
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

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

ELECTIONS HELD AT NOVEMBER MEETING!

OFFICERS FOR 2007

PRESIDENT: Hank Theiss
SECRETARY: Justin Seeley

VICE PRESIDENT: Joe Reina
TREASURER: Dave Rudloff

BILL NEWCOMB PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS...

Do you remember going to the movies as a kid? In between shows there would be short newsreel segments, coming attractions, or short subject movies to fill in time while the projectionist got the main feature ready to play again. Bill Newcomb purchased a DVD disc that contains two short subject movies that would have been shown in the 1940's. He played this disc for us at our November meeting.

The first show featured Edward Hewitt, George LaBranche, and Dick Hunt fishing the Neversink River, in NY. The second featured John Alden Knight fishing the Brodhead Creek in PA. So, "Who are these 'old dudes'?" you ask. Just because you never heard of them is no reason to dismiss them. These folks were the "heavy hitters" of the fishing and sporting world at their time, which ranged from approximately 1900 to 1950. They were book authors, magazine writers, newspaper sportswriters, and inventors, representing the leading edge of fly-fishing knowledge and enthusiasm during that period.

Here are just a few of their accomplishments: EDWARD HEWITT, considered by many to be the best trout fisherman of his era, wrote Hewitt's Handbook of Fly Fishing, published in 1933. GEORGE LaBRANCHE wrote The Dry Fly and Fast Water, a sort of revolutionary break away idea from an English style of fishing calm waters, published in 1914. JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT refined some old Florida folklore and published the "Solunar Tables" (Sol = Sun, Lunar = Moon) in 1936, that are still used today in many fishing publications, that indicate the best fishing times based on movements of the sun and moon, as well as other factors.

It was a very interesting program giving us insight into the lives and times of these leading innovators and inventors of that 50-year period. Many thanks to our own era "old dude" and friend, Bill Newcomb, for presenting that informative disc and for filling in the details about the lives of these folks.

Dick

TENMILE CREEK UPDATE: NOVEMBER 2006

There is significant progress to report for this month. A decision was made to segment this project into a series of phases. An actual plan and design was completed by US Fish & Wildlife. The application and description of the project to be submitted to Embrace A Stream is in its final stages of completion. A letter was received from The Clearwater Chapter endorsing the project. And initial contact has been made with the Council's Conservation Fund in hopes of attaining yet another source of funding.

A meeting took place on October 30th hosted by Joanne Schindleheim at her residence on the Tenmile. The attendees were: Joanne, Gian Dodici and Raymond Li from USF&W, Jeff Flack from Greene County Soil & Water, Walt Bennett from Greene County Federation of Sportsmen, and Hank Theiss, Dick Riccio and myself from TU. A decision was made to segment this project into phases given the magnitude of the damage. It was decided to first focus on the erosion problem on Joanne's property and therefore call this Phase 1 of the project. Later that week I received a plan, a design of the work to be done, and a preliminary estimate of the cost from USF&W. The Phase 1 segment would shore up the stream bank with heavy rock and then move the sediment from across the stream towards Joanne's property. This would slightly divert the stream away from the area effected by continued erosion.

Next, work began on the application to file with TU for the Embrace A Stream Fund. A cover letter was written giving a description of the problem and the plan for Phase 1...and the cost estimate was completed. Signatures required on the application are almost complete at this time. This information has also been distributed to all parties to this process. I am awaiting feedback before completing the application for its submission to Embrace A Stream.

The Clearwater Chapter was contacted to inform them of this project and ask if there was interest in assisting our chapter and if they would consider helping with a donation of either volunteers or funding. Their response was to offer a letter of endorsement of the project...which I have now received and thanked them for. A similar request has been extended to the Catskill Mountain Chapter.

Finally, contact has also been made with the Council's Conservation Fund in an effort to seek additional funding for this project. To date information has been distributed to the fund explaining the history of the stream and all documents attained so far. Work will continue on this lead and findings reported.

This completes my report, however, I have one other item that I would like to discuss for the future of this project. I believe that such a project is the essence of what our organization is all about. If we are successful and the time comes for actual work, we will need volunteers. It would be a real help if we could have more of our members participate. As 2007 approaches if we would all look within ourselves for a goal to do some added form of participation for our organization such as attending one more meeting than we have in the past or helping with some chapter function it would greatly strengthen our group.

Thank you.

