

MAINE COUNCIL

Year in Review | 2017

Maine Council 2017

Kathy Scott, Chair (KV)

David Miller, Vice Chair (S)

Mac McGinley, Secretary (M)

Don Abbott, Treasurer (GR)

Steve Brooke, NLC (KV)

Chapter Delegates

Georges River: Mark Brown, Doug Crossley, Dan Daly, Steve Hirshberg, Bruce Sigsbee, Terry Young

Kennebec Valley: Joe Albut, David Allen, Phil Allen, Gerry Cates, Carl Cote, David Hedrick, David Huntress, Dan Marra, Greg Ponte, Jim Thibodeau, David Van Burgel

Merrymeeting: Orman Hines, Jim Hynson, Brad Swanson

Mollyockett: Bob Harkins, Scott Stone, Steve Wight

Sebago: David Bowie, Ian Glass, Evelyn King,

National Staff

Jeff Reardon



Coordination, information, and Action

The Maine Council of Trout Unlimited’s mission is to conserve, protect, and restore Maine’s coldwater fish and their watersheds. At quarterly meetings, your elected Council representatives share National, State, and Chapter news, explore topics proposed, volunteer for assorted responsibilities, and move forward our mission. This newsletter is intended to represent only some of our efforts in 2017, touching a wide range. There’s always something we delve into, and always more we wish we could. The accrued number of Council volunteer hours typically exceeds 3,000 per year. Still, we could always use more hearts, hands, and minds. Interested? Volunteer to serve, or just attend a meeting to observe the Council workings. Or, if you haven’t already, reach out to your local Chapter, or ask us for help starting a new Chapter in your part of Maine.

Kathy Scott, Chair



Heritage Water, Heritage Fish: Brook Trout

-LD 1018: has been tabled by the Committee for a year to allow DIFW an opportunity to develop a rule for managing Heritage Waters tributaries.

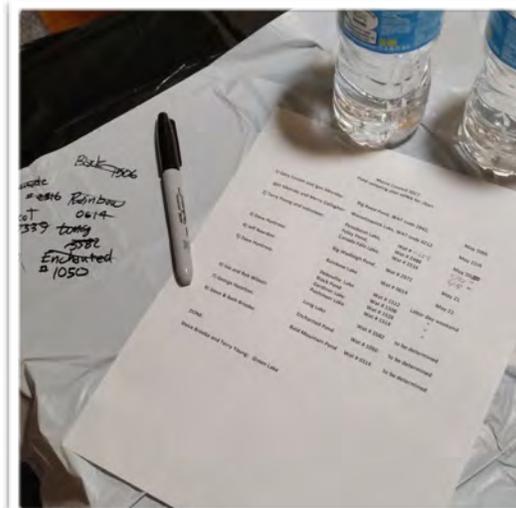
-LD 1236: DIFW has agreed to process proposed Heritage Water list additions more quickly. DIFW developed a rule for current processing with a new process for the remaining backlog list.

Jeff Reardon, Maine Audubon and Gary Corson were active participants in the work sessions for both LD 1018 and LD 1236. Jeff met with Commissioner Chandler Woodcock and Biologist Francis Brautigan to discuss both issues. The Maine DIF&W Heritage Fish working group dedicated to addressing issues of protection for brook trout and charr in Maine Heritage Lakes and Ponds includes our delegates Steve Brooke and Gary Corson.

Learn more about our Coastal Stream Survey Project and Brook Trout Survey Project by visiting our web site: www.tumaine.org

Fieldwork plus : Arctic Charr

Long a Council concern, the Landlocked Arctic charr (Blueback trout) working group is chaired by David Huntress, with Steve Brooke, Greg Ponte, Terry Young, and Jeff Reardon. Working in partnership with IFW and the University of Maine, in 2017 eDNA work began with ten people completing the training on a detailed checklist/sampling protocol. Georges River Chapter had approved transfer of \$600.00 to the Council to fund needed supplies. Steve Brooke spearheaded the purchase of the supplies for the kits locally and oversaw detailed assembly of the kits to greatly aid the sampling process. Volunteers traveled to specific sites as requested by UMaine and IFW, and delivered samples for testing in order to verify the presence of the fish. Council members also assisted with catch and release studies in Floods Pond. Kennebec Valley Chapter submitted an EAS application and won a grant to support Arctic Char programs in 2018. Also



for 2018, the Work Group is developing a presentation for Maine Chapters detailing what we know about these rare fish, their current status, and what steps need to be taken to better protect them (contact your Council representative)

