



SOUTH SOUND FLY FISHERS

THE GARDEN HACKLE

Volume 21 Issue 4

April 2021

Page 3 April program features a presentation by Trout Unlimited's Megan Barker regarding "Fishing in Southwest Alaska."

Page 5 Welcome three new members to our club David Brenna, Jamie Phelps and Doug Dunster.

LEADER'S LINE

By President Randy Allen



We are, after all, the South Sound Fly *Fishers*. Beginning this month your Board placed greater emphasis on fishing outings. In the Outings section you'll find *two* scheduled April trips. And, to better plan fishing outings among everything life throws at us we will print a longer-range outing plan each month. We are putting this thought into your head now so going forward you will become accustomed to reading the Outings section for what the future holds. And thank Gene Rivers for his hard work on assembling these plans as the season unfolds.

I want to know we are all safe out on the water. A lot of our fishers use a variety of floatation devices like float tubes, kayaks, pontoon boats, canoes, dinghies... COVID created a 2020 spike in new boaters seeking new forms of recreation. The increased numbers of new boaters brought a commensurate increase in boating accidents. People appeared to fit several categories - those who a) took chances, b) were inexperienced, or c) were just unlucky. We fish in some very cold Northwest water, sometimes sitting right at the

water level. In four of five recent drownings the victims were not wearing life jackets. The Washington ferries used to stop a couple times a year to rescue boaters in trouble; they are now rescuing boaters every few weeks.

How many of us knew that a life jacket is required by law for anyone aboard a paddle-craft? I have not seen a fisher who was not wearing his/her vest, but there's always a first. If you see something, say something; your friendly reminder to a vest-less fisher may make a critical difference. And, have you inspected and test inflated your vest this season using the manual inflation tubes? If yours is so equipped check the inflation cylinder and observe the expiration of the water soluble bobbin.

Those born after January 1, 1955 operating a boat with 15 horsepower or greater are required to obtain a Boater Education Card. If you have plenty of experience you can challenge the course and go straight to the test. Or you can take home-study or on-line courses to gain the knowledge. Get the card if you don't have one. A lot of folks who take the course after years of boating comment how much they learned from the courses.

What prompted this boating and life jacket stuff in a fly fishing newsletter? With the 2021 stream closures I expect I'll spend more time fishing from boats than waders. It's all about staying alive to fish another day. The same as driving a motorcycle, a fishing boater needs to drive defensively and assume the other boaters don't see you, they don't know the rules, and they are going to do something unexpected that you just sensed. Fishers need to be as safely equipped as possible.

At the end of the day it's not how many fish we catch this season, but how many boat-fishing trips we will come home from ... safely.

Stay well !

Randy Allen



Photo © Howard Nanto



April 20, 2021 SSFF Program

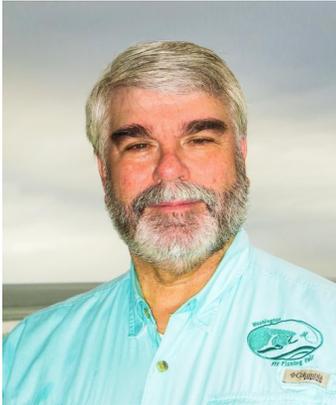
Fishing in Southwest Alaska, the history and current status of the Pebble Mine, and how Trout Unlimited is leading efforts to ensure Pebble Mine doesn't come back in the future.

Presented by Meghan Barker

Presentation summary: Join Trout Unlimited's Bristol Bay Organizer Meghan Barker for a digital presentation on the efforts that stopped the proposed Pebble Mine in 2020 and that now work to permanently protect Bristol Bay, Alaska. Meghan will be talking about fishing in southwest Alaska, the history and current status of the mine, and how TU is leading efforts to ensure Pebble doesn't come back in the future

Bio: Meghan Barker is the Bristol Bay Organizer for Trout Unlimited based in Anchorage, Alaska. Meghan works to spread the word about the threat of Pebble to anglers and fishing businesses in the Lower 48, and is rallying supporters to advance permanent protection for the southwest region of Alaska. Outside of work, Meghan can be found fishing, running, or skiing in south central Alaska.





