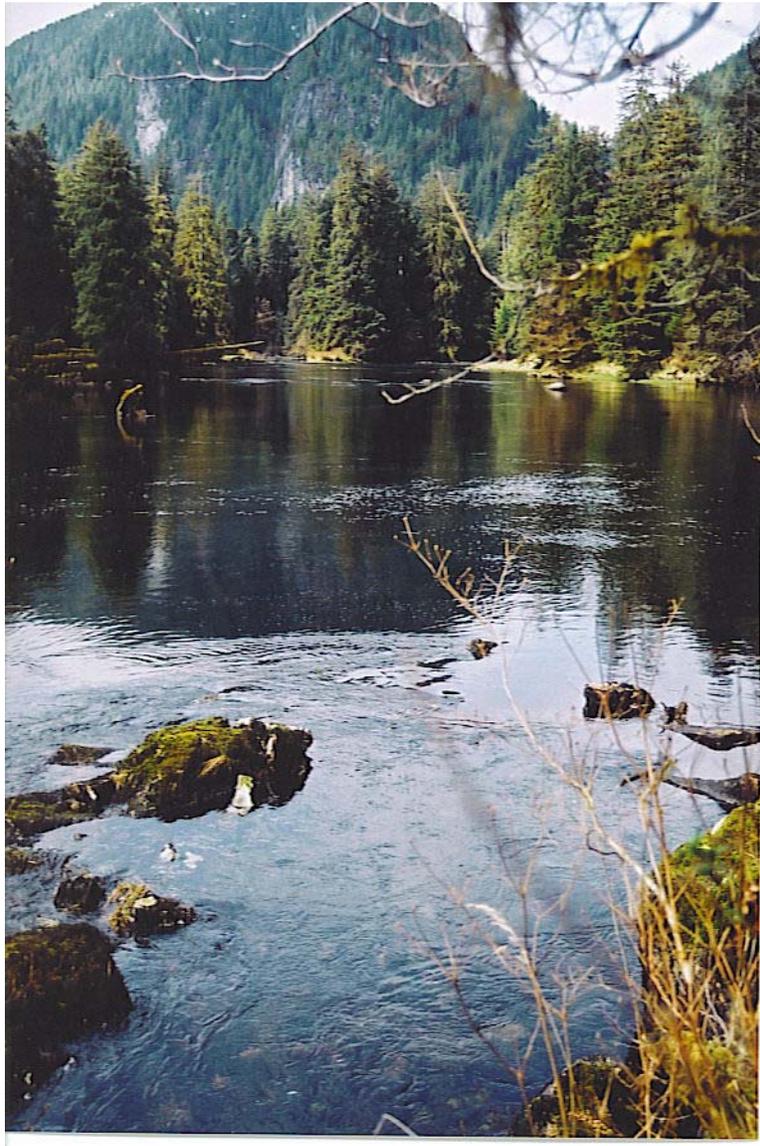


# B.C. Federation of Fly Fishers

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## Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters in British Columbia



*British Columbia has many Quality Waters*

### **Document Purpose**

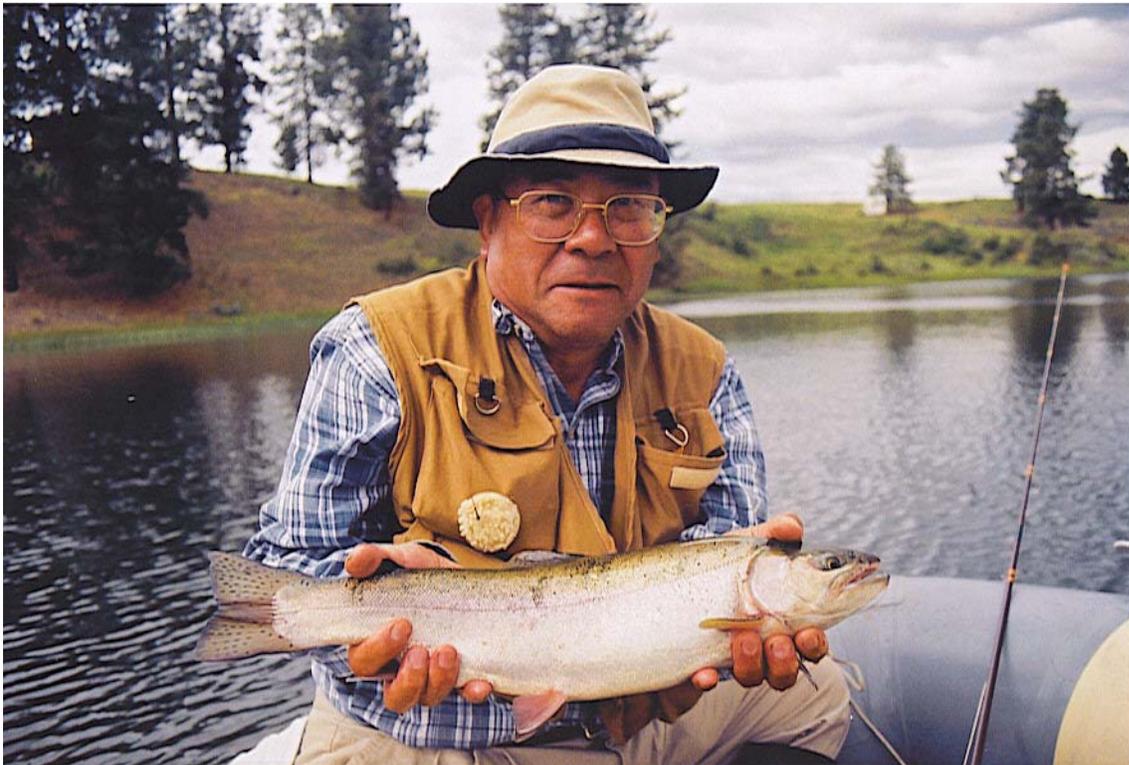
“Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters,” as viewed by the BCFFF, must be more precisely defined. It is important that those both within and out side of this organization, understand what we mean when we use this terminology. This document attempts to do this.

