

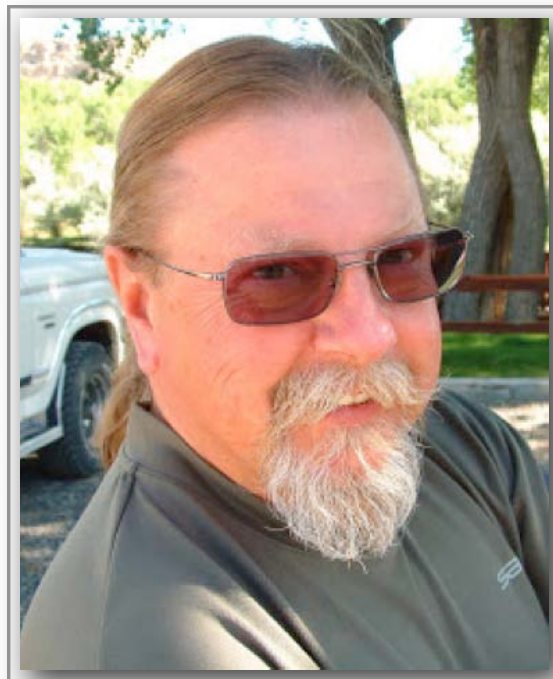


## Fly Fishing the Spectacular San Juan

*with Larry Johnson*

Not too far from southern California is a river that is world famous . . . world famous, that is, among fly fishers. In the northwest corner of New Mexico is where the San Juan River flows out of Navajo Dam, and there are very few fly fishing waters that can compete with this stream for numbers, size or the strength and fighting abilities of these trout.

The San Juan is a tributary of the Colorado River and became famous as a trout fishery after the Navajo Dam was built, which made the San Juan a tailwater. Construction began on this earthen dam in 1957 and was completed in 1962, originally designed for water storage in the newly created Navajo Lake. It is 402 feet high and more than 3,600 feet in length. Before the dam, the river was a relatively small one in the arid western foothills of the Rocky Mountains with not much to attract hordes of fly fishers.



*Larry Johnson*

*continued on page 2*

### May 2015 MONTHLY MEETING

Date: Tuesday, May, 19th  
 Wet Flies: 6:00 PM  
 Dinner: 7:00 PM  
 Place: [Olympic Collection, 11301 Olympic Boulevard, LA](#)  
 Cost: **\$32.00** per person  
 Parking: \$3.50 underground – Free on the street.

**TO MAKE RESERVATIONS: [RESERVE ONLINE](#)**  
**OR CALL THE HOT LINE 310 280-3459**  
**OR MAIL IN THE FORM ON PAGE 11**

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## Spectacular San Juan

But after the dam was in operation, with water flowing at a constant temperature of 42 to 44 degrees year-round, and the initial stocking of brown trout, the world began to take notice and for good reason. The trout average 17 to 19 inches, with many much larger. The fish took to the San Juan perfectly and the stocking of browns actually stopped 25 to 30 years ago so the browns are now considered wild. (These days some rainbows are stocked.) The pristine water below the dam runs for about 20 miles, with the fish numbering an incredible *nine to twelve thousand per mile*. This desert setting is indeed a unique one for a trout fishery, with the fish of the San Juan holding in pods, scattered in many of the riffles, as well as in back channels. The primary food source is midges, with the trout also taking mayflies, blue-wing olives, caddis, stoneflies, terrestrials like hoppers and ants and more meaty food such as worms, (yes, where did you think the San Juan worm got its name), leeches, snails and scuds.

You can drive to the river, or you can fly into Albuquerque, which then leaves you a little more than a three hour drive to the northwest, or you can fly into Durango, Colorado, which is one hour north of the river.

Larry Johnson has been fishing the San Juan for years. He loved it when he first fished it in the mid-80s and that love has steadily increased during the last 14 years that he's been living on the banks of the river. The southwest was a new experience for Larry. He was born and raised in New Jersey where his family had a restaurant along the shore of Lake Lackawanna -- yes there is a Lake Lackawanna -- that has been a summer resort 50 miles outside of New York City since 1911. Larry is one of five children born to a man whose first job was a mathematician working on what would become a new invention -- called a computer -- for IBM. Then Larry's father went off to fight in World War II.

Larry learned to fish from a neighbor at the lake, a Catholic priest whom Larry describes as being a family friend and a good fishing teacher who was the person to first put a bamboo rod in Larry's hand. Larry describes Father John Dericks as a man his family loved so much that he married everyone in the family . . . and they weren't even Catholic.



