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This interview was conducted with Rick Hafele on September 24, 2011 in WWU Libraries Special Collections, Bellingham, Washington. The interviewer is Tamara Belts.

TB: Today is Saturday, September 24, 2011, and my name is Tamara Belts. I'm here with Rick Hafele, who is an avid fly fisherman and he's also an alumni of Western. So, our first question is, how did you get started fly fishing?

RH: Hi, thanks. Well, that's a big question, isn't it? I got started very early, like when I was about 10 years old. I grew up in Illinois, left Illinois after I graduated from high school to come to Western, but while I was in Illinois I got started fly fishing. I had an uncle who lived in Missouri, and he did all kinds of fishing. My dad liked fishing but he had no experience fly fishing, so my uncle really got me started on a little spring creek in Missouri. Like I say, that was when I was about 10, and for whatever reason, it really took, and I just got kind of sold on the idea of fly fishing. I'd done, you know, fishing with a bobber and worms when I was a kid. My Grandpa would take me out for bluegill and bass. But once I got the taste of fly fishing, it really captured my interest. I grew up in a little farm town, so there was nobody around that knew anything about fly fishing. There were no fly shops. But I just went ahead and kind of dove into it as a kid. I ordered my first fly tying kit from Herter's (which was the only place to get fly tying materials then) and started tying my own flies when I was 11 or 12. Got a fly rod and just made all kinds of goofy mistakes and worked my way through it. But that's when I got started, and it was pretty neat. There really wasn't anybody that grew up around me that fly fished other than my uncle, and we'd go down to Missouri usually once a year on vacation, and he'd give me a few more pointers when I went back, so that was the beginning.

TB: Okay, I kind of [have] two questions because I don't know which one is which. I know that you decided to come to Western, but also you ended up majoring in entomology.

RH: Right.

TB: So was that an offshoot of your fly fishing or are the two things separate?

RH: Yes, I came to Western and majored in biology and had it in the back of my mind that I would do some sort of fisheries biology work. As I went through the program here, did a lot of great courses, and as a general biology degree, and I actually got a job, a summer job, here in Bellingham working for the Fisheries Department, and I got that my junior year. I did it between school breaks my junior year, and then after my senior year I worked for the Fisheries Department for another 4 or 5 months. That was interesting. It got me outdoors. I was counting—this is kind of interesting because one of my jobs for the Fisheries Department was counting gill net boats in Bellingham Bay during the summer gill net season, and this was before they had restrictions on how many commercial licenses. So during the season, I would go out at night. They gill net at night. You'd see the lights, and I'd count all the boats, and then I'd call in the next day to Olympia and tell them how many boats were out fishing. And there would be, this is no joke, 300 boats, gill net boats in Bellingham Bay, gill netting, and in Chuckanut Bay, I guess the two of them together. But there were just so many gill net boats. That was incredible. And then the other job was going around the hatcheries collecting scale samples and getting all the catch data from the commercial canneries, calling that in to Olympia, and then they'd adjust the weekly season.

So anyway, this gave me a definite taste of fisheries biology besides just the academic side of it. And I decided I would probably get bored with fishery biology over a career of thirty-some years. Jerry Kraft, who was the head of the biology department, at that time taught general entomology, which I took and loved it. Then when I was a senior, he offered aquatic entomology, and I was the only person who signed up for it. He went ahead and taught it, and we'd get together once a week. He'd give me reading assignments and reports and different things to do, but it was really great. Jerry Kraft was just a wonderful guy and a great instructor. So he really got my focus turned towards aquatic insects. But I was always interested in streams and fisheries, and that was, yes, partly from growing up fishing, and I don't know, there was just an intense interest in water, being around water. But when I took the aquatic entomology class from Dr. Kraft, it just really hit me—yes, that's what I want to do. He did his graduate work at Oregon State University, and so he was really familiar with their program, talked to me about their graduate program, aquatic entomology, and connected me with the aquatic entomology professor there, Norm Anderson. That got me really down the road in aquatic entomology.

TB: And so, I know that you ended up working at Oregon Fisheries or Oregon—

RH: Oregon Department of Environmental Quality, yes, DEQ.

TB: Okay.

