



Sonoma County, California
Volume 50, Number 6
June 2023

Chris Castellucci, RRFF member
Landing a Lahontan Cutthroat Trout at Pyramid Lake.
[Click](#) and scroll down to the third "Recent Club Photo
Galleries" for more website photos and story.

Since June 1977
Visit our website at
www.rrflyfisher.org

President's Message—It's Summer! By Penelope Gadd-Coster

It's June and for many of us, it is time for a much-needed vacation. Hopefully there will be fishing involved during our time off!

We won't have a General Meeting this month, but that doesn't mean our Club members and our Board are sitting idle. We are working on getting ready for our RRFF Summer Picnic on July 15th. If you attended last year, you know how much fun it was, and this year's picnic is planned to be better. The Summer Picnic organizing team is working on all the details that will make this year's Summer Picnic successful for your enjoyment. This includes organizing all the auction items that you can bid on and the raffle too.

You don't want to miss this important fund-raising event! Tickets for the picnic are available online until July 10th. [Click here](#) to buy your tickets now, and please invite family and friends to this fun event.

It is Board Member election time. The ballot is finalized, and we now need your vote as club members. RRFF Board Members are elected for a two-year term with about half of the board positions up for election each year. Club members also vote for our President and Vice President during every election. In the future, please consider being a part of your RRFF Board as we always welcome fresh ideas. I find it so exciting to be part of this growing organization! [Click here](#) to vote online (preferred method) or send your ballot to Board Member Brendan Galten. Both methods are simple and easy.

Speaking of a growing organization, every month we see new members joining our Club. The Board and I want to welcome all of you. It is wonderful to see this strong interest in fly fishing. We will continue to invite knowledgeable fly-fishing speakers to our General Meetings each month, organize fly-fishing outings for our members, and provide educational casting experiences at our casting pond. We will support conservation groups protecting our fisheries and keeping our rivers and lakes healthy. We will also continue to donate to organizations using fly fishing as a way of therapy for those in need.

If you haven't visited our website, check it out to see all the activities that you as members can join. [Click here](#) and then scroll down through The Cast to browse through the tremendous amount of useful information gathered and presented by Mike Spurlock, our webmaster.

One of my favorite organizations that we support is Steelhead in the Classroom. I have been writing about this group for the last couple of Cast issues. Now, I am happy to report the steelhead fry are starting to be released into tributaries of the Russian River. I found it satisfying to see the faces of the kids as we launched those steelhead babies. Those kids have been carefully tending to and watching the steelhead eggs develop into fry for the last couple of months. It was truly a great experience for all involved.

I also would like to invite you to check out the Northern California Fly Fishers International site that features Women Connect. [Click here](#) to view that website. This year they are featuring a trip to the Deschutes River which will be an opportunity for learning and fishing this river for wild Rainbow Trout.

As a Club, we are affiliated with the Northern California chapter of Fly Fishers International. As a RRFF Board member, I have been helping with educational efforts, like Train the Trainer Casting Instructor Program available to all member clubs, and supporting conservation efforts, like the Klamath River Project. Here are a couple of the activities coming up.

- **Women Connect** - join a thrilling fishing adventure on the Deschutes River, June 29-July 1.
- **Yuba Fest September 23, 2023 - Gathering of the Fly-Fishing Clan.** One full day of fun, conservation information and fly-fishing education, lunch, dinner, good music, auctions, and raffles. Be there! Camping available on site - Great fun with participants after the show in the campgrounds. [Click here](#) for The River Mouth NCCFFI Newsletter.

One other item I would like to share came from Trout Unlimited. It is a new film featuring a Board Member from the Twin Cities chapter. [Click here](#). It is a new film from Trout Unlimited titled, "The Studio" which highlights the Twin Cities Trout Unlimited board member Scot Simmons's path to creating a better life for himself and others as he strives to be a better role model for his own family. Fly fishing has helped him find his equilibrium.

Trout Unlimited is proud to share Scot Simmons's story. It connects all that find their place on the water. This was a very moving film and I wanted to share it, as I believe we can all take away something from this film.

And last of all, I encourage you to get out there and fish. I look forward to seeing you at our meetings, the pond, and at a RRFF fly-fishing outing!

