



South Sound Fly Fishers

# The Garden Hackle

Volume 25 Issue 12

December 2025

Page 1 <a href="#">Donations we will make in 2026</a>	Page 7 <a href="#">Successful Collaborative Casing Development Course</a>	Page 10 <a href="#">Annual Dues are now payable</a>	Page 2 & 14 <a href="#">Winter fishing</a>
--	--	--	---

## Leader's Line

Jared Wood, Club President



Greetings,

I hope this holiday season finds you healthy and well. As our year comes to a close, the South Sound Fly Fishers has much to be thankful for in 2025. We have had a very successful year in our outreach, education efforts, outings, fund raising, and in our annual donation drive for Munn Lake. Thank you to all who donated, we met our \$1200 goal which allows more funds to be used for other causes.

I am excited to report that your Board of Directors have also approved an increase to our donations from last year to the conservation organizations and programs which the club sponsors. Not only are we giving more this year, we also

increased the number of charities which we are supporting. Again, thank you to all of you who helped with the auction, volunteered your time with the many classes we taught throughout the year, or collected donated items to sell at our meetings. All of these efforts resulted in us being able to donate almost \$7,700! 2025 donations include:

- \$1,200 for Munn Lake Fish Fund (WDFW Fish Food Program)
- \$350 to FFI National Conservation Fund
- \$760 to the Hood Canal Salmon Enhancement Group
- \$760 to Project Healing Waters JBLM Chapter (Veterans Fly Fishing program)
- \$760 South Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (Salmon Education in schools 3-5<sup>th</sup> grade)
- \$760 Coastal Salmon Partnership
- \$760 Western Rivers Conservancy
- \$760 Reel Recovery (Men's Cancer Survivor Support Through Fly Fishing)
- \$760 Mayfly Project (Foster Children Fly Fishing Mentorship Program)
- \$300 The Osprey (Conservation and Information Awareness Initiatives)
- \$500 North West Youth Conservation & Fly Fishing Academy (Youth Academy - more funding will be donated in springtime)

Another conservation initiative that was also discussed and approved was adding SSFF to a letter of support for Washington State Council FFI grant funding initiatives for Pass Lake near Deception Pass State Park. We are joining many other fly clubs from around the state in supporting these efforts and making sure the grant money goes where it was allocated to go. [Both FFI letters immediately follow this section of this newsletter.](#)

A new and recent suggestion is that we start to hold monthly “Brew & Tie” events at a local restaurant or pub, where we can gather and tie flies once a month. We will discuss this at future club meetings once we find a location that is suitable, and it sounds like an ongoing fun event.

Friendly reminder that **we do not have a scheduled club meeting or outing in December.** However, many of our local lakes have been stocked recently. I challenge everyone to take a fishing trip with your friends and family, and help teach others how to stay warm while fishing in the colder weather. That is a universal skill that many have yet to master. This is also the topic of [Jesse’s article this month.](#)

I would like all of you to join me in thanking both our Vice President Max Doerge and our Conservation Chair Tim Veneziano for their many hours of work and service to our club the past few years as they transition out of their roles. They have both made a significant impact on our club and we commend them on their willingness to help others learn. Thank you for serving on the board and we hope to see you on the water!

I am excited and look forward to our 2026 activities. We have many great speakers lined up, along with some great outings planned. We also welcome Bruce Lincoln as our incoming President, Chris Titlton as the new VP, Bruce Baker as a Director at Large, Christian Jordan as the Conservation Chair, and Wayne Dixon as our Programs Chair. This is the first time in a long time that all positions on our Board of Directors have been filled, and we are positioned to accomplish much in 2026!

Thank you all for your support the last few years. It is very refreshing to have such great club members who are willing to make our community a better place.

As always, “fly fishing is the most fun you can have when you are not catching fish.”

Take care, be well, happy holidays, and tight lines!

Jared Wood

SSFF President

[president@southsoundflyfishers.org](mailto:president@southsoundflyfishers.org)



## FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL

Washington State Council

Dec. 8, 2025

Joseph Teresi  
Water Quality Program  
P.O. Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joseph Teresi:

Re: Pass Lake Cyanobacteria Management Plan – Phase 1 Letter of Support

I am writing on behalf of Fly Fishers International of Washington to support Washington State Parks in their grant application #WQALG-2027-WaSPRC-00065 for Phase 1 of the Pass Lake Cyanobacteria Management Plan.

FFI Washington is a statewide organization with 18 affiliated fly clubs that together promote conservation, education, and inclusive community programs. FFI works to restore wild fish habitat, runs an annual youth fly-fishing academy and supports veterans and women through specialized instruction—strengthening stewardship, skills and public engagement across Washington's fly-fishing community.

Pass Lake, a 98-acre waterbody at the southern end of Fidalgo Island, is one of Washington's most important fly-fishing waters. In 1940, through the efforts of our affiliated Washington Fly Fishing Club, it became the first lake in Washington formally designated as a "fly-fishing only" lake. Over the last 85 years, ongoing collaboration between our affiliated fly clubs, including the Fidalgo Fly Fishers, and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife has resulted in management that provides a unique, high-quality, catch-and-release fishery.

This heritage, however, is now under serious threat from a combination of harmful algae blooms, invasive aquatic plants, and invasive fish species. We appreciate engagement with Washington State Parks and fully support this grant application for study and development of a Pass Lake Cyanobacteria Management Plan. This is a vital first step in addressing water quality issues that affect the overall health of Pass Lake. We urge the Department of Ecology and its Washington Water Quality Program administrators to fund the work to the full extent allowed.

This project's first phase of developing a lake cyanobacteria management plan is an essential step towards addressing the growing public health and environmental concerns that Pass Lake faces.

