Time for a Swap Meet

Come One, Come All: New Stuff for Old!

Whew! Heat wave after heat wave—the dog days are surely upon us. How about coming to the nice, cool firehouse in Vienna with a load of that excess fishing and camping gear from your basement, closet, or garage? You probably have a collection of that stuff, perhaps some perfectly good equipment rendered superfluous by all the new gear you got for Christmas or your birthday. In air-conditioned comfort, you can spread out your wares, chat with other members, tell fish stories, and haggle over what you want to trade. Their garage contents can shift over to your closet, and you will have some new stuff to play with on your favorite fishing waters as soon as the weather cools off.

No gear to swap? No problem—just use cash, that age-old medium of exchange, and everyone will be happy.

Our winter swap meets have tended to be snowed out, so this hot-weather session will avoid that problem. But the success of this meet depends on you, our members being there in attendance. Oh—and bring a neighbor. A crowd is good! The meet is as much for fun as for any financial benefit.

Some popular items in previous swap meets:

- Fly rods
- Reels
- Flies
- Tying supplies
- Accessories
- Vests
- Clothing

In the past, a number of guides and representatives of local vendors have been enticed to join us, dispensing useful information and showing some of their wares. They support Trout Unlimited, and we try to support them, as well.

Some of these who have been present in the past:

- Tom Brtalik, Tom’s Fly-Fishing Service
- William Heresniak, Eastern Trophies Fly Fishing
- Orvis Tysons Corner
- Anglers Lie

AUGUST PROGRAM

Swap Meet

ALSO IN AUGUST

5: Fishing Trip to Rappahannock River (Va)
10: Board Meeting
26: Fishing Trip to Yellow Breeches Creek (Pa)
Rappahannock
River
VIRGINIA

When: August 5, 2006
Depart: Contact George Paine or check online at www.nvatu.org
Return: Whenever
Meet: Dick's Fair Lakes parking lot

By Mike Daly

The first trip will be to the Rappahannock River. The quarry will be smallmouth bass. You can wade wet or wear chest waders. Hip boots will not do much for you. Your rod should be anything from a six to an eight weight. You could get by with nothing more than a weight forward line, but if you have a sink tip or even a full sinking line for the rod you choose, this might be a good trip to experiment with either. With as much water as we have in the streams, you leader will not need to be finer than six or eight pound test. For sinking and sink tip lines, use a short, level leader, no more than three to four feet long. I am partial to fluorocarbon, but I would be hard pressed to prove that it gives you an advantage.

I am not sure which section of the river you will fish. My favorite stretch is above Kelly's Ford. I also cannot tell you how the breaching of the dam at Fredericksburg will affect the fishing. But Burt Weisman just told me that one of our members saw some eels in the Rapidan up in Shenandoah Park. Eels are interesting creatures. They are catadromous. They spawn in the ocean, in the Sargasso Sea, but live most of their lives in fresh water streams. Young eels, called elvers, are about a year old when they reach the coast in the spring and enter coastal streams. The females go farther upstream to live than the males. It takes a long time for them to reach maturity, the numbers in print range from five to twenty years. Then they head out to sea to spawn and die. Young eels are up to six inches long when they first migrate up our rivers. Would a fat smallmouth gobble up a six-inch eel? What do you think? I’m waiting to hear some confirmation that this happens above the old dam that was blown up.

One of my old favorite smallmouth patterns was called a Black Angus. Eric Leiser developed it for Angus Cameron to take fishing for Alaskan Rainbows in the late season. It was tied on a #2 or #4 Mustad #79580 hook! I’ve caught largemouth as well as smallmouth bass on it. Saltwater anglers tie them in all kinds of bright colors today. The original black one would probably serve pretty well as an eel imitation. Other smallmouth favorites include Jack Gartside’s Soft Hackle Streamer, and that wiggle-tail thing I call a Mike’s Minnow. The latter is my current favorite, and I often tie it with a bead head. Most of mine are on a 3XL, #8 hook. No mention of smallmouth bass can be made without reference to Bobby Clouser’s Deep Minnow and its variations. The basic technique for fishing these minnow imitations is to toss them across stream and strip a bit of line as the fly swings downstream and back across to a point straight below you. Let it hang in the current (on the dangle) for a moment before you strip it back far enough to lift up the line for your next cast. Mend upstream, or use an upstream reach cast if you think your fly is swinging too fast. Mend downstream if it is swinging too slowly. Toss the fly further upstream and it will sink deeper before you begin your retrieve. Experiment! Vary the speed and direction of your retrieve. Try retrieving it rapidly downstream for a change of pace. I like to feel the fly hitting some rocks along the bottom on the way back, regardless of the speed and direction of my retrieve.

Smallmouth will hit a variety of insect forms, especially if there are a lot of them available and they happen to be good-sized bugs. Sometimes they will even do this on the surface. They will also hit surface poppers and this can be a fun way to catch them. On the whole, most that I have caught have been on some type of minnow pattern, well beneath the surface of the water.

