

Early-Day Fishing in Rogue River Recalled by Putnam

Ex-Editor Deplores Access Park Plan as Way to 'Slaughter'

(Editor's note: George Putnam, editor emeritus of the Salem Capital Journal, and former editor and publisher of the Mail Tribune, has in recent months been writing occasional columns of reminiscence about earlier days in Oregon, and in southern Oregon in particular. A number of them have been republished by the Mail Tribune, with Putnam's permission. Another one, this time about fishing in the Rogue river, is published here today.)

By GEORGE PUTNAM

The Oregonian says editorially under the caption "He Bragged of Steelhead," the following, reprinted because the "Field and Stream Treasury" is not available in Salem at present:

"Remembering that it was the big fish that count in fly-fishing, not the big catches, W. F. Backus went on to say that 'We have in Oregon a river that will yield more big trout on the fly than all of the rivers of Maine, Ontario and Colorado combined.' That was a large order, but Sportsman Backus was an authority and he was writing in the authoritative 'Field and Stream.' The time was 1916. The marvelous river was none other than the Rogue, where a competent angler, he said, was virtually assured of half a dozen five-pounders every day. Ten-pounders were common."

"Sportsman Backus felt it necessary to explain that these fish were a species of sea-run rainbow called steelhead trout. He suggested that a 10-foot rod of seasoned split bamboo was just the rig; and with it a 'sensible single-action reel and 50 yards of heavy enameled line.' Add to this a six-foot single leader and a No. 4 Coachman with junclecock shoulders . . . and you Eastern anglers will insure yourself some of the greatest fishing you've ever had."

It was 40 years ago. Mr. Backus' article is one of scores on hunting and fishing in the 'Field and Stream Treasury,' a big, fat book published this week by Holt to mark the 60th anniversary of the well-known magazine.

Backus was a partner in Backus & Morris, sporting goods store in Portland which specialized in tying of trout and other angler's tackle. He was a fine fly fisherman, familiar with all Oregon trout streams.

Many times the writer spent the day on the Rogue river with Backus. Perhaps once a season would a lucky angler land five large steelheads in a day, and, as in all fly-fishing, many a day there would be none, 50 years ago.

Experience taught the fly angler to use a tapered enameled line supplemented by 100 yards of Cuttyhunk or silk line. And, no matter how skillful in the playing of the large steelhead, landing was a 50-50 chance. Many a time one would have to follow the large steelhead down stream a quarter of a mile of swift water to beach it.

Notes on the Flies

The fly used didn't seem to make much difference. One year I used only one variety of fly—a Royal Coachman and my fishing partner, Col. Kelly, used only one—Professor. The next year I switched to a yellow-bodied Gray Hackle, my companion to a Grizzly King and both years we probably caught as many steelheads as any one.

Steelheads seem to lurk in certain spots and one must relearn where they are after each flood. For the old spots may be filled with gravel and sand. So when the steelhead season opens, usually in late June or early July, these spots are first located.

Rarely could a steelhead be caught on a dry fly, though occasionally in the right kind of water one would be hooked. The steelhead usually lies in swift and rough water of a riffle or just below it and takes a wet drifting sunken fly at about a 45 degree angle from the fisherman. Many a noted angler has failed to connect with the steelhead with his dancing surface fly.

Are Fish Color-Blind?

A Stanford scientist has written a book to prove that fishes are color-blind, which seems a fact, I believe it. The hundreds of varieties of trout flies and the incessant switching are perhaps futile, except to sports goods stores. It is probably the way the fly lights naturally and its action that tempts the trout.

The days of the fly fisherman may be passing. There seem to be few now, superseded by the fish hog. Every year some new gadgets are invented to decimate the fish more easily. Fly-fishing is becoming a lost art. There are more fishermen than fish in our streams. High dams

destroy them, as do irrigation ditches which lower the temperature of the streams by lowering its waters. Pollution exterminates fish of all kinds. Fish hatcheries can't replace nature and their released fish are caught as soon as planted.

The automobile and good roads have sounded the death knell of the trout by making them accessible to mass extermination. The headwaters of all streams should be permanently closed and the fry planted where they have a chance at survival.

