

Creel Notes from the



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

Website: www.wffc.com



MMXXIV No. 5 **May, 2024**



President's Riffle

Size Matters
Danferd Henke, President, Washington Fly Fishing Club

A couple of weeks ago, I read with interest a Washington Post article entitled, "Fish Are Shrinking Around the World." It is undisputed that fish populations across the world's oceans are shrinking and so is the size of the individuals in those species. We need look no further than our own waters to confirm both statements. Consider the size and number of salmon, searun cutthroats, or steelhead sixty and seventy years ago compared to now. If you haven't been around long enough to actually remember those times, look at the photos from that era.



Why is this important and why is this happening? Consider the presentation of our honorary member Linda Mapes, when she spoke to us a few months ago about the plight of the orca as they search further and further for ever smaller king salmon. We need not consider the effect of this reduction in size as confined to the orca, though. Smaller fish = less food for any species – including humans.

So what is causing this unfortunate phenomenon? Part of it is fishing, both recreational and commercial. As a species, we make a practice of high-grading the herd, seeking the biggest fish and leaving the smaller behind. Admit it, you like to catch big fish. So does the guy who keeps his fish. Evolution in action. As a species, we tend to think that more is better. More poundage, more fish, all of that contributes to the diminution in fish populations and fish size. And before you mumble, "catch and release," take a moment of introspection and remember that even the best catch and release angler causes some mortality.

But the biggest single cause – the warming temperatures of the oceans and other waters. Experiments with brook trout have produced stark results.
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May Program

Cameron Eddy Colville Tribes Fisheries Conservation & Initiatives



Cameron Eddy, will be the May 21st Dinner meeting's Speaker and will talk to us about the Colville Tribes salmon and Tribal Lakes Fisheries conservation initiatives.

Cameron is a senior fisheries biologist with the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation. He manages the monitoring and evaluation of hatchery stocking programs on the Colville reservation and has been working for the tribe since 2016.



An Omak local who only ever wanted to have an out-

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door office, he graduated from Eastern Washington university with a degree in biology focused on wildlife management. Cameron enjoys archery hunting, backcountry packing with goats, farming and chasing his kids around the Okanogan valley.

Mission Statement: The Colville Tribes Fish and Wildlife Department’s overall goal is to maintain and protect viable populations of native and desired non-native species of fish and wildlife, and their supporting habitats, while providing sufficient numbers to meet the cultural subsistence, recreational and economic needs of the tribal membership.

(Continued from page 1) President’s Riffle

Those grown and kept in waters at 59 degrees were more than twice the size of those kept in water at 68 degrees. We all know, anecdotally, that water temperature has a huge impact on our fishing. But now the data is coming in.

What can we do, in our little corner of the world, to have an impact, big or small, on this matter. We can’t solve it ourselves, but as someone famous once said, “Just because you can’t do all you need to do doesn’t mean you shouldn’t do what you can do.” Take a small step or two. Some modest suggestions:

- Polish up your catch and release fishing – use barbless hooks, don’t touch the fish, leave the fish in the water, buy and use one of those Runje Releasers that Jerry McBride told us about (and please don’t point out that I’ve submitted to this issue of Creel Notes photos of a couple of members, including my wife, holding up fish)+
- When that water hits 67 degrees, maybe even a bit lower, stop fishing, don’t stress those fish
- When you catch that state record fish, be content with the knowledge that you did so, let it go
- Proselytize about catch and release fishing and stopping overfishing. One of the missions of our club is conservation. Take that down to a personal level.

These are small steps that straddle the political spectrum, taken by one are meaningless, but taken by many can have real impact. It all starts with you.

Monthly Meeting Location

In 2024, the Club’s monthly meetings will be held at the Seattle Tennis Club, 922 McGilvra Blvd. East, Seattle, WA 98112.

Wet Fly and fly tying commence at 5:30, dinner 6:15, with a program commencing at 7:00.

Please sign up early on the website.



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.

