

For four or five years, a huge trout known as "Old Bess" haunted the waters of Mother's Pool on the Esopus., Mother's Pool flowed closed to Old Route 28 at the base of Mount Tremper. The pool was a favorite of large trout..." - Ed Van Put, *Trout Fishing in the Catskills*

Spring 2008

Editor: Ron Urban

Chairman's Dubbing- As another season has begun April 1st, we begin pondering the future of our local streams, rivers, ponds and lakes as developers continue to propose developments that could affect the future of our fisheries. We at Trout Unlimited NY Council, national staff and local chapters will keep up the fight to preserve the environmental safeguards to make these as safe as possible, green in development and a compromise of economic and ecological benefits to all. I must say that, these are not isolated but affect us all in NY and across this country. Our previous Governor was focused to protect our resources as much as feasible but also be respectful for economic growth. As we all know, that future will be rethought by Governor Patterson but from all inside information, we should see the same steady course for conservation and environmental protection.

I must now tell you that my third term, as your Council Chairman, is coming to an end this September. So, you might say this is my final tour around the state and visits to meetings, banquets and special seminars. It has been a very enlightening, productive and rewarding 6 years. I would have not been as effective had it not been for so many across this great resource rich state. Many chapters have done tremendous projects and work on our streams and rivers. Others have advocated for protection of the resources and environments associated with them. Some highlights might be NY Council voted as Council of the Year by national, Paul Maciejewski winning the Ray Mortenson Award at national and the Council Chair being awarded as one of four recipients of the Distinguished Service Awards from national. This is not only a testament to the class of individuals in NY but to each and every one of you that has been active in chapters or at the state levels. We had three perfect years of Financial Audits submitted and this past year missed by 2 of 36 chapters not being completed in time. This is a credit to the chapter and council treasurers that made this happen. To all the Presidents that give of themselves at meetings, to council and making sure their chapters comply with the CEI, I send my gratitude for all you've done. And to all the spouses or significant others that give them to the cause of our Mission to Conserve, Protect and Restore our coldwater fisheries and their watersheds, I Thank You.

Even though there are only months left, I will complete my term with the fact that everything I have done or participated in was for the betterment of the resource. I know there have been difficult times and there certainly have been many rewarding times which the memories will be with me for a long time. Work is not done but only begun on several projects across the state. I hope I can see the completion of the \$1.3 million dollar project planned for the East Branch of the Ausable River in Keene, NY. This has come to be by the dedicated effort of John Braico. Saying this, I must not forget all of the dedicated Executive Board that has supported me and been part of this great ride. From the beginning I told several, I would be chairman only if they would come on board with me to see great things happen. They will be around awhile but as all good things they may just want to fish someday. From all corners of the state, I send my sincere appreciation for all that you have done for me and the council. I couldn't have done it without anyone of you. Let's finish our work we've begun and leave the resource better than it was 6 years ago.

Tying one on for all of you! Ron

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TU Philosophy

We believe that trout and salmon fishing isn't just fishing for trout and salmon. It's fishing for sport rather than food, where the true enjoyment of the sport lies in the challenge, the lore, the battle of wits, not necessarily the full creel. It's the feeling of satisfaction that comes from limiting your kill instead of killing your limit. It's communing with nature where the chief reward is a refreshed body and a contented soul, where a license is a permit to use not abuse, to enjoy not destroy our cold water fishery. It's subscribing to the proposition that what's good for trout and salmon is good for the fisherman and that managing trout and salmon for themselves rather than the fisherman is fundamental to the solution of our trout and salmon problems. It's appreciating our fishery resource, respecting fellow anglers and giving serious thought to tomorrow.

ZEBRA MUSSELS 20 YEARS LATER

Mark Brush

The invasive zebra mussel has disrupted food chains and caused billions of dollars in damage across the country. This year marks the twentieth anniversary of the discovery of zebra mussels. Mark Brush reports:

The invasive mussels first arrived here in the ballast water of foreign ships. The mussels are really good at filtering food out of the water column - such as algae and zooplankton - food that would eventually go to fish.

David Jude is a research scientist at the University of Michigan. He says, 20 years later, researchers are still fighting a perception that zebra mussels are good for the environment. That's because the mussels do make the water clearer.

"Well if you get clear water that means that some of the algae and some of the zooplankton that are in that water, that are part of the food chain, that are fueling our fish are going to be destroyed, degraded and damaged."

The Great Lakes have been hit hard by the invasive zebra mussels - and by their close cousins - known as quagga mussels. Jude says in many places popular sport fish such as salmon and yellow perch are having a tough time finding enough food to survive.

NIAGARA NEWS BUREAU

LOCKPORT — Invasive species and fluctuating populations of game fish and their prey will continue to keep the Lake Ontario fishery in a state of flux, state officials said at a meeting here Thursday. The Department of Environmental Conservation's "State of Lake Ontario" session drew about 50 anglers and charter boaters to Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Training Center at the Niagara County Fairgrounds.

Robert O'Gorman, a field station supervisor for the U.S. Geological Survey, told the audience that populations of alewife and rainbow smelt in the lake have fallen to near-record low levels. Those species are among the favorite foods of trout and salmon. "I can't really give you a reason," he said, although he speculated that the heavily stocked trout and salmon species used to bolster the fisheries are simply chowing down heavily on their favorite prey. He also said antipollution measures that sharply reduced the

discharge of phosphorus into the lake decades ago may be hurting the alewife and smelt.

O’Gorman said that’s because phosphorus triggers the growth of plankton, which the alewife and smelt like to eat.

