



The River Keeper: September 2011



With scenic fall fishing on its way, the September chapter meeting will help you find access to the local streams that offer great trout fishing and surprising peace and quiet.



Fly Fishing Fairfield County, Sept. 13

Discover the region's best trout rivers

Take a tour of the 19 trout streams in Fairfield County to discover where to go, where to park, what to use and how to fish these incredible streams hiding in plain sight in your own backyard.

Mianus Chapter Vice President Jeff Yates, is wrapping up his work on Fly Fishing Fairfield County: Secrets of Suburban Streams, a soon to be released regional fishing guide book, and will share everything he has learned about our local rivers.

Have you ever fished Morrissey Brook - have you ever *heard* of Morrissey Brook? What about the Farmill River, Ball Pond Brook, the Pootatuck River and more?

These rivers and 15 others all

lie within a 30 minute drive and all offer great trout fishing.

Jeff will cover all these rivers and tell you which ones to fish when you're targeting trophy trout, where to go to find native brook trout and what's your best bet for a quiet, scenic day on a secluded stream.

He'll also cover some of his favorite flies, equipment and tactics for fishing these small to medium rivers and discuss what seasons, water conditions and other factors will bring you the best luck.

Join us Tuesday, Sept. 13 for this great presentation.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at the mansion at Waveny Park in New Canaan.

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GREAT NEWS



HEROES OF CONSERVATION Chapter member Dick Emmons to be honored by Field & Stream

Longtime Mianus Chapter member Dick Emmons of Stamford has helped bring fishing to Fairfield County children and families since 2001.

As chief instructor of the state's C.A.R.E. program, Dick has literally "hooked" hundreds of our youth on fishing and the outdoors.

Now Dick will be recognized as one of the 2011 "Heroes of Conservation" by Field & Stream magazine in its September issue.

Brushing off the personal accolades, Dick said, "The Field & Stream honor is really for everyone who knows and loves the environment enough to preserve it and introduces kids and their families to the outdoors."

Congratulations Dick!

CONTACT US

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ABOUT US

The Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited conserves, protects and restores the coldwater rivers and streams in lower Fairfield County. With more than 500 members living in Greenwich, Stamford, Darien, Norwalk, New Canaan, Ridgefield and Wilton, the Mianus Chapter leads restoration projects and cleanup events on local rivers, promotes educational programs in the schools, hosts fishing outings for members and collaborates with local governments, state agencies and other nonprofit groups to plan and implement conservation programs across the region.

Learn more at: www.mianustu.org

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Looking forward to some fall fishing

This year's spring season started with some great conditions early on, but soon gave way to a prolonged period of high water. As soon as the high water started to recede, the temperatures soared to unusually high levels and quickly put a damper on fishing. The cold tailwater streams became extremely crowded and the fish grew very smart, very quickly.

Fortunately, the spring saltwater fishing on Long Island Sound was exceptional so if you fish saltwater, it was a good spring season. The bottom line is that it was a very challenging spring for freshwater anglers in our area.

However, every cloud has a silver lining. The high water reduced the number of fishable days and it seems that some of local rivers and streams have a higher than normal number of trout surviving into the fall fishing season. So, once the weather turns cooler and the fall rains arrive to raise our river flows, get out and take advantage of some promising autumn fishing. In addition to the prospect of catching trout, the fall scenery is spectacular.

To aid in your fall fishing, our opening meeting will be right on target with Jeff Yates, the featured speaker, presenting on the trout streams of Fairfield County. You won't believe how many there are! Plan to join us on Tuesday, Sept. 13 at 7:30 p.m. at the mansion in Waveny Park in New Canaan and take advantage of this opportunity to enhance your knowledge of our local rivers.

The Orvis "Fly Fishing 101" clinics held over the spring and summer were a great recruiting tool for the Mianus Chapter. We added over 50 new members. Welcome all.

