

California Cast

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The Newsletter for Trout Unlimited of California

Spring 2004

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'Golden' Opportunities Abound for Volunteers this Summer

By David Katz

This summer Trout Unlimited and California Trout are working with the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Forest Service in a collaborative effort to protect and restore the California golden trout. The Orvis Company and its customers are supporting this restoration project.

There are a variety of opportunities for volunteers to participate in the restoration activities that will take place in Inyo and Sequoia National Forests and Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Parks in the Southern Sierra. Many of these projects involve some rigorous backpacking and hiking in the high country. Some of the activities involve catching fish for genetic monitoring purposes, so fishing skills and equipment are required.

In all cases, volunteers will have to provide their own transportation to the starting points and will have to provide their own camping, fishing, outdoor gear, and food. Go to our website www.tucalifornia.org for a

complete write-up on all the project opportunities and an application form, or e-mail us your request and we will mail it to you.

Fence Work at Monache Wildlife Area: In mid-June there will be a work weekend at Monache Wildlife Area where we'll help put up a fence to protect the habitat along the South Fork of the Kern River and Monache Creek. A pot luck and barbecue are included.

Collecting DNA Samples: DNA sampling is done to help determine what constitutes a "pure" California golden trout, and to locate transplanted populations that may exist outside their native range. Tissue samples collected in 2004 will later be used for DNA analysis which will help toward a better understanding of the genetic composition and geographic distribution of California golden trout.

Volunteers, in teams of two to four persons, will hike into remote areas to catch fish and collect genetic samples by taking small fin clips. Volunteers participating in this monitoring work must attend a one day training

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Volunteers filled four trucks with garbage from Topanga Creek.

Earth Day at Topanga Creek

By Howard Kern

On April 24, the Los Angeles Chapter kicked off its annual Topanga Creek watershed stream project with an Earth Day cleanup on Topanga Creek. Partners in this project include the Santa Monica Mountains Resource Conservation District, Topanga Creek Stream Team, the Topanga Town Council, and the Santa Monica Chapter of the Surfrider Foundation.

The entire watershed of Topanga Creek is in an urban setting. Topanga Canyon Boulevard (State Highway 27) runs through the entire watershed, connecting the San Fernando Valley with the Pacific Coast Highway and the ocean. The Topanga Creek watershed is home to a genetically significant species of endangered steelhead, the Southern California steelhead. This watershed affords one of the best opportunities in the

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California Cast

www.tucalifornia.org

Editor

Jamie Hunter
949.493.2298
hjhunter1@cox.net

California Office

David Katz
Director
dkatz@tu.org

Rob Dickerson
Project Manager
rdickerson@tu.org

1120 College Avenue
Santa Rosa, CA 95404
707.543.5877

Chuck Bonham
Counsel
cbonham@tu.org

828 San Pablo Avenue
Number 208
Albany, CA 93706
510.528.4164

California Council

Gary Watt
Council Chair
510.237.7531
restlesswaters@yahoo.com

Next California Council Meeting

June 12 TU State Council Meeting will be held at the Healdsburg Library Forum room at the corner of Central and Piper Streets two blocks north of the town Square in Healdsburg, 9:00 a.m to 4:00 p.m. If you would like to attend or need more information, please contact us at 707.543.5877 or e-mail dkatz@tu.org

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'Golden' Opportunities

session before they will be assigned to a specific monitoring area. There are two one-day training sessions scheduled on July 10 and 17. Once you attend a training and receive a monitoring assignment, you can go out to do the sampling anytime you wish during the summer and early fall.

Seven Day Backpack: In late July there will be a seven day group backpacking trip to the Headwaters of the Kern. Under the direction of CDFG staff, the group will hike and fish the high country.

TU Labor Day Work Party: We're working on re-establishing the traditional TU Labor Day work party scheduled for Labor Day weekend in early September. This annual event is coordinated by Sequoia National Forest. Volunteers will participate in streambank and meadow restoration work. We'll have more details by mid summer.

Monitoring and Fish Removal: In late September, we'll assist CDFG and the USFS in a week-long monitoring project and exotic fish removal at Templeton Barrier and Strawberry Creek.

Back to Monache Wildlife Area: In early October, we'll return to Monache Wildlife Area for another work party to take the fence down and do other restoration work.

All activities will take place in the Sierra Nevada Mountains, where we will be at elevations from 7,000 to 12,000 feet. Remember, we will have warm days with potentially very cold nights. A good sleeping bag is critical. The main access point from the west is from the city of Bakersfield, with most trail heads for our activities about two and a half to three hours additional driving time from Bakersfield. For some trips, such as the Chicken Springs Lake trip, access is from Highway 395 (south of Bishop), which is on the east side of the Sierra.

