

# The Cast



## Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County California  
Volume 42 Number 10  
October 2015

**Pontoons Ahoy on Manzanita Lake**  
(l to r) Doug Mackay, Greg Jacobs, Ken Magoon

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[www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

### Headwaters...

I've been informed that we have a jam-packed issue this month, and that brevity on my part is a necessity. Here are a few things you should be aware of...

If you have not yet renewed your Membership Dues for the 2015/2016 fiscal year, invoices were mailed last week to those in arrears. Please submit your dues payment as soon as possible. We will update the database toward the end of this month and remove anyone who has not renewed by that time.

**Beginning Fly Fishing Class** – Your board of directors has been kicking around the idea of offering a Beginning Fly Fishing Class, specifically for our new members who would like to know more about fly fishing in general. This class would likely encompass three or four

sessions, probably to be held on Saturday's (starting out at the Casting Pond in Dan Galvin Park) and possibly including time on the river to work on skills and fundamentals. The sessions would be approximately 3 hours each and will cover all aspects of fly fishing for trout and bass - including equipment, flies, tackle set-up, fly casting, reading water and entomology. Instruction will be focused on the basics and on providing sound fundamentals from which a novice fly angler can explore this sport, art and passion further. If you are a RRFF member and new fly angler, and this concept interests you, please contact me at 765-1787. We will limit the class to approximately 6 participants and there are 3 or 4 board members who have expressed interest in providing instruction.

Steelhead season is fast approaching and it is anyone's guess as to what this winter will bring. Copious

amounts of water are forecasted with El Niño, but whether that translates into Sierra snowpack remains to be seen. Our coastal rivers and their tributaries are all in need of water and how that water arrives will determine the opportunities for our local steelhead fly fishing. In the meantime, trout season is winding down and fall conditions in the Sierra are cooling water temperatures and providing some low-water, late season action.

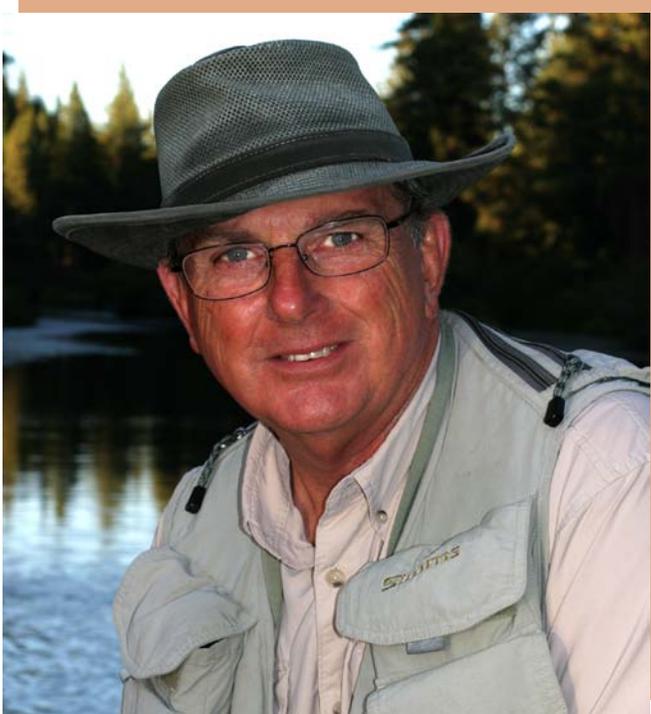
I hope that you are finding access to fishable water.

~ Steve Tubbs

Check out the Russian River Fly Fishers  
on the Internet at

[www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

## ~ October Speaker ~



Bill Forward, with well over 60 years experience fishing in the Sierra, is a full time resident and fly fishing guide in the moving and stillwaters near Graeagle, California. As a former award winning biology and physiology instructor, Bill merges his 32 years of classroom and university teaching experience with his passion and

expertise of fly fishing, and has been a featured speaker at the *International Sportsman's Expo* in Sacramento as well as presented numerous programs at the *Fly Fishing Show* in Pasadena and Pleasanton. Predominantly dealing with the technical aspects of fly fishing, Bill has over twenty-five articles on the subject in print to date. Six years ago Bill's enthusiasm for fly fishing stillwater lead to a partnership with TV's host of the *New Fly Fisher*, Phil Rowley in their co-development of the *California Stillwater School of Fly Fishing*. Bill is currently Senior Editor of *Sierra Fisherman Magazine*.

At our October 14<sup>th</sup> meeting Bill Forward will be presenting **Lake Davis: A Stillwater Classroom**. This program covers the tactics and strategies of stillwater fly fishing using Lake Davis as the "case-in-point". Information is presented in such a way that it is not only applicable to Lake Davis but also all other stillwater fisheries. Emphasis will be placed on the Lake Davis's hatch chart, where to fish at various times during the year, flies to use (and why), rigging, and presentation methods. Chironomid, damsel and callibaetis hatches and tactics will be specifically discussed.

