



Nor'East Chapter Trout Unlimited

DECEMBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

Protecting, conserving and restoring Massachusetts' Northshore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Greetings from the President

It's hard to believe that we're headed into December already, although I've fished for Chinooks and Coho at the Salmon River in Pulaski, NY, in a blizzard of falling snow and for steelhead at Elk Creek near Erie, PA, in similar conditions. I guess it won't be too long now before we see snow falling here... It's steelhead and fly tying season. We've had a good year so far, at our meetings.



Our upcoming meeting on December 7th will be a fellowship event, with pizza, fly tying and good conversation with tips and tricks from the experts. We'll look forward to seeing you at this event! Also please note that our January meeting will be on Monday, January 11th and not on the first Monday of the month as our normal meeting time, by a recent vote of the NETU Board. Speaking of that, we are asking you all to get online and complete a three-question short survey on Survey Monkey for us, regarding whether we should continue to meet on the first Monday of each month or on some other day. It'll take you only about 2 minutes to respond, but we'd like to know what your preferences are in this regard. Thank you! The URL for our survey is: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/WQQ3LQC>. Please respond right away to these questions.

The planning process for our Annual Banquet on March 19 2016 is proceeding apace. All of us need to keep our eyes out for appropriate auction gifts and we need to sell ads for the Banquet booklet as well! We'll need help from everyone in this group effort. We have people to prepare and serve the banquet itself, but we need gifts for the fundraising auction and ads for our banquet booklet. We also need help with the effort to publicize this event more effectively; without better attendance, we cannot fund as many of our cold water conservation projects as we would like; there is certainly no lack of needs to meet, with culverts to be replaced, dams to be removed or fitted with fish ladders, all to enable fish to pass through these currently blocked streams. And we're finding more projects in need of attention all the time. So we'll hope to see you on December 7th at the IRWA headquarters. This month, we'll have good conversations, pizza, fellowship, fly tying and some tips and tricks. Come at 6:00PM for a great meal! The meeting starts at 7:00PM. We'll have a great raffle, as always. Don't miss out! Thank you for your attention and participation.

Fred Jennings
NETU President

DONATIONS? UNWANTED ITEMS?
Contact Bob Thorkildsen if you have
any items for the raffle

Upcoming Events

Dec 5/6 Gift wrapping at the Orvis, Peabody Store. Help raise money for the chapter.

Dec 7 This month's meeting will be our annual holiday pizza party and fly-tying get-together. You don't have to be a fly tier to come. We'll have pizza for all, so bring an appetite and your own holiday cheer.

Jan 11 Kalil Bogdan will talk about fly fishing for Bones in Andros, Bahamas.

Feb 1 Michael Hackney will talk about 3D printed fly reels.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

The Nor'East TU Annual Banquet will again be held at the Ipswich Masonic Hall on **March 19, 2016.**

Have you renewed
your TU membership?

www.tu.org

“A WALK IN THE WOODS” PROJECT UPDATE

Fred Jennings, 30 November 2015

On 8 November 2015, a group of us (Wayne Castonguay, Geof Day, Fred Jennings, Ben Meade, Chett Walsh) met at IRWA HQ at 9:00AM for “A Walk in the Woods” to look for signs of wild native trout in Potter Brook, a small tributary to Howlett Brook which flows into the Ipswich River at Ipswich Road (as Topsfield calls it, though in Ipswich it is called “Topsfield Road”) near the west end of Willowdale Road. Here is what we found.

Our first stop was at the west end of Willowdale Road, just off Ipswich/Topsfield Road, to look at a private dam about 200 yards up Howlett Brook from where it joins the Ipswich River. There was once a fish ladder at that dam that was not replaced when the dam was reinforced about 30 years ago. This fish ladder, with the proper approach, looks like it could be fairly easily replaced; at the moment there is no evident means of fish passage through that point into the small pond that is created by the dam. The pond is surrounded by houses, so the dam may not be a good candidate for removal at this time (though we have not yet ventured to explore any such options with the owner).



