



Sonoma County, California  
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Bill Mitchell, RRFF member and his son, Colin  
Landing bass at Lake Oroville. Story page 6.

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

## President's Message By Penelope Gadd-Coster

It's summertime and I hope you are getting the much-needed time to be with family and friends to enjoy the weather and of course, to fly fish at your favorite lake or river.

Last month I enjoyed time with my family's newest high school graduates. This is always thought provoking for me. What is it going to be like for these young people as they transition into their future—are we doing the best we can to make their futures supportive?

Seeing them on stage, as they graduate, makes me also think about the future of our club. It makes me contemplate, where are we going? What are we

doing to make sure our club continues to succeed? According to marketing stats, fly fishing is growing in popularity, but those clubs associated with fly fishing, are not growing as much. We are seeing our members aging without backfilling our club with younger members. So, what can we do to improve this situation? How do we stock our RRFF Club with younger members?

I am also on the Board of NCCFFI that is tackling this same question and I hope to be able to bring some strategies and tactics to our own Board to stimulate discussions on how we might build our club with more younger members. In other words, not only maintain our club's current membership numbers but to help us move forward into a successful future. Your input



on this topic would be invaluable. I invite you to attend one of our Board meetings if you are interested in submitting ideas about this current situation. [Click here](#) to reach me.

One of the areas we are expanding is our Women's Group, led by Catherine Miller, with the assistance of Lisa Pardini. Also, Leafa Fiore is helping us reach out to women who might be interested in joining our club from Cloverdale and the surrounding areas. One of our goals is to increase the number of women joining RRFF.

I attended the first fly-fishing outing of our RRFF Women's Program at Foothill Regional Park located in Windsor. We had a blast fishing and getting to know new members better who attended. We also got to know our RRFF casting instructors and our supportive club mentors better too. Lisa Pardini and I have committed to learn how to help mentor our RRFF women members to improve their casting technique. Check out the article for photographs, smiles, and landed fish during that Foothill Regional Park outing.

Another way to maintain and grow our Club is to reach out to our Sonoma County youth and their parents. Board member Gregg Wrisley is working on a project to attract kids to our casting pond. Please check out the information on the website, [click here](#) and scroll down to the proposed program called, "Fly Fishing Class for Kids" (Want to learn how to Fly Fish?). When this program is ready to roll out, we will let you know.

As you know there are no general meetings this month or next. But the Board is still at work getting ready for the Summer Picnic Dinner Benefit event. Auction and raffle items including fly-fishing gear, wine, maybe even a discounted fly-fishing trip or two. Tickets are on sale on the website and at the casting pond too. You do not want to miss this event.

Something I did recently was to look at our first newsletter, The Cast, from 1977. Wow, we have come a long way with our newsletter publications since then. Check this out on our website. It is a great RRFF

history lesson. [Click here](#) to view that 1977 issue. It's fun to read and see the older issues.



A couple of steelhead fry ready for release

One last thing I would like to share a couple of pics from the Steelhead in the Classroom project in Cloverdale. The Club donates to this program, and it was such an honor to be a mentor to this teacher. This was her first time and mine. But we weathered the challenges of growing fish in a classroom and succeeded in releasing fish in the Russian River at the Cloverdale Bridge. The photo below is of very proud teacher and students; this makes me smile every time I think about that outing.



Cloverdale teacher & her students releasing steelhead fry

Finally, get out there and fish, and purchase your Summer Picnic tickets. RRFF looks forward to your support. Come for a great time. Thank you, Penelope.

## Guided Trinity River Trip

By Don Shaw

Peter Santley, a favorite guide for many Russian River Fly Fishers over the years, donated a two-day for a one-day price for a guided float boat trip on the Trinity River for October 24 and 25, 2022. His trip was put up for the silent auction at our July 16, 2022, Sumer Picnic Fund Raiser.

RRFF member Ken Young was the winning bidder. I was fortunate enough to accompany him. The weather was very pleasant for October. The fall colors were beautiful—hang on and I'll get to the fly fishing in a minute.

Peter keeps up a constant dialogue of information about the Trinity River while fishing, for example, fly fishing the Trinity, historical facts, etc. And Peter has a very polite way of telling you to stop screwing up, even though he has told you the same thing 3 times in the past 10 minutes. He is entertaining.

