Greetings,

I hope you’ve had a nice summer and spent some time on the water. I did a five-day float on the John Day with my son where we caught a lot of small bass, but nothing bigger than fourteen inches. In mid-August I landed my first steelhead on my spey rod while fishing on the Cowlitz.

For those thinking about attending the Cowlitz outing, I can definitely tell you the steelhead are in as I hooked another one that broke my line. My friend hooked two on his spey the same day, but both got off. We also caught several nice cutthroats while swinging flies for steelhead, and the coho should be starting to show up by the time of the outing.

As we turn our focus to the last four months of the year, the Board will be busy planning our calendar for next year that will include our rod building, fly tying, beginning fly fishing school, and net building.

The Board will also form a committee to recruit members for the 2024 board. Dan Green has stepped up to take over the Treasurer duties from Phil, so we will need a new Gillie. We still need to fill the President, Barb editor, and two at large Board positions. Additionally, we need to start planning for the 2024 banquet, and the Board is looking for a person to lead this effort.

I look forward to seeing you at the September General Membership meeting and at the outings this fall. Remember, it’s not what your club can do for you, it’s what you can do for your club – please volunteer!

Michael
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Mailing Address:
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Vancouver, WA 98666

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The Clark Skamania FlyFishers
Next Meeting on
Wednesday
SEPTEMBER 20, 2023
Wet Fly Hour @ 5:30  Meeting @ 6:30

Black Pearl on the Columbia
56 S 1ST STREET WASHOUGAL, WA 98671

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Dave Swank
CSF Conservation Director

Michigan Steelhead

Most of you know me as the club’s current Conservation Director. In my other job I’m a fish biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service working on fish passage and survival in the Columbia and Snake Rivers. Prior to that, I worked with NOAA-Fisheries in California’s Central Valley.

I earned a Ph.D. in Fish Ecology from the University of Michigan studying life-history variation among Great Lakes steelhead populations. After that I did a post-doc at UC-Santa Cruz studying the question of why some rainbow trout are residents while others become steelhead.

When I’m not out fishing I can often be found xc skiing, hiking, or enjoying a home-brew.

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Clark-Skamania FlyFishers (CSF) is a federally registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the State of Washington.

Founded in 1975, CSF is dedicated to preservation of wild fish stocks and the natural resources that sustain them. CSF is further committed to the promotion of fly fishing as a method of angling and, through it, an understanding and appreciation for the diversity of nature.

Broken Barb is a publication of Clark-Skamania FlyFishers, published monthly and free to members.

CSF is a member club of Fly Fishers International (FFI).
For further information visit our website http://www.CSFLY.NET
Conservation Report for September 2023

Dave Swank

Grant Updates

**Deschutes River Alliance** - The Conservation Committee met and has decided to follow up with DRA on some more specifics of how our grant money would be spent.

**World Salmon Council** - The Board has voted to approve an award of $3,500 for supplies for the Salmon Watch program run by the World Salmon Council.

**Cascade Forest Conservancy**. The club has reviewed a Letter of Intent from CFC. They intend to submit an application for $6,000 to support their fish habitat restoration work in this South Fork Toutle R. tributary.

Stump Creek Restoration w/ Cascade Forest Conservancy

I’ve volunteered for the Sept 9th-10th Stump Creek Restoration event with Cascade Forest Conservancy, and it would be great if some club member could join me and make it a conservation outing.

This work will involve building small instream wood structures in Stump Creek, which is a small tributary of the South Fork Toutle River near the headwaters. The structures will provide habitat for both fish and beaver.

The good news is that the worksite and camping area is only a five minute walk from where you park. They do not recommend driving low-clearance vehicles on the logging roads.

The event will start on Saturday morning, and end early Sunday afternoon, with one night of camping at the worksite.

CFC has added a third work event on September 23rd-24th, but that’s the same weekend as the Club’s Skagit River outing.

