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RALPH E. WAHL: Let's join the April 1967 meeting of the Flyfishers' Club of Oregon where President Nate Wilson is outlining the proposed fly fishing foundation.

NATE WILSON: Basically there have been twenty-five or thirty of us who have discussed this, who have worked on it. I'm not going to bore you with the details except to tell you basically that we are now ready to proceed to the organization and incorporation of this tax-free foundation. It's based upon a premise that those of us who have been privileged to enjoy the wild trout in the streams and lakes of North America, and being mindful of these gifts of the Creator, to constitute an increasingly battered international resource for the recreation, education, and pleasure of all men, hereby seek to create a perpetual foundation to preserve and protect this heritage for generations to come, and the specific purposes of this foundation are as follows: to establish a library to serve as a repository of books, periodicals, papers, photographs, films, soundtracks, and other live media communication dealing with fly fishing or subjects related thereto; to publish scientific, fictional, historical, and current papers, magazines, and books on fly fishing and related subjects (now, these related subjects of course are the things that you [imitate?], such as the aquatic life); to accept, classify, preserve, and maintain fishing rods, lines, flies, reels, and like memorabilia having historical or current interest; to directly or indirectly provide or support programs or instruction in the art of fly fishing and fly casting to both youth and adults; to provide or assist in providing for the benefit of the general public the aquariums on display and identification of various members of the trout and other fish families customarily taken by artificial flies, such aquariums to be located near where such fish are found and to be located in natural areas thereby.

Now, basically I don't want to enlarge on this except to advise you as follows. We have had indications from all over the United States of people who want the establishment of this. In the entire North American continent, so far as we know, there is no foundation of perpetual existence which will accept and can care for the magnificent libraries running all the way from the original Isaac Walton's to current publications. There is no place in the United States or the North American continent that has any place for the facilities of taking care of the memorabilia of fly fishing. One of the things that bothers a lot of our leaders in Oregon is that people come to this state and say, "Where can I see a steelhead?" And you can't see a steelhead except in the fish market or hid back in some of the ponds that are maintained in connection with the fish

hatcheries. Now, we don't want to get into an extended discussion of this tonight, but we want to tell you this: there are fifteen or twenty of us who are getting this thing ready for organization. We are going to issue an open invitation to all persons, including these club members who may be interested to join with us in the original articles of incorporation which will form an historic document and will be done in calligraphy by one of our [lady?] friends here tonight. It will be returned to this organization and will be kept as an original document.

[WAHL: This is Pete Hidy introducing Roderick Haig-Brown.]

PETE HIDY: Mr. President, honored guests, members, as you know, it is a distinct pleasure to sit this evening, as I have done, between Roderick and Tommy. It was overwhelming there for a few moments, some of the exchanges. I have here with me tonight, for sentimental reasons, two very extraordinary books. The first is *Fisherman's Fall* by Roderick, which I brought along for his signature. This will virtually triple its value among the book collectors after I am dead, Roderick, as you know. And then the [Gaylord Gordon [inaudible]?) where the people of Manhattan Island asked Roderick to contribute a few words, and he upstaged them all with a classic thing called "Period Piece" about his fishing in Chile. And if you would like to literally create a memorable evening for yourself, I would like to suggest reading Roderick's "Period Piece" in the [inaudible] and have him let you know of his experiences with the tugboat captains and the extraordinary guide by the name of Juan Martinez, [inaudible]. And it's truly an extraordinary thing, and I mention these because it could hardly occur that Roderick would come without a couple of books with his things in here tonight, because this is a great thing he has done for our sport. And with that, I'd like to confide one more thing. The other night when Nate asked me to make this presentation to Roderick, I was taken aback, I mixed myself a drink to contemplate this moment. As I looked at the liquor cabinet, there was some Scotch whiskey, which I prefer; there was some Irish whiskey, and some Canadian whiskey, and some English gin. I was stumped for a moment; I said, "My God, we certainly owe a lot to the British Isles." At this point I went into my room, my private room, and there are a number of books there, and as I looked up and down the bookshelves, it struck me that virtually all of my favorites were written by men who lived and fished in the British Isles or were born there and moved to Canada. I mention this because it's a great part of our heritage and tradition that this club seeks to preserve and perpetuate. So with that, I would like to read our citation to Roderick Haig-Brown, which is as follows.

