

Blue Mountains trout news

Newsletter of the Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter of Trout Unlimited, #559

P.O. Box 119, Phoenicia, NY 12464

November 2021



Photo above depicts a trout redd, more on these below

Next Meeting: Due to Covid and Thanksgiving, the board of directors decided not to host a November meeting. Currently chapter Membership Chair Russell Martin is soliciting chapter members to determine if the chapter should host a year-end, celebratory event. If you are an APW TU chapter member, and did not receive an email from Russell, by Monday---November 15th please express your opinion to Russell at: rmartintu@gmail.com Your input matters, and we'd like to hear from you.

Chapter Online Auction: The chapter's Online Auction concluded on November 5th; it was a highly successful financial endeavor. Thanks to Todd Spire for organizing this activity, and all those folks who contributed to it and supported it. Todd and chapter Treasurer Jody Hoyt are still busy counting up the profits, and hopefully there will be a report in a future communication; but for now it was one of the most successful fund raisers the chapter ever had. Thanks to everyone who supported it!

Trout redds: Given the new "catch & release" extended trout season on most NYS inland trout waters, there has been some discussion and concern regarding trout redds, specifically how to identify these so the angler does not unintentionally disturb any. A trout redd is an underwater spawning nest. Several factors influence when and where they are constructed, namely: water temperature, flow depth and velocity, and stream substrate.

On the Esopus Creek watershed, rainbows spawn in the spring, while browns and brook trout spawn in the fall. Rainbow and brown trout require running water, while brook trout can also spawn in stillwater ponds and lakes if there are underwater springs. Typically stream redds are constructed in transitional locations between pools and riffles, often in tailouts where water is forced through the substrate providing oxygen for trout eggs while keeping them free of silt and other debris. Water depth varies, but often it's not very deep. And typically redds are oval shaped, like a dinner serving plate. They often vary in length, and depth, depending upon the size of the trout spawning. And very often a clean, almost polished, oval of slightly depressed gravel will be surrounded by stones and gravel of darker colors, as surrounding areas have not been swept clean by trout building redds and spawning.

Without commenting on pros and cons of the extended catch and release fishing season, let me add that I have been fishing the Esopus Creek watershed since 1970, over half-a-century. And, since 2013 I've made a habit of fly-fishing for trout every month of the season, often in New Jersey December through March. Over the years, I've seen many trout redds, and still get very excited when I see another. For years the Esopus Creek supported an extended season through November 30th, where anglers could still kill trout. Yet, this appears to have little impact on the Esopus Creek wild brown trout population. And it seems Opening Day has been April 1st since forever, yet I've encountered spawning rainbows through mid-May and Mothers' Day. Again with

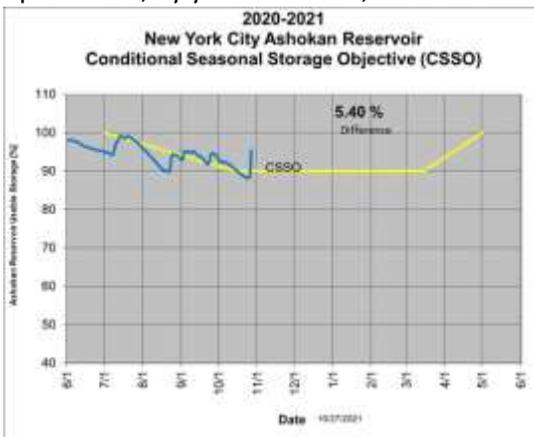
little impact on the wild rainbows. If anything, the new fishing regs reduce the killing season on Esopus Creek. However, allowing anglers to fish associated tributaries is new, and as a word to the wise, if/when fishing a smaller stream, anglers should walk along the bank and not through the water.

Trout redds are fairly easy to identify, once you know what to look for. From top left to right, clockwise are: a rainbow trout redd, two small brown trout redds, and a brook trout sitting on a redd.



For additional info, check out this AWSMP website post: <https://ashokanstreams.org/trout-love-in-the-spring-what-is-a-redd/>

Esopus Creek: It is fully expected that work will be completed on the Shandaken Tunnel, and it could be fully operational, by year-end 2020, with a new High Level Intake. Furthermore, New York City Department of Environmental Protection (NYC DEP) reports that the Catskill Aqueduct, from the Ashokan Reservoir, will remain offline for repairs, with only spill mitigation releases planned to continue through January 15, 2022, to maintain the Conditional Seasonal Storage Objective (CSSO). A CSSO is a predetermined reservoir volume of water that varies with time of year.



