

# *Fly Lines*

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*The official publication of the British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers*

Winter 2006

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## *Fly Lines*

*Fly Lines* is the official publication of the British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers and is published four times a year.

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Members as well as guest writers are invited to submit articles, photographs and artwork related to the pursuit of fly fishing. Send unsolicited material, with a self addressed stamped envelope for return to:

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Art Lingren photo

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### Dues are due for 2007

We want to thank all clubs and members for their past support; it is that time of year again to renew your membership. Membership is open to all who *support the objectives of the Federation.*

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Clubs: \$15 plus \$10 for each member (includes \$5 for insurance coverage)  
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Dan Cahill working the RDP intruder on Vancouver Island

### **Presidents Report December 2006**

On November 23, Peter Caverhill (Past President), Dennis Maxwell (Education Committee chair) and I attended a one day workshop hosted by the Freshwater Fisheries Society of BC (FFSBC). As the majority of you are undoubtedly aware, FFSBC is responsible for delivering the hatchery program for freshwater fisheries. The purpose of the workshop was to update stakeholders on the studies and programs that have been initiated to address the decline in angler numbers as indicated by the continued decrease in angling license sales. The funding for the society is derived from license sales and sales are declining. I know many find it hard to believe that angler numbers are down, especially when we are on our favorite water. Declining license sales are not isolated to this province but are occurring throughout Canada and the United States.

The first stakeholder workshop, to develop an action plan to address declining angler participation, was held in the fall of 2004 with a subsequent workshop in January 2005. Many potential reasons for declining angler numbers have identified. They include: an increase in our urban population that has less interest in fishing or opportunity to access fishing (thus fewer young people are being taught to fish); a shift in the ethnic mix of our

population which means that many individuals have never had exposure to sport fishing themselves and subsequently their sons and daughter are not exposed to the sport.

A key component in the strategy for increasing angler participation has been the Learn to Fish (L2F) program which the FFSBC launched in 2005. Basically the L2F program teaches participants about fish identification, tackle, knots, casting (not fly casting at this time), proper fish handling, regulations, and angling locations. In 2006 the Society hired 12 university students to deliver the program. The program was offered at various locations in the southern half of the province. Fish ponds were constructed at the Fraser Valley Trout Hatchery in Abbotsford and participants were allowed to return five times to partake in the catch and release fishery. The FFSBC does not see itself as being fully involved in offering the L2F as an on going program; they feel this program can be offered by non government organizations (NGO) or as a business.

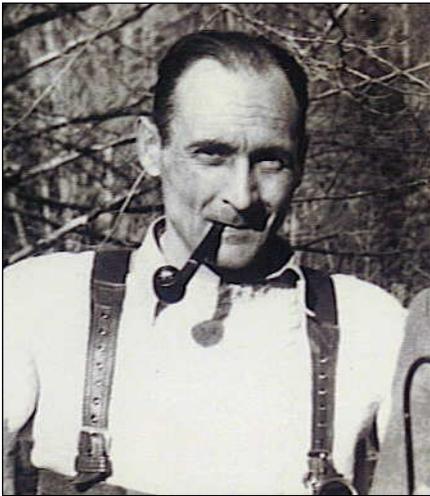
Increasing and or improving angler access is seen as another critical component of the angler participation program. The FFSBC has some seed money available to assist with projects such as trail improvement, fishing piers, boat launch sites etc. Liability insurance is certainly one of the major stumbling blocks with many of the aforementioned projects. The Society is looking into insurance issues, but one possible solution for NGOs would be to partner with municipal or regional governments.

I am sure that many of you will question the need to increase angler participation. I have, since we all wish we could save our favorite fishing spot from the crowds (okay for ourselves). The reality is that, as the number of anglers decrease, so does the funding required to the support recreational fishery and so will the pool of volunteers willing to step forward and devote their time and energy to work for the preservation and improvement of the fishery.

Before I sign off I want to point out that, for the most part, the issues we face in British Columbia are not unique to our province. The same issues can be found throughout North America and beyond. I just picked up my November issue of Fly Fishing and Fly Tying (published in Scotland so you know it is verrrry good ; okay I was born in Scotland so therefore automatically recognize good literature), the editor's column discusses the decrease in youth angler participation and what actions are proposed to deal with the issues (details on this will be provided in the December issue. Magazine editors learned how to bait a hook long before the rest of us).

