

NORTHWEST NEWS

By Terry W. Sheely

A Fly in Your Wine

Thirteen acres of lakes, ponds, and creeks at Sonoma's Leland Fly Fishing Ranch have evolved into a fly-fishing education center in the heart of California wine country. The center is designed to provide comprehensive fly-fishing instruction tailored to help people become self-reliant anglers. Managed by Leland Fly Fishing Outfitters, the education center, www.lelandranch.com, offers hands-on double- and single-hand casting instruction by Federation of Fly Fishers-certified casting instructors, along with comprehensive how-to instructions on a variety of fly-fishing topics.



PHOTO BY BJURKE WHITE

Lead Ban Shot Down

Going deep with microshot, lead-core sinking-tip lines, or wet flies wrapped with fuse wire won't land you in the hoosegow after all—except in Washington. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) denied a nationwide push by the American Bird Conservancy and other groups that would have banned lead from fishing tackle, ostensibly to protect waterbirds from lead poisoning. EPA assistant administrator Stephen A. Owens agreed with opponents—mostly sport-fishing organizations—that an outright ban is unnecessary, noting that the EPA is on top of managing lead issues. The EPA sank the petition on the grounds that proponents failed to prove that a ban on fishing lead was necessary as defined by the Toxic Substances Control Act. Washington's Fish and Wildlife commissioners, however, in an effort to protect nesting loons, banned shot and lead weights in 12 state-owned lakes and lead or zinc fly wraps at Long Lake in Ferry County.



Reading for Redington

Fly tackle manufacturer Redington, www.redington.com, has teamed up with author Kirk Werner, writer of *The Olive* series of children's books, www.olivethewoollybugger.com, to get kids into fly fishing. Publisher Johnson Books of Boulder, Colorado, and Redington are offering a package that includes a Minnow two-piece, 8-foot, 5/6-weight graphite rod, Crosswater reel with backing, weight-forward line, knotless leader, and a box of casting games, casting targets, and a coupon for half off Werner's books. Motivating the teamwork, says Jennifer Gish of Redington, is the fact that "kids are the future of the fly-fishing industry."

Western Rivers Buying Wild

In rapid succession, critical Washington and Oregon trout, salmon, and steelhead waters are being snatched up for protection, restoration, and public access by Western Rivers Conservancy, www.westernrivers.org. The Portland-based group's recent projects include acquiring a half mile of Oregon's Sandy River that completes a 13-mile corridor above former Marmot Dam; acquiring the Miniam Store boat launch, adjacent to Minam State Recreation Area, which is a favorite drop-in for Wallowa/Grande Ronde river floats; adding 60 acres to the Hoh River Trust, which protects salmon-rearing channels in a block of river habitat near Forks, Washington; and initiating a conservation project on 16 miles of the Lower John Day River that included buying the 8,114-acre Murtha Ranch with an 8,000-acre Bureau of Land Management grazing lease and the bottom 3 miles of coldwater Hay Creek, critical for summer steelhead, then winning the sheriff's foreclosure auction bid for a 3,259-acre property along the John Day 75 miles upstream of Murtha Ranch. At the end of the year, WRC purchased the second installment of a 47,000-acre property along 20 miles of the lower Klamath River on California's North Coast—a stretch of river critical to spawning salmon.



PHOTO BY JOHN SHERVY

Spring Fly-Tying Events

Watch and learn from some of the best fly tiers and anglers in the western United States at annual spring events throughout the region. The Northwest Fly Tyer and Fly Fishing Expo, www.nwexpo.com, runs March 11–12 in Albany, Oregon; the North Idaho Fly Fishing Expo, www.kellycreekflycasters.org, is slated for March 25–26 in Lewiston, Idaho; the East Idaho Fly Tying Expo, www.srcepo.com, runs April 15–16 in Idaho Falls, Idaho; and April 29–30 brings the Washington Fly Fishing Fair, www.washington-councilfff.org, in Ellensburg, Washington. The new kid on the block is the North Idaho Fly Fishing Expo, which will boast a large contingent of featured fly tiers along with special programs and demos.

Sage VXP Rods

The new VXP fly rods are the most powerful fast-action rods Sage offers at a midrange price point (\$485 to \$595, depending on model), and they boast plenty of high-end features. Built to generate ultra-high line speed, with a slender shaft design that reduces overall weight, the rods in this series are exceptionally smooth and responsive. The striking "Shadetree Green" shaft is appointed with dark green, silver, and black trim wraps and hard-chromed snake guides. The VXP line boasts 23 different models, with a rod to fit virtually all fishing demands and conditions. The freshwater models feature an anodized aluminum reel seat with a striking walnut diamond-wood insert; the saltwater and Spey models have fully anodized aluminum reel seats. All VXP rods have a four-piece

