

The Coast



Lake Sonoma
Weekend Before Lake Closed Due to
COVID-19 - Shelter in Place

Sonoma County
California
Volume 47, Issue 5
May, 2020

President's Message

A Late Thaw

Last year, at this time, our club was just getting back into having outings after a winter of record heavy rains and Sierra snowfalls that cancelled many planned events. Ironically, we are in a similar situation this spring, not because of flood or drought, but because of one of the smallest creatures in creation. Just when we think we have everything under our control, nature humbles us and resets our expectations. We are seeing our world in a different light and have an opportunity to learn new lessons, if we have a mind to.

We are still frozen out of many of the outdoor recreations we love, but there are signs of a thaw. Sonoma County parks have been reopened, although we are not allowed to drive to them. The

expectation is that some of the controls that were placed on us may soon be loosened. It will be up to all of us to follow the rules that protect ourselves and others, and not cause any stumbles on the path to regaining our lost freedoms. After all, social distancing is not so foreign to fly fishers – our usual preference is to be at least one rod length from the nearest angler on the water.

So, there will be no more large club gatherings or events until the authorities tell us that the coast is clear. In the meantime, our board is having monthly meetings by video, doing what we can to plan for the coming thaw. This issue will include a ballot for the board members and officers in this coming year. Please take a minute to vote for your board – we appreciate your support of our efforts to keep the RRFV running smoothly and meeting your needs.

If you have some idle time (and who doesn't these days), be sure to visit our website (<https://www.rrflyfisher.org>) or our Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/russianriverflyfishers>) for useful information and links to other sites related to the world of fly fishing. There is always something new to learn in this sport, if you look for it.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich

Conservation Corner

As RRF president Ed Barich mentioned in the March issue of the Cast, myself and fellow Redwood Empire Trout Unlimited board member Tom Greer will be serving as conservation coordinators for RRF in the future. As RRF members ourselves, we are thrilled for our groups to work together more closely.

Fly anglers have long been leaders in the conservation community, and it makes sense; healthy rivers lead to healthy fish populations which leads to better fishing. Trout and salmon face a multitude of threats across their range, and perhaps nowhere is that more evident than in the Golden State. With the looming impacts of climate change, continued population growth and Californian's seemingly insatiable thirst for water, the outlook for salmon and steelhead is not favorable. Yet, I remain optimistic; in part, because of what I see as a growing interest in our sport among younger generations, in part because of the continued dedication of lifelong anglers and conservationists, and in part because we know much more now than ever before about what salmon and steelhead need to thrive.

Conservation works best when people truly care about a place or species. As fly anglers, we devote time to the smallest of details, the flash of a wing case or the color of a thorax, and this makes us all naturalists. To simply notice the details in the world around us is the first step in understanding the

connections and processes that make things tick. We're primed to know more and care more.

Tom and I look forward to sharing conservation, science and restoration stories with RRF members in future issues of the Cast. If you have questions, concerns or ideas please get in touch with one of us. RETU events have been and will remain open to RRF members and we hope those of you interested in this aspect of our sport will consider joining us for a conservation speaker or restoration event just as we hope some of our members might pick up a fly rod for the first time. We look forward to continuing to build community in the Russian River watershed, within the sport of fly fishing, and around California's incredible fish species. ~ Charlie Schneider

Tom Greer - Has been fishing and walking in water since he was a wee lad near the Batenkill River in upstate NY. An outdoor enthusiast, environmentalist, and small business owner, Tom is married, with two kids and lives in Sebastopol.

Charlie Schneider - Was raised by lumberjacks on the Mendocino Coast. He is currently pursuing a master's degree in natural resource management with a focus on fisheries from Oregon State University. Charlie lives in Petaluma with his wife and two young boys.



