

# Merrimack River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

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MAY 2007

## President's Message

In March and April the chapter conducted a series of beginner and intermediate Learn to Fly Fish courses. Stan Jodziewicz and I are instructors in the New Hampshire Fish and Game department's Let's Go Fishing program, and we taught the course, with assistance from Jim Norton and casting instruction help from Tom Jutras. Some of the 60 students in the class have or will join TU. Go to the chapter [website](#) to learn more about the class. Let me know if you or a friend would like to attend next winter.

There are plenty of volunteer opportunities still available. This week many chapter members helped stock salmon fry in the Piscataquog and Souhegan Rivers. Thursday I was fortunate enough to be part of the stocking crew on the Souhegan River. We stocked over 100,000 salmon fry, that hopefully one day in the near future some will return from the Atlantic ocean to spawn in the Merrimack River, be captured at the Essex dam in Lawrence and continue the cycle of life. See Don's article about the Adopt-a-Biologist program and how you can get involved.

At the March meeting we had White Mountain National Forest fishery biologist Mark Prout tell us about his efforts to monitor and improve brook trout habitat. We will help Mark electroshock survey some brooks again this summer. Take a look at the [pictures](#) from last year's project on the chapter website. If there is enough interest, we will have one weekend day and one week day with Mark. This is a lot of fun, you learn a lot and it helps restore wild NH brook trout. If you want to volunteer for a day to help Mark electroshock wild brook trout in mid-August, send me an [email](#).

One of my favorite chapter activities is the annual chapter trip to Mollidgewock State Campground in Errol. We usually have about 35 members and guests attend the trip, which is timed to coincide with the Alder Fly (Zebra caddis) hatch on the Androscoggin River. There are still a few spots available, so read the article by Mack and contact him if you want to go on the trip. If you do go, you won't be sorry! Big flies, big fish, big cookout and a good time!

At the March meeting (at the Amoskeag Fishway) we will hold election of officers. We need a few more members to step up and fill an officer position. This is your chance to have a positive affect on what is being done to restore trout habitat in NH. Please consider running for office and taking an active role in leading the chapter. It is very satisfying to know that you made a difference for future generations to be able to fish for wild fish in our local waters.

It has been my pleasure to serve as chapter president for the last four years. Thank you for your support!

Tight Lines,  
Gerry

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 President's Message
- 2 Chapter Meeting and Camping Trip Information
- 3 Adopt-a-Biologist



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

**REMINDER: DO NOT FORGET !!!!!**

## **MAY MEETING NOT, REPEAT NOT AT SWEENEY POST MEETING HELD ON TUES 5/8 AT THE AMOSKEAG FISHWAY**

WE WILL HAVE A TOUR OF THE FACILITY BEFORE OUR REGULAR MEETING. ELECTION OF OFFICERS WILL BE HELD AT THE MEETING. THE FISHWAYS BUILDING IS LOCATED ON SALMON STREET IN MANCHESTER EAST OF THE AMOSKEAG CIRCLE (NEXT TO HOOTERS RESTAURANT). PARK AT THE UPPER LOT AND WALK DOWN THE DRIVEWAY.

### **FISHING EXPO: (Dave Magnon)**

On Saturday, May 5th, from 9 AM to 3 PM, the NH Fish and Game Dept. is hosting a Fishing Expo at F&G Headquarters on Hazen Drive in Concord. The NH TU Council will have a booth there, in addition to guides, distributors of equipment, and F&G biologists and other personnel. Plan to attend to support fishing in NH!

### **CHAPTER TRIP**

We have had great participation this year for the chapter trip to the mighty Androscoggin River in Errol NH. We have reservations for camp sites at the Mollidgewock campground starting Friday June 22<sup>nd</sup> and ending Sunday June 24<sup>th</sup>. The trip is timed to match the “Alder Fly” hatch on the river as the hatch produces great fishing action. In addition to the Androscoggin, members can fish nearby rivers in Maine, the Connecticut River in NH and the many ponds in the surrounding area. Saturday night is the world famous steak or chicken dinner cook out. The price for the trip which includes BOTH the two nights at the campsite and the dinner is only \$ 33 per adult. We still have room for members to come up for the festivities. If you have an interest in fishing in NH you should really try to make this trip. Everyone has a good time and almost everyone returns year after year. Contact Mac Duhaime at [mduhaimehome@yahoo.com](mailto:mduhaimehome@yahoo.com) regarding reservations. You can go to the following website to see information regarding the campground: [www.nhstateparks.org/ParksPages/Mollidgewock/mollidgewock.pdf](http://www.nhstateparks.org/ParksPages/Mollidgewock/mollidgewock.pdf). We have reserved site # 21-28 and 30-34-13 sites (4 people per site)

### **Adopt-A-Biologist Gets Off to a Great 2007 Start** (Don Mcginley)

After the great flood of April, 2007, our local rivers receded quickly and stocking of Atlantic salmon fry began on April 24<sup>th</sup> on the Piscataquog River in New Boston. The river level on this gorgeous clear blue sky day was perfect for all, man and fish alike. We had a record breaking number of volunteers at 15 which made the day even more enjoyable.

Four of us started early in the morning toward the headwaters of the Piscataquog in Frankestown where I came upon an old mill structure that still includes a large arch-bridge structure through which the water flowed. Who would have thought that this piece of “art” could have survived our second Hundred Year Flood in two years? When I met with our group back at the truck with Ben Nugent of NHF&G, we all took a few minutes to revisit this structure of our New England ancestors and think about their efforts – and, of course, what the industrial revolution did to our salmon and brook trout.

