



# Winchester Trout Unlimited Chapter # 638

## Lateral Lines

Winchester TU Newsletter

[www.winchestertu.org](http://www.winchestertu.org)

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### From the Prez

by Stan Ikonen

The meeting of the Winchester Chapter of Trout Unlimited on April 7 will begin with a presentation by Mr. Phil Johnson, the regional director of Project Healing Waters. This is a very worthy program that seeks to help wounded warriors heal through anglers who teach the contemplative act of fly fishing and tying flies. While such service is not a part of Trout Unlimited's mission, I feel it is appropriate for us to assist those who put their lives on the line for the freedom of other human beings.

Mr. Johnson's hope is to establish a core of volunteers to begin a program at the V.A. Hospital in Martinsburg. Glenn Rudy, a combat veteran and a member of TU, has contacted me and expressed a keen interest in assisting with this program. In the process, Mr. Rudy wishes to become affiliated with this chapter. I say we welcome him and his energy.

After the presentation by Mr. Johnson we will proceed with a normal business meeting agenda.

- Treasurer's report
- Donation Premiums
- TIC update
- Chapel Run
- Red Bud Run
- Fish with a Member
- Abrhams Creek
- Other items brought before the membership
- Fish Tales

See you April 7,  
Stan

\*\*\* Dinner at IJ Canns at 5:30 PM, 3111 Valley Ave, Winchester, VA 22602  
Meeting at 7 PM in the Lodge at Gander Mountain, 160 Commonwealth Ct, Winchester, VA 22602

### Chapel Run

by Bud Nagelvoort

#### Chapel Run Update

##### Upstream Issues

As reported earlier, the Ag Stewardship Act complaint filed two years ago on the Warfield's farm has finally brought results with the installation of fencing to exclude cattle from the stream except at a newly hardened watering access site. Recent monitoring by Friends of the Shenandoah River indicates an

improvement in water quality entering Joe Henderson's farm immediately downstream. Gradual continued improvement is anticipated as the damaged banks re-vegetate.

Immediately upstream of Warfield's there has been damage to several hundred feet of stream banks and stream bed by cattle pastured on 75 acres owned by Wittenburgs which has now been purchased by Tom Yannucci who owns Annfield Farm just upstream. Yannucci has contacted the Lord Fairfax Soil and Water Conservation District and plans are being developed to fence the stream and provide a watering trough on his newly acquired property from a pipeline to be extended from a present waterer. Construction should begin before the end of June.

It is a bit difficult to understand why Mr. Yannucci is willing to take care of the problem on his new property, but not at Annfield Farm where the problem is at least as severe. I'm about to remind him. Water samples over the past several years at Annfield Road which separates the two properties provide ample evidence of the need for livestock fencing at Annfield Farm. The LFSWCD has presented plans to do so, but Mr. Yannucci has chosen not to proceed ----- yet.

Another site on the stream a short distance above the Hamilton property at Briggs Spring where we also successfully pursued an Ag Stewardship Act complaint has a winter holding/feeding area for 30-40 head of angus steers. The result has been complete destruction of any cover in the feeding area of several acres and exposure of the gradually sloping land, with essentially no buffer area, to runoff into the stream. NRCS and the LFSWCD have worked on other projects with the owner, but he adamantly refuses to correct the current problem. I would like to have a member of the Chapter sign a complaint similarly to what two members have done in the past for problems now successfully resolved at the two other sites on Chapel Run. I will provide assistance in the preparation of the complaint. As in the past, I can't sign the complaint because I'm a member of the Board of the LFSWCD which will be called upon to investigate the complaint.

### **April 16 Event with the Virginia League of Conservation Voters and Piedmont Environmental Council**

As of this writing (April 2) plans for Saturday, April 16, at Ellerslie Farm with Members of the Virginia General Assembly and their families are still subject to being firmed up. The potential agenda still includes a guided fishing event for several Members (and/or family members) from 7-9 AM (we will provide tackle, but will they have hip boots, rain gear?), then a demonstration of installation of a crosslog structure at 9:30 followed by a tour of the livestock exclusion fencing and offstream watering Best Management Practices installed by the LFSWCD hopefully with Pete Benedetto, senior conservation technician with the District, at 10 AM, a parallel macroinvertebrate study in the stream for the kids at the same time, and a tour of the CREP/WHIP/native brooktrout spawning habitat at Joe Henderson's Chapel Hill Farm at 11.