Sincerely,

Steve Jones  
President  
[President@wscffi.org](mailto:President@wscffi.org)  
360 606-5947

Richard Plunkett  
Conservation Director  
[twocoals@gmail.com](mailto:twocoals@gmail.com)  
818 970-8860



FLY FISHERS  
INTERNATIONAL  
Washington State Council

And on behalf of:

Washington Fly Fishing Club -Seattle  
Overlake Fly Fishers--Bellevue  
4th Corner Fly Fishers--Bellingham  
Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds--Edmonds  
South Sound Fly Fishers--Olympia  
Alpine Fly Fishers--Puyallup  
Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers--Port Angeles  
and concerned fly fishers throughout Washington



## FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL

Washington State Council

Dec. 8, 2025

Joseph Teresi  
Water Quality Program  
P.O. Box 47600  
Olympia, WA 98504-7600

Dear Joseph Teresi:

Re: Pass Lake Eurasian Watermilfoil Integrated Pest Management Plan - Letter of Support  
#WQAIP-2027-WaSPRC-00140

I am writing on behalf of Fly Fishers International of Washington to support Washington State Parks in their grant application #WQAIP-2027-WaSPRC-00140 to develop a Eurasian Watermilfoil Integrated Pest Management Plan for Pass Lake.

FFI Washington is a statewide organization with 18 affiliated fly clubs that together promote conservation, education, and inclusive community programs. Our efforts include restoring wild fish habitat, conducting youth fly-fishing education, and supporting veterans and women through specialized instruction—strengthening stewardship, skills, and public engagement across Washington's fly-fishing community.

Pass Lake, a 98-acre waterbody at the southern end of Fidalgo Island, is one of Washington's most important fly-fishing waters. Since its designation in 1940 as the state's first official "fly-fishing only" lake—achieved through the leadership of the Washington Fly Fishing Club and reaffirmed in 1965—Pass Lake has been stewarded for decades through collaboration between our affiliated clubs, including the Fidalgo Fly Fishers, and the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife. This partnership has helped maintain a unique, high-quality, catch-and-release fishery that is cherished by fly fishers throughout Washington.

That legacy is now threatened by the rapid expansion of Eurasian watermilfoil throughout the lake's littoral zone. This invasive plant forms dense mats that displace native aquatic vegetation, degrade fish habitat, and can be easily and unknowingly transported by anglers on boats, anchors, and ropes—putting nearby waters such as Heart and Cranberry Lakes at renewed risk even after prior management efforts. A coordinated and science-based approach is essential to address this growing problem.

We fully support Washington State Parks in seeking funding to develop an Integrated Pest Management Plan for Eurasian watermilfoil in Pass Lake. This planning effort is a necessary first step toward implementing effective management actions—potentially including targeted herbicide treatment, native plant restoration, long-term monitoring, and public education. Such work is critical not only for protecting Pass Lake's ecological health and recreational value, but also for safeguarding adjacent lakes that have already undergone treatment. We urge the Department of Ecology and its Washington Water Quality Program administrators to fund this project to the full extent allowed.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,  
Steve Jones  
President  
[President@wscffi.org](mailto:President@wscffi.org)  
360 606-5947

Richard Plunkett  
Conservation Director  
[twocoals@gmail.com](mailto:twocoals@gmail.com)  
818 970-8860



FLY FISHERS  
INTERNATIONAL  
Washington State Council

And on behalf of:

Washington Fly Fishing Club -Seattle  
Overlake Fly Fishers--Bellevue  
4th Corner Fly Fishers--Bellingham  
Olympic Fly Fishers of Edmonds--Edmonds  
South Sound Fly Fishers—Olympia  
Alpine Fly Fishers—Puyallup  
Olympic Peninsula Fly Fishers—Port Angeles  
and concerned fly fishers throughout Washington



We will have wrapped up another fly tying course when you read this Garden Hackle.

Thirteen of Olympia area's newest tyers will have added 80 flies to their fly boxes with patterns that are highly successful here and anywhere there are fish. Giving credit where it's due, our students could not succeed so well without receiving individual attention from **Tobey Anderson, Kevin Angevine, Mike Clancy, Steve Farquhar, Bert French, "Lefty" Phil Jaramillo, Bruce Lincoln, Tim Mettier, Chris Tilton, Jared Wood, and Lee Yeager.**

Because of our instructors' dedication we achieved almost one student per teacher. This spirit of teaching is what SSFF is all about, In this case it's teaching at the fly-tying bench.

What excites me about our patterns is the first time I caught fish using them. We all have our go-to flies that produce fish. We use them, and they just work for us.

So, imagine my delight a few classes ago; students returned to our tying course to report their successes catching fish on Brassie nymphs they tied in the class the week before. The instructors were high-fiving. Proud of us, proud of the students.

One of Wayne Dixon's go-to is the gold-ribbed hare's ear nymph. He shared with me many stories of catching fish using that fly. One day I was stumped while fishing a familiar stretch of the Skookumchuck. It was a glorious spring day. In front of the rock outcropping on which I stood was a very fishy-looking narrowing which had produced fish previously. At the run-out the water widened with the perfect burbling, rippling, aerating fast water. Seams with slower holding water outside each seam, and surely fish.

My go-to nymphs were not working. At all. Not even a bump. But I knew, as much as Kevin has coached me not to waste time on slow, featureless runs, there are no fish there.\* I knew fish were in the tail of this fast slot. They just weren't hitting my fly. Ready to abandon the slot, but willing to try one last fly change. One fly among my nymphs was worth a try - my gold-ribbed hare's ear nymphs. I had tried them before, but never with success. What could I lose? I *would have* lost the thrill of catching those three beautiful ten-inch rainbows. The instructor becomes the student. I love learning. \*Talk to Kevin (chuckle).