Treasurer's Report – 2021 Dues are Due!

Hi everyone. Thank you for continuing to support SSFF. I hope you and your families are safe and well. With the number of vaccinations finally starting to ramp up I'm optimistic that we will soon begin seeing light at the end of the dark COVID-19 tunnel.

It's that time of year again. If you haven't already done so, please pay your 2021 dues as soon as possible. Dues for 2021 are \$40.00 for returning members. There are two convenient ways to pay:

1. You can make your Dues payment by Check. Please mail the check to:

Sound Fly Fishers
PO Box 2792
Olympia, WA 98507

2. You can make your Dues payment using PayPal or a debit/credit card. Please use the link below:

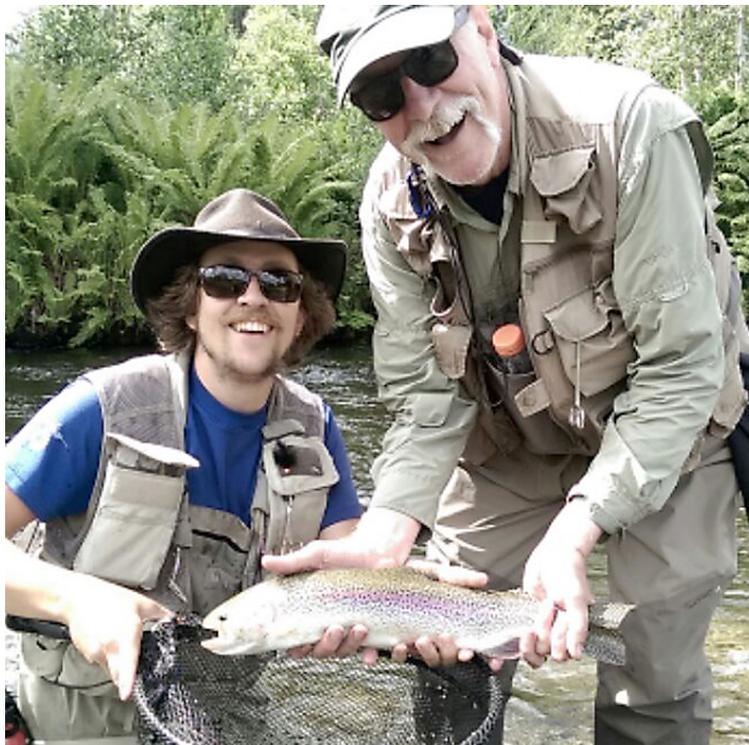
https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=NRE77ZFCKLF32



SSFF Welcomes new members-

David Brenna had heard of SSFF for many years and then our long-time member and TU President, Pat Prichard, introduced David to our club. Retired from working with state agencies David now has more time to fish. He's been a life-time fly fisher and has become a "dry fly fanatic" for fishing the top water and observing the dramatic takes. Below he's pictured with his son on the left.

David has conducted his own fly casting classes. And, he practices what he preaches; he practices his target casting two to three times a week. Distance casting is fine, but most fishers need to work on placing the fly where they need it with an acceptable presentation, especially casting a dry fly. David's wife, Martha, also fly fishes; she enjoys dry fly fishing as much as he. When they fish they stay together and enjoy taking turns observing each other's success. A good partnership! Welcome, David - glad to have you with us!



Jamie Phelps joins us. During high school a teacher's husband took Jamie fly fishing. That was all it took to hook him. Jamie and his wife moved from Abilene, Texas to Olympia during Christmas week 2018. They wanted a change of scene to a home on the west coast. During a conference trip a friend had suggested they look into Olympia. And the winter quarter 2018 was a blur checking the area, buying their home, and relocating to Olympia.

