

Creel Notes from the



April



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

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The Incredible Virtue of Freezing One's Butt Off

Danferd Henke, President,
Washington Fly Fishing Club

President's Riffle

It is a commentary on the human condition, perhaps a sad commentary, that subjecting oneself to masochistic levels of arduous circumstances for an extended period of time is often considered virtuous. Yes, of course, I'm talking about steelheading. In particular, steelheading weather. As I write, I'm thawing from a day chasing Washington steelhead on the Pere Marquette River in northern Michigan. I come here annually, often with Adair, to visit and fish with old college friends. In those halcyon days in New Hampshire, we would be out cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, glissading, in zero degrees, or even colder, laughing about it and thinking it was the best day of our lives up to then, barely noticing the cold. We were teenagers then. We are septuagenarians now. It's cold. It's freaking cold.



The temperature is in the low twenties. So is the wind. With gusts to 35. The windchill has us down to nine degrees. There are steelhead here, and beautiful brown trout, too, but they are cold as well. The water temperature remains in the thirties. The fish aren't aggressive. We started late, in deference to the weather, but the weather was not impressed with our homage. It worsened, then came the blowing snow. By 3:30, I couldn't tie knots any longer. By 4:00, our tiptops and guides were freezing. At 4:10, ice had formed on my waders.

We called it. The hour-long row out was excruciating. While my legs and feet had been fine while wading in the (relatively) warm water, by the time we reached the takeout, the air temperature had numbed my legs from knees to toes.

(Continued on page 2)

April Program

Brooke E. Penaluna Phd Research Fish Biologist United States Forest Service

Dr. Brooke E. Penaluna is a research fish biologist with the United States Forest Service at the Pacific Northwest Research Station, Oregon, USA.

Prior to graduating with her Master's degree in Environmental Science from Western Washington University, Brooke Penaluna worked for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife and earned a Fulbright Fellowship to Chile to study invasive fishes. Penaluna then went on to



(Continued on page 2)

Inside this Issue

- ✓ Page 1....April Program
- ✓ Page 2....Hugh Jennings Memorial
- ✓ Page 3....Aigner Fly Tying Competition Winner
- ✓ Page 4....Fishing Reports
- ✓ Page 6....Conservation Event
- ✓ Page 7....Loose Ends

(Continued from page 1) - Program

earn her Ph.D. in Fisheries Science from Oregon State University, and now works for the U.S. Forest Service as a Research Fish Biologist. In 2021, Penaluna was appointed the HJ Andrews Experimental Forest Lead Scientist, where she conducts research on the 16,000-acre research site committed to learning more about forests, streams, and watersheds. Current research conducted by Penaluna focuses on the effects of climate change and forest disturbances on fish and aquatic ecosystems, with a focus on policy planning and management.

(Continued from page 1) Riffle

We were cold. But we remain virtuous!

And, we caught some fish. Adair picked up a nice steelhead. Friend Dave landed a beautiful German Brown. Tomorrow's weather looks about the same. Enough virtue, we'll tie flies by the fire.

This river can be alive with more steelhead than one can imagine. And it isn't always this cold. Two years ago, the guides were wet-wading and the fish were slowly poaching. But for me, while seeing all those steelhead is a joy, this river always is a poignant reminder of what we once had in the Pacific Northwest and what we've now lost. We live with a mere remnant of a beautiful memory.

Creel Notes

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Hugh Jennings Memorial Event



Celebration of Life

for

Hugh Jennings

Please join family and friends
for a celebration of Hugh's life

reception following

Friday, June 27
1:00 PM

Bellevue Presbyterian Church
Main Sanctuary
1717 Bellevue Way NE

family contact:
landline: 425-746-6351
alanhjennings@gmail.com

Everyone likes birds. What wild creature is more accessible to our eyes and ears, as close to us and everyone in the world, as universal as a bird

- David Attenborough

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.

Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition

Marcie Kindinger Wins 2025 Boyd Aigner Competition

By Bill Neal, Awards Chairperson

Congratulations to Marcie Kindinger, the overall winner of the Boyd Aigner Fly Tying Competition for 2025. Her winning performance was announced at the March members' meeting. Flies submitted for the Competition had been judged by the members at their February meeting and were again on display at the March meeting.

The Competition is named to honor Boyd Aigner. He was a beloved member of the Club known for his fly tying skill and originality.



The 2025 fly patterns and the first place finisher for each were:

Damselfly, adult, size 14 – Marcie Kindinger

Royal Humpy, size 14 – Marcie Kindinger

Herring streamer, flatwing style, size 4 –
Hugh Clark

Congratulations and thanks to all participants

Holiday Party Needs Help!

