

# Creel Notes from the



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

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



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October, 2024



## President's Riffle

No President's Riffle this month

From Midcurrent Fly Fishing Magazine

## Do You Have Too Many Flies?

By: Spencer Durrant

I spend a lot of time working with beginner fly anglers, and one thing almost all of them share in common is a bit of "paralysis by analysis." That is, they let the amount of options and choices in fly fishing (how should I rig this fly? What's the best way to cover this run?) paralyze them into inaction.



I wonder if that same problem doesn't afflict us more experienced anglers, at least when we open our fly boxes.

If you've been doing this for any length of time, you probably have a nice collection of flies that cost more than you'd like to remember. But how often are you lugging around flies—entire boxes, perhaps—that you simply never use?

Years ago, I was on the Lower Provo River with my buddy Mike, and he was catching fish left and right. I couldn't get so much as a look at my flies, so I naturally asked what he was using. Mike showed me this little two-toned midge pattern, and I had *nothing* like it in the eight fly boxes stuffed in my vest. I borrowed a

few from him, promptly caught a bunch of fish, and spent the rest of the afternoon wondering how Mike had the *perfect* fly in one of his two small boxes.

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## October Program

### Earl Harper on Destination Fishing October 15th

Earl Harper will talk to us about Destination Fly Fishing at the Seattle Tennis Club.

Earl is a member of the Hatch Adventure Travel team of travel professionals with over 50 years of combined experience traveling the globe to some of the world's finest fly fishing and adventure destinations including:

- Argentina
- Bahamas
- Belize
- Canada
- Chile
- Greenland



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- Honduras Mongolia
- Island Mexico
- New Zealand Slovenia

## 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.

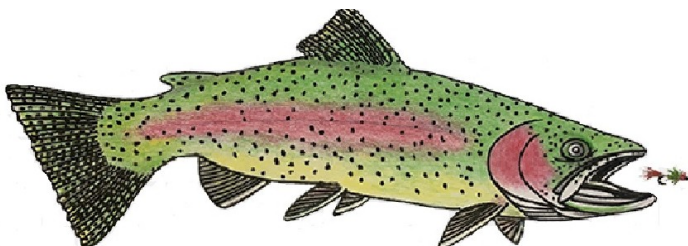


(Continued from page 1) - Flies

Mike has caught more fish in his life than I ever will, and I've never seen him with more than two fly boxes in his vest. That day on the Lower Provo inspired me to clean out my boxes and narrow my fly selection down to just the basics. It took a while, but I currently have 26 patterns I rely on, and that's about it. Obviously if I'm traveling or fishing a "destination" location, I pick up local flies or patterns, but for the vast majority of my own trout fishing in the Rockies, these 26 patterns are all I need.

Since cleaning out the flies I never used, I've not once felt paralyzed at the thought of picking a fly (something I certainly felt in my earlier years in this sport). Just a few days ago I was on a local tailwater, early enough to see the remnants of a fall blue-wing hatch that had the fish up and eating spent-wings. I took a minute to observe the rise forms and look at the water's surface before I tied on a mayfly spinner followed by a sparkle dun. In past years, I would've agonized over the fly choice until well after the fish had finished feeding on top.

Part of that growth may just be my experience, but I attribute a lot of it to keeping things simple. Fly fishing can be as complex as we want it to be, but enough things in life are tougher than they should be (paying a mortgage in 2024, for instance). Keeping it simple keeps the pleasure in the sport.



## Creel Notes

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

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### **Creel Notes Editor**

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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 Schedule

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

- October 12-13 Big Twin Lake 
- November 2 Penrose Point Wet Buns

### Upcoming Outing

#### Wet Buns Outing

**November 2, 2024**

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

I remember that member Dick Stearns once told me that “Wet Buns” is actually an acronym for Winter Experience to Try Bouillabaisse Under Nocturnal Skies. However, another member, Al Pratt, told me that it means a Wet Experience to Try Bouillabaisse Under Nocturnal Skies usually when it’s raining.

Whether or not we have sun or rain, this is your chance to fish for Chums that are staging in the shallow estuaries and the resident Coho are there for those who know where to cast. The sea-run cutthroat’s can be caught fishing from a boat or from the shore.

We will gather at the Group Camp G1 area at Penrose Point State Park, with dinner prepping starting around 4:00. I will be making the bouillabaisse seafood stew and volunteer labor is needed to crack crabs, chop fish, shell shrimp, etc. Bring your favorite appetizer, side dish, or dessert to share and some wood to burn in the fire. The bouillabaisse stew seems to warm my inside just as much as the hot fire warms my outside.

There is an option to camp overnight at Penrose State Park in our reserved group site that allows up to 10 tents. The address is Penrose Point State Park 321 158th Avenue Kp S, Lakebay, WA.

Please sign up on the WFFC website or call me to attend the Outing as I will need a count of who’s going for the Club provided food and beverages.

For more information about the Wet Buns Outing or to sign up, please click on the following link to do so:

<https://wffc.com/event/wet-buns-outing-november-2-2024/>



**Penrose Point State Park**

“Scholars have long known that fishing eventually turns men into philosophers. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible to buy decent tackle on a philosopher’s salary,”

– Patrick F McManus



**“Cutthroat Heaven”  
Coyote Creek Idaho**

*Your Creel Notes Editor’s Favorite Place*





## Missouri River, Montana

*By Hugh Clark*

My son Nate and I had two and a half days on the Missouri guided by Grant from The Cross Currents Fly Shop. Over the three days I had 33 hookups, 24 to the boat. The ratio of rainbows to whitefish to brown trout was 10 to 4 to 1.

