

The Cast



Russian River Fly Fishers

Sonoma County
California
Volume 43 Number 8

"July General Meeting"

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

President's Message

No August RRF General Meeting

Skunked!

The San Francisco Giants recently went through a 6-game losing streak. I had no problem imagining how they felt, especially after spending 3 days this month fly fishing a favorite northern California trout lake with not even a solid grab from a fish. I should have felt better after seeing that even the bait fishing guys were not having any luck, but that knowledge provided little solace.

If a batter was going through a hitless streak, a good coach would remind him that even the best players go cold once in a while, and as long as he kept his techniques solid, good times were bound to return. I guess the same goes for fly fishing, and after all, I did have the opportunity to see some great outdoors while fanning the waters. So if you are going

through a similar experience, remember that if this sport were too predictable, it would be nowhere near as interesting!

RRFF has a bunch of club outings scheduled for this fall. Of particular interest is a conservation outing led by Derek Campbell on September 17, with our club joining in the annual Russian River Cleanup. It will be a great opportunity to see parts of our namesake river that we may not be familiar with, and to do some good for our local environment in the process. As with all our outings, you can sign up at the next meeting or on the club website.

Because most folks will be out vacationing this month, there will be no club general meeting in August. Our next meeting will be September 14 at the Veteran's Memorial building in Santa Rosa. I hope to see you there.

~ Ed Barich

July RRFF Meeting Was Well Attended

About fifty RRFF members and guests gathered at the Casting Pond the past month for a Steve Tubbs prepared BBQ and a casting demonstration by FFF Master Fly Caster, Floyd Dean, assisted by his wife Janet. This was a much larger group than typically attends our July meetings. We ate all the picnic that Steve provided.



Floyd spent a couple of hours demonstrating a variety of “mending” casts to present flies. I was most interested in his various “Bounce Casts” that skip flies forward and “plop” them on the water to attract fish. It will be interesting to find how this works when fishing.



He also demonstrated and discussed the Double Haul cast with the aid of his **Accelerator: Fly Casting Trainer**. This device helps fly casters with their timing while hauling the line to increase line speed. I’m looking into the possibility of having a few of the training aids to use at our casting clinics.



This was a very enjoyable meeting on a beautiful evening at our casting pond.

~ Ken Magoon

~ Upcoming Outings ~

The RRFF is sponsoring four outings to familiar locations this Fall. They are listed and described on the club website: rrflyfishers.org.

As usual they are scheduled from Thursdays to Sundays. Go there to see more details about reservations.

Manzanita Lake September 8 to 12 (Trout).

Camping in Lassen Volcanic National Park. Contact Ken Magoon.

Davis Lake September 29 to October 2 (Trout).

Davis Lake Resort and RV camping. Contact Ken Magoon.

Lewiston Lake October 20 to 24 (Trout and Steelhead). Lakeview Terrace Resort. Contact Ed Barich.

Trinity River November 10 to 13 (Steelhead). Indian Creek Lodge. Contact Bill Laurie.

~ Ken Magoon

Fun at Almanor with the Hexagenia Hatch

I went fishing with Lance Gray at Lake Almanor Hex hatch on June 23. Lance is a California fishing guide who we have used for some club events and has been a club speaker in the past. I think Lance and his brother Lincoln may have conducted a Hex Hatch workshop at Almanor a few years back.

I drove 4 ½ hours and arrived about 5 pm at the west shore of Lake Almanor at the forest service camp ground near Plumas Pines Resort.

Lance had all the equipment – Fat Cat Float tubes, fins, three 5 weight rods (Type 3 sink rate, intermediate, floating line), water bottles and head lamp in the float tube pockets.

We waded up, launched the tubes and kicked out about 50 yards to a water depth of 20-25 feet. Lance carried the extra rods, a net and his float tube had a portable fish finder depth gauge. We were on the water fishing by ~ 6 pm. A flotilla of float tubers and boats gradually joined us over the next few hours.

The fly of choice was a pair of Wiggle Tail Glimmer Olive Size 10 and we used 3x tippet (8 lb test).



The initial technique was to troll very slowly parallel to shore with about 45 ft. of type 3 line at an angle that put the flies right near the bottom. At this time of day, the larvae are just starting to emerge from the mud and swim up to the surface.

