

fernandez-steven-2017-04-23.mp4

[00:00:12] Yeah.

[00:00:15] I'm sort of the first real Fisher fisher man Fisher person in my family. I met my mother and father probably fished for Pan fish when they were children. And anyway for me it was sort of a. Regulatory thing. And anyway I started 5th fishing when I was 12 years old and. Then.

[00:00:36] Fished for quite a long time. Started Time flies and it's one of my most enduring passions. It's actually. It's actually the one place I feel I can go where I feel completely safe and I can be a completely naive person like I'm a kid all over again.

[00:00:56] And childlike childish in the best way sometimes not the best way but but I it's like I feel completely safe. I could do whatever I want to do. And and for me this passion it's been lifelong and I took my my brother my younger brother fishing a couple of times. As when we were young. He was a bicycle racer and he enjoyed it but he then you know kind of dropped it. And. So I didn't think anything of it because he was doing his thing. And so of. A number of years later.

[00:01:35] He has a son and he Barbara on my fly rods. I gave him a fly rod for a son. And again I didn't hear too much about it in a few years after that. I get an email with a photograph of a great big steelhead that his cock bigger than any fish I've ever caught in my life. And at the same time that I thought your S.O. be Well how dare you do this. And. At the same time I felt that I I felt I was just elated.

[00:02:04] That this brother of mine who I care so much about. He's become my best fishing buddy. It's you know it's kind of one of those things where you know you want to involve people in everything you do and you can't just grab people by the throat and make them do something. And I feel fortunate that I was able to introduce this sport to him and he took it up and. We're going to be fishing in a couple of weeks together we go fishing all the time now and it's. It's one of the real highlights of my life. I think this is how. You've got to get the joke. You know it's when I say that about fly time fly fishing anything it's like you and I mean by that is is you. You can be completely serious about it at the same time that you really look at yourself and recognize that you're not so damn important. You know and that. If you were to criticize somebody else as my grandmother used to say point a finger of three pointing back at yourself you implicate yourself in your critiques and in what you do. And it's somebody that it's a camaraderie that you feel safe around this person. You know I have other friends when in the wilds a very close friend of mine we fish a lot to his. He's right up there with my brother. And you know we have some divergent political opinions. And it. Means absolutely nothing. You know it's like everything gets lost in this thing that you have this this shared love for. That's that's tremendous for me. You know you can you can share things about fishing. Share things. That have nothing to do with fishing whatsoever. And it all comes back to the same thing. It is fishing even though you're talking about cars or politics or whatever it is. There's this common thread that it's like a great leveller. And and you know we always talk about melting hearts. We talk about you know especially in this very fraught political climate. I have friends to the left and to the right and all over the place and I'm pretty much to the left. And it really doesn't mean anything. You know it just brings people together and we sort of agree on this wonderful thing that we have.

[00:04:29] Increasingly and perhaps now more than ever. Maybe there were errors like in the 70s and early on. Teddy Roosevelt once said or I felt it was extremely important to do something that was. That could stop the loss of what we have. And. We have a certain amount right now. And we really have to protect it and I don't mean in the most. Vicious fly Vangelis way that nobody is allowed to do anything other than fly fish because I find that to be. A very difficult subject to subject mine to maintain. There are so many pressures on natural resources as the world population explodes. While we have to first learn how to protect what we have but also how to encourage people to share. That's more than that. And what's interesting about that is as we try to protect more waters we have to realize we're going to be more people on those waters. You know in what we consider to be a solitary sport you're going to see more people and you have to just take a very deep breath. And. Understand that. This is how we will protect what we have for future generations. And rather than look at it as Oh dammit there's another person on my river it's not your river it's their river too and make up and say hi and you'd be surprised at what might happen. Well it's also another advocate for protecting that river right. Absolutely. Yes. And. And it's very easy to say oh you know roar we're gonna have to protect this stream or that lake. And then. If you do anything you might. Send an email to a representative that does exactly this much. You really have to get up to participate. And.

