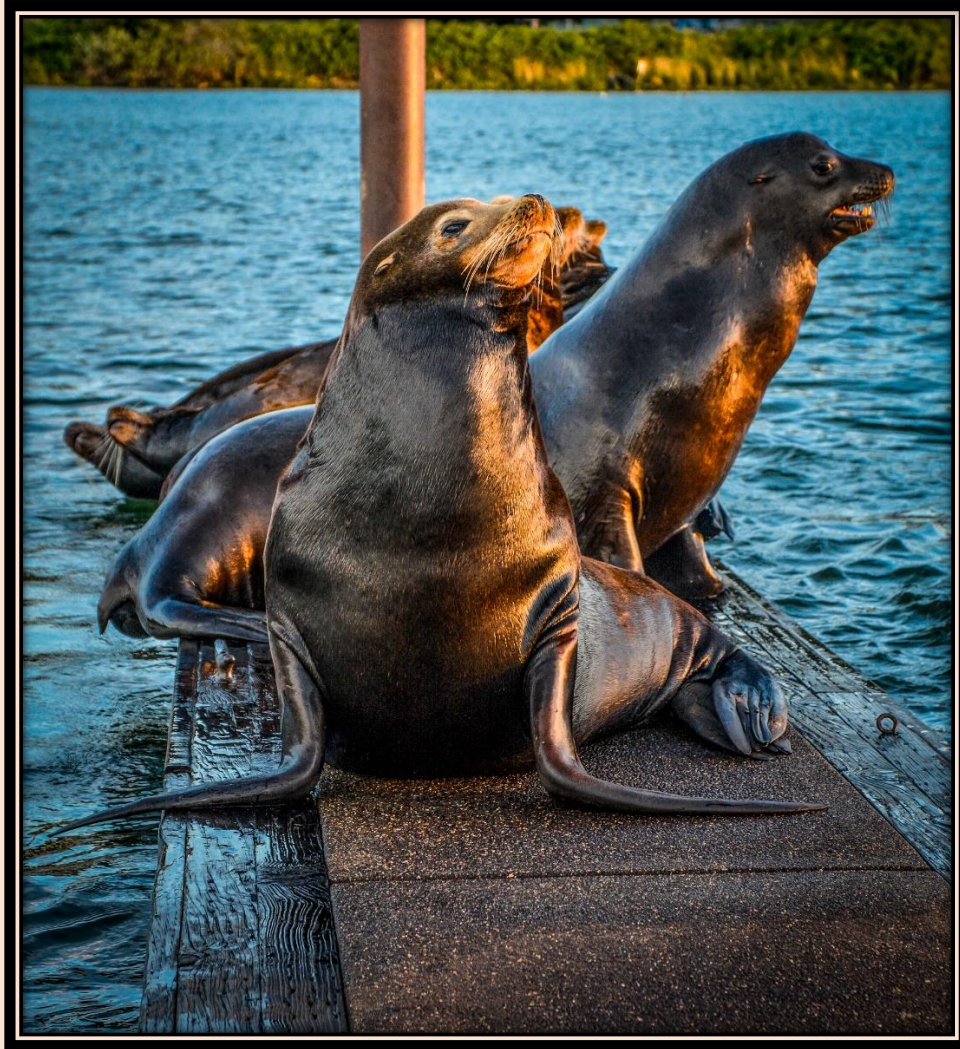


NOWA FIELD NOTES



AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020



***CRAFT IMPROVEMENT (SEO & PHOTOGRAPHY) - PHOTO PORTFOLIO -
MEMBER UPDATES – MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY INFO NEEDED -
SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS - AND MORE!***

NOWA FIELD NOTES – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

NOWA FIELD NOTES

The NOWA newsletter is published six times a year by the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association, a registered nonprofit, tax-exempt, public supported organization under IRS 501 c3 Code. Newsletter contributions in the form of craft improvement articles, photos, member photo portfolios, news items, letters to the editor and more are welcome but cannot be compensated. Send submissions by email in Microsoft WORD format. Photos can be sent in JPEG Format. The Deadline for submissions is the 15th day of the month prior to the next edition being published. Send them to:

NOWA NEWSLETTER EDITOR - John Kruse

PO Box 4269, Wenatchee, WA 98807

Tel. 509-670-8826 - Email: john@northwesternoutdoors.com

THIS MONTH'S COVER PHOTO – By Jason Brooks

NOWA OFFICERS, BOARD MEMBERS AND MORE

The NOWA website can be found at <http://nowaoutdoors.com>

Website Editor - Dave Kilhefner Email: Dave@kbi-ins.com

The NOWA Facebook Page can be found at www.facebook.com/NorthwestOutdoorWritersAssociation/



OFFICERS

PRESIDENT – Ron Kerr

VICE PRESIDENT – Matt Liere

2ND VICE PRESIDENT – Vacant

SECRETARY/TREASURER – Risa Wyatt/Dave Kilhefner

CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD – Robert Mottrom

DIRECTORS

EXPIRING MAY 2021 – Greg Gulbrandsen, Bert Gildert, Harold Pfeiffer

EXPIRING 2022 – Dave Vedder, Dennis Dauble, Alan Liere

EXPIRING 2023 – Joe Warren, Risa Wyatt, Janie Gildart

SUPPORTING MEMBER LIASON – Michelle Peters

NOWA FIELD NOTES – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I stared at a blank page for quite awhile trying to think of positive or intelligent things to say in this month's message. Most of my friends would probably suggest the "intelligent" part would be an oxymoron. I say that in jest, as I consider myself lucky to have so many good friends in NOWA that we can tease each other without anyone's feeling being hurt.

I could probably fill this whole message with a list of positive things about NOWA, but at this point coming up with new information about the organization's activities and moving forward has a few stumbling blocks. Most of which centers around the impact Covid 19 is having on so many people's lives.

Fortunately most members I'm in contact with are finding ways to stay active. I'm not a consistent viewer of Facebook, yet it has proven to be a great connector between members and friends. Dave Vedder is busy fishing, Troy Rodakowski is a one-man band in terms of staying active and many other members are doing likewise in their own pursuits. All of which are positive messages in their own way.

Recently, Tim Christie posted a message with the question:

"Given the seriousness of the Covid virus, what are you doing to make our path through this better?"

Within minutes at least 20 people responded.

The word "**seriousness**" jumped out at me because the impact this "bug"ger is having on all our lives does not appear to be going away anytime soon. I recently read that Remington Firearms has filed for bankruptcy protection for the second time. Remington has been a NOWA supporting member for decades and contributed much to the organization in dollars and opportunities for writers and photographers. When pillars like this one begin to fall you have to wonder who else will be taking a tumble. I'm sure many of you could name a few.

Recovery from the impacts of this virus is not going to be easy. One of my concerns for the moment is next year's conference. Is the dust going to settle soon enough for the organization to start making commitments? Are you as members going to commit to attend the conference? It might be easy to think that because the conference is eight or nine months away, we should just do it. Unfortunately it is not that easy. There is a lot of planning and financial commitment in putting on a conference.

(continued next page)

Normally we rely on support from Corporate members and the membership in general to make these events a success and worthwhile for our members to make the commitment to attend. Our awards program is based on member's entries of published photography, articles, blogs, etc. How is that going for everyone?

I appreciate we aren't going to solve this problem overnight, but after you sleep on it, I ask you to talk to any NOWA board member about your thoughts, write a letter to the Newsletter editor. I'm sure the new "normal" in the way the organization functions in the future could be somewhat different than in the past.

And I thank you for your continued support of NOWA.

Ron Kerr
NOWA President

FROM THE EDITOR



What makes for a good edition of NOWA Field Notes? Good content sent in by fellow NOWA members. I'm particularly grateful for the wonderful photos I received from Jason Brooks, the outstanding Member News segment from Terry Sheely, the great photography advice from Doug Wilson and the very good technical read (even for a Luddite like me) from Brad Trumbo about the importance of SEO for us as outdoors media professionals. Keep those contributions coming! It's what makes this newsletter worth reading every couple of months.