THANK YOU for your membership and to the new members—WELCOME!

Penelope

RRFF Summer Picnic

July 15, 2023

\$55 per person

\$15 per child under 12-years-old

Bring your family and friends!

Santa Rosa's Galvin Park

[Click](#) & scroll down to official Summer Picnic Poster for more information: buy tickets, volunteer to help, donate raffle/silent auction items.

Deschutes Salmon Fly Hatch 2023

By Mike Spurlock

Club members Walt Kruse, Dave Stone, Richard Hesselein, Gregg and Michael Wrisley, and Mike Spurlock signed up for a 4-day float trip on the Lower Deschutes River in eastern Oregon during May 2023. Those are prime weeks fishing for “Redsides” rainbow trout during the salmon fly/golden stone hatch.

At 9 AM the first morning, we met the Outfitter (Renton’s River Adventures) at Trout Creek Campground near Madras where we met the 3 guides and two camp helpers. The Renton’s (Dillon and his dad, David) run trout trips and steelhead trips on the Deschutes, steelhead trips in Prince of Wales Island, Alaska, and steelhead trips on the North Umpqua River. Some may remember that Dillon spoke about these trips at a club general meeting in 2019 and I have done each of these trips in the past few years, some more than once.



Our “bagger” raft ready to head down river

Earlier that morning, the first “bagger” raft carrying mostly food, tents, and the camp kitchen gear, launched and rushed ahead to get the best campsite before other parties could grab it. We transferred our clothes and sleeping bags to dry bags and loaded up the second “bagger raft”. Then we waded-up and got into our drift boat to start the float.

A typical day’s float covered about 10-12 river miles with numerous stops to get out of the boat to fish. Fishing from the boat is not allowed on the Deschutes. In the 4-days fishing we would cover

about 40-45 river miles. Each day the three drift boats would make a stop for lunch at an agreed spot along the river.



Mike, Rich, Michael, Walt, Gregg & Dave is behind the lens

The most common fishing rigs we used were 9 ft.- 5 weight fly rods with dry/dropper rigs: a Chubby Chernobyl dry fly functioning as an indicator, with a dropper: rubber legs nymph, or a bead head prince nymph or a caddis nymph on 3-4 ft. of 3x tippet. As the day warmed up and the hatch would begin, especially later in the week, we observed loads of salmon fly and golden stone nymphs transforming to adults and mating in the brush along the riverbank. The adult females would fly and



Salmon fly

deposit eggs in the river. As this occurred, the fish would begin to feed top water and we would eliminate the dropper, fishing just the Chubby or some other salmon fly or golden stone imitation, especially along the grassy bank or under the trees along the bank. Under the trees, we tried the “bow and arrow” cast.



Golden stone flies mating

A tricky cast at first, but with practice—very useful.

The Redsides typically are in the 12-15" length with some smaller fish and a few up to 20". They are quite a colorful and chunky bodied fish with plenty of fight.



Walt with a nice fish



Mike's trout



Dave's fish



Rich and his Bull trout w/guide David Renton



Michael Wrisley achieving a classic bow & arrow cast



Can you spot the Bighorn Sheep? There are about a dozen.

The float is very scenic with mountains, rock formations, and class 3 and 2 rapids. Several times we spotted Bighorn Sheep in the distance near the top of the mountains. Once we spotted two black bears on the mountainside lumbering across a large grassy slope. There were many ospreys nesting along the river, a sign that there are plenty of fish. We did not

run into any rattlesnakes although they are known to be around.



Rich at one of the high desert campsites

Streamside camps had two-person sleeping tents with cots and Therm-a-Rest pads. The guides and camp helpers all chose to sleep on cots looking up at the stars or on top of the drift boats.



End of the day activity: watching daylight slowly turn to night

The kitchen was usually under a tree not too far from the mess tent. Food was excellent. Some examples: hot breakfast burritos or egg and ham and melted cheese on a toasted English Muffins or quiche and fresh fruit (always) for breakfast. Did I mention the coffee? The loud jet engine sounding gas burner was lit and started roaring at 6:00 AM each morning (it was music to our ears) making it easy to wake up and grab an early cup of strong coffee before breakfast. And for a different lunch each day we were served, e.g., taco salad or chicken/veggie salad layered on Romain lettuce leaves making it an open-faced “sandwich” for lunch, and once we had a specialty

dinner—Yellow Eye Halibut from Alaska sautéed at the camp in white wine, sliced cherry tomatoes, chopped onions and garlic, herbs, etc., etc. It was cooked to perfection making it a knock-out dinner!



