



# Nor'East Chapter Trout Unlimited

## JANUARY 2016 NEWSLETTER

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

### Greetings from the President

Happy New Year! Wow. It's nice to sense that the days are getting longer, although we've a ways yet to go before we get ready for some more fishing, unless you're one of those lucky souls headed for the Caribbean or even further south for some fishing in South America or New Zealand. Or how about Africa? I remember a trip to South Africa some years ago, fishing for rainbows in the mountains a few hours east of Johannesburg, feeling like it was much like fishing out West until a bunch of baboons came over the ridge behind me, scolding me for being there. It was a strange reorientation!



Our next meeting is not on 4 but rather on 11 January 2016, at which we'll hear about the complex process of removing dams in New England from Michael Chelminski of Stantec Consulting Services Inc. Mr. Chelminski is the engineer-of-record for 11 completed dam removals and has worked on more than 60 dam studies in New England, including dams on coastal streams with sea-run brook trout. The presentation will discuss the ecological benefits of dam removal, ecological and infrastructure benefits of dam removal, resources for dam removal in Massachusetts, and how to identify, develop, and complete dam removal projects. He also has some really nice video footage of about 10 minutes in length from a 2014 trip to Labrador for Atlantic salmon, including shots of 15# fish taking dry flies, hauling a canoe upriver to virgin salmon water, and having a generally fine time with a fly rod, which he will present as well.

Then on 1 Feb 2016, we will hear about 3D printing of fly reels from Michael Hackney, which should also be a very interesting presentation on the use of new technology most likely unfamiliar to most of us!

Thank you all those who responded to our request to fill out our survey on NETU Meeting Days and Times. We will have a discussion of this at our business meeting and make a decision. The outcome will be reported in our next newsletter...

There has been a great deal of activity throughout the month of December on the Kinder Morgan TGP-NED Pipeline project proposal, and we will be reporting on those discussions and developments at our upcoming meeting as well.

(Continued on next page...)

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

### Upcoming Events

**Jan 11** Michael Chelminski (Santech) will discuss dam removal in Main and salmon fishing in Labrador.

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

**Mar 7** Meeting will be at the Orvis store in Peabody with Michael Brukada.

**Apr 4** Kalil Bogdan will talk about fly fishing for Bones in Andros, Bahamas.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

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

Have you renewed your TU membership?

[www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org)

## “GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT (CONTINUED)

The planning process for our Annual Banquet on 19 March 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 passages. And we're finding more projects in need of our attention all the time.

Our meetings currently take place on the first Monday of each month, starting at 7:00PM but if you come at 6:00PM you will have a great meal for a donation of just \$5.00, the best deal anywhere! This month, we'll revert to our normal and superb arrangement of having one of our own present a great meal for us! It really is “the best deal in town” and you'll never find a better meal for a contribution of merely \$5.00 anywhere... We'll have some good conversations over dinner, and then a great presentation followed by an interesting meeting on current developments and undertakings. Please be there (or be square)! We look forward to seeing you on Monday, January 11th, at IRWA headquarters, located at 143 County Road (off Route 1A on the right just south of Ipswich and Cable Gardens, right after you start down from the top of that hill), and at our 2016 meetings as well!

So we'll hope to see you on January 11th at the IRWA headquarters. 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



Photo: Salmon Fishing in Pulaski, NY. Fred Jennings

## SALMON FISHING AT THE SALMON RIVER IN PULASKI, NY OCTOBER 2015

A good friend and I went to Pulaski from his home in Schuylerville, NY (near Saratoga about a half hour north of Albany) to fish for salmon at the Salmon River. We fished upriver from the hatchery there in the Fly Fishing Only section. Though the salmon run was poor this year, there were quite a few salmon in that section where we've had good luck before in October. A lot of the salmon were beginning to show white fungus (those ones were easy to see!), but there were also a few fresh ones in the mix, and I was told that someone caught a steelhead though it seemed a bit early for them in that upriver section. We fished about a half mile below the dam, which blocks any further fish passage.

The first day it snowed on us, and there was some snow on the ground just south of Pulaski; they'd apparently had about 6-8 inches of snow just south of there along I-81 the day before (lake effect, I suspect). We caught a lot of fish that day, and by dusk they were moving and got easier to catch. We were both using 6 to 7 foot 2-weight rods for these big salmon, and they were a lot of fun when hooked. The second day was still cold but sunny, and the peak moment of the trip for me was when I hooked what must have been a big Coho salmon that took off downriver through a rapid while throwing itself completely out of the water repeatedly during this run of about 200 yards before tangling my line on a rock way downriver and thereby breaking me off. I had to wade all the way down there just to retrieve my tangled line!

I took a few photos of my friend fishing, a bit downriver from where we fished most, during a slack time. I didn't take many photos while the fishing was hot. Sorry, but there were too many "distractions"!

**Fred Jennings**  
**NETU President**



## STEELHEAD FISHING IN ELK CREEK AND LOCAL ENVIRONS AT ERIE, PA – 24-25 OCTOBER AND 19-22 NOVEMBER 2015

I was driving back from Cleveland, OH on 24-25 October and decided to check out the fishing. I looked at Rocky River just west of Cleveland – where I'd had some great steelheading in the past, but during the springtime – and the river was very low and clear so I didn't wet a line. On my way east toward Erie, PA, I also looked at the Grande River and Conneaut Creek, which were also low and clear. There was someone fishing at Conneaut Creek over holding fish in a pool, but he wasn't encouraging so I kept going. I did suit up and try Elk Creek in the Route 20 bridge area, but there were more anglers than fish in the one pool where the path to the river ends, and so I walked down below the bridge to find no fish at all in any of the transitional water. In the two holding pools I fished down there, the fish politely swam out of the way of my fly when I drifted it past them. I think they were rather familiar with the ritual in which I was engaged... The next morning I tried another spot somewhat downstream of the Route 20 bridge, and despite lots of anglers (the usual case) saw very few fish and I don't think I caught a one, though I had a few good shots at fish and hooked one or two of them. So then I headed on home, hoping for some rain in that general area.



