

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited

October 2007

OFFICERS

Dee Maciejewski-President

2711 Girdle Road, Elma, NY 14059 (655-1331) dryfly@adelphia.net

Gene Romanyshyn-Vice President

5289 Roberts Rd., Hamburg NY 14075 (491-6111)

Gary Coons--Secretary

7329 Townline Rd, N. Tonawanda NY 14120 (695-1003)

Tony Messina-Treasurer

33 Deveraux, Buffalo, NY 14214 (832-8517) amessina@hotmail.com

COMMITTEES

Awards-**Ed Luba** (648-9732)

Education-**Greg Waid** gresdell@adelphia.net

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-**Jason Czora** (875-4754) **Len Bigaj** (826-4178)

Stream Clean-ups-**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: **Vince Tobia**

266 Troy Del Way

Williamsville NY, 14221 (632-2749) vtobia@aol.com

Stamp

Label

President's Report

What a ride we've had with so many months of beautiful warmth. Seriously lacking RAIN for the streams, however. Hopefully there will be good steelhead fishing and "bass" fishing ahead. There is always, hunting, trapping, leaf looking, hiking, traveling, fly tying, fireside sitting, comfort food eating and drinking, etc. to keep us content throughout the cold months. Please remember to come to the meetings. In October, we have the raffle drawing, elections, and maybe a trick or a treat.

The Christmas party will be at the Donovan Post on December 13th--a Thursday night. We begin at 7PM; come early and enjoy pizza, wings, cookies. There will be a nice raffle with lots of goodies. We'll have music too. The very enjoyable Yankee swap will also be run (remember to bring a \$10 gift if you wish to participate). Gary's famous wine tasting is always a hit. This is for all WNYTU members. If you wish to attend, just notify one of the officers, so we may have an approximate "nose count".

Trout in the Classroom is finally in this chapter's future!! **Chuck Godfrey** is the Chairman, and he can always use volunteers! We have two interested teachers in East Aurora and Newfane schools! This will probably come about in Fall of '08.

If you know of someone who is thinking about joining TU- that's great. A lot of us joined so we could learn how to fish, find where to catch a fish, tie a fly or learn a casting technique. Maybe we wanted to win a nice rod, reel, trip, etc. while having a get together with friends. That is all very nice. But, Trout Unlimited really is all about Conservation. Clean waters. Adequate flows. Habitat for trout and salmon for generations to come. It is about the fish...NOT the fisherman. We need new blood, younger volunteers, sure. But if they don't believe in the mission statement of Trout Unlimited, maybe they should just join a fishing club.

Come early, October 30th and tie flies for your Chapter. Bring a friend.

Dee Maciejewski—President

Whispering Pines Fish Farm

POND STOCKING

Trout, Bass, Perch, Minnows

Grass Carp, Koi, Crayfish

496-7440

WNY TU Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, **October 30, 2007, 7:30 pm** at the **Donovan American Legion Post**, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. **Lew Markle**, a South Wales TU member and owner of Lew's Canoes, will share his knowledge of "Building and Restoring the Wood/Canvas Canoe". The program will begin after our brief business meeting, elections and raffle drawings. **Fly Tying will start at 6PM** Please bring black thread as we are tying bead head prince nymphs.

Information on Small Dams Wanted!

Researchers at Buffalo State College are in the process of creating an inventory of dams in Western New York and they need your help. The inventory, along with input from the public, will be used to identify local dams that have high potential for removal. The goals of dam removal would be restoration of natural flow conditions in streams and fish passage. If you know of any dams, especially small (< 6 ft high) dams, in this region please email (frothikm@buffalostate.edu) or call (716 878-6736) **Kelly Frothingham** at Buffalo State. We're looking for a brief description of where the dam is, for example, the name of the stream and a major road intersection up and/or downstream of the dam.

Fishing Partner Connection

We are starting a new column for those looking for a fishing partner: **Fishing Buddy Wanted**. If you'd like to share your day on the water with someone, e-mail Editor **Vince Tobia @ vtobia@aol.com**. He will put your contact info in the newsletter. To get in touch with your partner, contact them directly. Include your name, telephone #, and e-mail address.

