

Creel Notes from the



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



September, 2011



President's Riffle

The Labor Day weekend just ended. We have been having extremely nice weather—about 80 degrees or so—for several weeks. This after the most horrendous, cold, long-lasting spring and early summer I can ever remember. But it is these beautiful summer days that keep me here in the Northwest. I hate the cold and rain, but when it gets like this, there is no better place in the world to live. Do you ever stop and think how lucky we are to be living near (or in) a very metropolitan city, yet a two-hour drive can put you on a wilderness stream with decent fishing? Sometimes, a 10-minute drive from Seattle will put you into decent fishing. I did go fishing over the Labor Day weekend. I had four days off, but I fished only one of those days. It was, for a fact, the most surreal fishing experience I've ever had. The day started off as we launched from the Don Armeni boat ramp near Alki Point at first light (*10 minutes from downtown Seattle*). We motored around the point to try our hand at some kings. (*For the sake of honesty and transparency, I will mention this was not a fly-fishing outing*). The morning sunrise was electric, while Puget Sound lay as flat as a small protected beaver pond. Looking out west towards the Olympics, one could see the smoke billowing from the canyon where the Duckabush fire was raging. Despite the haze, the mountains were as beautiful as ever. My thoughts at that particular moment took me to the west side of those mountains – *“Some mighty fine rivers are just on the other side of them ‘thar hills – and now would be a fine time to hit ‘em.”* Knowing that we just launched in downtown Seattle, and now I had this view while fishing for salmon, made me feel smug ... arrogant. I mean, if I was in Kansas, this wouldn't be happening. To top it off, I did hook, and lose, a big Chinook after a good battle. After a couple of hours trying

for kings, it was time to change things up ... and boy, did it ever change! We were now going to try for pinks. We motored back around Alki Point and headed straight for the huge shipping container ships docked at the mouth of the Duwamish. What a contrast! Boating up a canyon in-between massive cargo ships, with cranes hanging over our heads, was something very new to me. Soon boats of all shapes and sizes came into view, each loaded with fishermen. The serenity of the open sound gave way to a circus atmosphere, with the most industrial, stinky, noisy part of Seattle as a backdrop. Looking over at my buddy, the skipper, and another bud, they were both laughing, apparently because of the look on my face. At the end of this waterway was an old bridge/pier with perhaps close to 200 fishermen lined up elbow to elbow. Every now and then you would hear a cheer when a fish was hooked ... or a collective groan when it came off. I seriously felt as if I was at a sporting event. The pinks were there. By the thousands. You could see waves of them swimming by your boat. Casting pink squid jigs, we caught and released many fish. Honestly, it was something fun to do on a hot day in Seattle. I am still shaking my head at the experi-

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ence. I am also, at this very moment, eating some of those freshly smoked pinks. Only in the Northwest!

Remember!!! ... The autumn Dry Falls Lake Outing is just around the corner, on October 1st and 2nd! I plan to be there. I love fishing Dry Falls in the fall. Many of you will remember, as I do, there used to be a split season on Dry Falls. It would be closed to fishing from July 1 until October 1 (I could be wrong on the dates). I would always look forward to both "opening days", but much preferred the "fall opener". Cool mornings with warm calm days are what I remember. Evenings just cool enough to really appreciate a warm fire. Hatches are always sparser, but the flies you fish with are bigger ... a dragonfly nymph on a sink-tip was always a good choice in the fall. Dry Falls fished well this past spring and should be even better in early October. The 14" to 15" fish should now be around 16" to 17". The club will provide the steaks, beer, wine, and grill. Be sure to bring a side dish, appetizer, or dessert. A bottle of something may find its way into my camping gear.

This month's general meeting on **September 20th** will be held at the **Yakima River Home Waters site**. Same general idea as last year. We can plan on another Taco truck or two ... maybe even a BBQ truck. Bus transportation will be provided. Go on-line to our website to sign up. You must pay in advance. We had a big turnout last year and we had a bunch of fun. Let's do it again this year. If you have a boat and have room for another member or two on the river, please arrange with Mike Wearne, or just talk directly with other club members. *By the way, I for one, am looking for a boat ride.* Let's get a big turnout!

One agenda item for our September meeting to pay attention to, is the nomination of the Nomination Committee. This committee is responsible for formulating a "slate" of nominees for the WFFC officers positions for 2012. If you would like to serve on the committee, please be sure to nominate yourself or have another member nominate you.

