

Creel Notes from the



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



May, 2012



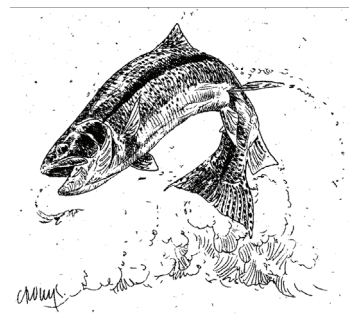
President's Riffle

This will be short, there are just two items. The first is the Yakima Home Waters and the second is the Seafair event.

First, I have asked the Trustee members to form a special committee about the Yakima Home Waters. I want them to examine all of the alternatives available to the club going forward. Our lease expires in September, so hopefully they can present a list of suggestions in the Creek Notes, and we can discuss the matter at the time of the July general membership meeting.

Second, the event over Seafair weekend will occur on Saturday. We hope to host up to twenty members of the US Navy. We will hold our event at Rattlesnake Lake. So we will need at least twenty boats, float tubes, etc... If you can be there and participate, that would be greatly appreciated. If you can provide a float tube and/or waders that would be great. Please let me know. We will also need volunteers to prepare the picnic. Again, if you can help in any way, please let me know.

Mike.



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May Meeting: Jack Mitchell on Fly Fishing for Steelhead by Bob Burdick

Jack started fishing at the early age of one. The first 16 summers of his life were spent fishing at Neah Bay, with his parents and grandparents as "Kelpers" - catching and selling salmon caught in the Straits of Juan de Fuca and the Pacific Ocean. When he wasn't in the boat fishing the ocean, he was by foot and/or bike fishing for sea run cutthroat in numerous local creeks on the reservation.

After high school, Jack went on to college at Washington State University on the 7 year plan for his BA in Sport and Recreation Management. While at college he fished, hunted and played a large amount of Rugby, hence the 7 years. After graduation he found himself in Ellensburg and realized that his love of fishing had brought him to the right place.

Jack's fishing trails have led him to Alaska, Canada, Idaho, Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, and South America. In Chile for 7 years, he explored many watersheds that until a few years ago had hardly ever been fished. His favorite fishing is a dry line for steelhead with a two hander.

Jack started the credited fly fishing class at Central Washington University in Ellensburg in 1994. The class is still ongoing and very popular. He has spoken on the topic of fly fishing at many sport shows, clubs, and seminars. Jack, The Evening Hatch, and his guide staff have been featured in numerous publications over the years including ESPN Outdoors, Fly Fisherman, Seasons on the Fly, Trout TV, American Angler, New York Post, and the Seattle Times.

Jack started The Evening Hatch in 1988, and since then the company has grown from a small red pickup and an Achilles raft doing a seasonal 50 trips a year, to a year-round operation facilitating over 800 guided river days. His services range from day trips to all inclusive programs featuring post-and-beam lodges in two locations. His 'Heart and Soul' waters include the Yakima, Klickitat, Methow, and the Upper Columbia. He may be found at home in Goldendale with his wife and partner Jennifer, aka "the Fish Chic", at 509-773-3460 or at jack@theeveninghatch.com.



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.

Denny Rickards on Stillwater Presentation

by Jim van de Erve

Denny Rickards is a fly casting instructor, guide, writer, lecturer, fly designer, tackle designer, and rod designer. In his presentation to the WFFC, Denny challenged some of the common perceptions, or misperceptions, about lake fly fishing. He was opinionated and insistent, but he explained many things that I had not heard before, aspects of fish behavior and fishing conditions that make sense and will lead to catching more fish.

The first notion he took on is that the fly we use is the primary reason for success or failure, that we think success is at the end of the line. The fly takes the credit or the blame. But the best fly won't catch fish if they can't see it. Denny suggested that the key is to look at what is going on around us, at what nature is doing to affect the fish's feeding pattern, and then to use the presentation that fits the conditions. Not surprisingly, Denny's book is called "Stillwater Presentation", not "Stillwater Flies".

Zones

Even before you can figure out the right presentation, you need to know where the fish are, how deep they are. Denny broke lake water into zones. Zone 1 is the top five inches. Zone 2 is from five inches to five to six feet deep. Zone 3 is from six feet to 11 to 12 feet deep. And Zone 4 is from 12 feet to the bottom.

