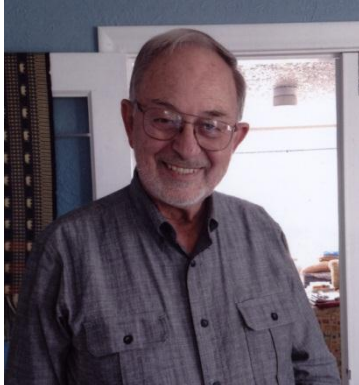




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This interview was conducted with Dr. Patrick C. Trotter on Tuesday, September 4, 2012, at his home in Seattle, Washington. The interviewer is Tamara Belts.

TB: Today is Tuesday, September 4, 2012, and I am here, down in Seattle, with Patrick C. Trotter, who is a very active-- Well I know he's written several books about fly fishing. I know he's been a fisheries' consultant. So we're going to find out a little bit more about how he got into all of that. Our first question, and he did -- I'm sorry, back tracking -- He did just sign the informed consent agreement. So our first question is always: How did you get started fly fishing?

PT: Well, it goes back a long time. It was right after World War II, anyway. My uncle--I had an uncle on my father's side who was a professional fly tier, made his living, believe it or not, during the Great Depression tying trout flies and supplying tourist camps. In fact, he once told me that even though maybe 20-25% of the country was out of work, the other 75% were kind of oblivious to it and behaving as though nothing was really happening, and toured a lot. His area of the country was the Sierras, down in what he called the mother lode country of California. And he would tie flies over the wintertime, then travel back and forth across the Sierras to Nevada, supplying all the tourist camps he came to. Eventually he became well enough established in that game so that he was tying for distributors who would distribute his flies to people like Orvis and some of the other major outlets for trout flies. And that's how he made his living.

In the summertime, he would take all that time off and travel around to different places to fish. One of his stops when his summertime routes brought him north was usually at our house, which was down in Longview, Washington. I was born and raised in Longview, on the Columbia River. He always brought samples of his flies along, and he was always telling all these wonderful stories, and he taught me how to tie flies as part of this. And that became my hobby really, collecting and tying trout fly patterns, or flies for just about anything that would take a fly. Sort of as a defense mechanism, because I never was interested in being a commercial fly tier like he was, but all of these flies were accumulating, I thought I should take up fishing with them. In those years, the stores sold makeshift fly rods made out of pretty much anything, and at some point along the line my family had acquired an old fly rod--

Technical issues

PT: Anyway, they acquired this old fly rod made out of tubular steel. This was in the days even before fiberglass fly rods. Bamboo was around, but those rods were pretty high end, and my family couldn't afford that, so I kind of adopted this old tubular steel rod. Another one of my uncles who also lived in Longview, he was the youngest of my father's brothers, took me aside and showed me how I was supposed to cast it. I spent summer times working in the berry fields in those years. You know, kids could get jobs picking fruit and berries, forking peas, picking beans, things like that, in the summertime. Although the pay was a pittance, I saved my money to get a decent fly line, and the rest of the outfit I pretty much put together myself. Aside from my uncle's advice, I more or less taught myself

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

how to cast this rig. And I started using those flies I had tied. I must have been ten or eleven years old when all this was going on. The very first trout that I caught on a fly I tied myself was on this old rig, in the Toutle River. It was in the month of August. I remember that, and I was eleven, so it must have been 1946, because I was born in 1935. That trout turned out to be an 18-inch sea-run cutthroat, which sort of set the stage for a lot of things that came later, but it was quite an experience at the time. Anyway, that's how I got started. And I've been a fly fisherman ever since.

TB: Well, we need to talk a little bit more now about your favorite places and your favorite ways or whatever, but I also know that you did manage to turn this into a career, in terms of you've been a fisheries consultant. But before that, how did you [determine to make this your educational pursuit]?

PT: Well, actually I evolved into a fishery consultant, or at least I think of myself nowadays as a pretty good fish biologist. But I didn't start out that way. By the time I got into high school, I was more interested in chemistry than I was in biology or fisheries.

Although, you know, I went through the usual boyhood things. Another boyhood influence that kind of set the stage for all of this was back in my Boy Scout years. I got involved in a troop that was led by a scoutmaster who wasn't particularly concerned about broadening our experience through community service or earning an array of merit badges. What he was interested in was hiking, fishing, and camping. So we spent an awful lot of time in the outdoors with backpacks on, trooping up these little streams; mostly into what was some pretty remote headwaters in those years. He was also a fly fisherman, and so was kind of a kindred spirit, and that had an influence.

But to backtrack, I went through all of the usual things about, you know, careers: forest ranger, fireman, airplane pilot; that sort of thing. But by high school, I got really interested in chemistry, and I found out that I had a real knack for it. I did very well. I excelled in chemistry. And one of my first true summer jobs was in one of the research labs of the Weyerhaeuser Company, right there in my hometown. So I studied chemistry in college and then graduate school; I ended up with a Ph.D. in organic chemistry. I didn't plan it this way, but it turned out that upon receiving my degree, a job opportunity was available in my hometown with the Weyerhaeuser Company, in the very lab where I'd spent my summers. So I accepted that position and spent, oh, seven or eight years as a practicing chemist in their research lab. And I did well enough so that I was promoted to positions where I eventually became manager of one of their research departments. Then at that point, I started getting these lateral transfer opportunities that got me over into forestry R and D, working in what they called their Biological Sciences division. I'd also spent some time as research department leader for the company's brief foray into biotechnology and molecular genetics, so began to master some of those things to go along with my chemistry background. I also realized about that time that I was becoming more and more interested in the company's work on stream and fisheries projects than I was in tree genetics. A lot of the science, a lot of the basics of the different disciplines that applied to trees and genetics also applied to fishes and their lives in streams. So I found myself evolving into that. About that time also, you know, those early interests of mine in cutthroat trout and fishing in the small headwater streams and poking back into the high country started kicking back in, and it was kind of an easy evolution to get into that line of work.

