



Special 25th Anniversary Issue

This post card is from the 1900-1910 period. It shows the St. Mary's River from the Waternish Rd., upstream from the Crow's Nest Pool. On the far right is the farm with its barns. The building in the center of the photo is a hotel, "Decker House", which was on the river's east side, accessible via a road over the hills from Melrose. Across the river from it is the Bells of St. Mary's cottage, the last of these buildings remaining today.

We invite you to visit the St. Mary's River Association's Education and Interpretive Center where you can see a full color enlargement of this wonderful photo.



The St. Mary's River Association

The St. Mary's River Association is a charitable, nonprofit organization providing leadership and engaging partners to enhance, protect and promote the St. Mary's River as a healthy ecosystem for Atlantic salmon and other native animal and plant species as well as a rich community resource.

Our vision is "Health for the river, the Atlantic salmon, and our community."

"SMRA NEWS" is a publication of the St. Mary's River Association as a service to our members.

Editor: Bill Carpan

The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of the St. Mary's River Association, the editor, or the publisher.

Memberships, suggestions, and comments are welcome. Address all correspondence to:

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THANKS RENE

Our immediate Past President of the St. Mary's River Association, Rene Beaver, served the organization with dedication and vision.

He was elected President at a time when we were faced with unparalleled challenges. Salmon stocks had been in a state of "free fall" decline for a decade; there were continuing problems with forestry and agriculture practices within the watershed; apathy was rampant within our membership; add to this a total ban on all forms of recreational salmon fishing and you had a prescription for a "sense of helplessness". For most the glass was "half-empty"; for Rene it was "half-full" and he was determined to fill it.

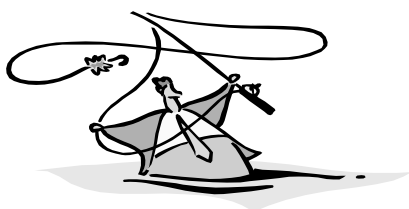
Rennie succeeded in enlisting the support of the organization and proceeded to inspire them with vision and enthusiasm.

He started with a fresh concept and plan to address the challenges and opportunities within the St. Mary's River watershed. He suggested we needed a new map of where we were going. That map took the form of a "Strategic Plan". He was instrumental in bringing the "right" people to the table at the "right" time.

Rene Beaver has initiated the vitally important first step to the restoration of the St. Mary's River watershed. We are indebted to him for his work, his commitment, and his belief in what the St. Mary's can become.

Thanks Rene.

John Cameron
Founding President
St. Mary's River Association



25th Anniversary - A Celebration!



by Joanne Mailman

It's hard to believe we are going into our fourth season operating our Education and Interpretive Center.

We have many events planned for this year including our 25th anniversary celebration on June 19th. We have a full day of activities planned including:

Tentative schedule of events:

- Silent Auction - Viewing all day at Center
- Smoked salmon samples to be provided by St. Mary's River Smokehouse, with refreshments available during open hours (coffee or juice)
- 8:00 am - Bird Walk with George Archibald and Hardy Eshbaugh
- 9:00 -12:00 - Nimrod's Rest: Children's program, including a fishing derby (16 years & under), book reading with local author Thelma Morris-Fogarty, and a wiener roast lunch
- 1:00- River Project tours
- 2:00- River punt building demo
- 3:00- Wood turtle presentation at Center with Mark Pulsifer
- 7:00- Fabulous Dinner, Entertainment & Silent Auction

Mark the date on your calendars and plan to attend. For dinner tickets call 522-2099.

Last summer we had 1988 visitors drop in to see us. Our summer students Cindy McGrath and Teddy Stevens enjoyed their work term, enlightening those from near and far about our great river and its history. Many new exhibits were developed and the response was great.

Once again, I invite you all to drop in to see us at the Center.

NOTICE TO MEMBERS Annual Meeting

The annual general meeting of the St. Mary's River Association will be held on **May 30th, 2004, 2 pm**, at the Association's Education & Interpretive Center, 8404 Hwy 7, Sherbrooke, NS.

Items on the agenda are:

**Guest Speaker
Annual Reports
Financial Report
Review of Past Year
Election of Officers & Directors
Plans for the coming year**

All paid up members are eligible to vote at the meeting. Memberships will be available for those wishing to join the association.

- Bill Carpan, Acting President



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Membership Dues

At the annual meeting held in May 2003 notice was given that our membership rates were to increase. The following rates now apply:

Junior	\$5.00
Regular	\$20.00
Contributing	\$50.00
Corporate	\$200.00
Sponsoring: Gold	\$500.00
Silver	\$300.00
Bronze	\$100.00

Memberships are due April 1st.

Memberships can be renewed by mailing a cheque to P.O. Box 179 Sherbrooke, NS B0J 3C0. A charitable receipt will be mailed as well as a membership card. New members are most welcome. Memberships also make a great gift!

THE MOOSE

By Bill Carpan



Top View



Side View

Tying Specifications:

Thread: Black 8/0 Unithread
Hook: Any size, barbless
Tag: Extra fine oval gold Lagartun varnished French tinsel
Butt: Black polypropylene dubbing
Tail: Krystal Flash divided — 4 strands each side
Ribbing: Five turns of medium oval gold varnished French tinsel
Body: Black polypropylene dubbing
Wing: Black moose mane, divided Butterfly style
Thread: Unithread 2/0 Kevlar for spinning deer hair
Hackle: Spun deer hair, Muddler style
Head: Deer hair clipped Muddler style, finished with black 8/0 Unithread and 2 applications of Angler's Corner wet head cement

The Moose is a wet salmon fly that I made for fishing the Margaree many years ago. It is actually a series, the difference between flies being matching head and tail color. I used natural gray for the Margaree, yellow for St. Mary's, orange for Liscomb, and black for anywhere.

If you have trouble deciding which fly to use, the Moose may be for you. A "hybrid" fly, it combines the best features of many flies: the essence of a nymph, the highly visible and mobile divided wing of the Butterfly, the clipped deer hair head & hackle of the Muddler, the moose hair wing so popular in Newfoundland, and the tantalizing sparkle of a divided Krystal Flash tail as in the Glitter Bug. The series is adaptable to most Atlantic salmon wet fly fishing, in colors and sizes suited to conditions.

Nova Scotia Anglers asked to review

Trout Management Plan

By:

Tara Crandlemere and John MacMillan,
Inland Fisheries Division, Nova Scotia
Department of Agriculture and Fisheries

The Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, Inland Fisheries Division has recently developed a trout management plan for the province. Through our public involvement process (Recreational Fishing Advisory Meetings), requests were put forth from anglers to design this plan specifically for trout.

The rationale behind fisheries management is to develop and implement strategies to address concerns for fish species, their habitat and resource users. Nova Scotia's sport fishery is diverse and enables anglers to experience opportunities throughout every season of the year. Brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) continue to be the most favored sport fish and require particular awareness to insure that the value of the resource is sustained.

The Inland Fisheries Division's mandate is to manage the recreational fishery through directed regulations, resource assessment, population enhancement (stocking), promotion and development, and indirectly through enforcement and protection of the resource and habi-



tat. The recent signing of the Canada-Nova Scotia Memorandum of Understanding on Recreational Fisheries has formalized the role of the Nova Scotia Government in recreational fisheries management.

