

February 2022

Headwaters

NEWSLETTER OF THE
STANISLAUS FLY FISHERS

Stanislaus
Fly Fishers

A CHARTER
CLUB OF FLY
FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL

MEMBER OF THE
NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA
COUNCIL OF FLY
FISHERS
INTERNATIONAL

Live Meeting

Tuesday, 2/8/2022
6:00 pm
@ Round Table Pizza
Pelandale Rd.
Modesto, CA
(Save Mart Center)

President's Message

Where is our rain? December was so awesome and had us all hoping for a reservoir filling winter and now here we are with the driest January on record behind us and praying for rain again. Keep praying, keep your fingers crossed or do a rain dance, whichever you think will do the trick. We need a bunch more precipitation.

It's that time of year again for me to remind you all that club and FFI dues are due. Our club dues are \$40.00 a year for a family membership and \$25.00 for seniors or veterans or \$35.00 for a general FFI annual membership. We need to maintain our Charter Club status with the FFI. By maintaining the charter status we are provided affordable insurance for the club and the FFI takes care of our tax reporting. Both of these services would be much more costly for our club if we had to find our insurance elsewhere and if we needed to hire a CPA to prepare our tax statement as a 501.c3 organization. Further we need a reasonable treasury to fund a meeting location and pay for speakers and fund outings. Please have faith that life will return to some semblance of normal and we will soon return to in person meetings. Speaking of which, if anyone knows of a meeting location that will work for our general meetings let Mike Hewitt or me know and we will see what we can arrange.

Let's get those dues in! We thank you!

We want to thank our outing coordinator Bob Bullock, he has reserved the Kistler Ranch bass ponds for our annual outing. We have Sunday March 27th reserved. We will announce details in next month's newsletter, but I wanted to get that date out to you now so you can make sure you keep the date open. (Continued on Page 2)

Stanislaus Fly Fishers Membership Information

Membership dues are \$40 per year for members.

Members must also join Fly Fishers International. Dues for the IFF vary, but do not exceed \$35 for a single, one-year membership.



Like us on Facebook 

We're on the Web!



Club News

Board/General Meeting
Tuesday, February 8, 2022
Round Table Pizza
3601 Pelandale Ave., Modesto
6:00 pm

President's Message (Continued from Page 1)

This is always our best attended outing and everyone has a good time fishing the ponds. Plan to attend; it will be a blast!

I have been out a couple of times this past month giving the "float and fly" method of bass fishing a try. I've had mixed results telling me I don't have it figured out yet, but I plan to keep working on it. I have only tried it at Don Pedro, but I'm going to give New Melones a try soon. It is fun. It's kind of like dry fly fishing in the sense that you are watching the indicator for the grab and when it bobbles or goes under, it's game on. I also gave surf fishing a try recently. While I didn't catch anything I did learn quite a lot about fishing the surf with a two-hander rod. Not only two-hander techniques, but some good where and when information. Looking forward to getting back over there and giving that another try soon.

Finally, we will conduct our monthly combination board/general meeting Tuesday February 8th at the RoundTable Pizza on Pelandale in the Save Mart center. Come on by and we'll chat about fishing and fly tying and who knows what.

Well, that's all I know for now. Please get those dues paid and join us on the 8th. Be safe and go fishing!

Tight Lines and bobber down!
~ Jim

Note: Here's an article on Float 'n' Fly fishing from Gink & Gasoline describing it in some detail.

<https://www.ginkandgasoline.com/fly-fishing-tips-technique/fly-fishing-float-n-fly-rig-for-the-fly-rod/>

