

FLY LINES

Official eJournal of the
BC Federation of Fly Fishers

ISSUE №24-1 | WINTER 2023-4

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Join Us!

TODAY IN OUR MISSION

to conserve and protect BC's sport fisheries

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FLY FISHING FUTURE
FOR TOMORROW!**



**TOGETHER, OUR
VOICE WILL PROTECT
AND CONSERVE
THE FUTURE OF FLY
FISHING IN BRITISH
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The BC Federation of Fly Fishers (BCFFF) is a registered, non-profit society whose main objective is to promote the conservation of the fishing environment in British Columbia. By networking with similarly minded clubs, organizations, businesses and individuals, the BCFFF provides a voice that reflects its members' and the public's concern for the future of BC's natural resources.

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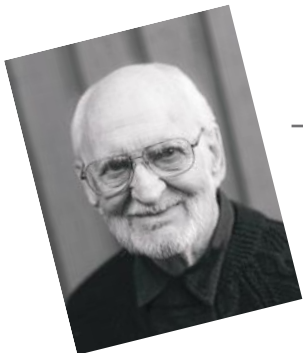
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BCFFF MISSION, VALUES, VISION

Mission: We are a federation of individual anglers and fly-fishing clubs. We advocate cooperatively with governments and other organizations throughout British Columbia for the sustainability of fish, their habitats, and quality angling

Values: We believe that fly fishing increases personal well being, encourages high environmental appreciation and knowledge, and instills commitment to achieving positive conservation outcomes

Vision: Ensuring a future that sustains accessible, quality angling in British Columbia

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Cover Photo: Pat George



Myles Armstead

President's Message

"In the depth of winter, I finally learned that there was in me an invincible summer."

(Albert Camus)

Winter is a challenging time for the BC fly-fisher, with declining runs of steelhead and changing weather conditions which seem to be the "new" normal in today's world. And yet we sojourn on, as do our beloved steelhead, albeit in far less numbers than a few short decades ago.

But there is always hope; anticipation that the next cast will be rewarded with a silver fish, and a dream that our conservation efforts will help preserve and restore for future generations the once-prolific runs of the fish we love.

I believe, in spite of the challenges facing anadromous fish, that we have many reasons to feel optimistic about steelhead. In this issue of Fly Lines, you will read about the work that the BCFFF has been conducting with governments (including First Nations), as well as other conservation organizations to help improve fish and fisheries in BC.

From a BCFFF organization perspective, we have launched a new website and have already seen an increase in membership as a result. The work that has been conducted on the Provincial Angling Advisory Team (PAAT) and the Sport Fishing Advisory Board (SFAB) by our directors, and specifically Michael Barr, has gone a long way to protecting residential angler's interests. The BCFFF believes that by finding common ground with all stakeholders, and building on that, we can ensure there will be quality angling for residential anglers for generations to come.

I would also like to make special mention of two of our directors, who have both decided to step down: Jim Culp and Don Grimway.

Jim has been a passionate conservationist for decades and continues to work very hard as a member of the BCFFF. He is now focused on local issues in the Lower Skeena, and is one of our key people in that region.

Don, who has been a director for over 30 years, was instrumental in representing the BCFFF at outdoor events, and more recently as Membership Director. His devotion to the BCFFF and what we stand for has been consistent over many decades.

The BCFFF is now over 50 years old. Our ability to adapt and change, while maintaining our commitment to quality angling and conservation, means our future is secure and I believe is bright.

Should you be interested in learning more about our board, either by joining one of our committees or by contributing in some other way, please feel free to reach out to Brian, Michael or myself.

Meanwhile, may your winter be full of hope and the tightest of lines!

Myles Armstead

President of the BC Federation
of Fly Fishers



Brian Smith

Editor's Message

Here we are in the middle of a fly fisher's other season; for me, nicely retired and still quite healthy, it seems the older I get the more time I have to spend doing things I really want to do: tying flies, building a rod, assembling shadow boxes of the "Classics", writing, and now putting together your Fly Lines. Myles and I are really enjoying working with the clubs and our fellow mentors to put these issues in digital print. We cannot do them without your help and support. Thank you!

The theme for this issue is "Winter Steelhead". The further I delved into it, the more I realized that the "real" story is the demise of this once incredible, prolific race of wild fish, which once came to our Island and Lower Mainland streams in droves. The irony is that these steelhead do not face the trials and tribulations of summer-run fishes, who blatantly die as by-catch casualties in commercial and other gill nets strung along their natal river mouths on the Pacific coastline of BC and the US states. Let's face it, we screwed up. When we could kill a steelhead, we did so. When we should have prevented bad logging practices in their home streams, or stopped dumping pollution into their estuaries, we didn't. Many of us who love steelhead cried out, but we were not heard nor heeded. We were helpless in our plight. Please forgive us for showing you a photo of a killed steelhead — it was 1973, and you could do so!

Our feature club this issue is the Osprey Fly Fishers of BC, the second oldest in the province. The Ospreys have done a lot for the BCFFF. Their members were on the founding team of the Federation, and one, if not the earliest, to join us as a club. Osprey members have served on the BCFFF board continually since our inception.

In memorial, we remember Skip Young, a man who was a true conservation

presence during his lifetime. He was the founder of Trout Unlimited, a member of the Loons Fly Fishing Club, and I'm told a wonderful person to be around. If you believe in "Fishing Heaven" as I do, we will see him again.

Our history article is once again presented by Art Lingren, and it features the immortal Kim Kilburn, one of the first gurus to talk to us in print about fly fishing in BC. Jim was a great student of biology and what made insects tick. He left behind a legacy of writings and drawings that were of the pioneering spirit of BC fly-fishing. With the Kilburn family's blessings, the BCFFF is archiving this arsenal of fly-fishing history, and we will be featuring many of them in upcoming issues of Fly Lines.

In Back Casts, we go back in time when you could kill a steelhead, and pass to you a photo and diary article by Osprey John Hamill; a 1973 fish-out on the Nanaimo River.

Our guest feature article is by Pat Micek, Past President of BCFFF. The story is about a winter steelhead stream, the Cowichan, one of the island's finest. Pat takes us on a journey through

both the eyes of an old timer, OT, and the lens of a young steelheader just beginning his experiences on the Cowichan. It's a good read!

Our fly-tying feature was coming from the bench of Katy Watson, who does a great job of painstakingly tying the "Classics" patterns of salmon and steelhead flies, but Katy has had to bow out for this issue to look after a personal issue. I'm sorry, but you will have to put up with me again. I'll tie a G.P. in the original style.

When we Pick a Fishing Brain, it's Peter Caverhill's turn to be in the limelight. I think some of us were still living at home with our parents when Pete took up fly-fishing. Pete has served on the BCFFF board for at least forty years, as President for many of them, and is now an esteemed director. When you read his stuff, you will realize that he has had a good ride! Most of us old timers remember and were around for the nostalgic Bryan Adams tune "The Summer of '69". Please sing along with Pete in his "Summer of '63"!

We include reports on a bit of Conservation stuff we have been working on, an interesting blog by Robert Lackey, the link passed to us by Bob Hooton. We also update you on our work with the Steelhead Committee and Selective Fishing.

Happy New Year 2024!
Enjoy your magazine!

Brian Smith, Editor

Club News/Reports

LOONS FLY FISHING CLUB

Fall 2023 Report

By Rick Boswell

We had seven members and guests travel to Cache Creek in mid-August for our annual summer get-together. The weather was clear and hot, the river was at a fishable level and there were fish moving about, and at times actively feeding. I'd say the fishing was only fair, but the camaraderie was exceptional. Cache Creek had been hit hard with flooding during the spring and the businesses were just getting their doors open, so I think the local restaurants and the Riverside Motel appreciated our visit.

Several avid fly fishers took advantage of the weather and water conditions during mid-

September to venture into the Lower Skagit. Our Gilly Jim White, who has fished the river for decades, did an excellent job of putting us all onto fish, all the while doing diligence by taking regular water temps and ensuring we put as little stress on the fish as possible. The real adventure was in walking/wading the river — the Skagit is truly one of Canada's gems.

Transition from summer to fall to winter ended with our annual Christmas Party, hosted by Master Host Wayne G.

During the Fall, we were saddened by the passing of long-time Loon member Bruce R. (Skip) Young. Skip gave his

time freely and generously to the enhancement of trout fishing in Canada. He founded Trout Unlimited Canada over fifty years ago while living in Montreal, and he left an indelible mark on the preservation of cold-water habitat in Canada. He was a past member of the BC Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and Director Emeritus of Trout Unlimited Canada. Skip's contributions to trout and salmon fishing should be an inspiration to us all. In 2024 Skip's favourite fishing hole on the Skookumchuck River will be officially designated "Skip's Run". Tight Lines Skip.

CARIBOO-CHILCOTIN FF

Report Fall '23

By Paul Carnes

The club took our annual fish-out to the Bella Coola River in early October, but unfortunately, we were washed out by a deluge of October rain, which made the river un-fishable as the glacial run-off turned the water a muddy-brown. We had a great turnout for our December social, the highlight of which is to finalize our fish-outs for 2024 (they are a secret to members only!) We also planned our fly-tying sessions for next year, which is where we learn about the top-secret, fish-catching fly patterns which members cooked up during the current season. Membership does have its privileges!

We wish BCFFF all the best in 2024. Thank you for being our voice!

OSPREY FLY FISHERS OF BC

Fall Report 2023

By Bruce Brandhorst, President

The Osprey Fly Fishers enjoyed this fall's fishing with productive fish-out at Corbett Lake in early October, while another group of members went to fish Vancouver Island beaches for Cohos. There was also a massive run of pink salmon in the Fraser system that many of us enjoyed. The pink salmon run on the Squamish system was low by historical standards, but better than two years ago. The Coho run into the lower Fraser system was excellent by recent standards, and some of the spring salmon runs were very strong. All of this activity provided many fishing opportunities for

members, including many Saturday fish-outs; however, crowds of gear fishers (who have increased a lot since Covid-19) make swinging many of the better runs difficult for us fly-fishers.

Returns of chum salmon remained well below normal. Hopefully, the closure of the recreational and commercial chum fishery will reduce the Interior steelhead by-catch. Late in the season, DFO, in its peculiar wisdom, shut down fishing for wild Coho, while allowing



Osprey Totems dinner 2023

retention of hatchery Coho. It's frustrating, because now we must develop a selective fly pattern that only hatchery Coho will bite!

We finished the year with our annual December dinner with the Totem Fly Fishers

and guests. Vice President Craig Graham organized an excellent event, with good food, a successful auction, and an enthralling presentation by photographer Fernando Lessa.

Happy New Year and tight lines for all!

KALAMALKA FLY FISHERS

Report Fall 2023

By Bob Tait

Kalamalka Fly Fishers started the fall season with our annual club barbeque, hosted by one of our members and attended by a total of 58 members and their families. The club supplies burgers, hot dogs & soft drinks and the members kicked in with appetizers, salads and desserts. If anyone went home hungry, it was their own fault....

Throughout the fall, our club has seen an increase in attendees at club meetings on Monday nights, primarily because of our excellent "education" nights. These can be anything, from a fly-tying night where a member leads or demos a fly or technique, to having invited guest speakers. Three recent examples are evenings where a member led an informational discussion on ice fishing--what you are going to need to get started, and what to expect on the ice. This was followed the next week with a session on safety on the ice, which led into a whole group discussion about safety on the water, from lakes to difficult classes of river water, how to use a compass, and to the latest satellite gadgets and what they can add to our peace of mind. Everyone attending that night either added to the discussion and/or learned something new.

One of our most-attended educational meetings was on the stocking of lakes: how it is determined which lakes are to be stocked, which

species is stocked, how it's stocked, and also why lakes are stocked as opposed to letting natural processes occur. We are fortunate that one of our members, Jason Webster, is a fish biologist who is very versed in lake stocking issues. Jason is a wealth of information, and can make for a very entertaining evening!

The club has been pretty active throughout the year in outreach programs. For example, in November two of our members attended George Pringle Community School to introduce students to fly tying, and over two sessions they taught an introduction to fly-tying to a small number of interested students.

Beginning in December, we will commence our rod building evenings, which is open to any Kal Fly Fishers member who is interested in building his or her own rod. Jack Butula, who supervises our workshops, has been building rods for our club raffle for many years, and we usually have six to eight members building their rods every January.

We recently reviewed and



Steelhead by Jesse Blake

updated our manuals and aids for the "Introduction to Fly Tying Course" we offer every January/February. This course is part of our fund raising for the club, and is offered in conjunction with the Vernon Parks and Recreation Winter Activities programming. The course begins January 16th and will run for six weeks.

The club has also struck a committee to review our bylaws and procedures in an effort to up-date them, and to implement a few changes which we hope will streamline our operation. Surprisingly, we had no problem putting together three different committees this fall: Bylaws, City Grant funds, and one for a review of our fly-tying course. We must be doing something right to have such great participation and involvement!

Lastly, the club is renewing it's drive to set up "clear your gear" stations in a few local fishing retail outlets, which we hope will start a recycling movement to clean up and dispose of used monofilament and fluorocarbon fishing lines. We have targeted four locations in the area, which we expect to be participating by the start of the 2024 season.

TOTEM FLY FISHERS

Club Update for Fall 2023

By Lorenzo Cirillo

The Totems finished up a successful four weeks on the Dean ending in early September. The fishing was reasonable for three of the four groups, but it is more about the experience of the Dean than the fish that were brought to hand. Two of our members managed to hook tagged fish, which earned them a tidy little sum of cash as well as being entered for a final draw for a Spey rod. Wouldn't you know it, one of our members won the rod as well!

Other fall outings included the Harrison River and Squamish River. The Harrison outing was well attended, but did not offer up many Coho. As usual, the members enjoyed a great lunch hosted by our outing's chairman. The Squamish River outing was cancelled due to extremely poor river conditions.

In summary, the Totems enjoyed a very rewarding year under the presidency of Scott Norris. He did an amazing job of dealing with some challenges and kept our club moving forward into 2024. Congratulations goes out to our new president, Carlo Ng. Speaking for the club, we are grateful that we had a safe and rewarding year with many memories made on various B.C. waters. The Totems extend their best wishes and holiday greetings to all affiliated members of the B.C. Federation of Fly Fishers. Best of luck and tight lines in 2024!

Club News/Reports

KAMLOOPS FLY FISHERS

Report Fall 2023

By Len Pigg, President

Our new executive will be meeting early in 2024. Our membership is currently at 53 paid members, and we have asked our members to pay before December 31st so we can pay our dues to BCWF & BCFF.

Our bone-fishing trip to the Bahamas was a success, and we will report on that at our January monthly meeting and provide dates and pricing for 2024. As McArthur said "I shall return" so shall we return to the Bahamas?

We had fourteen people sign up for our rod building classes which commenced in December, building 17 rods, which should be completed by the end of January.

We will hold an ice fishing

Kamloops FF LP photo



World FF Championships hosting



Team Canada celebrating Silver Medal



fish-out on January 13th if the weather stays cold enough. Smokies over an open fire at noon...mm good! Ice fishing fish-outs are a great way to get members together in the winter.

