

NW Youth Conservation and Fly Fishing Academy History - by Mike Clancy, Co-Director

It all started with idea of the founder, Dick Nye, a retired Tacoma middle school music teacher. Preparations for the Academy started in 2002 with Dick attending a youth camp, the nationally acclaimed, award winning Pennsylvania Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp in Boiling Springs, PA. After 2 years of preparation, Dick conducted the first Academy on Hicks Lake in Lacey, WA. at the Gwinwood Christian Community Center in 2004.

The Academy is sponsored by The Washington Council of TU, The Washington State Council of the IFFF, hosted by the members of The Puget Sound Fly Fishers of Tacoma, Olympia Chapter of TU and the South Sound Fly Fishers of Olympia.

Dick Nye retired after the 2008 Academy. Jim Brosio and I took over the responsibly of The Academy with our first challenge for the 2009 Academy. With the financial support of the Washington TU Chapters, the IFFF Fly Fishing Clubs, corporate and individual sponsors, we gave it our best and it worked. In all the years that Jim and I have been co-directors, we have been assisted by at least 50 volunteers. Without the support of the groups I mentioned, this Academy would not happen. Ron Smorynski and Jim Brosio, TU/SSFF/PSFF, have been involved since the very first Academy in 2004. Tom Van Gelder, TU/PSFF and Dave Bryant, PSFF/SSFF joined the staff, Matt Tuttle is the current Camp Director for the week event. Bob Triggs has also been Camp Director in prior years.

The curriculum is structured to provide students with a background in environmental science and includes lessons in ecology, hydrology, aquatic entomology, invasive species, watersheds, fish biology and behavior. Students also learn the skill of fly fishing, including fly tying, casting instruction provided by IFFF-CCI's, knot tying, stream side ethics and water safety. The Academy is for boys and girls, 12-16 years old. All equipment is supplied, enrollment fee is still \$275, however; no one will be turned away because of money. Each applicant needs to write an essay, explaining why **they** would like to attend and a letter of recommendation from their science teacher or counselor. The Academy for 2015 will be June 21-27 at The Gwinwood Center, on Hicks Lake in Lacey, WA. Applications will be accepted starting January 1, 2015. You may download the application at our website – www.nwycffa.com or view information on our Facebook page, our email: nwycffa@comcast.net.

Mike Clancy, Jim Brosio, & Tom VanGelder – Co-Directors