Finally, as of this writing, Gil Nyerges has received only 21 flies from members for the fly plate he will be putting together. Come on, boys!!! Get your favorite fly to Gil by October 1st. If everyone contributes, this will be truly a collector's item and a great historical artifact of the club. Get your fly to Gil ASAP!!!!

See you on the Yakima and on Dry Falls!!! A very nice one-two punch. Only in the Northwest!!!

Rocco Maccarrone, President

The Creel Calendar

Scenic Beach, Hood Canal, Outing, Sat., September 17th, and Sun., September 18th

Dry Falls Lake Outing, Sat., October 1st, and Sun., October 2nd

Creel Notes

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Jim van de Erve ... Editor
425-489-0971 jimvde@comcast.net
Ron Tschetter ... Publisher
425-746-6652 batribble@juno.com

President

Rocco Maccarrone maccarrone@frontier.com

1st Vice President (Membership)

David Ehrich demuslindley@yahoo.com

2nd Vice President (Programs)

Mike Wearne michael_wearne@msn.com

3rd Vice President (Christmas Party)

Mike Santangelo Mikeonthefly@gmail.com

Treasurer

Don Barton dbarton44@comcast.net

Secretary

Ron Tschetter batribble@juno.com

Ghillie 1

Jim Macdonald macdonaldco@msn.com

Ghillie 2

Conrad Gowell CGowell@pugetsound.edu

Trustees

Scott Hagen '09 Jim Young '09
Andrew Bennett '10 Craig Koepler '10
Bob Young '11 Chapin Henry III '11

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.

September Meeting at the Home Waters

The September WFFC meeting will take place on Tues., September 20th, at the Home Waters site, on the Yakima River, and at Red's Fly Shop. This will be your chance to see, use, and enjoy the Home Waters site; fish the Yakima; party with your friends; and in general whoop it up!

There will be transportation from the west side for you. A Grayline bus will pick people up at the Ravenna and 65th parking lot in Seattle, at 7:30 am. It will then proceed to Issaquah, where at 8:10 am, it will pick people up across the street from Creekside Angling. There will be pastries and coffee on the bus. Note that the bus will be cancelled if not enough people sign up.

We will meet at the Home Waters site in Ellensburg at 10 am. After a day of fishing and frivolity, we will assemble at Red's Fly Shop at 4 pm. We will then head back to the Home Waters site for dinner from the Taco Truck at 6:00 pm.

The cost is \$30. Please pay for the meeting in the Members area of <http://www.wffc.com>. In the same location, indicate whether you would like to go by bus or in your own car. If you drive, be sure that you download a parking pass from [wffc.com](http://www.wffc.com) (also in the Members area).

If you are interested in renting/hiring one of Red's boats or guides, you must contact Red's Fly Shop directly at (509) 933-2300 or www.redsflyshop.com, and mention that you want to make arrangements for a guide or a boat that is being held for the WFFC on September 20th.

Please bring your own lawn chair and your own lunch.

Cheers!

Nominating Committee

It's that time of year yet again: time to select the Nominating Committee that will nominate members for officer and trustee positions. We will nominate and elect members of the Nominating Committee at the September meeting at the Home Waters site—if there is a quorum. If not, we will nominate and elect members of the Nominating Committee at the October meeting. If you want to nominate someone for this committee, please ask them first.

August Meeting: Heather Bartlett on Hatchery Reform *by Jim van de Erve*

Heather Bartlett of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife presented at the August general meeting. One of our most popular speakers, this was her fifth visit to WFFC. At each one she has brought us news and perspective on what is going on at WDFW. At this meeting, she spoke on the history of the state hatchery system and hatchery reform.

Prior to 1900, there was legendary abundance of salmon and steelhead in the state of Washington. The first collapse of the salmon and steelhead fisheries occurred before the turn of the century, caused by overfishing and habitat changes. The state system of hatcheries was created to reverse that trend. It would provide mitigations for the hydropower system, obstructions, water withdrawal, and deforestation. It was also created as a public work project.

The phases of the hatchery system have been as follows:

- Phase 1: 1890 to 1905. Egg and fry releases.
- Phase 2: 1906 to 1936. Large number of eggs with short-term care.
- Phase 3: 1937 to 1945. Public works mitigations.
- Phase 4: 1945 to 1949. Expansion and modernization. Smaller egg takes, intensive pond rearing. New stations, old renovation.
- Phase 5: 1950 to 1981. Production hatchery development, increase in production. Belloni decision, 1969; Boldt decision, 1974.
- Phase 6: 1982 to the present. Fewer salmon with better survival. Development of large facilities and modernization.

