

# Creel Notes from the



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



Website: [www.wffc.com](http://www.wffc.com)



MMXVII No. 1

January, 2017

## President's Riffle

Happy New Year! Thanks so much for trusting me with this role for 2017, I am both humbled and honored.



There is a lot of 2016 that I am happy to see the last of but that does not include the outgoing leadership of the WFFC. What a stellar job Gary Bergquist and his leadership team have done over the past two years. Everything from updating our digital infrastructure (new website and administrative tools) to back to back fundraising home runs! It is so nice to step into this position with such a firm foundation in place. Thanks to all who were involved.

I would be remiss if I didn't congratulate Kerry Hodges (formerly Oldenburg) and her Holiday Party Committee specifically for once again producing an outstanding fundraiser for the club. Did you all have fun? I sure did! The auction action was fast and furious, the dinner outstanding and the wine flowed like a river in spate. Katherine informs me that I cleverly bid on and won a 17' aluminum freighter canoe. Really? Of course the real winners here were all of us and the WFFC. This year's total proceeds at the Holiday Party were over \$24,000 a record year. Net proceeds for WFFC are over \$11,000 with the Foundation clearing over \$7,000. Very nice.

Looking ahead to the coming year (and now with one Board Meeting under my belt) I am really encouraged about the future of our club. Some very capable folks are determined to leverage our new website and take advantage of new social media tools

to bring in a whole new generation of fly fishers. Other plans are afoot to convert our daughters, sons, grandchildren and friends to members as well. Our 1st VP for Membership, Rich Gaspar will be heading up this effort along with help from his committee and the Board. If you have been thinking of someone who might make a great member of our group now is the time to ask them along to an outing or a dinner meeting program. The future of this club really rests in our hands. Let's make sure the WFFC is around for another 75 years.

Our outdoor chairman, Dave Schorsch, has some great new outings in mind along with many of our tried and true traditional expeditions already lined up. I'm raring to go! Past President Mike Wearne has taken on the role of 2nd VP for Programs this year and with help from Bob Burdick our programs dance card is already full. Check it out, one great speaker after another.

I mentioned at the outset of this little article that I was happy to see 2016 slither out the door. Truth is I've been in a bit of a funk over our national political debate and what looks like might be in

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store for our environmental policies. After talking with some of our conservation committee members I feel much better. There have been a couple of really crucial victories for our side in just the last couple of weeks (see Conservation Report elsewhere in this issue). It turns out that most of these issues are fought and resolved at the local and state level. The WFFC has alliances with other like-minded organization where our capabilities are pooled to influence decision makers. A couple of nice wins is a great way to start off the new year!

Which brings me to the final point I want to make this month. If you, like me, have been casting about to see what positive thing you can do to make a difference, look no further. If you believe in the mission and goals of this organization, please get involved. We have some really key positions that are still open for 2017, if you think you can help please give me a call or shoot me a note. You can make a positive difference and it will lift you right out of the blues.

Of course the other thing that works is fishing. Grab a rod and get out there!

John Gravendyk

## Letters to the Editor

### DNR Burns Coal

Together, the people convinced one of Washington's most

powerful agencies to deliver two major blows to Big Coal in the Northwest - including denying a key approval for the last, largest remaining coal terminal proposal in Longview.

This is HUGE.

After a major victory in May of 2016 in response to the Lummi Nation, the Army Corps denied a critical permit for the Gateway Pacific coal terminal. Now, at the request of the Lummi Nation, the Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has agreed to expand the aquatic reserve to encompass Cherry Point. This provides more permanent protections to this culturally significant and resource rich place, and locking in the victory at Cherry Point.

But that's just victory #1!

DNR also denied a key lease for the Millennium Bulk Terminals' project in Longview, thereby rejecting Millennium's request to use state-owned land in the Columbia River to build new docks to export dirty coal. That means that DNR gave a firm 'no' to the nation's biggest coal export terminal. Why? For over six years, people from across the Northwest, Tribes, and community leaders banded together. Armed with science, common sense, and people power, we convinced DNR that Millennium's shaky finances and environmental impacts had no place on the iconic Columbia River.