Population enhancement through the use of Fraser's Mills and McGowan Lake hatcheries has been very important method used by the province to improve trout fisheries. Resource (population and habitat) information provides a base for enhancement practices and regulation changes to maintain stocks and control levels of exploitation. Habitat restoration projects such as those undertaken by the St. Mary's River Association have benefited wild fish populations. Reliable funding options

are required to maintain the value of future habitat initiatives.

The Trout Management Plan provides an overview on what has been done with regards to trout management in the past and addresses future concerns for protection of the resource. The document provides provincial management objectives and examines the important issues by a Recreational Fishing Area basis. Recommendations on the management strategies for each area will be solicited from angling organizations and community groups through the Inland Fishery Recreational Fishing Advisory process. This initiative will provide a means by which the public can influence the activities that affect the future of Nova Scotia's

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trout fishery. The trout management plan will be available for discussion and viewing at our spring recreational fishing advisory meetings. Also, you can visit our website (www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf) to view the trout management plan.

This year we have begun to organize our fieldwork around objectives, which are set out in the trout management plan by a Recreational Fishing Area basis. We are continuing to develop and expand Special Management Areas to enhance sea-run speckled trout stocks in the rivers of RFA1 (Cape Breton). In RFA 1, we are planning two field projects; one to examine the status of sea-run in River Denys and a smallmouth bass nesting survey on Lake Ainslie.

In RFA 2, (Antigonish, Guysborough, Pictou) we will continue to work with the community group in Guysborough county to determine the impact of the bottom draw facility at Goose Harbor Lake. This project involves electrofishing the tributaries of St. Francis Harbour River to determine if salmonids are utilizing the newly created habitat. Also, we will conduct a smallmouth bass nesting survey in Middle River Reservoir, Pictou county.

In RFA 3 (Halifax and Lunenburg), we will be organizing a creel survey on Petite Riviere and continue with the bass nesting survey on Hebb, Millipsigate and Minamkeak lakes, Lunenburg county to determine the potential effects smallmouth bass may have on the recovery efforts for the endangered Atlantic whitefish. In Halifax county we will be completing some lake surveys and continue to support the Acid Rain Committee by collecting baseline data on the West River, Sheet Harbour to determine the impacts of liming.

In RFA 4, (Digby, Queens, Shelburne, Yarmouth) we will continue to work with Salmon River Salmon Association on their initiatives to address acidity through the use of kiln dust. In RFA 5 (Annapolis, Hants, Kings) and 6 (Cumberland, Colchester) we will be continuing with our electrofishing data and habitat surveys in a variety of the rivers and tributaries that were previously assessed in our Temperature Monitoring Project.

We will continue to work with Queen's University on a project to assess long-term (100 yrs) changes in trout habitat in Nova Scotia lakes. It is shaping up to be a very busy field season and we are looking for-

ward to working with many groups throughout the province. For more information on the Trout Management Plan or our upcoming field projects please contact our office in Pictou.

Nova Scotia Department of Agriculture and Fisheries
(www.gov.ns.ca/nsaf)

Inland Fisheries Division
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The Estuary of the St. Mary's

The estuary is defined as an area where fresh and salt water mix. The tides come as far inland as Sherbrooke, so the estuary of the St. Mary's River stretches as a long and rather narrow passage, 11 kilometers from Sonora to Sherbrooke. Many particles carried in the fast flowing fresh water are deposited in an estuary to create a nutrient rich oasis for aquatic life.

The estuary of the St. Mary's is claimed to be a resting area for migratory fish such as salmon, sea trout, shad, and gaspereau before influxes of additional fresh water from upstream rains stimulate their upstream migrations. Estuarine rocks near Sonora are sometimes coated by mussels while nearby mudflats are alive with clams and eel grass. The mussels provide ample food for large flocks of eider ducks, while the mudflats are habitat for willets and black ducks.

As a youth, I lived along the St. Mary's from the mid fifties through mid-sixties. I had a passionate interest in waterfowl and was thrilled when Canada Geese sometimes flew over in spring and autumn. I never saw one land. Consequently in recent years I was delighted to discover that Canada Geese were breeding on lakes and ponds near the St. Mary's. Then in mid-winter of 2002-2203, I was amazed to discover a flock of perhaps 500 Canada Geese feeding on the eel grass beds on the estuary of the St. Mary's. This winter at Holiday time, there were half that number.

When I mentioned this to biologists at St. F.X. University, they explained that eel grass beds are being seriously damaged by the recent invasion of an exotic crab that disturbs the soil to the point that the grasses are washed away. In some areas, wintering populations of Canada Geese are starving be-

cause of the lack of their primary food - eel grass. The destruction of eel grass beds may also explain the decline of smelt populations in some areas.

Would it not be terrific if the St. Mary's River Association could partner with St. F.X. to support a study the fragile ecology of the St. Mary's River Estuary? Through research, answers might be revealed for the management of invasive species and thus the conservation of our indigenous fauna and flora at home and in other estuaries of eastern North America.

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Co-founder
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Parting Words

by Cindy McGrath

Thank you to the SMRA for giving me the opportunity to work at the Education and Interpretive Center this summer.

There were a few things about the job that stands out in my mind. I enjoyed meeting new people, and talking to them about the St. Mary's River. I am very happy that I had the opportunity to write updates on the activities at the Center for the Guysborough Journal; it has helped me gain experience for my studies in English. Making displays for the Center on the local wildlife took a lot of time and effort but seeing the finished product was rewarding. I was glad to practice my French when we had visitors from France and Quebec.

It is great that the River Association employs students each year. Summer employment is hard to come by in this area, and myself and the other student hired this year, Teddy Stevens, were grateful to be able to stay close to home. Teddy has said that he liked having the opportunity to practice his fly-tying skills.

I will be returning to St. Francis Xavier University in September, and I will look back fondly on my time spent at the St. Mary's River Association Education and Interpretive Center.



SPECIAL MEMORIES ABOUT THE ST. MARY'S RIVER

by
George Sutherland
January 19, 2003

MY INTRODUCTION TO FLYFISHING

In the mid 70's I had been invited by some friends to go trout fishing at Otter Lake in the Liscomb Sanctuary. As soon as we arrived we gathered firewood and set up our tents over spruce boughs. After camp was ready, we headed out on the lake for a good day's fishing. I was using a spinning rod with spinners and worms and all of the others were fly-fishing.

After dinner we were sitting around our campfire. It was still light and Ken MacDougall from New Glasgow grabbed his fly rod and suggested I follow him over to the edge of Governor's Lake. "Time you tried a fly rod" as he placed it into my hand. Under his instruction I slowly began getting the feel of things with a very short line. I had only made a few short casts when to the surprise of both of us there was a swirl and tug. I had hooked my first fish on a fly rod! I couldn't believe the action as the trout jumped. I could feel every pull through that supple rod. The trout felt much bigger than it actually was. I released it, but I was the one that

was hooked. Little did I realize at the time what Ken had introduced me to and the amount of enjoyment that awaited me.

