



January 2016
Edition

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Sustaining Donor



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From our President

Fishing Emergencies

I know, January messages are supposed to be titled something like New Beginnings or The Year Ahead and be full of platitudes about resolutions and fresh starts. May I take a little different direction? Talk about the same old things? The sport we love and our role in preserving and enhancing it?

My friends and family, the non-fishing ones anyway, laugh because I always have a fishing rod in my vehicles. No matter which vehicle, no matter what season, always there is a fishing rod. When asked why I respond, "You never know when you might run into a fishing emergency." Which implies a piece of water that just begs to be fished. But what makes any piece of water call you? The presence of fish, or at least the likelihood of fish, right? And the presence of fish implies forage, which implies water quantity and quality that implies healthy watersheds. Right?

And there's where you and I come in; those are all issues your Rocky Mountain Flycasters chapter is deeply involved in.

The last couple of years brought our local rivers and fish real fishing emergencies. They were victimized by fires and floods, and though those events themselves are long past - and forgotten by many - the effects linger and can't be forgotten by real lovers of our sport. The lower Thompson Canyon is still largely devoid of fish because the supporting ecosystem hasn't recovered. Sections of the Poudre River are still threatened by the fire-ravaged slopes that wall it in. These are fishing emergencies that call the true conservationist in us. A fishless Thompson or a debris clogged Poudre is a fishing emergency we, you and I, can help rectify through our charitable donations and volunteer hours on work projects.



Wil Huett, RMF President and TU Lifetime Member

recognition occurs at the \$50 donation level.

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We did well this past year working on these issues, in fact our combined volunteer hours placed RMF third among Colorado's Trout Unlimited chapters. Our 5265 hours was outpaced only by West Denver Anglers (6680) and Grand Valley Anglers (9400). On a per member basis however we (6.09 hrs) only ranked 11th. I think we can do better than that in 2016.

To get a jump-start on this upcoming field season, when we and partner agencies will have projects in both drainages, we've scheduled a 2016 volunteer orientation for January 14 at 7:00 PM for an informal evening at Mulligan's Pub. Please come, meet our coordinators, and learn more about how you can help replace fishing emergency with fishing opportunity in our home rivers. If you have not already done so please RSVP this event by clicking [here](#) and indicating your availability for that night.

See you on the stream,

Wil Huett, President
Rocky Mountain Flycasters

Chapter Event Calendar



From our Program Chair



Domingo Rodriguez, RMF Program Chair

During the January Membership Meeting we will have the exceptional opportunities of learning about the goals and activities hearing of two exceptional volunteer organizations. One of these, the FIPS Mouche World Fly Fishing Championship is international in scope; the other, the Wyoming-Colorado Veterans Alliance (WYCO), is a regional organization.

FIPS Mouche World Fly Fishing Championship



John Knight

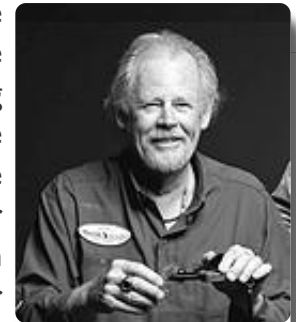
John Knight, International Organizer of the 36th FIPS Mouche World Fly Fishing Championship, will be speaking about a unique opportunity to volunteer and learn from some of the greatest fly fishermen in the world. The WFFC will be hosted in Vail, September 11-18, 2016, with parades, ceremonies, conservation symposium and more. With over 30 countries expected to attend, many volunteers are needed for every aspect of the Championship. See why Colorado is the location to represent the United States fly fishing to the world! Visit the **FIPS website**.

The Wyoming-Colorado (WYCO) Veterans Alliance



John Reardon,
WYCO Organizer

WYCO is a new organization that was established to support our fellow veterans. The board members come from all the services, with experience from the Vietnam era to the Mid Eastern conflicts. We are closely affiliated with the Platte River Chapter of Healing Waters, and have established close contact with many organizations that provide veteran assistance in the northern Colorado and southern Wyoming area. We are dedicated to support everyone, from today's vets returning to society to the folks who have been members of the community for years. We want to ensure their families are served as well. A BBQ with a golf and fishing tournament for sponsors, veterans, and their families kicked off the program



Duane Cook,
WYCO Organizer

last Labor Day. Similar events are planned, including fishing, hunting, or photography trips, and picnics to gather the vet communities for socializing, learning, and fun. The headquarters at Water Valley is available for meetings, counseling, fly tying, and job training sessions. WYCO Vets is to be an information conduit, with a primary objective to reach out to and connect with the vet who wants to know, or needs some help, with the people who can provide that knowledge or assistance. Visit the **WYCO website**.



