

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

To paraphrase old H.W. Longfellow; "The eggs are coming! The eggs are coming!" These won't be in red coats but in little pink jackets, and looking closely, you'll see the blacks of their tiny eyes. Hold your fire because they are coming as friends for us to raise to salmon fry for replenishing the Saco watershed in May.

Despite the numbing cold last Saturday, the hatchery provided comfortable shelter for the gung ho volunteers there to prepare for the coming season. Biologists Paul Christman of the Atlantic Salmon Commission, and Dave Bean of National Marine Fisheries Service outlined upcoming events while the volunteer crew sterilized 160 incubators where the eggs will be hatched. On Friday, February 6 at about 11am, we will receive our first shipment of about 500,000 eggs from the Green Lake Hatchery in Ellsworth. Two weeks later, Friday, February 20 at about 2pm, we will get the second batch of up to 300,000. Thanks to Bob Monroe and our volunteers, the hatchery is ready to receive them.

We hope to expand our restoration efforts this year by holding back some fry to raise for an additional year until they are smolts, ready to go to sea. In order to do this we must have our stocking permit changed and with the advice of the biologists, we are in the process of doing that. Over the years, the Saco has produced high return rates for both fry and smolts in comparison with other northeastern rivers. If we receive permission to raise smolts, we plan to do so this year and stock our first class in 2005. This is exciting! It could be a major step in producing much higher salmon returns by 2007.

From February 6 until stocking time in mid May, we will need help in tending the eggs and incubators, testing and maintaining water quality, and caring for the feeding fry until we stock them in the river. This is the eighth class of fry we have produced since we built the hatchery in 1997, and each year we have improved the working environment. Our biggest challenge is to recruit new volunteers each year to meet our growing needs. We are encouraged by the response so far this year but we need more. Please consider donating some of your uncommitted time and bring along a friend or two. It is a rewarding feeling to know you are contributing to the restoration of salmon in the Saco. Please plan to visit the hatchery on or after February 6. You can make a difference!

Something else to consider is the growing popularity of our monthly dinners at Saco's Trinity Church. Lynne Jackson has prepared and served up moose meat in lasagna and meat loaf form at the last two meetings with delicious sides and salads. The dessert table is growing, as is the attendance. Our reigning flytyer laureate, Don Sicard, pinch-hit for the scheduled speaker last week and brought some imaginative new cone head streamer patterns plus strike indicators to display and auction off. I was fortunate to win some and I am itching for some open water to wet them in. You have only two more dinner opportunities this spring. The next is Tuesday, February 17 at 6pm. See you there!

January's Meeting Gave Us Good Food and Entertainment By RJ Mere

Once again, Lynne Jackson put together a scrumptious dinner for 30 plus members. Her moose meatloaf, filled with tomatoes and melted cheese, was so popular that not one morsel was left. Steve Berry generously donated the moose meat. Thanks, Steve! The dessert table is starting to look like the display in a baker's pastry shop. Don Sicard provided the entertainment by showing us how to tie one of his innovative flies.

We would like to have everyone see the Alaska trip, which Bruce Bell prepared to show us, but we have one hitch: we need a power point projector because the photos are on his laptop computer. If anyone has a projector to bring in for our February 17 meeting, please call Dan Bonville (207-625-7693). See you at the next meeting!

Membership Dues and Hatchery Donations By RJ Mere

We want to thank the members for their great response to update their membership for 2004. Right now, hatchery dollar donations are more than double the membership dollars. This is sorely needed and we appreciate it very much.

If you have not sent in your 2004 membership dues, please take the time and do so now. The membership form is located at the end of this issue of the Salmon Run. Information you provide to us on the membership form allows us to update our files and to ensure that you do not miss the Salmon Run newsletter and special announcements. Remember, this is a membership driven organization. Our major fundraising is directed to businesses and foundations for equipment and materials to raise salmon from egg to fry. Your membership

dues helps us to pay the ordinary bills (electric, heat, and phone bills) of the hatchery.