FLYTYING AND MY FIRST FISHING TRIP TO THE ST. MARY'S

Jim Baillie was on the phone. (Jim had fished salmon when he lived in New Brunswick and was then manager of Central Trust Company in New Glasgow.). He was laid up with a broken leg in a cast and his wife, Murida, had bought him a fly trying kit. "Come on over" Jim's voice boomed. I was curious to see how flies were tied and went over to his house to watch.

When Jim took me into his room he had already set up two vises. "Might as well tie as watch," he said. After a bit of getting used to thread and a bobbin, we tied a nymph and Mickey Finn streamer. That was the beginning of a whole new connection to fly fishing, strange materials disappearing from Lillian's sewing kits etc and later appearing around the family room. Learning, experimenting and countless hours of pleasure at the bench lay ahead.

Early that summer Jim invited me to join him on the St. Mary's before going to work. We headed down well before sunrise and arrived at Mitchell's pool. Jim let me go first with my eight and one-half foot trout rod. I was still a beginner and was more than a little conscious of my

casting, but no one said a word as I flailed away.

Just before we were ready to leave and head back to town and work, Jim decided to make "one last pass". As he reached the bottom of the pool his line tightened and a bright fish jumped in the air. Jim caught the fish and I think I was more excited than he was. I decided that I had to return to this beautiful river.

BARREN BROOK

After an unsuccessful morning trying to find some sea trout, a friend and I ended up at Barren Brook on the West Branch of the St. Mary's. It was about 1:30 in the afternoon and very bright and hot. The conditions were "totally wrong" but there wasn't much else going on. Gary was going to show me a little about salmon fishing.

As he was just beginning to feed his line out at the edge of the pool, his line went tight and the leader snapped. To his complete surprise a grilse had grabbed his fly close to his feet and he had forgotten to change his trout leader to a heavier leader.

It was my turn and I began with a sparsely tied White Wulff with an orange yarn body. Given what had just happened, we were both excited. I made a couple of short casts at the lip of the pool and suddenly my line went tight. There was a pull on the rod, my reel began to sing like I had never heard it before and the hair

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stood up on the back of my neck! What a thrill as that fish jumped and landed causing a tremendous spray, the first of several runs and three jumps. My heart pounded and I actually prayed that I wouldn't lose it. Under my friend's guidance, I was fortunate enough to hook and land my first grilse. What a noble bright fish! I doubt if anyone forgets the excitement of hooking, playing and landing their first Atlantic salmon.

We continued fishing and somehow I foul hooked two more fish. A stranger on the bank said he'd really like to have one but we politely declined his request and released both fish. Shortly after two fisheries officers appeared out of the woods. They explained they had been watching us since we arrived. After seeing us release both of the foul hooked fish they explained they weren't worried about us and headed to another pool.

Of course for several years my favorite pool was Barren Brook. I didn't often see many other fishermen there. I started my son Mark fishing Barren Brook and on his first trip he could see the fish lying in the pool. He was so excited that he cast over them for hours and wouldn't take time to eat lunch.

MCKEAN'S BROOK

One trip I was staying at Eddy Cormier's camp on the West Branch in Smithfield. We ended up at the McKean's Brook pool on the East

River branch. I put on an ugly fly that I had tied based on a fly that a friend, Bob Stevenson, once showed me. I didn't know anything about fishing bugs and decided to prove it to all present.

Before I finished my first pass through the pool, I successfully had nine raises without hooking a fish! This is not as easy as it might sound. I pulled the fly away from fish, let them spit it out, let them pull it under and everything you can imagine, except hooking a fish. I attracted a lot of attention and some sympathy. Even the fisheries officer, Don Barnes, was on his feet urging me on.

After this little performance, Sammy MacDougall came over and asked what I had on. I showed him the fly, which had orange hackle at the head, a brown deer hair body with brown hackle and black calf tail for the tail. Sammy smiled, shook his head and readily agreed it was one of the ugliest flies he had ever seen. But it had caused a commotion, probably because no fish in the river had ever seen anything like it.

Sammy then gave me a fly that really was a bug. He kindly took me up to the head of the pool and taught me how to fish a dry fly, giving a little tug and rolling my wrist up river at the end of the cast, getting drift, following the fly with the tip of my rod, watching the slight dip in the water over eel holes etc. I'll never forget his understanding and patience, which ultimately

led to a great deal of satisfaction fishing dry flies.

LOVE THOSE HURRICANES

Several years ago I recall heading for the St. Mary's after a hurricane. Others had the same idea and there were a number of fishermen fishing the West River run into Silver's Pool. I decided to park before the bridge at Silver's and head through the brush until I reached the north bank of the West River run. A hurricane had passed and the fish were running and taking unlike anything I had ever seen before! I suppose it had something to do with a rapid change in the air pressure.

For the first time in my life there were several times when I looked down river and saw four fish on at a time. Parker Wong was across from me and I remember hooking two fish and then reeling in my line. Parker asked where I was going. We had company coming. Regretfully I had to return home!

I recall another time in July 1996 when I had just returned home from business in South Carolina at the tail end of Hurricane Bertha. I headed straight for the St. Mary's to fish salmon the first time that year. I hooked a nice fish at McKean's Brook on my first pass of the year and lost it. On my next pass I hooked a grilse, which gave me seven jumps before Phil Turner released it. Both on a black bear, green butt. Great



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way to start the season. On the way home I stopped and fished the run into Sutherland's Pool on the West Branch. I hooked and released a small salmon on an orange butterfly, lost two more grilse and had two more raises. Give me a hurricane anytime.

STITCH

One morning on the West branch flowing into Silver's, I was sitting on the bank listening to Ray Buckland and Wilson MacLeod talking about the fishing. Ray had a yellow lab, which had an obvious scar on his lip that had been stitched up. He was appropriately called "Stitch". Being a Lab, Stitch loved the water.

While I don't remember the topic of conversation I'm sure it was important. Suddenly there was a splash and the three of us looked around to see Stitch carrying a rock out of the River. Stitch went over a second time and as he put his head completely under water looking for another rock, Ray got up and starting hollering "Stitch, get out of the water."

Wilson finishing taking a drag on his cigarette, looked at me and very slowly observed "I don't know which one is crazier: a dog taking rocks out of the river or Ray hollering at him when his head is under water!". We had a great laugh over that. Stitch was always friendly. Although Ray growled at Stitch from time to time, Ray loved him. He accompanied Ray

in his truck and on the riverbank for several years.

TURTLES

I started both of my boys fly-fishing when they were very young. Michael was under ten years old and wanted to try salmon fishing. We headed for the St. Mary's and on the way down he asked if we would see any turtles. I replied "maybe", but didn't want to get his hopes up. We went up to a spot above the Meadow pool where we wouldn't disturb anyone. We were upriver from where I normally begin, so I decided to go first as I didn't want Mike stepping into any holes.

We had just begun when I heard Mike yell "Turtle Dad...BIG turtle." I called back that it was just a sod and he should continue on. "Big Turtle!" he yelled. With that he ran out of the river and threw his rod on the bank.

