

TROUT TALK

The Official Newsletter of Western New York Trout Unlimited (www.wnytroutunlimited.org) March, 2011

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Next WNY TU Chapter Meeting: Tuesday, March 29, 2011, 7:30 pm at the Donovan American Legion Post, 3210 Genesee Street, Cheektowaga, New York. (There will be no fly-tying at the March meeting.)

The presenter for the meeting has not yet been announced, but please join us.

President's Report

Greetings Fellow TUers,

I want to thank Nick Pionessa, of the Oak Orchard Fly Shop, for his presentation on Steelhead angling & tactics. We had some great interaction with members and guests. Thanks again Nick!

March is banquet season here in western New York. The Erie County Federation of Sportsman's Clubs dinner is one of largest and best attended. We had two of our local elected representatives there to give short speeches on support for conservation issues.

NYSDEC Region 9 staff received several awards for their professional efforts in conservation, environmental and public relations work. Scott Cornett, Fisheries Biologist, Connie Adams, Senior Wildlife Biologist, and Megan Gollwitzer, Citizen Participation Specialist were all honored. The caliber and dedication of the professionals we have working in Region 9 DEC make our “jobs” as cold water conservationists and protectors of the resource a pleasurable experience.

With the budgetary issues that face New York, retirement for many key DEC personal will create vacancies of familiar faces we have all come to know. Erie County’s Senior Environmental Conservation Officer, Thomas Scott, was honored for his lifetime commitment as he retires.

I just learned today of another key retirement for Niagara County, SECO Matthew Pestinger. If you get a chance to see them in our communities, take the time to congratulate them and to wish them well in the next phase of their lives.

On March 3, 2011, I attended the “State of the Lake Ontario” meeting at the Lockport Co-operative Extension Complex. The wealth of information from NYSDEC, USF&W, and USGS was incredible. Although I did note some disagreement between biologists and anglers present concerning the numbers of salmonids, both agreed the quality, specifically the sizes, of Chinooks were larger.

Experimentation on re-introducing the deep-water Cisco, once indigenous to Lake Ontario, now only present in Lake Heron & Lake Michigan, is underway. First trials have not met with success; however, NYSDEC & USGS biologists are hopeful the reintroduction will work. Re-introduction of the Cisco has been recommended for biodiversity and due to the lower amount of thiaminase (compared to that found in Alewives and Rainbow Smelt) which contributes to hatching mortality in Salmonids.

On a sad note, March 2, 2011, marked the day that one of Western New York’s most respected news writers passed away. Many of us knew him as The Buffalo News Outdoor News columnist. Mike Levy retired in 2003 as the recipient of many state and national journalistic awards. He will be missed in the conservation and outdoor enthusiast community.

We appear to be on the horns of a dilemma concerning the guest speaker for the March membership meeting. Scheduling difficulties may leave us with last minute changes, so as of “press time”, we are unsure. You’ll have to come to the meeting to see who it is.

We ALL live downstream. Please come out and support YOUR local chapter, become involved.

See you at the banquet and meeting.

Gary Coons, WNYTU Chapter President.

Announcements

- **A Report from Len Bigaj.**

Shows: The 2011 W.N.Y. Sport and Travel Expo has ended and was, for us, another success. Our booth made \$671, of which \$572 came from fly sales. We owe a special thanks to Dave Bollman for tying twenty-two dozen Bead Head Nymphs and to Bill Koerner for 230 Steelhead flies which were used at the show. As for the youth fly-tying day, we were pleased to have seventy-plus kids in attendance. I would like to say “thank you” to those who helped to staff the booth and who assisted with the youth fly-tying: Gary Coons, Ed Luba, Bill Koerner, Jeff Kohler, Justin Damude and friend, Dave S., Bob Zanke, Jim Stachowski, Antoinette Grote, Jerome Levan, and Dave Bollman.

Project Healing Waters: We will be tying at the V.A. on April 14, 2011, from 6pm to 8pm. If you would like to help, please let me know. (Len)

Annual Banquet: We are still looking for someone to serve as Banquet Chair for the 2012 event. The upcoming banquet (March 26, 2011; Lucarellis) will be my last as Chairperson. Our Banquet Committee is already hard at work and has obtained some great raffle items. This year, our Grand Prizes will be: 1st, a 16GB Apple iPad, and, 2nd, a 6ft 6inch, 2 wt Matrix Fly Rod and Reel. (And here's an exciting last minute item: Again this year, to help us raise funds, Judi Shelton and George Klemens will generously donate time at their wonderful home in Montana. This house provides ready access to truly world class fly-fishing.) Century Printing has once again donated the printing of our Banquet and Grand Prize tickets. The prize tickets are \$10.00 each, three tickets for \$20.00. The drawing will be held at the Banquet. Please try to attend. (If you can't make the Banquet, but would like to support TU, you can purchase prize tickets by sending a check to Leonard Bigaj, 58 Balen Drive, Lackawanna, N.Y. 14218. I will enter you in the drawing and will return the ticket stubs to you.) Tickets for the Banquet itself are \$30.00 each. (I have tickets for the Banquet and for the Grand Prize.) If you have any new or pre-loved items which you would like to donate to our Banquet, we will be happy to use them. (Ed. Note: Please see the Banquet announcement, later on in this newsletter.)

