



The Barbless Flyer

The mission of the Spokane Fly Fishers is to provide a family friendly organization for promoting the sport of fly fishing through education, application, and conservation.



The Annual Raffle Is Here Pick Up Some Great Gear and Help the Club!

By Kevin Brannon

Our monthly meeting on March 13th will be 100% devoted to the Raffle. Plan to arrive shortly around 6:00 pm at our usual meeting place, St. Francis of Assisi Church, 1104 W. Heroy. We will begin drawing winning tickets promptly at 7:00 pm. This allows time to buy extra tickets and browse the prize tables packed with great fishing trips and lodging opportunities, as well as fishing gear, fly tying tools and materials, camping gear, gently used fishing apparel, classic fly-fishing and fly-tying books and more. Remember, this is a "Bucket Raffle," so you can "bid" your tickets toward chances to win only the prizes you choose in advance, and your odds of winning depend on what percentage of tickets are bid on those prizes.



Tickets are on sale now for members only through the website. From now through March 12th, buyers of 20 or more tickets will receive 2 free tickets plus 1 free ticket for each 10 additional tickets they buy. Non-members may take advantage of this discount offer by contacting the Club at membership@spokaneflyfishers.com to reserve their tickets. All pre-purchased or tickets can be picked up at the sign-in table on Raffle night. For a current list of the prizes donated so far, go to our Facebook page and click the link to Raffle flyer. If you purchased tickets but cannot attend, you can give your tickets to a proxy and direct them to bid your tickets on the prizes you pre-select from the prize list.

We are also still collecting prize donations. If you are willing to lead a hosted fishing trip, have gear in good condition that you don't use, or are feeling generous enough to buy a gift card and contribute it to the Club, contact Kevin Brannon at kbrannonpdx@gmail.com we can arrange to pick up the item. If you would like to bring it in on Raffle night, that also works but it would be helpful if you could let us know ahead of time so we can list it in the prize catalog ahead of time and assign it a prize number for the drawing.

The Raffle has long been one of the Club's primary sources of revenue and it helps support many of the Club's offerings, paying for everything from room rentals for our meetings and classes to outings and mundane stuff like insurance and the costs of maintaining the website. It is also a fun way to contribute and, maybe, walk away with some new (to you) stuff at bargain prices. Hope to see you all there.

1. CRAWL
2. WALK
3. FISH



THE PREZ SAYS

March 2024

By Craig Adams

We are quickly approaching another fishing season. I urge you to get involved and enjoy an outing with other members of our club. The Outings Committee is working hard to schedule outings that club members have asked for, please support them.

One last thing. It's time to elect new officers for the Club. Please, if you are interested in filling one of these positions, contact any current club officer.

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March 2024

NOTES:

Mar 6	Board of Directors at EVCO, 3511 E. Trent. 6:00pm (all members welcome)
Mar 7	Knot Tying Class, Wildlife Council, 6116 N. Market St. 6-8 pm (for registered students and instructors)
Mar 13	ANNUAL RAFFLE, 6:00pm, St. Francis of Assisi, 1104 W. Heroy St (all members and guests)
Mar 16	Rocky Ford Creek OUTING!
Mar 20	Fly Casting Instructor Training 6pm, St Francis of Assisi (for volunteer instructors)
Mar 23	Fly Casting Class, Franklin Park, 9-11 am (registered students and instructors)
Mar 30	Fly Casting Class, Franklin Park, 9-11 am (registered students and instructors)
Mar 29	Good Friday
Mar 31	Easter Sunday
Apr 6	Fly Casting Class, Franklin Park, 9-11 am. (registered students and instructors)

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
BUY	YOUR	RAFFLE	TICKETS	NOW!	1	2
3	4	5	6 Board of Directors Meeting 6 pm	7 Knot Tying Class 6 pm	8	9
10	11	12	13 ANNUAL RAFFLE 6:00 PM	14	15	16 Rocky Ford Creek Outing
17	18	19	20 Fly casting instructor training 6 pm	21	22	23 Fly Casting Class 9 am
24	25	26	27	28	29 Good Friday	30 Fly Casting Class 9am
31 Easter Sunday	APR 1	2	3	4	5	6 Fly Casting Class 9 am

OUTING PLANNING MEETING

Rocky Ford Creek – Saturday, March 16

Host: Robin Gavelin (509) 998-0612

This Outing will be limited to eight anglers, and there is still space to sign up. We will meet on March 13th to confirm travel details (for approximately 10 minutes).

On March 16, we will meet at 9:00 a.m. at the middle park area. Bring your lunch and water. Please note that no drinking water is available onsite.

Parking: WDFW vehicle access pass is required. Carpooling options will be discussed at the meeting.

Directions:

Get on I-90 west to Moses Lake.

Take first exit coming into Moses Lake (I-90BL/WA -17) Exit 179

Continue north about 28 miles on WA—17N towards Ephrata/Soap Lake

Keep on right WA-17 at Ephrata/ Soap lake interchange and head towards Soap Lake.

