

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited (www.wnytroutunlimited.org) May 2008

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Stamp

**SAY, HOW ABOUT THAT RAFFLE FOR
PEOPLE WITH AN E-MAIL ADDRESS!!!!??**

SEE PAGE 2 FOR DETAILS.

**DON'T FORGET, YOU HAVE TO ENTER TO
WIN!**

Label

Next WNY TU Chapter Meeting Tuesday, May 27, 2008, 7:30 pm at the **Donovan American Legion Post**, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. **Fly Tying will start at 6pm.** Please bring pink or white thread, because we will be tying the Pink Woolly Bugger.

The meeting will include a presentation by trapper Gary Coons, on "Nuisance Trapping in Your Back Yard".

President's Report

The fishing reports have been positive! With our early blast of Spring came stories of bountiful hatches and plentiful fish catches on several local streams. Let's hope we have just the right amount of rain to keep the streams cool and the fishing hot, all Summer long and into the Fall. We, in Western New York, are very fortunate to have a variety of productive fisheries available, with a minimum of environmental threats to them. Other Chapters, other states, are not as fortunate.

Fishermen, hunters, and trappers are becoming a smaller group as a whole; and we must realize that Sportsmen are generally the Conservationists and Environmentalists in our society. In this changing world, there are those who would like to see our privileges disappear. The phrase, "Take a Kid Fishing" is taking on an even more important meaning. We all must do our part to instill our love and respect for our favorite area of sport in the next generations.

And speaking of young people, please enter a budding fly fisher you may know in the June, "Yute Raffle"! He or she must be 13-19 years of age, and must be present to win at the June 29th general meeting.

If you haven't sent your e-mail address to Russ and me, or signed up at the April meeting, then you are NOT entered to win a rod at the September meeting. Please e-mail us, **even if you were on the old e-mail list**, to receive the newsletter. We want to know if you are willing to accept electronic e-mails ONLY. The fewer the number of ones printed, the more money we can save.

Come to the May 27th meeting. Share your fishing news, find out how you can help your chapter, bring a friend, enjoy a libation. Remember to come early (6PM) and tie woolly buggers! Our entertainment will be "Nuisance Trapping in Your Back Yard" by Trapper Gary Coons.

Announcements

- **Free Chance to Win a Rod** (Forwarded by Dee Maciejewski). Yes, you read it correctly. Not only do you get a chance on a great 6 1/2 foot #4-5 weight rod, but also to give the chapter an opportunity to save some money. What we want is your current email address so newsletters and meeting notices can be sent out electronically if you desire. It currently costs us about \$.75 for each newsletter to be printed and mailed, and we send over 600 each time. Since we mail 5 hardcopy newsletters a year, that's over \$2000! If we could cut that figure even in half, a substantial amount of money that could be more available for our local projects, not to mention the paper that would be saved! The remainder of the newsletters is now electronic, but **if we don't have your address, you aren't getting them!** We only want your email for chapter use. We will not share it with anyone else.

Even if you think we have your email, we may not. Many of the addresses on our current small list are undeliverable. Only those who reply will be entered in the rod drawing. The winner will be selected in September, and if not present, will be notified by.....you guessed it email.

Simply email your name, and just say "yes" if you want all newsletters sent electronically, or "no" if you still want the hardcopy issues that are published.

Send your reply to both of the following so the lists can be checked for errors:

Russ Shefrin (Editor) newsletter@wnytroutunlimited.org

Dee Maciejewski (President) president@wnytroutunlimited.org

Please help us, and maybe win a great rod! Do it now, and ask your friends to do the same.

- **Bob Witzel**, a long time member of WNYTU is showing his lifetime of paintings at the Grant Street Gallery (corner of Lafayette) from June 7-29. Hours will be 4-7PM. Bob will be at the gallery on the 7th and 8th, from noon till 5PM. The show is free, and he hopes to renew old friendships with fishing friends. Works include paintings of Western New York waters and Montana trout streams. Please stop in!! (Submitted by Dee Maciejewski.)
- **Tree Planting Report and More** (Submitted by Chuck Godfrey). On May 3 and 4 Mike Kennedy, Dave Labiak, Tom Piwowar, Pam Budny, Joe and Kevin Morgan, and Chuck Godfrey planted 500 willows, 200 sycamores, 200 silver maples, 100 black locust, and 100 red oak bare root seedlings on the Kennedy property on Oatka Creek, just south of Warsaw. This is a stocked section of stream which had been heavily damaged by a high water event in March of 2007. The Wyoming County SWCD and the DEC had constructed a project similar to what was done on the Fairgrounds at Pike in 2005, using cabled log revetments, grade control structures, and sloping the bank to protect against further erosion damage and to construct new trout habitat. On May 8 and 11, Dave, Joe, Kevin, and Chuck were again planting trees. This time the project was on the No-kill section of the Wiscoy, above the Hillside Bridge. We planted 700

willows (admittedly most were 2 or 3 to a hole) and over 100 silver maples. This was done in 4 sections which for some reason did not have any willows or alders along the banks.

