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SEPTEMBER MEETING

Thursday, Sep 15, 2016 @ Farmhouse Restaurant

Wet Fly / Social Gathering: 6:00PM

Dinner / General Meeting: 7:00PM

President's Message:

By: Jim Paget

Labor Day marks the return to a more "normal" schedule for the club. After the summer off from meetings, we return to board meetings on the 1st Thursday, General Membership meetings on the 3rd Thursday, and Liars Lunch on the first Tuesday.

Summer provides the opportunity for many of us to travel to either new or old favorite fishing haunts. I hope that those of you who had the opportunity to travel will be willing and able to share the experience with the club at the November meeting.

As a club we will once again be participating in the Skagit River Salmon Festival. I urge you to check out the website for details of the Festival.

Activities in preparation for the Christmas party will be shifting into high gear. Please be thinking of items for the auction as that provides a major portion of the club funding for the year.

Finally as we begin preparations for next year, please consider how you might accept a more formal role with the club if asked. The club only functions because of the dedication and commitment of members of the club.

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This Months Presentation:

By: Ryan Johnson

The guest speaker will be Gayle Whitenberg, Fly Fishing Guide and Fly Fishing Instructor:

Gayle enjoys sharing her passion for the great outdoors and fly fishing with people of all ages. She has been a licensed guide for the State of Montana and a fly fishing instructor at Montana State University-Billings for eight years. Gayle is the former owner of Montana Troutfitters in Bozeman and co-founder of the Casting for Recovery Montana Trailhead chapter. Prior to starting her fly fishing career 20 years ago, Gayle was a spin caster along the banks of Crab Orchard and Devil's Lake in southern Illinois. She enjoys learning about the sport and finding "new" water whenever possible.

Open to non-members.

Fly of the Month:

By: Ryan Johnson

PATTERN DESCRIPTION:

The Pink Pookie foam hopper created by Dean Reiner out of Hatch Finders Fly Shop in Livingston, Montana in one of the more popular hopper patterns in the Livingston-Bozeman area... and for good reason. The Pink Pookie just flat out catches fish. This hopper pattern, with its foam bullet-head and foam wing, floats like a cork. The pink foam body of the fly seems very unnatural for imitating actual grasshoppers, yet the trout see something in the color pink that they identify as being food. Whether the pink foam is an attractor-color to the trout or just the right shade of color is hard to say. If you're looking for that "something different" hopper pattern try this one out.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Hook: Dai-Riki #730 sz. 8

I like to use 2xl nymph hooks for most hopper patterns. These hooks are very durable.

Thread: UTC Ultra-Thread 140 Denier or Veevus 8/0 in Red for a contrast color or Pink. I usually tie most of my hoppers with a contrast color thread.

Foam: 2mm craft foam. Tan foam for the wing, pink for the belly.

Under-Wing: Natural deer hair.

Post: 2mm craft foam - Orange

Legs: Medium yellow/black barred rubber legs



STATE-WIDE FISHERIES ENHANCEMENT GROUPS FACE SEVERE BUDGET CUTS:

By: Bruce Freet

There are thirteen Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups that perform valuable, cost-effective salmon habitat restoration and protection work in river watersheds throughout the state. While they are State Legislature sanctioned non-profit organizations, part of their funding comes from a portion of commercial and recreational fishing license fees, administered by the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group is our local entity, and it like the other groups, uses these funds to obtain cost-share grants, donations, in-kind contributions, and volunteer labor for salmon recovery projects. It has proved to be a very cost-effective program for salmon recovery. Unfortunately, State revenue for the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups took a dramatic cut in 2016 and is projected to decrease by 50% over the next two years. As the Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group works to obtain other funds from a variety of sources, they desperately need our help to make sure that the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife and representatives in the State Legislature know the work we do is important and that funds are needed to partner with other organizations in the

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Skagit Watershed Council and continue developing salmon recovery projects.

