



# Flylines

SPRING 2016    April 16

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This fish was released. Now we'll try harder to keep it in the water when taking its picture.

## **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**Welcome to 2016.** Time flies when we are busy. I hope you have been tying flies. This update will give you some information about our recent activities, and take you around our organization a little bit. The BCFFF board of directors and advisors have had a busy Fall and Winter discussing Quality Angling Issues. We have put forth 8 proposals in response to overcrowding and generally a decreasing quality angling experience on the Copper River in Terrace. These proposals would mainly limit the effectiveness of the angler, and give the fish a place and period of refuge. We have produced a letter in response to the vocal Northern minority which had asked the Province to institute a kill fishery for steelhead. We do not believe any fisheries managers would support a kill fishery for steelhead, however we felt it is important to support the current ban on steelhead harvest. Now that same minority wants hatchery steelhead on the Skeena and Thompson Rivers, even after all the data shows hatcheries harm wild steelhead populations. To make our voice stronger we need your support, so become a direct member, or join one of our member clubs through our website: [bcfff.bc.ca](http://bcfff.bc.ca).

The BCFFF board contains 13 very skilled directors comprised of biologists and experienced sports fishermen. In addition we have advisors and area representatives, such as Bob Hooton and Pat Mysek on Vancouver Island, Art Lingren, Craig Orr, and Jessea Grice and Jim Culp in Northern BC. We all feel it is worthwhile wading into this political arena for the fish, ecosystems, and sustainable quality angling opportunities. As we all know, this can be difficult with many different opinions and user groups out there. The BCFFF's balanced approach, putting conservation first, makes it easy to rationalize our direction, thus minimizing internal conflict. This also helps keep our 14 member clubs apolitical and fun operating largely as social clubs. Their political fishy concerns are relayed to the BCFFF for analysis and discussion and digestion. Quality Angling Opportunities are in danger of disappearing on our rivers in BC with the onslaught of better internet knowledge, advancing gear technology in rods, quads, and jet boats, with quality waters attracting even more fishermen/women. We can catch fish far more efficiently, and the numbers of wild fish are generally in decline. On steelhead rivers we must limit the effectiveness of a sports fisherman while catch and release fishing, and refocus on quality experiences, not quantities of fish caught. This will also show that sports fishermen are serious while demanding an overhaul of commercial salmon fishing to be entirely selective thus allowing weak steelhead and salmon runs to rebuild. Commercial and First Nations fisheries should become terminal selective fisheries such as the Babine Lake Sockeye Fishery (species selective and terminal at the source = near zero bycatch).

The BCFFF is always looking for interested people to help out, and our Secretary and Treasurer positions are coming vacant after many fine years of service from the incumbents, along with a newly created communications director position.

Our communications are getting better, but we clearly have far to come. Many still wonder what the BCFFF stands for. The BCFFF aims to educate anglers about ethics, conservation issues, fish handling techniques, and etiquette. We lobby on conservation issues. On this front we have donated money in 2016 to date for Katzie Slough Restoration (Fraser River

urban wetlands), Divas on the Fly (IWFF breast cancer survivors program) , Sooke kids learn to Fish program (WCFF/ HBFFA ), Spius creek restoration (Squamish River) , Penticton FF support , and will support Seymour River Rockslide fish passage issues. See our newly minted Quality Waters paper which says it all. Lloyd produces the quarterly BCFFF *Flylines* newsletter. You should receive these through your flyclub BCFFF contact. Some of these links are destroyed as people change emails etc. So please keep the BCFFF up to date with your club liaison contact information. Individually you can all sign up to receive our monthly communication directly by clicking on this: <http://bcfff.bc.ca/index.php/list> . (If interested in avoiding the middle man). Our goal is to visit or contact each club annually at least. Most active is our BCFFF FACEBOOK page, follow us here: <https://www.facebook.com/BCFFF/>.

Our BCFFF member clubs have a lot of great things happening. In Oceanside, Bruce and the Castaways have been busy teaching many dozens of new flyfishing enthusiasts to cast, tie flies, and even entomology. The Comox club is teaching high school students with a flyfishing program led by Norm. They have also hosted the last 2 BCFFF AGM's with wonderful events at Comox Lake. The West Coast Flyfishers in Sooke have been teaching flyfishing and have received funds for a high school program. Our newest Club, the Long Beach Flyfishers has been very active in Tofino. We welcome back our Cambell River member club, and look to have an AGM soon perhaps in Victoria with the HaigBrown Flyfishing Association, my old stomping ground. The Penticton guys have their shovels in the ground with lots of great fishy projects. The Castaways /IWFF / and Comox guys are having fishouts. Let us know what your club has been up to, and it can be featured in *Flylines*.

Upcoming Spring events include the very extensive annual Michael and Youngs Spey Clave Saturday April 9: <http://www.myflyshop.com/MYspeyclv.html> . All the major rod manufacturers will be there with rods you can cast, as well as master casters doing demonstrations, and raffles and prizes galore. The BCFFF thanks Dave and the Michael and Young's gang for supporting us and SSBC with proceeds from this fine event again.

The BCFFF sold out AGM is set for April 30 weekend at Corbett Lake. We are looking forward to a meet and greet on Friday night, business meeting Saturday morning, a banquet with speakers later, education sessions, fly tying, and of course, fishing in Corbett Lake.

