

**VOLUME 51**

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## **DECEMBER MEETING**

**Thursday, Dec 15, 2016 @ LaConner Seafood & Prime Rib**

**Wet Fly / Social Gathering: 6:00PM**

**Dinner /Festivities: 7:00PM**

### **President's Message:**

By: Jim Paget

I don't suppose that many of you would consider a year in which you failed to wet a line would consider that a good year. But I do.

In a year in which I single-handedly attempted to support the medical-industrial complex, members stepped up to unofficially fill in for me. At a time when I really wasn't able to focus on the requirements of the Skagit River Salmon Festival, a whole group of members made sure that the club's presence at the festival met the high standards that have been set in prior years.

I hesitate to mention names because so many people performed admirably. However I do need to mention the other board members - Ryan Johnson the Vice-President, Bruce Freet the immediate Past President, Tim Cooley the Secretary and Tim Van Dyken and Mark Gilmore the Treasurers.

Carl Hendricks and his successor Dennis Wilson the editor of the Wahoo was an invaluable resource as was Bill Brodie, the webmaster of our outstanding internet presence.

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Each month we had a Gillie, people to sell the meals and a greeter. In addition, Bill Brodie and Tim Cooley assured that we had the room set up and ready each week.

So yes, it has been a very good year, thanks to all of you.

## **Coastal Cutthroat aka Searuns!**

**By: Danny Beatty**

Fidalgo Fly Fishers, attending meetings over the last three years, have watched many programs about fishing for Searun Cutthroat Trout. Members that fish for searuns go to the Skagit River, Samish River, Ala Spit and possibly a few other locations around Skagit and Island Counties. Program presenters have information about other locations up and down Puget Sound and Hood Canal. Pictures they show of estuaries, points, logjams, etc. are where the Searun hangs out as they work their way into and out of the streams where they migrate to spawn.



A nice bright Skagit River Searun just before I reached over the edge of the boat and made the release. For many members of the club, the Searun just may be their favorite trout. Over many millenniums, the Cutthroat Trout has developed into many strains from Alaska to Arizona. Our Searun is the only strain that migrates to salt water.

Recently I was forwarded an article about where else in the area a person might find streams that contain a small “run” of searuns. It happens to be the San Juan Islands. In the 1970s and into the 1990s I often spent a weekend in May at Cascade Lake on Orcas Island. It was not unusual to catch nice size cutthroat. Cascade Lake has a mixed species of planted fish. One time in the early 70s when I took a group of boys over for a campout, one of them caught a cutthroat of about 24 inches. If you are ever at Cascade, the location was near the bridge on the south side of the lake. But I’m getting ahead of myself on finding searuns. Members of a group at Eastsound on Orcas Island called SeaDoc Society heard comments from long time residents who remembered searuns around the islands. The information intrigued the members and they set out to find if there were still searuns in the neighborhood. Read the results of their search in the following web site: <http://www.seadocsociety.org/cutthroats/>

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I remember seeing the small streams on Orcas. The description of the San Juan stream tells us it could use some environmental help. In any case, the story tells us once again the tenacity of this wonderful fish.

## **Conservation Grants Committee Report:**

Submitted by: Richard Raisler, Committee Chairman

The Fidalgo Fly Fishers conservation efforts this year have been outstanding! Proceeds from the 2015 Holiday Party and a special one time grant authorized by the board made possible \$4,250.00 for conservation. Grants were given to the following organizations; Western Rivers Conservancy, Wild Steelhead Coalition, Skagit Watershed Council, Skagit Land Trust, Skagit Fisheries Enhancement Group and Western Washington University's oral history fly fishing collection. I received two thank you notes from organizations that we support: Skagit River Salmon Festival Board and Skagit Land Trust. They appreciated and publicly recognized The Fidalgo Fly Fishers' involvement in community activities and conservation. These monies plus the individual participation by many club members in conservation work parties and leadership positions are significant. As Lee Wulff once said, "teach a person to fly fish and you have a conservationist". "Wahoo" to the Fidalgo Fly Fishers.

It seems appropriate to pass this information on to club members. We like to talk about our catch of the day during the fishing reports and our fun outings, but it is also worthwhile to talk about our service to the community and efforts to sustain a healthy native fishery.