Yellow Breeches Creek
PENDEN SV A L Y

When: August 26
Depart: Contact Dan Kelly
Return: You decide
Meet: Vienna Fire House Parking Lot

The second trip will be to Yellow Breeches Creek near Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania. If you fish above the dam at Allenberry, you will need chest waders. I assure you, that on the basis of personal experience, I know that hip boots will not suffice. Take a stream thermometer, or at least pay attention to the temperature of the water. The Breeches gets a big shot of cold water from the spring-fed lake in Boiling Springs. This water tends to stay along the north bank of the creek for some distance. If the stream temperatures start to get a little warm, the fish may congregate in this cooler section. I usually wear shorts under my waders and my lower legs can feel the difference in water temperature right away.

During the day, ants and beetles will be your best patterns. In the slow stretch above the Allenberry dam there are lots of midges. You will need 5X and 6X tippet to fish the Breeches, and if you want to fish any of the smaller midge patterns, you may need to go down to 7X or even 8X tippet. You wouldn’t want to fish this stuff with a pool cue. I use a nine-foot, three weight rod and it has served me right away. If you have never tried this form of fishing, you may need to go down to 7X or even 8X tippet. You wouldn’t want to fish this stuff with a pool cue. I use a nine-foot, three weight rod and it has served me well. My leader is usually anywhere from nine to twelve feet long.

You could see any number of mayflies toward evening. The one you are hoping to run into is the White Fly, but you may be too late too see these, as they usually appear around the middle of the month. Sometimes you will just see a few, but they can hatch in pretty good numbers. The White Fly, Ephoron leucon, is a very unusual mayfly. The female never molts from a dun into a spinner. If you have never seen a blizzard like hatch of mayflies, there is a chance that this could be your lucky day. If it is, you should know that the hatch doesn’t really get going until dusk, and by dark the whole thing, including the spinner fall is over. Emergers, flush-floating dries (like a Compara-dun), high floating flies (my favorite is a Cream Variant), and spent-wing spinners can all work at some point. The flies are about a #14, and #14 and #16 patterns seem to work more consistently than anything larger. I like to add a small chartreuse egg sack to my spinner patterns to help convince the trout that the fly is both delicious and nutritious.

I’ve seen other mayflies at this time of year on the Breeches, but not usually in great numbers. There is one, about a #14, that looks like a Light Cahill. There is also one that looks like a Baetis fly of some type, about a #20, with a body the color of a striped peacock quill. You could also see some giant Hexagenia flies. They are huge, about an inch and a half long! There is yet another mayfly that looks like a Brown Drake, but I haven’t examined one closely. You could see an odd Sulphur. Most of the sulphurs in the Cumberland Valley are Ephemerella rotunda, and they can be as small as a #18 very late in the season. I saw a little one once on the Breeches that was so yellow I thought it looked more like E. dorothea, but I was unable to catch it to see if I was right. Just remember that all of this potential mayfly action takes place late in the afternoon or in the evening.

The Breeches gets quite a bit of fishing pressure and anglers come from near and far to fish it. As a result, fish are regularly caught on quite a large variety of flies, some of which are pretty weird. Although I have fished this stream more than most of the ones I write about in this column, the more I fish it, the less certain I am that I do so in the most effective manner possible.
Changes in Chapter Leadership

Too often changes in NVATU administration take place with no fanfare, announced only by subtle changes in the lists on Page four of TroutLine. (Who reads that?) This month your Editor thought there were several changes in the roster worthy of emphasis.

Terry Lowe, Treasurer for some years now, has become very active in assisting the Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited, so he has passed the reins of chapter financial affairs to Duane Murphy. Terry has graciously agreed to be a Director to complete the term of George Brandon, who has moved out of the area.

Burt Weisman, Chairman for Stream Projects, has passed on his responsibilities to the capable hands of Bob Rosenthal. Bob will continue Burt’s tradition of filling out the many working parties needed for maintenance on Big Spring Creek, assisting our sister chapter in Adams County, Pennsylvania in work on Conewago Creek, and planning future efforts on other streams. He will look to our membership for the less glamorous but still important work of cleanup of Holmes Run and Accotink Creek, and assisting VGDF in stocking the streams in our area.

Thanks to the outgoing volunteers for their dedication to the needs of NVATU, and welcome to the new guys! We wish you well.

As continues to be the case, the chapter needs you, our membership, for the expertise and resources to allow us to succeed in all of our many projects. Volunteers may work only one or two times during the year, or may choose jobs that require some degree of effort every month.

Sometimes a few hours are sufficient; other positions may require more intense involvement, and the time requirements may increase as well. You choose what is comfortable for you. Some important jobs need filling: Banquet Chairman, Legal Chairman, and Publicity Chairman.

