

Stonefly Maidens
Ladies Fly Fishing
Club Newsletter
January 2003

AN OREGON COUNCIL-FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS MEMBER CLUB

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MEETING INFO:

**IMPORTANT—The meeting place has changed to Who Song and Larry's.
See the address below.**

Next meeting: TUESDAY January 14, 2003

Who Song and Larry's, 4850 SW Macadam Ave, Portland, OR 97201, (503) 223-8845.

6 PM, dinner and social hour

7 PM, program

Carson Lord will be the guest speaker for our January meeting. Carson works for the non-profit conservation group Oregon Trout and will be speaking about some of their recent accomplishments, upcoming volunteer opportunities, and some of the current natural resource issues affecting the fish and waters of our state.

This month's fish-a-long:

Saturday, January 18, 2003

Crooked River, Prineville, Oregon. The Crooked River is one of the best winter fisheries in Oregon. This time of year, the Crooked River is very easy to wade. The best flies are nymphs, small egg patterns and blue wing olives. If you are interested in attending the fish-a-long and won't be at the meeting, let me know so I can make sure you have the plans for the trip.

We have hats, denim shirts and T-shirts with our Stonefly logo on them for sale at the meeting. Hats are \$15.00; denim shirts are \$25.00; T-shirts are \$18.00. What better way to advertise the club?

Fly Lines

Happy New Year. I am excited about our plans for this year. Check out the tentative schedule below for speakers and fish-a-longs. We hope that you will enjoy the variety of speakers and fishing opportunities that we have planned. Please invite your friends to the meetings and help get them hooked on fly fishing.

Dues are now due. The \$25.00 goes towards paying for speakers and sometimes guides for our fish-a-longs. Please pay your dues as soon as possible. Anyone not paid by March will no longer receive the newsletter. So pay up and keep in touch. Membership forms will be available at the next meeting. We will be putting together a club roster for distribution to club members

only for the purposes of aiding members in finding fishing partners. If you do not want your name included on the list, please let us know on the membership form.

This month's speaker is Carson Lord of Oregon Trout. Oregon Trout is a one of the premier native fish conservation groups in the Northwest. They were founded in the early 1980s by committed fly fishers and conservationists. They have been on of the leaders in native fish conservation and habitat protection and restoration. One of their programs is the Salmon Watch program, which helps teach Metro area youth about salmon and watersheds. Volunteer instructors team up with fish biologists, tribal members and industry and conservation representatives to provide valuable environmental education through streamside field trips to view spawning Chinook salmon.

We'll be finalizing plans for the Crooked River trip. Carpools and meeting times will be set up. I really enjoy fishing the river, because there are lots of fish. You can almost be guaranteed to catch a fish. The wading is easy even in the winter. You can practice nymphing and dry fly techniques. Five-weight and lighter rods with floating lines work best. Come join us.

See you on the water and at the meeting,
Tilda

Tentative Program and Fish-a-long Schedule

Month	Program	Fish-a-long
January	Carson Lord, Oregon Trout	Crooked River, January 18
February	Rob Crandall, Nymphing for Steelhead	Eagle Creek, February 15
March	Mike Duley, Owyhee River	Owyhee River, March 21-25
April	Scott Richmond, Fly Fishing the Fringes	Carp Fishing, April 12
May	Marty Sheppard, John Day River	High Cascade Lakes, TBA
June	John Smeraglio, Salmon Fly Hatch	Deschutes River, June 14
July	Sturgeon Fishing	Columbia River, July 12
August	No Meeting	John Day River, August 16
September	TBA	Deschutes River, September 13
October	Donna Teeney, Saltwater Fishing	Sea-run Cutthroats, October 18
November	TBA	Chum Salmon, TBA
December	Christmas Party	None scheduled

All speakers and fish-a-longs are subject to change without notice.

Goings on: Fly Shops and Events

The Fly Fishing Shop at Welches 503.622.4607 www.flyfishusa.com

Call or visit the web site for more info on sales and upcoming events.

Sunday, January 12, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Fly Fishers' Round Table

Tying Stonefly Nymphs with Brian Silvey. Stone Fly Nymphs are some of the most sought after foods for big trout in rivers and streams in the Pacific Northwest. Knowing how to tie and fish them are big advantages. Brian Silvey is one of the most popular trout and steelhead guides in our area. Come watch him work his magic at the fly tying vise. Bring your gear. Tie along.

