Official Newsletter of California Fly Fishers Unlimited, a 501c(3) Non-profit - **July - August 2026**

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Some History of SALMON in California

The Baird Hatchery:

Searching for California's "Amber Colored Spawn Globules"

By Ken W. Davis

It's a time in pre-Caucasian California that we can only imagine. For centuries, thousands of salmon returned to the river called Winnemen because its cold, oxygen-rich waters were essential for the survival of the summer-spawning salmon. Living along the Winnemem, the handsome weather-faced Wintu tribe practiced shamanistic (taboo based) wildlife management that conserved migrating populations of *nooth,* the Quinnat salmon.

The salmon were "brothers to the Wintu, another People in disguise sent by the animal spirits to give their protein-rich flesh to the People.

Many generations of the Wintu tribe built

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Oh Betty!

Annual Dinner Winners

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CFFU Calendar - JULY - AUGUST 2026

DISCLAIMER: Dates on this calendar are subject to change. Check the CFFU website for the most up-to-date event schedules. CFFU Calendar LINK

JULY	EVENT	INFORMATION LINKS
	NO BOARD MEETING	
	NO GENERAL MEETING	
11	American River Clean-up - Mile 16	American River Clean-up
13 - 18	Lake Edison (Vermilion Valley)	CFFU OUTINGS
25	Casting Clinic	Monthly Casting Clinic
AUGUST	**EVENT**	**INFORMATIONAL LINKS**
3	BOD Meeting	Board Meeting
4	General meeting	General Meeting
12	New Member Meeting	New Members Meeting
17 - 19	North Umpqua Outing	North Umpqua Outings
19 - 21	North Umpqua Outing	
18 & 25	Fly Fishing 101 (Class for beginners)	Fly Fishing 101
20	TECH Thursday (Fly Fishing Knots PART -2)	TECH Thursday
22	Monthly Casting Clinic	Monthly Casting Clinic
29	Mentor Outing	Mentor Outing
31	Board Meeting	Board Meeting

Mike Giusti

Mike Giusti's Casting Practice:

Check your emails for upcoming dates.

Message from CFFU President JULIE KAYE

Thank you to everyone who joined us for our June program meeting. It was an informative and entertaining presentation by Pyramid Guide Joe Contaldi. It was also great to hear from a number of members as to where they're fishing (and catching!) around Sacramento and beyond!

The summer months bring so many options for building skills, sharing knowledge, and strengthening our fly fishing club and the NorCal community of fly fishers.

CFFU has a number of free opportunities available for members who would like to learn and practice fly casting, improve their skills, or work toward casting certification. These sessions are a welcoming way to learn, get helpful feedback, and spend time with others who share an interest in the art of fly fishing. Whether you are newer to fly casting or looking to sharpen more advanced techniques, we encourage you to take advantage of these opportunities:

Weekly: 1-2 weekly informal casting meet-ups—typically on a weekday and/or Saturday mornings—Gibbons Park in Carmichael. (Mike Giusti notifies club via email as to schedule.)

Monthly: Last Saturday of each month from 9-noon—Gibbons Park in Carmichael. There's something for everyone … casting lessons and practice. And for those wanting certification, courses are set up. (Frank Rinella notifies members via email; also listed on website calendar).

Fly Fest 2026: September 24-26: Fly Fishers International's signature event returns (September 24-26, Redding,CA) for three days of education, connection, and community in the heart of Northern California's trout country. Fly Fest 2026 brings anglers of all ages and skill levels together under one roof for a weekend built around learning, sharing, and celebrating fly fishing. From hands-on instruction to meaningful conversation—everything is designed to meet you where you are! Registration/details at FlyFishersInternational.org. Fly Fest volunteers receive discounted registration fees.

Thank you again for your enthusiasm and involvement. Additional club activities are available in the calendar section on the CFFU website. We look forward to seeing you at an upcoming CFFU event and at our next General Meeting on August 4th.

June Speaker – Joe Contaldi

The King of Pyramid Lake Cutthroat Fishing.

Shad Fishing with Captain Jeff Morin

Betty & Keith Pfeifer

Betty and Keith bid on a day trip fishing for Shad on the American River donated by Captain Jeff Morin.

They ventured out on May 27 and caught shad ALL day.

Golden Trout Trip with Dave Lentz & Mike Giusti

Big "Thank you" to Dave and Mike for offering this trip and really working with Sara on reading water and her casting. **Jeff Morin**

Tickets for an A's Game — Dave Lentz

Dave Lentz, Dave's son Nathan and Brian Davis (A's equipment Manager) talking baseball on the field before the Giants game. Laurie was not allowed on the field with her BEER.

A beautiful Friday night at the Athletics / Giants game.

Laurie and Dave enjoying the fireworks after the game.

History of Salmon in California - Continued

Chinook Salmon in Lower Putah Creek

From Page 1

V-shaped weirs to help capture the migrating salmon. The salmon were then speared, split and dried on riverside bushes. Their skeletons were returned to the river to insure that they would swim back to the ocean and return to feed the Wintu next year.

