

FLY-FISHING EDUCATION

At the

University of Alaska Fairbanks

ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT

2001 – 2002

UAF Fly-fishing Report #1

Submitted by:

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There were many people who should be recognized for their contributions and support in helping me create and deliver the initial Fundamentals of Fly-fishing class at the University of Alaska Fairbanks in the summer of 2002:

Jacklyn Hendrix, former director of UAF Summer Sessions who gave me the opportunity to pursue my dream of developing and delivering a fly-fishing for credit course on campus;

Florie Wilcosox and Amy Bristor of UAF Summer Sessions for attending to many of the details inherent in undertaking a project such as this;

Dr. James J. Kruse, Adjunct Faculty and Curator of Entomology at the University of Alaska Museum for his insights on aquatic entomology, and allowing me to borrow insect samples for use in my classes.

The University of Alaska Fairbanks Geophysical Institute and it's director, Dr. Roger W. Smith for allowing me to pursue my dream;

James A. Madonna, Ph.D., Professor Emeritus of Mining Extension for mentoring me in adult education program development and delivery;

The Orvis Company for the loan of high-quality rods, reels and lines for the students' use and to the Midnight Sun Flycasters of Fairbanks for the use of their fly tying tools; and,

Above all, my wife, Teresa, who completely supported me throughout this process.

ABSTRACT

This report chronicles the part-time adjunct faculty activities for Shann Paul Jones, Lecturer in Recreational Activities, for both the College of Liberal Arts and Summer Sessions at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). during the period of January 1, 2002 – August 19, 2002 This report was not filed in a timely manner as Mister Jones mistakenly believed that annual reports covered a calendar year, and were due in February.

University of Alaska faculty generally hold tripartite appointments with teaching, research and public service. Part-time instructors don't generally have a research or a public service component to their appointments, although Mister Jones lists both in this report.

This report also serves as Mr. Jones' plan of work for UAF Academic Year 2003 – 2004.

INTRODUCTION

My father, Kenneth Paul Jones introduced me to fly-fishing in 1976. Under his watchful eye, I grew as an angler until I moved to Alaska 10 years later. As the years went by, even though we were 4,300 miles apart, we always connected through the commonality of fly-fishing. My father was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in 2000 and passed away in October 2001. For nearly two years, I found my only solace with my fly rod—a symbolic connection to my father.

George Harvey initiated post-secondary fly-fishing education at Pennsylvania State University (Penn State) in 1947. Joe Humphreys followed him, and led PSU's program for 20 years until 1986. My father was a huge admirer of the for-credit fly-fishing program at PSU although he was never able to attend it. After my father passed away, I wanted to do something to honor his memory as an angler. Thus I began developing a course here at UAF based on the one offered by Penn State University.

Another self-centered factor led me to develop this program. During my time in Alaska, my fly-fishing skills had become stagnant. The only way for me to grow as an angler is to teach the subject of fly-fishing to others.

Course Development

The first step the instructor took in developing this course was to perform an Internet search for collegiate fly-fishing programs in the United States. A number of college and universities were contacted. Some programs were of great help, some weren't. A summary of the different institutions and levels of help received appear in Appendix I. Special commendations go out to Mark Belden of Penn State University, Mac Brown of Western Carolina University, Dr. John Arras of the University of Virginia, Tim Dunnigan of Montana State University and Paul Hudson of Auburn University for supplying outlines and course materials. These five individuals also took the time to speak with Mr. Jones numerous times on the telephone regarding fly-fishing program development.

Upon development of a draft course outline, Mr. Jones met with Jacklyn Hendrix, then the director of UAF Summer Sessions in the winter 2001 – 2002. Plans were then made to offer the Fundamentals of Fly-fishing during the evenings in both six-week sections. Advertising was done by UAF Summer Sessions through their catalog and on their official website. Mr Jones performed additional advertng through personal appearances, flyers, public service announcements and press releases.

FUNDAMENTALS OF FLY-FISHING RECR 140-F61

The initial Fundamentals of Fly-fishing course at the UAF began on Wednesday, May 29, 2002 at 6 p.m., in Room 344, Duckering Building, UAF Campus. There were originally nine students enrolled in the course before the first night. There were four students who signed up after the first night, and one who transferred from section F71. After the second class, three students were dropped for non-attendance, and one student transferred to section F71. The remaining 10 students all passed the course.