Dan Bishop, a DEC regional fisheries manager from Cortland, reported that the average weight of the chinook salmon in the lake, a popular fish among anglers, is lower than a few years ago. But Vince Pierleoni, owner of Thrillseeker Fishing Charters in Olcott, said that’s not all bad. He said his customers think the slimmed-down chinooks fight harder. “That’s the sport,” he said. “They have less fat. We think they’re more physically fit.”

But one thing his customers don’t like is lake trout with gashes in their sides caused by sea lampreys, a parasite fish that’s on the rise. Dan Connerton of the DEC said the lake trout population has fallen by about 80 percent of its levels of 15 years ago, while the numbers of lamprey gashes in the lakers they’ve tested are on the rise. He said with the lake trout population crashing, lampreys are attacking other trout species and also going after salmon.

Pierleoni said lampreys like clean water, and the Great Lakes are getting cleaner all the time. “There’s an international effort to restore lake trout across the Great Lakes,” said Jana Lantry, a DEC biologist. But she said first-year survival of stocked lakers has been “really poor” and no one knows for sure why that is. Pierleoni said lampreys like to eat freshly hatched lake trout.

Lantry said 453,000 baby lakers were stocked in Lake Ontario last year, and that number should rise this year. O’Gorman said another alien invader has entered the lake in ballast water discharged by foreign merchant ships: the “bloody red shrimp.”

The quarter-inch crustacean has been found in large numbers in the stomachs of alewives, perhaps meaning that they could make a food source for that key species. But O’Gorman said no one is quite sure what the shrimp are eating, and it might take a decade to figure out their overall impact.

“It’s a whole new lake, a whole new ecosystem, a whole new food web,” he said.

NYS Outdoorsmen Hall of Fame

Final plans for the Annual Banquet and the 25th Anniversary of the NYSOHOF are taking place. Also on the agenda will be the possibility of honoring ECOs who have died in the line of duty, and possible gun raffles later in the year.

The Annual Banquet will be April 26 at the Rusty Rail, Rte 5, Canastota. Registration and social hour will begin at 5 p.m.; dinner will be at 6 p.m. Dinner will be a deluxe buffet, including dessert @ \$20 pp. Please make reservations by April 18 by calling Leslie VanNort at work (315-735-5658) or Leo Maloney (315-363-3896).

An outstanding group of individuals will be inducted that evening. They are: Bill Wellman {TU} (Clinton County), Mick Elliott (Saratoga), Dr. John Braico {TU} (Warren), Rudy Hektor (Broome), Harry Woodfield (Broome), Charles Godfrey {TU} (Erie), Ron Kolodziej (Montgomery), Mike Zagata (Otsego), and three who are posthumous inductees – Scott Sampson (Seneca), Tim Noga (Cayuga), and Don Bronson (Niagara). Press releases announcing this have been sent out.

This year’s inductees will be joining last years Paul Maciejewski and Ron Urban who joined Ken Ziobro and Dave Corr from previous years as TU inductees. There may be others but I am not familiar

Raising trout as a way of understanding our need for cold clean water by John Fischer

1 - Preseason

While trout are important in themselves, they are like the canary in the coalmine, the vehicle for learning about clean water, its importance, and the difficulty of maintaining it.

Encourage communication.

The promise TU makes to each teacher is to accommodate funding (often seeking grants), help handle all paper work, obtain necessary permits, arrange for delivery of eggs, and to be a facilitator when needed...

Getting Ready – setup the system and fill the tank with water and check that the filters and pumps are functioning.

Once the school year begins and setup has taken place, it takes one to three weeks of testing to confirm that water quality and temperature have stabilized and are ready to receive the eggs. These arrive mid October (Brown Trout), early December (Brook Trout) and will then hatch within two to three weeks.

2 - Parenting

Prior to eggs hatching, the students are already monitoring the conditions of tank and eggs. This includes daily testing of water and removal of dead eggs. The first tail that appears makes for a banner moment. As the eggs hatch, becoming alevin, children begin to feel the impact of parenthood. Students may maintain a daily log, into which goes any cornerstone event, such as alevin consuming egg sacs, or beginning to swim upright, or if there are noticeable deformities. They learn that nature is profligate and about survival of the fittest. This cycle continues throughout the winter into spring, every day presenting the children with new occurrences.

As the alevin grow, becoming fry, they begin to take food provided by the hatchery, and are fed according to hatchery guidelines. Soon they need to be moved from the breeding basket to the larger area of the tank. Some fry are weak and do not eat and die. These lessons of life are discussed with the children as the trout mature and feeding becomes more aggressive. One kindergartner calls, "Look, there's my fish, and another fish has it in his mouth." And the teacher replies, "Well, you've smelled the fish food. What do you think the fish eat?"

Note: Seven day a week care is optimal, but not likely, as weekend access can be problematic. Weekend feedings may be covered

by loyal school custodians. The fact that the trout are given constant attention, early morning, evening, weekends, by the teachers is not lost on the children, who recognize the care required of the very young.

3 - Science

From the very first days., the children working in teams monitor the conditions in the tank. Students can be assigned to maintain a log book of personal observations. The grade levels, and how the teacher's build their curriculum, dictate the appropriate types of record keeping. Younger grades will check temperature and visible filtration and begin to develop essay writing skills...one teacher had his fifth graders writing Haiku about water and trout. The older grades applying chemistry and math, will, among other things, **test the Ph, ammonia levels, dissolved oxygen, and monitor percentages of surviving fish.** As their collected data grows, they are able to analyze the daily readings and determine that everything is OK ...or not. When problems occur, which they inevitably do, the children need to determine both the cause and solution. They have access to a number of resources:

1. **Discussion among themselves:** Through team interaction within a homogeneous group, they are often able to determine the cause and develop a resolution to a problem.
2. **Call or access your facilitator**, or hatchery personnel when faced with problems. They will provide the guidance to correct and solve most of the problems that arise.
3. Remember this: Sometimes....**a solution to pollution is..... DILUTION**
4. **Contact with peers and through the Web Site.** Every team in every school has direct access to all the other participants. Through direct communication between teams via chat rooms, discussion groups, and reports included on their own pages, children are

able to compare notes and reach solutions adopted by others.

