



# Merrimack River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

## President's Message

December 2009  
Volume xviii, Issue 4

### **Meetings/Speakers**

**2nd Tuesday of the  
Month-Sept—May**

**Doors Open-6:30pm**

**7:30pm Meeting -  
Starts**

**December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009  
Chapter Social**  
Food, Raffles and  
Fun



**January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2010**  
Jay High, President  
MFFA — Fishing the  
Restigouche/  
Matapedia Rivers for  
spring Atlantic  
Salmon

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One drum that I have continually beaten over the last year and a half: Our chapter has invested significant resources (volunteer time in particular, but also funding) in programs that are central to the mission of TU - improvements in the state of cold water fisheries. We have much in which to be proud. One issue that we have discussed frequently is ways to improve fishing quality in our "home waters". South central New Hampshire has a few rivers and other bodies of water that have provided good/decent trout fishing historically. We're talking about places that are a short drive away after crawling out of our own bed early on Saturday morning with the expectation of getting a few hours of quality water thrashing before retreating to the multitude of family/other obligations that are important in our lives. Many of us wish that we were numbered amongst the prestigious group of MRV TU members (mostly retired, aka expert fly fishers, meant with full respect/jealousy) that are a key part of the engine that drives the chapter - and who also "fish at will" - but we're not there yet.

The Souhegan River and the Piscataquog are good examples of waters that can fulfill this goal. The challenge is to identify-and implement-programs to restore these fisheries to a higher level of quality habitat sustainable for a longer portion of each year, i.e. to offer a healthy (fishable) trout population beyond the first 80 degree day. The reality is that our streams run strong and cold during the springtime until sometime into the early summer. Warm and oxygen-depleted water becomes the norm after that to the detriment of trout and trout fishing. Question that we are debating: How do we help to extend the season? The Souhegan River has received the most attention recently. After 6 years of

hard work, the Merrimack Village Dam was removed (summer '08). This opened up 14 miles of the Souhegan to fish movement from the Merrimack River up to the center of Milford. The town of Milford is now putting forth a plan to remove 2 dams near the center of town (one dam owned by the town, the other dam privately owned). Removing these 2 dams frees another 5 miles or so of the Souhegan to fish passage. A number of key partners are involved to make this happen (in addition to the town of Milford), including NH Department of Environmental Services (NHDES), NH F& G, and NOAA. Prospects are that improved trout habitat and much better oxygenation will result on good sections of the Souhegan.

MRV TU has been in close communications about this project with NHDES, probable project leader. We are evaluating how- also when- we should move to get TU actively involved in this project. Our plan is to pursue an "Embrace-A-Stream" grant from TU National to help fund this project; unknown at the moment is when to play the EAS card. The EAS grant requires a local commitment- matching funds plus significant MRV TU "on the ground" volunteer commitment. My guess is that our chapter will rise to the challenge when the time is right.

December Social- 12/8/09- it will be a good time as always. Bring 3 wrapped flies for the Yankee swap. More importantly, bring your wallet to participate in the bucket raffles and buy grand raffle tickets- supper buffet provided by the chapter- See you there,

Jeff

## **December 2009—Chapter Social**

The Chapter Social is Tuesday, December 8th, with doors opening at 6:30 pm and fine dining starting at 7:30 pm. Munchies, sandwiches, cookies, and beverages are provided for everyone. We will have a Yankee Fly Swap! You might ask, "What is a Yankee Fly Swap?" Well, bring 3 flies wrapped for the occasion, and we will swap during the evening festivities. We also have lots of prizes in our bucket raffles this year, so bring your spare dollars and take a chance with the great bucket raffle prizes! This is great time to socialize, laugh and spend some time with your fellow MRV TU Members.

