



Nor' East Chapter

January 2023 Newsletter

The Elusive Brook Trout

Dear fellow Nor'East Chapter Trout Unlimited Members,

Happy January, and Happy New Year as we welcome 2023!

There is nothing like a walk in the woods to get some exercise, fresh air, and quiet moments to think and ponder. With the goals of attaining all three, I hiked a favorite mountain of mine in NH last Friday, December 30th. This mountain is curiously - and uniquely - named. Due to the shape of its summit cone when viewed from afar, early European settlers named it after the distinctive tuft of feathers on the head of a bird species in their native England. This mountain also helps to form a watershed divide.



Photo: Ben Meade

from rock to rock across these streams, my thoughts inevitably wander to their tiny trout inhabitants. My thoughts usually turn to questions, and the questions to more questions. Without fail, I always find myself wondering: Are those trout populations related? Did both trout populations in both streams evolve from a common ancestor population at the end of the last continental glaciation? Or were they populated separately by trout that had moved upstream into the headwater reaches of each individual stream? Are there visible morphological differences in the appearances of the trout in each

The hiking trail to approach this mountain starts in the watershed of the Salmon Falls/ Piscataqua River and extends into the watershed of the Merrimack River. Two tiny, first order freestone streams drain the slopes of this mountain - one stream to each major river's watershed. Both streams contain beautiful native brook trout. While stepping

Meeting

Jan 9th

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/81280998254?
pwd=b1F6U1FuS0l
VNnVScmM4VWp
BS0x5dz09](https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81280998254?pwd=b1F6U1FuS0lVNnVScmM4VWpBS0x5dz09)

Meeting ID:812
8099 8254

Passcode:472721
Contact Info:

President Ben
Meade :
[Benjamin.K.Mead
@gmail.com](mailto:Benjamin.K.Mead@gmail.com)

Newsletter
submissions:
Jim MacDougall,
[info@tunoreast.or
g](mailto:info@tunoreast.org)

stream's population? Have humans played a role at all, moving trout from one stream to another? If so, why and when? Have hatchery-reared trout found their way into either stream? Some of these questions may indeed be answerable. However, in thinking about these trout, I find I am content in knowing that the answer remains a mystery to me and will likely always remain so. With every hike of this mountain (15 times and counting) I always enjoy knowing that the trout are "there", separated by a watershed divide that has major implications for the end point of rainfall and snowmelt on each side of its ridgecrest.

Speaking of watersheds, we have reached a truly watershed moment in the ongoing efforts to restore some of our local waterways in northeastern MA. As was announced in mid-December, the Ipswich River Watershed Association, the MA Division of Marine Fisheries, and the MA Division of Ecological Restoration were awarded federal grant funding (\$3.4M) through NOAA and an anonymous foundation (\$1.14M). Projects to be advanced with this funding include the Larkin Dam removal project, the South Middleton Dam removal project, Howlett Brook fishway installation project, the Willowdale Dam natural fishway bypass project, and the Ipswich Mills Dam removal project. Exciting, monumental news for sure! There are likely opportunities for NETU to be further involved with these projects as things progress. More to come!

As always, please don't hesitate to drop me a line - I would be happy to hear from you. Hope to see you on January 9th at IRWA when we will be fortunate to hear from Dr. Carl Soderland about his excursion on the Smith River in Montana!

Ben Meade, President

(Editor's note: I attended a Southern New England Chapter of American Fisheries Society meeting in 2010. A Phd student at UConn gave a presentation on the DNA of brook trout in headwater streams in NW Conn. It did offer some answers to Ben's questions. I am trying to obtain an abstract of the presentation for the next Newsletter.)

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 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

Dams Hurt Wildlife

This is a letter to the editor of the Ipswich Local News. We print it here with the permission of the author.

To the editor:

Here at the Ipswich River Watershed Association (IRWA) we appreciate the Local News coverage of the Ipswich Mills Dam Project and the forum it provides to have open and public dialogue within our community. IRWA is the voice of the river, and our mission is to ensure enough clean water for people, fish and wildlife, now and for generations to come, which is why we are passionate about this project. It's no secret that we are in favor of removing the dam.

The dam is old, outdated infrastructure that hasn't had a functional use since the 1930's. More importantly, it creates an unnatural barrier - specifically a hard stop to the head of the tide. We are in favor of removing this artificial barrier and repairing it to a natural and free flowing river once again.