Brian Chan & Dale Freschi from SFOTF will do a presentation on blob-fishing to our Fly Tying 101/Method Session in February.

The club is organizing a Fly-Casting session for beginners & advanced casters sometime in late March/early April, just before ice off.

The club was one of a group of many volunteers which hosted the mixed World Fly Fishing Championship held in Kamloops during September; a great success in which Canada won the silver medal. Some of the participants



Len enjoying the Bahamas

used drogues, a parachute-style device which is trolled on a long line from the boat's stern, and which slows the craft down to allow drift-casting while fishing lakes. You can cover a lot of water with this method, and our plan is to have a Fly Tying 101/Method Session on their use.

Attached are several photos taken at the event: one of me (Len) with Baz Reece on my left, and Bernie Maher (England Team Captain) on my right at Jocko Lake; another is of Silver Medal winning Team Canada celebrating their win.

COMOX VALLEY FLY FISHERS

Club Report Dec 19, 2023

By Dean Hodgson, President

Another nature blessed us this late summer and fall. Pink salmon showed up by the boatload in August, followed in September by the best Coho numbers in years. Spring salmon numbers were down a little, but the hatcheries eventually made their quotas. Chum salmon numbers were way down; fishing for them in any manner in any location was closed.

A low water table in the Oyster River prevented any river fishing in early fall, and then when we did get rain, the river was a blowout. The Puntledge and the Campbell Rivers fished well for springs, Coho and pink salmon.

Beach fishing has become very popular down in these parts, with anglers covering the beaches from Campbell River south to Parksville.

Our club had a great beach fish-out/hotdog barbecue at Miracle Beach in September, and we just finished our

Dean Hodgson & Cam Lewis



Dean Hodgson photo



annual Christmas party/silent auction fundraiser. Money was raised (more so this year as Tom Murray cleaned out his closets and donated lots of great items), deserving volunteers were recognized, and stories were told!

Mild weather this winter has found some of our guys out on our stocked lakes, and doing rather well, but we are already looking forward to spring, as we now have a local lake which has been stocked with kokanee triploids that are of eatable size. Us West Coasties will be pestering the interior folks for patterns that work for the kokanee, as this is a new game for us.

Winter steel-heading is just starting, although most of us with old hands that will no longer take the cold don't partake any longer, but we still have some members that do. As ever, we are hopeful for increasing numbers of fish.

Our regular fly-tying nights will see us through the winter months until spring, when we will all have a great hatch of new flies to try out.

HAIG-BROWN
FLY FISHING ASSOCIATION

Fall Happenings

By Ken Marsh

The Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association (HBFFA) is now under the able guidance of our recycled president, Mr. Pat George whose profile was recently featured in Flylines. In addition to being an enthusiastic fly fisher, Pat is an energetic and convivial president and a creative artist whose works have been donated to many fly fishing organizations, including the BCFFF. COVID put a significant dent in the Haig-Brown membership and Pat is working hard at rebuilding enthusiasm with social activities and fishouts. The club maintains a website <https://www.haigbrown.ca> which provides some information about the club's activities and contact information for those who would like to learn more.

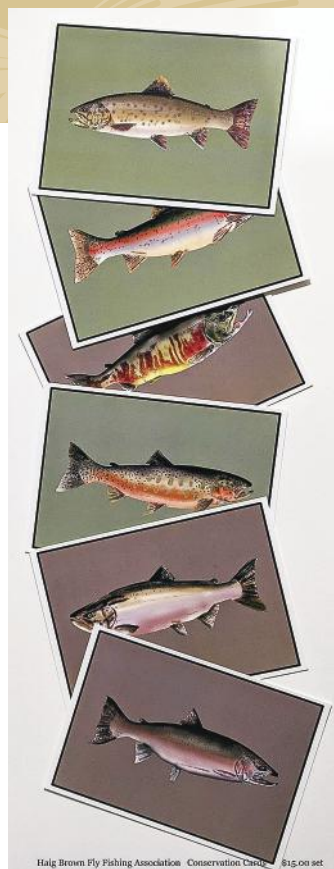
Our former president, Margaret Greenway has made it a point to bring our club into more modern times with the introduction of Facebook and Instagram sites which also post info about the club and members' fishing activities. The club meets on the second Wednesday of the month from September through May at 1575 Lyall Street in Esquimalt and also hosts a fly tying demo by Dave Robinson the following Wednesday. See our website for details.

August saw many of the club members beach fishing for pinks further north on the

Island with modest success, but doing much better when joining the throngs on the Campbell for pink salmon fishing. October saw the HBFFA joining the Westcoast Fly Fishers on the Sooke River for a barbeque and BS session before seeking out some of those feisty chums that populate the Sooke at that time of the year.

Not intimidated by one of the few genuinely chilly days this fall, early December found a hardy band of HBFFA anglers casting for coho on the Cowichan. Although remarkably unsuccessful, they were rewarded with some tasty smokies and chili which were shared with other appreciative anglers who happened by.

December events wrapped up with a well-attended and very nice Christmas party



Haig Brown Fly Fishing Association Conservation Cards \$15.00 set

hosted at the Cedar Hill Golf Course in Victoria. A great dinner was followed by our own James Tepoorten providing singing renditions

of fishing mishaps and a raffle that provided prizes for nearly everyone.

The HBFFA revised its popular Cowichan River Map in 2022 and has been continuing to make it available through a number of Island sporting goods stores. It has continued to be a successful fundraiser for the club with money going to our Conservation Fund to support local initiatives. Adding to this, is a set of art cards produced by Pat George. The cards, which depict several BC sport fish, are also offered for sale through Island shops. This year the club donated \$1000 to the Nature Trust of BC to assist in the purchase of 36 acres of undeveloped land on the Little Qualicum River. We look forward to contributing to similar projects.

POLAR COACHMAN

Fall Update December 2023

By Jeff Kormos, President

The mild weather of the late summer lasted deep into the fall this year, providing members of the Polar Coachman Flyfishers extended access to our favourite fly-fishing spots.

Regular business meetings resumed in October. The clubhouse was filled with stories of this year's trophies, mishaps and memories as we wound down another fantastic season on our treasured northern waters. We enjoyed getting together to tie flies again, bringing together both young and old, beginner and experienced members to tie

and demo the proven patterns of the season.

Our regular business meetings have been well-attended as we plan and respond to opportunities in our region to advance conservation efforts. We are also busy planning for our awards, elections, fundraising and other official business in the New Year. We had a great turnout for the Christmas potluck and gift exchange. A massive spread of

delicious food and some fierce rounds of the annual gift steal made the night a memorable one. While we hunker down for winter, we are excited to meet, reflect and to tie and plan for the coming season in anticipation of the mild weather's return.



PC Christmas Party potluck dinner

The Osprey Fly Fishers of BC

by Sandy McKinlay

The Ospreys, who celebrated their 50th Anniversary in 2019, have the distinction of being the second oldest fly fishing club to form in British Columbia. As is the case with any organization, there have been ups and downs — there have been battles which have divided the club — but the Osprey’s have persevered while others have faltered.



The Skagit River has always been a favourite for a fall day trip. Typically, the fall fishery is beautiful — the weather is good and the river can be waded. Hopefully, access to the river re-opens this fall after the devastating floods in 2022.

Back in 1969, there were only two fishing clubs in British Columbia. One was a saltwater group out of Campbell River. The other was the Totem Fly Fishers of Vancouver — a fly fishing club which had formed only two years earlier in 1967. The Totems had earned a lofty reputation within the fly fishing community and had also capped their membership.

The Ospreys owe their existence to the fact that the Totems were not accepting any new memberships. It all began at the Sportsman Show in Vancouver in 1968 where the Totem Fly Fishers had a booth. As the only fly fishing club in the Lower Mainland, they had attracted the interest of numerous fly fishers aspiring to become Totems. Thor Froslev was manning the booth when Peter Caverhill and Mike Wolfe, two of the founding

members of the Ospreys, approached with yet another inquiry about joining the Totems. Thor suggested the formation of another club and passed along the names and phone numbers of a bunch of guys wanting to join the Totems.

The first organizational meetings were held in Peter Caverhill’s one bedroom apartment. At one of these early meetings, all those attending were asked to think of a name for the newly formed club. Mike Wolfe put forward “The Osprey Fly Fishers of BC” and after about an hour’s deliberation, this was the name chosen. In March 1970, the club’s first constitution was signed by its original 12 members. By the fall of that same year, the club had grown to 18 members — three of whom are still members.

The Ospreys were one of the founding

clubs of the BC Federation of Fly Fishers in 1973. They have continued to support and participate in this umbrella organization over the decades. Five Ospreys have served as President of the BCFFF — Gil Sage, Peter Caverhill, Gord Bacon, Dave Kearney and Dan Cahill — some serving multiple terms. Osprey Don McDermid took over direction of the BCFFF newsletter in 1983 and with him, came the name “Fly Lines”. Don was editor of the newsletter for only two years — but “Fly Lines” stuck and continues to be used.

The Osprey News was the club’s primary form of communication. Back in the early 70’s, it appeared as faint type on several pages spewed from a wonky, borrowed Gestetner. Back in those days, there were no personal computers, no internet, no faxes, no answering machines or cell phones. The News was a printed hardcopy and delivered by Canada Post. The content for the newsletter was contributed in its entirety by the membership — articles written by the members — graphics and cartoons drawn by members.

With the evolution of technology, particularly over the past 20 years, the Osprey News has evolved. The only form of delivery is now by e-mail. Members continue to make contributions to the News but to a much lesser extent. With the evolution of the internet and the enormous amount of on-line content, interesting articles about various aspects of fly fishing are cherry picked and re-printed in the News.

More importantly, the Ospreys have developed and maintain their own website. This is an important resource for members as they can refer to it for a wealth of information — upcoming events, fly patterns and archived newsletters.

Early in the club’s evolution, its



Current club president, Bruce Brandhorst, with the elusive Permit, landed on the club’s most recent trip to Xcalak, Mexico.



Method Sessions have always been a key element of the Osprey Program — drawing from the membership or guest speakers. Here Dennis Gamboa is doing a fly tying demonstration for the club.



Regardless of the locale, on multi-day trips, a potluck dinner is planned.



Beach fishing for Pink Salmon at Cluxewe Resort on the north end of Vancouver Island is a bi annual event — happening on even years.

operational template was established and that hasn't changed substantially over the years. A regular meeting is held each month with guest speakers presenting on interesting topics — ranging from conservation and environmental efforts by the public and private sectors to fly fishing trips in exotic locales. In addition to the regular meeting, the club also has a monthly "method session" where a variety of topics relating to fly fishing are explored. Topics range from tying various types of flies, to first aid in the wild, to using and understanding underwater sonar, to tuning and winterizing an outboard motor. Fish outs also occur on monthly basis — ranging from day trips to local rivers and sloughs to multi-day trips to interior lakes or Vancouver Island beaches.

More recently, Henri Jover and Rudy Morzanowski took it upon themselves to organize trips to Xcalak, Mexico — a tiny fishing village just north of the Belize border. Eight to ten anglers make the trek to fish Chetumal Bay targeting bonefish, permit, barracuda and to a lesser extent, tarpon. Everything is arranged — transfers to and from Cancun, hotel accommodations, meals, and guides. The sale of the hotel used by the club into American hands has disrupted things somewhat. The club hopes to continue making these trips, but will likely have to consider alternate accommodations to keep costs in check.

While the primary function of the club is to create a spirit of fellowship and cooperation through active participation in the sport of fly fishing, the club also has a mandate to support all aspects of conservation in its programs. Over the years, the Ospreys have been active in a number of conservation

issues including the Juniper Beach Park Acquisition, the Coquihalla River "Stewardship", and the Lower Mainland Angling Regulation Signage. Possibly the greatest accomplishment was the effort of the "Skagit Anglers Committee" that joined with other groups (under the ROSS banner = Run Out Skagit Spoilers) to save the Skagit River Valley from further flooding. The SAC was largely the product of members of the Osprey Fly Fishers. Today, the primary focus has been the decline in salmon and steelhead populations in the coastal waters of British Columbia. More than anyone else, Peter Caverhill is the voice of the Ospreys in addressing environmental and conservation issues.

Perhaps the greatest strength of the club is its Open Door policy. The club has never turned away people because they weren't

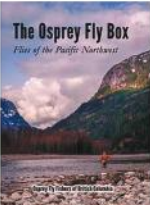
yet proficient fly fishermen. Anyone keen to learn more about the sport is welcomed by the club as a guest. History tells us that any club or volunteer organization gets stale if it prohibits the inclusion of new faces and new ideas. A quick look at the current executive and directors bears this out — the majority joined the club as "uninvited guests". Many of our hardest working members joined the club as a guest — having initially learned about the club from an internet search or the club brochure. As a result of this open door policy, the club has been able to grow in numbers and strength. The future is bright.

So, there you have it — the Osprey Fly Fishers of British Columbia. The club has survived for more than 50 years and there is no reason it can't continue to thrive for another 50.

The Osprey Fly Box

Flies of the Pacific Northwest

Comprehensive Guide for BC Waters



- ◆ Published in celebration of the 50th Anniversary of the club.
- ◆ 14 Chapters – 112 pages.
- ◆ Beautiful Photography
- ◆ Over 125 flies are presented with detailed recipes.
- ◆ Fishing tips for each group of flies from an expert.

"It's rare that books come out specifically on BC. It's even rarer that the book is good, but this one is. I bought a copy. It lays out all the flies that basically cover all the major fisheries, and quite frankly, the flies in this book can get you into all those major fisheries and do them properly."

Matt Sharp, Manager
Pacific Angler, Vancouver

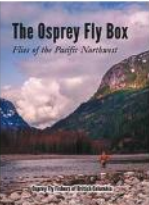
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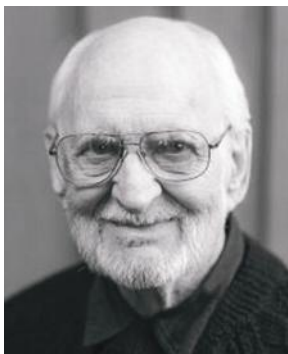
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Bruce (Skip) Young Obituary

Published by Richmond News from Nov. 23 to Dec. 23, 2023.

After a long battle with many health issues, Skip passed away peacefully in Richmond Hospital in October. He is survived by his wife Gillian; son Peter; daughter Mary (Jeff); stepdaughters Katherine (Bill) and Susan (Theo); stepson Bryan (Claire); four step-grandchildren Stephanie, Elisabeth, Tyler and Jack; and Luca, the dog. Skip's career included many chapters — photography, car racing, pipe organs and music, fishing and water conservancy.