See CFC’s website for more details:

[https://www.cascadeforest.org/volunteer/](https://www.cascadeforest.org/volunteer/)
## 2023 CSF Outings Calendar

**Don Kohler, Outings Director**  
moabman07@gmail.com  
(503) 891-5486

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>FishMaster(s)</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
<th>Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Sept 15-17   | Cowlitz River, WA         | FishMasters: Al Wood & Diane Schmitt (360) 904-7797  
Dan Gauger (360) 984-8127 | Overnight or Day, float or Wade, Steelhead or Sea Run Cutts |
| September 22—24 | Skagit River, WA         | Fishmaster: Steve Jones (360) 606-5947 sjones022@comcast.net | Overnight, float, Pink Salmon (Humpies) |
| October 6-8  | Klickitat River, WA      | Fishmaster: Don & Sherri Starkin (509) 637-4405 dstarkin@msn.com | Overnight, wade, Steelhead            |
| October 14   | Merrill Lake Fish-in     | FishMasters: Bieker, Yoshinaka, Hutchinson marvyosh@gmail.com | 9 to 3 fish and collect catch data for WDFW  
                       |               | Fall Steelhead—wade sjones022@comcast.net | Float or Wade—Salmon, Steelhead |
| Oct 20—22    | Grand Ronde River, OR    | FishMaster—Steve Jones sjones022@comcast.net | Fall Steelhead—wade                  |
| Nov 4 OR 11  | Kilchis River, OR        | FishMaster—Dennis Hite (503) 849 5649 dhite@yahoo.com | Float or Wade—Salmon, Steelhead       |

**NEW OUTING — Confirmation subject to weather and access**

### Cowlitz River, WA
- Sept 15-17  (see page )

### Skagit River, WA
- Sept. 22-24  (see page )

### Klickitat River, WA
- October 6-8  (see page )

### Merrill Lake Fish-in
- Oct 14  (see page )

### Grand Ronde River, OR
- Oct 10-22  (see page )

### Kilchis River, OR
- Nov 4 or 11  (see Oct Barb)
COWLITZ RIVER FLOAT – September 15 -17

FISHMASTERS: Al Wood and Diane Schmitt, 360-904-7797. alanstanleywood@gmail.com
Dan Gauger (360) 984 8127 DBGauger@gmail.com

Float or Wade for steelhead, Coho or sea-run Cutts

Please RSVP via email if attending.

Cowlitz float is a seven-mile drift from Blue Creek Trout Hatchery to Mission Bar that takes 3 to 5 hours, depending on how much you stop to fish. Floating is optional as there is good wading water near the boat ramp. There are no hazardous waters on this float. We can self-shuttle or Mike Sturza of Lost Creek Fly Shop will provide service for a $20 fee per person on Saturday.

Expect jet boat traffic for the first third of the drift which is the most fished and is the most productive for steelhead and sea run cutthroats. Depressions on the bottom are particularly important in this stretch.

After a mile long straight stretch, the river makes a sharp left turn. A house and outbuildings on the left looks like a Cabela's catalogue cover. Mission Bar take-out is 1/4 mile downstream, on the right side. A brown bulletin board can be seen from the water at the boat ramp.

7:30 AM Saturday— We will meet and set up gear at the Blue Creek Trout Hatchery boat ramp and shuttle cars will take floaters with vehicles to Mission Bar. Cowlitz Trout Hatchery, 165 Osprey Lane, Toledo, WA 98591

Driving Directions:
Take I-5 North's exit 63 (WA 505), toward Winlock/Toledo. Go 0.3 miles -> Turn right onto WA-505. Follow for 2.4 miles
Turn left onto Jackson Hwy. Go 1.2 miles -> Turn right onto Spence Rd. Go 5.5 miles
Turn right at the Cowlitz Trout Hatchery sign (0.9 miles past Class Rd) -> Follow the road around the hatchery to its end

METHODS, TACKLE, & FLIES

FLY LINES: Floating & sinking tip lines, 5-8 weight (5 wt if after sea-run Cutts) (7/8 weight for steelhead and Coho). A fast action 6 wt. or medium action 7 wt. is a good compromise.

WET FLIES: Black, blue, purple, red, and orange stinger/intruders; bright flies on sunny days and dark flies for cloudy skies. Smaller flies if the water is clear (6-14).

DRY FLIES: October caddis and muddlers. Swing fly with sink tip or skate fly on surface with dry flies for steelhead, Coho, and sea runs. Nymphing the drop offs has proven to be effective for both fish also. If you are fly fishing for cutthroats try targeting slower water and back eddies next to fast water.