5. **Local and State Environmental agencies** may provide lecturers to start off the year in each school, with a talk on the Watersheds. This places the focus of our program on understanding the need for clean water – the baby trout do the rest.

4 - Release

Each Spring, the program culminates in Field Trips to release the cherished fry into their natural home. By this time, the students feel a growing concern for the welfare of their broods when they leave the tank. What will they eat, and what is the stream really like? Trips are preceded by class discussions of stream ecology. It is in this pre-release period that the environmental group speakers, armed with slides and flies and conservation-minded anglers' philosophy, focus their school visits.

Traveling to a nearby Watershed stream, teams from all the schools can join their counterparts to offer a tearful farewell to their charges and a joyous hello to their new pals. Meeting in person for the first time, many of the students find they have already developed a bond, having completed a common task, although geographically separated. Not only do they discuss the experiences of the preceding semesters, but also, in the relaxed, outing atmosphere, they have an opportunity to talk of other things, and get to know each other better. Softening the loss of their fish, (one youngster was overheard saying "I feel pretty blue"), the children embark on the next level of research by collecting macro-invertebrates from the stream, and may take back for classroom study.

NYS DOT 20 Year Assessment Plan

By John Braico

New York State Council of Trout Unlimited has a long history of working with agencies at all levels in support of science based stewardship of NY's fragile coldwater streams. Our advocacy for a new Comprehensive Emergency Flood

Response Policy for NYS (presented 11/08/07 to the HHM Workgroup), our involvement with NYS DEC in eliminating barriers to fish passage at road crossings, and our involvement with NYS DEC in helping to craft policy for brook trout restoration are three active areas with significant relationship to the NYS DOT planning process.

Regarding streams and transportation infrastructure, NY Council Trout Unlimited would like engage NYS D.O.T. to give full consideration to integrating—stream form & function, aquatic & riparian ecosystem needs, and recreational uses as pertains to roadways & stream crossings wherever and whenever possible. Specifically we request inclusion of plans for:

- minimizing runoff of all forms from paved roadways into waterways
- preserving natural channel form & function at all road crossings, channel relocation and new road construction (including the preservation of slope, sinuosity, width/depth ratio, and all biologic attributes)
- the inventory and elimination of non conforming road crossings interfering with the passage of aquatic, amphibian and reptile life using extant BMP (USF&W fishxing or equivalent)
- ensuring that bridges & culverts can meet both water capacitance needs and stream substrate entrainment requirements with the accompanying sediment transported for the highest designed flows
- the planned management of flood waters on the flood plain while excluding non conforming structures from these areas
- the utilization of BMP for flood response that ensures infrastructure integrity & public safety while avoiding either causing or exacerbating damage to the stream channel and its multiple geomorphic & biologic functions
- the protection of identified species of concern when transportation development may have an impact

On behalf of NYS Council of Trout Unlimited, this provided input to NYS DOT's long term planning forum and was presented in mid February.

Millennium Pipeline Fish Friendly

Can a major natural gas pipeline construction project and world-class trout streams co-exist in harmony? If the Millennium Pipeline is any indication, the answer is an unequivocal “yes.”

The 30-inch- diameter Millennium Pipeline will extend from Corning in Steuben County to Ramapo in Rockland County, and will be aligned, for the most part, along the same route as the Columbia Gas Transmission Corporation pipeline that was installed approximately 50 years ago. The new Millennium pipeline will replace this Columbia Gas pipeline and provide customers in the Southern Tier and Lower Hudson Valley, as well as utilities in New York City, with new energy infrastructure to meet growing demand for natural gas – the cleanest burning fossil fuel. Pipeline construction began this past summer and will continue in 2008.

Although the pipeline is scheduled to be operational in late 2008, Millennium will perform further right-of-way restoration in 2009. Special environmental monitoring studies and mitigation will extend for several years thereafter.

“Throughout our planning process, we were sensitive to the fact that we are constructing this pipeline across, or near, some of the highest-quality trout streams in North America,” said Millennium President Dick Lehr. “After all, this area is known as ‘the birthplace of American fly fishing.’ We respect this unique natural resource and its importance for recreation and sport fishing.”

Under the watchful eyes of federal and state regulators and numerous on-site inspectors, Millennium is putting these words into action by using a series of special techniques and taking a number of other steps before, during and after stream crossing construction. It’s not a small task. Along its 181-mile-long route, Millennium will traverse approximately 400 streams and rivers, including more than 150 that are considered high-quality trout streams – that is, Class C(T) or better.

Working closely with the New York State Council of Trout Unlimited and environmental experts from the New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYDEC), the U.S.

Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, among others, Millennium developed plans and procedures for crossing the streams without causing long-term adverse impacts to the fishing habitat.

