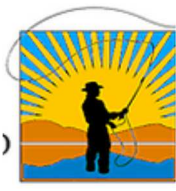


FINNY FACTS



Archive Version

San Diego Fly Fishers

July 2018

Cleaner Water, Brighter Streams, Better Fishing

Volume 41 No. 7

No Meeting at Yacht Club this Month

The **Annual Fundraiser** was a great event that had many members attending. But what makes this magic night so successful? **Volunteers.**

San Diego Fly Fishers has been recognized as one of the most successful organization that supports conservation and education in our local community and we will continue to lead with the help of **Volunteers.** Some of the activities we support include: Trout in the Classroom, Project Healing Waters, Golden Trout Wilderness meadow protection team, Day at the Docks, Youth fishing including STAR/PAL, Boulder Creek Project just to name a few.

What do they all have in common: **Volunteers.**

San Diego Fly Fishers offers to the community free fly casting lessons at Lake Murray nearly every Sunday, free intermediate fly casting lessons at Mission Bay, and free fly tying lessons at the San Carlos Recreation Center. All these programs are staffed by **Volunteers.**

If you haven't detected a theme to this column yet, **we want you to become a volunteer.**

To experience the feeling of satisfaction for a job done well, look into the eyes of

the young child as he/she releases their trout which they raised from an egg. Even a Grinch would find his heart growing three times larger. There is no greater feeling.

For more information about **Volunteering,** see any Board of Directors member and they will get you in contact with the program coordinator.



July Schedule

Every Thursday- Fly Tying at San Carlos Recreation Center 6:30-8:00

July 3rd- Open Classroom- Santee Lakes 12 noon-3pm
Fly Tying, Casting and Fishing

July 17th-Open Classroom- Santee Lakes 12 noon-3pm
Fly Tying, Casting and Fishing

Thanks for the generous Support.




Don Smith proudly displays his winning prize from the Annual Fundraiser at the Southwestern Yacht Club.

Inside

President's..... Page 2
 Annual Fundraiser..... Pages 3 and 4
 Tim Huckay's Report: Backpacking the Upper Kern RiverPages 5 thru 7
 SDFF..... Future Events and Activities Page 8
 Eastern Sierra Report.....Page 9
 Funny Page..... Page 10
 Sponsors Page..... Page 11
 Board Information..... Page 12

Next Program
 Fishing with Arizona Fly Casters
 August 3rd: Tidelans Park and Breakfast
 August 4th: Surf Fish South Mission and BBQ.

Cut-off date for the **August** Finny Facts is
Friday, July 20, 2018.
 Send submissions to Alan Thompson at finnyfacts@gmail.com

What a great evening!! Our Annual Fundraiser was an overwhelming success. As a direct result of your generosity and enthusiasm, our Conservation and Educational Programs will thrive for another year. For those prize winners who were absent, we will post your name in an upcoming edition of Finny Facts. Once again a standing ovation to **Mike Gilroy** and his team for a "Job Well Done."

As a reminder, we will be dark this month...no meeting August will be a busy month with more opportunities to be active in the club activities...LOCALLY. Come join our visitors from the Arizona Fly Casters, as we fish the San Diego Bay and the surf. We will have a food social after each fishing opportunity. So...if you decline to fish, come join us for conversation and some great food. Our August "meeting" will

be held at South Mission Beach...after we fish the surf.

Sorry this message is short, but I have Contractors all over my house...new roof, new windows, and a complete rebuild of the master bedroom.

Enjoy your July...be safe on the 4th. I am headed to Hawaii.

Tight lines,
Larry



**The Indicator
E-mailed
Containing:
Updates;
late breaking
Information;
and
Timely reminders**

**Fly Tying Congress
Every Thursday 6:30-8:30 PM**

Join the San Diego Fly Fishers at San Carlos Recreation Center at 6445 Lake Badin Ave. in San Diego. Instruction to create your own fly is available. Bring your own equipment or use the club equipment, available from one of the instructors.

