

CURRENTS

Newsletter published by Greater Boston Chapter, Trout Unlimited

November/December 2008

Greater
Boston
Chapter



Congenial Jim Rusher; Gaspé guide, casting professor, bon vivante and dual-program speaker.

Gaspé, Spey, Goin' Away!

Jim Rusher's tale in two cities ...

If there isn't a "Mr. Congeniality" award in the TU Hall of Fame, there should be, and, in this writer's opinion, Jim Rusher's name would appear prominently on the plaque. Unfortunately we arrived too late to witness Jim's expert demonstration of use of the two-handed spey rod, a valuable tool used frequently in salmon fishing. Having used one in Iceland's frigid glacial streams, I can attest to the spey's facility in throwing seventy-five feet of line out into a constant headwind.

Inside our temporary meeting area at Drumlin Farm Jim educated and entertained us with a slide presentation about Fishing for Salmon in Quebec's Gaspé Peninsula. Judging by the volume and enthusiasm of the post-program questions from the audience, his message was both heard and inspiring. Rusher operated a fly-fishing shop and guide service on the Salmon River near Pulaski NY for over twenty years, built up the Orvis store operation in the Boston area, and has worked

effectively for L. L. Bean's marketing success. He is now guiding salmon fishermen in the Gaspé under the nom de guerre "La Chapelle Lodge".

Quebec has designated certain salmon rivers to be "Zec" streams, the fisheries of which are controlled by the towns through which they run. Two hundred inch average annual snowfalls ensure plenty of water throughout the season.

There are four fishing assignment systems that are used generally but not uniformly, among the sixteen rivers on the peninsula. The most valuable assets are the "pools" that yield salmon; a "holding pool" is one where a fish which enters at the beginning of the season will generally stay in that pool for its duration; a "resting pool" is found in faster-running water and fish are entering, resting, then moving on upstream all season long. "Beats", or stretches into which a river is segmented for fishery management purposes, will contain one or more pools and the number of "rods" fishing a beat at any one time is limited.

The first system for beat assignment is the Private Club; one club, Rusher says, owns 35 kilometers on a river and it determines who fishes, when and how many fish at a time. The cost for those lucky or influential enough to fish a Club beat may be between \$1,000 and \$7,000 per angler per week. The November First Lottery System, used by several of the river authorities, requires out-of-area anglers to purchase lottery tickets (up to ten per angler per river); then, on the first of November, the tickets are pulled and the dates and times for fishing are meted out according to the order in which the tickets are drawn.

The Forty-Eight Hour Water system is also a lottery; tickets cost \$2 each. If an angler's ticket is drawn on a given date, he is invited to fish forty-eight hours after that date; if he can't, his ticket is discarded and another drawn for that time slot. Peter Schilling, GBTU's resident salmon-stalker, makes use of the fourth system, Public Waters, which require an angler to pay \$35 to \$100 per day of "open" fishing in the Public Water stretches. Rusher points out Public Water is very good water to fish, the difference being that there is no 'crowd control'. On the more productive and desired stretches the fisheries employ 24-hour guards to make sure the rules are obeyed.

In Quebec the engagement of a guide is not legally required. Fishing licenses cost \$130 per year for a "kill license", which allows the fisherman to keep his catch, and \$10 per year for a Non-Kill, or catch-and-release license. The incentive is clear.

Jim was generous with salmon-fishing tips. "The most important action to take, and the thing that makes Pete Schilling such a great salmon fisherman, is to have a plan", he says. "Study the river conditions for each piece of water once you know when you want to fish. Know what equipment you'll need, what the weather might be like, and, also important, if you're going to waste time, waste time in the middle of the day, not in the morning or late afternoon!"

