

Creel Notes from the



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

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Member of



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September, 2020

President's Riffle

I hope all of you are well, and if the pandemic was not enough for us to deal with, we are now being burnt and smoked out. We all hope for shifting winds and rain. I finally went fishing for the first time this year with Jay Deeds on the Hood Canal and managed to catch a nice Coho on a chartreuse clouser that I tied for the trip. No luck catching a cutthroat, but it was a great day out on the water with Jay.



Chuck Ballard, Neal Hoffberg and I held the first Zoom session of the Beginning Fly Fishing Class this week. We had 9 members and 9 non-members register for the class. The second session will be held on September 15th and the last session on September 23rd. The first session covered Fly Fishing gear, the second session covers how to fish Lakes, Rivers and Streams and the last session covers "do-it-yourself" fly casting through web videos instruction (due to Covid, we are unable to teaching casting in person).

This month's September 15th Zoom Speaker is Jimmy Cheers from Tennessee who will talk to us about catching trophy Browns on the South Holston River. Jimmy claims that the river "is not only the best kept secret East of the Mississippi, but perhaps in the whole world". Let's all attend the Zoom to "fact check" how big these fish are and enjoy Jimmy's presentation.

We are making great progress on donations for this

year's December Fundraiser, thanks to the generous contributions of our members, fly shops and fly fishing guides. We are looking for a few more fishing trips and lodging auction items, please reach out to Lily Cutler and let her know if you would be willing to donate one of these items.

This year is one that we all can't wait to get behind us so that we can hold Dinner Meetings, Outings and Classes once again, but this will most likely not be able to happen till the later part of 2021. The club is in its 81 year and still going strong despite the pandemic. We have had 39 new members so far this year and are Zooming together and fishing together in small groups. So take heart, the club continues to fulfill its mission as "a social organization of fly fishing anglers, whose mission is to provide resources to members, improve fisheries and habitat, and develop a public conservation ethic through fly fishing."

Stay Safe and Tight Lines – Jim Goedhart WFFC President

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Fishing Report

Cispus River Sept. 7 thru 10

Lynn and I wanted to spend some time somewhere we had never been, yet not too far from home, so we headed to one of the blank spots on our Washington map. There is a large national forest area between Mt. Adams and Mt. St. Helens that we had not explored. We ended up at the beautiful Iron springs campground on the Cispus river, about a dozen miles south of Randle. Massive old growth trees surround the campground, with a small sign that said the 300 year old specimens, four or five feet thick, averaged 236 feet tall! We saw several trees more than eight feet thick, and over 600 years old, even taller!

In the shade of those trees runs Iron creek, and it's confluence with the Cispus river. Each day after hiking around in the mountains, looking at craters and lava domes, taking pictures and picking blueberries, we would return to camp where I would drool over the pools and runs of the camp stretch. Finally on day three, I took my little three wt. down to the stream, and exercised a dry elk hair caddis near the mouth of Iron creek. Lazy trout rise on the second cast! Almost as good as a cold beer after hiking a mountain!

Outfitted in wet bluejeans and sandals, I rock hopped along the river, casting behind boulders and in seams. The water is cold and glacial, and late in the day, the visibility is about 18 inches. That did not seem to deter the trout, however, as several found a size 12 caddis without a miss. Most were native cutthroat from 8 to 10 inches, with

a few rainbows about the same size mixed in. A great way to cool off after miles of hiking in 90 degree weather. I'm sure some exploration on the miles of stream above and below the campground would yield some bigger fish, maybe even a bull trout from one of the big deep runs.

We returned just ahead of the wall of smoke coming from the south. A great trip! Lots to explore, might make it a week next time.

David Schorsch

Solo Road Trip to South and Central Oregon July 2020

By Cynthia Ferrucci

Ugh!! In July we had to cancel our trip to fish the lower Yellowstone because of COVID concerns in Montana. The girls and I struggled to figure out a safe, socially distanced adventure with great fishing.

Our guidelines, to comply with social distancing, were:

- No shuttles
- No boats, walk and wade guiding only
- Only cook for ourselves
- Only stay in our campers
- Only stop for gas



John Hyde of Yamsi Ranch was very understanding and accommodating. Yamsi Ranch is on the upper 15 miles of the Williamson River in Oregon. Their usual

Creel Notes

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SUBSCRIPTION IS FREE WITH MEMBERSHIP.

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program is lodging, meals and some guided days, but John would allow us to camp riverside and be guided which ever days we chose. We excitedly put together a travel plan for late July. But, unfortunately, the girls had a minor accident with their camper a week before we were to leave! Undaunted, I went solo. So, sorry, I have no fish

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On the Fly

Summer on the Clearwater

by David Ehrich

My household has taken COVID19 seriously, but our solution has not been to shelter in place and avoid public encounters. As luck would have it, our 20' Class B RV arrived as the pandemic kicked into high gear. I looked at the map and asked, where can a guy shelter in a beautiful place.

First stop was spring on Rock Creek near Missoula. I started by 14 days of quarantine by catching a handful of nice Cutts. Run off started, and I ran off home. Look south. With motorcycle in tow, I headed to Escalante, Utah and began two weeks of exploring the Four Corners area. My only contact with people was at gas stations, a rare open grocery store, one semi-open restaurant, and stepping well aside for fellow hikers or following them at discreet distance. After one trail conversation, I remarked that I had not had a conversation with a stranger for two months.

When Jen met me in the auxil-



iary vehicle with two kayaks, our family adventure began. Seeking water to paddle in and WiFi to keep Jen in touch with the great U of W, we traipsed around Stevens, Ferry, and Pend d'Oreille counties. Nary a fish was landed.

