

Casting Homeward

with Steve Ramirez

D. Roger Maves: [00:00:00] Welcome to Ask About Fly Fishing Internet Radio, your source for learning more about fly fishing in cold water, warm water, and salt water. Hello, I'm Roger Maves, your host for tonight's show. On this broadcast, we'll be featuring Steve Ramirez, and he'll be answering your questions on Casting Homeward.

D. Roger Maves: This show will be 90 minutes in length, and we're broadcasting live over the internet. If you'd like to ask Steve a question, just go to our homepage at askaboutflyfishing.com and use the Q& A text box to send us your question. We'll receive your question immediately. We'll try to answer as many of them as possible on the show tonight.

D. Roger Maves: And while you're there, make sure you sign up to receive our announcements. So you don't miss out on any of our future broadcasts. Just fill out the form on the right side of our homepage, and we'll let you know when the next live show will be. This broadcast is being recorded and will be available for playback on our website about 48 hours after the show ends.

D. Roger Maves: You can also find it on any of the podcast sites like Apple podcasts, Google podcasts, Stitcher, wherever you listen to your podcasts. So if you have to leave early. You can return to our website or any of the podcast [00:01:00] platforms at your convenience and listen to the recording at any time. If you're out and about on Facebook, Instagram, or X, we'd sure appreciate it if you'd share our podcast.

D. Roger Maves: And when you do, use that hashtag, AskAboutFlyFishing and hashtag FlyFishing. In fact, if you have a moment, do it while you're listening to the show that would be wonderful. The content of this broadcast is copyrighted. It's the property of The Knowledge Group, Inc., doing business as AskAboutFlyFishing. When we return, we'll be talking with Steve Ramirez about Casting Homeward.

D. Roger Maves: Enrico Puglisi Flies pride themselves in creating unique and one of a kind flies and fly tying material. Enrico has been experimenting with durable, synthetic, and natural materials to create flies that catch fish for more than 30 years.

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D. Roger Maves: Before we introduce Steve, I'd like to let you know about the great uh, prizes we have to give away tonight. For our drawings tonight, we'll be giving away one year membership to Fly Fishers International and a one year membership to Trout Unlimited.

D. Roger Maves: Now, if you haven't registered yet for the drawing, you can do so now. Just go to our homepage at askaboutflyfishing.com. Look for the link under Steve's section that says register for a free drawing. Click on that link and fill out the form and we'll announce the winners at the end of the show. We'll also be giving away a copy of Steve's latest book, *Casting Homeward*, courtesy of Lyons Press.

D. Roger Maves: And here's how you can win. You must be the first person to answer the question we ask at the end of the show. The question will be about something that Steve and I have talked about during the show. And just submit your answer along with your name and location using that text box on the home page. So, it's the same text box that you use to, um, ask questions during the show.

D. Roger Maves: So, listen closely, [00:03:00] take notes, use your best typing skills, and maybe you'll be the proud owner of Steve's latest book, *Casting Homeward*.

D. Roger Maves: Our guest tonight is Steve Ramirez. Steve is an outdoor and conservation author who lives and writes in the Texas Hill Country. Steve's first book, *Casting Forward Fishing Tales from the Texas Hill Country*, has received critical acclaim as in its third hardcover printing.

D. Roger Maves: His work has appeared in various journals, including *Fly Fisherman Magazine*, *Trout Magazine*, *The FlyFish Journal*, *American Angler*, *Hallowed Waters Journal*, *Tail Magazine*, *Texas Sporting Journal*, *Explore Magazine*, *Under Wild Skies*, *Cutthroat: Journal of the Arts*, *The Houston Literary Review*, and many more.

D. Roger Maves: Steve serves as the ambassador for Texas for the American Museum of Fly Fishing. He's a life member of Trout Unlimited and is a contributing member of the Nature Conservancy, Audubon, and Native Fish Coalition. As a certified master naturalist, Steve is [00:04:00] passionately involved in promoting the restoration and conservation of the watersheds, rivers, canyons, forests, desert, wetlands, grasslands, and shorelines of North America and beyond.

D. Roger Maves: He's an avid hiker and world adventure traveler who has explored four continents, but who always seems to return home to the spring fed hill country streams of Texas. Steve lives in Elk Comfort, Texas.

D. Roger Maves: Steve, welcome back to Ask About Fly Fishing Internet Radio.

Steve Ramirez: Well, thank you. It's so great to be back. Thank you for inviting me. That was a lot to say about me. I have to get you a shorter bio .

D. Roger Maves: Shorter. Oh, it's good for the search engines up on the website, so, uh,

Steve Ramirez: Great.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, no, that's, uh, . Well, you know, you've done a lot of writing and, and, uh, your time, uh, in the journals and so forth, so a lot to cover there.

D. Roger Maves: But, uh, yeah, this is, um, the third time. We've had you on the show first time. I'm looking at a show on, uh, September 21st, 2022. [00:05:00] We talked about Casting Forward, Onward and Seaward, your first three books, and then we talked specifically about Casting Seaward in June of 2023. So folks, you can find both those shows on our archive. If you just put in Steve's name, you'll find them and enjoy those shows as well.

D. Roger Maves: But tonight we're going to talk with Steve about his latest book, which is Casting Homeward and his adventures out there while he had to do his homework before he wrote this book. And I feel so sorry for him. But so you can send your condolences in and we'll pass them on to Steve.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Okay. Hard work to do the research, right? And have great experiences.

Steve Ramirez: Absolutely. And if they can read the book and suffer with me, if I carry it, but no, I, every book that I do is, you know, thousands of miles of traveling, as I say, by plane, train, [00:06:00] automobile, boat, canoe, foot and horseback. So, um, and occasionally falling down. So, uh, there's, there's a lot.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, this is your fourth book in your casting series, and I got the impression that this might be the last book of the casting series?

Steve Ramirez: It is, it is, it's the completion, the full circle. So

D. Roger Maves: And tell us about the series.

Steve Ramirez: Okay, the series was intended to be a four book series, and each book stands alone on its own in one way, but each book also connects to the next.

Steve Ramirez: So the way I wrote these, the way I conceived them, is that. They would act like ponds, uh, like ripples in a pond, like you drop the stone into a pond and they ripple out until they hit the shore and then they bounce back. So Casting Forward, the first book is focused here in the Texas Hill Country. And its main focus beside, um, for anyone who hasn't read [00:07:00] any of my writing before either in the books or with my column in Fly Fisherman Magazine.

Steve Ramirez: Um,, I try to make sure that I'm taking people on an adventure with me. Something they're going to enjoy and get something out of as they read and they feel they're there with me. But I'm also doing something else. I'm putting in a lot about the nature of the place. And by that I mean everything from the ecology to the history, the geology.

Steve Ramirez: In all four books, I include both. Euro American and Indigenous American thought and how it relates to nature. So, Casting Forward was here in the Hill Country, and its biggest focus is on the healing power of nature, because I'm a former Marine with PTSD, and it's a whole lot about how fly fishing and nature can be so healing.

Steve Ramirez: That book ended up in the movie Mending the Line, starring Brian Cox. Which, um, if you haven't seen it, it's on Netflix, a beautiful [00:08:00] film. Then the next one, I went across the United States. This four book series is all within the United States, other than some time in the Caribbean. And I traveled across the United States with the goal of seeking out native fish in their

native waters and telling that story of how they reflect what we've done to the earth and where we're trying to save it. And with all of these, I am, I'm telling the story through the eyes of the people that live there and love those waters. So, uh, it's not just the place and the fish, it's the people.

Steve Ramirez: Casting Seaward, as you would guess, I decided I was going to go from Alaska all the way down the Pacific coast to California, in the Gulf of Mexico, out to the Caribbean, and then up the Florida coast all the way to Montauk, New York.

Steve Ramirez: And in that one, I am focused on, as you would guess, saltwater fish. But I also go after anadromous fish, such as salmon, and in Alaska I followed salmon from [00:09:00] the ocean all the way to the smallest tributaries in the Tongass Wilderness.

Steve Ramirez: And then now Casting Homeward and as you would hear from the name, we're going homeward. It begins in Texas, it ends in Texas, and in the middle, what I do is I travel from the furthest reaches of Alaska in the Bristol Bay area, and then go backwards in time, so to speak, from west to east, kind of retracing the expansion of Europeans across America through where Lewis and Clark went through the Rocky Mountains and working my way through the Rockies down into Texas, Oklahoma, and ending up right outside New York City in the Catskills, which many people call the birthplace of American fly fishing. So that's the four book series right there.

D. Roger Maves: Okay, great. Yeah. So you explained, yeah, the themes to each book, which is wonderful. And you did a lot of writing in journals, magazines, so forth [00:10:00] prior to your starting this, the casting series. Had you written any books before that or was this whole series kind of a new endeavor for you?

