



The Fly Line

September 2011

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

End of Summer

Looks like this summer will be remembered as a high watermark year. The day I left Montana, the flow on the Bitterroot was 200 CFS below the record set back in the 60's. Around here, it seemed like it took forever to get flows down to fishable. The East Fork of the Carson has only recently gotten fishable flows, according to Victor Babbitt of Tahoe Fly Fishing. The good news is it looks like we are in for some great fall fishing. So don't put your rods away, this could still be remembered as a great fishing year.

The Finnon lake dam reconstruction is well under way. The outlet pipe has been installed and inspected and the actual dam construction is proceeding. The contractor, Veerkamp Construction, hopes to finish up construction on the dam this fall and the lake will start filling this winter. There will be lots of opportunities for the club to help set up the fish habitat, spawning beds and other structure as this project nears completion.

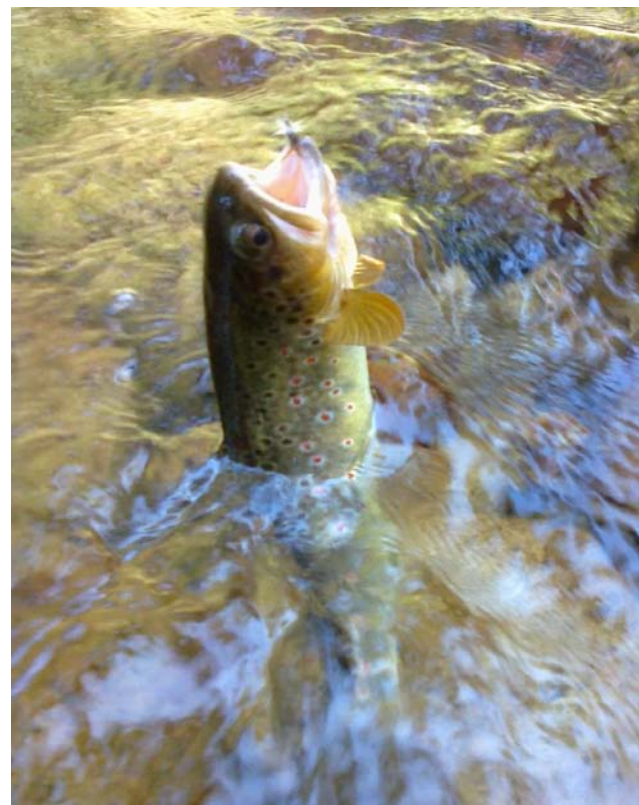
The second annual El Dorado Sportsman's Expo is coming up at the end of the month. This year the event starts on Friday, September 30th and ends Sunday October 2nd. There will be over a hundred vendors, dozens of seminars and presentations, and lots of stuff to experience. We will have a booth so we are again looking for volunteers to man it during the show hours. Anyone wishing to work a four hour shift will get a free pass to the Expo. Call Karl at 530.409.5409 or email me at kb_haw@yahoo.com to sign up. Show hours are Fri - 12-7, Sat 9-7 and Sunday 9-5

In other club news, we have been given about 35 Fly Fishing and Fly Tying VHS tapes. We are looking for someone to convert these to CD format for the club library. These will join the collection of magazines and books that are available to paid members. We should have the inventory out on the website this fall.