Denny stressed the importance of Zone 1. If you see rises, fish Zone 1 first, then proceed down. Don't do the reverse. Fish often cruise 12 to 15 inches below the surface. Fish feed where it is easier, first in the shallows.

Denny then stressed Zone 2, down to five to six feet deep. The bite often happens in the first four to five feet. If you can find an area five feet in depth, with a flat bottom, fish there. This is the zone that the Cortland Camo intermediate line was designed for (by Denny). Denny is also a big fan of a 10-foot sink tip, which he says filled a hole in his fishing. He said to never use less than 12 feet of leader in the top five feet. He is not a fan of floating lines, which he considers the worst of your options in many cases. It causes disturbance and is visible. When you see rings, switch to a sink tip and use small nymphs.

In Denny's opinion, when fish are deeper than 10 feet, they are down there for oxygen and the right



temperature, and to get away from you, but not for food.

When fishing any zone, keep in mind that when you are trolling or stripping, your line descends in a diagonal, not straight down. If the water depth is 20 feet, 20 feet of line will not hit the bottom for some time because the line descends diagonally. It takes double the line to reach bottom more quickly.

Your success in fishing depends on your ability to put the fly in the feeding zone and keep it there. Go where the fish go when they want to eat, when they want to hunt. Often that means going to the shallows. That's often where the food is. It's where the food source for the insects are, the zooplankton. The most prolific food-bearing region of any lake is along the shoreline edges. Parallel to the shoreline, and just offshore, runs a highway that fish cruise, looking for food. This is also where the big fish are. An effective way to tap into this fish highway is to position yourself just offshore, aligning yourself parallel to shore, and casting in to shore.

Presentation

And that brings us to presentation. Denny's favorite presentation is the cast and retrieve. An important factor is ensuring that you are showing the fish the profile of the fly. It's critical to get the fly in front of the fish, and show the profile. That happens when you cast in to shore, perpendicular to the fish highway. They will see the full profile of the fly. Put the fly next to shore, and then pull and pause.

Remember that fish don't look down, but up. And keep in mind the angle of the line. Your strike

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rate, Denny said, falls off after the first five feet of retrieve.

Denny does not like indicator fishing for chironomids. He teased us about it. "Do you enjoy staring at a little ball?" he asked. Now, he did admit that there have been times when he has been outfished by fishermen using indicators. But I don't think that he does it very often, anyway.

Cut out wasted time, he said. You can do so by using the right presentation, and by factoring in what's happening with the weather and the water at the moment. Is it cloudy or clear? If clear is the reflection of the light a factor? If it's colder than 50 degrees, slow the retrieve. The warmer the water, the more the fish will move. Factor in the time of day and the time of year. Where you catch fish is different at 6 am and 10 am. It's different in April than it is in June.

You have to adjust. When it starts to fall off, don't stay in one spot. The guy who moves will catch two or three times the fish.

Fish for the big guys early. Use buggers and leeches at first light.

Denny also has found that certain conditions inevitably slow fishing. When the water is cold and milky, when nutrients haven't settled, fish may not come to a cast and retrieve. They won't chase it. When the barometer falls below 29.9, you won't catch fish. They lie on the bottom and don't move. When a fish lies on the bottom, they are not eating. Included in these conditions are north and east winds, a lake in turnover, and full moons. Denny explains why in his book.

The Fly

Denny did address fly patterns, although it is not to him the most important factor. He maintained that our flies are not even remotely close to what the fish see. Does it look like food to the fish? No. We just think it does. Even if the tied fly looks like the insect, it won't act like it.

Fish take the fly because of movement. You get him to react to the movement. It stimulates them. Fish see the fly and get curious. A fish strikes at a fly to kill it, not eat it. When a fish thinks it's food, Denny said, they never miss.

He said that you don't have to match the hatch, if your presentation is right. In many situations, anglers really cannot match the insect, such as a chironomid pupa on the surface. And Denny is not a fan of bead head patterns or flashaboo. He stated categorically

that you shouldn't use bead-head flies. If you cast and retrieve in the feeding zone, you won't get them with a bead. It will sink too fast. And flashaboo? Insects don't have flashaboo. You catch fish, Denny said, in spite of beads or tinsel.

