



AUSTIN FLY FISHERS

October 2022
Volume 24 Issue 10



Carroll Hall and Capt. Eric Glass
Lower Laguna Madre

**Our AFF Meeting Thursday, October 20
at Northwest Recreation Center**

- 6 pm Outdoor Casting

- 7 pm Keith Mars -DIY fly fishing Idaho

Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson

-Fly fishing the Gardens of the Queen, Cuba

**These presentations were scheduled for August but due
to a power outage at NW Rec Center they were rescheduled**



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INTERNATIONAL
Charter Club**

President's Message by Kathi Harris

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To contact officers:

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Hey Folks! I thought I'd use this month's column to aid your holiday planning and shopping for your favorite angler. First up, Casting For Recovery is hosting a virtual photo fishing tournament Oct. 15-21 followed by a live auction and virtual event Oct. 22. Tickets and details available at castingforrecovery.org. Also this month will be Oktoberfest, hosted by Texas Hill Country Fly Fishers in Kerrville, Oct. 21-23. Go to thcff.org for tickets. Finally, mark your calendars for Austin Fly Fishers' Christmas Party and fundraising auction to be held December 15 at Rudy's BBQ on North Lamar. We'll be auctioning off rods, gear and assorted items to raise funds for Soldiers' Kids Involved in Fishing Fun (SKIFF) and Casting for Recovery. Come swap fishing tales, eat great BBQ and take care of your Christmas list, all while raising

funds for terrific causes. Details and tickets will be on our website soon.

Since we're all going into shopping mode, this month's recommendation is a widely available, relatively inexpensive piece of fishing gear I love to have handy when targeting big toothy fish, spring-loaded aluminum pliers. The brand I have is P-Line and they came with built-in cutting blades, a convenient belt-loop case and attachment lanyard. Lightweight and saltwater-proof, my pliers have the additional advantage of being bright pink, which helps my husband remember they aren't his! A variety of styles and brands are available online and in stores, ranging from about \$20-\$50.

Happy Fishing!



Kathi caught this redfish while fishing with Capt. Rick Hartman on the Laguna Madre

Financial Report

by Jim Robinson

9/1/2022 to 9/30/2022

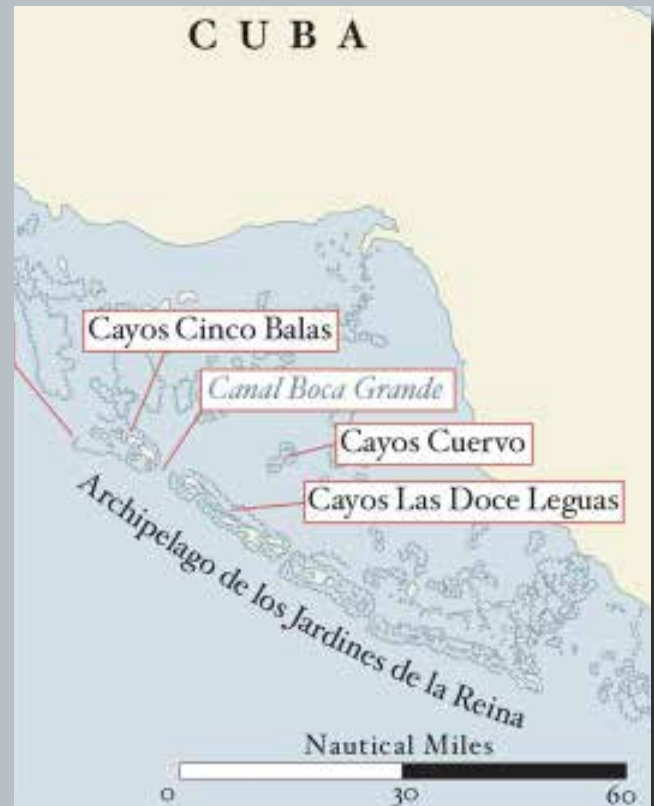
Begin Bal. Checking	\$25,189.60
Income:	
None	<u>\$00.00</u>
Total Income	\$00.00
Disbursements	
Austin Orr (presentation)	<u>\$150.00</u>
Total Disbursements	\$150.00
Net	(\$150.00)
Unencumbered:	\$15,907.75
Encumbered Funds:	
Casting for Recovery	\$00.00
SKIFF	\$9,131.85
Ending Bal-Checkbook	\$25,039.60

October Speakers – Keith Mars –DIY Fly Fishing Idaho



Keith Mars, AFF Conservation Chair, will present on DIY fishing travel and his recent trip to the Idaho panhandle searching for native Westslope Cutthroat and Bull trout. Keith will share some tips on how to plan, pack, and save time and money on DIY fishing travel. He'll also share some stories and photos of the amazing fisheries in Idaho.

Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson –Gardens of the Queen, Cuba



Brandon Rabke and Nils Pearson will present information on their recent trip to the Gardens of the Queen, Cuba.

My "Hail Mary" cast on the Lower Laguna Madre

by Nils Pearson

Setting up a group destination fishing trip usually requires making reservations a year in advance to secure guides, accommodations, and travel. Other than picking a time of the year that usually has good weather, you are locked into dates and you will have to contend with whatever weather comes your way. An additional complication to planning a trip this far in advance is that members of your group may have to drop out because they have contracted Covid. This year as in past years, I have made arrangements to fish SPI a year in advance. Carroll Hall and I and our sons would get together along with Brandon Rabke this year. Unfortunately, we faced cloudy and windy conditions on the water and a couple of invited friends had to drop out because of Covid infections.

Captains Eric Glass and Rick Hartman guided our group getting us on to reds every day. Because of the high winds and clouds, reds could not be spotted until they were 20 to 30 feet from the fast-moving wind-blown skiff. There was very little time to spot the fish and make your cast. If everything came together quickly, you got one quick shot at the fish before the boat ran over it.

Finally on our last day, Friday, the wind came down and there were no clouds. Ideal conditions for fly fishing. Capt. Eric Glass took Carroll and me to the East Cut (the east side of the Mansfield Channel). When we arrived that morning and made good casts to plenty of reds but they would simply not take our flies. We began to question everything we were doing and we changed flies, lengthened our leaders, and altered our retrieve patterns but still no luck. As our frustrations mounted, we all agreed to forgo lunch until we caught a red. As I stood on the bow, I was desperate to catch a fish and began casting to everything I saw. At this point I really didn't care what I hooked up, I just wanted to get a fish to the boat. Then just off the bow I saw a fish, made a good cast, and got a black drum to the boat. That's when our luck changed. After that catch, fishing was not easy but if we executed a good cast about a foot from the red we had a hookup and started boating fish.



Nils Erik Pearson with redfish



Michael Hall with redfish

Lower Laguna Madre cont.

My best moment of the week came at the end of my last day. Capt. Eric said it was getting late and he needed to get home to let his dog out before it had an accident. Carroll had been casting from the bow with little luck in the shallow sandy flat we were fishing. He asked me if I would like to come on the bow to close out the day for the last 5 minutes. I didn't hesitate and took his spot.

Just after I stripped out some line, I noticed a red about 10 feet off just to the right of the bow. I immediately made a flip cast at him. Unfortunately, the tippet went over his back as the fly landed on the sand. I gently slid the line off his back and pulled it in front of him. When the fly reached the red's field of vision, I twitched the fly and he pounced on it. I had him hooked for a moment but I didn't get a good set and the fly popped out when he tossed his head. Fortunately, he wasn't spooked and started to slowly swim away. I watched the path of his wake and made one of the longest casts ever—a near perfect 70+ foot cast, a foot or so in front of the fish. As soon as the fly dropped, I made a short strip and he swallowed my fly. I had so much line out that as soon as I set the hook and he headed off he was pulling line directly from my reel. I had made a successful “Hail Mary” cast in the final seconds of my fishing trip for my best catch of the week. What a memorable way to close out the week on the Lower Laguna Madre.



Capt. Eric Glass and Brandon Rabke with redfish



Nils Pearson with redfish caught on his “Hail Mary” cast

Conservation Report

by Keith Mars

Conserving the Wild in our Backyard - The Lower Colorado River

"We get into trouble only if we see the tree in the garden as wholly artificial and the tree in the wilderness as wholly natural. Both trees in some ultimate sense are wild; both in a practical sense now require our care."

William Cronan. The Trouble with Wilderness. NY Times, April 13, 1995.

Conservation and advocacy are not just for the far-flung places of fly fishing lore. It is easy to fall into the trappings that only "wilderness" warrants our full commitment to conservation and advocacy. That somehow the presence of people and competing uses make some creeks and rivers somehow lesser than their "wild" counterparts. Don't get me wrong. I advocate and support time and purse to protect our wild spaces. But, that doesn't mean we forsake our home waterways. To paraphrase William Cronan, "both require our care."

The lower Colorado River below Austin is one of those places that is not "wild", yet it certainly warrants our attention, respect, and care. The uplands of the Colorado between Austin and Bastrop have a patchwork of land uses, including agriculture, grazing, and mining. Hardly what one expects when one wants to experience a "wild" river. Yet, when on the river you feel transported back in time. Large areas of intact riparian forests, turtles, birds of prey, and seeps and bluffs can all be found along the lower Colorado. Not to mention the diversity of fish species found in the river, including our native Guadalupe Bass. This river and its watershed need our care. Trash, illegal dumping, the health of contributing creeks, gravel mines, dam releases, stormwater runoff, grazing practices, and land development all contribute to the health of this river and its watershed.

