

WindKnots

A Monthly Publication of the Texas Flyfishers

Volume 25 / Issue 1

February 2006

Going In and Getting Out of The Bob Marshall

By Aaron Hammer



All the hassles of last minute work, traffic delays, and airport security were behind us. Jeremy and I (especially Jeremy) were as giddy as school girls, completely over-stimulated and ready to board the plane. In the previous two weeks and with the help of no less than 300 emails back and forth between us, we had prepared everything we needed. Backpacks, boots, clothes, tents, stoves, rods, and flies were loaded on the plane. My dad was driving from Colorado to meet us in Montana for a week-long adventure. Little did we know just how memorable it would be. Before the trip, we were dying to go. By the second day, we were so sore that we wanted to die. By mid-week, we were having so much fun fishing that we questioned if we really had died. And on the last night of the trip, we very nearly did die.

South of Glacier National Park in Montana, the Bob Marshall wilderness complex covers 2,400 square miles of road-free terrain. "The Bob," as it is affectionately called, runs for 60 miles along the Continental Divide. Three wilderness areas combine to make one of the largest wilderness tracts in the lower 48 states. Our destination was in the dead center of this vast terrain, the South Fork of the Flathead River, nicknamed the SF. The shortest pack into the upper reaches of the SF is a one-way trip of about 25 miles. The reward for making the trek is a pristine river, clear water, great scenery, and fantastic fishing for beautiful, native cutthroat trout. And there are also lots of bears. Grizzly bears. Big, hungry grizzly bears. Just in case, we armed ourselves with pepper spray, bear bells, and plenty of rope with which to hang our food in trees at night. Jeremy was still "slightly" worried about the bears (again, much like a school girl). (Note: In order to prepare for camping in bear country, the best reference material is *not* a book on bear maulings.)

The adventure began the next morning when my dad, Jeremy, and I drove to the trailhead from my aunt's house. Our mission was set. We were going to spend two days hiking the 25 miles into the river, then take it easier (hah!) for a few days fishing and sightseeing before hiking back out. The river is definitely remote. Very few people make the hike, most preferring to horse-pack into the river. But horses just aren't my style. True to plan, we hiked, and we hiked, and we hiked some more. By the second afternoon, we finally reached some water worth fishing at the inlet of Big Salmon Lake. Feet were blistered and shoulders were sore, but our lines were finally in the water.

The fish did not disappoint. We fished for a couple of hours before finally tearing ourselves away for the final six miles along the lake to within a mile of the SF. We fished too long and had to cook and eat dinner in the dark (generally inadvisable in bear country). (Continued on page 3)

THE ANNUAL TFF AUCTION
will take place on
April 1st, 2006 at 9:30 a.m.

Bethany Christian Church
3223 Westheimer at Bammel

For more information
call Rick Rawls (713-830-5446)

President's Corner

by Jerry "Buggywhip" Loring, President of the Texas Flyfishers

Thanks to all of you for the wonderful and enjoyable evening Barbara and I had hosting the Christmas Party and Awards Banquet. I hope you had as much fun as we did. What a wonderful gathering of friends. Thank you all for visiting.

Clarke Thornton once again did a masterful job of planning and coordinating who-brought-what to eat and drink. There were dips, mini-sausages, sauces, salads, fruits, vegetables, seafood, dressings, stuffed items, homemade cranberry sauce, and the main entree of baked turkey and smoked ham. Remember to leave room for desert! The buffet overflowed with deserts.

The Christmas party doubles as a night of recognition. Accordingly, three meritorious service awards were presented. Norbert Burch was recognized for setting up the club web page and serving as webmaster for the last several years. Somewhere during those years Norbert became one of the better anglers in our club. Thank you, Norbert. We also acknowledged Ralph Adams for his masterful publishing of the Wind Knots, and presented him the key to the secret fishing lodge. It is so secret, no one knows where it is. Great job, Ralph.

The last award went to the Redfish Rodeo Committee. The committee was comprised of Pam and Phil Stranahan, Joe Burton, Gary Fultz, Rick Rawls, and Dick Kauth. The eleventh annual Redfish Rodeo was a rousing success. Designed as a break-even event to promote catch-and-release in saltwater, the RR netted one thousand dollars after expenses. Good work gang.