And we WON! DNR delivered a big blow to Millennium yesterday but the fight is not over. We must ensure that each and every permit is denied so that our communities are protected from this project once and for all.

Like most epic victories, there were many heroes. Tribes from across the Northwest stood in

## Creel Notes

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*Club officers and chairmen can be contacted by logging in the WFFC website in the roster area.*

## 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.

## Christmas Party Review By Kerry Oldenburg

Thank you for a making our Holiday Dinner and Auction a record breaker!



The Annual WFFC Holiday Christmas Dinner and Auction was held December 20<sup>th</sup> at the Seattle Tennis Club.

Over 110 members and guests attended the festivities enjoying the Happy Hour, Raffle Cans, Silent Auction, Fly Box Raffle and Dinner Auction. After socializing while viewing the many selections of Raffle Cans, Fly Boxes and Silent Auction Items the festivities got underway with Kris Kristoferson serving as our Master of Ceremonies and Pete Baird opening the dinner with a Robert Service poem.

Auctioneer extraordinaire Capt. Keith Robbins got the evening underway with his capable assistant John Schuitemaker leading the club members and guests through some very competitive (and fun) bidding to raise a record breaking amount for our club and community service programs. The Seattle Tennis Club contributed remarkable service and the meals were amazing!

I would like to thank the Holiday Committee members: Ann and Gary Bergquist, Jim Goedhart, Patricia Becker, and Stephanie Hagen for putting in many hours of prep work to pull it all off. Also, Chuck Ballard and Dick Brenning and our remark-

able fly tiers and wood craftsmen for contributing our beautiful Fly Box Raffle donations. Finally the whole Holiday Committee would like to thank our vendor donors, club members donors, those attending and their guests for making this annual event a tremendous success!

**It is with great pleasure that we thank to our Vendor Donors – Be sure to support these folks!**

Avid Angler, Sage Rods, Highliner Custom Rods, Aggipah Tours, Black Bear Lodge, Len Zickler, Hi Hium Lodge the Bendzak Family, Dancing Fish Winery, Emerald Waters, Ken Trimpe, Bookwalter Wine, Hedges Wine, Tenkara Rods, Sportco, Seattle Skeet and Trap Club, Creekside Anglers

**And Many Thanks to our Member Donors – we couldn't do it without you!**

Carol Anderson, Gil Nyerges, Robert Thorpe, Rocco Maccarrone, Doug Schaad, Dave Schorsch, Kris Kristoferson, Brian McGee and Greg Smith, Paul Wyckoff, Gary Bergquist, Kerry Oldenburg, George Bassett estate, Jim Goedhart, Kelly Davies, Brad Smith, Jim McRoberts, Curt Jacobs, Chuck Ballard, Pat Becker, Robert Tovar, Peter Crumbaker, Greg Crumbaker, Don Gulliford, Mike Wearne, John Gravendyk, Bill Redman, Bob Burdick, Denny Westover, Pete Baird, Hugh Clark, Jim Young, Dick Brenning.

**I hope we haven't missed anyone! See you Next Year!**

### Letters to the Editor continued

solidarity with elected leaders, municipalities, businesses, health professionals, and faith leaders. Countless people volunteered their time. Power Past Coal coalition members worked together, breaking records and showing elected officials that coal is so last century. The whip-smart attorneys at Earthjustice uncovered documents showing Millennium was lying about how much coal it wanted to handle, creating a major roadblock that set the project back years.

And then there is you. Whether you signed a petition, testified at a hearing, or volunteered your time, this victory belongs to you. We know you will continue to be there in this powerful network to make sure 2017 is the year Washington decision-makers

reject coal exports for good.

We head into 2017 armed with an incredible victory that nobody predicted six years ago. The Northwest will hold the line on dirty fossil fuels. It's our job now to ensure that this victory holds strong and that Millennium packs up and leaves the Pacific Northwest. But for now go find the left over New Year's champagne. Celebrate.

With gratitude,  
Joelle Robinson, Field Director  
Jasmine Zimmer-Stucky, Senior Organizer

## Conservation Committee State of the Union

By Doug Schaad

2016 saw major environmental victories. If one follows the broad conservation literature (not just fisheries, but including fisheries), we are seeing much better forest management, reintroduction of many ESA listed species, major momentum on the Columbia and Snake Rivers. A new coastal management plan in Oregon for all salmonids and coastal cutthroat. Culvert removal now allows access to spawning gravels in nearly every watershed.