ACCOMMODATIONS
CAMPING: Cowlitz Trout Hatchery parking lot. Outhouse only ... no running water or hookups
Motels: Castle Rock, Mossy Rock, Salkum

SOCIAL GATHERING:
Dinner on Saturday night will be a potluck buffet. CSF will provide the main course. Bring your own beverage of choice. Dutch oven treats are encouraged.
A-L provide salads or side dishes; M-Z provide hors d’oeuvres or desserts

WHAT TO BRING:
PFD and whistle for each person in a floating device
Fishing license
Discovery Pass for each vehicle
Bring snacks and drinks for the river trip.
In odd-numbered years, Puget Sound enjoys a run of pink salmon that is estimated to be about 4 million fish in 2023 and about 800,000 of those fish are headed to the Skagit River. You can target these 2 to 5 pound fish beginning in late August in waters in the Sound, but some of the best fly fishing for these feisty salmon is on the upper Skagit between Marblemount and Rockport in late September. Home base will be Glacier Peak Resort at 360 708-3005, Glacierpeakresortandwinery - Resort, Restaurant, Lunch a few miles upstream from Rockport. Tent sites start at $35, RV hookups at $45 and cabins around $150. It’s best to check the Web site for options then call for reservations. There are convenience stores in Rockport and Marblemount and restaurants, including a nice café at Clark’s (8:00 am to 8:00 pm). The nearest grocery is in Concrete about 30 miles west on the North Cascades Highway.

Fishing the pink run on the Skagit may be the closest thing to Alaska-fishing in the lower 48. All species of Pacific salmon swim to the Skagit but Pinks dominate at this time of year. Coho, late-run summer chinook and bull trout are also in the river at this time. The Skagit is large but not dangerous. The day-long float from Clark’s to the take out at Rockport is calm water with no rapids.

This is Stop & Wade fishing but you will need a floatation device to get around the river to the best water. Pontoons are ideal but float tubes will not work. We will put in at the primitive boat ramp at the Glacier Peak Resort. From there to Rockport covers the best holding water for pinks on the upper river. Fishing from the south bank distances us from walk-in anglers on the highway side of the river. Nearly a dozen beaches and bars with pools of holding water dot the floating route.

THE GEAR

Bring big equipment because of the big water, big flies and big fish. I fish with 7wt. to 10 wt. rods as Pinks fight hard and long. After landing 8 or 10 of these brutes you’ll be glad you’ve got a strong rod. I fish a Rio clear, intermediate sink tip with a 4 ft. 8 lb. tippet. These are schooling fish. The key to consistent hook ups is to work the edges of the schools by quartering a cast downstream, aimed at the edge of the school and stripping the fly in with a quick, short, staggered retrieve. The flies imitate krill and the right presentation gives the fly a pulsing motion. Takes are sudden and strong. Flies are pink and my favorites include the humpy chaser and humpy special. Watch the Google group for postings when I’m tying and I can show you how to make these simple flies.

Getting to the Skagit isn’t easy because Seattle is in the way. Plan 5 hours and, if lucky, you may make it in that. If in early or late traffic, anticipate 6 hours. Leaving Portland in late morning to time Seattle passage in early afternoon (2:00 to 2:30 p.m.) usually finds Northbound Express lanes open. Skirting the Metro Area’s east side through Bellevue is seldom much better. There is no way to avoid Everett where shifts of Boeing workers come and go throughout the day building those 787s.
October 6 to 8 will be CSF’s annual visit to the upper Klickitat River. Fall colors are blazing by then and weather is usually great. CSF’s first outing there was in 1986, over 35 years ago. This river offers bank fishing as well as a 2.5 mile float from Lydel Camp to Stinson Flat.

As usual, we’ll be staying at Stinson’s Flat campground, set in the spectacular Klickitat Canyon, about a 32-mile drive north from Hwy 14 at Lyle, WA. You can also come in from west side via Trout Lake Highway and Glenwood. Even if you can’t share the entire weekend, discovering this unique country is a great day trip.

Plan on low visibility conditions in the river due to silt and mud entering from the appropriately named Muddy Creek. Steelhead, resident rainbow trout, whitefish and “residualized” smolts will be on tap. The 2022 outing had 5-6 steelhead landed by the group.

As usual, Sherri and I will do a lasagna dinner Saturday evening. Watch for updates in October’s Broken Barb.

Don and Sherri Starkin
Saturday, October 14th is the 2023 “Fish-in” at Merrill Lake. This year in will be similar to past events where fishers will be asked to record catch by species, length and parasite observations to help Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife plan future fish management of the lake.

The “Fish-in” is a one-day event that starts at 9:00 a.m. and ends at 3:00 p.m. However, you can start fishing earlier and fish later. Please return catch data at the boat launch by 5:00 p.m..

Remember to bring a lunch, beverages, PFD and your Discover Pass. Also, internal combustion engines are not allowed on boats when you are fishing on Merrill Lake, but electric motors are legal.

