



Black Pine Lake

<i>President’s Message - Wytold Lebing</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Membership – Susanne Staats.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Cedar River Outing, June 24, 2023</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Methow River Outing, July 14-16, 2023</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Annual Picnic, July 20, 2023</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Rock Island Fishing Camp Outing, July 23-28, 2023.....</i>	<i>12</i>
<i>Gold in the Pan (Part 1)....Mark Conner</i>	<i>20</i>



President's Message - Wytold Lebing

First, a reminder: There will not be a general membership meeting in August. Over the years we have found that August meetings have had limited attendance. Many of us are busy getting kids ready for school or squeezing in a few last days summer vacation. In general, most of us are too busy to attend a club meeting. So again, there will be no general membership meeting on August 17. The monthly meetings will commence again in September.

As the fall approaches it is the time for selecting new officers. We want to have a slate of candidates to present to our general membership at the October 19 meeting, and then have the vote at the November 16 meeting. Both the Treasurer and Secretary will be staying in their respective positions for 2024. The positions which will need to be filled for 2024 are: President and Vice President.

Though the thought of being an officer might seem daunting, the other members of the Steering Committee and past officers are available to help and offer guidance. So, we are calling on you to step up and take a slightly more active role in the NFA. If you are interested in either position, please let me or any other officer know.

Finally, the Annual Awards Banquet will take place on Sunday December 10, 2023, at 5:30. It will be at the Haller Lake community center. There is no charge to attend since the dinner will be a potluck, again. We'll provide more details as we get closer to December.

Wytold



Membership – Susanne Staats

The last two months have brought quite a few new people wanting to join NFA. Perhaps it's because of the great lineup of summer outings we offer or just enthusiasm to get together with others who love fly fishing.

Whatever the reason, I'm happy to welcome the following individuals into the club. Mike Helbach, Roger Young, Doug Bennet, Nick Crain, Bruce and Kora McNicholas, and Franklin Munoz. Because we do not have a regular monthly meeting in August, the above members will be inducted into the club in September.



Cedar River Outing, June 24, 2023

Six NFA anglers gathered at the Landsburg Road bridge under cloudy skies and cool temps at 7:30 am. New-to-the-club members who came out are Bruce and Kora McNicholas and two Franklin Munoz's. Yep, father and son, plus Wytold Lebing and host Tom Beaulaurier.

From the Cedar River Trailhead parking lot on Landsburg Road the river flows alongside the Cedar River Trail (CRT) for the first mile. Then it meanders away. The CRT is used mostly by dog walkers, bike riders and joggers. There are numerous places to get to the river from the CRT and I showed everyone some locations to find their own comfortable access. There are also landmarks that I use to reference where I am on the CRT in relation to my fishing preferences, like where to leave the CRT and use the foot/h hoof paths.

By the time everyone had walked the first mile and seen a lot of the variety we all figured out what water we wanted to fish. We did not encounter any other anglers until later in the morning. By 11:00 am the cloudy sky was burning off into a fantastic day for June. That made the trout less comfortable and so they held to the places with shade and shelter near the bottom. Daytime fishing on the Cedar is usually challenging for me. For the day, I found three trout in three different locations using nymphs under an indicator. Each of them gave me one quick chance to get them off the bottom but they all shook my hook free. Still learning.

Flypaper



Aug. 2023



**L to R: Tom Beaulaurier, Wytold Lebing, Bruce McNicholas,
Kora McNicholas, Franklin E Munoz and Franklin Munoz**

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Methow River Outing, July 14-16, 2023

Fourteen people made the long drive to the beautiful Methow valley. This outing is a very popular one because the scenic landscape, quaint towns, and variety of activities offers something to everyone; even those who do not fish. Brett Schormann set off early Thursday morning transporting the club equipment. Wytold Lybing, Joan Matheson, and Joe Coakley arrived in the afternoon and set up their tents. Dave and Claudia Campbell rented an Airstream travel trailer to spend the weekend in comfort. Cynthia Lenz and Susanne Staats carpooled and, after a navigational error in Arlington, arrived in the late afternoon. After setting up the camp kitchen, everyone relaxed in their folding chairs and enjoyed trout spread and crackers provided by Joe. Most of the group went to Winthrop for dinner at Jupiter restaurant, where we not only had good food but also live music on the deck. Nick and Kathy Sherman drove into the campsite later Thursday night after exploring the Lake Chelan area.



