



# Nor' East Chapter

## December 2022 Newsletter

### The smallest deed is better than the greatest intentions.

Dear fellow Nor'East Chapter Trout Unlimited Members,

At NETU's October meeting, a discussion was held about what types of activities Chapter members would like to see NETU pursue. The discussion was lively and enlightening. I am truly thankful for those in attendance who candidly shared their views.



Ben Shea and Bob Torkildsen. Meade photo

A point of view that that was widely shared was that the Chapter should organize and implement more activities that accomplish some good, can be easily promoted, that are welcoming for all Chapter members, and that take place outside of our usual evening meeting times and in locations in the NETU region. In short, activities like **stream cleanups!**

Towards that end, NETU volunteers met on the banks of the Mill River on the Newbury/Rowley town line next to Route 1 on Saturday, November 19th. NETU has completed stream cleanups here in past years, and I am pleased to report that this year's cleanup was successful as well. A wide assortment of the usual roadside refuse was pulled from the woods and riverbanks. **Ben Shea, Carl Soderland, Bob Torkildsen, and James Goodhart** helped organize and met up to help. Thanks all! Spending a few hours on a Saturday morning collecting trash from the riverbank and roadside just made us all feel "good", didn't it?!



James Goodhart, Dr. Soderland, Ben Meade. Torkildsen photo

My two daughters (Adelaide, age 6

Meeting  
Dec 5th  
6:00 PM

Speaker at 7PM

Bucket Raffle 8 PM

At the Ipswich River  
Watershed HQ  
143 County Road  
Ipswich

In Person or Join  
Zoom Meeting

[https://  
us02web.zoom.us/  
j/88574311544?  
pwd=RHVlb295R0  
cvQ0RYWW5XZ3  
NwM3lwQT09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88574311544?pwd=RHVlb295R0cvQ0RYWW5XZ3NwM3lwQT09)

Meeting ID:885  
7431 1544  
Passcode: 232571

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and Lillian, age 4) also came along with me for the cleanup. They especially enjoyed using the grabber tools and happily enjoyed the "scavenger hunt" 😊. I was more than happy to explain to both of them on the drive home why it is important to A) Not litter in the first place and B) Chip in to help out when needed.



Ben Meade with Adelaide and Lillian. Torkildsen photo

I am pleased to report that **more of these activities are in the plans.** If you know of an area in need of some trash pickup in the region - especially in and around our local waters - please reach out. NETU is always looking to grow our active membership and we welcome everyone who wants to get involved!

As always, please don't hesitate to drop me a line - I would be happy to hear from you. Hope to see you on December 5th!

Ben Meade, President

## Your Action Needed!

We need bodies and minds to attend an informational meeting on the Ipswich Mills Dam to be held at the **Ipswich Town Hall on December 14, 5 PM to 7 PM.** In keeping with a TU philosophy of allowing rivers to flow freely. The removal of the Ipswich Mills Dam would open up the Ipswich River to a potential sea-run trout fishery that would increase the health of the river and give us more fish to catch! So for the cost of a couple of hours, taken from sitting on the couch, why not run down to the Ipswich Town Hall and learn about the issues effecting the river, the Dam and your fish. The meeting is organized by the Ipswich River Watershed Assoc. Your attendance is needed and appreciated.

## Help! Banquet Items Needed

Attention ALL MEMBERS. We are excited to announce that on **March 11th at Danversport**, we will resume our in-person fundraising **banquet**. We need your HELP with bringing in DONATIONS for the Banquet. Those of you that have previously attended know what to expect. For those of you who have never before attended, we encourage you to do so. It is a great afternoon/evening of seeing old friends and meeting new ones. And, for getting some great deals on gear and gifts! The items raffled or auctioned off will be: approximately 50+ bucket items, 12+ gift certificates to stores and restaurants, 24+ silent auction items and 10+ live auction items. Everything from flies, gifts, fishing gear, fly reels and rods, guided trips, trips to

# Ipswich Mills Dam Project

## Drop-in Event

Wednesday, December 14  
5pm - 7pm  
Meeting Room A  
Ipswich Town Hall

Learn how will dam removal affect

- erosion and flood risk
- legacy and history of downtown Ipswich
- the aesthetics of the river
- the Town budget
- fish and wildlife habitat and migration
- water quality

the **photo safari trip to Africa**. We encourage you to also think about the non-fishing items, items for everyone, for the ladies, for children, etc. Lastly, we are seeking add sponsors for the banquet flyer.