Renton's kitchen crew



BNSF freight train heading down river

There is a railroad track along the riverbank for the entire river distance and we experienced trains daily, occasionally in the middle of the night. BNSF Railway operates one of the largest freight railroad networks in North America, with 32,500 miles of rail across the western two-thirds of the US.

At the end of Day 3, we saw threatening dark skies in the distance and as the evening approached, a strong wind came up and blew down one of our tents. A bit of rain started, and a rain fly was added to each tent for the night. There was not much rain that night at our site, but we awoke with a higher, raging muddy

river. Obviously there had been some severe thundershowers up stream. We heard that there had been flash flood warnings in the region.



Stormy muddy river = No fishing last day

How was the trip? The scenery and animal life were fantastic, as was the food. Everyone caught fish on multiple days. The fishing was good but not as good as prior years' experience, probably because of very high water and we lost the last day of fishing. The main river rapid, Whitehorse, was a lot of fun. There was more than a mile of class 3 and class 2 rapids that were full of excitement. It is always a lot of fun to fish with friends. The trip was a great time.

Steelhead in the Classroom

By Tom Greer

Early morning on Friday, May 19th, two classes from Apple Blossom Elementary School in Sebastopol took a field trip to release approximately 80 steelhead fries in a beautiful setting on Dutch Bill Creek in Camp Meeker. Weather was perfect and the creekside setting was wonderful!

Teachers Liat Douglas and Colleen Walsh did a fantastic job educating their elementary school students on rearing steelhead from egg to fry through the Steelhead in the Classroom program supported by Sonoma Water, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, Trout Unlimited, Russian River Fly Fishers, with a lending hand from RRF coaches Karl Joost and Tom Greer. Dozens of tanks and supplies had been prepared and packaged by volunteers from Russian

River Fly Fishers earlier in the year and distributed throughout Sonoma County classrooms.

Liat and Colleen had set up their 10-gallon tanks in late March in preparation for egg delivery the first week in April. Approximately 50 eggs wrapped in gauze and packaged on ice were picked up from Sonoma Water, Santa Rosa and driven to Apple Blossom School, and gently placed into each of the two tanks, where the clear and perfectly chilled (55-degree F) water became their "nest" for the next few weeks. The eggs were "eyed up", so the kids could see both eyes and quite a bit of movement in the cluster of eggs immediately after they were dropped into the tanks. And within a couple weeks, the eggs had hatched into "alevin" which looked like minnows; about 3/4-1" long, with a pronounced eggs sac at the belly, where the alevin absorbed their nutrients. Within a week the egg sack was ingested, and no longer visible, so the kids and teachers had to feed the "fry" with sparse amounts of dry fish food (fish protein powder) that somewhat resembles ground nutmeg but smells like fish!

Up to and including the fry stage, the steelhead liked to hide amongst the tank's rocks and gravel but became "braver" and began to swim more freely and with confidence inside the 10-gallon tanks as they grew. Fortunately, there weren't any predators, so a very high percentage of the eggs survived and hatched. In the wild, a hen steelhead can lay up to 2000 eggs and only a few make it to maturity due to predation. In our tanks, we only lost a handful of eggs and fry to "natural causes", which if in the wild, would have been food for other fish and nutrients for plants and aquatic life. At release, the 80 fry were just over an inch long, and some had started to develop very faint "parr marks," (a function as camouflage) which is typical of fingerlings and small steelhead and trout before they fully mature. Liat and Colleen did an incredible job teaching the Steelhead in the Classroom program and integrating their own wisdom and teaching experience into the curriculum. It was fantastic to see how motivated, curious, and involved the kids were when I visited their classes for a handful of question-and-answer sessions.

