

The Hatch

Spawning Habitat and "Redd" Survey in November

Investigation into the root cause of the declining trout population in the Battenkill has inspired recent canoe floats on the Battenkill from Dufresne Pond down to the NY state line. Members from as far away as Boston showed up in support of the effort to locate spawning beds, called "redds". Most redds were noted to exist in moving water of moderate depth with small clean gravel (1/4" to 2" in diameter). Many of these redds were clearly visible in the bright November days scheduled for the floats. The teams marked the redd locations with survey tape and used maps to pinpoint their locations on the river. This data was then relayed to Ken Cox (our Fisheries Biologist), to be plotted using GPS technology so that a "geo-map" of the river can be developed. This map will highlight the whole river system and will note key population and spawning information. This information will be valuable for Ken and his team to further understand possible problems in the embryo-incubation stages of the current spawning trout population.

Ken Cox's effort have also focused on the strategic placement of Whitlock-Vibert Boxes (instream egg-stocking devices, filled with spawning gravel) throughout various locations identified in the redd surveys. Once in place these boxes will enable Ken and his team to measure the success of

spawning efforts in the form of fry emergence in the springtime.

Battenkill Regulation Proposal Update

As many of you know, the Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife proposed a "catch and release only" regulation on the Battenkill between Manchester's Dufresne Pond and the New York State line. As encouraging as the proposed regulation sounded, the proposal was amended by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Board in a 5-2 vote taken in October. The proposed amendment asked that children under the age of fifteen be allowed to keep two fish a day with no size restrictions, and all other anglers be allowed to keep one fish over 18" per day.

The leading proponent of the amendment was the Board's Bennington County Representative, Jack Standard. Jack was quoted that he "was just looking out in the best interest of the people in the vicinities of the Battenkill". With fear of potentially being unable to reverse the proposed 6-year regulation, Mr. Standard and other members of the board felt as though special interest and conservation groups would further effect future attempts re-open the river under general regulations and therefore potentially, forfeit local control of it.

The proposed amendment is currently in the public warning period which ends on December 10th. The Fish and Wildlife board is planning to vote on the proposal at their December 15th meeting.

All members are encouraged to contact their local representative, Jack Stannard, to discuss this important issue.

December 13th Meeting to be held at the Museum of Fly Fishing

Our chapter will be having its December meeting at the American Museum of Fly-Fishing in Manchester on Monday, December 13th from 6:00pm to 8:00pm. The museum is on Route 7A (immediately North of the Equinox Hotel) in Manchester

Gary Tanner and the Museum have been kind to offer the museum as our meeting place and members are encouraged to visit this wonderful museum and enjoy its treasures before and after the meeting.

The following topics are slated to be on the agenda for this meeting:

Chapter Elections, the Battenkill Regulation Proposal, the Pig Farm Stream bank project and the Redd surveys on the Battenkill

We encourage all members to attend this meeting as there are some exciting things going on in the chapter.

We look forward to seeing you all there so we can plot the course for our chapter into the next century.