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Bob Jacklin [00:00:10] I cannot think of one story right now there's so many but the thing that in fly fishing that really brings me to it is it's a learning experience. The whole thing about fly fishing and I spend my whole life since I was very interested in it about 13 years old.

Bob Jacklin [00:00:27] Is learning it. Every time you read the more you read the more you fish the more you'll learn. It's a learning experience. Every time I'm on the river whether I'm guiding someone or fishing by myself I always consider it a learning experience and I'm always open to learn something. One one experience that just just caught my mind right now is just happened three weeks ago. I had one night to fish the Atlantic Ocean right at Sandy Hook across from New York Harbor and I could see the Verrazzano bridge and the new Freedom Tower as I was fishing and everything was right. And normally when you fish off the surf right from the beach in the Atlantic ocean the waves are too high, the winds blowing, there's always something wrong. Everything was right. The tide was going out it was low tide it was dead calm.

Bob Jacklin [00:01:13] No wind and right at just about dark five o'clock a school of bait fish came by. And one of my bucket list I want to do on my life is to catch a striped bass right off the ocean not I've caught stripers before spinning tackle. I've caught them and mostly in boats fishing off a boat. I want to catch one casting right in Atlantic Ocean with a fly. I caught two. And one was a nice fish about 10 pounds. So that's kind of it is the essence for me. But but really I fly.

Bob Jacklin [00:01:44] And what made me think of that is before I caught any fish I looked up the beach and several people here they're fishing. But here comes a young man or fellow looked like he was young casting with a fly rod in his hand and all of a sudden he took off.

Bob Jacklin [00:02:00] And waded right down the river and started to cast like a maniac in one area. And I said to myself, he knows something I don't. He saw something I don't see. So I got fishing real hard and casting and within a couple of maybe 10 minutes I had a striped bass on the end of my line. So I always in my mind thank that fisherman for showing me something. He saw some fish move out there and tore after them and that told me there's fish coming. So I I learned from him. So to me fly fishing is always a learning experience. Of course I'm a fly fishing instructor. I'm supposed to be the pro but I don't consider myself a pro all the time. I'm a student. I'm always learning and always keeping my mind open to learn something else. So that's kind of the essence for me on that.

Bob Jacklin [00:02:53] One thing I think we can do just by letting the public and letting people know what's available. And I assume this is open to everybody.

James Thull [00:03:03] Anyone can walk through our doors and use any of our materials.

Bob Jacklin [00:03:06] That's great. I never had anything like that as a kid you know but like I grabbed what I could here and there. But there was nothing like this. It's just unbelievable. I have quite a library myself in my home. At least a thousand books and they are all categorized to where they are what shelf they're on what number book. So I do a lot of studying all my life on that and just have a place like this to come and say Boy I'd like to I'd like to know what happened back in 1875 era that era in fly fishing right after the Civil War. And you could find that out right here.

James Thull [00:03:43] Absolutely.

Bob Jacklin [00:03:44] Look up Thaddeus Norris right away and get some information on rod building. So I think what I'd like to see done here is somehow to get the word out. That's what's available and maybe to encourage people, the outsider, to come and see what's here. This is another way of bringing them to Bozeman you know and that's that all ties in. Federation of Fly Fishers, Trout Unlimited all the things we can do a little more job as far as letting them know what we have whether we need to run an ad or something maybe a few more little stories done on our collection and emphasizing the story.

Bob Jacklin [00:04:22] This has opened up to the fishing public that would like to learn. This is not only fly fishing. This is everything. But it's really fly fishing and what brings it all together I think. But it just fishing in general it's all here. Salmonid collection is just unbelievable.

Bob Jacklin [00:04:38] What's out there. And. It's been out there for many many years. It's finally putting it together. Well that's a good question. But.