After approximately 9 miles , take right at Hatchery Rd. NE.

Another 10 miles, turn right at stop sign; the middle WDFW access area is about a mile on the right.



Techniques:

Fly fishing only, with only barbless hooks and no weight on the tippet/leader. Most common methods used are:

1. Fishing scuds & egg pattern under an indicator. 4X tippet
2. Streamer fishing, with your choice of streamer. Black is the top color. 3X tippet
3. Dry flies. Usual players are Tricos, Baetis (BWO), PMDs. & Callibaetis 4X-5X
“Darc” at the Desert Fly Anglers shop in Ephrata has all the right flies and they are available 24/7 at his vending machine at the fly shop.

Gear:

9 ‘ 5 wt. is adequate most of the time. Caution against using too light a rod and over-playing the fish.

Footwear - No wading is allowed in the creek. However, many anglers still wear waders. Three main reasons for wearing waders:

1. Keeps you warm.
2. Keep you dry in case if you fall in the creek or step knee deep into many of the muskrat holes on the edges of the creek.
3. Provides some protection from rattlesnakes and ticks.

Registration:

Send email (with your name, cell phone and RFC Outing in subject title to rgavelin@comcast.net).

Best way to connect Call me 509-998-0612 leave a message.

SFFC FLY-FISHING SCHOOL 2024

By Paul Olsen and Claude Kistler



The Fly-Fishing School began on Thursday, February 29th, with a full class of 40 registrants. This year there are two youth members, four couples, and seven women.

Right off the bat, we need volunteers for our Knot Tying class on Thursday, March 7th. We need 8 to 10 volunteers to assist with this important instruction. Please let Paul Olsen know if you can help by sending an email to Paul at pkolebear@gmail.com.

Our next call to action is for 10 to 12 volunteers to help as casting trainers for our Saturday morning fly casting instruction from 9:00 – 11:00 a.m. on March 23rd, March 30th, and April 6th at Franklin Park in Spokane.

Our final instruction is at Medical Lake from 9:00 – 11:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 13th, followed by a stop for pizza.

Our lead casting instructor, Thatcher Beaty, will conduct a training session for volunteers from 6:00 – 8:00 p.m. on Wednesday, March 20th, at St. Francis of Assisi Church. Please plan to attend the training session so that we're all on the same page regarding the casting instruction provided to our students. Your help ensures that we provide competent instruction to class members and that they get a solid start as they pursue their fly-fishing journeys.



EDUCATION COMMITTEE

Seeking Mentors for Newer Fly Fishers

By Chris Bryant

Our club has a long-standing tradition of providing a place where experienced fly-fishers can share their knowledge and experience with those newer to the sport or new to the waters of the Inland Northwest. Every spring, some 40 people graduate from our fly-fishing school with the basic knowledge needed to pick out a rod, reel and line, tie leader, tippet and fly and put that fly into the water in the vicinity of a fish. What we're trying to do now is to provide a semi-formal way to take newer fishers the next step down the road. We'd like to establish a roster of reasonably experienced anglers willing to serve as mentors.

We are in need of club members who are willing to help mentor club members who reach out for help. This could be a new member who needs help getting started. Or it could be a more experienced angler who is interested in trying or learning a particular technique, such as Euro Nymphing or Trout Spey. Maybe you have a boat and would be willing to take someone out on a local lake and show them how to fish stillwater? These sessions could take place during a club outing or on a schedule worked out between you and the angler who is looking for help.

Likewise, if you would like some assistance and to meet up with a mentor in this way, please let me know and we'll try to match you with someone who can provide the sort of help you are interested in. We'll try to match members up and hope they have some fun, maybe catch a few fish and either learn something new or be that person who made a difference to someone else – which is really the best reward.

Chris Bryant, Education Committee Chair (Chris.bryant32@gmail.com)



Can You Help Us “In-source” the April Meeting Program?

At the suggestion of a couple of Board members who are relatively new anglers, the April meeting program will be in a format we maybe haven't used before. The idea is that we will randomly break attendees up into 4-6 groups and have them move as groups among various tables at regular intervals. Each table will have a Captain who will remain at the same table throughout the program as the groups rotate through. Each table will focus on a regional stream or lake that the Captain knows well. Each Captain will lead a discussion of the sort of general tricks and tips we might try to extract from the staff of a fly shop located near the subject waters.

The idea is to answer questions like: How long does it take to get there? What is the best route? Where are the better campgrounds, cabins and access points? Is a hike past the end of the road worth the extra time and effort or can I plan to fish from the vehicle? Where do you park? Do you need a Discover Pass or how much does the BLM charge for day use? Any special advice about wading? Do I need a boat to have a good time? What skill level is required to safely drift the stream in a boat? Are boat rentals available? Where are the better boat put-ins and take-outs? Gear recommendations – size of rod and line? Floating, sinking or sink-type lines? How far will I need to cast to reach the fish? What are the best and worst time of year to go? How are the crowds on weekends? What are your favorite hatches and when do they generally happen? Which flies are your favorites there? Which are your go-to fly shops and websites for up-to-the-minute information?