In 1984, after I'd been not quite 30 years with the company, I met my wife, Rena, who is now an artist, but at that time she was a contractor. She was a professional photographer then, doing contract work climbing around on tall buildings photo-documenting the construction of these high rise buildings. She convinced me that I could make it on my own if I took early retirement and got into fisheries science consulting work, which I finally did in 1990 when I had my 30 years in. That's kind of the summary version of this story. To sum it all up, I evolved into fishery biology, but I was able to practice it professionally and did fairly well at it.

TB: So what came first though was your love of fly fishing and your chemistry, and your pursuit of the science was really kind of a separate thing—

PT: Yes, really, and they just kind of melded eventually, and so...

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

2

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TB: So I'm guessing, did you meet Bruce Ferguson then down at Weyerhaeuser?

PT: Well, he worked for Weyerhaeuser; he was a little ahead of my time though. I didn't meet him at all during his time with Weyerhaeuser. I think he had left the company by the time I first met him. I actually met him because, well, while I was still working for Weyerhaeuser, I got interested in-- Well, I need to backtrack here and tell you another story because this is how I got into the writing aspects of fly fishing.

I forget when it was but I was still down at Longview. My daughter was about six and my son was eight or maybe nine years old, and they lived at that time in Pendleton, Oregon, and I was due to go over to Pendleton to pick them up and bring them back to Longview for a week or two for one of our periodic visitations. So I drove over there and picked them up, and you know, it was all hugs and kisses and everything, and then we got in the car and drove back to Longview. After we got back to Longview, my daughter came down with a case of the mumps. And of course I was good and exposed. And about two weeks after that I came down with the mumps.

By this time, Weyerhaeuser had decided that I had what they referred to back then as "high corporate potential." This is about the same period of time that I began to get those promotions, up the ladder of responsibility, out of the lab myself and into directing and overseeing what other scientists and technicians were working on. That also earned me a place in a session of the Weyerhaeuser Management School. This was a training ground for people the company expected to move on up into corporate executive positions. But that part didn't take. I was never interested in doing that. I always preferred to keep my head and my hand in the research and the science aspects of the things the company was pursuing, and I was not really interested in aspiring to high corporate executive positions.

But one of the good things that happened at this corporate management school was a class in effective writing, taught by an honest-to-God professional writer. His course really left a valuable impression on me. In addition to the mechanics of effective writing, one of the things he taught was to write about what you like or what you know. So anyway, while I was flat on my back recovering from the mumps, I thought, well, I know about fly patterns, and I also knew that there was a fishing magazine in Portland published by Frank Amato. So I wrote some short pieces about fly patterns and how to tie them, along with a little cover letter asking if he might be interested in this sort of thing, and he was. That led to a fledgling writing career, writing a column on fly patterns for Pacific Northwest fishing for Frank Amato Publications. In those years, he had only one magazine. It was *Salmon Trout Steelheader*, and so this column appeared in there for, I don't know, a number of years, until I just got burned out on doing it. Besides that, by that time, this movie—

TB: *A River Runs Through It*.

PT: *A River Runs Through It* had come out, and fly fishing blossomed into this huge industry. Several new national magazines devoted to fly fishing came out, and more and more things were happening in the fly fishing world and being publicized, and I found it really difficult to keep my pieces for the magazine up to date and ahead of the demand for new material. I found that when you are writing for a magazine you have to write about a year in advance of any given issue's publication date so that the editors can match what you're writing about with their desires for content, which is usually kind of seasonal. There was so much going on it was just hard to keep up with it. Because tying and fishing fly patterns just to make sure they worked the way their creators said they would was time consuming, it was harder and harder and harder to keep up with the deadlines for the magazine, and I just burned out trying to do it. So I stopped. The other thing was that Frank started publishing one of those strictly fly fishing magazines himself. It's called *Fly Fishing and Tying Journal* now, but it had a different name when he started out. Several people that I knew asked me why I didn't switch my column over to that other magazine. I didn't because Frank asked me to stay with *Salmon Trout Steelheader*, and paid me more to do so. Even though he was starting a fly fishing magazine himself, he wanted to keep a certain level of content devoted to fly fishing in *Salmon Trout Steelheader* as well. His argument was that, well, you don't get many new converts if you just preach to the converted, but preaching to the unconverted was what *Salmon Trout Steelheader* was all about, or what

he said it was all about at the time. That sort of tickled my fancy, so I stayed with *Salmon Trout Steelheader*. But that's how I got involved in writing, was with that little column on fly patterns.

TB: Okay, so I don't know if you want to talk a little bit first about your own favorite ways of fly fishing, because it actually sounds like you might be more into freshwater fly fishing—

PT: I am, yes, I am.

TB: --and yet you went on to write this fly fishing for salmon—

PT: Well, the reason for that gets back to when I met Bruce Ferguson and became friends with him. Even though I had this column in *Salmon Trout Steelheader*, I also wrote a few longer pieces for some of those other magazines. I had become interested in fly fishing for salmon, especially in the saltwater. I didn't have many opportunities to do that where I was living at the time, so most of my fishing excursions were in freshwater, including fishing for sea run cutthroat. But then Weyerhaeuser transferred me up here to Tacoma, and I found when I moved up to the Puget Sound area that the fishing was a bit different. All of our fishing in the lower Columbia area, even for sea run cutthroat, took place when they came back into the rivers, and they usually migrated in the late summer and fall, so it was kind of an August to end of October game down there. But up here, it was more of a year around game, fishing the beaches of Puget Sound for sea run cutthroat. And it turned out that when you fished the beaches for sea run cutthroat, you were just as apt to hook into a resident coho salmon or a resident chinook. Also, I got interested in the fly patterns that were used in the salt, because they were quite different from what I was accustomed to using. I also heard that one of the people reputed to be a pioneer and practitioner of the sport was Bruce Ferguson. So I called him up one day and proposed an interview for a magazine article, and he said sure, you know, why not, we'll talk. I think he had left Weyerhaeuser by then. He lived over by Gig Harbor, right on the beach at that time. I found him to be a very gracious host, you know. He took me out in his boat numerous times to demonstrate his methods and show me some of his favorite places, and we talked about fly patterns and how to fish them. He became essentially my mentor on flyfishing for salmon in the salt. And then I also found out that he too was interested in sea run cutthroat and that we were kindred spirits in that regard. He had a lot of the same experiences and fished most of the same waters that I had when he was working down at Longview. He had been to a lot of the same places and had a lot of the same fishing experiences that I did, except just a few years sooner. He was in the Timberlands group then...a land purchaser, I think, I don't know for sure. He did have a forestry professional background as I recall. But because of that interest in sea-runs, we served together on a couple of little committees, little ad hoc groups actually, that were focused on conservation of sea run cutthroat, which were in a pretty depleted condition even back then. And so, when he wanted to produce this book on fly fishing for Pacific salmon, he asked me to be a co-author, and he also talked to Les Johnson. Les already had a reputation as a pretty big-time fly fisher for salmon in freshwater. And also he was, he was...well, I guess my frank expression for this, was sort of a gearhead. He was really into the tools of the fly fishing trade, more so than I ever was. I was never a gearhead. I couldn't, you know. I didn't have the money to afford a lot of tackle from an early age, so I made do. And that outlook pretty much stayed with me through the years. I don't have thousands of dollars worth of stuff, the way Les and Bruce did. Bruce was--well, probably the more affluent of the three of us, I guess you might say, if that's the right word for it, but still we got along just fine. But that's how I met Bruce Ferguson and some of the other relationships that we found we had in common that endured up to the time he died.