As I looked behind me I suddenly saw a head the size of my fist on a neck sticking several inches out of the water. I watched in awe as the biggest turtle I had ever seen slowly drifted past me. Mike and I watched together as the fishermen below on both sides of the Meadow pool parted and watched as the turtle passed through.



DRAW & CONTEST WINNERS

During the past year, we held various draws to raise much-needed funds for the Interpretive Center and to promote the St. Mary's River Association. At the Community-a-Fair event held at the Sherbrooke Lion's Hall in May 2003, we had a booth promoting our continuing conservation efforts on the river. We also had a draw for a SMRA T-shirt, which was won by Lesley Brothers of Sherbrooke.

At the Pictou Expo we sold tickets on a rod and reel and this was won by Calvin Williams of New Glasgow.

During the summer we sold tickets at the Center on a watercolor of the river by Peter Bresnen. The ticket winner was Joan McGrath of Aspen.

The second annual "Name our Fish" contest was once again very popular with visitors both young and young at heart.

The following people chose the winning names: Regan Keay- New Glasgow (6 & under)
Amelia MacKenzie-Sherbrooke (7-12); Benjamin McMillan- Bridge-town (Teen)
And Marlen Heggie- Greenhill, N.B. (Adult)

Congratulations to all winners!

Thank you to everyone for helping us raise funds and awareness for our very important work.



Ron Chisholm, MLA

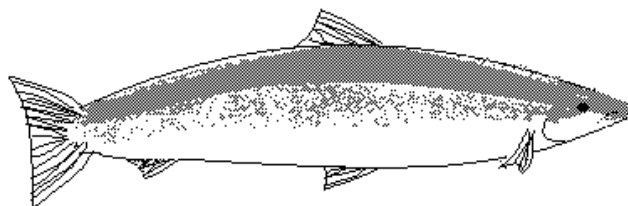
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William (Bill) Strople

Ruth Strople wrote the following article for the book "Their Stories – Eye Tissue Donors & Recipients" published by Canadian Eye Banks.

First of all, I would like to introduce myself as Ruth. I am the wife of my late husband William (Bill) pictured here. A few years after Bill graduated from high school, he decided he would like to work for Nova Scotia Power Corp. He took his Lineman's course in Halifax, successfully passing, and was hired immediately. He first worked in Antigonish, NS and later was transferred to Sherbrooke, NS. He actually fell in love with the village, with two things that attracted him very much, these being the St. Mary's River and me. About a year later we were married and this is where we made our home.

In the attached picture Bill is holding a salmon he caught (one of many), as he was an avid fisherman. He was an amateur at tying flies, one of the best in the world. Two things Bill enjoyed in his life were fishing and helping people. After retiring he worked at Recovery House in Antigonish as a counsellor. His boss told me it was unbelievable the people he helped in turning their lives around and everyone loved him.

He was working when he took sick before his sudden death. On May 1, 2000, I got a call about 3:15 AM from

the hospital. I couldn't imagine who would be calling at that hour of the morning as Bill was coming home later that morning. However, it was the doctor calling to tell me that Bill had passed away. I was absolutely shocked. I kept thinking, am I dreaming, is it some sort of prank or is it real. When I came to my senses I realized it was true. What the doctor was saying I must accept as true even though he was only 54. I guess when your number is called you have no say about it.

The doctor told me Bill had signed his donor card and did I agree with it. My reply was "if Bill signed his donor card that was his wish and no way would I object." That was my Bill! He wanted to help anybody, even if he was dead or alive.

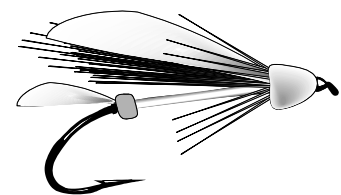
About a week later I received a letter from the Tissue Bank telling me they were able to use the corneas from Bill's eyes. Now, two very young children who never saw before are now seeing today. I cannot express the feeling that came over me. I just wanted to tell the world, I was so happy. I thanked God for being so good and the doctors for making the operations successful. To me, I felt as though part of Bill was still continuing on this earth. He gave a gift to two people, that if he only knew, he would be more than overwhelmed. This may sound stupid, but it is my belief, that Bill is in Heaven looking down on these two children. My deepest wish is that

someday I will meet these recipients and their families.

In closing, I must say, I urge everyone to sign their donor cards, regardless how young or old you are. Experience the feeling that you will be giving "A Gift Of Life" to someone.

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Thank you so much!



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Atlantic Salmon Federation Report



By Lewis Hinks – Regional Director,
Nova Scotia

The Atlantic Salmon Federation and our Regional Councils have been actively involved in a variety of salmon conservation efforts since our last report. Because Atlantic salmon travel through international waters, our efforts to protect them span the local, national, and international scenes. Following is a brief update on some of the issues, programs, challenges and successes of the past year.

At the time of writing we were cautiously optimistic that the first budget to be presented by Canada's new Prime Minister Paul Martin would contain funding for a salmon recovery endowment and habitat stewardship program. ASF and our Regional Councils had contacted Members of Parliament and the new Minister of Fisheries and Oceans

Canada, Geoff Regan, to reinforce this need that has been advocated for several years. We were hopeful that there would be mention of a salmon recovery program in the Throne Speech in early February. This would indicate that the Canadian government was ready to provide the leadership and financial support to protect salmon and the more than \$200,000,000 that it brings through the recreational salmon fishing industry to rural communities in eastern Canada annually. It is important to note that both the House of Commons and Senate Fisheries Committees supported increased funding for wild Atlantic salmon.

All of our partners involved in the Greenland Conservation Agreement are satisfied with the way this program is proceeding and we fully expect the agreement to continue in 2004. Orri Vigfusson has done an excellent job of administering our agreement and, in cooperation, with the Greenland fishermen's association, KNAPK, initiated several worthwhile development projects, including a successful effort to purchase commercial salmon nets for decommissioning. KNAPK reports that the 2003 subsistence harvest declined slightly from the previous year, from about 9 tonnes (3300 salmon) to 7.5 tonnes (2,700 salmon). One challenge is to raise the funding needed to pay the annual installment to the



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trust and economic adjustment funds in 2004.

In Maine, environmental groups, including ASF, government agencies, a power company, and Native Americans are working together to restore salmon habitat on the Penobscot River, which once held the U.S.'s largest runs of salmon. The Penobscot Partners are raising money to purchase several dams from the power company. By reducing the number of dams and increasing production at other dams, wild Atlantic salmon and other species of sea-run fish will gain access to 500 miles of river habitat that has been inaccessible for more than 170 years. At the same time, the power company will maintain 90% of its present production. A team of fisheries experts estimates that under the restoration plan, the Penobscot could support

12,000 Atlantic salmon.

ASF's live release program continues to be popular and there were several prize winners from Nova Scotia. Check ASF's web site (www.asf.ca) for information on the 2003 live release winners. The 2004 Live release brochure will be available soon and I encourage you to participate in this valuable and essential program that helps conserve wild Atlantic salmon.