For high-quality perennial streams, Millennium’s plans call for the installation of the pipeline using what engineers call the “dry-ditch” techniques. Using such proven techniques, water is diverted across or around the portion of the stream bed in which the pipeline will be installed so that construction (trenching) can be performed “in the dry,” thereby minimizing sedimentation that can enter a stream or water body, which is critical to maintaining the proper ecological balance for trout and other fish populations

One “dry-ditch” method, called the flume procedure, diverts stream waters through one or more temporary culverts during pipeline installation. The second “dry-ditch” option, referred to as the dam and pump method, involves the installation of temporary “dams” (typically comprised of sandbags) up- and down-stream along the right-of-way and then the use of a system of hoses and pumps to maintain water flows around the construction work area during trenching and pipe installation.

In both cases, temporary bridges made of timber mats are installed for the construction period. Heavy equipment avoids entering the streambed and is confined to working from a timber bridge above the stream or from the adjacent banks until construction is completed at a particular site. After the pipeline is installed below the streambed and protected with an extra-deep 48 inches of cover, restoration work begins and water flow is quickly returned to its native stream channel.

In addition, strict time limits also have been imposed to minimize stream disturbance. River and stream crossings must also be constructed during specific time windows to avoid spawning season.

“Time will tell,” says Jack Cooper, a Biologist with the NYDEC’s Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources Division who has inspected the stream crossings in person. “But they do seem to have a good plan in place, and if the contractor adheres to the conditions in the permit, there should be no long-term negative impact to the trout population.”

Millennium Supports Delaware County Culvert Repair, Workshop

As many fishermen can attest, culverts that are decaying or are in disrepair can prevent fish passage and aquatic movement. Because some of the culverts that service many high-quality streams and rivers in New York are in need of repair, Millennium Pipeline took the opportunity to fund a culvert rehabilitation project and educational workshop to demonstrate potential benefits for trout streams.

The selected culvert, which carries a high-quality brown trout stream, is located

adjacent to Palmer Hill Road in the Town of Walton, Delaware County, and its restoration was made possible through funding provided by Millennium

The culvert restoration was sponsored by Millennium but designed and implemented by the Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) in coordination with the Town of Walton’s Highway Department.

The Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) will work with the Delaware County SWCD’s “Stream Team” to plan the work to repair Horton Brook. For further details, contact Jeremy Waddell of the USC at jwaddell@u-s-c.org



“A river is more than an amenity, it is a treasure. It offers a necessity of life that must be rationed among those who have power over it.”

-U.S. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, 1931 Delaware River Diversion Case

A Fly Fisher's Prayer

Dedicated to a Departed Friend

I bow my head and close my eyes
I pray that soon the trout will rise
I pray for the safety of me and my friend
so we may fish together again
I'll take a bump, a scratch or scrape
but please don't let my tippet break
The Blue Winged Olives and Adams flies
should do the trick on the evening rise
The flies I've made are my best batch
Lord please just let them "match the hatch"
Let the dries float high and the nymphs sink deep
and keep the rocks beneath my feet
I've waited with anticipation
to fish this river, your creation
Since I was just a little boy
the only thing that brought me joy
Was being where the air is clean,
the mountains high, all cloaked in green
O' let the fights be hard and long
and the knot I tied hold tight and strong
and every fish I bring to hand
will live to fight another man
When the lovely day is done and through
and the evening sky is no longer blue
I'll step out on the river banks
to bow again and give you thanks
For even if I catch no fish
I'd still have been granted my best wish
Lord if you could, just one more thing,
across the hill from where the Angels sing
and the city where the streets are gold
and ones we love shall not grow old,
let, in that valley, running wild and clean
be a cold and rolling, trout-packed stream
Amen

A Watershed Moment for our Watershed Natives

By John Fischer

It was exactly 11:58am on February 25th, 2008 when the watershed moment arrived. I couldn't believe what I had just witnessed, but I knew it was significant. Being a former police officer who remembers being asked about times and places made me well prepared for recording it. What was this big deal? And why is it so momentous?

This was not the first time I had taken part in an electrofishing survey of Beaver Brook in the Shu Swamp section of the Frank T. Church Preserve in Mill Neck. It was the fourth time in five years. About 6 or 7 years ago we had removed the last of an earlier brown trout stocking in order to prepare to return the stream to its historical native brook trout population. We did this by stocking the stream with a good amount of fingerlings from the Cold Spring Harbor Fish hatchery. In addition to that initial brook trout fingerling stocking, the stream only received fingerling sized brook trout of 1_ inch to 3 inch from the Trout in the Classroom each spring in May. Since that time we would survey for holdover brook trout and check for evidence of natural reproduction and/or spawning activities. While we had found holdover brook trout each time, we had not observed convincing evidence of spawning or reproduction of brook trout. By proof we would need to find and document young of the year fry size fish (about an inch long at this time of year).



Here is what we were looking for and found at that fateful moment on the 25th day of February in 2008. The first picture of a spawned natural reproduction brook trout as it lies on the DEC measuring board. We documented another 20 or so young of the year trout fry, a true watershed moment if there ever was one.

Here are pictures of some of the holdovers who may have taken part in that spawning activity.

All of the fish were released right away into the stream waters of Beaver Brook in Mill Neck, NY. This will lead to a reclassification of the stream by NYS DEC to a designated Trout Reproduction/Spawning stream. The natives are returning to Long Island! See next photos.



TU National Survey

By Chris Wood

The TU vision of recovering wild and native fish within a generation so that our children may fish for them in their home-waters suggests that we will not only work in partnership with a much larger number of stakeholders, but that we will be so persuasive, powerful, or lucky that an even wider array of state and federal agencies, corporations, local communities, and others will make our vision their vision. Understanding who we are, what we represent, and why people should act in a manner consistent with the TU mission will help to ensure that we are more powerful and persuasive, than lucky.

