



Rx Fly Fishing!

The monthly newsletter of the Delta Fly Fishers!

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Jerry Neuburger, Editor

Stockton, California

In this Issue

Page 2—[Fly Tying Day still open](#)

Page 2—[Trout Bout a sellout success...](#)

Page 2—[New officer and director for club](#)

Page 2—[Raffles, raffles, raffles](#)

Page 3—[Annual installation dinner on Jan. 20th.](#)

Page 3—[New Years on the Moke](#)

Page 3—[Conservation: Record salmon runs on the Mokelumne, not so for the rest of the state.](#)

Calendar

December 9, Fly Tying with Bud Heintz\

December 13, General Membership Meeting, John R. Williams School

December 20, BOD Meeting, Oak Grove Park

January 1, 2018 New Years on the Moke

January 10, General Membership meeting Location TBA.

January 17, BOD Meeting, Oak Grove Park

January 20. Annual Installation Dinner



President's message for October

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

It's getting cold outside. The delta waters are dropping down the the low 50;s and the striper bite will soon shut down. Unless you're a steelhead angler, fishing opportunities are becoming slim. However, if you're a member of the Delta Fly Fishers, there's still a ton of things to do.

On Saturday, December 9th, the club will hold a Fly Tying Saturday at Oak Grove Park. The day's activities will be guided by Bud Heintz, a nationally recognized master tier (and also a long time club member!) Bud will instruct those attending on how to tie some of his signature flies in addition to explaining how to use them effectively. To make the day complete, a pizza lunch will make up the noon break. The activity is limited to 15 members and has a fee attached of \$25 per member. Three slots are still open. Contact Al Smatsky, al-gofish@softcom.net, 209 601-0819 if you want to participate.

The December general membership meeting to be held on the 13th at John R. Williams School will follow tradition with a member generated program where our own tell of some of the exotic places they've fished during the year and for the second year in a row, the club will hold a giant

Christmas raffle, featuring a complete 5 weight outfit, rod, reel and line as well as many other items.

The board will meet at Oak Grove Park to plan the annual dinner and talk about the year end awards on the 20th. At the same time, we'll welcome in a new club treasurer, Don Keefover, a new club membership chair, Dena Mason and a new director

And to end the year, we'll meet on the banks of the Mokelumne on January 1st, rain or shine, sunny or foggy, to welcome in the new year and be some of the first fly fishers in the state to wet a line at the beginning of the new year. .

In January of 2018, the club will hold its 41st annual installation dinner. We'll have some special guests to honor and celebrate with and this year we'll have FOUR grand prizes, a pontoon boat and THREE complete Redington rod, reel and fly Rio fly line outfits, a four weight, a seven weight and a 6 weight switch rod. The total value of the grand prizes alone is \$1,700.

And, a reminder, **DON'T FORGET TO BUY YOUR 2018 FISHING LICENSE BEFORE YOU GET YOUR WADERS WET!**

December's GM meeting features club members

It seems that Christmas brings on a time for tradition and this year is no exception for the Delta Fly Fishers. The December program has featured our own club members and their tales of their travels both near and far. This year the speakers Mark Delabarre, Bill Becket, Bob Fujimura, and Randy Villasicone will cover water from the rivers in Alaska to the flats of Mexico and everything in between.

Refreshment chair, Cliff Hoover, will make the night a special one with some Christ-

mas treats and drinks and the Christmas raffle will feature a full five weight outfit as well as numerous other prizes.

Have some friends that are interested in fly fishing? This is a great meeting to bring them to since it shows off the talents of our own members. The meeting will be held with refreshments starting at 6:30, call to order at 7pm. Wednesday December 13th, John R. Williams School. And of course, the Public is invited.

Fly tying day 12/9 still open

We still have three slots available for the special fly tying day with Bud Heintz on December 9th at the boat house, Oak Grove Park. The event starts at 9am and goes through 3-3:30pm. The fee is \$25. A pizza lunch and all tying

materials are included in the cost of the program. Please contact Al Smatsky to add your name to the list. Al's email is algofish@softcom.net or phone, 209-368-9261.