2024 Outings Calendar

WFFC 2024 Outings

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

WFFC 2024 Outings Schedule

- May 24-27 Lake Chopaka
- June 22-23 Leech Lake
- September 21 Hood Canal
- October 5-6 Big Green Lake (Okanogan County)
- October 12-13 Big Twin Lake
- November 2 Penrose Point Wet Buns



Upcoming 2024 Outings

Chopaka Lake Outing on May 24-27, 2024 (Memorial Day Weekend)

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

The Chopaka Lake Outing, near Loomis Washington, will be on May 24-27, 2024. Chopaka Lake has an 8 site BLM campground at the north end of the lake and a large DNR campground. The available camping spots can fill up quickly on the Memorial Day Weekend and sharing sites with other Club members is encouraged. Danferd Henke will arrive Sunday the 19th and he can possibly secure some camping spots prior to the Outing which officially starts on Friday the 24th.

The Club will provide beverages, but please bring your own food, drinking water and firewood. Chopaka Lake is located at over 2900' in elevation so be prepared for sunny, variable, or inclement weather conditions.

Please sign up on the WFFC website or contact Danferd Henke at (206) 949-8187 if you plan to attend the Outing. For more information about the Chopaka Lake Outing, please click on the following link to do so:

<https://wffc.com/event/chopaka-lake-outing-may-24-27-memorial-day-weekend/>

Leech Lake Outing on June 22-23, 2024

The Leech Lake Outing, near White Pass, will be on

June 22-23, 2024. Leech Lake has a few first-come first-served Forest Service sites if you are choosing to camp. I'll be staying in one of the condos at The White Pass Village Inn which is close to the lake. You can call The White Pass Village Inn at (509) [672-3131](tel:5096723131) to reserve a condo and you need to mention that you are with the WFFC to receive the one-night stay rate.

Happy hour will be around 5:00pm on Saturday, and we'll get the steaks going around 6:00. The Club will provide steaks for those that sign up in advance, along with beverages. Please bring appetizers and side dishes to share! We hope to have a campfire and please bring firewood if possible.

The Club will be providing a hearty breakfast consisting of pancakes, sausages, pastries, coffee, and juice on Sunday morning starting at about 7:30am in one of the Condos.

Please sign up on the WFFC website or contact Mike Nolan at (425) 754-1234 if you plan to attend the Outing as I need a count for the Club provided food. For more information about the Leech Lake Outing, please click on the following link to do so:

<https://wffc.com/event/leech-lake-outing-june-22-23-2024/>



Isaac Lake , Central Washington April 27-28, 2024

By Bob Burdick

I've continued to fish this 500 acre private lake in Eastern Washington, near Coulee City for the last 7 or 8 years and have always been pleased with the size and fight in the planted fish. Rented and maintained by Darc Nobel, owner of the Desert Angler in Ephrata, his daily rate of \$315 is reasonable and its open on Saturday, Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday. It's a bring your own boat affair, with no gas

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REPORTS
Continued

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motors allowed. Small enough to row anywhere, electric motors help in seeking shelter quickly from the elements. There are actually two lakes to fish, upper and lower Isaac, the lower one containing larger fish.

A large aerator protects both lakes from winter kill. Most of the fish (Rainbow) are in the 18 inch category with occasional monsters of 10 pounds. Open from roughly April 1 to June 1, and again in the fall from Sept until December 1, in the early part of the year it's best fished with chironomids with florid surface hatches the norm during the mid-day and then fished with the usual assortment of leaches, damsels, dragon fly nymphs, and attractors early and late in the day.

This year the fishing was slower than usual with my party averaging 10 fish per person a day hindered by wind and rain storms. Everyone caught at least 2 fish per day that were 21+ inches long.



Bob Burdick at Isaak Lake

Lake Hannan Outing

From Danferd Henke

Late in April, the Club made one of its annual outings to Hannan Lake, near Monroe. A dozen of so intrepid anglers braved the driving rain and wind for a day of fishing on this private lake. The conditions were bad enough that we lost a few participants early, for lack of feeling in fingers. But, despite the conditions, our members were catching fish, some were catching a lot of fish. The fish were uniformly of good size and healthy. Most of them were caught on leech patterns. In a not unusual turn of events, Mark Pratt was top rod. Around noon we put on a chili lunch, along with cornbread and brownies, and, perhaps most importantly, hot coffee. We all had a good time at lunch.

