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Joe Burke [00:00:10] Well, you know, it's a heritage thing for me. I mean, some of my earliest memories are fishing with my dad, who passed away when I was 15 years old, suddenly. And, you know, he had taught me the ethics of, of fishing, of the outdoors and the like. And now I'm in a position to, to, to pass on that information to you, know younger generations, you know, working with kids as a volunteer for educational things and the like. Yeah. So it's, it's a continuum of a responsibility I think that all of us have. So.

Joe Burke [00:00:56] Well my dad got me started when I was, when I was really small. And my older brother didn't care to fish. My younger brother, at that time, was too young to fish. My dad loved to fish and it was probably great therapy for he and my mother's marriage that he could get out once in a while, although she liked to fish as well, so, yeah. And you know those were my earliest memories of it and, uh, you know I can recall the independence, even as a small kid, in a big city, in second largest city in Illinois, Rockford, Illinois and three blocks from the Rock River, and I can remember sleeping out on the front porch, getting up when it was still dark and going down and fishing for catfish and the like, and so the independence, the responsibility that, you know teach, yourself safety and not by trial and error either, you know in a big river you didn't wade out or anything but, uh, uh, before fly fishing... As today, so many fly fisherman, we need to remember that there's not necessarily anything wrong with people throwing hardware and this and that, or fishing with worms, because most of us, our starter point was worm dunking. And in, you know, I think that there are places I don't want to see that most fly fishermen don't want to see some of these pristine waters become bait areas, but on the other hand you have to have places like that, whether they're village ponds, you know, that a lot of communities have in village parks and that now. There's got to be a starter point.

Joe Burke [00:02:40] When I was about 10 years old, I think, for Christmas one year I got this little box and it was a fly tying kit. And back in, this would have been the 1950s and certainly fairly early, mid-1950s, there was not much for materials. The hooks were probably bait hooks and whatever, and the vise was just a little metal thing that screwed the jaws together and the like. And so that's how I started tying flies. And to make money to buy more fly tying materials at Andersen's Hardware Store, which was a mile from my house. I would sell the flies at Roy's Barber Shop, across the street from my house. And Roy would sell 'em for a dime apiece. And, uh, in retrospect I'd have to say he was a heck of a salesman. But I would go over there several times a day to see if he'd sold any flies for a dime a piece, and if he'd sold some, I took the money and walked down to Andersen's Hardware Store to buy some more bait hooks, whatever, that you happen to think you needed. Just like today buying fly tying materials. And I truly believe that Roy was able to get in the express lane of the pearly gates up in heaven for, you know, steering me in that direction. But, uh, and they were gaudy colors as, as kids will pick out and that. But, but they caught panfish and the like. And, of course got me hooked on that so.

Joe Burke [00:04:19] The One Fly started, uh, I started in the second year of The One Fly, to help Jack Dennis out and some other people. The concept behind The One Fly then, and continues today was to have some camaraderie of fly fisherman and, ultimately, to raise awareness of our resource in the Jackson Hole Valley for our Fine-Spotted Snake River Cutthroat Trout and we had then grown to try to raise money for the resource and, uh, we do not do projects in The One Fly, but when there are grant applications that are sent in and, and today being on the board I'm on that, that grant committee. We do support projects in not just in the Jackson Valley but in the Snake River Fine-spotted Snake River

habitat area that, that we live in, and in some things in Yellowstone Park, we've done some things in Montana certainly, quite a bit in Idaho and continue to do that. So we've become much more successful raising funds. This past year, in maybe six or seven minutes at the September 2016 auction in The One Fly, we raised thirty five thousand, four hundred dollars for Kids Fishing Day alone, which nationwide is the first Saturday of every June. And this will be enough for probably four or more years, to sponsor the kids. We give them rods and reels, spinning rods and reels. But, again, back to, you know, that starting point. And they get caps, kids caps like this and the adult caps and we upgraded the food from hot dogs to some really substantial food. And they get some other things like this and that and the Wyoming Game and Fish, The United States Forest Service, over that way, Teton National Park, U.S. Fish and Wildlife; they all have these stations that the kids go through. Everything from ethics to, to safety to, everything from you know they'll dissect a fish and show them all about the trout and that, and then a couple of other friends and I will do the entomology part, and our 4H sport fishing kids will tie flies for other kids and the like. And, again, it's that you know passing on of the, of the torch and you know. But that's one example of a thing that we do. But a lot of stream improvements sorts of things. Some studies that will lead to, to stream improvement. And sometimes that is in the form of enhancing the knowledge that needs to be provided before projects go forward. So. Yeah.

James Thull [00:07:21] That's great, that's great.

Joe Burke [00:07:23] There are no cash prizes in the One Fly. It's not that, it's not a Bass tournament, okay?

