



November, 2001

Wow !! What a season. The best way to describe the steelhead fishing we experienced from late September until early November this fall is “world class”. For the first year of serious daily operation on the Bell Irving River, we are extremely pleased with the results. This year we operated 3 guided groups on a daily basis for 4 weeks. I was joined by Wally Faetz and Ken Moreau from Rivers Edge Guide Service in Terrace to guide a total of 26 clients for steelhead this fall. All guests enjoyed first class accommodation and meals at Bell II Lodge. The news will spread throughout the fly fishing community that we have a great run of fish up here. The most encouraging thing about the season was the many resounding comments from our guests....”I’ll be back next year”.

The season started great with anglers landing steelhead and coho as early as 15-September. This first bump of fish was somewhat short lived as mother nature decided to show her force by dumping over 4 inches of rain on the Nass watershed over 3 gloomy days. Needless to say, the fishing was very tough for the next week. Fortunately, our guests realized that one cannot control the weather. Although the fishing was challenging with a swollen river and muddy waters, we managed a couple of hook ups. As this was a returning group of fishermen from last season, we enjoyed great dinners and a good atmosphere and will look forward to their return next year.

By the first week in October the river was back in shape. The high water had brought in a great run of fresh, aggressive fish. The Moore group from Seattle, WA experienced one of the finest mornings of the season on 7-October hooking up with steelhead after steelhead. Although all experienced steelheaders, they were excited with the regularity of the fish this particular morning. The highlight was Jim Moore’s 17 lb buck caught on his single handed, Sage 9 weight with a floating line and a Special Bell Irving Marabou pattern. After the weekend on the Bell Irving, the Skykomish will never be the same for these guys.

The next week saw the first of 2 groups from Great Britain come to visit us. Peter Baxendale from Strutt & Parker Sporting in London brought his Atlantic salmon fishing techniques to tempt our BC steelhead. Although not entirely familiar to the intricacies of steelhead fishing, Peter had no problem landing 2 beautiful 15 lb fish on his first afternoon of fishing. He capped the week with a 39” buck that hammered a Finnish tried,

Atlantic salmon pattern in about 1 ½ ‘ of water. We were also able to take fish on a dry fly skated through boulder strewn structure on the warmer days this week. This was the first documented hook up of this kind on the Bell Irving river. Next year, it’s dry fly fishing all the way !! We will look forward to Peter’s return next year as he has shown interest in bringing his Salmon fishing amigos to tackle our BC steelhead.

The fishing remained very consistent throughout October. Our second group from the UK, John Salkeld, Hugh Murray and trip leader James Morland had a week of a lifetime. All anglers were very experienced with Atlantic salmon techniques, fishing rivers from Russia to Iceland and having logged many days on private rivers in Scotland. Adjusting to the steelhead took no time at all, and Hugh even managed to land his first steelhead ever with only 10 minutes of fishing. The weather conditions were not favorable this week. We received about 8” of snow making hot lunches, shelter and a daily fire a necessary part of our day. The guys soon realized that you do have to work to catch these fish. Nevertheless, the group managed to land fish everyday. By day 5 the water conditions where starting to change. The snow melt and warmer temperatures brought the water level up and slightly cloudy. This is all the change that the fish needed. The next 2 days were amazing as we hooked fish after fish. We landed 4 fish over 20lbs, including one 41” buck by John. Already confirmed to return next year for the same week, we are looking forward to a group of 4 Englishmen that will prepare to do battle with the king of the freshwater fishes.....Nass steelhead.

Pictures of our guests and their fish can be found in the photo gallery. Hope to see you in our album soon.

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Fly Fishing guide
Bell II Lodge