

amato-frank-2016-04-05.mp4

[00:00:13] I don't actually have one individual story. An awful lot of my fishing is done alone but I write so many stories.

[00:00:22] I don't know actually. Where do you even start. But what I will say is that. The one story that is. Totally all encompassing to me is fly fishing for steelhead. For me that kind of borders on being a religion and I love the environment that puts you into the streams the woods the weather the camping come the robbery. After that I just love trout fishing as far as his child fishing story is concerned. I started fly fishing on Fish Creek a small tributary of the Clackamas River back when I graduated from college the night that everybody graduated from college or that weekend. A lot of people went to parties. I took my camping equipment by myself went up to Fish Creek spent the next three days teaching myself how to fly fish for trout. So that was kind of the beginning of my fly fishing life.

[00:01:34] Well it's really strange but there's a river in Oregon called the Deschutes and it's about 250 miles long drains that you side of the Cascades. The river is probably the greatest trout fishing river in the world mainly based on the fact that it not only has the resident rainbow trout but it also has a run of five to 30000 seal that each year. And considering the Steelhead are essential and dangerous rainbows that puts the Deschutes in kind of an untouchable class when it comes to fly fishing for trial and or steal it. The dispute is two mile 2 hours from my home so I've always considered it to be my home water and I just love it as to pretty much all the people in the state of Oregon. I think the greatest impact it was I was in the second grade in a parochial school in Portland and my cousin Charles and I we had just gotten out of school and we came back to my house and my father said.

[00:02:45] Sam said Frank and Charles come and look at the fish I caught and he showed us it two and a half foot long steel that for the first time I'd ever seen a steelhead. I'd seen trout before but looking at that large fish they gave me the desire to catch fish and that was the inspiration that about 10 years later led to the capture of my first Steelhead.

[00:03:10] And since that time I've been thoroughly in love with Steelhead and I've chased them and got them in southern Chile in places that nobody probably has hardly ever fished or still and didn't even know that they existed all the way to British Columbia and the Catholic Island have cut steelhead probably in many different places is anybody on this earth but Steelhead. To me it is. It all started from the second grade in that first steelhead I saw that my father had caught.

[00:03:49] Well I.

[00:03:51] I had the opportunity to teach when I worked for Norm Thompson outfitters back in the 70s to teach a women's fly fishing class. And these were women that were really well educated they kind of knew their way around. They ranged in age from probably about 16 to 45 to 60. And I would ask each one of them know about 20 why they wanted to learn how to fly fish. And some of them said Well I'd like to impress my husband. Others said Well I'd like to make my father happy. And there were a couple that said well I just kind of liked the idea of it. Well they were very easy to teach and very willing learners. They casted really well. I never got the opportunity to actually take them fishing. But the interesting thing about getting people other than white and middle aged males fly fishing is

that it seems to be kind of a difficult thing to do. Young kids from the ages of maybe 12 to 20 are quite interested in the sport.

[00:05:04] Right. I guess at the time from 20 to 40 when young men and women for that matter to start thinking of partnerships and pairing up and children and employment and they don't really have the opportunity and the time pursue at the time probably to pursue the art of fly fishing.

[00:05:33] Well you know I published a fly fishing magazine since 1978 and so I've been able to see through our mailing list who the people are that subscribe. And also through inquiries that we've done their studies their ACS and also their interests. And by far. Trout are the fish that appeal to people who fly fish and trout generally are found away from cities. They NSF necessitate a certain amount of traveling. And it in traveling is expensive when you consider overnight as opposed to like Penn fish and carp and bass and even salmon for that matter. These are fish that are generally found in larger rivers or in bonds and can be found by in more highly populated areas. But the romance of the trout and the fly and the insects and in a trout rising to that insect is kind of rare to see other fish species leave the water to jump where an insect in fact one is when the Romans came into France and they are into Gaul at that time they noticed that there was a fish that was always jumping at Falls. And so they called it sailor or the Leeper and the trout itself exhibits that same desire to jump. And it's kind of a beautiful art form. And people are willing to probably put out more of themselves and more of their resources in order to chase this kind of a federal fish and it becomes kind of religion to itself from the form of the flight tying and from the casting itself. And from reading the water and the camaraderie among friends and the sense of adventure it's a sport that demands a lot of resources.

