



Trout Unlimited

Thames Valley Chapter Newsletter

Stream Lines

The Voice of Eastern CT Trout and Salmon Anglers

November 2020

Invitation to Chapter Meeting Via Zoom

Thames Valley Trout Unlimited November Chapter Meeting

Join Zoom Meeting via link below (easiest)

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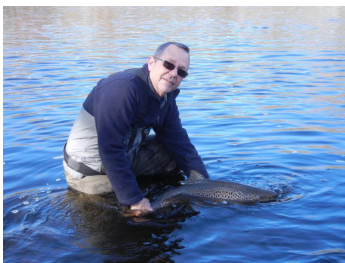
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President's Message....

Hello everyone!

Hope November is finding you all well and that you survived election 2020. I can't wait to have the news turn to something else – but I suppose this will continue to drag on for some time, COVID will continue to rage – so who am I kidding? Sounds like a great time to take refuge on the rivers and streams and get away from all of that. With the rivers a little bit replenished, the DEEP out there stocking and the weather feeling like summer these last couple days, I think the fishing gods are telling us something.

Last month we held our annual meeting. Everyone on the roster (posted on the web site) was elected or re-elected without any changes or additional nominations. There was some discussion on the proposed changes to the bylaws and it was decided to hold off on taking a vote and to let the board revisit the changes that we had recommended. During the meeting, door prizes of \$20 gift certificates from the Fish Connection and JT's Fly Shop were won by Phil Sands and Doc Merrill respectively. Doc requested his prize be given to the McMahon boys – thanks Doc!!

We just reached a significant milestone in the Papermill Pond Dam Fish Passage Design project. EA project manager Amy Hunt (guest speaker at the October meeting) delivered the Engineering Alternatives Design Analysis to TVTU. This provided preliminary design alternatives and we are now in the process of selecting which of those alternatives to move forward with to complete the project. As part of that decision, we have sent the report to US Fish and Wildlife Services, CT DEEP, NOAA and the First Selectwoman of Sprague. All have provided comments and we are incorporating those into our decision. We are currently on track to complete the project by April.

Don't forget – we are still holding our chapter meetings albeit via Zoom. Hope to see you all there.

The November Zoom meeting will feature Brian Eltz, Senior Fisheries Biologist, CT DEEP Fisheries Division



Brian has been working with the CT DEEP since 2000 when he started as an intern with both the Fisheries and Wildlife divisions; he then went on to work seasonally for the Diadromous Program and the Fish Management Program afterwards. Brian received degrees from the University of Connecticut in 2001 where he graduated with a B.S. in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, and from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst where he graduated with a M.S. in Fisheries Management in 2006. Brian has been working fulltime for the CT DEEP Fisheries Division since 2010. Currently, his main focus with the Fisheries Division's coldwater program is salmonid stocking, stream monitoring, Farmington River management, and wild trout management.

This presentation will largely focus on the status of wild Brook Trout in Connecticut after a recent resurvey of streams first sampled nearly 30 years ago. In addition he will discuss future efforts to make improvements to the salmonid stocking program.



"CuttSlam"

by Dave Parry



In August of 2004 I was planning to attend a conference in Phoenix Arizona. I thought about doing some fishing but thought I would have a long drive to get to some fishing.

To my surprise, I found that there was a species of Trout called Apache Trout located in the White Mountains of Arizona. It was about 3 hours away. The White Mountains are an expansive high plateau in Eastern Arizona near New Mexico. When the conference ended I left Phoenix early in the morning and headed East to Greer. The forecast in Phoenix was a day with temps reaching to 104 degrees.

At dusk that evening I caught my first Apache Trout. It was 40 degree at 9300 ft and I was frozen to the bone. But I was hooked on wild Native trout of the West. Some Western States have programs centered around catching the native species in their state. The first program of this kind began in Wyoming and it's called the CuttSlam. I could not resist the lure of a certificate from Wyoming Fish and Game AND going to Wyoming to try to catch all 4 species. All you need to do is take a picture of each species. The 4 Cutts are Yellowstone, Snake River Fine Spotted, Bonneville, and Colorado River Cutthroat Trout. This might sound like a relatively easy task but it took me 3 trips to Wyoming to finally achieve the prize.



My first trip was in August of 2009. It happened to be the wettest and coldest August in many years. Snow fell in the high peaks several days. Many of the rivers were blown out. Finding fishable water was a real challenge to find. We went deep into the Wind River Range to a lake that was once stocked with Yellowstone Cutts. After a harrowing ride up a deeply rutted and eroded road, we reached our destination. It was spitting snow and rain and the wind was howling. But I was able to coax a beautiful 19" YCT to take my nymph. It was my first (and only) that day which left 3 Cutts to go.

The following day we went to a fascinating area of the Wyoming Range in southwestern Wyoming. The area is called the Tri-basin region. What makes it so interesting is the fact that at the top of the basin, water flows into 3 different major watersheds. Each of the 3 watersheds holds a different variety of wild Cutts. So, on a good day, one can catch 3 different Cutts without travelling very far.