Our upcoming summer project will be helping the Red House Brook Chapter, along with the DEC, Allegany State Park, USFWS, SUNY Fredonia, and I hope I haven't left anyone out. This project will get on site planning started on 5/14,15,16. Some fish sampling (to see what the trout population is before the project is started) will be done prior to July. The actual work on the stream will probably start in July, but the exact dates will depend on when we can get started moving the logs that will be used.

On another note, again this year, the Erie County Federation, the DEC, and the Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board are running two Kids' Fishing Clinics to teach kids to fish and to give them the opportunity to fish. I've participated in this for years, and it is really rewarding to see the youngsters introduced to our sport, and, many times, to catch their first fish. We could really use a few more volunteers to help, as we had over 120 kids at each of the clinics last year, and were short on volunteers. If you think you could help, please get in touch with Chuck Godfrey at 675-0057 (home), 440-6995(cell), or steelheader@cheekcentfcu.net . The dates are June 14 at Tiff Nature Preserve, and June 28 at Chestnut Ridge Park (yes, there is fantastic pan fish fishing that is normally not available to the public at the South end of the Park.) Please consider helping at either or both of these great opportunities to get kids involved in fishing. They both will run from 10am-2pm, with lunches provided to all. We ask the volunteers to arrive at 8:30am but would welcome help for any amount of time.

- **A Reminder:** Why you should attend TU meetings, buy 50-50 tickets, go to the banquet, etc.: There are plenty of reasons to support the local TU chapter, but here is one you may not know about. The fact is that, by and large, the activities of the local chapter are not financed by the national organization. The costs of the newsletter, our portion of most area stream and habitat restoration projects, etc., are funded almost entirely by the money raised at the meetings, the banquet, and the sale of flies at the county fair. Your dues go to the national organization, which only provides money to the local group under special circumstances. Without the money raised here, the local organization may not be able to exist.
- **Fishing Partner Connection.** For those of you who are seeking a partner with whom to fish, we will be running this announcement on a regular basis but only in the electronic Newsletter. If you would like to share your day on the water with someone, e-mail Editor Russell Shefrin at AdkRuss@roadrunner.com; and your contact information (name, telephone number, e-mail address) will be included in the newsletter. To get in touch with your partner, contact him or her directly. Currently interested: **Bill Swartz** (716-741-2563, flytyer72001@yahoo.com). **Larry Jakubowski** (716-684-9755, jake14086@yahoo.com). **Tom Kielb** (716-895-3760).
- **“Community Forum on Priorities for Great Lakes Protection”** is the title of a program to be held on Thursday, June 5, from 7:00 – 9:00pm, at the Woodlawn Nature Center, Woodlawn Beach State Park, S-3580 Lakeshore Road, Blasdell (Hamburg), N.Y. It is hosted by Kit Kennedy, Special Deputy Attorney General for Environmental Protection. The announcement states, “Learn how the Attorney General’s Office is protecting our Great Lakes.....Share your priorities for Great Lakes protection”. The OAG contact number is 716-852-6271. (This notice, originally sent by former assemblyman Dick Smith, was forwarded by David Barus. Ed.)

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Articles

Editor's Notes:

1. The April 29, 2008, Chapter Meeting of WNY TU featured a presentation by Mr. Paul Fuhrmann, a biologist with Ecology and Environment, Inc. Mr. Fuhrmann provided an in-depth report on the McKinstry Creek Restoration Project, which is a mitigation project associated with the Route 219 Extension. The work involved 2200 feet of channel realignment and riparian restoration, which was performed in 2007. Included in Mr. Fuhrmann's discussion were such topics as site selection and analysis (stream visual assessment, stream dynamics, invertebrate habitat, etc.) and restoration designed to mimic natural systems in form, function, and process. The complexity and myriad variables involved were clear from his talk. This was another in a long line of enjoyable and informative presentations included in the chapter meetings, all the more reason for our members to attend those meetings.

2. Speaking of the Chapter meetings, mention of the presentation on February 26, 2008, was inadvertently omitted from the March newsletter. My apologies to Meagan Boice Green, who discussed the Dr. Victor Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve. This intriguing area is right in our “backyard” and includes self-guided interpretive trails, public guided tours, and a “green” education center. You can contact them at 716-683-5959 or go to <http://www.dec.ny.gov/education/1837.html>.

3. A few days ago, I had the pleasure of visiting the recently established Natural History Museum of the Adirondacks (also known as The Wild Center) in Tupper Lake, N.Y. This is a lovely facility with a lot to offer those with an interest in trout and their natural environment. On display, alive and well in beautifully designed tanks, are native strains (Little Tupper and Windfall) of brook trout, unusual tiger trout, and some gigantic lake trout. There is, of course, much more at The Wild Center. In my view, it is well worth a visit. While there, you may want to take a look at some of the “green” features of the buildings. Check out their website at <http://www.wildcenter.org/>. (They have a “trout cam”; but, as of this writing, it is not working. Staff is aware of the problem, which, hopefully, will be corrected soon.)



