



Flylines

FALL 2016

October 1, 2016



FROM THE DESK OF THE PRESIDENT

Rich Ronyecz

The 2016 AGM was held at Corbett Lake Lodge last April 30. A number of years ago this meeting was regularly held at Corbett Lake, so it was pleasing to meet familiar faces such as Art Lingren and Peter McVey. The main body of the meeting was review of the BCFFF Annual Report, which can be viewed on our website: bcfff.bc.ca. One of our most significant achievements was an upgrade on the website; everyone should have a look. The Webmaster is Jesse Blake. Our new executive is listed on the **Contacts** page. Welcome to new member Brandon Charlesworth who has agreed to stand as our new Treasurer. Many thanks to Jim McEwan, who did an exemplary job as treasurer for many years.

Sept 2016 BC Federation of Fly Fishers update

Salmon returns are generally weak this fall with the smallest Fraser River sockeye return ever recorded, along with weak pink and coho runs. Chinook stocks are weak across the board. Ocean survival remains poor so we must ensure human impact is minimal on weaker salmon and steelhead stocks. The BCFFF, SSBC and BCFDF have partnered in discussions to save dwindling Thompson River steelhead. Their numbers are greatly impacted by commercial and First Nations gill net fisheries in the river. Our goal is to have zero steelhead bycatch in these salmon fisheries. Anglers and Industry also need to limit their impact. BCFFF and SSBC are supporting Bill C 228 introduced by MP Fin Donnelly. This bill will make closed containment mandatory for salmon farming on the Pacific coast within 5 years. Dwindling salmon stocks cannot handle the diseases juvenile wild salmon smolts are being exposed to while migrating through open net salmon farms.

BCFFF update August 2016

Summer is in full swing and the salmon are returning to their natal streams with anglers in hot pursuit. Some species seem to be thriving in certain areas like wild Alberni sockeye, while Fraser river sockeye are dwindling.

On the political front the BCFFF has been lobbying for selective commercial and First Nations fisheries to protect less numerous salmon species and rivers with low numbers of fish. This is best achieved with selective terminal fisheries. Gill nets continue to be a problem for summer steelhead with many fish returning to the Dean River wearing net scars. Most of these fish caught in a net do not survive the encounter, let alone survive to spawn next spring. These fish are much too valuable to our heritage and the economy to be wasted as bycatch. We advocate changing fishing methods on rivers, especially the Fraser and Thompson Rivers. The legendary Thompson steelhead are an extreme conservation concern with numbers constantly dwindling. We support terminal selective fishing methods such as fish weirs with First Nations and commercial fishermen splitting the excess salmon once escapement goals have been met. This will result in protection of weaker salmon and non-target species such as steelhead.

So yes we need your support to make our voice stronger. Sign up for our online monthly news feed and you may join us for the paltry sum of 20 dollars. We value your support. http://bcfff.bc.ca/mem_membership.php#individual

Our Haig - Brown House Pinkfest gathering was super fun July 25. Many Island clubs had members attending to share stories and flies, and many of us were able to spend some leisure time on the Campbell River chasing the humpies. Returns were later than usual this year leading some anglers to success with others limiting their enjoyment to the perfect day and camaraderie.

Those who took in the tour of Haig – Brown's library and the history of Roderick Haig - Brown from the wonderful HB House Caretaker and Historian Catherine were delighted. Join us next year for this annual event on a Sunday August 10th. This is a bit later to take full advantage of the pink salmon run.

The BCFFF has booked Corbett lake again for next Spring for a fishout. Anne at Corbett Lake will be taking all reservations for accommodations and meals this year. Stay tuned for the announcement of the BCFFF AGM to be hosted by the Mid-Island Castaways in Parksville /Qualicum next Spring. The BCFFF is looking to promote conservation and fly fishing by hosting a fly fishing video/movie, so let us know if your community is interested in a fund raiser for your conservation concern.

