

TIGHTLINES

September on the North Fork Clearwater

By Les Jones and Jim Hagy

While it is a long trip to central Idaho chasing the West Slope Cutthroat, this is the season that is particularly enjoyable for stream fishermen. The campgrounds are nearly empty, the larger fish are seemingly more interested, the leaves are just starting to turn yellow and the woods are quite and peaceful. It was great therapy for a couple of long time "catch-and-release" stream fishermen.

Jim Hagy and I finally after numerous delays because of high water due to snow melt, did our annual pilgrimage to Northern Idaho to fish North Fork of the Clearwater, Kelly Creek and Cayuse Creek.

The weather was good, and very few fisherman on the rivers, but some ATV'ers and bow & arrow deer hunters. The afternoon of the first day we scouted the Black Canyon of the North Fork down to the junction with Kelly Creek. The canyon water looked very good, but the river below the junction with Kelly Creek was high and a much larger river than we wanted to tackle.

Day two we fished sections of the North Fork, catching a few cutthroat from 12" to 15" using an Oct. Caddis and a white, black & red floating attractor pattern recommended by the fly shop in Coeur d' alene. A pattern began to develop that we had not seen here before; no small fish in 6" to 8" range. We would catch 3-4 fish and have several strikes in one hole and nothing in the next 3 or 4. This remained constant all four days of fishing. (continued page 2)



Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds Fishing Report, from Mike Bunney
Here is the Hog that Steve Murray caught Henry's Lake in Idaho on our recent Montana trip!



Les Jones and I spent four great days last week in and around the N. Fork of the Clearwater River in central Idaho. We parked my travel trailer on the upper river and then traveled around from there and fished the N. Fork of the Clearwater, Kelly Creek, and various tributaries. Five weight rods were most effective on the larger streams in order to reach the holding water with the larger flies, but the three weight rods were really nice in the tributaries with a small parachute adams or caddis.

The weather was great and the fishing was good, but not quite as good as in the past. I enjoyed that Les likes to cook and I took advantage of his culinary abilities. Les unfortunately had a sore elbow, so I was able, this time, to get a fly out as far as he could. Even with his handicap, his quality of his presentation was worthy of trying to emulate.

The Cuts seemed to like large red/black dry flies (chernobal ants) OR very small light colored caddis patterns, but not the traditional orange stimulators or Dave's Hoppers as in years past. We did not spend much time nymphing and the results were not very productive when we did. The fish had been looking at a lot of flies all summer, so

they seldom came up to look more than "once" even if the presentation was respectable. Mid-day success was skimpy with the sun on the water, and not much better in the shaded areas.

This seasons high flows had subsided and the water was very cold. This led, of course, to the need for application of Crown Royal warming tonic upon returning to the trailer. Very few fish were found in the shallower water, whether flat or riffles. And even "pocket water" was not overly productive. The large pools are usually heavily fished all summer, particularly by the spin casters, so we generally concentrated on the deeper "runs" with moving water.



The third day we took the winding narrow gravel road up to Cayuse Creek. We fished in about a mile or so. Cayuse mirrors the challenges and opportunities of Kelly Creek, but of course the fishing gets better the further you go. We fished up to a narrow canyon and part way into it, but the going over large rocks became too much for old legs. We fooled a few nice Cutthroats, (Jim fooled most of them), and I'm sure we would have caught a bunch more if we had gone around the next bend of that canyon. The last half day we took it easy and fished a small tributary of the North Fork. Here we did pick-up some of those small Cutthroats we hadn't seen yet on this trip.

And there were the Kokanee Salmon from Dworshak reservoir, running up the Creek to spawn. These beautiful bright orange fish were easy to see in gin clear waters of Kelly creek. At times they would rise up to inspect your fly, and one actually took my Caddis and I had him on for a short time.

We fished mostly with dry flies, and found that the orange grasshopper that Jim likes up here and the yellow stimulator I like were not the "Hot Flies" in September as they are in mid-July. We had good weather, beautiful mountains, clear wild rivers, enough food, drinks, Crown Royal, and the therapy of a campfire. So is fishing only about catching Fish?

Invited Guest Speaker: **Chris Grieve** Norwest Fly Fishing Adventures *Fly Fishing the Stilly and Sauk Rivers for Steelhead and Salmon*

Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds members attending the September General Meeting heard a meaty presentation on how to fish steelhead and salmon from Chris Grieve, the tall, lanky owner and head guide from Northwest Fly Fishing Adventures. Chris could fill a book from everything he told us, and probably produce a film as well.