The November Trout Bout was a sellout. Great club volunteer effort

The Trout Bout was a great success due to the tremendous volunteer turn out we had. Special thanks go to Charlie Reames and the Keagys for their continued efforts in making the day a success. The crowds were huge and we sold out of snacks by

noon, a full hour before the event ended. We couldn't have done it without the participation of the 15 plus members, willing to give a few hours of their day to the club and the SJC Parks and Rec.

New officer and directors for club

We have a new treasurer, new membership chair and new director. New member, Don Keefover has volunteered to take on the treasure's position, moving up from newly elected director. Director Dena Mason has volunteered to assume the responsibilities of Membership Chair as well as her responsibilities of Education

and Salmon in the Classroom, and her young protégé, 15, has volunteered to take on the responsibilities as director. All of these positions are important to the club's health and I can't thank these volunteers enough for stepping up. We still have a vacancy of Vice President... any volunteers?

Raffles, raffles, raffles!!!

Christmas is the time for gifts and this year's next three raffles should satisfy the wants and whims of almost every member.

The first raffle to come around is the one at the club's December general membership meeting on the 13th. It will feature a complete five weight outfit, rod, reel and line as well as some other nifty fly fishing gear including a pair of Force fins.

The second will occur during the January club meeting, scheduled for January 10th. Because the annual dinner is so close this will be a smaller raffle but there will still be some things to make a fly fisher happy.

Finally, the annual installation dinner raffle will have FOUR GRAND PRIZES. The first is a new Redington Chromer 6 weight switch rod, a Behemoth 9/10 reel, and a Rio Skagit Multi-tip line, Value \$654.

The second is a new Redington seven

weight, 9 foot Vice rod, a Behemoth 7/8 reel and a Rio Grand floating line. Value \$330.

The third grand prize is a new Redington four weight, 9 foot Classic Trout rod, a Redington Zero reel and a Rio floating line. Value \$270.

The last grand prize is a Cabelas 8 foot pontoon boat, lightly used, donated by the prez. Value when new, \$250

In addition to the above, a number of rods and other fly fishing gear as well as some guided trips will be a part of the raffle and silent auction.

Christmas and the holiday season is also the season for giving as well as receiving. If you have surplus equipment in good order and want to donate it to the club for future raffles, bring it to the December or January meeting. If you're a fly tier, how about tying up a box of flies. Let's have some fun this year!

DDF Officers



President Jerry Neuburger	209-327-5993
Vice President Cliff Hoover	209-642-3809
Secretary Karen Keagy	
Treasurer Jason Stapleton	209-334-9201
Directors Ron Forbes Karen Keagy Larry Schmidt Sam Thompson Gary Tecklenburg Steve VonBerg Dena Mason Tim Costello Mike Nicholson	209-368-5767 209-482-8742 209-327-6161

Committees

Beginner's Fly Tying Tim Costello	
Bob McMillan Trout Bout (March) John and Karen Keagy	
Catfish Derby (June) Earl Summers	209-957-6756
Conservation/Restore the Delta Ron Forbes	209-368-5767
Education Dena Mason	
Fishing Mentor Program Tim Costello	
Fly of the Month Mike Nicholson	
Membership Bob Fujimura	209-339-0683
Monthly Raffles Jerry Neuburger	
Programs Al Smatsky Bob Sousa	209-368-9261 209-368-2683
Property/Historian John Keagy	
Publicity Steve VonBerg	209-327-6161
Rod Building Bob Fujimura	209-339-0683
Trout Bout (November) Charlie Reames	
Webmaster John Keagy	

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Annual Installation Dinner to take place Jan. 20 at Elks Lodge. Get in line early!

You can pay for your dinner tickets for the club's annual installation dinner at the December general membership meeting. Charlie Reames will be accepting checks or cash at the meeting, the cost, \$35 for a beef, chicken or vegetarian dish.

