



Sonoma County
California
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*Wild Rainbow
Smokey Mountains, Tennessee
Summer 2019 Fishing*

President's Message

Change...

It seems like every time I open a newspaper, I find at least one article about how scientists have discovered some new aspect of climate change. The locations of these discoveries are often exotic: the Arctic Circle, the Amazon River, or the Great Barrier Reef. The distant locations make this news less real to me, since the year-to-year climate that we experience in Northern California does not seem to be trending in any particular direction. Sure, we have drought and flood years, but that has been happening ever since I came here more than four decades ago. So, I adopted an attitude that climate change was something that was happening in those "other places" and that our home turf is immune from such problems.

Last month I joined a group of RRF fly anglers for an outing at Alpine Lake, which is at an elevation of 7500 feet near Ebbetts Pass in the Sierras. Several of

us had fished the lake in previous years and had had good luck catching planted rainbows by trolling or casting a streamer using a floating or intermediate fly line. Even though the areas we fished could be as deep as forty feet, the fish had always bit near the surface due to the lake's cool high-elevation water. But using this technique was not providing us with any action. I was beginning to think that we had arrived too late after the most recent fish plant and there was nothing left to catch. The same thing had happened last year, and we had assumed then that the lake had been vacuumed clean by bait-fishers before we arrived.

Fortunately, we had some anglers in our group who had never fished the lake before and had no previous biases to lead them astray. Jeff Cratty noticed that the surface temperature was warmer than trout could tolerate, and his sonar showed fish in the 15 to 20-foot depths. He switched to a fast-sinking fly line, methodically plumbed the depths, and was soon into fish. Seeing his success in figuring out the puzzle, the rest of us quickly switched to

deeper rigs and were able to share in Jeff's success. The trout had been there when we arrived, but "experienced" anglers like me had been looking for them where they used to be years ago, not where they hang out now.

We have all heard the parable of the frog in a pot of water on a stove, and how he neglects to jump out since the water is heating so slowly. I am beginning to think that the worst thing about climate change is that it is so gradual that the average human cannot possibly sense it. It used to be that lakes at the summit of the Sierras stayed cool enough that trout did not need to hunker down in the depths, even in the dog days of August. But maybe those effects that are being noted in the far reaches of our planet are not so far away from home any more. And maybe we would be wise to pay more attention to how nature is responding to the changes around us, changes that we fail to notice in our modern world.

Keep cool,

Ed Barich

August's Club Outing

Adventures at Lake Alpine

For the past three years (and maybe more), the RRF has held an outing at Lake Alpine, near Ebbetts Pass in the Sierras. The attraction at that time of the year is that it is high (7300 feet), cool, and relatively easy to reach by car via Route 4. Lake Alpine, with a pleasant US Forest Service campground on its east shore is the main attraction of the area, and its planted rainbow trout are always a draw to anglers.

Our party this year consisted of Bill Laurie, Jeff Cratty, Gregg Wrisley, Mike Spurlock, Brendan Galten, David Steiner, Ken Young, Chris Castellucci, Rick Baker, and Ed Barich. With such a large group, we were able to spread out over 7 campsites in the Pine Martin campground and share dinners on two

nights: Ed served "Mexican Paella" on Friday night and Mike barbecued hamburgers with fixings on Saturday night, along with numerous tasty side dishes supplied by others. As usual with our outings, no one went to bed hungry.

As in last year's outing, figuring out where the fish were hiding in Lake Alpine was a bit of a puzzle. Fortunately, Jeff found that the key was to get your fly down deep and by adjusting our rigs and techniques nearly all of us were able to get action. Jeff also had the most success in landing the most and largest (up to 18 inch) rainbows, as well as having some big ones break off.

With the lake fishing being best in the afternoon and evenings, several of us used the cooler mornings to pursue moving water opportunities. Mike and Gregg roamed the farthest by traveling to the East and West Walker rivers where the bigger trout lived: Mike landed a fat rainbow and Gregg battled a healthy brown there, both fish in the 20-inch range. Ed concentrated on smaller streams, including the upper Stanislaus, Wolf Creek and the East Carson River, where he used his Tenkara rod to pester many rainbows in the micro (less than six inch) and nano (*much* less than six inch) classes.

In all it was a good outing, but over the nightly campfires we discussed the possibility of finding a campground on the east side of the Sierras that would be more centrally located to good fly fishing waters. But that will probably be an exercise for next year's August outing.

