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Scott Richmond [00:00:10] Absolutely not. I have no idea why I like it. I just know that I do I like the hunt. I like the intellectual game. I like the participation in the outdoors I think that fishing done properly you are an applied naturalist. knowledge of the environment and quarry and all around awareness.

Scott Richmond [00:00:50] I think it's a great value to people of the future to be able to track and see what the attitudes and thinking of people was like. (unintelligible) my daughter is an archivist and she came up with a saying for a T-shirt for the graduating class: Archivists keep history fresh. So yeah it's a very valuable project.

Scott Richmond [00:01:14] The Deschutes River

James Thull [00:01:33] What makes it special to you?

Scott Richmond [00:01:33] I have no idea but I feel pretty much at home there (unintelligible) it is blue ribbon. For both wild native rainbow trout and for steelhead and that's very rare in the United States in the lower 48 it's a beautiful environment and it's a wonderful river for 100 miles of the lower Deschutes.

Scott Richmond [00:02:31] I think so. I just finished a project on the history of the Deschutes river started with 250 million years (unintelligible) extinction. and went up to the arrival of humans and stopped there into the geology and paleobiology of the Deschutes and knowing that history and then catching a fish there and understanding how things have evolved is a wonderful thing because it just gives you that sense of your not just dealing with the day or the last hundred years your dealing with millions of years of change and evolution. So last Friday I was fishing on the Deschutes near Maupin area and as you drop down past the river before the town you can see in the road cut river rock and there's silt and then there's river rock and there's more silt and then there's another layer of river rock and it's about 800 feet in elevation above where the river is today. Well that is where the river used to be. and those layers in between are volcanic ash so you catch the fish it's not just today It goes back millions of years. and not some fish that came out of a hatchery it is a fish that evolved. and has a history there I think that's trout steelhead are a different thing steelhead and I've written about this and thought about it quite a bit, the steelhead. Why is that such a mystical fish. To people. because the steelhead makes a Hero's Journey in the mythological sense. In Mythology. And this is a worldwide mythology. You find this in all cultures. There's the hero's journey. Where the hero is going out. To. A new place. Faced great risks. And brings knowledge back to the tribe. The anadromous fish has done that in the same way it's a trout. Could have just stayed in the river. And lived this life for these same two or three mile stretch of river. Yes. Yeah. But the steelhead has gone out to the ocean. Faced dangers a trout will never know. And. It's come back. Much bigger and stronger than if it had stayed behind. And so when you. Hook up with a fish like that a wild. Not a hatchery fish. The wild fish. You have partaken in the Hero's Journey. And that's the connection. So that's a. That's that's my sense of it. Other people is just a big fish

and it's like oh I look at I caught a steelhead you know. That means I got a wiener like a Louisville Slugger. So you know this but. You know to me It's a much bigger deal.

Scott Richmond [00:06:31] I have no idea. Well. As for bringing me into the sport. I've always been a fisherman.

James Thull [00:06:39] Is. It something in your family. Did your father fish.

Scott Richmond [00:06:43] My father was a terrible fisherman. But he loved boats and so we would go fishing together. It took a long time to figure out that he really didn't know the first thing about fishing we went Salmon Fishing in. Puget Sound. we lived in Seattle. For him it was just an excuse for being out in boats because that was his great life boats and airplanes. but he kind of got me started and then I just. I went on my own and became in time a fly fisherman.

Scott Richmond [00:07:14] rainbow trout and steelhead the wilder and more native the better. I like the rainbow. I've been asked the question before I like the answer because you got I should have said brown trout because they are harder to catch but the brown trout is not a native fish and its not about hard to catch its about. That the ancient connections and the rainbow trout is the trout of this area.

James Thull [00:07:54] That is true rainbow trout are native to this area, brown trout of course are invasive anywhere in the states and rainbow are invasive anywhere but the Pacific Northwest .

Scott Richmond [00:07:54] Thats right and brook trout are also invasive in the west.

James Thull [00:07:54] Yes native to the east.

Scott Richmond [00:07:54] Love them but they are an invasive species.