Until then, keep them wet if you need a photo.

Cheers Rich Ronyecz

BCFFF pres

## CONTACTS

### Board of Directors

Rich Ronyecz	President
Myles Armstead	Vice-president
Phil Rogers	Vice president
Peter Caverhill	Secretary
Jim McEwan	Treasurer
Ken Burgess	Membership/Gilly Fund
Kyle Sawayama	Past president/website
Lloyd Erickson	Newsletter
Trevor Nowak	Director
Jesse Blake	Director
Trystan Wilmot	Director
Don Grimway	Family Fishing Weekend
Art Lingren	BCFFF Historian

### Affiliated Clubs

Cariboo Chilcotin Flyfishers  
Comox Valley Fly Fishers  
Cowichan Fly Fishers  
Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Assn  
Island Waters Fly Fishers  
Kalamalka Fly Fishers  
Kamloops Fly Fishers  
Long Beach Flyfishers  
Loons Flyfishing Club  
Mid Island Castaways  
Osprey Fly Fishers  
Penticton Fly Fishers  
Totem Fly Fishers  
West Coast Fly Fishers

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Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M7

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**Newsletter editor email:** [acre5age@gmail.com](mailto:acre5age@gmail.com)

**Website:** [bcfff.bc.ca](http://bcfff.bc.ca) or [Facebook.com/BCFFF](https://www.facebook.com/BCFFF)

**Membership:** Open to all persons, and members of associated clubs. Direct memberships are \$20 payable to the Membership director.

## **LEARN TO CAST**

### **Making and Using a “Yarn” Indoor Fly Rod**

#### **(to Help with Practicing and Learning Fly Casting)**

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#### **What is this about?**

Osprey FF\BCFFF had been invited to participate in a “Chilliwack- is- All-About-Fishing” day for the public in Chilliwack on March 12/16. The event covered all aspects of fishing in an indoor venue. It included fly casting/fly tying.

I was asked to have some volunteer involvement with the fly casting side of the event. Also, I agreed to bring the yarn fly rods to the Osprey “Methods Session” the Wednesday evening following the Saturday in Chilliwack. Here is what I would cover at both venues:

1. The “yarn” practice fly rod and why it can be used to start people on the road to learn how to cast a fly. Also, for general fly casting practice indoors, where space may be limited, this can be a useful tool. (Demo casting with the “yarn/wool” rod).
2. “Yarn” practice rods can be purchased commercially (see below).
3. Using the yarn practice fly rod can be a lot of fun (especially with the shorter yarn fly rods that are easier to use in confined indoor spaces). Sometimes these are referred to as “office fly rods” (flick that line over the divider/bother your work mate).
4. “Yarn” practice rods can easily be put together with a few bits and pieces. This will be described.

#### **How the “yarn” indoor practice fly rod works?**

A short salvaged graphite fly rod tip (3-4 feet or so) with a few eyes and a short handle is the “fly rod”. A length of yarn (macramé yarn/heavier yarn) - hence the “yarn” fly rod- is the fly line. The leader is another piece of yarn (lighter in weight than the main yarn). The ability to cast a length of this line (yarn) with the correct loop shape (tight/narrow) will correspond to a much greater length of the actual fly line when actually casting with the real equipment.

In order to make the correct casting loops with the yarn will require that the caster move their casting arm for the front and the back cast with the correct timing just the same as must be done with the real fly outfit (start slow/accelerate/hard stop with slight wrist ‘dip’= same on both back and front).

This simulation of the fly line and a correct fly cast requires a fairly short length of yarn for the short rod tips and longer length for the longer rod tips. Attached to the yarn “line” is a length of lighter yarn that approximates the leader. The “leader” yarn is necessary because it eliminates the jerkiness of the casting and smooths the cast (just like a regular fly line behaves with a leader attached). The yarn line should be able to be pulled through the guides by hand on both the short and longer rod tip. This allows the yarn (line) that will be cast to be lengthened or shortened. This yarn practice outfit should be cast just with the rod hand. It doesn't allow for any shooting of line or line hauling during the casting.

To practice casting using just the rod hand, a length of the line is pulled out from the rod tip (short amount to begin/longer after short casts are able to be done correctly and comfortably).

The goal of using the yarn fly rod is to learn to make good casting loops (little distance between the fly leg and the rod leg of the loop). Once these loops are achieved with short and longer lengths of yarn “line” it is time to graduate to the real fly rod outfit. Now the challenge is to cast the good loops with the real gear just like was done with the yarn fly rod (translation from wool to real!).

