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RRFF Member Chadd Troedel and his
Putah Creek Rainbow Trout.
Article by Jenny & Chadd page 2.

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

President's Message By Daniel Powers

Our club continues to thrive, and none of it would be possible without the dedicated support of our club members, RRFF Board of Directors, and Coordinators. Thank you all sincerely for your generosity and commitment.

As many of you have been anticipating, the final numbers from the 2026 Winter Dinner we are still waiting on the final tally. Will we bring in more than \$4,600 last year?

On the elections front, the 2026 Nominations Ballot for RRFF Officers and Board of Directors will be published in the May Cast. If you have ever

considered stepping up and serving your club as a board member, now is the time. Reach out to me, Daniel Powers, to put your name forward, or contact any board member if you have questions. Once the ballot is distributed, we encourage every member to participate and cast their vote.

Finally, please mark your calendars for these important upcoming dates:

Saturday, April 11, 2026 — Join us for the annual cleanup of our casting pond liner. This is a critical maintenance effort that requires a minimum of 24 club volunteers. This task usually runs from 8-11 AM.

Wednesday, July 8, 2025 — The July General Meeting will be held at the casting pond for a relaxed, informal gathering rather than our usual Veterans Hall

location. Come enjoy the outdoors with your fellow club members. Time of this outdoor General Meeting will be announced later.

Fish on,
Daniel

Click [link](#) to club's 2026 calendars & outing sign-up sheets.

Club Activities	April '26 Date & Time	May '26 Date & Time
Fly Casting At the Pond	Daylight Savings Time Casting Clinic every Thursday 4:30 to 7 PM	Daylight Savings Time Casting Clinic every Thursday 4:30 to 7 PM
General Meetings will be held at the Vets Building	4/8 6:30 – 9:00 PM	5/6 6:30 – 9:00 PM
Annual Pond Liner Cleanup	4/11 8 to 11 AM	X
Board Meetings	4/15 7:00 – 8:00 PM	5/13 7:00 – 8:00 PM
Lake Siskiyou Outing (Ed Barich)	X	5/14-17
Clear Lake Outing (Don Shaw)	4/16 -19	X
Spey-O-Rama	4/18 -19	X
Baum Lake Outing (Ed Barich)	4/30- 5/3	4/30- 5/3
Steelhead <i>Flash</i> Day Trips	April (Ed Barich will announce, depends on river flow)	X

RRFF General Meeting By Mike Borba

Our April presentation, "The Creeks of Almanor," features long-time club favorite Lance Gray. While many fish Lake Almanor during the evening Hex hatch, Lance will introduce local creeks for more daytime fishing options.

Come on Home to 'Green River' By Jenny Tighe & Chadd Troedel

Jenny and Chadd met last summer, and one of their first dates was a fly-fishing adventure to Putah Creek. The two didn't expect much that day, but thanks to a lucky sweet pea fly, it turned into one of their most memorable days on the creek. Since then, they've both been hooked on fishing Putah. The following story is a narration of their most recent outing to Putah as told by both Jenny and Chadd.

Jenny:



Redemption & confidence as an accomplished fly fisher.

In mid-March, I had a rare Friday off and was eager to fish the creek after the voluntary winter closure. I had gone out opening weekend two weeks earlier and hooked fish but couldn't land any, so redemption was on my mind. I invited Jeff Cratty to join me, and we met just after sunrise at the dirt parking lot by the Putah Creek Bridge.

Putah usually draws many anglers, so I was thrilled to see only one other car parked at the creek that morning. The stretch beneath the bridge known locally as the "Staircase" is some of the most productive water on Putah though it's heavily pressured. Jeff's coworker had recently found success there with a pheasant tail nymph, so I started with that. **Tip:** I rigged up with a dry-dropper setup using a barbless jig-hook pheasant tail nymph beneath a barbless parachute hopper. I always smash the barbs on my hooks, but the game wardens are very strict on Putah. Last fall, Chadd and I ran into a warden on the creek who hiked down to the water and threatened to cite us because one of our hooks wasn't pinched down enough. We got away with a warning that day, but it was a clear lesson, and I now make sure to fish strictly barbless hooks on Putah.

It was a beautiful spring day with sunshine, green rolling hills, and wildflowers everywhere. It was easy to see how *Credence Clearwater Revival's* "Green River" was inspired by this place!

With my 5-weight rod in hand, Jeff and I hiked down, crossed the creek, and began working the water. The Staircase is full of pockets, pools, and tail outs all holding fish.