Instructor's Evaluation of Course

Overall, I felt the course went well. There was a wide range of ages present, and the class was balanced in terms of gender. There were three other UAF faculty members taking the course. This was very helpful in terms of soliciting their input as the course progressed. Based on their ongoing input, I was able to make changes to my lesson plans.

The class was highly motivated, and an absolute joy to teach. There were a couple of problems which beyond the instructor's control. The first was the late break-up weather conditions. Ballaine Lake was only stocked a week prior to the beginning of class. This was good from the angle there were fish in the pond for the students to catch. Although, at times the students would want to use techniques and flies other than what was called for in the lesson plan. By way of example, about midway through the course, the lesson called for slowly stripping streamers. A few students wanted to use dry flies and cast to the rising trout. In order to get them to use the desired technique, the teacher had to demonstrate it by catching three rainbow trout on three successive casts. From that point forward, the students were more receptive to the instructor's coaching.

The class built up their fly-fishing skills culminating in a field trip to the Upper Chena River on June 30. All students and the instructor caught lots of large arctic grayling on a variety of fly patterns. The final practical exam was a one-fly contest a Ballaine Lake.

Student's Course Evaluation

Student evaluations at UAF take two forms: the Individual Assessment System (IAS) and the Individual Students Comment Sheets. Students completed both of these forms prior to attending the last field exercise. The results of the IAS were not available to the instructor until after RECR 140-F71 was completed; therefore, data from the RECR 140-F61 IAS could not be reduced and evaluated in time to make any adjustments to the course content of RECR-F71. However, the Individual Students Comment Sheets were given to the instructor in early July, 2002. The following trends among the student comments were uncovered:

- Students felt the class presentation were well-prepared and helpful;
- Students appreciated the PowerPoint and overhead audio-visual presentation;
- Students felt the instructor was extremely enthusiastic, knowledgeable, prepared and organized;
- Students thoroughly enjoyed the laboratory and field exercises
- Thirty percent of the students indicated that Badger Slough was an unfit location for laboratory exercises.
- Twenty percent of the students indicated they wanted more fly tying as part of the curriculum.

- Students felt they were spending four to seven hours a week either in class or preparing for class;
- All of the IAS median scores were over 4.0 except for the questions regarding the reasonableness of work, and the grading techniques. These scores were 3.3 – 3.8. In fact, forty percent of the students put on their written comments that they thought there were too many quizzes and tests; and,
- Students mentioned have a teaching assistant would be helpful during the casting portion of the class.

FUNDMENTALS OF FLY-FISHING RECR 140-F71

The second Fundamentals of Fly-fishing course at the UAF began on Tuesday, July 9, 2002 at 6 p.m., in Room 344, Duckering Building, UAF Campus. There were originally six students enrolled in the course before the first night. There were four students who signed up after the first night. After the fourth class, three students were dropped for non-attendance/non-payment. The remaining seven students all passed the course.

Instructor's Evaluation of Course

Overall, I felt the course didn't go quite as well as the first one. There was a wide range of ages present (14 through 62), and the class was balanced in terms of gender. The group was not as motivated as the first section. Also, there were a few people who signed up and dropped the course within the first few meetings. This resulted in momentum for the course being delayed. The quality of the fishing deteriorated throughout the summer resulting in lower enthusiasm by the students.

At times the students would want to use techniques and flies other than what was called for in the lesson plan. By way of example, about midway through the course, the class took a field trip to Piledriver Slough on a hot evening. A few students wanted to use dry flies and cast to the rising grayling in low, clear and slow water. The grayling were ignoring the small flies. Some students became frustrated and questioned the instructor's expertise. In order to get them to use an alternative technique, the teacher had to demonstrate it by catching a grayling on using a sink and draw technique with an Egg-Sucking Leech. Suddenly, the students were enthused and more receptive to the instructor's coaching.