### **Make your own Yarn Indoor Practice Fly Rod:**

It isn't expensive or difficult and --- it certainly doesn't need to be fancy! Here is the step-by-step “How to”:-

- Scrounge a discarded fly rod tip (about 3.5 to 4.5 feet in length) – source = your friendly local fly shop. Even a spinning rod tip can work. The scrounged tip should not be too stiff (reasonably flexible).
- The tip may have too many guides on it (or many of them or all may be missing). For a yarn rod 2 to 3 guides are all that are needed. Guides with a larger opening are preferred. You may need to fabricate some guides. These are easily made out of soft wire (Dollar store or hobby shop – package of green coated thin wire lengths). Made-up guides can simply be taped onto the tip (or you can get fancier if you like ie regular, but large, snake guides; wrapped on with thread or fine cord). It takes only minutes to bend-up (needle-nose pliers) snake guides and tip tops with this easily bent thin wire. NOTE: if you will be removing existing smaller guides from the salvaged tip – be careful that you don't cut into the graphite as the tip will break at this point when casting the yarn (I know!).
- For the handle – it only needs to be long enough to accommodate a hand (much shorter than a “real” fly rod handle). You could get fancy and install a cork handle but this isn't necessary. All you really need is to have something thicker and firm at the thick end of the tip (you can simply wrap tape or glue and wrap foam pipe insulation and secure it with zap straps)

- Find the right yarn to use as the “fly line”= macramé or equally bulky yarn (try Michaels with their sale yarns or coupons). Use about 20’ of this yarn and attach a 4’ to 6’ piece of light/bright yarn to the fly line end (by way of simple overhand knots). This creates the “fly line” with attached “leader”.
- It can be helpful to melt the end of the yarn with a lighter so that it doesn’t unravel (this can also make it easier to thread through the guides on the tip.

**Commercially Available Yarn Indoor Practice Fly Rods:**

<b>Maker</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Approx. Cost (USD)</b>	<b>Detail</b>	
Echo	Micro Practice Rod	\$38	2 piece/yarn line	US
Orvis	Practicaster	\$30	47” -2 piece/yarn line	US
Tie-N-Fly Outfitters				New Zealand
Redington	Form Game Rod	\$40	50” -2 piece/ special fly line/case	US
TFO	Bug Launcher	\$50	4’10” -3 piece	US
Royal Wulff	Fly-O	\$30	One piece – 3’/bulky yarn line	US
Leland	Leland Master Cast Practice fly Rod	\$60	2 piece/foam handle/ Yarn line	US

**How things worked out at the two venues?**

**Chilliwack**

We had no idea how this would turn out. 2000 attendees came through the door for the day. Most were young families with very young children. The yarn fly rod location was very popular with lineups of parents and young kids 10 deep during the morning. The kids had a ball trying to score through the suspended hula-hoop “targets”. Eager parents were capturing their kids with cell phones and cameras. The day was saved for me when Marie Boyer, Jim White, and Richard Mayer (all from the

Loons fly fishing club) stepped in to handle a large chunk of the kids (we figured 150 – 200 sub- 10 year old kids). Marie was the real trooper! Amazingly only one rod got broken!

My take-away: this was a worthwhile event to help at; the hula hoop targets were most important for the kids (they could not have cared less that they were doing a precursor to fly casting – “What’s fly casting?”). None of the explanatory material on casting or building the yarn rod was needed (only one parent asked about how to make a yarn fly rod).

It was fun but I suffered for 5 days after with a huge cold (too many little hands!)

### Osprey Methods Session

I took all the yarn rods to the legion and I explained their concept and utility. Thirty members and guests were present = a great turnout! I talked a bit about the construction of the yarn rod (easy; not fancy; not expensive). I did some demo casting with several of the rods and I emphasized how useful these rods are for learning to do both single and double handed casting. Casting wool slows down the process and is very visible to the caster and observers.

We then inveigled “volunteers” to come forth and try. Maybe 6 or 8 bucked up their courage and came forth. They did well. Later in the free-for-all session, more came out when there wasn’t the scrutiny of all eyes being upon them.

One rod was broken!

My take-away: it was a useful evening; all of the attendees cast better than the kids in Chilliwack; there were some exceptionally good loops on display

**Peter Caverhill**

Port Moody, BC

[pandlcaverhill@shaw.ca](mailto:pandlcaverhill@shaw.ca)

March 11, 2016

From “Osprey News”

## NOTICE

Pete Caverhill draws to our attention a series of sessions with the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC. This is our chance to find out what they are doing, and to provide feedback. The following information can also be found at:

<http://www.gofishbc.com/docs/default-source/default-document-library/public-info-sessions---poster.pdf?sfvrsn=2>



The Freshwater Fisheries Society of British Columbia invites you to attend a public information session from 7:00pm to 8:30pm (see dates and locations below).

We will be presenting an overview of the work of the Society – including regional stocking plans and how 100% of your freshwater angling licence dollars are now being invested in the Province's freshwater fisheries resource.

The presentation will include a question and answer session to get feedback on what we can do to make fishing in BC even better.

The Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC is a private non-profit organization dedicated to the enhancement and conservation of British Columbia's freshwater fish resources for the benefit of the public.

The Society invests angling licence fees into stocking programs, research, conservation, education, and improved angler access to fishing areas.

To learn more, visit: [www.gofishbc.com](http://www.gofishbc.com)

We hope you will have the opportunity to attend one of these events.

