Sonoma County, CA
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September 2026

RRFF Member Pam DeCoite's Pikeminnow
2026 Eel River Pikeminnow Fishing Derby
Report by Ed Barich page 5.

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www.rrflyfisher.org

President's Message

By Daniel Powers

Summer Update: New Fundraising Ideas, Finance, and Recognition.

As we enjoy the summer months, I want to share an exciting idea the Board has been exploring to support the club and bring a little extra energy to our monthly meetings.

One possibility under consideration is raffling off higher-ticket fly-fishing items at select monthly gatherings. The goal would be to:

- generate additional revenue for the club;
- add a fun and engaging element to our meetings; and
- create another opportunity for members to participate and support RRFF.

The Board is still working through the details, and we will share more information as the concept develops.

On the financial front, the Board has been working closely with the City of Santa Rosa to resecure approximately $8,000 that has been held in an account on behalf of our club for nearly 30 years. We are optimistic about the outcome. Once recovered, these funds will be directed to the Pond Liner Fund, a project that remains a priority for the Board. This effort represents:

- a meaningful step toward strengthening the club's financial position;

- continued progress on an important facilities priority; and
- a testament to the strong relationship RRFF has built with the city over the decades.

On a personal note, the Board would like to recognize Dave Stone for the remarkable dedication he has shown to this club over many years. Quietly and consistently, Dave has served as editor of our Cast newsletter with rare commitment, care, and craftsmanship. Through his work, Dave has helped keep our membership connected to the heart of RRFF by:

- informing members about club news, meetings, and activities;
- capturing the spirit of the club issue after issue;
- bringing warmth, clarity, and continuity to the stories we share; and
- strengthening the sense of community that makes RRFF so special.

We want him to know that his contributions have not gone unnoticed.

Daniel Powers, President

Editor—"Aw-shucks…. Thank you."

Click link to club's 2026 Calendars & Outing Sign-up Sheets.

Club Activities	Sept. '26 Date & Time	Oct. '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 Meeting Vets Building	**9/9 6:30 –9:00 PM**	**10/14 6:30 –9:00 PM**
Board Meetings	**9/16 6:30 – 9:00 PM**	**10/21 6:30 – 9:00 PM**
Fishing at Foothill Regional Park, Windsor	**9/12** Sign up (click) (Pam DeCoite)	**X**
Lewiston/Trinity Outing (Ed Barich)	**X**	**10/8-11**

RRFF General Meeting

By Mike Borba

Charlie Schneider will share an update on Cal Trout's effort to remove two dams on the Eel River. Please join us to learn more about this important project.

Get prepared for our December General Meeting: Member Outing Presentations

As in past years, our December General Meeting will feature outing presentations from club members. If you have an outing you would like to share with the club, please contact Mike Borba, Presentation Chair, to be added to the presenter list.

- Share highlights, photos, lessons learned, or favorite moments from your outing.
- Contact Mike Borba if you would like to present.

Fly-Fishing Keswick Reservoir

By Glen Stanley

Glen and a Keswick Reservoir Rainbow.

My good friend John Van Dyke invited me to join him for a guided day on Keswick Reservoir in late July 2026. Keswick is in Shasta County just north of Redding, acting as the buffer for the Sacramento River flows out of Shasta Dam. It is a narrow body of

water that is 9 miles long and its depth can fluctuate as much as 10 feet in a day based on power generation and Lower Sacramento River water demands.

It looks like a lake in the bottom section and a river at the top. In the upper section we witnessed what was a placid flow change to a class one rapid in about 30-minutes time. Combine this with very rocky terrain; Keswick is not for inexperienced boaters.

Our guide for the day was Forrest Brizendine, owner of NorCal Fishing Guides out of Redding. He uses a specially outfitted 16-foot skiff/drift boat with a jet outboard for traveling and a geo-location assisted electric trolling motor to hold position and course via remote control. Combine all this technology with a set of oars and Forrest can effectively work all the best water Keswick has to offer.

Guide's well-equipped Keswick Reservoir jet boat.

Fishing techniques included both nymphing under indicators with 6 wt. 9 ½ foot rods and swinging leach or bugger patterns on fast sinking lines. Most of our time was spent nymphing with 2-3 small midge patterns in the 16-18 size. Keswick's rainbows—and reportedly a few browns—grow thick and strong by feeding mainly on midges and scuds from the moss-covered rocks, along with the occasional crayfish. Examination of a few rock bottoms showed there are also numerous small leeches. Surprisingly, Forrest reported there are very few caddis, stoneflies or mayflies present in Keswick.

We started our day at 6:30 AM due to the expected midday heat of 100 degrees or more. The boat ride just below Shasta Dam was bracing, but things warmed up quickly once we stopped to rig up.