Joe Burke [00:07:36] You have to say, "well what is a sanctuary?" These are these last remnants or relic populations, and there's there's a slight difference in the definition of relic and remnant, like. But regardless where you have these, these native populations, genetically pure or very, very small gene pool of, of these pure species that have evolved in a certain habitat. You know, the elevation, the water chemistry and not just the temperature, but you know, the chemistry of the water the elements that are in them and the like. These are essential, because when these animals are gone, you know, they're, you know, you just erase another little spot on the phylogenetic tree. And, you know, there's other trickle down things that, that live around that branch on the tree that depend on it. So when one's gone another one is gone ,and it's you know the dominoes are starting to fall. So, I think that it is essential. Because that branch of the tree that we're on eventually, you know, I mean if you want to look at in a selfish point 'Well what about me and my branch of the tree,' well you got to start looking out for the rest of the tree, the root system on up.

James Thull [00:08:56] That's great. So, what type of things concern you, about trout and salmonid habitats? What threats do you see what, what, what threats concern you?

Joe Burke [00:09:07] I mean, the clearest things are, you know, habitat degradation. And oftentimes it just goes along with development. It can go along with industrial development, but housing development, golf courses and, you know. These things can be done responsibly. Don't get me wrong I'm not anti- all of this sort of stuff. We need to do a better job of managing the water that we've got, the water usages, that may be with agriculture other in, industries other than agriculture and the like. So we just, we just need to be doing a better job of keeping stuff clean. I mean, it's as simple as that. Are there going to be natural changes. You know, yeah. There are, I mean, there have been warming times in the planet before, not this fast and probably not caused by the things you can put your finger on today, but I mean there's been volcanic activity there's been

[coughs] excuse me. There's been tectonic activity of the uplift and that, sometimes these things are good, they're natural. But there's a lot of unnatural stuff that's going on, that's been prompted by, you know, our species. Does that mean we have to put these things on a bookcase you know and close them in glass to only look at them? No. No, but we need to use them more responsibly than we have been. And clearly it's not everybody that's being irresponsible in use. And I think that those of us that like to think of ourselves as maybe being responsible should, you know, should try to educate some other people. And, you don't do that with pitchforks and torches.

Joe Burke [00:11:07] Well, I mean, certainly we live in a part of the country here in the Rocky Mountain, Upper Rocky Mountain West. It's a very quality sort of uh, fishing. There's more and more people. More and more impact and that can come from just. You know more fishermen out there or more everything out there. I mean, two summers ago a place just, just in Teton County Wyoming just outside of Jackson a ways, just on the edge of Teton National Park, that I could, it's still one of my favorite places and I'm not going to tell you what it is, that I like to hike into. You take bear spray with you, and the like. But, you know, it just is such a special place to me and, and a few of the people that are my special friends that will come-- an old professor from college that will come and visit and you know-- would take a few of these special people to this special place, as other people would do and the like. Well, I'm up there and say well 'What is this sound coming down?' I could hear some people talking and I look, and here came five pack rafts down. Somebody, some horse packer had packed these people up to the headwaters area of this, well upstream of this area. They put their stuff together and downstream right through where I was fishing. One of them actually acknowledged me, the last one of the five in line. The rest of them just like I was a statue that was there. You know, it's that idea of multiple use sounds really great on paper, but when, when one use totally negates another use and that use may be the experience of that use, then it's not a multiple, you know? Having more people out there doing more different things. It is not responsible multiple use.

James Thull [00:13:05] Yeah. Yeah, that's it, it's always tough because you want people to be out there enjoying the nature because then they become advocates for it.

Joe Burke [00:13:13] Well they are, and again, I told you earlier when we were talking about the importance of people feel, feeling that sense of having inherited this, this resource and the like. Because if they don't feel that empowerment over this heritage, these lands are going to be given away. You know there are already lots of states with the Sagebrush Rebellion that, that think 'well the states can do a better job of managing these lands and this and that.' Of what? Of fighting forest fires in the forest? You know, of all of the other management stuff? Of, you know, the federal government for instance and Teton County Wyoming, 93% of the land is state and federal land, and most of that is federal land. Well, the federal government gives money back to the state and the local government in lieu of property taxes. So you still are getting somewhat of a resource, and if you're in a place like Jackson, with Teton Park and right on the doorstep of Yellowstone, these are things that, that attract the tourists that, that spend the money, that pay the sales tax, the people they buy these services or products from then are paying the taxes that pay the freight for everything that needs to be done. All of those infrastructure things. I mean, it's, it's a pyramid effect it really is and, uh, and the states are just never going to be able to, to have that base of the pyramid. It's gonna look more like a pole. Yeah, than a pyramid. Little at the bottom and the top.

Joe Burke [00:14:59] I mean, do you want to sit back and cry about it later or complain about it? Again, I think that you can responsibly do that and through groups like you know,

I'm a member of Trout Unlimited and there's the FFF, you know the, the Fly Fisherman. Certainly the One Fly, you know, and I've rolled up my sleeves and that will continue to do it. And these are the types of things that people can get together with other like minded people and enhance some power to put their hand up. Again, I'm not a torches and pitchfork guy. That, that just, that puts the fences up not takes them down. So, um, but you need to do it. And you need to do it, like so many things in life, by having a good, a good example, you know? If you're setting a poor example...If you're setting a poor example do not expect, you know, others to then follow a good example or listen to you, when you try to preach to them to have a good example. I mean it's, it's not hard to understand.

