

CURRENTS

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Greater
Boston
Chapter



The "House" and the "Farm"

Rob Nicholas, veteran guide and outfitter associated with Housatonic Anglers, delighted our well-attended November GBTU meeting with a fascinating update on the Housatonic and Farmington Rivers. This is the second time Rob has done a presentation for the Chapter; he had new slides and new information about the Housy, which he admits is his favorite piece of water.

And, as in his earlier presentation, Rob gave a thorough briefing on the areas in Chile and Argentina where he both books flyfishing trips, and where he has fished for the better part of a decade. Rob described for members the amazing diversity of fishing opportunities in the Southern Hemisphere, ranging from lake fishing for cruising trout to small streams and larger rivers. Dry fly fishing is not the norm down south, but Rob described several rivers that are the equivalent to a Missouri River ex-

perience, i.e. fishing a big spring creek to rising fish.

In many opinions the most interesting portion of the show, however, was Rob's discussion of his recent experiences on the Housatonic. The dam on the river was re-licensed in 2005, which brought about a major change. The flows are now run of the river, meaning water is no longer held back for generation, dropping water levels and flow rates as well as raising the temperature of the water, then released in waves. The impact of this welcome change is still a work-in-progress, according to Rob. Longer term, he believes improved, more natural flows will encourage production of more aquatic life in the river, because there is less scouring of the bottom caused by the surges in water. This in turn, should lead to better dry fly fishing over time.

Because the dam on the Housy is a top flow structure, it heats up in the summer time. As a result, trout fishing slows during the summer months. Born to fish, Rob's reaction is to go farther downstream and chase a giant, healthy smallmouth bass population. And for a complete change of pace, he's got mulberry flies to throw to 15 pound carp cruising the river.

Rob can be contacted at Housatonic Anglers, at HousatonicAnglers.com, by e-mail at housangler@yahoo.com, or call 860-672-4457. (Story by Peter Schilling)



November meeting attendees heard Rob Nicholas speak about the Housatonic, the Farmington and fishing in Chile and Argentina.

JOIN TODAY AND HELP CONSERVE
COLD-WATER FISH HABITAT!



After the Westfield River clean-up day work session as part of the Connecticut River Watershed improvement project, several GBTU volunteers traveled up-river to check out the site of the proposed Russell wood-burning (biomass) electric power generating plant. See story Page Two)

2009 GBTU Officers/Directors:

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Peter Schilling - pmacds@aol.com
Keith Weinstein, VP - Keith@gbtu.org

CHAPTER ELECTION

The Chapter held our annual election of directors during the business portion of our annual meeting, part of the meeting November 24, 2008. Three current board members - Brad Voight, George Holmes and Frank Flowers - didn't stand for reelection for a variety of personal reasons. Our thanks and appreciation to each for many years of dedicated service to and support of GBTU. All other Board members stood for and were nominated for one-year terms. Chapter members also elected Garry Crago to his first term as a member of the GBTU board. The membership also voted to re-elect the current officers for another term.

Here is a list of Officers and Board members for 2009:

- David Glater, President
- Keith Weinstein, Vice President
- John Salemi, Secretary
- Skip Galanes, Treasurer
- Directors (the Officers and):
- Fred Boland
- Garry Crago
- Fred Jennings
- Frank LaGambina
- Jim Miller
- Curt Peterson
- Peter Schilling

Save the Date
Sunday, April 5th
PASTAFEST 2009
Hibernian Hall
Watertown



GBTU is supporting litigation to prevent construction of a "biomass", wood-burning power plant on the Westfield River in Russell, MA. (Photo - Janet Knott/Boston Globe)

Rumble on the River

Readers will note several references in this *Currents* to proposed construction of a wood-burning power generation station in Russell, MA on the banks of the Westfield River. While many fishermen and other conservationists are quick to applaud mitigation of fossil-fuel powered generation systems, it appears the Russell biomass plant is an example of the old adage "All that glitters is not gold".

Considering atmospheric pollution and global warming, use of sustainable fuel such as forest wood to produce electricity sounds like an environmentally sound idea. But demand for wood is growing with its use as an industrial fuel, spurring significantly increased "mining" of the nation's forests and driving the cost of fuel timber sky-high. According to the Boston Globe (October 9th), "There were 196 wood burning electricity plants in the United States as of January 2007, including 72 with 40 megawatt capacity or larger." These plants require a lot of material. Environmentalists warn that using the slag from other foresting operations and gathering materials from the forest floor interrupts the natural production of new forest growth, undermining the real sustainability of forest products as fuel.

Cooling and processing would remove up to 880,000 gallons of water from the river every day. In order to remove pollution from discharges into the air certain chemicals are used, which are then discharged into the river. And the wood-burning process reduces the volume of 880,000 gallons to a discharge of 130,000 gallons. The temperature of the water is increased significantly, thereby negatively affecting the river as a cold water fishery.

The plant *sounds* good; Massachusetts authorities have amassed support behind financing and promoting its construction, as permits and approvals have been fast-tracked, scientific documentation short-cut. If, as often happens, the builder sells the plant as soon as it is operating, it may walk away from subsequently discovered environmental problems.

What could these problems be? Diminished fish habitat for trout and salmon? Damaged water quality? Loss of water flow necessary for environmental sustenance? Over-demand for timber for fuel, resulting ironically in increased "greenhouse effect"?

The Chapter desires that authorities exercise due diligence and scientific research of the builder's plans and fast approvals. Those of us who have fished or just admired the Westfield will find Peter Schilling's presentation at the January meeting very interesting.

UPSTREAM ...

Monday, January 26th ...