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.

A user's guide to guiding.

There is something missing in many guided trips. The client is usually visiting the location for the first time. If they were on their own, the visitors would have read about the location, and visited a local fly shop, to pick up information about the river. When they first arrive at the water's edge they would take a pause to assess the river, its surroundings, and sun or cloud cover. Then they would look for feeding lines, pools, and riffles. Finally they would look for signs of insects, in, on, or above the water. All this is "reading the river". By contrast, guides usually know the river, or the chosen section of the river. They know where fish are likely to be holding and what they are feeding on. This knowledge is what allows them to put a client on to fish, and it makes them popular. Unfortunately most clients leave the location without having learned much about it. Is this a true complaint?

I wonder how many members share my angst with the process of hiring and working with a guide. In my lifetime I have not made nearly enough use of guides, at the cost of missed experiences and the addition of badly needed skill sets. Initially this was due to my impression, as an Englishman, that only royalty and their hangers-on, (I am not an adoring Monarchist), retained guides, also known as “Ghillies”. Then in California in the 80s, guides were few and far between. I was left to develop bad techniques all of my own design. My baseball-pitcher streamer cast probably holds the world record for the farthest thrown rod.

Part of my hesitation has been the uncertainty of what to expect and what to pay. The payment

issue has not been due to any real shortage of funds or an unwillingness to pay a gratuity to anybody who has provided excellent service. No, instead it has been the discomfort of judging excellence in circumstances where clients have been known to pay 40% tips on a \$500 ticket. I don't do that for a waitress or for a barber but I have been in a boat with wealthy companions who might just choose to do that, leaving me with the option to pay more than I felt appropriate or appear to be a cheapskate. Either way, the highlights of the outing were tainted by nagging discomfort about my tipping decision.

Today guides are plentiful and knowledgeable. Most of them are excellent company and they work hard to give a client a memorable day on the water. In the last few years I have resolved the issue simply by getting the financial arrangements clearly defined at the time the trip is booked and confirmed at the introduction to the guide. It's encouraging to note that the fly shop managers and the guides have been cheerful and frank about what was expected and the tip figure turns out to be a specific dollar amount, rather than a percentage. This makes sense when fly shops offer seasonal discounts or any-time specials, because guides work as hard on an ice-out expedition in February as they do on a Mother's day caddis hatch drift. The magic number in Colorado seems to be \$60 plus or minus \$10.

Perhaps it is only me that has struggled with the issue but I will describe a couple of my experiences and tell you what I have learned from the good and the bad outings.

First I will describe the horrible - always more fun. A few years ago I had a glorious vacation in New Zealand, driving from Auckland on the North Island down to Queenstown in the South Island. The country is spectacular, ranging from tropical forest to Antarctica. In the middle of South Island is Lake Taupo, a fishing Mecca. As I had not packed three rods and two tons of hooks, I had booked a full day guided trip and arrived early one morning at the designated fly shop. I met up with my guide, Richard, a fellow Englishman, and got fitted for rented waders and boots. He explained that the rods and gear were in his truck and we set out. I had already scouted the lake and pored over fishing information. The lake is six hundred square kilometers and is fed by three rivers. Browns and Rainbows had been introduced a century ago and they were reputed to have reached enormous sizes. New Zealand has no raptors and as a result the fish are not shy of cruising the surface. Sight fishing with dries is productive but stealth is required. I cursed myself for not having camo kit and knee pads but was sure my countryman would take care of that, even if I had to cover my face in mud. This would be assisted by the steady drizzle that drifted over the lake. As we drove to the lake my guide regaled me with his emigration history including twenty years in the country, his tribulations with integration with the "natives", and the lack of registration of guides that he insisted was needed to keep amateurs out of the profession.

We arrived at a large parking lot and he hauled out our equipment for the day. He handed me a rod and announced that we would be roll casting most of the day. I viewed the rod in awe. It was a 10 foot 10 wt, rigged with a ship's hawser line that held a white softball sized strike indicator followed by an ounce of weights and a six inch streamer. I spoke up, "This is a big rod for me. I roll cast, but my biggest rod is a 5 wt. The brochure described dry fly fishing. Will there be a time for that?"

His reply was, "It's a bad day for dries. If you can roll cast it won't take a minute to get the hang of the bigger rod. I'll show you how it's done." And off we went.