[00:07:40] Yeah I guess. Yeah. Oh that's that's great that's great that you've done a service that's. Wonderful stuff so. Oh yeah. Oh our subscribers Sure. Yeah.

[00:07:50] I would say probably maybe two percent are women and it's amazing in winter steelhead fishing. You know I virtually never ever see you know a female there and one summer steelhead on the shoots you know occasionally you do in trout fly fishing.

[00:08:07] They love to fly fish or trout women. I've taught quite a few women how to catch steelhead on the fly in fact I had a triple header with two other women on the Deschutes we had three steelhead on on a fly at the same time.

[00:08:20] What happened. Yeah it was a shock and they still landed their fish and I landed mine and we released them but it was a triple header. But anyway. That's great. Housing grow.

[00:08:37] My cousin was a fourth runner up in Mr. America. Chuck Amato I met him earlier. We grew up as kids and I tried to teach him how to cast a fly. And one of the high school football fields and he could not get the casting stroke. Whereas a woman picks up the ride and they catch onto it really quickly.

[00:09:07] The first thing is that in the case of Oregon and Washington and particularly coming in talking about someone is particularly Steelhead and salmon seal and salmon are both you might say almost kind of a commercial fish particularly the salmon. And if you look at studies in the Northwest that have been done scientific studies going way back to the 20s. Most of the money went into salmon research and so initially we found out most about salmon simply because it was an economically viable resource. Anything that we

knew about steelhead up until maybe 30 years ago was incidental information that we got while studying actually salmon. Now the schools are better funded and and because of endangered species there's a lot of money going into protecting Steelhead and salmon. But the one overall factor that's most important in all of this is keeping a large fishing population population of people who want to fish and who want to catch fish and are therefore interested in supplying the political muscle to keep the pressure on to keep the dollars flowing for studies. And that's really important on the Columbia it's important in Northern California so far not on the entire Pacific Coast. Some do we have all kinds of sport organizations. We have organizations that are almost purist and and they wouldn't care if there was never another hatchery steelhead and that if the only thing we had left were wild fish and in some cases that's somewhat practical on trout streams but on Steelhead streams some streams in this practical other streams. It isn't the most important thing again getting back to the fact that we absolutely need to have large numbers of people supporting for political reasons salmon and steel them. And in the case of the Columbia River a perfect example is that right now the Columbia has a total adult population of about 2 million fish per year salmon and steel at some years is more than 3 million. You get to that number by including the number of Steelhead and salmon that are caught in the Pacific Ocean as well as the numbers that are caught in the Columbia its tributaries as well as in numbers that naturally spawn and also the ones that spawn artificially. So two to three million salmon a year of those two to three million salmon per year about 80 to 90 percent of them are the result of hatcheries. If it wasn't for the hatcheries we would have virtually no system in effect if it wasn't for the. Or we would have very few salmon and steel that it wasn't for the commercial fishing industry which lobbied to have a a a a fish ladder at Bonneville Dam anatomist fish in the chute or in the Columbia River would be extinct about want to go down. It was originally designed in 1930s without a fish ladder thankfully because of the commercial fishermen in Astoria and Portland. They did that because there were no sport fishermen to be to speak of at that time there would be no salmon steelhead left above the bottom of a Bonneville now. But getting back to the organization's.

[00:12:40] Charter limited federation of five fishermen local outfits like the Washington that the Washington has in Oregon have they've done fantastic jobs but now some of those organizations are attempting to sue entities on the Columbia River and to attempt to get rid of hatcheries. And I think that this is a terrible terrible mistake and as do most people in the northwest. And the best thing that the average angler can do is to know his politician and to know his government and to write letters emails and to lobby for good practices.

