

# Creel Notes from the



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



September, 2012



## Yakima Home Waters Project

At the September general membership meeting, we will receive a report on the lease negotiations with the property owner. After a deliberation by the members, we will have a vote on whether to extend the lease for the Yakima Home Waters.

As your president, I consider it appropriate to discuss in this format the history of the Yakima Home Waters as I have observed the progress over the years.

I remember a series of meetings that were regularly held at the Seattle Tennis Club prior to the general membership meeting. The informal gatherings were normally held in the room where the WFFC board meetings are convened. We talked about a variety of locations, primarily lakes in the Puget Sound area. On more than one occasion we actually met with property owners. At one point, I contacted a representative of the Washington Dairy Association looking into the possibility of utilizing some farm property.

I am not sure of the date, but I remember when **Kris [Kristoferson]** contacted me about the potential of leasing the site that is now the Yakima Home Waters. I was supportive of the concept. That location was one of the first spots I attempted fly fishing with my best friend. I had been there several times since the initial effort, and am familiar with the vicinity.

For the last several years, we have built the shelter, primarily through the efforts of a few club members. In 2010 and 2011, we had general membership club meetings in Ellensburg at the home waters site. I could not attend the 2010 event. I was responsible for the 2011 event. Currently the shelter is complete. It has taken longer than I had hoped.

I am employed as a commercial real estate appraiser. In that capacity I observe many real estate projects get developed. Some are immediately occupied and some

languish without tenants for seemingly years. The analogy that I am trying to make here is that we have just experienced a three-year construction period, and we have not “tested” the market for the feasibility of the project.

As **Pat Peterman** correctly noted in the August membership meeting, we have not had one person devoted to promoting the usage of the Yakima Home Waters facility. I think that a person encouraging the use of the site within the club will properly “test” the viability of the project.

At the WFFC board meeting in August, we voted on what we should do going forward. **Gene Gudger** presented the idea of renegotiating the lease with the property owner. This was basically the same motion that Gene made at the August general membership meeting. The board voted; and the vote was a tie! I cast the deciding vote to bring the subject to the general membership meeting.

Personally, I would favor some sort of annual lease renewal agreement. If after another year the usage is not at an appropriate level, I would not hesitate to support the cancelation of the agreement and start the search process for another “home waters” location.

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## This Month's Speaker: Morgan Bond in His Own Words

I grew up in California's Central Valley in the 80's, spending my summer breaks fishing and float tubing on the Sacramento River to say cool. Somewhere along the way, I made friends with a kid whose parents were set netters in Bristol Bay during the summer, and he taught me to fly fish and tie flies. We began poking around the Sierras from Tahoe to the Kern River looking for trout in little alpine streams. Eventually my friend's family bought a fishing lodge in Alaska, and I tagged along for a few summers, ferrying gear and repairing cabins in exchange for some days on the nearby lakes and streams. I was absolutely stunned to see scores of fish piling into every little stream surrounding the lake, something completely foreign to a kid from California. I moved to the Napa Valley in middle school and my world view became more marine centric as I spent my free time poking around the sloughs and coast surrounding the San Francisco Bay.

After high school, I went to UC Santa Cruz for my Bachelor's work. On a whim I took scuba diving as an elective course and was immediately hooked with the amazing life of the kelp forests surrounding the Monterey Bay (although the warm water of the '97-'98 El Nino didn't hurt either). I switched my major to marine biology and began diving for any researcher willing to take me on board. Diving led to field work in kelp forests along the west coast from Mexico to Northern California, as well as research projects in the Bahamas and Tahiti.

After college, I worked as a diving technician for a year, but full-time diving is rough on the back, and I began poking around for other opportunities. Luckily, NOAA was opening a new research laboratory in Santa Cruz on the UCSC marine lab campus. They were interested in spinning up some work on anadromous fish in the Monterey Bay area and needed some biologists. I got a job and began doing creek walks and building weirs and smolt traps for steelhead and the southernmost native population of coho. Little work had been done with salmon in that area, and we were at square one building a research program from the ground up. I was so hooked on the steelhead work that NOAA offered to pay for my education if I went back for a Master's degree. I jumped at the opportunity, and completed my degree in steelhead marine survival in 2006.