James Thull [00:07:54] They are a beautiful fish a while back I went to the Great Smokey Mountain National park and interviewed the biologist there Matt Kulp and got a chance to catch a native brookie in its native waters and that was quite the experience

Scott Richmond [00:08:37] I caught a rainbow trout in Virginia one time. That's weird. I think it is important because I think the female perspective is. Valuable. And a Little gentler. I really object to angling machismo Where guys wrap it up into their sexuality somehow. Yeah. It's it's. About conquest and. It's about size and it's about. You know guy stuff. I don't think that's. I don't think long term that's a healthy thing for the sport. Soccer. Spectacles. These days. I'll take that. Piece.

Scott Richmond [00:09:43] By piece. The. I think. The. Biggest challenge is climate change. Or. Having just done the. Project on the paleo Deschutes. And looking back at the effects of climate change over the last. Millions of years. As a group it can be pretty devastating. There. Is a major threat. To. Our. Habitat. And the environment. The fish need. So that's. That's a big one. climate change is a big challenge. Anglers are a big challenge. People who do not handle wild fish properly even if they're going to release them they don't handle them. Properly. A lot of fly fishing movies things that show up on film tours and that stuff do not have good fish handling. Examples in them. I object to. Invasive species as a major problem. And anglers. can have a major impact on that. In. Not. Not so much fly fisherman. Well back up on that because they do do. It. In. So. There

there is a big problem with bait anglers using live bait which then escape into. Places they don't belong and populate and become a problem. And the penalty for illegal fish transportation is equivalent to a speeding ticket. And there's practically no enforcement anyway so why wouldn't somebody do that. It should be a felony. To do illegal fish transport. And. Not. pointing any fingers but the warm water guys are the worst offenders. in that. they say this would make a wonderful bass lake I'm going to take some bass and dump them in here and they replace wild native. Trout. and the bass overpopulate. first they're there. trophy bass and then you get a medium sized bass and then get a bunch of stunted bass. I have nothing left for the trout and the bass eat em anyway. You've got a crappy fisherman crappy fishery house. and at the end of it it does nobody any good. So that's a that's a big problem right now.

James Thull [00:12:23] Is it. Is it fair to say that this brook trout rainbow trout Brown trout are some of the most invasive species of trout.

Scott Richmond [00:12:31] They can be they can be I mean as you know there's. The brook trout brown trout rainbow trout and are not native to Montana. unless you get the west slope you know you get the cutthroat. the different cutthroat species. but I think you'd have a hard time convincing most people in Montana. To. Say let's eradicate all the Browns and the rainbows. And. Just catch cutthroat because they they don't value the cutthroat as much. So that's that's a tough issue but it's also invasive species in terms of aquatic parasites and the zebra mussel and new zealand mud snails. And that sort of thing. So that's that's that's a problem to. Hatchery fish can be viewed as an invasive species. may be the same species. But. That's a major problem we have in the Northwest. is years and years. Of hatchery salmon and steelhead programs. That's in this. This is a controversial point with some people but I believe it's at the hatchery stocks are very detrimental to wild fish. And. You kind of got a. Welfare Salmon and welfare. Steelhead. It's very expensive to maintain and it's never going to get along on its own. There is no case I have ever heard of of hatchery fish being able to successfully. Hatchery steelhead and salmon being able to successfully. Repopulate. A river. If you had. If you had good habitat and you leave them alone eventually they will. Move in. And. Repopulate the system. They did it after the ice ages. They can do it again. You just have to be patient. But that's not a particularly good human trait. unfortunately I think there's a very good reason it has to do with money. I think that a lot of the. But I don't know about the other states but I know that Orgeon And Oregon. The. Department of Fish and Wildlife which used to be the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. It used to be. One of the premier Fish and Wildlife organizations in the world. And that is not true anymore. And the reason is they don't have the money for. All of their money comes from the sale of licenses. And their fear is. If we don't let people kill a fish. They wont buy a fishing license and we won't get any money. So. The idea of catch and release to preserve wild fish is just. Not something. They're very. Open to. Because then. They just don't think they'll have any money. for anything. I'm not sure they're correct in that but that is what they believe. The first thing they can do is the education. They. Can understand. The fish and can understand get better understanding of the fish. Better understanding of the habitat and the environment in which the fish. Live. And then. take care of it. habitat is every thing. if you. Go if you build a place they will come. If you just take care of a place they will come. The wildlife. will do well have fun get smart. It's not just about when you catch big fish. When I first. Started seriously fly fishing. I. Spent. My. Summer. Fishing mostly one small stream in Washington. Which. I can't remember how I even got on. They had a. Decent population. Of. Mostly native. fish. Was a very small stream and if you got anything over six inches. it was large. But I caught a lot of them I learned my fly fishing there. The rudiments. Because I got a lot of feedback. And. It's not about the size of. About enjoying

yourself some guys they go out. if They don't catch. Big Trout. they want to go home and slash their wrists. Its not what its about.