In other news I've been keeping track of some of the economic winners and losers of the Covid-19 pandemic. Definite losers in our outdoors world would be resort operators in Alaska, Canada and Mexico who have lost most of their bookings this year due to travel restrictions. Hotels, big lodges and cruise ships, even smaller eco-tourism style cruise ships, have also been hit hard.

On the other hand, firearms sales are through the roof and the main buyers during these uncertain times are first time firearms owners. Also doing well is the sport of fishing! It's a great way to social distance and sales of fishing tackle along with participation has grown in a big way this year. Another big winner? RV rentals and sales. A lot of families are hitting the roads in RV's this year, so much so that rentals for the summer were pretty well sold out across the nation before summer even arrived. Where are they driving to? Our national parks, national forests, state parks and smaller family run resorts. Call it the year of the throw back vacation and call it an opportunity for some stories too! If you aren't covering this, you may be missing out on some profitable assignments!

NOWA NEWS

FISH CAMP ANOTHER COVID-19 CASUALTY

Ed Iman's Fish Camp, held every September since 2003 at the Peach Beach RV Park in the Columbia River Gorge, has been cancelled for 2020. Covid-19 and the restrictions that come with it in both Washington and Oregon when it comes to events, gatherings and social distancing are the reason why. It's a shame, because this has long been attended by a variety of NOWA members, but it's also understood. Here's hoping Fish Camp, and our spring conference in The Dalles, will be able to occur in 2021!