DIRECTIONS--From Interstate 8 take the Lake Murray off-ramp and drive toward Lake Murray. Travel on Lake Murray Blvd. for 1.6 miles and turn left at Lake Adlon Drive (1st corner past Jackson Drive). Go three blocks and the Recreation Center will be on your right.

Annual Fundraiser in Pictures Awesome Displays of Great Prizes to be Won



These were some of the prizes available in the Special Raffle Section including a Bob Berry carving of a Bonefish



Chuck Waterman and **Jack Duncan** were doing a brisk business of helping members with their questions and sales of the Special Raffle tickets. Both **Jack** and **Chuck** made some special prizes, a hand built fly rod and a handsome clock, respectively.

The level of quality of this year's prizes was unsurpassed. **Mike Gilroy** and **Jeff Clark** did an incredible job.

Right- **Mike Gilroy** addresses the crowd as **President Larry Sorensen** looks on.



Annual Fundraiser in Pictures— *continued*



A large enthusiastic crowd was on hand to as the general raffle started. There were plenty of prizes that could be won with the right ticket.

Below— Mike Gilroy hands the Bob Berry Carving to winner Craig Smith. Two big winners for the night with their rods.



SDFF Club Trip: July 26-29

- backpacking to the Upper Kern River by way of The Forks of the Kern Trail

Whether you are a beginning back packer or experienced, if you ever wanted to fly fish the hallowed grounds of the of the Upper Kern River, this is the trip for you. If you have never backpacked to fly fishing before and always wanted to, this is the trip for you – We will teach you the basics of backpacking. If you have been to the forks and want to go back with a bunch of fun people, this is the trip for you.

Join me (Tim Huckaby and a few other experienced club backpackers) for 3 nights in the wilderness and as many hours of fly-fishing for wild trout in between. Over the years and many backpacking trips to the Forks I have put a huge amount of work into developing a primitive camp site right on a big bend and pool on the river that can hold ~20 tents. It's only 4.2 miles from the trailhead to the site.

There will be many planning meetings and communications between now and the trip for those who are going. If interested, contact me by email: timhuckaby@hotmail.com. There's lots of information from my article below and I have so much more. Adapted from my article in the May/June 2017 issue of California Fly Fisher Magazine:

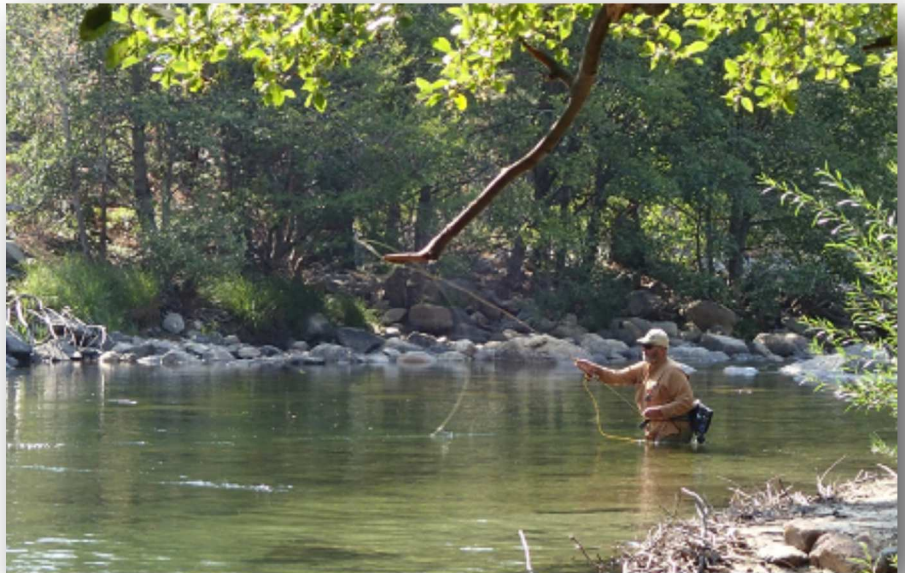
By Tim Huckaby

I am not a backpacker — I am a fly fisher. I backpack as a means to fly fish. It is just not in my genetic makeup to hike miles and miles past fishable water just for the sake of hiking. I cannot do it. Especially when I see rises.

