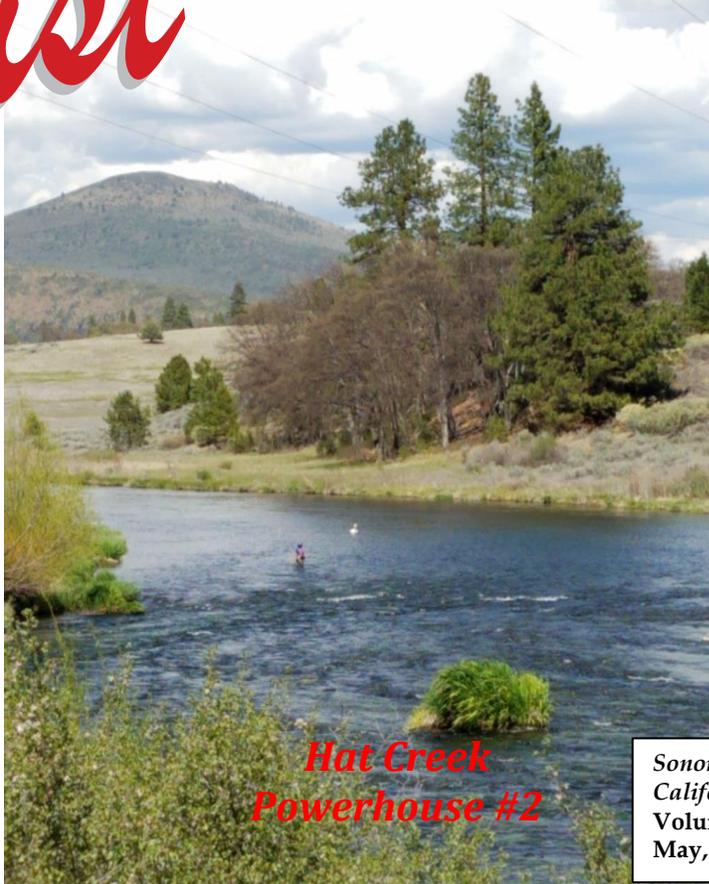


The Cast



**Hot Creek
Powerhouse #2**

*Sonoma County
California
Volume 48, Issue 5
May, 2021*

President's Message

Back on the Water

It has been over a year since our club had to wipe our outing calendar clean and go into virtual hibernation. After literally decades of planned club fly fishing events, the pandemic shut down one of our most cherished traditions – getting together with fellow fly anglers and enjoying the great outdoors. It is only fitting that our first post-pandemic outing was held last weekend at the Cassel campground near Baum Lake, the scene of many RRF fly trout-openers over the years.

While not all of the participants camped at Cassel, the following members were spotted at one time or another, on or near Baum Lake: Ed Barich, Jeff Cratty, Malcolm Zollinger, Ken Young, Tim Reuling, Rick & Ricky Baker, Rodger Bradley, Marcus Pipkin, Joe Hiney, Bill Laurie, Alan Espinosa, Anthony & Joe Bendik, Penelope Gadd-Coster, Bill Mitchell, Don

Shaw, David Stone, Heather Hamm & John Frenzell, Karl Joost and Steve Tubbs. With a cast of characters that long, you can tell there was pent-up demand for a club outing!

Although there was much uncertainty about the availability of campsites prior to the trip, the PG&E campground at Cassel had plenty of available non-reservable spots even late into the weekend. The weather was mostly cooperative, with sunshine and highs into the low 80's through Saturday afternoon when a brisk front swept through, sounding some thunderous booms and dropping just enough rain to keep the dust down.

