

## Testimonials

I am taking this opportunity to thank you for the excellent fishing experience this year on the Kitimat River. The action was steady, the fish were sparkling silver, and the river was mesmerizing and magical as always. I especially appreciated your kindness and hospitality both on the river and after hours at your home with your family. The black bear's visit to your neighbour's back yard while we were cleaning the day's catch of salmon and crab added new meaning to this year's adventure and experience.



I especially want to commend you for your fishing expertise and your professional service. It's a real pleasure to be around people like you that have a passion for what they do in life. It may seem to those on the outside that you live the perfect life fishing almost every day in a pristine wilderness environment. The truth is that you work very hard to supply, operate and maintain quality equipment and gear. You also shoulder a big responsibility with respect to safety. I'm sure that each of your fishermen feels comfortable, special and unique because of their time spent in your company. I certainly know that is true for me.

Your Good Friend,  
**Canadian Engineered Products & Sales Ltd. (CANNEPP)**

We've been fishing with Tracy for 5 years and look forward to the next trip every year. Whether it be drifting for fat chinooks on the Kitimat or targeting steelhead off the Skeena, Tracy has always delivered an exciting trip. His equipment is top-notch and he is constantly checking the little things to hook more fish. Tracy is professional and passionate about what he does. In the Pacific Northwest, this is the "go to" guy.



**Brian & Brenda Kochan**  
**Saskatchewan**

Tracey Hittel and Steelhead Heaven know fly fishing and they put into practice that great guiding skill and approach of imparting necessary local knowledge to their clients, so that they catch fish, try new techniques, have fun, and become better fly fishers. Yet, when called for, Tracey and company can be pretty laid back - and just when you want it - for instance, during those wonderful quiet moments when all you want is to watch the flight of the bald eagles in silence. That is what makes for fantastic, memorable trips for their fly fishing clients. And boy, can those guys handle those boats! Always felt safe. Always felt in good hands. Knowledgeable, flexible guides with great skills and positive attitudes - Tracey and team go the extra mile to make great fishing trips.



### **Eric Wilner and Sons**

Arrived at the lodge overlooking the Kalum last week of September 05 not knowing what to expect. Went out with Ted, a very knowledgeable guide, on the Skeena for the first few days, then it was on the Kitimat with Tracey, numerous pinks and one silver for those days.

On October 1st (first drift down the Kalum "AWESOME") Don't remember much about the fishing itself, a few pinks maybe, I wasn't counting, but the scenery and tranquility of that drift down the river left me in awe of the place, and I vowed to return for the steelhead the following April, and booked a week.

Had I known what was in front of me I might not have done so?

October, November then December and with it excruciating pain and hospitalisation. Being close to death's door and having a look at those pearly gates sure puts things in perspective, but the trip back to the Kalum kept me going, and so it was, on the 21st April 06, barely 3 months after major surgery I was back, and eager to try my luck on the Kalum.



Sat. 22nd, first drift with Ted, fished a blank all day, until we came to the last pool and "WHAM" everything went tight, in the neck of the pool, in the main current a leviathan had taken hold and for the next 20 min. It was touch and go who would be victorious. In the net it weighed 21.5lb, MAGNIFICENT" and a great start to the week.

Every day produced fish of outstanding quality, but what makes a trip like this work is the knowledge, expertise and dedication Tracey and Co. are willing to share with the guests at the lodge. They put you in the right spots with unnerving regularity and it's up to you to make the most of this information and more often than not your into a screamer.

I would dearly like to persuade some of my friends to come and try their luck, and pit their wits against a truly outstanding and awesome fish, the Steelhead, it makes our atlantic salmon back in the U.K. look tame. I would suggest it's similar to our Sea trout, only on steroids.

As for the hospitality at the lodge, well with Mickey's home cooking and Harlee's jovial personality, it makes for a fantastic trip to one of the most picturesque and unspoilt locations on the planet.

Many thanks Tracey and everyone for making these trips (for me at least) the most memorable I've been on.

### **Martin E. (Cap)**

"I'm a pretty hardcore steelheader and this was my first trip with Tracey, but based on the experience it won't be my last. The location of the lodge on the Upper Kalum River is breathtaking and his access to classified waters in the Skeena drainage makes this an outfitter worth visiting again. Oh yes, one more tiny thing...he knows where the fish are parked."



