

Creel Notes from the



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



July, 2009



Hello All!

Summer is here. The warm weather has had many of the rivers running high, but it looks like things are falling into shape. I hope you are all finding time to get out.

We had a great feast at the June meeting rewarded by an absolutely fantastic meal by Tom Douglas. The cooking demonstration started with duck breast with an onion and cherry garnish that was excellent, followed by pan-fried trout that was accented with a relish and served with "smashed" potatoes. I didn't hear anything but praise for the meal and the evening. We heard some great fish stories from the fairer sex in attendance...learning among other things that **Richard Embry** really did hook himself to his floor.

We attended the Jimmy Green Memorial Fly Fishing Fair in Monroe. Many members were in attendance and **Mike Wearne** manned an information booth and received several inquiries about the club. There were an estimated 400-500 attendees. **Don Simonson** led a casting instruction brigade for many interested in their first exposure to fly fishing. We have an event at Trail Fest at Rattlesnake Lake on Saturday the 18th, with our presence there being coordinated by **Bill Deters**.

The board continues to ponder the information received in the survey that so many of you completed. We continue to consider what, if anything, we might consider changing to remain in line with the majority of the membership. We are determining what issues had the strongest support to determine which few we might tackle for the greatest benefit based on the survey results. I personally don't have an agenda regarding outcome as a result of the information we have received...I think it is my job to support any change the membership votes to incorporate. If the membership chooses to change something, fine; if not, fine. There are costs and

benefits to each side of the issues raised, and I do feel we should all discuss pros or cons courteously as we consider our path forward. Whatever we decide to do we will still be the Washington Fly Fishing Club.

We still need to get the people who come on board (and those who have been around for a while who have a contribution to make) engaged in an activity or committee or on an outing. We have many ongoing functions that would benefit from their input and energy. If you have a desire to get involved, let me know.

We are celebrating our 70th anniversary at November's Meeting and if you have any ideas, let Steve Sunich or me know. Let's make it special.

We are now on Facebook as Washington Fly Fishing Club...become a fan!

Go Fishing and take a friend...

Pat Peterman
President, 2009

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This Month's Meeting

Joe Rotter of Red's Fly Shop will explore alternative Central Washington fisheries, and discuss "how to's" for the non-guided angler.

The Creel Calendar

Scenic Beach Outing, September 12th and 13th

Fishing Hood Canal when the tides are hopefully auspicious. Saturday night the club will provide steaks and libations at **Jay Deed's** home. Bring a boat to ply the waters of Hood Canal.

Kayak Point Outing, the weekend of September 19th or 26th

Come fish for Pinks. When will depend upon when the run shows up.

Dry Falls Outing, October 3rd and 4th

Given the potential for low fall waters at Dry Falls, there are discussions about moving this to Big Twin Lake, Chopaka Lake, Sprague Lake, or another lake.



Did you hear the one about...?

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.



Eliguk Lake – June 13 – 20 *by Bob Young*

Once again all in attendance enjoyed the annual Eliguk Lake outing. The trip for me went something like this. Leave home about 6:30 a.m., and drive to **Perry Barth**'s house in Lynnwood. Load Perry's gear in my truck and drive to **Ron Pera**'s house on Camano Island. Load our gear into Ron's truck and head out. Between Perry's place and our turn to the north from Ron's, I was hounded by both of them regarding my passport as last year I had forgotten it, and we had to drive from Camano back to Seattle to retrieve it. The plan now was to pick up **Gil Nyerges** at McDonalds in Burlington. We were actually a little early so I had a chance to grab a bite while waiting for Gil, who was soon delivered by his wife Gen. After adding Gil's gear to Ron's truck, we were off for British Columbia.

The long drive now takes us through Sumas, on to Hope, and up the very fine Coquihalla highway. This was a little different than in previous years, when we had driven up the Fraser River canyon. This is a nice four-lane highway and the toll has been removed. It is a little longer this way, but a nice smooth ride. We had planned ahead and prepared our lunches and stopped at a nice rest stop with a great view of Kamloops Lake for a lunch break.

Resuming our journey, we eventually arrived in Williams Lake for our dinner and stay-over. **Chuck Ballard**, his partner John Stachurski, and **Peter Baird** were already there, and after checking in to the Super 8, we met for dinner at the adjacent Laughing Loon Restaurant.