- **News from DEC:** Mr. Scott Cornett of Region 9, DEC, sends the following message.
 1. "Summary reports of DEC stream work and diary programs conducted in 2010 are now available (along with older surveys) at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/27272.html>.
 2. DEC Region 9 Fisheries is planning to conduct an angler use study and electrofishing surveys in 2011 – 2013, on East Koy Creek, to evaluate the trout stocking program there. This is part of a statewide study of our trout stocking program, designed to bring it up to date with changes that have occurred, in the last 25 years, in angler use, catch and release rates, and stocked trout survival. As part of this program, we will be marking all the trout that are stocked with various fin clips (combinations of adipose and ventral fins). This will help the field technician tell wild from hatchery fish and separate fish by stocking increment. (East Koy Creek gets three of these each year.) We are aware that some individuals in the past have been doing their own "experiments" by clipping the adipose fin on trout they catch and release. While we do not condone this in general, we especially ask that anglers not do this in 2011 – 2013, as it may negatively bias the results of our survey work. We appreciate your cooperation. "

- **Reports by Chuck Godfrey on Trout in the Classroom and the North Branch of the Wiscoy:** Please see the "Articles" section, later in this newsletter.

- **Website:** Webmaster, **Rick Toczek**, reports that he has made some changes to the website and has added pages. If the site needs updating or if there are issues with it, please let him know.

- **Treasurer's Report for the Period Ending February 28, 2011 (Submitted by Mr. Anthony Messina):**

BALANCE AT	FEBRUARY 1, 2011	(CHECKING ACCT)		\$78.94
INFLOWS:	TRANSFER FROM MONEY MARKET ACCT.		\$500.00	
	50/50 DRAWING		\$70.00	
	DONATION		\$35.00	
		TOTAL INFLOWS		\$605.00
OUTFLOWS:	MONTHLY MEETING		\$70.00	
	NEWSLETTER PRINTING		\$146.40	
	50/50 DRAWING		\$35.00	
	SHOWS		\$93.06	
		TOTAL OUTFLOWS:		\$344.46
BALANCE AT	FEBRUARY 28, 2011			\$339.48
BALANCE AT	FEBRUARY 1, 2011	(MONEY MKT ACCT)		\$18,027.54
INFLOWS:	INTEREST			\$1.37
OUTFLOWS:	TRANSFER TO CHECKING ACCT.			\$500.00
BALANCE AT	FEBRUARY 28, 2011	(MONEY MKT ACCT)		\$17,528.91



Articles

WNYTU Member Al Himmel has provided us with two articles, one a bit of humor and the other a tribute to the late Mike Levy, long time outdoors writer for The Buffalo News:

The End of the Worm

By Al Himmel

Best Friends:

Eddie and I had fished together many times during our brief odyssey on New Jersey waters, so much so that it hardly seems possible that we would ever go through a painful divorce proceeding; but even the best of friends must part. As it happened, his father was really to blame.

Living in a city environment meant worms were few and far between, generally due to a lack of lawns from which the extraction process might occur, a process that involved picking up crawling night walkers, during the nighttime hours, using a flashlight to locate the mating worms. Apartment dwellers such as myself had no recourse to digging or plucking those essential items in a trout fisher's arsenal. Thus, I relied on Eddie to supply the worms for our forays to the Pompton Feeder Dam where trout were stocked on a monthly basis. Eddie's domain, you see, had a front lawn approximately forty by twenty feet, just about enough to provide worms for two on one of our trips.

One day, it so happened that Eddie's father decided he would like to join us and to take his rooftop row boat along for added advantage over the unsuspecting trout which found refuge beneath the dam's turbulent waters. Thus it was my misfortune to find myself fishing the shoreline while Eddie and father fished from the boat close to the dam. My supply of worms, allocated at the onset of the fishing program, soon was depleted; and I was forced to make frequent pleas for an added allocation from the boated crew. Of course, this did not sit well with the two boaters; because their success at catching far exceeded mine. Eventually I was forced to make a critical decision and selected the only fly in my arsenal, a red and white Parmachene Belle, snelled, which imitated no known insect or baitfish, but which was a well known attractor fly of that era. I cast the Belle into the foamy waters at the base of the dam, and a flash of silver appeared behind my fly. My enthusiasm for flies suddenly increased many-fold, and I cast several times before the silver flash engulfed the fly. I was fast to a fourteen or fifteen inch trout. Of course, I did what any neophyte fly fisher would do: I yanked the fish out of the water and landed him without mishap, faster than such a large trout warranted. Soon a crowd of Jerseyite fishers gathered around the bucket which I had used to store my prize catch. Speculation was that the fish was a rainbow, brown, or speckled trout; because most Jerseyites have limited experience in identifying, no less catching, any of the trout species. Eventually, the consensus was that it was a rainbow trout; because it had a red stripe down its side. All in all, I was hooked on flies and divorced from worms, and liberated from my so-called friend, Eddie. Thus it was that worms, the dirty buggers, were out; and flies were adopted as my primary mode of fishing for trout.

