



Thames Valley Chapter Newsletter

Stream Lines

"The Voice for Eastern CT Trout and Salmon Anglers"

November 2015

Dear Member,

I am pleased to announce that we have been awarded a \$22K grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation for the Fish Rehabilitation on the Versailles Pond Dam (CT) project to refurbish the Versailles Pond fish way in Sprague, CT. Conservation Committee Co-chair Sal DeCarli, writer of the grant, will be representing and accepting the grant for us at the Long Island Sound Futures Fund 2015 Grant Award event in Stratford, CT on 12 November. We will be starting the project Sunday, November 22nd. Please, even if you only have an hour or so, volunteer to help disassemble the current decaying fish way. See the below article for details and I hope to see you there. The chapter is considering the submission of other grants in the near future and, hopefully, this is the just the start of other grants being awarded.

Funds for pursuing conservation, education projects and events are important but an even more critical resource is the human element... volunteers. Without it nothing can be started or accomplished. No non-profit organization can be successful without the support and efforts of its members. Your involvement and commitment is essential for Thames Valley TU to accomplish its mission. I am very pleased to have seen an increase in volunteerism within our chapter and hope to see even more of you get involved. The most recent examples of this were the members who supported the Wounded Warriors event last week, salmon stocking yesterday, and the members who volunteered to deliver the trout eggs and/or become mentors to our 14 TIC schools next week. Keep up the great work and Thank You for your service...

See you at The Moose!



John Preston, *President*
Thames Valley TU, Chapter 282
jpreston44@yahoo.com



Calendar of Events

Tuesday, November 17th - 6:00pm
Chapter Membership Meeting, Moose Lodge, Bozrah, CT
Douglas Thompson - Book talk "The Quest of the Golden Trout"

Sunday, November 22nd, Versailles Fish Way Deconstruction
Paper Mill Rd, Versailles, CT
TVTU will be assisting DEEP with the Refurbishing the fish way
Volunteers Needed (See article below)

Tuesday, December 15th - 6:00pm
Chapter Membership Meeting, Moose Lodge, Bozrah, CT
Presentation: (To Be Announced)

November 17th Membership Meeting - Raffle Table

The raffle table will be stocked with 30 items including a new 9'-2 piece-5wt fly rod and a new 5/6 wt. fly reel. The table will also contain several pkg. of flies, a range of fly tying material, a new in the box fly line and numerous other items. On our for sale table we will offer a lightly used pair of Simms waders size M/K, a couple of new reels along with a few other items. Christmas is just around the corner and here is a chance to get a gift or two and help the chapter too.

Free Upgrade to a Family Membership

We are pleased to launch [a new Free Family Membership Upgrade offer](http://www.tu.org/familymembership) to any existing Trout Unlimited member -- for a limited time only! By signing up and adding the names and information for the family members living in your household at www.tu.org/familymembership, you will enjoy the benefits of a TU family membership for the duration of your regular membership for free.

Thames Valley TU Awarded Grant for Versailles Fish Way... Volunteers Needed

by Jim Smith

Thames Valley TU is pleased to announce that we have been awarded a \$22K grant to refurbish the Versailles Pond fish way. We plan to start deconstruction on **Sunday, Nov 22 starting at 9:00 AM** to help remove old wooden baffles from the fish way in Versailles (a village of Sprague). TVTU volunteers and our Conservation Committee will be assisting DEEP with the project. We'll also assist with installing new aluminum baffles at a later date, but first the old baffles need to be removed and disposed of. The fish way allows anadromous fish access to Versailles pond and upstream to the Little River.

We will meet below Versailles Pond off Paper Mill Road in Versailles. You'll see a paved pull-off and gate. DEEP will be unlocking the gate for access and parking. See location map below and attached picture of the fish way and baffles.

Details and what to bring: There are a total of 55 baffles, the baffles are 4'x8' (with cutouts) and made of $\frac{3}{4}$ " pressure treated plywood. There are 8 stainless steel bolts in each baffle that need to be removed so they can be dismantled and disposed of. Much of our time will be spent unbolting the baffles, hauling them out of the fish way then loading them for disposal.



