
The Newsletter of the Columbia-Greene Rip Van Winkle Chapter #569 of Trout Unlimited

TU...TO CONSERVE, PROTECT & RESTORE NORTH AMERICA'S COLD WATER FISHERIES & THEIR WATERSHEDS

MAY and JUNE – BUSY MONTHS AT C-G TU

1. Saturday, May 1 **Willow Planting** TIME: 9 a.m. PLACE: Woodland Valley Creek,
Contact Dave Rudloff if you can help. (Bridge at the Esopus)
2. Monday, May 3 **Teach FlyTying to 4-H Students**
TIME: 6:30-8:30 p.m. PLACE: Greene County Cooperative Extension
Help Sharon LaPier teach tying a Woolly Worm and a Black Nose Dace.
The following people have volunteered to help:
George G, Lynn L, Wendy N, Joe R, Dick R, Dave R, Hank T
Contact Hank Theiss if you can help.
3. Saturday, May 15 **CWC Stream Clean Up** TIME: 9 a.m. PLACE: Routes 23 & 23A
Contact Dave Rudloff if you can help. RAIN DATE: Saturday, May 22
4. Tuesday, May 18 **TU Meeting** TIME: 7:30 p.m. PLACE: O'Brien's Restaurant
GUEST SPEAKER: Walt Bennet - "The Ten Mile Creek Project"
Raffle Drawing
5. Saturday, May 22 **Students' Day on the Stream** TIME: 10 a.m. PLACE: Routes 23 & 23A
Lunch provided by the club for students of the 2004 Fly Tying and Casting Courses.
6. Tuesday, June 15 **TU Meeting on the Stream – Schoharie Creek**
TIME: 5 p.m. PLACE: 23A at the Art Flick Memorial
7. Sunday, June 20 **Kids' Fishing Day – "Fishin' with Fran" on Father's Day**
TIME: 2-3:30 p.m. PLACE: TBD
Contact Lynn Lee or Fran Martino (518 392-5252) if you can help.

THE CURRENT ON "LINE"

IF YOU RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER BY MAIL AND HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS PLEASE CONTACT ONE OF THE CO-EDITORS SO OUR TU CHAPTER CAN SAVE MONEY ON MAILINGS.

Also, if anyone doesn't want to receive the newsletter any longer please notify one of us:

Dick Riccio (518) 851-7002

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WILD BILL FLIES

What do you get when you mix a dose of comedy, some wild yarns, and some deft hands that make killers. No, it is not Wild Bill Hickock, the legendary western guide and gunfighter. It is our own “Wild Bill Newcomb” the legendary fly tier from Copake, NY, who ties killer flies. I looked up photos of Hickock on the Internet and the physical resemblance is sort of eerie. Both have large mustaches, long flowing hair, unique hats and that unmistakable “cowboy” appearance. My guess is that Hickock never tied a fly, and Newcomb never shot a soul.

Luckily for us the Copake cowpoke uses his hands to tie some flies as unique as he is. One of them, Victoria’s Dragonfly, named after his granddaughter, is a fairly large fly that strongly resembles a dragonfly. He demonstrated its sturdiness by crumpling it up, then stomping on it with his spurless boot. It returned to its normal shape and size with a little manipulation. He also tied two flies originated by George LaBranch many years ago. The Pink Lady, (still tied and used by some folks today), and the Whirling Blue Dun were the other two that he demonstrated while telling jokes, spinning yarns, and giving us a fly tying history lesson. It was a thoroughly entertaining and interesting evening.

Our thanks go out to you, Bill, The Reel Cowboy, for taking the time out of your busy schedule to teach and entertain us. Dick

FLY FISHING CLASS SPRINGS TO LIFE

This year the fly fishing class, developed and taught by Columbia –Greene Trout Unlimited members, was quite a success. There were a total of 25 students, one of the largest classes in recent memory. It was a nice mixture of: younger and older folks, boys and girls, men and women, beginners and experienced, from all parts of Columbia and Greene Counties. Almost all the students completed the entire 6-week course held at Hudson High School, so it was a loyal and dedicated group.

As in the past, the sizeable group was split into two sections. While one group learned in the classroom, the other one practiced casting in the gym. At the end of an hour the groups switched places so that everyone got both the classroom and the casting experiences.

Fortunately, we were able to use fly fishing equipment owned by the Columbia County Sportsmen’s Federation, because many participants did not have fly fishing rods. Although the borrowed rods were quite stiff and difficult to use, several of the learners got to be quite proficient with them. Some of that should be alleviated next year due to the quick action taken by Hank Theiss, who submitted a request to L.L.Bean. They sponsored a giveaway program to TU chapters who showed a program dedicated to teaching youth how to fly fish. Because of his fast work and explanation of our involvement in an upcoming 4-H youth project, our chapter was one of about hundred chapters awarded equipment, and received 4 very nice rod-reel-line combinations.