As for the fishing, we may have had a couple steelhead on our lines for a short period of time, but never landed one. But we did land several half pounders and we hooked smolts more than anything else. Very low river water was the reason we chose for not landing any steelhead, even though that excuse didn't make us feel any better.

All in all, it was a nice trip. Ken and I enjoyed each other's company, had some nice meals, and we witnessed some very beautiful scenery too.

Thanks to Peter's donation to RRFF's Summer Picnic auction and donations from Ken and me, our club received \$400. All in all, it was a win-win for our club and for both of us. It is another reason to attend the Summer Picnic Fund Raiser this July 15<sup>th</sup>. We are planning and hopefully we will have similar deals like this one for attendees to bid on this year.

So, come join us at the RRFF Picnic and participate in the bidding for wonderful donated guided river trips, and fly-fishing gear and supplies. The Summer Picnic is fun for the whole family.

## RRFF Women's Fly-Fishing Day Trip

### Foothill Regional Park

By Catherine Miller

Bright and early on Saturday, June 17, thirteen RRFF members, seven women and six men, met at Foothill Regional Park in Windsor for our first RRFF Women's Fly-Fishing outing. The women who attended were Angela Sanchez, Catherine Miller, Maria de la Fuente, Lisa Pardini, Penelope Gadd-Coster, Rosa Sanchez and Sig Wallen. The men who provided individual mentoring were Don Shaw, Doug Mackay, Jeff Cratty, Mike Kast, Mike Spurlock, and Steve Tubbs. The enthusiasm of the women and the mentoring by the men made this a memorable experience for all.



Back row: Penny, Don, Mike K, Mike S. Front row: Catherine, Doug, Rosa, Angela, Maria (partial group photo).

We enjoyed fly fishing at each of the three ponds over a five-hour period. It was totally thrilling catching a



Angela & her bluegill

fish, particularly the beautifully colored bluegill. All women hooked bluegill and some largemouth may have been caught too. It was significant to apply our casting clinic preparation to an authentic fly-fishing situation. We each left appreciative of learning something new from our mentor(s) who helped each of us improve our fly-fishing abilities. [Click here](#) and scroll down for more



photos of all participants in our website's **Recent Club Photo** Galleries which capture the event beautifully.

Aside from being boundless fun, it marked a significant beginning for the growth of the RRF Women's Program.



Happy Catherine & her bluegill

The support for the women's program by RRF members has been tremendous and is greatly appreciated.



Rosa & RRF mentor Doug

Specifically for this outing, we would like to thank Mike Borba for tying 24 flies for our use, Don Shaw for tying additional flies and dividing them into our individual fly boxes, Don Shaw, and Mike Spurlock for helping to prepare us for this outing and to each of the mentors who

so graciously shared their fly-fishing expertise with us.

## Night Visions

By David Aherns

Once again it is almost June. It is amazing how this happens every year at the same time. The grass is almost five feet high in most parts. The wind ripples through it in waves, an ocean of grass hay. It is a beautiful time of year here. The fresh scent of earth, grass and sky permeates everything. For the last three years I have cut and baled the hay. This year I will let

it go to seed. This is a permanent pasture, never having been tilled and is getting to be a rare thing these days.

Inside the shop sleeps Theresa, my ongoing build of the classic wooden yawl, so beautifully designed by Albert Strange in 1913. The form molds are all positioned and the ribbands are the next step. However, for now, she is doing what she does, dreaming whatever she dreams, awaiting my return. For I am not there. Every so often, it happens more frequently these days it seems, I get an irresponsible itch to grab whatever tackle is close at hand and go off on an extended fishing trip. The cause of this reoccurring affliction is never at first obvious and usually not apparent until I once again find myself knee deep in salt water. At some point on my first day, I had the necessary epiphany. Too much routine. Half a day in the field and half in the shop. Field, shop, field, shop. This retired life is pure hell. There's just too much structure. So having had enough of this, I snatched up my fishing bag and a couple of favorite rods and headed to my old stomping grounds as a kid, the northwest coast of Florida. I know... I know fishing is not boat building, but sometimes one must reconnect. It couldn't be helped, had to be done. I've punched out.