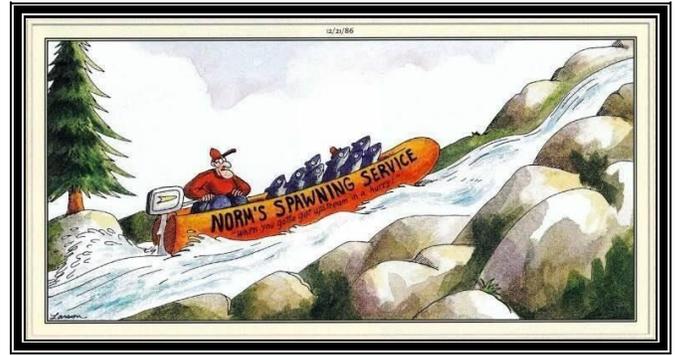
From L to R Tom Greer, Charlie Schneider and RETU members Eric Leland and Erik Young helping CDFW deploy a DIDSON sonar camera on the Eel River to monitor Chinook and steelhead last fall

Pre-Shelter in Place Steelhead

On March 8, 2020, just before the shelter in place order went into effect, Mike Spurlock caught a bright wild hen while spey casting on the Russian River at Vacation Beach. No one was around, and he was out getting a bit of exercise and just enjoying nature. At that time, the river was running about 400 cfs. Mike commented that he has fished several times since that day with no results other than casting practice.



Beautiful Wild Steelhead Hen



Remember to Support Fishing Guides During These Challenging Times

The following Guides have made very generous donations to our Cioppino dinner fundraiser. Please keep them in mind the next time you're looking for a Guide.

Recommended by club members:

Richard Loft, Napa Valley Fly Guides.
napavalleyflyguides.com
Andrew Harris, Confluence Outfitters.
ConfluenceOutfitters.com
Patrick Mackenzie, mackenzionthefly@gmail.com
Jon Baiocchi, Baiocchi's Troutfitters.
BaiocchisTroutfitters.com

Steelhead in The Classroom Update

For happenings with the Steelhead in the Classroom gang, just go to the RRF website:
<http://www.rrflyfisher.org>

Also, check out the weekly webinar link at RETU: <https://www.redwoodempire-tu.org/siclive>
This is a link to a live stream of steelhead eggs developing and hatching into fry in an aquarium.

Thanks so much,

~ Karl Joost

Steelhead of a Lifetime

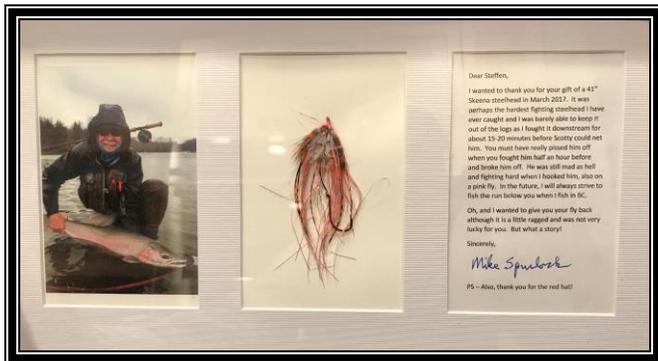
In March 2017, I was spey fishing for steelhead in BC on the Skeena River. We had been swinging flies for several hours without any results when our guide got a text from one of the other guides that they had just hooked up and were fighting a nice steelhead. The fisherman was Steffen Juhl, a Danish guy who owns [Salmon Junkies](#), a fly fishing travel company. After a short time, we got a second text message that Steffen had just broke off the big fish.

Frustrated by our lack of action, our guide decided to run up the river to fish a run just below where they had been fishing. I started stepping down the run

and pretty soon, hooked a big fish which fought like crazy. After about 15 minutes or more with the fish making numerous runs, several successful efforts to steer clear of logs and with lots of worry about breaking off the fish, our guide was finally able to net it. It was the hardest fighting steelhead that I have ever caught and my biggest. As we looked in the net, we noticed it had a second fly in its mouth, and it dawned on us that it was the same fish Steffen had lost about 30 minutes before - a 41" fish, ~22 lbs. Our guide could hardly wait to spread the news and everyone had a good laugh that night at dinner.

A few weeks later, I sent a framed display to the lodge with my photo, the fly, and a thank you note. The next that time Steffen was there, he was surprised to find it hanging on the wall and had a few choice comments for me. The story has become part of the lore of the lodge and the display still hangs there.

