



SMITH RIVER TU NEWSLETTER

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2022

UPCOMING EVENTS

December 1st – December regular meeting. Rania's Restaurant in Martinsville. Special Guest speaker George Palmer with Dept of Wildlife Resources (DWR)

January 27-28th – Angler's Choice Open House in Martinsville, VA. Chapter will host an information booth at the event. More info to come.

2023 Calendar of Events to be released January 2023

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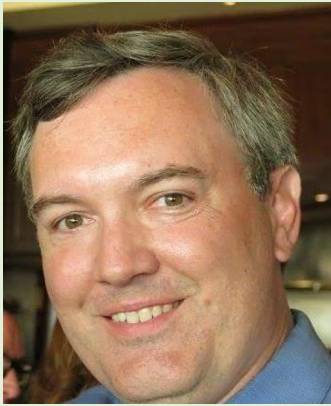
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PRESIDENT'S CORNER



I hope you all had a very Happy Thanksgiving. This newsletter will cover both November and December due to the busy holidays and limited chapter activities. I hope you all have found this newsletter informative and I look forward to continuing next year. If you have any suggestions for an article please let me know. I hope you are able to get in some fishing to close out 2022 and look forward to a great 2023.

-Jeff Deering



Recent Chapter Events

Oct 25th-27th Sampling of the Smith River using the older "barge" method. Great turnout of volunteers. Thanks goes out to all TU members who assisted.



Successful Smith River Sampling Event

By Al Kittredge

Virginia DWR sampled 5 sites on the Smith River October 25-27 using the barge method of sampling which requires a large contingent of biologists and volunteers. This is the same method used several years ago before DWR Region 2 acquired an equipment laden raft which accounts for most samples on the Smith today. So why did we go back to the old method..... here is a quote from Region 2 Fisheries Biologist George Palmer:

“The goal is to use this gear to collect native species (ie forage fish) and age-0 brown trout, neither of which is sampled very well with the raft unit we typically use. We have older data (collected with barge units) for comparison. The whole point to all this will be to see how the cessation of peak power production (powerhouse taken out by a landslide) has impacted the native species and brown trout recruitment. We've seen a positive response in brown trout growth and sizes, but don't really have the native species info. Should we be able to document a significant improvement in the native fish community, we hope to take this to USFWS so that they can then work with the Corps to reduce/eliminate peaking flows if they ever bring the generation units back on line”.

So what's a "barge" look like. They are made of metal or plastic and resemble an oversize bathtub. They are equipped with a shoulder harness and pulled by the strongest biologists in the crew. Each barge (we had three of them) holds a gas generator, electronics control box, assorted cables attached to probes and a 50 quart cooler or tub for holding the fish.



Here is what it looks like in action. You'd think nothing would get by this many people but that is not the case.



DWR Region 2 Fishery Manager Scott Smith and George Palmer, the DWR biologist assigned responsibility for the Smith River say the barge method collects about 30% of the fish, and the raft method 7-10%. The barge method is very labor intensive but collects smaller fish which is really what we wanted to study in this sample. The raft method only requires a handful of people but only covers a narrow section and collects the larger fish.

We only cover a predesignated length of each sample site. These are the same sections sampled in previous years. By doing this the biologists are able to compare changes.

The collected fish are off loaded from the barges and placed in holding tanks where each is identified, checked for general health and measured. Although our emphasis was on non-game fish and recently spawned brown trout we also collected some nice rainbow and brown trout.

Trout less than 10 inches were fin clipped (for later identification) and moved to below the Martinsville Dam where previous samples have shown they have more food. Many grow into trophy size fish.



Lots of non-game or forage fish were collected as well. We had a team of biologists who specialize in non-game fish identify each species and collect data from them. I've been helping DWR sample the Smith River for over 25 years and can attest to the fact that we are seeing more non-game fish than anytime that I have been involved.

As a layman who has fished the Smith River for about 30 years it is my observation that there is no shortage of fish. We never used to see many of this year class of recently spawned brown trout at locations very far distance from Philpott Dam. They are now spawning throughout the river. Non-game or forage fish were almost nonexistent when I first started fishing the Smith. They appear to be making a comeback in the past few years. George Palmer the DWR biologist responsible for the Smith River will analyze the data and brief his findings at the SRTU meeting on Thursday, December 1, 2022 - 6:30 pm, Raina's Restaurant, Martinsville, VA. The meeting is open to the public.