Sunday, January 19, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Slide Show & Presentation on Cuba with John Ecklund [Jardines de la Reina, Cuba](#). Without question one of the best places in the world to enjoy multiple bonefish and tarpon days on hundreds of miles of isolated flats, with permit always possible. Plus, all the cultural attractions of Havana a day away. Best time: late April – June.

Sunday, February 2, 1:00pm to 5:00pm

Tying Bonanza: Lake Flies, Steelhead Flies, Mixing Dubbing, etc. Group leader: Derek Fergus

Deschutes Canyon Fly Shop – Maupin 541.395.2565

Call or visit the web site for more info. Give the shop a call to find out about their specials and classes.

River City Fly Shop – 11429 SW Scholls Ferry Rd, Beaverton 503.579.5176

Fly tying every Tuesday evening starting at 6:30pm. \$50 for 4 sessions; you can join at any time.

Central Oregon Outdoors – 1935 S. Hwy 97, Redmond 866.223.4617

www.centraloregonoutdoors.com

Call or visit their web site for more information on local fishing conditions.

BOW

Stay tuned for workshop information. New registration materials will be available soon.

BOW weekend 2003 will be June 13 - 15 at Camp Magruder in Rockaway Beach.

Beyond BOW Family Rabbit Hunt, January 2003

Winter Workshop February 28 - March 2, 2003 at Suttle Lake United Methodist Camp

La Pine State Park Workshop June 7 - 8, 2003

If you would like to put your name on the mailing list to receive registration materials, please contact Nancy Smogor, Becoming an Outdoors-Woman Program Coordinator, at (503) 872-5264 x 5358 or check out their website at www.dfw.state.or.us/outdoor_skills/bow.html.

Life as a Watershed Leader

By Robert Stubblefield

Excerpted from: **OREGON SALMON**

Essays on the State of the Fish at the Turn of the Millennium

On a cold March day I walk a tributary of Long Creek with a friend I've known since first grade. The dark, slow, ink-thick water of winter coils through the meadow and the wind shifts, striking us face-on every direction we turn. Snowflakes rise, fall and cut sideways. For the most part we walk in silence. I fight the temptation to fill the air with babble and fall into a familiar rhythm of stepping through broken basalt and ducking gnarled branches of river hawthorn.

My friend is changing the grazing plan on this section of his property because he wants beaver and fish back in the creek, and because he's tired of eroding banks and calves lost to a stream swollen by runoff. He wants his son to be able to fish after chores and school, or simply to have the country-kid luxury of whiling away a spring afternoon beside a stream fertile with the mystery of rainbow trout rising to mayflies. I don't have to sell him on riparian restoration. He's knowledgeable and passionate on ranching and fisheries. Along with his wife, he has built and

expanded a viable ranching operation through the 1980s and 90s, a feat near impossible, during a period which bankrupted many inherited operations.

I returned to eastern Oregon in November of 1997 to work as coordinator of the North Fork John Day Watershed Council after a decade away in Portland and Missoula. Looking through the biographical profiles of the council members my first day on the job, I encountered few unfamiliar names. I grew up within a hundred yards of the North Fork, attended twelve grades at the small school in Monument, played basketball with and against council members, and worked summers for and beside them in sun-blasted alfalfa fields.

As of this writing, there are ninety-two locally recognized watershed councils active in Oregon. Their mandate under the Oregon Plan is "Restoring and protecting Oregon's watersheds through locally driven, voluntary, cooperative efforts." These councils are made up of volunteers, but the efforts are not viewed as entirely voluntary from the local level. The goals have been clearly established by the public, by the federal Clean Water Act, and by the federal Endangered Species Act. The answers to meeting these goals, or as to whether they can be met, are unique to each basin, sub-basin, and watershed within the Columbia Basin.

Why do individuals join watershed councils? An interest in fisheries? In watershed health? Enlightened self-interest? If the North Fork John Day Watershed Council is indicative of others throughout the state, the answer is all of the above, as it should be. Prospective council members described their reasons for wanting to be on the council, their qualifications for taking on a volunteer position requiring hours of travel over treacherous, blue-backed winter roads to debate the most contentious issues facing the sub-basin. The ninety-two watershed councils in Oregon currently represent our best chance to unite the passionate, informed, and invested.

