

September 2005



# CHICO AREA FLYFISHERS'

**short casts**

**June 2005**



## THE LINE

## General Meeting

Did summer go fast for you too? It flew by for me! I hope everyone had a great one and did a lot of fun family things, which included fly fishing too. This summer was a little different. The water levels, for the most part, were at early June levels in the first part of August! Streams that are generally a trickle this time of year are still flowing great. The fish got to love that!

### SECRETARIE'S NOTES

By Lionel Valley

I had two great fishing trips to Lake Almanor. No, it wasn't the "Hex" hatch, but it was the Blood midge hatch! I've never seen so many fish rising on the lake! They were every where! Bugs were coming off by the dozens! And, nobody else fishing! The largest I caught was about 3 1/2 pounds and on a 4 weight rod with a little Ross reel (which I won at our annual dinner). He almost spooled me as he jumped 6 times! It's pretty amazing to play a fish, sitting in a float tube, facing south, and have the fish leap out of the water to the due east of you! I was not in control! I also caught small-mouth bass and a huge Squawfish, which may have not survived my release.

Way back on June 20, 2005, your Board met and covered a number of items including the following:

-The Board spent some time discussing any restrictions that we need to be aware of concerning the use of our funds for such things as the money that was spent to make the Red Bluff Ranch available to all of our members for the weekend that was reserved for the Club. It was generally agreed that it was a great outing, but the Club needs to somehow get better participation from our membership to be able to justify the expense and trouble involved in having that type of outing.

I took my brother to Almanor and he caught his first fish out of a pontoon boat and his first fish out of Almanor! Now I think he may be sneaking up there without me! I never did get to fish the "Hex" hatch but the reports I heard were varied, but none were red hot.

-Your Board approved donations to the following organizations which totaled some \$6,100.00:

-Butte County Library, Hooked on Fishing, Chico Creek Nature Center, Cal Trout, Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve, McCloud River Preserve, Trout Unlimited, Northern California Federation of Fly Fishers, California Sportfishing Protection Alliance.

I had a family vacation at Lake Tahoe and I did go fishing twice. My son and I fished a tiny creek (Barker Creek), where I learned to  
*(Continued on page 4)*

-The Board is also looking into donations for Save Lake Almanor, Friends of the Trinity River, and the Butte  
*(cont. on page 4)*

### Chico Area Flyfisher's First Ladies Fly Fishing Clinic

Our first Ladies Fly Fishing Clinic was a tremendous success! We had a wonderful group attend, and all were anxious to learn, & have fun. After the day was done, there was a group of exhausted, smiling ladies.

Three representatives from Chico Fly Shop: John, Larry and Nick, as well as Mac from Fish First worked with the participants. They were there most of the day and all the ladies were able to receive one on one instruction. Sierra Stream and Mountain donated two items for each lady who attended. And, Brad the manager from Clear Creek Hunting and Fishing Club donated one free pass for each lady to return to the club with a guest. We were very delighted with the wonderful support from our local Fly shops and Clear Creek Hunting and Fishing Club.

There were at least 3 participants who had never fly fished before. With all the fish jumping around out there taunting us in every part of the lake, it was quite exciting to cast a line in hopes of catching a bass or blue gill. Most of the participants did catch one or the other. The fish didn't even care if you had a bad cast, when you began to retrieve your line; you were very likely to find a fish tightly holding on!

Those of us who had been fly fishing before received a free tune-up, and we were surprised to find many of us were bending our wrists. When this was pointed out, I found it much easier to keep the line higher in the air and this helped to keep my line off of the bank and out of the weeds I, for one, am now less likely to catch fish on my back cast as well as my forward cast!

As the day was ending, we all sat talking about their day and everyone expressed interest in another outing and where it would be located? We are considering a stream next time for steelhead, salmon or rainbow trout? We are considering our next Ladies Fishout to be in Sept or Oct.

So if you ladies, or you guy's wives, are interested in our next adventure, it's easy to attend. Just call Val Bowlby 891-0706 or Pat Sleeper 345-1197. We anticipate the next fish-out will be even better.

*The Chico Area Flyfishers have always worked to safeguard the environment, promote the protection and enhancement of our fisheries and at the same time safeguard the right of the public to enjoy these environments. In this vein the following letter of proposal was submitted to the California Fish and Game Commission requesting that the*

**Chico Area Flyfishers**

P.O. Box 3583

Chico, CA 95927

August 14, 2005

California Fish and Game Commission  
1416 Ninth Street, Room 1320  
Sacramento, CA 95814

**Subject: Proposal to Change Big Chico Creek Fishing Regulations**

Dear California Fish and Game Commission:

The trout fishing season on Big Chico Creek was drastically reduced in 2002 at the request of private landowners in the watershed. This action was not scientifically justified and it goes against sound Fish and Game Commission policy. The Chico Area Flyfishers (CAF) is requesting that the Commission return a reasonable season to this wonderful trout stream.