WFFC Creel Notes 4.25 HELP NOW!

Your December Holiday Party committee has been hard at work organizing plans for our December 16th fundraiser party. **YOUR HELP IS NEEDED NOW** to starting asking your guides, resorts, trip contacts, etc. if they will donate to this important event in the life of our club. **At this month's club meeting we will continue to collect your name and the item/s you will donate/find for this fundraiser.** PLEASE! PLEASE! PLEASE! As you start fishing and traveling this spring, please start now asking your contacts if they can donate to our live or silent auction or to our raffle.

Donated items don't have to be limited to direct fly fishing. Other types of trips, weekend get-aways are appealing, too. Camping items are popular as are restaurant gift certificates and woodworking items. Our

reach can be broad. If you use it or like it, others will, too.

A successful event allows not only our club to function, but gives us the ability to support the many non profit organizations that use fly fishing as a strategy to help beneficiaries. This is fly fishing – not only for fun but for the good of others.

Please come prepared to tell us what you'll donate and/or contact anyone on our Holiday Party Committee: Ben Chadwick, Chelsea Cullen, Kathryn Graendyk, Christ Wilder, Raymond Yu and Stephen Whittaker.

With great appreciation,
Suzanne Johnston
2025 Chair



2025 Outings

Outing Schedule for 2025

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair



WFFC 2025 Outings Schedule

- April 19 Lake Hannan
- May 23-26 Lake Chopaka - Danferd Henke
- June 21-22 Leech Lake
- July 19 Cooper Lake
- September TBD Hood Canal - Jay Deeds
- October 4-5 Big Twin Lake
- November 1 Penrose Point Wet Buns



Fishing Reports



Nahwatzel Lake and Sayonara

By Bob Burdick

On April 3rd, a Thursday, I fished Nahwatzel Lake (near Shelton) from 8 am to noon. I've been fishing this lake at least annually and sometimes 2 or 3 times a year since I first heard about it from a friend in 2014. That friend pointed out that the game department stocked it twice a year, with the spring stock containing a large number of jumbo rainbow trout to about 4 pounds. Although gear fishing was allowed, most fishing was with flies. Parking was very limited with space for perhaps 12 vehicles max at the single public access on the lake. Nestled beside a remote stretch of highway on the Olympic Peninsula one-half of its forested shore displayed the picturesque jagged piling remains of an ancient railroad system used to gut the peninsula of its logging wealth and provided shelter for trout. Use of the lake over the years seemed average with a few water skiers mixed in with bait fishermen and spoon chuckers.

Each time I fished it I gained insight into new areas where those large trout were hiding. And each year I seemed to catch more and larger fish. I'll always remember the day I landed 6 fish estimated to weigh 7, 6, 5, 4, 3, and 2 pounds. On April 3rd I was on the boat ramp by 8am and exhilarated that my planning was perfect as not a soul was there! By 8:30 I was launched---with 5 other cars and trucks waiting to launch behind me. By 9am I was fishing surrounded by 7 other boats. By 10 the parking lot was maxed out at about 15 cars and trailers with overflow extending onto the edges of the highway. By noon there were 25 to 30 boats, canoes, kayaks, and rafts spread across the surface of the lake. And only a few fish to 16 inches or so were being caught. There were no swallows working a chironomid hatch, and my offerings of chironomids, leeches, and buggers had been unsuccessful.

By noon I could no longer contain my frustration and quit. Smash mouth fishing is unpleasant. Sadly, I

think I'll have to say goodbye to Nahwatzel and hope that my memories of the good times will sustain me .



Nahwatzel Lake

Pass Lake Outing Report

From Mike Nolan – Outings Chair

The Pass Lake Outing on 4/5/25 was attended by eleven people including Mark Pratt, Sean Pratt, Ben Davidson, Jim Beck, Larry Karlovich, Bill Johnson, Jim Beck, Peter Schuitemaker, Suzanne Johnston, Dick Brening and me. That beats the previous year by one person even though we had two last-minute cancellations. It was a perfect Spring-like day to fish under sunny skies, light winds and moderately warm temperatures. Fishing was challenging for most of us possibly due to the cold temperature of the lake water.

While I didn't do a creel survey of everyone, the majority of the anglers caught a fish or two. Larry Karlovich landed a nice 16" rainbow just a few feet away from me. There were a few anglers, who weren't part of our group, that were indicator fishing with chironomids and having success in catching fish.