The Forks of the Kern Trail to the upper Kern River in the Golden Trout Wilderness leads to one of those special fly-fishing places that is worthy of all the hassle and effort of backpacking. The "Forks Trail" leads to the confluence of the Little Kern River and the North Fork (main fork) of the Kern River.

My first backpacking adventure was on the Forks of the Kern Trail in August of 2011. My buddy Rudi told me, "If you want to get to the good fishing, you have to earn it

with a



single other soul. I have shared the experi-

Club member Mike Gilroy roll casting dries to big Kern River Rainbows

backpack. I had no ideawhat that meant at the time. I know now. Rudi taught me the basics of backpacking and what you need to thrive for a few nights in the wilderness. Since then, I have backpacked the Forks Trail numerous times. I obsess about going there. During the winter, when roads to the Forks Trail are closed and snowed in, I fantasize about it. I practically look at the river flow of the Kern every day all year long.



I feel like I know the six miles of the Kern upstream from the confluence like the back of my hand. I have had some of the best fly-fishing of my life on that stretch, and I have also struggled to catch and release fish. I have even backpacked the Forks Trail to the upper Kern area all alone, fishing multiple 14-hour days without seeing a

ence by leading many to the upper Kern River by way of the Forks Trail, and I'd like to share the experience with you

Two Unique Trout Species

The Kern River is the only major river in the Sierra Nevada range that drains in a southerly direction. With a gradient of 30 feet per mile, the North Fork of the Kern River is one of the steepest and wildest whitewater rivers in North America. The "Forks Run," which is downriver from the confluence of the Little Kern River and the North Fork of the Kern, is a nearly continuous series of Class IV and Class V rapids and waterfalls. Because of approximately 20 miles of rapids, expert level kayakers cherish the put-in at the confluence of the Little Kern and the upper Kern. It is rumored that the Forks of the Kern Trail was first blazed by kayakers who dragged their boats all the way down the canyon to the river.

But at the confluence, fishing upriver on either the Little Kern River and the North Fork is manageable for a fit and agile fly fisher. And guess what? You can fly fish for two distinct wild-trout species that are found only in this area: the Little Kern golden trout and the Kern River rainbow.

Continued next page

SDFF Club Trip: July 26-29 continued from previous page

If you are one of those people who are on a lifelong quest to catch as many types of salmonids as possible, the Little Kern golden is on your bucket list. The Little Kern River and its tributaries are the only places in the world that hold the Little Kern golden trout. This is not the California golden trout — it's a unique species of goldens. For the last four years of drought, these beautiful fish have taken a beating, and I have avoided fishing the Little Kern over that time because the water levels were so low and the fish were so stressed. Biologists have speculated that during the drought, the Little Kern goldens that survived did so by fleeing upstream to the coolest, deepest water. Now that the Little Kern River is flowing well again, all indications are that the Little Kern goldens will

hopper pattern so viciously hard on top that it scares you. Then imagine that trout going absolutely ballistic after being hooked, jumping 10-15 times during the battle and refusing to tire. That is the Kern River rainbow. I have fly fished for trout all over the United States and in many parts of the world, and I maintain that Kern River rainbows fight harder than any trout out there. And because of the wild nature of the river, they are harder to land, as well.

