

Creel Notes from the



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

Website: www.wffc.com



MMXXVI No. 5

May, 2026



President's Riffle

As a fly fisherman who started fishing in 2018 my opportunities to fish have been a little sparse and my progress picking up fly fishing knowledge and experience has been a little slow.

On the weekend of May 8-9, I had the opportunity for more fishing on the WFFC outing at Corbett Lake in B. C., Canada. Dan Henke and I drove up to Corbett Lake and arrived on a Friday evening. We immediately went down to the boat launch area to see what we could see, which turned out to be lots of cruising rainbows in the shallows. It was late in the day so we decided to wait until Saturday morning to start fishing. Saturday we explored the shallows in my flat-bottom boat and saw fish rising almost everywhere we looked. Dan elected to try a #16 Lady McConnell fly and had immediate success. The fish weren't interested in any of my streamer patterns. Dan was kind enough to loan me a couple Lady McConnell's and I started to catch fish too - not nearly as many as Dan but I was doing pretty well. Having focused my tactics on streamers since I started fly fishing, this was the first time I'd caught a fish on a dry fly. Shocking, right? It was a real hoot! The water was 3 feet deep, crystal clear and the fish were rising despite the brilliant sunshine. My mediocre casting accuracy was enough to get my flies in front of a few fish and I caught 5 nice trout. During the next couple of days the fish headed for deeper water. We could see almost no fish in the shallows so we decided to troll the deep waters. The go-to fly for trolling fly turned out to be a #10 or #12 Pumpkin head. Once again, Dan loaned (gave)



A Good Teacher

Jim Beck, President,
Washington Fly Fishing Club

me a couple Pumkin Heads and I caught a respectable number of fish, all weighing over 3-4 pounds.

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May Program

Fly Fishing the Flats of Christmas Island



Join us for our May 2026 Club Dinner Meeting as we dive into the world-class saltwater opportunities at Ikari House Lodge on Christmas Island. Featuring Duane Teem, Managing Director, and Andrew Martin, Lodge Host.

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(Continued from page 1) -Riffle

I am thankful to Dan for teaching me more about dry fly fishing on still water than I'd learned in my previous 8 years of fly fishing. The best way improve fishing knowledge is to fish with someone who's a better angler than yourself. Given my relatively limited fly fishing knowledge, I can learn something from almost everyone I in the WFFC who I go fishing with.

Tight lines.

(Continued from page 1) - Program

For those in the club looking to trade our local river currents for the expansive flats of the Pacific, this is an evening you won't want to miss.

Why Christmas Island?

Located in the heart of the Pacific, Ikari House sits directly on the beach at the lagoon entrance in Ronton. This prime location offers immediate access to some of the most pristine and productive flats on the planet. Whether you are a seasoned saltwater angler or looking to notch your first bonefish, the diversity of the fishery is unmatched:

- **The Flats:** Endless opportunities to sight-fish for Bonefish, Milkfish, and the wary Triggerfish.
- **The Predators:** Test your gear and your nerves against the legendary Giant Trevally (GTs) patrolling the lagoon and reef edges.
- **Offshore Action:** For those wanting a change of pace, world-class bluewater species like **Tuna** and **Wahoo** are just a short boat ride away.

Our speakers will cover what it's like to fish there in the ultimate fly fishing extravaganza!

Meeting Location

Our monthly 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.



"Sometimes the fish deserves to win"
-Puckett

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.

Catching the Big One

Only In His Dreams!

Submitted From Deborah Katz



Here is an illustration
of why fly fishing
is so relaxing

Mike Wearne

2026 Outings

WFFC 2026 Outings

From Mike Nolan, Outings Chair



The next outing will be at the Sun Lakes Wildlife Area Unit on June 12-14. I have reserved campsite #127 at Sun Lakes State Park for Friday 6/12/26 to Monday 6/15/26. The plan is to fish the south end of Blue Lake on Saturday and either Dry Falls or

Lenore Lake on Sunday. We will gather at my campsite on Saturday night for Club provided steaks and beverages. Please bring a side dish, appetizer or dessert to share. Sign up on the WFFC website or contact me to confirm that you are attending.

The Leech Lake outing will be June 27th to June 28th and I suggest that you make your own reservations at the White Pass Village Inn. Here is the contact information for the White Pass Village Inn, <https://www.staywhitepass.com>, (509) 672-3131. The Club will provide steaks and beverages for those that sign up for the outing. Please bring a side dish, appetizer or dessert to share. Sign up on the WFFC website or contact me to confirm that you are attending.

