

Fly of the Month

Snake Fly



Hook: Salt water size 4 –2/0
Thread: To match body color
Tail: Saddle hackle 1 1/2” - 4 1/2” long
Wing: Two sections of marabou tied halfway between the bend and eye
Head: Spun deer hair. Trim flat on the bottom rounding the top.

Comment:

The size of the head controls the action and density of this fly. Also use a smaller hook for better buoyancy.

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Chapter Website: www.squanatissit.org

Upcoming Events

Chapter’s River Cleanup Project

Saturday, October 20th
Meet at the Colombo Area in Pepperell

October Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, October 23rd, Kirt Mayland
“The Future of New England Water: A Glass Half Full”

November Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, November 27th

December Chapter Meeting

Tuesday, December 18th



Trout Unlimited - Our Mission

*To conserve, protect and restore
North America’s coldwater fisheries
and their watersheds.*

Monthly Meeting

The Squan-a-Tissit Chapter of Trout Unlimited holds monthly meetings for chapter members and guests on the fourth Tuesday of the month (Sept. through May) at the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) Hall, Route 113 & Leighton Street, Pepperell, MA. **Meetings will begin at 7:00 p.m.**, however members and guests are encouraged to arrive earlier and participate in informal fly-tying. Bring your own vice and materials.

Directions:

From Rt. 3: Take the Rt. 113 Exit (Tyngsboro, Dunstable) and proceed west on Rt. 113, 6.5 miles, through Dunstable and into Pepperell. The VFW Hall will be located on the left side of Rt. 113, opposite a small center island with a stone monument and three flagpoles.

From Rt. 495: Take the Rt. 119 Exit (Littleton Common) and proceed west on Rt. 119, 9 miles, through Groton and into Pepperell. Turn right onto Rt. 111, and proceed 2.7 miles to a rotary. Turn right onto Rt. 113, and proceed 1.5 miles. The VFW hall will be located on the right side of Rt. 113, opposite a small center island with a stone monument and three flagpoles.

From Rt. 2: Take the Rt. 111 Exit (Ayer, Harvard, Clinton) and proceed north on Rt. 111, approximately 12 miles (total, to the Pepperell rotary), through Ayer and Groton to Pepperell. Route 111 merges with Rt. 119 in Groton. Once in Pepperell, Rt. 111 bears to the right (off of Rt. 119). Turn right onto Rt. 111 and proceed 2.7 miles to a rotary. Turn right onto Rt. 113, and proceed 1.5 miles. The VFW hall will be located on the right side of Rt. 113, opposite a small center island with a stone monument and three flagpoles.

Squan-a-Tissit Chapter of Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 654
Pepperell, MA 01463



Please Mail To:

Squan



-a- Tissit

NEWS

VOLUME 7, ISSUE 7

OCTOBER 11, 2007

The newsletter for the Trout Unlimited chapter that champions sport and conservation on two northeastern Massachusetts trout rivers: The Squannacook & The Nissitissit.

October Meeting

Tuesday the 23rd at 7:00 pm

Featuring

Kirt Mayland

presenting

“New England Water”

Visitors Welcome!

Chapter News

• Fall Stocking

The state has completed its year end stocking in our area. The Squannacook and Nissitissit Rivers were each replenished with over 400 Brown Trout and 450 Rainbow Trout in the 12 to 15 inch range. Take advantage of the beautiful fall season by spending time on our hometown streams!

• Fall River Cleanup

The chapter will hold a workday on Saturday, October 20th at the Colombo Area on Brookline Street in Pepperell. The main activity for the day will be walking the banks of the Nissitissit to remove trash. If enough volunteers arrive, we will send a group to the Squannacook as well. The day will start at 9:00 am. Tom will bring the customary coffee and donuts. Work efforts are expected to last 2 to 3 hours. After helping with the project you may want to take advantage of some wonderful fall fishing with other chapter members.



• Meeting Date Changed

The December member's meeting will be rescheduled to avoid conflict with the holidays. The meeting will take place on the third week of December, on Tuesday the 18th.