Most members already know the details of this annual event but for new members, it's a time to celebrate our fly fishing year, honor some members with awards,

welcome some special guests and hand out donations to support some of our conservation causes, and say thanks to the departing officers and board members while welcoming in the new people.

The evening ends with a giant silent auction and raffle and if you've read the president's message and raffle article you know that this year features **FOUR GRAND PRIZES** with a total value of over \$1,500 as well as numerous smaller

items.

The cut off date for buying tickets will be January 13th since the caterer needs to have a head count in advance.

An open bar and bottles of wine are available for purchase at the lodge. If members choose to bring their own wine, a corkage fee of \$5 may be charged. Let's make this a really good one!!!

Welcome the New Year by joining the club for a morning on the Mokelumne, donuts included!

When I first joined the club, over 30 years ago and heard that the club had its first outing of the year on January 1st at 7am in the morning on the Mokelumne, I thought, "This is crazy! Who would show up to a foggy and cold morning after staying up late the night before to welcome in the New Year?"

Never the less, I dragged myself out of bed at 6am in the morning on New Year's Day, loaded my fly fishing gear in my truck and drove through the fog to Van Assen Park at the base of Camanche Dam, expecting to find half a dozen members at the most. I was so surprised when I pulled into the parking lot to find a complete kitchen set up by the club's

old timers under cover with hot coffee and chocolate and donuts ready to be eaten and the fixings for lunch in the form of "tube steaks" (hot dogs) and chili.

Other members were pulling on their waders or were already on the water. After a cup of coffee and a donut, I joined them and picked up more than my share of planted trout. When the chill set in I returned to the kitchen and had some more warm beverage, a hot dog or two and a much appreciated bowl of chili.

While the Moke is no longer planted with stocked trout, it still is a fun place to fish and only minutes away. This year the number of steelhead returning up the river is epic with over 350 counted at Wood-

bridge Dam. That's seven times the 50 or so that have shown up in recent years.

Over the 30 years I've been with the club I probably missed a few opening days and truthfully, haven't wet a line in a number of years but I definitely plan to attend this year and may even get my waders wet.

In that time, I've found out that welcoming in the New Year with a visit to the Moke in the early morning a great way to start the year.

Come join the club stalwarts that make this event a really special day. If it's not already in your blood, it's likely to become a habit.

Record Salmon and steelhead returns on the Moke! Not so for the rest of the state. Commercial fishermen sue State Water Board

Fishing ... It makes us participants in nature instead of spectators. A crucial distinction because participants tend to become passionate and protective and spectators tend to become indifferent.

... Jerry Dennis

A Potential Record-Setting Year For The Mokelumne River's Salmon and Steelhead

In the past few weeks several TV stations, newspapers, and internet websites have talked about the possibility of a record number of salmon and steelhead returning to the Mokelumne this year. The large number of returning salmon and steelhead

on the Moke is a prime example of a well-managed river that had the potential of being a fishery disaster. After the major loss of habitat, due to the construction of Camanche Dam in 1963, the Moke could no longer sustain its annual run of between 60 to 80 thousand salmon. There



EBMUD's Michelle Workman showing off the Moke's new spawning beds. Photo by EBMUD

(Continued on page 4)

(Continued from page 3)

were years when less than 100 salmon and no steelhead returned to spawn. One weekend in 1977, I decided to fish the river and fished about 200 yards below the dam. Much to my dismay, the water was the color of over-creamed coffee and had the aroma of hydrogen sulfide (rotten eggs). I had no clue of what had happened. Dead trout lined the Moke's shore. It was an odd feeling knowing that by releasing the one fish I caught I was condemning it to death. Fortunately, things have changed on the Moke..

East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) had purchased land around the dam for its Lower Moke Project. The site included the Penn Mine with its copper and zinc laced tailings. Because of lower Camanche Reservoir levels and high water releases from Pardee Dam, the toxic copper-zinc laced water flowed through the hatchery and down the Moke causing a massive fish kill. EBMUD was totally unresponsive and ineffective in their solving the Penn Mine catastrophe and continued to release 19.5 millions gallons of toxic copper-zinc water through the Mokelumne's hatchery and downstream, killing all trout, steelhead and salmon.