Similar story about fishing the Deschutes last year. I had limited fishing time that day. After meeting Kevin and Veronica at the Chehalis bike path I ventured a little downstream. I cast dry elk hairs to the opposite bank to eager little trout. But the size 14s were a little too much for their small mouths. What the heck? Right behind me, between my feet and the river bank, why not try a Brassie?

I was pleased with my setup - my indicator bounced along saying the nymph was drifting across the stones, where the fish should have been. Then I thought... what if those bumps were not stones? What if those bumps. . . were *fish*? Fish that were striking at my Brassie repeatedly. I caught a bunch. Not huge fish, but many. Another great day, this time with Brassies.



The flies we teach DO work. Imagine that. It doesn't get better.

I wish you all a very joyous holiday season. Until the New Year - tight lines.

Here is our annual education program:

**Introduction to Fly Fishing** - Taught during February - March.

What is fly fishing all about? Is this something I want to try?

Students learn fly fishing gear: rods, reels, lines and leaders, waders, boots, and floatation devices (boats). We discuss locating fish in rivers, lakes, and the salt water, as well as local fish species you'll encounter. Our evening on entomology teaches about the life cycles of various insects, and which artificial flies imitate them.

Students also learn three useful fly-fishing knots.

We include two Saturday mornings to introduce you to the basics of casting a fly rod.

Enrollment is through the City of Olympia Parks, Arts, and Recreation.

**Fly Casting** - Taught spring-early summer, seven weeks, once per week. This class is for single-handed rod casting (not two-handed spey rods). You will cast a fly line for different situations including the wind. You'll also learn to "mend" your line to overcome the effect of moving river water on your line.

**Introduction to Fly Tying** - Taught weekly in the fall. Students receive plenty of individual attention as they learn to tie eight flies. After completing their homework, students will have tied 80 flies for their fly-boxes.

We teach a variety of flies useful anywhere including nymphs, streamers, and dry flies. After completion students can apply their skills to numerous other, similar flies.

Please contact Randy with questions. <https://southsoundflyfishers.org/contact/>



## **South Sound Fly Fishers hosted our first ever** **Casting Skills Development Course**

Holiday Greetings Fly Fishers,

Well, I just wanted to let everyone know that on Saturday, November 22, 2025 the **South Sound Fly Fishers** hosted its first ever **Casting Skills Development Course** which took place at the Tumwater Historical Park in Tumwater, WA. The weather was quite cool and brisk with a slight breeze but not a drop of rain. Thus, the event came off without a hitch.

The Tumwater Parks and Rec. Supervisor, **Charlie Groth**, graciously opened the park's gate for us at 07:00, an hour before normal park opening. SSFF setup volunteers arrived early to build the three-course casting setup which took over two hours to put together. The complete course consisted of the **FFI Bronze, Silver, and Gold** scoring lanes with two additional warm-up and foundation practice areas, one on either side of the scoring lanes.

Setup Team was **Kevin Angevine, Rodger Snider, Tim Bartley, Ann and Murray Boulware.**

A big shout out for these tireless volunteers who not only came early to setup, but also acted as Evaluators, Casting Mentors, and Welcome Greeters, then stayed late to help break down. **Excellent job everyone!**

Evaluator Personnel were:

**Bronze I - was Jeff Norman (Overlake Fly Fishing Club) Bellevue, WA**

**Bronze II - was Steve Saville (Puget Sound Fly Fishers) Tacoma, WA**

**Silver - was Rodger Snider and Kevin Angevine (SSFF) Olympia, WA**

Notable Highlights:

**30** people showed up to the event

**22** casted for score:

**12** earned their Bronze Certificate

**5** earned their Silver Certificate

No one casted for Gold

Dave Brombach (SSFF newsletter editor) earned his Bronze Certificate with the new 5 weight fly rod he recently made at the SSFF Rod Building Class a couple of weeks ago.

Numerous Members of the **Puget Sound Fly Fishers** of Tacoma, WA made up a considerable number of the total casters involved.

Even Members from the **Overlake Fly Fishing Club** of Bellevue, WA came down to join us; several of which completed their desired certificates.

Thanks to each and every person who graciously showed up to make this event so successful!



Each month, the Conservation Team looks for opportunities for Club members to volunteer to perform field conservation work, particularly in support of State or local agencies' conservation actions.

In previous Garden Hackles I have identified nearby Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife (WDFW) conservation volunteer litter clean-up activities associated with the Chehalis, Satsop, and Johns Rivers and a WDFW volunteer opportunity at the Bingham Creek Adult Weir Salmon Trap. These opportunities all remain open, and I have not found any new WDFW opportunities

this month.

If you are interested in volunteering for these open activities or finding out what volunteer activities may be available in areas where you fish or visit in other parts of the State, go to [Volunteer opportunities | Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife](#) and hit the “See all volunteering opportunities” heading box. You will not be able to sign up for a specific event until you have registered as a volunteer with the WDFW at the above site. If you have any future interest in volunteering to help the WDFW, I certainly recommend you register yourself. The WDFW does send out volunteer opportunities across the State to registered volunteers.

I have reviewed the Stream Team and the Hood Canal and South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Groups sites, and their salmon viewing activities are ending by the time you get this newsletter. I hope some of you took the opportunity to participate in a viewing. I went to a couple of them, and the salmon were plentiful. I have not yet heard any results of this year's runs compared to previous years.

## DESCHUTES WATERSHED SYMPOSIUM

I have tried to find a significant conservation achievement each month. I did not find one for the November SSFF Garden Hackle and chose instead to discuss the rescission of the 2001 Roadless Rule. The Roadless Rule will take over a year to revise and that schedule assumes no court challenge. Again, this month, I have not found a significant conservation achievement.