TB: Well, you kind of mentioned it, but so I'll ask you more specifically. Were you involved in the Sea Run Coalition? That was one of the ones that Bruce was in.

PT: I was. In fact, Bruce and I were among the charter members. He may have told you how that got started. The way I remember it...and you can check this with Bruce's rendition of it if he did tell you. The way I remember, it came out of Bruce's activism. He would go to meetings of the Game Commission and testify on issues of fisheries management and regulations, things like that. I didn't like to do that so much. I was more interested in the biology of the creatures and the science behind the issues involving their stewardship. But Bruce would go to testify at Game Commission hearings and other public meetings. He was also quite interested in the resident coho and Chinook

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

4

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salmon programs that the Department of Fisheries was running in Puget Sound. And he would pigeonhole the biologists and talk at length with them about that and express his opinions that way too. He was also a principle representative of the Federation of Fly Fishers at these meetings. Anyway, at one of the Game Commission hearings, he and another FFF representative testified on the plight of sea run cutthroat trout and urged some actions to protect and recover their depleted populations. Also at that meeting were some people from the state Trout Unlimited organization and also some people representing the old Washington State Sportsmen's Council. Now back in those years, none of these organizations ever agreed with one another on any fishery management issue, but at some point during their testimony, they realized they were all asking for the same things regarding sea-run cutthroats. So they got to talking at one of the coffee breaks, and agreed to try to work together on sea run cutthroat issues. They agreed to disagree on everything else, but to work together on the sea run cutthroat issues. Because by that time I was gaining some recognition as an independent expert on cutthroat trout biology, Bruce asked me to join in. So we started meeting on a regular basis after that as the Sea Run Cutthroat Coalition and got really pretty tightly involved with the Game Department. And that in turn led to positive changes in fishing regulations for sea-runs and to some of the other measures that were taken to recover deeply depressed populations. It was a pretty effective coalition for as long as it lasted. It eventually sort of petered out, but for a while there that was a good little group. It was kind of interesting, because it was a group that could still almost come to blows on any other subject having to do with fishery management. But when it came to the sea run cutthroat, they stuck together and spoke with one voice all the way through its existence. So, that's how that happened.

TB: And what about—were you ever involved in the Federation of Fly Fishers?

PT: Well, yes, I'm a member of course. I didn't join when it was first organized, though. I joined probably a year later. I also belonged to a fly fishing club and was an officer for a while, but eventually, because of my moving up to Seattle, it got to be too much of a chore to get to the meetings. It surprises me sometimes when I talk about how I got involved in some of these things, because I've always been kind of--I was always more of a loner. I was never much of a joiner. I'd still rather go fishing alone, although I have had a number of fishing partners over the years. When I was down in Longview, there were several old-timers who took me under their wings when I was growing up, before I went off to school, and that I got together with after I came back and started my career, but I was never really a joiner of clubs and that sort of thing. But I changed my mind when I was transferred up from Longview to the Tacoma area. The company had this little internal newsletter, and I got a copy of it down in Longview. I saw that a group of guys that were working at the new corporate headquarters in Federal Way, which is where I was going to be transferred soon, was forming this fly fishing club, and they had put out this little ad for membership. It was to be called the Alpine Fly Fishers because a couple of the principal proponents were really interested in packing and fishing the high mountain lakes. Anyway, I decided to join. I figured it would be a quick way to learn about the area's fly fishing possibilities. I turned out to be the charter out-of-town member of the group, and then after my transfer, I started going to the meetings on a regular basis. It met over in the Puyallup area. I guess it still does; it's still got a website. I haven't been to a meeting or belonged to it in several years, because I just couldn't get to the meetings on time anymore. But through that, I did get a little more active in some of the FFF's local and regional conservation issues. I was even...after the Pacific salmon book and my own book on cutthroat trout got published, I was even named the Washington Council of FFF's Federator of the Year. That was in 1991, I think. I've got a little plaque of that somewhere around here. I've also given presentations at FFF conclaves, and talks to various fly fishing clubs. So that's kind of a summary of my involvement in the Federation of Fly Fishers. I was never as involved as Bruce was at the national level, or as Les Johnson became later on. Bruce got very interested in the broader saltwater fly fishing scene you know, not just Pacific salmon, and became quite active at more of the national level of FFF. And Les did too, eventually, but I think Les's interest was focused more on steelhead.

TB: Did you ever work with Marty Seldon?

PT: No. Well, I met Marty Seldon, but I never really worked with him. We first met after the first edition of my cutthroat book came out. I was invited to speak at one of these Wild Trout symposia that they held every so many years over at Yellowstone Park. I met Marty Seldon and some of those other big names in fly fishing at that

symposium. I've run into him at one time or another when I'd go back to one of those meetings. He remembered me, but he couldn't really place how or why until I talked to him a little bit.

TB: He just happened to be someone else [I interviewed], I was down in California so I was able to do an oral history with him.

PT: Ah, interesting.