## Confessions of a Chironomid Fisher - Part 2

Submitted By: Robin LaRue

In the Spring of 1998, the event I call the “Romeo and Juliet Observation” occurred at Pass Lake. This event finally opened my eyes and converted me to Chironomid fishing. The Fidalgo Fly Fishers were having an outing at the lake on a Saturday. I had arrived early and caught a few fish using a wet line and wet fly. As usual, I anchored up on the edge of a drop off and cast to deeper water. As the early morning slipped away more and more boats arrived on the lake. The sun came out and it got warmer and the fish catching slowed to almost non-existent. I watched a 12 foot aluminum boat being launched with a lot of laughing, giggling and commotion. The boat was being launched by a guy and gal (Romeo and Juliet) in their early 20’s, obviously the guy was taking his girlfriend fishing for the afternoon. Clearly Juliet was new to trout fishing and certainly hadn’t been fly-fishing as her boyfriend rigged up two fly rods with long leaders and “Corkies”. Romeo rowed the boat and anchored in the deeper water near me, and within five minutes or less I heard a squeal of excitement and I saw that Juliet had a fish on, a couple of more squeals and coaching by Romeo and the fish was in the net. Romeo released the fish and handed his rod to Juliet so he could cast her rod. While he is casting her rod, Juliet squeals again and she has another fish on that she lands. The fish is no sooner in the net and Romeo hauls back on the rod he has just casted and he has a fish on, he hands the rod to Juliet. She tries to winch in the fish with the reel and pops the fly off in the fish. Meanwhile Romeo is releasing the fish in the net, and casts the line out and hands the rod to Juliet. She gives Romeo a kiss and says something about this is fun. Before Romeo can tie a new fly on the end of the leader on his rod, Juliet has another fish on. This action continues while I cast and retrieve my wet fly with nary a take. I look around the lake and the “light bulb goes on”, I realize that the only people catching fish are fishing “Corkies” (strike indicators) and Chironomids and the trollers or those casting and retrieving a fly are not catching fish. After 30 or 40 minutes of squeals and kisses not to mention catching fish I was not able to watch the Romeo and Juliet show any more, I rowed to the boat launch, loaded up my boat and left the lake. As I got on to Highway 20 just past the parking area I glance to my left, sure enough both Romeo and Juliet have fish splashing at the side of the boat.

That evening found me looking through the fly tying materials section of the Cabela’s Fly Fishing Catalog for Chironomid body materials, beads and scud hooks. A telephone call, extra payment for express delivery and three days later I received all I needed to tie a few Chironomid patterns for my next trip to Pass Lake. The next weekend I returned to Pass Lake with a few crudely tied Chironomid patterns a couple of orange “Corkies” and a handful of toothpicks for stoppers to regulate the depth that the Chironomid pattern would sink below the lake surface. Casting a 14

foot leader with a lump of styrofoam attached to the leader did not come easy. After untangling the leader from around the “Corky” several times I finally got the hang of slowing the casting motion down and opening up the casting loop.

Eventually, it happened after a good cast the fly line straightened out and the “Corky” gently landed on the surface of the water, the leader unfurled and the fly sank beneath the surface, suddenly the “Corky” disappeared and I could feel a fish tugging on the end of the line .... Eureka!! I brought the fish to the net and released it. Another cast with a short wait and again the “Corky” disappeared under the surface of the water. I don’t recall how many fish I caught that day, but it was enough that I decided to pursue Chironomid fishing in earnest.

Since that spring day I have continued to learn what I can about Chironomids and Chironomid fishing. I have bought and studied books and magazine articles about Stillwater Chironomids, Chironomid fishing, and tying Chironomid fly patterns. I have attended and listened to presentations by such notable Chironomid fishers as Phil Rowley, and Brian Chan. I have purchased their DVD’s and have spent a considerable amount of time viewing and reviewing them to pick up on some of the subtle tips that are contained in the videos. There are a number of excellent Chironomid fishers in the Fidalgo Fly Fishers and it has been fun talking and swapping information with them regarding methods of fishing, fly patterns, and tying techniques. A number of these conversations have occurred during various club outings. The Internet is a treasure trove of written information, and YouTube has countless videos on Chironomid fishing and fly tying.

