

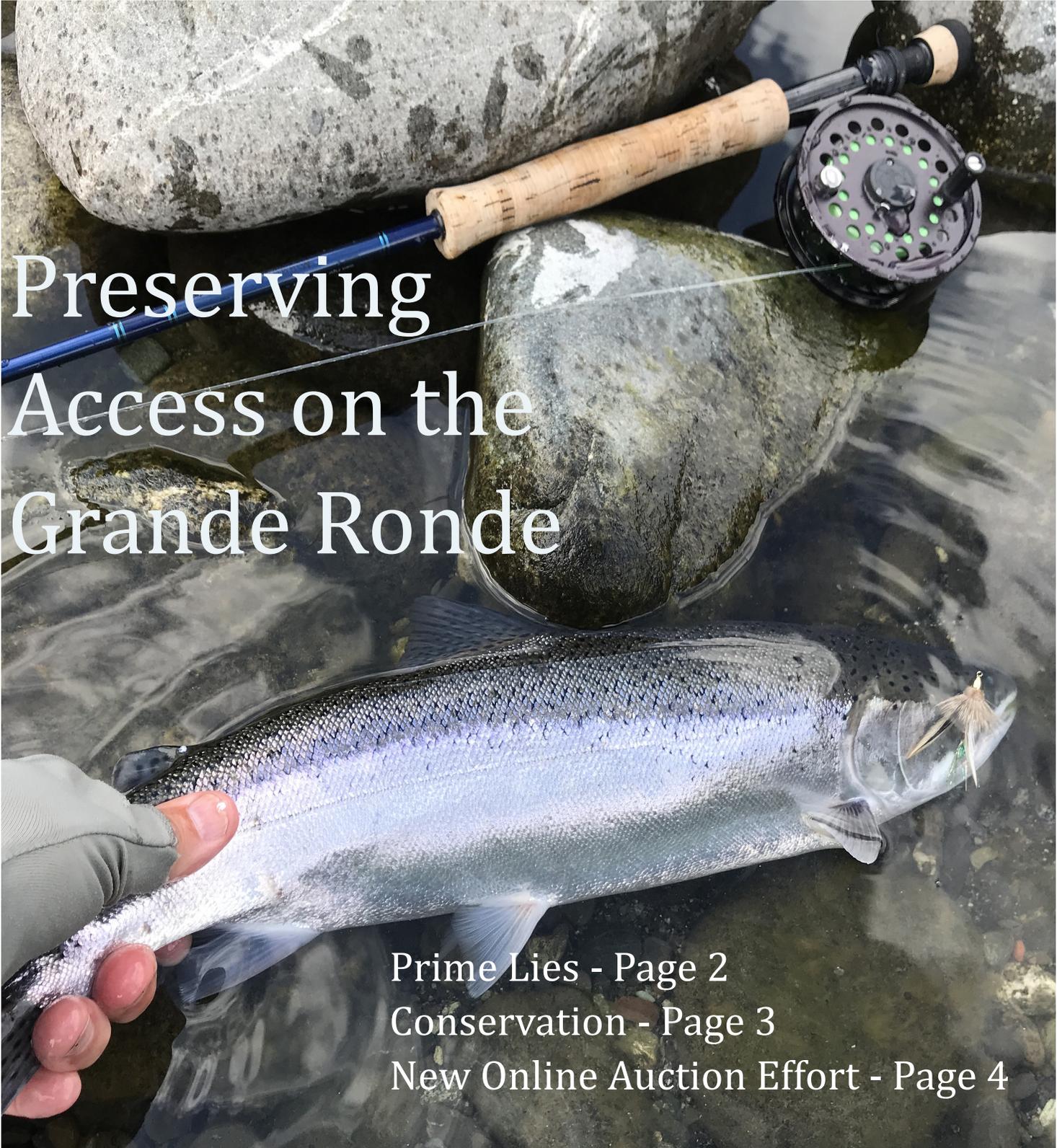


**FLY FISHERS  
INTERNATIONAL**

Washington State Council

# Covering the Drift

Volume 23 Issue 4 July 2017

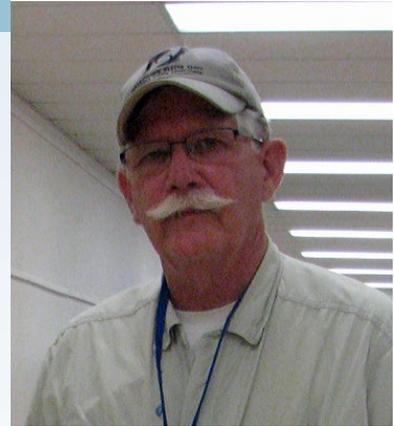


## Preserving Access on the Grande Ronde

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# Prime Lies

## Good Advice

By Bill Wheeler

The Council has supported various nonprofits through the years with auctions during the Volunteers' Dinner at the annual Fair. With the proposed change of venue for the fair, we will not hold a fair in 2020 and therefore no Volunteers Dinner. A core of people on the board immediately recognized that this would mean the Council would not be supporting the worthy nonprofits we have supported in the past. So, Sam Matalone, Steve Jones and Carol Anderson took it upon themselves to find a way to help this year. The new Online Auction was born. The accompanying article will provide the specifics. Please do what you can do to support the auction and our nonprofit benefactors. Great work, guys.

On another note, the wide variety of reasons people fly fish was recently brought home to me via social media. A newbie fly fisher posted on Facebook asking for help getting started. Several people

gave good advice and I offered to help the person if they were in the Seattle area and mentioned that I was a Master Certified Casting Instructor. Another pundit on Facebook put up a post essentially saying that learning about entomology, ichthyology, watching videos on YouTube, or taking casting lessons were the wrong things to do. Essentially those things won't help you catch fish. His suggestion was to get a good guide who catches a lot of fish and fish a lot. It was a suggestion I can't fault, but it shouldn't be someone's sole learning program. Of course, I took particular interest in the