They get big, too. Fish over 20 inches are common in the Kern, although landing them is not. I have lost many big Kern River rainbows in truly unique ways: by them snapping me off on 5X in midair, for example, and by 200 yard runs upriver or downriver at lightning speed. I have even lost

There has been one good thing about the four-year drought: although the Little Kern became too low to fish, the upper Kern became crossable in spots, so that runs on the east side of the river that had been impossible to reach with a cast suddenly became fishable. For the last four years, I have been able to cross the river in numerous places and cast to the risers unimpeded from the middle of the river. However, that party is over, and I can't imagine there being crossable spots on the upper Kern for the six miles above the confluence until the fall, and maybe not at all this year.

The Fishing

The fly-fishing on the Little Kern and Kern can be spectacular. I have had many 40-plus-fish days. Of course, as is true on any river, I have had days that are not so good. As on any river, the phase of the moon, the water clarity and level, the weather, the hatches, and the time of year affect the fishing.

The upper Kern can be a nasty, wild, dangerous river in the spring in a non-drought year. Many lives have been lost to drownings on the upper Kern through the years. At the time of this writing in early April, the upper Kern was at 3500 cubic feet per second. A couple months ago, it was at 10,000 cfs. In June, it is going to be downright dangerous. The upper Kern is not a tail-water river controlled by flows from a dam, and it is always prudent to watch the flow levels. My favorite site is in Kernville, downriver, at <http://www.dreamflows.com/graphs/day.104.php>. You'll find the three-year history view very interesting, comparing the present to the drought years. During the drought, I fished the upper Kern many times when the flow was under 200 cfs. It's also prudent to watch the temperatures. The closest city is Johnsondale, California, and it's not that close, nor is it at the same altitude. But, you can get a plus-or-minus 10 degrees pulse in the temperature.

Continued next page



The author quickly snapping a picture of a typical Kern River rainbow before releasing it.

come back strong and fast. These fish don't get big, but you can sight fish for them easily because of their colors, and they fight like hell. They also take flies on top.

The Kern River rainbow is also native, wild, and is unique to the area. They get big and mean and will test your fish-fighting skills. Imagine a trout hitting your

them in trees. I had a big Kern River rainbow jump 10 feet into the air into an overhanging tree, snapping me off on the branch on its way back down into the river. But mostly, I lose them because they head shake violently once hooked. I have lost plenty right at my feet; which in my book is great because then I don't have to touch them. They just don't give up.

SDFF Club Trip: July 26-29 continued from previous page

The forks section of the Kern does not see a lot of angling pressure because it's hard to get to when it's open and because it's closed for as many as eight months of the year. This part of the Kern is not for beginners, but I have guided plenty of first-timers to success there. There are places with calm water where a tree-free cast can be made. But because the Kern is wild and can rage, getting into position for the right cast can be a challenge. Many of the banks are overgrown with willows, bushes, and other trees. It's not the type of river for those who hate to lose flies. However, with risk comes reward, and a risky cast flung under a tree and through a two-foot window on a run against the bank is frequently rewarded. But, if my wife Kelly and her friend Meredith, both total beginners, can catch fish on dries there, so can you.



The author's son Mark, 14 at the time, showing that every once in a while, a good hook set on a dry-dropper setup can land two at the same time.

The forks section of the Kern produces the same hatches as many of the rivers of the Sierras, from mayflies, to midges, to a few varieties of stoneflies. What makes the upper Kern area unique, however, compared with most of the rivers and streams in the Sierras, is the abundance of grasshoppers. The Kern river rainbows cannot resist them. Hoppers appear in the spring

and get huge by the end of the summer, and I have fished hoppers successfully from early spring through late fall, but size doesn't seem to matter: I have fished a size 2 Huck Hopper as early as April and absolutely killed with it. The Huck Hopper is simple variation I tie of the Charlie Boy Hopper created by Charlie Craven from Colorado. It does really well on the upper Kern. It floats high, is easy to see from distance, and does not waterlog. It is one of those flies that that does not look so good in the fly shop, viewed from the top, but that outfishes all the other pretty terrestrials.