Winnemem is a Wintu term which means “Middle River”, and refers to the river located between the Pit River and the Upper Sacramento. (We call it the McCloud River) More than a river, the Winnemem was a life, a living, a spirit path for the souls traveling to the Afterworld. The river was sacred, the Wintu animistic; a common destiny would eventually drown both.

In the late 1860s, the McCloud River Canyon remained relatively pristine and free of white miners because the encompassing geology did not support gold-bearing substrate. But, as the Wintu were about to discover, one person’s totem can be another’s gold. Unfortunately, for the Middle-water Wintu, in 1872 a different world with a different totem wanted their salmon.
A retired Unitarian minister also sought the migrating salmon, but not for their spiritual or protein value; he wanted the amber-colored gold they carried: eggs, millions of salmon eggs.

Livingston Stone was that man, and he was on a quest. His journey began on the over-fished and polluted East Coast rivers. The Atlantic salmon fishery was failing; the salmon were disappearing. Canada was the only known source of salmon eggs, but they wanted $40, in gold per thousand. Feeling that the Canadian price was too high, the U.S. Fish Commission appealed to Mr. Stone, who had just published ***Domesticated Trout,*** a manual for fish-culturalists. Stone was considered a visionary in the infant science of fish culture.

When asked for his advice, Stone suggested that the Commission bolster the declining Atlantic fishery with eggs from the Pacific salmon. In August 1872, Spencer Baird, the U.S. Fish Commissioner paid Stone $250 per month and sent him to the West Coast to collect salmon eggs.

Livingston’s assignment was to start in California and if possible find the spawning Quinnats (We now call them Chinooks or Kings). After locating the fish, he was to build a catch station, harvest roe, and send the fertilized eggs to the East Coast.

First, Stone had to find the Quinnat’s spawning grounds. To his dismay, he discovered that no San Franciscan knew the birth place of the Sacramento River salmon. He was directed to an area near Rio Vista. No way! With one look, he knew that no self-respecting salmon would spawn in the warm-watered lower valley. Besides that, the river was muddied by the upstream hydraulic mining.

Eventually, he was introduced to the chief engineer of the Pacific Railroad Company. The railroad tracks stopped in Red Bluff, but the company had completed surveys north to Oregon. The engineer showed Stone a map and pointed to the junction of the McCloud and Pit rivers. It was there, the engineer assured

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History of Salmon in California - Continued

Stone that he had seen the Wintu Indians spearing salmon.

Stone proceeded north on the railroad to Red Bluff. From there he rode the *California and Oregon Stage* to the Pit River Ferry, where he and two assistants disembarked. They moved on foot north into the McCloud River canyon.

Stumbling over boulders and resting in the shade of big-leafed maples, they slowly moved up the McCloud River. Two miles above the confluence of the Pit and the McCloud, Stone's search ended. In front of him were several "Indian" camps with hundreds of fresh salmon hanging on the bushes. Standing over a small pool, he counted 60 salmon in front of the fish-spearing Native Americans.

It was there, in 1872, within the Wintu salmon fishing village that Livingston Stone founded the Baird Station, the first salmon hatchery on the West Coast. In Stone's own words: *"It was quite impressive, in the midst of these surroundings, to reflect that we were beyond the whiteman's boundary, in the home of the Indians, where the bear, the panther, the deer and the Indian had lived for centuries undisturbed."*

Through 10 years of hard work, the Baird Hatchery staff, and a few Wintu, shipped more than 31 million *"Amber-colored spawn globules"* (As a writer called the eggs in an 1875 *Overland Monthly* article), across the United States and to foreign countries, including Australia and New Zealand. The pea-sized eggs were packed in moss and taken by wagon to the railway station in Red Bluff. With the eggs went shipping instructions to keep the wooden egg-crates "plentifully re-iced."

Eggs shipped to the East Coast were hatched out and the fry planted in nearly every one of the large rivers south of the Hudson. Livingston Stone's accomplishments at the Baird Hatchery were phenomenal considering the site and conditions under which he performed, angry natives, panthers, tarantulas, 112º days, drunken white guys and an inconsistent water supply all contributed to his problems The Baird site was fifty miles from a sawmill. Nevertheless, he built the hatchery, and rebuilt it after they received 47 inches of rain in January of 1881. Driven by a strict Unitarian background, and an affinity for outdoor work, Stone succeeded in shipping eggs to the far reaches of the Earth.

Epilogue: In 1906, the U.S. Commissioner of Fisheries admitted the total failure of their efforts to introduce Pacific Salmon into Atlantic waters. The negative results still resonate in Stone's words: *"Except in very rare isolated instances those millions of salmon were never seen again."*

The Winter-run salmon, of the populations that spawned for centuries in the Winnemen, have dwindled to an annual run of a few hundred fish. In 1989, California officials added the Winter-run Chinooks to the State's list of endangered wildlife. Reasons for the endangerment are many: the loss of spawning grounds after the construction of Shasta Dam, acid-mine drainage from Iron Mountain Mines, water diversions, but mostly ignorance and apathy.

