

# Creel Notes from the



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



May, 2009



Hello all!

Hope the beginning of summer finds you all healthy and with an acceptably full slate of fishing activities through the fall. I have been out a little, and the impact of being on the water is nourishment for something primal in me that

gets a little out of whack if I don't prioritize things to make a little time for fishing happen. Speaking of priorities, your board wants to know how you feel about where we are and where we are going, and to that end has commissioned **Bill Kuper** to prepare a survey that will be emailed to the membership in the near term... probably Sunday. We are hoping for 100% participation, so please fill it out and e-mail it back. It should just take a couple of minutes, and it is sure better than guessing what the members are thinking. Thanks for your help.

As the show season ends, we made a great contribution to the Washington State Council's Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg on May 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup>. We had several club members demonstrating their patterns and tying skills, teaching classes, teaching casting, and managing the casting competition. The attendance at the show nearly doubled by many estimates over the prior year, and more people got exposed to fly fishing, making our time and energy contribution especially worthwhile. Thanks to those who participated. By the way, **Ed Sozinho** won the overall casting first and your team brought home a first, as well.

Members attending the Dry Falls outing, nearly thirty by some counts, had a great time. Dry Falls remains a tough but not impossible fishery to me, but several had a more productive day. The fish that were caught looked healthy. Our Saturday steak dinner was great and the stories around the campfire should have been recorded (or not). If you went on the outing, come to Chopaka and bring a friend. If you missed the outing, come to

Chopaka and bring a friend. It is the weekend of May 22<sup>nd</sup> through the 25<sup>th</sup>...the traditional feast of fish tempura being headed by **Jim McRoberts** and **Scott Hagen**. Please sign up now so they can get enough fish and batter, beer and soda, etc.

We have had a few folks recently ask about how one becomes a member. The bylaws call for attendance at three meetings or outings and an interview by the membership committee, who recommend that the membership vote the individual into membership, followed by their induction. Those steps are always followed, but the essence is to invite someone to attend a meeting so that they can meet us and we can meet them. Let me and the 1<sup>st</sup> VP Membership, **Bill Deters**, know if you have an interested party attending, so that we make sure they meet a few folks.

And above all, go fishing and take a friend.

Pat Peterman  
President, 2009

## Inside.....

This Month's Meeting	2
The Creel Calendar	2
Significant Others Event	2
On the Fly	3
Lone Lake Report	4
Dry Falls Report	4
Lone Lake, May 1	5
Rufus Woods Report	5
Conservation Corner, April 2008	6
Boyd Aigner Judging	7
Casting and Tying at Ellensburg FFF	7

## *This Month's Meeting*

### **Les Johnson – Our own member will talk about Fly Fishing for Salmon**

Les has written books on the subject with the latest release last year. It will be a good informational program with opportunities for questions and answers about our Northwest salmon fishery.

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## *The Creel Calendar*

**Chopaka Lake Outing**, May 23<sup>rd</sup> through 25<sup>th</sup>  
A classic club outing.

**Jimmy Green Memorial Fly Fishing Fair and Casting Expo**,  
June 20<sup>th</sup>  
From 9 am to 4 pm, at Lake Tye Park in Monroe. Designed to bring people into the sport. (Ask **Leland Miyawaki** about it.)

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## **June Significant Others Event!**

*by Steve Sunich, 2nd Vice President*

This year we will be honored to have Tom Douglas back giving a cooking demo at the June meeting. The meeting is at the Palace Ballroom on June 17<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 pm (cocktail hour) and 6:45 (call to dinner). **Remember that this is a Wednesday, not the typical Tuesday.** The Palace Ballroom is at 2100 5th Avenue in downtown Seattle, at the corner of 5th & Lenora.

The price had been lowered this year to \$33 per person.

This event was started by Keith Robbins a couple years ago and is back by popular demand. It is the only meeting where you can bring your significant other! Our significant others have loved it and have participated in fishing reports and cooking demos.

Look at this menu!

- Starter: *Duck Confit with Red Cabbage, Hazelnuts, and Watercress*
- Entrée: *Pan-fried Trout with Mountain Cured Ham and Bacon*
- Dessert: *Chocolate Cake and Fleur de Sel*

We will need to have a guest count early, so get your reservations as soon as possible. Space could be limited. You will be able to register and pay on the Web site. For those of you not using the Web site, we will have forms available at this month's meeting, or we can mail them to you if you do not have an e-mail address registered with the WFFC.

