

NEWSLETTER #9 - JANUARY 2003

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This is the ninth edition of our monthly newsletter with updates on great fly fishing venues and insights for our traveling fly fishers. We want to help you match the right location with your fly fishing goals and objectives and properly prepare you to fully enjoy the experience. We've been to most locations and pride ourselves on our ability to research new ones. Whatever unbiased information on timing and locations we can provide comes at the same cost to you as booking direct – i.e., no extra cost.

'03 LELAND FF TRAVEL BROCHURE IN THE MAIL

Our 2003 Leland Fly Fishing Travel Brochure was recently mailed. This year's edition is 6 pages with a bonefish on the cover. It includes many "world class" fly fishing destinations both domestic and international. They've been mailed over the last few weeks with the last batch mailed this week. If you haven't received a copy by January 15 or have a friend who should get one, hit "reply" and send us the "snail mail" address.

EARLY SEASON ROCKIES TROUT FIX

We've been making a shop trip in April to the North Platte River in Wyoming for a few years now and have found it to be an excellent early season location. Last year, Tony Brookfield and a friend made the trip in early April. We printed Tony's report last year, but thought it might be worth another take because of the timing.

"Peter and I had a great time on the North Platte (besides the hand cramps at the end of the trip). We had been concerned that the weather may not be great in early April in Wyoming, however, we had 60 to 70 degrees every day. Catching less than 20 fish each per day was considered a bad day (but who's counting), and we caught nothing smaller than 15 inches - mostly rainbows and a few cut-bows. The guides were patient, superb oarsmen and skilled fish-finders. The lodge was comfortable, the food excellent and the hosts were friendly..

We were joined by a group of seasoned fisherman who fish all over the world and have fished the North Platte half a dozen times. They claim that the North Platte is the best place anywhere for big trout. I'll be back." TB

(See below for our hosted trip to the North Platte in '03.)

'03 HOSTED TRIP SCHEDULE

April 1 – 6: North Platte Lodge, Wyoming. A great early season Rockies destination with good size fish and the option of fishing two private creeks. \$1,400 pp/do includes transfers from Casper, flies, leaders, and license.

June 7 – 10: Deschutes River Float trip, Ore. Timed to catch the salmon fly hatch on the Deschutes. \$1,300 – 1,400 depending on the number in party.

June 21 – 25: Smith River Float trip, Montana. One of the great float trip experiences in the U.S. A good experience for both veteran and novice fly fishermen. \$3,000 pp.

July 4 – 11: Minonipi Lodge, Minipi River, Labrador. The finest dry fly fishing for brook trout in the world. Past guests have regularly caught fish in the five-plus pound category. \$3,750. Our hosted trip week for '03 is SOLD OUT although other weeks in '03 may still have openings. Taking reservations now for our hosted week in '04. Don and Scott Muelrath will be the Leland representatives for the hosted '04 trip.

July 4 – 11: Dean River/Moose Lake combination trip, British Columbia. Combine fishing the world famous Dean River for steelhead and kings with some of the fastest rainbow dry fly fishing in North America. \$4,250 – SOLD OUT for 2003. Moose Lake Lodge still has space available during other weeks for '03.

Taking reservations for the combination trip in '04 – this is limited to one week and only six people.

July 25 – Aug 1 and Aug 1 – 8: Dean River, British Columbia. The Dean River is rated by many as the finest steelhead river on the globe. \$4,250. Our first week has been SOLD OUT every year to the same group; still have two spots left for Aug 1 – 8.

(Note: only one of the three trips to the Dean/Moose Lake lodge will have a Leland representative along and, as of now, we don't know which one)

July 26 – Aug 1: Ladies Week at Three Rivers Ranch, Idaho. Three Rivers Ranch is one of the West's finest fly fishing lodges with outstanding location, guides, service, cuisine, etc. They have a special week geared to helping ladies get started in fly fishing (also great for veterans). A great fly fishing experience in a beautiful setting!!! \$3,170.