**Please RSVP to [Marla.Zarelli@gofishbc.com](mailto:Marla.Zarelli@gofishbc.com) if you are able to attend.**

DATE	LOCATION
<b>April 13, 2016</b>	Club Room at the Coast Fraser Inn, 285 Donald Road, <b>WILLIAMS LAKE</b>
<b>April 14, 2016</b>	UNBC Agora Lecture Theatre, 3333 University Way, <b>PRINCE GEORGE</b>  <a href="http://www.unbc.ca/about-unbc/campus-maps">http://www.unbc.ca/about-unbc/campus-maps</a>
<b>April 18, 2016</b>	Northwest Community College, Terrace Campus, Room 113, Spruce Building, 5331 McConnell Ave., <b>TERRACE</b>  <a href="https://www.nwcc.bc.ca/campus/terrace-campus">https://www.nwcc.bc.ca/campus/terrace-campus</a>
<b>April 21, 2016</b>	Best Western Baker Street, Osprey Room, 153 Baker Street, <b>NELSON</b>
<b>April 22, 2016</b>	Van Horne Room at the Prestige Rocky Mountain Resort & Conference Centre, 209 Van Horne ST S, <b>CRANBROOK</b>
<b>May 3, 2016</b>	<b>Kelowna and District Fish &amp; Game Club, 4041 Casorso RD, KELOWNA</b>
<b>May 4, 2016</b>	Ida Room at the Coast Kamloops Hotel & Conference Centre, 1250 Rogers Way, <b>KAMLOOPS</b>
<b>May 10, 2016</b>	Main Hall at the Royal Canadian Legion, 1825 Comox Ave., <b>COMOX</b>

## JOKE

“Do you really believe your husband when he tells you he goes fishing every weekend?” asks Mary’s best friend Bonnie.

“Why shouldn’t I?” responds Bonnie.

“Well, maybe he is having an affair” comments Mary.

“No way” laughs Bonnie, “He never brings home any fish!”

## CONSERVATION

The following **letter** was sent to the Minister of Forest, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations. Peter Caverhill has been representing BCFFF at meetings of the Provincial Angling Advisory Team and has expressed concerns about its effectiveness. This is an example of work your executive is doing for BCFFF.



### BC Federation of Fly Fishers

PO Box 41023

RPO Woodgrove

Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M7

March 28, 2016

### Honorable Steve Thomson

Minister of Forests, Lands, and Natural Resource Operations

PO BOX 9049 STN PROV GOVT

Victoria, BC

Dear Minister Thomson:

#### Re: **Provincial Angling Advisory Team (PAAT) – Concerns about Effectiveness**

For the past several decades, the BCFFF has participated on a number of provincially-run advisory “teams” designed to deal with all aspects of Provincial fisheries management. Our role has been to provide constructive discussion around provincial management aspects related to freshwater angling (ie angling regulations and other fisheries management aspects such as steelhead/ steelhead angling). This has been in concert with other concerned stakeholders on the “team”. In essence we have been a “Sounding Board” for the province. We have also been able to identify fisheries management areas that are of great concern to our membership.

The most recent iteration of the advisory process is the PAAT run by your ministry. There are two PAAT meetings each year. Over the past several years, we and other stakeholders on the team have identified a number of fisheries management concerns that we believe are extremely urgent. These concerns are given a moment or two within the agenda of the spring or fall PAAT meeting agendas. Unfortunately, with each meeting our concerns keep reappearing but without any provincial commitment to effectively deal with them. We are being ground down with a process that appears to be aimed at process for the sake of process. We participate as volunteers with no recompense for our time spent. It is extremely frustrating! It must change!

Most of the concerns that arise in the PAAT meetings have to do with wild steelhead and angling for wild steelhead. These steelhead stocks are iconic – part of our wild heritage! BC has been renowned worldwide for our ability to offer incredible steelhead angling under quality angling conditions. This ability is now at serious risk for a variety of reasons. Here are a few of these reasons:

- The future of wild steelhead stocks and wild steelhead angling in BC is under threat on many fronts (non-selective net fisheries, climate change, ocean conditions, habitat loss, and angling). We must be able to interact more effectively with your staff, and the other stakeholders, to work together to address ways that we can tread more lightly on our iconic and economically important wild steelhead.
- Angling guide licensing on classified and non-classified steelhead waters is out of control and threatens the ability to manage for uncrowded, quality conditions for all (but especially residents of this province). We need to look seriously at how angling guide data and angling guide management is handled in light of what we perceive to be serious trends.

The PAAT process must change to spend more effective discussion on wild steelhead/wild steelhead angling. In our view, this means more time spent between the province and stakeholders, allocated to discussing these issues, proposing solutions, and putting the solutions in place. As long-serving participants on the PAAT “Team” we must be able to see more visible actions arising from these enhanced discussions.

BCFFF would welcome, and appreciate, the opportunity to meet with you, and perhaps the other stakeholders, to discuss our concerns directly.

Thank you for considering our concerns about this consultation process.

Respectfully,

Richard Ronyecz

President, BCFFF

Peter Caverhill

Secretary, BCFFF and BCFFF representative on PAAT

Cc BCFFF Board; Tom Ethier, ADM, Resource Stewardship Division, FLNRO; Dan Peterson, Director of F&W, FLNRO; Mike Ramsay, Manager of Fisheries, FLNRO

## A Clear and Present Danger: Zebra mussels.

Phil Rogers wrote (April 2015):

“Please watch the attached video on the Mussel Threat that could easily destroy all our rivers and lakes. It is not only boats that come in from the US Border and adjoining lakes like Osoyoos Lake, but also the boats that come in from Alberta. If there ever was a reason to be an isolationist this is it. This invasive threat could wipeout all of our salmon, steelhead and trout systems in very short order. The BCFFF should support organizations, like Oasis, that are trying to pressure the provincial government into upgrading the fight against this threat before it's too late. The provincial government's commitment in providing three mobile testing teams falls extremely short of being an anywhere near effective response to this potentially disastrous issue. I would like to see this issue brought up at the AGM and a BCFFF Position Statement if there is a consensus amongst our membership.”