Bob Jacklin [00:04:54] Number one is as a young kid I didn't have much mentors at all. But there was one man I'd like to mention his name was Gover Kookogey kind of an interesting name. And he was what I would call the local expert in New Jersey on fly fishing and back in the 50s. And he read several books and tied flies for a living. And he worked in a sporting goods store and he had a store of his own back and forth. But very nice man and he helped me a little bit to get started in tying flies. He never offered to fish with me and that would have been nice. I always felt I would like to fish with him and in return I fish with a lot of people a lot of young people and a lot of it for free. Even though I get paid sometimes. Most of its for free but once I got involved in the sport a little bit I have to contribute most everything to to several people. Number one was Bud Lilly in West Yellowstone that talked with me and Ed Mueller another great fly fisherman from Indianapolis. Both of them talked to me in joining a new organization. Just started in nineteen sixty five. Their first meeting for roughly put together, and in 1967 when I first got to West Yellowstone out of the service this organization was getting ready for their first really conclave and Bud and Ed Mueller talked to me and I joined for twelve dollars. The Federation of Fly Fishermen. And later on a name was change of Federation Fly Fishers to include everybody not just fishermen but or man. But anyway I joined that so I'd have to I'd have to put Bud and Ed Mueller on top of my list. And Ed spent time with me. He was he was a single guy and retired age. I call him and I thought he was an old guy cause he was 58 see. 58 now I'm almost 70 doesn't seem like that's very old. But when I was twenty two that seemed a little bit older. But I joined the organization and became a charter member. So I'm so very proud of being a charter member and have been a steady member member and contributor for the last 50 years. And this year we're having our fiftieth get together and fishing show or conclave if you want to call it. That us old timers prefer to call it the conclave. But it isn't, its changed it's a fishing show to include all people and educate. So just as we're driving up here my wife and I yesterday I thought they want me to do a program a PowerPoint program over in Eugene Oregon this year for our fiftieth anniversary. And I think I'll do one on the history of the Federation of Fly Fishers. That'll be a nice PowerPoint for it. And it'd be a way of giving a little back. Also the main purpose it'd be it would be a way of saying thanks to some of the people who got us started in this federation over the many years that you could say a little tribute to. The next person on a list I'd have to I'd have to give credit to. Lefty Kreh for his casting help and his friendship over the years. So he's the second one. I would do that I spent a lot of time. And then third

would be a combination of Lee and Joan Wulff. I met them together and Lee was such a great guy and Joan was just such a wonderful lady and fisherman and caster that we became personal friends all these years. So those people are among the top. But other than that I could make a list forever. Leon Chandler from Cortland Lines meant a lot to me. We're very good friends and we fished together a little and his son was a friend of mine but Leon was quite an educator and he did a lot for promoting fly fishing all over the world including Japan.

Bob Jacklin [00:08:52] Boy that would be a tough one to point to anybody would be the best angle. But. Not always are the best writers the best anglers.

James Thull [00:08:59] Certainly.

Bob Jacklin [00:09:01] Now there's a big difference and not not always the best people doing something are the best teachers. So [unintelligible] for me I'm a drummer and I don't drum much anymore but when I was a drummer and. I found out that not all of only all the good drummers were the best instructors. So that's that's interesting to know. Stuff like that. So I carry that on with me. Now that would be a tough one. There's so many good people there's so much written out there was really good good books. I guess I have to give some some thank you and tribute to Gary La Fontaine. I didn't know Gary as well as a fisherman but not being a real educated person myself and I actually feel a little strange in a college environment like this to be honest with you. I feel strange. I didn't go to college. I did go to college in the evenings for a few years when I got out of service and I very much appreciate the opportunity to go. My grades were good. I just didn't figure I was I was college material. But I always thought a lot of Gary La Fontaine because he was one of the most well educated and well writers that we've had in our history. And so I give. And we did a few things together we did a book together, a small book on the Yellowstone River.

Bob Jacklin [00:10:23] But I always appreciate the fact that here's a person that was completely different than me. I did everything outdoors on the rivers and everything and I spent my life on a river. He was an educated guy and he could write very very well. Completely different than me. And yet we were both friends and I gave him a lot of credit. He was really a sharp guy. I always say he could read.

Bob Jacklin [00:10:46] He could read five books and read and write a book on it. To me that was that's something to be able to do that, see? So I gave him a lot of credit he's no longer with us. But luckily we were both inducted into the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. At the same time. He was passed on already but still I feel very proud at him and I we're the first two people west of the Mississippi River to be inducted in the Fly Fishing Hall of Fame. That's so so I give him a lot of credit. I've read all his writings and he was.

Bob Jacklin [00:11:23] I don't know how to say it much but I really appreciate him very much.

James Thull [00:11:27] John said he was a guy who was always thinking. Yeah you know he was always thinking of a better way to to tie your shoes or tie a fly or anything else.

Bob Jacklin [00:11:36] Always thinking. That's what makes fly fishing so special. Even all fishing is fun. You go out and try to catch a fish. And I have no problem with people fishing worms or bait or or whatever. We're out having a good time. That's what it's all about. You don't have to have a fly. I prefer fly because there's a lot more involved in it. And you're always learning. It's back to the education theory. You always are that they will take that fly

but maybe they'll take this one or the approach is different or why one guy catches more than the other or this and that back and forth. So you're always learning trying to figure out the problem and the problem is getting the fish on the end of the lines now. But the fun is the problem.

James Thull [00:12:17] Yeah.

Bob Jacklin [00:12:17] Solving a problem.

James Thull [00:12:19] The way Joan and Ted described to me is the difference between spin and bait fishing and is that with fly fishing you're matching wits with the fish. You're fooling. You know with bait fish and you're putting out bait you're not you're not fooling anything.

Bob Jacklin [00:12:33] That right, you're enticing them.

James Thull [00:12:35] Yeah. Spinning you're just acting on instinct.

James Thull [00:12:37] But with fly fishing you're you're tricking them.