In distant years past, the TFF Christmas Party was held in a rented a hall or room. The event typically included a formal sit down dinner along with a speaker and awards ceremony. Over the years, the party was held at Vargo's, the Rice Faculty Club, the University of Houston Club, and several different restaurants. Seven years ago, Mike and Susan Eberhard began a new tradition of hosting the event at their home. Now, the tradition of hosting the annual banquet at the President's home has become a good and firmly established tradition. The atmosphere is warm and relaxed, very much open to socializing, making new friends, and renewing past fishing trips.

Thanks for visiting our home.

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Mesquite Landing

By Phil Stranahan

Time flies. It has been a year this Thanksgiving since Mesquite Landing became available. For those of you who haven't visited yet, Mesquite Landing is our new home in Fulton, Texas. We built a garage apartment just to accommodate guests and have had a good response from the Texas Flyfishers.

We can accommodate up to six overnight guests. Among the guests this year: Jerry Loring, Aaron Hammer, Dale Burrier, Jeremy Cottrell (now back in Australia), Mike Siegman, Scott Fossum, Ralph Adams, Rick Rawls, Dick Kauth, Gary Fultz, Eduardo Davis, and Keith Calder. It was a great summer and fall with plenty of fish, mostly from the kayak.

We have a fleet of three kayaks, but usually fisherman bring their own, so there is plenty of transportation available. We added a fourteen foot johnboat with a twenty-five horsepower Johnson to get kayakers to more distant fishing sites.

One of the side benefits for us, in addition to all the good fishing company, is all the stuff left by visitors. Various shirts and pants, flies, good wine, beer, kayak paddles, etc. I'm thinking of installing a lost-and-found facility.

If you are thinking of coming to the Rockport area to fish, please let us know, even if you don't stay with us. Reservations are on a first-come, first-served basis. Talk to some of the fishermen who have been here for more info or reach me by telephone at 800-377-7240.

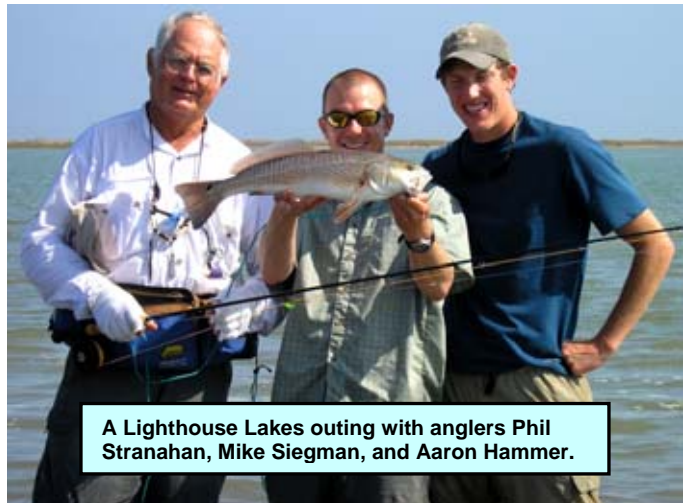
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TFF Meeting Update

Our next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 28th** at the Holiday Inn Select at 2712 Southwest Freeway between Kirby and Buffalo Speedway.

The February speaker will be **Capt. Sally Moffett** of *Capt. Sally's Rockport Outdoors* (www.kayakrockport.com).



A Lighthouse Lakes outing with anglers Phil Stranahan, Mike Siegman, and Aaron Hammer.

The Waterlogged Chronicles of the Texas Flyfishers

Circa February 2006

By Pescado Pete, Alias the Grand Scammer

Health is the recent issue for Twice Retired Tom. A reaction to medical treatment was severe in the extreme and caused Tom to be laid-up for several months. He is working hard in personal therapy and plans to become mobile (wheelchair?) during the first part of 2006. Please call Twice Retired Tom (281-379-7944) and give him some high-fives over the phone for all of his good work for TFF, which was pure quality.

TFF really, really, really, really needs of a VP of Programs. Someone should step forward and volunteer. Twice Retired Tom was working as VP when the medical thing happened. Several of the officers are filling in, but TFF needs a full time VP of Programs. The search continues. Pescado Pete, alias the Grand Scammer, has his eye open for that special someone.

Former Famous Fearless Leader has been asking when the 2006 auction will be held. The target date is April 1st. No kidding. Get your fly stuff in a box, a large box, and bring it to the January or February or March meeting, or drop it off at any of the local fly shops. These are the items we auction off to keep TFF funded. Moneyman is the auction chairman again. If you want to help Moneyman, volunteer at the meeting or call him. His number is in the *Wind Knots*. The more auction items we have, the better. Perhaps you have something special that can be donated, like an Abel reel. The auction needs a dozen items that qualify as "first-class merchandise." Can you help with any high-dollar items?