The date for the Hood Canal Outing hosted by Jay Deeds has been set for Saturday September 12th. Jay chose this date for the favorable tides for fishing Hood Canal on this particular Saturday.

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 on TBD, the Middle Fork of the Snoqualmie on TBD and the North Fork of the Stillaguamish River in November.

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.

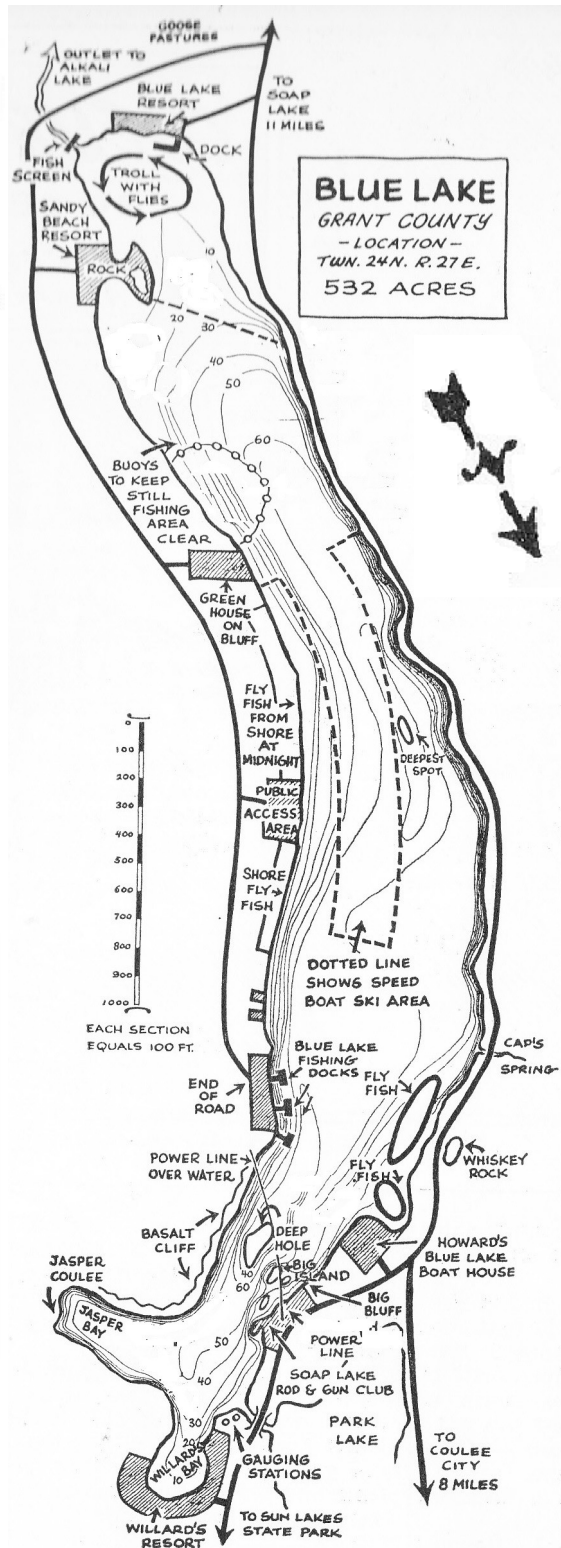
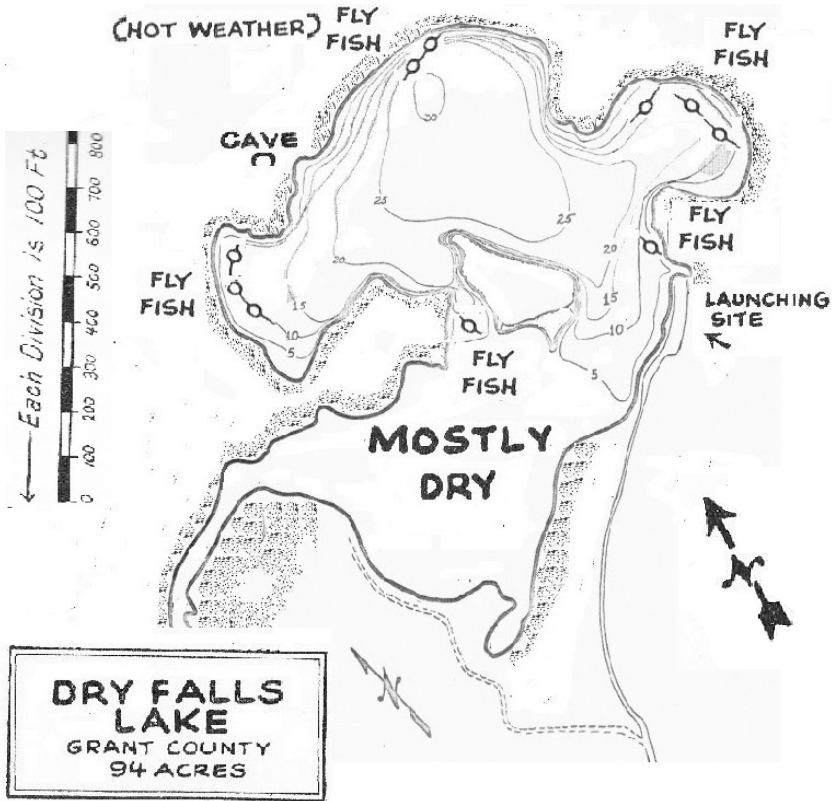
WFFC 2026 Outings Schedule

