

St. Mary's River Association Spring News 2016



West Branch view of restoration work, bank protection, channel blocker and sill. Photo credit: Nicholas MacInnis.

RESTORATION CONTINUES ON WEST BRANCH, ST. MARY'S RIVER

The 2015 restoration season began slowly due to high water. Although we loved to see such good water for the fish, it played havoc on the West Branch restoration. Week after week, just as the water levels began to recede, the weather proved to be an impediment. Never have we seen so much rain during the summer as this year. Finally in September, we were able to gleam a few weeks to get the structures done. Restoration work so far has included installation of rock sills, deflectors, groynes, channel blockers, and bank rocking. Positive results are already being seen since the start of work in 2014, with the channel beginning to narrow and deepen, cool water pools being formed, and increased spawning at restoration sites. This year's redd counts were up to 51, from only 12 pre-restoration. Funding partners this year include the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation, NSLC Adopt-a-Stream, DFO's Small Craft Harbours and Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program.

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And much, much, more

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT - Scott Beaver

ST. MARY'S RIVER ASSOCIATION

The St. Mary's River Association is a charitable, non-profit 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 animals and plant species as well as a rich community resource.

Our vision:

"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.

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:

**St. Mary's River Association
PO Box 179 Sherbrooke, NS
B0J 3C0 or via e-mail us at
stmarysriver@ns.sympatico.ca**

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I wish I could open with "Atlantic salmon are making a huge comeback throughout the North Atlantic and its associated river systems! Grab your rods and prepare for a great adventure." This is obviously not the case and we are a long way from that point.

I ask myself how we got to this stage of the game. The great St. Mary's River of my childhood now suffers record low salmon numbers, well below conservation requirements, and for the first time ever the extreme measure of live release was implemented throughout the Maritime Provinces. Sixty -two possible causes for "at sea mortality are identified where most of the losses seem to be occurring. Coupled with the lack of combined cooperation from all parties who stand to gain or lose, it is little wonder we are in this particular state.

Your association is committed to doing our part even if the odds are stacked against us. This is the eye of the tiger moment in time. We say, "never give up and never surrender" and that is just what we are doing here at the St. Mary's River Association.

Is it really doable? Well, our Newfoundland friends have shown the way by making the Exploits River North America's highest producer of Atlantic Salmon, besting even the mighty Miramichi in some recent years. Much vision, strong leadership, cooperation, will and determination went into that wonderful achievement, proving that it can be done and by a small rural community much like ours.

We are currently constructing a strategic plan to help communicate more efficiently with board members, members at large, donors, sponsors, community organizations, provincial bodies and federal bodies. This is a working document to transfer between the hands of one executive to the next, for new board members to understand the by-laws, procedures and projects currently on the books. This working document will be one that we can present to potential donors and say clearly who

we are and show our progress to date on past and current projects.

A major achievement over the last 18 months was the establishment of eight committees focusing on very different issues that are important to the success of our Association. Our executive has identified reports from our past which stress the need to diversify our role contributing to a stronger healthier community based organization. (Ann Camozzi's Strategic Plan from 2002, and Peter Dowd's Recreation Plan done in 2009.)

Our committee structure:

1. Habitat Improvement Committee
2. Salmon Enhancement Committee
3. Paddlers Paradise Committee
4. Public Relations and Community Outreach Committee
5. Executive committee
6. Information Technology Committee
7. Personnel Committee
8. Fundraising Committee

Your Habitat Improvement Committee has been working tirelessly. A more in-depth article by Kenny Silver who chairs this group follows a bit later in this newsletter. But I would like to highlight some most impressive numbers. In the last two years we have fund raised and spent \$400,000 on habitat work on our West Branch resulting in just over four kilometers of river being restored. Our goal is quite challenging with our sights set on the next eight years to complete the entire project, some sixty kilometers of the West Branch. The Habitat Improvement Committee is also responsible for a Redd Count Project that will help monitor and assess the ongoing results of everyone's hard work and dedication on the West branch. Results to date are very encouraging. On the East branch some much needed work at the barrier-free MacKeen's Pool has been completed this year as well. Thank you to Habitat Biologist Charlie MacInnis, Kenny Silver and committee members for your hard work and commitment to this critical endeavor.

Next year the committee will continue work on previously identified West branch sites including some restoration work at Sutherland Brook.

Your Salmon Enhancement Committee is chaired by Robert Cook and his group has created an Outline Plan identifying enhancement options available. Last year the committee worked on enhancing salmon stocks by capturing kelt in the spring. These kelt were reconditioned with the assistance of the Department of Fisheries and Oceans so they could spawn a second time. Seven female salmon produced approximately 25,000 eggs. The eggs will be kept and hatched over the winter at the Cold Brook hatchery and released in the spring of 2016 to help boost juvenile populations. I would like to thank Michelin Tire Granton for their \$5000.00 donation used to purchase 4 tanks for the purpose of transporting and containing our kelt. Thank you so much. The tanks will help our efforts immensely this spring. Thank you as well to DFO's staff at the Cold Brook Hatchery for their support and making this project a success. The committee is also working on organizing a Quad County Enhancement Committee with the belief that a broader relationship sharing knowledge and ideas amongst peers in our regions will help to improve enhancement efforts. We've also made progress developing a working relationship with the nearby Paq'tnkek First Nation, and we hope to increase mutual understanding and develop joint undertakings together. Partnered with NS Inland Fisheries, one of this years targeted enhancement projects for the St Mary's River is a sea trout enhancement program slated for the fall and additionally a repeat of our successful Kelt Project slated for the spring of this year. Thank you all committee members for your hard work and dedication over the last year and keep up the good work.

The Paddlers Paradise Committee is chaired by Andrew Anderson and his group is responsible for promoting paddling on our beautiful river. The committee is currently investigating access sites for paddlers to put in and to take out their boats. They are also

playing a significant role in the QR coding project which will place river-side signage on the river for paddlers and anglers. The committee is also working on establishing a relationship with Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia as well. Exciting stuff!

Our Public Relations and Community Outreach Committee is chaired by Dr. John Hamilton. His group is working on an article for the Atlantic Salmon Journal based on the habitat work Charlie MacInnis has been doing on our West Branch. The group is also leading the QR coding project. Briefly mentioned in the Paddlers Paradise Committee report, the project will deliver QR coded signage coupled with an app downloaded to your phone which will capture the unique image and bring the user to our website right from your smart phone. For example, the data could give river maps and pool regulations along with seasonal data. It is not limited so we could put any historical facts and any other relevant info patrons may be interested in on the linked page. This is an exciting technology that we feel will bring added exposure to the area and promote the river and surrounding communities. .

Our new Information Technology Committee was formed last fall to create a more user friendly and more informative web site. To date goals, priorities and evaluation criteria have been outlined and a search is on for appropriate software and services. These are being tested and evaluated to ensure our needs are met. Keep your eyes open for an exciting new look in the near future.

A special resolution to amend the Associations by-laws will be proposed at the Annual General Meeting. Many thanks to those who worked so hard to make this update possible.

Part of the Michelin Tire Environmental Stewardship Grant was awarded to the SMRA to cover all costs of a data logging project. Two Onset data loggers loaded with a pH sensor, pressure sensor (water level) and a rain gauge have been purchased at a total price of \$12,000.00. These units are semi-

portable and are intended on streaming data to a time delayed trend right on our web page where the public can view it. We have partnered up with the St. Mary's Education Center/Academy grade 12 chemistry class taught by John MacIsaac to provide a real application opportunity for students about pH, how it affects fish, deploying this equipment and how this data can be useful to our organization. Thank you Michelin for choosing our project, we will put this equipment to good use!.

