



Troutlines

Special Points of Interest

- Brook Trout Study
- TU Regional Update
- Fishing for Walter

Chapter Meetings and Events Calendar

Lie and Tie Night

First Chapter Meeting of the Season September 20, 2012

See Calendar on page 6 for more information.

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Brook Trout Study in the Lower Warner River Watershed

by

George Embley and Gordon Riedesel

Over a two-week period in June 2012, chapter members, members of the Warner Conservation Commission, and interested individuals took part in the ongoing brook trout inventory and habitat assessment by NH Fish and Game. Lead researcher and field general, Ben Nugent, with the aid of the volunteers and other Fish and Game biologists, led the search for wild brookies in the many small tributaries of the lower Warner River Watershed. George Embley, chapter VP, served as volunteer coordinator, and Judy Tumosa of New Hampshire Fish & Game provided the training. In addition to helping with the electroshocking used to identify resident fish, volunteers conducted water quality testing (pH, dissolved oxygen, and water temperature) and sampled aquatic macroinvertebrates (including mayfly and dragonfly nymphs and caddis larvae) which are used as indicators of habitat and water quality. This project is part of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture, a program under the National Fish Habitat Action Plan.

Ben reported preliminary results which indicate that two-thirds of the 25 streams surveyed contained brook trout. The sampling method was to electroshock 100 meter stretches of water. There were instances where 40 and even 60 brookies were counted within this short distance. Probably the most surprising finding occurred while surveying the small stream flowing next to Kearsarge Regional High School. In a short stretch of stream having an average width of only 3 1/2 feet, 60 wild trout were found. This section was confined to a narrow riparian zone bounded by the high school parking lot on one side and North Road on the other.

A limited amount of water quality testing was conducted on all streams. In general, the pH and dissolved oxygen (DO) levels were in a range that would support trout. Temperatures varied from a low of 55F to a high of 74F. Trout have difficulty surviving above average temperatures of 68F so it comes as no surprise that very few trout were found in the streams that exhibited temperatures above this level.

Brook Trout, continued on page 5



This wild brookie came from a 5 foot wide stream in the Lower Warner River Watershed. Love those fins!

(Photo by Gordon Riedesel)

Presidential Commentary - Dan Stickney

Welcome back!

Here's hoping that the summer was a good one - I know it was quick for my family and I, but some really great stuff came out of it.

Early on in the season my son and I spent a few minutes fishing a small mountain brook, and we had a ball; I'd like to tell you about it, if I may.

He was in a chest pack, which made balance a little tricky for me, and knowing where my feet were going was more guess than certainty, but we made it through unscathed, and I'm happy to report that Elliott saw his first trout: it was a brightly colored wild brookie, right around four inches long. If it had strength to match its heart I'd never have landed it, which is part of the reason why I still chase these little fish in small water.

Knowing what I'd be up against, I took a short, light rod and skittered a small caddis pattern through the biggest pools in the small stream - there were plenty of eager fish, and each one was a delight to the boy on my chest (and me); they'd wriggle and thrash until I could get the hook in my fingers, then one final flip and they went back under the rock they came from. The one exception was the first fish, which Elliott got to look at and touch for just a moment before it was released. He was tickled, and I'd like to think that right then he started a lifelong love affair with things that swim in cold, clean water.

I've often enough advocated taking a kid fishing, but until I did it for myself I failed to understand how powerful it really is; I'm not ashamed to admit that I choked up a bit when he reached out and touched that

little trout and smiled. I'm sure that those of you who have been there already may have felt the same - at least I hope you did, because it was a moment that I'll remember as long as I live. Like most of you, I've caught a bunch of fish: many bigger, some in prettier spots, a few that really stand out for one reason or another, but I don't think I'll ever catch one more important to me.

This story has a point: without the cold, clean water that we work to preserve that little trout might not have been there. Elliott would have had a first fish sooner or later, warmwater or cold, but brook trout usually do well in pretty places - and that's a part of their appeal to me, so I'm glad that I could share that with him.

We have another year of great meetings with interesting speakers, service projects, and volunteer opportunities coming up - I hope to see many of you at them, because TU is really a grassroots organization, and participation is critical to making that model work.