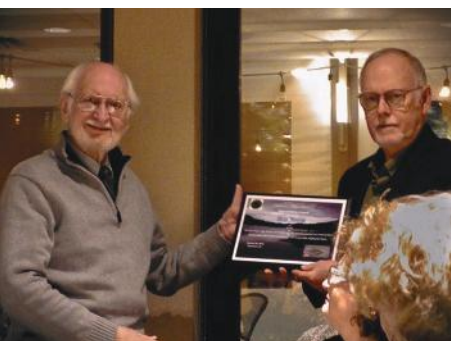
Skip Young, 2017

Skip was the founder of Trout Unlimited Canada over 50 years ago in Montreal — an organization that has left an indelible mark on the preservation of cold-water habitat in Canada. His lifelong commitment to the protection of ecosystems has defined his legacy and has inspired new generations to follow in his footsteps. He was a past member of BC's Habitat Conservation Trust Foundation and Director Emeritus of Trout Unlimited Canada, where he played a significant role in the drafting of the Pacific Salmon Treaty. Skip particularly enjoyed being a member of and engaging with

his colleagues in the Loons Fly Fishing Club.

In Skip's honour, a run of the Skookumchuck River in the West Kootenays, which he visited many times in recent years, will now be known by his many conservation and angling friends as "Skip's Run".

Skip's last working years were with Canada's foreign service, where he represented his country in Cleveland, Seattle, and Lagos, Nigeria. After many years abroad, he and Gillian returned to Canada, where he enjoyed his retirement years partaking in many local clubs and activities in Richmond, BC.



Skip Young & Peter Caverhill
October 2018

Skip Young

Saturday January 20, 2018 — Arbutus Club

Dinner and Evening to Recognize Skip for all his good work

The other night, a number of friends and associates gathered to surprise Skip and his wife, Gillian, with a dinner. The event was arranged by Skip's longtime friend, Greg Shyba, from Calgary. The evening was to honour Skip for his many decades of conservation work in Canada and BC, aimed at cold water fish such as trout and salmon. About 30 people attended, made up of folks from the Loons Fly Fishing Assn. (Skip's club in Vancouver), a few Totems, the odd Osprey, and dignitaries from Trout Unlimited Canada.

Skip, now in his 80's, has had interesting adventures over the decades. He has been a lifelong angler/fly fisher and was a Canadian diplomat for 20 years with postings throughout the world. In 1972 in Montreal, Skip was the spark (along with 6 others) that initiated Trout Unlimited Canada.

Skip came on the BCFFF scene in 2007 when both Skip and I sat on one of the Provincial government's main advisory committees, then called the "Freshwater Fisheries Regulations Advisory Committee" or FFRAC ('FishFrack'). Skip was there to rep Trout Unlimited Canada and I was representing BCFFF. Soon, Skip's

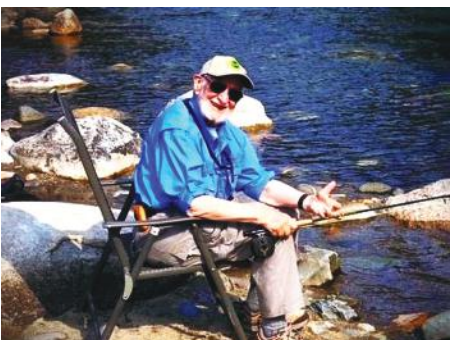
representation shifted to Trout Unlimited BC. A bit later, he sat through the advisory meetings as he represented BCFFF with me for several years.

During the 3 year period from 2008 to 2010, Skip was on the BCFFF Board, and we worked together on several BCFFF initiatives with a number of BCFFF'ites (BCFFF Succession Plan; Rod Haig-Brown centenary celebrations in 2009, among other things). Skip's long background in diplomacy and conservation was a welcome assist to our BCFFF ways, which can be wild-west-ish.

As time slides along, and the world gets crazier and crazier, the increasingly loud drone of life makes it harder to remember events and people who have given important service. Those who have gone before, too easily slip beneath our layer of remembrance.

This evening was a great opportunity for BCFFF to thank Skip for his work with our organization. BCFFF recognized Skip for his help to BCFFF with a plaque, a BCFFF pin, and a BCFFF hot/cold bottle that can be used for liquids of all sorts and temperatures (including emergency evacuations!).

Pete Caverhill, BCFFF



Skip enjoying a day on the river

IN MEMORIAL

Article by Art Lingren

Jim Kilburn

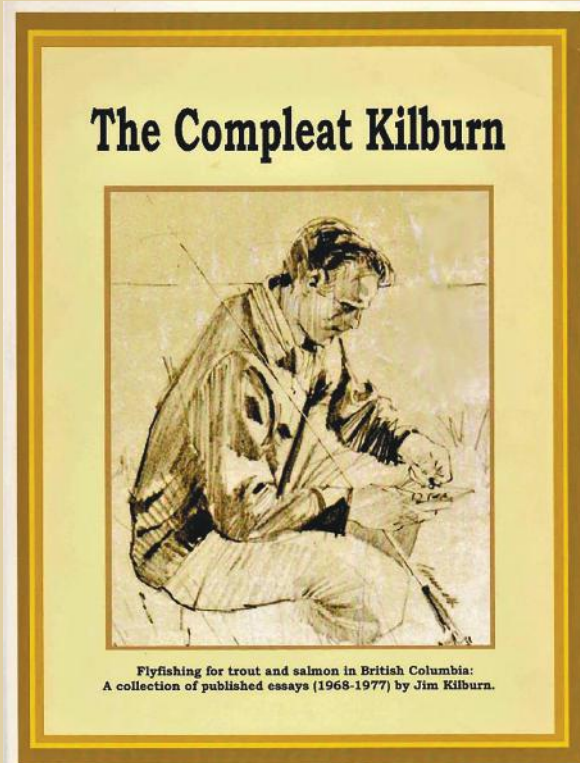
Jim lived a long life; he died on November 13, 2021, at age 94. I remember in 1967 when my neighbor across the hall in our apartment Bob Saunders asked me if I wanted to accompany him on a visit to Jim Kilburn, then living in Richmond.

I was just starting to tie trout flies and Saunders said that Jim was a well know BC fly tier. Bob wanted advice on fly materials or how to tie a specific fly, I can't recall which. Nineteen sixty-seven was the year the Totem Flyfishers came into being and Kilburn one of the founding members. Saunders joined the year after. It was before Kilburn's started authoring articles on fly fishing, and BC lake insect etymology in Western Fish & Game magazine. In the years following, I read Kilburn's articles as did other BC trout fly fishers. Jim moved to

Qualicum Beach on Vancouver Island well before I joined the Totems in 1983 and I don't recall bumping into him ever since that 1967 visit to his home.

In the past five years I have been making occasional trips to Campbell River with friends and to visit friends and see Gwen Kushner, the lady who does my special edition books. Peter Broomhall often came along on these Campbell River trips. He and Kilburn have been good friends for decades and Pete suggested we try including a visit with Jim. Jim would have been in his late eighties when we first visited and when I said my name, he recalled

AJL FB POST NOVEMBER 21, 2021



that I had visited him at his Richmond home 50 years ago. Peter, Dan Holder, and I had a short visit with Jim a few months ago and are pleased that we got to see Jim one last time. Kilburn made considerable contributions to BC fly fishing.

In the early 2000s Jim was assembling his old articles and Ian Beveridge, a Kilburn friend, helped format the articles into a book. Ian was a British Columbia Federation of Fly Fisher vice president at the time, and I was BCFFF president. Ian brought the Kilburn book proposal to the board, and we decided to fund the printing on the Kilburn book.

We didn't do a large print run but what we did sold quickly, and we did another run to satisfy demand. Jim Kilburn contributed much to BC fly fishing, and we are pleased the BCFFF was able to help preserve his contributions by publishing *The Compleat Kilburn* (2003).



“The best
laid plans of
mice and men
oft go

astray

Club Outing –

By John Hamill

Article from the
"Osprey Past"

February 4th, 1973 – Nanaimo River

"The best laid plans of mice and men oft go astray". That's how it looked prior to the scheduled February Osprey Fly Fishers Club outing of a trip to Vancouver Island's Nanaimo River.

There were reports of bank-to-bank floods; another rumour of six inches of rain in four hours had thrown a wet blanket on our enthusiasm. However, it was decided to go over and scout the river.

We clambered onto the 3-a. m. Canadian Pacific Ferry, and a bleary-eyed bunch had 6-a.m. breakfast in one of Nanaimo's more enterprising hotels, which even supplied our buddy Warren with his coveted double helping of hash brown potatoes!

Reaching the river at the main highway bridge, the group split — Warren, Blair and John went upstream and Peter, Herb and Milt headed down. There was nothing doing upstream and we were a little disappointed to find the water murky, but at about 11:00-a.m. John hooked a fine silver fish in a shallow eddy; this fish weighed in at 12-lbs.

However, there was more to come, for we kept hearing reports that three other fly fishermen were hitting "all kinds of fish". Indeed, when the group united about 5 miles downstream Herb had a beautiful fish, as silver and clean as you could imagine, and it weighed close to 14-lbs.

The fun seemed almost just to start when the fishing stopped, but everyone was in the best of spirits, fully satisfied with having had one of the most enjoyable trips ever.

As far as I am concerned the highlights were not only the two fish, but the beauty of the river, as well as sharing the day with excellent comradeship.

*(Taken from The Osprey News —
February 1973)*

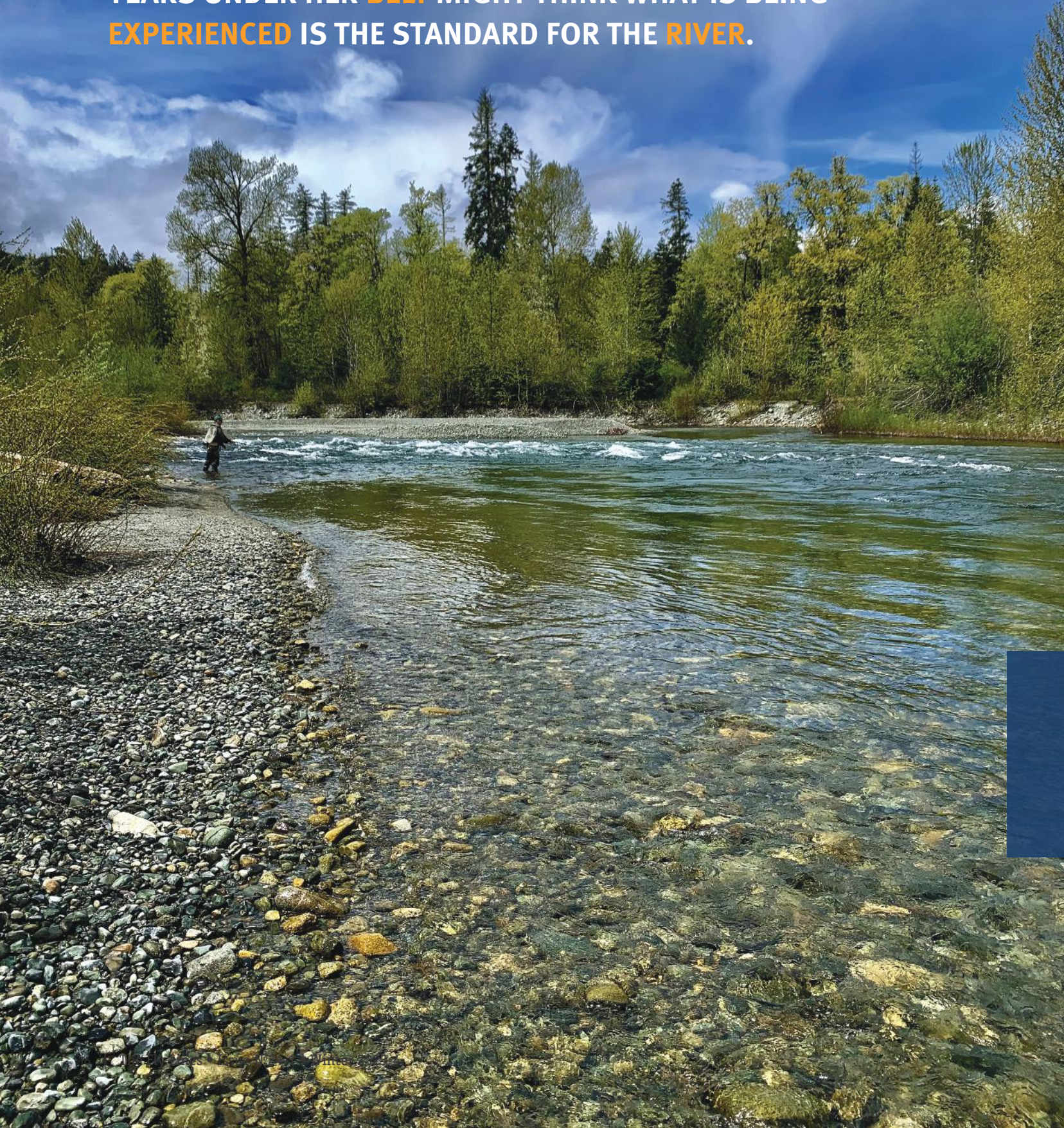
Comment from the present:

By Pete Caverhill

This article by member John Hamill and the two pictures (member Herb Spooner with his beautiful 14-pounder and members Milt Draginda and Herb choosing the "magic" steelhead fly). Herb (sadly, is now long gone) was a rough and tumble elevator mechanic, who liked to consume, and wasn't averse to a bar room challenge from time-to-time. He often contributed to the "News" with writings that were sensitive and thoughtful — who would have thought?

This article, and the pictures, also show that the steelhead streams of the east coast of Vanisle (in this case the Nanaimo River) still had plenty to offer. Since 1973, conditions went awry, steelhead returns plummeted and the rivers were closed to angling — sadly, where they still sit today. So sad!

REFLECTING ON THE RIVER IS LIKE EVERYTHING,
DEPENDENT ON **PERSPECTIVE**. OT SEES THE RIVER
AS IT ONCE WAS, WHILE AN **ANGLER** WITH FEWER
YEARS UNDER HER **BELT** MIGHT THINK WHAT IS BEING
EXPERIENCED IS THE STANDARD FOR THE **RIVER**.



A RIVER CHANGES — FOR THE LOVE OF THE COWICHAN

By Pat Micek

River's change, that is their nature. Some by the twists and turns of nature, while others are profoundly altered by human connections. The Cowichan River on Vancouver Island in British Columbia has experienced a little of both, and now struggles with conflicting pulls and pushes to maintain its status as one of British Columbia's most renowned streams.