Student's Course Evaluation

The Individual Assessment System (IAS) and the Individual Students Comment Sheets were both completed prior to students attending the last field exercise. The following trends among the student comments were uncovered:

- Students felt the class presentation were well-prepared and helpful;
- Students appreciated the PowerPoint and overhead audio-visual presentation. In fact, some wanted copies;
- Students felt the instruction was extremely enthusiastic, patient and passionate;
- Student thoroughly enjoyed the laboratory and field exercises
- Some students indicated they wanted more fly tying as part of the curriculum.
- Students felt they were spending four to nine hours a week either in class or preparing for class; and,
- IAS median scores for the questions regarding the reasonableness of work, and the grading techniques were increase over RECR 140-F61.

RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM CHANGES, 2003

Based on personal observation and student input, Mr. Jones recommends the following changes to the *Fundamentals of Fly-fishing* course for Summer 2003:

- Only one section will be offered (first six-week). The fish are more active during this period. This makes for a better angling experience for the students;
- Badger Slough will not be used as a field laboratory site. Note: this site was not used during the F71 section in Summer 2002;
- Request that Orvis provide up to three different sizes (length and line weight) rods. One size did not work for all students;
- Final Exam (~one half-hour) is moved to the last day of class (July 2);
- The number of quizzes is reduced to four, and no more than one scheduled per week;
- Angling journal keeping will be given greater emphasis;
- Student will begin learning how to fly cast on the first night of class, and will practice every session; and,
- The assessment quiz that had been given at the first class meeting will be replaced with a questionnaire. Also, the room should be set up U-shaped rather than traditional lecture style for that first meeting;

PROGRAM & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2002 – 04

At the time this report was authored, Mr. Jones had already attended the *Fly Fishing Show* in Bellevue, Washington, February 22 – 23. Most of the funding (\$750.00) for this trip was provided through the UAF Summer Sessions Travel Award Program. The rest came from Mr. Jones. At this meeting, Mr. Jones attended eight seminars and a short course (Appendix VI) as well as meeting with numerous members of the United States and Canadian fly-fishing industry. Mr. Jones made changes in his course content based on knowledge gained from attending this meeting.

Mr. Jones was approached by Dr. Susan Blalock of the UAF College of Liberal Arts regarding possibly offering the Fundamentals of Fly-fishing course in Fall 2003 or Spring 2004. Because the ice does not break up in Interior Alaska until last April to mid-May, a spring course offering is next not practical. However, a Fall course offering would be possible with the following changes:

- The course start time would be moved from 6 p.m., back to about 4:30 p.m. to compensated for the diminishing autumn daylight;
- The casting and fishing lessons would occur in earlier sessions so that they would be completed before freeze-up; and
- There would be more fly tying than in the summer course due to class session being scheduled well into October. Therefore, the fall offering should be renamed, Introductory Fly-fishing and Fly Tying.

A complete proposed course schedule and class outline can be found in Appendix III.

Mr. Jones is developing a proposed a fly tying course to be first offered in the Spring 2004.

Mr. Jones will develop, a proposed advanced fly-fishing course to be first offered in the Summer 2004. The class will be based on program development work to be done through the remainder of the 2003 – 04 academic year. Some of this work may be done through the Kenai Peninsula College's Kenai Fishing Academy.

INSTRUCTOR PUBLIC SERVICE, 2001 – 2004

Public service is a time-honored tradition at the University of Alaska. During the 2001 – 2002 time frame, Mr. Jones performed the following public service:

- Fairbanks Outdoor Show seminar titled, Interior Alaska Fly-fishing: A Tanana River Drainage Primer, April 21 - 22, 2001 (gave this talk on consecutive days).
- Fairbanks Outdoor Show seminar titled, Interior Alaska Fly-fishing: A Great Place to Start, April 20 - 21, 2002; (gave this talk on consecutive days).
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Community After School Program “In An Evening” seminar titled, Interior Alaska Fly-fishing; October 10, 2002.
- Alaskaland Children’s Christmas Crafts Bazaar, Midnight Sun Flycasters fly tying table; December 2002.
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Community After School Program Committee; member, 2001 – 2003 (ongoing).
- Ryan Community School Advisory Committee; member, 2001 – 2003 (ongoing).
- Midnight Sun Flycasters; member (ongoing).
- UAF College of Liberal Arts, Registration Rush Demonstration Table at Wood Center, April 8

Planned Public Service: 2003 – 04 (at the time of this report)

- A planned seminar at the 2003 Fairbanks Outdoors Show
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Community After School Program Committee; member, (ongoing).
- Ryan Community School Advisory Committee; member, (ongoing).