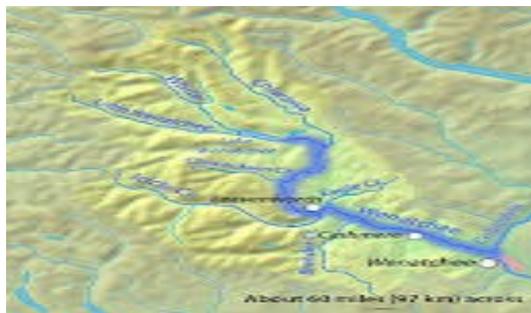
I have had people new to fly fishing ask me about Chironomid fishing, I tell them at times it can be the most productive type of fishing. I caution them if they take up Chironomid fishing it can be addictive. I tell them about developing that “1000 Yard Stare”, that allows you to tune out your surroundings and focus on any movement of the strike indicator. I relate stories about days on Pass Lake and Heart Lake when bringing 20 to 25 fish to net in one day while Chironomid fishing is not unusual. Or fishing trips to Kidd and Minnie or other lakes near Merritt, British Columbia when the Chironomid hatches at times are so prolific the fishing can be unbelievable. I hesitate to tell them that on some of these trips I have caught so many fish that I almost didn’t want to catch any more, so I didn’t set the hook when the strike indicator went under the surface of the lake, I waited until the fish hooked itself. Sometimes this would take 3 or 4 “pull downs”, but it didn’t matter because I had already lost track of the number of fish I had brought to the net.

Yes, I confess I am a Chironomid Fisher.

## **CONSERVATION SMALL GRANT HAS IMPACT IN WA:**

By: Danny Beatty

An IFFF conservation small grant to the Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers helped secure over a mile of river access for the public in a recent joint venture spear-headed by Trout Unlimited and Wenatchee Valley Fly Fishers. Efforts are underway to transfer the property to the Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife to provide public access for angling and other non-motorized recreation at the mile-long stretch of the Wenatchee River. [Click here to read the thank you letter>>](#)



## **New Members in November:**

By: Ryan Johnson

Mark Gilmore introduced Bill Keeler who relocated to Anacortes from Houston after retiring from the oil industry after a 33 year career with BP. Bill has worked all over the western US, the Caspian Sea in Azerbaijan and the interior of Oman. He has been married to his wife Pam for over 32 years and has 2 grown children and 1 grandson so far. Bill started fly fishing in 1986 in Wyoming and has fished off and on since. His interests include both fresh and salt water fishing, fly tying, hunting, golfing, running and skiing. Please give Bill a warm welcome to the club.



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## **OUTINGS COMMITTEE REPORT:**

**Submitted by Bill Brodie**

Several Fidalgo Fly Fishers have expressed an interest in fly fishing for steelhead on the Skagit.

Richard Raisler and Deene Almvig will coordinate walk-in wade group trips (3 fishers to a group) when the Skagit River conditions are acceptable. Richard will try and schedule one weekday and one weekend outing during the month of January. Responding members will be divided into two groups, based on casting ability of those responding to the Steelhead Outings Survey.

[Http://www.fidalgoflyfishers.com/OUTPOLL/](http://www.fidalgoflyfishers.com/OUTPOLL/)

If they can cast 50 feet or more of a heavy sink tip that would be one outing group. If they are learning to cast 50 feet with heavy sink tips that would be another outing group. The primary intent of this outing is to learn about steelhead fishing with experienced club members.

The selection and assignment will be done after Richard and Deene see who responds and their skill level. If you are interested in this adventure, please fill out the survey. Members will be placed on a notification list to be informed about a trip when it is planned. The day will start in the early morning with groups meeting at an agreed upon location and end with a fun lunch at a restaurant. Please refer to the Bulletin Board Topic [Steelhead on the Skagit](#). Also, participants will need good rain and winter clothing (layers), a wading staff, and a lifejacket.

### **Also a Reminder:**

**Confluence Spey Demo Day with Sage & Redington, Saturday, December 10<sup>th</sup> 10am-2pm @ Nugents Corner on the Nooksack.** Join the Confluence Fly Shop and Sage/Redington/Rio Rep Erik Johnson to test out the latest and greatest in spey and switch rods from Sage and Redington. Whether you're a seasoned veteran two-handed caster or want to learn, they will offer instruction in casting and a great selection of new stuff to try out. They will set up on the large gravel bar just upstream of the Hwy. 542 bridge at Nugents Corner (the usual spot).

**Fly Shops:**

**The Confluence Fly Shop**

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