



To conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watershed

MEETING: April 19, Ken Balog, Fishing the Mill River. A subject close to home that Ken will present backed by his years as a New England fly fisherman. Last speaker this spring. All are invited to attend and celebrate the season's opening.

Letter from your President:

Because of business commitments, I'm writing this in sunny San Jose. Although the weather here is very pleasant, I have to remind myself that few if any trout live in the local waters, because of the elevated water temperatures during the summers. We have it pretty good in Connecticut!

On March 21, another Stamford Mianus River Initiative meeting was held with the various user groups of the Mianus River Park. As requested for this meeting, I had sent to Erin McKenna my thoughts on the 'ideal' park experience. It came out rather bucolic, but hey a guy can dream, can't he. I didn't say anything about trampled vegetation, bait cups strewn about, dogs chasing dogs chasing people, etc. Here were my thoughts; maybe you have similar ones:

- There is a muted sense of sound. The sun occasionally makes it down to the floor of the woods but generally it is shady, cool and comfortable.
- The sound of running water, sometimes loud, sometimes barely a murmur, can be heard.
- As I walk along the paths, I can feel the firm surface underneath but occasionally I step over some fallen branches and through piles of leaves.
- People I meet are friendly but not gregarious; more interested in their own enjoyment. A few ask directions since they forgot which trail they're on.
- Some of the walkers have their dogs, who are eagerly sniffing and exploring along the trails.
- The padding approach of the footsteps of a trio of joggers can be heard; they woosh by, then they're gone.
- Off in the distance I can hear and occasionally see a group of bikers trying to push themselves up and down and up and down their hilly trails.
- A father is standing in the water next to his son teaching him how to fish in the rapidly flowing river.

I heard through Walt Kirkman that the DEP's trout stocking on March 15th was a success. The DEP team led by Bob Orciari did a great job, as did about ten willing stockers in our bucket brigade. The combined DEP and Mianus TU team did get up as far as the Swamp Pool. Approximately 1,200 good-sized trout were stocked in the river at intervals down to the Merribrook bridge. The hatchery truck went on to continue stocking the lower Mianus River below the filter plant and from the two lower bridges.

This leads me to pose 'the President's question of the month' to the Chapter's membership: what motivated you to join TU? Have we helped meet your expectations of what TU was supposed to be accomplishing? What do you see as the Chapter's role, e.g., to promote fishing or to promote cold water conservancy. I welcome your feedback.

If emails from the CT Council are any indication, there does appear to be an expanding amount of legislation and new laws under discussion in Hartford. In the future, when we are asked for support, I will forward the discussion threads to the general membership, particularly when they seek the Membership's support, e.g., writing a letter to your state representative, on the problems and causes.

Our Chapter's semi-annual trip to the Connetquot has been fully booked now for several weeks, and confirmation letters were sent. Please remember to bring a large boulder with you to help augment the limited supply found in the park. Just remember how productive Beat 9 is with its v-damn structures.

Mother Nature again frowned on us, prompting the cancellation of the March general meeting. Ken Balog is teed up in April to tell us about his favorite river in the area, the Mill River!. Make sure to plan to come to that meeting

Tight Lines, Jim Glowienka

Mianus Chapter Officers

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Tom Yates	(203) 834-2837
Don Walton	(203) 637-0213
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Violet Jeans	(203) 637-1607
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Directors at Large

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Ray Hamilton	(203) 322-0254
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Committees

Banquet:	Mike Law
CT Council:	Jan Allardt
Education:	Don Walton
Kids Programs:	Mark Mitchell & Rob Mould
Membership:	Mike Law
Web Master:	Dave Stoller
Speaker Programs:	Duane Mertz
Raffles:	Mark Mitchell & Rob Mould
Refreshments:	Violet Jeans
Stream Action– Norwalk River:	Jeff Yates
Stream Action– Mianus River:	Walt Kirkman & Don Walton
Trips:	Franklin Lang, Jeff Yates, Dick O'Neill

Meeting Location

Regularly Scheduled Meeting Location:

Waveney House, New Canaan CT

Time: 7:30 pm

Directions: Merritt Parkway, take Exit 37 and go North on Rt 124 (South Ave) for approximately 1/2 mile; take your 1st Left into Waveney Park Entrance. Follow Road up to the mansion. Parking is on the periphery.

MEETING SCHEDULE

April 19:

Ken Balog, FF the Mill River in Fairfield

May 12 Annual Casting Clinic

June 14 Annual Picnic

Norwalk River Clean Up Saturday April 2

Volunteers are needed. Please call Jim Glowienka or Jeff Yates to sign up. See phone numbers above.

Orvis Darien is having their big sales event with speakers, fly tiers etc. April 29 to May 1. Stop by one of our biggest supporters and enjoy yourself.