Looking for a Few Good Men!

I've had the pleasure of being a part of Trout Unlimited for the better part of 25 years. During that span many people have come and gone having contributed countless hour of their time and efforts toward maintaining our coldwater fisheries. For the past 3 years or so we have been without a president and vice president as well as other director positions. This year is shaping up as a carbon copy with no apparent leadership at the top. Our Board of Directors as a management group have done a tremendous job of holding things together. Elections are upon us as a chapter once again and I am

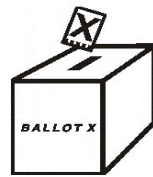
imploring every chapter member to look into their schedules and find some time for active involvement as a member of our Board of Directors. We need new people, new ideas, unique outlooks, and a commitment to continue what has already been established as a marquee chapter of Trout Unlimited. The present board will see some resignations and retirees this fall and we could be facing a void of positions. We are too large of a chapter to allow this to happen. We can't expect the same people to "do it" over and over every year. We need your help and participation. The work load is minimal, the gratification is immense, the fun never stops. Reward yourself and your chapter by coming to the October member's meeting and volunteering for a turn as a board member. The upside is a continuation of our chapter as it exists, the downside is an eventual decline in what we can accomplish. Sacrifice is hard, ask any of us, but in this case please give back to your chapter remembering what the chapter has given to you throughout the years!

October 23rd will mark a significant day in our chapter's history of participation from it's members. Something tells me that you'll show up in full force ready to carry on the tradition of involvement that we are known for as a chapter.

Regards,
Charles W. Shadan
Membership Director

Chapter Elections!

Nominations for chapter officers will be heard at the October meeting. Please make every effort to participate. Any chapter member can run for office or nominate an individual for office. Final elections will be held during the November member's meeting.



The following positions are up for election this year.

Officers:

President
Vice President
Treasurer
Secretary
Membership Chairman

Board of Directors:

3 Director positions (1 yr term)
1 Director position (2 yr term)

October Presentation

Kirt Mayland

"The Future of New England Water: A Glass Half Full"

Kirt Mayland is the Director of the Eastern Water Project for Trout Unlimited. He is also on the board of directors of the Northwest Conservation District and the Sharon Audubon Society, a member of the Fisheries Advisory Council and a participant in the Coverts Forest-Wildlife Conservation Project. The Eastern Water Project is a new Trout Unlimited program focused on improving water diversion and instream flow policy in



the eastern states. The program concentrates on developing and promoting changes to state policy related to instream flow protection, regulation of withdrawals of ground and surface water, and water supply planning.

The New England states historically have been blessed with free-flowing rivers. However, over the past century, changing demographic patterns and antiquated laws and policies have combined to strain the region's water resources. The result is an increasing number of rivers with so little water that they no longer support aquatic life. Some literally run dry during the hot summer months.

Trout Unlimited's Eastern Water Project is modeled on their successful water advocacy efforts in the western states. The project works with communities throughout the region to address a host of water management issues including dry streambeds, water shortages and habitat degradation. Volunteers spend thousands of hours annually engaging in these issues – from working on the

ground to restore streams to advocating for modernized water regulations in state legislatures. Experience shows that existing regional water policy cannot protect our water resources today. Come out to the members meeting and find out what the future holds for New England's water.

Didymo Threat

The following is from the NH Fish and Game website.

New Hampshire anglers and boaters: be on the lookout for a new invader! The aquatic nuisance algae known commonly as "Didymo" or "rock snot" has invaded the northern reaches of the Connecticut



River, marking the first official report of *Didymosphenia geminata* in the northeastern U.S.

This diatom species already affects freshwater rivers and streams in other parts of the U.S., Canada (including Quebec province) and New Zealand.

It is critical for anglers and boaters to be aware that Didymo is on the move and is easily spread by even just one cell of the alga breaking off and drifting downstream in infested reaches. It is also very easily spread by waders, fishing gear and other gear that touches the bottoms of streams in infested areas, so it is essential to check and clean your fishing gear to prevent the spread of Didymo.