Remember: the third Thursday of the month, from September until May, we'll be at the Forest Society (unless we tell you differently) listening to interesting folks talk about things that we love, learning something, and maybe even making a little bit of a difference.

See you there.

All best~

Dan

Editor's Soapbox - Gordon Riedesel

Over the next nine months, TROUTLINES will be headed your way every four weeks or so. Our long-term members know that the Basil W. Woods, Jr. Chapter of TU is an active, productive, and healthy chapter.

A break from publishing TROUTLINES doesn't mean there is nothing going on. As this edition and October's issue will show, no

moss grows under our feet - or maybe algae under our wading boots.

Our members make the success of the chapter possible and the board of directors is always open to new voices, faces, and ideas. So let them know what you like, would like, and don't like. You can reach the board *via* e-mail or regular mail. Our

address is on the back page. Thanks to everyone.

We hope that you enjoy this issue and continue to support TU's important work. That's all from the editor's desk for now - "gone fishin."



In Our Own Backyard TU in the Northeast Update

by Paul Doscher

One of the things that makes TU such a successful conservation organization is the engagement of its enthusiastic volunteers. There are many national conservation groups with substantial staffs, but very few that have thousands and thousands of members who get out and make things happen on the ground as TU does.

This year members of the national and regional TU staff and TU member volunteers from around the northeast again had the opportunity to meet and learn from each other. TU's Northeast Regional Meeting was held in Springfield, Massachusetts July 26-28 and attended by more than 80 people from each New England state, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. There were even folks there from West Virginia and Wisconsin!

In TU's action tradition, a day of hosted fishing by the local chapters on the Swift and Deerfield Rivers started the event, and we learned again how tough big fish in crystal clear tailwaters can be. Saturday kicked off with an enthusiastic welcome by TU President, Chris Wood, who reminded us all what a tremendous impact TU is having all across the nation in protecting, restoring and reconnecting our precious coldwater streams. For me, as a long time grassroots volunteer, and now Grassroots Trustee, I have to say that Chris is a tremendous leader, who inspires both the staff and volunteers by both lauding the great work they do and energizing them to go out and do even more.

The workshops over two days covered topics from habitat restoration, dam removal, land conservation, youth education, fundraising, to building partnerships with other groups to create and sustain successful conservation projects. We were updated on the fight to save Bristol Bay in Alaska from the proposed world's largest gold mine. Bristol Bay is the source of the world's largest sockeye salmon fishery and TU is working with others to stop the mine from being permitted. We were reminded that the proposed mine will include one of the world's largest tailings dams, and that it's failure could wipe out the entire fishery, permanently. Sadly, the history of such dams is not good, with nearly every major mine in the world having experienced dam failures.

We had an inspiring presentation from the organizers of Project Healing Waters. This outstanding program matches TU volunteers with wounded veterans to teach them fly-fishing and get them out on rivers around the country. The stories of how the program has helped veterans deal with the effects of injuries including PTSD are extraordinary.

We also got an update on the tremendous progress that TU and its partners are making in the effort to restore healthy populations of Atlantic Salmon on Maine's Penobscot River. While buying up major dams and then removing them isn't exactly something a TU chapter can do on its own, it was inspiring to hear how TU partnered with other conservation groups to raise the millions needed and then get the first of the dams removed. Saving the salmon in the US is no small task, and this project is no small undertaking, but it's working.

One of the best things about these regional meetings is hearing what other TU chapters and councils are doing in their own home waters. The conversations in the hallways and around lunch provide a tremendous cross-fertilization for project ideas, fundraising initiatives, educational efforts and more. Successes of projects like the restoration of Nash Stream here in NH, as presented by Jim MacCartney served as inspiration for people from around the northeast for what can happen on their streams. NH Council Chair Burr Tupper and NLC representative Mary Weiss attended all the sessions and no doubt will have great ideas to share with our New Hampshire chapter leaders at the next council meeting.

