

The Barbless Hook

January 2021

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

President's Message

by Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

Well, 2021 just lays ahead as we finally put 2020 behind us. The New Year looks a lot brighter especially with the vaccines finally being distributed and inoculations under way. I hope everyone, especially in our age group, can get their vaccination shot sooner rather than later, so life as we used to know it can get back to some sort of normalization. I look forward, hopefully this spring, that we can again start having our monthly club meetings at the Livermore Rod and Gun Club's clubhouse.

I hope all of you had a very Merry Christmas, and you are safe and healthy, as well as your family and friends. I wish you and your family a Happy New Year and that the worse of 2020 is finally far behind us.

For those of you who could not make our December monthly club meeting via Zoom, the following Officers were again elected to serve on the Tri-Valley Fly Fishers board for 2021:

- Albert Mansky – President
- Martin Loomis – Vice President
- Chris McCann – Treasurer
- John Price – Secretary

The following is a list of Directors that will be serving on the board in 2021, some of which are in different positions than in 2020. This announcement of the 2021 Directors will be made at our January monthly club meeting via Zoom, but are listed here for those of you who will not be able to attend the meeting.

- Rob Farris – Education
- Jim Broadbent – Fly Tying Class
- Steve Johnson – Library / Video



Alan Wyosnick ringing in the New Year with a steelhead on the Feather River.

In this Issue

President's Message	1
January Meeting	2
Outings and Activities	3
Member Reports	4
Fishing App	4
Website Tips	7
Education Update	8
Patience vs Persistence	9
Conservation	10

- Ron Dueltgen – Member at Large
- Tom Vargas – Member at Large
- Todd Hryn – Membership
- Mark Spruiell – Newsletter & Webmaster
- Martin Plotkin – Outings
- Gary Prince – Refreshments & Conservation
- Dave Fontaine – Speakers
- Daniel Kitts – Trout in the Classroom

We currently have a number of open board positions, most recently with the change in board member responsibilities. They are Auction, Publicity and Raffles. If you have any interest in serving on your TVFF board in 2021 or have any expertise that we could use, I welcome you to contact any Officer or Director. We could use your help as well as your experience.

In the meantime, stay safe and healthy and let's go fishing. I hear those fish calling me, COME AND GET ME.

Al

2020 TVFF Board of Directors

Officers

President	Albert Mansky
Vice President	Martin Loomis
Secretary	John Price
Treasurer	Chris McCann
Past President	Roger Perry

Directors

Auction	Open Position
Conservation	Open Position
Education	Open Position
Outings	Rob Farris
Fly Tying	Jim Broadbent
Member at Large	Ron Dueltgen
Member at Large	Tom Vargas
Membership	Steve Johnson
Newsletter	Mark Spruiell
Publicity	Open Position
Raffle	Martin Plotkin
Refreshments	Gary Prince
Speakers	Dave Fontaine
Trout in Classroom	Daniel Kitts
Video Library	Steve Johnson
Webmaster	Mark Spruiell

January Meeting – Phil Rowley

We have a **Don't Miss** opportunity for our next meeting. We are lucky to have Phil Rowley – world-renowned expert on stillwater fly fishing – as our January meeting speaker to kick off 2021. Phil will be joining us from Canada to talk about one of his most popular topics: Tactics for tough days on stillwaters.

We'll also be having a raffle at this meeting for members who complete our [website survey](#).

Please check your email for the meeting invitation and for more information about the survey and raffle.



Outings and Activities

Please visit the [Event Calendar](#) on the TVFF website for a complete list of all upcoming meetings, outings and activities.

Feather River Steelhead – January 5 & 9 (weather permitting)

These are two separate one day up and back trips to the Feather River at the town of Oroville to fish for steelhead with up to six TVFF members each day. As of now we will observe the Club protocols around Covid-19... more updates on this as we get closer to the actual dates.



It is a walk and wade trip, typically involving crossing the river in knee high water and fishing up/down the mid-stream gravel bars with indicators and high-stick nymphing. It is suggested that you bring along a wading staff as you may be wading in quicker water that is up to waist high if you want to gain access to more fishing spots.