CONTACTS

Board of Directors

Rich Ronyecz	President
Phil Rogers	Vice-president
Jesse Blake	VP/Webmaster
Peter Caverhill	Past Secretary/director
Brandon Charlesworth	Treasurer
Ken Burgess	Membership/Gilly Fund
Kyle Sawayama	Past president
Lloyd Erickson	Newsletter
Dean Houston	Director
Len Piggin	Director
Trystan Willmott	Director
Don Grimway	Family Fishing Weekend
Art Lingren	BCFFF Historian

Affiliated Clubs

Cariboo Chilcotin Flyfishers
Comox Valley Fly Fishers
Cowichan Fly Fishers
Haig-Brown Fly Fishing Assn
Island Waters Fly Fishers
Kalamalka Fly Fishers
Kamloops Fly Fishers
Long Beach Flyfishers
Loons Flyfishing Club
Mid Island Castaways
Osprey Fly Fishers
Penticton Fly Fishers
Totem Fly Fishers
West Coast Fly Fishers

Mail: PO Box 41023, RPO Woodgrove, Nanaimo, BC V9T 6M7

Email: general@bcfff.bc.ca

Newsletter editor email: acre5age@gmail.com

Website: bcfff.bc.ca or [Facebook.com/BCFFF](https://www.facebook.com/BCFFF)

Membership: Open to all persons, and members of associated clubs. Direct memberships are \$20 payable to the Membership director.

The Quality Angling Experience Concept



April 2016 (updated by Tristan Willmott)

Introduction and Objectives

The British Columbia Federation of Fly Fishers (BCFFF) completed an original document titled *Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters in British Columbia* in 2003. This previous document outlined the important resource that occurs in British Columbia with regard to Quality Angling and Quality Waters. The premise of the document introduced key characteristics to help define the attributes of the resource and discussed general management implications. The following represents an update to the original paper, builds upon the viewpoints that were introduced and develops the concept of Quality Angling Experiences in the context of current and future resource management options.

The BCFFF believes that it is essential to describe and clarify the attributes that define and shape Quality Angling Experiences (QAEs). An essential aspect of maintaining the integrity of British Columbia's Quality Waters and the concept of QAEs is the recognition and management of current and impending threats that have the potential to erode the inherent values of the quality angling resource. By describing the various elements that are associated with QAEs, our aim is to identify these threats and develop measures to ensure the protection of a very important resource in perpetuity.

Quality Angling and Quality Waters – British Columbia's Unique Resource

Anglers in BC are extremely fortunate to have direct access to a diverse collection of rivers, lakes, estuaries and beaches offering angling opportunities for numerous species of fish. The opportunities are generally unlimited and covered under the nominal cost of an annual fishing licence. In other parts of the world, especially in Europe and Great Britain, the majority of waters are privately owned. Fly-fishing is generally limited to "put and take" fisheries, where an angler purchases a day ticket, which entitles the angler to a bag limit of stocked (hatchery raised) fish. The cost to fish on a stocked lake for a day is considerably more than the cost of an annual licence in BC. Opportunities for more unique angling experiences for wild fish in remote settings (for example the Scottish Atlantic salmon rivers) are generally cost prohibitive for the average angler. While this scenario limits the number of anglers on any given managed reach of river, which maintains the quality of the angling experience, it comes at a significant monetary cost to the angler. Similar examples of unique, generally cost-prohibitive angling experiences occur in