I want to wish everyone a Happy New Year and remember fish cannot talk so you must speak out on their behalf.

# Remembering Haig-Brown on the 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of His Death on October 9, 1976



## Introduction

By Art Lingren

*Roderick Haig-Brown  
February 21, 1908—October 9, 1976  
Our Fly -Fishing Father*

When he was living, Rod Haig-Brown influenced many fly fishers through his writing and since his death 30 years ago on October 9, 1976, his books have continued to influence new generations of fly fishers. In recent weeks, for a number of reasons, I have been thinking about Haig-Brown. A friend, Jeff Lee, has been doing research on Haig-Brown and in my conversations with him, Jeff has reminded me how important Haig-Brown's influence has been on me in my fly fishing and conservation activities.

Bob Taylor, one of my closest fly fishing companions and like-minded Haig-Brown enthusiast, died on July 5, 2006. A couple of months ago, Ron Grantham passed on to me some of Bob's files and included in them were copies of Haig-Brown's letters to Lee Straight starting from the first in 1946 through to the 1970s. Bob also kept files on the Haig-Brown Kingfisher Creek Society and The Haig-Brown House. It was in the Haig-Brown Kingfisher Creek Society file that I found a 7 May 1980 letter from Van Egan to Bob explaining to Bob the goals of the society and Van included in that correspondence his article "A Fishing House on a River." Rod Haig-Brown and Van Egan were the best of friends and Rod in the years before his death talked about rehabilitating Kingfisher Creek through the Haig-Brown property and that the house gets heritage status. Through Van's efforts and others, coho salmon again spawn in the creek that now flows through the Haig-Brown property and after Ann Haig-Brown's death in 1990 the house did get heritage status. However, when the Campbell Liberal government was elected back in 2001 through their core review process they abandoned heritage properties. These politicians, who have no respect for things before their time, determined it wasn't a core government function to preserve the heritage of British Columbians. The Haig-Brown properties and house for the next few years was managed by the Haig-Brown Institute but they are now the property of The City of Campbell River and the Campbell River Museum. Hopefully, the city and museum will do a better job of protecting the place where Campbell River's most famous son lived and wrote.

In my desire to provide Jeff Lee with the names of some fly fishers who Haig-Brown influenced, I asked Bill McMillan if he had met Rod or was he influenced through Haig-Brown's writing. Bill's response is a thoughtful tribute to Haig-Brown's influence on McMillan.

In closing some notes regarding the pictures in the following Haig-Brown tributes are appropriate. Jack Lillington (Pintail) took the photo of Rod Haig-Brown in this

Introduction. The portraits of Cotton and Walton come from the frontispiece of the 1825 printing of Sir John Hawkins' edition of the *The Compleat Angler or, Contemplative Man's Recreation* by I. Walton & C. Cotton. The drawing of Cotton's fishing hut is from the 1894 printing of *The Compleat Angler* by Isaak Walton and Charles Cotton, Richard Le Gallienne editor. The drawing of the Haig-Brown House is from *Fly Patterns of Roderick Haig-Brown* (1993) by Art Lingren.

### A Fishing House on a River

Written by Van Egan shortly after Haig-Brown's death



Roderick Haig-Brown like Charles Cotton lived beside the river he wrote about.

*Charles Cotton, the father of fly fishing*

Who was Charles Cotton? Serious fishermen consider him "father of fly fishing" as all fishermen, and non-fishermen, consider Isaak Walton "father of fishing". They know, too, that Cotton and Walton were not only contemporaries but close friends. They fished together, discoursed together, loved one another as father and son and

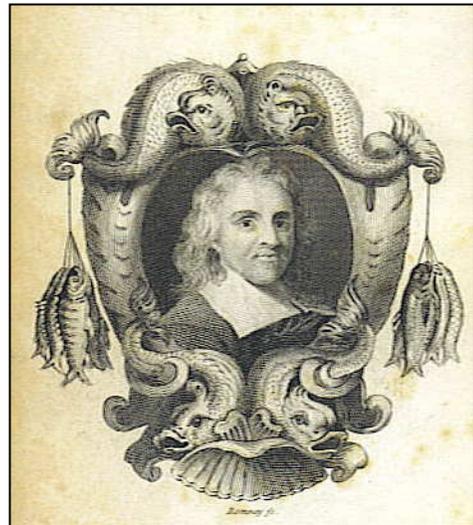
spoke of one another as father and son. When Walton's fifth edition of *The Compleat Angler* was published in 1676, the last edition during his lifetime, it included Part 2, "Being Instructions how to angle for a TROUT or GRAYLING in a clear stream." This was Cotton's contribution, sent to Walton for his approval rather shortly before publication time.