This will be the third year for this Club trip. The first year we had eight members bring a total of 23 fish (wild and/or hatchery raised) to the net, including chromers up to 24" in length. The second year was less productive as the main wave of Steelhead moved through the system the month before the season was open in this section (the hatchery person I spoke with said they had over 1000 fish come into the hatchery one day!). The Feather can be a productive and exciting water that offers a nice day trip being only 2:45 hours away from Pleasanton/Livermore. Our day will encompass a full day of fishing with a streamside break for lunch, you will need to bring your own food and beverages. Please note you will also need a Steelhead Report Card in addition to your 2021 license.

Contact Alan Wyosnick if you have any questions about this trip.

Lower Yuba River Skwala Workshop with Jon Baiocchi – January 27 & 30

TVFF is once again offering a Skwala workshop outing for up to four anglers on the lower Yuba River near Marysville with Jon Baiocchi. We are getting a head start on the other clubs for these workshops, which will also allow us to be fishing the river after the workshop for the entire season.

Jon has been a recent speaker at the club and the Yuba has been his home river for over 20 years. In this one-day workshop Jon will provide key information early in the season so that attendees will be well prepared to fish the hatch for the entire hatch season through the end of March. He will concentrate on the current Skwala hatch on Dry



Fly/Dry Dropper and nymphing presentations and tactics specifically for the Skwala stonefly hatch, including Leader Formulas, Fly Recommendations, Access Areas, local inside knowledge, insight on the hatch and all the details that pertain to it. Leaders, tippets, lunch, drinks, and handouts included.

The Skwala hatch has been widely promoted in the early season, and the wild trout and steelhead that live in the Yuba River key in on this first big meal of the new year. Fishing a Skwala dry is the most rewarding way to catch large, educated trout on the Yuba, and seeing the take happen in real time is the epitome of fly fishing. The Yuba River has one of the best Skwala hatches found in the west, and it is the perfect classroom to hone your skills and your ability to match the hatch for challenging trout and steelhead. You will learn much from this most informative workshop centered on entomology that you can apply all over the west.

[Both dates are fully subscribed but waitlists are available. There is no cost to join a waitlist.]

Contact Rob Farris if you have any questions about this trip.

Member Reports

Lake Tahoe – Tosh Okano

Haven't been fly fishing for quite some time, but I was fortunate enough to be invited for a guided sport fishing trip on Lake Tahoe in early December. My two friends enlisted the services of long-time guide and friend Gene St. Denis who was kind enough to entertain us for three days on Tahoe, learning a few of his methods for a variety of lake species. The first day was spent focusing on the abundant mackinaw in very deep waters with the aid of downriggers. The second was targeting a local subspecies of rainbows called "Royal Silvers", fishing close to shore. Final day was plying waters further from shore, hoping for a large brown trout. We did hook up with something large but it came unbuttoned before we could see it. Gene had many fish tales of large fish both caught and released prematurely. If you are interested, Gene's DBA: Blue Ribbon Charters.



Finally a Fishing App that Works

Rob Farris

I ran across an app called [The Catch and The Hatch](#) in a Trout Unlimited blog recommendation that might be helpful, especially for those that haven't attended our Entomology class, forgot what they learned in the class, or if the instructor just bored you to tears...