Stanislaus Fly Fishers 2021 Board of Directors

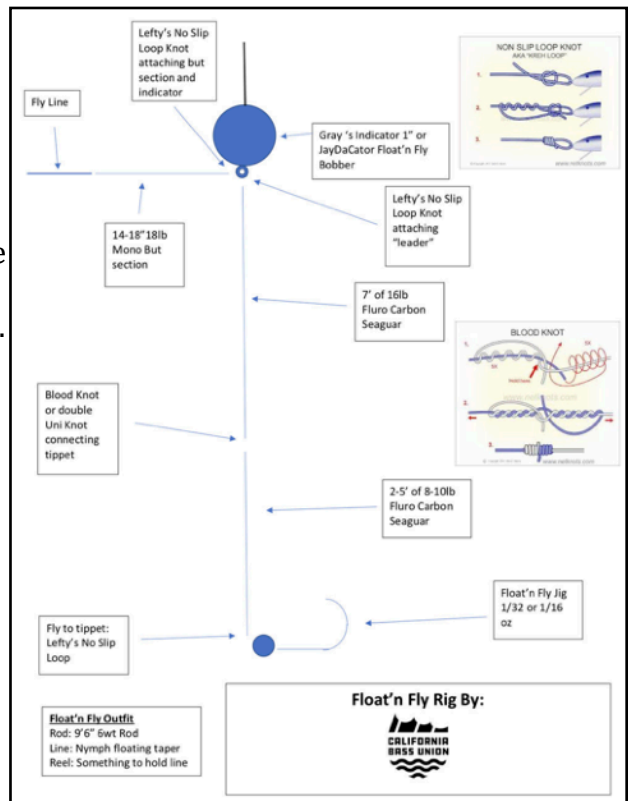
President – Jim Bowen
 Vice-President – Gus Link
 Treasurer/Membership –
 Dennis Stambaugh
 Secretary/Webmaster –
 Michael Hewitt
 Outings – Bob Bullock
 Raffles – Jim Goodwin
 At-Large – Bud Heintz
 At-Large – Jeff Bakker
 At-Large - Pat Roe

In-person board meetings are currently suspended until Covid protocols have determined it is safe to resume them.

Club News (cont.)

Float 'n' Fly

This is a typical float 'n' fly setup. There are some variations out there if you Google it, but they all are basically the same. For visuals of the flies and gear, check out Delta Bass Bugs' website. They do have items and kits for sale, but you can find what you need elsewhere as well. Visit it [here](#).



The Fly Box "Unit Skwala" via Jon Baiocchi

For this month's pattern, I've chosen to go with a fly favored by the late Jon Baiocchi for fishing on the Yuba River, the Unit Skwala. In his blog he mentioned that he got the pattern from a friend who in turn credited getting it from Montana guide John Cook who guides on the Bitterroot River. I spent a week fishing with Cook and his guide stable several years ago and can attest that they know their stuff. Rather than give you a lot of information in here, I'll just post the links to Jon's blog [here](#) and a video of Jon tying the fly [here](#). As we near the anniversary of Jon's passing last April, let this serve as a reminder of what a quality guy Jon was and a tribute to his contribution to the sport of fly fishing and the effect he had on all those who had the pleasure to know him, fish with him, and/or otherwise benefited from his knowledge and experience through his club presentations. RIP, Jon!



Unit Skwala Recipe

- Hook; Tiemco 101 or Mustad 94840 #10.
- Thread; Uni 6/0 dark brown.
- Under body: yellow olive vernile wrapped tightly.
- Extended over body: Larva Lace black foam.
- Wing: Spirit River UV2 poly yarn.
- Head: Moose hair tied bullet style.
- Legs: Large round rubber in brown.
- *Note: After tying, treat with Loon Hydrostop

Upcoming Outings and Events

Fly Fishing Show – February 25-27, 2022, Pleasanton

Kistler Ranch Outing – March 27, 2022, Highway 108

Membership Information

Membership Dues (\$40) for 2022 are due now due and payable. 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 FFI 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. The online application for FFI membership is linked below.

FFI Membership [Application](#)

Comics

TUNDRA CHAD CARPENTER



Conservation Notes

This Supreme Court Case Could Destroy Water Protections

gizmodo.com | Molly Taft | January 26, 2022

The Supreme Court agreed this week to hear a case brought by two Idaho residents who have fought the Environmental Protection Agency for years over a wetland on their property. This isn't just a simple case of some long-suffering landowners, though; it's one that is backed by industry interests. And with the Court in an ultra-conservative phase, the case could totally reshape how waterways across the U.S. are protected from pollution.

"There's a range of outcomes [to the case], all of which are bad," said Dave Owen, a professor of environmental law at the University of California, Hastings. [More ...](#)

Salmon Strongholds: Huffman brings back Salmon FISH Act

nationalfisherman.com | Jessica Hathaway | January 25, 2022

On Tuesday, Jan. 25, Rep. Jared Huffman (D-Calif.), reintroduced the Salmon Focused Investments in Sustainable Habitats Act. The bill, introduced first in October 2019, seeks to identify, restore, and protect the most outstanding salmon rivers and watersheds in America, and to ensure funding needed to sustain thriving salmon populations.

Habitat degradation, pollution, dams, overharvesting, climate change, and other factors have caused salmon populations to decline across the country, severely impacting Tribes, fishermen, and the communities that depend on them, according to a release from Huffman.