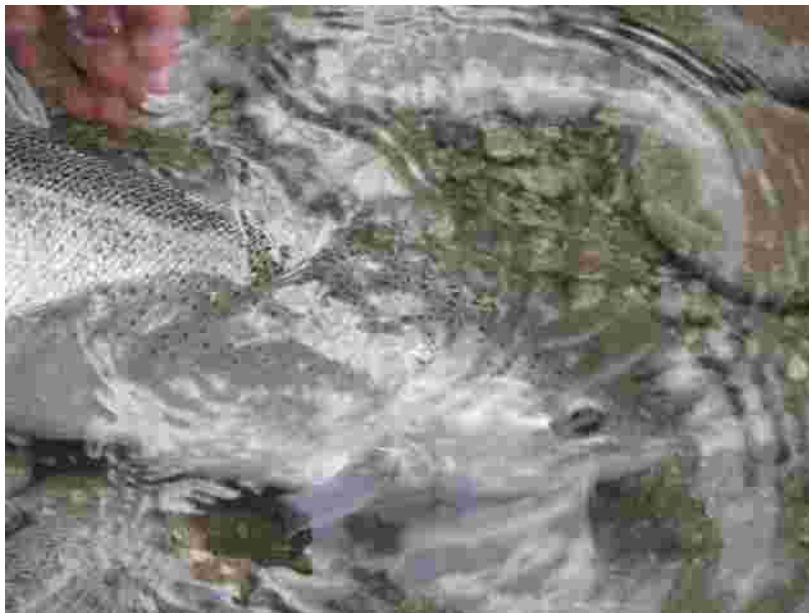


places such as Norway, on the Atlantic Salmon Rivers, or on the Kamchatka Peninsula steelhead rivers in Russia.

There is an interesting conundrum that is created by our unique range of opportunity and immediate “availability to all” angling resource in British Columbia. While anglers appreciate having the luxury of almost unlimited access at a very low cost, crowding is becoming a problem, which generally decreases the quality of an angling experience. While an angler may yearn for an uncrowded fishing experience akin to a beat on a Scottish river, would that same angler be willing to give up the unlimited range of accessibility and low cost of angling in order to achieve that experience? Ultimately, QAEs can be maintained by controlling angler numbers, which in the case of the examples provided in other countries, is achieved through monetary cost. This is a very effective tool, but is not applicable to the BC system. The challenge, in light of the underlying BC angling premise of unlimited access (generally speaking) and low cost of angling, is to maintain the low costs and range of access while still allowing for QAEs.

The Quality Angling Experience – Elusive Concept or Tangible Goal?

It is important to try to understand what is meant by a Quality Angling Experience, if we are to devise methods to protect and promote quality angling opportunities on quality waters. An individual angler may have a clear personal ideology about what constitutes



a QAE, which is likely going to differ from another angler’s perspective. Some anglers may place more of an importance on the numbers of fish caught in any given angling session, where-as another angler may put more emphasis on the surrounding environment (perhaps a wilderness setting) when defining what a QAE entails. An angler’s overall state of

well-being may be intertwined with specific angling experiences, which highlights the difficulty in trying to isolate what actually constitutes a QAE.

There are too many variables to pinpoint the precise definition of a QAE, and it would best be viewed as more of a concept or general ideology as opposed to a tangible, easily definable feature. **The BCFFF takes the stance that the concept of a QAE should lean heavily towards conservation and using angling techniques that help to reduce the impacts on a resource that is facing numerous challenges, especially when considering a species such as steelhead.** These challenges include (but are not limited to) human-induced climate change, unfavourable ocean survival and

destruction of freshwater rearing habitat. Increased angler efficiency, in terms of accessibility, more effective fishing equipment/techniques and the availability of information (i.e. Internet resources) is stacking the odds in favour of the angler and increasing the impacts on a natural resource at a time when the resource is dwindling. Considering the current and predicted future uncertainty in the viability of species such as wild steelhead, the BCFFF believes that resource management should always err on the conservative side (Precautionary Principle).

The BCFFF provides the following main attributes, which we feel help to provide clarity for what the QAE concept should consist of:

- Uncrowded waters, which is a difficult concept to define in itself. We believe that it means that a water is shared by an optimal number of anglers who share an ethic that seeks to protect and conserve the fish and fishery. Different types of water will be associated with varying sensitivities to crowding. Rivers tend to be more sensitive in this regard, where-as lakes generally have a greater capacity;
- Aesthetically pleasing surroundings, which generally refers to the depth and range of natural vistas, lack of development and the degree of “wilderness or wilderness-like appeal”;
- Challenging conditions, where angling experience is enhanced through the combination of skill and knowledge of the fish and its environment. The QAE concept should focus less on numbers of fish caught and more on the reward of catching fish with challenging angling methods. Being able to learn from an angling experience should be an important factor in any QAE. If catching fish becomes too easy through the usage of techniques that put the advantage heavily in the angler’s favour, a conservation issue can often result and opportunities for learning and fulfillment are decreased.
- Water quality and fish habitat conditions that are conducive for a sustainable, healthy fish population;
- A reasonable supply of challenging fish to catch, such as unique runs of summer-run steelhead. The opportunity to take (kill) fish must never be factored into what constitutes a QAE; and



- Fly-fishing opportunity – some waters are uniquely suited to catching fish by fly fishing because of the physical nature of the water or the behaviour of the fish species present, which offers unique angling experiences.