Bob Jacklin [00:12:39] And most fly fishing once you hook to fish it's all over. It's not the catching the fighting or anything. It's getting them on the lines like me with the striped bass. I learned years ago as a kid fishing salt water there's a trick to fishing salt water. Be there when the fish are there. And once that happens and you've got something so so I and I tie a special fly to look like a large bait fish the fly worked you know. So all those things are all these things are come together put all together to make a worthwhile wonderful experience in life. I think the most special is you have a chance to catch a wild.

Bob Jacklin [00:13:23] Native indigenous species trout that's been here all those years. The native cutthroat trout. I'm also a big promoter of the brown trout, rainbow trout, brook trout which are basically imported from other areas. But just to catch a wild trout. And to me it doesn't have to be indigenous but a wild trout that has reproduced. And you're catching a wild trout that reproduces himself in the fishery. I think that's the most thing and the next thing that comes with it a lot of us don't consider enough but we do I do consider it is where you are. Just some of the most beautiful rivers and mountains and just scenery in the world. You put yourself almost any place you go. You've put yourself right in a postcard. I grew up as a young kid. I grew up two city blocks a long walk from Newark Airport. So I grew up in a rough kind of rough area. But but Newark Airport had a lot of meadows out there years ago and I had a trap line in 1958 or so I was 13 with other kids. Few other kids. And we trap muskrats in these swamp areas and little rivulets out there. All part of Newark Airport today it's the airport. But years ago Newark Airport was in Newark. Now it's half in Elizabeth New Jersey in that area. But. We went out there and the funniest thing is occasionally a black and white police car would show up in you know drive around out there and as kids we would naturally hide you know try to get out away. And we watched the police every once in a while. Two of them would jump out a car grab a shotgun to hunt pheasants. No one told the police you couldn't hunt out there. So that's I had always a big kick out of that. But that was my some my early experiences into going into an area that was not built up. Just a wild cattail environment out there that was, I guess you could call wild. Nothing like Montana. I saw Montana for the first time and the Grand Tetons. And I think it just it just took my breath away. I think what I enjoy mostly is watching people get it. They get the cast and they try to. I try to teach in a very very basic way to to to break it down into a few rudiments they you need to do and once they get that,

to watch the expression on their face when they actually can lay a line out. The next thing that's better that's even better and that is when they get into their first fish and that goes under guiding. But teaching casting just to see him get it. At first I have no idea what's going on and they're waving it all around. But after a while they get the idea of stopping the rod. And the line will pay attention to the rod. And stop the rod and the line turns over and rolls out. And to me that's when I see that happen and just the expression on their first roll cast make a nice roll cast on the line rolls right out right where it's supposed to go. That's pretty nice. I give free lessons for the last 30 years every Sunday night in West Yellowstone on the casting pond that the Federation had donated and built back around 1985 and I've been doing that every Sunday night. I'll probably continue this year. I always threatened to quit cause. I don't have a Sunday night off in the summer for the last 30 years. But that's fun. We have anywhere from 20 to 35 people show up. I give him a quick lecture and then I have a bunch of friends that help and we all instruct. And then I go around personally make sure I cover everybody that shows up and we help him cast. You know young kids somebody will bring a little 10 year old which is getting a little young. But as long as they're interested I have some short rods things like that that work out well for them.

Bob Jacklin [00:17:28] And it's a lot of fun. I think the best age is when they're interested. And follow up with that same question. What what children what children are interested in doing mostly is not fishing. They're interested in casting, whether it's a spin rod with a push button zebco or something like that. Get him out there doing it. Let him hunt some frogs let them play around the water, get him interested in the outdoors and sure introduce him to fly fishing. And if you get lucky and I have several times over the years or many times get him into some fish. Thank God for the Whitefish in Montana. We catch a lot of those. And with a good small fly working in a special area small stream. A young kid 10 years old could get into some whitefish and Trout too occasionally. So that's nice but I think it's important for them to catch fish. But I keep mentioning myself, kids want a cast they don't want to fish they don't want to put a fly out and wait for a fish to maybe take it. You're not interested in changing in the right fly or putting the rare or putting it all together. What they want to do is cast. So let them cast. Pretty much the same way but what Lefty Kreh says and I say all the time and I got it from Lefty. I could teach anyone's wife to cast but my own. So what Lefty's commented on years ago was.

Bob Jacklin [00:19:04] Your wife doesn't listen to what you say she listens to how you say it. So if you say it right everything's fine. But a lot of times ladies all learn a little quicker from a stranger because still take it at face value and listen to what he says and do what he says. Where their husband, they're always going to try to figure well this might be a better way. And I always laugh at my wife and I if we go fishing I'm supposed to be the guide. We are out fishing and I say let's go try it over there. I don't want to go over there. Well I'm the guided we are going over there other people just go I say let's go over there we go see. With the wife let's go over there and try that spot. I don't want to go over there. I don't want to wade through over. So I think a lot of that is you get that. But as far as difference.