Mike Levy: A Man for all Seasons

By Al Himmel

Jim Keech and I knew Mike Levy, because he always wanted to go fly fishing and to learn our secrets of the Wiscoy. Of course, we were only too glad to show him most, if not all, of our secrets; because the revelation invariably led to a column extolling our fly fishing skills. Naturally, Keech enjoyed the plaudits more than I; because his skills were demonstrated fluidly, with a fly rod, whereas I tried to re-create them, verbally, in the drawing room. We both enjoyed the Levy columns and subsequent photographs of fly lines cast over running

waters. Thanks to Mike Levy, both Keech and I enjoyed moments of public fame, or, at least in my case, public infamy. Woe to those who encountered Mike Levy on the stream, for his techniques, be they good or bad, would be exposed in the subsequent Levy column. We fished and tried to raise trout to the fly, but the fly racket holds no promises for success, so it becomes a “catch as catch can” game; and tiny trout of any variety may well be the mark of a successful day of fly fishing. Mike made every day a successful day by extolling the process in his columns. We miss him immensely.

(Ed Note: Al Himmel also reports: “[Mike Levy wrote] articles on local and remote fishing and hunting stories, often of national [significance]. Mike loved fly fishing and enjoyed sojourns on the Koys with both Jim Keech and [me]. He was honored by WNYTU on several occasions at our annual banquets and gave the organization many assists with publicity for our stream projects, stocking programs, and fishing reports. Mike Levy provided our efforts with well documented reports of TU’s success as a conservation organization, and his columns provided all outdoorsmen with the details of our efforts and those of the DEC programs. He provided the outdoor world of WNY with weekly updates on the hatches and the fly fishing success of all of Western New York trout streams.”)

Trout in the Classroom: An Update

By Chuck Godfrey

WNYTU’s “Trout in the Classroom” program is alive and well. There was an issue with ammonia at the Springville School, resulting in the loss of many trout. As much as everyone would like to see all the eggs hatch and grow to adulthood, it’s actually a good lesson for kids to see that Mother Nature is pretty tough. However, the survival rate is still much higher than it would have been in the wild. Nichols, Frontier, and Brockport have all been humming along successfully, with around 200 browns eating Brockport out of house and home. I’ve got three eight-year old grandchildren, so I can empathize with that.

Frontier has an interesting opportunity for us. Jason Ersing, the cooperating teacher at Frontier Middle School, has an ambitious plan for the program. On June 1 (yes, I know, that’s a change in the date), he and the kids and parents will be installing solar panels to provide all the electrical power for the project, putting in a 400 gallon tank, cleaning up the area, painting part of the building, and doing some landscaping. We would be grateful for any help that anyone could provide. Details are included in Mr. Ersing’s flyer at the end of this newsletter. But, please note that the **correct date is June 1, not April 1**. Anyone having any questions should feel free to contact Jason by phone (982-9673) or by email jersing@frontier.wnyric.org . If you think you can help, please let him know so he has an idea of how many people to expect.