You can help by doing the following:

☐1) Participate in a quick survey. The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) is proposing additional funding for community based groups that restore salmon habitat. If you believe this is important, as we do at SFEG, please voice your opinion right here: https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Fish_Investments☐

☐n survey question #1- Let the state know that SFEG is an important community partner in restoring habitat and we need funding to keep putting projects on the ground! Need more info? Read WDFW's Fish Investment Proposal before commenting right here:

http://wdfw.wa.gov/wildfuture/proposals/062316%20wild_future_factsheets_fishing.pdf☐2)

Let the recreational and commercial fishing community know that habitat work is important and that increasing license fees now will help ensure sustainable fisheries in the future. Let them know that SFEG is an important community partner in increasing fish populations through habitat restoration and that funding is needed to support the development of projects. ☐3)

If you know local WDFW Commissioner Larry Carpenter of Master Marine Services, please let him know why you believe SFEG is an important community partner in increasing fish populations through habitat restoration and that funding is needed to support salmon recovery.

☐

The Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group was formed by members of the Fidalgo Fly Fishers in the early 1990s and we have had members on their board of directors ever since.

Conservation Grants:

In April the membership of the club was presented with the opportunity to request one-time grants for conservation-related activities or organizations. In order to not run the risk of violating IRS rules, the Fidalgo Fly Fishers needed to increase or donations as a percentage of retained funds.

There were no requests submitted to the Conservation Grant Committee or the board. As a result, the Conservation Grant Committee met and made the following recommendations to the board:

\$900 Western Rivers Conservancy

\$900 Wild Steelhead Coalition

The board voted unanimously to accept the recommendation of the Conservation Grant Committee. The funds will be dispersed in the near future.

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Up Coming Events:

Saturday September 10th from 10am to 6 pm - The Skagit River Salmonid Festival.

Note: Please check the Outings and Event page on the web site, things get added from time to time.

Wahoo Content:

The question has been raised as to what is acceptable content for the Wahoo. More specifically why some items have been submitted to the Editor of the Wahoo, but have not been published. I will attempt to answer the question.

The Wahoo exists to provide information to the membership, e.g., descriptions of the upcoming meeting topics, menus, public meetings of general interest, or actions of the board. It is not a place to argue or debate.

We do provide on the website a forums area where members are free to present their personal feelings on issues that are generally of interest to the club or the fly fishing community. Indeed, members are urged to use the forums for that purpose.

New Members in May:

By: Ryan Johnson

Ron & Cathey Frederick

Bruce Freet introduced new members Ron and Cathey Frederick of Mount Vernon to the club at the May meeting and Tim Cooley conducted the swearing in ceremony. Ron and Cathey are both retired and new to the sport of fly fishing. They recently completed the Introduction to Fly Fishing Course put on by the club at Skagit Valley College. Both of them look forward to learning more about the sport and interacting with fellow members of the club. Welcome aboard.



REMEMBERING COHO:

By: Danny Beatty

Mark Yuaso writes the Thursday Outdoors column for the Seattle Times. For three weeks during August 2016 he included the following sentence in the Statewide Rivers section: “Many Westside rivers close to all fishing after Aug.31 to protect weak stocks of Coho, and anglers should check the rules pamphlet for what is open and closed.”

I grew up in the 1930s and 40s 4 to 5 miles east of Birch Bay (Whatcom county). During August and into September my dad would be invited to fish for Silvers by a friend or brother in law. They would launch the small wooden boat where Birch Bay State Park is now located. Even with the small outboard it did not take long to get to Pt. Whitehorn and the tide rips that held the Silvers. I remember dad coming back from these trips with three or more fish (I guess there were liberal limits in those days) and place them in a wash tub where they were cleaned. The fish were eaten fresh as steaks, canned in pint jars, salted in “crocks” and smoked. Silvers were a part of our winter diet. I did not know the term Coho until years later. We called Coho - Silvers, Chinook - Springs and Chum - Dog Salmon.

The years passed along and dad and his friend Fayne were able to go fishing around Pt. Lawrence on Orcas Island because my brother and I were able to do the necessary farm chores. He talked about catching numerous fish along the kelp beds of the northwest shoreline.

