

NCCFFI Report to Clubs, May, 2023
Mark Rockwell

I sit here thinking about what to write to all of you who are ready to go fishing, and wanted to remind you that **tomorrow, April 22nd is Earth Day, 2023**. It is a day to remind us that we only have one planet that supports life as we know it. There is only one earth, and it is our home. Take a look:



There are no borders. All of it is our home. We tend to identify only with the region that is close to us and our residence. Then identify with our state and our country. For most, the rest of the world is "over there". But, is it really?

I came to a difficult time recently when we moved to Santa Barbara and left Northern California. I miss all of you and the place where all of my fly fishing life has been spent. I know little about the watersheds down here and most of what is trout country is a long way away. I still yearn

for time on Fall River, the Lower Yuba, bass in the Delta, and steelhead on the north coast. I also miss the beautiful vistas - The crest of the Sierra, driving up Hwy 5 along the Upper Sacramento River, fishing on the Delta for stripers, and the ocean around San Francisco.

After reading a great book - ***The Sense of Wonder*** by Rachel Carson, I came to a new reality that has helped me with my move. In the introduction it says, "*She captures the essence of the wonder-filled world of children and stirs in us that ancient longing for unity with the living world.*" What I know for me is that when I'm outdoors I do feel more 'connected' to the planet, and it gives me a *feeling* like nothing else I do. This sense of connectedness started when I was about 8 or 9 and being at my grandparents cabin in the San Bernardino mountains. I'd spend the day fishing with worms in the creek and watch deer come for a drink, birds playing in the trees, a beaver swimming by, and fish swimming. Those moments changed me.

Then I grew up and went off to college, work and a family. As an adult I became connected to my work and family, but was uneasy inside until I got outdoors and re-connected with other planetary residents - trees, fish, birds, deer, etc. Fly fishing was

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my vehicle to get connected again, and rediscover that child within me. I love that feeling, and do all I can to have that connected experience often. Ask yourself if this isn't true for you. Do you feel "more connected to the planet" when fly fishing. Is it the fishing that you love, or is it the sense of connectedness? Maybe it's both.

An experience I had in B.C. fishing steelhead was one moment I never forget. I was alone fishing a run at 9 p.m. in the evening in July (still light) when a nice fish grabbed my submerged spey fly. We fought for maybe 12 minutes and when I got her to the bank, grabbed her tail, eased the hook out, I was stunned by her beauty. Silver, sleek, clean, shinnny, with a slight streak of rose on her cheek and side. She was Gorgeous! She lay on her side with one eye just looking at me, and I looking at her. We were one for that moment. I thanked her for the meeting, let her catch her breath, and let her swim back to complete her journey to spawn. At that moment I was totally connected - to her, the place and the planet. It was special.

Now, when I'm asked, "where do you live?" I respond, "**planet earth**". My residence is in Santa Barbara. To me, that response tells me I am still connected to Northern California, and I'm connected to all of the planet. I'm working my way through a new reality that is more comforting and wholesome. My home is our planet, not this one place. This has changed me forever.

So, this Earth Day, let's all think about what we can do to help the planet deal with we humans. We are currently a stressor to the planet, and we have to all find it in our hearts to act differently. Leave a light footprint as we walk, and use less, dump less, reduce our carbon footprint, call on our elected officials to move NOW on ways to reduce carbon. After all, we are taking care of our home by these actions.

Join FFI as a start: <https://www.flyfishersinternational.org/>. They are our fly fishing brothers. A recent paper from FFI - ***A New Conservation paradigm*** - connects caring for our watersheds and the importance they play in sequestering carbon. Science now says that the plants and watersheds can sequester 37% of the carbon we need removed from the atmosphere. Learn more about this, and how you can help here: <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZdvXYBASbRvPb9IOv6XpQI06q6FhnoXo/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103694342699691456221&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Happy Earth Day! We all live here together. Let's all find a way to help! FFI, NCCFFI, your fly fishing club are all brothers and part of the fly fishing clan. Let's play!