

The Cast



Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County California
Volume 48, Number 10
November 2021

Mike Spurlock in the middle of a snap-T cast on the Trinity River
(See “*Spey Newbie*” story by Ed Barich below)

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

President's Message Drought or Flood?

As fisher folk, we are always closely tuned into what the weather is doing and what it is predicted to do next. Temperature and wind conditions get our immediate attention, but because in the long term our sport is so tightly coupled to water, precipitation is always on our mind. As we have learned over the past few years, too much or too little of it can put our angling plans on hold.

The recent month of October was a perfect example. In the beginning of the month, we were suffering through the most severe drought in memory. The water level in Spring Lake, a favorite bass fishing spot

near my home, was the lowest I had ever seen, causing many anglers to avoid it. But later in the month we got 8 inches of rain in a 24-hour period, putting the lake in flood, and closing the park to visitors. I guess when you pray for rain, you must be careful not to overdo it.

The long-term forecast is for above average precipitation in November, with a La Niña (low rainfall) winter overall. Perhaps our best hope is for an “average” winter (if that still exists in this era of climate change) but be prepared to change our plans to follow nature’s path, wherever it may go.

Tight lines,

~ 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!

RRFF General Meeting Wednesday, November 10th

7:00 pm – The Lodge Room,
Santa Rosa Veteran’s Memorial Building

For our November General Meeting. We will offer an exciting presentation about **Fly Fishing for Peacock Bass in the Brazilian Amazon**.

Join us for an in-depth presentation into one of the most exclusive Fly Fishing trips in the world. **Rob Anderson of Bucket List Fly Fishing and Pyramid Lake Fly Fishing** will dive into his operation on one of the clearest rivers in the Amazon and how he was able to turn it into a jungle preserve, keep fishing pressure to a minimum, help many jungle villagers, and make it a true Bucket List adventure.

Penelope Gadd-Coster, Vice President & Program Chair



Steelhead in the Classroom By Karl Joost

In late 2020, as the COVID virus dragged on and kept kids out of the classroom, with zero field trips, I was

approached by my amazing buddies David Berman and Shelly Spriggs of Sonoma Water with a proposition: “Would the Russian River Fly Fishers be interested in donating \$1,600 to help Sonoma Water produce an exciting video about **Steelhead in the Classroom**? Audience and purpose—a Sonoma County-wide introduction to *Steelhead in the Classroom* for elementary teachers, students, parents, and sponsoring organizations. We would use an expert videographer Alex Roa, the founder of Topo Collective of Sebastopol.”



The board agreed to the donation. David Berman and Shelly Spriggs also agreed to be our May 2021 general meeting speakers, joining us by Zoom video conference.



The video production process: 1) Begin with a compelling story board and script. 2) Build on the content by filming the egg to fry sequence in fish tanks in the classrooms. 3) Focus on the students, especially at fry release on local creeks: Mark West Creek in Larkfield, Dutch Bill Creek, and Santa Rosa Creek. 4) Request local teachers, students, and RRFF member’s input to be included in the video. 5) Show fly fishers from Russian River Fly Fishers club fishing

on the Russian River. 6) Collect, edit, and finalize the hundreds of video clips and ideas.

Additional funds and support were raised from Sonoma Water, Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited, and CDFW (California Dept of Fish and Wildlife), and the video project was successfully completed. Also, donations came from Alex Roa, the talented young videographer.

Shelly Spriggs was the point person for this project.

The video will be shared with all schools and teachers who participated in the Steelhead in the Classroom program. And the video will also be used to promote the program. We are confident that our message will reach many more schools and people who will learn about fly fishing and the remarkable migration of steelhead and salmon in the Russian River watershed.

Steve Tubbs shared the video with the Cordell Bank and Greater Farallon's National Marine Sanctuary Advisory Council since they are interested in our educational efforts. The video was well received.

Where can you see the video right now?

<https://www.rflyfishers.org>

or

<https://youtube.com/watch?v=W8woBUMn6y0&feature=share>



New RRFH Hats

Don Shaw will have our new hats available for purchase at the November 10th RRFH General Meeting and at the casting clinics. Don chose a variety of new colors and styles. A big shout out to Don for getting

these hats made and making this project a success. They are handsomely and durably made. And much appreciation goes to Steve Tubbs for designing our RRFH logos. ~Editor



L to R: Structured "Trucker's hats" (left and center) with new logo and embroidered fly. Non-structured "Dad hat" (right). All hats, \$20.00 each, cash only.



Doug MacKay contemplating a hat style & color

RRFH Winter Fly Casting Clinics

Our *first* Winter Fly Casting Clinic will be held on Saturday, November 20th. Held on the first and third Saturday of each month from noon until 2:30 pm (weather permitting). These events are **FREE** and are **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!** Beginners are always welcome. We do have some equipment available for your use at the Casting Pond if you do not have your own. Won't you join us? See you there!

See poster on page 6

Spey Newbie

By Ed Barich

I have had years of experience casting single-handed fly rods, but when it comes to two-handed spey rods I am truly a newbie. I took a couple of hours of spey lessons years ago, and all I remember is that I could sort-of make a cast on river-right, but not at all on river-left. Since then, I had no interest in more lessons, but when Mike Spurlock invited me to join him on a float down the Trinity River, fishing for steelhead with a guide who could teach me to spey cast, I reconsidered. We would both be in the Trinity area after the Lewiston outing, so this would be a convenient time to finally get some real on-the-river spey experience.

