

# Creel Notes from the



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

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



**MMXXIV No. 6** **June, 2024**



## President's Riffle

### Fishing in the Information Age

Danferd Henke, President, Washington Fly Fishing Club



Hello, All – in our effort to provide better information to our members regarding actual fishing, we are considering a couple of initiatives. First, over the years, I have acquired detailed bathymetric maps of several of the lakes we fish as a club and as members. These are quite robust in their detail and may help an angler select likely fishing locations. The bathymetric maps that I have include Chopaka Lake, Lone Lake, Pass Lake, Cooper Lake, Gibbs Lake, Big and Little Twin Lakes, and Nahwatzel Lake. I hope to post these in the Members Only “Tips and Tricks” section of the website. If any of you have similar maps of our lakes that you are willing to contribute, please contact me. (I know there are a couple of websites out there that provide maps and we will post links to those sites as well.)

Second, and this is a much a Club heritage matter as fishing information, I know there are many flies out there that members have developed over the years. Some of the inventors or those patterns are no longer with us and before any more of those patterns are lost, I'd like to find a way to preserve them. If you know of unique patterns from some of our forbearers or have developed your own that you are willing to share, it would be appreciated if you would send me a photo of the finished fly, the pattern instructions, and a paragraph or two (not more) about the fly or the Member who developed it. I'd like to start a library of those flies reaching back and maintain it going forward for

the benefit of all members.

If there are other informational topics that you would like to see the Club address, please let me know.

Tight Lines.

Dan

## June Program

### Speaker: Ben Johns The Behavior and Ecology of the Pacific Salmon and Trout

Ben Johns of the U.W Department of Fisheries will speak on the behavior, ecology, evolution and conservation of fishes.

Most of their work is conducted on salmon, trout and char, investigating such topics a migratory behavior and homing, habitat requirements , factors

*(Continued on page 2)*

## Inside this Issue

- ✓ Page 1.....Pres Riffle, June Program
- ✓ Page 2.....Outing Schedule
- ✓ Page 3.....Outings, Fishing Reports
- ✓ Page 4, 5...Chopaka Outing
- ✓ Page 6, 7...Reports
- ✓ Page 8, 9...Reports
- ✓ Page 10.....Healing Waters
- ✓ Page 11.....Leech Lake Primer
- ✓ Page 12.....Loose Ends

(Continued from page 1) - May Program

affecting reproductive success, evolution of populations, straying and population expansion and trophic ecology.

Their research blends a variety of field techniques including tagging, telemetry, direct observations, and a variety of sampling techniques with laboratory experiments and analysis of long-term datasets.

Also, This month, the Club's members will judge the entries into our annual Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition. Come cast your votes for the best flies tied by our members.

### 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.

### 2024 Outings Calendar

WFFC 2024 Outings  
From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

#### WFFC 2024 Outings Schedule

- June 22-23 Leech Lake
- July 20 Cooper Lake
- September 21 Hood Canal
- October 12-13 Big Twin Lake
- November 2 Penrose Point Wet Buns



### Upcoming 2024 Outings

#### Leech Lake Outing on June 22-23, 2024

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

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

(Continued on page 3)

## Creel Notes

...is the official publication of the Washington Fly Fishing Club. Subscription is free with membership.

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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.

(Continued from page 2)

mention that you are with the WFFC to receive the one-night stay rate.



**Leech Lake Photo by Bruce Strand**

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.*

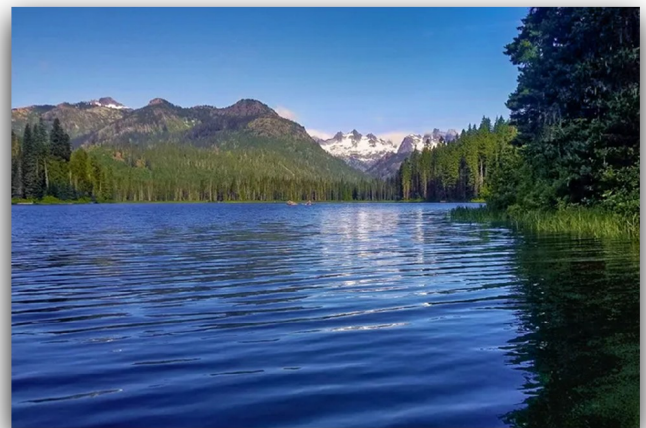
### **Cooper Lake Outing on July 20, 2024**

