

# Flyline

A Publication of the Flyfisher's Club of Oregon

FOUNDED 1961

## **State of the Deschutes Round table Discussion with Deschutes River Alliance, Trout Unlimited and others**

September 12, 2017

Panel Discussion – State of the Deschutes River

Join us September 12th for a lively and informative discussion on the state of the Deschutes River. We have assembled a panel of several non-profits, including Native Fish Society, Trout Unlimited, Deschutes River Alliance, and more, who are working to protect this beloved river.

Come hear about the history of their conservation efforts, and their different perspectives about the challenges the river faces, and the remedies they support. This should be an enlightening conversation well worth making time for. We hope to see you at the meeting next month.



## *President's Message*

With Labor Day being just around the corner I am starting to day dream about fall fishing. Our next meeting should be an interesting and well attended meeting with a panel discussion on the state of the Deschutes River. Watch for more information in the newsletter and our facebook page.

We are adding some visual excitement to our wet fly hour with slides from members. Please send me recent photos of fish, club events or just beautiful outdoor shots that you would like to share. Please send to [teribeatty@windermere.com](mailto:teribeatty@windermere.com). I am also looking for tyers for Sept, Oct & Nov, please let me know if you are available.

Congratulations to Rick Pay who has done a great job at adding new members. Our membership is on the rise and we appreciate not only Rick's efforts, but thank those of you that have introduced these new members to our club. Keep up the good work.

My best to you,  
Teri



## Member Matters

New member Adrienne Karecki joined in July and attended the August Picnic at the Westmoreland Casting Ponds. Adrienne and her family enjoy camping and, of course, fly fishing! Membership chair Rick Pay has updated our membership rolls and we have 184 paid/honorary/or lifetime members. There are still 12 members who have not renewed for 2017 and have not indicated whether or not they will remain active members. If you think you might be one of these members, contact Rick Pay [payclan@earthlink.net](mailto:payclan@earthlink.net) and he will let you know. We want you back to share in our great Club! Thanks!

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### Foundation Receives Notes of Thanks

The [Multnomah County Library Foundation](#) and [Oregon State University](#) sent letters of thanks to our Flyfisher Foundation for the annual gifts the Foundation was able to continue providing, thanks to your generous bidding at the annual auction. The Library Foundation will use the \$4,000 gift to continue development of the C. Edwin Francis book collection and Flyfisher Foundation Archive. The \$5,000 gift to Oregon State supports the Tom McAllister Flyfisher's Club of Oregon Graduate Scholarship Fund. Thanks for your support!

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### August Picnic Had Fun for All

The weather was perfect, the members were jovial, and the competition was fierce (NOT!) at the Annual FCO Picnic at the Westmoreland Casting Ponds. A huge shout out to our fly shop supporters, Joel LaFollette and Nick from Royal Treatment Fly Fishing and Jack Hagan and son, Finn, from Northwest Fly Fishing Outfitters! Joel and Nick tested our "hit the river running" skills with their hilarious Wader-Up Challenge. Jack humbled many of us with his distance and accuracy competition. Great practice for upcoming bonefishing trips! Our esteemed President, Teri Beatty, demonstrated her casting and wading prowess by taking first place in both competitions! There were many sweet prizes for the winners and runners up of our competitions, all generously donated by Northwest Fly Fishing Outfitters, Royal Treatment Fly Fishing, and our leading FCO couple, Teri and Ross Beatty.



And did we mention the dinner? It was fabulous picnic fare! BBQ meats, refreshing salads, tasty dessert! A huge thank you to Teri and Ross for their efforts to make this year's picnic a tremendous success!



[More picnic photos](#)

## Literary Angler

*Editor's Note: FCO Board Member Jim Hillas sent this story back in the spring and I thought I would hold on to it to whet your appetite for late fall steelheading. It's been a tough season with the heat, the smoke and the dismal fish counts. I hope Jim's story takes you back (for some it will be WAY back) to that first tug and run. It sure did for me. LKH*

### **First Kiss on the JD** by Jim Hillas

I am sending a few belated pics from my steelheading trip on the John Day last November. It marked my first (and second and third) steelhead on the fly so I have very good memories of this outing. Six prior trips on the Lower Deschutes, the Trask, the Nehalem, and the Clackamas had yielded nothing but a few bumps and blown opportunities.

I went with fellow FCO member Rick Pay and two other anglers on the Rattray Ranch property near Condon. We fished with guides Corey Koff and Martin Cizek of Marty and Mia Sheppard's Little Creek Outfitters. This stretch of the John Day was recently acquired by Western Rivers Conservancy (a recipient of FFO auction funds) and is soon to be transferred to the Bureau of Land Management, so it's anyone's guess how much longer it will be available for private trips.

