

Creel Notes from the



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

Website: www.wffc.com



MMXXVI No. 3

March, 2026



President's Riffle

Greetings, fellow anglers. Welcome to another episode of "The fly fishing club president who's still learning to fish". In this episode we'll explore the comedy of errors (I prefer to think of as a learning experience) I committed on my first float trip on the Snake River. On this trip my brother, Bill, and I booked a float trip with a great guide who works out of the town of Island Park, Idaho. I drove from Seattle to Bill's house in Boise on a Thursday evening. The next day Bill and I set out for Island Park. Our lodging was a small one-bedroom cabin in a 10-cabin courtyard near the river. There was a nice restaurant within walking distance and the food was great.



Idaho Adventure
Jim Beck, President,
Washington Fly Fishing Club

We got a good night's sleep on got up ready to fish. We checked in with the Guide and he outfitted Bill with a nice 5wt rod similar to the one I had brought with me from home. The Guide gave us a short brief on how to stand in the drift boat, brace ourselves when the river gets a little bumpy and sit down when it gets a little really bumpy. He also instructed us in the art of drift boat fishing. Neither Bill nor I had ever been drift boat fishing. In fact, I believe that this was the first time Bill had even held a fly rod.

Keeping one eye on our indicators as we floated down river our Guide was as helpful as he could be to help us catch fish. Teaching us how to dead drift our nymphs under an indicator and mend our lines as necessary call-

ing out the word "set" when he thought we had a take. I can't count the times the Guide called out "set" and we were just too slow to set our hooks. We were frustrated that we weren't reacting quickly enough and I'm sure our Guide was even more frustrated that we just weren't getting with the program. Eventually, I caught a few of nice fish, a whitefish and a couple of nice rainbows. But, as with all fishing, the fish you remember

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March Program



Ryan Fortier

*WFDW District 6 North Central
 Fisheries Biologist*

Ryan, of the WFDW District 6 North Central Fisheries Biologist will be our guest. He will be highlighting current information about excellent fishing opportunities in his respective area.

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(Continued from page 1) - Riffle

most clearly is the one you didn't catch. Late in the day, I hooked something big. Being so inexperienced in the art of playing and landing a big fish, I blew it. The fish started to run down river and instead of giving it some slack I held on not giving an inch. After five to ten seconds of fighting, my tippet broke off. To add insult to injury the tension on my flyline catapulted my indicator back at me hitting me squarely in the forehead. It was a hard lesson. Since then I've missed out on landing my share of big fish, but not because I played them wrong. I hope to test my fish-playing skills at the next club outing at Corbett Lake in BC.

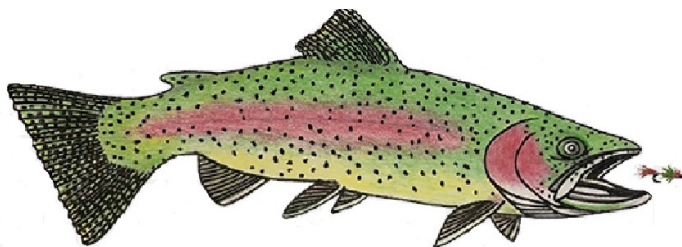
Meeting Location

January's meeting will be held at **The Hall on Occidental 589 Occidental Ave S, Seattle, WA 98134**

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.

Note: this month the meeting is 4th Tuesday instead of our normal 3rd Tuesday



WFFC Casting Classes

Beginning Casting Classes Still Available

Dates: March 21, 28, April 4 & 11.

Time: 10:30 a.m.'

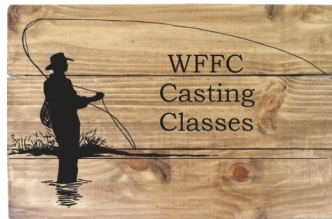
Cost: \$80 for new students, includes one year membership in WFFC.

No charge for current WFFC members.