In the November SSFF Newsletter, I let you know about the Deschutes Watershed Symposium, which was held on Saturday, November 22, 2025, from 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM, at The Evergreen State College. I attended this symposium and found it very worthwhile. I am going to give you some of the information that came out of the symposium. The morning session discussed restoration activities in the Deschutes River. The afternoon session discussed the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project.

**The Morning Sessions.** In the upper to middle watershed of the Deschutes, several presenters discussed the continuing action to improve salmon habitat by the placement of engineered log jams. The action has been going on for several years. The lead for this



activity is the South Puget Sound Salmon Enhancement Group (SPSSEG) with support from the Weyerhaeuser Timber Co (WeyCo). Aerial views of the recently placed engineered log jams were provided. In the lower portion of the Deschutes, a presentation from the Port of Olympia focused on on-going watershed improvements, and a presentation from Olympia Ecosystems focused on plans within the Deschutes River Preserve. The objective within the preserve is to slow flows down, creating a diversity of flow conditions and creating resting areas for migrating adult coho, as well as flood and drought protection.

**The Afternoon Sessions.** Before discussing the afternoon session, I think some information is needed. The Symposium was sponsored by The Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team (DERT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to protecting and restoring the Deschutes Watershed. DERT was formed in 2011 (see <https://www.deschutesestuary.org/> for more information). Over the last 15 years, DERT has been working with State agencies, legislators, and other organizations to get a project established. And they have been successful. In 2022, the Department of Enterprise Services (DES) issued an Environmental Impact Statement (see <https://deschutesestuaryproject.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Capitol-Lake-Deschutes-Estuary-Final-EIS-1-Summary.pdf>) and began design work with the Washington Department of Ecology (Ecology). In 2025, the Washington Legislature directed Ecology to serve as the lead state agency to manage the Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project (DERP).

In the afternoon session DERT introduced Ecology, and Ecology presented a status of DERP. There was a lot of detail provided and, overall, Ecology showed DERP is on schedule and sufficiently funded to complete design and permitting in support of the start of project construction in early 2027. Much more detail, including some excellent photographs and artist renderings, can be found at [Deschutes Estuary Restoration Project Factsheet](#).

Per the Factsheet above, DERP “restores estuarine habitat that is critical to growth & development of ESA [Endangered Species Act]-listed salmon.” This is a significant fish conservation project. In addition, it is the largest estuary restoration project in an urban area in the United States. This project will change the footprint of Olympia and help the salmon. There will be several opportunities for the public to participate in reviews. If you have not already, I recommend interested SSFF members sign-up for updates from DERT at [Deschutes Estuary Restoration Team](#) and/or from [Ecology at Washington Department of Ecology](#).





## South Sound Fly Fishers

### Membership Report - December 2025

Total paid membership as of this date is 97.

Total new members in 2025 are 37.

It is difficult to believe that we are about to end year 2025 and enter into 2026. It has been a great year for South Sound Fly Fishers and it is because our membership was extremely active. Thank you for your participation and we look forward to your continued membership.

A friendly reminder that 2026 Membership Dues are due in January. Club Membership and Dues Membership runs from January 1 to December 31. There are two convenient ways to pay your membership dues:

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

South 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:

#### SSFF Returning Member

[https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted\\_button\\_id=BXHH6MJ3T5MAU](https://www.paypal.com/donate/?hosted_button_id=BXHH6MJ3T5MAU)

#### SSFF New Member

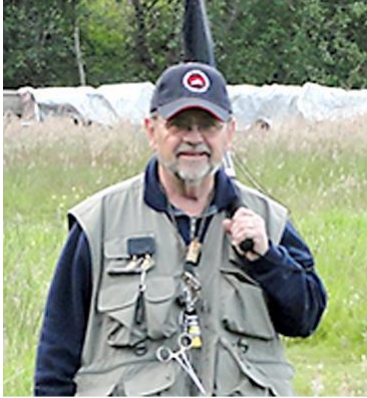
If you wish to become a new member, please go to the SSFF website - [Membership page](#), fill out the application and submit your payment

Thank you for your continued membership. We wish you and your families a happy, joyous and safe Holiday Season.

---

# Washington State Council of Fly Fishers International (WSCFFI) & Government Affairs

Mike Clancy, Chair



## Fly Fishing International (FFI), WSCFFI & SSFF Events for 2026

Tri - Cities Sportsman Show  
January 23-25, 2026  
Pasco, WA

The Big Horn Show  
March 19-22, 2026  
Spokane, WA

Washington Sportsman Show  
January 28-Feb. 1, 2026  
Puyallup, WA

Washington FFI Fly Casting & Fly Tying Fair  
April 19, 2026  
Pickering Barn Park, Issaquah, WA