In addition to the teachers and myself, a few parent volunteers showed up to assist in keeping things in order on the May 19th release date. We were fortunate enough to have Luke Walton attend who was a parent volunteer. Luke works for Prunuske Chatham, Inc., who along with Gold Ridge RCD was integral in the removal of the old Creek Dam and reconstruction of the stream channel on Dutch Bill Creek to improve fish habitat. This is precisely where we released the steelhead fry. If you haven't been there, it's worth a short walk behind the post office in Camp Meeker. Here's a short video on the Restoration project: [Click here](#). A hundred yards or so downstream of the dam is an incredible sight that includes a series of rock weirs consisting of boulders weighing up to 4 tons that were strategically and aesthetically placed to enhance fish habitat and prevent erosion. It's just behind the Camp Meeker Community Center and is accessible to the public. Go there! Bring a picnic and dip your toes into the cool creek on a warm summer day. Approach with stealth, and with any luck, you may spot one of Colleen or Liat's steelhead fry.



Happy student ready to release a steelhead fry

Thanks to Liat and Colleen's successful steelhead rearing; the kids were beyond excited, had a wonderful time and learned a lot about steelhead and the environment. Both teachers and kids are looking forward to their upcoming summer vacations where they can get outside to explore, swim, fish, look for bugs, and enjoy the waters and splendor of California.

Baum Lake 2023 Outing Report

By Ed Barich

This year's RRFF Baum Lake Outing (formerly called the "Opener") was held on May 18-21, 2023. Participants included Ed Barich, Jeff Cratty, Chris Castellucci, Kraig Smith, Scott Thomas, Jeff Myers, Matthew Cardle, Michael Bluto, and Keith Beaston. Most of us camped at the PG&E Cassel Campground, which is about a half mile from the lake.



Typical Baum Lake rainbow trout

The weather that weekend was unusually warm with highs in the upper 80's. With the heavy snowpack in the nearby mountains, most of the local streams were running high and turbid, preventing them from offering the good fly-fishing opportunities usually found in the Burney area.

The one exception was at the base of Burney Falls, where Kraig was able to pull a large trout out of the swirling mists. But for the best angling, Baum Lake was the focus of our angling efforts. Since the lake is continuously stocked by the state hatchery, we had plenty of action catching rainbows that averaged 13 inches, with an occasional fish in the 20-inch range. Most of the trout fell for sub-surface presentations,

stripping damsel nymphs and streamers. Dry fly fishing was problematic, with trout refusing anything but the tiny mayflies that were occasionally hatching on the lake surface.

The fish moved around constantly, so each day we had to use our boats to relocate the schools. The angling was challenging, but with the scenery and wildlife to view, ultimately rewarding.



Baum Lake trout food

Although fishing occupied our days, we had evenings to gather and exchange our fishing adventures. On Friday we had a group potluck at Kraig and Scott's campsite, and on Saturday we all met at the recently re-opened Blackberry Diner in Burney for dinner.

With the warm weather, our first camping experience of the season was enjoyable, except for the mosquitos, which were heavily present at dawn and dusk. Anglers should be wary that with this year's record snowpack in the Sierras, you need to be prepared with repellents and clothing to ward off the hungry little buggers that own the woods.



Jeff M.—Baum Lake

Women's Fly-Fishers' Program

By Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini

Message to Women's Fly Fishers: An enjoyable casting clinic was had by all on May 25. Seven women attended the casting clinic, and several helpers were available to assist with equipment preparation and casting. There seems to be an ease with which we are moving forward. We know several of you had other commitments and will attend the following clinics on Thursday, June 22, July 27, and August 24 as your schedules permit. Additionally, we are moving forward with our plans for our June 17 day trip to Foothill Regional Park, in Windsor. Thanks to our four RRFF helpers, Don Shaw, Mike Spurlock, Doug Mackay, and Steve Tubbs, this will be an extraordinary fly-fishing opportunity for beginners and experienced fly-fishers, as well, to strengthen your knowledge of equipment preparation, casting, and fish handling. Mike Borba is tying flies for us and is gifting us with Woolly Buggers to attract Big Mouth Bass and nymphs to attract Bluegill. Jeff Cratty is available to assist with equipment purchase and assembly. A big thanks to all who have supported us in this effort. Just a reminder that if you plan to attend the day trip, you must attend the June 8 and June 15 equipment preparation clinics and pre-register on the sign-up sheet on those dates, except for RRFF members who may want to sign up online.