To make this program work, we need to recruit some members with experience fishing in particular places to serve as table Captains. We are seeking 4-6 people who are willing to try to answer most of these questions about those places, maybe bring in a copy of a river or lake map and/or a hatch chart. It will a pretty low-stress presentation – just sitting at a table with a few fellow anglers for 10-15 minutes, having a conversation about the basics of how to fish the waters you know well. Odds are high that other members sitting at the table will also know something about your topic and will help carry along the conversation.

If you are willing to help, please contact Kevin Brannon at kbrannonpdx@gmail.com.





Publisher's Note: Ken Moore's Articles



If you are like many regular readers of The Barbless Flyer, you look forward to seeing Ken Moore's monthly columns of fly-fishing instruction. We are now twice as fortunate that an angler of Ken's knowledge and experience chooses to contribute to our Club in this way. Recognizing that not all Club members are at the same level of fishing experience, Ken plans to contribute two columns per month from now on – what he calls Level 1 for novice to intermediate anglers, and Level 2 for intermediate to expert fishers. Ken's new business, **1 Cast Fly Fishing**, has also become a business member of the Club. Look for his business card in the next issue of The Barbless, after the last-minute licensing hassles are worked out. Thanks, Ken. Congratulations, and good luck with the new venture!



LEVEL 1 INSTRUCTION The Game

By Ken Moore

One of the overlooked skills in catching trout is learning to fish where the fish are as opposed to where they are not. Reading water to determine the most likely lies will, in truth, increase your catch more than learning to identify insects and matching hatches, more even than honing your presentation skills to delicate perfection. However, it feels heretical to write that.

You will rarely do well with the perfect fly on the most finessed cast if you place it where no trout can take it. On the other hand, if you flail away with the wrong fly in the correct water, placing it awkwardly where trout have gathered, you're bound to catch a few, even if it seems to be accidental.

Trout are simple; they have just a few essential needs. The way moving water shapes itself to meet those needs dictates where you will find them in that water. The first need is shelter from a constant and pushy current. Trout cannot stand directly in fast or even moderate flows for more than a few minutes. They need some sort of obstruction to the current, even if it's just pockets in the turbulence where water is slowed as it rushes over fair-sized bottom stones.

The second key need is protection from predators. Common attacks on trout originate from overhead in the form of ospreys, kingfishers, eagles, etc. The protection for our fish can take the form of a riffled surface or deep water, through both of which birds have trouble seeing. Overhead predation is a primary reason you find trout podded up in a single deep lie surrounded by shallow water that is just as productive in terms of what trout eat but offers them less protection.

Food is the third and final key factor in finding fish. The need to eat often overrides the first two needs. Trout will fight a current if some food form becomes suddenly abundant in a riffle or pushy run that has no obstruction to break the current. They will hold and feed near the surface if a hatch rewards them for the risk they take to be up there feeding on it. They'll spend energy in a current as long as they gain more energy from what they eat than they expend.

Whenever you explore a creek, stream, or river for trout, you'll find them where the water meets these three needs, and you'll find them absent where the water does not. In places where the water meets all three basic needs in generous proportions, you'll find a prime lie that is usually the location of the largest trout to be caught in that particular reach.

It's easy to write theoretically about reading trout water. Let me describe it in terms of an exercise you can apply to your actions out where the wild waters flow. Before you fish a particular bit of water when trout are not rising, carefully examine the water and predict where you expect trout to lie. Then fish all the water without restricting your casts to those spots. Where you envision a lie, feel free to intensify your fishing with your fly (usually a nymph). Confirm your predictions, and probe the water with intensity if you desire.

After fishing that bit of water, pause to re-examine the water and compare your predictions to your results. Did you catch fish where you expected them to be? Did you catch fish in lies that you failed to predict? Both of the questions are answered yes sometimes and no at other times.

That's the Game. Here is its primary benefit: Over time, as you watch the water, predict lies based on the shape of the water, then fish it to see if you're right. Your expectations and your results begin to coincide more and more often. In other words, based on experience, your brain learns to sort out clues and read the water for prospective lies more accurately. It's like life: You observe, and you learn.

Wherever you hook a fish, whether you predicted it or were surprised by it- whether you'd even looked at the water before you fished it- take time to examine the water where you hooked it. Ask yourself how the water met the needs of the trout. Ask yourself why that trout was there. The critical tool in reading trout water is genuine experience. It's a data bank building in your brain of what the water looked like in places where you hooked trout and also what it looked like in places where you did not hook trout. Most importantly, as you build your data bank of acquired experience, just relax and enjoy your time on the water. Trust me- it will come if you stick with it. Fish It.