Steve Ramirez: Uh, these are my first books that I've written. So, uh, prior to this, I wrote short and published short fiction and poetry, but also essays and stories in magazines about the outdoors, not just fishing, but also hunting. Back when I was hunting, I don't really hunt anymore. And also other outdoor adventure activities around the world.

Steve Ramirez: So I would write those things. But those were all in magazines and literary journals. And this is my first set of four books, which has taken me about seven years to write.

D. Roger Maves: Now was most of your writing done after you got out of the Marines?

Steve Ramirez: Oh, yes, yes I've been other than all the journaling I did in the Marine Corps.

Steve Ramirez: Yes, so [00:11:00] Yes, but I've been writing since you know, people ask well, when did you start writing? Well, the truth is I started writing since I was a kid. I was writing

Steve Ramirez: stories back then. It's just something I have to do I have to write And in the Marine Corps, I have, I have the original journals of me at a post waiting to see if I was going to be blown up that day.

Steve Ramirez: And I have my, my original journals of exactly how I felt in the moment. So I've, I've always been writing.

D. Roger Maves: Will there ever be a book about your experiences in the Marine Corps?

Steve Ramirez: Probably not. Probably as close as we get to the United States. And never say never to anything, but the truth is, there's nothing,

Steve Ramirez: There's nothing special about me. It's just that I tried to translate the journeys I take so that other people get something out of it.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah. Okay. Just thought I'd ask.

Steve Ramirez: Well, some of it I can't, this sounds silly, but some of it I can't [00:12:00] write about. So my last three years with the top secret clearance overseas and you know, I don't really want to go through all that.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, I didn't know. My dad was in the Air Force, like we talked about before in the show, and he was an intelligence officer and, and, uh, my whole life. It's what does your dad do? Well, I don't know. He works in an office with no window.

Steve Ramirez: Right?

D. Roger Maves: I didn't really find out about some of the stuff, but he worked on until he was in his 60s. So, yeah, it was, uh

Steve Ramirez: I,

D. Roger Maves: yeah, pretty enlightening.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah, I, um, I didn't tell anybody. Well, the people that I, I hung out with when I was with Africa Corp were mostly intelligence officers. They were either, they either were civilian intelligence officers, like central intelligence officers, or they were military intelligence officers. So,

D. Roger Maves: Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: I know what you speak of when you ask your dad what he does and he says, I fish, I fix washing machines.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, I know. We didn't do that. [00:13:00] Yeah. Yeah. Well, um, what initially inspired you to go on this multi year, you know, quest of discovery, so to speak. I mean, that's my words, not yours. But, um, you know, with the 4 series and the 4 books in the casting series.

D. Roger Maves: What inspired you to get started on that?

Steve Ramirez: That's a great question. The short answer is suffering. So, um, I spent 35 years of my life in the Marine Corps and outside of the Marine Corps armed and dealing with the worst of humanity. I did everything from working in counterterrorism to undercover narcotics and weapons and many other things for every day of my life.

Steve Ramirez: I was armed and dealing with, we'll say, mean people. And, uh, I wasn't armed because I didn't have to, you know, I had to be. So, I went from getting through that 35 years and at the end of it, it would be pretty easy to feel [00:14:00] completely cynical about the world. On top of that, my PTSD got worse. So, casting forward came out of me simply trying to survive.

Steve Ramirez: And fly fishing, and being in nature and being with my daughter as well was the way I survived, because if you think about it, if someone is dealing with very severe PTSD and their job is to be armed every day, that's not a really good combination, if you're following me, because depression,

D. Roger Maves: Sure

Steve Ramirez: Those things come with it.

Steve Ramirez: So, after 35 years, It was time to say, I'm done. And I started fishing and writing. It just organically happened. And people have asked me about my writing style. So I've mentioned to you, I just started a fifth book and a new series with Lyons Press, because this series has ended. And we're going in a new direction now.

Steve Ramirez: And people have asked me, [00:15:00] well, how do you do that? Well, after I finish a book, I always have, I have these moments of like existential angst of what am I supposed to do now? And I just know that if you go stand in a river and don't worry about it and let the universe tell me what you're supposed to do next.

Steve Ramirez: So these things naturally came is the more I spent thinking about, what was keeping me alive and many of us, our fathers took us out fishing and taught us about nature and that was my case and that's what was keeping me going is my connection with nature and kind of the best people. So, the more I got out there, the more I saw how much nature was suffering.

Steve Ramirez: Not just me. And that's where casting onward came, because if you see the series, you're going to find out that the first book is very much an internal solitary journey. The next two, I am out with all these amazing people and it's very [00:16:00] nature oriented and very ecologically oriented. And then casting homeward, we're moving back into being what's life all about, sort of a deal.

Steve Ramirez: So full circle. And what I love is when I hear from readers that these books have really impacted their life in a positive way. And sometimes they're saying, you found ways to say what I've been wondering. So I felt compelled to write them. I hope it's not too long a wind of an answer, but I have felt compelled that I have to write. It's like I am on a mission. It's not my doing. I'm being told this is what you'll do next. I know it sounds very woo woo, but it's exactly what's happening. And when I sit down to write, it just comes.

D. Roger Maves: Okay, what do you hope readers will get out of your books

Steve Ramirez: A lot? First of all, I hope they enjoy them. I write for the readers and I repeat myself purposely in my books on certain things because I want them to stick in the people's head and my social media. I often [00:17:00] write to the people that follow me. I'll say. Writers need readers. I hear about authors that don't seem to value their readers the way I do. I can't imagine it. So I'm

writing for them. I want them to have fun and I want them to enjoy it. I want them to feel like they're there with me. I want to open up worlds to them that they may not see themselves.

Steve Ramirez: That's the first level. Have fun. The second part is I'm hoping that they learn to love these places because we One thing I've learned everywhere I've traveled, four different continents, 21 countries, is we only save what we love and we only love what we know.

Steve Ramirez: So I want to bring people, I want them to start caring about Alaska even if they've never been there. I want them to care about the Amazon even if they've never been there. And so I do that by, without beating anyone over the head, we're going down the river and we're learning together about what's going on there. And the next thing I'm hoping people get out of it, and this is very subjective, this [00:18:00] is my subjective opinion, I feel like we're getting to become a more lonely, distant, and angry world.

Steve Ramirez: And I spent 35 years dealing with really bad folks. I say that in a very flippant way, but you know what I mean. I dealt with the worst of humanity. And now I'm writing about what if we chose to be the best of humanity. And I do that by surrounding myself with great people that I get to go fishing with.

Steve Ramirez: And I very rarely meet a fly angler who isn't a pretty awesome person. We just seem to draw a good tribe, in general. So those three things, I hope they come out with more knowledge, but more than knowledge, kind of a feel that they want to do something about it. I hope they come out of it a feeling they've, they connected with the stories, and I hope they come out of it feeling more hopeful and empowered, because it's so easy now, I think, for us to look at the [00:19:00] news, to be on the internet, and to think, oh wow, the world just seems hopeless, and it's not.

Steve Ramirez: So those are what I think people should get out of it, I hope.

D. Roger Maves: Sounds good. It sounds good. Let me take a quick break here. We'll come back and continue talking with Steve Ramirez about his books, the, uh, the Casting Series, so hang tight folks. I'll be right back.

D. Roger Maves: The Ugly Bug Fly Shop in Casper, Wyoming has been serving fly fishers in Wyoming and around the world since 1983.

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D. Roger Maves: You're listening to Ask About Fly Fishing Internet Radio, and we're talking with Steve Ramirez about [Casting Homeward](#). If you'd like to ask Steve a question, go to our homepage at askaboutflyfishing.com and fill out that form, and we'll see if we can get your question answered tonight on the show.

D. Roger Maves: Okay, um, Steve, the, we did get a couple of questions in here on the internet. Mark in Connecticut wrote in and he said, Your way with words imbues your books with descriptions

that have so much clarity, it's as if the reader is looking over your shoulder at the scenes you describe.

D. Roger Maves: My question is, what authors and works have influenced your writing?

Steve Ramirez: Wow, Mark, that's a great question. Um, and I don't know if they've influenced my writing, influenced my thinking maybe. So in my younger years, I read. Like a lot of young men, I read Ernest Hemingway as much as I could. I've also read other things, Steinbeck and [00:21:00] Jack London and Russell Annabelle and all the outdoor writers.

Steve Ramirez: And I started to decide which ones I really got something out of and enjoyed and which ones I didn't, which were great storytellers. Another one, Peter Hathaway Capstick is a hunting writer. He's gone now, but he's a great storyteller. And But I read really widely. I'm usually reading two or three books at a time.