Threats to the QAE Concept

The BCFFF concept of a QAE and the values attributed to the concept face numerous threats. Perhaps the most significant threat comes from the ideology/behaviour of individual anglers. To try to change an angler's way of thinking and encourage the usage of techniques that would result in less fish caught is a very difficult undertaking. The emphasis, however, must be on conservation and decreasing our collective impact on the resource. This will ultimately help to increase the longevity of opportunities to fish for species such as wild steelhead.

Individual angler etiquette can also have negative implications with regard to QAEs, with specific regard to overcrowding and allowing equal opportunities for access to a particular fishing area. Proper angler etiquette can help decrease the frustration that is often attributed to heavy fishing pressure.

An increase in the use of boats (especially jet boats) and helicopters is allowing for increased access to areas that may once have been accessible to people willing to put



in the time and effort to access by more traditional means (e.g. hiking). Internet resources are providing quick and easy reference guides allowing for increased access to previously less well known fishing areas. This increase in access puts obvious limitations on what may once have been QAEs in

previously uncrowded areas.

Guiding operations tend to exacerbate problems associated with overcrowding, especially on non-classified waters where guiding constraints are currently very minimal. The main driving factor behind any guide's business is the ability (sometimes at any cost) to ensure the clients catch fish. This puts pressure on the resource and can limit the availability of both fish and fishing areas for the wider angling community. The BCFFF salutes and encourages both clients and guides that focus on the Quality Angling Experience.

The QAE Concept as a Conservation Tool and Recommended Measures to Promote and Protect the QAE Concept

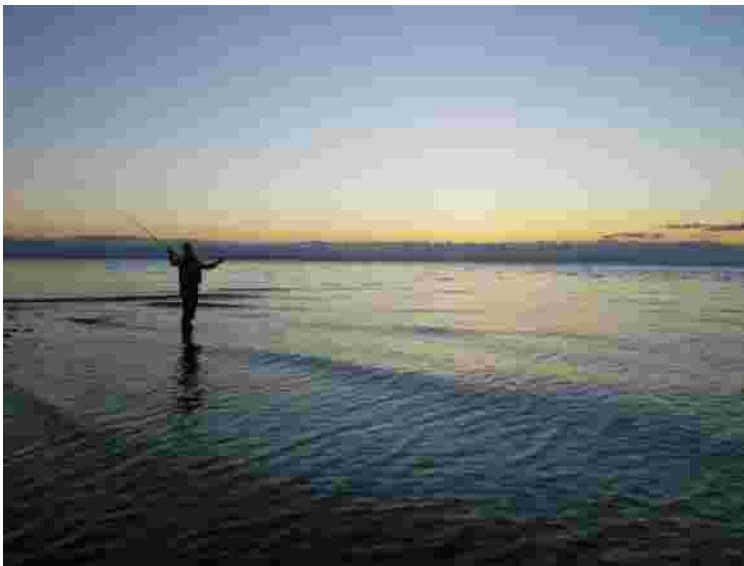
The BCFFF constitution states that "... the Federation will take actions to safeguard or enhance the interests of fish and preserve, maintain and develop angling opportunities for BC." Now that we have an idea of the QAE concept and the attributes that the BCFFF considers as being appropriate when defining the concept, there is the opportunity to further develop the concept as a conservation tool, or at least as a principle for directing positive action. The concept can also be used to maintain and develop angling opportunities in a responsible manner that reflects the intent of the QAE concept. The QAE concept, therefore, complies with the BCFFF constitution. The following measures are provided as potential options that would help to promote and protect the QAE concept:

Limiting the Effectiveness of All Anglers (including fly-fishers)

In order to address one of the main threats to the QAE concept and protect the integrity of quality waters, individual anglers need to change their angling ideology. This may seem to be an impossible task, but education, ideally through inclusion in regulation, or at least through guidelines included in regulations synopses, would help explain the concept. Some anglers are already open to the idea and are practicing fishing techniques that limit the impact on the resource. Movements such as the "Keep em Wet" campaign are helping to underscore the importance of limiting angling impact on wild steelhead through the proper handling of fish and suggesting self-imposed catch limits.