More information on Didymo and instructions on how to prevent it's spread are available at www.wildlife.state.nh.us/Fishing/Didymo_invasive.html. Please take the necessary precautions to prevent this devastating invader from getting a foothold in our local streams.

In Praise of Wild Trout:

An Open Letter to the Members of the Squan-a-Tissit Chapter of Trout Unlimited

from Ray Gagnon



"In Wildness is the preservation of the world."

-- Henry David Thoreau

I had driven almost four hours to get here. It was two and a half hours to my log cabin in the Lake's Region of New Hampshire and another hour, at least, to the trailhead. I had hiked in over two miles with a 20-or-so-pound pack on my back, containing lunch and my fishing gear, to get the headwaters of the Happy River. To borrow a line from Ted Williams – the nature writer, not the ball-player – I like to call it the Happy River, because that is not its name.

On my first pass walking up-stream along this headwater I'd thought the little pool was unfishable because of a tree that had fallen across it. On my way back down-stream, though, it became apparent that the tree was absolutely branchless on the upstream side, and that it would be easy to cast a fly to the head of the pool and get an easy, long drift under the tree-trunk, right

down through the middle of the slick.

I yanked out some line and dropped a little caddis right at the top of the crystal sheet of moving water. As the fly approached the spot directly below the tree trunk, I tensed, readying myself for the strike I hoped would come.

I have been a fly-fisher for what is still a relatively short time, especially if compared to some of my fellow Squan-a-Tissit Chapter members. Yet, for some reason I can't really explain, my dissatisfaction with fishing "stocked" rivers seems to be growing faster than that of many of my "brethren," and my desire to fish over wild – I actually think they should be called *real* – fish grows more insistent with every season.

At first, I thought it was the fight. I thought it was the electricity of it all, the speed with which wild fish hit. The intensity with which they battle to escape, to remain free. But I'm less sure that's really it now.

As time goes by, I'm coming to think it's more the "idea" of the thing. In fact, the more I think of it, the more the whole stocking regime seems sillier and sillier to me. On a given day, someone with a tank truck comes by and dumps a netfull of mass-produced fish in your local river or pond. Then you go there and pull them out.

Somehow, there's just no integrity to the whole thing. It's so completely artificial. The fish have nothing to do with the place you catch them in. In fact, if you fish enough streams and ponds in a fairly contiguous area, as I sometimes do in New Hampshire, you have the disappointing experience of pulling out the same, carbon-copy fish no matter where you go that season. After a few outings, you actually get to be an authority on this season's "standard, government-issue fish"! This is exciting? This is sport? I don't think so.

Nowadays, as far as New Hampshire goes, you can even subscribe to an email that tells you what

water-bodies have been stocked and when! Hey, why not take the guess-work and inefficiency completely out of the program? Why not arrange to meet the tank truck at the stream with a 50-gallon drum and just take 'em home?

Tell me: You go out for deer in the fall. Would it be sport to you to get an email from the State, telling you they'd just loosed a whopping herd of farm-raised deer in your local conservation area, and you were free to go in there and "git 'em"? It's "shooting," maybe, but I wouldn't exactly call it "hunting."

Or maybe wing-shooting is your game. If so, would it thrill you to blast away in an aviary? I doubt it. Again, shooting, not hunting.

And admit it: How exciting is it to drag in, like an old boot, your fifth or sixth barely-protesting, washed-out, drab-gray rainbow at Gilman's pool?

In any case, for me, these are the reasons I fish my "home waters" less and less and find myself ranging farther and farther a-field for a more authentic fishing experience. I almost never go to the Nissitissit any more. And I haven't visited the Squan-a-Cook in several seasons.

A "local trip" for me is now the Swift, and even there I find myself gravitating away from the stocked hogs of the "Y-pool" and the "Hatchery Pool" – now *there's* an authentic fishing concept! – and heading down beyond "Cady Lane" where it feels more like a "real river" to me, and where I'm more likely to catch some of the Swift's real brook trout.

