



# Rx Fly Fishing!

The monthly newsletter of the Delta Fly Fishers!

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Stockton, California

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## Calendar

August 16, DFF BoD meeting, Oak Grove Park

September 13, DFF General Membership Meeting, John R. Williams School

September 16-21, Bridgeport Outing

September 27, DFF Board Meeting, Oak Grove Park

October 11, Club potluck and swap meet, John R. Williams school

October 18, BoD Meeting, Oak Grove Park.

October 25, Fly of the Month fly tying session, Oak Grove Park



President's message for July/August

## On the Road (Again!)

I'm writing this as I sit in my living room, almost packed and ready to leave on a three month tour of the south, starting in Galveston Texas, and then running the coast, east through, Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, Florida, Georgia and South Carolina. The van is loaded and the little travel trailer is hooked to the back, both parked in front of the house. Departure time is nine hours from now, 4am. We're starting early to avoid the heat.

This is my third drip of the summer, the first in June to Crain Prairie Lake in Oregon and the second, just a week ago, again to Oregon to fish the Deschutes for small mouth bass. Both trips were fun but nothing like the one planned, a three month tour of the south east coast.

Yes, some fishing is planned, the target: redfish. But some good old fashioned museum browsing, mansion gawking and botanical garden strolling is just as much a part of the trip. We plan to visit some big cities on the way east, New Orleans, Miami, Savannah, Charleston and more on the way back, Atlanta, Vicksburg and Dallas on the way back.

In the mean time, some really competent people will step in and run the club functions.

Lets look at what's happening month by month.

### August

No general membership meeting this month. The summer has been just too hot to meet at Oak Grove Park and the facility just too small.

The August BOD meeting is scheduled for August 16th at Oak Grove Park, 6:30pm start time. Immediate Past President Gil Parker will chair.

No club outing is planned for August.

### September

The general membership meeting will take place at the John R. Williams School on September 13th, 7:00pm start time. Al has a program scheduled on Sierra trout fishing.

The annual Bridgeport outing is scheduled for September 16 through 21. Additional details will be forthcoming in the September newsletter

The September BOD meeting is scheduled one week later than normal because of the Bridgeport outing. It will take place on September 27th, Oak Grove Park, 6:30. I'm sure someone will step up and chair the meeting. I'll make some requests via e-mail.

### October

The October general membership meeting will feature a swap meet as part of the evenings events. The food schedule will be posted in the October newsletter as well as the start time.

Cliff Hoover will lead the October outing to Heenan Lake. If you've never fished this lake before you owe it to yourself to go on this outing. Dates and times will be posted in the October news letter.

The October BOD meeting will take place at the usual third Wednesday of the month, Oak Grove Park. Again, I'll look for a volunteer chair.

Our first Fly of the Month will also take place in November, fourth Wednesday of the month, 6:30, Oak Grove Park.

For you couch potatoes, still four more weeks before Labor Day. Pack the car, and go fishing. You only live once, go for it.

Jerry

## Oroville Dam, a near disaster and some cost cutting

*They say you forget your troubles on a trout stream, but that isn't quite it. What happens is that you begin to see where your troubles fit into the grand scheme of things and suddenly they're just not such a big deal anymore.*

... John Gierach

### IT SHOULDN'T COME AS A SURPRISE

In a conservation article three months ago, I listed several reasons for the Lake Orville's spillway catastrophe and near loss of the dam. Ongoing independent studies are now showing the spillway failures were not caused by the weather as claimed by the state. The potential disaster was caused by decades of ongoing bureaucratic malfeasance. The 770-foot high structure was built in 1968 and is operated and maintained by the Dept. of Water Resources (DWR). After the near-disaster occurred, Gov. Brown, the DWR, Bureau of Reclamation, and water contractors (including Westlands Water District) were evasive in answering questions regarding Lake Orville's spillway maintenance.