I hope next year, when the meeting will be in the Catskills, that more New Hampshire TU leaders will be able to attend. If you can only drive to one regional meeting a year, this is the one to go to. In addition, having fished the Catskills a couple times, I can recommend making the trip. It's a great area, with beautiful streams and some really awesome trout.

Paul Doscher is an advisor to the Basil W. Woods TU Chapter and serves as a Grassroots National Trustee for TU.

Links for Further Information

Bristol Bay: www.tu.org/conservation/alaska/save-bristol-bay

Project Healing Waters: www.projecthealingwaters.org

Penobscot River: www.penobscotrivers.org

FISHING FOR WALTER

by Bob Ives

Early this summer when conditions were perfect, I took a solo drive to Pittsburg since my brother Tom couldn't make it. Apparently, moving his entire book bindery from Concord to Bow inside a two week window was more important to him than fishing with his older brother.

In spite of my brother, I wasn't alone long. Angus met me at camp and decided he needed to practice his guiding skills on me. He obviously had no idea how skilled an angler I really am. He decided we should fish the Trophy Stretch.

Now I know from my vast experience that you always cast a streamer down and across at a 45 degree angle. That is how you catch the really big fish. But NO, Angus decided I should cast straight up stream rather than the tried - and - true method that skilled river anglers instinctively employ. Upstream? How foolish I thought, but Angus being a guide of some notoriety I didn't want to make him feel inadequate by pointing out his obvious mistake in strategy. So as an obedient practice client I proceeded to hurl the fly up stream and strip it back like a maniac just to keep up with the current.

Apparently there are a few really dumb fish that don't know the rules. I proceeded to catch two nice brookies 16-18 inches long with only three casts (OK they were only 12-14 inches long when they landed in Angus' net). As focused as I was, I made one more hopeful cast upstream when out of the blue (actually very dark grey) a bolt of lightning struck as if a sign from the heavens. Angus, using his vast knowledge of meteorology, barely counted to one before the bunker-buster thunder clap got my undivided attention. Faster than a lightning bolt, I exited the water like a scalded cat. By the time we scrambled the 100 feet back to the car I was soaked to the skin. When I started my car the sun was out again. The weather is fickle up north. I still wonder if casting upstream was breaking some cosmological rule with my infraction made strikingly clear by the fishing gods.

The next morning we headed out to fish below Murphy Dam. The flow at the bend was perfect, mist was on the water and the sun just peaking over the mountains. How could it get any better than this I thought as I followed Angus down to the river. I was shaken from my early morning revelry when Angus suddenly turned down stream away from the most

perfect stretch with its cold clear water flowing into deep dark pools. Why he was headed down river to the flat, flaccid water where no respectable fish would even consider living I couldn't imagine.

Once again, he insisted that I cast up stream. Still reliving yesterday's action (not the thunder and lightning) I didn't object too loudly. Not trusting my highly refined knot tying skills, Angus tied on a fly for me. I was fishing my 4 weight trout rod and he tied on a 4" streamer - resembling Nellie the Loch Ness Monster - with a giant tungsten bead head. After a quick attempt at practice casting, I managed to wrench the heavy metal fly from the depths and catapult it upstream. I started to strip slightly faster than a snail's pace in the stagnant flow, Angus was perched above me on the steep bank like an osprey observing my ever move.

After several casts I moved into deeper water below a sunken log that ran parallel with the flow. My shoulders aching, I made a Herculean cast and started to strip back. Angus suddenly screeched "strip faster" "STRIP FASTER". Just then I spied a huge shadow moving across the bottom following my now, not-so-big fly. I stripped faster until the butt of my leader section popped through the tip of my rod, I pulled the rod back and started to back pedal. Just as mysteriously as it had appeared the shadow was gone. Several casts later I crawled up the bank exhausted from the anaerobic casting exercise. Angus confidently reported that it was a big Brown that followed my fly for 30 feet or more - and it had to have been 24 inches long. Judging by the shadow I had seen he was probably not too far off. Walter is still waiting in that slow flaccid water for me to return - and cast upstream once more.



Bob Ives is a frequent contributor of fine fishing literature to TROUTLINES. He is an advisor to the board of directors and former director. He usually tells the truth.