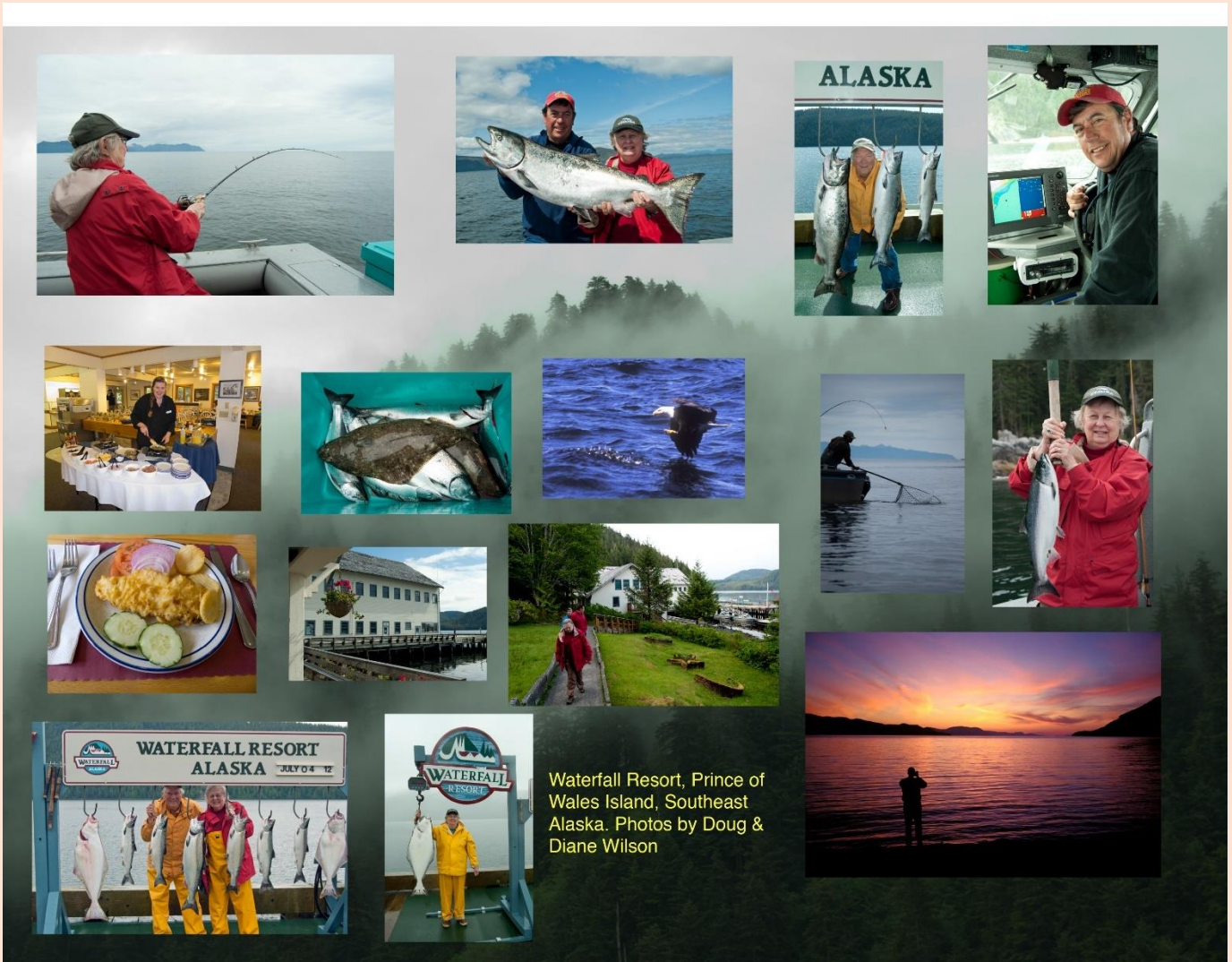


NOWA FIELD NOTES – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

CRAFT IMPROVEMENT

PHOTOGRAPHING YOUR RESORT ADVENTURE

by Doug Wilson



You're headed for a remote outdoor fly-in fishing lodge and dreaming of a great fishing adventure, be it your first or a return from many seasons. Of all your personal equipment, your camera, whether it is a Point & Shoot model, Digital Single Lens Reflex or your cell phone may be the most rewarding item you bring with you. (continued next page)

If you have Wi-Fi service available at the lodge you can post up to date photos of how your trip is going. When you get back home, you may even want to compile a photo book of your trip. Several publishing services on the Internet offer this service at a reasonable price. Their software allows to automatically layout a book or you can select the layout yourself.

A group shot of you and your fishing buddies when you arrive at the lodge will be a good start. Usually someone else will be happy to snap this photo. Have them take two or three shots in case someone in the photo closes their eyes. You can also use the self-timer on your camera to get this shot.

If your camera is tucked away for storage, it won't do much good. Keep your camera handy to grab fleeting shots that will enhance your memories of the trip. Pack it in a small carrying bag if it is a digital Single Lens Reflex or in a jacket pocket if it is a P&S or a cell phone.

If you are flying in by small plane, press your camera lens right up against the plane's window to eliminate reflections in the window, which might otherwise ruin your shot.

Be sure to use any opportunities to photograph your fishing mates, your guide and passing scenery and wildlife. If shooting scenery while the boat is going full bore, a fast shutter speed is needed to get sharp photos. I'd suggest you ask your guide and fishing partners to take photos with your camera as well, which they will happily do.

When you reach the fishing grounds, the first item is to catch fish. Once someone is hooked up you might shoot some action shots of a fish being landed, but being the first day, you will probably be more excited to catch fish than photographing them. Be forewarned, a missed photo opportunity may never present itself again.

When you bring in a photo worthy King (Chinook) or silver salmon, halibut, rockfish or lingcod be sure to ask your guide to wash any blood off the fish before photographing it. I prefer holding the fish horizontally in most cases. Don't long arm the fish to make it look bigger. It is also a good idea to shoot some shots in a vertical format.

Besides hero shots with your fish, be sure to do some close-up photos of your tackle, bait, etc.. In many instances it is a good idea to use the pop-up built in flash on your camera to get a better exposure. Sometimes a bright sky in the background will result in under-exposure of the person holding the fish. This is especially true on bright overcast days.

If the sun is out, ask your guide to position the boat so the sun is over your back and lighting your subjects. Have them pull the bill of their hats higher so no part of the face is in shadow unless you are using the flash for fill in light. However, if a hot bite is on, your guide may be hesitant to maneuver the boat for photo lighting instead of catching more fish. (continued next page)

If you are close enough or have a telephoto lens try to make some photos of other fishermen in resort boats with their prize fish that you can email to them. It will be truly appreciated by your fellow guest. We have done this several times. Be sure to take some available light photos of your dining area and your fishing mates chowing down on some very fine meals prepared by the kitchen staffs. These photos round out your memories of the resort experience.