TVTU has arranged for transportation and disposal of the baffles but will need help loading the materials. Please bring a cordless impact driver or socket wrench and sockets, if you have them, and wear gloves and work boots. The fish way will be dry so no need for waders or rubber boots. Refreshments will be available.

Volunteers - please contact [Jim Smith](tel:860-608-0028) 860-608-0028, to sign up and if you have any questions. You may also sign up at this month's membership meeting.



[Link for Google Map & directions.](#)

Conservation Fund Raising Raffle

by the Conservation Committee

Win an Orvis Helios Outfit!

The Conservation Committee has been busy planning & working on increasing our conservation efforts and applying for grants. This takes a lot of resources... man-hours and money. Please help us raise \$2000 for future projects dedicated to conserving, protecting and restoring our cold-water fisheries in the Eastern CT. All funds from this raffle will be ear marked for conservation only.

Show your support for Eastern CT cold-water fisheries and **Win** a very "gently used" Orvis Helios 9 ½ Foot, 6 WT, 4 Piece, Fly Rod & case (original MSRP \$795); a "new" Gold Orvis Mirage III LA Fly Reel (MSRP \$475), and a "new" Sage WF6-F Fly Line (MSRP \$79). A perfect outfit for broodstock Atlantic Salmon or big water angling!



Raffle tickets are only **\$20** each. The drawing will be held once we meet our goal of \$2000 (100 tickets). You do not have to be present to win. Tickets are available at our monthly meetings and through the Chapter's Board of Directors members.

Thank You for your Support.



"Lobsterville"

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Can't believe it myself, but I'm really out here driving down South Road long past midnight. After the bottle of Chilean red and a grilled Ahi I should be snoring, thoroughly sated, yet the pull of striper fishing is stronger than sleep. What is it about this that is so damn fascinating?

The other night I was out here too, fishing Lobsterville through the dawn at four AM. It was slow. I got one bass around six or seven pounds and missed another. Got my fingers whacked on the reel handle for my troubles. Just between you and me, I may be out of practice.

But conditions look better for tonight. High tide will be around three and a striped bass prefers to come inshore to pick off sand eels when it feels safest. Even the full moon can spook a fussy striper. I could try several other spots but affection and memory draw me here again. On long winter nights deep in REM sleep, I walk this sand with fly rod in hand. Lobsterville Beach, near the far west end of the Vineyard, has been good to me so many times. There have been nights I said to myself after releasing a fish, "Whew, I hope I don't hook another one until I catch my breath" - but it didn't stop me from immediately casting again. In my mind the scenario is all worked out; I can already feel those bulldog thumps on the fly.

Martha's Vineyard is convenient for my family vacation, a two and a half hour drive and the forty-five minute ferry ride. Like many an angler, I'll try to squeeze in some fishing while doing nice and relaxing things with my wife. It's not easy to do, and it seldom works out perfectly. The only thing that makes it feasible is that during the time spent on the beach most days, you can nap instead of read or stare at the bikinis - a safer idea anyway. This game is played by many a fishing Dad and husband and it's usually only luck when it turns out well.

Going to Lobsterville for the sand eels involves the middle of the night for a few weeks in June. Really a small skinny fish, the 3" - 4" sand eel should stay buried in sand during the night, but some overly enthusiastic ones can't resist looking for a snack. Then when it begins to get light, they all pop up and become active. Striped bass run the shoreline during the wee hours, working hard. Because there is such a short vertical space for the bait to escape in, hungry bass will get into water that barely covers their backs. Casting parallel to the shore actually covers more fish sometimes. How cool to hear a splash BEHIND you! Sand eels make these little blips on the surface all along the bowl, which stretches from the Menemsha Pond outflow almost to Gay Head.

When I first tried this, I showed up sometime between four and five AM, ready for the dawn, which had barely begun. Another guy looked like he was getting ready to fish, fussing with tackle in the back of his truck, but the light went on for me when he called over, "That was good fishing, wasn't it?" He was packing up to leave.

