

The Barbless Hook

September 2023

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

September Meeting – Wednesday Sep. 6th, 7pm

Lance Gray – Putah Creek

Our speaker for the October Meeting is the long-time friend of our club Lance Gray. Lance will be joining us live and in-person and will be talking about Putah Creek, a watershed in our own backyard. You won't want to miss meeting Lance and hearing his talk.

Other notes: Gary Turri will once again offer free casting help at Wattenburger Park, 1515 Honeysuckle Rd, Livermore, from 5 - 6:30 pm. He will be going over skills and drills for casting. Come to the casting instruction then head to the meeting.

Lance and his wife Kirsten own Lance Gray & Company, a full-service outfitter offering guided trips, fly-fishing schools, workshops and a travel agency. Lance conducts presentations at fly clubs and outdoor shows and supports local groups like Cub Scouts and 4H. He's a signature tier for Aqua Flies, pro staff member for Sage and Rio and is a featured writer, with articles published in Angling Trade Magazine, California Fly Fisher, Fly Fishermen, Sierra Fisherman and Northwest Fly Fishing.



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President's Corner

Marty Loomis

Beginning next month, October, we will be rolling out the new Waiver of Liability to all TVFF club members. We will be moving over to the recognized FFI waiver over the next several months including during our membership renewal. I'm hoping we can do this online so that we don't have to manage a whole bunch of individual pieces of paper. I will be talking to our web master extraordinaire, Mark Spruiell as to what we can do.

We have a ten-member board; but could always use more support on the board and in our on-going activities and outings. If you would like to be on the board as a member at large or to help out with any of our programs, please contact me or one of our other board members at one of our meetings or by phone.

Summer is in full swing as we approach the dog days of summer. From what I hear, fishing is mostly good with lots of good successes, not everything got washed out to sea.

Water is still running high and fast on some rivers but very doable. Alan Wyosnick and I just got back from a day outing to Kennedy Meadows and had a very productive day. We were catching anywhere between 6 to 16 inches, not bad at all.

November Special Raffle

Steve Johnson – Raffle Director

We will be raffling off an **Orvis Clearwater 6 wt., 9'0", 4 pc. fly rod** at the November meeting. This is an excellent rod that normally sells for \$290. It can be yours for only a \$10 ticket. Tickets will be sold at the monthly meetings through November or online at the [TVFF store](#).

Additional information on the rod follows.

Designed in Vermont with a focus on affordability that doesn't sacrifice quality and performance, Orvis' line of Clearwater Rods is ready for anything from tiny mountain brooks to a wide open flat. Made with a medium-fast action, the Clearwater offers solid feedback and casting presentation whether you're just starting out or have decades of fly fishing under your belt. Performance-driven, the Clearwater has enough power to launch large flies, handle gusts of wind, and make those lengthy casts at cruising fish. Whether you need a 2 weight for small panfish, a 4 weight for Euro nymphing, or a 12 weight to handle the tarpon of a lifetime, Orvis makes their Clearwater series in a range of different line weights and lengths to accommodate just about any fish you're chasing.

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

Blank – Made from high modulus graphite with a medium-fast action, the Clearwater blank makes for smooth and versatile casting. With its graphite core, you get a lightweight feel with this blank, while its medium-fast action provides instant feedback so that you can feel every flex this rod makes. The Clearwater Rod also comes with a clean black finish. This blank has a timeless look and brings just enough stealth whether you're pursuing tough trout or bonefish in a shallow channel.

Guides – For their Clearwater series, Orvis outfits each rod with chrome snake and stripper guides with ceramic inserts. With the chrome outer, you get excellent durability without excess weight, and a ceramic insert ensures that every cast you make is shooting nice and smoothly.

Reel Seat – A versatile reel seat that lets you rest easy knowing that your reel is always secure, Orvis' Clearwater Rods have a black nickel aluminum reel seat. With the aluminum composition, this seat is nice and light while resisting corrosion, and its black nickel finish offers additional stealth for those spooky fish that get put down over any reflection of light.

Rod Tube – Safe and sound is exactly how your rods should rest when you're not using them, and Orvis outfits their Clearwater series with a solid rod tube. This tube will protect your Clearwater whether you're flying to a different country or just drop it on the ground early in the morning before you've had your coffee.

