

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited

September 2006

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Stamp

Label

President's Report

I hope you all enjoyed the long, hot summer. If you fished some of the local streams, you may have seen the new TU posters at access points, placed there by tireless volunteers. While some of us relaxed the past several weeks, myself included, many dedicated TU members were also busy helping **Chuck Godfrey** at stream projects, or working the Erie County Fair with **Len Bigaj**.

I hope to see more of you at the meetings. This month, September 26th, **Don Kwiatkowski** will speak to us and show us slides of Pennsylvania's Spring Creeks. Plans are being made for future monthly meeting programs, but we still need a coordinator. Might you be the one to volunteer for this job?

There will be no fly tying at the September meeting. If you would like to tie flies at home to donate to our club, you could bring them to a meeting. If you wish, you will be reimbursed with hooks and hackle.

Your help is always needed and appreciated. This year, won't you consider being more active in TU? Make a difference.

Dee Maciejewski, President

Anglers Choice Taxidermy

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WNY TU Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, September 26, 2006, 7:30 pm at the **Donovan American Legion Post**, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. **The speaker will be Don Kwiatkowski who will talk about Pennsylvania's Spring creek & Penn's creek. There will be no fly tying at this meeting**

Chapter Elections

Chapter elections will be in October, so all nominations must be in at the September meeting. If anyone wishes to run for the Officer or Director positions, please let Dee Maciejewski know at the meeting.

Cattaraugus Creek Outfitters

Receive updated stream reports for the Spring & Fall Steelhead runs on Lake Erie's Tributaries, including Cattaraugus Creek. *Sign up now to be on our mailing list:* email vtobia@aol.com or call **Vince @ 479-2327**.

Saltwater trips 2007 Join other local anglers on great fishing adventures!

Grey's Point Lodge—Acklins Island, Bahamas—Bonefishing Adventure (February 17-24)

Crooked Island Adventure—more Bonefishing (February 24—March 3)

Contact Vince for more info @ 479-2327.

The Brook Trout of Spring Brook (Springville)

by **Scott Cornett of the NYS DEC**

On July 17, 2006 a crew from the Region 9 Fisheries office sampled the brook trout population in Spring Brook, located in the Village of Springville, Erie County. This stream had not been sampled since 1992. The stream is unique in Region 9. Wild brook trout are the only salmonid occupying the stream and it is our largest, high fertility stream where brook trout are found exclusively. The stream averages 14 feet in width, with a flow at the time of sampling of 8-10 cfs. The stream was electro-fished at three sites. Site one, located in a village park just above South Buffalo Street, produced seven yearling and older wild brook trout in 285 feet. We also captured six other fish species. Habitat at this site was very good. Site two was located at Maple Ave. At this site we captured 12 yearling and older wild brook trout in 288 feet along with eight other fish species. Trout habitat at this site was also very good. At site 3, located at North Street, 12 yearling and older brook trout were captured in 369 feet. We also found seven other fish species at this site. Trout habitat at this site was fair. Three additional sites were looked at, but not electro-fished. At site 4 located at Middle Road, a large beaver pond precluded electro-fishing, however one adult brook trout approximately 7 inches in length was observed from the bridge. Site 5 was located at Mayo Road. This site was not electro-fished due to very heavy alder and willow cover over the stream. The stream at this site was only about 3 feet in width and had a heavy growth of watercress. The water temperature at this site was 74 degrees. Finally, site 6 was located at Sharp Street. The stream had virtually no flow at this site and was more of a marsh. The water could not be reached to take a temperature due to deep muck along the banks. The stream below this point flows through a golf course and did not appear to have extensive shading.

In a 1992 survey, there were an estimated 26 pounds/acre of yearling and older wild brook trout (257/mile) in the stream. In this year's survey, we found an estimated 18 pounds/acre of yearling and older wild brook trout (199/mile). The largest brook trout collected was 10.6 inches, however seven of the 31 adult brook trout captured were greater than nine inches. No young-of-year brook trout were captured in this survey. A few young-of-year were captured in the 1992 survey. It is likely that reproduction is occurring in small tributaries or in the main stem where cold springs are available.

