



The BROKEN BARB

May 2024 Vol. 46, Issue 5

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Upcoming Events—Mark your calendars!

- Apr 30-May 4 Eastside Lakes Outing
- May 7 Brew Tie
- May 13 Board Meeting
- May 15 General Membership Meeting
- May 18 Kalama River Outing
- June 5 Laurance Lake Outing
- June 7—9 Deschutes River Outing
- June 21—23 Coldwater Lake Outing

President’s Message

by Jerry Brask, CSF President

As promised in April, the following financial information reflecting income from the Banquet was approved by the Board at the April Board meeting.

Banquet Income for Conservation, Education and Outreach Fund:

Banquet Donations:	\$10,224.41
Banquet Auction:	\$21,474.50
Cup Raffle:	\$ 3,869.05
Total Income:	\$35,567.96

It was a very successful event financially! Thank you again to all of you who helped to make it happen! Our challenge moving forward is to be good stewards making wise use.

The Board met in a strategic planning retreat on April 27th. We had significant discussion and planning about the Conservation, Education and Outreach fund. There also were productive discussions about the Club’s 50th Anniversary in 2025 and how to note that milestone. The Board also discussed Banquet planning, Membership Chair or committee, Board training and other issues.

There will be opportunities for members to help on many of these issues that will be announced from time-to-time at monthly meetings. Stay tuned!

I am submitting to our wonderful Barb Editor, Jane Traffalis, a separate piece written a few years ago about a visit to Lenice Lake, if you are looking for a fishing experience to read about. Hope to see you on the water.

Jerry



Meet our 2024 Board of Directors

Jerry Brask, President
Jerrybrask51@gmail.com

Paul Smith, 1st VP
Programs Director
psmith1419@gmail.com

Don Kohler, 2nd VP
Outings Director
Moabman07@gmail.com

Jack Glode, Secretary

Dan Green, Treasurer
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Carol Kohler, Director
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Mitchell Martin, Director
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Mark Meyer, Director
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Michael Golob, Past President
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Jane Traffalis, Broken Barb Editor
jane.traffalis@gmail.com

Welcome New Members

New members continue to discover CSF for access to education, recreation, and conservation activities, on and off the water.
It is with pleasure that Clark-Skamania Flyfishers welcomes:

Sabrina Blair— Vancouver, WA
Ronald Koetje—Damascus, OR
Douglas McPhee— Camas, WA
Stephanie Roberts— Vancouver, WA
Michael Stone— Camas, WA
Michael Williams—Washougal, WA

Clark-Skamania Flyfishers NEXT GENERAL MEETING Wednesday, May 15, 2024

Wet Fly Hour @ 5:30 | Meeting @ 6:30

Black Pearl on the Columbia 56 S 1st Street, Washougal, WA

At the May meeting, we will be serving the usual offering of **PIZZAS** and beverages.

Clark-Skamania Flyfishers (CSF) is a federally registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Washington.

Founded in 1975, Clark-Skamania Flyfishers is dedicated to the preservation of wild fish stocks and the natural resources that sustain them. CSF is further committed to the promotion of fly fishing as a method of angling and, through it, an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of nature.

Broken Barb is a publication of Clark-Skamania Flyfishers, published monthly and free to members.

CSF is a member club of Fly Fishers International.

For further information on Clark-Skamania Flyfishers, visit our website at csfly.net.



May General Meeting—Guest Speaker



Josh Phillips, a Gonzaga University graduate and former scholarship athlete, has seamlessly integrated his lifelong passion for fishing into his journey. Transitioning from his education to a professional soccer career, Josh's love for fishing persisted. In 2017, he co-founded Spawn Fly Fish, driven by a shared passion for angling and a desire to create a haven for fellow enthusiasts in the Pacific Northwest. Today, Spawn Fly Fish stands as a premier fly fishing shop, a testament to the company's vision and dedication. With unwavering commitment and genuine love for the sport, Josh inspires others to pursue their fishing passions both on and off the water.

Josh will be speaking on fishing the Palix River system of tributaries for chum, coho, steelhead, and sea-run cutthroat.