The last time I stood on the McCloud River Bridge, a few miles

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Salmon Continued

Continued from Page 7

north of the historic site of the Baird Hatchery, I threw a yellow rose into the water as it rushed toward Lake Shasta. The rose was my Dad's; I removed it off his casket before we buried him. I hoped that the flower might settle near the site of the hatchery and the Wintu salmon village now 300 feet below the surface of the lake. My father, a hungry child of the Depression, fished for salmon and trout in the cold spring-fed waters of the McCloud prior to the construction of Shasta Dam. With the rose went a simple prayer for my Dad and the Wintu: May they fish forever in the Afterworld.

(This article was adapted from a piece I wrote for the Wildlife Historian in December 1996.)

NOTE: For the September edition of the "On the Fly," I have requested an interview with Chief Caleen Sisk of the Winnemen Wintu Tribe.

Iron Mountain Mines

Ken W. Davis Image: 5/19/1992

Acid-mine drainage flowing from the Old # 8 Mine adit on Iron Mountain. The mines under the name of Mountain Copper Company operated from 1860 to 1963. Small operations of copper cementation continued until the 1990s. This "scar" is visible from Redding.

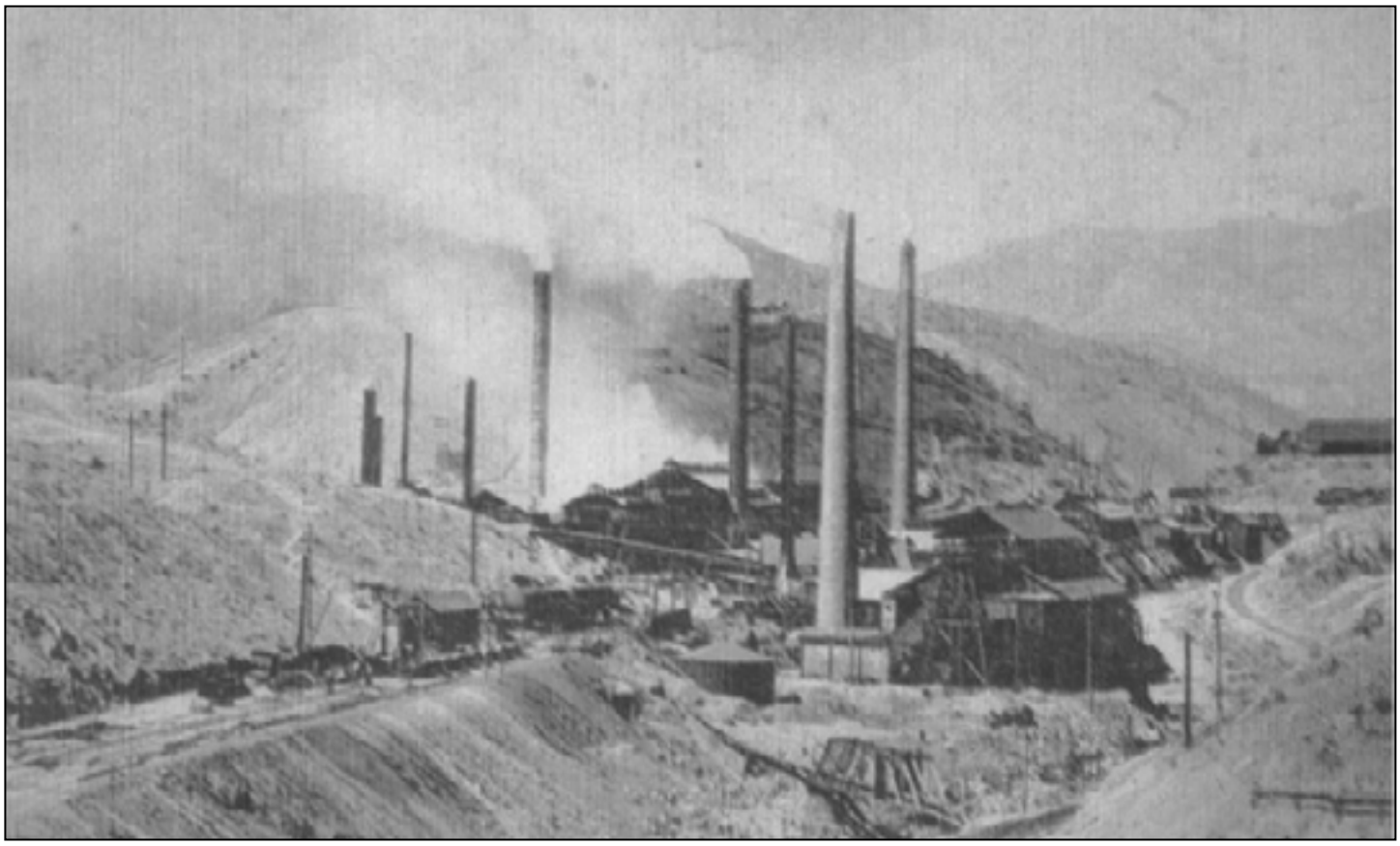
The acid-mine drainage contains copper, iron, cadmium, zinc, arsenic and lead. The acid condition is natural in some situations. Severe conditions are caused when mining operations allow air and water to reach sulfide-bearing rocks creating acidic conditions. The water from Iron Mountain is considered the most acidic on the planet with a minus 3 pH.

