

TIGHTLINES

Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds Annual Okanogan Lakes Outing

By Mike Truax, Photographs Jim Hagy

During the last two weeks of October nearly one third of OFF's members traveled to the Okanogan Valley region in search of feisty trout. As usual they were greeted by bright fall colors, sunshine and rainless days. The weather turned cool but except for a bitterly cold and windy day at Lake Chapaka was tolerable and did not impede the good times. Pictured: Mike Truax (fish on!) & Bill MacDonald at Aeneas Lake.
(continued page 2 & 3)



Deschutes & Klickitat Steelhead Fishing Report *Jim Traner*

Here is a nice hen steelhead I caught in the Deschutes on Sunday. I fished the Klickitat on Friday and it was tough. The water was gin clear and I was persistently stupidly skating flies all day.

We spent Saturday and Sunday in Oregon on the lower Deschutes (Heritage Landing up to the Water Tower) fishing with Mike Duffy, one of Tom Larimer's guides, and an excellent angler, Spey caster, and guide. The water had come up over the last few days so the fishing was more difficult than it could have been but my partner and I both hooked fish and missed more. (continued page 2)

FLY FISHING THE ALLEGATOR HOLES

by Keith Stamm



On the Clark Fork in October the BWO hatch doesn't get going until noon. The trout are laying low waiting for the emergers. So what is an impatient angler to do until then to keep from freezing stiff. James Johney the Blackfoot River Outfitters guide showed us this white and red double-bunny fly about six inches long and said, "Let's fish for some pike."

He eased the rubber raft into one of the old oxbows common on this section of the river. *They are deep and still, just the kind of place alligators would love if the water were warmer. Instead of alligators there are huge pike over forty inches long.* They kept following the fly right up to the raft and not eating. It was unnerving.

Dick got excited, really wanted one. I thought, "Be careful what you wish for," and passed the fly rod to him. That was when James spotted a pike laying in the weeds at the far end of the "alligator hole." Dick made an accurate cast with the extremely clumsy fly and the pike ate. Fortunately he was only 26 inches, just the right size for a fly rod, Dick's first pike on a fly.

Deschutes & Klickitat Steelhead (continued)

I used my old Sage 6126 Spey rod with a 450 grain Skagit Switch head. Anyone with a similar rod should check it out. We fished a lot of 10 foot T-14 tips with heavy flies and that little combo could turn over a fly with very little effort. I would recommend that anyone with a little time on their hands over the next 2-3 weeks try to make a trip down there. The crowds are gone and the fish are there. **Tom Larimer's web site:**

www.LarimerOutfitters.com

One further note, the Klick was tough the day I was there but it has been producing some very nice fish. I fished with Brian Styskal who, like Mike, is a very fishy guy and one of the best Spey casters you will run into. Brian took a lady client out a week earlier who had never fished for steelhead nor Spey cast. He gave her a day of instruction and then off to the river where she landed her first steelhead, a 38 1/2 inch fish monster. I hope he told her it would go downhill from there.

MEMBER NOTICE: Opportunity to Donate Clothing, from Phil Sacks

Every Saturday my wife Dorothy, volunteers at the Trinity Lutheran Church in Lynwood to help with the Neighbors In Need program, which serves a hot breakfast to the homeless and needy in the local community. The winter cold weather is rapidly approaching and they are in special need of clothing (especially warm clothing, male and female), blankets and sleeping bags. If you are able to donate any of these items, please bring them to the next Club meeting. If you cannot attend the next meeting you can call

Phil Sacks at 425-741-7311 who will pick up your donations. Thank you.

Okanogan Lakes Outing (continued)

Members smile with gratitude for Jim Hagy's introduction of White Leech pattern, put to good use by Truax, pictured here with Bill McDonald, Hugh James, and Nick Wisser at Aeneas Lake on a lunch break.





Head Hunting on the Clark Fork

by Keith Stamm

Dick Simmons and I were “head hunting” on the Clark Fork River in Montana, precariously perched on a squishy, shaky rubber raft. We floated down the wide corridor of a river enclosed by towering cottonwoods, their golden glow lending some warmth to otherwise cold and rainy days. It was uncomfortable for us fly fishers but peachy for the blue-winged olive, that hardy trooper of a mayfly.

James Johney, our guide, was searching for them, eyes riveted on the glassy surface of the river, spotting the most subtle disturbances on that surface that belied the presence of rising trout. Suddenly he slashed with oars and redirected the course of the raft while announcing, “Some heads coming up in that current seam 10 feet off the bank, get ready to cast.”

Dick and I shifted our eyes from the cottonwood scenery and peered downstream, trying to see the subtle rings on the surface where a trout’s head poked up to sip a tiny mayfly. James could read these rings like a book, not only the exact location where the head came up, but the size of the trout as well. He said, “Big head in that foam line, Dick, cast right next to that stick in the water.” “Let it hunt,” he added, meaning allow the fly to drift down to the fish. It was important to get the fly exactly into the trout’s feeding lane.