I hope you will all consider volunteering a day or more as the season progresses. I guarantee that you will receive back more than the few hours you give ... just as our little group did at the arch of the old mill.

If you can help with Atlantic salmon fry stocking during the month of May, please phone Vikki Leonard at NH Fish & Game to sign up and to get all details on dates and meeting places. Vikki can be reached at 603-271-2501.

We expect a number of opportunities this summer to assist Biologist Dianne Emerson with her Wild Brook trout study and also to help out on several Nash Stream restoration efforts. If you are already on the Adopt-A-Biologist Program Email list, you will automatically receive Email notices of events.

If you are not on the list, you can join the effort by emailing me at: [donmcg44@comcast.net](mailto:donmcg44@comcast.net)

### **Matt Carpenter of NHF&G & Volunteer on April 24<sup>th</sup> Piscataquog Stocking Effort**



## **LACK OF OUTDOORS INTEREST NOT JUST IN NH (NY TIMES ARTICLE)**

### **OUTDOORS; Fish Are Biting, but the Anglers Aren't**

By **MATT HIGGINS**

In his short story "Big Two-Hearted River," Ernest Hemingway delivered a paean to the trout that got away.

"He had been solidly hooked," Hemingway wrote. "Solid as a rock. He felt like a rock, too, before he started off. By God, he was a big one. By God, he was the biggest one I ever heard of."

But in the language of government data, the story of the ones that got away is more prosaic, telling how applications for fishing licenses have been in a freefall for more than a decade.

In New York, where the start of trout season April 1 signals an annual rite of spring, the number of licenses issued has declined for a dozen years, according to the Department of Environmental Conservation.

In 2002-3, the D.E.C. sold 1,007,156 fishing licenses. By 2005-6, the last year for which complete figures were available, only 978,848 were sold.

New York's figures reflect a national trend. According to United States Census Bureau data, 19 percent of Americans fished in 1991. By 2001, only 16 percent fished.

Even in Florida, which has experienced a population boom, freshwater fishing licenses have hovered around 600,000 for several years.

"For the most part, our license sales are level," said Bob Wattendorf, fisheries biologist with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission. "But they're nowhere close to where our population growth has been."

Several factors have been cited to account for the waning interest in fishing -- from the decline of rural life to increased working hours -- but there is one thing that seems certain: fewer children are introduced to or remain interested in fishing.

"My own feeling is that it has more to do with demographics and aging population," said Paul McKeown, a fisheries manager for the D.E.C. in New York. "Baby boomers are getting older and not being replaced by a younger generation.

"Kids don't get exposed to fishing like they would years ago. Years ago it was part of a family's heritage to go out and hunt and fish."

Chuck Godfrey was taught to fish by his father at age 2. By 7, he was trout fishing on rural creeks around Western New York. Godfrey in turn taught his son and daughter to fish. Now his three grandchildren, all 4 years old, have begun fishing.

A past president of his local chapter of Trout Unlimited, Godfrey is the current president of the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, an umbrella organization of hunting and fishing groups in the Buffalo area.

Now retired, Godfrey was a high school math teacher for 29 years, and coached track and cross-country. During that time he observed a change in young people's attitudes toward the outdoors.

"There are not as many people oriented toward a rural lifestyle as there used to be," he said. "They seem to have lost that connection to the land."

In his 1995 book, "Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder," Richard Louv made a case that children had become alienated from nature by a combination of shrinking natural spaces, technology and parents fearful of potential perils outdoors.

According to a 2007 United States Fish and Wildlife Service report, there was a minus-20 percent change from 1990 to 2005 in children who had ever participated in fishing, with declines occurring nationwide.

The study also reported that half of those 16 and older who had quit fishing cited a lack of time as the main reason.

"Both parents have to work a lot," Godfrey said. "They don't have time to fish and hunt."

To stem losses in Florida, Wattendorf said that the state's Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission had tried to demonstrate that the sport offered families an opportunity to spend time together. And Godfrey's group, the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, has teamed with the New York D.E.C. to offer two free fishing clinics for children each year in and around Buffalo. Meanwhile, as interest has declined, fishing has actually improved in New York. "The trout fishing is incredibly better than when I was young," Godfrey said. "There's a lot more creeks that have a lot more fish than there used to be. I used to catch 10 to 12 fish on the same waters that I catch 40 to 50 now."

With small farms increasingly abandoned, rural land has reverted to a natural state and improved the quality of nearby creeks and streams. The federal Clean Water Act of 1972 has improved water quality and fish populations in the Great Lakes and its tributaries. And in preparation for trout season, the New York D.E.C. has stocked more than two million fish this year.

**"The fishing is there," McKeown said. "It's recruiting fisherman that we're failing at."**

## **SALT WATER FLY FISHING**

If you have never tried salt water fly fishing, the following website has good basic information regarding technique, tackle, strategies, etc.: <http://www.marco-island-florida.com/don/home.htm>

## **PERSONAL NOTE**

This is my last issue as your newsletter editor. It has been a fun and interesting three year stint. I hope that you have found the past issues interesting and informative and learned some useful tidbits about the "quiet sport". I leave you with the wisdom of my grandfather: *"If you keep your rod stiff and your line wet you will always have a good time"*.

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~ Visit our Web site! ~

<http://www.merrimacktu.org>

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