My friend got in touch with me in mid-November with the news that rain was expected that week so I headed for his place again on November 18th and we headed westward on the 19th for Erie, PA via Oak Orchard Creek about halfway between Rochester and Buffalo, NY. We fished Oak Orchard Creek for just a few hours before dusk on November 19th, and I hooked three brown trout, having one on for just a few seconds, another for a bit longer, and the last one – quite a nice fish – until I had it almost to hand and then the hook came out. The last fish jumped several times and gave me a bit of a thrill. That was all blind fishing because the water was pretty turbid. At dark, we headed for Erie,

PA, arriving there at about 9-10PM to our hotel in Sterrettania just west of Erie. On Friday morning, November 20th, we took a look at Elk Creek in Sterrettania but it looked pretty barren, so we drove over to Folly's End Campground a bit downriver of there and talked to Jim Phillips (campground owner; I've stayed there in my camper many times and he knows me well) who said that there were some fish in his area but they were spread out and hard to find. So we went upriver from Folly's to try our luck. We caught a few fish under the Route 98 bridge, and worked our way over a mile upstream but there were very few fish seen or caught there.

My friend Dick caught one and I hooked about six and landed 2 or 3 of them. When we got back down to the Route 98 bridge, I hooked a really nice steelhead, about 30" long and bright as a newly-minted dime, and it ran downriver about 150 yards before the fly broke off while I was landing it. What a beautiful fish!

It was so late by then that instead of going anywhere else, we quit early (at around 3:00PM) and had a rest and then went out to dinner and to a movie in Erie. The next day, on Saturday, November 21st, we checked out some of the water at the Route 20 bridge and saw no fish at all so we left there pretty quickly without doing much of any fishing.



## STEELHEAD FISHING IN ELK CREEK AND LOCAL ENVIRONS AT ERIE, PA – 24-25 OCTOBER AND 19-22 NOVEMBER 2015

Instead, we ventured to 16-Mile Creek in North East, PA and fished up from Route 5 (near Lake Erie) to where there's a falls that blocks fish passage (except perhaps in very high water), so the fish bunch up in a couple of pools that are always surrounded by eager anglers. I hooked a couple of fish in the lower of the two pools, and tried the upper one after a few people left. Dick hooked 1-2 there as well, but we didn't stay very long. We took a look at 20-Mile Creek but it didn't look very good so we thought we'd do some exploring so we took a look at Chatauqua Creek in western NY state, and then tried a bit of fishing in Canadaway Creek but neither saw nor caught anything, and drove further east to Silver Creek (low and clear; we just looked at it) and to



Cattaraugus Creek which was running pretty high and very turbid (which is almost always the case) and were told by a guy who was quitting who fished there regularly (near Gowanda) that, despite about 20 trucks parked there and many fishermen in the river, he'd not seen any fish caught and he hadn't caught anything either. So we didn't try fishing there; it was getting late and we headed back to Erie and quit early again, to have dinner and go to the movies again. The next day, we decided to leave but to check out Cattaraugus Creek again in the Gowanda area; it was flowing just as hard and there were only 2 trucks parked there where there were 20 parked the day before, so we opted to head east instead of bothering to fish there. We caught a few fish, but the fishing was slow. There was no rain as predicted, either, which certainly would have helped things a lot.

The thing I like most about Elk Creek and the other PA steelhead creeks is that they are all shale-based and therefore are pretty shallow and clear (save for right after a big rainstorm), so they involve mostly sight-fishing for big steelhead in small water. It's always crowded when the fishing is good, but the fishing can be terrific especially after a good shot of rain. Elk Creek takes a few days to clear if it clouds up, but the shorter streams around Erie seem to clear up pretty fast. There was one time – about 7 years ago – when we stuck around, waiting for Elk Creek to clear, and when it started to do so, it was like I-95 (Route 128) around Boston at the height of rush hour. The fish were all bright, fresh in the river, aggressively taking the fly. I had one fish come 15 feet across a pool to slam my large black nymph. From about noon until it got too dark at about 5:00PM, my guess is that I hooked about 250 fish but landed only a third of them. Until I changed my tippets from 7 and 9 pound test up to 12 and 16 pound test, I didn't land any. That was a memorable day!



Well, fishing is all about hope. Getting to Elk Creek from here is about a 12-14 hour drive (each way); that requires a whole lot of hope... Ten years ago, Elk Creek was a really fabulous fishery, and fish could be found everywhere, both in the holding and transitional water (where they would readily take a well-presented fly). In the last seven years, I've seen this fishery in a steep decline, just like our striper fishery here. There is no clear reason for this decline, but it's very sad. I still love going there, but our expectations are not like before. My friend Dick is reluctant to do this again, though I'll try to persuade him to go once again come the spring. We will see. Hope is the engine of effort. I will go there again. I love those magnificent fish...

**Fred Jennings**  
**NETU President**



Steelhead in Erie, PA. Fred Jennings



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