

December 2015  
Edition

President's Message

From our Editor

Holiday Party

David's Lines

From our Treasurer

December  
Conservation Notes

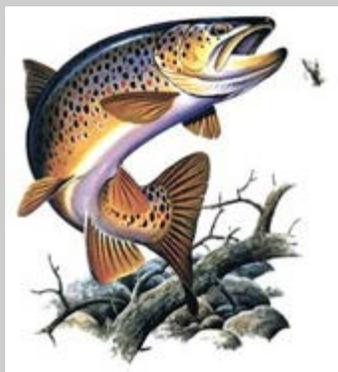
Let's Go Fishing

Sustaining Donors

RMF Quick Links



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## From our President

### Holiday Wishes and Gifts and Celebrations, Oh My!

I don't know about you, but I think the holiday 'season' in our country now begins with Halloween and doesn't end till the Super Bowl is won or lost, or maybe even until President's Day sales are wrapped up. Unfortunately it isn't quite one hundred percent 'holiday' so we can't all rush off on the first red-eye to Christmas Island and warm up our winter-chilled casting arms.

Still, we can celebrate the fact there is a Christmas Island which still has fantastic fishing to fuel our wishes, and that we are involved with an organization working in cold-water climes to preserve our remaining great fishing, and restore what we have lost.

If you recently responded to our membership survey by pledging to play an active role in our field projects next season, I want to give you a special holiday high-five. Due to the grant monies we have raised and the trust and confidence we've built with partners like the Forest Service and Colorado Parks and Wildlife, we have unique opportunities in the next couple of years to dramatically affect the future of our home rivers. Glad you are willing to give some time back to the fish and streams we love. Bob Green, our newsletter editor, describes the survey results in an article below.

While this is a 'kickback' season for some, your chapter is not taking a holiday and resting on past laurels. We have applied for a Trout Unlimited "Embrace A Stream" grant which could add a missing funding piece needed to begin restoring Greenback Cutthroats to George Creek, a tributary of the North Fork of the Poudre. What a gift we could give the future with such a restoration project! If that request is funded we'll have a Christmas in July celebration on the banks of George Creek as we put our boots on the ground to fulfill another wish for native trout.

Speaking of celebrations, don't forget our Holiday Party coming up the 11th of this month (in lieu of our regular meeting date). **Check the details on our website** and come see if you can win one of the holiday trees decorated with flies. Friends and family are welcome!

**you can afford. Special recognition occurs at the \$50 donation level.**

Join Our Mailing List!

Forward to a Friend

One gift arrived a little early this year when Cheyenne Owens, the current Behnke Fellow at Colorado State University, dropped in at our November meeting to thank the chapter for supporting the Fellowship program. CSU sources tell us it is one of the more significant Fellowships on campus. Cheyenne is using our support to continue masters degree work on Snake Rive cutthroats. She promised to return to a meeting next year (not that far away!) and tell us more about her research.

Speaking of CSU and the famed Dr. Behnke, some of our newer members may not know that the renown 'Dr Trout' was a long time chapter member. More than an acclaimed academic, he was also a fisherman and participated when he could in our conservation field work. I remember a rainy night on the banks of the Michigan River near Gould when he rolled his sleeping bag under my jacked-up pickup to keep dry. But, to the point, CSU has begun a drive to build a \$3 million fund to endow a Behnke chair in the Warner College of Natural Resources. His work was a gift to fish lovers the world over. It will be great to see it honored and continued in this way. See more on our [Scholarships page](#).

And finally, fish never take a holiday from feeding, so if you find some open water, drift a nymph through it and you may just land yourself a cold, wet, fishy gift. And, hold on to that wish for Christmas Island. There's always next year!!

**Wil Huett**, President  
Rocky Mountain Flycasters

## Chapter Event Calendar

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## From Our Editor

### Good News: Results of the RMF Pre-Season Survey of Volunteers

Because 2016 RMF volunteer conservation projects will require an unprecedented number of volunteers, the Marketing and Communications Committee developed a plan to identify, enlist and begin to engage volunteers over the winter of 2015-2016. The plan, currently being implemented, began with an email survey to identify those with an interest in volunteering, and will include follow-ups with interested volunteers and a least one-group orientation meeting.



**Survey Procedures:** To determine what we need to know about potential volunteers to effectively recruit and engage them, a review of the volunteer recruitment literature was conducted; and, all members of the RMF Leadership Team were asked to contribute questions they thought important to aid the chapters' identification and engagement of volunteers. The M and C Committee then reviewed these questions and constructed a draft questionnaire. The draft questionnaire was sent



RMF Flypaper Editor Bob Green

back to the Leadership Team members for review. Following this review, an invitation to participate and a link to the final survey instrument was emailed to the approximately 1,000 addresses on The Flypapers subscriber's list. After the initial invitation was emailed on November 10, three email follow-ups were sent. In addition, on Guest Night, November 18, the email addresses of people who had not received the email invitation were collected. These people were also sent the survey link and an invitation to participate on November 19. The survey was closed on November 23.