Bob Jacklin [00:19:55] Obviously men tried to force everything with their muscles. Being a man or trying to force it to they're going to force it. Where a lady tends to maybe let the rod do the work and they teach you to stop the rod. She stops. Make the rod come forward and stop and at that point you turn over the power or any energy you have built up in the rod from your forward cast or back cast. When you stop the rod the energy is transferred to the line and the line rolls out. We cast a line by rolling it. So that's the whole thing. So I think they tend a little bit more to let the rod do the work rather than making it do the work.

Bob Jacklin [00:20:39] You look at the whole river and you break it up in pieces. What you do there is you look at the top of the water and you watch how the water flows and that gives me a good indication of what's underneath. And you get a little rise in the water like that just a small rise. That means there's a rise in the bottom. There's a there's a rock there or something. And you watch this and also I like to look where there is shallow water into a deeper water. I'm always looking for a place where trout could settle without working too hard to maintain his position in a river.

Bob Jacklin [00:21:13] And if I could find a spot that does that that tells me there's a fish right there. And so the fish are going to be in the best spot in the river for them. And the bigger fish are going to have the best spot. So that's how that's going to work. So you so you pick out all your areas. And once in a while occasionally I'm not correct. We find new places. If I'm fishing with some friends whether I'm guiding or fishing for guiding for our living for money which normally I don't fish when I guide, but if I'm fishing when I do with a lot of friends or or do a free guide trip which I do, I fish places where I think there isn't any fish. That's how I find new places. I read water and say well that's kind of different. I don't know about and I put them in the best spot always. Whether I'm getting paid or not doesn't matter when I'm fishing with somebody I put them in the prime spot. Because if they catch a fish I caught part of that fish too. That's how I feel. So we're all catching fish and it's good. So I spend my time fishing the tail end of a pool or a place that doesn't look like it has much. I try to read the water and figure out where one might be. And I work those places that are not very welcome. They don't look real well. The other thing I do is I fish places that are difficult cast and I fish if I get a fly in a difficult place like that I figured not too many other guys are going to fish that before I did. So there's a chance any fish in there is the first time they'll see if like presented correctly in a difficult area where we have two currents. This reminds me of a just this fall I guided a man who's had some trouble getting around walking and he asked to sit when he cast and he has to use a two handed rod. He can't use it. He's fished for years. Good fisherman. But he has he's up in age and has some problems with that and he has to say he has a special stool he sits in. And we fish he hired me to take him out for the brown trout run; he wanted to get a Brown. We went up in Yellowstone Park. We fished a half a day. Nothing could... Fishing two handed rods swinging fly in areas where I know there's some fish. Nothing. Nothing. We had a little bit of lunch on the bank. We fished another two hours, zero. So finally about 4:00 in the afternoon I said Let's let's get out of the park and get down to Madison. Just where the river comes out of the Yellowstone Park. There's a couple spots I know there's a spot there where there's an island and two currents come together. And I just caught a couple of good fish there a few days before. So I bring them down. We sit on the bank. He sits on the bank kind of stool sits in a stool and I said lay one right where the currents come together. He put a fly out there first cast 20 inch brown trout. Landed it. Made his whole day. And course at the end of day offered me a tip and I wouldn't take it. I said. The tip is you catching that big brown trout. That made my day. he only got one fish all day. He's caught fish all over the world. The man knows how to fish. He just physically he's hampered with able to do it. But he wanted a brown trout made that cast and he got a got a good one. Brown Trout. To me that made my day and I'm sure it made his day. The rod is easy. I enjoy an eight and a half foot rod for a five or five six weight line right in that bracket. I helped develop one for Sage many years ago and over the last couple of years we have a signature rod out that I helped developed and worked on for the St. Croix Rod company which I work with now. So to me that's all around rod. I just got back a month ago from fishing bone fish. And out there. And down in the Nassau area and I was sorry I brought my 10 weight and my eight weight with me and I was sorry I didn't bring my eight and a half foot five six weight because smaller fish and even with the wind I could've

handle that rod a lot easier on a small guy and I can handle that small rod. Why do I prefer eight and a half. They're all good. The most popular rod sold is nine foot four or five weight line all through the old world for trout fishing. That's the most popular rod, size and all. Unlike eight and a half Jerry Siem who designed rod for Sage eight and a half. Joan Wulff eight and a half. Many of us like the eight and a half foot rod because in my observation and working, given the same action for all the rods we're all the same if I had all the same action. The eight and a half.

Bob Jacklin [00:25:58] Has a little quicker line speed than a nine foot because it moves quicker slower. The nine foot has a bigger gap to move eight and a half smaller. So the line's moving quicker so the quicker the line moves the more accurate and the more consistent your cast will be. Is there a big difference between eight and half a nine? No it's not a more than an argument but if I'm in a tournament or fishing myself and I grab a rod I grab an eight eight and a half. That's the one. As far as the lines are all kinds of good to three good companies big companies out there nowadays all make good lines. Joan Wulff has her own model line and tapers that she put in. And Cortland Lines and scientific anglers are real. As far as a line they're all good and the rods are the same way. Today.