James Thull [00:17:28] Do you think that's an evolution thing I hear a lot of people talk about. You know you go through that phase where you want to catch a lot and then big fish and then it's more about just being on the water than anything else.

Scott Richmond [00:17:38] Well I think there's a lot to that first. First. You want to catch a fish that you want to catch a lot of fish and you want to catch a big fish. You might want to catch a lot of big fish and then you just kind of like. Let's. Just go fishing in a few summers ago Dave Hughes and I used to go out. Once every week or so to Deschutes and. We. go was. like July. And. Caddis season. But by July things are pushing off to the edges of the day. For the good fishing and you do better with nymphs. During the middle of the day. We get a late start. Get over there fish through the middle of the day. Usually dry flies and. Go home before it got very late. It. Was kind of like you know just going to catch it my way on a dry fly I just feel like fishing. with a dry I don't feel like going out. There with a nymph. Right now and. Dredging the bottom. I. Would just catch fewer fish and do it our way because we caught a. Lot of fish. Myself. So. I don't need to prove anything to anybody. Including myself.

Scott Richmond [00:18:53] There's somebody who maintains a good attitude whether the fishing is good or not. I went fishing with a guy some years ago. We did a three day float trip on the Deschutes. I rowed the boat. I cooked the meals. I told him where to where to fish. I think I even paid for the shuttle. And. Fishing wasn't great he spent the whole time bitching about it. Like well, you just ruined the trip for me too and I'm the guy who did all the work. So. I took you to a. Part of the river you've never seen before. Like all about catching the fish. John Geirach Dave Hughes. and. Well. I like Tom Alkire you just talked to Alan Murray. I Like my own stuff.

Scott Richmond [00:20:14] I have no idea. I just like to, I liked fishing. I liked writing. in the early 90s. I had an extremely high stress job. In the high tech industry. I started writing as kind of an outlet. creative outlet. Published a couple of. Minor. Pieces. And a friend of mine came to me with a suggestion for a book. Which I turned into a. Much bigger project than he had. In mind. He was a. Small publisher. And. That turned in to the Pocket Gillie which was my first book. And then. The. I left my high stress. High tech. Job. to. Write. Books. Temporarily. Which from an economic standpoint was probably not a good decision. Because there's no real money in it. But. It was very satisfying. I took some of the ideas from. The Pocket Gillie and said Let's let's apply those to the Deschutes River. And. Do a book on the Deschutes river. So. there was that. Another one on the. Cascade Lakes fishing oregons other season. Sort of went on. From there. And then it was. The. Publisher I was working with. Intellectually. Ex-wife. Of. The. Guy that. There that originally suggested the Pocket Gillie. Said you know we should get into this Internet thing. And use it as a way to sell books. Because there was a lot of concern at that point which was the late 90s. That the. Trade bookstores were being swamped by the big chains. Barnes and Noble Borders. B Dalton. Walden Books. They were totally changing the book industry at that point. So we say well let's let's do something that. We can sell books. And I said well that's fine but you have to have a reason for people to come to your Web site. Rather than just. Buying books. So. It. Let me. Do some work on this To. Put out information that changes like here's where there is fishing this month. Here's the current river levels. Here's a fly of the month. And that sort of snowballed. At first it was. Fishing in Oregon dot com. Which covered. Fly fishing and traditionally in Oregon. And then it split into two Web sites. Westfly, it covered fly fishing only in five Western states Oregon Washington. Idaho