The worst conditions make the best memories – *and if you believe that, I have a bridge in Brooklyn I'd like to sell you.*

Pere Marquette Steelhead Report Michigan

From Danferd Henke

Three other members and I missed the April meeting, because we were off fishing for steelhead on Michigan's Pere Marquette River. Kris Draper, Stephan Fjelstad, Adair Dammann, and I spent a week fishing with Alaska and Michigan guide, and Friend of the Club, Tom Johnson. Tom's family owns two lodges on the Nak Nek River and have contributed a trip to our annual auction for the last several years.

We all got fish, but fishing was rough this year. There were many fewer steelhead in the river this year than in the last several years. Hypotheses abound as to why, but the most popular speculation is that the hot/cold weather was like a sine wave starting in January. The thought is that at each peak in temperature, a bunch of steelhead thought it was time to go back down river to the lake, resulting in fewer fish in the river at any one time.

Three to five hits a day was the norm, landing one or two fish. We also got some nice browns. See Kris Draper below, with a nice steelhead. And Adair Dammann's gorgeous brown.



Pere Marquette Brown



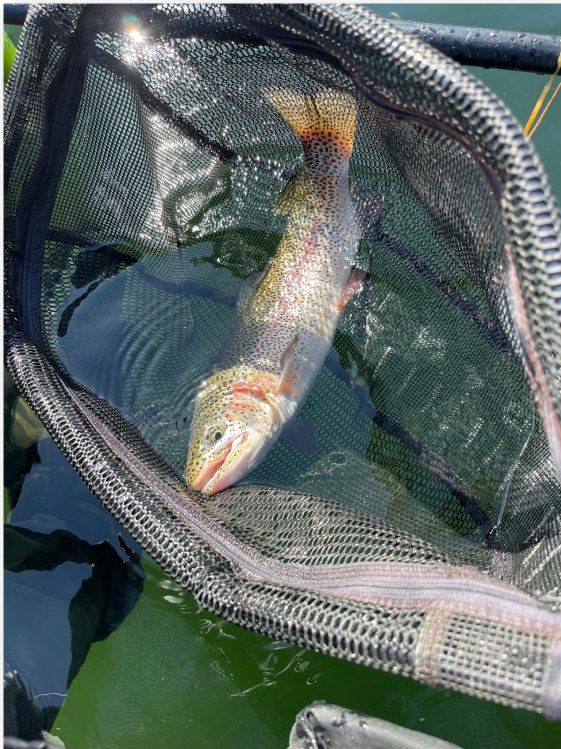
Pere Marquette Steelhead

Cady Lake Report

From Danferd Henke

A couple of weeks ago, a friend and I fished Cady Lake. Cady is a small privately owned lake that is open to public fishing thanks to a deal between the property owner and WDFW. It's just this side of the Hood Canal, accessed through Belfair, about a two hour drive from Seattle. It's a pretty little lake, with big fish. Be warned, though, that there is no out-house there.

When we arrived, we were greeted by the sight of rising fish and no other anglers. Some of the fish, large fish, were clearing the water by a foot and a half. It was almost as if they were hunting something airborne. Unfortunately, we couldn't figure out what those rising fish were taking, whether rising to the surface, just below the surface, or on the surface. Nothing seemed to work and, lacking a hover fly, we were reduced to fishing deeper with fast sinking lines. By doing so, we began to get hits, but not many. Each of us wound up with one fish landed, but they were good fish. Sixteen to seventeen inches and healthy. And beautiful. See the photo below. I'd definitely give Cady another chance.



Cady Lake Bow

Extra Tip

Zipper Pull



Some knots seem like they require another set of fingers.

Two of my favorite knots to tie tippet to fly are the fisherman's knot and Eugene bend knot, and both are easier to tie if you can use both hands to work the tag and standing lines without worrying about the fly. Other knots, such as the Kreh's non slip loop, are a lot easier to tighten if you can secure the fly and put tension on the standing line while pulling the tag tight with forceps or pliers.

I learned the zipper pull from an old Art Scheck book and in lieu of a zipper, I often use the looped leg of a small black binder clip, which I can attach anywhere on my fanny pack or vest.