Send e-mail to dkatz@tu.org or rdickerson@tu.org for full information and sign-up form or visit our website at www.tucalifornia.org. 🐟

David Katz is Director of Trout Unlimited of California. You can reach him at 707.543.5877 or by e-mail: dkatz@tu.org.



Wine Creek in Dry Creek Valley.

Quivira Winery and TU team up for steelhead

By Rob Dickerson

Steelhead Red! What vision does that conjure up in your mind? A red fish... or a fine wine from Quivira Vineyards Wine Creek Ranch located in Sonoma County's Dry Creek Valley in the Russian River watershed?

If you picked the latter, you got it right. TU has partnered with Quivira Vineyards to promote coho salmon and steelhead trout restoration efforts in tributaries to Dry Creek. TU and Quivira are using Wine Creek as a model for other grape growers and wineries in the Dry Creek Valley to show that world class wines and fish can coexist.

Resource use and population growth have resulted in a devastating impact on the salmonids that once thrived in the Russian River and its tributaries. Once, flourishing populations of steelhead, coho salmon and chinook salmon drew anglers from around the globe to test their skills on the Russian River. Now these fish are on the brink of extinction. The lands in the Russian River watershed are 90 percent privately owned and offer a tremendous opportunity for restoration and recovery projects.

Dry Creek flows into the Russian River near Healdsburg, California. The Dry Creek watershed covers approximately 56,000 acres and is identified as a watershed with many tributaries suitable for steelhead trout and coho salmon.

In the Dry Creek Valley, 11 tributaries of Dry Creek have existing fish

populations and offer the potential for

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Salmon Protection Threatened by Hatchery Policy Changes

By Alan Moore, TU staff

On April 29, news broke on the front page of the *Washington Post* of a new and widely anticipated hatchery policy being crafted at high levels of the Bush administration. *Post* reporter Blaine Harden obtained a draft of the policy, which appears to lay out a strategy for counting hatchery fish along with wild fish in determining an individual stock's need of Endangered Species Act protection. By lumping hatchery and wild fish together in determining abundance, the new policy could be used to remove federal protections from many or most of the 26 currently listed (and one candidate) stocks of salmon and steelhead up and down the Pacific coast, as well as inland to Idaho.

Reaction to the draft policy was swift, both in the press and among the various interests carefully monitoring Pacific salmon recovery and other conservation issues, including many on Capitol Hill.

"I feel like the people of the Northwest woke up to a bombshell this morning," Sen. Maria Cantwell (D-Wash.) said in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*. "I'm very concerned we're moving away from science, which is what our policy has been based on, for some political judgment or political expediency."

Editorials criticizing the policy also soon appeared in *The Seattle Times*, *The Oregonian*, *The Seattle Post-Intelligencer*, the *Vancouver Columbian* and elsewhere.

Trout Unlimited staff were quoted extensively in the dozens of press accounts that came in the wake of the *Post* article. TU voiced criticisms over the vagueness of the

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Quivira Winery

restoration. TU is taking a leadership role in coordinating stream restoration activities on the fish-bearing tributaries of Dry Creek. TU is working with California Department of Fish and Game and NOAA Fisheries personnel to identify and implement restoration projects at the highest priority sites. Wine Creek is one of these sites and we plan to conduct revegetation, instream structure improvement and fish passage barrier removal projects along the length of the stream this summer and fall. TU volunteers, mostly members of the Redwood Empire Chapter, will be a key component of this effort.

TU will continue to work with landowner and local groups such as the Dry Creek Valley Association, Sonoma County Farm Bureau and the Russian River Property Owners Association to conduct education and outreach efforts in the valley among landowners. 🐟

Rob Dickerson is project manager of Trout Unlimited of California. You can reach him at 707.543.5877 or by e-mail: rdickerson@tu.org.

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Earth Day at Topanga Creek

Los Angeles County area for this species to recover.

Howard Kern and Kevin Reed helped organize the efforts for TU. The main focus of the day for the TU crew was to clean up and restore a site where a transient had lived and later abandoned. This area was just a few yards from the creek and

"An entire commercial dumpster was filled with fencing, rusting propane tanks, and bags of cans and bottles."

there was a great deal of garbage to be hauled out. It was hot, dirty work, moving rotting mattresses, old sheets of plywood, old rusty pipes and bedsprings, as well as bags of miscellaneous garbage. Load after load was shuttled along a path through a forest of oak trees above the creek. By the time we finished, the four trucks that volunteers had donated were loaded high. Other volunteers, over 50 strong, worked with our partners up and down the creek.