*Isaak Walton, the father of fishing*

Approval was immediate and enthusiastic in a letter signed "Your most affectionate Father and Friend, Isaak Walton." In Cotton's book is the legendary advice to fish "fine and far off" and in it, too, is a description of his Fishing House, built in 1674. Remarkably, Cotton's Fishing House stands yet today beside the River Dove and is perhaps fishing's greatest shrine.

Could not we in North America have an equivalent shrine? The possibility exists.

A few years before Haig-Brown died he and his wife Ann, with their children's blessing, signed over to the Government of British Columbia their 19-acre farm for inclusion in the Green Belt Lands. The agreement included half, the assessed value of the property at that time and the right of either, or both, to live out their lives in the house.



Since his death the recurring question has been how to best protect this heritage for the safekeeping of future generations.

One answer has been to establish a stream rehabilitation project on the farm. Kingfisher Creek, which passes through the south side of the Haig-Brown farm, sinks out of sight in a boggy alder bottom while a fork of it has been diverted through culverts and under business properties to spill uselessly into the Campbell River well below its former confluence. Little of this fork sees any sunlight and no longer can spawning salmon reach the fork on the Haig-Brown property. Nonetheless, it would not be an overly optimistic plan to bring the two forks together and rechannel the main branch through the Haig-Brown farm. Bob Hearst, a program director with the Salmon Enhancement Program believes it can be done, but to make it productive in relation to the costs will require some additional low lands bordering the south side of the Haig-Brown property. The land in question is 26 acres, has industrial potential and an asking price of \$250,000. A Haig-Brown/Kingfisher Creek Steering Committee has been working to raise the money but so far is unsuccessful. They have an option on the 26 acres which runs out September 1st.

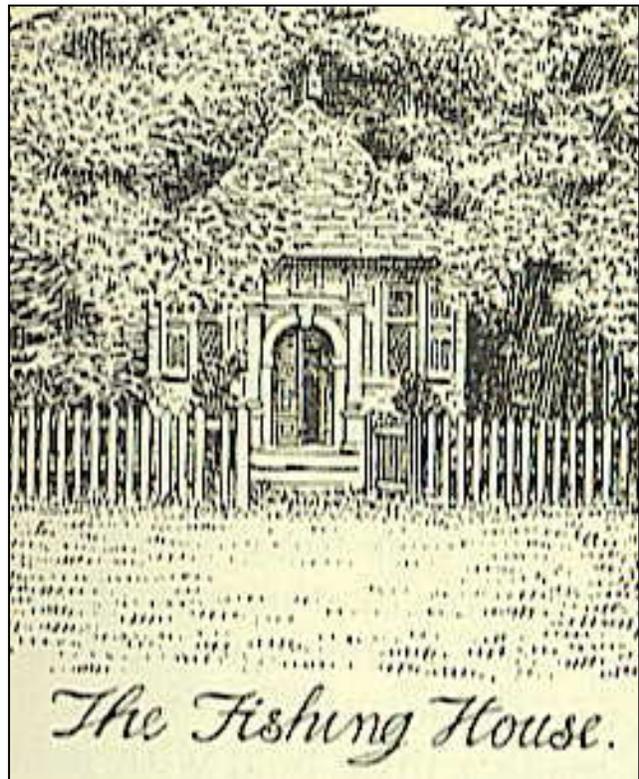
The rehabilitation of Kingfisher Creek is something that Haig-Brown once envisioned and would please him immensely. Further it would give purpose to the property and attract the public interest and the care necessary to preserve the natural setting and home in which this illustrious writer worked.

