



Newsletter: June, 2015

Editor: P.J.Wall

Editorial:

It's hard to believe we've been an official organization for just about a year. It makes one sit back and ponder a little. Nobody can tell you, or me, that an organization runs itself. It's hard work. Wild Salmon Unlimited is no different except, perhaps, we could be viewed as running against the grain. The grain that is the traditional methods used, until recently, by other organizations attempting to enhance wild Atlantic salmon stocks. Over the past year my interpretation of the feedback we've received is that, in some quarters, it's guarded yet, in others it's enthusiastic. Perhaps that is to be expected of a new kid on the block. After all change is the one constant in our world yet its acceptance is always inconsistent. That's not new so we must keep going.

The goal of putting salmon back in rivers has to be amplified for, as we all know, the alternatives are dire. Many of our rivers are listed as endangered with more to come. And fast. We have to change the way we've been doing things. Unfortunately the greatest hurdle lies with convincing those who are most responsible for the demise – the Department of Fisheries (DFO) and the governments that fail to fund it.

As you'll see below we, in partnership with First Nations and the Richmond Wildlife Association, are in the initial stages of preparing a new enhancement project for the Grand River in Cape Breton. This time around we'll approach (DFO) in the early stages to take advantage of the advice they offered in turning us down last time. If they find it difficult to work with us to reach the goal of enhancing that river's wild salmon population then I see no alternative but to lobby the Federal and Provincial governments to make it happen. We've got to get the politicians and public on side. Things have to change. We can all do it with an "X".

Speaking of getting people on side we need everyone on side to try and sell our tickets for the two Pieroway rods that were so kindly donated. We had a great day in Sydney mines, in April, where we sold almost \$900 worth. There are lots left so if you've not bought some it's time to try your luck. The draw will take place at our annual meeting on June 27th. See you there.

So Long: **Pat**

From the President

Well folks here we are announcing our annual meeting for June 27th, 2015. It seems like just yesterday we attended our inaugural meeting at St. Patrick's Parish Hall in North East Margaree. The same place we'll be meeting this year at 13:30. In the intervening 12 months your Executive and Board of Directors have been busy. Several of us went on a few road trips to explain our mission and garner support for our endeavour of putting wild Atlantic salmon back in their native rivers. The Nova Scotian associations that we visited were welcoming and very interested in our goals. The LaHave, Mersey, Cobequid, Richmond and Cape Breton Anglers associations joined as affiliates. The latter, beyond paying their yearly fee, made a significant monetary contribution for which we are grateful. We hope all will join again this year so we can together work towards a brighter future for Atlantic salmon. As you all well know it certainly needs all the help it can get. As part of educating ourselves we motored to East Machias, Maine and met with the Downeast Salmon Federation executive director and staff. A very pleasant venture that provided us with interesting information and inspiration.

On the fund raising and lobbying front Lowell Weir, chairman of that area, has been busy. At present he's got commitments from two major Canadian banks. Their contributions will start following the reception of our charitable status. The latest news from the Canadian Revenue Agency is that the review of our application will be finalized by July of this year. A long wait. Lowell is also working to get Nova Scotia Power on side for a commitment. After all it's they who, along with the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO), axed the Mersey hatchery and damned every river they wanted in Nova Scotia, and who knows perhaps elsewhere.

As you all know Wild Salmon Unlimited made a formal proposal to the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation (ASCF) for financial assistance with a "smart stocking" program to be carried out on the Medway and Grand rivers. Unfortunately, the Foundation felt our proposal was too aggressive and it was declined, however, they did request that we re-apply this year with a smaller project on a river that had fewer natural obstacles. We also applied to the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) for help but their criteria was based on our proposal being approved by the DFO. Myself and three other members of the Board met with DFO officials to garner that approval but were turned down. The DFO officials were in a "no stocking of smolts mood". However, they too encouraged us to develop programs to enhance wild Atlantic salmon that would meet their scientific policies. Policies that, in our opinion, need to change if we want to prevent Atlantic salmon from becoming extinct. At the time of this writing our two proposal writers: Joel Robinson and Peter Hill are in the process of developing a new submission for both the ASCF and ACOA that will hopefully receive DFO's endorsement.

Last, but certainly not least, we attended the Sydney Mine's Sportsman show for two days in late April. A display booth provided by Lowell Weir, at no charge, was set up in a large school auditorium where, over the two days we sold close to nine hundred dollars' worth of tickets on two Pieroway rods, provided by Jeff Pieroway, also, at no charge. The rod drawn will take place at our annual meeting and there are still lots of tickets left. By now most members will have received tickets in the mail and we ask that you try and sell as many as you can to help our cause.

In closing I wish to thank everyone for their support and volunteer efforts over the past year and I look forward to working with everyone again in the next year. See you at the meeting. **Bob.**

Meetings with officials:

Our president met with the Honourable Gail Shea, Minister of Fisheries and Oceans at an August function in Sydney and spoke to her about Wild Salmon Unlimited (WSU). He was cordially received and Minister Shea indicated her desire to work with us in our endeavours. In fact later in the year she expedited a meeting of WSU directors and the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) officials to discuss our goal of putting smolts in rivers. Joel Robinson, our treasurer, and Bob also met with Nova Scotia's Minister of Fisheries and Aquaculture, The Honourable Keith Colwell and two executives from the Inland Fisheries Branch, Mr. Don MacLean and Mark MacPhail. Minutes of their meeting can be found under the news tab on our website at: www.wildsalmonunlimited.com

Charitable status:

Lowell Weir our fundraising chairman has applied to the Canadian Revenue Agency for our charitable status. Just recently the Agency informed us that our application is in the final stages of review and we should know by July, 2015 of their decision.

