



TALE OF THE POOL

SPRING 2014

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Banquet- Eugene Gordon
Membership- Hal Homler
Youth Education-Jim Tobal

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, March 12th, 2014, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
- Annual Banquet: Saturday March 22, 2014 Uniontown Holiday Inn 5:30 p.m. to ??
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, April 9th, 2014, Gander Mountain Washington, PA 7:00 p.m.
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, May 14th, 2014, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

The years fly by! It has been ten years since I have served the chapter as its President. For most of us, work, family, other volunteer commitments, any number of responsibilities and even occasional fishing can prevent us from devoting more time to Chestnut Ridge TU.

In 1997, Chestnut Ridge held the first Youghiogheny River Symposium. This was a daylong seminar event conducted at the Penn State Fayette campus. The motivation for the affair was concern for the Yough's future and the challenges that the watershed faced. Sadly, many of the old threats still exist and they have new "partners"...everything from new strip mines to Marcellus exploration to the invasion of didymo. From the original symposium a Yough River Plan was drafted and this plan has guided CRTU's resource management work over the ensuing years.

The conservation, protection and restoration of the Yough and a number of its tributaries have garnered regional and national recognition for our chapter. But there is much yet undone. This fall we completed a comprehensive Strategic Plan to guide the chapter's future efforts.



Photo by Dale Kotowski

The Youghiogheny River

I am asking all of you to come and work with us. Dig deep, find the time, attend a membership meeting and find out how you can help. Each of you possesses talents that can assist this chapter. Ten years ago I wrote "...the sportsman who is not also a conservationist is a fool".

We need local people who love the big river and are willing to commit time and energy. The Yough's future depends on you.

See you at a meeting!

See Dale's article *Seasons on the Yough-Spring* on Page 3. Also, there will be fly tying demonstrations at the March meeting. "Spring Patterns for the Youghiogheny"

Please try to attend the *Fly Fishing Film Tour* on Sunday, March 16th, 2014. 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM At the Oaks Theater in Oakmont, Pa. Tickets are available from *International Angler*. All proceeds from this event will be used to support *Casting for Recovery*. For more information on casting for Recovery visit www.castingforrecovery.org
-The Editor

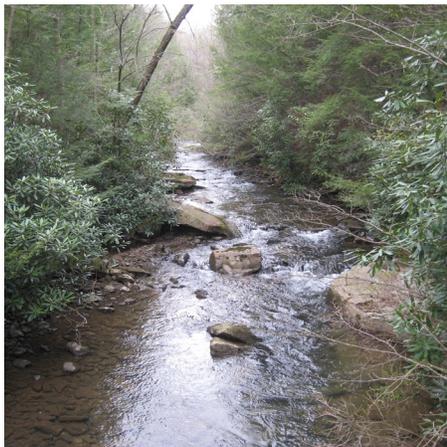
19TH ANNUAL BANQUET

The 19th Annual Banquet will be held on Saturday, March 22, 2014 at the Uniontown, Holiday Inn. Cocktails start at 5:30 p.m. and dinner begins at 7:00 p.m. Please join us for an exciting evening of raffles for wildlife prints, hunting, fishing, and camping equipment and much, much more! Dinner choices include stuffed pork chop, orange roughy, or stuffed chicken breast. The cost is \$40 per person. For tickets or more information contact Eugene Gordon at (724) 277-8688. The deadline for ticket orders by mail is March 8th 2014 and by phone is March 16th 2014. Please bring a friend or two!

CRTU PONDERES RESPONSE TO HEMLOCK THREAT

BEN MOYER

Hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), the invasive insect pest that has decimated hemlock stands throughout the southern Appalachians and eastern and central Pennsylvania is well established now on streams of the Laurel Highlands. Meadow Run's streamside hemlocks show heavy infestation, as do trees along the Youghiogheny River in Ohio State Park and along portions of Laurel Hill Creek. HWA infestation is best detected by noting a decline in the vigor of hemlocks and by the presence of the "woolly" tuft-like egg cases on undersides of hemlock needles. HWA kills hemlocks by puncturing the needles and sucking out fluid and nutrients the tree needs. Infested trees grow gray and sickly and can die within five years.



Hemlocks shade the flow along Quebec Run. Hemlock woolly adelgid is now established in the Laurel Highlands. The pest has already decimated hemlock stands in central and eastern Pennsylvania.

Photo by Ben Moyer

Every trout fisherman in the Laurel Highlands region is familiar with the eastern hemlock. It grows densely along all of our trout streams, providing vital shade that cools the water, holding banks secure from erosion with its roots, and moderating the release of nitrogen from decaying organic matter in the surrounding forest. Noting the importance of hemlocks to coldwater ecology, CRTU's officers, board and planning committee included a response to HWA in the chapter's strategic plan, crafted with the help of Robert Morris University last fall.