INSTRUCTOR RESEARCH, 2001 – 2003

Part-time and adjunct teaching faculty members are not normally required to pursue formal research. However, as Mr. Jones was developing the Fundamentals of Fly-fishing course for UAF in 2002, he noticed that there was a great deal of variation in fly-fishing programs among the dozen educational institutions contacted. These variations could not be easily attributed to regional sport fishery factors. At first glance, it appeared that most of the post-secondary fly-fishing programs in North America were developed primarily from the instructor's point of view and biases. Therefore, a question which should be posed (and will be addressed in the first year of this study) is, "Are we teaching adults the fly-fishing topics, they want to learn in a post-secondary environment?" This question can be extended to private fly-fishing schools as well.

Fly-fishing programs at the post secondary education level experience fluctuations in enrollments largely due to the prevailing popular culture. For example, after Robert Redford's movie *A River Run Through It*, was released there was a corresponding spike in adult enrollments in both public and private-sector fly-fishing schools. To a large extent after taking an initial fly-fishing class or course, students have no way to advance their formal education.

This research into new approaches in adult fly-fishing education was initiated to identify what variations in need for fly-fishing education exist and how the problem of stagnant enrollments may be addressed. During the initial stages of investigation, questions began to surface in files and in the literature, suggesting the need to diversify adult fly-fishing education programs. Governmental agencies, fly-fishing industry members, educators and students have casually indicated that there is a need for a balanced educational formula for fly-fishing that would serve the general public, educational/governmental and private sectors.

To identify the needs of each group, research will be conducted in North America by distribution of comprehensive questionnaires to representatives of the fly-fishing industry, educators, trainers, governmental agents and members of the general public to gauge the educational wants and requirements for the different groups. In the first year of the study, the general public will be surveyed. If the PI deems the study a success, the second and third parts of the study will be performed in successive years.

By amalgamating the results obtained for each user group, it is hoped that a model will be created that includes each of the components required for the development of a diversified adult fly-fishing education program. Through this model, weaknesses and strengths peculiar to individual study areas will be balanced. This model will serve as a resource of information for other regions interested in developing or improving adult fly-fishing programs.

It can be concluded that this investigation into new approaches in adult fly-fishing education will provide solutions to current fly-fishing enrollment and curriculum problems faced by public and private educational institutions, and will satisfy the fly-fishing educational needs suggested by government, industry, educators, students and the general public.

The UAF Institutional Review Board approved the project A Balanced Formula for Adult Fly-fishing Education, January 28, 2003.

At the time of this report, Mr. Jones is also exploring research funding through the Recreational Boating & Fishing Foundation.

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APPENDIX I – Other Universities and Colleges Which Offer Fly-fishing Courses

Post-secondary educational institutions which provided significant help:

Pennsylvania State University – Mark A. Belden
Montana State University – Tim Dunnigan
Hereford Residential College at the University of Virginia – Dr. John Arras
Binghamton University (New York)
Auburn University – Paul Hudson
University of Wisconsin-Stout – Charles Bomar

Post-secondary educational institutions which provided some help:

Red Rock Community College -
Western Carolina University – Mac Brown

Post-secondary educational institutions which were contacted but provided no help:

Sheldon Jackson College (Alaska)
Tyler Junior Community College (Texas)
University of Tennessee
Washington & Lee University (Virginia)

Other institutions with fly-fishing for credit programs which were not contacted:

Colorado Mountain College
Cornell University
University of Oregon
Colgate University
Washington State University
Dartmouth University
Berea College (Kentucky)
Butte College (California)
Kansas State University
Michigan State University
Colorado Christian University
Medaille College (New York)
San Francisco State University
University of Toledo

APPENDIX II – RECR 140 F61/F71 Course Descriptions and Schedules; Summer 2002

The Fundamentals of Fly-Fishing

Class Days/Times: M, W (Beginning May 29, Ending July 3), 6:00 – 8:30 p.m. plus field trips

Class Fee: \$40 (for Field Excursion #3)

Class Size: No more than 14 students

Credit: 1, pass/fail

Class Location: Duckering 344

Instructor: Jones, Shann Paul

Contact Hours: 43

Phone: x1660 (on campus only), 474-5468 (from off-campus)

E-mail: jones@gi.alaska.edu

Office: Elvey 616

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description: This course's purpose is threefold:

- I. Provide students with the necessary knowledge to make educated fly tackle selections;
- II. Help students develop the skills, tactics and procedures needed for successful arctic grayling and stocked salmonid fly-fishing at an entry-level; and,
- III. Offer the opportunity for students to acquire a life-long outdoor recreational activity.