I started in a deep pool and immediately hooked a feisty rainbow, but with a vigorous head shake it shook free and took my fly with it. My knot had failed. After tying on another pheasant tail, but this time with a pink hot spot and CDC collar, I double-checked my knot and moved upstream to another pool where Chadd had caught a nice fish last fall. On my first cast I hooked up again, but just before netting it my leader-to-fly-line connection snagged in my top guide and the fish popped off for a long-distance release.

I worried the day might be a repeat of my opening weekend frustrations. Running low on pheasant tail patterns, I switched to a sweet pea fly that had brought me luck last summer. I cast into the tail out below where I'd just lost the fish. My hopper suddenly submerged; I was hooked up again.

This time, I wasn't letting it get away. The fish was heavy and I carefully worked my angles to keep it out of the current. Jeff, fishing nearby, captured the fight on camera. It turned out to be a fat hen—the biggest fish I've landed on Putah so far. It made the moment even more special to have Jeff, one of my mentors, there to witness it.



Jenny fighting her feisty Putah 'redemption' rainbow seen on page 2. Photos by Jeff.

Chadd joined us on the water around 10 AM just after I had landed my fish.

Chadd:

When I arrived, I took photos of Jeff and Jenny fishing before I waded up and rigged my rod. I slipped into the river upstream of Jeff and Jenny and worked my way down to them, getting some bites. I missed setting the hook using one of Mel Light's crippled emerger flies.

Fishing in the same spot as Jenny, I caught my first fish of the day, but it was too small to bother netting. I grabbed the eye of my hook and let the fish unbutton quickly in the water, and the little guy swam on his merry way. With a fish on the board early in my day, I was able to partake in libations and not take the rest of the day seriously—mission accomplished.

Around lunchtime we headed back to the dirt parking lot to refuel and strategize. We formed a caravan and scouted the fishing access points from top to bottom along highway 128 and found the usual sprinkling of Toyotas and Subarus decorated with fishy stickers at every access point. We decided our best bet for uncrowded waters was the most difficult hole to reach—through a ravine up to the base of Monticello Dam. After our trek, we enjoyed having a large swath of Putah Creek to ourselves.

As we prepared to wet our lines again, I bumped into a rattlesnake that had the courtesy of letting me know of its presence. It was now later in the day, so I chose to bring a 3-wt. rod for dry flies in the event of an afternoon hatch, and a trout spey rod to cover water quickly. While rigging up my rods, I saw no signs of rising fish. I decided to cast a streamer with my spey rod. Jeff insisted that I try a fly he had tied but didn't have a name for—a smaller white jig streamer with a bright red collar. I gave it a couple of casts while Jeff observed my spey casting technique. With my third or fourth cast, Jeff recommended letting more line out and trying to get the fly lower in the water until I felt it touch bottom. Once I felt the fly bumping off the bottom, Jeff instructed me to raise my rod tip slightly and pull in a few strips. On the third strip, I hooked up with what felt like bottom, except that river bottom isn't supposed to swim away!

The fish didn't put much effort into showing itself during the battle, but once I brought it near the bank, I clearly saw the monster I was fighting. I approached the situation with caution while Jeff positioned his net in the water and successfully landed the catch for me.

I was now holding the largest fish I had ever caught on Putah Creek. A lengthy male, we admired its size and features. Using a barrel swivel followed by four feet of 2X tippet, I had only played the fish for a minute or two, but the fish was visibly tired and bore a scar, as a dime-sized chunk of his left gill plate was missing.

Jeff and Jenny took pictures as quickly as possible, and I made sure to loosely hold the fish in the water until he swam away on his own. I thanked the fish and people around me and then continued to drink enough to keep my radiator from freezing all winter.

Putah Creek can be challenging and frustrating, but also incredibly rewarding. The fishery's resilience, after bouncing back from drought, wildfires, and mudslides just a few years ago, is inspiring. We're lucky to have such a special wild trout stream so close to home, and we encourage everyone to test their fly-fishing skills there.

Russian River High Water Steel on the Fly By Peter Taylor

The Russian has been a bit high for us fly fishers, but it looks great right now. I went to the river with my Winston 9' and 5 ¼ oz. single hand bamboo rod with a type III shooting head. I wondered if I could get lucky, but I couldn't get my fly in front of a steelhead.

