



# Mending the Line

VOL. XXXXIII WILDERNESS FLY FISHERS SANTA MONICA CALIFORNIA MAY 2009

*For Our May Meeting WFF Presents:*  
**Fishing the Kern River  
with Guy Jeans**



**D**o you want to learn all about fishing a great and beautiful river in our own backyard? This month you will have that opportunity. We're going to see and begin to understand the joys of experiencing parts of the southern Sierra, including such wonderful places as the Upper Kern River, the Hole in the Ground, Grasshopper Flat, the Little Kern River, Lake Isabella and the Greenhorn Mountain Range.

Guy Jeans is a local boy made good. He is originally from Ventura, where he enjoyed surfing, fishing and music. In fact, for more than 15 years Guy made a living composing, writing and performing music in a popular 10-piece band. He still performs today, doing benefit concerts for the American Cancer Society and raising money for breast cancer research. However, as Guy traveled with his band, he discovered many rivers and streams that spiked his already strong passion for fly fishing. He fell hopelessly in love with the Kern River and the many other waters of the southern Sierra and thus pioneered a guide service there and opened Kern River Fly Shop with his wife Raquel and daughters, four-year-old Brooke Sierra and one-year-old Ellie Rayne.

Guy has been fishing this area for more than 20 years and he guides at least 250 days a year all around the southern Sierra,

Sequoia National Forest and the Golden Trout Wilderness. Actually, Guy has fly fished throughout the U.S. and Canada and in 2006 was chosen as a team captain for the western US Fly Fishing Team that competed in Colorado at the National Fly Fishing Championships. He is also host of two DVDs: "Sierra Fly Fishing Volume 1 The Lower Kern River" and "Volume 2 The Kern River in the Golden Trout Wilderness." He writes fly fishing articles for magazines and newspapers including Southwest Fly Fishing magazine and he does 25 speaking engagements a year on the fly fishing opportunities of the Southern Sierra. He is a contract fly designer for Solitude Fly Company and his Kern Emerger series is sold and fished internationally. Guy has guided anglers from around the world wanting to catch the three native trout only found in the southern Sierra: the Golden Trout

*Continued on page 2*

Date: Tuesday May 19  
Wet Flies: 6:00 PM  
Dinner: 7:00 PM.  
Place: Olympic Collection, 11301 Olympic Boulevard  
Cost: Prepaid **\$29.00** per person  
Paid at door: \$33.00

**YOU CAN PARK UNDER THE BUILDING FOR \$3.50 OR PARK ON THE STREET OR CARPOOL!**

Send in the dinner reservation form or call 310 280-3459.

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## Wilderness Fly Fishers at the Festival

*by Larry Carroll*

The 2009 Santa Monica Festival will take place on Saturday, May 9th from 11:00 am to 6:00 pm at Clover Park. This exciting event is sponsored and managed by the City of Santa Monica Cultural Affairs Division, the City of Santa Monica Environmental & Public Works Department, and Community Arts Resources (CARS).

As in past years, Wilderness Fly Fishers will have a booth in the Eco Zone. This is a forum for environmental organizations such as ours to come together and share their goals and activities with the community at large. It's also a great chance to meet Trout In The Classroom alumni!

In addition to the Eco Zone, the Festival will present music and dance performances on two stages, hands-on workshops and demonstrations, a Town Square, an international Marketplace and the newly expanded Global Café. The Festival is Southern California's first large-scale, zero waste, green powered event. With an ever-expanding profile in Santa Monica and Los Angeles, the sponsors are predicting between 9,000 and 15,000 participants at this free, all-day event.

Past WFF participants have felt this to be one very fun day. If you would like to volunteer to help run the booth, please visit the 2009 Santa Monica Festival forum on the club website.



### *Guy Jeans, continued from page 1*

(our state fish), the Kern River Rainbow and the Little Kern Golden Trout.

Guy's presentation will be a multimedia experience with music and beautiful photography. His topics will include local entomology as well as the best fly fishing techniques and strategies to employ for success in fishing these lovely and near-by waters. We will discover and examine the areas in and around the southern Sierra, including the Upper Kern River 20 mile section, Wild Trout Section, Hole in the Ground, Grasshopper Flat, Kern Lakes in the Golden Trout Wilderness, Kern Plateau, Little Kern River, South Fork Kern River, Rock House Basin in the Dome Land Wilderness, Lake Isabella, the three sections of the Lower Kern and the Greenhorn Mountain Range. Please join Guy as he takes us on a journey of fly fishing our own southern Sierra.