Warranty – As of July 2022, Orvis' Clearwater Fly Rods are backed by their 25-Year Guarantee. This is a straightforward and excellent warranty that lasts for 25 years. It doesn't matter whether you slam it in a door, step on it, or you encounter a manufacturer defect, Orvis will repair or replace your rod. If the rod can't be repaired and it's out of production, Orvis will choose a newer model of at least equal value.

Outings and Activities

Mitchie McCammon – Outings Director

We are always looking for fishmeisters to lead an outing. Do you have a favorite place to fish? Let me know, and I will help you to get an outing organized and on the website. Outings are a great way to get to know other members of the club. And, fishmeisters get \$25 to go towards gas.

Upcoming trips

September 16 - Fall River Guided Float trip with Confluence Outfitters – There are two openings left for this trip. The cost is \$300 per person if we can fill the second boat. See if you can find a friend and share a boat. The Fall River is beautiful, and access is limited, so going with a guide is a great way to fish and learn about this water.

September 26-27 – McCloud River Nature Conservancy – This is not a beginner trip. You must be fit enough to walk distances and wade in difficult conditions. The trip is currently full, but if you are interested, sign up on the waitlist. If an opening comes up, I will go down the list.

For more information on these and other outings and events, or to sign up, visit the [Events](#) page. Time to get fishing again! Keep checking your emails and the events page for new trips.

Free Casting Lessons

Gary Turri – FFI Master Certified Casting Instructor

As we did last year, we will again have free casting lessons prior to the May-October club meetings. The September session will be from 5-6:30pm. This will allow enough time to get to the club house before the club meeting starts.

The location will be at the same place, Wattenberger Park in Livermore. This year I have decided to use the Fly Fishers International (FFI) Fly Casting Skills Development program at these pre-meeting casting sessions. The reason is that I have observed great improvement in the casting skills of the students that I have worked with using this program. Several of our club members that attended the Pleasanton Fly Fishing show this year did the Skills Development program there on that weekend. I know some of them have completed the Bronze Level Skills and are now working on their Silver Level Skills.

All the casting skills have a related and very useful fishing application. Bottom line is the more skills that you learn and can do with consistency, the more fish you will catch, which will make your time on the water much more enjoyable. Trust me on that one!

There are four casting skill levels: Foundation, Bronze, Silver, and Gold. I will set up three casting courses at each of pre-meeting casting sessions. If a member has completed Bronze and wishes to work on the Silver level skills, any of the courses can easily be set up to Silver.

I have all the necessary equipment to facilitate the FFI Fly Casting Skills Development program, including the fly casting courses and the supporting paperwork. I have been involved in this program since its inception in 2018 and had the pleasure helping many anglers achieve all the various casting skill levels.

I will also have our TVFF club loaner rods available if you wish to use one or bring your own rod if you wish. You just have to show up, be prepared to have fun improving your current casting skills and for sure learn some new skills to become a better caster and angler.

Don't worry "This is not a test or exam"... rather it's about improving your current casting skills and learning new casting skills. You will leave each evening knowing what skills are great and which ones to practice!

Here's how to learn more about this great program between now and the first casting session in May.

Google FFI Fly Casting Skills Development, then click on the Angler Guide.

You can skip the Foundation level skills and mainly focus on the Bronze level skills as that's where we will start in May. Be sure to also read the Performance and Tackle Guidelines on pages 16 and 17.

I'm looking forward to helping any of our club member improve their casting skills, regardless of your current skill level. Don't miss this great opportunity to develop your casting skills while having fun with other club members.

Hope to see you there.

How to Fish Lakes for Trout

Mark Spruiell

Join us for this new educational offering for TVFF members interested in learning more about fishing lakes. In our two sessions on September 13th and 20th, we'll cover a wide range of topics including equipment, watercraft, tackle, lake structure, retrieves, entomology, finding fish, and water safety. The cost is \$45 and you can register or find more information in our [event calendar](#).

Member Reports

Bob McCollum – San Luis Forebay

Martin Plotkin and I fished the San Luis Forebay and caught a few striped bass. Hot day with tropical clouds and high humidity. The water temp was around 80F which is pretty high even for bass. Probably best to hold off fishing it for a month or so and let the water cool off a bit.