## *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*

At the April meeting, our President, **Pat Peterman**, broke protocol and started the meeting by recognizing the sons of members (both living and passed) who have graced the club with generational magnificence. A few brave members brought guests to the program, the others fearing the ramifications of introducing anglers to tonight's presentation about the end of the world.

Fishing reports ranged from my skunk on Pass Lake to 3 ft. mackerel in Fiji. Many members made the outing to Dry Falls. Of the 26 members, only a few braved a report, leaving me to wonder how many skunks went uncrowned.

Committee reports started with a visual feature of the members Web site shopping area. From now on, you can try on items at the meetings to get your size right, and then order things online, just like you are buying from Amazon. Go to the WFFC Web site, check in as a member, and shop until you drop. You can also pay your dues and prepay for dinner.

The rest of the committee reports went by at the speed of light, halting just for a moment at the Home Waters report. It appears, and I choose that word carefully, that we have an understanding with the owner. No paper has been signed, and no money will be spent until such ink is dry. From there, the committee hopes to get a survey, drill some post holes, line out some projects, and then get out the tool belts in July.

**Doug Schaad** started his report with the word 'bleak', but it went uphill from there. The legislature stripped most of the negative language out of the budget in regard to the WDFW Wildlife Commission. We as a state enter now into a major legislative cycle in terms of fishing regulations. For example, some forces are at work to ban all taking of Bull Trout. The Conservation Committee welcomes other ideas from members and promises to forward them to the right people in the right language. Doug thanks all of you who gave your legislator a piece of your mind.

**Pete Crumbaker** discussed the new spot for the Christmas party. We regain control of the bar and join the trendy in the search for the fun and excitement of SODO. **Jim McRoberts** reported on Project Healing Waters, which ironically was under-attended because Pooh's Pond twenty miles west of Port Angeles was a ferry trip away, and these Vets are at risk for suicide on the ferry ride. Sad, but true. The next trip is to Trophy Lake. Give Jim an e-mail "shout" if you can help.

**Jim Young** led our discussion of the bylaws revisions. Members had the major changes for review. Debate ensued, most fiercely over the question of the spelling of 'gillie' versus the more tradition and Scottish form of 'ghillie'. In a moment of unflagging tradition (and in forfeit of common sense), the membership supported the archaic form, thus ensuring more students being flummoxed at spelling bees for years to come. The horror.

A prompt return to business started with a review of the excellent time had by all at the Dry Falls conclave. Even stray motorcycle riders were treated to a steak dinner and short lecture on the difference between a dry fly and a wet fly. **Steve Sunich** briefly reviewed the upcoming meetings before introducing Nate Mantua.

Nate is an Associate Professor at the UW Aquatics Department. He spoke five years ago about El Nino weather patterns. Since then, most of the world has shifted its focus to climate change, especially in relation to salmon and steelhead. Since Washington is in the heart of Steelhead country, we are avoiding many of the ill effects of fringe systems that are much more vulnerable. For example, we will have cold water, where California steelhead have more and more trouble returning to cold streams. At least for now.

Glaciers are in rapid decline in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. And glaciers are responsible for keeping western rivers cold, even in the summer. Glaciers are just the indicator of reducing snow pack, changing available water later in the summer. As the snowmelt timing shifts, fish have trouble adjusting because human-caused climate change is not as gradual as typical change. Timing of river floods has altered by two to three weeks.

Nate is mapping river output on the long term and speculates that river temperatures will rise by one to five degrees centigrade (three to ten degrees

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

Fahrenheit). These numbers will depend on our carbon output and nature's ability to handle greenhouse gases. If we look ahead based on his research, we will see higher and higher average temperatures. Our coolest days may be the warmest days of yesteryear. In other words, we have a new climate to look forward to by 2090.

His models show that we will have more rain and less snow at higher and higher elevations. Rivers will then peak when the winter rains peak. That means river temperature and flow will peak in January, rather than June. That's a big shift. Anadromous fish have developed life cycles to take advantage of historic river flows. If changes in flow meet changes in river temperatures, steelhead and salmon risk major changes and increased vulnerability to disease. In other words, salmon rivers will become carp and bass rivers as adult salmon quit migrating when the water reaches 70°.