## Chapter Meetings Jan./Feb./March—Speakers & Programs

**January 12 – Jay High – President of MFFA– Presentation on Fishing the Restigouche/Matapedia Rivers on the Quebec/New Brunswick border for spring Atlantic Salmon.** Jay is a native of Manchester and has been an avid fly fisherman and fly tier for over 40 years. He is an original member, and current president, of the Manchester Fly Fishing Association. While officially retired, he is a regular off-ice official with the AHL Manchester Monarchs, where he runs the game clock, the scoreboard, and/or works on game statistics. His association with the world famous Restigouche and Matapedia Rivers of eastern Canada started in 2002 when noted fly tying author, Dick Talleur, then of Manchester, approached Jay about a trip to Matapedia, Quebec for spring salmon. Since that inception, there have been annual May trips of MFFA members with as many as 11 fishermen. Jay's presentation is a synopsis of these annual trips, covering the fish, fishing, area accommodations, logistics, and costs associated with these trips. Jay owns a camp in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom, and fishes the Upper Connecticut River regularly. This past July he caught and released his NH trout of a life time, a 28 inch Brown, estimated at about 10 pounds.

**February 9 – Jim Norton – Fishing in Southwestern Montana (Dillon Area) 2004 and 2008 trips are covered.** Long time MRVTU member Jim Norton presents an evening fishing the rivers of the Big Sky country of Southwestern Montana. Jim is a licensed New Hampshire fishing guide, a

member of the NH Guides Association, and a partner in the New Hampshire Rivers Guide Service. Jim wrote a monthly column for the New Hampshire Union Leader and Sunday News for close to 20 years as well as articles for other publications and magazines. His outdoor column now appears in the New Hampshire Vermont Outdoor Gazette. While Jim spends the majority of his time guiding on New Hampshire waters, he has fished and photographed from Alaska to Newfoundland. The Montana presentation is based around Dillon in Beaverhead County. Beaverhead County is 5,551 square miles, about the size of Connecticut and Rhode Island combined. Among the rivers visited are the "blue ribbon" fisheries of the Beaverhead, Big Hole, Ruby, and Madison. Also covered are hikes into remote lakes for Grayling and Cutthroat trout. Beaverhead County is surrounded on three sides by the continental divide, ranging from 4,770 to 11,154 feet of elevation. This is Big Sky, wide open spaces – and big trout – with drift trips through canyons and remote creeks and mountain lakes.

**March 9 – John Magee – Fish Habitat Biologist for NH Fish and Game, On the Nash Stream Restoration Project**

## Volunteer Opportunities—Rockingham and FFNH

The chapter has a booth at the Rockingham Hunting and Fishing Expo in Salem, NH and is co-sponsor of the Fly Fish NH Show (FFNH), Pelham, NH. We need assistance to help at both shows with chapter activities (see dates/times below). At the Rockingham show we need assistance to set up the booth on Friday and "man" the booth on Sat/Sun during the show. At the FFNH show, we need the same type of assistance **PLUS** we are adding slots this year to help with food sales (no serving).

Participants at both shows get free admission to the particular site and have ample time to peruse all the exhibits. Volunteers working the booth can expect to sell raffle tickets and/or admission tickets, describe chapter & TU activities, invite new members to join, act as TU "ambassadors" and help with food sales in Pelham. Last year we had more volunteers than spots to place them, so please decide early in order to get the time & date you want.

### Rockingham Fishing and Hunting Expo

Fri. 1/8/10 (set up only) Time TBD, but will be in afternoon-3 people needed  
 Sat 1/9/10, 3 people needed 9a-1:30p  
 3 people needed 1:30p-6p  
 Sun 1/10/10, 3 people needed 9:30a-1p  
 3 people needed 1p-5p (including breakdown)

### Fly Fish NH Show-Pelham

FRI 3/5/10, 4 people needed (set up only) Time TBD (afternoon)  
 SAT 3/6/10, 4 people needed 8:30-12 noon (booth/entrance door)  
 4 people needed 12n-4p (booth/entrance door)  
 4 people needed 10a-2p (food service)  
 SAT 3/6/10/4 people needed 8:30-12 noon (booth/entrance door)  
 4 people needed 12n-4p (booth/entrance door)  
 4 people needed 10a-2p (food service)

