

September 21, 2009

President's Message

Today is the first day of fall. Are you ready for the main event? October 23rd and 24th are the dates for the gathering of the clan, the fraternity of fly fishers throughout Florida. The council's annual conclave and fly fishing show will be held on those dates at the Ramada Celebration Resort near Disney World. Please mark your calendars now, register and make your reservations at the hotel. Our special rate includes breakfast and a donation from the Hotel to the council for each registration. So please register for the FFF special.

The conclave program schedule includes seminars, casting instruction, fly tying, a trade show of fly tackle manufactures, Florida fly shops, and a fund raising banquet Saturday night with a special guest speaker who will address the group updating us on conservation issues throughout Florida. A splendid time is guaranteed for all.

The council board of directors has a philosophy of sharing and access to opportunities for learning and enjoying the fellowship of our sport. To this end, the conclave event has been centrally located and is easily accessible from the far corners of the state.

The conclave is financially accessible too. The cost for the show is just \$10 for both days. It's accessible to everyone interested in fly fishing as we are opening up the event to the public, so bring your fishing buddies and please tell your friends. Membership in FFF is not required to attend the event. And all the programs, seminars and instruction are included in the admission price. The banquet and auction and the certified casting instructor testing are the only optional events at an additional cost. Our goal is to provide value to our members and grow the fly fishing community in Florida.

Clichés are pure distilled wisdom. In the past I have written about the wisdom of that old cliché, "Many hands make lighter work." It's working for all of us right now. I'm proud of our members and clubs as so many have stepped forward and come together to sponsor, staff and manage this event. Our members are always willing to share and mentor. I want to thank the numerous volunteers who are working to make this event possible. And I want to thank the individual donors and clubs who support us financially and through gifts of items we will use for our fundraising. I also want to thank you for your future attendance at the conclave. We need your attendance for this event to be a success.

But the spirit of sharing and giving is not new to our sport. Fly fishing has a long history of being a secret love affair passing from generation to generation from mentor to novice. It was for generations a sort of underground movement enjoyed by few individuals that held its secrets closely, only sharing with a trusted few. That began to change when fly fishers organizing groups and clubs. Then the Federation of Fly Fishers was founded in 1965 followed by state and regional councils, all with uniform purpose in mind, to create an open fraternity of like minded sportsman.

Fly anglers organized to share our sport and for the first time openly shared the secret joy, wisdom and learning of fly fishing including knowledge of tackle, rigging, fly tying, casting skills, fly selection and identification of salt water game fish prey and insect forage in the case of fresh water fishing. We share approaches and presentation techniques, destinations and locations to fish, trip planning tips, water access points, fishing stories, fellowship, camaraderie and the occasional fish tale with some being factual and others being true whoppers, some that got away. FFF is the proverbial birds of a feather group for fly fishers.

Federators share a commonality in our concern for the conservation, improvement and protection of all places wild. We share our time and efforts to stand for the environment, staff projects to improve it and we represent a unified voice to stand for doing what's right for conservation in our political environment.

The Florida Council is made up of many individuals and clubs throughout the state. Since we are a federation, we are the FFF. There is no divide between the national office, councils and members. The management and authority rests in the members, clubs and councils. This makes us unique among sportsman's groups as we set the agenda. Each of us is the Federation. It's important to note how each of us benefit from the Mall Effect. The bigger the better and membership is what makes FFF succeed for the common good.

There is a new member special available at the Conclave. Everyone who joins the Federation for the first time will be given a complimentary ticket to be entered into the Five Rivers Lodge Sweepstakes. This is a fund raiser FFF put together to support our efforts on a national basis. There will be one trip for two anglers drawn for each council. Some lucky sport in Florida will win a trip for two which includes a \$1000 travel stipend. You can find detailed information about the council, the conclave and the Five Rivers Lodge Sweepstakes on the council web site at fff-florida.org. Tickets will be available for the Five Rivers Sweepstakes at the conclave.

Our sport and each of us who love fly fishing benefit if we stand together for our passion and become part of the fly fishing fraternity that we call the FFF. Together we can make a difference in our world where ecosystems and habitat are constantly threatened by mankind. We do a good job of this now, but we can always do better. It only takes a little participation by each of us to give a little back and take action as good stewards of our world on behalf of our descendants. I encourage each of you to donate a little time and give some back to preserve and improve our earth. Let's pass on a better place to live. Joining the Federation is a good way to start. Renewing your membership is a great way to express your continued support. Becoming active in support of our projects is the best way to ensure our success.

Stay hooked,

Bill Gunn
President, FFF Florida Council