We left the main road and headed southeast up a steep and windy National Forest road to Smiths Fork which holds Bonneville Cutts. They only occupy a small portion of the water in southwestern Wyoming which eventually flows into the Great Salt Lake. Smiths Fork is a tributary of the Bear River which is longest River in the US which never reaches an Ocean. It is 500 miles long while only 100 miles from its source to the Great Salt Lake. Smiths Fork is a small Creek less than 20 ft wide. Lots of willow and brush surrounded the stream making access and casting a real challenge in places. But after some tough fishing I got my second Cutt. It is a gorgeous with golden hues and the telltale red cut. 2 down, 2 to go!



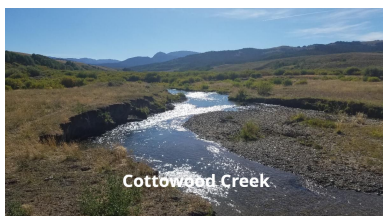
We then proceeded to Labarge Creek for Colorado River Cutts. We accessed it by traveling to the top of Smiths Fork road then down into the Colorado River watershed. Introduction of Browns and Brookies has really hurt wild and native Cutthroat species in the west because they out compete the native fish. This is certainly true for CRCs in Wyoming. Stocking of Rainbows has been even worse because they interbreed Cutts out of existence. Pure Colorado River Cutts are found mostly in small high elevation creeks. LaBarge Creek is an interesting fishery in that it was treated with Rotenone several years ago to reclaim it as a native Colorado River Cutt. TU and other groups have worked hard to save this fishery and it is an amazing success story. Labarge Creek is a little larger than Smiths Fork but unfortunately it was overflowing its banks from the heavy rains. We fished it hard but ended the day with still only 2 Cutt species. A Colorado River Cutt picture would have to wait for another trip to Wyoming. Damn!



So the final Species, Snake River Cutts, were the targeted fish for my last day of fishing on this trip to Wyoming. The pure SRCs have survived and thrived in the wild. These fish still have strong populations in many streams in the Snake River watershed including the Snake River. We headed to the Gros Ventre River a short distance from Jackson where I stayed for the week. It was relatively big water compared to the small creeks we had fished for the CRCs and BCs. Though the water was up, it could be cautiously waded. We had a great day and caught many SRCs including a feisty 15 incher. That along with the strong current made that fight a tough one but in the end, I got my picture! So I left Wyoming with 3 down and one to go.

I did get to LaBarge Creek again in 2015 as we passed through Wyoming on a trip from Yellowstone to Arches National Park. We camped nearby and I got a full morning and afternoon on the Creek. The water was running nicely and it was a beautiful day. There are some days fishing that make you wonder whether there are any fish in the stream you are fishing. Well that was the kind of day I had. No rises, no visible activity, nothing. I did get one hit that I missed and it was the only shot all day.

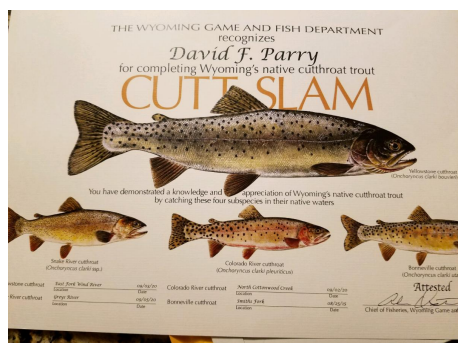
This summer I decided I had to get out West again so I went, Covid and all. That CuttSlam was calling me back. I needed that CRC! This year, the water was low but fishable when I arrived on September 1. I hired a guide the first day. I headed to Pinedale Wyoming and met my guide at 8 am after a 2 hour ride from Jackson. It was a very cool western Cowboy town with a quality fly shop. I stocked up at Two Rivers Fishing and headed with my guide to North Cottonwood Creek. It was private water and similar in size to so many other small mountain creeks in the Rockies I have fished. It had Willows right up the bank with deep cut holes in bends in the creek. It wasn't fished often so I was hopeful that I would get my first CRC. It didn't take long to get my picture. It wasn't much of a lunker. It actually slipped through holes in the net! I did catch some nicer fish though with a few around 12 inches. I missed some nicer fish as well. Their lightning strikes made it really hard to set the hook. They would smash the hopper patterns that I was using. For every fish I caught, I probably had 3 or 4 hits.