Modifying Resource Management Regulations Associated with Harvest Opportunities

Regulatory control associated with harvest limits and opportunities should be considered, as harvest incentives generally result in overcrowding. At the very least, enforcement should be increased for harvest fisheries, to ensure that illegal activities



such as snagging and/or flossing are addressed. More significant penalties for infractions should also be implemented. This would help decrease the number of anglers present by discouraging the "anglers" intent on fishing illegally, which would increase the overall quality of the angling experience for others. Increased enforcement would also, of course, help

decrease the impacts on the fish. Fly-fishing-only regulations may be considered as appropriate conservation tools under specific circumstances, as angling opportunities/effort can be maintained while decreasing the pressure on the resource (i.e. reducing the number of fish caught). Methods that are extremely effective should be discouraged, or catch and release limits imposed to decrease the impacts on the fish.

Improving Angler Etiquette

Anglers also need to become more aware of proper angler etiquette, which again should be addressed through appropriate education, regulation changes and/or building on applicable guidelines included in regulations synopses. Angling practices that involve claiming a particular run or pool for an extended length of time need to change. Simple concepts such as rotating through a pool and not “stepping in” below an angler can go a long way in maintaining a QAE, especially on waters subject to heavy fishing pressure.

Ensuring All User-Groups Have an Equal Say in the Management of the Resource

Many anglers (both resident and non-resident) that are attracted to BC’s quality angling experiences are fly-fishers. These anglers contribute substantially to the provincial economy. It could be argued that fly fishers generally seek and demand QAEs; therefore, fly fishers must be given adequate consideration in the management of the fishery resource.

Collecting and Maintaining Appropriate Resource-use Data

In order to make informed decisions about the fishery resource and to help maintain the concept of a QAE, appropriate data needs to be collected and made available to resource managers. By knowing the various attributes of anglers (e.g. total numbers, place of origin, length of stay for visiting anglers and total guiding activity), appropriate management decisions can be formulated. The data would be particularly useful in dealing with issues such as overcrowding and fishing effort, especially on waters where there is a conservation concern.

Improving the Management of Guiding Activity

Guiding activity should be more carefully managed, especially on non-classified waters. Limitations and constraints on guide licences should not be focused purely on Classified Waters. This would help to maintain QAEs for resident anglers and help to address overcrowding concerns.

Implementing Improved Controls on Boat Use

Limiting boat use (especially jet boats) and helicopter access through regulatory changes would help to prevent the erosion of QAEs by reducing overcrowding and also by limiting the effectiveness and efficiency of associated angling methods. This would help conserve the resource for the enjoyment of everybody (level the playing field). Power boat bans, implementing boat-free areas, eliminating fishing from boats and using horsepower restrictions (through regulation) are all measures that could be used more frequently to address the threat posed by a relatively recent increase in boat use.

Limiting Angler Access

Limiting access is an effective measure in maintaining the QAE concept, as evidenced by the quality of angling experiences in countries such as Norway, Russia (e.g. Kamchatka) and Scotland. Private ownership is the primary factor in maintaining QAEs in these areas, which does not apply to the BC fishery resource as a means to limit angler access. While the angling community may be reluctant to admit that the number of participants in certain fisheries needs to be limited, to preserve the QAE concept, it is an option worth considering. The proper management of current initiatives that help preserve QAEs on quality waters (e.g. through the Classified Waters system) is an important aspect to take into account. The management of Classified Waters should be closely monitored and updated, as necessary, to ensure that proper goals and objectives are being met. Perhaps the Classified Waters concept could be expanded to include additional waters and be modified to decrease angler numbers, where applicable.

Increasing the Revenue Available for Resource Management

Sacrifices may need to be accepted (i.e. in terms of higher costs to the angler) in order to be able to fish, especially on Classified Waters, to meet the management objectives associated with any regulatory changes. Ultimately, if angler licence revenue is directed back into the resource, be it through increased enforcement, habitat enhancement or angler education, increased costs should be considered as a viable management measure if we are to maintain the current range and value of angling experiences.

