



WindKnots

News, views and piscatorial propaganda from the MadDog Chapter

Vol.I, No. 1

Spring, 2006

Join us for our Annual Banquet!

Saturday, April 29, 2006, Best Western Inn (Exit 10, I-89, Waterbury Center, VT)

Featuring guest speaker & world-class photographer:

Thomas Ames, Jr.

author of *Hatch Guide for New England* and *Fishbugs*,

Great friends, great food, great auction items, great cause...

Social hour, 6 pm, Dinner, 7 pm

Forecasts

by Clark Amadon, President

Welcome to WindKnots, the first issue of what we intend to be a regular publication of the MadDog Chapter. As your new president, I want to take a moment and share some of my thoughts about our chapter, and some the things that I've discussed with those of you who've attended the last few meetings.

First and foremost, I want to thank Tom Murray for his leadership, energy and dedication over the past several years. Without it, the MadDog Chapter would almost certainly still be languishing, perhaps little more than a memory to folks like Dr. Bill Allard, Vince Rossano, Steve Sanderson, Chris Wagner, Brian Koiker and others who took the trout by the tail in the early- to mid-eighties to try and preserve what was good in the MadDog's area, and improve that which wasn't.

I also want to thank the directors who continue in their important roles – chapter bean counter John Mudgett, vice president and vocal advocate Lawton Weber and “new” chapter secretary Budd Shedaker, one of the original MadDog directors.

I want to take this opportunity to share with you what I believe about the work we should be doing.

1. We need to be active. There should always be a project that's being worked on, and “sweat labor” from the members involved.

- 2. We need to gather information** about the habitat and trout fisheries of our region. We need to know what are the current and future needs for the streams in the area.
- 3. We need to feel connected to one another** through regular meetings, projects and, of course, fishing related events.
- 4. We need to create partnerships** with compatible organizations in our area. We can use one another's strength and resources.
- 5. We need to listen to and work with** those whose views and objectives are compatible with ours, yet be respectful and persuasive with those whose views and objectives appear to run counter to ours.
- 6. We need to embrace new leaders** and nurture their development.

Finally, and most importantly, I want to elicit your input. I firmly believe that, together, we can make a real difference in a part of the world that is increasingly threatened by the encroachments that have virtually destroyed or forever altered so much of America's cold water fishery. Fortunately for all of us, Vermont still has much to offer. How much it will offer our sons and daughters is largely up to us. So I ask for your ideas, support – and a little sweat equity from time to time.

Thanks for listening – now let's have some fun!

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Projects...

MadDog, CT VT Chapters join Cabot Creamery, GMP, DEC and others in Winooski Headwaters kick-off event, Saturday, May 13 – volunteers needed!

The MadDog Chapter of TU, along with the Central Vermont Chapter of TU, The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, Cabot Creamery, The Friends of the Winooski River and Green Mountain Power are working as sponsors in the Kick-Off event of the Winooski Headwaters Community Project. The tree-planting project will take place in two shifts, 9am-noon, and 1-4pm, Saturday, May 13th.

The planting will be held at the *Green Mountain Curlies, Inc.* farm just north of Marshfield Village on Route 2. Lunch will be provided!

This a great opportunity to produce a *flood* of TU support – and get some good publicity for the Chapter, as well. Bring your shovels, friends and kids, if you'd like. Project tee shirts will be available

Please volunteer for this great project, and call or email me (496-7971, clark@amadononline.net) to sign up. As mentioned, lunch will be provided for both shifts, so we need an accurate head count for planning purposes. Please help!

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Dams...



Power generators...river killers... fish frustrators... cold water sources... white water producers... reservoir fisheries...

Damn dams. Seems like we can't live with 'em and can't live without 'em.

Cox Brook dam, however, is one we should be able to do without – and do something about as a Chapter. It's practically *asking* to be taken out of its misery. All circumstances seem to point to success as a Chapter project.

The dam has an interesting history. Built in 1927 to power a mill, its construction was finished just before the big

you-know-what. By the time the flood waters had receded, investors and all others connected with the project had understandably lost their collective appetite for anything hydrologic. So in a sense, it is the dam that never was.

Historical irony aside, removal of Cox Brook dam is desirable and potentially doable for a number of reasons:

1. First, it's an impediment to rainbows and browns seeking to make their way up from the Dog to suitable spawning habitat.
2. It's an eyesore.
3. There is a supportive landowner, who owns land above and below the dam. No other "interested parties" seem to have a vested (or any other kind) of interest.
4. There is support from the State for its removal and, perhaps owing to some residual "momentum" from Chapter involvement in projects over the last couple of years, there appears to be monetary resources available for the venture.

As you can see from the photo, the dam is breached at the bottom and appears held together by little more than rebar in places. The landowner reported water levels that surged over the top of the dam last January – the highest levels since 1991. The net effect of this was a dramatic lowering of the sediment build-up behind the dam, and therefore a diminished danger of significant gravel release from the dam's removal.

