



Fish N Fool

Kathie Morgan

Some men fish for the joy of fishing. Some fish for money. Those who put pleasure ahead of profit are sometimes called fishin' fools. Gary Lamont was one of those, and so, I suppose, was I.

When the season ended we left Morro Bay and began deadheading on the party boats up and down the coast, following the bite and selling our catch where we could. We managed to support his family and myself.

Eventually Gary found work on an oilrig taxi, and I fished alone. Then a call awaited me one afternoon at CISCO in Oxnard. Dick Petter introduced himself and said he needed a galley cook at H&M Landing in San Diego. I drove down and reported for work the next day aboard the Fish N Fool.

Petter fished for money. Nobody was stingier than he, and nobody more suspicious than he that others might rip him off. Nobody in the fleet liked him, and his own brother would buy a ticket on another boat rather than ride the Fool for free. I lived aboard, in spacious comfort, having a 3-man bunk all to myself and a privacy curtain, and a cubbyhole for my clothes – all in the crew's quarters forward. Life was good, despite having the galley take recounted night after night ... as if. My first duty each night was to set up the coffee for the next day. Then I was free until a deckhand woke me in the morning. One night we had an especially noisy group of well-oiled passengers, clamoring for cold beers. Despite my weariness, I served them all, then shooed them out.

You never slept enough during albacore season. Talk of sleep replaced talk of women among the deckhands, and dreams of getting a good night's sleep were common. Falling asleep was easy, and I did.

CRASH! I rolled to the curtain, pulled it aside and jumped down, then made my way up the metal ladder to the deck. Once the breeze hit me, I sensed that I was not dressed for rescue, clad only in panties. Back down the hatch I dived, jumped into my bunk and rolled toward my clothes cupboard.

Ohhh, it felt good to be horizontal once again! How important was it to be dressed when the rescuers arrived? Surely I would be more capable of aiding in my own deliverance if I got just a few more winks.

In the passenger bunkroom just aft, the passengers were singing, "Nearer My God to Thee." I closed my eyes. Surely the rescue crew would find me.

They didn't! Instead, the sun was shining when I woke and heard the unmistakable castanet beat of an albacore flopping its way down the deck. Obviously I had not been rescued but had died and gone to heaven. Hallelujah! Amen!

I later learned that Dick had succumbed to the urging of a passenger for another beer. Rather than lose the sale, he left the wheel and went below to open the fridge and the cash drawer. Left to its own devices, the boat slammed into a channel marker buoy at the entry once to the harbor, putting a rocking chair size hole in the Fish N Fool's bow. As the hole was above the waterline, Dick opted to continue the trip rather than lose a payday.

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They didn't call him "Dick the Dick" for nothing.

Hobie Officially Kicks Off 2017 Fishing Season

Learn more about what Hobie is doing and planning for 2017 including their new MirageDrive 180 forward/reverse propulsion system, now available as a stand-alone accessory that can be retrofitted into any model Hobie MirageDrive boat. Also check out news on the Hobie Bass Open qualifier for Hobie's World Championship, new accessory offerings, First Cast learn-to-fish program, Top Gun team and much more. [Read more...](#)

Besides fishing products, Hobie also has a wide array of water toys including sailboats, stand-up paddleboards, surfboards and the world's first and only Eclipse stand-up pedalboard. www.hobie.com



Hobie
FISHING

Lower Owens: Cure for Wintertime Blues

BY BOB SEMERAU

Western Outdoor News Staff Writer

BISHOP— Despite heavy rains and even record snowpack at higher elevations the Lower Owens ran gin-clear just below the Pleasant Valley Reservoir. The stretch of water was devoid of anglers due to crisp, cold 34-degree temperatures, but with broken clouds and still air, the day looked to be perfect fly fishing conditions.

The drive up to Bishop had flown by in six-hours flat, and other than constant distractions of changing scenery, the trip was uneventful. Leaving the less-than-attractive high desert of Palmdale, passing the airplane graveyard at Mojave, and finally catching sight of the huge Cinder Cones alongside highway 395 as it climbs toward the mountains, cares of the work-a-day world simply slipped away along the road.

Roadside signs pointed out the Hollywood Museum at Lone Pine, celebrating the rich film history of the area. Many of the hills along the way have been the backdrop for westerns shot on location nearby. Further up the road between the old towns of Lone Pine and Independence, is the travesty that was Manzanar, where 10,000 Japanese citizens were held during WW2. Now a national historical site the grounds and buildings are being restored in hopes of bringing enlightenment to future generations and perhaps a warning about the miss-use of government powers.

Those distractions had to wait for another day, perhaps when we return to Bishop in April for the Outdoor Writers Association of California spring conference.

Some great little motels await in Bishop and the folks at the Chamber of Commerce had recommended the newly remodeled Holiday Inn Express. The fresh décor and friendly staff really made getting in from the road a pleasure.