The short film "MUSSEL THREAT" is a MUST SEE for anyone who cares about our beloved freshwater lakes and rivers. This film illustrates just how dangerous invasive mussels are and is a rallying cry for the protection of BC's freshwater. Okanagan filmmaker Brynne Morrice has done an amazing job on this movie.

<http://vimeo.com/125057151>

**WATCH and SHARE. Lets help this film go viral.**

Information on Oasis can be found at: [www.oasis.ca](http://www.oasis.ca) or <https://www.facebook.com/invasivespeciessociety>

### Furthermore:

Minutes of the May 4, 2014 meeting of PAAT show that this issue of invasive mussels was considered. There was a recap of legislative changes related to invasive species; focus on zebra, quagga and Conrad's false mussels. Zebra/quagga characteristics include: they attach to solid surfaces, they have free swimming larvae, and adults can be out of water for up to 30 days and survive. They are filter feeders, tiny, and can travel via boats and contaminated equipment. Some negative consequences include decrease in pelagic fish because of loss of plankton, accumulation of toxic algae, and cause waterfowl die off. Also, they can cause blue green algal blooms. There is a proposal to develop an aquatic invasive species regulation (AIS) under Fisheries Act (in the "hopper"). There are no federal resources, so it will fall on provinces to resource.

Provincial prevention procedures developed for boat inspection stations – low and high risk water crafts can be identified through a decision matrix (e.g. more than 30 days out of water represents low risk). The Canada Border Service Agency does not have the authority to stop and hold boats at the border (voluntary currently); the AIS regulation will provide the authority. BC does have the authority once the vessel is in the province.

You can find out much more on zebra and quagga mussels online at

[www.dontmoveamussel.ca](http://www.dontmoveamussel.ca)

A Winnipeg contact informs me that Zebra mussels have invaded Lake Winnipeg. He says government is very worried about their impact. But once in place, **nothing** can be done to control them!

## DIVAS ON THE FLY

### Introduction

As the fly rod propels the line onto the waters of the flat calm Westwood Lake, anticipation takes hold of the Divas. Only short months ago, fly fishing was the last thing on the mind of the breast cancer survivors! Their focus was on today and surviving the challenges they would face over the coming months from treatment for the life-threatening disease. Chemotherapy, radiation and for some, surgery was fresh on their minds. Nowhere were there any thoughts of a beautiful sunny day, on a quiet lake in search of the elusive rainbow trout they had been learning to stalk over the weekend.

On the weekends of early June, the annual Divas on the Fly Retreat takes place at Bethlehem Retreat Centre, in Nanaimo British Columbia. DOTF is a leisure program which uses fly fishing to enhance the quality of life of breast cancer survivors. To date, fifty ladies have attended the weekend retreat to learn the sport of fly fishing. Fly fishing as a leisure activity for breast cancer has many potential benefits. Enhancing the health and well being of survivors is of paramount importance to the breast cancer community. Furthermore, leisure activities become a focus for survivors after treatment and provide an opportunity to improve their quality of life. Mortality rates of women diagnosed with breast cancer have declined since the 1990's, however the Canadian Cancer Society estimated that 22,400 women would be diagnosed with breast cancer in 2008 and 5,300 will die from the disease\*\*.



The participants have learned the fundamentals of fly casting and fly tying, entomology, knot-tying and equipment basics - but most importantly, participants have spent time on the water practicing catch-and-release fishing. The breast cancer thrivers have come from Vancouver Island and the Lower Mainland communities including Powell River, Nanaimo, Maple Ridge, Vancouver and Courtenay. Volunteers from the Island Waters Fly Fishers and the Haig Brown Fly Fishers have worked as instructors and Gillies during the weekend Retreat.

The Divas on the Fly Retreat has been supported by the BC Federation of Fly Fishers, Island Waters Fly Fishing Association, Roche Pharmaceutical, Superfly, Trout Unlimited Canada, Gone Fishin', Ellison Lake Trout Ranch, Wholesale Sports Outdoor Outfitters, Cabela's and Sage Canada.