The Hat Creek area provided us with plenty of opportunities to wet a line. On Friday most of us were out in boats on Baum Lake, searching for trout. In previous years we had found many of them not far from the launch area, but this year most of the action was discovered downstream near the Powerhouse #2 dam. The hot flies there were

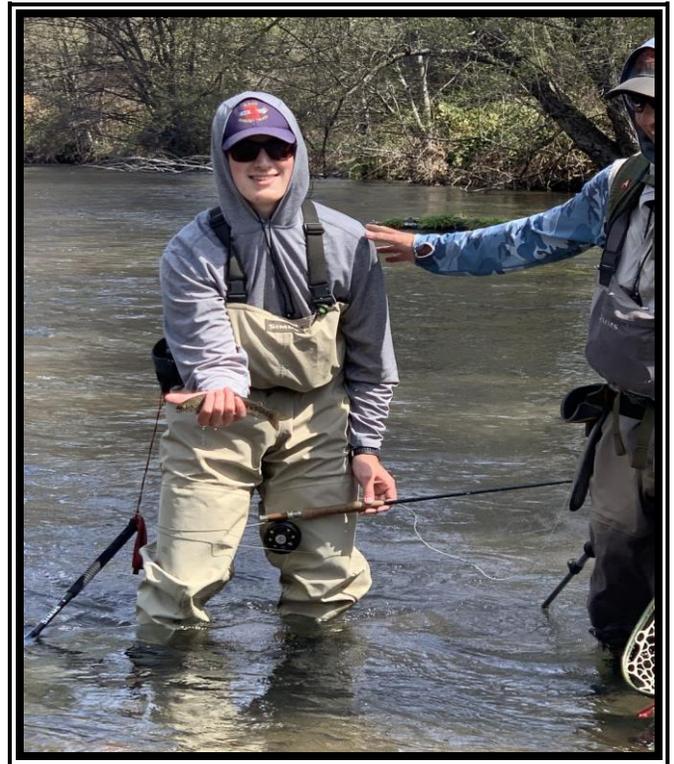
damsel and midge nymph imitations, and while most of the fish caught were “planter” size, there were several hooked by our guys that were more trophy-sized, putting up impressive battles.

On Saturday, most of us spread out to try other local waters. Jeff, Joe and Marcus explored the upper end of Burney Creek and caught trout in the mists at the bottom of Burney Falls. They, as well as Rodger, Tim, Anthony and his son Joe were successful in hooking wild trout in the Cal Trout section of Hat Creek below Powerhouse #2. I had an excellent adventure kayaking a couple of miles up the Fall River, where a kind stranger gave me a magical “Hale-Bop” fly that turned a “skunked” day into a one-trout success.

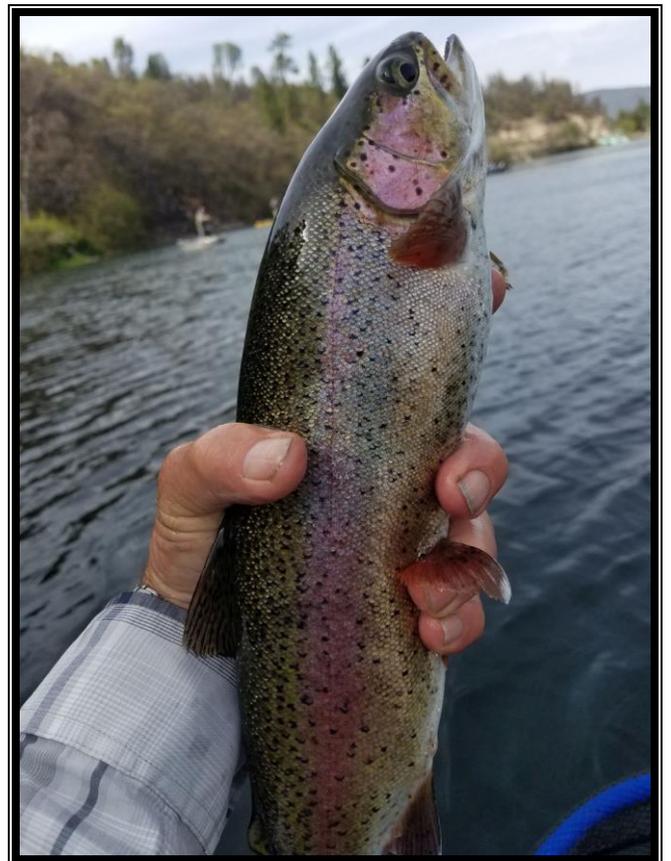
As luck would have it, the CDFW planted trout in the Cassel Canal next to the campground that weekend, providing fly fishing action just a short walk away from our tents and RVs. Thanks to that bounty and all the other waters visited, I believe that every club member I met on the outing was able to hook a fish on a fly. That’s certainly a measure of success, but my favorite part of the event was being able to fish with club members that I had only been able to see on Zoom for the past year. It was great to be back on the water with friends, and I am looking forward to doing it again soon.