Please join me in welcoming Bill Forward as our guest speaker at the **Wednesday, October 14 General Meeting**.

~ Joe Banovich

RRFF Program and Speaker Chairman

## Conservation Corner 2

### ~ The First of the 4 "H's": Habitat

Over the next several articles in The Cast, I will try to set the background for conservation issues, take us through some of the key local conservation efforts, and perhaps most importantly, highlight opportunities for us all to get involved and make a difference.

River fisheries conservation has been defined as an issue of the "4 H's": **Hatcheries, Harvest, Habitat and Hydropower**. In our watersheds, these categories hold true, but with the emphasis placed on particular localized issues. Habitat largely comes down to lack of adequate year-round water and logging. Hydropower can more accurately be portrayed locally as an issue of dams for water retention and recreation. Local over-Harvest is (mostly) a thing of the past. But the 4 H's holds together well enough to use it to highlight the challenges our local watersheds face in supporting the vibrant salmon and steelhead fishery it once did.



**Figure 1: Russian River tributary**

Of the 4 H's, Habitat conservation issues are arguably the most complicated and critical issues facing our local watersheds' ability to support sea-run fish, so we'll start there. Drought is a periodic event in our Mediterranean climate but human impacts compound the negative effects. Anadromous fish like salmon and steelhead have adopted life strategies that fit our climate. High water periods of Winter and early Spring correspond well to spawning runs and out-migration of smolts. But adequate cold, clean water and gravel must exist for the cycle to continue.

Here are some examples of how our local Habitat affects our fisheries:

a. Water diversion – In our dry cycles, excessive extraction and diversion becomes one of our biggest challenges. A few dry and warmer Winters move our expectations from strangeness to concern to that sneaking suspicion that this is the “new normal”. If you're a homeowner in the lower watershed, you're no doubt aware of the this Summer's [water restrictions](#) on four key Russian River tributaries; Dutch Bill, Mark West, Mill and Green Valley creeks. And no doubt aware of the controversy around the equity of these restrictions between small and large land owners. But these actions are bandaids to fundamental problems in our watershed that add stress on top of a stressed system. From [marijuana dewatering](#) to large-scale vineyard practices (such as frost protection to bluegrass lawns), the number of “straws” in the system is not sustainable during drought.

b. Forestry practices – The Russian River watershed was blessed (and cursed) by having the largest, accessible old growth redwood forests to the Bay Area. As dramatically highlighted through archival photos in *Fishing the Russian River* (Meghan Walla-Murphy, 2014), destructive logging, and the railroads built to

move timber, devastated the river from the mid-1800's through the 1930's. Unfortunately, as the recent ill-planned Gualala River [“Dogwood” Timber Harvest Plan](#) to log to the waterline on the lower river demonstrates, some lessons need to be periodically reinforced.

c. Gravel mining – Potentially less well-known, unless you fly the river from low altitude, historical gravel dredging for concrete, road, and rail building has also left an indelible mark on our river.

d. Development – Numerous scientific articles outline the hazards to sea-run fish through [degradation of estuaries](#) like the Gualala's, paving over of feeder streams, trash in our waterways, channelization of main stems and channel incision caused by flood-control activities. These continue to plague our watersheds as population pressure continues to grow.

#### **4 Ways We Can Make a Difference in our local fish Habitats:**

Follow water use guidelines compiled by [municipalities](#), [county](#) and state governments, even when there isn't a drought.

Volunteer for [local stream cleanup](#) and [habitat restoration](#).

Drink wine! - Support [Salmon Safe wineries](#) such as Quivira and Martorana Family Wineries.

Fight damaging forestry practices (sign the [Gualala petition](#)), buy Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) certified lumber, hug trees.

~ Derek Campbell

Conservation *Chairman*

## *Day Fisher's combine with Women's Monthly Outing*

The [Day Fishers](#) group and the [Women's Monthly Outing](#) group combined their outings and fished two private ponds for blue gill and largemouth bass in September.

After several hours of casting and several thrilling blow-ups - "wow that was a big one" - club member Fritz Wisor landed the only Largemouth while Susan took to hand the only blue gill for the day. Six changes of flies and varied stripping didn't increase the take however, the early sunrise experience with beautiful sunny day made it a relaxing and worthwhile outing.

The curiosity of about a dozen hikers stopping to sit, watch, and learn a little about fly fishing catch and

release added purpose to the event.



