

May 2010
Washington Fly Fishing Fair, Back to Fishing

Fly Fishing Fair

At the end of April the Washington conclave of the Federation of Fly Fishers held a fly tying, fly fishing event in Ellensburg, Washington. The event was well attended, and I had a 16' LP Fly Pod there on display. I also helped the guys at Red's Fly Shop conduct a boat rowing class on the Yakima River. We covered launching, items necessary in a drift boat, and a brief chance to row.



Two participants of the rowing demo.

It seemed that everyone who took part enjoyed the chance to try a ClackaCraft boat.

Different state councils conduct these fly tying events and they seem to be getting more popular all the time. It is a terrific opportunity to see a vast array of excellent fly tiers. You will find people tying everything from tiny size 28 midges for trout to huge offshore patterns for billfish. Because I tie mostly steelhead flies, I enjoy watching the tiers who are demonstrating that style of fly. Without fail I will see something new for my tying attempts.

Back to Some Fishing, Finally

This past year has been physically pretty tough for me. In April of '09 I had surgery for a herniated disk. In August I had another surgery for the same thing. Then in mid-December I had back surgery again, this time to remove a cyst that had done some nerve damage to my right foot and to perform a vertebrae fusion. Fishing trips were few and far between.

Even though I must now wear a brace on my right foot, things are looking better and I'm hoping to do more fishing. On May 8th Joyce and I took the dogs for a boat ride on the Nestucca River. It was a very pretty spring day with a sky

full of big fluffy clouds. The river was dropping just enough to provide a few exposed gravel bars, great places to let the dogs out to run and for us to sit in the spring sun while we ate lunch.



Fluffy, billowing clouds contrast the blue spring sky.



Exposed gravel bar, an excellent place for lunch in the sun.

After lunch we got back to fishing. We put out the divers and shrimp again. The rod tips began the rhythmic jiggle and bounce indicative of divers. Fortunately, it wasn't long before Joyce hooked a late winter hatchery steelhead. Her rod tip buried nearly to the water and Joyce lifted it from the rod holder to set the hook. We were at the head of a large, deep pool, and the fish had plenty of room to run where it wished. I maneuvered the boat into calm water and reached for the net. The fish turned out to be about 8½ pounds. We killed it, had a couple of meals of fresh steelhead and smoked the rest.



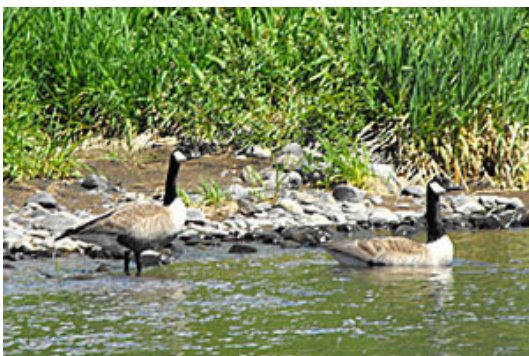
Joyce with winter steelhead.

May is a nice time to fish the Nestucca River. Spring chinook and summer steelhead are just beginning to show. Spring chinook fishing is much better right in Portland and Oregon City on the Willamette River. Therefore the Nestucca sees very little pressure, and we experienced a very nice day seeing only one other boat.

This is also the time of year to see wildflowers beginning to bloom and wildlife along the river. In the past we have seen ducks, deer, otters and Canada geese. On this day Joyce found some columbine in bloom and Canada geese in many different spots.



Columbine



Canada geese

Although we both enjoy fly fishing for trout and steelhead, we decided that we would fish with divers baited with sand shrimp. With the river

dropping and getting warmer, we will probably do the rest of our fishing this year with fly gear. The river was still a little high and a little cool for fly fishing on this day. We started the day by catching a lot of small cutthroat trout. The little devils really like bait. I make sure all of our hooks are barbless. I use pliers to flatten the barbs. That way we don't have to handle the fish in order to release them. I merely grip the hook shank with my pliers, turn it upside down and the fish slides right off.

We continued to fish our way down river to our takeout point. In a nice run that has produced in the past a fish hammered my bait. This fish was a little smaller than Joyce's, but it was a wild steelhead. I played it up alongside the boat and released it without netting it or even touching it.



Yukon sleeping



Buster sleeping

We reached the take out at 4:30. We still had four hours of daylight left, but we were happy with the experience we had just had. The old dogs were sleeping, and we loaded the boat and headed back to the house. A day well spent, and we are looking forward to many more.

Sandy River Spey Clave



Looking at the entry to Spey Clave

The Sandy River Spey Clave is the premier event for two-hand fly rod enthusiasts, both experienced and novice. This is a gathering of some of the best two-hand casters in the country. Sandy Spey Clave takes place in Oxbow Metro Park on the banks of the Sandy River. The park itself is a beautiful place, and the Sandy River this time of year runs clear with both summer steelhead and spring chinook salmon present to challenge your fishing abilities. The entire event is free of charge except for the modest park entry fee. Expert casters such as Mark Bachmann, Simeon Gawesworth, John and Amy Hazel, Steve Rajeff, Kateri Clay, Al Buhr, Mia and Marty Sheppard, Denise Maxwell, Mike Kinney, and Mary Ann Dozer do casting demos throughout the three-day event.

The weather this spring in Oregon has been cool and damp, but Mark Bachmann, the event promoter from The Fly Fishing Shop in Welches, Oregon (www.flyfishusa.com), must have some good connections or know how to pull strings. On May 14, 15 and 16 the weather was perfect, warm and sunny.



Jim Irwin and Dick Sagara with the Temple Fork Rod display

At Spey Clave you get the opportunity to try nearly any two-hand rod available--TFO, Sage, Winston, Beuhla, CND, Berkheimer, Gary

Anderson Custom Rods, G. Loomis, Scott Rods, Hardy, R.B. Meiser, Thomas & Thomas, and even Bob Clay's Riverwatch bamboo rods from the Kispiox Valley in British Columbia.



Bob Clay wraps one of his spliced joint bamboo fly rods

It seems that everyone is really helpful at Spey Clave. I received lots of help and advice determining the proper line for the old Sharpes bamboo rod I got this past winter. One of Gary Anderson's custom-made lines turned out to be the correct match.



Gary Anderson assists an interested attendee at Spey Clave.

We all need to be very grateful to Mark Bachmann and Patty Barnes of The Fly Fishing Shop for the great job they do in organizing The Sandy River Spey Clave. It's a terrific event filled with useful and needed information for anyone interested in using two-handed fly rods.



ClackaCraft at Spey Clave