ASF continues to deliver *Fish Friends*, in cooperation with our regional councils and affiliates. This program, that teaches students in grades 4, 5 and 6 throughout eastern Canada and northeastern United States about the importance of keeping fish and their environment healthy, is currently in around 100

Nova Scotia. If your association has an opportunity to assist a local school with *Fish Friends*, I encourage you to get involved. It is a wonderful way of getting the youth of your community interested in the health of your river.

Recently ASF developed a new program for youth called *Magic On the Rivers*. The goal of this program is: "To encourage young people to take an interest in angling, and to gain insights and love of an activity that can become a passion." This program was developed with the input of many people, who have a great deal of angling experience. It is designed around modules that make program delivery flexible and it can be delivered outdoors or indoors, on weekends or evenings, or even as part of a week long camp. There are modules on fly casting; fly tying; fly



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rods; reading a river and reading a scale; how to release a fish properly; angling ethics and safety; information on salmonids and information on river restoration. This program is fun and educational for both the kids and the group delivering it. The St. Mary's River Association was one of the first groups to deliver the fly casting session and Joanne Mailman told me she found the program well written and easy to follow, even for someone who has limited fly fishing experience. I hope the St. Mary's River Salmon Association will continue to work on delivering this program through your Education and Interpretive Center.

Finally, Congratulations to the St. Mary's River Association on your 25th Anniversary. Your dedication to the St. Mary's River and its salmon are to be commended and I look forward to continuing working with you in the future.



Shooter's Range Day Invitation



To the members of the St. Mary's River Association:

On Sunday August 22, 2004, we are hosting a Range Day and we would like to take this opportunity to invite your group to join us.

In August 2002 we hosted the BMW Owners Club of Nova Scotia for a very enjoyable day which included

some safety training, range etiquette, a fine barbecue lunch followed by one on one range instruction and shooting. Many of these folks were first time shooters and were introduced to several different firearms and shooting styles. They had a fun, safe and informative day at the range. All activities were conducted under close supervision of properly trained and certified Range Safety Officers.

Please consider our invitation and let us know if you can make it. Feel free to call us with questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Yours sincerely

Charlie Hallett, President
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Dr. Mike Ackermann, Secretary
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Nova Scotia Salmon Association Report

by David Reid, President



Greetings Members of the St. Mary's River Association.

My name is David Reid. I was re-

cently elected as President of the Nova Scotia Salmon Association. I replaced George Ferguson who held the position for 4 years. George did a fantastic job guiding our organization and he left very big shoes to fill!

I wanted to give SMRA members an update on the activities of NSSA. Over the past 3 years, the focus of our group has been acid rain and the disastrous effects it is having on our salmon producing rivers in the Southern Uplands Region of Nova Scotia (including the St. Mary's). In 2001, we arranged for a visit by Atlee Hindar, one of the world's leading acid rain researchers, to advise us on mitigation plans for rivers in the Southern Upland Region. Dr. Hindar visited several rivers and prepared a report which contained recommendations on how to mitigate against the effects of acid rain. The NSSA then took the lead and formed an acid rain mitigation committee. This

committee is made up of members of NSSA, ASF, DFO, DOE, NSPI and affiliate groups. The committee commenced a review of Dr. Hindar's report and determined that in order to kick-start acid rain mitigation efforts in this province, a pilot project was required. After an exhaustive review of several candidate rivers, the committee selected the West River, Sheet Harbour as the river for the pilot project.

The West River project involves the installation of an in-stream liming doser. The doser is a permanent facility and consists of a silo for lime storage, as well as a mixing device for application of the lime into the West River. The committee has prepared a draft business plan setting out the project's goals and costs. In conjunction with ASF, the NSSA is involved in extensive fund raising for this project. The price tag for the 10 year life of the project is currently

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estimated to be in the \$500,000.00 to \$650,000.00 range.

The NSSA has never taken on a project of this magnitude, but our aggressive approach to acid rain mitigation is based on the premise that if the rivers in the Southern Upland Region are ever to be restored, this venture is necessary. Many research opportunities will be created by the project, and the hope is that we can use this project as a springboard to convince government to invest in further mitigation efforts.

The support we have received for this project is growing on a daily basis and we hope to be in a position to turn the switch on the doser in the fall of 2004.

In addition to the West River project, the NSSA has been fighting hard for funding for the Adopt-A-Stream Program. Funding for the program was originally available through a joint provincial-federal co-op program. However, this program has wrapped up and alternative funding sources are currently being sought. The NSSA, together with the other members of the Inland Fisheries Advisory Counsel, have been strongly lobbying the province to enact a habitat

stamp for fishing licenses to support habitat work. We had hoped that this stamp would be in place for 2004, to ensure that the volunteer groups in the province would receive funding for their habitat work for this year. Unfortunately, we received news just before Christmas that Cabinet was not prepared to support the stamp at this time. However, discussions in early January with the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries has provided some encouragement that the stamp will be in place for 2005. Look for a notice of the proposed stamp in this year's Regulations Handbook.

The NSSA is also involved on many other fronts, including monitoring the Inner Bay of Fundy situation and supporting various other volunteer groups in the province, such as the Ecology Action Center and our many hard working affiliates.

I appreciate the opportunity to be able to update you on our activities and encourage you to please contact myself or any member of the NSSA Board if you would like further information on the activities of the Nova Scotia Salmon Association.



Tentative Schedule of Events 2004



April 2: - Cobequid Salmon Association Salmon Fest 2004
Dick Huggard, 895-5905
Jack Johnson, 895-0036

April 7: - Nova Scotia Salmon Association Dinner

April 30: - Pictou County Rivers Association Expo

June 19: - 25th Anniversary Celebrations

June 20: - St. F.X. Conference

July 1: - Giant 3rd annual bake and yard sale

July & August: - Fly tying demos Sunday afternoons

July & September: Name our fish contest

August: - Recreation Department Day Camp

Tentative Projects:

- Silvers Pool bank stabilization
- Smolt Wheel Assessment Project — continuation of last year
- Collaboration with DNR and St. FX on Wood Turtle Study
- Updating museum displays
- Historical research
- Tree planting at Cutbank



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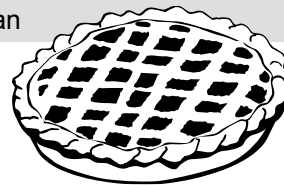
Today, February 19th, a record winter storm has crippled the province of Nova Scotia. Bill, Charlee (the cat), and I are cozy warm in our home in Stillwater but what we need is comfort food. So, true to my heritage, I prepare one of my Granny's favorite meals, rabbit stew. It has been simmering all day on the wood

stove causing the intense aroma to waft through the air interfering with Charlee's deep sleeps as she is curled up on her mat beside the wood stove.

My Granny, Julia Ann Richard, was born in the small fishing village of Charlos Cove, Guysborough Co., in the year 1888. As a young woman she sailed to Boston, USA. In time she met and married Grampy, Thomas Colleton. Widowed, Granny moved back to Charlos Cove, three youngsters in tow, to reside with her mother Nancy Richard. They lived in a two-story house, high on a hill overlooking the village and cove. In this home, under Granny's guidance, I began baking. So, I would like to share this special pie with you all.