Friday morning at 6:00 a.m., Wytold and Dave floated with a guide on the Methow River for approximately 12 miles. Dave brought 4 large fish to the boat (20") and Wytold and Dave caught several other trout in the 8-12" range. Joe fished Big Buck Lake in his pontoon boat. Brett, Cynthia, and Susanne went to Big Pine Lake to check it out. Then we relied on Google Navigation to direct us to Black Pine Lake but ended up on someone's private road and nowhere near the lake. Thanks to Cynthia's navigation skill, we found our way to the lake via a narrow, twisty, back road. At Black Pine Lake we saw fly fishermen, kayakers, hikers, and people on stand-up paddleboards. A grandmother with her two grandsons caught two 12-13" trout right off the fishing dock. Mike Helbach fished the lake in his pontoon boat. Back at the

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campground, the rest of our group showed up: Alan Pilkington, Jim and Kathy Watson, Wes, and Hannah Fullerton. For Friday night dinner we had appetizers, asparagus and chicken pasta dinner, salad, and caramel rice krispy treats for dessert. Although we did not see the Northern Lights, Friday evening had a pinkish red glow in the sky and millions of stars above.

Saturday morning after coffee, members set out to enjoy their day. Mike floated in his pontoon boat from Winthrop to Twisp. Jim wade fished off the Winthrop-Twisp highway and caught a couple of fish on nymphs. Alan wade fished the Methow, and Wes and Hannah floated in their raft from milepost 20 to Metalin



Creek. In addition to catching some fish, Wes and Hannah had fun floating through some white water and dunking themselves in the river to cool off. Joe tagged along with Wes and Hannah in his pontoon boat and caught a few fish. Nick and Kathy wade fished upstream of Winthrop and hooked three fish. Wytold and Joan went to Black Pine Lake to try out their paddleboards. Kathy, Cynthia, and Susanne went to the Twisp Farmer's market and later met Brett for a beverage at Sun Mountain



Lodge. Dave and Claudia also went to the Twisp Market and discovered the bakery delights of the Cinnamon Twisp Bakery.

Late Saturday afternoon, Kathy and Susanne tried out their new kayaks on Big



Twin Lake. Meanwhile, back at the camp kitchen, Brett was busy recruiting help to cut up onions and mushrooms for the gourmet rib eye stroganoff dinner he was preparing. Everyone gathered at 4:30 p.m. for appetizers and by 7:15 dinner was served. The food was definitely worth the wait. Complementing the stroganoff was green salad and rice crispy treats and cookies for dessert. After dinner, we shared stories and wine in the cool evening shade and retired under a starry sky.

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On Sunday, after some fortification from coffee, everyone got busy packing up their personal gear and the club equipment. Most were planning on driving directly home, although Nick and Kathy stopped by Washington Pass for a view of the

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Flypaper



Aug. 2023



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mountains. Thanks to everyone who helped before, during and after the outing to make it a success. (Susanne Staats)

Annual Picnic, July 20, 2023

The club picnic on a Thursday evening in July at Richmond Beach and was blessed with beautiful weather, great food, and an animated crowd of NFA families. The conversation was so engrossing that, evidently, no-one stopped to take pictures of the festivities. We didn't take a head count, but attendance was over fifty. The burgers and dogs formed the basis, with pot-luck appetizers and desserts. Fresh Puget Sound crab dip and homemade ice cream were just a few of many delicious contributions. Thanks to everyone for making this such a fun event! (Susanne Staats)



Rock Island Fishing Camp Outing, July 23-28, 2023

After driving through the scenic Canadian Cascades, which are different from ours having a forest of deciduous trees along the highway, ten of us arrived at Rock Island Fishing Camp in time for dinner on Sunday July 23.



