

# Catskill Mountains Trout Unlimited

To conserve, protect and restore New York's Trout and Salmon Fisheries and their watersheds



## September Meeting Wednesday September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, 6:30PM

This month's speaker will be Troy Haley. Troy is a retired Army Master Sargent who served 23 years in both the Marines (7 Years) and Army National Guard (16 Years). During his time in the service, he was deployed in the first gulf war, Somalia and Iraq war.

Troy will be coming to chapter meeting to speak about [Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing](#) (PHWFF). Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing began in 2005 serving wounded military service members at Walter Reed Army Medical Center returning from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan. Since then, PHWFF has expanded nationwide, establishing its highly successful program in Department of Defense hospitals, Warrior Transition Units, and Veterans Affairs Medical Centers and clinics.

The Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing program provides basic fly fishing, fly casting, fly tying and rod building classes, along with clinics participants ranging from beginners who have never fished before, to those with prior fly fishing and tying experience who are adapting their skills to their new abilities. All fly fishing and tying equipment is provided to the participants at no cost. Fishing trips, both one day and multi-day, are also provided free of charge to participants.



## Calendar

- September Chapter Meeting**  
Wednesday September 21<sup>st</sup>, 2016, **Community Room, Hudson Valley Mall, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM**  
  
Speaker: Troy Haley, Project Healing Waters
- October Chapter Meeting**  
Wednesday October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Community Room Hudson Valley Mall, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM  
  
Speaker: tbd
- Annual Conservation Banquet**, Saturday October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2016  
Stonehedge Restaurant West Park NY
- November Chapter Meeting**  
Wednesday November 16<sup>th</sup>, 2016, Community Room Hudson Valley Mall, Kingston NY, 6:30 PM

## Conditions in Esopus Creek: A Report on the August SPDES Permit Meeting

By Andrew Higgins

On August 16<sup>th</sup> I attended the semi-annual SPDES Permit meeting in Tannersville. As many of you know, the SPDES Permit governs the water quality in the water released from the “Portal” in Esopus Creek. It sets temperature and turbidity limits for DEP. TU was well represented at the meeting. In addition to myself, Ed Ostapczuk and Tony Coccozza, from the APW chapter, were there, and Ron Urban was there representing both our chapter and the state council. The meeting was a lively one, with both bad news and good news for Esopus Creek. I’ll start with the bad news.

### Hot Water in the Esopus

It was a tough summer for the Esopus Creek. I’m writing this on August 20<sup>th</sup>, and the temperature on the Coldbrook Gauge nearly reached 80 degrees yesterday. That’s lethal for trout. A major cause of the warming in the creek is the warmer water coming through the portal this summer. By late July, water coming through the portal topped 70 degrees.

This puts DEP in violation of the SPDES Permit, which sets 70 degrees as the maximum temperature. But shutting down the portal right now would result in drastically lower flows and higher temperatures in the stream. So the question right now is what DEP can do about planning for future years.

At the meeting, DEP suggested that these high temperatures were due to bad luck: an unusually hot July combined with drought conditions. (They asserted that the lack of a snow-pack this



winter had minimal effect on water temperatures.) Tony Coccozza asked several questions about the high flows in June, when cold water was pumping through the system. DEP explained that those flows were necessary to bring the Ashokan Reservoir up to level, and that they had no reason to be concerned about the cold water reserves in the Schoharie at that time. They went on to say that once they noticed temperatures rising in early July, they began adjusting flows to conserve cold water, and the recreational release planned for early July was canceled.

Leslie Zucker of the Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program asked DEP about including climate change in their modeling. DEP’s current modeling is based on past data, and this July was one of the hottest on record. Modeling that anticipates rising temperatures might enable DEP to better able to respond to hot, dry conditions like we had this summer and keep the temperatures in the water coming through the portal below levels required by the SPDES permit.

The long and short of this is that DEP’s priority will always be having enough water available for the city—that’s what the institution exists for. Lots of good people who

care about the environment work for DEP, but the condition of trout habitat in the Esopus will always be a secondary concern to the institution. So it's up to TU to keep advocating and making sure that DEP prioritizes water temperature in the Esopus. The tough questions asked by TU members at the meeting reminded DEP about our concerns about water temperature in the creek.