The Wiscoy Project

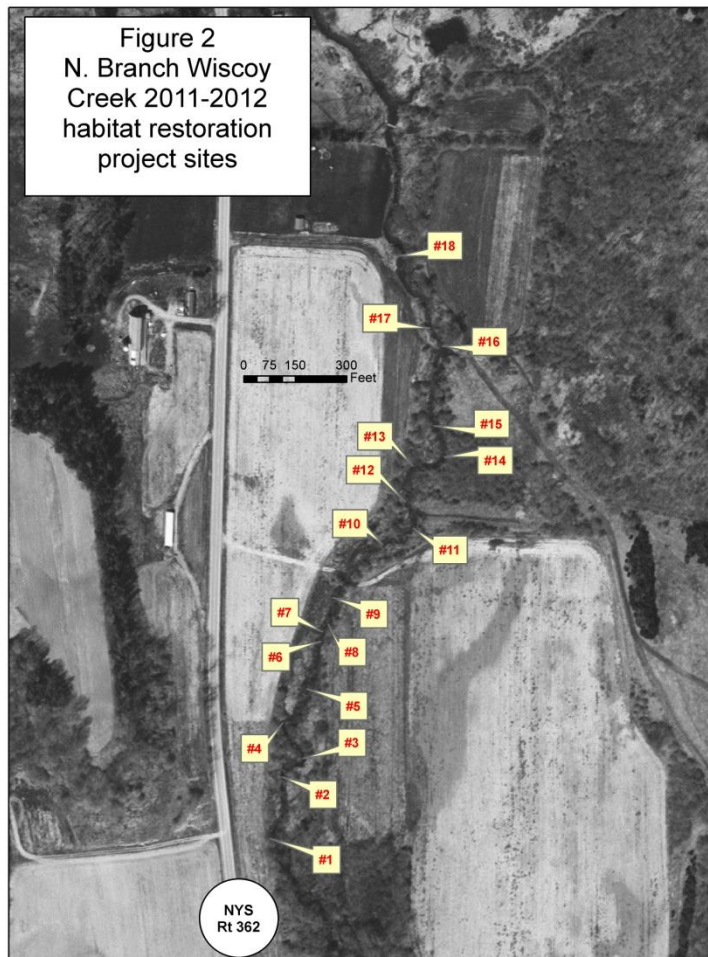
By Chuck Godfrey

This summer we will embark on what is probably our most ambitious project yet. We will be working with the USFWS, Wyoming County SWCD, and Region 9 DEC Fisheries to construct “lunkers” to be put into the North Branch of the Wiscoy in order to enhance the habitat for adult trout. [For details of the “lunker” structures, please see Gary Coons’ President’s Message in the electronic edition of the February newsletter. Ed.] I’m really excited

about this. Since last year, Ray Li and Marie Schrecengost of the FWS, Greg McKurth of SWCD, and Scott Cornet have been busy designing the project, which is to be modeled after similar highly successful efforts in the “Driftless Region” of the Midwest. They also managed to put together a great grant application which will pay for the project. We will need to have a lot of volunteer help on this, as we wish to construct enough of the “lunkers” to create overhead habitat in 18 places on the creek. Each of the structures will require multiple “lunkers”. I’d like to be able to have a 15 or 20 person crew to construct these in an assembly line manner; because the more people we have, the quicker we can get them built. I have one picture from Wisconsin which shows at least 22 people involved in constructing them at once. I have several documents which you can view to see how the “lunkers” work, how they are constructed, the reasoning behind the project, etc. If you email me at steelheader@roadrunner.com, I’d be glad to email them to you. They’re really interesting and well worth studying. In the meantime, I have included some photos which will help to orient you to the project. [They follow this article, Ed.]

We’ll be starting the project this spring with a planting of many, many trees in spots along the creek in sections that will not have machinery installing “lunkers” later in the summer. Right now we’re tentatively planning to plant on Saturday, May 7th; and if we don’t get finished that day, we’ll either schedule another day that week or, more likely, work again on Saturday, May 14.

Remember, get in touch with me if you wish to view any of the documents or pictures pertaining to the project.



An Overview of the Project Area



Constructing "Lunkers"



A View of Lunkers Installed in the Stream



A Stream with Lunkers Installed and Finishing Touches in Place.

And finally, for a change of pace, here are pictures of some recent awardees at the latest Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs Banquet.



Scott Cornett (right) receives his Professional Fisheries Award from Frank Miskey, Sr.



Elma Conservation Club Vice President, Paul Byczynski (left) is presented with the Project Healing Waters Local Sponsorship Appreciation Award. (WNYTU's Len Bigaj [center] and Gary Coons [right] did the honors on behalf of Project Healing Waters.)

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**WESTERN NEW YORK CHAPTER
TROUT UNLIMITED
ANNUAL FUNDRAISING BANQUET**

Saturday, March 26, 2011

LUCARELLI'S BANQUET CENTER

1830 Abbott Rd

Lackawanna, NY 14218

716-824-8711

TICKETS \$30.00/PERSON

8 OR MORE TICKETS RESERVES A TABLE

- 6:00 PM CASH BAR/COCKTAIL HOUR
- 7:00 PM BUFFET STYLE DINNER
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LEN BIGAJ

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What

We are installing Solar Panels

And Wind Turbines to run our districts

Brown Trout fish hatchery on Renewable Resources



Where

Lake Erie Sea Way Trail Visitor Center

4968 Lakeshore road (Route 5)

Hamburg, New York



Who

Past and Present Frontier Living Environment Students

Buffalo Niagara River Keeper

Trout Unlimited

Solar Liberty

When

April 1st 2011

8:00am-3:00pm

Please Come and Help
Our Cause

This is open to Frontier Middle School Students and their Relatives. Please call Jason Ersing If you would like to attend and help out. jersing@frontier.wnyric.org or call me at 926-1730 x3229.