Pacific Northwest Sportsman Show  
Feb. 11-15, 2026  
Portland, OR

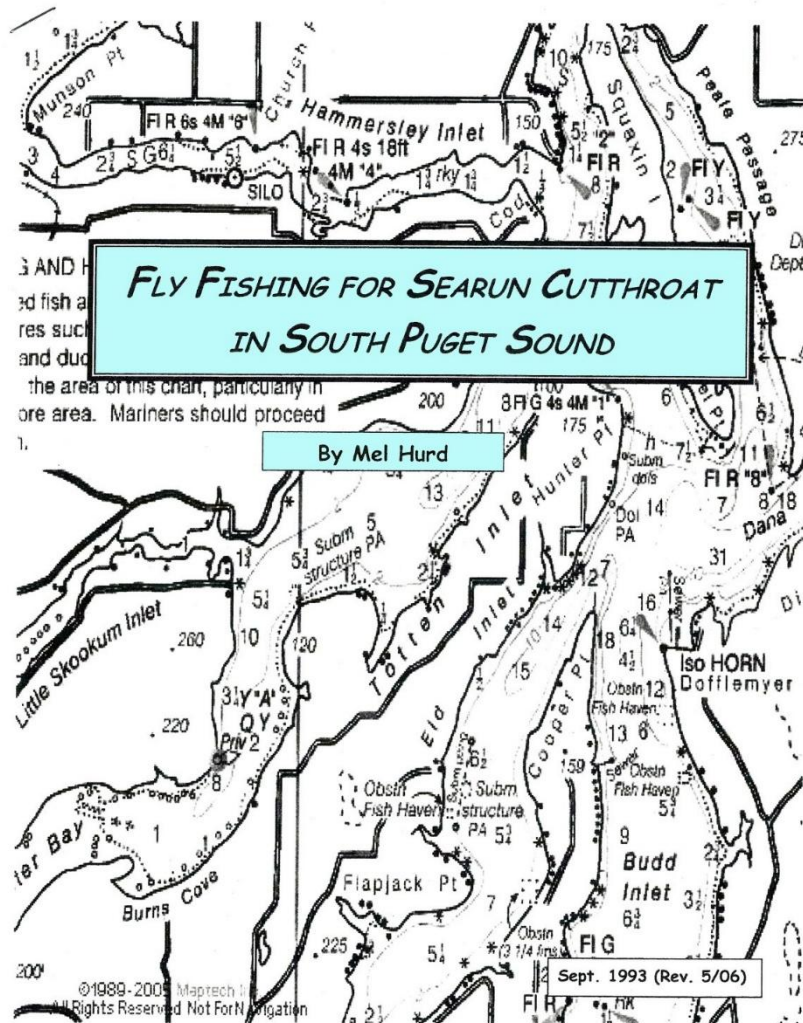
Women Connect Missouri River Rendezvous  
May 22-24, 2026  
Craig, MT

Fly Fishing Show  
Feb. 14-15, 2026  
Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue, WA

NW Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing  
Academy  
June 20-27, 2026  
Panhandle Lake, Shelton, WA

NW Fly Tyer & Fly Fishing Expo  
March 13-14, 2026  
Linn County Expo Center, Albany, OR

## Fly Fishing for Searun Cutthroat in South Puget Sound, by Mel Hurd



This is a 20 page booklet written by Mel Hurd, long-time member of SSFF. This is an absolutely wonderful guide to fish our sea-run cutthroat in our back yard, or front yard. The booklet is a means to support our conservation program and the Academy. We recommend a \$10 donation, or more.

To order your copy go to the Donation page of our club's website, [Sea Run Cutthroat Fishing Guide](#), fill out the form and submit your payment. Payment can be made via the PayPal link below the form. If you prefer you may mail a check to our treasurer at

SSFF P.O. Box 2792  
Olympia WA 98507

As soon as our Treasurer receives your donation, the booklet will be mailed to you.

It's so easy to read and learn. And it would make a nice Christmas gift.

WDFW - December 3, 2025 News Release - MyWDFW mobile application now available in Apple and Google Play app stores

NEWS RELEASE

MyWDFW mobile application now available in Apple and Google Play app stores

The MyWDFW app is a comprehensive mobile licensing tool for both hunters and anglers. It supports license purchases, displays active hunting and fishing license privileges, and enables electronic tagging for a wide range of game species, including deer, elk, turkey, and black bear. App users can also report migratory bird harvests and submit end-of-season harvest reports.

Other functionalities incorporated into MyWDFW, and also available in the newly updated Fish Washington® app, include catch record cards for select fish species and an Enforcement View for WDFW officers, along with access to customer licensing (WILD) profiles.

You will have the option to **choose between paper licenses and mobile licenses for the upcoming 2026 license year**. To enroll as a mobile license holder for 2026, customers should:

Log in to [fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov](https://fishhunt.dfw.wa.gov)

*Starting in 2026, you will have the option to have your tags, catch record cards, and migratory bird cards to be available electronically on your smart phone or as a paper copy*





### How to Winter Fish and Why Not To!

Winter is upon us here at South Sound Fly Fishers. For many, 'tis the season to put on some fuzzy socks and tie, tie, tie. And God bless all of you fly tiers. Your refused blemished attempts keep my boxes stocked. And the stings of my wobbly casts into everything behind me more painless than I deserve. But for the rest of us. The maladjusted, solitary bah humbugists of spring crowds and newbies. It's our time to shine in the lightless grey skies of the Pacific North West's bigger water.

Fishing this time of year is cold, wet, miserable, and dangerous. It's what I hear is called type two fun. The misery of type two fun is enjoyed in retrospect. But the most beautiful you'll ever see any piece of water is from the middle of it in a heavy snowfall. On days like that you can hear everyone tucked into their homes. With warm toes and smiles and feeling in their faces. Cars parked in their driveways instead of blowing by every five minutes to remind you how far out into the wilderness you didn't really get. On days like that only you are seeing what's in front of you. Days like that will remind you why you started doing this in the first place.

So where in this frozen hell scape are the fish and what are they doing?

### Springs, Tail waters and why they matter.

Here's where you become one of those fly fishers who carries around a little thermometer. Find water that is +/- 40F. If your temperatures are far below that you're in Minnesota and I'm happy you found our club's page somehow. To quickly locate warmth, find your way to a good tail water or someplace spring fed. Tail waters coming out of dams will be coming from the deepest part of the water on the back side of the dam. Colder water or ice on the surface insulates the deeper water from the atmosphere, giving it a stable temperature. The formed pool at the head of a tail water and the turbulence they cause will bring fish in.