Finally I would like to acknowledge the never ending efforts of our Museum Manager Joanne Mailman. The Education and Interpretative Centre, which is managed by Joanne, is the focal point of the SMRA and Joanne's positive attitude, overall knowledge of the job requirements, her endless commitment and willingness to help out wherever and whenever needed confirms her dedication to the association and the River. Thank you very much Joanne.

Here's hoping you get to enjoy the beautiful St. Mary's River in 2016!

Regards,
Scott Beaver

NOTICE TO MEMBERS
RE: GENERAL ANNUAL MEETING,
NOMINATIONS AND
SPECIAL RESOLUTION

The Annual General Meeting of the St. Mary's River Association will be held on Sunday May 29, 2015 at 2pm at the Association's Education & Interpretive Centre 8404 Highway7, Sherbrooke NS. Everyone is welcome.

Please see page 13 for important notice.

SMRA EDUCATION & INTERPRETIVE CENTRE NEWS

Joanne Mailman, Manager

Another summer has come and gone here at the St. Mary's River Association Education and Interpretive Centre. We saw almost 2300 visitors come through our door. What an interesting summer it was. The wet weather not only hampered our restoration efforts but also kept away tourists. September brought in good weather and the return of visitors.

Some events that took place:

May 23 - Girl Guide tree planting at the MacKay property (see story on page 12)

May 24 - SMRA Annual General Meeting

July 1—Annual Canada Day Yard Sale

June 5 - RBC/Bluewater day

August 8 - Stream Makers— Aquatic Insects

September 10 - Hosted Sherbrooke Women's Institute and Ruth Legge's program on her trip to Germany.

Our yard sales continue to be very successful. The new display on the St. Mary's River Punt was completed. Thanks to Historic Sherbrooke Village for donating the punt. Visitors can read about the history of the punt and sit in it to gain firsthand experience on what it must have been like floating down the river hoping to catch a salmon.

Every Wednesday in July and August we offered free Fly tying demonstration with Christopher Sinclair.

We only received funding for one summer student this summer and were pleased to welcome back Christopher.

We were very grateful to receive a wonderful donation of fly tying equipment from Jen Pond, daughter of member Joseph Patton. It has been inventoried and we look forward to being able to teach new fly tiers with this much appreciated gift.

In the fall, we applied to the Aviva Community Fund for funding for the West Branch project. This was our first foray into social media fund raising and thanks to all our friends, we received a \$5000 grant! It was an experience we hope to duplicate next year.

On Saturday August 8th, SMRA offered our Stream

Makers program on freshwater aquatic insects. Despite the rain, it was very well attended, with almost 20 attendees of all ages. The program started with a short PowerPoint presentation by Christopher Sinclair, outlining general background of aquatic insects in our freshwaters and their life cycles. Next, the group moved to Archibald's Brook (a tributary to the main branch of the St. Mary's River) and collected aquatic insects by turning over rocks and putting them in a shallow pan to identify. The group used a different method here to collect samples. The instructor completed a kick sample and the attendees used nets to collect any insects that became detached from the rocks and sediment. After all samples were collected, a short quiz was given to test the students on their identification of the different aquatic insects. The group then enjoyed snacks and juice. The group left with lots of smiles and a new understanding of aquatic life! Assisting Chris in the field were directors Andrew Anderson, Jocelyn Ellis and Scott Beaver.



In 2016, we are planning to offer a number of educational program. Jocelyn and I are working on a Butterfly Garden and display for the Centre. We are updating our web site, which will be on line this spring. You can follow us on Facebook, we always post our events there. We are also on twitter @smrasalmon.

We are looking forward to a busy 2016 season. Hope to see you!



Top photo: Annual Canada Day yard sale

Bottom Photo: Our building got a much needed face lift this year. Who knew what could be accomplished with a power washer. Also, rotten wood was replaced and a fresh coat of paint applied. Much thanks goes out to Terry Croft and Irvin Hartling.

Top photo: Clyde Bowman of Afton tries his hand at fly tying. Christopher Sinclair offered free fly tying lessons every Wednesday in July and August.

Bottom photo: Stream Makers participants in the water at Archibald's Brook.

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Education and Interpretive Centre Events

BUTTERFLY GARDEN

Nearly every property, anywhere across North America, can be transformed into a natural wonderland filled with life and activity. Plants, nesting and roosting boxes, and a steady supply of water are the key elements in any backyard habitat. One of the projects that we are planning this spring is designing and building a butterfly garden at the St. Mary's River Association Interpretive Centre.

We hope to fill the garden with a variety of plants that will give residents and guests in the Sherbrooke area the opportunity to spend a few minutes viewing and photographing butterflies that are attracted to the plants in search of nectar. Perhaps you may even find a few caterpillars feeding on the foliage.

Please stop by the St. Mary's River Association Interpretive Centre when you are in the area to visit our displays and garden and don't forget to bring your camera.

PADDLE THE ST. MARY'S

SMRA is also working on plans to paddle the St. Mary's River this fall. We will be partnering with the District of St Mary's and Canoe/Kayak Nova Scotia to host a paddling event showcasing some of the habitat restoration completed and paddling work we have been doing on the St. Mary's. Watch our Facebook page, twitter and new website for updates.

CANADA DAY YARD SALE

Once again we will be having our Canada Day yard sale on Friday July 1st. This yearly event has generated almost \$16,000 since 2001. Much needed funds that help cover the operating costs of the Interpretive Centre. Donation of items are welcomed! We couldn't do this without our generous supporters. As in the past few summers, we will continue to sell items throughout the summer. Everyone loves a bargain. So drop in!

SALMON DINNER AND AUCTION

Since 2004, this bi-annual fundraiser has raise over \$98,000 for SMRA, Antigonish Rivers Association and Nova Scotia Salmon Association projects. See page 31 for this years plans. Hope to see you there!

Education and Interpretive Centre Programs Photo Gallery

The SMRA Education and Interpretive Centre has offered numerous programs for the public since 2001. Every year we try to offer new programs to spotlight our rich community resources. We have held Magic on the River—a program directed to kids aged 4—12. We have offered birding and nature walks, wood turtle programs, snake programs, river restoration and estuary walks to name a few. Here are a few photos.




FUNDING PARTNERS-THANKYOU

We are very grateful to receive funding from our generous supporters, without whose financial assistance, much of the work of the St. Mary's River Association would not be possible. Thank you to the following:

The Elizabeth Wakeman Henderson Foundation
NSLC Adopt a Stream Program
Atlantic Salmon Conservation Federation
NS Student Careers Skills
Development Program
Recreational Fisheries Conservation
Partnerships Program
DFO—Small Craft Harbours
Michelin Canada Granton Plant
Fossil Power Systems Inc.
AVIVA Community Fund
Royal Bank Blue Water Community Fund
TD Friends of the Environment
ALSO

To all our volunteers, a great big thank you! Without your generous contribution of time and energy, we would not be able to do this important work.




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Fantastic year for conservation on the St. Mary's River - Karen McKendry, Conservation Coordinator with the Nova Scotia Nature Trust

The generosity and foresight of people connected to the St. Mary's River continued to shine in 2015. On Earth Day we announced the donation of a property on the St. Mary's by Ronald Archibald. The land, close to the confluence of the West and East branches of the river, sits nestled amongst woods already protected by the Nature Trust (Archibald Conservation Lands, and A.M. Sandy Cameron Conservation Lands). This conservation gift adds to the ecological integrity of this key spot on the river, and adds to the network of protected lands in the area for people to enjoy. Thank you Mr. (Ronald) Archibald!