The Rebirth of Pennsylvania's Big Spring

By Jack Black

Pennsylvania's Big Spring Creek, in Newville, PA, is a classic low gradient limestone stream, a favorite of Vince Marinaro and Charlie Fox. It was unique among Pennsylvania's limestone spring creeks in that it was almost totally dominated by a free rising strain of wild brook trout. As a boy growing up in nearby Hershey, I fished it to the exclusion of most other streams. With time's passage, even though fly fishing was to take me to many other

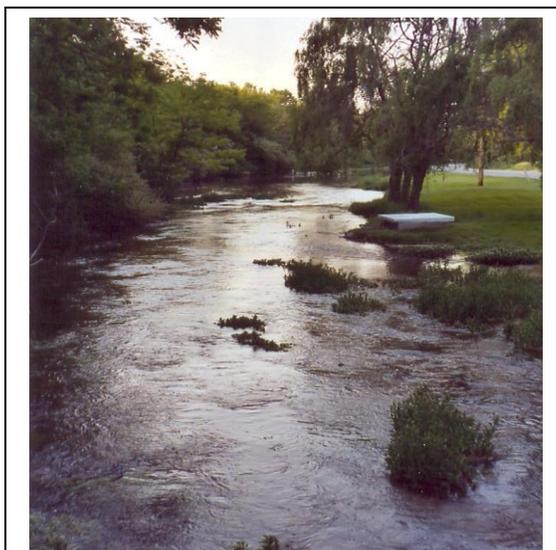
streams and rivers throughout the country, I never forgot about Big Spring, its remarkable brookies, and its beautiful pastoral scenery.

Unfortunately, in the late 1950's, a commercial hatchery was built a half mile below the springs which contribute to the water's quality. This hatchery destroyed the fishery from a 4.5 mile portion of the stream below the commercial hatchery's outfall.

In 1968, the state bought out the commercial hatchery but, three years later, proceeded to build what has been described by others as a mega-hatchery. This massive fish cultural plant produced in excess of 900,000 trout per year (around 360,000 lbs., requiring more than 580,000 lbs. of fish food). As a point of reference, Caledonia produces in the neighborhood of 150,000 lbs.

Unfortunately, the hatchery's outfall was located just below the springs, thus polluting the entire stream. By 1974 the remaining wild brook trout population was in trouble.

In 1995, at the invitation of Garrett Mortensen, I met with a small group of dedicated fly fishers to describe how we could conduct a study that would explain why hatchery effluent caused the collapse



Big Spring Creek

of the brook trout population. Following that first meeting, Gene Macri, an expert on the use of EPA Rapid Bio assessment methods, and Ralph Shires, a chemist, and I conducted an ecological study to determine the nature of the hatchery's environmental impacts, which seemed to include the collapse of possibly the best brook trout fishery in the US. We discovered low concentrations of dissolved oxygen within the stream's spawning gravel that in turn caused changes in the stream's invertebrate community such that virtually 100% of the stream's invertebrate life was pollution tolerant organisms. Sow bugs alone constituted more than 90% of the invertebrate biomass.

We presented our report to the PA Fish & Boat Commission in the fall of 1997. Biologists from the PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) were also in attendance. As a result, DEP biologists Mark Embeck and William Botts conducted their own studies. Even though slightly different methods were used, their findings closely paralleled ours. These data, a public hearing, and the dedicated legal work of Kurt Weist of Penn Future, eventually resulted in a decision, by the DEP, to refuse to renew the hatchery's NPDES permit (federal discharge permit). This development was instrumental in the closure of the hatchery on November 15, 2001.

By the following spring (2002), there were subtle hints that improved water quality was affecting the stream in a positive way. Although limited, there was some successful spawning by a scattering of adult hatchery trout the first fall-winter. The sowbug population was decreasing, and scuds were increasing. In 2003, natural reproduction of brook trout was confirmed in the stream's upper reaches. Large numbers of Baetis mayflies and black stoneflies were now established. The first sulfur dun mayflies followed in 2004, with more dramatic increases in the population of this highly sensitive mayfly species in 2005 and 2006. By this juncture, natural reproduction of brook trout was well established in the upper reaches; and abundant reproduction by rainbows was occurring in middle portion of the special regulation section (Flies Only, C&R).

The stream is making a dramatic turn around. Sensitive mayflies, caddis, and stonefly species are now well established. Natural reproduction of brook and rainbow trout is improving with each passing year. Several major grants for habitat improvement were recently awarded to the Cumberland Valley Chapter of TU and its partner, the Big Spring Watershed Association, and the PA Fish and Boat Commission. The future looks bright for Big Spring.