Finding the motel to be right down the street from the best damn BBQ, Holy Smoke Texas BBQ, I made a beeline for the dry-rubbed ribs and chicken.

With sunrise came the realization that the day was going to be bright and lovely. The fortunate chance that news having report exaggerated the incoming weather might have played into anglers not showing up along the river. Whatever the reason, the short drive north to the foot of the reservoir was easy and full of anticipation.

Local guide, Gary Gunsolley, had spent some time with me, giving tips on the Czech Nymph-no-indicator technique used most commonly along the Lower Owens. Simply a matter of wading-up and getting into the shallow water of the river, then high-sticking the fly-rod, while searching the line for a tremble or change of direction. Nothing to it.

Two-hours after stepping into the knee-deep, frigid water I at last saw the tell-



QUALITY WATER, fished all alone, is part of the wintertime thrill of fishing the Lower Owens out of Bishop.

Bristlecone ancient pine forest, near Bishop

Meade Fischer

At around 10,000 feet in the While Mountains, there is a hike among some of the oldest things on the planet, the Bristlecone Pines. These gnarled old trees have survived in this harsh climate for over 4,000 years, and you thought you were getting old.

The hike is a long loop from the visitor center, and it can be done, with time for photos in an easy half day.

As the crow flies, it's not far from Bishop, but to get there you have to negotiate a winding mountain road. Go south on 395 to the 168 and go east up the hill to While Mountain Road. When you get to the visitor center, park, grab your camera and start walking. One of those trees is the oldest, but the park isn't telling you which one.



tale tremble and struck for the first fish of the day. This brown decided it would show me what L.O. trout are about and quickly I found the need to push up river, regaining some of the rapidly disappearing backer being ripped from my reel.

As I glanced around I was amazed to not see a single angler anywhere up or down the river. There'd be no help with this one. Gingerly stepping along the river bottom as fast as was prudent in such a chill, with the rod held high and constantly grinding the old Ross reel on my Sage, the line came in and at last, so did the 18-inch-plus fish.

Getting photos and releasing fish on your own is an art and every artist knows the difficulties of achieving desired results. The fish flipped out of the net and recovered very nicely before even one picture could be taken.

But lessons learned early in the day paid dividends as the day drew on. A few more fish at a few more spots though the tranquil afternoon were more than enough for any report and soon it was time to call it a day.

The ease of getting to this stretch of water and the lack of competition for spots and likely layups, makes winter fishing the Lower Owens a go-to option for this fly-guy's next trip. Surely, I won't wait till April before the road and the river call upon me to make the short drive up to Bishop and these beautiful waters once again.



SNOW CAPPED mountains surround the valley at Bishop and are a beautiful backdrop for a winter's day, fishing on the Lower Owens.

LOWER OWENS BROWN ate a streamer pulled across the river quickly for Dave Sivak of Irvine.



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From the editor: You don't have to have a published article to be in print here. We want to hear from OWAC members, so send your latest outdoor adventure, photo, blurb or reflection. Even a paragraph or two would work. If it would interest our members, we would love to print it.

SPEED KILLS

LIGHTWEIGHT AND LIGHTNING FAST, TENZING'S NEW TX 14 IS GRAB-AND-GO HUNTING DAYPACK PERFECTION

Plano, IL (March 16, 2017) – Great hunting is where you find it, and sometimes, it's just a short distance from the house, camp or truck. Hunters headed for the stand, blind or back 40 don't always want or need a large hunting pack. They need a secure place to keep essential hunting gear and supplies meticulously organized and ready for action – a sturdy, svelte and lightweight hunting pack that won't slow them down.

Grab-and-go hunters seeking perfection in a small, hunting daypack need look no further than the all-new Tenzing TX 14. Featuring uncompromising function and infallible Tenzing engineering and construction, the lightweight TX 14 is designed for speed, and is optimally sized for any localized hunt.

Weighing in at less than two pounds, the ultra-efficient TX 14 is an organizational savant, providing a total of 1,600 total cubic inches of storage in three compartments, two side pockets and nine organization compartments. From quivers to car keys, clothing and cutlery to optics and game calls, the compact TX 14 daypack provides readily accessible, organized storage for every essential item needed for a morning or afternoon afield. Best of all, this astounding capability comes with a hunter-friendly price tag under \$100.

Legislature Honors Sebastopol Photographer for Wildlife Photo of the Year

On March 9, 2017, the California Legislature honored wildlife photographer Joshua Asel of Sebastopol with a resolution declaring his image of the life-or-death battle involving three species as the California Wildlife Photo of the Year. The photograph, presented on the Senate floor, captures the death-grip of a great blue heron as it clenches a garter snake, and the snake's last-ditch diversion of releasing a shrew that it had just taken moments before.

