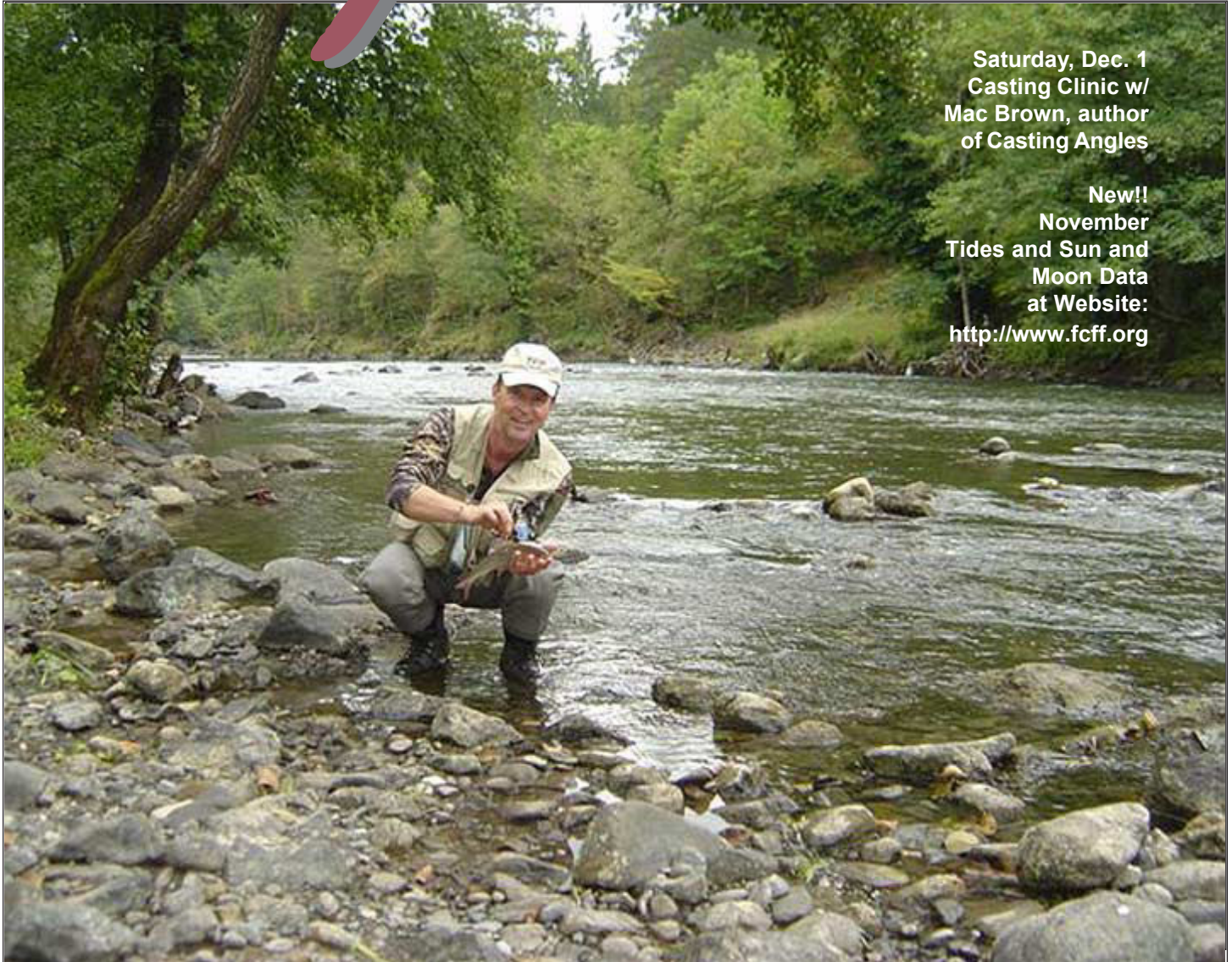


First Coast Fly Fisher

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www.fcff.org

Nov. 2007



Saturday, Dec. 1
Casting Clinic w/
Mac Brown, author
of Casting Angles

New!!
November
Tides and Sun and
Moon Data
at Website:
<http://www.fcff.org>

In August FCFFer 'Jaz' Mackic Returned To His Home Waters In Bosnia To Trout Fish

MEETING & SPEAKER

Monday, Nov. 5 -- FCFF General Meeting. Meeting starts at 7 p.m. Speaker: FFF Master Casting Instructor David Lambert. Lambert's presentation, *Evaluating the Cast Using Loop Size, Shape, Speed and Direction (LSD)* is an easy-to-understand, occasionally funny, useful look at diagnosing problems with the fly cast--both yours and others. He is the author of Smart Casts and is a Florida editor for Sport Fishing magazine.