Tight Lines, Karl



Molly on Silver Fork

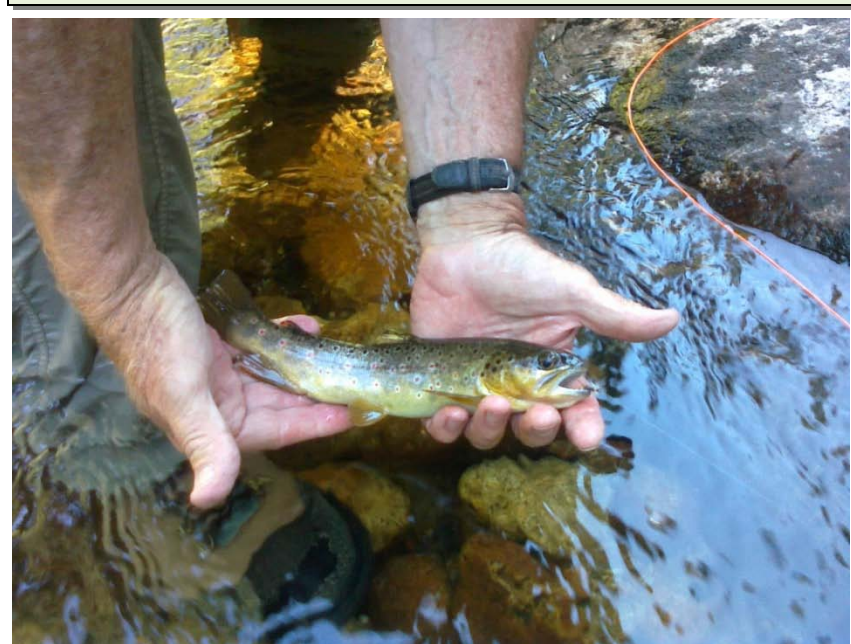


DAVE'S FISHING REPORT

My fishing report for August sounds more like a June report. The streams are coming into shape very nicely at long last. We have been fishing the Silver Fork of the American River with good success - once you get away from the waters that have been beaten by the bait and lure fishermen. The American River, above Kyburz, and the streams that feed it have started to kick out good numbers of brookies, browns and rainbows depending on which tributary you fish. Nothing bigger than 9-10" fish but fun to stalk. Jeff and I fished Indian Creek Reservoir last Wednesday and met, quite surprisingly, Lew and Bob from our fly club. We arrived at about 10:45. Bank fishermen at the dam were catching nice freshly stocked trout with power bait on the bottom. Lew and Bob had just started to get into a few hookups as we approached them. It was the first fish they had seen since getting there at 8:30. I stuck my first fish after only 15 minutes while kicking along in my float tube. Didn't land it but it was in the 13" range. I immediately threw out a cast, and while doing a hand over hand strip, had another grab. Both fish had taken my #12 olive wooly bugger. My mistake was to continue across the dam and along the north shore in search of more willing fish. I noticed that Lew and Bob were leaving around noon, so I figured the fishing hadn't gotten any better. Jeff was reporting a hookup and a break off every so often on his walkie-talkie but was heading up lake to meet me further up the lake. Fortunately for him, he quickly fell into the "Queen Mother" of a pod of fish, hooking some 18 fish in the process, landing 10 nice sized 12-14" freshly stocked rainbows. Needless to say, he didn't join me "up the lake". I was getting a grab here and there, with a few hookups, but nothing bigger than 10" rainbows. The wind came up quite heavy around 1:15 and with Jeff hungry and no way for him to conveniently get into my car, I headed back down the lake. Not even a detectable grab the entire kick back. The algae bloom appears to just be starting despite the cooler, higher (much higher) water level. I have never seen the lake so full. The weeds that are so common on this body of water (at this time of year) have just now started to poke up to the top. Damselfly were crawling up out of the water and onto my float tube arms. This might be the reason only the freshly stocked trout were grabbing. Two of the small hold over fish that I landed were quite chunky. All in all it was a successful outing, more so for Jeff. I think this lake will be kicking out lots of nice fish in the coming 2 months.

Bass and bluegill fishing on the small ponds has continued to be quite productive on top water poppers while fishing the last hour or so of daylight.

Tight lines to all. - Dave



September Meeting

This month we are meeting at Boeger Winery, 1709 Carson Road on September 15th. This is a joint meeting with the newly formed El Dorado Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Wine tasting starts at 6PM, regular meeting 6:30-8PM. There will be a 20% discount on wine purchases that evening. Come on out, bring your picnic dinner, lawn chairs, have a great glass of wine, and hear Lexi Boeger give an excellent fly fishing presentation.