PM Cowichan nice buck

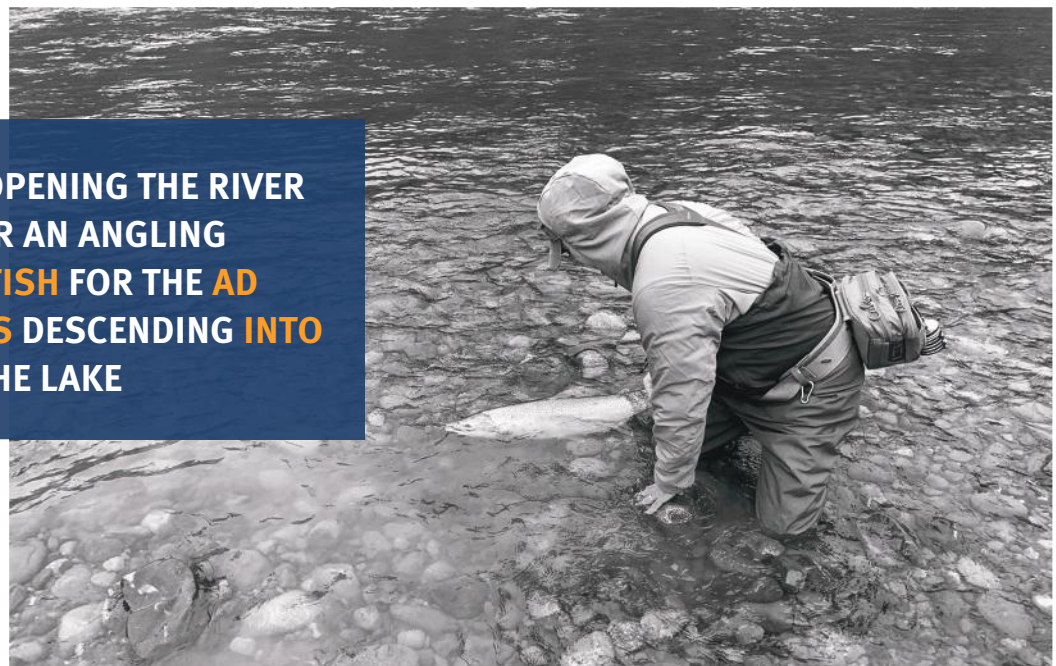
In 1995, Cowichan River was designated a Provincial Heritage River, and during that year sections of the river were placed into a Provincial Park. In 2004 the river was given a Canadian Heritage River status. The importance of the designations speaks volumes about the value of the river from a historical, cultural and recreational standpoint. This of course is the foundation for why the Cowichan River's fishery should be preserved and protected.

For two plus centuries the Cowichan River has garnered attention from anglers. To this day, despite the sometimes-challenging conditions, the river still deserves to be classed as a river of angling importance. The river's populations of three species of salmon,

steelhead, rainbow, cutthroat and brown trout presents an opportunity to angle year-round. But, in recent years, troubles with returning steelhead and salmon numbers, low water flow, temperatures too high to sustain fish health and increased angling pressure have stressed the resource and the fish.

In thinking of the Cowichan River an angler with 60 years of intimate experience was consulted. He is fondly known by his younger angling buddies as OT, which most certainly the reader can interpret. OT speaks of the Cowichan as if it were his love. He remembers the days of tree canopies that stretched from bank to bank, providing shade during the sweltering afternoons of summer and offering limbs

THE REASON FOR OPENING THE RIVER WAS TO ALLOW FOR AN ANGLING OPPORTUNITY TO FISH FOR THE AD FLUVIAL RAINBOWS DESCENDING INTO THE RIVER FROM THE LAKE





▶ hanging down like fingers in the river providing safe havens for young fish. He speaks of days in winter when steelhead in the upper section of the river, above Skutz Fall, would be jostling for spawning position in numbers that got your attention from 100 metres away. He tells of times when hatches of caddis or mayflies would fill the air as mist, when yellow sally and golden stoneflies would crawl up waders, and when trout would feast on the insect morsels as they floated by fish lies.

It isn't that the Cowichan River doesn't provide

some of what was remembered, but rather it is now less profound, or in some cases almost non-existent. Like OT, the river has changed: the canopy is thinner, the bank more tattered, and the pace of users around it more pronounced. Time hasn't been totally favorable.

Reflecting on the river is like everything, dependent on perspective. OT sees the river as it once was, while an angler with fewer years under her belt might think what is being experienced is the standard for the river. What we have now is a generational divide of

viewpoints. The same can be said for the way the river should be managed. Some believe the river is offering adequate fishing, enough to maintain the current management regulations. Others, like OT, see the river as it once was. The question begged is whose view is more accurate? Of course, that isn't the precise question. The question should be:

“When evaluating an angling experience for a Heritage River like the Cowichan, what should drive the management practice?” For OT that answer is simple, two things should be drivers: preserving the fish populations of the river at optimal levels and ensuring a quality angling experience.

It is hard to fault those with narrower experience of the river, because their frame of reference is limited. They don't understand what once was and how it shapes the context and interests of others proposed management practices. History has a way of informing our viewpoint. However, it is very important for those who angle on the Cowichan River to understand that what is doesn't reflect the full scope of the rivers past fishery and angling opportunities. And, to assume the current conditions are the benchmark for management is dangerous.

The days that have flowed past OT may not ever be experienced again. Who knows? One thing is for sure, managing the Cowichan River as if today is the benchmark will most likely serve to doom it. Several relatively new events are influencing the river's health. OT sees angling pressure, particularly in the upper river as an issue contributing to the decline of spawning steelhead in the upper section of the river. The number of anglers on the upper river from November to March was few 30–40 years ago. Today anglers walk and wade and drift in numbers that are much higher. Guided and non-guided anglers drifting the river have blossomed into flotillas, remarkably targeting key areas, and sometimes anchoring next to or on runs where spawners are present. Additionally, anglers have available a much wider variety of gear that accommodates a range of conditions with a higher percentage of hook-ups. This of course means that even with a smaller population of fish, the sense of success remains relatively high. So, fish are being hooked multiple times, and this presents a real problem for the declining populations of resident fish and most importantly steelhead. A hatch of boats sailing down the river dropping anchors and disturbing spawning fish is



a regular occurrence, and anchors present a threat to the spawning beds.

So, as OT sees it you have a conundrum of sorts. Anglers with narrow experience see the river as it is, and find it somewhat acceptable, and the OTs of the river see it as it was, and ask for help to save it from the decline that is so obvious to them. Recent events have added another strike to the threat the river faces.

In the early summer of 2023, the upper section (a specific section from Skutz Falls to the 70.2-mile trestle, but possibly in other areas) experienced a kill of aquatic life, including invertebrates and fish. The kill sent shivers up the spines of many who angle on the rivers. Government managed to close the upper section of the river, but as of November 15th reopened a section of the upper river from the trestle to the town. The reason for opening the river was to allow for an angling opportunity to fish for the ad fluvial rainbows descending into the river from the lake. With this decision many questions are developed, but the one most important one is:

“How does allowing angling work to preserve and protect the remaining fish in the upper section of the river?” From the position of OT, it questions the reasoning of government and of those who espouse to support fish.

There most certainly isn't any way to know whether or not angling will detrimentally



affect the fishery of the upper section of Cowichan River; however, it is known that any idea that the precautionary principle is being practiced is a pipe dream.

OT will walk the river and watch the flotillas move down stream, stopping and occasionally dragging anchors through redds, and watch anglers shuffle through spawning beds, or cast to fish actively spawning. He will remember a time when the section of river from the trestle to town was closed from November to

April to provide a haven for spawning fish. The lone steelhead he spots moves back and forth waiting to be accompanied, but he wonders, "Will it be joined?"

*Pat Micek,
Past President of BCFFF*

Who is looking out for our fish?



By Michael Barr

Wise conservation measures and smart regulations sustain great angling opportunities.

While variations in angling success are accepted as normal, long-term declines are a warning flag to both anglers and fishery managers alike. We entrust government managers to be monitoring and adjusting for these changes on our behalf, and blame them when problems occur. An alternative approach actually lies with our control; harness the experience of our members who intimately know these lakes and rivers and angling practices to help prevent or proactively address local problems.

Enter the angling advisory world. Both provincial and federal governments hold ultimate authority and responsibility for conservation and regulatory decisions affecting recreational angling. Recognizing this special knowledge anglers possess; they have created formal advisory committee systems to tap into that insight to help assess priorities and support decision-making. Advice is sought both at the local level (e.g. BCFFF club representatives and other anglers) and provincial scale (e.g. organizations or associations) for both federal and provincial agencies. Access to key fishery staff is also enabled through this process.

So the answer to who is ultimately looking out for the fish is ... us!

To this end, the BCFFF is currently launching a provincial campaign to re-energize our membership and Board of Directors (BOD) to engage significantly with both agencies at both levels. It can be tedious work, but 'being at the table' is the only way to ensure that abundant fish, healthy habitat and quality angling practices are realized. BOD efforts over

the last 1–2 years have already yielded impressive achievements, and respect for the BCFFF as an important voice has risen among its peers. Stay tuned for how you or your club may increase your existing influence if already engaged or how to take that initial step, if not.

BC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition hosts MLAs event.

Members of the BC Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition — including BCFFF — hosted MLA and Government officials at events in Victoria on October 18, 2023 (<https://fwhbc.ca/>). Key messages were delivered directly to key Ministers and staff:

- 1) **Improve management of fish, wildlife and habitat across BC;**
- 2) **strengthen nature in BC through landscape protection**
- 3) **increase and dedicate funding for fish, wildlife and habitat.**

Minister Nathan Cullen (BC Land, Water

and Resource Stewardship, provincial fisheries file), commended the initiative and acknowledged the value of this Coalition in providing 'one voice' for conservation in BC.

The Fish, Wildlife and Habitat Coalition represents 27 groups with diverse interests from environmental non-government organizations, hunting and angling guides, conservation organizations, wildlife viewing, ecotourism, naturalists, hunters, anglers and trappers with over 273,000 members and more than 900 businesses across the Province of British Columbia. The Coalition was formed to advocate for biodiversity and ecosystem health and the restoration of long-term sustainability of fish, wildlife and habitat in BC.

BCFFF is a proud member of the Coalition and acknowledges a duty to collaborate with partners advocating for broad conservation policies, not just our own interests. BCFFF representatives directly engaged in conversation with key Ministers and staff on BCFFF's role and the issues important to our members.



The General Practitioner

By Brian Smith

If you are a salmon or steelhead fly fisher who plies coastal streams anywhere in the world, it is very hard to go wrong if the first fly you test the water with is a G. P. Just as the diet of trout which reside in lakes mainly consists of freshwater shrimp and scuds, the diet of anadromous (sea-going) fish is largely made up of ocean crustaceans; shrimp, prawns and crabs being the major contributors.

In the British Isles, during the early years of the nineteenth century, many anglers used live shrimp on their hooks to fish for salmon. The practice was banned by the landowners in the 1950's, and prompted many fishers to get creative and come up with alternative ways to get their fish. Lt. Colonel Esmond Drury of Great Britain developed the original pattern, which he called the G. P. because of his use of the golden pheasant feathers, which make up a large portion of the pattern. Apparently, the Brits felt offended by the name G. P. as this is their slang word for a 'doctor', and so felt changing the name to General Practitioner would be more appropriate.

The G. P. begs to be fished with a floating line, especially in low water conditions of late summer, as by tumbling through a likely holding lie, it tends to stimulate aggressive strikes from fish that are just "hanging around" waiting for tides or whatever before they move upriver. You could also weight the pattern in the front end, which would impart an up-and-down bobbing movement as the fly travels through the seams of a river. During winter, as water temperatures dip below 40 degrees F. and fish tend to not move for the

fly, a sink-tip line and short 4-foot leader will get your fly into holding zones better than the floater, and can improve your hook-up ability.

Alternative colours to orange for this pattern are black and purple, using the same golden pheasant tippet feathers, but subbing the body dubbings, hackles and feathers with dyed-black or purple tones. These dark patterns are really good steelhead colours, and have been faithfully used by anglers for many, many years on their favourite rivers. The G. P. has also spawned many creative derivatives that have become mainstays in our fly boxes, Art Lingren's Indispensable being the most prominent in my collection.

I have yet to find a copy or photo of the Col. Esmond Drury's original pattern; however, I can guarantee you that it looks similar, but nothing like the Davie McPhail pattern which I have chosen to tie for us. There are as many variations as there are fly tiers, but generally speaking, it needs to swim correctly, and wing placement is the key to that feature. If it looks like a prawn and acts like a prawn, the fish will take it like a prawn — slowly and deliberately.

The General Practitioner's Pattern

Hook:	Mustad S71 #1-4
Thread:	UTC 70 fluorescent hot orange
Tag/Ribs:	Gold embossed tinsel
Tail:	hot orange bucktail, body length
Over-tail:	golden pheasant tippet; golden pheasant feather on top, slightly longer than the tippet
Body:	hot orange seal's fur dubbing; 2 sections, both separated with over-wings of golden pheasant tippet and g. p. feather
Hackles:	fire orange saddles, palmered through the body sections and then ribbed counter-clockwise with the gold tinsel



1

Tying instructions:

1 Attach your thread and rib tinsel at mid-point of the shank and take them to the point of the hook.



2 For the tag and tail. With your tinsel, make 3 wraps down the shank to the hook barb, and then 3 wraps back to the previous tie-in point, and tie-off. Measure the tail to the full length of the shank, stack the hairs to even the fibres, take it to the tie-in point, bind down, and wrap back to the middle of the shank.



3 The over-tail. Trim the chaff of a whole g. p. tippet feather, roll it in your fingers to bunch the fibres, and lay it on top of the bucktail. For length, the second band of black bars should be at the end of the total hook shank and bend. Tie it in. Secondly, choose a reddish g. p. rump feather, trim it, and tie it in on top of and slightly longer than the tippet feather. Photo is in step 4.

Tip: Whole feathers have a tendency to roll when tying them in, because their stem is round. I use a non-serrated pair of pliers, and crush the feather stem flat so it will not roll. I tie the feather down, and then pull the stem backward to fit the length I am looking for. Handy tip for all of your tying-down of whole feathers.



4 Body section 1. Tie a dubbing loop of fur in at the half-way point of the shank, take it down to the tinsel, and return to the tie-in point.



5 Hackle. Tie the hackle in, tip first, at the half-way point of the shank, wrap it down to the tinsel, and return to the tie-in point, palmering all the way down and back. A good G. P. should be "leggy".
Tip: When you tie a hackle in, stroke the barbs back from the stem near the tip, tie-in on the stem shiny (concave) side forward to the hook eye, and then give a little tug to separate the feather about a cm. from the body. This will give a nice transition for the barbs on the first wrap of hackle.

Step 6



6

Ribs. Counter-wrap the tinsel rib forward through the hackle and tie down in front of the body section. Using a Velcro or dubbing brush, comb the hackle fibres downward and rough-up the dubbed body. Trim the hackle barbs sticking up on top of the dubbed body. Leave the remaining tinsel for the second body section.

Step 7



7

Repeat steps 3 and 4 with the g. p. tippet and top feathers. The length of the tippet feather should be stopped at the second bar of the previous tippet; the top feather slightly longer than the tippet feather.

Step 8



8

Body section 2 is a repeat of steps 4, 5 and 6.

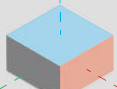
Top View



Side View



TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW

BOTTOM VIEW

Bottom View



Other colours I like to use:



SEAL FUR IN BLACK



SEAL FUR IN PURPLE



Peace '63

PICKING A "FISHING BRAIN"

PETE CAVERHILL — THE SUMMER OF '63

Brings back memories from long ago (1963) when at 21 I was #2 man on a two-man crew tasked with doing a F&W Branch Peace River fisheries survey (summer job after year 2 @UBC).