~ Mike Spurlock



The Irish Bar

Reprinted from *The Cast*, November 2014
Volume 41 Number 11

Every Village of any consequence has one and that is as it should be. The young in our society are nurtured, shaped and molded by every strata of sobriety into people of solid timber in these fine establishments. The truth be known, governments have been founded as well as toppled within the hallowed walls of Irish pubs where there is the

melding of the mind, the soul, and the Jamison's. The Irish Bar is of no small significance.

Our story begins many miles from the sea, on the waters of one of the great steelhead rivers of North America in the wilds of British Columbia. The river is unbridled, free to flow at the pleasure of our Creator and by her hand it is touched with a power which compels one's attention to its grace and beauty. This river is the stuff of legends and on one particular late September morning it was ever so pleasing to the eye.

The early morning mist was lifting from the river's surface and the first rays of the sun were beginning to soften the chill. The Aspens glowed in their golden Autumn splendor and that soft amber backed by the deep blue-green of the majestic Northern Spruce and Hemlock forest. The morning was a good morning and held the promise of a fine day. Kelly Ames, Heather Hamm, John Frenzel, and I navigated downriver, bundled against the crisp wind, and picked our way around the large granite boulders lying just below the river's surface. We anchored the boat in shallow water and rigged our two-handed rods with Scandi floating heads and slow sinking tips. Rosie the Riveter seemed to be the fly of choice, but I tied on a Shamrock just for luck.

There were two runs separated by the boat. The run above us was somewhat shorter than the run below and deeper as well. We reckoned that Heather and John would fish the lower run and Kelly and I would split the upper run. The day before I had hooked two wild steelhead in the lower half of the upper run, and given that Kelly had yet to hook her first steelhead in this river, she would get that bucket and I would fish above. To properly fish the upper run, one needed to wade waist deep and some fifty feet out from the moss-covered cobbles along the edge of the run. The bottom of the river was layered with greasy cannon balls interspersed with greasy basketballs and those between rocks the size of greasy Volkswagen Bugs. This run was a wader's

nightmare and only the foolhardy would attempt it without a wading staff.

We moved slowly out into the water and began the cast, swing, and step-down pattern so effective in presenting the fly to every hold. I was some hundred yards upriver when I noticed that Kelly's rod was bent in a deep arc. Her reel was screaming, the line was flying, and the water was erupting with the silver of a wild steelhead. Kelly's expression seemed to be a euphoric smile superimposed on a look of sheer terror. Heather, John, and I worked our way to her with the net while she fought a long-distance battle from her position out in the run. Her feet were planted firm on the hard bottom. One misstep and she would be looking at the beast eye to eye.

The fish had taken her shooting head, 150 feet of running line and 300 feet of her backing and was holding far out and downriver. Kelly carefully worked her way out of the run, down the green moss-covered bar, and into a position below the fish. Once in command, the epic battle edged her way and she soon swung her first wild Skeena Steelhead into the waiting net. As the mighty steelhead lay in the net, the barbless hook fell free of his jaw as if to underscore the quality and finesse of the Lassies' technique.

There were high fives all round, pictures of the object of her quest, and much celebration. The release was successful and the brute made his way into the sanctuary of the shadowy depths of the river. The baptism complete, we retired to the comfort of the moss carpeted boulders on the bar and multiple flasks appeared as if from thin air. Kelly commented that the green of the moss on the large boulders, the trees, and the beautiful river scene conjured pleasant memories of earlier times with her Dad in Ireland. At that solemn moment, John proclaimed, as we all raised a wee dram of Jamison's; "This run will, forever more, be known as the 'Irish Bar'". And so, it was that a new

'Establishment' was born on the banks of the mighty Skeena River! Here's to Ya, Lass!!

~ Big Pierre

Our Club Website

The club website <https://www.rrflyfisher.org/> has a few items that may be of interest while you are staying home. Check out the live video feed from member Tom Greer's steelhead aquarium. Tom also provides us a video update each Friday. We are also periodically adding stories, fly fishing videos as well as slideshows.