Women's Outing Private Pond

~ Susan Bostwick

## Manzanita Lake Outing Report



The fishing at Manzanita Lake in Lassen National Park September 24-27 was really tough. Club members: Tom Magliulo, Ed Barich, Chris Castellucci, Doug Mackay, Greg Jacobs, Ken Young, Alan Cason, and I had very few grabs and fewer hook-ups. Claude Boulware and Dennis Asti joined us on Saturday, but didn't bring us better luck. I went two full days without a grab, but had three hook-ups on a damselfly nymph in one hour, then nothing. Too bad I lost that fly on the third fish.



Manzanita Brown

There were no hatches and the wind came up early in the day, making nymphing the best tactic, which we were definitely schooled on by a Redding local. On Friday, this gentleman hooked numerous fish from an anchored very big Dave Scandin red pontoon with a substantial metal deck. He acknowledged landing 20 trout using a #16 Brown Zebra Midge, fished 10 feet below an indicator.

On Saturday, we tried his technique with various midges. Doug had a couple of grabs, but the rest of us didn't have enough anchor rope or endurance to kick against the wind in deep water.

As with many of these RRFF outings, great dinners and camaraderie moderated fishing frustrations. Sylvia Mackay provided Doug with a delicious beef stew and corn bread meal on Thursday. Friday, Tom cooked a great meal of pork loin, broasted [sic] potatoes and gravy. Several members contributed adult beverages to our meals which, of course, were consumed in moderation.

Thanks to all you wives, who let your men go off on RRFF outings, but return with stories that make you wonder, "*Why do you do this?*"

~ Ken Magoon

## Bucket List - Fly fishing for sea run Arctic Char in the Ekaluk River, Canadian Arctic

The Ekaluk River is about 3 miles long draining Lake Ferguson into the Arctic Ocean in the vicinity of the fabled Northwest Passage.



It is 200 miles north of Arctic Circle at latitude 69 degrees N and 1500 miles from the north pole. It is several hundred miles north of the tree line.

This is located in Nunavut Province in north east Canada. Nunavut Province was created in 1999, has a population of 20,000 and comprises 20% of the land mass of Canada. Most residents are Inuit (Canadian native peoples).

The Ekaluk River has a run of 80,000 fish that go to sea to forage for 6 weeks beginning at “ice out”, about July 1. Fish must return before the sea temperatures drop below the point that their blood will freeze and beginning mid-August, the 3-4 week return begins. Returning fish then spawn in the lake and live under the ice until the next year. It is during the return that the fishing is spectacular with many large fish in prime condition in the river. The local people net returning fish as they enter the lake and are allowed to take 8% of the run. There is evidence that the river has been a popular fishing location for 4,000 years.

I flew from SFO to Edmonton, Alberta (where we spent the night), to Yellowknife, Northwest Territory, to Cambridge Bay, Nunavut (where we landed in a 737 on a gravel runway) and then into Ekaluk Camp via floatplane where we landed in the river estuary.

Ekaluk Camp was set up by [B&J Flyfishing Adventures](#) in 2001 and conducts two one-week camps for 12 flyfisherpersons each year. The camp owner is Bill Lyall, a descendant of an Inuit mother and a Scottish/Irish father and has lived all his 74 years in the Arctic as did his father. He is an official in Cambridge Bay and a member of the Nunavut Legislative Assembly. Some people are offended by the term but he refers to himself as an Eskimo. Bill is a real gentleman and is full of stories. He is also a very hard worker keeping the camp running. I am presently reading a book written by his father “The Arctic Man” and can’t put it down. After that, I will read a book that Bill wrote. It is a rough life up there, especially in the early days when white men

first arrived before radios and airplanes.



When we landed, I waded up, grabbed my 8 wt spey rod and headed out to catch a few hours of fishing before dinner.

### Conditions during the week:

**Daylight:** 15 hour days, light enough to fish 4:30 am to 9:30 pm, full/near-full moon all night. North Star approximately directly overhead.

**Weather:** Temperature range 32 to 55 degrees Fahrenheit, some days +35 mph wind, one day rain.

**Cabins:** Primitive, zero degree sleeping bags.

**Food:** Camp meals were decent and plenty to eat. Dinners: mostly char, caribou and more char.

**Fishing:** Walk and wade, 7-9 wt rods (spey or single handed), Sink tips, 20 lb leaders. 2-4 inch flies, best colors seemed to be pink and red. For me, 8 hookups per day, hard fighting fish, I only landed half, average 8-10 lbs. My best landed was 34"x18", perhaps 14 lbs. Some fish caught were + 20 lbs. I probably had some of these on. We were told it was a relatively slow year due to high water.



**Wildlife:** pesky Arctic foxes, Canada Geese, Sandhill Cranes, Seagulls, Caribou/Bear/Musk Ox (we didn't see any).



**Evidence of early human life:** Many piles of stones which are early inhabitant food caches and fox traps.



[Link to more...](#)

Summary: Excellent trip to a very unusual and desolate part of the world I didn't know about, interesting history and culture, good fishing.