Council Strategic Plan 2018

In 2017, we've worked to formalize our strategic plan process. Our agreed five years areas of focus:

1. Native Species
2. Engagement - Chapter coverage of the state
3. Funding to support to our Professional staff

Embrace a Stream

EAS grant applications: TU National is breathing new life into this, intended to be its marquee grant program. Applications are due by July 15 and awards granted at the Annual TU Meeting in September. Three 2017-18 grants were received which affect Maine: Sebago TU for its Tenmile River Culvert Correction Project, West Branch of the Tenmile River, Saco River Watershed; Kennebec Valley for its Arctic Charr Population Survey, where volunteers from the Chapter will use the funds to survey lakes and ponds in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont in order to identify watersheds appropriate for Arctic Charr; and, cooperatively between Sebago and Ammonoosuc TU, a brook trout radio tagging and research project called "Androscoggin Headwaters: Young Trout, Young Science," on the Dead Diamond River and its tributary Loomis Valley Brook, primary spawning streams for the Magalloway River brook trout..



Youth: 2017 TU Trout Camp

Once again, a great year! 12 teenagers and 2 alternates were selected to attend the camp, which features hands-on instruction in conservation of coldwater fish and their habitat through a time-tested curriculum taught by volunteering experts, with the support of LL Bean and other donors. All of the campers caught fish, too. 2018 applications due April 15th, see: www.troutcamp.org

Partnering = Progress

The most effective work for coldwater fish and their habitat often requires working together. Our efforts in 2017 found us coordinating with the Maine Council of the Atlantic Salmon Federation, the Natural Resources Council of Maine, Maine Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, and other groups, including land trusts, watershed councils, and Maine's Department of Inland Fish and Wildlife and Department of Marine Resources, and federal agencies. Work with the Kennebec Coalition dovetails with our ongoing litigation against NOAA relating to fish passage on the Kennebec. For Kennebec River flow monitoring, we're working with partners who sought us out for our impartial research. We're keeping an eye on the Cold Stream area in regard to a potential utility corridor, and we're listening to concerns of members over a proposed major wind project. Partnerships also involved businesses, whether through much valued financial support or much appreciated expertise.

National Leadership Council Work Group

National issue which impacts our coldwater fish: David Van Burgel has served on the National Climate Change work group of the NLC for six years. They have developed tools (on the TU web page) for Chapters to use, organized a Climate related edition of Trout magazine, surveyed TU members and related industries, and moved the issue up on the National agenda.



In Congress

HR 3043 : Trout Unlimited opposed the so-called, and misleading, "Hydropower Policy Modernization Act of 2017" and urged members of the House to vote against this legislation.

Public land management: A Presidential Executive Order was issued to review certain National Monuments. Katahdin Woods and Waters NM was included. Kathy Scott and other TU representatives met in Washington with officials to discuss the impact. Our Chair also submitted an OPED to the Bangor Daily News.

Maine Legislature

-LD 820: After much work, and with special thanks to Jeff Reardon and our partners, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee voted 12-1 "Ought to Pass". The bill then went to the Senate, where it passed 34-0, and the House, where it passed by 126-14. With a few changes around the edges, those votes held up after the Governor vetoed the bill. The result is a mining law that:

- Bans open pit mines and bans tailings impoundments
- Requires dry stacking of tailings.
- Bans "wet mine waste management units" (subaqueous deposition of mining waste to prevent AMD).
- Bans mining "in, on, or under" all state-owned lands, which in Maine includes sub-tidal wetlands and the land under lakes and ponds.
- Bans mining under "significant river segments".
- Prevents any placement of mine waste or other potentially dangerous materials or operations in flood plains.
- Requires evaluation of a "worst case" failure based before approval of any mining applications, and that the applicant post financial assurances sufficient to clean up and remediate damage that might occur.