Pie Filling

3 ½ cups foxberries
2 tbsp. cornstarch
½ cup blueberries
dash nutmeg
1 ½ cup sugar
dash cinnamon



Place ingredients in pot. Add two tablespoons of water. Simmer until mixture begins to thicken. While this is cooking prepare pie crust, using your favorite pie crust recipe. Roll out pastry for bottom crust. Place in well greased pie pan. Turn berry mixture into unbaked crust. Roll out pastry for top of pie. Cut pastry into ½ inch strips. Arrange strips across top of filling in lattice style. Bake in 350 deg. oven until crust is golden brown.

Serve plain or with nutmeg custard sauce. If served with the nutmeg custard sauce, then for added variety and flavor place a spoonful of bakeapple preserve on top. C'est si bon.

Merci, ma belle Granny. De tous les Acadiens, heureux "congres mondial acadien 2004".



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Allan MacDonald's Lemon Squares

By Flo Duffy

Yes it's true. Flo's lemon squares have found their way to Allan's heart. Not only Allan, but everyone else savors these squares when Flo serves them at a meeting break.



Bottom

½ Cup butter
¼ cup white sugar
1 ½ cups flour
1 tsp. Baking powder
pinch of salt

Press in bottom of 8x8 baking dish.
Bake at 400 degrees for ten minutes.

Let cool.

Filling

Prepare sheriffs lemon pie filling (one envelope) as per package instructions.

Pour over cooked bottom.

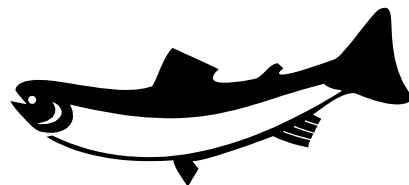
Top

Using egg whites from filling preparation, beat until stiff. Add ¼ cup of

white sugar and beat until stiff and frothy.

Put on top and bake at 400 degrees until golden brown.

Fish Facts



"Female fish that through some disability have not been able to spawn are known as baggots or rawners whereas the male is known as a kipper."

- Neil Graesser in "Fly Fishing for Salmon", a delightful book about angling in Scotland, published by The Boydale Press, 1982.

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Adult salmon assessments 2003

October 7 and 8, 2003 got off to a good start with 95 salmon seined and tail punched in three of four pools in the West River St. Mary's. Participants were, Jamie Gibson, Shane O'Neil, Kim Robichaud-LeBlanc, Darcy Pettipas and Peter Amiro (project leader), diving and shore support provided by Alan McDonald, Gary Baudoux, Parker Wong, Mike O'Hearn and Brad Hubley (student volunteer).



From left to right: Back row: Gary, Shane, Parker, Alan, Brad, Mike, Peter, Kim.
Front row: Jamie, Darcy

However, by the return trip on October 14, 2003 water levels had risen and only four fish were captured at Sutherlands Bridge.

This data contributed to a Research Document in preparation titled, "Status of Atlantic salmon on the Southern Upland of Nova Scotia to 2003". A synopsis of the information for the St. Mary's River follows:

In the **St. Mary's River** escapement estimates were obtained from recreational catches (1996 and earlier) and from mark and recapture experiments (1997 to 2001). In 2002 a mark recapture experiment was attempted but water levels increased before fish could be recaptured. The estimate was derived from the mean catch rate of 0.13 (0.06–0.20) for seining operations previously conducted at the same locations. In 2003 a similar situation occurred. A total of



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NOVA SCOTIA Agriculture and Fisheries

On behalf of my Department I want to wish the St. Mary's River Association congratulations and best wishes on the occasion of your 25th anniversary as an organization. Your Association, through hard work and dedication, has made a significant contribution to conservation, enhancement and promotion of sportfishing in Nova Scotia. I wish you continued success with your endeavors.

I would also like to encourage all Nova Scotians to take advantage of the **Nova Scotia Sportfishing Weekend** which will be held this year on June 5th and 6th, 2004. This is a great opportunity to enjoy our great outdoors. Get out for the fishing!

Chris d'Entremont

Minister, Nova Scotia Department of
Agriculture and Fisheries

13 larger multi sea winter fish and 82 small salmon were captured in these same three pools on October 7 and 8, 2003. Due to high water conditions on October 14, 2003 only four small salmon were captured, three of which were marked. These numbers were insufficient to estimate a population and therefore the mean efficiency was again used.

Using the mean efficiency of the seining operation the estimated escapement to the West River St. Mary's, in 2003, was 722 fish (467 – 1,586) of which 83% were small salmon. Based on the proportion of habitat sampled, total escapement to St. Mary's River in 2003 was estimated to be about 1,313 fish that yielded 42% of the egg requirement for the entire river.


If the small sample obtained on October 14 was used the river estimate would be only 230 (100 – 400). It is unknown how accurately either estimate reflects the population. Until further information such as electrofishing for juvenile salmon in 2004 is available the higher estimate, which is below 50% of the conservation requirement, will be utilized for assessment purposes.

The adult salmon ageing data indicated a population of mostly small salmon that had returned after one winter at sea. The larger salmon were mostly first time salmon

Escapement Estimates St. Mary's River

Year	Small	Large	% Egg Conservation
1995	2038	437	92
1996	1535	590	93
1997	709	110	28
1998	1926	74	55
1999	559	150	30
2000	572	46	16
2001	580	195	30
2002	400	30	14
2003	1092	221	42

returning after two winters at sea. The scarcity of repeat spawning salmon among the St. Mary's River population, unlike many other salmon populations in the Maritimes and Newfoundland, together with the rarity of larger three sea-winter salmon and low survival after one winter at sea (small salmon or grilse) does not bode well for the stability and/or persistence of the population.