Water Safety Reminder

Idaho/Montana Tragedy and Water Safety

From Jack Crowley

Last week I fished Montana at Craig, Missouri River. Two guys were killed.

First gentleman was fishing with his grandson on the North Fork D'Alene outside Cataldo, ID. Wearing hip boots, slipped, boots filled, I watched a little as a six hour body search went on. Water high and hard, but clearish. Second gentleman, John Brewer (76), a well-respected AP writer from Port Townsend, was on his annual fly-fishing trip to Montana. Raft hit and slid up a log jam just downriver from Darby on the Bitterroot, flipped- two guys were saved, John drowned.



Would a hard boat have bounced off the jam? I personally feel rafts will get you. They're squirrely,

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hard to fish from, certainly to stand in, and always catching your line/leader/fly. Hard to row. Just sayin'. Dave Casey allows no one in his drift boat without a life jacket.

Please be careful out there, stuff happens.

Heady Response—Water Safety

Advice on Wearing PDF's

From John Baker

I live on the Wallowa River which joins the Grande Ronde as it heads to the Snake. The Grande Ronde was Hemmingway's favorite steelhead stream.

There's a 30-mile wild and scenic section of a 40-mile trip, still pretty good fishing, which involves 4 of the 5 classes of rapids, depending on flow. I've done that trip in four days, and I did it once in 5-1/2 hours in a drift boat rowed by a 76 yr old ranch friend who'd spent his life on the river--he rowed and I looked backward to call out sweepers coming after us on a day when the valleys above us were flooding. He was dam good rowing the drift boat.

I'm pretty good rowing a racing shell, but rowing my Stream Tech (made by Maravia) raft over the years is its own ball game and can become very hairy in a second.



The more I've been on our rivers, the Salmon, the Owyhee, the more I realize how many more things can turn bad fast. Big water can be bad. Little water can be deceptive. **Never - that's never- be in either a raft or a drift boat without a PFD on your body and zipped**, not under your butt. Further, dress for the water temp, not the ambient.

Five years ago a father and his boys about 11 and 13, on their nice 40 mile, three day trip on the Grande Ronde in easy Class 1 – 111 water started out the morning of the last day and before they were settled in the raft (aka PFDs not yet fully on or buckled), with the dad rowing, hit a rock head on and the boys were thrown forward and out. The raft was slow to get off the rock. Does the dad jump to go for the boys

or row like hell for them? Didn't matter. They were off with the current. The dad lived. The boys didn't. How'd you like to make that phone call home? And come home with the PFDs in the raft. Keep in mind you can start drowning on a hot spring day when you go overboard in frigid run off when your body reacts to the shock of the water and your reflex is to take in a big gulp of air, getting H2O instead.



What a shame for those guys in Montana. For a better story, read THE EMERALD MILE - (see this month's book of the month) Spoiler: that's the name of a drift boat; setting: the Colorado River at full flood.

WSCFFI Casting Fair



WSCFFI Casting Fair Action
Certified Instructor Tom Cammarata works with a student on his Pick Up and Lay Down Cast.

Conservation

Conservation Committee Update And Methow Lakes opening Report from MVFFC Officers

Submitted by Robert W Thorpe
Conservation Chairman

WFFC Conservation Efforts: Chair and a few volunteers have continued to reach out to other Clubs (i.e. 3 Rivers-Issaquah on habitat restoration and trapping events). I have been forwarding events to WFFC Board Members.



We have continued contact/ attendance with other clubs and – Trout Unlimited, FFI staff and recruitment for Healing Waters and Reel Recovery—i.e. Human Conservation part of ongoing Legislative Efforts - Washington State -support for culvert replacement by citizen/business groups approved - only significant legislation Committee members supported Alaska Pebble Mine not receiving permits. Committee continuing President Dan’s goal of a club restoration project (i.e. restoration of Mercer Island Luther Burbank Park wetland invasive species, removal/replanting wetland facultative plants) - an option with local scout troops/students for fall. Proposal is under discussion with city staff/electeds.

