



## President's Message

Our auction was a great success! The Board would like to thank everyone who donated and participated, particularly Kevin Formway for all the work he put in. While the results aren't quite final, it looks like this was our most successful auction, netting over \$24,000. The Board also liked this change to a spring event (*but not Easter weekend*) so the next auction will likely be spring 2027.

We have a lot going on over the next few months. If you haven't been on a club outing in a while I would encourage you to attend an outing or two. Fly fishing is what brings us all together. I know I would have never discovered new lakes, developed my fly-fishing skills or made so many new friends without our club. Please check the club website or our social media posts for activities.

Let's go fishing and maybe have an adventure.

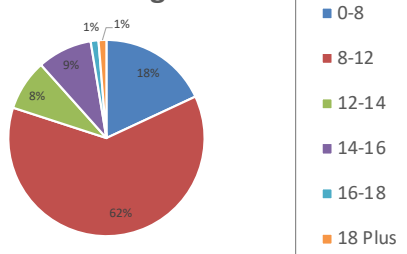
**-Mike**



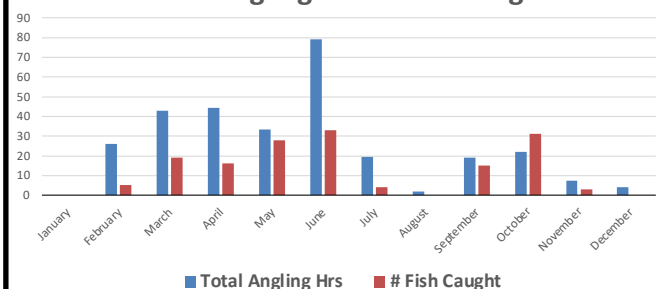
### Squalicum Lake:

Our club is seeking someone to take over monitoring and collection of creel census cards at Squalicum Lake. This involves going to the lake periodically, collecting creel census cards, tabulating information and sharing with our club and DFW. Duties also include simple monitoring of kiosk and boat launch. If you are interested or have questions, please contact **Mike Riber**.

**Squalicum Lake  
Size of Fish Caught 2024**



**Squalicum Lake  
2024 Angling Hrs & Fish Caught**



## 4CFF Calendar of Events

### ***May 14, 2025 5:00pm. Join us for Beer Night!***

Goods Local Brews, 2620 Northwest Avenue Bellingham. Food Trucks and Dog Friendly

### ***May 15-18, 2025 Dry Falls Outing***

Located north of Soap Lake and east of Park Lake. Camping at Sun Lakes-Dry Falls State Park. Also lodging at nearby Sun Lakes Park Resort or The Cove at Sun Lakes

### ***May 28-June 1, 2025 Red Lake Outing***

Located 54 Kilometers west of Kamloops, BC a little over 4 1/2 hours from Bellingham.

### ***June 15-18, 2025 Big Twin Outing***

Located just outside Winthrop, WA Big Twin is a stocked lake with excellent camping.

### ***July 10-13 Methow Classic***

River Bend RV Park, Twisp. Reservations suggested as soon as you decide if you will go.

## Conservation Project Report April 17, 2025

We were asked by NSEA to complete a project on Deer Creek in Whatcom County. Upon completion, this project will restore a section of Deer creek for coho and cutthroat trout to spawning and rearing potential. Deer creek is a tributary to Ten Mile Creek in Whatcom County. On April 17 **Ralph Lloyd, Greg Finney, Jeff Taylor** and one potential member **Nils Lazich** spent a beautiful morning planting 200 trees at the NSEA project. The volunteers organized their efforts and the coordinator expressed great surprise at how many trees such a small crew planted. The property owner provided baked goodies to the planters. She said she saw a Coho Salmon navigate its way all the way up to her property, something she had never seen before. We are making a difference. Please come out and help on future conservation. They are fun, important and impactful.

*-Jeff Taylor (reporting for Ralph Lloyd)*



## 4CFF Conservaton/Education Auction Report

### April 19,2025

Greetings,

Thanks to extremely generous donors and buyers, our event was a resounding success! The last update from our treasurer had us netting just over **\$24K**. That is considerably more than I was anticipating, and I believe it is well above average. Well done everyone!