- June 12-14 Sun Lakes Wildlife Area Unit
- June 27-28 Leech Lake
- July 18 Cooper Lake
- September 12 Hood Canal - Jay Deeds
- September 25-27 Big Twin Lake
- October 10 Yakima River
- October 24 Lake Hannan





Sun Lakes Wildlife Area Unit Primer



Maps from Fred "Piscatorial" Peterson
Spokane Washington

Aerators Keeping Lakes Alive



How Aerators and Anglers Keep Washington's Highland Lakes Breathing



From WDFW

Keeping lakes healthy in north central Washington is a community success story: a small group of volunteers, local anglers, and nonprofits working together to support aeration systems in highland lakes throughout the region. The systems help to ensure that air can circulate through soil and water, ensuring healthy year-round habitats for fish.



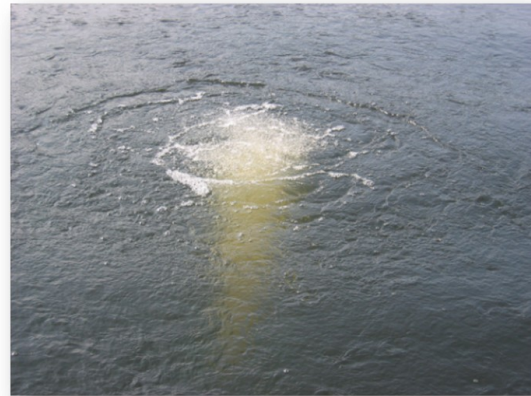
Aeration in progress at Sidley Lake., Okanogan County

How the aerators work and why they matter

Beneath the surface of these shallow highland lakes, decaying grass and other plant matter consume oxygen and release toxic gases. While this is a natural process, without intervention, those gases build up under winter ice, leading to dangerous low-oxygen conditions and sometimes large fish kills. Aeration systems pump air into the lake, driving bubbles upward that mix the water column and, because aerators keep portions of lakes from freezing over, vent trapped gases at the surface.

That circulation does two important things: it releases harmful gases to the atmosphere, and it maintains open water where sunlight and UV rays can pass through, supporting natural oxygen production and providing critical breathing space for fish and overwintering waterfowl. The result is better year-round

habitat, stronger fish populations and fisheries, and a healthier food web for everything from aquatic insects to birds.



Aerator at Work

History and tradition

Lake aeration in the north central Washington highlands dates to the 1950s, when WDFW installed Washington's first aerator project at Sidley Lake. In 1973, a local family stepped in to help operate and care for the Sidley aerator, beginning a multi-generation volunteer tradition that continues today.

Community volunteers continue to carry on that tradition. Volunteers monitor the equipment, adjust aerator run times, and even head out onto the ice after storms to restart systems when power is lost. This neighborhood-style effort is informal but highly organized in practice, with clear roles and a shared goal: keeping the lakes alive and productive for fish, wildlife, and people.

Year-round operation with winter as the focus

Highland lakes face stress in both winter and summer, and the aerators are managed accordingly. In winter, the priority is preventing full ice cover and oxygen crashes, so systems run to maintain open spots and movement under the ice.

The Highlands Community Support Coalition (HCSC), a local nonprofit, underwrites the Sidley and Molson lake aerators as part of its environmental support work. The **Okanogan County Fly Fishing Club** and donations received from community members funded a complete rebuild of the aging Sidley Lake aerator. Improvements included replacing a fail-

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(Continued from page 5) -Aeration

ing 50-year-old unit with a fully refurbished system originally used at Ell Lake and rebuilt in Spokane.

For decades, aerator operation depended on small community donations to cover maintenance and power costs. With HCSC's support, funding has become more transparent, allowing volunteers to focus on operation and on-the-ground stewardship.