The class structure is roughly one-third lecture and two-thirds laboratory and field exercises.

Grading: Students will actively participate in lectures, laboratories, casting and field exercises to local waters during the course. Students must do the following to pass the class:

- Attend lectures, laboratories and field exercises (have no more than two absences);
- Actively participate in lectures, laboratories and field exercises;
- Score 70 percent or higher on all quizzes, pass practical field skills test (Go/No Go) and score at least 70 percent on final written exam.

APPENDIX III

Proposed Outline for *Introductory Fly-fishing and Fly Tying*

RECR 140 F07

Class Days/Times: M, W 4:40 – 7:40 p.m. plus optional field excursion as arranged

Class Fee: \$45 (for Field Excursion)

Class Size: 18 students (approx.)

Credit: 1, pass/fail

Class Location: U-PARK 160

Instructor: Jones, Shann Paul

Contact Hours: 42

Phone: x1660 (on campus only), 474-5468 (from off-campus)

E-mail: jones@gi.alaska.edu

Office: Elvey 616

Office Hours: TBA

Course Description: This course introduces students to the art and science of fly-fishing and fly tying. Students will learn how use a fly rod to place a fly with pinpoint accuracy, tie fishing knots and construct their own leaders, tie their own flies, and, most importantly, learn where fish live and how best to catch (and release) them. Scientific information on Alaskan freshwater fish, habitat, entomology, and stream ecology will be covered in the context of practical fishing advice and fly tying technique. The course's purpose is threefold:

- ◆ Provide students with the necessary knowledge to make educated fly tackle selections;
- ◆ Help students develop the skills, tactics and procedures needed for successful arctic grayling and stocked salmonid fly-fishing at an entry-level; and,
- ◆ Offer the opportunity for students to learn to tie their own flies.

The class structure is roughly one-third lecture and two-thirds laboratory.

Grading: Students must do the following to pass the class:

- Attend and actively participate in lectures and laboratories exercises (have no more than two absences), make-ups are at the discretion of the instructor;
- Score 70 percent or higher on all quizzes (except the assessment quiz), pass practical field skills test (Go/No Go) and score at least 70 percent on the written exam. Quizzes and tests are open book, open note and students may confer with each other unless otherwise directed by the instructor. Make-up quizzes and exams are offered at the instructor's discretion.
- Students will keep a journal of all class and fly-fishing activities. Journals will be checked at the start of each class session and field exercises.

Text: Whitlock, Dave. 1996. L.L. Bean Fly-Fishing Handbook. OR Beck, Cathy. 2002. Cathy Beck's Fly Fishing Handbook.

Miscellaneous:

- ◆ Each student must present a current State of Alaska sportfishing license by the second class meeting. Students shall also provide their own journal, clipboard, writing implement(s) and eye protection.
- ◆ Students must arrange their own transportation to the laboratory exercises (unless otherwise arranged). Labs may be held during inclement weather. Students must provide their own field clothing, boots and raingear.
- ◆ Students will be required to carry health insurance as per UAF policy, and to fill out a health questionnaire and field trip waiver during the first day of class.

APPENDIX IV

Seminars and Short Course Attended in Bellevue, Washington

How to Add Yards to Your Cast – Mark Sedotti

Trout Tips and Destinations, How to and Where – Barry Beck

Nymph Fishing Day and Night – Joe Humphreys

Match the Naturals, Not the Hatch – A.K. Best

Conquering Chronomids – Philip Rowley

Matching Mayflies Simplified – Dave Hughes

How to Find Trout in Still Waters – Philip Rowley

Basics of the Double-Haul – Cathy Beck

Women's Fly Casting – Cathy Beck