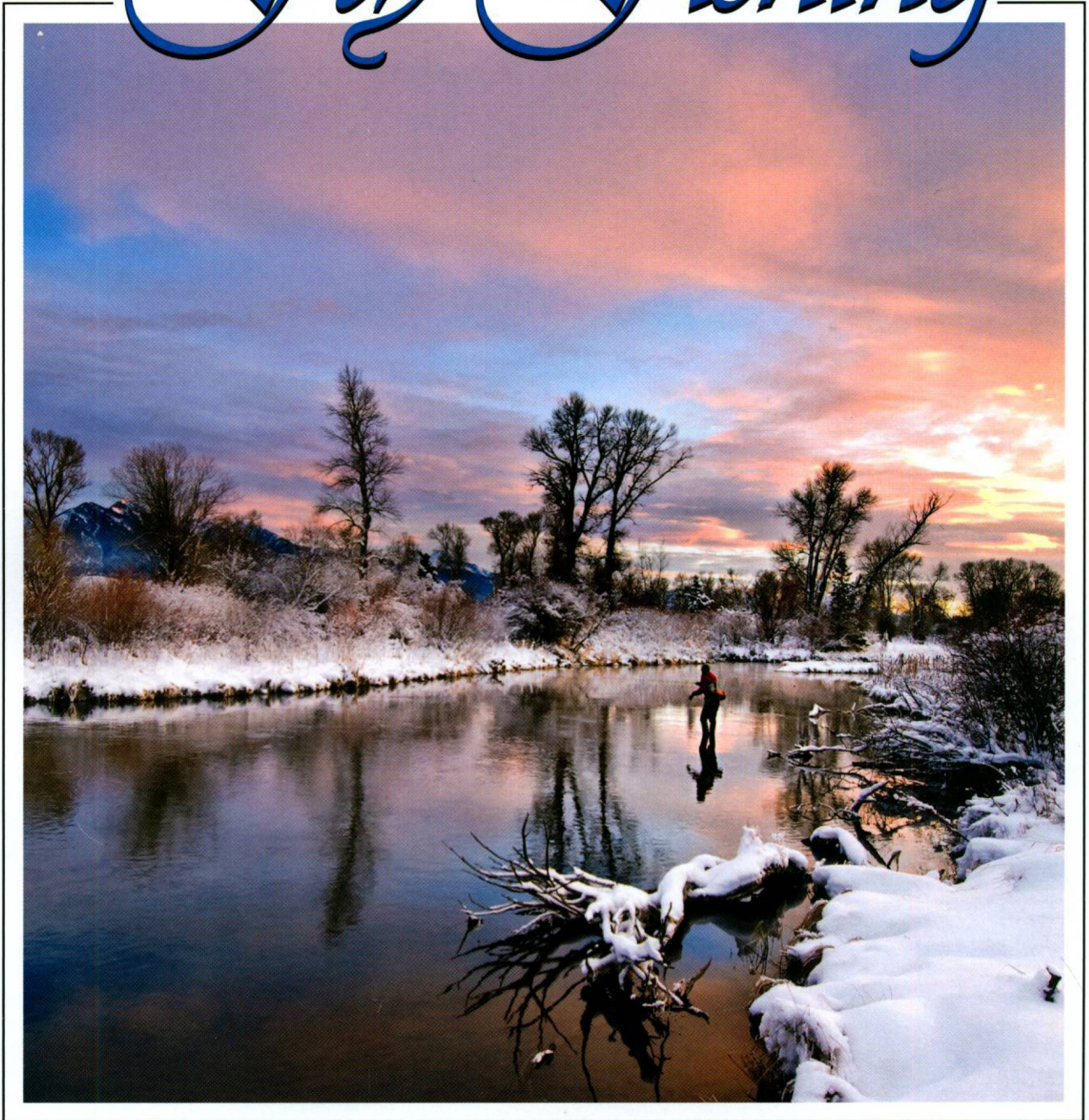


# NORTHWEST

January/February 2008

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## *Fly Fishing*



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Merced River, CA • 40  
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# NORTHWEST *Fly Fishing*

