

Backcasts

Newsletter of the
North Eastern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers

President's Corner

Summer 2007



This past year has been full of promise and progress for NEC. Our work with the Healing Waters Program serving wounded veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and our increased emphasis upon introducing youngsters to the joys of fly fishing through our work with the boy scouts promise to become vital components of NEC's ongoing mission. Richard Diamond, NEC Director, has become very involved with the Healing Waters Program and is leading NEC's efforts in this area. Our strong presence at the fly fishing shows, our tying and casting classes at the same shows and at the Boy Scout

Camporees are indicators of the great progress we are making in bringing FFF's commitment to Conserving, Restoring and Educating through Fly Fishing to both the general public and the fly fishing fraternity. I am also delighted by NEC's progress in moving to a full electronic communication system. While progress has been slower than planned, we have a new web site provider and will be greatly updating our site in the next few months. Rodney Priddle, VP of Membership and NEC Treasurer, became frustrated with working with outside web designers, studied the skill on his own and has taken over as web master for the time being. We are in the midst of obtaining updated email addresses for all 900+ NEC members and will shortly begin sending regular updates on NEC activities to all members.

*"If you want to
be part of
NEC's
activities let me
know"*



I returned home from the FFF Conclave and National Board of Directors Meeting delighted with the plans being outlined to make FFF a stronger force in the world of fly fishing. FFF has hired System Professional Corporation to redesign the FFF web site. Plans call for making the web site a "must visit" source of fly fishing, education and conservation information. While several months away from completion, the new web site will provide links and data on all aspects of FFF's mission of "conserving, restoring and educating through fly fishing". To further reach out to its membership and the fly fishing fraternity, FFF is beginning the process of planning for hosting four regional events in addition to the national conclave. The Board of Directors is also encouraging each of the 15 Regional FFF Councils to consider promoting an event to help in its efforts to introduce more individuals to the benefits of fly fishing.

Additional outreach efforts by FFF have brought both Cabelas and Bass Pro Shops into the FFF fold as Retail Members. An arrangement is in place whereby FFF, through its Councils, will be the exclusive provider of fly fishing instruction at all of their stores in the USA and Canada. Cabelas has five stores planned or in construction in the NEC region. Bass Pro has several up and running and more in the planning stage.

FFF and NEC are on the move. If you want to be a part of NEC's activities let me know. Send me an email at fordr@hotmail.com

Bob Ford, NEC President

NEC and FFF National Conservation Committee Fund First Ever Science Grant for Research of Fish Behavioral Studies

This spring the NEC and the National FFF National Conservation Board agreed to fund one of the first ever science grants to help fund basic scientific research. This process began last fall when I met Dr. James Liao. Dr. Liao was introduced to me by Dr. Ed Brothers, who once served as a Professor of Ichthyology (fish biologist) at Cornell University in Ithaca, NY. Dr. Liao presented his Ph.D. research from his dissertation he wrote while attending Harvard University at a local fishing club meeting in Ithaca, NY. His initial research was a study of hydraulics and fish behavior. For several years, Dr. Liao studied fish behavior by watching fish move and how they responded to various geometric objects placed in the flow.

He used sensors attached to live fish to measure the muscle activity of their behavior. He eventually was able to show that fish could shut down most of their muscles and "surf" on eddies created by objects in the flow.

I met with Dr. Liao earlier this spring and he told me about the next step in his research: to understand the neurobiology of how fish used hair cells on the surface of their skin to detect eddies. His eventual goal is to understand how fish can exploit turbulent flows and how to recreate the hydrodynamics of favorable flow environments for stream restoration purposes. Dr. Liao's research combines neurobiology, hydrodynamics and biology with strong implications for anyone interested in stream restoration and conservation habitat work.

The NEC and FFF grants enabled Dr. Liao to purchase a specialized underwater camera to continue his research while at Cornell University. By funding his research, FFF and NEC are participating in leading edge scientific research that will provide all sorts of exciting outcomes for years to come. When Dr. Liao completes his research, he will be preparing a paper for publication in the Fly Fisher (the FFF National magazine) and we hope to have him as a guest speaker at one of the National FFF Conclaves.

By Mike Hogue, NEC Director and VP Conservation

"strong implications for anyone interested in stream restoration"

Have You Taken the Clean Angling Pledge?

