

TIGHTLINES

"FLINGING FLIES FOR FISH (COHO) IN FIRTH"

Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds

Photo of the Month

Hugh James

Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds

MERRILL LAKE TRIP JUNE 2012

John Schwartz, Education Chair

Having participated with the club in my first overnight outing to Merrill Lake, for my part, it was a most successful outing. The lake is in a most beautiful setting. I even caught a few nice fish. I would encourage all our members to consider participating in any future Merrill Lake outing or any of the other upcoming outings planned.

When asking fly fishers about flies to consider for Merrill Lake, the giant Hexagenia mayfly was often mentioned. For the record, I did not see any Hex hatches while I was on the lake.

However, I did capture various "something or other" insects while waiting for that "big" or even the "only" strike of the day. These insects were various sizes and shapes and were all a black/brown color. And even with my limited entomology knowledge, I did recognize one as an ant. So to "match the hatch", I tied on whatever flies I had that matched the

black/brown color. And, I did catch a few fish on the surface with the color match as the only matching criteria.

Which brings me to suggesting a basic entomology presentation for those interested. Please send me an email if you might be interested in a class.

Cascade Fly Ant

Hook: Dai Riki 305, size 6-18

Abdomen: Black sparkle dubbing

Wings: Grizzly hackle tips, trimmed to shape

Hackle: Brown

Thorax: Black sparkle dubbing

Tying Instructions: www.west-fly-fishing.com





A 22-INCH BROWN: WHAT ALL DOES IT TAKE?

KEITH STAMM

What do you think it takes? The right fly? A perfect cast? Or both? Actually, it takes a lot more, if you think about it. Let's go back to the beginning. Let's start with where you are.

You're on the Upper Missouri a few miles above Craig, MT, floating in a drift boat down miles of a "spring creek" a couple hundred yards wide. You know all that water is a gift of the mountain snowpack, water that is clear and cold year-round because it flows from under Holter Dam. The Upper Missouri would not have 44 miles of spring creek conditions without the dam.



Those are just a couple of the things it takes to produce a 22-inch Brown. But Browns don't grow that big on water alone. The Upper Missouri is loaded with trout food – sowbugs, midges, mayflies, and caddis. No stoneflies because the water is too pure and cold. Why so many bugs? You have to see the bottom of that river. It takes your breath away, a bottom paved from bank to bank with clean gravel,

the outwash of ancient glaciers. No silt, no muck, just gravel and, in some areas, the most amazing weed beds! Turn over a small river cobble, any cobble, and it will be crawling with bug life.

The trout in this river eat well. The rainbows are all chunky with bellies like you'd get from a six-pack-a-day habit.

As a fly fisherman, you see all that before you've made your first cast. You get on water like that and you're just thankful that such a river exists, and that you're lucky enough to be there.

And so now you start floating and your guide, Sean McAfee of Linehan Outfitting Co., maneuvers the boat into soft water close to the bank. He points and says, "Cast back upstream into that little pocket." Your top fly is a size 18 lightning bug, the bottom fly a zebra midge, size 20. Why such small flies? Sean has chosen them because this is a spring creek, "It's too pure and too cold to grow big bugs," he says. "Small fly, big fish," he adds.

Your first two casts miss the pocket. The third is a bullseye. The indicator drifts maybe a foot before it darts under. Now if only that size 20 hook will hold, and the 5x leader not break. ***Brownie runs to the middle of the river, emptying the spool into the backing, then slugs it out until Sean makes a deft scoop with the net.*** Soon you're in the picture, smiling, holding up that 22-incher, looking like you'd done it all. But you're really only at the end of a long chain of events that began long ago in glaciers and mountains.

SURPRISES AT MERRILL LAKE

Bill MacDonald

The first surprise happened before we even left. Mike and I were planning to stay with Tom Sawtell at his cabin on the Lewis River, but fate had other plans for Tom. His photograph “Heron of Edmonds Marsh”, the same photo donated to our 2011 Conservation Auction had been juried in at the Edmonds Art Festival and won the coveted “Best of Edmonds Award.” Mike and I would have to forgo



the cabin life for another time - artist's accolades trumped flinging flys with the Club and Tom stayed behind, even after investing in a new kayak for the trip.

Congratulations Tom, smart buy Jim, and members – be reminded to donate to the 2012 OFF Conservation Auction!