Another river gem had its future secured in 2015. The Nature Trust had the opportunity to purchase a riverside stand of old growth Eastern Hemlock forest on the West Branch near the Lead Mines Pool. The stunning forest is known to locals and river paddlers, and is one of the last of its kind in the province. When we put the call out to the public to ask for help in raising funds to buy the land in order to protect it, the response was fantastic! Residents of the river, and fans of the area from near and far, responded generously, and we their help we were able to secure the funds to formally protect what is now called Hemlock Hill Conservation Lands. In addition to the spectacular old growth forest section of the property, the site hosts floodplain forest (including on 2 islands in the river), a lake and a wetland. Rare species, including Wood Turtle, Canada Warbler, and Olive-sided Flycatcher, can now rely on this site to meet their habitat

needs. Our sincere thanks to out everyone who supported this campaign, including local landowners, donors, funders, and conservation partners.

Last year was also a pivotal year for land conservation on Crown Land. The province fulfilled the commitment created in 2007 to formally protect 12% of Nova Scotia's landmass by 2015. Years of analysis, hard work, and public and stakeholder consultation, led to a Parks and Protected Areas Plan that recognizes that more than just large areas of protected Crown land are needed to maintain the ecosystem functions we need to survive. By the end of 2015, tens of thousands of hectares of new Wilderness Areas, Nature Reserves, and Parks were designated, and the 12% goal was met. This is an important piece of the puzzle, but more work is needed – we need the help of landowners to create corridors of wilderness for flora and fauna on private land, and we need to encourage government to formally protect lands that were identified in the Plan but not protected by the end of 2015 – including those on the St. Mary's River. These Crown parcels that abut the river on the West and Main Branches can be view in the Protected Ares interactive map.

Our work on the St. Mary's River Conservation Campaign is now entering its 10th year. The journey has been a wonderful one, leading to special lands conserved for all time, and powerful relationships formed with people who share our passion for this special place. We invite everyone to learn more about our work, and to get involved in their own way. We welcome donations to our campaign fund, which

are used to care for the 7 properties we have conserved on the river so far. We are also always looking for outdoorsy people to volunteer to visit our properties and report on their condition, as part of our Property Guardian program. Here's to another banner year on the St. Mary's in 2016 !



A group of keeners exploring the newly protected Hemlock Hill Conservation Lands during a guided hike in July. Credit: Bonnie McGrath

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA—Susan Heaslip, Louise de Mestral, and Alex Levy

In 2015, Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) continued its varied work on Atlantic Salmon in the Southern Upland region. These activities included: juvenile assessments on the St. Mary's River; juvenile, smolt, and adult assessments on the LaHave River; and support to adult salmon monitoring on the West River, Sheet Harbour. In collaboration with the SMRA, DFO also reconditioned kelts collected from the St. Mary's River and has begun assessment of this potential recovery activity.

Despite the challenges of rain and high water conditions in July, we were able to sample ten electrofishing sites on the St. Mary's River (6 West Branch and 4 East Branch sites) during the weeks of July 20 and 27. We also returned the week of September 28 to sample two additional West Branch sites, including the first year of data collection at the SMRA's habitat restoration Site 4.

Preliminary estimates from this year's electrofishing surveys are an average fry (age-0) density (fish per 100 m²) for the East Branch of 14.5 (see Figure 1) and an average total parr density (age-1, age-2, and age-3 combined) of 6.6. Estimated fry and total parr densities for the East Branch in 2015 were up from last year, but were lower than the averages for the previous 5-years. For the West Branch, the average fry density was 2.9 and the average total parr density was 5.1 (see Figure 2). Estimated fry densities on the West Branch were lower than in 2014 and lower than the previous 5-year average, while the total parr density was higher than the previous year and comparable to the previous 5-year average.

Adult salmon counts at the Morgan Falls fish ladder on the LaHave River – which is the other index river for the Southern Upland region – were

160 grilse and 19 multi-sea-winter (MSW) salmon during 2015. The grilse count increased from 43 in 2014 and the MSW count was comparable to 2014 (21 MSW). These adult returns continue to remain well below the Conservation Requirement for the LaHave River.

In 2013, the SMRA proposed a kelt reconditioning project as a potential activity to increase egg deposition in the river. Attempts to collect kelts from the St. Mary's River began in the spring of 2014; however, to date, the number of kelts collected have been low (≤ 11 each year). To begin the project evaluation, 10 kelts that were collected in the spring of 2015 were successfully reconditioned and spawned at the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility in November. Adults were returned to the river in January, 2016, and the initial development of the offspring from these crosses is being monitored in captivity to evaluate their viability and condition. If enough kelts are captured in the spring of 2016, the second phase of the project will involve release of reconditioned kelts into the wild to spawn naturally with subsequent monitoring. Logistical and human resource challenges exist with monitoring; however developing a study design for a wild assessment component of this project was supported at the most recent Southern Upland Salmon Collaborative Projects Working Group meeting in November 2015.

As we prepare for another year of assessment work on the St. Mary's in 2016, we look forward to our continuing collaboration with the SMRA on assessment and monitoring activities within the watershed.

- Contributors: Susan Heaslip, Louise de Mestral, and Alex Levy

FISHERIES AND OCEANS CANADA– continued

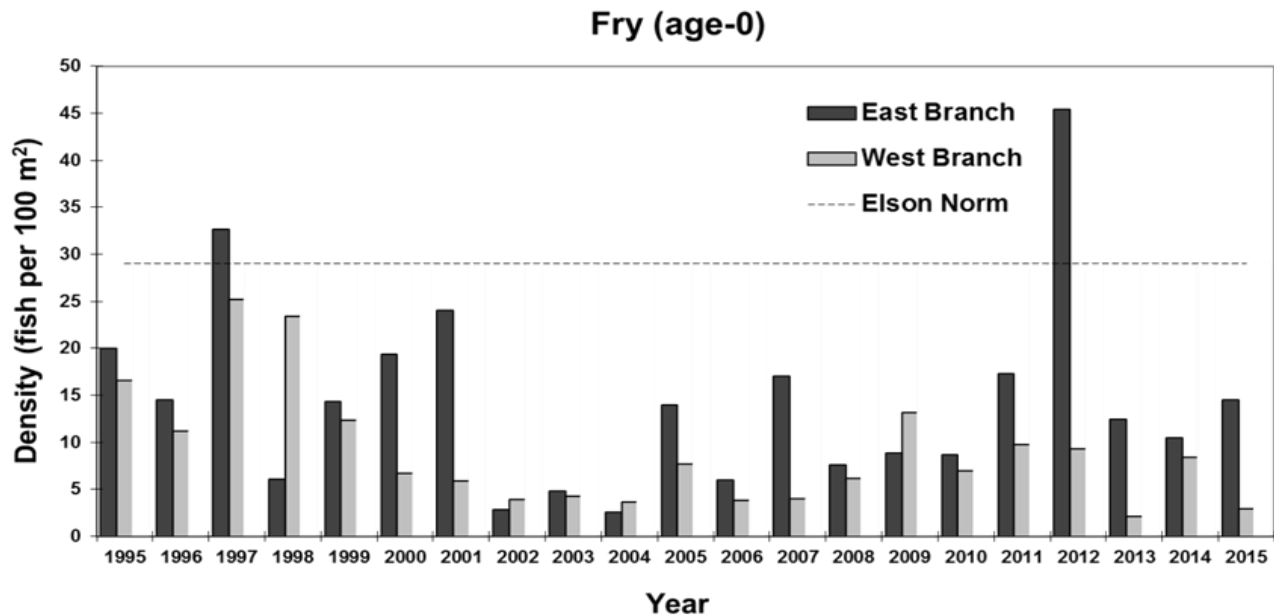


Figure 1. Preliminary estimates of average fry (age-0) density for juvenile Atlantic Salmon in the St. Mary's River (East and West branches are shown separately) during 1995 to 2015. Note: area fished vs. standard area was used to calculate densities in 2009. The Elson's Norm value of 29 fry per 100 m² has been used as a reference for juvenile production in fresh water.