**Results:** 168 RMF members and friends completed the survey. Of these, 143 or 85% indicated they were either definitely interested (81 or 48%) or might be interested (62 or 37%) in volunteering during the 2016 year. A significant number of people who volunteered in 2015 (63 or 44%) expressed an interest in 2016 volunteering, including almost all (95%) of the members of the Leadership Team. More importantly, perhaps, the potential volunteers included 79 or 56% new volunteers, those who did not volunteer in 2015. And, 51 or 37% of the potential volunteers said they would be interested in attending a meeting this winter and 67 (49%) responded "maybe."

The complete findings from the study can be examined in this [Survey Monkey PDF](#).

The findings also revealed a wide range of different activities in which the potential volunteers were interested. Notably, many volunteers indicated their availability to volunteer for projects on weekdays, and a large number of fish and wildlife and other conservation professionals expressed an interest in volunteering with us in 2016.

**Note:** Three survey respondents, selected at random, each won a \$100 cash card for participating in the survey. These awards will be made at a special 2016 RMF volunteer orientation planned for mid-January 2016.

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## Our Holiday Party



We encourage you to attend our annual festive party and bring your spouse or significant other. We have a lot of fun with the White Elephant gift exchange, the raffles, and good conversation over heavy hors d'oeuvres. A cash bar will be available featuring great brews from the brewery.

Cost is \$15 per person if purchased on line (\$20 at the door) and can be purchased from the [Rocky Mountain Flycasters holiday page](#).

Because of larger number of attendees, we ask that you bring one wrapped gift per couple for the White Elephant exchange if you wish to participate. There are a variety of gifts presented each year and opportunities to "steal" them

will be there. (Who will go home with the lighted marble trout?) Lots of fun!

Please also bring a few flies to put on the fly trees for that raffle. Raffle tickets are included with entrance price, but we'll sell you more if you want! We also raffle off a rod!

We'll gather at 6:30, eat about 7:00, and then have the gift exchange around 8:00. We should be finished between 9:00 and 9:30.

Please go online now at the website above and get your tickets.

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## *David's Lines: A Flypaper Column*



David Cunningham, *The FlyPaper* Columnist

"I am an Englishman who is very happy to live in Colorado. I am semi-retired from the business world and have renewed my interest in writing. Some of my pieces will relate to actual events, others will be fiction. (My friends tell me I have trouble knowing the difference.) The "David's Line" column will feature the mysteries of our sport, restoration, and the pleasures of good company. Let me know whether or not these stories are worth reading. Life is short—go fishing first "

—David Cunningham.

### **Fishing buddies**

(Author's note: *Apologies to Bob, Allen, Mark, and Mike, if these stories don't quite match their recollections.*)

Fly fishing is a singular sport - one angler, one fly, one fish. In the moment, the isolation and intense focus is the core of the experience. But the joy of the experience is magnified when you have a fishing buddy. The benefits are too many to list, and most consist of small things, like a hand when you're scrambling up a steep bank. It always surprises me how a ten pound pull makes so much difference in taking those last couple of steps - and saves you the embarrassment of the butt-shuffle that was your alternative. Another surprise is the ability of congenial company to cut driving time in half, or so it seems. For those of us living in Fort Collins, a solo drive to Alcova to fish the Miracle Mile is a 4 hour drag through endless Wyoming rangeland. Fill the car with three buddies, buzzed on caffeine at 6 am, chattering about last week's fishing on the Poudre or their latest home improvement disaster, and the drive is over in no time at all.

Then there is the shared wisdom in reading the river, fish spotting, and fly selection. Two or three people fishing a river can try different approaches and when one hits the magic combination, companions can adopt the same rig. Seeing a friend net a fish encourages persistence, and bragging rights rivalry sharpens our intensity.

Friendships are built around shared experiences, particularly when conditions or circumstances create hazards, and the measure of your companions is how they react. Fly fishing often involves visiting unknown waters at remote locations, frequently in the mountains, and sometimes in the winter. Most

of us have misjudged the weather, or fished too long in heavy rain until it turned to thunder, lightning, and hail. Being alone increases the risks and certainly doubles the anxiety when you make these bad decisions. There is nothing like seeing your equally half-drowned buddy pointing back to the trail so you don't stay any longer, and you don't clomp out alone.