Bob Novak TENMILE CREEK CHAIRMAN

La ROCCA'S CORNER – “Fish Tails & Fish Tales”

My father was a scientist. He was a biochemist by training, a microbiologist through much of his career, and a practical businessman who turned his knowledge and energy into a successful scientific testing laboratory. Dad worked for General Foods Corporation for many years before he started his own business; in one of my favorite photographs, he is seated with his back to the camera peering into GF's first electron microscope. His powers of observation were keen, and he could combine what he saw with what he knew and turn out practical advice for his clients in the food, drug and cosmetic industries. Brother Paul has very successfully followed in Dad's footsteps; not I.

SCIENCE ON THE TENMILE

A tale I spun a few months ago recounted a wet but productive few hours on the upper reaches of my home water. I caught and released a couple of nice brown trout and then departed with a feeling of satisfaction tainted by a nagging sense that maybe the water was not quite what it had been a couple of decades before. In the months since then a lot has happened concerning the Tenmile Creek. Our local chapter of Trout Unlimited has renewed its focus on the creek and begun the process of addressing the deteriorating condition of both sections of the stream channel and the habitat improvement structures, which were installed fifty years ago. In the process, a dedicated member of the chapter uncovered some striking information about the number of trout that the creek supported years ago, a number that seems to have steadily decreased with the changing condition of the stream banks and channel and structure. That information prompted a question for me: What about the water itself?

As it turned out, that same question intrigued one of my fishing buddies, one who happens to be a scientist. Tom is a biochemist by training, has directed both hospital and environmental laboratories, and most recently taught high school science courses. At Guilderland HS Tom conducted special science projects with interested kids with whom he would spend time on local waterways monitoring water quality. When we talked about our favorite trout creek and its water quality his response was, “Let's do it...let's see what the water quality really is.” I've already mentioned that science and I are not a good match, but when it came to a trout stream I love to fish, I was anxious to learn. In addition, over the last six or seven years I have been doing some work for US Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and its “nonpoint source pollution grant program” and I've developed both a professional and personal interest in the subject.

Tom suggested that we get in the creek and look carefully at the *benthic community*...the *macro invertebrates*...the *bugs*...that we trout fisherman talk about so much. The theory is the same as the “canary in the coal mine”: if the bugs are thriving, the water must be good. More than ten years ago I had facilitated a series of focus groups around the country, again for USEPA, as part of what they called the “indicators project.” That project was a large-scale initiative to help gain acceptance for and increased use of biological indicators of water quality. So I had some idea of what Tom had in mind.

What we did is sometimes referred to as a “kick study.” I waded into a riffle (the best bug habitat) ten feet above Tom who held a fine mesh net to the stream bottom. As I slowly shuffled downstream, pushing rocks and gravel in front of me, the dislodged members of the benthic community floated into Tom's net. All kinds of nymphs and water organisms were trapped in

the net: caddis, mayflies, stoneflies, dobson flies, dragonflies, water pennies, scuds, midges and an occasional aquatic worm. We kicked and shuffled and collected and counted until we had one hundred organisms in our count. Then, using a specified protocol (a science word!), we assigned a score. And the water quality in the Tenmile Creek, by that method of analysis, was excellent. It was pretty basic stuff, but it was science, and it was answering our nagging question. In addition, it was fun; and Tom was a good instructor.

A couple of months later I had another opportunity to “do some science” in the creek. The Rensselaerville Institute, where I’ve worked for more than thirty years, has a decades-old program called **Minds On** (distinguished from “hands on”) in which groups of middle and high school students spend the day at The Institute under the guidance of a practicing professional or other expert with something significant to share. Topics range from the Underground Railroad to History You Can Touch to Newspaper Writing to Science. Tom was invited to design a **Minds On** program on the scientific method; he built it around the water quality of Tenmile Creek and the practices he’d used in Guilderland. I was invited to be his lab assistant. “Doc” and “Tech” were the names we took for our day with 20 eighth graders – 10 from Greenville and another 10 from Fonda-Fultonville.

Tom made the day “real” by announcing that our job for the day was to confirm or negate the findings of a graduate student named Sean Madden who had done his field work at the Huyck Preserve a few years ago. Sean studied water quality above and below Myosotis Lake, the headwaters of the Tenmile. We began the day with a series of exercises designed to show that there really is a “method” to science and that simple observation is not enough. Observations need to be accurate and reproducible, and Tom showed the students how you can be fooled. The kids threw small wet sponges at a blackboard marked with a scoring grid and calculated median and mean scores, learning the nature of each and how they can and do tell you different things.