Mike Nolan will be hosting a day outing at Cooper Lake which is located 3 1/2 miles northwest of Salmon-La-Sac and is accessible by a Forest Service Road from the upper Cle Elum River. Anglers can expect excellent angling opportunities fishing for brook trout and rainbows 8-10 inches. Brown trout in the 1 to 3-pound range and some much larger are also available. Small kokanee and cutthroat are also taken. The lake was recently stocked with 3000 rainbows averaging 2.40 lbs. on 5/28/24. A boat launch is available, but all motors are prohibited by county

ordinance. There is a small US Forest Service campground at the lake and a Forest Service Pass is required for the area.

I'm planning on being at the lake at about 9:30am on Saturday morning after making the nearly 2-hour drive from Seattle. If you don't see me at the boat launch, then you will find me on the lake in my green Outcast Fish Cat Cruzer float tube. In the late afternoon we can gather for food and refreshments at the Brick Saloon located at 100 W Pennsylvania Ave, Roslyn, WA 98941

*Please sign up on the WFFC website or contact Mike Nolan at (425) 754-1234 if you plan to attend the Outing.*



**Cooper Lake**



### **Chopaka Lake WFFC Outing Restored**

*By Dick Brening*

Hats off to Dan Henke and his wife Adare for hosting and restarting the Annual WFFC Outing at Lake Chopaka over the Memorial day weekend.

I was among the 7 club members who attended. In fact I stayed a full 10 days (the allowable limit for a thirty day period) enjoying this great fishing/camping

*(Continued on page 4)*

(Continued from page 3)

destination. I have been making this trip from the Seattle area for over 30 years and have missed very few spring trips and started adding fall trips a few years ago. I guess I'm sold on this lake as a great place to visit and fish. As always Chopaka was Chopaka. Fishing is not really easy there for me and the weather can be problematic.

This year as reported earlier by Ben Davidson the fish were almost exclusively on the midges that were coming off in great quantity. This was OK for those wishing to fish under a bobber but made fishing difficult for us dry fly guys. I did get a few fish using

an adult midge pattern that I tied based on a specimen that spent a few minutes resting on the window of my trailer. I would like to name the pattern "Chopaka Midge" but I think it will require a more extensive evaluation by others before I could be that bold.

My daily fishing results ranged from 0 to a high of 6. But the size and quality of the rainbow trout made up for the meager numbers. Most fish were in the 16 to 18 inch range with some measured 20" and larger. The longest that I heard reported was about 24

inches. The fish were heavy and strong. They fought well resulting in full U bends to the rod while attempting to land them.

Mooching and casting/stripping the red headed Olive Willy and the Canadian Pumpkinhead Streamer were also successful for me.

The weather was cool with showers most days but with only light to moderate wind.

Hooray for the return of the WFFC Chopaka Outing!

## Chopaka Lake Outing

*By Danferd Henke*

Several Club members camped out this past Memorial Day Weekend at Chopaka Lake and enjoyed treacherous weather and hard fishing, including Dave Ehrich, Dick Brening, Adair Dammann, Mark Pratt, and Ben Chadwick, and Danferd Henke. A couple of guests joined us as well. We all caught fish, mostly

subsurface, as the hoped for hatches seldom materialized – except for midges. The dominant food source on the water over the weekend were large black chironomids and blood worms, 3/4" to 1". There were plenty of midge adults skittering around the surface. Dick Brening developed a fly to imitate them and it proved out. Mark Pratt was top rod – now there's a surprise! We enjoyed campfires each night and two steak and corn dinners, with members supplying side dishes. As for the fish, they were in the best condition I've ever seen them. Strong, long, and hefty. We caught many fish 18" plus, including some 20" and a couple of 21". It was a challenge to get them up and to the net on 5X tippet.

