



Seams and riffles on the Yakima River

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President's Message Wayne Balsiger

The February meeting should be good as we learn: Is Washington's freshwater as abundant as we think? I am looking forward to hearing the answers from our guest speakers from the Washington Water Trust. See more detail in The Flypaper.

And at the meeting Dave Campbell will be talking how to fish his home waters. The Skagit/ Sauk rivers are open, and we have an outing in late February hosted by Dave.

The 2024 Outings are posted now on the website. We have several of our favorite Outings on the calendar. We can still use your help as a host or co-host, so let Russ know. It's a good time to volunteer!

The six weeks of Fly-Tying classes are scheduled to start Thursday February 20. We still have two spots open at last count. We will not be doing our traditional Fly-Casting Classes this year as we were unable to come up with an instructor.

We are planning to have a phone tree to call members to encourage them to come to the meetings and enjoy the camaraderie of other members and the presentation. Let me know if you are interested in helping phone other members.

The Flyfishing Expo is back! And it's only a couple weeks away in Bellevue.
<https://flyfishingshow.com/bellevue-wa/>.

Monthly Raffle: We are looking for a volunteer to be meeting Raffle Chair, as you know we have a raffle each meeting. Let me know if you are interested in helping with this activity.

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Annual Dues: Time to pay your dues if you have not done so. Still a bargain, do it today via the website.

Wayne

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Membership – Susanne Staats

I would like to introduce everyone to two new members inducted into the club at the January meeting. Joe Martini grew up in Denver and enjoyed fly fishing for trout in the rivers, streams, and alpine lakes of the Colorado front range and western slope. Joe moved to Washington in 2019 and has enjoyed learning about the diverse fisheries of the Pacific Northwest and techniques to target these fish. Joe likes to fish at nearby beaches searching for sea run cutthroat and salmon in the summer and fall. He also loves to wade the rivers and streams on the east side of the Cascades while fishing for cutthroat and rainbows with dry flies. Joe learned about NFA after meeting a club member in the parking lot of Golden Gardens last fall. He has a raft and looks forward to learning and fishing with other anglers. He is happy to share his knowledge and see where he can get more involved with the club in the future.



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Garrett Thomsen grew up in Ennis Montana. As the son of a fly-fishing guide, Garrett had a fly rod in his hand at the age of five and has been fly fishing ever since. He enjoys pursuing trout, steelhead, salmon, and sea run cutthroat in local waters. Garrett is also interested in fishing for bass on Lake Washington, although that is something Garrett has not tried before. Garrett joined the club to learn more about fishing locally and to get to know members with similar interests. He knows how to row and owns a 16' Lavro drift boat. If any members would like to show Garrett a thing or two on a local river, Garrett would be happy to row!

Susanne

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January Member Meeting Notes – Nick Sherman

Wayne Balsiger stepped to the podium as new President of NFA. Or as the old president, since Wayne held this role twenty years ago. He said he could recycle his old notes.

We had a guest attend, Randy Lee. It was good to see Scott McCracken back again. New members are Joe Martini and Garrett Thomsen.

Many thanks to Roger Young, who provided treats.

We need a volunteer to step up to be Conservation Chair. We typically plan three outings and decide what organization merits the \$500 Conservation Award.

We are looking for a Raffle Chair. There is a supply of items already to last many months, making this position easier.

The always rewarding Fly Tying Class begins February 20 for six weekly sessions. Many members take this class several times, testament to how sociable and rewarding it is. Don't let it stop you if you are going to miss some sessions - you get all the materials anyway and a good set of instructions, lacking only the entertaining conversation.

There were no fishing reports. I suppose the weather has been a little chilly.

The long-awaited RL Winston VSL 4 weight rod raffle square was completed. See separate article below for the winner. Many thanks to Brett Schormann, who bought up all the remaining squares to bring us to the big moment. Wayne's hand got tired writing Brett Schormann so many times, so he marked each square BS.

Our speaker for February will be Chris Czarnecki with the Washington Water Trust.



Russ Shropshire was the featured speaker at this meeting, laying out the framework for our 2024 outings. Outings are the raison d'être for our club and we depend heavily on outing hosts to carry them off. Being a host is easier than in past years. For a weekend outing, the host plans an optional simple Friday night dinner, coffee / tea in the mornings, and a Saturday night centerpiece meal. Members do the cooking and cleaning up. Peter Maunsell offered to help with menu planning by sharing his program that churns out menus, recipes, and shopping lists. Cooking equipment is in the club locker. For day trips, the host just provides coffee or nothing at all. Please consider hosting an outing. To learn the ropes, consider being a co-host.

