

zinky-dorthy-2017-04-22.mp4

Dorthy Zinky [00:00:10] Well it, it probably has made me more sane. I have always enjoyed the outdoors. My father started me fishing at 4, not fly fishing. And so I developed quite a love for waters, fish. I married a man who never fished, his father was an avid fly fisherman and he actually was the one that got me into fly fishing. I had done all the other kinds of fishing and so I picked up fly fishing, I fell in love with it and that's really all I do now. I took a class from a very well known fly fishing instructor. He did not want to teach beginners but I went out and I caught fish and then when I had a chance to go on a five day trip the instructor said "Well now you have to know how to double haul." I said "Oh?" I didn't know what double haul was. So I took the class and actually learned how to fly cast. Because before I was just doing the old flop, flop and, and I said I was catching fish, but not doing a very pretty job of it.

Dorthy Zinky [00:01:29] I grew up fishing in the Salinas Valley, there was a small river, small stream.

James Thull [00:01:35] Is that here in Idaho?

Dorthy Zinky [00:01:36] No, it's in California. It's water that came out of the Pacific Coast range flowing into the Salinas Valley and I grew up fishing on that. And then I grew up fishing on the coast for cabezon, lingcod. We also picked abalone and uh, that's, that's my childhood background.

Dorthy Zinky [00:02:12] Access has been limited to places that you know I used to fish before. The, some of the areas the fishing isn't as good, simply because the rivers have been degraded. But I can see more groups working on trying to get the rivers back in shape. This is in California. The problem in California you have people that don't appreciate what they have. I stopped fishing for steelhead in California some years ago, because of the people who ran through the redds destroying eggs. Simply because they didn't care about that, they figured the fish were always going to be there. But as you know, if you destroy the redds, you destroy the fish. So I, it made me sick just to watch this so I stopped fishing in those areas, and I go fish for steelhead now in Oregon simply because people seem to have much more concern about what goes on in their rivers.

Dorthy Zinky [00:03:29] Well unless um... I see more and more places going to pay to play, pay to fish, pay to play. And, I hate to say this but at least you know that they take care of their fish. I'm concerned that what I see in California is that there are too many people that don't appreciate the fish. They think it's for them to catch, eat, and they'll always be there. And so my concerns are conservation I guess.

James Thull [00:04:08] Yeah.

Dorthy Zinky [00:04:09] And I don't- you can try educating some of these people but I'm sorry, they're very difficult to educate. I, would you like to have one example?

James Thull [00:04:18] Yes, I would.

Dorthy Zinky [00:04:19] Okay, I'm fishing for steelhead on this one river in California and this one moment, this one man has hooked a salmon and I said to him very nicely, "Excuse me sir, but you foul-hooked your salmon." I'm sorry, that was the wrong thing to say. I have, they say "if looks could kill", that was one of those. And I'm not sure the man

could talk because he grunted to me. And it was not, it was a learning experience for me, let's put that way, I never did that again.

Dorthy Zinky [00:05:02] Well yes because the dams have been so bad for the anadromous fish. And then because people will go in and poach. We don't have enough Fish and Game people. Where I fish for salmon, this is fly fishing for salmon; we've watched certain people who will fish one place, catch a fish, that's your limit. And then they'll end up going some other place to fish. Same day, which is against the regulation. But uh... for the most part I guess with the salmon people it's the same group, and so you know people and it's like, it's almost like a club and there are a few bad apples.

Dorthy Zinky [00:06:01] Well the fish aren't as- no they're not as big. Well they are in some places I know. Somebody just caught a 28 pound steelhead this last February on the Smith. The Smith is one of the last wild rivers there in northern California. It's a beautiful river. I cannot go there and fish it by myself simply because the water is too fast. And I'm a conservative wader, but let's say I make a mistake, I would be in real trouble. I don't fish that by myself. I fish a lot of places- I have fished all my life, other than with my dad, when he passed away I fished by myself. Simply, there weren't women who were out there fishing or who liked to fish like I did. I take, I took one woman once, fishing. And after a half hour she got out of the river, this was steelhead fishing, and she got out of the river because she hadn't caught anything. I'm sorry, with steelhead you may not catch anything in a day or you may catch- I've had 17 fish days, I've often had zero fish days, so.