Volume 10, Number 1 • January/February 2008

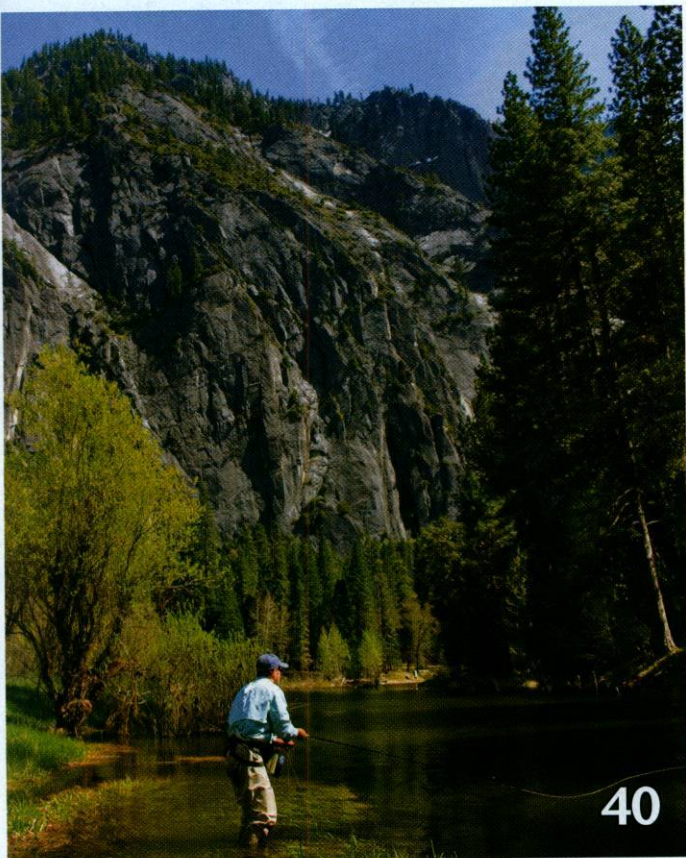
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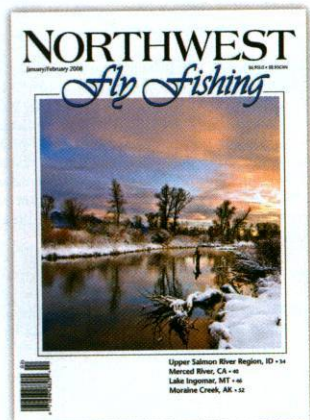
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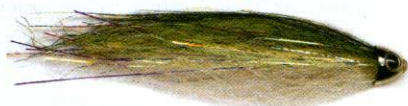


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Cover: Jenny Grossenbacher shrugs off the cold on DePuy's Spring Creek in Montana.

Photo by: [GrossenbacherPhoto.com](http://GrossenbacherPhoto.com)



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# Pioneers & Legends

John H.N. "Jack" Hemingway, 1923–2000:  
Idaho Outdoorsman, Environmentalist, and Passionate Fly Fisher

By Jack W. Berryman



Jack Hemingway finishing a long cast for a steelhead on Oregon's North Umpqua River in the late 1960s. Photograph by the late Dan Callaghan, courtesy of Bob Wethern and Mary Kay Callaghan

John Hadley Nicanor Hemingway was born October 10, 1923, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada. His parents, Ernest Miller Hemingway and Elizabeth Hadley Richardson, had married in 1921 and were residing in Toronto while Ernest wrote for the *Toronto Star*. Young "Bumby," as his father called him, was given his two middle names to honor his mother and the famous Spanish bullfighter Nicanor Villalta. Shortly after Jack's birth, his parents, as part of the Lost Generation, moved to Paris, where they soon divorced. Although his father's popular book *The Sun Also Rises* (1926) was dedicated to "Hadley & Jack," and he figured in his father's short stories "A Day's Wait" and "Fathers and Sons," Jack saw little of his father during the 1920s, except during summers.