The parking lot was packed full of vehicles and boat trailers. We secured a nice spot to set up our canopy over a picnic table. A brat and bun lunch were provided at 1pm along with chips and assorted beverages. A few of us went out after lunch in the afternoon and had about the same luck as we did in the morning. Ben and I were the last boats off the lake at

(Continued on page 5)

(Continued from page 4) Pass Lake

about 5pm. The wind was still, but neither of us saw any signs of fish rising on the glass surface of the lake.



Just look at the heads on this bunch!



WFFC flotilla /Pass Lake

Conservation Report

Conservation Event Saturday May 17, 2025

Luther Burbank Park , Mercer Island

From Robert Thorpe Conservation Chairman

There will be a WFFC Conservation event at Luther Burbank Park on May 17th from 10 AM to 1:30-2 PM (Staff arrives at 9:45). The Park is just off I-90 E Mercer or Island Crest Use South Parking Lot or Near Park Dept Bldg. We will be removing invasive plants and replacing with 'Wetland Facultative Plants' supplied by Mercer Island Park Department.

They will have staff to supervise and tools will be available. Participants should bring waterproof footwear (i.e. some waders) and a small shovel (i.e. like a clam shovel) to remove vegetation in lake. Larger tools and water drinks will be supplied.

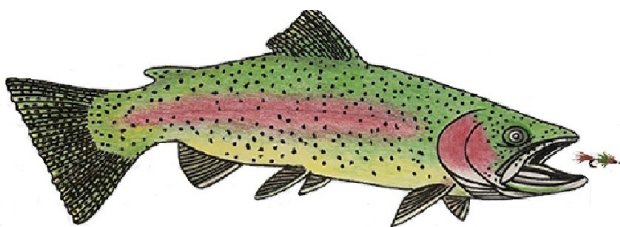


I have invited 3 Rivers and Trout Unlimited. We have several members of both groups and have participated in their Lake Sammamish cleanups/plant removal. I am also inviting Mercer Island Scout Troops some UW /UW Bothell Fisheries /Environmental Science students and will reach out to local press; Mercer Island, Bellevue, Seattle Times and maybe television. The key is getting 12-15 minimum to sign up and attend (good for new members!).

An event like this was suggested by Dan, our President and discussed at the Board Meeting.

So please big shout out in April and again in May before event. A huge thanks for your great work, not easy and much time involved.

I wrote Environmental articles for weekly in Lincoln NE and sold advertising to finish BS -so realize how much effort is involved)-thus my profound appreciation



The Interesting/Unusual



Cat Ladders, Bern Switzerland
Absolutely nothing to do with fishing but.....
In Europe, cats are frequently used for rodent control

WFFC Book Bonanza

Current Book Handed Out At Meeting

From Chuck Ballard

Kudos to Bruce Mc Nea for providing members with free copies of a outstanding new book on the history of the Northwest salmon and Steelhead .



The book, Managed Extension authored by Rick Williams and Jim Lichatowich, describes how management practices have been the major contribution to the loss of the runs of the past and the bleak future for the runs of native salmon and steelhead unless significant changes are made .



Herb-Crusted Lingcod Fillets

From <https://www.realgoodfish.com>

Ingredients:

Fillet of Lingcod (Cut into as many servings as you like)
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
1 tablespoon each (dried): oregano, basil, thyme, and rosemary
1 small yellow or brown onion, sliced
4 tablespoons butter melted

Cooking Directions:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

1. Liberally coat Lingcod with olive oil.
2. Mix and crumble herbs then place each fillet in mixture lightly coating each side.
3. Season the fillets with salt and fresh ground pepper.
4. Melt butter in a Pyrex cup, and drizzle the melted butter evenly over the herbed fillets.
5. Place in a baking dish, with onions surrounding the fillets for essence.
6. Add the Lingcod to the oven and cook for 20 minutes.
7. Remove Lingcod and let cool 3 min. Plate Lingcod with wilted onions over the fillets.

Serve with Tartar Sauce and Fresh Lemon wedges.



Fly of the Month

Lighting Bug



This fly was developed by the late Larry Graham of the Overlake Fly Fishing Club.

Materials:

- **Hook:** Fulling Mill FM50 85 Black Nickel 2X Long Nymph Hook Size 14

- **Bead:** 7/64 Inch Nickel Tungsten Bead
- **Thread:** UTC Ultrathread 70 Denier – White
- **Lead:** Lead Free Wire Spool – .015
- **Wire:** Small Silver Ultra Wire
- **Tail:** Natural Pheasant Tail Fibers
- **Legs:** Natural Pheasant Tail Fibers
- **Body:** Medium Silver Hollow Tinsel
- **Wing Case:** Large Opal Mirage Tinsel
- **Thorax:** Peacock Herl