He also reported watching rainbows trying to move upstream through the dam every year at spawning time. Depending on water conditions, some actually make it through.

As old and seemingly compromised as the dam is, the structure itself was built to last, and some heavy equipment will be needed to take out large portions of it. We'll need some "sweat equity" from Chapter members and are asking for your help and support. We're really just beginning to get this project going, and will keep you updated as to when we would need your help. More at the April 29th banquet.

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Short casts...

On the Mad River, there's a good chance there will also be some tree plantings. It looks like work will be done along Rte. 100B in Moretown. The timetable for this work is less certain, but there is a landowner who is very supportive of the project. The Mad gets a strong thermal dose in the summer and has much need for stream bank stabilization in many areas.

On the Dog: Rich Kim reports that the tree revetments placed in the Dog last year did not survive the winter; the trees placed in the upper pool are still in place, however and may benefit from additional anchoring. We'll be consulting with USFS and will keep you updated. In the past we've had strong support from riverside landowners and there are a number of areas where plantings would be beneficial. The Riverton stretch has willing landowners and stream bank and adjacent land which would benefit from more trees. Our namesake river is a jewel which we need to continue to polish.

Outtakes from: The Bright Future of Trout in Central Vermont

At the MadDog Chapter meeting in early March we spent time collecting stories, information and opinions about ourselves, the wishes we have for the chapter, and of course about trout and fishing. This information and data, is going to help us keep focused on what we feel passionate about and what we can do to nurture that passion and the trout and wild environs we seek to protect and preserve. Following are some "outtakes" and stories from the members present at that meeting. I found them inspiring at the time, and hope you feel the same. We'll continue to share member stories in future newsletters. These first quotes are answers to this question:

Tell about a time you felt a profound connection to nature and the act of fishing...

"...helping out Rich electro-fishing in two spawning streams, which showed me how much potential there was in a body of water to produce 'life' and how important even the smallest piece of water can be."

"...fishing in a medium-sized Kansas pond and hooking a black bass almost 2 feet long. It was a magnificent fish and it put up a good fight. Several times I thought I had lost him but I did land him. Drove home in the dark feeling happy that there were fish like that."

"10 years old on a small brook on the farm I grew up on in Maine... I felt bad for the trout I stuffed in an old wool sock... and even at the age of 10 to 12 I felt the need to leave some (trout) for others."

"Made a trip to Montana last year. The first time I had fished for trout outside of Vermont and first time to fish for big trout. The wonderful feeling that my guide had for that part of the river and the environment but also for the fish and the privilege of fishing."

"Snorkeling/tubing in Oregon on the Deschutes River in big water. Reverence and thrills of the experience"

"Fishing in Canada. Remote lake, close family members, sharing time away from civilization. The connectedness of people, place and fish! The beauty of abundance of fish, flora, fauna. The pure simplicity of the situation."

"Every time I fish the Dog".

"Hooking a large brook trout and having a loon chase it around and under the boat!"

"Fishing the Madison in 1983 outside of West Yellowstone. It was like entering into another dimension. The air around almost seemed to vibrate with clarity. Eagles flew overhead and I was broken off by one fish after another, like speeding pickup trucks. An everlasting memory."

Favorite tree decorations...

As space, time and material permit, we'll publish members' favorite fly patterns and fishing stories in WindKnots. It is only fitting that founding director and master fly tier Dr. Bill Allard, gets the first "cast."

One of my favorite hatches on the Dog River is the sulphur spinner.

This little yellow fly could be one of several species; Ephemera dorothea, Epeorus vitrea or other Epeorus species. The Ephemera often hatch with the later part of the Hendrickson hatch (Ephemera subvaria) but have considerably yellower bodies. To imitate the dorothea dun I have tied the Hendrickson pattern with a body made with dubbing mixed from pinkish and yellow fibers and found it useful in the second half of May. But it is the spinner fishing for these sulphurs that I have found most productive. The duns hatch in the afternoon; the spinners appear over riffles, at the top of a pool, in the early evening until dusk.

You may find them from late May through the month of June, and the fish are looking for the spent spinners and take them regularly. Some evenings even large fish will move up into the bottom of the riffle to take these flies. I have used a variety of spinner patterns with success but settled on this somewhat bright one with a fluorescent egg sac as my favorite. Size 14 is usually best but it's good to have the sizes bracketed to fit the situation.



Sulphur spinner

Thread: Uni-thread 8/0 light cahill

Hook: Mustad 94845 size 12-16

Tail: light dun hackle fibers tied split

Egg sac: rabbit fibers, fluorescent yellow-chartreuse

Abdomen: orange goose biot

Thorax: mixed yellow and tan fibers

Wing: light dun clipped top and bottom

Ed. note: While this is undoubtedly one of Dr. Bill's best patterns, the most productive spinner I've seen him use came from the hubcap of a '57 Cadillac; fished slow and deep about five feet in front of a Dave Davis rig, its churning action proved irresistible to Bullpout almost any summer midnight.

MadDog Chapter, Trout Unlimited
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