Our first day on the water was November 17. We loaded ourselves and our gear into the guides' pickup trucks well before dawn and ground our way down a rough gravel road for about 45 minutes before reaching the river near Thirty Mile Creek. Frost coated the vegetation in silver and gray, and a mist hung over the river. Rick and I were paired up with Corey for the first day. After rigging up my 13'6" Spey rod, I stepped in at the top of our first run (the Equipment hole) and started swinging a blue and black wet fly - I believe it was a Hohbo spey. The sun slowly emerged over the canyon wall and began to dissipate the mist. I reached the (not very far) extent of my casting comfort zone and began to step down the run. Corey patiently offered suggestions for improving my casts and reminded me to mend my line. Occasionally, mind and body worked together to produce acceptable, even graceful casts, less so after Corey headed downstream to check in with Rick and bad habits reasserted themselves.

The John Day is stunningly beautiful, and I found myself easily distracted from the task at hand by birds in the air and the play of light on the rugged canyon walls. But the current speed and water looked great, and I was starting to feel like this might be my lucky day. I was well toward the bottom of my run, nearing the end of the swing when I first felt a bump. Barely suppressing my "trout strike" reflex, I dropped the loop of line I was holding in my rod hand and held my breath. Line slowly started to slide through the guides until I was tight on the reel. I lifted my rod tip and felt the fish shake its head, then begin to run. Corey heard the reel scream and began heading upstream as I played the fish. A few heart pounding moments later after some exciting runs and splashy jumps, the fish was tailed and I was posing for a picture with my first steelhead caught on a fly. Maybe 5 or 6 pounds, it was relatively modest compared to winter-run monsters, but it sure looked good to me. My hands were still shaking when I started casting again.

My second fish came perhaps 45 minutes later, as I re-stepped down the same run. The fish took the same fly, but much earlier in the swing and it ran hot. I was somewhat surprised to see that it was smaller than the first. Later that morning, we headed upstream to meet up with Martin and the other two anglers. The Butt Crack run is long enough to accommodate four lines, and we had some time before lunch, so Corey put me into the water at the top of a slower pool.

A dozen or so casts in, and I was fortunate to hook and land my third fish of the day. Three steelhead in one morning is one of the better fishing days I could ask for, and I know it is not my new normal. But if a steelhead is the "fish of a thousand casts" then by my count, I still have a few more coming.



## Conservation Corner

*Editor's Note: Editor's Note: You may have seen the dismal reports on this year's steelhead returns on the Columbia. Our own Dave Moskowitz provides the nitty gritty in his 3rd report from the Conservation Angler on the 2017 returns as of the end of August. The silver lining is that there has been slight improvement since his last report. However, the low numbers speak for themselves. If you are out on the river fishing, please take care to give them a quick release and keep 'em wet. LKH*

### **Columbia - Snake River Wild Steelhead Report No. 3**

The Conservation Angler is providing you with an updated status report on the 2017 Columbia River wild summer steelhead crisis.

Pre-Season Forecasting:

Annually, managers analyze adult returns and out-migration data to provide a pre-season run forecast for salmon and steelhead. The 2017 pre-season forecast for the three steelhead run components issued on March 24, 2017 was as follows:

Columbia Summer Steelhead – 2017 Pre-season Forecast (March 24, 2017)

**Early summers** (Skamania run) = 11,300 total, with only 4,100 wild fish.

**A-run summer steelhead** = 112,100 total, with only 33,000 wild fish

**B-run summer steelhead** = 7,300 total, with only 1,100 wild fish

#### **Actual 2017 Run Size to-date: Bonneville Dam**

Here is a snapshot of things so far in 2017 from July 1 to August 31

- The early run "Skamania" steelhead totaled fewer than 4,000 adults which is the lowest count since 1970).
- 71,472 total upriver summer steelhead have passed Bonneville Dam. This is a small but welcome uptick!
- In 2016, 97,756 adult steelhead had passed Bonneville by 8/31.
- In 2001, 444,053 steelhead had passed Bonneville by this date!
- The 2017 total is only 30.8% of the most recent 10-yr average (2007-16).
- 24,877 wild summer steelhead have passed over Bonneville Dam.
  - In 2016, 30,773 wild steelhead had passed Bonneville by this date.
  - In 2001, 75,555 wild steelhead had passed Bonneville Dam by this date!
- The 2017 wild steelhead return is only 29.4% of the most recent ten-year average for wild steelhead returns past Bonneville.
- Wild steelhead comprise 34.8% of the total steelhead past Bonneville Dam.