Tight lines,

~ Ed Barich



Joe Bendik on Hat Creek



Hat Creek Wild Rainbow



Fall River Wild Rainbow



Lunch at Baum Lake



Penny at Baum Lake

A Feast of Fellowship

A reprint from 20 years ago, this Opener remembrance is a "blast to the past", some of which was also relevant to this year's Covid RRFF Outing. Except for the size of the group and the group dining experience, the experience remains just as valid, with a cast of characters that includes both familiar faces and past RRFF members...

Well...it finally arrived; our trout fisherman's "Thanksgiving" (as Scotty put it)...ushered in ceremoniously by a few days of cloudless skies and temperatures pushing 80 degrees.

By the time the unsettled weather (that characterized much of April) had blown through, I'd gone a little stir crazy - ready to drop everything, load the car and leave town a few days earlier just to get on with it. Some RRFF friends fueled that fire...their web-page musings sending me bouncing further off the walls. They were anxious too. Before us, a weekend of promise...a gathering of good friends on sparkling waters...sharing fellowship, good food, experience...opening a new season of fly fishing in pursuit of trout. We all sensed it would be a big one this year. We had seen others, at the club meeting, who shared our anticipation; their ardor reflected through dancing eyes and animated conversations of past trout adventures and remembered season openers. I saw them...and their enthusiasm added to my own.

Every year we wait for it...but this year seemed harder for me than most. Perhaps because our winter was so mild, it seemed as if we were already late, already past the time when we should be on the water. To antagonize my impatience, I eagerly joined in the remembering (of past years) and the planning for this year's opener. I shared my restlessness with others equally excited. I encouraged that fire inside me to burn brighter, hotter - fanning it as the last weekend of April approached...until I was giddy with the promise of another season and, at the same time, gleefully aware of the certainty that only a river could quench what I had encouraged to consume me. As the last days slowly passed, my eagerness grew. Finally, on Wednesday, I received the following message from Rick Baker on the Yahoo RRFF Club Page, "Man...just go home! You're a worthless employee...." He knew exactly where I was coming from.

This year's annual RRFF Trout Opener at Hat Creek was an outstanding success! Following John and Charlie (who went up on Wednesday to secure the campground and to fish Bidwell Ranch), my son Nick and I raced up I-5 and Highway 299 on Thursday to claim our spots by the campfire. The weather was holding beautifully...clear skies, comfortable temperatures and a slight breeze. Arriving at the Cassel PG&E campground early in the afternoon, we were greeted by a welcoming committee of Scott, Scotty, Dale, "Cowboy", Bill, Phil and a bottle of Corona (with a lime wedge). Historically, Thursday night has always been rather sparsely attended - with maybe 6-12 of us securing the campsites and setting up for the weekend. This year, by dinnertime Thursday evening, we had 31 RRFF members and guests in line for a spectacular

meal of barbecued chicken and pork ribs (slathered with Lee Smith's homemade cookin' sauce – an opener tradition), baked beans and a green salad. Just before dinner, Tim Reuling arrived bearing a case of wine to add to the mix of libations that were priming the pumps. A couple of members sneaked off to Baum afterwards...but most of us were content to enjoy the revelry and companionship around the campfire (seeing that we were unfit to drive by that point anyway).

Friday morning the cooks were at it again, providing sustenance for the grueling action that would mark the "Baum Lake Fishing Tourney". Eggs, bacon, sausage, biscuits, sweet rolls, muffins and "stand a spoon up in it" coffee greeted our growing contingent. By 11:00 AM, Baum Lake was dotted with a variety of RRF watercraft. Fishing was tough...sporadic rises made dry fly fishing a "crap shoot" and nymphing and streamer fishing were only somewhat more successful. Of those "floaters" who caught fish, the general consensus was "one" per boat. Nick and I (roaming the lake in our canoe) headed out to the grass island, dropped anchor and (as I proceeded to demonstrate how he was going to fish the awkward indicator and split-shot laden, two-nymph rig he was going to use) caught and landed a nice, fat 14" rainbow on the first cast. There was no lack of optimism in our boat! But, as the afternoon progressed, at final tally we fared no better than the others who landed fish. Our big bang came early and was not repeated.