I have to admit, I didn't enjoy this last winter. I found it cold and wet. Well, according to the professor, by 2040, I will be nostalgic not just for archaic spellings of ghillie, but also for winter as we knew it. The news gets worse. Climate change tends to amplify problems that already exist. We have decimated aquatic habitat with overdevelopment. If sea levels rise, more freshwater habitat will be lost. Estuaries are crucial for juvenile development. Since estuaries are at risk from man and climate change (another weapon of mass destruction), salmon run a double risk. From there the cycle continues: less habitat for less fish with worsening conditions.

Had enough? Wait, there's more. Our coastal waters are cooled by offshore winds taking warm coastal water out to the deeper parts of the ocean. Colder water from the depths takes the place of warmer shore water. Since cold water is water rich in food, shifting winds can change food supplies. Coastal salmon need abundant food supplies to get a head start on other ocean predators. This is critical for their survival. I could go on, but you get the picture.

Good news? Well, you might be fishing for tuna some day. They are targeting Humboldt squid off the coast of Washington and Oregon. Get a stiff rod and weighted jigs.

## Lone Lake Outing Report

by Jim Macdonald

The weather was great Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, for the Lone Lake New Member outing. Many people caught a lot of fish. **Mark Pratt** at last count had taken 11. Lunch was great with a lot of talking goin' on. I think we fired up the grill three times to accommodate the late arrivals, and gave all the late arrivals a bad time over having to fire the grill up again, good naturedly, of course.

I think everyone had a great time.



*A full crew at the Lone Lake outing*

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## Dry Falls Outing Report by Jim van de Erve

Some 30 club members descended upon Dry Falls Lake at the annual club outing on April 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. The fishing was, well, slow, as a number of members had one- or two-fish days. The fish were taking chironomids deep, with some people on the lake going down 25 feet off of an indicator to find them. Dragging a damselfly nymph and other flies down low also worked at times, but those who had it dialed on deep chironomids outfished everyone else. You could see fish working in shallower water, but they weren't much interested in what we were throwing at them.

**Craig Koepler** may have been high rod for the club with a six-fish day. The fish I caught were 18" and 20", and very healthy, which is encouraging if you don't think about the number caught.

But—and this is important—the party back at camp was superb, with wonderful food, terrible jokes, smooth whiskey, and fine cowboy poetry from **Jack Crowley**. The tradition lives...

You remember May 1: The only really nice day we've had. Given the good weather, Lone Lake was surprisingly uncrowded, so I headed for my favorite spot where I could see fish rising to a hatch of large chironomids. I covered a rise, felt a light take, set the hook—and then this *THING* started moving ponderously toward the center of the lake, taking my fly line along with it.

Muskrat? Beaver? Somebody's escaped pet alligator?

Nope, none of the above. When the thing finally came to the surface, I saw that I had hooked a bulbously fat, hideously ugly grass carp, one of some 900 stocked a couple of years ago to eat the Brazilian elodea weed that was threatening to choke Lone Lake. This one looked as if it had eaten all the weeds by itself.

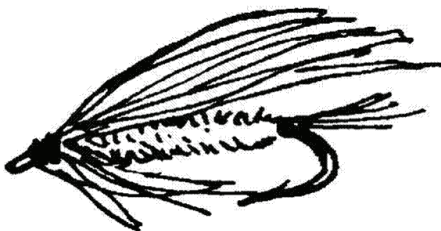
The carp are supposed to be vegetarians, but this one had clamped down hard on my No. 10 red chironomid imitation and wasn't about to let go. The carp also are supposed to be sterile. I sure hope they got that part of it right.

Anyway, I was using a 6-foot, 9-inch rod and a very light tippet, so I had to fight the beast gingerly. It made several strong, short runs, but mostly just grubbed around on the bottom like a pig rooting through a landfill. Finally, after about 10 minutes, the carp rolled onto its very fat side and I led it to the boat, twisted my fly out of its jaw, watched it swim away, and then threw up.

Just kidding. I really didn't throw up. I sure thought about it, though.

So now I've added grass carp to my life list of fly-caught species. I won't be anxious to do it again.

Oh, yeah: I also caught a lot of nice trout, 15 to 18 inches, the largest one pushing three pounds. So it was a good day. And I learned a valuable lesson, one I won't soon forget: Now I know how to distinguish between a trout's riseform and a carp's riseform.



