



TALE OF THE POOL

WINTER 2017

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

UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, March 8th, 2017, Knights of Columbus, Uniontown, PA 7:00 p.m.
- Annual Banquet
Saturday, March 18th, 2017 Park In by Radisson, Uniontown 5:30 p.m. to ??
- Dunbar Clean-up
Saturday, April 8th, 2017
Game Commission Shed 8:00 a.m.
- Membership Meeting: Wednesday, April 12th, 2017, Location to be determined 7:00 p.m.

FROM THE PRESIDENT

As we move quickly in to the New Year, I would like to make mention of some of the most significant accomplishments from 2016. The Chestnut Ridge Chapter of Trout Unlimited conducted the Youghiogheny River Symposium on Friday, June 24th, 2016 at Penn State Fayette Eberly Campus. A planning committee consisting of chapter members Deb Simko, Ben Moyer and Dale & Cynthia Kotowski, Mountain Watershed's Krissy Kasserman, Fayette County Conservation District's Heather Fowler, Ohio State Park's Barb Wallace and Wilderness Voyageurs Outfitter's Eric Martin worked tirelessly for many months developing the program.

The original symposium was held in 1997. This came in the days when the Yough drainage suffered from numerous abandoned mine discharges. The largest occurred in 1994 and was known as the Shaw Mine disaster. It affected many miles of the Casselman and Youghiogheny rivers. The first symposium dealt primarily with the remediation of these mine discharges.

Fast forward twenty years and we have a river still plagued by the same old enemy. However, mining and mine drain-

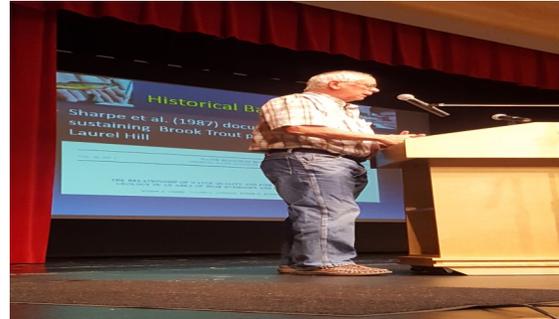


Photo by Devon Chalfant

age has been joined by shale gas exploration, climate change, invasive species, overuse, and other problems. The future of our precious river depends on the formation of lasting conservation partnerships.

The daylong symposium opened with a keynote address by Department of Conservation & Natural Resources Secretary, Cindy Adams Dunn. Her participation in the event directed statewide attention to the Youghiogheny as a natural resource of critical importance to the environment and economy of southwest-

ern Pennsylvania.

The morning panel consisted of biologists Rick Lorson and Mike Depew from the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission, Rose Reilly of the US Army Corps of Engineers, and Rick Spear of the Department of Environmental Protection. Their discussion on the "Living River" examined the current aquatic environment in the Yough. We received valuable information on habitat trends, the management of water levels and water quantity, and the current status of the Yough's improving fisheries.

(Continued on page 3)

22ND ANNUAL BANQUET

The 22nd Annual Banquet will be held on Saturday, March 18th at the Park Inn by Radisson in Uniontown. 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, beef burgundy, chicken piccata or lemon pepper tilapia. The cost is \$40 per person. For tickets or more information contact Eugene Gordon (724) 277-8688. Deadline for tickets: mail no later than Saturday, March 11th, 2017 or phone Sunday, March 12th 2017. Please bring a friend or two!

NURSERY FISH KILL

DALE KOTOWSKI

On September 28, 2016, the CRTU cooperative trout nursery located at the Yough River Lake outflow suffered a substantial fish kill. We lost more than 500 fish over this and subsequent days. Biologists from the US Army Corps of Engineers and the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission conducted an immediate and extensive survey. It was eventually concluded that the fish died from nitrogen poisoning resulting from super saturation of the discharged waters released by the D/R Hydro power generating plant operating adjacent to the nursery in the basin below the dam.



Chestnut Ridge TU has operated this nursery in a cooperative partnership with the US Army Corp of Engineers, the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and the D/R Hydro electric plant since 1999. In a typical year, ten thousand trout are raised from fingerlings to be stocked into the Yough and other waters. We also provide fish for a variety of youth fishing activities. We have experienced previous fish kills due to nitrogen poisoning as well as the loss of fish due to high water damage to the nets and, potentially, resulting from vandalism.