In 1928, Jack's grandfather, Dr. Clarence Edmonds Hemingway, committed suicide, an act that would torment both he and his father throughout their lives. The following summer, Jack accompanied his father on a trout-fishing trip to Montana, where he was introduced to fly fishing. Looking back at those formative years, Jack remembered that "in our family not only fly fishing but all sporting forms of fishing were a sort of religion."

By the mid-1930s, Jack had moved back to the United States, where he was enrolled in Storm Gate School in Cornwall, New York. He continued to spend summers fishing and traveling with his father. For his 15th birthday

in 1938, Jack received a copy of Ray Bergman's new book, *Trout*, a text that Jack said "captured my imagination, introducing me to the vast numbers of places to fish and techniques to master and stimulating a voracious hunger for all of the literature of fly fishing." He and his father continued to make their annual fly-fishing trips to Montana, but by the late 1930s, Ernest had discovered Sun Valley, Idaho, and in fact, finished writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) at Sun Valley Lodge in 1939. The following summer, Jack first fished Silver Creek and immediately fell in love with the area.

After graduation from prep school in 1941, Jack and a friend took a six-week fishing trip to the West, including the Yellowstone country. On this trip, Jack first fished the "famous North Umpqua River we had read about in Ray Bergman's book *Trout*." Here, although he did not ever see the fish that broke a skated fly off his leader, Jack had his first encounter with a steelhead. Clearly remembering the event, Jack knew that "even though we hadn't done battle, and had barely touched gloves, I felt in no way cheated. There was pure exhilaration in the sure knowledge that I had found something entirely new to me, and which was going to stimulate endless interest, anticipation, and excitement from then on."

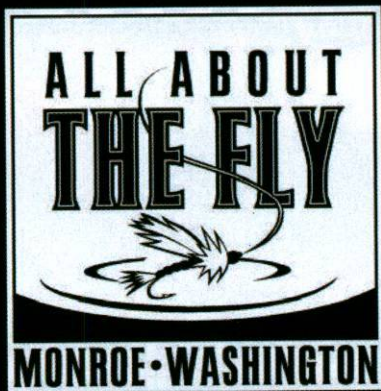
Jack began college at Dartmouth in the fall of 1941 but dropped out after his first year. He took another extended fishing trip to the West in the summer of 1942, fishing the Yellowstone region as well as in Idaho, Washington, and Oregon. On this trip he first fished Washington's Kalama River, a river that Jack believed "literally changed my whole life."

Fishing for summer-run steelhead with a dry fly on his first day, Jack hooked and landed three fish on three consecutive casts, the first steelhead he ever landed.

That fall he enrolled in the University of Montana in Missoula but once again grew dissatisfied with college life. He dropped out and enlisted in the U.S. Army in



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The advertisement features a photograph of a man in a fishing jacket and cap, smiling and holding a large rainbow trout. The background shows a scenic view of a fishing lodge with several buildings and a river. The text "ALASKA SPORTSMAN'S LODGE" is at the top. At the bottom, it says "Kvichak River • Bristol Bay, Alaska" and "ORVIS 2005-2006 FISHING LODGE OF THE YEAR" with the website "www.fishasl.com" and phone number "(907) 276-7605".

early 1943. Initially serving with the military police in North Africa, he was soon assigned to the Office of Strategic Services with the rank of captain. Known for his bravery, he parachuted over the French countryside with fly-fishing equipment in hand. He was later wounded, captured, and spent six months as a prisoner of war until World War II ended.

After the war, Jack tried college again at the University of Montana but was more interested in a young woman he had met in Sun Valley. He quit school and moved to Sun Valley to be closer to Byra Whittlesey, better known as "Puck," from Twin Falls, Idaho. After stints as a bellhop and desk clerk at Sun Valley Inn where Puck was employed, and amid plenty of trout fishing on Silver Creek, he took a bus to Key West to visit his father and then bused again to San Francisco. After a brief department store job, he started a business tying trout flies with a friend, Peter Auer, selling them to stores. They also attempted to do "custom work" from their shop in Auer's apartment and excelled at tying Peter Schwab (*Northwest Fly Fishing*, Summer 2001) steelhead flies.

