



# AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

May 2022

Volume 24 Issue 5



**Our AFF Meeting Thursday, May 19 at  
Northwest Recreation Center  
6 pm casting (weather permitting)  
7 pm Dennis North presentation  
-Fly Fishing Caddo and East Texas Lakes**

Ben Patrick fishing the Llano River  
Article on page 4

# President's Message by Kathi Harris

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Try it. You might like it. You might even catch Tarpon Fever, which is a lot more fun than it sounds. Honestly, I had never paid much attention to fishing for tarpon because it seemed like a time-consuming, probably fruitless endeavor that would only take away from our time on the Texas flats. And I heard plenty of people, including guides, cast aspersions on tarpon fishing for similar reasons.

In April, on our hastily arranged trip to Florida, I still wasn't paying attention, not even realizing it was 'official' tarpon season until Gary told me our guide, Jerry Perez, "guaranteed there will be tarpon." We fished with Jerry out of Flamingo, located at the southern tip of Florida in Everglades National Park.

We rode 45 minutes as the sun rose to a still, shallow swamp-like bay so filled with rolling Tarpon it looked like a Disney attraction. Unreal. And apparently unhungry. Those fish weren't interested in breakfasting on the shrimp fly Gary was casting so we moved on to an open bay in the Gulf. It was there that, after Jerry managed to correct a couple of the million things wrong with my casting, I jumped a big tarpon, hooked with a Gulf Coast Special, and caught Tarpon Fever. Gary also hooked several and we caught other fish – jacks, snapper and snook.

But the one that got away was all I could think about. Jerry later told us we were his last clients for the season at Flamingo and he was relocating for the rest of the season to the Keys, where the migrating tarpon go to gorge, and reportedly get intoxicated on, the palolo worms that come off the coral in May and June. That means we could target Florida tarpon in

spring, Texas redfish in the fall, and Texas tarpon in between. The moral of this fly fishing story is pay no mind to the naysayers, don't worry about your skill level, and try it anyway. After all, when was the last time you regretted going fishing?

This month's recommendation was first given to me by fellow club member Jack Lehman. For gear hauling, wader removal and transporting wet stuff, I recommend the blue IKEA shopping bags with the double cloth handles. These things are cheap, light, durable and very handy. Protect your wader's feet by standing in the tote when you remove your boots, then just carry your wet waders in the same tote. Great for local car trips they're also very easy to pack for flights and handy to have for all your gear toting needs on those remote trips.

Happy Fishing!

Kathi

## Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

4/1/2022 to 4/30/2022

Begin Bal. Checking	\$25,380.64
Income:	
Total Income	\$00.00
Disbursements	
K Harris (refreshments)	\$26.53
Total Disbursements	\$26.53
Net	(\$26.53)
Unencumbered:	\$17,222.26
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$00.00
SKIFF	\$8,131.85
Ending Bal-Checking	\$25,354.11



## Conservation Report

by Keith Mars

### Reconnecting Streams Just Got a Big Boost in Funding

We are seeing a watershed moment in recognizing our waterways and watersheds as infrastructure, and just like bridges and roads, green infrastructure needs repair and maintenance. In late 2021 the \$1.2 trillion Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act was signed into law. The law makes significant investments in wildlife habitat and green infrastructure over the next decade. It is one of the largest infrastructure investments in the nation's history and had bipartisan support in Congress. There are many conservation-related elements of this Act, such as \$350 million towards wildlife crossings, \$500 million for prescribed burning, and \$250 million for decommissioning and restoring old Forest Service roads and culverts. Of particular interest to conservation-minded fly fishers is the \$38 million going out this fiscal year to shovel-ready projects in the National Fish Passage Program.

Many science-driven conservation organizations, such as Trout Unlimited and Bonefish and Tarpon Trust, push hard on stream reconnection as the benefits can be incredibly impactful. Streams can be disconnected for many reasons, such as diversions, undersized and scoured out culverts, and damming. These actions cut off miles and miles of upstream habitat critical to spawning, particularly for anadromous fish, such as salmon and steelhead. The National Fish Passage Program helps to right these wrongs by removing stream impediments. Below is a list of 40ish funded, shovel-ready projects to remove old dams, improve fish passages, and replace undersized culverts with bridges.

<https://www.fws.gov/story/2022-04/fish-passage-restores-rivers-protects-wildlife-and-rebuilds-economies>

Keep an eye out for many more infrastructure projects that support improved fisheries. Oh, and look no further than our own backyard for conservation projects coming from the infrastructure bill. \$9 million is going to water quality improvements in Waller Creek. It all goes downstream, so these improvements can pay dividends from the Colorado River to Matagorda Bay.

<https://waterloogreenway.org/federal-funding-announcement/>

### May Speaker – Dennis North

Dennis resides in East Texas and has been fishing competitively since 1972. He has fished national, regional and local tournament circuits, including B.A.S.S., FLW BFL, Fishers Of Men, Bass Champs and Crappie USA. Dennis has been fishing and guiding on Caddo and East Texas Lakes for more than 35 years, and he also makes CrawClicker rattles and his own custom crappie jigs and flies.