### **Paul Kranhold**

Having fished all over the world and shot fishing and travel TV/films in countries like New Zealand and Chile, I was impressed not only with the fly fishing in and around the



Upper Kalum, the beauty of the land, the location of the lodge, the hospitality of the outfitter and lodge owners, but also the knowledge that Tracey and his guides have of the area's fisheries. I can't wait to go back and hook into those elusive steelhead that Tracey and his guides helped put us on.

## John Dietsch

Hi, my name is Troy and I love to fish, salmon and steelhead a favorite. Now, I could tell you about fishing on the coastal rivers of Northern California, Southern Oregon, or the Olympic peninsula in Washington. Maybe the Campbell river, some remote streams out of Ketchikan, the Naknek river, and the Alagnak river or the Karluk river on Kodiak Island plus the many streams and rivers in between. But I am going to let you in on a place that I try to



keep a secret, and that is Steelhead heaven. I have been fortunate enough to fish with Tracy on two different trips and can tell you that having fished with a lot of different lodges and guides that the guide makes the trip, and I have never had someone work so hard to get me and keep me into the fish. Tracy and his guides have so much experience in the area with everything from the fishing conditions and river flows to holding locations of the fish and what to use to catch them. They can accommodate anyone from the hardcore flyfishermen who knows what they want, to the first time fishermen who wants to have a good time. They will tie you anything from a fly like the Kitimat combo to a roeball or show you how. The watershed that they fish from is one of the best in the world, if not the best. You can have an opportunity to fish rivers like the Skeena and for the fish going up to the Kispiox, the river that the world record steelhead comes from or the Babine river. A chance to fish the Mighty Kitimat, the Nass, the Zymoetz{Copper}, the Zymacord or the legendary Kalum, the river that the world record chinook {king} salmon comes from, not to say steelhead up to 30+lbs. If you can land them, bring lots of backing. They can also fly you in to a remote stream where the fish never see another fishermen. Your accommodation at the Upper Kalum Lodge will be one you wont soon forget, from Mickys outstanding meals and desserts to Harlee making sure that you feel at home like one of the family and have everything you need, plus maybe a story or two about the area, since he has been there for quite a long time {ha, ha}. Trust me, the question is not if I am going back, but when I am going back. If you want to fish at a place where the air is clean, the wild life is unbelievably abundant, and any cast can be a new worlds record no matter what you are fishing for, or a fishing trip that you think you died and went to heaven on. You know that Steelhead Heaven is where you want to be. One of the rare places left where the guides get your line into the fish not just the water.

Remember, keep your tip up, your line tight, and always “listen to the guide”

### **Troy Adams**

If you are looking for a real Canadian salmon fishing experience and a serious chance to land a steelhead and five species of salmon on the fly in one week, you need look no further than Steelhead Heaven.



During a recent trip with my father in July, we were treated exceedingly well in what we described as "Chinook Heaven". Good river fishing is dependent on many factors; weather and the resultant water conditions probably being the most important. Having four rivers within an hour drive of the lodge afforded us the flexibility each morning to decide which river we would fish. In my opinion, the guide will either make or break your trip. You will be very hard pressed to find a more dedicated and professional guide than Tracey. This was easily the best value for money fishing trip I have had the pleasure to take.

### **James Fisher Hong Kong**

Looking for a first rate Steelhead fishing experience on the fly? Well here you go. Tracey Hittel, proprietor and chief guide of Steelhead Heaven in Kitimat B.C. is the person to contact. Offering several water options to chase these ironheads within the Neighborhoods of Kitimat and Terrace, Tracey will tailor your trip to your personal style of chase. In this case the request was to be placed on locations that can be fished in the traditional cast-swing technique using a raft only as a means of transport from seams to tailouts. Being able to cast to holding areas being the most desirable action. And action it produced! Measured perhaps not in great numbers of fish but rather anticipating that ferocious grab at the arc of the swing. This is the ultimate rush of fly fishing for trophy size steelhead on the Kalum River a trib of the mighty Skenna in B.C. Holding a 37" fully colored buck in hand is an indescribable in experience. Lodge accommodations, is also first rate. The fare provided by the lodge owner and his



wife will satisfy the most discerning appetite. And oh those desserts will certainly caress your sweet tooth! Overall contacting and joining Tracey for a week of fun and chase will provide a memory that will last a lifetime!!! "TIGHT LINES"