We hope you will attend our meetings and events and become active members. The Mianus Chapter's veteran members are an incredible resource for you as you start your fly fishing journey.

For our current members, step forward when you see a new face at our monthly meetings, introduce yourself and make these first time attendees feel welcome. There is nothing more disappointing than for these folks to leave their first meeting feeling just as much a stranger as when they arrived.

Over the summer months, we held several informal fishing trips where interested members were invited to join others in a day of fishing on the Housatonic or Farmington Rivers. These informal events were posted on the website and emails sent out to drum up attendance. Response was good and we will post future trips of this nature as the interest and opportunity arises.

The chapter sponsored trip to the Housatonic River on May 7 for a day of instruction and fishing was well attended and a great day was had by all, despite the higher than usual flows.

Our fall outing to the Connetquot River on Long Island is planned for Tuesday, October 4, providing there is sufficient interest. Our March trip to the Connetquot was sparsely attended.

Our Special Olympics Fishing Derby is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 1 from 9 a.m. to noon at Merwin Meadows Park in Wilton. With more than 50 athletes expected we will need all the volunteers we can get to help out. The derby is an annual favorite of all who have volunteered in the past, so if you have not been able to help in the past, please plan to attend. If you do attend, you will go home with a wonderful feeling of satisfaction for a day well spent helping those less fortunate than ourselves.

Remember that the Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited is an all-volunteer group so don't be reluctant to step up and volunteer. We need your help!

Tight Lines,
Dick O'Neill
President

New website design offers helpful tools, tips and more

So what's new on the Mianus Chapter's website? Well, quite a bit actually.

For starters, we've switched to a fresh new design that's easier to navigate and full of great content to help improve your fishing skills, learn fly tying, find chapter events, volunteer for river restoration projects and learn about our education programs in the local schools.

There's so much to cover that the best way may be just to visit the new website and see for yourself!

Fishing Maps and More

Have you always wanted to try fishing a new local river but not known where to park or if the river is blown out by high water? Now you can simply turn to the Mianus Chapter website.

Under our new **"Area Fishing"** section you'll find great tools, including Google maps with parking directions and embedded USGS streamflow gauge charts that tell you just how fast the river is flowing.

Right now the website offers these details for the Mianus River, Norwalk River, Saugatuck River, Mill River and Farmington River - with more to be added soon. There's also a great section on Long Island Sound for you saltwater anglers.

Skill Building Videos

The **"Fishing Skills"** section offers some great videos on matching the hatch, fly casting and reading the water and the new **"Fly Tying"** section will host a range of ever-changing videos showing step-by-step instruction for some of the most effective patterns on local water.

Along with the videos, Mianus Chapter members will share their tips and tactics for success on local streams. And we'll continue to scour the web for the best articles, blogs, videos and other fishing-related content that will dramatically increase your learning curve or open your eyes to a new skill.

The Old Standards

And the content you've come to rely on will only get better as the site continues to expand.

As always, the **"What's Hatching"** section provides you with the latest information and on-the-water reports of insect activity and trout feeding behaviors.

The **"Chapter Calendar"** features an ever-updated listing of Mianus Chapter events as well as programs being hosted at our area fly shops.

There's tons to explore and new content is being added all the time. Expand your fishing knowledge, learn more about our coldwater conservation efforts and find out how you can get more involved in the Mianus Chapter online 24/7. Explore the new website today.

Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Conserving, protecting and restoring lower Fairfield County's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

HOME ABOUT US UPCOMING EVENTS FISHING, HATCHES AND MORE LINKS & RESOURCES CONTACT

Season of the Mayfly

Learn more under "What's Hatching"

The Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited is comprised of more than 500 anglers from Greenwich to Ridgefield, Connecticut, dedicated to preserving and protecting the rivers and streams of lower Fairfield County through restoration projects, education initiatives and advocacy efforts.

