

The Barbless Hook

December 2023

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

December Meeting – Wednesday Dec. 6th, 7pm

Greg Vinci on Fishing the American River

Join us for our December meeting and learn about fishing the American River from Greg Vinci. Like the Feather River, the American River opens on January 1st.

Northern California's American River is one of the most reliable trophy Steelhead fisheries in the northern hemisphere. The size of the fish are large and they return each winter like clockwork. The American also hosts annual runs of "half-pounder Steelhead" and good runs of American Shad and Striped Bass. All of this in one of the most densely populated cities in the state. This is a great introduction to those who have never fished the American and it will also provide some good information to regular visitors that have not had a chance to explore the whole fishery.

After over twenty years in the wholesale fly tackle and accessory business, Greg embarked on a writing career culminating with the authorship of the best-selling "Flyfisher's Guide to California". Greg continues to write about fly fishing and his stories and photos are regularly published in national fly fishing magazines. Many of his images have graced the covers of those magazines.



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New Member

TVFF welcomes Tony D. from Livermore to the club. We look forward to seeing you at a club meeting or outing soon!

President's Corner

Marty Loomis

Another month and another Thanksgiving gone. Christmas just a couple of weeks away and into the new year, I cannot believe how fast it has gone by. I already have my New Year's resolution ready to go for 2024, I'm going to fish more. I'm hoping for a quieter year and more free time to do fun stuff. Recently, since fishing isn't happening as much, I find that I've been watching more YouTube videos in the evening. People who know me already know that I have an addiction to YouTube. Just about anything you can think of is there including fly fishing stuff to no end. The problem is that if you watch too many you soon conclude that you don't know diddly squat about fishing and wonder how you have ever caught fish at all. My favorite current channel is one called Troutbitten. Videos, podcasts, store, etc. but seems to be pretty good overall. Sometimes a bit cerebral but pretty good. The biggest lesson that I have learned in all this is find something that works for you because everyone has the perfect answer.

As mentioned a couple of months ago or maybe it was last month, but we are rolling out the new TVFF outings waiver that we will be asking everyone to review and sign. It's been a few years since last doing this and we are probably missing a few waivers so it's time to do the paperwork. Since we are now an FFI member and for insurance requirements we will be using FFI's waiver. Our goal is to do this electronically to make this as painless as possible. You should be seeing it shortly.

Outings and Activities

Mitchie McCammon – Outings Director

Events and Outings

It has been a great year for the guided trips we have had in 2023. A huge thank you to all our fishmeisters who made the guided and non-guided trips happen this year. While we had our challenges with high water and weather, we made the best of difficult conditions. As we look forward to 2024, there are already a few outings scheduled. Yes, it's already almost the new year! And remember, we always welcome fishmeisters. Have a trip you are thinking about? Let me know and I will help you set it up. Fishmeisters get a \$25 gift to help pay for gas.

December – Stanislaus Flyfishers are sponsoring a Fly Fishing Film Festival on Friday, December 8 at 6:30 pm at the Prospect Theater Project, 1218 K St., Modesto, 6:30 pm. Doors open at 6pm. Tickets are \$12 per person.

2023 TVFF Board of Directors

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Newsletter	Mark Spruiell
Raffle	Steve Johnson
Refreshments	Gary Prince
Speakers	Dave Fontaine
Trout in Classroom	Daniel Kitts
Webmaster	Mark Spruiell

There will be a raffle and a no-host bar. Tickets can be purchased [here](#). This is not a TVFF event. Please register on your own and make any arrangements with others who may be going.

May – The ever-popular Yuba River UC property outing is back! Please note the new and confirmed dates of May 4 and 5. Mark your calendars! Each person is responsible for their own accommodations should they choose to spend the night up there. More details will be coming soon!

Member Reports

Jim McCabe

My brother and I had a great day of bass fishing on Clear Lake with a terrific guide named Ed Legan. (Thanks to Dave Fontaine for the referral.)

The day was sunny and calm and, being a Monday, we had the lake almost to ourselves. Over the course of the day we caught about 25 bass with the biggest one that my brother caught coming in at just over 9 pounds!!!! We also hooked about 12 fish in the 3-4 pound range.

Ed had us throwing a Carolina rig with a Zoom Baby Brush Hog that was watermelon candy in color. We fished in water from 6 to 30 feet in various locations and fished a lot of docks and other structure. All in all a great day on the water. You can reach Ed at 702-497-8938.