Bill Swartz 716-741-2563

Larry Jakubowski 716-684-9755

Tom Kielb 716-895-3760

flytyer72001@yahoo.com

jake14086@yahoo.com

Fly Tying, Festivals & County Fair Dates

Flytying Thanks to tyers **Dave Unetich and Craig Zink** for helping tie 25 black wooly buggers.

October meeting bring black thread we will be tying Bead head Prince nymphs.

WNY Sports and Travel Expo will run March 6th to 9th. 2008. If you would like to work a shift or two let me know at 826-4178 or LBIGAJ001@roadrunner.com.

Fund raiser 2007 Please bring all tickets sold or unsold to October meeting. The drawing will be held at this meeting. Please try to attend.

Banquet The banquet will be held on March 15th 2008, so please try to attend. More information to follow.

Thanks

Len Bigaj

Cabin Range

Guns Bought * Sold * Traded

Sporting Clays* Skeet* Trap

St Croix Fly Rods & Fly Fishing Tackle @ great prices

Open Tuesday thru Saturday 10am-5pm

Doug Day & Mike White

2580 Lockport Olcott Rd. Lockport NY 14094

(716) 434-2646

2007 WNYTU Fundraising Raffle

Help out our local chapter raise \$ for local stream projects

Gift Certificate Prizes

Oak Orchard Fly Shop \$150
Buffalo Outfitters Fly Shop \$150
Orvis Corporate Store \$150
Gander Mountain \$100
Dick's Sporting Goods \$100

Drawing to be held on October 30, 2007 at the WNYTU general meeting

Winners will have their choice of gift certificates

Tickets are \$5 each, or three for \$10

Only 600 tickets will be sold

**For tickets send donation to Len Bigaj, 58 Balen Drive, Lackawanna NY
14218 or call 826-4178**

Parking Lot Completed on 18 Mile Creek

Construction of a 10 car fisherman parking lot on the end of South Creek Road in the Town of Hamburg was completed. The lot is located on Erie County owned property – Eighteen mile Creek Park. The lot gives access to the Eighteen mile Creek catch and release section.

DEC CLOSES FISHING ON THE WEST CANADA CREEK DUE TO DROUGHT CONDITIONS

Because of dry conditions and low water levels in Hinckley Reservoir, flows into West Canada Creek have been reduced to record low levels. As a result, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) will be issuing emergency regulations closing this renowned trout stream to all fishing from its mouth (the Mohawk River) upstream to the dam at Trenton Falls. The regulations affect a 28-mile section of the Creek, take effect immediately, and run through Nov. 30, the end of the regular season. However, catch-and-release fishing will be allowed beginning Dec. 1 on a stretch of the creek beginning at Trenton Falls Dam and running downstream for 2.5 miles to the Cincinnati Creek.

The low flows impact West Canada Creek's important trout fishery in many ways. Chiefly, low water in the riffles impede fish passage and, as a result, trout and other fish are forced to concentrate in deeper pools. This makes them vulnerable to stress related to too-warm water temperatures, reduced food supplies and, potentially, low oxygen levels. The trout population would also be subjected to increased levels of angler catch rates and harvest. It is hoped fall rains will relieve the low water conditions in Hinckley Reservoir and allow discharges into West Canada to be returned to normal, higher levels.

The emergency regulations are designed to protect the trout fishery through the current stressful conditions, which will ensure a return to quality angling next spring and summer. DEC fisheries and law enforcement staff will be on the river beginning this weekend to advise anglers of the emergency regulations and suggest alternate fishing locations.

For more information, contact:

Region 6 Fisheries Manager Frank Flack at (315) 408-4440 or

Region 6 Natural Resource Supervisor Albert Schiavone at (315) 783-16

City Agrees to Help Regulate Delaware River by Releasing Water From Reservoirs

Under intense pressure from anglers, environmentalists and angry residents of downstream communities devastated by floods three years in a row, New York City has agreed to change the way it operates its huge Delaware River reservoirs.