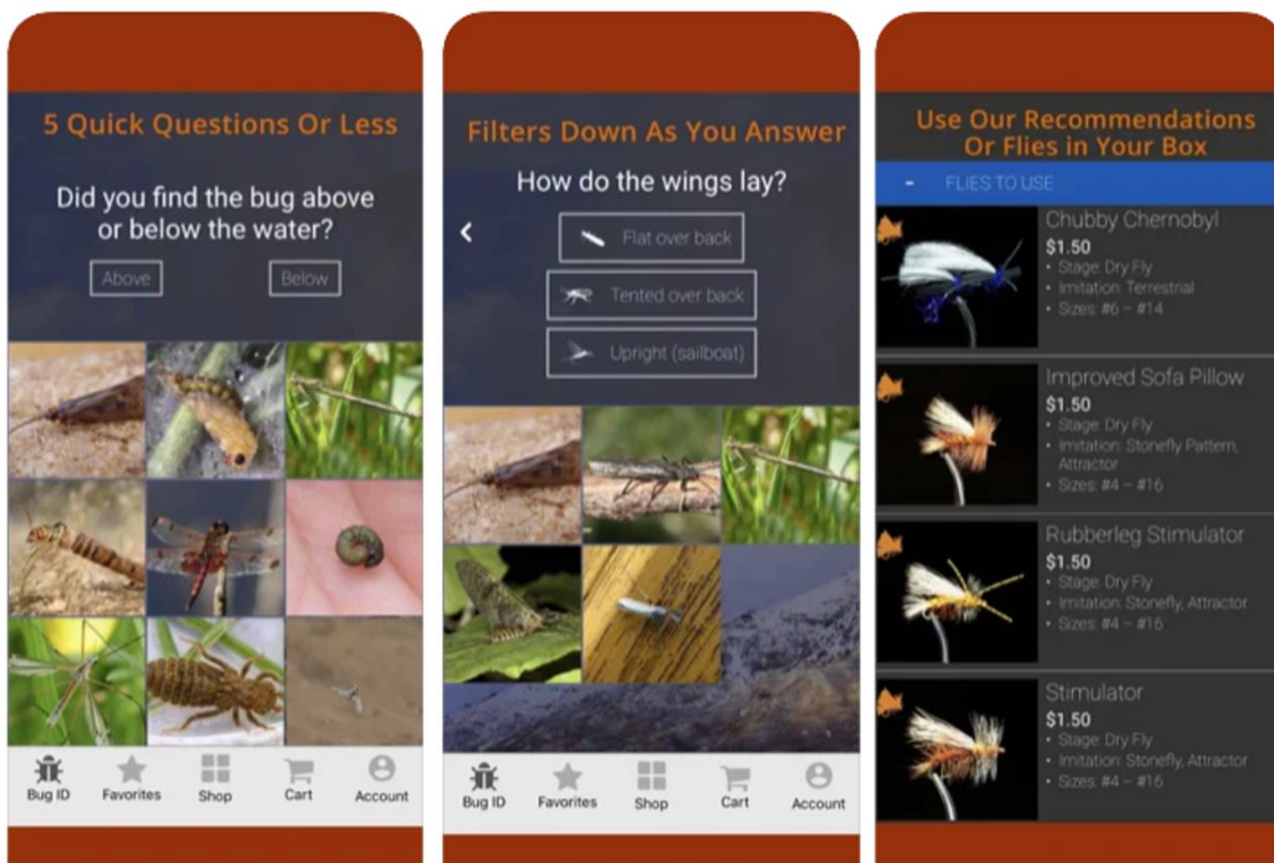
The app is available for both iPhone and Android users on the two app stores. I'll speak to the iPhone version since that is what I downloaded. First the specifics:

- It is a free app, although you will have to provide your email address. You'll likely get follow up emails as the creator sells flies and courseware, which are matched to the bugs on the app. I haven't reviewed

his policy materials as yet so I wouldn't be surprised if they also sold their email list (which you can always unsubscribe from any follow-on emails of course). This seems to be a small operation owned and run by Allen Gardner (who is a marketing guy by trade – that's a real red flag if you ask me... 😊) using the app and the website to generate the revenues for the business. The business has been around for nine years serving the fly fishing industry.