Another answer, and one that could well be part of the first just described, is giving the farm an official Heritage designation. This would provide reasonable preservation of the present property but not in itself aid in the restoration of Kingfisher Creek. But perhaps it is the more important of the two. For unlike any angling writer since Walton and Cotton, Haig-Brown enjoys an enthusiastic and serious following without equal. Considering the place of angling in literature, perhaps first among recreations, we have had in our time a major, if not the major, contributor to a vast international library. Haig-Brown's followers revere him.

*Cotton's Fishing House built in 1674*

What all anglers feel, Rod articulated; why we fish, Rod told us, and we could understand; when we feared dangers to our rivers and its fish, Rod led us. He was writer and teacher,

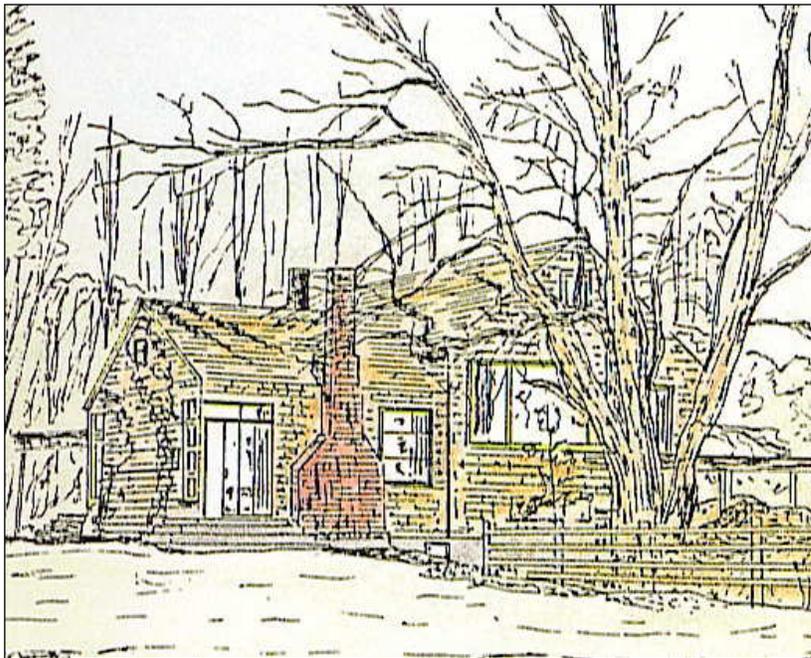
conservationist and diplomat, philosopher and angler. Because his legacy is in print, his death leaves less a void. As present generations do now, future generations will read him and be inspired. And as with Walton and Cotton, future generations will seek out the river he has immortalized.



Cotton built his Fishing House on the River Dove and embellished the archway over the door with the interwoven initials of himself and those of Isaak Walton. Above this, in stone, is the motto "Piscatoribus Sacrum". While the Fishing House suffered decay for some years following Cotton's death, it has been restored and kept in remarkably good condition. Its history can be followed through a long list of writers beginning with Cotton. From descriptions of its first elaborate wainscoted interior and marble table to its outer stone foundations, its pathways and plantings to the streamside of the River Dove, one can know it as though it were one's very own heritage. Indeed, we might with Cotton's enthusiastic pupil Viator agree when he said, "Why then I perceive I have some title here . . . ."

Edward Marston called Cotton's Fishing House "this remarkable temple sacred to all anglers". Like Viator, whose lectures from Cotton on "how to angle for a trout or grayling in a clear stream" and how to make the flies which "may peradventure take a Trout this morning" took place within its walls, an extraordinary number of modern anglers has been given instruction within the Haig-Brown House on the River Campbell. Many of the questions came through the mail and many and lengthy were the answers. Even more anglers appeared on his doorstep and all were made as welcome as if they were among the mighty of the angling world, who also have made regular visits to talk with him. One could be as comfortable within his presence as with one of his delightful books. Many still come.

Today people stop by to see where he lived, what the river looks like from his window, to ask questions of Ann about his work. Some come to see his fishing tackle which has been collected and catalogued. These are significant personal tributes by people who have been positively affected by reading Haig-Brown. They convey greatness on the man. They will continue so long as there is something to see when they arrive, something that adds a tangible link with the inspirations of his writings. It is time we North Americans had our Fishing House, our "temple sacred to all anglers".