Rich Wilkens, Wayne Balsiger, Karen Gilbert, Walt Shields, Roger Young, Wytold Lebing, Errol Flagor, his son Torre Flagor, Bill Gibson and Peter Maunsell enjoyed this week at Rock Island, a serene, remote fishing camp.



We had “the American Plan” with all meals included. The food was delicious, home-cooked with a different entrée every breakfast and dinner and rich, yummy desserts, especially the blueberry pie with excellent crust. We made our own lunches: sandwiches and fruit. Dinner is prepared in a kitchen without the modern conveniences of electricity, dishwashers, and refrigerators. Take a look at the refrigerator (ice) house when you are there. You can prepare coffee in your cabin or get it at 7 am in the lodge before an 8 am breakfast.

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Thankfully the 90-degree weather forecast turned cooler with highs in the mid-sixties, with one day 54 degrees. We did have some light rain; that was nice. Mostly we had clear skies or deep blue with cumulus clouds on the horizon and lots of sunshine. The cabins each had a wood burning stove with chopped wood and kindling. We had electricity for two hours in the evenings. The three common toilets with showers had hot water. Everything was clean and convenient.

Flypaper



Aug. 2023



The camp hosts, Jeannie and James, are knowledgeable and friendly. James loved that we were not asking him “how” to fish, but rather more refined questions. When fishing the other lakes, we let them know where we intended to fish because there are only so many boats at the other lakes so all would have a boat.

In the evenings, we gathered on the dock, watching the hatches, telling fish stories, while some of us fished and others took photos. In the early mornings, we enjoyed the sunrise and mist over the lake.

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Rich Wilkens said the bird photo is a male Spruce Grouse, Wytold and Rich saw probably 20 birds driving to different lakes. These birds are normally very stealthy, you hear their calls but never see them, so it was a treat to see so many.



There were some fish taking insects on the surface in the evenings, but I do not think anyone caught a fish on a dry. The dry fly fishing ended about two weeks before we came. My “go to” fly was a dark olive Gomphus Dragon that Trevor, a Rock

Island regular, gave me as well as a Darner Dragon fly. Other flies that worked occasionally for me was a Doc Spratley, and San Juan Worm.

There are several nearby lakes you can fish, all with row boats on them. On Rock Island you can rent a small quiet electric motor. One lake is accessed by going about 3/4 mile on Rock Island and walking 5 minutes to Weinholt Lake. Peter and Wytold fished it on Monday and were disappointed, as in the past it had done well

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for them. Lower and Upper Hardcastle lakes are about a 15-minute walk from camp. Rich Wilkens fished them on Monday and caught about 30 fish. Peter and Wytold joined him there on Tuesday. Wayne, Walt and Roger followed on Thursday, but it was a slow day, like on a Monday after the weekend fishermen have gotten the fish wised up. This was also the coldest day and likely had something to do with the slow fishing. The moon was approaching full as well.

On Thursday Rich, Peter and Wytold tried to find Gammarus Lake but frustratingly never located the trail. Then went back on Friday with a guide, found the trail and did very well there.

Errol, Torre, Wayne and Walt and Roger and Bill Gibson fished mostly on Rock Island. Errol and Torre were quietly catching lots of fish all week. You need to ask them for their secrets. For Wayne, one fish nicely tail-walked for about two full seconds before dancing off his fly. Wayne did fish Weinholt on Friday for two hours. After one hour of nothing with the Gomphus, a Doc Spratley hooked a fish in 5 minutes. He got off halfway to the boat. That was it for two hours of fishing.