Don't save your camera only for sunny days. Weather is extremely variable in Alaska and British Columbia. You may have strikingly beautiful blue skies some days and fog and drizzle on others. Summer days up north offer nearly 18 hours of daylight surrounding the summer solstice on June 21st. While you never know about weather, when the sunset turns the sky to spectacular reds, it is a stunning sight worth capturing.

Hopefully you will see Humpback whales blowing and breaching, bald eagles in flight and Steller sea lions hauled out on the rocks. Getting a good photo is usually done on the fly with a telephoto lens as Federal laws does not allow you to intentionally get too close to protected sea mammals. Please don't ask your guide to stop so you can get a photo. The guide might receive a large fine if they do.

It is best to shoot available light inside rather than use your camera's flash. Using flash often results in washed out faces and dark backgrounds. You should have a shutter speed of at least 1/60th of a second to get a sharp picture. Rather than using the flash, set your camera at a higher ISO (Sensitivity) in the camera's control settings. If you are not sure how to do it, be sure to take your camera manual with you. An ISO of 800 will allow you to take photos inside most areas of a resort. Instead of hand holding, you may get a sharper image by setting the camera on a smooth surface like a table or counter top.

In most cases it is best to use the auto color balance setting in your camera. It will compensate for the various lighting conditions such as daylight or fluorescent. I prefer to shoot my camera in the programmed mode most of the time as it selects a reasonable shutter speed and lens opening.

One more thing; photos of your accommodations can add to your memory book. Set your self-timer and place your camera on a table or cabinet that allows you to capture an image of as much of your room or cabin as possible.

The bottom line? Catch a lot of fish and take as many photos as you can. This will provide you with memories and bragging rights that may last a lifetime, or least until you make a return trip.

CRAFT IMPROVEMENT

SEO MATTERS

by Brad Trumbo

There is no substitute for a tangible, paper book or glossy magazine. But like it or not, we live in a digital age, and electronic media are steadily gaining ground in the literary world. If you've published a blog or other digital media, you are likely familiar with the term Search Engine Optimization (SEO). For those unfamiliar, SEO is defined as the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to a website through organic search engine results. In a nutshell, it gets you found and read. It draws those using search engines like Google to your outdoor-related content.

If you don't publish digital media, you can stop reading right here. But if you at least maintain or have considered an online portfolio, hear me out.

There are a number of parameters that play into SEO and having a basic understanding of the mechanics of it can work wonders. The first and most important feature is compelling content. Being outdoor writers, we have nothing more to discuss here, right? Unique content about specific experiences, methods, gear, etcetera, is our jam. But is your content "linkable"? Linkable content is something that can be accessed with a click from a Google list, no logins required, and readily shared to social media.

Next, how is your content titled? If you publish an article on walleye fishing the Snake River, the title should contain the word "walleye" and something related to fishing a river, if not "Snake River", for example. Another consideration is title length. This has to do with the title of the specific article, as well as where it is located within a website. Google cuts off titles at approximately 60 characters, so keep titles meaningful and relatively short.

For example, if you are traveling to Walla Walla, WA, and would like to know about hunting pheasant in the area, search "pheasant hunting Walla Walla". The number one link leads to an article I wrote a couple years ago and posted to my website, "Pheasant Hunting the Walla Walla Valley Uplands". It ranks higher than the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife because of the specific place, hunting and pheasant all being in the title. Speaking of character length, this title just barely fits Google's display parameters. It has been viewed by a number of readers and I continue to be surprised by how many reach out to me for more information. (continued next page)

Additionally, the uniform resource locator or URL (fancy terminology for “web address”) matters to search engine algorithms. I am no web designer and rely on Wordpress to host my personal site. I pay for my own domain, bradtrumbo.com. When a search engine hits my site for the given terms, the address appears as bradtrumbo.com/portfolio/pheasant-hunting-the-walla-walla-valley-uplands/, for example. This address format is recognized and reported by search engines because there is a clear hierarchical structure that can be deciphered as pertaining to specific content like “pheasant hunting Walla Walla”. Cryptic web addresses like www.example.com/randomtitle/tt0468569 are overlooked by the search engine algorithms because the hierarchical structure is lacking.