I stayed through the following week, along with Dick, and we did get into some short but intense Callibaetis hatches. The action on emergers was fast and furious for about 45 minutes on a couple of days, in light rain often. (I love dry fly fishing in the rain!) The damsel nymph migration never happened while I was there and there was but feeble action on adult damsel flies. As a consequence, there were few fish cruising in or near the reeds, compared to normal.

The weather never warmed up and we had frequent rain. Chopaka also treated us to thunder, lightning, and hail. It was a good time. In the eleven days I was there, it never got warm enough to take a bath!

From my perspective, the best times with this Club are at the outings. It is around that nightly campfire that information is exchanged, lies are told, and relationships are built. If you can make it to one of our overnight outings, you won't regret it.



Damsel "Fishing Vest" Migration

# Chopaka Lake Outing

*Photos by Adair Dammann*



**Another 'Type' of Chopaka Rainbow**

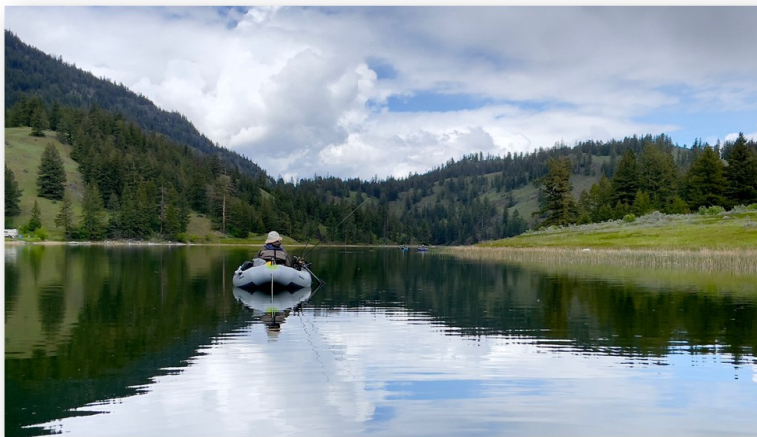


**Mark and Elsie - first on the water every day**



**Mark Pratt Speaks!**

**Fishing Northside  
Weedbeds**



**Looking Down Lake**





**What is in the water fountain that makes people smile all the time?**  
*Inquiring minds want to know!*

## **Corbett Lake British Columbia**

*By Bob Burdick*

For about the last 15 years I've spent a week in the Spring at this private lake, 4 hours from Seattle chasing rainbow who are in turn primarily chasing hatching Chironomids, and Callibaetis flies. This years gang included Gary Bergquist and pal Jim Jacobson, Hugh Clark and one other fisherman, and we stayed, slept, and cooked in one of the Corbett Lake Resorts 7 cabins. The fishing was entirely from our own boats which on most days were tossed around by the wind and doused regularly by rain. Despite the weather we all caught fish, some much more than others with the release count per boat varying from 4 or 5 to 29 Unlike other years the fish seemed to be uniformly 17 to 21 inches with only a rare fish much larger.



**Corbett Lake Beauty**

Like other lakes in Washington, this Springs chironomid pupa were smallish, a size 18 imitation working best. The Callibaetis hatches were sporadic, lasting as little as an hour and some days not at all. However, on our last day of the trip I observed the densest Callibaetis hatch I'd ever seen. In one of the shallow side bays of the lake, perhaps 10 acres in area, Callibaetis started popping resulting in 1,2, or even 3 adult Callibaetis floating in every square foot of the that 10 acre area. My Callibaetis became one of thousands of others, mostly ignored as the entire bay became alive with the fishing frenzy that suddenly stopped after 10 minutes when the wind died down and the water became mirror clear. The other interesting phenomenon I observed on this trip was the interest fish had in ants and beetles. When the wind was blowing strongly there were a lot of takes on ant and beetle imitations, but only occasional takes when the wind died down. My best guess was that when there were gusts of wind ants and beetles were blown out of shrubs and trees bordering the lake and the fish had learned that and thus would readily lunge for these imitations.

## **Coffeepot Lake Lincoln County Washington**

*By R. Teshar*

Reconnected with an old college buddy who farms just outside of the small town of Harrington Washington. We took a fly fishing class in college (Yes, it's actually a credited course) and I found out when he gets some time he hits a few of the lakes near his farm, one of his favorites being Coffeepot Lake.