Methow Valley fishing report. Local MVFFC members report better than average for size and numbers opening week at several lowland lakes i.e. -Twin, Davis, Campbell, Patterson etc.

I will be fishing next two weeks with members and attending Tuesday May 22nd barbeque and auction at Bear Creek Golf Course -will have more updates in future.

More Evasive Species Problems

Illegal Introductions of Pike in Carefree Lake and Lake Washington

From Washington Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

This month, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) crews used gillnets to remove northern pike from Carefree Lake on San Juan Island after illegal introductions of



the invasive fish species. Twenty-two adult pike have been removed so far from the small lake at Limekiln Preserve.

WDFW crews also removed two northern pike from Lake Washington in March and April of this year during ongoing efforts to monitor non-native predatory fish species and reduce their impacts on salmon. At least six pike have been removed from Lake Washington since 2017, and the Department believes the invasive fish were illegally introduced into the large lake in recent years.

Highly invasive and aggressive predators, in Washington state northern pike (*Esox Lucius*) are a harmful non-native fish classified as a prohibited aquatic invasive species.

If anglers catch northern pike in new areas, WDFW asks that they kill the pike immediately and do not release it, take a photo, and report it by calling 1-888-WDFW-AIS, email at ais@dfw.wa.gov, or use the Washington Invasive Species Council reporting form or mobile app at invasivespecies.wa.gov/report-a-sighting/.

Under Washington regulations, prohibited invasive species may be killed and retained if the person is certain about species identification and assumes responsibility for correct identification and adherence to state rules and fishing regulations.

“Pike can live more than 20 years, grow larger than 45 pounds, produce a large number of young, and consume large quantities of amphibians, birds, small mammals, and fish, including impacting Endangered Species Act listed salmon and trout,” said Justin Bush, WDFW’s Aquatic Invasive Species policy coordinator. “If left unchecked, northern pike will overpopulate and cause significant impacts on Washington’s aquatic ecosystems.”



Removed Pike—WDFW Photo



Fly of the Month

Modified Chopaka Emerger

Original - by the Late Preston Singletary—WFFC member

Hook: Size 14 Daiichi 1190 Standard Dry Fly

Tail: Sparkle yarn (Combed out)

Abdomen and thorax: Nature's Spirit Callibaetis fine dubbing

Wingcase and Brush: Coastal deer hair

Thread: Cream Danville 6/0 thread

Anoint the whole fly with floatant in order for it to float horizontally in the surface film.



Book of the Month

The Emerald Mile

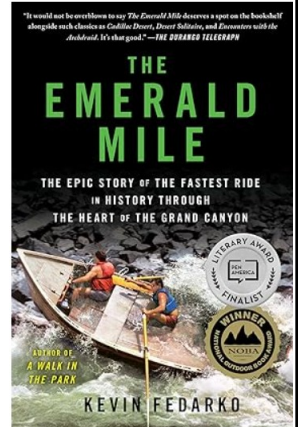
by Kevin Fedarko

Although this not a fly fishing book there is a lot here to absorb. Especially with the recent loss of life on rivers.

Superb writing with detailed descriptions on river and dam hydraulics and runoff, plus a thrilling story to boot about the Grand Canyon/Colorado River and the odd bunch river runners who run the Colorado in wooden Mackenzie style boats.

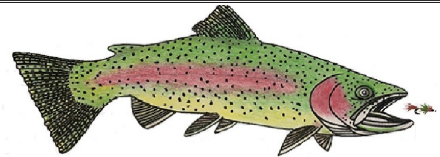
Also included are battles of environmental stewardship and the unique characteristics of rivers and the skills needed in running them.

In my opinion this is one of the better outdoor books I've ever read. Check it out on Amazon—at last count 4,000 reviews, nearly all 5 star ratings..... so I'm not the only one who liked this book—
Editor



Our office may be local, but we work all over the world

Mongolia, Iceland, Bahamas, Chile, and more...
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There is a Will and a Way



So inspiring is this man's determination to do what he loves, despite the obvious restrictions his body has tried to place on his love for fly fishing and the outdoors.

I never knew a man who took a bedroll into an Idaho mountainside and slept there under a star studded summer sky who felt self important that next morning

— Frank Church