Friend John Van Dyke and Glen admiring good size Rainbow.

Forrest used a Jaydacator bobber on the nymph rigs for ease of frequent depth changes, a sliding weight against a small swivel, and small nymphs tied off on droppers for the first two. It was not an easy rig to cast, but we managed with an effective water load when necessary or a Belgian cast, which is best for heavy rigs, using wide loops to keep the rig straight.

The fishing turned on when the current increased as water levels dropped, and it remained relatively consistent throughout the day. The rainbows we caught averaged 16 to 18 inches, with a fair number of fish over 20 inches and some under 14 inches. These are strong fish in swift current, and even the smaller ones put up a good fight. We literally lost count of the number of fish netted. Later in the day, we switched to swinging small olive leech patterns, also with good success. Many of the grabs came once the line had almost straightened below the boat and ranged from a gradual tightening to vicious tugs.

Despite being a Sunday, there was only one other boat we saw fishing and they were throwing conventional tackle. Forrest confirmed that relatively few guides take the time to learn Keswick's fishing

locations and techniques. Another challenge is having the right boat setup necessary for dealing the peculiarities of the varying water flows, rocky obstacles and distance to cover. In addition to Forrest, The Fly Shop and several other Northern California outfitters offer guided trips on Keswick. It's a worthwhile fishery to try when you're near Redding and a strong alternative to the often-crowded Lower Sacramento River.

RRFF Casting Challenge and Women's Group Mini Clinic

By Tracie Koenig

RRFF Fly-Casting Challenge winners holding their prizes: Chadd, Jenny, Tracie, Jeff (RRFF mentor), and Lynn.

Casting Challenge

During the July picnic, Jeff Cratty held a casting competition. Jeff placed two hoops in the middle of the casting pond and gave competitors time to practice and determine the amount of line needed to reach each target.

Using a roll cast and a pick-up-and-lay-down cast, each competitor had 10 attempts to land their fly yarn inside the hoop. The competition was both fierce and friendly, with Lynn coming out on top!

A big thank you to Jeff for putting together such a fun challenge!

Women's Group Mini Clinic

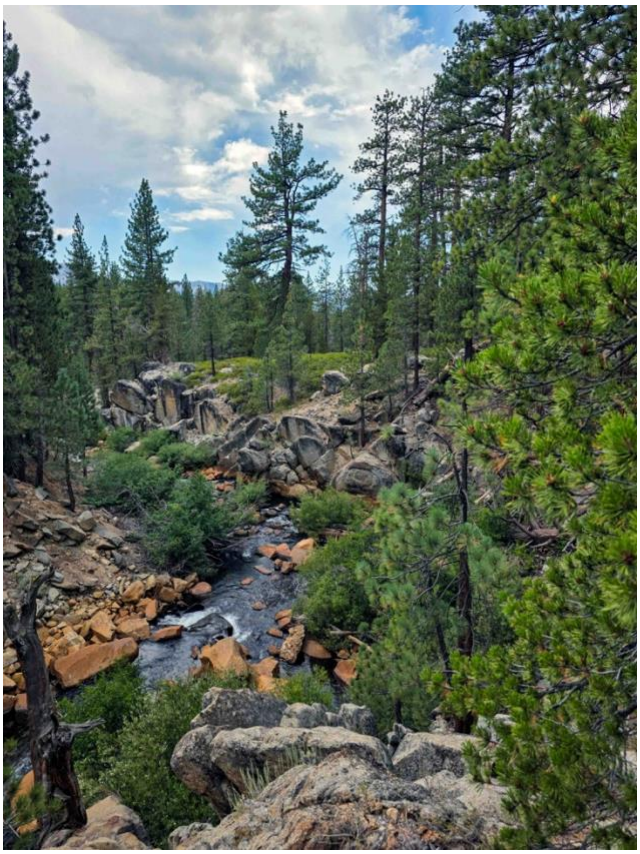
The Women's Group would like to extend a big **THANK YOU** to Jeff Cratty for holding a mini clinic for members preparing for the Upper Sac River trip. Jeff shared his knowledge on equipment setup, flies, and reading the river. Jeff even jumped into the pond to demonstrate how river currents work. We left the pond feeling more confident and better prepared for our trip.

We appreciate Jeff taking time out of his busy schedule to work with a group of chatty women and help build our skills!

Fly-Fishing Sierra Nevada Creeks

By Mike Bluto

I traveled to Lake Thomas A. Edison from 8/6 to 8/10 with the goal of spending time with friends and family and fishing new waters. It was a long seven-hour drive, and the last forty miles took two of those hours. No big RVs on that road! That mountain road brought us into the rugged Sierra Nevada range east of Fresno.



Looking down at Mono Creek.