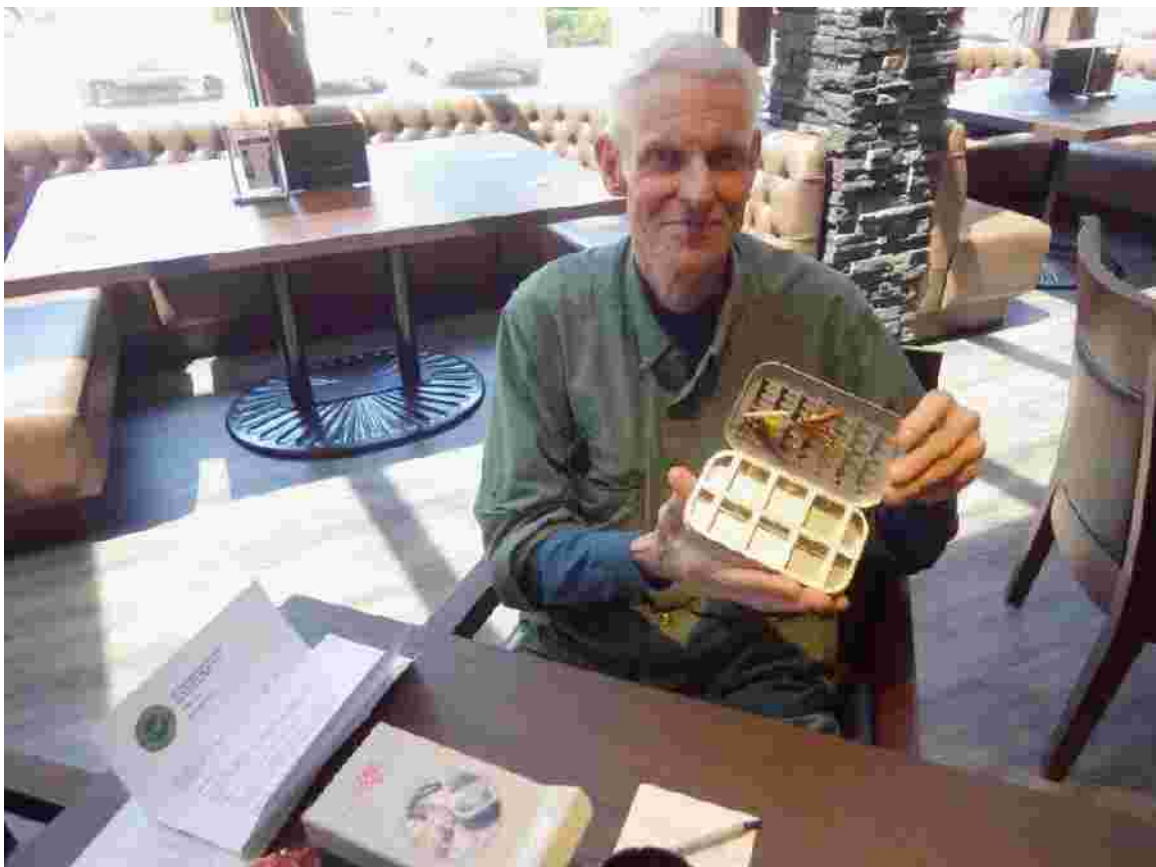
Summary

British Columbia provides very unique and diverse angling opportunities that are readily accessible at a very minimal cost. It is our goal that the QAE concept, which includes the attributes considered most important by the BCFFF, can be used as a conservation tool in support of forward thinking guidelines that endeavour to protect both the resource and intrinsic angling values. The continued recognition of threats to the QAE concept and further discussion into appropriate management measures will help to ensure the preservation of quality angling on quality waters in perpetuity.

SAD NEWS

BCFFF member Rob Way passed away on Sunday, September 11, 2016. Rob suffered from an increasingly debilitating affliction, pulmonary fibrosis. This disease makes breathing more and more difficult until taking in air, and moving around, becomes just too painful and impossible. Late this summer Rob went into care in Port Coquitlam.