~ *Ed Barich*



Lake Alpine Outing Photos



Tubing on Lake Alpine



More Dinnertime Fun



Stanislaus Rainbow



Enjoying Dinner

Into the Stream

[An Article by Steve Tubbs](#)

The first impulse to pursue fly fishing as a method to catch fish is a decision as nuanced and varied as the angler who chooses it. It is a step into the unknown, a choice first taken without any realization of just how involved learning to fly fish can become. Once introduced, the new fly angler must determine how far he or she wishes to take it, or even if they have the time (and desire) to continue the pursuit. Fly fishing offers a level of participation in the environment that typically moves well beyond other types of angling, and an opportunity to journey to, and experience, an ever-changing palette of ecosystems that are each unique, spectacular, and interdependent. Choosing this path can be a growth experience. It can inspire you to move beyond the confines of your day-to-day self, and introduce you to a larger world and a more inclusive perspective.

For most of us, an introduction to fly fishing begins with the humbling challenge of learning to fly cast. Whereas other methods of casting involve throwing a weighted lure or bait that is often attached to the end of a monofilament fishing line, the fly cast presents a new twist. As many flies are pretty much weightless, the fly fisher must learn to throw a fly line - a dynamic weight system that changes with line length, distance, presentation, and the confines

of the environment. This potentially graceful act - exemplified by the fly line snaking through the air in a smooth transfer of power - pulls the leader, tippet and fly behind it, and ultimately allows the fly line and leader to unroll and deliver a "fly first" presentation.

When performed correctly, the fly cast delivers the fly in a manner that reflects the requirements of a particular situation. It is precise and smooth, efficient and effortless. As the fly is often meant to mimic a natural food source, location specific conditions always determine the presentation. These include water, wind, temperature, depth, accessibility and the preferences of the quarry. To "fish" with hope of success, the fly may need to be presented with a straight line, a slack line, drag-free, delicately, or with a splash (*only a few of the countless variables). The fly caster must learn loop control, how to manipulate line speed, and an endless list of techniques that are often "moment specific" and developed on the water as needed. The versatile fly fisher is one who can execute any fly cast that conditions demand while creatively implementing solutions for whatever arises during this process.

Beginning fly casters are often amazed at how much there is to learn about fly casting, and at the amount of practice that it requires to become proficient. Many fly fishers learn a few basic casts, those required to fish a certain "vacation location" that they frequent, but never attain the skill, feel, and muscle memory that comes from committed practice. The refrain, "I'll practice on the water...while I am actually fishing" is a common one. This may be fine for eager, small fish on mountain streams and lakes, but often falls short when targeting selective quarries on technical waters where even the slightest mistake will eliminate your opportunity. Fly casting practice allows the angler to build an arsenal of presentation techniques that can be deployed when challenges dictate. Responding effectively in less than perfect conditions, and adjusting for other limitations, are skills acquired through a familiarization with the fly rod and its capabilities. When you only have one shot to make the perfect cast for "a fish of a lifetime", fortune most often favors the accomplished.

Although fly casting is often the first step for a new fly angler, it is only a prelude to an understanding of fly fishing. As the novice learns about fly casting, questions about fly rods, fly lines, and leader systems naturally arise. Equipment inquiries and the decision regarding "what do I buy?" lead to conversations about what quarry the new angler wishes to pursue and how much they want to spend. This, in turn, leads to discussions about rod action, line-weight (and types of fly lines), and flies. Inevitably, fly fishing knots become a concern as the angler tries to figure out how to tie the backing, fly line, leader, tippet and fly together in a manner that easily facilitates adjustments and change. These basic tackle considerations can be a bit overwhelming, even before terminal tackle options are explored. It soon becomes evident that the rods, reels, lines, leaders and flies are all interdependent and directly related to what the angler will be fishing for, the type of aquatic ecosystem they will be fishing in, and the techniques that will be required to successfully target fish.

Certain fly fishing techniques require specific casting abilities. These include the placement of the fly in the proper position, and involve controlling the fly line throughout the presentation. But before these techniques can be identified, the angler must discover how to read water. Whether a lake or a river, there are water currents and geographical features that indicate where fish will often hold or congregate. These factors determine where the fly should be presented and suggest the approach that may be best suited for success on a particular piece of water. Combined with seasonal influences, weather, air temperature, time of day, water temperature, and available food supplies, the decision of where and how to fish, and what method to use, has now become a game plan determined by an increasing number of interrelated variables. Suddenly, this fly fishing adventure has become quite complicated.