Thanks go out to Hank for this action and for his involvement in teaching the fly fishing class. The other instructors for this class who also deserve a round of appreciative applause for their continued efforts to make it a success are: Lynn Lee, John Libruk, Bobby Fisher, Wendy Neefus, George Goth, Dave Rudloff, Tim Lippert, Rick Bobrick, Dick Riccio and Joe Riena. Dick

2004 STOCKING PROGRAM UNDERWAY...FINALLY!

The trout-stocking program finally commenced after the first false start of the season. The Kinderhook Creek was scheduled to be stocked on April 2nd but was cancelled in the early evening the night before the stocking was to take place. It got rescheduled for April 8th and was successfully completed. At this time, 4-20-04, all the streams in Columbia County that were scheduled to get fish have received them. There will be more stockings that will continue through, approximately, the 3rd week in May. I'm pleased to report that each of the stockings has had a large volunteer contingent from our TU Chapter.

The Greene County Program is also underway and it has had its share of bad luck as well. After one of the 1st stocking events the delivery truck developed a mechanical failure in the axle. Another event, the one for the 20th of April, had to be cancelled due to an engine failure on the delivery truck before it left the hatchery, however, the Catskill Creek has been stocked at this point in time.
Dick

FROM THE EDITORS: THOUGHT FOR THE MONTH

Fly-fishing is solitary, contemplative, misanthropic, scientific in some hands, poetic in others, and laced with conflicting aesthetic considerations. It is not even clear if catching fish is actually the point.

JOHN GIERACH – Dances With Trout (1994)

La ROCCA'S CORNER – "Fish Tails & Fish Tales"

Four weeks into the trout season and I've not yet been out...what kind of fisherman am I? A buddy of mine has been telling me for years, "La Rocca, get your priorities in order!" He now lives in Seattle to be close to great fishing. So it goes.

ON STOCKIES, HOLDOVERS, WILD and NATIVE TROUT

My new vest arrived from Cabela's (a mesh shortie as I promised myself) so a couple of nights ago I emptied my old vest on the dining room table and loaded the new one, adding a couple of dozen flies I'd purchased from an outfit in Colorado. As usual, that kind of project got me thinking fishing. Chuck, who works for DEC, had recently sent me the stocking schedule and list, and I mulled that over as I fussed with the big decisions about what to put in each vest pocket. Then I called brother Steve who told me he caught a few "stockies" on his first trip and on his second excursion had landed three "wild" rainbows making the run out of the Titicus Reservoir. I began to wonder about the different trout in our streams and how we trouters value them.

So I had some fun, I called a half dozen of our TU chapter members and asked them for their own words of definition on four “kinds” (not species) of trout: stocked trout, holdover trout, wild trout and native trout. I was having so much fun I actually called one of our members twice...embarrassing. The next day I called my friend Chuck at DEC and asked him for “official” definitions to run against the consensus developed in my informal phone survey. The results, I believe, speak well for the knowledge of TU members. Many of us probably started out chucking worms and salmon eggs to anything in the creek that would take them, but we are far more sophisticated now...in lots of ways, including what we know about trout and how we value them. Here are my notes from an evening of phone calls.

Stocked Trout. “Stockies.” We are all on the same page here...a no brainer...or is it? We all think that these are fish planted in the waterway in the same season that we catch them...or don’t catch them, and that is the little wrinkle. If they survive the season in which they are planted (stocked) we bestow another title on them. And I believe “bestow” is the right word because even the tone of our voices when we talk about them seems to convey higher esteem.

Holdover. While we did not all say it in the same way, the meaning was consistent: a stocked fish that survives the season in which it was stocked. “Remained in the stream from one season to the next” is the way one member put it. Presumably a trout could “holdover” for a couple or a few years, but unless we could really discern that easily, we can’t add successive layers of esteem to the term. One of us said that a holdover is a “two year old” trout, but that is not quite accurate. From a DEC coldwater fish specialist: “holdover trout...most generally can be taken to mean stocked trout that remain in a given water from a previous year’s stocking. For example, stocked trout in the Catskill Creek on April 1, 2004 (before the 2004 stocking) are holdover trout.” There are some!