### **River Otters**

As also previously mentioned, a river otter has been observed by yours truly in the vicinity of the Christmas Tree and Rockpile pools. Further confirming its presence are tracks in newly deposited silt on one of the recently installed bank protection logs upstream from the dam. While long suspected as a possible threat to the survival of our stocked fish at Chapel Run with evidence of their presence showing up in injured fish, it now seems reasonably to conclude that along with Great Blue Herons we have two predators totally capable of undermining our efforts to establish naturally reproducing rainbows and/or browns (or eventually brookies) in our stretch of the stream.

At the LFSWCD Envirothon on March 29 I had the opportunity to discuss river otters with a knowledgeable rep of the VaDGIF. Bottom line: as an agent for Lee Warner, the owner of Ellerslie Farm, I could trap river otters at Ellerslie Farm. I won't go into any more details.

So some interesting stuff going on at Chapel Run.

### **Chapel Run Work Session**

The work session on March 5th with Dave, Terry and Bud allowed for the sophistication of the new "Diving Board" technique for placing rocks in their proper and exact locations as the next generation of

bank protection up the banks from logs and rocks previously installed in the stretch between the dam and the bridge. More of this work is to be done on the 9th.

It is particularly fun to watch Terry trying to avoid (successfully I would note) a swan dive off the high board as his ballast is out-fulcrumed by the rock being slid into off-loading position at the end of the board hanging out over the bank. We can expect many ohs and ahs from the General Assembly if, perchance, we choose to add a demo of this technique on the 16th. Any volunteers?

What we will do on the 9th, however, is finish up the second generation of bank protection rock installation and complete the installation of the next crosslog now roughly in place with only the bank trench needing to be dug and its rock north bank anchor needing to be installed. Rocks will be provided.

We will also drag to the site the crosslog to be installed on April 16.

Since we have become so adept at bank protection installations there should be ample time for discussions about super steelhead at Lake Erie led, hopefully, by Kehcpokorp.

Tight lines.

## On The Fly

by Carl Rettenberger

Thanks to our good friend and fellow Trout Unlimited member Jack E. McAllister, I have a series of video cassette recordings to share with other members of the Chapter. I have watched the videos several times and was able to learn a lot from them on both the subject of fly fishing and fly tying, and I know you will too.

Jack suggested that we do the same thing with these videos that his lathe turning classes do with theirs, and that is to rent them to fellow members for a month with "*all proceeds being donated to the Chapter's Treasury*", which I believe to be an excellent idea.

Here's how it works: you look over the video titles and pick out as many as you would like to rent for the month at \$2.00 per tape. You sign them out, take them home, watch them as many times as you would like at your leisure, then return them the following month. Because Bud is an old friend, *he gets a special deal*, yes that's right a special deal, he gets them at the bargain rate of any two for \$5.00.

Here's a list of videos we have available:

Steelheading Made Simple by Jerry Darkes & Brian Flechsig (Fishing the Erie tributaries for steelhead)

Cool Flies for Hot Fish by Jerry Darkes & Brian Flechsig (Tying Steelhead flies for the Erie tributaries)

Steelhead Flies by Jeff "Bear" Andrews

Volume I -The Tying Techniques of Bob Clouser & Lefty Kreh

Volume II -The Tying Techniques of Bob Clouser & Lefty Kreh

Volume I - Fly Tyers Masterclass by Oliver Edwards

Volume II - Fly Tyers Masterclass by Oliver Edwards

Volume III - Fly Tyers Masterclass by Oliver Edwards

Fly Fishing Success -The Fundamentals by Joe Humphreys

A Casting Approach to Dry Fly Tactics in Tight Brush by Joe Humphreys

A Casting Approach to Nymphing Techniques by Joe Humphreys

Tying with Rainy's Float Foam by Rainy Riding

Practical Atlantic Salmon Flies by Dick Talleur

The River Vatnsdalsa, Iceland (Atlantic salmon and brown trout fishing)

## **Fishing Trips**

### **Fish with a Member (or.....Let's Hook Up Together)**

by Fred Boyer

4/15 --Shad trip to Fredericksburg. Be sure to register as a salt water angler. See note from Charlie and Stan

4/16 and 4/17- Va. Fly Fishing Festival, Waynesboro, VA

5/17- Chapel Run fishing contest and work day (Piedmont Environment Council visit?)