### Board of Directors

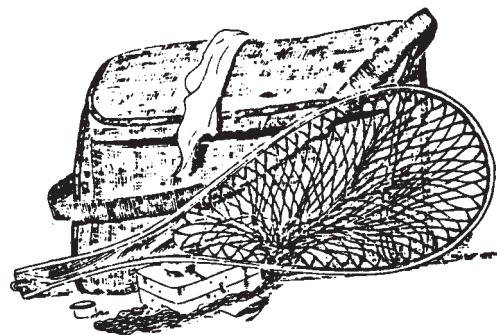
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| WFF Family Picnic .....      | Marie Hammond,              |
| .....                        | Jim Solomon                 |
| Casting .....                | Jim Solomon                 |
| Holiday Party .....          |                             |
| Conservation .....           | Mel Light                   |
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| Trout in the Classroom ..... | Mel Light, Jim              |
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| Outings .....                | Alex Siele                  |
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| Webpage .....                | Larry Carroll               |
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*Check out our web site at  
[www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org)*

## WFF Coming Attractions

|                |  |
|----------------|--|
| May 9          | Santa Monica Festival  |
| May 12         | Board of Directors Meeting   |
| May 19         | General Meeting "Guy Jeans "The Kern River"  |
| May 17-19      | Big Horn River Outing  |
| May 23         | Fly Tying Westwood Recreation Center   |
| June 9         | Board of Directors Meeting   |
| June 16        | General Meeting - David Lambroughton "Endless Summers"                                   |
| June 26-29     | Lower Sacramento Outing  |
| July 16        | Joint Meeting with SPFF - Ken Hanley "Fly Fishing Bass"                                  |
| September 15   | Members Show and Tell  |
| October 13     | General Meeting Trapper Badovinac "Solitude - Finding and Fishing Small Western Streams" |
| Oct 29 - Nov 1 | Hot Creek Outing   |
| November 17    | General Meeting - Skip Morris "Fishing the Surface of a Trout Lake"                      |



## May Board of Directors Meeting

The May 12 Board Meeting will be held at 400 Bonhill Road, Los Angeles, Ca 90049. Meetings start promptly at 7:30 P.M. All members are welcome. New members are especially encouraged to attend. Come and see how your club runs and you might pick up some fishing tips too.

## Fly Fishing the Lower Merced River

*by Kyle Kirwan*

Eight years ago on a happy May day I had just finished a class action trial in Modesto, and jubilant with victory, I wanted to find somewhere to go fishing. I heard about a guide named Tim Bermingham in Jamestown. I called him and learned that he had exclusive fishing access to about four miles of the lower Merced River below Merced Falls, a small dam operated by PG&E which generates some power and makes water sales to downstream farmers. The lower Merced River is a bit of an anomaly, in that the upstream dams built in the 1960's actually restored the river to its pre-gold mining and pre-dam glory.

As many of you know, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the best trout fishing in California was in the lower stretches of the Sierra Nevada West Slope rivers, which teemed with native West Slope rainbows and a host of anadromous salmonoids in spite of aggressive dredge mining for gold. But in the early 20th century, expanding agricultural interests and aggressive deforesting caused a major decline in the quality of waters and thus the fishing in these rivers. I had fished them with good success in the early 1950's, but by the early 1960's the lower rivers were ruined by dewatering and silt runoff which muddied and warmed the waters to levels which native trout and legacy aquatic insects could barely tolerate. Natural reproduction also suffered from the siltation.

When the dam projects were largely completed in the mid-1960's, some anglers started discovering tailwaters below the lower elevation dams which recreated the prehistorical cold and clear waters. Siltation washed away, and freestone streams began to recover. The few hardy native rainbows began to reproduce again in numbers, and the fisheries were restored. There are now attractive stretches of tailwaters on the Stanislaus, Tuolumne, Merced, and Kings Rivers. The most astonishing of these is the lower Merced River.