Grant County Farm Bureau, Oregon Trout, Kiwanis, The Nature Conservancy, Oregon Cattleman's Association, American Fisheries Society. High school biology teacher, rancher, grocery store owner, contractor. Team roping, fly-fishing, hiking, hunting. Council members listed affiliations with professional and fraternal organizations, occupations, hobbies. I didn't have to read far to learn how long families had been here. "Fourth-generation Grant County rancher." "Third-generation Grant County resident." Second-generation residents listed this information farther down—the equivalent of a restaurant boasting "Fine dining since 1996."

Local pride and intimacy with the land result in exactly the kind of expertise and institutional memory watershed councils were formed to involve and draw from. Implied in those biographical statements would be the idea that we have somehow worked, learned, dreamed, and prayed our way toward a sustainable resource ethic. And in our best moments we could imagine this so. We could stand on our front porches for a thousand and one moonless summer nights and never notice an occasional star blinking off, or the frogs going silent one by one.

For the members of the council who make part or all of their living from agriculture, culpability in the demise of chinook salmon and steelhead runs is a tough sell. Driving to Portland they pass three dams and a hundred miles of slack water on the mainstem Columbia. Members drive past streams channelized and piped underground because of a natural course which inconvenienced developers. Rural/urban polarization isn't peculiar to Oregon; the Cascades simply provide a particularly visual delineation. Cattle ranchers on the east side feel scapegoated by urban and suburban residents benefiting from cheap electricity and willingly pouring tons of effluent into the Willamette River with each heavy rain. On both sides of the mountains, habitat degradation is driven by convenience, habit, profit, and ignorance, but seldom, if ever, by malice.

Culverts blocking upstream passage, bare banks eroded by a century of overgrazing, lawn fertilizer runoff—the problems confronting each watershed council are as specific and unique as the Willamette's Johnson Creek or the North Fork John Day's Potamus Creek, but broad questions shadow the entire Columbia Basin. Are we willing to point fingers, shrug our shoulders,

and scratch our heads until chinook and steelhead are gone because ultimately we chose preternaturally green lawns, lower sewer and electric bills, or grazing streambottoms year-round?

The search is constant for a metaphor, a simile, or analogy that places our challenge in perspective. Last February I attended a conference where the catch phrase seemed to be, "The Columbia Basin is as large as France." I wondered how that idea would help define the issues for the North Fork John Day Watershed Council. "Oh," I imagined them saying, "Then it would be like driving from Nice to Cherbourg, except the cheese wouldn't be as good." Something else I heard at the conference stayed with me, too—that not only are the factors affecting anadromous fish more complex than we think, they're more complex than we can think.

Change approaches slowly in the sage and juniper foothills of eastern Oregon, but it does arrive. Some ranchers are realizing that their parents and grandparents could afford to manage (or mismanage) their cattle operations as they did only because they entered a country with native bluebunch wheatgrass cinch-deep on a saddle horse. What seemed an inexhaustible resource was mostly grubbed out by the 1930s. Second and third generations who graze their operations in the same manner end up selling parcels of their ranches to afford this right.

An undeniable measure of romance lingers in raising beef cattle, but increasingly ranchers are realizing that the bottom line is a product that must be sold, and to be sold it must be produced in a manner palatable to the buying public. It's hard times for farmers and ranchers. Importing our food and exporting our problems begins the process of ranches mutating into ranchettes and ranchettes mutating into Western-theme subdivisions until restoration becomes a non-issue.

When neighbors approach neighbors to buy hay, to lease pasture, to sell a horse, business is the last subject broached. You can drive up to the porch and never climb out of your pickup and ask to borrow a neighbor's tractor worth tens of thousands of dollars because yours is broken down. That's neighboring. But the buying and selling of a season's work must be approached delicately. Many view the chinook salmon and steelhead in the same manner—a commodity to be bargained over. Individuals and groups dedicated to restoring the fish runs operate as if fighting a war of attrition, while farmers and ranchers hold out because of a belief that a single concession can only lead to more. Meanwhile the runs steadily decline.

