

The Salmon Run



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A Publication of the Saco River Salmon Club, P.O. Box 115, Saco, Maine 04072, 207.282.6985

From the President's Corner by Jack Parker

By 1995 I'd been reading the 'Salmon Run' for three years and had vaguely promised myself to attend a meeting. With our Waterboro camp upgraded for my impending retirement, the Saco River Salmon Club hatchery could be a rewarding place to spend some spare time during the long winters. My club debut would be at the annual banquet at Seascapes. I imagined arriving at happy hour to enjoy the sunset over idyllic Cape Porpoise harbor. Two hours drive from Boston and a gale was brewing. By Arundel it was fierce. I entered Seascapes somewhat wet and disheveled but comforted to be part of that happy scene. By evening's end I was hooked. I haven't missed a banquet since, and SRSC is part of my life.

This year will bring changes. Our longtime hosts and SRSC members, Art and Angela LeBlanc, will work their last SRSC banquet as they have sold Seascapes this spring. This may be our last chance to celebrate at this magnificent location. Please join us on May 9 by returning the enclosed reservation form (and raffle tickets). You will make life much simpler for our retiring secretary/treasurer, John Cadwallader, if you do this before the last minute.

Our club's sincerest thanks go to Art and Angela for the superb cuisine and service they have provided all these years, and to John C and wife Roe for their unsung efforts in carrying out the necessary logistics. Thanks for all the wonderful memories!

On March 24, Dick Neal and I attended a public hearing in support of a bill to restrict personal watercraft in portions of the Saco River before the IFW committee of the state legislature. Much supporting testimony was heard, in particular a home video showing six years of flagrant violations. Riverside residents presented many complaints about jet-ski abuses. We voiced our directors concern about operation of these craft in sensitive salmon habitat, particularly tributaries which were previously inaccessible to motor craft. A manufacturer's lobbyist was the sole dissenter present.

We are concerned about reduced federal funding available to USFW Downeast hatcheries that provide the native Maine Atlantic salmon eggs we incubate in our hatchery. Brood fish for these eggs are maintained in the Green Lake hatchery at Ellsworth in what is termed their domestic program. This program is the only source of eggs for our hatchery and for the Fish Friends program in elementary schools throughout Maine. This year in our area alone, children in more than two dozen schools will receive salmon eggs from our hatchery to raise in classroom aquariums and to later stock in the Saco River under supervision of Fish Friends volunteers. Reduced funding at

Green Lake is jeopardizing continuation of this program, giving us pause about future egg supply for our hatchery, Fish Friends, and Saco River salmon restoration. We have discussed our concerns with USFW, the Atlantic Salmon Federation, and the Maine Atlantic Salmon Council, and are in the process of making them known to our congressional delegation.

We'll keep you posted. We may need your support.

Membership Report By John Cadwallader

Please extend a warm secret handshake to the following new members:

Leon Ogrodnik, Harpswell
Jay Boomer, Wells
John Read, Saco (Life member)
Tim and Donna Linley, E. Parsonsfield
Diane Ricciotti, Peaks Island
Tony Derosby, Kennebunkport
Dr. David Palmer, Portland
Michael Leavitt, Saco

Leon doesn't really qualify as a new member. He was one of the club stalwarts back in the early years when the idea of a hatchery was just forming. I'm sure Leon can remember many late night Director's Meetings when we literally burned the midnight oil. I hate to think what time he got home. Leon has been "away" for a couple of years, but he's back with us now. Diane deserves some kind of award, both for hatchery volunteer work, and for being a regular at our fly tying sessions. She drives straight to the hatchery from her job in Augusta, changes clothes, and then has to leave in time to catch the last ferry home.

Current membership stands at 178 compared to 136 for the same date last year. We're definitely out of the doldrums. For those of you still in arrears, the enclosed Banquet Reservation Form has a space for dues. Not sure if you're paid? Check the code in the URH corner of your mailing label: P3, P4 or PL means you're paid for 2003, 2004 or Life. (With John, above, we now have 11 of the latter.) P2 or P1 means you last paid in 2002 or 2001. And lastly, those 178 renewals have brought in approximately \$2,800 in dues and \$4,500 in hatchery contributions for a total of over \$7,300. The figures I reported in last month's newsletter were 129 members and \$6,000 in total revenues. That's quite a surge in one month.