Springs carry a similar effect but a geo thermal version. So many feet below ground the earth has a mean temperature. Regardless of what's going on with the weather. Where these aquifers reach the surface - spring fed creeks, inlets, and ponds - temperatures will reflect this. These stabilized temperatures will also carry larva and anything else that needs to be warm to survive. When fish find an eco-system with agreeable water they will gather in the deeper sections of pools.

Focus on areas you think fish would find shelter from predators. Small game and water sources diminish in the winter. So your neighborhood bird of prey or raccoon is sure to be near-by. The weather and lack of calories make fish lethargic and thus an easy meal. To combat this, they will divide their time between holding deep to rest or making a slow lap to the edges of drop offs to see what's tumbled from the busier water. The pool beneath a tailwater typically has churned up sand and sediment for them to hide in also.



A secret all these butch winter fly fishers don't share is to be successful it is better to be lazy. The forty degrees you're looking for isn't going to come until after the sun has been up for a while. All of your hook ups will be in a snoozy late morning window from around 10:00 to 3:00. Which means you can sleep in, make a big breakfast, and get a hike in if you want. Personally, I use this time to get some brisk miles up and down the river looking for structure and pools I think are good fish holding spots. This part of the morning is also a good opportunity to site fish.

Typically we fish terrain and water. With so little algae blooming you'll pick out pockets of bundled up fish waiting for the sun. They may not be feeding right now. But they are out jockeying for good position for when the bugs start to move just like you are. When you do find them try to cast to a single fish rather than drift your fly through all of the fish. When I come across a school in the winter it seems like they are usually taking turns exposing themselves for a meal. Find the fish doing laps to the surface and present to the area it's feeding.

And move around the river a lot. Some fish will be present and just not eating. So go find new ones. Drift your fly through a few of your go-to riffles and runs and prove to yourself that there are no fish there right now. Locate the desperate fish. Putting in some miles will keep you warm as well. Warm will keep you alive and grateful instead of wondering what you're doing outside right now.

As far as hatches, bug activity is at its lowest point of the year. Low end fluctuating temps and drastic changes in water level don't make happy breeding grounds for aquatic insects. The usual tactics of fishing an afternoon hatch for the fish to buffet out on is a no go. The heartier of critters will still be in the water column though. Stick with your basic emergers to present an easy meal. Winter is not necessarily the time of getting a fish to rise. Rather it's the time to brush your fly across its nose and whisper, "please?" Sow bugs, any worms, candy, or slush eggs and all your favorite midges should convince one that all this trouble was worth it. Keep in mind water is going to be very clear and the fish are going to be sluggish. This makes them very spooky. So be brave and get out your 5-6X tippetts.

**How to read water conditions after and before rain you ask since we all decided to live in a coastal rain forest!**

A lot of rain pushes bank material into the river making it too cloudy for fish to see. Some people can catch fish in these conditions. I cannot. After the silt lifts the fish will be starving though. Medium or light rains will wash terrestrials into the water. It will also stir up the banks pushing bugs out of their slimy weird little nests. Rule of thumb, fish in the rain. Unless it's way too rainy - then there is no reason to show off.

The next, and what should be everyone's first consideration, hypothermia. If you think somebody is being soft not wanting to go out in these conditions then you've never been around someone who's hypothermic. Someone in our club either has been themselves or been around someone who has been. If you don't know to be very afraid of cold weather injury go ask. That being said, with preparation and some basic understanding of staying warm it is as manageable as it is menacing. About ten years ago I fell into the Gallatin river in a wilderness section, in October. Don't ask. I spent the next nine hours shaking violently in a sleeping bag trying to spark a jet boil with a lighter held between my wrist and rubbing it on the ground.

If you are going to be out alone like I was then have your contingencies ready and in place. When I've got to camp, I take warm clothes, including socks, gloves, and a beanie. There was a space blanket in a sleeping bag and a thermos of already warm soup. So, all was well that ended well. If I didn't have all of these things placed and ready it could have been a different story. If my equipment hadn't been packed and in my truck, I would not have been able to get it out and set up in the state that I was. Scary story over and aside, if you are careful and prepared you will be fine.

The most overlooked tactic of winter fishing, and most obvious, is stay out of the water. If you can help it don't get in. If you're not in the river then it's not draining the precious warmth out of your body. When you inevitably have to start wading just follow basic layering protocols as if you were going skiing. Personally, I like many small layers more than a few big ones. Puffy jackets look cool. But they eventually restrict your movement. A long sleeve waffle shirt, with a short sleeve tee shirt over it and a heavy wool button-down carries me into some pretty low temps. For my undies I like waffle long johns and a pair of fleece pants or bibs over them. Wool gloves, socks and a beanie are just as important equipment here as any. For these items I usually have a full backup set in my gear. If anything gets soggy, I can change them out and get back in action.

As for waders this is usually when you decide you're going to pony up for some pricy ones next go around. And some insulated boots. And suddenly those jackets you try on but don't buy are not so expensive. This is when you find out your old Gore Tex jacket doesn't cut the mustard either. And you have to get your credit card out. That's what they're for, though. It will take some trial and error getting bundled up right. But if you do and if you're careful you won't get cold anymore once it's all dialed in. Well, not that cold.

So, when is it too cold? Mostly that answer is up to you. People ice fish. Inuit's take canoes between ice flows looking for seals in the Arctic. Below freezing your rod guides and gear will start to ice over. There's a good handful of gimmicks and tricks keeping your guides clear. The surface tension of water will make it cling to your line as you retrieve it. This will slowly crust over your guides until the line can't pass through. And trying to chip it off with your chilled to a gnarl claws will likely snap them off. The only sure-fire trick I have is sloshing my rod around in the river every other cast or so.