The fascinating image took the grand prize of the annual contest, presented by Outdoor California magazine and California Watchable Wildlife, and sponsored by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy. Senator Mike McGuire (Second Senatorial District), chairman of the joint committee on fisheries and aquaculture, and Assemblyman Marc Levine (10th Assembly District) jointly authored the resolution. The announcement on the floor of the Senate marked a high point in the week as seven photographs from the contest hung in the Capitol outside the Governor's Office.

This year, 2017, marks the sixth anniversary of the competition, but Asel said 2016 was the first time he'd entered. Each year, the contest selects five bi-monthly winners. Joshua's photographer took first place for January-February 2016. "I'd spotted the garter snake in the field a couple minutes earlier so when I focused on the great blue heron I knew exactly what was going to happen," Asel said. He took a series of shots that has the heron whipping the snake around before the snake pitched the shrew away. He believes the snake

tried to confuse the bird, to offer it something else and perhaps to get the heron to release it.

"I didn't know I had the exact shot with the shrew in the snake's mouth until I was home where I could take a closer look." According to Barbara Steinberg, Outreach Coordinator, California Watchable Wildlife and photo contest administrator, "As soon as I saw this photo, I knew this would be the 2016 photo of the year!"

HEAVENLY BISHOP

by Carol

Martens

The word bishop means so much more to me than a player piece in a common board game. I was born in Santa Monica California almost 75 years ago making me a true California native. Most of my life I've lived in the San Fernando Valley which makes me a valley girl! (Lady) (Senior woman) I'm still here and in OWAC because of my appreciation and love of the mountains, valleys, lakes and rivers. A year has rarely gone by that my family and I have missed a trip to the BISHOP! A bishop can be part of a church as well as a board game, but never bored. It's a holy place reflecting our Gods' creation and beauty.

As an outdoors family some of our best memories are bundled around the Bishop area. It's where we caught our first trout, camped out, backpacked and car-camped our way to the glory-filled high country. We all made it to the top of Mt. Whitney a few times and even once up the east face. It's also where I faced death a couple of times and lived to tell about it. The day my husband Jerry passed away, we shared one of the most spiritual moments he ever had on a solo trek in the high country. He rounded a corner early one morning and caught the sun rising and beaming down unto a flower-filled valley. He wept at the sight and the feeling of God's presence. I told him that would

be the first thing he would see in heaven. He passed away a few hours later. I must share that we didn't realize he was passing that day until it happened and he was paralyzed from the neck down. His last words were "It feels good." This was such a joy and comfort for me on our last day together.

It's my goal to write much more about my past experiences in Bishop, but right now I'm looking forward to our conference in April so I can include all the exciting and new experiences we are destined to have. It can only be better if you're there to enjoy it with us.



Day Hikes Around Orange County (2nd Edition)

Robert Stone

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Orange County lies along the coast in southern California between Los Angeles and San Diego. The county is framed by the Pacific Ocean on one side while the Santa Ana Mountains stretch along the entire back side of the county. The coast-to-mountain landscape creates an interesting, diverse terrain that offers many opportunities for exploration.

Despite the urban encroachment, nearly 30% of Orange County is preserved as city parklands, wilderness preserves, national forests, and state parks. Along the county's 44 miles of shoreline reside long stretches of sandy beaches, marine terraces, and promontories. The Cleveland National Forest and the San Mateo Canyon Wilderness cover thousands of acres of forested canyons and plateaus in the Santa Ana Range. This essential guide describes how to get to backcountry trailheads in the Santa Anas, the best trails to hike in the county's expansive parklands, and where to find access points to the coastline. Several inviting urban routes are included as well. Highlights of the

hikes include sheltered coves, tidal estuaries, forested canyons, cascades, weathered sandstone peaks, and vista points with views from the ocean to the cities.

A range of hikes is included, from easy coastal walks to strenuous hillside climbs. Statistics, accurate directions, and a map for every hike makes these adventures stress free. Dog access information is included, as well as a thorough index.

Companion guides include *Day Hikes Around Los Angeles*, and *Day Hikes On the California Southern Coast*.

Since 1991, Robert Stone has been writer, photographer, and publisher of Day Hike Books. He is a Los Angeles Times best-selling author and an award-winning journalist of the Rocky Mountain Outdoor Writers and Photographers, the Northwest Outdoor Writers Association, the Bay Area Travel Writers, and active member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America. Robert summers in the Rocky Mountains of Montana and winters on the California Central Coast.

California Rambling: Worth of Water: The Problem

by John Poimiroo

First of a three part series

"We never know the worth of water till the well is dry."

— Thomas Fuller, 1732

California's well is drying up. After four years of drought, the Sierra Nevada watershed has been damaged by forest fires and bark beetle infestations (*Beetles 101, Property Owners Take Note*, Dawn Hodson, Mountain Democrat, June 24, 2016). And, if more isn't done to restore the Sierra Nevada watershed soon, all Californians will truly know the worth of water.