Wyoming fishing can be described as a target rich environment. So many great options and only 5 days left. I had a really hard time deciding on my fishing destinations for the rest of the week. After all, I had my CuttSlam. I settled on the East Fork of the Wind River near the little and very cool, DuBois, Wyoming. On my first trip to Wyoming, I went there in search of Yellowstone Cutts. It was seriously blown out and muddy from the heavy rain and snow. We never got in the water. I thought I would take another shot at YCT in its native habitat in this

beautiful river. It is a good sized river but quite low and easily wadable. The first hole I fished was tough to get a good drift of my hopper so I missed 3 or 4 nice fish. I fished up stream for about half a mile and then fished downstream below the hole where I started. I caught some decent sized beauties but again missed a lot of fish because of the lightning strikes. As I was getting ready to call it a day, I tried that hole I started at again with no hits. I thought I would make a last cast to a spot about 50 ft upstream where earlier I saw a nice fish. I changed flies to a small Red attracter fly and made a perfect cast. I saw a small YCT start toward my fly but it gave way to that big guy who slowly and deliberately sipped that fly in and turned. Set! Yahoo, it was a strong 17" YCT. It made it to my net and it was my new CuttSlam picture. What a way to end the day!

The last full day, I thought I would hit the last of the 3 watersheds that began in that Tri-Basin area. Greys River flows into the Snake River. It starts as a trickle in the Tri-Basin area and travels 60 miles and grows into a River similar in size to the Farmington River. The farther upstream, I heard, the more SRC dominate. Greys River Road is a dirt road that follows the river for its entire length. Most of it is public water. I had very little info about the River so as I travelled upstream, I would get out occasionally to scope out the river and look for activity. I talked to a few fisherman I met on my way up and their reports were not very encouraging. Finally, about 30 mile up, I came to a big 90 degree turn in the river with fast moving water entering the large pool created by the turn. It looked like a great spot so I got my rod, tied on a Tan Caddis, and started to fish. I noticed a few widely dispersed rises so I was encouraged. Over about 30 minutes the smattering of rises grew into the most amazing feeding frenzy I have ever seen in my life. I would bet there 100+ fish were porpoising out of the water, gorging themselves on the hatching Caddis. I lost track of the number of fish I caught. One broke my 3X tippet. This went on for 3 hours. Then it slowly ended and I couldn't get a rise on anything. It had been so spectacular day I decided it was time to head back to Jackson.



When I got home, I sent the pictures of each Cutt to Wyoming Fish and Game. The Certificate is now on my wall. What's next? California Heritage Trout Challenge? I have of three of the 6 species needed. Western Native Trout Challenge sponsored by the Western Native Trout Initiative? I have 8 of 8 states and 10 of 12 species needed. Utah Cutthroat Slam? Or maybe Nevada Native Fish Slam? Rocky Mountain Cutthroat Slam? Decisions, decisions.



"Volunteers Wanted"



Program Coordinator Needed

We are looking to fill a board position of Program Coordinator.

Duties of this position include:

- * Coordinating who brings refreshments.
- * Finding and arranging speakers.
- * Bringing coffee supplies & replenishing as needed.

If you are interested in helping the chapter by filling this position, please contact Gary Lussier [email](#)



Fly Tying Coordinator Needed

We are looking for a Fly Tying coordinator to support chapter events. It is not a requirement to become a board member, but the coordinator is welcome to join the board.

Duties include:

1. Contacting and arranging for volunteer tyers at our chapter meetings
2. Coordinating tyers for our fly tying classes (usually one six week class at the Fish Connection).
3. Coordinating tyers for our outreach events.
4. Replenishing tying supplies as required.
5. Communicate with board to coordinate requirements. Please contact Gary Lussier or Ray Schaeffer for additional information

Donations Wanted

You can help our TU chapter by donating your unused fly



fishing and fishing equipment including rods, reels, flies, books, fly tying and other reusable items. We will auction or raffle the items off and used the money raised to support our chapter's programs including conservation projects, stream clean up, stocking, TIC, speaker fees, and other operating expenses. Email [John Preston](mailto:John.Preston@thamesvalleytu.org) or call 860-546-6690 if you have something to donate or bring the item(s) to the next chapter meeting.

Thank You... for Your Generosity and Support.

Thames Valley TU Chapter 282 - PO Box 2181, Columbia, CT 06237

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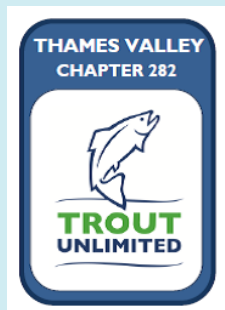
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About Us

TVTU Chapter's Mission

To conserve, protect and restore Eastern Connecticut's trout and salmon and their watersheds.

Our Vision

By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild cold-water fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our



Place an Advertisement in "Stream Lines"

Looking to reach a new and diverse audience? Presently we have over 450 members in Eastern CT and the newsletter is published September through May (9 issues). If you have a service or product and would like to reach out to our outdoor and conservation minded readership, consider placing an advertisement in the chapter's newsletter "Stream Lines" and website. The cost is only \$50 for the entire year (9 Issues).

children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

Questions or comments on the Newsletter
contact Editor [Bruce Danielson](#)

For more information and to place an ad,
contact [Daniel King](#).

Thanks for your support!

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