After twenty minutes of trogging a public pathway we arrived at an outlet from the lake. This river was sixty feet wide, looked deep without structure, and was moving at about three knots from right

to left. There was a foam lined feeding zone thirty feet off the bank curving to my left. Access was down a slide to a ledge ten feet below the path, with no possibility of entering the deep water. Substantial bushes reached down to the water on either flank. There was zero opportunity for a back cast and the direction of the flow meant that I would either be casting left-handed or right-handed over my left ear. I grumbled, "I don't think this is going to work.." Richard's reply was, "There are a hundred fish stacked up here. You'll do fine It's easy. Watch", and proceeded to roll cast sixty feet upstream. He handed me the rod and barked, "Strip, strip, strip. Strike as soon as it twitches."

I stripped and mended forcefully to avoid drag through the zone then pulled the line back to cast. There was some slack water ten feet upstream and I used that to lay line on the water and hauled back for my two handed left side roll cast. I used every ounce of my strength. The line curled forward, picked up the Hindenburg strike indicator, lifted the weights, but died picking up the fly. The rig drifted ignominiously by, like flotsam after a shipwreck. I repeated this sad cameo a dozen times until Richard offered to make another cast. In fact he made four and on the fourth pass the indicator "twitched". He struck like a bass fisherman and the line sprayed water as it felt the weight of the fish. With the hook set, he stripped and wound until the fish was on the reel, then handed me the rod. The experience of the weight and strength of the fish was a thrill. I set about managing the runs and one surface splash until the fish quit and I brought him to the net. It was a twenty inch rainbow with a big belly. We combined to unhook and I bent to make the release. Richard grabbed my arm, almost dumping me in the river. "Hold on mate, hold on. This is a picture fish for you."

The anger in my face backed him off a bit. "I'm not about to pose for a customer-wall photo of me with a fish that you cast to and hooked. We need another spot where I will have room to swing this rod." With that, the rainbow wriggled and was gone.

We walked a half mile to find a spot where I decided I could fish. We rigged a smaller indicator, less weight, and smaller fly. The combination landed three unassisted small browns. There were no photos and early in the afternoon I called it a day. The hike in the increasing rain was not one of Richard's better memories, nor was the confrontation at the shop when I gave him a NZ\$20 bill and told him that the rest of his tip was my payoff for not filing a complaint with the fly shop owner.

In fairness to the profession, this tale describes a worst case combination of a guide's client contempt and self-interest. However, revisiting the outing created the beginning of my checklist for interaction with a guide. It included; describe my expectations; describe my skill level; state whether or not I wanted to be schooled about my technique; ask what gear we would be using; where we are going; and what the game plan is.

Fast forward a couple of years and I'll describe a much better experience. Dave, a Fort Collins guide, agreed to take me for a half day visit to Six Mile on the North Platte at the Colo/Wyo border a few miles from Riverside. Accepting my request for a half-day was the first of Dave's many courtesies on our trip, made possible by the fact that he had a client the previous day and they had driven separate cars to the river. We met in the parking lot at 8 am and Dave's first question made me smile, "What do you have in mind for the morning?"

I told him that I would like to spend half of our time tossing dries; I knew we had better odds with nymphs but my nymphing skills were bad and I would appreciate any and all comments about how I fished. I wanted to know why we were using any rig he recommended. With that Dave spent a while talking about the characteristics of the river, current water levels, the previous day's action, where he planned to get on the water and how we would work a run. I told him that I was recovering

from a small surgery and needed to be careful on wet rocks. He noted that and we headed to the river. As we walked our conversation was a two-way introduction, each of us gathering information that would help us collaborate on the stream.

When we reached his first spot Dave kept back from the bank and spent a few minutes sussing out the scene. Then he spent another few minutes describing how he read this stretch. He had noted a few caddis in the air but there were no rises and no bugs on the water. He opted for a hopper dropper rig with a small prince nymph weighted eighteen inches below the hopper. The best access for a right handed caster was from the far bank and we needed to cross. Without hesitation he offered me a hand and we crossed with our arms over each-other's shoulder. Mid-stream I was surprised by the force of the water and Dave became my instant best friend forever.

On the bank he suggested how I should work my way up the river, then moved on ahead of me and left me to shake out the business week kinks in my cast and my attitude. A little later he came back and steered me to a riffle that dropped into a short bowl. On the third cast the hopper disappeared and I was into a beautiful rainbow that turned out to be all of ten inches long but with welterweight fighting spirit. Dave let me net the fish and do the release so that the fish was swimming off in a couple of minutes. My massive grin told him that I did not need trophy fish to be happy.

