



CSM Presents Young Salmon Anglers:

Braden & Kyle Simms

With introduction by their father, Rich Simms

A double haul... Braden and Kyle Simms are seventeen-year-old identical twins from Mukilteo, Washington, a small seaside town centered around sea-run fish, adjacent to Puget Sound and the Olympic Peninsula. Braden and Kyle grew up in an angling family with a strong conservation focus and a love for the outdoors. Their names were chosen for their Gaelic meanings: Braden means salmon; Kyle means fjord.

Braden and Kyle started angling at a young age. They are both energetic and have a passion for fly-fishing, as well as skiing. They push each other to do better, but at the same time give each other "the business" to the point where mom and dad must step in and

referee. They are gregarious, active and love to pursue sea-run fish — which for us includes steelhead, salmon and cutthroat — along with trips to fly fish for wild trout. Following are their thoughts and descriptions regarding fly-fishing and the meaning it has in their lives:

Braden: It all started when I was seven or eight years old — and boom, I'm not the only one hooked. Ever since, I have had a soft spot for fly-fishing and fishing for sea-run fish including steelhead, salmon and cutthroat trout. I am lucky to live in such an area to chase these fish.

My fly-fishing interest started when I was with my twin brother and dad on the Olympic Peninsula, and I hooked my first wild steelhead. Not only is that one of my fondest fishing memories, it's

also where I began to learn more about conservation. I'm lucky to have my dad, who has taught me many amazing things, of which none are as cool as fly-fishing. The love and passion that my dad has for fly-fishing sets a huge example for me. He even has a sign that says, "I thought I wanted a career, but turns out I just wanted to fish." I grew up with a twin brother who truly does have a sense for the water. It amazes me every time I go fishing with him and my dad. It's like watching two monkeys climbing on a tree, seeing who can get to the top, always ambitious to find the right pockets or the next run to fish.

Kyle: Catching my first wild steelhead was the most memorable fishing day for me. It was so extraordinary being face to

face with that fish. My interest in fishing began on a trip when my father took my twin brother Braden and me steelhead fishing on the Olympic Peninsula during winter. We had to wake up at 5:00 AM in below-freezing weather. This kick-started my interest because I learned to appreciate a lot of things about fishing. You have to work hard, but with hard work comes reward.

Braden: Why do I love it so much? What really lures me into fly-fishing for sea-run fish is the art of it — to chase these fish and be curious to explore new spots. I see it in my dad, and I believe that's what makes him one of my favorite people to fish with. He is always willing to go the extra mile to help me read a new fishing spot. He has taught me persistence and to always be curious or what fly the fish are biting on.

Kyle: The things I like about fly-fishing are that it can take you to some of the most incredible places on earth. And the adrenaline rush that comes with fly-fishing compares to none other. It is a blast fly-fishing for coho salmon in the open ocean out at Neah Bay. I think this is super cool because you get to see whales coming up, and sometimes there are so many fish around. You see birds, and when you cast to the edge of the birds working, you can hook up with a hard fighting coho. A memorable day fishing for me was a rainy day in Belize on the Monkey River when I was twelve years old and caught a tarpon.

Braden: I feel that, in this world, everybody has one thing that makes them feel at peace. Even if you have 100 things going on in your life, but if you do that one thing you are at peace. For me that thing happens to be fishing. The sound of the boat motor starting on a cold early morning in the saltwater, the sound of the river, or line screaming off your reel. Fishing can take you to some of the most beautiful places in the world.

Kyle: My favorite place to fly-fish for steelhead is my own stomping grounds, the Olympic Peninsula. I love this place because it's relatively close to my home, and there are so many great steelhead rivers there. To bring my fly-fishing to the next level, I hope to learn more about tying flies, and to learn more about the steelhead species.

Braden: There are many places that I love to fish for sea-run fish. However, there happens to be one trout river that sticks out in my mind more than any other, and here's why: There was a point in my life where I wasn't doing well, so I went to Montana. I lived on a little ranch outside Missoula, close to the Clark Fork and the Blackfoot rivers. We would get a chance to go fishing on these rivers, and there were also days when I would just go outside and fly cast because it was therapy for me. One day that really sticks out to me was the day my family came to pick me up from the ranch and we went into Missoula for lunch. I looked at my dad and said, "Hey, why don't we go up to the Blackfoot to toss a few flies." Next thing, I remember standing on the edge of the river next to my dad and casting. Then it hit me that I felt like me again. I felt free in some ways that I hadn't felt for a long time. I believe fly-fishing and the outdoors saved me and made me who I am today.

Kyle: As I grow up, I hope to get involved with more steelhead conservation like my dad and help save this great species of fish. There are so many places I want to go, including my home waters. But if I were to choose one, it would be the Dean River in British Columbia, because of how strong the wild steelhead are there. Conservation means a lot to me when thinking about steelhead. Without conservation, this fish possibly wouldn't be around, and that would mean generations to come won't have the experience of fishing for this extraordinary species.

Braden: There are many places that I would love to fish for steelhead in the future, such as the Dean River in Canada. I am very concerned for the future, with steelhead fisheries potentially dying out before I have opportunity to experience them. It makes me sad to know people aren't doing their part when it comes to conservation. For me, that comes from my passion for the fish, my love for fly-fishing and a concern for the future. I believe it's important to take things step-by-step in life. In 20 years, you may regret



the things that you didn't do. If you read this, I hope this is your calling to cherish and continue to do things you love and take care of them, too.

Kyle: Fly-fishing has affected my relationship with my twin brother Braden for the better because we've been able to find something we can learn from each other, something we can grow and bond together over. Fly-fishing has impacted me personally because I have been able to find a certain peace when on the water. I believe what makes me unique as an angler is my ability to read water and know what's going on, whether it's hatches coming off or being aware of fish rising.

Fly-fishing for wild steelhead has taught me so many things. If I were to pick one huge skill that this sport has taught me, it's to be persistent and more observant. Being persistent when steelhead fishing is huge; there's a reason the steelhead is called the fish of 1,000 casts. I believe that the skill of being persistent has helped me with many things, like skiing, for example. When you try a new trick and know it might not happen on the first try, you need to be persistent because it will come eventually. It also ties into a new hobby I picked up during quarantine — skateboarding, which can be frustrating. But being persistent will be your best friend when trying new things.

In conclusion, I hope this inspires others my age to pick up a fly rod and try it because it teaches important life skills and introduces opportunities in life and conservation. ●