Being in a drift boat concentrates the buddy experience. First, there are three people sharing 35 sq ft of space for five hours. Two of them are swinging lines with large hooks attached, and one is trying to keep the Titanic off the rocks. What could possibly go wrong? Last year Mark Miller offered his drift boat for a fishing trip on the Green River. Bob Green and I filled the passenger seats. My line control in the gusty winds tested the courage of my companions. Mark learned to duck and row at the same time. To ease his distress, I offered to row for a while. With the confidence of a man who rows a folding boat on a back-yard lake, I boldly launched us onto the river. Mark gave me a few pointers, the most important of which was, "When a rock appears, point straight at it and back paddle." A short time later a rock did appear. I used my infinite wisdom to conclude that it was way too big to point at, so I spun the boat around and rowed for the shore. My efforts had zero effect on our trajectory and we careened towards Mount Everest. Mark's face took on an ashen hue, but he managed to keep expletives out of his barked instructions. The boat came around just in time to thump the outer edge of the mountain. My tour of duty as pilot ended immediately. An hour later Mark volunteered to take the boat through the Mother-in-Law rapids on his own. Bob and I jumped out in an instant and hiked downstream to pick up the pieces if he made the slightest mistake. (There is a fine video of that passage with us egging him on.) Finally, at the end of the day, we had wade fished for a while and Bob returned to the moored boat. He proceeded to perform an elegant embarkation, misjudged the stability of the gunnel, and rolled into the river. This was not an air/sea rescue situation as the mooring was shallow and Bob's reaction to the icy water flooding his waders was a leap that would have been a highlight clip for any NBA dunking show. Out of the water, he had to make a choice of a frozen ride to the pull out or a half mile hike. We figured that the hike would warm him up, and I walked with him while Mark rowed the boat. He was not very good companion as his chattering teeth drowned out his responses to my jokes about guys who fall out of boats. It is a credit to the human race that I can still count Mark and Bob as friends.

Sometimes the hazards crop up away from the water. Two years ago a friend and I set out to fish Delaney Butte in North Park. We left at 7 am in early May and we took the scenic Poudre Canyon route. The Weather Underground forecast had warned that winds would be high, but we glossed over that flimsy information and celebrated a friend's friend's fishing report that indicated that the ice-out had produced big hungry fish. The wind in the canyon buffeted my Jeep, but we attributed that to "Vortex effects" and drove on. About fifteen miles from Walden the wind was fierce and we came up on a line of stalled traffic. A couple of lodge pole pines had fallen onto the road. I peered down the road and suggested that we drive to the head of the line, put my tow strap on the tips of the downed trees and let the Jeep drag them off. Allen yelled, "Forget the damn trees, back the hell up." Apparently I had stopped alongside a dozen beetle killed pines that were now bent 40 degrees in our direction. From 50 yards back we watched them pop and fall like breadsticks. Our day was saved by the chance arrival of a road repair crew with a grader and a front end loader. When the wind eased off they cleared the road. As we were so close to Delaney we decided that going home would be stupid, (and, of course, we don't do stupid), so we proceeded to the lake and set about fishing in a thirty knot wind. It was a cold day to start with and the wind took the apparent temperature to frostbite levels. In wet boots and waders I weigh about 150 lbs and when a nasty gust found me standing on a six foot wide, fifty foot spit of land, it literally drove me into the lake – one hand on my rod, one hand on my staff and one hand on my hat – you get the picture. At that moment, Allen hooked a rod-bending fish. I watched him moving along the bank with waves crashing at his knees. He landed the beast, a 6 lbs brown, and we high fived the brilliant decisions we had made that day. Since then Allen and I have fished many streams on breathlessly beautiful days, but it is the Delaney trip that we talk about most

often.

The most common minor disaster on a river is falling in. The afore mentioned Allen and I were fishing at Upper Landings, (near Stove Prairie Road junction with Hwy 14), where a fast riffle feeds into a large, deep, pool, with a vertical rock wall and a back eddy that swirls in a twenty foot loop before running out over shallow bar. We chose to fish the riffle first and I was upstream of Allen. I glanced over several times to see how far apart we were and how far down he was working the stream. After a five minute gap I looked again and there was no sign of him. I assumed that he had decided to fish around the bend in the river at the top of the pool and I continued to cast. Twenty minutes later I had moved down the river and, as I approached the pool, Allen was walking towards me – dressed in loose pants and a tee shirt. He had stepped into a small hole at the head of the pool and tumbled in. The current took him into the pool and rolled him into the eddy. He touched bottom and it took some strong kicks and strokes to get out. He returned the next day with a grapple hook to retrieve his rod and reel. It could have been the fire brigade dragging for him.