Steve Ramirez: And so other books that didn't teach me anything about writing, but a lot about life, it would be things like Sapiens by Yuval Bahrari, and um, Raiding Sweetgrass. I mean, so many books that I read. To put it in perspective, about a year ago, I donated four pickup truckloads of books to our public library here in Texas, , um,

D. Roger Maves: That sounds like a, something I should be doing.

Steve Ramirez: So I [00:22:00] donated them and friend Bob White had said to me, I wanna see the ones that you kept. And yeah, there's a, is a very small amount that I've kept that are permanently part of my collection until I'm not here anymore. And I took a picture of it and sent it to Bob. So I would say. When I was looking at the way people write, it's either non fiction storytellers like Kapstik or it's looking at fiction storytellers like Hemingway.

Steve Ramirez: And I really enjoy not only reading, but I'll also say, um, I'm going to draw a blank. He, um, he wrote, um, No Country for Old Men and, and various other books. He's a Texan, too, and I'm drawing the blank. Great, great writer. But anyhow, when I read them, I'm also paying attention to how are they crafting it. So, when I write these stories, I think Hemingway is the one that said that, uh, books aren't written, they're edited.

Steve Ramirez: And he meant himself, and that's what I do. [00:23:00] I edit myself quite a bit. I write very raw. I put it out there, I don't stop myself, and then I go back and I reread.

Steve Ramirez: When I read a book, and I think this is truly good writing, then I pay attention to what are they doing. Where's the alchemy here? Because to me, stories are powerful.

Steve Ramirez: Stories are what Move whole civilizations and I guess a little bit, I'm hoping to move things and notch myself away. So that's what I pay attention to. I don't know if I've done a really good job of answering this question, but when you read so many books, it'd be hard for me to nail it down.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Uh, I can tell right away if I'm reading something, I'm going to keep going with it or not very, and it's not always the ones that are the classics. I won't say the names of some of them, but there's some in our genre of literature that are great classics, and they may have sold many more copies than I ever will.

Steve Ramirez: But I start reading them and I think I can't take this. So, [00:24:00] yeah, so that's,

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah. I always love a book where, you know, um, because I tend to read nonfiction in the morning and then fiction at night, you know, before going to bed.

Steve Ramirez: Great Plan.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, and it's always like, God, I hate to put this down. I mean, you know, I mean, I have to wait till tomorrow night to continue, you know, then you know, you're in a good book, you know,

Steve Ramirez: I agree.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Oh, I was thinking of Cormac McCarthy and, um, you know, like if you've read The Road, that is a book that you turn the page and you turn the page and you turn the page. Now, I don't think all books have to be that, because I actually am a slow reader usually because I read with a highlighter and an ink pen with me.

Steve Ramirez: And the books that I've kept, whoever gets them after I'm not here anymore are going to find all my little notes in the corners of what it made me think of and what my ideas were about it. So [00:25:00] yeah, I tear books apart very carefully and very respectfully and that's what I do as a kid for Hemingway..

D. Roger Maves: Hemingway, yeah. Rory, uh, Fukushima in, uh, California asks, when and where did you start fly fishing and what is your favorite place to fly fish and what would be the target species?

D. Roger Maves: Sam Johnson basically asked the same question. So I'd like to hit both of those.

Steve Ramirez: Okay. Well, the first part of that's really easy and the second part's near impossible. So, um, the first part of where did I start fly fishing? I am a self taught fly angler. And I learned right here in Texas by picking up a rod, getting a VHS of Mel Krieger so I could learn the basic stroke and trying to teach myself.

Steve Ramirez: When I wrote Casting 4, the only person I had ever fished with in my life beside my father as a kid, and he fished with a spinning rod, [00:26:00] was my daughter. And I taught her to cast. Based on what I knew. So, here I was, well into my life, and I had never fished with anyone other than myself. So, with that, you get the amount of skill that you can teach yourself, which is to say, not much.

Steve Ramirez: And, uh, after that, I started fishing with all these wonderful people that I met along the way for the other books. And so, hopefully, my skill level has been going up with surrounding myself with really talented people.

Steve Ramirez: Now, the next thing I think they both asked was, what is your favorite place to fish? And what is your favorite target species? And that is much more difficult for me to say. So, I'll try to answer it. I don't know that I can say there's one place is my favorite place to fish. I can tell you the places I'd like to go back to again and again, that would help. I love fishing off Montauk, New York and Long Island with my buddy David [00:27:00] Blanken.

Steve Ramirez: And I would do it every time he ever invites me. So, it's that. That's a place I love. I love fishing for Corbina off the coast of L. A. On the beach right there. I absolutely adore fishing in the Bristol Bay area of Alaska. And all these places are very, very different. I love chasing bonefish in the Caribbean.

Steve Ramirez: And I just came back from fishing with my buddy Gary Blua down in the Caribbean. Baha in La Ventana,

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: And I am forever hooked on that part of the pun, and if anybody ever wants to go do that, you should definitely do it. I guess I'll add one more in there, I was just down in Campeche, my buddy, Raul with the tarp in town and we I have a blast down there that place is just that I'll go there every time They let me go.

Steve Ramirez: So with that said these are all my favorite places I've been and you notice there's another [00:28:00] little freshwater trout waters mentioned in there I guess my favorite place I've ever fished gosh, it's so hard in Casting Homeward I, um, went down the Snake River with the guy up there, Boots Allen, a friend, a good friend of my, uh, my dear friends, uh, Randall and Mary Kaufman, and Mary and I went down the Snake, and I have to say, That, that was just glorious.

Steve Ramirez: I mean, I would do that if I didn't get to fish.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, that's a beautiful river. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah, that's, it's just, it's fantastic. What else I loved about it is it's native. I'm not catching, I'm sorry for people like my friend Kurt Dieter and me love brown trout, and I like them too when I catch, if I catch them in Scotland.

Steve Ramirez: But I love catching native, gorgeous Snake River cutthroats on the Snake River.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yep.

Steve Ramirez: So it's really hard for me to nail that down, I guess when [00:29:00] someone says, well, okay, you've gotta pick a fish in a place. Okay, here you go. My state fish, the Guadalupe Bass, found only here in our crystal clear spring fed rivers in the Texas Hill country, if I have to pick one.

D. Roger Maves: There you go. Okay.

Steve Ramirez: So that was your long, I hope they're happy.

D. Roger Maves: Really? Yeah. I hope so too. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Don't ask a guy that's fished all over the place.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, it's, you know, I know it's a tough question to ask because each experience and each fish, you know, for me, there's different parts that I love.

Steve Ramirez: Right, and it's not just about the fish for me or the fishing.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, it's like hooking up with a big tarpon is wonderful, but the fight isn't so much fun, you know, that's because it can be long and drawn out and then, but baby tarpon in Campeche Can you get the same kind of action, but the fight isn't so long. So you get to do it again sooner. So yeah, it's um, [00:30:00] each fish has their own little thing that they give back to you.

D. Roger Maves: And just some of them, it's the chase. Some of them, it's the fight. Some of them, it's where you have to go to get them. And you know, yeah, it's. And each one has its own beauty.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah, and for me anyway, it's about much more than the fish and the fishing. It's the whole, the whole enchilada, I'm saying because I just came back from Mexico.

Steve Ramirez: It's the food, it's the music, it's the friends, it's the experience of the whole thing. If all I was doing was trying to catch big fish, you know, well I guess I could do that in the canal outside Phoenix, but I don't know that I want to.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, I know what you're saying when we, I went to Campeche and fish with Enrico Puglisi down there and stayed at his little, little lodge, which is wonderful.

D. Roger Maves: And he cooked us a meal that night, went and got some fresh octopus, because octopus is a thing, you know, in Campeche and, uh. Yeah, it's a big shrimp and we grilled [00:31:00] them and he cooked the octopus and yeah, we had a wonderful dinner and that was you know Oh, what a great way to end the day, but yeah, I hear you. Totally. Yeah.

D. Roger Maves: In casting homeward you wrote several chapters about Alaska.

Steve Ramirez: Right.

D. Roger Maves: And I You were, from what you were saying just a few minutes ago, uh, because I was going to ask you the first time, but you've been there before, so I'm going to ask you, what drew you back there again?

Steve Ramirez: Well, I'll tell you, when I came up with the concept that I was going to do Casting Homeward as the final book of that series, and that's what it was going to be focused on, Homeward, what is the place we call home, how do we define it?

Steve Ramirez: I was talking with my dear buddy, Bob White, who does, I'm so grateful, does the artwork for my books. He does them for John Geerak, and he's just an amazing artist and a great person. And we were just having a chat, and I said, What is the home waters of [00:32:00] your heart? The place if you that was where you're going and I truly thought he was going to say something like the St. Croix River, which he lives quite close to or the flambeau and and I've fished all those with him and they're gorgeous but he didn't he said the Wood River drainage of Bristol Bay and then he said and the River Malo region of Argentina.

Steve Ramirez: And I asked him why and he said well we talked about Bristol Bay and he said well I've I've been guiding there since I was a young guy, and it's where I, you know, learned everything. It's where I met my wife. It's where, it's just, I had all these memories of this place.