River Updates

Norwalk River: Jim Glowienka announced that the Norwalk River clean-up day sponsored by the town of Wilton will be on Saturday, April 2nd. The Mianus Chapter has once again taken responsibility for cleaning the stretch of river from Merwin Meadows Park on Lover's Lane in Wilton north to School Road. Chapter members can meet at Merwin Meadows at 9 a.m.

Jim said the Norwalk River trout stocking by the DEP will take place on March 29th, the same day as the Connetquot fishing trip. DEP has said they would be willing to accept the help of two or three able bodied volunteers, but do not want a large group because of safety concerns along Route 7.

Mike Law said he had made a preliminary offer of \$2,000 to Dick Harris to help continue the Norwalk and Silvermine River water quality monitoring. Last year's analysis of the two rivers found E. coli levels well above the state guidelines for a Class B river, and Mr. Harris had said he would like to continue tracking the hot spots in the rivers, mostly caused by large Canada Goose populations and possibly failing septic systems. Funding for the project was transferred by the DEP to the Saugatuck River watershed, and unless Mr. Harris has \$20,000 by May 1st he will be unable to continue the monitoring.

Jim noted that the Board has not yet voted on the spending, but in the past meeting there was a sense of the Board that the \$2,000 would be given if Mr. Harris could raise the remaining \$18,000 from other groups and the towns involved.

Mianus River: Jim said the DEP stocking of the Mianus River had been postponed from March 3rd, and was rescheduled for March 15th between 10 and 10:30 a.m. Walt Kirkman said he would contact Bob Orciari with the DEP to organize the stocking, making sure the stocking truck went all the way up the riverside road, and did not just stock at the bridge on Merriebrook Lane.

Check our Website at www.mianustu.org for the latest updates on meetings cancelled or changed, trip status etc.

Note this: We are also running a photo album on the website showing our members favorite fishing photos. If you have one or more photos that you would like to post, send them to Jeff Yates at jeffyates31@aol.com. Add a caption describing the fishing trip. Or mail them to Jeff at 51 Cheery Lane, Wilton, CT 06897 and he will scan them in for you.

In the Catskills, the Ties That Bind

By JAMES PROSEK (NY Times article)

The first time Paul Weamer visited Roscoe, N.Y., to fish the Beaverkill River, a place he had read about a dozen years earlier, when he was only 10 and just beginning to develop his passion for fly-fishing, he spent the night in his pickup truck because he was too broke to afford a motel room. But the next morning, his body still stiff from sleeping on the front seat, and with frost on the windshield (it was a cold May morning), he was casting a fly in the fabled Junction Pool, where his heroes of the sport — Theodore Gordon, Harry Darbee and Sparse Grey Hackle — had once stood, and any soreness was restored by the river's tonic.

That evening over a hamburger at the Roscoe Diner, he realized he had to come back; he had fallen in love with the town and the river. When he returned to his home in Altoona, Pa., several days later, he announced to his new bride, Ruthann, "This is where I want us to retire." As it turned out, he couldn't wait that long. Three years later he and Ruthann moved to East Branch, just outside Roscoe.

At 31, Mr. Weamer, who now owns a fly-fishing store in nearby Hancock, N.Y., and spends his winters creating innovative trout flies in the Catskill style (roughly defined as a sparsely tied imitation of a mayfly with wood-duck feathers as wings, a spun-fur or stripped-quill body, and rooster hackle feathers for legs) is continuing a century-old tradition that has led Roscoe to be called Trout Town, U.S.A. And while thousands of avid fishermen await opening day of trout season — April 1 in New York — with keen anticipation, none do more so than the residents of Roscoe, where the event was again a cause for celebration last week.

Roscoe itself hasn't changed much over the decades. Its winters are long and quiet, and there aren't many opportunities for work besides the bluestone quarry or the prison in Woodbourne. A sign next to an old rusted truck outside of town illustrates the local sentiment, "Rust in Peace." It is this decrepit charm, with its echoes of the past, that makes coming here, year after year, a kind of pilgrimage for anglers.

Like other regions where fly-fishing for trout reaches a level of fanaticism — Livingston, Mont.; Jackson, Wyo.; Grayling, Mich. — Roscoe has its share of fly-fishing gurus, who, in the small world of fly-fishing reach a status of mythical celebrity. Just upstream from Roscoe on the Beaverkill, in Lew Beach, resides Joan Wulff, often called the first lady of fly-fishing. Ms. Wulff is a casting champion who has run a fly-fishing school (originally with her husband, Lee) on the Beaverkill since 1979. Ed Van Put, a historian of the region, came to live in Livingston Manor, southeast of Roscoe, more than 30 years ago and works for the state Department of Environmental Conservation. Mr. Van Put raises his own roosters for their prized hackle feathers, which he uses to tie variations of his favorite fly pattern, the Adams.