RH: That was where I worked most of my career. I was with DEQ 22 years. I was very involved in the bio-monitoring program, or bio-assessment program, which was really pretty good timing on my part because when I was out of grad school, I got a job with a private consulting firm. We did a lot of stream survey work up in Alaska, which also involved aquatic insects. So I did some really cool trips up to Alaska looking at aquatic insects, as part of the private consulting firm work. But then I got a job at DEQ, and it was right at the time when EPA was really starting to push states to look more at aquatic life in streams rather than just chemistry. And so, there I am, you know, with the background in insects and water biology, so it just fit right into what I was interested in, and I got involved then in developing a lot of the bio-assessment protocol, bio-assessment studies, working with EPA in Oregon on that. And that's primarily what I did. I also managed the monitoring program for the state there for a few years before I retired. But mostly what I was working on was the whole bio-assessment thing, using aquatic insects and fish.

TB: So how did those two integrate?

RH: Yes, well with the fly fishing side of it, it was obviously aquatic insects and especially trout fishing. {They} go hand in hand because that's what fly fishermen are really interested in figuring out, what are the trout eating? Most of the time it's aquatic insects of some type or terrestrial insects for that matter. So when I was at Oregon State University as a grad student, they had a program called the Free U at that time, and it was a pretty neat program because they had the infrastructure set up to offer rooms, and they had a catalog of class—they would put in classes that were being offered. So they handled all the infrastructure and kind of organization, and anybody could offer a class, and anybody could take it, but it was all free. Instructors wouldn't get paid, and the students didn't have to pay anything. So there were all kinds of things being offered. So I started offering in my last year as a grad student through the Free U a class on aquatic insects for fly fishing, because I'd been fly fishing all the time I'd moved to the Northwest, here in Bellingham and in Oregon. I'd continued my interest in fly fishing when I was in college. And so I offered that class for the Free U what do you know people signed up and took it, and that sort of got me thinking about how would I start actually explaining to fly fishermen about aquatic insects, and then connecting my own experience fly fishing more with the entomology side of it.

Dave Hughes, who has been my long time fishing buddy,— I was a TA for aquatic entomology at the university when I was a grad student—e audited aquatic entomology, and that's how we met. We started fly fishing together, started going on fishing trips together, and the strong connection with that and his interest in bugs and everything, it just lead one thing to another, and we started teaching a class together. We started offering the class on our own for a small amount of money, and people would sign up. Then that led to our first book, *The Complete Book of Western Hatches* that Dave and I did together. So that was how my more formal role in the fly fishing world got started, through the Free U at Oregon State.

TB: Well what about—if you have a healthy aquatic environment for insects—does that mean you have a healthy stream and thus a good fishery, or is it not always the same because it can get overfished?

RH: Yes, when you look at it generally speaking, that's exactly right. If you've got a good insect population, a normal distribution of sensitive species, and we're talking trout streams, we're talking cold, high quality water, you're going to have a high diversity of aquatic insects in a healthy trout stream, and that means typically you've got conditions that can support a good trout population. Other factors may inhibit that, and overfishing certainly can be one, and other things like the introduction of non-native fish species that could be impacting native fish, or something like that. So there are a lot of factors that could be affecting the fish besides the water quality and conditions. And to some degree, fish are going to need somewhat different habitat than the insects, overwintering habitat for example. During high flows, they might need more pool habitat to protect them fast water. And same in the summer during really low water, they may have some more sensitive habitat issues going on that can affect the trout population. But in general, where you've got a good water quality and good insect population, you've got everything in place for a good trout population.

TB: And does logging impact the aquatic insects too?

RH: Yes, it can. Anything that's going to increase temperature and siltation are two main factors in forested areas that are going to impact water quality, the insects and the fish. It can directly affect fish because it will smother the eggs and you get a lot less survival from spawning. But it also affects the aquatic insects, especially a number of them that are very sensitive to siltation. Then temperature is another one that can really influence both trout and more sensitive aquatic insects. So if you removed the canopy, you'd open it to sunlight, in some systems, especially in Western Oregon and Western Washington that have generally low nutrients, in general, you open up the canopy, you get a lot more plant growth, a lot more periphyton and algal growth, which can actually increase the insect population. And that's been demonstrated in a lot of studies. So there's some things that happen that can actually increase productivity. But if it opens it up too much or too big of an area and you get temperature increases or siltation, and erosion is the big one from slides and destabilizing the hill slopes, that's the real risk generally from logging, is destabilizing the soils.

TB: Anything more about what attracts you about studying fish?