In addition to being a financial success, I think everyone enjoyed themselves. My sister and her husband were visiting from Vancouver, WA and I know they did! They ended up with the two "Distillery" items, and the bee hive setup. I don't know how he plans to get those bees to Vancouver, but I do know that I don't want to be in the car when they take those bees home!

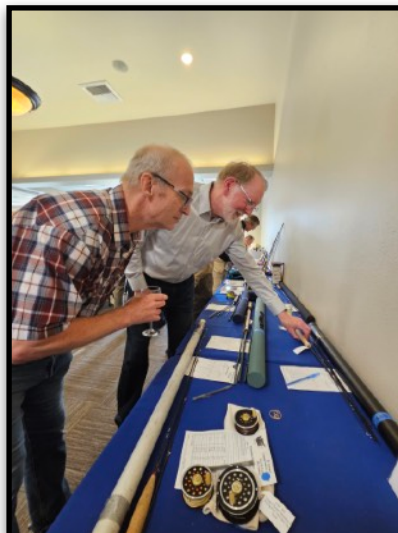
While I did not get to bid very much I did not go home empty handed. My sister won the "Pick of the Live Auction" raffle, and with a little guidance from me she chose the Yakima River Float Trip. Neither she nor her husband are fly fisherfolk, so my sister is going to enjoy the float on the Yak, while Matt and I fish (and her husband checks out the local vineyards).

Another objective of our auction was to provide individuals (especially those new to fly fishing) an opportunity to pick up gear for reasonable prices. Again, I think we succeeded on this count. I know of some extremely good deals that were had by individuals new to our sport. I also know of some very experienced fly fishermen who went home with some very nice things for really great prices.

It's important to keep in mind that the majority of the proceeds from the auction will be used to support local conservation efforts, and the fact that we did well financially means that we will be able to provide more meaningful support.

So we made money, had a good time, attendees went home safely with some pretty good deals, and we will be contributing to local conservation projects in the near future. Sounds like a win to me!

***-Kevin Formway 2025 Conservation Auction Chair***

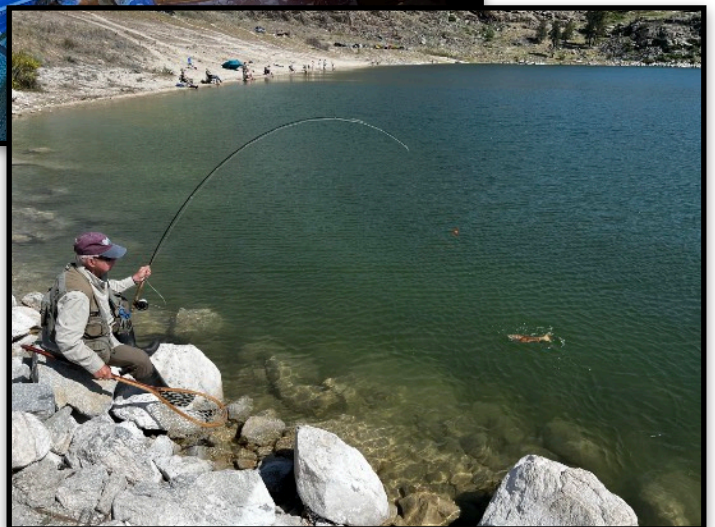




## Omak Lake/Chopaka Lake Outing Report May 24-29, 2025

### Omak Lake-

The trip to Omak Lake was four hours rather than five because the nice surprise that North Cascades Highway opened. The weather in Omak was really surprisingly good with only one day of wind that made casting a challenge. A group of eleven of us that included 3 prospective members spent 2-3 days fishing for Lahontan Cutthroat at Omak Lake. Spay casting and roll casting made the day. Chironomids, Black, Olive and Tan Leeches seemed to work the best but it became obvious to me that the most able leech fishers had consistent success. Ralph made some very helpful suggestions on depth and rate of strip but sadly it still didn't improve my leech catch. Daily totals ranged from 1-17 fish per person with the "hottest" fishing occurring close in shore and in the evening. A dinner at Loggers was reasonable and we enjoyed a good conversation about past fishing trips around the Northwest. Pete Lamb donated a rod for the outing drawing. After dinner we all headed back to the lake and the evening bite while short was very productive with Jeff Taylor making sure that everyone caught an after dinner fish by sharing his "secret spot" and making sure everyone had a chironomid that would do the job. He spent his time netting fish! Camping was not a wilderness experience but grass campground with hot showers was well worth the \$15. The lake was crowded because of the nice weather.





