

Early Clearwater Fly Casters History

Written by Sherm Lowell ~12/75

The Clearwater Fly Casters began its existence five years ago with a nucleus of about 15 members/ the first officers were Sherm Lowell, president, Ben Collins, vice-president, Chuck Fredrickson, treasurer, and Myron Micky, secretary. We affiliated with the FFF in September 1970. Membership is now around 65. We are a very informal club, admitting members of both sexes on application. Only this year we finally incorporated with a definite set of by-laws and a charter. We now have 3 vice-presidents, one of whom is also program chairman, and another in charge of club outings. We have a conservation chairman, a librarian, a club bulletin editor, and a liaison officer (with the Washington Council of the NW Regional Council of FFF)

From the beginning we have had monthly dinner and program meetings preceded by a cocktail hour. We usually get an attendance of about 40 for dinner and 50 for the program afterward. Our dues are \$10 per year, most of which has gone to pay the cost of printing and mailing our monthly newsletter, which was at first called the Creel Notes, but is now titled the Fly Tippet.

During the summer months our dinner meetings are replaced by club outings to places like the Kamloops country, the Moyie River in Idaho, and Montana. During the year we take trips less far a field. An October outing to Dry Falls Lake is always done jointly with the WFFC and some other clubs from the Seattle area.

Among the various projects undertaken by the club are:

1. Cooperation with the WFFC for several years in the annual trout census and tagging at Lenice Lake;
2. Sponsorship of a public symposium on the declining fishery in the Grande Ronde River: the causes and remedies (ultimately leading to catch and release restriction by Washington Department of Game);
3. Purchase or construction of 3 small boats for use on Lenice and other lakes;
4. Placement of several trash cans for public use, marked with club insignia, along Snake River access points;
5. Creation of a fly fishing book collection in the Pullman public library;
6. Inauguration of an annual fly fishing clinic the weekend before the season opens with free admission to movies, how-to talks, fly tying demonstrations, casting instruction, and casting games (last year's clinic on a fine April day, drew upward of 500 people, including many young people);
7. Teaching of fly tying classes every year open to public at a very modest fee;
8. Raising money for Pullman Memorial Hospital by sale of flies tied by members.

The club treasury has grown steadily, partly from some dues accrual, but more importantly as a result of an annual auction of donated items (last year it raised about \$250) and by return of teaching fees from fly tying classes to club from WSU and Spokane Community College. Some of the money has gone to Joe Brooks fund to

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preserve the Yellowstone River and to initiative drive in Oregon to make steelhead a game fish.

Without doubt fishing in the area has declined substantially in the past ten years, mostly as a result of navigation dams on the Snake River. An enormous amount of prime fishing water, including much excellent steelhead fly-fishing water, has been replaced by reservoirs. At the present time the magnificent steelhead and salmon runs in the Clearwater are in danger of being lost through as a result of heavy kill of smolts going downriver and bad management at the Dworshak National Fish Hatchery. The loss of much of the North Fork of the Clearwater River with the filling of Dworshak reservoir is only partly mitigated by what appears to be an improvement in the native cutthroat fishery in the upper reaches of the river and some increase of the trout population in the Clearwater below the dam due to cooler water temperatures in the summer. The gradual decline of the splendid lake fishing in Spokane and Adams counties is also a matter of concern. The worsening of trout fishing appears to be due in part to the deliberate introduction of spiny ray fish into many lakes in defiance of WDG regulations.

The official club delegate to the Northwest Regional Conclave, June 14, is Sherman Lowell, with George Hinman and George Johnson as alternates.

Sincerely yours,
Sherman Lowell