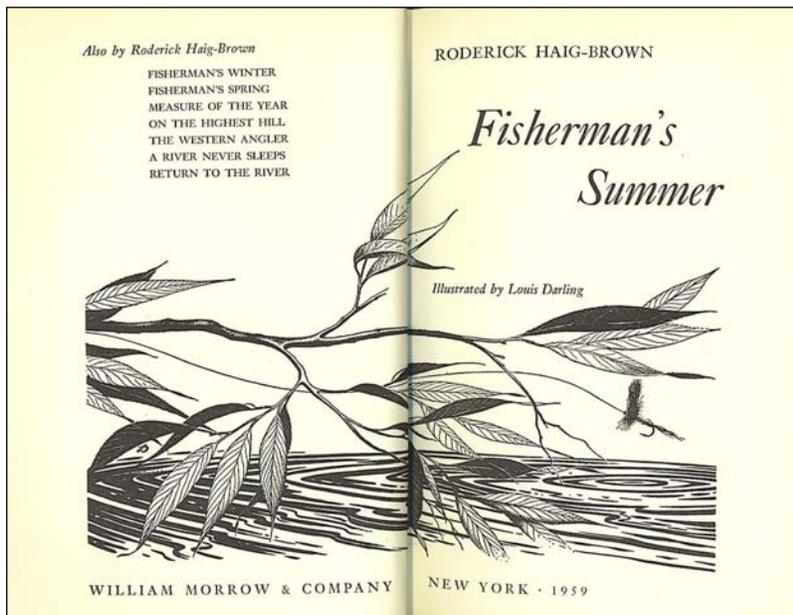
British Columbia attracts fishermen the world over. They come for its fish and for the environment in which they find them. They have in the past come to visit our most notable angling author. In a way they still do. On what better setting than Vancouver Island's beautiful Campbell River could our Fishing House be situated? *The Haig-Brown House—Our fishing house and where our father of fly fishing lived and wrote*

With what finer North American angling writer could it be associated? Whether visitor or resident, we all "have some title here".

## Thoughts on Roderick Haig-Brown

By Bill McMillan

I will remember when Haig-Brown died on October 9th. It happened to be the 6th anniversary of my first marriage. My wife and I were camped on the Deschutes River with our two children when she tried to tune in a station on the radio. The static momentarily cleared as we ate dinner with a quick news release about his death. I was stunned. The radio station blurred back to the usual static of reception in the canyon. My wife thought I had been stricken by a stroke or something ... not likely at age 31, but its unexpectedness took the breath right out of me.



I began reading Haig-Brown in 8th or 9th grade when our little library at Camas, Washington displayed *Fisherman's Summer* in its "new book" alcove in 1959. (I wrote a story about *Fisherman's Summer* and the subsequent depth of influence Haig-Brown's writings had on me in a 1996 magazine article titled "A Book with a Yellow Cover.") Thereafter, I read everything by him I could get my adolescent hands on.

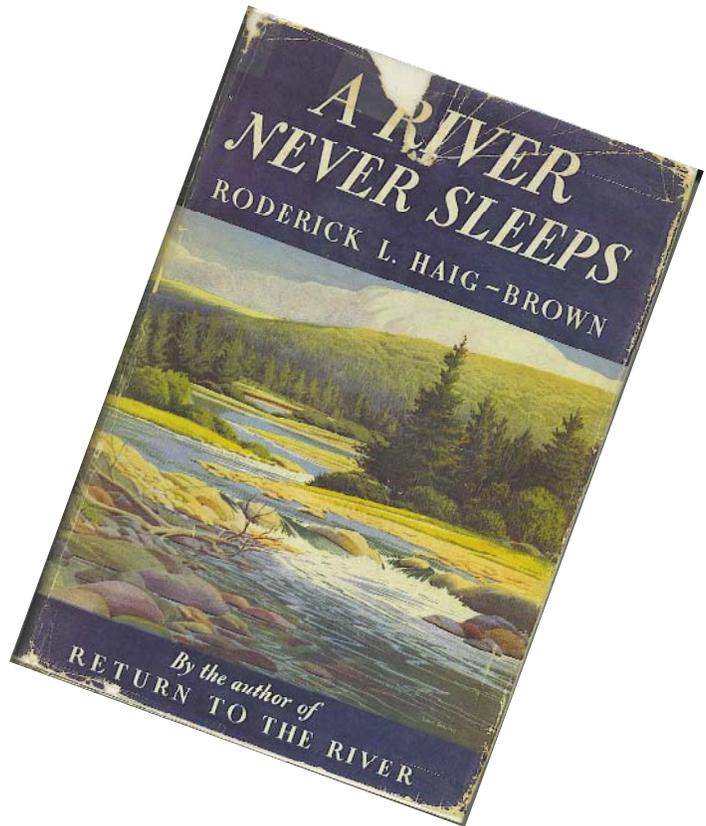
My most cherished book is the copy of *A River Never Sleeps* I bought in high school and subsequently read 2-3 times each year from that point until my early to mid 30s. As Thoreau wrote, "...just as the aged read their bibles." The book's cover dangles loose and has ink scribbles on it from when my son or daughter was 3-4 years old and just learning to doodle. The slip cover was discarded many years ago. Notes are in the margins and favored passages are underlined in several ink colors from readings at differing times.