TB: Otherwise, yes, Danny knew him.

So why don't you tell me a little bit too more about how, I mean, I know that cutthroat was your first fish, but tell me a little bit more about how that evolved, because that's a pretty—

PT: Well, yes, I was interested in cutthroat trout even before I got involved in fish biology and consulting work...from age 11 onward, I suppose. While working for Weyerhaeuser, I had access to a pretty good science library, especially after we consolidated the research organization in Federal Way. We had a top-notch library there. It was probably as good, you know, for tapping into the literature on things that Weyerhaeuser was involved with, as the university libraries. And of course we did have access to the university libraries on an interlibrary loan basis for books and journals our library didn't carry. So I found myself, as my job career began to evolve into more of those disciplines that related to fishes as well as forest trees, I found myself digging more and more into the literature on fisheries science, as well as the material I needed for work assignments. I was interested in the biology and ecology of the creatures, especially the cutthroat trout species. As you know, there are many subspecies distributed around western North America, and I was becoming more and more interested in those. By this time, I had already put in about 20 years with the company, and among other things Weyerhaeuser was generous with, for their professional employees anyway, was vacation time and leave of absence opportunities. I had been single for a while, and had accrued a whole lot of vacation time, so I decided--I decided that, well, you know, I've learned enough about these creatures from books and journals and reports, now I'd like to go see the places where they lived and study them in their own native environments. That would have been about 1978 or 1979. Of course, by that time, you know, many of those populations were also depleted, and some of them were even thought to be extinct. I started writing to people who worked with these other cutthroat subspecies--this was before widespread use of computers and the internet. I corresponded with the biologists and the university scientists who were working with them, and agency scientists too, and I found that they were very receptive to my interest. I would offer my help on their field projects as a volunteer. I was, you know, in pretty good shape then, and I could do that. I found that they were very receptive to this sort of approach, so I took my accrued vacation time and arranged with the company for leaves of absence periods for the times my vacations wouldn't cover. In all, I made three great circle expeditions through the American west, a slightly different route each year. I'd start around the 1st of July or earlier if we could get into some of the high-country places where the native cutthroats still persisted. I tried to schedule things so that I was following the snow line, which is sometimes pretty chancy in the Rockies, for example. I did basically three great circle routes, three full field seasons, working hands-on with populations of the several subspecies of cutthroat trout that still existed out there. And that, plus all this other material that I'd been accumulating from my library research, all came together in the first edition of my book, *Cutthroat: Native Trout of the West*. I completed the manuscript in 1983, but it took until 1987 to find a publisher, which turned out to be the Colorado Associated University Press.

What's interesting about that is that in the interim, we were also working on...I was working with Bruce and Les Johnson on the first edition of our *Fly Fishing for Pacific Salmon* book. I wouldn't call it a harmonious time, but I don't recall any particular problems getting either piece of work done. One of the things that probably helped as far as my time involvement for the salmon book, was that it took four years after I had finished the manuscript for the cutthroat book to actually find someone who would publish it. So there was a time lag. I got that manuscript finished in 1983, and the salmon book came out in '85. The cutthroat book didn't come out until 1987. Or maybe it was the other way around. I can't remember now.

TB: I think one came out in 1987.

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

6

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PT: Yes, one came out in 1987, one came out in 1985. But anyway, there was a hiatus on my cutthroat book. The manuscript was just circulating around, you know, being bumped from publisher to publisher until finally the Colorado Associated University Press (they're now the University Press of Colorado) picked it up and published it as a natural history book.

TB: 1987. It came out in 1987, yes.

PT: And the other one came out two years earlier, during the hiatus, so that's how that worked out.

TB: Okay.

PT: And besides that, my part of the salmon book...well, I had two parts, weren't that demanding. The history aspect of saltwater fly fishing was mine to write, and the fly pattern part of it was mine to write as well, so those parts were my contribution. Les wrote the chapters on tackle and equipment, and all of the stuff on freshwater fly fishing and methods, which Frank Amato wanted us to include. If it had been up to Bruce, we wouldn't have had that in there.

TB: Oh okay.

PT: It would have been strictly a saltwater fly fishing book. But Frank was adamant that we should include a freshwater component, and that's where Les Johnson came in. The first edition of that book...I've got to say this because the lead role flip-flopped for the second edition...the first edition of that book was Bruce Ferguson's. It was his baby. He was the spearhead of that and the chief editor and writer all the way through it. He was the first author definitely, you know, of that book. I think in fact I--I can't recall for sure, Les might be able to straighten this out, because Bruce is no longer with us, but my recollection is that Bruce was the one, once Frank got so insistent about having the freshwater part in there, Bruce is the one who approached Les to write that part. I think that's how Les came into the project.

TB: Okay.

PT: I actually knew Les at work where I hadn't known Bruce, because Les was a contemporary. I ran into him often. He was working for the company also in Federal Way when I was there.

TB: Oh okay.

PT: Yes. He was involved in the editorial department. He had been a commercial artist, as I recall, but he was also a writer and editor for a lot of the company publications.

TB: Okay, okay. Let's see— So, we've talked about that, federation, let's see. Well, let's go back now to the more pleasurable part. Tell me a little bit more about what are your favorite ways to fish, your favorite places, whether you prefer, wet flies, dry flies, and you still might talk-- I know that Bruce's thing about the saltwater too was that he really wanted to chase and get all the five species of that.

PT: Yes, he did.

TB: Do you have goals like that?

PT: No.

TB: Or what are your goals?

PT: Well, I didn't really have any particular goals in the same sense as Bruce...unless you'd call my desire to see and study all the subspecies of cutthroat trout in their native habitats. I did accomplish that, but it wasn't a fly fishing goal.

TB: Okay. Let's go back to your favorite places and favorite ways to fish.

