

CURRENTS

Newsletter published by Greater Boston Chapter, Trout Unlimited

November, December 2009

Greater
Boston
Chapter



Doug Lyons's "audio-fishual" AuSable River presentation drew enthusiastic applause.

Fishing the Roots

Doug Lyons stalks the birthplace of Trout Unlimited

Fifty years ago, give or take, a handful of anglers on the AuSable (pronounced "Aw-Sobble") River in upper Michigan founded an organization to protect, preserve and restore cold water fishery habitat. Thus was born Trout Unlimited. Our ambassador to the Battenkill, Doug Lyons, traveled to the AuSable with friends in 2008, and in June of this year, the fiftieth anniversary of TU's founding, with his son, Clayton, and board member Garry Crago. Each year the solstice coincides with a gigantic "hex" hatch on the river, attracting regional fishermen and producing an abundance of large fish. "If you see the wild irises blooming, the hatch is on!"

On both trips Lyons' logistical headquarters was Gates AuSable Lodge, owned by Rusty Gates, in Grayling, Michigan. "It's simple, but clean and comfortable", Crago and Lyons reported. "There's a fireplace, a nice restaurant and one of the best-supplied fly and tackle shops anywhere." The stay cost them \$40 per person per night, reasonable in contrast to fishing destinations further west.

We are all familiar with Doug's interest in Battenkill habitat restoration; the first section of his excellent audio-fishual presentation involved dropping sizable cedar trees into the river to provide "hiding areas" for solitary-minded trout. According to him, the AuSable doesn't experience the wide range of flows our eastern streams encounter; "Stream flow is steady. Once a tree is snugged up against the bank it will stay there for many years." It is one of the largest spring creeks in the lower forty-eight states. The river's edge, which is sandy-soiled, had been clear-cut totally about a hundred years ago. The trees there now are second and third growth trees.

Fishing the AuSable is an experience, according to Lyons and Crago. "The water is generally no more than waist-deep, mostly just above the knees. One sees coyote, bald eagles, deer and other wildlife constantly." It is also a challenge: "There's lots of woody debris. You have to cast your fly, literally, right up against the debris. There's so much insect food on the river the fish don't have to move to get it. You can catch them, but you have to put the fly right on the fish", says Garry Crago.

On both trips Lyons noticed there were few anglers during the day. His party picked up few fish, but they found the real action, both fish and human, takes place at night when the hatch is its most intense. "You're fishing in the pitch dark", Doug recounts. "You have to set the hook by sound, as you can't see your fly. The guides know exactly where the fish are and how to catch them. They say, 'Thirty feet, two o'clock', and you try

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Garry Crago accompanied Doug Lyons and his son, Clayton, on their June, 2009 AuSable adventure.

GBTU Meetings are always this interesting. Find out the fourth Monday of each month, 7:00PM, Drumlin Farm, Lincoln.

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to cast to that blind spot, then wait for the sound of a strike. It's challenging." At night fishing is done from AuSable boats, special, 18' long, with low gunnels, carrying the guide and two fishermen.

The cost of the trip is relatively undaunting. A guide charges \$325 for two anglers for a full day, which is limited only by the hours the fish are biting, not by the clock. Garry recommends a 6-weight, 7-foot rod, glow-in-the-dark line, and 2X tippet for the big browns. "These fish really give you a fight!" When a large fish Garry hooked wrapped itself around an underwater log, the guide jumped into the water, disentangled the fish and let it go, still on the hook, so Garry could bring him to the net.



Doug Lyons cradles a big brown during the "hex hatch" on the AuSable.

**Conservation minded?
Visit www.gbtu.org
See
"Mayland on Water
Flow"**



GBTU chapter president David Glater: "Did I just say that?!"

GBTU president David Glater recently followed up on the "Gulf Brook Culvert Project", a habitat improvement project partially funded by the chapter. The following is the response from Todd Allan Richards, Fisheries Biologist, MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife:

Hi David, the project is moving along. Pat Huckery (DFW) and Ellen Fisher(Pepperell Cons. Com) have done the site wetlands delineation and Tony Stella and Doug Cameron of the Office of Fishing and boating Access have completed the site work to prep the site plan engineering. These plans should be ready in 2-3 weeks. Pat and I are also preparing the initial permit documentation. Lots of pieces and parts, but they are still coming together.