DIRECTIONS TO MERRILL LAKE

From I-5: Take Woodland exit 21 for WA Highway 503 toward Woodland/Cougar for 27 miles. One mile before the town of Cougar, turn left onto USFS Road 81 (Kalama Recreation Area sigh). Travel north 3.5 miles to the lake access road on your left.

From Battle Ground: Take WA-503 N (NW 10th Avenue) north past Lewisville Park, through Amboy and toward Cougar. This reaches the I-5 route 3 miles west of USFS Road 81. There, turn Left to Merrill Lake.

We are especially looking for CSF members with boats that can carry two anglers. Those who wish to fish alone are welcome to participate and report their catches.

Tell FishMasters Warren Bieker (360-687-5475, ljbieker@comcast.net) or Marv Yoshinaka (541-728-7496, marvyosh@gmail.com) or Jim Hutchison wilandhutch@gmail.com if you plan to attend. We may need to contact you if the outing is postponed because of bad weather.

We’ll meet at Merrill Lake parking lot at 9:00 am on Saturday, Oct. 14 for a short orientation. Those trailering boats might come early to avoid congestion at the boat launch. Anglers will be provided a fish length measuring board, a catch record form and pencil.

October is one of the prime times to fish Merrill Lake. Weather can be pleasant or rainy and cool so bring your rain gear and warm clothes. Despite the ‘iffy’ weather, this activity is in October because the lake’s trout usually bite particularly well then.

Most summer techniques also work well in the autumn. CSF members catch fish by trolling or wind drifting in open water, still fishing with nymphs or chironomids, casting dry flies at rising fish, and stripping nymphs on floating, intermediate or sinking lines. Various fly patterns will catch fish including small caddis and mayflies, terrestrials, nymphs, streamers, attractors and wooly buggers.

If lacking a boat, you can fish Merrill Lake from shore. The lake is low enough in October that you can walk along the shoreline, below the brush. Feeding fish are often in fairly shallow water, especially near weed beds, logs
The Grande Ronde is an ideal fall steelhead destination and Oct. 20-22 the Ebsen Campground on the Ronde will welcome Clark-Skamania Flyfishers as well. Location is on Oregon-Idaho border below Hells Canyon.

In 2020, CSF members donated to help purchase the Ebsen Fishing Access site on the Grande Ronde. CSF was one of 10 Washington fly clubs that helped to raise $38,000 to purchase the 8-acre site for WDFW to manage as public fishing access. Ebsen is now complete with two vault toilets and a gravel parking pad big enough for trailers to 30 feet. There are also several level tent sites. It’s a dry camp without water or trash removal.

Remote location means visitors must plan ahead. It’s 375 miles to Ebsen, about 6 hours on the road. Top off your fuel and your water in Asotin before driving 25 miles south on the Snake River Road to reach Ebsen. All camping is first come first served, without fees but you need a Discover Pass. Plan on driving 20 miles a day between Grand Ronde fishing holes. There is a sparsely stocked store near Heller Bar. No fuel.

The Grande Ronde above Lewiston ID and Clarkston WA is not a monster river. It’s bigger than the Kalama but smaller than the Cowlitz. It’s a classic free stone river with long glassy tail-outs for swinging flies and concentrated slots for nymphing. 12# Maxima Ultragreen or 10# fluorocarbon are minimum tippets on the GR. Anything lighter and these adults will give you a lesson. You will need to go heavier if you head to the Clearwater River in Idaho. (If interested in that, drop Steve a line.)

Grand Ronde steelhead have a liking for dry flies so pack your October Caddis, Crystal Caddis, Lemire’s Greased Liner, Bombers, Muddlers and your Lady Caroline’s. Pack floatant.

Let us know if you can make it. Fishmaster Steve Jones sjones022@comcast.net.

Lodgings Options:

Snake River Canyon Lodge, 90 Second St., Asotin, 509 243-4214......Small city hotel 25 miles from Ebsen.

Snake River Rendezvous, 25484 Snake River Rd, Asotin, 509 243-3620........lodge on the river that has rooms for small groups and positive online reviews. It’s about 12 miles from Ebsen on the Snake River.

Victor and Dawna’s Hells Canyon Resort, 35909 Snake River Rd, Asotin, 509 243-4865......lodge on the river that is closest to Ebsen. Nice rooms and positive reviews.

This photo is a B-run fish landed in 2022 on a Lady Caroline. Foam body Bombers in tan and yellow were working well 2021.

