

Creel Notes from the



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

Website: www.wffc.com

Member of



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President's Riffle

"Conservation" is part of the Club's core mission. What did that idea mean to our founders in 1939? What does it mean today? Over those



earlier years, the Club was instrumental in conservation at the micro-level, focusing its efforts on specific bodies of water. The best example of that is the Club's work to convince the Washington State Game Commission to designate Pass Lake as the first fly fishing only lake. But in 1939 our home waters of the Pacific Northwest were not yet experiencing the ever-diminishing runs of steelhead and salmon – to the point of near extinction – that plague any number of other species today. Wild fires did not seem to consume annually nearly half the North American continent, from the Southwest to Alaska. And while the claims to limited flows of water always have been an issue in the American West, the issue of water quantity was nowhere near as extreme or foreboding for our fisheries then as they are today.

Certainly, today's compelling conservation issues are of regional and global origin and can be daunting. No small club in Western Washington staffed by volunteers will solve them by itself. Whenever I despair at that thought, I remember that "just because we can't do what should be done, doesn't mean we shouldn't do what can be done." So what

can we do to further our mission?

We can form alliances with larger, better-funded purpose driven organizations, lend our voices to their campaigns, and make modest contributions to them, within our means. Over the past few years, under the leadership of our Conservation Chair, Robert Thorpe, and others, the Club has participated at those levels in the successful efforts to ban gold dredging in Washington streams, to prevent copper mining in the Methow, to bar the re-permitting of salt water fish pens, and to lobby against the permits sought to allow gold mining near Bristol Bay. (Three weeks ago, the EPA determined that the discharges from that proposed mine would have unacceptable consequences to fisheries.) Closer to home, the Club provided financial assistance to the Western Rivers Conservancy's acquisition of the Yakima Canyon Ranch and 3.5 miles of riverfront. These successes are just a sampling of the Club's efforts to further conservation.

Over the next year, you will receive periodically emails from the Club asking you to consider the

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Conservation

WFFC-Conservation Committee -2023 Status Report

The following provides a 2022 summary, goals for 2023, budget recommendations for committee, and includes outreach to Board members as well as members—including new members or those have been absent for a while on their suggestions for their re-engagement.

2021-22 saw some landmark decisions:

- No copper mining in Methow,
- Banning of salt water fish pens,
- No permits for Bristol Bay gold
- No gold dredging in Washington

WFFC was heavily involved in political outreach and contacting dozens of Alaska Native and fishing groups signing on to their efforts. Locally we teamed with Trout Unlimited on issues impacting Sammamish River/Lake tributaries and Methow Valley FFC on restoration to Twin Lakes and signage, and removal of spinney ray plants.

Our 2023 GOALS OBJECTIVES as one of the most respected Clubs in NW comes opportunities to lead and/or support efforts to stop building dams on the Lewis River and remove Snake River Dams—pending other party's decisions/recommendations and buy in by most Senate/Congressional delegations. We are in touch with key Federal and State officials (Note there is some discussion about building a water way bypass of Snake River Dams, maybe more cost effective?)

BUDGET Objectives:

- Retaining \$500 to MVFFC for Little Twin aerator—installed but have bills to pay.
- I have asked them to donate \$500 to our Youth Program—working with Chair-John G
- Continuing to support three full time research/position papers production at 3 Rivers TU.

COMMITTEE Goals: raising \$1000 each year for conservation:

- Recruiting new members
- Organizing restoration projects—i.e. Mercer Island/Luther Burbank shore/watercourse restoration with MI Parks—a follow up to our casting classes there.

Outings

I hope that everyone has been busy tying flies and cleaning their fly lines in anticipation of the upcoming fishing season this year. I'll be honest, I have big wader boots to fill. Our former Outdoor Chairperson, Dave Schorsch, did a phenomenal job for the club over the last eleven years. However, I'll do my best, with the help of others, in providing quality fishing outings for the club this year.

We've already had a few members volunteer to host outings this year. Let me know if you would be interested in hosting an outing to a river, lake or saltwater location. For example, if a member were to plan a trip to Lake Chopaka or the Yakima River, that person could let me know to invite other members to attend. The outing wouldn't need to be a full-blown event with all of the equipment, food and beverages, but rather a day trip, or short weekend trip to accommodate the working-class folks.

