

The Barbless Hook

June 2020

Edited by Mark Spruiell



tri-valleyflyfishers.org

President's Message

by Albert Mansky

Hi Guys and Gals:

Well, I would like to think the worst of the pandemic is behind us and better days are ahead of us. I've heard from some outfitters that they're guiding again on our favorite waters. Although there are certain restrictions, such as bringing your own food and water, not riding in the guide's vehicle, and of course wearing a mask. I guess that's a small price to pay to get back to some sort of normality. Needless to say, I haven't wet a line in a couple of months, but I hear through the grapevine that some of you have managed to get out and catch a few fish.

I wish that I could tell you when we could restart our monthly meetings again, but the Livermore Rod and Gun Club is still shut down. They're waiting on Alameda County to lift their restrictions. From what I hear, at least for now, once they do reopen their clubhouse and outdoor picnic area will still be off-limits to group gatherings. It looks like it's going to be some time before things get back to normal. Hang in there, I see a light at the end of the tunnel and hopefully it's not a train (bad joke).

I hope all of you are safe and sound in your own home. We're not out of the woods yet, but we're slowly getting there. If you have a chance to get out and do a little fishing, I wish you good luck. Till next month, keep the faith and your chin up.

Al



Todd Hyrn nymphing in Hat Creek

In this Issue

President's Message	1
Officers and Directors	2
Outings Update	2
Outings and Activities	3
Member Reports	5
Putah Creek Survey	9
Salmon Update	9
Coronavirus & Fishing	10
Lahontan Cutthroat	12
Finding Trout in Rivers	14



"Obviously, we need to readjust to in-office meetings."

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	Kent McCammon
Outings	Rob Farris
Fly Tying	Jim Broadbent
Member at Large	Ron Duetgen
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

June Meeting – CANCELED

Our June club meeting is canceled. Please check our website for the status of our July meeting.

Outings Update

Rob Farris – Outings Director

Oh my, this is getting difficult. Coronavirus, civil unrest, closed campgrounds, masks, protective protocols and equipment. Having personally lived through the Vietnam protests, the Martin Luther King protests and destruction of D.C. when I lived there, and the Watts riots while I was in L.A., this all feels very strange and uncomfortable. In times like these I need and find my grounding with my family and in getting back into the quietness of the streams and lakes that I love. As a wise angler recently said, "I can't wait to get past social distancing so that I get out and be alone again..."

If you're feeling anxious, cooped up and bored, then you might think about getting out and fishing **in a safe manner**. There are lots of fish everywhere getting lonely without us, including some very nice 20-24" fish at Baum and Hat that are very accommodating. And the hatches are awesome right now.

Our Newsletter article from Trout Unlimited is a good perspective on the situation. Personally, I've gotten out four times in the last five weeks with repetitive trips to Hat Creek and now Baum and Manzanita Lakes which are now open (see Todd's Hat report). All those trips were done with safety being the primary consideration, and during the trips I felt very safe. But each of you will have to make your own decisions that you and your family feel comfortable with. If you have any questions on how I managed the trips, feel free to give me a call.

So when do we resume our Club outings?

That'll be a Board of Directors decision, but my personal thoughts are that right now there are several impediments to the Club resuming normal outings activity. Personal safety is paramount, of course. Then we have Club liability, the closure of many key campgrounds, local County restrictions and openings, proper hotel and eatery precautions, guide and float trip restrictions, and social distancing common sense guidelines. With all of those considerations and a Board of Director's decision, we should begin opening up Club trips when it makes prudent sense, and I hope that's soon. **That will certainly mean adhering to both government and common-sense guidelines.** And that may change our trips with changes such as lower maximum numbers of participants, individual transportation requirements, effective social distancing, cancellation of float trips, minimal shared camping sites, and the curtailment of typical social engagements and group meals on trips.

I will be communicating any changes in our outings policies as quickly as we determine them. In the meantime, personal fishing can be accommodated and be a real treat if you research and adhere to any guidelines and restrictions when you go. And above all, go find some peace in the water and please protect yourself accordingly if you do get out.