RH: Yes, so you know I really enjoy trout fishing, say compared to steelhead or salmon fishing. I don't do that very much. I just really enjoy trout fishing, and it's definitely because of the strong interaction between what trout are eating, aquatic insects, and the whole way you imitate the insects with fly fishing. Someone said to me a number of years ago, Darrell Martin actually, who lives in Tacoma and is an interesting fly fishing writer, "You know, it used to be, 300 years ago, art and science were kind of all connected because if you were an artist—the scientists tended to be artists, or the artists tended to be

the scientists. There really wasn't a big distinction." But obviously in our more compartmentalized world now, science and art are pretty separate. But fly fishing really is the perfect way to combine the art and science of what goes on in streams. And that's really what, I think, has captured my overall interest in it for so long, because I've been doing it since I was 10 and still enjoy it. But, it's that art with fly tying, the art with fishing, casting, rods, the whole artistic side of fly fishing, and then the science side of fly fishing is just as endless when you start studying the fish and insects, so it's really a unique combination.

TB: And then, I think you do, but do you have a favorite fly?

RH: Ha! I don't know if I have a favorite fly. I've got a few that I use a lot. I guess one might be—I do a lot of nymph fishing, and again it's kind of that interesting connection with when you know what's living on the stream bottom. There's a green rock worm pattern that I tie, called the *Crystal flash green rock worm*. That's definitely one of my favorite patterns. I use that a lot. I don't tie very complicated patterns or real super imitative patterns. I'd say over the years of studying aquatic insects and the more I learn about them and the more I have experienced fly fishing, I'd say I've pared my fly list down instead of increasing it because I realize how many insects I can imitate with a single type of pattern by just varying its size and color. And so a *Harrop dun* is a dry fly for mayflies that I really like, and then I use a standard elk hair caddis an awful lot, but you can adjust it by trimming the hackle off the bottom and fish it differently. Then the other patterns that I use quite a bit would be wet flies, soft hackles and that sort of thing that imitate pupae that are emerging or mayflies if they're emerging. So those would be the three or four main ones that I kind of go to. But it's interesting, you know, my fly boxes have gotten simpler over the last 30 or 40 years of fishing instead of more complex.

TB: And so you really don't like to do any saltwater fly fishing?

RH: Oh, I haven't had much opportunity. I fished a little bit in the Sea of Cortez, saltwater, and I really think it's fascinating and the fish are incredibly interesting fish, but I really haven't had the opportunity to do too much, and that's something I would like to do more, but probably in the warm water kind of saltwater, not so much the Pacific Northwest saltwater. I'm drawn to where you can fish maybe for roosterfish and permit and bonefish and that sort of thing.

TB: Do you have any thoughts about the evolution of equipment that you've kind of used?

RH: Oh, yes. Yes, well when I started it was all fiberglass. And fiberglass was pretty—well, it was the only thing available other than bamboo, but you had to have quite a bit of money to buy bamboo; so when I was a kid, I was definitely getting a cheap fiberglass rod, and then I got better fiberglass rods. The fiberglass rod that I still have and use a lot I bought at Patrick's Fly Shop in Seattle.

TB: Yay!

RH: That was when I was a student here in Bellingham. I had saved up and I was like, Okay, I'm going to buy this Phillipson epoxite fiberglass rod, and I got it at Patrick's. Then, I also purchased a couple of bamboo rods, and I still have a number of them. I've never been a collector of rods, but I have a couple that I fish with. And then, graphite of course is the, you know—it's hard to get any better material than graphite, mix it with boron, and there's some fine tuning that goes on, but really graphite rods still seem to be kind of the peak of evolution in fly rods. People I'd say that learn fly fishing now, all the graphite rods on the market are much, much faster action rods. Even if you look for the slowest action graphite rod out there, it's a much, much faster rod action than fiberglass was, and certainly much faster than bamboo. So people are learning on rods that are much faster action than what folks in my generation learned on. And that's not bad or good; it's actually easier to cast the faster action rod because it's a little more forgiving if your timing isn't quite right. But it's really interesting. I still much prefer the slowest action types of graphite rods, and I'm sure it goes back to my learning on slower action rods to begin with.

TB: And any other thoughts about the reels or the lines?

RH: Yes, I mean they've just gotten better, better and better. The first reel I had was an automatic reel that was a horrible reel, but then a Pflueger. For most trout fishing, the reel isn't going to be too much of a problem even if you get an inexpensive reel. The drags on the reels now really work. The drags on reels in my day didn't really do much but make a little noise, so you learned to control line tension with your fingers because the reels didn't really have any effective drag. I find that's still what I tend to do, again, because it's kind of ingrained in my psyche. But now the reels have great drags on them and you don't even need to touch the line when you catch a fish. The reel will take care of it. So, I think in some regards, it's much easier now because just like outdoor ware, you know, you go up in the mountains you've got great poly fleece and Polartec fleece and great Gore-Tex coats and everything, so it's much simpler than it used to be. It's the same with fly fishing. The lines float better, are designed better, they're going to cast a lot better. The finishes on them are much slicker so you can shoot line a lot easier. So yes, all the new equipment works definitely better than it used to. And leaders is another area where a lot of changes have taken place, with fluorocarbon the big one probably, but just the designs of leader and types of soft and stiff. You know, when I was first starting, I just bought Stren leader, and used that, you know, there wasn't many options out there. And getting it fit properly, that's the other thing that there's much more information, and people in fly shops now will really get somebody starting set up with an outfit that's all balanced. And with fly fishing, that's the key, besides just practice and learning how to do it. But if you've got an outfit that's balanced so the rod and the line, the leader, is set up correctly, you're going to be worlds ahead when you start to actually learn how to cast.