With the attached link you will find a form letter to give to donors to solicit prizes (501C3 number included), the form to place an advertisement in the Banquet Program, a thank you template and an excel spreadsheet of who has reached out to what donors from the last banquet prior to COVID in March of 2020. You may recall our last banquet was probably the last gathering you attended before the pandemic. We look forward to seeing you all there!

Thanks, Josh Rownd

## TU attends local conference on the rivers of the Great Marsh, the Parker, Ipswich and Essex.

A report by Fred Jennings, NETU past president, current NETU Board member, and NETU Representative on the PIE Rivers Partnership Steering Committee.

Hello, NETU chapter members!

I attended this meeting, and was delighted to find our President, Ben Meade, our recent president, Josh Rownd (who also succeeded me as Vice Chair of the MA State TU Council), and our new NETU board member, the recently retired Dr. Carl Soderland, also in attendance. It was so nice to see them in three dimensions instead of just on my computer screen through our many Zoom meetings, though that's always a pleasure too...



I took some fairly careful notes at this meeting, as NETU representative to the PIE Rivers Partnership Steering Committee, because I thought it would be helpful for NETU Newsletter readers to become more aware of these efforts. I have to start with a confession: when I read the above presentation titles, my reaction was that these talks didn't sound very interesting, but I attended anyway. I've been at most of these Annual Meetings during the last 5 years or so, and they've always been fascinating and very informative. I'm happy to tell you all that - despite my initial misgivings - this year was excellent too!!! And well worth taking notes for you...

Introduction - **Ross Povenmire, Chair of PIE Rivers Steering Committee**

Ross gave us an informative overview of the PIE Rivers Partnership and our efforts to protect the Parker – Ipswich – Essex River watersheds by joining up a wide cross-section of interested and concerned local conservation organizations.

### **PIE Rivers Partnership Update - Erin Bonney Casey, IRWA Staff Member**

Erin is the primary administrator of the PIE Rivers Partnership, and she gave us an overview of the structure and purpose of this collaborative effort, which is divided into four working groups designated and described below:

1. River and Stream Continuity: This working group prioritizes aquatic barriers and stream crossings, and works to remove barriers to migration of species and riverine or tidal flows;
2. Water Conservation: This working group works to incentivize water conservation through regulatory changes and public outreach, and to provide tools for proper stewardship of environmental resources;
3. Water Quality Management: This working group identifies water quality problems in our regional area, addresses estuarine sources of pollution, and works to upgrade stormwater systems by various means;
4. Land Use: This working group promotes low impact development (LID) efforts, works to improve land use bylaws in local communities, and to provide stewardship tools to them as well.

### **Water Flow and Drought in the Parker River - Rob Stevenson, Parker River Clean Water Association (PRCWA)**

Dr. Rob Stevenson offered a plethora of detailed research findings on the flow rates over time in the Parker River, as a means for us to understand the situation for this river, showing highly variable flow rates over time in this river, ranging from lows of well below 0.1 cubic feet per second (cfps) to as high as 116 cfps. Interestingly, drought conditions in the Parker River have become much more frequent and longer lasting over time. Interestingly, to provide perspective on what these flow rates mean, 1 cfps = 7.5 gallons/second → enough to provide for the needs of 12,000 – 13,000 people per day. The point is that the town of Georgetown draws all of its water needs from the Parker River; when flow rates are high, for example during the wintertime, this is no problem. However, when flow rates are very low, such as during summer drought conditions, there is simply not enough water to provide for the needs of its citizenry without imposing stringent conservation measures, as Rob Stevenson’s data made clear.

### **Municipal Codes: Conduits for Stormwater Management and Climate Resiliency - Cece Gerstenbacher, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)**

Cece Gerstenbacher provided an enlightening and informative review of efforts underway to prepare our municipal systems for stormwater runoff issues in an age of increasingly virulent storms and violent weather events of various kinds. She began by distinguishing “natural” vs. “developed” landscapes in terms of their water retention capacities. Natural landscapes have 50% infiltration, 10% runoff, and 40% evapotranspiration through plants, while developed landscapes have only 15% infiltration, with 55% runoff, and 30% evapotranspiration. As a result, during periods of high intensity precipitation, stormwater

runoff issues become of great concern. These can be usefully managed with the installation of rain barrels, rain gardens, green roofs, permeable pavers and bioswales.