California's Sierra Nevada watershed provides over two-thirds of the water used by Californians and irrigates some 750,000 acres of farmland. It is essential to our populace, economy and way of life.

Healthy watersheds do more than supply water. They support healthy forests, meadows, rivers, streams, lakes and ecosystems. They nourish plant and animal life, collect and filter water, store carbon (which helps regulate climate and improve air quality). And, the Sierra Nevada watershed is an essential source of forest products, recreation and tourism.

Considering how vital the Sierra Nevada watershed is to California, one would think the State would be doing all it can to maintain the watershed and restore it, but that isn't happening.

In 2014, California voters approved \$7.5 billion in general obligation bonds (Proposition 1) to increase water storage, water quality, flood protection and watershed protection and restoration. In comparison, they have approved \$64 to \$98 billion for a bullet train that will, once it is completed, serve a small fraction of those who depend upon the Sierra Nevada watershed.

Where will we go on that train, if there's no water at the other end of the line?

Considering the importance of a clean and abundant water supply for a growing population, industry and agriculture, the restoration of the Sierra Nevada watershed should be a priority, though it doesn't appear to be.

The Sierra Nevada Conservancy (SNC), a state agency, states, "Right now, the Sierra Nevada region is at a critical point. A century of fire suppression, a shortage of restoration

Cont. on pg. 6

efforts, and years of drought have placed Sierra forests, lakes, meadows and streams at incredible risk.”

Last year alone, more than 29 million trees in California died as a result of drought, insects and disease, up from 3.3 million the previous year. Eighty percent of those trees were in the Sierra Nevada, and a dead tree does little to prevent erosion.

Wildfires are becoming larger and more severe, as well. SNC reports that between 1984 and 2010, the number of wildfire acres that burned at high intensity rose by 50%. The 2013 Rim and 2014 King fires continued that trend with about half of the acreage burning at high intensity.

These high-intensity burn areas experience runoff and erosion rates five to ten times greater than low or moderate-intensity burn areas, resulting in sediment that degrades water quality, damages hydropower infrastructure, fills reservoirs, prevents fish eggs from hatching and reduces storage capacity.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) estimated following the King fire that during a five-year storm event, the equivalent of 226,000 dump trucks full of sediment can be expected to enter the Rubicon River watershed.

Similarly, Pine Flat Reservoir, downstream from the 2015 Rough fire, is vulnerable. SNC predicts that should a ten-year storm event occur, upwards of 2,000-acre-feet of sediment could get deposited in the lake, displacing enough water to supply 2,000 families for a year.

Those trees are not just essential to preventing sediment from being deposited in the watershed, but also to cleaning the air by absorbing carbon dioxide. Almost half of the carbon absorbed by California’s forests is stored by Sierra Nevada forests,

enough to offset the annual emissions of more than 1,000 coal-fired power plants.

Sierra Nevada meadows are as threatened as are reservoirs; they’re important to capturing snowmelt and releasing it slowly through dry months. Meadows also filter sediment and pollutants, contributing to higher quality drinking water. However, many Sierra meadows have become degraded by wildfires and dead forests, diminishing their capacity to filter and store water.

The USFS regional forester estimated in 2011 that 500,000 acres need to be restored each year to improve forest health and watershed reliability. However, that’s two to three times greater than what’s being restored today.

Funding has been the primary barrier to increasing the pace and scale of restoration across the Sierra, though other challenges exist. Among them, the Sierra Nevada Watershed Improvement Program lists: improving coordination between federal, state and local agencies, adjusting air quality regulations to allow controlled burns that help thin forests susceptible to holocaustic wildfires, dedicating funds to restoration so that they are not used for other purposes, faster processing of environmental assessments, and establishing mills and plants necessary to process the timber and create new profitable and sustainable markets and uses for it.

What Thomas Fuller wrote 284 years ago, has never been truer. Let’s not wait till the well is dry to know the worth of water.

This is the first in a series on the Sierra Nevada watershed. The next article will explore solutions and the final article in the series will describe benefits for El Dorado County.

Captain Tom Mattusch

of the charterboat Huli Cat has been taking science crews and volunteer anglers on trips to the Farallon Islands to update research on age and distribution of Canary and Rosy rockfish populations. This will be the first year in over a decade recreational anglers will be able to keep a Canary rockfish (1) in their daily bag limit of 10 rockfish. Volunteer anglers assist with Citizen Science to participate in the study.

During the rockfish trips, other species are frequently encountered. Those fish are descended as studies have shown they will definitely survive. There will be one more trip set up as part of this study.