Bob Jacklin [00:26:45] The rods are made with so much work and care as far as design and tapers and materials that it's hard to find a bad one. The fishing tackle today the trout tackle for trout is designed to such a high extent and work so valuable, I can't see any improvement in the in the future. And that was written in 1911. So that gives you little idea where we're at now. No question in my mind my favorite trout is the brook trout. I grew up fishing for Brook trout and as a young kid I was introduced to a small little stream within about 500 yards from a regional high school. In Morris County in New Jersey. In this stream had native Brook trout and even in the 50s native Brooke trout were pretty much unheard of. And not unheard of but not sought after or quite very often. And here I was introduced by my mother's uncle who liked to trout fish and I caught my first native Brookie about that big and I spent the rest of my school years whenever I could fishing that area and I I developed a very very a lot of.

Bob Jacklin [00:28:08] Appreciation for trout in the stream that reproducing itself. Especially in New Jersey environments like that you got high water or low water in some cases polluted water. And here you find the remnants of a wild trout fishery and they were Brook trout and most beautiful trout in the world are really pretty and I enjoyed catching lots of them and the great thing about him is fish were always there. Was it not like a stock situation. Lee Wulff mentioned many years ago that for fishermen to come up on a piece of water a beautiful pool that was barren of fish is a nightmare. But that same piece of water loaded with trout but hard to catch is a welcome challenge. And that's what he said and I always thought that in my mind. So when I fished these brook trout they were always there if I was clever enough to figure out how to catch them. So the beauty is the fish are always there. And in Montana you live in here in the last 45 years, the Fish are always here.

Bob Jacklin [00:29:11] What can I do to catch him. That's my trick is to be able to catch him. So that's that's all part of it. So the brook trout to me but a wild trout and I consider wild trout not only indigenous trout for the area but a wild trout as self-sustaining reproducing brown, brook, rainbows what have you are all good. And I enjoy catching them all. Naturally, there is nothing better in catching a wild cutthroat trout in the upper Yellowstone River. That's what it's supposed to be and I appreciate that very much. So I think I'd have to say species wise is the brook trout. Well in Montana we have to look at Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks. Fish and Game Department. And I think and I say this publicly they've done an excellent job over the years of trying to do as best they could to

maintain a wild fishery and as many fish and had the river absolutely loaded up with fish for visiting anglers. Right now we've lived through probably the busiest time fly fishing has got to see in Montana. We're not on a tapering down but on kind of a flat as far as the interest the amount of people that are that are there that are interested in fishing. So the Montana Fish and Game Department has done an excellent job of promoting catch and release. And back to Bud Lilly again I have to give Bud a lot of credit goes he and Lee Wulff as well. And Joan Wulff and all of us together working with these big organizations. In promoting Catch and Release that puts the fish in the water. There's nothing wrong with keeping a fish. I took some criticism for keeping a very large fish a couple of years ago but I'm a taxidermist. I wanted to do it. And Lee Wulff even though I studied under Lee Wulff, right until he passed on he did everything you could to promote catch and release but he was in a salmon camp.

Bob Jacklin [00:31:05] And it was legal to take one salmon he would take one salmon he wouldn't take five or he wouldn't take over his limit. He would take one for the week or the time and cook it up and enjoy the fish. So I have no trouble with people keeping the fish as long as they are within the law. Fish and Game regulates how many fish we can keep. If we kept all our limits all of us, there wouldn't be any left we could clean it out in the summer pretty well. So the idea of Catch and Release is really paramount to having a good fishery. We return to fish carefully back to the river again to spawn and catch and let someone else enjoy for the day. But keeping the fish is not as long as it's within the law, I have no big problem with that and I see people bait fishing on the Madison where it's legal and I'm walking past some of the guy's got a nice big rainbow and it's dead on a string. And I say boy that's a nice fish you see. This is a good one. He's really excited. He's got a fish he's camping out he's going to go eat that fish. I don't have a problem with that. Yeah I'd like to see a released sure. But that guy had a nice time and he enjoyed it and that's part of the point of the trout fishing part of fly fishing is to appreciate that too. Very important.

Bob Jacklin [00:32:26] Most of the fly shops I see today are starting with people big money. And they have a big shop and all oak counters and tables and I'd see in my reports or magazines I read on a fishing tackle trade news and this and that. I started with nothing. And I think the thing you have to do is I think this is a small business. If you try to go too big I think I see too many fail. It's just not enough bottom line. I got lucky I started with nothing I started with zero and I've appreciated everything I've gotten so far in is business wise. So my advice would just be work hard. And don't look for making lots of money, look for having a great life. That's really what you get out of it. Fishing tackle especially the fly fishing tackle will provide a person with a nice life. And I think that's what I've gotten out of. It.