COMING EVENTS

New Moon -- Friday, Nov 9; Full Moon - Saturday Nov. 24
Sunday, Dec 2 -- Full Day Casting With Mac Brown, author of Casting Angles and David Lambert, author of Smart Casts.

Mac is one of the really inventive casting instructors out there. European casters consider Mac to be in the forefront of casting dynamics. The clinic will be held from 9:30 - 4 at M & M Dairy. This clinic is free to all dues paid members.

Monday, Dec 3 -- FCFF General meeting. Come Hear Florida Fish and Wildlife Officer Chris Holleman. Meeting at 7 p.m.

Rainy Day Fish Came Reluctantly

by Mike McQuiston

Woody Huband, Larry Holder and I blasted off from the Palm Valley ramp in the rain 10 minutes after the rest of the crowd. Passing the FCFE snails en route, we were chuckling, knowing we'd be first at our honeyhole.

Disregarding our rain blasted faces and wet raingear, we immediately spotted a rare striped redfish just south of the St. Augustine airport (photo 1). This fish proved difficult, but Woody and Larry were not deterred and resorted to the seldom-used bream jerk cast in an attempt to foil this reluctant fish. After 15 minutes of fruitless vertical casts directly above the fish, we moved to stay with the rapidly rising tide.

Next flat, Woody beat us out of the boat and cornered a very nice max-slot red, bringing him to hand after a difficult fight (photo2). Mightily encouraged by Woody's success, we headed north at 50 mph to stay with



Woody Huband and Larry Holder Double Team A Palm Valley Sheepshead

the tide despite of a brisk north gale, heavy rain, and rough seas. Arriving at Pine Island completely soaked and half our faces blasted away by rain pellets, we spotted a big red with an axe-handle tail. Larry deftly placed a Maddog fork-tail fiddler 18 inches in front of the fish who promptly inhaled it. Unfortunately he also exhaled it. It was one of those "I caught him and he got away" deals.

As the water fell on the last flat at Pine Island, we headed north to try our last shot 2 miles



Woody Huband Hoists A 28-Inch Valley Red

south of the ramp. Although beautifully flooded, we saw no tails. Wet, cold, hungry, we arrived back at the ramp just as the rain stopped, justly proud of our somewhat successful day and our speed on the water. My heart fell when I saw John Adams' empty boat trailer, knowing he and Rob BENardo were still out there chasing fish in their little River Hawk dink boat. John and Rob showed up as we were hauling the boat out, both FCFEers grinning from ear-to-ear. John and Rob were eager to tell their story of going slow, not getting far from home, waiting for the tide, spotting numerous tails, and catching large redfish.

Moral of this story: Anybody can catch a redfish on the flats, but it takes a real man to go fast in a driving rainstorm.

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The Rockies: Cimarron Creek

by Dana Griffin III

I'd just returned from a satisfying morning of catching 8-10-inch cutthroats, feisty little fish that would slam into virtually any fly you tossed their way. There was the rather odd business of having to cast over your head to reach these fish, but stranger things have occurred on fishing trips.

These particular Rocky Mountain natives called Cimarron

Creek home. The Spanish word 'cimarron' means wild or unruly, and the name fits, especially during spring runoff when a mountain of melt water comes crashing down the steep gradient bed, flowing rapidly into the West Fork of the San Juan.

Such a deluge of water would wipe out all the fish, nymphs and anything else dead or alive if the bed were open and exposed. Fortunately, the contours of the bottom of Cimarron Creek are anything but open and exposed. The huge, RV-sized boulders that frame her banks, offer aquatic life an abundance of protective hideaways where critters can hold out until something resembling normal returns. In most years, "normal" starts about June 15th, which was more or less when I found myself hanging onto one of these big rocks with one hand, casting a size 14 bivisible with the other. To fish Cimarron you need to plan on some high stakes rock-hopping and getting thoroughly soaked.

So summertime sees water levels return to a state approximating a typical mountain creek, but this particular piece of water lies high up in the San Juan watershed, virtually at the foot of Wolf Creek Pass.

Over the centuries, enormous rocks have worked their way down slope from somewhere higher up in the mountains. They've wedged the flow of water between them, so the outcome is that Cimarron Creek is really a series of closed-in pools connected by a necklace of waterfalls or chutes.



