

Creel Notes from the



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



September, 2009



Hello all!

September already. I hope you are all getting out a bit. I saw **Leland Miyawaki** today, and he said he caught a steelhead today. He was smiling when he said it. It got me thinking about the runs starting and a trip or two that I

have planned for the fall. I am ready.

We have great meetings to round out the year thanks to **Steve Sunich**, our 2nd VP Programs. Next week we have our round tables where club members share their expertise. We are also having our garage sale during the Wet Fly. Don't forget to bring in those things you are thinking about selling. I have a few things that I was going to sell on eBay, but thought I'd give our members a shot at them first. Our October meeting will feature Dave Hughes. After some consideration, the Board felt that we have no way of correctly guessing how many meals to order for that one, so we will be requiring reservations. You will be able to sign up on line or mail in the reservation form in this issue of the Creel Notes. In November we will be having our club's 70th Anniversary Party. And **Peter Crumbaker** says we'll be having a great Christmas party in December...details to follow.

Several members are helping **Kris Kristoferson** with Reel Recovery next week. Way to go, guys. Each year we lose a couple members, and it always seems to be those folks who don't get involved in club activities. Our dinner meetings are enjoyable...a place to touch bases with friends and get information of what is fishing well (or not) and hear a usually great presentation, but the core of who we are rests in the activities of the committees. This is where the vast majority of our efforts are focused: providing service to our club and community in our efforts to reach out to teach skills, support our veterans, youth, political allies focused on fish and fisheries, exposing those enduring life's trauma to the beauty of

our sport, planning and attending outings, and the many other things we do at the committee level that provide the fulfilling experience that keeps us engaged and thankful for our membership. To that end, I ask each committee chair to recruit two new committee members and get them engaged. If you are a member and not serving on a committee, look up a committee chair on the Web page and give one of them a call and say you'd like to help. It continues to be a goal to have every member engaged and making a contribution. The rewards for that engagement flow in both directions.

It is my intention to ask at least one guest to our October and November meetings. I think that they will be extraordinarily enjoyable meetings, and I think that some of those who have been thinking about a fly club would enjoy them. I hope that you will bring a guest to them, too.

Our member **Les Johnson** (one of my sponsors) suffered a stroke and has been in Evergreen hospital. I don't know when he goes home, but he is able to have visitors and receive phone calls. Get well, Les.

Go Fishing...And Take a Friend!

Pat Peterman, President 2009

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September Program *by Steve Sunich*

The program this month should be a real treat. It is roundtable time, and the WFFC has put up some special members to share their expertise. We have the following topics (subject to last-minute change).

- Entomology: Roger Rohrbeck
- Special Tying Tips and Tricks: Preston Singletary
- Knots: Richard Embry
- Smith River: Joe Kristof
- Rod Repair: Bob Birkner
- Tying Flat-wings for the Salt: Nathan Keen
- Top 20 Fly Fishing Books: Mike Wearne

The format will be that we spend two 30-minute sessions. Individuals can pick two topics of interest to attend. Or, attend the same one twice.

This is also garage-sale month. We will have some tables set up to display your wares at the Wet Fly hour and break. All we ask is that 10% of your take goes back to the WFFC.

October Meeting *by Steve Sunich*

October's program will be a treat, as Dave Hughes will be with us to talk about Reading Trout Water. For that program we are anticipating a larger-than-normal turnout. Therefore, it will be necessary to make reservations early, either on-line at the Web site or by the attached mail-in form. The deadline that we need to receive reservations will be October 14th. We cannot guarantee space will be available after that date.

The Creel Calendar

Scenic Beach Outing, September 12th and 13th

Fishing Hood Canal when the tides are hopefully auspicious.
Saturday night at **Jay Deed**'s home. Bring a boat.

Yakima River Fishing/Work Party, October 3rd and 4th

The details of the Yakima Home Waters lease will be finalized by October 3rd, so the Dry Falls outing has been moved to the Yakima River Home Waters site. Check the WFFC Web site for details on how to participate in the work party.

Fish Lake Outing, October 24th and 25th

Needs to cool so the algae bloom comes off the water.

WETBUNS, November 7th and 8th

A club classic.