James Thull [00:07:13] So that- I guess that leads me into my next question.

Dorthy Zinky [00:07:17] Development, development, I think more development, yes. Oh, I'm just trying to think. The forest, when they go in and clear cut. That ruins it.

James Thull [00:07:35] Changes everything doesn't it?

Dorthy Zinky [00:07:36] Because they will come down. And so I've seen rivers ruined from that and ruined for years.

Dorthy Zinky [00:07:49] They did that with the San Joaquin um, it probably been, there probably had no water in it for maybe as many as 30 years and finally somebody came and sued, maybe the state I don't know. And they started putting water back. Now of course there's water this year but there's water everywhere this year. But it, there um, I see. I know a lot about agriculture because I grew up in that area and over in the San Joaquin Valley on the west side you have some of the poorest soil conditions of anywhere. And yet they came in there and they started farming in that area and it drove a lot of selenium. They had a place where the selenium collected but they were losing so many birds in that area, they had to stop that. Now the selenium I think probably just gets dumped where people are supposed to dump it in. But that ar- those areas are never going to be good soil areas. And so, those people are the ones- a lot of those people are screaming for water they're getting it this year, but were screaming in the past saying, you know, "we grow crops and Congress isn't letting us have any water." But it's not the place to be growing crops. It's just bad soil. Very alkaline. Which then leaches on all the- all the salts and then.

Dorthy Zinky [00:09:28] I see a lot more women. I used to go places and I'd be the only woman there. And um, and the thing was the people accepted me, the men accepted me because I could fish. And they knew I wasn't there to whatever, but I was there to fish and I

became kind of like their buddies. And I have a lot of friends in the fly fishing area that I've known for probably 35 years. And when we go places you always run into some of them. And they're, they're quite protective of me which is a very dear thing. But I don't feel that they need to be but they are.

Dorthy Zinky [00:10:18] I like tying all kinds. I like fishing for all kinds of fish, fly fishing for all kinds of fish. If I get ahead on flies then I'll concentrate on those that I'm- that I'm slow in. Right now I'm, I'm in a pretty good, in a pretty good shape because I haven't been able to salmon fish for the last years because of the high water. My steelhead fishing the same thing. So I'm loaded with those flies. I tie a lot, I go to Big Horn when I leave Idaho Falls. And I fish there, I'll be there for about six weeks. I normally would be there all summer but the water is high and it's supposed to go up. Most of the fishing will be nymph fishing. Not my favorite but I won't... if that's what I have to do I will. So, I don't know- my favorite dry flies are those with CDC wings. I have always found those to be just, they do- they're more successful for me. If it's successful for me that's the kind I like to tie.

Dorthy Zinky [00:11:37] They're just so gorgeous. They're, they are so beautiful. You look at them, you say "what a beautiful..." We were up on the John Muir wilderness area, our club. I belong to several clubs, but this was a women's fly fishing club. And we, we, we packed in and the first one I caught I had run back to camp. Now, try running in 10 thousand and you don't run very fast. But anyway they were all gone and they had gone downstream where they were catching brookies because you had to be up a little higher for the golden. But they were just gorgeous.

Dorthy Zinky [00:12:24] Well... because I tie, I can look at what's successful and tie it or maybe do a little variation of it and if it works well, that's... I like tying and I like catching fish on my flies and I'll give flies away on the river. Doesn't bother me at all. If somebody's not catching I say "here, try this." And um...