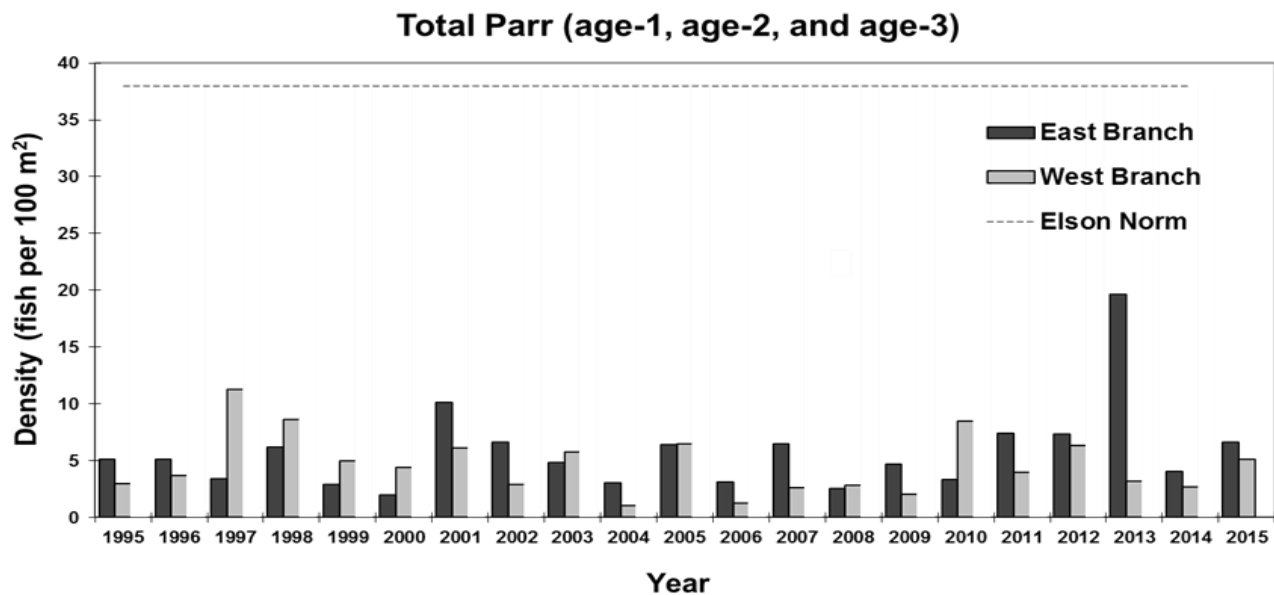


Figure 2. Preliminary estimates of average total parr density for juvenile Atlantic Salmon in the St. Mary's River (East and West branches are shown separately) during 1995 to 2015. Note: area fished vs. standard area was used to calculate densities in 2009. The Elson's Norm value of 38 parr per 100 m² has been used as a reference for juvenile production in fresh water.

Local Girl Guides and Royal Bank Staff Volunteer Tree Planting

On Saturday May 24, 2015, the 1st St. Mary's Girl Guides tracked an hour up the West Branch, St. Mary's River to help SMRA members plant trees along the newly restored bank. Along with parents and 20 guides, were Royal Bank Sherbrooke branch staff. They helped plant 30 trees at the MacKay restoration site.

The local Sherbrooke Girls Guides received funding from TD Friends of the Environment to purchase trees and the Royal Bank staff donated funds through the Community Action Grant program under the RBC Blue Water Project.

SMRA would like to thank all the people who came out to help us plant trees. A job well done!



MEMBER OF THE YEAR 2016

The St. Mary's River Association is pleased to nominate

GWEN BOUTILIER

Gwen grew up in Port Bickerton and graduated from St Mary's Rural High in Sherbrooke. She continued her education at NS Teachers College in Truro, graduating in 1979. In 1980, she left her NS home for Toronto, ONT (due to lack of teaching opportunities) and worked there until 2008, returning to NS as a full time resident in 2009.

Gwen worked in the financial services sector in a variety of positions all her working life, and is currently employed part time in that industry. She served as a volunteer on Peel Condominium Corporation 261, Mississauga ON, first as Secretary and then Treasurer over a 9 year period. She learned to fly fish in recent years, which led to meeting Bill Carpan of River Magic and ultimately started on the Board of Directors of St. Mary's River Association in 2014. Gwen currently serves as Treasurer.

Her objective is to make a positive contribution to the SMRA; working together with all of the association's volunteers to accomplish their goals, and in turn contribute to the growth and viability of the local community.

**All your efforts on behalf of the
organization are greatly appreciated.
Thank you !**



NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING, NOMINATIONS AND SPECIAL RESOLUTION

The Annual General Meeting of the St. Mary's River Association will be held on Sunday May 29, 2016 at 2 pm at the Association's Education & Interpretive Centre, 8404 Highway 7, Sherbrooke NS. All paid up members are eligible to vote at the meeting. Memberships will be available for those wishing to join or renew their membership.

There are currently 6 open director positions. The Nominations Committee will be considering nominees for these or any other positions that become open. The membership may also submit nominations. In accordance with the Association's by-laws, nominations from the membership at large will be received by the Secretary at the address below up to the 15th day of April, 2016. Any member of the Association may submit nominations for candidates for any or all of the open director positions. Nominations are not open this year for the offices of President, Vice-President, Treasurer or Secretary as their two year terms have not expired. Nominations shall be in writing signed by the nominator and the nominee using the Board of Directors Nomination and Consent Form available from the Secretary at the address below or at the Interpretive Centre during open hours or on our web site at <http://www.stmarysriverassociation.com>.

The following special resolution to amend the Association's by-laws will be proposed at the annual general meeting:

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

1. The existing By-Laws are repealed and replaced by the attached By-Laws effective as of the date they are approved by the Registrar of Joint Stock Companies.
2. The Secretary is instructed to file a copy of this resolution with the Registrar within fourteen days after it is passed.
3. The Executive is authorized to make any changes to the attached By-Laws which the Registrar may require before approving such By-Laws and to do any acts to fulfill this resolution.

