

Creel Notes from the



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



May, 2011



President's Riffle

OK ... it's mid May and I am in full fishing mode now. I, along with about 40 other WFFC members and guests, attended the Dry Falls outing in mid April. The outing was a rousing success. Fishing wasn't bad, and some big fish were landed. Our steak BBQ was supplemented by a plethora of sumptuous side dishes provided by members and their guests. Good food, good wine, great conversation, and a warm, albeit sideways, fire made for a fun evening. All that outing did was fire me up for more fishing. By the way, be sure to thank **Dave Schorsch** and **Mark Pratt** for their organizational efforts. Many others were involved, too.

That leads us to ... **Chopaka!!!** Memorial Day weekend (May 27th – May 30th) marks another of the WFFC's "big" outings. Several of us went last spring, and the fishing at the lake was as good as most veterans of the lake could ever remember. I think it would be asking too much for similar success this year, but who knows! The club will provide the BBQ grill and beverages for the Saturday evening dinner (bring your own meat), Sunday morning breakfast, Sunday evening Tempura dinner (a true classic tradition), and Monday morning breakfast. If you have never been to Chopaka Lake, the camping is the best ... right on the lakeshore with terrific scenery. You may see deer, moose, and even a bear or two. **Be sure to sign up on the website so we can get an accurate count of attendees.** We want to be sure to have enough food. If you go, **bring firewood, ice, and plenty of drinking water!!!**

If you have not heard, Kaufmann's Streamborn Fly Shop has sadly gone out of business, abruptly closing all their stores. Once a stalwart in the business, they succumbed to the bad economy. A word of advice ... support these remaining fly shops as much as possible: Or-

vis in Bellevue, the Avid Angler, Patrick's, Creekside in Issaquah and Seattle, Pacific Fly Fishers, Puget Sound Fly Co, All About the Fly, Red's ... all of them are our allies, friends, and our bread and butter. We rely upon them for donations to our Christmas auction, so in turn, their success helps our success. They are also our conduit to the public. When you visit an area fly shop, introduce yourself as a member of the WFFC and establish a rapport with them. It's good for their business and our business.

Finally, **Mike Santangelo** recently distributed a letter to our club members reminding them to either procure donations for our Christmas party or donate something of value themselves (see page 6). I thought his letter was right on the nut. Every member is responsible for furthering the success of our club. Our club needs money to operate and do the things we want and should do. So please, help make our fundraising a success. Let Mike know how you can help out.

I can't wait for Chopaka Lake! I hope many of you can make it. Let's share a beer and some flies

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together at the lake. Chopaka Outing ... bring wood. If you bring a guest, let **McDonald** know, for the contest.

Yakima River structure ... Your Board members are working hard. We've had terrific attendance and tackled many tough issues. I am very proud of the board. Take a second and thank them for being there, being engaged, and representing the best interests of our club. I am amazed at the behind-the-scenes work these board members put in.

Your WFFC President for 2011,
Rocco Maccarrone

May Club Meeting Speaker: Ray Gould

Ray will be discussing his new book "Fly Fishing for Kamloops Trout". Ray is a past recipient of the Letcher Lambuth award for his work in building cane rods.

Fly tier: **Dick Brening**

Gierach

John Gierach will be at Third Place Books on May 24th for a reading of his new book.

Salmon: Running the Gauntlet

This television show discusses the status of salmon in the Columbia River system. As **Bob Young** says, "This is a very informative show and should be seen by all our members and friends."

PBS - Nature has already posted the full episode on their website. Check that out at <http://www.pbs.org/wnet/nature/episodes>.

The Creel Calendar

Chopaka Lake Outing, Sat., May 28th through Mon., May 30th

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.

Doug Rose on Sea-Run Cutts

by Jim van de Erve

Doug Rose is a well-known fishing guide on the Olympic Peninsula who specializes in sea-run cutthroat trout and steelhead fly fishing. His presentation on this evening focused on sea-run cutts. He started out the April meeting by saying that he was honored to present to us because “you’ve got some of the best sea-run cutt fishermen around.” He did say that cutt fishing is different on the Peninsula, where you can fish year-round. He then took us on a tour of the Olympic cutthroat waters, which included four types of waters: rivers, large lakes, beaver ponds, and the salt.