But I bet any big terrestrial imitation would work on the forks of the Kern all season long, whether alone or as a top fly on a hopper-dropper rig. Unless you are a total beginner, there is no reason to fish "the bobber." The standard rules apply for what tie for the dropper. Of course, it is always prudent to turn over rocks and stare at the bushes to figure out what is hatching. The general rule of flashy flies in clear water and darker nymphs in not-so-clear water applies.

There are many deep pools on the Kern, so a day spent stripping streamers can be really fun, too. Troutzilla and his buddies live in the upper Kern. I have had my rod ripped out of my hand on a take on the swing more than once.

Of course, like most of the rivers in the West, the hour at the end of the day can be crazy-fun dry-fly fishing on a size 18 mayfly imitation. For beginners, that is the most likely time of day for easy hookups.

I don't think leaders and tippet size matter much here. I fish 5X in a hopper-dropper or pure dry-fly setup and 3X when I strip streamers. You probably can get away with stronger leaders and tippet and probably would save a few flies from the trees in the process.

In the summer months, I wade wet. The river is cold — it's melted snow. But the weather can be hot, so I can be quite comfortable. I always hike in (or pack in) wading boots with felt bottoms. The polished granite stones in forks of the Kern are slippery. Titanium spikes do more harm than good on the Kern. In early spring or late

fall, I pack in lightweight (inexpensive) waders.

The "Tax"

So, if the fishing in the forks of the Kern is so awesome, why haven't you heard of it? Why are there so few fly anglers who fish the upper Kern from the Forks Trail? Why doesn't every fly angler in California fish this section of the Kern? I call it the "forks of the Kern tax." The "tax" is that the hike is physical. You should be in good cardio shape to do this hike. From the Forks of the Kern trailhead, you will lose 1,100 feet of elevation in the first 2.2 miles as you hike down into the canyon to the Little Kern River. That is a reverse hike: you are heavy with food (and in my case, whiskey) hiking downhill on the way



A Kern River rainbow fooled by a Huck Hopper.

in and lighter on the way out. Then you have to cross the Little Kern River with your backpack, and in non-drought spring conditions, that can be a challenge. The biggest challenge, of course, is that you have to regain that 1,100 feet in 2.2 miles when you hike back out, often with 35 to 50 pounds on your back and frequently in hot temperatures.

-continued on page

Future Events and Activities



**Fair Registration Will Open
Tuesday, June 5, 2018
9:00 a.m. MDT**

Club Fishing Events

There are numerous Club sponsored fishing events that will occur over the next few months.

July 26-29

Join **Tim Huckaby** as he leads a group of fly fishers on a backpacking trip to the Upper Kern River via the Forks of the Kern trail. **Tim** wrote a great article which appeared in the **California Flyfishing** magazine.

See his article starting on page 5

August 3-4

Join the Arizona Fly Casters as we fish Tidelands on Friday, August 3rd and Mission Beach on Saturday, August 4th.

September 5-9

Check with **Tim Huckaby** if there are any openings remaining on this epic trip to Montana. The members will fish the Clark Fork River and stay at the **Clark Fork Outpost**.

October 18-22

Join **Larry Sorensen** as he leads a group to Arizona where we will be overnight guests of the **Arizona Fly Casters**. Then it's on to the fabulous **San Juan River** in **New Mexico** for 3 days of fishing. Lodging is available and you must contact **Larry** asap.

Member surveys indicated that you want more club sponsored fishing trips. We have listened.

Eastern Sierra Report from Sierra Drifters

Fish'N Conditions 6/1/18

The thunderstorms that plagued the sierra every afternoon last week have gone away. This weekend is setting up for high pressure and a big warming pattern. You can expect warmer and breezy weather in the coming days. We have experienced some windy afternoons and evenings but this hasn't really affected the fishing much.

East Walker River has returned to fishable levels once again. The high flows have no doubt moved some of the fish around to new holding areas.