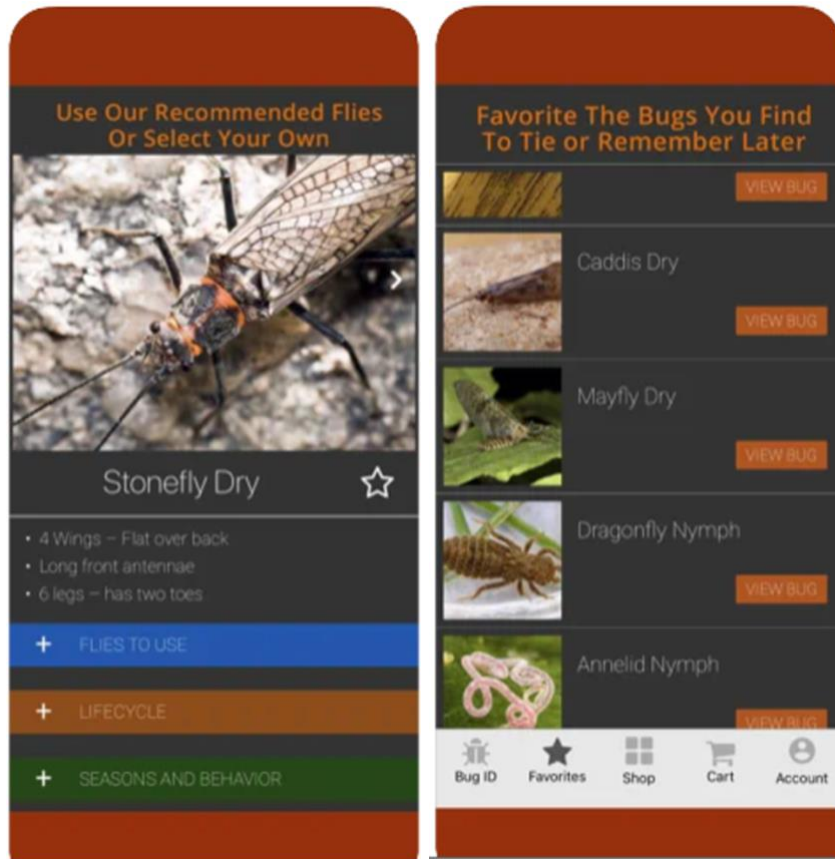
- He's made it really easy to fill out your fly box if you are missing anything, but that's a small price to pay for such a powerful app. Obviously that is paying for the developmental cost he put into this project, and it is quite powerful and helpful. Note that I don't get anything like a free Sage rod for reviewing his app, but I need to look into that... 😊!
- They run a web site at thecatchandthehatch.com and also have over 40,000 followers on Facebook. The iPhone app is rated 4.5 stars on the Apple app store and 5 stars on Google Play.
- You can access a YouTube video on the app's capabilities [here](#), if you don't want to read any further...

OK, top level stuff. Free, no internet required, high quality pictures to help you match what you catch, easy user interface, only consumes 44 MB on the phone, smooth and well-done navigation throughout the app. The app construction and sequential process is very simple to follow on-stream without internet access as it's downloaded on your cell phone for local access. It's an easy way to match the catch (the bug you collect) vs. carrying a small book or manual with you. How easy can it get? So here are the preliminaries for a route that I took through the app:



1. "Did you find the bug above or below water?" – let's start with below
2. "Does it have legs or not?" – sure, let's go with legs
3. "What types of legs does it have?" – let's pick jointed vs. no joint

4. “Does it have a tail or not?” – yep, we like those with tails
5. “Does it have easily visible antenna or not?” – yep. It then narrows down your choices to two bugs with pictures of both and you need to select the closest match. I picked the Damselfly nymph by the way (these are their generic app promo pictures – I do know what a Damselfly nymph looks like, I think... hmmm).



6. It then displays the bug with multiple pictures and a brief description. Even better, it offers you three additional screens: “Flies to use”, “Lifecycle”, and “Seasons and Behavior”.
7. In “Flies to use” it will identify the flies to use as a starter, and if you want to buy from them it will help you place the order for them.
8. As an app user it will also offer you a 50% discount on those flies. Not bad...
9. Each fly has a “favorites” button (Star) that when pressed will store it in the app’s Favorites folder for quick access.

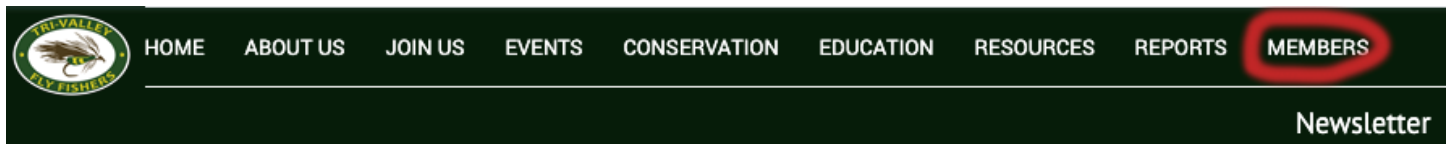
So far I’ve run through multiple scenarios and they are accurate. I would say that the Mayfly section could use several more screens to narrow down the choices to a specific type rather than just a generic Mayfly, especially here in California where we have so many hatches during the year. At that point you have to look at their suggested flies to make the best choice, although you may not know specifically what mayfly you are trying to match. For that level of detail, I guess that you’d have to attend our Entomology class which goes deep into the specifics.