Damless Ipswich Mills, composite by Jim MacDougall

Dam removal is not just an issue in Ipswich. Across the country communities have been choosing to take down dams. In a publication on dam removal guidance for municipalities, the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environment (EEOA) states that dams "...big or small, generally impede the flow of water and obstruct the continuity of a riverine system. They also decrease oxygen levels and increase

temperature in the water, obstruct the downstream movement of silt and nutrients, change river bottom characteristics, and alter the timing and quantity of river flow."

100% of dam removals improve the ecology of the river.

As we saw in the recent letter to the editor about the dam, people are reasonably concerned about this project's impact on wildlife. It's easy to say that the current dammed condition doesn't "need" to be restored. Things have been good in our lifetime, so why do we need this change?

The reality is things are not good. A rich diversity of wildlife inhabits the impoundment upstream in spite of the dam - not because of it. For every blue heron you see majestically posted up by the banks, a mother mallard gets separated from her brood who can't fly over the dam.

For every turtle you see hop off a log as you paddle by, there's five that get caught in the fish ladder trying to escape the rising tide below the dam. And let's not forget the millions of tiny invertebrate bugs that serve as the base of the food chain for all the wildlife that we know and love. These tiny living

creatures go over the dam by the thousands every hour and cannot survive the abrupt ecological shift from freshwater to saltwater.

The notion that the current ecosystem upstream of the dam will be irrevocably damaged by dam removal is not true. We encourage you to visit any free-flowing location farther up the river and you will see the same mix of wildlife plus river



Photo: Jim MacDougall, July 2022

species that do not tolerate artificially ponded conditions. At the Town's Dam Info Session UMass PhD student Kate Abbott presented her work documenting other dam removal projects in Massachusetts. Her work spoke specifically to this topic and shows the positive impacts on local ecology once you free a river.

We want the community to know that every aspect of this project will be closely scrutinized by the many Federal, State, and local agencies that must issue a permit for removal to move forward. This rigorous process by law is required to ensure that no harm is done by removing a dam and that conditions overall will improve as a result. Along the way there will be more public hearings and opportunities for our community to express their concerns and have their questions answered.

We welcome and encourage your participation in the process; ask questions, talk to your neighbors and fellow community members, learn as much as you can - be a part of the conversation.

Neil Shea
Restoration Program Director
Ipswich River Watershed Association



Wading Boots Review by Craig Andree

Oh no. Splash! Hope you have your wading belt on; the water is winding its way down inside your waders soaking all your clothing. Now your socks are soaked and your feet are sloshing from the cold stream water.

Your day on the water might be shortened as you start to shiver.

The best medicine is preventative. Not falling. One of the best ways to avoid falls is to have the right foot wear. There are many options in the wading boots arena. You can get boots with Vibram soles for Simms boots, Kling-On sticky rubber soles for Korkers, felt soles, soles with cleats or studs, and after-market crampons. There are a lot of options in the market place.

The following YouTube video will help you make a more informed decision on what options are available in selecting wading boots and boot add-ons. Enjoy. <https://youtu.be/QEjQJzo7Hg>

Editor's note: Check out the debate over felt soles and invasive species [here](#).

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 - Gratitude

Chett Walsh of NETU and Beverly recently donated a handmade table organizer that he built for our generous landlord IRWA. At the December meeting, Chett very kindly gifted a beautiful table organizer to IRWA as a thank you for their generosity in allowing NETU to use their meeting space on a monthly basis. The attached picture is of the organizer that Chett built. It is a work of art. In Chett's words, "It's made of Curly Maple sides and Basralocus corners. Small leftover pieces of



Photo: Chett Walsh

the Fish Ladder Frames that NETU collaborated with IRWA on at the Willowdale Dam on the Ipswich River were found in the shop and put to good use. These frames spend the entire year submerged in water, hence the use of such a resilient wood like Basralocus is merited. Some NETU members thought it would be a nice gesture to up-cycle the cut off pieces of the Fish Ladder Frames into an everyday use item for IRWA's office". Thank you Chett, for expressing the Chapter's gratitude to the Ipswich River Watershed.

Ben Meade, President



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/>

Please volunteer

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. The core of this club is a few people like you who volunteer their time and expertise. Our 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. Any amount of time you can spare makes a difference.