DEP also announced that efforts to replace the Five Arches Bridge over the Esopus Creek, in Boiceville, will begin this month. FYI: <https://www1.nyc.gov/site/dep/news/21-039/nyc-dep-upcoming-project-replace-two-bridges-near-ashokan-reservoir#/0>

When NYS DEC Region 3 Fisheries Biologist presented at the October chapter meeting, among many interesting subjects he also mentioned DEC's Trout Stream Mapper, found here:

<https://www.dec.ny.gov/outdoor/122444.html> And if you missed it, chapter member Bennet Ratcliff penned a very nice front-page article for the Oct. 13th issue of *Hudson Valley One*, titled "Yesterday on the Esopus: An elusive search for the brown trout run." FYI: <https://hudsonvalleyone.com/2021/10/15/yesterday-on-the-esopus-an-elusive-search-for-the-brown-trout-run/>

East Branch Delaware: Peter Marx, of our EBD Committee and chapter rep to the Coalition of the Delaware River Watershed (FYI: <http://www.delriverwatershed.org/>), reported that the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill that just passed the House, and will be signed into law by the President on Monday. It contains a provision to provide an additional \$26 million over 5 years for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's Delaware River Basin Restoration Program. This will be for habit restoration and protection projects throughout the entire Delaware River watershed - from the headwaters of the East and West Branch all the way down to Delaware Bay.

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program (AWSMP): Both chapter President Mark Loete and Board of Director Chet Karwatowski attended a recent AWSMP Stakeholder Meeting, where they presented Leslie Zucker the Chapter's Silver Trout Award for her invaluable leadership and efforts as AWSMP Program Leader. Well-deserved Leslie!

Acid rain report: Jody Hoyt reported in October there were 7 rain events as measured in Boiceville. These had a 6.0 weighed pH with 7.64 inches of rain. By comparison in Oct. 2020 there were 6 such events with a total of 3.43 inches of liquid precipitation--- including 0.1 inches of snow, and a 5.4 weighed pH. Thank you Jody for your ongoing efforts on this project and as chapter Treasurer!

Treasurer's report: Jody Hoyt reports at the end of October the chapter had \$12,908.70 of which \$11,971.02 was in the General Operating Fund and \$937.68 in the Conservation Fund. The report does NOT reflect any income from the chapter Online Auction.

Membership: As of this newsletter, our membership remains at 116 members. This month we welcome Bill Berg of Roxbury as a new member. As always **new** TU members can join for half the "regular" membership fee, or \$17.50, of which the chapter receives a \$15 rebate from National. Membership forms: http://www.apwctu.org/pdfs/TU_membership_brochure2018_web.pdf

Russell Martin, Membership Chair, can be reached at: rmartintu@gmail.com for membership questions or concerns.

Newsletter: If you received this newsletter and would rather not, please hit **REPLY** and write **REMOVE** and hit **SEND**. This is my last newsletter, something I enjoyed doing for many years. By year-end the email address APW_TU@Hvc.rr.com will be discontinued. In the future chapter members and newsletter readers can reach Todd Spire at: spireny@gmail.com Best of luck Todd, I know you'll do a great job!

Beyond our watersheds and other news: The 2021 International Fly Tying Symposium will be held at the Parsippany Hilton Hotel in New Jersey on Nov. 20th and 21st. FYI: <https://internationalflytyingsymposium.com/>



Recently chapter members Kevan Best and Ken Brooks, two of the best dry-fly fishers I know, returned from a successful Atlantic Salmon Nova Scotia trip, sharing a couple photos.



Useful links:

Ashokan-Pepacton Watershed Chapter Trout Unlimited: <https://apwctu.org/>

Ashokan Watershed Stream Management Program: <http://ashokanstreams.org/>

CWC Watershed Currents: <https://cwconline.org/watershed-currents-e-news/>

Delaware County Soil and Water Conservation District: <http://www.dcswcd.org/Stream%20Program.htm>

Esopus Creek hatching chart: <http://www.catskillanglingcollection.org/>

NYC DEP Reservoir Levels-Releases:

https://www1.nyc.gov/html/dep/html/drinking_water/release_channel_levels.shtml

Rondout Neversink Stream Program: <http://www.rondoutneversink.org/>

The last dance,
Ed Ostapczuk
Nov. 12th, 2021