

Merrimack River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

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President's Message

At the November chapter meeting we briefly discussed the current funding shortfall being experienced by the NH Fish and Game department. They need an additional \$1.6 million per year for each of the next two years to maintain existing programs and staff, and to perform the bare minimum of maintenance required on facilities and equipment. Cost control measures over the last few years include staff reductions of 14 positions through attrition, deferring required maintenance and limiting new programs. At the same time, Fish and Game has been mandated to provide more services in a climate of shrinking revenue from licenses. Our state is becoming more urbanized and suburbanized and many residents are not buying hunting or fishing licenses. Since 1995 the number of hunters has decreased by 25% and fishing license sales are down 10%. At the same time, more people want to hike, canoe/kayak, and enjoy wildlife viewing, all of which puts a strain on our natural resources and the resources of Fish and Game for search and rescue, access and non-game conservation efforts. Boat and OHRV fees are intended to fund search and rescue missions, but almost 90% of rescues involve people who have neither a boat nor an OHRV. Currently, Fish and Game receives almost no funding from the General Fund. In addition to requesting General Fund financial support, other funding options are being considered, including a Conservation Decal fee for non-motorized boats, and a saltwater fishing license, among other possibilities.

Some factions are looking to break up the Fish and Game department and absorb the pieces into other agencies. This would be a disaster for good wildlife management practices and risks politicizing wildlife management decisions. We need a Fish and Game department governed by best practices in wildlife management and not one that is forced to serve the whims of local politicians.

We will continue to track the progress of the various funding alternatives and keep the membership informed of opportunities to make your voice heard. Right now a good idea would be to call or write your state rep and let them know that breaking up the Fish and Game department would be a very bad idea and that some level of funding from the general fund would be a good idea.

Speaking of funding, in the envelope with this newsletter you will find a self-addressed envelope and some raffle tickets. The Grand Raffle is our main fundraiser of the year. If possible, sell a few tickets to your neighbor, to your brother-in-law and to your best fishing buddy. The money will go towards coldwater conservation activities in New Hampshire which will benefit everybody. Thanks for your generosity.

Elsewhere in the newsletter you will see an announcement for our Holiday Social. This is a terrific opportunity to meet some really nice people who have some of the same objectives that you do – improve fishery habitat, enjoy the outdoors and catch a fish now and then. See you there!

Tight Lines,

Gerry

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- 3 Raffle Tickets enclosed for you to sell or buy



EDITORS NOTE: IF YOU HAVE ANY SUGGESTIONS OR COMMENTS ON THE NEWSLETTER SEND THEM TO: MRTUNNEWS@COMCAST.NET

THANKS

**DON'T MISS OUR WORLD FAMOUS PLATTERS AND PRIZES DINNER !
TUESDAY DECEMBER 12TH AT 7:00 PM AT THE SWEENEY POST**

The dinner features our fabulous deli platters, soft drinks, and deserts. In addition, we have many, many prizes in our bucket raffle and book sale. Last year's dinner was a resounding success, so be sure to join us for the festive occasion. You will not only have a chance at great prizes and good books, but also a place to swap lies about the past fishing season.

**Don't forget to bring three gift-wrapped flies for the Yankee Fly-swap!
DINNER IS ONLY \$ 5.00 AND INCLUDES FOOD AND BEVERAGES!!!**
(Adult beverages can be purchased at the bar by those who qualify.)

**REMEMBER TO BUY YOUR GRAND RAFFLE TICKETS
DRAWING AT THE APRIL DINNER**

Tickets are \$ 2/each or \$ 5/three.

GREAT PRIZES FOR THE RAFFLE (WINNERS CHOICE)

1. 12 FOOT HERITAGE FEATHERLITE KAYAK, PADDLE AND LIFE PRESERVER
2. 2 NIGHT (SUN-THURS) STAY AT TALL TIMBERS LODGE IN PITTSBURG, NH
3. CUSTOM ORVIS FLY ROD-9' 5WT.

As many of you know, there will be no fly fishing show in Wilmington MA this year due to the show promoter dropping the venue from the schedule. The show was the major source of chapter funding through raffle ticket sales. We are hoping our chapter members will be generous this year and buy extra tickets to make up for the loss of the ticket sales at the show. Please buy your raffle tickets by sending a check in the enclosed envelope.

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SWEENEY AMERICAN LEGION POST

251 MAPLE STREET MANCHESTER NH DIRECTIONS: ELM STREET TO VALLEY STREET TO MAPLE STREET (1ST LEFT AFTER STADIUM)

~ Visit our Web site! ~

Meeting Schedules, Pictures and Articles about Adopt-a-biologist program, Stream Restoration Projects, Chapter Outings, Fly Patterns, and a "Links Page" with links to interesting web sites