Join Our Mailing List

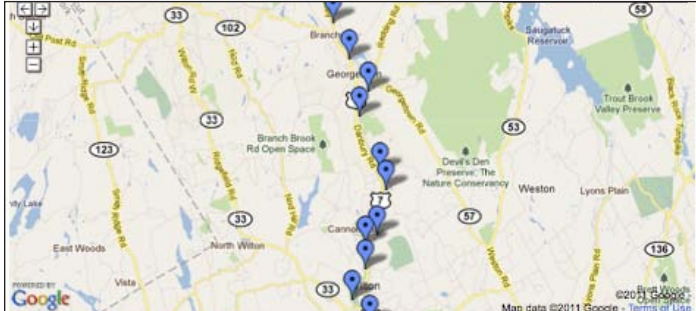
As part of Trout Unlimited National, the chapter depends on grassroots efforts to maintain the region's natural resources for future generations. Become a member and join us for upcoming events including informational meetings, fishing outings, river restoration project, school education programs and more.

Learn more About Us

Farmington River Trip - July 16 Tying the Sulphur Parachute Season of the Mayfly - VIDEO

If you take care of the fish, the fishing will take care of itself.

Visit the new site to learn more - www.mianustu.org



View **Norwalk River Fishing Map** in a larger view

About the River

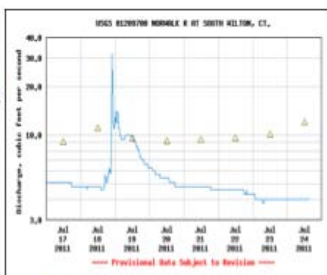
The Norwalk River is a relatively small stream running from the Great Swamp in Ridgefield to the Long Island Sound in Norwalk. For the majority of its roughly 20-mile length, the Norwalk is publicly accessible, with only two short sections of private property currently posted No Trespassing.

The river is easy to get to as it parallels Route 7 for most of its length, with many easy parking areas. The best sections of the river runs from Wolfpit Road in Wilton north to Topstone Road near the Redding and Ridgefield town lines.

Despite the ease of access, the Norwalk is a challenging river for two main reasons. For much of its length, the river width is fairly narrow,

Norwalk River Streamflow

USGS RESERVOIR MONITORING AT WEST WILTON, CT.



Click to enlarge Norwalk River Streamflow chart

"Area Fishing" features local fishing maps and more

Mianus Chapter calendar of events - Sept. through Feb.

Special Olympics Fishing Derby - Saturday, Oct. 1 - Merwin Meadows in Wilton

The annual Special Olympics Fishing Derby is one of the Mianus Chapter's most popular events. For nearly a decade the annual derby at the pond at Merwin Meadows Park in Wilton has helped athletes from Connecticut Special Olympics learn how to fish and win prizes.

It doesn't take much to volunteer and the rewards are beyond description. To see an athlete reel in what very well may be the first fish of their life and then beam with joy, pride and a sense of accomplishment is beyond compare. Everyone helping out at the event can't help but leave with a big smile on their face.

This year's derby takes place on Saturday, Oct. 1, with preparation and rod setup starting at 9 a.m., the derby running from 11 a.m. to noon and a complimentary lunch for athletes and volunteers following.

If you'd like to volunteer for this extraordinary event, email Jeff Yates at jyates@mianustu.org for details.



Mianus Chapter member Henry Baker with his fishing partner John Waterhouse and a hefty largemouth.

Connetquot River Outing - Tuesday, Oct. 4 - Connetquot State Park Long Island



Though hatchery problems persist, fall always features brook trout in spawning colors on the Connetquot River.

Join the Mianus Chapter on our annual fall outing to the Connetquot River in Long Island.

A storied river with a historic past, the Connetquot is nestled in the heart of hundreds of acres of state park and makes for an enjoyable fall day of fishing.

The cost per person is \$60 and includes lunch. Members may bring one guest.