March Meeting Featured Two Guest Speakers

By RJ Mere

After yet another fabulous potluck dinner, John Cadwallader presented the list of names of officers and directors for approval by club members at this annual meeting. As stated in John's report in this issue of the Salmon Run, we have a new secretary and treasurer to replace John Cadwallader when he heads off to sugar maple country (Vermont) at the end of this year.

The first guest was David B. Tibbetts, a life long avid fly fisherman and outdoor watercolorist. His paintings are primarily of fisherman, their boats, and the ponds and rivers of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. They hang in a few select galleries and private collections throughout the country. They are featured in our second guest's book, "Hatch Guide for New England Streams". Dave displayed his artwork and donated 20 percent of all sales during the evening of the meeting to the hatchery.

Our second guest was Thomas Ames, Jr., a commercial photographer whose work appears in books, magazines, and catalogs throughout the U.S. and Canada. Tom presented a slideshow with close-up photos of a wide range of nymphs and explained the behavior and hatching dates of each. He remained on hand to autograph his book "Hatch Guide for New England Streams".

Thanks to Kittery Trading Post

By John Cadwallader

We have received a \$500 hatchery donation from our friends at the Kittery Trading Post, Kittery Maine. The Adams family members have taken a personal interest in our club over the years. We're pleased to have them as members as well as financial supporters. Why not give them a personal thank you on behalf of the club the next time you're in the store. And remember to support all of generous business who support us.

Election Results: Long Standing Record Intact

by John Cadwallader

The annual elections held at our March meeting marked the 23rd year in a row we've preserved our remarkable record: no one has ever run for office in our club and lost. Jack Parker and Dan Bonville will continue to serve as President and Vice President, respectively. Larry Orme and Tom DeBruin are stepping in as Secretary and Treasurer. The Board of Directors remains the same, with the exception that Bill Winward and Bob Hopkins have stepped down, and Joe Cuccaro and Rick Cavers have stepped in to fill the empty chairs. Our sincere thanks to Bill and Bob for their service to the club: We look forward to seeing them on a regular basis at future club functions.

Banquet on May 9th at Seascapes

by John Cadwallader

Enclosed in this newsletter is a reservation form for the upcoming

annual Banquet. Those of you who have attended in the past know what a special evening we have to look forward to. As you read in Jack Parker's "Presidents Corner", Art and Angela Leblanc have sold the restaurant, but they'll still be on hand at the time of the Banquet to help with the transition. We can only wish the best for both the Leblancs and the new owners in their future endeavors. I've got a premonition that on the evening of May 9 we'll all be treated to one of those glorious Cape Porpoise sunsets that poor Jack didn't get to see at his first Banquet (if ever).

Social hour begins at 6:00 PM, and the meal is usually served shortly after 7:00 PM. Following the meal, we'll swear in the incoming officers and present several coveted awards: The Conservation Award is presented to the individual or group from outside the club that has made the most significant contribution to achieving our goals over the past year; The President's Award goes to the individual club member who has similarly contributed in the eyes of the President. And, of course, the evening will end with our stupendous auction and raffle. Art Leblanc, auctioneer extraordinaire, has been seen standing on the end of the Cape Porpoise Pier lately, seemingly shouting into the empty ocean for hours on end. No he's not calling mermaids, he's getting his voice in shape for the auction. (Angela's the one who studied opera - maybe we should give her a turn.)

Note: Donations of auction/raffle items will be much appreciated. Do you have some excess fishing or outdoor items that are cluttering up your cellar? Do you have a fishing camp (salmon or otherwise) with an unbooked weekend? Even non-fishing items are popular. One year we had a pink teddy bear donated. To my pleasant surprise it went for top dollar, thanks to some fierce bidding from several of the (distaff) guests. When you have 100 or so people in attendance, I'm convinced there's no item so bizarre that 2 or 3 people won't bid on it. I should think any such donations would also be tax deductible, at least for the value received by the club.

Grant's Camps Raffle Tickets Enclosed

The grand finale at our banquet will be the drawing for the winner of a 3 day weekend for two at world famous Grant's Kennebago Camps on Kennebago Lake in the Rangely region. Grant's is an old time fisherman's paradise with all the modern amenities. Access is via about 10 miles of private gated road off Route 16 near the town of Oquossoc. You'll stay in a comfortable private lakeside cabin with your authentic Rangely boat and motor tied up at your dock. Fishing is good on the lake throughout the day, or grab your waders and challenge the big salmon and trout in the nearby Kennebago River. (All waters are fly fishing only.) All meals are provided, and there are plenty of activities for the non-fishing spouse: moose watching or hiking to the top of nearby 3,700 foot West Kennebago Mountain, to name a few. You don't have to be present at the banquet to win, but it sure is fun if you are. Our thanks go to owners John and Carolyn Blunt for donating this wonderful prize.

