



TALE OF THE POOL

WINTER 2016

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, February 10th, 2016, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
Presenter: Dale Kotowski
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, March 9th, 2016, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
Presenter: Kieran Frye
- 21st Annual Banquet: Saturday, March 12th, 2016, Park Inn by Radisson, Uniontown, PA 5:30 p.m.
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, April 13th, 2015, Hampton Inn California, PA 7:00 p.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

"A sportsman or a sportswoman who is not also a conservationist is a fool". I have repeated this statement many times over the last twelve years. Put another way, we as anglers have an obligation to give back, to protect our waters, to care for the places we love, and to encourage our fellow men and women to be of like mind.

The day may come when we will all be members of Carp Unlimited! The lowly carp being the only fish left to pursue. Until then, we must continue to conserve, protect and restore our air, land and water in hopes that trout as well as other game fish will have a fighting chance to inspire the dreams of our grandchildren.

It was brought to my attention at a recent CRTU board meeting that our membership is now nearly 500 strong. Out of that large number there exists a few hard working men and women who regularly attend meetings, serve on committees, assist the Trout in the Classroom projects (twenty schools to date), monitor water at our remediation projects, raise trout at our nursery in Confluence, educate the next generation of fly fishers, provide



Photo by Ben Moyer

The Youghiogheny River

various community outreach programs, and interact with politicians and general citizens alike to engage them in our cause. I could go on.

It is the same few people always. As one of the chapter's founders recently said, someone of the few always seems to step up when work needs to be done. But what happens if they don't or can't?

I am writing this to the rest of you, the 400 plus that we never see except maybe on the water enjoying the current hatch on the

Yough or one of its tributaries. I assure you that these days spent fishing are in jeopardy. They will not last. The waters will warm and the insects and trout will disappear. This is not just speculation. There is sound science examining the threats to the cold waters that the trout now call home.

On June 24th and 25th, 2016, CRTU will conduct the second Youghiogheny River Symposium at the Penn State Fayette campus in Uniontown. The first symposium was held in 1997.

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CRTU'S 21ST ANNUAL BANQUET

CRTU's 21st annual banquet will be held on Saturday March 12th, 2016 @ the Uniontown Park Inn by Radisson (formerly Holiday Inn). Cocktails begin 5:30 pm, Dinner begins 7:00 pm. Deadline for tickets is March 6th, 2016. Dinner choices are Beef Burgundy, Lemon Pepper Tilapia, or Chicken Piccata. Ticket price is \$40 per person. Seating is limited so respond ASAP to avoid disappointment! Contact Eugene Gordon at 724-277-8688 for tickets or more information. If you cannot attend, please consider making a donation since this is our only fund raiser. Make checks out to CRTU and mail to PO Box 483, Uniontown, Pa. 15401.

PLANS ADVANCE FOR CRTU'S SECOND YOUGHIOGHENY SYMPOSIUM

After an unavoidable postponement from 2015, CRTU has rescheduled the Second Youghiogheny River Symposium for June 24-25, 2016. As was the original Symposium, presented by CRTU in 1997, the event will take place at the Penn State Fayette Campus, midway between Uniontown and Connellsville on the west side of Rte. 119.

"It's time for CRTU to make this happen," said CRTU president Dale Kotowski. "A lot of time has passed since the first symposium, the Youghiogheny is of greater value to the region than ever and there are new challenges to meet to keep it that way."



An angler hooks a trout in the "Middle" section of the Youghiogheny River. The second-ever Youghiogheny River Symposium will highlight the Yough's attraction as a tailwater trout fishery as well as its other environmental and economic benefits to the region. Photo and article by Ben Moyer

CRTU hopes to attract regional policy-makers, municipalities, recreational user groups, state and federal agencies to the Symposium, as well as representatives from natural resource extraction and development industries currently or potentially active in the watershed.

Attendees will hear presentations and discussions on a diverse range of topics, highlighting the Yough's recreational, ecological and economic value to the southwestern Pennsylvania region, and examining possible threats to the river's continued recovery and health.

CRTU is attempting to assemble the most knowledgeable, accredited and experienced speakers possible to make presentations on the Youghiogheny and its attributes. The program will offer numerous ways for guests and participants to engage in discussions of particular interest.

President Dale Kotowski has been in continual contact with Penn State Fayette staff, evaluating the facilities and considering various options for the event.

"The Penn State staff is excited and impressed by CRTU's accomplishments," Kotowski said. "It is apparent they want to work with us to make this a success."

"The facilities there are just outstanding, every bit as good as we could get by going even to someplace near downtown Pittsburgh, and the price makes it a clear choice. Penn State's offer to reduce the auditorium, security and audio-visual equipment rental fees for a non-profit, public-service organization like CRTU makes this financially doable for us. More importantly it will keep the registration fee affordable, so that we can attract the greatest possible number of participants."

Authorized by the board, the symposium committee has arranged for the liability insurance coverage required by Penn State in order to hold such an event on campus.