Anglers also contribute valuable "sweat equity." The fly fishing club supports this work by recording catch-and-release data on the lakes, helping track fish health and trends over time, and providing another line of evidence that aeration is working.

WDFW supports the use of aerators on our public access sites and stocked lakes when they're used to improve fish habitat and water quality. WDFW recognizes that these systems can be vital for preventing winter fish kills and maintaining stable oxygen levels in shallow, high elevation lakes such as Sidley and Molson. By allowing aeration equipment on managed waters, WDFW provides local communities and partners the flexibility to safeguard valuable recreational fisheries while ensuring that installations meet safety and environmental standards.



Typical Aeration System

Community, fishing, and open water

The benefits of aeration are easy to see on a cold winter morning at Sidley Lake. Open lanes of dark water slice through the ice, and those leads become magnets for ducks, geese, and other waterfowl that depend on unfrozen surface water to survive. For residents and visitors, those same open areas tell a

story about a living lake (one that still supports trout, birds, and an invested community).

The annual ice fishing derby at Lake Sidley is an example of how recreation and conservation meet on the ice. Families, anglers, and curious newcomers gather in the snow, drilling holes, swapping stories, and fishing over a lake that stays productive thanks in part to the bubbling systems a few yards away.

Behind the scenes is a neighborhood volunteer program: people willing to check gauges, shovel drifts, watch weather forecasts, and occasionally crawl out in



Ice fishing derby on Sidley Lake. Credit: Kevin Myrick

the dark to restart a tripped breaker. With HCSC's financial backing, angler science support from groups like the **Okanogan County Fly Fishing Club**, and support from WDFW, lake aeration in north central Washington has become much more than a piece of equipment, it's a model of community-powered habitat stewardship.

Need Bifocals Department



Adult Biot Midge #22
From Neal Hoffberg



Great Poster for Your Wall #1

RAINBOW TROUT

Oncorhynchus mykiss

A COLDWATER SALMONID BUILT FOR CURRENT, DRIFT, AND MIGRATION.

NATIVE RANGE
Pacific drainages of North America west of the Rockies introduced widely in streams, rivers, lakes, and reservoirs around the world.

STREAMLINED BODY
Torpedos shape reduces drag and helps hold position in fast, flowing water.

BLACK SPOTTING
Dense black spots cover the back, sides, dorsal fin, and tail unique to each fish.

ADIPOSE FIN
Small, fleshy fin found between the dorsal fin and tail in all salmonids.

ROSY LATERAL BAND
The signature pink to red stripe is usually brightest on the sides and gives the trout its name.

SPAWNING COLORS INTENSIFY
Males develop a deeper red band, redder cheeks, and stronger contrast during the breeding season.

STEELHEAD CONNECTION
Some rainbow trout are anadromous (steelhead). They migrate to the ocean and return to freshwater to spawn.

1 COLDWATER NICHE
Where It Thrives

- Cold, clear, oxygen-rich water (50-60°F / 10-14°C)
- Deeper pools for resting and escape from high flows
- Undercut banks, logs, and rocks provide cover from predators and high water
- Connected rivers, lakes, and reservoirs support year-round survival
- Clean gravel for spawning (logs buried in redds during spring)

2 WHAT DRIFTS INTO THE MENU
Opportunistic feeders—juveniles to adults.

- ZOOPLANKTON & INSECT LARVAE (Gambusia)
- MAYFLIES
- CADDISFLIES
- WIDGES
- STONEFLIES
- TERRESTRIAL INSECTS
- CRUSTACEANS
- FISH EGGS
- SMALL FISH

3 TWO LIFE PATHS

RESIDENT (FRESHWATER)
Many rainbow trout live their whole lives in streams, rivers, and lakes.

STEELHEAD (ANADROMOUS)
Born in freshwater, migrate to the ocean to grow, then return to their natal streams to reproduce.

Steelhead are migratory rainbow trout.

FAST FACTS

- SPRING SPAWNER**
Females dig redds in clean gravel in spring. Eggs hatch in 4-6 weeks, depending on water temperature.
- TEMPERATURE & OXYGEN SENSITIVE**
Thrives in cool, well-oxygenated water. Stress occurs above +48°F (10°C) or with low dissolved oxygen.
- SIZE**
Often 8-20 in (20-50 cm) in freshwater. Steelhead can grow much larger.
- LIFESPAN**
Commonly 4-8 years in the wild; some live longer under ideal conditions.
- WATER QUALITY MATTERS**
Clean, cold water and connected habitat are key to healthy trout populations.

RESILIENT, BEAUTIFUL, AND INDICATORS OF HEALTHY WATERS. Protect cold water. Protect life.