My job description ranges from "Get the cows off the creek," to "Get the government off our back." Both are correct, I suppose. In many cases, a grazing exclosure is the answer, and, if watershed councils are effective, voluntary actions replace regulatory burdens. Returning to work along my home waters often means being labeled a sell-out by one group and an apologist by another.

Here on the North Fork, the council brings tribal, timber, ranching, environmental, and educational interests together for monthly meetings. Progress is being made. In the past year I've seen a decrease in the amount of talk devoted to out-of-basin problems such as predation, overfishing, and ocean conditions, and a sharpening of focus toward in-basin matters including riparian health, upland conditions, and wetland meadows.

On a Sunday morning early in March, I walk the riverbank my father fenced off twenty years ago. As a teenager I carried buckets of water to the trees he planted on July days when the river gravel burned through the soles of my sneakers. Steelhead swim upstream and hold in the pools. Willows, alders, and young cottonwoods are almost ready to break dormancy, and as I rub a cottonwood limb between my thumb and forefinger, the fluttering, throaty cooing of migrating sandhill cranes filters down through the frost-glittered dawn.

Like the steelhead, the sandhills pass through this high desert country like an ancient, overlooked promise kept. What if those steelhead do vanish? Will we recognize it as a sign of our ability to impoverish ourselves and the world, or simply accept it: another pocket of absence?

The steelhead and chinook salmon are our most potent talismans of watershed health here in the Columbia Basin. Their dwindling populations represent a long-delayed siren call to action. Watershed restoration will ultimately rely heavily on efforts at the most local level if it is to be successful. Within the North Fork John Day watershed alone exist countless micro-climates, shifts in flora and fauna ranging from mayfly nymphs crawling in the gravel substrate of the streambed to towering Ponderosa pines at ridgetop. Throughout the history of the Pacific Northwest there is a record of exploiting the landscape, alienating and exterminating the people and cultures dependent upon an intimate knowledge of this entire range for their existence.

Five years ago I taught a writing workshop with two friends of mine in a small eastern Oregon town. The enthusiasm of the junior high students waned along with the early spring sunlight filtering through the windows. One of my friends asked the students what they considered beautiful. Near the back of the room a lanky boy who had remained sullen and silent throughout the day spoke up. "The cows after I help my dad feed," he said. "The way they line along the feed bunks and steam rises off them and they start eating and settle quiet. It's real pretty." The boy wore the same eastern Oregon farmboy wardrobe I grew up in—a blend of hand-me-downs he was yet to grow into and clothes of his own he'd outgrown. He was years away from being comfortable with himself, from finding any measure of ease with the world. But he'd seen a few things most people hadn't and valued those things now and would value them later, whether he stayed or left this windblown high-plateau wheat country.

The Northwest salmon recovery effort operates in a window when a vast, collective memory of sustainable, harvestable runs remains close at hand. There are men and women who relate with eloquence and immediacy the Snake-River-bound chinooks leaping and twisting through Celilo, who recall the warmth of the sun drying the splashed rocks and planks of the fishing platforms. There exists the memory of the spent beauty of abundant salmon and steelhead carcasses lining the banks and shallows of the high drainages of the North Fork John Day soaked in golden, low-angle September sunlight. There are many who saw these salmon as most of us haven't, people who valued them then and value them now.

Perseverance and pride are much-admired traits in Oregon. Flexibility scores lower on the list, the ability to compromise discounted deeper yet. But the latter two qualities must be exercised if the former are to be of any lasting consequence. The bank of local knowledge goes back not two, three, or four generations, but a hundred generations. And each generation offers hard-earned, vital lessons.

Watershed councils are a relatively new entity in Oregon. Purpose and protocol are still being defined. Will we recognize the opportunity to enhance basin-wide recovery decisions with local knowledge, or mistake it as only a chance to rationalize and justify current practices? For the Oregon Plan to succeed, individuals and environmental, agricultural, tribal, timber, and governmental interests must continue gathering to confront these questions, and to search inwardly and outwardly for the answers.

Robert Stubblefield works as a watershed coordinator on the North Fork of the John Day River.

To order a copy of OREGON SALMON: Essays on the State of the Fish at the Turn of the Millennium (from which this essay is excerpted) call (503) 222-9091 or email info@ortrout.org