

Creel Notes from the



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

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Member of



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President's Riffle

Welcome to Fall Fishing! I hope everyone had a wonderful summer and is now thinking about the many fall fishing opportunities available here close to home. I have been fishing the Yakima and Cle Elum, and I am happy to report the water levels are down, and wading opportunities are now available across the entire system. We are experiencing great success with caddis, October caddis, stoneflies, and a very productive crane fly hatch on the Yakima. Now that the water levels have dropped, the fish have moved off the banks and are readily taking dries mid-river. Look for feeding lanes that provide good cover, structure, and an adequate supply of food delivered to the fish. Don't be afraid to skate those large dries and crane flies to entice those fish to strike. In the upper river system, I am fishing darker-colored caddis flies, orange October Caddis, and streamers! On cloudy, cool days, the BWO hatch is here! Try using extended body BWOs dries and swinging BWO soft hackles to eager and hungry fall trout. If you have questions about fishing the Yakima, don't hesitate to contact me.

We have club fishing outings coming up this fall. On October 9th – 12th, we have arranged access to fish the Western Rivers Conservancy's new property, the Yakima River Ranch Campground. Jim Cox with Western Rivers will be hosting. This event will



be an excellent opportunity to walk and wade the canyon during prime fall fishing. Please visit the WFFC website for more information and to sign up for this great event. Additionally, on October 22nd, we will be fishing the always popular Lake Hannan. This outing is an excellent opportunity to test your Stillwater Trout Tactics we learned from Phil Rowley and catch some great fish with your fellow club members.

The annual Holiday Fundraiser is once again rapidly approaching. This year's event will be held at the VFH Hall on Mercer Island on December 13th. If you have any items to donate that will help the cause, please don't hesitate to reach out to Jim Goedhart or me. Please mark your calendars and help us raise money to fund our club's education and conservation efforts for 2023.

Tight Lines,
Dave Spratt
WFFC President

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Fishing Reports

Big Twin and Davis Lake

by Chuck Ballard

Finally got out this week after a full summer of no fishing.

On Wednesday 14th I fished Big Twin. The water is still very warm and I don't think it will cool for at least another week. Hooked five, two quickly to hand. Both on dry flies.

The next day I went to Davis Lake also near Winthrop. Had an exceptional day catching 12" planters. Almost all on an olive Carey special and dry line.

This day in spite of the great weather and fishing was ruined as I hit and rolled a black bear near Pateros. So sudden, with no time to react. The bear did manage to run back across the road, so it is hard to say how serious the damage was. I really feel bad for the poor bear.

Goodnews Lodge, Goodnews Bay, Alaska; August 17-24
by Bob Burdick

Returning to the Bering Sea and the Goodnews River Lodge in a better time slot than last year, Jay Deeds, his brother Craig, Jim McRoberts and myself had a very productive week chasing silvers averaging perhaps 5 to 15 fish a day to almost 20 pounds. The housing was adequate, the jet sleds used for transportation didn't break down, the food was excellent, the weather remained overcast most days, the gravel banks were conducive to easy wading, single handed rods worked well as did switch rods, and spey rods bailed us out when the wind blew strongly. I find in my senescence that I continue to get jacked when hanging on to a hot silver tail walking across the river with my fly in its jaw and will plan to return next year for another stab at these magnificent fish.



Chuck Ballard prepares to launch on Davis Lake in beautiful Eastern Washington, and many trout will feel the pain as a result.

Creel Notes

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On the Fly

The Meeting in Reel Time

by David Ehrich

Let's try something different. I'll publish Creel Notes after the meeting with an up-to-date report from the meeting and our speaker. This might just be a fancy excuse for not having done my job yet, or it might be true innovation. We'll see.

The meeting started with the usual social hour whereupon one member suggested I do Creel Notes in a completely different newsletter format so it would read better on his phone. After I got over my urge to shove the job down his throat, I did take a minute to wonder: is there any point in doing CN in newspaper format with columns and carry-over articles to subsequent pages? Is there any grace in the current layout that makes reading the .pdf enjoyable? Would you rather have it published like a long newsletter with pictures embedded assuming I can get MS Word to co-operate? Let me know. I also got to hear about a "I know a motorcyclist who died story" which I might note are stories that motorcyclists never want to hear. And then I heard the bad news that Maury Skieth had died and that set me back a bit. I took a couple great high lakes trips with Maury and.....well, you know how it is.