Tight lines,
Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini, Co-Coordiators
Women's Fly-Fishers' Program (WFFP)

Important Announcement ***Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinic***

Beginning in June we will be changing the Women's Fly-Fishers' Casting Clinic back to the 4th Thursday of each month from 4:00 - 7:00 p.m. rather than the 3rd Saturday of each month. On Thursday, June 22, our meet and greet will be from 4:00—4:30 PM followed by casting instruction from 4:30—7:00 PM. Women's casting clinic dates through August are June 22, July 27, August 24. And know this, all women are always welcome to attend each RRFF Thursday casting clinic from 4:30—7:00 PM. See you at the pond!

Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

Archuleta's Reel Works

Custom fishing reel repair, servicing, and manufacturing.
733 Detrick Drive, Grants Pass, OR 97527
(541) 956-1691
Bill Archuleta, owner
[Click here.](#)

King's Sport and Tackle

Clothing, flies, rods, supplies, gear, accessories, instruction, guide service, and canoe rental.
16258 Main Street, Guerneville, CA 95446.
(707) 869-2156.
[Click here.](#)

Outdoor Pro Shop, Inc.

Fishing gear, supplies, fly fishing, flies, rods and accessories.
412 Houser Street, Cotati, CA 94931.
(707) 588-8033,
Fax (707) 588-8035
[Click here.](#)

Sportsman's Warehouse

Top brands for hunting, fishing, and more at America's Premier Outfitter
5195 Redwood Drive, Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 585-1500
[Click here.](#)

Calendar of Events

The RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics began on Thursday, March 16th, from 4:30 until 7:00 PM. Those days and hours will continue to be held every Thursday evening (weather permitting) until the end of Daylight Savings Time in November.

We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome...

We have many RRFF outings coming up during 2023. To view the signup sheets for those RRFF Fly-fishing outings click below.

[Click](#) here for a complete list of upcoming RRFF fly-fishing outings for 2023

How to Contact Board of Directors & Coordinators

If you want to contact one or more of the Board of Directors and/or Coordinators below, then click on this link, which will bring you to our website.

[Click here.](#)

The names of our Board of Directors and Coordinators will appear. You may click on a name and leave a message for any person below and our website will send it to their personal email address, and they will respond to your message.



RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Vice President & Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

Casting Instruction Chairman, Facebook: **Steve Tubbs**

Casting Instruction: **Don Shaw**

Membership Badges & Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wisley**

New Member Mentoring, Casting Instruction: **Jeff Cratty**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

Program Chair: **Mike Borba**

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Member at Large: **Daniel Powers**

Coordinators

Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

Casting Instruction: **Binky Castleberry**

Conservation Advisors: **Charlie Schneider & Tom Greer**

Women's Fly-Fishers' Program: **Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini** — Co-Coordination

Russian River Fly Fishers

c/o Spencer Bader
3310 Conifer Drive
Santa Rosa, CA 95404



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).

*Indicates required field.

*Name _____ *Date _____ *How did you hear about us? Referred by? _____

*Address _____ *City/State/Zip _____

*Preferred Phone: Home _____ or Cell _____ *E-mail _____

Occupation _____ *Signature _____

*Circle a (Yes or No): I'm applying as a new member Yes / No or I'm renewing my existing membership: Yes / No

Single membership - \$50 annual dues Junior membership (live >75 miles from Santa Rosa or age 16-18 - \$25 annual dues.)

Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time) Family Membership - \$55 annual dues—List family members: _____

The club would like to help you meet your needs. How many years have you been fly fishing? _____

Circle any areas you want help with: I would like help learning or improving my cast. I would like advice on fishing equipment.

I would like a lesson in tying knots I would like a lesson in tying flies I would like to have an experienced member mentor me

on local waters or on a club outing. Any other areas not mentioned above? _____

*How are you planning to pay? _____

Note: Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st of any year will cover the balance of that year and the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th. IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at www.rrflyfisher.org
OR NEW MEMBERS, MAY MAIL THIS APPLICATION TO:

RUSSIAN RIVER FLY FISHERS, C/O SPENCER BADER, 3310 CONIFER DRIVE, SANTA ROSA, CA 95404