The Delta Fly Fishers (DFF) had enough of the fish kills and EBMUD's unresponsive attitude and continuing neglect of the Mokelumne River and its fish. We merged with other groups to save the river by suing EBMUD. An organization, The Committee to Save the Mokelumne (CSM) was formed and joined with Bill Jennings and the California Sportfishing Protecting Alliance (CSPA) to protect the Moke.. The CSPA provided regulatory help and filed the legal complaints against the utility. EBMUD was responsible for fish kills at the hatchery and downstream in 1977,1988, and 1989. The legal battles



Harvesting eggs from a female Chinook salmon at the Mokelumne River Hatchery. Photo by EBMUD



This is what a healthy salmon return looks like. Photo by EBMUD

with EBMUD continued until the utility was finally defeated after extensive court battles.

The court placed major restrictions on EBMUD, including increasing water flows for the salmon and steelhead from 13,000 af to 85,000 af. The utility was also required by the court to hire a professional biologist to oversee and protect the Moke and its fisheries. Some of our club's members will recall working with biologist Dr. Joe Merz in trying to reestablish cottonwoods along Murphy Creek to protect juvenile salmon. After its' major losses in court, **EBMUD demonstrated a positive, pro-active change in attitude and has become, arguably, the best pro-environment-fisheries utility district in California.** Considering EBMUD's positive actions for the Moke's fishery, President Jerry Neuburger suggested to the DFF's Board of Directors that we award them our Good Stewardship Award. The award was presented to EBMUD's Richard Sykes, head of their Fish and Wildlife Section and Michelle Workman, Supervising Biologist, at the club's banquet last January. Sykes and Workman were both honored and pleased to receive the award for their progress and leadership that has improved the Mokelumne's fishery.

EBMUD's pro-active environmental/fisheries policies are again bearing fruit with the Mokelumne's salmon population this year. In several articles this last year, I pointed out how water mismanagement by the state and federal agencies have brought our salmon dangerously close to extinction. However, EBMUD's progressive attitude with the Moke's fisheries is becoming become

more evident. Working with the Dept. of Fish and Wildlife (DFW) at the Mokelumne's Hatchery, this years salmon returns are approaching record numbers. In 2011, a record of over 18,000 fish was set. As of the last week in November, over 17,000 salmon have returned. Bill Williams, the director of the hatchery, told me the fish count is released on Thursdays, but no count was reported on Thanksgiving so he didn't have more exact current figures. The harvesting of the salmon will stop on December the 18th. As of this writing we have 22 more days to pass the former record and it looks like we may be successful. In past years, the Moke. has not been a haven for steelhead with the average returns being about 100 fish per year. In a 10 year period from 1976 to 1986, no adult steelhead could be found in the Mokelumne River system. So far this year 454 steelhead have returned. Last year 759 steelies were recorded. To date, 6.5 million eggs have been fertilized. In the past, the hatchery only used sperm from large males to fertilize the eggs. However, now sperm from different sized males is being used to insure biodiversity in the Moke's salmon. The largest salmon harvested to date weighed 31 pounds.

Jose Setka, the manager of fisheries and wildlife for EBMUD commented, "It's going to be one of the top three or four years we've seen since 1940." He said that 70,000 cubic yards of gravel (about 300 dump trucks) have been added to the river to widen it and to create better spawning conditions. A multiplicity of techniques are being tried to increase the number of salmon and steelhead returning. For example, the Delta Cross Channel Gates are closed 5 days a week to prevent the salmon from straying in the

(Continued on page 5)

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Delta. During the five year drought, EBMUD released up to 5 major water pulses to move the fish up river to spawn. Another effective strategy they have used is to barge young salmon into the Delta and release fewer fish at different locations at various times of the day and night. The young salmon are then less prone to loss from predation by the resident striper population. Coded wire tags are being used to collect data to determine the effectiveness of these procedures.