His 5 weight rod and reel were a birthday present that motivated Jamie to attend some casting clinics. He's done some lake camping and fishing, and he is looking forward to learning more about our area and fisheries. We will have to introduce you to a fellow Texan, our Secretary, Lee Yeager. You can swap stories. Now we'll get you on some outings with us. Jamie - welcome to the Club!

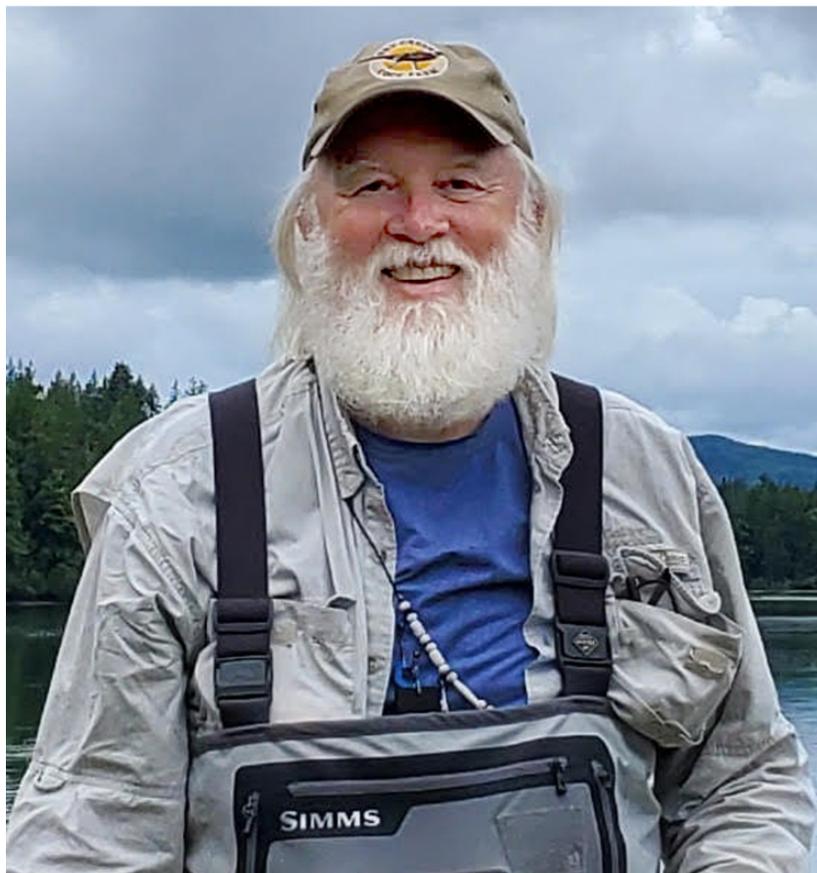


Doug Dunster is another new member. As a kid growing up in Montana near the Clark Fork River he fished the usual salmon eggs in the local streams. Until that day in the eighth grade when he encountered an older gent using a fly rod. Doug was fascinated in this new gear and techniques.

He writes, “I got into fly fishing in the 1970s when I was going to graduate school at Central Washington University where I was working on a Master’s Thesis studying Plecoptera (stoneflies). I enjoyed some great fishing in Eastern Washington Lakes and the Yakima River back in those days. When I moved to Western Washington I had some great days on the North Fork Stillaguamish River for steelhead back in the 1980’s.

I’ve fished rivers in Oregon (Deschutes and Grand Ronde) and lakes, as well as Puget Sound beaches for trout, steelhead, and salmon. I do the bulk of my fishing these days on lakes from my pontoon boat. I also try to get in two or three trips every year to Alaska and British Columbia for combination salmon and halibut fishing.”

Doug is very interested in learning about our sea-run cutthroat trout. Doug - we’ll have you talk to some of our sea-run experts to speed up the learning curve. Welcome!



Welcome to you all !