We next stopped at a culvert under one of the back roads just below a beaver dam just east of Route 1. That culvert was blocked-in by about 3” mesh screening at its upper end and allowed no upstream fish passage at the lower end due to a one-foot drop from the culvert to the brook. There did not appear to be any likely fish passage at the beaver dam upstream of the culvert. Despite that, there appeared to be signs of (some sort of) fish in the water between the culvert and the dam, based on slight disturbances on the surface of the calm water just upstream. There is a boardwalk bike path up near the beaver dam that we did not walk out to that might give further evidence on whether there is any possibility of fish passage at that beaver dam itself.



“A WALK IN THE WOODS” (CONTINUED)

The third place we stopped was just west of Route 1 in Rowley, where we looked at the culvert under the road which appeared to permit fish passage, although a dam and private pond just below the road appears to inhibit fish passage through that section. There was another private pond just upstream of the road that does not seem to be fed by this brook on the upstream side, and an overflow culvert below this pond is several feet above the brook so there would be no possibility of fish passage into this small pond from below. We then walked up the brook from here, looking for trout or small fish. The terrain was pretty rough and muddy; it was necessary to bushwhack our way between $\frac{1}{4}$ and $\frac{1}{2}$ mile upstream. We did see a few small fish, some about 3” long but most about 1” long, that darted under cover so quickly that there was no way to identify the species.



We regathered at our parked cars at around 11:00AM, after “declaring victory and calling it quits” and then took a few minutes to take a closer look at the water just below the downstream private pond which looked to be overgrown enough to hinder fish passage through that section. Wayne Castonguay, who knew this area in his youth (as he grew up in those woods), said that the stream conditions used to be much more conducive to trout than they are now; he used to see pretty large brook trout spawning in those areas during late autumn.

Conclusions and Implications: I think that if we can find several other brooks in the area that might also hold small native fish – perhaps trout – then the next step, once we have identified some of these prospects, would be to have DFW come up and try to verify the presence of trout in those tributaries through electroshocking.

Fred Jennings

AN IMPORTANT FUND-RAISING OPPORTUNITY FOR NETU AT THE ORVIS SHOP IN PEABODY

John Hansen, the fly fishing manager at the Orvis Shop in Peabody, has offered our chapter a fund-raising opportunity in which chapter members can come and wrap gifts at the Orvis shop (all materials will be provided) with a request for tips and donations to be given to the chapter! Last year, the Cape Ann Animal Shelter did this for one weekend and made almost \$1000.00 in tips and donations. We also might be able to sign up some new members during this process.

Let's do this on Saturday and Sunday from 10:00AM until 6:00PM and see how we do. If the effort is successful, there might be an opportunity to do this every weekend until Christmas, which could make some serious money for NETU's coffers. Please come to the Orvis Store on Saturday or Sunday to help! It'll be fun. Most of life is just showing up...

Fred Jennings
NETU President



TWO VALUABLE IRWA-HOSTED MEETINGS

I attended two valuable and interesting IRWA-hosted meetings in the last 24 hours. On Monday evening, 30 Nov 2015, IRWA held an open meeting at Middleton's Flint Public Library at which a number of speakers described various aspects of the proposed removal of the Bostik Dam across the Ipswich River right in Middleton. It was an informative view of the process of dam removal with respect to the regulatory and testing requirements and other decisions that must be made.

The second meeting was from 8:30AM until about 12:30PM at the Newbury Public Library in Byfield, regarding the P.I.E. (Parker Ipswich Essex) Rivers Restoration Partnership, with a diversity of valuable and informative presentations on the various aspects and examples of the importance of partnership relations in ecological restorative projects. Again, a very worthwhile experience! Immediately following the meeting, a bunch of us ventured over to the Larkin Road Dam on the Parker River – as an example of a current dam removal project in its early stages – and its dysfunctional fish ladder. As I took a few photos of the dam and fish ladder, I thought I'd share them here.

Regarding this subject, there is a Newbury Board of Selectmen meeting on Tuesday evening, December 8th, starting at 7:00PM, at which this dam removal project will be discussed. Those interested should show up, though Eric Hutchins of NOAA suggested that during this relatively delicate phase of the project, no one should behave in any way that might offend or put off these selectmen, though showing up and thereby expressing your interest will likely be quite helpful. Check the website for the Town of Newbury for additional information and details on where this meeting will be held.