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7) Coffeepot



Coffeepot lake is ~15 miles west of Harrington in the scabland country, picturesque in its own way. It is mixed species lake so bass, crappie and other spiny ray inhabit the lake along with trout.

Seems there has been more wind this year in eastern Washington than I can ever remember and the day we fished was no exception. Coffeepot sits in a northeast/southwest direction where the wind give you a lot of problems We stayed anchored (thanks to an old farm implement flywheel) that weighted 40+ lbs (at least). Where others were blown off the lake we kept pretty much stationary



**Windy, an understatement**

Casting in that wind was another story with a limited remedy. I had a hard time with my 5 weight rod getting my choronomids out and away from the boat and having some semblance of control.

We started off with smaller choronomid patterns in sizes 18 to 20. The choronomids were working well

in the beginning then later switched to bloodworms. Three and a half hours of fishing between the two of us yielded nine fish. The fish were very well fed and heavy, one over 20" (I didn't catch it) and a couple in the 16-18" range. I think we would have done better if the wind hadn't been so merciless.



**Coffeepot Bow**

Every fishing excursion runs into obstacles. The wind was ours. Wind burned hands, face etc. All part of the fly fishing experience.

There is a nice rustic free campground (BML land) with a nice dock.

## **Corbett Lake British Columbia**

*By Gary Bergquist*

After checking in and visiting with Ann Thompson, manager of Corbett Lake Lodge, we trailered our water craft down to the put-in: an eight foot Spring Creek pram with an Outcast pontoon boat strapped to its hull. We had a warm sunny day for our first day on the lake. We would be joined later by three other anglers although we did not realize the length of time it would take WFFC members, Drs. Burdick and Clark, to make their way to the Thompson Plateau; however, that is not my story to tell.



The weather during our stay was varied to say the least. We starting out with some very warm days and experienced snow the night prior to our last day of fishing. In between these extremes we had a VERY windy day featuring strong multi-directional winds and gusts which blew boats off anchors and, in my case, a packet of unsecure flies out

(Continued on page 9)



of my boat. Fishing was a little problematic. At one point I rowed in to a cove, tied on and cast a large black ant pattern with the wind figuring there had to be a few ants being blown on to the water. Sure enough, after a bit of a wait my drown ant was taken. Later that day I anchored in a bay hoping for a lull in the wind. I was not there before hearing sudden loud cracks and seeing wind felled large fir trees slamming down on the near shore. Looking up at the height of the nearest trees on the shore, my boat felt really small.

Fishing was a bit mixed although good. For those anglers focused on fish counts a couple of days were a little tough with only a few fish netted. Keep in mind a "few fish" at Corbett means one catches "only" a few 17 to 20 inch healthy hard fighting rainbows. (Boo Hoo!), On the other hand, one angler in our group had over 25 fish to his boat on two consecutive days one at 23 inches...all but a few taken on the surface with dries.

I do not regularly fish chironomid patterns; however I did land a 20 inch rainbow on a buzzer pattern using a slow hand twisted dry line, fairly shallow water and a pretty wild battle before I had it in the net. Corbett does have more than its share of anglers devoted to chironomid fishing. At times and; some areas of the lake it can be a tad congested with closely anchored boats...lots of bobbers on the water.

My sense is the anglers in our group experienced much more success with surface flies and nymphs than in prior years. This was in spite of the rather weak and sporadic callibaetis hatches. The weak hatches were a little disappointing as in prior years the callibaetis hatch was very, very impressive.

I fished with dry and intermediate lines. Two fly patterns worked very well for me this year. The first was Brian Stamack's "Susan's Damsel" (see Phil Rowley's Still Water Selections) as well as a hare's ear pattern. The hare's ear pattern I fished is not your granddaddy's hare's ear pattern. Rather, I used a contemporary version of the pattern as tied by a well know fly pattern designer and tier.

All and all, a good trip. Looking forward to next year.

*I have fished through fishless days that I remember happily without regret.*

-Roderick Haig-Brown



**Corbett Lake British Columbia**

## **Missouri River, Montana**

*By Hugh Clark*

Former WFFC member Bill Booth and I fished for two days on the Missouri on June 3 and 5.