The gear guy above me hooked three *spent* steelheads with his bobber and roe set up. He had the lucky rod and picked the perfect spot. I got annoyed when I thought about that guy catching three steelhead while I got none. How could that gear guy hook three steelies and me none? I shook it off by laughing out loud. It was getting dark and I headed home empty handed. **Note:** "A spent Steelhead is one that has already spawned and is on their way back

down river to the ocean. Spent fish aren't as strong as fish that haven't spawned yet because they used much of their energy and saved fat to get to their ancestral spawning grounds. The spawning process includes preparing the redd for fertilization activity. They don't fight as hard when caught in the spent condition. Steelhead begin to feed after spawning to regain their strength, which begins in the river, but mostly happens when they get back to the ocean."

That evening, I gathered myself and moved past my silly jealousy. I headed out again the following morning. Coincidentally, my close friend—also a gear fisherman—showed up at the river just as I did.

I watched him hook a nice spent wild steelie in an area I thought I had just covered. The fish was holding in a spot I didn't cast to—the far bank. It was fun to watch him land that steelie. I decided relocating to a less frequented stretch of the river would likely increase my luck of catching a fish. As I was leaving, my friend saw I had an orange Silver Comet on my line. He said, "Hey Pete, you should change to a more natural black colored fly." I had different plans.

I got out of my truck and stared at a familiar isolated run. I considered changing flies but stuck with the Silver Comet based on strong instinct. As I observed the fast run from the top of the riverbank. I drew from my memories on how to approach this run. To be successful, I recalled I had to start casting somewhat higher upriver than normal. By my tenth cast my rod bent.



I lifted my rod and surprised, I hooked a good size steelhead in the swift current. I held the rod up and kept the line tight but couldn't budge it upriver. I put the bent rod low to the water, kept the line tight and

began to move slowly down river with my rod tip pointed toward the bank. Now I could start reeling some line in. The steelhead made a brilliant cartwheel jump and stayed on my hook; it took several more minutes to finally get it to hand and then I stood back and admired its beauty.

It felt very good to hook and land such a bright steelhead after seeing those gear guys land several spent fish. Fly anglers can catch them in big waters with patience and confidence.

RRFF Life Member Award By Steve Tubbs RRFF Life Member (2007)

Congratulations to new RRFF Life Member Mike Spurlock...!

What is a RRFF Life Membership?

The RRFF Life Membership Award is bestowed on an individual for Outstanding Service “above and beyond” the call—service to the organization that is the Russian River Fly Fishers. Further, it represents a long-term commitment as an "Ambassador for the Russian River Fly Fishers"—reflecting a dedication toward the support and promotion of our fly-fishing club and to its continued prosperity. Personally, I view this award as a tremendous honor and as an indicator of the highest level of commitment to our organization.



Mike Spurlock with some of our fellow RRFF Life Membership Award recipients, L to R: Scotty, Mike, Paul and Don.

The Life Membership Award is not only about sharing our passions with our fellow members, but also about a commitment beyond our passions. Sharing our passions is relatively easy. Working toward the

betterment and furtherance of our club as it evolves into the future involves a different level of commitment, one that may not always be as pleasant or quite as enjoyable. This dedication involves working together toward change and moving beyond disagreements with respect and honor.

Our RRFF Life Membership awards are not given lightly. There have been only 25 recipients since the Russian River Fly Fishers was founded in 1977. 25 recipients over the last 49 years! Typically, this award is earned only after many years of continuous service. It honors those individuals who have served even when it has not been easy to serve, and who have shared (and continue to share) of themselves with all of us.

Mike Spurlock has exemplified these qualities over the last 23 years. His development of our RRFF website, and his service as its webmaster, has been a "game changer" and consistently promoted our highest ideals. Mike has also served on our Board of Directors for many years, including considerable time as our RRFF Treasurer. Likewise, his commitment to mentoring our new RRFF members during our club outings, casting clinics and special events exemplifies his continued service to our organization.

Thank you, Mike...for your unfailing dedication to the Russian River Fly Fishers! You are an example for all of us.

RRFF Volunteers Needed By Doug Mackay, Pond Steward

On Saturday, April 11, a RRFF volunteer group will convene for a scheduled cleanup of our casting pond. We invite participants to meet in the southeast corner of Dan Galvin Park, at the intersection of Bennett Valley Road and Yulupa Avenue. The casting pond can be found beyond the soccer fields and dog park.

Cleaning the bottom of the pond requires a minimum of 24 volunteers. The sediment is directed toward a large pump located at the far end of the pond by means of a wave generated through the coordinated

effort of 24 push brooms, each operated vigorously by volunteers advancing in unison.

If we begin gathering earlier and have an enthusiastic group of 24 people by 8:00 AM, we should finish by 11:00 AM. Please remember to bring rubber boots, push broom, hat, sunscreen, sunglasses, and a cheerful attitude. For new members, this is a great opportunity to meet others in the club.