## Chopaka-

On Saturday a group of us headed up a very rocky and rutted road to Chopaka Lake. In all eight fishers from the club showed up. Fish were caught on leeches and chironomids. A very windy Sunday morning held most people on the beach but prospective member Gib Morrow fished the shore with indicator and chironomid and had 10 fish before 9AM while we were all still drinking coffee. Message to Bob....get going in the morning and don't let wind deter you from fishing! At about 10AM prospective member Jim Swanson had been on a hike and reported that the north end of the lake was calm. I was off rowing North against the wind. That day and subsequent days the North end was very productive with catches between 10 and 40 fish per boat each day. I managed to catch the smallest fish (the size of a dill pickle and justifiably the subject of much good natured ridicule) but generally 18" – 22" with the Triploids putting up a running jumping fight and the Blackwaters looking like spotted war veterans slugged it out on the bottom with repeated runs. Several doubles came on the lines and a variety of methods were used to get two fish from two different rods into the net. We really enjoyed fishing the cove hearing Grouse, Wood Peckers and watching the Eagle pair and their babies in the tree above. It was very much a wilderness fishing experience.

That evening Mike Reiber shared a wonderful apple pie with the group and the next morning used his dutch oven to make a blueberry breakfast cake that was really appreciated. A great campfire topped off a tiring day of fishing. It makes me wish I could return tomorrow.

## *Bob Jorgenson-Outing Host*



## Report on the April 27, 2025 Washington State Fly Fishers International Fly Casting and Tying Annual Fair

The Fly Casting and Fly Tying Fair in Issaquah was a great success as the mixed sun and clouds weather cooperated. The location provided the opportunity for walk in participants as well as a large number individuals who were present for their second or third time.

- Booths featured Atlantic Salmon fly tiers demonstrated tying techniques and other booths offered the opportunity to join Fly Fishers International and offered information on other fly casting related programs.
- Meanwhile, on a grass field single and two handed group lessons were taught throughout the day for beginners through advanced casters by Marion Hiller and Ruth Simms..
- Molly Semenik and Todd Somsel taught two-handed anglers on the shores of Lake Sammamish
- At the opposite end of the field Frank Koterba led the fly casting skills development program with several casting at the Bronze, Silver or Gold levels by the end of the sessions.
- Those who desired help with specific casting issues could participate in a "Casting Clinic" with coaching by Don Simonson and Steve Hiller. There was also a walk in clinic.

In all it was a varied and active casting and tying event and one that would really benefit any member of the 4th Corner Fly Fishers. Plans are already underway for the 2026 Fly Casting and Fly Tying Fair in Issaquah. **-Marion Hiller**



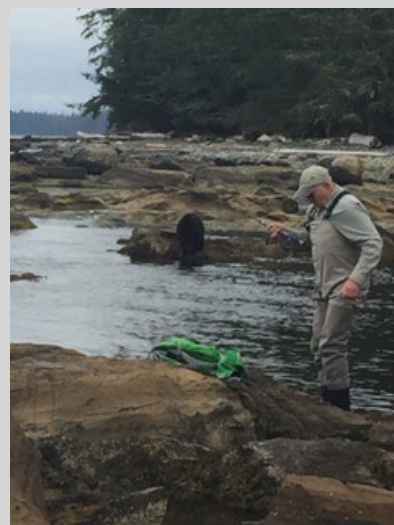
## 4CFF Memory From a Past Outing

### ***This Story Provided by Mike Riber-***

Sometimes the fishing is so good that the bears don't mind sharing a pool with a few fly fishers. In this picture, between the bear and long time member Klaus Lohse there were maybe a hundred Pink Salmon and the bears did not mind us catching and releasing a number of fish. This took place on Vancouver Island in 2016 when several club members went to investigate the even year Pink run. It was a fun trip with adventure, exploring, wildlife and even a few fish landed.



Klaus Sharing a Cast With His Favorite Bear



Ready for a Meal



# Fly of the Month-Red Butt Wood Duck

*(A Dry Falls Must Have Fly in Two Shades)*

**By Steve Wimer**

## Recipe.

Hook. AquaTalon Chironomid Ambush hook.  
Size 14-16.

Thread. UTC 70d in Red and Wood duck colors.