What works for me is to fall asleep at seven PM and wake at midnight to go out. A weird system, but effective. There have been times when I walked down to the water and bass were feeding right there immediately. Other times I walked left for a mile or two to find them. The famous hot spot is out that way,

Dogfish Bar, where bass can baitfish even easier, but the activity might be anywhere or everywhere.

It can be ridiculously good fishing. My best night was eleven striped bass from 28" to 33" on a simple red estaz marabou fly. I ran into a local guide at Coop's tackle shop during the day who said he'd done well on red. I bought a red permanent marker, colored a few of my white ones, and now I'm never without red. It's usually a bad move to ignore anything learned at Cooper Gilkes' place.



For the last few years the results have slacked off, and Coop says it's slowing down already this year, but I just like this stuff. I favor salt water fly fishing when it most resembles trout fishing. Although I'll always accept a boat invitation, rock-hop the jetties, or battle large swells if it's the only game in town, I prefer to be able to wade with ease, discovering the secrets of current, bait, and predator by myself. Like the May worm 'hatch' at Ninigret salt pond or an October morning at Napatree Point beach, Lobsterville provides a southern New England angler with that precious opportunity.

So enthusiasm keeps me awake on the slow drive as I look forward to the shore, and it has to, as three deer take turns crossing the road right in front of me. The top speed

on the island is 45 and in the wee hours that's a recipe for hitting a dumb doe. Not to mention the skunks and raccoons. Oh, yeah, the cops are awake too. When I get to the beach parking area, it's empty. Not a good sign, I think, but I'm always in favor of that primal feeling of aloneness, of being ahead and apart from the crowd. Bring it on. Too late to go home anyway.

From here one faces north. The great sky surrounds me and commands attention. The island, its charm and beauty, history and ecology, fall away. I embrace the night sky and it embraces me back. Tilt my head and look up. I resent the brim of my hat, want to see the sky while looking at the sea. Vineyard Sound is slate gray with black ripples across to the Elizabeth Islands, but the sky is deep space blue and the stars are overwhelming. The Big Dipper and Little Dipper hang low in front of me. The Milky Way arches from behind, over my head, and fades below Ursa Minor into the fuzzy glow from Woods Hole. Magnificent. The moon is gone already. Europe-bound jets are so high they don't make a sound. At the summer solstice, it's not just the longest day of the year - it's the shortest night.

I cast from knee deep, alert but tranquil. It's a privilege to be here. The slow hand over hand retrieve gets done by feel as I can barely take my eyes off the stars. My hands create an innocent sand eel, bopping along toward a meal. My ears are alert for a splash, and my eyes swivel like a lizard for the sign of a swirl. Come on, big girl. Drama. My mind conjures up the anticipation of casting toward a feeding fish and waiting for the take.

It's quiet. After a while, I walk left towards Dogfish Bar, past the houses I'd rent if I had three times the budget (hah). I'm dreaming of how this will go, making up the story in my head. The sensation of 'oh my God, this is a big one' coming through the rod. That rush a predator gets - "I am IN the zone!" I have wanted to share the experience of this place. I've taken notes, scribbled observations on past trips, and this time all it will take is a few decent fish to put it all together. Yet a mile later, the sea remains still.

Ahh, man. Conditions are perfect. With only a light breeze, the water is flat enough to see and hear any activity. Nothing happens. No bass, no hickory shad. No sand eels tonight. I guess there will have to be a next time. Soon, at a frighteningly early quarter to four, the glow in the northeast will appear and signal the beginning of the end to this fish story. I begin the walk back, surprisingly still serene. The gentle sea keeps rolling in, the gentle, implacable sea.



Congratulations!

Jackie Preston is now the CT Council's Women's Initiative Chair

Jackie has been fly fishing since the mid 70's, a TVTU events volunteer, and the chapter's Treasurer for the last 6 years. She was a grassroots member of "Women in TU", attended the inaugural 2012 "Women's in TU" symposium in Colorado and their second meeting in Wisconsin 2013. Jackie plans to meet and discuss with all of Connecticut's TU chapter's WI Chairs to start implementation of the Women's Initiative (WI) Best Practices recently developed by the WI Executive Group.

