

NEWSLETTER #36 - MAY 2005

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Leland Fly Fishing Travel Newsletter - May, 2005

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This is the thirty-sixth 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.

ALASKA DAY AT THE BUSH STREET SHOP, TUESDAY, MAY 24

Alaska is the featured presentation at the shop this Thursday for our monthly Destination Day. Alaska is one of those destinations that some people return to annually, but every fly fisher has to visit at least once. The life cycle of the salmon fuels a rich marine environment that is unique in all the world. Our focus for the presentation will be on the Bristol Bay area, possibly the greatest fresh water variety fishery on the planet with a special focus on the trophy rainbows. The presentation will be at 12:30 ONLY at the shop.

We have space reserved for a Leland shop trip at one of the premier lodges in Alaska during the prime time for the trophy rainbows and silver salmon. We'll also be answering questions about this trip.

Additionally on Tuesday, I'll be available by appointment for discussion/slide presentations on other destinations.

THE MOMENT I BECAME A FLY FISHER

My son, Scott, and I are in the final stages of preparing a fly fishing book to send to print. The title is *Fly FISHING'S GREATEST ADVENTURES; THE HUNT*. It's been several years in the coming and captures the essence of stalking the world's great gamefish with a fly rod. It includes over 300 photos of the great experiences we have witnessed with fly rod in hand. In preparing the introduction for the book, we engaged in a conversation about the moment we were captured by fly fishing. My story goes like this (reprinted in part from the Introduction to *THE HUNT*):

Puffs of dust kicked up with each step as the 12 year-old boy moved along the well-worn trail that encircled the lake. In one hand he carried a spinning rod and the other hand clutched a bottle of salmon eggs. He was walking deliberately, heading for a spot he knew was the "honey hole." This special spot was the place he anticipated the orange salmon eggs would tempt some of the thousands of rainbow trout that the Fish and Game Department hatchery truck had released into the lake that week.

He hesitated as something caught his eye. Gentle ripples disturbed the water's glass-like finish near the bank, sheltered by the long boughs of a large redwood tree that extended some fifteen feet out over the surface.

Wanting a closer look, the boy set his rod down as he dropped to his knees and began crawling through the dry grass. As he quietly approached the shoreline, he saw the cause of the disturbance and froze. In the crystal clear water, a

few feet from the water's edge, a ten-inch rainbow trout was swimming in purposeful half-circles with his lips occasionally breaking the surface.

He appeared to be eating something, but what was not clear. There were several flies buzzing under the tree limb and there appeared to be some insects wiggling on the water's surface. Entranced, the boy forgot about his "honey hole" as he lay there, eyes riveted on that rainbow.

That lake was one of several on Mount Tamalpais operated by the Marin County Water Company in Northern California. The boy's father took him fishing there twice or three times a season. On their next few trips to the lake, the boy would rush to the spot under those overhanging branches in hopes of witnessing the same scene, only to be disappointed.

The boy was me and it was that moment, lying under the redwood tree, where the passion to become a fly fisherman was born. Of course, I didn't realize it at the time, but there have been many times that I've reflected on that experience and the impact it had.

If you have a vivid recollection of the first moment you were captured by fly fishing, hit reply and send it in. It would be fun to share some of these great moments in the newsletter.

TRIP REPORTS - FANTASY TARPON MORNING

I don't have all the details in yet on this trip, but I know enough about this particular morning in the early stage of a Belize trip to relay it - it's too good to sit on for a month.

Wayne Henry and Tom Flood were sharing a skiff with guide/captain Martin McCord using the mothership Meca as their base of operations. Both Wayne and Tom were looking for their first encounter with a large tarpon and this morning would be the time. In the early fishing session before breakfast, Wayne sight cast to a rolling fish on the surface, the fish ate the fly, and the race was on. One hour and forty-seven minutes later, the 80 pound tarpon was at the boat. The hook was removed and the fish released to fight another day. I happened to be on a phone call with the Meca when they came in for breakfast and spoke with Wayne. He was wiped out - totally exhausted - but thrilled with the experience and stated he didn't need to fish anymore that day.

Wayne's boat partner, Tom, would follow that experience after breakfast with something special. Sight casting to cruising fish, Tom hooked a monster, well over 100 pounds. The tarpon towed them for over two miles during the 90 minute struggle. The fish then attempted to move off the shallow flats, to the deep blue waters offshore. To get to the deep, the fish would have to cross the barrier reef (the second longest barrier reef in the world runs down the coast of Belize). Instead of looking for a cut in the reef, the fish swam through the coral infested shallows right up to the reef, but was too big to get his massive body over the top. As the fish turned away from the reef, slack formed in the line and some elk horn coral helped release the fish before Tom could get him to the boat.

Bet they both slept well that night!

SPRING STEELHEAD ON THE SKEENA SYSTEM

In the last newsletter, we posted some information about spring steelheading on the Skeena system in BC. It was noted that we were looking to acquire some space during the best time for trophy steelhead during the spring period. It appears that this is going to happen, either late March or early April of '06. We already have several people on the candidate list - if you'd like to get more information, hit "reply."

LUGGAGE LOCKS THAT AIRPORT SECURITY APPROVE

My wife recently brought to my attention that there are now combination luggage locks approved by the airport security people. They are made in a manner that allows the security people to use a special key to open them. They work fine for those that want to lock their duffel bags or rod tubes. Ours were

manufactured by Austin House and have a special 6-sided oblong logo on them that signifies they are approved for use with airline luggage. Any luggage store will have them; probably also the major department stores.

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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