But before the new fly angler succumbs to frustration, perhaps it would be best to take whatever rudimentary knowledge and practice one has developed and simply step into the stream. As I intimated earlier, each one of us decides just how deeply we wish to delve into our fly fishing practice. All fly fishers start at the same place, tentatively pursuing a new way to catch fish and a new

understanding of fishing. We learn every time we hold a fly rod. We observe and discover new variations and possibilities whenever we visit those beautiful ecosystems that entice and nourish us. Fly fishing involves so much more than catching fish. Enmeshed in location, it is a reflection of our ability to “see” the world around us. And as we immerse ourselves in those locations, we enter deeper into the stream of life, discovering an interconnected understanding that offers the potential to include everything within it. Whereas our growth is dependent upon our ability to observe, include and integrate, our understanding is influenced by the level of our immersion.

As fly fishers, we decide how deeply to step into the stream. Fly fishing offers a life-long opportunity for discovery and adventure, as well as a balm to quiet the mind and soothe the soul. If we allow, it can open the door to inner exploration. If we seek, it can help us find our place in the natural world...a world from which we were never apart.

Step into the stream...

~ Steve Tubbs



Local kids, local steelhead, world-wide consequences: Steelhead in The Classroom

Become a RRFF steelhead in the classroom coach and help kids and their teachers hatch steelhead eggs in their classroom and release the fry into local tributaries of the Russian River.

Talk to Karl Joost (707 483-6172) to get started. Your child's classroom not involved- we can fix that and make a big difference! More to follow.



RRFF Board News

With the beginning of a new fiscal year for the RRFF, the board would like to thank Mike Kast and Ken Young for their many years of service as directors. Although they will be leaving the board, we know that they will continue to contribute their skills and time to the club, as they have on many occasions in the past.

With these two new openings in the board, we would like to invite current members to consider stepping up and joining the RRFF board of directors. We are looking to fill two positions:

- Secretary – This officer position includes keeping the meeting minutes and organizing board elections.
- Conservation Chair – Although the RRFF is not strictly a conservation organization, our bylaws list conservation as an important area of interest. We need someone who can educate our members on conservation issues and help provide ways our members can support the preservation and renewal of natural resources.

If either of these positions are of interest you, please contact Ed Barich or any of the board members for more information.

Reminder: Annual Club Memberships Due

Annual membership dues were due July 1st for the fiscal year of July 1, 2019 to June 30, 2020.

September General Meeting

September 11, 2019 - General Meeting at the Veteran's Memorial Hall, 7PM featuring a slide show presentation of members summer fishing adventures.

RRFF Newsletter **Submissions**

Please email submissions as an MSWord doc to our newsletter editor:

Marcus Pipkin –
marcus.pipkin@comcast.net

Note: Beginning with the October edition, The Cast newsletter will be emailed to all members on the first Wednesday of each month. Newsletter submissions must be submitted to the editor at least one week prior to this date.

Support Our Local Fly Fishing Businesses!

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September Calendar of Events

RRFF Thursday Evening Fly Casting Clinics – Held every Thursday during Daylight Savings Time – 4:30 until 7:00 pm (weather permitting).
This event is **FREE** and is **OPEN TO THE PUBLIC!**
Beginners are welcome...

11 General Meeting at Santa Rosa Vets Hall, speaker - all members report experiences over the summer (Don Shaw)

12-14 Frenchman's Reservoir (Chris Castellucci)

18 Board Meeting

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

RRFF Board of Directors

RRFF Board of Directors

President: **Ed Barich**
539-4608 ebarich@sonic.net

Vice President & Membership Chairman: **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**
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Raffle Coordinator: **Gregg Wrisley**
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Member at Large: **Jeff Cratty**
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Steelhead in the Classroom Coordinator: **Karl Joost**
978-3897 joosts@pacbell.net

Coordinators

Day Fishers & Fly Tying: **Lee Soares**
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Women's Activities: **Susan Bostwick**
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Casting Pond Steward: **Doug Mackay**
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Casting Pond Monitor: **Binky Castleberry**
527-9607 fsh2xsbc@earthlink.net

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

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