To register, send your check payable to Mianus TU to:

Dick O'Neill
90 Branchville Road
Ridgefield, CT 06877

Anglers will need a new New York fishing license (their season ends Sept. 30) and must have hip-high, rubber soled waders only - no chest waders or felt soles.

Fly Fishing with Nymphs - Tuesday, Oct. 11 - Waveny Mansion in New Canaan

Presenter Bill Keister will reveal the secrets behind fishing for trout with nymphs - a deadly set of tactics sure to help you catch more fish.

Learn techniques such as long line and high stick nymphing and discuss the line management skills needed to present weighted flies down deep on a drag free drift.

An accomplished angler who has traveled the world chasing trout and other gamefish, Bill will cover the rods, lines, leaders, strike indicators and weight setups for effective nymph fishing. His presentation will focus on tactics particularly suited for Connecticut rivers and trout.

The October meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at Waveny Mansion in New Canaan. Details and directions online.



Fishing with nymphs can be a productive tactic no matter what the conditions. Learn the secrets Oct. 11.

Join us at our monthly meetings, fishing trips and more

Fishing the Housatonic & Farmington Rivers - Tuesday, Nov. 8

Rob Nicholas, owner of Housatonic Outfitters, has been guiding and teaching anglers of all skill levels on the Housatonic and Farmington Rivers since 1993.

In this special presentation, Rob will share his tips for success on these incredible rivers in upstate Connecticut. He will cover dry fly fishing for trout and swinging streamers for smallmouth bass in the Housatonic as well as the year-round opportunities on the Farmington - a tailwater stream that remains cold year-round and provides excellent summer fishing.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at Waveny Mansion in New Canaan.



Annual Holiday Party - Tuesday, Dec. 13

The Mianus Chapter's annual holiday party is always a festive affair, with a delicious buffet served by the board, drinks and dessert and a special holiday raffle featuring a fly rod and other great prizes.

This year's featured speaker, photographer Daryl Hawk, will present "Distant Journeys" a trip in images that starts in the Canadian Arctic, travels through the Americas, to Antarctica and New Zealand and culminates in the hidden Himalayan kingdom of Bhutan.

The holiday party begins at 7 p.m. and takes place in the Carriage Barn arts center at Waveny Park in New Canaan - to the left and downhill from the Waveny Mansion where most meetings are held.



Fly Tying Night - Tuesday, Jan. 10

Join the Mianus Chapter's expert fly tyers for an evening of instruction and fun at the vise. Learn how to tie Jeff Yates' "Killer Caddis" nymph, discover Gustavo Castano's secrets of blending natural and synthetic materials for great streamer effects, fine tune your delicate dry fly tying with Jim Glowienka and learn the most effective local patterns from Tony Hill.

Perfect for the beginning tyer, or for seasoned pros, the evening is fun, informal and sure to provide you with a new understanding of the art of fly tying.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at Waveny Mansion in New Canaan.

Stillwater Fishing - Tuesday, Feb. 14

While the tactics are often familiar, effective stillwater fishing can often confound the competent stream angler.

Learn the skills and techniques that are most effective and the tackle and tactics needed. Chapter vice president Dean Keister will help anglers of all skill levels develop the knowledge of where the fish are, when and why to increase catch rates and maximize their time on the water.

The meeting begins at 7:30 p.m. at Waveny Mansion in New Canaan.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Tuesday, Sept. 13

Fly Fishing Fairfield County

Saturday, Oct. 1

Special Olympics Fishing Derby

Tuesday, Oct. 4

Connetquot River Outing

Tuesday, Oct. 11

Nymph Fishing Tactics

Tuesday, Nov. 8

Fishing the Housatonic & Farmington Rivers

Tuesday, Dec. 13

Annual Holiday Party & Raffle
With photographer Daryl Hawk

*The holiday party begins at 7 p.m.
in the Carriage Barn at Waveny Park*

Tuesday, Jan. 10

Fly Tying Night

Tuesday, Feb. 14

Stillwater Fishing

DIRECTIONS

Unless noted, Mianus Chapter meetings are held at the mansion at Waveny Park in New Canaan.