The city started a practice yesterday that is to continue at least through the next three years, releasing up to a total of 35 million gallons a day from three of its largest reservoirs into the Delaware River to maintain regular temperatures and water levels in the river.

Many fly fishermen supported the new plan because they said it would protect the river's brown and rainbow trout, which attract fishermen from around the world and have become an important part of the local economy. Some environmentalists say that by making regular releases of water, the city will be restoring some of the Delaware's natural rhythms and flows. But many residents of riverside communities in four states along the 330 miles of the Delaware are unhappy with the plan and critical of the way the changes were accepted in secret at a meeting last week of representatives of New York City and the four states: New York, New Jersey, Delaware and Pennsylvania. They said the plan would do little to prevent or even mitigate the kind of catastrophic floods that swept down the river in 2004, 2005 and 2006, causing several deaths and millions of dollars in property damage.

Community groups have collected 12,000 signatures demanding that New York City permanently lower the levels of the Cannonsville, Pepacton and Neversink Reservoirs to 80 percent of capacity so that stormwater runoff can have a place to go rather than charging down the river in flash floods. They said that would have lessened the effect of the last three floods.

A large scroll containing the 12,000 signatures was presented last week at a public hearing of the Delaware River Basin Commission, the body established in 1961 to oversee the water resources of the area.

"We look to you to protect all of us, not just New York City," said Eleanor Miller, a resident of New Hope, Pa. "All we ask is that you do your job."

About 200 people attended the public hearing, but were surprised to find that a decision had already been reached on the new water management plan.

"What a weasel of a deal," said Elaine Reichart, a resident Belvidere, N.J., and member of Aquatic Conservation Unlimited, a community group demanding that the city lower its Delaware River reservoirs.

Under the terms of a 1954 decree by the [United States Supreme Court](#), New York City is allowed to take up to 800 million gallons of water a day from the Delaware River. But the decree also requires the city to ensure that there is enough water left in the Delaware to adequately supply downstream communities like Trenton and Philadelphia, which also draw drinking water from the river.

The flow of water downstream also has to be strong enough to keep ocean saltwater from coming so far up Delaware Bay that it threatens freshwater intakes that supply Philadelphia.

New York has adamantly resisted lowering its Delaware River reservoirs by 20 percent all year long. Paul Rush, director of West Hudson operations for the city's Department of Environmental Protection, which runs the water system, said the three Delaware River reservoirs were now below 70 percent of capacity. If they had been lowered at the beginning of this summer, he said, the city would be close to a drought warning now.

"Maintaining a 20 percent void in the reservoirs would pose a large risk to the water supply," Mr. Rush said.

The new plan would lessen flood risk somewhat, Mr. Rush said, because the city would release more water during wet periods than it does now, creating space for storm water runoff in the reservoirs.

He conceded that the most critical time of the year for flooding, the spring, was also when the city would be trying to store as much water as possible for the peak summer period.

Until the new plan took effect, the city had to maintain excess water in its Delaware reservoirs to be released when the temperature of the river water rose too high and threatened the trout, which require cold water and strong flows. State conservation officials could order the city to release cold water from the bottom of the reservoirs, lowering temperatures and increasing flows.

The new plan, with its regular releases throughout the year, is intended to change that. "This takes us away from the piecemeal, bit by bit approach," said Cathleen Curran Myers, the Pennsylvania representative on the basin commission. "It may not be perfect, but it gives up a good framework within which to look at the whole picture."

Under the terms of the 1954 Supreme Court decree, certain changes can be made by the unanimous consent of the four states and New York City. But the regulations enforcing those changes must be approved by the commission.

Although the new plan went into effect on an interim basis yesterday, the commission will take public comment for several months and hold a formal public hearing before voting next year on the new regulations.

Scobey Hill Dam news

By LAURA MAGEE

The Scobey Hill Dam currently blocks the passage of steelhead trout and other fish to the upstream areas of Cattaraugus Creek. That might not always be the case, though. By modifying the dam, the fish would be able to reach the upper 34 miles of the creek, but altering the dam is not without controversy.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers held its first of many meetings regarding the dam in Springville on Sept. 27 at the Concord Town Hall. The economic benefits to the area, the history of the Scobey Hill Dam and the environmental tolls were brought up during the public comment section of the meeting, which was attended by more than 50 people.