Rob, a member of the Loons fly fishing club in Vancouver, has been an important board member with BCFFF for well over 20 years. Notably, he's been our liaison with the Outdoor Recreation Council of BC. He recently had to step away from active duty on the Board because of his health. Peter Caverhill says "When Rob retired from active duty with BCFFF last spring we took Rob out for lunch in Maple Ridge and presented him with a letter of thanks from BCFFF and an engraved Wheatley fly box." One of the flies was tied by Will Bush, the other by Dan Cahill



HURRY UP AND WAIT

By Lloyd Erickson

Even the longest journey begins with a single step.

When you go on the dream trip of your lifetime you want to be prepared. Planning is required. When planning you will want to get the best advice available, preferably from someone who has already taken the trip.

My dream trip has been to fly fish the Tree River for Arctic char. The Tree River is in Nunavut, about as remote a place you can find that has a comfortable Lodge and people that speak fly fishing. The Tree River is about 232 miles northeast of Great Bear Lake Lodge, and the camp is about 4 miles from the Arctic Ocean. Access is by float plane only; the most convenient strategy is to go as an overnight trip from a stay at Plummer's Great Bear Lake Lodge. The Tree River is renowned for trophy Arctic char (world record 32 pound Arctic char was caught there) and an angler has a reasonable chance to tie into one over 20 pounds on a fly. But they are super strong fish and bringing a large one to the net is a great challenge.

I have to admit that I was unprepared for the invitation from my son Steve to go on a fishing trip to Great Bear Lake Lodge. Steve has been there so he was the expert to advise me. First, I was faced with the logistics of getting there. Plummer's charters the aircraft that flies you directly from Yellowknife to the Great Bear Lake Lodge. My first stage was to book passage from Nanaimo to Yellowknife. Since I was using Air Miles on Air Canada I had to book the trip right away. Next I had to consider what to take. Fortunately, Plummer's provides an Information Handbook to help. It states that baggage must be less than 45 pounds to be checked on their charter (rods and tackle are carry-on). That was compatible with Air Canada requirements. Plummer's Handbook also makes recommendations for clothing. Clothing must be warm because a lot of time is spent sitting in open boats. It is essential this includes waterproof, warm boots and rain gear. As my son advised, bring clothes for comfort taking into consideration the worst conditions we might experience. Try that and keep your baggage below 45 pounds! Other personal items such as phone, camera, sunglasses can be carried-on if they meet airline requirements. Some things like bug spray have to travel in your checked luggage.

Of course, the most important consideration is what fishing tackle to bring. For most fishing opportunities Plummer's does sell (at competitive prices) or loan fishing tackle. This pertains especially to fishing in Great Bear Lake. But for Tree River the serious fisherman should bring his own equipment. Bring gear that might be used while fishing for coho or steelhead in large rivers. A 9 weight rod with a high speed sink tip line is recommended. Additional lines should be carried for flexibility, such as a mid range sink tip. Some people might like to try fishing dry flies, so bring a floating line. A lot of the opportunities are to fish holding in pools around bedrock and huge rocks. Stout leaders of about 15 pounds are favored, and slightly weighted flies are invaluable. Some people have suggested using white zonkers tied upside-down with lead eyes, or Intruder patterns. Many other steelhead patterns in sizes 1/0 to 6, including Popsicle patterns, muddlers

and Mickey Finns also work. I tied up some Clouser Minnows in chartreuse and fluorescent green, and some white bunny leeches. Nothing better for building anticipation than tying up favourite patterns.

I suppose my trip was typical of travel, whereby early anticipation is followed by prevailing reality. The theme for this trip was hurry up and wait. In the first place we had to do a bit of juggling early to book the plane flights. But I ended up with longer waits at airports. On the first day, when we arrived in Yellowknife, the local power at our hotel was down, and we had to wait to check in. On the next day we had to get up early to catch the shuttle to the airport. But since we were the farthest from the airport we had to wait as the shuttle visited various stops to pick up clients. We still got to the airport earlier than the 9:00 deadline. Then we had to wait for more than an hour and a half for reasons not communicated to us passengers. Once we got to the Lodge, we had to wait for our luggage to catch up. We did manage to get out fishing the first day! Then on the second day, after we managed to travel to our fishing destination, the impellor on the motor failed and the motor was in danger of over heating. We had to return to the Lodge with the auxiliary kicker. We did return fishing after lunch. On the fourth day we flew by float plane to Tree River. This trip had been delayed one day due to rain. But that didn't matter because there was flexibility in schedules. We flew through clouds on the way out but the ceiling cleared in time for us to land at Tree River. We got a good look at the river as we flew in. We landed in time for lunch. As we geared up, it started to rain again. It felt just like going out on a steelheading trip.

