



Trout Unlimited

Thames Valley Chapter Newsletter

Stream Lines

The Voice of Eastern CT Trout and Salmon Anglers

December 2019



President's Message....

Season's Greetings! Hope you all had a great Thanksgiving.

Here is a quick update on our Papermill Pond Fish Ladder project. An RFP was issued on November 6 and a site walk conducted with prospective bidders on November 23. By the time this newsletter gets to you, we should have received proposals for review. Per our fairly aggressive timeline, we plan to announce a winner by December

20. We would then expect to begin discussions with the selected firm and sign a contract by mid to end of January 2020.

In case you hadn't noticed, Pat Gaynor has been starting to mix things up a bit at the fund raising table. Last month he introduced a specialty item (the portable fly tying kit) as a dedicated raffle item. He's also planning to invest in some better quality door prizes. And finally, he has started a suggestion box and a sign up sheets for volunteers to bring in snacks for the meeting if they would like. We'll be trying this over the next few months to see how well it works. All of this with the purpose of keeping things interesting and hopefully drawing more people into the meetings.

John Preston and Bob Walsh are planning to conduct fly tying classes again this year. They will be at the Fish Connection and the Ledyard Library for two separate sessions. I have taken classes with these gents and can tell you they were a tremendous help to me getting started tying flies. If you've been thinking of taking this up, didn't know where to start or just needed that extra incentive, don't pass this up. Look for more details in the newsletter or the website. And speaking of tying and the web site, check out the "Fly Tying" tab on our TVTU website. John has built a nice library of some flies that I'm sure you need for your fly box.

Finally, have a Merry Christmas, Happy New Year and Happy holidays. Enjoy your families, stay safe and see you next year!

Tight Lines!

Gary Lussier
[email](#)

Chapter Meeting Tues., December 17th, 6 to 9pm

Featured Presentation by: Neal Hagstrom

"So You Want More Trout, Why, Where and When Do They Spawn."

State Fisheries biologist Neal Hagstrom will go into trout life history, locations, what redds look like, substrates and upwelling zones.

Chapter Events

Dec 17th, 6-9pm
Chapter Meeting
Franklin Firehouse
5 Tyler Drive, Franklin, CT
Neal Hagstrom - "So You



Neal is our most popular and requested guest speaker by our members. Neal has been with the DEEP for 30 years and began his career by earning a B.S. in Biology from UCONN. He earned a Masteries in Fisheries and Allied Aquaculture from Auburn University. For the past 7 years, Neal has been leading a seven year effort by CT DEEP to survey the rivers and streams in

CT.

Note the change in the January speaker

Special Holiday Sale & Raffle

The holiday meeting is a great way to celebrate, connect with friends old and new, and meet other anglers like you who are committed to our mission and making our local watersheds better and healthier.

A free event for chapter members, their family, friends and fishing buddies... the holiday celebration will feature assorted appetizers, coffee and sweets.

In addition, we will have fly fishing "stocking stuffers" available at unbelievably low prices, a special "holiday" door prize (see below) and, of course, our Raffle table featuring a TFO 9' 6wt 4pc fly rod, Cabela fly reel with spare spool & double reel case, fly boxes, flies, books, gift knife set, leaders and much more... All to help you be the Santa of the year!

Doors Open at 6pm

Our meetings are free and open to members, guests and the general public. Social time, fly tying demonstrations, refreshments, raffle, door prize & more... Featured presentation starts shortly after a short chapter business meeting at 7pm.



Want More Trout, Why, Where and When Do They Spawn"

January 4, 9 am – 1 pm
FVTU Annual Angling Gear Tag Sale
Farmington Community Ctr
321 New Britain Ave
Unionville, CT

Jan 21st, 6-9pm
Chapter Meeting
Franklin Firehouse
5 Tyler Drive, Franklin, CT
Darby Hittle - "Eastern Lake Ontario Steelhead Fishing"

Feb 1st, 9am - 3pm
CFFA EXPO
Maneeley's
65 Rye St
South Windsor, CT

Feb 18th, 6-9 pm
Chapter Meeting
Franklin Firehouse
5 Tyler Drive, Franklin, CT
Annual "Flies and Pies" night

March 17th, 6-9PM
Chapter Meeting
Franklin Firehouse
5 Tyler Drive, Franklin, CT
Jeff White - "Delaware River Club "

April 21st, 6-9PM
Chapter Meeting
Franklin Firehouse
5 Tyler Drive, Franklin, CT
Tommy Barnowski - "Bonefishing in the Bahamas"

Dec 17th Chapter Meeting "Special Holiday" Door Prize



Fund Raising Chair, Pat Gaynor, will be livening up the door prize this month with something a little different. So lets see you at the next meeting and you will have a chance at this door prize.