The survey was developed after a few meetings and phone calls with chapter

leaders. Beth Duris, the editor of TROUT, deserves special thanks for seeing the effort through. **The purpose of the study was to better understand what our membership thinks about TU – who we are, who we should be, and where we are going.** It's a treasure trove of interesting information about how this subset of members prefer to receive information about TU; messages, programs, and issues that most resonate with them; motivations for membership; levels of activism, and so on.

Like most studies, it has its limitations. Because it was an online survey, obviously, it has a built-in bias toward people that are active on the web. In addition, it is likely biased toward TU "activists" as the survey was in the field only so long as it took for us to get a statistically significant sample. Presumably, the more active members would be more inclined to take the 20 minutes required to complete the survey than people who care less about TU. Even with that bias, active TU members are our core constituency and it is likely more, not fewer, people will be getting their information online in the future.

A top-line summary of the findings of this survey of online and active members includes:

- **TU is made up of anglers that are committed to fishing** and to protecting and restoring fisheries;
- Respondents are **most aware** of the following TU programs: **Embrace a Stream (95%)**, reforming western water laws and improving in stream flows (79%), and protecting roadless areas in the West (66%);
- **"Take care of the fish and the fishing will take care itself,"** and protecting and restoring trout and salmon fisheries resonates with the survey group more than protecting clean water or addressing the effects of climate change on fisheries;
- 55% of the respondents said they **participated in more than four chapter meetings per year**; 50% said they had contacted local officials about a TU campaign; and 50% said they had participated in TU efforts to

introduce young people to fishing and conservation;

- About half of the respondents believe **TU is 75% conservation and 25% fishing**. Nearly half of the respondents think the balance should be more like 50%-50%, conservation to fishing;
- The most prominent reason for continuing to support TU is "to be a part of an organization doing conservation work in North America" (82%); relatively unimportant was "learning local fishing spots" (10%); and last was "to receive free gifts and benefits" (4%).
- Nearly 75% of the respondents prefer to receive TU information via email. And the information they want is "conservation news about my local watershed."

Again, because it was an online survey, it has a built-in bias toward people that are active on the web. It may also be biased toward longer-term members (for example, 47% of the survey respondents are members for six years or longer, and the actual percentage of members of five years or longer is 27%). That's a good thing, though. Because these are TU's core constituency – the loyal, long-term folks whom you don't want to alienate. They're a good baseline for developing programs, messages, and ideas in the future.

State Wildlife Grants

The Division's Fish and Wildlife Diversity Program, as funded by State Wildlife Grants (SWG), is still in its nascent stages and we will see it continue to grow, evolve, and change. As made evident by the findings of the **Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy (CWCS)**, we need to continue to externalize delivery of the CWCS because agency resources are inadequate to do all that needs to be done, and external partners share interest in and enthusiasm for conserving the state's species of greatest conservation need. We also need to build the expectation that engaging in delivery of the CWCS and the subsequent Watershed Action Plans (WAPs) is within the responsibilities of all division staff, not the limited number of SWG grant-funded fish and wildlife Diversity biologists (whom I will hereafter refer to as Diversity biologists).

As the program continues to grow, it will build on 30+ years of endangered and non-game species and habitat conservation efforts in the Division. The availability of federal SWG grants provides a modest, but still tenuous, funding source that enables us to formalize and legitimize work on species that have been neglected for years. We have much to do, however. I hope I can draw on all of you to help us shape the future of the Fish and Wildlife Diversity program and to support the Division's Management Team and Diversity biologists as we move forward.

The first step the Division Management Team (DMT) took was to reconstitute the SWG Management Team to directly involve the Diversity biologists. The current team now consists of the nine Diversity biologists, Dan Rosenblatt (Bureau of Wildlife), Frank Flack (Bureau of Fisheries), Debbie Barnes (Bureau of Marine Resources), and Tracey Tomajer (Bureau of Habitat). Lisa Holst manages and coordinates the team and the DMT continues to provide programmatic oversight.

Over the course of the last 1-2 years, the Diversity biologists and other central office and regional biologists have participated in numerous public meetings and solicited countless comments from partners and other interested parties as they developed initial drafts of watershed-based Wildlife/Watershed Action Plans (WAPs). Taking advantage of all that information and the professional training and experience of our staff, we will be revising how we allocate SWG funds t h i s y e a r .

The SWG Management Team reviewed the copious recommendations generated over the past two years on what needs to be done to conserve New York's species of greatest conservation need. They analyzed, distilled, and refined those recommendations to identify the most important, urgent, and highest priority recommendations that are suitable and appropriate for funding under this next iteration of SWG grant funds. On January 8, 2008, the SWG team provided the Division Management Team (DMT) with their proposed recommendations, aggregated into three existing FFY 2006 grants: Research and Inventory (\$1,016,221), Management and Restoration (\$1,161,395), and Planning (\$725,872). On January 9, the DMT reviewed and discussed the recommendations. Exercising executive responsibilities, the list is being revised to add to

and adjust some of the priorities.

The DMT is still finalizing the actual process we will follow in acting on the priorities with the available funding, recognizing we still need to meet all state procurement procedures and U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service granting requirements (such as the 50:50 match). Initially, Division staff will be queried for their interest in developing projects that address the identified priorities. These Division-sponsored projects may be delivered by hiring temporary/seasonal staff or interns, or via MOUs with other state agencies and SUNYs.

A second stage will include soliciting contracts with non-state-agency parties to address remaining priorities for which there is funding. It is our full and sincere intent to continue to engage partners in delivering projects identified in the CWCS and the WAPs, whether with SWG funds or through cooperative relationships. However it also is imperative that for a project to be viable, we must have Division staff that has the interest and capacity to manage and execute the project.