PT: Well, when I was younger, I was much more broadminded, I guess. Like I said, I got interested in saltwater fly fishing, and I did a lot of that with Bruce, but it was mostly confined to Puget Sound and the Strait of Juan de Fuca. I was never really one to travel broadly for fly fishing, except for my trips into the western North American interior to study the cutthroats. I was never really one, even after the big movie came out, I was never really one to fly off for fly fishing adventures on Christmas Island, or Belize, or up in Alaska, or New Zealand, or down in Patagonia, or any of those places you began to read about. I was more interested in the local freshwater species, the local cold-water freshwater species, because they did me pretty well. You know, professionally, they kept the wolf away from the door after I left Weyerhaeuser, I guess is one way to put it. And so I was much more interested in those than some of the more exotic or big game species, you might say. I never got swept up into the, I don't know what you call it, the fish bum mentality either. I always thought of fly fishing more in the relaxing, contemplative, non-competitive sense. Those aspects had much more appeal for me always. So that--plus my interest in the cutthroat trout, came to pretty much dictate my favorite way and places to fish. I did an awful lot of steelhead fishing when I was younger. I haven't been steelhead fishing now in several years. I did an awful lot of saltwater fishing for salmon around here, beach fishing, and you know, out of small boats in the Sound and on the Strait. I haven't done a lot of that in quite a long time either. Although I keep telling myself I'm going to get back to the beach fishing for sea-runs because I'm getting to be a little bit less mobile than I used to be, and less physically able to do some of the things I used to do. For example, if I'm working professionally, somebody else can carry the electroshocker or do the snorkeling. I'm not going to do that anymore. I can still get to places. Getting back out of places is even more important I guess, but somebody else can do the hard labor now that I used to really kind of look forward to doing. Anyway, that's kind of dictated my choices. So I guess today, my favorite way to fish is with dry flies with a small fly rod, poking around in tiny, often unnamed streams, way up in the headwaters or as far up as I can get, looking for their--

Technical Issues

PT: Their native trout. They provide me much more pleasure than, you know, going around to the various other blue-ribbon waters and destinations they write about in the magazines anymore, so.

TB: You've kind of described it. Can you tell me a little bit more about, maybe, what's a perfect day for you on the stream, especially since you're kind of the contemplative person? Are you like--I guess I've heard kind of two stories about people just really trying to go fish for a little while, and then they try to figure out what is really going on, and then go back at it again, try something different.

PT: Oh, I do a lot of that too, but it's always just in the course of the day, trying to tempt the trout and figuring out what they're doing out there. But I guess my perfect day in fly fishing would be any day I can be out there.

TB: Okay.

PT: But you know, I also have a float tube and I paddle around in lakes when the streams aren't open, but I truly enjoy the stream fishing more; and especially in the small headwater streams, looking for the wild native trout. I really like that. It's quite nice to still be able to find them and to actually be able to interact with them in their own setting.

TB: So, maybe try to talk a little bit about your consulting and your fishery, I think you called it fishery science consultant.

PT: Yes.

TB: Obviously--are people getting more sensitive in trying to save our native trout?



PT: Well, I'd like to think they are. I don't mean to get into the politics, anything like that, but I have found that who's responsible for setting policy and the direction we're going is very important as to what actually gets done in the field in this regard. The global warming, the global climate change issue is a case in point. Up until our most recent change of federal administrations, the government scientists and government-funded scientists and administrators who were actually in a position to acquire the information and do something about what they were finding, you didn't hear anything from them, nothing. But when that change occurred, within about a year, all kinds of things began to happen, I mean, papers being presented at conferences,

papers appearing in peer reviewed publications, reports, all kinds of things coming out. It was as though this whole world of folks who really had some insight into what was happening and how these models work and what they were trying to say and how to scale them down to predict the impacts on individual locations, like a particular watershed, say like the Cedar River watershed, just to pick a local example, or up where you live, the Nooksack or the Skagit River watershed, just proliferated. I mean, it was like somebody had, you know, popped a, broke the-- what's that thing that Mexican people hang up?

TB: A piñata.

PT: Piñata; broke the piñata, and all of these goodies came spilling out. There was just a huge outpouring of work all of a sudden. And it was...I belong to the American Fishery Society, and they had a big annual meeting in Seattle in 2011 that broke all kinds of attendance records for one of their meetings, and god, there was a ton of papers on this subject. But you know three or four years prior to that, you wouldn't have heard a peep out of any of these people. I mean, it was like the subject was *verboten*. You couldn't talk about it, or rather, they couldn't talk about it. So stuff like that goes on that I saw as a consultant. There's this ebb and flow of environmental concern that happens. Another of the things—I'm afraid a certain level of cynicism is going to appear in my interview at this point. But another, similar thing I noticed during my consulting experience had to do with the preparation of environmental impact statements. I started consulting work in 1990, right after I left Weyerhaeuser, and I very quickly earned a reputation for being good at preparing the fisheries element reports that go into these EIS documents. I enjoyed doing it, which a lot of consultants don't, so that brought a lot of business my way. There are two kinds of environmental impact statements. There's a National Environmental Policy Act that spells out the requirements and process for when and how to prepare an EIS for federally-funded projects and the state has its own Act for state-funded projects. Most big construction projects, highway construction, bridges, things like that require environmental impact statements under one or the other of these acts. And these are required, okay? I mostly subcontracted to other big consulting firms who would compile the full EIS document, and for the first few years my business was good, phone ringing all the time with people wanting to recruit my time for fishery element reports. The other big thing was Endangered Species Act consultations. To prepare clients for these, you compile all the same information as you do for an EIS fishery element report, and here in the northwest there are plenty of endangered species that could be impacted by large projects. So an administration change comes along, and all of a sudden the phone's not ringing anymore. That was a puzzle, so I started asking some of the people who would normally recruit me for this, and they'd say, Well, you know, the big project managers are finding that nobody's really holding their feet to the fire to produce an EIS or hold a consultation, so a few of the bolder ones are just simply not doing them. Projects continued, but nobody said a word. When that administration got voted out, my phone started ringing again, but by then I had slipped into a more complete retirement mode. I turned in my business license in 2004. But for somebody else who is good at it, EIS documents and Endangered Species Act

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

consultations are back in vogue. So to sum up, interest in protecting and perpetuating our native fish species seems to ebb and flow. There are hills and valleys to some of these things, or at least that's the way I came to think of that. Maybe at the grassroots level or among the common folks who don't have to deal with policy so much, there's interest. At least I hope there's interest in being good stewards of our native fishes and their habitats. But I see, you know, at the place where the—what do you call it, the rubber meets the road, there's this hills-and-valleys kind of thing that goes on... or at least that's the way I've come to see it.