Later in the morning we moved to a section of deeper water and switched to a nymph rig. Dave asked what I thought of the fishing prospects. I took a good look around. There were still some sporadic caddis in the air but no action on the water. I had a seine net built into my net and used it to find bugs that flushed out when I shuffled a couple of rocks. I suggested a caddis pupae and pointed out potential feeding lanes, plus my concerns about how to get to them with a good drift. He told me how important it would be to get down deep and noted that the leader should be double the apparent depth. Having agreed on a plan I began to fish and he stood close by so he could advise on different ways to handle the rod. The combination delivered two nice browns.

About an hour before we would end our excursion we began to see fish rising. One or two at first and then a dozen all at once. The caddis were blooming. We both knew that this may not last for long and we would not be around for an evening hatch so we needed to get efficient. Dave managed this by climbing an upstream rock and calling back suggestions on where fish were holding. The next thirty minutes were the best of my Colorado experiences. Six fish, mostly rainbows, hit my fly, then danced and fought their way into my net. The biggest of them may have been fourteen inches. My biggest problem was releasing them fast enough to get back in the game.

Dave and I parted company in the parking lot and he left me with the impression that he had been as pleased to meet me as I was to have him as a guide. I fished the river alone the next day and the bite was not as good. However it was the only time in my life when I have been able to say to new arrivals, "You should have been here yesterday."

My take-away guidance to engaging a guide is communication. Describe what you are looking forward to, and your skills and weaknesses. Ask all the questions that come to mind so that you and the guide can be prepared to make the day work. And ask about tipping expectations and any other costs. Make sure you are clear about the location and how to get there, then arrive early with a ready smile and a warm handshake.

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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).

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Youth Outreach Notes

Rocky Mountain Flycasters Chapter of Colorado Trout Unlimited has made initial contacts and is attempting to help form a "5 Rivers" TU Fly Fishing Club of CSU students. There are already fifty-two "5 Rivers" Clubs at universities and colleges across the USA, including about ten in Colorado. A club's purpose is to promote fly fishing art and skills as a form of outdoors recreation, bringing students together to develop a conservation ethic, and to learn about and involve millennials in cold water conservation as an outgrowth of their fun experienced. Each club is operated independently and financially by the students in accordance with that club's official charter, with Advisor oversight. A brief presentation can be viewed by clicking **here**

A CSU faculty or staff member is required by both the University and Trout Unlimited to serve as a Club Advisor for the club's official leadership board. A club can also interact with a TU Chapter if one is nearby, in which case a chapter member serves as the Chapter liaison.

Clubs are supported nationally by a group of fly fishing industry companies: Costa Del Mar, Redington, Temple Fork Outfitters, Flymen, Loon, Cheeky and Vedavoo. Clubs and individual members participate in regional rallies. They also nationally earn eligibility for awards, trips, product grants & pro deal discounts by competing in categories across Best Overall Chapter, Conservation Initiative, Fundraising and Community Outreach. A detailed presentation can be viewed by clicking **here**

Volunteer Opportunity: Individuals who are employed by CSU in a faculty or staff capacity and may



Dennis Cook,

Youth Outreach Chair

be interested in the Advisor position - and also RMF Chapter members who may be interested in the Liaison position - are asked to email **Dennis Cook** or call (970) 372-9229 at their earliest convenience.



From Dick and Linda Jefferies: Strategic Planning

Rocky Mountain Flycasters (RMF) is currently working to develop a Strategic Plan for the organization. To that end, a draft of the plan is being made available to the membership of RMF via email. If you are a member of RMF and we have a valid email address for you, your review copy should electronically arrive by January 12th. If you do not receive a copy and would like one for review, please contact **membership chair** to request a copy of the draft.

As a member of Rocky Mountain Flycasters, your thoughts and opinions about the near-term path we will use to meet our mission and goals are important and valued. To submit comment following receipt and review of the draft, please follow the comment submittal directions that will be enclosed with the draft copy.



Sustaining Donors

Rocky Mountain Flycaster Sustaining Donors



St. Peter's Fly Shop



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Marc Brown
Frank Cada
Dennis Cook
Tom Culbertson
Yang Qian &
Edward McConnaughey
Wil Huett
Jax Fish House
Robert Streeter
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The Kitchen

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