You have the opportunity to make a difference for the lower Colorado. Contact your Council member or county commissioner and advocate for clean water entering the Colorado and sound land use practices that protect and restore the riparian forest. Illegal dumping is a significant issue on the lower Colorado. If you want a soul satisfying day of conservation work, join our good friends, the All Water Guides, for the lower Colorado trash bash on November 12, 2022. In 2018 and 2019 alone the trash bash participants pulled out 14 tons of trash!

Remember, it's all home water. The lower Colorado needs your care.

Keith Mars, AFF Conservation Chair
@conservationonthefly



Poor Land Management



Healthy, Intact Riparian Forest

SKIFF Program by Bob Maindelle

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

September is a month of transition in many ways – kids and their families get back into the school year routine, weekly schedules adjust to account for academics, athletics, and other after-school activities, and, in most years, we see the weather begin to moderate. As such, I normally begin offering evening fishing trips for our military kids, giving an after-school fishing option during the weekdays. Unfortunately, September 2022 offered very few comfortable afternoon/evenings with temperatures most days still well into the 90s. So, I did not conduct any SKIFF trips in September, but, now that the oppressive heat has broken, I look forward to getting kids back out on the water in October.

Our local school districts have October 10th off for Columbus Day, and I am offering both an AM and a PM trip to correspond. Even if the weather did not cooperate this month, the Austin Fly Fishers club officers certainly did, coming together to promptly provide all that was necessary in order to prepare our 2022 grant application with the McBride Foundation, associated with the Austin Woods and Waters Club.

We have requested \$1,150.00 to aid in continuing our efforts to introduce military children to the outdoors while separated from their military parent by that parent's duty requirements.

The McBride Foundation has bolstered AFF's own efforts in this way for the last six years.

We anticipate closure on the application in October, in advance of the McBride Foundation's annual fundraising dinner slated for November 3rd. To learn more about that organization see <https://austinwoodsandwaters.org/McBride-Foundation>.

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 the McBride Foundation, the Sun City Rod and Gun Club, the Sun City chapter of Women Helping Others (WHO) and a number of supportive individuals, 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.

