

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited

November 2006

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Stamp

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President's Report

If you were unable to attend the last meeting, you missed a great program on aquatic insects by **Dr. Wayne Gall**, Regional Entomologist from NYS Dept of Health. At November's meeting, **Rick Kustich**, author, TU member, and trout fisherman extraordinaire, will speak to us on Salmon & Steelhead Fishing, which many of us hope to be doing between now and Spring. Mark your calendars to hear **Joe Evans** and **Scott Cornett** of the DEC at the January meeting. In February, **Tom Scott** will be sending one of his fellow ECO's to speak to our chapter on Lake Erie tribes, regulations, etc. What kind of programs would you like to see at your monthly meetings? If you have suggestions, or wish to offer your talents, please let me know!

Thanks to all who wanted to serve as an officer or board member in last month's election. Your officers ran unopposed. The three Board members elected for a three year term are, **Len Bigaj**, **Chuck Godfrey**, and **Paul Maciejewski**.

A list of books available from the TU library will be at every meeting.

Just a reminder to all active volunteers to keep track of your donated hours throughout the fiscal year.(start now) and make sure **Secretary Gary Coons** knows the total by next October. The cumulative effect reflects the overall health of our chapter.

Don't miss **YOUR HOLIDAY PARTY**, held at the Donovan Post, 3210 Genesee St., **Thursday, December 14th 7PM. FREE FOOD and FUN.** Sign up at the meeting on Nov. 28th or call an officer or board member. Optional: bring a wrapped, \$10 gift to partake in the Yankee Swap!!

Bring black thread if you're tying before the next meeting. Come early, bring a friend.

Dee Maciejewski, President

Anglers Choice Taxidermy

World Class Fish Taxidermy

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WNY TU Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, November 28, 2006, 7:30 pm at the **Donovan American Legion Post**, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. **Rick Kustich**, author, TU member, and trout fisherman extraordinaire, will speak to us on Salmon & Steelhead Fishing. **Fly Tying will start at 6PM** when we will be tying black wooly buggers, so bring black thread.

Second Annual Holiday Party

This year's Holiday Party will be held on **December 14th** at the Donovan American Legion Post 3210 Genesee St. The festivities begin at 7 PM. There will be snacks and pop, pizza and wings. We will have a raffle. If you bring a wrapped gift (worth \$10) you can participate in the Yankee Swap. It's a lot of fun. Please join us this year.

New Website for Region 9

Region 9 Fisheries has their own web page on the DEC website now with a bunch of info for the Region's fishing opportunities, trout and otherwise. To get there either type in:

www.dec.state.ny.us/website/dfwmr/fish/reg9fish

or at www.dec.state.ny.us/ website type in "Region 9 fisheries" in the search section and click on "Fishing in Western NY".

Paul Maciejewski Honored with Trout Unlimited's Highest Award

The Ray Mortensen Award for Outstanding Volunteer Leadership is presented annually in recognition of an individual's extraordinary contribution to the coldwater fisheries resource conservation through their leadership efforts. Paul is a 27 year life member of Trout Unlimited, who has served in many capacities, including as Western New York Chapter President, NY State Council Chair for a record six years and presently as a National TU Trustee. **Congratulations, Paul, on receiving National's most prestigious award.**

nov. flytying at 6pm. bring black thread will be tying black wolley buggers. thanks to oct. meeting tyers dave unetich, gary coons, paul maciejewski, we tied 40 brown wooly buggers. Thanks for the help len.

CALLING ALL ELVES!

Once again, **Gander Mountain** has generously offered WNYTU the chance to do gift wrapping at their store. In order for it to happen, we need elves! Yes, you too can be taught to wrap presents. Just ask our editor who became proficient in just 18 minutes! All materials are supplied, but in the past, some brought their own scissors. Pointed shoes and funny hats are not required, but would be good to laugh at. This is a great fun way to help the chapter raise funds for our stream projects, and a chance to do some shopping of your own.

The day is **Saturday, December 9, from 10am to 4pm**. Hopefully, we will have enough of you volunteer to have 3 shifts of workers. We need at least 4 people at the tables and one other to remind the customers of our service for each shift.

If you can help us that day, please let Paul know at the meeting, or call (655-1331) or email (dryfly@adelphia.net) with your available time. The last time we did this, we all had a great time and raised quite a bit of money for the chapter. Thanks in advance for helping!

Paul Maciejewski—head elf

An Idea Worth Throwing Back

Published: June 2, 2006 in the NY Times

After a yearlong experiment with rainbow trout, researchers at the University of Missouri have announced that feeding them creatine — the body-building supplement Mark McGwire made infamous — can improve their fighting ability. Actually, these experiments demonstrate that trout eating a 5 percent creatine diet can swim against the current far longer than fish that aren't taking the supplement. No one has tested these creatine rainbows against an actual angler. But that has not prevented the researchers from leaping to an economic conclusion. "Fishermen probably would pay a premium for a chance of catching fish that fought longer and harder," one of them said.

Probably. But also probably not. A trout that is being fed creatine is being fed by humans. The ones at the University of Missouri were tested in double-walled plexiglass tubes. The ones that anglers are likely to hook would be living in ponds, where their diets could be supplemented with creatine. They would be hatchery fish. And that's where the irony of a study like this becomes apparent.