The fundamental concept that is driving my desire to re-focus this year's allocation process is that the Division has the responsibility – and expertise – to lead a fish and wildlife diversity program, identify those projects that are most urgent and important, and conduct those that are of the highest priority. The main difference between this year and past is that we will more narrowly focus the scope of eligible projects to those that have been identified as of highest priority and need, and then to more fully engage Division staff in managing and overseeing the projects.

I welcome suggestions on how we can better deliver this program and how we can make the process for delivery of this year's projects rewarding and productive.

Patty Riexinger,
Director
Division of Fish, Wildlife and Marine Resources



**SCHUMER SLAMS UPCOMING IJC
REPORT FOR IGNORING THE
CONCERNS OF NYS GREAT LAKE
COMMUNITIES AND FAILING TO
INCORPORATE \$20 MILLION OF
SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH – SENATOR
PUSHES STATE DEPT. TO HOLD OFF ON
ISSUEING UPCOMING IJC REPORT**

U.S. Senator Charles E. Schumer slammed an upcoming International Joint Commission (IJC) report that will have a major impact on water levels across Lake Ontario and the St. Lawrence River but fails to incorporate \$20 million worth of scientific research and feedback from local waterfront communities. Later this month, the IJC, a U.S.-Canadian partnership responsible for regulating the level of water in Lake Ontario and St. Lawrence, will be announcing for public comment a proposed change to its management practices. These changes will affect the water levels across the two bodies of water, and in turn, have a significant impact on fisheries, recreational boating, waterfront property values, hydropower generation, and local economic development.

Schumer blasted the upcoming study for failing to take into account volumes of research and the feedback of communities situated along the lake and river. In particular, the new IJC study doesn't include information from the 2006 Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence Study Board. The Study Board in 2006 delivered a report to the IJC commissioners detailing several new options for managing water levels on the River and the Lake. The study process included significant research and analysis from more than 180 scientists and numerous rounds of public comment.

Trout Unlimited Statement on the Delaware River Flow

After extensive review of the interim Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP) for the Upper Delaware River and three Catskill reservoirs that provide drinking water to New York City, Trout Unlimited has determined that while the concept behind the FFMP is indeed the best way to manage the river's flows, the actual water release schedules in the plan will continue to damage the ecosystem of the Delaware River.

Trout Unlimited (TU) is dedicated to the ecological preservation of the Upper Delaware River environment and its trout fisheries. Because of this, our organization and its New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania Councils cannot support the reservoir release schedules that are contained within the interim Flexible Flow Management Program (FFMP) due to the significant damage these releases will cause to the Delaware River's ecosystem. In particular, under the interim releases the trout fisheries of the Upper Delaware River's main stem will be damaged due to lethal rises in water temperatures and loss of habitat. Additionally, the interim release schedule will continue to harm American shad populations and habitat, dwarf wedge mussels and other fish and wildlife as well as the recreational tourist economy of the Upper Delaware region.

It is well documented that there is more than enough water in the Upper Delaware River for all the Decree Parties and for healthy aquatic habitat for trout, shad, and the many other species that live in and along the Neversink, East and West branches, and Main Stem of the river. The current constraint under which the FFMP is modeled, however, is invalid, biased, and inflexible:

- New York City's annual diversions from Neversink, Pepacton, and Cannonsville reservoirs over the past ten years have averaged 508 mgd. Yet the Delaware River Basin Commission (DRBC) has consistently required that all OASIS modeling of future scenarios consider an annual New York City diversion of 765 mgd. This means that over 290 mgd is available for ecosystem benefits downstream of the reservoirs, not the 35 mgd that the DRBC is currently modeling.

- By imposing a release schedule calculated for extreme water supply diversions (765 mgd) when the actual annual average diversions are much lower (508 mgd), the DRBC's interim FFMP will result in far more reservoir spills and significantly higher reservoirs each year than the OASIS model currently predicts. This is wasteful and irresponsible management of the Delaware River's water.

- New York City's annual average diversions have been decreasing over the past 15 years, and they are not projected to increase for the foreseeable future.

Given New York City's average diversions and the resulting additional water in the Upper Delaware River, the following changes will correct the deficiencies of the FFMP with no risk to any of the Decree Parties' water rights and availability.

(1) **The releases in the interim FFMP must be increased.** Higher reservoir releases from Cannonsville are needed from May to September to protect trout habitat in the lower West Branch and Main Stem Delaware River. Similarly, higher release rates are required for the Neversink and East Branch tributaries to protect against low flows and high water temperatures. In light of the large quantity of available water that *will not* be diverted to New York City and *will* eventually find its way downstream as spillage over the dams, TU *cannot* accept any FFMP without an increase in releases from all three reservoirs. The OASIS model can substantiate this, and the DSS model verifies the considerable habitat gains for the rivers.

(2) **More release levels and seasons are necessary in the interim FFMP.** The interim FFMP structure is very inflexible; during most summers, releases will remain in L2 more than 75 percent of the time. At a minimum, additional graduated levels need to be added to both the L1 and L2 Storage Zone. The FFMP will also benefit from additional seasons, particularly because of traditional water temperature and flow problems in mid- to late-May, early-June, and the summer period through mid-September whenever Montague flow target releases are not made.