Lance kicked alongside coaching me and reporting the water depth and the fish pings on his finder. I hooked up a ~ 5 lb brown after about 10 minutes. The grab was very powerful and it took a while to land with a 5 weight rod.



Over the next several hours until about 8:30 pm when the sun set, I hooked another 5 fish, browns in the 4-7 lb range plus one small rainbow.

About half way through this, we switched to the intermediate line as the nymphs rose and the beautiful bright yellow Hex adults started to appear on the surface, much to the delight of the grebes who were feasting on them as they struggled to take flight.



By 8:45, it was starting to get fairly dark and the surface was covered every 6” – 12” with the Hex adults. The trout started to feed on top here and there and we switched to a dry line casting floating flies: Hex para-nymph emerger and stillborn trailer.



The challenge was to cast a fly in front of a feeding/travelling fish and strip with a series of pops, hoping the fish will take notice among an abundance of flies on the water. At some point, hordes of bats came out and started to get in on the action, eating the Hex in the air and off the water surface.

In the next 20 minutes, as darkness approached, I was able to hook one fish, a 6-7 lb rainbow that ate the stillborn trailer. He hit it hard and it was quite exciting to catch a big fish on top.

By last light about 9:10pm, the fish action abruptly totally died in spite of many fish visible below on the fish finder. The fish were apparently full and the bats had eaten all the surface flies. We could no longer see to cast, so we put on the headlamps and kicked in to shore.

The largest fish I saw anyone catch was a rainbow in the 10 lb range. There were also some decent smallmouth bass caught. The Hex hatch usually lasts from June 10 to mid-July with the peak about June 21.

This was a great learning experience and may be the most fun I have ever had fishing still water:

- 3-4 hours in a pleasant setting
- lots of action, some top water
- plenty of big hard fighting fish with strong grabs

In retrospect, I should have planned to stay on for a few more days in the campground to enjoy this action.

Cheers,
~ Mike Spurlock

~ ~*The 8 Pound Pond*

What's in a name? Three years ago right after we became members of the Tara Firma Farm community (we monthly purchase their incredible meat package) we invited women to fish the pond at an RRFF outing. One newbie fly fisher accompanied us on what became for her an incredible experience.

Her first catch to hand on a fly rod was what Lee determined was an 8 pound largemouth!

Standing on the pond's dam, she cast a frog fly to a rising bass just as Lee had instructed. For those of you who do not know, Lee Soares has been mentoring the Women's Outing activity for many years. Thank you Lee!

After landing her prize and returning it to the water, this lady was told euphemistically "you're up s___t creek!" As largemouth bass fishers know, catching that size largemouth bass anytime is a rare experience. Of course we were all excited for her beginner's luck and looked forward to her returning for future outings and maybe a public brag at an RRFF club meeting.

However, that was not to be; we never saw or heard from her again! She came, she caught, she left!

Because of that awesome catch, we dubbed the pond The 8 Pound Pond, not wanting to forget that day or that Mr Big LM is probably still there.

Well, the addiction is annually fed by the wish or dream or fantasy that Mr Big LM will show up again. To nurture the dream, we are making regular summer treks from the farm store up the hill to the pond and tossing a variety of flies.

We continue to introduce newbies to this pond in hopes to see him OR maybe witness another catch IF only new inductees to the magic of the 8 Pound Pond receive the honor of seeing, receiving blow ups or strikes from him.

June was one of those days where two initiates to the pond - experienced fly fishers -- got to see bass and blue gill. The RRFF WOMENS' Outing hosted Judy Brandi and Nancy Tennyson. All caught bass and Mentor Lee also caught blue gill. It took three hours of solid fishing for the pond to produce, as LMs were teaching us a lesson.

SUSAN: I learned that everything Ken Hanley taught us at one of his RRFF Lectures is true: Damsel nymphs are the main course about 10am on. Lee followed Ken's teaching with much success while Susan, Nancy, and Judy insisted on starting off by trying to convince the bass that top water frogs and rat mats are just as good breakfast fare. It didn't work as we wanted. Woolly buggers posing as rising damsel nymphs were ALL the bass wanted. Blue gill too.