There was a good discussion around the proposed outings. The big ones have rough dates that will be firmed up soon. We are still looking for more suggestions and hosts for day trips. And some trips, such as John Day, will require members to obtain the necessary permits. A brief list includes local lakes, Puget Sound Beaches, the upper Yak, Coffeepot Lake, Cedar River, Metolius River, MF Snoqualmie, Methow River, Rock Island Lake BC, Clark Fork, Kelly Creek Idaho, Lower Yak, and Three Rivers, Idaho (Selway, Lochsa, MF Clearwater). Let's make this a great outing year!

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February Skagit/Sauk River Steelhead Outing – Dave Campbell

Washington State Department of Fish and Wildlife is opening portions of the Skagit and Sauk Rivers to “catch and release” steelhead fishing Feb 3 through April 17, 2024. The reason for this special opening is that they forecast a return of 5,215 steelhead. The return is strong enough to allow some fishing opportunities. Opening rules include fishing Saturday thru Wednesday only, closed Thursday and Friday.

Outing date is scheduled for Tuesday February 27. Please note due to the unpredictable nature of the river conditions, the schedule may be revised.

Particulars including choice of river and locations will be determined closer to the scheduled date depending on river conditions.

Long time NFA members Dave Campbell and Jim Watson will host.

This will be a “walk and wade” outing and will be limited to 6 additional participants.

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February Member Meeting - Dave Campbell

In preparation for the February outing, Dave will give an overview of the Skagit/Sauk special steelhead opening. He'll then focus on specific techniques for "winter steelhead on the fly". Come to the meeting and learn from the expert!

February Member Meeting Speakers - Washington Water Trust

Is Washington's freshwater as abundant as most people think? Despite its perception as a water-rich state, many of Washington's rivers and streams face flow challenges, particularly during the late summer months when salmon migrations are occurring. Join James Kraft and Chris Czarnecki from the [Washington Water Trust](#) learn more about how water overuse and mismanagement combined with climate change has left many salmon and steelhead streams around the state with low stream flows. See how Washington Water Trust brings people together to help restore flows and develop a more sustainable freshwater future for Washington.

The mission of **Washington Water Trust** is to protect and restore healthy rivers and streams across Washington so that fish, farms, and communities can thrive for generations. We craft smart, collaborative solutions to our freshwater challenges that will withstand the test of time in our rapidly changing world.

James Kraft, Executive Director, joined the Washington Water Trust in 2020. James is a native of Seattle, WA, and attended Harvard College where he majored in East Asian Studies then attended law school. For 27 years, James was general counsel for Plum Creek Timber Company. In that role, he helped lead the company's efforts to be a leader in environmental forestry and helped negotiate numerous habitat conservation agreements and major conservation easements across the country. James led the efforts to conclude pioneering habitat conservation plans for the spotted owl and 285 other species in the central Cascades, and bull trout and grizzlies in Montana. He also negotiated the second-

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largest conservation easement in the United States covering 363,000 acres in Maine. James has been a long-time advocate for the environment and the arts and currently serves on the board of Long Live the Kings, Seattle Theatre Group, and previously on the board of Pacific Northwest Ballet.

Chris Czarnecki, Development Director, joined the Washington Water Trust in 2019 with a desire to protect Washington's freshwater resources and the fish that he loves to pursue with a fly rod during his free time. He graduated in 2007 with a B.A. in English Literature from Wake Forest University in his hometown of Winston-Salem, NC. Since then, he has worked for conservation non-profits in Alaska, Nepal, Washington DC, and Seattle including eight years of experience with organizations focused on biodiversity conservation in the mountains of central and south Asia including the Snow Leopard Trust where he served as Project Manager on a project focused on transboundary snow leopard conservation in central Asia.



NFA Fly-Tying Class Begins – Nick Sherman

The famous NFA Introductory Fly-tying Class is taught by Eric “Rockfish” Olson and David “Smallmouth” Williams. The class, held once a week at Haller Lake Community Center, starts with the basics, covering hooks, threads (did you know the 6/0 Flymaster thread is 70 denier, and 6/0 Uni is a whopping 135 denier?). If you sign up for the class, you’ll learn all manner of cool stuff and simple materials, then rapidly move into tying a Carey Special, an essential still water pattern. Up next will be the Carey Special, Chironomid, Woolly Bugger, Pat’s Stone, and Pheasant Tail. The class is so entertaining that many students come back for another go at it.