In 1985 or 1986, Valerie kindly came down to Vancouver, WA to give the fly club I and another fellow organized back in 1975 (Clark-Skamania Flyfishers) a program. She stayed 2-3 days with one of our club members who had a larger house and visited with me one of those days on the Washougal River. I took her to a series of waterfall barriers that isolated wild summer-run steelhead from those of hatchery origin. This was first discovered, and increasingly verified, in volunteer snorkel surveys by the fly club. The idea for the snorkel surveys generated from my visits with Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Association members in the early 1980s, although I had long thought of doing so from the readings of Haig-Brown's scuba experiments on the Campbell many years before.

As I made lunch for Valerie afterward, I told her, "Maybe you got a feel today for the influence your father had on a boy who read his books and the direction of the life of the man who followed. I had a good strong father figure of my own. It was he who taught me fly fishing and the joy of the outdoors from a very early age. I was in no psychological need of a father. But *your* father also became *my* father. He came to me through books and taught me something of a larger responsibility that I probably would not have listened to coming from my own father. I am not alone. In fly fishing and conservation programs given over the years, I have met dozens of others who can similarly claim your father as also theirs. In some strange way you seemed a sister long before having met you. This is likely so for all of us who read your father's works and grew up as benefactors of his lessons disguised by fishing. Those few brief sketches of your mother and your family were left vague enough for all of us to quietly enter."

Valerie did not seem one inclined to unnecessarily show emotions, but there was a prolonged moment of hesitancy in her ability to respond.

In 1968 I was a young man of uncertain future, as were many young American men trying to sort their way through the complex decisions of right from wrong regarding the Vietnam war. I spent ten days on the Olympic Peninsula and then Vancouver Island traveling about alone trying to find consultation from what wisdom Nature might offer. I finally gravitated to Campbell River and found myself at a little primitive campsite along the river just upstream of the Quinsam's entry. I was stunned at my familiarity with a place I had otherwise never experienced beyond repeatedly read descriptions by Haig-Brown. At a point upstream, I sat mind adrift looking down at the powerhouse structure beside the Canyon Pool and understood the depth of Haig-Brown's grief. And just downstream there was the Upper Island Pool whose beauty of angling perfection remained despite the anguish of the concrete flaw. I had found "home" -- a moral rudder in a world of chaos. We must all continue to find meaning and beauty from a world that continually adjusts to imperfections through the evolution of natural processes that recreate Nature with an ever-changing face we often fail to initially recognize.



The next morning, before I left the Campbell with my necessary lesson, I walked downstream along the road to try and determine which might be the Haig-Brown house. My ability to socially interact with people was limited by inherent shyness. I never even considered trying to meet Haig-Brown. Nor did I ever consider writing to

him. I assumed that all people preferred their privacy to that of intrusion. After walking the short length of houses along the Campbell and then back upstream, I was quite sure that the brown house with a gray Jaguar sedan in front (that I could see through the fruit trees and other vegetation along the gravel driveway to it) had to be the house where *A River Never Sleeps* was written. I lifted my camera to take a photo, and suddenly felt like a thief. The camera went back into its case unused. I lingered a moment, gave a silent Thank You, and went on my way.

