped clean up, if you know what I am saying.

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## The April Fly-Fishing WASL

This is a fishing club, remember? That means you're supposed to be out catching fish. But how much do you really know about the fish you're trying to catch? Test yourself with this latest installment of the Creel Notes' continuing fly-fishing WASL:

1. Taxonomists recently reclassified the rainbow trout as *Oncorhynchus mykiss*. What was its scientific name before it was reclassified?
2. This splendid gamefish has a lunglike organ that allows it to survive in poorly oxygenated water by rolling on the surface and taking in air. What is the fish?
3. What Northwest fish was named after a character in a Charles Dickens novel? (Extra credit if you can also name the novel.)
4. The females of this Puget Sound gamefish bear their young alive. What is the fish?
5. This gamefish, originally imported from the East Coast but now firmly established in the Northwest, is a member of the herring family. What is the fish?
6. These fish, which once spawned in Nevada's Truckee River, have been introduced in several Washington State waters. What are they called?

7. The kokanee is actually a landlocked \_\_\_\_\_ salmon.
8. They used to be commonly called squawfish. What are they called now?
9. The lake trout is actually a member of the \_\_\_\_\_ family.
10. If you caught a specimen of *Eosalmo driftwoodensis*, where and when would you have been fishing? (Answers on P. 7)



### Yakima Fishing Report *by Hugh Clark*

My wife and I spent two nights, Mar 31-Apr 2, at the Yakima River RV resort, on the property where we approved a WFFC lease. There was one other RV on the property, and as advertised we got water and electricity for \$26/night. It was cold! 18 degrees the first night, 27 the second. I fished for three hours on consecutive afternoons, 3:30 to almost seven. Runs, riffles, and banks were all approached. I only saw two fish rise, caught one 15 incher on a Skwala. The underside of rocks were thick with Skwala nymphs, but no adults were seen on the surface. There was no BW Olive hatch, but abundant midges in eddies in the late afternoon. I did not see any fish working the eddies. I think this site will be most enjoyable and I will certainly give it another go as the weather warms.



*Hugh Clark fishing the Yakima Home Waters*

### 2008 Washington Fly Fishing Conclave

The Washington Fly Fishing Conclave is just around the corner. Sponsored by the Washington State Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers (WSCFF), the conclave is scheduled for May 3, 2008, at the Kittitas County Event Center in Ellensburg.

The conclave will consist of fly tying and casting demonstrations, classes, games, and competition throughout the day. The keynote speaker is Bob Jacklin, who is a guide, outfitter, renowned tyer, and casting instructor. The classes are not full (fee: \$25). And there is still room for additional competitors for the club in the casting competition. Please contact Ed Sozinho if you are interested.

There are motel rooms available at a negotiated rate, but you must register under a group. For more information, contact Pat Peterman.

For general information about the conclave, see <http://www.washingtoncouncilfff.org>.

### WFFC 2008 Outings Underway

*by Robert Tovar*

As the newly appointed Chair of the Outdoor Committee, I am excited to share with you some of the outings we have scheduled for 2008. This year's schedule preserves some of the traditional outings WFFC members have enjoyed in past years and includes some new locations and destinations. By the way, the schedule is nowhere near complete, so there is plenty of time to propose additional outings that members can enjoy.

While we have already held two outings, at Lone Lake and Pass Lake, the ones that have many members excited are scheduled for April 18<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> at Dry Falls Lake and May 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> at Lake Chopaka. These particular outings have historically attracted many members over the years and for good reason. They are wonderful places to fish and even better places to camp. A Saturday night potluck dinner will be held at each event. Members can also expect their traditional Sunday pancake breakfast at the Memorial Day Lake Chopaka outing.

We do want to draw your attention to a couple of special outings this year. We have tentatively scheduled a working/fishing outing at our newly acquired Home Waters property along the Yakima River. The date has tentatively been set at June 7<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup>, and at

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present the plan is to have enough members turn out to build a shelter and otherwise assist with developing the location. We will make plenty of time to fish as well.

The other special outing is the New Members Outing at Rattlesnake Lake on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The WFFC Board wants to ensure that new members have the opportunity to meet as many club members as possible and proposed this event as a special day for new members and their sponsors. All members are welcome and strongly encouraged to attend.

The Outings Calendar will soon be posted on the WFFC Members site for your perusal. I want to say thank you to many of the members for offering their assistance in organizing some of these outings. You will find several outings already scheduled and room for plenty more, so please forward your ideas for outings to me at the email address below or corner me at one of the meetings to share your thoughts and ideas.

As Chair for this committee, I am looking forward to a successful year on the water and fully expect to see many of you at these fun and exciting events. By the way, we could use more help with the planning and logistics for the outings, and I am hopeful that some of you would be willing to serve on the Outdoor Committee. If you have any questions about our outings schedule or if you can assist with organizing these wonderful events, please email me at the following address: [teamtovar@comcast.net](mailto:teamtovar@comcast.net).

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## **Dry Falls Outing** *by Jim van de Erve*

The Dry Falls Lake club outing is coming up very soon, and as always, it heralds the opening of east-side trout fishing. For me—and I'm sure many others—the first spring trip to Dry Falls is a ritual, a renewal, a return to a lake that always flat-out amazes me.