The planning committee has been closely monitoring the related activities of a cooperative collaboration of agencies, organizations and private businesses in northwestern Pennsylvania, centered on the Allegheny National Forest. The collaboration there has identified priority hemlock sites and is now asking volunteers to monitor hemlock stands for HWA infestation. Their next step is to seek funding for HWA treatment, which is both expensive and labor-intensive. The Nature Conservancy, a national conservation organization, is helping the agencies and local groups with coordination, communications and mapping of the hemlock resource. CRTU has been in contact with The Nature Conservancy (TNC) about our concern for hemlocks in the Laurel Highlands. TNC is aware of the significance of the ecological and outdoor recreational importance of the Laurel Highlands region and has offered its assistance in CRTU's HWA response.

In concept, CRTU's members would be trained to recognize HWA infestation along the streams where they fish. CRTU would then communicate their reports to TNC for GIS mapping of infested areas. CRTU's next step would be to apply for funding for treatment, most likely by biological means, through the release of predatory beetles that prey on HWA. Some funding sources are being investigated at this time. There is no guarantee of success in this effort. HWA has proven a resilient and persistent pest. But biological controls have shown some promise and there is no other alternative, at present, on a landscape scale. Ohio State Park has initiated biological control but the results are not yet known. Chemical treatments are known to be effective but must be applied to each individual tree, requiring an enormous commitment of man-hours to treat only a small area. Many experts believe this winter's cold temperatures may have set back the HWA infestation, at least temporarily. But the same experts warn the pest will bounce back. More information on HWA and CRTU's response will be provided at future chapter meetings and through this newsletter.

RIVERS CONSERVATION AND FLY FISHING YOUTH CAMP

The Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited is holding the 20th annual Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp on June 15-20, 2014, at the Allenberry Resort, Boiling Springs, Pa. The curriculum is based on college level classes. Students are instructed in ecology, aquatic biology, geology, hydrogeology, erosion, and sedimentation control, ichthyology, riparian corridor protection, watershed management, entomology and more. Fly tying and hands on fly fishing instruction is experienced daily.

Admission will be limited to 32 qualified students. Students, ages 14 to 17, will be selected through an application process, and the applicants must have been born between June 20, 1996, and June 15, 2000. The camp tuition is \$350 per student for the entire week and will be paid by the chapter if an applicant from the chapter is selected. All meals and accommodations are included for the residence camp. A student need not be an accomplished fly fisher or a budding aquatic biologist to attend. All the student needs is to be highly motivated and willing to learn.

The Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp was founded in 1995 through the efforts of the late Dr. John R. "Jack" Beck and the late Enoch S. "Inky" Moore, Jr., Pennsylvania Fish Commissioner. Their goal was to select 32 teenagers each year who were the leaders in their class. The thought is that today's leaders in high school become the leader of tomorrow's communities. In a few short years, they will be the bankers, lawyers, realtors, municipal officials, and possibly future chapter officers. If the camp can implant a kernel of knowledge in today's students about the importance of clean water, when those students become the decision makers in their communities, it may have a positive impact on how water resources are used.

All applications must be post marked no later than March 31, 2014 for early acceptance. For an application or more information, visit www.riverscamp.com.

SEASONS ON THE YOUGH – SPRING

DALE KOTOWSKI

Spring (if it ever comes!) is a wondrously complex season on the Youghiogheny. Hatches abound and thoughts of rising trout coupled with months of cabin fever fuel our fishing enthusiasm. Let's take a look at the Yough's prerequisites for a successful spring season.

Early spring offers us a continuation of the winter's patterns. Winter stoneflies will hatch through March. Little black stones size 18-20 and brown/gray stones a size larger will join the Baetis (little blue winged olives) size 20-22 to provide you with the first consistent dry fly fishing of the year. These hatches are usually a late morning or early afternoon affair.

When nothing is hatching, you will wisely spend your time nymphing. I prefer European nymphing in the spring. Two or three nymphs fished deep with a little movement will usually out produce indicator nymphing. "Go to" patterns for this time of the year should include bead head versions of the Prince, pheasant tail and hare's ear in sizes 16-18. Caddis larvae patterns in tan and olive as well as brighter green to match the "rockworm". Try these in sizes 14-16. Suckers spawn as water temperatures reach the 40's. Your favorite sucker spawn patterns should be in your early spring fly box. Try bright colors when the water is off color and go with paler shades as the water clears. Use a heavily weighted nymph such as the Vladi worm to anchor your nymph rig.