Body. Butt sections is red tying thread and the thorax is wood duck tying thread. (Try rusty brown thread for the thorax as well.)

Rib. Flashabou color Blue steel # 6916. (Pre-cut 0.5mm ASB can be used as well.)

Bead. 2.3mm brown tungsten.

Gills. Uni-stretch in white.

Loc Tite super glue or Sally Hansen Hard as Nails to finish

## Tying instructions.

1. Place bead on to hook. Personal preference- I put the bead on with the bigger hole toward the eye of the hook (backwards to most people) because I feel it allows me to build a smoother taper to chironomids. Tie in ½ to 1 inch piece of gill material in front of bead and pointing forward over the eye of the hook. Use the minimum number of thread wraps to secure material and whip finish as the bead has to slide over the whip finish. Trim gill material butt and secure with whip finish and snip thread. Pull bead forward over the area where gill material is tied in to the eye of the hook. Gills can be trimmed to length, gill length should be approximately the size of the bead.
2. Reattach red tying thread behind the bead and tie in flashabou rib material. Secure rib material back to the bend of the hook, generally just above where the barb on the hood would be. Wrap the red thread forward creating a smooth gently tapered body as you return the red thread just behind the bead.



Here are two versions, wood duck thread and rusty brown thread. I would suggest you tie both.

3. Using the wood duck colored thread, start just behind the bead and tie off the red thread and snip red thread. Wrap the wood duck thread back approximately 2/3 of the length of the body of the fly. Leave approx. 1/3 of the red thread showing to create the red-butt. Wrap the wood duck thread forward to behind the bead, again creating a smooth gently tapered body.
4. Wind the flashabou forward to behind the bead in 6 to 7 evenly spaced turns. Then secure the flashabou with the wood duck thread and snip rib off. Whip finish the chironomid just behind the bead.
5. Finish the chironomid by applying Loc tite super glue or Sally Hansen Hard as Nails. I've used UV resin in the past but have recently stopped using UV resin on chironomids because it just doesn't hold up as well. I have to thank John Sanders for this tip.

Fishing this chironomid.

Fish the chironomid under a strike indicator just like you would any other chironomid. Recently on a trip to Dry falls lake with John Sanders, I observed large wood duck colored chironomids with red butts near the boat launch. It was my top producing fly for the next two days. If your headed to Dry falls with the club later this month, be sure to have few of these in your box in size 14-16. I'd also have the same fly with rusty brown thread in place of the woodcock colored thread.

Bobber down and tight lines!

Steve

Ed. Note: Two years ago we had a club outing at Dry Falls and two gentlemen from Lynden were absolutely killing it with 25 fish a day. This is what they were using. These are also reported to be very effective at Lone Lake, South Whidby

### ***Safety Side Note:***

Some fly fishers have developed the very bad habit of holding a fly in their mouth as they prepare their leader to tie it on. Now we all know how frustrating it is to drop a fly on the ground and not be able to find it. You can solve this by either adding a small magnetic strip to your boat to hold the flies you have used or are preparing to use. Another trick device is a cling magnetic fly holder. <https://g.co/kgs/xPeUxPR>

The alternative is a trip to the E.R. with your fly box to describe the object and the tough explanation to the person who loaned you the fly that it is "swimming on its own" Another reason to commit to barbless hooks.

***(Safety Side Note Provided by Bruce Aigner)***





## Dry Falls Lake Outing

### May 15-18, 2025

Fishing at Dry Falls Lake requires a floatation device (raft, float tube, pram). No motors of any kind allowed.

Dry Falls Lake is located north of Soap Lake and east of Park Lake. Dry Falls is a geological wonder of North America. Carved by Ice Age floods more than 13,000 years ago, the former waterfall was once four times the size of Niagara Falls. Today, the 400-foot-high, 3.5-mile-wide cliff overlooks a big sky and a landscape of deep gorges and dark, reflective lakes. The park is a notable site along the National Ice Age Floods Geologic Trail. This lake is very popular with fly fishers. Fishing has been excellent the past five years for Rainbow Trout ranging in size from 12-20 inches with most fish greater than 14 inches. This lake is best fished from a pram, float tube, or pontoon boat.

There is a State Park Campground which accommodates both tent and trailers (**Sun Lakes - Dry Falls State Park**). For reservations **Click here --> [Campground Reservations](#)**.