LEVEL 2 INSTRUCTION

Smallmouth Bass Tips

By Ken Moore



Smallmouth bass fishing is hands down one of the most exciting game fish in abundance in the Inland Northwest. If you haven't yet experienced fly fishing and the pull of a smallmouth bass, I would put it on your bucket list for 2024. Below are some of my most common guiding tips for putting a small mouth into the net.

During colder water temperatures, smallmouth tend to reside deep; as the water temperatures increase, the fish become more predictable. Smallmouth bass spawn in the spring, and these are the temperatures that you need to put into your think tank for patterning their behavior:

48-55 degrees F - The smallmouth begins to prepare for pre-spawn. They also start assembling into larger pods as they cruise for food.

58 degrees F - Small Mouth begins to stage for spawning. The smallmouth redds are being developed during this temperature.

60-70 degrees F - Spawning begins. Not all bass spawn at the same time. After spawning, the female leaves the nest, and the male guards the nest for up to 4 weeks.

If you walk and wade, please be on the lookout for spawning beds called redds, not only smallmouth redds but all fish redds. The freshly created lighter areas free from algae and fine sediment are the easiest way to identify these spawning grounds visually. (Older redds are less visually evident as the algae and sediment quickly re-accumulate.) While I am on the topic, even if you wait for a month post-spawn and you wade through a redd, you could be crushing the eggs laid during spawning. Best to stay out of the redds

No Run, No Fun - Like trout, bass do not care to be in faster-moving water (unless the food intake outweighs the energy expenditure). You will find smallmouth bass in slower-moving water, on the slower side of the interface with faster-moving water. Like rocks and logs, current breaks allow the fish to expend less energy and ambush prey as it passes. Frog water can be a common place to find largemouth and smallmouth bass. Concentrate on ambush possibilities since this is a primary behavior trait for this fish species.

Use The Sun To Your Advantage - It is very accurate that the best bass fishing is in the early morning and before sunset. Smallmouths do not like bright sunlight. When fishing mid-day, say 9:00 am to 6:00 pm, cast to the shady parts of the river or lake. This tip may not be intuitive, but if bass do not prefer bright sun, you will find them in the shade. Look for shady spots on the river, such as under trees, rock ledges, or anywhere you can find shade. Bass are fairly tolerant of podding up. If you find one bass in the shade, you will often find five to a dozen. Be bold with your casting; you need to get the fly in tight to the structure, be it a tree, snag, or a pocket in a rock wall. Often within inches of the shore. I always recommend fishing the strike zone - shade, structure, current breaks, and the deepest, darkest, and slowest water I can find.

Find the Bait, Find the Fish - Baitfish, terrestrials (grasshoppers, ants, and beetles), and mice are all common prey top surface items for smallmouth bass. I also fish the same nymphs we use for trout, including perdigon patterns, and I will "drown" my terrestrials to elicit strikes. Do not ignore what hints nature provides visually, such as cormorants, pelicans, and swallows, which all indicate something is there or the birds wouldn't be.

The biggest mistake I witness fly fishers make while smallmouth fishing is they get in a hurry on the retrieve. When your fly hits the water, pause and wait for the retrieve. The fly will make a splash, and tiny waves will emanate from that splash; allow the fly to sit still for 15-20 seconds, or at least let the waves disappear. While waiting, remove the tippet/leader slack to the fly. After your pause, give the fly a quick short pull and wait for another 15-20 seconds. After repeating this a couple of times, re-cast to another place that catches your fancy. There is no need to fish the fly back to you. A couple of feet of retrieve is plenty. We are searching for feeding or predatory strikes.

If you are looking for an excellent place to try a local river and hone your craft, The upper stretches of the Spokane River from Post Falls to just below the State Line truck weigh station on I-90 is an excellent place to try your smallmouth luck and extend your knowledge base. Fish It.



Beginner Fly Pattern

Brown Lightning Bug



Hook: Mustad 3906B #14

Bead: 2.4mm Tungsten

Thread: Red 70 Denier UTC

Tail: Coq de Leon Brown or pheasant tail fibers

Ribbing: Amber Wire Small UTC

Body: Holo Tinsel Brown Medium UTC

Wind Case: Holo Tinsel Brown Small UTC

Thorax: Peacock Herl

Legs: Coq de Leon Brown

www.youtube.com/watch?v=HfeuS0tBnyU

Tying Steps:

1. Place hook with bead in the vise.
2. Wrap a thread base starting behind the bead to the bend of the hook shank.
3. Tie in 8-10 tail fibers where you stopped the thread wraps. The tail length should be half to three quarters the hook shank length. Once the tail is secured with thread, wrap thread to behind the bead cutting off the extra fiber material.
4. Pace the wire behind the bead, wrapping the thread back to the tail. Tie in the tinsel at the tail.
5. Wrapping the thread forward and back until you have a smooth thread body stopping at the bead.
6. Wrap the tinsel forward with touching wraps or a little overlap. Wrap tinsel to bead then tie off. After snipping the extra tinsel off and the wire, wrap back to the 2/3rd point of the body.
7. Counter wrap the wire forward to secure the tinsel and give it a segmented body appearance. Snip the wire off or helicopter it. Wrap thread to the 2/3rd position again.
8. Tie in another piece of tinsel at this position on top of the shank. Tie in two pieces of Peacock herl at the 2/3 tie in point wrapping the herl forward to the bead and tie off against the bead creating the thorax. Take two wraps of thread in front of the herl and two wraps behind the herl locking it in place. Trim the extra herl off.
9. On the Coq de Leon feather pull 6-8 fiber tippetts forward forming a "V" shape, snip this group free from the feather. Place the V in front of the bead with the 2 segments facing back over the sides of the bead. Pinch these two segments tight to the peacock herl side. Take two wraps of thread, snip the extra barb in front of the bead off.
10. Pull the Tinsel over the peacock herl thorax over the bead creating a wingcase. Take two wraps over the tinsel making sure you do not tie over the legs you just made. Pull the tinsel back over the wingcase and take a few more wraps locking in the tinsel. Snip off the extra tinsel leaving a little tinsel tag. Head cement your thread wraps.

Note: There are many Youtube videos of the lightning bug. Look up lightning bug and try tying several different patterns styles, go fish them to find out which pattern works for you. You will find this pattern and many more on Youtube.com. Enjoy this pattern and go fish it someplace.

Intermediate Fly Pattern

March Brown Spey by Martin Joergensen



Hook: Salmon hook, size 2-2/0

Thread: Red, 8/0

Tag: Flat silver tinsel, small

Tail: Mottled partridge fibers

Rib: Yellow floss or tying thread

Body: Hare's wool dubbing

Hackle: Grey goose Spey hackle

Wing: Turkey

Head: Tying thread

Instruction:

1. Start the thread at the hook bend over the barb.
2. Tie in the silver tinsel pointing rearwards.
3. Take 4-5 wraps forward and tie down and cut surplus.
4. Tie in the tail to extend behind the hook bend.
5. Tie in the rib. If using tying thread, double or quadruple.
6. Dub the body to about 2/3 up the hook shank. Leave room for the wing and head.
7. Wrap the rib in 4-5 turns, tie down and cut surplus.
8. Tie in the hackle, tip first, curved side forward.
9. Wrap the hackle, stroking the fibers back and down.
10. Tie down the hackle, trim and cut off surplus.
11. Cut two symmetrical slips of turkey tail feathers. About 20 fibers in each will do.
12. Lay down slips over the body and pinch
13. Take two turns over the tie-in point and tighten upwards while still pinching.
14. The wings should fold down vertically.
15. Take an extra turn just in front of the existing.
16. Trim wing butts.
17. Cover butts with thread and form a head.
18. Whip finish, cut and varnish

Beginner Fly-Tying Course Report

Instructors' Notes

By Chet Allison

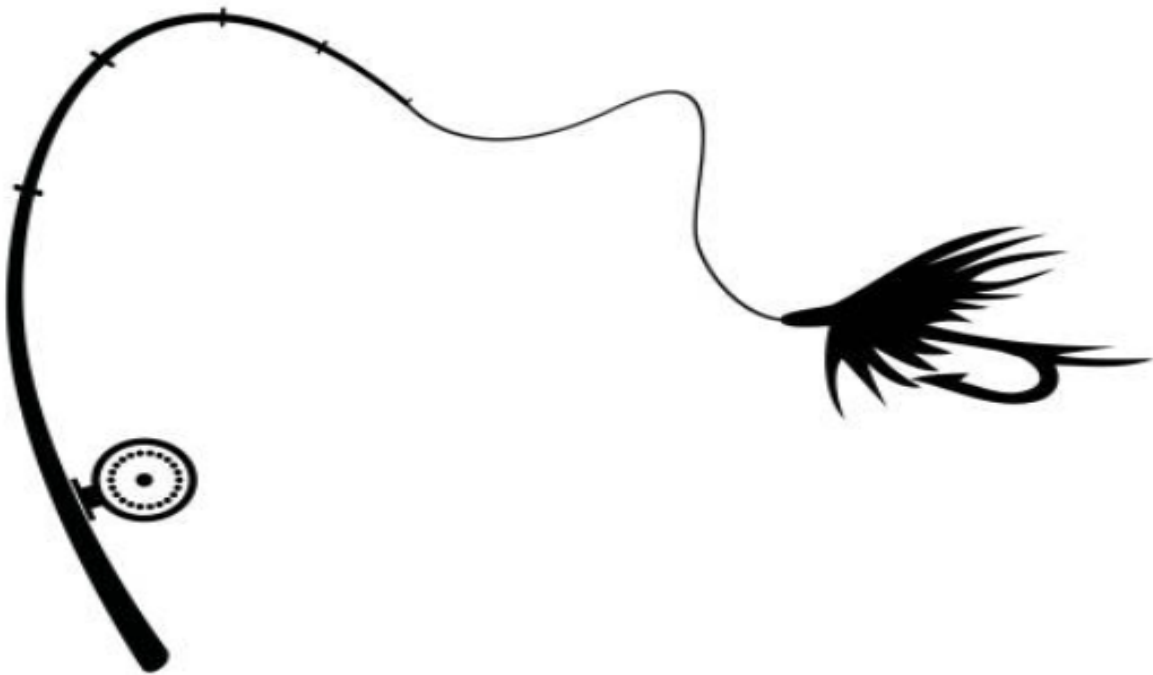
Today is February 10, 2024, and it was the last day of Beginner Fly Tying Class. The class was taught to tie 12 patterns over the course of 6 weeks. Four men, two women and a youth, applied their talents and skills to the provided patterns.