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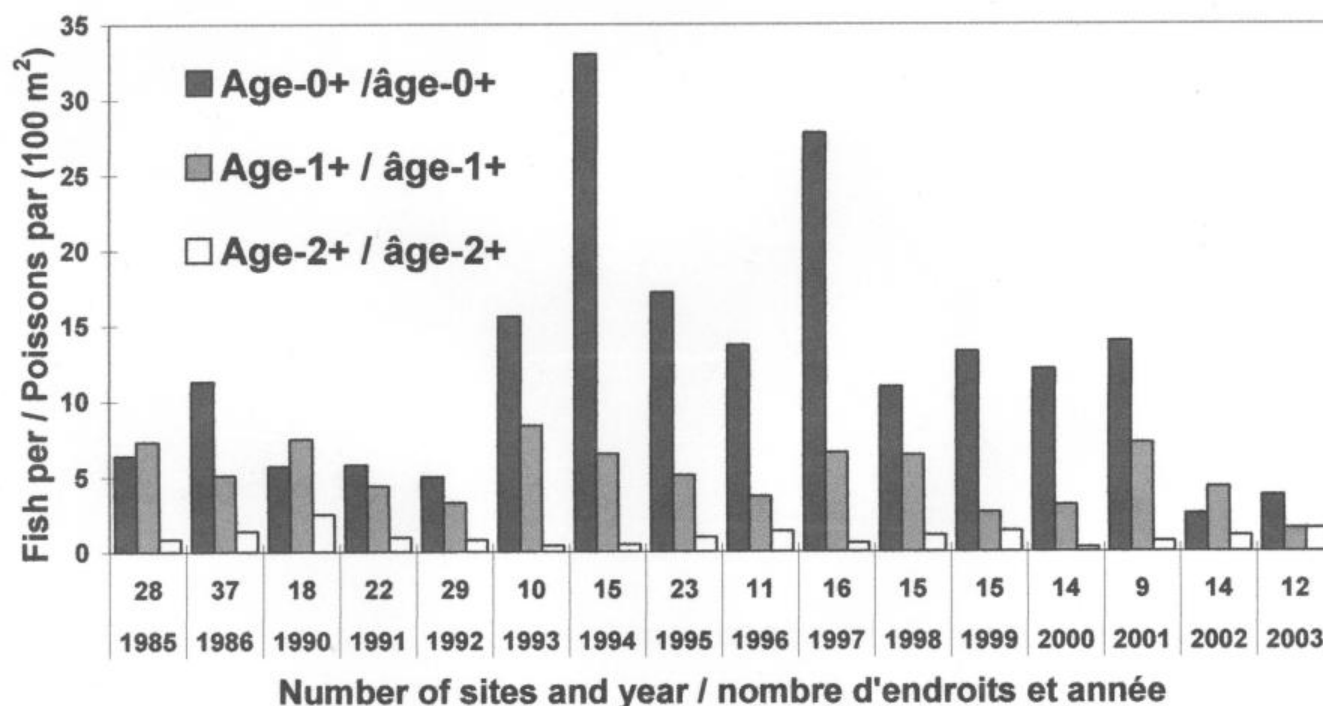
Juvenile salmon assessments 2003

The Diadromous Fish Division juvenile salmon assessment team visited 12 locations throughout the St. Mary's River in 2003. These are among 37 known juvenile salmon electrofishing locations sampled periodically since 1985. Electrofishing provides quantitative information concerning the population of juvenile salmon based on non-lethal sampling. These data have contributed to previous assessments of the production potential, current production and status of the St. Mary's River. The information derived from quantitative electrofishing provides a check on assessments based on adult salmon and can be used to isolate possible production limitations.

In 2003 observers/volunteers from the SMRA accompanied the crew to see first hand what the operation was all about. Also in 2003 an honours student, Brad Hubley, from Dalhousie University collected information from several rivers including the St. Mary's on the morphometrics (shape) of juvenile salmon. Brad completed his honours thesis using these data.

In 2003, total parr (age-1+ and age-2+) densities were again the lowest in the 1985 to 2003 series. Fry (age-0+) densities in 2003 are the second lowest in the time series. This data corroborates the recent assessments that indicate escapements well below conservation requirements and historic average escapements.

St. Mary's



Summary

These data contribute to a not too bright picture of the population. While there are gaps in the knowledge of the population, like the uncertainty of the status of the East River population, the distribution of sampling in the West River, the uncertainty of the Main River production and the exact cause of the low abundance of age-1 parr following years of high age-0 parr (fry) there is little doubt that the St. Mary's River salmon population is in need of persistent supporters like the SMRA. The Diadromous Fish Division looks forward to supporting the SMRA and contributing to the workshop on the St. Mary's River in 2004.

- Excerpts from a research document in preparation — Peter Amiro



Member of the Year Allan MacDonald

SMRA directors honoured Allan MacDonald by voting him Member of the Year 2003. His leadership regarding river issues, along with support from other volunteers, has enabled SMRA to conduct salmon assessment projects, remove obstructions from the river and its tributaries, and stabilize river banks.

The Association relies on his knowledge and advice for planning any river project. Although Allan is always courteous and helpful at meetings, he is happiest when his boots are wet. He loves the St. Mary's River. He has earned the respect of DFO's Science Branch, as the following shows:

"I was delighted to hear that Mr. Alan MacDonald was chosen by the St. Mary's River Association as Member of the Year for 2003. I know that a good portion of his volunteer time was directed to working with DFO and particularly with programs under my direction.

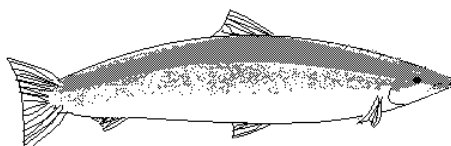
SMRA and DFO are very fortunate to have such an amicable and capable volunteer like Al to work with on a regular basis. Al is a tremendous example of those intangible attributes that make up an exceptional volunteer, local knowledge balanced with humility, eagerness with practicality, adventurism with safety, and seriousness with humour.

Al has always said how appreciative he was to be shown new things, experiences and ways of thinking and even a few new places in his backyard. I have always looked forward to days in the field with Al and I hope that we can all continue to learn from Al in the future. Tahoe Al!"

Peter G Amiro
Biologist
Diadromous Fish Division
Department of Fisheries and Oceans
Canada

On behalf of our Honorary Directors, the Executive, Board of Directors and all our members, thanks, Allan for all of this, and congratulations on your award. You certainly deserve to be recognized for the contribution you've made over many years.

- Bill Carpan



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Wood Turtle Project Update

By Mark Pulsifer



Female wood turtle digging nest

To say that year one of the wood turtle project was successful would be an understatement that could not begin to recognize the hard work and commitment to this study by project staff, SMRA members, and the local community.

During our first community meeting last spring when we introduced the project we met with several helpful individuals who showed us on photos where turtles were observed in the past. Armed with this information the project team set out to scour the river and stream banks for wood turtles. Our primary purpose was simple, to find turtles. Anecdotal evidence over the past several years had suggested that the wood turtle population within the watershed was declining. The long term fate of wood turtle populations throughout the province is enough of a concern that a provincial conservation and stewardship plan was developed to better inform land owners and land users of the reasons why these declines may have occurred, and what steps could be taken to try to stop further losses.

With this in mind, we set out to, locate, capture, measure and mark as many wood turtles as possible to assess population size, sex ratio, age structure, morphological variation, levels of injury, and nesting success. We also wanted to identify critical habitats such as nesting beaches, and winter hibernation sites, and to increase community awareness about wood turtles and the threats that are contributing to their decline.

Results from this year's work were exciting and concerning. On the positive side, our surveys from May through early

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July resulted in the location of 143 different turtles within the greater study area. Considering that in three previous summers we had found only four turtles we were completely surprised by this type of success. Like most things timing is the key, and we quickly realized that turtles are much easier to find when the vegetation is not waste deep.

These numbers suggest that the population may be bigger than originally thought, although it is difficult to know how much bigger at this time. Each turtle was aged, sexed, and measured, before being individually marked and released. Our data also suggested that the population is made up of equal numbers of males and females, and that adult turtles (19+ years) comprised a significantly greater proportion (72%) of the sample than juvenile turtles. The high percentage of adults is likely a reflection of factors such as low juvenile survival rates, and adult longevity; although, some of this difference

may be the result of sampling bias. Juvenile turtles are smaller, harder to see, and may use different habitats than adult turtles.