You may obtain an electronic copy of the proposed restated by-laws by contacting the Secretary at the address below or view them at the Interpretive Centre during open hours or on our website. The proposed amendments clarify the by-laws and propose other changes including:

- members may remove a director by a vote of 75% of those in attendance at a special meeting of members for that purpose;
- various notices under the by-laws may be given by electronic communication;
- the date for nominations from the membership will be changed from April 15 to April 1;
- clarifying that the directors shall regularly appoint a person with financial training to review or audit the Association's books;
- changing the % of directors voting to appoint an executive director to a 75% vote of directors voting;
- changing the % of members voting for certain matters to a special resolution passed by 75% of members voting to mortgage, sell, lease or otherwise dispose of land and buildings;
- changing the quorum for members' meetings from 15 members to 15 members, at least 5 of whom are not directors;
- changing the quorum for directors' meetings from 5 to 50% of the directors eligible to vote plus 1;
- clarifying that the Board of Directors shall consist of a maximum of 20 members including the President, Vice-President, Treasurer and Secretary;
- clarifying that nominations from the floor are permitted at the annual general meeting provided if the nominee consents to act either orally at the meeting or in writing presented at the meeting.

All are welcome to attend.

Jocelyn Ellis, Secretary

Date: February 5, 2016.

jocelyn.ellis@bellaliant.net

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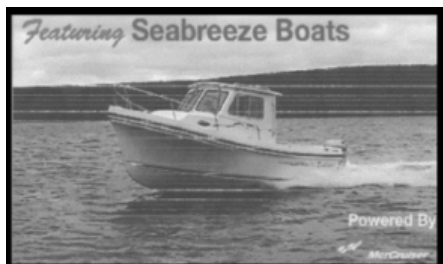
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NSLC Adopt-A-Stream - Amy Weston

Congratulations to the St Mary's River Association on the on going restoration of the West Branch. This ambitious undertaking is showing early success with excellent pool development and spawning habitat as demonstrated by the number redds identified in the area of the restoration work. NSLC Adopt A Stream is really pleased to be supporting this project. Although there is a great deal more to be done, the work so far is working really well.

This past year was the most successful year to date! In addition to the St. Mary's River Association, 22 other community groups were also hard at work on projects on their local rivers and streams with the support of NSLC Adopt-A-Stream. Thirty-five watersheds across the province are better protected and have been actively improved. The people power behind this effort involved 550 volunteers giving 6900 hours of their time, in addition to labour provided by 85 summer field staff at work in communities across the province.

In all, a remarkable 191,710 square meters of habitat was restored in 2015. Charlie MacInnis not only designed and supervised the large scale work on the West Branch St Mary's but also on the Cheticamp River in collaboration with the Cheticamp Rivers Salmon Association and Parks Canada. At the other end of the province, the Clean Annapolis River Project was at work improving the main channel of the Nictaux River. And in between, there were many summer crews and volunteers working on smaller rivers and streams implementing well established restoration techniques by hand such as digger logs, deflectors, step pool development to improve migration,

spawning and rearing habitats.

Providing access to habitat is a fundamental goal for watershed restoration work. While dams are obvious barriers for migrating fish, improperly sited, designed, installed or maintained culverts at stream crossings are major contributors to habitat loss. Fish passage assessment of culverts consistently find that between 50 and 70 percent of culverts are barriers due to outflow drop and/or excessive velocity.

With additional funding from the federal Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program, the Nova Scotia Salmon Association's NSLC Adopt-A-Stream program has been developing and testing various prefabricated chutes, pool weirs, and baffle devices to address some velocity and outflow drop barriers. NSSA Field Programs Chair and expert aquatic biologist Bob Rutherford spearheaded the development of low-cost, adaptable fish passage remediation options and specific design criteria for the program.

In 2016, NSLC Adopt A Stream field technician Will Daniels was involved in more than 20 fish passage remediation projects – providing site assessment, design, material procurement, technical installation oversight, and a fair amount of muscle. Daniels worked collaboratively with the structures' owners, including individual landowners, Ducks Unlimited, and in particular NS Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal, as well as with local community groups such as the Clean Annapolis River Project, Unama'ki Institute of Natural Resources, Bluenose Coastal Action Foundation, and the Mi'kmaw Conservation Group -- re-establishing

more than 120 kilometers of stream.

We've been working to secure more project related funding, develop new tools and provide the training and resources our community group partners need to best make an impact in their watersheds. We are anticipating a great field season in 2016!

For more information about the program, visit our website www.adoptastream.ca or contact amyweston@adoptastream.ca or tel. 902-644-1276. Like us on Facebook!

This spring the NSLC Adopt A-Stream Sale will be held March 28 to May 1. When you visit an NSLC store, you will be able to select products from our many contributing suppliers, including Keiths, Peller Estates, Bacardi, and Coors Light. Not only do you save money, a donation will be made to the NSLC Adopt-A-Stream program.



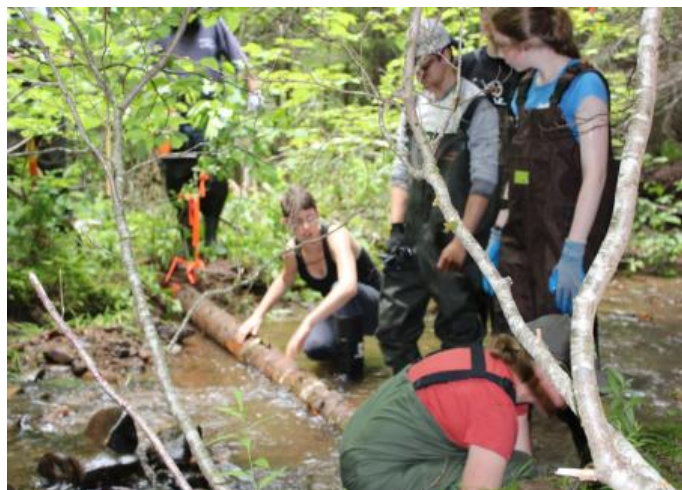
Fish passage
NSLC Adopt A Stream field technician, Will Daniels worked with UINR to fix fish passage on Bryden Brook CB. Wooden baffles and a fiberglass chute were installed in a box culvert.

NSCL Adopt - A- Stream - continued



Digger logs / deflectors

Hands-on training in restoration methods is offered by NSLC Adopt A Stream each summer to community groups for their field staff and volunteers. Sessions were held in Fall River, Mabou and Kenzieville last year for 80 participants.



In collaboration with the Clean Annapolis River Project, a galvanized chute was bolted to the metal chute at East Moose River to allow for fish passage.



SMRA received funding from the NSLC/Adopt a Stream Program, Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation and the Recreational Fisheries Cooperative Partnership Program to restore the Barrier Free Access site at MacKeen's Pool.

ATLANTIC SALMON FEDERATION REPORT - Lewis Hinks, Director NS and PEI Programs

It's hard to believe but it has been more than one year since ASF and the Miramichi Salmon Association called on the Canadian government to immediately address the crisis facing the survival of wild Atlantic salmon. The numbers of salmon returning to many Canadian rivers, including the Miramichi, were among the lowest on record in 2014. ASF wrote letters to and met with federal Members of Parliament and Fisheries and Oceans Canada (DFO) officials. Our efforts were rewarded by former DFO Minister Gail Shea, when she created a Ministerial Advisory Committee and charged it with consulting throughout eastern Canada and recommending action to reverse the decline. ASF President Bill Taylor served as Vice Chair of the Committee.

After consultation with stakeholders, First Nations, scientists and managers in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, the Committee recommended and former Minister Shea announced mandatory live release and barbless hooks in the Maritimes for the 2015 season. The Committee continued to consult in Newfoundland and Labrador and then Quebec, presented 61 key recommendations to the former Minister at the end of July and then a federal election was called. DFO has been actively working for several months on the Special Report on Wild Atlantic Salmon in Eastern Canada and its 61 recommendations provided by MAC. The department is analyzing the recommendations to identify which ac-

tions can be taken immediately and which would be longer term due to financial considerations.