Dave Angelo and I fished Slab Creek reservoir for a few hours Friday afternoon. We (mostly Dave) landed over two dozen squawfish in the 12-17 inch range. These fish are surprisingly good fighters and provide good sport on light tackle. We used a #8 brown crystal bugger near the shoreline with a #3 sink line.

EL DORADO CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED NEWSLETTER

This newsletter, as it is, will be polished up a bit once our website is complete. The site is being finalized as of this letter and hopefully will be operational by the end of next month.

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Our September membership meeting will again be on the third Thursday evening, the 15th. We will be meeting at Boeger's Winery at 1709 Carson Rd., Placerville. Due to loss of sunlight we will start at 6pm with winetasting, and from 6:30-8pm for our regular meeting. Chapter member and winemaker, Greg Boeger has graciously given us a 20% discount on all wine purchases for the 15th. Our exciting guest speaker will be Lexi Boeger discussing:

BEYOND FISHING

Lexi will talk about her experience growing up in a family with a rich fly fishing heritage and it's formative influence. The bulk of the discussion will encompass the transformative power of fly fishing and wilderness experience on our perspectives and attitudes. Fly fishing as a medium for perspective on life, family relationships and tradition, and spiritual experience. Boeger will read some passages from her in-progress fishing novel.

As always, all are invited to attend, not just members. Bring your picnic dinner, soft drinks and lawn chairs. The Hangtown FlyFishers are especially invited to join us.

GREAT SIERRA RIVER CLEANUP

The third annual Great Sierra River Cleanup will take place on Saturday, September 17th. Our chapter will be hosting cleanup, fishing and a BBQ at China Flats on the Silver Fork of the American River. This is a great opportunity to bring out the entire family to help give back to our streams. We'll start at 9am and clean short stretches of the river. Bring your work gloves and related hand tools, lawn chairs, soft drinks and your fishing gear. At 12 noon we'll have the BBQ lunch (burgers and dogs) and fish the rest of the day. Stay as long as you like. In order to have sufficient food for all, please RSVP to this e-mail if you plan to attend and join us for lunch. We will have trash bags and nylon gloves, but if you have trash bags of your own, please bring them. We'll haul away all the trash collected.

WATERSHED EDUCATION SUMMIT (WES)

Our chapter will be helping at the WES this year. It will be held on September 21-24 at Capp's Crossing off the Mormon Emigrant Trail near Sly Park. The WES is an 11 year old program where high school kids camp out and learn about the various aspects of the forest including stream composition. However, they have not been shown how that ties in with fishing. We've been asked to take a few hours (~4) to show them the connection, including identifying insects, how to tie that pattern and fish it, how to read the water and casting skills. We will need 4-5 volunteers to carpool to Capp's Crossing on Friday the 23rd, leaving at 12-noon and returning after a 5pm dinner, which WES will provide for us. If you can volunteer for this great, inspirational project, please RSVP to this e-mail.

SPORTSMAN'S EXPO

The second annual Sportsman's Expo will take place on September 30, October 1st and 2nd at the ED Co Fairgrounds in Placerville. Our chapter will have a booth and we need a few more volunteers to help staff the booth. Saturday is the busiest day and we're short handed for that day. The event runs from 9am to 7pm on the 1st. Some of us will be in Truckee for the TUCA State Council meeting Saturday. We'll drive up and back that same day so we can help on Friday and Sunday, but we need some help here. You'll hand out TU brochures and talk "fishing" with the visitors at our booth. Our chapter is getting a significantly reduced rate for the booth if we help with the kids fishing pond. We will help the kids with their catch-and-release skills. Please RSVP to this e-mail for the 2 hour (or more) time slot you can cover.

Allen Afield: It takes practice to learn to set a hook with floating flies

By KEN ALLEN

People sometimes struggle with learning a new skill, and the ones with good memories clearly recall the discouragement years, even decades later. Folks from the latter group make compassionate instructors.

Recently on a central Maine river, I pondered this theory about empathic teachers while feeling sorry for Heather, my oldest daughter. She was dead-drifting a floating fly in a full-blown, blue-winged olive hatch and missing strike after strike. ("Dead-drifting" means floating naturally on the surface film or in the current with a slightly slack line.)