The lower Merced River flows out of Merced Falls dam. The water is clear and cold year round, generally between 52 and 56 degrees F. Due to 19th Century mining, the stream bed had been dredged and somewhat straightened. About 99% of the trout are native rainbows which somehow managed to survive over 100 years of mining and then dewatering. They now reproduce well in the restored waters and gravel stream-bed. The reservoir upstream is planted on a put and take basis, and occasionally a planter or two gets sucked through the turbine and down into the lower river. However, their survival rate is near Zero due to the cold, swift waters and competition from native trout for the best lies. The real stars of the show are the native West Slope rainbow trout which have fully repopulated the river over the past fifty years.

The native rainbows are broad shouldered and have large, powerful fins and tails. They are heavily spotted, and males have bright red gill plates and broad red stripes down their flanks. Hens are lighter colored and less broadly striped. The river is full of these fish. All of them are in superb health. An average daily catch is 30-40 native trout per rod to hand. The trout run from 9 inches to over 24 inches. I fished the river on April 10, a bit early, and our fish ran larger this season for some reason. About 80% of the trout were 12 to 14 inches ( I caught one or two around ten inches); about ten percent were 15-17 inches. The rest were over twenty inches, although all four trout over twenty inches escaped, either by breaking my 5X tippet, or flipping the size twenty fly. Damn. The largest rainbow I have landed in the Merced was 24 inches. These fish can really swim. We have had break-offs with 15 inch trout. They are "rainbows" in the most dramatic and sublime sense of the word. They run and leap and tire slowly. They are a handful. They are a challenge to play and land.

The river is a typical freestone river, and the bug life is abundant. The river is full of mayflies, tricos, some stones, caddis galore, sow bugs, winter midges, and "San Juan" red aquatic worms. Just pick up a dinner plate size rock, and you will see for yourself why these trout are large and healthy.

When I was fishing on April 10, we put in the river at 9:15 a.m. in the jet boat and ran right into the middle of a large blue wing olive hatch which lasted about an hour. I hooked some nice ones, but lost them. Alas. But I had several to hand in the 12-15 inch range. We then moved further upstream and ran into a literal cloud of tricos. We stuck a few more, but nothing big. There were too many bugs in the water and the



fish were very spooky in the shallows. We then moved all the way up to the dam and started drifting and nymphing. The first trout was a 16 inch buck rainbow. I fished until 2 p.m., and then took out because I had to get up to our ranch for Easter. By then I had landed at least 30 trout, mainly on nymphs, although we caught a few more on dries during the trico spinner fall. The largest I landed was a bit over 16 inches. But I had four trout over 20 inches on all the way to the net, but lost all four when they turned and ran and leapt again. First trip jitters, I guess. Large spring caddis (sedges) were popping off when I left, but the trout were still keyed on millions of trico spinners flowing downstream. I can only imagine what happened around 4 p.m. when the trout started keying on the emerging caddis.

The fishing will continue to improve through the middle of June as the trout continue to gorge on a smorgasbord of spring bugs, flowed by summer hoppers and the usual mid-summer bugs. I understand a few of our members are fishing there now, and we will have the benefit of their reports as summer approaches. The fishing slows a bit in mid-summer, but 30 trout per rod per day is still the norm. It is just that the really large trout sulk a bit, unless you clunk them on the head with a nymph or get a windy day when they are gathered on the south bank waiting for hoppers to blow into the river, a truly frightening spectacle! We catch large trout in the summer, but they are not as aggressive to the fly as they are in the spring when the river's aquatic insect life really blossoms.

Tim is a catch and release fisherman. He knows the river cold. He is a highly skilled flyfisherman and an excellent guide. You access the river through private property. You run upstream in the jet boat and drift down. The river is pretty easy wading. It is freestone bocce balls and gravel. It gets a little slippery in the summer, but the flows are lower then. You will never see another fisherman on the river. You have it all to yourself.

How to get there: Tim's email address is fish\_hog@peoplepc.com. His telephones are 209-984-4007 (home) and 209-206-1936 (cell). We usually stay at the historic National Hotel in Jamestown. The rate is \$140 per night. There is an historic bar in their saloon. The food in the restaurant is good, although there are several other good restaurants in town. Typically, Tim meets you at the hotel, you go to breakfast, and then drive 35 minutes through mother lode landscape down to the river, where he berths his jet boat, and you are in the water as soon as you can string up and rig up.