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.

REPORTS

August Meeting: Brendan McCarthy

by Jim van de Erve

If Captain Brendan McCarthy was your guide, you'd be out on the water off Montauk Lighthouse, at the eastern tip of Long Island, at first light. You'd look for a bait school, and if you found one, you'd sit on it. Brendan would tell you that the fish will show up.

All of a sudden, striped bass would rise to the surface right in the middle of the school. Albacore tuna would rise on the outside, with bluefish underneath waiting for scraps. The water would start to boil in a frenzy of open mouths breaking the surface as they rip at the baitfish. You would hear a loud pop-pop-pop and you'd stare at the baitfish blitz as it turned into a wild scramble of bait fish decimation.

You'd get out a nine-weight rod with a floating line and a 40-30-20 leader. You'd put on an Alky Moore or an Alby Whore or a Mushroom, and slowly move it through the boil, trying not to snag them or get the crazy fever so you snap them off. If you'd bring one to boat, it could be six or seven pounds, or twenty pounds. And if you'd land a bluefish, you'd be well-advised to stay away from its teeth. They can bite your finger off without you even knowing it.



Bill Neal presents the Boyd Aigner Award to Bob Burdick

This is Brendan McCarthy's territory. He schedules out of the Urban Angler Fly Shop in New York City, and guides close to—or right in the middle of—the biggest metropolitan area in the country. He started fly fishing by heading out to upstate New York as much as he could, but he soon found out about the great fishing right around New York City. He bought a boat, caught a 14 ½-pound striped bass, and was hooked. Great fishing such as Jamaica Bay in April or May, or late fall. The Hamptons in June or July. Montauk—which the locals call Mecca—in August, September, or October.

Brendan guides 175 days a year, two trips a day. It sounds like a wild, highly productive fishery that kicks out big fish. As Brendan says, "The subtleties aren't there as for trout." But it is threatened by its own success. Fifty guide boats can attack the area off Montauk in the fall. Poaching has and continues to be a big problem. Striped bass were nearly cleaned out in the 'eighties. But Brendan and others are working for game-fish status for stripers in New York state. Check out their efforts on <http://www.stripersforever.com> and <http://www.Joinfca.org>. And because it is hard at the present time to tell how many fishermen fish, the state will institute a salt-water license in 2010.

Brendan feels that the big fish peaked in 2002. He also says that the real big fish are hard to catch on flies. However, judging from Brendan's photos, the fishing can't be that bad and their efforts must be paying off. In addition to albacore, bluefish, and stripers, you can find skipjack tuna, blue-fin tuna, green bonita, Spanish mackerel, false albacore, and sturgeon. They're fed by baitfish that include squid (a large percentage of the baitfish), big sand eels (up to 6 inches), tiny rainbait (bay anchovies), and herring that stripers follow up and down the coast.

In the spring, you can fish the flats using flat boats and a push pole, sight-fishing into shore like you were in the Keys. Brendan uses an eight- or nine-weight rod with a floating or intermediate line, casting sand eels or crabs. You can fish the rocks and rips with nine- or ten-weight sinking line. You can fish from the beach or go 20 miles off Montauk to Block Island. The one constant seems to be that you fish with big flies. Brendan sometimes fishes a 16-inch herring-pattern Mushroom. As he says, big flies = big fish.

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In addition to Montauk, Brendan also spoke at length about Jamaica Bay. This is a wildlife refuge roughly five miles in diameter—that is surrounded by the boroughs of New York City. Brooklyn bounds it on the west and north; Queens with JFK airport is to the north and east; its southern boundary is Rockaway Beach. The water sports shallows as well as 30 to 50 feet of water. In the fall, bait fish forage in the bays and then move toward the ocean. Stripers migrating from north to south linger in the area for the bait. Brendan will chase the birds that shadow the action. This can be particularly productive in October, November, and December. Brendan has a boat in a marina in Brooklyn, and will often set up right off JFK and fish for stripers, blue fish, and tuna. As he says, “It’s great water, you just have to pick the right time. You can catch schoolies all day long.” He pauses, and then adds, “But go for the big fish.”