James Thull [00:33:25] I think that's great advice.

Bob Jacklin [00:33:26] What I makes me feel good and proud of what I did. It's not so much what I've accomplished.

Bob Jacklin [00:33:33] But how far came from where I started. Zero basically. And worked hard to get it and I appreciate it. At this point in my life. I'm 70. Next month I'll be 70 years old. I don't owe anybody anything. I have a nice store and a nice life and everything and everything's paid for. It only took forty five years but I did it. Well naturally where or especially in Montana we're doing all we can to save our habitat and not lose any more. The more people you have available and the larger our cities grows, like Bozeman mushroomed in the last 30 years and it will mushroom again I'm sure. That's more

opportunities. The Gallatin was a great river or is a great river but there's people fishing now every day of the year including Christmas there on the Gallatin. So eventually we'll have to watch it carefully Fish and Game to see if we can maintain as far as catch rates. I'm a firm believer in catch rates. We want people to catch fish and so many per hour. An hour in Montana used to be able to do over and over that that amount of catching. But on an average national or worldwide scale one fish an hour is considered good. If we could maintain that that's pretty good fishing. All right. One an hour. So that's good. So our fish and game I take my hat off to him. I don't always agree on everything they do. I'm not locked into native fish only or indigenous native fish only. I have no problem with the exotic fish like Brook Brown and Rainbow. As long as they are reproducing and providing a good fishery for it. Where I differ sometimes is some of our biologist get hooked on the too much onto the native fish only as far as having a right gene pool and just getting and cutting it down to where it's almost.

Bob Jacklin [00:35:37] Very difficult to maintain. I think we ought to just work a little more on the on the catch rates whether it's Brook brown rainbow brook trout or wild native cutthroat wherever we have or golden. We only have about 10 lakes in the whole state of Montana that had the original strain of golden trout from Colorado. But there is some and it provides a chance. So might like to hike a little bit to get up over 9000 feet and catch a real golden trout. So that's an opportunity to do so. We have so many opportunities. So basically I feel pretty good about Yellowstone Park and what they're doing in fisheries. You're trying to eradicate the improperly put in lake trout lake trout are a great fish but not in Yellowstone Lake where they really cut down on wild native cutthroat. This is important very important to do that so we need to be more vigilant and watch everything we could to maintain our wild fishery. But just wild indigenous fish only with the right gene pool. I do have some stop. Ones once you want a balance in there. And you can go overboard. Some of the smaller streams that are high up in elevation where there's some natural barriers like waterfalls, I'm all favor for doing all we can to bring back our wild indigenous species in those areas.

Bob Jacklin [00:36:57] But as far as our bigger rivers I have some problems with that. I don't quite go along with our biologists on that. I think we have a good good rainbow trout fishery that's reproducing by itself. We should be leaving that alone for the fishery. The park doesn't agree with that. Park officials want to fish in Yellowstone Park like it was in 1865. Native indigenous fish only. To the point where no fish in 1865. Just as soon have no fish now. And so we have some differences on that. But but I give them a lot of credit in trying to do all I can and I promote and I spend my money and donate to them to do all we can to keep the quality of fisheries we have. So I'm not against them I'm with them. But I just don't go all the way over. I like a nice balance. As far as fisheries species.

Bob Jacklin [00:37:57] Especially in the last 50 years when I when I can compare. Prior to that things run off pretty much. Prior to that prior to 50 years ago. It was I'm a fly fisherman. I'm a little better than you. See. And there was that sentiment and then that kind of philosophy through to our to the world. I've learned to fly fishing. Around 50 years ago, people like Leon Chandler and Lee Wulff and Joe Brooks and Joan Wulff and all spent a lifetime trying to improve this and improve it and teach it for others because, like myself, we want more people to commit to the sport more people who enjoy what we're enjoying and we can do that. So that's important. So everything is changed around in 50 years. And along with that the tackle has made improvements like you can't believe. The quality of rods as far as the casting. Years ago when I mentioned that a little quote back in printed in 19 quoted in 1911 about the quality of the tackle they had back then. Nowadays our tackle is really good but back then they only cast 20 feet. Now we're catching fish with 70 feet a

line now in some cases. So our tackle will do it. So that's one improvement we have with lines rods reels flies quality of hooks everything. Everything is improved to the point where and also the the openness of our fishermen all of us. There's a few exceptions but all of us we want to bring more people into the fold. And as I always say the more people you bring in, yeah makes it a little more crowded on the rivers, but the more people those people are voters. And they want you show them what's available and they turn that have a love affair with trout in the wild rivers, those people are going to vote that way to maintain that fishery we've had in Montana. So we need that. So yes there's whose people look at the canoe and the rafters out there. In some rivers you have aluminum hatch and middle of the day there's rafts and canoes and everything all over the Gallatin as these rafts come in by. But those people are having a good time and they're voters and they want to maintain that river too. So I think we accept them and what we have to do is start fishing a little earlier in the morning later in the evening and avoid that conflict. So we don't hit the conflict head on. We just work with it. And. I really feel about the rafters is, they'll put a trout down for a second or two or a couple of minutes and that's it. Those trout are so conditioned to see rafts coming over it doesn't bother their feeding habitat or anything. It moves them around a little but doesn't, but once a raft goes by you've got a chance to catch fish. So they're really not that bad. We have to appreciate the fact that these people are having a good time. Maybe most of them, their first experience in Montana floating the Gallatin River and having a good time. So we have to consider that too. We just can't be just looking at ourselves.

