



## President's Message

Well, even with an extra day, February flew by! The older I get, the quicker it goes. Add to that new job, another trip to Missouri, dang! It is all good though, by trout season I should be settled in and ready to hit the high mountain streams. My dry-fly soul is begging to get on the water. Heck, I just need to get on the water period!

This is an interesting time of the year for me. Doldrums for fishing (not enough time or light) but yet the world is bursting forth. Almonds and fruit trees are popping out flowers, so many plants are ready to pop out and flower, it truly is amazing! I am loving the spring, and getting the garden ready, but I really need to get out and fish!

I only got to spend Sunday at the Fly Fishing Show, I was recovering from traveling on Saturday. As always, I saw a lot of folks I know, saw some great products and generally had a great time. We are fortunate to have this event so close to us. If you have not gone, it is highly recommended. Makes me want to go fishing!

As always, I hope to have a large turnout at the meeting (March 12), because what do we need at the meetings?

Beer! Yes Beer! That means someone has to bring some! Is that someone you? Bring some beer to the meeting and find out!!

All kidding aside, please come out and participate. Participation makes the Club successful.

Members, do you have any suggestions? Anything that you would like to see happen at the meetings? Or anything that you would like to see happen with the Club? Please, feel free to reach out to me, or any Board Member, and tell us. We welcome any and all questions, suggestions and feedback. After all, it is not my Club, it is everyone's Club. The more participation we get, the more successful the Club can be.

I am looking forward to seeing everyone not only at the meetings, but out on the water in 2024!

Tight Lines!

~ Link

## Club News

### ... February General Meeting - Tuesday, March 12, 2024

Our program this month will feature a review of Wente Scout Camp. President Gus Link has been volunteering there for a few years and was more recently joined by Vice-President Bob Bullock. During the camp the scouts can earn merit badges, and Link and Bob have focused on helping them earn the fly fishing and fly tying merit badges. Come learn more about this volunteer opportunity which includes fishing privileges during camp!

### ... The Fly Fishing Show @ Pleasanton

This turned out to be a pretty fun event from my perspective. We had a booth in a decent location that saw a lot of traffic, schmoozed with a lot of people (attendees, vendors, other clubs), and had a large number of people sign up for our newsletter. While many reside outside our area, they were interested in attending the F3T event in April and now we have a way to keep it in their minds. The booth was manned over the weekend at various times by Jim Bowen, Paul Wallace, Anthony Johnson, Dennis Stambaugh, Roger Ringsted, Randall Reyes of Rivers of Recovery with another veteran, Bob Bullock, and myself. The report I was sent stated attendance was 9,189 for the show.

### ... GGA&C Club Free Casting Clinic

Just a reminder that the free casting clinic is held the second Saturday of every month from 9:30 am - 12:00 pm at Golden Gate Park. Saturday, March 9th is the next session. A carpool group is a fantastic way to attend if you're free that weekend. The event is held rain or shine.



### ... Fly Fishing Film Tour Returns!

Speaking of the 2024 Fly Fishing Film Tour, the date has been set for April 6, 2024 @ The State Theater in Modesto from 2:00 pm - 6:00 pm. This is shaping up to be a great event! In the meantime, please be thinking about how *you* can make this a fantastic fundraising event for Rivers of Recovery. For those that don't know, The SFF has been involved in promoting the F3T event at The State since its inception, which I believe dates back to 2009. The local event was suspended due to the Covid lockdown in 2020, but we are dedicated to

bringing it back bigger and stronger than ever. We not only will need member support in running things the day of the event, but also in arranging the donation of raffle prizes. We welcome all manner of items, including but not limited to gift cards, gift baskets, handmade items, gift certificates, small appliances, tools, camping gear, etc., fishing and non-fishing related. All proceeds from the raffle and profits from the event will be donated to [Rivers of Recovery](#), an NPO that provides proven-effective recreational, outdoor rehabilitative therapy for combat disabled veterans. This is our opportunity to give back to those gave so much for us.



### ... Outings and Events

We will have information booths at farmers' markets this spring to promote the club and the F3T event at the State Theater. We will be at both Modesto (March 2nd and 23rd) and Turlock (March 16th) for certain and possibly Ripon and Escalon. We will likely have a booth at the Earth Day celebration in Graceada Park April 20th.

On Friday, March 15th, we will be participating in the salmon fry release at Knight's Ferry with a school from Atwater. We'll be on hand to demonstrate fly casting with our club rods and let the students try it. We can always use extra volunteers to work with the groups! Send me an email if you are interested. [webmaster@stanislausflyfishers.org](mailto:webmaster@stanislausflyfishers.org).