Beginning in July, the discharge waters at the dam begin to warm. By September of recent years, we see water temperatures above 70 degrees Fahrenheit. This warmer water is less able to retain oxygen that the trout need for survival. The trout remaining in the nursery cage are now in approximately three feet of water and, thus, are in a very stressed environment.

The D/R Hydro plant regulations state that they must maintain dissolved oxygen levels at or above 7.5 mg/l. As reservoir levels drop in the summer and water temperatures increase, the lower depths of the reservoir become depleted of oxygen. The lowest influent oxygen levels occur in late September.

Dissolved oxygen mitigation typically begins in mid-July and continues through October. D/R Hydro currently uses a combination of the following three methods; adding oxygen to their discharge by oxygen injection, by the use of low-pressure blowers, or by using spill gate discharges.

The use of blowers to inject low-pressure air into the draft tubes of the turbines is preferred since it is the most economical. Unfortunately, atmosphere is mostly nitrogen and nitrogen super saturation raises the total dissolved gases above acceptable levels and, in this case, led to the fish mortality.

The various problems in this scenario have occurred before and will present themselves in the future. As we face warming air temperatures, we will have a corresponding increase in lake temperatures. From July through October, when the lake begins its Fall turn-over, water temperature and oxygen level concerns will affect the operation of the cage culture nursery. Therefore, in the future, our "nursery crew" will attempt to complete all fish stocking by the month of July. This effort will require the help of the Pennsylvania Fish & Boat Commission and we have asked them to deliver fingerlings to us a bit earlier than in past years to allow feeding and necessary fish growth.

The above change will place additional burdens on an excellent but overworked group of volunteers, our "nursery crew". If you would like to help, please call Dale Kotowski at (724) 747-1513 or Jim Johns at (814) 395-5096.

HOMEMADE FLY FISHING ACCESSORIES

ASHLEY WILMONT

If you are like me, you love to buy fishing gear and accessories. I get a thrill of excitement when I buy a new accessory that I believe will help me catch more and bigger fish. I would love to walk into a fly shop and buy whatever I want, however, most of us have to look for ways to save money. Here are some ways that I have found to spend less on necessary fishing items. A DVD fly box, pill case dry fly container and paper leader wallet are just a few inexpensive fly fishing accessories that I have made.

To make a slim, lightweight fly box, simply glue a sheet of craft foam to the inside cover of a DVD case. Use light colored foam so your flies are easy to see. Some DVD cases have tabs on the inside cover to hold a pamphlet about the movie. Sometimes I don't glue the foam in; I just slide the foam sheet under the tabs so I can swap out foam pieces. Use an older DVD case, the new ones are made with thin plastic which are less durable. A 5mm sheet of craft foam costs about \$1.27 and you can find cheap DVD's at a flea market if you don't have any cases already. The case is worth about a dollar. This is a great project for young fly fishers who often loose gear on the stream or new fly fishers who are unsure if they want to invest in a brand name fly box. This DVD custom fly box can be made for about \$2.27.

To keep my midge dry flies organized, I keep them in a small Monday through Friday pill container. The containers are small, lightweight, and make it easy to organize flies by size. I put my largest midges in Monday and the smallest midges in Sunday. These containers also come in medium and large sizes which are great for larger dry flies like stimulators and hopper patterns. You can find these containers at almost any drug store or grocery store from \$2 to \$7.

I like to experiment with different nymphing leader formulas so I save the butt section of tapered leaders to re-use. As a result, I have many half used leaders that easily become unorganized. To prevent them from becoming a tangled mess, I make a leader wallet by taking a 8.5 by 11 sheet of paper, and fold it into quarters. (Continued on page 3.)

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

Dr. Cynthia Walter, Associate Professor of Biology at Saint Vincent College, spoke on "The Youghiogheny in a Global Context" and provided valuable perspective on the unique ecological character of the Laurel Highlands region. She compared the Laurel Highlands and the Youghiogheny to a number of similar and significant river-based natural places around the globe.

The first panel of the afternoon session examined the "River of Opportunity" and consisted of Renee Siefert, President of the Laurel Highlands Visitors Bureau, Eric Martin, owner of Wilderness Voyageurs Outfitters, and Ken Bisbee, Park Manager of Ohio-lyle State Park. The river's impact on the region's economy, tourism, and outdoor recreation was addressed.