"I pledge to inspect, clean and dry my gear. I am committed to protecting our fisheries resources from invasive species."

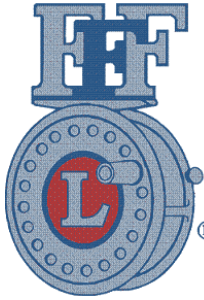
The Federation of Fly Fishers has joined with a number of national partners (<http://cleanangling.org/partners.php>) to announce a new program (<http://cleanangling.org>) that targets anglers and boaters in the prevention of invasive species spread. The Clean Angling Pledge program asks you to take the following steps:

- Inspect your gear for any plants or dirt.
- Clean your gear with clean water.
- Thoroughly dry your gear.
- Never transport any fish, plants or animals from one body of water to another.
- Tell others to do the same!



The pledge is simple and if we all follow the guidelines, we will become participants in this struggle to keep our waters free of invasives. Please join the Federation of Fly Fishers and countless dedicated anglers in the fight against invasives by taking the Clean Angling Pledge today. You can take the pledge by visiting cleanangling.org. If you are interested in becoming an organizational partner, contact the Federation of Fly Fishers at convserve@fedflyfishers.org or 406.222.9369 ext. 102.

FFF Life Membership Was Never Easier



Many of us want to show our support for FFF and wear the Life Member Patch but when it comes time to write the check, we hesitate. Now is the perfect time to become a FFF life member. The Federation is running a special promotion between July 1, 2007 and December 31, 2007. Join or upgrade your membership to Life Member status for \$750 and you will receive your choice of a **Sage 590-4 Z-AXIS Series Rod in 5 wt or a Sage 890-4 XI2 8 wt rod**. Both of these rods retail in excess of \$600.00. A new life member gets a package valued in excess of \$1150 for a \$750 investment. Not a bad way to show your support and add a piece of quality equipment to your fly rod arsenal. Life membership payment plans to do qualify for this promotion. Contact FFF at fffoffice@fedflyfishers.org

Rod Building Kits Available for Charter and Affiliate Clubs



Here is another reason for your club to affiliate with FFF. The Federation will make fly rod building kits available to FFF Charter Clubs and Affiliate Clubs. These kits will be made available for fly rod building classes. They are not for personal use, or for club fundraisers. Clubs may order up to 12 kits. There is no charge for the kits for FFF Charter Clubs, except for shipping and handling. FFF Affiliate Clubs will be charged \$10 per rod, plus shipping.

A flat fee schedule for S&H is as follows: 1-4 kits \$20, 5-8 kits \$25, 8-12 kits \$30.

Kits Include: Graphite fly rod blank - Set of snake guides - Reel Seat - Tip Top - Hook Keeper - Grip

To obtain fly rod building kits FFF clubs with must submit a letter of request on club letterhead containing the following information: FFF club membership number - Roster of student names participating in the class - Date(s) of the class - FFF club contact information including: phone number, street address, and email address.

Upon receiving the above information an order form will be sent out via email. The fly rod kits will be sent when payment is received. Contact Matt Wilhelm for the order form and additional information: educate@fedflyfishers.org

NEC and Project Healing Waters

Many of you have heard about or asked about Project Healing Waters. NEC members have been involved in this program to aid in the rehabilitation of our veterans who have been wounded in the Iraq and Afghanistan Wars. NEC Director Richard Diamond been working to organize the program in the New England area. In addition, NEC Director Michael Gallart has worked through his TU Club to bring the program to New Jersey. Other NEC members are very involved in this program. A future issue of BackCasts will have a feature on NEC and Project Healing Waters. Until than ----



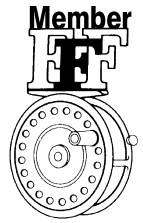
Want to Know More About Project Healing Waters?