We camped at Vermillion Campground. A nearby "resort" serves Pacific Crest Trail hikers and makes it easy to buy ice, but otherwise the amenities are sparse, and the nearest town a long distance away. The campground is basic, with potable water and outhouses. While each campsite is quite large, the entire campground is situated on an incline, so tent spots in each site are prearranged. The lake is a bit of a walk away. Next time, I will probably camp at Mono Creek Campground, which is on the same road, and about fifteen minutes closer to home.

There will be a next time because the fishing and scenery were fantastic. On Friday, my first full day there, I fished Mono Creek, which provided cold water and big rainbows just downstream from the lake. I used zebra perdigons and gasoline perdigons on a 3-wt. nymphing rod to catch 12 trout within four hours. Six of those trout came in the last hour, once I got the lay of the creek. Also, I found a small dam diverting a portion of the creek water into a pipe that flowed down to Shaver Lake just east of Fresno while letting the remainder flow into Mono Creek. There were roadside bait-dunkers on the opposite bank, but my fishing partner and I were the only people on our side of the creek, which presented best access to feeding lanes in the creek.

My fishing buddy suffered with hip waders only. The creek water was very cold. After the small dam, in a maybe not-so-smart move, I clambered down with the creek's flow and caught a brown trout that was by far the prettiest fish I've caught all year. It was incredibly dark—the almost black upper section of its body made its bright and colorful spots pop. It was a stunning fish. I tend not to take photos of the fish I catch because I want to be very cautious when landing trout and returning them to their environment.

On Saturday, we drove the off-highway vehicle road called the Bear Creek Trail, which is not suited for low-clearance vehicles. Bear Creek itself was warm and running low, but football-shaped trout cruised the still water the creek fed into. Next time, I'm bringing a float tube to access the colder still water.

Sunday was best. I hiked far downstream from the small dam I discovered on Friday. I scrambled down through thick brush where the creek flowed, then fished my way upstream from pocket to pocket. I didn't see anyone else. The fish were wary, and the tight pockets made presentation tricky, but I caught plenty of rainbows and a few browns.

Eel River Pikeminnow 2026 Outing Report

By Ed Barich

The weekend of August 20-23, 2026, was the second annual RRFF Eel River Pikeminnow club outing. While practically no fishing is done on the Eel in the summer, there is a "Pikeminnow Derby" held there, sponsored by Cal Trout. The purpose of the derby was to encourage anglers to harvest the Sacramento Pikeminnow, which are a native California species but are considered invasive and predatory to wild steelhead and salmon fry in the Eel River. Our club members enjoyed participating in the derby last year, so we decided to do it again in 2026.

Jeff and Ewan and their Sacramento Pikeminnows

Our group this year included leader Ed Barich, Jeff Cratty, Pam Boyd DeCoite, Don and Jan Shaw, Eric Byous, Chris & Bruce Riezenman, Mike Spurlock, Penelope Gadd-Coster, Leafa Fiore, Keith Gay, Jan Whitney, Ewan Lithgow, Gary Hollinger and Gregg Wrisley. We chose to camp at Burlington State Campground, which is conveniently located on the Avenue of the Giants (Hwy 254) near many of the fishing spots that we found productive last year. All the campsites there are full of towering redwoods that kept us nicely cool during the day, and close to ancient groves where the redwood giants still live.

Gary and his Sacramento Pikeminnow.

For members who were new to the Eel and fishing for pikeminnow, Jeff served as club mentor, passing out samples of his "Cratty Crawler" fly that was so effective last year, and locating new spots on the river where pikeminnow could be caught. With his assistance, our Eel "newbies" were able to catch many of the target species. Wherever Jeff wanted to go, our folks followed and were successful. At the end of the weekend, we had removed over 28 pounds of invasive pikeminnow from the Eel River. We also noted that the largest fish caught this year were smaller than last year, indicating that the derby is putting a dent in the pikeminnow population (as intended).

After working up appetites on the river, we were able to gather at Don and Jan's campsite for pot-luck dinners on Friday and Saturday evenings. Thanks to the variety of the dishes and the quantity provided, certainly no one went to bed hungry. The evenings ended with us sitting around Don's campfire under the tall redwoods, sharing our stories and fish tales. The consensus of our group was that we would like to do this outing again next year.

Don enjoying the serenity of the Eel River.

Gregg casting in cooler shaded water for pikeminnows.

Fly Fishing with the RRFF Women's Group is FUN!

By Debbie McAfee

Ten RRFF women aged 35 to 80 just got back from an amazing trip to the Upper Sacto River in Dunsmuir. I could try to describe what an amazing trip it was, but I'll let some of our texts tell the story.

