

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited (www.wnytroutunlimited.org) February, 2010

OFFICERS

Gary Coons—President yragсноoc@juno.com
7329 Townline Rd, N. Tonawanda NY 14120 (695-1003)
Gene Romanyshyn-Vice President
5289 Roberts Rd., Hamburg NY 14075 (491-6111)
Antoinette Grote-Secretary (684-9523)
Tony Messina-Treasurer
33 Deveraux, Buffalo, NY 14214 (832-8517) amessina@hotmail.com

COMMITTEES

Awards-**Dave Tooke** (688-7492)
Education-**Antoinette Grote** (684-9523)
Library-**Nick Pionessa** (683-1873)
Membership-**Larry Bolster** (688-5836)
Fly tying sessions-**Len Bigaj** (826-4178)
Resource protection-**Gary Coons** (695-1003)
Salmon & Steelhead-**Don Kwiatkowski** (894-9807) & **Nick Pionessa**
Shows-**Len Bigaj** (826-4178)
Spring Banquet-**Len Bigaj** (826-4178)
Stream Projects-**Chuck Godfrey** (675-0057)
Sunshine-**Dee Maciejewski** (655-1331)
Website: **Ric Toczek** webmaster@wnytroutunlimited.org
Welcome-**Len Bigaj** (826-4178)
Video Library-**Jim Zak** (894-7301)
Erie County Federation Reps:
Chuck Godfrey (675-0057) steelheader@cheekcentfcu.net
State Council Delegates:
Chuck Godfrey (675-0057)
Gene Romanyshyn (627-2888)
Newsletter: **Russell Shefrin** AdkRuss@roadrunner.com

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(This newsletter is an expanded version of the print edition.)

Next WNY TU Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, February 23, 2010, 7:30 pm at the Donovan American Legion Post, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. Fly tying begins at 6pm. Please bring brown thread, because we will be tying the Hare's Ear Nymph.

The presenter, for the entertainment portion of the meeting, will be Mr. Scott Seidman, an accomplished fly tyer, who will share some of his expertise. Please join us.

President's Report

Greetings Fellow TUs,

Our January chapter meeting traditionally features a DEC presentation on the "state of our streams", as it were. If you missed this year's meeting, you missed one of the best. I want to thank presenters Scott Cornett and Jim Zanett for their professional efforts in conservation. The audience included fellow TU members and a number of interested guests.

February's speaker will be Rochester's Scott Seidman. Scott is not only a fellow TUer and NYSTU Council member but is an accomplished fly tyer who uses innovative techniques and materials. Bring a note pad with you, because Scott points out ways to tie flies that often get forgotten after the presentation is over.

As you have seen from the previous newsletters, the banquet is not far away. Len has tickets available for both the raffle and the dinner. Please don't wait for the last minute to reserve your tickets. The banquet is by far our biggest fund raiser of the year. It is also an appropriate time for recognition of individuals who have contributed to the community and to cold water resource protection. Award nominations should be sent to Dave Tooke or to me via e-mail (though handwritten recommendations are acceptable) no later than March 14, 2010, the last day of the Sportsman show.

As many of you know, we are part of the Erie Promotions Sportsman & Travel Show again this year. Sunday, March 14, 2010, we are hosting a youth tying activity from Noon to 4pm. Volunteers are needed to help with the manning of the booth throughout the show as well as for the youth tying.

Thanks to Nick Pionessa, keeper of the WNYTU Library, an inventory has been completed and a list of titles and authors has been compiled. The list will be coming soon to our website.

Many issues remain at the forefront for cold water resource conservation. We are actively involved. For example, we continue to monitor activities concerning the Marcellus Shale project, a matter which may impact our streams.

Also, WNYTU is in favor of the "Triple Arch" Peace Bridge design; because it places the piers in mid-river, away from the shoreline where they would affect many of our cold water fish species and their forage. This recommendation is based on sound biological facts and research.

I'm sure you have all heard of the Asian Carp debacle and its threat to the Great Lakes. The US Army Corps of Engineers will spend more than \$13 million to deter the Asian carp. Unfortunately, this may be "too little, too late": Asian Carp DNA has already been found above the weakly established barriers.

Finally, we are supporting an initiative to encourage the EPA to fund the Buffalo Niagara Riverkeeper's proposal for River Corridor Zoning for Habitat Protection. The funding would help to conserve the Buffalo River and the Lake Erie ecosystems.