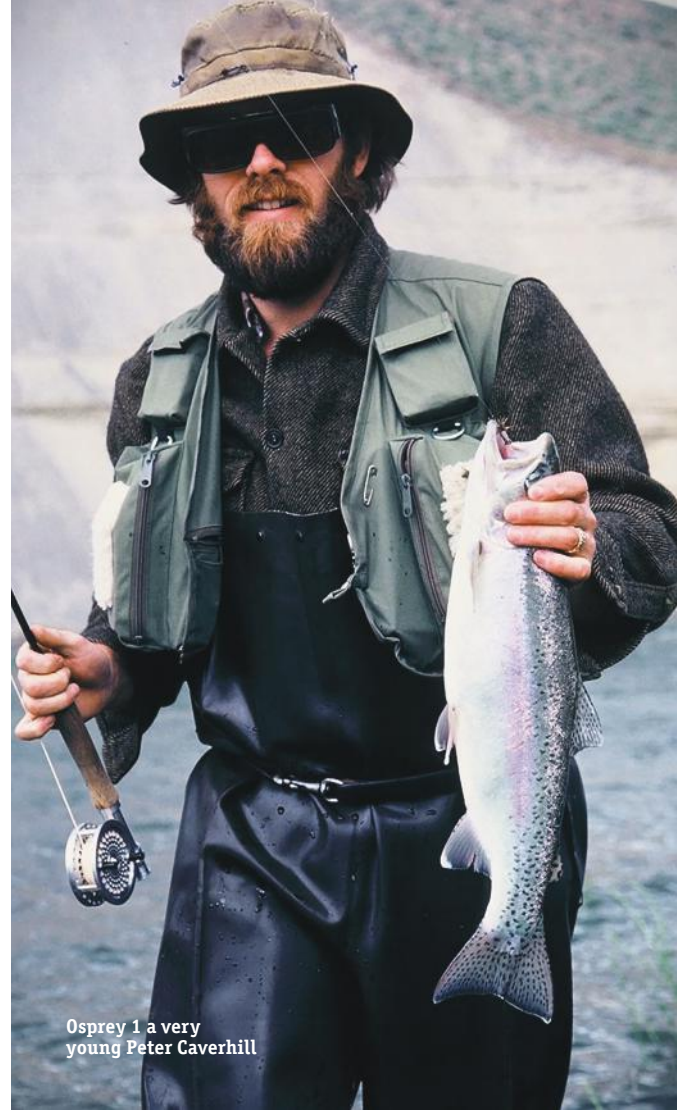
Prior to the Bennett Dam becoming finished and functional, there was concern that there could be Northern Pike above the dam site on the Peace system. The predaciousness of pike and the fact that they harbored a tapeworm that could infect salmon made the survey important if the dam raised water levels that could spill over into the Pacific system. Arctic and Pacific watershed were known to trade places in the vicinity of Arctic, Divide, and Pacific Lakes on the Upper Parsnip. So, as it turned out, this was mainly a basic fish distribution survey (set gill nets; seine the river bars, dispense rotenone, record results, take samples — do some angling). No pike were encountered and the Bennett Dam reduced the max raised water levels to prevent arctic to pacific spillover

This was my most wonderful summer job! Four months in the Peace — 2 with a 45' riverboat on the Parsnip, Finlay, and Peace; through Deserter's Canyon with Art Van Somers to Fort Ware on the Finlay; a month with a Cessna

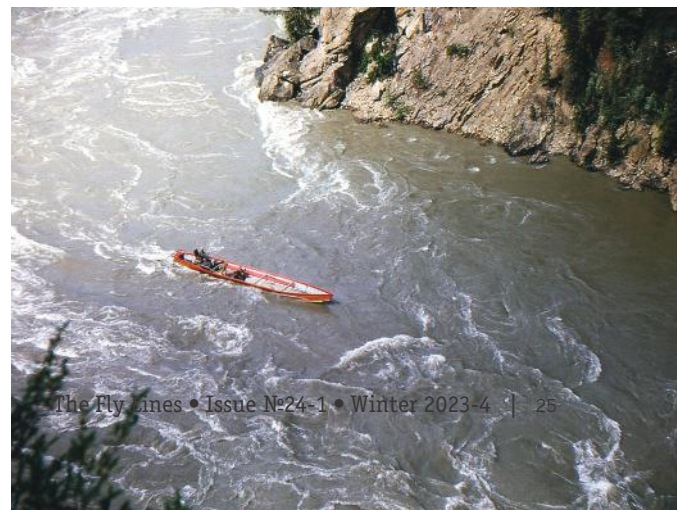
180 to check the outer reaches of the watershed (Spatsizi and other major tributaries); a month driving with an old Studebaker station wagon full of "liver ins" for specimens, that leaked formaldehyde and made our eyes water.

So — no Northern Pike, but tons of sampled arctic grayling, char and other fish (first to discover Kokanee in the Arctic watershed in Arctic Lake!). For giggles here are a couple of pictures from way back then. The Deserter's Canyon pics (Finlay R.) below fort Ware show Art Van Sommers 50' freight river boat with supplies intended for Fort Ware just below and in the canyon. Art and his son ran this freight service to Ware for many years. It ended when the dam flooded the Peace, Finlay, and Parsnip. Here's me at age 20 in our 45' riverboat. And the there is me — age 21 somewhere on the Parsnip. Fun!

Pete



Osprey 1 a very young Peter Caverhill



The Caverhill Nymph & the Helen's Heller

The following history is from Art Lingren's Fly Patterns of British Columbia

The story behind two of BC's best fly patterns

During the 1960s and '70s Helen Peacock of Kamloops worked as a professional fly tier; one of her creations was called the Helen's Heller and the Caverhill Nymph owes its origins to Peter Caverhill. In a November 1994 letter about the Caverhill Nymph, Peter says that

"this fly was simply a case of lazy misidentification and sloppy fly tying ... I thought that I had been tying a Helen's Heller; however, those with greater knowledge and understanding realized this error and had to call it something, [and] they decided to give it my moniker."

A fly's reputation is often bolstered when the fishing is slow and what few fish are caught are consistently deceived by that pattern. During an October trip to Dragon Lake, this happened with the Caverhill Nymph and was recorded by Jim Kilburn in March 1975 issue of Western Fish & Game. Skeptical about veteran feather tossers' Jack Vincent and Bob Backus, advice that the fish were targeting only the Caverhill, Kilburn stuck with his favoured Anderson's Stone Nymph for most of that first fishless day and writes:

That night, warmed by campfire and companionship, I calmed down somewhat. I even listened more attentively, and I learned that the few trout that had been taken had been victimized by a strange, black, seedy-looking concoction called the Caverhill nymph...

At daybreak, I was anchored on my favourite shoal, casting with the sink-tip. Early morning came and went. So did 100 casts with a well-chewed Anderson nymph... By late afternoon, I was still fishless. And frustrated...

When I stopped at the Vincent-Backus camper, I was fishless, frigid, and frustrated... there I learned that the majority of the trout hooked that day had taken the Caverhill nymph... I... suggested that the cold fishless specimen standing before them required... several Caverhill nymphs... Being gentlemen, they took the bait on each cast...

On the following five days, I was able to establish that the trout did indeed favor the Caverhill nymph. And, even though fishing was slow by standards of previous

years, I did manage to hook 16 trout to eight pounds-fishing reasonably hard.

To top Kilburn's trip, Joyce, Kilburn's wife, took a 9-pounder on a Caverhill Nymph. When I asked Caverhill for a fish story, he referred me to Kilburn's story partially detailed above and noted that the fly was featured in Alf Davy's book The Gilly (1986).

"However, the fly must be pretty widely used and appreciated because I'm constantly questioned by new fly fishers that I meet about the Caverhill Nymph," said Peter.

Twenty years has lapsed since Peter made that fly-tying faux pas, but the fly like the ardent fly fisher and fisheries branch biologist, Caverhill, lives on.



Caverhill Nymph Fly Pattern

Originator:	Peter Caverhill
Intended Use:	Wet fly for rainbow trout
Hook:	Number 6 to 10, Mustad 9671 or 9672
Body:	Blue-black mohair
Ribs:	Flat or oval, silver tinsel
Collar:	Blue-black hackle
Head:	Peacock herls-coloured yarn or peacock herls
Location:	Dragon Lake



Steelhead



Trout

Over the years the Caverhill Nymph has been a popular pattern with BC anglers, as evidenced by the following E-Mail sent to Peter.



Peter's 4 Answers

By Peter Caverhill

1. ONE PLACE to fish?

If I could have only one time and place in the world to fish, my plea is for a week in late July on the mighty Thompson River near Savona B. C., angling for its fabulous rainbow trout. Big water! Big heat! Big rapids! Big slippery boulders! And most of all, bigger than average fish!

2. Having ONE ROD to fish that place with, what would you choose?

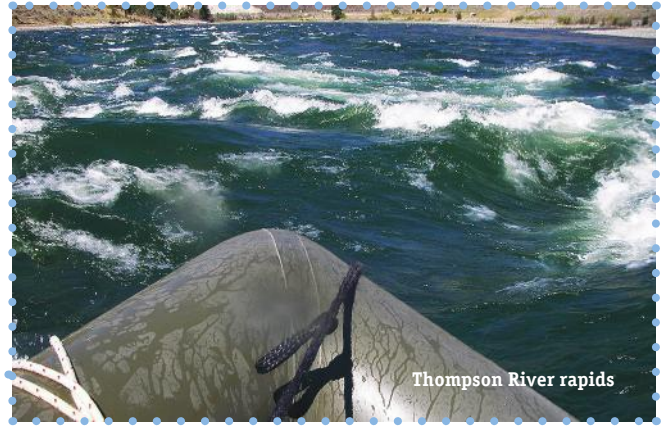
My "Cheakamus", an 8'6" 2-pc. It's a bamboo blank, with cork handle and Super Z's already installed, purchased from Earle Anderson at Woodward's in the 1960's – finished while supposedly studying for final exams in grade 12.

3. Having ONE REEL to put on that rod, which one would you choose, and what line?

There can't be just one reel! So - Hardy Princess – wonderful little clicker, but don't let it near the salt (others did, I didn't – ouch for them!). The second is an old Lamson 3.0-disc, a wonderful reel for the beach salt, (but remember, they all need a wash after use)!

4. Having ONE FLY to use, which one would it be?

The Clark's Stone – squirrels died for this (at least their tails did); orange Polypro with a bit of deer hair, a brown collar that a chicken donated, plus gold tinsel, and your weapon is complete. It's a floater when free and a sinker when pressured – very effective!

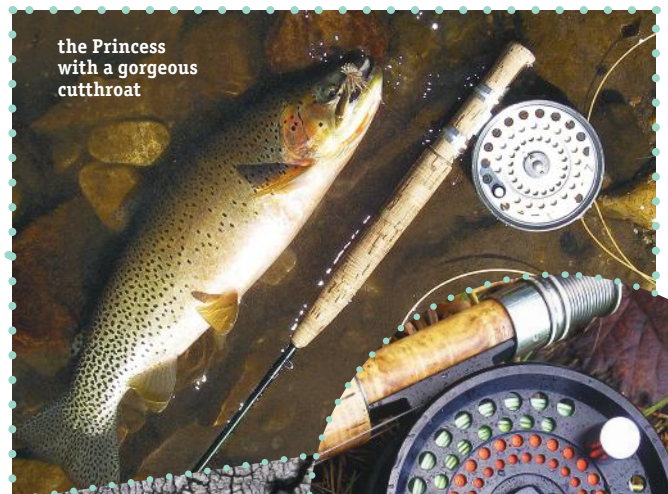


Thompson River rapids



The Cheakamus

Photo: Earle Anderson



the Princess with a gorgeous cutthroat



Hardy Princess reel

Lamson 3.0

Clark's stoneflies





BC Federation of Fly Fishers

website: www.flyfishers.ca

November 14, 2023



To: BCFFF Club Contacts, BCFFF Direct Members, BCFFF BOD
Re: BCFFF AGM 2024 Corbett Lake May 10-11, 2024

Folks, our AGM for 2024 will once again be held at Corbett Lake. Clubs, please share this memo with your club members. I suggest you book early in you wish space at Corbett as there is limited accommodation (5 cedar cabins & 3 lodge rooms). RV parking (un-serviced) is also available at Corbett. You must confirm a reservation and boats by March 31st, 2024.

We have arranged overflow accommodation at corporate rate with the Ramada in Merritt, 15 minutes drive from the lodge. All of the lodge amenities: meals, boats, fishing will be available to BCFFF Ramada guests; however, you will need to reserve your place and presence with Corbett 4 weeks in advance.

The details:

1. Corbett Lake Resort: Ann Thomson 250-378-4334 corbettlake@gmail.com
 - Accommodations:
 - Cedar cabins: \$80 night per person (pp), minimum 2 to a cabin, + \$25 night pp for extras
 - Lodge rooms: \$60 night pp, minimum 2 per room except room 1 (has 1 queen bed, \$100 night for one person; couple \$120)
 - RV parking (un-serviced): \$20 night
 - Fishing: \$50 full day, \$25 half-day per angler
 - Boat with motor rental (reserve in advance): \$40 per day: \$20 ½ day
 - Launch fee: waived
 - Food service (advise 4 weeks in advance): \$160 pp for the weekend. Includes: Friday night appetizer reception; Saturday breakfast, packed lunch, dinner; Sunday brunch. Includes coffee, tea, water during the day. Taxes and gratuities extra.
2. Ramada Merritt Hotel 3571 Voght Street 250-378-3567; frontdesk@ramadamerritt.ca
 - Accommodations:
 - Ask for BCFFF Corporate Rate
 - Rooms \$159 night 2 queen beds room; \$149 night for 1 queen bed room
 - Food service:
 - Restaurant on site
3. Auction item
 - Once again, we will have our fabled silent auction. Donations from clubs/ members are gratefully accepted

Let's have a good AGM, and get some early spring fishing in!

Brian Smith & Michael Barr,
Vice-Presidents BCFFF



Columbia River Basin: How Would Ending Fishing and Closing Hatcheries Change Wild Salmon and Steelhead Abundance?*

by Robert T. Lackey

Department of Fisheries, Wildlife, and Conservation Sciences
Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon 97331



*Transcription (with light editing) of a seminar presented to the Pacific Salmon Commission (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada) on November 29, 2023.



CO John Merriman Stamp R Jan 1984

For millennia, the geographic range of Pacific salmon has been the North Pacific and surrounding river basins. As climate changed, and it did many times, the geographic distribution expanded, and shrunk, especially at the southern ends, that is, on the eastern side, modern-day California, Oregon, Washington, and Idaho — and, on the western side, China, Taiwan, Korea, and Japan.

However, currently, Pacific salmon are also found in New Zealand, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, Falkland Islands, the North American Great Lakes, the U.S., Canadian, and Russian Arctic Ocean, Iceland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, northwestern Russia, and who knows where pink salmon have turned up this month! Most definitely, Pacific salmon are resilient, highly adaptable species.

But, from here on, I will only focus on a single North Pacific location, the Columbia River Basin. Also, when I say “salmon,” I include steelhead.

The Watershed

Although the Columbia River Basin is only a single watershed, it covers an Alberta-size slice of real estate.

Standing in the United States, looking north across the 49th parallel, perhaps the BC portion appears small, these days even inconsequential from a salmon perspective, but it is not. Yes, the Canadian portion is only 15% of the Basin’s land area, but it stores more than a third of the snowpack. And several mammoth Canadian dams serve as gigantic storage containers, as well as producing substantial amounts of electricity.