Doug started and ended talking about the Calawah, which must hold some fascination for him. He said that the main stem of the Calawah has both a nice run of steelhead and is great for cutts. He talked about “tank holes” 12 feet deep, where the cutts bite better in a soft drizzle. And that up high, the Calawah has nice resident cutts, with big spots. The same thing is true for the Bogachiel. At one point, the Bogie runs through a gorge—get above the gorge, and the cutt fishing can be unbelievable, even as much as 12 or 15 miles up.

Same thing for the Queets. Cutts are apparently plentiful high in the Olympics, and if you’re adventurous, and fish “a tributary or a tributary” of the Queets, you can be rewarded. In river systems, cutts tend to favor large woody debris and in-stream structures, with adults hanging out in large pools.

Doug also encouraged us to fish big lakes on the Peninsula. Fish streamers early in the day on Crescent Lake, when the bigger fish are up in the water



Gil, Rocco, and Jim inducting Mike Mosczynski

and you can fish “like you’re fishing for Chinook in salt water”. The record cutt is 12 pounds, but Doug thinks bigger fish have been pulled out of Crescent. And Lake Quinault: it has a big slurry of food and big fish. (Just don’t forget a tribal license and boat.)

But lakes don’t have to be big for cutts. Try beaver ponds as well, even if the ponds have ramshackle dams and don’t have classic water, but are murky.

Doug also had plenty to say about the salt, both on the east and west sides of the Peninsula. He spoke about cutt waters around Marrowstone, where he suggested looking for beaches with broken shells where forage fish like to hang out, and where cutts spawn high on beaches at high tide. On the western coastal waters, Doug likes scalloped points where cobble falls off to gravel, where there’s “junk” in the water, and by bluffs where debris can fall in. And within a mile of a creek—the book I have says that when cutts go to the salt, they typically stay close to shore, and seldom range far from the mouths of their parent streams.

And flies? For the salt, Doug likes those in Les Johnson’s book. He likes woolly buggers for sticklebacks, herring patterns, chum fry imitations like the Jim Dandy, and bucktail muddler minnows. In rivers, he likes an Orange Heron and a Spruce Fly, and he harkened back to photographs of cutt fishing in the 60’s that showed fly boxes filled with Haig-Brown patterns and Royal Coachmen.



Peter Draughon (left, to be inducted) and John Prudden (right, new member)



Chopaka Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

The damsels and mayes are calling, it must be time to head for Chopaka!

The club's annual Memorial Day weekend at Chopaka Lake is always a blast, no matter the weather! We gather in the main camp area at the lake, Saturday through Monday, May 28th to 30th. Look for the club banner!

We will have the traditional Saturday potluck/happy hour around 5:00. Bring your best appetizer/side dish to share. The club grill will be set up for everybody to use by dinner time, so bring your steaks, kabobs, snake, rhino, etc... The club will provide pop, beer, cheap wine. Harder choices are on you, expect to share. Sunday morning (not too early) is the pancake breakfast; will need help with stoves and volunteers. Sunday evening, another happy hour, with the tempura crew setting up woks and fish and batter. Always good stuff with cold beverages.

The more the merrier! More volunteer help means more casting a dry fly along the reeds for the crew!

Chopaka is a beautiful lake in a beautiful setting, lots to see and do other than fishing. It's a great place to bring spouse and family. The campground has outhouse style facilities and a hand pump on a well, although I don't use the water there myself. The camp should be considered dry, so bring plenty of water, along with some firewood.

Music has become sort of a tradition at the Chopaka campfire, so feel free to bring your guitar or kazoo, and sing along.

The fishing is mixed, along with the mountain weather, so bring everything. The mayfly hatch usually starts after noon, with fish starting on emergers earlier. At the peak of the hatch, fish grab parachutes and clipped Adams with abandon in sizes 16 to 12. Damsels are always good, with heavy hatches at times, and active fish working the weeds for nymphs and hovering adults. There are some BIG, hot fish here, so expect to get broken off in the weeds. Bring backup flies along with the rain gear. For the die-

hards (like me), the day wraps up with night fishing. Dragging a black leech behind the boat in the dark results in screaming hits from some of the biggest fish in the lake.

You can hear people hollering clear across the lake when it happens. Then retire to the fire for stories and a nitecap. Bed feels good after a day like that.

I hope to see lots of you there this year. Let's make some memories!

Any questions, call me at 206-227-6134.