"Roderick Haig-Brown for his lifelong devotion to sportsmanship and international friendship among fishermen; for his concepts and his work in conservation and his research into the habits of fish; for his charity toward the manufacturers and purveyors of defective hooks; for the clarity and simplicity of the prose in his many delightful books; above all, for his skill in describing the mystery in the water, the strangeness and the beauty of the fish, the art and the joys of fly fishing."

Roderick, it gives me great pleasure to present to you this citation of honorary life membership in the Flyfishers' Club of Oregon.

RODERICK HAIG-BROWN: Well, thank you very much, Pete, and thank you, gentlemen, very much. That's a very great honor and privilege. I did have some suspicion that I would be made an honorary life member, but I didn't have any suspicion about this [inaudible] I will treasure forever. I believe I was supposed to come down and speak to you tonight; I don't know if I am supposed to go ahead and speak now, or whether...it's not...

HIDY: Go ahead, Rod, I had some other nice things to say, but you know them already.

HAIG-BROWN: Thank you, [Matt?], it seems simpler and more informal. This is a great privilege to be here and a great pleasure. And it's a great pleasure to be here with Tom Brayshaw of course. It's sort of a special pleasure because I think I've never been at a club meeting of this kind with Tom before. I would have you all know, he's somebody to be [inaudible]. A very great deal has happened in what I suppose could be called the political world by sport since I met with you in 1961, and in view of this foundation that has been discussed tonight, I thought I might slide over a few of the things, not exactly to put the foundation in perspective because I don't wish to do that and I don't think it's appropriate, but to give some idea of the frame of things that are going on in North America today that are the background of a foundation such as this, which I would suggest couldn't have been dreamed of perhaps even five years ago, or maybe somebody was dreaming of it then.

What it seems to me what has happened is that fly fishermen still remain a happy and much maligned minority, as they always will be, but they have in the past five or six years begun to get together and look at their position in a way they never have before. And they have begun to speak up quite loudly and perhaps even to pack a little political weight. Now, all this is rather sad in many ways; we're all sensitive, retiring, shy, and moderate souls, as you know, little given to display and never given to aggression. Yet I'm afraid this kind of thing is necessary. The last four, five, or six years have seen the development and maturity of such organizations as Trout Unlimited, [Notheno Volume Fly Fishes?], many local clubs throughout the country dedicated to fly fishing, and on top of this, developing from the initiative of McKenzie Flyfishers and strong convictions of the Theodore Gordons, we have the Federation of Fly Fishers. I'm wearing their button tonight. This is a pretty significant, and these are good moves in themselves, but I think in the stimulus they have given to fly fishing everywhere to group together [inaudible] their interests, they are even more important. There are a great many important things to be done in the interests of the sport, and this is going to help get some of them done.

But in line with the likes of this club and also the thoughts of the foundation, I find myself wondering sometimes just what it is we're all going to get together on. Fly fishermen in my experience are pretty unregenerate individualists, and personally I would like to see them continue that way. But it could happen – there are Madison Avenue associations involved here – it could happen that we shall soon be told to improve our image. I'm sure it could do with it. You remember that old tale about the Cabots and the Laws communicating occasionally under just the right conditions, but the fly fishermen communicating only with somebody of the rank of God, and then checking the poor guy's fly box to see if he preferred it upstream or down. But this isn't just, I suppose, the right image for the latter half of the twentieth century, and maybe it should be improved. But I can't be terribly concerned. I never felt that it matters so much how

we fish as that we should be interested in fishing, and more than this, that there should be plenty of fish and fishing water for everyone. And I think this is one point on which all of us can and should get together. I don't mean, I am not suggesting political activity or anything, but many of you I'm sure outside this club do take part in aggressive efforts and so on.