Where: Luther Burbank Park, Mercer Island

Parking: North Lot

Casting area: The Meadow, Area B



Creel Notes

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

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Jim Beck

1st Vice President (Membership)

Gary Corra

2nd Vice President (Programs)

Neal Hoffberg

3rd Vice President (Christmas Party)

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Travis Sampson

Trustees

Jerry Kindinger,

Tom Neu, Deborah Katz,

Mike Moscynski, Robert Thorpe,

Chuck Ballard, Danferd Henke

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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.

WFFC Exhibit at the Fly Fishing Show

By Mike Nolan

The Washington Fly Fishing Club (WFFC) participated in the Fly Fishing Show held on February 14-15, 2026, at the Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue. Throughout the event, many attendees, including several WFFC members, visited the WFFC exhibit booth to learn more about the club and engage with representatives.



The two-day show took place over Saturday and Sunday, featuring a total of 72 exhibitors. Attendees had the opportunity to witness 18 featured fly tiers in action, attend 18 seminars focused on techniques for catching fish, observe 9 casting demonstrations, and explore 34 topics related to fishing destinations. Additionally, there were 13 presentations dedicated to fly fishing in British Columbia, Canada, and 7 fishing technique specific classes led by expert fly anglers.

Fly Fishing International (FFI) hosted the Fly Fishing Learning Center at the event, offering instruction on fly tying, fly casting, and a variety of other fly fishing topics. Throughout the show, door prizes and drawings were available, adding excitement for all participants. The event saw especially high attendance on Saturday, with a noticeable decrease in visitors as Sunday afternoon progressed.

A special thank you to Henry Martin, Jerry Kindinger, Jim Beck, Jon Waite, Chuck Ballard, Danferd Henke, Travis Sampson, and all other volunteers who contributed their time at the WFFC booth.



Pilot and Co-Pilot
Travis Sampson and Danferd Henke

Club Winner at the Fly Fishing Show

The Hawk Is A Winner!



David “Hawkeye” Hawkinson, was the lucky raffle winner of an very nice Jon Lyman bamboo fly rod raffled off by Casting for Recovery at the Bellevue Fly Fishing Show.

It remains to be seen if he can catch any fish with it—Ed



Chelan WA, Taken Evening February, 24th, 2026 Behind My Condo—Editor
‘Filler Photo’

FFI Spring Casting Fair

Washington State Council FFI Spring Casting Fair

From Neal Hoffberg



For many, fly fishing is a solitary endeavor—a quiet conversation between an angler, a length of graphite, fiberglass or bamboo, and a rising trout in a secluded lake or mountain stream. However, each spring the Washington State Council FFI brings anglers together into a vibrant, bustling communal celebration known as the Fly Casting Fair.

A Learning Hub for All Skill Levels

At its core, The Casting Fair is an educational institution without walls. Our sport is notorious for its steep learning curve—mastering the physics of a loop, understanding the life cycles of aquatic insects, and learning the delicate art of "reading" water. Our FFI Certified Casting Instructors and Master Casting Instructors will demystify those casts that catch fish. Watch and tie alongside skilled fly tyers as they create artificial flies that imitate the insects that trout feed on in our lakes and rivers.

This year it is our pleasure to have world champion fly caster Maxine McCormick join us for the noon-time presentation. Maxine will demonstrate how she builds an accurate, reliable and repeatable cast to targets at twenty - fifty feet.

Fly fishers are unique among outdoor enthusiasts for our deep-seated "catch-and-release" ethic and our fierce protection of cold-water habitats. Stop by the FFI table and learn about our state and national commitment to conservation. While you are there, if you are not a current member of the FFI, join us and become part of the solution to furthering the betterment of our sport.

Join us on April 19th, 2026 at Pickering Farm, located in Issaquah. There will be all day casting events, including the Fly Casting Skills Development courses. Hours are 9:00am - 4:30pm.

Class offerings are filling fast.

Check us out at WSCFFI.Org. Tight Lines, loops and leaders,

Neal Hoffberg

Director, Casting WSCFFI.Org

2026 Outings

WFFC 2026 Outings Schedule

From Mike Nolan, Outings Chair



We're looking forward to you joining us on some of the club outings this year. I'll be hosting the majority of the outings, and I'm seeking volunteers to host other outings. Details are currently being finalized for river outings to the Cedar River in June, the Yakima River in October and the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River in November.