suggestion not to take casting lessons. The Facebook post essentially said casting instructors can't catch fish. I girded my loins and was formulating rebuttals in my head about casting instructors not being able to catch fish. I was thinking of people like Lee and Joan Wolf, Gary and Jason Borger, Lefty Kreh, Bruce Richards, and innumerable others who have held fishing records while being excellent casting instructors. I was fired up, I would tear up the

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### Special points of interest

- Fly fishers have an opportunity to help preserve fishing access on one of the state's iconic steelhead rivers, the Grande Ronde. Acquisition of the 8-acre site would preserve access and expand available campsites for fishers. Page 3.
- Auctions are a tried and true method to raise funds. The Council has held them at its annual Expo for years. Now the Washington Council is expanding the effort online with a series of recurring auctions on Bidding Owl. Com. Page 4.
- The Washington Council and its nearly 800 members accomplish a lot thanks to hard working members and volunteers. The national FFI leadership recognized four of those members at its annual conclave in Bozeman, Mont. And the Washington Council recognizes graduates of the Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy that return year after year to mentor a new class of young fisher men and women.

# Conservation

## Preserving Access on the Grande Ronde

It's a rare opportunity when you get a chance to preserve fishing access on one of the West's great steelhead rivers. Right now we've got that opportunity.

The Wild Steelhead Coalition of Seattle in cooperation with The Inland Empire Fly Fishing Club in Spokane has struck a deal to acquire 8 acres on the bank of the Grande Ronde River in eastern Washington.

