

Ahokan / Pepacton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited
Mitch Keller author of **East Branch, Six Years on a Catskill Trout Stream**
Chapter Meeting Minutes of March 24th 2021

Present: Tony C, Ed O, Kevin Lyons, Jody H, Thom F, Mark L, Peter Marx, George Marcus

7:08 Mark L called the meeting to order.

Previous Meeting Minutes: I had already noticed an incorrect citation regarding our chapter's response to the Pump Storage Issue and struck out Regional TU and inserted NYS Council of TU. Tony C made a **motion** to accept the minutes as presented, Chris H seconded, **motion so passed.**

Financial Report for February: Jody H reported an "Operating Balance on 2/01/21 of \$11,969.88", income amounted to \$150.00 and their were expenses of \$25.00. Factoring these and adding the \$787.68 in the Conservation Fund, brought the "Total Cash Assets on 2/01/2021 came to : \$12,882.68."

Acid Rain Report for January: Jody H reported that there 10 storms, sleet and snow totaling 32.9 inches, equalling a liquid amount of 4.07, with a total weighted average pH of 5.9.

Mark L mentioned that we had little opportunity to raise funds since the pandemic hit, but that **Todd Spire** had generously offered half of the proceeds of his **Second Annual Fishing Tournament** to be held in **June.**

Mark L mentioned that **Kevin Lyons** from the **Smith River Chapter** of **Virginia** was present. When asked he answered that: "he is not related to Nick Lyons."

Mark L brought up the **Premier Energy Holding's** application for a permit to study further their proposal for a **Pump Storage Facility.** He added that the idea, if implemented, would have severely detrimental ecological and economical effects in this area of the Catskills. Mark went on to say that **Ed O** had written a letter of opposition to the **FERC**, that could be used in any form by others to register their oppositon as well. The project threatens the **NYC water supply**, some of the world's best. **Ed O** further indicated that he wanted to submit it to the **FERC** almost immediately, as time was of the essence.

Jody H made a **motion** to authorize **Ed O** to send his **letter of protest** when ever he wants, I seconded, and there were no objections, the motion was so passed.

Peter Marx a Professional Washington Lobbyist, asked if anyone has brought to any congressional delegations suggeting they may have language or vehicles to prevent this. When asked what the best way to contact senators or congresspeople, he said he was meeting with **Delgado's** people the next day.

Mark L then turned the program over to **Mitch Keller:**

Mitch had indicated earlier, that he would read sections from his book. He started with early days on the **East Branch** and the dizzying number of fly patterns and how to deal with the intimidation he felt by his seeming lack of knowledge. This was the first indication of the humility which he admirably maintained in later years. He was aware that there were many successful anglers that carried only the flies they thought necessary. An extreme of this was an experienced old timer that used only an **Adams** and an **Ant imitation**. **Mitch** then went on to relate his experiences and admiration for the Adams. He wrapped up with when in doubt use an **Adams** and added, that he was usually in doubt.

Chris H indicated that he really enjoyed the reading his book and sympathized with the number of flies carried issue.

Mitch then related his apprehension that he would be in the company of vain, expensively decked out anglers, which enforced his desire to seek a little solitude on less populous waters. He related that he met with an incredible **lack of success**. It seemed, that **“he wasn't as good a flyfisherman that he thought he was.”** At first he was almost tempted to blame the rivers, but knew better. He then had to accept the fact he had a great deal to learn and made the **realization that learning** has to be embraced as a **large part** of the **enjoyment of the sport**. Several chapter members expressed that they too “had been there and done that” earlier in their angling days. **Mitch's** experiences resonated with us, I think, because of his acute observational skills and compelling writing which most found quite enjoyable. It was agreed that fly fishing was an incredibly a complex endeavour combining art, art, science, and sport that was also ever changing. The unpredictable aspects that often taught new lessons were, in large part, what kept anglers coming back repeatedly was an idea that all seemed to agree with. **Mitch** had reminded many members of those truths, and it made for a lively exchange between he and most present.

Mitch mentioned that, in his experiences, anglers he'd met or overheard, commonly asked: **“What the most memorable fishing experience they had was.”** He went on to say; that though many traveled far and wide to seek adventures and he did, at least, spend much time outwest in the states, it was the **East Branch** and other **Catskill** waters that created his most memorable experiences to date. He related that his most memorable experience was a **twenty six day period** he spent fishing every day in the **Catskills**, that he called an immersion experience during which he experienced the most free from everyday life. **Mitch** related that he didn't catch an extraordinary number of fish, or any of the largest fish he'd caught, but it was that he had experienced what it was like to live for fishing only. Fishing days, reading, and tying flies at night. This was the epitome of the **“six years on a Catskill trout stream”** that inspired the title of his book.

This was followed by recollections and/or notable experiences of many of the chapter members. All present, it seemed, had an enjoyable time expressing perceptions of fishing the Catskills whether good or bad.

Mark queried **Peter M** about his endeavour of water temperature and migration monitoring of the **East Branch** which he obliged by relating some of the data revealed and it's implications for anglers.

Soon after, the meeting adjourned because of time limitations.

Respectfully submitted,
Thom Frankel (chapter secretary)