Conservation Report – May 2024

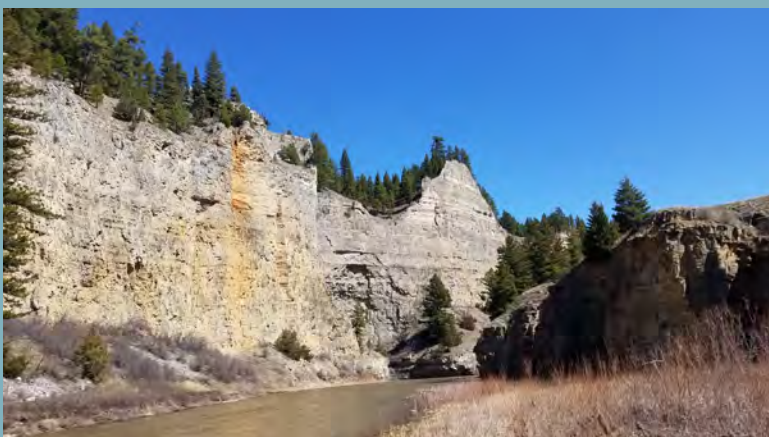
by Dave Swank, CSF Conservation Director

Grants Update

Project Healing Waters - An organization that provides fishing trips for military veterans, using donated trips from local guides. We have received a full application for \$2,000. **Update: We are waiting for a response to some questions we had about their application.**

Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy - runs a fly fishing academy in Washington for children interested in learning about flyfishing. **Update: The Board approved their application for \$2,000.**

Coast Salmon Foundation - The Board LOI received a Letter of Interest on April 1st. We responded with several questions to the applicant and are awaiting a reply.



Eastside Lakes Outing

by Larry Pipes

The Eastside Lakes Outing is set for April 30 thru May 4th. The headquarters will be the Oasis RV Park & Golf Course in Ephrata, Washington.

Let's plan on getting together around 6:00pm on Tuesday the 30th for an orientation. If you can't make this meeting we usually assemble each morning around 8-9 to plan the day's fishing. If you haven't been on this outing, we usually break up into small groups each morning and head off in various fishing holes. In the evening we compare notes, so we cover a lot of water. Fishmasters are listed below if you have questions. Let one of us know if you are interested in attending in case we have any last minute updates.

FISHMASTERS

Larry Pipes, larry.pipes@gmail.com 360-880-5875

Jack Glode, jeg_63@hushmail.com

April 30 - May 4

The following are the most popular locations to stay:

Oasis Resort RV & Golf

- 2451 Basin St, Ephrata, WA 98823
- 509-754-5102 oasisrvandgolfcourse.com
- \$33 (we get a 10% discount, let them know you are with Clark-Skamanian Flyfishers)

The Best Western Rama Inn

- 1818 Basin St SW, Ephrata, WA 98823
- 509-754-7111
- 154 + tax

Ten Pin Inn, Moses Lake (20 minutes east of Ephrata)

- 157 Stratford Road, 98837
- 509-764-7500 www.tenpininn.com



Dry Falls Lake



Deep Lake



Lake Lenore



Visit Rocky Ford to meet some well educated fish

Kalama River Outing

May 18

by Mike Carroll

Driving Directions: From Vancouver, take I-5 N to exit 32 (Kalama River Road). Turn right onto Kalama River Road. At the traffic circle, take the 2nd exit and stay on Kalama River Road. Go approximately 1 mile and turn right onto Modrow Road. CSF Signs mark the destination.

A Discover Pass is required at this launch site.

Meeting Time: *8 AM at the town park located 1/2 mile past the roundabout on Kalama River Road. We will discuss access, safety, floats and shuttles, with maps. (* updated meeting location)

Area Description: The Kalama River has about 16 miles of fishable water with variable access (some steep). A wading staff or trekking pole is needed. Float distance from 'Red Barn' is about 7 miles / 5 hours. Modrow or Slab Hole are recommended take-outs.

Fishing Methods: 6 to 8 weight rods of 9 to 10 feet with fast-sinking tips to work "low and slow." Flies may be leeches in purple and black or traditional patterns such as Green Butt Skunk, Purple Peril, Springer Green, Freight Train, Ferry Canyon and Deep Purple Spey, along with muddlers such as After Dinner Mint. Hook sizes 6 to 2 are commonly used for steelhead. Pink beads may also produce on this river.