Outings Director John Driver has several things on the calendar for the upcoming season beginning with a local outing to McSwain Reservoir on April 13th. June 14th-16th, is a weekend outing to either Beardsley or Clark Fork (TBD). This can also be a one-day trip for those who can't make the whole weekend. September 6th-8th we'll return to the Fall River and Circle 7 Ranch. And finally (for now) we're looking at a trip to Eastern Nevada and Wild Horse Reservoir October 4th-6th.

### ... 2024 Dues are now due and payable!

Please see info at the [bottom of the newsletter](#). Pay by mail or in person at a club meeting.

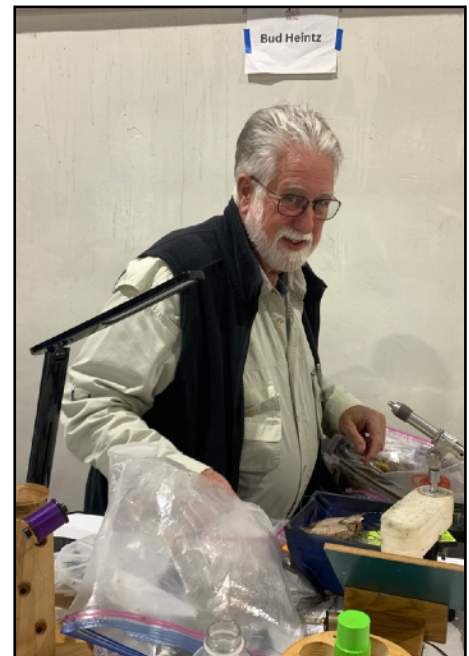
### ... New Fly Tying Class!!

Five Mondays in April. See flyer at end of [newsletter](#) for details.

## Upcoming Outings & Events

[Click here for a link to our Google Calendar.](#)

- General Meeting "TBA" - March 12, 2024
- Modesto Farmers' Market Booth - March 2, 2024
- Turlock Farmers' Market Booth - March 16, 2024
- SFF Board Meeting - March 28 - Track 424 Brewery, 2150 Yosemite, Modesto
- Fly Fishing Film Tour 2024 @ The State Theater - April 6, 2024
- Knight's Ferry Salmon Release w/ Peggy Heller Elementary - April 15, 2024
- Earth Day Celebration @ Graceada Park - April 20, 2024
- McSwain Reservoir - April 13, 2024
- Beardsley / Clark Fork - June 14-16, 2024
- Fall River / Circle 7 Ranch - September 6-8, 2024
- Wild Horse Reservoir, Nevada - October 4-6, 2024



Saturday's Pleasanton Fly Fishing Show crew: Jim Bowen, Anthony Johnson, Michael Hewitt and Paul Wallace. We were promoting our club, Rivers of Recovery, and our upcoming F3T event April 6, 2024 at the State Theater. Of course, Bud Heintz was there showing off his mastery of fly tying skills as he does every year! We're lucky to have Bud as a major resource of fly tying knowledge. Thank you, Bud, for everything!

## Tuolumne River Trust - OpEd

The following was published February 1, 2024 in the Modesto Bee.

### **This Sierra river needs more water for salmon.**

#### **San Francisco wants to give it gravel | Opinion**

*By Peter Drekmeier, Policy Director at Tuolumne River Trust*

Nature designed the Tuolumne River to be a fast-moving, cold river. Dams and diversions have turned it into a slow-moving, warm stream. Its operators are trying to solve the problem with physical changes to help native fish. That won't work if the river also doesn't get some of its water back. The Modesto and Turlock Irrigation Districts, along with the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission, recently announced a plan to invest \$80 million to restore fish habitat in the river. Unfortunately, a critical issue remains: More water to make the habitat work. Without this, the Tuolumne River's beleaguered salmon population will not recover.

Past attempts to restore Tuolumne fish populations without significantly increasing flow have all failed. Following a 1995 voluntary agreement, the Tuolumne diverters embarked on a plan to restore instream habitat. Their signature project involved filling a mining pit in the river with gravel to disrupt bass (a non-native predator of salmon) habitat. It failed. The districts' own post-project report highlighted the resilience of bass populations in the Tuolumne River due to persistent low river flows.

There is no getting around that the core problem facing the Tuolumne River is the altered flow pattern, a river left with a fraction of its water. Less water means warm, slower-moving water. And warm water favors warm-water species like bass over native species. This is glaringly apparent during drier years when the river becomes clogged with non-native water hyacinth. Beneath the pariah vegetation, bass lurk in the shallows, awaiting their next meal of baby salmon.

The new habitat restoration program is essentially the proposed Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement, which the diverters put forward as an alternative to the State Water Board's Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan. The state's plan would require a range of 30%-50% of the River's natural flow between February and June, starting at 40%. The idea behind the flow range is that if other measures (that don't involve increasing flow) work, then the river

might not need as much water. But if those measures fail, there will be a back-up plan. This approach encourages effective solutions, as opposed to the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement, which is more like a set of tasks to be checked off a list.