(3) **Weekly averaging of the Montague flow target is needed.** The wildly fluctuating releases that result from the efforts to meet Montague flow target shortages must be eliminated. These

extreme daily variances create dangerous water temperature fluctuations to the biota and disrupt various forms of recreation on the rivers. Proactive directed releases must be based on a weekly average target rather than daily variances. Anticipated hydropower generation releases from the Lackawaxen and Mongaup rivers make this entirely feasible and such a weekly averaging should be instituted immediately. Using anticipated water diversions, anticipated Montague target releases, and projected hydropower releases, the Rivermaster can institute a weekly Montague release that accounts for these factors and eliminates these harmful and unnecessary daily fluctuations.

(4) Directed releases for the Montague flow target must be balanced from the reservoirs.

Some portion of the Montague releases should be apportioned as necessary to the East Branch and Neversink rivers when the Rivermaster requires water releases for the Montague flow target. Such an allocation in releases will provide more aquatic habitat to the three tailwaters and help avoid draining Cannonsville during dry years.

(5) A formal annual review of the FFMP is mandatory. A process must be established to provide for an annual review of the FFMP to assess its performance. Consistent review, analysis, and response are needed to address any of its shortcomings and incorporate new research. Because these aquatic environments are extremely sensitive, we stress the need for the DRBC to maintain the ability to act quickly at times to avoid long-term environmental damage from loss of aquatic habitat. Any formal process to review and respond to new information or environmental conditions must include the stakeholders and not be unnecessarily hindered by the bureaucratic process.

TU recognizes the extraordinary efforts that are necessary for the equitable apportionment and management of the Upper Delaware watershed for both the DRBC and the Decree Parties. We recognize that management needs for these rivers will remain dynamic and require constant assessment. By implementing the above courses of action to correct the deficiencies of the interim FFMP, the DRBC and the Decree Parties can use their power to significantly improve the health of the Delaware River and its treasured trout

fisheries—and with no risk to New York City or any other Decree Party's water supplies or rights.

Trout Waters Youth Camp

Trout Waters Youth Camp is moving forward with a Cortland as a major sponsor. Soon I hope to fill everyone in more of the details. I can say this is a great deal more than I expected and will go a long way it making the camp a success. I can say the O. Mustad and Son have promised us all the hooks we need for the camps Fly Tying classes. Thanks to Loren Williams we may be getting some of the US Youth Fly Fishers to help with casting and tying lessons. We have also received some other donations of cash to help with expenses.

With that I would like to add that we are asking for NYTU Chapters to donate **\$250** or more to the Trout Waters Fund. This money will be used for expenses like T-shirts, hats, waders, wading shoes, insc. rider, books and other operating cost. This is our first camp, and although we are working from a model of several camps we still will have some bugs to work out. The kids will never know because they will be having the time of their lives. With many of the chapters donating money it will mean much to me that you all support this idea as a way of meeting our mission goals of restoring, protecting and conserving cold water habitat, by educating the next generation of stewards.

Besides money we will need volunteers during the week. I can not say how important it will be to have the best fly fishers from NYTU act as mentors each evening during the main fishing time between 6 till dark. Each night students will fish a different part of the West or East Branch of the Delaware as the flows and schedule allow. Fishing with different mentors means that they will learn many ways of doing the same thing. They will get our lifetime of fishing skills in one week. Just think if we could have gone to a camp like this how many more fish we could have caught.

Staff and people needed:

- Dr. or RN or EMT- to handle medical records and medical needs for the students on hand all week.
- Driver for the 15 person van, would prefer to have one driver for the week. This is the only transportation the students can be in.
- Camp Director-preferable a woman who has experience with dealing with kids.
- Volunteer coordinator-makes sure volunteers know when, where, and why.

- Camp helpers- on hand to help with student activities during classes and stay overnight and help with morning fishing.
- Fishing Buddies-these are the VIPs who fish with the students during the mandatory fishing times on Monday thru Thursday at various spots at 6:00pm till about 9:00pm or dark which ever comes first. 12 students=12 mentors.

All volunteers will go through a background check performed by TU National so I will have forms for this as folks volunteer. There is still a lot to do between now and then. So if anyone knows of a company that can donate T-shirts and/or Hats with our camp logo on them please contact me. We are a big state and I want folks from one end to the other to have a chance of helping in anyway they can. This is your camp and I am doing this as a way of thanking you for being a member of TU, plus I like teaching kids. Thank you for your support!

Trout Waters Youth Camp
 Executive Director
 Kurt Nelson
 Region 7 VP
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 607-372-6330

NYSCTU WORKSHOP: **STREAM RESTORATION** **PRINCIPLES & PRACTICE**

Helping TU volunteers promote the best possible care of our fragile trout waters is the primary goal of this weekend event hosted by NYSCTU's Resource Management Team. This workshop will focus upon applying river & fisheries science to define stream & fisheries problems & selecting and testing interventions.

This workshop will run Friday evening 7 PM 5/16, through 3PM Sunday afternoon 5/18 at the SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry Environmental Education Center at the Charles Lathrop Pack Demonstration Forest located on Rt. 9 2 miles North of Warrensburg, NY. We would like to have up to 20 participants from as many TU chapters as possible. Working in teams, participants will apply learned skills under the guidance of experienced field/lab instructors.

(Bring your fishing gear as you will have some time to wet a line in local streams.)

Classroom & Field Training will:

- 1) Review: river mechanics, bankfull principles & assessment methods
- 2) Examine stream processes using the EMriver stream simulator.
- 3) Explore the "Limiting Factor" concept in fisheries restoration
- 4) Examine geomorphic restoration principles and applications
- 5) Groups will be given real stream problems to tackle, propose interventions, construct model interventions and test them using the EMriver unit.