## **Preamble**

In British Columbia we are fortunate to have the opportunity to fly fish a number of *Quality Angling Waters*. The majority of these waters are owned by the people of BC and are accessible in the sense that they are not controlled by private land title. These opportunities are regionally diverse and cover waters that vary dramatically from the small lakes of the interior, to streams both large and small, and to coastal saltwater beaches and estuaries.

In other parts of the world, especially in Europe and Great Britain, most waters are privately owned. The best of these waters rent for many hundreds of dollars a day and are inaccessible to the average angler. On those privately managed waters quality angling is a commodity with a price. For example, on private Scottish rivers an angler pays a fee for the right to fish a section of river with an attendant (guide), in a pleasant setting and without competition from other anglers. This is the way that quality angling waters are maintained in places other than North America.

In British Columbia, because our waters are a common property resource and open to all for the price of a fishing license, it is a special challenge to maintain high quality angling opportunities.



*H. Kamizawa with a fine still water rainbow trout*

## **How does BCFFF define Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters?**

We believe that *Quality Angling and Quality Angling Waters*. possess a number of key defining characteristics:

- A reasonable supply of challenging fish to catch - these could be special stocks of summer-run steelhead, coho salmon, rainbow trout, cutthroat trout or other native fish. Waters such as the Cowichan River with its brown trout or the Kispiox, Thompson and Babine rivers with their large summer-run steelhead are a few examples. The opportunity to take (kill) fish is not important in deciding that a water offers quality angling.
- Aesthetically pleasing surroundings – Aesthetics can be difficult to pin down and debate may rage over whether a water possesses the right mix of aesthetics or not. However, natural vistas, lack of development and the ‘feeling of wildness’ are important. The more unspoiled the surroundings, the greater is the value that can be placed on this attribute for a water.
- Water quality and fish habitat conditions that are conducive for a sustainable, healthy fish population.
- Uncrowded waters -The concept of ‘uncrowded’ is also hard to define. We feel it means that a water is shared by some optimal number of anglers who share an ethic that seeks to protect and conserve the fish and fishery. Different types of water will have their own sensitivities to crowding. For example, rivers tend to be the most fragile in this regard. Lakes (depending on size) generally have greater capacity. To maintain the uncrowded attribute of quality waters in the future it may be necessary to limit angler access. For example, the Dean River is currently managed so that angler use does not exceed a certain predetermined number of angler days appropriately allocated over the fishing season.
- Challenging conditions—Angling, where the catching is too easy, can quickly become less interesting and can also present a conservation challenge to a wild stock of fish. Angling recreation is (and the status of a quality water) is enhanced when a combination of skill and knowledge of the fish and its environment rewards the angler with greater success.
- Fly-fishing opportunity—some waters are uniquely suited to catching fish by fly fishing because of the physical nature of the water or the behavior of the fish species present. The better the opportunities are for fly fishing the higher the water will rank as a quality water.

### Cost and the provision of Quality Angling Water

BCFFF recognizes that the cost of maintaining and managing *Quality Angling Waters* could be high. We do not reject the idea of higher costs (special licenses and or management systems) provided that these cost are fully explored with those who have the most interest in using quality waters (through advisory or other forms of consultation) and that user fees be used toward the management of the fishery.

British Columbians live in a large province with many lakes and streams and a relatively small population. We share some very special fisheries. Many do not realize how fortunate we are. As the population increases and access to more remote waters becomes easier, we need to think about how we will maintain quality angling opportunities. Maintaining quality angling opportunities on quality waters closer to the large urban centers will always be a challenge. The BCFFF feels that to accomplish this will require a more consideration toward reducing harvest

incentives (generous bag limits guarantee angler crowding) and increasing the angling effort required to catch fish. This will be especially so for waters where there may be a conservation concern for a target species of fish. Fly fishing regulations may play a role in accomplishing this under specific circumstances.

Many of the anglers ( both resident and non-resident) that are attracted to BC's quality angling are fly fishers. These anglers contribute substantially to the economy of the province. BCFFF therefore supports the idea that the needs of fly-fishing anglers, who will demand a quality experience, must be given adequate consideration in the management of these particular waters.



*A summer-run steelhead is a superb quality fish*

### **Summary**

By way of this document, the BCFFF has provided our initial view on what important characteristics waters should possess to be considered as *Quality Angling Waters*. British Columbians are fortunate to have a number of waters that presently provide quality angling at minimal cost. Increasing numbers of anglers from around the globe are attracted to these waters. Special management and regulations will be required to ensure that quality angling on these

waters remains for present and future generations of fly fishers to enjoy. Consideration will need to be given toward establishing a set of “tools”(some old, some new) for managing the quality angling experience. Some waters may be best managed by limiting angler numbers, by requiring more angling effort per fish hooked, by preserving the aesthetics of the angling environment through protection efforts or by recognizing the large participation by fly anglers and installing regulations that reflect this.

*The BCFFF is a non-profit, voluntary society, representing the interests of anglers and fly-fishing clubs throughout British Columbia. This is our thirty-first year as advocates for ethical and environmentally friendly angling practices, fish conservation, habitat protection, and maintenance of access to, and opportunities for fishing on lakes, rivers and oceans.*