The Author Enjoys Fishing A Western Creek

To reach the cutts that live in these miniature pools, the angler has no choice but to stand in or just to the side of one of these chutes, trying not to slip while at the same time executing as graceful as cast as circumstances allow. You're casting to the pool above you, often presenting your fly to fish that are over your head. You

strain, edging up on tiptoes to try and discern a strike. Unless you've really made a mess of your cast, the strike almost



Distinctive Jaw Slash of A Rockies Cutthroat

always comes. These fish don't see that many insects on or under the water, so they're not inclined to let anything remotely edible sail past.

This is an excellent place to try out the fly you tied and are too embarrassed to show (it was soooo ugly!). Cimarron trout will restore your confidence. You'll work for these easy trout and if you can make it back to your vehicle without falling on a glass slick boulder, you'll carry a sweet memory for a long, long time.

Characteristic features of cutthroat trout include a red/orange slash under its jaw, and round spots concentrated on the dorsal and caudal regions.

Lessons From the Flood-Grass

First Year Spring Tides Teach Much

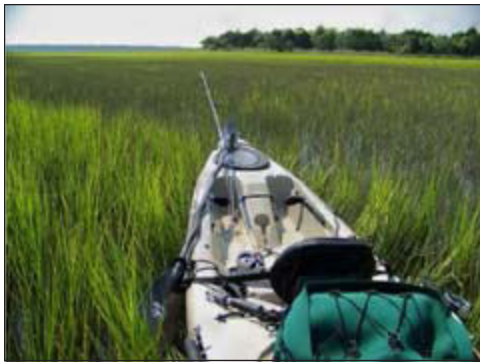
by Rich Santos

After fly fishing my first year in the flood grass I must say that it was a great learning experience that was full of excitement and many surprises. With every trip I saw something different, some I may not have been completely prepared for. This made me think about better tactics and alternatives for the next adventure.

It was also a great test of my hunting skills which included some great sight fishing, which also included careful listening. It certainly made it a fun challenge! This included gearing up with the right equipment, flies, rods, fly lines, approach and dealing with the forever changing Redfish behavior, weather conditions, etc. Below is my list of important things I've learned and feel need special attention in order to be more successful in the hunt for Redfish in flood grass.....

When: Starting in early summer through early fall. It's always best around the full moon period. Look for your tidal height to be around 5.3 feet or better off the Mayport, FL tide charts. Locations further north or south will have much different tidal height requirements, but they will flood when the tides in Mayport are at least 5.3 feet. The wind direction, barometric pressure, etc. also have a great effect on the final tide heights.

Watercraft: My first and best choice is by kayak. Why? Because you're simply able to see and cover a lot more Spartina grass flats by being able to cross over those deeper cuts and feeder creeks to see more flats. Plus you have the advantage of stealth. Also having a kayak that you can stand up in and pole yourself is a major advantage for optimum visibility. I could recall being able to see tails probably more than 100 yards away!



Bart Isaacs' Cordgrass Redfish

Flat Access: When first approaching a flat that you want to fish you need to avoid the finger creek areas and outer deeper cuts that feed into the flat. The Reds use these areas as there main roadway into and out of the flat and will generally be there first when it starts to flood. You don't want to spook them off the flat before getting an opportunity to cast at one. Try to enter the opposite end or through the thicker higher grass as shown in lower left photo. Note the feeder creek in upper right corner of the photo. The

first photo below shows the spartina grass flat prior to flooding.

Wading & Approach: Slow down and be patient! Move very slowly with minimal wake and keep your ears open. Many times a Red will be only 10 feet in front of you without giving you a sign. The tip of his tail might just pop up. When you see a fish, keep your eye on him the whole time and figure out how he's eating and moving. I found that a 25- to 35-foot cast works best for not spooking the fish and still have good accuracy. Presentation and accuracy really matter here, with minimal false casts.



(continued on page 5)

Learning From the Flood-Grass

continued from page 4



Rod, Line & Leader Selection:

My preferred rod weight is a 6 wt. - 8wt. with a 7weight as my first choice with a clear floating line. The lighter the rod and line the softer the landing and the less the fish will feel your presence. I like short leaders made up of fluorocarbon that are no more that 7 ft. long. You want a soft to medium type tip flexed rod that will load easily for a quick response and still give you accuracy.