Cutthroat Trout may be found from Upper Hatchery to Summers Creek. Use similar flies and rods, scaled down (6 to 10-sized hooks and 5 to 6 weight rods).

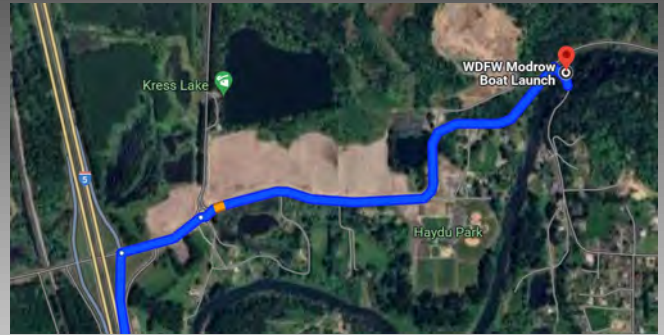
Dinner: Michael and Paula Golob will host a barbeque at their cabin at 2:00 pm. (14.5 miles upriver, Road 8100, 1/2 mile on left).

RSVP: If you plan to attend, please RSVP with Mike Carroll.

FISHMASTER

Mike Carroll, mudler.mike@gmail.com

360-953-3310



Laurance Lake Outing

June 5

by Jerry Brask

Laurance Lake: At about 3,000' (about 160 acres) is on the north slope of Mt. Hood near Parkdale. On a clear day, great view of the mountain. Primarily a flyfishing lake (use of bait is prohibited), with rainbow, brookies, cutthroat and wild bull trout. Both dry fly fishing and nymphing can be productive.

Methods: Kayaks or Pontoons are best and recommended. Float tube could work, but it would be challenging to reach as much of the lake as you might like. A few wading opportunities.

Meeting and Time:

Meet between 8-9 am at the boat ramp area. 1 hour and 45 minutes to 2 hour drive from Vancouver. About 1 mile of very rough road; truck or SUV is recommended. **Fee:** \$10 at registration. Non-waivable.

Head Count: Please let us know if you are planning to attend. Also, parking can be tight, and it would be helpful to have a good count on vehicles.

Equipment. Life preservers required. Whistle strongly advised. Anchor may be helpful if there is wind.

ELECTRIC MOTORS ONLY

Clothing: Usual clothing but be prepared for perhaps still chilly and maybe windy weather on the mountain.

Fishing Gear: Both a floating line and a full sink or intermediate sink line on 4 to 6 weight rod. 3X to 5X tippets. **Do not forget to bring your Oregon fishing license (annual or day license).**

Flies: Woolly buggers, pheasant tails, streamers, dry flies, soft hackles trailing, and your favorites.

Lunch: BYO. We can plan a time to break for lunch if there is interest.

Directions:

- 84 east to Hood River exit #64-towards Or-35/ Government Camp
- Go south on OR-35
- Go about 14 miles to OR-281N, Turn Right.
- Go about 2 miles to Baseline/Stop sign. Turn Right.
- Go into Parkdale and to Clear Creek Road. Turn Left. (It is the first left after RR tracks with a sign to "Library.")
- Go about 3 miles to Right hand Fork/Turn. Sign to Laurance Lake to Right. Turn Right.
- Go about 4 miles to Laurance Lake. Register \$10.
- Go down the short road to the boat ramp after Registration.

There is some parking near the boat ramp. We may need to unload gear at the boat ramp area and park vehicles back at Registration. Short walk.

FISHMASTERS

Jerry Brask

jerrybrask51@gmail.com 503-502-4283

Peter Anderson

pavanderson321@gmail.com 360-606-7013



Deschutes River Outing

June 7–9

by Todd Gerhardt

Please come and join us for this year's outing on the Deschutes river. We will be camping at Harpham Flats, which is just upstream of Maupin, Oregon. There are also lodging accommodations at the Imperial River Company and the Deschutes Motel. The campsites at Harpham Flats are first come first served. That being said, we've never had a problem with having enough campsites in the past. If you are going to camp in a tent, please let me know as we normally reserve a group site in the center of the campground for that.