The area from about St George Island south through Apalachee Bay is called the Forgotten Coast. The coast south of here to about Crystal River should be called the Never Found Coast. There is almost no way to get here but by boat. Much of the land, if you can call it land, is tidal, hundreds of square miles of tidal marsh and swamp. The explosive crash of an alligator leaping from a bank, the call of a pileated woodpecker is thrilling but between the thrumming cicadas and a single mosquito is a primal silence that is almost religious. This area is little changed from when I fished it as a kid in the mid 60s. It is the least populated part of Florida and if you stay away from Crystal River and Steinhatchee you will pretty much be alone with only an occasional shrimper or a boat or two. People don't come here for the beaches as it is an inhospitable place. This suits me perfectly. It is the edge of

civilization, still primeval, quiet, away from packs of giggling girls with their phones, out of range for jet skis, the destroyers of peace and silence.

Closer to the Gulf is a maze of sloughs and islands extending 200 miles or more. These islands are a paradise of an ecosystem. One can wade for miles across shallow flats towing a kayak behind and cast to large game fish such as reds (red drum), specks (speckled trout, but not really trout), jack crevalle, and occasionally, snook and tarpon. My Dad and I spent countless days exploring this area and doing just that. This was before kayaks were popular, however. We fished with light spinning rods and fly rods. My old Mitchell 401 reel and my seven-foot fiberglass Diawa were state of the art in those days, and they gave a feel that is not matched, in my opinion, by any rod these days. I'm not saying they were better, certainly not, just different. And it felt right to handle these rods, (whatever that means). My fly rod, however, is a different story. My #9 weight Loomis or my St Croix is very different and, in every way, superior to my old whippy #8 South Bend which I fished with until I was in my 40s.

I have a compendium of memories about this place and they mostly all revolve around my dad. We came by boat out of Mobile Bay or trailered a boat. We fished from the boat or anchored and waded. Once we sailed a Cheoy Lee sloop, a boat that belonged to my dad's friend. Our course was a long leg Southeast out of Mobile Bay. Then East to The Big Bend area and then we worked our way north and south along the coast. This is where I learned to love night watches. Ghosting along at two knots refusing to start the engine, the sea around us ablaze with phosphorescence. The glow of Pensacola far behind us, the brilliance of the night sky encouraging revelation after revelation about life, the world, my future, and every manner of earth-shattering cognition possible to a kid not even out of high school. It was my watch, and this was where I belonged. Dad came on deck about midnight to see if I was okay. I was well beyond okay. I never wanted this to end. Dad stayed in the cockpit for a while and we talked, not

about college (thank heaven) and he didn't give me any instructions, to my astonishment. We talked about regular stuff, just as if we were two regular people, not as father-son. Then he went below saying "see you in a couple of hours." We had no jackline rigged. I wasn't clipped in. And I had no life jacket on. But there were two guys below sleeping and the boat was mine. Perhaps these were the days when responsibility and common sense, (or luck) prevailed. I was fifteen, my future was hot, and I was on fire.

To wade in areas like this you must learn a certain dance called the *stingray shuffle* to avoid a catastrophic encounter. Stepping on one of these will put you in serious trouble. There are also sharks, sometimes big bull sharks, which patrol the cuts between islands, and they will come up on the flats if you are carrying fish. These are not really dangers they are just things to know. The life here is amazing. As I walk there are schools of small fish everywhere, small crabs, snails, conches. Birds are diving and soaring, ospreys, eagles, pelicans, anhinga, and skimmers. My dad taught me all of this, as all dads should. I suppose his dad, my grandfather, taught him. And I have taught my kids as best I could. We fished side by side hundreds of times. Sometimes I look to my left and I can see him, sunglasses down, tying a knot. Sometimes I see him there in the dark of the cockpit, a vision of his past, a vision of my future. In an intuitive leap, I think I understand it now. This must be the thread that bonds father to son generation after generation. He sees me as his past. I see him as my future. And that look is always there. A look that says, "better get moving, finish something." This Father's Day will be 17 years since our last fishing trip, but the visions never quit. There's no point in saying one more time how much I appreciate all that we did. He already knows. As all fathers do.

As I look around, I think I've got time for a few more casts. I tie on a red and white Mirrolure, Dad's favorite, to give it a try.