Jeff Fadden

Steve and I took a day trip to one of my favorite lakes yesterday. It was long drive but the weather was perfect and the fish were biting in the morning. I also found out that smoking a cigar at almost 8000 feet is no easy task.



Ken Tetzel

Not too much to report, but... my son and I fished the Feather River below Oroville last weekend. We were trying for steelhead and reports were pretty good. We didn't hook up any steelies but we did hook up a few salmon. Great fun fighting some big fish. All broke off!! Some guys caught a few steelhead earlier in the day. The salmon run seemed huge to me. Lots of spawned out dead fish and many working their way upstream. Pretty cool!

Martin Plotkin

The Annual TVFF striper outing took place on Thursday, November 9th. Six boats participated: Martin Plotkin's boat with Marty Loomis and Gary Turri, Daniel Kitt's boat with Barry Penner, Rob Fletcher's boat with Robert Nishio, Bill Potts's boat with Steve Johnson, Bruce and Chris Patrick fished from their boat, and Jim Knecht's boat with Tosh Okano. The weather, winds and tides were almost perfect for the day. Most of the boats launched from Risso's Marina and the others met up there. The fleet proceeded across Frank's tract and fished False River and the area around Webb Tract in the morning, meeting up for lunch at the Northeast



end of Webb Track. After lunch, the boats dispersed to fish various favorite spots in the area. Fish were caught by most boats, none really large or in great numbers. A good time was had by all.



Rob Farris

I jumped on a quick one-day trip up to the Stanislaus looking for the big browns out of Lake Don Pedro following the Kokanee for their fall spawning journey. Great weather this time of year but it's changing, and I had a slightly overcast day which was perfect. Nine miles in and I can't find the browns I was after. But this time it was the bigger rainbows that showed up.



Fishing in the canyons this time of year means that you only get 4-5 hours of fishing time after the water warms up, and then the canyon walls blanket the water with shade and cold water in the early afternoon. So, I made the best of it tossing indicators with a rubber legs up top and a copper john down below. Worked last time I was up there a few years ago, so why not? Well... there'd be no reward for that kind of crazy thinking of using an attractor rather than a natural. Being the entomologist fan that I am, I decided to heed my own teachings and look around. And what should I see? Not a miniature sleigh and eight tiny reindeer, but a sparse hatch of midges. Duh?

So I put that famous black Perdigon underneath and I went looking for a nice current seam, which was right in the middle, and not in the softer seams (that was a little strange). And whack...! I hook into two 18" very fat rainbows and finish it off with an even fatter 19" girl to end my short day. Very colorful fish; a bit challenging getting down to the river from last year's runoff embankment debris; and a short day with the encroaching shade. But it's always nice getting out in the fall and seeing how beautiful and hungry these fish become prior to the onset of winter.

