

SO, WHAT HAS THE FEDERATION OF FLY FISHERS DONE FOR ME LATELY?

Good question. And I hear it frequently. Here is my personal and unvarnished response. First, the question changes from "me" to "us" in a hurry. Since SFF decided to join the FFF in June of 2007, we acquired club insurance made possible by such affiliation. The infamous Withlacoochee trip convinced us of the need.

We received one free incentive TFO Lefty Kreh rod for every twelve new FFF members enrolled—(113 paid members). These rods became club rods and contributed to our financial health through club auctions. SFF also received twelve free 10 wt. rod blanks to stimulate our rod building education.

As a club, we flew the SFF and FFF flag at Florida Sportsman's Show at no cost to us. Our FFF relationship got us not-for-profit entry fees into other events as well. Visitors have found us by searching the FFF Florida website. Numerous program presenters came from our FFF contacts at the expo and other events (Rick Grasset, Pete Greenan, Ron Whiteley, Steve Gibson, and Aaron Adams).

Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing was introduced to us at an FFF expo and encouraged by FFF partnerships and publications. Thirteen SFF volunteers donated 872 hours this year to helping vets learn to cast, tie, and fish at Bay Pines VA. Pat Damico heads up PHWFF region activities while Terry Kirkpatrick and John Craig are point persons for Bay Pines.

FFF leadership and publications encouraged us to participate in the Boy Scout Fly Fishing Merit Badge Program. Richard Oldenski led over ten SFF members to teach twenty scouts how to cast, tie, fish, and remove hooks from flesh this year.

OK, FFF has been helpful to the club—so what has it done for me? Well, I got a patch, a magazine, and a bill for \$25.00 (senior special rate). I also receive the FFF club wire, a useful monthly e-mail communication put out by Barbara Wuebber that includes updates, articles from other FFF newsletters, and some helpful book reviews. FFF introduced me to "Catch" Magazine and its outstanding

photography. These FFF folk like to write stuff, so I get to read strategic plans, educational strategic plans, angler code of ethics, and some other pretty wordy material.

What made a profound personal impact upon my life was the contact with FFF people at the board, club, and officer level. Pat Damico's casting clinics gave me sufficient skill to even approach a casting pond where people like Pete Greenan, Dusty Sprague, Lee West, and others gave me some invaluable casting tips. Ron Whiteley presented a great program for us; however, he kept me informed and inspired with a barrage of e-mails about conservation and legislation. Others shared their journey through fly tying tips and fishing wisdom. At an FFF board meeting I caught some passion for conservation projects in Florida. Basically, people wearing the FFF badge expanded my world and broadened my education. They gave me access to a larger fly fishing community. Priceless!

FFF Florida Council Conclave at Ramada Celebration Resort October 23-24 gives you a chance to rub shoulders with some of the finest casters, tiers, and liars. And answer the question for yourself.

Check out <http://www.fffFlorida.org/conclave.htm> for more details.

Ken Hofmeister