She then turned to the Mass. DEP MS4 Municipal Assistance 2021-2022 Grant Program Award process, which involves a statewide effort to require towns to review their bylaws to make them more responsive and resilient to climate change and environmental concerns. The Bylaws Review Process involves a number of discrete stages: (a) the identification of liaison people to work with local communities; (b) the identification of local codes and bylaws then to be reviewed; (c) the review of those codes and bylaws; (d) the preparation of reports on each community examined; (e) liaison meetings with community members; and (f) the sharing of findings with the public once all these other stages are completed.

She discussed the use of the Massachusetts Audubon Bylaw Review Tool, which has five major goals. She then summarized the reports supporting proposed bylaw changes in the towns of Boxford, West Newbury, Groveland, Ipswich and Essex, followed by a review of regional findings with respect to Open Space Preservation and Development. She discussed the frequency of inconsistencies that they found in local bylaws and regulations where, for example, low impact development (LID) issues are mentioned but without any imposition of explicit standards to guide actual efforts, and instances where general qualitative proposals were not clearly tied to explicit quantifiable measurement standards. More information about this effort can be found at: <https://pie-rivers.org/portfolio-item/municipal-stormwater-codes-a-regional-review-for-northeast-massachusetts/>

She also addressed local efforts to use EEA Climate Resiliency Funds to work more specifically with four local communities: Andover, Boxford, Georgetown and North Andover, with the purpose of reviewing their town codes and bylaws to propose and implement needed changes. She went through lists of prioritized changes and implementation plans for each of these four towns.

### **Expanding Water Quality Monitoring in the PIE River Basins - Ann Witzig and George Comiskey of the Parker River Clean Water Association (PRCWA) and Ryan O'Donnell of the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA)**

Ann Witzig started with the question: WHY? What is the purpose of monitoring water quality? There were a number of answers based on how these collected data are used: (a) the creation of these water quality data; (b) uploading these data to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) website; (c) sharing these data with the general public, such as via EPA sites such as one for the Ipswich zip code: [www.mywaterway.epa.gov/community/01938/overview](http://www.mywaterway.epa.gov/community/01938/overview), which is typical of the information collected for other local communities in Northeastern Massachusetts.

She then discussed the Mass. State program called AquaQAPP (where QAPP stands for Quality Assurance Project Plans) which is aimed to assist ongoing efforts to improve water quality throughout this state. More can be learned about this program at: <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/use-aquaqapp-to-plan-your-monitoring-project>. They presented this as a Citizen Science process to assure proper and accurate data collection and management to assure quality throughout every stage of such efforts.

George Comiskey then described PRCWA's Summer Program of water quality monitoring, where they currently have 17 stations (with 4 of them new ones) to measure dissolved oxygen (DO), conductivity and water temperature. They are also hoping to get some new equipment next year so they can also monitor phosphates and other aquatic chemicals in these watersheds. They used to collect these data on a monthly basis, but have recently increased the frequency of their summertime water quality data collection

efforts to every two weeks. They described how they enter real-time data and site photos onto a map to be found on the PRCWA website (cf. <http://www.parker-river.org/>) which has a wealth of other relevant information available.

In this context, he talked about Story Maps which are addressed to answering questions about “How Is My Waterway?” For example, dissolved oxygen (DO) is absolutely critical to the survival of living aquatic organisms needed for the maintenance of ecological health, under MA State standards that call for DO measures above 60% to pass this threshold. They indicated that their recent efforts on 14 August 2022 showed 6 sites passed and 11 other sites failed to meet this standard. The water quality information that they collect is posted on their PRCWA website, their Facebook page, and sent to the Ipswich Local News for reportage and public consumption. They have also recently installed some new water quality monitoring equipment (including HOBO sensors) in the Mill River, about which very little has previously been known.