## Ed de la Torre

BEST DAY OF MY LIFE; to mention the truth, I have never paid anybody to take me fishing in my life, except to help with gas and food. I am a very adamant fisherman in Ontario and know where to go and have a good idea on how to catch fish, as in rainbow trolling, center pin drift fishing, and salmon {Chinook} casting a lure, down rigging, and float fishing with the centre pin. I sent an e-mail to Mr. Tracey John Hittel asking a few Questions on flies, and more. Tracey returned my e-mail immediately answering my questions. As I flew into Kitimat, to visit and fish with my brother, I found I was depending too much to fish with people that had their own life to deal with, and then to get out to fish. Frustrated, I called Tracey John Hittel and met with him at his home. Over a beer I spoke to Tracey with many questions, and I was very impressed with the answers I was receiving. I purchased a few flies to try on my own as Tracey knew I had lived there before 20 years ago, and had an idea where to go. I still had the same problem of people that had a life to live before they could go fishing. Frustrated still I remembered that Tracey gave me a choice of two days he had off before he got into the guide season. I called back and told him I would take the second day he had off, and did tell him that he would be the most expensive taxi ride I would pay for in my life. Tracey should have thrown me out of the boat near the end of the drift for saying that to him, but he is like me, I enjoy other people catching fish and watching. Tracey took me for THE RIDE OF MY LIFE. The caliber of this mans knowledge surpassed my expectations to no end. I used the centre pin float fishing with a 13 foot rod. Tracey tied all bait for me to use and was at my reach all day long helping me in any shape or form. He told me areas to cast that I would have not cast to. I told Tracey a 15 fish day {COHO} was not to bad until I heard other people fishing that day had caught a few, not as many as Tracey helped me with. BEST DAY OF MY LIFE. My biggest regret was my choice to fish the second day Tracey offered me. If I had fished the first day he offered me I would have given him a deposit on the river for the second day without a thought as I was leaving in a few days. To anybody that has read this, I hope it



puts a different prospective on life for the fisherman that is learning to fish and to the fisherman that has a back ground like mine, the value of a good guide in an area you want to fish is extremely important if you want to have a day you will never forget. I hope a few people will learn a lesson from my mistake. Hire a good guide and have the BEST DAY OF THEIR LIVES. To mention Tracey is a professional guide. I have never fished with someone so open to knowledge that is shared for you to learn. As for the fishing trip Tracey helped me fill a complete roll of film on my digital camcorder to watch at home, and took pictures on his digital camera, burnt them on a CD to show and use. As I watch my video, I will be planning the trip back as now I have something to work hard for to have the pleasure to fish with the gentleman they call; Tracey John Hittel.

## **SHARP HOOKS**

### **Ed Wojnarowski**

My brother (Roger) and I have done a lot of fly fishing for trout mostly in lakes within central BC and southern BC. This trip was Roger's first experience fishing for salmon using a fly rod. Our Steelhead Heaven guide (Barkley) really advanced our skill level in learning how to take salmon on the fly rod. To break the ice, we concentrated our fly fishing on pinks and our guide put us into several excellent runs and lots of action.

Barkley asked my brother if he is ready to test the drag out on his new islander fly reel and 10 wt sage rod. Barkley picked out a fly from our fly box, and within a couple of casts Roger had a big chum (picture below) on the line. The chum immediately caught the fast water and within seconds Roger was into the backing as he played this fish. Barkley suggested to move downstream with the fish and work him into the quieter water. Roger worked the large chum for some distance down river on the gravel bar. I told him that when he gets to Kitimat he can get the truck and trailer for us. Well he didn't get that far before landing a beautiful approx 18 to 20 lb chum which we held for a few pictures and then released back into the Kitimat River.



Overall, we had a great trip and look forward to future fishing charters...