As the weeks went by, the tyers got better with each class. By the 6th week, the tyers were able to successfully tie (and beautifully, mind you), Adams and Muskrat Nymphs. I see no reason why these tyers cannot continue to become very good fly tyers and fish catchers.

I would like to thank Craig Adams, Gordon McCammond and Larry Ray for their help in the success and completion of these fly tyers in their tying endeavors. With the help of these assistants, the students will become skilled tyers. Some of the tyers were asking about the intermediate class. Beware instructors of the intermediate class, these tyers are on their way!

I would like to thank the tyers of this 2024 Beginner Fly Tying Class: Michael Aubrey, James Zimmerman, Peter and Carolyn Taborsky, Chris May, Krystin Symons, and the youngest student, Ryder Sandaine. These students did a fantastic job following instructions from their instructors. Each question was answered, and time was taken to explain what needed to be done and given a demonstration by me or another instructor. This was a great year teaching Beginner Fly Tying.



Outings Schedule 2024 (Tentative)

By Robin Gavelin

Please be aware that this schedule is tentative and subject to change

<u>DATE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>HOST</u>	<u>RATING/EXPLANATION</u>
March 16	Rocky Ford Creek	Robin Gavelin	Usually cold/windy
April 20	Twin Lakes		Can be cold/windy
April 30	Badger Lake (<i>weekday</i>)		Can be cold/windy
May 4	Amber Lake		Can be cold/windy
May 11	Kids Fishing Day	Craig Adams	WDFW Event
May 18	Clear Lake		Can be cold/windy
May 18	SFFC Picnic	Craig Adams	SFFC Event
May 31 – June 2	Long Lake (Republic)		Float Lake
June 8	Badger Lake & One Fly Contest		Float Lake
June 11 – June 14	Kelly Creek (<i>midweek</i>)*		Wading
June 21 – June 23	North Fork CDA, ID		Wading
July 26 – July 28	St. Joe, ID	Alicia and Ken Moore	Wading

*Water flow dependent; alternate is Lower Selway River.

Please note that there are *weekday* and *midweek* outings (multiple day trip).

I suspect that 2024 will be a high fire risk and ultra-low water level fishing season in the Rockies and PNW. Please note that any outing may be rescheduled, moved to an alternate location, or canceled at the Club's discretion. Fire danger, low water, weather, river runoff and other dangerous or adverse conditions can affect our outings.

Intentionally, I have not written any outings in August and September. This part of the schedule will be posted in April, and reviewed at the April Club Meeting when we have a better idea of the situation. If you have any questions or suggestions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Robin Gavelin rgavelin@comcast.net

Important Notice

Each time a member enters a new skill level for the first time, it is recommended that they consult with the Host and/or arrange to attend with a member experienced in that skill level.

Conservation Corner

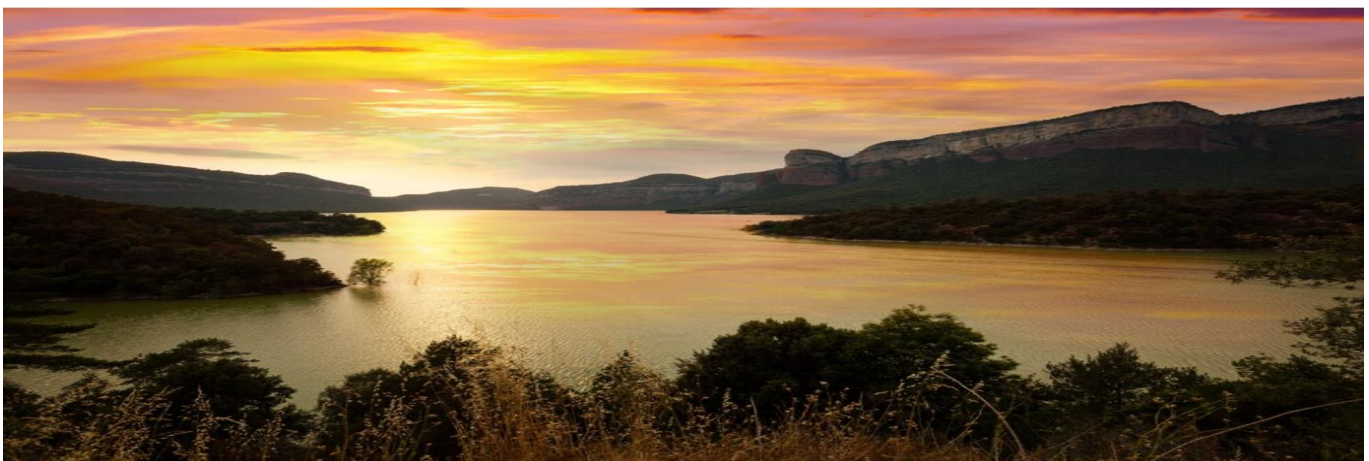
Revived Conservation Committee is Working to Revive Collaborations with Other Groups