In partnership with the state Department of Conservation, the Corps is currently evaluating the feasibility of fish passage at the dam. Implementation costs for a fish passage system and a sea lamprey assessment trap have been estimated to be \$4,055,000. This alternative and others will be further evaluated during the next phase of study.

Project Manager Laura Ortiz explained that section 506 of the 2000 Water Resources Development Act allows the Corps of Engineers to provide planning, engineering and construction support in the development of the Great Lakes Fisheries and Ecosystem Restoration.

A fact sheet passed out at the meeting explained that steelhead trout cannot pass through the Scobey Hill Dam, a 40-foot-high and 338-foot-long structure, which originally functioned as a power generating facility. Since the dam is no longer being used to generate power, there is a desire by resource agencies to enable steelhead trout from Lake Erie to pass to the upstream reaches and tributaries of Cattaraugus Creek.

The first step, Ortiz explained, would be a feasibility study, which includes conducting an inventory of existing conditions and evaluating the economic and environmental benefits associated with a fish passage at the dam, and culminates in selecting a plan of action. The feasibility study will cost about \$600,000, Ortiz said, and will be paid for by the federal government.

“Regardless of what we do, there is going to be some good information gained from the feasibility study,” Ortiz said, adding the structural stability of the dam is unknown at this time, as well as potential impacts on the fishery.

One concerned individual asked if the dam will be removed and Ortiz said it will be one of the alternatives addressed.

Another individual asked about sea lamprey, an invasive species that with the dam in place cannot travel to the upper reaches of the Cattaraugus River and its tributaries. DEC Region 9 Fisheries Manager Paul McKeown said the DEC doesn’t want the lampreys “to get up there” and fish passages can be made so lampreys can’t get past. One suggestion, he added, is putting a lip on the ladder so that lampreys, which use suction to advance, cannot get past, while steelhead trout can jump over the ladder. “You may get one or two,” McKeown said about the lamprey and a fish ladder. “But you’ll get the majority.” One example of a lamprey barrier exists on Spooner Brook, just downstream from County Route 39.

DEC Fisheries Biologist Jim Markham said only a few streams in the area offer the opportunity to increase a wild run of steelhead and called the Cattaraugus Creek a “unique opportunity.” Steelhead has become the most popular sportfish in the tributaries of Lake Erie since this fishery expanded over the past decade.

Another issue discussed is the fact that the Scobey Power Plant and Dam is designated a historic structure by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation and by the National Historic Register. “We are aware that anything we do has to be coordinated with the National Register,” Ortiz said.

In response to individuals concerned about the historical impact of the dam, one attendee said the dam may have been at the site for nearly 100 years, but the creek was there without a dam for a million years before that.

Concord resident Bob Church asked why the issue of a fish ladder was even being discussed. He believed, since the dam is a national historic site, it can’t be altered but Ortiz said the ladder could go around the dam and leave it in intact.

McKeown clarified that the law does not say the dam cannot be altered, but its historic nature has to be considered during the permit process. “Are we going to destroy the Statue of Liberty just because we don’t want it there?” Church countered.

A spokesman from Trout Unlimited reiterated that the Army Corps in just doing a feasibility study now and no action has been taken yet, saying, “Everyone is getting all up in arms about this.” “We’re not even anywhere close,” Ortiz said about a final decision. “We’re not getting the bulldozer out tomorrow.”

Another individual said there are not many places fisherman can actually fish from the upper Cattaraugus, but McKeown said the DEC continues to pursue public fishing rights.

As for present plans, a dam stability and geotechnical analysis will determine the condition of dam and help formulate alternative plans, Ortiz said, and this will be done in fiscal year 2008, along with a hydrology and hydraulic analysis. Sediment sampling has been done, although Ortiz said she is awaiting results.

