

NEWSLETTER #27 - AUGUST 2004

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Leland Fly Fishing Travel Newsletter – August, '04

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This is the twenty-seventh 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 sites. One of our services is to compare and contrast different lodges/outfitters. 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.

BUSH STREET SHOP DESTINATION DAY, WED, AUG. 25 –SALT WATER FLATS DESTINATIONS COMPARED

Next Wednesday has been designated as our monthly Destination Day in the Bush Street shop. I'll be in the shop from 11:00am through the evening. The scheduled slide presentations will be at 12:30 and 5:00pm and will focus on great salt water flats destinations – we'll compare and contrast places like Christmas Is, Bahamas, Belize, Florida Keys, and Ascension Bay. Also, I'll have with me the photos from our recent trip to the Minipi River in Labrador (see below). Personal slide presentations by appointment can be scheduled on any of our great destinations. Let me know if you'd like to make an appointment and what destination you'd like me to be prepared for. Drop in and say "hi" and let's discuss the exciting possibilities of fly fishing travel.

MINIPI RIVER'S GIANT BROOKIES – A TRIP REPORT

After arriving in Goose Bay, Labrador, the four of us (my son, Scott, Jim Hine and his 14 year old son, Andrew, and I) jumped a float plane for the 25 minute flight to the lodge. We unpacked, ate dinner, grabbed our rods and began our fourth adventure pursuing the giant brook trout of the Minipi River. Soon, our canoe was silently gliding over glassy waters littered with green drakes. Occasionally, the surface would be disturbed by large, sipping brookies, sending out heavy ripples as they dined. Scott looked at me and said, "It's good to be back." We picked out a cruising fish and began the stalk. Scott's first cast produced a hook-up and a 5# male brookie in full spawning dress was released. We released two more fish (3.5# & 6#) that evening using size 12 Grey Wulff's and so began our fourth week fishing this legendary watershed.

Meanwhile, Jim was also hooking up.....however, he was using his "California hook-set" and broke off his first two. It would take him the first evening to get the feel of pounding the hook home in these deep-bodied, heavy fish. By the next day, he had it right (see below).

This is the same fishery that Lee Wulff discovered in the late 50's and vowed to protect. It's been well managed and today still provides the world's best opportunity to regularly take giant brookies on dry flies. The short rundown:

What the Minipi River experience IS:

- first and foremost, the world's best destination for stalking and sight-casting to giant brook trout of 5 to 8 pounds on the surface.
- A wilderness experience in a beautiful, unspoiled area.
- Provides a feeling of exclusiveness – only anglers we've seen during our four trips were the 8 or less anglers staying at the lodge with us.
- Guides who will work an angler's dream day – start at 9:00am and fish through dark at 10:30 with a two hour break for dinner (very few operations still provide long guide days on the water).
- Has a pike option that can provide explosive surface takes and meaningful numbers of good fish.

What the Minipi River experience ISN'T:

- Luxury – rather, seasoned, clean, and well maintained wilderness lodges with good food at Anne Marie and Minonipi. The newest and larger lodge at Minipi Lake provides a few more amenities.
- No weather guarantees – like most of the world's great trophy fisheries, weather can be an issue.
- Tough to find space during the best hatch weeks because of the large number of repeat clients, some who've been making annual trips for 10, 20 and 30+ years during the same week each year.
- Bugs – mosquitoes and black flies in shore areas.
- Difficult to get to Goose Bay, Labrador. You must overnight in Toronto, Halifax, or Boston to get there from California, but are able to make the return in the same day due to the time zone difference.

Availability: Many weeks are full already for both the '05 and '06 season at Anne Marie and Minonipi Lodges.

Openings still remain for the following weeks:

'05 – Anne Marie: 6/24-7/1, 8/5 – 12

'06 – Anne Marie: 6/23 – 30, 7/21 – 28, 7/28 – 8/4, 8/11 – 18

'05 – Minonipi: 6/24 – 7/1, 7/15 – 22, 7/22 – 29

'06 – Minonipi: 6/23 – 30, 6/30 – 7/7, 7/14 – 21, 7/21 – 28

'06 Leland week: we have already reserved the entire lodge at Anne Marie for the prime hatch week in 2006 of 7/14 – 21. This will be our fifth trip to chase the giant brookies. Price will be approx \$4,000 pp based on double occupancy and shared guide.

STEELHEADERS; DEAN RIVER AND BABINE OPENINGS

The Babine Steelhead Lodge, in it's first year of "going public," still has some prime time fall steelhead spots available in late September and October. In addition to it's great location on the river, it also is situated in a spot that allows easy access to productive runs for fishing after your guide day is complete. Great for the steelheader interested in maximizing their time on the water. \$4,000 per week.