"The ecological, cultural, and economic importance of salmon is hard to overstate; they support tens of thousands of jobs, sustain fishing communities, generate billions of dollars in economic activity, and provide a food source for millions of people. They also hold immense cultural significance for Tribes, like many in my district, who have fished for salmon since time immemorial," said Huffman, chair of the House Subcommittee on Water, Oceans and Wildlife and Co-Chair of the Congressional Wild Salmon Caucus. [More ...](#)

Climate Change, Aquatic Invaders Turn Up the Heat on Native Trout

flatheadbeacon.com | Tristan Scott | January 4, 2022

Using three decades of monitoring data, local researchers reveal how the interplay of aquatic invaders and warming stream temperatures are driving steep declines in native trout populations.

As a stronghold for native trout species, as well as a mountainous region that has warmed at nearly twice the rate of the global average over the last century, the northern Rocky Mountains of Montana are an ideal laboratory setting for climate analysis. [More ...](#)

NCCFFI Report to Clubs - February 2022

By Mark Rockwell, NCCFFI President

Well, we are moving toward the Fly Fishing Show in Pleasanton, February 25 - 27th, and to our knowledge, the show will go on. We are in communication with the show organizer, and NCCFFI plans to participate. Our booth will be in a different location just outside the main entrance. We made this move to make it safer for our volunteers and guests. Rain is our biggest concern, and we hope the good weather holds.

We'll be more limited in what we can do, and will not hold the Boy Scout merit badge & kids tying due to safety concerns and lack of space. We will have certified casting instructors teaching fly casting in the usual location outside and up the hill. We thank the Golden Gate Angling and Casting Club for providing most of the people. For clubs who do not have a booth at the event we can display your club brochures and direct prospective new members to you via our club rooster. Just let us know what you need & drop off your materials at our table.

We do hope to do our Club Presidents luncheon on Saturday, February 26th, but have not settled on time as we need further clarity on possible location. We plan to hold this outside as well for greater safety. All club Presidents or club representatives are invited to attend - no cost. Our topic will be: What to Expect from NCCFFI - Your Council - in the Coming Year.

It's important to know, as was described in my January Club Report, that we are focused on improving communication with our clubs, and working to bring greater value to all of you in the fly fishing community. This level of connection brings the ability to have more impact to help our watersheds & fish, and have more fun. It's been our intent over the past few years to be more connected to you & your club, and to add value for being an FFI affiliated club. We feel strongly that when we all work together great things are possible.

With great pride, we are planning to re-start our Hall of Fame dinner in the Fall of 2022. This was an historic event that NCCFFI has known for in the past. Many of the fly fishing greats have been honored as members. E.C. Powell, Andre Puyans, Lani Waller, Ken Hanley, Mike Michalak, Bill Schaadt, Mel & Fanny Krieger, Cal Bird, Jim Adams, Al Kyte, Marty Seldon, and many, many more have been honored. The list totals 37 honorees. It's impressive!

We feel strongly that tradition is one of the hallmarks of fly fishing, and much of that has come from our region. New fly rod types and styles, sinking lines, shooting heads, inventive new flies, and new styles of fishing originated here. The Hall of Fame event was designed to recognize these legendary people for their creativity and contribution to our sport. So, please look forward to the Hall of Fame Dinner later in the year. You're invited!

We will continue our successful monthly Club Presidents Happy Hour Zoom calls, with the purpose of bringing our clubs together at least monthly to talk, share ideas, and help each other make our clubs more effective at meeting the needs of members. Everyone is invited to attend, so feel free to let me know, mrockwell1945@gmail.com, if you'd like to participate.

I'll also continue doing these monthly reports for your newsletter & website to keep all members aware of what we're doing. I will include periodic Conservation reports as well. Working together we have more fun, can be more effective in fishery advocacy, and help each other have successful clubs for everyone's enjoyment.

Here's to a great summer outdoors - with friends & family - and to good fishing experiences!

Mark

For Mark's Conservation Report, see the [end of this newsletter](#).

More Club News - Raffle



9ft 9wt Powell Tiburon II/Tioga Teton Trinity

9ft 3wt Powell LGA/Tioga

We are currently raffling two E.C. Powell rods with Teton reels that were donated to our club by Philip Hawkins, the Atwater school teacher whose students were doing a salmon release back in February of 2020 and invited our club members to attend and provide casting and fly tying instruction. The first is a Powell Tiburon 9ft 9wt with a Teton Tioga reel and includes Gus Link custom-sewn rod sack and reel pouch. The second is a Powell LGA 9ft 3wt with a Teton Trinity reel and also includes custom-sewn rod sack and reel pouch from Gus Link. We are selling playing cards, one deck for each rod combo, for \$5.00 each. The raffle drawing will be held when either the decks have sold out or at our December 2021 meeting, whichever comes first. Proceeds will be used to help fund speakers for our general meetings. Many thanks to Philip for his donation to our club.

