

2016

April – May Clearwater Gazette

Oil Creek Outing

Jeff Kremis

The annual Oil Creek Fishing Outing will be held on Saturday May 7th. This year we will be meeting for lunch at the Blood Farm access area due to a fishing tournament being held at Petroleum Center. The Blood Farm access area is the first area you come to once entering the park.

I hope you can join us for a day of fishing and burgers and dogs for lunch. If you plan to attend please contact Jeff Kremis at jjkremis@gmail.com or 724-588-4378.

Youth Fishing Derby

Jeff Kremis

The Neshannock Chapter will be hosting the 12th Annual Youth Fishing Derby on Saturday June 18th. This year there will be a change in venue and the derby will be held at the Grove City Sportsmen's Club located at 97 Centertown Rd. in Grove City. The Derby is open to children 12 and under and older individuals with disabilities.

Registration will start at 8:30 and there is no entry fee. Parents will need to sign a consent form to allow their children to participate. A free lunch of hot dogs and soft drinks will be provided by the Grove City Sportsmen's Club at noon and prizes will be raffled off at 12:30. All children will receive a prize. You will need your own fishing equipment and bait.

If you have any questions contact Jeff Kremis at 724-588-4378 (e-mail jjkremis@gmail.com) or John Jones at grovecitysportsmensclub@gmail.com.

Veterans Service Program

Matt Ceremuga

The Neshannock Creek Chapter of TU is interested in starting up a veterans services partnership program to introduce our local disabled and non-disabled veterans and active duty service members to the healing powers of our waters, with a goal of

thanking them for their service and engaging them in our chapter activities. For those interested in volunteering to help coordinate a series of events and activities associated with this new program, please contact Matt Ceremuga at neshannocktu@gmail.com.

Munnell Run Trout Nursery

Bill Stevenson

We are coming to the end of another stocking season at the nursery. In June, 2015, the State provided us with about 1800 fingerlings to raise to maturity and then release into various streams. Thus far we have stocked fish in 5 different locations: Coolspring, Neshannock, North Deer Creek, Wolf Creek and in Lake Julia in Buhl Park. At this point in early May, we have about 300 fish left to stock; the browns are between 12" and 16" long and the golden rainbows are between 16" and 19". Those who help stocking the streams are members of Trout Unlimited, various fishermen, landowners along the waterways and children from our community and school districts. Often classes of children with their teachers will come to the stocking location and help bring the fish down from the tanks and release them into the water. The children are excited and enjoy putting the fish in the water and we get great pleasure in watching and encouraging our next generation of fishermen (or is it "fisherpersons"?). The children are anxious to come back and fish the waters and try to catch the fish that they know are in there!

Recently, we found a note in our mailbox at Coolspring requesting that we stock fish where children can fish for them with bait rather than artificial lures, flies, etc... We stock the fish both upstream and downstream from the *Delayed Harvest Areas* where one is allowed to fish with bait. By State rules, in the *Delayed Harvest Areas and Fly Fishing Only Areas*, one can only fish with artificial lures. We stock many fish in the areas where the children or others can use live bait.

The new fingerlings which are about 2" long will arrive in the last week in June and the process of raising them begins again for yet another season.

Trout in the Classroom

Reg McClelland

Once again the TIC program is coming to a close. Once we got all the problems fixed or repaired with everyone's equipment, everything has gone fairly smoothly this year. The only problem that I heard of was Rick Stevens of the Delahunty School lost their chiller. We have a spare on hand now but he didn't even need it. They just decided to use ice for one day to keep the water cool and then to have an early release. They stocked their fish into Cool Spring the next day.