Bob Jacklin [00:41:00] The best thing about being a guide is that you meet people generally when they're at their best. They're on vacation. They want to learn. As opposed to maybe being a doctor or a a an attorney. We meet people when they're really not at the best. They have some problems and there's other things to consider. So being the guide, I get a chance to meet somebody who number one love wants to learn. Hopefully that's their idea. Wants to catch some fish. They want to go out with the expectations of having a good time. I don't have a lot of bad experiences being a guide. I suppose there has been a couple but not much. Most people are meeting halfway and listen to what just what you say and they are into some fish and that's fun. We all have bad days. Not many of them hopefully we don't have too many of them but days where you can't seem to get fish. You don't do anything right. And that's the worst part about being a guide you just can't maybe give what somebody thinks they should get. Even though you try. But there are a few.

Bob Jacklin [00:42:07] All the time as I see people in their when they're at their best and they enjoy what they do. And by them catching a fish I caught part of that fish too. And they enjoy that fish comes up takes out dry fly right off the top. One fellow I knew I had trouble walking around and I got him to a pool. And I said you're going to have to crawl up to the side of the bank on this pool and I want to fly right there I want you to put it right there. And he you know I'm sure he thought this guy's talking. He did that he walked up got down my hands and knees. He had trouble doing it got right over the edge ten foot cast put the fly right there, big whitefish came up and took that fly. He looked at me he said you are the guy. First cast. That's the kind of thing that you remember. You know what. I put the fly there and the fish was there. That doesn't always happen. But that's one instance where it was just right on the money. First cast. So that's, you remember that. The greatest thing about a whitefish is they are native and they're here.

Bob Jacklin [00:43:13] And the bad thing about whitefish was we're losing we're losing the amount of fish we've had at one time. I don't know why, biologists are working on it. It could be just. They don't know the whitefish doesn't allow itself very much to be handled. And they they I think they they squirm and wiggle you can call it that but they expend

themselves so much that I think it hurts him and fish may pass on. They don't do well as far as our shocking fish and game when they shock the area and they shock for population estimates on the Madison let's say, they don't kill very many trout at all. There must be occasionally where one doesn't make it very very light. But Whitefish I don't think do as well being handled with that. The great thing about a whitefish I explain to people is they were here in quantities and are pioneers that were here a hundred years ago, they put up barrels of whitefish in the wintertime because they salted well and the thing that made them great is they ate well. But you could keep catch more than you could Trout. Trout was still harder to catch and not as numerous back then. So whitefish were numerous. You could put up a barrel to fish in a winter, salt them and be able to eat all winter long. That's very entering so the whitefish are a great fish. The other thing it saves a guy like me. If you know a spot where you have a tough day fishing, you know a couple of areas where there are plenty of whitefish, you can get a beginner in a bunch of whitefish on a dry fly and have a ball. The fisherman that gets pretty good after a while he turns against a whitefish because the fact that they're difficult on the fly, they're difficult to release even with a barbless hook, is so difficult to get the hook out, they shake and they just mess up your fly.

Bob Jacklin [00:45:03] They do a lot of that but all that stuff is small. Just having a white fish there is a great experience. I mean they catch you can catch him. They're a great fish. I'm a big whitefish promoter. I think they're a great fish to have and they weren't quite compatible with fish. They're bottom feeders, yes but they do rise and take dry flies and there's quite compatible with the trout. I don't see any problems with whitefish and trout existing in the same water at all. I don't I don't think if I killed one white fish purposely that it would help the trout population or I killed a thousand whitefish it would help. I think the best thing is return them as best we can and enjoy what they are and there is a good balance of fish in there. Whitefish and trout. They go together quite well.

Bob Jacklin [00:45:57] The piece of advice I would give him for angling is to go out and have a good time and enjoy everything that's involved in it. Take into consideration what you're learning. I promote that learning part all the time because.

Bob Jacklin [00:46:09] The reward is what you caught, sure, but even a better reward is what you learn. So I approach it from a learning deal. Fly fishing is learning and every time you go out you're going to learn something. So you're always going to get something even though you may not catch any fish. And so just learning that experience, putting it all together I think is the is really a great reward. I'm still learning every time I go out. I'm always trying my mind's open to figure something out.