In the morning Peter, Chuck, and John got out early and headed for Nimpo Lake as they were to take the early flight into Eliguk. It's about a three-hour drive from Williams Lake to Nimpo. The rest of us were able to sleep in an extra hour, and on our way to Nimpo, we saw some wildlife and some not so wild domestic cattle in the road. Included in the wildlife group were two black bears, one a large cinnamon-colored beast.

The flight is aboard a Cessna 175 or the good old reliable Beaver with the big radial engine. My group

was on the Beaver. The flight takes about 25 minutes and the plane deposits you at the lodge dock. We arrived about 12:30 or 1:00, and after having lunch everyone went fishing, or I could say catching.

The lake has a lot of fish. There seem to be many fish that jump. They are all over the place. These are not feeding fish, but just jumpers. Why? No one seems to know for sure. But when there is a hatch, they are very active with feeding rises. It appears to me that the major hatch this time of year is the midge. I did see the occasional mayfly or caddis, but midges were most prevalent.

Starting about 9:30 a.m., fish were seen rising aplenty, particularly at the west end of the lake where a couple of streams flow in. There are some weed patches and I think this is good territory for bug growth. I did well on a small #14 lime-green Doc Spratley until I lost it. Poking around in my fly box I found a Sheep Creek Special, which when tied on was something special. I am sure it was taken for a midge emerger, as the fish liked it. Meanwhile, Ron Pera was having a great time with a large #8 Stimulator on top. Perry was having a ball picking up fish on top with a caddis. Perry also tried fishing a chironomid about 15" below an indicator, but found the fish were generally quicker than he was. Chuck Ballard and John like to cover a lot of water, so they were all over the lake running into schools of fish. But by the end of the week, they were spending most of their time down at the west end like the rest of us. When things slowed and fish stopped feeding on or near the surface, a black woolly bugger with a red bead on a sink tip would generally attract strikes. Of course, Gil has plenty of spots staked out as he has been going into Eliguk for over 20 years. You've heard the expression, "no matter where you go, there you are"; so with Gil, "no matter where he fishes, he fishes with you know what".

I would conservatively estimate that everyone hooked at least 50 fish a day. Fish were hooked routinely right off the dock, and fish could be seen gorging on mosquitoes within inches of the dock.

Chuck Ballard had this to say: "The trip was great and we had good overall weather: many fish as usual and even some dry fly fishing. Fish size is always a question, but there was at least one 17" fish I know of, because I caught it."

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Over the years Chuck has come up with some interesting “patterns” for fishing Eliguk. The fish seem to like bright, flashy stuff, so he gets pretty innovative. Last year he developed the “Cheer Leader”, red and white being the school colors. This year it evolved into the “Fat Cheer Leader”. Also, a pattern from a previous year is something he calls the ‘Psycho’. The hot flies for Chuck were the Psycho, and a red dyed peacock chironomid with a gold bead head. As an experiment he wanted to see if he could catch a fish on a hook with just a brass bead. Sure enough he had two hook ups before something went wrong. While describing this over dinner, someone suggested that he try tying it with two brass beads and calling it the “Brass Monkey”.

Eliguk had special regulations with a four-fish daily limit and no bait rules. B.C. in an effort to standardize regulations has removed these restrictions and allows a five-fish take, which is standard on most lakes in the province. I know the previous owner of the lodge was against these changes and that Gil wrote letters protesting the removal of the special regulations. But with the five-fish limit, most of us brought home the legal possession limit of ten smoked trout.

As fishing was so good during the day and the mosquitoes so bad in the evening, we were able to put together a foursome for bridge a few days after dinner.

Valentine Lake, B.C. *by Ron Tschetter*

Thunderclouds hovered over Merritt with flashes of lightening. Considering the nature of interior British Columbia, this is not unusual. It’s a place where a single day can hold fierce rain, bright rainbows, hot sun, and occasionally snow. The weather has a long-standing reputation for refusing to cooperate with fisherman.

This year was very peculiar. The B.C. interior weather had been hot two weeks prior to our trip. The lakes warmed up very quickly, then abruptly the weather turned cold. Lakes appeared to be in sort of suspended animation. Hatches were hard to come by. Lake temperatures were actually decreasing throughout the week in many of the lakes we visited. This, I think, threw the fishing off.