Though the program is not entirely finalized, the Symposium's objectives will naturally be similar to those of the first event 19 years ago, with some refinements and adaptations to current conditions. "There's a sense that we might want to elaborate a bit more on the 'upbeat,' the positive, and the 'fun' aspects of having a healthy and vibrant river with an emerging tailwater coldwater trout fishery here in our backyard," Kotowski said.

The 1997 symposium's stated objectives were:

- To raise community and regional awareness of the value of the Youghiogheny River as a natural resource and tourism asset.

- To initiate a planning process designed to minimize conflicts among diverse uses of the river and its resources.

- To identify common goals and objectives of various groups and individuals so that the symposium might serve as a catalyst toward greater cooperation in promoting and protecting the river resource.

- To review efforts already underway to improve the water quality of the river and its watershed.

- To communicate to state and federal natural resource management agencies and political leaders that there exists a high level of local interest in the Youghiogheny River, and that local people are willing to commit time and energy to the river's future.

Attendance at the first symposium exceeded 100 individuals, with numerous state and local elected officials in attendance.

The board acknowledged the importance of teamwork and sharing responsibilities over the coming year while CRTU plans for this event, and seeks input from any CRTU members who helped with the first symposium in 1997.

BARGAIN BROWN TROUT: HOW TO SAVE MONEY ON A UTAH FISHING GETAWAY

ASHLEY WILMONT

Four volunteers for Casting for Recovery (CfR) Western Pennsylvania (WPA) and one fishing friend flew to Heber Valley, Utah to attend the CfR National Conference. As Gretchen Fay, CfR WPA fly fishing instructor, prepared for the conference, she noticed that it would be held five minutes from a blue ribbon trout river, the Middle Provo River. She also noticed that another famous fly fishing destination, the Green River, was only a three hour drive from our cabin. Turning a business conference trip into a nine day fishing trip was an opportunity that she couldn't resist. The problem was that the trip had to be affordable for everybody. Destination fly fishing trips can be thousands of dollars. But, thanks to Gretchen's savvy ways and the group's willingness to do this trip on a budget, we were able to do a nine day all-inclusive Utah fly fishing trip for about \$1,300 per person.

Besides the plane ticket, lodging is typically the highest expense of any vacation. Instead of staying at a hotel, Gretchen found a cabin on VBRO.com. VBRO.com is sort of like Craigslist.com for vacation rentals. You can rent private vacation homes nationally and internationally for reasonable prices. Our cabin was fully furnished, clean, quiet and had huge windows that overlooked Heber Valley. Our cabin was \$900 total for seven nights, we stayed two nights at the CfR conference lodging. (Continued on page 4)

FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

During those times the Yough and a number of its headwaters were compromised due to mine runoff and the effects of acid rain. Water quality had been quite poor for some time and, as a result, so was the fishing, especially compared to what we can experience now on the Yough. The work of a number of conservation groups stopped the decline and has restored much of the watershed. But new enemies of the river have joined the old and there remains much to do in the future.

In addition to CRTU, the symposium will feature other friends of the Yough to include:

Mountain Watershed Association, Ohio State Park, US Army Corps of Engineers, Pennsylvania DCNR, Pennsylvania DEP, PA Fish & Boat Commission, California University of Pennsylvania, Penn State Fayette University, Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, National Trout Unlimited and other local TU chapters.

This will be a **BIG** deal. I urge you all to attend. Please stay tuned for more details.

A bigger deal is what each of you can do as an involved member of Chestnut Ridge chapter. We can use your help in any one, just one, of a hundred different ways.

Come to a meeting and pick something that you would like to do. We are all busy in our daily lives, some more than others. But some find that extra time to help. Now we need a few more of you who are willing to do that. The future of our sport here in the Laurel Highlands depends on it.

Our regular meetings are held at the Knights of Columbus in Uniontown and the next meeting is Wednesday, February 10th. I will speak on "tying & fishing the midge, black fly & crane fly".

The regular March meeting is Wednesday, March 9th. Internationally renowned fly tier, Kieran Frye, will be there to tie "must have nymphs for spring trout".

Our April meeting will be Wednesday the 13th and will be held at the California Hampton Inn & Suites. We hope that few more of our Washington and Greene county members will be able to attend. There will be multiple speakers that evening.

In May, we will be back at the Knights of Columbus on the 11th. Chad Hough will speak on "finding wild brown trout in unlikely places."

I hope to see some of you at one or more of these meetings.

Please note that our annual banquet will be on Saturday, March 12th at the Park Inn by Radisson in Uniontown.

Good fishing is what I wish for you in the future and not something that we only remember from our past.

FISHING THE BLACK FLY

DALE KOTOWSKI

Some years ago my wife, Cynthia, and I did a canoe trip in the Ontario wilderness. We had some minor concerns regarding potential encounters with wolves and bear, but much more "fear" regarding constant contact with biting insects!

During our many portages, protected by full-body bug suits and head nets, the little buggers bit my only vulnerable anatomy. My bare hands, locked to the gunwales of the canoe as I carried it around waterfalls and logjams, were their constant source of "food". My hands bled for days!