The primary legal foundation for hatcheries is that they can mitigate damage from dams. The tribal legal foundation was Belloni in 1969, which established that the native tribes are entitled to a "fair share" of the salmon harvest under treaties signed in the 1850's, and the Boldt decision in 1974, which refined the Belloni ruling by determining that native tribes were entitled to 50 percent of the salmon har-

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vest as their fair share. Hatchery fish counts have been instrumental in determining treaty/non treaty sharing.

Hatchery release of salmon and steelhead are 195 million today. This is a decline since 1988, but an increase from 1960, when it was 120 million. The peak was 380 million in 1981. The economic impact of hatcheries in annual personal income is \$68 million: \$30 million in the sound, \$9 million on the coast, and \$29 million on the lower Columbia. An economic analysis of the hatcheries is included in WDFW's hatchery 2020 plans.

There is a long history of hatchery production, providing a hatchery harvest opportunity and economic value. But hatchery fish pose a risk to natural spawning. Hatcheries have contributed to the decline of wild populations. Hatcheries pose genetic, ecological, and facility risks. The genetic risks are inbreeding and domestication. The ecological risks are predation, competition, and disease.

As a result of the Endangered Species Act (ESA), authorization is needed to continue hatchery operations. There are some twenty formal hatchery management programs, including the 1985 Puget Sound Management Plan and the 1986 Hood Canal Management Plan.

The Hatchery Scientific Review Group (HSRG) is a scientific panel that was formed to address hatchery reform, as mandated by Congress. HSRG has recommended approaches to reduce the risks of hatcheries. Its priorities are first, to improve the brood stock management, and second, to ensure that hatcheries meet standards. It recommends to the state whether the hatchery program meets reform standards. Their job is to reduce the biological risks, not close hatcheries. (For more information about the HSRG, see http://www.hatcheryreform.us/hrp/about/hsrg/welcome_show.action.)

The principles of reform are:

- The goals must be clear.
- It must operate in a scientifically defensible way.
- There must be feedback for decision making.



Hatchery reform started in 2005. At its Nov. 6th/7th 2009 meeting, WDFW adopted the *Fish and Wildlife Commission Policy Decision C-3619* “to advance the conservation and recovery of wild salmon and steelhead by promoting and guiding the implementation of hatchery reform.” (You can see a draft of the policy at <http://bit.ly/pd8VgP>.)

Policy C-3619 uses the principles, standards, and recommendations of the HSRG. It addresses both conservation and harvest concerns. As a result, watershed-specific plans have been developed to implement hatchery reform, and brood stock management standards will be implemented by 2015.

The means to reform hatcheries are to keep them small, to reduce hatchery production. When hatchery fish return, they should be collected. Hatcheries should be brought into compliance with standards.

In Puget Sound, a citizen-based advisory group will be initiated that will institute hatchery action implementation plans. They will coordinate with federal environmental impact statements. A coast process has also been initiated, and a lower Columbia River plan has been drafted. These plans need to align WDFW production with the recovery plan.

In the Interior Columbia Basin, hatchery production on the Snake, Wenatchee, and Methow rivers will be revised. They are reducing the number of steelhead that are released in some locations. The total will be the same, but the location of the releases are different. They want fewer hatchery fish in the Methow, so they don't interbreed with the wild fish.

Brood stock management standards provides metrics for performance of hatchery programs. At the present time, 45% of the programs meet HSRG stan-

dards. By 2015, 90% of programs will meet HSRG standards. The programs must meet environmental standards by 2015. Note that in the capital budget request for 2011 to 2013, the state only got some of their budgetary requests, while the federal programs got all of theirs. The WDFW is more and more dependent on wildlife funding, a lot from recreational use.

The hatchery reform policy is a paradigm shift for hatchery production. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) is the impetus for reform.

To implement the reform, WDFW will use mass marking of harvest production, all Coho and steelhead, and almost all Chinook. Mass marking is done with automated trailers that cut the adipose. The efficiency of releases is indicated by smolt traps that look at wild and hatchery survival. WDFW also uses acoustic tagging.

One reform strategy was to use fishermen to remove returning hatchery fish from a river system. However, there is often a good catch rate, but not a good retention rate. Catch and release of hatchery fish can harm wild fish.