Event/Meeting Cancellations Due to Inclement Weather

In the event that we need to cancel a scheduled meeting due to inclement weather, an announcement will be published on our website by 4:00 PM on the day of the scheduled meeting or event.

Our meetings are held at the Franklin Firehouse on Tyler Drive (just off Rt 32) in Franklin.

The facility houses the library, town garage and the firehouse. The meeting entrance is on the left as you enter the facility.

The Franklin Firehouse in Franklin is located just north of Route 2 ,exit 27. Go 6 miles north on Rt 32 and Tyler Drive is on your right

[Google Map Directions](#)



"Most anglers, especially tyros, false cast too often. Three false casts should be sufficient for any throw and two is better. One is perfect."
-Joe Brooks



Volunteers Needed

Stocking Coordinator

The chapter still needs a volunteer for this position .

The position entails working with the hatchery management to schedule the stocking times, locations and sending an email to the stocking volunteers to establish a rendezvous for the stocking.

We are getting close to stocking season and we could use the help. If you are interested, please contact Gary Lussier [Email](#)



Fund Raising Committee Assistants

Duke & John Preston will be stepping down as Fund Raising assistants soon.

Therefore, we will need at least two volunteers for this critical position and program to help our new Fund Raising Chair Patrick Gaynor at chapter meetings and other fund raising events through out the year

If interested, please contact Patrick Gaynor [Email](#)



By George Jacobi

Housatonic #2 The Corner Hole/The Wall



The Corner Hole in Housatonic Meadows State Park is where many first-time Housy anglers end up (if the regulars give them room). Folks happily fish just the Corner Hole for their whole lives. It's a great choice, arguably all you need to know about the famous river, except this: [water data](#)

The Housatonic is on natural flow now, just like the Shetucket River. There are a few places where at 400-800 CFS you can find good dry fly fishing, but generally you want it as low as you can get it. Below 300 CFS gives you access to a lot more water. Much of the Housatonic is terrible for wading, genuinely dangerous to anyone less than strong and agile. And tall. Like the Sand Hole, the Corner Hole is an exception.

Above it, One-car Hole, the Birches, and the Monument Hole are steep, fast, and rock-strewn. In other words, great nymph habitat. The riffle below the Monument leads into a long wide right angle turn: "the Corner". Thus begins 100 yards of flat water, fishable from both sides, ending up at "The Wall", a vertical rip-rap rampart supporting the railroad bed. Trout are spread out from top to bottom.



Enter the Housatonic Meadows picnic area from Rt. 7 and drive down to the end of the road. A quick glance from the parking lot will show you if there is any surface action; if there isn't any here it is unlikely anywhere else on the river. A short foot trail leads left up to the Corner itself, where many of the best trout live in the pockets, holes, and channels where the fast water gradually slows into the pool. You'll need a hefty cast to reach a lot of them. The aquatic insects from all the water above wash into this classic, heavily-fished bend. The Corner ends at a large rock on the other bank; past that, midstream trout get smaller and easier

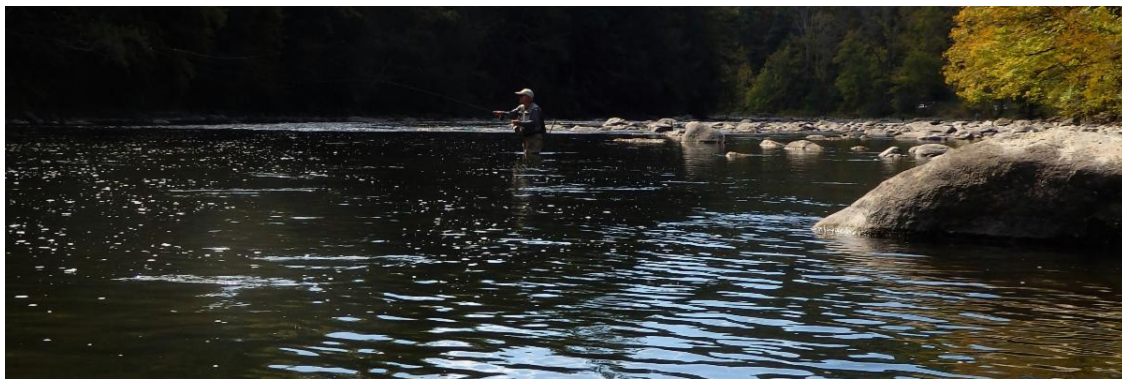
all the way down the length of the straightaway.



