

Blue Mountains trout news

Newsletter of the Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited, #559

P.O. Box 119, Phoenicia, NY 12464

May/June 2020



Banner above is of an early June afternoon on Esopus Creek, downstream of Five Arch Bridge.

Chapter meetings: Our chapter meetings are still on hold due to the coronavirus, but Trout Unlimited National reopened as of June 1st and has suggested guidelines for TU activities. Perhaps the chapter might have a virtual fishing night out this month, after which members can send in a photo of their outing to be shared. Stay safe, and stay tuned.

NYS inland trout fishery management modifications: DEC has finally made public their long awaited proposal to modify NYS inland trout fishery management plans. These were delayed by the coronavirus and Zebra mussel issues at their Rome Hatchery. Per a DEC press release, major elements of their draft plan include:

1. Drawing a clear line between wild fish and stocked trout management;
2. Placing greater emphasis on habitat improvement;
3. Making management simpler and more understandable;
4. Eliminating unnecessary regulations;
5. Providing year-round fishing opportunities through the creation of a statewide catch-and-release season;
6. Extending the duration of stocking on select stream reaches;
7. Increasing the size of stocked fish;
8. Ensuring that each stocking contains some fish that are 12 inches or larger;
9. Improving the vigor of hatchery brown trout for increased survival;
10. Developing an interactive map for information on stream reach management and fishing access locations; and
11. Expanding outreach on the significance of wild trout populations and the water they inhabit.

Here is DEC's May 27th press release on this matter: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/press/120477.html> while the proposed Trout Stream Management Plan can be found here: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/111015.html> DEC will accept comments on this until June 25th.

We encourage all members to review the proposal, and provide comment. The chapter's board of directors' is conducting virtual Zoom meetings to review and discuss the plan plus provide input on behalf of the board. Currently a major chapter focus is DEC's classification of the Esopus Creek as a non-wild, or hatchery-extended, category. If you wish to share your comments with the chapter board of directors, you can email them to me at: Tailwaters@Hvc.rr.com and I will pass them along to all chapter board members.

NYS DEC Region 3 news: Due to coronavirus virus impacts, DEC has temporarily suspended overnight camping along the Rondout Creek and in the Peekamoose Valley. For a complete list of suspensions, check here: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/120286.html> Additionally DEC has temporarily reduced the number of Blue Hole permits that will be issued for weekend/holiday activities from 50 to 25 per day.

Here's additional info from DEC on how to recreate responsibly during the coronavirus: https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/NYSDEC/bulletins/28b9108?fbclid=IwAR1_6VzsbsBZGrTE8aDqNEBwOhtlZzyBUDNEX8pzElwXRxG3mbJZXiRlssM

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP): On May 26th I participated in a virtual AWSMP Stream Ecosystem Working Group on behalf of the chapter. Rajith Mukundan, a NYC DEP Research Scientist, gave an interesting presentation on the use of SWAT modeling of stream temperatures, in particular how it might be applied to the Esopus Creek.

If you didn't get a copy of AWSMP's Spring *Trib*, it's available here: http://ashokanstreams.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/09/Trib_Spring_2020-online.pdf Additionally, there are AWSMP educational YouTube videos available here: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyx7cud0j1lErvyru4TGU-w>

Catskill Heritage Brook Trout Study 2020: As reported in the last newsletter we are ready to undertake sampling activities, with all necessary components in place, but are temporarily on hold due to the coronavirus.

Trout in the Classroom (TIC): Spotlight on chapter member Bob Yunich, who responded to Jody Hoyt's request for chapter TU volunteer hours. Though we've never met, and Bob doesn't live close enough to attend local chapter meetings, he's very involved with Trout Unlimited.

Bob Yunich lives in NYC with his wife, but is a member of the Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter of TU, and very involved with Trout in the Classroom. Bob's a Life Member of Trout Unlimited and Theodore Gordon Flyfishers, where he met the late Joan and Arthur Stoliar, becoming interested in Trout in the Classroom as a TGF Board member.

Bob says he's been flyfishing since he was seven and in 2017 started to wind down his career as a financial advisor, becoming interested in increasing his volunteer work, in projects like TIC. His wife's family owned property in East Meredith so in 1986 he and his wife bought an old farmhouse in

Andes, which Bob calls his spiritual home, and the reason he's a member of our chapter. He enjoys fishing the Delaware River watershed.

In 2018 Bob contacted TU National to inquire how he could get involved with TIC and was introduced to Lillit Genovesi, TIC Coordinator NYC & Watersheds. He works with Lillit on various projects including planning and fund raising. In 2019 a NYC event raised \$15,000 for TIC! NYS TU Council Chairman Larry Charette appointed Bob as the TIC Coordinator for the Eastern Region on the NYS Council.

So you see, Bob's been very involved with Trout Unlimited, though he's never been to a single APW TU chapter meeting. Thanks Bob for all you do.

Acid rain report: Jody Hoyt reported during April there were 9 measurable events with 7.05 inches of liquid precipitation, including 2.7 inches of sleet and snow, having a 5.9 weighted average pH as measured in Boiceville. By comparison in April 2019 there were 11 events with 6.61 inches of liquid precip, including 1.8 inches of sleet/snow, and a 5.6 weighted pH. In May there were also 9 measurable events with 3.45 inches of liquid perception, including 1.4 inches of sleet and snow, having a 5.9 weighted average pH. By comparison in May 2019 there were 11 events with 5.63 inches of liquid precip, including wet flakes, and a 5.8 weighted pH. As of this newsletter, most local streams are flowing below historically averages; we could use some rain.