--Bob Maindelle



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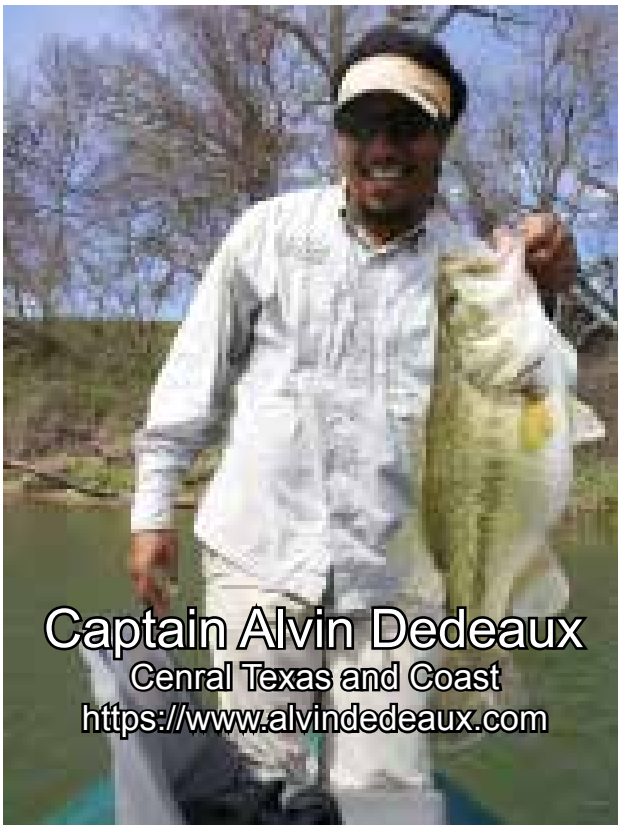
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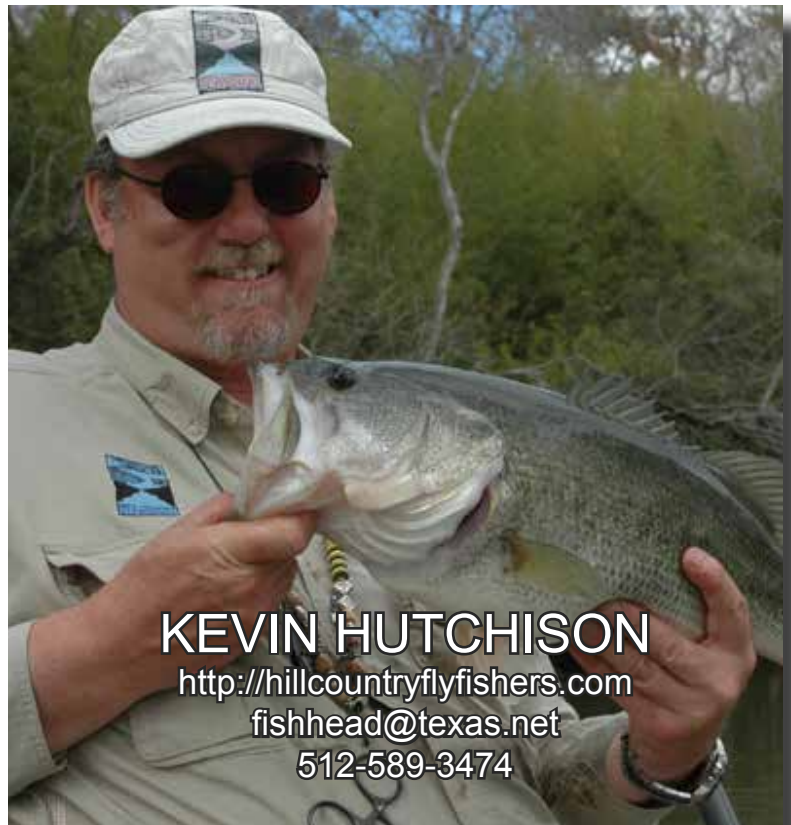
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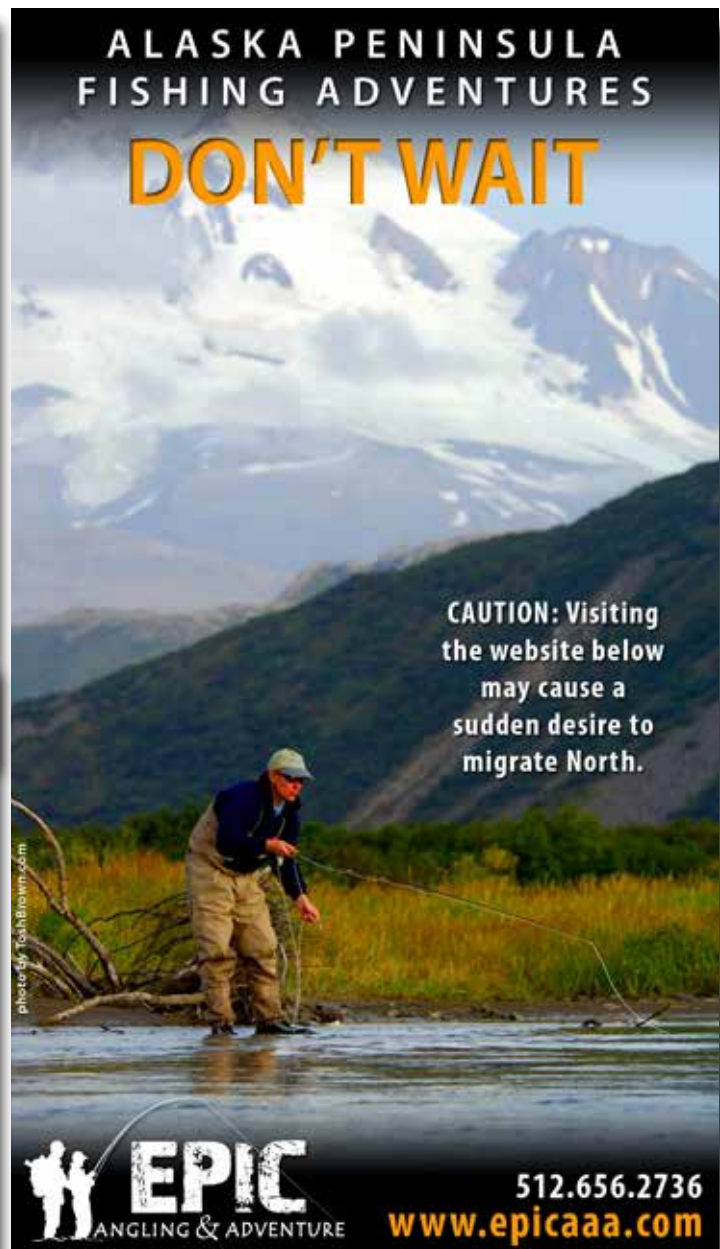
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