On the east side, Brook Road, then Popple Swamp Road, lead you down to parking at the Wall, and a dirt road has room for three vehicles about halfway up the pool. The rest of that driveway is private; don't block it or trespass. The Wall and that bank for yards above is great water, home to large selective fish, but too deep for wading. Furnace Brook enters the river just below the Wall as an added challenge. A left-hander will have an easier time here. The rest of us must reverse cast, bank cast, or tiptoe out just far enough, although this is where a long delicate dry fly cast quartering downstream comes into its own. You better get the first drift right though; these Brown Trout have seen it all.

To access the east side of the Corner, walk up the railroad track itself. Looking down from the tall bank, you'll pass some of those big fish calmly rising. From the Park, even Lefty would have a tough time reaching this side. These Browns know you're right-handed (I told them) and they hold just where currents overlap and a fly drags. A short brushy trail off the railroad bed leads down to the Corner, and it is great fishing from the riffle to the aforementioned big rock. You are actually closer to the pod of trout from this side. If they make you crazy, walk up to the Monument Hole and twitch a streamer deep. Corner Hole trout that get caught too many times hide up here and grow to over twenty inches.

When the Housatonic gets going during a spinner fall in a soft May sunset, or on a long October afternoon of Blue-winged Olives, you have found yourself in a huge spring creek where the dance of insects, birds, and trout is itself worth watching.



"King Salmon 2019"

by John Manfred

King Salmon is located roughly 300 miles southwest of Anchorage. It is a small town of not more than a few hundred people. Once very much more active because of the Air Force base that thrived there. No longer active, the base is now manned by a mere skeleton crew that keeps the runway cleared. If you imagine the Aleutian peninsula as the trunk of an elephant with the head of the beast representing Alaska, the town of King Salmon would appear as the eye. Approximately 10 miles up the Naknek River. The river hosts literally millions of returning salmon funneling into Bristol Bay each year to maintain their phoenix like death and rebirth. Virtually every species of Pacific salmon will visit this river annually. King, sockeye, red, chum, silver salmon all take their turn to spawn in this river and its tributaries; a pageant worthy of note and wonder. These salmon provide

The stream was filled with spawning sockeyes their bright red bodies signaling that they were beyond their edible

stage. They would be so numerous as to be forced to dart between your legs as they steamed up the creek to do their thing. That is, lay their eggs, have them fertilized and proceed into the next life. We fished for the Dollies and grayling by dropping a single plastic egg imitation over the tops of the sockeyes. The egg would frequently bounce off their backs to sink beneath them where the waiting



the fuel that supports an ecosystem that is quite amazing. Rainbow trout, Dolly Varden, grizzly bear, and a host of other organisms including humans partake of this periodic feast.

I have returned to this extraordinary place five times in the past 20 years and in my mind it remains the primo fishing destination of anywhere in the world. I have fished New Zealand, Australia, Scotland, Ireland, Ecuador, Panama, Mexico, Belize, New Brunswick, British Columbia, as well as a wide variety of states in the US of A. Alaska, especially the Bristol Bay fishery remains at the top of the list.

With the preceding information in mind I had decided about a year in advance to revisit this special place with a few of my fishing companions. What started out to be a small group of gents with whom I have had the pleasure of participating in this noble pastime turned into a sizable number; thirteen to be exact. I contacted Tom Baumgardner of Rainbow Bend Lodges to see if he could handle that number of sports. I was ecstatic to find that he could. In fact we took over every bed in the lodge. Now this august group representing seven states – Maine, Connecticut, North Carolina, Florida, Texas, California and Oregon converged on King Salmon by way of Anchorage where we all met at the Dimond Center Hotel. We did the shopping for our self prepared meals while we were in Anchorage. The lodge specializes in angling while the culinary skills are left to the anglers – a cost saving factor that was significant. Since several of us delight in our gustatory expertise, we ate rather well for the five days at the lodge. The cost for the food came to something like sixty bucks per person. Not sure about the others but I came away from the adventure 10 pounds heavier.