More Capt Tom pics on page 7

Bishop is waiting for you

The community of Bishop, California is anxiously awaiting the 2017 Outdoor Writers Association Conference April 25-27. Bishop's slogan "Small Town with a BIG Backyard" fits perfectly. While Bishop retains the charm and hospitality of a small town, they also have all the modern amenities today's visitor requires. There is free Wi-Fi in downtown, including the picturesque city park. There are dozens of lodging options, ranging from quite luxurious to quaint and budget friendly. More than 30 restaurants offer cuisine for any taste and any budget. Downtown shops and galleries are mainly mom & pop style which means they provide high quality goods with honest, friendly service.

As for the "BIG Backyard," that's a gigantic understatement! Bishop's backyard is full of opportunities for fishing, hunting, hiking, biking, OHV/ATV adventuring. This time of year, you can even enjoy snow sports in the mountains just minutes from town. What's a backyard without wildlife? Mule Deer, Big Horn Sheep, eagles and hawks call this place home, while hundreds of migratory bird species pass through.



As for the OWAC Conference, the Bishop Chamber of Commerce has been hard at work making sure every detail is attended to. The Conference, Marketplace and Craft Improvement Sessions will be held in the Tallman Pavilion – it's the newest and nicest meeting space in all of Inyo County. The Wednesday night banquet is set for Yamatani Japanese restaurant - with owners Robbie and Roxanne Tani as your hosts, you will not be disappointed! The

hardest part will be choosing which activity you would like to do on Thursday – fishing, photography, wildlife viewing, OHV riding, snowshoeing, shooting, visiting a ghost town or museums? On Thursday night, your dinner party will be a real, honest to goodness barn party! This isn't just any barn, it's at the upscale, elegant Hidden Creeks Ranch. You'll enjoy a barbecued tri-tip dinner, live music and terrific company. Transportation between downtown and the ranch will be provided.

Last time an OWAC conference was in Bishop was 10 years ago – Bishop is thrilled to welcome you back!



Bishop offers so much for the outdoor lover



Tom Mattusch cont.



Take a Long Spin Around the Lake

Long spinning rods join St. Croix Legend Tournament lineup; improves drop shotting, wacky-rigging/shaky head and hair jig techniques

Park Falls, WI (March 17, 2017) – The finesse bite. It's a thing of beauty, seldom capped with a violent thump, but rather felt in the gentle twitch and a wandering line that form the telltale signs of a bass sampling your bait. Sometimes, it's the only way to lure bait-weary bass into the boat; other times, it's simply the most exciting and entertaining way to fish.

And for days when finesse-fishing holds dominion over finicky feeders, St. Croix is adding two new, 8'6" spinning additions to the Legend Tournament Bass lineup. And the progressive rods are reaching the light of day just in time for the 2017 Bassmaster Classic Expo in Houston, Texas.

"First is the specialty drop shot rod, which is equally as effective for casting lightweight hair jigs," says St. Croix Marketing Director Jesse Simpkins. "The other is a big water finesse version for heavy, shaky-head jigs or big wacky rigs."

Both rods are coming off a trial-by-fire testing period at Billy Chapman's famed Angler's Inn in Mexico, where the St. Croix team spent the better part of a week battling the bass of lakes Picachos and El Salto—two of the most legendary bass fisheries in the world. "They're incredibly lightweight," says St. Croix's Dan Johnston, who put the rods through the ringer with virtually every lure avid bass anglers might throw on them. "Even with light lures like hair jigs, you can throw them a long way, and the added rod length combined with braided line and a fluorocarbon leader means if you do get bit on a long cast, there's no stretch. You hardly have to set the hook."

Johnston doesn't know how many fish he landed with the new, now-seasoned designs; he stopped counting. But he does know that the fast-tipped, 8'6" rods are capable of putting more distance on a lure than a traditional-length finesse rod. And, he says once a fish is hooked up, the added length gives you unparalleled control over your prey.

"I could see the fish coming up like a rocket ship," Johnston says. "Once I knew a fish was going to jump, I could just very slowly, in a controlled way, put that rod tip down and give it a couple of reels, and when I did, that the fish could not clear the water because of the length of the rod. Now, is a real hot six-pound fish who's full of steam going to clear the water? Maybe so, but it's a heck of a lot better than trying to keep one out of the air with a shorter rod. You gain a lot of control in fish-fighting with these.

New at the Bassmaster Classic, St. Croix's 8'6" Legend Tournament rods were born when B.A.S.S. opened competition to rod lengths up to 10', lifting a ban that had been in place since the 1970's.

"At first, people talked a lot about float-n-fly being the technique that would benefit most from the new rule," adds Johnston. "But what we're entering now is a really exciting time for rod manufacturers. There are a ton of techniques that can benefit from the added inches."

"When you're fishing humps and drops, and you want that lure to fall before you bring it across, you need to be able to pick up extra line quickly when they bite. These rods absolutely do that," adds Simpkins.

Diehard competitors, and the everyday angler alike, will immediately improve their efficiency with modern techniques like dropshotting, casting hair jigs and working wacky-rigs and shaky-heads with these tape-measure spinning rods.