Judy finally succumbed to experience Hanley's secrets and landed two bass. Nancy also followed suit and landed several. Although an elk hair frog hooked and administered Susan the tug-drug on 4 bass, only one of them agreed to be handled. She received cheap thrills with 10 blow ups, but refused to spend much time with nymphs.

Although the seemingly phantom Mr Big LM never showed his fins this time, now the dream stays intact and future trips are guaranteed. ALL had a fun Sunny day of fly fishing at The 8 Pound Pond!

Next Women 's Outing is Saturday August 27.

NOTE: (WOMENS' Outings have switched from fourth Fridays to fourth Saturdays)

Call [707-815-5926](tel:707-815-5926) OR email shbgold@gmail.com for additional info.

~ Susan Bostwick

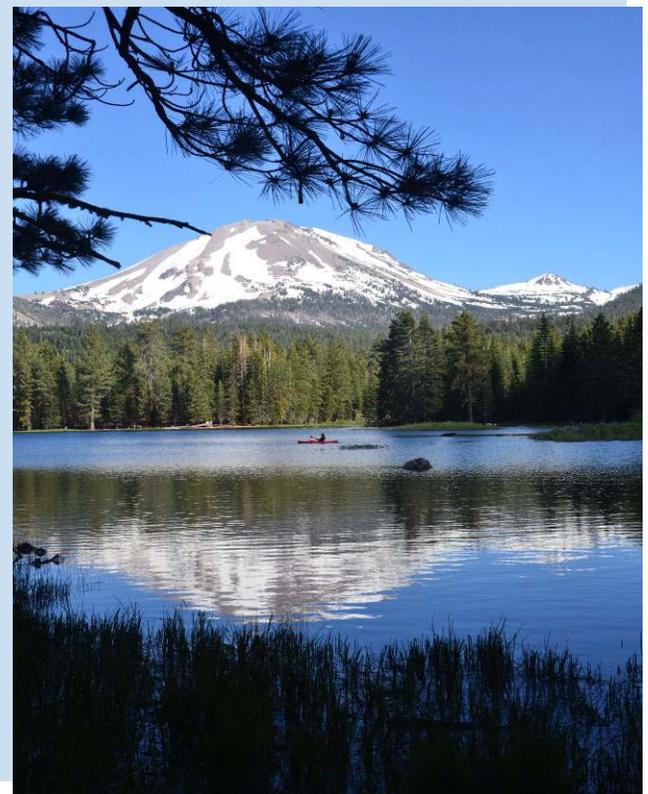
June 2016 Manzanita Lake Outing

Don Shaw, Walt Kruze, Ed Barich and Ken Young joined me for three days of camping and fishing at Manzanita Lake in Mount Lassen Volcanic National Park during June. It was an unusual outing in that all reserved sites were taken back in April. Ken and Ed had to take a chance to get a site in "B Loop", but found one near our camp, which allowed us to easily bring together our dinner meals and share an evening fire. The fires helped ward off the chill of 37-degree night temperatures.



A "pyromaniac" camping next to us spent the first evening repeatedly pouring gas on a log, sending flames 10 feet high under fir tree boughs. The next day I told a Park Ranger about this and he had a talk with the guy. That night the "perp" constructed a large cut wood fire, waited until late and then lit it with cups of gas. Next night he and his girlfriend were visited by two Forest Service officers. I felt kind of sorry for them, but they had reserved the site for the week and were apparently allowed to stay.

Unfortunately, fishing the lake never became as hot the guy's brief flammers. There was a lot of wind from early morning. Guys from two other clubs reported low number of grabs for the whole week. We saw no Callibaetis hatches and the damsels were not too prevalent. As we were packing on Sunday, Don and I shared that we both landed just 3 fish over the two and a half days. I had two browns and one rainbow on a damsel fly and olive wiggle tail. I think that Ed and Ken did about as good. Walt, as we have come to expect, probably hooked 3 plus fish per day. He explores the further corners of the lake and casts into structures. Good fishing Walt.



I'll share a personal note. For many years I have combined a few days at Manzanita Lake with 3 days fishing at Whipple Ranch on Fall River. Don and Walt have accompanied me for several years, as did John Iding, back in the day. This year could likely be the last of these memorable fishing outings, as Whipple Ranch will be sold by Dennis Jacobsen. I know that many RRF members know Dennis and appreciate his efforts to provide comfortable lodging and easy access to one of the best stretches of Spring Creek trout fishing water (Zug Bug Alley) anywhere. Thanks Dennis!

