



A bad day fishing is better than a good day at work



by James Myers
Boomerang Staff Writer

Guides from all over the state are speaking about their local waters and favorite fishing spots at the University of Wyoming Fly Casters Club's 8th annual Wyoming Anglers' Symposium, "Destination Wyoming," which continues Saturday at the UW Union Ballroom.

The focus for this year's is Wyoming fishing spots and Wyoming anglers, and with all the guides at the symposium, there aren't too many streams more than a foot deep that at least one them doesn't know about, said Jed Johnson, president of UW's Fly Casters Club.

One of the symposium's key speakers, Jack Dennis, is the host of the Outdoor Life Network's "Fly Fishing" and a resident of Jackson. The fly-fishing expert's presentation for the Saturday night banquet is titled "20 Places You Need to Fish Before You Die." He has attended all eight symposiums.

"I love coming to Laramie. I like to come because of the kids," Dennis said. "I love to hear them get so excited about fly-fishing."

He feels strongly about the students who put the program together and a sense of pride that the sport is taking with their generation.

Dennis feels that after all that is taught in school and all that people do during the workday, fishing is a good way to relax.

"We learn how to make money, then we've got to learn how to make a life for ourselves," he said. "Fishing, for a lot of people, helps them tolerate the other part of life which isn't as fun."

Raising environmental awareness is another reason that Dennis enjoys coming to this symposium.

"Over the years we've had water issues and public land issues. We've had endangered fish issues. We've picked something that's in education to have a symposium on," Dennis said.

This year's discussion, "Do fish feel pain?" by Jim Rose, is an example of the educational angle. He is scheduled to talk at 1 p.m. Saturday.

Much of the material is geared towards educating the public of new policies.

The symposium has hosted some of the world's best fishing writers and the world's leading fish biologist. It is also reaching out to prospective patrons of outdoor recreation.

Speakers during the two-day symposium include Tim Wade of North Fork Anglers in Cody, Darren Calhoun from Wind River in Crow Heart, Mike Kaul of Two Rivers Emporium in Pinedale, Don White of Four Seasons Anglers in Laramie, Mike Snigg of the Wyoming Game and Fish Department and Dennis.

Johnson estimates the club has between 200 and 300 members, many of whom were once UW students who have moved away. The connections to older members of the club who have moved away are part of what gives members an advantage in finding good spots.

"This club is a variety — from students to professors, to people who have graduated who are working in town ... or in Northern Colorado," Johnson said. "When people move, we keep the connection." Johnson said there was a place for everyone in the club, even those who aren't students — the only prerequisite is that members be interested in fishing.

This connection provides members access to many fishing holes that they normally would have to look much harder for.

"If you want to fly fish or you want to learn how to fly fish or you want to find a fly-fishing partner, this is the place to do it," Johnson said.

The club meets twice month to give presentations on local waters and the various facets to them. The club spends a lot of time on the Platte River, around Saratoga, the Medicine Bow and Vedauwoo.

Johnson stresses that this is a perfect opportunity for freshmen looking to get out and see the wilderness. A lot of the members have vehicles capable of making it into good fishing spots as well as extra equipment and decent knowledge of the area. Many of the members even have boats.

Interested parties can also rent fly-fishing equipment in Half Acre Gym at the Campus Activities Center. The equipment that the activities center has was acquired thanks to the club, so there was mindful purchasing done in that regard, Johnson said.

The symposium runs from 8 a.m.-5 p.m. in the Union Ballroom on the UW campus Saturday.

The banquet and raffle begin at 6 p.m.