

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

ACTION ALERT! *by Jack Parker*

“April is the cruelest month,” wrote T.S. Eliot in 1922.

This April 22 the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sought to prove it. On the same day President Bush supported salmon restoration in a speech at the Wells Reserve, his regional USFW director contradicted him in Augusta with an appalling announcement. At an Atlantic Salmon Technical Advisory Committee meeting, director Marvin Moriarty announced plans to cancel the domestic program at their Maine hatcheries at Green Lake and Craig Brook. By May 24, all fish, fry to brood stock, were to be disposed of in this program that supplies eggs for the Saco and other river restorations, plus more than 150 elementary school classroom programs.

When questioned, the director said he realized this would be the end of restoration in the Saco, other Maine rivers, and school programs statewide. He added that, being new to his job; he had just learned that the Saco has the highest rate of returning fish in the United States. He asked for comments, but stated his decision would stand unless something (drastic) changed before May 24. Our hatchery needs your help now! We urge all you newsletter readers to email Steve Williams, Director, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service at Steven_A_Williams@fws.gov. It would also help to let our congressional delegates hear from you about this critical matter by phone or email. Letters will not arrive on time!

Email addresses: Senator@Collins.senate.gov;
Olympia@Snowe.senate.gov; rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov;

From the President's Corner *by Jack Parker*

Aside from the USFW fiasco, which we are hoping is resolved in a much more positive direction, much happier events did occur in the past few weeks. Our hatchery received permission to reserve up to 40,000 fry from this year's class to raise as smolts to stock in the Saco next spring. Past years' performances indicate that stocking both fry and smolts each year enhances restoration results. We see this as an important step forward and look to work with a new partner, the Pine Tree Hatchery of Sanford, our friends at MariCal, and Maine Atlantic Salmon Commission biologists, to help raise these fish.

Thanks to banquet committee members Dan Bonville, Larry Orme, and Nick Sibia, more than 70 members and guests enjoyed a fine dinner and auction at the Dunstan School

Restaurant in Scarborough. Traditionally we present two annual awards at this event. The Conservation award to a non-member group or individual who we recognize for outstanding assistance to Saco River restoration went to MariCal Inc of Portland, a scientific firm dedicated to help providing an abundance of healthy fish to a hungry world. Through their chief scientist, Tim Linley, they have been an invaluable source of help to us in the past year. The President's award, which goes to a club member, went to club director Mark Woodruff, who has given us an enormous amount of quality time over the years, largely in outreach efforts such as grant writing, representing the club at several river committees, publicity, habitat surveying, and much more. Congratulations and our sincere thanks to MariCal and Mark.

Saturday morning, May 1, was open house at the hatchery. Consensus of our staff is this year's class of fry is the healthiest and most active we have ever raised. New attendees who came were astonished at what's happening in this little publicized building on the Saco River's banks. Stocking will begin on Wednesday, May 12 and continue on the following two Saturdays, May 15 and May 22. If you wish to get involved, we can use your help on the Saturdays. We start at 8:00 am. Your volunteers have worked hard for another successful year. Please help us to make sure we can continue to do so for many years, and see the Saco River thrive.

SRSC Annual Banquet *By Nick Sibia*

Friday April 30, heralded another marvelous SRSC banquet. This year we chose a new location, Dunstan School Restaurant in Scarborough, for the 69 members and guests, including L.L.Bean, Mar-Cal Inc., and Atlantic Salmon Commission. After appetizers and refreshments were served, everyone enjoyed a buffet style meal along with soups, salads, mussels and clams, many entrees including three salmon choices. Hot and cold beverages and deserts completed the gastronomical experience. Dan Bonville, vice president of the club, was this years banquet chairman. Dan opened the evening with an introduction of John Cadwallader, our past secretary and treasurer who recited our creed for the Atlantic salmon. Officers and directors from last year were carried over and sworn in for new terms, along with three new directors, Lionel Bouthot, Frank Connelly, and Susan Polans. Bill Winward will not be a director this year due to health. The good news is that he is recuperating. Get Well, Bill.

President Jack Parker presented the Conservation Award to

MariCal Inc., with MariCal president Bill Harris and Tim Linley accepting. The Presidents Award was presented to Mark Woodward. Congratulations Mark for a well-deserved award. Mark takes care of our grants, power plant negotiations, and stream evaluations, just to name a few of the important tasks that he accomplishes for the club. Great work Mark!! We all thank you.

Jack also commented on our latest challenge to continuing our goal for the Saco River salmon. The info from USFW that we may not be getting eggs in future. You will hear more about this. Also, keep an eye out for the front-page news stories on this. I was auctioneer this year in absence of Art Leblanc who is vacationing. Many items were auctioned including three fishing trips, signed artist prints, flies from famous tiers, fishing rods, Patagonia clothing, and a Gortex wading jacket. There were more items to numerous to list. We also had raffle items, which were raffled off a little different this year, using buckets so lucky members could pick items in which they were interested. Like the auction items, there were many items and everything that you could imagine. We will list donors at a later date as we collect our data. The trip to Grants Camp which is donated by John and Caroline Blunt was won by Peter Frongillo. Everyone had a great time and went away with many treasures. If you missed this year's banquet make sure you come to next year's. The banquet committee for this year was Dan Bonville, Larry Orme and Nick Sibilia.