TFF has a new webmaster in the person of Dave (ex-Lord of San Luis Pass) Kelly. This most capable person stepped-up and volunteered and the transition between Dave and Seadoo (we must change his name because he now owns a bigger boat) is complete. If you have any suggestions for the web page, please communicate them to Webmaster Dave directly. The more information we have the better. Photos and stories and such are always in demand. If it is interesting to you, it is probably interesting to someone else. And for the record, Webmaster Dave was indeed once known as the "Lord of San Luis Pass" because for years and years and days and days on end, he stood a serene watch on that beach with a dozen surf rods staked at the water's edge.

The fishing reports from the River Guadalupe have been OK so far in 2006. Is there a fish for every foot of river frontage? No, but the flows have been low and very wadeable and Video Man (leader of freshwater outings) says the stockings have been adequate and so has the fishing. Reports say a float vessel is the best method to get away from the hard-hammered sections at the river road crossings. What's new there? Check with Dr. Ed Rizzolo if you want some good info on the River Guadalupe. Hill Country Waldron says the fishing is good because the pressure is not as heavy as it used to be.

See you on the water.

Post Script: If you have any good scuttlebutt (that's Navy lingo for shop talk) sent it to Pescado Pete, Alias the Grand Scammer, P. O. Box 571134, Houston, TX 77257-1134. Your confidence will never be betrayed.

[Recommended Internet Links from Dave \(ex-Lord of San Luis Pass\) Kelly](#)

Aerial maps of Texas:

<http://www.texmaps.com/aerials/aerial-photos-texas-coast.html>

Animated knot tying:

<http://www.animatedknots.com/indexfishing.php?LogoImage=LogoGrog.jpg>

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(...The Bob Marshall - continued from page 1)

The sound of a stick snapping in the distance alerted our senses. The sounds stopped, but not Jeremy's alertness. He spent his 30th birthday hardly sleeping, listening for bears that never came. The next morning, the excitement of reaching the SF was more than enough to make up for the lack of sleep. Over the next three days, we caught hundreds of cutthroats and a few bull trout (a.k.a. river sharks). Bull trout are a relative of the Dolly Varden and native to Montana, Washington, Oregon, and British Columbia. They are very aggressive and grow to a large size. On several occasions, we had bull trout chase and even eat cutthroats that were in excess of twelve inches.

We let all of the fish go, mostly because we didn't want to deal with the fish smells and the bears that they might attract. The fish were numerous and fairly easy to catch. It's not nice to call them dumb, but the fishing wasn't difficult. The cold nights signaled that summer was slipping away fast. The fish were eager to eat and fatten up on an assortment of caddis and mayflies, nymphs, and hoppers. Our typical rig was a hopper/dropper combination using a size eight to twelve hopper or stimulator above a bead-head nymph. Both were equally well accepted. Sixteen inch cutthroats were routinely slamming the hopper. Jeremy was high rod, catching more and larger fish. He can tell you all of the details of each fish, how he meticulously selected the proper fly and cast to the perfect riffle with just the right timing. If you want a 15,000 word email, just ask him about the fish he caught. The fishing is probably some of the best dry fly fishing you can find. It was certainly well worth the grueling hike.

Another highlight of the trip was getting up at 4:30 a.m. to hike some four miles and 3,000 vertical feet to reach the top of the Great Chinese Wall of the Bob Marshall. We hiked the gently sloping hill on the west side to reach the top of the east side's vertical cliff. The 1,000 foot wall runs for 22 miles along the top of the continental divide. Sitting at the top of the sun-soaked wall right after sunrise is indescribable.



Up until the last night of the trip, the highlights were the superb fishing and the hike to the Chinese wall. The next morning, the highlight was living to tell the story of the night before. During our last night, we were the only people camped at the head of Upper Holland Lake in what is a well-used campsite. Our wariness of grizzly bears had waned, having seen only one black bear during the previous seven days. We hung our food between two trees and easily slipped off to sleep, exhausted and eagerly awaiting milkshakes on the way home.

