



The *Tippet*

February, 2011

Clearwater Fly Casters
www.clearwaterflycasters.com
A Federation of Fly Fishers Club



February Speaker: Paul Arentsen, “Hells Canyon Country and The River of No Return”

This presentation will be a photo/video tour of Hells Canyon Country and The River of No Return with Winding Waters River Expeditions. It will include photos and video collected during rafting and fishing adventures on the Snake River in Hells Canyon, the Lower Salmon River and the Grande Ronde River. A brief summary of the natural and cultural history of these river corridors will follow the video presentation, including the story of why the Salmon River is called The River of No Return. The evening will conclude with a discussion of the types of trips that we offer, focusing on our Supported Steelhead trip on the Grande Ronde River.

Paul Arentsen, co-owner of Winding Waters River Expeditions, grew up in Louisville, KY. While earning a B.A. from Indiana University, Paul began his career as an outdoor educator and guide during the summers. He worked as a guide for Wilderness Ventures (WV), leading teen backpacking trips all over the West and Alaska. While working for WV, he was introduced to “The River” which he has not been able to leave behind since. In 1998, Paul began working as a professional river guide on the Salmon River, Deschutes, Grande Ronde, and Colorado Rivers. Paul is trained as a Wilderness First Responder and an Outdoor Emergency Care Technician, as well as in Swift Water Rescue. He has a genuine interest in sharing his passion and knowledge of running rivers with others, which will become apparent from the first moment you meet him. Paul resides in Joseph, OR, with his wife Penny, where he spends his time working as a back-country ski guide and carpenter, fishing for Steelhead, and looking forward to the next river season. As an active volunteer in the community, he's a member of the Lion's Club and the **Ferguson Ridge Ski Patrol**. He also volunteers for the **Wallowa Avalanche Center** and the **Wallowa Valley Soccer Association**.

President Cliff Swanson's Message

The club is off to another great start. The big project for the year is our biennial auction. This year the auction will be held in the fall on a Saturday during the day. It is anticipated that our auction will attract more than club members to support our organization.

The executive committee has started planning for the event. Several members have stepped up and accepted nominations to some of the major committees. If each member gave just a few minutes of their time, our auction will be successful. Please say yes when a someone asks you to help. A big part of the organization for the auction will happen at the executive meetings. These will be one week after the general meeting on Thursday at the Fireside Grill (or The Wine Bar) in Pullman, and everyone is welcome.

Calendar

Feb 9: CFC Meeting, Paul Arentsen, Winding Waters River Expeditions, “Hells Canyon Country”

Feb 15: Fly Tying Night, Moscow Title

Mar 9: CFC Meeting, Sam Sickles, River Borne Outfitters, “Deschutes River Fishing”

Amber Lake Fishout: Date Not Yet Fixed

Jul 15-17: St. Joe Fishout

Information

The Tippet is available as a PDF file on our web site. Please submit information to the Newsletter Editor.

Meetings 2nd Wed:

**Wet Fly Hour: 5:30 PM
Dinner: 6:30 PM
(buffet, \$16 per person)
Program: 7:30 PM**

We appeal to members to look through their fishing supplies, etc., for items they can donate to the raffle. A special THANK YOU to Tim Cavileer for flies, Bob Harwood for fish prints, and Dave Quellar for fishing materials, which they have donated already this year.

Backcast to January Meeting

Pre-Function Demonstration: Madison Hedding demonstrated how to tie her “Madison Special” fly. Mark Few, the Gonzaga coach, was the first person to catch a fish using her flies, and now more than 500 fish have been caught with this pattern. (See last month’s Tippet for the pattern or www.northweststeelheadfishing.com to purchase.)

Guests: Jerry and Jane Wallace from Clarkston, George Ball (retired from WSU) and Kelly Cassidy (curator at WSU’s Connor Museum), Roger Willemsen from Moscow who became a member, and Earl Dorsey from Moscow.

Fishing reports: No actual fishing reports were given, but Bob Harwood had a fish *print* report again this month. He brought a small print of a 27 inch 7 pound Bull Trout and donated it to the raffle. The fish was caught in Gold Creek by a poacher and seized by an IDFG officer who notified Bob so he could get a print.

Conservation Report: No report from the committee this month, however Steve Bush reported on a meeting he attended on the proposed land exchange. He said the majority of people attending the meeting were very much opposed to the proposal as it now stands. Approximately 70-100 people attended and only two copies of the proposal were made available at the meeting. More information can be found on the website; comments can be made until February 23.

Dave Tharp spoke in favor of the land exchange with some modifications. He also noted that 85% of the land in Idaho County is already in public ownership, so many are opposed to taking more land out of the tax base. John Read commented that the company is a development company, not a timber company, and that the Upper Lochsa land is depleted and would require a lot of money to rehabilitate it. Since there were many issues and lack of time, further discussion was postponed until the next meeting. It was also suggested that interested parties get together for a discussion before then.

Announcements: Cliff Swanson asked for feedback on the seating arrangement that was tried this time. Each person picked a place card (e.g., Fly Flat, Amber Lake, etc.) as they paid for dinner, then sat at the table with the same name on it. This mixed up the seating. Cliff asked if he should do it again next time, and there were mixed reactions. Maybe he’ll try some variation of it again.