Ryan O’Donnell next reported briefly on the water quality monitoring by IRWA on the Ipswich River, where they have 24 sites for their monthly monitoring for conductivity and chlorides; 18 sites for their biweekly monitoring for bacteria and other nutrients; 4 sites for continuous monitoring for DO and 5 sites for continuous monitoring for water temperature. All of their results from this research can be found on the IRWA website: <https://www.ipswichriver.org/>.



### **Apple Street Culvert Replacement and Roadway Elevation Project - Peter Phippen, Merrimack Valley Planning Commission (MVPC)**

Peter Phippen finished up this series of presentations by talking about this project on Apple Street that was initiated due to a flooding event in 2018. First, the 30” culvert there was undersized and therefore unable to handle the water flows during that storm, so Apple Street flooded in a low section near Southern Avenue a short distance south of the center of town and the causeway in Essex. What this project is meant to achieve is to raise the roadway 15” to 30” in an 800-foot-long section and replace this inadequate pipe culvert with an installed three-sided box culvert of significantly larger dimensions with a naturalized streambed under it. They also want to widen this section of road by two feet. The permitting process for this project is extremely complex because it takes place in an environmentally sensitive area on a

scenic public roadway. The cost of these improvements are estimated at \$4.5 million and a successful outcome might take as long as 7-8 years to be reached. The discussion turned to the relevance of the Essex Causeway, which also needs eventually to be raised to prevent its flooding at extremely high “spring tides” and storm surges, and to cope with the prospects of local sea level rise, but the Apple Street project will not have any effect on causeway issues. In 2018, there were apparently two big storms only two weeks apart that flooded the causeway and some of the local businesses there, and Apple Street is the most convenient substitute route from one side of Essex to the other when the causeway is too flooded for

traffic use, so these improvements to Apple Street are needed to keep that alternative open. There are some local neighborhood objections to this project, due to resistance against widening the road in this section because it might increase traffic speeds or hinder local residents' ability to walk safely in this section of roadway.

All in all, this was a valuable meeting with very informative presentations. I'd recommend that everyone give some consideration to attending this Annual Meeting of the PIE Rivers Partnership when it takes place in December 2023!

Thanks for reading this!

## TU Nor'East Active Members have Bug Outing



Ken Washburn, Michael O'Neill, Kalil Boghdan. Torkildsen photo

Michael O'Neill, Kalil Boghdan, Kenny Washburn and Bob Torkildsen volunteered to help the Ipswich River watershed Assoc. (IRWA) with their macro-invertebrate study of Fish Brook in Boxford and Boston Brook in Middleton on November 18. Hardy folks, pitching in and getting it done.

IRWA has been monitoring insects and other inverts since 1988 as a method to monitor water quality. As you might expect, there has been a decline in some species. Those that are sensitive to pollution like road salt. During a thaw in the winter after the roads have been treated with salt, the salinity of the river can spike. This spike does affect larva and eggs in the stream and will cause

mortality. A couple of the mayflies are disappearing from the Ipswich particularly the *Paraleptophlebia sp. now Neoleptophlebia*. This would be a Iron Blue Dun pattern, or Blue Quill.

## Speaker Series September through May

Compiled by Kalil Boghdan

I am pleased to announce the guest speaker series for our chapter for the upcoming year. The speakers have a wealth of knowledge in fly fishing and also in the conservation of our natural resources. It is our hope that you will either attend our in-person meetings or tune in via Zoom. Except for September, our meetings are held on the first Monday of the month at the Ipswich River Watershed Association Headquarters located at 143 County Road, Ipswich, MA 01938. Our evenings begin at 6:00pm with a wonderful dinner prepared by our resident chefs. The speaker portion of the evening begins at 7:00pm followed by the board of director's meeting shortly after the speaker's presentation at around 8:10pm.

Several of the speakers for this year are traveling considerable distances to present to us in person. Your attendance and support of your TU chapter and its endeavors will truly enhance its mission.

We look forward to seeing you at our meetings.

**September 12, 2022:** Several members of the NETU Board of Directors will share their fly fishing experiences that they participated in this past summer. This should prove to a fun and informative evening of presentations.

October 3, 2022: Ben Gahagan, Diadromous Fish Specialist for the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. Ben will share information regarding the state of herring runs in the Northeast part of Massachusetts. No show. In his place a round-table discussion between Board of Directors of the Nor'East Chapter of TU and its members on how to increase membership involvement with the chapter.