The Baum Lake Tourney traditionally finds its ultimate resolution around the Friday evening campfire. As more RRF members arrived to set-up camp and join the festivities, the stories of spectacular "misses" and "monster trout" cast the true light on the day's events. With the real prowess of all good fishermen in full evidence, the line between truth and fiction blurred as we feasted on yet another wonderful meal – this one consisting of antipasti salad, lasagna, roasted beef, barbecued chicken and cucumber salad. With the sunset came the wind, and although not uncomfortable, a few sprinkles prompted a large fire where our (now 42) revelers enjoyed themselves with amusing fishing stories and the (encore) joke presentations of Scotty Broome (as well as a few new ones from other happy contributors). The weather was changing. By the time the last of the fire crew staggered off to bed (chased by the calls of a giant snipe), the clear, star-filled sky and pleasant temperatures of the night before had departed.

I awoke, at some point early Saturday morning, and lay listening to the wind as it rattled through the trees. The distant barking of coyotes reminded me that I had heard them the previous night as well, their yapping bringing memories of previous trips and other places. As I lay on my cot, the first drops of rain began lightly sprinkling the tent and I remembered that the weather forecast had called for rain on Saturday. With some concern, I drifted back to sleep.

As predicted, Opening Day dawned under stormy skies. Grey, rain-laden clouds raced above us, driven by a gusting wind that hadn't subsided with morning. The good news was that it was only partly cloudy, and as the rain cells moved across the campground the resulting showers were short-lived and followed by periods of broken sunshine. As we all headed off to enjoy the Cassel Volunteer Fire Department's annual Opening Day breakfast, the rain wetted the campground and those of us on foot. However, as the morning progressed, the larger rain cells were blown through, and by the time we were ready to fish the weather conditions had improved considerably.

With the size of our group, it was necessary to split up and cover a wide variety of waters to avoid overcrowding and becoming (thanks Arch...for this quip) a "bio-hazard". By 11:00 AM, group members had departed for the Pit River, Burney Creek and various points along Hat Creek including the lower section above Lake Briton, Teal Island, Carbon Bridge, Powerhouse 2 and a multitude of points in-between. Rick Baker, his cousin Clement, Nick and I headed off for Lost Creek, where we found a fishery devoid of fish. Evidently (according to the other fly fishermen we talked to) all of the weed growth had been killed in Lost Creek about three years ago, and the fishery hasn't been the same since. We, and the other fishermen present, saw absolutely no evidence of any fish of any size. That was a little disheartening for me, as Lost Creek had provided some memorable opening day action in past years and I was hoping to introduce Nick, Rick and Clement to some of that fun. That afternoon, as the groups returned for an early dinner, we heard numerous stories of success, especially on the Pit River and in the areas above and below Carbon Bridge on Hat Creek.

The RRF Saturday Night Feed (provided by the club) was a "Thanksgiving" barbecue featuring a 22-pound barbecued turkey, spiral cut hams, mashed potatoes, yams, sautéed vegetables and an assortment of desserts

purchased from the Volunteer Fire Department Bake Sale (provided by new members, Preston and Casey). Afterwards, a few groups of anglers dispersed once again, this time to pursue the evening hatch, with a rather large group of us finding our way to the Cassel fore-bay (an easy “stagger” from camp) to tempt the sometimes-picky trout that live there and seem only to rise in those last couple hours before dark. Others tagged along not to fish but to watch and enjoy the antics of a bunch of “relaxed” fly fishermen. By evening’s end, the unsettled weather conditions had dispersed and the skies were once again fairly clear. The wind had also died. Once the sun set, the evening campfire got even bigger as stories of the evening forays filtered around the circle, followed by more jokes and discussion. It had been an eventful opening day, with varied levels of success, and the campfire died early as, one by one, we all drifted off to bed.