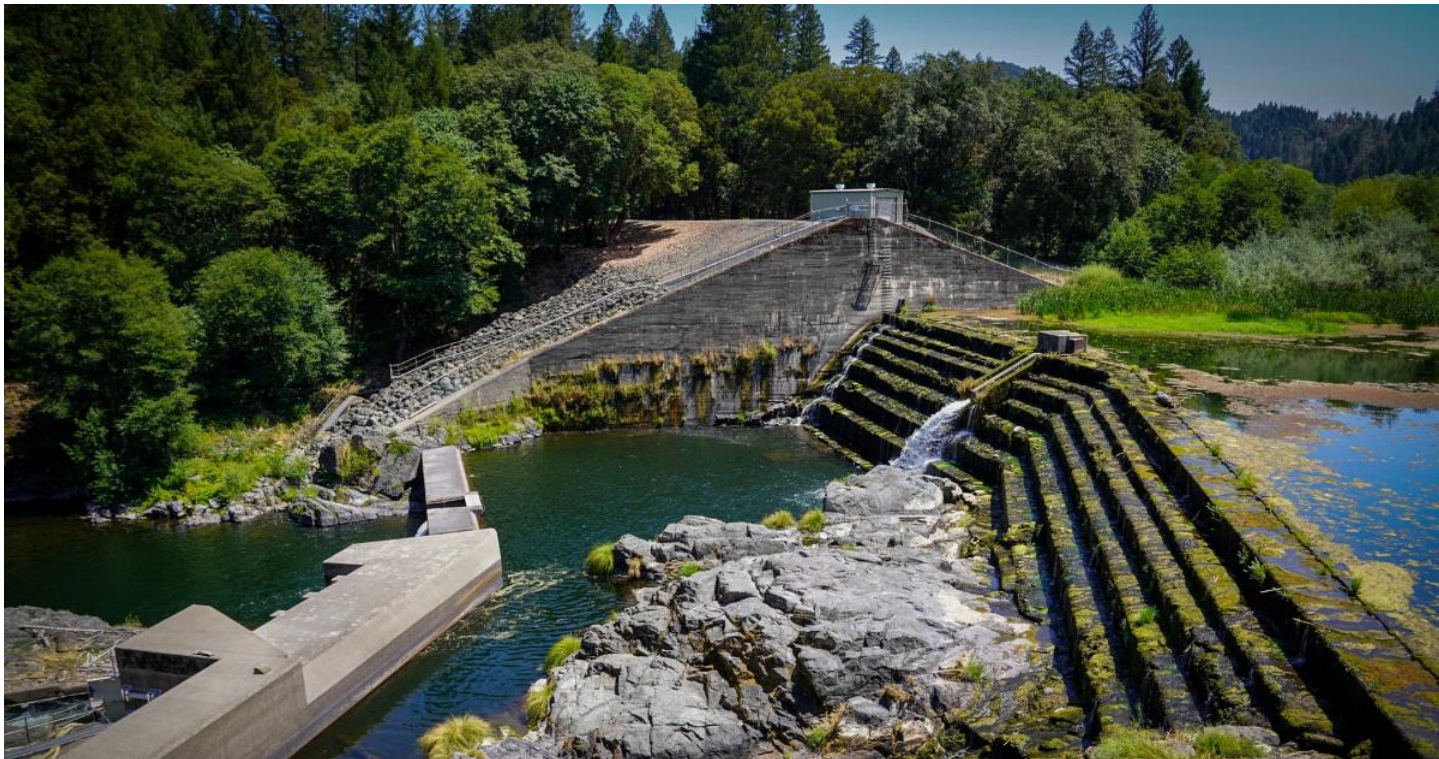
Mark Spruiell

Chris McCann and I went to Pyramid Lake in mid-November. Water temperatures were still pretty warm in the low 50s. We started out at Monument but didn't have much luck, except for Chris landing a very large cui-ui, which is an endangered (but recovering) species of sucker fish native to Pyramid. We decided to move to a different beach, but on our way there we ran across a couple of young fishermen that had gotten their truck stuck in the sand and had practically buried the back end. Fortunately they had a shovel and we had a tow strap, so we let the young guys dig and we eventually pulled their truck out. We launched our boats again at Warrior and didn't have too much trouble finding fish. We spent the next two days there as well and caught some nice fish each day. My last trip to Pyramid was right before Covid so it was great to finally get back out there.



Removal of Eel River Dams

CalTrout



On November 17, 2023, Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) released the initial draft of its plan to remove two dams on the Eel River. The plan calls for the complete and expeditious removal of most of the Potter Valley Project facilities.

“The Round Valley Indian Tribes have relied on the Eel River and its fishery since time immemorial. Today marks a historic first step in restoring this important cultural and natural resource to health,” said Lewis “Bill” Whipple, President of the Round Valley Indian Tribes Tribal Council.

“CalTrout has been a staunch advocate for removing the Eel River dams and restoring this important watershed from headwaters to estuary,” said Curtis Knight, executive director of California Trout. “The draft plan calls for removing Scott and Cape Horn Dams, two of Northern California’s most harmful fish passage barriers, and restoring the Eel River to a free-flowing state.”

“Dam removal will make the Eel the longest free-flowing river in California and will open up hundreds of stream miles of prime habitat unavailable to native salmon and steelhead for over 100 years,” said Brian J. Johnson, California Director for Trout Unlimited. “This is the most important thing we can do for salmon and steelhead on the Eel River, and these fisheries cannot afford to wait.”

The Eel River once supported runs of up to a million salmon and steelhead each year, but those numbers have plummeted to a fraction of historical numbers. Scientists recognize that a healthy and free-flowing Eel River has the potential to play a key role in the rebound of these fisheries throughout the North Coast region.

PG&E's plan also includes – as an alternative for evaluation – a revised framework proposal from a regional group to negotiate terms for a new diversion facility that could support ongoing limited water diversions into the Russian River watershed after removing the dams, provided such diversions are consistent with the full recovery of the Eel River ecosystem to self-sustaining, harvestable populations. Proponents of the proposal include the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Trout, Humboldt County, Mendocino County Inland Water and Power Commission, Round Valley Indian Tribes, Sonoma County Water Agency, and Trout Unlimited.

