

SESPE

FLYFISHERS

MEETING NEWS

TIME: 7:30 P.M.
DATE: January 15, 2003
PLACE: Senior Rec. Center
Santa Clara and Oak

PROGRAM

*FISHING MAMMOTH
LAKES COUNTRY*
with Kevin Peterson

UPCOMING EVENTS

BOARD MEETING

January 14th, 7:00 PM
Shakey's Pizza Parlor

FEBRUARY MEETING

February 19th, 7:30 PM
Senior Rec. Center

JANUARY BOARD MEETING

February 18th, 7:00 PM
Shakey's Pizza Parlor

JANUARY 2003

Fellow flyfishers:

The passage of the holiday season, and the advent of a New Year, once again presents us all with opportunity. I sincerely hope that each of you can participate in one of the upcoming Club outings; you can initiate this New Year by fishing, and perhaps this theme will carry on throughout the balance of 2003.

In keeping with this concept, I would like to encourage all of you to share fishing with a "new" generation of fishers. The beauty of the locales; the skills and knowledge shared, and the time spent together are a priceless gift. Many young people, children, or grandchildren would love to be with you while you are doing something that you cherish. Most of our membership is older, and without the cultivation of a younger element, the Club focus is narrowed commensurately. We should reverse this trend.

Regarding the Los Robles Diversion fish ladder, please maintain your interest and attention to this most important matter. Casitas Municipal Water District will not voluntarily release enough water necessary to support the upstream steelhead migration and spawning. It seems that no one on their side of the issue believes, or has seen sufficient proof, that enough steelhead exist in the Ventura River to justify the loss of water stock. This orientation must be revised if we are ever to see the return of steelhead runs to the Ventura River drainage. We must marshal all available resources to apply pressure to both the Bureau of Reclamation and the National Marine Fisheries Service, to compel proper (and effective) operation of the Diversion facility by Casitas Water District.

In the spirit of the New Year, please look through any of your infrequently used gear, and either post it in the "For Sale" section of the Newsletter or consider a donation to the Club for the March auction. The auction is our single largest fundraising venture of the year, and we are committed to making it more varied, and even more successful, than in the past. To this end, please plan to attend, invite others, and bring an inclination to generously part with your money. Auction items will not be limited to fishing-dinners, hotel accommodations, and health/beauty gifts are planned.

Our speaker this month, Kevin Peterson, will make his presentation on the Mammoth Lakes/Eastern Sierra region. Since this area is our tacit "backyard" fishery, there should be something here for nearly everyone. See you there.

Bill

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

THIS MONTH'S SPONSOR

ERIC'S TACKLE SHOP

2127 Thompson Blvd.
Ventura, CA 93001

(805) 648-5665

WIND KNOTS AND TAILING LOOPS

FLY TYING FOR 2003

It's time to renew our Fly Tying get-togethers and they are scheduled for the fourth (4th) Thursday evening of each month (unless announced otherwise), so mark your calendars. The first get-together will be on January 23, 7:00PM, at the Brooks Institute's Ventura campus, 5301 N. Ventura Avenue (Rt. 33 to Canada Larga off ramp). As before, we'll meet in the conference room. Ray Johnson has made some special boards to hold our vices so please bring your "stuff" and do some tying.

The Flies we will be tying are the "Adams" and a "Modified Hare's Ear".

Materials for the Adams:

Tail: Brown and Grizzley Hackle Barbs mixed.
Body: Gray muskrat fur or gray wool
Wings: Grizzley hackle tips cocked forward
Hackle: Grizzley and brown mixed
Head: Black

Materials for the modified Hare's Ear:

I assume it will be about the same as a regular Hare's Ear, but I don't really know (Bill didn't tell me).

Bob Smith
647-3522

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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VICE PRESIDENT

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SECRETARY

Gary Bulla: 646-0286

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Carl Rhoads: 644-0940

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Jack Weber: 649-2287

Ray Johnson: 649-5605

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Membership- Paul Wilson
Newsletter- Glenn Derossett
Programs- Gary Bulla
Raffles- Charles Dewing
Refreshments- By Committee
Outings- Jeff Hereford
Auction- Vacant
Youth Programs- Vacant
T.I.C.- Vacant
Education- Vacant

SPEAKER PROFILE

Fishing Mammoth Lakes Country with Kevin Peterson

SFF's first presenter for 2003 is someone who has certainly been involved in the outdoors all his life and who knows well an area most of us have fished in the past and will probably fish in the future. Kevin Peterson was born in Wyoming, where his father worked for the Wyoming Department of Game and Fish, along with being a hunting and fishing guide. Understandably,