Here in Nova Scotia, the government announced new regulations to govern salmon aquaculture and is now working on policy details. We are hopeful that the regulations heed the recommendation of the Doelle-Lahey Independent Aquaculture Regulatory Review and go far enough to provide much needed protection to wild Atlantic salmon populations in Nova Scotia and also to coastal communities.

The first crop of salmon raised by Sustainable Blue went to market last fall. This land based, closed containment farm uses state-of-the-art technology to grow salmon in an environmentally-sustainable manner for consumers in Nova Scotia and beyond. Land based companies such as Sustainable Blue and Canaqua are proof that Nova Scotia can be a leader in the industry.

Meanwhile, The Conservation Fund Freshwater Institute in West Virginia and ASF are continuing research on land based salmon aquaculture. The next goal is to formulate a locally sourced, fishmeal free and sustainable feed, which will augment the benefits of growing Atlantic salmon on land in closed-containment facilities.

We are pleased to see an increase in salmon returns in 2015 to many rivers throughout eastern Canada. The Margaree appears to have had a very good season, at least compared to 2014 and that gives us

hope. Still, the fact remains that wild Atlantic salmon populations across North America are in a downward trend, and we must redouble our efforts. We remain cautiously optimistic and cannot stress enough the need for continued vigilance to ensure the future of wild Atlantic salmon.

The West River, Sheet Harbour project continues to be a success with a new style of counting fence recently added to the project. It is a resistance board weir design that allows it to rise and fall with the changing river levels while not allowing fish to pass. It is a safe design as workers do not need to go onto the fence in high water to remove sections to take the stress off the structure. It also allows boats and debris to just float over it. We installed this to get a handle on the numbers of returning fish. While we did have a problem with the sill to which the fence was attached to the bottom, and the fence had to be removed early, a total of 34 salmon, mostly grilse were counted. That is very encouraging news for this project, given the poor state of returns to most of the Southern Up-land Rivers.

ASF researchers have been working diligently this season to understand the challenges confronting Atlantic salmon during their migration. They are analyzing the 2015 tracking data retrieved and downloaded from receivers along the seaward migratory routes of salmon from the Cascapedia, Res-tigouche, and Miramichi rivers.

ATLANTIC SALMON FEDERATION REPORT— Continued

We are researching the impact of striped bass and cormorant predation on Atlantic salmon in estuaries, where our data is indicating high mortality.

At the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO) meeting in 2015, ASF, along with other accredited non-government organizations, raised concern over the increased harvest of migrating wild Atlantic salmon at sea. At the June meeting, Greenland unilaterally limited its quota to 45 tonnes for both its factory and subsistence fisheries and agreed on measures to improve monitoring and control

of its fisheries. This amount of harvest is still well above the zero harvest advised by the International Council for the Exploration of the Sea. However, for the first time in four years we have an actual cap on harvest and, if the monitoring and control measures work out, the overall harvest in 2015 should be about half of the 2014 harvest, which is progress.

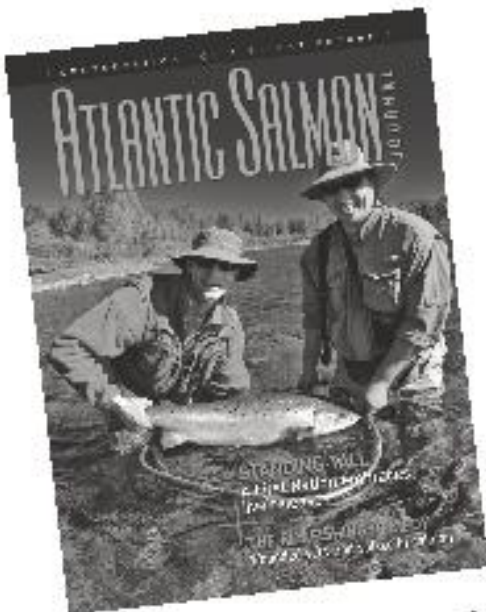
Should you have any questions about ASF research or conservation projects, or wish to inquire about becoming an ASF member, please don't hesitate to get in touch with me at any time.

In friendship and conservation,

Lewis Hinks

Director, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island Programs
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2015 - AT A GLANCE - YEAR IN REVIEW
Just a small sampling of our work this past year.



SMRA Kelt eggs at Colbrook Hatchery



Above and below: West Branch restoration work



Above: SMRA Kelt being released Below: Restoration work

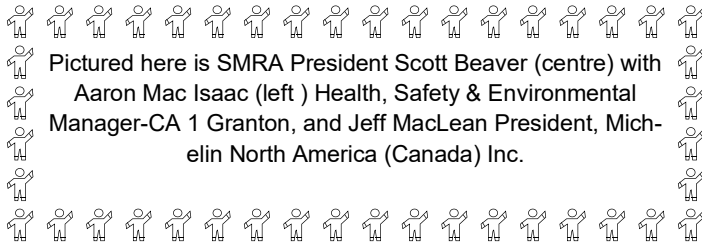


Below: Charlie MacInnis hard at work on West Branch Restoration






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Pictured here is SMRA President Scott Beaver (centre) with Aaron Mac Isaac (left) Health, Safety & Environmental Manager-CA 1 Granton, and Jeff MacLean President, Michelin North America (Canada) Inc.



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INLAND FISHERIES DIVISION REPORT - Andrew Lowles, Sportfish Development Officer

It was another busy season with the Inland Fisheries Division. We were out doing population assessments, promoting and development our great sportfishery, stocking trout and researching invasive species across Nova Scotia. The following are a few highlights from our promotional programs and fisheries enhancement activities over the past year:

Promotion and Development Programs

There are two demographics that are underrepresented in Nova Scotia's recreational angling community: young people and women; and are targeted through the delivery of two programs. The Learn to Fish (L2F) Program focuses on exposing young anglers across the province to recreational angling. This year was the largest year ever for the Learn to Fish Program, seeing more than 2,300 students, 500 more students than previous efforts. The program was delivered in school classrooms, but has been extended to include high school students. Again this year, we visited IWK Children's Hospital, Scouts and Guides Canada, and 4-H groups. As last season's effort was lacking representation from certain areas of the province, additional effort was made to more evenly spread across the province this year. This was successfully achieved with increased representation from RFA 1 (Cape Breton) and RFA 4 (Digby, Yarmouth, Shelburne and Queens). We want to thank the Hants West Wildlife Association and Mark Weare, along with his volunteers for their continued support of the program.

Becoming an Outdoor Woman (BOW) was again a great success.

We coordinate a number of modules at the fall BOW program. Andrew Lowles was the key speaker on Saturday evening, presenting "Fishing Across Nova Scotia" to an enthusiastic audience. In February 2016, Winter BOW will happen on Cape Breton. The Ice Fishing portion of the program will be increased to include a 3rd session as well as Saturday evening Fly Tying.

We have worked on a number of promotional programs and projects this year. The provincial fisheries website has been updated. The Inland Fisheries Division was represented at the Sport and RV Show in Halifax and at the Truro Agricultural Expo. In the spring of 2016, the Department is considering attending the Toronto Sportsman Show. The Sportfish Registry will be updated and we intend to simplify the submission process and create a visible online records page.