"Hey, my test of a great fishing trip is does my face hurt from smiling? Does my belly hurt from laughing? This trip meant both."

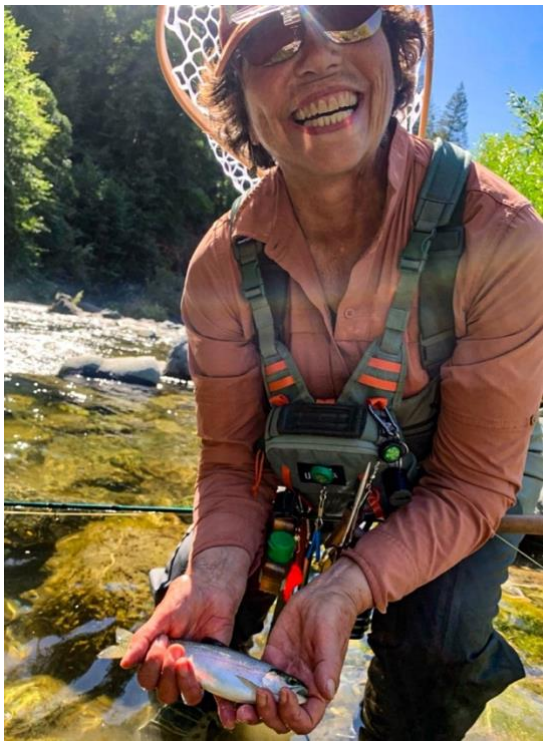
"Thank you, Genie, for planning this trip! What a wonderful fun time and thank you Trish for arranging the house—great digs! And thanks to all of you for the laughs, rides and education!"

"Miss you ladies already! I had such a fun weekend fishing with you all and getting to know everyone better. Let's get together again as a group and fish in the fall!"

Everyone by now has seen lots of photos of fish. Now, I want you to observe these photographs of smiles:

Tracie

Lynn



Betty

Jenny

The upper Sacramento River is a beautiful river and very "fishy" with eager rainbow plants, shy browns, and fighting big lake trout just arriving up the river. There is something for everybody.

Guide Michael Kielich (530-356-3532) put together a great program of the long fishing history of the area at Ted Fay Fly Shop on Friday where they served dinner and expertly helped us select any equipment and flies we needed. We loved that shop and some of us (I'm not naming names, but you know who you are) went back every day. Michael's day job is a

kindergarten teacher, which explains why he is a great communicator and patient teacher. In advance, he provided a map of the area with the many fishing holes clearly marked and described access routes and rig recommendations. Michael set us up with guides that worked with most of us on Saturday and we tried new spots on Sunday. Many of us arrived Thursday and left Sunday/Monday, fishing every day at all the spots highlighted on the map.

This was my first overnight trip with the club despite being a member for two years. I've been at the casting pond, wading clinics and Truckee River clinics working on my technique as a beginner. This trip raised me to a different level. We made friends, laughed, fished, shared, helped, and learned from each other.

Genie sharing with us one of the many beautiful locations on the Upper Sacramento River to fly fish.

We are already making plans for next year. We have scheduled a planning social at my house on 10/1/2026 at 6:30 PM; RSVP using my email address mcafeedebbie@gmail.com. Come to the social after spending some time at the casting pond if you wish. Everyone is welcome. We're hoping to schedule a repeat trip in September 2027 to coincide with a river cleanup event. We'd also like to firm up plans early to book the same riverfront house for our lodging and book Michael and his guides too.

If you have not been on a women's outing because you are worried that you aren't experienced enough or don't know anyone, then plan on coming to the next one because after this trip we were all experienced enough and knew everyone.

Join us for planning or sign up as early as possible. In the meantime, check the club calendar for all the events that will build your skills and introduce you to the many great club members that are attending and mentoring. It will be fun!

Kim and Penelope scouting the Upper Sac.

Lynn and Debbie having a good time.

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RRFF Obituaries & In Memoriam

To place an obituary notice, send info to Dave Stone, Editor

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 1,300 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 an email 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: **Mike Samuelson**

Secretary: **Michael Bluto**

Treasurer: **Tracie Koenig**

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

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

Outings Coordinator: **Ed Barich**

Northern CA Council Fly Fishers representative: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

Casting Instruction, Outings: **Don Shaw**

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

Raffle Coordinator, Education: **Gregg Wrisley**

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

Program Speaker Chairman: **Mike Borba**

Member at Large: **Jenny Tighe**

Coordinators

The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

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

RRFF Conservation Advisor, Cal Trout Connectivity 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 - $60 annual dues
☐ Junior membership - $30 annual dues (age 16-18 or live >75 miles from Santa Rosa)
☐ Gold membership - $1,000 (one-time)
☐ Family Membership - $65 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