Presently, there is a continuing, growing distrust of the comments made by Gov. Brown and all agencies involved in Oroville Dam's operation and maintenance. To stifle his critics, Gov. Brown and the DWR said the constriction of the spillway was a "security issue" and information was not released for reasons of "dam safety". Other groups see this as an ongoing maneuver to continue the state's bureaucratic blunders without public scrutiny. However, records of the dam and spillway maintenance are available and open to scrutiny. Mid-July, the San Francisco Chronicle published an article entitled, "Engineering Expert Blasts Management Failures At Oroville Dam". The scathing report was authored by Robert Bea, a well-respected engineering expert who is a professor emeritus of engineering at UC Berkeley and co-authored by Tony Johnson. Both are well-respected for their work on UC's Center for Catastrophic Risk Management (CCRM). Their group included 15 volunteers who are also

experts of risk management. The team put in 3,000 hours of work on this project. Brea's report is nothing less than scathing.

According to Bea, the "progressive deterioration" could have been prevented. In a report issued by the CCRM, the DWR and the Division of Safety of Dams (DSOD) did not follow proper procedures. Bea commented the spillway was "regulated to failure" by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Bea and his associate, Tony Johnson, found that the "long term use of these in inappropriate standards, guidelines, procedures, and processes" for decades lead to the spillway's failure, not the weather as Gov. Brown and DWR continue to claim.

As the CCRW's report was released, private contractors are working 7 days a week, 24 hours a day on the spillway's reconstruction. As you recall, the failure of the spillway forced the dam operators to use the poorly designed emergency spillway which is nothing more than a dirt hillside. After a very short time of the emergency spillway's operation, it was apparent that the emergency spillway was causing catastrophic erosion of the hillside and potential failure of the Oroville Dam itself. There was no choice but to order the immediate evacuation of 180,000 people downstream.

Reports now show that the spillway did not have the water stops needed to seal the joints. This allowed the leaks which severely weakened the spillway. Also, insufficient steel reinforcement was used in the spillway's construction. Unbelievably, clay pipe was in the drainage system rather than the much preferred PVC pipe. The purpose of using cheap or insufficient amounts of material was to save money in construction.

Bea's report also pointed out that that potential disastrous flaws, in both the primary and emergency spillways, are not new. They were brought to the attention of both state and federal agencies more than 10 years ago. He has shown that structural defects and cracks had been found 8 years earlier leading to cratering in the spillway. Bea's report for the

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CCRM points out four issues that contributed in Lake Orville's spillway failure:

- . design flaws in the base slabs
- . poor foundation work
- . a faulty drainage system and maintenance
- . defects found in 2008 were not resolved properly or repaired by the DWR which operates the dam. DWR has ignored the flaw for almost two decades.

While Gov Brown rushes as quickly as possible to have the spillway rebuilt, without public or expert scrutiny, several key questions remain unanswered. First and foremost is the concern that spillways must be rebuilt to much higher standards than were used in the flawed 1968 structure. Although the organizations with expertise for dam safety have yet to suggest the best structure possible, the state is rushing forward under the veil of secrecy. It is obvious, given recent history, the DWR, BR, FERC, and DSOD will fully mismanaged Lake Orville's spillway disaster. They are not competent to design the new structure. Who is designing the new structure? What are the costs? Do water contractors, such as Westlands, who purposely diverted attempts by groups such as California Sportfishing Protection Alliance from addressing known flaws of the spillway, have a financial responsibility in construction cost? They have been very silent about their responsibilities during this disaster.

The seriously flawed emergency spillway is not receiving any attention during current construction of the main spillway. Its' brief use made it abundantly clear it will cause a catastrophic disaster if it is ever used again. Despite DRW's releasing as much water as possible during the crises, had California had several days of warm weather, our massive snow pack would have melted and the results would have been devastating including the possible loss of the dam itself.