The deal with the lodge was 5 days of guided fishing. Gear provided by the lodge. Filleting and cryovacing of fish , a fly-out



to a hotspot within 100 miles of the lodge. It turned out that the fly-outs were the most exciting experience for me. Our destination was Featherly creek which was an hour's flight from the lodge aboard a 1957 DeHavilland Beaver. A craft that looked like it had just come out of the factory.

It had been completely rebuilt from stem to stern. Chris, our pilot, clearly loved his role as bush pilot. His plane was rigged for tundra flying with huge balloon tires designed for landing on the tundra.

The flight afforded us a bird's eye view of a spectacular sunrise over volcanic up-thrusts, meandering streams, mirror-like lakes and ponds, stunted fir trees though only 10 ft. tall could be a hundred years old. The growing season

Dollys and grayling were sucking up whatever the females were dropping. Weren't they surprised when they discovered an occasional egg that stuck to their lips.



Grayling are yet another char, not as colorful as the Dolly but beautiful in their own right with their dorsal sail



Glenn hoists the sail

Returning to the much larger Naknek, the action there was not as furious. Our target fish, the silver salmon, had not yet arrived in its usual stunning numbers probably because of the very hot summer we were having. Instead of blankets of swarming fish there were only pods of 4 or 5 fish that were hard to spot. We did catch silvers but not in the expected numbers.



I did not experience the other fly-outs this trip but others did and found them equally rewarding. A tundra trip to Bible Creek

was similar to Featherly. The other one to Brooks Camp was by float plane; not only the bear watching capitol of the world but an excellent rainbow fishery as well. When you had your fill of catching rainbows you can hike to a raised platform



is very short and so are the growth rings. We landed on a gravel scree that was carved out of the tundra by Mother Nature's own D19 Caterpillar bulldozer, a frozen wind of a hundred plus miles per hour that grades frequent portions of the tundra forming these sometimes convenient landing strips for willing bush pilots. This scree was

about a mile from our target so we had to do some bushwhacking to get there through arroyos tightly packed with a jungle of vines and alders that crowded into these aberrations which provided escape from those 100 mile winds. Walking on the tundra was a piece of cake compared to these deviations. We would hack our way though one area only to find it not to the liking of Carson, our guide, who had us backtrack to another vantage point. By this time the temperature inside my waders had to be about 110. Finally, after nearly reaching the absolute limit of my 79 year old left knee, we entered Nirvana. The stream had to be an apparition it was so beautiful. The fishing was spectacular. We caught Dolly Varden and grayling that exceeded 20 inches. Not only were they a challenge for our 6wt rods, but there was a fish on every third cast. My rod finally exploded on one of the Dollys breaking at the tip with a resounding snap. Fortunately Carson had an extra. Obviously this was not a first for him. These fish were beautifully colored. I can see where the Dickens inspired Dolly Varden came from. They resemble the east coast cousin known as our brook trout, also in the char family. The Dolly, however, has more paint on its palette.

where you can observe grizzlies commanding the top of Brooks Falls waiting for a leaping salmon to dare to approach their open jaws.



Alaska seems to be doing an admirable job of caring for its fishery. A good example is the catch-and-return policy on streams that are not stocked. A fisherman must return these wild bows to their homes, hopefully to grow to trophy sizes. The Naknek and the Brooks Rivers are proof that this practice has been successful. Rainbows in excess of 30 lbs. are not uncommon in these waters.

The five days at Rainbow Bend rewarded us with many bear sightings, eagles, caribou, Even a lone wolf, tails and tales galore.

I don't know that I'll live long enough to do it but, you know, I might try for a sixth visit to this magical place.

"Wanted" - Fly Tying Tools



In addition to providing fly tying classes to a number of local schools TVTU will also be conducting beginner & intermediate fly tying classes this winter and Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing/Fly Tying classes for veterans in the near future. Therefore, we need additional fly tying tools (scissors, bodkins, hackle pliers, whip finishers, hair stackers, bobbins and vises). If members have any spare tools and vises in working condition we would appreciate your donation of them.