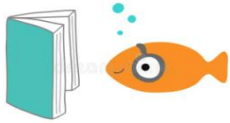
By Kevin Brannon

The Conservation Committee has adopted what co-chair Brian Desautels describes as a synergistic approach to the crucial work of conserving and enhancing fish habitat and fishing access in the Inland Northwest. As Brian described it to committee members, we are fly anglers who are organized to fish and pass our love for and knowledge of game fish and their environs on to others. We have some 140 active members who spend time on the water, care deeply for it and are often among the first to see problems as they develop. There are other organizations that specialize in and are funded to protect and restore the environments that nurture the fish populations we value. The role of the Committee, then, is to pass along to SFFC members the knowledge and information these specialist organizations develop and help them mobilize SFFC members to assist in projects that they need help with and are within our scope. In return, we offer them fishing education and chances to see firsthand what exactly they are working to preserve. The Club has done this sort of collaborative work with other groups such as the Inland Empire club and WDFW for many years and we see this as an extension and formalization of that work.

Brian is developing a spreadsheet that lists potential partner organizations, contacts within those organizations and a member of the Conservation Committee who serves as SFFC's liaison with each partner organization. Already, Brian and Committee members Roger Bertsch and Chris Bryant have attended a board meeting of the Spokane Falls Chapter of Trout Unlimited, where they met with the leadership of SFTU as well as leaders from Spokane Women on the Fly and the Land Council. Other groups we will seek to collaborate with include Spokane River Keepers, Western River Conservancy, Friends of the Little Spokane, Friends of the Clearwater, WDFW, the Kalispell and Spokane Tribes, Friends of the Clearwater, IEFCC and North Idaho Fly Casters. If you would like to join the Committee in this work or suggest other organizations where you have a current contact, please contact Brian Desautels or Kevin Brannon.

Some of you may have met Scott Noble at our February meeting. Scott is the current president of SFTU and he attended our meeting along with other leaders of his chapter and Spokane Women on the Fly. He said that TU's Priority Waters program for the Spokane River is closing in on its funding goals and that they are hoping to begin restoration work in the Hangman's Creek drainage soon to benefit our native redband trout. They are already recruiting a professional program manager to head that up. Although it always takes longer for these things to get underway than you would hope, this project should generate plenty of opportunities for SFFC members to give back to the community.





Larry's Book of the Month

By Larry Ray

A Heretical Perspective on Dry Fly Fishing. When I first saw the cover of *FLY-FISHING HERESIES*, by Leonard Wright, I thought this must be another attempt at humorous fly-fishing writing. So, I didn't pay much attention and simply set the volume aside for later examination, to see if it warranted a spot on our Library's shelves. A bit later, when I began my perusal, I couldn't put it down! I should have known from the fact that Nick Lyons wrote the forward that this was, in fact, a serious work.

Nothing if not opinionated, Wright challenges much of the traditional, conventional wisdom surrounding our sport. First, and foremost, is his critique of the ancient rule regarding a drag-free drift of one's dry fly. We have probably all experienced that moment when, after a drag-free drift, when the fly begins to drag and we start to retrieve line or raise the rod for the next cast, we are startled by a smashing strike. We probably write those off to coincidence or a reaction by "the village idiot" of the pool. However, Wright argues that, far from being accidental or dumb luck, the trout's reaction is the result of life-like action being imparted, even if inadvertently, to the fly. His own observation has revealed that natural insects never drift motion free, but instead are in constant motion, even if so slight as to cause only the tiniest ripples on the surface. His belief in this is such that he adopted the practice, on each cast, of giving a slight twitch to his fly immediately after it alights to draw the attention of any trout that might be lying in wait below. He applies the "twitch" to virtually every dry fly he casts – mayfly, caddis, or terrestrial. He recommends we do the same.

Most chapters offer clear challenges to some cherished fly-fishing dogma. Those that don't are instead full of wonderful instruction. Throughout the book the reader will be reminded, or should bear in mind, that the author is writing from a perspective held fifty years ago. This is no disadvantage; it in fact is revealing at times in a way that reminds us of how far we've come, or, perhaps, that we may not have advanced so far as we might think. Either way, the author's style is provocative and stimulating.