Brook Trout, continued from page 1

Counting macroinvertebrates took a combination of patience and good eyesight (or a magnifying glass) to spot these tiny denizens. While there were some sizeable larvae and nymphs, many of them were less than a millimeter in length. Try spotting gills or wingpads on those guys. Most fly fishermen can tell you that presence of certain insect populations, such as mayflies and hellgrammites, can indicate good water quality. NH Fish and Game has taken this one step further and come up with an index (VBAP Biotic Score) that correlates water quality with the types of macroinvertebrates present. Results for the lower Warner River watershed indicate that, when water temperature is low and when the Biotic index predicts excellent water quality, wild trout will be present - often in large numbers.

Ben's full report will come this winter. We are looking forward to that and plan to invite Ben to present his results and recommendations at a chapter meeting. We hope results of this survey can lead to actions that our chapter, together with other conservation groups, can take to help preserve and improve this resource.

Thanks to all those who helped make this program a success. More than 20 volunteers put in long days of hard work. But as any volunteer would tell you, it was both fun and fascinating to see what such small streams hold. And as fly anglers, seeing the real nymphs and sorting them has been a great education.



In a 100 yard stretch of this little stream Ben Nugent's electrofishing produced 25 brookies.

Photo by Brad Towle

A sizeable brookie is weighed while other fish await their turn. All fish, trout and otherwise, were measured and weighed, before being returned to the water.

Photo by George Embley



September 2012 Chapter Meeting

Thursday, September 20, 7:00 PM

Forest Society, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord

This year our first meeting will be on September 20th and we will focus on a review of highlights from last year and plans for the coming year. This is also our traditional *Lie and Tie* night. Bring your tying materials and/or stories. If you don't tie, come and watch. If you have a hard time telling the truth, you will be at home here. So, if you would like to tie flies or give a short talk on your recent fishing adventure at this meeting, please let George Embley (gembley@tds.net) or Dan Stickney (dan.stickney@gmail.com) know.

Also, we are now planning this year's meeting programs. So if you have a topic you are anxious to hear about or, better yet, have a specific speaker in mind, pass that on to George also.

Volunteers Wanted for the third annual "Fly Fishing with Amy" event held on the Cochecho River. Amy's Treat is an organization to help cancer patients and survivors do normal and fun activities. Fly Fishing with Amy is one of several programs. The Seacoast Cancer Center of the Douglass-Wentworth Hospital is the major corporate sponsor. Volunteers help with casting instruction and fish, one-on-one with the participants.

This is the third year and its popularity has grown so there are two days set aside to accommodate all the people who want to give it a try (or come back from prior years). Great Bay chapter TU is again taking the lead and organizing the event. This year's dates are **Saturday October 6 and October 20**. The day starts at 9:00 AM and runs until 3:30 PM. Several Basil Woods chapter members helped last year and our assistance is requested. Please e-mail Wendy Nixon (fishinnixon2@comcast.net) of Great Bay TU and let her know you can do one or even two days. You will be glad you did. It really is a great way to spend a day.

Calendar

Thursday, September 6. TU Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, September 20. First Chapter Meeting of the season. 7:00 PM, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord.

Thursday, October 4. TU Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, October 18. Chapter Meeting. 7:00 PM, Society for the Protection of NH Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord.

Always check the chapter website for news and updates.

www.concordtu.org

Welcome New Members

We look forward to hearing from you and all new members and meeting you soon.

Shawn Bolduc
Lisa Braiterman
Keven Cote
Samuel Duprey
Stephen Duprey
Gary Lines
Jack McCarthy
Stanley Prescott, II



Drawing courtesy of www.davewhitlock.com

Newsletter Information

Troutlines is published September through May. Chapter members who have given TU national their e-mail address will receive an e-mail notice from us through the TU national server that the latest newsletter is online at our chapter website. Paper copies are sent to members who don't have an e-mail address listed with TU national.

If you would prefer to receive paper copies of **Troutlines** rather than electronic copies, drop us a line to either our e-mail or mailing address. If you now receive a paper copy and would prefer to read it online, drop us a note and update your membership information with TU national.

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