

Vance Thompson Lake Chopaka

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President's Message - Wytold Lebing

Despite all the deep snow in mountains (many of the local ski resorts delayed their normal closing dates), now that it's May, things are warming up down here at sea level and heating up the fishing.

Our second weekend long club outing will be at Coffeepot Lake in Lincoln County. Besides the rainbow trout, other species you might catch include black crappie, largemouth bass, pumpkinseed sunfish, and yellow perch. There is not much shore fishing available, but a small pontoon boat or raft opens up the 310 acres of fishing.

Speaking of outings, the time left to sign up for the Rock Island Fish Camp (RIFC) trip in July is running out. The camp has been holding open 12 spots for the club. We need to finalize our arrangements with Rock Island and release any unclaimed spots back to RIFC. So, if you are interested in catching some Kamloops trout this summer don't wait too long before signing up.

Here are a few dates to remember. The club picnic will be held on July 20, 2023, with location TBD. The annual Club Banquet will be held on December 9, 2023, at the Haller Lake Community Center. By the way we are still looking for volunteers who are willing to help with these events. The next club meeting is on May 18. Our speaker will be from the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife to discuss the status of fish pens in Puget Sound. This should be a very interesting talk on something that impacts our fishing in the Puget Sound area.

See you then. Remember, watch your backcast.

Wytold



Membership – Susanne Staats

At our May meeting, we inducted two new members. Joe Coakley rejoined the club after an absence of several years. Joe is eager to go fishing with other members and has already participated in the Deschutes outing. Mark Souza also joined to meet fellow fly fishers and participated at the Coffee Pot Lakes outing. If you see Joe and Mark at the club meetings or outings, please welcome them.





Upcoming Outings

Chopaka Lake Hosts - Errol Flagor & Vance Thompson June 2 – 4

This trip is designed to hit the peak of trout activity in this remote lake in Okanogan country. Chopaka Lake is where fly fishermen belong, and chironomid soakers put down roots. It just may be the hottest callibaetis mayfly lake in the state. Located on a distant walled-in funnel at just under 3,000 feet elevation above the Sinlahekin Valley, Chopaka Lake is 148.8 acres of trout water squeezed into a narrow 1½ mile long ladle. Depths in the southern half, the handle end, average less than 10 feet and support fertile nests of bottom vegetation that grow incredible insect fodder, especially mayfly nymphs. The bowl of the ladle is on the north end where the lake bottom plunges to more than 70 feet. A floating device is necessary to fish for the large rainbows that cruise the lake.





Deschutes River Hosts- Ron Romeis & Peter Rubenstein June 16-18

We will be camping at the [Beavertail Campground](#) 10 miles below [Sherar's Falls](#). The campground is halfway between Lone Pine Put-in and Mack's Canyon Campground. On Saturday, folks can float from Lone Pine down to Beavertail or from Beavertail down to Mack's. And vice versa on Sunday.

There are tons of places to bank-fish along the road. You can purchase online an [Oregon fishing license](#) and a [Deschutes River Floaters Pass](#) (if you are going to float the river); there will be a campground fee as well.



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Cedar River Host Tom Beauliaurier June 24

The Cedar River flows from Chester Morse Lake on the western slopes of the Cascades and east of Rattlesnake Lake. Fall and winter glimpses of salmon and steelhead that used to return to this urban/mountain stream are needing a miracle for their migratory recovery. Luckily the whitefish and trout have managed to survive poaching and predation well enough to offer good fishing. The river shows you different characteristics, depending on your location. The upper Cedar provides stretches of sparkling, fast water over large boulders into short clear pools, the mid-section offers smaller boulders and more pools, and then getting closer to Lake Washington the flow is slower and your chances for finding larger trout improve.





May Member Meeting – Fly Fishing in Cuba

Several members gave fishing reports. Joe Coakley was in Montana fishing on the Bitterroot, Missouri, Clark Fork, and Blackfoot rivers. Mark Souza fished 5 lakes in the Winthrop area: Big Twin Lake, Moccasin Lake, Dry Falls, Lenore, and Hilltop Lake (private), James Schmidt had good luck on Munn Lake, Wayne Balsiger fished Langlois Lake, and Errol Flagor fished Big Twin Lake. All of our members had success catching fish with sizes ranging from 12-18”.

Our May speaker was Jon Covich from Seattle. Jon is employed by Fly Water Travel as their expert on fishing in Cuba. Jon has traveled to Cuba 24 times and highlighted 4 Cuban destinations in his talk: 1). The Gardens of the Queen is a protected national park and considered one of the most pristine ocean habitats on the planet. It has fishing for Bone fish, Permit, Tarpon, Jacks, and Barracuda. 2). Gardens of the King is at the western end of Cuba and features Tarpon in the bays as well as Permit and Bonefish. 3). Island of the Youth is on the Canarreos Archipeligo. This is a great place to fish for 5 to 30 pound resident Tarpon and up to 50-70 lb. migratory Tarpon. 4). Cayo Largo, also in the Canarreos Archipeligo, has big flats and features Tarpon and Bone fish. In addition to talking about the fishing, Jon provided a good introduction to Cuba and featured stunning photography throughout his presentation.