TB: And do you have any thoughts about the popularity of fly fishing these days and the etiquette on the streams?

RH: That's kind of a hotly debated topic in the industry because the concern is that the demographics of the baby boomers and such has peaked in terms of age and the amount of outdoor activity they're doing, and so the amount of time they're spending fishing is going down, and there isn't the influx of younger folks fly fishing to make up for some of the older folks not doing it. So in the industry, there's real concern that the population of fly fishers is declining. I don't have any studies I can quote with statistics, so I don't know for sure if that's true, but it does seem like there's probably something to it. I do a lot of talks at fly club meetings, and maybe the younger generation isn't joining fly clubs. But at a fly club meeting, whether you're in California or Michigan or Oregon or Washington, there's hardly anybody under 50 at a fly club meeting, certainly under 40, very few. I'd say 5% of the people are under 40 when you go to a fly club meeting. So just from that, the demographics sort of looks that way. But it could be that the younger folks aren't really focused on joining clubs.

I just had a conversation with some folks this past week when I was out fishing about the difference in some of the magazines that are coming out geared to more of the younger fly fishing crowd, a lot more kind of online magazines that are happening that the younger generation is more likely to get into. There is a different kind of aesthetic that seems to be present, and I think it's just, again, an age thing perhaps, or the focus tends to be more on the extreme side of fly fishing, you know, going to Panama catching a hundred Peacock bass or the trip to some remote lake where you have to rappel to get into it. You know, there's always some kind of edge to it that's often in the articles that are written for the younger folks. And they're shorter. If it's over a thousand words, that would be rare in a lot of the magazines and articles targeted for younger fishermen. So there is some kind of interesting distinctions occurring. But in terms of the actual numbers of younger folks coming into this sport, I don't think it's huge. When the movie *A River Runs Through It* came out, that really had a mega impact on the fly fishing industry. A lot of people got into it from that movie, and a lot of those people didn't stick with it for 20 years, but they stuck with it for 5-10 years, and book sales went up, magazine sales went up, retail stores opened up, fly fishing stores opened up. Partly the economy right now is affecting fly shops, but fly shops are closing, but I also think it's partly the number of fly fishermen isn't as great.

TB: Interesting. How did you get started writing? I know you had a long column for the *American Angler* and the western—you also published something called the *Western Hatch Quarterly*. Could you talk about some of those things?

RH: Well, I really got started writing with my connection with Dave when we met at Oregon State. He'd always wanted to be an outdoor writer, a fishing writer, and so he really got me kind of thinking about that option as well. Then when we did the book, *The Complete Book of Western Hatches*, that

opened up the door to do magazine articles. We'd been doing talks together and individually too. So we were getting some recognition from that, and that opened the door to do more magazine articles. And I started writing for *American Angler*, yes I wrote that column for 30 years.

TB: Thirty, wow.

RH: Yes, so I started in like 1981,—yes, it was right about then, 1980 or 1981, and then I quit about 3 years ago, so maybe that's a little over 30 years. But, it wasn't *American Angler* at the beginning. It was *Fly Tyer*? Yeah, *Fly Tyer*, was the original magazine, and then I worked for the magazine over the course of about four different owners and about eight different editors. Anyway, so I wrote that, it was called "Beginning Entomology," originally, and then it was just called "Entomology" for most of the time.

I wrote other articles for other magazines periodically, but mostly that, and then other books. I did *Western Hatch Quarterly*. That was kind of something I got into when I originally worked for the private consulting firm. They went out of business during the recession in the early 1980s, and there was a three-year gap where I did consulting work, and I picked up writing this *Western Hatch Quarterly* as an idea, another way to bring in some revenue. And it was fun—I learned a ton about writing and publishing. It was just a newsletter that was mailed out to folks.

That's kind of gone full circle because now Dave Hughes, myself and Skip Morris are doing an online magazine that we just started called *HookedNow*, we just started that in January. And so we're kind of trying to utilize the advantages of the Internet and put together a little online magazine that comes out every other month.