Don't be shy about volunteer-

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ing to host an outing because I'm available to assist you through the process. Hope to hear from you soon and email me at mikes-nolan@comcast.net or call me at (425) 754-1234 if you are interested in volunteering to host an outing.

The outings are a means for people to learn about the local fisheries and glean "secrets" from

the old pros in the club. For me I always seem to learn about a fly pattern or a new fishing technique when I attend an outing. The outings shown below are now live on the WFFC website and please sign up if you plan to attend.

WFFC 2023 Outings Schedule

- March 25-26 Quincy Lakes Unit (Quincy, Burke, Dusty)
- April 29-30 Seep Lakes Unit (Quail, Sage)
- May 6-7 Green Lake-Okanogan County
- June 24-25 Leech Lake
- September 16 Hood Canal
- October 14-15 Big Twin Lake
- November 4 Wet Buns

Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

Tyer's Corner

To paraphrase Shakespeare's Richard III, "Winter is the season of my discontent – with my fly boxes that is." They are half empty and disorganized and require attention before the spring season catches me unprepared. Tying is in order.

Somehow, though, in lieu of tying old standbys, I always seem to find myself seeking new and different patterns. With that in mind, I recently acquired *The Feather Mechanic* (2021), an interesting volume from a tyer on the other side of the world. (Is the grass always greener, Dan?)

South African angler Gordon van der Spuy has put together a superior book that should appeal to beginner and expert alike. Van der Spuy emphasizes the importance of "Form Follows Function" in fly design, the absolute necessity of

thread control in tying, and building in as much inherent movement and other triggers as possible in each fly.

The book's excellent drawings illustrate the steps and techniques of the patterns it features and each pattern builds on the techniques described in the previous ties. For the most part, the materials van der Spuy uses are mainstream and locally available here. (I'll confess to some continuing trouble sourcing Egyptian goose biots and vervet monkey guard hairs, though, so I substituted turkey and squirrel tail, respectively (as he suggests).)

Check out his *Skinny Damsel* and his versions of the *Para Rab* and *Papa Roach* for use on our local lakes and rivers. It's a good read, I think you'll enjoy it. Van der Spuy also has a short series of tying videos out on YouTube.

WFFC Fly Tying Class

Adult Midge #26



Neal Hoffberg

WFFC Beginning Fly Tying Class begins March 29th. Classes are being held at the Stroum Jewish Community Center, Mercer Island.

Learn the art and skills of fly tying that will bring you a lifetime of enjoyment and personalize your experience as an angler. Details can be found on the club website. Register is now open.

Neal Hoffberg

The 2023 Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition

The Competition is open to all Club members and those participating in programs sponsored or supported by the Club.

Here are this year's patterns:

Wally Wing mayfly, size 14

Golden Stone nymph, size 14

Spun deer hair head streamer, size 4 to 1/0, tier's choice

For more details on the patterns, please see the respective You-Tube videos describing how to tie them.

Flies will be due at the time of the May members' meeting. Fly boxes will be distributed and participation numbers assigned at the February members' meeting.

If you have questions, please reach out to Bill at BILL.NEAL.0517@GMAIL.COM.

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.

Passings

Fran Wood



Fran Wood died on July 31, 2023, while living near his daughters Jennie and Amanda in Port Townsend.

Born in Haverford PA, he was a fly fisherman since childhood, starting in eastern Pennsylvania, and later for most summers at Camp Allagash in Maine where he was the canoe and fishing councilor though college and medical school. A fellow councilor was Ted Rogowski.

Fran joined the WFFC in 1955, served on many committees and as president. He was an early participant in the High Lakes outings, often accompanied by his first wife, Nora. His back pack was usually heavier on the way out, filled with trash and bottles collected from remote camp sites. He shared the foibles of many fly fishers and collected awards for broken rods, lost big fish and unanticipated swims!.

Several years before Nora's death he married Bunny and she attended many WFFC outings. An active conservationist, he championed efforts to get rid of DDT, protection of water for sport fishing and served on the Board of CELP.

As a physician, he spent his professional career at the UW School of Medicine as a clinical investigator, teacher and role model. Living in Madrona, Fran, Nora and Bunny were major sponsors of several small community parks. Using his large and careful hands, Fran taught fly tying to many novices and I was one of his students.

If WFFC members wish to do something to honor Fran, gifts to Save Our Wild Salmon would be appropriate.