5/14-Trout trip to Lost Land Run-MD out of state Fishing License required.

5/21- Trout trip to Smoke Hole

6/11 Chapel Run work day

6/18- Lake Frederick Fly Fishing Challenge (Bring your own boat or rent one there.)

6/30-Help Stan with campers Graves Mountain Lodge

7/23- Smallmouth bass float trip Shenandoah

Aug/Sept-Striper trip to bay?

Saturday October 8- Chapel Run fishing contest and work day

Tuesday November 9-Friday November 11-- Steelhead Erie, PA (The date is one week later than in the past two years in hopes of better water.)

### **Brookie "Fish with a Member" Trip**

By Fred Boyer

After multiple weather checks Thursday and Friday, Dan and I decided there was no time like the present to head out to the Rapidan. Departing about 7am Saturday morning we made it to the parking space near the bridge about 8:45. With the lot empty, we were the first to arrive. The sky was mostly clear on our trip down so we were excited that the rain/snow was holding off.

The water was gin clear and really flowing with numerous plunge pools, slow and fast water. I started with a bead head prince in the large pool just below the parking area. After about 30 minutes without success, I switched to a black stone fly that Carl tied along with a bright parachute fly as indicator / dropper. Those #18 black stone flies are impossible for my eyes to see so I needed assistance. I have got to say Carl knows how to tie a fly and when to use them. On my third cast, I had a take and on my fourth I had my first of 19 fish in hand. I stayed with the same combination all day and had the most fun any fly fisherman could have on a most picturesque stretch of water.

After working up stream all morning, I found Dan about noon. He had been shut out when I caught up with him and was a bit down on himself. I moved up stream one pool and had a hook up in my second cast. I called him on the walkie-talkie to come up to fish in the same pool. He switched to a dry Mr. Rapidan and had a hook up soon there after. His juices were now flowing so he ventured further up

stream. We had originally planned on meeting at 1pm to be able to make a stop at Graves Mt. Lodge, but after that first fish he was off and running.

I worked every large pool back down stream and had at least a take or a fish in hand at every pool. By the time I got to the truck it was 3:15. Dan had found me by then so we decided to call it a day. He reported that his "Dan's wiggle tip" technique resulted in 15 Brookies to hand.

34 fish for the day. Not bad for a pair of Brookie rookies and a very well tied Carl's stone fly.

Remember that the next Fish with a Member outing is for Shad on the Rap on Friday 4/15. Let me know if you want to meet and car pool. 540-660-9180 or [fred@boyersnet.com](mailto:fred@boyersnet.com).

## **Winchester Trout Unlimited Holds Its First Fishing Outing of the Year**

By Bill Prokopchak

The first Winchester Trout Unlimited fishing trip of the year was from March 15 through 18 to Erie, Pennsylvania. The target species was the spring run of Steelhead.

Only two members of the chapter made the long drive to Erie. Dan Brackensiek arrived on 20-Mile Run late in the afternoon. I beat Dan to the stream, and had my line in the water by 2:30 -- several hours before Dan. We found the water high, but beautifully green. The water was about as perfect as it could be for Steelhead fishing.

I started the afternoon at the island near the parking area and quickly landed two nice Steelies. The first was a small silver one of about 19 inches. The second was a real beauty of 26 inches with a marvelous pale pink stripe down the side.

The pool I was fishing was quickly surrounded by other fisherfolk who were drawn to the action. I moved upstream toward the bridge working the riffles and runs with only limited success, hooking and losing two additional Steelies during the remainder of the day.

Dan, on the other hand, fished downstream from the parking area and brought an even dozen Steelies to hand. His only complaint was that not one of them approached the 26-incher that I had landed. Members of the Winchester Chapter will need to come to the next meeting to hear Dan's live account of his most prolific Steelie day ever.