But then, other books followed, *The Complete Book of Western Hatches*. I did an *anglers' guide to aquatic insects*, and then I've done a couple of more field guides for more of the layperson, like watershed councils, folks that are doing bug sampling for water quality, so I did a field guide with Steve Hinton (who now lives in Bellingham) for them to help them identify aquatic insects. And then, *Nymph-Fishing Rivers & Streams* is the most recent book I did, in 2006, and then a bunch of DVDs.

The first one came out in '83, *Anatomy of a Trout Stream*, and that's still being sold. That was done by 3M Scientific Anglers. Then in the last seven-eight years, I've done—actually, the most recent one just came out this past week, and that one's called the *Advanced Tactics for Emergers & Dries*. So about seven-eight years ago, myself and three other compatriots started a company called Laughing River Productions, and we've done a series of DVDs, and done a total of seven instructional DVDs.

TB: So maybe you've answered all of this. How did you get started presenting, teaching others? Well, you did talk about that definitely—

RH: Yes, the Free U. It definitely was with the Free U.

TB: And how's that rewarding to you or satisfying?



RH: Well, it is. For one thing, I guess I've always felt comfortable talking in front of a group, and I like teaching. I've continued to do some teaching at Portland State University, Aquatic Entomology class at Portland State. It's offered every other year to grad students there. But most the time I've been instructing classes and workshops and club meetings and stuff for fly fishing, and I've just always enjoyed that side of it. I guess the really rewarding side of it is you have people come up periodically, like this guy said, "Oh, my son was at one of your talks, and it's turned his interest around

completely. He didn't know what he wanted to do, and now he's like totally into looking at rivers and streams and looking at aquatic insects and fishing. He, you know, really loves it." So you hear stories like that. And then, people will just come back and say, "Wow, that fly you told me to use has really worked. I was fishing and I caught tons of fish on it." So, you hear kind of the success side of some of the people you've talked to, so that always feels good. You never know what goes on when you finish giving a talk, but occasionally you hear back, so that's great.

The other thing teaching does, whether it's teaching a university class or teaching fly fishermen, is it forces you to understand it better. If you're going to explain it to somebody else, you really sit down and think it through because you want to do a good job teaching it, so you really think it through much more carefully. So I would say writing and teaching both are extremely useful tools in just learning a subject better, and so I just think it just keeps your own interest and curiosity a little more heightened by teaching.

TB: Okay. You did mention that you're doing like this online journal, but what do you think about things like YouTube? I know that they have some of your flies--you tied some of your flies and stuff, so any other thoughts about all the current technology that's out there?

RH: Well, I think it's fascinating. There's so much information that you can get on YouTube and the Internet now, and as a creator of material, it's kind of a double-edged sword because there's a tremendous amount of interesting information out there, but if you're a creator and trying to get some pay for it, it's harder now. It's actually harder because there's so much of it that's free. So I think for people starting out now, it's a real challenge to find a way to get paid for it. If you can't get paid for it, well, you can do it out of love, but that only lasts so long if you're going to make a career of it. So, it's got a double-edged sword to it. I think it's really neat; the technology now to produce information is fantastic. I mean, I just get off on it myself, being able to go out and do some cool video production with just a little camera, go to iMovie, turn it into a movie, put it on YouTube, and you know, 2 days later it's

up available for people to watch it. It's pretty incredible. So from that standpoint, I think it's really amazing.

And like anything on the Internet, you have to watch it carefully and kind of sort out the good information from the bad, and kind of keep an open mind because some of the stuff out there may not be too accurate. But for the most part, I think people are doing a pretty good job. So, I'm using it more. We're trying to use it more and take advantage of it to reach more people. It's a worldwide market.

I mean, that's the other thing that's really cool. You put something out there, and you can get people in Switzerland and France and Germany and Oregon and Washington, all connecting to it, so that's very cool. And there's a lot of great talent out there—I just got an email, as an example—I just got an email two weeks ago from this guy in Austria who's taking aquatic insect pictures. He's not a fisherman, but he sent it to me because of my background and asked me what I thought of his photos, and they're incredible. They're just awesome, amazing photos. And now he's got a little gallery up on his website of these, and they're European insects, but the photos are beautiful. So you can connect with these people instantly now that before you couldn't, so it's really, really amazing that way, very amazing. Share ideas on fly patterns with anybody around the world if you want. The speed of which people can get information to other people and can actually make a contribution is like it's never been. But getting paid for it is the challenge.

TB: You did talk about Dave Hughes. Did you talk about John Smer—

RH: Smeraglio?