Our proposal refers to the section of Big Chico Creek described in the Freshwater Sport Fishing Regulations subsection (b)(20)(B) of Section 7.50 Alphabetical List of Waters with Special Fishing Regulations. This Section of Big Chico Creek is described as follows: *From Bear Hole to the upper Boundary of the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve.*

We propose that the "Open Season" be changed to allow fishing from October 15 through May 31. We strongly recommend continuing the current requirement for artificial lures with barbless hooks, and the zero limit on salmon. We are not proposing changes to the other sections of Big Chico Creek.

This proposal would accomplish the following tasks:

- It will return to California anglers, a fishery that was unnecessarily taken away in 2002 at the request of private landowners in the upper watershed
- It will maintain consistency with established Commission Policy: *Al Taucher's Preserving Hunting and Sport Fishing Opportunities Policy.*
- It will continue a reasonable fishery management approach, where spring-run Chinook salmon are protected, while still allowing trout fishing as occurs on numerous other local waters such as the Sacramento, Feather, and Yuba Rivers, as well as Deer Creek, Mill Creek Antelope Creek, and Battle Creek.

## Rationale Document for Chico Area Flyfishers' Request to Reinstate Big Chico Creek Trout Fishing

### **Background**

During the 2001-2002 Fishing Regulations cycle, in response to a request by landowners in the upper Big Chico Creek watershed, the California Fish and Game Commission drastically reduced the fishing opportunities on Big Chico Creek. This included a revision of the regulation boundaries and a massive reduction in the fishing season upstream of Bear Hole. Most of the trout fishing on Big Chico Creek occurs upstream of Bear Hole, and the public has access to about 7 miles of this outstanding trout fishery stream in Upper Bidwell Park and the BCCER. In the Upper Bidwell Park section of the stream, the season was reduced from 258 days to 90 days, a 65% reduction. In the Big Chico Creek Ecological Reserve (BCCER) section, the fishing season was reduced by 40%. In addition, the new 90-day season occurs mostly during the winter months of November through mid-February, so the cold temperatures and inclement weather reduce the fishing opportunities even more. These closures resulted in a major loss of a wonderful public fishing resource.

The initial request for closing down this fishery was based on protecting spring run Chinook salmon. This reflected a poor fishery management strategy because no salmon season existed on Big Chico Creek, and only barbless hooks and catch-and-release fishing was allowed in the trout fishing section of the stream. These regulations were more than sufficient to protect the few spring run found in this section of the stream, just as catch-and-release/barbless hook regulations sufficiently protect the spring run on Battle Creek, Deer Creek, Mill Creek, Antelope Creek, as well as many other streams where trout fishing is allowed where spring run Chinook are found. On the Sacramento River, anglers can fish for trout even during the spawning period for winter-run Chinook salmon, an endangered species (our proposal protects against this by not allowing fishing from June 1 through October 14). The catch-and-release fishing on Big Chico Creek targets the healthy population of trout in the stream, not the salmon, as witnessed by the numerous members of the Chico Area Flyfishers (CAF) who used to fish the stream on a regular basis.

### **Incidental Take**

Regarding the issue of incidental take, where a salmon could be caught unintentionally by an angler fishing for trout, this question was posed to the CAF membership and not a single person had ever accidentally hooked a salmon on Big Chico Creek, some members having fished the creek for over 40 years. And keep in mind that regardless of whether a salmon is caught, this section of stream is catch and release. In addition, a naturally occurring fish barrier on this stream has precluded all but a few salmon from even accessing the upper 6 miles of this stream. Therefore, the closure of this trout stream for the last 4 years has not reflected a sound fishery management strategy. Little, if any, additional protection has been afforded the few salmon that even occur in the upper section of this stream.

### **Poaching**

Regarding the subject of salmon poaching, the 2001 regulation change made it easier for the illegal poaching of spring run Chinook. Will Bishop, a recently retired game warden with decades of experience in this area, said that legal trout anglers are a big help in reporting poachers because they know the regulations, can identify illegal activity, and will notify the game wardens of violators. This is particularly important considering the understaffing problems facing wildlife enforcement these days. The continued closure of this trout stream drastically reduces the eyes and ears of legal anglers who would assist in its protection.

### **CAF Proposal**

The Chico Area Flyfishers is an organization with over 100 members and has been actively involved in conservation and fishery issues since the 1970's. CAF considers the protection and promotion of our fishery resources its highest priority, and we believe this will be accomplished through sound fishery management practices and by continuing a legacy of strong conservation ethics.