Dorthy Zinky [00:12:59] I fished Argentina and Chile. I fished a lot over Alaska. I fished British Columbia, I fished Mexico. I've never fished Florida. Let's see... or- I've never gone to New Zealand. It used to be on my list. But after going down to Chile I thought I can't deal with these long flights. I don't sleep and you end up, you know after 15 hours um, exhausted and punchy. And so, I still think I would like to go to New Zealand, I just don't want that flight.

Dorthy Zinky [00:13:56] Might be New- might be uh, British Columbia. For big steelhead.

Dorthy Zinky [00:14:08] The steelhead to me are so special because they're, they're not as easy to catch. And some days you may not catch any. Some days you may catch a whole slew. But I just I like they're beautiful. They're just gorgeous fish. I fished one place in Oregon, for what probably were- for landlocked steelhead. It's in the Klamath River or not Klamath river, in the Klamath lake. And those fish can get very large, you can get double digit rainbows. And they are hard fighting fish, but I think they probably evolved as steelhead before the dam was- went in. But I do like the steelhead, that's my favorite.

Dorthy Zinky [00:15:08] Well I've taken young ladies with me and I've worked with them on their knots, and then I've taken them up into the Sierras and worked with them on setting the hook, landing the fish, taking them to lakes where you end up with double digit trout. It's, it's wonderful to watch them grow. That's what, I suppose the most fun.

James Thull [00:15:38] What piece of- what do you advise for them to join a group to just practice? What kind of advice do you give them?

Dorthy Zinky [00:15:44] I tell him to take take advantage of- in San Francisco they have a- I belong to Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club. I may have pawns there and people are so eager to teach anyone. And if they live in the San Francisco area I say go there, they have all kinds of peop- and these are, these are pretty competent people. I said they'd love to help you with your casting. Take advantage of it. There's, there's no place where you can go that's not a pay to play, pay to play place where you can go and catch a lot of lugio which are a lot of fun. You can get them in some of the reservoirs. But you have to know which ones and where to fish. Other than that uh, yeah just take advantage of- there are, there are resources out there. You don't have to go to the fly shop and pay a lot of money for a class unless you want to.

Dorthy Zinky [00:16:59] When we started this, the woman's club. We started over 30 years ago and it was import-.

James Thull [00:17:05] Can you tell us the name of it?

Dorthy Zinky [00:17:06] It was important because other women were afraid to go in predominately male clubs.

James Thull [00:17:14] Can you tell me the name of it?

Dorthy Zinky [00:17:15] Yes, it was the Golden West Women Fly Fishers and they're in New- in San Francisco. And there wer- there were just too many women who were too reluctant to go to all men's clubs. But now I see a lot of women in those clubs and they seem more comfortable and so I'm not sure that an all women's club is as important as it was. We still, you know have, we have a lot of outings. Which is a lot of fun, which are a lot of fun. There's some fun people in them.

Dorthy Zinky [00:18:02] A favorite story. I guess my favorite story is a very good friend, she's since moved down to Santa Fe and we'd been fishing for shad on the American River, no it was on the Yuba River. And her husband had given her a pair of waders and they leaked. So periodically I would have to take her, have her sit down and pick up her feet so we could get the water out of her waders. And, now we're in a very redneck area, I will tell you this. And so when we got back to the car, we start to drop our waders, but you know we wear long johns and all kinds of things underneath. We start to drop our waders and a car had pulled up with two dads and two teenage boys in the car. I've never seen anybody get out of a place so quickly when we dropped our waders. I don't know what they thought we were gonna do. But anyway they really, those boys were going to be corrupted.

Dorthy Zinky [00:19:05] Don't be afraid to get out on your own. Just know your limitations. Be very careful. I've been all over the Sierras and I've gotten places probably where I shouldn't have gone because of wildlife, I don't carry a firearm. And some places I've decided maybe this is not the wisest place to go and I've re- you know, retraced my steps. But don't be afraid to get out there. And I think nothing of going on a little stream that I could wade right up the center of. Now granted I'm probably not going to catch anything bigger than an 8 inch fish, but they're fun and you don't see anybody and if you like that kind of atmosphere it's wonderful.