*Navajo Dam and the San Juan.*



*San Juan River*



*Larry Johnson & Fish*



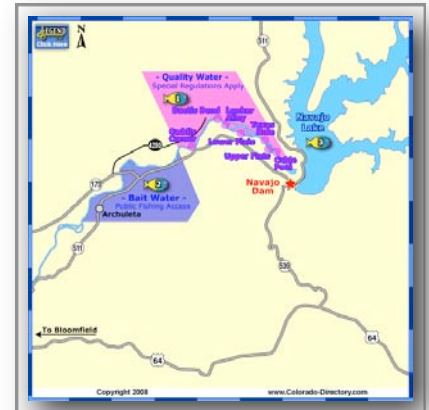
*4 Corners Map*



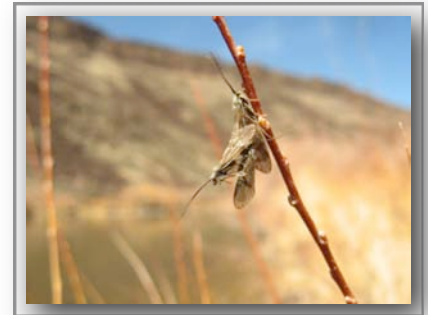
## Spectacular San Juan

Larry graduated from Nichols College of Business in Dudley, Massachusetts in 1975 with degrees in business administration and marketing. After graduating, he worked at a ski lodge in Vermont until his brother-in-law convinced him to come out west to California. After a few years of working in different sales positions, Larry was hired by Polaroid where he spent more than a decade working for that corporation in Europe. In 1991 he was on a fishing trip in Florida where he had dinner with a doctor when this doctor showed him a new-fangled invention – a digital camera. Larry is a smart man and almost immediately realized that the Polaroid camera was doomed. He took early retirement and eventually wound up in New Mexico where, in 2000, he decided to become something of a trout bum on the San Juan. He actually took a job working behind the counter in a fly shop and, a year later, when Soaring Eagle Lodge came on the market, he bought it. He lived through some rough spots, like the actual day he took possession of the lodge. It was September 11, 2001 and by early afternoon, he was flooded with cancellations. But his skills at sales, marketing and publicity have proven invaluable and his investment paid off. He loves the San Juan, he loves guiding on the San Juan and he loves all the people who come there to fish.

To see and learn more about the San Juan, Larry Johnson and Soaring Eagle Lodge, go to: [www.soaringeaglelodge.net](http://www.soaringeaglelodge.net)



*San Juan River & Navajo Dam Map*



*Caddis*



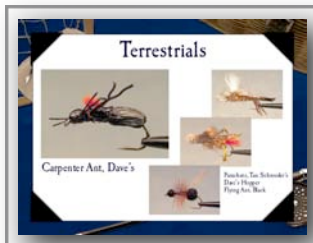
*Jacquez Ranch Water*



*Midges*



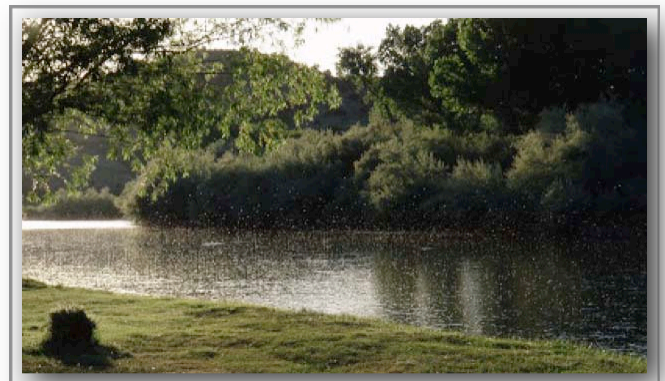
*San Juan Worms*



*Terrestrials*



*Nice Brown*



*Caddis Hatch on the San Juan*



## Board of Directors

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Vice President	OPEN
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Outings	Larry Carroll
	Clay Dodder
Webpage	Larry Carroll
Newsletter	Jeffrey Pill
	Michie Hirooka
	Marcia Breskin
	Clay Dodder
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[Wildernessflyfishers@gmail.com](mailto:Wildernessflyfishers@gmail.com)

To join WFF, Visit our website  
[www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org)

## May Board of Directors Meeting

The May 12th 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.

