



Sonoma County California
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May 2022

Charlie Schnieder, with friends, fishing for Lahontan cutthroat trout,
Pyramid Lake

(See "Chris Castellucci's Pyramid Lake RRF Outing & Report, pg. 2)

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

Presidents Message Save our planet

As anglers, we tend to believe that we have a closer connection to our planet than the average person. We intentionally spend our leisure time traveling to wild places, hiking through scenic landscapes, wading in flowing and tranquil waters, all to encounter (and maybe even touch) aquatic creatures. But what can we do daily to ensure the preservation of the places and resources that make our sport possible? Don't expect the next state ballot to include a proposition to approve/disapprove saving our planet. Instead, the daily efforts of millions of individual citizens could help to conserve our natural world. Examples of things we can do to protect our environment are:

- **Save the Bugs** – Have you noticed that the populations of terrestrial and aquatic insects have decreased over the decades? Although DDT was outlawed in the 70's, more potent systemic pesticides have taken their place, decimating bug populations and reducing the prey necessary to sustain wild trout. By switching to organic foods, you can vote with your pocketbook to minimize the agricultural use of pesticides (and possibly improve your own health).
- **Save Gas** – When the Pandemic started, most of us became wary of riding in a vehicle with a non-family person. Now that this fear is subsiding, carpooling to outings is safe again.

Two anglers traveling together cuts emissions in half (and saves money).

- **Save Litter** – Everyone knows that littering the landscape is literally a crime. But even small amounts of plastic (small pieces of leader, lost indicators) can take their toll on wildlife and the environment. On your outings, be sure to contain that small stuff and dispose of it properly. Better yet, pack out somebody else’s trash when you encounter it on your travels.

If we make these individual efforts, and let our friends know about it, they may decide to emulate our behavior. Kind of like a movement – takes me right back to the 70’s.

Happy 52nd Earth Day,

~ Ed Barich

**Check out the Russian River Fly Fishers
on the Internet at**

www.rrflyfisher.org

**for outings information, RRFF events,
member news, photos and more!**

Note:

We encourage members to check the **website calendar** and get out there and go fishing.

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/club-calendar-and-trip-signups.html>

- We now have monthly outings planned through October 2022 (tap on link above for signups and outings with trip leaders).
- May 5th – 8th Baum Lake
- June 9th - 12th Lake Manzanita
- June 23rd - 26th Lake Almanor
- **July 16th - Summer Outdoor Dinner 4-7 PM at Galvin Park Picnic Area**
- Sept. 29th – Oct. 2nd Lake Davis
- Oct. 13th – 16th Lewiston Lake

- Talk to the trip leaders if anyone needs any suggestions on equipment or mentoring on the water.

We have also added links to several local public events that may be of interest. See you on the water.

RRFF General Meeting Wednesday, May 11th

**7:00 pm – The Lodge Room,
Santa Rosa Veteran’s Memorial Building
Penelope Gadd-Coster, Vice President & Program Chair**

This month’s speaker, Devin Olsen, will be talking about: *My Confidence with River Fly Patterns and How They Made the Cut.*

Devin started fly fishing in Yellowstone at age 9. Within a couple of years, it became an addiction he could not shake. He begged for rides to local streams until he could drive. He started competing at age 19 and made Fly Fishing Team USA in 2006 when he was 21 years old. He has competed in 11 consecutive World Fly Fishing Championships. He has earned a bronze individual medal and silver and bronze team medals from those championships and numerous medals from other competitions in the United States. He holds a bachelor’s degree in ecology and a master’s degree in fisheries science. He worked as a fisheries biologist for several years before starting his company Tactical Fly Fisher. He has produced three instructional films: *Modern Nymphing—European Inspired Techniques*, *Modern Nymphing Elevated—Beyond the Basics*, and *Adaptive Fly Fishing*. He is also the author of the book *Tactical Fly Fishing—Lessons Learned from Competition for All Anglers*.