All in all, it’s a very useful tool in my mind if you are not totally “up” on your Entomology, and it appears to be a useful one for on-stream identification. Please do your own due diligence on whether you wish to download this app as this isn’t a fully comprehensive exploration of it.

Website Tips – Member Roster

Mark Spruiell

The club's member roster can be found on the [members-only](#) section of our website:



If you haven't logged in for a while, you'll first be prompted to do so in order to access this part of the system.

From the members home page, click on [Roster](#) to access the member roster. The roster page shows an alphabetical listing of all club members:

CLUB ROSTER

To search for a member, click in the "Search" box and start typing. The system will try to match your keyword against member names, emails, addresses and phone numbers.

[Advanced search...](#)

Search: Found: 89

Show: 1-50

Name	Email	Address	Phone
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[Abellar, Augusto](#)

Note however that it only shows 50 members at a time; you'll have to use the drop-down highlighted above to go to another group.

If you're looking for a particular member's contact information, the quickest way to find them is to begin typing in the Search box:

CLUB ROSTER

To search for a member, click in the "Search" box and start typing. The system will try to match your keyword against member names, emails, addresses and phone numbers.

[Advanced search...](#)

Search: Found: 1

Name	Email	Address	Phone
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[Spruiell, Mark](#)

This is a “live” search that continues to filter the results as you type in your keyword. Searching is not limited to names; you can enter partial phone numbers, city names, etc. To reset the filter, simply clear out the contents of the Search box.

As always, please contact me if you have any issues using our website.

Education Update for 2021

Rob Farris

As we head into 2021, we are all hopeful for a return to a more normal year and enjoying our fly fishing to an even greater degree. For many that also means furthering their education in new areas. Until we know the full

amount of “re-opening” that we will be able to accomplish however, our plans are obviously in a state of uncertainty. So it is likely that we may need flexibility in how we deliver our classes in the short term.



As I transition this year to the Education responsibility from my previous Outings role, I am committed to providing multiple layers of educational opportunities for both the new fly fisher as well as those seeking more advanced learning. My objective will be to provide both live instruction for our classes, bolstering our website capability with more courseware that can be utilized from home, “on the water” sessions, and short form “pre-meeting classes” if there is sufficient interest.

To kick off our courses in 2021, we are once again planning to have our Fundamentals of Fly Fishing course available in the March timeframe, either in the Rod & Gun Club facility if open, or in an alternative open air area if necessary incorporating the need for enhanced Covid prevention requirements. For those who participated in a shortened version last year due to the Covid shutdowns, we will welcome them back to the class at no additional charge to help get their learning back up to speed. We will shortly have registration on the website available and I’ll send out an email when that occurs.

Other future classes this year will include our normal Fly Tying with Jim Broadbent, Entomology, and several different Casting classes with Gary Turri. Additionally, we are looking to offer courses in Euro Nymphing, Dry Fly fishing, Bass and Striper fishing, and potentially Stillwater fishing. Stay tuned as we need to secure instructors and available times for those.

The agenda for our first class, **Fundamentals of Fly Fishing** includes: Getting started and equipment selection; introduction to Knots, tools, and resources; fly line, leader, tippet and rigging the rod; different fishing techniques; basic entomology; fly types and selection; reading the water; introduction to lake fishing; local fishing opportunities; and safety. Also included is a one-day casting instruction with Gary Turri and an “on the water practical” on a local stream (i.e., Stanislaus, Yuba, etc.) with Club members.

If you have any suggestions to advance your own learning please feel free to let me know, and I’ll try to see if we can support it in the coming year.

Patience vs Persistence

Domenick Swentosky – Troutbitten

A good angler doesn't need patience. He needs persistence.