~ Mike Spurlock

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## RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Steve Tubbs**

765-1787 [steve@kresky.com](mailto:steve@kresky.com)

Vice President and Outings Co-Chairman: **Ken Magoon**

527-8376 [magoon5294@aol.com](mailto:magoon5294@aol.com)

Secretary: **Greg Jacobs**

823-7341 [gjacob48@gmail.com](mailto:gjacobs48@gmail.com)

Treasurer & Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

(415)-599-6138 [spurlinov@comcast.net](mailto:spurlinov@comcast.net)

Casting Instruction Chairman: **Steve Tubbs**

765-1787 [steve@kresky.com](mailto:steve@kresky.com)

Program Chairman: **Joe Banovich**

526-6015 [joebanovich@sonic.net](mailto:joebanovich@sonic.net)

Outings Co-Chairman: **Bill Laurie**

538-0399 [blaurie120@att.net](mailto:blaurie120@att.net)

Library Master: **Don Shaw**

664-8573 [donjanshaw@comcast.net](mailto:donjanshaw@comcast.net)

Membership Dues Billing: **Ed Barich**

539-4608 [ebarich@sonic.net](mailto:ebarich@sonic.net)

Special Events and City Liaison: **Art Carney**

539-2545 [ccarney@sonic.net](mailto:ccarney@sonic.net)

Member at Large: **Mike Kast**

538-9762 [michaelrkast@gmail.com](mailto:michaelrkast@gmail.com)

Member at Large: **Tom Lynn**

538-4366 [the4lynns@sbcglobal.net](mailto:the4lynns@sbcglobal.net)

Membership Chairman: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 [demackay@sonic.net](mailto:demackay@sonic.net)

Member at Large: **Paul Matzen**

795-8885 [ggbridgeman@att.net](mailto:ggbridgeman@att.net)

Membership Database: **Ken Young**

539-9649 [wlk4fun@sbcglobal.net](mailto:wlk4fun@sbcglobal.net)

Conservation Chairman: **Derek Campbell**

591-5667 [dcampbell00@hotmail.com](mailto:dcampbell00@hotmail.com)

Member at Large: **Gregg Wisley**

823-5572 [ggwris@gmail.com](mailto:ggwris@gmail.com)

## Coordinators

Day Fishers Coordinator: **Lee Soares**

974-2651 [frommewee@comcast.net](mailto:frommewee@comcast.net)

Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**

815-5926 [shbgold@gmail.com](mailto:shbgold@gmail.com)

Casting Pond Stewards: **Doug & Sage Mackay**

575-5709 [demackay@sonic.net](mailto:demackay@sonic.net)

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

527-9607 [fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net](mailto:fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net)

## Calendar of Events

**Casting Clinic** - Every Thursday evening 4:30PM - 7:00PM  
(weather permitting)

### October

14 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM

21 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM

22 - 25 **RRFF Outing to Davis Lake** (E. Barich)

### November

1 Daylight Savings Time Ends

11 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM

12 - 15 **RRFF Outing to Trinity River (Steelhead) or Pyramid Lake** (E. Barich)

18 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM

21 **Winter Fly Casting Clinics** - Begin November 7th,  
at 12:00 noon until 2:30 PM.

Thereafter, clinics are held the first and third  
Saturday of each month (weather permitting).

### December

5 Russian River Steelhead Clinic (K. Magoon)

9 General Meeting - Vets Building 6:30 PM

10 - 13 **RRFF Steelhead Outing to American River** (B.  
Laurie)

16 Board of Directors Meeting 7:00 PM

**Russian River Fly Fishers**  
**P.O. Box 2673**  
**Santa Rosa, CA 95405**



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## Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

*I acknowledge in this agreement, and fully understand, that it is a release of liability. I further acknowledge that I am waiving any right that I may have to bring legal action or to assert a claim against Russian River Fly Fishers (RRFF) for its negligence. Any member who invites a non-member (including member's spouse and family) agrees that such guest is bound by the same conditions and agrees to so advise the guest. I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, meetings).*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Referred by \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_ \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_ \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail Address\* \_\_\_\_\_

How Can You Help the RRFF? \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation \_\_\_\_\_ Signature \_ \_\_\_\_\_

\* Required for e-mail newsletter

### Please mark one of the following categories:

**I apply as a new member:**  **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues  **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

**Family membership** – \$55 annual dues

[JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

**Junior membership** – \$25 annual dues

**Existing membership renewal:**  **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues

**Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

**Family membership** – \$55 annual dues

[RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

**Junior membership** – \$25 annual dues

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 30th of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30<sup>th</sup>

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers, P.O. Box 2673, Santa Rosa, CA 95405**