

Suncoast Fly Fishers



On The Fly

The Prez Sez by Ken Hofmeister



SUNCOAST FLY FISHERS VISION AND VALUES

Wow! We've marked some milestones in 2007. We were clear on our mission (what we do). We've had fun and forged ahead with some significant improvements for our organization. We even caught fish along the way!

It's time to ask "Now what?" What does our "preferred future" look and sound like? What is distinctive about our club? What is most important to us? How do we treat each other and relate to new members? Do other clubs "benchmark" against us to improve? Suncoast Fly Fishers are a diverse group with a rich range of experiences on the waters. We all have some improvement ideas and suggestions for enriching our time together. Some things we've experienced elsewhere--some we just know would make us better.

Here are some questions that will help us collect these ideas and consider how to implement them. You can print off this page and write in your responses. Or, complete a copy at the May 17 meeting at Walter Fuller Park. Agenda: 6:00-7:00 casting, fly tying, knot tying. 7:00-8:30 Pizza and soft drinks--along with Alan Sewell's Snook Extravaganza Program. Your board will carefully consider all input as we recommend improvements for your review and response.

WHAT SHOULD WE KEEP DOING?

WHAT SHOULD WE STOP DOING?

WHAT SHOULD WE START DOING?

WHAT IS OUR GREATEST OPPORTUNITY?

WHAT IS OUR GREATEST THREAT IN THE FUTURE?

WHAT DO WE WANT VISITORS TO SAY ABOUT US?

SFF UPCOMING EVENTS

- May, 17 - Snook program Alan Sewell
May, 19 - Night Snook Outing
June, 21 - Fishing Argentina Capt Pat
June, 23 - Emerson Point Outing
July, 21 - Chassowitzka River Outing
August, 18 - Fred Howard Park Outing

Inside this issue:

Table with 2 columns: Article Title and Page Number. Includes items like 'Outing reviews, Previews, Tournament Results' (page 2) and 'Map and Meeting Preview' (page 9).

Outings—Reviews and Previews *by Richard Oldenski*



May Outing - May 19, 2007

Night Snook Fishing Extravaganza

May Outing

We are charged up and excited about our annual night snook fishing outing for May. These hefty muscular linesides have been making a come back since the red tide invasion of 2005, and they'll be waiting for us under the dock lights. At the May meeting, Alan Sewell will present all we need to know about how to locate, attract and fight mano-a-mano with these feisty sports fish. At the meeting we will also match up fishing partners. We'll need boats for this outing and hope members who own boats will be able to attend and

Future Outing Previews:

June - Emerson Point

July - Chassowitzka River

August - Fred Howard Park

September - Fort DeSoto—joint outing with the Mangrove Coast Fly Fishing Club

take a partner or two with them. For this outing, you can fish the docks anywhere in Pinellas County. Fishing can begin anytime after dark on Saturday May 19. We'll meet for breakfast and fishing tales at 7:00 AM on Sunday at the MacDonald's on the Tom Stewart/Madeira Beach Causeway.

April Outing

What happened to Lake Pasadena? This lake, usually teeming with bass and sunfish, was dead. Only one fish was caught. An 8 1/4 inch sunfish won the prize for Ken Doty. Although not gale force, the wind was stiff and the recent cold front had turned the lily pads dry and yellow. We consoled each other at lunch where the conversation centered on hopeful expectations for the Everglades trip.

Fishing Tournament

Sun Fish—Ken Doty 8 1/4"

All others are open at this time

EVERGLADES BLAST 2007 *by Joe Dail*

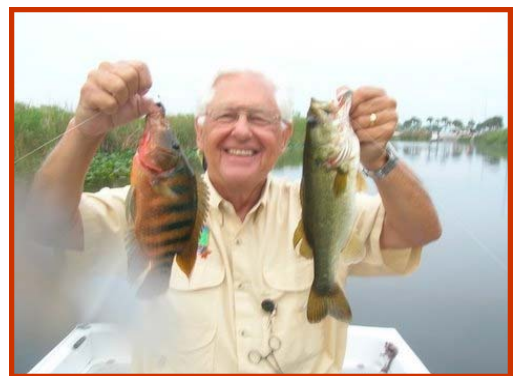
From Friday through Sunday, April 27-29, approximately 17 SFF members and guests enjoyed spectacular fly fishing on the canals near I-75 in western Broward County.