Winter is also when to take a little extra care of the fish you do hook if and when you release them. Touch them as little as possible. By this point your finger tips are colder than the water and the fish. To you your hands feel like sharp, icy mitts. That's how they feel to the fish too. If you haven't purchased a hook remover or aren't the best with your forceps, now is when to learn. It's a chance to build a good habit under self-serving conditions. Releasing fish from the net will keep your gloves and hands out of the water.

Last but not least, eggs are very productive in the winter and fine to fish with. But keep in consideration that you do not cast to spawning fish. If you see spawning beds move along. Will you get these fish to bite? Yes. They are protecting their eggs. Will you anger the fly gods doing so? Also, yes. Curses will be upon you. Soon you will bury a barbed hook in your finger or ear. Flounder a cast and knock your glasses into the water in front of you? Knock a whole fly box into the river? Those moments are all fish karma. A blue hued, six armed trout with a round belly and finger cymbals is in the sky delightfully chuckling at you. And when this happens, you'll suddenly remember when you bothered a fish in its spawn bed because you couldn't go home empty handed again.

Hold your grief and shame closely. Leave spawning fish to spawn. So, you can innocently and in good conscience arrive home with your soaked through gloves that you will be trying to blow your no longer warm breath into. Trying to warm your frigid cupped hands enough to get your key in the front door. Where and when your special someone will meet you under the porch light and deservedly say, I told you so.



## Fundraising

## Kevin Angevine, Chair



Do you have item(s) that you don't use?

Have you considered donating it/ them to the club?

*SSFF is registered as a not-for-profit corporation with the State of Washington and is an exempt organization under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Donations to SSFF may be tax deductible.*

While SSFF operates in 'Good Faith,' all sales are considered "As-Is" condition. SSFF assumes no liability and the buyer purchases items at their own risk.

There are 2 ways that you as a **PAID member** may utilized this section of the newsletter.

- Donate an item(s) to the club, we will list it in our classifieds. All money from the sale of the item(s) will be added to the club's general fund. Contact our Fundraising Chair, Kevin Angevine via [southsoundflyfishers.org/contact/](https://southsoundflyfishers.org/contact/)

Thank you in advance for your donations.

- Private Sale - **available ONLY to current paid members.** List your item(s) in our classified as a private sale. No retail, business or commercial sales are permitted. This will be a transaction between the seller and purchaser. The club will not act as an arbitrator nor as an agent for either party. The SSFF club will accept **no liability** in this transaction. Submit the info for this sale to [southsoundflyfishers.org/contact/](https://southsoundflyfishers.org/contact/)

**Once the transaction is complete, a donation to the SSFF club in the amount of 20% of the sale price is suggested.** This donation can be completed via the SSFF website [Donations and Support](https://southsoundflyfishers.org/donations-and-support/).

The SSFF will list the item(s) in both our monthly newsletter and our website [southsoundflyfishers.org](https://southsoundflyfishers.org)

The format will include:

- a short description (20 words maximum)
- price
- contact information (**list only the contact info that you are comfortable listing.**)
- no photos will be accepted for a private sale.

Example:

XYZ fly rod & reel (5 wt) - \$100 - Contact John Doe (johndoe@xmail.com) 555-333-4444



The following items are available for purchase from the SSFF club

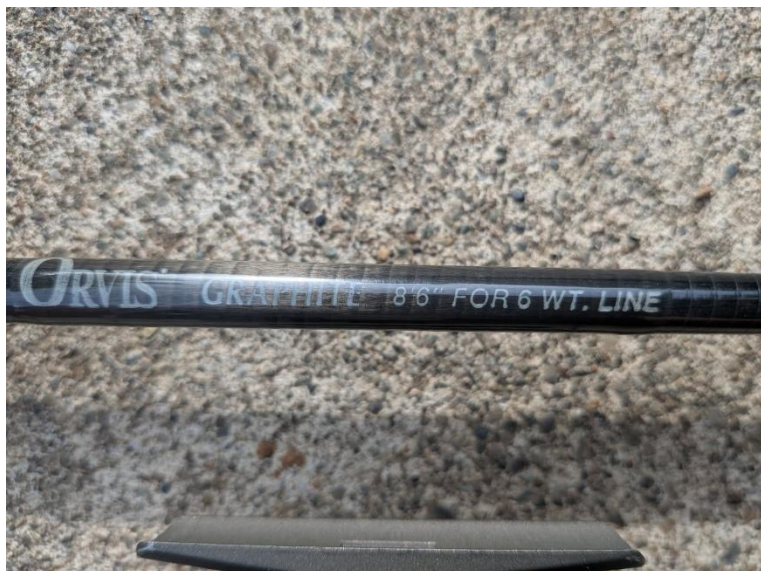
---

Cortland Rod, 8'6", 5-6 weight rod with  
Cortland Crown II Reel  
\$100





Orvis Rod, 8'6", 6 weight rod with  
Martin VFR reel with sinking tip line  
\$135.00



CeramicFish  
\$12.00

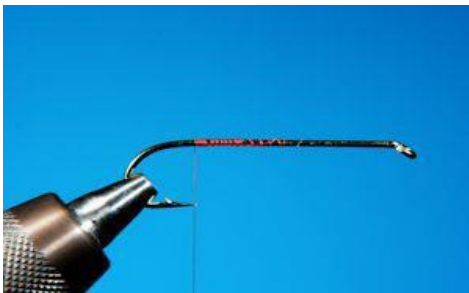




## Muddler Minnow



Creator:	Don Gapen
Photographed by:	Kevin Erickson
By:	Kevin Erickson
Hook:	2X - 4X long Sizes 12 - 1/0
Thread:	Red
Tail:	Matched slips of Turkey Wing or Tail Quill
Body:	Gold Tinsel flat or braided
Underwing:	Fox Squirrel Tail
Main Wing:	Matched slips of Turkey Quill to match tail
Collar/Head:	Deer Hair - spun and flared - trimmed to desired shape



1. For a deeper-sinking version, a conehead or metal bead can be added first or wire for weighting wrapped around the shank. In modern times, the fly is often tied without any added weight and the depth controlled through the fishing approach or line style. Mount the hook in your vise securely with the shank level. After attaching the thread, wrap back to a position above the point.



