

The Salmon Run



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From the President's Corner by Jack Parker

Almost everything, good weather, salmon returning to the Saco, and our annual banquet, seems to be delayed this spring. Finally, in the last few days, the first two salmo salar were lifted into the river by the fish elevator at Biddeford's Cataract dam. As no smolts were stocked in 2001, we expect significantly fewer fish this year. For the first time in recent years, returns may almost solely depend on fry stocked by our hatchery in the late 90's, plus some wild propagation in the river. We are keenly interested in this year's results and very hopeful that this spring's rains will preclude the adverse high water temperatures and low flows of the past two summers. We are working with US Fish and Wildlife and the Atlantic Salmon Commission to increase future smolt stocking to augment our hatchery fry. For the past few years, the Saco has had a higher rate of returning smolt than any other Maine river. We think that both fry and smolt stocking are necessary to build a healthy population. Some readers may have recently become aware of a "Super Smolt" program being developed by the Marical Corporation of Portland, for both wild salmon and the aquaculture industry. This forward-looking program may have important implications for our river's future. We hope to have more to tell you about this soon.

More than seventy members and guests enjoyed our May 9 annual banquet at the former Seascapes, now Pier 77 in Cape Porpoise. We will sorely miss Angela and Art Leblanc and wish the new owners all success in their new venture at this fabulous site. The Leblancs were presented with a special award to hang in their retirement home. Carolyn Blunt accepted our annual Conservation Award on behalf of the Saco and Biddeford Savings Institute, and our retiring secretary/treasurer, John Cadwallader, received the President's Award plus a talking redneck bottle opener, essential for his retirement activities. Thanks to all of you for your many years of supporting SRSC.

Congratulations to hatchery manager John Blunt and our loyal volunteers for producing this year's robustly healthy class of fry. Our May 3 open house was followed by several stocking days ending May 22 in canoes on the Big Ossipee River. A few fry will remain in the hatchery until the schoolchildren tours, led by Lionel Bouthot, end in early June. We will have a cleanup day on Saturday, June 7 to complete our season, which, thanks to you all, has been hugely successful.

The Annual 2003 Banquet Closes One Era and Opens Another By John Cadwallader

The evening of Friday, May 9, marked another in a long series of marvelous banquets at what is now Pier 77 Restaurant in the scenic harbor in Cape Porpoise. New owners, Peter and Kate Morency, hosted over 70 members and guests, including former (Seascapes) owners, Art and Angela Leblanc. It was an emotional evening for both the Morency's (it was their opening night), and especially for the Leblancs, who have been very good to the club for the many years they have opened their doors to us. At the end of the meal, when Chef Peter and staff were called out to take well deserved bows, Angela said she could rest easy now, knowing the restaurant was in the best of hands. Even my 6-year-old grandson, Owen, could feel her emotion. He asked, "Why is that lady sad?" I found out later he took her a little note that read, "Be happy". I think she was happy, Owen.

Attendance was down this year from the normal 100-plus but, in hindsight, that was most certainly due to the fact that the banquet was scheduled two weeks later than normal due to renovations by the new owners (just one of those facts of life). We will go back to an April date next year. I am not worried that our reputation is slipping, as witness the following story: Every year we extend complimentary invitations to a number of our valued supporters. We are always happy to have L. L. Bean accept our invitation to send a representative and guest. We are even happier when they send half the store. Well, not quite, but here is a message we received from Laurie Gilman, our contact person at Bean's, prior to the banquet: "We have a total of 6 people who would like to attend the SRSC banquet. And, I've got to say this is the ONLY banquet that it has been easy to get people to attend. You guys are popular!" New Officers and Directors were sworn in during the evening. As previously reported, Jack Parker and Dan Bonville are continuing to serve as President and Vice President, respectively, for the coming year, and Larry Orme and Tom DeBruin are stepping in as Secretary and Treasurer for the (retiring) yours truly. The list of Directors is the same as last year, with the exception that Bill Winward and Bob Hopkins have stepped down, and Joe Cuccaro and Rick Cavers are filling the vacant chairs. I made an embarrassing omission during the swearing in: I forgot to include Dick Neal's name as I called on the Directors to stand and take the oath. My apologies to go out to Dick. We look forward to having his valued service as a club Director. The evening ended with our world famous auction and raffle (great stuff, at bargain prices). A full accounting of the proceeds will have to wait for next month, but our sincere thank-you goes to the many good