There are also many, many more conservation organizations with paid staff making a difference throughout the Northwest. From my perspective the biggest role for the WFFC is aiding/abetting/funding folks and organizations making a positive difference. There will always be a role for personal and club advocacy with WDFW, and legislative representatives at all levels of the geographic spectrum.

Having been here since Lake Washington and Puget Sound were both cesspools, I remain optimistic that much can be accomplished. I'm especially pleased with the recent collaboration with multiple Native American tribes allowing impact that no single individual can make.

Here's a good place to go to find out what is happening and who their Commissioners are: [http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings/2017/01/agenda\\_jan1317.html](http://wdfw.wa.gov/commission/meetings/2017/01/agenda_jan1317.html)

## Boyd Aigner Competition Rules Announced

By: Bill Neal, Awards Committee Chairman

Our Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition for 2017 is now underway. This is a friendly Competition with an objective of permitting each participant to demonstrate his or her creativity and tying skills. Each participant is to submit a "best" fly in each of three categories and may submit only one set of flies. The Members of the Club will be the judges.

The Competition was won last year by a tier outside the Club. Can we bring the trophy home?!

Here are the 2017 patterns:

Pale morning dun spinner, size 16;  
Goddard caddis, size 12; and  
CDC biot comparadun, size 14.

The schedule for the Competition is as follows:

|                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| February Members' Meeting | Display boxes distributed |
| April Members' Meeting    | Flies due                 |
| May Members' Meeting      | Judging                   |
| June Members' Meeting     | Winners announced         |

The winner will receive the special WFFC pin that was developed for the Competition, as well as having his or her name on a rotating plaque. Bob Burdick and I will serve as Coordinators for the Competition. Please contact either of us if you have any questions. Thank you for your participation and good luck to all.

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Bob: (h) 206.329.5948; [reburdick@comcast.net](mailto:reburdick@comcast.net)

## Board Announces Small Rise in Monthly Dinner Prices

The WFFC Board has voted to raise the price of the monthly Dinner Meeting by one dollar. This new price of \$34 per Dinner will cover cost increases charged to us by our hosts, The Seattle Tennis Club. Please note that the dinner price also covers the cost of our use of the STC facility for the evening.



Editor's Note

Some fine photos came my way, and I could not place them because of inexperience with the software. Or, to be truthful, I could have placed them and they would have been sideways. -de

## Award Ceremony January Meeting

By Bill Neal, Awards Committee Chair

The January members' meeting is our traditional time to recognize Club members and others who have distinguished themselves through service to the Club and the fly fishing community. We are changing things a bit by spreading the Awards presentations over two months, January and February, and including a regular program event in each.

The presentations at these two meetings will include the Club's more regular Awards, described below, and special ones, recognizing meritorious conduct, as well as that which may be more humorous. Our regular Awards will include the following:

*Empty Creel Award*, presented to a member for exceptional dedication and contribution to the welfare of the Club;

*Tommy Braysshaw Award*, presented to a member for distinctive and meritorious contribution to the general community through furtherance of the aims and purposes of the Club; and

*Andy Award*, presented to a member who has "suffered most cruelly from the vagaries of Murphy's Law".

Bob Burdick and Mike Wearne have arranged a great program for the January meeting, described elsewhere in these *Creel Notes*. The February program will be as previously announced.

The last change is relaxation of the coat and tie requirement for the January meeting, as it is for the February meeting. We look forward to seeing all of you there. Thank you.