I wanted to continue my studies in a place with more salmon expertise, so I entered the PhD program in Fisheries at UW in 2008. My current research revolves around understanding anadromy, and how fish decide when to migrate to sea (if they go at all), how long to stay, and what habitats to use. I conduct field work in the shadows of the Mt. Veniaminof volcano on the Alaska Peninsula with Dolly Varden, an abundant research fish. My PhD work is now winding down and will be completed in spring of 2013, when I hope to move on to other exciting salmonid research.

## 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.

## August's Meeting:

### Cutthroat Fishing in the South Sound

by Jim van de Erve

At the August meeting, Dave Schorsch spoke on cutthroat fishing in the south Sound, which he defined as roughly from mid Vashon Island south to all fingers of the south by Shelton, Arcadia, and thereabouts. It is a huge, convoluted area. You can fish there your whole life, and not fish more than half of it.

It's an interesting fishery because you can be in the middle of half a million people and still feel like it's wild. It's a different habitat than in the north. You go from big open reaches in the north to more intimate, braided lagoons. Often it's more like stream fishing than mooching for salmon. For example, the beach south of Gig Harbor has a huge development around it, but you would never know. And then fishing Everhard Cove at high tide is like motoring through the Amazon.

There is a lot of wildlife in the South Sound. It is a stewpot of critters. The whole beach can move. And the bugaboo of sound cutts is oysters. Puget Sound is paved by oysters of a high value. That's good if you like oysters, and it's good for the water quality, but it's bad for access.

Cutthroat are a primal native fish of the West. They are aggressive in feeding, reproduction, and filling all nooks. They will crawl to every limit. Dave speaks of them with great respect for the type of fish they are.

#### Where to Fish for Cutts

A good sea-run cutthroat beach is north of the Hartstein Island bridge: rocky. "Sea-run cutthroat" and "rocky" are synonymous. They like a cobbled beach with pits and pockets and animals. It's great for predators like sea-run cutts. They are fast, strong, and like little orange flies. Look for little bays, a rocky beach, shade, and current.

The second best habitat for them is a small stream estuary, where they can reproduce, where they can find shelter in the winter. They like to winter over in streams.

Cutts like eel, crabs, oysters, and sand dollars. They will be there in the fall. Cutts are like little baracudas going after them.



*Some of Dave Schorsch's Cutt Flies*

The type of beach preferred by cutts is a long, straight run with heavy current and shelves, stumps, and logs. Cast to shore with streamer patterns and work it in your boat with the motor. In addition, a lot of the structure that cutts like is man-made, like little rock walls, pilings, or a sunken chunk of something. Structure for cutts is big, like at Acadia, which has a giant pile of logs and branches every 50 yards. They are full of fish. Old pilings are good.

Good stream estuaries are the mouth of Sherwood Creek by Allan, Rocky Creek into Rocky Bay, which has larger setbacks. This is great water, and you can fish in a foot of water at low tide. Sherwood Creek is working to get a sockeye run.

Dave contends that there is more high quality water in the south Sound than in King County.

A good spot is Olalla Bay. Park at the boat launch, and walk. It's prime cut water. Some bays drain completely dry between tides. Olalla Bay does. It can be good in the fall. Cutts near Olalla have a lot of sea lice. Some beds are full of them. They don't seem to affect the fish. Cutts lose them when they go up a stream.

Fish north of Gig Harbor, west of Vashon. Another good spot is Penrose State Park, which has a mile and a half of beach. Also fish the mouth of Vonn Bay. Fish just outside it.

Kennedy Creek. You can wade, but watch when you are wading. South side of Hammersley Inlet.

Look for where predators like to eat. Points, edges. Cutt fishing in the south South is best in the summer and fall, when the water is generally good.

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Fish sit on the downstream side of an island. They pile up by a current line or seam.

## How to Fish for Them

Beach access is an issue. Puget Sound is more than 95% privately owned. Seafood companies are posting no trespassing signs on their oyster farms. That means using a boat. You don't need much of a boat. A jon boat works, or a pontoon boat, or a pram. You can wade. But don't use a float tube. You can even fish out of a kayak. A motor helps. You can use little boats in protected water.

A bigger boat really helps. With a flat bottom for shallow water. There can be a lot of distance between boat launches. It's helpful to have a South Puget Sound map, and a boat launch book.

Tides change beaches. An outgoing tide is best for a narrow mouth. If fishing during a tide, look for current seams. Tides can be good anytime. But fishing a high tide can be tough. A middle or low tide compresses the water, and can be better. Tide moves food around. Put lead on attractor flies, and strip. Use a slow sinking line, an intermediate. It can be effective to use a shooting head.