The land, a great deal at \$25,000, stretches along nearly 2,000 feet of riverbank along some of the best summer steelhead water in the state. The Wild Steelhead Coalition put up \$2,000 in earnest money to secure the land. The Inland Empire club has pledged \$2,000 to the purchase. The Washington State Council of Fly Fishers International has

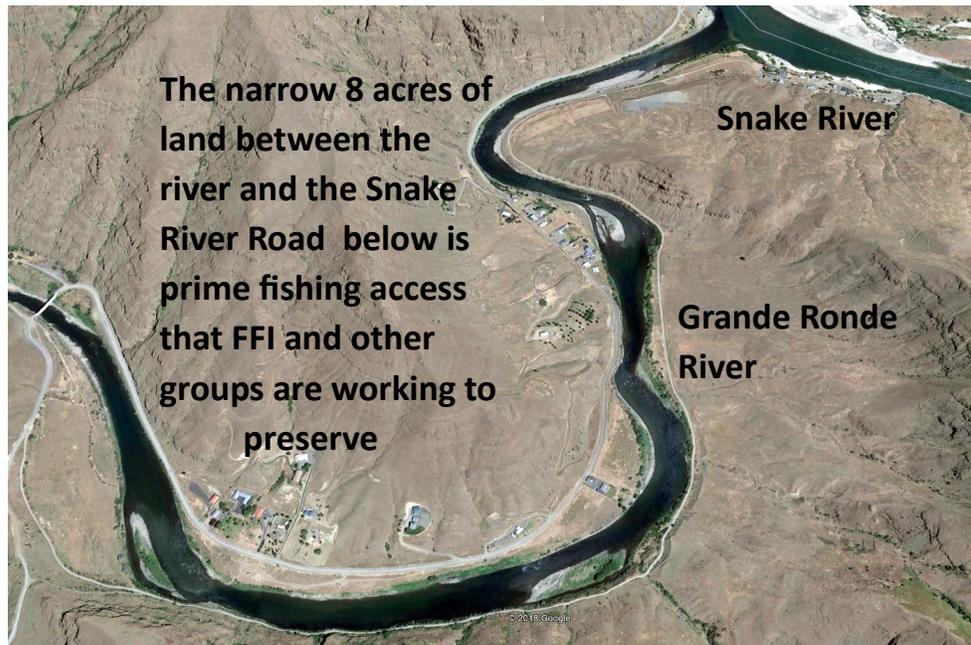
pledged \$2,500 and an anonymous donor has pledged another \$2,000. The goal is to raise an additional \$16,500 this fall and close the deal before the end of the year, said Jim Athearn of the Inland Empire club.

"It's my intention to talk to anybody and everybody in the FFI clubs in the state to make this happen," said Athearn. "These 8 acres are never going to grow a cow or a bushel of wheat, this needs to remain fishing access."

The area between the north bank of the Grande Ronde and Snake River Road has been public fishing access since the early 1980s when the Washington Department of Fish & Wildlife acquired a recreation access easement from property owner Lynn Miller of Lewiston, Idaho. But Miller now needs to sell the land, said Chris Donley, WDFW Region 1 fish program manager. The family offered to sell the land to the state, but WDFW doesn't have money for acquisitions so Donley turned to the Inland Empire Fly Fishers in Spokane.

Inland Empire officers were interested, but

cautious, said Athearn. Price was the key. After a few conversations, Athearn and Miller settled on \$25,000, which was affordable. The Wild Steelhead Coalition agreed to act as the non-profit transfer agent so private donors could receive tax benefits for their gifts. Once acquired, the coalition will transfer the land to WDFW for ongoing management. The Inland Empire club will



not own the property, but it is organizing and leading the purchase campaign.

The Miller family "would rather see people get recreation value from the land than see someone buy it and put a McMansion on it," said Donley of WDFW.

It's already a mansion in the minds of many steelhead fly fishers. The property, a few miles up stream from the confluence with the Snake River, is a stony shoreline between what are known as the Turkey Run on the downstream end and the Shadow Hole on the upstream end. There is a pull off onto the property and a pit toilet installed by WDFW. The spot is known as the Ebsen Fishing Access in WDFW documents. At its widest, there is only 250 feet between the river and the road.