~ Ken Magoon

Conservation Corner



~ Killing Trout? ~

Recently, my family and I were backpacking in the Desolation Wilderness. The lakes and little connector streams were teeming with Brook trout, many in the typical 8-9" range, but a few notably pushing 16". It was a perfect venue for my young children to work on their fly fishing skills and we had no problem catching enough fish for our annual last-night Brook Trout Fry. But the number of people I talk to who are surprised that I, as a modern fly fisher into conservation, would keep and kill a wild trout has got me to thinking. In this day and age, with more fishers and less fish, is it ever OK to keep a fish?

In an earlier article, I wrote about the potentially devastating effects of over-fishing populations of fish. But that is typically an issue of mechanized, for-profit commercial harvest. Recreational fishing can be a more complex issue. Recreational over-fishing can certainly harm a fishery (Slaughter Gulch, below Spicer Reservoir, being just one example), but unlike commercial fisheries, it's not so simple. Before continuing, I'm going to separate out recreational harvest issues of trout from salmon and steelhead. Whether to keep a trout versus returning it to the water is such an interesting and complex and evolving issue that I'll tackle anadromous Salmon and Steelhead in a separate article in *The Cast*.

We fly fishers are an evolving bunch. Start by reading some Hewitt or Skues or Gordon and then moving on through to Gierach and Leeson and Schullery. The prose is still lyrical, the stalk sublime, the scenes idyllic, but one stark difference is noticeable. No more "braces of trout on the berm". As we've moved from hobnails to felt soles to rubber. So have we moved from limiting out to C&R Grip & Grin to Keep 'Em Wet. As you read modern fishing articles and essays, you can't help but notice the

apologetic tone of the author when they admit to that age-old tradition, The Fish Fry.

The scientific community has played a key part in this evolution. Catch & Release fishing came out of key research on the improved performance of a fishery if trout are properly returned after being caught by fly or spinner. More recent research has advanced this even further as "proper handling" has become better defined. As the Native Fish Society cites, "*studies have shown that the longer a fish is exposed to air after exhausting exercise the higher their mortality rates are (Ferguson and Tufts, 1992; Gale et al, 2011). Even 30 seconds of air exposure reduces a trout's ability to recover and can provide a significant additional stress even when catch and release fishing (Ferguson and Tufts, 1992).*" This has led to a raft of initiatives and articles that highlight the value of educating anglers.

But where is all this headed? What's the next wave? Whither the venerable Fish Fry? Who knows, but it sure is interesting to follow. Through careful reading, I can come up with two clear, diverging pathways. There are the Pragmatists, summed up well by looking at Trout Unlimited's Wild Steelhead Initiative that differentiates between a degraded fishery with put-and-take Enhancement Hatchery trout (kill your limit) and wild, native salmonids (treat with reverence). This pathway concludes that people will fish, and there is a better way to go about it, supported by articles such as the [2015 article in Hatch Magazine](#) that stated that native Yellowstone Cutthroat in the South Fork of the Snake River required a certain amount of catch-and-kill of non-native rainbows to survive. National Parks have instituted what is almost a bounty on non-native trout by opening up catch limits to 10 fish or more on Brook Trout in Western parks.

The alternative I would call the Idealists. Paul Schullery, in his 2008 book, *If Fish Could Scream*, highlights the spotlight being shown through popular culture on Catch & Release fishing as a way to "hurt fish for entertainment". While neither he nor I knows what to make of this yet, it is a sentiment that can't be ignored as fringe, as evidenced by the July 2016 Fresh Air interview of Jonathan Balcombe, author of the just-published *What A Fish Knows* (Scientific American, 2016). Citing Victoria Braithwaite's Penn State research in *Do Fish Feel Pain* (Oxford University Press, 2010), Balcombe makes the case that while trout don't have many of the nerve fibers associated with long-term pain, they certainly do have a negative reaction to being hooked. And as most of us can attest, they seem to be able to learn to be hook-shy.

So where does that leave us? I certainly think more about how I treat a fish that I've hooked. And I definitely plan a bit better about what I'm going to do if I hook one. I pay more attention to where the fish in the river or lake came from and what would have been there without our

meddling. But as you can see from the picture and story at the beginning, I also haven't stopped fishing and still love a good Fish Fry.