An entire commercial dumpster was filled with fencing, rusting propane tanks, and bags of cans and bottles. While this is good news, the bad news is that it was there in the first place! Each year since 1998, we have held a creek clean up in April and September, and each year, we remove between 4 and 10 tons of trash. TU has been a part of this effort from the beginning, and was a major factor in getting this rolling again this year. This year the dumpster was paid for by TU and UBS Corporation.

The LA Chapter will make a much larger effort in September for California Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 18. For more information, contact Howard Kern at howardkern@aol.com. 🐟

Aquatic Ecologist Don Duff Plays Key Role for TU

Q By *Jamie Hunter*

Quite a few California TU members know Don Duff from the crucial role he has played over the years in helping us with federal and state partnership programs, Embrace-A-Stream grants, Golden Trout Wilderness grazing issues, San Mateo southern steelhead restoration, and education about instream incubators used for native trout recovery.

Duff recently retired from the U.S. Forest Service after 43 years of combined federal service, including service with the U.S. Air Force in photo intelligence during the Cuban Missile Crisis. During his career as an aquatic ecologist, Duff has worked as a member of the Forest Service, BLM and Fish and Wildlife Service—based in a number of western states, including California, New Mexico, Montana, and Utah.

Duff became involved with native trout exploration in the 1960s, working with Dr. Robert Behnke in New Mexico and later, the Northern Rockies. In 1972, Duff became the State Fish Biologist in Utah for the Bureau of Land Management. Exploring the vast desert areas near the Utah/Nevada border in 1974, Duff discovered two relic populations of Bonneville cutthroat (BCT) in the Deep Creek Range. These were previously thought to be extinct. In 1975, Duff found another trout population further north in the Pilot Peak Range. To his excitement,

Dr. Behnke confirmed that these fish were an original remnant Lahontan cutthroat (LCT) strain from the Pyramid Lake population...quite a discovery.

For 13 years, Duff was the USFS National Liaison to Trout Unlimited. In this role, he oversaw the signing of an incredible fifty partnership agreements between TU



Don Duff at Deep Creek Drainage in Nevada.

and Federal and State agencies. These agreements help TU members to work effectively with these important partners, making it much easier to set up volunteer restoration

projects and have a voice in the shaping of state and federal management plans for salmonids.

Duff is currently vice president of the Great Basin Chapter, based in Baker, Nevada. This diminutive chapter has developed a number of Embrace-a-Stream projects for BCT and LCT, generating over \$500K in grant funds for native trout recovery over the last five years. Through the persistence and hard work of many volunteers and agencies, some 14 streams along the east/west fronts of a 75 mile mountain range on the Goshute Indian Reservation have been restored with Bonneville cutthroat trout.

During his retirement, Duff will still be working for Trout Unlimited as an Aquatic Resource Consultant. He is currently available for grants assistance, training, and scientific guidance to TU chapters, councils and the national office. Of course,



Don also plans to finally get a little fishing in, now that he has retired from the Forest Service. TU of California salutes Don Duff for his many contributions to native trout recovery and welcomes his ongoing assistance to us with California resource issues. *Don Duff can be reached at TUDTrout@aol.com.*

Jamie Hunter is editor of California Cast. E-mail hjhunter1@cox.net

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David Hines of NOAA Fisheries, left, says a few words as Homer Canelis, right, accepts an award for his work on the Austin Creek restoration project.

TU Partner Honored as Environmental Hero at Earth Day Ceremony

On Earth Day, April 22, Homer Canelis, TU's landowner partner in the Austin Creek restoration project, was named Environmental Hero of the Year by NOAA Fisheries. Canelis, owner of an Austin Creek based gravel company, has worked tirelessly with Trout Unlimited, local, state and federal agencies, and members of his community to make this unique restoration project successful.

Austin Creek is a tributary of the Russian River that enters the river about 5 miles from the river's mouth at the Pacific Ocean. TU partnered with Canelis, the California Department of Fish and Game, NOAA Fisheries, the California Conservation Corps and the Sonoma County Water Agency to implement the Lower Austin Creek Migration Improvement Project. The first stage of the project was completed in the fall of 2003 and resulted in the improvement of 4,000 feet of steelhead trout and coho salmon habitat. See website www.tucalifornia.org/nccoho2.htm#austin for more information.