Cast to rocks and the rocky beaches. Let your fly dangle, then bring it up slowly. The fish are close to shore. Routinely drop flies on rocks.

Fish an intermediate line near shore in the fall. You can also fish a dry line in shallow water with glow bugs. Strip it slow. South Hood Canal.

When fishing with a candlefish, on the other hand, strip as fast as you can. Drop it on the beach and strip it.

If there is a shoal away from the beach, it may hold cutts. Cutts are shallow-water creatures. Don't waste your time in the deep reach between the shoal and the mainland. In the shallows, drift and cast to the rocks. You can slow down with an anchor—slow down, but don't stop. Or you can use a rope chain to slow down with. Low water is not necessarily bad.

Hook up so not catching on the bottom. Cutts hit from the back, so orient hook point forward.

## What to Fish with

In weed beds, cutts will go for candlefish, herring, sculpins, and blennies. A good candlefish pattern is green and wiggly. When fishing the current, use lead eyes, but it will puff up and swim. One of Dave's

favorites is an orange and white ply. He also suggests using clowser flies.

You can use the same flies for cutts as for silvers, but retrieve differently. Black flies and Egg-sucking leeches can be good. Use candlefish for big fish. Candlefish can be as wide as your hand. Attractors get smaller fish.

One of Dave's favorite flies is a size 10, orange chenille body. Bead head, orange tail, white hackle above, orange hackle below.

Typical for fall fish is 14 to 17 inches. Can get 20 inches, but not often.

You can also catch sea robin, a strange fish. Rock fish. Starry flounder. Coho salmon. Pink salmon. Pinks are a blast in salt water. Dolly Varden (the Holy Grail in the salt). A weirdo fishery is night fishing for chums. When night fishing, you can walk up to the fish in the shallows.

Cutts match the bottom. It's tough to see them.

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## Hood Canal Report *by Dave Schorsch*

Sometimes a day can just be too beautiful. Such was the case for many of us at Hood Canal on Saturday, Sept. 8<sup>th</sup>. The sun shone, the water glittered, and the mountains were spectacular. Beats a day at the office, as they say. But bright sunshine is the enemy of fat trout in the shallows when ospreys and eagles abound, as they do at Seabeck.

Fishing was pretty tough for most of us, with fish being spooky and skittish all around the Hazel, Qulcene, and Seabeck areas. Fast boats piloted by **Young, Deeds, Henry, and Schorsch** ran dozens of miles, and fished miles of beach for meager returns. The cutts were there, just picky and weird in the



bright light. That's our excuse, anyway. We found a big school of silvers and summer chum near the shellfish lab, but getting them to bite was another matter.

The guys who stayed close to home fared better with some pretty great sea-run fishing in and around Stavis Bay. **Mark Pratt** (as usual) hammered them working from a pontoon boat there.

After a rough ride back, because the wind came up in the afternoon, we retired to Jay Deeds' home for a pizza feed. 19 club members, and Jay's patient wife, Jone, chowed down Seabeck pizza and beer till dark. **Preston Singletary** presented an excellent PowerPoint show on sea-run cutts on a screen in Jay's living room. Most wandered home, and some stayed for another day.

Sunday dawned cloudy and windy, so those of us who went out stayed pretty close in. I fished with Mike Wosinsky (sp?) and his guest Jim Goedhart. We fished in the waves around Stavis and south, finding half a dozen trout, and seeing at least one pod of silvers that expressed no interest. We met Pratt hours later only to hear that fishing was great right in front of the boat launch! Figures!

Anyway, it was a great good time, and I wouldn't miss it again for the world. Thanks again to Jay Deeds for hosting this outing and putting up with a bunch of ner-do-wells on his property. Hope he's willing to do it again next year!

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### **Rat Lake Trip** *by Chuck Ballard*

Jim Higgins and I spent the day at Rat lake and I was nearly "skunked" because Jim had a very fast sink line and I didn't. The fish were down very near the bottom and my type II just didn't cut it! Jim caught 12 to 14 fish up to 14", and I finally managed two, one on a dry damsel and one on a Ruby Rat. Jim caught his on an olive woolly bugger.

