

# The Hatch

## Message From the President

June is here, and already we've experienced the full-court-press of summer weather! El Nino is sure to be blamed for this and undoubtedly thousands of other phenomenon between now and October.

Now there's a term to define 1998! "El Nino." Amazing how often this comes up in day-to-day conversation! Here's my spin on playing Dr. Sociologist: The universal adoption of a science-specific term such as "El Nino" happens only when a critical mass of the population has been influenced by the particular phenomenon, *and when it is treated as newsworthy by the media.* (I'll come back to that later.)

Wouldn't it be interesting if the American population, or even citizens of the Southwestern VT TU Chapter territory were equally familiar with the term and concept of "cold-water fishery conservation?" The distance between the commonality of "El Nino" in everyday conversation and "cold-water fishery conservation" is caused by lack of sensationalism as much as any other factor. El Nino will probably influence no more people's lives than will the affects of our dwindling natural cold-water fishery resources, but issues like diminishing trout populations on the Battenkill will never be the stuff of daily news headlines.

Our news media are skilled, first and foremost, at sensationalizing anything. Here's a little exercise to help drive this concept home: Think back to the last 10 days of news you have heard, read or

watched. Undoubtedly there was at least one slow day in which the local news was a little mundane. Do you remember the "big" story that wasn't? Maybe it was about the harrowing rescue of a cat which was trapped in a fallen-down barn or a shopper who was (omigosh) overcharged in the grocery store! Maybe you heard about the child that found a newt in his cereal bowl? Here's a real one for you. Do you remember all of the fuss over a *tortilla* with the image of Jesus on it?

Point is, the media understand that in order to keep you, their consumer interested, they need to put a little bit of intrigue into the day's reporting - even if it has to be created.

TU is a conservation-oriented organization, and conservation generally comes across as the "big" story that wasn't. If we are to have wide-spread public awareness of the issues which face our cold water fisheries, perhaps we need to create a little intrigue in our reporting.

Here's my shot at some local news: **"Brown trout populations are down a shocking 70% or more on the Battenkill. No one knows how long this fishery will last. Some say that this great fishery, the same great fishery that Lee Wulff used to travel far out of his way to fish, may be on its final down-hill slide!"**

The focus of our chapter's efforts, this Summer, will be spent stabilizing a portion of the Battenkill stream bank. We will also be working with local conservation organizations to help try to figure out the primary influences of the brown trout population decline. With a

little sensationalism, we might succeed at getting more people interested in solving the problems this great river is facing. The Battenkill brings thousands of dollars of commerce to Southwestern Vermont, and without a healthy trout population, this commerce could be in severe jeopardy. Now that is a piece of news worth sensationalizing!

I encourage you to stir your local pots on this subject. Bring some attention to this cold water fishery problem in your neck of the woods. Talk to your friends and neighbors and let them know that we have some "BIG" problems, and that we need to do something about it now.

In the next couple of months, the stream bank stabilization project is going to take a lot of work. If ever there was a time to step forward and provide some support, now is the time. Call or write, or send a check. Better yet, come to the next meeting and become an active participant in the solution! (It sure beats reading about it.)

*By the by...*you needn't be concerned that our chapter has become the Battenkill chapter of TU. It just turns out that the majority of our active participants live in the Battenkill drainage area. We thought we'd work in the back yard for now, and branch out once we get some interest from other areas.

Look further in this issue for details regarding our next meeting.

**Thursday, May 28<sup>th</sup> Meeting Notes**

Our meeting last Thursday took place addressing many of the issues facing our Chapter.

There were 13 members in attendance and a terrific dialogue followed on how we can better organize the Chapter to make it work for all its members and the Trout and Salmon Habitat in Southwestern Vermont.

### **Battenkill Stream Bank Stabilization Project Planned**

Our major focus for 1998 will be the completion of the Battenkill Streambank Stabilization Project on the Pig Farm stretch. While we are still in the discovery phase of this project with regard to permitting and landowner participation, we are confident that we will complete this project before October 15<sup>th</sup>.

To date, we have already raised over \$3,600 for this project and we expect to raise more through foundation grants and other fundraising vehicles. Andy Goode, a seasoned professional in the Conservation arena, will be spearheading our efforts on this project and will function as the official project coordinator. Any people interested in volunteering their efforts on this project are encouraged to call Andy at 362-8592.

### **The Chapter's Financial Status**

Frank Nelson, Chapter Treasurer, reported on the financial condition of the Chapter. We currently have assets totaling \$11,444.02 and no outstanding liabilities.

The general Fund balance currently stands at \$2,100.71 and there remain nine other dedicated funds (both river and project specific) which total \$7,240.60.

### **Next Meeting Tuesday, June 16<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 PM**

Ryan Shadrin, Tom Deck and Ray Berumen, our social coordinators (SC's) and membership drive team, will be hosting our next meeting. They have

planned a great social evening including barbecued hot dogs and beer! You'll be seeing more meetings with a social theme, and the goal will be to get the business out of the way as soon as possible, with plenty of time for food and lies. The SC's will be planning a SWVT TU Chapter fishing excursion, so bring your suggestions for locations!

#### **Meeting agenda is as follows:**

- Hapgood Pond Fishing Derby report.
- Battenkill Stream Bank Stabilization status-report and special committee assignments.
- Vote on a resolution to create a Manchester-based checking account to handle day-to-day cash flows.
- General housekeeping, comments and suggestions.
- The business part of the meeting will last from 5:30 to 6:15.
- 6:15 until 8:00 - Barbecue!

**Where:** Ryan Shadrin's house which is just North of the center of Manchester Center on Bonnet Street (AKA rt. 30). From the flashing light in Manchester (junction of rts. 11/30 and 7A) go North on Bonnet Street (rt. 30). You'll see the First Vermont Bank on the right hand (East) side of the road. Ryan's house is three houses past (North) of the bank on the (East) side of the road (same side as the bank.) There is a large tan and brown house in the front, and Ryan's place is the carriage house at the end of the driveway. You may park in the driveway or on Bonnet Street. If you have any questions about getting there, call Ryan at 362-8595.

### **Hapgood Pond Fishing Derby on June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998**

The Eighth Annual Green Mountain National Forest Youth Fishing Derby will be held on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>, 1998 at Hapgood Pond in Peru. This year, through the partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, local members of the Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited will be coordinating the fund raising efforts for this year's event.

The Youth Fishing Derby has become a very popular event for families in our area, getting families together to share in the fun of fishing. Last year, 128 boys and girls participated and 145 trout were reeled in! Following the Derby, everyone was treated to a lunch and an awards ceremony where every youngster received a prize.

Your Participation in National Fishing Week is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please contact Bob Bayer of the Manchester Ranger District Office at 362-2307 or Bill Bullock at 362-8637.