There was brief discussion of planning for the club auction. It will be on a Saturday in the fall, probably late September or sometime in October, location to be determined. Members asked to serve as heads of committees are: Sponsorship – Cliff Swanson and Steve Bush, Auction – Dave Uberuaga, Activities and Program – John Read, Publicity – Lavon Frazier and Mary Read, and Member Dinner – Dave Tharp.

The possibility of having Tri-State embroider a club emblem on shirts, hats, etc. was brought up. The clothing could be purchased at Tri-State or could be brought into the store. The embroidery fee would be around \$8. It was asked who had the pattern that was last used. This will be discussed further at the next board meeting.

Steve Bush announced that the Western Idaho Fly Fishing Expo will be held January 14-15 in Boise at the Idaho fairgrounds with a number of interesting activities. The Washington FFF will host the annual Fly Fishing Fair in Ellensburg the first weekend in May (*editor’s note – the Washington State Council of FFF website has the date as April 29-30*). Also the FFF Conclave is at West Yellowstone August 30 – September 3. Steve encourages members to join and support the FFF. The Kelly Creek Fly Fishing Expo in Lewiston will be March 25-26 this year. Cliff noted that the Kelly Creek club is looking for someone to tie flies at their expo. Perhaps they would reciprocate and do something for us at our auction.

Bruce Frazier announced that dues for 2011 were due.

Program: Rick Hedding, “Spring Steelhead Fishing – Grande Ronde River & The Madison Special”

Doug Young introduced Rick Hedding and his daughter Madison from Clarkston. Doug thanked Jim Hill, who has successfully fished with Rick Hedding’s flies, for suggesting Rick as a speaker. Madison starting to tie flies when she was 9. She’s now 14, still ties flies, and put together the PowerPoint presentation that Rick used for the program.

Rick started guiding in 1999. He contends that a little bit of success turns the corner for a steelhead fisher to become a steelhead catcher. He likes the fly to go to the bottom quickly. He uses leader about the length of the rod, e.g., about 10' of leader with a 10' rod. Then he adds split-shot for weight, using 4-8 bb's depending on water speed and depth. Super-slow presentation is the key. Be sure the indicator is the first thing going down the river, and stack the line above it. A super-slow dead drift increases the catch-rate, but there is a delicate balance between having enough line for a slow drift and yet be able to set the hook. He often tells his clients, "Mend, mend, mend!" His biggest catch was last spring above Bogans. The fish was very strong and ran about 700 yards from the boat. It measured in at 31" and weighed about 10 pounds.

Jim Hill remarked that you can't "trout fish" for steelhead and asked Rick to explain the differences in technique. Rick said that steelhead are essentially lazy. They have a huge fat reserve but they're in the river for about nine months, so they still need to conserve energy and are generally resting above a big rapid. The fish are usually concentrated in less than 20% of the available water. They tend to stay in the slow water where they feel safe, especially in the fall when the river is clear. They prefer water around 8' deep without a glassy surface – they will be as deep as they need to be in the water to not see the sky.

Rick talked about Oregon's effort to enhance the Ronde fishery with native brood-stock. They asked for help from fishing guides to keep native fish alive and put them into Fish & Game live traps which they made available on the river. The fisherperson turns on a transponder on the live trap, and an F&G truck comes by and picks them up. The fish are taken to the hatchery and resulting offspring are tagged before they're released. F&G flies a helicopter over Lower Granite Reservoir, up the Snake, and then up the Grande Ronde to track movement of these fish. This effort started in 2003/2004 and seems to be working really well.

The Grande Ronde is an excellent place to teach fly fishing, both steelhead and small-mouth bass. Rick's tip for catching bass is to cast the "mouse" on to the bank and pull it off into the water.

An interesting and fun trip for steelhead fishers is the "Steelhead Train" that goes up to where the Wallowa River runs into the Grande Ronde, especially if they have a non-fishing partner along. Rick also mentioned the "Seasons on the Fly" series, an episode of which was shot in 2007 featuring the Madison Special on the Grande Ronde. Links to several episodes can be found on his website.

Fly of the Month for February: Steelhead Rubber Legs

By Deke Meyer (taken from www.flytyersonline.com/flytying)

Materials

Hook: Steelhead streamer, sizes 2/0 to 10.

Thread: Orange 3/0 Monocord.

Tail: Marabou; orange Krystal Flash.

Rib: Optional, gold, copper or silver wire, or fine tinsel.

Body: Orange Crystal Chenille, regular chenille, yarn.

Hackle: Optional, palmered body hackle.

Legs: Round rubber (or Sili-Legs)

Eyes: Various weighted eyes: lead, nickel plate, non-toxic with pupil (Real Eyes with adhesive inserts used)



Tying Tips: You can tie the weighted eye on the very front part of the top of the hook, just behind the hook, or about 1/4 to 1/3 of the way back from the hook eye. (The Clouser Minnow, that most deadly weighted-eyes-on-top fly, features barbell eyes about 1/3 the way back.)

After you tie on the barbell eyes, place a drop of super glue on the tie-down area. (Aaron Alpha recommended because it has a long "working time" before it cures, it penetrates better, and the bottle is less likely to dry out.)

Clearwater Fly Casters
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Clearwater Fly Casters Officers 2010

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CFC membership dues are \$20/yr for individuals, \$30/yr for families, \$10/yr for students, \$50/yr sustaining, \$300/lifetime. Meetings are on the 2nd Wednesday, September through May, at the Best Western University Inn, 1516 Pullman Rd, Moscow, Idaho. Wet Fly Hour 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM and Program at 7:30 PM.