There is also nearby lodging at: [The Cove at Sun Lakes](#). [Sun Lakes Park Resort](#)

**Equipment:** 5 or 6 wt rod and a sinking line. Flies should include streamers, damselfly nymphs, leeches, scuds and chironomids. Pram, pontoon or float tube.

\*Please note that Park Lake adjacent to the State Park campground is not the lake that we will be targeting. Dry Falls Lake is about a 1.5 mile drive up the road. No motors of any kind allowed on Dry Falls Lake.\* Remember to bring your Discover Pass and your PFD.

**\*If you have questions contact the event organizer Kevin McClurg at 360-224-8342 or email at [kpmcclurg@gmail.com](mailto:kpmcclurg@gmail.com)**

**\*For anyone attending who is not yet a member and have not signed the Candidate Member Application and waiver, please copy and sign the waiver ([Click Here](#)) and send to me via email at [kpmcclurg@gmail.com](mailto:kpmcclurg@gmail.com) or print and bring with you to the outing.**

The "boat launch" is minimal and will not accommodate launching a larger boat. I'll be staying in area **C**, site **#57**. There will be a fly box raffle (big thanks to Ed Ruckey!) during Friday evening cocktail/beer hour (5:00-ish). I heard a rumor that Dry Falls is fishing well. Let's hope that continues into May. Hope to see you there.

***Kevin McClurg - Outing Host***



# Red Lake Outing

## May 28-June 1, 2025

Red Lake is located 54 Kilometers west of Kamloops, BC, a little over 4 ½ hours From Bellingham.

The Lake has Penaske, Frasier and Blackwater rainbows and also a fairly good population of elusive brook trout to 2lbs. The lake is stocked multiple times per year with 30,000 fish in 2024.

Recent reports suggest that trolling a Chan Ruby Eyed Leech on a sinking line is very effective. Shrimp patterns near the bottom are also effective. This time of year expect to see hatches of Mayflies, Damselflies and nymphs, medium sized Chironomidea and leeches. You may also see black ants. The lake was not affected by winterkill this year.

A flotation device is required to access and fish the lake. Anglers should have a Canadian Fresh Water Fishing license, an approved flotation device for each occupant and a safety kit including a heaving line that can be found at Canadian Tire for \$12 CDN. Fox 40 is an example and can also be found on Amazon. Boats were inspected during an outing at Tunkwa two years ago. Motors to 10hp are acceptable on the lake.

Directions to the lake are as follows:

Take highway 5 to Kamloops, at the bottom of the hill, stay on 5 north over the Thompson River, turn west at the airport sign, cross over the North Thompson River. Continue west past the airport on a well graded road.

When you see the Red Lake sign, continue west for less than 1 mile.

Take the first left (south) to the campground.

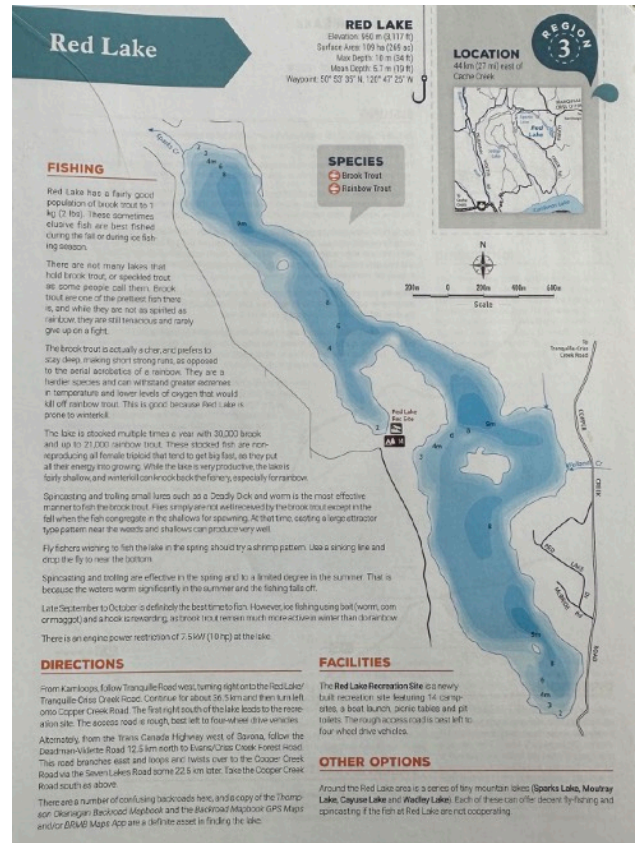
Reports are that the road is acceptable for vans and small trailers and has 14 relatively new campsites.