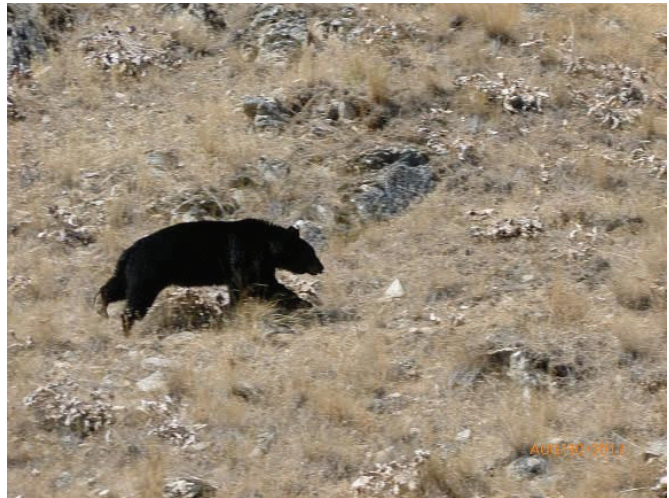
There was a highlight to the trip, however, as there was a full-grown black bear that ran down the shore right passed my boat and I got this quick passing shot as it headed up the side of the mountain.

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### **Online Logo Store Cancelled**

*by Jim Macdonald*

The Online Logo Store has cancelled the WFFC for lack of interest on our part.



### **Dry Falls Outing** *by Dave Schorsch*

Our annual fall outing to Dry Falls lake is Oct. 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup>. This is often our best-attended outing of the year! The weather is usually beautiful, and the fishing is always good to great. This is a great time to bring the wife, share a happy hour and barbeque, and catch a few trout in the process.

We will meet, as usual, in the rear of the Sun Lakes State Park campground. Around campsites 26 thru 29, I think. Plan on a happy hour Saturday starting around 5:00, and a hot grill for the steaks around 6:00. Bring your best appetizer, and side dishes for pot luck are always welcome. The club will provide steaks for those who sign up, and pop, beer, and box wine. Other more discriminating choices are on you, expect to share!

Musicians, budding musicians, people who can hum or play the spoons are invited to tune it up around the fire. There are cabins to rent at the Sun Lakes Resort on Park Lake, if camping's not your style. Plan on having a good time!

The fishing is the best of the year, as far as I'm concerned, with dry lines the tool of choice. Prowling the shallows, throwing buggy nymphs at sighted cruisers is a blast. The charge, the wake, the swirl, hookup or no, it's a rush. Rainbows will be about 8 to 1 to browns in the catch for most anglers, with browns often being the biggest. Other places to fish include Lake Lenore for the big cutthroat there, and Rocky Ford for stream rainbows, both selective and not.

Join us at Dry Falls this year! Sign up on the web site, and let us know if you can help haul stuff or set

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up/clean up. Don't forget to include head count for steaks!

See you there!

**Dave Schorsch**, 206-227-6134

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### **Yakima Day Trip** *by Dave Schorsch*

Some of the club members have never gotten a chance to fish the Yakima river in the area of the club's Home Waters project. I hear it's great dry fly fishing in the fall, and would like to find out.

Several of us have discussed a day trip there on Saturday, Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>. Let's pack a lunch and meet at the Home Waters structures at the Yakima River RV park around 9:00. Those who know the waters can share some info. on water, access, and fly patterns with us newbies. Let's spend the day fishing, and gather back at the park in the afternoon for cold beers and storytelling. Should be back home in time for a late dinner.

A quick easy trip, carpool with a buddy, dry flies, and sunshine. Sound good? We'll try to arrange a sign up, or call me (**Dave Schorsch** 206-227-6134), or just show up.

See you there!

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### **September 18<sup>th</sup> Meeting Agenda**

*by Bob Burdick, Program Chairman*

For the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting, I've arranged to have two speakers discuss their work on fish migration patterns in the Columbia River basin, the Northwest, and possibly Alaska. Eric Waters works for NOAA and provides PIT tags and radio tags that biologists use for tracking fish migration patterns and behaviors for Salmon and Bull Trout. He would like to raise everyone's awareness of these tags that they may find in the belly or esophagus of these fish and what to do with them. Morgan Bond is a graduate student at the U. of W., one of the young men whose research we have helped fund, and will discuss life histories and migration of steelhead, cutthroat, and bull trout, and will focus on his specific Dolly Varden research and how it is related. I an-

ticipate that this will be a fascinating addition to our lore of angling.