-LD 1350: "An Act To Amend the Law Regarding Recreational Gold Prospecting", which would have added more classes, more dates, and allowed motorized sluices, power dredges, high bankers, with motors up to 7 hp, to be used year round in any stream in the state. After several meetings and some great TU member testimony, the Environment and Natural Resources Committee voted 12-1 "Ought not to pass".

Thank you - this means You!

We extend our sincere thanks, to all who contribute, to major donors LL Bean, Kittery Trading Post and Fuller Foundation, and, certainly, to you, the grassroots volunteers who, through these and other efforts, are making a difference.

Our Five Chapters

Each has its own web site and Facebook page, and, collectively, contributes far more every year than space allows. Here are just a few of the 2017 highlights.

The Maine Council offers small grants to Chapters. Ask any representative for details.

Sebago TU

wrote applications for awards of over \$130,000 in new grant money for habitat restoration in 2017. We continued our focus on getting women on the water - over three hundred took advantage of our Maine Women Fly-fishers' resources online and attended our monthly meetings to learn fishing skills and to network with other women interested. The chapter hosted monthly events both on and off the water, conducted workshops on casting and fly tying, and held an event especially for first timers to get out on the water. We hosted three day trips to Maine fishing lodges as well as day trips to fly fish on local rivers. We continue to get younger adults involved -our board now has five members under the age of 30 with special 'meet up' events designed for a younger fly fishing crowd.



Merrymeeting Bay spent a n eventful and useful summer in 2017 helping IF&W and USFWS set full time, real time temperature loggers on a variety of streams we've assessed as potential trout water in the MidCoast, and electrofishing small streams for signs of trout with IF&W. Outreach activities included introducing kids from Georgetown Central School to fly tying and fly fishing, with materials provided by L.L. Bean In October, members old and new were invited to a day of fly fishing and camaraderie on the Androscoggin and Wild Rivers.

The **Mollycokett** Chapter is well known for the Western Maine Fly Fishing Show, a March gathering offering a spectrum of all fly fishing and trout conservation have to offer. In June Chapter volunteers joined forces with personnel from U.S. Fish and Game, Maine IF&W, and the Androscoggin River Watershed Council in removing an old logging dam from the West Branch of Sunday River. In August the excavation and heavy construction to improve access and parking, stabilize the river bank, and install a hard surface boat ramp on the Androscoggin just upstream of the bridge in Gilead was completed. Other events focused on youth, women's programs, and veterans. From October 1st through 8th, we manned our "fishing camp" booth at the Freyburg Fair.

Kennebec Valley celebrated 37 years of conservation, and kicked off our Cold Stream water temperature monitoring campaign. Many years of Atlantic salmon restoration efforts with DMR biologist Paul Christman and his team saw results in returning sea-run adults. Efforts to establish fish passage on the Kennebec and its tributaries involved ongoing legal efforts. Our members continued an active role in Augusta with both the Legislature and State Officials. We volunteered for the Council Arctic Charr work group, then received an Embrace-a-Stream grant at the National level to continue that work into 2018. We were immersed in kids programs and the TU Trout Camp. In 2017, the Kennebec Valley Fly Tyers began, and continues at the Buker Center in Augusta on the first and third Wednesdays with setup starting at 6:00 - tools and materials provided.

Georges River's 2017 conservation projects included a meeting in Searsport for dam removal, and one to be held in January on the removal of the Montgomery dam in Camden. Partnerships included some great work by Lincolnville, replacing a deteriorated and undersized culvert with an open-bottom culvert, allowing sea-run fish to pass through to spawning grounds in nearby Coleman Pond. We're proud to have partnered with the town, the Maine Department of Environmental Protection, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and NRCM to support this project. Invited speakers in 2017 included Kate Farnham, local Fly Fishing School and Laboratory Instructor in Biology at Bowdoin College, about pre-trip planning, the habitat needs of fish, and key hydraulic features as predictors of where fish may lie.



Maine Council of Trout Unlimited

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