Then I'll have to get going. I've got a lot to finish.

## Father-Son Outing Fly Fishing Lake Oroville By Bill Mitchell

Last May 2022, my son Colin, and I had so much fun celebrating his birthday with a fishing trip on the Lower Sac with Brian Kohlman of Confluence Outfitters that we have decided to make it an annual event.



Bill & one of his many bass

This year we originally planned to fish the Feather River with Ben Thompson, also of Confluence Outfitters, but that morning Ben said that they'd released too much water from the dam and that they couldn't take boats on the river. So, we switched gears and fished Lake Oroville. This was again a lot of fun. How many bass did we catch? I haven't a clue. But I wouldn't be surprised if it was 40 or 50, greatly multiplying the number of fish either of us have caught on flies during our lifetime. It makes me want to try Lake Sonoma sometime. Colin also caught a couple of bluegills, and I caught a few using surface poppers under Ben's excellent guidance. We saw a bald eagle—always cool. Ben and Colin are about the same age with similar tastes in music, so I heard a lot about various bands I've never heard of before. They got along famously and are apparently now connecting on their favorite social media website.

It was hot; the photo of me above in a sweatshirt was early morning. Last year the weather was perfect. We're looking forward to continuing these father-son fly-fishing trips each May no matter what the weather throws at us.

## Women's Fly-Fishers' Program By Catherine Miller & Lisa Pardini

Wow! There sure is a lot happening with the RRFF Women's Program. On Saturday, June 17, we had our first women's fly-fishing outing at Foothill Regional Park in Windsor. There were seven women, plus six RRFF instructors who provided individual mentoring to each woman. The enthusiasm of the women and the mentoring by the men made this a memorable experience for all of us. To see more photos, [click here](#), which will take you to the RRFF website homepage and scroll down to the Photo Gallery.

With the encouragement of our President, Penelope Gadd-Coster, outreach to women continues to be a significant component of the RRFF Women's Program. This is currently happening through the efforts of Leafa Fiore with Cloverdale's Nextdoor women, and Lisa Pardini, a Board Member with Golden Gate Anglers and Casting Club. Last week Lisa made an announcement at GGACC that the RRFF Women's Program and the GGACC Women's Program now can collaborate and participate together in casting clinics and get-togethers in both organizations. This announcement was well received. We welcome newcomers to Russian River Fly Fishers.

A Women's Instructors Casting Clinic, led by Steve Tubbs, will be offered on Saturday, July 1. This is intended to qualify interested women for mentoring at the casting clinics and on outings.

## Fly Fishing the Mighty Mo By Dan Powers

I was able to travel to Montana for two separate occasions within a 3-week period this year to fly fish with RRFF member Mike Day who hails from Missoula, Montana. Mike and I met over 14 years ago playing rugby against each other at the coveted rugby



tourney in Missoula called Maggotfest. When I arrived, we set out to fish the *Mighty Mo* (Missouri



Mike and Dan floating the *Mighty Mo*

River) which flows close to the town of Craig, Montana. Craig is known to have more drift boats than people,

which I can say is probably true.

Driving over the bridge into Craig there is a house on the right with a statue of a naked man holding a nice rainbow trout.



Dan & his Brown

There is a sign on the house that says, "*Fish Naked.*" I'm glad to say, I didn't see anyone fishing naked. The town itself has three fly shops, a 5-star restaurant, a tap room and a bar. What more could one ask for?

Over the course of the two trips, we would float 6-12 mile each day



Mike, RRFF member with his Brown

catching multiple fish. The fish fought hard, and they would

take multiple runs before settling down so we could net them.

We had some long nights catching up next to a campfire and drinking adult-beverages, which in turn made for even longer days on the river. One day Mike decided to take a power nap for 1 1/2 hours supported on his oars as we floated down the center of the river. I just let him sleep.

This was an experience I will look forward to every year and I have already booked another trip back in the fall.