Fly Selection:

The most important detail about your fly is the weed guard . . . weed guard . . . weed guard, and make sure it works! I can't stress that to you enough! That's priority! My favorite ward is made of 16-pound Mason Hard mono with double loop guards around the hook heal or bend and tied off to the hook eye (see photo below).

My second major issue is using a soft landing fly that won't pop like a rock hitting the water! These fish will often spook very easily. I like to wrap the hook shank with .25 lead wire because the weight can be easily distributed over the shank for a softer landing. I recommend a crab pattern made with Glimmer Braid tubing, Hackle or another soft material that will have a subtle impact on the water. The key also is to build a small fly around the size of a dime or a little larger. When the grass gets thicker I recommend a fly with less weight so it stays up higher in the water column. When the



Red is cruising they will see it better instead of the fly sinking down and getting lost in the deep grass. You will also need to use an extremely sharp hook. Many times these Reds will not get a good hook set due to the angle you are at and the direction they will run.

Storage and Equipment: Travel Light! It will save you energy! I do recommend carrying 2 rods with one broken down and stored away as a back up rod. It should be one rod size bigger for the changing wind conditions. Carry a minimum of 15' rope with clip to tow your kayak if needed when the water level gets to low. Keep your active rod tip angled high with the fly reeled in and butted up to the rod tip. This will avoid grass snags that could break your rod tip! A stake out pole is needed to anchor your kayak for when you get out and wade. Make sure you keep it clipped to your kayak because it can get lost poling yourself around in the grass. This I learned the hard way! This includes all equipment, etc. It should be tethered to the kayak because it can easily get lost.

Safety: Most of all, while wading beware of mud holes. Stay close to your kayak. Secure you paddle when you get out and wade away from you kayak. It's your most important tool that you

don't want to lose. They can easily get blown away where you might not be able to get to it. I also highly recommend using a GPS.



Weather is another major concern especially when lightening is approaching. Immediately head in if you are near your launch spot. Otherwise I recommend taking cover in the high grass and NOT a nearby island. Trees on islands attract lightening! Rod tips down! Tight Loops and Lines!

Terry & Roxanne Wilson To Speak at FCFF Banquet, Feb. 2

First Coast Fly Fishers is proud to announce that we will bring internationally recognized warmwater flyfishing and fly tying experts **Terry and Roxanne Wilson** to speak at the 2008 FCFF banquet, Saturday, Feb 2. The Wilson's will also conduct a free-to-members half-day clinic on bass and panfish. The clinic will include fly tying, rigging and knots, and methods of approaching warmwater fish.

The Wilsons have authored numerous books on bass, smallmouth, and pan fish fishing. They are popular and highly sought after speakers throughout North America. Their articles on fly fishing and fly tying appear regularly in magazines like *Flyfishing and Fly Tying Journal*, *Bassmaster*, *Flyfishing Quarterly*, *Fly Tyer*, *Fly Fish America*, *Warmwater Fly Fishing*, and many more.

The Wilsons have been the recipients of numerous awards for their contributions to the sport of fly fishing.

This year's banquet chair is Dr. Larry Holder. The banquet will offer nearly \$7,000 in gifts, drawings, and bid items. Grand prizes will be announced in the December newsletter.

Don't forget to mark down the date – Saturday, Feb. 2 The day before the Superbowl.



**Warmwater Fly Fishing & Tying Instructors
Terry and Roxanne Wilson**

Il Presidente Takes First Sheephead From Grass

by **Rich Santos**

Jason Sheasly and I fished the “stormy” club outing with Warren Hinrichs. He brought us to some great Sheepie spots that he immediately found and put us on. Jason was up first since he hadn't fished the grass yet this year. Warren spots the first tailer in some thick high grass and Jason 2nd cast and puts the fly in a small 12” opening that the fish was working.



