



# TALE OF THE POOL

FALL 2017

## OFFICERS:

President-Dale Kotowski  
Vice President-Dave Welling  
Secretary-John Dolan  
Treasurer-Scott Hoffman

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Lou Giovannelli  
Eugene Gordon  
John Gulya  
Cyndi Kotowski  
Bernie Manyak  
Ben Moyer  
John Ruby  
Jim Tobal

## COMMITTEES:

Resource Mgt.- Scott Hoffman  
Nursery-Jim Johns  
Banquet- Eugene Gordon  
Membership- BJ Hebenthal  
Youth Education-Jim Tobal

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, December 13th, 2017, Christmas Party, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, January 10th, 2018, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, February 14th, 2018, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.

## FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we leap into fall, I would like to thank the many "hands on" volunteers who make possible the Chapter's many accomplishments! A few of the highlights are worth mentioning...

On the weekend of April 21<sup>st</sup> thru 23<sup>rd</sup>, CRTU participated with the DCNR staff at Ohiopyle State Park and the volunteer group, Friends of Ohiopyle, to host a fly fishing retreat for veterans and active duty service members. A number of CRTU volunteers served as river helpers for the two days of fishing and as instructors for the teaching segments of the retreat. A special thanks goes out to the Beaver Creek Anglers who hosted the Sunday fishing outing at their property on Beaver Creek.

May was dominated by youth activities. CRTU partners with over 20 area schools' Trout In The Classroom (TIC) programs. PA's TIC program is made possible by a partnership of the PA Council of Trout Unlimited and the PA Fish & Boat Commission. The program teaches students grades 3 - 12 to raise brook trout in their schools while learning about the conservation of trout and their habitat. Eggs are received in the fall and the students care for the developing fish throughout the school year. By May the brook



Photo by  
Brad Isles

PA TU Council president Charles Charlesworth (left) presents the Council's Jack Beck Award for Outstanding Youth Outreach to CRTU's Jim Tobal.

trout fingerlings measure 2 - 3". On release day, the class participates in the "stocking" of their trout into an area stream. The Chapter partners with the DCNR staffs at Ohiopyle and Laurel Hill State Parks to instruct the students in stream biology, chemistry, hydrology and fly casting. It is worth noting that we have been catching these trout, now 6 - 8' long, for quite a few years. The students are always happy to hear that some of their "pets" survive. Chestnut Ridge Chapter is proud to recognize its Youth Coordinator, Jim Tobal.

In September, Jim received PATU's Jack Beck Award for Outstanding Youth Outreach for his work with students in Fayette, Greene,

and Washington counties. (Please see the article below.)

Recently, the Chapter has begun a comprehensive survey of the entire Youghiogheny River in partnership with California State University, Carmichaels Area High School and Ohiopyle State Park DCNR. This study resulted from discussions that followed CRTU's 2016 Youghiogheny River Symposium. (Please see the article on Page 3.)

Another Symposium spawned activity was held on September 30<sup>th</sup>. Partnered again with Ohiopyle State Park DCNR and Friends of Ohiopyle, CRTU volunteers treated hemlock trees along (Continued on Page 3.)

## JIM TOBAL HONORED STATEWIDE FOR YOUTH OUT REACH

**BEN MOYER**

The PA Council of Trout Unlimited honored Jim Tobal, CRTU's Youth Outreach and Education Committee chairman, with the 2017 Jack Beck Award for Outstanding Youth Outreach at the PA Council's recent annual meeting near State College.

PA Council recognized Tobal's leadership in promoting the Trout in the Classroom program and for establishing 20 Trout in the Classroom projects within CRTU's region of influence in southwestern Pennsylvania. (Continued on Page 4.)

## CRTU HELPS OHIOPILE STATE PARK SAVE HEMLOCKS

BEN MOYER



Photo by Ben Moyer

CRTU members Paul Gulya (left) and John Gulya treat hemlock trees against hemlock woolly adelgid on Meadow Run in OhioPILE State Park.

If you fish for trout in Pennsylvania, you've been close to a hemlock tree. The eastern hemlock—Pennsylvania's official state tree—grows to impressive size in the damp forest duff along streams throughout the state. In steep ravines and along forested floodplains, dense hemlock foliage casts cooling shade across the nearby currents, increasingly important to trout survival as stream temperatures rise in a warming climate.

Sadly, the hemlock is threatened by hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA), an invasive aphid-like insect accidentally imported into from Asia early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The tiny insects probe into hemlock needles and extract the fluid, causing the tree to lose its familiar luster, turn gray and die.

From Virginia and the Carolinas HWA has spread north and west. HWA infestation has expanded rapidly during recent warm winters. It has decimated hemlock stands in the Great Smoky Mountains and Shenandoah National Park, and widespread hemlock mortality is now evident in eastern and central Pennsylvania.

But extensive hemlock loss is still not apparent in most northern and western counties, farther from the advancing infestation's front and, perhaps, buffered by a slightly cooler climate. HWA is present, however, along mountain streams in the Laurel Highlands. Hemlock decline there will likely accelerate, especially with continued mild winters.