But whenever possible, I'm at least as far north as central New Hampshire. And if I can square away some real, as we say, "quality time," I'm even farther up north in New Hampshire, Maine or Vermont. Then, of course, at least once yearly, I try to get out West for even more of "the real thing."

So you're reading this, and I know what you're thinking: "But everybody can't do that! Who does he think he is!? What a snob! Not everyone has a

second home up north. And many of us with more obligations just don't have the time to travel far. Some of us may be further along in years, so hiking in rough country isn't feasible any more. Then, too, many of us have kids. Kids don't want to drive four hours to fish. Sure, we'd like them to be able to fish over wild fish, and so would we, but most, if not all, of our local streams just don't have wild fish in them. And, hey!, get real, Ray, not everyone can afford the time and money to get out West every year or maybe even at all!"

And I say to you, *precisely!* You make my point *pre-cise-ly!* And in reply, I offer you TU's Vision for the future, which is: "to ensure, by the next generation, that robust populations of *native* and *wild* coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy *healthy fisheries in their home waters*" (emphasis supplied). Put another way, what we're all supposed to be doing as TU members is making the sad situation I've been describing go away. What we're all supposed to be doing is making sure that our kids and their kids won't have to work as hard or spend as much to have a real vs. "manufactured" fishing experience. Are we? Are you?

Ours is clearly a very ambitious Vision. There may even be some who doubt its attainability. But TUers involved in the "Back the Brookie" and "Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture" programs are certainly not among them. And we in our Chapter shouldn't be either.

But our Chapter took a vote at our April meeting last spring that makes me wonder if some of us really understand the goals and motives of the organization we belong to and say we support. In case you weren't there, our Chapter voted by an easy margin, to conduct an *additional* stocking of hatchery fish *beyond what the State already puts into the*

Nissitissit River. Not only that, but the motion for the so-called “supplemental stocking” was actually made at the meeting by a member of our Chapter’s Board of Directors – someone whose job it supposedly is to *lead* the Chapter in the right direction!

Now I think I could make a compelling case that, as the TU Chapter that supposedly stewards the health of the Nissitissit, we should long ago have begun to question whether the State’s customary stocking regimen of that river is even desirable or appropriate. But let that go for now. What seems clearly indefensible to me, though, is that our Chapter would initiate – *initiate!* – a move to introduce additional numbers of hatchery fish *beyond* what the State already puts there.

Let me hasten to admit that I do not know that the Nissitissit could be a successful wild fishery. Let me even concede the possibility that the Niss might, in fact, be totally incapable of being a self-sustaining wild fishery. I admit that this could well be true. However, *we do not know this scientifically and factually at present*. But what we *do* know empirically is that tributaries of the Nissitissit *do contain wild brook trout now*. Because some of our own Chapter members have verified their presence there.

We also know scientifically and factually that hatchery fish have undesirable, adverse effects on wild fish populations. (For those of you who are long-term TU members and save past issues of TROUT magazine, I refer you to a comprehensive, two-article series carried in the Summer and Autumn issues of TROUT in 1992. Please note: *this data is almost 15 year old!* Yet we continue to stock unquestioningly!)

Now, consider this. We belong to an organization whose Mission is: “to conserve, protect and restore coldwater fisheries and their watersheds” (emphasis supplied).

My central point is simply this: We do not know, for fact, whether the Nissitissit, *if it were at its healthiest*, could be a self-sustaining wild fishery. But we *do* know its tributaries contain wild fish. And we *do* know that hatchery fish can be harmful to wild fish. Given what we do know, then, until we are sure about the Niss’s potential one way or the other, shouldn’t we *at least* refrain from doing anything that could, in fact, be harmful, and, I would argue, is actually counter to our organization’s Mission and Vision?

OK, I say, you may not want to take on the State to try to reduce or eliminate the introduction of hatchery fish into the Niss – though I think a good case could be made that we should. But until we know more, it should be as clear as day that our Chapter should, *at least*, never originate – *originate!* – a motion to dump even *more* hatchery fish into the river than the State already puts there. In fact, if we were true to what TU stands for, we should line up to a person in *protest* against such an idea!