More than 30 significant fish kills (salmon and steelhead) have occurred in the Sacramento River since 1963. It was declared a SuperFund site in 1983. Ongoing work is attempting to reduce the acid drainage.

Note from Ken: For several years, I had total access to the Iron Mountain property including a visit with engineers 1/4 mile inside the mountain. Ted Arman, the owner actually asked if I could "restore" the property seen in the image above. Ahhhh, No thanks Ted!

"With the rose went a simple prayer for my Dad and the Wintu: May they fish forever in the Afterworld."

Winter-run Salmon Continued



The smelter operations built by Mountain Copper Company in 1896 at the base of Iron Mountain worked to process the mined ores. Photo circa 1902-1906. The toxic smoke killed all vegetation for a couple miles.

Heavy metal laden water in Spring Creek which flowed from Iron Mountain Mines into the Sacramento River at Keswick. The Mines were responsible for an estimated 30 significant salmon kills, some estimated over 100,000 fish. The Mines were declared a Super Fund site in 1983.

The 12 Amigos and a Quest for Pez Grande

By John Durand

A few trophy fish and multiple species were caught during CFFU's first annual June outing to Baja. Ten adventurous Pescadores traveled to La Ventana on the Sea of Cortez in search of Roosterfish and Dorado.

June is normally prime time for large roosters, but this year's extreme marine heat wave brought some unique fishing conditions. Sardines which are an important food source for migratory fish were not abundant. Fortunately, large Dorado arrived a couple months ahead of schedule to test the limits of our 10 and 12 weight rods.

Several anglers in our group were saltwater rookies experiencing this style of fly fishing for the first time. During the six days of fishing Dave Lentz, Mike Giusti, Tim Au-Young, and David Zook all caught their first ever dorado on flies.

Steve Payer, Guy Deaner, Wayne Wato, and myself also caught some very large dorado on flies using 10 weight rods. In retrospect, Steve thinks a 12 weight would have been a better choice for his pair of very large bull Dorado! Everyone in the group also caught hard fighting Skipjack Tuna

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The 12 Amigos and a Quest for Pez Grande

and /or Bonito. Neither were target species but they are extremely fast and a thrill to play on a fly rod. Roosterfish were challenging, but we all had shots at large Pez Gallo. The first morning on the water Tim Au-Young achieved one of his trip goals casting to and landing his first of three Roosterfish!
Later in the week David Zook tied on one of his own large sardina patterns and cast his 12-weight rod just offshore from the Punta Arenas lighthouse. He hooked his second Pez Gallo which turned out to be a monster from every rooster anglers' dreams.

Rick Beall, one of the veteran salts, hooked into a couple fish that tested his determination and tackle. While most of us were back on shore enjoying cold cervezas, he was skillfully playing a huge Jack Crevalle, toro, which circled his panga multiple times. Rick eventually won the bullfight. He also landed the trip's largest Striped Bonito. These were both new species for him.

In addition to Roosters, Green Jacks, and Pompano; Nick Ciani mastered the art of landing Giant Mexican Needlefish on a fly! These were all new species for Nick.

Other trip highlights included Guy's Golden Trevally which was safely released before reaching a sashimi plate.

A few of us resorted to trolling or using live bait at times when the sardinas were scarce. Without shame I'll admit that I was thrilled to catch a very large Dorado while trolling for Wahoo with a pink Rapala.

Everyone caught multiple and/or new species in the Sea of Cortez which Jacques Cousteau named the Aquarium of the World. During the six days of

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The 12 Amigos and a Quest for Pez Grande

fishing five anglers including Mike Giusti and Wayne Wato caught both roosters and dorado. Eight of us caught at least one dorado and six of us caught at least one rooster.

This was my third stay at Hotel Todo Bien, and once again the accommodations, service, and dining were exceptional. On several occasions we brought Dorado to the kitchen in the afternoon and enjoyed delicious mahi-mahi ceviche with dinner.

fish so they relaxed by the pools or ventured out for some sight-seeing. One of their trip highlights was the personalized salsa cooking demonstration in the Todo Bien kitchen with Chef Lilly who also provided the local recipes.

Even with the challenging warm water conditions, we all had a great time! Rick Beall's quote "If you didn't come here to have fun, don't bother showing up" could be a mantra for all outings. This was an unforgettable adventure shared with an amazing group of friends.