When I was deciding whether to go or not, the 3-minute video I watched showed the fish house with the outline of a fish and said "Bruce Alzner, July 31, 85 Portland, OR, 5 lb. 2.5 oz." Bruce is my cousin. This is the lake my Uncle Bob used to go to every year, and I had forgotten the name of it. I definitely had to go even though I had only a 15-hour turn-around after getting home from my Thistle (sailing) National Championship at Flathead Lake Montana: 510 miles home, 307 miles to the fishing camp.

The fish were in the 12 – 20-inch range this year for us. Not the 34" 14.5 lb. monster fish Don Simonson caught on June 12, 2017, on a Black Carey Special. Hang onto your hat. You can see a Bald Eagle take a fish 20 feet from you. As well as loons swimming on the lake. Rock Island will smoke your trout on Thursday



night. Several of us took home smoked trout, prepared by our host, James, a nice treat.

For those of you who are addicted to your cell phones, there is no cell service except 3-miles up a nearby hill. This is a quiet, relaxing place, even for non-fishers. There are a couple of kayaks at the dock, swimming, reading, writing, mountain cycling, birding, and meditating.

Roger said he would just add that waking up to a 7:01 am cup of coffee, not made by me is priceless. Not having to plan meals and cook,

then clean up...priceless. It was a fun easy trip with fine company.

The club is planning to go back in 2024, but the week is not set yet. (Photos of the trip are here: [2023 Rock Island outing](#) Wayne Balsiger)

Flypaper



Aug. 2023



Wytold, Bill, Walt, Peter, Rich, Karen, Roger, Torre, Errol, Wayne

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Gold in the Pan (Part 1)...Mark Conner

The year was 1970; my friend Jim and I were 23 and young, in college, off for the first part of the summer, and primed for adventure. Jim was a graduate student at Duke University, I was still at Washington University in St. Louis. At Duke, Jim had made a friend, Dave, who raved about a special primitive area in the Rockies where he had snagged a summer job and would again work the summer months as a wilderness patrolman for the Forest Service, rock climbing in his off-hours. He invited us out to trout-fish in the Bridger National Wilderness in Wyoming. The Forest Service provided Dave with a horse and a pack mule, and Dave promised to pack some of our gear the 16 miles into our chosen base camp, easing the backpacking loads needed for eight days in the backcountry. Growing up in St. Louis, Jim and I had never even seen a trout. The Wind River Range promised an appointment with fish. We liked to spin cast for smallmouth bass from canoes on spring-fed Ozark streams and thought, what the hell, let's give it a go. After all, in the western Appalachia of Missouri, smallmouth *were* called trout; only largemouth were bass.

So, Jim and I piled into (and slept in) his VW micro-bus and headed west on the 1,200-plus mile drive to the Elkhart Park Trailhead above Pinedale, Wyoming. Along the way, in our first experience with altitude, we climbed 12,941-foot Star Mountain in Colorado, both of us breathless at the summit. Puffy wind-blown cumulus cast undulating shadows on the surrounding peaks and valleys as they sailed east. Further west, preferring backroads, we encountered the baffling travel puzzle of the then partially dirt track of Utah State Route 1364, which seemed to disappear as it passed through the lush grasslands of the sinuous Green River below Flaming Gorge. Eventually arriving at Elkhart, we met Dave, a wonderfully welcoming and personable fellow. After salutations and inquiries about our journey, he packed onto the mule what gear he could and set off on his rounds* while Jim and I hiked the Pole Creek Trail towards our pre-determined meeting point, Cook Lakes. After our late start, we figured one and a half days of trekking with a night of camping along the way. It was late June, and the mosquitoes made us miserable, but the big, biting deer flies were worse. We thought the insects would thin out as we gained elevation, but the higher we went, the more we got.



This Photo of Seneca Lake below Fremont and Jackson Peaks (by hikingproject) Captures the Grandeur of the Winds.