2. Match a pair of slips (strips) of selected turkey quill material that are about half the hook gape in width. Place back-to-back. Hold the tapered tips of the strips TIGHTLY in your left hand (for right-handed tyers) above the hook shank, but rotated slightly toward you. Allow the strips to then roll into the final position on top of the hook instead of trying to keep them from rolling beyond the vertical. Wrap the thread around the strips and hook and back up on top again. Most importantly, bring the middle finger of



your left hand up behind the base end of the quills in front of the thread. Wrap the thread around the strips and hook and back up on top again. Keep the butts from rolling with this finger - the butts should only be allowed to compress vertically. PULL UP on the thread while holding the strips tightly to secure them to the hook. After a few more tight wraps, continue forward securing the excess along the length of the shank. Don't let the quill spin around the shank. Leave  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the shank for the head of the fly.



3. Attach the braided body material at the front of the body space. Secure it as you wrap the thread back to the tail (above the point) and then wrap the thread back to the front of the body space. Wrap the braid forward in one continuous smooth layer. Tie off and trim the excess.



4. Select a small clump (two dozen fibers or so) of Fox Squirrel Tail for the underwing. Clean out the shorter fibers by holding the tips of the fibers in your left hand and removing the shorter fibers from the base with your right hand. Clean the hair well, as any extra fibers make securing the hair all the more difficult. Tie in tightly on top of the shank with the tips extending back just past the tip of the tail. Trim off the excess and wrap over the butt ends.



5. Select either a symmetrical turkey quill with even length fibers on both sides or a matched pair of quills with similar length fibers on opposite sides of each quill - one has long fibers on the left side and the other has long fibers on the right side. Open your scissors to where the points are the same width as the hook gape. Slide them into the quill to separate out a strip that is then the same width as the hook gape. Cut the strip out as close to the base of the quill as possible. Match the strips and place back-to-back the same as the tail. Follow the same steps to secure the wing as used to tie in the tail. When viewed from above, you should have a narrow knife-edge view of the strips. Trim the excess and secure the butt ends.





6. Select deer hair that is on a **GOOD QUALITY TANNED SKIN**. It is imperative to get good quality hair that is soft and hollow and therefore will spin and flare correctly. Avoid hair that is on a hard, stiff dried skin. If the skin is dried and hard enough to drive nails with, the hair will be thin, brittle and have lost its' hollowness - all factors you want to avoid. Cut out a clump about the size of a pencil or pen in diameter. Clean out the short fibers and underfur thoroughly. Place the hair against the fly and measure the tips back to the middle of the wing. Transfer the hair to your left hand. Trim the butts about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " beyond where the tie in point is. Place the hair on the **BACK** side of the wing and take three loose wraps around the hair and the hook. Placing the hair behind the wing allows it to spin freely before encountering the wing.

7. Follow the techniques description - "Spin and Flare." Roll the hair and spin it around the hook completely, then tighten the thread and flare the hair. Often the hair will tend to clump and not distribute evenly, leaving a large amount on one side and not much on the other. If you have this happen, **SLOWLY** unwrap first one wrap, then another. As you undo the second wrap, a point will come where the hair springs loose from the hook. **DON'T UNWRAP ANY FURTHER!** When this happens, the hair is now loose and can be spun further to even out the distribution. As long as you are slow and careful this process can be repeated until the hair is nicely spread around the hook. Make a few more tight wraps, pull the thread forward through the hair add a few more wraps and then finish the head.

8. Trim the head to the desired shape. A standard "bullet" shaped head will be bulky and buoyant. A shallow, wide "wedge" shape is effective to make the fly dive and dart with an enticing swimming motion. Experiment and see what you like best for your fishing. One option is to leave the head larger and simply carry a pair of scissors with you when fishing. This way a quick trim can modify the head and therefore the way the fly fishes to suit your needs at the time.



2026 SOUTH SOUND FLY FISHERS Officers, Chairs	
President (Officer)	Bruce Lincoln / Jared Wood (outgoing)
Vice President (Officer)	Chris Tilton / Max Doerge (outgoing)
Secretary (Officer)	Veronica Smolen
Treasurer (Officer)	Lee Yeager
Conservation (Chair)	Christian Jordan / Tim Veneziano (outgoing)
Director at Large (Chair)	Murray Boulware
Director at Large (Chair)	Bruce Baker / Bruce Lincoln (outgoing)
Education (Chair)	Randy Allen
FFI/Gov't (Chair)	Mike Clancy
Fundraising (Chair)	Kevin Angevine
Membership (Chair)	Phil Jaramillo
Mentorship (Chair)	Tim Bartley
Newsletter Editor (Chair)	Dave Brombach
Outings (Chair)	Jesse Bakke
Past President (Chair)	Jared Wood / Lee Yeager (outgoing)
Programs (Chair)	Wayne Dixon / Lee Yeager (outgoing)
Webmaster/Facebook (Chair)	Vic Andrade

SSFF Club Website: [southsoundflyfishers.org](https://southsoundflyfishers.org)  
 USPS Mail Address: SSFF, PO BOX 2792, Olympia WA 98507  
 SSFF Garden Hackle Newsletter  
 © December 2025