By the way, since last you visited, the plan has changed from one culvert replacement to 2. The commitment of the OFBA to complete the site plan engineering took a big burden off the project and allowed us to consider replacing Oak Hill Street as well. Once done, this will be a very nice project.

Thanks for touching base and I will try to do a better job of keeping you in the loop.

*Todd Allan Richards
Fisheries Biologist*

MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife

UPSTREAM ...

October 26th ...

Regular chapter meeting, Drumlin Farm, Lincoln MA, doors open at 6:30, program at 7:00. Public invited.

Program:

"Fishing Yellowstone On The Cheap", an excellent presentation by member John Bolongnese, with an excellent visual presentation.

November 2nd ...

A glutton for punishment, or just enough of a 'good thing'? John Bolongnese will repeat his popular **"Fishing Yellowstone On The Cheap"** at our **"In-Town" Meeting** on Monday evening at historic Durgin Park in Faneul Hall. Social Hour begins at 5:00. Besides enjoying a great TU event, these In-Town get-togethers make for terrific networking opportunities. Bring a friend!

November 23rd ...

"The Magic of The Bamboo Fly Rod", presented by Chris Moore, president of the White River Watershed Chapter in VT/NH. A member who has seen this presentation says he came away educated and excited about the history, science and growing popularity of this venerable icon from fly fishing's origins. Drumlin Farm, Lincoln, doors open at 6:30, program at 7:00. Public invited. Bring a friend.



Chris Moore will present "The Magic of the Bamboo Fly Rod" November 23rd.

Legislation Word from TU

David Glater received an email from TU seeking support for Senate Energy and Climate Change legislation. An edited version of that email follows. According to Mr. Glater the bill treats biomass burning as a "renewable energy source", like wind or solar energy, though burning wood generates carbon dioxide, a major component of greenhouse gas.

From: **Beverly Lane**, Trout Unlimited
Subject: *Senate Energy and Climate Change Bill and National Sportsmen and Women Telephone Town Hall-October 20*

Greetings TU volunteer leaders,

We are writing about some big news on climate change legislation. We are at a crossroads right now, and we have an opportunity to get an effective bill passed. If it does not pass in the coming months, it could be a year or more before another opportunity comes around.

We have been especially pleased by how well our volunteers and staff have worked with our conservation allies, including the National Wildlife Federation, Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Ducks Unlimited, and others.

Senate climate change legislation is set to move forward in the coming weeks.

On September 30, the Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act (S. 1733), is vitally important to our mission, as it seeks to significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions while providing funds for projects that will help trout and salmon populations adapt to ongoing climate change. Following passage of a similar bill in the House, the Senate has the opportunity to advance critical legislation for conserving trout and salmon watersheds.

On Tuesday October 20th Theodore Roosevelt IV, former Senator John Warner of Virginia, and thousands of other sportsmen and women from across the country met in a teleconference to discuss climate change and its impacts on fish and wildlife.

With climate legislation recently introduced in the Senate, the coming

weeks will be key to elevating the voices of those concerned about the impacts of climate change on our nation's natural resources. Congress needs to hear from sportsmen about the need to pass strong climate legislation.

We are preparing an alert in support of the legislation and draft op-eds that you can use, and we are working on "Season's End", which will highlight adaptation projects. Our strong science base will be embodied in two reports, "Healing Troubled Waters" and "Season's End".

Time is running short for trout and salmon.

Climate change presents myriad challenges to trout and salmon: warmer water temperatures, reduced water supplies, and more extreme events such as floods and droughts. Climate change also exacerbates challenges from invasive species and diseases, and changes in ocean conditions impact salmon ocean habitat and food availability.

Recent studies, outlined in the reports indicate that trout could decline by more than 50 percent in Appalachian streams and more than 60 percent in the West because of the impacts of climate change. Salmon species in the Pacific Northwest could decline between 20 and 40 percent.