If you've ever caught a wild rainbow trout — truly wild, like those in the Delaware or the Madison River — you know that it doesn't need any help from creatine. A hatchery trout is a different creature entirely — a wan spirit reared in concrete tanks, fed trout pellets, and dumped into a foreign world on opening day. Creatine might make a difference to these fish and the anglers who catch them, but it's the wrong difference, especially since the F.D.A. hasn't approved creatine as a food additive. Anglers don't need creatine-enhanced hatchery trout. What we need are more wild trout in more wild rivers

Fish Passage At Springville Dam

This is only a summary of the issues-to read the full report, visit the DEC website.

A new document by the NYS DEC reviews issues related to fish passage over Springville Dam and in particular, those associated with passage of lake-run steelhead trout to the upper Cattaraugus Creek system.

Cattaraugus Creek flows from its headwaters at Java Lake in Wyoming County for 65 miles to Lake Erie. The stream has a drainage area of approximately 280 square miles. Springville Dam, a 40 foot high, 338 foot long structure built in 1922, is located 34 miles above the mouth and is impassable to fish. The dam has not generated electricity since 1998 and is currently maintained by Erie County as a recreational park. The US Army Corps of Engineers in partnership with NYS-DEC is currently evaluating the feasibility of fish passage at Springville Dam.

During the last 20 years a high quality lake-run steelhead fishery has developed in Cattaraugus Creek from the mouth to Springville Dam (hereafter referred to as *lower Cattaraugus Creek*). This fishery is supported by the stocking of steelhead smolts, although an estimated 25% of adult fish returning to the creek are of wild origin (Mikol 1976, Goehle 1998). Due to heavy siltation and high summer water temperatures, little successful spawning occurs in the main stream. Approximately 27 miles of tributary below Springville Dam provide steelhead spawning and nursery habitat (Table 1).

Public access for angling on the lower 34 miles of Cattaraugus Creek is limited (Table 1, Figure 1). Most of the lower 20 miles of the stream are within the Seneca Nation of Indians (SNI) Cattaraugus Reservation where fishing by non-Native Americans requires a SNI fishing license. Approximately 4 miles of public fishing rights easements (PFR) exist along lower Cattaraugus Creek and eight miles of the main stream and the South Branch are under NYSDEC jurisdiction (Zoar Valley Multiple Use Area). Access to the creek within the Zoar Valley MUA is considered challenging since much of it flows within a deeply incised gorge. Lower Cattaraugus Creek is turbid during much of the time steelhead are in the stream (September-May) due to the abundance of clay soils and highly unstable, erodible banks.

From Springville Dam upstream (hereafter referred to as *upper Cattaraugus Creek*), NYSDEC maintains 34 miles of PFR easements. From river mile (RM) 46,

near the mouth of Elton Creek upstream to Java Lake, the creek runs clear most of the year, providing ideal trout angling conditions. NYSDEC annually stocks 18.2 miles (RM 40 to RM 58) along the main branch of upper Cattaraugus Creek and 6.2 miles of Elton Creek with yearling and two year old brown trout. Approximately 17 miles of the main stream and an additional 27 miles of several tributaries support abundant, fishable populations of wild, resident brown and rainbow trout. Relict populations of native brook trout occur in 15 headwater stream sections. At least 30 additional miles of smaller tributaries provide spawning and nursery habitat for wild trout populations.

Issue Summary

This review of existing literature showed that changes in the sportfishery could be expected from passage of steelhead to the upper Cattaraugus system. Passage upstream of Springville Dam would provide access to 50+ miles of spawning habitat and result in the establishment of a sportfishery supported almost entirely by natural reproduction. Due to the popularity of steelhead, and particularly wild steelhead, angling use in the upper Cattaraugus Creek system would be expected to increase. Angling for steelhead would peak in late October and November, particularly during periods of peak flow. The fishery would continue until May with use by steelhead anglers declining substantially from June to October. The peak period for inland trout fishing occurs in April and May so some overlap in use for the two fisheries would occur during this time. Increased use of the resource in spring may lead to conflicts amongst anglers as well as declines in the “quality” of angling for those preferring a more secluded or isolated angling experience.

Although 34 miles of PFR and 15 parking lots exist on the upper Cattaraugus, use may exceed capacity at some of the more popular sites. These sites should be identified and if possible, public access obtained. This may require use of cooperative agreements and memorandums of understanding in addition to the more traditional acquisitions of easements (PFR) and/or parking lots. One specific area in need of additional PFR is the 12 miles upstream from Springville Dam to Elton Creek. A concerted effort should be made by NYSDEC to obtain PFR in this section, preferably in the period prior to passage.

Biological changes in the fishery are more difficult to predict but development of a naturally reproducing steelhead population in the upper Cattaraugus Creek system would likely cause some reduction in abundance of resident rainbow and brown trout. Relict populations of native brook trout occur in the headwater sections of 15 tributaries, one of which has a barrier impassable to fish. These 14 populations exist in association with resident, non-native, brown and rainbow trout. Based on existing literature it is difficult to predict whether steelhead would be an additional competitor to brook trout or if the predicted displacement of some resident brown and rainbow trout would result in no net increase in competition. This would certainly be an area of research that should be explored further.

The states of Pennsylvania and Ohio showed substantial economic benefits associated with the Lake Erie steelhead tributary fisheries. Expansion of steelhead to the upper Cattaraugus Creek system would be expected to produce comparable benefits, particularly if wild populations develop. Some loss in economic value associated with declines in abundance of resident brown and rainbow trout must also be considered but these losses would likely be small compared to the economic gains associated with expansion of the steelhead fishery.

To read the report in it's entirety, visit the DEC website.