Surprise number two, on the lake: Mike and I were unloading the boat and gear when I tripped over a battery box and fell right on my ear, great way to start a trip!! After fishing for a while, with not much luck, we happened upon a young lady with her kayak stuck between to logs. I ended up in the water to my belly button, but with her boyfriend finally showing up, we got it out for her though we never did see them on the water after that. I wonder what they were doing instead of kayaking??? Now, I need one of the fly tying members to tie me up some blue-eyed double breasted damsel (in distress) nymphs, they should improve my luck at Merrill Lake next time.

Later in the day, Mike hooked a decent rainbow, and as he was bringing it to the boat, about 3' behind the boat, and eagle took the fish right off the top of the water and flew away, so Mike was trying to land a fish and an eagle, in the air, at the same time. Unfortunately, we did not get any pictures of the event, but it was spectacular (Editor's note: The eagle pictured resides near Bill's house on Puget Sound).



The next morning, I hooked a fish, and this time we were watching for the eagle, as he had been circling around us, and several others, all morning. We saw him coming, so Mike had the camera at ready, but just while the eagle was about 30' out on his approach, Mike's rod started to bounce, so he had to grab that, and again, no picture. He did land the fish, but I think we both would rather have had the picture. That disappointment was properly drowned in sufficient alcohol in the evening over lasagna with the rest of the crew.

Monday, it was raining, so we ditched the fishing and took a drive up to Mount St. Helens, though we could not see much through the clouds. All in all, a great trip, fishing was good though catching was slow, but I think a good time was had by all.

FISHING REPORT - NORTH FORK LEWIS RIVER
Thomas Sawtell - First chance to fish my home water this year: A rare large resident Cutthroat Trout, Labor Day.



CONSERVATION NEWS

Mike Truax

Washington's Fish and Wildlife Commission to consider rules changes of interest to OFF members.

OFF and Evergreen Fly Fishers have pushed Lake Sixteen in southern Skagit County for "Quality" lake designation under Selective harvest rules.

In September, the Commission will begin taking public comment on whether Lake Sixteen should move from "standard seasonal" rules to year-round "Selective" fishing rules. The WDFW is likely to oppose the rule change on the basis that standard seasonal rules generate more revenue for the department through license sales.

Once the Commission sets the date and procedures, club members will be provided additional information and be asked to comment in support of the rule change.

Bob Jateff, WDFW's Fisheries Biologist for Okanogan County indicates that the Commission will consider a proposal to rescind the state's restriction on using 2 poles while fishing fly-fishing and other Selective Fisheries lakes in the County.

If the change is approved, all lakes in the county will permit the use of two poles upon purchase of the 2-pole endorsement. Okanogan-area fly fishing clubs and OFF advised Jateff of their support for this rule change.

It is assumed the Commission will set procedures and dates for public comment consistent with those for comments about Lake Sixteen.

GENERAL MEETING: Wednesday September 12, 2012

Invited Guest Speaker: Bill Geer

Presentation title:

"Beyond Seasons' End in Washington: Climate Change and Fisheries"

The speaker for our September meeting is Bill Geer, a biologist studying the impact of global warming on wildlife. Bill has rather impressive bona fides; B.S. University of Montana School of Forestry; M.S. Montana State University. 39 years as a professional fish and wildlife conservationist. Former Chief of Fisheries and former Director of the Utah Division of Wildlife Resources; Coordinator for the North American Waterfowl Management Plan for the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation; Vice President for Field Operations and Conservation Programs for the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation; Inland Northwest Conservation Manager for the Nature Conservancy in Idaho; Executive Director of the Outdoor Writers Association of America; Director of Western Lands and Climate Change Initiative Manager for the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership.

Bill is also Special wildlife adviser to both Senator Jon Tester and to the Wildlife Conservation Society. His presentation will address the physical evidence of climate change in Washington, its effects on fish and wildlife, and measures being taken to improve adverse impacts.

If you are interested in fishing the Puget Sound region, I urge you to attend. I was fortunate to meet with Bill in Lolo while fishing my way through Montana and Wyoming and found him to be very down to earth and very interesting to listen to; not a geek bone in his body. Hope to see you there.

Another Nice Chromie



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.

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Bill MacDonald, President
Wade Nash, Vice President
Jim Traner, Treasurer
Thomas Sawtell, Communications
Dave Gross, Secretary
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Trustee

Chairs:

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Terry Zeitner, Membership
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