Several bass in the four-pound category were reportedly taken on white foam spiders (President Ken was observed hauling a big one into his canoe), and 40 to 50 hard-fighting cichlids per fisherman were common. Also caught were oscars, stumpknockers and shellcrackers.

Vessels used included powerboats, gheenoes and canoes. Alligators were abundant, which may explain why no kayaks were seen (except those belonging to a club from Cocoa Beach whose members seemed reluctant to put them into the water).

The group stayed at the La Quinta Inn in Sunrise, which made us welcome by having breakfast ready by 5:30 a.m. each morning. On Friday, the group met for dinner at the Diner 84, where the conversation centered on the amazing catches that afternoon, particularly by those who had not made the trip before. Dinner on Saturday was at an outdoor table at Grumpy Dick's, highlighted by a visit from a scantily clad motorcyclist who was unfortunately accompanied by a rather large, bearded biker.

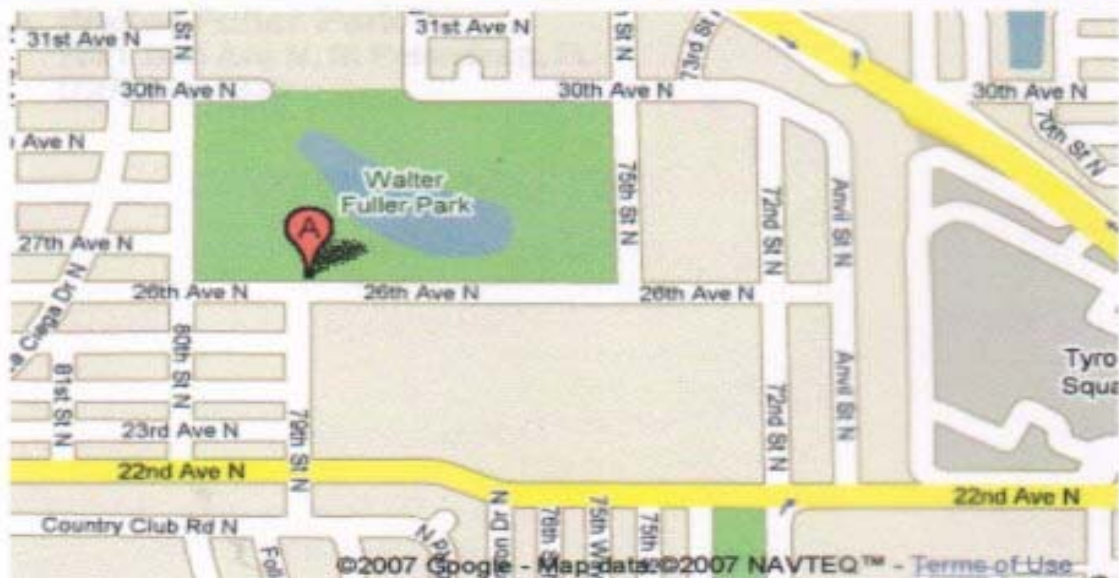
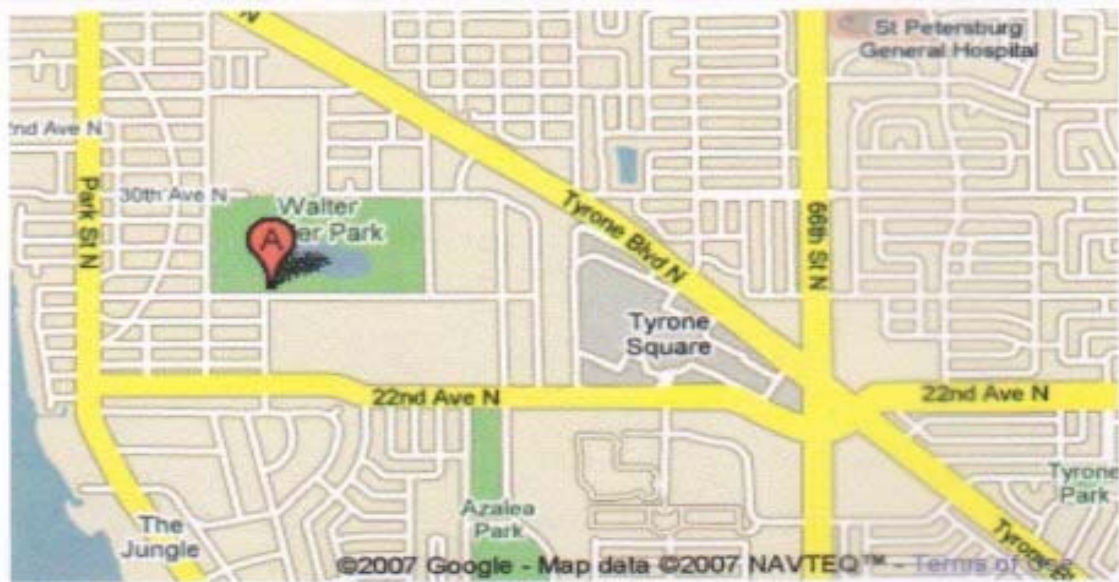
President Ken turned on his charm and a possibly embarrassing incident was avoided. Although this is not an official club outing, the Everglades trip is becoming an annual tradition, and the club appreciates the efforts of Don Manning for getting it started and for making hotel and restaurant arrangements.