Two weeks later I rented a tiny fruit picker's cabin on the Yakima River. It was the first of several cabins that has come to determine my subsequent 38 years of living on rivers -- the Washougal, the Grande Ronde, and now the Skagit -- trying to assimilate the lessons from each as the Campbell had provided Haig-Brown. A life that has transitioned from fishing to fish and river conservation has inevitably followed, much as it had for the man whose lessons invisibly guided my choices.

(Note: Bill McMillan, of Washington State, has been involved with wild steelhead and salmon conservation for over 30 years. He fought long and hard for the wild steelhead runs of the Washougal River. He also developed fly fishing techniques to catch winter steelhead and wrote about this in his book "Dry Line Fishing for Winter Steelhead" -now out of print. Bill is currently involved with the wild fish conservation group Washington Trout as President.)

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## **Annual Awards**

It is important in the evolution of every organization to acknowledge and recognize the contributions and achievements for those few who contribute to the art and craft of fly fishing and conservation.

Understanding where we are is often helped by knowing where we've been, what has occurred, and who was involved. A look back to the people, places, and things of our past helps to give context and relevance to our organization and what we stand for. Our present achievements and future hopes are but an extension of the anglers and angles of the past. The BCFFF has a number of awards and it is time to consider who should be recognized in 2007. The BCFFF board reviews nominations at its March meeting. Please forward yours or your club's nominations with supporting documentation to Art Lingren, awards chair at [artlin8@telus.net](mailto:artlin8@telus.net) by February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007.

### **The Conservation Award**

Given to that BCFFF club in recognition for their contribution to the conservation and enhancement of BC's fishery for a specific conservation-related project.

### **The Appreciation Award**

Given to that individual, group or business in recognition for their support of the BCFFF. It is customary to give the AGM's hosting clubs this award, as well, it is given to individuals and businesses who contributed significantly to the event.

### **The Gilly Award**

Given in recognition to that BCFFF member who has continuously given exceptional service to BC's Fishery, the Sport of Fly Fishing, and the BC Federation of Fly Fishers.

### **The Angul Award**

Given to that individual, who is not necessarily a BCFFF member, for their outstanding contribution to the heritage of the Art & Science of Fly Fishing in British Columbia.

### **Arthur William Nation Award**

In the spirit of Bill Nation, given to a young fly fisher conservationist for their work in BC's freshwater fisheries.

### **Jack Shaw Fly Tying Award**

Given to a BCFFF member who excels at the art and craft of fly tying.

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**BCFFF**  
**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**  
**MAY 25-27, 2007**

**HELD AT:**  
EXECUTIVE PLAZA HOTEL  
& CONFERENCE CENTRE  
405 North Road,  
Coquitlam, BC

HOSTED BY



## ***Fly-Fishing Pioneers & Legends of the Northwest***

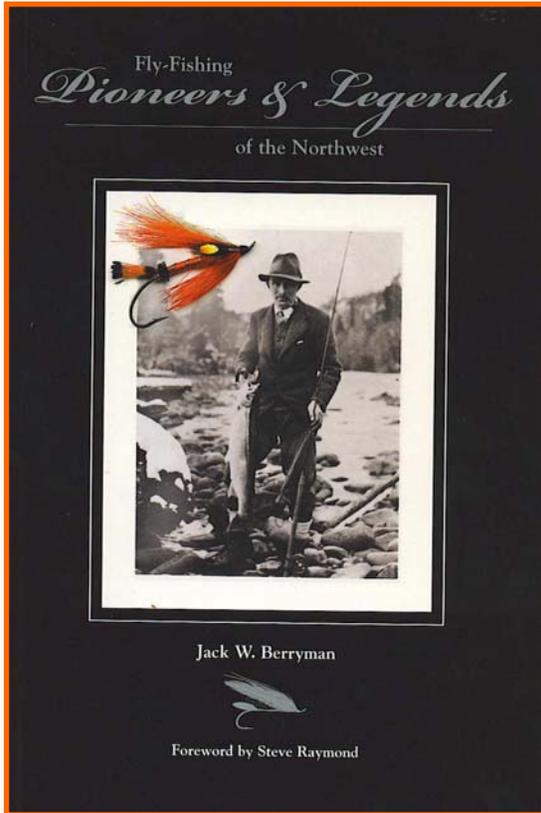
Jack W. Berryman

Northwest Fly Fishing, LLC.