Most of us are returning next year, but there are likely a few spots available.
June 13-18, 2027, Fishing 6 days

Hotel Todo Bien, June 12-19, 2027, 7 nights
Contact John Durand for information
j_durand@frontiernet.net

Duck Valley Outing - Jeff Howard

By Jeff Howard

After seeing Doug Ouellette's presentation on Billy Shaw Reservoir, we started the Duck Valley Outings (in 2023) This year's meet-up was mostly camping at Mountain View Reservoir Campground, although some members chose to stay at Arrowhead Inn nearby in Owyhee or Chambers Motel in Mountain City. We have had as many as 16 CFFU members on these trips.

In 2023 our average fish-to-net count was right around 20 fish per angler and many fish were over 4 lbs. Unfortunately, our average has been declining little by little over the last 2 years.

This year 10 anglers made the 8 hour drive to try our luck. Those members were myself, my dad (Gary Howard), our friend from Colorado, Brian Young, Erik Blihovde, Robert Rountree, Jerry Govier, Jake Mater, Bruce Bartholomew and Russ & Debbie Heckley.

The trip did not start off well for Dad and me. A trailer tire blew out short of Winnemucca, NV and then my A/C quit. We were off to a PERFECT start! Actually, more than a few things happened on this trip: a rod broke, a fly box sunk and a broken truck got towed to a mechanic shop as well. I think there were even more mishaps

Most of the group fished Mountain View Reservoir for the first few days. We only caught a few (and missed a few). Some did better with 7 or 8 to net. After a few days we started fishing at the catch & release lake, Billy Shaw, and most of us did better there so we continued to fish there. If I remember correctly, Eric caught 17 one day and Jerry caught 13 on a different day.

The wind was normal for May. It blew us off by afternoon on more than a few days or should I say, " more often than not ". One day, the 45mph wind blew the snow sideways and stuck to the ground.

All I can say is the catching was not like 2023 was. I don't think it is worth the drive anymore
Still, we had a great time!

Bruce with a nice rainbow

Congratulations: Captain Jeff Morin

By Captain Jeff Morin

The Operator of Uninspected Passenger Vessels (OUPV) or commonly known as a "6-Pack Captains License" has been over a year's work and lots of time on the water. Some of the various requirements are having 360 days of boating experience, completing a USCG-approved OUPV/Six-Pack captain's license course, successfully passing the USCG OUPV test, passing a physical exam and drug test and having a valid First Aid and CPR certification.

As a guide, I was limited to non-motorized vessels on navigable waterways (American River, Delta, etc) and could only legally guide by means of a drift boat or walk and wade. In other words, with a motorized vessel, I was limited to non-navigable waters (i.e. Lake Berryessa). With an USCG OUPV endorsement, I am legally able to take paying passengers (up to 6 max, but realistically only 2) on navigable inland waters on a motorized vessel. To put it simply, I can legally guide from my jet boat on the American River and Northern CA Delta for Striper and Bass on the fly!

Captain Jeff Morin (Left) on the American River with client Keith Pfeifer.

Annual Swap Meet

Members shopped for good deals at our Annual Swap Meet before the May 5th General Meeting.

Laurie's Bucket List # 41 & 42 = DONE

Salmonfly on the South Fork Snake River

The Pfeifers alerted us to the Teton Valley Lodge located in Driggs, Idaho. You can fish three sections of the Teton River and four sections of the South Fork of the Snake River for rainbows, browns, cutthroats and cutbows.

Two Bucket List items were completed. I've always wanted to fish with dry flies during a salmonfly hatch. And, of course, catch a larger cutthroat. It was awesome to see the cutties rise in the crystal clear water to devour our flies. Also great fun to see them clobber the real salmonflies.

The Lodge has great food, super lodging, and fun guides. The Lodge staff was very accommodating, helpful, and always friendly.

Laurie Banks with a beautiful Cutthroat

Teton Valley Lodge on the Teton River.

PONDERINGS

By Forrest Oldham

Forrest Oldham with a McCloud Redband Trout

SOLUTIONS

There are, no doubt, many reasons for enjoying fly fishing, not limited to, the places we get to see, the people we meet and their friendships, the richness of the history and all that goes with it, not to mention the amazing fish and their behaviors.

One thing that I believe gets passed over is the fact that it is a sport of many solutions. It is definitely a reason I enjoy it. Looking carefully, we find that the various "tools" (the rods, nippers, hair stackers, etc.) are created to solve various problems we encounter in trying to solve other problems like how do we get that fly to the fish, or how can I create a better looking fly and such.

We arrive at the stream to see a nice group of fish that we cannot reach with a overhead cast, solution, roll cast. Early fall run steelheaders needed to reach further across the river and thus was born the shooting head. A more modern solution was how do I get my fly to hang level beneath my indicator (bobber)? Let's create the "balance fly" whether it be a leech, streamer or other named "new fly". This look for solutions helps us get out our creative ambitions and may create another problem. Are we complicating things with all we are lead to believe we need waterside? Only time and your journey, your solutions, your conclusions, and your confidence will dictate your experience.