Joe Burke [00:16:19] First of all I don't ask them if their parents have insurance. That's the wrong direction to go. You know, the biggest thing. I, I also work, now that I'm retired the last four and a half years, I do a lot of other volunteer stuff. And one of the things I do is work with kids at the literacy center in Teton County, Wyoming. And, and one of the things that works with everybody but is really indicative with kids, is don't be talking to kids all the time. Listen to them. And, you know, I think we need to listen a lot more than, than we talk. And, and it's easy to teach respect, you know, verbally but don't expect that that necessarily is going to soak in. So I think that to have good listening skills is an important thing. To do that with kids, and really adults too, is, as in as we're doing here to sit down and talk to someone at eye level. Don't be standing up and preaching to them, you know try to talking, looking down at them. We need to start talking to people, find that common ground and believe me I mean, we have a lot more in common than we, than not.

Joe Burke [00:17:32] I mean, look at some of the things that have been done with ranchers in the West, that have been great stewards of the land and partners, in fencing areas to keep cattle out of the streams so they don't degrade the streams by tearing down the banks and this and that. These are people you'd, know, you'd say 'these are not like-minded people.' They are like minded people, but they don't necessarily express that in the same words that you would, and that. You know don't, don't speak down to these people. Speak, speak to them and listen to them. And, likewise, they'll, they'll speak to you and listen to you. Not all of them but, but you've got to start somewhere. And a lot of them will, you know? You know farmer, rancher John, Johnson's working with you over here and, you know, the stories he remembers that his parents and grandparents told him about the quality of the land, and the stream and that, the guy that's at the adjacent property they say 'you know I remember that, those stories too. We could probably work to make this thing work again, and it isn't gonna hurt us financially at all.' And in essence it enhances the value of their property. And there's states that will have payments for, for sportsman's access and stuff like that. You know, again, it's a two way street but it's not hard to all be going in a one way direction.

Joe Burke [00:19:05] Because if you don't do these things, if you don't save this and this is also this heritage of fly fishing. When it's gone, it's gone. And you know this is, this is not, you know like the Khmer Rouge wiping out the culture in Cambodia. You know? You need to, you need to preserve that heritage and you need to do it historically. And when you take original documents, not just the dollar value of those, that's incidental, the cultural value of that is, is without dollar signs. Again, this is our heritage. You know, some of these people I have met before, the names you have just mentioned. And whether that's because of the small tribe of fly fishermen or whatever, maybe somewhat of a consequence of that. But, but regardless it's so important to remember where we've come from. Hard to, you know, responsibly go forward if you don't know where you came from.

Joe Burke [00:20:23] You know, to be able to smile certainly helps. Rather than criticize like, 'you are a little quick on that take' or 'you know you were leaning on that fish a little hard before it broke you off' or, you know. And certainly you don't appreciate, and usually do not go fishing often with, someone that decides that you know because you're hooking up on some fish that they're standing right there where you're fishing, okay? But what's really fun, is to, with your good fishing friends with strangers as well. And I think a lot of fly fishermen and fly tiers have done this over the years, where you'll run into another fisherman, and your watching them and maybe their struggling, or maybe they're doing OK. And you, you cut 'em some distance, you know. So you're not encroaching upon where they're fishing and that, but then you start talking about this and that or you say you know, 'Why don't you try this fly? I've been pretty good here before on this. Why don't you put this fly on and see how you do?' And then at the end of the day you meet this person at the trailhead, or the parking lot, or whatever and they said 'you know that fly really, really worked. That was great.' And so that sort of sharing of it, and that ability to enhance one of those other people's experiences? You know, they're going to enhance somebody else's experience. Whether it's helping some old lady across the street with their groceries, or somebody else on a stream, having some patience with a little kid that they take fishing and the like. I think these are the qualities of the friends that I go fishing with, that are my fishing buddies, so you know, hopefully I'm a good fishing buddy too, to them.

Joe Burke [00:22:07] So, you know, but again it goes in... This is all of our responsibility. And you know it's, it's amazing how fast the years go. And it's time to really get even more serious with those younger people, but not just the younger people, I shouldn't say, I mean that's an obvious starting point. But what about the professional person, that maybe has been very successful financially in life that you can maybe talking to helping out with some things? I mean, one of the things that The One Fly um, some of these people that have come year after year and that, you know, it really helps, you know? There's one guy I like to tie some flies for, this and that, and I don't ask for anything in that he's extremely generous financially to The One Fly. It's like a homecoming every year when some of these people come back and there is no station in life that is recognized, other than that you're a fly fisherman, and you love to do the same thing is to go out there and try to catch those Fine-Spotted Snake River Cutthroats. It's that common denominator again, and that one way road that we're both on so... or the two way road that brought both in the same lane.

James Thull [00:23:28] That's great.