The point he wants us all to remember is presentation is as important, if not more so, than the fly itself. That's because presentation is much more closely related to the behavior of the food – does it skitter, crawl, swim horizontally, or vertically?

For this reason Chris is a real stickler about lines and leaders, which he carefully tailors to water conditions, time of year, and type of fish. And to how he wants his fly to behave in the water column. For example, for winter hatchery steelhead we should be fishing even flows 2-8 feet deep moving about walking speed. This calls for multi-tip lines that can be selected to reach specific depths—e.g., a type 3 tip (sink rate=3 inches/second) for shallower runs. He uses a long, 7-11 foot leader with a 10 lbs fluorocarbon tippet. For native steelheads that arrive during higher, colored waters in March, a type 6 tip may be required, along with a shorter, 3-6 foot leader, and flies that sink. Finally, for summer steelhead under the low, clear water conditions of late summer and fall, he recommends floating lines with longer leaders, and flies that float or ride in the surface film.

Chris also gave recommendations for fishing salmon and dollies. You might want to try his multi-purpose leader: 7 feet of 15 lbs. Maxima Ultra-green, 4 feet of 8 lbs. Maxima, 2 feet of 8-12 pound fluorocarbon. You might want to try a floating rather than sink tip line and a long leader when fishing for Pinks, he says, because Pinks respond best to a fly swimming vertically. Also, don't get stuck on fuschia-colored flies, because often white or mint green can be more effective. Thanks Chris for a great presentation! Information available: www.northwestflyfishingadventures.com



Fly Fishing the September Heat Wave by Keith Stamm

It was mid-September on the Upper Columbia and the sun was blazing, raising the mercury into the high nineties. That combined with a full moon was not a recipe for fly fishing success. With the odds stacked against us (me and Pat Burdick of the renowned Lenore Tally Ho Club), Evening Hatch guides, CJ Emerson and Rory Oconnor adapted and came up with a winning formula. We would get on the river at dawn, fish until noon, take a four-hour lunch break and hit the river again until dark.

It was dry flies in the skinny water close to the bank at dawn and again at dusk. The rest of the time we fished size 16 brassies under indicators, and swung wet flies in the seams and riffles. The winning dry flies were Chernobyl ants and big beetle patterns. Picture 20-22-inch rainbows detonating your dry fly. The explosion can be so startling you can't help but jerk the fly away.

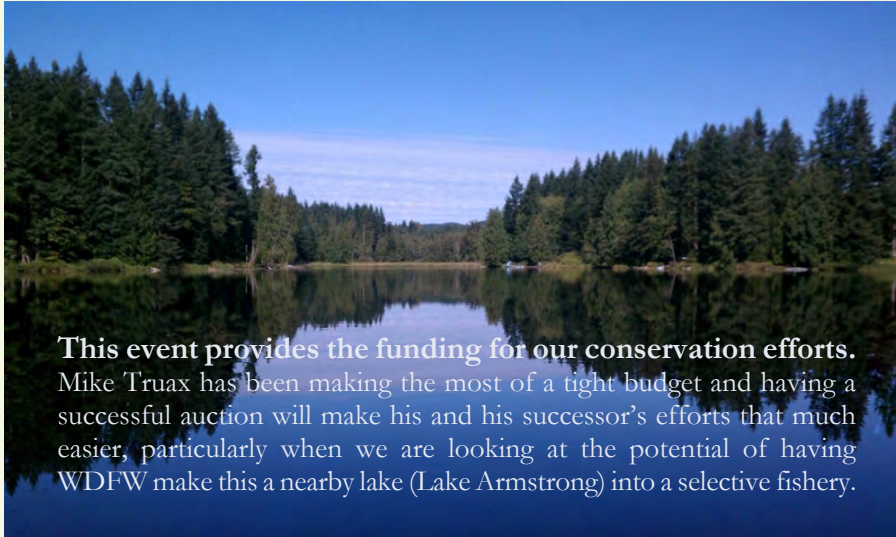
The Upper Columbia, as you can imagine, is big water. The fish density is not high. You have to hunt for the fish, and you have to know where to look. Our guide knew how to read the river, and he rowed his tail off for hours keeping the 18-foot jet sled in position to work the seams and foam pockets. (cont.)

Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds Banquet & Auction Update

John Wendt and Jim Traner have been making progress on putting the auction together. We are going to change directions a bit this year. In the past, with the exception of the “jewelry year” for you old timers, we have pretty much concentrated on just having items pertaining to fishing in the auction. We will continue to have the majority of the items in the fly fishing realm, but we are going to expand into more mainstream items such as dinners, gift cards from retailers, and any other items our members can solicit. By doing so, we can expand the number of individuals attending the auction who aren’t necessarily fly fishermen, but, never the less, want to support our cause. Also, it greatly expands the donors we can approach.