Mary Dette, at 73, still ties traditional Catskill flies and sells them out of her home on Cottage Street in Roscoe. If you want flies tied by her own hand you have to place your order now and be prepared to wait a year (her husband, Gene Clark, jokes that even at her rate of 400 dozen flies a year she has back orders from 1950). She is the daughter of Walt and Winnie Dette, who had been the standard bearers for the Catskill tie since the Depression, carrying on a legacy that began with two of the founders of American fly-fishing, Theodore Gordon and Rube Cross.

A trip to Ms. Dette's fly shop before a day's fishing has become a ritual for many of the anglers who come from Manhattan to fish and to talk. "When the season begins," Ms. Dette said recently, "I think, oh good, I'm going to see all these friends again." As we talked, she looked over at her fly-tying desk. "Oh golly, then I think, a lot of work to do." The sign outside, "Dette Trout Flies: Walt, Winnie, Mary," has the patina of an old brass fishing reel, satisfying to anglers who return to grasp something familiar in an ever more rapidly changing world.

At the fringe of the Catskill group are Poul Jorgensen, a longtime resident of Roscoe known for his salmon flies, and Art Lee, who is known widely by his writings. The history of Catskill fly-fishing is well documented, both in books ("Land of Little Rivers" by Austin McK. Francis and "The Beaverkill" by Ed Van Put are perhaps the best) and at the Catskill Fly Fishing Museum and Center in Livingston Manor on the banks of Willowemoc Creek.

The Catskill past is secure, but some are wondering where the next generation of fly tiers and anglers is, and who will perpetuate the Catskill legends. One sign, perhaps, of the continuing appeal of Roscoe is the planned reopening two years from now of the Antrim Lodge, which closed in 1990. David Beveridge, the new owner of the Antrim, like Paul Weamer, fell in love with Catskill fishing through its rich literature. What inspired him as a child growing up in Erie, Pa., was a book by a New York lawyer named R. Palmer Baker Jr. called "The Sweet of the Year" (William Morrow, 1965) The author described escaping the city to Roscoe on the weekends and fishing. Many of the anecdotes mentioned the Antrim Lodge and the fly-fishing heavyweights who ate, drank and stayed there.

"I wanted to be a lawyer like him," Mr. Beveridge told me from his office in London. "I was 12 years old. He had every weekend off and got to go fishing, and every weekend he caught fish. When I got out of law school I went up to the Catskills, that was the first place I went. I stopped at the Roscoe Diner for breakfast, went fishing, and I had dinner at the Antrim Lodge. I remember right where I sat. That was the only time I ate there because the next year it closed, in spring of 1990. When I went back up with my wife — we were dating at the time — I wanted to take her there for dinner, but it was still closed. It took me 10 years to convince her to let me buy it."

Though he works in London, Mr. Beveridge has a house on Willowemoc Creek near Roscoe. "In my mind I'm there every day," he said. The region has that effect on people. Though most anglers agree that opening day of trout season is not the best for fishing — in fact, this year's cold, wet weather bore that out — they also agree that it is a day worth commemorating.

Each year, the ceremonial first cast takes place at 7 a.m. on Junction Pool, at the confluence of the Willowemoc and the Beaverkill. "It's usually very cold, and I don't expect to catch anything," Joan Wulff said early last week. "Nevertheless, it's a sacred day. Our church on that day is Junction Pool. You see what tradition provides for people; it's like an anchor. It's a very good thing. It makes you feel like you're part of things." When Ms. Wulff said that, all I could think of was a hapless mayfly floating along on the surface, a warm May breeze in our futures, and a large trout coming up to eat it. At least on opening day, sharing stories among old friends, our fates seem slightly more secure.



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Visit our website www.mianustu.org

TU National: <http://www.tu.org>

I Need Lessons

Maybe you do too. Not only how to FF better. I need how to win better. Or how to win at all. What I mean is I attended the banquet this past weekend and it was great. I bought ticket packets and loaded one particular bucket item with all I had. I won nada. Nothing. Zero! But those that did, really hit gold and won big. Jeff Yates won the grand prize and no one, no one, deserves it more than Jeff. He may be Secretary of the Chapter, but he does so much more with enthusiasm and a great deal of knowledge that benefits all of us. Of course there were many other winners of the bidding wars in the auction and the raffles. Most of you missed a really special event and I hope that you will reconsider next time and come to the banquet. I can't give lessons on how to win, except to say the chapter and all of you who participate as volunteers, attend meetings and fish together benefit from being a member of this well run chapter. Do become more active in the chapter. The real lesson is it is a win win situation to do so.