On Sept. 30, National Public Lands Day, CRTU volunteers Paul Gulya, John Gulya, Scott Hoffman, Ben Moyer and Dave Welling assisted Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources personnel treat hemlocks along Meadow Run in OhioPILE State Park.

"Meadow Run is a regionally important trout stream, shaded by hemlocks throughout its length. It's been a popular Delayed Harvest stream and the Fish and Boat Commission recently included Meadow Run in the Keystone Select program. Our chapter values these hemlock stands and wants to help maintain their cooling shade," said Chestnut Ridge TU president Dale Kotowski. "Besides, it will not be the same fishing here if these hemlocks die."

Options for fighting HWA are limited. There is no practical way to spray large stands, so trees must be chemically treated individually, or biological controls must be introduced in the form of predatory beetles from within HWA's native range.

Barb Wallace, environmental education specialist with DCNR directs the hemlock protection effort at OhioPILE State Park. Wallace raises funds for the work through a native plant sale at the park every spring, and from donations from local organizations and businesses. Chestnut Ridge TU donated \$500 to the effort.

"We are so excited that Chestnut Ridge TU gave us money this year. Their help as volunteers has been immensely useful. This is labor-intensive work to treat these trees. Without them we could not accomplish so much. This is a 20,000-acre park with 300 acres of high priority hemlocks along streams and the Youghiogheny River."

Wallace directed the TU volunteers to a heavily-fished section of Meadow Run within the Delayed Harvest section. She divided the group into teams and issued each team a plastic, labeled bottle containing several hundred spherical CoreTect tablets, one form of the imidacloprid insecticide known to be effective against HWA. Wallace explained that CoreTect offered the advantage of being effective while also easy to use with minimal training of volunteers.

The teams moved along Meadow Run, selecting large hemlocks that overhung and shaded the stream. One team member measured the tree's diameter, then calculated the number of tablets required to treat the tree—two tablets per diameter-inch.

Other team members then probed the soil at the hemlock's base, as deep as possible with long screwdrivers, inserting one tablet per hole.

"The tree will take up the insecticide through its roots," Wallace explained. "It will systemically protect the tree from adelgid for perhaps as long as seven years."

The teams accomplished treatment of large hemlocks along a one-third-mile stream segment, but many thousands of trees remain vulnerable farther downstream. Asked about future plans, Wallace said the work will continue as long as funding is available. Chestnut Ridge TU sent several members to the recent Wild Trout Summit hosted by the Fish and Boat Commission, and feels that some effort to protect high-priority hemlocks is essential in view of heightened interest in wild trout.

"Extensive work done here in the Laurel Highlands by one of our partners, California University of Pennsylvania, shows that stream temperatures on mountain headwater brook trout streams are nearing the critical limit in mid-summer," Kotowski said. "Anything we can do to protect these streams from further warming is vital."

One hope is that chemically treating trees will "buy time" while introduced populations of beetles that prey on HWA, released elsewhere in the park, have time to build and spread. The Hemlock Restoration Initiative, based in North Carolina, has documented some success with this strategy.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Meadow Run to battle the hemlock wooly adelgid. (Please see the article on Page 2.)

Surveys by CalU's biologists have shown that brook trout populations in the Laurel Highlands are declining due in part to increasing water temperatures. Their studies stress the need for riparian cover, hemlocks, in much of the Laurels. This cover, along with higher elevations, makes our mountains one of the last best hopes for the brook trout's survival. The chemical treatment of endangered hemlocks is, hopefully, just the beginning of a comprehensive effort to preserve PA's state tree and it's state fish!

This fall we will again place alkaline sand in the headwaters of Dunbar Creek. These sand additions in combination with treatment facilities on Glade Run have greatly improved the water quality in Dunbar Creek. There is now a robust population of native brook trout throughout this watershed and an improved ability to hold over trout that are stocked by the PA Fish & Boat Commission. In the next few years, the Chapter hopes to begin a restoration project on Dunbar that will further benefit this important stream. The conservation, protection and restoration of Dunbar Creek were a driving force in the formation of Chestnut Ridge Chapter. We look forward to the next phases of this work.

Lastly, in November, we will receive fingerling trout from PAFBC for our nursery in the Yough at Confluence. Our nursery crew was responsible for the raising and stocking of rainbow and brown trout into the Yough and area waters in 2017. Our partnership with PAFBC, the US Army Corps of Engineers and D/R Hydro was strengthened, benefitting our efforts and insuring the successful continuation of this important conservation and community service program. Our thanks to Jim Johns and his hardworking "crew"!

At this time, I would also like to thank those individuals who stepped up as new Officers, Directors, & Committee Chair: Vice President, Dave Welling, Secretary, John Dolan, Directors, John Gulya and JD Ruby, and Membership Committee Chair BJ Henthall. And, of course, thank you to our stalwart group of Officers, Directors and Committee Chairs who have served the Chapter so well over so many years!