Another technique that is helping the juvenile salmon survive is a changed diet. Weeks before the release of the young fish, their diet is altered to one that is higher in salt. The young salmon's bodies face a huge physiological change when moving from fresh to salt water. Their adjusted diet eases the initial stress they face Also EBMUD has been using a Speech Cone for a number of years. The Speech Cone is a device that improves the amount of oxygen in the lake's lower water column near the dam. The cone improves the oxygen content of the water flowing into the hatchery and helps prevent lack of oxygen fish kills that have occurred periodically throughout the hatchery's existence.



“Moby” salmon? A tired female Chinook in her last efforts to continue her species. Photo by EBMUD

This year's salmon run at other locations in the state is a mixed bag. Due to inept federal and state water management practices and illegal water transfers to southern agribusiness, many returns will be poor to mediocre at best. This year's Sacramento River run is near catastrophic.

Once the rivers run was the largest in the state. To date only 1,123 salmon have returned.

Unfortunately for our commercial fisherman, as successful as the return of fish in the Moke, only 10-12% of the state's catch comes from the river. EMMUD's Richard Sykes and his colleague's have turned the Moke around and are effectively restoring the river's salmon and steelhead populations. The Delta Fly Fishers can take pride in our part in this year's successful run.

Commercial Fishing Organizations Sue the State Water Resource Control Board (SWB)

Four commercial fishing groups have filed suit against the SWB. The groups are: the Pacific Coast Federation of Fisherman's Association, the North River Alliance, the Institute for Fisheries Resources, and the San Francisco Crab Boat Owners Association. The suit against SWB was initiated since they have consistently failed to protect clean water and public trust resources in the Delta. The fishing groups maintain that the SWB, 1) has failed to protect the Delta's water from water temperatures which are dangerously high. 2) Allowed toxic pesticide pollution in the Delta. 3) Totally disregarded readily available data from the state and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA also requires the SWB to comply with EPA 303(d) listing requirements By willfully ignoring EPA law, the SWB has allowed massive water diversion to southern agribusiness interests and

allowed continuing violations of the Delta's water quality during the 5 years drought.

Noah Oppenheim, executive director of the Pacific Coast Federation of Fishermen's Associations, stated that, "By failing to adequately protect the critical salmon habitat, the State Board is failing

to implement its fundamental responsibilities at a time when California's salmon fisheries are withering on the vine. Two years ago nearly all endangered winter run king salmon in the Sacramento died because the river was allowed to overheat. Meanwhile our fishery is facing a second year of disaster in a multi-decade period of decline. Inadequate environmental protection destroys fisheries and costal communities, yet the water Board is again telling us to sit back and wait on them to take action. Salmon fishing families cannot abide by these delays and derelictions of duty any longer."

The watershed consultant for Institute for Fisheries Institute Resources, Regina Chichizola, complains, "The State often violates the public trust by letting the regulated industries and polluters drive the processes that regulates them, but when the fisherman and other clean water advocates engage, their concerns are largely ignored. The state of California is forcing its salmon into extinction and polluting its drinking water by failing to protect water quality and its flows. We have watched year after year as the state has ignored its own science and pushed for more diversions, misjudged storage and conveyance projects."

One of the most difficult parts of being a water advocate for Restore the Delta is speaking before the SWB, Bureau of Reclamation, Senate and Assembly committees and other government agencies knowing your comments are being disregarded and ignored. State and federal agencies are required by law to take your testimony. As this suit demonstrates, fisheries and environmental groups are being constantly ignored illegally by the SWD and the state government. However, several issues the plaintiffs raise need to be resolved prior to other proposed projects can begin. Projects such as a tunnel through the Delta. This is how we continue to delay and finally stop these projects. Adjudication.

Ron Forbes

Ron Forbes



A friendly reminder. You'll need a brand new fishing license in January. Maybe a good "Christmas" present? Leave a note laying out in a prominent place!

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2 column inches each newsletter issue for the year for \$400, six months \$200, quarter \$100, one month \$40. The ad may include artwork and will link to the advertiser's website.

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For additional information please phone or e-mail [Jerry Neuburger](#), Editor 209-369-5752



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