Steve Ramirez: And we ended up going there. And I said, well, I'd like to see that. So we ended up going up there. So the first part was, it was important to my dear friend. The second thing that drew me up there is, I'm basically also an environmental writer.

Steve Ramirez: I'm not just writing fishing stories. And I wanted to write [00:33:00] the story about Bristol Bay, because Bristol Bay is, I believe, a truly important fight for all of us to pull behind and, and save and this is the interesting thing about it, so many places where TU or others are working, they're working to repair the damage we've already created.

Steve Ramirez: Uh, it's already been heavily decimated in many ways, but Bristol Bay is still largely, I mean, every part of the world has been touched by humanity, but Bristol Bay still is largely intact. But that could end, So I wanted to get up there and see it and experience it for myself, and I did. And I have to say that for those people who haven't been up there, and everybody has a different experience, they may say, oh, the fishing was great, and that's all they thought about it. But for me, I'm grasping everything. I'm learning from the indigenous people there. I'm enjoying the food, the wildlife, the flying.

Steve Ramirez: I love being in a float plane and landing on some distant place. And [00:34:00] so, that's why I went up there, to have that entire experience, and then to try to translate that into words, so that when people read those five chapters, they feel like they're there with me.

Steve Ramirez: So that's what drew me up there. It's always the people, the place, the story. That's what drew me up there.

D. Roger Maves: Had you been to Bristol Bay before, or were you in a different part of Alaska?

Steve Ramirez: No. In Casting Seaward, I decided I wanted to hit Southeast Alaska. So now I've been to two main areas of Alaska. I would like to go again to a different area, but in Casting Seaward, that's where I followed salmon all the way up to the tiniest tributaries with a friend and Trout Unlimited biologist, Mark Hieronymus.

Steve Ramirez: And so, yes, I've seen two different visions of Alaska, and there's many more than that I know, but I've been able to see both places and see. What's going on there and why these [00:35:00] places are many people listening here have been to Alaska and many haven't but I have to say if it doesn't change your life and your views in some way about how beautiful things can be and how wild things can be and how much it matters.

Steve Ramirez: It should if it doesn't do that for you, then you're probably half dead inside.

D. Roger Maves: Let's uh, let me take it. Go ahead.

Steve Ramirez: That it's pretty amazing place.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, um, let me take a quick break. We'll come back to Alaska here and talk more about that beautiful place.

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D. Roger Maves: Let's see here. So, yeah. What was your experience in Bristol Bay? What did you do there? You know, what did you fish for?[00:37:00]

Steve Ramirez: Well, I fished pretty far and wide. I was pretty fortunate. So I got to fish for multiple species of salmon from King Salmon to. You know, coho, and we fished for all the species of salmon that were going through there, also for, for big rainbows, and, and Dolly Varden, which I love fishing for, and some Arctic char, and then the one I really wanted to get the most when I was there, which was Arctic grayling, and so we got to do all of that in different parts.

Steve Ramirez: I fished from the center of the, uh, Wood River drainage on the Alaguac. And then all the way out to the western shores, um, way out in the, in the very far out on the west side and then all the way down to where there's Walrus Island and up on the rainbow and then ultimately on the no, the wrong turn river.

Steve Ramirez: I think it is. Yeah, wrong turn river. So just the whole area plus doing some fly outs and landing on [00:38:00] lakes in the middle of. Paradise.

D. Roger Maves: Did you stay in one place and fish, I mean, fly out from that one lodge or something?

Steve Ramirez: Did both. We, I did fishing from the lodge, which was Bristol Bay Lodge, which I totally loved.

Steve Ramirez: And we fished a gulawak from there. So you're going out on a boat and then we also flew out to the further out. Outrivers and stayed in tent camps, very nice tent camps, and sometimes we did hops where you just fly out, land on the lake, do your fishing, fly back, and I've already told you that I'm addicted to flying and float planes.

D. Roger Maves: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Steve Ramirez: And if I,

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, when we,

Steve Ramirez: I mean, people say, aren't you afraid of dying? I said, well, if I die, I'll die happy. I mean.

D. Roger Maves: You know, when we, um, when we flew out there, we went to the Togiak river in Bristol Bay and, uh, flew out on a Widgeon. I don't know if you know what a widgeon is, but it's a, it's a [00:39:00] plane that lands in the water. Okay. So it's got kind of a belly of a fish almost. And then, uh, then the wheels come out and, uh, and then it'll pull up on a gravel bar. So it's kind of an amphibious plane, but I remember getting, we took off and, um, uh, Dillingham and it was pouring rain and the crab, as soon as his wheels left the ground, we had a crab position taking off in this storm.

D. Roger Maves: And then later, he just takes the sunglasses off, puts them on the dashboard and he's flying between mountains. And we're looking at moose down below, you know, and it's like, this guy did it so casually, you know, it was like, oh, it's just, you know, driving over the, uh. The grocery store or something, you know, it's like, yeah, they are amazing.

D. Roger Maves: Those pilots. I'm totally impressed with them.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah, I, I became pretty tight with some of the pilots and one in particular in one point, he said to me, so do you want to fly the plane? And I said, yeah, and then we saw other clients. The other clients in the back had [00:40:00] to look on their face. He said, maybe we'll try to do it other time. That was ready.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah,

Steve Ramirez: We were in to have one beavers, which, uh,

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, that's the gold standard up there. You know,

Steve Ramirez: Oh, yeah, that's just

D. Roger Maves: Amazing, yeah,

Steve Ramirez: I would do it just to fly around and those things that fishing

D. Roger Maves: Was there a particular species that impressed you?

Steve Ramirez: I would say, well, 1st of all, there. They're all great. I'm not going to schedule this. I'm going to tell you the fish that I wanted to catch the most and I mentioned it was Arctic grayling and I was not disappointed. It was the first fish I wanted to go after. It's the first one I caught. It was the last fish I wanted to go after and the last one I caught and, uh, and on the, uh, On the wrong turn river, I caught a good size grayling that the guide said was the grayling of a lifetime.

Steve Ramirez: Now, I know this can be guide talk.

Steve Ramirez: So I took it in stride. Like having a date and her saying you're the [00:41:00] best looking man I've ever seen. I'm not gonna take that seriously. So, um, But I would say I loved catching grayling the most. It's just something I've always wanted to do there. Now impressed me. I caught a, um, accidentally caught a, a chum salmon, which nobody gives any respect to.

Steve Ramirez: And I do. I think they're quite beautiful and doesn't matter to me how they are to eat. And I was trying not to catch salmon actually on this river because they were spawning, the chums were spawning. So I'm trying to miss them. I'm, I'm going for the Dolly Varden and for the rainbows that are trying to pick off the eggs coming out of the, out of the nest.

Steve Ramirez: And this, uh, Female chum, this hen comes, big one, comes flying out and grabs a hold of the fly anyway. I'm trying to get it away from me. And that one impressed me. And I'll just tell you really quick the story because it ran me down. I had to get [00:42:00] out of the boat. We couldn't keep up with it. It ran me down the river, down a gravel bar covered in bear scat.

Steve Ramirez: And it was, It was a battle and when I finally landed her, I walked her all the way back up the river so I could put her back in her red, make sure she was fully recovered and just walked her all the way up. I talked to her. So, yeah, she left the lasting impression on me because this is a fish that was at the end of her life, but still had that fight.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: Hope that's a good answer for you. That one fish I'll never forget..

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. You know, it's funny because when we went to Bristol Bay. The Coho's silvers were late coming in and we caught a ton of chum salmon and they were a blast. I mean, they weren't on their reds or anything, but they were fresh out of the sea. And yeah, I didn't even know what a chum salmon was at that point. You know, it was all new to me and, and I was totally impressed by them. They're fun to catch. Yeah. [00:43:00] So,

Steve Ramirez: Oh, I absolutely love them. They, they fought in so many different ways. And, um, And that fish wore me out. And so I thought the best thing I can do is get her back home. And I did. I walked her all the way up.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. How did, you know, did fishing in Alaska change how you think and feel about the natural world or how you think about fishing?

Steve Ramirez: I don't think it changed me. It kept expanding where I've been going anyway. So my ideas about fishing and about our interaction with nature has been growing. I say now that I'm a 63 year old 6 year old, because I think the older I get, the more childlike I'm becoming, the more I'm in awe with nature.

Steve Ramirez: And, um, Alaska is a big awe. So, I think it expanded even more, because even though I was way out there, I could definitely see the impact on nature, where they were having flooding like they've never had before, where I'm [00:44:00] fishing in the treetops of the willows to catch grayling, and on what's supposed to be a grayling island, but there's no island left anymore.

Steve Ramirez: Um, so, um, It didn't change me, it made me feel more urgent that we need to, if we truly love nature and we truly love our rivers and we truly love our fish, we better start doing something about it and paying attention and waking up. But, yeah, I guess the only other way it is changing is it's so good to look down from a plane or to hike across a river and see how much space there still is left in America.