[00:13:31] Fish and Game seems to be in Oregon Washington and in California. The departments seem to miss to certain extent suffering from a lack of license and money is because fishing populations are kind of slowly diminishing. If there is license some moneys. The amount of study and research is going to be diminished and resource itself is going to fail. The logging in such things as industrial pollution. I think that again the average angler has got to be involved in police supporting those organizations which support some kind of environmental purity. Well number one without a doubt would the Robert King Brown and I started reading his books when I was in high school and he made you feel like you were fishing the stream with him and he just was a absolutely wonderful writer and he was inspiration to my starting a fishing magazine. That and the fact that I loved Prince and I loved.

[00:14:51] Magazines and and books but after Hager Brown there were really many wonderful writers and I published probably about at least probably 100 to 200 writers and maybe about 300 books and I've published the manuscripts that people have sent me that

I've enjoyed reading myself. I never published something that I didn't like and even I thought at times that. A book wouldn't sell out well. I so decided to publish it because I felt I liked it. And there were maybe enough people around who liked it well enough so they might break even that was possible to do up until about 2007. But then everything changed in print started going downhill and digital printing and free information on the web it kind of supplanted publishing as I knew it. Book publishing. So consequently I'm now in my personal reading am starved. As far as seeing outside manuscripts to publish because it's all changed. So anyway. But when I was him in high school I worked in in part time in a grocery store about 20 30 hours a week. And when it was my break time or lunchtime the the owner or manager would allow us to take magazines off the newsstand rack to read so I would read Field Stream sports field outdoor life in Western outdoors.

[00:16:34] Sosa with only four magazines on the newsstands in the 60s. And I thought to myself that if I ever got the chance I'd like to start a magazine about Northwest fishing. And so a few years went by I got out of college.

[00:16:49] The end of the first year that I taught high school I put together a few thousand dollars and I asked a few writers like Robert Kagan Brown Eunice Radner and some other Northwestern writers who were well-known. They were all newspaper journalists essentially. I asked him if they would contribute articles. They said yes.

[00:17:07] And that was the birth of salmon Chelsea at her magazine in 1967 and it took a couple of years but then after a couple of years by 1970 I was able to start working out at a normal school time.

[00:17:21] That's great. And you're telling me early on your students did artwork for it for their region.

[00:17:27] There was a student by name of Kevin Bernard who was early and good artist and you kind of liked the fish too so I asked him if he would consider doing a couple of drawings for the covers of the very first magazine and he did and was wonderful. I think he was either junior or senior at the time but I did a good job.

[00:17:50] That was one of the students he taught. Yeah he taught high school prior to their life. OK great.

[00:18:00] The thing that I absolutely love the most about both being an editor of salmon Charles Steele here and now the publisher of the magazine and then particularly being the editor of the books was receiving a manuscript or receiving a manuscript and being on the log. You never knew what to expect in the immediate feeling voice to see the pictures see the photographs and slides whatever they might be and if they were inspiring. That was great. And then to somebody reading the manuscript and all of a sudden find out that the writing was as good as the photographs or maybe better than the photographs that was just wonderful.

[00:18:43] And I remember a fellow from Charlton limited who was the editor of Travel limited magazine telling me back in the 70s that every fisherman had at least one really good article income and that the key was to get that article out of film and that was kind of true too.

[00:19:03] So I've seen so many people that we publish one or two articles and put those were great articles experience type articles the how to articles and know where to go

articles. Those are kind of the meat that would kind of help drive a certain amount of sales but the fun articles for me were the ones where people told stories about their fishing and about their fishing friends and experiences. I think probably the least favorite aspect was actually doing. Copy work actually grammatical changes some of the nuns who taught me in grade school and high school would probably turn over in their grave if they saw that I called myself an editor from Norway.

[00:19:56] So me and previous that I didn't do bad. But then I needed a professional editor and fortunately the company had fairly early on got a professional editor.

[00:20:15] I honestly don't know at my age. At 74 I know that for me I like Prince and I like the printing process.

[00:20:25] I like the feel of books and the look of books that are massive books and so I'm not really into digital things I use a computer all the time. I use the web and I use it mainly for information news wise but book wise I'm still kind of you know I'm too old.