Because of its fertility, this stream has the potential to produce more larger brook trout than most others where they are found in the region. This stream should be able to produce many more brook trout than our surveys have

found and there are several limiting factors that need to be addressed. The first limiting factor is water temperature. In the afternoon of the survey, with air temperatures in the low 90's, we recorded water temperatures at our lower and upper sampling sites of 72 degrees and 74 degrees. We recorded temperatures at two bridges above our electro-fishing sites (Sites 4&5) and found temperatures of 74 degrees at those sites also. High water temperatures are likely due to loss of shade where the stream runs through a golf course, a dairy farm and also due to several large beaver ponds on the upper stream. The second limiting factor is siltation, likely due to beaver activity and poor land use practices throughout the watershed. The wild brook trout population in Spring Brook is a unique resource in Erie County and Region 9 that needs further monitoring, rehabilitation and protection.

There are almost 2.5 miles of Spring Brook below our lower sampling site, however time did not allow us to examine the lower section of the stream. Only the lower 0.2 miles above the mouth are readily accessible with electro-fishing equipment with the area upstream in a gorge. In 1981 the stream was surveyed 0.25 miles above the mouth. No trout were found, but seven other fish species were captured. It is quite possible that some wild brook trout from the upper section of the stream do drop into the lower section of the stream, however high water temperatures likely limit their population and do not allow them to reproduce successfully in this section. There is a 12 foot high man-made falls just above South Buffalo Street that is an impassible barrier to fish returning to the upper section of the stream where we sampled. The water at the base of this barrier falls onto a concrete slab and there is no plunge pool, thus if steelhead gain access to lower section of the stream after alteration of the Springville Dam, they should not be able to reach the upper section of the stream and impact the brook trout. Impacts to water quality and habitat loss due to development and poor land use are the immediate concern for the future of brook trout in this stream.

New Steelhead Regulations

Beginning on October 1, 2006, there will be a 12" size limit on all salmonids taken in Lake Erie & it's tributaries.

Catch and Release, Artificial Lures only section (year round fishing) for all trout and salmon on Chautauqua Creek from the bridge on South Gale Street upstream 1.3 miles to the upper dam used by the Village of Westfield for water intake.

Catch and Release, Artificial Lures only section (year round fishing) for all trout and salmon on the main branch of Eighteen Mile Creek, in the Eighteen Mile Creek County Park lands. This section is within the county park, which extends approx ¼ mile below the forks, or junction pool. The south branch is excluded from this regulation. Signs will be placed on both streams around October 1.

The Brook Trout of South Elmwood Avenue: True Story or Urban Legend?

By **Russell Shefrin**

In his book, "Brook Trout", Nick Caras has a chapter entitled "Manhattan: The Cradle of American Trout Fishing". The chapter tells of Manhattan Island brook trout water long vanished in the face of urban development. Does Buffalo have a similar story to tell? I have recently obtained information which suggests the answer may be that it does indeed. My investigation into this fascinating situation is not yet complete; but I would like to give you a preliminary report.

According to the documents I have reviewed, it seems reasonably well established that, around the early 1860's, a wealthy Buffalonian by the name of Bronson Case Rumsey purchased a large tract of land. The property was bounded, on the east, by Delaware Avenue, on the west, by Carolina Street, on the north, by Tupper Street, and, on the south, by Tracy Street. Mr. Rumsey constructed an elegant mansion near the corner of Tracy and Delaware. To the west of his house, he developed a park-like setting that included a small lake. To us trout fishers, it is the source of the water for this lake that is particularly interesting.

An article in the "Buffalo Times", dated January 23, 1927, recounts that Mr. Rumsey's lake was created from a stream which had flowed through the property during its previous life as a brick and lumber yard. This stream, according to the "Buffalo Times" story, was kept fresh and cold by its feeder spring and once "abounded" in brook trout. Exactly when it did so is not stated.

Throughout the late 1800's, the Bronson Case Rumsey estate, including its wonderful lake, figured prominently in the social life of Buffalo's elite. However, by around 1915, the Rumsey family had sold much of the estate, South Elmwood Avenue bisected the old property, and the lake had been drained. A small island which had once stood in the lake reportedly became the foundation for School 76, built in the 1920's.