Tosh Okano – Kenai River

Just returned from the Kenai River in Alaska with a box of halibut and salmon fillets. My wife Marlene did well on the river with a side planer, Kwikfisk #13 and a rod holder I mounted onto the railing of a platform by the river. She caught at least 3-4 silvers and a sockeye. Myself, I was planted in the water with waders, fly rod and

casting outfit and used whichever worked that day. There were anglers there flossing the sockeye which is a legal form of snagging the outside mouth. Tried a form of that with a fly rod, buckshot weights, 5' mono leader, red bead and a 2/0-3/0 single octopus. Casted various spinners, spoons, and all had to be single hook with no bait allowed. Originally our trip was to include two halibut and two guided river boat for salmon. But due to a storm we were able to get out for one halibut trip in Homer. Wife was upset that they canceled the second halibut due to the storm, but I would rather be in a comfortable cabin watching the storm than out in it on the ocean. She actually caught some more salmon off the river rather than bobbing up and down on a 35' craft holding on for her life. On our way home we did pass through Cooper Landing on the Kenai where fly fishers target large rainbows and the occasional salmon. That's another place on my bucket list.

Mike Freitas – Hope Valley

My wife and I camped for six nights at the Hope Valley campground right off Blue Lake Road. The first day was a little rocky since the remnants of hurricane Hillary weather was passing through, but the rest of the trip we had gorgeous weather. The fishing was slow in the mornings but picked up in the late afternoons. Because of this, I used the mornings to scout out the different spots along the meadow. The meadow had been flushed out from the unusually heavy winter according to a local flyfisherman. This meant that there were very few bugs in the water and very few fish in the meadow. I was able to catch plenty of little brookies, mostly near the campground. I even caught one eighteen and one twelve-inch rainbow. Next time I go I will have to try Faith Valley or head over to the Upper Truckee for the elusive Lahontan Cutthroat heritage trout.



Rob Farris – Yellowstone

This is a tale of three trips, bad weather, and the pursuit of the Wyoming Cutthroat Slam.

Perseverance. Spectacular scenery, amazing conservation work, abundant wildlife, tropical depression Hilary with intense rain, car troubles, pursuing the Wyoming Cutt Slam, and a total of 3,700 miles of windshield time. And that's the short story. We've been asked to do a full presentation for the Club at a future meeting, as there were so many aspects of this trip to detail in a newsletter report. So stay tuned, but here's the gist of it from our participants Gary Prince, Alan Wyosnick, Mitchie McCammon, Todd Hyrn, Denis Haire, and Rob Farris.



We kicked off the trip on the South Fork of the Boise River, and it was a harbinger of the remaining trip to come. The river still had a bit of a higher water challenge, and the hatches had been delayed at least 4-6 weeks and reduced, as it has been this year in California. Nevertheless, we were joined by Denis's daughter and friend, and some success was had in challenging water with Rob getting the big fish party started (after Mitchie got the first fish at the campground the night before) with a nice 18" rainbow on a grasshopper, tucked in close to the bank. Todd tried to re-up Rob with one of his own but lost that beautiful fish after it did an Air Jordan on him. And here comes another harbinger for what's to come: Alan is deep in the canyon with a flat tire to change and insufficient tools... on his rental.



Our biologist/guide with the pure-bred Yellowstone Cutt, Denis trying to show a buffalo how to hook a fish on Slough Creek, and Gary



On to the main event: helping Yellowstone National Park with fisheries conservation. We are accompanied and guided by the lead summer biologist tasked with identifying, tagging, and measuring native wild Yellowstone Cutthroat trout, as well as a Field & Stream writer and photographer for an upcoming story. And did we ever hook them, starting with the Lamar River (1.5 mile hike in and then back, uphill), then on the lower Slough Creek, and finally an upper section of Slough. The entire process was fascinating while we focused on catching as many wild fish as possible for logging and tagging, until the final day. And that day was to catch as many "non-native" fish as we could (rainbows and hybrid cutt-bows) and dispatch/kill them to clean up the fishery. I think that everyone walked away with deep gratitude for what the Park is doing to restore native wild fish. And Mitchie walking away with bragging rights for the first fish and largest fish, which

continues to this day unfortunately. We also received an unsolicited comment by the biologist/guide that **“your group was the most productive, competent, and best fly fishing group I’ve had all year”**. Quite a compliment for Tri-Valley Fly Fishers...



Mitchie’s 1st and largest; Alan deciding red or black Perdigon (or both); with Todd & Alan fishing the Lamar River.