Their goal remains to increase women's membership and leadership. The work group developed an action plan and retention plan. They created best practices developed to be posted on the TU web site. Thus far, the membership has increased to 10,000 women. The Women's Initiative chair position at the chapter level is established and now we have 45 chairs in 26 states. The group is excited about the new family membership drive. We now have 3700 more family members since the drive started. Next year there will be another survey of women: What do they want in TU?

Another interesting factoid Jackie mentioned is that CT fishing licenses for salt and fresh water increased by 7 percent for women last year and the men's decreased by 2 percent. As Dylan once said: "Times they are a changing..."

For more information see November's Women's Initiative [Newsletter "On the Rise"](#) and [Women in TU](#).



Fly of the Month

"Peacock and Partridge"

Video and tying by Tightlines Productions

Here is a soft hackle pattern that has been around longer than all of us and still is an effective fish getter. It was one of the first flies I learn to tie but with a gold tinsel tag and no wire rib. There're a snap to tie. Try it in #14/16s. Quarter cast and swing it and/or "lift" it to simulate an emerging caddis or mayfly. Don't be too quick to recast... hesitate a moment or two before recasting. And, then be prepared for a jolt at the end of the drift. [Link to tying video](#)

Fly Tying Recipe: Peacock and Partridge

- Hook: Orvis Tactical Wide Gap hook (or TMC 100), size 12 and smaller.
- Tag: Fluorescent green, 8/0 or 70-denier. (Old school - gold, silver tinsel)
- Rib: Gold Ultra Wire, small.
- Thread: Black, 8/0 or 70-denier.
- Body: Peacock herl.
- Hackle: Hungarian partridge neck feather.
- Head: Black tying thread and Head cement.

"Equipment Corner"

by John Preston

About 6 or 7 years ago I purchased a Quick-Seine and I now wonder why I didn't have one sooner. I tried using a small aquarium net many years ago but it just didn't do the job and it was a pain to carry around. It converts your landing net into a seine net to capture stream insects and to provide you with an instant sampling of insects without the inconvenience of pocket-searching, juggling, or tying-on. A compactible white seine net is stored and transported in a pouch on your landing net handle and is always ready to use. The elasticized net is stretch over your landing net in seconds to capture and examine insect specimens on or below the surface of the water. It dries completely inside its breathable pouch after use. It comes in a couple of sizes. It cost me less than \$20 back when and worth every cent I paid.



This year while fishing "new" water out west... it again save the day for me. Large rainbows were sporadically working the surface but there wasn't any hatch visible in the air or on the surface. I whipped out the seine and all I could find were a few gray nymph shucks which I guessed were about size 16. I tied on a #16 gray sparkle dun with no floatant (to simulate an emerging fly) and after a few casts a working bow gently sipped it in. Set the hook and several minutes later netted a plump, strong 18" Henry's Fork rainbow. Needless to say I highly recommend this product.

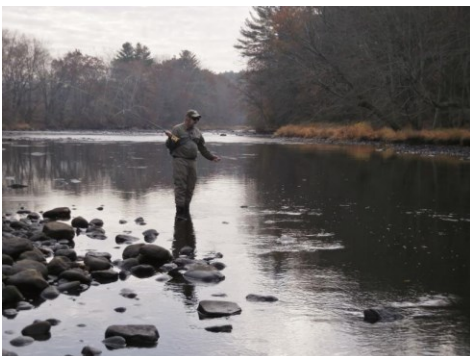
If you have any product reviews or recommendations, please submit to [John Preston](#).

A Morning with the... "Shetucket Salmon Slayer"

by John Preston

My first experiences fishing for broodstock Atlantic salmon in the early 90's were less than impressive. I caught a couple of small salmon with 9 weight saltwater gear (which is overkill) my first time out and it was like fighting a couple of old waterlogged military boots. Couple this with high water, cold weather, inconsistent dam releases over the years and the result is I haven't been salmon fishing on the Shetucket River for years.