Randy Allen

Washington State Council FFI Government Affairs

Mike Clancy, Chair



WSCFFI Press Release - Edited by Steve Jones, President WSCFFI

Washington FFI supports WDFW Quicksilver plan to sustain winter and summer steelhead in Puget Sound waters. We also support a sport fishery for hatchery fish in locations such as the Snohomish, Dungeness, and Quilcene rivers that can sustain hatchery fishery without threatening a wild population.

We support the components of the Quicksilver plan that preserve catch and release fishing for all wild winter and summer steelhead. The best habitat for steelhead reproduction is a wild free flowing river. Washington FFI supports the wild steelhead management initiative begun in 2018 on the Skagit River. We do not support the introduction of a wild brood-stock program on the Skagit. That wild management strategy should be sustained, and recreational fishing rules should be written to maintain the integrity of the wild management strategy.

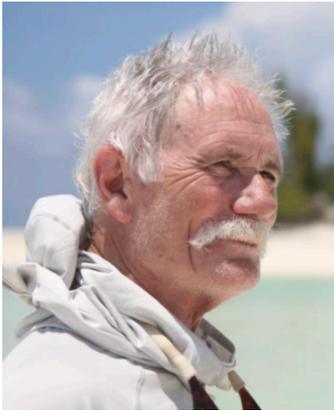
Single, barbless-hook, catch and release fishing should be the standard for all rivers where wild management is a priority.

Washington FFI supports the expansion of wild steelhead management to additional Puget Sound rivers including the Samish, Elwha, Nisqually, Nooksack, and Skokomish rivers.

Study Committee: Robert Gerlach, Jim Maus, Mike Clancy, Sam Matalone, and Steve Jones

FFI PRESS RELEASE

Tom Logan, Chairman, FFI Conservation announced today, the FFI along with our conservation partners, TU and others, we are going to endorse Congressman Mike Simpson's proposal to remove the four dams on the Snake River. It has been stated, if the dams are removed, we don't know if the salmon and steelhead fishery will recover, but, if the dams are not removed, the fishery will definitely go away. We have now joined our partners in asking the NW Congressional Delegation to endorse the proposal and why.



THE SOAPBOX

Greetings Anglers,

Since sea run cutthroat (SRC) have been the subject du jour lately I want to share some info about what some of them are doing now, and what that tells us.

The newer members may not be aware of the club's history in SRC conservation and study. I'll provide a thumbnail sketch of our accomplishments since I've been around because I have first hand knowledge of those efforts. Back around 2005 or 2006 the club started fund raising to print and post angler information signs designed to protect the fish from abuses in Puget Sound. These warnings identified SRC's, listed the regulations protecting them such as single point hooks and catch and release restrictions. We raised a good amount of money so when the signs were printed and posted there was still a sum of dollars left over. Around this time a women's fly-fishing club in Seattle disbanded and donated another \$500 to our SRC fund since they knew of our efforts.

Also, around this time our local biologists at WDFW were starting the first real scientific studies into sea run cutthroat. Much of the information known about our other anadromous species: the several salmons and steelhead of the Northwest, knowledge about diet, spawning habits, migration and the like had been ignored concerning the trout, mainly because they lack the commercial value that has driven the studies of these larger species. Several members of the club started volunteering with the agency to help gather data for the fledgling SRC studies. Joe Jacquet provided years of data and samples of the dietary habits, Mel Hurd and I participated in sampling studies to implant electronic transponders tracking migratory patterns, and I was able to get donations from other fly-fishing clubs in the region by presenting shows about our efforts and how to fish for cutthroat in the sound.

As the WDFW study grew, they aspired to perform DNA testing to begin to understand which streams the fish spawned in, whether these populations were faithful to those areas,

how each group differed, and a lot of other stuff that the biologists understand a lot better than I can describe. This testing is expensive and was not provided for in the local area budgets. Heck, a lot of the study was performed in the local guy's spare time. We donated all the money we had in our SRC to the agency to help fund the initial round of DNA testing. The agency began to take the study more seriously, and the area biologist at the time began to do presentations to clubs and organizations up in the Seattle area where he described how our little club in Olympia had provided the seed for this new scientific and conservation program. With much deeper pockets the organizations and businesses of Pugetopolis started contributing serious amounts of money for testing and equipment. These activities resulted in what is now the Coastal Cutthroat Coalition that has greatly expanded the resources and reach of the program.