Parks Speed Slaughter

To seal the doom of the trout, steelhead and salmon and stimulate their slaughter "recreational parks" along the Rogue are being established. Seven new parks have been announced along the Rogue which will have picnic and boating facilities.

And the tragedy of it is they are to be developed through the use of game commission funds, collected in the name of conservation, and maintained by the county with taxpayers' money. Thereby good-bye forever to Rogue River trout fishing.

Newspapers are mistaken when they say that "public access to the fishing spots in the Rogue river has been limited to extensive private ownership of the lands" through which the river flows. The parks are described as designed "to open up the spots where fishermen can get down to the river."

Under the Oregon law the land owners do not own the river, like they do in California. The river belongs to the state or federal government, if it did not, the state could not restock it. It is a meandered stream. Anyone can walk along its banks or down the stream to fish and there are thousands of places of easy access.

Anyone Can Fish Rogue

I have fished the Rogue for many years from above Union Creek on the upper Rogue to Gold Beach at its mouth and no land owner ever interfered or tried to. For nearly 30 years I was part owner of a mile and a half of river front below Trail with a fishing cabin and we never could and never did object to any one's fishing the stream or walking along its bank. And boat fishing is banned above Bybee bridge from June to January.

There are now numerous resorts along the stream for fishermen—they do not attempt to control fishing rights, for they have none.

Until the turn of the century, there was little sport fishing in the Rogue. The pioneer was only interested in food. Long cane poles were used with big spoons or salmon eggs bait, and sometimes the fishing was done on horseback. When a big fish was hooked, the farmer put the pole over his shoulder and rode his horse dragging the salmon or steelhead ashore where it was salted down in a barrel for winter food.

"Silk Stocking Anglers"

The first fly fishermen with their light rods and tackle were derided as silk-stocking fishermen and belabored in legislative efforts for their conservation efforts. I helped initiate a bill closing the Rogue river to commercial fishing in 1910, which was passed by a vote of 49,712 to 30,397 which the next legislature repealed. Steelhead in Rogue river are classified by law in 1912 as a trout, but in no other streams in Oregon where sea-going trout is commercially fished as a "salmon." The Rogue was some years later closed to commercial fishing and still is.

Californian Killed On Redwood Highway

Grants Pass — (U.P.) — Lee Ahyta, 37, Crescent City, Calif., was injured fatally early Saturday when the car he was driving skidded into a bridge abutment seven miles south of Cave Junction on the Redwood highway, state police reported.

Ahyta died in a local hospital about two hours after the accident.

Leonard W. Brekke, also of Crescent City, suffered minor injuries in the accident.

Use Mail Tribune Want Ads Dead line for Sunday Classified is at noon Saturday.



ROGUE FISHING 40 YEARS AGO—The picture above, taken 40 years ago, shows George Putnam and the late Col. E. E. Kelly of Medford. The former was at that time editor of the Mail Tribune. In the accompanying article he tells of early-day fishing in the Rogue river. The picture was taken by the

late William L. Finley, the noted naturalist, in his moving picture "Mutt and Jeff" of the Rogue," which was shown through the nation in connection with Finley's lectures in 1915 and 1916.—(Engraving courtesy of the Capital Journal.)

'Safe-Teens' Group Nmd at Meeting

A committee to assist in the promotion of the "Safe-Teens" movement was appointed at a meeting of the Jackson County Association of Insurance Agents at the Jackson hotel this week.

Purpose of the nation-wide "Safe-Teens" movement is to promote safe driving among teenage youth.

Members of the association also voted to assist in formation of an association of insurance women; changed the regular meeting date from the first to the second Thursday of each month, and voted in favor of closing insurance agency offices on Veterans Day, Nov. 11.

A nominating committee was appointed at the meeting to nominate officers for 1956. Election of officers will be held at the December meeting of the association.

Girl Scouts

Surprise Party

Members of Troop 156 recently gave a surprise birthday party for their leader, Mrs. Al Carara. The girls taking charge of arrangements were Toni Adams, Patricia Calhoun, Karen Crevier, Diane DeLorne, Karen Fogel, Theresa Fogel, Judy Kirkland, Virginia Krueger, Ann Manno, Mary Pat Naumes, Dorothy Raush, Martha Simpson, Carol Valentine and Carole Doyle at whose home the party took place.