No Fly-Casting Class This Year – Nick Sherman

No NFA Fly Casting Class will be held this year. We are looking for someone in the membership to consider conducting the class next fall or next year. No IFF or other certification is necessary, but of course we would want someone who is accomplished in fly casting. Think about how you got started and consider passing it along.

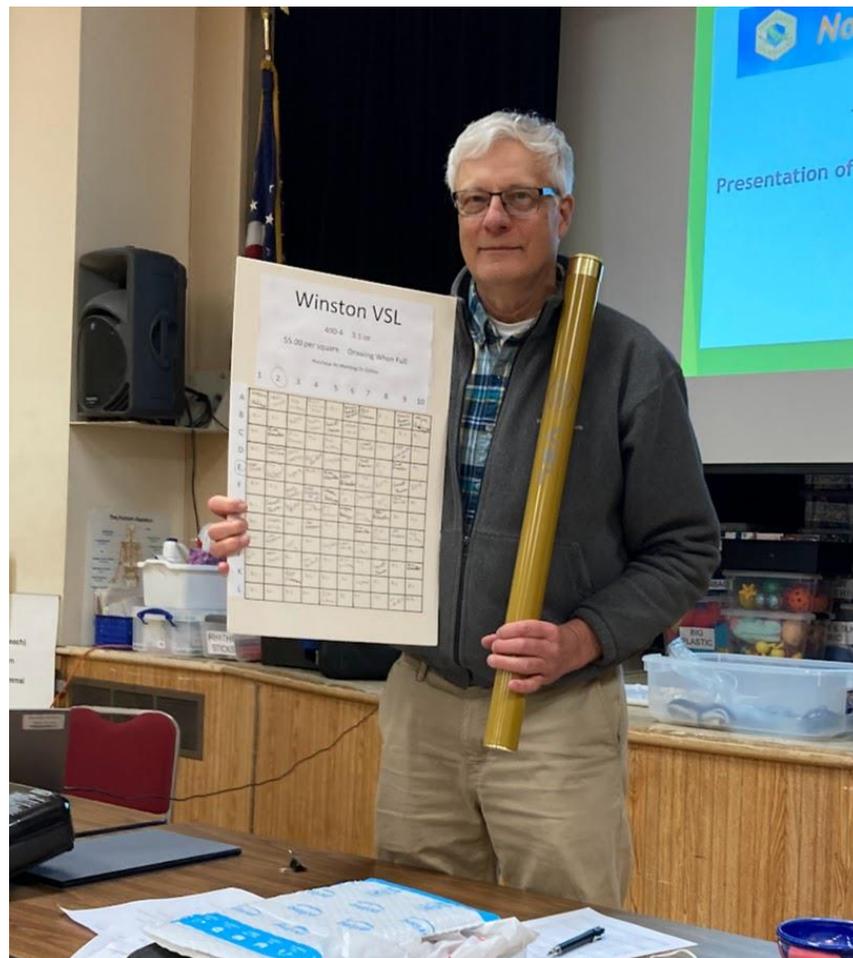
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Winston Rod Raffle – Nick Sherman

Peter Maunsell donated a fine RL Winston VSL 4 weight rod as a prize for a 10 by 12 raffle square. At \$5 per square, the club makes \$600, and someone gets an incredible rod. It took many months as numerous people took a chance on some squares, but Brett Schormann ended the wait by buying up all the remaining squares in time for the January meeting. Wytold drew a 2 out of the jar followed by an E. With that, Bill Gibson now owns a Winston! Thanks so much to Peter and Brett for your contributions.



President Wayne Balsiger displays the raffle board and the prize.



Wytold draws the slip of paper with the column, displaying the form which shows why he (and any bystander) always watches his back cast.

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Bill Gibson with the prize.

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May Bill's new Winston fish as well as his old rod (Skagit River salmon).

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Bellevue Fly Fishing Show 2024 – Nick Sherman

If you want to learn more about fly tying, fishing, and gear, check out the Fly-Fishing Show at Meydenbauer Center on February 17-18th. There is also a One Night Only International Fly-Fishing Film Festival on Saturday February 17th. Click at the following link to get more information and to purchase tickets.