**November 7, 2022:** Ben Gahagan, Diadromous Fish Specialist for the Massachusetts Division of Marine Fisheries. Ben will share information regarding the state of herring runs in the Northeast part of Massachusetts.

**December 5, 2022:** "In Search of Wild and Native Trout in the US" by Dave Parry. His presentation documents his travels out west from New Mexico to California to Wyoming. There are about 25 subspecies of Cutthroat Trout, Rainbows, Redbands, and Golden Trout. Each has adapted and evolved to be a perfect match for their environment. The decline of these beautiful species and, in many cases, their return are amazing stories. The efforts of the federal and state governments, TU, WNTI, and many other groups have been Herculean.

**January 9, 2023:** Carl Soderland, fly fishing enthusiast, fly-tyer, and current member of the Nor'East Chapter of TU. Carl will share his week-long experience fly fishing for trout on the Smith River in Montana.

**February 6, 2023:** Christopher Jackson, fly fishing guide on the Deerfield River, the Swift River, and other rivers in the western part of Massachusetts. He was a board member of the Deerfield River Watershed Chapter of TU. He authored an article in the August/September issue of the Fly Fisherman magazine. The article is titled, Going Wild. Chris will talk about the efforts to create optimal river and environmental conditions on the Deerfield River to promote and support a wild brown trout population. More information to follow.

**March 6, 2023:** Ethan Bourque, an associate of Concord Outfitters of West Concord, MA. He is also a fly-fishing guide, youth fly fishing instructor, and an environmentalist. Topic to be determined

**April 3, 2023:** Brenda Sears, saltwater striper guide on Cape Cod, Registered Maine Guide in the Rangeley area, fly fishing instructor, author of numerous articles, board member of several major charitable organizations, and in the off season, a traveler in her motorhome fly fishing around the country. Topic to be determined.

**May 1, 2023:** Art Howe, current member of the Nor'East Chapter of TU will speak on the important topic of Fishing Safety. Details to follow. Free food!!

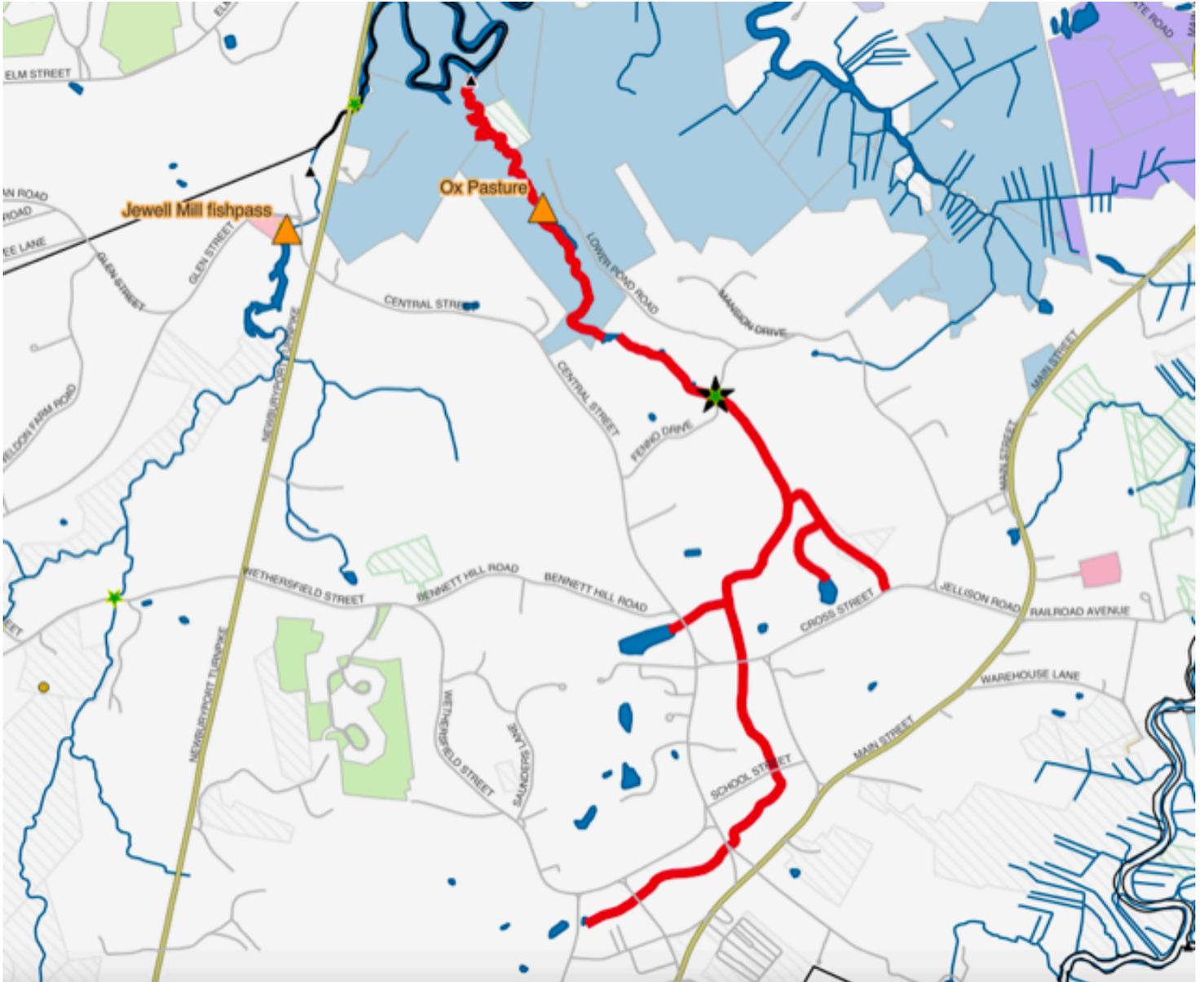
## Parting shot - Success!!