A major project for reform is the Elwha, as a result of the dam removal. The Lower Elwha has a tribal hatchery for steelhead that will need to get ESA authorization like WDFW. As the operator, WDFW has some latitude in all hatchery operations. In the restoration plan for the Elwha, the fear is that there wouldn't be any recolonization.

The HSRG advisory group has supported wild zones. If you have any comments about wild fish, send them to Jim Scott.

For information on the system, see the agency Web site (<http://wdfw.wa.gov>, Fishing tab, Hatcheries section).

the evening. On the river at four with light overcast, fishing was desultory until 7:00 pm. After that fish were taken regularly to a total of 14, many over 14 inches, and all on the dry fly. I fished a foam bodied stonefly with an elk hair caddis dropper, and both worked. There was very little hatch until after 8:00 pm when a modest caddis hatch occurred. A cast to within one foot of the grassy bank was most effective, but of course that led to donating three flies to the fish mafia in the trees, iris, and grass!

High Camp at Scottish Lakes

by Ron Tschetter

We stood waiting in the parking lot for our designated 9:00 am pickup time. Destination, Scottish Lakes High Camp, where we planned an extended weekend of hiking and fishing at the multitude of high-altitude lakes lying deep in the Alpine Lakes Wilderness area.

Our pickup vehicle moaned up the road's steep incline as the wooded shoulders of the mountains hemmed us in on either side. Crystal-clear weather and the sweet smell of alpine air. City life left far behind.

High Camp is a cluster of buildings consisting of a lodge, shower/sauna/hot tub complex, and an assortment of cabins. The cabins are equipped with little pleasures to perform all the basics for cooking, washing, and cleaning. **Pete Baird**, **Mike Wearne**, and I occupied one of the cabins. Also on site were club members **Hugh Clark** and his wife Suzanne, **Paul Lingbloom** and his wife Evie along with Paul's brother, Mike Lindbloom, and his wife Mary.

Our first wildlife sighting occurred when a resident mouse greeted **Pete Baird** and me as we inventoried the cabin cooking utensils. The mouse quickly disappeared, but we were wondering if his favorite outing time wasn't somewhere around midnight where our food might become easy pickings.

There are a number of high-altitude lakes in the surrounding area. All require some hiking to get to. Since we were anxious to get fishing, Chiwaukum Lake would be our first jaunt. Chiwaukum lies down in a deep valley ~ 5 miles from the camp. It's a pleasant hike over some beautiful alpine meadows, then the trail takes a drop into lower Ewing Valley where the lake is situated. There are some shoals at



Yakima River Report *by Hugh Clark*

I headed to the Yakima in mid morning, planning to wade or bank fish in the afternoon and evening. The Cle Elum was running very high, and when I saw the Yak at 4100 cfs, it was clear that wading was not a good choice. By good luck, The Evening Hatch got me together with Bruce Scotland as a guide for

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Paul Lingbloom and Tank

the inlet end of the lake that afford an angler an opportunity to wade out far enough where backcast won't be a problem. Wading out in loose mud and cold water can be a little unpleasant, but you'll be right close to the drop off where the fish are cruising. And they were certainly cruising! **Pete Baird**, **Mike Wearne**, **Paul Lingbloom**, Mike Lingbloom, and I were kept busy all afternoon catching and releasing brook trout, not world beaters in size, but plenty of action. A very pleasant afternoon with enough breeze to keep the mosquitos grounded.

The hike out exerted our leg muscles well and worked up a good thirst. Little did we know that before we left, **Mike Wearne** had left a few bottles of beer in the cold creek running behind our cabin. Our cabin had grins from ear to ear!

The next day we decided to wander a bit farther out. Donald Lake, which is at a higher elevation and a bit more remote, was the target destination. We thought there might be a chance at some larger fish. The last mile and a half to Donald Lake requires a hiker to be carefully observant of stacked cairns that guide you up a rather steep incline which is somewhat void of a visible trail. **Pete Baird** had been into this lake before so he had a good idea where we were headed and we arrived at the lake with minimal wandering.

Donald Lake is a clear lake which harbors larger fish, but we had a tough time catching them. An afternoon of fishing brought us only four cutthroats to hand. An interesting observation was that both of us

had waded out on a shallow shelf that juts out to an abrupt drop off. While we were casting to the deeper water, our backs to the shallows, a few trout would sneak behind us looking for surface insects in barely a foot of water. It didn't seem they were bothered by our presence, but toss a fly line over them (which I tried numerous times) they'd spook to deeper water like a rocket. Motivating behavior on their part, like they'd had some experience with fly lines and knew it meant trouble.