I want to make this point clear. I've tried to make it in British Columbia between the sports fishermen and the commercial fishermen as far as salmon are concerned, and I would like to make it again as far as all anglers are concerned. Now, it's quite evident that there are going to be more and more anglers over the remaining years of this century, and a great deal will have to be done for it. Not only must the waters we have be protected and improved, but new waters must be found, and new orders of productivity must be achieved. And this is by no means impossible. There is already in the United States, I understand, and this excludes Alaska and the Great Lakes, a greater area of manmade reservoirs than natural lakes. And this area is increasing every year by some three and a half percent. Present totals I believe are on the order of eight and nine million acres respectively for natural and manmade, and the increase is expected to go up to eleven million acres of reservoirs over the next few years. All this is under constant study, management is steadily improving, and productivity can and will be greatly increased. And at the same time, more and more attention is being paid to the salt water sports fisheries. Here too significant improvement is being achieved and can be continued. These forms of fisheries have great appeal for very, very many fishermen, and for many they remain the only type of fishing in which they are interested. I suggest it's highly important for all anglers, whether or not they themselves choose to fish such waters to work for their steady improvement. At the same time, of course, it's necessary to work for the protection and improvement and restoration of wild trout waters, wild bass waters, and wild salmon waters everywhere. But there can be little hope of real success in this unless the truly massive angling pressures are satisfied in these other waters. You may say this is kind of a sneaky suggestion, a little bit Machiavellian, and perhaps it is. But I believe that it is a suggestion in the best interests of all anglers. In spite of anything that may be done, pressure on the wild and natural waters will increase, but by providing abundant fishing wherever it is possible to do so, we shall be sure that only those who really want to be there come to these wild waters, and we can depend upon those who do come to treat them with respect.

A word or two about the wild waters, and especially those anonymous streams that so many of us fish, I intend to be optimistic about the future of these waters. Dams of course are always a problem, but I hope and believe that dams on smaller streams are becoming less and less attractive to developers, and I believe that they will continue to become less and less attractive. Pollution is a problem, but there has never before been anything approaching today's public awareness of the problem. And I believe this can be built into a determination to bring it firmly and finally under full control. On this side of the border, you have a powerful program in operation, and you have strong federal leadership that I wish we had in Canada. It is important to support this in all its flavors, both as fishermen and as water users in other respects. It is encouraging to me, and I am sure it must be to you, to read of the twenty-year plan, which is going to cost \$105 million, I believe, to clean up the Willamette, and this should set a standard of some sort for pollution everywhere in the Pacific Northwest. And on the positive side of things,

I'm encouraged by the clear success of properly designed and placed artificial spawning channels and by the great potential of flood control on smaller streams.

I'm confused, I admit, by the Oregon and Washington developments with hatchery fish. I realize that down here it's possible to produce mature smolts in one year instead of two owing to the more favorable water temperatures, but I still get a strange impression that the fishermen are not entirely satisfied with the results. I don't know enough about it to comment on it properly. One thought that does cross my mind is that the fish possibly pass rather too rapidly to limited areas of stream near the hatchery, and that maybe this isn't just exactly the answer that the steelhead fishermen have been looking for. I say this with great respect because I don't really understand just what is happening down in the States in the way I would like to before I comment fully.

But going back to artificial sporting channels, I feel that these are a very valuable and powerful factor. To express the thing conservatively, an egg-to-fry survival from properly built and maintained sporting channels better than thirty-five percent is a moral certainty. You can clean those channels out from time to time and pick up your survival; it'll drop off as there is some silting, and there always is some. Clean them again, and it will bring them up again. But it never needs to drop below some thirty-five percent. And the fry so produced are very much more viable than hatchery fry, and we don't have of course the long expense of raising them to smolts. But there is an intermediate step, you see, and I'm leaving out here, and that is this area of raising those young fish to smolts. I feel that here we have not yet done the proper research; we haven't found out as we should about the rearing needs of the young fish, and we haven't found ways yet to provide for them. Flow control of course is a critical factor in this, but the costs of flow control cannot always be justified. It can be on many small streams. Physical improvement of the streams by cleaning gravel, directing or deflecting flow, modifying streambed contours and stepping steep grades offers a great many possibilities, and this kind of work I think also might offer a lot of possibilities in delaying some of these upstream hatchery-raised fish if more favorable resting places could be provided for them. Any physical improvement of streams is an asset. It's even possible to attain temperature control of streams over a few critical degrees, and this can make a very great difference to survival of both adults and of immature. I believe that work of this kind should be going on more and more intensively everywhere all the time. Two other promising areas of research that I expect to see developed in the next few years are firstly the closer examination of the outflows of plankton from lakes into streams and the factors that affect them, and two, a closer examination of the factors affecting smolt survival on entry into salt water. This is critical in some streams, and I don't know whether it is critical in all streams.