Steve Ramirez: In these places, and for me, that makes me feel good. Even if I don't get there very much. I want to know wilderness is there. I don't want it covered in roads.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. So the thing with me in Alaska, I'm going to throw a little water on your fire here, but, um, because, like, we talked about before the [00:45:00] show, as I grew up there in Anchorage is, and this is just the thing we could just talk about this general standpoint of too many people. Not enough resources and I've seen that in Alaska. I've seen that in Colorado where I live now Yeah, and

Steve Ramirez: Texas

D. Roger Maves: You say there's a lot of wild open space, but it's shrinking I was talking to Will Blair, Will Blair is um a guide who was for years running trips to Kamchatka, you know, and

Steve Ramirez: Right

D. Roger Maves: And so he's been in Alaska. He's guided in Alaska and we were just talking about a couple of rivers. He went up there to fish and was really pretty disappointed because in the old days, you know, fishing was so much better.

Steve Ramirez: Of course, everywhere.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. And so it's still a place. Someone should go as soon as possible because, uh, more and more people like when we, when we went there, we drove up that dirt Alcan [00:46:00] highway.

D. Roger Maves: Right.

D. Roger Maves: And now it's paved. And now there are caravans of RVs going up there and places my dad and I used to have the whole river to ourselves are now shoulder to shoulder. You know, these are places outside of Anchorage. I'm talking about, but you pretty much have to fly in to go to be alone anymore. So,

Steve Ramirez: Sure.

D. Roger Maves: You know, it's kind of my thought on it.

Steve Ramirez: You're not throwing any water there because I agree with you when I made it about, uh, Oh, so remember, I lived in Africa too, and I have, everywhere I've gone, I have not found a place that isn't shrinking and isn't in trouble. When I was in Southeast Alaska, what I saw was that those glaciers are vanishing fast.

Steve Ramirez: And the mining companies love it, by the way, because every time the ice slides back, they can make a new claim. So. And I was in Peru, and I'm in the middle of the Andes in Peru, and the guide I'm with is saying when I was a boy, all these [00:47:00] mountains were covered in snow, and there was no snow on any of those mountains around us, none.

Steve Ramirez: There were no glaciers, none. This is the Andes. We went up to 15, 000 feet on a 21, 000 foot, uh, or 20, 000 foot. I'm trying to remember how high Salcantay Mountain is. It's pretty high. So, wherever I've gone, including Alaska, I've seen that impact, and I'm always stuck with, and somebody got very upset with me once when I was sharing this, I'm always stuck with looking at a place and saying, I wish I could see it before we all got here.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: I don't mean, I don't mean that would be something I'd want to live there and die in that because we do need each other, but there's too many of us. We have 8 billion humans on earth. It's too many. So yeah, too many people. I'm with you on that. And

D. Roger Maves: Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: And I want us to, when I write about this, People will notice I don't say I caught it.

Steve Ramirez: I say I caught [00:48:00] him or her. I'm trying to get more anglers to pay attention that these things are alive and the rivers are alive. So here in the Texas Hill Country, for example, last year and the year before were the first times I know of in history that's been recorded where whole sections of the Guadalupe River went dry to the stone and everything died.

D. Roger Maves: Oh boy.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah. The desert is moving east. I know every corner of this land here and I've seen the change. I've seen the plants changing. I've seen the wildlife changing. It's happening fast. So you haven't thrown any cold water. That's why I mentioned Bristol Bay is about as good as we're going to get on the places we're talking about. Because southeast Alaska was very much scarred up in many ways. Uh, with logging grounds and other things. Um, so, and that's why you'll hear me even move away from the word resource. [00:49:00] And I studied natural resources, so, since college. So, because I want us to say, hey, that's a forest. And, and the thing with salmon, salmon need bears and bears need salmon.

Steve Ramirez: And salmon need clean water and they need, The right amount of water.

D. Roger Maves: I did a, um, I, I did a show with Bill Horne. Uh, I don't know if you've met or talked to Bill Horne yet, but I did a show called Bristol, Bristol Bay Sockeye Salmon and Rainbow Trout. You might want to listen to that because he's talking about the importance of the sockeye to that whole ecosystem.

D. Roger Maves: And how, you know, that's what the rainbow trout are all about is the sockeye, but sockeye are not a um, not a sport fish per se. They are vegetarians and they're kind of hard.

Steve Ramirez: You can catch them, but they're not.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: And most of the ones I saw,

D. Roger Maves: They're not like the other ones,

Steve Ramirez: Right?

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. We're turning color already and that kind of thing. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: But those sockeye, and [00:50:00] that's the largest sockeye population in the world to my understanding,

D. Roger Maves: Right? Right.

Steve Ramirez: And the difference also I see in Bristol Bay is unlike places like Southeast Alaska and most of the lower 48, it is not as impacted on by hatchery fish.

D. Roger Maves: No,

Steve Ramirez: If you go to South, if you go to Southeast Alaska, a big part of the population being counted of salmon are actually hatchery fish.

Steve Ramirez: So you can't get a fix on how healthy the ecosystem is and the wild fish are. And I, these are the things I write about without beating people over the head of. I want them to travel

with me and see how much, these places are beautiful and the people are wonderful and there's so much to be happy about, but there's also a lot for us to do and there's too many of us.

Steve Ramirez: You're right.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. You also wrote about Montana and in Casting Homeward. What did you discover there? What unique experience did you have there? Because again, Montana is probably 1 of the most visited states [00:51:00] in the lower 48 for fishing. So, yeah.

Steve Ramirez: So, um, when I got out of the Marine Corps, I went to the University of Montana for one year.

Steve Ramirez: And so I lived there a long, long time ago. This was 40 years ago. So I got to see, This is the first time I've been back to Montana since 40 years ago, and it's beautiful. The rivers are beautiful. I wish more of them were native fish and not just catching rainbows and brown trout, but they are what they are.

Steve Ramirez: But what I saw in Montana is kind of what we've been talking about. I don't want to be a downer, but there's a lot going on there. Some of it's because of how many of us are fishing it. Some of it is because how many of us are moving to these places. And some of it is most definitely related to the change in the climate, in my opinion.

Steve Ramirez: And so if you look at like the, um, the Bighorn River, Everywhere I've traveled, people say you can go anywhere, you can go to the [00:52:00] Amazon and people say the fishing was so much better 20 years ago or 40 years ago. And of course it was, the common denominator is us and how many of us are doing it. So as anglers, when I'm fishing here in the Texas hill country, I've actually gone fishing when, I won't fish when I know the fish are going to be stressed from the heat, I don't go at all.

Steve Ramirez: I have actually fished with no hook on my fly. And. I don't go when they're stressed. So I'm taking care of the thing that I say I love. And that's why I keep writing, you know, every angler a naturalist. If we pay attention, I'm not just So every time we catch a fish, what we're actually showing is we've learned something about that fish. We learned about its habitat, what it feeds on. We've learned about the currents. We learned how to read a river.

Steve Ramirez: Those are all beautiful things that fly fishing does for you. But if the only reason you're doing it is to see if you can catch a bigger fish than your buddy, you haven't gone very deep.

Steve Ramirez: There's so much more. So I loved my time in Montana and I got, I was drawn there again by the people. I was there with my friend, Sue Kerber [00:53:00] and her partner, Josh. And the other reason I was drawn there back there is because, as I mentioned, my first book Casting Forward was in the movie, Mending the Line.

Steve Ramirez: And I wanted to fish the exact rivers that are in the movie. So I did in Paradise Valley. And, um, it was gorgeous, loved it. Loved every bit of it, but I definitely could tell the difference from when I lived there 40 years ago.

D. Roger Maves: Oh, sure. Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: I can see it's gotten hammered and I can see that we're going to have to have more and more rivers going like the Smith is where not everybody can go there all the time. You have to wait your turn.

D. Roger Maves: Well, that's that's, you know, you, you brought up the things that have affected fishing, you know, including us and so forth. But 1 of the things that's a big factor, I think, in Montana and in the Rockies, Wyoming, Colorado is private land. So you have these people buying up huge ranches and the access is limited, so [00:54:00] then that funnels all of us down into more limited areas, you know, because we can't fish these private areas.

D. Roger Maves: And, you know, the water rights where you can't put your foot on the bottom of the river, you know, restricts even more. So, yeah, it's kind of a pet peeve of mine. It's like, you know, it's getting more pay to play as every year passes and, and it's not cheap. It's not cheap.

Steve Ramirez: No, and I don't think we should have. Nature in any way, including fly fishing, be something only for the wealthy. I get to go on some trips that I could never afford because someone invited me. So, I'm lucky that way, but I don't, um, Another friend of mine, Richard Louvre, wrote the book, Last Child in the Woods, and he actually, people pay attention, a lot of anglers won't know who Richard is, they should find out who he is.