## COMING EVENTS

For more information go to the WFF website [CALENDAR](#)

Trout in the Classroom	Mon.	May 11
Spring Super Raffle	Tue.	May 19

## May Raffle Items

## Value

See Super Raffle items

## **2015 SPRING CONSERVATION SUPER RAFFLE PRIZES**

In May, for the first time ever, we will conduct a Spring Conservation Super Raffle. Like our Holiday Super Raffle, it will feature top of-the-line gear and fantastic trips as well as other outstanding prizes. (Can't make the May meeting? No problem. You don't have to be present to win!) See the great prizes in this issue of Mending the Line. Raffle details are available on our website at [www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org). Go to the website, click on Events (in the menu on the left side) and then click on the May 19 meeting date. Please buy as many tickets as you can, as this is a most important fund-raiser for the club.

### **TEMPLE FORK Lefty Kreh Finesse 3 wt, 8'9", 4 pc FLY ROD with CASE**

Retail Value \$220.00 Lefty Kreh Finesse Rods complement the TFO line by offering a more "traditional" taper and action for those who fish small flies and fine tippets on light lines. These are the ideal rods for meadow streams, limestone creeks, and spring creeks. At short to medium distances, Lefty Kreh Finesse rods cast effortlessly, turning over long leaders easily. The shorter lengths are perfect for tight quarters, while the longer length rods will keep a back cast well above tall grasses. Lefty Kreh Finesse rods are handsomely appointed with rosewood inserts on an up locking reel seat, which nicely accentuates the deep olive finish.

### **WILLIAM JOSEPH 5 wt, 9', 4 pc SHIM1 FLY ROD and 5-6 wt FLY REEL**

Retail Value \$300.00 This is a great rod and reel that you have to see to appreciate. It is Canadian made and at the International Fly Tackle Dealers Show many people were amazed at the high performance of this rod.

### **ORVIS RECON 8 wt, 9', 4 pc FLY ROD (No Rod Tube)**

Retail Value \$450.00 Recon teams a high-performance, fast action feel with light swing weight. With close-in loading prowess and the power for longer reach, Recon rods boast a completely new ferrule design, a modern shadow green blank, and covert black nickel hardware and reel seats. Made in Manchester, Vermont with a cloth rod sock and 25-year guarantee.

### **CHOTA CAMO HIPPIES - Small (Exchangeable)**

Retail Value \$140.00 Sometimes you need a hip wader, sometimes you need a knee high wading sock and at other times you need "something in between." Now you can have all in one with Chota's New Camo "Hippies" Convertible Stocking Foot Hip Waders. The Hippies feature a 3mm neoprene stocking foot attached to a three-ply breathable laminate upper with an adjustable drawstring at the top for a secure fit at any height. A built-in cinch strap just below the knee keeps the waders in place and helps to prevent flooding just in case you go in a little too deep. Built-in gravel guards are standard.

### **BRODIN GALLATIN GHOST NET**

Retail Value \$115.00 For general trout fishing this is the best all around net in a catch and release style. Thermoplastic rubber net bag with re-enforced yoke. Overall length is 24.5" and the hoop is 8.75" by 17.25".

### **SAGE 33" MULTI-ROD TUBE (6 Fresh/4 Salt)**

Retail Value \$130.00 Sage Manufacturing, fly-fishing industry leader, announces the release of the most innovative rod tube design in over 50 years. Sage's new design transforms the traditional travel rod tube to set the new standard in fly rod protection. Made using an aluminum extrusion process, the unique and proprietary design incorporates alternating convex and concave curves, which not only looks sophisticated but also adds new dimensions of strength. Its distinctive octagonal shape also keeps the tube stable on smooth surfaces. Other features include oversized, rubberized end caps, which help prevent scratches and dents and a bottom cap with a custom ID area to write crucial contact information in case of loss. The quarter-turn tenon style cap clicks shut to form a tight seal to keep dust, water and grit out of the tube. Each of these features ensures that rods will be protected no matter the abuse.

*continued on page 6*

## **2015 SPRING SUPER RAFFLE**

### **AIRFLO SUPER-DRI ELITE WF5F FLY LINE – Lichen Green**

Retail Value \$75.00 The Super-Dri technology has been developed for the serious floating line angler, featuring a friction reducing coating which lets the line glide through the rod rings and adds yards to your cast. The Super-Dri's coating gives you unparalleled floatation with the ability to repel water, dirt and surface scum better than any material in the history of fly lines.