Chopaka Report: May 6th and 7th

by Mike Santangelo

Here is a Chopaka report to get folks motivated for the WFFC Memorial Day outing to beautiful Lake Chopaka. Right now it is 47°, gusty winds from any direction and raining cats and dogs. Fishing this morning was pretty good. It wasn't a fish every cast, but most casts produced a takedown. I was chironomiding under an indicator. The takes were really light and fast so getting a hook up wasn't easy.

I arrived at Chopaka yesterday, around 1:30, set up camp, and was on water by 4:00. It was overcast and 54° with a wind out of the south that wasn't too bad. The water temp was between 46° and 48°. My first fish was in 7' of water. He was a small fellow, around 12". The next two were in the same area and were around 16". The larger fish were long and skinny. It was tough to get a stomach sample. What I did find were very small black chironomies around size 20, some small white scuds, and some small



pale creatures that could have been very small damselfish.

This morning started with little to no wind and a mostly cloudy sky. Most of the fish I caught were the smaller size. They were 12" – 14" and feisty, but not like the fish that were here last spring. The large fish from last year have passed on and we are in an interim period while the fish grow. The lake is slow to get started due to the long winter. Many fish are still scudding, even though I did get one fish that was full of chironomids. Most of the chironomids were black and size 20. There were a few larger sizes in his tummy as well, around size 16.

Most folks are fishing in the shallow far-south end where the water temperatures are a bit higher. The fish that I saw them catch, and that I caught in that area, were 12" – 14". I did find larger fish in the deeper water, especially near the weed banks. The smaller fish have more zing to them.

The road was in very good shape until the first cutoff, which has a sign stating "No lake access, Ranch access only". After that the road went to hell. Sort of ass backwards to the way it normally is. There was a little bit of snow near the road, but that will be gone in a day or so. However, the snow level is still very low.

Well, it looks like the sun is getting ready to come back out, time to get back on the water. My suggestion for Memorial Day is to bring a size lighter rod than you would normally use. If you use a 5 weight, bring a 4 along for a bit more fun with the smaller fish.

Yucatan by *Chuck Ballard*

Five WFFC members (**Dave Wands, Chuck Ballard, Curt Carlson, Paul Messner, and Gil Levy**) and three guests (Roger Harper, Greg Kluh, and John Stachurski) traveled to Paradise Lodge on the Yucatan Peninsula near the town of Magahual for a baby tarpon, bonefish, and permit fishery the first week in April.

Overall the trip was good, however the numbers of fish expected in the nearby lakes were in very short supply. The baby tarpon were mostly confined to the brackish cenote lakes, and we did manage to boat about 20, as a group, for 6 days of guided fishing, since it was very difficult locating fish at any one time. There were no large fish as was anticipated, but the average size ran about 3 to 6 lbs. Daily



Chuck Ballard scores

each of us had the opportunity to cast to four or five small baby tarpon, with at least two "skunk" days for everyone. Perhaps the reasons for the sparse tarpon fishing would include hurricane damage in 2007, excessive netting and spear fishing by locals, and/or the presence of invasive species such as Lion fish that were reported.

The flies that seemed to work best were a black gurgler and a surface deer-hair pattern similar to a large muddler minnow, which produced some spectacular strikes.

The bonefishing was in either Chetumal Bay or Espiritu Santo Bay. These locations were about a two-hour drive away from the lodge and then another hour and a half bumpy boat ride that minimized fishing time on the water. The salt waters were beautiful; however, the flats were very sparsely populated with bonefish. The few caught were up to four or five lbs., but most were about 12" or so. These were caught mostly on a tan squid pattern, a shrimp of a similar tan color, or Crazy Charlie. No permit were hooked, although a few received some casts.

The weather was hot, sunny, and no rains except for the expected 25 kt. winds that really limited the average caster's ability to reach the few fish that were spotted by some very capable guides. The lodge accommodations were good and the Mexican food was presented well, although the portions were large from my perspective. All in all, it was a fun time together and we especially enjoyed Curt's joke telling at the dinner table. Unfortunately the group doesn't have any plans to return again. What we experienced was certainly far less than our expectations or as described in the promotional literature.