[00:06:16] Because just sending letters to protect something you think is important to you is a letter on a representative steps that you would actually go out and participate and help in conservation efforts because you love this. That's sort of that human human thing that. Encourages other people because just by examples that you would be out there doing something. And that's really critical as we move forward in history with increasing increasing pressures on what we consider to be you know our heritage.

[00:06:56] Well I'm currently the fly fishing or the flight time director for the Southwest council the Federation of Fly fish it's a great big long mouthful there we talk. I called the Federation and so I support the fly trying and they get people involved in that. The federation is critically important. Trout Unlimited. Cal Trout the nature conservancy and even ones that are not strictly involved. With fly fishing. We're an agricultural land trust. I happen to know that because I'm an architect and we have them as a client and they prove that they preserve it preserve agricultural land that helps preserve sort of a rural character in areas that deserve to be protected in countless local organizations. I would hazard to say it's it's critical that when you do this that you understand that people have to also enjoy using using a resource because there are times when it gets a little bit too much and too restrictive. Interesting I say that as a liberal Democrat but I have seen an overly restrictive. Attitudes used and. To the point where you know you look down on a bait fisherman.

[00:08:16] Rather than sink thing you have all enjoying this. So the more people you can get involved in these organizations the better. Oh yeah. Oh yeah. With. I was just on Soda Butte Creek where it hits Lamar River last year after the conclave and I was fishing right there at the confluence and there. It's very public so a lot of people there and I was. Maneuvered myself into a really nice raffle and a father with his daughter came down on the other side of the river and were fishing the same started for same raffle. I was fishing and normally you would just yell at them get out of your way how dare you do this. It it instantly your hackles go up and I think how dare they. I just said there's a father with his daughter. And kind of a little bit funny. I called for cutthroat job just one after the other.

[00:09:20] Bam bam bam bam and I sort of had enough. You know it's like and he was pointing to me to showing us. Tony you started look he's doing this he's doing this. This

guy this bubbles was a lure on it and and she was casting out. He was trying to explain to her and we're fishing the same we were in real run and it didn't bother me and I had caught four fish and I knew there were many more in there and I just I finally I real live and said Have a nice day and in the end he said wonderful display of skill thank you have a great time. And it was just it was nice to see two different kinds of people doing the same thing you know. And you know if we sort of step back a little bit and not worry about that sometimes I mean it's not like somebody comes up instead stands right next door and throws his line right in front of you. You know we all have that. I've had more fly fisherman do that than Bay fishermen do that by the way on the same trip somebody did that to me out on a road and tried racing me to the Ron and I just thought it's yours. You know it's it's not that important. I'll find another place to fish if it's that important for this person that's ok you. Know. But but yeah this is the father was the daughter was just it was just like at Jim.

[00:10:36] My parents would take us on camping trips many many years ago my grandfather had a house on Lake Arrowhead in California and we'd go out in the boat and we'd fish for Pan fish little blue Villa you know. Every kid has done that was it. It wasn't one of those things where I said this is going to do for the rest of my life. I enjoyed it. And then years later I was about twelve years old. Are you a flat.

[00:11:05] I was about 12 years old. We went camping. We would take it. We had a Volkswagen bus. We would stick six of us or seven of us in this bus and if my grandmother we would go places and we went to Colorado. We'd go down river. So we went to Colorado outside of Aspen and I looked down in the river for some reason I was just enthralled. There were trout in this river. I don't know. Somebody put something inside of me at that moment and my dad rigged up a drop line for me with a salmon egg hook and sinker and I sued in this one little pool in this creek Marine creek right below marine life and I caught four fish and I was. Hooked.

[00:11:46] And I as soon as we got back I went to the local fishing tackle store to find out where it was and I bought a zip code learned to fish outfit and we just still had all this stuff right. So I I just started fishing and. And then there was a sufficiently that happened. I walked into the store one day. And I would find some salmon a carcass or something like that I don't remember. And there was a little quartz multi compartment the plastic box from this big recliner and had all these little things in it with different colors. And it's had flies nine cents. And I asked of the guy who was behind the counter. Whose name was Miller. I still remember I said what it like. And he said those are fries and. I'm looking at this is.