Thus my love/hate relationship with the black fly began...

Black flies, insect order Simuliidae, live in all types of streams and rivers. Their natural habitat is large rivers and uncountable numbers call the Yough home. They offer trout a ready meal throughout the year.

These insects have multiple generations each year just like midges. While they hatch during the winter, spring and summer months, the adult is only, occasionally, the trout's diet. Pupae likewise are not worth imitating since they form a sealed hard pupal case that is attached to the stream bottom. The adult emerges while still in its cocoon and the whole mass floats to the surface.

It is the larval stage that we need to imitate. On the Yough and its tribbs, an imitation of this stage of the black fly is one of my most consistent producers during the winter and early spring seasons.

Black flies take their name from the dark color of the adult. Larvae range in color from cream/gray to olive/gray to shades of olive/brown. For years I've tied my black fly patterns using Coats & Clark sewing thread or DMC embroidery floss in sizes ranging from 16 down to 20. I use either a light wire scud hook or a dry fly hook. Don Holbrook in his book "Midge Magic" writes "...if you only tie one pattern out of this whole book make it this one" referring to the black fly larvae.

This fly should be fished just above the stream bottom. You may do so under an indicator fished in tandem with an egg or another nymph. Even better is to fish it as part of your "Euro nymphing rig". A heavy fly to get you deep and the black fly on a six-inch dropper about eighteen inches above the anchor fly. Try this technique on a warming February day up at the tailrace. You may be the only one catching fish!

Good fishing!

Chestnut Ridge Trout Unlimited
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We're on the web at
www.ChestnutridgeTU.org

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. Trout Unlimited's Chestnut Ridge Chapter has been a leader in coldwater conservation in southwestern Pennsylvania since 1995. With its efforts focused on the watershed of the Youghiogheny River, Chestnut Ridge TU works for cleaner streams, public awareness of water quality issues, and high quality trout fishing for the region's residents and visitors.



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BARGAIN BROWN TROUT (CONTINUED)

Between the five of us, it was \$180 per person. The key to saving on lodging is having lots of friends to split the costs. Food costs were only \$58 per person. We ate in almost every night and didn't buy a lot of alcohol. We split SUV rental and gas too, which came to about \$28 per person.

The first day after we arrived and settled into our cabin, we fished the Middle Provo River. The Middle Provo is a tail-water that provides 12 miles of blue ribbon trout fishing. Before 1999, the Middle Provo was a straight channel with poor fish habitat. The Utah Reclamation, Mitigation and Conservation Commission began the Provo Restoration Project to change the river back to historic conditions. This multi-billion dollar restoration project created wildlife habitat and five public access points. Each access point has clean restrooms, ample parking and large stone pillars that mark each entrance. The second day we hired guides to show us the Middle Provo. They were great; they put us on fish and showed us spots that we could go on our own. For an idea of how good the fishing was at the Middle Provo, the CfR WPA medical facilitator who has only been fly fishing for a couple of months, caught 30 fish within a few hours. Most of the fish that we caught were medium sized brown trout that took size 20-24 midge and blue wing olive nymphs. We fished this section almost every day. We saved a lot of gas money by lodging close to the river that we fished the most, especially since we had to rent a large SUV.

The fourth day of our trip, we floated the Green River. The Green River is a large tail-water with epic numbers of trout. One of our guides, Charles Card with Spinner Fall Guide Service, informed us that the Green has about 18,000 fish per river mile. The river is designated into three sections. We floated the A section which starts at the Flaming Gorge Dam and ends seven miles downriver. This section of river is set deep in red rock canyons and the water is stunningly clear. While floating in the drift boat, it was easy to look down to the green covered river bottom to see rainbow trout holding in the current. Catching 50 fish on a Green River trip is common, but we didn't catch huge numbers. The Flaming Gorge Dam released very cold water temperatures on the day of our trip and the only insect activity was very small midges and blue wing olives. We did manage to bring some nice rainbows and brown trout to net. If you float the Green, I recommend that you go when the insect hatches are better and be sure to ask your guide if the dam will be releasing good water temperatures for fishing. Since we had to schedule our trip around the CfR conference, our fishing had to be during a less optimal time of year. However, at the CfR conference, I heard that the fishing was much better on the B section of the Green where the water was warmer. Always go with what the guide recommends, but if the dam is releasing extremely cold water, I suggest floating the B or C section. To save on money, we drove to the Green River very early in the morning and drove home late at night. It was tiring, but we saved on hotel costs.

I encourage you to take a trip to Utah to fish for trout. It can be easy to spend a lot of money on a fishing trip, but by splitting costs between a few friends, you can go to Utah to fish for brown trout for about \$1,300 a person. Or \$1,400 if you prefer a good scotch!

LAST CAST

FROM THE EDITOR

Follow us on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/ChestnutRidgeTU> and on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ChestnutRidgeTU>.

Many thanks to CTRU members Dale Kotowski, Ben Moyer, and Ashley Wilmont for their contributions to this issue of the newsletter.

Scott Hoffman