"There are easements in the area, but what we are short on is camping area," said Donley of WDFW. "Now this gives them plenty of room to camp along the

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# FFI Launches Online Auctions

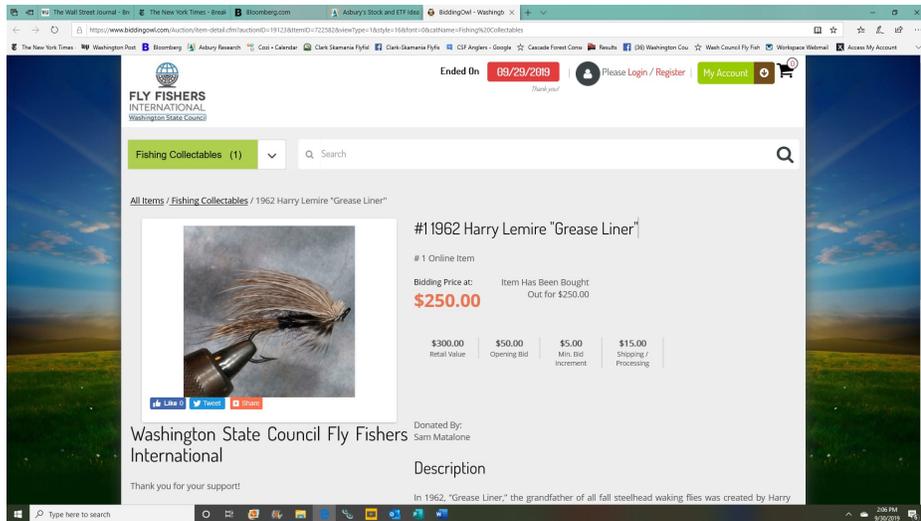
## New Method to fulfill a long-time commitment to our non-profit partners

The Washington Council of Fly Fishers International has raised money every year for the past decade for three important non-profit efforts in our state: Project Healing Waters that helps veterans rebuild their lives through fly fishing, Casting For Recovery that helps restore confidence for women cancer survivors and Olympic Peninsula Fishing Innovations which designs and builds tools for one-handed fly tying and fly casting.

These non-profits do valuable work for people and FFI has proudly raised and donated more than \$12,000 over the past five years to the three groups. Donations from Washington FFI have been a critical part of funding for the groups every year. Auctions at the annual Volunteer's Dinner at the Fly Fishing Expo in Ellensburg have raised the majority of the funds FFI donates every year. So, when the FFI board decided to take a year off while moving the Expo to a new venue in Western Washington we had to come up with a new way to raise money to support our non-profit partners.

We've come up with a solution.

We are going to move the annual Volunteer's Dinner auction online into recurring auctions on the Website Bidding Owl. Bidding Owl is a private company that offers online auctions for non-profits to raise funds. It will allow Washington FFI to create and run



This is what our auction site looks like on Bidding Owl.com

its own monthly auctions within the Bidding Owl site. The system is easy to use and reaches thousands of people every month around the world. Beginning in October, Washington FFI will source goods and services to offer

for auction on the site. The first item sold for \$250 to a purchaser in England. Our second auction will begin later this month. Go to Bidding Owl.com and search for Washington State Council Fly Fishers International later this week to see our next auction item. We intend to run a new auction about every two weeks through spring.

So that's the plan friends. We are a non-profit and we have non-profit partners that rely on us to help them deliver service to friends in need. We've been there to help them for more than a decade. Join our new online auction program to help uphold our mission to conservation, education and community.

Thank you.

## You can help

FFI members and clubs statewide can help with the auction by donating goods of value that the council can include in the auction.

The Harry Lemire fly that appeared in our first auction is an example. It's a traditional item in new, or at least undamaged condition. It was tied by a fisherman of note to FFI members and it is authentic, including a note from Marlene Lemire verifying its authenticity and thanking the bidder. If you or someone in your club has a similar item of unique value including original flies, rare books, antique fishing creels and so on, consider donating the item to the FFI auction program.