The Wet Buns Outing has been cancelled resulting from poor fishing opportunities and low member participation. A few years ago, the Club cancelled the Dry Falls Outing usually held both in the Spring and Fall due to low water levels and poor launch access.

Contact me if you have a fishing outing suggestion or are interested in volunteering to host an outing. I hope to hear from you soon and email me at outings@wffc.com or call or text to (425) 754-1234.

The outings shown below will be included soon on the WFFC website by April 2026.

WFFC 2026 Outings Schedule

- May 8-10 Corbett Lake BC Canada
- June 12-14 Sun Lakes Wildlife Area Unit
- June 27-28 Leech Lake
- July 18 Cooper Lake
- September TBD Hood Canal - Jay Deeds
- September 25-27 Big Twin Lake
- October 24 Lake Hannan



Old School Hobbies

Making A Comeback

Gen Z and Millennials are increasingly bailing on screens for analog hobbies like bird watching, FLY FISHING, even blacksmithing.

Why? The endless sea of scrolling makes the brain feel like 'warm cottage cheese' and the real life stuff like a 'palate cleanser'.

Example: A New York million dollar investment banker quit to run a needlepoint shop.

Consider this: You are reminded that your brain likes finishing things. Nothing says self care like stabbing fabric 5,000 times on purpose!

State Resource Budget Woes

DNR Maybe Hit Hard



The Washington State Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has announced tentative reductions to recreation access across the state due to budget cuts amplifying an ongoing lack of funding for maintenance and staff.

Chopaka Lake, a fly-only water tucked in a stunning portion of Okanogan County, and nearly 20 other sites around the state are listed for a range of tentative service reductions should supplemental operating budget proposals from Governor Ferguson or the state House and Senate come to pass this short legislative session. Other campgrounds that could be fully closed include Hoh Oxbow near Forks, Lyre River west of Port Angeles, Skookum Creek near Newport and Winston Creek near Mossyrock. The other DNR recreation sites would see late openers, winter, seasonal or partial closures, service reductions, or combinations thereof. "The Governor's proposed budget for the 2026 legislative session includes cuts that threaten crucial maintenance work performed by

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(Continued from page 5) -DNR

DNR staff.

The Operating Budget for DNR's Recreation Program was already reduced by more than 20% moving into the 2025-2027 biennium, and the 2026 proposal includes an additional \$750,000 per year in reductions. Both proposed House and Senate Operating Budgets also include reductions to the Recreation Maintenance Account." says a DNR press release.

Over at WDFW, both the Senate and House propose to reduce how much money is allocated for WDFW water access sites, restrooms, grounds and facilities, among other properties, the Senate by \$2 million a year from 2023 -25 budget levels, the House by \$800,000 from that same benchmark. This is in addition to a 10 percent reduction in WDFW enforcement staff.

Both agencies are preparing comments on legislative proposals as legislators begin the process of merging the spending plans into something that can pass the legislature by the scheduled end of the session, March 12. You may wish to contact your legislator with your opinion.

Governor Ferguson then will receive the budgets to sign or veto in part in April

Update on Corbett Lake 2026

Corbett Lake Lodge British Columbia May 2026

Great Fly Fishing and Still Some Spots Open!

From Mike Nolan, Outings Chair



We have approximately 9 fly fishers going on the Corbett Lake Outing in May 2026. There are still two cabins, a duplex unit with adjoining door, available from Friday, May 8 to Monday, May 11, 2026 checkout. As well, one cabin is available from Monday, May 11 to Friday May 15. These units are not being held exclusively for our Club, but if you're thinking on going you should book soon. Let me know if you are going and I'll add your name to the Outings List.

Contact Ann at the Corbett Lake Lodge to reserve you cabin.