Give Jay Lovering a call!

Whither Salvelinus?

Many fishermen hold a particularly warm place in their hearts for the most widely distributed cold water salmonid native to the eastern United States: the brook trout, officially named Salvelinus fontinalis, or “little salmon of the spring.” To some, brookies were the first trout on a fly rod caught many years ago. For us in TU, they represent the “canary in the coal mine” because they need the purest and coldest waters within the brookie’s natural range. For that reason, they inhabit the highest portions of our watersheds, and if they are in trouble, it implies that the water that flows downstream into the major rivers is probably compromised.

In December 2005 the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture published a report on status, threats, and trends with respect to brook trout waters. The study covered the Appalachians from Maine to Georgia. It encompassed about 25% of the entire native range of brook trout in all of North America, and 70% of the U. S. range. (It omits the north central states.)

The assessment is that wild brookie populations are impaired. Most of the larger riverine habitats no longer support reproducing populations. The most intact watersheds are to be found in Maine, followed by New Hampshire and New York. Pennsylvania has the largest number of subwatersheds with reduced populations.

How does Virginia stack up? The report says that Virginia remains a stronghold for stream-dwelling brookies, but also has the largest number of extirpated watersheds in the region including Virginia, West Virginia, and Maryland. One conclusion: we in NVATU have plenty of work to do.

Send Your Best Pictures to TroutLine

The on-line version of TroutLine includes space available for our members to fill with their favorite photographs and information on their fishing trips or other outdoor adventures. To keep this feature going, the TroutLine staff requests that you send in your favorite photographs, preferably in jpeg format using the highest quality setting on your digital camera. (Regular prints are fine, just let the editor know if you need to have them returned after scanning.)

Please tell us your name and how to get in touch with you, what we see in the picture, when and where the catch was made, and any other details you care to share, such as weather, flies used, size and weight, and anything else that might be of interest to other members.

Submissions or questions, please contact: Dick Davies, (703) 425-2503, redavies3@verizon.net

CURRENTLY

TWO

The largest fish I ever caught in the Breeches came from the run that comes out of the lake right in the heart of Boiling Springs. This was a hefty fish just under two feet long. It was toward the end of the evening and she had been lounging under the footbridge that crosses the run. She took a cased caddis pattern that I had bounced along the bottom right in front of her run. She took a cased caddis pattern that I had toward the end of the evening and she had been a hefty fish just under two feet long. It was

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TWO

The largest fish I ever caught in the Breeches came from the run that comes out of the lake right in the heart of Boiling Springs. This was a hefty fish just under two feet long. It was toward the end of the evening and she had been lounging under the footbridge that crosses the run. She took a cased caddis pattern that I had bounced along the bottom right in front of her nose. The fishing had been a little slow and this was a new pattern for me. I just wanted to see how well I could control its drift. The fish took fairly, and it took me some time to tire it with the light tippet and three weight rod I was using. I had been fishing some smaller flies prior to this, and had been too lazy to cut back on the leader when I switched to the larger pattern.

Toward the end, the fish rolled in the leader and when a Good Samaritan netted it for me, it was no longer hooked exactly where it should have been. I was grateful to him for netting the fish and for confirming that he too had seen it hooked in the mouth. The Good Samaritan was the only angler around. The usual peanut gallery, which includes several good friends of mine, was absent. Initially, I was disappointed that these old cots were not around to witness my moment of glory. Subsequently, I was grateful to have avoided the abuse I would have been subjected to, had any of them seen the hook a bit south of the north end of the fish when it was finally landed. Incidentally, a cased caddis larva is still one of the last patterns I would pull out of the box on the Yellow Breeches.

There are a few things I can say about the Yellow Breeches with confidence. If you fish the flat water above the dam behind the Allenberry Playhouse, use chest waders. I have empirically determined that hip boots just won’t do here. One of the old coots referred to above is a retired game warden named Gene Utech. He taught me to catch salmon on the Miramichi, is a retired game warden named Gene Utech. He taught me to catch salmon on the Miramichi, and he is an old time wet fly fisherman. Gene doesn’t get around too well any more, but most evenings will find him sitting on the bench above the run that comes out of the lake along with a few of his cronies. Occasionally, he’ll make a few casts and hook a fish or two. He is a tall, skinny guy, and if you see him fishing, ask to see his fly when he sits down. It will be an elegantly tied little soft hackled fly, probably not larger than a #16. Not too many of the “experts” that you run into on the Breeches (with tedious regularity) fish these old fashioned flies. Not too many of them have caught as many fish as Gene has.
One trailer found: In late July our Art Director and his friend Jim floated the West Branch and main stem of the Delaware River looking for their trailers lost in a flood the month before. Three miles downstream of the campground a trailer was spotted on river left. Jim and his guide prepared to check it out (inset photo). Above, Jim approaches his totaled trailer. Next month: what was found inside.