We ALL live downstream. Please come out and support YOUR local chapter; become involved.

Gary Coons, WNYTU Chapter President.

Announcements

- **A Report from Len Bigaj:** Thanks to all the fly tyers who contributed their time and effort at last month's WNY TU chapter meeting. A special "thank you" is in order for Dave Bollman for tying and donating 100 nymphs.

Shows: The next show will be the W. N. Y. Sport and Travel Show. It will take place at the Agri Center in Hamburg from March 11 through March 14. The hours will be noon to 8pm on March 11 and March 12, 10am to 8pm on March 13, and 10am to 5pm on March 14. On the 14th, we will be fly-tying with the children from noon to 4pm. If you would like to help out, please call me, Len, at 826-4178.

Project Healing Waters: We will be fly-tying with the vets at the Buffalo V.A. on February 25 and on March 18, 2010, from 6 pm to 8 pm. Please let me know if you would like to help.

Annual Banquet: The next banquet will take place on March 27, 2010, at Lucarelli's Banquet Center. Our thanks to Century Printing for donating the printing of our Banquet and Grand Prize tickets again this

year. Some of the great items at this year's banquet include zippered waders, airline tickets, an up-right vacuum, fly rods and reels, a Florida golf outing, Lands End apparel, a Vera Bradley purse and wallet, Mikasa and Lenox accessories, T-Fal cookware, and much more. If you cannot attend but are interested in the banquet's Grand Prize drawing, we are pre-selling the raffle tickets. The first winner will get a choice of a Sage 2x1 590 9ft. 5wt. 4pc. fly rod with an Orvis Mid-arbor fly reel (value \$1000) or a Dell laptop computer with a T-Mobile Web-N-Walk card (value \$500). The raffle tickets are \$10.00 each, or three for \$20.00. Mark your choice on your check, and I will fill out your ticket, return your stub, and enter it in the Grand Prize drawing. If your entry is picked first, that is what you will win. The winner need not be present. Just send your check to Len Bigaj T.U., 58 Balen Drive, Lackawanna, N.Y. 14218. Details for the Banquet, our major fund raiser, are contained in the announcement at the end of this newsletter. Please try to attend; we need your support! P.S. Kindly order your tickets A.S.A.P., so I can order the food in time. Thanks, Len.

- **News from DEC: Mr. Scott Cornett**, Fishery Biologist at Region 9, would like all interested parties to know that "The New York State DEC Region 9 Fisheries Office will be running angler diary programs on three streams during 2010 and we [DEC] are currently recruiting anglers to keep diaries. A diary program for the Genesee River in Allegany and Wyoming Counties will run from April 1st through October 30th. This program will cover the river from the PA line downstream through Letchworth State Park and will record data for both trout and bass fishing trips.

The other diary program will cover Ischua Creek in Cattaraugus County and Goose Creek in Chautauqua County. This program will run from April 1st through June 30th and will evaluate an experimental stocking involving equal numbers of brook trout and brown trout. If you fish any of these three streams (even once) and would like to keep a diary for DEC, please call the DEC fisheries office at (716) 372-0645 or e-mail at fwfish9@gw.dec.state.ny.us. The diary programs will be used to evaluate the quality of the fisheries in these streams and determine future management actions for them."

During the 2008 trout season, Region 9 conducted an angler use survey on the Ischua Creek in Cattaraugus County. The survey assessed the amount of fishing on the stream, the catch rate, and angler opinions regarding several trout management issues for Ischua Creek. One purpose of the survey was to evaluate the success of a 2.2 mile-long Catch and Release regulation in reaching its objectives which were set for it when it was established in October, 2004. A summary of the survey findings are available at the DEC website <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/59688.html>. Mr. Cornett would like interested anglers to read the summary and then to send DEC their opinion as to whether to keep the above Catch and Release Section or to remove it. The decision needs to be made by May, 2010.

- **Stream Projects: Mr. Chuck Godfrey**, our Stream Projects Committee chairman, has submitted the following report: Work is planned on at least two streams during the upcoming summer. The first is on the Wiscoy. High flood waters during the January thaw caused some damage to the Wiscoy, just above the Wing Farm. Repairs will be made by the USFWS this spring, and we will be helping with planting of bare root seedlings and young potted elms at the site. TU has a program, through Landscape Elms, for obtaining up to one hundred free young potted elms. We plan on taking advantage of that program to plant at a minimum of three sites along the Wiscoy. The plantings should take place in late April or early May, because the DEC tree nursery delivers them at that time.