[00:20:47] Seems like a tangible thing. Yeah and yeah me too. That site I've never read a book on a on a Kindle or anywhere else. I was very out of water.

[00:21:00] Okay. You set me free. You know. Oh go ahead.

[00:21:05] The book was invented by the Romans and previous to the Romans the everybody used Scrolls but of course the Romans got into law and probably because of the worthiness of the Y scrolls were on hand. So some smart Roman got the idea that they would cut the scrolls into pages and bind them together. And now it's a birth of the book. So we can figure the book as we know it is about 2000 years old not actually a printed form but in unbound form a bound book previously that it was scrolls at least in the western world. That's. Well in a way you know we're fortunate in the United States and the world has an incredible amount of universities an incredible amount of teachers and professors an incredible amount of really fairly well educated people. And so I don't think we will necessarily suffer from that.

[00:22:13] But on the other hand something I haven't given a lot of thought to. Yeah that's good. Good question.

[00:22:26] I can't say honestly I don't know how is it.

[00:22:30] Do you know how is the process different in that which which format is more popular is your customer far as making in DVD.

[00:22:37] The DVD has generally been either made by or watched over by my two sons Nick and told me and I've stuck with the books and magazines and I'm sure the printed material.

[00:22:50] But we've produced probably about 10 to 15 DVD at this point mainly on Steelhead and salmon fishing and mainly on your fishing. We've pregnant produced a couple of fly fishing too but I don't know.

[00:23:11] I absolutely agree with you because I started out the same as you did. I started out bait fishing in a little creek. In fact I live along it. And by the time us kids were about 70 eighth grade we were using sometimes manure or worms sometimes we'd use crawfish

tail. Sometimes we'd take a bowl head and cut it up and use the bait we catch a little 6 inch fish.

[00:23:35] Well there was always this mystique about a trout taking a fly. And so when we got to be in eighth grade somebody bought a couple of flies. We tied them on to these little rods so we had and we would adapt the flies and the water and to see a trout come up for something artificial as opposed to a piece of meat to eat. It was really a revelation that chop would take feathers and a hook and it was kind of a miracle.

[00:24:08] And from then once we got into high school and had a little bit more money we could kind of graduate to some inexpensive fishing tackle. And that's how it happened for us. I don't see that happening to many kids today because more people are living in city environments and there isn't that opportunity to live a longer stream and to maybe experiment as much. At least I don't think there is like the same stream I live long now in Milwaukee or even when I was a kid. Every week we would fish it on Saturday and Sunday and we'd walk maybe a mile or two miles fishing and now I I. It's been years almost since I've seen another child fishing that same stream that I used to fish every week. And the access isn't much different. There aren't any no trespassing signs and nobody would kick kids out if they saw them fishing. But it just seems to have gone away. I don't know. My name. Well that is the most important single thing I think is to let the kid feel a bite or to see life at the other end of his ride. And it's hard to tease fly fishing. To a child who is probably younger than maybe eight or nine or 10 because they can't make that connection they can't make the connection though to feeling something pulling on their line and feel that little tingling that that special sensation. But I didn't attempt to teach my children how to fly fish until they were about nine or 10 and I did that by taking them to small streams that had lots of small trout and fishing with them and watching the fly with them and worked out in most like to fly fish to this day.

[00:26:20] Well I had the opportunity of seeing that beautiful light display there Federation of Fly fisherman in Livingston. And that is just kind of awe inspiring and particularly among fly fishermen who are so used to reading books and who like history innately it seems and like the incredible amount of art and lore in history that goes with it. I think having repositories of fly fishing history in all of the artifacts is invaluable for the inspiration it gives the people that that view these things in. And it's it's really helps to be able to see either letters or equipment or some kind of memorabilia that a particular famous or even an infant event not so well known. Fly fishing. Author has left to fly fishing. Museum.

[00:27:32] The only thing that I can suggest is plan your next fishing trip. Make it fun.

[00:27:39] Bags. That's what I'm thinking about doing now for the summer. Now let's seal Ed almost over sign things around. Yeah maybe some camping and. Yeah. Scrape.