## **Rod and Roger**

“HOT” best describes our trip to Steelhead Heaven. We caught a fair number of rod-jerking salmon and the weather was more like Mexico than Canada. We spent four days on the river in all with Tracey Hittel and had a blast. All of the staff had incredible and humorous personalities; surely among the best in Terrace if not BC. Tracey clearly knew the rivers well, and Harley and Mickey (the lodge hosts) have been well versed in delicious home cooked meals and spending quality story telling time with the guests. The accommodations were excellent and spacious composed of two bedrooms and a large combined kitchen, dining and living room (far superior to hotel room stays).



We fished two days on the Kalum River after the elusive 100 pound King Salmon and two days on the Kitimat River where the fish were in thick. Each day was a different experience (drift and jet boats) covering different parts of each river. Bald eagles and majestic snow covered peaks were plentiful each and every day. The fishing/lodging/food were perfectly catered and allowed us to fish early and stay late (this might explain the wicked sunburn...). I highly recommend this trip to a beautiful part of Northern America. The only negative was having to go home! I'm looking forward to my next trip.

### **Len Pennacchio**

I had the opportunity to fish the Kitimat for 3 days with Tracey the first week of April, 2004. Considering that the river was in good shape, I was delighted to find minimal boat traffic. Tracey has a lot of experience on this river, and although each run looked better than the preceding one, we concentrated on the runs that he felt would be the most productive.



I was able to get a couple of grabs a day and landed 1 steelhead each day. Each steelhead was special of course, but the best fight was from an awesome wild buck (37"X19") that ran into the backing twice and jumped 7 times! The 3 days just flew by. I would love to go back again sometime.

The hospitality I received from my hosts (Harley and Mickey Poague) at the Upper Kalum River Lodge was second to none. I am amazed that I only gained 3 pounds while I was there. Their property is lovely with great views of the surrounding mountains. The rooms were spacious and quite comfortable. A fine trip indeed!

## **Bob Budd**

**In July '03 I spent 21 days solid fly fishing with Tracey and most of those were on the Kitimat, a river created by God for this purpose.** We started out our time together on the majestic Skeena, a waterway of awe inspiring proportions (particularly for those, like myself accustomed to European alpine rivers). Although we spent a couple of slow days trying to get used to fly fishing in such a vast expanse of water I have since heard from someone here in Austria who goes there every year that the Skeena fly fishing in September is fantastic if you hit the right spots.

Tracey suggested a visit to a famous Skeena tributary and immediately located a run teeming with salmon all of which paid us and our flies not the least bit of attention.

Frustrated but determined we moved down river to the next runs where we caught a 40lb Chinook on a 15lb tippet and landed a stunningly silver jack spring (Chinook) of 16lb. We were both using the purple articulated flies Tracey had recommended.

The rest of the time we spent on the Kitimat, floating and fishing the best spots (and Tracey knows them all). Nature in the raw. The skeletons of mighty trees scattered in the water. Flocks of eagles (can you believe it?). The odd bear checking us out and deciding prudence is the better part of valour (if only they knew!). Dark shadowy patches of mobile river bed (pink salmon and later chums) sliding about under the boat. Sometimes the river and the fish conspired to show total contempt for our efforts, sometimes they teased us, sometimes they rewarded us and sometimes they were so generous my arm was aching to fall off from drilling salmon who had their own views about about being landed.



Tracey is a guide whose deepest wish was for me to achieve my goal – which was to catch Chinook on the fly. And when I did he was as over-the-top, stupid-grin happy as I was. We had too many experiences of all kinds to list them here. I mean, do any of you know how funny it can be when a 25lb chum stops speeding away, does a turn, charges full speed and then jumps out of the water straight at you? Well, the look on my face must have been pretty damn funny because Tracey spit out his sandwich and bent double holding his sides! He didn't laugh quite so much when the next moment a huge chum broke off his fly line and steamed away down river with it.

What else do you need to know? The Kitimat is teeming with salmon. Tracey is an excellent, well equipped guide and both he and his wife, Janelle, went to great lengths to make me feel at home, including cooking wonderful sea food dinners with freshly caught crab and salmon. He even got me back into fly tying. He was sitting at the tying table at 6.30 most mornings preparing for the day ahead. In fact the fly I caught my first 22 lb Chinook on I had tied under his direction the night before (under the provenly inspirational influence of a couple of cans of beer).