~ Mike Spurlock

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

www.rrflyfisher.org

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



Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

Archuleta's Reel Works

Custom fishing reel repair, servicing, and manufacturing.
733 Detrick Drive, Grants Pass, OR 97527
(541) 956-1691
Bill Archuleta, owner
www.archuletasreelworks.com

King's Sport and Tackle

Clothing, flies, rods, supplies, gear, accessories, instruction, guide service, and canoe rental.
16258 Main Street, Guerneville, CA 95446.
(707) 869-2156.
www.kingsrussianriver.com

Outdoor Pro Shop, Inc.

Fishing gear, supplies, fly fishing, flies, rods and accessories.
412 Houser Street, Cotati, CA 94931.
(707) 588-8033,
Fax (707) 588-8035
www.outdoorproshop.com

Sportsman's Warehouse

Top brands for hunting, fishing, and more at America's Premier Outfitter
5195 Redwood Drive, Rohnert Park, CA 94928
(707) 585-1500
www.sportsmanswarehouse.com

May Calendar of Events

**BECAUSE OF CORONAVIRUS AND THE SHELTER
IN PLACE ORDER, ALL CLUB MEETINGS, OUTINGS
AND FLY CASTING CLINICS ARE CANCELLED
UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE.
PLEASE ALL STAY HEALTHY AND SAFE**

RRFF Board of Directors

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**

539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

Vice President: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Secretary: **Vacant**

Treasurer & Webmaster: **Mike Spurlock**

(415) 599-6138 mikerrff@gmail.com

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

765-1787 steve@inspiri2.com

Program Chairman: **Don Shaw**

477-5928 donjanshaw@comcast.net

Outings Chairman: **Chris Castellucci**

763-2017 chrslucci@aol.com

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

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Raffle Committee: **Paul Matzen**

795-8885 ggbriidgeman@att.net

Conservation Chairman: **Charlie Schneider and Tom Greer**

Newsletter Editor: **Marcus Pipkin**

(615) 969-9200 marcus.pipkin@comcast.net

Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**

823-5572 gwriss@yahoo.com

New Member Mentoring Coordinator: **Jeff Cratty**

796-3691 rjcratty@yahoo.com

Steelhead in the Classroom: **Karl Joost**

978-3897 joostspacbell.net

Coordinators

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

974-2651 frommewee@comcast.net

Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**

815-5926 shbgold@gmail.com

Casting Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

477-2805 fsh2xslc@att.net

Russian River Fly Fishers



2020 Ballot

Officers & Board of Directors

The following candidates have been nominated by the RRFF Board of Directors to serve for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2020. You may choose to elect the candidate slate as presented or you may write-in other RRFF members in the spaces provided. There were two nominations received from the general membership and they are included on this ballot.

RRFF Officers

President

- 1.) Ed Barich
- 2.) _____

Vice-President

- 1.) Doug Mackay
- 2.) _____

Board Members - (Elected for a 2-year Term)

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1.) Don Shaw | 7.) Jeff Cratty |
| 2.) Mike Spurlock | 8.) Karl Joost |
| 3.) Paul Matzen | 9.) Brendan Galten |
| 4.) Doug Mackay | 10.) Tim Reuling |
| 5.) Ed Barich | 11.) Penelope Gadd-Coster |
| 6.) Chris Castellucci | |

I choose to elect the Candidate Slate as presented above.

(Check box to accept ballot as presented.)

Returning Board Members (beginning second year of 2-year term)

- 1.) Steve Tubbs
- 2.) Gregg Wisley
- 3.) Marcus Pipkin

Please return all ballots by July 1, 2020
Vote online at rrflyfisher.org

Ballots may be mailed to: **Russian River Fly Fishers,**
c/o Doug Mackay, 1221 Olive Street, Santa Rosa, CA 95407.

Russian River Fly Fishers
c/o Mike Spurlock
20 San Domingo Way
Novato, CA 94945



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* _____

Main Interests in the Club? _____

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

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.

Dues paid by a new member joining the RRFF after March 1st 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**