[00:12:33] Totally astonished. I said Look. Where do you put the bait. And he said they don't you don't put bait on this.

[00:12:42] What's the fish supposed to do. He said they look like insects. These were yellow Sally's royal Wolf's white Millers of. The world catchments white nose. The Guardian's things you've ever seen in your life. They don't look like anything at all. All right. And there were nine since you two already falling apart in the box are poorly tied. I didn't know that. I was flabbergasted. I bought a couple of them. I raced home. I drove my bicycle over to receive a park which had upon I grabbed a bunch of duck feathers.

[00:13:13] Went back home got my mom's yarn and sewing thread and my feet Holder hooks had the slices to hold the worms on them and I just started having a great time with these things. I was just. It was like. UPS or otherwise. Universe. And my parents seeing this and perhaps thinking of how we keep this kid out of trouble told my grandfather who

for either my birthday or Christmas bought me a five time card and it was a net grey fly tying kid.

[00:13:41] He was a guru of Southern California. Fly fishing. I didn't know that at the time. But I started tying flies. Number of couple of years later I was actually trying for Ned Gray. I tied for historical fishing with spot and then Ned gray and it was this unbelievable opening for me. It's here is this artistic thing that made not the slightest bit of sense.

[00:14:09] That I was allowed to do and catch fish worth. You know if you're not putting a worm on a hook right you're putting feathers on a hook and yarn and thread and hair and fur. It was just crazy.

[00:14:33] Yeah it's it's ironic that you say that because there are very very few areas in California where there really are native fish that haven't been planted there by man for some reason or another.

[00:14:45] But I wouldn't call them more wild fish but even the areas that are completely wild native trout versus wild trout like Brook trout in California I almost treat them the same especially love catching fish about this big in what I like to consider to be just this side of impossibility.

[00:15:09] You know creeks that go into the desert like how close can you get to the desert before there's nothing there anymore. You know that like edge of existence which is why I like the Eastern Sierra so much. It's this abrupt rise out of the desert and you're suddenly in pristine jewel like mountains. But to fish a small creek with a small rod and gets a very small fish with friends or without friends and that fishes with Travis big. This is really as amazing to me as catching a 20 inch brown trout or bigger. I mean don't get me wrong I love catching those as well. But. But there's it sounds hopelessly romantic but there is a real connection at that point to to the wild to stir to the you know the air. That. The.

[00:16:09] I think it's critical. And.

[00:16:13] What's interesting about this is we've talked about preserving wild native species. There are times now where we're trying to take non-native trout out of areas and it's a. It's a it's traumatic for me. But I understand the situation you know in in the Sierras. Sequoia Park Kings Canyon and in the wilderness areas. That I think it's the yellow Lake frog has been wiped out of its existence in many areas because prior to white man trapped in limbo 10000 feet. And so they're deep. They're trying to clean trout out of some of these areas and I'm very very conflicted by I understand. I completely agree and I completely disagree because I have fished for golden trout up to 20 inches in some of these lakes and and golden trout is native but they don't. They were never up there. It's like do they belong. I don't know yes. No. I would hate to see them be eradicated forever because you know we were never here at one time. So where do you draw the line. However it is really wonderful to see Lockhart and cutthroats being reintroduced to the Eastern Sierra. A fish that was almost completely wiped out for food because of Los Angeles thirst for water because people hated them because they didn't fight as well as a brown trout or a rainbow trout. And it's so childish to think about that and so nice to see them back and the parks are more critical than ever. But I think even more critical than the parks and the wilderness areas are you and me and and the community that we would create to you know to stem the tide of sort of an apathy that has you know. These things. You know you don't have to go anywhere you can just you know on this thing you could go somewhere and like well

how do you turn this into going somewhere and making sure that that somewhere isn't just an image anymore. Well the standard things that we've always thought about.

[00:18:23] You know in certain areas it's overgrazing.