While fishing I realized how all the little details in our preparation resulted in positive rewards. My 9 weight rod and sinking tip line were exactly the right choice. The waders I borrowed from the Lodge (good quality Simms), combined with my steelhead weather rain coat, kept me dry and warm. Everything went well and I brought 6 Arctic char to the net. I lost 8 fish, 2 of which I had a good look at when they jumped clear of the water: they were over 20 pounds! The best fly was a chartreuse Clouser. This fly has a slim profile, and being weighted on top rides upside down, and avoids hanging up on the bottom. Since I mainly fished pocket water along the sides of the river, I kept my leaders short, about 5 feet. Most casts were really short, but good line control was important. In the evening we took a boat down to the Arctic Ocean. We saw a Muskox and a Grizzly bear. There was an Inuit Inukshuk standing on the cliff near the mouth of the river. As we motored down river at about 9 o'clock pm I realized we were heading north, toward the sun which never dipped below the horizon. It was the perfect day that never ended.

Back at Great Bear Lake, we fished from the boat. The lake is so large that one is inclined to travel significant distances to fish the hotspots. We mainly caught lake char, which appeared to have 2 variations, one they called the red fins, and the other merely the greys. Generally, it appears that the red fin ones were feeding (even gorging themselves) on emerging sedges. The greys were also feeding on sedges, but we also caught them on streamer flies. The really large lake trout, usually greys, are definitely piscivorous, are slow growing, but long lived and are known to reach 80 pounds. On the Thursday in the morning it snowed for over an hour! We were in an open 18 foot Lund, but we were

comfortable enough because we had been warned and had prepared well. We tried some smaller black flies for grayling, but still caught lake trout on them.

I will remember Great Bear Lake as a huge lake nestled in even larger, gently rolling lands. The land is riddled with small lakes and small streams with generally flat rock and comparatively small hills. Many of the hills sport a ring of gravel harking back to days when glaciers covered the land. Although the area is "above the tree line" there are occasional pockets of small trees. Shrubs and flowers reflect the areas where soils exist, many in zones where silts were laid down in ancient lakes. In most areas there are no signs of people. There is no pollution. The water is pure, and good to drink. The sky is a special blue. I would love to return another day. For more info see: www.plummerslodges.com.

FLY OF THE MONTH – CLOUSER DEEP MINNOW

Whether you are fishing for Arctic Char in July or coho in September, the Clouser Minnow is one of those perennially effective flies that deserves a place in your fly box. Its secret is the “dumbbell” eyes which are tied on the back of the hook. This causes the fly to ride upside down, and avoids many hangups on the bottom. The slim profile and weight allow this fly to sink very quickly down to the fish catching zone. My favourite colours are white over chartreuse or white over fluorescent green. But many other combinations are effective too. Here’s the recipe:

Hook: Mustad 34007 or equivalent; size 2 (4 to 1/0)
Thread: 6/0 chartreuse Uni-Thread
Eyes: 6/32 inch lead dumbbell painted red w/ black pupil
Belly: white deer tail
Wing: chartreuse deer tail over silver Krystal Flash

The eyes are lashed onto the top of the hook about 1/3 the way from the eye. Tie in a bundle of white deer tail fibers (about the thickness of 2 wooden matches), twice the hook length behind the eye on top of the hook. Holding these deer tail fibers up, wind the thread down the hook to a point behind the eyes. Then hold the deer fibers down and wrap the thread over the fibers, spiral wrap to a position over the hook point then with wide spirals wrap back to a position near the hook eye. Turn the hook upside down in your vice. Attach a small bundle of Krystal Flash on top of the hook. Trim for length. Attach a bundle of chartreuse deer tail fibers (same size and length as the white) on top of the Krystal Flash. Finish with epoxy.