<https://flyfishingshow.com/bellevue-wa/>

Fly Fishers International Update for January – Nick Sherman

FFI is playing a role at the Fly-Fishing Show in February at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue and the Washington Council wants you and your fellow club members to join us there. For the first time ever, FFI will host a reception at the show Saturday, Feb. 17 from 4:30 to 6 pm where FFI members and friends can gather to say hello and learn about a game-changing conservation strategy for Olympic Peninsula salmon and steelhead rivers. The \$30 FFI ticket buys full day entry to the show plus the reception with savory snacks and a chance to win a new Thomas & Thomas 5wt fly rod and other quality gear. FFI also will host the Learning Center at the show where we will offer walk-in instruction on fly tying, knots, and casting if space is available. Tickets are available on the WSCFFI.ORG Website.

The Fly-Casting Fair is returning to Ballinger Park May 4 with a full day of skills development for fly casters and tyers. The event, now in its third year, offers a range of classes for newcomers and experienced fishers and a chance for FFI members throughout Puget Sound to connect. Watch for details in spring.

The Washington Council supports excellence in fly tying, fly casting, education and conservation and invites you to nominate your friends and your fly clubs for our annual awards. Every club has leaders that keep the club going and growing. Nominating those men and women for the annual Washington Council Awards program is a way to say thanks. Details about awards and nomination forms are

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available on the WSCFFI.ORG Website, click on the About Us tab and click on Awards.

Finally, this month the Washington Council wants to welcome a new affiliated club, 4th Corner Fly Fishers of Bellingham. Join us in welcoming the gang at 4th Corner. Directors and members of Washington FFI appreciate your friendship and support. Tight lines to all!

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Float Tube Forum 1 – “How To” for Beginners Who Want to Get Out On the Water – Nick Sherman

This is the first of a series of articles written to help a beginner break through a common barrier to fly fishing by using a float tube.

Do any of these apply to you?

- I’ve moved to the Pacific Northwest, and I don’t know where to fly fish.
- I do not know how to cast well and there is no open space to practice.
- I cast well on grass, but struggle on real water.
- I can’t catch any fish in the rivers here.
- I don’t have space for a boat trailer or even much room in my garage.
- I ain’t even gotta garage; you can call home and ask my wife (from Uneasy Rider , Charlie Daniels).
- I don’t have a pick-up bed to transport a pontoon boat.
- I want to fish with my partner.
- I don’t want to spend a fortune.

These pretty much all applied to me, thus this column is written by someone who understands a beginner’s situation. For me, a turning point was getting my float tube.



I have canoes, but trying to cast from a solo canoe is frustratingly ineffective and I had no-one else to paddle me. A float tube, however, lets you get out on numerous local lakes where you can cast away without snagging your back cast or hooking an onlooker. I can keep my float tube inflated all year and just slide it into my Forester SUV. From Edmonds, I can be on the water in 25 minutes. I grab my rod (strung up with my favorite fly), toss the gear in car, drive 10 minutes to Lake Serene, unload, and park nearby, pull on my waders, strap on my fins, TIE MY ROD on, and PRESTO - I'm fishing. At the end of the outing, it is the same thing in reverse.

I recognize that using a float tube excludes river fishing. We have the Yakima and the Snoqualmie and people in NFA that know how to fish them. I love drift boats on the Yellowstone or the Green River and rafts on the Smith River. But these venues won't let you go out after work for an hour of fishing.

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Here is what you need for float tube fishing: You already have a 4 wt. or 6 wt. rod, 8-½ or 9 feet long. The reel makes no difference. You probably have chest waders. I have SCUBA fins, but otherwise you'll need to buy fins that fit over your wader socks. You need an inexpensive high volume hand air pump or a little 12-volt electric compressor. A net certainly helps land fish. Then the float tube itself.

I am 6 feet tall, and 175 pounds and Kathy is 5'-3" and 110 pounds. We use identical float tubes. I bought a Creek Company Outdoor Discovery Craft 420 Ultralight at Cabelas in 2013. I paid about \$200 because it had been used and returned. I am still using it; the only hole in the bladder that I patched was due to an errant fishhook. I later picked up the same model for Kathy at Sierra Trading in Oregon for \$150 tax free, but that was a steal never to be repeated. I just saw a flash sale for \$180, listed as \$120 off. This model, or the equivalent in another brand, is the one to get. The seats inflate which keep your rear out of the water, which is far warmer and makes it easier to propel yourself. When dry, it weighs 10 pounds. I picked up a Creek Company U-Boat 2000 Super Combo in Forks discounted to \$100. I don't like this one because you pretty much sit in the water where you might freeze to death. I take this smaller one if it is a challenging backpack hike or when I loan my two good tubes out to visitors.