Check out Brendan’s article on Jamaica Bay at <http://www.flyfisherman.com/northeast/bmjamaica/index2.html>.

High Lakes Report by David

Some things I can’t tell you about this trip. For example, I can tell you that four of us went to Hidden Lakes in the Pasaytan Wilderness area, but I can’t tell you how we got there. I can tell you we went recently, but my attorney has advised that I don’t give out specific dates. Finally, I have been advised by the same counsel to only use the first names of the participants: **Bill, Pete, Dick**, and myself. I can, however, reveal that the Hidden Lakes are closer to Canada than to the trailhead near Winthrop, WA.

Pete, a seminal High Laker, wanted one more chance at the big ‘Bows that lurk deep in the Hidden Lakes. I’m always game for big trout, but I’m not much of a lake angler, especially in the venerable Curtis Craft that seems to have a mind of its own. Dick and I arrived a couple days after the lead party had established camp at the shelter next to Upper Lower Hidden (no joke). Bill revealed sightings of 24+” trout on Pete’s rod, so we got busy blowing up the boats, stringing the bows, and tying big, bushy flies onto weighted lines.

I was lurking over the deep water before I could say Weighted Carey Special. I quickly got one almost



Pete at Hidden Lakes

to hand before he shook loose. We’ll never know, but it was a monster. Dick had one jump behind his boat and nearly swamp his raft. We’re talking a pretty small lake with a shrinking deep section (15’ to 30’). I lost another under the boat and one that I never even saw before the wind picked up. Fortunately, Bill and Dick kept fish and dinner went from freeze dried to gourmet in one wrap of the tin foil.

Wednesday, we all went to Cougar Lake, a separate water system than the four Hiddens. With a strong stream entering from the north, Cougar had not dropped like the others. I hooked a 20” + ‘Bow and rods were bent in all directions. After lunch, the boys headed back out and I fished the inlet stream, standing in really cold water, catching more fish than I can remember and one 16” beauty destined for the camp fire.

Dinner featured Dick’s 76th birthday, bringing out the better whiskey, gourmet chocolates, an inspired rendition of one of Robert Service’s lesser known poems by Pete, and a short section of Faulkner describing an early morning sortie by Jeb Stuart across Union lines to steal coffee, read by yours truly. I hope I am still breathing at 76, much less hefting a big pack over hill and dale. It was a night to remember and good reason for some club members to dig out their backpacks, tents, and Ibuprofen.

Dick and Pete went on a mercy mission on Thursday to fish out Lower Lower Hidden’s dwindling trout population in a lake that was dropping so fast we could see the progress in one day. An eagle had beat them to it, and they joined Bill and I at Middle Hidden, where Bill’s rod got nearly worn out from

action and I managed to actually hook and release one of the dang-big lake rainbows. The fights were fantastic, featuring reel-spinning action and big jumps. This 20-incher made four jumps, but I kept contact and released the big fella back into the wild. It was the only fish I touched all day, so when the wind picked up I took off. I made it back before the rain started. Everyone else got soaked.

After a cold night I awoke to an inch of snow and 30 degrees on my thermometer. Morale dropped a wee bit among other campers in the region and one couple, fearing their tent might collapse under an inch of snow, had fled to the ranger cabin and pleaded for floor space. Ranger Will gave in, but admitted to getting little sleep as their dogs scratched on the door all night. Our group had a bit more savvy and found comfort in hot food, repeating stories we had told the day before and standing around stomp-ing our feet.

The sun came out and after lunch I headed back to Cougar without my boat, determined to enjoy the inlet stream. Bill joined me on the other side of the lake and the other guys dispersed. I caught several, and just about the time I could no longer feel my feet, I put something big and ugly with rubber legs in the main channel and hooked the alpha trout, measuring 19.5". Pete found a trout with 3 ounces of gear in its stomach and with Bill's keeper from the day before, we had to invite guests. Ranger Will joined us for the feast, sharing stories of ranger life, his days at Franklin H. S., and his PhD. studies in Norwegian influences on Scottish/Celtic culture. Top that, will ya!

I'd tell you about how we got home, but I can't.