Patrick Saunders photo of river herring in Ox Pasture Brook, 2022

TU active member, Patrick Saunders of Rowley, discovered a new breeding population of river herring in the Ox Pasture Brook in Rowley this past summer. This is really big news. The dam at the head of the tide for this brook had blocked fish passage for decades. It was removed in 2013 by the Mass. Division of Ecological Restoration with MassWildlife. TU Nor'East helped restore the surrounding site with plantings to stabilize the banks in 2013.

And now we have fish!! "Unbuild it and they will come."



Ox Pasture Brook in Rowley, Orange triangle is old dam site. Green star Brook trout eDNA 2018. Herring spotted between the two.

## Volunteer Training

Within the TU national web page are some very nice instructional presentations on how to become a TU leader. If you wish to volunteer, you could find some help by visiting the Volunteer Tacklebox page at: <https://www.tu.org/get-involved/volunteer-tacklebox/>

## Board Members

The health of the Chapter is dependent on mindful people who make contributions to what we do, which is develop friendships with people who like to fish, make improvements to fish habitat and try to address

some of the degradation to cold water fisheries. We are lucky to have these folk volunteer their time and expertise. Their collective effort is what puts good programs in front of you every month and generates the successes in restoration and advocacy that garners respect from the public.

**The full slate:**

<b>James Goodhart</b>	<b>4/2/2019 – 4/2/2022</b>
<b>Mike O’Neill</b>	<b>4/2/2019 – 4/2/2022</b>
<b>Bob Torkildsen</b>	<b>4/2/2019 – 4/2/2022</b>
<b>David Walsh</b>	<b>4/2/2019 - 4/2/2022</b>
<b>Josh Rownd</b>	<b>1/1/2020 – 1/1/2023</b>
<b>Ben Meade (President)</b>	<b>1/1/2020 – 1/1/2023</b>
<b>Ben Shea (Vice President)</b>	<b>1/1/2020 – 1/1/2023</b>
<b>(Open Seat) (Secretary)*</b>	<b>1/1/2020 - 1/1/2023</b>
<b>Peter Vandermeulen (Treasurer)</b>	<b>1/1/2020 – 1/1/2023</b>
<b>Fred Jennings</b>	<b>4/5/2021 – 4/5/2024</b>
<b>Carl Soderland</b>	<b>4/5/2021 – 4/2/2024</b>
<b>Geoff Klane</b>	<b>4/5/2021 – 4/2/2024</b>
<b>Floyd Maker</b>	<b>4/5/2021 – 4/2/2024</b>
<b>Spencer Belson (Director-At-Large)</b>	<b>4/5/2021 – 4/5/2022</b>