Collaboration is the Key to Restoration Success

By Mark Woodruff

I attended the annual meeting of the Saco River Coordinating

Committee. This is the group that meets to review fishery activities on the Saco River. Attending the meeting were representatives from Maine Department of Marine Resources, National Marine Fisheries Service, FPL Energy, City of Biddeford, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission, and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. Each year when I attend, I am reminded that there is probably no other group that meets to discuss issues related to anadromous and resident fish populations in a specific watershed. We are part of an important collaborative effort.

So that you know what happened a brief explanation of the key topics follows.

American shad are reluctant to enter the confines of the Springs and Bradbury locks. FPL Energy will solve this by trucking the shad from Cataract to a location above Springs and Bradbury Dams. River herring and Salmon are able to negotiate the locks. Water temperatures permitting, salmon will be trucked to the Big Ossippee.

Scale samples taken from salmon reaching the Skelton Fish Lift were used to approximate the number of individual stocked as smolts and fry. Out of the 47 returning fish, four are believed to have been stocked as fry the remainder were smolts. The implication for our program is that the Saco River needs to have a better balance of smolt and fry stocking. Although smolts appear to offer a better rate of return, biologists believe the fry stocking produces adults that have more 'street smarts' and will end up being better spawners.

Electrofishing in September 2002 revealed that a good number of our fry have matured to parr. There was discussion that decreasing the number of fry stocked in a stream would benefit parr size. With fewer fish there would be less competition for resources.

In anticipation of greater numbers of returning salmon there is a need for the Club to locate new spawning grounds.

The Club will continue its habitat surveys and use of temperature loggers. FPL Energy has offered to assist with additional temperature loggers.

The Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission will assist the Club with and early and late stocking of fry from the hatchery. This should alleviate the overcrowding problem we have once fry are feeding in the troughs.

FPL Energy has submitted its Draft Application for re-licensing the Bar Mills Dam. On a separate track they will be assessing downstream passage at the dam. A discussion of the need for upstream passage was tabled until this summer.

Upcoming Events by John Cadwallader

Wednesday, April 9, 6:00 - 9:00 PM: Final fly tying session at hatchery

April 25-28: Atlantic salmon trip to Restigouche & Matapedia.

Saturday, May 3rd, 9:00 AM- 3:00 PM : Open House at the hatchery
Public is invited

Saturday, May 10, 8:00-?: Fry Stocking by foot & canoe. Meet at hatchery

May 31-June 2: Trout and salmon trip to the Dead and Carrabasset Rivers

Contact myself or any other Director for details on any of the above

Upcoming Conclave Needs Your Help! By Dan Tarkinson

I'm writing to you to remind you that the FlyFishingInMaine.com Spring Conclave at Moosehead this June. As the event approaches (less than 3 months away), the excitement is building. We look forward to a fun and successful event. As you probably are aware, the event is completely non-profit, we are donating all proceeds to the Saco River Salmon Club (www.sacosalmon.org) and Trout Unlimited's

Youth Program (www.tu.org/campaigns/youth_edu.html), two very worthy causes.

We need your help to ensure we raise enough money to cover our limited costs (getting OldGuide out here for you all to learn from, and covering location and marketing costs). While I'm not asking for/or expecting a handout (although we'll take it if you insist!), what I would like for you to do is consider signing up for one or both of the classes offered by OldGuide www.flyfishinginmaine.com/conclave/ (the only "events" at the conclave that will cost \$\$), and/or buying some raffle tickets for a chance to win a Carrie Stevens tied Gray Ghost (www.flyfishinginmaine.com/grayghost/) a truly unique opportunity. Please consider participating in one of these ways to help FFIM ensure a successful event...if all goes well, we plan to do this every year!

Lastly, if you haven't arranged for a place to sleep yet, there is still some camping space available at Casey's \$6.00 pp per night...as well as a limited number of spots in the main cabin (read: indoors bed) for \$30 a night, so e-mail me back if interested. Otherwise, there are many other motels/campgrounds etc. Campsites in the Greenville area that would be glad to have you, but I recommend you make your arrangements early, as space is filling up everywhere.