The feasibility phase will last between 36 and 48 months, while determining the plans and specification will last 12 to 18 months and construction, depending on recommended alternative, will last 12 to 18 months. If the project were to go ahead, the cost sharing would be set at 65 percent federal and 35 percent non-federal. Ortiz said the next public meeting will be in nine months to a year and there will be “concrete information” available at that time.

Didymo News

The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) today announced the presence of the invasive algae didymo (*Didymosphenia geminata*) in two additional fishing water bodies in New York State.

Samples taken by DEC have confirmed that didymo is present in the East Branch of the Delaware River. In addition, based on samples taken near the Route 191 bridge in Hancock, Delaware County, didymo is suspected to be present on the West

Branch of the Delaware River as well. These are the latest recorded incidents of this aquatic nuisance species - also called rock snot - in New York State. Early this summer, didymo's presence was confirmed in a section of the Batten Kill in Washington County.

The Delaware tailwaters are one of the premier trout fisheries on the East Coast, and are a popular destination for large numbers of anglers. The discovery of didymo in these waters is particularly troubling given their proximity to other famous trout streams, notably the Beaver Kill and Willowemoc Creek, and the tendency of anglers to fish multiple streams over the course of a day or weekend. The microscopic algae - an invasive species to New York - can survive for many days in cool, damp conditions. Porous materials such as neoprene waders and felt soles used by wading anglers are prime suspects in the spread of didymo among streams.

Didymo cells can produce large amounts of stalk material that forms thick mats on stream bottoms. The appearance of these mats has been compared to brown shag carpet, fiberglass insulation, or tissue paper (picture can be seen at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/environmentdec/36890.html>). During blooms these mats may completely cover long stretches of stream beds and persist for months. The stalk material produced by didymo is slow to break down and may persist for up to two months following its peak growth. These mats alter stream conditions, choking out many of the organisms that live on the stream bottom, potentially causing a ripple effect up the food chain affecting trout and other fish.

Didymo has historically been limited to cold, nutrient-poor, northern waters, but in recent decades has been expanding its range and its tolerance to warmer and more productive streams. Once introduced to an area, didymo can rapidly spread to nearby streams. Anglers, kayakers, canoeists, boaters and jet skiers can all unknowingly spread didymo by transporting the cells on boats and other gear. There are currently no known methods for controlling or eradicating didymo once it infests a water body.

Anglers, canoeists, kayakers, boaters, or others who witness and suspect the presence of didymo in state waters are advised to contact DEC with the location so that samples can be taken to document and monitor the algae spread. DEC continues to urge anglers and other water recreationists to Check, Clean and Dry to prevent the introduction and spread of didymo.

Check -- Before leaving a river or stream, remove all obvious clumps of algae and look for hidden clumps. Leave them at the affected site. If you find any later, do not wash them down drains; dispose all material in the trash.

Clean -- Treatment varies depending on what needs to be cleaned. Be sure that the solution completely penetrates thick absorbent items such as felt-soled waders and wading boots.

Non-absorbent items

- o Detergent or salt: soak or spray all surfaces for at least one minute in a 5% solution (by volume) of dishwashing detergent or salt (7 ounces of detergent or salt added to water to make one gallon); or
- o Bleach: soak or spray all surfaces for at least one minute in a 2% solution (by volume) of household bleach (3 ounces of bleach added to water to make one gallon); or
- o Hot water: soak for at least one minute in very hot water kept above 140 F (hotter than most tap water) or for at least 20 minutes or in hot water kept above 115 F (uncomfortable to touch).

Absorbent items require longer soaking times. For example, felt-soled waders require:

- o Hot water: soak for at least 40 minutes in hot water kept above 115 F; or
- o Hot water plus detergent: soak for 30 minutes in hot water kept above 115 F containing 5% dishwashing detergent.

Dry - If cleaning is not practical, after the item is completely dry to the touch, wait an additional 48 hours before contact or use in any other waterway. Check thick absorbent items closely to assure that they are dry throughout. Equipment and gear can also be placed in a freezer until all moisture is frozen solid.

NOTE: If cleaning, drying or freezing is not practical, restrict equipment to a single water body.

While DEC recommends anglers always take these precautions, it is especially important that any gear used out of state be treated before using in New York waters.