So, at that point I was ready to leave and never come back, but the pizza arrived and since I had already paid and my beer was half finished, I sat back down and enjoyed some memories of Maury. Plus, I really do need to know how



to read water better and I didn't want to miss the presentation from Heather Hodson.

But first, fishing reports. In brief, members fished everywhere from Big Twin near Winthrop, to the Good News River in Alaska to the South Sound, to Brooks Lake in Wyoming and Brooks river in Alaska, to wading on the NF Clearwater in humble Idaho, to guided floats on the Bitterroot. My favorite part of the report was hearing about an Alaskan guide nick-named "Shag". Use your imagination. I challenge all these anglers to send me a fishing report and some photos. Otherwise, it didn't happen.

Now to the presentation. Neil Hoffberg, our program chair introduced a speaker well known to club members and to women anglers the world over; Heather Hodson. She is founder of United Women on the Fly, devoted to increasing diversity on the banks of our rivers as well as educating anglers of all sorts through her new project: "Fly Fishing Instruct". The event was delivered via Zoom and recorded, so you can augment my drivel with graphics and videos and her sharp and erudite talk. I will do my best to summarize.

Trout need food, protection, shelter from current and oxygenated water. Despite your assumption that trout fear you more than anything else, you're wrong; birds are their main concern. So, don't look like a bird. Cold water, as you know, holds more oxygen, but water over rocks and plants also picks up some O2. You should assume they are looking upstream for all four things in prime water, or perhaps making sacrifices to exist in sub-optimal environments. For example, they may give up cover for O2 or may give up food

to find comfortable temps. These conditions would be less optimal, but productive. But heck, I know you, you want the big fish and you know the trophies are looking for a grand slam of prime conditions and push all the little pretenders out of the way.

Dividing the river into sections helps us narrow down the answer to the question: where are the big fish? First comes the riffle (O2 being added!), then the run, the pool and finally the tail out. Each requires different tactics. Look in all four cases for the seams: where the riffle seams with slower water, where the currents mend together to create the run (smoother water with foam – "Foam is Home"), the shelf seam of the pool and where the tail out starts to blend with the next section of the river. And then there are boulders, exposed or deep, each providing the holy grail of protection, shelter, and food delivery. Heather finds that a small fish tends to stay right behind

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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.

Seattle Mayfly Project 2022 Recap

by Jen Eliuk

On Saturday, August 27th the Seattle chapter of The Mayfly Project held its last outing. This year, like all years, brought some challenges but ended with a happy group of kids who got to get outside, fish, and learn valuable skills we hope serve them for years to come.

The Mayfly Project teaches local foster kids (including former foster kids who have been adopted) to fly fish, with a focus on catch and release and conservation. In addition to casting and how to land and handle a fish properly, we teach them knots, etymology and fly tying. We take them on about five outings to local lakes, creeks and rivers over the course of several weeks.

This spring just a few weeks before our first outing, we found out that the group home we were set to work with did not have the resources to coordinate with us, and had to cancel participation. We put the word out on social media that we had openings for more kids and heard from several foster parents that their kids wanted to join. In fact we heard from so many people that after we had our attendees confirmed, we added a new one-day event to try to accommodate even more kids. It is just so hard to say no to kids who are excited to fly fish! These kids met up and fished at Lake Meridian in Kent, and had such a great time that they are on our wait list for next year's project, along with others.

Our main group consisted of five boys and one girl, ages 10-14. One kid is an Eagle Scout and was earning his fly fishing badge by participating. We also added a few

new mentors, who all did a great job and were very engaged with their mentees. On our first outing, to Rattlesnake Lake, we introduced everyone and lent them the gear they would be using at outings and taking home to practice with. They all got a bag with bracelets made from old fly line, sunglasses and a curriculum booklet. The curriculum is really comprehensive and illustrated, and covers knots, how to read the water, and important safety tips like wearing sunglasses for eye protection and keeping wading belts tight. Last year, the Seattle project had the curriculum translated to Spanish, which is now available for all Mayfly Project chapters internationally.

Over the summer we had several outings, and since one of the mentees uses a wheelchair, we stuck to ponds and lakes so they were able to have the same experience as everyone else. Our last outing was up at Alpine Lakes Lodge (formerly U-Fish RV Camp) in Easton, which has several stocked ponds with great access and space to backcast. Fish were caught, and all the mentees were surprised with their very own, brand new Cortland 8ft 4wt rod and reel set, and a pack with hemostats, nippers, a stocked fly box, leaders and tippet so they have everything they need to keep fishing. The rods are really good quality and cast beautifully!