Steve Ramirez: I'm grateful that he wrote the foreword for Casting Homeward. And in his book, Last Child In The Woods, he's talking about nature deficit disorder, he calls it, how much more and more people are being pushed out of [00:55:00] nature. So we have this real problem where there's too many of us and yet as we stop connecting, we lose interest and we think pavement's okay.

Steve Ramirez: So I think we're going to have to find that balance. That's why I mentioned the Smith River and there's other places I would like to see more control down here on the Devils River. We need to protect these places and even if sometimes what we're doing is saying I'm not going to go, go there and as often.

Steve Ramirez: So, um, yeah, I'm with you access is important, but the other side to that is I'm huge. I think I hear you saying public land, public land, and I want more public land, not less public land. I live in a state that has almost no public land. Everything's a big ranch. And in casting, in Casting Forward, I wrote that what I want to see is for people who have the money and the government to get in here as these ranchers are selling off to developers [00:56:00] and buy this land, put it out.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, like the nature conservancy and, you know,

Steve Ramirez: Right. And I, that's why I'm a big supporter of nature conservancy. And I put it in every book I have, um, because they're, they're doing the only way you do it by the land. And now you can't have it. You cannot put the condos there. No. You cannot drain it. Now, we still have to protect the water because some people are buying land just so they can sink a well and drain that water.

Steve Ramirez: So, in Texas, we have water rights in Texas that are from 1909. That needs to change. It basically says as much water as you can suck out of the ground from your property is you can have.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, the other thing is, you know, you talk about public lands, even some of the public lands we have aren't accessible to us.

D. Roger Maves: For instance, the Grand Canyon or many of the wild rivers and Utah and Colorado where less than 10 percent of the permits to, you know, do whitewater trips through those areas. are for the public. The rest is commercial. [00:57:00] So you can go on a commercial trip tomorrow, but you got to wait 12 years or be in a lottery to get on one of these rivers, you know, on your own.

Steve Ramirez: It's tough.

D. Roger Maves: That's yeah. And that's public land. That's public land, but it's controlled by commercial outfitters and nothing against commercial outfitters. But you know, when you as a private individual can only access that 10 percent of the time and have to wait 12 years. That's not fair either. So yeah, well in my mind

Steve Ramirez: The world work we have with a billion people is at some point something's gonna have to give we're not going to have access to everything We always want when we want it.

Steve Ramirez: But with that said I totally hear you. I totally hear you I wish we would like to see us anglers take the lead in this in many ways we have, but we can keep going more and I know you're going to move me east through the book so we can do that. As we move east from Montana and Alaska, you're going to see that the things you're talking about become even more.

Steve Ramirez: And that's why I do these books this [00:58:00] way. There's a story and a story and a story and at the end people, ah, that's what I want. Okay,

D. Roger Maves: Let's take a quick break and then come back and talk about the East Coast here. Yeah, exactly where I was going next. So hang tight and we'll be right back.

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D. Roger Maves: You're listening and ask about fly fishing internet radio, we're talking with Steve Ramirez about Casting Homeward, you'd like to ask Steve a question. Fill out that form on the homepage and uh, we'll see if we can get it answered for you.

D. Roger Maves: Okay, Steve. Let me just check here.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, it just struck me as I was doing, as I was doing that commercial break there was, all these, I've been doing these shows since 2006. We talked about a lot of these things. I hope somebody, uh, 50 years from now will listen and go, look at what those guys, those old guys talked about back then, you know, and I wonder what they'll be facing.

D. Roger Maves: At that point in [01:00:00] time, you know.

Steve Ramirez: That's a great comment. And I have to say, I'm going to say something that's my subjective opinion, which everybody has one is if we don't act right now, and I think it's almost too late. If we don't start acting right now on many, many levels, what they'll be saying is, do you remember when they used to fish?

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Do you remember we're talking about how the Big Hole River used to be so much better in Alaska used to be so much better. And, you know, the Penns Creek used to be so much better, but what we really need to understand is they could end up being nothing. They could be end up being devoid of fish in 50 years. I won't be here for it.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: But these places could very much. You know, there's, that's why. I have used quotes from The Road, the book The Road, for anybody who's read it, because it talks about the almost, well, an apocalyptic point of view, and we're not [01:01:00] far. Um, things fall apart quickly, and that's why I, one of the things I repeat in all my books is everything's connected to everything.

Steve Ramirez: And whether we're talking about people, whether we're talking about ecosystems. So casting seaweed, I'll say this really quick, because I know we don't have that much time. I went into the whole life style of what people call a sand crab or a sand flea. It depends on where you're at, which, but they call them and how, if that, if that one creature collapses, which it could very well do, because they're starting to show up with heavy metals in them.

Steve Ramirez: Whole list of creatures and fish and wildlife collapse with it. So yeah, I think you, that's a great comment. Hopefully we're speaking now and it actually causes us to do something together rather than saying, well, I hope somebody does something. Well, that should be us, anglers have a lot of, we have a lot we can do.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. It's, uh,

Steve Ramirez: Moving east,

D. Roger Maves: It's, [01:02:00] it's gonna be like, I remember when grandpa used to fish and he took me a few times. You know, it's like,

Steve Ramirez: Right.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. So you did go out east, you went to the Catskills. Spent a few of my high school years there in the Catskills, and it's considered the birthplace of American fly fishing.

D. Roger Maves: What were your thoughts fishing there? I'm, I don't think I need to ask. Well, let me ask you, why did you go there? I can guess, but let me hear it from your, your mouth.

Steve Ramirez: Well, as you know, I went through, uh, Pennsylvania and then up through there, and I was kind of following the history of classic fly fishing.

Steve Ramirez: I purposely put this as America's legendary rivers. It's more tongue in cheek than anything. So yes, I'm going to some legendary rivers, but I'm also asking the question, why do we call this one legendary? And you'll see that I went to some creeks and rivers that would people say, well, why that's legendary?

Steve Ramirez: Well, it's because this was Dave Wintlock's favorite place to fish. That makes it legendary. So, so, um, [01:03:00] what brought me to Catskills is a couple of things. One is there's always a person involved. So I was fishing with my friend, Josh Caldwell, who's the director of the movie, Mending the Line. And that's where he lives and that's his home area.

Steve Ramirez: And so a person brought me there in each case and a story brought me there. I wanted to fish in this beautiful, uh, I'll say wild place, but we all know that everything's been a bit domesticated by us. And it's right outside New York City and provides most of the water for you in New York City. I wanted to kind of end on that note, sort of, you know I end up in Texas.

Steve Ramirez: But I wanted to end on that note of this, this place that is still quite beautiful. Where, history shows how long ago people started using a fly to catch trout. Back then they were catching mostly native trout, and now you're mostly going to be catching brown trout and, [01:04:00] and rainbows, though I did catch rookies there.

Steve Ramirez: I wanted to go into that history. I wanted to delve into why is this place so special and what makes it special today? And I'm really glad I did. And I also wanted to show that you could be right outside New York City, right outside a huge metropolis, and you can have something beautiful and wild. I'll argue that our cities should have clean water running through them with fishing for kids.

Steve Ramirez: This is America. I can't believe we think so small that we think that can't happen. I mean, why not? Why not urban fishing for kids that is clean? Just make it happen. You know, we can send someone to the moon, we can't clean up a river. So, anyway, I wanted to go and see that, and I went to see it through the eyes of my friends that were there, and I fished with several great people that have become my friends, who all find the Catskills, and I'll say also Western, uh, Connecticut as their home, because I went up to the Farmington.

Steve Ramirez: I'm so [01:05:00] glad I did. But here's the other part. I wanted to watch the difference in the way we humans behave from place to place. You know, I came up, I grew up in the South. We take things kind of slowly. We say, yes, ma'am. Yes, sir. We might have a shotgun in the back of our truck, but we're polite about it.

Steve Ramirez: I'll start, I'll start.

D. Roger Maves: I'll shoot you if you're running. Uh huh.

Steve Ramirez: No, it's okay if you run.

Steve Ramirez: But it was really interesting for me to learn. You're talking about people and resources. Some of the best friends I have made are from the northeast of the United States, and I fished with them in waters that I Absolutely adore.

Steve Ramirez: And I can't wait to go back fishing with them again. But I was able to see why the culture was much quicker. Let's hurry up. Let's get to the river. Let's get to our spot. Let's, you know, I mean, I was, I'm used to sitting on the back of a pickup truck and, and talking with my buddies for a while as we meander up to the river.

Steve Ramirez: And [01:06:00] when I'm in the northeast with my friends, I know they're going to have, they're like Superman. They've got their gear on faster than I can get out of the truck. And I realized it's because if you don't get to your spot in time, somebody else has got it.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah,

Steve Ramirez: It took me a while to figure that out when I live in an area where I can fish in the Upper streams around here and never see another angler. I saw one once in one of my favorite backwater streams and this is in 20 some years I felt like someone was dating my wife.