Now, every one of these points, except possibly the last, has direct bearing on the management of resident trout streams, and full application would make not only for improved yields of fish but for improved angling conditions. This is important because if you distribute your fish through the length of the stream, obviously you distribute your anglers much better, and it's a much happier condition for all of us. Management of this sort is fundamental, and it has the important additional value of clearly staking the anglers' claim to waters so managed. If someone wants to put a dam there, well, we're using it [inaudible]. But I think it's a much more compelling claim to say this water has been managed, developed, and physically improved. Or,

the sport of fishing, we've got money sunk in it, and you're not going to interfere with the money we've put into it. It seems the dollar talks very loudly and very emotionally still. It's only after these things – one reason I'm going into all this is to emphasize this point to you – it's only after these fundamentals are taken care of, and I think you can achieve miracles, or small miracles anyway, by such management practices as size and [inaudible], catch-and-release programs, and gear regulations, these things cannot achieve their full effects until you've got the other effects operating fully for you.

You may wonder why I've dealt at such lengths with conservation matters before coming to the idea of the flyfishers' foundation. Well, it's partly because they interest me (in fact, fascinate me) and I like to entertain myself as well as other people, but it is also because I believe the first emphasis of any North American flyfishers' foundation should be on the great North American fact of public ownership of the resource. I can't tell you in what ways this would be recognized in your foundation, but it clearly is a different sort of foundation from the ... it puts me in a position where I am thinking of a foundation, a collection of memorabilia and all various things, but if I think, we'll say, on a collection of angling treasures, fly fishing treasures that are at the flyfishers club in London, obviously the background of that collection is very different than the background of any North American collection. It comes from a specialized, more or less limited, and somewhat privileged group, whereas ours comes from everywhere and all about. It sets us apart, this fact, from anything of the sort that may have been done previously, and undoubtedly it's had a powerful effect on the way this sport has developed on this continent, including the way the fly fisherman has usually been pushed to the wall. This obviously should be recognized in your foundation. There have been contributions from many good men in many ways and walks of life. It is already a puzzle, for instance, to trace the development and even the original dressings of many established Western flies. Tom Brayshaw, if you get hold of him tonight, can tell you the story of [Kerry's?] special in its original form, and perhaps you'd better get it from him while you can, because this is going to be lost. It's been checked and double-checked and referred to in magazines, but there is a fly that's used throughout the whole Pacific Northwest and many other places, and very, very few people even know what the original dressing of [Kerry?] was. A full set of Bill Nation's [Kamloops stripe?] patterns I think would be pretty hard to pull together at this stage. Bill, and many of you can confirm this, the memory of him was a pretty campy old fellow, and I never could tell whether he was pulling my leg or not when he told me about they fly and how he invented it. Tommy will tell you he put a [large body?] on a great many of his flies, and he claimed them as originals because he put a [mallard wing?] on. Well, he did a lot of very strange things. He had things like the little red dragon meeting with her mate, or his mate, whichever way it was, all in the same fly. That's what he told you anyway, and that's what the fish took it for. Well, these little bits of ancient history should somehow be grabbed hold of, if they can be. I didn't know Bill Nation all that well, and I don't know that there are very many people who remember him that well. But if you can drag out some of Bill's original talk, I think it belongs in northwest fly fishing history.

I wanted to – and I suppose somebody here knows, but I don't know who produced the Skykomish Sunrise, obviously one of the most popular of steelhead flies. I imagine Enos Bradner would know, probably Ralph Wahl would, but I don't know. And I'd like to know. Some of the early books on fly fishing in North America are already pretty scarce, though

perhaps very few are so scarce that they cannot be found. Pamphlets and magazine articles are another matter, yet they are often important and certainly have their place in any major library of the sport. I think one of the best places the foundation might find to get at this would be an examination of the conservation section of the Denver Public Library. But it will take work of this kind to get a foundation library working and taking full advantage of the things that are available now and will in a very few years no longer be available. These books and pamphlets and booklets of all kinds belong very much in a major library of the sport.