The Deschutes is home of 1000s of trout per river mile. The main attraction is the native red side trout. These fish grow to be quite large and put up a good fight. I would recommend at least a five weight rod with 4X tippet. This will allow you to land the fish without having to play it to exhaustion. It will also help keeping the bigger fish from breaking off. We will be going immediately after the famous Deschutes salmon fly hatch. You will probably still see a few salmon flies on the bushes by the stream bed. Since the Deschutes River is fairly swift, most of the fish will hold within 8 feet of the shoreline. High sticking nymph is very productive on the Deschutes. If you'd like to swing flies, I would suggest something with rubber legs, sculpin, or bouncing stonefly nymphs near the bottom. There will also be some dry fly opportunities. At present I am in contact with the Deschutes Angler Fly Shop to try to arrange an informational talk on Friday evening. I will let you know how that progresses.



If you intend to float the river, please let me know. You will need to get a Deschutes boaters pass, which is available online. Google "Deschutes River Boaters Pass" to find the link. If you are going to put multiple people on your boaters pass I will always suggest adding an alternate trip leader to it, in case somebody doesn't want to go at a particular time. I would also suggest making multiple copies of the pass if you are not going to be drifting close to one another. The section of river that we normally float is from Nena down to Harpham Flats or Wapinitia. If you take out or launch from Harpham Flats, there is a trail fee of \$1 (one dollar) which is on the honor system.

For questions or more detailed information please contact Todd Gerhardt.

FISHMASTER

Todd Gerhardt

Toddgerhardt1315@gmail.com 503-793-9022

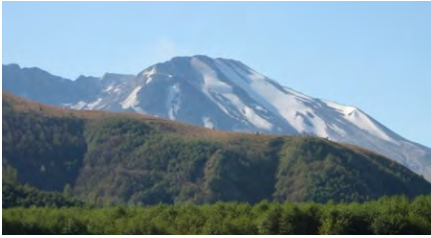


Coldwater Lake Outing

June 21–23

by Julie Berge

Coldwater Lake is on the north side of Mount St. Helens within the monument area. The lake lies at approximately 2500 ft. elevation.



Driving Directions: Access off I-5 via SR 504, **Exit 49**; go east on the well maintained state road. Coldwater Lake is 45 miles from I-5. You will pass Seaquest State Park at 5.2 miles, Toutle at 11, Kid Valley at 18.3 (last place for gas), Eco Park at milepost 24.1, and finally Coldwater at milepost 45.

Passes: No parking passes are required

General Information about Coldwater Lake

- No gas motors are permitted, but you may use an electric motor.
- You must have a pontoon boat, float tube, canoe, boat, or some means of getting on the lake – no fishing is permitted from shore (if you hike the lake, you are restricted to “stay on the trail” and there are only two access points to the shoreline where boats may land).
- Coldwater is a lake of 766 acres.
- The outlet stream is closed to fishing designated by a sign near the boardwalk.
- The Rainbow and Cutthroat are a self-sustaining population from the original plant in 1989. Fry were first found in 1992 and though the lake has limited productivity, fish continue to spawn successfully.

Fishing Gear: The usual suspect flies will work (or not) such as buggers, leeches, nymphs or a fly that floats well. I suggest you bring both floating and deep sinking lines – you never know one might work better than the other. The fish bite on the surface and deep.

Friday: Frank and I have reservations for Thursday, June 20th as we like to camp and we love Eco Park. Eco Park is the last camping spot in route to the lake. On Friday, from the campground, we plan to hike down to the Toutle River and explore out on the mud flats. As you walk up river you will eventually have a great view of the mountain. Any type of shoe works, but plan to get them wet. The river has many paths through the mudflow and none are very deep. If camping interests you, please make a reservation through Eco Park Resort. Their number is 360-274-7007 or you can txt Dawn at 360-749-6799. There is a two-night minimum to camp. There is a restaurant on-site and the owner, Mark, will cook breakfast and dinner if you let him know ahead of time. He also bakes amazing pies. We will have our 5th wheel and will be in site 7. The gate is closed so you will have to get out and open and close upon entry and exit. You must also check in upon your arrival.