Elevation is 3,107 Ft. It is a long narrow lake with 3 islands, has 3 shoals, and a max depth of 34 ft.

The Limit is 2 rainbow, 1 over 50cm, 1 under 50cm. (50cm approx. = 16")

You may want to stop in Merritt to buy fresh fruit and vegetables.

**Ralph Lloyd - Host. 360-201-9940**





# Big Twin Outing

## June 12-15, 2025

**We are planning an outing to Big Twin Lakes in Winthrop.**

**210 TWIN LAKES RD  
WINTHROP, WA. 98862**

Big Twin campground has been in a family for five generations. They have cabins, full hook up RV sites and camping with water and electricity. It is important that you contact them for reservations soon as they tend to fill up. [bigtwinlakeresort.com/reserve](http://bigtwinlakeresort.com/reserve) Indicate that you are with the 4<sup>th</sup> corner fly fishers club and they will group us in near proximity if that is what you would like to do. This is a rather informal gathering and if you have any questions about how to fish the lake or what to use this is your chance to ask some experienced Big Twin fishers for advice. With the north cascades highway open Big Twin is 3 ½ hours from Bellingham and 15 minutes from the Cinnamon Twisp Bakery!

The lake is stocked with Rainbows annually and they did not have winter kill this year so there should be some holdovers. Some people fish from shore but your greatest success will be with a flotation device or boat. Trolling and stripping a leech on a sinking line or fishing chironomids deep will give the greatest success.

Other lakes in the area (within a half hour) that would be good options if fishing is slow are:

Little Twin Lake  
Black Pine Lake  
Buck Lake  
Davis Lake  
Campbell Lake

***Angus MacArthur - Host. 360-483-8954***



## Looking Ahead

### ***June 3, 2025 May Board Meeting 6:30 (Trinity Lutheran Church 119 Texas St)***

Meeting starts at 6:30 all members welcome.

### ***Dry Falls Outing- Thurs - Sun May 15th - 18th Kevin McClurg Outing Host***

Camping at Sun Lakes State Park, reservations advised.

### ***Club Meeting - Thursday May 22nd 5:30pm -9pm - Project Healing Waters***

"Guiding Veterans In Need To Healing Through Comraderie, Connectedness and Fly Fishing"

Bellingham Golf and Country Club

3729 Meridian St.

### ***Red Lake, BC Outing- May 28-June 1. Ralph Lloyd Outing Host.***

54 Km West of Kamloops BC. There is a fairly recently improved campground with 14 sites.

### ***Big Twin Outing - Thursday-Sunday, June 12-15***

Big Twin Lake Resort just outside Winthrop, WA. Make reservations early and mention that you are with 4th Corner Fly Fishers if you want to camp near others from the club. 509-996-2650 or [reservations@bigtwinlakeresort.com](mailto:reservations@bigtwinlakeresort.com)

### ***Methow Classic Outing - Thursday - Sunday, July 10-13***

Many fishing options for this Classic event from floating the Methow to hiking or driving in to local lakes and small streams. Make reservations at River RV Park and campground. Mention that you are with our group under comments if you want to camp with the group. [riverbendrv.com](http://riverbendrv.com)  
509-997-3500

### ***Bearpaw Lake Hike-In July 22***

Details on the hike and trip will follow. Float tube advised for this trip.

### ***Upper Skagit Outing - Thursday - Sunday August 12-14***

Drive up for day fishing or plan to camp at the Ross Lake Provincial Park. Reservations available or first come sites also available.

### ***Club Picnic Saturday, August 23 starting at Noon***

Lin Nelson has graciously offered his home/back yard for our annual picnic. Details regarding food and set up will be forthcoming. Please put this one on your calendar.