I wonder at the same time how far our foundation can go in all this – in conservation, for instance. This enormous field touches on so many other fields, you might very well find yourself storing records of the strange doings of the U.S. Army of Engineers and the U.S. Forest Service and the WPA [Works Progress Administration]. But on the whole, I would recommend the line be drawn somewhere, and perhaps that's where it should be. It will be a problem though to decide just where you are going to cut the thing off and say, "This is the end of our frame of reference." The center of emphasis I hope, and I am sure if this club and the members of this club stand back a bit, will always be on the sport itself, and the nature and changes of its development on this continent. In saying this, I remember the remark of a hunting and fishing companion some twenty years ago. He's a very profane gentleman, and I'm not giving you his exact words. "You know," he said at that time, twenty years ago, "old timers like you and I have had our share. It's up to us to put in our time making sure that there's something left for the kids." And for the next ten years or so, my friend did exactly that, and he fought many mighty battles for conservation, always profanely and always powerfully. Then he came to the conclusion, again a profane conclusion, when things weren't advancing much and he went back to hunting and fishing. Now he's hunting and fishing harder than ever, and I kind of think he has a point. [chuckles] You can get far too wrapped up in all the surroundings of our sport and almost forget to go fishing. I hope this won't happen to the foundation.

I hope there will be room, and I see it's written practically into the articles, room in the foundation for a display that shows the western development of the fly rod. Again, some remarkable things have been done here in the West, and the record of them can very quickly pass away. I think of men like Harold Stimpson and Letcher Lambuth in Seattle who built a number of very beautiful rods, one or two samples of which I think should be in the foundation's collection, partly because they are northwest, partly because they are North American, but also because they are in some instance spiral, and I think very, very few spiral rods have been built anywhere in the world. I would like to see something to show the development of the fly line. I think the fly line is an enormously important and fascinating thing, and there has been a great deal of development in the fly line, even within my lifetime. Tommy will tell you that he started fishing with a braided horsehair tapered line. So we've come quite a long way to the modern synthetics and the various strange things that we now use to get the fly down where it shouldn't be and so on. [laughs] Some sort of history of this kind should be available and in the foundation. And of course I hope that there will be a splendid and comprehensive collection of artificial flies, well indexed and complete with their original dressings. I hope that something may be achieved in the way of a collection of natural trout stream insects, though this in itself would be again a major undertaking, and it should be a matter of wise selection. Many of the local insects are not all that important to the fly fisherman. I don't really see how any of us imitate a caddis grub

crawling along the bottom, and I've watched them underwater a good deal lately. I even have gone to the length of picking them off the rocks and dropping them in the front of the noses of large numbers of small fish that I thought were hungry, and they wouldn't even touch the darn things. I don't know why they have their stomachs full of them or how they take them when they do get their stomachs full of them, and why we should tie up a fly and call it the yellow caddis or the green caddis or something, and imagine that it's imitating a nymph caddis larva walking along the bottom and then get taken by a fish about two inches off the top of the water, I don't quite know. But we do do this [inaudible] thing, and there is no question that the caddis in all its many forms is a very important trout food and a very important young salmon food. I'd like to see some nice caddises in this collection. Again, you're going to have to wonder where you're going to cut it off. I believe there are several hundred separate species of sedges identified in Great Britain; I don't know how many of them must be on the North American continent. Be a little bit selective.