"St. Croix really nailed it with these," summarizes Johnston.

Legend Tournament Bass spinning features:

Integrated Poly Curve (IPC) tooling technology.

Advanced Reinforcing Technology (ART).

High-modulus/high-strain SCIV graphite with FRS for unparalleled strength and durability.

Fuji K-Series Concept Tangle Free guides with Alconite rings. Ideal for super braid, mono and fluorocarbon lines

Fuji TVS blank-touch reel seat on spinning models.

Machined-aluminum wind check and trim pieces.

Split-grip/super-grade cork handle.

Kigan hook-keeper.

Two coats of Flex Coat slow-cure finish.

15-year transferable warranty backed by St. Croix Superstar Service.

MODELS:

LBS86MLXF (Hair Jig/Drop Shot) 8'6", Medium-Light Power, Extra-Fast Action

LBS86MXF (Big Water) 8'6", Medium Power, Extra-Fast Action



Natural Wonders Forever

Proposing a Reefing Plan for California

By: Capt. David Bacon

I write this with the feeling that it may become the most important column I've ever written for you. I took part in a 2-day national conference on artificial reefing, which brought together the leading experts from all across the country along with staffers who have artificial reefing as part of their job descriptions or titles in various states including the East Coast, Gulf Coast and West Coast. Russell Dunn and his team from NOAA Fisheries put on the conference and my well-worn hat is doffed to them for doing a great job.

Fish Reef Project (www.fishreef.org, our best option for quality reefs) asked me to represent them at the NOAA sponsored meeting and I represented recreational anglers of California as I regularly volunteer to do at the County, State and Federal levels. By attending, I learned enough to put together a well-vetted, comprehensive reefing plan to propose for California.

Here is the story of how the plan came about... The national conference was organized into several working portions, the first of which was a panel discussion of the state of reefing along the country's 3 ocean coasts. Panelists from the Gulf Coast spoke of their long-term and current work and then panelists from the East Coast talked about their efforts and successes. It was overwhelmingly evident that both of those coasts are fervent about their reefing plans, purposes and progress. Permits are being issued, reefs are being built, critters are happy and people are happy. The feeling throughout the large conference room was elated and positive.

Then it was California DF&W's turn to speak and the good feelings evaporated quickly. California doesn't have a reefing plan. Our DF&W says it wants to have a reefing plan but first wants such a monumental amount of research done that it won't happen in any of our lifetimes and California doesn't have the money to fund that level of research anyway. So basically the statement was being made that California isn't going to have a reefing plan. A comment I overheard in the audience was, "They are letting the impossible quest for perfection get in the way of doing something really good."

Raising my hand at the point where questions were being taken, I asked the California DFW person how we can get past the stance of not being able to put together a reefing plan and be more like the progressive Gulf and East coasts where they really have good works going on. The words spoken in reply offered no real hope.

Fortunately, the floor has given again to the folks who were actually doing good reefing and discussion in panels

and breakout sessions returned to valuable issues such as comprehensive large-scale planning, purposing new reefs, materials (such as a high-relief combination of reef balls and quarry rock), siting, biological benefits, improving sustainable fishing, fisheries management planning, the well-established production value of artificial reefs, adding spawning substrate, enhancing colonization of specific species, enhancing forage opportunities, providing for subsistence fisherfolk, replacing lost socioeconomic resources, creating recreational opportunities near ports and creating habitat for larvae to settle and grow on to enhance biological productivity. The overall value of artificial reefs is truly amazing and much of the country recognizes and embraces reefing.

The conversations were eye-opening and valuable because the room was full of people who had long distinguished careers in artificial reef research, purposing, permitting and implementation. These were the highly-respected people to whom newer professionals bring their ideas to get holes shot in them until they get it right. I felt blessed to be able to talk with and learn from them and get their advice and vetting on tailoring a solid Plan for California.

Near the end of our final breakout session I asked some of the most experienced and revered among them to hear out the plan for California I put together from what I had heard and learned. They kindly obliged and when I was finished, they said it was a good and workable plan for California and advised me to run with it. So at the very end of the conference I took an opportunity to speak before the entire national gathering and described the plan I will propose to my state. Here is that vetted plan, in its combination of simplicity and complexity.

I propose... a statewide comprehensive network of large-scale geographic zones within which new aquatic habitat (reefs) may be proposed and will be permitted. I propose a comprehensive network because we need to move past trying to permit and build one reef at a time and instead think comprehensively about networks of reefs for a single solid purpose. In California's post-MLPA life with roughly 60 percent of our prime natural habitat having been set aside as Marine Protected Areas where we may not fish or where fishing is severely restricted, the purpose of the comprehensive network of reef zones will be to draw fishing pressure away from the remaining natural reef zones which are inadequate to withstand all of the fishing pressure that was once spread over all reefs.