Steve Ramirez: I was so upset that he was standing there I'm used to being having solitude when I want it and I got to the Northeast and I'm you know, I'm on the yellow breaches and there's a person every 50 feet.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Um, so saying that I have come to love the Catskills area and Western also in Vermont. I've come to love that area. I've come to love the people and, uh, the waters, but there's a lot of us. [01:07:00]

D. Roger Maves: Mm-Hmm. . Um, well, and then, and the east has been used to that kind of, you know. The amount of people on the rivers, you always used to see those opening day pictures in the East shoulder to shoulder, you know, on the river.

Steve Ramirez: Yeah. I kind of

D. Roger Maves: Don't really have an opening day, right? It's just

Steve Ramirez: Right. And then the East, of course, the pressure so heavy that most of the places I fish in the East are. Largely, these are fish that have been put there, you know, through hatcheries, uh, because there's no other ways, there's no other way the habitat could sustain the fish because they're being caught and caught and caught and caught.

Steve Ramirez: So, um, at some point we're going to have to decide, well, what kind of angling experience do we want to have? And what are we willing to give up for that to happen? Are we willing to give up our frequency of it? Or what are we willing to give up? I don't know what the answer is going to be, but I'm really grateful that in the writing of this book, I got to travel all the [01:08:00] way across America and then end up back here in my home and, um, and experience this country through the eyes of the people.

Steve Ramirez: And I really do believe we have more in common than we have that separates us. I really do. I found that no matter where I am, if I'm fishing with anglers and where I'm out there with people, that there's a lot of good folks here that care about their home waters and their homelands. And so. And that's why I'm very involved with Bristol Bay.

Steve Ramirez: I don't live in Alaska. I just got done being the host of a show through Guadalupe Valley, Guadalupe River Trout Unlimited, that we were working with the United Tribes of Bristol Bay to do the show to raise awareness and raise some funds for Bristol Bay. Because it's still a fight. So people say, why are you interested in that when you're in Texas?

Steve Ramirez: Well, this is all our land. All our water. It's Okay,

D. Roger Maves: That's the world, the world right?

Steve Ramirez: It's the world. This is a global issue, a global [01:09:00] problem. And we're also starting to set standards, you know, where we think, well, we don't. So when I was a kid, my dad used to kill snakes as soon as he saw them, because that's the way he was raised.

Steve Ramirez: And I started teaching them about how important they were and, and by the time I was done, my dad never killed a snake. He would pick up, pick it up with a stick and move it off the road like I did. We can do that. We just need to change the way we see things. And because I want kids way down the road to see the beauty that you and I are seeing.

Steve Ramirez: I want them to, to have that experience of catching that fish and watching it swim off. Or like in Alaska, when we're catching salmon, and we catch a certain amount because we're doing it legally, and they end up in the frying pan, and that was beautiful too.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. You know, there are some positive stories about cleaning up the rivers, even, you know, in Colorado here in downtown Denver now, they've cleaned up the plat and you can have some incredible carp fishing [01:10:00] down there. Huge car downtown Denver, you know, with the high rises going up. And it used to be there wasn't a fish in that river. Oh, yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Why not?

D. Roger Maves: Salmon river. It's not a trout river, but it's a, that's an excellent card.

Steve Ramirez: I know, well, it could be an excellent warm water river. And with all the other wildlife that goes with it, I'm with the San Antonio river going right through downtown San Antonio. I don't go to the river walk. It's real tourists tend to go, but when I have gone there, because there's a visitor. I'm amazed at how many people don't see the plain bellied water snakes that are sitting on the trees and all the wildlife that's all around them while they're going to the restaurant to get their fajitas.

Steve Ramirez: Why not have every city? Why shouldn't every kid be growing up with that? So, yeah, that's why I love the work of.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, we were, uh, just visiting, um, we were in Truckee, uh, or in Reno and, uh, went up to Truckee and the Lake Tahoe area. But this little apartment that we had [01:11:00] in, uh, Reno, we were looking right down. They had a river walk there too on the Truckee River. And they had built these structure and stuff in downtown Reno, in the river and, and so forth. And, uh, I'm looking down from 13 stories down and I can, I can see three people fly fishing right in the downtown area of Reno. And I thought that's really cool.

D. Roger Maves: You know? Yeah. See the guys wet footprints going on the sidewalk from his waders, you know, and stuff. Mm-Hmm. , it's, uh, yeah,

Steve Ramirez: I wanna see that.

D. Roger Maves: There's a beauty to that.

Steve Ramirez: See that in every town.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: Sure. I want to see that in every town. My daughter lives in the town in England. We're all over town. They have scientists say, friendly.

Steve Ramirez: That's what it says, because that's what they remind each other to be. But all over that town, they have community gardens and orchards where people just come and pick their own fruit and the community helps keep it going. And they have community tasks for, you know, nature walk with your kids. And why not?

Steve Ramirez: Why don't we have this? So, yeah, I think us anglers have a lot we can teach ourselves and a lot we can teach the [01:12:00] world. And it's a whole lot more than how many fish I can catch. I, I have days where I'm fishing, where I'm catching fish after fish and I just snip off and I think, well, you've had enough.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah. Yeah. Did, um, you started, like you had mentioned, you started Casting Homeward in Texas and you ended in Texas.

Steve Ramirez: Right.

D. Roger Maves: What makes Texas so special to you?

Steve Ramirez: Well, it's Casting Homeward. And I've traveled, as I mentioned, four continents and 21 countries and many, many, many states. And I've found beautiful things everywhere, but I was really struggling with the idea of how do I decide what's home. And I have to tell you, no matter how great it was in the Baja, no matter how great it was in Montana,

Steve Ramirez: I'm happy to come home. And I did this purposely because, I mean, everything I write is on purpose. Uh, all my books in this series, I don't know what I'm going to do with the next series, but they all have 21 chapters, which is just arbitrarily tied [01:13:00] into the solstice.

Steve Ramirez: There's all kinds of symbolism I put in here. And this is symbolism too. Full circle. I mean, everything in nature is a circle. From a bird's nest to the ripples in water, full circle back home, Texas, the Texas Hill Country, not Texas as a whole, Texas Hill Country specifically is my home. And I'm able to take people on this journey with me from these wild, wild places all the way over to cities and then bring them back here to where I live and tell them why this place is so precious to me, just like their home is to them and why it's disappearing.

Steve Ramirez: I mean, the proximate cause is us. So yeah, I am a bit doing a call. I always say I have a lot of hope, but to me, hope is an action word. It's not a thing like, I hope someone fixes this for me. I mean, I'm a Marine. We do things. So. That's why I bring it back to Texas. And the other thing [01:14:00] with this story I'll tell you, uh, you didn't mention it but I go to Oklahoma in this book and I, uh, Dave Whitlock and Emily Whitlock have been the kindest people to me from the first, they read Casting Forward before anybody got to read it, before it got published, and they, and Dave did a blurb for the back of it.

Steve Ramirez: And Dave and I were supposed to be going fishing and Dave passed away before it could happen. So Emily told me to come on up and I went up there and stayed at their house for a few days and we fished the waters that Dave and Emily fished and I got, Emily gave me one of his vests to wear. It still had his fly box in it with its notes.

Steve Ramirez: It was beautiful. And so this book also ends talking about home because beside that being his home waters and Emily's home waters, and these are two beautiful people and I love them both. I knew that the Devil's River, which is my, one of my core home waters here in Texas, was a place that they loved and they loved being together.

Steve Ramirez: So Emily asked me, would you take Dave, some of Dave's ashes down and put him back [01:15:00] into the Devil's River for me? So in this book, I repatriate. Dave's ashes into the devil's river. That's how this book wraps up.

D. Roger Maves: Oh, wow. Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: I help bring him to one of his homes, just like this may be my home, but I also feel at home in other places I've been.

Steve Ramirez: So that's why I go back to Texas, because every good change we can make starts at home. But it's the way we're treating the, the clerk at the grocery store to the way we're treating our rivers and that's why I know I'm getting deep here, but that's the way I write. If you really love someone, you don't just use them up.

Steve Ramirez: If you really love something, you don't just use it. And I hear anglers saying all the time, Oh, I love the river. I love being in nature. Well, good. Let's prove it. So, uh, that's why I bring it back to Texas, because I'm watching this gorgeous place dry up, and I'm watching the [01:16:00] hills be swallowed in roofs and McMansions, and the water be drained into golf courses and swimming pools and yards.

Steve Ramirez: So at some point with a billion people, we're going to have to start making some changes and the points now. And I know I sound like I'm preaching, but what I'm really doing is begging. I'm saying, come on, come on, y'all. We love this place. We enjoy it. It's what keeps us going. We love going down that river.

Steve Ramirez: But would you want to go down the Snake River if there was no wildlife and no fish, just water? I don't think so.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah.