Fisheries Enhancement

Each spring provincial hatcheries stock approximately 200 lakes across Nova Scotia. Most of these are stocked with brook trout; additionally, over 20 lakes are provided with Rainbow trout from the Fraser's Mills Hatchery. In recent years much of the stocking effort has been directed to lakes in populated centers to provide additional recreational angling opportunities. There are more than 25 wheelchair accessible, barrier-free facilities in Nova Scotia. Most are located on stocking fishing sites that receive trout from the hatcheries. Approximately 50 trout fishing derbies, sponsored by volunteer organizations, received trout from the hatcheries.

Fall Trout Stocking

Trout stocking with finger-sized juvenile trout is carried out in October and November. Lakes stocked in the fall are typically more remote than the spring-stocked lakes, but still have significant fishing pressure. These fish are presumed to grow for a season before becoming large enough to be caught. Approximately 175 lakes receive brook trout in the fall. Most brown trout stocking takes place at this time of year. The majority of brown trout stocking takes place in rivers where the fingerlings have access to estuaries where they can grow quickly.

Winter Trout Stocking

Nova Scotians are encouraged to remain active all year and many do so by getting out and enjoying time ice fishing for trout. Twenty lakes, including the Bras d'Or Lakes, are stocked with either rainbow or speckled trout in November and December, in anticipation of the winter season. Several other lakes which are stocked in the spring remain open year round.

Atlantic Salmon Enhancement Program

This was the ninth year that the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been working to support the Atlantic salmon and enhance the fishery. On Cape Breton Island, the Margaree Hatchery provided fall parr for Margaree River, Baddeck River and Middle River. It is unlikely that the fall salmon season on the Middle River and Baddeck River (both stocked 2010-2015) would have been permissible without the stocking program. On the mainland, Fraser's Mills Hatchery provided fry and fall parr for West River Antigonish. With assistance from many volunteers,

INLAND FISHERIES DIVISION REPORT — continued

successful broodstock collections took place on for West River Antigonish, West River Pictou (Fish Friends), Middle River, Baddeck River, Mabou River and Margaree River. In addition to providing brook trout for local watersheds and selected sites on Cape Breton Island, the Margaree hatchery typically supplies 130,000-160,000 parr each fall and 30,000-40,000 Atlantic salmon smolt in the spring, for the Margaree River.

Broodstock salmon from Baddeck River, Middle River, Mabou River as well as the Margaree River are now held at Margaree Hatchery to provide eggs for next year's production. Broodstock from West River Antigonish and West River Pictou (Fish Friends) are held at Fraser's Mills Hatchery.

Community Based Enhancement Facilities

A number of community-based fishery organizations operate small scale hatcheries or incubation boxes. Trout eggs are delivered to these in late winter. The fry hatch in early spring and when they have developed to the point where they are able to begin feeding on their own, they are released. This usually takes place in early to mid-May. Over the last few years there were operations in New Waterford, Port Morien, Coxheath, Isle Madame, Mulgrave and Tatamagouche.

Fish Friends

Fish Friends is an educational program, sponsored by the Nova Scotia Salmon Association and maintained through the hard work of

many dedicated volunteer organizations. Aquarium units are set up in participating school class rooms and teachers are provided with educational material about the trout and salmon life cycle. Children get to watch the eggs hatch, and the fry develop. They feed them for a few weeks and then release them into a local stream. Last year the hatcheries were able to provide eggs to approximately 70 Fish Friend projects.

Tight Lines,

Andrew Lowles

Sportfish Development Officer



White Muddler Minnows and Atlantic Salmon - Don MacLean

When I was fishing salmon in New Brunswick last summer I was interested in learning which flies were catching fish during the season so I spent some time reading the camp's log book where anglers record their catch, where they caught it and the fly they used. I was surprised to see that a white muddler minnow was the most successful pattern almost every week. I went back a few years in the log book and saw that it was a consistent fish catcher for the camp members. I guess I shouldn't have been surprised. Take a look in many local anglers' fly box and there is a good chance that you will find an assortment of muddler minnows, or its modifications, in a variety of sizes. The muddler minnow, some would say, is the best trout fly ever invented and there are few that would argue with this statement. Famed angling writer the late Joe Brooks was a great fan of the muddler and its greatest promoter. In a 1963 story he wrote for Outdoor Life magazine Brooks gave the history of the fly and its development. Don Gapen tied the first muddler minnow when fishing the Nipigon River in Ontario. He tied the fly in an attempt to imitate a freshwater sculpin. The minnow had a broad,

flat head and a tapered body that he was able to imitate using deer hair combined with a gray squirrel tail and a turkey wing tail.

The muddler minnow imitates wide variety of trout food and that is the key to its effectiveness. The muddler minnow is less well known as an Atlantic salmon fly but it is obviously just as effective on this species.

My first introduction to the white muddler minnow was on the St. Mary's River. When I started salmon fishing there were a number of anglers who were legends on the river and one of them was the late Bill Strople. I had the good fortune to know Bill and he introduced me to the white muddler minnow as a salmon fly. He fished it in a variety of sizes, depending on water conditions, and consistently caught salmon. Bill tied the white muddler in a range of sizes from 16 up to 4/0 and also used the fly for striped bass, sea trout, rainbow and brown trout as well as mackerel. I often jazz up my white muddlers with a silver body and some peacock herl and mallard flank in the wing but the white muddler I saw in New Brunswick was all white except for a red under wing. I am

sure you can include any variation you wish and the fly will still be effective. I hope you have some fun with it.

The White Muddler Minnow

Thread:	White
Tail:	Small section of white calf tail
Body:	White floss or silver tinsel wrapped over 2/3 of hook shank
Wing:	Underwing of red calf tail
Head:	White deer hair spun and trimmed. Clip front to shape and leave a collar of hair at the back

Don MacLean is an outdoor writer, fishing guide and biologist who lives in Nova Scotia. He is the author of Discover Nova Scotia Sportfishing and A Little Thing I Tied Myself- Stories of Atlantic Canadian Fly Tiers. He can be reached at old-trout@seasidehighspeed.com

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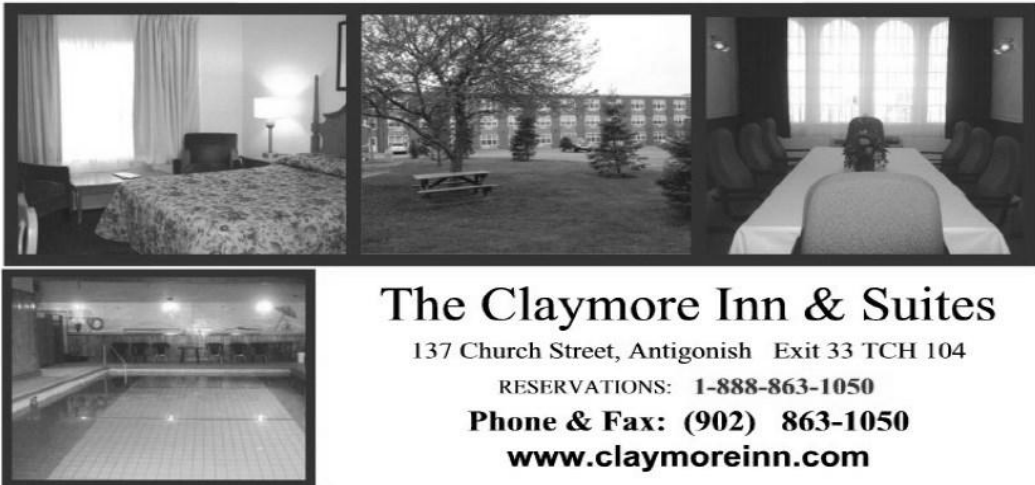

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Submitted by Kenny Silver

In 2013 SMRA used past studies, public consultation, etc. to complete a Salmon Restoration/Recovery Plan. The report concluded that several actions were required including habitat restoration and stock enhancement to help jump start low Atlantic Salmon populations and offset the impact of increasing "at sea" mortality. While low pH is a concern on some tributaries, the affects of past log drives, peak rain, and ice events have caused damage along much of the West Branch and various locations on the East Branch and main stem of the River.