Saturday: Since most fishers are making this a day trip, we will plan lunch in the picnic area like in years past at 1 pm. I’m planning to make grilled sausage with potatoes and green beans. Any sides would be appreciated. We will also be at the boat launch around 8 am should you have any questions.

Once back at Eco Park for the evening, will plan to make smores while sitting around the communal fire pit. Firewood is provided. Due to Eco Park’s Insurance, you must be a registered guest to be on the grounds.

RSVP: Please RSVP with Julie and if you have any questions feel free to call Julie, Frank, or Larry.

FISHMASTERS

Julie Berge 360-798-6757 swatberge@gmail.com

Frank Berge 360-798-6463

ASSISTANT FISHMASTER

Larry Morris 360-253-1646 lcmorris1250@gmail.com

Clark-Skamania Flyfishers

2024 Outings

page 1 of 2 (late April — June)

April 30-May 4	Eastside Lakes - Washington Fishmaster: Larry Pipes, (360) 880-5875, larry.pipes@gmail.com Assistant Jack Glode (307) 630-9612, jeg_63@hushmail.com Overnight, Wade or Float, Trout
May 18	Kalama River – Washington Fishmaster: Mike Carroll, (360) 953-3310, mudler.mike@gmail.com Day trip, Wade or Float, Steelhead, Trout
June 5	Laurance Lake - Oregon Fishmaster: Jerry Brask, (503) 502-4283, jerrybrask51@gmail.com Assistant Peter Anderson, (360) 606-5947, pavanderson321@gmail.com Day trip, Float, Trout
June 7 - 9	Deschutes River, Harpham Flat BLM Campground Maupin, Oregon Fishmaster : Todd Gerhardt, (503) 793-9022, toddgerhardt1315@gmail.com Assistant Bob Harrison, (360) 798-6220 bobnjeana@yahoo.com Float, walk and wade, trout
June 21 - 23	Coldwater Lake – Washington Fishmaster: Julie & Frank Berge, (360) 798-6757, swatberge@gmail.com Assistant Larry Morris, (360) 253-1646, lcmorris 1250@gmail.com Day trip, Float, Trout



Coldwater Lake

Clark-Skamania Flyfishers

2024 Outings

page 2 of 2 (July—November)

- July 12 - 14 **Upper Lewis River – Washington**
Fishmasters: Don & Carol Kohler, (503) 891-5486, moabman07@gmail.com
Overnight, Wade, Trout
- July 18 - 20 **Crooked River-Oregon**
Fishmaster: Bob Shimane, (408) 314-0645, andylily99@gmail.com
Overnight, Wade, Trout
- August 3 **John Day River - Cottonwood Canyon State Park - Oregon**
Fishmaster: Mark Meyer, (360) 253-7273, md.meyer@comcast.net
Day trip, Wade, Bass
- September 6 - 8 **Cowlitz River - Washington**
Fishmaster: Al Wood & Diane Schmitt, (360) 904-7797 alanstanleywood@gmail.com
Overnight, Float or Wade, Steelhead, Trout
- September 11 **Laurance Lake - Oregon**
Fishmaster: Ben Nolte, ben@bigamazonfish.net
Day trip, float, trout
- October 4 - 6 **Klickitat River – Washington**
Fishmasters: Don & Sherri Starkin, (509) 637-4405, dstarkin@msn.com
Overnight, Wade or Float, Trout and Steelhead
- October 12 **Merrill Lake Fish-in – WA (In conjunction with WDFW)**
Fishmaster: Marvin Yoshinaka, (541) 728-7496, marvyosh@gmail.com
Fishmaster: Jim Hutchison, (360) 837-8011, wilandhutch@gmail.com
Fishmaster: Warren Bieker, (360) 687-5475, ljbieker@comcast.net
Day trip, Wade or Float, Trout
- November 9 **Kilchis River-Oregon (Tillamook)**
Fishmaster: Dennis Hite, (503) 849-5649, dhite1@yahoo.com
Day trip, Float or Wade, Chum Salmon

Brew Tie

**Tuesday, May 7
6:00 to 8:00 pm**

**Ghost Runners Brewery and Kitchen
4216 NE Minnehaha Street, Suite 108
Vancouver, WA 98661**

This monthly no-host DIY fly tying with nibbles, brews, and camaraderie is “a must” for CSF tyers. Come one, come all to tie some flies and drink a couple beers. Non-tyers are welcome.