Then we got a text out of nowhere: "meet me on the NF of the Clearwater at Aquarius NFS campground". What the hell. But first let's fix that leak that somehow four weeks in the shop and \$200 hadn't fixed. Buying every tool in Metaline Falls and Ione, we moved all the infrastructure around the plumbing, tracing it back finally to the shower hot water feed. As I re-taped and tightened the fixture, Jen leaned over a ledge to wipe the water up and broke a rib.

When has a broken rib ever detoured someone from fishing? We parked the car and kayaks at friends, smartly leaving the fishing box, and headed to our rendezvous. We left the known (to me) world at Orofino, headed back to Headquarters and over a harry detour to the river. Camp set up and Mike anxious to catch the evening hatch, I looked for my wading boots, vest, rod, etc. and realized my mistake. No worries, Mike has five rods and I borrowed a pair of shoes from someone at camp that came with a generous shot of single malt. (Why does stupidity deserve a toast?)

The North Fork. Miles above the slack water of the useless Dworshak Reservoir, the wild river heads deep into the Bitterroot wilderness, with its head waters flirting with Montana. Step hillsides, mature forests (many dating from the Big Burn of 1910), and dozens of feeder creeks, create a river that often appears bottomless in depth, occasionally stretching out to allow wading, with many a effluvial fan

of a generous feeder stream. Skip the polarized glasses, you can see the bottom from anywhere, searching out big schools of "reds" or Kokanee in red spawn heading up the feeder creeks. Don't worry, they are not interesting in anything you serve up outside of a grappling hook.

Borrowed tennis shoes don't make for great wading, so Mike headed to sure footed waters with sandy bottoms and promising riffles. I felt like I was in a movie: a beautiful river, wading up to my thighs in shorts, and a wide brim hat to cut the sun's glare. Just don't look down at the footwear. Well presented flies (not my speciality) yielded results. Occasionally a fish caught itself on some errant nymph cast (my speciality). We finished a nice dusk fish, a fine summer's day of casting for big trout, and two lovely dinners served up by a slightly banged up camp bound Jen.

The next day, the look on her face said "let's get me to the hospi-

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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.



The author and daughter Faye

Central Oregon Continued

photos!

The upper Williamson is a spring creek with origins in the Winema National Forest. The ranch has been in the Hyde family since the land was purchased by John's great uncle in 1911. It is well known for its large redband trout and a *Hexagenia limbata* hatch in late July into August. But there is more fodder to be had.

I arrived on a Sunday. I anticipated rough camping conditions. However, John and his family had long ago made nice camping accommodations a few river-side locations. John took me to my camp and gave me a quick orientation to the river.

After I landed a few nice sized redbands on hoppers in the afternoon and one on the hex emerger before bed, I readied for a guided walk and wade day with John.

On Monday, we landed a few fish on hoppers and streamers. Most of the catch on the Williamson is nice sized brook trout introduced decades ago. About 20% of the catch is redband rainbow in the 14-18" range, but larger trout have been caught. We caught some 20+ fish that day.

John is very laid back and loves to have fun fishing. As we waded through the grass, we stirred up storms of yellow grasshoppers. John captured a few hoppers and dropped them above a culvert. With each passing meal, you could hear a fish in the culvert suck it down.

The evening hex hatch had not started going strong yet, but the still the fish were looking with an occasional take.

In the mornings and afternoon there was a trico hatch. At times the fish seemed to prefer this little mayfly over hoppers.

Every morning started with the sound of sandhill cranes:



After three great days of fishing the Williamson, I toured Crater Lake National Park.

My next stop was the Crooked

River in Central Oregon. The canyon section below the Prineville Dam has multiple BLM campgrounds and easy river access. This section of the Crooked is

perfect water for new fly fishers. These are not trophy fish, but they are ready and willing to take the dry fly.

On my way home, I spent a night at Merrill Lake. The *hexagenia* hatch was going strong at dusk, and blessed me with a few fish.



A side trip to Crater Lake NP split up the trip.

On The Fly Continued

tal", so a couple days earlier than planned, we headed to Spokane, her car, and temporary camp until the doctor told her what everyone knows; it's gonna hurt for a while and there's nothing you can do. Bright side, your husband has to lift, carry, shove, and pack everything. As I left Mike on the river with his family arriving, I said, "I've got some unfinished business on the NF."

Unfinished business. Mike's clan (they are Scottish) met up at the same NFS campground and invited me along, this time with my gear. Nice trout can be had anywhere on this river that you can access water. Many beat the wade by chucking gear (water bubbles preferred) from shore into massive water. I fished shallow water, inlet streams, and occasionally boulders when I felt confident up and down 40 miles of river between Aquarius Camp and Kelly Creek.

Saving the best for last, we returned to the Bingo Hole, so named because most of the retirement home could still wade there comfortably. I drifted down past the easiest waters and fished a shore riffle behind me. Strike. He dragged me out into the current, back to shore, and back out. Since I knew it was the last fish of the day, I played it carefully bringing to net a nice 18" Cutt. Letting him get back to business, I headed to shore to watch Mike work along with the osprey, eagle, and occasional otter and had an idle thought; this might be the most beautiful river in the west.



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Meetings have been temporarily cancelled in person at the Seattle

Tennis Club, but club life goes on with new members joining, zoom meetings, fly-tying webinars, board meetings, and regular updates to the club web pages.

Keep in touch at <https://wffc.com/> and make sure to send you thoughts and fishing reports, true or false, to davidehrich@rocketmail.com for the next issue of Creel Notes.

Please include a photo (.jpeg preferred) with your article.

Live meetings will commence when conditions permit. Until then, don't lose faith.