These events have eroded the river banks creating wide shallow flows and multiple channels along many sections of the river. In the summer the shallow nature provides a large surface area that allows the sun to heat the water temperature to levels that make it difficult for juvenile salmon to survive. Not only can the temperature reach lethal levels, large portions of beach are exposed, which often result in the juvenile fish being trapped in small pools as water levels fall and warm.

During the fall, with higher water levels, adult salmon may spawn on these beach areas. In winter, the water freezes resulting in lower flows which can expose the salmon eggs or result in the ice freezing to the bottom along these gravel beaches. Not only can this pose a risk for the salmon eggs deposited in these shallows, during the spring thaws when water levels increase, the ice often floats lifting the gravel with it. This can result in additional erosion and gravel being deposited in areas where other salmon eggs may have been laid.

At about the same time the Department of Fisheries and Oceans prepared a report titled Recovery Potential Assessment for Southern Upland Atlantic Salmon that also identified the need to address the habitat deficiencies. It concluded that if no action was taken there is a seventy-three (73) percent chance salmon will be extinct on the St. Mary's River within fifty years. The report stated by increasing the habitat productivity by twenty (20) percent the probability of extinction would be reduced to twelve (12) percent. The first goal has to be to make this twenty percent

improvement, but the long term goal has to be to further improve the habitat so that there is no chance of extinction. This effort will require significant fund raising and work by our Association. However, the alternative of a St. Mary's River devoid of salmon is not acceptable.

The Association began to address this issue by completing a study funded by the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation identifying the work required to create a narrower deeper channel along the wider shallow sections of the West Branch of the river. An example of the erosion and the affect this has had on the river channel can be seen from the Glennel Bridge where there are many shallow runs and multiple channels. Areas like this need to be addressed so that there is a single narrow channel with deeper runs and pools. The report concluded that the cost to complete the entire West Branch of the River would be more than ten million dollars.

Using this report the St. Mary's River Association began to implement the habitat restoration work along the West Branch of the river in the summer of 2014 with the restoration of 1.4 kilometres of river. The work included a variety of structures designed to use the natural flow of the river to create a narrower channel with the proper combination of pools and riffles. Studies by experts concluded starting on the upper stretches of the river would better manage water flow and ice that would potential damage to future structures constructed further down river.

In May of this year (2015) the area Girl Guides with funding assistance from the TD Friends of the Environment and the Royal Bank Blue Water Fund organized a tree planting along the banks of one of these restoration sites. As someone who has enjoyed the river for many years and worked to restore it, it was very exciting to see the next generation of conservationists being exposed to and taking an interest in the river.

The St. Mary's River Association could not have begun these restoration efforts without the substantial fiscal and planning support of our funding partners -

Continued from Page 28

NSLC/Adopt A Stream, Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation, two Department of Fisheries & Oceans funding programs (Small Craft Harbours and the Recreational Fisheries Conservation Partnership Program), and many hours of volunteer time. Over the last two summers these funding partners have provided over \$400,000. This funding along with many volunteer hours has resulted in over four kilometres of river being restored. However, this is only a small fraction of what is needed to complete the entire sixty plus kilometres of the West Branch of the river.

The work done in the last two years provides a show case of what can and needs to be done to make the river a more productive habitat for juvenile salmon and other native species that rely on the river to survive and thrive. Last fall when volunteers were doing inspections of the restored sections they were elated to see freshly dug salmon redds where salmon deposit their eggs and this summer workers noted juvenile salmon in the pools and riffles created by last year's work.

The St. Mary's River Association must promote this work to show what it has done and seek more funders and sponsors to complete the work along the remainder of the river. Because of the relatively short season where water conditions permit restoration activity and the time needed to raise the amount of money required, it will take many years to complete the entire river.

Another project the SMRA has begun is to enhance salmon stocks by capturing kelt in the spring, having them reconditioned so they spawn a second time. With the assistance of the Department of Fisheries & Oceans ten (3 males and 7 females) kelts were captured in the spring of 2015, reconditioned over the summer, spawned, and their progeny will be released next spring (2016) to boost the juvenile population. The Department of Fisheries is developing the necessary protocol to release future captured and reconditioned kelt so they can spawn in the wild where their reproductive success will be measured.

During the fall of 2015 the SMRA conducted Redd

Counts (locations where salmon deposit their eggs) along sections of the restored river. The spawning activity in these sections was compared to activity in a section of the river where no restoration work is planned for several years. These counts showed that there was over six times more spawning activity in the restored areas than in the control section where no restoration work was done. From this it is clear that spawning salmon prefer the changes to the river resulting from the restoration work. It is hoped that by repeating this study and comparative juvenile counts each year we can show the positive impact that the restoration work is having on salmon productivity.

Please check out our web site

www.stmarysriverassociation.com or visit our

Facebook page at www.facebook.com/StMarysRiverAssociation to learn more about this

work and other things that the Association is doing.



Pictured above is director Kenny Silver in the West Branch locating redds, fall 2015.

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DID YOU KNOW: GEOLOGICAL HISTORY OF THE ST. MARY'S RIVER

Rock formation dates back to 540 million years. Both the East and West branches of the St. Mary's River originate in the Carboniferous Lowlands of the eastern mainland and flow along faults created over 220 million years ago when the "super continent" Pangea broke up. In the middle of the Triassic period, the continental masses began to move apart resulting in this lineal fault system. Two distinct geological faults are the pathways for the St. Mary's River. On the West Branch is the St. Mary's Fault. Many examples of siltstone, shale, dolomite and conglomerate can be seen due to exposed bedrock around Melrose. In the upper reaches near its source, Eden Lake, the East Branch flows through the Chedabucto Fault. Arenite, siltstone and sandstone dating back 365 million years can be seen. The Main Branch lies within the Magna Group-Goldenville Formation and rocks such as greywacke and slate as seen on the river bottom. Now you know!

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SALMON DINNER and AUCTION 2016

Planning for the next fundraising dinner and auction has just begun. With our partners, Antigonish Rivers Association and Nova Scotia Salmon Association, we hope to bring our friends together for a day of fishing, tying, dinner and fantastic auctions and raffles. This event helps raise funds for protecting and preserving our rivers.

Anyone wishing to help out is welcome. If you would like to pre-order tickets or make a donation of cash, auction items or sponsorship, please contact us. While your at it, why not get a group of friends and sponsor a table for 8.

Date: October 15, 2016

Place: MacKay Room, Bloomfield Centre, St. FX University

Cost: \$65.00

This is a GREAT way to support a GREAT cause, enjoy GREAT food and have a GREAT time!

For more information or to purchase tickets contact Joanne at:

stmarysriver@ns.symaptico.ca or call 902-522-2099.

If undelivered return to:

St. Mary's River Association

PO Box 179

Sherbrooke, Nova Scotia, Canada

B0J 3C0



***St. Mary's River Association
Education & Interpretive
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Exhibits related to salmon angling