No effort seemed too much for Tracey in striving to live up to his high ideals of what being a guide is all about.

**Thanks and see you again.  
Steve Hardy**

**Archie Begin holding a small chinook doe, 25 - 28 pounds. Caught with a muddler minnow, using an eight weight Sage. The fish was released unharmed.**

There is something incredibly satisfying, if not actually mystical about watching as thirty yards of looped fly line sails through the air and lays out a fly in perfect symmetry, across the top of a promising stretch of water. Two other larger siblings to this little doe snapped fifteen pound tippet as though it was made from sewing thread. Both of them were hooked within ten feet of shore and neither of them offered more than a whooshing splash and a glint of silver before line began tearing through the water faster than it could scream free of the reel.



Yes, Chinooks will readily take a fly...if it is the right fly...and if you know how to fish with them. They are not however, for the faint of heart or the weak of knee. Don't bring your six weight and if you like to throw your own creations, make sure the hook is up to the task. There is nothing more frustrating than fighting one of these slabs for an hour and then feeling that heart wrenchingly familiar, sudden loss of weight on your line, only to reel in and discover - not broken monofilament, but a completely straightened hook! The Skipper snapped this pic with his sparkling new digital camera on a singularly lovely evening in late June, 2001. That is the Kitimat river in the background. The section of river we were fishing is passed over by most anglers. This is partly because it is only accessible by boat, but also because few recognize that the species will hold there.

I have lived and fished avidly in Kitimat for more than twenty years. During that time, the town and river have become somewhat of a Mecca for anglers of all ages and experience levels. Due in large part to the local hatchery, the Kitimat River enjoys strong returns of every salmonoid excepting Sockeye, and at certain times of the year it is literally teeming with both Cutthroat and Dolly Varden. I have had days where I hooked a fish on every cast, breaking a century in a single day on several different occasions. On a given day, it is quite possible to catch steelhead in the double digits. In fact, I have observed so many spawning in a single stretch of water at the same time that the swirls from their mating dance made it look like it was raining. During coho season, it is quite common to observe as many as ten people or more, all with fish on at the same time, many of the fish tipping the scales over fifteen pounds and several over twenty. I met the Skipper when he first came to Kitimat some eight years ago and we have logged a lot of hours together on dozens of local streams. He asked me to throw together this little testimonial for his website and because he is my friend, I am happy to do it.

I judge a lot about a person by how they act when they go fishing and I will fish with just about anyone at least once. I know most of what I have written probably just sounds like typical fisherman's tall tales, but it is all true nonetheless. In truth, I have barely scratched at the surface. Come check it out for yourself...if you dare. Drop the Skipper a line...he won't steer you wrong. Perhaps we will have an opportunity to meet and fish together. I'll bring the flies.

## ***Archie***

**On July 21, 2003 we arrived in Terrace, BC. Rented a car and drove a short distance to Kitimat. We met our guide Tracey Hittel**



and his fiance Janelle. The next morning we went out on the Skeena River fishing for sockeye. It was a slow day but Tracey assured us the action would be hot and heavy on the Kitimat fishing for pinks and chums the next day. We went out with a guide friend of his Mark Guiliano. After about 15 minutes into our drift Angela had hooked and landed three nice pinks. I was hooking fish but was having trouble landing them. Angela suggested I was "horsing" the fish and maybe I should slow down my retrieve. I guess that was my problem because after that we caught and landed over one hundred pinks. Also, seven chums in the 20-25 pound range. Mark took one of the fresh pinks and prepared a shore lunch on an open drift wood fire. It was delicious. That night Tracey invited us to his home for a wonderful seafood and steak dinner. Prepared by his fiance Janelle.

Bright and early the next morning, Tracey picked us up for another day of salmon fishing on upper Kitimat. We drifted a beautiful stretch of river and saw numerous bald eagles and even had an encounter with a grizzly trying to bring down an adult bull moose in a chase across the river. We stopped at several nice pools and caught several more salmon including a number of doubles.

The morning after we left for Vancouver Island for site seeing and memories of one of the best fishing trips we have ever taken!

**Tim & Angela Foster**  
**Memphis, TN**