On Valentine Lake, B.C.

Much of our time was on the Nehalliston Plateau west of Little Fort. We fished numerous lakes, none of them exceptional. Our usual old haunts of Irish, Lost Horse, French, Summit, and others I would prefer not to mention were mediocre at best. Insect activity was hard to come by. One particular lake looked like it was in the process of turning over or had just turned over. It looked like all the bottom growth had just been scooped up and dumped top-side. We had phenomenal fishing there last year. This year the fish were present, but were tight lipped.

Valentine Lake just west of 100 Mile is an interesting lake. Broad aqua shallows, looks like a fisherman’s dream. Its high alkaline content coupled with a high total dissolved solids count grows trout fast. But there were no hatches to speak of, and although the fish are very nice size (20” range), it wasn’t easy fishing. Lightning and thunder caused me to head for shore and duck for tree cover more than once during the afternoon.

Later in the week I headed for the well-known Island Lake (a.k.a. Big OK Lake). Unstable weather with a constant wind blowing out of the west made fishing very difficult. Incidentally, the small Forest Service campground is now unrecognizable. Clear cut, everything. The place looks downright ugly.

Stopping at the local fly shop in Logan Lake, I was told I didn’t need to go any farther than right here in town. Logan Lake has been fishing pretty well. In short, I had a wonderful 45 minutes of chironomid fishing at the west end of the lake on size 18 grey body. Took my chironomid bobber less than a minute to submerge. None of those 6+ pounders that are suppose to inhabit the lake, but many in the

18" range. Then the whole experience abruptly quit. No more swallows swooping. Hatch over.

My final day was spent on Gypsum Lake. When someone tells you that 'we will take a shortcut', they are talking B.C. shortcuts, which can open up a whole new discussion on what constitutes a 'road'. Without going into any detail, the 'shortcut route' into Gypsum cost me a whole exhaust system and eventually some new shocks. Gypsum is a great spot for prolific sedge hatches. I can attest to that. This particular day the weather warmed up a bit after noontime and for the next three hours casting to a rise and a couple of quick jerks produced a fish on practically every cast. A Tom Thumb worked just fine in imitating the traveling sedge. The fish were not large, but had lots of action. But then the dark clouds started to appear, then wind, then rain.

This time the rain didn't stop. It rained through the night and the next day all the way down the (no more toll - hooray) Coquihalla to the U.S./Canadian border.

Lost Lake and Hosmer Lake, Oregon, June 14-20 *by Steve Raymond*

This was my 40th consecutive year at Hosmer Lake. The first day son Randy and I drove to Lost Lake at Santiam Pass. I'd heard a lot about this fly-only, catch-and-release lake, including its reputation for rainbow and brook trout up to 20 inches. We found that if you took four average-sized Lost Lake fish and laid them end-to-end, they MIGHT reach 20 inches. In other words, the average size was four to six inches. I did catch one 12-inch brook trout that I think might have been the largest fish in the lake. I don't know where those 20-inch trout stories came from, but if the fish in Lost Lake were ever that large, they aren't any more.

As for Hosmer, the fishing was poor, as it has been the past several years and as we had expected it would be again. The weather was cloudy, cool, and windy, with a few rain showers, which negated the sight fishing for which Hosmer is famous. On the one bright, calm morning we did experience, it was possible to see just how few fish there actually are in the lake. Brook trout now outnumber the landlocked Atlantic salmon, but there are not really that many of either species. The fish population has declined steadily for several years, a victim of not-so-benign

neglect by the Oregon Department of Fish & Wildlife. In fact, most of the once outstanding fishing in the central Oregon Cascades has disappeared.

We fished five days, during which I landed eight salmon and four brook trout. That was one more fish than I caught during five days last year, so I suppose that means the fishing was actually 1/12th better this year. It didn't feel that way, though. Randy again was high rod, which is becoming routine, with 17 fish. My largest was a 17-inch brook trout that weighed about 2-1/2 pounds. Randy got one a little larger than that. There were caddis hatches nearly every day and a dry caddis emerger was the most effective fly, although we also took fish on caddis adults and damselfly adults.