Call, or email if you want to help or have any questions. Reporting information will be sent out at a later date to the volunteers. Ron Peimer, 603-716-6284, mrtunews@comcast.net



## ***Passing On A Tradition—Jim Norton***

I don't know what the numbers are relative to license sales, but there seems to be a renewed interest in fishing ranging from adults who fished when they were younger to kids whose parents never fished. It could be people are working fewer hours, or are out of work and looking for something to do, or it could be economics. A season's fishing license is considerably less than a day's lift ticket for skiing most mountains or for a day's greens fees at many golf courses. One-day fishing licenses are available for those who just want to fish for a day or two; it's an inexpensive way to spend a day or as much time as you want.

Most of the kids I grew up with in the 1940s and 50s around the Kittery/Portsmouth area fished the creeks and tributaries of the Piscataqua River. My first recollection of fishing was on Spinney Creek with a hand line. A camp on Great East Lake converted me to fresh water; camping at Dolly Copp was my exposure to mountain streams and rivers. I spent four years in the Marines, mostly at Quantico, Virginia which was a great place to fish and hunt. In addition to bass and blue gills there was a phenomenal trout stream where we never saw another angler. I put a lot of mileage on a pair of rubber hip waders walking the stream fishing Mepps bucktail spinners.

In the early sixties I decided to take up fly fishing and purchased an inexpensive bamboo rod. The rod never got a lot of use as I struggled trying to use it. Also in the sixties came my introduction to the Rangeley area and landlocked salmon fishing; this came through a friend who had a camp on a remote brook trout pond along the Appalachian Trail in Maine along with a connection to a camp on Lake Mooselookmeguntic.

By the 1970s I was in my thirties and decided to get serious about fly fishing, so I picked up another outfit with a fiberglass rod. Within a few years I had become a fanatic (not to be confused with proficient in any aspect) including fly tying which I also took up.

By the 1980s I was doing reasonably well, but my casting was atrocious, at least in my eyes and probably to anyone watching. Casting for distance became an obsession (some anglers go through this phase). It was compounded by a friend that could cast twice the distance I could; this was very noticeable when fishing ponds. Help came when I read an ad for casting lessons from Dick Monroe who lived in Derry. The class was a couple of hours one night a week for six weeks, I ended up going eight. The first session I doubled my casting distance. It was great; unfortunately by the time I practiced the next day I had forgotten everything. The second class solved the problem, and after that improvements came weekly as I spent the summer amus-

ing my neighbors casting in the yard.

My friend purchased an expensive graphite rod worth several hundred dollars and raved about its performance; he liked it so much he bought a second. When fall came we were back on the water at our favorite pond along with my trusty inexpensive outfit. My first cast went the same distance as his; every cast after went five to ten feet further. He started complaining there was something wrong with the rod and switched to the second one with the same results; it ruined his weekend. After the trip he returned the rods. I never told him about the lessons.

I've encountered a few instances this year where anglers have passed something along to the next generation. I talked to a father who had a twelve-year-old son who lived to fish and was interested in learning to fly fish. The boy had read everything he could get his hands on about fly fishing and picked up casting like a natural. He ended up catching a nice rainbow. After the class we stopped at the Evening Sun Fly Shop; the owner Charlie Shadan asked how he had done. Charlie congratulated him and told him to pick out any three flies in the shop. On his next visit to the shop Charlie asked the boy if he had ever heard of a Wheatley fly box. The youth had; they are very expensive. One of Charlie's customers gave the box to him and asked him to pass it along to someone just getting started; the boy was elated!