There will be table available if anyone would like to display their hand-tied flies.

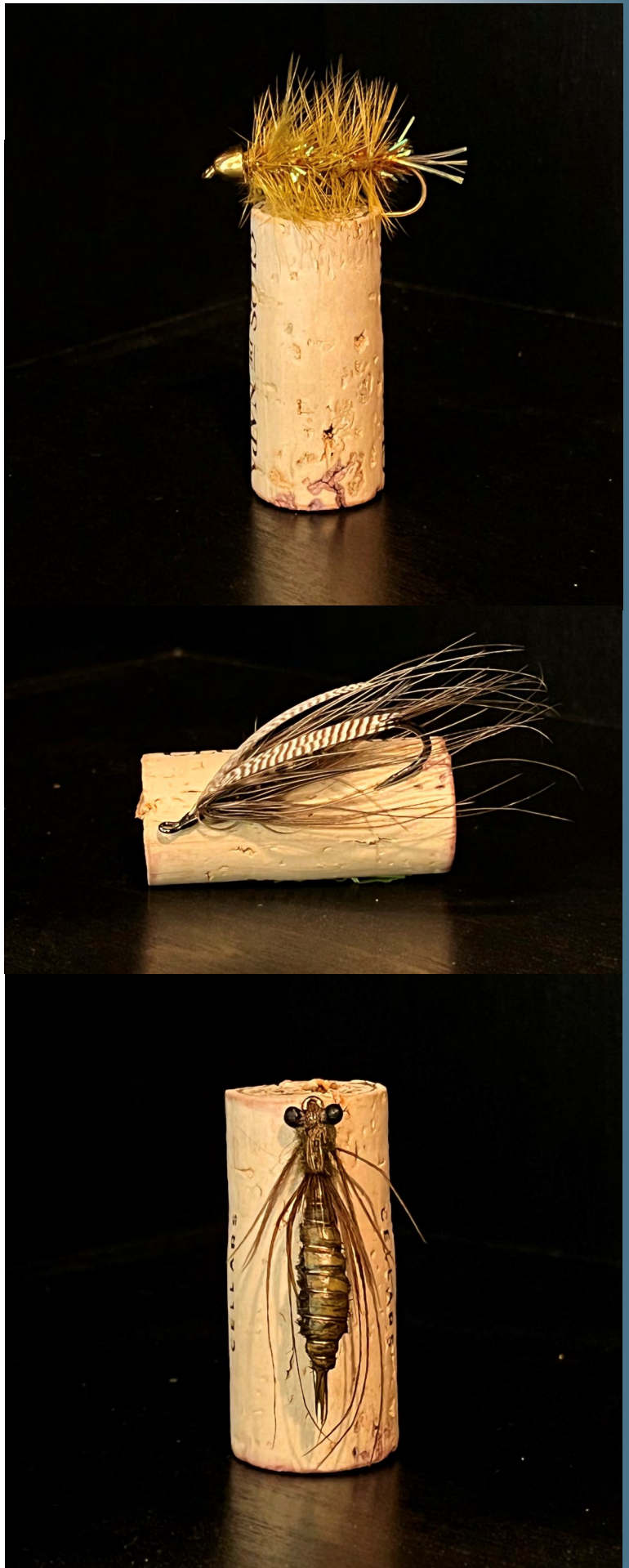
Bring a towel or other cover for the tables to make it easier to gather your tying waste and to prevent glue spots from reaching tabletops.

Ghost Runners is hidden inside a small industrial park so scout the access in daylight. Once found, it’s easy to locate but first search can be tricky. It’s located between St. Johns and Andresen, set far back on the north side of Minnehaha Street.

Bring your fly tying stuff, non tyers are also welcome.

**If anyone would like to tie a fly for the group, let Forrest Koponen know at:
360-772-5081; aobdnr@gmail.com**

Flies shown at right were tied by Steve Jones and Forrest Koponen.