The silent auction is being changed, as well. In the past, a few “vultures” (you know who you are) hung around the donor sheets and made a last second bid. In addition, anything with a monetary value went for 50% to 80% of face value – a great deal for the member but not so good for the Club. This year will be a bit different. Each silent auction item will become a raffle. The more raffle tickets you place in the container in front of the item the better your chances are of getting whatever you are bidding on. So you may put a \$5 raffle ticket on an item with a fair market value of \$100 and win it. In the meantime, perhaps 22 raffle tickets are placed on the item so OFF just made \$110 rather than the \$50 to \$80 it would have made in the past.

This year we are asking for members to bring guests in addition to “significant others”. We are having banquet tickets printed and will be distributing four tickets for each member. If you can’t sell them or don’t have 3 friends, we won’t hold your feet to the fire. However, having “outsiders” contribute to our auction will mean dollars in that won’t come from our members pockets.



This event provides the funding for our conservation efforts.

Mike Truax has been making the most of a tight budget and having a successful auction will make his and his successor’s efforts that much easier, particularly when we are looking at the potential of having WDFW make this a nearby lake (Lake Armstrong) into a selective fishery.

Finally, we would ask that everyone go with the flow and see how it works. We’ve given these changes quite a bit of thought and we can tweak them in the future if needed. We can have a lot of fun (we always do), make some money for the Club, and have a successful auction if we all just pitch in and help.

Please, everyone go out and get one donation from a retailer, restaurant, hotel, or fly shop or guide. Thanks for your efforts on behalf of the auction committee.

Fly Fishing the September Heat Wave, by Keith Stamm (continued)

The first afternoon he saw something that riveted his attention like a bird dog on point, something our untutored eyes totally missed. The water had come up a notch from the mid-day heat, pushing some of the extra water into a back bay. Normally that bay would be dead water, but now seams and vortexes and foam pockets were forming at its leading edge. We rigged up with brassies and began fishing along this complex interface, with CJ rowing and calling instructions: “Cast into that foam pocket right there.” “Drop one right into that little eddy.”

We worked that water for an hour or so, taking a half-dozen amazing fish, a 6-pound rainbow, a 4-pound cutthroat, etc., very good fishing for a hot, bright summer day after a full moon.

That’s the Upper Columbia for you. The fish are so amazing one or two can make your day. A half-dozen adds up to an experience you’ll never forget, and never match anywhere else in the lower 48.

If you haven’t gone, you should. The new Evening Hatch lodge is first rate with bunks that look right down on the river. This is not a cramped cabin, rather a spacious lodge with high ceilings all trimmed in gorgeous knotty juniper. And you won’t find better guides anywhere. They are tireless.

And they know fly fishing and they know the river. It’s a winning combination, even during a September heat wave and a full moon.

EVENT SCHEDULE

Outing October 24, 2011

Okanagan lakes - Blue Lake & others

November: In the works, Methow River steelhead With Jeff Brazada Info:

www.brazadasflyfishing.com

GENERAL MEETING:

Oct. 12, 2011

Invited Guest Speaker:

Mike Benbow - Blog Writer Everett Herald - Fly-Fishing with Mike. Topic: *Fly fishing the Methow and Grande Ronde rivers.*

Information: www.heraldnet.com (search Mike Benbow)

GENERAL MEETING:

Nov. 9, 2011

Invited Guest Speaker:

John Kendall - Guide & owner Black Heron Fly Fishing Shop. Topic: *Fly fishing the Cowlitz River and Merrill Lake.* Information:

<http://blackheronflyfishing.com>



GENERAL INFORMATION

The General meeting is held on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at the South County Senior Center, 220 Railroad Ave. Edmonds, WA. Social hour: 6:00pm Business meetings are 6:00pm on the 4th Wednesday each month at Alfy’s 4820 196th SW, Lynnwood, WA.

Officers:

Bruce Johnson, V.P., 425-742-2252
Bill MacDonald, Treasurer, 425-774-4769
Thomas Sawtell, Communications & TIGHTLINES, 425-744-0401
Keith Stamm, Secretary, 206-368-5596
Phil Sacks, Gillie, 425-741-7311
Mike Bunney, Trustee, 425-672-3345

Chairs:

Mike Truax, Conservation, 425-672-6963
William Scott, Outings
Terry Zeitner, Membership
Open seat, Education
Beverage Meister, Jeff Bandy

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