Kevin learned both sports at a very early age. When he was three, the family moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, where Kevin really developed his outdoor skills. Most of his free time was spent fly fishing on the Thompson or Poudre Rivers. Then, when Kevin was nine, the family moved to Costa Rica where he added surfing to his repertoire. After graduating from Costa Rica Academy in 1974, Kevin moved to Houston, Texas, and spent time in Galveston fishing for redfish and speckled sea trout. Fast forward four years later and Kevin moves to Santa Barbara where he continues fly fishing, while adding scuba diving to his activities. After realizing that he was spending a lot of time driving to Mammoth to fly fish, ski and hunt, Kevin moved there permanently in 1981 and, after a few years, became a part-time guide for Fred Rowe at The Sierra Bright Dot. Soon he was working full-time and by 1986, he became a partner in The Eastside Guide Service and the newly opened Trout Fly Shop. Today, Kevin is co-owner and head guide of both The Trout Fly and The Trout Fitter Fly Shops in Mammoth Lakes. He guides and teaches fly fishing and, while he loves to fly fish around his home, he also fishes for steelhead in Oregon, bonefish in the Bahamas, tarpon in Florida and sailfish, dorado and tuna in Costa Rica. Kevin hunts ducks and turkeys and now loves snowboarding as well as skiing.

Recent reports indicate that about 85% of the fly fishers who travel to the town of Mammoth Lakes are from southern California, so isn't about time we all learn some valuable information about this area? Kevin's presentation will show and tell about the fly fishing opportunities in Mammoth country. He will show us maps and photos of places to fish, how to fish, special techniques to use (along with gear and flies) for such places as the Lower Owens, Crowley Lake, Hot Creek, the Upper Owens, the San Joaquin River, the East Walker River (both in California and Nevada) and some special back country waters. What a great show for an area that is such an important destination in our own state!

FROM THE OUTING CHAIRMAN

OUTINGS PLANNED FOR 2003

FROM THE OUTING CHAIRMAN

January's outing to the Lower Owens is scheduled for the weekend of 18/19. Plan on meeting at the parking lot on the east side of the river located at the Pleasant Valley Campgrounds near the small foot bridge at 8:30 a.m. on Saturday. Call me if you have any questions on accommodations or other info.

There are still openings for Lee's Ferry trip during Feb. Dates are tentatively planned for either the 7/8/9/10 or 14/15/16/17. Reservations are made through the Marriott. Looks like a lot of guided fishing for the price of \$645 which includes accommodations. Call Bill Ulrich for details.

Tejon Ranch bass fishing is scheduled for 22 March. We already have eight signed up. Since we are limited to 15 request everyone interested sign up by the middle of Feb. In order to hold your position on the list I will need the check for the rod fee of \$50 (non-refundable) by 1 March. This allows me to sufficient time to mail off for the permits and keys to the ranch. The details of time and meeting location will follow. This is a very popular outing so contact me as soon as possible to reserve a spot.

Jeff Hereford
1227 Seafarer st
Ventura Ca 93001
658-0829
jehmah@msn.com

AUCTION! AUCTION! AUCTION!

Sespe Flyfishers Annual Auction

March 19, 2003 7:30 P.M.

(Regular Meeting Night)

Our main fund-raising event of the year is just around the corner. It is your chance to obtain a much desired fly fishing item and support your club at the same time. The proceeds from the auction represent about half of our annual income. The money we get from our annual auction, and from our dues, is what allows us to present the programs that we all enjoy so much. Please plan to be there...bring a friend...and your checkbook or credit card!

We need donations of all types. Donating an item(s) is an opportunity for you to support your club in a way that does not require the commitment of time that many of us are not able to give. Extra gear? Services? Flies? What have you got?

If you had planned to purchase a piece of equipment in the near future why don't you contact Frances or Bob to see if we have the opportunity to purchase it at a discounted price. All we would need is a guarantee from you to purchase it at the auction. Call as soon as possible to give us time to order the item.

Please bring the item(s) to the January or February meetings or call Frances or Bob Smith @ 647-3522 if you have a donation, or to arrange pick up of a donation, or for information.