Perhaps the best part of the trip was visiting old friends, including some who have been coming to Hosmer longer than I have. Among them was Wade Foss, son of late WFFC member **Ed Foss**, who introduced me to Hosmer. Wade now lives in Redmond, Oregon, and spends a lot of time at Hosmer. We also met a family from Madras, Oregon, whose grandfather learned about Hosmer from a WFFC member he met years ago at Dry Falls. He couldn't remember the member's name, but his description made it clear that he was referring to our late member **Fred Dewitt**.

So it's nice to see the club's Hosmer Lake traditions continue, even if the fishing isn't anything like it used to be.

Where the Hell is Wood Lake, MT?

by Dick Brening

After a week of camping, hiking, and wildlife observation at Many Glacier in Glacier NP, the **Bairds** and **Brenings** decided it was time to go fly fishing. I had promised Pete I would fit in a couple of days of fly fishing during our trip to Choteau, Montana, for the annual 4th of July rodeo. This 4th of July trip has become somewhat of a tradition for the Brening family, and this is the second time the Bairds have joined us.

I selected Wood Lake for our fishing destination. I had sampled the lake a year ago and was impressed enough to want to try it again.

After leaving Glacier NP, we stopped for a short visit with **Jerry Sugamele** and his wife at their home on Duck Lake. He has built a wonderful retreat on

(Continued from page 5)

the west shore, not far from the property that he and **Boyd Aigner** owned in years past. The Sugameles now spend considerable time there in the summer months. They were certainly good hosts to us, providing our whole group with beverages and freshly baked pie.

Our group consisted of Pete and Lynn, my wife Marje and I, and two of our sons, Rory and Kevin.

Wood Lake is located on a dirt road in the foothills on the east slope of the Rockies, 23 miles west of Augusta, MT. The lake is at 5799 ft. altitude, is roughly 20 acres, and has a new FS campground just across the road, making it a convenient place to fish and camp. Five miles further up the road is a popular east-slope access to the Bob Marshall Wilderness.

Wood Lake is a planted lake. However, it has been chosen by the Montana Fish and Wildlife department to be planted with west-slope cutthroat trout. In 2007 they started the conversion from rainbows. From our fishing results, there appeared to be three generations of cutthroat living in the lake and while we were there, they delivered 3000 fingerling WCT for this year's plant.

After helping Rory rig up, I went about readying my gear. Within moments he was actively catching 8 to 10" fish on dry flies while just standing next to the boat launch. For the two days that we were on the water, the catching of fish after fish was pretty much how it went for all of us.

We only had one raft and one float-tube, so we took turns floating and casting from shore. Both ways produced fish. The cutthroat were either 8 to 10, 12 to 14, or 16 to 18 inches in length. I assume that is in direct correlation to the three WCT plants since 2007.

On the second day I was lucky enough to hook and land a healthy 18-inch rainbow holdover that took me into my backing twice, while putting on a great aerial display. Fishing for me was mainly with dry flies. A size 10 Tom Thumb worked very well, until I ran out of them, and then size 10 & 12 elk hair caddis was my fly of choice. Royal Wulff worked well also.

Oh, by the way, if you plan to try Wood Lake, make sure your wine bottle is tightly corked. The 46-mile round trip on a typical east slope Montana dirt road left a very heavy coat of very fine dust in and on everything else.

Belize Trip Report *by Mike Santangelo*

A while back, I spent a week on Ambergris Caye. This was a family vacation, not a fishing trip, even though my wife may want to argue that point. I fished with a guide for two days and on my own the remaining days. Tarpon, bones, and permit were the targeted species. I also caught some jacks and cudas.

Much of the first day was spent driving around Ambergris (south of the cut) looking for fishing spots. As far as fishing from the beach, Ambergris really has little to offer. I found one wadeable (hard sand) flat on the bay side and smaller spots offering potential on the ocean side. For the most part, the sand on the bay side was soft and the flats on the ocean side had lots of turtle grass making spotting fish difficult. It was windy, very windy, as well. This did not look promising.