This proposed agreement is to sidestep a necessary rebalancing of the beneficial uses of the Tuolumne by its primary regulator, the State Water Resources Control Board. In a years-long process that is still under way, the Board is examining alternative agreements such as this one rather than exercise its authority and provide more flow to the river as a necessary use of the water. If the voluntary agreement is implemented and the measures fail, the Tuolumne River ecosystem will continue to degrade.

The main focus of the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement is to add spawning gravel to the river. However, research indicates that this isn't what the river needs most. A study by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service found that while poor spawning habitat limits baby fish (fry) production, the river is already producing more fry than its rearing habitat can support. So just adding gravel would likely not lead to more adult fish.

To improve rearing habitat for baby fish we need to restore the river's floodplains, as proposed by the districts. We also need to activate them with water, as dry floodplains do not serve an ecological function. Proponents of the Tuolumne River Voluntary Agreement claim it's based on science, but that "science" has been challenged by a number of natural resource agencies and fish biologists. A peer review commissioned by the National Marine Fisheries Service found major flaws in the fish models the voluntary agreement is based on.

The truth is, the Tuolumne River has been the subject of an unintended experiment for decades. The unasked question? Can native fish survive with only 20% of the river's natural flow? The unequivocal answer is no. The Tuolumne salmon population is worse off than on any other Central Valley river.

Habitat restoration is important, but it must be coupled with higher flows. Non-flow measures cannot substitute for desirable water temperature, inundated floodplains and sufficient flow to transport juvenile salmon down the river and out to the Bay-Delta quickly so they are less likely to get eaten by bass.

Commitment to the restoration of the Tuolumne River requires a shift from traditional, single-focused solutions to a more integrated, science-based approach. Fortunately, there are very reasonable solutions that can help restore the Tuolumne while protecting our water supply and reducing flood risk in Modesto. For example, we need to capture potential floodwater and use it to recharge our groundwater basin, an initiative that could attract financial support from the SF Public Utilities Commission given its cost-effectiveness compared to developing new water supplies in the Bay Area.

We encourage the Tuolumne River diverters to take the next step toward a more sustainable community, economy and river ecosystem. Tuolumne River Trust stands ready to be part of a comprehensive solution.



**STANISLAUS FLY FISHERS IS A CHARTER CLUB OF FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL AND MEMBER OF THE NORTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF FLY FISHERS INTERNATIONAL**

## SFF 2024 Board of Directors

President: Gus Link • Vice-President: Bob Bullock • Secretary/Webmaster: Michael Hewitt  
 Treasurer/Membership: Dennis Stambaugh • Outings: John Driver  
 Community Outreach: Paul Wallace • At-Large: Bud Heintz • At-Large: Roger Ringsted

## SFF Membership Information

Membership fees for 2024, currently \$45, are now due. For your convenience, we can now accept a credit card for your dues for an additional fee of \$1.00 to cover the cost of the transaction. All SFF memberships are “Family Membership” status; spouses, significant others, and/or children must also be Fly Fishers International members to be official SFF members. FFI General Memberships include you, your spouse or co-habiting partner, and children under 18.

Reminder: Club dues **DO NOT** include FFI dues. FFI dues are paid directly to the FFI and must be maintained regularly since the SFF is an FFI Charter Club. If you are not an FFI Life Member, or do not pay for three years at a time, you must renew your membership yearly! Remember to list the Stanislaus Fly Fishers as your Affiliated Club. This is important due to our Charter Club status as that links you to us on their roster. The online application for FFI membership is linked below. Standard annual FFI dues range from \$20-\$35 based on status (general, senior, veteran, youth).

Mail Membership Dues to: Dennis Stambaugh  
 3833 Blue Bird Drive  
 Modesto, CA, 95356

[SFF Membership Form](#)

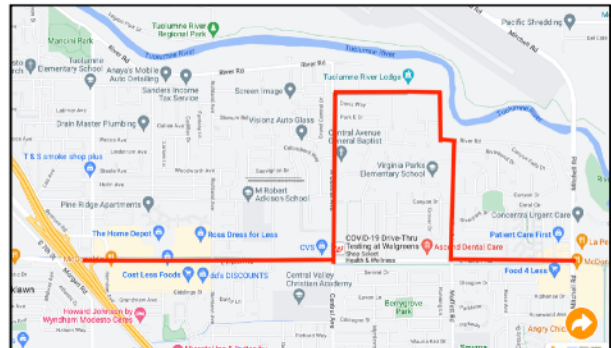
[FFI Membership Link](#)

## Directions to Tuolumne River Lodge Tuolumne River Lodge 2429 River Rd, Modesto, CA

From 99 take Hatch Rd east to Central.  
 Left on Central to River Rd. Right on River Rd.