Please contact Charley McCaughy cmccaughtry@aol.com or John Preston jpreston44@yahoo.com or bring them to the next monthly chapter meeting. In addition, any member who would like help assist when the classes are scheduled please contact Dave Parry (TIC/Education) dfparry01@gmail.com or Ron Bettez (Veterans Program) rbc141@gmail.com.

Thank You For Your Support

"TVTU Fly Tying Classes Start January"

Thames Valley TU will be conducting Fly Tying classes again this winter. Bob Walsh, John Preston, and Jack Balint will be teaching the classes. The classes will be held 9:30 - 11:30 am Saturdays at the Fish Connection, 127 RT12, Preston, CT.

Tentative (more info to follow) class dates are January 11, 18, 25, February 1, 8 & 15th. Classes are open to members (young & old) and to the public... beginner to experienced fly tiers welcomed. Tools and materials will be available if you don't have any. There are no fees for the classes and materials.

In addition, we will be conducting a **Beginners Fly Tying Class** through JAN 18, 25, FEB 1 & 8th at the Ledyard Bill Library, 718 Colonel Ledyard Highway, Ledyard, CT on Saturday afternoons 1:30 to 3:30pm. The class is limited to 12 students with a minimum age of 8 years old. **Please contact the library to enroll in this class at (860) 464-9912.**



Why Learn Fly Tying?

Fly tying is great way to learn some of the finer points of fly fishing; something to do off-season and keep focused on fishing; because you like being creative & working with your hands; and, you want to spend many hours alone or with friends doing a fun hobby. Also, there is great satisfaction catching a fish on your own fly. Another reason people tie is to save money. How many \$2 plus flies have you lost in the trees or snagged on the bottom of a stream and the hundreds of store bought flies in your many fly boxes? But the jury is still out on that.

But one sure way to save money for sure is to take our fly tying class. This way you can determine if this hobby is for you before you shell out to buy the necessary equipment and materials to get started. There is nothing better than learning by personal instruction. Learning from a book can be hard but not impossible. Nowadays, we would suggest using online videos might be a good alternative. So, if you think you would like to give it a try. Enroll in our fly tying classes. It's fun and you will meet some great people and future friends... and have something that gives you pleasure for a lifetime!

Contact [John Preston](#) or Jack Balint (860) 885-1739 at the Fish Connection to enroll, for questions or information.



Fly Of the Month "Chuck's Caddis Variant"

by John Preston

This month's fly has been around for some time. It was developed by Chuck Stranahan in the sixties as a steelhead fly. I picked up a dozen #14 at Cabela's when they had some great sales on Umpqua flies every spring about 3-4 years ago. Now that Bass Pro has taken over the sales are just not the same.

I have tried them before with not much success. Probably because I'm partial to the X & X2 Caddis and the Iris Caddis (emerger) during a caddis hatch. But this summer fishing out west it was THE fly to use. I "discovered" a small stream affectionally named Cesspool creek. Actually I learned about it from "California" Dave who was my neighbor at the campground. We never got to fish together because I'm an early riser and

Well to make a long story short I learned to skip the skinny water and concentrate where the water had some depth and look for structure. Results... four beautiful, strong, leaping, reel singing rainbows that tuned my three weight into a pretzel!! I missed or could not land a couple... of course, they were BIG!

Steve came down from Bozeman to visit me the next day and I took him to different section of Cesspool and we did even better... landed eight 16 to 19 inch bows and Steve caught a 13 inch Grayling to boot!.... Yes, he is sworn to secrecy too.

By the way, the third day in another section was a real workout for my 3 weight too. I can't wait to go back next summer...

he doesn't get going until after well after 9am. But we would always go over where we fished and how good or poor it was that day. One day he mentioned how good Cesspool creek was which I'm sworn to secrecy so don't ask me or I will have to kill you! Now Cesspool creek is a stream I always wanted to try but stories about how much wildlife (bears in particular) inhabited the area made me a bit wary to try since I tend to fish alone and I hate to make noise when fishing.

Cesspool is a freestone stream that is about the size of the Natchaug River and holds some very nice wild rainbows, the occasional grayling and the best part is I never saw another fisherman besides my friend Steve (one time) during the three days I fished it. Well "California" Dave's description of the fish he encountered was no lie... to be honest I wasn't sure Dave was telling tall tales.