An update - openings at John Blackwell's Dean River Lodge on the lower river for next summer are still in the sorting stage. There may be some openings, but the number and dates are still not final as of now.

TRIP REPORTS: ALASKA, COLORADO, NEW ZEALAND, THE DEAN RIVER, BELIZE

Jane Crocker, with sons Scott and Garrett, had a customized 10 day Alaskan experience that was split

between one of Alaska's "A" lodges and a float trip with Ouzel Outfitters. Commentary:

"We had an absolutely wonderful trip. . It was a fabulous time. It was well organized, with a well-informed, knowledgeable, friendly staff. Not to be duplicated. Scott's first catch was a 50 pound king salmon. I managed to snag a lesser weight sockeye. Garrett caught some beautiful rainbows and greylings. It was incredible to see the large groups of beautiful salmon spawning. We saw lots of bears..... Thank you for organizing all the logistics."

Lem Crocker, Warren Foss, and sons visited one of the premier fly fishing lodges in the west two weeks ago: "All four of us thoroughly enjoyed our trip to Elk Creek. The boys became much better fishermen as did Warren and I. Lots of rainbows and many with significant size (ie, 20+ in)."

Nancy and Grant visited New Zealand on a "couples itinerary" in March and her comments mirror the reports we get back from our NZ travelers; "We had a wonderful trip to New Zealand. We enjoyed all the accommodations.....all the guides were great. We love the country and would live there if we could! Thank you for making all the arrangements." (Note: "we could live there" is the most common phrase we hear from NZ travelers)

From Carlo Proto on his first Dean River summer steelhead adventure: "The hosts and guides were wonderful. It was the trip of a lifetime for me. I caught the biggest steelhead of my life, somewhere between 17-18 pounds. Great fish. I averaged 2 fish per day hooked and landed 6. John got the biggest at 20 pounds."

Marshall Bissett on his first mothership trip on the Meca with Martin McCord in Belize (note: Marshall sent a very detailed report of his trip that can be forwarded upon request) - "The trip was all I expected and more. The mothership is the way to go! The tarpon fishing was tough because there were no on migratory fish on the flats – did jump, but not land, 6 fish. The bonefishing was better than normal and I caught 2 permit. As a bonus, I caught a 20# jack. What is the lead time for booking a trip for next year?"

"FANTASY STUFF" FOR THIS ISSUE

While fly fishing is pursued for many reasons, having a "fly fishing fantasy" experience is something we all chase. Once in a while it actually happens and this column is devoted to sharing those special moments/days.

Paul Waters took his largest steelhead topping the magic 20# mark from the Copper River on the Skeena system in BC. The fish was 40 inches and 22 pounds and fresh from the ocean – hot fish.

Bob Rubin joined us for just two nights on our Minipi River trip. On his one full day, Bob took three brookies tipping the scales at 4.5 and 7# on a size 16 caddis imitation and a 6.5# on a drake imitation. Jim Hine also had a great first full day with a 6.5# fish on a stimulator and a 6# on a size 4 Grey Wulff (that's right, size 4 – gotta see it to believe it).

Andrew Hine had the largest pike on our Minipi trip at 8.5#, one-quarter pound larger than his dad's biggest. But the size wasn't THE BIG thing about this fish. It was killed for a meal and when opened up, here's what was found in his stomach:

2 mice

1 six inch long plastic hook remover

1 gold Canadian dollar coin

BELIZE MOTHERSHIP OPENINGS FOR '05

The rebookings of our '04 clients for their '05 Belize mothership (www.flyfishbelize.com) trips are completed through July. Open dates from Nov 1, '04 through the end of July are:

Meca (3 or 4) Seaduction (party of 2)

11/6 – 13 11/6 - 13

12/9 – 16 11/16 - 23

1/14 – 21 12/9 - 16

2/6 – 13	1/18 - 25
2/16 – 23	1/28 – 2/4
6/29 – 7/6	2/19 - 26
7/20 – 27	7/9 – 7/16

QUIPS AND QUOTES

This month's quote comes from Mark Twain and can be related to all the great places we plan to fly fish: "Twenty years from now, you will be more disappointed by the things you didn't do than by the things you did."

LELAND-FRONTIERS AGENT AGREEMENT

In addition to the many great destinations that we represent, Leland Fly Fishing Adventures also has an agreement with Frontiers to represent all their properties (many of which we already book independently). If you are considering any of the destinations that Frontiers offers, please give us a call as it's virtually the same process as booking through Frontiers, and we need the "bonus points." And, we may have some personal experiences that can add to your knowledge and preparations.

Either phone or drop us an e-mail if you have questions or would like more information about any of our destinations.

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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