Pyramid Lake Report By Chris Castellucci – March 2022

Our spring Pyramid Lake, NV outing included eleven anglers: Ed Barich, David Steiner, Mike Tibett, Chris Tibett (guest), Joe Hiney, Marcus Pipkin, Mike Spurlock, Walt Kruse, Glen Stanley, Mike Kangrga, and Chris Castellucci. Lodging was difficult but we all found places to stay—the Nugget Casino in Reno, a

few at the Pyramid Lodge, North Nets beach in RVs, and SUV camping.



Pyramid Rock & fishermen

Pyramid Lake was beautiful with bluebird conditions and great photo ops. However, as we all know, windy/cloudy weather is always helpful in catching the world-famous Lahontan cutthroat trout. Our fish numbers would have been greater with less than comfortable weather conditions. We all prayed for wind, but only got mild sporadic breezes which is when we caught some fish. I expect in a couple more weeks, more fish will be showing up to join the annual fish spawning parade.

The North Nets beach was the popular spot with as many as 40 fishermen with ladders lined up. South Nets, Pelican Point, and other beaches were not so active.



Marcus landing his Lahontan cutthroat trout.

Everyone caught fish, with Mike Spurlock catching 8 fish, Joe Hiney 6 fish, others with multiple fish catches. On Sunday morning Marcus walked the shoreline at the northern end of the North Nets and spotted a school of Lahontans feeding in the shallows

at 1-2 feet deep and decided to make a few casts; it paid off. Marcus caught 3 fish with one being the largest Lahontan Cutthroat Trout of our group at 33 inches long, using a size 10 chironomid. It was the largest trout he ever caught of his 20+ years of fly fishing. I am sure it will not be the last. Glen Stanley was having a tough time, missing several grabs, but finally shook the monkey off his back and caught a nice 6 pounder. The flies that got the best results were black and olive wooly-buggers, white popcorn beetles, and black and red chironomids. For those that did not make it up to Pyramid Lake and want to venture it alone, it is a long, but easy drive, and well worth it. I believe the best catching is yet to come.

Editor—Chris' prediction could be right on the money! Check out RRFF member, Charlie Schneider's Lahontan monster on page 1.

Healing Waters Proposal and Report By Joe Hiney

During the April 20, 2022, RRFF Board of Directors meeting, I proposed the club should consider donating \$550 to help cover the cost of a fly-fishing outing for veterans belonging to Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. (PHWFF). This not-for-profit organization began in 2005 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center serving wounded military service members returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since then, PHWFF has expanded nationwide, establishing its highly successful program in Department of Defense hospitals, Warrior Transition Units, and Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and clinics.

Project Healing Waters brings a high-quality, full spectrum fly fishing program to an ever-expanding number of disabled military service personnel. We focus our resources wherever the need is greatest and expand our partner base in the process. PHWFF has become recognized as an innovative leader and model in the field of therapeutic outdoor recreation for the disabled, through its successful application of the sport of fly fishing as a rehabilitation tool.

Healing Waters focus is fly fishing as a way of healing veterans that need help. This National Organization helps veterans with disabilities get out into the world by teaching them fly fishing. The San Francisco chapter was established in 2016 and started with a small group but has grown to about 21 active veterans with 12 volunteers. We have veterans with disabilities at all levels, some unable to walk and others more capable. The organization accepts donations to fund their activities. My proposal to the Russian River Board was to finance one outing for 16 veterans to go to a Sonoma County winery with private lakes where they would enjoy catching largemouth bass, possibly some trout and some panfish. This is a great outing that is appropriate for veterans of all levels of mobility giving us a chance to get some of the guys who can't wade into the water to a place where they can catch some fish. We have veterans dealing with PTSD and the fish outings provide a safe place for them to socialize with other veterans who understand what they are coping with.

