

The Fly Rod Corner

ATTEND BAMBOO ROD-BUILDING CLASS AT 2010 CONCLAVE

Story and photos by Dave Mosley

As a result of knee surgery and a shoulder injury, I have spent a considerable amount of time in my local hospital's rehabilitation clinic. In April, the clinic sponsored a three-day event put on by the Fly Casting Institute. The cost for the event was \$995. Now I don't mean to disparage the event, but I think that an interested party could get better instruction at the 2010 Fly Fishing Fair and Conclave in West Yellowstone, Montana, for somewhat less cost and also have the additional benefit of enjoying programs and other classes.

For roughly the same price, you can build a bamboo rod and still visit conclave. West Yellowstone High School has generously agreed to allow the Federation of Fly Fishers (FFF) to use the high school shop for a bamboo rod-building class just prior to conclave. The tentative dates for this class are August 19-23. The price of the class is \$900 with a \$300 deposit

ing and teaching bamboo rod building. The class is a fund-raiser and all proceeds – except the cost of materials and lunches – will go to the FFF.

The class will instruct students in the various ways to split bamboo, to straighten and press nodes, and to plane tapered strips for the butt and the tip sections. Gluing and straightening of blanks will then take place, followed by installation of the handle. Finishing and wrapping the rod will be discussed and demonstrated; however, the student is expected to finish the rod at home using thread colors of their choice to wrap the guides. All materials for building the rod will be supplied except for the wrapping thread. The only required tool to be brought to the class is a block plane, but do not purchase one without discussing it with an instructor; it's very important to get the right tool.

The benefit of building one's own rod is obvious, as one develops pride of

sary equipment and instruction, whether or not you have woodworking skills. However, let me warn you, rod building can get in your blood and get expensive when acquiring new equipment.

The only equipment necessary to build a bamboo rod is a plane and a planing form, as the rest of the tools can be made or a substitution can be arranged. I suggest you check out various rod building Web sites because many of them are donors to our class. We use Bellinger planing forms and reel seats (www.GenuineBellinger.com). Cork grips have been supplied by Golden Witch (www.GoldenWitch.com) and/or Anglers Workshop (www.AnglersWorkshop.com). Ferrules are from Classic Sporting Enterprises, and guides and tip tops come from all of the above. These manufacturers and vendors donate or sell at a greatly reduced price to the FFF for this class, and they are respected providers of equipment and products for bamboo rod builders as well as others in fly fishing.

If you have ever considered building bamboo rods, now is your opportunity. Of course, we hope you will

If you can tie a fly, you can build a bamboo rod.



From left to right: Bamboo culm split and node dams removed. Split strips ready for planing and heating. Setting a planing form. Planing the strips. Materials for building a rod along with reading material.

due May 15; the remainder of the balance is due August 1. In order for the class to be held, there must be a minimum of eight students and no more 10. The ratio of students to instructors is 2 to 1. Since the instructors have to bring equipment and materials some distance, it is necessary to have registration and payment as early as possible. These instructors are unpaid volunteers who have considerable experience in build-

craftsmanship in a new dimension of fly fishing and the pleasure of fishing a rod that you have built. Also, the class affords the opportunity of developing new friendships in fly fishing and the FFF. I have developed friendships over the years with former students and instructors from these classes. Generally speaking, the classes have been fun socially as well as rewarding in skills learned. If you can tie a fly, you can build a bamboo rod given the neces-

stay in West Yellowstone after the class and enjoy all the conclave has to offer. If you are interested in taking this class or attending conclave, please contact Jessica Atherton, Fly Fishing Fair and Conclave coordinator, 406-222-9369, ext. 107, conclave@fedflyfishers.org at the FFF office. ☺

Dave Mosley is retired from teaching and has been active in the FFF since the early 1980s. He has held various FFF offices, organizes bamboo rod activities, and resides in Hamilton, Montana.