Tips and Tricks

Fly Fishing Gear Tips

midcurrent.com | Marshall Cutchin

Leaders and Tippets

Leader Materials To achieve the best knot strength in leaders, use the same brand for all sections. Identical materials make stronger knots.

Lubricate Your Knots Always lubricate your knots before tightening them. Saliva works on monofilament, but lip balm or a commercial knot lubricant is better for tying knots in fluorocarbon.

Match Tippets to Flies To determine an appropriate tippet size for trout flies, divide the hook size by 3. The result equals the typical “X” rating of the appropriate tippet. Example: a hook size of 12, divided by 3, equals a 4X tippet.

Tippet Sizes The “X” designation of tippet size comes from a very old designation of wire size for watch parts, later applied to cat gut leaders (one size change equaled 0.001 inches in diameter). Lefty Kreh’s general advice on what the numbers mean is helpful: subtract the “X” number from 9 to get an approximate line test rating. E.g. 6X tippet has a breaking strength of about 2 pounds.

Leader Butt Sections When buying or making leaders make sure the butt section is heavy enough. A good rule of thumb is that the leader butt should be 70% of the diameter of the fly line. For most trout lines that means a leader butt of .021”-.023” works best, for heavier lines, .026”-.028.”

Check Your Bait Especially when casting often or in strong winds, examine your tippet and fly every four or five casts. Wind-knots (overhand knots) weaken your tippet by at least 50 percent, and tippets can get tangled in your fly or even knotted around the hook bend — things you won’t notice on a fly that is 40 feet away. Also check the action of the fly on the surface or in the water next to you; trout flies that don’t float well or straight and saltwater flies that “foul” (have materials wrapped around the hook bend) often stop fish from eating a well-chosen fly.

Keep Fish-Ready When finished fishing, hook your fly in one of snake guides and wrap the leader around your reel’s spool. This will keep the end of fly line out of the rod top and ready to be stripped out when you’re ready to fish again.

Complete article [here](#)

Where are We on the Issue of Improved Conditions in the S.F. Bay-Delta?

Mark Rockwell, VP Conservation, NCCFFI

There is little doubt that it has been many years since the State Water Resources Control Board has up-dated the water plan for the primary source of water for most residents in California. The Bay-Delta, as it's known, is the region of central California that essentially all the rivers of the western Sierra drain, providing the central location for access to water for the large majority of our states citizens. This is where the Sacramento & San Joaquin Rivers meet, and what used to be the largest estuary in the western side of the Americas. To say it was bountiful is an understatement. Today, because it has been channelized and restricted to prevent flooding and allow farming, it has become somewhat urbanized, and certainly its water flows have been totally altered to suit human needs.



The State Water Resources Control Board (Water Board) is legally responsible to protect the public trust resources (fish, wildlife, and habitats) in and around state waters for the benefit of all citizens of California. In the Bay-Delta that means providing a balanced plan to serve the interests of water agencies as well as protecting fish and wildlife. That plan is called **The Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan**, and it is supposed to be updated every 3 years. Here is what the Water Board website says about the plan:

“Protecting the Bay-Delta watershed and its many beneficial uses is one of the State Water Board’s primary responsibilities and top priorities. The State Water Board is responsible for adopting and updating the Water Quality Control Plan for the San Francisco Bay/Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta Estuary (Bay-Delta Plan), which establishes water quality control measures and flow requirements needed to provide reasonable protection of beneficial uses in the watershed.”

The Water Board has not updated the Plan since 1995! We’re well past its “once every 3 years” mandate. Water uses, ecosystem conditions (including Climate Change), and the statewide population that depends on water that passes through the Bay-Delta all

have changed significantly since then, producing a critical need for an updated operating framework. So, starting in 2009 the Board began the updating process starting with a laborious effort to determine what the science was saying about protecting the watershed's fish, wildlife & other aquatic resources. This took several years of effort, including ensuring that all studies used passed through scientific peer review.