One of the activities that the local WDFW crew now performs is operating a weir on the Skookumchuck River during cutthroat spawning season in late winter and spring. The weir traps fish migrating upstream to the spawning grounds, and again on their return to the Sound. These fish are carefully measured, implanted with tags like the ones pets are fitted with, they are weighed, and then scale and DNA samples are taken. On the return trip, the trapped fish are weighed again so the amount of body weight lost from spawning eggs and milt is known. Juvenile fish and chum salmon fry are often trapped as well.

My family went out to the weir Easter weekend with my son when he did his sampling and maintenance, and I got some great photos of the operation.

WEIR ON SKOOKUMCHUCK RIVER



The upstream collection chamber is at the far left of the weir by the bank. The downstream side is beneath the plywood cover on the right of the picture. The structure is built and maintained by biologists working out of Olympia.

SPAWNING FEMALE CUTTHROAT

Fish ID# 900226001037398 (tagged at weir)
Female captured in upstream box at weir and passed upstream. Recaptured 48 hrs later in downstream box and passed downstream.



February 24th
Length: 438 mm
Weight: 951 grams



February 26th
Length: 439 mm
Weight: 814 grams

137 grams lost post spawn =
14.4% weight reduction

Fresh redd documented ~0.28
km upstream of release site
(directly above weir), measuring
2.6 m total length X 1.0 m wide.

This slide from my contact at DFW shows the same cutthroat hen on the left pre spawn, then the changes two days later after leaving her eggs in her redd. Note that she lost 14.4% of her body weight in the process.

BABY CUTTHROAT



Juvenile SRC. These will reside in the natal stream until ready to migrate into the sound and adapt to salt water the first time.

CHUM FRY



Tiny chum fry just hatched and ready to head for the Sound. For those of you who want to tie chum baby patterns, this is what they look like and how big they are!

Thanks for reading,

Don Freeman



Are you new to fly fishing? Many seek the SSFF to learn to fly fish or to improve their skills. New fly fishers accelerate their learning curves by joining a club and attending qualified classes.

Of course COVID-19 benched your skilled instructors. We'll post more details as we open up following guidance from the Department of Health.

SSFF offers three formal classes.

Introduction to Fly Fishing taught in spring, five weeks, once per week. After this course you'll understand what you gear you'll need like rods, reels, lines, waders and boots, floatation devices for still-water fishing. We cover locating fish in rivers, lakes, and the salt water, and discuss local fish species you'll encounter. We also study the flies you'll use in our section on entomology.

Fly Casting taught spring-early summer, seven weeks, once per week. This class is for single-handed rod casting, not spey rods. Through this course you will cast a fly line for different situations including the wind. You'll also experience how to overcome the effects of moving river water upon your line.

Introduction to Fly Tying taught in the fall - winter, six weeks, once per week. Students tie a new fly each week. As homework students tie that fly at home and bring their work to the next class. The instructor-to-student ratio ensures students receive a lot of individual attention. We teach a variety of flies useful anywhere including nymphs, streamers, and dry flies. After completing the course students' skills can be applied to other flies similar to those taught.

Please contact me with questions; my email is on the last page of the newsletter.

Thanks for your patience as we all navigate COVID-19.

Wash your hands, wear a mask, and maintain your distance in parking lots and streamside!

Randy Allen

Outings

SSFF 2021 OUTINGS

We are planning two outings a month from April through October. One will be mid-week and one will be on weekends. For 2021 the Board of Directors is the Outings Committee. Feel free to suggest any outings you would like to be considered to any of your Board members.