From Mitchell Rd take Hatch Rd west  
 to Moffett Rd. Right on Moffett to River Rd.  
 Left on River Rd.

[Google Map](#)





# Beginning Fly Tying Class!

Five nights of instruction. Five basic flies. All materials and tools provided. Class will be held on each Monday night in April from 6:00-8:00 pm at Endeavor Alternative School, 2555 Lawrence St., Ceres, CA. Class is limited to six participants. \$75 per person paid in advance to guarantee a space in the class. Checks\*\* can be made payable to Stanislaus Fly Fishers and mailed to:

\*\* Venmo and credit card options available

Dennis Stambaugh  
3833 Blue Bird Drive  
Modesto, CA, 95356

Please note “Fly Tying Class” on the check and include contact information. To signup or for questions, please email Mike Hewitt at [info@stanislausflyfishers.org](mailto:info@stanislausflyfishers.org).

April 1 - Zebra Midge

April 8 - Walt's Worm

April 15 - Leisenring Spider Soft Hackle

April 22 - Woolly Bugger

April 29 - PT Nymph

**Sign up now!**

## Baum Lake Outing Invitation

Delta Fly Fishers are inviting our neighboring fly fishing clubs to join them in fly fishing Baum Lake, March 22-25. Fly fishing guides Scott Sugimoto and Gary Wickwire have a new group clinic in store for fly fishers planning to attend this outing. They and hosts Bob & Jean Fujimura plan to pre-fish this spring fed section of the famous Hat Creek on Friday March 22. The next day, we will have a guided clinic with instructions on the various techniques such as dry fly and streamer presentation with opportunities for fishing with Scott and Gary. They are also planning to provide flies and a nice lunch at the lake. On Sunday we have a final day of fly fishing as a group. This new outing is tailored to introduce new fly fishers to this well-known fishery and provide technical skills needed to maximize their fishing success. DFF members Bob Fujimura, Jerry Neuburger, and others have had some wonderful winter fishing in previous trips.

Participants should bring 3-5 weight rods with matching floating lines. This spring fed section of Hat Creek is typically clear and has consistent flow and moderate water temperatures thorough the winter. Small nymphs, emergers, and dry flies imitating midges and Blue Winged Olive (Baetis) mayflies are the primary offerings this time of year. Scott recommends longer leaders (+9 ft) with finer tippet (up to 6x) for the best fishing. Small streamers such as micro buggers or mini leeches (#8-12) can be also very productive when stripped or dead-drifted or swung. Contact Scott Sugimoto (scott@ontheriffle.com or (530) 276-1612) or visit the Baum Lake fishing report at The Fly Shop (<https://www.theflyshop.com/streamreport.html>) for more fly selection or terminal rig recommendations.

Fishing from shore is limited so bring a personal watercraft. Baum Lake has a slow current in its main channel, so watercraft with oars and an anchor are strongly recommended to fish more lake area and to hold position. Boats using gas motors are not allowed. Contact Bob Fujimura by email ([deltaflyfishers@gmail.com](mailto:deltaflyfishers@gmail.com)) if you need loaner fishing or floating equipment. Participants are responsible for their own lodging, most meals, and transportation for this event. There is a nearby campground run by PGE (<https://www.californiasbestcamping.com/modoc/cassel.html>) and there are

motels available in the towns of Burney and Fall River Mills. Cold winter conditions at night can be expected during March so plan your lodging plans accordingly. Burney has the most dining and shopping options, including a full-serve grocery store, hardware, sporting goods, and gas stations. Bob can provide referrals on lodging and dining options if needed. The Fujimuras frequently dine out on their fishing trips and welcome outing participants to join them. Due to its lower elevation, the area around Hat Creek and Baum Lake is usually not adversely affected by winter storms – however, check the road conditions on Hwy 299 concerning the highway summits between Redding and Burney before travelling.

The outing cost is \$100 per person for covering the guide services, Saturday lunch, flies, and incidental leader supplies. Contact Bob Fujimura ([deltaflyfishers@gmail.com](mailto:deltaflyfishers@gmail.com) or (209) 329-1692) to register to attend. All participants are required to sign and submit a valid DFF liability waiver form and wear a personal floatation device if they fish from a personal watercraft. Outing fees are non-refundable, but participants can sell their spot to other members. Persons interested in participating should register ASAP. We hope members of all experience levels will participate.



Jerry Neuburger showing the size of trout available from Baum Lake, photo provided by Jerry Neuburger, FB post on Sept 23, 2023.