In 2018 the Water Board completed and passed what is called **Phase 1 of the Bay-Delta Water Quality Control Plan** which includes tributary flows into the San Joaquin River. Historically, flows in the 3 main tributaries of the San Joaquin River (Stanislaus, Tuolumne, and Merced Rivers) were as low in droughts as 6% of unimpeded flows (No dams or diversions), but averaged only 10-20% in critical times of the year (February - June). This means that 80-90% of the river flows never made it to the Delta! **Phase 1 requires a change to 40% of the unimpeded flows during the critical months of February - June.**

<https://mavensnotebook.com/portfolio/bay-delta-water-quality-control-plan-bay-delta-plan/>

This was a huge change that immediately resulted in pushback from Water Agencies. At the December 2018 Water Board meeting water agencies and the Governor supported a voluntary process be started to allow affected agencies to try to find common ground on meeting the new flow requirements, and that stopped the Water Board from implementing the approved Water Quality Plan Update to allow this process to move forward. This effort was to be called **The Voluntary Agreements**, and all water agencies in the San Joaquin River system would work to find ways to meet the new flow mandate.



We are now in 2022, and to date, no voluntary plan has been shown to meet the requirements. Some would say we've wasted 3 full years in this effort, and the Bay-Delta watershed has suffered as a result. Here's what that means:

1. Delta Smelt are functionally now extinct
2. Winter-run Chinook salmon are closer than they've ever been to extinction
3. Fall-run Chinook numbers are near all time lows
4. Stripped bass have suffered significant declines in CDFW winter trawl studies

5. Central Valley steelhead have suffered untold impacts (their numbers are not measured)
6. Delta water quality is at an all-time low, with annual toxic algae blooms increasing in size and location.
7. Bay-Delta cities are suffering the associated costs to keep waterways open
8. Salinity levels have been outside required levels in more of the Delta in these years, leading to reduced delta farm crops and increased drinking water treatment costs.

Where are We Today?

There has been increased efforts by most NGOs, including NCCFFI, CSPA, NRDC, Defender of Wildlife, and others to push the Water Board to initiate their new plan, and it seems like the Board is listening. Will they act? We hope so. Here is what the California Legislative Analysts Office (LAO) had to say in January, 2022:

“Swift Adoption and Implementation of Plan Updates Is Important. Updating the water quality objectives for the Delta watershed is long overdue and should be a high priority for the state to complete. As noted, the last major update was nearly 30 years ago. The current standards and regulatory framework have not been sufficient to protect fish and wildlife in the watershed. If current trends continue, the state is poised to lose some of its native species to extinction. Moreover, the prolonged process of waiting for new water quality standards to be specified and implemented creates uncertainty for water users and thereby complicates their planning and operational decisions.”

Here’s a good rundown on where we are today in the Water Board’s words:



<https://mavensnotebook.com/2021/12/15/state-water-board-bay-delta-water-quality-control-plan-update-completed-and-implemented-by-2023/>

Where Does NCCFFI Stand?

After 20+ years of working on this issue, our Conservation committee and leadership are fully supportive of increased Delta inflows from tributaries, as well as through-Delta flows into San Francisco Bay. We do not feel the 40% unimpeded flows in

the San Joaquin River tributaries is enough, and we're hopeful that when flows in the Sacramento River & its tributaries are finalized, they will be higher than the San Joaquin system flows.

We also believe the current approved flows in the San Joaquin system need to be implemented immediately! **Time is over for water agencies to voluntarily comply. It's clear - they are not capable.** If the flows as approved are implemented, they will find a way to make it work. Can the fish and wildlife in the system find a way to make it work? We don't know, but we hope so.

We understand how important and valuable water is to everyone, but we also realize that water is a necessity for fish and wildlife, and it needs to be available all the time, just as we know we need it all the time. To be clear, there is more water contractually obligated through water rights and other obligations than falls as rain or snow. This over-appropriation is called **Paper Water**. This has developed over time because the Regional Water Boards and state & federal agencies never want to say no to development.

Simply stated, the water we have must be distributed in ways that continue to sustain people, fish & wildlife and the watersheds we all need. There is no mystery here. With Climate Change worsening there is no time left to argue. We must find better ways to manage water, and recognize humans are only one species among many who need water to survive. There are good plans that have been submitted. We were part of developing one offered by the Environmental Water Caucus several years ago. Here's a link:

[http://www.ewccalifornia.org/reports/EWC WATER PLAN-Revised 2018.pdf](http://www.ewccalifornia.org/reports/EWC_WATER_PLAN-Revised_2018.pdf)

On specific impacts to fish and watersheds, see Dr. Jon Rosenfield's section the report from the Planning and Conservation League's meeting titled: **The Bay Delta Water Quality Control Plan. Where is it At?**

<https://mavensnotebook.com/2021/02/03/planning-conservation-league-the-bay-delta-water-quality-control-plan-where-is-it-at/>



What we Know the Bay-Delta can be - - If We Take the Appropriate Actions