The presentation was full of surprises. Denny hasn't used less than 2x tippet in ten years. He uses 1x all year long, and maintained that his hook rate has not suffered. He encouraged us to use fluorocarbon tippet because it doesn't reflect any light. Use a blood knot when using fluorocarbon. Also, use a mono loop knot when using fluorocarbon, which allows it to swivel.

If you have any questions, pick up the phone and call Denny. By all accounts, he will answer them, whether he knows you or not.



Dry Falls Trip Report by Dave Schorsch

The club had our annual April outing at Dry Falls Lake, with the usual cold wind and sunshine mix we all expect. The lake was a little colder than usual, and was in the midst of "turning over", so fishing was slower than most of us would have liked. Clumps of bottom material were floating in shallows that seemed to be abandoned for the time being. I did find fish over weed beds in three to five feet of water with an intermediate line and dragon type nymphs. I picked up about a dozen fat fish in the 16 to 19" range, including some nice browns on Saturday. I'll bet the fishing really picked up once the lake settled down and cleared up.

The Saturday happy hour and potluck was great, and well attended. The club provided steaks for 28 members, significant others, and guests. Special thanks to the wives and girlfriends who came along and put up with the wind blowing dirt on the grill, not to mention providing the great appetizers and side dishes to go along with the cheese and crackers the guys put out. The fire was nice, in spite of the wind, and we all had fun without the need for canopies.

Thanks to all who hauled, cleaned up, and cooked! Couldn't do this stuff without your help! See you at the next outing. Tight lines!

Dry Falls Outing, April 13th, 14th, and 15th

by Bob Burdick

Arriving at Dry Falls Saturday morning, I was dismayed to see the water in the lake turbid with scattered clots of bottom material floating in various areas, indicating that the lake was in turnover. Undaunted, I launched and for the next three hours did not touch a fish despite throwing everything I could think of at them, after my primary chironomid under a bobber technique seemed ineffective. My sonar indicated that there were lots of fish in 20 to 28 feet of water, and I literally frothed at the mouth watching two fishermen from British Columbia hook fish after fish in deep water. Finally I swallowed my pride, and hat in hand rowed over to the two fishermen to ask them what they were using. Chironomids without a bobber fished vertically below the rod tip on a sinking line starting one foot off the bottom and stripped very slowly upwards for three feet, and then repeated if no strike occurred, they said. I hurriedly changed gear and presto using their technique landed seven very nice fish in the next two hours.

On Sunday I charged out on the lake, ready to rip lips to the tune of 40 fish, which is what the two Canadian fishermen had each done on Saturday only to find after 3 hours that I was fishless again. The Canadians had left, but I noticed several other fishermen, including **Ron Dion**, landing a lot of fish. Humbling myself again, I rowed over to Ron, and begged to be told what he was doing that was so successful. Ron took pity on me, and explained that although the upward strip was successful on Saturday, on Sunday, the fish would only bite on a chironomid that was held perfectly motionless one foot off the bottom in 20 to 28 feet of water. Changing technique again, I again became successful landing six or seven fish in the next two hours before heading back to Seattle.

I don't have a good explanation for the sequence of events here, but after explaining the details to Denny Rickards, our speaker on lake fishing at our last general meeting, he opined that during lake turnover the fish huddle on the bottom where the oxygen may be best, are relatively dormant not chasing food aggressively, and the fact that the chironomids were held in front of their noses likely triggered the strikes. Nonetheless, more experience using the vertical retrieval of a chironomid pupa seems in order.

Dry Falls Trip Report 4/27/12 – 4/29/12

by Rocco Maccarrone

Finally made it east of the Mountains. I hadn't been fishing in a very long time. Fellow member, **Robert Tovar**, and I made a trip over to Dry Falls Lake with both of us itching to wet a line in a bad way. We were able to make an early exit from work on Thursday late afternoon – his pram on top with mine on a trailer. The state park was very sparse with campers when we arrived about 7:00 pm. We picked a spot we liked, as we pretty much had our choice of any campsite ... or so we thought. In a gusty wind, we unloaded firewood, camp gear, and coolers. We set up Tovar's tent in a nasty wind, securing it with several lines. Then Robert left to pay for the site. We were in site 118. When he came back he said, "You don't know how lucky we are!" Apparently, virtually every site in the campground had been reserved for the weekend, as it was Opening Day Lakes weekend. Only four or five sites were available. And 118 was one of them. After a huge sigh of relief, whiskeys were in order.