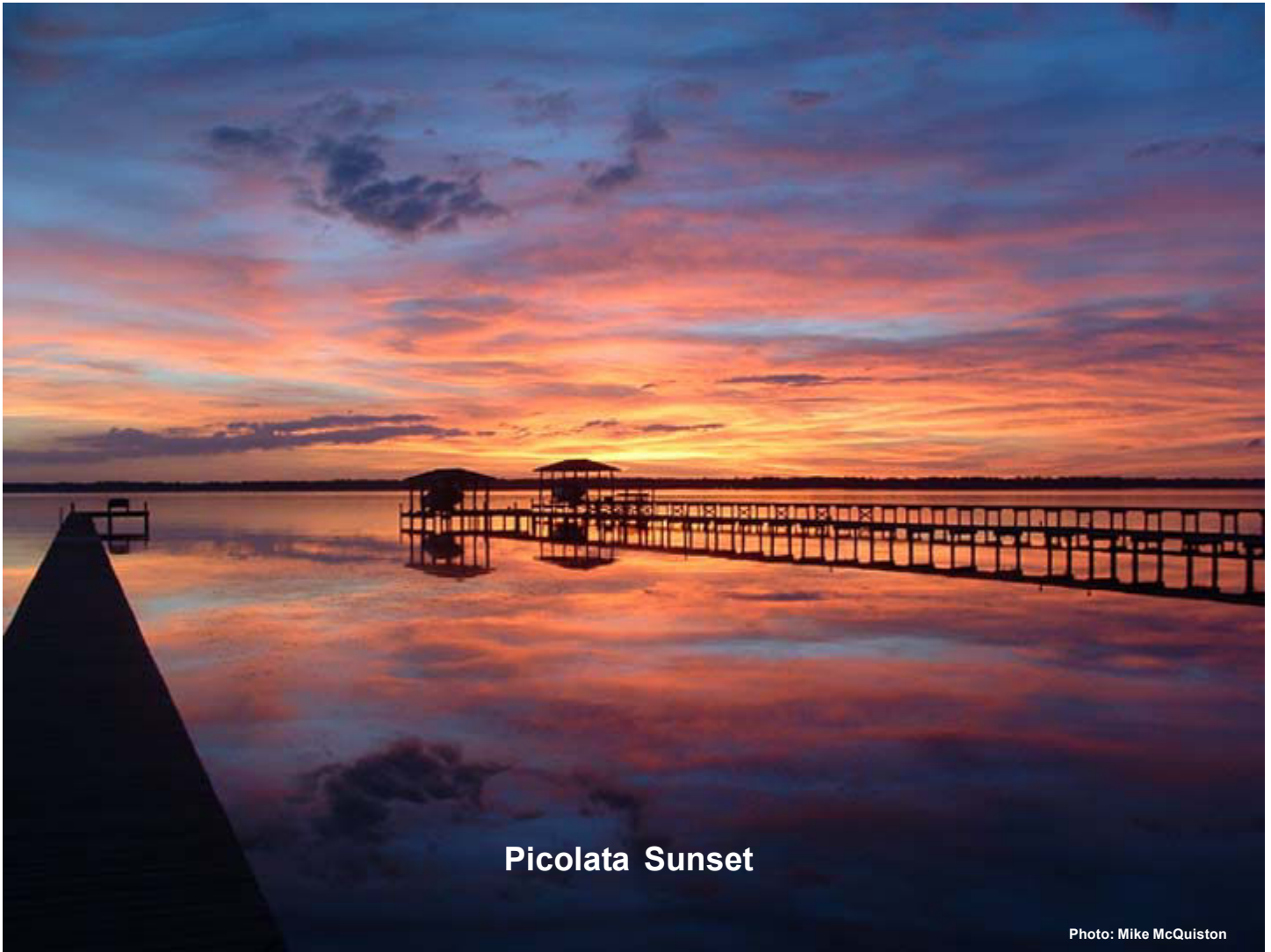
Jason Sheasly with Guide Warren Hinrichs

That Sheepie jumped on it like a chicken on a junebug! Jason hooks and lands his 1st ever Sheephead on fly. Was about 3-4 lbs! Wow! Then the wind and rain came! I'm up next and Warren spots another one tailing hard with his head straight in the grass like a scared Ostrich buried in the dirt from the neck up! I threw about 15 casts at this fish and at times hitting him in the head. Nada! We saw about 10 more Sheepie tails that we both had more shots. Fish no can do! Moving on we only saw about 3-4 Redfish tails for the whole day. The rain, wind and high water made it tough. Then we fished maddogs spot. The last 5 minutes there Warren spotted a tailer and Jason was up on deck. After a few casts Jason scores again. The fish gods were looking over our Presidente since he hadn't been out in a while. He was rewarded with a well deserved flood grass slam(I think). Congratulations Jason!

The Rainbows of Bosnia



Talk about fishing off the beaten path. FCFer Jasmin 'Jaz' Mackic traveled to his homeland, Bosnia, for a few weeks vacation in late summer. While there, he fished a few of the country's many trout waters.



Picolata Sunset

Photo: Mike McQuiston

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