We began at 9,350 feet, gained 1,770 feet, lost 940; the 2,700 combined proved arduous for lowland first- time school-boy backpackers carrying heavy, mostly borrowed gear. For example, our cumbersome spring-loaded “pop-up” tent with intricate spring-loaded albatross wing-like umbrella ribs must have weighed 20 lbs. Our intended itinerary was to detour north on the Seneca Lake Trail to not only experience the grandeur of the lake but also the backdrop of Fremont (the highest in the state) and Jackson Peaks, avoiding a treacherous crossing of Pole Creek, which Dave strongly advised. But first a swim in Hobbs Lake. What disaster. Timid me only waded in the cold lake slowly, but Jim plunged into the leech-infested waters and emerged covered with them. A good hour of matches to leech tips burnt them off, but not without the horror of maniacal blood-sucking. Having come for adventure, we got more than our share. (caltopo.com is a good website to follow our route)

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Continuing around the awesome setting of Seneca Lake basin, we were to hang a right at the junction with the Highline Trail to cross over Lester Pass down to the Cooks. But we tired of the bugs and the view-less switch-backed trail in Lodgepole Pine and struck out cross-country to seek a breeze to ease the pestilence, choosing open meadows interrupted by only the occasional copse of Aspen. Convinced we were better route makers than the trail builders, our contemplated route was over either of two saddles. The wrong choice revealed our arrogance, leading to a dead-end cirque. Bewildered for perhaps an hour, we tried to find the proper way, not at all sure we could retrace our steps to the trail. Obstinance pressed us on to the once-found, rather obvious pass. Opened out before us was the grand scale of the high basin below, brimming with lakes, including the Cooks, with the crest of the Rockies beyond. Would the lakes keep their promise of an abundance of trout? You see, for us, the fishing represented more than just sport because, for food, we had only packed in rice and dried potato flakes, apple sauce, trail mix, and cereal. If we did not catch trout, we would not eat much protein. What with the mosquito feast and the idiotic paucity of our provisions, it would have been a great time for a diet, but we were only rail thin to start.

Where we camped at the junction of the two Cook Lakes (Photo by hikinginthelight)





Still way above the tree line and just below the pass, several tarns bedded in a lovely setting. We decided to set up camp there for the night but first catch fish. I got out my spin rod and cast blindly into the largest pond with no luck. Impatient, I meandered down the outlet stream to a much smaller tarn, only 3 feet deep. Sure enough, at the opposite end were three large trout. They saw me, and I saw them. I tried a Mepps. Indifference. Other spinning lures to no avail. I had bought on a whim a large dry fly on maybe a size twelve hook. Apathy. The deer flies were biting me mercilessly through my raggedy rolled-up turtleneck sweater. Swatting them and thinking, why not, I slid a deer fly over the imitation fly. Now, *this* was appetizing. I watched, mesmerized, as the trout deftly, ever so nimbly, stripped bait fly after bait fly off the artificial. Then I caught one. She was big, she was hooked, and I was smitten. Without a ruler, I measured the gorgeous fish from the tip of my little finger to my elbow. Later, with a tape, I counted 18 inches; 20 would be too much to believe. The big fish had a radiant golden color to its sides: my goodness, the rare California Golden trout for my first salmonid (*Onchorhynchus aguabonita*). *Agua bonita*: pretty water. I should say so. Now we had fish for dinner. Never over the ensuing half-century has it gotten any better than that, retrieving that fish in that place, with dinner seized and our pantry relieved. The mouth-melted bright pink flesh we ate with our fingers. Hunger made the better cook, but the fish *was* delicious.



California Golden Trout (Photo by hikinginthelight)

Was I fly fishing, or was I not? Yeah, I know. I was bait-casting with a dead animal, nothing more than the much-maligned meat fisherman. Now, however, I figured that if a fellow had a proper fly line threaded down the ferrules of a willowy fly rod, and he knew how to smoothly roll out that line with the

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appropriate fly, he might be able to use insect repellent and avoid the plague of insects, all the while catching trout more efficiently, accomplishing something truly elegant in the bargain. Well, I decided that when I got home, I would go to art school. So, I enrolled in a fly-casting class. (Part 2 will be published in the next Flypaper.)