I was at the VA hospital in San Francisco when I saw a flyer on the wall talking about Healing Waters, announcing if you had a desire to learn to fly fish to come by the Golden Gate Park casting ponds. So, I did, and Healing Waters took me in. I got a new rod and reel with line at my first meeting, and I started to learn to cast it. Thanks to the many skilled volunteers and instructors in our group at practice, my casting improved rapidly. In my second year, it was announced that our program would be participating in the National Healing Waters casting competition. I then obtained a copy of the rules and course outline, bought some Hula-Hoops, and set up a course in a park close to my house. I practiced three or four times a week for a couple hours for several months before the competition. I won my program's competition and was sent to the regional competition in Long Beach. I placed second in the competition at Long Beach and was sent to the National Finals in Bozeman, Montana. In Bozeman, we competed for two days, and I took third place in the Silver Plate division of the national finals. The casting competition is fun and brings a lot of veterans together, but fishing outdoors is where my heart is, and I am grateful for

getting into the program and being able to fish with some great people. As I've gotten better, I've expanded my fishing. One day I met Jeff Cratty and heard about the Russian River Fly Fishers club, met a few members, and I just joined right up.



Joe at Pyramid Lake on recent RRFF outing

I want to add that I have seen good changes in the veterans since they joined Healing Waters. Some who are dealing with PTSD have opened up and are engaging in other activities. Fly fishing has a magical effect on stress. It helps motivate the depressed and nature's outdoors calms the soul. There is comradery among the veterans, unspoken, understood and always present.

The RRFF Board unanimously approved the proposal. Joe reports the Russian River Fly Fishers' donation decision was greatly appreciated.

Ascension Bay, Mexico

By Mike Spurlock

In 2019, Don and Jan Shaw wanted to go to a warm place with a beach where Don could fly fish and Jan could relax and enjoy the beach, explore the town, and read. Jan picked out a fishing lodge in a sleepy little Mexican village on the Yucatan peninsula, Punta Allen. I agreed to join them. Should one choose to drive, it is about 115 miles south of Cancun in the Sian

Ka'an biosphere reserve area, just north of the Mexican border with Belize.

Ascension Bay is known for fishing for bonefish, tarpon and permit with permit being the most prized quarry. Punta Allen has several fishing lodges including Palometa Club, Grand Slam Lodge and Fisherman Lodge, the lodge Jan picked out. We paid 50% in 2019 and planned to fish for a week in April 2020. Unfortunately, our plans were disrupted by Covid. For several years, we rolled over the payment until 2022 when we finally bit the bullet. We got our Covid shots including double boosters and decided to go in April 2022.

We flew overnight on a red-eye flight to Cancun arriving about 6 AM and after some confusion and delay, met our van driver in front of the Margaritaville restaurant. We set off on a several hour highway drive to Tulum where we would get a skiff to make a one-hour transfer to the lodge. After starting out, our driver informed us no skiffs were available and that he would drive us to Punta Allen. We endured a 7-hour drive including the section of unpaved rough road through Sian Ka'an. This was not that pleasant after our mostly sleepless night on the red-eye flight to Cancun.

The town consisted of a quaint 12 blocks with sandy unpaved streets at the tip of a peninsula at the northwestern side of Ascension Bay. The entire town is focused on fishing, the people are very friendly, and the food was excellent.

Fisherman's lodge has about 10 rooms and a pool, a few beach cabanas, a popular restaurant on the beach. Each day was in the 70–85-degree range with a 10-15 mph breeze and occasional showers.

We would leave after breakfast about 7 AM and make a 30–60-minute boat ride to various small uninhabited islands where we would site-fish from the boat for bonefish, tarpon or permit in the flats or for tarpon in the mangrove channels. Each person would take a turn standing on the bow with the deck hand who would sight for the fish while the captain would also sight from a platform in the rear of the

boat while polling. Each day we would each get about 10-20 shots at a fish, sometimes at a school and sometimes at a solitary fish.

Guides giving directions: 'Cast 12 o'clock 40 ft', or '9 o'clock 20 ft'



Mike enjoying fly fishing on a beautiful day.