Montana and Northern California. Gear None. Fly fishing gear end in Oregon and Washington. Fishing in Oregon was 1998 and Western Fishing.com was 19 was, and along with Westfly, was 1999 and the, and the motivation at that time. The book stuff just dropped away. it proved to be too difficult to do with that point. Too expensive. Compared to. The. Returns.. It was the middle the dot com. era and. Well let's let's build these websites up. Sell them to somebody and make a lot of money. I was doing that. So. I was just it just. Was just me. And. The dot com bubble burst I thought well what the heck am I going to do now. So I canned the non-fly fishing site Western fishing dot com. So that's gone. What am I going to do with WestFly. I just don't see a way to make any money off of this right now. I don't know how to monetize it. But I'd like to keep it going. So. I turned it into a nonprofit. To do something . Makes more money and we'll give it to fish causes. But that was. 2000. So they doing it. It's 18 years. In doing. the website. It's a little long in the tooth right now it needs a major. Some major upgrades. Because I kind of got diverted by things like being a grandparent. and writing a novel and writing short stories. stuff like that. I want to get back to it make it a little bit better. Well it's very hard for us. As. To. Separate. The. Fishing. From the writing. If I. Every time I go fishing I'm thinking about what can I write about. So. I'm always paying attention to it from that aspect. And. To. Be. Because the writing was written really not. its not an economically productive activity.. Economically I'd be. Way ahead. To. Take the time I spend on writing and websites and do a better job of managing the assets I already have. And then just go fishing. I mean really I'd spend more time fishing. I. Have a lot more money but. I can't seem to do that. So. I don't sort of a. Compulsion or an obsession I guess.

James Thull [00:26:46] Do you feel it's made you more consciously observant?

Scott Richmond [00:26:49] Yes. And. Then. And. And people think it's more cool if you say you're a writer. I'm very happily married. So. but I weren't if I was single I know that has a lot of. Appeal to. The opposite sex. Well you do. I'm a writer. Oh really. That's so sexy. Well you can fish for native species native wild. Fish. That's one thing. It's. Beautiful. And you can do it all year. Now having gone on about. The value of. my enjoyment of native wild fish I have to also say. That. I do enjoy fly fishing for carp. Which are as invasive as thye get. But very challenging. Yes. Yeah I don't really know about National Park.Service could. I mean they do have a role in preserving habitat. And they should be preserving habitat. Suited to native species. Now how you control. Populations. I think that. We're in. There are places that have. Self-sustaining. Populations. Of. Non-native. But wild fish. And. Where they are not. Impacting . Native fish. Then. I guess I don't have a problem with that. But. I think that's a hard thing to prove. When. They're not.

James Thull [00:28:58] Yeah. That's especially. I think in Montana it may be more of an issue because cut throat are. I wouldn't say the strongest species of trout in some ways brook trout rainbows Browns will out compete them and of course interbreed with them. And so on and so having a genetically clear cut. Cut throat population is more of an issue. One of the things that I think Yellowstone has done a really good job of is one of the mandates of national parks is for preserving native species so that they have where there's natural barriers. They've taken out the rainbows and the brookies and things like that put back in cuts and Graylings and things like that.

Scott Richmond [00:29:37] And. I think that. The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has. Tended to move toward . Well I think there I don't think they're stocking Brook trout anywhere anymore. They used to. And they've just kind of let them fade out. There were some self-sustaining populations in some of the lakes but I think. They. tended to fade away. There was a fly fishing only Lake fairly well-known wonderful lake called Hosmer