"Auer and Hemingway Flies" did not last long, however, because of the long hours and low pay. So in early 1948, Jack became a sales trainee with the Ashaway Line Company in Ashaway, Rhode Island. He was assigned to the Northwest region and, with Puck now residing in San Francisco, was thrilled with the potential. He traveled and fished regularly in northern California, Oregon, and Washington, with frequent stops at the Kalama and the North Umpqua, where he befriended Clarence Gordon. Yet, by the fall of 1948, Jack realized that "so far I had met only dismal failure in everything I had set out to do since the end of the war." He knew that he "had found the right girl, but I hadn't been able to find the right means to support her."

So, to have "an honest living," Jack went back into active duty with the Army in late 1948 and was sta-

tioned first in Germany and later at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. He fished throughout Europe while in the military. He and Puck were married in Paris in June 1949, and their first child, Joan, was born there in May 1950. Jack was able to fish while stationed at Fort Bragg and also took leave to visit his father in Havana, Cuba. Jack finally left the Army in late 1953 and drove back to his wife's hometown of Twin Falls in search of work. After taking some time to fish the local waters, including the Snake, he left Puck and his daughter in early 1954 and went on to Eugene, Oregon, looking for a job in securities. He was eventually employed selling stocks in Portland and was happy to be located again in steelhead country. He caught his first winter steelhead on a fly that year in the Toutle, and also met Frank Moore on the North Umpqua.

Jack's second daughter, Margot, was born in February 1955 in Portland, and the following year, he started with Merrill-Lynch. He discovered the opportunities for steelhead and salmon in British Columbia, where he met Roderick Haig-Brown. After working for Merrill a short time in Havana, where he visited his father—and both pledged never to commit suicide—he returned to Portland and his family. Shortly after, in 1958, Jack transferred to the San Francisco Merrill office and rented a house in Mill Valley for the next nine years.

His stay in San Francisco provided many opportunities for fishing. He fished the Feather and Russian for steelhead and shad, made numerous trips to British Columbia, and became a devoted North Umpqua summer visitor. On the North Umpqua in late June 1961, Moore helped Puck catch her first steelhead on a fly. During that trip, Jack received the tragic news that his father had committed suicide on July 2 in Sun Valley. Moore flew Jack and his family from Roseburg to Ketchum for the funeral. In November that year, Jack's third daughter, Mariel, was born. The following year Moore introduced Jack to a member



of the Steamboaters club on the North Umpqua, Salem attorney and photographer Dan Callaghan. They became lifelong friends and regular fishing partners for the next 38 years.

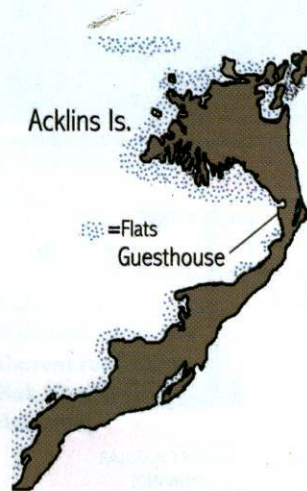
At the age of 42, in 1965, Jack finally finished his college education at Sonoma State College, with a particular emphasis in limnology. He and Puck attended the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) conclave with Dan and Mary Kay Callaghan in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, in 1966 and convinced the gathering that Sun Valley would be an ideal future meeting site. Following the conclave, Rod and Ann Haig-Brown accompanied the two couples for several days of trout fishing on Silver Creek. With the benefit of money from his father's estate and a desire to get back to the Sun Valley area, Jack moved his family to Ketchum in 1967. He was momentarily set back with a mild heart attack but worked for a local newspaper and did some guiding on the Big Wood River.

