

The Cast



Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County California
Volume 52, Number 1
January 2025

RRFF member, Rick Baker preparing to release
a Yuba River wild rainbow trout
Story, page 2

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

President's Message Daniel Powers

Well, the new year is here. The upcoming Winter Dinner on February 15th should be a blast. You will not want to miss this opportunity to socialize, pick up new fly-fishing gear, and eat your hearts out. This year we will have a paella dinner on the menu. It should be good (see page 8 for more information).

Personally, I just got back from Montana. I went on a winter fly-fishing trip on the Missouri River and met my friends near the town of Craig. I caught fish, but the memories of this trip were the best part. You can't make this stuff up. A friend, known as Frank the Tank,

was in the bow of drift boat and he had a fish on, so I decided to wrap my bobber rig around his line to make it more interesting and then I proceeded to knock out one of the boat plugs. Through all that, he did land the fish, and my other buddy, Peaches, wanted to know, "Where is all the water coming from?" I responded, "It's coming from where the boat plug no longer is..." After some *choice words* were exchanged and frustrations settled down, I quickly grabbed my small plastic bottle of flotant and wrapped the base of the bottle in tinfoil. I was able to re-plug the hole. That jerry-rigged solution took care of the water flowing into the boat. It was a perfect fit and to everyone's relief, we continued down river without sinking. These

little mishaps pretty much summed up the trip. However, we all caught fish and had fun!

I hope you are all thinking of setting some goals for the new year. I'll share mine. I signed up to run the Lake Sonoma Marathon on April 12th.

I'm look forward to seeing you'll soon.

Happy New Year, Daniel Powers

Click [link](#) to club calendar and RRFF outing sign-up sheets.

Club Activities	January Date & Time	February Date & Time
Winter Casting at the Pond 1 st and 3 rd Saturdays each month	Saturdays, Noon to 2:30 1/4 & 1/18	Saturdays, Noon to 2:30 2/1 & 2/15
Potential Steelhead Day Trips January through April (river flow & weather dependent, Ed Barich TBA)	Steelhead Day Trips Jan. through April Sign up	Steelhead Day Trips Feb. through April Sign up
Steelhead Festival Lake Sonoma Fish Hatchery	X	Saturday 2/8 10 AM – 4 PM
General Meeting	1/8 6:30 to 9:00	2/12 6:30 to 9:00
Steelhead in the Classroom Egg Delivery	X	2/12, 10 - 2 PM Karl Joost needs egg delivers
RRFF Winter Dinner	X	Saturday 2/15
Board Meeting	1/15 7:00 to 8:00	2/19 7:00 to 8:00

RRFF General Meeting By Mike Borba

Fly Fishing Exotic Locations Around the World is the title of our January 8, 2025, General Meeting presentation by Mary Tealdi. Mary has been fly fishing for 45 years and is a long-time member of the Golden Gate Anglers Club and the John Muir Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Join us for what will be a very interesting evening.

Another December on the Lower Yuba River By Ed Barich

On the weekend of December 7-8, 2024, the RRFF had an outing at the UC-Davis Sierra Foothills Extension property on the Lower Yuba River. It was a good-sized

and capable group, including Ed Barich, Rick Baker, Joe Hiney, Bill Hiney, Mike Bluto, Gregg Wrisley, Jenny Tighe, Glen Stanley and Walt Kruse. Some of us stayed at motels in the Yuba City area and one group stayed at an Airbnb house, which was a comfortable and inexpensive option. We also gathered in the evenings for dinners at local restaurants.



RRFF members enjoying a brew after fishing the Yuba

The section of the river we visited is the tailwater below Englebright Dam and above the Hwy 20 bridge that is reserved for barbless hook/catch and release angling for wild rainbow trout. Water conditions were clear and cold at about 900 cfs, but there were no mayfly hatches present and very few rising fish.



Colorful Yuba River wild rainbow trout

What was different compared to last year at this time was that spawning salmon were present, as well as Skwala stoneflies, which were seen crawling out of the river and into the brush. This provided us with some excellent sub-surface action.

On the first morning, Jenny was able to catch 3 rainbows, using an egg pattern under an indicator and casting downstream from the occupied salmon redds.

For the rest of us, using a Pat's rubber-legs sinking fly to imitate the emerging stoneflies led to more hooked and landed fish than we had seen in many years. I was even able to get the skunk off my new 11' 4wt trout spey rod by landing some trout for the first time, which put a big smile on my face.