Northwest Michigan, March 12-18, 2011

by Dave Schorsch

A bunch of you guys spend a fortune travelling the globe for steelhead, big lake-run rainbows, and sea-run browns. I go to western Michigan and fish America's oldest "wild and scenic" designated river, the Pere Marquette. This is the eleventh year for me, fishing the spring breakup, if I time it right. I stay at a private lodge, with 3 ½ miles of river, and a nice cabin, for about 70 bucks a night. No shit.

I fish the river on foot for the length of the lodge property, a full day's work for sure, or float the river with local guide John Kluesing. John is a great guide, and makes a great streamside steak for lunch, for about 300/day. This year I fished with John for 4 days and banked it for three.

Fishing small nymphs and egg patterns, I averaged two steelhead and two browns a day on my own. With the increased access of a drift boat, and John's expertise, the rate basically tripled. Our best day, on the lower river, was 12 steelhead hooked with six landed and two monster browns that we thought were steelhead until they hit the net at 5 or 6 pounds! All the fish here are wild, with the browns descended from the first planting in North America, long before they found their way to New Zealand or Patagonia. The steelhead in the Pere Marquette have been wild for close to a century. All aspects of their normal life cycle are represented here, 2-pound "skippers" (jacks) to 16-pound chromers that crash your gear and go over a couple tree limbs on their way back to the lake, leaving your knees shaking. You gotta love it!

This is world-class fishing on a K-mart budget. Photographic evidence was presented at the board meeting to favorable review. Total cost for the one-week trip, less airfare, about 1700.00 for one angler. 2400.00 for two. Private water, guided float for four days, and lodging.

Check it out!

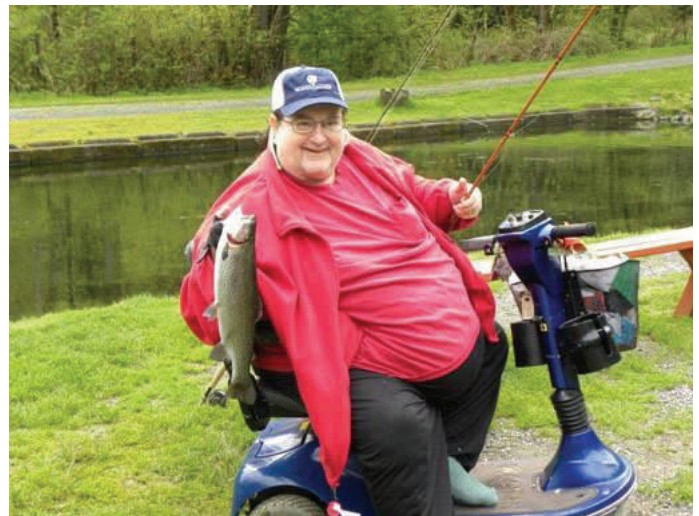
Project Healing Waters: May 7th Outing

by Jim McRoberts

On a dreary (have we had any other kind?) Saturday morning, we departed our carpool areas for Bill's Fishin' Hole in Orting. I had **Bob Young**, **Don Schroder**, and Paul Dibble (a new helper) with

me. **Bob Birkner** picked up **Chuck Ballard** and **Randy Hieronymus**, **Dick Stearns** and Vicki Hoagland came from Bremerton. **Art Alton** (new member), **Scott Hagen**, and **Marv Young** each came alone. Two vans came from the Seattle VA with six veteran patients and three Recreational Therapists. Three other outpatients came by themselves.

We rigged the rods and tied on foam flies with no hook points to practice in the pond with 10" to 18" triploid trout. After everyone had a chance to feel the take and spit out of the fly, we moved to the pond with 2 ½ pound to 5 pound fish, the keepers! As you know the fish have to make the choice! In the practice pond the competition causes them all to attack as quickly as the fly (food) "plops" on the surface; however, in the pond with



bigger and fewer fish, they are in no hurry! The vets in wheelchairs and those with diminished reflexes are not certain when to set the hook or how to fight an unruly fish! After a few losses, they get the hang of it and OH what fun! The smiles show it all! We were very fortunate and the rain did not arrive until the last fish was landed! Fifteen fish were landed, the biggest 8.5 pounds! The big fish went home with the lucky angler to have for dinner! Fourteen of them were taken to be smoked and will be returned to the Seattle VA for many tasty snacks before lunch or dinner!

