

# **FLY-FISHING EDUCATION**

**At the**

**University of Alaska Fairbanks**

## **ANNUAL ACTIVITY REPORT**

***2002 – 2003***

**UAF Fly-fishing Report #2**

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 2003:

Florie Wilcoxson 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.

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

Tim Stallard of UAF Outdoor Adventures for logistical support of class field trips

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 August 19, 2002 – June 30, 2003 This report was not filed in a timely manner as Mister Jones has missed considerable work in October, 2003 due to illness.

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**

Much of the time this report covers, was spent in research and program development. Mister Jones spent the most of the winter changing several fly fishing lectures and developing the fly tying lessons for the Introductory Fly Casting & Fly Tying Course. After these lessons were developed, they were field tested at Ryan Community Schools program as the Elementary Fly Tying course.

Mister Jones attended the first Fly Fishing Show in Bellevue Washington. At this late-February event, he attended numerous short courses and seminars. He also met with some of the leading fly fishing instructors in North America such as Joe Humphreys, Barry Beck, Philip Rowley and Cathy Beck. Mr. Jones also met with numerous authors and fly fishing retailers including Dave Hughes and Randall Kaufmann. Much knowledge was gathered and many new contacts were made during this trip. Mr. Jones wishes to thank UAF Summer Sessions for providing the majority of this trip's funding.

While not usually required of UAF adjunct instructors, Mr. Jones engaged in fly fishing-related research and numerous public service commitments in 2002-2003. After the successful initial campaign in Summer ,2002, for credit fly fishing education returned to the University of Alaska Fairbanks in May, 2003. In summary, the class couldn't have been held in better weather, the water conditions couldn't have been more perfect, and the students were absolutely pleased.

For the 2003 – 2004 academic year, Mr. Jones is unveiling a new course, Introductory Fly Casting and Fly Tying to be taught first in Fall, 2003. At the time of this report, it has also been picked up for the Spring, 2004 term. He is also working with UAF Summer Sessions to modify the Fundamentals of Fly Fishing course to fit a weekend schedule. Mr. Jones has also developed an intermediate-level fly fishing course that has been submitted to UAF Summer Sessions for review.

Mr. Jones will also undertake public service activities with the Alaska Department of Fish & Game's Becoming An Outdoor's Woman program. He will continue working with the Fairbanks North Star Borough (FNSB) School District Community After School Program as well as developing cooperative program with the FNSB Parks and Recreation Department. Current fly fishing-related research will continue into 2004.

One of the most significant program development steps taken over the past two years is to offer short course and workshops through the FNSB School District Community After School Program. This allowed the instructor to try out various teaching techniques and field sites before putting them into the UAF course. One such site is Piledriver Slough. For the past two seasons, this has worked as an excellent field site for both UAF and Community School events. During both the May 2002 and May 2003, all Community School participants caught grayling. The instructor was able to demonstrate proper presentation, hooking and releasing techniques during these events as he had scores of fish on the end of his leader.

# **FUNDMENTALS OF FLY FISHING (RECR 140-F61)**

The initial Fundamentals of Fly-fishing course at the UAF began on Wednesday, May 28, 2003 at 6 p.m., in Room 344, Duckering Building, UAF Campus. There were originally nine students enrolled in the course before the first night. After the second class, one student dropped due to work conflicts. The remaining eight students all caught lots of fish 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. The class was highly motivated, and an absolute joy to teach.

## ***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 are not yet available to the; therefore, data from the RECR 140-F61 IAS could not be reduced and evaluated in time to report herein. However, the Individual Students Comment Sheets were given to the instructor in early September, 2003. The following trends among the student comments were uncovered:

- Students felt the class presentation were thorough, well-organized and helpful;
- Students felt the instructor was extremely enthusiastic, knowledgeable, prepared and organized;
- Student thoroughly enjoyed the laboratory and field exercises
- Twenty-five percent of he respondents would like to see some instruction on cleaning and filleting fish.
- Students were impressed with the amount of progress they made in a short amount of time.

# **RECOMMENDED CURRICULUM CHANGES, 2004**

Based on personal observation and student input, Mr. Jones recommends the following changes to the *Fundamentals of Fly Fishing* course for Summer 2004:

- A non-credit option may be offered through the UAF Summer Sessions program, and/or the days that the program be changed to weekends;
- Request that Orvis provide up to three different sizes (length and line weight) rods. One size did not work for all students;
- The Final Exam will be dropped in favor of a practical skills checklist;
- The number of quizzes is reduced to four, and no more than one scheduled per week; and,
- Angling journal keeping will be stricken from the requirements;

## **PROGRAM & PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, 2003 – 04**

Mr. Jones 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. A fall class was held from September 8 – October 22 and a Spring course is slated for mid-March until the end of the spring term with the following changes:

- The course start time would be moved from 6 p.m., back to about 4:30 p.m. to compensate 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 Casting and Fly Tying.

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

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, 2002 – 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 26 - 27, 2003 (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)**

- Board of Directors – Midnight Sun Flycasters
- Board of Directors – Alaska International Senior Games, Inc.
- Fly Casting Sport Commissioner – 2003 Alaska International Senior Games
- Fairbanks North Star Borough School District Community After School Program Committee; member, (ongoing).
- Ryan Community School Advisory Committee; member, (ongoing).

## **INSTRUCTOR RESEARCH, 2002 – 2004**

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. Data collection is ongoing.

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

# APPENDIX I

## RECR 140 F07

### Introductory Fly Casting and Fly Tying

**Class Days/Times:** M, W 4:40 – 7:40 p.m. plus field excursion to be scheduled

**Credit:** 1, pass/fail

**Class Location:** NSCI 207

**Instructor:** Jones, Shann Paul

**Contact Hours:** 42

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

**E-mail:** [jones@gi.alaska.edu](mailto: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. This class will provide students with the necessary knowledge to make educated fly tackle selections. Students will also 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 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), and return all borrowed equipment and books;
- 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.

**Text:** Kaufmann, Randall. 2002. Fly Tying For Beginners. (required)

#### **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.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **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