Before the outing, I studied some RIO spey videos that gave me the basic ideas of the two-handed casts. Our guide for the float was Andreas Fuhrmann of Confluence Outfitters. His job was to transport us to likely steelhead runs using his raft, and hopefully get me to the point where I could make some useful casts with the spey rods he provided. Neither of us had fished with Andreas before, but besides being knowledgeable on fishing the Trinity, he was an effective (and patient) casting instructor.

After launching the raft, Andreas took us across the river to the left bank, where we could set up our rods and we got some casting practice on an overcast “steely” day. Mike had his own spey rig and is an experienced caster, so all Andreas had to do for him was provide a local favorite fly and point him toward a run to fish. For me, Andreas demonstrated two casts that could be used on the left bank: a reverse double-spey, which is a left-handed version of the standard double-spey I had seen in videos, and a snap-T, which was one that I was not able to successfully perform years ago. I started practicing the reverse double-spey, since it was easier, and after a few “crash-and-burns” was able to get the fly across the river. The Trinity was not very wide at this spot, but I was impressed at the ability of a spey cast to drop the fly near the opposite bank with minimal effort (when my cast worked).

As the day went on, we floated to several left-bank spots, Mike looking for steelhead action and me looking to make some fair casts. I wanted to try the snap-T cast, but it looked advanced to me, and I feared getting a fly stuck in the back of my head. At some point I snagged the fly on a rock and broke it off, leaving me with a much less dangerous rig. Seizing the opportunity of safe casting, I tried a couple of fly-less snap-T casts and started to get the hang of it. Later, Andreas replaced the lost fly and thanks to my “dry runs”, I was able to successfully execute a snap-T without adding a fly ornament to my RRFF baseball cap.

Toward noon, we took a shore break where Andreas set up a picnic-style lunch, complete with folding chairs and table. While lunch on a river float usually involves cold sandwiches on hard boat chairs, Andreas treated us to an up-scale dining experience - I felt like I was on an African safari.



Ed's spey steelie

Later in the afternoon, we stopped at a long riffle on river-right, where Mike took the down-stream reach, and I took the upper. After working hard all morning on what I thought were more difficult river-left casts, I was pleased to finally get a chance to do the standard double-spey and really get into the rhythm of the cast, along with a step downstream after each swing of the fly. When I got down to the beached raft where the run would end, the line went tight, and a steelhead launched out of the water. Andreas yelled “let it run” and I resisted the temptation to touch the spinning, buzzing reel. The fish made a few good

sprints, but I eventually got it under control. Holding a twelve-and-a-half-foot-long spey, I am not sure what I would have done if Andreas had not skillfully netted the fish. It was an average-sized wild Trinity steelhead—but my first ever on a two-handed rod.

That was the only fish of the day, but our adventure was not quite over. We were within a couple of miles of the take-out spot when a front came through and rain began to fall. An upstream wind pushed hard enough to keep us from making any progress downstream, even with Andreas straining at the oars. Mike and I got out to walk, while Andreas dragged the raft as dead trees snapped and fell around us. Eventually we got to the lee side of a point, where we could get back in the boat and make it safely back to the take-out. After a summer-like weekend at Lewiston, we felt the full brunt of the first drought-busting storm of the season.

For me it was a good day, finally learning to make casts that I had failed to do years ago, sweetened by the cooperation of one wild fish. It left me with a desire to learn more about casting with these mysterious two-handed rods.

Spey Casting Clinic on the Russian River

December 11, 2021

10 am – 1 pm

Mike Spurlock, RRFF Board Member, is organizing and leading an on-the-water spey clinic. Sign up if you are a member who either has spey equipment and willing to let others cast with your equipment or if you don't, members who just want to try casting. To sign up for this clinic go to:

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

Note: Will be scheduled to a later date if the river water is too high.





Russian River Fly Fishers
Winter Fly Casting Clinics

Noon until 2:30 pm

Held on the first and third Saturday of each month!
(Beginning November 20th, weather permitting)

This event is always **FREE** and is **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**
Beginners are welcome!

LEARN TO FLY CAST!

Please join us in the southeast corner of Dan Galvin Park, on the corner of Bennett Valley Road and Yulupa Avenue. The Casting Pond is located beyond the soccer fields and Dog Park. For more information, visit

rrflyfisher.org
facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers

Please follow all COVID-19 protocols when you are using the Casting Pond!

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Calendar of Events

RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics - have ended for the year due to the lack of light. The winter casting clinics will start November 20th and are OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!
Beginners are welcome...

November

- 4-6 Pyramid Lake (Chris Castellucci, Trip Leader)
- 10 RRFF General Meeting – 7:00 @ SR Vet's Hall
- 17 RRFF Board Meeting – 7:00, Zoom
- 20 Fly Casting Clinics – Noon – 2:30

PLEASE FOLLOW ALL COVID-19 PROTOCOLS!

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

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**

539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

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

331-0762 ynegraper@gmail.com

Secretary: **Brendan Galten**

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Treasurer, Membership: **Spencer Bader**

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Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

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

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Member at Large: **Don Shaw**

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Outings Chairman: **Chris Castellucci**

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

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Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**

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New Member Mentoring: **Jeff Cratty**

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Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

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Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

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Member at Large: **Mike Borba**

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Coordinators

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

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Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

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Conservation Coordinator: **Charlie Schneider**

217-0409 bikecharlie@gmail.com Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited (RETU)

Conservation Coordinator: **Tom Greer**

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The Cast Newsletter Editor: **Dave Stone**

953-9816 davestone@sonic.net *

*Note: new email address. ~Editor

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