Further, the four Canadian Columbia

River dams allow for full power generation, year around, from the U.S. portion of the mainstem Columbia, rather than being limited to historically high runoff months.

So much for the one-minute hydrology lesson; now for a synopsis of the human footprint in the Basin!

For humans, the Basin’s indigenous population peaked around 1500, perhaps at a million, but then began a steep decline, largely caused by old-world diseases, smallpox, measles, and influenza, eventually dropping by about 90%.

So, by the early 1800s, the human population, being almost entirely indigenous, was very low. Thus, the effect of humans on salmon abundance was certainly not zero, but it was not dominant.

COLUMBIA RIVER BASIN: HOW WOULD ENDING FISHING AND CLOSING HATCHERIES CHANGE WILD SALMON AND STEELHEAD ABUNDANCE?

Lackey, Robert T. 2023. Seminar, Pacific Salmon Commission, November 29, Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Things changed in the mid-1800s.

Today, the Basin’s human population is around 5 million and heading to more than 10 million by the end of this century.

Moving to salmon, estimates vary of the pre-1850 aggregate Basin salmon run, but nearly all fall between 5 and 15 million. More recent work puts the number toward the lower end, perhaps 6 or 7 million.

Sure, there were big, disruptive natural events that affected salmon runs, such as the massive collapse of Table Mountain in the 1400s, just upriver from Portland,

creating a 170-mile, 300-foot deep lake, completely blocking the mid and upper Columbia to migrating salmon for a decade or two. Think about that:

No salmon reaching the mid and upper Columbia for decades; what a demonstration of ecological resiliency!

The Basin's Great Salmon Decline

But since the 1800s, ignorance is not a credible excuse for what happened. For example, in the 1860s, with the adoption of modern canning technology, concurrent with the proliferation of railroads, commercial fishing shifted to high gear. And that was just the start.

By the 1890s, well over a century ago, the head of what is now the U. S. National Marine Fisheries Service pleaded for something to restore the dramatically depleted salmon runs, roughly a 75% reduction overall, well before any mainstem dams.

But society, and governments, always face policy choices with difficult trade-offs. Salmon issues are, and were, no exception.

One well-known example of such societal policy choices, in the tumultuous 1930s and 1940s, a sequential suite of salmon policy drivers burst on the scene and greatly affected the Columbia River Basin. Initially, it was the responses to the Depression, followed by preparations for a likely war, and then, the Second World War itself.

Yes, for nearly two centuries, there were countless trade-offs involving salmon in the Basin, and generally, people realized that the choices would not be good for wild salmon. Policy making, of course, is all about picking winners and losers. Salmon advocates were often on the losing end of such policy debates.

The Basin's long-term downward trend in salmon abundance is readily apparent, but it is not constant. Certainly, the overall trend may be well-defined, but the actual yearly, or even decadal, run size varies. A bit of caution: even with solid data, and anyone who has ever evaluated run data knows, annual run sizes are highly variable, and there are decades where overall salmon abundance somewhat rebounds. Don't be fooled by short-term trends.

But what is apparent is the general, long-term downward trajectory, even though

so-called good and bad ocean conditions temporarily alter the trend. For example, the familiar Pacific Decadal Oscillations, and similar phenomena, are somewhat understood scientifically. However, variations in terrestrial climate also affect salmon abundance, but these are poorly understood.

However, overall, the 173-year, downward trend is unmistakable, and it continues.

Alternative Futures for Basin Salmon

OK, that was the past. For the rest of this talk, I will focus on the "most likely" future of the Basin's salmon, particularly *wild* salmon. But first, let's acknowledge a few facts.

One obvious reality nowadays, few wild salmon return to the Columbia. Why? Well, 40% of the Basin that once supported wild salmon no longer does, mostly due to dams, both large and small. And, much of the remaining Basin is highly altered.

Second, of the current total Basin run, that is, *both* wild and hatchery, about four in every five started life in a hatchery.

Third, over the past 40 years, roughly 9 billion dollars has been spent by U. S. Federal and State governments to sustain, or even recover, the runs. If the "forgone revenue and opportunity costs" are included in these costs, the total expenditure leaps to an even bigger number.

And fourth, yeah, sure, everyone cheerleads reversing the downward trend in the Basin, but enthusiasm drops off when realistic policy trade-offs are explained, and monetary and nonmonetary costs are included. For example, consider the consequences for wild salmon of the *additional* 5 to 10 million Basin residents in 2100, as well as the 30 to 40 million *more* people calling the Pacific Northwest home.

As for selecting an overarching salmon recovery strategy for the Basin, some argue that hatcheries are just about the worst option. *Conversely*, others believe that even the little *remaining* salmon fishing would not be possible without the annual stocking of the more than 140 million smolts pumped out by the Basin's 208 hatcheries.

Second, regarding commercial, recreational, and tribal fishing, various advocates assert that continued harvesting of hatchery salmon keeps wild salmon numbers low. Stop all salmon fishing, they argue, and wild salmon abundance will



Stamp clones Jan 1984



Mountain Fishing
Artist: Pat George

rebound. Is that true?

Third, how much good have the billions of dollars spent actually done for wild salmon, other than employ thousands of people, like me, and some of you, to fatten up at the public trough? Sorry, it's an awkward question, most definitely.

OK, what type of information is required to answer these fundamental, policy-relevant questions?

My first choice is what is commonly regarded as *science*, the process of testing hypotheses in a rational, systematic, testable, and reproducible manner. You need all four for the "scientific method." But to be amenable to the scientific method, the research questions, that is, the hypotheses, are necessarily simplified.

Alternatively, *experiential knowledge* is ubiquitous in fisheries management and policy, and it *can* address complex research questions, but does not meet the four rigorous requirements of the scientific method.

However, what about *scientific experts* who blend science and personal experiential knowledge, thus, arguably, providing the most credible answers to complex policy and

management questions?

But a cautionary note: what about employment or personal policy bias? Once you coax scientific experts into participating, their answers presented in public are often very different from those offered in private. In my experience, anonymity is essential.

Given all these research challenges, how can the most credible, but policy-relevant answers be obtained?

Predicting the Future

My answer was to perform a simple thought experiment, but one with promised anonymity for all participants.

First, I created a list of senior scientists with extensive research and management experience with Basin salmon issues. All were what any of us would classify as a "who's who" of "scientific experts."

Second, right from my first contact, I promised complete anonymity. Interestingly, from the start, many participants expressed appreciation for being able to answer questions bluntly and candidly, free of pressure from employers, colleagues, or advocacy organizations.



Artist fishing four
Artist: Pat George

Third, questions were strictly science or fact-based. I did not push any particular policy goal or management approach, nor did I ever ask participants for their views about which policy goal or strategy should be adopted.

How was the experiment carried out?

First, from an initial list of 100 experts, I found email contact information for 96. Standard email requests were sent to those 96.

Second, 67 responded to the first or second email. As surveys go, this is a very high response rate.

Third, 60 of the 67 agreed to participate. Of the seven who declined, two did so because (paraphrasing):

“The likely results will be used by opposing advocates to undermine our preferred policy position.” In reality, this is a highly charged political issue, and science is often an effective advocacy weapon in such disputes.

Fourth, ultimately 58 of the 60 answered the question. Their actual responses are

available on my [Oregon State University website](#).

OK, what question, exactly, was asked?

This is the question asked of all participants. In essence, all of a sudden, assuming no hatcheries and no fishing, what would happen to Columbia River Basin’s wild salmon?

To allow time for the runs to adjust to this new reality, that is, no fishing and no hatcheries, I asked respondents to allow for a couple of decades for fish populations to adjust.

Many respondents provided a single sentence answer with little, if any, elaboration. Others provided pages of detailed explanation justifying each step in the thought process.

Well, the bottom line, what do experts think *would* happen to the abundance of wild salmon in the Columbia River Basin without hatcheries and no fishing?

Think for a second; what would your answer be?

First off, more than 4 in 5 respondents, 83%, predicted that current *total* salmon abundance, that is, both hatchery and wild, would decline.

Many of the 83% expected the resulting total run (which would be only wild) to sink to a much, much, lower number, some to even less than the already very low current wild run.

No one predicted the extirpation of salmon from the Basin, but most expected that the current total run, a couple of decades after closing hatcheries and stopping fishing, would decline greatly, presumably so much so that little or no sustainable harvest would be feasible.

Examining the alternative possible outcome, only 1 in 20 predicted that wild runs overall would be higher than the current total run.

What are the Management Implications?

So what is the take-home policy message?

Here's the bottom line for managers, policy makers, politicians, and the public. According to the experts, eliminating all salmon and steelhead fishing and closing all Basin fish hatcheries, would not greatly change the abundance of the Basin's wild salmon and steelhead. Of course, hatchery runs would go to zero.

Essentially, 20 years after stopping fishing and closing hatcheries, there would most likely be many fewer total salmon, but roughly the same number of wild salmon as now. Yeah, some expected perhaps a tad more, but most respondents predicted the same, or fewer, or a lot fewer, wild salmon.

The key point, almost every respondent predicted that, after 20 years, there would be a smaller *total* salmon run in the Basin than today. Yes, a drop from about 1 to 2 million total salmon to probably 200 to 300 thousand *wild* salmon, approximately 3–5% of the 1850s abundance, ESA numbers, not fishable runs.

So what are the implications?

First, right off the top, the current "fishable" salmon runs in the Basin are largely sustained by hatchery releases. Essentially, no hatcheries, no fishing.

Second, implicit in the results, hatcheries don't seem to have much effect on the abundance of *wild* runs except to provide many strays that spawn.

Third, even success in ESA de-listing will not likely mean that there are "fishable" runs. Wild runs less than 5% of historical levels are generally not fishable on

a sustained basis.

And fourth, without the pre-1850 climate, and the unaltered conditions in the Basin, big runs of wild salmon are not realistic.

Other Ways to Evaluate Salmon Recovery Efforts

OK, an anonymous survey of experts is one approach, but are there other ways to answer such questions? Let me dramatically shift gears here and present a very different approach.

The efficacy of the Basin's massive salmon recovery efforts can be assessed by computing society's *Return on Investment*. Recovery programs are expensive, and the nagging unknown is always:

"How effective were those expenditures in increasing, or even sustaining wild or hatchery runs?"

Good question, but how do you answer it? To start, we have four decades of pretty good Columbia River run data. It is not perfect for sure, but it is quite good as far as fisheries data goes.

Further, we also have a pretty good estimate of the dollar cost of salmon recovery programs over the past 40 years.

OK, the crucial policy question is, "What did the public get for all this restoration money?"

Yes, lots of money was spent over the years, and one oft-stated purpose was to recover wild salmon. Did it?

As luck would have it, one of my Oregon State University colleagues, an economist, Bill Jaeger, and a USGS biologist, just published such an analysis. Great timing!

Here is a synopsis, hot off the press.

First, \$9 billion has been spent directly by governments to restore salmon in the Basin. And, of course, this direct expenditure is conservative because it does not include the so-called "foregone revenue and opportunity costs."

Their overall conclusion: after 40 years of restoration efforts, there were no net "benefits" from such expenditures. In other words, spending \$9 billion made *no* measurable difference in salmon runs. Zero. Not what anyone wants to hear, right?

More directly relevant to the topic today, they also concluded that restoration

Who cloak themselves in the accoutrements of science, but offer nothing but policy advocacy masquerading as science

It is **time** to engage the **public** and politicians in a **serious** discussion about whether the **billions** spent to recreate substantial **wild** runs has any prospect of **success**.

programs, relative to wild salmon, failed miserably.

Thus, their results are broadly consistent with my survey. Perhaps recovery programs did benefit salmon at a local scale, but there is no overall measurable improvement despite spending billions!

Astonishingly, when the facts seem so apparent, how has this sobering reality persisted for at least four decades?

To answer, let me hypothesize, and then let me speculate. Think back to when you sat in the back row of Political Science 101. Never short of answers, political scientists will readily offer two likely and familiar reasons for this apparent illusion.

First, at the top of the list is something they call “*policy domestication*.” It is ever so tempting for politicians to neutralize (i.e., to domesticate) a nasty, persistent political conflict by inundating it with heaps of money. After all, here we are, your friendly, ever-responsive government spending billions funding the *Salmon Recovery Industry*. Essentially, the political proposition is:

“Let’s not do anything unpopular until the experts do what they can do with all this money!”

Yes, tried and true, the policy conflict has been put on the political back burner by domesticating it, an example of symbolic politics in action.

Second, in that same political science class, if you were still listening, you might have heard about “*policy advocates masquerading as scientists*.” Yes, much of the scientific information that government officials, politicians, and most importantly, the public, actually hear is provided by such folks; those who cloak themselves in the accoutrements of science, but offer nothing but policy advocacy *masquerading as*

science.

Ecological Reality

There’s another component to the answer that must be acknowledged: *ecological reality*!

Specifically, one prominent, often omitted, fact is many of the Basin’s fish species are doing exceptionally well. For example, the most abundant anadromous fish in the Basin these days is not a species of salmon or steelhead, but *American shad*, an introduced species that is very abundant.

Similarly, walleye, smallmouth bass, largemouth bass, northern pike, and many others, provide world-class fishing opportunities, but not salmon or steelhead.

Yes, good old Biology 101 in action. The dramatic change in species composition is unsurprising given the highly altered ecological state of the Basin, coupled with a climate different from 200 years ago.

Let me wrap up with a few take-home messages.

First, the decline of wild salmon in the Columbia River Basin should not be surprising. After all, the main drivers are broadly known.