## Spring Transitions to Summer – by Ben Patrick

May is a month of transition here in Central Texas. As spring begins to transition to summer, fish transition from their spawning beds and into a feeding frenzy. Fishing this time of year can be stellar.

I was lucky enough to have an unexpected day off from work last Wednesday and decided to hit one of my favorite spots on the San Gabriel. I knew the bass were active as I saw bait busting on the water. I tossed a large yellow deer hair fly into the bank and watched as fish after fish exploded on the fly. After a long session I was further rewarded when I switched to a small nymph and picking up an elusive carp.

If you happen to find yourself in my position and have a day off work. Make the time to wet a line anywhere you can. May is one of the best months of the year for fishing in central Texas. The weather may be hot, but so are the fish!



# SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle



Dear Friends of S.K.I.F.F.,

Well, the third time was a charm! After having to put off the Hawbaker boys during their MLK holiday and Presidents' Day holiday from school, we were finally able to get on the water the Monday after Easter.

That evening, April 18th, I fished with the sons of a U.S. Army Warrant Officer Ryan Hawbaker, a U.S. Army helicopter pilot now deployed to Europe.

Matthew (a 9th grader) and Caleb (a 5th grader) were accompanied by their grandfather, Tim Herold, a U.S. Navy retiree, who, along with his wife, were down visiting their daughter, Jessica (the boys' mother), and their three grandkids.

Fishing was pretty simple that afternoon. A steady NNE wind at ~11-12 mph kept the water rippled and the fish biting.

Thanks to the fairly bright conditions, the fishing took place in 24-37 feet of water. We fished only vertically with Caleb and Tim using MAL Dense lures (chartreuse tails), and with Matthew preferring with the 5/8 oz. Bladed Hazy Eye Slab. However, when the bite turned on, he saw his results lagging behind that of his grandpa and younger brother, and eventually joined in on using the MAL Dense, as well.

Once we got set up in a "Spot Lock" position over the fish and began working our lures, the commotion drew fish in, which, in turn, drew even more fish in. The longer we stayed in an area, the more fish we attracted, and the better the bite got. Eventually, the fish would thin out and/or lose interest, but we spent nearly an hour over each of the final three groups of fish we found (the first group of small fish we found up shallow I used as

a "teaching tool", and then we left them in pursuit of better quality fish in deeper water).

Our final tally of 206 fish consisted of 3 short hybrid striped bass, and 203 white bass.

For those new to SKIFF, SKIFF is an acronym for Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun. It is a program now in its 13th year, sponsored by the Austin Fly Fishers, and supported by individuals and entities, all of whom desire that kids separated from a parent by that parent's military duty, be given an opportunity to experience the outdoors through fishing during that time of separation, free of charge. The program also offers a time of respite for the home-front parents who may need a short break from single-parenting.

Thank you for your support of the SKIFF program!

--Bob Maindelle

## Outings by Juan Shepperd

May 21, 2022 – non AFF event. Brushy Creek One Fly Tournament. Meet at Living Water Fly Shop in Round Rock, Texas at 8 AM.

I haven't planned an official club outing for May. I want to plan trips you want to join. Happy to co-host, or hand it over to you. Part of me is leaning towards a Colorado River float in a new section of the river. It's huge river, right?! San Marcos River fishes well this time of year, though it moves fast. You need a boat. Ideally, 2 people in a boat. One to fish; One to steer. I am also curious to try the Guadalupe River Southeast of Austin, close to where it meets and absorbs the San Marcos River outside Gonzales, Texas. It looks to be an hour from Austin. Come and Take It. If you have thoughts you want to share, a preference or another suggestion, drop me a line. I'm always game for fishing.

June makes a nice time to fish the Texas Coast. Anyone want to organize a saltwater outing?

I'm kind of a river rat. I like moving water. Hopping on and off a boat. Sitting in rapids and enjoying a cold beverage, occasionally. Waving a stick. I like the whole experience. I blocked off dates (June 25 – June 28) to float and fish the South Llano River near Junction. It's a non AFF event. For those of you who have a kayak and can get away, the South Llano River makes a great float. River starts about 60 miles southwest of Junction, near the Kimble-Edwards county line. Out there, the landscape is arid and dry and this trip is great prep for a Devil's River float in the Chihuahuan desert (something I want to do someday). Near Junction, Hill Country soils support oak, juniper, pecan and mesquite trees. Lots of native grasses. Smarter people than me estimate there are over 1,000 springs in the area. I'm going to camp to keep costs down and stay close to nature, but there are local motels too. I floated this river 2 years ago and it was a blast. I saw deer, feral hogs, raccoons and Rio Grande turkeys all near the water. Tons of Guadalupe bass. I didn't find monsters, but I bet some of you could. I found lots of beautiful, native, wild, hungry fish. Made me happy. If this interests you, let me know. South Llano River makes for some fun fly fishing.