Despite the overnight winds, Friday was very pleasant on the water with off and on blows, partly sunny skies, and about 60 degrees. Good chironomid hatches all day. We each landed about 7 or 8 fish on that day and on the succeeding days. We caught them on a variety of techniques, but most were caught in 6 – 10 feet of water. The fish size ranged from 12" – 20" with an even distribution of all sizes. Several 18" fish were caught. The best thing about the whole trip was the health of the fish: very stocky with excellent fight. Even the small ones put up a good scrap. The odd thing was that it wasn't crowded at all. It wasn't deserted by any means, but we pretty much fished wherever we wanted.

Friday night blew pretty hard as well. No campfire two nights in a row. We sat in Tovar's tent playing cribbage and sipping good bourbon and scotch. Out on the lake on Saturday, a familiar voice echoed on my radio – it was our buddy Todd Kalamar. He arrived at the lake unexpectedly. Todd fished from his arrival at 3:00 until dark and managed to catch several nice fish. Saturday night, we were able to have a nice roaring fire. No wind on this night.

Sunday was the nicest weather day of the weekend. Seventy degrees and very little wind all morning. When we left the lake to go home around 1:00,

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the fishing was still pretty good. In all, a very nice Dry Falls trip. I'm ready to go back!

Chopaka Lake Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

The annual Chopaka Lake outing is coming up Memorial Day weekend! Better get to tying those mayfly emergers and duns that ride low in the water, you'll need a bunch! May 26th, 27th, 28th is when we're there, so get the camping gear together and join us. Sign up on the website, so we know who and how many. (It also helps us to save campsites if we know your ETA). You'll find a writeup there with more info on the fishing and what you might need if you haven't been before.

A special note!!! I've been told that you are supposed to have a "Discover Pass" to use the campground area at Chopaka Lake, along with many others in our state. This is not the one you get with your fishing license, it's a separate permit to use most state lands, and it's purchased separately. You might check to see if you have one.

I'm really looking forward to this trip! The Saturday happy hour is killer! If you have any questions, feel free to e-mail me (slow), or call me (fast) at 206-227-6134. See you there!

Leech Lake Outing *by Dave Schorsch*

It's time to head for the mountains! We'll spend the weekend at White Pass fishing for brookies and big triploid rainbows in a crystal clear, shallow mountain lake. It's only 80 miles from my house in West Seattle, around Mt. Rainier, to Leech Lake. The drive is beautiful, no matter the weather. This is a close-to-home fishing trip that just about anybody can do.

Last year we had great callibaetis hatches both days, with more big fish than most of us had seen before. The fishing is mostly dry lines, and dry flies, with some searching with nymphs between the hatch events. This is protected water, so most any floating craft is appropriate. Even though the lake isn't really big, it's just one big weed bed, so fish can be anywhere, especially the brookies. Expect

changeable mountain weather, so bring appropriate gear.

There are some nice campsites around the lake, but they fill up fast. Most of us will stay at the White Pass Village Inn condos that look down on the lake from across the road. They have great "ski bum" type units that sleep four to six people for about 110.00/night. I try to have three or four people in my unit, with a shared cost of about 25 bucks a night, fully furnished, and a kitchen! The folks who run the place are great to us, and have several units available for Friday and Saturday nights, but not Sunday night. (An annual trail runner group rolls in Sunday.) Give them a call for reservation info. at 509-672-3131.

We will be having a happy hour Saturday on the lawn at the Village Inn, with a steak barbeque to follow. Sign up on the website for steak and beverage headcount. Jim MacDonald will be cranking out his signature blueberry pancakes Sunday morning there as well, with coffee and juice, so you'll be all fueled up for a few more hours on the lake, and an easy drive home.

This is a great trip to bring your kids and grandkids on! Let's get the younger folk involved in what we love. See you there.

For Sale: St. Croix Rod *by Gil Nyerges*

I have a St. Croix (Legend Ultra, model UFT 908), 9', 8 wt., 3-piece, salmon/steelhead rod for sale. It has not been used for fishing, only for demo in my fly casting classes. It lists for \$395 in their catalogs and my asking price is \$200.



Spring Fishing *by Conrad Gowell*





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here

May, 2012

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:

Jack Mitchell on "Fly Fishing for Steelhead".