The highlight of the day – certainly for me and I think for the students as well – came when they pulled on hip boots and we drove them to the Tenmile below Rensselaerville. After lessons on sampling technique, we drew samples of creek water in different locations on the creek itself and a tributary. When we returned to The Institute teams of students conducted tests of conductivity of the water using small, hand-held meters with built-in mini computers...all with strict adherence to scientific protocols to insure accurate baselines.

The more minerals in water the more easily it will conduct electricity – conductivity. What the kids found was different levels of conductivity reflecting different amounts of dissolved salt in the water in different parts of the creek and its tributaries. With enough observations and doing the statistical tests to insure reliability, the students confirmed Sean Madden’s findings: the Tenmile Creek is not pristine. The tributaries below Myosotis Lake contribute minerals to the creek, principally salt...road salt that has infiltrated the soil and will likely continue to leach into the water of the tributaries and be carried to the Tenmile. That is the bad news; the good news is that the salt levels are still relatively low...low enough in fact that the water organisms that call the creek home are still doing very well. Our canary is still singing mightily.

Should we be concerned? Should we be careful and on guard? Should we continue to monitor the water in this wonderful little trout stream? Absolutely on all counts!

FROM THE EDITORS: Hank's Thought for the Month

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

The Tenmile Creek project is one of the few times we really follow the TU mission statement.
As a result, I chose to highlight it this month
as we embark on this vital major environmental endeavor.

TROUT BROOKS & TROUT BOOKS:

A Look Into Justin's Bookcase

It's the time of year when activities such as fly tying and reading replace wading and casting. One of my favorite ways to beat the winter doldrums is to research new fishing opportunities for the upcoming spring. Living in the Hudson Valley affords us a tremendous number of trout streams within a few hours' drive that will keep even the most avid angler busy.

Connecticut's Housatonic River has been tempting anglers with its big trout and excellent hatches for years, yet now, with the recently established "natural flows" from the hydroelectric dam, the river's potential just may become reality. Jeff Passante's Housatonic River Fly Fishing Guide (Amato, 1998) is just the tool to whet your appetite for exploring the Hous. The book highlights the major pools in the Trout Management Area along Route 7 and details the hatches and patterns that are successful for the river's regulars.

The Housatonic is well worth exploring...with several fly shops nearby, a hot fishing tip is only a purchase away. If you do decide to make the trip, if the fishing is slow or you find yourself in need of a hot lunch to thaw out from springtime flows, you just may find me wading in a bowl of New England clam chowder at one of my favorite eateries. But if you get the last bowl before I do, plan on revealing that secret spot where a twenty-inch brownie awaits my fly.

FROM THE EDITORS: Justin's Chuckle for the Month

FROM THE INTERNET...

A pastor, a priest and a rabbi were out for a day of fishing. After getting into the boat, they had just pulled away from the dock when the rabbi said, "Stop the boat I forgot the coffee." The pastor who was driving the boat said, "I will turn around and take you back to the dock," and the rabbi said, "Oh, no need, I will be right back." The rabbi quickly jumped out of the boat, and ran across the water to shore and then to his car to fetch the coffee, and then ran back across the water, and got back in the boat. Well, the pastor not wanting to be shown up by the rabbi said, "Oh my, I forgot the sandwiches," and quickly jumped out of the boat to attempt running across the water like the rabbi, but instead, sank quickly to the bottom of the lake. With that the priest looked angrily at the rabbi and said, "You should have shown him where the rocks were."

MANY HANDS MAKE LIGHT WORK...WELL MAYBE!

November 4th forty-five people helped Greene County Soil & Water and New York City Department of Environmental Protection plant 2,000 trees on the Batavia Kill. C-G TU was represented by Dave Rudloff and Hank Theiss.

The Batavia Kill is a beautiful stream and this planting of trees will increase streamside soil stability and help maintain the watershed for years to come. Hank

HANK'S FLY BOX – Fishing Mayflies

Recently I found an old article written by Ted Leeson and printed in Field and Stream about fishing mayflies. He listed 10 important tactics for fishing any exciting mayfly hatch. The following is a summary of Ted's list that most of us know, but a review is always good.