Ed 's Yuba wild rainbow

The fact that all of us were successful in catching fish proved that this weekend was "a prime time" on the river, despite it being nearly winter. We can't wait until next year on the Lower Yuba.

Euro Nymphing and Other Ways to Enjoy Fly Fishing **By Greg Jacobs**

Although my dad taught me how to fly fish when I was ten, I only fished streams near the camps he set up for the family amid the lower elevations of the west Sierra. Our first real fishing outing was near Plumas Eureka State Park. We were fishing small streams, but we caught a lot of trout, and some were nice sized.

We also stayed at Drakesbad, a "dude" ranch in Lassen National Park. I hooked my first larger trout, one a spawner in Warner Valley Creek, and a couple of nice Brown Trout in streams nearby. I did a little more fly fishing when my wife and started backpacking in the

Sierra after we got married. I found some nice fish in the Merced River in Yosemite, East Carson River, and lakes near Sonora Pass.

I really got interested in fly fishing in the early 90's. I saw an article in the SF Chronicle about Ralph and Lisa Cutter's fly-fishing school on the Truckee River. I realized how little I knew about fly fishing. We spent a morning getting a lecture about the life history of insects that trout fed on, how to dissect a stream and look for fishy spots and finally casting. It was the first time I learned about "Euro Nymphing", only that was not what Ralph called it. He just called it *short lining*.

He stuck strike indicator putty at different spots on his leader and tippet. He walked right down to the Truckee and started pulling out trout near Hirschdale, when it had public access. Then he had us try this method. I swear I caught fish, and my friend also did the same. It was like magic.

Fast forward to July 10, 2024. Six of the Russian River Fly Fishers (Including me) had signed up for a course on the Truckee, taught by Peter Santley. Peter is a well-known guide on most northern California waters and many RRF members met him several years ago, when he guided us during our club outing to the Trinity. This time, we had instruction from him from 9 AM to after lunch at what used to be called Horner's Corners on the Truckee. I had not been there for years, and Peter pointed out that area of the river had recent and helpful river rehab efforts conducted by Trout Unlimited. Peter reviewed many ways of fly fishing with us: dries, indicators and nymphs, hopper dropper, and Euro Nymphing, and, like Ralph Cutter, he waded down the river and began catching fish.

The RRF group were most successful with the Euro technique, and we had action. Not a lot of fish were landed, but we had action. We all really enjoyed ourselves, and *I think it would be another good club outing in the future.*

I left around one o'clock and drove north into the heat. I wanted to take one more shot at the Fall River before it really got hot (this year, over 100° F). I enjoyed

taking Hwy. 395 to Susanville, where I caught up to Hwy. 44 and headed to the small-town, Fall River Mills. I had fished the Pitt River at the end of June with Jason Cockrum, and two days on the Fall. He had me try his version of “Euro Nymphing” on the Pitt in June and now after Peter’s Truckee River lessons, I was ready to try his instructions on the Pit again. Although the water was warmer after the hot spell, we still hooked over 20 fish from Jason’s small raft. All on a Euro setup. It was easier on the Truckee, but it worked well on the Pit too. That was the first day. But the second day, I fished the area around Ahjumawi Lava Springs State Park where we hunted for trout hanging around springs. I have been lucky most of the time there and again, I got some very nice fish.

I have mentioned this before. I love to bird, and both the Pit River and the Fall River areas provide some of the best birding. When the fishing is slow, I dig out my trusty binoculars and enjoy focusing on wild birds of that region. It’s a good pairing, *catch & release* fly fishing and *focusing* on wild birds in the same area.

Swinging Flies on the Trinity

By Kevin Ostrom



Kevin ready to release his Trinity River steelhead

During the period of December 13 - 15, 2024, I fished the Trinity River. I hooked six and landed four. They were adult steelhead, and all were caught swinging flies. Those beautiful fish were 24 to 28 inches in length. It was a very enjoyable three days.

RRFF Women’s Program Update

By Pamela Boyd DeCoite & Tracie Koenig

Pamela Boyd DeCoite’s Report

Hello Club members! I would like to share a planned new style of apparel for RRFF women which we like to describe as our RRFF *swag*. We plan to offer this new line of clothing soon. I’m shooting for some time after the first of the year.

This project was the result of a lighthearted discussion among some of our women’s group about the swag we saw at a GGAC women’s 2024 event. Below are some of the photo samples I shared with our Board of Directors which they recently approved.