Kelly Creek: Idaho's Blue Ribbon Trout Stream *by Ron Tschetter*

One of the great pleasures I get out of fly fishing is the beautiful places it takes me that I never tire of. One of those places for me is Kelly Creek in Idaho's lower panhandle. Since my college days in Pullman, Kelly Creek has always been a favorite.

Kelly Creek is restricted to fly fishing and barbless hooks only. It contains a very healthy population of naturally spawning native Westslope Cut-throats. It's world renowned and for good reason. It

flows through some of the most beautiful country imaginable and the fishing can be spectacular.

So when an old college friend and his son from Spokane suggested that we hit Kelly Creek, I was all for it and at the same time a little dubious. I'd never fished the creek in August. Hot weather and possible low water levels worried me. I was thinking the fish might leave the upper reaches where we planned to fish and move to the lower areas of the creek where the large deep pools and deep canyons offered temperatures that seemed more accustomed to trout. The lower reaches are also alongside the main road and get most of the fishing pressure. Nevertheless, our plan was to hike up the Upper Kelly Creek trail and fish its headwaters.

We met at the historic town of Pierce, Idaho. (E.D. Pierce first discovered Gold in Idaho, year 1860.) We purchased our licenses from the "we have anything" Pierce Hardware Store. It's amazing the inventory of stuff this store carries!

From Pierce it is still nearly 70 miles by mostly dirt road to the upper Kelly Creek trailhead. It was a hot 90 degrees when we arrived in the afternoon. As I expected, Kelly Creek was lower than I'd seen it. Again, I worried about the upper reaches where I assumed there would be less water. Nevertheless, the next morning, before light, we packed up and headed up the trail to camp at the confluence of Kelly Creek and Cayuse Creek, about a 5-mile trip.

Cayuse Creek is a large tributary of Kelly Creek (actually larger than Kelly itself). The two come together to form the main branch of Kelly Creek. In the past, I've always thought Cayuse was a bit better



Upper Kelly Creek

fishing than the main branch. I slowly worked my way up Cayuse using a size 20 dry fly I call 'the Brownie'. Normally you'd find fish in the riffle seams and behind larger rocks, but the water was warm. I wasn't seeing any fish with my Polaroids where I would normally expect them to be. I finally got to the first deep pool and 'bingo' there they lay bunched up in the deep cool water. I worked 'the Brownie' over the deep pool with slow results. Suddenly a small hatch of micro brown flies started 'buzzing' above the surface of the water. Things immediately started to happen. My size 20 'Brownie' wasn't doing much so I dropped down to a size 22 and immediately started catching fish. I caught and released seven fish out of the first pool all in the 12" to 12 1/2" range. One particularly good one I'd guess in the 16" range was a crafty devil. He'd come up for the fly and looked like he inhaled my Brownie. Many times I was sure he was on, but he was always quicker, spitting it out faster than I was setting the hook. I guess he finally figured I was nothing but a fool, and decided it wasn't worth the contest. He sulked in the deeper water for the remainder of my time working the pool. Continuing up the creek those small micro hatches would suddenly commence on and off. I figure between the three of us we caught around 25 fish for a total of nine hours of fishing.

The clear evening brought on a wonderful show that comes about every August. The Perseid meteor shower was in full force, and with the sky so clear it gives the illusion that you should be dodging some of the debris items.

The next morning we headed up Kelly Creek trail to a place called Hansen Meadows. Kelly Creek was too low to fish in the upper reaches so we decided to turn around and came back out that afternoon.

Since I had another day on my fishing license, I stayed one more night while Doug and his son went back home. Since there was no evidence of anyone being in the large camp/parking lot for the last few days, I began wondering if anyone had touched this part of Kelly Creek. On a hunch I waded out into the shallow seam that is formed from the inflow of Moose Creek. First cast, a nice 12" cutthroat. I caught nine fish that evening right at the campground. Not a soul around.

My trip finally ended with 'a splash and a crack'. I decided to forgo my wading boots for tennis shoes

and shorts because of the warm 90-degree weather. Bad mistake. While skating along an ultra-slippery bottom, I got real cocky about my ability to move around without falling. Kelly Creek got the last laugh. While double hauling some extra line, my feet suddenly went completely out from under me. With a splash I landed sideways on an underwater boulder. Result, two fractured ribs, a big black bruise the size of a dinner plate, and many sleepless nights.