But at the urging of my friend Dale Pitkin I once again gave it a try. He's obsessed with stalking broodstock Atlantics and has been telling me how very successful he's been for weeks. Dale recently sent me pictures of salmon he has been slaying in the



The "Shetucket Salmon Slayer"

Shetucket and that was all I needed to break out the gear. The lure of catching big fish is like catnip for anglers. We also convinced our buddy George to meet us at a not so secret spot and the "Tres Amigos" of yesteryear were once again pursuing the Big fish. Back in the early 80's we made a pilgrimage to Pulaski after I had read an article on the then "new" fishery and of course, we had to go. It was the like the "wild West" back then (snagging was allowed) and we couldn't believe the size of the fish being caught.

Stuck behind a school bus I got to the Shetucket a bit late and Dale and his buddy Todd were already on the water. I walked down to observe them while I finished my breakfast tea. As I

arrived riverside Dale had just release a salmon and hooked into another a few cast later. It was nice one and it fought fiercely to free itself. I snapped some pics from the bank and after Dale had release it, I headed back to the car briskly to put on my gear.

Armed with a 5/6 weight (a tad light) I waded over to Dale and Todd to get the lowdown. Dale said that the UFO ("Unnamed Fly Only" - I am sworn to secrecy) was the fly of the day and there were several fish working in front of us. Needless to say his sage advice was spot on. Graciously they let me take the hot spot as I tied on one of my UFOs that had been gathering dust for years. The river was a little low for my 4 foot extra fast sink-tip (a floating line would have been a better choice... in the car, of course) but after a few quartering casts a salmon took the fly and exploded to the surface as I set the hook. The salmon jumped about five times, swam up and down the pool, and took me into the backing. I'm not fan of large arbor fly reels but I see their have their place... so, I got a real workout playing the salmon on my single-action reel. The next time I will use one of my old multiplier, light-weight Orvis reels... I've got a soft spot for the older classic fly reels. Finally the battle was over, removed the hook, Dale took a quick photo and I released the magnificent salmon.



A short time later George showed up. He had been fishing downstream because he couldn't find a parking spot near us. He was given the spot and shortly he too was into a nice salmon. The salmon quickly leaping several times headed downstream and into George's backing. After a prolonged battle the salmon grudgingly was coaxed to shore... another fine specimen. George was able hook another one but after a few leaps and quick charge downstream the salmon was able to dislodge the fly. We tried a while longer but the salmon suddenly seemed to get a case of lockjaw. All in all, a great morning of fishing for broodstock Atlantics.



"Grinnin' George"

If you haven't tried fishing for broodstock Atlantic Salmon before I suggest giving it a try, but unlike my first attempt don't go with a heavy outfit. Try a 6 or 7 weight (best), 9 to 10 foot rod and a quick retrieving reel (I still don't like LA reels). Dale likes classic salmon flies but they aren't necessary. I hear a Mickey Finn is a killer. Here are a couple of links that I have found that might be helpful if decide to stalk Shetucket salmon: [Ben Billelo](#) has a 5 part write-up that is very good and [Noreast](#) contains a short piece by Ron Whiteley.

Or, better yet have a friend like Dale "Salmon Slayer" Pitkin to point the way...

P.S. - After stocking the Salmon (15 to 25 lb.) this week I suggest an 8 weight fly rod or small winch might be in order...


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 **Jacqueline P. Preston**
Owner



Place an Advertisement in "Stream Lines"

Looking to reach a new and diverse audience? Presently we have over 470 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 purchase an ad contact Jim Smith via email at, jsmiththamesvalleytu@gmail.com. Thanks for your support!

Help Raise Funds for Thames Valley TU



by Jim Clark

Dear Chapter Members...

Here is a way you can help us raise funds to support our various projects. Donate your no longer used Fly Fishing equipment and books. We will raffle them off and use the money raised to support the chapter's various projects. As a non-profit chapter we can give you a letter for the value of your items which you can use for tax filing purposes. For more information and to make a donation call Jim Clark at 860-546-6924. Thanks for your support!

To join Thames Valley TU or for information please visit our website www.thamesvalleytu.org
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