Directions to all fishing outings can be found on the WDFW website if you are not familiar with a particular lake, stream, saltwater park or other outing location. The Ghillies' email contact info is on the last page of the newsletter if you have questions about a specific outing.

April

4/25 Sunday, 9:00 am

Spencer Lake. Meet at the launch ramp. Go northeast from Shelton approximately 7 miles on Hwy 3. Turn right on Pickering Road and go 3 miles, then turn right on Spencer Lake Road for 1 mi to access on left. Trout and spiny ray fishing. Spencer is usually planted with some large fish. The lake is stocked multiple times per year with rainbow trout and even a few cutthroat trout, including "jumbo" sized fish.

It's also a great bass and perch fishery, with some of western Washington's finest fishing for largemouth bass during the summer months.

Suggested flies: Woolly buggers in green, black, or brown, gold-ribbed hare's ear nymphs, and chironomid patterns.

Lines: floating with intermediate sink-tip or intermediate sinking line.

Ghillie is Randy Allen - contact him by email on the last page of the newsletter.

4/30 Friday, 11:00am

Black Lake. Meet at the launch ramp parking area. Gene Rivers is Ghillie.

Black lake is open year-round. Trout and spiny ray fishing.

There is a dock you can fish from, however a watercraft of your choice is recommended.

Plenty of parking, rest rooms. Limited shore fishing. Floating line and intermediate sinking recommended.

May

5/11 Tuesday 10:00am

Munn Lake. Meet at launch ramp. Parking is limited. No fishing from shore. Boat or any type of watercraft recommended. Excellent fishing for crappie, bass, and bluegill in the spring. Trout fishing is good. Indicator fishing with chironomid patterns can be very productive. Surface and subsurface fishing can also be productive. Ask club members for pattern recommendations.

5/22 Saturday 9:00am

Long Lake near Lacey. Meet at launch ramp. Watercraft needed. Trout and spiny ray fishing. Floating and intermediate sinking lines recommended. Casting and trolling can both be productive. Recommended fly patterns will be discussed at our club meeting on May 18.

June

6/21-22 Monday & Tuesday

Leech Lake, located at top of White Pass. Gene Rivers is Ghillie. Come for one day or camp out and stay for both days. Fabulous fishing for brook trout and large rainbows. Some shore fishing but watercraft needed to really fish this lake. Some good dry fly fishing when a hatch is on but nymphing is also very effective.

July through October TBD

November

Date TBD. Hoodsport Hatchery. This is combat fishing for chum salmon. WDFW is reporting low predicted chum return in 2021. Details to follow. This is if you don't know better places to fish for chum when the Fall run comes in but there are better and easier to reach locations.

December

12/10 Friday

Twanoh State Park on Hood Canal. Big Fjord Project. 10 club members will fish with WDFW biologists and Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group. All slots are currently filled but if any vacancies open up club members will be notified.

Greetings Fly Fishers:

Here is a book on fishing for one of the most iconic fish in Puget Sound:

“FLY FISHING FOR SEARUN CUTTHROAT IN SOUTH PUGET SOUND”

Mel Hurd, past President and a longtime member of SSFF, is the author of this incredible booklet. Mel originally wrote the booklet in 1993 and revised it in 2006. The 20 page booklet is one of the most informative references for the South Sound area with locations, tactics, etc. This booklet comes highly recommended by many members of our club who have had success by following Mel’s tips.

It is a wonderful booklet, referencing everything you can think of regarding “FLY FISHING FOR SEARUN CUTTHROAT IN SOUTH PUGET SOUND.” It’s very informative and an easy read. Fishing the salt is great in our area, and there are references to areas for easy access for fishing for searuns, plus recommendations on equipment and fishing techniques.