SEE YOU AT THE AUCTION ON MARCH 19TH

Membership Renewal

Dear Flyfisher,

The new year is here and it is time to renew your membership in the Sespe Flyfishers. In order for the club to continue to provide quality programs, outings, seminars, and to participate in conservation efforts, we need the continued support of our membership. Support from our existing membership is import to maintain the continuity of the club.

In other words, WE NEED YOU!

Please complete the attached membership renewal application and return it to me today. Your support is always appreciated. Please complete and return to: Paul Wilson, 1956 Hayden Street, Camarillo, CA 93010. Thank You!

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

TELEPHONE:HOME _____ WORK _____

E-Mail _____

New Members The Applicable fee below plus \$6.00

Membership Renewal

Ventura/Santa Barbara County Residents (Self and Family) \$35.00

Residents outside Ventura/Santa Barbara County (Self and Family) \$12.00

Youth Membership Renewal (under 16 years old) \$12.00

Volunteer Contribution to the Sespe Flyfisher Conservation Fund \$12.00

\$_____ Make your check payable to: Sespe Flyfishers.

The membership is January 1 to December 31. If you have any questions, please call Paul Wilson at (805) 482-7443

THE NATIONAL MARINE FISHERIES SERVICE SPEAKS OUT ON THE ROBLES STEELHEAD FISHLADDER

The public meeting held on 12.18.02 by Casitas Municipal Water District (CMWD), to receive public input into the proposal to build a steelhead fishladder at the Robles Diversion on the upper Ventura River, was attended by close to 200 citizens. This was a pretty good turnout for an evening meeting scheduled at short notice for the week before Christmas.[Many were flyfishers-gb.]

A brief introduction by CMWD's hired public relations company, Rauch Communications Consultants of Santa Barbara, was followed by CMWD's position and then by that of the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). NMFS is the federal agency responsible for the recovery of the southern steelhead, listed as a federal endangered species in 1997. NMFS was represented on 12.18.02 by Jim Lecky, their Assistant Regional Administrator for Protected Resources, Southwest Region (covering all of California). What follows is my summary of Jim Lecky's twenty-minute presentation to the citizens in attendance, including CMWD's Board of Directors.

THE STEELHEAD'S DECLINE

The southern steelhead, which ranges from the Big Sur coastline down to around the Mexican border, has suffered a 99% decline - caused mainly by the construction of dams which block their migration to spawning habitat, and the resultant loss of streamflows.

NMFS has been in a formal consultation with the Bureau of Reclamation (who own Casitas Dam and Lake as well as the Robles Diversion and canal), under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, relating to the "take" of southern steelhead at the Robles Diversion, which is operated by CMWD and used to carry Ventura River flows to Lake Casitas.

PLANNING FOR THE STEELHEAD'S RECOVERY

This consultation has led to the design of a state-of-the-art fishladder for the Robles Diversion and the development of an operating plan with three elements. These elements are (1) the minimum flows needed by the fishladder to permit steelhead to reach it and to ascend it, (2) the length of the migration window (i.e. having the ladder operating when the steelhead arrive), and (3) the requirement to mimic the natural hydrology of the Ventura River.

The water released down the fishladder when it is in operation will not simply be a flow that keeps the fishladder operable - it also must provide enough water downstream in the natural stream channel for the steelhead to be able to reach the base of the fishladder. In critical shallow areas of the Ventura River, known as riffles, a six-inch minimum depth is required. Any less than that and the steelhead's fins would be sticking out of the water. Fifty cubic feet per second of water, meets those minimum requirements, as identified by CMWD's consultant but inexplicably rejected by CMWD General Manager John Johnson.

Remember, the flows NMFS is proposing are only enough to keep the migration corridor open long enough for the southern steelhead's upstream migration. It's not a generous flow of water - it's the bare minimum for the steelhead to reach the fishladder.. (This is why CMWD's "offer" to release less water won't work - the steelhead won't have enough water to reach the fishladder, resulting in a complete waste of both the released water and the \$6 million estimated cost of the Robles Diversion fishladder.)

WHEN WILL THE STEELHEAD ARRIVE?

Using data from the Carmel River, southern steelhead migrate upstream at the rate of around a mile a day. Therefore they'll need 10 days or so to get from the ocean up the Ventura River to the Robles Diversion and its proposed fishladder. The fishladder must therefore be operating for at least 10 days after the peak flow of major winter storms, between January and April. (If, as last year, there are no major storms, there'll be no water used by the fishladder and CMWD won't be "losing" any water for the steelhead.)