Feb Meeting

Hello, All WFFC Members -- we have a great meeting coming up on Tuesday February 21 at the VFW Hall on Mercer Island. Don't forget to sign up on the Club's website.

Former Member Leland Miyawaki will join us to demonstrate tying his Miyawaki Popper and then discuss fishing for searun cutts with us. This should be one of our best programs of the year. See the attached agenda.

We also will be presenting the Board-approved budget for the coming year. PLEASE MAKE A SPECIAL EFFORT TO ATTEND THIS MEETING, AS WE NEED A QUORUM OF MEMBERS TO VOTE ON THE BUDGET. See the proposal attached. <https://wffc.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/2023-Budget-Approved-by-Board-Feb-Club-Meeting.pdf>

Finally, the Club will be running a special auction of a fishing trip to Alaska, a \$5,000 value. Please see the attachment for details about the trip and the auction. <https://wffc.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/Special-Trip-Auction-1.pdf>

'Riffle' Continued

conservation issue described. Generally, those emails will ask for a signature to a petition or an email to an elected official about the matter. We hope you will consider responding to those requests. Please don't dismiss these efforts as inconsequential. They are not. The removal of the Elwha dams and restoration of those runs took more than a decade, and did not occur until the groundswell of voices rose to a roar. Those other daunting issues facing us

will take as long or longer to resolve, but we all need to do what we can now.

The Club also is considering participating in a couple of "hands on" volunteer conservation efforts, perhaps through WDFW and other agencies. Please stay tuned for more information on those opportunities.

If you are interested in participating in the Club's conservation efforts, please contact Robert Thorpe at rwta6869@gmail.com.

I hope to see you all at our next meeting, on February 21.

Fishing Report

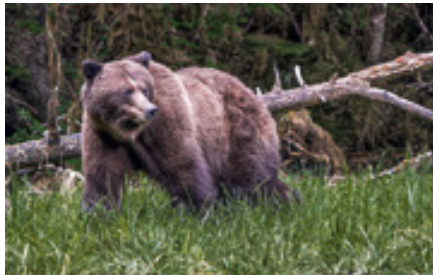


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Trip Report Ascension Bay, Mexico

By Dennis Westover

Several weeks ago, my son Erik and I returned from a seven-day saltwater fly fishing trip to the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. After a six-hour flight from Seattle to Cancun and a four-hour drive on what must be the worst road in Mexico we arrived late in the evening at the small village of Punta Allen. Punta Allen is home to half a dozen fishing lodges ranging from super luxurious to rather modest (ours). Ascension Bay is known for its diversity of species and offers the opportunity to catch bonefish, baby tarpon, snook, barracuda, and permit.



This was my first trip to Ascension Bay but my son had been there fifteen years earlier on his first saltwater trip. With borrowed gear (mine) he managed to hook and land a 17-pound permit and was looking forward to a repeat.

Fishing is done from 20 foot fiberglass boats know as Pangas. They are comfortable and efficient fishing platforms equipped with 40 hp engines and polling platforms. The fishing area is expansive and on most days, we ran at full speed for 45 minutes before reaching the area we intended to fish. There are hundreds of square miles of flats and channels in dense mangroves that provide ideal habitat for saltwater game fish. Ninety percent of our fishing was done from the boat because of the soft bottom but we occasionally fished on our feet, especially when we were pursuing permit. Most of our fishing was done with eight weight rods, switching to nine and ten weights for the barracuda, snook and permit.

On balance, the fishing was challenging and the catching was disappointing. The bonefish were few and far between and with a few exceptions those we caught were much smaller than bones from other areas I have fished. On one day, we fished exclusively for bones – sighted two fish all day and hooked one. A highlight of the trip was one day spent hunting snook along mangrove shorelines. Casting 10 weight rods and large bait fish imitations to within inches of the mangrove was challenging but super exciting when a 10-15 pound snook exploded on your fly.

We caught a few barracuda and spent an afternoon targeting permit. A few were sighted and pursued but refused our offerings.

Our guides were excellent (two per boat). The food and margaritas were first class and the accommodation was fine.

Would I recommend Ascension Bay as a saltwater destination?

Based on my experience I'd say no. There are other areas that are as easy to get to with more and larger bones but in some cases without the diversity of species (Bahamas, Cuba, Christmas Island). My experience at Ascension Bay was a six day snapshot in time. If you go the picture you take may be completely different.