Klinline Kids Fishing Derby

by John Geyer

The Klinline organization puts 15,000 1-year fish (12 to 18 ounces) into the netted area. 2,500 fisher kids catch 2 each and a few die, leaving ~9,000 in the pond. With the masses, we put 400 “brooder” hens (females of 3 to 6 pounds)) that trout hatcheries keep 3 or 4 years as egg-makers. (After eggs have been removed from a female trout several times, fertility slows and big fish are “retired” to fishing programs like this.)

Kids catching those 3 to 6 pounders win bikes and other prizes of consequence and recognition.

Klinline Kids Fishing is the biggest Kids Fishing event in Washington or Oregon. Five regional trout hatcheries (Washington) clean their tanks to deliver 3 truckloads of fish.

Our local electric utility (Clark Public Utilities) donates \$40,000 to compensate hatcheries for cost of raising and delivering the fish.

After the event, we release 8,000-plus fish into the lake, stocking the summer catch for Vancouver Parks & Recreation.

My take away at the Special Kids event was the universal joy and thrills of catching First Fish. For all that’s wrong with the world, nothing was evident among those with real challenges to handle. Caregivers were as marvelous a study as were fisher-kids and folks.

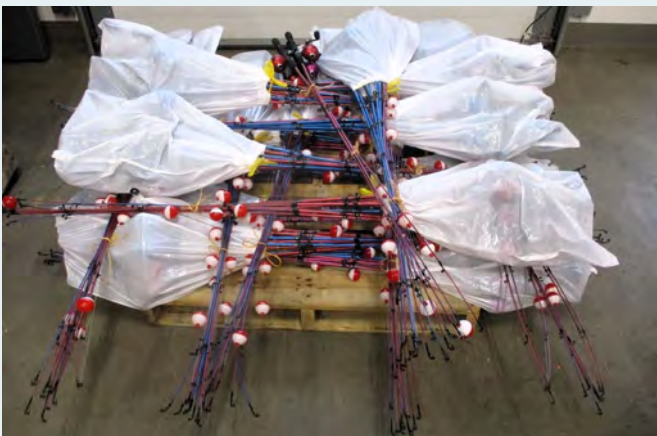
For all that fishing offers participants, I cannot imagine any greater rewards than were on tight lines, today. This entire production was as good as it gets. BIG Kudos to all who made this happen, seamlessly and “as fishing should be.”



Klineline Kids Fishing Derby—continued



Klineline Kids Fishing Derby—continued



CSF Annual Bill Wiggins Memorial Fly Fishing School

by Jane Traffalis

This was a must-attend event for anyone new to fly fishing or seeking to advance their knowledge and skills. The comprehensive course, led by Peter Anderson, covered a wide range of modules: rod, reel, and line (Peter Anderson); entomology (Dave Swank); safety (Jack Glode); gear (Sandy Johnson); tactics (Russ Flaskerud); etiquette (Bonnie Houghton); casting (Steve Jones & his many assistants); knot tying (Peter Anderson); where to fish (Michael Golob); and an introduction to CSF (Jerry Brask).

Here are some key takeaways from the class:

- A reel merely serves as a line storage tool and provides balance to the rod. Don't break the bank buying a new one.
- For flies, size and shape are more crucial than color.
- Damselflies fold their wings back, while dragonflies keep them to the side.
- An 'unimproved' clinch knot is just as strong as the 'improved' version.
- If caught in a lightning storm with no shelter, minimize ground contact by kneeling and leaning on your elbows.
- The majority of fish feeding occurs below the surface.
- Maintain composure when encountering anglers with poor etiquette; don't let them ruin your day.
- Keep your rod moving in a consistent plane during casting, avoiding half-moon motions.
- If stranded on a desert island, bring Sandy Johnson; her extensive gear collection could prove invaluable for survival and fishing.

Sincere gratitude to Peter Anderson and all who contributed to making this event a resounding success!



Spring Casting Clinic

Under the expert guidance of Blake Reimer from Discovery Fly Fishing in Sherwood, Oregon, the Spring Casting Clinic provided participants with personalized casting instruction tailored to their skill levels. Reimer's exceptional ability to analyze each cast and communicate insightful feedback allowed attendees to refine their techniques. His patient, one-on-one approach ensured that every participant left the clinic with a deeper understanding of proper casting mechanics and strategies for continued improvement.