The angler, almost never initially seeing the fish, would respond to directions from the guides - "Cast 12 o'clock 40 ft", or "9 o'clock 20 ft", etc. Since the fisherman's idea of distance was not always the same as the guide, and since we were often casting with a 10-15 mph crosswind, the cast sometimes (often?) did not go where it needed to go. During this frantic operation, the guide would give us an excited blow by blow on recasting to a different position, stripping faster or not at all, setting the hook, etc. It would be nice to think that most casts were effective at getting a strike, but it is more likely that only 10 or 20% were. Fishing for tarpon in the mangroves involved poling through winding sloughs about 6 ft wider than the boat, again responding to the guide about where and when to cast. It was easier for the angler to spot fish, but the additional challenge was not hooking the surrounding bushes or trees (or not hooking the captain).



Mike tarpon hunting trying not to tangle with the mangroves.



Don's permit

Often, we would get a chance to make several casts before spooking the fish but not always. By the end of the week, we had hooked 16 bonefish, 8 tarpon and 1 permit. Our most exciting session was when Don caught the permit.

We were able to get close to an entire school of perhaps 20 permits with the boat properly oriented relative to the wind and Don's left-handed cast. Don made a few good casts and soon was able to hook and land a permit. The school was still in the area, so the captain again got within range, and I got up on the bow to cast. We were able to get close to the school again and again, and before the school finally dispersed, I had hooked and landed 5 bonefish and 6 snappers one after another.... but no permit. I could not keep the bones and snappers off my fly. They were mixed in with the permit and it was not to be my day.

At the end of each day, we would return to the lodge, often with an uncomfortable 30–60-minute ride if it was windy with the skiff pounding on the waves. It was nice to be greeted at the beach by the restaurant staff with a nice cold washcloth and a margarita.



Don cooling off with a cold towel and eyeing his margarita.

RRFF Voting Instructions

RRFF have extended the Board and Officers nomination process to the end of May 2022. We have received some nomination ballots from the announcement in April's issue of The Cast. If you haven't nominated a RRFF member yet and would like to register your nomination vote, please click on this link:

<https://www.rrflyfisher.org/election-of-board-of-directors.html>

We will include the final "Voting Ballot" for Officers and Board of Directors in the June issue of The Cast for a final tally before July 1, 2022.

Steelhead in the Classroom Report

Eggs Delivered!

By Karl Joost

Many classroom teachers sent partners or helpers to pick up eggs on March 16th and April 13th. Due to staffing or distance, many eggs were delivered by RRFF and Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited (RETU) volunteers. A hearty turnout of 9 RRFF/RETU drivers

and organizers delivered steelhead eggs to more than 20 of the 102 classrooms on March 16th and April 13th.

RRFF members, Mike Spurlock and Daniel Powers, manned the checkout station to make certain that eggs and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) authorization forms were correctly matched up. Because of Mike and Daniel's administrative skills distribution to the right classrooms went smoothly.



Gregg Wrisley deserves special recognition for his stagecoach run on 4/13 to 5 classrooms: Kenwood Elementary, Sonoma Charter School, and 3 classrooms at Flowery Elementary School in Sonoma. Ken Young also went all the way to Sonoma to deliver eggs to Montessori School on 3/16. Charlie Schneider delivered to multiple classes in Petaluma.

Tony Ramsden delivered to 3 classrooms at Brooks Elementary School in Windsor and two Westside Elementary Schools in Healdsburg. Bill Laurie delivered to Montgomery High School in Santa Rosa. Karl Joost delivered to Roseland Elementary in Santa Rosa and Cross and Crown in Rohnert Park. Tom Greer delivered to Apple Blossom Elementary in Sebastopol.

A big thank you from the teachers and kids who you helped! And a thank you from CDFW and Sonoma Water who greatly appreciate RRFF and RETU's involvement!

What happens after the eggs are delivered? Here's an example. There was intense excitement and interest and lots of questions followed by interesting

discussions from 4th graders in David French's class at Summerfield Waldorf Farm and School (Santa Rosa).