This is the kind of program that is run by the students and teachers, we as a TU Chapter are not really involved with the actual raising of the fish. It's one of those "no news is good news" kind of things. And I haven't heard much other news, except a video I received from Jan Abernethy from East Elementary in Greenville showing how well their fish were doing. You can see this video on our new website at; <http://www.neshannock-tu.org> under Youth Programs or by following this link; <http://www.neshannock-tu.org/uploads/4/9/2/1/49210775/video.mov>

All of the other schools have given reports of good numbers of surviving fish this year. After a couple of bad years with reports of some schools losing all their fish and even having replacement fish shipped to them. So I'm sure they are in their planning stages for the release festivities. We try to get involved with some of the release days but with most of our board members still working a full time job it's hard to be at all of them. We wish them all luck with their trout release days.

This year our chapter purchased an extra chiller to have on hand in case one of the schools has a problem and loses theirs. The chiller is a very important part of the process. If they lose a chiller it is very difficult to keep the water at a constant cool temperature. It's a lot of messing around with ice and a very difficult procedure. So now hopefully, if there is a problem, we can have a working chiller in their possession in a couple hours.

PATU provides a grant program to support the classroom needs, and helps to educate the next generation on cold water conservation. The PATU grant program assists teachers in replacing outdated or non-functioning equipment, books, field and sampling equipment, as well as funding field trips to engage students in Coldwater Conservation activities.

This grant program is fully funded through the support of individual contributions. You can help

support this program by purchasing a PA TIC t-shirt or TIC raffle ticket today! Just go to the PATU website at

www.patrou.org

Mercer High School TIC

Tom Harris



Pictured above is Mercer High School students that attended the TIC trout release of 46 young Brook Trout on 5/4/16 at Coolspring Creek. Following the release, the 30 students and approximately 15 parents enjoyed a tour of the Munnell Run Trout Nursery.

The Mercer High School administration has been big supporters of the TIC program and Luke Rust (teacher) has been involved all six years the program has been in the school. Luke has done a very good job of working the TIC program into the curriculum of his 9th grade Biology class.

Website/Facebook

Matt Ceremuga

The website has been updated with the dates of events that are coming up. When more details are provided for the events, I will add a link "More Details" next to the event date. This link will provide more details on the specific event that you are interested in. If you have any questions about the website or would like to see something added, please email me at Neshannocktu@gmail.com

Our Facebook page is up and running. In the near future I will be adding all of the upcoming events to the Facebook Page calendar. To find us on Facebook, please search Neshannock Chapter #216 of TU and give it a like.

Penns Creek Ramblings

Reg McClelland

What is it about some streams that will stay in your head long after you have left? I have had the opportunity to fish some of the biggest names and some of the best streams in the South and in the West, but Penns Creek is the one that does it to me. Every time I fish Penns, after I leave, it stays on my mind until I get to fish it again. My problem is that I live 4 hours away from this piece of trout heaven and there are places much closer where it is much easier to catch many more fish, but none in my estimation are as well-earned and give more satisfaction than the ones that comes from Penns.

This was taken from an article that was written on the Great Rivers section of flyangleronline.com. "You have to earn fish on the wild trout section of Penns Creek in central Pennsylvania. Nothing is given. If you don't have the right lure, fly or bait, you won't catch trout. If you don't present your offering in precisely the right manner, you won't catch fish. If you fish at the wrong time of day, you won't hook up. Fishermen looking for easy pickings will not find them at Penns Creek. Instead they will encounter one of the toughest angling classrooms in existence. Even the most skilled fly rodder has no guarantee of success on this stream. On the other hand, those who enjoy a challenge, and are willing to work at angling and observations skills, will find Penns rewarding."

So... if it's that tough, what makes it such a draw for me? Is it because it flows through some of the prettiest valleys in Pennsylvania? Is it the Brown Trout that seem to be stronger and prettier than anywhere else? Is it the mind boggling amount of insects that hatch there every year? Is it the three and a half miles of catch and release wild Brown Trout fishing that has only walk in access. Is it the fact that I have some of my best memories fishing with some of my best fishing buddies on that stream? I'm not sure what it is. It must be a combination of all of the above because I sure spend more time thinking about that place than anywhere else that I have ever fished.