We went to bed under a clear sky and cool, still air. At about 12:45 in the morning, I was jolted awake by a thunderous roar. Not the roar of a bear, but of wind sounding like a speeding train. Within seconds there was a sharp lightning-like crack and the thunderous crash of a tree. I instinctively huddled in the fetal position at the bottom of the tent. Then there was another crack and more crashing sounds. The lightning and crashing sounds were deafening. Big trees were falling all around us. I was sure that the tent would be flattened. It was like being stuck in a car trunk and hearing a 20 car pile-up all around, thinking that at any moment, your car could be smashed by a semi going 70 mph. Then, 30 seconds later, as quickly as it came, it was gone. We turned on our flashlights to reveal a branch hanging through the back of the tent. It had hit my dad in the shoulder, but we were otherwise ok. Thinking of my friend in the other tent, I called out, "Jeremy, you ok?" Two seconds of silence. "Jeremy!" Finally, "Yeah, I'm OK." I don't know who was more relieved to hear the other person's voice.

We crawled out of our tents into the air, which was eerily warm and still. It had been only 30 second from the time I awoke, but the destruction caused in the campsite was absolutely incredible. All across the campsite lay 40, 50, and 100 foot trees that were snapped-off and up-rooted by an intensely powerful and incredibly localized windstorm. We were lucky to be alive. A 100 foot tree lay perfectly through the space between our two tents. Had this 5-ton monster fallen a foot in either direction, it would have taken out one of our tents. One three inch limb struck the ground just before our tent (and my head). It bounced and ripped through the tent, hitting my dad in the shoulder. Small branches on the other side of the tree ripped and destroyed Jeremy's tent. We walked around in shock surveying the damage and calculating how lucky we were. After a long while and at least one group-hug, we got back in our tents for the rest of a night's fitful sleep.

The next morning we were once again amazed with our good fortune. Of the many suitable sites for a tent, our spots were two of only a few that weren't covered by falling trees. We continued to survey the damage. The storm knocked down about 30 trees, 25 of which were within 20 yards of our camp. These trees were big, strong trees snapped in half and torn up by their roots. Trees that had been there for decades were wiped out. We were in the epicenter of a meteorological anomaly. The infinitesimal odds that caused these trees to fall on that night, at that spot are incalculable. This, coupled with the fact that we narrowly avoided death, might raise some questions about life that I'd prefer to not get into with this article.

Still, amazed and grateful, we packed up our gear and finished our hike out to the car. We stopped for ice cream two times and made it back to aunt Jane's house. We have great memories and stories to tell of going into and getting out of The Bob.



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WIND KNOTS CLASSIFIEDS

Space permitting, we'll run "Wanted" and "For Sale" ads for members of Texas Flyfishers. On a case-by-case basis, we may also run ads from non-members if the goods or services sought or offered would be of interest to our members. Send your ad by e-mail to ralphchristineadams@earthlink.net or regular mail to Ralph Adams, 4019 Levonshire, Houston, TX 77025. If you like, please include a photograph of items to be sold.

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2006 OUTINGS SCHEDULE

Our outings schedule is a work-in-progress. Here are the trips we have currently scheduled for 2006. Sometimes dates and places change, so check here regularly. **Blue font indicates a change has been made since the last issue of *Wind Knots*.**

To volunteer as a trip leader, contact fresh water outings chairman Clarke Thornton or salt water outings chairman Scott Fossum. Their telephone numbers and email addresses are on the Executive Committee listing later in this issue. Fresh water trips are designated [F], salt water [S] in the listings below.

[F] February 19 – Burton, TX – Yegua Creek, Newman's Bottom, white bass, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] March 25-26 – Port Mansfield, TX – led by Scott Fossum. Sight-fishing the Lower Laguna Madre flats for redfish, trout, drum and ladyfish. Stay in hotel or, if there is sufficient interest, we may rent a bay house with a lighted pier. Boat or boat ride required.

[F] March 17-19 – Mountain Home, AR – The "Sowbug Round Up," trout, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] April 29 – Aransas Pass, TX – Brown & Root Flats, leader needed. Catch lots of redfish and speckled trout using a kayak. Good catching opportunities are a short paddle from the start or go for a 10 mile marathon paddle. Kayak rental and delivery are available nearby.

[F] April 9 – Bellville, TX – Loring's Secret Bass Lake, bass and panfish, led by Jerry Loring.

[F] April 29 – Damon, TX – The Sunfish Spectacular, panfish and bass, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] May – West Galveston Bay – Greens Lake, led by Scott Fossum. This is a kayak trip. We will ferry the boats eight miles to/from Greens Lake by motor boat.

[S] May 13 – Aransas Pass, TX – Lighthouse Lakes, led by Ralph Adams. Kayak trip in Lighthouse lakes. Kayak rental available nearby.

[F] May 20-21 – Nueces River, Camp Wood, TX – Bud Priddy Memorial One Fly, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] June – Rockport, TX – kayak trip, led by Aaron Hammer.