Day one was cloudy and windy, with gusts to 25 knots. Nymph fishing was excellent with about 20 fish to boat, none smaller than 16 inches and several over 20 inches. Most were hooked on a # 16 or #18 sow bug, with a few on a mayfly nymph # 18. It is hard to believe those big fish can be caught on such small flies. June 4 the wind was gusting at 35-50, and we gave up on fishing. Instead we visited The Buffalo Jump Museum in Ulm, The Lewis and Clark Expedition Museum and the Charles M. Russell Museum in Great Falls.

On June 5 we fished from 8:00 am to 12:30, in bright sunny weather with moderate winds, hooking just 8 fish but including one brown and one rainbow over 20 inches, also on nymphs.

Montana in June is bright green with white cotton clouds and dramatic canyons as we drove to and from Wolf Creek past The Gates to The West on the Missouri. Wolf Creek Anglers gave us good housing and arranged for our guides.



### Missouri Brownie

...And it swam rapidly home on release



### Project Healing Waters at Trophy Lake



A day with Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing members and WFFC volunteers at Trophy Lake. Bottom center, going clockwise: Neal Hoffberg, Jim McRoberts, David Hart, Johnny Strong, Sherman McCarter, Luis Blanco, Chuck Ballard. The fishing was tough. But the few that we caught were big, beautiful and full of fight.

## Tutorial on Leech Lake

By Steve Raymond—From the Creel Notes  
July 1971

Leech Lake, at the summit of White Pass, is one of the finest fly lakes in the state. It's small, shallow and easy to cover. The water is usually clear, weed growth heavy and hatches plentiful. The trout, eastern brook, are not large but there are lots of them and they make wonderful eating. *(I might add that there are now triploid rainbows that add to the fishing bonus, some in the 18+” range –Ed)*

Leech is at an elevation of 4,700 feet. Usually the snow is gone and the lake is accessible by Memorial Day. The best fishing is usually the last 2 weeks of July and all of August no matter when the snow goes off.

In most areas the lake is 3 to 5 feet deep. Because of the clarity of the water, it's often possible to see the fish rise or strike at the end of a long cast. The trout average is about 10 inches, but you can count on picking up several 12” to 13” fish in a day's fishing. I like to use a 6 foot, 2 ounce midge rod with a sinking line. Even a 10 incher will put a good bend in such a small rod. *(but the triploids are good size and more than make up for smaller average brookies—Ed)*

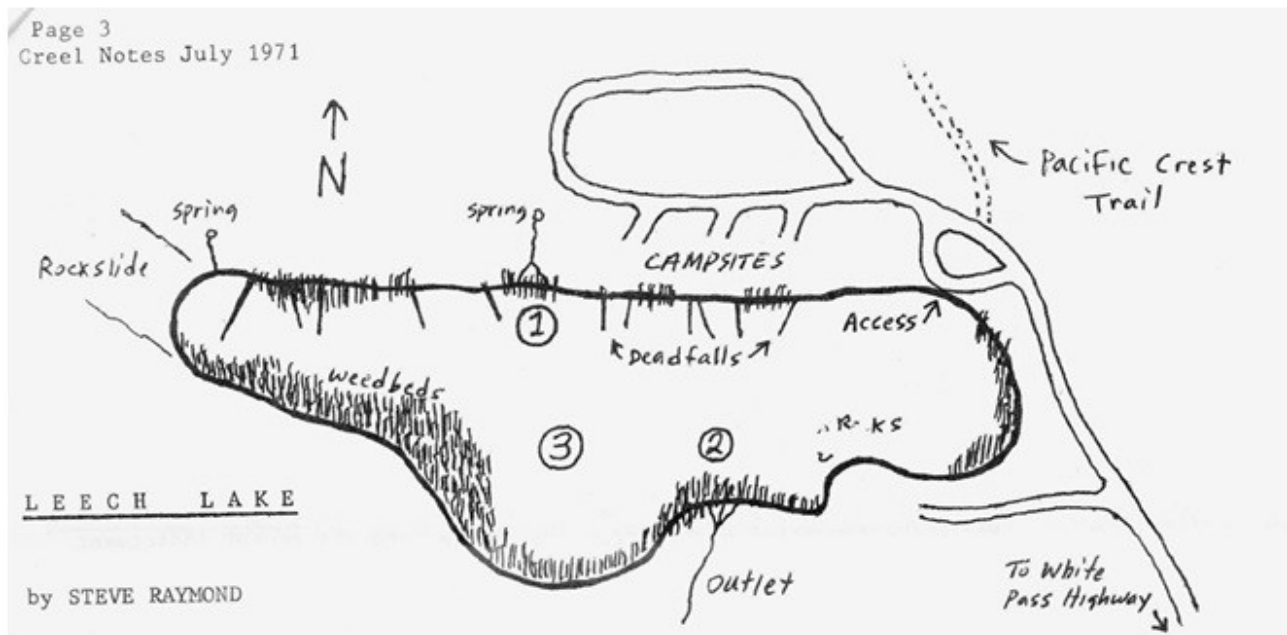
There are campsites all around the lake, maintained