Treasurer's report: Jody Hoyt notes no change in financial activities since his last monthly report and he wishes to thank all members who sent him information on their volunteer TU hours so he could complete his Annual Report for TU National.

Membership: As of June 3rd chapter membership stands at 108. As of this newsletter we welcome several new members who either just joined TU or transferred in: George Burns, West Shokan; Benjamin Dates, South Kortright; Brian Demand, Olivebridge; Rudy Hellenschmidt, Shokan; Mark Sampsen, Olivebridge; and Mark Santucci of Highmount. Welcome one and all.

And, please remember that during these trying coronavirus times TU National is offering a **one-year FREE membership to all essential workers** and COVID-19 responders, as they put themselves at risk keeping our country going. Thus far nearly 2000 essential workers, new to Trout Unlimited, have joined. If you know of someone, please share this line with them:

https://gifts.tu.org/essentialworkers_join?utm_source=appeal-email&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Lines%20to%20Leaders%206.1.20&zs=5OHCb&zl=VgV72

Other new TU members can join at half price for \$17.50, of which the chapter receives a \$15 rebate. Applications here: http://www.apwctu.org/pdfs/TU_membership_brochure2018_web.pdf For membership questions, contact me at: Tailwaters@Hvc.rr.com

Newsletter: This issue of *Blue Mountains trout news* is being sent electronically to all chapter members and friends that we have valid email addresses. If you received this and would rather not, please hit **REPLY** and write **REMOVE** and hit **SEND**.

DVD's worth considering: The last newsletter included several links to YouTube videos folks could enjoy while sheltering in place. This month's newsletter includes the names of a few DVD's worth considering.

The first one is called *Chasing the Taper* by Tin Boat Productions. It's an eighty-three minute video featuring bamboo rod makers: Marc Aroner, Per Brandin, Dana Gray, Dennis Menscer, Rick Robbins, and Bob Taylor. Chapter members Forrest Hutchinson and Kevan Best make honorable mention. In fact, Kevan makes a cameo appearance with his killer smile. If you like cane rods, you'll probably enjoy this. It is currently available.

The second DVD is expected to be available this fall and is titled, *A Mountain River - The Esopus Creek: Headwaters to the Hudson*. This film covers the entire Esopus watershed, from the headwaters at Winnisook Lake, through the upper Esopus and Ashokan Reservoir, to the lower Esopus and Hurley Flats, and the creek as it makes its way to the Hudson River in Saugerties. The history includes geologic times, native and colonial habitation, the world-class trout fishery, industrial and agricultural uses, water power, conservation efforts, the struggle with turbidity and ongoing stream-side restoration. Footage will include interviews with DEP and DEC experts, historians, conservationists, anglers and lots of on the creek fishing. Local residents have provided additional personal photos, historic scenes and images. The music is by Tim Kapeluck, the late Artie Traum, Jay Ungar and Molly Mason. This is being produced by Tobe Carey and Mark Loete; watch for it.

A third one is titled *Land of Little Rivers*, and this is all I know about it: <http://landoflittlerivers.com/> It's a DVD by Bruce Concors about our Catskill rivers that looks very interesting to say the least.

Beyond our watersheds, other news, and perhaps outside the trout creel: Folks who live/recreate in a NYC watershed might enjoy the first part of these photos:



https://www.thevintagenews.com/2017/07/11/spectacular-photos-show-the-saga-of-flooding-the-catskills-and-building-the-dams-to-bring-water-to-new-york-city/?fbclid=IwAR0cOAYr-RqHyUy_Nj_S56IZrEKomja2AS5BjKJLQ9DQuz68ZaDsutHUVqE

And who recalls chapter members Paul and Heidi Nute, now relocated to Maine's Rangeley Lake region. Heidi holds a couple world records for tarpon on a fly rod, and she's still at it fishing for noted The Pine Tree State brook trout like the one she's holding before release. Wish I could be there myself.

If you're not a dye-in-the-wool bamboo rod trout flyfisher like me, then you'll really enjoy this also:

[https://www.newyorkupstate.com/outdoors/2020/05/hudson-river-angler-lands-huge-striped-bass-its-a-day-ill-never-](https://www.newyorkupstate.com/outdoors/2020/05/hudson-river-angler-lands-huge-striped-bass-its-a-day-ill-never-forget.html)

[forget.html](https://www.newyorkupstate.com/outdoors/2020/05/hudson-river-angler-lands-huge-striped-bass-its-a-day-ill-never-forget.html)

Useful links:

Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter Trout Unlimited: <https://apwctu.org/>

Minutes of the most recent chapter meetings can be viewed here.

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program: <http://ashokanstreams.org/>

CWC Watershed Currents: <https://cwconline.org/watershed-currents-e-news/>

Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District:
<http://www.dcswcd.org/Stream%20Program.htm>

Esopus Creek hatching chart: <http://www.catskillanglingcollection.org/>

NYC DEP Reservoir Levels-Releases:
https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/drinking_water/release_channel_levels.shtml

Rondout Neversink Stream Program: <http://www.rondoutneversink.org/>

Ed Ostapczuk
June 4th, 2020