600 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., Suite 512

Seattle, WA, 98104

2006, 206 pp. Fold over softcover \$29.95US



Starting in 2000, 23 of Jack Berryman's Pioneers & Legends articles have been featured in *Northwest Fly Fishing* magazine. This book is that collection of articles of which four pioneers are from British Columbia, four from California, one from Idaho, four from Montana, five from Oregon, and five from Washington state. Each article documents the fly fishing activities of the pioneer and each piece is well illustrated with black and white and colour pictures. If the pioneers was responsible for developing a fly or flies many of them are included in the book and for some John Luke has dressed exquisite samples of the tier's flies.

Berryman organized the book's chapters in alphabetical order by state and province. British Columbia's pioneers are the lead and included in that chapter are articles on Arthur William (Bill) Nation a Kamloops trout guide and innovative fly designer, General Noel Money a Stamp River steelheader and fly

tier, Tommy Brayshaw an angler, artist and fly tier, and Roderick Haig-Brown a writer, conservation and fly fisher. A picture of Tommy Brayshaw holding a Coquihalla River steelhead graces the cover of Berryman's book. There are many other notable anglers in the other USA chapters, many of which will be familiar to those who have read books in which some of them appear such as Trey Combs' *Steelhead Fly Fishing and Flies*.

I was given the opportunity to see parts of the book prior to publishing and asked for an endorsement. I wrote that we are fortunate that Jack Berryman has a deep appreciation for the sport's history and has documented the many achievements of Pacific Northwest pioneer fly fishers in this book. From reading about them you will learn that our Pacific Northwest fly-fishing history is second to none. My only disappointment is that that the book only comes in softcover. I prefer hardbound copies for my library.

**Reviewed by Art Lingren**

## **Province Initiates a Fresh Water Fishing Regulations Advisory Process**

In early December, key angling groups were notified by the Provincial Ministry of Environment that they would be establishing an advisory process and advisory committee on fresh water fishing regulations. A “Terms of Reference” document has been provided. As this explains, the job of the new Freshwater Fishing Regulations Advisory Committee (FFRAC) will be to regularly review angling regulations that are provincial in scope or are regionally important (high profile). The basis for the review process will be to look for ways to make angling regulations more palatable to present and future freshwater anglers. “Discouraging” freshwater angling regulations have been identified as one of the reasons behind declining participation in angling in BC.

The Committee will consist of 8 members, from established angling umbrella groups (5 from non-commercial and 3 from commercial recreational angling groups). Each organization will have an “alternate” who will function in the absence of the main committee member. In addition, there will be Provincial and Federal government members. Members will be appointed for three year terms. The Committee will meet two times annually (spring and fall) but will have conference calls and other sessions as needed. Committee members must have a “holistic” approach to considering regulation issues. This means that folks must try to be more broad-minded than perhaps their own personal or organizational agendas suggest. Consensus on discussion issues is a goal, but if this is not possible, dissenting views will be presented to the Fish and Wildlife Director, along with Committee recommendations. As issues arise, Committee members will seek feedback from their organizations.

What does this mean for BCFFF? We feel that it is essential that we take part in this advisory process (if it is decided that BCFFF should fill one of the 5 spots). Fisheries conservation and quality angling opportunities depend upon specialized angling regulations, so we need to be part of the decision making on these regulations. We also need to be concerned about the future, and where angling advocates will come from. This becomes worrisome if interest in angling is declining, so we need to find ways to keep interest in fishing alive and well.

Being part of this advisory process means that we must find suitable volunteers (two) who are willing to take on the job for the next 3 years. It means that BCFFF must also cover any travel expenses to attend meetings.

Now, please allow me to rant a bit here. BCFFF is not new to participating in these types of advisory processes. We have been involved in them for over 30 years. These days, the challenge for us is to find willing volunteers, especially those that have not already been around the mulberry bush three or four times already. We like to think that we are protecting the interests of all BC fly anglers by taking on roles such as this fishing regulations advisory process. However, telling folks that we are doing these good deeds for them doesn't seem to cut the mustard when we try to get new fly fishing clubs or individuals to join BCFFF. It's a dilemma for sure!

So, we'll keep you informed on this fishing regulations advisory process as time progresses.

**Pete Caverhill**  
**BCFFF, Immediate Past President**