Historically, it is estimated that the southern steelhead had 105 days of adequate flows for upstream migration from January through April. The NMFS operating criteria for the fishladder will grant the steelhead enough water for 44 days, on average. CMWD's offer was equivalent to only 15 or 16 days a year.

Remembering that the steelhead will need about 10 days of adequate flows to reach upstream spawning habitat, historically they had, on average, over ten "chances" a year. NMFS' proposal will give them just over four opportunities a year; CMWD's proposal would give them only one open window a year.

The steelhead's internal clock brings them back to the rivers they were born in at the right time of year to migrate upstream to spawn. But they don't all arrive in early January and wait for adequate stormflows to move upstream. They may arrive at the Ventura River's

estuary at any time in those four months - so CMWD's offer of only one good 10-day flow will necessarily mean that most of them "will miss the bus," leading to their historic prime spawning and rearing habitat.

NMFS' mandate is the recovery of endangered species, substantially more than lending them a meager helping hand, as CMWD wants to do.

NATURAL FLOWS

To mimic the natural hydrology of the Ventura River, the third element of NMFS' operating criteria for the fishladder, the downstream flows will be gradually reduced over the 10-day water releases. If the flows stayed at the same level as at the beginning of each 10-day release, steelhead might begin moving upstream too late in the 10-day period to make it all the way, or they might take their time and linger on the way upstream. The gradually reduced flows will therefore serve two purposes - (1) to keep steelhead moving upstream and (2) to avoid giving them false cues to begin their upstream migration.

Steelhead are very aware, of course, of water flows and can readily ascertain that flows are diminishing.

THE PLAN'S SAFEGUARDS

NMFS has three proposals to make sure Lake Casitas doesn't dry up because of the southern steelhead (as CMWD General Manager John Johnson frequently and erroneously claims will be the case).

The fishladder's operation will be closely monitored to enable continued improvements to its performance; there will be a five year review to take a thorough look at all aspects of the project, and the fishladder's operation could be curtailed in prolonged drought conditions. This last safeguard benefits all parties - in dry years such as last winter, there aren't enough flows for steelhead, with or without a fishladder. Nobody's saying that in dry years steelhead ought to be granted all the water before the rest of us - on the contrary, NMFS is saying that the fishladder will stand idle in very dry years, period, because it is proposed to be operated only when there are adequate upstream flows naturally available.

As Jim Lecky stated, "NMFS is not going to, has no intention of, drying up Lake Casitas."

THE BENEFITS OF NMFS' PROPOSAL

Southern steelhead will have immediate access to 6 miles of historic spawning and rearing habitat, up the Ventura River along Hwy 33. When Matilija Dam comes down, there'll be 12 more miles of historic habitat accessible to the steelhead. The benefits to CMWD of agreeing to NMFS' proposal include the regulatory certainty of knowing they are abiding by the requirements of the federal Endangered Species Act, and the availability of around \$4.5 million in public grants towards the Robles fishladder's construction.

NMFS' TAKE HOME MESSAGE

Jim Lecky's presentation concluded with four points to keep in mind on the topic of the Robles fishladder:

- (1) NMFS, the Bureau of Reclamation and the Ca. Dept. of Fish & Game all consider NMFS' operating criteria for the fishladder to be reasonable and risk averse
- (2) The NMFS required fishladder flows are the minimum possible - and under 10% of Lake Casitas' safe yield.
- (3) CMWD's watersupply will be safeguarded in drought conditions, because the fishladder won't use any water in dry years.
- (4) The Ventura River is an essential element of the recovery of the southern steelhead from its endangered status.

HOW TO GET INVOLVED!

It's time to start attending CMWD meetings when the fishladder comes up on the agenda again - to be alerted please contact Paul Jenkin of the Matilija Coalition

Paul@matilija-coalition.org

MEMBER'S CLASSIFIED ADS

- Spey Rod-15' 10-11 Wt. Cabelas (Loomis blank) \$ 140.00
1-14 Wt. 2pc. Austin Flyrod \$ 165.00
1-Redington Large Arbor AL910-Gold finish \$125.00
DB Dunn "Payette" rod case for 10' 2-pc. rods (with reel attached). \$ 40.00
All items in very good to excellent condition.
Call Bill @ 805.657.5566

NEWLETTER INPUT

If anyone needs to contact me regarding the newsletter, I can be reached at the following numbers.

- 654-2054 Weekdays
- 525-1904 Weekends and Evenings

glennderossett@peoplepc.com

Sespe Flyfishers
P.O. Box 5127
Ventura, CA 93005