The hike out was underscored by more beautiful country and spectacular views, but the mosquitos laid claim to any rivulet or bog near the trail. Their assaults kept us on the move.

Any sore muscles were easily remedied by the camp hot tub. Just the right temperature too, not the scalding temperatures that I've experienced in most hot tubs. The stars were out in full view which made tub soaking all that more dazzling.

This is a wonderful place for an outing. The rates are reasonable. There are plenty of group accommodations such as picnic table, outdoor gas grills, and cabins well equipped with everything needed for conventional housekeeping. The lodge is pleasant with a couch, plenty of tables, and good reading material. Coffee is ready at 8:00 every morning.

And that cabin mouse? Never another peep so we never told camp management about him. We figured his good behavior warranted an acquittal from a mouse trap.



Pete Baird bringing in a brookie

Home Waters by Dave Schorsch

Home Waters is coming together! Just got back from the sixth trip over there! Thanks to all the guys who have pitched in with heavy labor and construction skills! Starting in July, the trips have gone approximately as follows:

1. Hole digout and modification. Hot, dirty, sweaty digging of rocks out of the bottoms of 4 foot deep holes, 2 foot wide. We now know just how many rocks there are in the Yakima valley:
Kristoferson, Schorsch, Alton, and Callahan.
2. 2nd hole digout and modification, layout of structure, setting and bracing of main uprights:
Pratt, Schorsch, Maccarrone, Karlovich, Little, and two Schuitemakers.
3. Pre-inspection hole, post, and gravel tune up:
Schorsch.
4. Inspection and concrete pour: **Kristoferson and Pratt.**
5. Structural framing and enormous amounts of rock work: **Pratt, Schorsch, Crowley, Robbins, Berquist, and Koepler.**
6. Roof framing and sheathing, north building:
Pratt, Schorsch.

Sorry if I forgot anybody, several days of heat stroke have taken their toll. There is still a lot to do, but we do have one structure done far enough that you'll have some shade for the September club gathering. Thanks again for all the help, guys!

Fly Plate by Rocco Maccarrone

Gil Nyerges has been kind enough to offer his skills and time to assemble a fly plate (or two) of all WFFC member's favorite flies. These fly plates will be offered as auction items at our annual fund-raising Christmas Party. We have been promoting this effort all year. So far, Gil has received a grand total of 21 flies - pathetic. The following is an email I recently received from Gil:

"Please understand that I'm NOT complaining, but I feel that we have to keep up the pressure on the



membership to send in their flies. So far, we have twenty-one flies received and processed. That's the good part—I'll try sending you a small picture that I scanned during the construction of the last one I did for the club some years ago. You'll see that there are 82 flies mounted, and that there remains to be a fair amount of effort on everyone's part to make this a success. I'm going on! The premise is that everyone knows what the reason for my request of a deadline of October 1st is for. I don't expect 100% participation, but certainly 50% is not unreasonable and I feel is a good goal. I will go forward and process all that I receive by October 1st, but I will be keenly disappointed at too much less than that and it might be a rather mediocre offering for our live auction."

PLEASE, get your favorite fly (1 fly) to Gil or myself by October 1st. Let's make these fly plates a success for the good of our club.

A Question to Ponder . . . by Steve Raymond

The Whidbey *News-Times* of August 21st carried the tragic story of Dan Dodds, 62, who was fishing at Whidbey's Keystone Spit on August 18th when he hooked a huge fish. The newspaper reported that "the ensuing battle ranged all over, with Dodds at times fighting the monster while waist-deep in the water." A bystander said the battle went on for 15 or 20 minutes. Dodds eventually landed the fish, a beautiful 28-pound chinook salmon. "That's the fish of my dreams," he told another angler who watched him land it. Then he killed the fish.

Moments later, Dodds suddenly pitched forward and died of a heart attack.

Which leaves one to ponder the obvious question of what might have happened if he had released the fish.



Washington Fly Fishing Club
P.O. Box 639
Mercer Island, WA 98040
www.wffc.com

Stamp
here

September, 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:

The September WFFC general meeting will be an outing to the Home Waters site on the Yakima. For more information, see the article on p. 3.