We will continue the McIntosh Brook habitat improvement in Allegany State Park this summer. The stream will be surveyed again this spring to see what the effects of high water have been and to determine what work needs to be done. I anticipate that we will spend a couple of days removing large rocks uncovered by the flow of water in the pools which have been formed. If the effect is anything like it was last year, I think the pools will be even deeper and the habitat even better. McIntosh and Beehunter Creeks will be electro-shocked early this summer to evaluate the success of the program. (McIntosh will be closed to fishing through the 2012 season.)

If anyone can think of other places which could use our efforts, either this year or in the future, please contact me, Chuck Godfrey, with suggestions.



At the WNY TU chapter meeting on January 26, 2010, Mr. Scott Cornett and Mr. James Zanett, both of N.Y.S. DEC, provided us with a wide ranging discussion of several issues of significance to cold water fisheries conservation in Western New York. Thanks to notes provided to me by the presenters, I am able to give you a brief summary. But you “really had to be there” to appreciate the presentation. Russell Shefrin, Ed.

- McIntosh Brook (Allegany State Park) and Wiscoy Creek – 2009:

In June, 2009, a fish and habitat sampling was conducted on McIntosh Creek and the “control” stream, Beehunter Creek. As anticipated, the number of adult brook trout was less than that found in 2008. This result was expected; because, in 2008, young of the year (YOY) and yearling trout had not been found. However, in 2009, good numbers of YOY brook trout were observed in both McIntosh and Beehunter, a finding that bodes well for the future. Unfortunately, some stocked brook trout were present in McIntosh. They had apparently entered the creek from Red House Brook or Lake. Because the goal of the project is to develop a population of wild brook trout in McIntosh, these hatchery fish were unwelcome visitors. As a result of this discovery, DEC plans to suspend stocking of brook trout in Allegany State Park and will stock brown trout, instead. As far as habitat on McIntosh is concerned, the “pool digger” structures seem to be working.

In 2009, DEC conducted surveys to monitor the wild brown trout population on the Wiscoy and its tributaries. Several sites were electrofished, and the results could be compared with an angler diary survey. The electrofishing revealed that, on the Wiscoy itself, the abundance of brown trout appeared to be the lowest since 1978. However, there was so much variance among sites that it is difficult to reach definitive conclusions on this matter. If the brown trout population in the Wiscoy was, in fact, unusually low in 2009, it could be because of poor reproduction in 2006 and 2007. (Trout abundance on the North Branch of the Wiscoy and on Trout Brook was more encouraging.) Information on these surveys, as well as others, can be found on the DEC website under “fish surveys in WNY”.

- Didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) Update: So far, this non-native invasive algae has not been found in Western New York. Anglers need to remain vigilant, however, to prevent its spread.

- 2009 Flooding in the Cattaraugus Creek Watershed: While some parts of area creeks were well scoured, in other sections of the same waterways accumulations of woody debris now provide good trout habitat. The “fishability” of those areas is, however, another matter!
- Public Fishing Rights (PFR): While DEC did pick up new areas on Goodell Creek and on the North Branch of the Wiscoy (and hopes to acquire more on the Cattaraugus), budget constraints reduce the likelihood of more PFR acquisitions in the near future.
- Ischua Creek Regulations: Some decisions need to be made on the Ischua Creek Catch and Release regulation area. Surveys in 2008 revealed a low abundance of brown trout in the C & R section, though, as hoped, angler use of the area was similar to the rest of the stream and was spread through the season. However, catch rates were below the objective of one trout per hour. DEC would like to hear, from individual anglers, opinions on whether to keep the C & R regulation. The decision needs to be made by May, so, if you have comments, please send them in soon. On the DEC website there is a link for sending comments.
- Planned Fish Surveys, 2009: Surveys are planned for the summer on McIntosh and Beehunter Creeks and on Clear Creek in Ellington. Some similar work will likely also be done on some of the area’s small wild trout streams.

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Trout Unlimited is a non-profit organization with the mission to: conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.