“Critically, this new proposal includes a commitment from all proponents that funding, permitting, and construction of a new diversion will not delay PG&E’s decommissioning and dam removal,” said Johnson. “It represents a viable framework for a two-basin solution and we are committed to working with our partners to develop it further.”

“We agreed to work with Russian River water users on this effort because we believe strongly that the best thing we can do for salmon and steelhead is to get these dams out of the river as quickly as possible,” said Knight. “If we can work out a deal, that is the best way to make that happen.”

“The Tribes are pleased to join with their partners in creating a path to a solution that ensures the survival and recovery of our most precious resource,” added President Whipple.

The framework proposal submitted to PG&E lays out critical elements of a deal, including: formation of a Regional Entity with the financial capacity to operate a new project; selection of an engineering solution for the new diversion works; identification of river flows and a diversion schedule that allows water diversions and full restoration of the Eel River; funding for Eel River restoration; and a permitting pathway for the new facility, among other things. Proponents hope to resolve these matters in time for inclusion as a preferred alternative in PG&E’s May 2024 Draft and January 2025 Final License Surrender Application.

Proponents have set a target date for dam deconstruction to begin in 2028, pending review and approval from the Federal Regulatory Energy Commission, which oversees the decommissioning of hydroelectric projects. Provided a final deal can be negotiated, all proponents, including CalTrout and Trout Unlimited, would commit to seeking permits for the new diversion so that it can be built immediately following dam removal to avoid a disruption of water supplies.

The public comment period for the Initial Draft Surrender Application and Decommissioning Plan is open until December 22.

About the Eel River Dams

The Potter Valley Project includes two Eel River dams, a diversion tunnel that moves water out of the Eel River watershed and into the East Branch of the Russian River, and a powerhouse. The Project’s owner, PG&E, has allowed its license for the operation to expire and is currently working with federal regulators to develop a license surrender and decommissioning plan for the facilities.

Located on the Eel River 20 miles northeast of Ukiah, Scott and Cape Horn Dam are over 100 years old. Equipment failures in 2021 caused Project owner PG&E to permanently suspend hydropower operations. Water storage levels in Lake Pillsbury, the reservoir created by Scott Dam, have been reduced by more than

25% due to increased seismic safety concerns with the dam. Scott Dam completely blocks fish passage to high-quality cold-water habitat in the Eel River headwaters. The smaller Cape Horn diversion dam has a faulty fish ladder that needs to be revised to meet current environmental standards.

Conservation and commercial fishing groups have long advocated for a free-flowing Eel River. In 2023, American Rivers named the Eel one of America's Most Endangered Rivers, citing the Potter Valley Project dams as major factors driving Chinook salmon, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey toward extinction.

Removing the Eel River dams would make the Eel California's longest free-flowing river and would reconnect salmon and steelhead with almost 300 miles of cold-water habitat.

Items for Sale

If you need contact information for a member, use the club's online [roster](#).

Martin Plotkin

FREE – Several 5- and 3-gallon buckets. Call Martin to arrange pickup.



Gary Turri

Rods for Sale (New Condition in Tubes):

- Redington Classic Trout 8.5 foot 4 weight \$100
- Redington RS3 9 foot 10 weight 2 piece \$100
- TFO Blitz 9 foot 8 weight \$250

Two Hand Spey Rods:

- TFO Deer Creek 12'6" 5/6 \$230
- TFO Deer Creek 13 foot 6/7 weight \$230
- Echo Dec Hogan 2 13' 7 weight \$230

Fly Lines for sale (New in Box and 50% off):

- Cortland Trout Boss Double Taper DT-6 \$50
- RIO Single Hand Spey WF6-F \$50
- SA Spey Lite Scandi Integrated 240 grain \$50

Ron Dueltgen

1. Three waist-band dry bags from SealLine, approx. 5 Liter. 12 in. high x 9 in. wide. They have a draw-string mesh pouch on the front. \$5 each



2. Clear dry bag, "H2Zero" from Seattle Sports. 28 in. high x ~10.5 in diameter. Approx. 30 Liter. \$20



3. Small dry bag from Seattle Sports, approx. 12 in. x 6 in. Approx. 3 liter. \$2



4. Two large mesh gear/dive bags, from Soul A Max. 28 in. high x 17 in. wide. Drawstring closure. \$5 for the pair. (Only one is shown)