TB: Yes. You mentioned Skip Morris, and then Mark Bachmann. You did a Deschutes River trout fly fishing—

RH: Fly fishing school, yes.

TB: Do you do that a lot?

RH: We started doing it a couple years ago, and we're doing it once a year now.

I've been doing various types of workshops that are on-stream workshops as well as just more shorter indoor workshops. But Mark runs the fly shop in Welches, Oregon, great fly shop, and he does a lot of steelhead clinics. He's a real hardcore steelhead fisherman, but obviously they do trout fishing too. So, he just decided we could put together a three-day school on the Deschutes. He sets up a camp. He's got a generator, so I do slide shows in a tent, with the generator going right on the bank of the Deschutes. We go in on a jet boat to some nice remote area on the river. It's great trout fishing. It's great insects. It's a really cool situation to do a three-day class on the river.

I've been doing fly fishing classes on the Deschutes with John Smeraglio, who runs the Deschutes Canyon Fly Shop in Maupin for 25 years now. We do those two or three times a year, and they're out of Maupin. We run them through his fly shop in Maupin.

And then Skip Morris is just another long-term fishing friend who's also written numerous fly fishing books, mostly on fly tying. He's best known for his kind of innovative fly tying and patterns, but he and I have been friends for a long time. He's also a writer. So Dave, Skip and I thought, what the heck, let's try this online magazine thing and see what happens.

TB: Very cool. Now, I don't want you to be shy or whatever because I don't know all of your awards. I know you have a life membership in a Federation of Fly Fishers, which I think is an honorary thing too, right?

RH: Yes.

TB: So could tell about why you got that and other awards that you've gotten related to your fly fishing?

RH: Well, the two main ones are the life membership in the Federation of Fly Fishermen, and then also a life membership in the Fly Fishers' Club of Oregon, which is the oldest fly fishing club in Oregon. And both are basically for contributions to fly fishing through writing and lecturing. **TB:** Okay. Any other thoughts about any of the other organizations that you belong to, the North American Benthological Society, Oregon Trout--?

RH: Yes, NABS, Oregon Trout, which is now Freshwater Trust. They've changed names, but I'm still a member. Native Fish Society, I'm a member. Xerces Society, I'm a member. Well between my wife and I, then we also belong to the Western Rivers Conservancy and the Sierra Club and I think a couple others, I can't remember. But these are the main ones that are focused on trout and streams and insects.

Xerces Society is great, out of Portland is where they're headed up, and they were started for conservation purposes of butterflies. And it's grown into quite an organization on the conservation of invertebrates. They have a focus on aquatic insects as well. So they have a specialist working there who just focuses on aquatic systems and the protection of the invertebrates in aquatic systems. So there has been a strong link when I worked at DEQ between the Xerces Society and what we were doing at DEQ in water quality related stuff. They've done a lot of great work—they'd get grants, either state or federal grants, to help train people in doing in-stream sampling of aquatic inverts to get volunteers out there looking and that sort of thing. So they've been a great organization, and just a lot of neat people interested in bugs. Yes, so those are the main ones.

And then NABS is probably the main scientific professional organization that focuses a lot of their stuff on aquatic insects. So if you're into the science side of it, their journal, peer-reviewed journal, is the one that's really good to read, a lot of stuff related to water quality and insects and, oh, all kinds of things on aquatic invertebrates.

TB: Okay, and what are some of the things, if we haven't missed anything, that you're most proud of, in regards to your fly fishing?

RH: I think just trying to provide a good link between the science and the layperson that's not a scientist. They don't want to be biologists, but they've got a lot of curiosity of what's going on out there. So if anything, I'd be most proud of the fact of helping translate and communicate to folks who aren't scientists or biologists information about streams that gets them curious about rivers and gets them realizing they're really special, and that there's a lot of things out there that need support and protection, and it's not just, go out and catch a fish on a *Royal wulff*, which you can do. There's a lot more to it that's going on out there, and if you have some awareness of it, you're going to appreciate the fishing more, you're going to understand a lot more about how complex and interesting a stream is. So I see that as kind of one of the roles I've been able to connect with, given my science background and my fly fishing background, and I hope if anything that's kind of come through over the years.

TB: Okay, and what are the things that are important about fly fishing that I haven't asked you about?

RH: Well, I guess I would say just kind of what I'm talking about right now, that fly fishing is unique in combining the art and science of the topic, and there's very few arenas I think today, because of specialization, where you get to do that, and fly fishing very clearly does that. The other thing it does is it gets you out in places that are incredibly beautiful places and gets you more aware of environmental risks, concerns.