Our proposal to change the open season on this section of the creek while keeping the catch-and-release, barbless hook requirements, would establish a new season that maximizes angler enjoyment of the fishery during the most desirable periods to be on the stream. These include the early fall and during the spring when the fish are becoming more active, and the flows and water temperatures are highly suitable for fishing. We propose to close the fishery after May 31 due to the elevated water temperatures that can occur during this time period, particularly in the lower reaches of this section.

The 2002 decision to close down most of the trout fishing on Big Chico Creek was unjustified and onerous. It significantly impacted trout fishing while providing little, if any, real protection for the salmon. Our goal is to correct this problem and re-open the trout fishing season on Big Chico Creek. The salmon will not be harmed by this action and the public will greatly benefit by the restoration of this thriving trout fishery.

## LOCAL GUIDES

Chico Fly Shop  
Chico, CA  
(530) 345-9983

Fish First  
Chico, CA  
(530) 343-8300

Merganser Outfitters  
Chico, CA  
(530) 345-4071

Orland Outfitters  
Orland, CA  
(530) 865-8545

Oasis Springs Lodge  
Paynes Creek, CA  
(530) 642-4150

Big Bluff Ranch  
Red Bluff, CA  
(530) 529-2291



**RAPTOR ROD WORKS**  
Production \* Custom \* Repair  
(530) 894-2062

## Calendar of Events

**Gen. Mtg. - Sept. 14th**  
**7:30pm**  
**Butte County Library**

**Feather River Fishout** September  
18th. Meet at park and ride Hwy 32

**Newsletter Editor**  
ledbetterpe@butte.edu

**CAF WEBPAGE**  
Http:chicoareaflyfishers.org

**FISHING REPORTS**  
www.fishfirst.com

CHICO AREA FLYFISHERS'  
P.O. BOX 3583



## SECRETARIE'S NOTES (Continued from page 1)

Creek Watershed Alliance.

-It was also agreed that donation suggestions from any of our members should be solicited keeping in mind that we do have a limited amount of funds. So if you have a good alternative, please get the information to support your request to any of our officers or board members without delay.

*"Human Beings, who are almost unique in having the ability to learn from the experience of others, are also remarkable in their apparent disinclination to do so". Douglas Adams*

## Presidents line (Continued from page 1)

fly fish when I was a kid. An 8 inch Brook Trout is a big one in this creek! The standard fish is a 4 to 6 inch Brookie. We didn't catch anything notable, but we did come across a 5 foot rattle snake, which didn't rattle once. He was happy to get out of our way, and so were we!

We then fished a small lake with two small inflatable boats. We fished hard, with no success, although there were a few fish rising. It's been a while since I've had to deal with two pound leader, that stuff is thread! Even with my magnifying clip-ons, I had a heck of a time with a #20 midge imitation. After a few hours we called it quits. When I was a kid I remembered about catching fish where the stream came into the lake, so I told my son I was going to check it out. Two feet of grass, willows and mud made the walking difficult but I made it to the place where the stream came in, well, where it used to come, some 40 years ago!

Just a tiny sandy stream bed, taken over by the grass and willows. No water. I knew there was water coming in someplace, because we had crossed the stream on the road, and I noticed about 8 to 10 inches of flowing water. As I walked back to the truck my foot sunk through the mud, cold water! The stream went under ground! I gingerly walked out towards the edge of the lake, on a kind of floating, vibrating mass of grass and mud. Fortunately I spotted a small log 6 feet from the water that I could stand on and not sink up to my knees. I could see a undercut cove, with water about 3 feet deep. With a bead head bugger on, I just dropped it into the cove and Wham, a hit. I missed him, but the next one I didn't. A nice 13 inch Brookie! As I was playing him I looked back into the cove and there was a huge mass of trout swimming out towards the middle of the lake.

The fish were under my feet! My son and I caught 8 Brook trout from 11 to 14 inches, and we could've caught more but a jeep came in and I didn't want them to see us. A bait fisherman could catch a sack full! Classic fly fishing at it's best!

Start thinking about nominations for officers and directors. The nominations will be in October, with the election in November. If you love to fly fish this is a great way to meet some of the best fly fisher people in our area! Learn their secrets, and their secret spots, become a director, its fun! 5211834 U.S. POSTAGE

## BOARD MEMBERS

**President:** Dana Miller...345-3266

**Vice President & Historian:**

**Roger Bevers** .....343-6442

**Secretary:** Lionel Valley 343-7364

**Treasurer:** Dennis Boyd 891-5760

**Fish Master:** Don Sleeper345-1197

## Board Members:

**Ron Leger**.....343-5191

**Don Sleeper**.....345-1197

**Val Bowlby**.....891-0706

**Larry Willis**.....895-0156

## FISHOUT SCHEDULE

Location	Date	Fish Master	Event
Feather River	September 18th	Don Sleeper	Steelhead/Salmon