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### **WFFC Participates in Bothell Community Outreach Event**

*by John Gravendyk, 1<sup>st</sup> VP Membership*

Sunday, August 26, saw four intrepid WFFC members manning our booth at the City of Bothell end-of-summer event known as *Riverfest*. **Michael Werne, Ron Tschetter, and Ron Dion**, along with yours truly, worked the crowd from 10:00 am until 3:00 pm. The purpose of the event was to provide a venue where community members of all ages could discover local clubs, hobby groups, and service organization in which to join or volunteer.

There has been a complete lack of fly fishing shows here in Puget Sound in 2012, and your membership committee felt this event might at least generate some community interest in our activities and possibly yield some membership prospects. Our association with Casting for Recovery and Project Healing Waters (as outlined on our display board) was a big hit with those visiting our booth. Ron Dion worked his usual magic demonstrating his fly tying prowess and assisting youngsters as they tied their first ever fly. Meanwhile, Mike, Ron, and I talked with visitors about our club and the benefits of considering membership in the WFFC.

I'm happy to report that the event actually yielded a fair number of potential members who left us with their contact information. All of these folks have since been contacted, and it looks like a couple will be joining us at an upcoming dinner meeting.



Thanks to Mike, Ron T., and Ron D. for giving up a beautiful Sunday to support this effort.

I'd also like to take this opportunity to thank members who are independently bringing fishing friends to our meetings and outings as potential members. Clearly this is the best way to fulfill our membership goals.



### **Signup Deadline** *by Jim Macdonald, Ghillie I*

Dear WFFC Club members, Registered Guests, Prepaid Signups, and guest speakers: It is now necessary to sign up for dinner no later than the Thursday Evening prior to the meeting. Cutoff on Prepaid Signups is also midnight on the Thursday prior to the WFFC Dinner Meeting. The easiest way to respond is by replying to the email you receive. If you need to respond in another fashion, you may call me at 206-396-4733. If you do not make the cutoff of Thursday, and you still want dinner, you are required to pay an additional \$5.00 for your dinner at the Ghillie sign-in table.

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### **WFFC Fly Tier's Round Table**

*by Dick Brening*

I hope you all have had some time to get some fishing in and are in need of tying some flies.

We have arranged with the church on Mercer Island to allow us to use a room for the Round Table for the 2012/13 fly tying season.

We will begin our round table meetings in Octo-

ber on the second Wednesday, October 10th (6:30 PM to 9PM). We will continue to meet monthly (second Wednesdays) through May 2013.

I will try to remember to send out a brief e-mail reminder the weekend before each round table meeting just in case you forget. However, put this on your calendar and plan to attend.

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### **Fly Fishing Program** *by Mike Wearne*

On June 10, 1999, the Olympic Pipeline Company gas pipeline along Whatcom Creek in Bellingham burst and sent over 229,000 gallons of fuel into Whatcom Creek. One of the three victims was Liam Wood, who was fly fishing on Whatcom Creek. As a result of efforts by the author David James Duncan, a fly fishing education program was developed at Western Washington University. The idea of the program was that through fly fishing, the students would develop a respect for the natural world and the river ecosystems. You can investigate the program by googling Western Washington University for the "Liam Wood Flyfishers and River Guardians".

I was made aware of this program recently when I went to Scottish Lakes High Camp. The driver of the SUV that transported me from Highway 2 to High Camp had participated in this program at Western and was extremely enthusiastic about the program.

What does this program at Western have to do with the WFFC, you may ask?

The University of Washington has a College of the Environment. This program is described on the University of Washington website. I am curious about the possibility of proposing to the University of Washington that they establish a similar program to the program that is established at the Western Washington. The WFFC could provide the instructional materials, fly tying equipment, rods, instructors, etc., necessary to get the program off the ground. Such an effort is totally consistent with the aims of our club and it could lead to attracting new and younger members. There is no doubt that this would require a significant commitment on the part of the membership. The WFFC, with its members doing what comes naturally, would surely get some excellent publicity, positively contribute to a worthy program at the U. of W., and likely gain a few new members.



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Stamp  
here

September, 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:

Eric Waters from NOAA and Morgan Bond from the U of Washington Fisheries Graduate Program will be presenting "What we are learning about salmon, steelhead, and bull trout migration in the Pacific Northwest, the Columbia basin and the Willamette Basin from PIT and radio tagging"