### **Exciting News about the Shandaken Tunnel Intake**

While the short-term news in the Esopus is grim, the long term outlook is more positive. Local Trout Unlimited members have expressed serious concerns about ongoing renovations to the Gilboa Dam and the Shandaken Tunnel Intake in the Schoharie Reservoir, and DEP seems to have taken our concerns seriously. John Vickers, Chief of Water Operations for DEP, announced that "Preliminary modeling shows favorable results using a new High Level Outlet at Gilboa Dam." This is significant news. You may remember that DEP had announced a Low Level Outlet from Gilboa Dam. This was a serious danger to the Esopus because it meant that if DEP needed to release water downstream from the Gilboa, it would be releasing cold water first. A high level outlet enables them to both ensure the safety of the people living downstream from the Gilboa Dam and preserve the Schoharie's small cold water reserves. It's a win-win!

In addition, John Vickers shared details about DEP's plan for a variable-level intake value on the Shandaken Tunnel Intake system. The current intake is set at a fixed height. The new additional intake can be moved up and down about 50'. That will enable DEP to preserve the colder water longer. For example, early in

the season DEP could release water from higher levels and preserve the lower, colder water for later in the season. This even has the potential to raise stream temperatures in April, giving a jump start to trout season!

These infrastructure announcements are big news. They should have a significant impact on the ability to maintain cold water temperatures for the trout in Esopus Creek. But they have to go hand-in-hand with modeling that accounts for rising temperatures and more extreme weather events in our region.

How can you help? Write to DEP Acting Commissioner Vincent Sapienza expressing your concern about the high temperatures coming through the portal this summer. The SPDES permit sets 70 degrees as a maximum allowed temperature for water coming through the portal. The target temperature is 62 degrees. Comments from some DEP officials at the meeting suggested that they saw the 70 degree mark as a suggestion rather than a legal limit. Be sure to also congratulate DEP for their innovative work on the Shandaken Tunnel Intake. This new tool should allow for much more effective control of water quality in the Esopus. Please urge DEP to adopt modeling that will prevent the kinds of high temperatures we are experiencing this summer. Acting Commissioner Sapienza can be reached at

<http://www.nyc.gov/html/mail/html/maildep.html>.

## CMTU Event Connetquot Fishing

CMTU is planning a trip to the Connetquot River State Park on Monday, September 26 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at \$ 40 per person. There is a max of 30 anglers, but no minimum. Please let Bill Shaw know if you are interested in going and who would be interested in a car-pool arrangement.

Bill Shaw (whshaw10@frontier.com)



## CMTU Conservation Banquet 2016

The Catskill Mountains Chapter of Trout Unlimited invites you to our **52nd Annual Conservation Banquet**, 6:00 PM, **Saturday, October 29th**, at the **Stonehedge Restaurant** on Route 9w in West Park, NY. s. As many of you know, this is the major fund raising event for our chapter, and it enables us to do all the good work that we do each year to conserve, protect, and restore the coldwater fisheries in our region and beyond.

This year's speaker will be noted author and former DEC Fisheries Principal Habitat Technician Ed Van Put, together with his wife Judy Van Put, will give a power point presentation on artists who fished the Catskills. In addition to being the birthplace of fly fishing in America, the Catskills played an important role in American landscape painting. Judy will present the program, and explain how those two activities often overlapped; after which Ed will answer questions - either on the subject or on fishing in general. As many of you know, Ed Van Put is the author of Trout Fishing in the Catskills and The Beaverkill: The History of a River and its People.

See [cmtu.org](http://cmtu.org) for more details.

### This year's grand prize raffle items include:

*First Prize:* [Orvis Superfine Rod \(7'6", 4wt\)](#)

*Second Prize:* [2 Night Stay for 2, Hungry Trout Resort](#)

*Third Prize:* [Guided 1-day trip for 3 on the Douglaston Salmon Run with Dave "Rocky" Rockwell.](#)

Grand prize raffle tickets are \$10 per ticket OR 3 tickets for \$20.