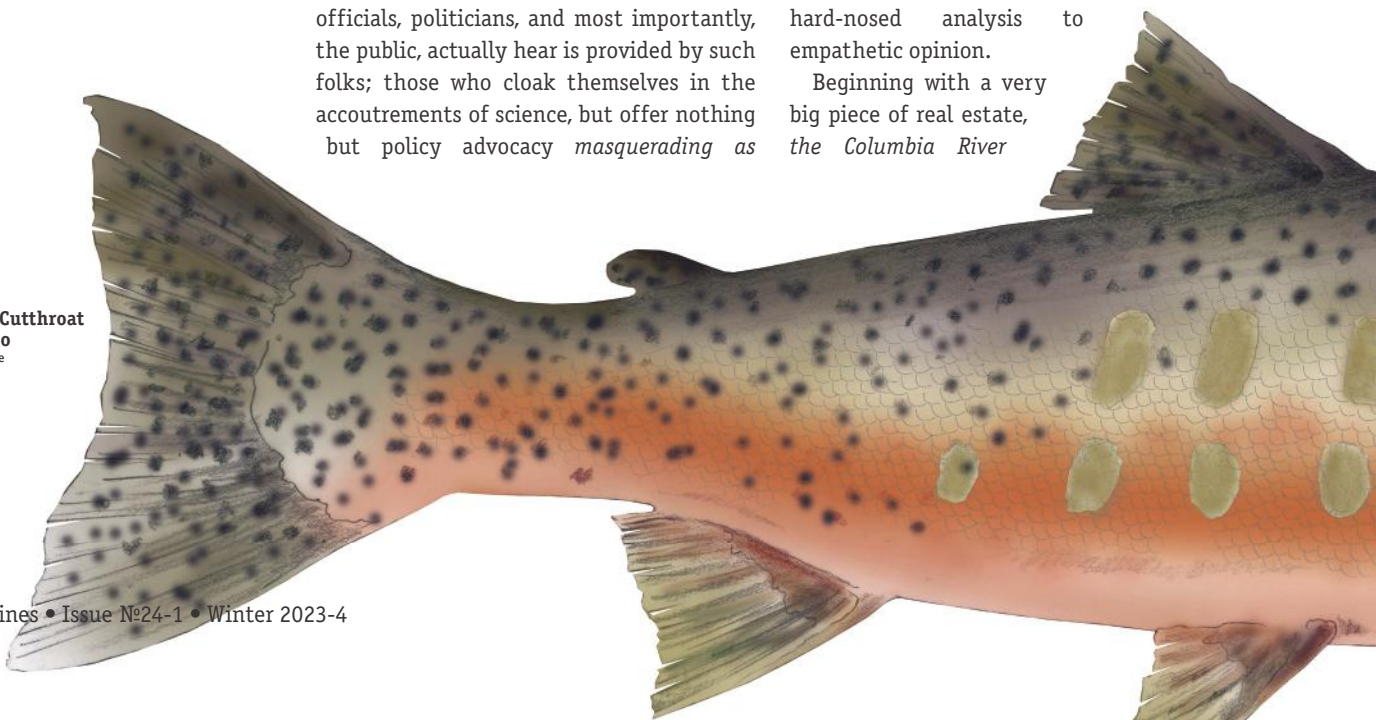
Second, to change any of these policy drivers requires substantial economic and lifestyle changes from the region’s residents. Engineering and other tweaks will not do it.

Third, perhaps it is time to engage the public and politicians in a serious discussion about whether the billions spent to re-create substantial wild runs has any prospect of success.

I’ll close by shifting from hard-nosed analysis to empathetic opinion.

Beginning with a very big piece of real estate, *the Columbia River*

Westslope Cutthroat Trout Litho
Artist: Pat George



Basin, some 200 plus years ago, David Thompson, David Douglas, Meriwether Lewis, and William Clark described its' salmon runs to the world. And yes, I know their time was different, including the weather. For example, in some years near present-day Portland two centuries ago, even the great Columbia River was ice-covered, and for weeks, wagons were driven across its width. And there were curling matches on the river near present-day Portland! Indeed, it must have been a great time to be a salmon!

Beyond changing climate, for salmon, what played out over the ensuing two centuries should not be surprising, and it was broadly predictable. People sought a better life for their families. They needed to eat. They detested floods. They demanded wars that be won. They voted for candidates that promised cheap, reliable electricity, and much, much more.

Yes, all is old news, for sure. And, there was nothing wrong, *or right*, about those policy choices.

For those of us who reside professionally in the *Salmon Recovery Industry*, perhaps it is past time to ditch our comforting *illusions*. As well, it is surely past time to banish groundless *optimism*, and, equally important, to avoid deceptive *pessimism*.

Instead, it is time for blunt, accurate appraisals about the future of the Basin's wild salmon and steelhead runs.

Nothing more, but nothing less is warranted. Thank you.

Summary:

The overall public policy goal of restoring runs in the Columbia River Basin enjoys widespread public support, but billions of dollars have failed to reverse the long-term, general decline of *wild* salmon in the Basin.

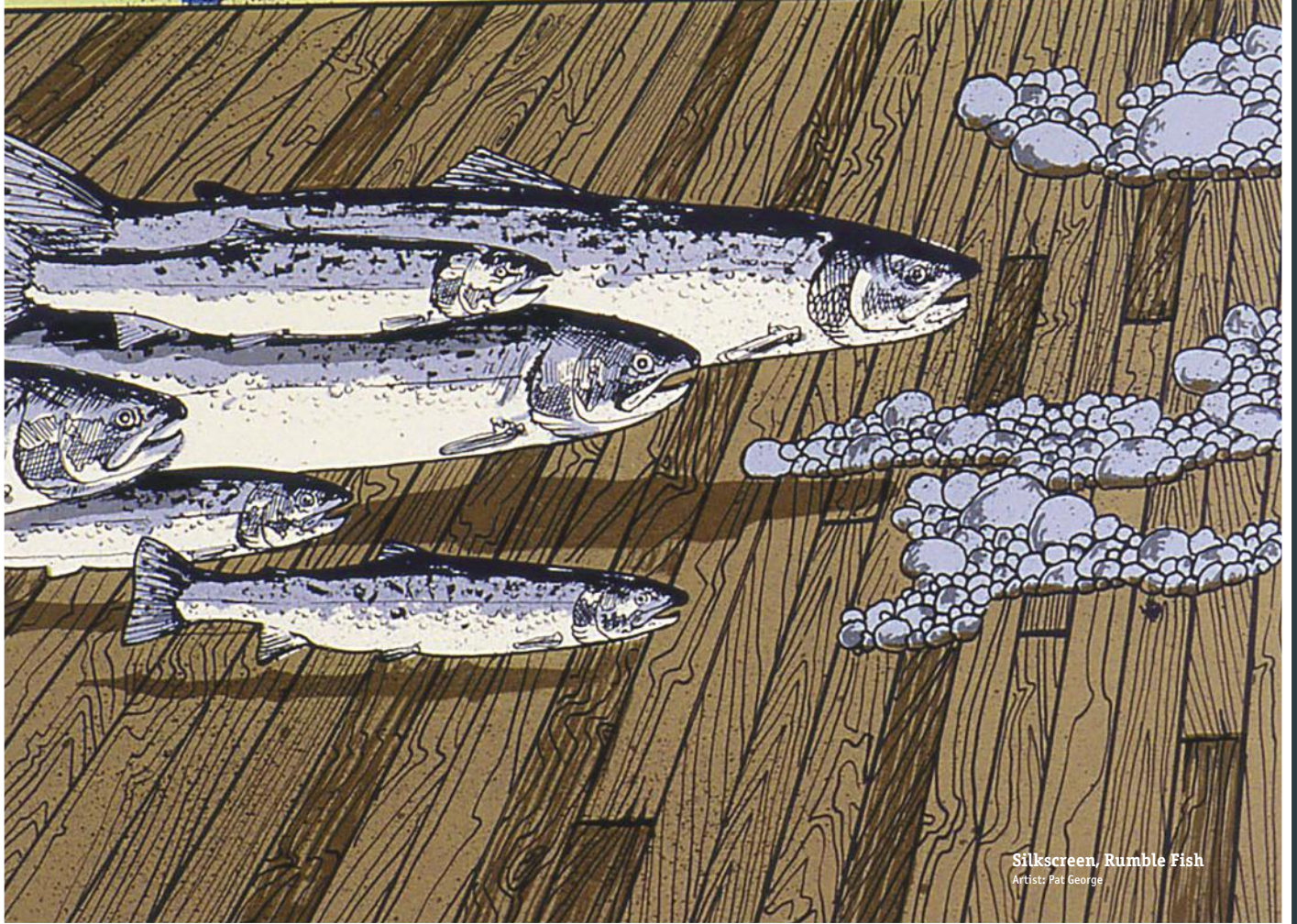
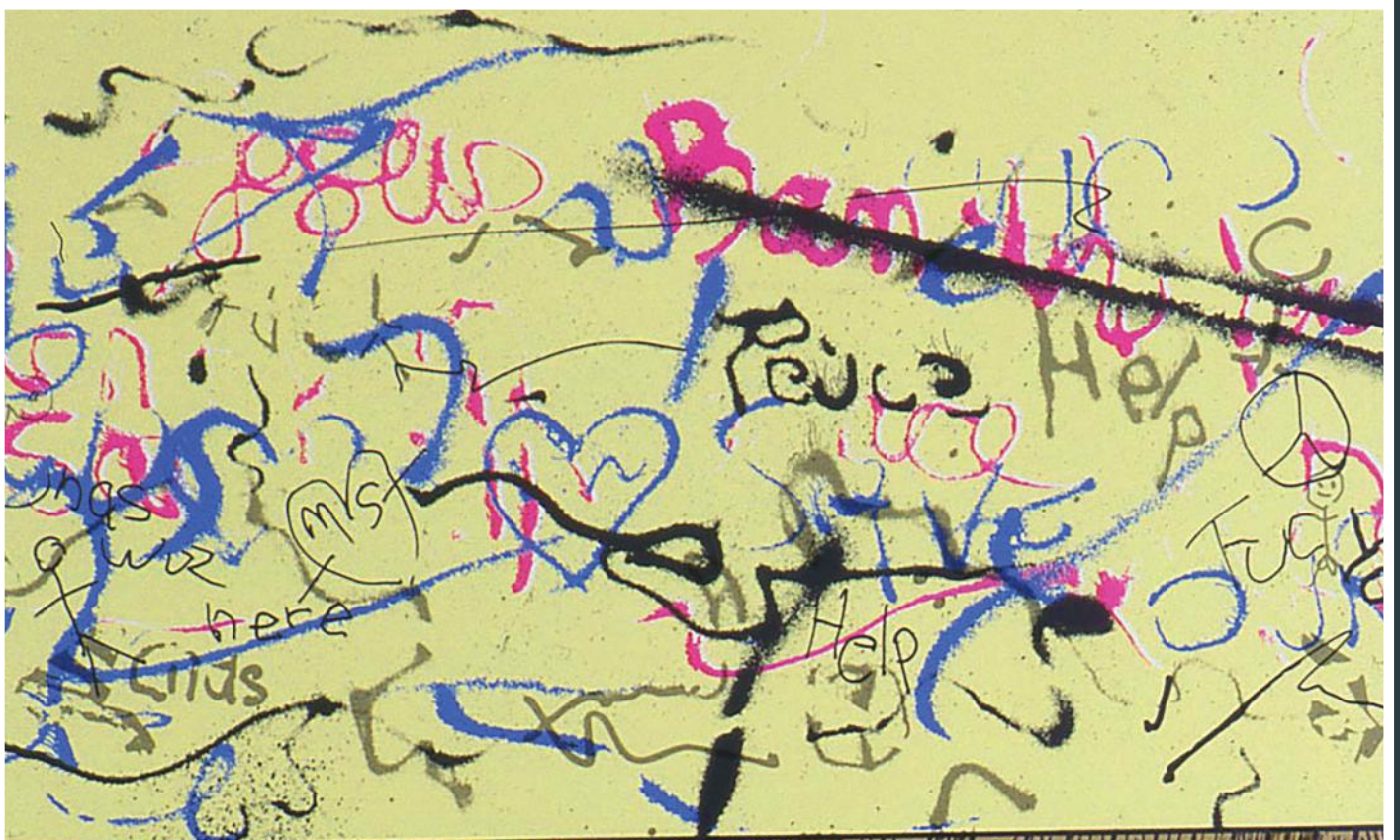
To answer the question of whether the effort to rebuild runs through the hatchery production and release of salmon, I asked 58 well-known salmon scientists to predict (anonymously) how the overall abundance of Columbia River Basin salmon (including steelhead) would change after 20 years *if* fishing was stopped and hatcheries were closed. About 83% predicted that current (wild plus hatchery) salmon abundance (overall Columbia Basin run) would *decline* without hatchery stocking and fishing.

Most surveyed experts predicted that stopping fishing and closing hatcheries would not greatly change the current overall *wild-only* abundance in the Basin. Based on these experts, salmon fishing and hatchery additions are not currently believed to be among the major *drivers* of the low abundance of wild salmon in the Columbia River Basin.

The current overall abundance of wild salmon in the Columbia River Basin (roughly 3–5% of pre-1850s levels) is within the expected range, given the amount and availability of good salmon habitat, past and current ecological changes, and overarching trends in oceanic and climate conditions.

Stopping fishing and closing hatcheries likely will not drastically change the current *wild* salmon abundance in the Basin, and it may well drive wild runs even lower than their *already* very low levels, according to many experts





Silkscreen, Rumble Fish
Artist: Pat George

Steelhead Trout – *Survivors*

Excerpt from the book *Seasons of a Fly Fisher* by Brian Smith

I believe that steelhead trout are the most noble of all fish species. For fly fishers that seek them in BC waters, they are the ultimate challenge to bring to the fly. They are also the most affected specie of anadromous (ocean going/river breeding) fish that man and his industries have unwittingly attempted to vanquish.

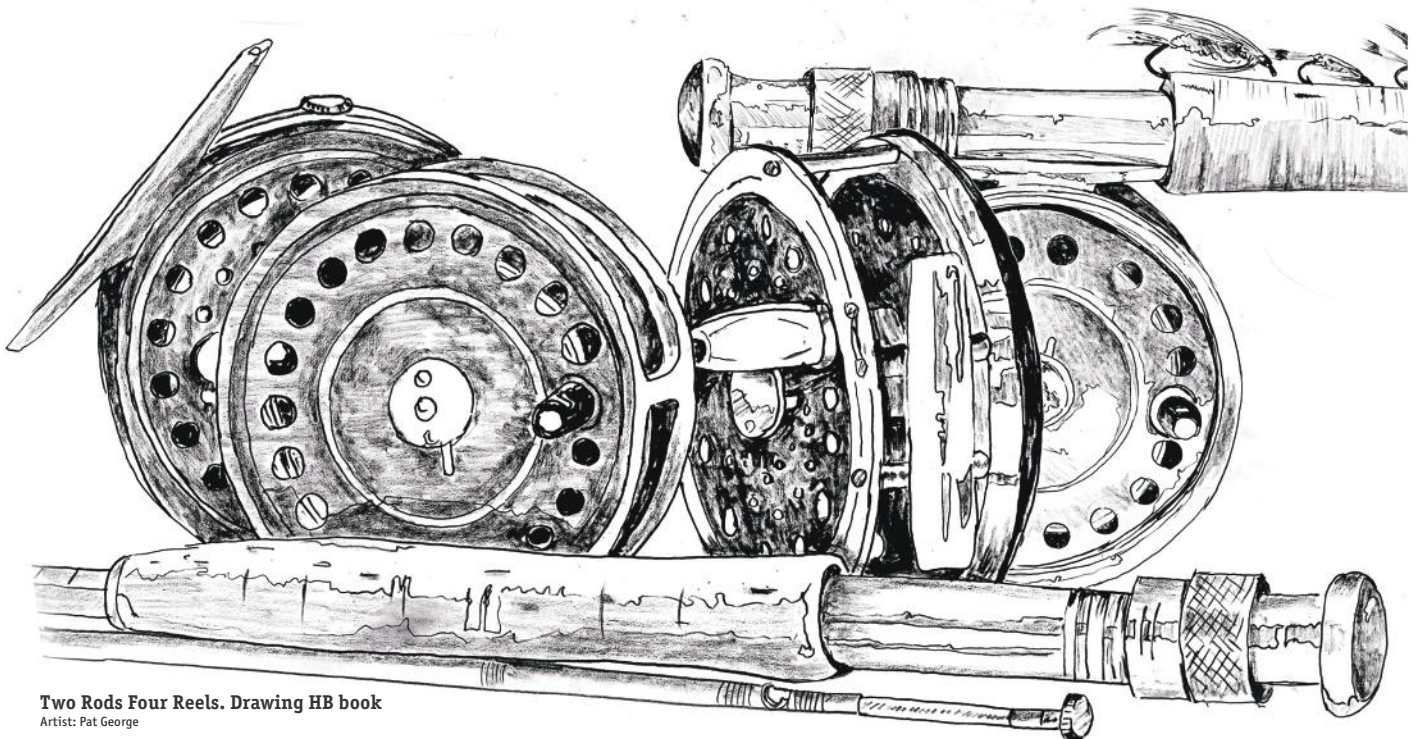
After adults' spawn in early spring, well before their natal streams' freshets, fertilized steelhead eggs incubate, their fry emerge and they will remain and mature in their home freshwater streams for one to four years. Their instincts take over and when nature calls, they migrate to the sea where they will spend one to five years in the marine environment before returning to their birth rivers. Less than five percent of the steelhead hen's eggs will survive to make the return journey. It's a phenomenon and caring of nature that this staggered migration existence of their young in

fresh and salt water shields the steelhead from extinction. Some rivers like the Kispiox in Northwest BC and a few in Alaska produce fish in the 15–20 kg class.