The joy of spring fishing is matching the hatches as they occur. Somewhere on the Yough watershed you will find the following in the coming months:

grannom caddis sz 14-16,-blue quill sz 16-18, quill gordon sz 12-14, hendricksons sz 14-16, march browns sz 10-14, tan and olive caddis sz 14-16, sulphurs sz 12-14, green and brown drakes sz 8-10, cahills sz 14-16, and, of course, ubiquitous midges sz 20-26.

And if all of that is not enough...you can fish streamers. Remember in early spring, colder water slows the trout's metabolism. Swing your streamers for best results. As the water warms, you can begin to strip your streamers as the trout begin to chase.

This exceptional fishery did not always exist. As recently as twenty years ago, fishing on the Yough was deteriorating. Acid mine spills on the Casselman and elsewhere had markedly affected sport fishing on the Youghiogheny well below Ohiopyle. None of the above was happening. Hatches were virtually nonexistent and fewer and fewer fish were caught. What a difference all of you can make!

FISH AND BOAT ACCELERATES STREAM SURVEYS BUT FISHING REGULATIONS OFFER WILD BROOK TROUT LITTLE PROTECTION BEN MOYER

Pennsylvania's brook trout populations, which cannot thrive without clean, cold water, are a shadow of those that once graced state streams. Logging, agriculture, urbanization and mining so degraded streams that the species made a last stand in remote headwaters where food is scarce, predation from mink and fish-eating birds is fierce and trout seldom exceed 9 inches.

Brook trout take on new importance within modern attitudes toward conservation, which emphasize native species. Once, fisheries managers and anglers believed that whatever trout were easiest to raise in hatcheries were the best to repopulate streams. Today, there is growing interest in native trout that can reproduce and thrive in a region's own waters.

"It is important to think of brook trout as an indicator that tells us we have high quality water, the absence of pollution," said retired Penn State professor of fisheries science Robert Carline. "Where brook trout can live, lesser known native organisms can live there too. Where they are found, these fish prove a quality landscape."

The first step in brook trout conservation is to find where they still swim. A 2006 report titled "Eastern Brook Trout: Status and Threats," from the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV), a collaboration of 17 eastern states and provinces to restore native brook trout, stated: "A significant portion of Pennsylvania lacks any data on the presence of brook trout."

But the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission has made progress surveying for brook trout over the past five years.

"We're working with universities and cooperators to look at previously un-assessed waters to see if they support wild brook trout," said Fish and Boat Commission coldwater unit leader, Tom Greene. "This effort is prompted by concerns about development of the Marcellus gas resource in some remote regions where brook trout might be present, and there remain other stresses like spreading urbanization and road construction. Our teams are covering 500-600 waters per year. In over half we are finding some wild trout, and the majority of those wild trout are brook trout."

"Their vigorous approach to stream assessment is the shining star in the Commission's cap. They are really pushing it," said Ken Undercoffer of Clearfield, a board member of the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited, 3-time former council president, and Pennsylvania's representative to EBTJV.

Continued on page 4.



Fish and Boat Commission surveys are finding wild brook trout in more streams than expected. Could more restrictive fishing regulations on wild brook trout improve our wild trout fisheries? Photo by Ben Moyer

Chestnut Ridge Trout Unlimited
Chapter #670
P.O. Box 483
Uniontown, PA 15401

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.



Tale of the Pool
Official Newsletter of CRTU

FISH AND BOAT ACCELERATES STREAM SURVEYS BUT FISHING REGULATIONS OFFER WILD BROOK TROUT LITTLE PROTECTION (continued)

Highlands region of southwestern Pennsylvania continue to support wild brookies, including streams where CRTU is active to improve water quality.

Greene's teams are keeping track of new brook trout waters they find. "Our reproducing trout waters list is updated every time there is commission action; generally that's quarterly," he said.

But the presence of some brook trout does not mean the population is at its highest potential. According to the EBTJV report, Pennsylvania populations are "Reduced" in 18 percent of sub-watersheds known to harbor the fish. And that's the good news. Populations in 78 percent of sub-watersheds are "Greatly Reduced."

The Fish and Boat Commission manages fishing for wild brook trout under the same general regulations that govern angling for stocked hatchery fish.

Undercoffer believes brook trout could do better if angling for those wild fish were regulated differently.

"Just look at Maryland," he said. "They have far fewer brook trout waters but they identify those streams and set up regulations to protect their populations; smaller creel limits, and no minimum size, which tends to protect the bigger, reproductively successful fish.

"In Pennsylvania, people have been fishing over hatchery fish for so long that they think that's all there is," Undercoffer continued. "Most anglers have no conception there's a wild fishery out there. We need to educate people about what we once had and what we could have again in some special places."

LAST CAST

FROM THE EDITOR

If you receive the newsletter by mail, and wouldn't mind receiving it by email to save the chapter printing and postage costs please email me at smh_1959@yahoo.com.

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

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

Scott Hoffman