Thank you to Mark Meyer for coordinating the clinic!



A Place Is Different When You are Alone and in the Dark

J. Brask

I was on a flyfishing club outing to Lenice Lake in remote central Washington. The area was traumatized 15,000 years ago by the Missoula Floods, scouring the landscape and relocating rock, soil and plant life across what is now Montana, Washington and Oregon. 100 miles north of Lenice, the floods carved out the largest continental waterfall, roughly ten times larger than Niagara Falls. Water no longer flows over the falls, but Dry Falls Lake now rests beneath it.

Back to Lenice, there are several lakes lined up east to west, with a rather dramatic ridge, called the Saddle Mountains, running parallel to the lakes just to the south. A narrow gravel road provides access to the lakes from the west, where it passes a small impoverished hamlet on the way to Lenice. The Columbia River also flows by 5 miles to the west, journeying south towards the Columbia River Gorge, as it did during the floods.

The lake is known for large trout and fierce winds that gather strength coming from the west. Those winds cross a wide, flat terrain with essentially no obstacles for miles. It can be chilly in April, with temperatures at night in the 30s or lower. The wind was gathering itself Wednesday afternoon when I arrived. Club members were staying in some form of trailer or "hard-sides" at Lenice, mindful of a couple intrepid friends who stayed in tents a few years ago. They spent the night in freezing temperatures struggling to keep their tents and gear from blowing to Idaho.

I woke Thursday at 5 am, still dark, to find a pre-dawn calm. It was cold. I relaxed in the trailer for a second cup of coffee, encouraged about reduced winds, and walked the quarter mile to the boat ramp and my pontoon. When I finally kicked onto the lake around 6:30 am, the sun was up and the wind came with it. With 15-20 mph winds, it was some of the most challenging wind conditions I had fished in, with white caps forming that morning and growing throughout the day. The winds climaxed on Saturday, with everyone blown off the lake by steady 20 mph plus winds and 30-40 mph gusts. I went on a hike. Sunday, the barometer shifted, the weather calmed, while two otters patrolled the lake as we fished.

After missing the early morning calm on Thursday, I resolved Friday to rise early ahead of the wind. Another club member inspired the effort, but we did not set a departure time, leaving it at "see you down at the boat ramp." It was dark, quiet and clear when I rose without an alarm at

4:15 am. There was no wind. Nobody stirred in the camp. Stars twinkled above me walking to the lake with a headlamp. Gathering my gear took only a few minutes, but I felt twinges of apprehension preparing in the chilly dark alone. What dangers lurk in the waters in the dark?

I kicked onto the lake at 5 am. My anxiety dissolved. The lake was smooth and calm. There was no wind. It was very dark. The lake was silent. When I looked overhead, the Big Dipper smiled back. I cast a line to troll slowly and quietly. For a few minutes, I marveled at the moment. Mainly, I recall gratefulness that a guy from the Midwest was able to find himself at this setting. There was a tug on my line. I set the hook and retrieved the trout. It was a 14" rainbow, no record breaker on this lake. Still, he had good color and was hefty. I released him to enjoy his own coming daybreak. Before long, I saw the headlamp of my friend along the path to the boat ramp. We fished together in the dark, and watched sunrise from the lake.

Friday turned out to be a pretty good day fishing overall for me and many club members as well. Despite the wind, it was a very worthwhile outing. There was some good time shared with friends. We enjoyed ourselves outdoors. Fish were caught. I learned some things on this trip, always a plus.

I will remember the morning under the stars most vividly. Wonder seems the best word to describe it. Wonder at the magic of the morning. The beauty of a place. A flood that defies comprehension. Fish sustaining themselves in harsh conditions. The hardscrabble poverty lived by people today in nearby towns we drive past to fly fish. Birds singing their tunes along the banks. Insect life that sustain the trout. Otter we worry about disrupting our fishing, whose home is actually the lake. The opportunity for a mid-western transplant to have fished solo on a quiet morning in the dark under the western stars.

A place is different when you are alone and in the dark.