The 2016 Divas on the Fly Retreat is scheduled for June 3 – 5 at the Bethlehem Retreat Centre in Nanaimo. For further information, contact Wayne Pealo, Director, Island Waters Fly Fishers, [pealo@shaw.ca](mailto:pealo@shaw.ca)

## What Have We Learned Since 2009 With Divas on the Fly?

In the Fall of 2015, Wayne Pealo, Director of DOTF, implemented a survey to explore if there was interest for a women's fly fishing club on Vancouver Island. The survey was sent out to past DOTF participants and volunteers. The following information was identified through the research:

- 56% of respondents believed there is a need for a women's fly fishing club on Vancouver Island. Another 31% were unsure.
- 40% of respondents would participate in a women's fly fishing club, while another 20% were unsure.
- The best days for participating in a women's fly fishing club were Wed/Thur, followed by Mon/Tue and Sat/Sun.
- 57% of respondents were interested in more fly fishing opportunities.
- 28% of respondents have participated in fly fishing since attending the Retreat.
- 81% of respondents were interested in fly fishing in lakes and rivers, 54% were interested in fly casting, while another 45% were interested in fly tying and fly fishing education.
- There is a new women's Fly Fishing Club in Comox...*BROADS WITH RODS*. The group has just started and is working with the Comox Valley Fly Fishers

The information collected through the survey suggests there may not be a need for another women's fly fishing club on Vancouver Island but there are a variety of opportunities for involving more women in fly fishing activities on the Island.

For more information about the project, contact Wayne Pealo, Director at [www.dotfiwff.weebly.com](http://www.dotfiwff.weebly.com) or email [pealo@shaw.ca](mailto:pealo@shaw.ca).

\*\*Canadian Cancer Society/National Cancer Institute of Canada (2008). *Canadian Cancer Statistics*, Toronto, Canada

## NAME THAT FISH



Lake char from Great Bear Lake. Oops. So much for keeping the fish **wet**!

## The Quality Angling Experience Concept



April 2016 Trystan Willmot

### Introduction and Objectives

The British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers (BCFFF) completed an original document titled *Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters in British Columbia* in 2003. This previous document outlined the important resource that occurs in British Columbia with regard to Quality Angling and Quality Waters. The premise of the document introduced key characteristics to help define the attributes of the resource and discussed general management implications. The following represents an update to the original paper, builds upon the viewpoints that were introduced and develops the concept of Quality Angling Experiences in the context of current and future resource management options.

The BCFFF believes that it is essential to describe and clarify the attributes that define and shape Quality Angling Experiences (QAEs). An essential aspect of maintaining the integrity of British Columbia's Quality Waters and the concept of QAEs is the recognition and management of current and impending threats that have the potential to erode the inherent values of the quality angling resource. By describing the various elements that are associated with QAEs, our aim is to identify these threats and develop measures to ensure the protection of a very important resource in perpetuity.

### **Quality Angling and Quality Waters – British Columbia's Unique Resource**

Anglers in BC are extremely fortunate to have direct access to a diverse collection of rivers, lakes, estuaries and beaches offering angling opportunities for numerous species of fish. The opportunities are generally unlimited and covered under the nominal cost of an annual fishing licence. In other parts of the world, especially in Europe and Great Britain, the majority of waters are privately owned. Fly-fishing is generally limited to "put and take" fisheries, where an angler purchases a day ticket, which entitles the angler to a bag limit of stocked (hatchery raised) fish. The cost to fish on a stocked lake for a day is considerably more than the cost of an annual licence in BC. Opportunities for more unique angling experiences for wild fish in remote settings (for example the Scottish Atlantic salmon rivers) are generally cost prohibitive for the average angler. While this scenario limits the number of anglers on any given managed reach of river, which maintains the quality of the angling experience, it comes at a significant monetary cost to the angler. Similar examples of unique, generally cost-prohibitive angling experiences occur in places such as Norway, on the Atlantic Salmon Rivers, or on the Kamchatka Peninsula steelhead rivers in Russia.

There is an interesting conundrum that is created by our unique range of opportunity and immediate "availability to all" angling resource in British Columbia. While anglers appreciate having the luxury of almost unlimited access at a very low cost, crowding is becoming a problem, which generally decreases the quality of an angling experience. While an angler may yearn for an uncrowded fishing experience akin to a beat on a Scottish river, would that same angler be willing to give up the unlimited range of accessibility and low cost of angling in order to achieve that experience? Ultimately, QAEs can be maintained by controlling angler numbers, which in the case of the examples provided in other countries, is achieved through monetary cost. This is a very effective tool, but is not applicable to the BC system. The challenge, in light of the underlying BC angling premise of unlimited access (generally speaking) and low cost of angling, is to maintain the low costs and range of access



while still allowing for QAEs.

### **The Quality Angling Experience – Elusive Concept or Tangible Goal?**

It is important to try to understand what is meant by a Quality Angling Experience, if we are to devise methods to protect and promote quality angling opportunities on quality waters. An individual angler may have a clear

personal ideology about what constitutes a QAE, which is likely going to differ from another angler's perspective. Some anglers may place more of an importance on the numbers of fish caught in any given angling session, where-as another angler may put more emphasis on the surrounding environment (perhaps a wilderness setting) when defining what a QAE entails. An angler's overall state of well-being may be intertwined with specific angling experiences, which highlights the difficulty in trying to isolate what actually constitutes a QAE.

There are too many variables to pinpoint the precise definition of a QAE, and it would best be viewed as more of a concept or general ideology as opposed to a tangible, easily definable feature. **The BCFFF takes the stance that the concept of a QAE should lean heavily towards conservation and using angling techniques that help to reduce the impacts on a resource that is facing numerous challenges, especially when considering a species such as steelhead.** These challenges include (but are not limited to) human-induced climate change, unfavourable ocean survival and destruction of freshwater rearing habitat. Increased angler efficiency, in terms of accessibility, more effective fishing equipment/techniques and the availability of information (i.e. Internet resources) is stacking the odds in favour of the angler and increasing the impacts on a natural resource at a time when the resource is dwindling. Considering the current and predicted future uncertainty in the viability of species such as wild steelhead, the BCFFF believes that resource management should always err on the conservative side (Precautionary Principle).