The pond bottom is slippery. If working in the pond isn't for you, help with the pump, hoses, or bring refreshments instead. **Note:** There will be no sign-up sheet for this session; it's not needed. All are welcome to join this popular RRF crew, and membership isn't required. Bring a fishing buddy on April 11th if you'd like.

Side Note: The pond liner turns 20 in 2028. This will be a good time to inspect it and plan for replacement.

Thank you for your consideration. I invite you to come join the rambunctious and fun group. One could think of us as the *RRFF Volunteer Push Broom Brigade*.

RRFF Fly-Fishing Classes

By Gregg Wrisley

RRFF wants to find out how many members are interested in our fly-fishing classes. There are three options: Beginner, Advanced Beginner, and Intermediate. Which classes are offered and their scheduling will depend on overall interest. Each session lasts around four hours and takes place on a weekend day. Membership covers the cost, so all classes are free for members.

The Beginner class introduces fly-fishing basics, gear setup, knot tying, types of fly fishing, aquatic insects, and casting fundamentals.

The Advanced Beginner class is for those who have completed the Beginner class or have equivalent skills and fishing experience. Topics include line and fly selection, fighting and netting fish, reading water, and advanced casting techniques.

The Intermediate class is for those with Advanced Beginner skills, some fishing experience, along with practicing those casting techniques at our pond. It

covers advanced casting, reading rivers and lakes, fishing methods, and locating holding water.

To express your interest, register for the trip on the Club website's Calendar sign-up area. Please note, classes will only be offered if enough people show interest, so don't delay. Signing up simply indicates your level of interest—it doesn't obligate you to attend the class. To sign up for these classes, click this [link](#).

Update March 31, 2026—Gregg Wrisley

Hi there wonderful RRF fly fishers. There is currently enough interest in taking the Advanced Beginner Class that it will be offered at the pond on May 9th.

If this date works for you, please sign up on the Club Website (under Calendar) for the class. Please check that your email address is correct as that is the main way that I will communicate with you prior to the class. Don't wait too long as there are only so many spots in the class.

Those of you that have shown your interest in the Advanced Beginner Class, to reserve your spot, click on the following link in red text from our website calendar page which will allow a club member access to the sign-up sheet: 05/09 [FLY FISHING ADVANCED BEGINNER CLASS](#)

Your spot is reserved when you sign up and pay your deposit of \$50 (Your \$50 will be refunded when you attend the class or decide you need to dropout by May 1st). When we get closer to the class date, I will email you with the class start time, things to bring, and perhaps some preparation materials. We should be done by 2PM at the latest.

Currently, we are not planning the Beginner or Intermediate Class because of limited member interest. If more individuals show interest in those two classes and sign up, then we will add those classes to the schedule.

Contact Gregg Wrisley if you have questions, gwrisk@yahoo.com or 707-823-5572.



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Russian River Fly Fishers on Facebook

Please [click](#) join us online to enjoy:

- Updates on RRFF Events
- Local Flyfishing Information
- Flyfishing Instructional Videos
- Flyfishing Travel Videos
- Conservation Updates
- Fly Fishing Industry Updates
- Flyfishing Non-Profit & Charity Information
- Fishing Reports
- Flyfishing Photography & Inspiration

Our Facebook community has over 1,232 followers and provides links to various vendor and fly-fishing related sites at both local and national levels.

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.rrflyfisher.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 Events: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Secretary: **Michael Bluto**

Treasurer: **Tracie Koenig**

Webmaster, Membership, Assistant Treasurer (Square): **Mike Spurlock**

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

Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Casting Instruction, Outings: **Don Shaw**

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

Raffle Coordinator, Education: **Gregg Wisley**

Women's Program Coordinator: **Genie Praetzel**

Program Speaker Chairman: **Mike Borba**

Website Sales, Outings: **Pam Boyd DeCoite**

Casting Instruction, Casting for Recovery contact: **Paul Matzen**

Coordinators

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

Fly Tying at General Meetings: **Lee Soares**

Conservation Advisor, Cal Trout "Lost Coast Project Manager": **Charlie Schneider**

Conservation Advisor, Steelhead in the Classroom: **Tom Greer**

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

Fly Rod Building: **Rick Baker**

Russian River Fly Fishers Membership Application

(if possible, we prefer that you use the on-line application on our website where you can also pay online:

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/membership-application--payment.html>

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 box 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 MIKE SPURLOCK, 20 SAN DOMINGO WAY, NOVATO , CA 94945