Canelis received this recognition because he is an outstanding example of a small business owner (gravel mining) who has a strong sense of community and environmental stewardship. He has volunteered his time and resources, often at the expense of his family business, to create and implement instream mining methods that will dramatically improve habitat conditions in Austin Creek. This stream is critically important to the survival and recovery of threatened coho salmon and steelhead. He also acts as liaison with local community members to catalyze fisheries restoration efforts throughout the watershed and surrounding areas. His ability to provide effective leadership, in a community possessing significant reservations about government regulation, has made him a highly effective, albeit unconventional, conservationist. He has also raised the standard of industry performance and is currently lobbying with California government to implement change statewide. 🐟

South Coast Chapter Launches First Cast

By Jamie Hunter

First Cast is TU's program to introduce youth to angling. The South Coast Chapter recently launched a pilot program in Orange County, the first in Southern California. In partnership with Ensign Intermediate School in Newport Beach, *First Cast* is provided as an after school program to more than thirty seventh and eighth grade students. They were taught casting, fly-tying, knot-tying, stream etiquette and conservation ideals.

Instructors came from our Chapter, The Fly Fishing Club of Orange County and Long Beach

Audrey Williams, Chapter president, introduces students to streamside knot-tying.



Casting Club. The committee contributed over 200 volunteer hours to establish the program, which wrapped up with a fishing trip April 24 to the West Fork of the San Gabriel River. Eighteen students participated and ten caught (and released) fish.



Intent students follow Cheryl Moore's every move as she shows them what to do.

Thanks to all the teachers and mentors of this program, as well as Committee Chair Brent Evans. If you are interested in participating in the future, please contact Brent Evans at gbevans@pacbell.net. 🐟

TU Update...

■ North Coast Coho

Great news for the North Coast Coho Project! TU was recently awarded three grants by the California Department of Fish and Game Fisheries Restoration Grant program to support our precedent setting efforts to enhance coho and steelhead habitat in Mendocino County.

TU and our partner, Mendocino Redwood Company (MRC), were granted funds for work which includes the Hollow Tree Creek Restoration Project Phase II (\$597,755), Hollow Tree Creek Phase II Watershed Assessment Phase II (\$45,135) and the Little North Fork Noyo River Restoration Project (\$200,645). The field work is scheduled for the summer and fall months of 2004 and 2005. All three projects include matching donations from MRC.

■ Southern Steelhead

The South Coast Chapter of Trout Unlimited is participating with the CDFG and NOAA Fisheries on several restoration efforts for southern steelhead. Chapter members are participating in barrier surveys on Aliso Creek and a new signage program planned for several Orange County streams, designed to educate the public about native steelhead.

The chapter is part of a cooperative effort to install a much needed fish ladder on Trabuco Creek, where it crosses the I-5 freeway. This project is a partnership between TU, CDFG, the County of Orange, and County Flood Control District. Finally, the chapter is leading an effort to develop Watershed Plans for Aliso Creek and San Juan/Trabuco Creeks. South Coast has sought grant money from CDFG's *Fisheries Restoration* and *Adaptive Watershed Plan* programs and will hear in late 2004 if they were successful. Call or e-mail George Sutherland if you are interested in helping with this project. *George Sutherland is the Project Coordinator of the Southern Steelhead Recovery Team. He can be reached at 949.361.0274 or gsland@pacbell.net*

■ South Coast Chapter

In April, the South Coast Chapter shared a conservation meeting and auction with the Fly Fishers Club of Orange County, an FFF club. The speaker was Dr. Robert Behnke, the world authority on the evolutionary,



Terry Imlay, FFCOC Program Chair welcomes Dr. Robert Behnke at the joint TU/FFCOC Conservation meeting and auction.

distributional and genetic relationships among western trout species, especially that of the cutthroat lineage. His presentation focused on California's native trout, their current status and opportunities for conservation. Dr Behnke, who writes a quarterly column for Trout Unlimited's *Trout Magazine*, contributed copies of his new book *Trout and Salmon of North America*, which contains illustrations by the noted Joseph Tomelleri, which were sold at the auction.

The auction netted about \$7,000 which was shared between several conservation organizations and raised sufficient funds for the South Coast Chapter to continue its programs for the next year. Thanks go to all who participated with purchases, donations and time.

—Audrey Williams

■ San Joaquin Chapter

The first meeting of the San Joaquin Chapter of Trout Unlimited was held on May 1. The Chapter is comprised of the 268 TU members who live in the Greater Fresno Area. Our Chapter boundaries include King and Sequoia National Parks and Monuments, Wilderness areas and the US Forest Service and State Lands. The golden trout area is located just south of our border. Our counties include Fresno, Tulare, Madera and parts of Kern.