"Rusher" cont., p. 2-

GBTU Officers/Directors:

Fred Boland, VP - fred@gbtu.org
Frank Flowers - ennisxblue@yahoo.com
Skip Galanes, Treas. - skip@gbtu.org
David Glater, Pres. - david@gbtu.org
George Holmes - gholmes499@aol.com
Fred Jennings - peakdawn@yahoo.com
Frank Lagambina - gambi07@comcast.net
Jim Miller - troutbum351@yahoo.com
Curt Peterson, VP, Currents Edit. - curt@gbtu.org
John Salemi, Secy. - john@gbtu.org
Peter Schilling - pmacds@aol.com
Brad Voight - morellbox@aol.com
Keith Weinstein, VP - Keith@gbtu.org

"Rusher", cont. from p. 1-

Dry flies, some of them appearing bizarre to trout fishermen, are very effective, Rusher advises. "Fish the edges of the 'cone', the triangular formation in the water's surface as it enters a pool", he adds. "When any of you are thinking about heading to the Gaspé Peninsula, remember, it's an expensive adventure. You want to do it right so you get the most fun out of it. You can contact me and I'll be happy to help you get where you need to go and fish when and where you need to fish."

Jim made this same presentation at the Boston meeting one week later with concurrent rave reviews.

Contact Jim Rusher at jimrusher@gmail.com, or at 617-875-5170 (Cell).

UPSTREAM ...

Monday, November 24:

Guest speaker Rob Nicholas, veteran guide with Housatonic Anglers, will update us regarding fly-fishing on the Housatonic after 2005 re-licensing of a dam to make it a "Natural Flow River". He will also report on the Farmington, a tailwater fishery not well known to some. Rob also represents several lodges/outfitters in Chile and Argentina, and will tell us about planning trips.

Monday, January 26:

A representative from Mass Riverways will describe the need for GBTU members to do "stream surveys" on local rivers and streams, especially those that might hold native brook trout. These surveys are the critical first step in planning for river and stream improvements and restoration.



Watershed restoration has made it possible for sturgeon to return to the Penobscot River.

Cause Celebre:

Penobscot River Restoration

October 27th our small meeting room was graced with the presence of TU National staffer Jeff Reardon and Penobscot River Restoration Executive Director Laura Rose Day, armed with an interesting program about the Project. The PRW covers a third of the state of Maine, some 8,570 square miles, and is the second largest watershed area in New England.

"Penobscot Power & Light bought all of the dams on the watershed in the '90s", Reardon told us. "This was a good move for them, and it has helped our project in the long run." The power company has been more cooperative with restoration efforts than other utilities. Jeff also described how the Penobscot tribe of Native Americans has been very active and influential in the Project, as they are interested in developing their revival of birch bark canoe manufacturing and, of course, salmon restoration on the river.

Salmon are the focus of the Project. Blue-back herring and alewife passage and spawning are important as well, as they keep cormorants and eagles well-fed, drawing attention away from newly-hatched salmon fry and, later, the smolts returning to the sea. Proper management or removal of the dams on the Penobscot and its tributaries is important for restoration of the herring, alewife and salmon runs.

"Merely getting the Atlantic salmon listed as *endangered* was a fight", says Reardon. Commercial interests know that "listing" a species gives it special attention from conservation and wildlife agencies, so they try to obstruct the designation if they can.

Historically the salmon fishery was closed in 1947 when only 40 fish spawned in the Penobscot. Last year, Reardon reports, 2,200 fish spawned, up from 1,600 the previous season. Swimming downstream is more of a problem than upstream for the fish, as they get caught in the very strong, concentrated flumes and get chopped up and beaten.

Although the focus species, salmon are not the only beneficiaries of the Project. Sturgeon, striped bass and the American eel also naturally use the river. "The eels are particularly interesting", says Reardon. "All of them begin life at the same time in the Sargasso Sea in the South Atlantic, then follow the Gulf Stream into fresh water rivers, stay there for fifteen years while they mature, then swim back downstream and on to the Sargasso together to spawn again, just the opposite of the salmon cycle."

Bonefishing in the Bahamas

GBTU member Andy Bonzagni, long time friend and supporter, sends this note: "As fall wanes and next trout season is a dream, we prepare for another winter. Warm weather could be something to look forward to if you plan a trip for some bonefishing. For those who have not angled for bonefish, think of them as *trout on steroids*. For bonefish, as with some trout, you stalk and cast only when you spot a fish; only floating lines are needed. So for you trout bums this is a natural progression.