You can purchase tickets to the banquet and the raffle online through [Eventbrite](#) or by contacting Ron Urban (845-339-5938 or [Rongonefishing@aol.com](mailto:Rongonefishing@aol.com)).

## Volunteer Opportunity – AWSMP Family Fun & Fish Day

AWSMP Family Fun and Fish Day was rescheduled to Saturday, October 1<sup>st</sup> from at Kenneth Wilson State Campground (859 Wittenberg Road, Mt. Tremper, NY). It will be held from 11:00am to 1:30pm

AWSMP is seeking volunteers for this event. AWSMP will cover the cost of entering the park and will provide a free BBQ lunch! NYSDEC will be on hand to provide fishing tackle and bait.

This is a great opportunity to see that happen and to teach some basic fundamentals of the sport. If anyone has any questions about the event or wish to volunteer, please contact: Brent Gotsch, AWSMP (845) 688-3047 ext. 3 or [bwg37@cornll.edu](mailto:bwg37@cornll.edu)



### Interested in becoming a Member of Catskill Mountain Trout Unlimited

Trout Unlimited is America's leading coldwater conservation organization. Our hope is that clean, cold, fishable water exists for generations to come, but we can't do it without the support of committed anglers and conservationists like you. Click here to [become a new TU member](#) and see all the great benefits of membership, or click here to [renew your existing membership](#).

## Note New Chapter Meeting Location

Please note that starting this September the CMTU monthly meeting will be at a new location.

September's meeting will be held at the Community Room Hudson Valley Mall, Kingston NY (Located near the internal entrance of JCPenny) [map](#)



## CMTU Earth Day Bennet Elementary School 2016

TU Volunteers were invited to talk about the importance of clean water and trout at Bennet Elementary School in May. The event also included some fly casting lessons for various types of trout.



## From the President

### Trout in Strange Places

One of the interesting things about fly fishing is all the strange places where trout show up. We tend to think of them in streams tumbling out of the mountains or tailwaters below dams. I've caught trout in a few unusual places, but this summer was the first time I caught trout in a swimming pool!

For a family trip this summer, Liz made us reservations at the Robert H Treman State Park in Ithaca. "Our campsite's right on a trout stream," she told me excitedly. I had images of us camping beneath pine trees on a burbling brook. When we left Kingston, a good 50% of our luggage was fishing equipment.

We got to the campsite on a brutally hot day. Instead of cool pines we were in a bare field with burned grass. The ground was hard as concrete. Behind our campsite was a band of brush. I thought the burbling brook must be through that. So we bushwacked in only to find the edge of a gorge. At the bottom of a 15 foot drop, there was the streambed. And there was the stream—flowing at maybe 2 or 3 gallons per minute. Looked like I wouldn't need all that equipment after all.

While I sat down with the dog to whine about the heat, Liz and Faye went off to swim at the pool. The pool, upstream from our campsite, was a large, half-acre basin cut in stone below a trickling waterfall. In the 1930s, WPA workers had built a dam and a stone bathhouse. It was a beautiful place. And cool! I did wonder for a second if it held trout, but I didn't really believe it.



The next morning as I walked the dog by the pool, I saw rings. "That looked like a rise!" Sure enough, I soon saw a cruising trout.

After the swimmers had left that evening, Liz, my daughter Faye, and I headed to the pool with our fly rods. When we got there, we could see cruising trout all over the pool. They were especially thick over by the diving board, in the deep end, near the waterfall. Most were in the 10"-12" range, but a few were larger. We fished for about an hour, until it was too dark to see. These were wary trout. We only caught a few. But it was the first time I've ever landed a trout while standing by a diving board!

You always hear that all a trout needs is clean, cold water and food. Looks like this even applies to swimming pools.

Tight lines,

Andrew

# Chapter Information

**President:** Andrew Higgins

**Vice President:** Ted Hoover

**Secretary:** Ryan Williams

**Treasurer:** Ron Urban

**Directors:** Bert Darrow

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