Fishing trips could also make excellent donations. Many clubs have outings to favorite destinations every year. Offering to host two or three fishers from outside your club on that outing could be an attractive item of value for bidders. Destinations,

Continued on page 6

# Friends and Leaders

## Four Washington Council members recognized for contributions nationwide

The Washington Council of FFI is fortunate to have many dedicated and long-time members. We know them as friends and fishing companions and people who step up to get the job done in our home state. To FFI members in other states they know them for their outstanding leadership, their passion to improve our organization and bring its mission and programs into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. That is why four members of the Washington Council were honored at the 2019 President's Awards Banquet at the Fly Fishing Expo in Bozeman.

**Len Zickler** received the FFI Award of Distinction for his three-year term as president of the national organization. Len led a period of rapid change that included everything from moving our educational resources online to hiring a new executive director, Patrick Berry. The award, formerly known as the Lapis Lazuli, recognizes prominent, extraordinary and long-term commitment to FFI.

### Four Honored at FFI President's Award Banquet



Continued on page 6

Len Zickler center

# Academy graduates return to lend a hand

These may not look like grizzled river veterans, but looks can be deceiving.

Take 19-year-old Jacob Bengelink, he's been a ghillie since 2015. So has Brad Dashchofsky. The old timer is Rowdy Sanford, ghillie since 2014.

Joking aside, these young men and women make up a key part of the team of the Northwest Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy put on annually in Washington by Trout Unlimited and supported by Fly Fishers International. The crew of ghillies, nine in all this year, provide an important hands-on part of the daily instruction for the 20 or so students that attend every year. They provide the extra hands to help students learn knots, cast lines, organize gear and learn to wade.

Each of the ghillies have been students in past years. They return to lend a hand and enjoy the academy from a different point of view. Without the ghillies, Academy directors Mike Clancy of Washington FFI and Jim Brosio of TU would be constantly short-handed.



Clockwise from upper left is Hayden Williams, Brian Schober, Jacob Bengelink, Easton Armstrong, Reggie Bahr and in front from left is Josh Ioimo and Cody Satterla-Macy

So here's a tip of the hat to the experienced fishers who return year after year to help a new class of Academy students. They are valuable to us all.

Tight lines gang.

## Friends and Leaders



Above Carl Johnson receives a fly rod and thanks for years of service. At right Kuni Masuda and Larry Gibbs after receiving Presidential Medals for work in fundraising and international outreach for FFI.

**Carl Johnson** received the FFI Award of Distinction for his 12-years as president of the Washington Council. His tenure included launching the council's first statewide Fly Fishing Expo. He led the council to extend fundraising help to non-profits Project Healing Waters, Casting for Recovery and others. In his last column for this newsletter he wrote, "It's the fly-fishing community that is so special to me and I am fortunate to be part of that community."

**Larry Gibbs** was awarded a Presidential Medal for his generous support of Washington Council fundraising efforts as well as his early and vigorous support of the nationwide 1000 Stewards, a program to recruit members willing to donate a fixed amount to FFI over 5 years. The goal of the program is to create a long-term and stable funding base for the



organization.

**Kuni Masuda** was awarded a Presidential Medal for his leadership in making FFI a truly international organization. Kuni has directed a three-year effort to understand the needs of the more than 1,300 international members of the organization and create outreach programs to better serve and expand that global membership. He has organized outreach to fly fishers in Japan, Italy and Germany and in 2020 plans to begin translating the FFI Website into those languages as well.