Thanks for your time...and I'm looking forward to meeting you all in June!

Dan Tarkinson, FlyFishingInMaine.com

Note: Nick Sibilias has tickets for the Carrie Stevens raffle or they can be ordered through FFIM.

And Now the Rest of the Story....

By Mark Woodruff

Last month I met with Matt LeBlanc of FPL Energy to discuss the company's plan for downstream passage at the Bar Mills Dam between Buxton and Hollis. As it turned out, our meeting added another perspective that was needed in the article I wrote for the January issue of the Salmon Run.

I had focused on the high number of mortalities observed in the 2001 Bar Mills Dam turbine study. Matt pointed out that a turbine mortality study is just that: smolts are released directly into the turbine intake to see if they survive. However, under normal circumstances, smolts migrating downstream are more likely to follow spill flows over the bypass dam when the boards are down. Alternately, the sluice near the turbine intakes provides another downstream passage. Since salmon prefer swimming close to the surface, both routes can pass a majority of the migrating smolts. So, what happens to the few fish that enter the turbines? According to Matt and Ed Baum's article in the December 2002 Salmon Run, modern turbines offer a minimum of 90 percent survival.

To prevent fish from swimming into the turbines, FPL will be testing the effectiveness of the submerged plastic fence I described in the January article. Recall that four foot and eight foot depths will be tested to see that smolts are directed toward the sluice. The challenge for FPL will be keeping the fence vertical in the water as the current rushes towards the intakes. This may be especially difficult where the sluice is close to one of the intakes. In light of this, we discussed positioning the submerged fence to direct fish from even entering the canal leading to the turbines.

I left much more informed and encouraged. I think we still need to be vigilant about those few mortalities. In a restoration effort, every smolt counts. They are our hope that there will be more adults returning to spawn in the years to come.

Support Your Local Chapter of CCA

By RJ Mere

The Saco River Chapter of CCA Maine is having its First Annual Dinner and Auction on Thursday, May 1, 2003 at the University of New England Dining Facility, 11 Hills Beach Road, Biddeford .

Doors Open at 5:30 PM. Please join us for a great evening of food, cocktails, and fun! We will have a live and silent auction and raffles. Some of the product highlights include: Walden Kayak, lots of framed artwork, guided local fishing trips, Orvis and L.L. Bean gear, and much more!

Ticket Prices:

\$25 for current CCA members

\$25 for Spouse

\$35 for Guests and Renewing Members (Includes a 1 year membership in CCA)

Please help us preserve and conserve our local marine environment. For more info or to buy tickets please call the office at

1-800-639-3961. The Coastal Conservation Association is a 501(c)(3) non-profit dedicated to the conservation of our marine resources. Contact Timothy Rafford, Assistant Director, Coastal Conservation Association, 500 Route 1, Suite 23, Yarmouth, Me, 04096, 1-800-639-3961, Cell: 207-318-4854

This book's worth a space on your shelf

by Scott Wilson

John McPhee has a new book, "The Founding Fish". McPhee has written several excellent works dealing with the environment and the outdoors. The book is about another anadromous fish, the American shad. McPhee uses a combination of personal experience, historical and biological research to chronicle the story of the shad. The sheer numbers of shad historically in our rivers is staggering. George Washinton fished commercially for shad and in 1771 recorded a catch of 7,760 fish! There is a most interesting chapter on the breaching of the Edwards dam on the Kennebec. It includes a great description of the man on the backhoe actually breaking through the cofferdam and setting the river free. One chapter is bound to be controversial. In it McPhee explains his "catch and eat" philosophy. This philosophy challenges many of the beliefs and ideas I have about catch and release. The book culminates with an appendix of recipes for preparing shad and shad roe for eating.

"The founding fish", made for great wintertime reading. It made me realize the impact we've had on all anadromous species and how the shad and the rivers in which they migrate to have historically been a great resource.

Saco River Salmon Club

Membership Form

Name:

Address:

City:

State: Zip:

Phone: ()

E-mail address

Dues are annual - January through December

Single \$15 Family \$25 Student \$5 Senior \$5 Life \$300

Donation to hatchery \$

Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."

Send to RJ Mere,
9 York St.,

Kennebunk , ME, 04043 or email to rjmere@gwi.net