June Member Meeting - Catching Coho on a Floating Fly

Leland Miyawaki presented an informative and entertaining talk on fly-fishing for coho salmon (or pinks since they will run this summer). Many years ago, Leland noticed that, while coho are traditionally targeted with sinking lines, salmon would pick off wounded baitfish on the surface. Dragging a tapered head popper along the surface leaves a wake and imitates a helpless baitfish. Since fish are not too deep when coming in to shore to feed, opportunistically they will strike on the surface.

There are advantages to a surface fly. It can skitter over weed beds or some seaweeds with less hang-up. You can see the strike, which is always more fun. The floating line is easier to pick up for the required long casts.

Salmon fishing from shore requires long casts. Learn to double haul and try to shoot sixty feet of fly line. By the way, this is an excellent way to learn a double haul since you are making many, many casts. This is distance casting, not finesse. Leland recommends a six weight, nine-foot rod. He uses a Cortland 200 grain specialty compact float line. A shooting head helps, but any bonefish or floating trout line should work if you can cast it a long way. Use a nine-foot leader that tapers to a 0x or heavier (nothing lighter). These fish are not leader shy.

Use a saltwater reel, preferably with a sealed drag. This type of fishing is hard on a reel, so rinse salt and sand out after every use. Or else, consider your reel disposable.

Fish when the coho are migrating in close to shore. For example, Point No Point starting around mid-July on into October. Wade out to get as far out with your cast as is reasonable. Cast for distance is to cover more water; but the fish might be right close to shore chasing baitfish. There is no need to stand where everyone else is. Let those with surf rods chucking buzz bombs have their place and move to where you can back cast freely. "At Lincoln Park, watch your back cast. Ninety percent of the people blithely walking into your back cast lane are lawyers."



Leland fishes all kinds of tides but prefers moving water as it moves the baitfish. A tidal swing of 4 to 6 feet peak to trough is nice. Obviously, waves are a detriment, but a light ripple on the water lets the popper leave a nice wake. Avoid a bright, sunny, dead calm day. Leland likes long slow strips to leave a wake, although some people strip faster (“that means you have to cast more often”). As with all saltwater fishing, use a strip set! Strip in until the fish feels it and takes off – don’t do a “raise the rod trout set”.

Make long blind casts to cover water and pass the time. But absolutely pick up and target jumping fish and baitfish boils. The fish are moving, so look for them feeding as they pass by. Or look for baitfish – the coho will be nearby.





Coffee Pot Outing Report May 21-23, 2023

Due to the patient instruction of David and Eric in our Tuesday Fly-tying class, I showed up to my first NFA outing with all suggested flies except the Hamster. I also upgraded my 30-year-old rod with a new nine-foot 5 wt. Moonshine Drifter II, disassembled and cleaned my old Pfluegar reels, replaced the dry lines that sink and purchased a used Scadden pontoon boat that weighs, in case I have not yet mentioned, only 26 pounds. There was just not time to tie Hamsters.

Coffee Pot Lake is the result of repeated flooding as glacial dams formed and melted. The final shape is from the unimaginable flooding that occurred when the ice dam broke that eld in Lake Missoula. That wall of water slammed west into Pend Oreille, southwest to the Spokane Valley and finalized Coffee Pot and other small lakes in the Channeled Scablands. These waters removed softer rock, which is why the lake depth can suddenly go from 12 to 60 feet. I was excited to see obsidian next to columnar basalt, which would indicate some complicated and peculiar pressure and heating events. I was wrong- my Geography professor identified the obsidian as chert and noted the ridiculousness of my theory.

I was also wrong about my ability to catch and keep fish. I did catch my cheek due to laziness in not turning around when the wind picked up, but it was a barbless little pink Chironomid, not a Hamster. I missed a strike when I was rowing back to camp towing a vintage Woolly Worm. I missed other fish because I was watching the ospreys or the swallows or a rattlesnake.

Fortunately, the kindness and hospitality of the group erased my abject failure to catch anything. David and Eric were excellent hosts, the dinners were quite lovely and morning coffee was appreciated. With temperatures of 95 degrees F on Saturday, the evening sky was continually slashed with lightning, followed by winds necessitating late-night scrambling for those of us who had not tied up their boats correctly. Peter and Wytold detailed necessary additions for my boat, with how's and why's. My milk carton crate is coming along after I found my stainless rivets. Walt offered excellent advice on lake fishing and general flyfishing practices. The Coffee Pot Lake Outing was a congenial and educational weekend.

Flypaper



June 2023

When Eric next mentions the presence of a stinging or biting insect such as chiggers, appropriate repellent should be administered to avoid a week of misery. **(Maureen Sullivan)**

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Chopaka Outing Report June 1-4, 2023

8 members participated:

- Errol Flagor (co-host)
- Vance Thompson (co-host)
- Peter Rubenstein
- Susanne Staats
- Helen Botcher
- Wayne Balsiger
- Colene McKee
- Bill Denzel

All arrived a day early on Thursday.