With Mel’s permission SSFF is offering his booklet to interested members and non-members. We are asking for a minimum donation of \$10 which includes shipping via U.S. Mail (U.S. addresses only). All proceeds go into our Conservation donation fund. Some members have donated more than the minimum. For your extra donations *we thank you!*

Either send a check to Jim Maus Treasurer SSFF PO Box 2792, Olympia WA 98507 or use PayPal/credit card/debit card:

https://www.paypal.com/donate?hosted_button_id=GYWE6RQWY2CF4

As soon as Jim receives your donation he will notify me with your address, and I will get the booklet to you.

If you pay electronically you will receive your booklet sooner than sending your check to the PO Box.

Mike Clancy, SSFF, BOD

A good friend, Wes Bigney, wrote these reminiscences. I became good friends with Wes while teaching fly tying at New Mexico Trout. In his youth Wes fished the Cape Cod area of Massachusetts while his dad owned an Orvis fly fishing shop. Working careers took him around the country until he settled in New Mexico. He's now at the point that he cannot fish any longer, so he is sharing his knowledge.

Preparation for and Handling of Large Trout by Wes Bigney

"It is an ill wind that blows no one good."

Consider the stay home curfew we are all living by. Every month that we have to stay home the fish grow another inch. By fall the fish stocked in March will be "braggin' sized."

"Braggin' Rights"

These rights are associated with any fish larger than average. Frequently we get only one of these fish per day. Also, frequently these fish swim off with our fly and our braggin' rights because we are not prepared to handle them. Much of the time we put away our equipment and reuse it at the start of the next trip so that is the same fly, leader and the same reel drag setting for an average 10 to 12-inch fish.

There are three phases to the fight that a fish puts up. The first phase is crazed with fear and the need to get away. The second phase is the fish using its shape to resist. It uses its shape to turn broadside and swim from side to side in front of us. Finally, in the third phase, the fish wears down and turns allowing us to bring the fish in.

Regarding phase one, the fish is using all its power to get away from us. We need to be able to let the fish take line off the reel so the leader won't be broken. Therefore, the reel drag should be zero. In phase two the fish is not resisting vigorously and some more drag can be applied. Phase three can have more drag to get the fish into shore when there is little resistance.

The point is that a consistent drag does not fit the needs of landing a fish and it may lead to a lost fish. Large fish do not announce their intention to strike; suddenly

they are on and pulling strongly. So, one should fish with no drag to avoid break offs and loss of fish with “braggin’ rights.”

It must be emphasized that the rod should be kept upright and bent at all times. This provides a shock absorber that keeps the fish from breaking off. When the fish in phase one rushes away from you and pulls your rod down straight, you must let out line so you can get the rod up straight and bending again toward the fish. One should not allow the rod to be pulled down straight along the line to the fish. This is called a “straight pull.” This tests the whole line system – line, leader, and knot at the fly... and finds the weakest link resulting in a possible break off.

In order to play a large fish and finally land it one needs to stay attached to the fish. Some fish will be large enough to take all your fly line, and you need some “backing” to stay tied to the fish. You will need 25 to 30 yards of at least 25 pound test nylon bait casting line. This means you will need a reel with enough capacity to hold the 75 to 90 feet of fly line *plus* 25 yards of backing at the end of your fly line loop to loop connection so this joint will go through the guides. It will usually take a 3 to 4-inch diameter reel.

Photo © Howard Nanto





SOUTH SOUND FLY FISHERS – 2021 Officers, Directors, Chairs

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Director at Large, Kevin Angevine grcaulder777@gmail.com

Club Meetings are conducted by Zoom at 7:00pm the third Tuesday of every month except August and December. Zoom is open at 6:30 if you want to visit and talk fly fishing.

Board of Directors Zoom meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month starting at 7:00 pm.

During the COVID-19 pandemic and until further notice, all scheduled meetings are conducted on-line. The North Olympia Fire Department is closed to meetings until further notice.

The meeting announcement and meeting Zoom code are sent to members and friends about a day ahead of the meeting by email. Website: southsoundflyfishers.com

USPS Mail Address: SSFF, PO BOX 2792, Olympia WA 98507

SSFF Garden Hackle Newsletter
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