Years later I had my own sixteen foot boat which I used to fish around Fidalgo Island. One fond memory happened in the late 1960s when I launched the boat at Sunset Beach and fished the tide rips between Green Point and Fidalgo Head. The time was mid September and I evidently arrived about the same time as a school of Silvers. It was one fish after another as I trolled back and forth through the rip. I called dad

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and he came the following Saturday. Remembering his success along the Orcas kelp shoreline, dad asked to troll in closer to shore inside Green Point. He no more than got his lure working than there was a solid strike. It turned out to be the largest Silver he ever caught.

The other memories I have of Silvers have to do with their spawning runs. I grew up on 60 acres of the original land that my great grandfather homesteaded in the 1870s. Two intermittent streams which had spawning runs of silvers went through the land and into California Creek. My grandfather told us about a group of Native Americans (Indians) that camped on the north end of the homestead during the late fall so they could harvest some of the fish. He told of playing with the Indian children when he was a boy in the 1880s. Years later, when clearing some of the land, we found special Indian stone artifacts that are 2500 years old. One of the intermittent streams still had a good (for its size) run of silvers when we were growing up. Along in November, after fall rains, we would check the stream on a daily basis until that special day when the fish were there. But changes were happening to California Creek and many of the creek's meandering tributaries were straightened into ditches. In those days the ditching was done with what dad called a "drag line". It was like an excavator but with cables on drums instead of hydraulics to move the beam and bucket. There was a three to four acre wet land in one section of our land. It was drained when the ditches were extended. Looking back on this, now seventy years later, I realize all this activity did little in the way of making large tracts of land more productive or more useful. Most of those small farms are no longer in operation. The land is used for some livestock grazing and other uses that did not need the drainage which caused a loss of fish habitat. This area of one rather small creek is just an example of what took place up and down Puget Sound.

Some members of the club participated in fly fishing for Coho at Ebey Landing during the fall of 2015.

Those who caught the fish told about the fish being smaller than normal. The September 2016 issue of National Geographic has an article that helps explain why the Coho are smaller and adds another dimension to the salmon's problems and closing rivers to fishing.

The article is called "Heat Wave" by Craig Welch with the introductory sentence: "A giant patch of warm water known as the blob shocks the Pacific, in what some fear is a preview of our future oceans." Much of the article is about the larger whales, seals and sea otters. Coho get two important statements. The first tells about oceanographer Bill Peterson's 20 year research off the Oregon coast where he studies "the miniscule plants and animals that form the foundation of one of the planet's most productive marine systems". "The prize course in this buffet is supposed to be inch-long krill. Shaped like shrimps, they are gobbled by auklets, Coho, basking sharks and whales." Peterson's recent samples have contained less

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and less krill and more zooplankton which he describes as “limp-lettuce side salads: smaller and less nutritious”. “Coho salmon returned to West Coast Streams as malnourished runts.”

Now these Coho, which I think of as the “everyman’s” salmon, have had their small coastal spawning streams changed into ditches and a North Pacific “Blob” has taken away their needed food. Craig Welch ends the article:

“And that, more than anything, I now realize, may be our new normal: the unfathomable gulf between the sea we thought we knew and the one we’re rapidly creating.”

Danny

Salmon Festival:

By: Jim Paget

The Skagit River Salmon Festival will be on Saturday, September 10th from 10 AM to 6 PM. It will be held at the Waterfront Park at the Swinomish Casino & Lodge. We will be having our usual booth featuring both fly casting and fly tying.

The [Skagit River Salmon Festival](#) is a diverse partnership between local, state and federal agencies, tribal communities, local utilities, businesses and non-profit organizations focused on the conservation of the Skagit River system and its rich cultural history and natural resources.

Our club participation in this free, public service event supports other Skagit Watershed Council organizations, conservation organizations that we contribute to, and provides a valuable public education to fly fishing for young and old alike.

I want to thank the 30 members who responded to our Survey/Poll asking for help in this worthwhile endeavor. The schedule has been sent to those volunteering to participate and we look forward to a very successful event.



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Photos of the Month:

By: Richard Raisler



First photo: Arrowleaf balsamroot with Centennial Mountains in the background

Second photo: Swanson's Hawk

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Fly Shops:

The Confluence Fly Shop

2620 N. Harbor Loop Drive #9her

Bellingham, WA 98225

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