For the last several years, I have heard stories about great fishing in this lake that is the impoundment behind Chief Joseph dam on the Columbia at Bridgeport, and extends for 50 miles through inaccessible canyon country to the base of Grand Coulee Dam at Grand Coulee. The Colville Indian Reservation forms the north border of the lake throughout its length, and the Colville's have been raising trout for commercial sale in net pens in the upper portion of the lake/river for several years. Definitive information has been hard to come by and except in a few instances, I've been unable to verify fish to 27 pounds, catch and releases of 20 to 30 fish a day, no dry-fly activity, rupture of net pens 5 to 8 years ago that started the fishery in the lake, and dangerous water flow in the area just below the spillway at Grand Coulee. Almost everyone I talked to fished in the November to May time period, with mornings being better than afternoons. I had seen pictures of football-shaped fish that had come from this water, several by **Don Gulliford**, and the regional biologist in Ephrata had told me that the only way that fish can get such huge bodies relatively to their heads was to be fed fish pellets. Fortuitously in the last few months, I ran into two fishermen who fish this lake and were willing, for a few of my sculpins, to show me the ropes.

On Thursday of our trip, at 9 am, we launched our prams at the convenient Dept. of Natural Resources boat launch just above Bridgeport on the south and downriver side of the lake. There is also a developed launch at the state park on the north shore. The lake in this area is trolling water, with no weed beds, steep banks, and depths of 120 feet. The fish we found seemed to be lying in the top 10 feet of water underneath a long chain of giant buoys that stretched across the entire lake/river to prevent debris from clogging the dam spillway. Some form of woolly bugger seemed to work best here, and in four hours, before being blown off the water, my partner landed three fish 16 to 17 inches, and I landed one of three to four pounds.

On Friday, we launched a jet sled from a rudimentary put-in on the reservation side about six or seven miles downstream from Grand Coulee dam. This is in an area of net pens. We saw 20 or 30 bank anglers catching an occasional fish, but only a few boats on the water all day. The proprietor of the local

(Continued from page 5)

tackle shop in Electric City informed us that we didn't need a reservation fishing permit to either launch from the reservation side or fish the river, so long as we weren't fishing with our feet on their land. We learned from a friendly local that the Indians regularly dump fish from their pens into the lake/river (2,500 three- to four-pound fish on the day before we fished), which has built up a substantial bank and boat fishery in the last several years, with as many as several hundred bank anglers congregating around the net pen area on weekends and at times as many as 50 or 100 boats plying the nearby waters. This gent also explained that once in the river, the released trout, and what native trout there are, feed on the fish pellets that drop through the bottom of the nets and because of this feed, the larger trout tend to stay around the upper end of Rufus Woods, which was consonant with other information I had been told. Erratic fishing has been related to the volume of water released from the dam.

On this particular day the river current was minimal, and anchoring and casting near either the pens or the river bank was possible, but non productive. So we elected to run up river, and drift repeatedly across the Nespelem bar (which sits in the middle of the river near the pens and bulges up to within 10 to 20 feet of the surface) casting woolly buggers on high D lines. Using a fast jerky retrieve, my fishing partner caught three fish in the three- to four-pound category, and I caught one in about four hours of fishing. Each fish was football-shaped and fought well, but unfortunately each had both the dorsal and ventral portions of their tails worn off (presumably from being in the nets), diminishing their ascetics. One of the fish we cleaned had an intestine that was absolutely stuffed with trout pellets. The water temperature was 43 degrees, and suggests to me that this should be a year-around fishery, since the water coming out of the bottom of Grand Coulee Dam should be cold even in the hot summer months.

The canyon scenery was picturesque in the bright sunlight, and we had enough activity to make me want to come back and try the upper end again.

## Conservation Corner, April 2009

by Doug Schaad and Preston Singletary,  
Co-Chairs, Conservation Committee

April is typically a busy month for the Conservation Committee, and this was no exception. Here are a few of the items that we tackled.

### Legislative

Along with many members of the WFFC, the Conservation Committee worked hard to defeat Sen. Jacobsen's SB 5127, which would have removed all citizen input into the management of **OUR OWN** natural resources. When SB 5127 morphed into HB 1778, and the most egregious sections of SB 5127 were appended, we went after that one as well.

Though we can take no more credit than informed citizens, I'm pleased to say that the Commission, with its regional representation, remains intact. While not perfect, the intent of the citizen's initiative in 1995 remains alive.

The Conservation Committee also supported federal legislation to expand the Alpine Lakes Wilderness Area to include the Pratt River and the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie River.

### Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife

Proposals are now being accepted by WDFW for the major regulation cycle that will change regulations in 2010. The Conservation Committee has endorsed a proposal by Dr. Tom Quinn to ban the retention of Bull/Dolly Varden trout in all waters where they may now be retained.