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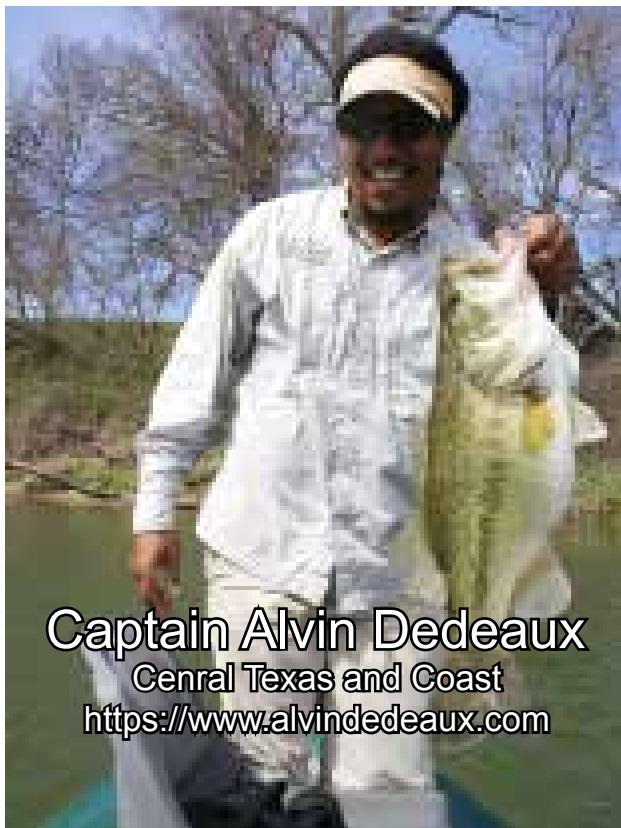
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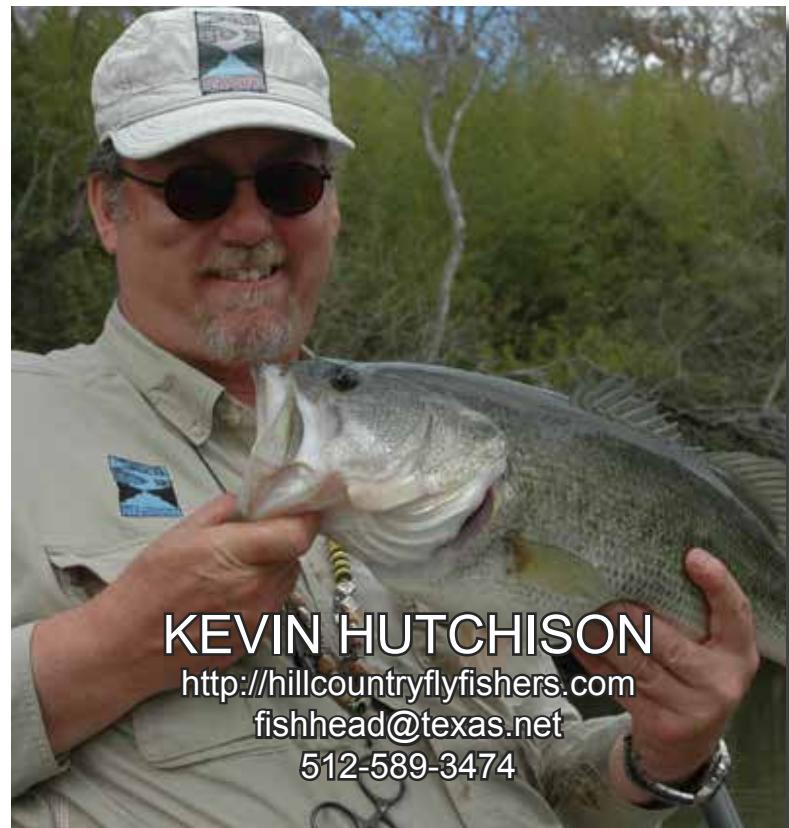
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A composite image featuring two parts. On the left, a background photo shows a fly fishing line cast into the water. Overlaid on this are the names and contact information for Capt. Fred Lynch. On the right, a separate photograph shows Capt. Fred Lynch, a man with short hair, holding a large redfish (a type of trout) by its mouth, standing on a boat.

**Capt. Fred Lynch**  
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ALASKA PENINSULA  
FISHING ADVENTURES

**DON'T WAIT**

A man is fly fishing in a river. In the background, there are snow-capped mountains. The text "CAUTION: Visiting the website below may cause a sudden desire to migrate North." is overlaid on the right side. At the bottom, there is a logo for EPIC Angling & Adventure and contact information: 512.656.2736 and [www.epicaaa.com](http://www.epicaaa.com).