Bridgeport Reservoir still loaded with water and some jumbo fish have been showing up around the lake.

Silver Lake has fish feeding on small midges toward the south end.

Hot Creek good for numbers and some large fish in the deep pools. It gets good in the afternoons when the mayflies start to emerge.

Upper Owens has smaller fish above the bridge, with the occasional pair of cut-throat still in the river.

McGee Creek still holding some cut-throat in the shallow gravel areas and a few rainbows along the deep undercut banks.

Crowley Lake remains consistent with sporadic slow periods depending on weather and locations around the lake. Good numbers can be found here with some good quality fish mixed in.

Middle Owens flows holding steady and good water conditions but bite remains on the slower side.



We need your help getting rid of Carp!



CARP ANGLERS WANTED, CONVENTIONAL ROD AND REEL, SPEAR, OR BOW

- KILL A CARP and FISH FOR FREE!
- KILL A CARP and TENT CAMP FOR FREE!
- KILL A CARP, PROOF REQUIRED!

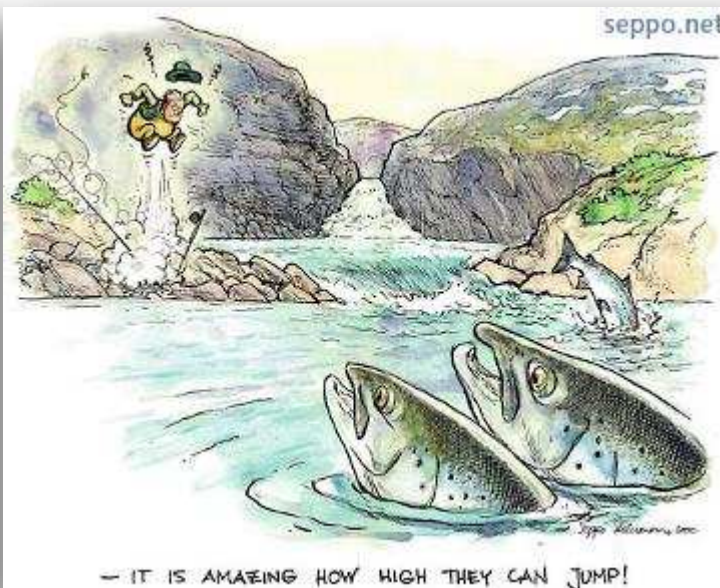
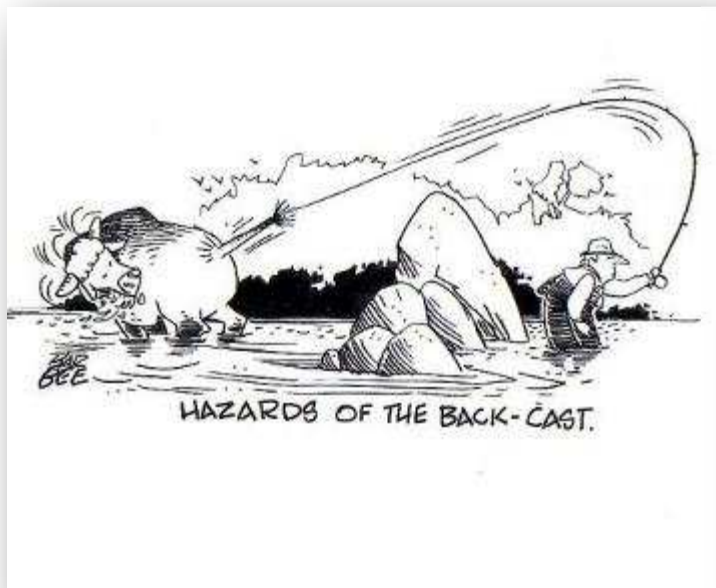
LAKE CUYAMACA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

KILL A CARP!