Fellow Club Members: the Holiday Fundraiser

No, it is not Christmas, but it is time to start thinking about the WFFC Holiday Fundraiser. In past years, the club has looked at the Holiday meet-

(Continued from page 6)

ing as a way to have a good time and make some money. This year the budget dictates that we look at the party as a way to make more money than we have in the past, but still have a good time.

To make it easier for our membership and their guests to attend, we have moved the Holiday Party from December 20th to **December 13th**. Hopefully this will make for fewer schedule conflicts in the busy holiday season. So please mark your calendars accordingly. The WFFC Holiday Party is at **Seattle's Herban Feast on December 13th** this year. Herban Feast has seating for 300, so we are counting on our attending membership bringing a guest or two. We need donations. As usual we will be showcasing flies tied by our membership. **Dick Brening** has graciously agreed to take on the task of organizing this. **Gil Nyerges** has offered to create a fly plate or two of individual flies tied by club members (these flies need to be given to Gil by the October meeting).

Other club members have started the donation process has well. For example, **Jay Deeds** coaxed Coach Duff into donating a guided bonefishing trip on Oahu. Jay will also be sponsoring his annual Hood Canal fishing trip. If you are going on a fishing trip, why not ask if your guide is willing to donate a trip to the WFFC, especially if you are a long-time customer. If you don't feel comfortable asking, please let me know. I've heard enough "no's" lately that it doesn't matter anymore.

If you have some lightly used gear that is sitting in the back of the closet, it may be time for it to find a new home (better yet, new unused gear). If you have gear to donate, let me know and we can arrange a time to pick it up. Make your donations early so I can test the stuff out to make sure it is still functional.

We have some talented artists in the club. We also look forward to your donations. I know that as some of us become empty nesters, we downsize. If you have some art that has been sitting in a box, donating it may clear up some space. Let me know.

Finally, I or somebody else on the Party Committee will be contacting you personally and asking for some type of donation such as cash, goods, or services. Please be prepared to give to the club generously. A number of manufacturers are responding to our requests for donations with offers to sell product at a discount. We can, and will, use cash donations to take advantage of these offers.....times have been

tough and the fly fishing business is hurting, so in-kind contributions have been tough to land.

Oh, one other thing, photographs. If you are on an outing and get some nice snapshots, please pass them on to me. Most of us have digital cameras nowadays, so take some pictures that we can share and enjoy at the Holiday Party. Thank you.

Michael Santangelo (mikeonthefly@gmail.com) and **Gary Bergquist**.

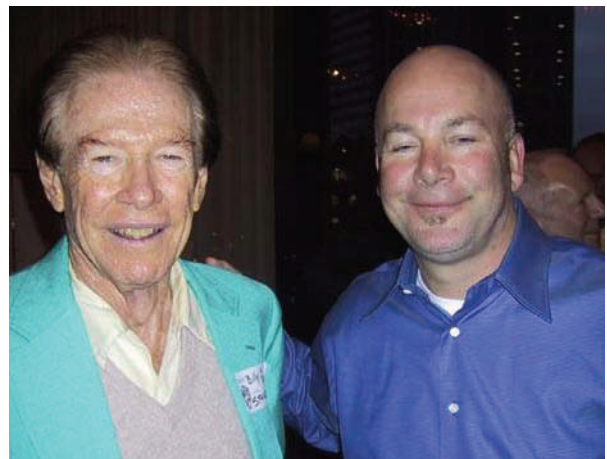
In Memoriam: Billy Pate

The fishing world recently lost Billy Pate. Pate was one of the world's foremost big-game fly fishermen, and a friend of some of us in the WFFC. He was perhaps best known for his 188-pound world record tarpon on 16 lb. tippet, for starting World Wide Sportsman in 1967, and for catching the first blue marlin on a fly rod. But that's just the start of Pate's angling achievements. He held more significant salt-water fly fishing records than any other angler. He was the first person to catch a black marlin on a fly, and the first to catch six billfish species on a fly.

For Pate, it wasn't just about filling up holes in the record books. He fished for the thrill of pursuing species that are challenging and exciting. To Pate, light-tackle fishing for tarpon was the ultimate challenge. He was also a committed conservationist.

In the words of Randall Bryett, "Billy Pate insists his greatest pleasures have come from the wonderful friends he has made and the lovely waters he has fished."

(This article contains material from Randall Bryett.)



Billy Pate and Captain Keith



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Stamp
here

May, 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:

Ray Gould: Fly Fishing for Kamloops Trout