The next week they visited the Park View nursery home.

Patricia Calhoun—Scribe.

Lost Articles

Scouts are reminded to pick up "lost and found" articles from camp at the Girl Scout office by November 15.

Honor Mothers

Girl Scout Troop 163 held a tea for their mothers at the home of their leader, Mrs. Ralph Thompson, Monday, October 31, this day being Juliet Lewis birthday.

Pat Emly gave a talk on Sir Baden Powell and Patsy Thompson talked on Juliet Low. We welcomed Frances Bessonet into our troop as a new member.

Mrs. Scott Ellis is assistant leader. Sherry Kablich is president and Marcia Harrington, secretary and treasurer.

NEW TOPIC

Philadelphia — (U.P.) — Barbers here have added to their conversational repertoire. Instead of the running commentary on the weather and sundry subjects, they will urge the customers to register before the deadline and vote at the Nov. 8 municipal election.

Hospital Drive Men To Gather; Campaign Volunteers Set Work

Managers and assistants of seven groups of the advance gifts committee of the Rogue Valley Memorial hospital fund raising campaign will meet at 7:30 p.m. tomorrow at the campaign office at 28 South Bartlett st.

They will receive final instructions on the advance gifts campaign. The advance gifts committee is organized to secure large donations and memorials from those who are in a position to subscribe larger amounts.

A special group of 20 men, with Glenn L. Jackson as manager has been working on advance gifts.

Besides Jackson, others who will meet are Sam Colton, John Moffat, Dick Finch, Tom MacLeod, James Rowan, A. N. Potter Jr., Curtis Hopkins, H. D. Christensen, Ron Gande, Eugene Ferrell, Robert E. Schott, and Russell J. Hogue.

Thorndike Chairman

Eugene Thorndike is chairman of the advance gifts committee, and Jackson is co-chairman. The general organization for the fund raising campaign is headed by Walter G. Garner and James J. Dunlevy. The general campaign probably will start in December.

A total of 150 men is expected to volunteer for the general campaign, making a total of 245 working to solicit funds for construction of the three-story, 78-bed hospital at the corner of Barnett rd. and Murphy rd.

Jackson county residents will be asked to subscribe \$714,000, which is about one-third the total estimated cost of \$1,900,000. Some \$600,000 had been contributed to date, and another \$586,000 is available from federal Hill-Burton hospital funds.

Names of founders and volunteers in the fund raising campaign will be listed on a plaque in the hospital lobby.

Various civic and other organizations have been encouraged not to make memorial fund rais-

Pay to Jobless in Jackson County Down in October

Unemployment benefits paid during October in Jackson county were less than half the number claimed during the same period in 1954, John J. Patton, manager, Oregon State Employment service, announced recently.

The number of unemployed in the county as of Oct. 31 was estimated at 585 persons including 200 women, compared to a total of 1,065 at the same time last year.

Rapid Decline

The high employment level at the end of September, when only 262 persons were estimated unemployed in the county, was maintained through the first half of October but declined rapidly during the last of the month due to the end of the fruit harvest and the closure of some sawmills.

Reasons given for the shut-down of sawmills and night shifts being discontinued in some mills included shortage of logs; shortage of railroad cars, and a less favorable lumber market. The total number of employees effected by the shut-downs is small compared to the total employed in the lumber industry in the county, Patton said.

Nearly all retail sales firms contacted during October indicated a very good volume of business.

There will be a demand for orchard pruners as soon as the leaves are off of the trees. No large change in the employment situation is expected until bad weather slows down outside work of all kinds, Patton said.

Speakers Slated At SOC Assmly

Ashland—Three speakers will speak at an assembly at Southern Oregon college here at 10 a.m. Wednesday, Nov. 9. They will speak on various educational processes of foreign countries.

Seek Endorsement

The hospital board of directors is seeking endorsement of various organizations for the hospital, and the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce has already endorsed the project.