Once settled in Idaho, Jack became very involved in matters of politics, conservation, and fishing and hunting in his adopted home state. He befriended Ted Trueblood (*Northwest Fly Fishing*, Spring 2004), an associate editor for *Field & Stream*. Through this friendship Jack became Northwest field editor for *Field & Stream* in 1970; learned to fish the Salmon, Clearwater, and Grande Ronde rivers for steelhead; and got directly involved with efforts to stop a pit mine in the White Cloud Mountains and a dam on the lower end of Hells Canyon on the Snake. As a result of these latter efforts, Jack sponsored a fund-raising party in Sun Valley for the Democratic candidate for governor, Cecil Andrus, under the banner of "Republicans for Andrus." When Andrus, who opposed the mine and dam, won the election, he appointed Jack to the Idaho Fish and Game Commission (IFGC), a position he held until 1977.

Jack regularly attended the FFF conclaves during the early 1970s and became friends with most of the fly-fishing notables in North America.

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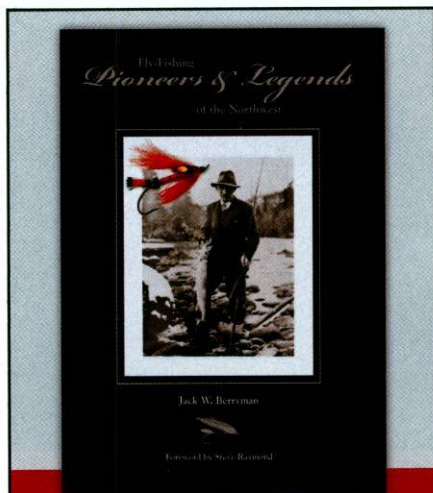
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Accordingly, he traveled extensively with fly-fishing trips to Chile, Iceland, Norway, Alaska, British Columbia, Yellowstone, and Oregon, among numerous other places. He was also the focus or author of several important magazine articles during this time. He and his half-brother Pat were featured in a June 1970 *Field & Stream* article, "Out in Hemingway Country," and he authored "The North Umpqua Story" in the February 1971 issue of *Field & Stream* as well as "Will We Let the Pink and Silver Warrior Die?" for the August/September 1971 issue of *National Wildlife*. Jack and Pat took *Field & Stream* writer Hank Bradshaw to fish Silver Creek, where Bradshaw described Jack's appearance as "ruggedly handsome" and was so impressed watching Jack fish that he described the experience as "one of the finest exhibitions of fly-casting I've ever seen."

In his *National Wildlife* article about the future of Columbia River watershed steelhead, Jack predicted that "the day of their decline or even demise in the Snake River watershed of the Columbia may be closer than many of their admirers realize. This at least appears to be the outlook unless something is done."

During his term as a commissioner for the IFGC from 1971 until 1977, Jack was able to institute some crucial conservation measures. He was instrumental in the adoption of catch-and-release laws in Idaho as well as stopping the practice of stocking hatchery-raised "catchable trout" where they would negatively impact the wild trout population. Jack noted that "we were able to bring about some of the most forward-looking fisheries



Jack Hemingway walks out of the river after a long day of winter steelhead fishing in the early 1980s. He generally fished with binoculars around his neck so he could more closely view the wonders of nature that he loved so dearly. Photograph by the late Dan Callaghan, courtesy of Bob Wethern and Mary Kay Callaghan

policies anywhere in the world."

In 1975, during his tenure as a commissioner, he urged the Nature Conservancy to purchase more than 800 acres of land along Silver Creek, as well as more than 10,000 acres of conservation easements, the first such project in Idaho. Jack, along with his friend Ernest Schweibert, mounted a national fund-raising campaign for the purchase and succeeded in establishing fly-fishing-only/catch-and-release rules on what is today known as the Silver Creek Preserve. During this time, too, Jack used his name and status to advance other conservation causes for the Atlantic Salmon Federation and the North Atlantic Salmon Fund as well as the Nature Conservancy.