Now, about that trout stream. It's a great story, but is it true? If it is true, what became of the brook? Was it buried? Does it still exist in some groundwater re-incarnation? Since I read the 1927 article, I have been trying to obtain enough corroboration from other sources to convince me that there really was a fine trout stream in what is now a thoroughly paved over and urbanized part of Buffalo. So far, I have found two other references ("Buffalo Times",

June 4(?), 1931; "Buffalo Evening News", October 26, 1940). Unfortunately, both are subsequent to the 1927 report; one is by the same author; and, while both talk of a trout stream, neither says anything about brook trout. It is quite possible that these later accounts are based on the 1927 article. Of note, though, is a volume called "The Picture Book of Earlier Buffalo" (Frank H. Severance, ed., Buffalo Historical Society), published in 1912, which states that the Rumsey property "included a fine natural spring" which "made possible a pretty lake of clear water". I could not find a reference therein to a trout stream, but the passage supports the accounts of a good quality spring. (Incidentally, at the time of the writing of the book, the spring was described as still flowing.)

One of the fascinating aspects of history is the problem of separating fact from legend. This is not to say that the articles I have read so far are not true, but I would very much like to see some additional evidence, preferably predating 1927, for a stream which "abounded" with brook trout.

It would also be most interesting to be able to trace the course of the Rumsey Park brook; but, so far, I have been unable to do so. While I have found two maps which show part or all of the lake, neither shows an inlet, an outlet or any other stream. It is possible, of course, that the feeding spring was covered by the lake and that the stream had been a very short one.

Earlier this summer, I visited the area of the Rumsey estate. There was no obvious evidence of a stream or spring; but South Elmwood does seem to sit in the bottom of a shallow depression, while School 76 is perched on a terrace. This may be the site of the long gone lake (photographs of which are available on the internet, by going to www.wnyheritagepress.org and looking, under "Photographs", for "Rumsey Park- 1915").

If there was indeed a trout stream in the Delaware and Tracy neighborhood, could its inhabitants have been brook trout? This is entirely possible. The DEC website report, "The Trout of New York", states that brook trout were once widespread throughout the state and that rainbow and brown trout were not introduced into New York waters until the 1870's and 1880's, respectively. Moreover, brookies are known to inhabit clear, cold water such as is reported to have been produced by the spring on the Rumsey estate and have been found in very small streams. Whether the fish said to have flourished in that particular stream were native or privately stocked is another interesting question to which I have yet to find an answer.

My plan is continue to research this story from Buffalo's "olden days". Hopefully, additional information will be the basis for a future article.

2006 Erie County Fair Show

Well another Erie County Fair has come and gone and I am very pleased to inform you that all our hard work and fly tying has once again paid off. We earned a total of \$1191.00 at our booth of which \$758.00 came from fly sales. We beat last years total by \$263.00.

First of all I want to thank my wife **Linda** and our daughters' for all their help with set up and especially the decorations for our booth. We took second place and received a \$75.00 prize. Thanks to our monthly fly tiers and a special thanks to all who volunteered to work those long 10 days. **Don Kwiatkowski, Charlie Dickson, Gary Coons, Hank Lipiew, Jim Stachowski, Dave Unetich, Don Klug, Mike Beliveau, Vince Tobia, Ed Luba, Ray Kegler, Jim Zak, and Bill Swartz.**

Thank You All

Len Bigaj

PS: I have sent in an application for next year's booth. The Fair will run from Aug.8-19, 2007. So get ready. I have received confirmation that the **Sportsman's Show it will run from March 8-11, 2007.** We have a lot of flies to tie between now and then.

East Koy Tree Trimming

This past summer we trimmed brush and debris jams on East Koy Creek between Jordan and Metcalf roads. **Jim Budny, Jake Kwapiszeski and his dad, Larry Stokely, and Jeff Baker** all helped. If you like this part of the stream, take a look at it. It is much more fishable now than in recent memory. Much thanks to **Gene Romanyshyn** who set up the project and contacted the landowners for permission. Next year we may do more on the East Koy and will probably tackle the "no kill" section of the Wiscoy. We also aided USACE **Dave Derrick** with a planting for a class he was teaching at UB by providing the use of our planting tools. Also, several members helped with electro-shocking in the Wiscoy watershed. We will be planting some more willow cuttings at the 2005 Fairgrounds project on the Wiscoy.