We dragged ourselves off the stream about 7 p.m. when the rains came. After a quick stop at The Colonial Motel in the vicinity of North East, PA, just a few miles from our favorite Steelie stream, we set off to eat dinner. Quite literally just a few yards from the motel, we found The Freeport Restaurant. Dan and I arrived just before closing to find a friendly staff and a white board posted with the evening's specials.

The Freeport was to become our favorite and only dinner stop after the first evening's serving of creamed chicken over mashed potatoes and biscuits. Each serving was, quite literally, delivered on a platter big enough to serve a family. I know my portion contained a whole chicken. Well fed, and I mean very well fed, Dan and I made our way back to our digs for a nightcap and a good night's sleep before day two of our spring Steelie trip.

March 16<sup>th</sup> saw a disappointed Dan and me on 20-Mile Run at 7:30 a.m. The overnight rain and snowmelt made the water high, barely fishable, brown, and cloudy. We worked hard for our fish that day. I think Dan hooked one small one and I hooked and lost a whopper. At least it wasn't actively raining.

We broke for an early dinner with the concern that the water was still rising. We were worried that fishing would be washed out tomorrow. After dinner, we stopped by the stream and found it still higher. The island near the parking area was completely under water. Not a good sign. Dan retreated to his room, tired from two day's fishing and discouraged about tomorrow's prospects. I retreated to my room to rig my rod and reel for some heavy water fishing in the morning.

A pleasant surprise awaited us as we approached 20-Mile Run at 7:30 a.m. on March 17<sup>th</sup>. St. Patrick had smiled upon us! 20-Mile, while still quite high, had tamed itself overnight and was flowing

green again (in honor of the day) with just enough cloudiness in the water to hide fisherfolk from the fish. If there were fish, this could be a great day.

Dan hammered the Steelies at Bud's Bend, with six hookups. Two of which were fighting monsters. The biggest one, christened Moby Dick by Dan, fought him up and down stream for at least five minutes. Like the Moby Dick of old, our Captain Ahab let the monster get away. Although he managed to land not a single Steelhead by afternoon, he had some fine battles to remember. Often the ones that get away provide the best tales.

This might have been Dan's finest Steelhead day ever. What about his twelve-Steelie day on Tuesday? There were no monsters during the twelve-Steelie day -- but that's another story.

While Dan ruled the morning, Bill ruled the afternoon. After landing a nice Steelie at Bud's Bend, Dan and Bill fished upstream to the bridge. Dan managed another hookup to end the day with seven.

I hammered the runs and riffles upstream and brought my St. Patrick's Day total to 4 for 10, although I think I hooked and landed the same fish twice.

Friday, March 18 was a washout at 20-Mile Run. Icemelt had swollen the stream to unfishable levels. Dan hit the road for Virginia without fishing. I headed to 16-Mile where the stream was less swollen. I managed a 19-incher on my very first cast. That was it for 16-Mile.

I headed to 14-Mile Run on the recommendation of some old guy who, like me, was moving down the numbers looking for good water. 14-Mile Run was in good shape compared to the other two creeks and I began fishing along a wall and had a hookup on my first cast. Lost it.

There were only a few fishermen along 14-Mile, and I saw three Steelhead landed in the couple of hours I was there in addition to the big sucker I caught on a nymph. I made my final cast in a run near the lake and hooked a nice Steelie. The fish gave me a fierce battle before shaking my egg pattern. At 12-Mile I finished the day 0 for 2, with Steelhead hookups on my first and last casts of the day.

Before leaving Erie, I had a late lunch of grilled salmon at The Freeport Restaurant before heading south.





# Fishing Story

By Bill Prokopchak

## All-Natural Frankenfish Found in Erie

By D. Averell Poisson  
Pittsburgh Post Science Editor

**Erie** -- Two giant steelhead fish that locals are calling Frankenfish have been found dead on the shores of Lake Erie in recent months. The first fish found by an angler near the mouth of Elk Creek in October measured just over 40 inches long with a weight of about 27 pounds.

According to PA Fish Commission biologist, Sam Trutta, PhD, the extra large steelhead was a bit of a sensation among the local fishermen, but did not make the headlines since no one could take credit for catching it and claiming a PA state record.