Bar Mills Re-Licensing Back on Track By Mark Woodruff

This past summer and fall, progress on the draft report assessing the need for upstream fish passage at the Bar Mills Hydro facility came to a halt. According to Larry Miller of the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), hydro issues on other rivers in Maine prevented representatives from the federal and state fisheries agencies from making their recommendations. This necessitated FPL Energy, owner of the dam, to request an extension for filing the final report to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC). Fortunately, discussions between USFWS and state fisheries agencies have resumed! The group is condensing its timeline and hopes to have the draft assessment report available in March of this year. At that time, FPL Energy, the fisheries agencies, and other interested parties (i.e. Saco River Salmon Club) will meet to reach a consensus on a final assessment report. Meanwhile, FPL Energy re-licensing application for Bar Mills is being reviewed by FERC. The fisheries agencies and the Club requested additional studies. Specifically, that FPL provides a preliminary design and cost estimate for construction of the upstream passage. FPL is reluctant to do this without first having gone through the assessment process mentioned earlier. The Club believes that a preliminary evaluation of the design and costs of upstream fish passage would be advantageous for FPL since it would be part of operating the re-licensed hydro facility.

Restigouche Trip Dates Are In By RJ Mere

Dan Bonville has been in touch with Peter Dube, owner of the Hotel Motel Restigouche, and they have worked out the dates for springtime fishing for Atlantic salmon in Quebec. Mark your calendars for April 23 through 26. We begin driving up on Friday, April 23, and fish on Saturday and Sunday, and return on Monday, April 26. The price for the trip is \$540.04 (US) for two people. The price includes lodging in the comfortable rooms, gourmet meals that will knock your socks off, and restaurant tips. Guide costs, fishing licenses, and taxes are not included in the price. To avoid trouble, please remember that this is a special price for the members of the Saco River Salmon Club. If you wish to have a room for your private use, you will be charged at a higher rate. A fishing guide will cost \$280.00 for two people for two days. That's \$175.00 Canadian. Fishing license costs are variable, depending upon which river, the Restigouche or the Matapedia, and can be purchased locally. Call Dan Bonville to sign up for the trip and to find out where to meet for the ride to Canada.

Club Trips Schedule for 2004 By Dan Bonville

February 20-22: Our annual ice-fishing trip up to the Belgrade Lakes. It will be our fourth year at Bob and Laura Richters' Belgrade four season camps.

April: Fly-casting seminar at Sonny Pierce's Shy Beaver hatchery and fly-fishing club. Dates are to be determined soon.

April 23-26: Atlantic Salmon fishing on the Restigouche and Matapedia Rivers.

May 21-23: Steve Berry's camp on the Moose River. Fish the Moose River, Indian Pond, the Kennebec River, both the East and West outlets and branches. Book early on this one!

June 4-6: Fly-fishing on the North and South branches of the Dead River, the Carrabassett River, and Chain of Ponds. We will stay in Chris Bond's ski lodge. This is a fun trip for kids of all ages!

July: The Penobscot River, below Lincoln, for smallmouth bass. Dates to be determined.

August: Kayaking and canoeing for smallies on the Saco River with guides Mark Howland and Bill Diamond. Dates to be determined.

September: The West Branch of the Penobscot River. Camping, fishing, eating, and fun! Dates to be determined.

October: Fishing the East and West Outlets of the Kennebec River and hunting for Roughed Grouse from Steve Berry's camp on the Moose River in Moosehead Lake country. Dates to be determined. I am expecting a full house, so book early.

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 \$

I would like to volunteer in the following areas:

Board of Directors

Newsletter

Hatchery Operations

Stocking

Hydropower Issues

Legislation

Public Relations

Membership

Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."

Send to RJ Mere, 9 York St., Kennebunk, ME, 04043
or email to rjmere@gwi.net