I awoke again that early morning...this time hearing nothing but the stillness. No wind. It was cold. “Good,” I thought to myself. “That means that it’s absolutely clear outside. It ought to be a great Sunday!” I could dimly see the top of Nick’s head sticking out from the top of his mummy bag.

Sunday morning dawned clear, beautiful and around 30 degrees. Already, some of the early risers had departed either for home, or to get in some last-minute fishing, as the final breakfast sizzled in the skillets and the coffee took the edge off the previous night. Carlos Tamayo (once again...and becoming another tradition) donated fresh tortillas and salsa for our morning meal as chorizo mixed with eggs and potatoes, ham and potatoes and scrambled eggs were prepared for breakfast burritos. It was a “build your own” breakfast and would be our last group meal together. Afterwards, some of us would fish a little more before breaking camp while others would take this last group meal as an opportunity to say their goodbyes.

After breakfast, Scotty decided to take a few of the new members and some of the less experienced fly fishermen to “The Toilet Bowl” below the Powerhouse 2 generating station. Here he hoped to get them onto some of the fish that can be seen in that deep pool below the Powerhouse outlet. I decided to take Nick there as well, as he was discouraged that he hadn’t hooked a fish yet for the weekend. Once we finally hit the right combination of split shot to get those nymphs deep enough to invade the feeding lanes, Nick hooked into a beautiful brown trout

that was quite large and very thick. After fighting it for about 15 minutes, he finally got it up to the wall where I was lying prone with the net. I attempted to head the brown into the net, but as the fish approached it turned sideways and hit the length of my net broadside. Its head easily extended 3” over the front of the net and it’s tail another 3” over the rear. I heard the line snap as it rolled off the net and back in to the water. What a feeling...I had wanted to see Nick with a picture of that 20-inch plus trophy in his hands! He’d certainly done his part. He seemed okay with it though, happy to have caught a fish (much bigger than his dad’s) and to have it witnessed by so many others...even though he didn’t get the picture.

To sum it all up...it was a fantastic weekend and one of the best “Openers” I have ever been a part of. Rarely will you find a group of individuals who come together and make things work as smoothly as they went this weekend. It seemed as if someone was always stepping up to take care of whatever needed to be done...whether it was cooking meals, washing dishes, emptying garbage, mentoring new members or providing information. The faces kept changing, and the jobs kept getting done!

A few individuals contributed in special capacities. Big thanks to Scotty Broome for organizing all of the meals, purchasing all of the food and supplies and carting all of the necessities up to the campground (with the help of Scott Lewis and a rented trailer). Also, special thanks to Life Member Bill Archuleta for acting as treasurer and collecting the \$20.00 per person fee to cover all of the camping sites, extra parking and meals for the weekend (an absolutely tremendous bargain). Bill also took care of all of the fee payments. Scotty and Bill likewise spearheaded the mentoring program and either took it upon themselves, or introduced new members to other club members who could assist them in becoming more familiar with the area or with specific fishing techniques. Rick “Cowboy” Norris provided “all the wood we could burn”, something he has done for us the last couple of years. A special thanks to you as well, Rick.

And finally, the “Opener” would not have been the same if all of you hadn’t attended. We saw faces we hadn’t seen for a year or so...and a lot of new faces that are the true testament to the dynamic direction our club has taken in recent years. We missed a few members who usually make this event (Dick Betts – hope you’re feeling better soon...and Mark, where were you?). A special thanks to all the cooks, all the dishwashers, all the wood

gatherers, coffee makers, garbage emptiers...to everyone who contributed something of themselves this weekend to ensure that things went a little bit easier for the rest of us. What a great group of people...and how fortunate we are to have such a quality membership, and great group of friends, to share in the benefits of this wonderful sport.