The last weekend in May this year I took one of my granddaughters fishing. She was 7 ½ months pregnant, and we were under a "no wading" edict from mom and gram. We fished a pond from shore, then, as we were packing up, an older gentleman walked by who was just getting into fly fishing. I spent some time going over casting with him. We talked to a young man who was just rigging up. He said he too was just getting started, and I spent some time going over the basics of casting with him. When I asked why he decided to get into fly fishing he said it was something that he always wanted to do. An individual he knew through his company gave him the outfit. (It was not a starter kit; the rod and reel were top of the line products worth several hundred dollars.) He told him to enjoy it, to join Trout Unlimited, and to become involved in conservation.

It can be frustrating trying to learn something on your own without a friend or family to help. New Hampshire Fish and Game has an excellent "Let's Go Fishing" program covering everything from Ice fishing to Fly Fishing; hundreds of people take the classes every year. The Merrimack River Valley Chapter is a major contributor to the "Learn to Fly Fish" program running several classes each spring.

## ***Chapter Camping Trip, June 2010***

Sign up early and don't miss out on our Chapter Trip at Coleman State Park. We have 15 sites for June 24, 25, & 26. The cost is \$90 per site and includes the 3-night reservation. The Chapter Dinner will be held on Saturday, June 26<sup>th</sup> and the cost will be \$15 per person. The dinner is open to all members and guests whether you're staying at the campground or have other accommodations. Last year's trip sold out and we had a great time so reserve your spot early.



To reserve a spot for camping and/or dinner contact Ron Hamel at [RMHamel@comcast.net](mailto:RMHamel@comcast.net) or (978) 835-8857. Checks should be made out to MRVTU and sent to Burr Tupper, 47 River Road, New Boston, NH 03070.

## Grand Raffle Tickets—2010



Enclosed in this month's newsletter are your tickets for our Grand Raffle and a self addressed return envelope to mail in proceeds from any donations received from your ticket sales. Proceeds should be returned in the form of a check made out to MRVTU and sent to Burr Tupper, 47 River Road, New Boston, NH 03070. We need everyone's help

and support to meet our goal to raise \$6,000. We've undertaken a couple of new projects this year on the Souhegan and Piscataquog Rivers in addition to our ongoing efforts and this raffle is one of our critical fundraisers that will help us move forward on these projects.

This year's prizes consist of the following: Two Nights Lodging for Two People with Meals at Tall Timber Lodge, in Pittsburgh, NH. This is great venue to enjoy the Great North Woods as you'll see if you want to visit their website at [www.TallTimber.com](http://www.TallTimber.com). Another one of the prizes is a

Custom Built Winston Boron IIT, 3 weight, 7'6" Fly Rod with an Abel reel and fly line. This is a fantastic "ready to fish" package. Lastly is a \$200 Gift Certificate for Stone River Outfitters. You can go to their website @ [www.StoneRiverOutfitters.com](http://www.StoneRiverOutfitters.com) and make out your shopping list!

Tickets donations are \$2 each or 3 for \$5 and we're asking each member to sell 3 books (9 tickets). The winners will be drawn at the Annual Conservation Banquet on April 24, 2010, and winners need not be present to claim a prize. If you can't get your friends, coworkers, relatives, neighbors, and fishing buddies to make a small donation for a great cause and a chance at some nice prizes there are a few other opportunities where you can help. We are recruiting volunteers to work at the Rockingham Hunting and Fishing Expo on January 9 & 10, and the Fly Fish New Hampshire Show on March 6 & 7 to promote our TU Chapter mission and fundraising and you can sign up with Ron Peimer to volunteer for these events.

We thank you in advance for your help and support.

**MEETINGS ARE HELD THE SECOND TUESDAY OF EACH MONTH (SEPT-MAY) AT THE SWEENEY AMERICAN LEGION POST, 251 MAPLE STREET MANCHESTER NH. DIRECTIONS: ELM STREET TO VALLEY STREET TO MAPLE STREET (1ST LEFT AFTER STADIUM)**



**Chapter Officers**  
[www.merrimacktu.org](http://www.merrimacktu.org)



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