"I go fishing not to find myself but to lose myself." – Joseph Monniger

"There is certainly something in angling that tends to produce a serenity of mind." – Washington Irving

Outings and Activities

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

Baum and Manzanita Lakes – July 9-12

This is a three night, four day camping trip to [Baum and Manzanita Lakes](#) in the Shasta and Lassen National Park watersheds. You can fish from shore at both lakes but a watercraft is recommended. Participants can attend whichever days work for their schedules.

We'll be camping at Manzanita Lake campground in Lassen National Park. Manzanita is a wild trout fishery with special regulations hosting rainbows and browns. Baum Lake, near Burney, also contains rainbows and browns and is stocked by its on-site hatchery. Both lakes offer excellent dry fly fishing, and nymphs and streamers work well too.



La Paz Mexico Ocean Fishing – July 11-18

[This trip](#) is a broad-based fishing excursion in La Paz, Mexico hosted by guide [Gary Bulla](#) with fishing for Dorado, rooster, mangrove snapper, yellowfin, grouper, wahoo, and cabrilla pargo. Cost includes all food, beverages (including beer) and single-occupancy accommodations. Gary runs a superb all-inclusive trip with the best fly fishing captains in the area and two lovely sisters that prepare great Mexican meals. He'll be on hand in La Ventana to share his vast knowledge, and he fishes with a different "pescador" every day to get you well acquainted with Mexican fish. His season, which runs April thru October, is mostly full for 2020 but he has held this week exclusively for our club. He will open it up to all others at the Pleasanton Fly Show. This is a great trip that should be on your bucket list.



Truckee Watershed – July 24-27

This is a three-night, four-day [camping trip](#) at Logger Campground on Stampede Reservoir, with four days of fishing the Big Truckee, Little Truckee, and Milton Lake for rainbow and brown trout. It coincides with the peak of multiple aquatic hatches in the area and will include river wading opportunities and a day of either float tube or bank fishing at Milton Lake. Fishing techniques to be used include traditional indicator nymphing, Euro nymphing, streamers, and dry fly techniques. On the first evening, we are planning to have local guide Jon Baiocchi join us over dinner to discuss



where to fish, how to fish, and the current flies that are working in the areas at that particular time. It should be a great kickoff for 3-4 full days of fishing in the area since we won't be going in "blind" to the conditions.

Southeast Alaska – August 28-September 5 – Martin Plotkin

Have you ever wanted to fish Alaska? I am sponsoring a [Tag-Along Fishing Trip](#) to Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. The trip will be at Mike and Sarah Warner's, Coffman Cove Adventures. We will plan to arrive at Prince of Wales on August 28th and depart on September 5th.

Coffman Cove is located near two dozen rivers within 5-90 minutes from the cabins and each offers something different to anglers. Depending on the river, we will be fishing for Coho, Pink or some Sockeye Salmon or Sea Run Cutthroat, Rainbow or Dolly Varden Trout. Each fishing group will have a private cabin with full access to the amenities of the dining cabin.

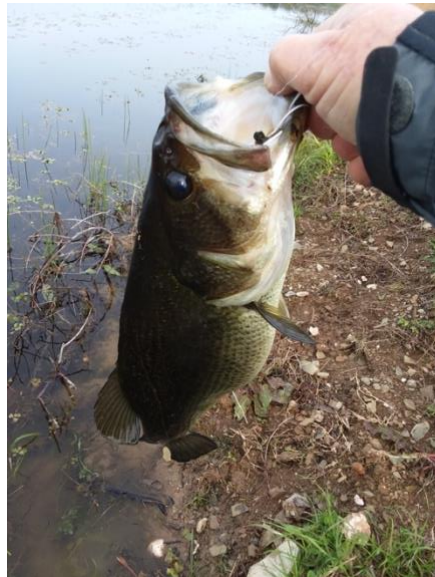
The trip cost includes lodging, meals, fish cleaning and packaging, use of a vehicle (fuel is extra), and transportation from the ferry or any float plane base on the island. This is a great trip for people looking for amazing river action. For complete details, click on the link above and contact me with any questions.