Fly fishing clubs and fly fishermen have always been one of the main protectors of streams and raise money to protect streams and help on a lot of conservation issues. So I think that's the other really important side of fly fishing, is that it's a sport, but it connects you in a very deep way with nature. Fly fishermen like to hang out and tell stories, but when they go fishing, they tend to walk in separate directions, and then they come back at the end of the day and talk about their experiences, so it tends to be something you do in solitude. So I think it provides a really deep connection with nature as well.

One other person I want to mention because he's had an interesting influence on my fly fishing, and he lived here in Bellingham, and he was a custodian at Western, and that's Dick Van Demark. He was the guy that started the Fourth Corner Fly Fishers, or was one of the people that started the Fourth Corner Fly Fishers. Dick and I were great fishing buddies before he passed away eight or nine years ago. When I'm talking about the deep connection with nature that was Dick. He was just all about being aware and

connecting with nature, and fly fishing was his way of getting that. But he was a great fly fisherman and great friend, and he lived here in Bellingham, so it's worth mentioning.

TB: Now how did you meet him?

RH: I was giving a talk to the Fourth Corner Fly Fishers, a slide show to their club, and he came up and started talking to me, and we kind of had a connection there, and then he invited me on a fishing trip to Interior Lakes in BC. We went on one trip, and then we started going every year. And I just came back from fishing the upper Skagit River out of Hope, BC, with a fellow named Paul Beck. Paul Beck I met through Dick 25 years ago, and Paul Beck and I are still good fishing buddies. Yes, Dick's had a big influence on me in fly fishing.

TB: Oh, excellent. Otherwise, if you don't mind, I'd ask you some questions about Western. First of all, how did you, from Illinois, decide to come out and go to Western?

RH: That's a good one. Well, not what you might think, in terms of serious research and like comparing this and that and the other thing. So I'm growing up in a little farm town in central Illinois, flat, corn everywhere, interested in fish, interested in trout, not too much around there. So I know I want to go somewhere and I need to go somewhere outside of Illinois to sort of see what's out there and experience other types of streams and interests that way. So I actually applied only to two schools. I applied to University of Maine in Orono, Maine, and Western Washington in Bellingham. And the reason I picked Western Washington—there was a fellow that was a year older than me, he graduated from the same high school I did, and he was going to Western, and he heard I was thinking about going to some school in Washington state, and he said, "Oh, Western is a great school, and you'll love it. It's a beautiful place. It's a lot of fun, and it's a small school. Which, you know, I wasn't looking for a huge school because I went to high school with 300 people, so I thought I'd be kind of lost in a big university. So, I got accepted to both, but the weather sounded more to my liking out here on the west coast, and I went. And at the time, the out-of-state tuition at Western when I started was \$180 a quarter, for out-of-state tuition, and that was about the same as it cost in-state tuition in Illinois at that time. So when it came to looking at the cost, Western was quite doable too.

TB: And so did you know when you came to Western that you were going to major in biology?

RH: I did.

TB: You kind of knew that--

RH: I knew that because I grew up dissecting frogs when I was a kid. I dissected all kinds of things that I'd find, and I was collecting bugs. I was into animals, and I'd bring—I mean, one of the memories when I was like 11 or 12 is dissected a frog and I had its heart beating and I brought it in to show my mom, you

know, *Look, the heart's still beating*, and I was really into it. So I knew biology was kind of what I wanted to get into.

TB: Oh, excellent, excellent. So could you talk about where did you live when you were first came to Western?

RH: Yes, I lived—what's the dorms up--?

TB: Ridgeway?

RH: Ridgeway.

TB: Okay—

RH: Yes, lived in Ridgeway, and then I lived in the new, when they were the first year they were open on the other—

RB: Buchanan Towers?

RH: Yes, yes, rented a place there, and then—so I got married my junior year, and my wife and I met a doctor that lived out on Chuckanut Drive, and they had a little cabin that they provided to college students free if they would be caretakers for their property. Because they had some horses and goats, and he would travel, and so they wanted somebody to clean the house and watch their animals when they were traveling. They had a little cabin out on Chuckanut Drive, and we lived there for two years. And that was outstanding. We could ride our bikes into campus or drive or whatever, but it was close enough that it was easy to get in to school, and definitely the price was right. So that's kind of where I was living here on campus, and it was great.

When I was here—so I started in 1969, left in 1974, and it was at the height of a lot of the protests, and it was also when Fairhaven and some of the other parts of campus were almost kind of on edge because you know there was still that uncertainty over how far the hippie movement was going, and how far out were they- it was interesting. But Fairhaven was quite a focus on alternative classes, alternative thinking, but the anti-war thing was pervasive across the campus, and I participated in quite a few marches, a number of marches.