### ***Kelly Creek / NF Clearwater, Idaho Outing - Monday - Sunday September 15-21***

Some may choose to stay over and fish the St. Joe after. Details to follow from Steve Weimer Host

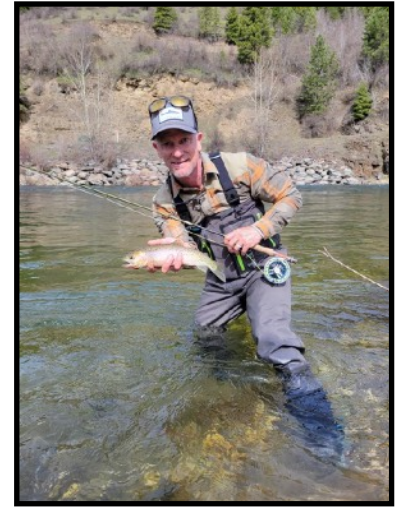
### ***Chopaka Lake Outing - Thursday - Sunday October 2-5***

Details to follow from Mike Riber Host



## The Other Season on the St. Joe River in Idaho.

Although many articles have been written about the great dry fly fishing for west slope cutthroat during the summer and fall on the St Joe River, few people talk about the other season on the St. Joe. That season being the pre-runoff fishing that occurs in late March through early May. While it would be incredibly rare to have the river to yourself during the summer season, I recently spent 3 days floating the St. Joe and never saw another angler. Besides having the river to ourselves we found the cutthroat abundant and hungry. They readily took nymphs, streamers, soft hackles and dry flies. One day during an 11 mile float on the lower river we hooked over 100 cutties and 60 of them on dry flies. Yep, in April! Want to hear more? Let me tell you when, where and how.



The St. Joe is in northern Idaho. Starting in the Bitterroot range, it flows 140 miles west until it joins Coeur d Alene lake. For fishing purposes we'll divide the Joe into the upper and lower river. The small town of Avery, is what most consider the divide between the upper and lower river. In the summer and fall the upper river is classic freestone west slope cutthroat fishing at its finest. The St Joe River road follows the river from the town of St. Maries through Avery and up to Red Ives ranger station. Due to the paved road, easy access and abundance of campgrounds and cutthroat, the St Joe is a popular summer fishery. But lets talk about the other season on the Joe.

The pre-runoff fishing on the Joe occurs on the lower part of the river near Calder. Here the river has a lower gradient and therefore flows slower. Many cutthroat migrate down stream in the winter to the slower flows and slightly warmer water than the upper river. But then in the summer the lower river is too slow and warm and most cutthroat migrate to the upper river.

Due to more private property along the lower river, access is best from a boat. If you've got a raft or drift boat who wouldn't love to float a river with very few anglers and loaded with cutthroat.

There are two primary floats on the lower Joe. First, from the Marble creek bridge boat ramp 11 miles down to Calder. The second float is from Calder 8 miles down to the Mile 16 bridge. The water is similar in both sections. Both are easy floats without major rapids. As always, keep an eye out for woody river debris.

The pre-runoff season generally occurs in late March until early May depending on snow pack and weather conditions. Fishable flows at Calder vary from 2500 cfs up to 7500 cfs. Flows on our trip were 3800 – 4000 cfs, and the water was crystal clear. Warm temps or heavy rain will affect both the flow and visibility. You can plan well in advance but mother nature has the final say.

How do you fish the lower Joe? Successful techniques include casting streamers to the bank and retrieving slowly. Remember the water is generally in the low 40s so the fish won't be quite as aggressive most of the time. Therefore, don't strip the streamer fast. A twitch or two with the rod tip will generally get a cutties attention. A variety of sculpin style streamers produced fish in the mornings and afternoons. Nymphing certainly works well in the early spring. Because of the colder water temps, the cutthroat will concentrate in the slower water. They won't be in the classic flowy summer cutthroat water. Focus on slower water and back eddies. All kinds of nymph will work. Some favorites are little black stonefly nymphs, skwala stonefly nymphs, any variety of mayfly

nymphs or general attractor nymphs like a prince nymph. While floating the river, a stone fly and mayfly nymph under an indicator produces plenty of hook-ups.

Dry flies, yes, some great dry fly fishing. Skwala stones and Nemoura stones (little black stones) are present during pre-runoff. Foam skwalas and bullet head stoneflies can be rigged with a dropper to search for fish while covering water. One of the most prolific mayfly hatches occurs pre-runoff and that is the march brown mayfly. This hatch usually starts in early April and can create amazing dry fly fishing. We hooked nearly 50 cutties in one run during an incredible 2+ hour march brown mayfly hatch. It's the first major hatch of the year and the fish respond with vigor!