## Fishing Report Driftless Area Strategies

### Fly Fishing Spring Creeks in the "Driftless Area" in Wisconsin (and MN, IA and IL)

by John Townsell (AKA Lucky)

During the school term, we live in West Salem, WI which is about 5 miles East of La Crosse, WI which is on the Mississippi River. There are many spring creek streams in the "driftless area" (where the glaciers didn't cover it during the last ice age). There are over 1,000 miles of accessible streams! These streams are compara-

ble to the famous spring creeks in Pennsylvania (the Letort, Yellow Breeches, etc.) but are not nearly as well known. So far, I drive (25-30) miles to my current fishing near Coon Valley, WI. There are (3) almost parallel streams that I am fishing and scouting: Bohemian Valley, Timber Coulee and its tributary, Rullands Coulee and Spring Coulee. These (and Coon Creek) all come together in the vicinity of Coon Valley, WI. I have fished Timber Coulee the most: I just started upstream in an area, fished for a day and then, the next trip, I started at my exit and again fished upstream, I repeated this cycle to learn the waters. I also did a couple of "bushwhacking trips" which were a LOT of work but I probably caught trout there that would have died of old age without ever seeing a fly! The old adage in Yellowstone Park is: "99% of the fishermen never travel over 100 yards from the road"! The tough part of the bushwhacking is that I am traveling in green weeds over my head and green, thick-stemmed grass that is knee to waist high. I literally have to "bull my way" through. Where this is prevalent, the fishing from the bank can be brutal; snagging fly on backcasts and on weeds overhanging the stream. Takes lots of 6x and 7x fluorocarbon tippet, SIs, flies and **patience** to fish like this!

Regarding wading: I'll give you the negative part first: There is a real problem with silt buildup out of the main current. The silt buildup is very important in that it gives a base for the "watercress" to grow which provides protection for the fish and the stream insects. The stream bottom itself is hard and rocky and the water is crystal clear. The silt buildup can be dangerous. Your foot can sink in up to your knee and really "stick". If you lose your balance, you could break a leg (or drown!). Just recently, a person doing stream reclamation work in MN was found, after (4) hours being stuck, by the landowner. He had fallen into the stream and was stuck up to his waist. They had to "mount a rescue" to get him out! A rope and pickup truck wasn't sufficient (without hurting him)! It would be really hard to regain your footing even with the aid of a wading staff. Incidentally, a Foldstaf doesn't work. The lower section(s) stick in the mud and won't extricate. You have to use a solid wading staff to be sure. Almost impossible to wade upstream very far in this situation; usually I get in the silt buildup only when crossing the stream. Sometimes, I can wade up the clear parts of the stream (makes for easy casting!) and avoid the silt areas but it is a lot of

work. The good thing about the silt is that long, flowing weeds (locally called "watercress") grow in the silt (waving in the current) and provide cover for the trout (and the insect life!) that would be non-existent otherwise. I know that the trout hang out under the weeds because I have scared a "ton" of trout out while wading!

Now for the good part! The State has leased easements for fishermen along almost all of these streams in this area. A lot of this has been because of the Conservation efforts of the fly clubs (TU affiliated) improving the streams and making friends with the farmers. A lot of the fishing area is through pasture land that is grazed daily by tame dairy (mostly) cattle. This makes it like fishing from your front lawn (except for the occasional weed, small brush or overhanging trees). Easy walking. Most of the fences have wooden "stiles" to climb over the fence. Other places I have always found a way to get under the fence. Some of the fences are barbed wire with an electrified wire also. Not a problem.

These are spring creeks. Moderately heavy rain doesn't seem to affect some of them and they all clear up quickly. Those like Coon Creek, which drain some cultivated fields, take a little longer. Water comes out of the ground at 49 degrees. Water temperature has been about 56-60 degrees in area I fished (in 75-89 degree weather). So far, I am usually only a short distance (or a very few miles) from the actual start of the stream. Don't know the CFS (it moves right along!) but it can be as little as 3'-4' wide in the rapids on curves to 10'-15' wide in the "meadow sections". If left natural, it would only be 12"-15" deep in the "meadow sections" and less in the rapids. This provided very little cover for the fish from predation. But, thanks to Conservation efforts, some of the Clubs like my Trout Unlimited Club here that I belong to, improvements have been made. They build LUNKER structures. The letters stand for something but, basically, they build a platform on a curve, and place large boulders on it to anchor it and sometimes place large boulders strategically around it to cause the stream to cut a deep hole back under the structure. Some of these holes that I have seen are waist-high and deeper. Even a couple of feet depth helps a lot. These are ideal for nymphs and strike indicators (SI). I am constantly changing the depth of my nymph below the SI. The main problem with this method is accuracy and stealth in having the SI and nymph "splash"/land in the rapids above the hole and then not have your fly line spook the fish. I have used yarn strike indicators and clear fly lines (and 6x-7x fluorocarbon tippet) to try to minimize this (although I used "rubber-core foam indicators" and white lines and they still worked fine). It seems to be important to get the

nymph down to the bottom in the hole. Drifting it high just doesn't seem to work.