TB: You did participate in some?

RH: Yes.

TB: Did you participate in blocking I-5?

RH: I didn't do that, but I did marches through town. We came from campus and went downtown. I did a couple of those, but I didn't do the one on I-5. But it was a great time, I mean, it really was—I just loved Bellingham.

TB: And then were there other—I know you liked Jerry Kraft. Did you have some other favorite professors?

RH: Dr. Lighthart, taught oceanography, and I don't know what his situation is now, obviously he'd be retired, but he was a really good instructor. An extremely challenging course in oceanography, and we would do a field course—part of it involved a thesis, if you will, kind of a term thesis, but you had to do field biology to do it. We'd go out to one of the islands off the bay here and spend three or four days sampling, doing intertidal sampling, a lot of different type of intertidal organisms, whatever your topic was, but related to oceanography.

But Dr. Lighthart was great. He had a unique way of testing people, which I've tried to incorporate a little bit, but what he did, he would give an oral exam to two students personally, and they had to pass—he'd give them individually to each student, and they had to pass, and then when they passed, they had to give an oral exam to two other students. It was kind of like a chain letter through the class, and his classes were generally small, like 18-20 people. So it wasn't too hard to do that. But what it forced the student to do is first take it from him, and then they had to study to give the test, and then you'd have to give the test questions to Dr. Lighthart to tell him what you were testing the other students on, and then you had to write a report telling whether that student passed or not and why you thought they passed or why they didn't pass. And then those students would give it to two others, and then the last group of students who didn't have anybody else to give a test to would kind of meet with Dr. Lighthart and explain what the test was about, and then they would be the first in line to start with the next exam.

And it really—forced you to focus—you were scared to death when you started giving the test to other students that you wouldn't give them a fair test. Then you had to write a report back to the professor explaining why they passed or not, and so everybody was studying two or three times for one test. It was really a great concept.

TB: Oh, very cool.

RH: Yes.

TB: Anything else about Western that you'd like to talk about or mention?

RH: Football team wasn't very good when I was here.

TB: You know we don't have one anymore.

RH: No, I didn't know. I didn't know that.

TB: January 2009; gone.

RH: Oh, okay. Well...that's funny. Oh, the other thing... So, I played drums, and I started playing drums when I was around 10 years old too, and I still play drums in Portland in a couple of blues groups. But the one thing I regret when I was at Western, because they have a great music department, is I never got hooked up with the marching band or anything, because I did that in high school. And looking back on it, I go, *Man, I should have done that*, but, you know, there's only so much time.

TB: Right, right. I think my last question is just, do you have other interests? It came out with Dave Hughes that at one point you were in Europe biking with your wife.

RH: Yes.

TB: And so I guess I was just wondering if that's a big passion. I mean, we think of you as a fly fishing guy. Are there other big passions that--?

RH: Well, the drums. The music is the huge one.

TB: Music, okay.

RH: Yes, like I said, I started playing drums when I was 10. I started playing in a group that played out in front of people live when I was 14, so I've got a long history with it.-- We had a group when I was in high school, and of course rock-n-roll was huge. We'd play at high school dances and stuff, so I have a long history of playing drums in music groups. And I'm playing in two blues groups in Portland now. We play in gigs around town.

TB: Oh, very cool, very cool.

RH: So drums and music is the big passion. I've done a lot bicycling, my wife and I, in '76 or '77--'77, I guess, did a three-month bicycle trip through Europe. I don't do long tours now, but still enjoy riding bikes, commute to work on bikes and stuff. We have sea kayaks now, so I always think about coming back to Bellingham, Gulf Islands, or the bay islands here and San Juan Islands, and doing more sea kayaking because the wife and I like to sea kayak. So outdoor stuff, but fishing in terms of outdoor activities is probably still what drives where I go, when I go. It still tends to be around the fishing side of it, but yes, I like getting out and doing other things too, but besides fishing, definitely the drums, music.

TB: Okay. Is there anything else I haven't asked you that you'd like to mention or we should--?

RH: I can't think of it. You know, it's just neat being back on campus because it brings back so many memories.- I'm glad it worked out to do the interview here because it brings back a lot of memories from being here at Western. It was a great school. It really was. I didn't give it a lot of forethought when I decided to come to Western in terms of researching all the different things about the school, but yes, it was a great choice.

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

RH: Yes, Tamara, thanks for inviting me.

TB: Okay.

End of Recording