Joe Dail with a nice Everglades Mayan cichlid and bass.
Photo by Joe Dail

New Meeting Location Walter Fuller Park

The Suncoast Fly Fishers have a new location for their monthly general membership meeting. Starting with the May 17, 2007 meeting, we will gather at Walter Fuller Park, located at 7891 26th Avenue, North in St. Petersburg. The new meeting hall will provide a larger and cleaner room with excellent lighting for fly tying demonstrations, good parking, spacious lawns for casting and a generally friendlier atmosphere for families. Speakers will no longer be in competition with low flying aircraft or gunfire. Walter Fuller is easily accessed: from I 275 take the 22nd Ave. N. exit and head west on 22nd Ave, make a right turn onto 79th St. N. (just past Azalea Middle School) which ends at 26th Ave, N. directly across from the driveway to the Recreation Hall parking lots. From Park St/Starkey Rd, go east on 26th Ave, N. approximately 3 blocks to the Rec. Hall driveway across from 79th St. Or, go to the SFF website <http://www.suncoastflyfishers.com/> and click on the “**Directions**” link. You will be able to get specific directions from your house to the Park. Our May 17th meeting will feature free pizza and soft drinks along with Alan Sewell’s dock fishing for snook program. Don’t miss it. See the maps below.....PS



A. Walter Fuller Park
7891 26th Ave N, St Petersburg, FL

Dock Lights Are Getting Hot! *by Capt. Pat Damico*

Warmer water has snook moving out of deep canals and rivers and starting to forage on baitfish in the shallows. Since they are primarily nocturnal feeders, lighted docks are getting a lot of their attention.

I will gladly admit my favorite fly rod quarry is a mean Old Snook. Daytime Snook fishing with a long rod is hard work. Yes, there are many areas where numbers of small Snook can be tempted during the day, especially during the first and last hours and under low light conditions. If you want to get really rattled and have your tackle tested, fish in the dark. One of my fishing buddies, Bob Finck, told me years ago, after a Snookin' good trip, "Pat, they're like largemouth bass on steroids."

If you've never pursued Snook at night, where do you begin? I use a flats boat that is equipped with a bow mounted Minn Kota electric motor. Preferring not to anchor, I can maneuver the boat, even when fishing alone, to get me in the best position. The electric will also be used as soon as you hookup, to get you and your lunker away from barnacle encrusted structure. Use your electric in forward mode only and turn it one hundred and eighty degrees to go in the opposite direction. Reverse prop wash seems to disturb fish because of the excess vibration. A slow steady speed will not scare fish like sudden stopping and starting. Dock lights will be the areas where I will do most of my fishing. These lights attract plankton, which in turn attract hordes of baitfish that are easy pickings for large, lazy Snook. Some bridges have lights on the fenders and lighted Marinas will also attract fish, but I prefer to concentrate on lighted docks. Check out the areas you want to fish during the day so you are familiar with water depth and any navigational hazards. Pick an area where there are a lot of lights mounted close to the water. This way, you can just use your electric to go from one to the next. After a hookup, a light will frequently not produce for a while. Move to the next one and return later. Running and gunning at night is not a good idea. This time of year, docks



Capt. Pat with a beautiful fly caught snook, fishing the dock lights. Photo by Capt. Pat Damico

near passes and points adjacent to deeper water will harbor more fish. As the water temperature drops, docks back in canals where water is warmer will be more productive.