David's class will release their fry in Santa Rosa Creek west of Willowside Rd. They plan to walk to the creek from their school. (Don't miss the release photos of the fry from the other schools as well, in the next CAST!)



Steelhead Eggs Approximate Timeline: Eggs spawned at Warm Springs Hatchery - February 24, 2022; eggs delivered to classroom - March 16th & April 13th; all eggs hatched into alevin - April 1st; alevin transform into fry swimming in tanks - April 17th; fry release is planned for May 5th.

RRFF Women News

By Penelope Gadd-Coster

Let's meet at the casting pond. There are skilled cast instructors ready and willing to help you with your casting questions and technique. And the pond is

looking great! If you do not have a fly rod, there are RRF practice rods available at the pond for your use.

Email me with your ideas of what you would like to see in The Cast with a focus on women: fly tying? Outing? Coffee meeting?

Fly Fishers International News Coming Soon—FFI Women Connect has designated June as Women's Fly-Fishing Month! Let's get involved.

Join other women as we learn to become better fly fishers, learn about careers in fly fishing, and get out on the water to fish! Our 2022 Photo Contest closes on June 30 at midnight. Send your photos to: <https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/Get-Involved/FFI-Women-Connect/FFIWC-Calendar>

I look forward to seeing and hearing from you!

Summer Picnic Announcement

We hope to get the picnic flyer out soon. Details of planning are still underway. Picnic will be on Saturday July 16, 4 PM to 7 PM followed by area cleanup 7-8 PM. We have rented the large picnic area at Galvin Park and will have Sonoma County Catering prepare the buffet meal. Beverages will be wine, beer, soft drinks, and water. There will be a raffle and a silent auction, like what we have traditionally done at the annual Cioppino Dinner. We will be soliciting donations to augment purchased items. Tickets will be available on our website (on-line sales are preferred), no later than the posting of The Cast issue the first week of June. We will email you an announcement when tickets are available.

Clear Lake Outing and Report By Mike Borba

Seven club members met up at Clearlake for our April outing. Most members camped at the group campsite reserved by Ed. We all felt safe and secure because of the Boy Scout troop in the adjacent campsite. Fortunately for us there was no need for them to use their first aid skills. Fishing started out slow with no fish caught Friday. It's a big lake and it took a while to

locate fish. Saturday everyone caught plenty of crappie and a few bass. We ended the day dining at the Saw Shop Public House in Kelseyville, a few minutes from the campground. Sunday morning's fishing was a repeat of Saturday until the wind picked up, and then it was time to go home.



Ed enjoying Clear Lake



Smiley with his good-looking crappie

Important Message

For those new members looking for assistance to sign up for a RRF outing, you may call Jeff Cratty at 707-796-3691. He'll help by talking you through the computer sign up steps on our website.
Give Jeff a call.

Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

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Calendar of Events

RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC and beginners are welcome.

May

5-8 **Baum Lake Outing** (Ed Barich – Trip Leader)
11 **RRFF General Meeting** – 7:00 PM Zoom
18 **RRFF Board Meeting** – 7:00 PM, Zoom
5, 12, 19, 26 **Fly Casting Clinics** – 4:30–7:00 PM (Thursday evenings)

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS!

Visit www.rrflyfisher.org for a complete list of upcoming events!

Important Change

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.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. Their personal phone numbers will be present too.



RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**

Vice President & Program Chair: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

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

Member at Large: **Don Shaw**

Outings Chairman: **Chris Castellucci**

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

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**

New Member Mentoring: **Jeff Cratty**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

Member at Large: **Mike Borba**

The Cast Newsletter Editor & Publisher: **Dave Stone**

Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

Conservation Coordinator: **Charlie Schneider**

Conservation Coordinator: **Tom Greer**

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 _____

*Mark the following: I'm applying as a new member or I'm renewing my existing membership

Single membership - \$50 annual dues Junior membership (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? _____

Choose 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