[00:18:26] And you know if you had the thing about that is like in goldenrod area you have people sheep farmers who sheepherders who have graze that area forever and so then you look at it as a strict bottom line thing it's like what is the economics they get out of it versus the economics of it being you know a tourist area.

[00:18:44] And at times we have to realize that sometimes our noses kind of going in a different direction than the question that our way of life sometimes has to change a little bit. And we have to recognize that it doesn't mean you completely stop something but it means you. You make allowances for things that need to impinge on what you have done. So for sheepherders maybe look.

[00:19:06] You can't trample the water anymore and maybe we need to take some of that out of your ability to go there maybe we could put you somewhere else or I don't know. For me it's.

[00:19:15] To recognize that I can't go up to all those lakes and necessary fish for golden trout.

[00:19:19] So it's as much a notion of mining and pollution and etc. as it is our own sort of thought process and what our what we want out of this is as important as that. So you know it's like. You could say let's get rid of all dams and all lakes and all reservoirs. Well a whole lot of people like fish those reservoirs and we get electricity from. So how can we in areas where salmon need to survive. We have to keep take those dams down without question or we won't have them in areas where there aren't salmon. But we have a viable recreation resource and anglers to tap to help protect other resources that needs to happen too. So. I would say I would say probably the biggest thing that would. Affect. Future is apposite is. Again you know worrying about this thing taking over and not using it. But using this as a way to get people less apathetic and more involved protecting. People. Number one. I have seen.

[00:20:35] I've seen the cyclical thing about fly fishing that kind of that that flows and ebbs and flows and ebbs where there's certain times like with a river runs through it. We have an absolute apogee of participation and everybody is enthralled and people are coming into our sport. And it's fantastic and then there are areas times like during the Great Recession. Where there's just not resources to do things in. And.

[00:21:05] Stores weather up and go away etc. But in an overarching thing I've seen a lot more a lot more care towards the resources more catch and release fishing without being fly Vangelis but understanding that you know you just can't go on kill a whole bunch of fish people. You know it's really important that if you're going to keep a fish in an area where you're allowed to that you recognize this is for your sustenance and what does it mean to do something like that. And. And that's where I think we as fly fishers can really help. Understand this ecosystem better than that. It's not just racing once efficient a hatchery throwing me and then catching them and then raising a bunch more throwing them into catching them. Yes we have that. That's important but also how do we preserve an area that I guess I can go to and have a great time catch 30 40 fish that day and then you know next day somebody else can come and do the same thing and have an equal day you

know and I haven't cleaned the place out you know or I haven't left trash anywhere so I've seen a lot more conservation. And I've seen it hybridized with was business more and more and that is that's important. On the one hand everybody poo poo is due to corporatization of slogans like oh it's green. What's this. So what's that. But then you have to see the other side to it it's like it is green. And we recognize we can't have. We can't have or you know our smog. Or 67 Chevy is anymore or whatever they are we have to have something that's much lighter on the environment. So that's probably the biggest change I've seen.

[00:22:54] It's not just important. It is a live or die situation as the United States diversifies. And becomes less white. And more multicultural and thereby. They we are all worlds safe no world. So I tie a lot of fishing or art flies that really discuss race and issues like that. And you know I do it purposely. Tim ratio spoke. I can't remember was last year or the year before at the time of the Livingston conclave and it was at the awards ceremony and he got up there and he said Take a look around you. What do you see. And we all looked around and saw Gray hair. Everybody knows this. Take a look around you and see how few children see how few women that are involved. He said the next person you're going to introduce to fly fishing is that guy was with hoops in his ears and tats all over his body and piercings he said. That's the next fly fishing. And he is dead on the money. I live in Los Angeles. For me it's. Catches are almost there. It's a fashion. It's not a it's not a gang playing and you know it's not some sort of pull a knife on shank. It's not that it's any steel. It's just the way people are involved. And. They are as nice as anybody I've ever met. They're just like you and me and and yet somehow to the degree that we get other people other than all great white people involved male white people involved is the degree that this sport will not just survive but thrive. You know it's the new generation it's the next thing. And and we just have to remind the people who are coming in. That this is a heritage that goes both ways. It's really that simple.