Are tides important? Is incoming preferred over outgoing? The most important consideration is to have moving water. If the tide is slack, the fish will be there milling around and not feeding. Pick times when there is maximum tidal flow. The current will orient the fish.

As they face into the current waiting for their food, they may be positioned away from the dock with one tide and under the dock when it reverses.

Tackle will depend on the size of fish available. Two fly rods one with a floating and the second with a clear sink tip would be ideal. Nine-foot, fast action rods in eight or nine weight should be equipped with thirty pound fluorocarbon shock tippetts. A nine-foot tapered leader on the floating line is perfect. The sink tip can have a three or four-foot shock tippet only since the clear line is almost invisible. Observing feeding fish will tell you what flies to select. Snook will be very selective. If they are feeding on glass minnows, larger offerings will be refused. When a small grass shrimp skips under the light in a panic followed by a series of explosive boils, use a small shrimp pattern. Duplicate the movement of the forage with your retrieve. Keep the rod tip close to the water and strip strike when you feel the take, then get the fish away from the structure. Crimp the barbs on flies, it will make release easier and help penetration. Besides shrimp and baitfish patterns that sink, I always have a few floating patterns; nothing beats the excitement of a large Snook exploding the surface. The newer synthetic materials are very effective. Polarfiber Minnows, Dan's Neerly Live Bait, Lefty's Deceiver and Clouser Minnows are all good choices for sub surface. Jack Garside's Gurgle Bug and small Poppers will work on top.

Your boat should be well organized and every-

thing unnecessary should be stowed. Daytime problems will quadruple at night. Tripping, catching line, not finding things, can be frustrating. Stealth is the key. Noise should be eliminated. I wear a small "LEDHEDZ" light on my hat brim that uses small button type batteries and weighs almost nothing. It can be turned on to change and locate flies or assist in bringing a fish alongside for release.

Fly line management, especially in the dark, can be a major problem. I've caught more than one sixty dollar fly line in my electric motor. A couple weeks ago, Capt. Mel Berman and I were guests of Capt. Rick Grasset, fishing Sarasota Bay. Rick introduced me to a homemade stripping basket that can be placed on the deck and is a clever, inexpensive way to eliminate all the problems associated with fly line control. When not used, it is very compact and easily stored. Contact me if interested in a description of how to make this inexpensive tool. Besides catching fish, this tip alone was worth the trip with Rick.

Remember, you are fishing in someone's back yard. I make it a policy to thank dock owners when they are around during the day, for the privilege of fishing their dock at night. Not only will this surprise them, I have been given some great other fishing locations nearby.

If your fly fishing luck with daytime Snook has been frustrating, give night fishing a try. Your catching rate should accelerate. When you see the size and numbers of fish after dark, and how much fun you've missed, you'll see why this has become my favorite.

A certified casting instructor, Capt. Pat Damico fishes lower Tampa Bay and surrounding waters with light tackle and fly rod. His website www.captpat.com will give you additional information.

This article originally appeared on Capt. Mel Berman's website www.capmel.com and is reprinted here with the author's permission.PS

SUNCOAST FLY FISHERS

Our Aims and Purpose

The Suncoast Fly Fishers are dedicated to sharing their total fly fishing experiences and to developing interest in fly fishing in both fresh and saltwater. We shall promote and teach both fly fishing and related subjects of fly tying, rod building, fly casting and knot tying.. Through collaboration, fellowship, conservation and sportsmanship, we will help members become more skilled, have more fun and be more productive in the sport. Suncoast Fly Fishers support the conservation of natural resources, boating safety and fishing regulations.

LOCAL FISHING GUIDES

Capt. Pat Damico, Tampa Bay 727-360-6466

Capt. Pete Greenan, Boca Grande and

The Everglades 941-923-6095

Capt. Mike Homer, Tampa Bay 727-418-5005

Capt. Ray Markham Sarasota and

Tampa Bay 941-723-2655

MANY THANKS

To all of my Suncoast Fly Fisher friends, I just want to thank all of you who called, sent e-mails, get well cards and the beautiful flowers to my wife Marie who was in the hospital for some rather serious surgery. Your kind thoughts and wishes were much appreciated and did a lot to brighten her 15 day stay at Palms Of Pasadena Hospital. Marie is home now and recovering well. In the meantime I am collecting many brownie points playing Mr. Mom. Oh well, the fish will wait, I suppose.