The major rivers are the Kings and the San Joaquin. Also included within our boundaries are the Edison Lakes and their tailwaters and feeder streams and watersheds, and several agriculture storage reservoirs. Almost all of these impoundments have dams and several have power generation operations. Our watershed has high recreational use year-round and provides drinking water for our cities and towns.

With these varied uses, it is imperative that we work closely with the numerous local agencies and other conservation organizations in the protection of coldwater fisheries along with educating the public.

Our objectives are clean, cold clear water and the support of the wild trout populations and native fish in their habitat. We're looking forward to getting involved in various trout projects as well as having some fun fishing together.

Contact Matt Holford, Chapter President at 559.323.7083. Please send your e-mail address to mmholford@sbcglobal.net to receive your copy of the chapter newsletter.

—Matt Holford, Chapter President



Restless Waters: Whispers

By Gary Watt

Late afternoon shadows fell over the tips of pine trees across the water at Carbon Bridge. The sun was visible through the forest. Here and there, portions of the tall grass glowed in the low angle light, and the surface shined where the rays struck the water.

With no great confidence, but sizable aspirations, I left the parking lot and walked upstream. I had a theory, formulated in the wake of a recent unproductive evening, that the bend below the Powerhouse Riffle might fish better from the far bank.

I positioned myself just below a slough that dripped in from the east bank, and tied on a Pale Evening Dun. The first rises began just as a couple of anglers arrived on the opposite shore. He started fishing about 80 feet upstream of me. She started in almost directly across. They were both wearing cowboy hats, not something that I consider a good sign, which probably says more about me than them.

Neither one had made a cast when I hooked up. The small fish shot into the air, its vermilion sides metallic in the dying sun. A good beginning. Better lucky than good, they say. Lucky? Good? Neither? Who knows? Oh sure, there have been moments. But was that luck, or skill? Was I lucky, or good? Does it even matter?

The next fish was decent, and took some line a fair ways toward the lady. It tumbled on the surface, startling her, and then ran back to me. They were both watching as I released it. Then the whispering began.

"Ask him what fly he's using," he said under his breath. "Go on, ask him." "I don't want to ask him, you do it," she replied.

The next fish was solid, more so than I had expected. It ran straight down the middle of the creek, way downstream. When it threw the fly, the fish hit the water so hard it sent waves to both shores.

"For God's sake, will you ask him what fly he's using?," he implored her. "You ask him," she rejoined. "Ask him, for heaven's sake," he rebuffed her. "Nice fish," she said to me, smiling. "What are they taking?"

"Pale Evening Dun," I returned, "fished with the Hat Creek skate."

She was mystified. "Hat Creek Skate? I'm not sure we have any of those," she said, shaking her head.

Another nice fish rose midstream. I looked at the rise, then at her. I remembered the time I began pulling my tippet off the reel, trying to feed it through the guides. I remembered how Ron could have made a big deal out of it. He didn't, though. The fish rose again. I thought of how Harold used the most modest gear, tied the most exquisite flies, and caught such big fish. How he always offered up the best water when things got too far out of hand. How he shared his secrets.

"Here," I called out, "take this one," casting my line all the way across and above her. She caught it with her rod tip, and pulled it toward her, looking at me quizzically.

"Go ahead, clip it off and tie it on," I told her. The frogs were just starting to croak, the mad final minutes just beginning. As she cast to the big fish, I distinctly heard, "Why didn't you get me one?"

I didn't look back. Walking quickly I wanted to be at a certain chalky bluff while there was still enough light to work the ledge. There was a big fish down there. A huge fish. I had never hooked it. Lucky? Good? Who knows? But in the distance I could hear her reel screaming—and him telling her what to do. 🐟

Gary Watt is the Council Chair of TU of California. His fishing stories have appeared frequently in these pages. For more Restless Waters, visit www.tucalifornia.org.

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New Salmon Policy

policy's standards to determine the need of federal protection for individual stocks as well as the apparent basic contradiction of including hatchery fish under the Endangered Species Act.

"Hatchery fish certainly have a role in restoring salmon runs and mitigating some of the damage inflicted by salmon declines, but they have no place in determining federal protections," TU Salmon Policy Coordinator Kaitlin Lovell told *The Olympian*.


Western Conservation Director Jeff Curtis focused more on the vagaries of the policy, including one critical determination which used the standard that hatchery fish which have become "no more than moderately divergent" from wild fish may be included in abundance evaluations.

"That's a loophole large enough to drive a hatchery truck through," Curtis told *The Seattle Times*. "We, as humans, are no more than moderately divergent from chimpanzees, but that doesn't make us the same."

Federal officials remain mostly mum on the policy, instead insisting that the implications being raised by conservation groups and others are premature. 🐟


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