The next day I went out and tried a section of Cesspool. Because of the stream's gradient the water was fast, a bit choppy and



plenty of skinny water so I decided to use more of an attractor type fly that floated well... Chuck's Caddis stood out when I scanned my fly boxes. I believe Chuck's Caddis was so successful because it is easy to see, floats like a cork, and the oversize hackle makes it possible to give it the "sudden inch" (a method popularized by Leonard Wright way back in the early 70's) when the occasion presents itself... in short, drag free is not always best way to entice trout.



Steve trying to land a fiesty "Cesspool" bow

Chuck's Caddis Variant work so well that I used it with good results on the Yellowstone and Lamar Valley tributaries. Tie it on... I'm sure you will have success too!



Steve lands another "Cesspool" rainbow

For Step-By-Step instructions for Chuck's Caddis Variant go to [Charles Craven's Fly Box](#)



Chuck's Caddis Variant Recipe

Hook: TMC 921 # 14 - 16

Thread: 8/0 Rusty Brown

Body: Rusty Brown Antron Dubbing

Wing: Fine Natural Deer Hair Topped with White Calf Body Hair

Hackle: Grizzly Dyed Golden Brown, oversized

"Fishing is not an escape from life, but often a deeper immersion into it."

~Henry Middleton

Items for Sale

Duke's Ultimate Dubbing Brush (new) Dual purpose dubbing brush - **SALE \$3** (MSRP \$4)

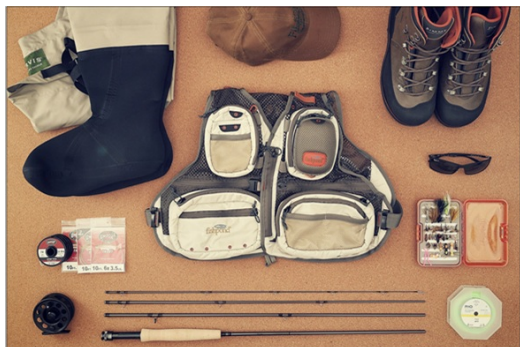
Orvis Tacky Dry Side Fly Box (new) holds 367 flies 7"L x 3 3/4"W x 1 1/4"D - **SALE \$20** (MSRP \$45)

Various Wading Boots (Used) mostly sizes 10/11's - **Blowout SALE up tp 2/3 OFF our low prices**

Cabela's MTX 9' 5wt 4pc Fly Rod w/ graphite tube - condition - \$165 **SALE \$150** (MSRP \$400)
 Cabela's MTX 9' 6wt 4pc Fly Rod w/ graphite tube - Mint condition - \$165 **SALE \$150** (MSRP \$400)
 Korkers Wading Boot - New Old Stock, Size 11 w/ walking/hiking sole only - \$35 **SALE \$20**
 LL Bean Travel Fly Rod - 9', 7wt, 6pc w/ tube & bag, near mint condition - \$75 **SALE \$65**
 Umpqua Toketee Vest - New, never used, gray, one size fits all - \$65 **SALE \$55** (MSRP \$159)
 Bamboo Rod Oven (homemade) - The heat gun (not included) oven is **FREE** for the cane rod maker who will pass it on FREE to the next rod maker.

For the above items or to place items for sale, contact [John Preston](#) 860-917-4485

Donations Wanted

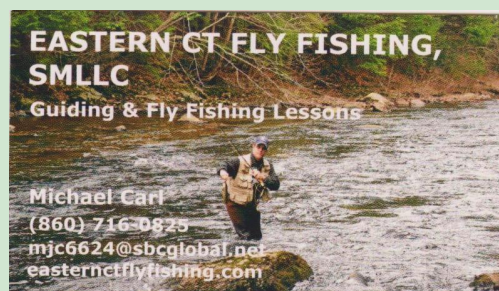


You can help our TU chapter by donating your unused fly fishing and fishing equipment including rods, reels, flies, books, fly tying and other reusable items. We will auction or raffle the items off and used the money raised to support our chapter's programs including conservation projects, stream clean up, stocking, TIC, speaker fees, and other operating expenses. Email [John Preston](#) 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.

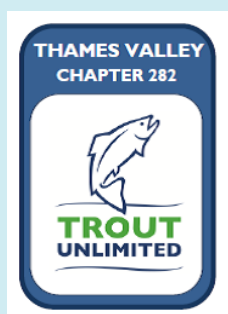
Thames Valley TU Chapter 282 - PO Box 2181, Columbia, CT 06237

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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 children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters.

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

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).

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

Thanks for your support!

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