### **SOARING EAGLE LODGE ON THE SAN JUAN RIVER, NEW MEXICO**

Larry Johnson has graciously donated, at half price, three nights lodging with meals and two days guided fishing for two anglers. Soaring Eagle Lodge is located on the banks of the world-renowned San Juan River in northwestern New Mexico. Larry Johnson is our May presenter and will be doing his program on the San Juan River immediately prior to the drawing for the raffle prizes. **Not included in the donation is gratuity for dining and guides, New Mexico fishing license and rental equipment. Donation is not valid September 1 – October 31, 2015. Winner pays Soaring Eagle Lodge \$1,023.00 (Value for two anglers for three nights lodging and two days guided fishing would be \$2,046.00). Expires June 1, 2016.**

### **PAT JAEGER, EASTERN SIERRA GUIDE SERVICE**

Pat Jaeger, our January 2014 speaker, has donated a one-day drift trip on the Lower Owens at half price for one or two anglers with the date to be mutually agreed upon. Eight-hour drift trip includes: Flies, complete wading gear, rod/reel, terminal tackle, lunch and beverages. A unique way to get away from Lower Owens weekend crowds and explore new, trout-infested water is to go by boat. Since most of the river below the Wild Trout Area is not accessible by foot, drifting is the best way to explore this wonderful fishery. **Winner Pays \$212.50; Value \$425.00 (Plus Pat will give a 25% discount for an additional consecutive day). Expires March 31, 2016.**

### **ERNIE GULLEY FLY FISHING GUIDE SERVICE – “Two for One”**

Fishing at Crowley Lake with WFF's good friend and very popular presenter as well as a respected and successful guide, Ernie Gulley. Crowley Lake is considered one of the premiere stillwater fisheries in the United States and Ernie Gulley has graciously donated two days of guided fishing on Crowley Lake for two anglers for the price of one day. **Winner pays \$400.00; Value \$800.00. The trip will be available during the 2015 fishing season and per the scheduling of Ernie.**

### **KERN RIVER FLY SHOP'S 2015 BEGINNER FLY FISHING SCHOOL WITH GUY JEANS**

Certificate entitles one entry (\$75.00 value). All equipment is provided for the class that is approximately 4 hours long and scheduled one Saturday each month. Includes basic entomology and casting, commonly used knots and fly fishing techniques and strategies used on the Kern River and most western freestone streams.

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### **TWO BOTTLES OF 2005 CHATEAUX TALBOT BORDEAUX RED WINE**

Donated by Peter Haight Approximate Value \$160.00 ( \$80.00 each bottle)



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## **In Their Own Words**

### **Third Graders React to 2015 Trout in the Classroom**

*by Celia Carroll*

Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup> marked the end of the Wilderness Fly Fishers' 2015 Trout in the Classroom (TiC) program, as the last school group released the fish they had watched for ten weeks grow from eggs to young rainbow trout.

"I had a very awesome time...the flyfishers taught us so much," wrote Joanna, after she and her classmates had released their young rainbow trout into a small creek at Kenneth Hahn State Recreation Area. A total of 581 students participated in the 2015 TiC program (AKA Classroom Aquarium Education Program) sponsored by Wilderness Fly Fishers, in conjunction with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

For the three seventh-grade Culver City Middle School classes, volunteer fly tyers demonstrated their craft and discussed the philosophy of catch-and-release fishing using barbless hooks. The three elementary school classes released fish for the teens.

The third graders rotated among four stations, staffed by WFF volunteers: Fly Casting Lesson, Entomology, Fly Tying Demonstration, and Fry Release.

"The first station was learning how to cast a fly rod...I learned that you should bring the rod straight up in the air, wait till the line straightens out and then pull forward." Neil accurately described the lesson he received from WFF casting instructors.

Gordon watched the process of tying a fly: "First, he de-barbed the hook. Next he wrapped the hook in brown thread. Then he cut a piece of brown string and used some more brown thread and wrapped the string with it. Then he got a lighter and burned the end of the string to make the head of the worm."

Tristan wrote, "I used the net to catch all the things in the lake. I caught a lot of algae, moss, some clams, worms and rocks. It was awesome to see all the cool things in the lake." All the elementary-age students caught their own specimens in the 'Bugology' station and magnified them to examine what their young fish would eat after being released.

"The final station was releasing the fry. When we got to the station we sat down and the teacher (a WFF volunteer) got the trout which was in a bucket...Ms. Schnauss called us by number order. When it was my turn Ms. Schnauss said what's its name? I said Squirmy," wrote Sofia, in describing how she released her fish.

*continued on page 8*



## Trout in the Classroom



And so another year of successful TiC activities has been completed. This program of teaching young people about trout and how they grow is important and valuable to conservation and our sport. We will never fully realize the future impact upon these students who learn about fish and the environment. But what we do know is that these young people gain knowledge about fish and how ecology works. Their perceptions have been grounded in science and taught with actual hands-on experiences . . . and all the students appear to have had fun while also absorbing important knowledge.