The fisherman who found the fish, Jake Knopf of Meadville, reported that the fish seemed to exhaust itself trying to swim upstream through extremely shallow water at the mouth of Elk. "He's so big he couldn't hardly find water deep enough, and he just died trying," Knopf said at the time.

"Good thing the local fish warden took and froze a tissue sample from the fish," said Trutta. "Before he donated the fish to a local charity that accepts fish and game to feed the needy, he gave the sample to me for analysis."

The second giant steelhead was found in January during a period of low flow at the mouth of 12-Mile Creek west of Erie. This one measured just under 40 inches with an official weight of 26.6 pounds. Some teenagers found the fish as they walked along the beach near their parents' vacation home. Their father, a Pittsburgh lawyer who asked not to be named in this article, said that the fish appeared to have been dead for some time, but was well preserved because of the cold weather.

"We were fortunate that the father called me directly to tell me of the huge fish," said Trutta. He put it in a freezer chest until I could pick it up. Two fish of such amazing size gave me an opportunity to do some genetic testing on tissue samples from both fish."

Over a period of several weeks, Trutta and a second team at Penn State under the direction of Len Lotic, PhD, worked independently on the tissue samples. Drs. Trutta and Lotic will publish their findings in the May edition of *The Journal of Salmonid Genetics*.

The two teams concluded that both of the large fish have a previously unknown variant of gene CYR61 on chromosome 6p. This reporter asked both scientists to tell me in plain English what this gene and chromosome do.

In a telephone interview, Dr. Lotic said, CYR61 is one of the genes that governs growth. "Since both of these fish have the same variant that I've never seen before, I postulate that it may be the sole reason these two fish were so damn big."

I also interviewed Dr. Trutta at his office in Harrisburg. He has reviewed the genetic records of the females and males in the class of parent fish three years ago which seemed to have produced these two Frankenfish.

"You see, we didn't know if there could be other big fish like these out there, when the mutation happened, if it was a recessive or dominant, if it will now be part of our steelhead gene pool. I had a lot of questions."

Trutta's review of genetic records on the males and females used to produce the class of fish three years ago indicates that a number of the fish showed the variant in the same gene but not the extra size.

"It must be a recessive mutation that has been carried by a few of our fish for some time. Three years ago, by chance, the right female and right male came together at the hatchery. Bingo. These are not some genetically engineered Frankenfish, these are all-natural. We have *Supersteel*. I have the records, and I think I can even tell you the date it happened."

The two scientists are amazed that a steelhead could put on so much weight in just three years. Dr. Lotic speculates that these large fish may be the reason that steelhead runs in the past three years have been smaller than usual. "We have been blaming the loss of smolts on the walleyes in Lake Erie. Maybe it is these huge *Supersteelhead* that are vacuuming up the smolts."

Both scientists agree that the records show the CYR61 - 6p variant is spreading through the Erie steelhead population. Records for the class of smolts two years ago show that the number of breeding fish with the gene variant has grown roughly by the power of two. In last year's class of breeding fish, the variant had again grown by a power of two.

A fisherman friend of mine asked the Fish Commission biologist what this means for the average steelhead fisherman in Erie. He said that only time will tell, but he expected a shift toward increased fishing in the lake during the fall and spring steelhead runs. "These fish are just too [expletive deleted] big to make it up our small streams during low water," he said. "Everybody wants to catch a *Supersteel*. I expect folks will be changing from 10-lb. test to 30-lb. next fall."

The PA Fish Commission is already making plans to change its steelhead stocking procedures. Fish Commission chairman, Ralph Chunks, says they are going to monitor closely the breeding stock during the next five years to limit the number of fish with the variant gene. The Commission wants to insure survival of enough smolts to keep the normal steelhead fishery healthy.

Erie County business owners, on the other hand, are urging the Commission to keep the *Supersteel* coming. "Once word gets out that we have 30-pound *Supersteel*, man, it will be great for business," said local flyshop owner, Rusty Hooks.

For more information, please contact this reporter, D. Averell Poisson.

That's the French of course: *d'avril poisson* loosely translated as *April Fool*.

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