1. KEEP MOVING - Mayfly emergences can be localized...so check out more than one location on the stream.
2. LOOK SHARP - Look very closely...some rises are very hard to see.
3. FOLLOW FORM - A rise form leaving a bubble is a signature that trout are eating adult mayflies...a rise form of tail or dorsal fin indicates fish feeding on nymphs or emergers.
4. AIM FOR A TARGET - Rise forms appear on the surface downstream of the trout's underwater location...be sure to drop your fly above or upstream of where the rise appeared.
5. PRESENTATION - The classic dry-fly quartering cast upstream is good...but sometimes a quartering cast downstream, so the fly is presented ahead of the leader, is the only thing that works.
6. DON'T BE A DRAG - Sometimes drag can be invisible to the angler...try a longer tippet or a size smaller.
7. FOLLOW PROTOCOL
 - a. Change size – put on a smaller version of the same fly.
 - b. Change silhouette – if using a high floating fly change to a parachute or comparadun.
 - c. Change type – if using an adult version does not work go to an emerger or floating nymph.
 - d. Change color – go from dark to light or vice versa.
8. MATCH CAREFULLY – Sometimes you see duns on the water...but the fish are taking those few spinners that you hardly notice.
9. BE UNORTHODOX – Don't hesitate to tie on something different...tie on an ant imitation or an oversized dry fly.
10. EXTEND THE HATCH – When mayflies seem to stop emerging...action still might be found in back eddies or slow water pockets where so-called stillborns or cripples can be found.

JOE REINA TAKING ORDERS FOR SHIRTS and VESTS WITH TU LOGO and CHAPTER NAME

I will be accepting orders for polo/golf shirts and fleece vests from shoptu.org until 3:00 p.m. Friday, January 5th 2007. Both the shirts and vests will have the TU logo along with our chapter name. We will receive a discounted price for ordering 20 or more of each. So with this being said I will need to have the orders and money up front. If we do not receive the minimum 20 orders the order will be cancelled and monies will be returned. At our meeting this month the chapter choose green as the color. Joe Reina (701-3640)

Shirts: Sizes: S-5XL

Price: \$25.00 ea. (reg. price) our price \$22.00 ea.

Vest: Sizes: S-3XL

Prices: \$20.00 ea. (reg. price, sizes S-XL) our price \$18.00 ea.

\$25.00 ea. (reg. price sizes 2XL-3XL) our price \$20.00 ea.

AND THE NOVEMBER WINNER WAS...

...Bob Novak who won flies hand-tied and donated by Wendy Neefus. **(Those wishing to donate flies or other door prizes for the free monthly drawings should contact Dick Riccio.)**

FLY-TYING CLASSES START...WEDNESDAY NIGHTS!

C-GCC Room 132, 7:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.

JANUARY 10, 17, 24, 31 FEBRUARY 7, 14

STUDENTS: Sign up with the college.

**WE NEED HELP TEACHING TYING, HANDING OUT MATERIALS
AND HELPING STUDENTS SET UP VISES, ETC.**

WE HAVE A JOB FOR YOU!

Please let George Goth (622-0837) know which days you can help.

SAVE THE DATE!...March 24, 2007!

The Columbia-Greene Chapter of TU is pleased to announce that the **SECOND ANNUAL CONSERVATION BANQUET** will be held on **Saturday, March 24, 2007** at the **Bavarian Manor in Purling, NY**

The festivities will begin at **5:00 p.m.** and will feature dinner, a presentation by noted fly tyer and author Jay "Fishy" Fullum, and many opportunities to win great prizes.

Plan to join us for one of our most fun-filled activities of the year.

COMING SOON...C-G TU TRIP

to the CATSKILL FLY-FISHING CENTER and MUSEUM in Livingston Manor

Go to www.cffcm.org for more information.

Wendy Neefus is arranging a date...to be announced.

THE CURRENT ON“LINE”

IF YOU HAVE AN EMAIL ADDRESS AND RECEIVED THIS NEWSLETTER BY MAIL PLEASE CONTACT AN EDITOR SO OUR 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

Hank Theiss (518) 851-9442

Justin Seeley (518) 537-4685

Email addresses can be found on the Web Page at <http://cgtu.org/> on the “Contact Us” page.

C-GTU MEETINGS

EVERY MONTH: Our regularly scheduled meetings are held at 7:30 p.m.

at the Cornell Cooperative Extension Building on Mountain Road in Cairo, NY,
the 3rd Tuesday of each month (**except July and August**) unless otherwise indicated.

MEETING THIS MONTH: Tuesday, December 19, 2006

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, January 16, 2007

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

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KEEP CURRENT...WITH THE CURRENT!

Dick Riccio, Hank Theiss & Justin Seeley (Editors)