TB: Very interesting. What about, they're taking down like the Elwha Dam, so when they take the dam down, is that going to restore the native--?

PT: I think it will, I think it will, and I think it will happen a lot faster than even a lot of biologists might give it credit for.

TB: I think there are hints of that already, aren't there?

PT: Oh, sure. I'd just love to be working on that project. I really would, because you know, it's one of those things where you're going to see something that blows your mind almost every day. I know John McMillan, who--I don't know if you've encountered Bill McMillan in your—

TB: Yes. Oh, he and his son just wrote a book.

PT: Yes, they did. Well, John's actually a professional biologist. He works for NOAA Fisheries. I know both of them. Bill's a very good friend of mine and has been for quite a while. I've worked with him on a lot of projects.

TB: I saw that.

PT: Anyway, John's the professional, Bill's the philosopher. John's the scientist. He works on that Elwha project. He talks about the amazing things he's seeing there all the time. He's kind of like, Jesus, something's blowing his mind all the time it's happening so fast.

TB: And actually, that was a question I had. We kind of skipped over it. But how did you two, because I know you did at least one report with Bill McMillan, probably more. Did you know each other or you just got matched together?

PT: Well, one of the other things that happened was that when they formed Washington Trout years ago, I thought it was a great idea to have a conservation-minded organization like that devoted to trout and salmon, so I threw in. Again, I'm one of the charter members. I was on the first board of directors they set up, until I found out that the issues a board of directors mostly deals with was not my cup of tea.

TB: Oh.

PT: I wanted to kind of keep them more on the straight and narrow from the science point of view because, you know, a lot times when you get, excuse me, really involved in environmental activism, you can go as far overboard in a negative way as you can in a positive way, just because you don't--you have a tendency to think, well, I've got the moral high ground here, and the science is going to back me up, no matter what I say or do. And there's a corollary attitude that seems to arise, that good science is science that tells me what I want to hear, which is not always the case.

TB: Right, right.

PT: And that was what I saw as my role being on the board of directors, but I got kind of tired of that really fast. I realized I was really more interested in going out and doing the science or leading others who were doing the

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

10

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science, rather than, you know, being an arbiter of what the science should be telling these folks. Another reason I resigned from the board was that my attorney told me that, well, if I wanted to be a consultant and work in the environmental field and work for nonprofit organizations, which I did want to do in addition to anybody else who needed consulting advice, that I should not belong to these organizations in order to avoid conflict of interest issues. I did not want to quit these organizations, but I did back out of the officer-ship or board of directors roles. I also belong to Trout Unlimited and the Federation of Fly Fishers which also have conservation missions as well as Washington Trout, but, you know, I've stayed kind of in the background of all of them for the same reason. I told them that I did want to support their missions, but I also wanted them as clients, as a consulting biologist. In this regard, the guy who became executive director of Washington Trout--actually I reached kind of a handshake agreement with him for about 20% of my time to advise him on science matters when he became the executive director. And it was through this that I got involved with Bill McMillan. Bill I think was also a charter member. He too was on the board of directors, and he was the president of the board for, oh, several different times. He might still be for all I know. But he also worked for them as a field biologist. That started back when the president's forest plan, Clinton's forest plan, came down, during the spotted owl controversy, when all the forest plans were rewritten and there were big cutbacks on logging in old-growth stands and that sort of thing in the national forests. I kind of lost a train of thought there. Anyway, when all of that happened, Washington Trout received a grant to retrain out-of-work loggers in stream and fish habitat survey work, and in stream habitat restoration work, which turned out to be very successful program. They actually employed a bunch of these folks, and Bill took a staff job with them doing that kind of work. Shortly after that, the State began to revise its own forest practices rules, and the Washington Trout field crews did an awful lot of what they called stream typing for these new rules, where they would go out in the field in teams to survey streams and discover where fish were present or absent, which was the basis for the revised rules. Bill became a team leader for these surveys. And then, while all that work was going on, Washington Trout won a big grant from the Northwest Power Planning Council to do a major genetic survey to identify where pure-strain resident trout populations might still exist in the interior Columbia River basin. Washington Trout hired me to be the field supervisor for that big collection project, and Bill was on the team. Bill was one of the people on the team. That was a three-year program, where we spent each field season, out sampling headwater streams to find out where the native resident trout populations were holding out in the state...their presence/absence, and their level of genetic purity. So Bill and I worked on that together. We wrote up some other proposals for expanding the work into different areas, but none of those were accepted. But anyway, that's how Bill and I came to work so closely together.

TB: Cool. So what are some other things that, and I want you, and it sounds like you might not, but I do want you to brag about yourself, so what are some other things that you're most proud of in regards to your fly fishing or your organization involvement?

PT: Well, I'm proud of the work we did on that grant project. That was a good piece of work. One of the things that we discovered was that the southernmost distribution in the state of what pretty much has to be a native west slope cutthroat population, basically we expanded the historical range of that trout in Washington. But I guess I'm most proud of the second edition of my cutthroat book. Yes, I think that was a pretty good piece of work, even though it hasn't sold as well as the first edition did, which kind of tickles me in a way.

TB: But it's also available on the Internet.

PT: Say what?

TB: It's also on the Internet. We have the electronic version as well as the print version in our library.

PT: Oh, do you?

TB: Yes.

PT: Well I'll tell you, you can find a whole bunch of pretty cheap copies of the print version now. The second edition, which is a much larger, revised and updated version, was published by the University of California Press down in Berkeley, and we were actually expecting bigger things from them publicity-wise and marketing-wise, than was actually delivered. But I think we got--you know, everybody was having budget problems, and I'm not so sure they pushed it the way they led us to believe they were going to, because it never did--it hasn't sold as well as the first edition did, which really kind of in a way, it surprised me because it's a better and more comprehensive book, and frankly, it's disappointing. But at the same time, you know, I sit back with this bemused expression on my face when I think about it, because I suspect that the University Press has, what they call, remaindered it now. It's what they do with their unused, their unsold copies, because all of a sudden some of the bookstores you see on the Internet--I check in with Powell's Books in Portland all the time. In fact, I picked up a--I wanted a--I have two copies of my book. The copy that they originally sent me, the original author's copy, for some reason arrived with a broken spine.