It is good for the ego to buddy fish with a beginner. It is amazing how much minutia fly fishermen accumulate and it makes us feel so superior as we impart our knowledge to somebody who fails comprehend simple things like pupae, nymphs, emergers, spinners, and Chernobyl Ants, or fails to grasp the double back-haul cast. Of course there is the risk that they execute a cast with the delicacy of a breaching blue whale – and promptly hook a 2 lbs rainbow. My comeuppance came when my friend Mike joined me for a guided outing at Deckers. Mike had been a spin-cast fisherman for many years and, after twenty hours of practice on a pond, I had taught him everything that he needed to know about fly fishing. Our guide from 80/20 Anglers set up our rigs with three flies, a glob of weight, and a Thingamabob. He led us to a riffle stretch and we began to cast. Within a minute I had a bird's nest mess and Mike had hooked the guide. Being a guide he didn't dump us both into the pool. Instead he growled, "Who taught you to back cast to fish a riffle?" We both pointed at each other, "He did." The guide snorted and then proceeded to demonstrate the simplest technique of an upstream flip, downstream drift, loading the rod at the bottom of the drift, and flipping it back to begin over again. Fly-in-the-water time was tripled and before long big, fat, rainbows were in the net. Again it is amazing that Mike is still a friend.

An alternative to picking a beginner as a fishing buddy is to select one who is smarter, younger, and stronger than you are. At my age this opens a vast number of candidates. After you have snared one of these heroes it is important that you make begging for help sound like a wise suggestion. For instance, when the best approach for a right handed cast to a feeding lane is on the far bank of a wide, thigh deep, fast moving stream, make the suggestion, "Would you be better off casting on the far bank? We could buddy up to take the risk out of the crossing." Your hero will place his arm over your shoulder, you will grab his wader belt, and together you will stroll to the promised-land. It is amazing how much more stable four legs are than two when traversing stacked bowling balls and moss covered slabs. Horses worked it out centuries ago and grew an extra pair.

I find that these buddies appreciate small gifts, so I pull out one of my nine fly boxes and select a fly previously recommended at a fly shop in Outer Mongolia, and offer it with a brief comment, "Try one of these. They are magic on this river."

There are a thousand fishing buddy stories, often featuring somebody doing the Mexican Hat Dance, or hooking his pants, or casting to retrieve his hat. There are bear stories and snake stories, fishing lady stories, (where the guys are the ones we are laughing at), and frostbite stories, but the key is that they are all better with a buddy.

## From the Treasurer



Tom Culbertson, RMF Treasurer

When I became RMF Treasurer over 2 years ago, I said that I would serve for 3 years. That time will be up next May or so. Since the Treasurer's job needs a person with accounting skills, I'm beginning the search now. If you are a practicing accountant, CPA or otherwise knowledgeable and would like to volunteer your skills with an award winning chapter of Trout Unlimited, please contact me. If you know someone who might be interested, please have them contact me by email: **Tom Culbertson** or call 970-541-7029 or 970-685-1401 (cell).

## December Conservation Notes



Dave Piske, Conservation Chair

### Colorado Water Plan Provides Support for Healthy Rivers

About a year and a half ago, Governor Hickenlooper directed the Colorado Water Conservation Board to deliver to him, a statewide water plan by December 10, 2015. On Thursday, November 19, it was delivered at a large gathering of very interested people, not all of whom seem happy with the results.

Colorado Trout Unlimited and its chapters across the state advocated for new solutions to the ways in which water is managed and utilized by multiple users. And TU is pleased that the plan does have features that, if implemented and adequately funded, will help protect the health of Colorado's rivers, and particularly those on the western slope.

To learn more about three features of the plan that are important for future healthy rivers, go to <http://ourcoriver.wpengine.com/updates/>.

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## Let's Go Fishing



Mark Miller, Let's Go Fishing Coordinator

### The end of a season

So, they are over...the RMF 2015 fishing trips. Thanks to everyone who participated this year. We had great times together--and caught some fish as well! (Make sure you read David Cunningham's column about fishing buddies. It's in this issue of The Flypaper). We will be putting the 2016 schedule together over the next few months. If you have suggestions or questions let me hear from you.

**Contact me** or my cell number is 970-744-8229.

Oh, one more thing. We can't end the year without sharing a photo of RMF member Scott Kempe and the Silver Salmon he caught on what he describes as "the trip of a lifetime". Scott caught this beautiful specimen on the Eyak River in Alaska. He used a fly rod with a pink and purple starlight leech. Congrats Scott, for catching this splendid fish and upon your retirement as science teacher exemplar from Rocky Mountain High School!

Return to **TOP**



RMF member Scott Kempe and (one of many) Silver Salmon

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# Sustaining Donors

## Rocky Mountain Flycaster Sustaining Donors



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