~ Steve Tubbs

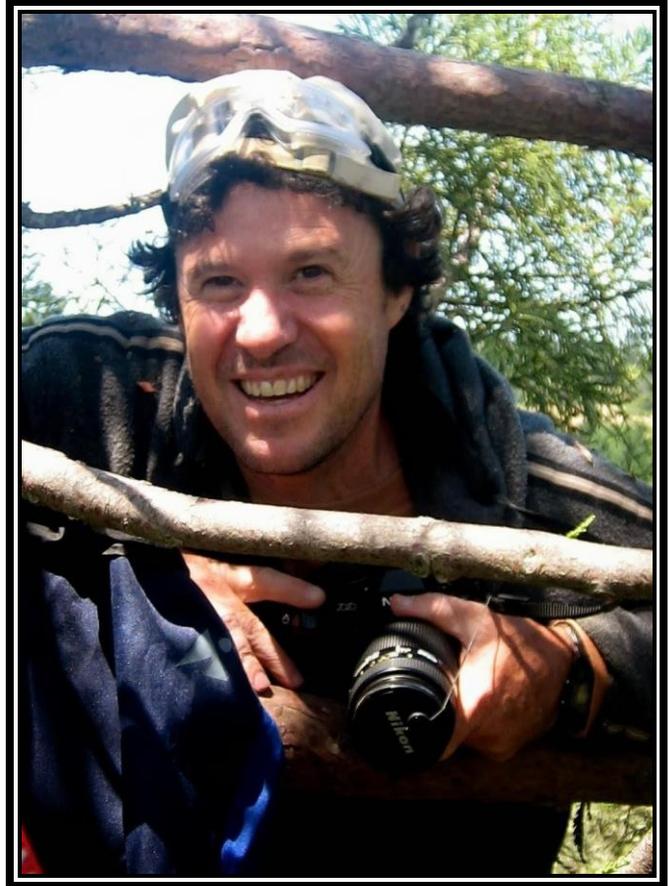
Virtual Zoom May General Meeting

The club will hold a general meeting on **Wednesday, May, 12th at 7PM** using the Zoom video sharing application. **David Berman and Shelly Spriggs** will give the club a lively behind the scenes look into this year's **Steelhead in the Classroom** program, including the video production that RRF has sponsored that will be used by teachers all around Sonoma County to introduce their students to their Steelhead in the Classroom studies each year.

David Berman has worked for Sonoma Water for over 5 years. He lives in the Dutchbill Creek watershed outside of Occidental. He has been a science educator and wilderness guide for over 38 years. He has been involved with salmonid restoration and education for 33 years in Western Sonoma County. David also teaches the California Naturalist Certification Program for the UC Cooperative Extension. David loves nature photography, exploring, and learning to fish. David has been inspirational and instrumental in organizing and encouraging Sonoma County teachers, coaches and sponsors in the Steelhead in the Classroom program.

Shelly Spriggs is the lead person for producing the RRF sponsored video production and also has been central to the 8 lively episodes Sonoma Water, CDFW, RRF, and RETU helped produce for teachers and students this year that are YouTube hits (think Tank Time with Tom, Meet the Biologist). Motivated by an appreciation and reverence for the natural world, Shelly works as an environmental educator with Sonoma Water. Additionally, she leads guided outings throughout the county, sharing her fascination, enthusiasm and extensive ecological knowledge with audiences of all ages. Using animated animals, birds and fish and smiling

engagement, she relates in a natural way to kids and teachers.



David Berman



Shelly Springs

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

12th General Meeting Zoom - [David Berman](#) (Steelhead in the Classroom)
19th Board Meeting Zoom
23rd Shad fishing on American River with Al Smatsky

Casting Pond Clinic on Summer Schedule - Thursdays 4:30 pm - 7:30 pm (We are following COVID protocols)

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 gbridgeman@att.net

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 joost@pacbell.net

Member at Large: **Brendan Galten**

364-1671, galtenb@gmail.com

Member at Large: **Penelope Gadd-Coster**

Member at Large: **Tim Reuling**

Coordinators

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

974-2651 frommewee@comcast.net

Casting Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**

575-5709 demackay@sonic.net

Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**

477-2805 fsh2xslc@att.net

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

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 _____ Cell Phone _____ E-mail Address* _____
Main Interests in the Club? _____
How Many Years Have You Been Fly Fishing _____
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

Due to Covid-19. Dues Are Optional. Donations are appreciated.