by the forest service. Get there early on the weekends. There are outdoor toilets and good fresh water from the springs. However, check around before taking the water from the spring nearest the campground; last year some people were using it instead of the outdoor toilets.

Gas, food and booze are available at the White Pass Summit, about 1/2 mile from the campground. The best spots are numbered:

1. The hottest place on the lake. Brookies congregate off the mouth of the spring where the cool water comes in. Anchor close to shore and put your fly near weed bed or along the windfalls. I once caught and released 106 trout in this spot during a five hour period.
2. Best spot for bigger trout. The brookies spawn in the outlet and the bigger fish tend to lie off the weedbed during the summer months before they move into the creek to spawn in the fall.
3. Good when others fail

Best all around pattern is a damsel fly nymph, light green, tied on size 8 4X long hook. A self Carey works sometimes. On bright days, a size 12 TDC on a thin leader sunk deep works well. Of course, the most elective pattern of all is Raymond's Reliable, but most of you guys are too clumsy to tie it.





## Fly of the Month

### Crackleback

*Tied by the Late Bob Birkner—WFFC member*

**Hook:** No. 12 (standard dry fly hook)

**Thread:** Uni 8/0, Brown

**Body:** Orange Floss

**Shellback:** Peacock Herl

**Hackle:** Rooster Saddle, Furnace or Brown

Can be use wet or dry just under the surface film. Really a good pattern. The late Bob Birkner's favorite at Hi Hium Lake in B.C. They really work!



## Extra Tip

### Rubber Legs, Foam and Fly Tying on the Cheap

Head to craft store and you will find a ton of fly tying supplies

Bass skirts from the gear section work great for rubber legs. You can also slide them right up against a streamer to increase the action and profile. . Foam in standard and unique colors are easy to locate. I bought out several craft stores in a **particular lavender foam that seems to be discontinued**. It's deadly for trout. Craft fur, eyes, glues, pom poms for egg patterns, etc.

Take a walk around and let your imagination run wild. In the dead of winter, roaming around a craft store isn't the worst way to kill some time.



## Women's Fly Fishing Day



Seattle area celebration of National Women's Fly Fishing Day. The date is 27 June 2024. Location is Ron Regis Paark, Renton. This is an all day event on the Cedar River. Bring your gear (or rent) and learn new techniques for fishing. Group share experiences and more.

27 June, 2024

# CELEBRATE NATIONAL WOMEN'S FLY FISHING DAY

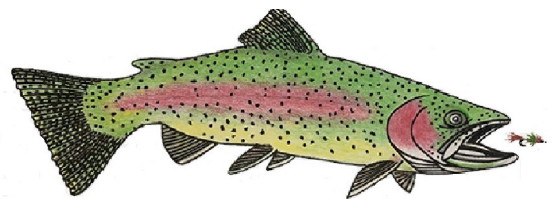
JOIN SHEJUMPS, EMERALD WATER ANGLERS: WOMEN ON THE WATER, PUGET SOUND WOMEN ON THE FLY, AND LADIES IN WADIES FOR A FUN-FILLED DAY CELEBRATING NATIONAL WOMEN'S FLY FISHING DAY!

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*"Here comes the trout that must be caught with tickling"*

-William Shakespeare Twelfth Night Act II  
Scene 1, Line 2