Days two and three were spent with George Bradley, a local guide. I booked him independently after finding his name and several referrals on the Internet. We spent day one on the Savannah Flats looking for tarpon. This was my first trip fishing for tarpon, although I have fished baby tarpon in the Florida canals before. Because the wind was down, we had a relatively smooth half-hour boat ride from the hotel to the flat. George was relatively pessimistic of our chances, saying that few fish had been spotted recently. As it turned out, we spotted at least 15 tarpon, and had six shots with four hookups. The first hookup broke off at the class tippet and on two other hookups, the fish spit the hook on the first jump. I got one tarpon to the boat where he spit the hook before George could grab him. While that was a



Mike's First Permit

disappointment, the day was exciting and I learned a lot. I can strongly recommend George as a tarpon guide. He spotted fish despite the wind chop and at amazing distances.

Day two with George brought the heavy winds again, so no Savannah Flats, even though I wanted another shot at a tarpon real bad. We went to the Cayes south of Ambergris looking for bonefish and permit. We no sooner arrived than 30 feet ahead of us were two permit feeding on a grassy flat. A quick cast with a Gotcha and fish on. It was a small permit, but my first and a very good start to the day. Did I mention that it was windy? The wind made spotting permit or bones tough. We had other shots and landed several bones, all on the small side, but it was difficult. For the most part, the day was spent in the lee of the mangroves looking for fish in the calmer waters.

The winds did not die down for the rest of the trip. I fished the areas that I had located on the first day, catching bones, cudas, and a few small jacks. The best bonefish was one that I did not catch. On the bay side flat, I saw a large fish coming straight towards me. I cast the fly right in front of him and started stripping and he followed, and followed, and followed. He would not take the fly. Finally, as the leader reached the rod tip, he ate, and in my excitement, I pulled the fly right out of his mouth. He started swimming around looking for the damn fly, so I dropped it in front of him. He grabbed it and away he went. This was a nice fish. He was fast and pulling lots of line, much of which had been coiled up at my feet. I decided to slow him down and palmed the spool. Things did not feel right. I looked and the handle was coming off of my Redington AL spool. This is going to be great, 75 yards of line out and no handle on the spool so I couldn't play the fish or reel the line back in. And all the while, the fish was still running. Then he decided to come back towards me. The line went slack, he went lose, and I got the handle back on the spool. It sure was an exciting few seconds.

I also explored the Caye looking for other areas to fish. The pickings were slim. To fish Ambergris you really need access to a boat. I could have booked guides for the mornings, but I really don't like fishing for bones with a guide. The distances to the larger flats were far enough that even renting a kayak was not an option. There are some very nice hard white sand flats to the west of Ambergris where

a couple of people can fish for hours on their own. George and I had been out there on day two. I am sure that reaching them via water taxi could be arranged for unguided fishing. If I hadn't been on my own, but had somebody to join me on the flat, that is what I would have done.

The town of San Pedro takes up much of the habitable part of the southern half of Ambergris Caye. It has some nice restaurants and plenty of bars. Most folks get around on either bikes or gas-powered golf carts that are lots of fun to drive. However, much of San Pedro is dusty, noisy, and in many places rather dirty and junky.

In conclusion, "almost" counts only in horse-shoes and hand grenades, so the closest I came to the Belizean Grand Slam was a trio of beers. Yes, the Guinness is brewed in Belize City.

Big Twin Lake by Winthrop - July 8, 2009

by Rocco Maccarrone

Camped at Pearrygin Lake State Park with wife, daughter, and dog. Despite it being a family outing, my pram and fly gear managed to find a way into our cargo. Mild temperatures around 75 or so. I got an early start getting on the water about 7:00 a.m. A sparse chironomid hatch had some fish working the surface. I used a raccoon pattern, a dry fly that mimics an adult chironomid. I hooked two fish that way that both came unbuttoned prior to the net. Both fish were in the 14 -15" range.

I switched to a woolly buggler on a full-sink line and plumbed the depths. There is a distinct drop-off ledge just off the swimming dock off the private campground. Every pass along that ledge brought me a strike. I had three more fish on the reel using that technique. Lost them all. The final two were VERY LARGE fish that will bring me back in the fall. These felt like fish well over the 20" mark. Only two other anglers on the lake. I had to get back to the family, so I only fished until noon. Final tally ... 0 for 5.

Bonus report: the Methow is dropping into perfect wading and fishing shape. Runoff is just about done. Report from other anglers is the fishing is good on the Methow.



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Stamp
here

July, 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: Joe Rotter of Red's Fly Shop

Joe will explore alternative Central Washington fisheries.