The “A-run” fish, or those that spend one year in the ocean, are the most common in late September and early October. These fish run 4-6 pounds.

There are more “B-run”, or two years in the salt, fish that run later in October. They can weigh 10 to 15 pounds and are common enough to keep it interesting.
**Riffles & Eddies**

**It’s time to Update your CSF Calendar**

As CSF returns to after-summer activities, we resume General Membership Meetings on third Wednesdays and have a flurry of outings, events and classes planned into December. An outings’ summary is provided on Page 3 with details of each event on Pages 4 through 9. Since COVID, outing’s participation has averaged just 50% of historic numbers and only attendance gives them purpose and fellowship. So, join in to get full benefits from your CSF membership. We ARE a fishing club!

It is also time to choose how you can volunteer to help the Club in 2024. There is plenty of work for everyone to have a turn. A number of openings exist for leadership positions (President and one Director role), “town crier” (Broken Barb editor), Special Event planning (Annual Banquet Chair and committee leaders, 2025’s 50-year Anniversary Celebration, Donor Development for the Conservation Fund, Fly Fishing school production, FishMasters) and new ideas, as they come up.

Fortunately, rebound from COVID’s hiatus is all but complete. That said, the pandemic's greatest impact on CSF was diminished Volunteerism. People adapt very quickly to being “cared for”. But, nobody’s mother keeps house here so each must take care of themselves and guide others less familiar with Club needs and opportunities. Any volunteer group works and learns by doing and, then, passing “lessons learned” on to others. Contact any Officer or Director for help in finding your niche.

**A word about Kilchis River (Tillamook) in November**

Members note that CSF lacks outings on Coastal rivers other than Forks, WA. Dennis Hite is organizing a late season day trip to the 7-mile Kilchis River outside of Tillamook (in lieu of Wind River). Chum Salmon enter this river through November so we’ll go early in the month (with an eye on weather). Watch for details and directions in October’s Broken Barb, on Google Group’s CSF Anglers.com and at October 18th’s General Membership Meeting at Black Pearl on the Columbia.

**Recent Outings/Events**

On August 12, seventy seven (77!) CSF members shared a beautiful day, great eats and fellowship at our Summer Picnic at Fallen Leaf Park in Camas. Kudos to Carol Kohler and her helpers who made this a special success at a wonderful venue. Thank You! also to Dan Green for a broad Gillie selection and Cup Raffle and to Jerry Engle for presenting his hand-crafted Fly Bench tools and accessories. This year’s fellowship featured almost 20 new CSF members in Get-Acquainted mode. We’ve been joined by over 60 new friends in the past year.

On August 26, 13 fishers gathered at Cottonwood State Park on the central John Day River, south of Arlington, OR and northwest of Condon. Weather and water were favorable, although the airshed clouded with afternoon smoke from Lane County fires. True to form, late summer fishing found high numbers of smaller bass and a few Northern Pike Minnows. (Springs trips target fewer but bigger bass and salmon)

FishMaster Mark Meyer lined out the group and rods scattered over a mile of wet-wading water. While the fish were small (under a pound), most caught 15 to 20 or more on a wind-free day.

CSF members are encouraged to try this picturesque day trip (2 hours from Vancouver) on their own as scenery is outstanding, wading is easy and Cottonwood Canyon State Park facilities are in tip-top shape.
Clark-Skamania Flyfishers’ Membership and Dues

Attached below is CSF’s 2023 membership application form which all paying members need to complete, sign and return. The form will allow us to update contact information for club records. It also has a liability waiver statement required by our new insurance carrier.

Please return the application with your dues if you have not paid them yet. For those who have paid their dues please fill out the form and return it. The application needs to be signed (first and last name)

The return address is:

Clark-Skamania Flyfishers’ PO Box 644 Vancouver, WA 98666

Annual Dues are $45.00 payable by March 31

New Membership (Y/N) _______ Renewal (Y/N) _______ Date _____________

Print Name ______________________ Signature: ____________________________

(see Liability Waiver below)

2nd Member: (no Charge) ________________ Signature: ____________________________

(see Liability Waiver below)

Address: ______________________________________

(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

Home Phone: __________________________ 2nd Member Phone: __________________________

Email: _________________________________ 2nd Member Email: __________________________

By signing above, I/we waive all claims and release Clark-Skamania Flyfishers (CSF) and all its members from any and all liability arising from CSF-sponsored activities.  

(rev. 2021)