Panel Three examined the "History of Healing"; the restoration and resource management work accomplished by a variety of conservation groups from past years to present times. This panel included CRTU's own Scott Hoffman, the Youghiogheny Riverkeeper, Mountain Watershed's Krissy Kasserman, Annie Quinn, Executive Director of the Jacob's Creek Watershed Association and Western Pennsylvania Conservancy's Mark Killar.

The last panel of the day examined a "River at Risk". Threats to the watershed consisting of shale gas and active mining, management of invasive species and water quantity & management in the upper reaches of the Youghiogheny basin were the topics. This panel consisted of Krissy Kasserman, Fayette County Conservation District's Heather Fowler and Eric Null, Lake Manager from Deep Creek State Park.

The day ended with a climate change roundtable from California University of Pennsylvania: Dr. William G. Kimmel, Professor Emeritus of Biology, Dr. David Argent, Professor of Fisheries & Wildlife Biology and Dr. Derek Gray, Assistant Professor, Department of Biological and Environmental Sciences. Dr. Gray's research measures rising water temperatures in lakes around the world and its impact on fisheries. Drs. Kimmel & Argent cited their recent study examining the trend of rising temperatures in Laurel Ridge headwater streams, and implications for native populations of brook trout. This study showed very interesting results of rising air and water temperatures and declining brook trout populations when compared to their prior study in 1987 of the same waters.

180 to 200 participants attended the daytime session of the symposium!

On the evening of Friday, June 24th, the symposium continued with a less formal event held at the Knights of Columbus in Uniontown. A panel of the Youghiogheny River fishing guides gave a presentation on fishing the big river. Guides from Laurel Highland Guide Service, Nemaocolin Woodlands and Wilderness Voyageurs. Outfitters showed a real worldview of the monster trout and bass that call the Youghiogheny home. Refreshments were served and approximately 60 people enjoyed this session on a beautiful summer evening.

On Saturday June 25th, a picnic was held at the Yough outflow near the chapter's cage culture nursery. Food, friendship, tours of the nursery and fishing were the call of the day. Fly casting instruction was provided for the beginner's in attendance and even some "old fly fishermen" received some help with their casting problems. On the river, some trout were caught and some were lost as we fished the tail end of the seventeen-year cicada hatch. We signed a number of new members and approximately 40 people recreated with us that day.

In addition to the symposium, CRTU continued its many projects ranging from the trout nursery at the dam in Confluence to its cold-water conservation and restoration efforts. In the area of youth education, we participated with twenty-two area schools in their Trout In the Classroom educational programs.

In September, all of the Chapter's efforts were rewarded as we received the Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited 2016 Edward Urbas Best Chapter of the Year Award during their statewide meeting in Bellefonte, PA.

I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all of the many volunteers who made these 2016 accomplishments possible. I hope to see more of you involved in 2017 as we begin to tackle the watershed's many challenges.

Please remember that our annual banquet will be on Saturday, March 18th, 2017 at the Park Inn by Radisson in Uniontown.

HOMEMADE FLYFISHING ACCESSORIES (CONTINUED)

I tape or staple the creased side and slide a coiled leader into each fold. You get three compartments per sheet of paper which you can write the type of leader on the inside of the fold for identification. This method is great if you need an organized way to store leaders on your shelf at home. If you have it in your field pack, use transparency paper or a laminated sheet of paper for a more durable wallet. This wallet is also great for traveling because it is very light, compact, and disposable. One sheet of paper costs roughly .005 cents or you can use free scrap paper from work or school and the tape or staples will cost less than one cent.

I hope you find these homemade fly fishing accessories helpful in your pursuit of trout and other game fish!

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.



Tale of the Pool
Official Newsletter of CRTU

LAST CAST

FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to take this opportunity to make sure everyone is aware that the chapter will need a new president and officers at its September 2017 election. After severing nearly 4 years, Dale feels getting "new blood" in the president's office will benefit the chapter. Dale has done a tremendous job in leading the chapter which included spearheading the Symposium and helping the chapter in receiving Pennsylvania Trout Unlimited 2016 Edward Urbas Best Chapter of the Year award.

The chapter has accomplished much through its various projects such as the nurse, Trout in the Classroom, and the Glade Run Alkaline Sand project. Unfortunately, there is much work to be done.

When I asked Eugene Gordon about having to find a new president his reply was, "don't worry someone will step up because someone always does."

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 and Ashley Wilmont for their contributions to this issue of the newsletter.

Scott Hoffman