We are planning a hat, a unisex hooded sun shirt along with 2 options for a woman’s cut vest! All the items will allow us to proudly display the RRFF logo wherever we go.

Hat
Option #2 - White



Women's Vest #1
Option #2 -
Iron Gate



Sun Shirt
Option #1 - White/Blue Mist Camo



I want to thank Jenny Tighe for providing the photo mockups showing off the RRFF logo on some of the various apparel choices and color options.

I anticipate being able to offer color choices and, of course, size options. My hope is all of you will find something you'd be comfortable in and be proud to wear! I will report back to you when I have all the details ironed out.

Tracie Koenig's Report



RRFF Women's luncheon at Brewster's, Petaluma

On Saturday, December 14th, 2024, the RRFF Women's Group gathered for our annual Winter Luncheon. We met at Brewster's, enjoying their beautiful holiday decorations and festive atmosphere. Although the recent storm made travel impossible for some, your absence was felt, and you were missed.

For many of us, it was an opportunity to meet members who were "new" to us, sparking lively conversations about fishing, family, fly tying, and upcoming adventures. Phone numbers were exchanged, and plans for spontaneous fishing outings began to take shape.

We look forward to catching up again at our Winter Dinner in February, with plans already underway for a Spring Luncheon.

RRFF Steel in the Classroom Update
By Karl Joost

Yes, we are almost out of the woods! As you may recall, I wrote an article in the October 2024 Cast. I mentioned at the beginning of that article, the State of California had "... passed down an 8 percent budget cut and a temporary hiring freeze that will affect the Steelhead in the Classroom (SIC) program." Also, I mentioned Ryan Spencer, who replaced retiring Ethan Rotman as the new regional Classroom Aquarium

Education Program (CAEP) coordinator ha[d] left his CDFW position for new opportunities.” That situation prevented the SIC program from taking on new teachers wanting to participate in the SIC program.

To make that long story short—Good News—Steelhead in the Classroom is back on solid footing. The staffing shortage is in the process of being fixed. The administration at the regional and state levels are putting in significant amounts of effort, diligence, and dedication toward keeping SIC a strong teaching tool in our schools and keeping sponsors updated. Our local sponsors are Redwood Empire Chapter Trout Unlimited (Charlie Schneider), Russian River Fly Fishers (Karl Joost), Sonoma County Water Agency (David Berman), and Golden West Women’s Fly Fishers (Lori Brendlinger).

So far, 66 of last year's 90+ teachers in Sonoma County have re-applied and are guaranteed participation in the SIC program. Additional applications received before the deadline are still being processed. We will get a final update in the first week of January, so the number of teachers and their classrooms is sure to grow!



Young student proudly carrying a cup of live steelhead alevin to be released in a Russian River tributary

This must be the most amazing classroom science package in a 10-gallon tank you'll ever find. The students and teachers love the SIC science and they

love RRF support. Mark your calendars. This program provides our RRF members a wonderful experience delivering steelhead eggs to our teachers and their students. The joy is palpable when walking into a local classroom for the first time and giving the cup of live steelhead eggs to those kids. Wow!

Sign up and join the fun. Egg delivery dates are Wednesday, Feb 12, 2025, 10 AM - 2 PM and Wednesday April 2, 2025, 10 AM - 2 PM.

Click [link](#) for additional details in our RRF website and to contact Karl to let him know, *you want to help*. Thank you for supporting Steelhead in the Classroom!

Copper River Lodge, Alaska August 2024 By James Kibler

My wife convinced me to splurge on a trip to the Copper River Lodge to celebrate my 50th birthday this past August. The lodge is in Pope-Vannoy Landing, Alaska. The trip there consisted of a flight to Anchorage, followed by a 10-seat Cessna flight through a turbulent mountain pass to Iliamna, followed by a float plane hop to the mouth of the Copper River, then a jet boat to the lodge. And it just got more adventurous from there.

I didn't really know what to expect from the 6-person, fly out lodge. The brochure said there were big rainbows, but brochures say lots of things. My closest experience had been lodges in the North Woods of Maine and New Hampshire. I was expecting rustic and was ready to make allowances for the food. I mean, it's hard to get fresh ingredients to isolated places, and this place was so isolated that I didn't see a road for the full week. Dinner the first night—on par with top notch Sonoma County fare—should have been a clue that I needed to ratchet my expectations upward. But I wasn't there to eat, I was there to fish.

