

# INTRODUCTION

## Why the Hunt?

By Don Muelrath, Co-Author

Puffs of dust kicked up with each step as the 12-year-old boy moved along the well-worn trail that encircled the lake. In one hand he carried a spinning rod and the other hand clutched a bottle of salmon eggs. He was walking deliberately, heading for a spot he knew was the “honey hole.” This special spot was the place he anticipated the orange salmon eggs would tempt some of the thousands of rainbow trout that the Fish and Game Department hatchery truck had released into the lake that week.

He hesitated as something caught his eye. Gentle ripples disturbed the water’s glass-like finish near the bank, which was sheltered by the long boughs of a large redwood tree that extended some fifteen feet out over the surface.

Wanting a closer look, the boy set his rod down as he dropped to his knees and began crawling through the dry grass. As he quietly approached the shoreline, he saw the cause of the disturbance and froze. In the crystal clear water. A few feet from the bank’s edge. A ten-inch rainbow was swimming in purposeful half-circles with his lips occasionally breaking the surface.

He appeared to be eating something, but what was not clear. There were several flies buzzing under the tree limb, and there appeared to be some insects wiggling on the water’s surface. Entranced, the boy forgot about his “honey hole” as he lay there, eyes riveted on that rainbow.

That lake was one of several on Mount Tamalpais operated by the Marin County Water Company in Northern California. The boy’s father took him fishing there two or three times a season. On their next few trips to the lake, the boy would rush to the spot under those overhanging branches in hopes of witnessing the same scene, only to be disappointed.

The boy was me, and it was that moment, lying under the redwood tree, when the passion to become a fly fisherman was born. Of course, I didn’t realize it then, but there have been many times that I’ve reflected on that experience and the impact it had.

(Excerpted from the introduction, Page 29, of THE HUNT, Fly Fishing’s Greatest Adventures)