Without the dedication, skills and good cheer of WFF volunteers, the program could not have been a success. A big “Shout Out” and gratitude go to: Larry Carroll, Mary Jo Dalton, Peter Haight, Steve Fernandez, Charlie Motley, Norman Nelson, Rich Peters, Rick Radtke, Tom Rasmussen, Leslie Riley, Art Siegel, John Dalton and Jim Solomon.



*Jim Solomon oversees students adding trout eggs to their classroom aquarium.*



*Students with aquatic insect catching gear*



*Casting Instructor Charlie Motley  
with student.*



*Rich Peters and students focus on fly tying*



*A student releases his trout gently  
into the stream.*





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# WFF Member Fishing Reports

Here is a new section for those of you who wish to let the club know where and how well the fishing has been. Please get them to be by the 20th of each month for inclusion in the next months newsletter.

Clay Dodder

## Oregon

*By Rich Peters*

Here is an email many of the WFF Board members received from Rich Peters. Some of you may have already heard some of this at the last meeting when Rich got up and told us about it. This is for the rest of you.

Greeting, WFF Members

I officially kicked off my 2015 fishing season last week with a trip to Oregon (an incidental reason for going was to meet my son's future in-laws). We primarily fished the lower Deschutes below Maupin from shore and drift boat for the equivalent of about 3 days. While I cannot say the fishing was red hot, we all caught plenty of wild, red side rainbows on a combination of dries, nymphs and emergers. This time of year (leading up to the much anticipated salmon fly hatch in about a month from now (email dated March 30th)) the fish are generally eating March Browns, Baetis and Skwalas, but in addition they always seem to enjoy stonefly nymphs. The best fly in my arsenal was a March Brown soft hackle emerger which fooled a number of good fish. Interestingly, I have fished the Deschutes a few times now and IMHO it is one of the best rivers that no one seems to talk about down here, and that is independent of the tremendous summer steelhead run. The fish are not overly large, generally in the 12-14" range with a few every trip in the 16-18" range. But the River is an impressive watershed and it's really fun to hook up in the riffles and the big tail outs. You cannot fish from your boat so wading is essential, and while not terribly difficult it's usually deep.

We also fished the Wilson River last Friday for late winter run steelhead but no takers. It's one of many coastal rivers near Portland that flows into Tillamook Bay and has great runs of a couple species of salmon and steelhead, but we had no luck even though water conditions were near perfect.

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*continued on page 10*



## WFF Member Fishing Reports

### Oregon

Celia, (the clubs resident bird expert) - we spotted lots and lots of birds on the Deschutes, most of which I couldn't identify if my life depended on it. However, of the ones I did recognize there were mallards galore, a few honkers, an osprey, a heron, and most notably a bald eagle. The eagle was hanging out in the deserted campground near our take out boat ramp and swooped very close by and low as approached. I've seen lots of them in Alaska but that's the closest encounter I've had in the lower 48. Impressive would be an understatement.

Take care and if anyone has a report on the Stillwater clinic I'd love to hear.

Rich



*Fishing was good on the Deschutes River near Maupin, Oregon in March for Mike Peters and Lisa Curran.  
Photo by Rich Peters.*



*Spring fishing in Idaho is often only associated with trout, salmon and steelhead. Locals know otherwise. This 3.9 lb smallmouth was caught in April between snow flurries on a mountain reservoir in southern Idaho.*



# Print & Mail Coupons

*If you prefer not to use our website, mail in a coupon with your check.*



## Wilderness Fly Fishers Membership Application

\_\_\_\_\_ New Member \_\_\_\_\_ Renewal

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Annual Dues: Starting January 1, 2015**

### New prices

- ☐ \$40 Single - Regular  
☐ \$60 Single - Golden Trout  
☐ \$50 Family - Regular  
☐ \$70 Family - Golden Trout

\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL enclosed

### Mail Check With This Form To:

**Wilderness Fly Fishers  
P.O. Box 3358  
Santa Monica , CA 90408-3358**

## May 19th Meeting Reservations

Please make your dinner [reservations online](#) or send in this coupon.  
Your check must be in the club mailbox by Wednesday, May 13th, 2015.

Names \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Dinner(s) x \$32 per person

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

*Please make check payable to W.F.F.*

### Mail to:

**Wilderness Fly Fishers  
P.O. Box 3358  
Santa Monica, CA 90408-3358**

Join us online, Visit our website [www.wildernessflyfishers.org](http://www.wildernessflyfishers.org)





# May 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26	27	28	29	30	1	2 One Surf Fly
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11 WFF Trout in the Classroom	12 WFF Board Meeting	13	14	15	16
17	18	19 WFF Monthly Meeting Speaker: Larry Johnson Spring Supper Raffle	20 WFF Deadline for Newsletter Articles	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	1	2	3	4	5	6