Editor's note: This article has been edited for length. Please see the full article at <https://dwr.virginia.gov/blog/smith-river-sampling-seeks-out-native-non-game-fish-and-young-brown-trout/>

Killer Bug by Frank Sawyer



Materials

Hook: Nymph, size #10-18

Weight: Lead/Lead-Free wire (optional)

Thread: 6/0 or UTC 140 denier

Tail: None or short tuft of yarn

Body/Abdomen: Grey yarn*, 100% wool

*Jamieson's Shetland Spindrift Wool, Color: Oyster #290

Tying Instructions

- Mount hook in vise. Weight is optional. Wrap .020 lead wire around the center 1/3 of the shank. Use the number of wraps as desired.
- Attach thread with a jam hitch. Build a thread ramp on both ends of the lead. Stop thread above the barb.
- Cut a 6" piece of yarn. Tie in the yarn on top of the shank above the barb. Advance the thread to one eye width behind the hook eye.
- Wrap the yarn forward forming a symmetrical, cigar shaped body to one eye width behind the hook eye. (Wrap back and forth on the shank if necessary to form the desired shape.) Secure the yarn with several thread wraps.
- Snip off the excess yarn. Form a thread head. Tie several half hitches or whip finish. Trim off thread. Apply head cement.

Women in Fly Fishing

Need inspiration to start fly fishing or improve your casting skills if you already fly fish, keep reading. Eleven-year-old Maxine McCormick became the youngest person ever named to the American Casting Association's All American Team, scoring a 289 out of a possible 300 points in fly-casting accuracy at the 2015 ACA National Tournament.



The score exceeded the current women's fly casting accuracy record of 286 and became a new junior casting record. The score was the fourth highest overall, behind only casting legend Steve Rajeff, her coach Chris Korich, and one point behind her dad Glenn McCormick. The highest women's score at the 2015 Nationals was 270.

Maxine now holds seven junior casting records, six for accuracy, and a 111-foot fly distance record. The photo and story appear in the Feb-Mar 2016 issue of Fly Fisherman magazine.

Maxine (born 2004) is the youngest world champion in fly casting history. In 2016, at age 12, she won the women's World Casting Championship in fly-fishing. She is America's No. 1 female caster. She is the first child to participate in and win a gold medal at a world-class event since 13-year old American diver Marjorie Gestring won the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maxine_McCormick

Fly fishing and fly casting is for everyone at most any age.

This year the 2023 Virginia Fly Fishing & Wine Festival will feature a women's fly fishing workshop titled, "Beyond the Cast Women's Symposium"

The symposium will offer a variety of intermediate to advanced classes for those female fly anglers that want to take their skills to the next level. The entire event is held indoors and runs concurrently with the VA Fly Fishing & Wine Festival

The festival will be held January 14-15, 2023, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the Meadow Event Park, 13191 Dawn Blvd, Doswell, Va. 23047. Seating is limited so sign up early.

For more information visit the festival website at: <https://www.vaflyfishingfestival.com/>

COMMUNITY CORNER

Are you interested in taking on a more active role in the chapter? We currently have committee lead positions open and are looking for volunteers. The time commitment is flexible and you don't need to be an expert to help the chapter out. Contact Jeff Deering for more information

Nominating committee – Actively helps to build our chapter leadership (Lead Open)

Advocacy committee - Chapter voice for local issues affecting our local rivers and streams (Lead Open)

Conservation committee – develops and leads our Chapter's conservation efforts (Co-Lead Open)

Diversity committee – promotes the Chapter and TU to all members of the community and seeks to attract new members(Lead Open)

Events committee – helps develop and promote the Chapter's activities (Lead Open)

Fundraising committee – everything costs money and this position helps us raise the funds we need (Lead Open)

We are also in need of a social media lead to handle our Facebook page and Instagram account.



Smith River Chapter

Trout Unlimited

Smithriver.tu.org

Visit our Facebook group where we share event announcements and photos.
<http://www.facebook.com/SmithRiverTU>



For story suggestions or to share photos from your recent fishing trips please contact us at smithrivertu@gmail.com

Smith River TU Chapter Officers

Chapter President – Jeff Deering (jdeer76@yahoo.com)

Chapter Vice President – Eric Tichay (erictichay@yahoo.com)

Jason Collins – Chapter Secretary (jaymcol81@yahoo.com)

Treasurer – Roy Ford (r16ford@hotmail.com)

Board Members

Joe May

Al Kittredge