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Report from Fletcher's Cove - September 16, 2010

If you want to fish at Fletcher's Cove this fall, please don't dilly-dally too long. We have commenced the fall seasonal process of rowboat maintenance. As September makes way for October, the number of rowboats available will shrink as they are pulled from the water to be cleaned, repaired and repainted for next year. Our classic fishing skiffs get lots of heavy use in a wear-inducing environment and they need mucho TLC before the cold weather arrives. For example, if most of the prep work had not been done before last February, the "Siberian express" that charged into D.C. would have delayed the return of the boats to the river. Fishing at Fletcher's often bolts full gallop right out of the gate in late March, so we need those boats ready to row. But rest assured that Fletcher's will have some boats available through October as well as kayaks and canoes.

Alex Binsted, Fletcher's resident fishing ace, and his dad Mark (a Fletcher's employee in the 1970's) took a little angling trip above the Cove last week. The precise location will remain undisclosed, but I will say it was prime smallmouth bass territory. Much of the Potomac above D.C. , with all its water quality and over development issues, can still be described as a smallmouth bass factory. I am annually amazed at the river's resilience in spite of the challenges humans have thrown at it. After a tough summer, Alex and Mark experienced a fantastic day of fishing with many bass caught and released, along with some aggressive, lure-chasing catfish and panfish.



George Frenett after a day on the river

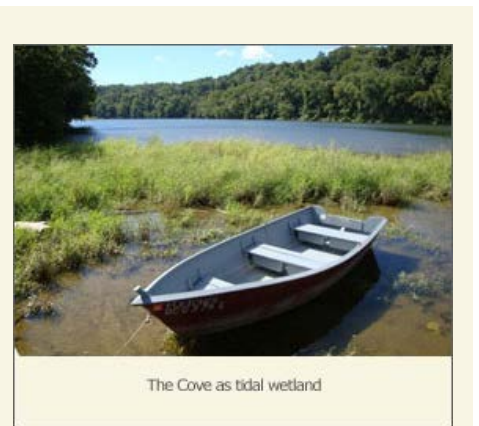
George Frenett is (to our knowledge) the oldest regular angler at Fletcher's. George started angling at Fletcher's in 1942 while in the service during World War II. He attributes his youthful vigor to lots of garlic, a touch of wine, a wonderful marriage and the fact that a day of fishing does not count against one's aging.

George played "tough-guy" football at Fordham, both offense and defense, and was coached by "Sleepy Jim Crowley," one of the vaunted four-horseman of Notre Dame. He had a full sports scholarship and was looking to a possible career with the Redskins until WWII intervened and the entire Fordham team was sent off to serve their country. In

mid-life, George taught at Stratford, an historic public school in Arlington, VA.

No matter how busy I am in the moment, when old timers like George show up at the boathouse, I try to soak in some of their wisdom and stories. In contrast to our youth-oriented, instant knowledge culture, it is a precious treat to look into the eyes of so much life experience. Nothing substitutes for that in a person and it is an immeasurably valuable human asset. Over the years, George has seen so much along the Potomac, but he never stops looking for more.

George fished last week, trolling the drop-offs and structure out from the cove, and was rewarded with a fat smallmouth, some hungry blue cats and assorted snags with sinkers, hooks and line attached.



The Cove as tidal wetland



Alex Binsted and "Dimo" with a fat Potomac River smallie (Photo by Mark Binsted)

The late summer scenery is beautiful along the river shore right now. Many wildflowers and grasses are gracing the landscape and tidal wetlands. If the hot summer discouraged you from getting outdoors, please reconsider now before the cold rains of fall arrive. You can't do much better for a display of nature's beauty than a walk along the C&O Canal when the leaves are turning. An early season cool breeze over the still, warm water has an almost primal, calming effect. Between the torrid and the frigid is where life can celebrate its joyful self. Please come visit us at Fletcher's before the doors and dock are locked for winter.

Dan



One of many delicate wildflowers on display
at your local Fletcher's Cove

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