There is one problem that we probably cannot solve, that would be getting old. Although we can make the process more pleasant along the way. We can do this by enjoying our sport as often as possible with others we care about. I was fortunate to start fly fishing as a teen and was accepted by a number of people that were about 10 years senior to me as my mentors. I would generally meet them during different seasons of fishing on the American River. I savored their stories and made some with them sometimes on other waters. I learned from them. I watched them. Something really stood out to me. It occurred to me that most were moderate in their living, passionate in their fishing and they lived long…

"Only time and your journey, your solutions, your conclusions, and your confidence will dictate your experience."

Forrest Oldham, 2026

Fly Tyers Exchange

Mary Beth Govier won the $ 30.00 Gift Certificate for her entry into the Fly Tyers Exchange.

Fly Fishing 101 – Mentor Outing

Kathy and Gloria taking a break during the Mentor Outing in May.

Ten CFFU members new to fly fishing participated in the 101 Class.

This quarterly class will be offered again on August 18th and 25th followed by the Mentor Outing on August 29th.

Where Do I Start to Purchase Fly Tying Materials?

By Tim Au-Young

Hello all. For those of you who wish to explore tying flies and beginning a new hobby, time is of the essence. The more one does something, the more one becomes more proficient. Fly tying is no different.

Equipment is the first subject to note as once someone decides on what and how to purchase equipment, then one can actually get started tying. One of the first questions many new ,or novice people ask is, “shall I just buy a kit or purchase all items individually"?

There are good and bad things on purchasing a kit. Often, in the beginning, it is simple and a great way to see if a person will stick with it. An example would be a parent purchasing a kit for their child, or grandchild. If the tying does not work out, then a beginning kit has served its purpose: relatively inexpensive and the child moves on. The bad side of purchasing a beginning kit is that the quality of all pieces of equipment are average at best. This is not to say that there are kits of good to excellent quality.

On the other hand, personal experience tells me to purchase the best quality equipment that one can afford at the time, looking at the future. If a person decides to take on fly tying, then purchasing very good quality everything will make learning more easy, and less stressful. The economics is also a good investment for the future not having to re-purchase a poor quality tool. Once one has purchased the equipment, then the real fun begins! NOTE: a future article will go over the different types of equipment, to include the vise and tools.

Fly fishing clubs are a great way to get indoctrinated in to fly tying. Often a club will have free or very low cost fly tying lessons. Fly tying lessons on line are good and bad. Just because a person has a video out on how to tie flies, that does not mean they are:

1. Good to great tyers
2. Have good technique

So now the real essence of the tile of the article, “where do I obtain fly tying materials”, come in to play. As a past fly shop employee, I would suggest visiting your local fly fishing store. There you will obtain the nearest point of service, obtain vital information, and begin your fly tying career. Often times, the shop will provide fly tying lessons at all levels for nominal to fair rates of instruction At the store, you will receive basic information and service. As you progress in your tying, you will purchase more and more materials. Again, visiting your local shop can, and will provide you basically all you

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Fly Tying Corner: continued

need. So the next question: what about purchasing materials on line? I see that the prices can, and will be cheaper, or less expensive".

Basic logic says to purchase items at the best price, which is true. On line services can provide what seemingly is a lower price, but there are issues. When purchasing on line items, the person filling the order can give out store stock that has been sitting on the back peg for who knows how long? Average quality packages of feathers can be distributed leaving the best quality products for in store customers. Another item of question are the shipping charges to get your order back to you. Sure, products could seem less expensive, but once the shipping charges are added, then the dead net price can, and often is, higher than the local fly shop item. Warranty is also an issue one does not get a great deal on if something is purchased on line. How much value do you place on your time?

So there, purchase your goods locally and get the best quality products, feather and organic items in particular, with service and warranty of personal service. There may be situations that your local fly shop may not have what your seek, then obtaining products on line is an option due to your browser doing the leg work on where to obtain what you are looking for.

Starting a new hobby is an important decision based upon the time that you put towards it. Going to your local fly shop is a great way to get started. Visually looking at a product and obtaining more background information from the store employee yields time well spent.

CFFU Monthly Casting Clinic

By Frank Rinella

We had a casting clinic on Saturday June 27th at Gibbons Community park. About 18 people showed up to practice, we had our casting coaches there, Phil, Frank, Forrest, Bill, Nick and Mike.

The day at 9am looked like it was going to be coaches teaching coaches, but by 10 or so all the late risers shows up and we filled the casting area.

A good mix members, a new family, dad was newer to fly fishing and his wife and son were first timers.
Four of our members were practicing for a fly fishing trip to Montana, which was a very smart move on their part. If your going on a fly fishing trip this summer, practice at one of our clinics before you go, it should definitely improve your casting and catching.

CFFU Nor Cal Fly Casting Event

Phil Chauvin, Frank Rinella, Julie Kaye and Willy George at the casting Event.