Steve Ramirez: In the book, *The Road*, he gets to the, to the ocean he's trying to get to to find out that the entire ocean is dead. Well, it's not the same.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, yeah,

Steve Ramirez: And we can fix this. And so, yeah, that's what I'm writing. That's why I bring it back to Texas. This is my home and I want to do what I can for home while I'm trying to do what I can for everywhere else.

D. Roger Maves: That's a great, great, great way to wrap up. Thank you for that, Steve. [01:17:00] And, um, but I got to ask you 1 more question and it's the what's next question. Can you talk about what's next for you?

Steve Ramirez: I can

D. Roger Maves: In the way of writing. Okay,

Steve Ramirez: I can already under contract with Lyons just with a new series. I won't say the title of the series, but the book that I'm working on right now, now I'm going international with this and I'm connecting us as I try to connect us across the United States. And now I'm connecting us to different parts of the world.

Steve Ramirez: In this case, what I'm doing is this story is going to start with me. On the very pinnacle of Portugal, where they used to believe it was the end of the earth or the end of the world, depending on how you translate the Portuguese. And I'm going to end up going the journey that the conquistadors took down through Mexico, Central America, the Amazon, and all the way down through Patagonia to what they then said, well, this must be the end of the world.

Steve Ramirez: And you can figure the symbolism here. And I'll be fishing in the Amazon. [01:18:00] With the native peoples there, I'll be in Northern Patagonia and Southern Patagonia and I'll be going

down the River Piranha, going after Golden Dorado. But you know, as you're gathering with my stories, there are a lot more than fishing that they're about.

Steve Ramirez: So I'm doing this all with the people that live there, love there. You know, I'll be eating their food. I'll be getting involved in their lives. So that's what I'm doing next. And I do know where this series goes, but I'm not going to say where the other books go. But this one is going to go throughout Latin America all the way down to Tierra del. Almost to Tierra del Fuego. I don't know if I'll make it to there.

D. Roger Maves: Stay tuned, folks. Yeah, stay tuned.

Steve Ramirez: Thanks for asking.

D. Roger Maves: More from Steve Ramirez. Yeah, looking forward to it, Steve. Looking forward. Yeah,

Steve Ramirez: Me too. I do stay living.

D. Roger Maves: But we got to wrap it up here tonight. There's never enough time, but we got to quit sometime. We're already over time. So I want to get moving here to the end, but stick with [01:19:00] me.

D. Roger Maves: We're going to give away one year membership to Fly Fishers International and one year membership to Fly Fishers. Trout Unlimited, and a copy of your book, Casting Homeward, courtesy of Lyons Press. So, folks, hang tight and we'll be doing that in just a moment.

D. Roger Maves: The Bonefish and Tarpon Trust works very hard to safeguard the future of our beloved flats fisheries from protecting spawning sites threatened by unsustainable fishing pressure. To securing historic funding to restore Florida's Everglades and estuaries, thanks to their members. They've expanded their conservation to the Bahamas, Belize and Mexico.

D. Roger Maves: There's still much more work to be done and they need your help with your support. They can ensure that the flats fishery is healthy and sustainable now. And for generations to come, visit btt.org and become a member of the Bonefish and Tarpon Trust today. Again, that's btt.org.

D. Roger Maves: Just a quick reminder to everyone, before you leave the website tonight, please take a minute and give us your feedback about the show.

D. Roger Maves: You can find a link on our homepage in the section under tonight's show that says, [01:20:00] What did you think of this show? And just click on the link and leave your comments. We'd really appreciate it.

D. Roger Maves: And now it's time to give away our prizes. Our winners for our drawings are randomly selected from the show's registration database.

D. Roger Maves: If you didn't register for tonight's show, it's too late now, but make sure you do so for our next show. You don't want to miss a chance at winning some of these great prizes we, we give away. If you are one of the lucky winners, we'll contact you after the show. Collect your information so that we can deliver your prizes to you.

D. Roger Maves: Um, so the first thing we're giving away is a one year membership to Fly Fishers International. To learn more about FFI, go to flyfishersinternational.org and they are a great organization to support and covering all the bases with, uh, salt, warm, cold water fishing, uh, you name it. All over the world. Our winner for that is Anthony Lopez in Massachusetts. Anthony Lopez, in Massachusetts. So, congrats, Anthony, and thanks for playing tonight. I know you'll [01:21:00] enjoy your membership.

D. Roger Maves: And, uh, I will give away now a one year membership to Trout Unlimited. Again, a super organization to support, tu.org. To learn more about Trout Unlimited, go to tu.org. And our winner for that is Arthur Beans, Arthur Beans in New Hampshire. So congratulations, Arthur. I know you'll enjoy your membership as well.

D. Roger Maves: So now we'll give away a copy of Steve's latest book Casting Homeward, courtesy of Lyons Press. And to do that, I'm going to ask a question and there is going to be a, on the homepage of our website. You'll find that, you know, the same place that you ask questions during the show, you can answer this question.

D. Roger Maves: So put in your correct answer, your name and location. First person that gets the correct answer wins Steve's latest book, Casting Homeward. So, here we go. Let me clear my queue. And all right.

D. Roger Maves: [01:22:00] So the question is, Steve talked about two fish that impressed him in Alaska. One should be pretty easy. The one or other, maybe not so easy.

D. Roger Maves: I need the names of both those fish. Okay, the two fish that impressed Or you could say that Steve got excited about when he was in Alaska. So let's have it folks. Now, Steve, there's a slight delay before they actually hear the questions and then they go type their answers. So we, we got to kill some time here a little bit, but I think we had a great talk tonight and a lot of important things we need to think about, you know, and a good time, you know, sometimes to think about it is when you're looking at that water out on the river and enjoying it.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, I'm saying, Hey, I'd like to keep what we got here. And yeah, it looks like we got a winner here. He said Arctic grayling and chum. Yeah. Chum salmon to [01:23:00] be more specific. Are we going to take that as a winner?

Steve Ramirez: That's a winner. That's a winner.

D. Roger Maves: That's Dave Goff in Thornton, Colorado. Dave, welcome to the fold here. And. Uh, I know you sent in some questions about some kind of off topics, but we try to stay on topic and, uh, but I appreciate you sending those in tonight.

D. Roger Maves: Dave, to get your prize, be sure to, um, fill out that same form and send me your mailing address. I've got your email address. I've got your name. I just need your mailing address so that we can get Lyons Press to send that out to you.

D. Roger Maves: So, uh, thanks for playing tonight. We've got some other winners. Phil McCartney had the correct answer. Bob, you know, Sockeye wasn't the one, uh, . But uh, anyway, there were others too that had sent incorrect answers. So thank you everybody for playing and paying attention and sticking with us to the end here tonight. We always appreciate your questions and your attendance and, uh, love to have you on. You, Steve, [01:24:00] thank you again for being with us. It's always a pleasure to talk with you.

Steve Ramirez: My Pleasure.

D. Roger Maves: Yeah, and to hear your thoughts on nature and fishing and the world and, uh, always, always joyful. So, uh, hopefully again soon. All right.

Steve Ramirez: Thank you so much.

Steve Ramirez: Sure. Hopefully you've all found the podcast archive on our website. If you haven't just look in the link in the description. The link in the top line of our menu on the website and you'll find the archive and all of our past shows over 400 and some shows now can search by keyword keyword phrase.

Steve Ramirez: For instance, you could put in Steve Ramirez and find all his shows. You put in Bill Horne and found that about the sockeye, you know, and in Alaska, which I think would be good background for Bristol Bay. But anything else, Madison River, Tarpon Trout, you name it, and you'll find something that will please and educate you. I'm sure.

Steve Ramirez: Our next broadcast will be on October 16th and on that show and interview Alan Zarembo and our show will be on [01:25:00] Florida's Exotic Peacock Bass. Alan has been fishing and guiding Florida water since 1986. His expertise in catching the exotic peacock bass is unmatched. Then join us as Alan unveils his top strategies for catching these colorful trophy fish.

Steve Ramirez: And whether you're a seasoned angler or just starting out, you won't want to miss this, uh, game changing, his game changing tips. Um, so get ready to enhance your skills and land, uh, that catch of a lifetime, a peacock bass.

Steve Ramirez: Be sure to add this to your upcoming, uh, this upcoming show to your calendar, right under Alan's photo on the homepage. It says, add to calendar button, just add to your calendar, and then you won't miss our next live show.

Steve Ramirez: We'd like to thank Fly Fishers International, Trout Unlimited, Bonefish and Tarpon Trust, Lyons Press, Olympic Peninsula Skagit Tactics, and Ugly Bug Fly Shop and Enrico Puglisi Flies for sponsoring our show tonight.

Steve Ramirez: Don't forget to visit our website at askaboutflyfishing.com and make sure you're signed up to receive our announcements so you don't miss out on any of our future broadcasts.

Steve Ramirez: Thanks [01:26:00] for listening to Ask About Fly Fishing Internet Radio. We hope you enjoyed the show. That's it. Good night everyone and good fishing.