With the departure of Alan, Gary, and Todd, the rest of us headed for more fishing, and right into the jaws of Hilary’s intense rain and wind while we were camping at Hebgen Lake. Great... So we lost three key days and watersheds to the weather. The intense storm put the fish down so we made lemonade out of lemons and spent one day touring Yellowstone National Park instead, which is amazing. But remember that “harbinger”? Unlucky for the car, but lucky for us, our car problem hit us at our Yellowstone campground as Denis exhausted a battery (really killed it). We needed to source a unique replacement battery in Jackson over 80 miles away. So much for Henry’s Fork this year...

Miles and hours later and the three of us are back in Wyoming chasing the four species Cutthroat Challenge. Everyone caught a pure native Yellowstone Cutt with our Park conservation efforts so we’re off to a great start. Next up we decide to chase the Colorado cutthroat located on the eastern side of the Wyoming range some 150 miles away on remote North Horse Creek. Rob turns into our scout and finds a great pool loaded with fish in this small mountain stream. And we all connect and complete ½ of the slam.



A nice Colorado and Snake River Cutthroat specimen.



Another long trip back around the Wyoming range again to search out the fine spotted Snake River cutthroat on the Grey's River. We all get our third stunning species (and yes, it is dramatically fine spotted), and decide to move on for the Grand Finale and the elusive Bonneville Cutthroat. Finding them IS tough! First a 15 mile drive up a rutted dirt road is a bust, so the next day we back track the 15 miles to connect with another forest road for 24 more miles of a dirt road around the mountains to Hobble Creek. Planning to camp there for the evening we find that the road is impassable due to 2' of water to drive through at a road ford, so we buckle down and fish Hobble Creek for the day.



Rob's thickly spotted Bonneville cutthroat on Hobble Creek, with Mitchie & Denis on the Grey's River.

The pressure is on and everyone changes flies 19 times trying to find a winner, and 2 PM sets in. The road back is not one to travel in the dark or rain (approaching) so we only have a few pressured hours left. Denis and Mitchie change flies again while Rob throws in the towel on dries (a shocking development!), and returns to the car for his Euro rod and a change in tactics. Rob catches up and quickly hooks up with a beautiful 18" Bonneville Cutt and completes the slam. And for another two furious hours both Mitchie and Denis use Rob's rod and setup in a futile attempt to catch their final fish. We're tired after 18 days on the road and in tents with darkness approaching, and we agree to postpone this final component of the slam for Denis and Mitchie to another time. Disappointing for sure, as so much time and effort went into the chase. But these fish are not dumb cutthroats and must really be approached carefully. Denis and Mitchie will be back and get their final fish on the next trip. All in all a very adventurous and satisfying trip with highs, lows, and always with spectacular vistas and stunning fish. We'll all be back soon with a new love for Wyoming.

FFI Yuba Fest

Mark Rockwell – Fly Fishers International

On Saturday, September 30th we will hold the fly fishing event of the year in Northern California! We're calling it the **Gathering of the Clan** - bringing like-minded people together for Yuba Fest. If you fly fish, love rivers, recreate on the water, or have an interest in conservation - **This event is for you!**



Saturday will offer a full day of fly fishing learning, casting with certified casters, fly tying with experts, and the opportunity to learn what is happening in Conservation from numerous organizations. A great lunch will be available for purchase during the day, along with drinks (more details on food service coming soon), and you'll enjoy live music in the afternoon. In addition, there will be a raffle, silent auction for fly boxes and other great items & a live auction for selected high value items. Be sure to stick around for the Social Event from 4:00 PM to 6:30 PM.



There is a lot to do in and around the Grass Valley/Nevada City/Yuba City area and it is a great place to spend a delightful full weekend. For more information about Yuba Fest (and things to do in the area), go to the [NCCFFI Website](#) to get all the information you will need and register to join us for this great celebration at Sycamore Ranch County Park on the Lower Yuba River.

More details to follow soon. We look forward to seeing you there!

Items for Sale

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

Gary Turri

New in Box Floating Fly Lines at 40-50% Off:

- Scientific Anglers Spey Lite Scandi Integrated 240 grain, \$40
- Cortland Trout Boss Double Taper DT-6, \$40
- RIO Single Hand Spey 6wt line \$60