The BCFFF provides the following main attributes, which we feel help to provide clarity for what the QAE concept should consist of:



- Uncrowded waters, which is a difficult concept to define in itself. We believe that it means that a water is shared by an optimal number of anglers who share an ethic that seeks to protect and conserve the fish and fishery. Different types of water will be associated with varying sensitivities to crowding. Rivers tend to be more sensitive in this regard, where-as lakes generally have a greater capacity;
- Aesthetically pleasing surroundings, which generally refers to the depth and range of natural vistas, lack of development and the degree of "wilderness or wilderness-like appeal";
- Challenging conditions, where angling experience is enhanced through the combination of skill and knowledge of the fish and its environment. The QAE concept should focus less on numbers of fish caught and more on the reward of catching fish with challenging angling methods. Being able to learn from an angling experience should be an important factor in any QAE. If catching fish becomes too easy through the usage of techniques that put the advantage heavily in the angler's favour, a conservation issue can often result and opportunities for learning and fulfillment are decreased ;
- Water quality and fish habitat conditions that are conducive for a sustainable, healthy fish population;
- A reasonable supply of challenging fish to catch, such as unique runs of summer-run steelhead. The opportunity to take (kill) fish must never be factored into what constitutes a QAE; and

- Fly-fishing opportunity – some waters are uniquely suited to catching fish by fly fishing because of the physical nature of the water or the behaviour of the fish species present, which offers unique angling experiences.

### Threats to the QAE Concept

The BCFFF concept of a QAE and the values attributed to the concept face numerous threats. Perhaps the most significant threat comes from the ideology/behaviour of individual anglers. To try to change an angler's way of thinking and encourage the usage of techniques that would result in less fish caught is a very difficult undertaking. The emphasis, however, must be on conservation and decreasing our collective impact on the resource. This will ultimately help to increase the longevity of opportunities to fish for species such as wild steelhead.

Individual angler etiquette can also have negative implications with regard to QAEs, with specific regard to overcrowding and allowing equal opportunities for access to a particular fishing area. Proper angler etiquette can help decrease the frustration that is often attributed to heavy fishing pressure.

An increase in the use of boats (especially jet boats) and helicopters is allowing for increased access to areas that may once have been accessible to people willing to put in the time and effort to access by more traditional means (e.g. hiking).



Internet resources are providing quick and easy reference guides allowing for increased access to previously less well known fishing areas. This increase in access puts obvious limitations on what may once have been QAEs in previously uncrowded areas.

Guiding operations tend to exacerbate problems associated with overcrowding, especially on non-classified waters where guiding constraints are currently very minimal. The main driving factor behind any guide's business is the ability (sometimes at any cost) to ensure the clients catch fish. This puts pressure on the

resource and can limit the availability of both fish and fishing areas for the wider angling community.

### The QAE Concept as a Conservation Tool and Recommended Measures to Promote and Protect the QAE Concept

The BCFFF constitution states that "... the Federation will take actions to safeguard or enhance the interests of fish and preserve, maintain and develop angling opportunities for BC." Now that we have an idea of the QAE concept and the attributes that the BCFFF considers as being appropriate when defining the concept, there is the opportunity to further develop the concept as a conservation tool, or at least as a principle for directing positive action. The concept can also be used to maintain and develop angling opportunities in a responsible manner that reflects the intent of the QAE concept. The QAE concept, therefore, complies with the BCFFF

constitution. The following measures are provided as potential options that would help to promote and protect the QAE concept:

#### *Limiting the Effectiveness of All Anglers (including fly-fishers)*

In order to address one of the main threats to the QAE concept and protect the integrity of quality waters, individual anglers need to change their angling ideology. This may seem to be an impossible task, but education, ideally through inclusion in regulation, or at least through guidelines included in regulations synopses, would help explain the concept. Some anglers are already open to the idea and are practicing fishing techniques that limit the impact on the resource. Movements such as the “Keep em Wet” campaign are helping to underscore the importance of limiting angling impact on wild steelhead through the proper handling of fish and suggesting self-imposed catch limits.

#### *Modifying Resource Management Regulations Associated with Harvest Opportunities*

Regulatory control associated with harvest limits and opportunities should be considered, as harvest incentives generally result in overcrowding. At the very least, enforcement should be increased for harvest fisheries, to ensure that illegal activities such as snagging and/or flossing are addressed. More significant penalties for



infractions should also be implemented. This would help decrease the number of anglers present by discouraging the “anglers” intent on fishing illegally, which would increase the overall quality of the angling experience for others. Increased enforcement would also, of course, help decrease the impacts on the fish. Fly-fishing-only regulations may be considered as appropriate conservation tools under specific circumstances, as angling opportunities/effort can be maintained while decreasing the pressure on the resource (i.e. reducing the number of fish caught). Methods that are extremely effective should be discouraged, or catch and release limits imposed to decrease the impacts on the fish.