A steelhead requires what seems (to them) very little to survive: clean mountain watersheds free from siltation, permitting oxygen rich gravel filtration for their eggs' incubations; ample streamside forests and vegetation, to keep their streams cool for the development of their young fry; and adequate boulder, pool and canyon water, to provide resting areas and cover for their migrations and growth. It's an act of nature our steelhead

watersheds began this way when glaciers receded over ten thousand years ago, and an insult to the fish that their habitat is in constant turmoil because of what we have allowed to happen to it.

Today, except for very remote migration streams along the North Coast of BC and Alaska, steelhead (and all anadromous species) that travel densely populated areas of the Pacific Ocean watershed must compete with human generated obstacles that threaten their very existence. Two hundred years ago they were so prolific along the Pacific Coast that they were found as far south as north-western



Two Rods Four Reels. Drawing HB book
Artist: Pat George

Mexico. Today, however, you will rarely find them south of northern California.

Along the Pacific coastline, around populous coastal cities, we develop upstream dams and powerhouses on what were once major steelhead rivers, curbing the natural flows of their streams and raising water temperatures to unliveable limits for adult migrations and young fish fry. We pollute marine waters with human

disposal waste, fertilizers, pesticides, man-made disasters and even fish farms where the fishes grow and mature. In their upper watersheds, we often log to shoreline their natal creeks and streams, silting them with unnatural run off, unsuspected of killing their unborn alevins. And on the high seas, we kill and market them as incidental by-catch casualties of drift nets. For centuries, we

have allowed their estuaries to be gill-net fished during their prime migration periods, limiting their natural numbers to those who could survive the carnage.

And still, the steelheads come back to us; summers running with the salmons, winters on their own volition. Because of this incredible will to survive, they should be referred to as the "noble" species of fish.



Ladder Silkscreen
Artist: Pat George



Pat George Bio 2024

Graduating in honors from University of Victoria Fine Arts, Pat left Canada to study lost wax casting and printmaking in England. He undertook to study at Middlesbrough Art College, producing ten (10) lost wax aluminum sculptures, six (6) bronze sculptures and a suite of eight (8) silkscreens. Upon completing his studies in England, he was asked to join the University of Victoria Visual Arts Department as technical support for their sculpture program. As the only technician, he was instrumental in the design and building of several major pieces of equipment used in the department. As a member of

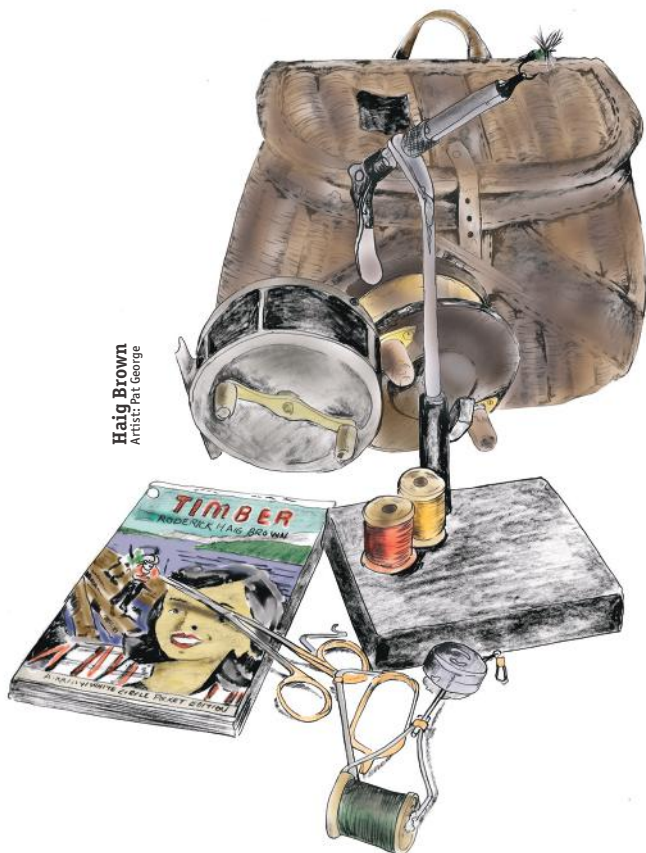
the University, he has been very active in promoting the visual arts within the community. As a member of the Fine Arts Faculty, he was involved with the Maltwood Gallery Committee, the Presidents Council and the Professional Staff Association. He has also been active in the local community, is Past President of the Victoria Community Arts Council, President of the Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association (HBFFA), and a committee member of the Pacific Salmon Foundation. In 1993 he was recognized as the CFA's Arts Leader of the Year. As Administrative Director of the Visual Arts department he developed many programs, exhibitions and policies for the university, and Pat's Artists Manual on Health Hazards in

Visual Arts is required departmental reading. During his association with the University, he has served on the UVic Day Care board, the Professional Staff Association, the Visual Arts Safety Committee and the Maltwood Gallery, as well as many other committees.

Pat is now eighty years old, but continues to produce artwork, with his prints and sculptures in major collections and art galleries throughout the world. Over the years he has regularly donated artwork to many significant and worthy organizations: the CNIB, BC Federation of Fly Fishers, SALT Society, Pacific Salmon Foundation, Trout Unlimited, and many other worthy recipients.

Principally a silk screen printer, Pat has been invited to participate in numerous International Print Biennials and group exhibitions. As well as being highly-skilled in water-soluble silk screen methods, his knowledge of hand lithography, etching, and block printing has kept his work much in demand. Recently, his fish studies have been used to produce greeting cards, which are sold by HBFFA with proceeds from sales supporting worthwhile local conservation programs.

During his tenure as President of the Greater Victoria Community Arts Council, Vice President of the Pacific Regional Arts Council, and director of the Ground Zero Printmakers, he advanced the concerns of the visual artists, and through this dedication to visual arts, Pat was the driving force that curated and organized the most successful Victoria Regional Art Exhibitions to date. Through his knowledge of organizing exhibitions, he was asked to participate in installing Artropolis 90 and the B. C. Festivals 90 and 91's "Images and Objects" Show.



Haig Brown
Artist: Pat George

NEWS AND VIEWS

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR INPUT ON BC'S FISHERIES MANAGEMENT

Longstanding mutual benefits have resulted from working relationships between select provincial angling organizations (NGOs) and the province of BC through the Provincial Angling Advisory Team (PAAT). However, it is a constant challenge for members to keep up with government changes: new Ministries, new Ministers and Senior Staff, and endless strategies and initiatives. As a longstanding member of PAAT, the BCFFF recognizes the importance of staying on top of change and works continually to ensure its voice remains relevant and its advice influential.

New opportunities have emerged to improve NGO-Government advisory relationships which, at times, have seemed a fruitless investment. For 2023–24, updated "Terms of Reference" for both PAAT and its federal DFO equivalent, the Sport Fish Advisory Board (SFAB), seeks to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of capturing public advice through its' respective committees. A specific measure is to more directly and formally consider local (club) advice on fisheries management through local and regional advisory committees.

Another is the option to create Working Groups, which will allow a deep dive and action on complex issues government alone cannot tackle. Lastly, both PAAT and SFAB have agreed to work collaboratively, reducing duplication and refining shared responsibilities. Yes, these are bureaucratic changes, but for individuals and organizations like your BCFFF, who recognize the potential these process changes offer, it is a unique invitation to help shape the future of our fisheries as never before. As we see these opportunities unfold, we will roll out more information on how to engage as an individual or club by direct contact, or in a future Fly Lines issue.

Michael Barr — BCFFF BOD

BCFFF REJUVENATES CONSERVATION FUND



Ken Marsh

The guiding purpose of the BCFFF has always been the protection and enhancement of our sport, the sport fish we love and the habitats in which they thrive. Nearly 40 years ago this purpose was given substance by a small group of members led by Alf Davy when, in conjunction with the BCFFE, he published the book, *The Gilly*. This pioneer publication had the admirable goal of tapping the expertise of various notable BC fly-fishers, and provided written expertise to anglers beginning fly-fishing, or wishing to expand their skills to new locations and challenges. Many readers will recognize the names of the skilled contributors, some of whom are still active members of the BCFFF,

including BC legends such as Peter Caverhill, Brian Chan, Tom Murray and Barry Thornton. Many have since left us: Ralph Shaw, Mike Maxwell and Jack Shaw.

Alf's primary purpose in publishing *The Gilly* was the hope that sales volume would generate sufficient revenue to form the basis of a substantial conservation fund, which would provide support for fly-fishing organizations willing to undertake projects in support of our sport fish and their habitats. To that end, Alf explicitly indicated that all monies raised by the sale of his book *The Gilly* would "go to the British Columbia Fly Fishers Conservation Fund".

When *The Gilly* was published in 1985, it went through three printings in its first year on the shelves! It is fair to say that sales of the book exceeded expectations, and over the years the fund has grown to over \$200,000. The terms of the fund indicated that the capital was to remain intact, with accumulated interest

providing funds for worthy projects. Various projects proposed by BCFFF member clubs have been supported over the years with funds generated from capital in the Gilly Fund. These have ranged from physical repairs of streams, to hatchery upgrades, to signposting streams, and to education programs such as helping breast cancer survivors heal through fly-fishing.

In 2015 the BCFFF received a bequest of over \$23,000.00 from the estate of Charlie Thomas, which offered additional opportunities to fund projects with an educational thrust. In 2023, the BCFFF Directors decided that the funds could be most effectively used by combining them into a single Conservation Fund.

Any member or member club of the BCFFF may apply for funds for projects designed to improve or protect fish habitat, or to enhance or promote the sport of fly-fishing. Money has also been used to support initiatives of other organizations, such as the Nature Trust of BC. The criteria and application forms for a funding request are outlined in a document on the BCFFF representing different regions of the province. The reviewing committee may ask the applicant to provide further details or clarification before finalizing their recommendation to the Board of Directors for approval. The success or amount of the grant will depend on such factors as the number and nature of other submissions, the significance of the project, the degree of support it has from other organizations or individuals, and the likelihood of the project being completed in a reasonable period of time.

For several years now, the money available for projects has been under-utilized. All BCFFF clubs and members are encouraged to consider issues or opportunities in their area which could benefit from a BCFFF Conservation Grant.

Ken Marsh
Chairman, BCFFF Conservation Funds

IN 2015 THE BCFFF RECEIVED A BEQUEST OF OVER \$23,000.00 FROM THE ESTATE OF CHARLIE THOMAS, WHICH OFFERED ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES TO FUND PROJECTS WITH AN EDUCATIONAL THRUST.



Steelhead
by Jesse Blake



Steelhead
by Jesse Blake



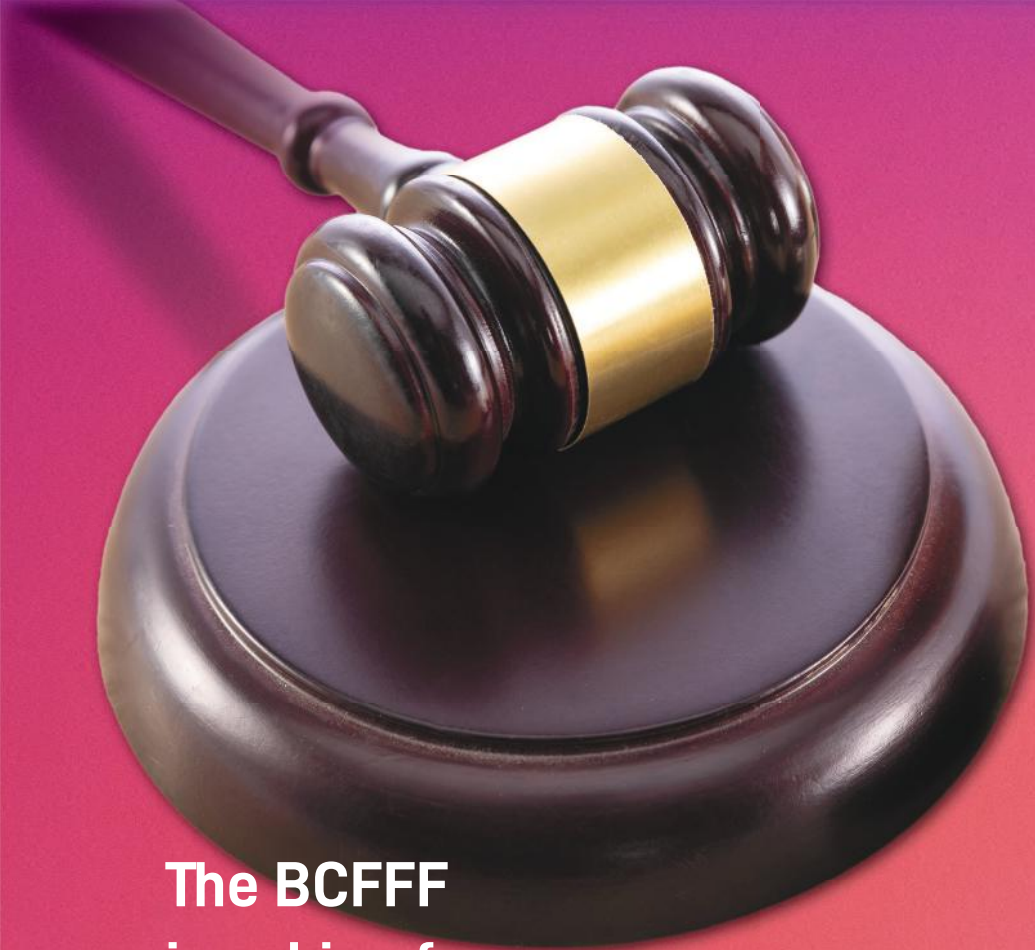
In Patagonia
Photo by Michael Barr



Winter's hope answered
Photo by Tom Duke



Winter River
by Jesse Blake



The BCFFF is asking for donations from our members to help support our first annual online Conservation auction to raise funds for are two existing trusts.



WINTER ONLINE AUCTION 2024

**Help
Support our
Conservation
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Contact Brian or Myles should you wish to donate
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