I fished it every year with some friends back in the 80's and 90's. We went mostly for the Green Drakes, but I think we caught most of the fish on nymphs and sulfur patterns. I can remember one year we were there just as the Drakes were starting and I did actually catch a couple fish on a Green Drake Dun. But if you talk to

the locals or the "Old Timers" of Penns they will tell you that the Green Drake hatch is not the best time to fish there.

For some reason I didn't get to fish there for a while, marriages, kids, houses, divorces, life in general got in the way and I didn't get out there for probably six or eight years. But the last couple of years I have made up my mind to get back out there. And I have been there three times in the last couple years. The fish are still there, in the most recent survey of the wild trout section of Penns Creek last year, biologists turned up about 2,500 brown trout per mile. "It's safe to say Penns Creek has one of the highest densities of wild brown trout in the state," said Jason Detar, the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's chief of fisheries management.

The tunnel and foot bridge at Poe Paddy has been restored to better than it was before, a lot of the pools and runs look the same as they did before. The Penns Creek Valley is just as pretty as it always was. The little towns that you drive through to get there have grown some. There are more places to get gas and a cup of coffee and more places to eat lunch, I'm not sure that is a good or bad thing but I guess you can't stop progress. But once you leave Rt. 322 and make the thirteen mile drive back the dirt road to Poe Paddy nothing has changed, except for the new bathrooms in the campground, the only thing I noticed is that there was a place to buy fire wood that was never there before and that is a plus, firewood was always a problem around Poe Paddy. And they have also run electricity back there. There is two camp sites that have electric hook ups.

The great lakes steelheads are bigger, and easier to catch, but in my book that is not fly fishing, that is catching fish on a fly rod. It's nothing like what you have to do to catch fish on this stream. I truly enjoy the angling on Penns, and I call it "angling" not just fishing. There is a lot more to angling. I like the challenge and what I have been calling the "awareness of fly fishing. You need to really observe what is going on around you when you're fishing Penns, any stream for that matter, but more so on Penns. One reason is because it's one of the toughest places to wade I have been. There are more places in that stream where it is deeper at the banks than it is in the middle of the stream. Rocks and boulders ranging in size from a bowling ball to your pick-up are everywhere in the stream bed. The Penns Creek saying is "find big rocks and find big fish". Even when it's low it is a challenge,

and it's rarely low during the best hatches. Spend enough time there and you're going to fall in.

But you really need to watch what the fish are doing, what kind of rise forms are they making, are they even breaking the surface? Just because the largest bug of the year is hatching doesn't mean that the fish are eating them, they are probably eating one of the smallest. I don't claim to be any kind of an expert on fishing Penns or fly fishing in general for that matter, but you have to keep all of your senses on high alert if you want to hook up on Penns Creek Brown Trout on a regular basis.

I have had trout in this stream straighten out and break hooks. I have observed a trout rise to and refuse to eat five or six natural insects in a row before it would actually eat one. I have seen the water look as if it was covered with a bed sheet there were so many spinners on the water. That kind of makes it tough to catch fish with a poorly tied coffin fly. But I have also had some unforgettable days on Penns. The largest fish I ever caught there was caught on one of the smallest flies I fish with when nothing was hatching, in probably some of the most fished water on the stream.

It has arguably some of the best hatches in the state and some of the toughest fish to catch on a dry fly. The fish are smart there, one saying I heard years ago is that "the fish on Penns can tie thee variations of most patterns", they have seen it all, if not all, most of it. There is a very well-worn path on both banks of every fish-able place I have ever been on Penns. It gets a "lot" of pressure and that combined with wild fish makes for some of the toughest fish to catch. But in my estimation these are some of the prettiest and strongest brown trout around.

As one article I remember reading said "bring your A game". But if you can put it all together at the right time on this stream it will make for some of the most memorable fishing you will ever find in this state and a lot of other ones too. That's just one guy's opinion, but if you haven't guessed, I'm kind of partial to this place. When I die, I want my ashes spread there.