## A Report from the Sierra, Then from the Fall River By Greg Jacobs

In that order, my wife and I just returned from the Mono Basin Bird Chautauqua over the weekend. (June 19) The word "Chautauqua" is an Iroquois word describing the Chautauqua Lake in New York where in 1874 the first large meeting of the public was held to discuss the issues of the day. More Chautauquas followed, all with the purpose of promoting adult education. They were very popular in the Midwest until 1930's. They have now experienced a small revival. The Mono Basin event offers a wide variety of birding classes taught by professionals, who take small groups (of the public) birding in the Lee Vining area, within a 100-mile radius. We went for 4 days; the first day was called Birds and Brews—my favorite class. Yes, we birded, and yes, in between we stopped at three breweries. Over the next three days which were more serious, we saw a ton of migrating birds, including 50 Bald Eagles at Bridgeport Reservoir. And, of course, while we are watching birds, I keep my eye out for on-stream conditions, and looked for good fishing spots. I am heading back up to the area with a friend to fish in August. We like to hit Crowley Lake every year. Sometimes I do get a chance to fish in between birding classes, but not this year. All streams are roaring: East Walker, West Walker, Little Walker, Owens, Lee Vining Creek, etc., etc. Should be plenty of water all season. Of note, The Mammoth Ski Resort is supposedly open to August.

Now on to some fishing. I tried a little something new for the Fall River this year. I used to go to Whipple Ranch, an old farmhouse built on the river, 2-3 times per season with Sebastopol friends. Unfortunately, the former owner sold the Ranch and has finally gotten out of the business of making hundreds of anglers happy. The ole Whipple Ranch is under a new owner, and available to rent, but for considerably more money, and unlike years past, you cannot launch your own boat at the ranch property. Also, unlike years past when Whipple could be rented to hold 8, the maximum occupancy for the ranch is now only 4. It just is not *the* place to go anymore. So, this year I spent some bucks and fished two days at the Old Spinner Fall Lodge. It is now owned by a wealthy Silicon Valley type, who has fixed it up and is trying to rent the facility to groups. I was a guest of "Travel Creel Hospitality", owned by Josh Scharwitz, both a guide and excellent chef. He has rented the lodge for several three day slots this summer. So, in that situation you get three nights, and two days of guiding by excellent guides, and all meals prepared by Josh, a top-rated chef. We had outstanding breakfasts and drank our morning coffee while watching the upper Fall River flow by. We had ribs, steaks, Caesar salad, and wonderful desserts. As for fishing, I have never seriously fished a PMD (Pale Morning Duns) spinner fall (4<sup>th</sup> stage of the mayfly's development). I am not saying it was over the top for my two days there, but there were plenty of spots on the river where I hooked fish at long distance, and, yes, even landed them. It is hard for an aging angler with poor vision to set the hook on a fish 60-70 feet away, but fortunately my guide, Jason Cockrum could see what was going on. He told me that my slow hook ups were probably to my advantage. When we could not find a pod of rising fish we switched to indicator fishing, using three typical nymphs, and had action. I think the fact that there were intermittent thunderstorms just may have knocked down the fishing.

Finally, I want to say something about fishing etiquette. I had a partner in Jason's boat for the two days, and when we started out, I was relieved to see

that he could handle the technical fishing required—for about an hour or two.

Did you ever fish in a boat with someone who should have traded casts, so that both anglers got a chance,



Guide Jason, and Greg on the Fall River but instead "hogged" the water. I really had to work to get a cast in edgewise, and despite a few comments by me and the guide, my "buddy" did not get the hint.

Finally, Jason had to order him to take turns. I still caught fish, in fact, more than my boat partner, but it sure made for the tough job of casting as far out as I could, and then flipping out 60 more feet of slack even harder. The guy would also say something like, "We sure aren't getting many fish here." Or "Do you think we should move to another spot," and the one that really ticked me off— "How many fish do you think you have, "about \_\_\_?" If you are fishing with a stranger for the first time, make sure you all set some clear rules down for each other.

So, other than some very near lightning strikes and a fishing companion who will not be my buddy again, it was great.

## ***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.**



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## **Calendar of Events**

The RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics began on Thursday, March 16<sup>th</sup>, 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 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-Coordiators

Women's Northern So. Co. Outreach Group: **Leafa Fiore**

Fly Rod Building: **Rick Baker**

# 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 1<sup>st</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> to June 30<sup>th</sup>. IF YOU PREFER, YOU MAY JOIN OR RENEW ONLINE at [www.rrflyfisher.org](http://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**