Member Reports

Jim Broadbent

By practicing social distancing, we can get out of the house and wet a fly. Kistler ranch gave up a few bass with TVFF (8 fishers) and Tracy FF (10 fishers). The little guy is from a pond in the hills in Contra Costa county. Be safe!



Ben Sheridan

I wanted to thank your club for all of the help you were able to provide us, especially Robert Farris, that we met attending the Fly Fishing Show in February. We caught all three species in two days: Golden Trout, Little Kern Golden, and Kern Rainbow. We have many wonderful memories.



Todd Hyrn – In Search of Salmon Flies

On Thursday morning May 14th Rob Farris, Mark Spruiell and myself departed the Tri-Valley at O Dark Thirty. It can be said we all had an agenda:

- Keep alive the cancelled club outing in search of the mighty Salmon Fly originally scheduled for the same weekend.
- Rob's return to his home water and dry fly purity.
- Mark to break into the TVFF rank and file of Euro Nymphers while using a bright shiny newly purchased Echo 3 wt. nymphing rod.
- Todd to jail break away from work responsibilities for a couple day pursuing my favorite hobby and, as later accused by a fellow fly fisher, dredge the bottom of the stream with metal (nymphs). Must have been one of Rob's dry fly purity buddies.

Leaving at O Dark Thirty was a requirement because our fearless leader Rob was all about being in the water for the prolific Hat Creek hatch mid to late morning. So off we went with all our food, masks, and reservations at the storied Green Gables in beautiful downtown Burney, CA. As it turns out the weather forecasters were correct, and it rained most all of Thursday. Rob said it'd be perfect weather for the Green Drake hatch, but so much for entomology theory. The hatches were less than prolific, the fishing however did not disappoint. The number of anglers in the creek surprised us when we arrived but Social Distancing had nothing on us, and we were all able to have our own piece of the most desired stretches of the creek. The creek was our friend on this rainy day and all three anglers had a great day on the water.



After Chef Rob served up happy hour and a hearty dinner, off we all went to our sanitized rooms for sleep. Friday morning came and the plan was to fish Hat Creek in the morning and run up to the Upper Sac for the afternoon and evening. Three things happened that altered our day. Mark arose with the realization that nymphing with its constant casting uses different muscles. The weather at Hat Creek could not have been more different than Thursday. Bright sunny skies and a picturesque day at Hat. The third was the fishing and the quality of fish caught Thursday and as described below. These three events had Mark decide to return home mid-day while Rob and I decided to sit Creekside, enjoy lunch and a beverage before returning to the water for the afternoon. Upper Sac you will have to wait.



Friday morning despite the excellent weather provided tough fishing and a complete reversal of Thursday am. But then.....Todd made a trip to the island to contemplate. Low and behold what appears, the sought-after Salmon Fly. Into the fly box I go and enter top fly #8 Pat's Rubber Legs. Back into the water I go and first drift bam, another fish, another fish. Walk down to Mark give him a Pat's and bam he is on; Rob converts from dry fly purity to a Pat's. What started as a tough day became a great day on the water with fish up to 16" and Rob giving Todd extra Entomology course credit for spotting the Salmonflies.

Overall, there is a tally of fish to the net for the three anglers somewhere. It was an excellent trip much the like of every great day of fishing with great people. My departing thought is simply, if you thought about going you should have, you would not have been disappointed.

Alan Wyosnick

SIP got the better of me so I decided to take a solo drive up 108 which my wife fully endorsed...starting to wonder if this is a strong hint she has seen way too much of me lately. Went as far as the turn off to Kennedy Meadows, the road was closed just beyond that point. The forest service roads and the road to Beardsley were closed I found out until May 15. So I could only see the section of the Middle Fork above the reservoirs. As you would expect the water was high from the snow melt and as a consequence the access and fishing was tough. I did get lucky and found a honey hole which allowed me to play with 10 nice rainbows up to 17 inches which saved the day from being goose eggs.