During the 1980s Jack's daughters Margot and Mariel both became celebrities in the world of modeling and acting. Both had been thrust into the limelight at an early age and brought considerable national attention to



Jack and Puck. When Jack published his first book in 1986, *Misadventures of a Fly Fisherman: My Life With and Without Papa*, he exclaimed, "I spent the first fifty years of my life being the son of a famous father and am now spending the last fifty as the father of famous children." He went on to say that the "only waves I have made have been in the currents of trout and salmon streams, and now that our fledglings are all out of the nest, that's where I propose to continue to make waves."

After Puck died from cancer in 1988, Jack married Angela Hovey the following year in Sun Valley. He told his new bride that "I am introducing you to a life of nature, fishing, and shooting" as they promptly departed for a six-month honeymoon in Europe to fish and hunt. By the early '90s, Jack and Angela had built a log cabin overlooking the Grande Ronde River in Washington, and used it regularly for their hunting and fishing exploits. Jack continued to fish all over the world in the company of other celebrities like Yvon Chouinard (founder of outdoor company Patagonia), Tom Brokaw, and Sasha Tolstoy (grandson of the great Russian novelist). Yet he still fished year after year with Callaghan and never missed their annual trips to the Yellowstone area and the North Umpqua.

Jack finished the manuscript of his second book, *A Life Worth Living: The Adventures of a Passionate Sportsman*, shortly after he had written the foreword to Nick Lyons's book, *Hemingway on Fishing*, in early 2000. The Lyons Press agreed to publish Jack's book, and Jack flew to New York City that November to meet with Lyons as well as to get a heart checkup. Lyons remembered that "Jack very much wanted the title *A Life Worth Living*," surely the result of his experiences with the suicides of both his grandfather and father as well as daughter Margot in 1996. As a result of findings by his physician, Jack underwent emergency open-heart surgery; within days after complications arose, Jack was taken off life support and died on December 1.

In essence, Jack Hemingway lived the life his father wrote about—the heroic exploits of soldiers, bullfighters, boxers, fishermen, and hunters. Much like the heroes in Hemingway's novels, Jack exemplified the "Hemingway Code" of "grace under pressure." Physical prowess, sportsmanship, hard work, valor, bravery, and being a skilled warrior, just like the character traits espoused in the boy's novels of Gilbert Patten and Ralph Henry Barbour or in Teddy Roosevelt's "virile virtues," were all embodied in Jack's personality and his way of life.

A memorial was held in New York City in early December with moving tributes from Tom Brokaw, Howell Raines from the *New York Times*, and Callaghan. Another memorial service was held later that month in Sun Valley, where Idaho governor Dirk Kempthorne reminded the large gathering that "Idaho has lost one of its finest... Jack Hemingway lived a life as big as Idaho's outdoors. He was never happier than when he was knee-deep in the midst of one of our beautiful streams, fly rod in hand."

His wife Angela remembered that "fly fishing was his passion, and it took him to the far reaches of the planet," and daughter Mariel explained that "my father, in an unconventional way, was a priest of sorts... in the greatest cathedral of all—nature."

In her emotional eulogy, she said, "His communion took place in the streams and rivers he fished... The peace that Daddy felt in the outdoors was a gift from God... and he gave it back by his many conservation efforts, and in sharing with family and friends."

Obituaries and tributes were published in the *London Times* and *New York Times* and numerous other dailies, as well as in most of the national fly-fishing magazines. His book, *A Life Worth Living*, was published posthumously in 2002.

*Jack W. Berryman is an angling historian and author of Fly-Fishing Pioneers & Legends of the Northwest. He lives in Kirkland, Washington.*

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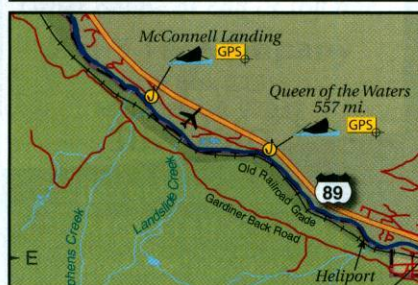
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