Bob Jacklin [00:46:37] If I can learn something, and nowadays after all year fishing I don't have to catch a lot of fish. So my fun is maybe fishing a difficult piece of water, catching a trout, or catching that hard to catch fish. Maybe work an hour on one fish. I've done that just this past fall, there was is a fish rising and I couldn't get the fish and I stayed there worked and worked and worked and take time out if I made a bad cast, fish stop rising, sit on a bank for a while, check my leader then go back and fish would come up again start work and be back on that fish. Spend an hour at catch that one fish. To me that that made my my experience. I had a good time. It's gonna take more people interested in fishing. Fly fishing. And I think we do have that on a business.

Bob Jacklin [00:47:29] And I know I look at things a little different as I'm getting older now. But. For the last several years we've been on kind of a flat. The movie A River Runs Through It is passed. That generated a fair amount of people interested. I think we have to

keep that interest up. There's so many things to entice young people, that they're really not out on the streams and rivers and the lakes like they were when maybe I was a kid or my generation above me that had the opportunities. So to keep fishing alive we have to keep fly fishing alive especially. We have to keep keep a presence out there. Taking the time a guy like me to take it take the time to teach new people especially kids. Bring him into to bring them into the fold. Encourage them rather than say I'm a fly fisherman I'm better than you. You know. Years ago that sentiment when I was a young kid was there but it changed. Now we want to bring people into our fold. We for the last 50 years. People like Lefty Kreh, Leon Chandler, Bud Lilly, Lee and Joan Wulff and and just to name a few. Ted True Blood on and on on Joe Brooks were bringing people in. Let's write books let's give seminars on how to do things better and get these kids and younger people involved so they'll carry on the fly fishing tradition like the library here. This is exactly what we're doing. How many young people go to college here university here and are exposed to this now. Even if they just hear about it a salmonid trout library. Everything on fishing that's up here has ever been written. It's here. I mean that's it's right here.

Bob Jacklin [00:49:16] I've a lot of thank you's out there for people I mentioned some names as a lot of you I haven't heard of but they're great people. I got very lucky and again we're going to give Bud Lilly some credit because he hired me to help teach not not teach myself but help with his son Greg. Charlie Brooks and others did to hire me years ago in 1969 to teach his fly fishing school. I didn't teach it all I didn't do it all. I helped I was part of a program I did to dry fly part of it and leaders and stuff. And I was a fly fisherman and I was learning then I was about twenty five. But I really started learning when I worked for Bud and then after a couple of years I moved on to the Fenwick Fly Fishing schools. Spent 10 years with them.

Bob Jacklin [00:50:05] And I got to instruct and teach with some of the best people in the world. People like Lee and Joan Wulff. Ed Mueller, Frank and Gladys Gray, were the headmasters of all of Fenwick Fly Fishing school. Jimmy Green who invented the Fenwick rod, he invented excuse me invented the feral light rod connection from putting a blank one one blank into the other and make it a feral which called a feral light. He invented that around the late 50s early 60s. He was a rod line designer a tournament caster. So Jimmy Green and it's just a whole host of people that I've worked with over the years. Lefty Kreh that I've ran schools with taught with and learned from. Mel Krieger and Fenwick hired three really neat guys including myself. I want to call his own neat guy back around 1973 to teach their fly fishing schools. Dr. Gary Borger for the West Midwest schools, Mel Krieger for the West Coast schools, and myself for the Western schools. And us three instructors worked with Fenwick with Frank and Gladys Gray and others in all those years doing putting schools together and teaching people and the greatest thing is.

Bob Jacklin [00:51:20] I'm the student. Even though I was the instructor, I think I was the best student Fenwick ever had. I learned more from teaching new schools and that's where I learned to keep teaching with all these other great people, sharing ideas. I'd like to think I passed on some things but I've learned so much from these other folks I work with. So that's that's a great experience is what I learned over the years and got better at casting because I wanted to, but also because I've learned from some of the best people in the world. They were all friends are all friends of mine. Became good friends. We kept our friendship going all those years. Good casters. We have these little tournaments at the conclaves and Federation shows and stuff and I enter them all, you know, and these young guys beat me out a fair amount of time. But I have the attitude where I don't care whether I win or lose I'm there having a good time. That's the point. And yeah I can once in a while I can now be one of these young kids and do even better. But I'm having a good

time and these older folks that are passed on now. Lee Wulff. Courtland. Leon Chandler and all those great people. I learned from them and now it's up to me to pass it on to others. And I became a better caster than some of those folks. And these younger guys are coming up are better than I am and I always feel they they learn from guys like me or myself and they improve so much a little bit beyond that. So I go out there and I go get beat by some 30 year old. That's fine. I have a good time to get a good cast. So it's all fun. I don't take it serious as far as win or lose. I'm not I'm not worried about I go out have a good time casting. That way I don't get all roused up I'm just out there and do my best job and sometimes I win. Sometimes I don't.