Finally, keywords are important to include in titles and when tagging posts. There are a few ways to determine which keywords to use, aside from the obvious phrases associated with the topic of the content. Google offers a free keyword plugin called Keyword Surfer which provides stats based on phrases you enter and search. Other keyword tools are available for free and for fee that provide the search volumes for keywords you enter, as well as a list of other similar key words and where they rank in popularity.

I understand this a dry topic, but the relevance of SEO cannot be overstated, particularly for younger writers making their entrance into the digital freelance world. While I claim no expertise as an SEO wizard, I do generally pay attention to keywords and titling. And it not only drives traffic to my site, but it can also bring in a job or two.

In April, a Seattle-based media company represented an independent filmmaker, Steve Utaski, who was looking to promote a film he had planned to release at various Pacific Northwest film festivals this spring. Subsequently, the film festivals were cancelled due to coronavirus outbreaks. When the festivals failed, he turned to writers. Because of my website, I was one of them. I drafted an article on native pollinators with a focus on the blue orchard mason bee, about which Steve’s film was based. A month prior I had published a similar article on mason bees for my Waitsburg Times column and was able to quickly spin that into a new angle, to the delight of the client and the betterment of my journalism experience.

While websites, search engines and drivel about SEO are never all that exciting, considering the benefits down the road make it worthwhile to spend some time at least developing a searchable portfolio with clickable content. As your portfolio populates and folks search the internet for sage advice or a worthy writer, it can speak for your experience and talent and reinforce your celebrity status (thanks, Terry Sheely!).

“SEO is like a resume, you polish it so you
have your best foot forward.” – Matt Cutts

MEMBER PHOTO PORTFOLIO – THE DEER HUNT



Jason Brooks is a talented writer and photographer based in Washington State. He loves to fish and hunt.

His son Ryan is frequently pictured in the stories Jason shares.

This month, Jason was hired by "Salmon & Steelhead Journal" to be the editor of "The Tailout", their digital magazine. Check out the latest edition at <https://www.salmonandsteelheadjournal.com/the-tailout/>

MEMBER UPDATES – From Terry Sheely

BACK INTO HELL’S (CANYON) ON A DIGITAL MISSION



*Alan Liere, nailed this white sturgeon
just to update my photo file.
All business!*

Taking advantage of the involuntary free time provided by COVID-19 cancellation of most of my state-side and all out-of-country story trips, I had time to do a little office housekeeping updating photos, files, contacts etc.

Happily, I discovered that I had 479 photos of Hell’s Canyon/Snake River fishing, boating, camping and scenery. Unhappily, every one of those 479 was a transparency. To my surprise it had been so long since I’d been in the Canyon (one of my all-time favorite places) that my stock photos had been trampled by the dinosaur of technological evolution.

I needed marketable hi-res digitals.

I needed another trip into Hell’s.

And I got it.

Who knew that it would live up to its name with 108 degree temperature—in the shade.

A call to Michelle Peters, long-time NOWA supporting member and President and CEO of Visit Lewiston/Clarkston Valley set the wheels, uh, jet boat, in motion. She immediately lined up a reunion dinner at Rooster’s riverside restaurant, and a 60-mile run into the Canyon with Snake Dancer Excursions (509-758-8927) for sturgeon, smallmouth, history (pictographs/mines/pioneer artifacts and the canyon’s staggeringly steep and gorgeous scenery), bighorns, chukars and other wildlife, with a couple of stops on sand beach swims/wades and a chill-off soak in Cherry Creek waterfall. (continued next page)

Couple of more calls and Natalie and I had a long-overdue on-the-boat reunion with NOWAians Al Liere and Lenny Frasure. Hell's Canyon is Lenny's backyard and if there's a pebble he hasn't checked out I've never seen it. The man knows Hell's Canyon and is an authority you can quote. Al made the two hour drive south from north of Spokane just to bring his puzzling sense of humor and most importantly our fishing luck. He came through with a photographable white sturgeon and plenty of smallmouth.