There was, during the middle of the last century, a movement, especially in spin-fishing, toward ultra-lite gear. This movement carried over into fly fishing by emphasizing the use of shorter, lighter rods. Wright takes direct issue with this trend with reasoned discussion of why longer rods are better both for fish and angler. All the virtues of longer rods we acknowledge today – less line on the water, greater casting ease, quicker lift and recast, and the rest – are logically outlined by him in his chapter advocating for longer rods. He cites the use of extremely long rods by the professional fly fishers of France and Spain, who fish to supply the local markets (which, of course, is illegal in the U.S.). All the professionals he observed used very long rods with which they could dap and dance the fly over pools and riffles, methods which enabled them to successfully support families and households.

Wright doesn't try to conceal what reads like utter disdain for Isaak Walton, or at least for Walton's saintly reputation. Walton is labeled a plagiarist who stole most of his material from contemporaries such as Charles Cotton (who is said to have written the middle section of Walton's *The Compleat Angler* for later editions). He quotes Lord Byron and Leigh Hunt in their similar criticisms. Wright then goes on to decry what he calls the "cutesy-poo" fishing writing style that he traces back to Walton. The reader may be a bit shocked by the severity of Wright's critique but, somewhat oddly, at the end there is a hint of retraction which smacks of a bit of an apology. All of which makes for fascinating historical reading.

Did I mention that the author is opinionated? The author's opinions regarding flies and fly dressing are no less strident. He rejects the move toward exact imitation of nymphs which he saw as faulty in that the materials

required for exactness were inflexible and thus gave no movement in the water. They were also inaccurate because many of the mayflies supposedly imitated by the exact nymph patterns actually hatched under water and ascended the water column as fully developed adults. Thus, his preference for wet versions of the dry patterned adult.

There is more, but space limits my ability to recite it all in any detail. The reader will want to examine the author's reasoning for fishing dry patterns during the heat of the day, in the face of the conventional wisdom (then as now) that during sunny, warm periods the angler must fish deep. Meanwhile, Wright's reasons for frequently fishing caddis dressings instead of mayflies, as were preferred by most of his contemporaries, will seem to have been born out today. Wright, an eastern angler, had little experience with deer and elk hair caddis patterns and preferred his own dressings using other materials. His descriptions of these dressings and how he evolved them are quite instructional and will stimulate those who enjoy tying and fishing caddis patterns.

The author posits that the best trout angling in the world is not in Alaska, Argentina, or the Scandinavian north, but in Central Europe! He makes a compelling case for such an assertion even though his reasoning is of course dated, and much has changed since he wrote this. He also devotes an entire chapter to why salmon (Atlantic salmon) and trout are nearly the perfect game fish. Did I really state that Wright was of strong opinion?

There is even a chapter, quite thoughtful and well-illustrated with various forms of stream restoration structures, on stream conservation. Were there no criticisms, the chapter would be too out of character. So, read what the author has to say regarding fish culture (i.e., hatcheries).

All is not of provocation and cynicism. The chapter on The Ultimate Fly Rod contains the best discussion of the old rod makers and the glory of their products that I've read, better even than those contained in books specifically about bamboo rods. Note that bamboo is compared only to glass; again, this was written before the proliferation of graphite.

Aside from the forceful, compelling writing, there are some wonderful black and white historic photos of such as Halford and G.E.M. Skues (p. 98), Halford's great wet-fly advocating rival!

Taken in its historical context, this volume is revealing, quite instructional, at times humorous, and even a bit clairvoyant in hindsight. And it is nothing if not extremely entertaining. Borrow it from the SFF Library and see if you agree.



SFF Club Information

Officers

President:
 Vice President:
 Treasurer:
 Secretary:
 Board Position 1*:
 Board Position 2**:
 Board Position 3***:
 Past President:
 Sgt. at Arms:
 *3-year term expires May 2026
 **term expires May 2024
 ***term expires May 2025
 President, VP, Treasurer,
 Secretary and Sgt. at Arms
 elected annually

Craig Adams
 Kevin Brannon
 Brian Soth
 Larry Ray
 Chris Bryant
 Bill Millspaugh
 Brian DeSautels
 Chet Allison
 David Marshal

Committee Chairs

Publications Comm: Open
 Conservation: Brian DeSautels /
 Kevin Brannon (interim)
 Robin Gavelin
 Outings: Chris Bryant
 Education: Brad Collins
 Membership: Paul Olsen/Claude
 Fly-fishing School: Kistler
 Librarian: Larry Ray
 Programs: Kevin Brannon
 Barbless Flyer Editor: Jacki Shear Brannon
 Proj. Healing Waters: Craig Adams
 FFI Liaison: Brian Soth
 Beg. Fly-tying: Chet Allison
 Int. Fly Tying: Brad Collins
 A/V Coordinator: David Marshall

SFF Contact Info:

Change of Email Address: Log into our web page spokaneflyfishers.com and change the data on your profile form which is visible after you log in.



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Club Mailing Address:

SFF Club, PO box 4141, Spokane, WA 99220

Tight lines!



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Savvy fisherfolk are keenly aware of their surroundings