This would be the time to say that I will lend one of my 420 float tubes out to a member if you want to try the concept.

The float tube has two main bladders and two seat bladders. Once you know how, it is a 10-minute job or less to inflate with a hand pump. I find getting the air out for packing up is more annoying than inflating. However, if you have the storage space and can fit the inflated float tube in your car, keep it pumped up all year. There are many storage compartments, and it is much nicer just to leave all your miscellaneous fly boxes and auxiliary gear in the pockets ready to go. I take a plastic tarp to spread in the back of the SUV to protect the back from water and mud when you slide the wet float tube back in after fishing.

The hardest part of using a float tube is getting into it at the boat launch, especially with spectators. You must position the FT close to the water before you put waders and fins on. Then carefully shuffle backwards in your fins (channel



your Lloyd Bridges Sea Hunt memories). Wade out on a treacherously slippery boat ramp or through a fin clutching mud flat and put your rear in the seat (all the time carrying your fly rod). Shove off backwards, but not too hard in case you drag on the bottom. Last year on a cold day, I went completely over backwards and did a full 360 roll underwater. Luckily no video of that appeared on the internet. But Sherman's law says you will only fall in the water on the coldest days. Your problems getting out almost always occur when your fins slip on the slimy boat ramp. Or when you turn your back, and your float tube blows out in the lake.

Once underway, you propel yourself backwards with flutter kicks. It is a disaster if your fin comes off, especially if it sinks, so take great care in fin selection and how you put them on. Don't go out in high winds and don't go far in moderate winds. Weak propulsion and limited range are the greatest flaw in float tubes compared to pontoon boats.

Next month, I'll talk about how to catch fish in local lakes from a float tube.



Happy wife, happy life.

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General Information on Personal Locator Beacon & Satellite Messenger Devices (January 2024) – Vance Thompson

1. TERMINOLOGY/DEFINITIONS:

- a. **PERSONAL LOCATOR BEACON (PLB) DEVICES:** These devices only send emergency location information. They do not provide emergency or non-emergency messaging.
- b. **SATELLITE MESSENGER DEVICES:** Any device that sends (and maybe receives) emergency and/or non-emergency messages is a Satellite Messenger Device.
- c. **SATELLITE S.O.S:** Satellite SOS is simply, albeit a very important, function or mode on Satellite Messenger Devices, PLBs, and more recently smartphones like the iPhone 14, 15.
- d. **GPS:** Most, if not all the devices reviewed in the websites listed below have GPS antennas that provide GPS information. It is a simple matter for software to be provided that can help with navigation BUT navigation drains the battery so having a device with navigation features may not be the best choice. Smartphones are far better for navigation and drain their battery less. Commonly used, wilderness navigation apps for smartphones include Gaia, Caltopo, and OnX.

2. WEBSITES TO OBTAIN PRODUCT-SPECIFIC DETAILS:

- a. ***The 5 Best Satellite Messengers of 2024: NOTE: The website actually reviews the 10 devices shown on page 2 of this document.***

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[https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/topics/camping-and-hiking/best-personal-locator-beacon.](https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/topics/camping-and-hiking/best-personal-locator-beacon)

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b. **GARMIN:**

○ **inReach Messenger Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/garmin-inreach-messenger>

○ **inReach Mini 2 Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/garmin-inreach-mini-2>

○ **GPSMAP 66i Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/garmin-gpsmap-66i>

c. **ACR Bivy Stick Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/acr-bivy-stick>

d. **ZOLEO Satellite Communicator Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/zoleo-satellite-communicator>

e. **Somewear Global Hotspot Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/somewear-global-hotspot>

f. **Ocean Signal rescueME PLB1 Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/ocean-signal-rescueme-plb1>

g. **SPOT X Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/spot-x>

h. **ACR ResQLink View Review:**

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/acr-resqlink-view>

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i. ***iPhone 14 Review:***

<https://www.outdoorgearlab.com/reviews/camping-and-hiking/personal-locator-beacon/iphone-emergency-sos>

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