Full Size Posters Are Available From
Fly Life Outdoors

Fly of the Month

Lady McConnell



- Hook:** #12-20 Daiichi 1180 or 1190
- Thread:** Black Veevus 6/0 or 8/0
- Tail:** White Z-Yarn
- Shuck:** Grizzly Hackle Fiber
- Back:** Natural Deer Hair
- Body:** Black Veevus 6/0 or 8/0 or Dubbing to match
- Hackle:** Grizzly Rooster Cape or Saddle

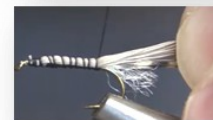
Tie in a tail Z Yarn.



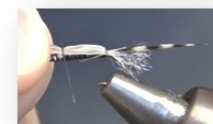
Tie Grizzly Hackle Tip



Tie in Deer Hair Fibers



Pull Deer Hair Fibers up and over the top



Tie in Grizzly Hackel (Rooster or Cape)



Book of the Month—Book Review

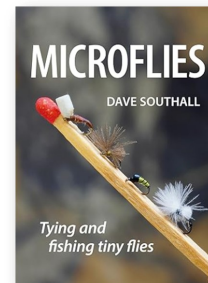
Microflies: Tying and Fishing Tiny Flies

David Southall, Coch-y-Bondu Books, 2026

From Danferd Henke

This recent volume might better be titled, Tying Flies Too Small to See (and I'm somewhat surprised that Neal Hoffberg isn't the author). The book is focused mostly on the bugs and streams of Britain, but there is much to be gained from a perusal of this tome by those of us fishing on our side of the pond, novice and expert alike. The author and friends have made trips to Montana and describe their close-encounters-of-the-trout-and-insect-kind on the spring creeks and rivers there.

First, let's define our terms. What



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size is a “micro fly”? In the author’s view, those start at size 18 and go down to 30. I scoff at this author’s limited hook range. I have hooks down to 32. (Not that I’ve ever tied on them, I bought them mostly for grins and giggles.)

The author runs through a description of the micro invertebrates, including chironomids in all stages, various and sundry mayflies (Baetis and tricos) in nymphs, dries and spinners, caddis in their pupae/pharate stage, aphids, ants, beetles, and even thrips. He then moves on to describe how to tell what the fish are taking, when you can’t see what they’re taking. The answer: You guess. Trial and error is the order of those days. Your guess may be an educated one, based on where the fish are feeding, what you see landing on you, what you see kick-sampling (no, not the San Juan Shuffle), sweep netting with a 1 mm mesh net, throat pumping a trout if you catch one by accident, or your knowledge of local hatches, but, fundamentally, you guess and keep changing your guess until you get it right. If you ever do.

Next, the author describes the equipment used in presenting these tiny flies, including long, light rods capable of keeping the line off the water, shorter rods for fishing fast-moving water on heavily wooded streams, finely-tapered lines, terminal tackle, and methods of fly to tippet attachment. (Obviously, I need new gear!) He includes descriptions of various types of casting, including Italian Casting, Totally Under the Tip, and the Slowed Down Angular/Italian Style Dump Cast. For subsurface presentations Southall uses the Dump Cast of Pile Cast to achieve the drop, the washing line method, a conventional dry/dropper rig, and various indicators. He also describes in detail his super-light, light, and heavy tackle setups. You can make fishing these small flies as complicated as you wish.

In the last chapter, “Suitable Flies,” Southall provides the recipes for many of the microflies he uses. He describes in detail the hooks that he favors and their characteristics. His recipes include clear descriptions of his materials (most of them mainstream and readily available). His tying sequences are easy to understand and follow.

Well, I’m ready to start tying some of these patterns. If only I could see . . .

Recipe of the Month

Good Cod!

Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1/2 onion, chopped
- White Onion, Large
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon pepper
- 1 (3 ounce) fillet cod, or more to taste
- 2 tablespoons dry white wine
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese, or to taste (optional)



Directions:

1. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan over medium-high heat; cook and stir onion, garlic, and lemon pepper until onion is slightly tender, about 3 minutes. Add cod to the frying pan, flipping the cod over to coat both sides with oil.
2. Cook cod in the onion mixture until it flakes easily with a fork, occasionally sliding fish around so it doesn’t stick, about 4 minutes per side.
3. Pour wine into the frying pan and bring to a boil while scraping the browned bits of food off of the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon. Slide the cod around the pan, flip it over, and slide around again until coated in wine, about 1 minute.
4. Transfer cod to a serving plate; top with onion mixture and Parmesan cheese.