**Orville Dam's Newest Worry: ITS' "GREEN SPOT." Is LAKE ORVILLE LEAKING THRU THE DAM THE DAM?"**

Once again, Oroville dam's green spot is making headlines. The green spot was first noticed shortly after the dam's construction. It is a green belt of vegetation growing at the south end of the dam.

DWR offers an explanation for the spots existence that makes that makes no sense. They claim the green spot is either caused by rainfall or an active, flowing spring. Another report, just issued by Robert Bea and his team of risk management experts, does not agree with the DWR. Bea is concerned and worried that making this report public might cause great concern for local residences in the dam area but he said, "The consequences of not getting the right answers is very high. I don't think anyone should encourage a casual approach." He is releasing this new report because DWR is, once again, taking no action for a potential dam failure.

Bea points out that that during our last two major droughts the green spot has flourished. In last 5-year drought, millions of pine trees in our forests were lost but the green spot continued to grow well. He also noted that water does not flow uphill. How can water flow uphill from a lower source to cause a green spot? Also, the top of the green spot's vegetation border is a straight parallel line on the dam's surface, not areas of erratic growth and no growth. Bea's report infers that the DWR's answers demonstrate of a lack of engineering competency. To further DRW's lack of competency, the team points out that DRW drilled the green spot in 2016. The internal piezometers that measure pressure of the water on the dam failed years ago and can give no information on the dam's pressure. Bea's group wants the piezometers restored and the results of the tests need to be made public. However, Erin Mellow of the Natural Resource's Agency (NRA), which manages the DWR, still maintains that rain has caused the green spot. This, in spite of the fact the NRA has absolutely no scientific evidence to back NEA's or DWR's claim.

The risk management team is worried that the wet spot is caused by differential settlement. This settlement is caused by the earth under the dam moving or shifting. Bea points out, "Water likes cracks." The team is concerned that differential settlement will cause the dam to rupture



and fail. The results of a dam failure at Orville are obvious. A massive loss of life and structures would occur. Another team of independent dam experts is studying what happened at Orville's spillway and will release their results later this fall.

#### **THE PUBLIC'S RAPIDLY GROWING CONCERNS WITH CALIFORNIA'S INEPT, SELF-SERVING MALFEASANCE OF OUR WATER**

The longer I am involved with environmental issues concerning our state's fisheries, the Delta, and the state's water issues, the more discouraged I become. However, there is a growing bright side. More and more people use media such as Facebook to bring environmental/fisheries issues to public view. As I was researching this conservation issue article, Dan MacDaniels sent Facebook a post on Bea's report on Orville's problems and then questioned the state's ability to build the twin tunnels if they can't manage a dam. The more article's, such as Dan's, that are posted the more people became informed and the harder it is for Gov. Brown et.al. to get away with their ineptness.

On the 26th of July, Dan Walters wrote a article in the Sacramento Bee, entitled "Bureaucratic bungling on Orville Dam bodes ill for future projects." The article talks about the Orville issues we are starting to learn about and how badly the dam has been managed for decades with impunity. Because of posts like Dan's and article's like Walters, more and more people are not trusting those with self-serving interests. This was shown when 180,000 people were forced to evacuate downstream from Orville. Now, almost none of the evacuees trust anything said to them by Gov. Brown or the DWR. They are

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tired of being lied too.

Pay attention to who authors' articles, letters, or posts on California issues. For example, Dan Walters is a well-know, highly-respected journalist. He has a successful 57 year career in newspapers as an editor and journalist. In 1981, he was the only person writing a daily column on California issues. He has written over 9,000 articles about California. Stay away from source's that are unknown or whose topics can't be readily verified. There is a

huge number of phoney blogs on the net. Sources such as Yahoo is well-know for it's junk. Read their information with a grain of salt.

The battle to save the Delta and stop Gov. Brown's ego project, the twin tunnels, is heating up. We will be receiving more and more phony information. Read the articles carefully and check out the authorship and validity.

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