This new network of reefing zones should be equivalent in size to the existing network of MPAs. If we build new aquatic habitat smartly, with reef balls and quarry rock in high-relief patterns and not far from harbors, the overall fishing value — due to flora and fauna production as well as attraction — will become so great that anglers will see them as better places to fish than most remaining natural reefs.

Furthermore, I propose that California put together an interagency team of State and Federal agencies to define, streamline and expedite an Artificial Reef Permitting Process. If this is not done, reef proposals will tend to languish on desks and move forward at glacial pace if at all. Some of the states' representatives at the conference talked about a 3 to 6 month permitting process, though sometimes permitting moved along considerably quicker. Let's see if California can match or beat that timeframe. To help us with that, I ask National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to incentivize California's reefing program to motivate our State agencies to organize, permit and assist with implementing reefs within aggressive timelines.

In summary... I ask California to rapidly create this network of reefing zones and help us with permitting and implementation. I ask NMFS to help out by supporting and incentivizing California's effort. I ask individual California anglers to contact your State representatives and the California Fish & Game Commission and urge support. I ask fishing clubs and organizations which include and represent recreational anglers to make this proposal a primary priority. Let's build some reefs together!

Help Prevent "Sign Blindness"

By Del Albright, OWAC Member

Outdoor writers and photographers have a special ability that I believe we could share more to help make our great state a better place to live and recreate. We hold in our hands (typing fingers) and in our travels in the outback, the ability to help cure "sign blindness."

I spend a large part of my time educating folks on how to recreate responsibly – doing it right while enjoying the great outdoors.

But the one thing that frosts me is how some people do not seem to see signs, and therefor suffer from what I call sign blindness – the inability to see what is in front of them and follow the rules!

How many times have you seen someone feeding the wildlife despite a sign 10 feet away to the contrary? Think about the tracks you see of a mountain biker or dirt biker who just had to get off the trail and leave an imprint where it did not belong in spite of brochures, signs and laws to the contrary. And how about the citified lifted truck that tears through a meadow when the huge public lands sign specifically forbids that?

Sign Blindness is a disease ruins our public lands and special places for everyone. We can help cure it. I hope you will join me and include (as appropriate) in your writings notes, tips, and suggestions that encourage responsible use of public lands and prevent abuse or damage of our resources. I like to call it the outdoor code of ethics:

Stay on the roads and trails no matter your choice of conveyance.

Obey the laws and rules and be sure to set the example for those behind you.

Stop and read the posted signs and kiosks as you travel the backcountry. Know and follow the rules.

Always pick up trash even when it is not yours.

Say something (without jeopardizing your safety) to

people being idiots and ruining it for all of us. In the worst cases, I do not hesitate to call law enforcement.

Sign Blindness is curable. It may take time and it will certainly take every responsible outdoor writer/photographer to be part of the cure.

Del: National Ambassador, BlueRibbon Coalition/Sharetrails.Org

These Are Challenging Times For Working as an Outdoor Writer

By Tom Martens

As an outdoor writer, I don't feel like "the enemy of the American people."

But being a member of the press, that's how President Donald Trump characterized me in one of his late-night Twitter rants.

The President has also said as a member of the press, I am "dishonest," a purveyor of "fake news" and a member "the opposition party."

Is he really talking about me – someone who writes about to fly fishing and conservation issues?

Probably not, but his comments are so general all of us outdoor writers get tarred with the same brush – impacting our credibility and our ability to gather facts for stories and columns.

Speaking of facts, ones about natural resources and the environment will likely be harder to come by in the Trump era. For instance, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has been ordered to remove pages containing data from its web site. Budgets for scientific research have been cut.

Change in the climate, which have been based on years of research and scientific data, has been called a “hoax.”

It’s going to be challenging being an outdoor writer for the next few years or so.

What’s to be done for us outdoor writers?

Here are 10 things outdoor writers can do to not only improve the capacity to write stories now, but also the future.

1. **Facts Based Stories** – When covering outdoor news, stick to the facts from California, rather than federal agencies.
2. **Based Stories on Actions** – Use information for stories based on actions that have been formally taken by agencies, such as bills approved by the State legislature and public agencies, such as the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or California Fish and Game Commission;
3. **News Sources** – Use news sources who have a record of providing reliable, rather than politically skewed information;
4. **No-Name Sources** – As much as possible, avoid writing stories and column using information from an “unnamed” or “reliable source” or someone who can’t be identified by name;
5. **Long-Term Impacts** – For conservation stories, focus stories on long-term, rather than short-term impacts (always remember that administrations – whether federal or state – come and go with election cycles);
6. **Reader Interest** – Focus on what outdoor readers want – namely stories about recreational opportunities, how to improve skills, etc., rather than about politics in far-off places like Washington, D.C.
7. **Follow the Money** – When writing about outdoor issues, stories based on what gets funded or not provide useful and reliable information about regions and topics;
8. **In-Depth Interviews** – Stories based on in-depth interviews with public officials or newsmakers regardless of their political leaning in a question-and-answer format can provide them a chance for get their information across while the writer maintains control of the topics.
9. **Press Releases** – Always check facts in press releases, especially from agencies or officials with a hidden political agenda;
10. **Avoid President’s Name** – Although he is the president, avoid using his name in stories or columns, unless you are looking for increasing your exposure on Twitter.