The Hell's Canyon reunion was a flashback to earlier NOWA years when we frequently traveled together on FAM trips to story destinations. It was great to see and fish with Michelle, Lenny and Al again. Old times. Good productive NOWA times.



Lenny Frasure taking a reunion break at his cabin in the Blue Mountains.

Temperatures soared, it took longer to play two oversize sturgeon than it did to conjure up bites, the smallmouth bass were right where young Clayton Waller, our Snake Dancer guide said they would be and they had a fondness for plastics and plugs. I wound up—not surprisingly in this digital age with 296 updated digitals, updated notes and contacts and at least four story slants.

And of course, I'll probably have to go back to round out my Hell's Canyon file with steelhead and salmon digitals, but that'll be another story, eh Michelle. Stories best captured when the canyon is a little bit cooler than Hell.

The point: COVID-19 be damned, there's still work to be done, friendships to be rekindled, markets to be refreshed and NOWA is the knot that holds it together.

MEMBER UPDATES

BILL BRASSARD ELECTED AS OWAA BOARD MEMBER



Bill Brassard, the Senior Communications Director for our Supporting Member, the National Shooting Sports Foundation, was elected this summer as a Board Member for the Outdoor Writers Association of America. How he finds the time with everything else on his plate we don't know, but Bill's character and wisdom will be a benefit to the board and this national outdoor communicators organization!

WE STILL WANT YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FOR NOWA FIELD NOTES!

- Craft improvement articles
- Member and Supporting Member news
- Member stories
- Photos and/or photo essays
- And more!!!
- Plus...We need help on committees too and Dennis Dauble could use assistance from you in putting together our 2021 conference in The Dalles! Contact Newsletter Editor John Kruse for contributions at john@northwesternoutdoors.com. If you are willing to serve on a committee contact President Ron Kerr at rcgkerr@gmail.com

NOWA FIELD NOTES – AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2020

IT'S TIME TO UPDATE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY INFORMATION!

We haven't updated our membership directory since 2017 and it's time to do so this year. With that in mind you could please email Terry Sheely and let him know the following information?

NAME:

MEMBERSHIP LEVEL (Active, ActiveRetired, SupportingMember, Etc.)

ADDRESS:

HOME PHONE, WORK PHONE & CELL PHONE:

EMAIL:

SPOUSE NAME:

SHORT BIOGRAPHY:

Here's a sample:

ROBERT FROST (AR)

122 Rockingham Road, Derry, New Hampshire 03038

H: 603-432-3091 W: Same C: 603-433-4025

derrylib@derrypl.org Spouse: Elinor White Frost

Poet and farmer who often writes about the outdoors. Author of several books to include "Stopping by the Woods on a Snowy Evening", "A Boy's Will" and "A Mending Wall". Winner of four Pulitzer Prizes.

Please email your information by the end of August to Tsheely@tnscommunications.net. Thanks!



SUPPORTING MEMBER NEWS



WATER RIVERS
Paradise

LEWISTON, ID / CLARKSTON, WA

Make the Lewis Clark Valley your basecamp for your next epic fishing adventure. Bring your group and stay in a riverside hotel or RV resort and book a private fishing charter with one of our experienced guides. Double-the-fun and fish for Fall Chinook and Steelhead on the Clearwater River. Triple-the-fun and fish for Fall Chinook, Steelhead and Sturgeon all on the same day on the Snake River in Hells Canyon!



Visit Lewis Clark Valley

FIND YOUR GUIDE & PLAN YOUR TRIP
(509) 758-7489 / www.visitlewisclarkvalley.com

FINAL SHOT



Dave Kilhefner once again provides us a parting shot featuring a beautiful wild steelhead he caught and released not with a fly rod, but with a spoon. One thing about Dave. He's a pragmatic fly angler who isn't afraid to use hardware when the time is right to do so and from personal experience, I can tell you he is a fun person to fish with! Until next time, stay healthy, enjoy the outdoors, and share it with the public in print, online, or on the air! - JK