By Frank Rinella

On May 23rd CFFU hosted a Fly Casting Stills Development (FCSD) event in Carmichael. With the support of the CFFU Board and the many club volunteers we were able to put this event together. To put together an event of this size and complexity it really took a lot of work and planning by the team members from the six different Fly clubs and the casting instructors from Golden Gate Angling and Casting club.

Our thanks also go out to Chuck and Mary Ann and the lunch staff, great job. The FCSD program was put together by Fly Fishers International (FFI) . The program is designed to improve your fishing skill by practicing different casting techniques. At the event led by Willy George and Phil Chauvin we had 110 fly casters come out and help as Certified instructors / mentors or as club members going through the casting program. Our thanks go out to all the volunteers (there are too many to name them all, Thank you) who helped our club make this a very successful event.

If you were not able to attend this event, your still in luck with the leadership of Mike Giusti and our mentors we are offering this same program on set Saturdays and many Tuesday mornings. Check our club calendar for scheduled casting events.

CFFU Nor Cal Fly Casting Event

Morning gathering at Gibbson Park of the instructors helping those who want to teach casting.

Willy George (R) working with Trevor Segelke on teaching casting techniques.

Four year-old Chris Klemin working with his Dad on casting techniques.

Postcard from Montana

Remember the BUG spray...they bite!

Spey Clinic with Jason Renfro

Swinging into Spring: CFFU Members Polish Their Two-Handed Spey Casting Skills at Sacramento Bar

By Bill Barron

On April 26, 2026, six enthusiastic CFFU members (Dawn Marquez, Tricia Simms, Stephen Payer, Louis Hein, Jeff Howard, and Stephen Boll) gathered at Sacramento Bar, near the Sunrise walking bridge, for the opportunity to enhance their two-handed Spey casting skills. The spring morning was cool and drizzly, classic steelhead weather, however, the goal for this day was not fish but better Spey casting skills. Each angler arrived equipped with a unique Spey rod, ranging from lightweight trout Spey setups to robust, two-handed salmon rods. This diverse array of gear highlighted the versatile nature of Spey casting and the varied angling interests within the CFFU community.

The clinic was led by Jason Renfro, a highly regarded, local, casting instructor affiliated with Fly Fishing Specialties. Jason is known by several club members for his extraordinary technical expertise and patient teaching style. Before the waders even hit the water, clinic organizer, Bill Barron, supplied the group with hot coffee, bagels, croissants, and donuts—a morning spread that was much appreciated by all. Thus fortified, Renfro began the session with an overview of the key fundamental mechanics behind two-handed casting, emphasizing anchor placement, D-loop formation, and the use of two hands throughout the cast.

Instruction commenced with a deep dive into the foundational Double Spey cast, a critical technique for executing downstream changes of direction when the wind blows downriver. Renfro meticulously broke down the movement into distinct, manageable components: the initial lift, the strategic placement of the fly anchor, and the fluid, circular sweep that forms the vital D-loop. CFFU members watched closely as he demonstrated how a smooth acceleration, rather than brute force, utilizes the rod's deep bend to propel the line effortlessly across the current.

At this point, anglers waded into the river to put key teaching points to the test. Jason provided personalized, one-on-one coaching, tailoring his feedback to the specific rod and skill level of each CFFU member. He waded into the river alongside individual participants to diagnose timing errors, adjust hand placements, and offer custom cues for their specific Spey lines.

Transitioning to the next key cast, Renfro introduced the Snap T cast, also called the C Spey, an indispensable tool for scenarios where the wind blows upriver. He illustrated how the distinctive "snap" motion quickly repositioned the line upstream, creating a safe and effective casting vector. By breaking down the timing of the snap and the subsequent repositioning sweep, Renfro demystified the cast, transforming what initially appeared to be a complex sequence of movements into a logical, rhythmic motion. This was followed by a second time on the water during which Jason, once again, offered angler-specific coaching and feedback.

Upon completion, each participant felt the session was extremely worthwhile, noting that they learned a considerable amount of practical

Continued on Page 24

Spey Clinic with Jason Renfro

information and were highly interested in attending additional Spey casting clinics.

Key takeaway learnings from Jason:

1) A Spey cast can be defined as a water loaded fly cast that involves a significant change of direction. often used in circumstances where there is little or no room behind the angler.
2) Two-handed rods are named because both hands should be used throughout the entire cast.
3) Slow the casting tempo – a great many novice caster use a tempo or cadence that is too fast to maintain proper tension.
4) Both the double Spey and Snap T (or Circle C) casts are sustained anchor casts; the former is a down stream anchor cast best used with a downstream wind and the latter is an upstream anchor cast best performed when the wind is blowing upstream.
5) For the double Spey – focus on the anchor point or position of the end of the fly line (where it meets the sink tip or leader) ensuring that it is a rod length or so away downstream at a 45 degree angle.
6) For the Snap T ensure that the anchor point, achieved by upstream "c" motion of the rod tip should land a rod length or so away upstream at roughly at 45 degree angle.
7) The final portion, or forward cast, is performed by pulling the bottom grip of the rod inwards toward to angler along with the use of the top hand pushing slightly forward toward the target.
8) All the above should be done with the arms and in front of the angler and close to the body.
9) Finally, participating in casting clinics or private lessons is only the first step. Becoming a capable Spey angler, just like any sporting activity, requires practice, practice, practice. Jason suggests heading out to the river with a specific goal in mind for each practice session, e.g. slowing down, placing the anchor correctly, sweeping with a gentle upward angle, getting to the proper firing position, ensuring that the anchor is pointed at the target before the forward cast.