folks who donated all those items (in alphabetical order): **L.L. Bean, Dave Footer, Grant's Kennebago Camps, Patagonia, Horton's Smoked Salmon, Saco Bay Tackle, Shaw's Supermarkets, Shy Beaver Trout Club, John Swan, and Tom's Bait and Tackle. Thank you, also, to the many members who made personal donations: Dan and Sandy Bonville, Lee Brown, Art Leblanc, R.J. Mere, Harvey and Victoria Patry, and Bud Peck.** We will follow up with individual thank-you's, so please let me know if I left anyone out. Art was feeling so generous that he donated his wife's fly vest. Apparently, he didn't ask her, because she had to buy it back at auction. And Art, as usual, was our auctioneer. Wouldn't you have loved to be a fly in the back seat as they drove home that night. One final item: The winner of the Spring Raffle for a weekend for two at Grant's Kennebago Camps was (member and director) Ken Castner. Owners John and Carolyn Blunt have generously donated this prize for more years than I can remember. We sold over \$800 worth of tickets this year, and this is only the second time that the winner has been present at the banquet to claim his/her prize. Congratulations to Ken, and thanks to all you members who took a chance. Your turn will come.

Welcome New Members *By John Cadwallader*

There are quite a few this month (actually two month's worth):
William Meyer, Wells
Mike Lowell, Biddeford
Kathryn Thorndike, Biddeford Pool
Albert DeConing, Framingham, Mass
Bob and Marcia Key, Cape Porpoise
Jim Cumming, Manchester (Me)
Galen Lagassey, Windham
Ray Girard, Biddeford
Chuck Moody, Houlton
Gretchen Bufo, Scarborough
Dave Palmlund, Portland
Corey Wiley, Portland

A few personal notes: Mike Lowell is one of the original club founders and Directors, Gretchen is (President) Jack Parker's daughter, and spent many volunteer hours at the hatchery this spring, and I think that's the same Chuck Moody that used to hang around my house in Saco when there were a couple of teenaged girls living in it. (I noticed his check was drawn on a Saco bank.) Membership now stands at 215 for the year, way up from the last two years, and closing in on the record 222 we hit in 2000. Welcome to all.

Restigouche River Trip is One to Remember *By Harvey Patry*

Victoria and I headed for the Atlantic salmon waters of the Restigouche River, in Quebec, on May 4. We drove up with Jack Parker and Tom Gagnon, a new member from Alfred. We fished for the next three days and we had good weather and great fishing.

Despite the warnings of everyone freezing during the early salmon fishing season, you don't have to be miserable to catch spring salmon.

On the first morning out, our Guide Jean Rene lost the water pump on his motor. That put him out of commission so in the afternoon we fish with Pete Dube, owner of the Hotel Motel



Restigouche, and the famous Richard Adams, the king of the river. Richard is 92 years old and has guided for royalty and sport celebrities from all over the world. It was quite a thrill for



us to have him in our canoe. He must have brought us luck for on that same afternoon Victoria earned a silver medallion for catching an Atlantic salmon over 30 lbs!

Overall, it was a wonderful trip and we are looking forward to going back next year.

Special Thanks to Saco Frame Center *By John Cadwallader*

Those of you fortunate enough to have taken home any of the framed artwork from our banquets over the past many years know what a skilled job the folks at Saco Frame Center do. They are artists in their own right. They have also been very generous

to us over the years, donating much of their work or charging us a fraction of the going price.

I stopped in a week after the banquet to give them my personal thanks, and spoke with manager Johanna Hoffman. Many years ago, Johanna provided the pen and ink sketch used on the masthead of our newsletter. It was quickly apparent that their generosity isn't just for the sake of good PR. They are as committed to the conservation ethic as we are. They do framing for many other of the well-known conservation groups in this area. Johanna also actively participates in "Saco Spirits", a group working with the city of Saco on downtown revitalization of Pepperell Square. Saco Frame is located at 10 Pepperell Square.