When dead-drifting emergers or dry flies in my early teens, I faced the same maddening challenge and distinctly remember the frustration with hook setting. I have also taught fly-fishing seminars since 1974 and watched myriad newbies confronting the same dilemma.

Here's the problem: When fish rise to a free-floating fly, they sip the imitation and spit it out quicker than the caster can say, "Oh, poop!"

The technique for coping with a quick take and rejection follows: With the non-rod hand, lightly pinch the fly line between the index finger and thumb just in front of the rod handle. Make sure to hold it with the line going straight up from the finger and thumb to the first stripping guide. The line must be tight between those two points and all the way to the tip guide.

When fish take a fly, the hand holding the line pulls down and away while the rod hand crisply lifts the rod tip up and back. That tactic tightens the line and sets the hook -- hopefully without breaking the thin tippet.

Which gets back to the finger-and-thumb hold. When a heavier fish strikes with the finger and thumb on the fly line -- so goes the theory -- the resistance pulls the line away before the tippet breaks. If the caster uses four fingers and thumb with a death grip, it's easy to snap the delicate tippet.

On that recent day with Heather, salmonids rose with reckless abandon for dead-drifting mayfly duns and emergers on the surface. As multiple missed strikes piled up, her face started to look plenty long.

I understood her disappointment after going through it myself and teaching fly-fishing seminars, where I'd tell participants they'd miss 20 strikes in a row with floating flies before starting to get the hang of it.

Heather casts superbly and plays fish well, and through the years, she has fished nymphs or baitfish imitations after quartering across and downstream. When fish hit, they hook themselves because the line hangs tightly in the current. That day, though, she was mastering a new skill. Also, she was confronting three other roadblocks:

- To complicate the common difficulty of setting the hook with a floating fly, fish were targeting a size 24 mayfly imitated by a blue-winged olive dry fly or emerger -- insects as small as a mosquito. Such a miniscule fly makes it 10 times more difficult to drive the hook's point home.
- Also, the tiny fly dictated a 6x or 7x tippet with a diameter as fine as a spider web -- easily breakable when setting the hook or playing a fish.
- With micro patterns, aggressively setting the hook can whisk the fly from the salmonid's maw.

Small fish have a cavernous mouth in comparison to a tiny fly. If a caster pulls on the line and rod too quickly, even with a proper strike and great reflexes, then the fly may slide out without snagging cartilage.

To set the hook with a size 24 fly, the hook must be ultra-sharp and the strike paradoxically crisp but ever so gentle -- a tactic best described by an image. Fly rodders pretend the hook has snagged onto a spider-web strand, and they want to tighten the line quickly without breaking the web.

When missing strikes had disheartened Heather to the core, we went to a bass pool to cast a baitfish imitation, quartering across and downstream.

Before she cast, I explained how to cast a heavier fly on a light leader:

- Make a softer casting stroke so the leader doesn't kink up.
- Wait two or three seconds longer for the back-cast to straighten out.

A 15-inch smallmouth grabbed the streamer and broke the 6x tippet in a wink, prompting me to change to a heavier diameter. I should have done that anyway before the cast.

Finally, though, Heather landed a smallmouth about the same size as the lost one, and the day started looking up.

Eventually, we went back to the salmonid pool and continued the lesson on setting the hook on tiny, floating flies, but as I said, newbies must miss 20 to learn the difficult skill, enough to make a saint swear.

Heather remained clean-mouthed but was in a world of bother.

I hoped she would remember the difficult lesson years later when teaching others to fish dead-drifted flies on a somewhat slack line -- a lesson in adroitness as well as in patience.

CLUB STUFF

2011 OFFICERS:

PRESIDENT AND TREASURER – KARL WEILAND

VP MEETINGS – LEW ARCHULETTA

VP OUTINGS – DAVE ANGELO

NEWSLETTER & WEB SITE – [JEFF NAGEL](#)

If you want your pictures or stories in the newsletter or on the web site - email Jeff Nagel – click on my name & type in your message.