



TROUT UNLIMITED

Conserving, protecting and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

The Backcast

A publication of the Taconic Chapter Trout Unlimited
September, 2009



First Membership meeting of the season
September 24th
5:30 pm
Bass Water Grill
(Route 8, Cheshire)

**A verbal presentation and meeting will highlight
the events for this upcoming year.**

All members get a free drink!

Greetings

If you've grumbled about all the rain we've had this summer, you are certainly not alone. It's more than I can remember - ever - and while I'm not sure about the statistics, it must be some kind of record. In spite of it, I hope you did your fair share of fishing - I did mine. Fortunately, there just may be a bright side to all this rainfall. First of all, I heard that it will probably result in some excellent holdover fish for next year; and second, my rain gear was finally put to *really, really* good use, as I'm sure yours was.

I'm looking forward to our first meeting on the Thursday, the 24th, at the Bass Water Grill, and to all of the meetings and speakers scheduled for the coming year. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact me if there is some information or a story that you'd like to see included in future newsletters: 395-9616, or steve@berkshirehisc.com. Tight lines,

Steve Smith

TU's Eastern Water Quality Project Director Steps Down

Effective April 4, 2009, Kirt Mayland, TU National's Eastern Water Quality Project Director, stepped down from his position. Mr. Mayland had been a fixture in New England for many years, and he has been an incredible asset to all New England TU Councils, including our Massachusetts/Rhode Island Council. He worked diligently on stream flow issues, one of the biggest issues that New England TU chapters will continue to face over the next ten years.

As many local chapters and counsels will attest, Mr. Mayland has been effective, professional, accessible, and a pleasure to work with. He provided assistance well beyond the hours specified in his TU work plan, and on issues broader than those in his stated position's mission. He is moving on to a job in the private sector, working in alternative energy. From his new base of operations in Philadelphia, Mr. Mayland will simultaneously continue to work on a TU project in Connecticut (on a pro bono basis).

We wish him all the best in his new endeavor, and thank him for the positive impact he made toward TU's cold water conservation projects throughout New England.

Orvis.com now has local River Reports

Follow the instructions below to find
local river reports

First, go to orvis.com and click on fly fishing. Then, scroll down and click on "River Reports." At that point you'll find a map of the US where you can select any state.

For Western Massachusetts, you'll find information on the Deerfield and Westfield, (hopefully they'll add more in the future). The reports describe the water condition, flow, temperature and best time of day to fish. They also grade the quality of fishing for the rivers at any given time from "Red Hot" to "Fish somewhere else this week." On top of that, they list the hottest flies to use.

As of 8/31/2009, according to the reports, the Westfield is fishing "good," while the Deerfield is "just OK."

A day spent fly fishing with a centenarian

Article by Gene Chague
Berkshire Eagle

Recently, I had the opportunity to go trout fishing with local fly fishing legend, Charles Lahey of Pittsfield. We didn't expect much action because we were fishing late morning on a hot July day. We would have had a great time even if we didn't catch any fish, but the fact that we each managed to catch and release one made the trip that much more special.

Charlie is a legend for a couple of reasons. He turned 100 years old last November. His milestone was acknowledged by the national organization of Trout Unlimited (TU) when they did an article about him in their quarterly magazine entitled Trout. Some 140,000 TU members worldwide read about him and saw a picture of him fly casting. His birthday was also acknowledged on the Today Show on TV.

Another reason for his fame is that he created a fly which he named the Mad River Special. It is an orange bodied bucktail fly that he developed to fish the Mad River in Vermont when he and his two brothers Fran and John used to camp and fish there in days gone by. Both brothers have passed beyond the riverbend, but the fly lives on and has been the demise of many a wry trout here in the Berkshires. Fortunately, Charlie practices catch and release, otherwise there would be far fewer trout swimming our waters.

He has been a Taconic TU member for a long time and rarely misses a monthly meeting. Last November, when word got out that he was about to celebrate the big birthday, the chapter purchased a birthday cake and was going to surprise him at the monthly meeting. Wouldn't you know it, that very day Charlie fell and broke his hip. "That's the end of Charlie's fishing days", people said, "That's the end of his independence". (Charlie lost his wife some time ago and he insists on living alone in his second floor apartment with no elevator). Well, he still lives there and this past April attended the monthly TU meeting, had a great meal, a couple of drinks and thanked everyone for the cake.