I urge you, if you haven’t read it already, and maybe even if you have, to go back and read TU President, Charles Gauvin’s message in the Spring, 2007, issue of TROUT magazine. In that message, titled “Since 1959,” Gauvin reminds us that TU was founded back then by seven visionary guys who were tired of catching hatchery-raised fish in their home waters in Michigan. He re-affirms the fact that TU is a “conservation group,” not a “fishing club,” and as such, has always lobbied for “habitat over hatcheries,” confident in the belief that, “if we take care of the fish, the fishing will take care of itself.” Well, sadly, last April, our Chapter took an action worthy of a “fishing club” and completely unworthy of a “conservation group.”

I urge you to consult the Conservation Success

Index (CSI) map on TU’s website that illustrates the traditional range of the Eastern Brook Trout. It not only reflects the current status of Brook Trout across their traditional range. By definition, given our Vision Statement, it also defines the historical range *to which we have committed ourselves to ensure the return of “robust populations” of these iconic fish*.

It is true that this massive effort is still in its early stages. It is undoubtedly also true that all rivers that were once healthy coldwater fisheries will not be able to be “restored.” But the Eastern Brook Trout map, by definition, indicates that TU national is not “giving up” on any rivers, at least not yet. And, at this early stage, without scientific evidence, why should we? In fact, we should be the last to “give up,” *especially* on those rivers we’ve committed to safeguard.

If you are concerned, as I am, about the action taken by our Chapter last April, I’d like to ask you to help ensure that we never do anything like it again. The names, phone numbers and most email addresses of our Chapter Directors are always printed in this Newsletter. Call them. Write them. Tell them you are opposed to the use of Chapter money, contributed for *conservation* purposes, to buy *hatchery* fish. Tell them that before we contribute to detracting from the natural integrity of the Nissitissit River by adding to the foreign hatchery fish already stocked there, you want them to conduct the necessary, scientific due diligence to determine the true habitat potential of the watershed. Tell them you want to support habitat improvement, not hatcheries. Tell them, in other words, that you want us to act like a Chapter of Trout Unlimited and not like a “fishing club.”

As soon as the little caddis drifted beneath the tree trunk, it happened. Or, at least, I assume it happened, because the fly was gone. And there was the faintest hint of a lightning-quick, phantom-like, shadow-motion in the vicinity of the fly just as it

disappeared. You see, it is difficult to be sure you’ve sensed something that is over almost before it happens.

But I was now experiencing irrefutable proof that *something* had happened, because my little, 7 ½ foot, Orvis 4-weight was pulsating as it bent double, once – twice – three times before I brought the 5 or 6-inch brook trout to hand.

He was a magnificent little specimen. Most notable to me at first glance was the fact that in places where brook trout usually show an orange blush – stomach, fins, etc. – he was more of a beautiful, pale, salmon pink. Since the rock bed of this little stream was composed of stones of the lightest yellow color, I speculated that thousands of years of natural selection had probably brought about this more favorable coloring to this stream’s trout.

Noticeable, too, was his form. His fins were absolutely perfect, undamaged and glistening. No blemishes, wear marks or fraying of any kind. He was one of the loveliest fish I’d ever caught. It occurred to me at that moment that, as much work as it had been to find, stalk and catch him, I would take *one* of him to *twenty* larger, planted, hatchery fish dumped in any of the “stocked” waters closer to home. Sad, I thought, to have to come all this distance to have this kind of experience, but if this is what it took, this is what I would continue to do for as long as I had to. For as long as I could.

Because he was the real thing. He had been born in this stream and had grown here into the truly wild thing that he was. And I had experienced that wildness first hand. Just perhaps, his lineage might be traceable back to the recession of the glaciers. He was part of the integrity of this river system and, by comparison with his tank-raised, mass-produced counterparts, he was about as distant and different a creature – stealing a phrase from Mark Twain – as lightening is from the lightening bug.