Most fish are in the 10-14 inch range, but 16+ inch fish can be found each day. A 3-5wt rod works well for nearly all styles of fishing the early season.

The summer and fall are the most popular times on the Joe. If you're feeling a bit more adventurous and want more river to yourself, with back eddies concentrated with cutthroat, try the other season on the Joe.

- Steve Wimer



## Speyapalooza Report

### May 3, 2025

On Saturday, May 3rd, the Confluence Fly Shop and North Sound Trout Unlimited held their 8th annual Speyapalooza gathering at Howard Miller Steelhead Park in Rockport along the banks of the legendary Skagit River. The sun shone high overhead with only a fleeting threat of rain, the river babbled along at a moderately low flow and an occasional bull trout broke the green surface of the water in its zealous pursuit of out-migrating salmon fry. By all accounts, we were blessed with another glorious Spring Day along with lots of eager folks happy to enjoy it while wielding waders and a long two-handed fly rod.

The Confluence and North Sound Trout Unlimited came up with the idea of creating a local spey gathering to give people an opportunity to learn more about spey casting, demo lots of different equipment on the water, get some free instruction and, through generous donations, raise a little money to fuel NSTU's many local conservation projects. Other spey gatherings were happening throughout the Northwest, from the popular Sandy Spey Clave in Oregon to the Red Shed Spey event on the Clearwater River in Idaho to Michael & Young's yearly spey rod demo day just north of the border in BC. Many of those destinations are a day's drive from here and we wanted to build something for the local angling community right in our backyard.

Reflecting back on the previous years of Speyapalooza, we've had some rainy days, some bitter cold ones, along with a few where the Skagit ran bank high and even partially through the camp ground, making getting in the water to test a few rods anything from an uphill battle to stay warm and dry to an all-out impossibility. This was one of those rare years when it all came together with great weather, ideal water conditions, lots of vendors and outstanding attendance. We estimated



around 140 people at this year's Speyapalooza and had booths representing Sage, Redington, Rio, Scientific Anglers, Orvis, Bajio Sunglasses, OPST, Aqua Flies, Renegade Rods, Dryft Waders, Recycled Waders, Echo, Winston, Airflo and Nam Products. Everyone seemed to find their favorites and as usual, the event provided an opportunity to fall in love with some new equipment you'll eventually convince yourself you can't live without.

Spey rods really need to be tested on the water to get the best experience. Because spey casting relies on water tension on your line to load the rods, casting a spey rod on the grass just doesn't cut it. Participants are encouraged to bring their waders and boots so they can cast in the river and many people signed up in advance for free hour and a half spey casting lessons. If you've never used a spey rod before, a little time with an instructor is a great way to get started down the right path and once you get comfortable with it, you'll find it's a very efficient and enjoyable way to present a fly, particularly when covering a large river like the Skagit. Last Saturday, as if on cue, the wind blew pretty steadily upstream through most of the afternoon. It's not a bad situation for a lefty like myself, but it provided a good excuse for a lot of right handers to work on their ambidexterity in spey casting. You generally want to avoid forming a cast between you and the wind, whether you choose to switch hands to do it or bring your dominant hand across your body for a back-handed cast. Should you fail to learn this lesson, the wind will sternly remind you time and time again.

In addition to the casting and classes, which typically dominate the day, North Sound TU provided a free lunch of hot dogs and chips. Brandon Sly even prepared a few bottles of what has become known as his "spey sauce". This heavenly elixir features peanut butter, sweet chili paste and even some kimchi and is usually a big hit. I grew up eating hot dogs with peanut butter and think it's a winning combo but for any doubters out there, "don't knock it till you've tried it." At the end of the afternoon, we had a big raffle featuring donations from the Confluence and our many vendors in attendance. Lucky winners walk away with rods, reels, packs, lines, fly boxes and a variety of other prizes.

Speyapalooza has been one of the highlights of our year for many seasons now and we're already looking ahead to the next one in the spring of 2026. If you'd like to hear more about Speyapalooza and other fly fishing related events coming up in our local community I would encourage you to sign up for both the [Confluence Fly Shop](#) and [North Sound TU](#) newsletters. We were excited to have quite a few members of the Fourth Corner Fly Fishers at this year's event but more are always welcome!

Best fishes,

Scott Willison  
Owner, The Confluence Fly Shop



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