FREE INTERMEDIATE FLY CASTING 1st and 3rd Sundays at 8am Ski Beach, Mission Bay Park

John Wylie and I (Dennis Panish) are teaching free intermediate fly casting lessons on the first and third Sunday of every month down at Ski Beach Mission Bay. Lessons start at 8 am and run about an hour. I recently received my Casting Instructor certification from FFI. This is open to all SDFF members including beginners and intermediate fly casters.

Funny Page



The altitude can play a part, too. The altitude at the trailhead is 5,844 feet, so it's over a mile high. But what really get you is the heat. It gets hot in the southern Sierra in the summer. It is always best to hike out first thing in the morning, in the coolest part of the day.

Don't let me scare you off, though. I'm 55 years old and 15 pounds overweight. The huffing and puffing is totally worth it. I brought my buddy Mike from the San Diego Fly Fishers on a three-nighter last summer, and he's 67, six-foot four inches, and a biscuit under 250 pounds, so it's not like a death hike — it's just challenging physically. He's begging me to take him back this summer.

Fly fishing the upper the Forks of the Kern River is not for the faint of heart. But as I

have elaborated, there are so many reasons that make the huffing and puffing totally worth it. It's beautiful, it's remote, and it does not get a lot of fishing pressure. Its trout are wild and unique. I hope you get to experience the pure joy of the area, as I have for so many years.

If You Go . . .

You don't have to invest hundreds of dollars to get into backpacking. Both REI and A16 rent backpacks, sleeping bags, pads, and tents very inexpensively. And they hold free classes on the basics of backpacking.

You'll need a California fishing license, and you'll need to make sure you have the correct permits. You are allowed to have a backcountry campfire in the forks of the

Kern, but you will need a fire permit and a Golden Trout Wilderness permit. They are both free.

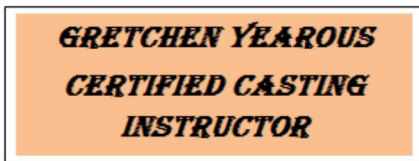
Check out the Web site of the Kern River Fly Shop, <http://kernriverflyshop.com>, and if you have the time, stop to visit Guy Jeans at the shop in Kernville. Guy and his staff are genuinely nice and can offer a wealth of information. Just tell them you are fishing the forks, and they will provide detailed information on the current hatches, and what you should throw.

For more details, feel free to reach me through my fly-fishing blog site at <http://fly-fishing-blog.timhuckaby.com>

FREE CASTING LESSONS EVERY SUNDAY starting at 9 AM

Join the San Diego Fly Fishers at Lake Murray to cast or improve your skills. Free instruction is available. Bring your own equipment or use the club equipment, available from one of the instructors. DIRECTIONS--Take Interstate 8 to Lake Murray Boulevard. Go north on Lake Murray Boulevard to Kiowa Drive. Make a left and continue to the parking lot next to the boat dock. We are to the immediate right of docks under the large cabana. See you there!

2017 Fundraiser Sponsors (2018 Update Next Issue)
A special thank you to our Sponsors . Please Support them with your business



**San Diego Fly Fishers
2018 Directors**

Larry Sorensen **President**
 Sherry Ashbaugh.....**1st Vice-President**
**Media Coordinator**
 Bruce Harris **Treasurer**
 Mark Hedderson..... **Secretary**
 Bruce Bechard **Co-Programs**
 Jack Duncan..... **Rod Building**
 Mike Gilroy..... **At Large**
 Fred Gregory..... **At Large**
 Lee McElravy **Project Healing Waters**
 Jeremy Ramberg **SWC-FFI Club Liaison**
 Gary Strawn **Conservation**
 Alan Thompson..... **Newsletter**
 Steve Vissers **Membership**
 Paul Woolery..... **At-Large**

Other Chairpersons

Tim Huckaby..... **Co-Programs**
 Alan Thompson **Fly Casting Clinic**
 Lucky Ketcham **Fly Tying Clinic**
 David Collins **Web Master**
 Don Davis..... **Video & Library**