Overall I'd say the fishing was better than I would have expected. The only drawback was the creek was rather warm so the riffles and seams that would normally hold fish were not as productive. The fish were seeking that cooler water in the deeper holes.

The best way to get to Kelly Creek is actually from Superior, Montana. Head south from Superior on the Diamond Match Road. Then up and over Hoodoo Pass, and down the North fork of the Clearwater to the Kelly Creek Work Camp. Take a left; it's 11 more miles to the Kelly Creek trailhead. The other route from Orofino/Greer, Idaho is actually farther from Seattle or Spokane. Don't forget a fishing license. A one-day license costs \$12.50, but it's only \$6.00 a day for each extra day. A cheap price to view world-class beauty and fish a blue-ribbon trout stream.

Oh, and bring your spiked or felt wading boots.

Committee Positions Available

Serving on a committee is one of the best ways to contribute to the WFFC and have fun to boot. The following committee positions are available:

- **Outings Committee chairmanship.** Get club members out fishing. Speak with outgoing chair **Robert Tovar** about this opportunity.
- **Education Committee chairmanship.** Help spread the doctrine. Check with outgoing chair **Don Simonson** or President **Pat Peterman**.
- **Creel Notes Committee position.** Like to write, edit, and publish? Check with chair **Jim van de Erve**.

Project Healing Waters August Event

by Jim McRoberts & Vicki Hoagland

On August 29th, four veterans were taken to **Bill's Fishin' Hole** in Orting. This is the second time we have had some veterans at this pay-to-fish operation. Again, we spent the first hour using flies with the hook cut off at the bend. We used foam ants/beetles that make a big "plop" when they hit the water! A perfect fly to match the "fish-pellet hatch"! The vets have great fun watching the fish attack the fly and then spitting it out only to have it attacked by another fish. The fish range from 12" to 16" in this pond.

After they had some fun, we took a break for lunch. Then we moved to the middle pond that has fish in the 2- to 3-pound range. We tied on a barbless hook from our stock or used one that the vet tied himself. One of the vets on this outing had a Carey Special that he had tied the week before. He landed two nice fish on it. It was a very proud moment for him and all of us. We ended up keeping eight of these large fish that I took to a custom smoking shop. They will be brought back to the VA for patients and staff to enjoy. A great time was had by all! The volunteers were Vicki Hoagland, **Scott Hagen**, **Chuck Ballard**, **Jim McRoberts**, and Karl Schaffer. We plan another event for September 26th.



Project Healing Waters Success

Christmas Party Plans by Peter Crumbaker

"Welcome to the 70th annual Washington Fly Fishing Club's Christmas Party!"

That is what I currently am planning to have everyone see this year as they enter the SoDo Park location hosted by Herban Feast. Recently, I finished reading **Steve Raymond's** book on the history of the WFFC, *Backcasts*. While smoking my cigar, it dawned on me... that is what this year's Christmas Party needs. Some history of the club! After all, it is the 70th anniversary, just in case you missed the banner across the entrance there.

Details are just in the beginning stages; however, I would like to ask my fellow club members to consider any contributions that you may have in adding some history to the high tradition of our Christmas party. Some thoughts might be: rods of old club members that you may have been wondering what to do with; a pair of waders that you have not yet thrown away; photographs; old maps, etc. We are currently only four monthly meetings away from 2009's last great event of the year, and great I think it will be. Please also keep in mind while you are out enjoying good times on the water or while spending time with other club members, to document those moments with a quick photo. If not, you can simply picture me on the big screen for 2009's slide show... slide after slide. Works for me!

While reading about the history of the club, it gets me excited to honor the traditions and people who have formed, written, lobbied, worked, and created this wonderful organization into what it is today. I look forward to honoring that this December, and hope that you too will be filled with anticipation. We have lots to celebrate! If you have any questions, thoughts, or concerns, feel free to contact me... I'm in the roster if you can find it!



Washington Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 639
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Stamp
here

September, 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: Round Table and Garage Sale

Come hear your club members present on a wide variety of fishing subjects.