[F] June 10-11 – Llano River, Junction, TX – bass and panfish, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] July 22 – "Port O'Connor One Fly Tournament." Rotating crystal trophy up for grabs. Greatest total inches of fish caught on 1st fly tied on wins. No entry fee & you get a free meal (what a deal). Boat, boat ride or kayak required. Scott Fossum leader (contact information on Executive Committee listing).

[S] August – Redfish Rodeo.

[F] August 12 – San Marcos, TX – bass and panfish, led by Clarke Thornton.

[F] September 16-17 – Frio River – bass and panfish, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] September 23-24 – "Padre Island Surf Fest." Fish Padre Island National Seashore guided by Capt. Billy Sandifer for speckled trout, ladyfish, tarpon, and jack crevalle. Optional camping on beach. Estimated cost of \$125 for one day of guided fishing, the second day is on your own. \$50 non-refundable deposit required to reserve space, led by Ralph Adams.

[S] October – South Padre Island, leader needed.

[F] October 28 – Damon, TX, the Seven Lakes at Damon – bass and panfish, led by Clarke Thornton.

[S] November – Location TBD – led by Aaron Hammer.

[F] November 18 – Guadalupe River, Sattler, TX – rainbow trout, led by Clarke Thornton.

December – No outings.



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TEXAS FLYFISHERS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Jerry Loring

President
Home: 713-464-8687
Cell: 713-875-4289
jerrytms@flash.net

[Position Vacant]

VP Programs

Mark Jones

Secretary / Membership
Home: 713-466-1539
mdjones54@hotmail.com

Rick Rawls

Treasurer / Auction
Work: 713-666-7100
Home: 713-830-5446
rick@parkatbellaire.com

Corey Rich

Legal
Work: 713-861-1928
Home: 713-621-6071
corey.rich@aya.yale.edu

Clarke Thornton

Freshwater Outings
Work: 713-512-3657
Home: 713-641-0022
cthorton@ehshouston.org

Scott Fossum

Saltwater Outings
Work: 281-604-4949
Home: 281-480-6053
scott.fossum@akzonobel-pc.com

Ralph G. Adams, Jr.

Wind Knots
Work: 713-767-5134
Home: 713-664-0491
adamsfamilytx@sbcglobal.net

Frank Schlicht

Education / Fly Tying Festival
Home: 281-392-5296
aged_sage@hotmail.com

Dave Kelly

Webmaster
Home: 936-894-1710
daveekelly@earthlink.net

Mike Willis

Special Events
Work: 713-223-7041
Home: 713-721-4755
mwillis@us.ca-indosuez.com

Troy Miller

Fly Casting
Work: 713-466-2322
Home: 979-865-5117
Troy.Miller@bakeroiltools.com

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About Wind Knots

Wind Knots is your monthly newsletter, and it needs your help – otherwise we'll run out of things to print. E-mail your articles, photos, artwork, graphics, fishing news, tall tales, lies, and letters to the editor to adamsfamilytx@sbcglobal.net not later than the 10th of the month for that month's issue. **Be sure to put the words *Wind Knots* in the subject line of your e-mail.** If you don't, I might think it's spam or worse and delete it before opening.

If you have digital photos, please send them via e-mail in .JPG format. If you have paper photos, mail them to Corey Rich, 2900 Wesleyan, Suite 545, Houston, TX 77027. Please include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for their return.

The preferred form for text – stories, letters, and so forth – is in Microsoft Word. Please try to keep your offerings in the 800 to 1,000 word range, or less. If you send photos along with an article, proposed captions are appreciated.

Wind Knots is posted on the club's Web site as soon as it becomes available. Check www.texasflyfishers.org regularly for the latest newsletter and other news of interest.

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Texas Flyfishers
P.O. Box 571134
Houston, TX 77257-1134

Texas Flyfishers Membership Application

Please check one: New Application Renewal

To join Texas Flyfishers or renew your membership, please complete this form and mail it with your check to the address below, or bring it with you to one of our monthly meetings. All memberships expire June 30th of each year, and renewals are due July 1st. New members, please pro-rate your payment for the number of months between now and the end of June, inclusive. Our monthly meetings are held on the last Tuesday of every month (except December), beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Dues are for (check one): Individual at \$24 a year Family at \$32 a year Student at \$16 a year

Name: _____

Address: _____

Home phone: _____ Work phone: _____

Email: _____

TEXAS FLYFISHERS
P.O. BOX 571134
HOUSTON, TX 77257-1134