Fred Jennings
NETU President



IPSWICH RIVER DAMS UPDATE

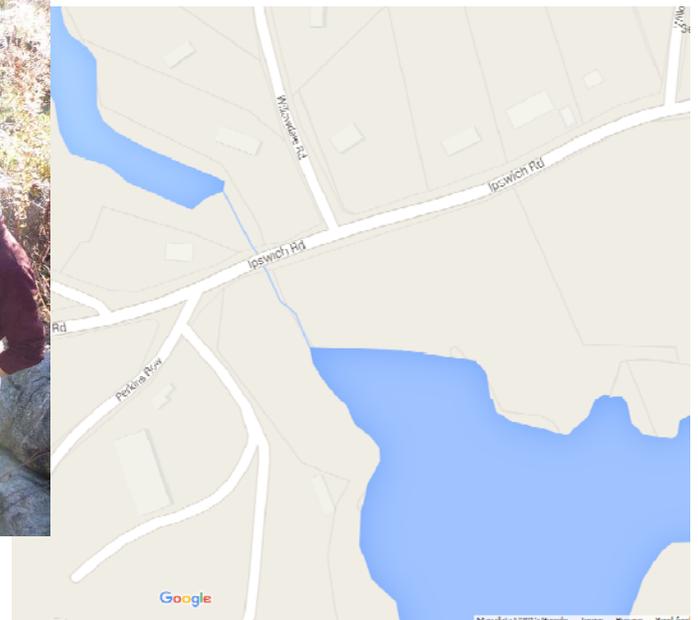
The Peabody Dam on Howlett Brook is the first obstruction and impoundment upstream from the Ipswich. A map snapshot below. Several NETU members visited on Nov. 8. It was a fine day. Some small fish were observed significantly upstream of this dam, however nothing was positively identified beyond a few deer ticks and no fishing occurred. Further investigation is probably a good idea. Wayne Castonguay reported seeing large fish on redds in the fall in the headwaters of Howlett Brook in his boyhood that were easily taken by bow and arrow. Having participated in the exact same thing in my boyhood upstream of a small farm pond in Paxton MA in the mid-sixties, and as I later confirmed the photo was of a large brown trout, I'm coming more-or-less to the general conclusion that the fish that he and his companions harvested back then above a similar small pond might have also been stocked brown trout in their ever failing quest to spawn. Prognosis for further investigation of any changes on the mostly non-functional fishway at Peabody Dam has support from Mass Department of Ecological Restoration however any further discussion is dependent on discussions with the landowner. And as these matters go, it is with great disappointment that we learn from Jim MacDougall that the discussions have gone quite after the passing of a member of the landowner's family. But that doesn't mean we won't keep trying...



Peabody Dam on Howlett Brook



Geof Day



FLYFISHING THE ROARING FORK

Lucky enough to have a couple of vacation days left over at Marriott that needed to be used before the end of 2016, my wife, her sister and sister's husband and I headed out to Aspen, CO for a long weekend of sightseeing, enjoying nature, and maybe – just maybe – I was hoping to squeeze in a couple of hours of fly fishing on the Roaring Fork River and creeks around Aspen and Snowmass. It turns out that fly fishing in the early winter can be quiet exhilarating and rewarding. We really lucked out that weekend: Aspen opened its sky-lifts for the first time in the season since they already had had enough snow and cold to get a number of trails open. We rode the gondola's up to the top and enjoyed drinks in 60deg weather at 12,000ft. The weather stayed absolutely gorgeous: in the mid-50's during the day and mid 20's at night, but clear and no wind. Since I had no idea what the area was like, I got in touch with Aspen Fly Fishing (www.aspenflyfishing.com) and they set me up with Cole, a young guide originally from Texas. Cole drove us out to the

Lower River Road just near Snowmass and Gerbaz way (off rt. 82). Our first spot yielded some large browns 14-16inch mostly on small zebra nymphs and egg patterns. On the way to our next spot we saw browns cleaning the bottom so the females could lay their eggs. Pretty cool if you have never seen that before. Careful not to disturb the redds we moved a quarter mile downstream and fished deep around a large rock in a bend in the river. Lots of great catches and a perfect afternoon in the middle of November. Not many rainbows, but lots of beautiful browns. If you are going: the area is easily accessible and popular to fish.



Catching 12-16" browns

Peter Vandermeulen

Maroon Bells, Aspen, CO



Aspen Sunrise.



Cole from Aspen Fly Fishing caught one of the few rainbows.

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