This is a guiding theme I've taken up, not just on the water, but in everyday life. The distinction between the two states of patience and persistence is a maxim that carries over, well beyond the river.

In some ways they are opposites. Patience is waiting for something to happen. And persistence is making something happen.

Over time, patience has been pinned to fishing, as if the two go hand in hand. But that's a mistake. It's an attached stigma that doesn't fit — not for Troutbitten anglers, anyway. So once again, it's apparent that words themselves change the way we think about things. Words and meanings change how we do things. New anglers are taught that fishing is a quiet, patient sport. And so they wait. And they are content when nothing happens.

Many anglers never grow out of this waiting, under some mistaken belief that simply putting in the time will eventually produce results. And to some, patience itself is a reward. It should be, really. There is value in seeing things through, in having the will to stick with a task where the fruits of our labor are slow in coming, where waiting is a virtue.

But all you need is a full day spent with a persistent fisherman to know that your patience isn't really getting anything done.

The persistent angler doesn't accept much about the idea of patience. He is restless. He knows that quality fishing means correcting the inefficiencies, scrapping bad technique and actively forming good habits. He is a tireless critic of his own performance and uses an honest overview as a motivator to be better.



Photo by Bill Dell

The passion for fly fishing grows quickly in the average angler. How can it not? The places where wild trout take us are a panacea that fills us with emotion and enthusiasm unmatched in daily life. The river calls to us, and we return. But in truth, the spark dims over time. The extraordinary becomes common, and we no longer feel that same effect of the woods and water. It's human nature to adapt and find a comfortable place

among our surroundings, and so we grow familiar with what was once stunning and magnificent. In short, just being out there no longer satisfies. The novelty wears off.

Patience in the face of such comfort fails us. And the angler who was once enamored with the extraordinary experience of a river is no longer filled with the same desire to return — when the newness is gone. He stands unimpressed and uncharmed by what have become common things. An angler who can cast a dry over conflicting currents to achieve a drag-free look to a rising trout, may eventually lose the spark that helped him achieve that success in the first place.

It's a cycle. And those of us who've been with the woods and water for decades see the path from afar. Youthful enthusiasm burns out over time. But persistence keeps die-hard anglers involved in a long game. A drive to understand a drifting nymph in totality, or to test streamer presentations regardless of failure or success — these are the things that keep an angler involved for a lifetime.

It is persistence that keeps us alive, open to new challenges, and on an unrelenting course to meet new goals.

Of course, we understand that patience is a component of persistence. Because as we push to develop new skills, we must wait between trips until the moment our boots are wet again. Patience is necessary. And yet, too much of it fosters complacency, a satisfaction with memories and plans rather than a dogged determination to get back out there and continue on our path.

Persistence is the primary character trait of a good angler and one that keeps him involved for a lifetime. Patience is but a secondary helper.

Fish hard, friends.

Conservation

Happy Holidays from CalTrout

“Thank you for supporting our work to ensure resilient wild fish thrive in healthy waters now and for future generations. With you by our side, we remain steadfast in our vision for a California with clean, cold waters flowing freely from source waters to the sea.

Cheers to this year finishing stronger and better equipped for the times ahead. Happy holidays from all of us at California Trout!”



Alameda Creek Restoration Highlights

Fish Ladders Nearing Completion: The Alameda County Water District finished the second year of construction on the massive fish ladder at the BART weir in lower Alameda Creek. Construction will be completed by the end of 2021.

County Enhancing Fish Passage in the Flood Control Channel: The Alameda County Flood Control District began environmental review for fish passage enhancement in a 5.6-mile reach of the Alameda Creek flood control channel below the BART weir. The project will enhance and maintain a low-flow channel, which will improve fish passage and better protect juvenile trout from predators.

Caltrans Niles Canyon Project includes Stonybrook Creek Culvert Removal: Caltrans is beginning construction on two highway safety projects in Niles Canyon. The Alameda Creek Alliance secured a settlement agreement with Caltrans to increase environmental protections, with the agency agreeing to plant additional native riparian trees and remove invasive plants. Caltrans will also remove a road culvert at the bottom of Palomares Canyon and replace it with a bridge, which will improve migratory fish passage into the Stonybrook Creek tributary.