As the jet boat blasted up the Copper, I started to get that electric feeling of anticipation as I saw rise after tail after swirl. Big fish. “Did you see that?” I asked with rookie excitement. The guide had seen the fish and

that reaction before. Not quite bored, he shrugged, “Sockeye” and kept driving upriver.



Up close & colorful sockeye salmon

The Copper River drains eventually to Bristol Bay, and everything up there, from ecosystems to economies, are driven by salmon runs. In the Copper, that means bright red Sockeye. The presence of those teeming magenta slabs added a surreal element to the river environment. They dictated the style of fishing—beads representing eggs were the only game in town. The rainbows were feasting, and minute changes in bead style seemed to have huge impacts on the success rate with these finicky but not timid fish.

The bears were feasting, too. They cared not at all for what we were doing, at most casting occasional nonchalant glances as they passed us, often within 10-15 yards. They cared only about seeking their next salmon meal. The experience of watching a brown bear of at least 700 pounds charge almost directly at me from less than 100 yards away and admiring the beauty of the situation without a tinge of fear is not something I ever expected.



A brown bear feasting on a sockeye

The fishing itself was almost too good. Whether on the home river or on one of the several float plane fly-outs, there was almost never a slow time. I only slowed down when my elbow and forearm got worn out from reeling in 20-23” wild, fat rainbows. I caught fish up to 24”, and I think there was a 26-incher caught while I was there. We didn’t target Sockeye at all but accidentally caught many. One fly-out led to some beautiful silver salmon. The lodge, the guides, the fishing, the bears, and the fly-outs all made for an amazing experience. If I win the lottery, I’m going back.



The Copper River rainbow trout

What Was Your Favorite Printed Cast Story/Article/Memoir During 2024?

Send the title & month of your favorite story & why to Dave Stone by clicking [link](#). I’ll publish the one that receives the most votes, I’d like to see a large voting turnout. Thank you.

Russian River Fly Fishers

Paella Dinner

Saturday, February 15th
5:00 - 9:00 PM

**SILENT
AUCTION**

\$50.00 Adults
\$15.00 Children under 12

*Fundraising
Raffle*

S.R. Vet's Memorial Building Dining Room, 1351 Maple Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

Appetizers. Dinner, Dessert & Beverages Included

Tickets available at: **rrflyfisher.org**
Last day for ticket sales is February 8th.

Bring your Friends & Family!



Volunteers and Donations Welcome

Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

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Calendar of Events

We have started our Winter hours and days at the casting pond. Noon to 2:30 on the first and third Saturdays of each month (weather permitting).

We are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!

Beginners are welcome....

We are planning RRF outings for our 2025 seasons. For the current list of upcoming RRF fly-fishing outings for 2025, click [link](#).

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.

<https://www.rflyfisher.org/board-of-directors--coordinators.html>

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: **Daniel Powers**

Vice President, Women's Outreach & Resources: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

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, Youth Education Chair: **Gregg Wrisley**

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

Outings and Clinics: **Pam Boyd DeCoite**

RRFF Fly-Fishing Skills Development Program: **Tracie Koenig**

Program Chair and Fly of the Month: **Mike Borba**

Women's Activities Coordinator, Outings and Clinics: **Catherine Miller**

Coordinators

Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

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

Women's North Sonoma County Outreach: **Leafa Fiore**

Fly Rod Building: **Rick Baker**

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

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. This agreement is valid for all RRFF sanctioned events, (fishing outings, picnics, dinner fund raisers, meetings, pond casting clinics, etc.) some of which are open to the public and all of which are covered by RRFF insurance. As a club member you are approved to participate in certain covered events which are not available to non-members: fishing outings and training for fly-casting certification.

Note: Private activities arranged by club members (not sponsored or approved by the club) are not sanctioned and will not be covered by RRFF insurance.

I have read this statement and agree to its terms as a condition of my membership in the Russian River Fly Fishers.

***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 _____

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

*Check the boxes below that is applicable:

- Single membership - \$50 annual dues
- Junior membership - \$25 annual dues (age 16-18 or live >75 miles from Santa Rosa)
- Gold membership - \$1,000 (one-time) Family Membership - \$55 annual dues List family members: _____

Membership includes a woman who would like to be contacted by our RRFF Women's Group:

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____ Email: _____

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

Check any areas you want help with:

- I would like help learning or improving my fly-fishing 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