## 2009 Blasting & Casting Winners



### Accuracy Beginner

- 1st Mike Callaghan
- 2nd Leslie Riley
- 3rd Sis Goldberg

### Intermediate Accuracy

- 1st Mel Messinger
- 2nd John Kingsley
- 3rd Peter Haight

### Advanced Accuracy

- 1st Zan Rufus Isaacs
- 2nd Steve Weisberg
- 3rd George Boehme

### Distance

- 1st Mel Light
- 2nd Steve Weisberg
- 3rd Jay Melzer

## The Fishing Fanatic – Knot Tying Part II

*by Mel Light*

Knot sure about the connection?

Last month I described the Orvis tippet knot, which is to connect your tippet to the leader. The next knot to learn is the Orvis knot, which is the connection from tippet to the hook. By the way, the reason these knots have the Orvis name attached to them is because Orvis has had contests to see what the best knots were and these two are a couple of winners.

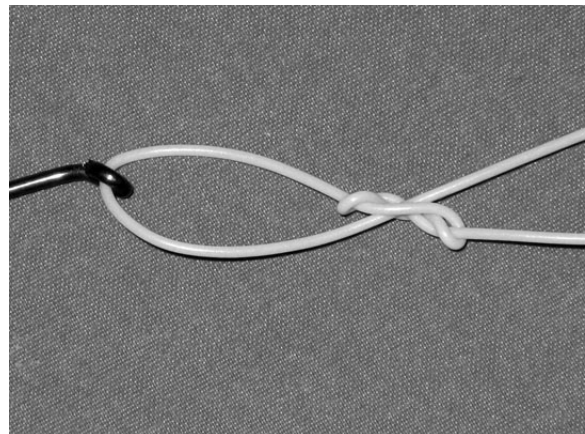
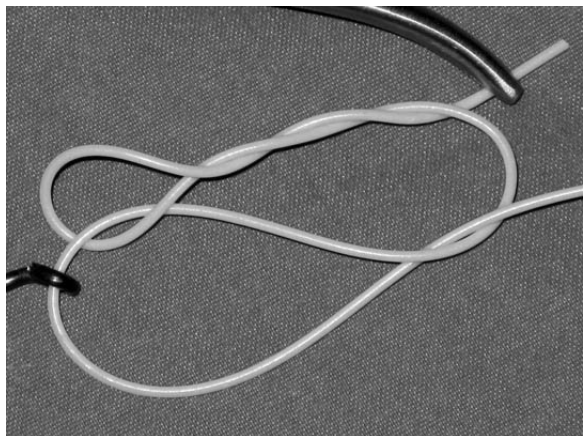
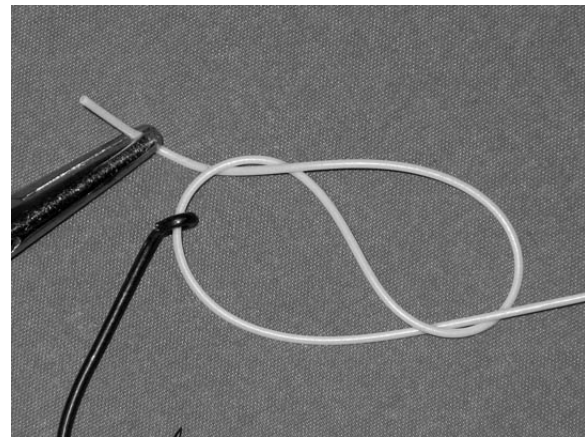
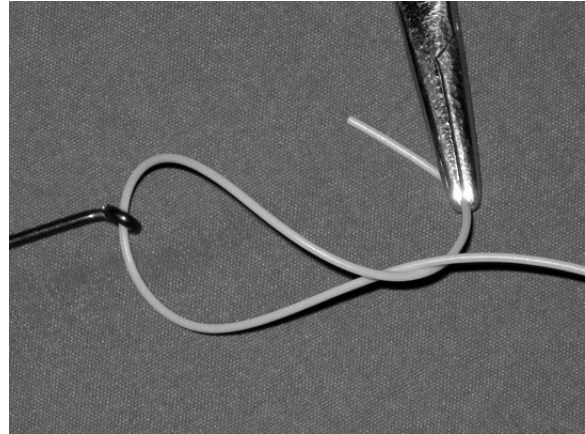
The Orvis knot for tippet to hook connection is a little more difficult to tie than the prior knot, but when weighed against tying two or three improved clinch knots to get a good one, it is worth the effort.