Our three days of blue-wing olive fishing were both exhilarating and exhausting. Exhilarating because the mayflies started coming off at noon and that kept the trout looking up until close to 6 pm. When their tiny sails appeared on the surface the heads started coming up. They rose to our flies all afternoon. We hooked a lot fish, but missed considerably more because we struck too soon or too late. Of those we landed, all were feisty wild trout from 12 inches on up to 19, both rainbows and cutthroat. It was exhilarating also just to be floating down that golden corridor with its endless variety of pools, slicks, riffles and eddies, not another boat in sight, only the clatter of duck wings or the shriek of an eagle to break the silence, but not the spell. We felt as if we were the first fly fishermen to ever float down that river.

It was exhausting because fishing tiny mayfly patterns from a moving boat demanded hours of intense concentration. The tiny flies were hard to see, especially when floating among flecks of white foam, which was often the case. To make matters even more difficult, we normally fished with two flies, a dun pattern with an emerger trailing behind. Most of the trout ate the emerger, which reduced the role of the dry fly to an indicator. But what a useless indicator it was when we were unable to see it most of the time. Fortunately for us, James had much better eyes and was often able to track both our flies. He would see the dry fly pulled under and call out “Get him Dick! Get him!” And sometimes Dick did.

It was exhausting also because our attention was divided between watching our flies and managing the loose fly line, which conspired to tangle around our feet and every projection in the boat. True to Murphy’s law, these tangles would occur right when we were trying to hurry a cast to an especially juicy rise, or when a big fish had been hooked and was streaking off to the other side of the river. Tangles at these times set off Keith’s spontaneous eruptions of socially unacceptable words and phrases.

While enjoying immensely the opportunity for so many hours of great dry fly fishing, we also reflected afterward on what we might have learned. First, that we have yet to invest enough time in dry fly fishing to be very good at it. But no amount of experience is going to make our eyes any sharper. Given that most of the trout were grabbing the emerger, we should have tied on a larger, more visible dry fly that we could see. We also discovered that floating nymphs ala Gary Borger (“Fishing the Film”) often made a more effective emerger than the conventional patterns. Never leave town without some. Finally, we were reminded not to take our shortcomings too seriously; the quality of the overall experience is more important than keeping score on how many fish are hooked and landed.

Okanogan Lakes Outing (continued)

Club members stayed as far north as Palmer Lake, while others camped at Blue Lake but most stayed at Conconully. Those located at Conconully, or visiting that location, enjoyed hospitality hour at Mike’s cabin and group dinners at the “Sit’n Bull” and “Lucky D’s” (a sad note, two days following our group dinner at Lucky D’s the restaurant was destroyed by fire).

During the trip club members visited the following lakes: Chapaka, Blue (Wannacutt), Washburn Lake, Blue Lake (Seinlahekin), Aeneas, Green and Buzzard. Of these, Buzzard and Aeneas Lakes produced the largest and strongest fish while Green Lake pond produced the highest rate of catch.

Due to the cool temperatures experienced toward the end of October, it was proposed by several attendees that next fall the Okanogan trip should be moved forward to late September or early October.. In all likelihood that outing date will be adjusted accordingly.



Hagy’s action shot of Bill MacDonald’s catch of 20”+ trout at Buzzard Lake (4 x Enlarged)→

Steelheading on the Methow and Grande Ronde

October Guest Speaker Mike Benbow

We got the lowdown on when, how and where to fish steelhead on the Methow and Grande Ronde rivers from Mike Benbow of the Everett club, who has years of experience on both rivers. Along with the lowdown,



This native Methow steelhead was caught by Mike in early October 2011 on a purple egg-sucking woolly bugger.

Mike treated us to a collection of gorgeous slides, and left a gift of several top steelhead flies for the Club auction.

Mike advised us to be on these rivers when the water levels come up around early November. When the river levels rise and the water temperatures drop into the mid-fifties, the "thermal blocks" in the Snake and Columbia will dissipate and the fish will move up. Until then these thermal blocks form a barrier that keeps fish out in the main river. Usually it takes cooling autumn rains to remove these blocks, he said.

Both rivers can be fished walk and wade but it's best to get on the water early, in the dark with a flashlight, if you want access to the best water. Both rivers can get crowded, especially the Grande Ronde. There is plenty of access to good water on the Methow from Hwy 20. The best access to the Grande Ronde may be the seven

mile stretch from Bogan's Oasis up to the state line.

According to Benbow, you'll catch more fish close to the bottom after the water cools down, so be prepared to use sink tip lines and weighted flies. A variety of fly patterns will work. The main thing is to have confidence in the fly you're using. Nymphing is generally more effective than swinging flies, but both methods will catch fish. He recommends stonefly, fall caddis pupae, and black articulated leech patterns.

He reminded us that long casts are not necessary. In fact, in early morning and late afternoon most steelhead will hold within 3-4 feet of shore. So switch and spey rods are useful at times, but not mandatory.

EVENT SCHEDULE

November Club Outing:

Methow River steelhead

With Jeff Brazada, Info:

www.brazdasflyfishing.com

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>

2011 ANNUAL CONSERVATION BANQUET & AUCTION

Proceeds benefit non-profit organizations dedicated to fisheries conservation and enhancement in the PNW

Date: December 14th, 2011

Time: 6PM to 9PM

Place: South County Senior Center
220 Railroad Ave., Edmonds, WA

Tickets: Available from members

Price: \$50 per person

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.

Remember, 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 nearby lake (Lake Armstrong) into a selective fishery.

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.

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.**



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 Alf'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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