Editor’s note: Tom Martens is Editor at Large of California Fly Fisher magazine.

Spring is all the Rage in Redding, CA:

Take the Whiskeytown Waterfall Challenge,
Connect with the New Shasta-Trinity National Forest App,
Explore Classic Cars and
Saddle Up to the Annual Spring Rodeo

REDDING, CA, March 23, 2017 - Redding’s year-round adventure is really raging this spring, as in raging waterfalls, the new Shasta-Trinityself-guided tour app is all the rage, Kool Classic cars will be raging down the street and there will be plenty of raging bulls at the rodeo - need we say more?

Whiskeytown Waterfall Challenge April 15 - 23, 2017

The National Park Service invites visitors to take the Whiskeytown Waterfall Challenge during National Park Week Saturday, April 15th - Sunday, April 23rd. For a self-guided adventure obtain a free Waterfall Passport at the Whiskeytown Visitor Center and visit Brandy Creek Falls, Boulder Creek Falls, Crystal Creek Falls and Whiskeytown Falls to complete the challenge and receive a special gift. Or complete the challenge by joining free ranger-led hikes to the park’s four major waterfalls, including ADA accessible Crystal Creek Falls. The challenge can be completed during multiple visits, or, finish them all in one day for bragging rights. Ranger led hikes will be offered daily from Saturday, April 15th through Sunday, April 23rd with morning and evening hike options! You can reserve your spot by calling the visitor center at (530) 246-1225 beginning April 1st. For more information visit www.visitredding.com/eventdetail/2789/waterfall-week.

Shasta-Trinity National Forest App

The Shasta-Trinity National Forest has partnered with OnCell to launch a mobile app that will allow visitors to take self-guided tours of five popular sites in the forest using their personal mobile devices. The app also serves as a communication tool and allows the forest staff to deliver the latest information and news to visitors. The five sites on the Shasta-Trinity National Forest are highlighted in the OnCell app are Bailey Cove, Bowerman Barn, Lewiston & Trinity Lakes, McCloud Waterfalls and Mount Shasta. The Forest Service plans to add additional sites in the future. The tour portion of the app features forest facts, historic and cultural information, and unique imagery all keeping with the Forest Service’s goals of providing better interpretive and educational information for visitors. The app also features offline and GPS maps to help visitors discover points of interest within the forest. For more information visit www.fs.usda.gov/detail/stnf/news-events/?cid=FSEPRD534238.

Redding continued

Kool April Nites April 22 - 30, 2017

The Cruise: Friday, April 28th, 2017

Main Car Show: Saturday, April 29th Redding Civic Auditorium

The 28th annual Kool April Nites features vehicles built in 1979 or before. Car lovers line the streets to watch the Friday Nite Cruise from 6:30-8 pm featuring up to 2,000 cars with new participants every year. Those same cars can be viewed up close all day Saturday at the Redding Civic Auditorium. With seventeen locations around Redding, finding a Show and Shine spot won't be hard. The challenge will be having enough time to see them all! Enjoy live entertainment by Decades Thursday night at the Redding Civic Auditorium with tickets available at the door for \$10 a person. On Friday, live entertainment continues with the Hot Rods Band performing classic oldies from 8:30-10:30 pm.

Kool April Nites does more than provide a unique opportunity to see beautifully restored vehicles and great entertainment. Every year they give back to local non-profits serving youth. Last year alone they donated \$40,000 between 15 organizations and this year that amount is expected to increase. Visit www.visitredding.com/eventdetail/2717/kool-april-nites for a complete list of activities and events. Online registration is also open for those who want to show off their classic car during Kool April Nites.

69th Annual Redding Rodeo May 17-20, 2017 Redding Rodeo Grounds, 715 Auditorium Drive, Redding, CA 96001

Saddle up for the 69th Annual Redding Rodeo and get ready for some bucking, roping, riding, and boot-scooting! This exciting event attracts mutton busters and steer wrestlers from all over the United States. It kicks off with a steak feed BBQ and dance, and karaoke championships followed by a 4-day PRCA rodeo. This is where the best PRCA cowboys and cowgirls compete for added prize money and it's always a thrilling performance. Once again this year, the event will be filmed and televised on CBS Sports. For ticket information visit www.visitredding.com/eventdetail/1594/68th-annual-redding-rodeo.

For more information on events in Redding and Shasta Cascade, please check the official events calendar. To discover all the adventures and attractions Redding has