September 19 – 26: Belize salt water flats fishing from the motherships Meca and Seaduction. Fish the finest bonefish, tarpon, and permit flats in Belize with her premier guides Martin McCord and Charles Westby. \$2,400pp

February, 2004: A return to New Zealand. Details still in the planning stages

Possible additions could include another salt water/bonefish destination and Kamchatka

DEVELOPING YOUR CASTING SKILLS

The difference between a fly casting range of 30-40 feet and 60-70 feet is significant and can open up many additional fishing opportunities. When my son and I started fly fishing in saltwater in Belize and the Yucatan, we carried one fly rod for bonefish in the boat and three spinning rods. We couldn't make the casts necessary to catch tarpon, permit and the other saltwater species (we could only catch bonefish which were close by and downwind). After some lessons and study on casting technique, we were able to expand our range to 60, 70 feet, and more. Today we only carry fly rods in our skiff – four or five of them rigged for all the saltwater species – and any fish within 90 feet is a target.

The key issue in expanding your range to 60-70 feet is learning to double haul. After learning this technique, your fly fishing enjoyment and success will increase. This applies to fresh water as well as saltwater fishing. A double haul will allow you to increase your line speed to gain distance as well overcome casting obstacles such as a head wind. Learning to execute the double haul will improve your accuracy and double and triple the water you can cover and fish you can reach.

What is the best way to learn to double haul? I think the best way to learn (given that most of us don't want to spend hours practicing in a non-fishing situation) is to take a few lessons and make sure that you

understand how to correctly execute the basic technique. Then it just takes practice and it's more fun to practice when there are fish to target. If you have an understanding of the basic technique, a week of fly fishing (bonefish flats in saltwater provide an excellent lesson stage) will ingrain your new skill because you'll be working on it everyday. Before the week is over (assuming that you begin your trip with the correct basic technique), you'll be confidently executing accurate 60-70 foot casts, even with the wind in your face. Your new skills will be yours for a lifetime of fly fishing enjoyment and will provide the basis upon which to build further skills.

One of my greatest challenges in preparing people to enjoy a world class fly fishing experience (whether it's chasing tarpon and bonefish in Belize, trophy trout in New Zealand, or steelhead on the Dean River) is to convince them to invest some time and a few bucks in developing their fly casting skills. It's a shame to spend thousands of dollars traveling to a great fly fishing destination and not be able to capitalize on the possibilities because of restricted casting skills. The most basic element in enjoying success with a fly rod is developing the ability to cast successfully. Fortunately, it's not rocket science. It is a motor skill that can be mastered by the young and old, weak and strong, or male and female.

If you want to learn, or just improve, your double haul Leland's two shops have a world class team of fly casting instructors. Please contact me or the shops directly to set up a lesson. It will definitely be worth your time.

San Francisco: 415-781-3473

Lafayette: 925-284-3474

TIERRA DEL FUEGO AVAILABILITY

One of the world's great fly fishing experiences is pursuing the giant sea run brown trout of the Rio Grande in Tierra Del Fuego, Argentina. In a normal year, finding space during the prime time of Jan - March at any of the great lodges is impossible. However, this is not a normal year and we know of some space available. If you'd like to throw together a great adventure at this late date, give us a call. We can book space at most of the operations in Tierra Del Fuego and should be able to find you space.

DEFINING COLD WEATHER

We've had some cold and wet weather in Northern California the last four weeks – or have we??? Below is a message I recently received from Lorraine Cooper, owner of Cooper's Minipi River Camps in Labrador ---

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T'is pretty chilly here today. Minus 30 with wind chill. I have a huge wood fire burning and the electric heat cranked up on high, and am sporting a wonderful pair of seal skin mukluks on my feet. Life in the north, nothing like it.

Either call or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations. I'll be chasing tarpon, bonefish, permit and snook in Belize from Jan 12 to 24 so if you have any pressing matters, please contact me ASAP.

An enthusiastic traveling fly fisherman,

Don Muelrath

Leland Fly Fishing Adventures

888-347-4896

flyfish@napanet.net

www.flyfishingoutfitters.com

e-mail Josh Frazier at Josh@flyfishingoutfitters.com

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