There was no significant hatch and all were hooked while nymphing under a strike indicator: size 18 may fly nymphs, sow bugs and a local fly called a purple load. The median rainbow was probably 18 inches with daily bows to almost 20 inches. The early releases were mostly my fault, striving for a brief run to return fish to the river before exhaustion. The guide convinced me to let the fish run. These bows are big, strong jumpers in the fall.

Fishing traffic was lower than in the spring and there was plenty of room for all. The flow rate was about 3,900 cu. ft. Wind is usually a factor and for us was mild, severe and moderate for the three days. the drive from Great Falls to Craig is beautiful, and the fields bright green.



**Hugh with a Missouri Brownie**



**Missouri Rainbow**

## **Chopaka Lake - Fall 2024**

*By Dick Brening*

The last week in September I was able to make a 10 day trip to Chopaka. During most of the days I was there the campground was only half full or less. The lake level was low but fishable. The weather was mild but windy at times.

As usual fishing for me at Chopaka is slow. Often I can easily count my fish to the boat per day on one hand and break-offs seemed more common this year. Maybe it is time to replace my aging tippet stock.

Although the fish lacked in quantity for me, the fish I did land more than offset that by the quality. I was able to hook and land bright, strong bows in the 20+” range with my largest close to 24”. I had good success using size 14 green damselfly nymphs fished on a dry line up against the reeds along the shore. I also had success casting light and dark stimulator patterns, size 10, both during the early afternoon and just before dusk. Occasionally a stripped white marabou leech worked. The fish were heavy, in good physical condition and they fought hard when hooked with several diving directly to the bottom into the the weed bed.

During most afternoons the larger fish put on quite a performance. The dragon flies which were large and brown this year were doing their mating dance above the water just out side the reed beds. It was quite a sight to see these large trout come clear out of the water, jumping straight up and taking the dragonfly pairs



*(Continued on page 6)*



(Continued from page 5) - Chopaka

in flight. Someone needs to design a dragonfly pattern with hovering capability!

Mid-way during my trip I was joined by two of my sons, Rory and Jeff. They were able to spend four days and it was a big treat to spend time with them at my favorite fishery.

On my last day a young man who had pulled into a nearby campsite came over and introduced himself. He said he noticed my WFFC cap and ask me if I knew Boyd Aigner. Of course, I said yes. He identified himself as Boyd's son Bruce. We spent a windy afternoon reminiscing on his activities as a boy growing up and attending many WFFC activities. It was fun to recall many of the crazy happenings of the past. He remembered many the WFFC more mischievous members that were good friends of his dad. We swapped many stories involving guys like Dick Thompson, Jerry Sugameli, Gordy Young, to mention a few. My thanks to Bruce for stopping by.

The last fish I caught merits special mention. It was late in the evening when I hooked an aggressive fish that fought very hard and resisted being picked up in my net. When I finally brought the fish to the boat it was a very large male in full spawning color. The head and 'back were a dark steely green, the sides of the fish were slabs of bright red and the jaw was slightly hooked. It was a very angry looking fish but very beautiful to see in the last light of the day.

## Club Outing Report

### Big and Little Twin Lakes September 12-13th

It was hard to believe that October is already here. The Big Twin (and Little Twin) outing this year was characterized by pleasant environment & surroundings, great fishing companions, an excellent meal, but average fishing. My experience is when the Twins are slick (no wind or riffle) it's tough fishing which seem to be the case with most of the club members.

Saturday's evening meal included some fine steaks for everyone and a variety of dishes brought by members. We also were visited by members of the Methow Valley Fly Fishers which filled us in on what efforts they had done to improve Big and Little Twin Lakes and general information on fly fishing the surrounding area.

Thanks to Mike Nolan our outings chairman for putting together another great outing.



**Big Twin Campground WFFC Arrival**



**Tom Neu gets things set for the evening  
(with a bottle of Merlot)**





**A few members from the Methow Valley Fly Fishers joined us (L to R)—Methow President Pete Speer, Methow Treasurer Alan Sodell and ‘WFFC fly caster extraordinaire ’ Don Simonson**



**Steaks, Side Dishes and Desserts Galore—Eating Time (L to R)—Mark Pratt, Alan Sodell, Ron Mazurek, Chuck Ballard, Brown Jacket Fellow (Facing away =?) and Ben Davidson**





**Slick Water on Big Twin = Tough Fishing**



**Evening Campfire**





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### Fly of the Month

#### Copper John



#### Dressing

- Hook:** Gamakatsu S10, Size: 12
- Thread:** Uni-Thread 6/0, Black
- Wing:** Thin Skin, Pearl Flashabou
- Wire:** UTC Ultra Wire, Color: Copper
- Thorax:** Peacock Herl
- Legs:** Partridge Feather, Color: Dark
- Tail:** Goose Biots, Color: Brown
- Head:** Gold Tungsten Bead



### For Sale

#### For Sale West Marine Inflatable Boat/ Dinghy Model PRU3



An excellent skiff for fishing. Length 8ft. Beam 5 ft. Rolls up for easy storage. Inflates in minutes with high volume foot pump. Easy to row. Hard transom suitable for up to 6HP gas Motor or electric. Includes oars, two anchors, floor mats and a seat cushion. \$360. Cash only.

Jim Young Phone: 425-301-0909



### Reeling in the Years

“All those nice flies you just tied, now go rub them in the dirt. You’ll find they will work a lot better”  
- Roy Patrick

*Yes, he did say this!  
(From his Fly Tying Class, year 1969)*