Spreading the word:

In an effort to familiarize other like-minded organizations in Nova Scotia of WSU's mandate and goals some Board members visited and made presentations to several groups. Some joined as affiliates. Those include the Cape Breton Anglers Association, Cobequid Salmon Association, Richmond Wildlife Association, LaHave River Salmon Association and Medway River Association. The Cape Breton Anglers Association, beyond paying their affiliation fee, made a significant financial contribution for which we are all thankful. Presentations were also made to the Margaree Salmon Association and the Nova Scotia Salmon Association. We did meet with some members of the St. Mary's River Association and have corresponded with their executive. We were welcomed and received positive feedback from all.

Smart Stocking:

During the summer and fall of 2014, directors Joel Robinson and Peter Hill with input from others, including the Medway Salmon Association, Richmond Wildlife group and First Nations personnel, spent countless hours preparing a proposal directed to the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Fund (ASCF) and the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA). The multi-year proposal requested financial assistance to carry out, what WSU calls, a "smart stocking program," on the Grand and Medway rivers in Nova Scotia. "Smart stocking is the title given to the process by which smolts are acquired; the physical conditioning process they undergo and the timing of their release to insure greatest survival. The ASCF were very complimentary of our proposal but felt it was too ambitious for a first attempt and it was declined. In the meantime a meeting was held with DFO officials to review our goal. At the time they were in a "no stocking" mood and felt our proposal would not get approval from their science branch, however, they encouraged us to continue our efforts to help salmon but to adhere closer to their policies. Since our application to ACOA required we receive DFO approval for our project we withdrew it and asked to re-apply when we've got a new project in place.

"Flies, Lies and Fiddling"

That was the title of an October weekend of seminars/workshops plus fly tying/rod building and casting instruction held at the Blue Barn in Margaree sponsored by the, Calgary based, Pieroway Rod Company. After presenting an interesting talk on Atlantic salmon, to an afternoon audience, our own Leonard Forsyth was presented with a beautiful 9 foot Pieroway rod and case by Pieroway's president Geoff Pieroway. The rod is to be used as a WSU fund raising item. WSU is extremely grateful to Mr. Pieroway for this generous "gift." We've not made a decision as to how we'll use it yet. Too busy admiring its copper finish and burl maple insert reel seat.

Downeast Salmon Federation:

While on a trip to visit friends in Cape Cod, Massachusetts, Bob, member Fred Burns and yours truly stopped by the Downeast Salmon Federation facilities in East Machias and Columbia Falls Maine. Downeast Salmon Federation serves as a hub, leader and catalyst engaging local communities with an array of partners and allies on three fronts: replenishing stocks, protecting and restoring Habitat, and strengthening stewardship. They've recently received support from Patagonia and have just partnered with the North Atlantic Salmon Fund (NASF), based in Iceland, in their fight to restore Atlantic salmon populations. We met with Dwayne Shaw, their executive director, over a beer in a local pub to get a short summary of their endeavours. The following morning we visited their hatchery facilities and staff. A very dedicated group who have conservation and enhancement flowing through their veins. They are an inspiration.

Salmon Dinner/Auctions:

Some Wild Salmon Unlimited members attended fund raising dinner/auctions at the Margaree, LaHave, and Cobequid Associations. All were well attended. It is encouraging to see the support these organizations receive from the general public in their communities.

Submission:

Wild Salmon Unlimited attended a meeting of the Ministerial Advisory Committee on Atlantic Salmon and took part in the discussions. A written submission was presented and the contents follow are attached.

Sydney Mines Sports Show:

In March of 2015 Harry Vickers, President of Cape Breton Anglers, informed us of a sportsman show to be held On April 19th and 20th, 2015 in Sydney Mines. He suggested it may be a good venue for us to attend and showcase our organization. We agreed. Harry booked the very reasonably priced (\$75) space for us and we set up our WSU display that was provided to us, free of charge, by Lowell Weir. Leonard Forsyth contacted Mr. Geoff Pieroway, President of the Pieroway Rod Company, and he kindly provided two beautiful rods for use as a fund raiser: a 10 foot and 9 foot with WSU engraved on the handles. We had 200 books of tickets printed for the rods and our first attempts at ticket sales were at the Show. Over the day and a half there we sold in excess of \$800 worth of tickets. Tickets are \$3/each or 2 for \$5. A very successful inaugural show result and thanks to Harry Vickers for the suggestion and for his help with setting up our display.

Grand River Meeting/2015:

On May 20th, 2015, several Board members attended a meeting with the Richmond Wildlife Association to discuss plans for a new salmon enhancement project for the Grand River. Funding for the projected project will form the basis of a financial assistance application to both the ASCF and ACOA.

Remembering Charles Dennis:

It is with great sadness we remember our First Nations Advisor Charles Dennis. Charlie, as we referred to him, was a wonderful asset to our group and provided significant assistance. We will miss him. We extend our condolences to his family, friends and business associates.