Thanks again, *Paul*

Fly Tying Bench — Poly-Whitebait by Don Coleman

It is May, so it must be time for the Suncoast Fly Fisher's Annual Night Time Snook Fishing Extravaganza. Many flies work well for fishing for snook under the dock lights and if you look at your back issues of "On The Fly" you will find some good examples in the "Tying Bench". In the Sept. '06 issue are two good flies - Ken Doty's Snook Fly and Jack Gartside's Gurgler. Clouser style flies in all white can be productive and we covered several types in the Oct. '06, Nov. '06 and the Jan. '07 issues. In the Mar. and Apr. '07 issues we highlighted various styles of Deceivers; tied in all white materials, these are also productive. Here is another excellent fly for night-time snook fishing and we'll let our old friend Don Coleman who introduced the fly to SFF tell you how to tie it.PS

Poly-Whitebait Flies an EP Style fly

by Don Coleman

Despite my preference for tying flies with natural materials, there is one fly that uses artificial material that has been very productive from South Florida to New England. While it requires entirely different fly tying techniques, it is relatively easy to tie. Enrico Puglisi not only designed his series of "EP Flies" but also markets the flies and materials used to tie his flies. His EP Fibers and Sea Fibers set the standard for polypropylene fibers. Similar fibers are sold as Neer Hair. His Peanut Butter fly, designed to imitate Baby Bunker (menhaden) is particularly useful for imitating laterally compressed, sawbelly type flies like the Scaled Sardines and Green Backs which are common on the saltwater grass flats. Many commercial fly tiers have copied Enrico's flies and call it by other names. I am strongly of the opinion that tyers should give credit where credit is due and not steal designs created by others.



Poly Whitebait Fly tied by Don Coleman

Photo by Paul Sequeira

Materials:

- Hook: Eagle Claw 254SS or equivalent
- Size: 2 through 1/0
- Material: EP Fibers, Sea Fibers, Neer Hair or other polypropylene fibers
- Thread: Lava Lace mono thread or white thread of your choice
- Eyes: Molded plastic
- Coloring: Permanent marking pens, color as desired

Tying Instructions:

The Peanut Butter style fly is usually tied on 1x short hooks. Sizes #2 to #1/0 seem best for the grass flats and can be used for both sight fishing and blind fishing. Enrico uses fine Larva Lace thread; I simply use my usual White, 6/0 Uni-Thread to tie the fly. He ties a sparse bunch of white fibers at the bend for a tail. He then ties sparse bunches (you cannot use bunches that are too sparse) spaced along the shank of the hook. Enrico lays a bunch of white fibers for the belly of the fly across the top of the hook shank and brings both ends around under the shank and secures with thread wraps. The top of the fly is tied with sparse bunches of colored fibers (*or plain white fibers and colored with permanent marking pen ...ps*) laid along the top of the shank and folded back and secured. (*Repeat this procedure to fill the hook shank. ...ps*) Mylar flash can be tied in between bunches if desired, as can red flash for gills (I don't bother). Molded eyes are then Gooped to the sides and the fly is trimmed to the desired shape. The poly fibers can be marked with waterproof marking pens if desired. EP flies do not absorb water, which allows easier casts and quick drying.

A Day on the Rainbow River by Roger Blanton

April is the best month of all to get out your popping bugs and catch some bluegills on the Rainbow and Withlacootchee Rivers in the city of Dunnellon. I got a late start this April morning. My wife wanted to go along for the boat ride, even though I haven't convinced her to give the fly rod a try. That's okay – more fish for me.

We eased out of the dock on the Rainbow and headed to a small bay just off the Withlacootchee. On this morning I had my dad's bass boat, but this area can be easily and safely fished from a kayak. I shut down the big engine and hit the trolling motor as we entered the bay. The sun was on the rise by now, so I headed to the east shoreline to fish the shaded bank. Experience has taught me that you have to find the shaded banks to find the bluegill. Fortunately, there are lots of large trees lining the banks of the rivers, so there is shade on one bank or the other most of the day.