New Members Meeting

Tenkara Flies

Ishigaki Kebari (Ishigaki Tenkara Fly)

Written and tied By: Jim Berdan

Tenkara is the modern Japanese version of the earliest fly fishing. For thousands of years, a rod, a line and a fly were all they had, and all they needed. Modern tenkara rods are telescopic, long (10 to 14.5 feet), very light (2 to 4 ounces), collapse to 24" or less, and have no reel.

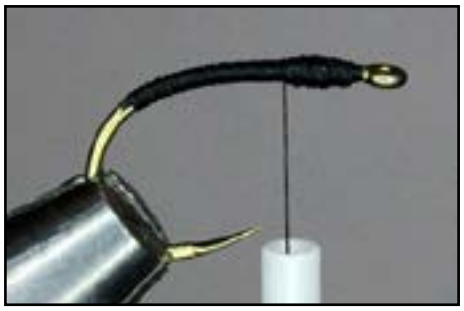
Tenkara flies are unique and do not necessarily match a specific insect. These flies are very simple and most have a reverse hackle, which creates more resistance and acts like a parachute under water. This is known in Japan as the sakasa kebari style and is known here in the United States as tenkara style. Kebari translates as fly in English. The flies shown here are named after their Japanese tier and photos 5 and 6 are examples of other tenkara flies.

There are three basic materials used to tie tenkara flies: a hook, thread, and hackle. Some Japanese tiers use sewing thread, but here I recommend fly tying thread. Besides thread, you can use dubbing or even yarn for the body of the fly. Hooks used for this fly very from standard nymph hooks (straight or curved shank) to exotic Japanese eyeless hooks. Hackle can be soft, such as partridge, or the stiffer saddle hackle. For more information about tenkara flies or tenkara fishing, google it.

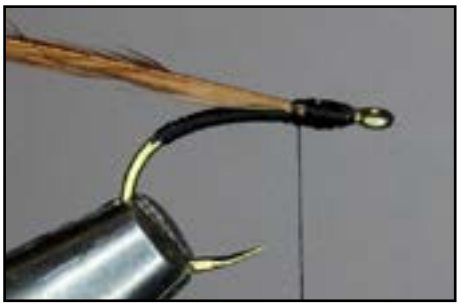
The best part of tenkara fishing is you don't have to use tenkara flies with a tenkara rod. You can use any of the flies that you know to be successful.

Materials List:

Thread: Danville Flymaster – 70 denier 6/0 – Black
Hook: Tiemco 2499 – Size 12
Hackle: Saddle Hackle – Brown



Step 1: If you use a barbed hook, pinch the barb. Lay down a thread base to about the middle of the bend and return the thread to just behind the eye. Build up a small head about 1½ eye lengths behind the eye and leave the thread at that point.



Step 2: Prepare and tie in the hackle so that the dull side is facing toward the eye of the hook.

Step 3: Wrap the hackle (two or three turns) towards the bend of the hook and tie off. Pull the hackle fibers forward and add thread wraps to give the fly a reverse hackle appearance. Now build up a tapered body behind the hackle and whip finish behind the hackle.

The finished fly.

Takayama Kebari (Example)

Amano Kebari (Example)

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Newsletter & Club Information

CFFU Club Meetings

First Tuesday of each month.

Richard Conzelmann Community Center
2201 Cottage Way, Sac., CA 95825

(PDF Map Link)

General Meeting Schedule:

6:15 P.M.: Fly Tying Demo - Coachman Corner

7:00 P.M.: Program Presentation

8:00 P.M.: Club Information

CFFU Membership

New Member: Individual: $40.00

New Member: Family: $55.00 (Includes spouse and children under 18 years old.)

New Member: Junior: $35.00 (Under 18 years old)

JOIN CFFU: Membership Form: **(PDF Link)**

CFFU Board of Directors

Please visit the CFFU Website for information about the Officers, Directors and Club Committee Leaders

LINK to CFFU Leaders

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Newsletter Submissions

All submissions, images and other material are due by the 25th of the month. The Newsletter Editor reserves the right to reject any article or image that does not meet the Editorial Guidelines.

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Banner Image

A healthy Male Chinook salmon photographed in Lower Putah Creek. Ken W. Davis image.