A "school of instruction" dinner, originally scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 10, has been changed to Monday, Nov. 14, at 6:30 p.m. at the Jackson hotel. The dinner meeting was changed so it would not conflict with Elk lodge activities Thursday night.

Four members of the local chapter of the National Secretaries association volunteered last week to fold prospectuses. They were Miss Bea Saunders, Mrs. Lola Russell, Mrs. Daisy Cain, and Mrs. Gwenn Carter.

Among new directors whose names were not listed previously are Walter Garner, Janet Guches and John Niedermeyer.

Rogue River Students Hold Magazine Drive

Rogue River—Fifth through eighth grade students have sold \$364 worth of magazines in the annual magazine subscription sale at Rogue River Elementary school. The sale started late last month and will end Monday.

About one third of the total collections will be retained by the school for purchasing a tape recorder for music, language and other classes. Three students who solicit the most subscriptions will receive a watch, a travel clock and a fountain pen.

Each room is anticipating sales totaling \$150 with seventh and eighth grades presently leading with \$93.

New Haven, Conn. — (U.P.) — After appealing a 60-day sentence for striking a policeman, Joseph Pouncey wound up with a nine-month term.

How To Meet Higher Demands for Timber Talked by Foresters

Various approaches to help meet the increased demand for wood were discussed at a meeting of the Siskiyou chapter of the Society of American Foresters Friday.

Larry Solin, forester at Elk Lumber company who attended the national SAF meeting in Portland recently, told of pertinent points brought out there, pointing out that stepped-up production of trees will be necessary to keep up with demand for wood in a steadily increasing population.

Among the suggestions Solin said, are assistance to owners and managers of small plots to better utilize those areas; more preventive measures regarding disease, and increase salvage among diseased trees; planting trees in areas where vacant land is not valuable for farming; and planting and restock cut over areas as soon as possible after logging.

To Support Publication

The group also discussed and agreed to support for this year the society's publication "Western Forester," a newsletter sponsored by the Puget Sound and Columbia River sections of the society. The publication started this year.

The majority of members present at Friday's meeting believed the newsletter would tend to bring chapters of the two sections closer together, and would furnish news concerning other chapters which may be of interest to other areas.

Also discussed were possibilities of strengthening the Columbia River section, of which the Siskiyou chapter is a member, and programming for future meetings this year.

By-Laws Changed

The group voted to amend the chapter's by-laws to exclude, in

describing the geographical boundary, "parts of Douglas county." Douglas county has been claimed by another chapter, Ted Maul, chairman of the local chapter, pointed out that members living in Douglas county have been attending in another chapter.

Maul said the executive committee would meet in the near future to appoint a vice-chairman to fill the unexpired term of M. L. Tedrow, who is being transferred to Washington. Tedrow is with the U. S. Forest Service Co.

Friday afternoon, a group of about 30 members toured five plants at the White City industrial area. The plants are Fir Ply, Inc., Oregon Veneer company, Cowning Lumber company, Cowning Lumber company's saw mill, Cascade Wood products, and Padgham Mill-work company.



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Bristol Expresses Optimism About Aid for Mining

Optimism about federal aid for the mining industry was expressed at a meeting of the Northwestern Mining Council, Inc. here.

F. I. Bristol, Rogue River, principal speaker at the meeting, gave a report on the convention of the American Mining Congress held in Las Vegas last month.

Program Needed

Bristol said that according to Secretary of the Interior Douglas McKay, a mining program is needed which will produce mineral requirements without additional imports.

President Eisenhower vetoed appropriations voted by Congress for continuing government stockpiling of strategic minerals with the statement that it was only stop-gap legislation, and asked that the next session of Congress come up with a complete mining program, Bristol said.

Groups Named

It was pointed out at the convention that the Interior department had appointed 14 groups to work on a program of desired mining legislation, Bristol said.

He stressed the fact that a publicity program to bring about better understanding of the problems of the mining industry by the public was needed.

IT'S A PUZZLEMENT

Bennington Center, N. Y. — (U.P.) — Sister M. Claudianne at Sacred Heart school has four sets of twins in her kindergarten-first grade classroom. There is one boy-girl duo; two sets of boys and one set of girls.

he could not handle both responsibilities as they should be handled.

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