Errol Flagor arrived first and caught and released four rainbows. After that, none of the eight caught any fish the rest of the weekend. Helen did get one bump. This was pretty much the case for all anglers at the lake since a winter die off had reportedly occurred. Peter, Helen, and Susanne used Peter's canoe to circumnavigate the lake twice, once with fly rods, once without.

Susanne, as always, donated Starbuck coffee for the outing. On the wee hours of Friday morning, she realized that she had not ground the coffee beans so she hiked a LONG way up the entrance road to see if she could get cellphone reception to call Bill and Colene (whom she thought had not arrived yet) to ask them to bring ground coffee. No cell reception so she walked back to camp and used a tent hammer to smash the beans in a Ziplock bag. But all agreed that the hammered coffee tasted great. Later Friday, Bill and Colene (whom unknown to Susanne, had arrived late on Thursday) brought over ground coffee.

Helen made friends with some birds in the area and let them poop on top of her tent fly. On Saturday, an aluminum foil cap, reminiscent of the tinfoil hats that people in the 1950's used to ward off space aliens, was taped to the top of the tent fly. Not to be undone by this, Vance Thompson put aluminum foil over his camera since the same bird shifted from Helen's tent to his camera.

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Vance Thompson's car battery was dead on Sunday morning. Kudos to Wayne Balsiger who jumped the battery and got him on his way back home. (**Vance Thompson**)





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Key Role Recognized in Celebration at the White House

Excerpts from Tom Quinn, as told to Susanne Staats

Here is the story. My work includes both teaching at the UW in fisheries but also, since 1987, field work at the UW research camps in the Bristol Bay region of western Alaska. I have been especially involved in the work at Iliamna Lake, which was jeopardized by the massive Pebble Mine that was proposed for gold, copper, and other metals. I provided data, photos, expert information, and so forth as part of an effort spanning about 20 years to point out how dangerous this mine would be to the region's salmon and trout, wildlife, and the people who rely on them. The Native Alaskans were overwhelmingly against the mine, as were the commercial salmon fishermen, the processors, sport fishing groups (Trout Unlimited, for example, was very involved), river conservationists, etc. The Environmental Protection Administration under Obama decided that the mine proposal violated the Clean Water Act and moved to prevent it. The next administration gave the mine the green light. But, under Biden, a more final decision was made to deny permits earlier this year.

On very short notice, I was one of the people invited to celebrate this decision by the office of the President. I was able to make it, and joined many from the United Tribes of Bristol Bay, TU, commercial fish industry, and other groups in recognition of our efforts to provide the EPA with information on which to base their decision. It was an incredible celebration, in the Rose Garden (yes, that one!) and Biden was there himself to speak. Attached are a few cell phone pics. I got to sip champagne in the Rose Garden, and I can tell you that in May the roses are in bloom!

Tom Quinn

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June 2023



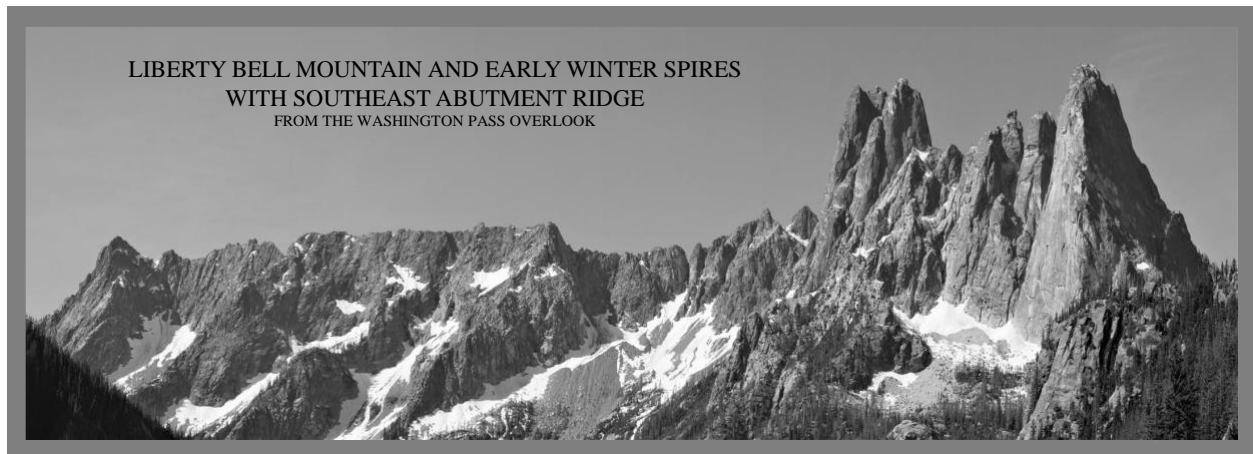
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Photo Essay Along Highway 20 - Mark Connor

Mark Connor has prepared a photo essay of the peaks and ranges as you drive along Highway 20. The picture below is the first picture of the essay. A link to the entire set of photos may be found [here](#)



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