First thread the tippet through the hook eye.

Then pass the tag end behind the line coming into the hook. Take the tag end through the loop you just created.

Now take the tag end through the second loop two times.

This is one of the few knot that require pulling on the tag end first then allowing the knot to slide down the main line to the hook. Always moisten the line prior to the final seating of the knot. Over the years I have always used my tongue to moisten the knot and never had any ill effects from Giardia which is the parasite that lives in a lot of our waters. To be safe, however, it is a good idea to use stream water to moisten the knot prior to cinching it down.



*Paul Volcker, former SEC chairman, models the latest in fashionable headgear with Jeff Pill in New York last summer.*



## Smart Fishing, Smarter Fish

by Alex Siele

Up at 5am and out the door by 5:30 doesn't exactly describe my typical Sunday. I particularly enjoy the act of sleeping and few things will get my blood flowing that early in the morning. However, if you tell me I'll have a shot at catching a trophy trout, go ahead and wake me up at 4am, or 3am for that matter. To be honest, that might even keep me from falling asleep the night before.

By 6:50am, on the Sunday of our Stillwater flyfishing trip, I had already arrived at Laguna Niguel Park. I proceeded to follow the directions given to me by the ranger at the gate, and it led me along the lake. Now, I don't know about everyone, but I believe the majority of the people reading this, like myself, experience a significant increase in heart rate and a healthy endorphin lift when you first come into view of some type of body of water, especially ones that hold trout.

and a half on the 405 was quickly the lake. This was my first time was thoroughly impressed. It is hills surrounding the majority of fair number of people there at 7 and peaceful.

First on the agenda, on Stillwater flyfishing. His thought out, I felt like I was in class. He knows where his fly is in relation to the bottom of the lake to the inch. He told us of video that some anglers/scientists had taken of the life-cycle of a stillwater midge, and how it will rise just slightly off the bottom and then drift back down for a certain time-period. It was these midges we were looking to imitate, and the fish that target them, which are apparently mostly trout in the lake, that we were targeting. I highly recommend speaking with one of the members who was at Frank's seminar to learn more about the technique, because if I tried to write it all down, our newsletter would be a textbook.

So, after learning how to rig up and then doing so, we hit the lake. It wasn't the greatest blue-sky day you could wish for, but the weather cooperated wonderfully, and getting a chance to float around the lake with fellow WFF members made the day that much more pleasurable.

Oh yeah... So how was the fishing?

Did I tell you how nice it is to float around the lake with everyone? OK, OK. So there weren't any real catches to speak of. Until, Peter Haight got a bite. He successfully hooked the fish. Perhaps it was the beast of Laguna Niguel. He fought it hard, and landed the monster. The truly amazing part about this fish, was that it was hard to determine its size. If I had to put a number on it, I would say 8, because it was just slightly larger than a size 10 wooly bugger. I believe it was the trophy of the day, nonetheless.

Not even our teacher/guide Frank managed a bite on this day, but it hardly diminished the amount of fun we had. To say the least, I am very excited to fish the lake again in the future, and the technique we learned and walked away with, will catch many fish on many lakes that hold trout. But most importantly, if you haven't fished with fellow members, it's a must. We have great people in our club, and getting a chance to know them better only made me a prouder member. This is a great group we have, and I hope every member gets to enjoy one of our trips like I did.

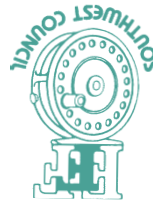
I can't even imagine how fun it will be when we add catching fish to the mix.

*His technique is so precise and so thought out, I felt like I was in an upper level college science class.*

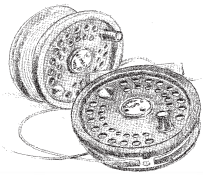
All grogginess from my hour lifted when I was able to see to Laguna Niguel Park, and I somewhat tucked away with the lake, and despite having a in the morning, it felt private

Frank Murata gave us a lesson technique is so precise and so an upper level college science





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## May 2009

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| 17<br>Big Horn<br>Outing | 18                    | 19<br>General<br>Meeting<br>Guy Jeans | 20<br>MTL<br>Deadline | 21                       | 22                       | 23<br>Fly Tying<br>Westwood<br>Recreation |
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