Wild Trout. Again we got it mostly right. These trout are the product of natural reproduction in the stream. One DEC biologist said wild trout are “fish that are born in the wild,” and in a wonderful little comment, one of his colleagues “quibbled” with him to note that wild trout are “hatched” in the wild, not “born.” Great fun! They added, “We have wild populations of brown and rainbow trout for example,” even though it is mostly browns that are stocked. (I should also tell you that a couple of our folks let the word “native” slip into their discussions of wild trout, but mine was not to challenge anyone that evening.) The wild trout designation is fun because there can be wild trout close to home in places that are hardly wild!

When we first moved to Medusa in 1972, in the process of settling into the old farmhouse, we pulled up some linoleum in one of the bedrooms and discovered an “insulation lining” of newspapers. There was a *Times Union* sports section from 1963 with a rod and gun column that announced that DEC (known by another name then) had stocked the Ten Mile Creek in Rensselaerville that year for the last time. To my knowledge that is still true (someone correct me please if I am wrong), and that is why the green and white, hand stenciled, unofficial signs at the access points say “sustaining population”. I’ve caught and released a few of those hatched-in-the-stream wild trout.

Native Trout. We did not say it in the wonderful technical words used by our professional colleagues, but nearly all of us know the definition. From our own DEC, native trout are “species naturally occurring in New York State. These include brook trout, lake trout, and Atlantic Salmon. Brown trout and rainbow trout, for example, are not native to New York. They are not part of New York’s ‘natural’ fish fauna.” Wonderful words...so precise. I’ll add that those marvelous, deep-bodied, golden and cream colored browns that we long to hook – and occasionally do – will never be native trout anywhere in this country...not in the Big Horn in Montana or the Delaware in our own back yard!

The evening of phone calls could have gone on and on, but some of us, I know, hit the rack pretty early, so it ended. More fun than the definitions that emerged were the responses to the last question I posed to those who answered my call: “Been out yet?” All had been out at least once; some caught fish, some not yet. One of our fold felt very badly about inadvertently killing a water snake that was active way too early in the season. The poor creature met his demise when crushed by a loose rock dislodged as our member played his first “nice fish” of the season. In my last call, one of our brothers reported catching a “fish of a lifetime” the evening before. The 22-inch brown (holdover for sure, maybe a wild fish) took a size 16 bead head Olive Nymph in high roily water. The location was disclosed without hesitation, but I did not inquire if it could be passed on...so I will not.

HANK'S FLY BOX – Blue Quill Emerger

Well it’s the second week of April and I finally got out to fish for the first time this season, and was even pleased to see a few flies. I wish I was able to catch a few fish but catching a few flies was a step in the right direction. The fly I caught was a black stonefly and I was happy because I already had both a Dark Hare’s Ear and a Black Stonefly on the end of my leader. I tried Wendy Neefus’ 2 fly rig and it worked well. I only got my tippet material twisted up one time!

Soon I saw another small fly, which I could not catch but it looked like a small Blue Winged Olive (BWO). I began to wonder if it was a BWO or if it could be a Blue Quill. BWO, Blue Quills, Quill Gordons and Hendricksons are all commonly found emerging in late April and May. The latter two flies are bigger so I was still sure the fly I saw was a BWO or a Blue Quill...but which one was it? The key was if I could catch it I could determine if it had 2 or 3 tails. The BWO has only two tails whereas the Blue Quill has three tails.

To the entomologist, Blue Quills are called *Paraleptophlebia*...some fly fishermen call them Paraleps. We are seeing fewer Quill Gordons and Hendricksons because of poorer water quality. Fortunately both the BWO and the Blue Quill have survived increasing industrial and residential pollution better.

I decided to go home and tie some Blue Quills. The recipe I chose is similar to the one found on page 43 of the May/June 2004 issue of American Angler. The recipe I used follows:

BLUE QUILL EMERGER

Hook: Dry fly, sizes 16 and 18

Thread: Brown or reddish brown 8/0

Trailing Shuck: Reddish brown poly yarn

Abdomen: Reddish brown dubbing

Wings: Medium-dun CDC fibers

Thorax: Reddish-brown dubbing

MEETINGS

EVERY MONTH: Our regularly scheduled meetings are the **3rd Tuesday of each month (except July and August)** unless otherwise indicated. We meet at 7:30 p.m. at O'Brien's Restaurant on Route 23B in Leeds, NY.

THIS MONTH: Tuesday, May 18, 2004 **NEXT MONTH:** Tuesday, June 15, 2004-on stream

COLUMBIA-GREENE RIP VAN WINKLE CHAPTER #569 OF TROUT UNLIMITED Chapter Officers

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Keep current...with The Current! Dick & Hank (CO-EDITORS)