Drumlin Farm, Rte. 117, Lincoln MA; doors open at 7:00, program starts at 7:30;

(1) Update on project to establish whether brown trout can successfully summer over in the lower Assabet River. GBTU Chapter member Miles McCloy, manager, and Andy Bonzagni, owner of Concord Outfitters, will make the presentation. (2) Tim Purinton, Rivers Restoration Planner for MA Riverways, describing volunteer activities to protect and restore water quality and healthy stream flows, and improve fish habitats.

Monday, February 23rd ... (Drumlin Farm), and

Monday, March 2nd, (McFadden's Saloon, State Street, Boston);

(1) Board member Peter Schilling will review the proposed Russell wood-fueled electric generating plant on the Westfield River and describe the impacts this plant would have on this active cold water fishery.

(2) Fly fishing the Falkland Islands - presentation by Hugo Williams.

March ... (See PastaFest, April 5th)

Sunday, April 5th ...

PASTAFEST (Details Follow)

Monday, April 27th ... (Drumlin Farm);

GBTU member Peter Hill will describe fly fishing in New Zealand.



Jim Miller says "We need two things: Early reservations, and donations for our live and silent auctions!" PastaFest April 5th, 2009.



Fourth Grade, Marie L. Baldwin School in Cambridge. Trout in Classroom tank provided by GBTU.

Trout in the Classroom

Funded by GBTU, the combined 4th grade classes of the Maria L. Baldwin public school in Cambridge has started a Trout in the Classroom project (TIC).

Brown trout eggs were obtained in early December from TU member Wayne Miller, owner of Blue Stream Hatchery in West Barnstable. Mark Hattman, president of the Cape Cod Chapter built a beautiful wood cabinet for the tank and supplies. On December 13th the eggs began to hatch and by the 15th the class noted that they had a 90% hatching ratio.

After hatching, the two fourth grade classes started a weekly observation of the young trout. Each student is keeping a journal of life in the tank. The class is also beginning to participate in Fin Pals, organized by Jessica Griglak in New Jersey. Fin Pals is an email-based student exchange, linking students involved in TIC in various grades throughout the USA. It's been extended this year to schools in the UK.

In early May both 4th grade classes will take a field trip to Walden Pond where the students will release the Brown Trout.

DOWNTOWNERS!

**GBTU 2nd in-town meeting!
Monday, March 2nd, 2009
5:30-7:00 PM
McFadden's Saloon
State Street, Boston
See "UPSTREAM" for Program
Information**

Warning: Warming Up!

Vermont Nuclear wants to heat up the Connecticut River - our help is needed to stop it!

The Connecticut River Watershed Council is looking to GBTU members to support its opposition to a permit that would allow the Vermont Nuclear Power Plant in Vernon, VT to increase the temperature of water Vermont Yankee discharges into the Connecticut River. The plant's warm water discharges can affect the river as much as 50 miles downstream. Visit our Chapter website, www.gbtu.org, to read the letter GBTU Chapter President David Glater recently received from the Council.



Make your reservations now for PastaFest 2009, April 5th. Great dinner, swell prizes!

2008 Angler's Quote of the Year:

"My greatest worry is that when I die my wife will sell my fishing equipment for what I told her I paid for it."

- From a Memorial Service Program, donated by Anders Nilsson



Look closely to see trout fry; Trout in the Classroom, Cambridge.



FIRST CLASS
US Postage
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Framingham, MA 01701
Permit No. 19



Enormous pike caught in Canada late this fall.

“Address correction requested”

PRESIDENT'S STREAMSIDE CHAT - David Glater

It's time for a recap. *Think global, work local* is our theme, and we have tried to live up to this goal.

September saw our first-ever in-town meeting. Our next will be Monday, March 2nd, a week after our February 23rd meeting at Drumlin Farm. In-town meetings should make it easier for those living and working close to Boston to attend.

In 2008 the we have been supporting a project to see whether brown trout can hold over on the Assabet River in Concord. Hear about this project at our January meeting at Drumlin Farm. This meeting will include a presentation from MA Riverways on volunteer activities to help protect and restore water quality and stream flows, and improve fish habitat.

We are assisting a legal challenge to a biomass electric plant proposed on the Westfield River in Russell, MA; it would suck up to 880,000 gallons a day, returning only 130,000 gallons

of warm, chemical-laced water, frustrating efforts to restore Atlantic salmon spawning in the Westfield, which has the best salmon return results among CT River tributaries and threatening trout survival in the prime flyfishing stretch along Rte. 20. We've been following a project to remove dams on the Shawsheen River in Andover which would enable Atlantic salmon, shad, and herring to access the length of the river.

Presentations have included updates on (1) MA Marine Fisheries Division's project to bring shad back to the Charles; construction of dams, water pollution at spawning grounds and over-fishing have extirpated the population; (2) removal of dams on the Penobscot River in ME. Removal of two and construction of a fish bypass will reopen the river to salmon, eel, shad and other anadromous fish migration. TU helped obtain Federal funding.

Thanks to our successful PastaFest we were able to contribute to Penobscot restoration and to Casting

for Recovery, a retreat for women recovering from breast cancer. We continue to provide volunteers and financial aid to Battenkill and Red Brook stream restoration. We've initiated another Trout in the Classroom project at Maria Campbell School in Cambridge with volunteer help. TIC is a TU initiative encouraging elementary, middle, and high schools to study ecosystems, water quality and conservation while raising trout eggs to fry in a tank we funded. Students ultimately deposit the fry in Walden Pond.

Thanks for your help, support and encouragement.

Enter the Great EMail Raffle!

Here's what you can win: A fifty-dollar gift certificate redeemable at Firefly, Concord Outfitters or Orvis - your choice! *Here's how you enter:* Send your email address and name to fred@gbtu.org; if your email isn't already in our data base (and 600+ aren't), your name will be entered in the drawing at our January 26th 2009 meeting. Winner notified by email.