To Get There:

Take Merritt Parkway to Exit 37 for Route 124 in New Canaan

Head north on Route 124 (South Avenue) toward town

Take the first left to Waveny Park

Follow the road to the top of hill

Mansion will be on your left

Trout in the Classroom brings science alive for students

The Mianus Chapter's "Trout in the Classroom" program continues to grow and bring the outdoors into our local schools.

By raising trout from fertilized eggs to small fry and then releasing them into a local stream, the students learn about life cycles, natural ecosystems, the importance of cold, clean water and how trout are an indicator of healthy rivers. More importantly, Trout in the Classroom makes learning fun.

Three new aquariums were added in the past year, two at the Trailblazers Academy in Stamford (6th and 8th grades) and one at the Chester Addison Community Center in Stamford - which had difficulty getting off the ground. In addition, students raised trout for a second year at Saxe Middle School in New Canaan and Brunswick School in Greenwich.

The program at New Canaan Country Day School will return next year - students raised atlantic salmon this year - and Wilton High School's 300-gallon "Big Blue" hatchery tank was still on the fritz following renovations but is expected to be up and running and raising much larger trout in the coming year.

Next year the chapter will be bringing Trout in the Classroom to Darien High School and Middlesex Middle School in Darien.

We are looking for a TU volunteer to mentor the programs in Darien for the next school year so please don't be reluctant to step up and get involved in this wonderful and rewarding program. All you need to volunteer is some spare time in the fall to help teachers set up their tanks and in the spring to help students release the fish - the science, the care and feeding and the logistics are all handled by the teachers and their students.

To volunteer for Trout in the Classroom, email Dick O'Neill at doneill@mianustu.org, or call him at 438-5918.



A student from New Canaan's Saxe Middle School says a final goodbye before releasing "her" trout.



Dick O'Neill explains trout habitat to a student from Trailblazers Academy before the release in Stamford.

Money well spent - Annual banquet auction item is a perennial favorite

Dick O'Neill, the Mianus Chapter president, has been the winning bidder on the Jack Smola - 4 Days 4 Rivers guided fishing package for two anglers at three recent fundraising banquets. Board members Jeff Yates and Jim Glowienka have also bought the trip.

When asked why he would spend \$1,000 give or take on the same auction item more than once, Dick

replied "It is an outstanding value in several ways since Jack donates a significant portion of the proceeds to our chapter and Jack is an outstanding guide who knows his rivers well and always puts me over fish."

As a matter of fact, Jack guarantees a hookup on every trip or he'll throw in an extra day. Jack has never had to make good on that guarantee.

The package is featured as a day each on the Housatonic and Farmington Rivers in Connecticut and the Westfield and Deerfield Rivers in Massachusetts. However, Jack is flexible and will suggest the river most likely to produce good results at the time.

Dick's nephew caught a personal best (a 20-plus inch rainbow trout on the Westfield) and his wife Margaret

caught a personal best (18 inch rainbow on the Deerfield). With the exception of the Housatonic, Dick has caught fish in the 20 inch range while being guided by Jack on the other three rivers and he and his guest had a 40-plus fish day on the Housatonic with Jack.

Make this the year you fish these four great rivers. Attend our 2012 banquet in April to bid on the trip.

River restoration projects continue to make a difference

Since 1995, when the the Mianus Chapter increased its focus on river restoration projects it has been clear that the work is making a difference.

In fact, at the very first project site completed on the Norwalk River, state DEP electro-fishing studies showed that the juvenile wild brown trout population jumped 137% in one year thanks to the shelter and structure built by the Mianus Chapter.

Thanks to chapter volunteers, who have contributed thousands of hours cleaning up and restoring the river, and funded by our annual banquet and private and state grants, the chapter has restored several miles of local streams.