One of their goals is to upgrade the traffic island with a public art display. Because of the proximity to the Cataract fish elevator, the group is hoping that the centerpiece will be a statue depicting Atlantic salmon. They are working with a talented local sculptor. Let's hope they are successful. Next time you are passing by, stop in and ask for Johanna, and, by all means, take a look at their handiwork on display. You might get inspired.

Response to FPL License Application *By Mark Woodruff*

As you have read in earlier articles, the Bar Mills Hydro Project is due for its license renewal by 2005. During the past two months, fishery agencies and other interested parties have had the opportunity to review and comment on FPL's draft license application. The major points of the application were:

- Continue to operate the Project on a daily cycling basis, with approximately a two (2) foot impoundment fluctuation.
- Provide a year-round minimum flow of 15 cfs in the bypass reach of the Project to enhance fisheries habitat.
- Improve downstream angler access to the upper bypass reach by clearing a trail and adding appropriate signage at the existing parking area.

- Grade the take-out at the canoe portage to improve the slope for unloading and trailering small boats.

Finally, under the terms of the 1994 Saco River Fish Passage Agreement, FPL in consultation with the fishery agencies must determine the need for upstream passage no sooner than 2005.

(Downstream passage facilities were constructed in 2000 and operational in 2001. See the last issue of the Salmon Run for details on submerged screens.)

Our club took the opportunity to comment. Below are the more significant comments:

- Provide 100 cfs as a year-round minimum flow to promote a more riverine character and improved angling in the bypass.
- Design small boat access to discourage use by larger boats and personal watercraft.

- Include an independent analysis of economic viability of the Project since upstream passage or higher minimum flows in the bypass may be required.

- Improve water temperatures in the impoundment in an effort to enhance it as a migratory pathway for anadromous fish.

Once FPL reviews our comments along with those of the government agencies there will be a meeting to iron out differences. By June 30, 2003, FPL will submit its final application to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Getting a Sinking Feeling Something's Wrong in a Quebec ZEC Zone *By Dave Fenderson*

ZEC stands for Zone Environmental Conservation and the Quebec government has set aside thousands of acres all over the province for sporting recreation and tree harvesting. Trappers who maintain their trap line every 48 hours minimum or lose the site own the only camps in the ZEC where I was staying. I have relatives in Deep River, Ontario just 18 miles south of the Ottawa River where I was visiting. The ZEC I was in has thousands of acres with hundreds of beautiful lakes and streams. The cost to drive a car into the ZEC was a reasonable \$6.00 Canadian for one day. The price gets cheaper the more days you spend in the ZEC.

Once you have received the road pass, you must designate which lakes you are going to fish. You cannot go to another lake unless you notify the ZEC office. Some of the lakes were closed due to over fishing in the past few months. Also, if you don't show up when your time expires, the wardens will come looking for you. I paid my road fee for May 25 and headed out for two adjoining lakes designated for fly-fishing only and I was advised they contained two-plus pound speckled trout. I was issued a road map and at 05:30, I headed out to the trout lake.

What I didn't know was that the map was out of date and that the road I was going north on had not had any traffic by logging trucks since last Fall. I noticed that the bad spots in the road were full with sand. It had rained for several days and the woods still had snow in them. I also saw huge moose tracks in the road. After traveling alone in my red Volvo wagon (with 250,000 miles on it) for over two hours at 10 to 12 miles per hour, I figured I was 20 to 22 miles from the ZEC office and definitely on the wrong road. As I started up a long narrow hill, I got into a depression, which I discovered was thick oozing wet sand. At that time, my front wheels started to spin. The car almost slowed to a stop and was sinking. My God, I thought, I am in quicksand and I tried to open the driver's door. The car inched forward very slowly. If only I could get a few more yards out of this car, I promised that I would give it an oil change. It must have heard me because as luck would have it I did get to solid ground. The only drinking water that I had with me was one small bottle, which I elected to conserve because I had to get back over this muck and wasn't sure that I could make it through twice. I prayed that the ZEC agent who spoke only French would not forget me.

I finally found a place to turn around and headed back down the road, only this time I was doing 45 miles per hour. No problem, and eventually I was on the right road. I did stop to fish along the way out and because I was still shaking, so was my rod, line and fly. Maybe next year their maps will be up to date!

Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."

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