## Donate to the auction effort

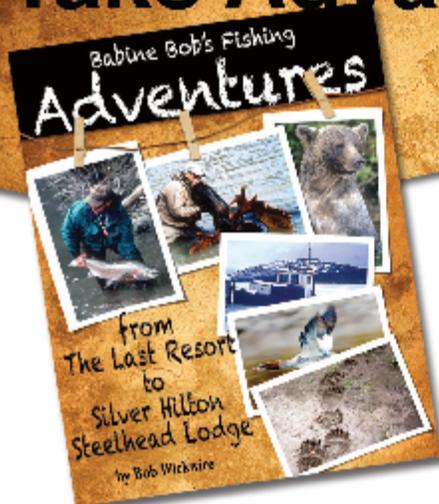
such as unlocking the secrets of Rocky Ford, steel-heading on the Grande Ronde, or fishing for "half-pounders" on the Rogue River (which are early returning "jack" steelhead) can be an attractive fishing opportunity that many fishers wouldn't consider without expert help. Your club members could be those experts, offering knowhow and friendship on the water.

FFI has many expert fly tiers among its

membership and clubs could offer lessons with an expert tier for auction. Clubs could offer one-time tying sessions or a series of lessons with a noted tier. The sessions could be for one or as many as three tiers to study with an expert from your club. Those are just a couple of ideas. For information or to submit an idea write to: [VPCommunications@wscffi.org](mailto:VPCommunications@wscffi.org).

Thank you.

# Take Advantage **NOW!**



## Special Pre-Publication **Book Offer!** Babine Bob's Pioneering Fishing **Adventures** From the Last Resort to Silver Hilton Steelhead Lodge

by *Bob Wickwire*

In misty, forest covered, Northern British Columbia flows the legendary Babine River, long known for its magnificent large steelhead to over 30 pounds. This all color, 200 plus page, 8 1/2 by 11 inch volume is truly a classic. Author Bob Wickwire and his wife Jerri Lou created several lodges known for offering the finest steelhead fishing in the world.

This is their 60 year story about the discovery, development and protection of what many believe to be the world's finest steelhead fly fishing river! At one hundred thousand words in length and featuring about 200 color photographs and illustrations it almost has as much meat to it as one of the local grizzlies!

From the first pages to the very end of the book you will be enjoying their continual discoveries as they fashion a beautiful life filled with almost unbelievable happenings and challenges—most successfully overcome. Bob and Jerri Lou migrated to British Columbia in the 1960s from Oregon where Bob helped pioneer Clackamas River steelheading and boating.

I have known Bob since the 1960s and can only say: "What a guy!" He has lived to become the classic steelhead river pioneer. This is his wonderful story. . . Frank Amato, Clackamas and Babine steelheader, too.

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## Prime Lies

Facebook world with an insightful, erudite post.

Then, I began to think about the various rewarding aspects of fly fishing. We all do it for different reasons. So why can't just catching fish be your total motivation to fly fish? It's not mine, but it might someone else's. More power to you, but there are some days there are just no fish to catch and if I didn't enjoy casting, looking at the bugs on the water and under rocks, watching the birds and wildlife on the shore it would be a boring day. If numbers are his enjoyment fine, but don't force your type of enjoyment on someone else. Let them find

their own. I can't honestly think of a day that I went fly fishing that I didn't enjoy. Sometimes fishing isn't the goal. Fly tying can be a pursuit all its own. We all love aspects of fly fishing for our own reasons, even if we can't or don't choose to fish any more.

Remember our sport is under attack from a myriad factors like climate change, habitat loss due to development and other aspects of corporate greed. Keeping abreast of legislation impacting our rivers and streams and helping elect individuals who share our love of nature may provide as much gratification as catching a 24-inch brown.

## Conservation

river as well.”

Officers of the Washington Council of FFI urge members to join the campaign and donate to acquire this valuable access point on the Grande Ronde. For more information, contact [VPCommunications@wscffi.org](mailto:VPCommunications@wscffi.org).

To donate, send checks with a note on the bottom

that the funds are for the Grande Ronde Land Acquisition and mail to:

Wild Steelhead Coalition  
117 E. Louisa St. #329  
Seattle, WA 98102

## Address