TB: Oh.

PT: It's one of these horizontal format books, and it's a big heavy one, and that's one of the problems with those books. You start messing around with them and treating them a little less than very carefully and the spines start breaking. This might be one of the reasons why publishers don't like to produce books in that format anymore. But the firm that acted as my agent for that edition was kind of enamored with the horizontal format at that time.

TB: Okay, that's interesting.

PT: Yes, there are a lot of these little insights into the publishing world that I got, that make me laugh when I think about them. But anyway, to make a long story short, I think they're remaindering it. There are a lot of bookstores now that have copies labeled as used books, but they look like nobody's opened them. You know, they haven't--the ones that I've seen have been pristine. They're just like they were right out of the box from the publisher. So I think that's kind of what's happening. You can get some pretty cheap copies of it now on the Internet from used book companies. And what's really funny about that is that I never saw a used copy of the first edition ever, until I guess it was 2004, 2005, I finally ran across one.

TB: Oh, okay.

PT: And it was selling for, god almighty, I couldn't believe how much money they wanted for that book, because it only cost, you know, back in 1987, it only cost--I mean, a high priced book was \$20. And god, this thing was 200 bucks.

TB: Yes, yes. I was going to say, Bill McMillan's *Dry line steelhead and other subjects*, that one is a paperback, costs-- someone got us a copy, and it's like 100 bucks, getting it contemporarily now.

What are some other things about fly fishing that I haven't asked you that you think are important?

PT: Well I'm afraid I'm going to have to be a dud on this part of the interview. I don't have any real grand insights for you.

TB: Any thoughts on the future of fly fishing?

PT: Oh I think it's got a future. I mean, it was an industry even when my uncle was involved in it, you know, years and years ago. He's long gone of course, but there was a business aspect to it even then. There were people who operated as distributors, who bought and resold his flies to the likes of Orvis and others. He tried to stay--he stayed very quiet and very far in the background. I remember him telling me one time that-- I got to also tell you when I start getting into stories about him, my uncle was quite a drinker. I wanted to interview him for my fly pattern pieces for Frank Amato back when I was writing those. At that time he lived in, down around Humboldt Bay--I

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

12

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can't think of it, McKinleyville, California. My dad and I decided we'd take a little drive down to talk to him, and boy, old Uncle Alvin was—Alvin was his name, Al Trotter—was being very close mouthed about the patterns he had developed. He'd developed quite a few original patterns that nobody knew about at that time. But I wasn't having much luck getting him to open up. So my dad took me aside, and he says, "Go down to the grocery store"...you could buy liquor in the grocery stores in California then, like you can here now. "Get yourself a bottle of bourbon and sit it down in the middle of the table and start pouring drinks for him, and that will get him talking," which it did. I mean, we spent until, I couldn't believe it we did, but I was matching him for a while, and I never have been a really heavy drinker, but I kept up with him because I wanted that interview, and the more he drank the more he talked. But one of the things he did tell me was that he preferred to be in the background. He didn't care if he was known as a big time fly tier, although he was. He considered it strictly as a business. He had an operation going that was probably as big as some of those ones you read about, or you used to read about, that evolved over in Montana.

TB: Oh, Grant? George Grant?

PT: Well not him so much, but there was a guy in Livingston I think, you know, you see pictures of all these ladies sitting in front of these tying machines—

TB: Is that Dan Bailey?

PT: Dan Bailey. Yes, his operation was as big as that.

TB: Oh wow.

PT: But nobody knows about it, you know. That's kind of how he worked. He tied flies and he had people doing piecemeal tying flies for him, all winter long. And then like I said, in the summer he would, you know, take off and do other things. So he did all of his work over the wintertime, and it was a real high production outfit. But nobody knows about it. He preferred it that way. One time a writer for *Field and Stream*--he told me this while, you know, going on at the table, kind of pounding down the bourbon, but he told me that several...in those years, *Field and Stream*, *Outdoor Life*, and *Sports Afield* were the big time outdoor magazines, and he said that he was always being approached for interviews by those magazines, and he turned them all down flat, never wanted any part of that. And that's...in a way that's kind of how I feel about things, you know. I have one or two flies that are original with me, but most of the ones that I fish with nowadays are flies that somebody else tied, and they work. So, if it's not broke, don't fix it.

TB: Yes; but tell me about a couple then that you originated.

PT: Well, Les Johnson's got the patterns for one of the flies that I originated, although I can't exactly call them original because they were basically just tweaks of material and stuff from something that somebody else tied. But back in my sea run cutthroat fishing days, when I was really involved in that back in the 1960s and 1970s, why this little bucktail fly that I called the K Special Orange was—

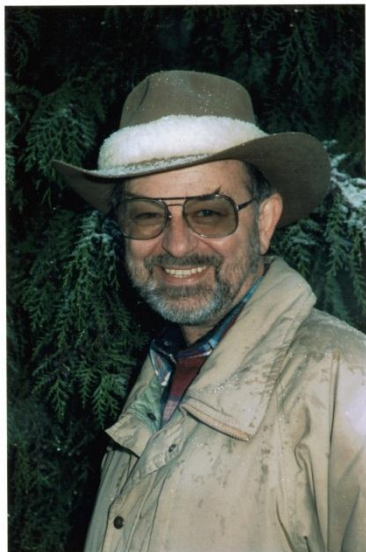
TB: K?

PT: Yes, K, capital K, and then Special, Orange. Les has got the pattern for that in one of his books.

TB: Okay, go ahead.

PT: It out fished everything that I put it up against for sea run cutthroat...although other people who tie other patterns say the same thing about their flies.

TB: Do you have any insights into how that works though? Is it catching the fish at a certain time that makes something, I mean, was this an imitator or--?