Putah Creek Regulation Change Survey

Putah Creek Trout (PCT) would like your opinion regarding potential fishing regulation changes to protect spawning trout.

Putah Creek is a designated Wild Trout Water, well known for its trophy rainbow trout population. Traditionally, Putah Creek had been governed by general trout regulations, including harvest, during the regular trout season (April-November), with catch-and-release with artificial lure angling allowed for the remainder of the year. However, with the cessation of supplemental stocking of the fishery in 2008, concern over the impact of angling pressure on the wild trout population became critical. In 2009, PCT petitioned the California Fish and Game Commission to change the regulations for year-round zero harvest, artificial lure angling to reduce the impact of harvest on the wild trout fishery. The regulation change was granted and instituted beginning with the 2010 fishing season.



Since then, many anglers have been observing a voluntary seasonal closure from December 1 to March 1. PCT is now seeking input on whether to pursue an official seasonal closure of angling on Putah Creek and, if so, under what conditions.

Since then, many anglers have been observing a voluntary seasonal closure from December 1 to March 1. PCT is now seeking input on whether to pursue an official seasonal closure of angling on Putah Creek and, if so, under what conditions.

[Click here](#) for more information and to take the survey.

Salmon Update

The Golden State Salmon Association (GSSA) posted on [their blog](#) that a federal court recently ruled that a water diversion and pumping plan run by the federal Bureau of Reclamation, deadly to salmon and other wildlife, must restrict its pumping. The ruling comes in two cases, one brought by GSSA and allied groups and one brought by the state of California. Both seek to overturn excessive water diversions developed under U.S. Interior Secretary David Bernhardt, because of the extreme environmental damage they are causing.



The court directed the federal government to reinstate a restriction on Delta pumping that is more protective of juvenile salmon and steelhead through May 31, when the more protective rule would annually expire. Baby steelhead and salmon are currently migrating through the Delta.

GSSA is also asking the State Water Resources Control Board to use its authority to require the feds to leave enough water in Lake Shasta through the summer to supply the cold water returning adult salmon will need in the fall to spawn.

The coronavirus may change fishing as we know it

Kirk Deeter – Trout Unlimited

Ironically, 2020 is “The Year of the Rat.” Given how 2020 has unfolded so far, I actually consider that to be an insult to rats.

But we are seeing some lifting of the pandemic fog where I live in Colorado and in many other places around the country—and fishing definitely stands to be affected... for better or worse.

On the “better” front, while we are in the throes of runoff in my area and river fishing is at least a few weeks away from normal “game on” like many places out West, every time I pass a local pond or lake, I cannot help but be flabbergasted by the number of folks I see fishing. And not just individual anglers ... families. Moms and dads with kids of all ages—socially distanced in little familial pods on patches of green grass or docks along the water. Some are casting Snoopy rods, and some are even fly fishing. And catching! Bass... trout... pike... I’ve seen more lit up small faces in the last two weeks of hiking by water than I have in the past several years.



The author is seeing more and more people fishing during the pandemic.

I thought about that for a bit, and it all makes sense.

After all, there are no T-ball or soccer leagues here. No concerts, no rodeos. Nobody’s going to the movie theater, and the possibility of heading off to summer camp is still very much up in the air. Healthy outdoor family activities (and outdoor is an operative word, as science is learning that the risks of virus transmission are substantially lower outdoors than they are indoors) boil down to things like hiking, and biking, maybe frying a few ants on the sidewalk with a magnifying glass ... and fishing! I don’t know about you, but when I was 11, given the choice between a march through the wildflowers or fishing, I chose fishing. Or frying ants.

Surely, there must be a way to tap into this phenomenon, both short in the term and over the long haul. I don’t know how many fly shops are selling Snoopy rods too now, but maybe they should? I assume many shops are at least selling flies. And tippet. Maybe even guide trips? Great!