Lake. That. Was. Well known for having. A landlocked. Atlantic salmon fishery. And they. Stopped doing that. They're not stocking them. There anymore because it's not a native fish. And then. Hosmer is a wonderful lake. . What. What kind of fish were they? landlocked. Atlantic salmon. And. brook Trout. But. Not native here. Why would you do that if You're going to put anything in you might as well put in rainbows. And a lot of the lakes. Especially the Highlands and the Cascades. Don't have. A. Natural. Trout populations you. Can say well they're. isolated. So they're not going to impact other native fish. On the other hand they do impact things like. Frogs. So they're native. So. They do have an impact. I kind of got mixed feelings about this. Well they can be saved. And they're in a lot. a lot of danger and if you just look at. The kinds of. Run we used to have. Compared to what we have today It's a terrible situation. Some of that. We used to think it was genetics. That they were taking. A narrow genetic strain. Salmon. And steelhead. And. Using those for all the hatchery stock programs. Skamania steelhead. What you got in the Great Lakes if I understand right. is the Skamania strain of steelhead. So they thought well we'll. We'll get some. some wild. Fish. And we'll. Use those in our hatchery breeding program. And what they found was that after about two generations, this had terrible results. Even though they had. Wild parents. They just finished a study here just. About the last six weeks or 4 weeks. That. They found that. The hatchery steelhead. Had. Changed their. Their. DNA. Significantly. In. One generation. The mere fact of being raised in a different environment. They changed. Their genetic structure. So yeah that's that's what's happening. Between. Climate change. Habitat destruction. And. Hatchery. Policies. I think. And. Fishing regulations because we allow. Far too many. Fish. To be. To be killed. That. That has. A big impact. I think that. The. Regulations that they set up for salmon. this is both commercial. Fishing and sport fishing. The. Regulations call for a certain escape. Number of wild fish. I have a strong suspicion. That number is much lower than it ought to be. How. Much too optimistic. There are. More. Numerous populations of wild animals. That require. A great deal. Of. Diversity and in large numbers to be sustained. It. Is. A lot more than you think. Yes. Salmonids may just. Fall into that and there is there is a role that. The. Non-anadromous. Fish. Play. In Steelhead and salmon. Reproduction. In the wild. We're just starting to understand. This this is. A very complex issue. Sure. And we just don't understand it at not. You just. Barely. Barely touched the surface. It wasn't that long ago they thought oh let's. Let's. Let's improve things let's make life easier. For. Coastal salmon and we'll take all of the woody debris out of the rivers. Well turns out that was a essential. for moving fish. So now they're putting it back the genetic thing that inner. Interactions with. Hatchery and wild populations. These are all recent. Things. I. Mean we were so ignorant about this.

James Thull [00:34:59] But of course even the different drainages can have slight genetic differences. And behavior habits and. That's. they are a complex fish

Scott Richmond [00:35:06] Well unless it's the. Thing. Everybody says they've. a lot of people. Saying and believe. That. Salmon. anadromous fish like salmon and steelhead we got salmon. Four species of Pacific Salmon. Chum King . Coho. Sockeye. Plus Steelhead Trout, cutthroat trout we have alot of anadromous species. So--where. was I going with that? I, everybody thinks they go back to their native river especially Salmon. Well they go back to the exact gravel bed they came from. No they don't. They don't do that. 90. Percent of them do that. 10 percent of them which is a lot of fish. Will wander off to some other river. It's even a bigger number for steelhead steelhead are famous. Wanders. Salmon. Now 90 percent go back. 10 percent go somewhere else. Well that genetic mixing. Is probably essential to having healthy stocks. That's how you. Rebuild. After an environmental catastrophe. Or a. Climatic. Catastrophe. You've got fish that come back after one year in the saltwater. After two years. After three years. Well if you had. A. .

Environmental catastrophe and the Fish were all one year one salt fish. They'd be wiped out. but they wander around they come back at different times. It's all. Nature just mixes it up in a wonderful way Plus the way that they refresh the gravel and change things. And you take the wild spawning fish out of the rivers. And the river dies.

James Thull [00:37:05] So is it like ideal. A mutt more genetically healthy than a purebred dog. Kind of idea with the salmon mixing 10 percent going other places.