PT: Well it was just a bright, gaudy bucktail fly. It was a very simple fly. It just had a red tail—and a deep orange chenille body and white bucktail wing. It was an attractor fly, which is what most people used for sea run cutthroat in the rivers down there at the time. This pattern was another of those attractor flies. But I thought it was better than all the other ones people were using, at least in my hands it was. I've used it in quite a few different places for sea run cutthroat, and it always seemed to out produce what other people were using, so I keep tying it for when I go sea run cutthroat fishing in the rivers, which is kind of getting more and more seldom. But when I do go, that's the fly that I use. Along that line, I should show you something. I don't know if we can do this. If you step around the corner here, you'll see it. If you step around the corner here, you'll see that, especially this one. That's a Joe Tomelleri original, of a sea run cutthroat trout. [Joe Tomelleri is one of the foremost technical illustrators of fishes in the world, and what we were viewing at this point in the interview is his original illustration of a Skagit River sea run cutthroat, which I now have hanging in a place of honor in my home]

TB: Wow, that's beautiful.

PT: My wife got me that for a present for my 75th birthday.

TB: Wow.

PT: It's a sea run cutthroat from the Skagit River. Actually it's a composite from two specimens. Bill McMillan and I caught them. It was kind of a commission painting for the book, for the second edition of my cutthroat book.

TB: So is that the cover picture?

PT: No, the cover picture is a west slope cutthroat that Joe also did. The coastal cutthroat picture is in Chapter 3. The trip when the two specimens for that picture were taken was the last time I've been river fishing for sea run cutthroat trout. Joe told us how to preserve them so that their colors would still be good by the time they got back to him...he lives in Kansas... and then we both shot up, I guess, two rolls of film each on the head, the fins, the tail, and the overall body which were features he wanted us to try to capture on good film as well to guide his painting.

TB: Wow.

PT: We got a male and a female that were cookie cutter renditions of one another. Both of them were very nice specimens. The Skagit River is the only river in the state where it's still legal to keep two sea run cutthroat. Everywhere else in the state, it's "catch and release" for them now, they're in such bad shape. We only took the specimens because we wanted them for this picture, otherwise Joe would have had to get them from some other state.

TB: Oh, wow. It's beautiful.

PT: Yes. So that's a composite of the two specimens that we sent him.

TB: Yes, nice, nice.

Are there some other things that are important about fly fishing that I haven't asked you?

PT: Okay. Well, you asked me that question earlier and I can't think of any.

TB: Okay, okay.

PT: No great insights into that one for you.

TB: Okay; and I know I asked you about any thoughts on the future of fly fishing.

PT: Yes.

TB: And you said there would always be fly fishing.

PT: Yes, I think so. It's a good way to do it. And the other thing I should probably say about that is that especially in this day and age where there's so many young folks want to get into something that's, what do you call it? It's a sport that seems to be one of those "In" things like skiing was. Everybody wanted to get into skiing, and everybody wants to get into fly fishing, which I guess is a good thing. There's an awful lot more competitiveness to it though. Well this is getting back to that question: what do you think is important? There's an awful lot more competitiveness to it than there used to be, it seems to me. But on the positive side, it seems to be attracting more people into it. And if this attraction carries with it some of the same philosophies involving ethics and the stewardship of the resource, and all of those kinds of things, that had been there sort of underlying the sport through its earlier years, why then that's a good thing, I think. I don't know if I said that very well, but that's probably the most profound thing I can—

TB: No, no, you said it well. Some people have expressed concern, though, about all of the people and feeling like there's a lack of courtesy out on the streams at times.

PT: Well, you do see that, and I think that's because of—I think that's the competitive aspect of it I'm talking about. You're seeing more and more of a lack of courtesy, I think, in our society as a whole, in our day to day living. I mean, you go to downtown Seattle anymore, and you don't see anywhere near the courtesy that you used to see, as far as pedestrians, or you know, pedestrians behaving with respect to traffic flow. And you don't see the courtesy among drivers that you used to see either. There's a lot more road rage incidents, I think, nowadays than there used to ever be. In fact, we had one in Seattle just a couple days ago where somebody got shot and killed by somebody driving a big, I think it was a BMW sports car.

TB: Yes, that made the news, I think.

PT: Yes, it was on TV last night, in fact.

TB: Okay, okay. Well, and you've already probably answered, maybe not, but I'll ask this question, because you're not a gearhead, I think, but anyway.

PT: No, I'm not.

TB: Do you have any thoughts about the evolution of equipment, or does that question probably not even interest you?

PT: It probably doesn't even interest me. It's going to continue to evolve, and you know, when my stuff wears out, I'll-- But I fished for years—well, here's something. I didn't even know they were still around because I haven't seen one for sale in a fly fishing shop in a long, long time, a Pflueger Medalist fly reel. It cost me, I think, well, they're probably around 40 bucks now, but, you know, it used to cost me around \$15. They still make them, but I'm

Patrick C. Trotter Edited Transcript -- September 4, 2012

Fly Fishing Collection

15

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still using my old Pflueger Medalist fly reels, and I think I'm doing just fine. I caught any number of steelhead, I caught any number of salmon, I caught any number of, you know, like anybody else has, with my Pflueger Medalist fly reel, and it still works just wonderfully. And as long as I take care of it, it works fine.

TB: Very good, very good. What—

PT: I don't need to spend a thousand bucks on something that was, you know—

TB: So what kind of rod do you have, main rod?

PT: Well, okay. The main rod I have right now is a—geez, I have to go look. I've got a Sage in there. I have three or four rods now.

TB: Well, I was thinking, I mean, is it graphite, bamboo, fiberglass?

PT: No, it's one of the new composite materials—because I got it fairly recently to replace an old fiberglass rod that I decided to retire. It's a St. Croix, I think is the brand—yes, it's a St. Croix rod. I've got two of them, and they're fairly new replacements. One of them is about 7 ½ feet long, which takes a real light weight line, and that's the one I use for the bulk of my fishing now, in those high mountain streams. The other main rod I have is also a St. Croix, but it's a little longer. It's about 9 ½ feet long, and I use that when I'm fishing out of my float tube. And those are the two main rods that I use. But I use the little one a lot more, and I enjoy fishing with it a lot more.

TB: Okay, okay. Now is there anything else?

PT: I think not. You'll probably want to be heading out.

TB: Well, thank you very much. This has been great.

(End of interview.)