I tied on one of my morning favorites – a black popping bug with white spots. Using a sidearm cast to stay below the tree limbs, I landed the first cast within a foot of the bank. By the third cast I brought a small bluegill to the boat. Experience on this river has also taught me that the great majority of fish caught will be small. You just have to make enough casts and you'll eventually catch a keeper. I had decided that, on this trip, I'd try to catch enough for a fish fry, at least for my wife, Linda, and I. This would require at least 4 bluegills in the half-pound class.

We caught about 10 fish in the first bay, including 1 keeper and 1 bass that really wanted that bug. Then, we moved back up the Rainbow to a bay off the main channel called Blue Hole. The water on the Rainbow was its usual gin clear self, so I tied on a white bug with black dots. A word of warning for all you spider tiers – forget it. I have tried spiders many times and always return to the popping bug. They out fish spiders 10 to 1 – at least on these waters. My selection was rewarded with at least a dozen gills and 2 more keepers.



A brace of nice Rainbow River bluegills, enough for lunch for two. Photo by Roger Blanton

The sun was getting higher, so I switched to a chartreuse popper. By the way, my color selection is the result of many hours fishing this water; it was no accident. Low light – black, more light – white, after 10AM with more intense sunlight – chartreuse.

We fished selected areas of shaded banks on the main channel of the Rainbow as we were headed back to the dock and were again rewarded by gills, plus another keeper. Back at the dock by 11 and we had our fish fry. After not cleaning a bluegill in over 20 years, I found I still had the knack and the fillets were done without any miscues with the fillet knife. And, I even have the pictures to prove it.

So, if you want to catch a bunch of bluegills, get to the Rainbow and Withlacootchee in April.

EVERGLADES PICTURES

In an effort to get a few more pictures on one page, I did not include captions. I would however, like to identify the picture contributors and express my thanks.

Top Row: Photos 1 & 3 by Joe Dail, Photo 2 by Ken McKinnon

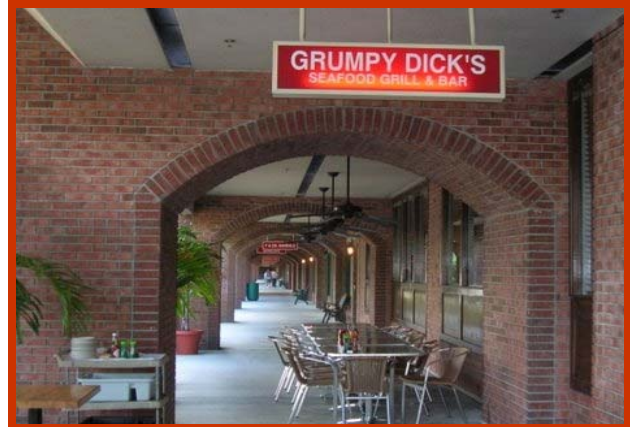
2nd Row: Photo 1 by Ken McKinnon, Photos 2 & 3 by Joe Dail

3rd Row: Photo 1 by Ken Doty, Photo 2 by Joe Dail

Bottom Row: Photos 1 & 2 by Ken Doty

I don't think you'll have any trouble identifying the SFF members in the pictures. Many thanks to all.. Paul

Pictures From The Suncoast Fly Fishers Everglades Blast 2007



SUNCOAST FLY FISHERS

Club Officers

President: Ken Hofmeister 727/521-1637

Vice President: John Zientarski 727/391-1480

Secretary: Joe Dail

Treasurer: Alan Sewell

Board of Directors

Roger Blanton - Larry Cohen

Pat Damico - Ken McKinnon

Richard Oldenski - John Rodgers - Paul Sequira

“On the Fly” is the monthly newsletter of the Suncoast Fly Fishers (SFF), a not-for-profit organization offering fly fishing and fly tying instruction to members and visitors. Club membership includes newsletter subscription. Send e-mail submissions to:

psequira@tampabay.rr.com



Next Club Meeting: Thursday, May 17, 2007

Time: 6:30-7:00 PM Outdoor Activities

7:00-8:30 Meeting & Program

Location: Walter Fuller Park

7891 26 Avenue, North, St. Petersburg, FL 33710

Program: Dock Fishing for Snook with Alan Sewell

VISIT OUR WEBSITE

<http://www.suncoastflyfishers.com/>

Suncoast Fly Fishers

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