Phone: 250-378-4334, Email: corbettlake@gmail.com

Mike Nolan, Outings Chairperson, (425) 754-1234

Book of the Month

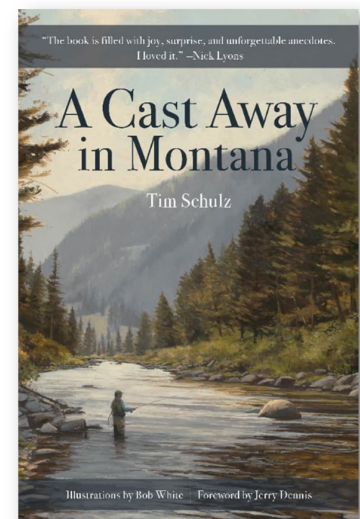
A Cast Away in Montana

by Tim Schulz

Named a 2025 Michigan Notable Book by the Library of Michigan

2025 Outdoor Writers Association of America Excellence in Craft Award for Books (2nd place)

A Cast Away in Montana is the captivating story of a passionate angler's first trip to Montana. Through Tim Schulz's humorous, insightful, and reflective storytelling, readers not only discover the thrill of pursuing elusive fish in stunning landscapes but also embark on a profoundly personal exploration of life, loss, and self-discovery. This compelling narrative resonates with fly-fishing enthusiasts and those seeking a meaningful connection to nature as it weaves together engaging tales of adventure, friendship, regional history, and reflection. Whether enjoyed by an angler, an outdoor lover, or simply a fan of beautifully crafted storytelling, A Cast Away in Montana reels in the reader and leaves a lasting impression.



WFFC Members Invade Albany Oregon Fly Tying Expo

Albany Oregon Fly Tying Expo Report

From Chuck Ballard

Chuck Ballard , Neal Hoffberg , Gary and Ann Berquist attended this years FFI Oregon Fly Tying Expo on March 13 -14 .

Neal supported the casting groups and I tied flies both days . Gary and Ann did a tour of the expo and Gary spent some time looking for quality tying materials to tie Atlantic Salmon flies.

The show seemed well attended and there were almost 150 tiers over the two day event .

There are so many great tiers it is very humbling to be invited to participate. Many of my friends from the NW Atlantic Salmon Fly Tying Guild were there as well and really brought some creative ideas to encourage the ultimate in fly tying technique to the masses .

For anyone who ties flies or would like to get started it is the best show there is to gain the required knowledge all in one place . This event also includes a few quality suppliers of tying materials .



Chuck Ballard (one of our WFFC "Invaders")
Shows his Fly Tying Prowess



Season Ready

Fly of the Month

Bead Head Baetis Nymph

Dressing:

Hook: 2X-long nymph hook (here, a Dai-Riki 730), sizes 18 and 20.

Bead: Gold bead, 5/64-inch.

Thread: Yellow olive, 8/0 or 70-denier.

Tails: Coq de Leon fibers.

Body: Stripped peacock herl.

Wingcase: Dyed golden-yellow pheasant tail fibers.

Thorax: Olive rabbit-fur dubbing.



Recipe of the Month

Crab Posole Salad

Dressing:

About 2 tbsp. lime juice

1/2 teaspoon minced serrano chile

1 teaspoon minced shallot

2 tablespoons grapeseed or safflower oil

2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil

About 1/4 tsp. kosher salt

Pinch of pepper

Salad:

8 ounces shelled cooked Dungeness crab (about 1 1/4 cups)

1 watermelon radish, halved and thinly sliced, or 4 or 5 round red radishes, thinly sliced

3 cups thinly sliced napa cabbage

2/3 cup canned white hominy, drained and rinsed

1/3 cup loosely packed cilantro leaves

1/2 avocado, cut into 1/2-in. cubes

2 green onions (green parts only), thinly sliced

Directions:

1. Whisk dressing ingredients together in a small bowl. Season to taste with more salt and lime juice. Set aside.

2. Make salad: Put crab, radish, cabbage, hominy, cilantro, avocado, and half of green onions in a medium bowl. Add dressing and toss gently just to coat.

3. Divide salad between 2 or 4 plates, arranging some crab pieces and some radishes on top. Sprinkle with remaining green onions.