Shy Beaver Club **By Dan Bonville**

On Sunday, May 2, twenty Saco River Salmon Club members and guests spent a fine afternoon giving and taking fly casting lessons, eating BBQ hotdogs and fishing for trout in the pond that is part of the Shy Beaver Hatchery and Club owned and operated by retired IFW biologist, Sonny Pierce. At Sonny's invitation, members and friends toured the trout hatchery from late morning until late afternoon, and got to sample the pleasures afforded members of the Shy Beaver Club. Shy Beaver members pay for the privilege to fly fish the pond using the club's five boats and club building with its coffee pot, chairs and picnic tables, and my fish from April 1 through mid October. Members may bring guests and may keep trout now and again. The fish are not easily caught like one would expect of the pond of a hatchery. Rainbows are released once in a while but the pond holds naturally producing browns and brookies as well. Thanks to Sonny Pierce for a wonderful afternoon.

The State of the Hatchery **By Bob Monroe**

Well, it's that time again, Spring, when nature comes out of its winter dormant state into its bright colors. Every thing is growing, trees, grass and flowers, yes, even our fish. This year's batch is the best we ever had. We all suspected they were and then knew it for sure when Dave Bean confirmed it The hatchery has around 600,000 (plus or minus 5,000) feeding fry. As I write this on May 8, we are starting to feed with a different starter

food. We started with a little heavier feed, and then we switched to a mesh starter, we began three weeks ago. Dave Bean is very pleased with the fish. Dave along with Paul Christman, who is a biologist for the Atlantic Salmon Commission, will join club members for our stocking on the Big Ossipee by canoe on May 12. We will follow with two other stocking days: May 15 and May 22 with other club members. It is noted that we have the best restoration program going in the northeast. I personally want to thank all of the volunteers who have spent time at the hatchery and also the club as a whole. It takes a joint effort to make this program work. We still need pickers, at least two per day, if not three, for one to two hours every day until May 22. Thanks.

Email This Letter Today! **By RJ Mere**

At the beginning of this newsletter, Jack mentioned that club members and other recipients of this newsletter should email or call Steve Williams, Director, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service at Steven_A_Williams@fws.gov. Jack also mentioned that it would also help to let our congressional delegates hear about this critical matter by phone or email. Their email addresses are: Senator@Collins.senate.gov; Olympia@Snowe.senate.gov; rep.tomallen@mail.house.gov;

You may use your own words, but we have provided the following letter as a template, if you wish:

Dear Director Williams;

I am one of over 200 members of the Saco River Salmon Club, located in Biddeford, Maine. I am writing to you about the proposed budget cuts that will eliminate support for private Atlantic salmon programs such as ours. Our state of the art Atlantic salmon hatchery is located on the Saco River. We are proud of our accomplishments but anyone would expect to hear that from any member of any group. I invite you to speak to your own people and call the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Craig Brook Hatchery (207-469-6701) or Green Lake Hatchery (207-667-9531) to find out what they think of the Saco River Salmon Club Hatchery. I am positive that you will hear nothing but words of high esteem for our volunteers and for our ability to obtain the seemingly impossible goals for which we strive in our efforts to restore the wild Atlantic salmon to the Saco River watershed.

Please take a moment and take a virtual tour of our hatchery by logging on to our website: www.sacosalmon.org The proposed budget cuts for those two hatcheries for programs which support private hatcheries such as ours is nothing short of disastrous for us. We rely on Green Lake Hatchery in particular because that is where our broodstock are held. We receive 800,000 fertilized eggs each year and rear them until the fry are ready to be released in the tributaries of the Saco River watershed. We are proud of our facility and that we operate with an astounding mortality rate of just four percent. In addition to our restoring Atlantic salmon, we offer educational tours, mostly to young school children, where we explain the importance of restoring

all anadromous fish, including American shad, alewife, and eel. We participate in Fish Friends, where we donate some of our fertilized salmon eggs to school rooms so that the young students may raise their own Atlantic salmon and release the small fish in their local streams. There is no other educational program like this and it surely would be a lamentable loss – one that would force the topic of salmon restoration back into the shadows of ignorance when we started our restoration program in the early 1980's. Since then, we have negotiated up and down stream passage for anadromous fish, improved spawning habitat within the watershed, and conducted surveys to check the health and progress of our fish. These next few years are critical for our program. We expect to see our numbers of returning fish to multiply exponentially as returning fish and stocked fish reproduce in their natal waters.

To loose our broodstock is to pull the rug from beneath our feet. We have worked closely with and trusted USFW over the years but this budget cut would literally be the end of us and our program. We're not talking millions of dollars. We're not even talking hundreds of thousands of dollars. Craig Brook will loose \$10,000 annually and Green Lake will loose \$51,000 annually. It's not a lot of money but the loss of those funds will have a profound effect on many worthy programs including our educational programs. These are hard times for all Americans and we understand that sacrifices must be made for the benefit of others. However, these budget cuts are not significant enough to in dollar amount to make a difference when spread out over the Regional scale. On the other hand, they are significant to Maine because so many people are touched by the conservation and educational programs we offer.

I appreciate your time for reading this email and hope that you will conclude that the private stocking programs in Maine make a powerful partnership in the restoration of Atlantic salmon. We augment the USFW restoration program with our dedication and with thousands of hours of volunteer time. Please keep this partnership alive for the sake of our wild Atlantic salmon and for the sake of the future generations who will benefit from it. Thank You.

Submit your short article for "The Salmon Run."

General interest stories, recipes for fly tying or foods, comments and suggestions are welcomed. The editors reserve the right to edit all materials. Send to RJ Mere, 9 York St., Kennebunk, ME, 04043 or email to rjmere@gwi.net

Visit our website at www.sacosalmon.org

Editors: Dan Bonville and RJ Mere

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:

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Board of Directors | <input type="checkbox"/> Newsletter |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hatchery Operations | <input type="checkbox"/> Stocking |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hydropower Issues | <input type="checkbox"/> Legislation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Relations | <input type="checkbox"/> Membership |