New Flows below Calaveras Reservoir Attract Trout: After the rebuilding of Calaveras Dam, the SFPUC began in early 2019 to release cold water from the reservoir. Low-flow water releases during summer and fall have turned Calaveras Creek below the reservoir and part of Alameda Creek below Little Yosemite into a cold-water refugia for native fish. The SFPUC this year reported seeing more rainbow trout during annual fish surveys in the stream reaches that receive these flows. These stream reaches will be prime spawning and rearing areas for steelhead trout.

Alameda Creek Watershed Center Breaks Ground: The SFPUC broke ground on the long-anticipated Alameda Creek Watershed Center in May. The center will open to the public in 2022, offering educational programs and a public meeting room. Features will include a virtual reality trip through the lifecycle of a steelhead trout.

Riding the Skunk Train – Sam Davidson, Trout Unlimited

TU-led partnership with historic railroad restores key salmon habitat on California's north coast

Trout Unlimited works with many different types of partners in developing and completing stream restoration projects. Mining and timber companies, ranchers and wine grape growers, private landowners and water suppliers are among the diverse entities that make possible TU's efforts to enhance dry season flows, habitat productivity, and fish passage in key salmon and trout streams across the country.

You can add railroads to that list. On the Mendocino Coast in California, an old, historic railway line is at the heart of a suite of restoration projects completed this year that will help imperiled fish species in one of the most important river systems on California's North Coast for coho salmon and steelhead.

These projects, on the Noyo River in Mendocino County, will restore access for endangered coho and threatened steelhead to nearly two miles of key spawning and rearing habitat in the upper watershed. The projects replaced two culverts blocking fish passage along the Skunk Train railway and a third culvert on an adjacent timber road that prevented fish from utilizing valuable habitat.

Once abundant in coastal streams north of Santa Cruz, coho salmon have been in precipitous decline for the past half-century and are now one of the rarest native fishes in California. Federal and state recovery plans for coho rank improvement of fish passage in the upper Noyo as one of the highest priority actions for improving prospects for this species on the Mendocino Coast.

TU led these projects with support from many partners, including the Mendocino Railway (affectionately known as the Skunk Train), the Soper-Wheeler Company, the Mendocino Land Trust, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, NOAA Fisheries, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Michael Love and Associates, AECOM, Granite Construction, the California Fish Passage Forum, The Nature Conservancy and the Salmonid Restoration Foundation.

Although the Noyo River is home to one of the most stable populations of California coho, the federal recovery plan rates this population at moderate to high risk of extinction. From 2013 to 2018, the 5-year average for returning adult coho was 2,755 (the recovery target for the Noyo is 4,000).



Skunk Train project site, Noyo River (before).

Both state and federal recovery plans for coho salmon in this region also identify reducing sediment deposition sources as an important action step for species recovery. Decrepit culverts are especially problematic, as they can cause erosion into streams—sometimes delivering such large amounts of sediment the impact on fish is catastrophic—and prevent fish from moving throughout the river system.

Anna Halligan, TU's North Coast Coho Project director, said that one of the culverts under the Skunk Train was in such poor condition that the hillslope around it had begun to erode and was delivering fine sediment into the Upper Noyo River. A large storm event could have saturated the soils and caused slope failure, potentially burying about three miles of the river under one foot of fine sediment — roughly equal to 840 full dump trucks.

This suite of projects has been in the works since 2010, when Trout Unlimited commissioned a detailed assessment of sediment sources and fish passage barriers along the railway. The construction phase of these projects began in June of this year and



Project site (after).

was completed in October. The two railway culverts were replaced with large structural steel arches. A third culvert on a private timber road directly upstream from one of the rail culverts was replaced with a bridge.

The stream channels were also restored during construction, ensuring fish and other aquatic organisms will be able to migrate successfully.

“Projects like these can take a long time to get off the ground and require a lot of support from public and private entities, but their benefits are immediate and long-lasting,” said Halligan. “Clean water, healthy fisheries, and a robust local economy are good for everyone.”

Such projects also benefit local communities by employing local contractors, helping to sustain existing fisheries, and supporting a mainstay of the Fort Bragg and Willits tourism economy, Halligan noted.