In 2011, the Mianus Chapter continued its commitment to restoration work, completing a spring river clean-up, a native willow planting project in May and a conifer revetment project and planting in August. This fall, the chapter will finish a large boulder-lined bank restoration and will begin its second project on the Mianus River, restoring the severely eroded Bath House Pool.

With current projects ongoing on the Mianus and Norwalk Rivers, and new initiatives taking shape, the chapter can always use the volunteer and financial support of its members.

Learn how you can contribute to these successful efforts online at www.mianustu.org, or by contacting Jeff Yates at jyates@mianustu.org or 203-216-7078.



Luke Newton and Tony Hill plant native willow tubelings along the banks of the Norwalk River in May. The willows will grow into large shrubs, shading the river to keep it cool, providing shelter for trout and preventing erosion.

Informal fishing outings bring Mianus Chapter members together on the water

In 2011, the Mianus Chapter tried something new - informal summer fishing outings.

There were no guides hired, no set schedule or planned lunch, just a date, a location and a chance to fish an area river as friends. Carpooling was organized and the camaraderie and conversations on the water - and on the ride to and from - made for enjoyable days.

With successful trips to the Farmington River for trout in July and the Housatonic River for smallmouth in August, it's clear these trips should continue.

Because of the impromptu nature of these outings, advanced notification by print newsletter is difficult.

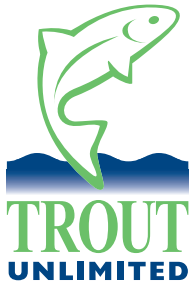
To be informed of future trips, check the chapter website frequently and sign up for our chapter email list by emailing Jeff Yates at jyates@mianustu.org.

Along with invitations to special fishing outings, you'll receive electronic notices of state trout stockings, river condition and fishing reports, reminders of coming events and more.

If you don't have access to the internet, call Tony Hill, Trips Committee Chair, at (203) 854-4788 to be added to the fishing trip call list.



During the summer months, Mianus Chapter members and guests shared the water for several memorable days just fishing together as friends.



Mianus Chapter
Trout Unlimited
PO Box 475
Wilton, CT 06897

DEP finds brook trout in Norwalk River - A 21-inch brown too

Chalk one up for New England's hearty native!
(And for conservation efforts by Trout Unlimited.)

During a recent electro-shocking survey of the Norwalk River, the Connecticut DEP was pleasantly surprised to capture an eight-inch native brook trout in the upper reaches of the stream - and where there's one, there are others.

Despite all the challenges facing them - development, pollution from lawn fertilizer, pesticides, stormwater runoff and more - these native gems are still managing to survive. Since brook trout require only the cleanest, coldest rivers to survive, finding this native trout is a sure sign that the work we are doing as volunteers to restore the river and protect it from threats is working.

Of course, this doesn't mean we throw a party, pop a few corks, eat some cake and call it a day. Now is the time for the Mianus Chapter to redouble its efforts to protect these brook trout (and the wild brown trout in the Norwalk River) by continuing our work with increased urgency.

Since 1995 we have been actively restoring the Norwalk River and will continue to do so for years to come.

Join us as a volunteer at one of our many river restoration or cleanup events this fall and next spring. Watch the website for details on coming projects or email Jeff Yates at jjyates@mianustu.org to be added to our email list.



Native brook trout like this one from an area river require cold, clean water to survive. Finding a population in the Norwalk River is a great sign, but also a call to action to do more to protect them from ever-increasing threats.

Big Brown Trout Too

And it wasn't just the tiny brook trout that were a treat. Among the many trout sampled from the river was a 21-inch wild brown trout holding over in a deep pool in the lower end of the river. To get to this size, the wild brown trout had to hone its survival skills and avoid predators of the feather, fur and felt-sole variety.

There are more than a few of these big fish in this small stream and you can help these wild browns and native brook trout thrive by helping out at coming restoration projects.