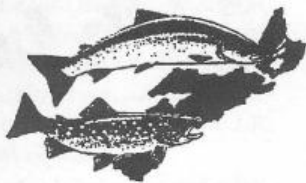
The project also had its share of completely unexpected surprises. We found two previously unpublished insect-wood turtle associations that were very intriguing. One involved black flies swarming the shell of a turtle (for unknown reasons), and the other involved a fly whose larvae feed off the tissues and fluids of developing turtle embryos.

On the down side, physical examination of captured wood turtles revealed that approximately 70% of all turtles had sustained some form of injury, ranging from relatively minor chipped shells, to potentially life threatening injuries such as major shell damage, the loss of one or more limbs, or the loss of an eye. Serious injuries were most likely the result of encounters with highway

vehicles, or industrial machinery. Thirty one percent of all turtles were missing at least one half of their tails, presumably from encounters from would-be predators, such as raccoons. Finally, 5% of all turtles had drill holes in their shells, indicating that they had been captured and kept as pets for some period in their lives.

Knowing the whereabouts of critical habitats such as nesting beaches and winter hibernation sites is crucial for the conservation of this species, and is a foundation for future stewardship and community outreach projects. In any given year predators destroy upwards of 85% of all wood turtle nests. Within our study area we were able to locate several nesting beaches, and protect a number of nests with screened predator excluders. Despite our efforts we still found over forty nests which had been destroyed. The project was also fortunate to receive funding from the Government of Canada's Species at

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Risk Fund which provided support for the purchase of four VHF radio transmitters which were placed on four turtles. These transmitters allowed project staff to locate two important winter hibernation sites.

Effective conservation requires both public education and local community involvement. In addition to provincial Natural Resources support at various levels, we were fortunate to have the help and support of SMRA Educational and Interpretive Center staff who fielded phone calls and recorded information on wood turtle sightings. Educational display space was also provided at the interpretive center in Sherbrooke, as well as a venue for community meetings.

Of the 31 watersheds in Nova Scotia where wood turtles have been reported, the St. Mary's River watershed is believed to have the most important population in the province. Results from this study and new in-

formation learned from next season's work will be used to help make sound integrated resource management decisions in this watershed, and other watersheds within the Atlantic region. Future conservation efforts directed towards this species are contingent on, comprehensive demographic information for this population, and strengthening the commitment of individuals and organizations such as the SMRA that have the ability to affect wood turtles in the watershed through stewardship and education initiatives.

Great Books by our Nova Scotia Authors

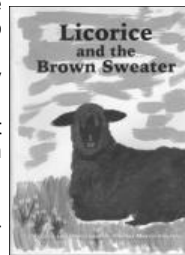
Discover Nova Scotia Sportfishing: A season-by-season Fishing Guide to Nova Scotia by Don MacLean

Biologist Don MacLean works as a sportfish manager for Nova Scotia's Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. A veteran fisherman and writer, his book guides you to the best locations throughout the year.



Licorice and the Brown Sweater by Thelma Morris-Fogarty

Thelma's book weaves the adventures of farm life into a beautiful tale for all ages. She lives on a century farm in Lower Caledonia, Guys. Co. NS, has kept sheep, and she is also an avid spinner, weaver, stuffed toy-maker, as well as a gifted writer and illustrator of children's books.



The St. Mary's and other Waters by Charles Widgery

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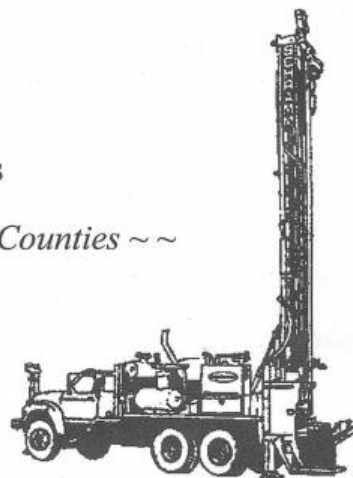
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In Memoriam

**Anthony Hector
"Tony" Roy**

Born November 9, 1927
Died January 23, 2004

In January, 2003 we lost a great angler, friend, and supporter of the St. Mary's River Association. Tony Roy served as President of the Association from 1980 – 1982. His good friend and fishing buddy, the late Father Frank Miffen, was Secretary-Treasurer during that period.

When the Association designed and built its Interpretive and Education Center in 2000, Tony and another friend, Dale Archibald, donated their engineering and architectural expertise to the project.

Tony was a man who loved and enjoyed life to the fullest. His positive attitude was always inspiring and he was a joy to encounter. He spoke of retirement for a few years, but never took that step. He didn't need to. His business trips were frequently mixed with the pleasures of fishing and golfing and, of course, seeing his many friends. Tony loved life because he knew how to live.

- Bill Carpan, 2004

SMRA Projects & Sponsors, 2003



John, Patrick, and Jolie Duffy at the end of the Cutbank Pool.

Riverbank Stabilization

Above is a view of the St. Mary's River Association's riverbank stabilization on the east side of the Cutbank Pool on the East River St. Mary's. The Cutbank, as the name suggests, has been seriously eroded over many years. If allowed to continue, this erosion would drastically alter the entrance of the river (at Miller's Bank Pool) into Glenelg Lake.

The work was made possible through the generosity of Maritimes & Northeast Pipeline, Shell Environmental Fund, StoraEnso Port Hawkesbury, and Kimberly-Clark. Thank you for your support. Total project cost was \$19,927.00.

Contractor George F. MacDonald & Sons placed 160 loads of large stone along 600 feet of riverbank. Project leader was Jack Duffy with assistance from Don Barnes and Paul d'Entremont.

Smolt Wheel Project

We reported in detail on this project in the fall 2003 SMRA News. Many thanks to StoraEnso Port Hawkesbury and The McLean Foundation for providing financial assistance. We also thank Eric Jefferson and Peter Amiro of Department of Fisheries &

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Oceans and volunteer members of the Association for their support.

Wood Turtle Display

We are very grateful for a grant from the Animal Welfare Foundation of Canada for a permanent Wood Turtle display in our Education & Interpretive Center.

Special thanks to our sponsors:

The David-Faye Sobey Foundation and The Elizabeth Wakeman Henderson Charitable Foundation.

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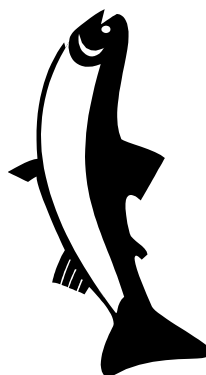
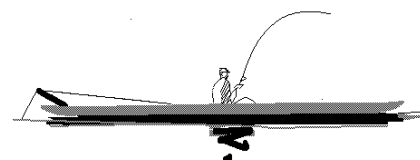
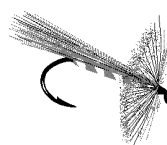
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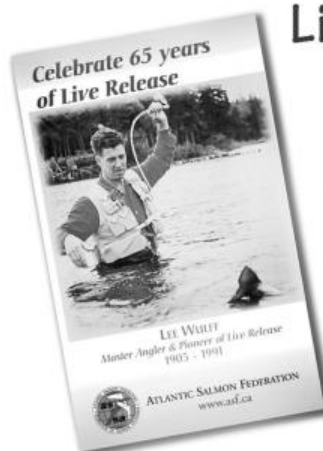
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