Bonefishers may choose among many locations but I prefer the Bahamas for cost and travel time. One can get to most of the Islands in a day, and flights via Nassau hover around \$400. This year we traveled to Cat Island for a do-it-yourself-week of fishing. The south end has small creeks about the size of the Swift River, as well as smaller flats about twenty acres each which were very productive, easy to navigate, and produced fish in the 3-5 pound range. The size of the creeks and flats gave us about four hours in each location before moving. By the third day we knew the tides and what time to be in each area. We started to see bigger fish, landing several in the 8 pound range. Melissa hooked one that was easily ten pounds tailing at the mouth of a creek! He ran for the mangroves and broke her off. We changed tippet size, but for the rest of the day Melissa muttered about that fish.

Cat Island is just one of many in the Bahamas offering self guided fishing excursions. Finding an island and the services you need within your budget is a priority. Most have shore-accessible flats/creeks crawling with fish. If shorts and t-shirt are inviting winter attire, don't let another day go by without bonefishing. For more info:

-AndyBonzagni, Concord Outfitters
andy@concordoutfitters.com
978.318.0330



Andy Bonzagni with a prize Bahama mama bonefish.



Restoration of Red Brook in Wareham receives a lot of financial and energy support from GBTU, sea-run brook trout the major beneficiaries. Here a crew carpe's a photo op during a work session.



Westfield River clean-up day yielded a surprise, a safe at the bottom of the river. Peter Schilling's smile disappeared when it turned out to be empty!



This crew recently released a thousand brown trout into the Assabet River as part of member Miles McCloy's college project. Miles is second from left, Andy Bonzagni is far right.

Earn Holiday Cash! 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. The winner will be notified by email.

Elections Aren't Over Yet!

GBTU Boardmembers have developed a slate of new directors and officers for membership approval; this notorious group will be presented to those present at our November 24th meeting at Drumlin Farm. President David Glater and the nominating committee are seeking one more person who might be interested in serving; contact mrpresident@gbtu.org if you are or know of someone who would be interested.

Trout in the Classroom

Our GBTU mentor in the Newton Trout in the Classroom program, who has served the kids and the fish well for several years, would like to find someone to take his place. Interested? If so, please contact mrpresident@gbtu.org.

CURRENTS



Newsletter of Greater Boston Trout Unlimited

51 Hawthorne Street
Arlington MA 02476

"Address correction requested"

FIRST CLASS

US Postage

PAID

Framingham, MA 01701

Permit No. 19



Skip Galanes and Peter Schilling GBTU at the Westfield River cleanup project.

PRESIDENT'S STREAMSIDE CHAT - David Glater

Our first in-town Boston Chapter meeting drew a respectable turnout - about 35. Some 15 were "new faces" - not regular attendees at Drumlin Farm. Jim Rusher's presentation on Gaspé salmon fly fishing and spey casting techniques was as well received at this session as it was the previous week at Drumlin Farm.

The GBTU Board will be discussing another possible downtown meeting. Input from those who attended, or wish they had, will be appreciated!

Assabet River Update. This spring the Assabet in West Concord below the mill dam was stocked with brown trout for the first time. With the support of GBTU, Chapter member Miles McCloy organized the successful stocking of 1,500 browns. He did this as a college project. Summer and early fall reports indicate the project was successful: The Assabet has more angler and non-angler attention; Summer

brought reports of holdover fish being caught. In mid-October another stocking was accomplished.

An ultimate goal is to determine if brown trout will hold over through the summer. The Assabet suffers low flows and warm temperatures in summer, but Miles, who's fished the river his entire life, knows areas that serve as refuges for the trout. Check www.gbtu.org or get more details at our meetings.

Westfield River clean-up. The CT River Watershed Council invited GBTU to participate in their one-day clean-up of the river and tributaries. We worked on the Westfield River. On short notice we gathered a few Chapter members to work and explore the Westfield, portions of which are designated a Federal Wild and Scenic River, and to view a site where a wood-fired ("biomass") powered, water-cooled, electric generating plant is proposed.

We need your e-mail address! Short notice invitations prove email is effective for an communicating

immediately with members. Many more members could have had a day on a beautiful river, helping clean it up or counting fish had we had more email addresses. Our sizable Chapter could collectively better function as a chorus on issues that concern us as environmentalists, anglers, and citizens. You need to help us. (See "contest" page three.) Please send your email address to Fred Boland, fred@gbtu.org, with your name and address.

Thanks, and *Happy Thanksgiving!*



Tony Vinciguerra and Peter Schilling enjoyed the Boston in-town meeting.