## YOUGHIOGHENY RIVER STUDY

DALE KOTOWSKI

Historically, the Youghiogheny River was severely impacted by abandoned mine drainage (AMD) so much so that in Tim Palmer's 1984 book "Youghiogheny: Appalachian River", he referred to it as seemingly lifeless. From the early 1950's through the 1990's AMD resulted in a number of major fish kills.

Over the years, several local watershed organizations, including Chestnut Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited, have acquired financing for mitigation projects resulting in improving water quality throughout the watershed. However, the threats from past mining, along with new threats including the Shale Gas Industry, make the recovery fragile.

Long term monitoring and biological assessment of the effects of acidity, temperature change, and other insults is much needed.

The Youghiogheny Rivers Conservation Plan resulted in part from Chestnut Ridge's Youghiogheny River Symposium in 1997. This plan, along with others, identified the need for the establishment of a monitoring network and an evaluation of the aquatic environment in the Yough Basin. With this in mind, Dr. William Kimmel and Dr. David Argent of California University of Pennsylvania (CalU), conducted a survey of fish populations in the tributaries of the Yough in 2009.

The Youghiogheny tributaries were of interest in that they serve as temperature refuges, spawning habitat, and nursery areas for fish. Further, they function to improve the overall water quality of the main river, in that many of these are classified as High Quality Cold Water Fisheries, Coldwater Fisheries or Exceptional Value by the Pennsylvania DEP.

The need for a broader monitoring and assessment project remained after the completion of the tributary survey. Following last year's Youghiogheny River Symposium, discussions began to develop a plan to ensure the Yough's continued protection; one that would provide a more comprehensive and current baseline against which future environmental insults can be measured. The information gained from this survey will allow issues related to the conservation of resources as mentioned in the Yough River Conservation Plan, and will assist in the protection of these aquatic resources.



The Carmichaels sampling crew

In September, the Youghiogheny River Survey was begun. The partners include CalU, Carmichaels Area High School, Ohio State Park DCNR, and Chestnut Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited. The Yough mainstem from the dam at the Youghiogheny Reservoir to the mouth at McKeesport will be surveyed to allow the creation of a fish database, the evaluation of fish community connectivity between the mainstem and it's tribs, the evaluation of macroinvertebrate populations and a comparison and analysis of water quality.

The sampling stations will be established at the mainstem confluence of twenty of the tributaries that were included in the 2009 survey but now the Yough itself will be sampled 50 meters above and 50 meters below the mouth of each of the tribs. At each site, electrofishing will be completed, macroinvertebrate kick net sampling will be done, and lastly, measurements of water temperature, pH, and specific conductance will be performed.

The first of the surveys have been completed. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Drs. Argent and Kimmel were assisted by students from Carmichaels High School. They floated the Yough from Dawson to Layton and completed surveys in four tributary areas.

(Continued on Page 4.)

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

We're on the web at  
[www.ChestnutridgeTU.org](http://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

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## OUT REACH (CONTINUED)

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The following excerpt from Jim's nomination form, supplied to the PA Council by appreciative CRTU members, conveys Tobal's dedication to the Trout in the Classroom program and to the region's youth, whom he served as a professional educator until his recent retirement.

"Jim's nurturing of the TIC program is comprehensive, from the initial contacts through classroom setup, operation of the equipment, identifying release sites in appropriate streams, coordinating transportation for the students and arranging for press coverage of the release events. At the releases, Jim personally sees that each student is directly involved in releasing trout and he constantly re-emphasizes the importance of clean cold water at streamside, where the impact on students is greatest. His own classroom experience also enables Jim to assist teachers in adapting TIC to their own curricula, emphasizing science, social studies, math, language or art at appropriate times in the school year."

"I really appreciate this award," Tobal modestly acknowledge. "But this is really a chapter achievement, not an individual one."

The CRTU membership appreciates Jim's humility but everyone knows the chapter's success with Trout in the Classroom is almost entirely a result of Tobal's tireless efforts.

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## STUDY (CONTINUED)

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On September 24<sup>th</sup>, the good doctors were assisted by CRTU volunteers in surveys completed at the mouths of Dunbar Creek and Morgan and Bear Runs. Earlier, a number of tributary confluences were surveyed in the highlands with the assistance of the DCNR staff at Ohio State Park. The survey process will be completed in October/November through the combined efforts of all of the partners.

Sample analysis will be done at CalU in November/December with the preparation and submission of the final report to follow. With the establishment of the sampling stations, they could be made permanent and then used for future and ongoing assessment and evaluation of changes in water quality.

This project will provide the data needed to evaluate the environmental sustainability of the Youghiogheny River basin. Pennsylvania's 2008 "River of the Year" abounds with recreational opportunities from canoeing and kayaking to fishing from rafting to biking and hiking. This project accomplished through partnership will help to protect this river and its opportunities for generations to come.

We thank Dr. Argent and Dr. Kimmel for their contributions to this article.

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## LAST CAST

## FROM THE EDITOR

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

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

Scott Hoffman

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