On site male & female bunkhouse lodging with showers is provided. (Sorry, no camping allowed.) All participants will need to bring a sleeping bag, towel and toiletries. Food will be catered to site as part of the \$45 participation fee that also includes instructional material. (\$90 for non TU participants). Suggested materials include: short boots, wet wading gear, note pad & pencil, small pocket calculator. Other materials will be provided either in advance as printable downloads, or at the workshop.

All participants will need to register in advance & send their \$45 (or \$90) fee payable to NYSCTU to: John Braico, 10 Ashley Place, Queensbury, NY 12804, 518 793-1135 Fax 798-9576 Email: jbraico@aol.com . Detailed information including travel directions will be sent to all registrants upon receipt of a completed registration with accompanying fee. Please note that we are limited to 30 participants (minimum of 10).



Didymo Alert

Update your list of invasive species to include the aquatic diatom (a unicellular algae) known as didymo, or *Didymosphenia geminata*. ‘Rock snot’ was confirmed present in the Upper Connecticut and White Rivers in Vermont last year. And as if this news wasn’t bad enough, biologists with the USGS, NY DEC and VT ANR just confirmed *Didymosphenia geminata* is also present in the Batten Kill in VT and NY and the East Branch of the Delaware.

By the time you read this, there have been signs posted on the Batten Kill advising all river users of the presence of didymo in the river, and offering recommended procedures to help prevent its spread to other waters. While we wait to hear of the plans devised by VT, NY, and NH environmental agencies, who are cooperating in this effort, as to how they intend to deal with didymo, here are a few facts about didymo, what to do if you think you’ve found it, and most importantly, what you should do as a responsible angler to help prevent spreading it to other waters.

Didymo can form extensive mats or ‘blooms’ on the bottom of rocky stream beds. When it does this, it can make survival impossible for aquatic macro invertebrates, plants, and other organisms by smothering them.

A single cell of didymo is microscopic, making it nearly impossible to detect on waders, boots, or clothing. Therefore, it is essential for all anglers to adopt a preventive attitude, and follow these guidelines established by New Zealand Biosecurity: **Check, Clean & Dry**. According to the EPA, decontaminating your equipment in between uses in different freshwater systems is vital to preventing the spread of didymo by humans. Wildlife and animals, well that is a whole other story. Do your part to help prevent the spread. Encourage others.

Global Warming and the Effects on Trout

I have had the privilege to see the presentation by Dr. Steve Wright on this matter affecting so many of us and the environments. Our friends at the National Wildlife Foundation have done an excellent job putting this together. He is available to make a presentation to any NY TU Chapters and looks for the invitation to come to a chapter meeting. Contact Steve by email and tell him NY TU Council Chairman recommended him and his presentation at: wrights@nwf.org

NEW YORK JOINS GREAT LAKES WATER RESOURCES COMPACT

Multi-State Agreement will Protect and Preserve Water Resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin
Governor Designate David A. Paterson today announced that legislation has been signed authorizing New York State to join the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin Water Resources Compact. The Compact is a multi-state agreement designed to protect, conserve, and improve the water resources of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Basin. The legislation was signed by Governor Spitzer on March 4, 2008.

“Unfortunately, water levels in the Great Lakes have seen drastic declines in the last decade, and it is vitally important that we protect and conserve this essential water resource. The Great Lakes Compact demonstrates the commitment of all of the Great Lakes states to work together to achieve that goal.”

“Having New York State sign on to the historic Great Lakes Compact is critical to protecting our precious freshwater resources, particularly Lake Ontario, Lake Erie, the St. Lawrence River, and their tributaries. Joining this multi-state and multi-province effort is the right thing to do for our environment, for our communities, and for our future.”

Commissioner of Environmental Conservation Pete Grannis said: “The Great Lakes are among America’s greatest natural resources and they must be protected from excessive demands. The compact is an integral tool that will establish proper management practices and standards so that the benefits these waters provide will continue to be available for future generations.”

Robert Moore, Executive Director of Environmental Advocates of New York, said: “The magnificent waters of the Great Lakes and the St. Lawrence River have provided New Yorkers with so much throughout our history, including unparalleled habitat for fish and wildlife and

drinking water for millions of residents. Environmental Advocates of New York applauds the Administration.

Earth Share NY- Protecting The Future by Ron Urban, ES NY Director

Earth Share of New York offers citizens one efficient and effective way to care for public health and our air, land, water and wildlife. Earth Share of New York partners with workplaces and employees in New York to support hundreds of environmental groups through efficient and effective payroll contribution giving.

Earth Share of New York makes it easy for public and private sector workplaces to help their employees preserve, protect, and defend the environment a charitable giving campaign at the workplace Earth Share of New York provides donors the unique option of donating one gift to be distributed to all Earth Share of New York member organizations, effectively addressing many environmental concerns. Donors can also designate their contributions to one or more charities of their choice.

Payroll Contribution giving allows you to choose how much you can afford to give and do so in small increments throughout the year.

If your workplace does not have an employee giving drive or does not include Earth Share of New York in its current payroll contribution campaign, here's what you can do:

- Find out who handles your workplace campaign, benefits package, or personnel issues, and let them know that you and other employees want to contribute to environmental causes. Hosting an Earth Share campaign is a simple and effective way for a company and its employees to demonstrate concern for the environment.
- Earth Share can send you or your employer an Earth Share brochure which provides more information about setting up a workplace campaign at your company. Send an email to www.earthsharenny.org to request a brochure. Or, if you prefer, we can send the brochure directly to the appropriate person in your company.
- Contact us today to talk about how we can bring Earth Share to *your* workplace!
- To find out the organizations that are currently members of Earth Share NY go to: <http://www.earthsharenny.org/members.htm>