S. 1733 will reduce pollution to avoid the worst effects of climate change.

The Senate bill will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2020 and by over 80% by 2050, reductions scientists believe are necessary to avoid the worst impacts of climate change. Greenhouse gas emissions will be reduced by setting limits of emissions each year and forcing oil companies, power plants, and other emitters to pay for their emissions. The bill also provides investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy and protects consumers and small businesses from rising energy prices.

S. 1733 will provide funds for projects to help trout and salmon populations adapt in a changing climate.

Even as we reduce greenhouse gas emissions it will be critical to complete habitat restoration projects. The legislation includes provisions for protecting fish and wildlife from the impacts of climate change. Sections of the bill that direct state and federal agencies to conserve and protect fish and wildlife species and their habitat are crucial to the future of trout and salmon. Funds provided would help conduct research necessary to understand the impacts of climate change on coldwater streams and rivers and carry out conservation, restoration.

Specifically, the bill will provide funds to the Department of the Interior to conduct research on climate impacts on fish and wildlife and to implement habitat and species protection efforts on DOI lands and to the Forest Service for protecting important fish and wildlife habitat on its lands. Additional funding will be available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund to protect and acquire additional important lands and waters for fish and wildlife. The bill also provides money to EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers to protect large freshwater and estuarine ecosystems, like the Great Lakes and the Yellowstone, Connecticut, and Columbia and Snake River basins. State fish and wildlife agencies will receive substantial funding for fish and wildlife habitat when they develop natural resource adaptation plans.

Climate change may be the greatest threat to survival for trout and salmon species TU has worked to protect for 50 years. S. 1733 presents a balanced approach to reducing greenhouse gas emissions while investing in our natural resources.

We look forward to working with members of Congress and the Administration to craft an effective bill as it moves through the next steps of the legislative process.

You can see a copy of S. 1733 by visiting [Clean Energy Jobs and American Power Act](#) on the web.

Join Now! david@gbtu.org



Clayton Lyons poses with his father, Doug, in front of the Gates Lodge sign, Grayling, Michigan

"Address correction requested"

STREAMSIDE CHAT -Guest Chatter: Garry Crago

Celebrating TU's 50th anniversary seems a good time to reflect on two rivers, each of which experienced significant improvements through the efforts of dedicated anglers and conservationists.

The first such river is the Au Sable in Michigan. Upon the banks of this river in Grayling sixteen fishermen founded Trout Unlimited. I had the pleasure of fishing the Au Sable with Doug Lyons this summer and was fortunate enough to be there during the famed hexegenia hatch. The hatch was simply amazing, bringing to the surface the river's significant population of large wild brown trout during darkness; in fact it was not uncommon to fish until 3 AM. However, what struck me even more was the passion for this river of the anglers we met, and their collective goal that it remains a sustainable cold-water fishery with a thriving wild trout population. The Au Sable is also

the home water of Rusty Gates, proprietor of the Gates Lodge (in Grayling) that was home base during our trip. Rusty's long-term involvement and leadership is one of the key reasons the river has thrived for such a prolonged period. The Au Sable is a prime example of hard work, dedication and stewardship combining to protect cold-water resources and wonderfully reflecting the mission of TU.

And that takes me to the second river that warrants mentioning: Vermont's Battenkill. I've had the opportunity to fish it several times with Doug Lyons, who is truly a friend of this river. Doug acts as a "guide" for anglers new to the river and, more importantly, participates as a volunteer with state and federal officials, working on habitat restoration and fish studies. It's an idyllic trout stream with good flows and cold temperature even in the hottest summer periods. The fishing on the 'Kill, however, had declined in the late 90's and much work was

required. With habitat restoration and strong stewardship, the river is recovering, as both electro-shocking studies and angler reports confirm. My advice? Talk to Doug about Battenkill restoration efforts and, of course, the fishing! By all means visit the Battenkill so you can see firsthand the restoration efforts. Perhaps you'll catch one of the large wild browns that are known to inhabit the river. Maybe you'll even want to become a volunteer.



Garry Crago and "Big, Bad, Leroy Brown" on the Au Sable.