Scientists tell us that Dry Falls was carved by an explosive rush of water of almost unimaginable proportions. That may seem like the stuff of legend, rather than truth, but the lake is worthy of the legend: it is otherworldly, a pristine lake surrounded on three sides by towering, rugged bluffs. In this primeval setting, you can see geese course through the coulee, coyotes range along the shore, anvil cumulus drift

across the badlands, and you can raise lunker fish from the depths.

It's more than a beautiful landscape, it's also a great fishery. Is it as good as it was twenty years ago? No, probably not. But it still holds a lot of fish and it's still a unique fishery. Dry Falls has a ragged shore, an uneven bottom, and rocky islands that form a myriad of fishing ecosystems. Wherever you fish on Dry Falls, there is always another spot of the lake that beckons you. If you haven't caught a fish in a while, you may remember that time five years ago when you caught fish after fish on a small black chironomid in a cove across the lake—at the same time of day and with exactly the same conditions that you are experiencing now. Do you stay or go? It can be maddeningly enticing.

My favorite start to a day on Dry Falls is to put in at the farthest entry, work my way along the beautiful weed beds to the right, fish past the small cliffs where fish love to take chironomids, troll along the reeds where you can get a hammerhead take on a nymph, and then enter the large cove on the far right. When the morning hatch is on, fish take chironomids all through that cove, from the deeper water in the center to the shallower water up against the reeds. It's also great for dragging a marabou damsel or a Carey Special, or stripping a pheasant tail or a scud from the reeds. And I'm sure that there are club members who have much more effective secret weapons in their fly boxes.

But wait. You can also oar across the deeps to the cove where the trail comes down from the lookout. This also has a great chironomid hatch, reeds to cast into, shallower water near the point in the middle—where big fish hang out—and that intriguing small adjunct of a cove on the far end.

And then there's the Lips, the water between the islands, both the deeper water away from the put-in and the cozy pocket water that can be great for midges. And The Aquarium, where you can fish a dry or an emerger over those rich weed beds (hopefully the water level's up this year). And the outlet, where club members did so well at last year's opener. And the rock wall on the peninsula by the far end, which Rocco has liked more and more over the last few years. And the cove at the put-in, and...and...

What's a guy to do? You need multiple days on this water, multiple trips to this lake.

Gentlemen, the WFFC Dry Falls outing is just around the corner: April 18th to 20th.

## Western Washington University's Fly Fishing Collection

The Fly Fishing Collection at Western Washington University continues to grow. You can check it out on-line by going to <http://www.library.wvu.edu>. Click on "Special Collections," then click on "Fly Fishing Collection" (the Elkhair Caddis icon). This will get you to a page listing the books and other items in the collection, including "oral histories." Go to the latter page and you'll find photos of WFFC members Jack Hutchinson and Fran Wood. Click on those photos and you'll get a transcript of interviews with each. Interviews with other members, including Walt Walkinshaw, Frank Headrick, and Gil Nyerges, are being transcribed and will soon be added to the website.

The Fly Fishing Collection is currently housed in the Special Collections department of the Wilson Library on the WWU campus. However, a major expansion is planned. Danny Beatty (former FFF president and Fidalgo Flyfishers member) and I met recently with the architect and WWU officials to kick around concepts for the new Special Collections area. It will include a "research room" with small displays of fly-fishing artifacts, books, and art. The library staff also is continuing discussions with the director of the Whatcom Museum of History and Art in Bellingham to draft a memorandum of understanding for the two institutions to collaborate in a permanent fly-fishing collection/display. The memorandum probably will take the form of an agreement for the library to maintain custody of most fly-fishing books, historic manuscripts, oral histories, and artwork (all of which would be available to researchers or other interested parties), while the museum would maintain custody of "realia" (artifacts) and smaller collections of books, art, etc. The museum also is undergoing a major expansion and is thinking about a permanent exhibit on fishing, which would include a section on fly fishing.

Much work remains to be done and it will probably take at least another year for all this to come together, but the result could be that Bellingham will eventually become a major center of fly-fishing history. Stay tuned.

## Backcountry Folks Gathering *by Pete Baird*

Mike Wearne will host an early gathering at 5:00 pm before the next regular meeting on April 15 to discuss the possibility of a summer horse-hike trip in the Beartooths. The meeting will be held in the View Room of the Seattle Tennis Club, at the SE end of our main dining area. Check your calendars and have some thoughts on which week would best fit into your summer plans. If you are unable to make the meeting, but do have an interest in the outcome, please let Mike know. If we are too late in our planning to make a Beartooth trip happen this year, do discuss a more local option for a shorter duration venture. If you recognize any other folks who ought to be informed of the gathering please let them know.

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## The Fly-Fishing WASL

Answers:

1. *Salmo gairdneri*
2. Tarpon
3. The Dolly Varden. The name of the novel was "Barnaby Rudge."
4. Sea perch (*Embiotocidae*). There are 23 species, several of which inhabit Puget Sound.
5. The American Shad
6. Lahontan cutthroat
7. Sockeye
8. Northern pikeminnow
9. Char
10. British Columbia, about 40 million years ago. *E. driftwoodensis* is the earliest known troutlike fossil fish, believed to be a forerunner of modern salmon, grayling, and whitefish. (OK, we admit that was a bit of a trick question; appearances to the contrary, no WFFC member is actually 40 million years old.)

Score:

0-4: You may not know much about fish, but you sure smell like one.

5-8: You have a long way to go upstream.

9-10: You can scale any heights.



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April, 2008

**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: Travis Rummel of Felt Soul Media

An independent filmmaker, Travis will discuss the joy and pain of making fly fishing films.