A separate proposal submitted by the Conservation Committee would ban the retention of all wild iteraparous salmonids statewide. If this proposal is accepted, statewide retention of all wild cutthroats and steelhead would be banned. While separate from Dr. Quinn's proposal, the submitted regulation change does include both Bull Trout and Dolly Vardens.

### Student Research Funding

Your Conservation Committee awarded two research grants to Mr. Thomas Buehrens and Ms. Jessica Beetz. Mr. Buehrens will be investigating the interaction of resident trout populations with Coho/Chinook populations since the removal of the Landsburg dam on the Cedar River. His research

*(Continued from page 6)*

follows previous WFFC-supported investigations into Coho colonization above Landsburg. Results of his research should provide additional knowledge relevant to the removal of the Elwha dams. Mr. Buehrens is being mentored by Dr. Tom Quinn.

Ms. Beetz is developing computerized models to investigate the impact of global warming on 25 stocks of Coho in the Pacific Northwest. Her research will be focusing on marine survival and differentiate between wild and hatchery Coho stocks. Given the paucity of data on marine survival, the Conservation Committee heartily endorsed the proposal. Ms. Beetz is being mentored by Dr. Nate Mantua.

### **North of Falcon**

The Conservation Committee wishes to thank **Keith Robbins** for his years of service within the North of Falcon process. While we can never provide reimbursement for the countless hours that Keith has invested, the Conservation Committee did reimburse expenses incurred for his travels on the club's behalf.

### **Center for Environmental Law and Policy (CELP)**

During the calendar year of 2008, members of the WFFC donated in excess of \$1500 to the Center for Environmental Law and Policy. This month the Conservation Committee provided a check for \$1000 to CELP, the upper limit of the matching program approved by the general membership.

The Conservation Committee wishes to thank CELP for their leadership in protecting the Crab Creek watershed from becoming another huge reservoir in the Columbia Basin. We also salute the membership of the WFFC for their support of CELP.

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### **Judging for Boyd Aigner Competition**

*by Bill Neal*

A special feature of the May Members Meeting will be the judging of the 2009 Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition. We have 13 participants in this year's competition, and the patterns that have been submitted are, as always, very interesting and impressive. This is particularly so for the yellow jacket

pattern, which has encouraged quite a bit of creativity. The judging is done by all club members, so please take a few minutes to inspect these patterns and cast your vote. The winners will be announced at the June meeting.

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### **Washington State Council of FFF**

*by Don Simonson, Casting Co-Chair*

On behalf of Kip Keener and myself, I want to thank the WFFC members who administered and competed in the 5Wt Fly Casting Competition at our Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg. Administering the games were **Ed Sozinho, Craig Koepler, Jim Macdonald, Chuck Ballard, and Don Barton.**

The WFFC won first place in the team competition and **Ed Sozinho** won first place in professional individual. The team consisted of **Ed Sozinho, Craig Koepler, Pat Peterman, and Walt Swanson.**

I also want to thank the following FFF CI casting instructors who did a fantastic job of teaching the kids on Friday and doing casting classes: **John Olson, Pat Peterman, Jim Higgins, and Walt Swanson.**

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### **Fly Tying at the Ellensburg Fly Fishing**

**Fair** *by Bob Burdick*

The Ellensburg Fly Fishing Fair is a newer fly-tying venue promoted by the FFF. One hundred and twenty-five tiers took part in this event, and tied in three-hour blocks over a two-day period. Most tiers were local to Washington State, but others came from British Columbia, California, Montana, and as far away as Georgia, to demonstrate their skills. Many tiers tied productive local wet and dry patterns, but others tied multi-colored Atlantic salmon flies, a few tied realistic insect imitations, and Harry Lemire, as usual, demonstrated his technique of tying flies without a vise. Both silent auctions and raffles accompanied the tying, held in two large adjoining rooms on the Ellensburg Fairgrounds. There were also celebrity tiers who demonstrated their techniques to a theatre audience, and a continuous series of lectures on various fishing topics. Our club was well represented by tiers and lecturers: **Jim Higgins, Les Johnson, Joe Kristof, Leland Miyawaki, Preston Singletary, and myself.**



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Stamp  
here

May, 2009

### 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: Les Johnson on Fly Fishing for Salmon

Our fellow member will speak and answer questions about our Northwest salmon fishery.