Now, I'm sure, whatever you do, that you'll have files of the club bulletin and the history of the all the fly club, past, present, and future. This will take some doing. Again, though, a fascinating concept: how many fly clubs there have been in North America I don't have any idea; how many there are today I don't know at all. But I would think that there should be some center of organization where this information could be available. The library of fly fishing films, and I suppose of fish films generally, will, I'm sure, become one of the biggest things that the foundation can achieve. I think it's of vast importance as a historical record. Of course it's invaluable; its interest to the future would be enormous. Many films, I would think, that have been made must be in danger of becoming lost. I think particularly of a little film made by Martin Bovey of Boston which shows both [E. R. Hewitt?] and [LeBrage?] in the same short fifteen-minute film. I'm quite sure this is the only film extant of those two men, and a copy of a film like this surely should be collected while it can be collected for the foundation library. There will be others, and undoubtedly there are others. You would want to cut it a little bit carefully there again; too much of the home movie stuff might overburden your shelves. And no doubt there will be some system for recording notable fly-caught fish. I think now of Kenny Anderson's twenty-six-and-a-half pounder taken from the [kespiochs?] on the Skykomish Sunrise last year. I believe at the same time he released three others that were considered to be over twenty pounds. And I think also of a twenty-four-and-a-half-pound fish taken in the Dean River by an unnamed lady on a red moth fly in 1965. Maybe we're coming into an era of twenty-pound steelhead taken on the fly – I certainly hope so – but I suspect the total to date could be counted on the fingers of two hands. At the same time, I beg you, don't burden your foundation with everybody's stuffed fish. [laughs] To me, there are few things more depressing than a stuffed fish. They usually aren't very well painted in the first place. I saw a magnificent brown trout in Colorado a couple of years ago, five and a half pounds I think, a fish in perfect condition and a magnificent color, immediately dispatched with great care to one of the leading taxidermists in the United States. Some six months later, I happened to be in the man's house when the finished piece came back. It had a green head and a red body, and all I could think of was a sockeye salmon. This is not very nice, but it does happen, and even if it doesn't happen in the first place, by the time those poor old things have hung around a while and got the dust on them and have the club servants brushing the scales up the wrong way and so on, they begin to look pretty moth-eaten. I would suggest that if you can find anybody who does the kind of work

Tommy does, you might record your outstanding fish that way rather than just stuffing them. If you're going to stuff 'em, eat 'em.

Now, I'd maybe go on listing things like that, but I don't think that's what I'm here for. It isn't really necessary. There are lots and lots of ideas [that] will come up. The whole thing is an exciting idea, and a useful idea, and it's one that will bear many interpretations and many extensions. The only word of caution that I'm trying to give you is that its interpretations and extensions should be allowed to grow naturally out of the sport itself and its greatest concomitance. Now if this suggests to anyone the immediate purchase of samples from all the well known distilleries, I would say no. Keep the sport to its barest essentials, at least until the morning rise is over. I wish you a happy foundation, a merry, cheerful, bright, and colorful foundation, one that can carry a few serious implications perhaps but needs none. For what we do is done for pleasure, the many and intense pleasures of the fly rod and the stream.

And if I may – I realize this is premature, and I don't know just whom I should inflict this on – but I would like to make a small presentation to your president for the foundation, which may be of some interest. I brought it through the customs this morning. The guy in the [inaudible] asked me about it. He said, "What's it worth?" "Well," I said, "I don't know. It has some historical value, I suppose." "Oh," he said, "we'll soon value it for you." So he disappeared for a while. "It's just some flies, isn't it?" And I said, "Yeah." "Well, you're not allowed to take in anything that's worth more than five dollars." I said, "Well, it wouldn't cost you five dollars to buy those if you bought them in [inaudible] store." "No," he said, "but they might have been tied by the most famous fly fisherman in the world, and they might be worth fifty dollars." Well, that's told you enough about it, and I would like to offer this as a starting gift for the foundation. [audience claps]

UNKNOWN SPEAKER: This is a collection of small flies. These specimens of Mr. Skews are expert examples of the fly tier's art. Despite the handicap of eyesight and injured hands, this work by a man in his eighties could not be better. The nymphs, designed for use on the River [Hitchin? and Herusquay?] are of historical interest and value and should be carefully preserved. These specimens were dressed in 1940. It's signed by W. H. Laurie. [Applause] I'll leave these on the front table so that you can see them afterwards. I'd like to confess that I've been a reader all my life. You can always spot a reader if you see him at lunch and he's forgotten to bring a Reader's Digest; he will be carefully perusing the fine print on the back of the ketchup bottle. I can't think of any author who has given me more pleasure than Roderick Haig-Brown. [applause] My first book was *The River Never Sleeps*, and I've read it at least five times. My second was *Fisherman's Spring*, and I've read it at least as often. And it's always a continuing and very pleasant surprise to me to find that he is an author who can speak as well as he writes. I'm sure I can speak for you all when I tell you, Rod, how much pleasure you have brought us tonight, and how delighted we are to have you as a life member.

That concludes the meeting; the meeting is adjourned. [Applause]

(WAHL: This is a copy of an original recording made at the meeting.)

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