How you can make a difference –

- a. Pay attention to where the trout you're catching come from. A Conservation Hatchery fish is not an Enhancement Hatchery fish. And neither is a wild, native trout.
- b. Follow the available science and support your local fly shop – wet your hands, buy and use rubber landing nets, land 'em quick on higher strength tippetts, and go with barbless hooks. Landing gloves are best for bigger fish.
- c. Be Drought Smart – Use a stream thermometer and don't fish for salmonids when water temperature is >70 degrees Fahrenheit, support science-based low-flow river closures, and don't target fish trapped by low flows.
- d. Keep your pictures quick and your fish close to or in the water – Join initiatives such as [Fish Need Water](#), [KeepEmWet Fishing](#), and the Native Fish Society's [Keep 'Em Wet](#) campaign to improve education.

~ Derek Campbell, Conservation Chairman

Guide Trip . . .

Raffle Tickets for The Lance Gray donated guide trip for two are still available at \$20.00. Each ticket has a \$425 value.

Tickets may be purchased at the general meetings and the winner need not be present to win.

~ Editor

RRFF Membership Dues Renewal

As of July 1st, your RRFF Membership Dues are due and payable. We appreciate your timely renewal and will continue to hold our dues at their current rates. **You may renew your membership online at www.rrflyfisher.org** or by US Mail. Please remit to: Mike Spurlock, 20 San Domingo Way, Novato, CA 94945. All checks must be made payable to the **Russian River Fly Fishers.**

Gold Member	\$1,000.00 contribution (one-time)
Family Member	\$55.00 per year
Single Member	\$50.00 per year
Junior Member	\$25.00 per year (ages 16 to 18)

Your support is greatly appreciated and provides funds for our speakers, outings and special events throughout the year.

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**

539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

Vice President & Outings Co-Chairman: **Bill Laurie**

538-0399 blaurie120@att.net

Outings Co-Chairman: **Ken Magoon**

527- 8376 magoon5294@aol.com

Secretary: **Greg Jacobs**

823-7341 [gjacob48@gmail.com](mailto:gjacobs48@gmail.com)

Treasurer & Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

(415)-599-6138 mikerrff@gmail.com

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

765-1787 steve@kresky.com

Program Chairman: **Joe Banovich**

526-6015 joebanovich@sonic.net

Library Master: **Don Shaw**

664-8573 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Member at Large: **Chris Castellucci**

763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

Member at Large: **Mike Kast**

538-9762 michaelrkast@gmail.com

Membership Chairman: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Member at Large, Casting for Recovery: **Paul Matzen**

795-8885 gbridgeman@att.net

Member at Large: **Ken Young**

539-9649 wlk4fun@sbcglobal.net

Conservation Chairman: **Derek Campbell**

591-5667 dcampbell00@hotmail.com

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**

823-5572 ggwris@gmail.com

Coordinators

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

974-2651 frommewee@comcast.net

Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**

815-5926 shbgold@gmail.com

Raffle Coordinator: **Christie Geernaert**

Casting Pond Stewards: **Doug & Sage Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

527-9607 fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net

Newsletter: **Lorrin Ngum**

762-4652 lorrinn@aol.com

Russian River Fly Fishers
P.O. Box 2673
Santa Rosa, CA 95405



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).

Name _____ Date _____ Referred by _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Home Phone _ _____ Work Phone _ _____ E-mail Address* _____

How Can You Help the RRFF? _____

Occupation _____ Signature _ _____

* Required for e-mail newsletter

Please mark one of the following categories:

I apply as a new member: **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership – \$55 annual dues [JOIN ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

Existing membership renewal: **Single membership** – \$50 annual dues **Gold membership** - \$1,000.00 (one-time)

Family membership – \$55 annual dues [RENEW ONLINE @ www.rrflyfisher.org](http://www.rrflyfisher.org)

Junior membership – \$25 annual dues

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 30th of any year will cover the balance of that year and also the membership dues for the following fiscal year. The RRFF fiscal year runs from July 1st to June 30th

Please mail this application and your check payable to: **Russian River Fly Fishers**
c/o **Mike Spurlock, 20 San Domingo Way, Novato, CA 94945**