#### *Improving Angler Etiquette*

Anglers also need to become more aware of proper angler etiquette, which again should be addressed through appropriate education, regulation changes and/or building on applicable guidelines included in regulations synopses. Angling practices that involve claiming a particular run or pool for an extended length of time need to change. Simple concepts such as rotating through a pool and not “stepping in” below an angler can go a long way in maintaining a QAE, especially on waters subject to heavy fishing pressure.

#### *Ensuring All User-Groups Have an Equal Say in the Management of the Resource*

Many anglers (both resident and non-resident) that are attracted to BC’s quality angling experiences are fly-fishers. These anglers contribute substantially to the provincial economy. It could be argued that fly fishers generally seek and demand QAEs; therefore, fly fishers must be given adequate consideration in the management of the fishery resource.

#### *Collecting and Maintaining Appropriate Resource-use Data*

In order to make informed decisions about the fishery resource and to help maintain the concept of a QAE, appropriate data needs to be collected and made available to resource managers. By knowing the various attributes of anglers (e.g. total numbers, place of origin, length of stay for visiting anglers and total guiding activity), appropriate management decisions can be formulated. The data would be particularly useful in dealing

with issues such as overcrowding and fishing effort, especially on waters where there is a conservation concern.

#### *Improving the Management of Guiding Activity*

Guiding activity should be more carefully managed, especially on non-classified waters. Limitations and constraints on guide licences should not be focused purely on Classified Waters. This would help to maintain QAEs for resident anglers and help to address overcrowding concerns.

#### *Implementing Improved Controls on Boat Use*

Limiting boat use (especially jet boats) and helicopter access through regulatory changes would help to prevent the erosion of QAEs by reducing overcrowding and also by limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of associated angling methods. This would help conserve the resource for the enjoyment of everybody (level the playing field). Power boat bans, implementing boat-free areas, eliminating fishing from boats and using horsepower restrictions (through regulation) are all measures that could be used more frequently to address the threat posed by a relatively recent increase in boat use.

#### *Limiting Angler Access*

Limiting access is an effective measure in maintaining the QAE concept, as evidenced by the quality of angling experiences in countries such as Norway, Russia (e.g. Kamchatka) and Scotland. Private ownership is the primary factor in maintaining QAEs in these areas, which does not apply to the BC fishery resource as a means to limit angler access. While the angling community may be reluctant to admit that the number of participants in certain fisheries needs to be limited, to preserve the QAE concept, it is an option worth considering. The proper management of current initiatives that help preserve QAEs on quality waters (e.g. through the Classified Waters system) is an important aspect to take into account. The management of Classified Waters should be closely monitored and updated, as necessary, to ensure that proper goals and objectives are being met. Perhaps the Classified Waters concept could be expanded to include additional waters and be modified to decrease angler numbers, where applicable.

#### *Increasing the Revenue Available for Resource Management*

Sacrifices may need to be accepted (i.e. in terms of higher costs to the angler) in order to be able to fish, especially on Classified Waters, to meet the management objectives associated with any regulatory changes. Ultimately, if angler licence revenue is directed back into the resource, be it through increased enforcement, habitat enhancement or angler education, increased costs should be considered as a viable management measure if we are to maintain the current range and value of angling experiences.

### **Summary**

British Columbia provides very unique and diverse angling opportunities that are readily accessible at a very minimal cost. It is our goal that the QAE concept, which includes the attributes considered most important by the BCFFF, can be used as a conservation tool in support of forward thinking guidelines that endeavour to protect both the resource and intrinsic angling values. The continued recognition of threats to the QAE concept and further discussion into appropriate management measures will help to ensure the preservation of quality angling on quality waters in perpetuity.

## DANCING INSIGHT

Springtime chironomid fishing in lakes is one of those special fishing occasions that the serious fly fisherman never misses. It is a time when the stars align, and a series of events occur that lead to more connections with trout. I have soooo much to learn about it. But I have learned a few tricks. One of those tricks I call “envisioning”.

In the springtime, as days grow longer and sky grows brighter, our lakes begin to warm up. In the muddy lake bottoms insect life begins to stir. Chironomid larvae come to the surface of the mud and wiggle out, going for short visits into the water column. I’m not sure why, perhaps they are coming up for a breath of fresh air so to speak, after spending months in the anoxic muds.. That’s why these larvae look red, because of their adaptation to low oxygen levels. And I don’t know when they come out, perhaps all day or any time of day. I imagine many come out at the same time, wriggling free into the water column. And I imagine the trout come to investigate what the dancing is all about. They find a whole bunch of food in that narrow water layer just above the bottom wriggling and wriggling and attracting all sorts of attention. It’s no mere coincidence that a fly fisherman comes along and sinks a hook down to that bottom layer. And no coincidence the hook is dressed to appear like one of the dancing chironomids



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But it is a delightful coincidence when a fish finds the hook and tries to eat it! Then a dance of another kind begins.

I must admit that my success at chironomid fishing improved once I was able to envision these events. Perhaps part of that success was realizing that these stiff little imitations actually work. Perhaps the clearer vision helped me deliver the flies into the zone near the bottom. Adding a bead to the fly helps it sink more quickly. And adding a small weight, or even a small swivel to the leader helps get that leader down as well.

The fun begins when the events come together. Join the dance.