#### **Actual 2017 Run Size to-date: The Dalles Dam**

Here is a snapshot of things so far in 2017 from July 1 to August 31

- 17,082 total summer steelhead have passed The Dalles Dam.
- In 2016, 31,406 adult steelhead had passed by 8/31, and in 2001, 196,360 steelhead had passed The Dalles Dam by this date!
- The 2017 total is only 15.1% of the most recent 10-yr average (2007-16).
- Only 7,339 wild summer steelhead have passed over The Dalles Dam.
  - In 2016, 12,806 wild steelhead had passed The Dalles by this date.
  - In 2001, 70,548 wild steelhead had passed The Dalles Dam by this date!
- The 2017 wild steelhead return is only 15.9% of the most recent ten-year average for wild steelhead returns past The Dalles.
- Wild steelhead comprise 43% of the total steelhead past The Dalles.

### **Actual 2017 Run Size to-date: Lower Granite Dam**

Here is a snapshot of things so far in 2017 from July 1 to August 31

- 719 total summer steelhead have passed Lower Granite Dam.
- In 2016, 5,493 adult steelhead had passed by 8/31, and in 2001, 18,087 steelhead had passed Lower Granite Dam by this date.
- The 2017 total is only 6.3% of the most recent 10-yr average (2007-16).
- Only 448 wild summer steelhead have passed over Lower Granite Dam.
- In 2016, 2,288 wild steelhead passed Lower Granite Dam by this date.
- In 2001, 6,680 wild steelhead had passed Lower Granite Dam by this date.
- The 2017 wild steelhead return is only 9.8% of the most recent ten-year average for wild steelhead returns past Lower Granite Dam.
- Wild steelhead comprise 62% of the total steelhead past Lower Granite.

### **Notes:**

1. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) to the US v. Oregon Court Settlement downgraded their pre-season forecast on August 14, reducing the original forecast for A-run summer steelhead from 112,100 fish to 54,000 fish (hatchery and wild combined).
2. The current passage number is 63.8% of the original forecast.
3. High water temperatures at the Bonneville Dam prevented steelhead sampling research for the first ten days of August, hampering efforts to count B-run steelhead.
4. The B-run steelhead forecast has not been updated by TAC.
5. Idaho, Washington and Oregon have reduced the bag limit for hatchery steelhead to ensure enough hatchery steelhead return to hatcheries, while no specific measures have been taken to ensure that wild steelhead return to spawn in their home rivers.

### **Protecting ESA-Listed Steelhead:**

Fishery managers are trying to manage non-tribal commercial and recreational fisheries so that impacts on ESA-listed wild A-run and wild B-run steelhead do not exceed 2%. To put that percentage in real numbers, that means that sport and non-tribal commercial fisheries must not result in more than 660 wild A-run summer steelhead mortalities nor more than 22 wild B-run summer steelhead mortalities between the mouth of the Columbia and the confluence of the Snake River.

*The Conservation Angler continues to believe that the current slate of time and area closures, plus the creel and monitoring efforts in place are insufficient to avoid exceeding the ESA-impacts, let alone providing enough wild steelhead escapement to spawn in their natal rivers and streams.*

- Key Questions Remaining Unanswered:**
1. What measures are being taken to monitor the upstream migration of B-run steelhead and track wild B-run steelhead mortality
  2. What measures are being taken to ensure enough wild steelhead reach and spawn in their home rivers

### **Take Action:**

None of the agency conservation measures adequately address the impact of tribal platform and net fisheries on extremely scarce wild steelhead.

If you are concerned about wild steelhead and agree that not enough is being done, please forward this email along with your personal concerns to:

[Odfw.commission@state.or.us](mailto:Odfw.commission@state.or.us)  
[james.scott@dfw.wa.gov](mailto:james.scott@dfw.wa.gov)

If you would like more detailed information, please go to our website or Facebook page for The



Conservation Angler's detailed recommendations to conserve Columbia and Snake River wild steelhead in the recreational and commercial fisheries planned for the Columbia River this year.

**Next up:**

1. B-run steelhead run size updates.
2. Reports on the monitoring of current commercial and recreational fishing impacts on wild steelhead.

Thanks for reading and please feel free to forward this message.

Sincerely,  
David A. Moskowitz, Executive Director  
The Conservation Angler  
971-235-8953