Which leads me to the “worse” discussion. I know, I’ve heard, I bleed, and I understand that guide trips are way down, and in most places, people are only starting to catch up. And it might be a “way low” season or even a lost season for friends of mine in some places. All I have to say about that is that it’s a marathon, not a sprint, and while the short-term picture looks very bleak for many of us, the long-term prospects for fishing might be bright. We’re looking at license sales, state-by-state, and depending where you are, they are up, 10, 20 ... as much as 40 percent.

I do not know, in the age of COVID-19, whether things will soon return to the “norm” for guides who depend on out-of-towners to fly great distances, stay in lodges, and ultimately sit in a drift boat with you. I hope you can adjust, because the CDC-based counsel on six-foot distancing still stands. That spells hard times for drift boat guides and skiff guides. Where your states allow flexibility, Godspeed. Do it right.



Take the necessary precautions to protect you and the people you fish with.

Above all, wear a mask. Of some sort. It's not for you. It's for your sports. And it's for the sport as a whole, so fishing doesn't get shut down on a rebound of COVID-19 traced to someone taking a chartered fishing trip. We still don't know all we can and should about this virus, but what we do know is that you can carry it and feel nothing at all. We know you can be feeling tip-top, completely asymptomatic, and unwittingly pass it to someone who could be killed by it. Whether they knew the risks going in or not, it's not cool to potentially kill someone because they wanted to go fishing.

Masks work. Social distancing works. Stay a rod-length apart. Incidence of infection among first responders in New York is lower than the general population because the PPE masks they wear work. Even in the context of self-containment, homemade and simplified masks help. You might not know you've been infected for up to two weeks, if at all. But if you're running around with two sports a day for two weeks, that's 28 people you put at risk, for the sake of pulling on fish. There isn't a legal waiver in the world that will protect you from that liability if you didn't at least try to act responsibly with every trip you take.

We all want to be respectful and protective of the people who so desperately want to get out on the water and fish. But don't, for a minute, discount the front-line healthcare workers, and all the stuff they are going through now. Vow to take some of those people fishing, free of charge, whenever they can. They're still fighting a massive battle, and we'd seem like insensitive jerks if we merely fished through this pandemic without at least paying a little homage and respect to the people who really made a difference. That's just common courtesy.

Kirk Deeter is TU's vice president of marketing and the editor of TROUT Magazine. This article first appeared in Angling Trade.



Lahontan cutthroat trout threatened by hybridization

Jason Barnes – Trout Unlimited

As one of only two lakes in the world to support a relict self-sustaining and naturally reproducing population of Lahontan cutthroat trout, a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, Independence Lake is irreplaceable.

We are no stranger to adverse conditions at the high elevation lake near Truckee, Calif., but even the melting 200 percent snowpack during the 2018-19 winter tested our engineering skills during annual construction of a weir to keep Lahontan cutthroat trout from ascending Independence Creek from the lake. It took 400 sandbags, 200-feet of cable, 75 T-posts and three weeks of grueling work in nearly freezing weather, but we finally got the temporary barrier constructed.



One of the first Lahontan cutthroat to show up at the weir on Independence Creek in 2020.



The annual building of the fish weir at Independence Lake was much easier this spring. It was completed the Friday before Memorial Day weekend and spawning fish showed up the next day.

With such rare fish you might wonder why we went to such an extreme to STOP them from entering the stream to spawn and, you would be right to do so, but first you need to know the situation at Independence Lake is a dire one.

The Nature Conservancy has acquired the land around the lake to preserve a one-of-a-kind functioning ecosystem that includes the largest cutthroat trout species on the planet. Bears, otters, eagles and osprey feed regularly on the spawning cutthroat which often exceed 30-inches in length.

Years ago, the United States Geological Survey, under the direction of Gary Scopettone, developed a population viability analysis that showed Eastern brook

trout as the single largest threat to the dwindling Lahontan population in the lake. From 1997 to 2015, USGS worked furiously to figure out ways to count cutthroats in the lake, tally the spawning run, and eliminate the brook trout population from Independence Creek. Innovative methods for removal of Eastern brook trout from the creek were successful, bringing the numbers from the thousands down to around 400 when the USGS office was forced to close the project due to a federal government shutdown. The USGS office was eventually closed, putting years of work to save the population at risk with no clear plan moving forward.