[00:24:57] I really enjoyed. Well. Some of my mentors are. Flat tires to fly first who wrote a lot. In no particular order J it's in Leonard's book flies tremendous art flicks master flight time guy. Dave Whitlock Ernie Shwe Birch Paul Juergens and. Swisher Ann Richards. Critical critical works. AJ McClain standard encyclopedia. You're hearing a lot of old stuff. I know I don't do a whole heck of a lot of reading right now. I read Th eL.A. Times every day. Much more topical I should say art criticism things like that. But but in the fly fishing world those and then a dear friend of mine who wrote a book called The Art of the trout find another book called Salmon fly off the tires in their art which I was featured in Judith Dunham wrote these books that changed the face of fly fishing books. Suddenly they were about personalities and what makes each of us tick. It wasn't. This is how you put a tag on a fly and this is why you've casta. It was that through the human beings that. Do this. And. It was a tremendous opening I think. So it ended up not just being you know field and string type which is as wonderful as it's ever been an airplane but it is about who you are who I am. Why do what makes that person tick. What do we bring in from outside of fly fishing into fly fishing. That I found. Just it's captivating. And you've seen how books have changed since those in my opinion seminal books coffee table books people people to our coffee table book. Coffee table books reach the lay person. And I've passed these books around to people who have this much to do with fly fishing and they're astonished if you gave somebody a technical book who's not a fly fisherman. They may be turned upside down and look at it and go That was nice.

[00:27:03] But this is an opening into our world and our opening into somebody else's world that I think is really important. It's really important and I would hope that you and other organizations would figure out that it's not a criticism. Figure out a way to get these

out to people more. Because. In flight time things have changed so radically since I started when I was 12 years old. That's 45 years ago. When it was muskrat and ad Brewster Haskell and hooks and and Chanel and now it's silly skin and rubber legs and foam and cone heads and stuff like that. And there's a loss in my opinion. If it's all just whatever it is topically in the present and you forget about all this over stuff that has to come along with it and it's it's to me it's very similar to the notion of sampling in hip hop is that you know you're listening to hip hop and you're hearing felonious Monk sampled. OK. Both are in it. And if you didn't do that you wouldn't have all of this wonderful history. You know it's like how do you how do you forget Beethoven you. How do you forget Mozart. And. That culture is more easy to assimilate because it's so grand it's our Western culture. Fly fishing seems this big and we need to let it be known that it's it's something that more people can participate in. And if you lose that history it's almost like it's rudderless. It doesn't mean that what you're going to be doing now is bad or it has no meaning. But to me there's there are human beings that have been involved in this and there are you know ideas and you know bears that have been drunk over. Over things that are as valid then as they are today that inform. What can happen today. And so to the degree that you can. Bring that out and get more people involved in it.

[00:29:14] It will enrich the sport. It will continue. There'll be a continuum rather than you know a separation. Sure primarily as a flight tire and as somebody who tries to be really creative with flight time. I would really implore people if they know anybody who wants to be involved in fly fishing flight time. To bring in from outside of the sport as much as you possibly can. I've tried to bring art architecture culture. As somebody said once before hysteria anarchy anything you can bring into this sport that in some ways adds to it some ways upends the apple cart and then you know deconstruct it put it back together as your own but most importantly I tell students when I when I teach classes it's if you really want to make a mark you need to contribute back what you've gotten and and that's what's most important.

[00:30:20] Don't just take something take something that you've gotten from Hollywood Vincent or Wayne Llewellyn or whoever you know or the tire around the corner that you've watched put it together. And if you think you've come up with something. Share it. Bring it back because you need to expand this balloon so to speak that we have. Otherwise it will just shrink. I think that's really critical too to contribute. Don't just go on YouTube and see something and learn how to tie fly and go out. Enjoy yourself. That's fantastic. But you need to bring it back. You know you need to bring it back even not just to the person who gave it to you but to somebody else and that's bringing it back. And and I would really implore everybody to do that as much as you can and implore others to do that as well.