IGFA Contact

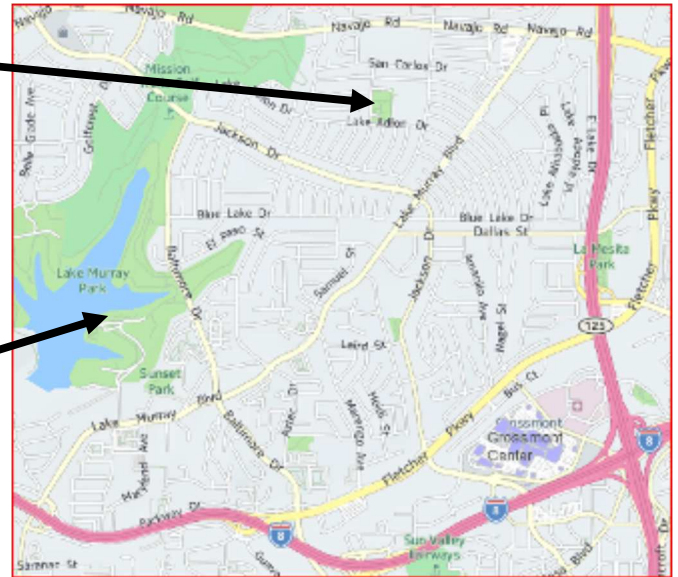
Wesley Woll
 675 S. Sierra Ave. Unit 25
 Solana Beach, CA 92075
 858-481-6386 858-395-9479 cell

Fly Tying Congress
 Thursdays 6:30-8:30

San Carlos Rec. Ctr.
 6445 Lake Badin Ave.
 San Diego, CA 92119

Fly Casting Clinic
 Every Sunday 9 to noon.

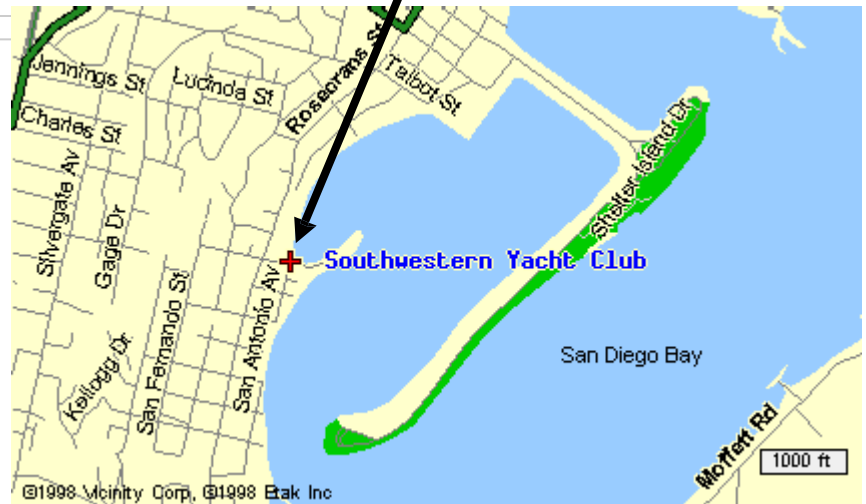
Lake Murray
 Kiowa Dr.
 San Diego, CA 92119



Monthly Programs

First Monday
 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Southwestern Yacht Club
 2702 Qualtrough Street
 San Diego, CA 92106



**Affiliate Club of the
 Fly Fishers International**

Since 1962

Directions from Highway 8 (traveling West) or Interstate 5 (traveling South)

Take Rosecrans exit West to Owen Street
 Turn Left on Owen Street, drive 1 block to San Antonio
 Turn Left on San Antonio, drive 2 blocks
 Turn right onto Qualtrough and follow to SWYC entryway at end of street.

Southwestern Yacht Club
 2702 Qualtrough Street
 San Diego, CA 92106
 (619)222-0438