A large Lahontan cutthroat trout is released at Independence Lake.

That's when Trout Unlimited stepped in. State and federal agencies were unable to dedicate the staff time and energy it took to carry on the USGS legacy, which every year requires a minimum seven weeks of intensive field work. In heavy snow years, like the winter of 2018-2019, the work can stretch on for as long as four months – a luxury rarely afforded to agencies that have multiple priorities across a much larger area. TU had the flexibility to adapt to these changing needs and provide consistent people power to ensure the work of the collective partnership continued.

Each September, California Department of Fish and Wildlife heads to the lake with electrofishing boats to remove adult brook trout and other

nonnative fishes from the lake while Trout Unlimited crews, funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, work on the creek. Since 2015 we have reduced numbers of brook trout in Independence Creek down to the single digits and last year no brook trout were found in the lake. Success, right?

Not exactly. A range-wide genetic analysis of Lahontan cutthroat populations in Nevada, California and Oregon done by Helen Neville, Trout Unlimited's senior scientist and UC Davis in 2018 turned up hybrids — a mix Lahontan cutthroat and rainbow trout — in Independence Lake samples.

Just as we thought our work to ensure the cutthroat population in Independence Lake was free from the threat of Eastern brook trout, this development came as terrible news. There was a lot of speculation about how the non-native rainbow trout got in the lake, but evidence points to dam maintenance. The lake was lowered for maintenance in 2012 and the velocity barrier that once kept downstream fish from moving up into the lake was gone. A few rainbows made it into the lake and spawned with the native cutthroat and now we are left with a new issue to deal with.

This is where blocking the annual spawning run comes in, as an important strategy to help manage and reduce hybridization. Lahontans are tagged and genetic samples taken for each of the fish captured. Fish are analyzed at the University of Nevada to determine if they are hybrids and only the pure cutthroat are physically passed above the weir to spawn. Our hope is that we can tag as many as possible to ensure we are passing as many of them as we can above the weir to spawn.

Last year Trout Unlimited and California Department of Fish and Wildlife crews caught 170 Lahontan cutthroat trout and 14 of those sampled were found to be hybridized. That means that 156 of those LCT were 'pure', so we hope at least some of them will attempt to spawn this year and keep adding to the population.



The completed fish weir on Independence Creek.

This year, we faced a new challenge: with the COVID-19 situation, we weren't even sure we would be able to have a crew up at Independence Lake and worried much of the work we had done previously would be lost if the hybrids were able to spawn. Thankfully, Trout Unlimited, The Nature Conservancy, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife worked together to get a team to the lake.

Brandon Reeder and Monika Larson faithfully isolated for weeks before the season and are now living out their summer at Independence Lake. The Nature Conservancy graciously allowed the two TU

crew members to stay in one of their cabins so they can complete the important cutthroat work at Independence Lake.

The weir was installed the Friday before Memorial Day and had the first fish run up the creek the very next day. We are fortunate to have dedicated TU employees and a U.S. Fish and Wildlife employee who came up on his day off to help us get the weir in just in time. We will continue to staff the weir and catch and tag as many fish as possible this year in hopes every year the spawn run will grow stronger.

These may be strange times for all of us, but in some ways it's business as usual for the TU LCT team – you just never know what you'll get into in any given year, but one thing remains constant: There's always work to be done and we'll be there to do it.

Jason Barnes is the Lahontan Cutthroat Trout Biologist/Coordinator for Trout Unlimited. He is technically based out of Reno, Nevada, but is rarely in town. To say he is dedicated to Lahontan cutthroat trout would be a serious understatement.

How to Find Trout in a River – Orvis Guide to Fly Fishing

Orvis has published two YouTube videos hosted by Tom Rosenbauer explaining how to find trout in a river. Each video is about a half-hour long and well worth the time to watch them. Click on the images below to view them on YouTube.

How to Find Trout in a River, Part 1



How to Find Trout in a River, Part 2