Scott Richmond [00:37:14] Seems to be that to. Be that way. You get a certain amount of. mixing that goes on and. Colonization. Of river systems. So it's that's why I said earlier that. If you. If you. Have a place for them. Eventually. You. Know. Fish will come in. They'll do well. just have to be patient. And have that place. Well user feedback is very important but I got remarkably little of it. I asked people what would you like to see on the Web site. Most people just go. I don't know. It just kind of. It grew out of. My. The. Books I wrote. Which were. Basically. the things I wish I knew before I started fishing in this place. Where to go. What to do. what do you tie on. what do you do with it. so. Where to how to. what to Well the 90s it was the books. In the 90s.. I wish. I was a main. Writer. In Oregon. When the website came along in 98. I only did. A book that came out in 98. That was very successful. I did a. Second Edition to Deschutes book in 2004. And did. This. novel in 2012. I've got a collection of short stories that come out this year So the website is where I'm influential at this point. I've hard pressed to name just one right now from writing. But. The. New Writing has shifted because the writing used to be. Guidebooks. Collection of Essays and fishing oregon's endless season was kind of a. Combination of essays with. The technical information in them as well. And. So. On. When. I did the novel it was because it was kicking around the back of my head for a long time. And. The novel has a lot. its set on the Deschutes River. There's a lot of fly fishing content too. Too much for some people. But it's also a lot about relationships. I. Had one person. Whose comment was. This would be a much better book if you just. Skipped all that relationship stuff and. Talk. More about. fly fishing well yeah ok there are people it's just like it's a form of pornography for them and I. Just. fishporn. They want to read about fish. not about the. Relationship stuff. Is just. the way but that's what really interests me is the relationships. Between people. And so. In the short stories there's often a fishing. Context but it's not about fishing. It's about people. There's only so much you can say about. Fishing. Before you're getting very repetitious. And. There's a whole lot more you can say about people. And if the people thing happens in the context of fishing. Or in the context of. The outdoors. And. People's. Interaction. Not just with each other. But with their environment. And how the environment. Either affects them. Or. Symbolizes what's going on. In their. Relationships. Has just opened up. An interesting but I got to finish up these short stories and get back to the website. cause its been neglected for a while you opened up Pandora's box. OK. Because. Let me tell you about Norman MacLean. I was in. what's the town. Seeley Lake. Two years ago. And. I. Set out. To find Norman MacLean's cabin on my bicycle. And had a mountain bike and he kind of used that as a. I wrote. Actually was a series of. Audio pieces. On Westfly. Call bicycle runs through it hours. And. This. Started with the Norman MacLean museum, there in Seeley Lake, which was very touching. You see pictures. Of his brother. Of the books that he taught from and eventually I did find his. Cabin. out on the. Lake. And. I've never heard anybody else say this. So maybe I'm wrong. But here's my take on a river runs through it. Because A River Runs Through It is a very important book to me. I was given a copy of that book on Christmas Eve 1981. And I've done some fly fishing up to that. I haven't gotten through more than the first page. when I said--it went through me like a diamond drill--I want to do more fly fishing. My youngest daughter was finally out of diapers. My house was remodeled and I had this kind of time dividend where I could go off and do other things. And so. I went off and within a few

months became absolutely passionate about. Fly fishing where I'd just been talking I. Little you know. Fit in here and there. Beforehand. Yeah, so *A River Runs Through It* is not about fishing. It's about relationships. And the format for *A River Runs Through It*, if anybody who's familiar with, with classic literature. There's--oh, get the guy's name--it's called the dramatic arc. And you have the beginning, sort of the onset, rising action, climax, falling action, and the ending, the denouement. That is the format in which Shakespeare wrote. The five act play. Because we didn't put things in acts but he had that. That came later. But he had the. Structure to it. Norman MacLean says this at the beginning, or near the beginning of *A River Runs Through It*. That he talks about the cast, and it says. A touch above. And he's really talking about writing and he's talking about the format of the, in my mind, that the fly cast has a beginning, a lift off that sets things in motion. And then there's the back cast. Everything goes one direction back. There's a brief pause. And everything turns around. And goes. The other direction. And then there's a sudden stop. And the fly settles gently on. Water. That is the classic dramatic structure. Now did Norman MacLean know what he was doing? Damn right he knew what he was doing. What did the guy do at the University of Chicago, he taught Fricking Shakespeare. I've seen his copies of the plays with his handwriting in them at the museum there at Seely Lake. And so, the book takes place in a series of fishing trips in which this thing happened. When you think about the dramatic arc in a play like *Romeo and Juliet* kind of an offset. You've got this lovesick guy Romeo, and then he goes to the ball he sneaks in to the ball at the Capulets and meets Juliet. And you have rising action. Like the roller coaster. Characters who are in charge of their destiny. And, and now it's falling action. It's like gravity. The characters are no longer in charge of their destiny. Destiny has them by the throat And. Then there's a sudden stop. At the. end. That's the structure the river runs through it and Norman MacLean knew exactly what he was doing. And he put it in the context of a fly cast.