In June, he went fishing with several TU members. He still couldn't stand on his feet too long so he brought a folding lawn chair and set it up on the bank. While seated he was making beautiful fly casts. Fly fishing is not the type of fishing where you lob out some bait and sit there waiting for a fish to come along and take it. You have to work all of the time, constantly casting and maneuvering the fly to make it look lifelike and worthy of a trout's attention. Charlie still is a master at that. His eyesight is failing a bit these days and cannot see the fish hit, so he relies on the sense of feel to hook and bring them in. That day he hooked up with 10 trout and caught and released 5 of them. We simply watched him fish in awe and admiration.

His hip is improving all of the time and he didn't need the lawn chair on the July fishing trip, preferring instead to stand and move from place to place while fishing. On the way home, we stopped and had lunch with the ROMEOS where he linked up with some old friends. (ROMEIO means Retired Old Men Eating Out. They meet for lunch at a local restaurant weekly). Charlie got home around 2:30 pm, just in time to check on his vegetable garden and get ready for the big band era musical presentation at the Colonial Theater which he was attending with his daughter Andrea Dimassimo that evening. He had a rather full day, wouldn't you say?

If the Good Lord is willing and the creek don't rise (too much), and Charlie can make time in his busy schedule, we hope to go out and outfox a few more trout this summer. There's an old expression that goes something like this: "Go fishing and live longer". Perhaps there is something to it.

Oat-Crusted Trout **(The Scottish way to Hold a Fish Fry)**

(I am not a cook, but I found this recipe in Field & Stream, April, 2008)

Ingredients:

4 whole trout, cleaned	All purpose flour
1 egg, beaten	1 cup rolled oat
1/4 cup milk	2 tablespoons vegetable oil

Whisk the egg and milk together. In a separate bowl, mix the flour with salt and pepper. Rinse the trout in cold water and pat dry with a paper towel. Lightly dredge the trout in the seasoned flour, then in the egg mixture. Roll the fish in the oats, pressing lightly to make sure they adhere.

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat, (you may need to add more oil as you go). Add the trout, in batches, and cook 3-4 minutes per side, or until golden brown. Flip them as gently as possible. Transfer the fish to a warm oven as they are finished. Serves 4.

The article says this dish is best to serve with roasted potatoes or french fries. It also claims - *insists* - that it goes very well with a Samuel Smith Oatmeal Stout, or a glass of single malt scotch. Enjoy!

Massachusetts/Rhode Island Council to Meet in West Springfield

The September meeting of the Massachusetts/Rhode Island Council of Trout Unlimited will be held in West Springfield. The meeting is scheduled for Sunday September 27th from 9:00am - 1:00pm at the West Springfield Lodge of Elks. The meeting will be hosted by our neighbors of The Pioneer Valley Chapter, and MA/RI Council Chairman, Peter Schilling, will preside over the meeting.

Taconic Chapter Board Members

President—Carl Kronberg	Treasurer—Herb Rod
Vice-President—Ron Wojcik	Secretary—Ted Kaufman

Taconic Chapter
2009 - 2010 Calendar of Events

TU Board Meeting,	Sept 17 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner
Membership Meeting,	Sept 24 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Member Social
TU Board Meeting,	Oct 22 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner.
Membership Meeting,	Oct 29 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Author Gary Soucie, <u>Wooly Wisdom</u>
TU Board Meeting,	Dec 3 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner.
Membership Meeting,	Dec 10 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Christmas Party, Auction, Bucket raffle and more TBA
TU Board Meeting,	Jan 10, 2010 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner
Membership Meeting,	Jan 28 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Speaker TBA
TU Board Meeting,	Feb 18 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner.
Membership Meeting,	Feb 25 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Susan Swersky, Housatonic EPA Rep
TU Board Meeting,	March 18 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner.
Membership Meeting,	March 25 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Harrison Brothers. Deerfield Drift Guides
TU Board Meeting,	April 22 - 6PM Misty Moonlight Diner.
Membership Meeting,	April 29 - 5:30PM Bass Water Grill Andrew and Dana. Masswildlife