Anyway, accurate casting, avoiding hanging up on overhanging weeds and brush, watching your backcast, casting under overhanging trees, etc. (and replacing a lot of tippets and flies!) seems to be the important thing. I love it!!

On mornings when I am a little late, there is usually one fisherman's car parked at several sections (the areas that are really easy to access). I just avoid these because I now know other sections that take a little effort to access and no one goes to. Believe it or not, one of the limiting things for these more "difficult areas" is a place to park along the road! There are narrow shoulders mostly but, knowing me, I found a few places where the shoulder is just wide enough to park without worrying about sliding down into the ditch. I seem to be the only one who does this (as well as "bushwhacking"). Incidentally, I found good fishing even in the areas that are easy to access (thanks to mandated catch and release).

There is a full range of insect life. I find that small nymphs, scuds and sowbugs (locals call them "cress bugs") work fine. A local legend is Bethke's pink squirrel nymph (you can look it up). Grasshopper patterns are a hoot in some meadow areas. I am not much of a technical dry fly fisher but have done well on some parachute Adams-type dry flies and elk hair caddis. The good old Crackleback works.

Summary: this is tough fishing. And the catch rate may not be high. And the fish are not really large. But there are up to 2,000 fish (and more!) per mile in some sections of the streams. Lots of time may be spent getting in position to cast and then rebuilding leaders, SIs and flies when you hang up. But the access is unbelievable. For an experienced, patient fisherman, it is a great experience!

To give you an idea of what the "Driftless Area" here in Wisconsin (and MN, IA and IL) is like, this is a sampling

Heart of the Driftless sneak peek <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RRF0wMcXisY>

Best of the Driftless <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vil6PR-59vU>

The Driftless Area Mystery <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R22RTkcpp-c>

The Driftless Region- An Enchanted Land <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c95UI4ret20>

The Driftless Region-Wisconsin <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nka6wRoYXMA>

John Townsell

## New WFFC Website Launch Announcement

The new WFFC Website will be launched on December 21<sup>st</sup> ready for your 2017 Dues renewals payments and the January Awards Dinner Meeting signups replacing the current website which is over 15 years old.

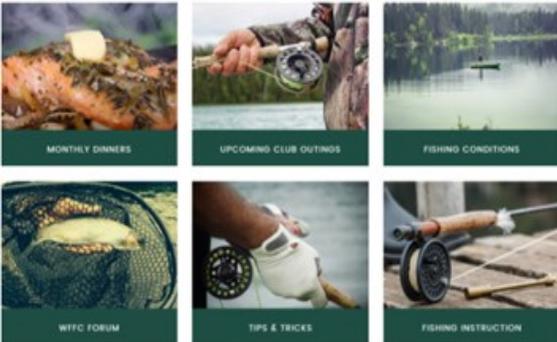
A “First Look” pdf will be emailed to you shortly, showing several screen shots of the WFFC.com “Public” and “Members Only” features of the new website.

What’s New:



Public

a  
or



Members Only

\*Public and Members Only content viewable on PC, iPhone iPad

\*Login to Members Only content with your email address and your current WFFC Password



Click

  
→



\*Stripe Credit Card payments are used pay for Meals, Education Classes , Dues and to make Donations (WFFC will no longer accept PayPal for payments)

A full presentation of the new website’s capabilities will be presented at the November 15<sup>th</sup> Dinner Meeting with a Q&A time to ask questions.



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**January, 2017**

**Meeting Announcement**



**Meetings are held on the third Tuesday November 15, 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: Join us for the annual Awards Banquet, toast, roast and celebration of all things great about the WFFC, our sport and those who rise above (or fall below) the surface. Remember, this is a fancy dress event, requiring coat and tie for the gentlemen and what ever is the equivalent for the ladies.**