It is so much fun to see how much the kids progress with their casting and knot tying over the course of a project, and the joy on their faces when they catch a fish. The smile never leaves them. We hope they leave having felt that

'On the Fly' Continued

a rock, but the bigger quarry can be found in the ">" or Vee, below where the two seams the rock creates come together, often several feet below the boulder. Her mantra; "Fish the V".

Heather fishes upstream, looking for water slow enough to encourage trout to hold in 1-3' of water ready to pounce on food from sheltered positions. She likes to fish the foam in the riffle and run, but when the water gets deep, maybe 3-6', she knows that fish are behind boulders and other structure in the nice cool water waiting for a well-presented fly in the shallow end of the pool where the water drops off the shelf. These drop off are prime with all four needs met. Trout like changes: changes in currents, depth, color and structure. These transition points are where it's at.

I'll leave you with a couple key ideas. Don't fish the whole big river. Find your four sections: riffle, run, pool, and tail out and fish that smaller section upstream as you wade or walk the bank. Fish the seams. Fish the structure seams. Foam is Home. Plus, her favorite; fish the V.

others believe in them and will support them (even if they make mistakes or don't catch any fish), that being outside connecting with nature is stress-relieving, and to feel proud of themselves for trying to learn a new, often difficult, skill.

On behalf of the Seattle chapter, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to WFFC for their donation this year, which contributed to these kids having this rare opportunity. If you would like to donate or become a mentor please visit TheMayflyProject.com.



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Weekend Report

submitted by Doug Schaad. This report comes from one of my Oregon partners who was visiting family on Whidbey. Thought it might be of interest.

On the way home, we swung by Coronet Bay to check on the harvest of humpies. The checker had seen exactly 11 fish checked in a week! Ha! Some run! All of the effort was on the outside of Whidbey Island because the inside was closed.

That night, we ate up a big mess of oysters, plus Mom had cleaned hundreds of clams, so we headed down to throw the shells at the local beach, right by Dad's place. As we did, we noticed fish jumping. XXXX struck up a conversation with a fellow there with a fish pole, and we discovered that the entire run of humpies was right in front of us, 30 feet out. We made plans to return the following morning for the high tide. So we did - arrived around 7:00 to fish jumping everywhere.

But now there was another fellow there, a flyfisherman, who explained the regulations: Closed to salmon fishing until Sept 1. The game warden had been there the previous two Sundays and wrote tickets galore, even to catch & release guys, because they were salmon fishing with buzz bombs. The fly guys pleaded that they were after sea runs and avoided getting pinched. Well, XXXX and Dad are renegades. No saltwater license, closed to fishing until Sept. 1, and then catch & release only. So Dad flings out a buzz bomb, catches a fish, conks it on the head, and they zoom home with it. I stayed and visited with the guy flyfishing. In an hour or so, he landed about 10 bright and sporty humpies, 3-5# each. He fished a bright pink fly and a sink tip line. He was nervous about convincing the warden that he was after sea runs with that fly, so he quit, vowing to return in three days (Sept. 1) for some legal fishing. I must say, it did look fun. If you Puget Sound guys want some fast fishing, clearly this was it. High tide; cast from shore; Troxel Beach, Whidbey Island.



This Month in History



Les Johnson in Print

submitted by Grant Hendrickson

A book I recently read is "Walk on Water" by Lorian Hemingway, published in 1998 by Harcourt, Brace. The cover includes a statement from Time: "For this Hemingway, it's a love of fly-fishing, a weakness for drink, and a fine way with words." On page 189, preparing for a TV film of her fly casting in Florida (she had never done any fly fishing), she wrote: "I wanted to be prepared and figured with all I'd read recently on the subject I could learn the basics in half an hour of hands-on practice. Les Johnson, fish book author and a gifted angler, offered me a lesson in a downtown Seattle park. I confess to being impressed by the distance he achieved with his wet noodle line, but the physics behind it eluded me.

I remember Les, who looks a little like a fleshed-out Wally Cox (similar falsetto) watching me with a sinking look on his face as I bullwhipped the rod back and forth, huffing and straining, producing nothing but nasty little BB-sized knots in the delicate tippet. "It just takes some practice," Les said, trying to reassure me. I imagined him rolling his eyes when he turned his head, mumbling to himself, "Yeah, right. Sure." "But you can't go on TV like this, Lorian. Absolutely not."

Great book, recounting a personal struggle with the demons of drink, but full of wonderful fishing stories from Florida and Washington State.

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