Last fall the Retirement Living Network did a program on Ed Nicholson and John W. Colburn since they are retired and working with the wounded at Walter Reed. They did a day and a half of taping and reduced that to a 19 minute program. This video will give you a good idea of what Project Healing Waters is all about. Check it out at

<http://www.rl.tv/RetirementLivingTV/OurShows/Showclipshome tabid/374channel/1/scid/814/Default.aspx>

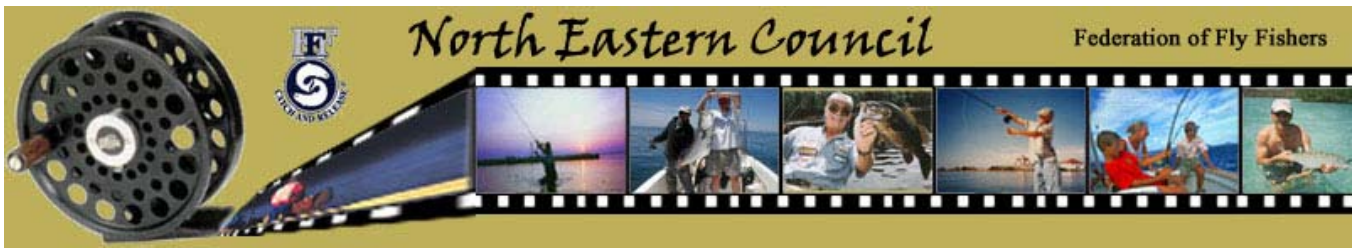
Special Membership Opportunity for Affiliated Club Members

Know someone in an affiliated club who is not a member of FFF? Now is the perfect time to recruit that affiliated club member to the federation. As all of you are aware, we need to increase our members to support the Federation's growing Conservation and Educational programs.

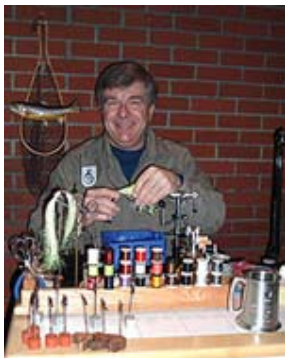


One group that represents real potential is the members of our affiliated clubs who are not FFF members. (see affiliated club list at www.fffneec.org/clubs.html) Here is a great opportunity for those individuals to become Federators. From July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007 affiliated club members may join the Federation at the special discounted price of \$15.00 for a regular one year individual membership. Note: this is not for FFF membership renewals. Membership form must be signed by the club president to certify that the applicant is a member of the affiliate club. For more information on this promotion contact NEC Membership Chairman, Rodney Priddle at RPRIDDLE@nycap.rr.com

A Note from Our Webmaster Rodney Priddle



That is our web site masthead posted above and I am happy to announce that it has a new home. The address is still the same, www.fffneec.org When you visit it, you will see that it looks pretty much like the old one, with the following changes:



- The old e-mail program is gone. To help fight spam, you now have to use our secure form to send us an email.
- The links page now has fishing info for every US State and Canadian Province, with an emphasis on the States and Provinces within the North Eastern Council territory.
- We eliminated the "NEC Community" section which was a bulletin board that was under used.

Eliminating the "Community" page required us to redesign our events/calendar section. **The expanded events page now allows NEC Charter and Affiliated Clubs to have their events posted on the NEC web page. All your club needs to do, is send an email with the details to the webmaster.**

We also need to get the site populated with material our members Want and or Need. Please visit the site, give it a look see and if you have a suggestion, send the webmaster an email with your comments. We are still populating some of the sections, but that too will come in time.

PS: Please take it easy on me!!! I am not trained in web page design. My primary goal was to get the NEC web page up and running and a secondary goal of being replaced!!!! If you are interested or know of fellow fly fisher who wants to be our webmaster, drop me and email. RPRIDDLE@nycap.rr.com

NEC Has Been Active Spreading the Word

The North Eastern Council continues to carry the FFF message of Conserving, Restoring and Educating Through Fly Fishing to the general public, youth groups and, of course, the fly fishing fraternity. NEC members contributed an enormous amount of time staffing the NEC booth at the major north east shows and teaching fly tying and fly casting to Scouts.

NEC participation was prominent at the following shows with members manning the NEC booth or helping with demonstrations and classes.

International Fly Tying Symposium – Somerset, NJ

Fly Fishing Show – Marlboro, MA

Fly Fishing Show – Somerset, NJ

LL Bean Show – Freeport, ME

Saltwater Edge Show – Newport, RI

Bears Den Show – Taunton, MA

Kittery Trading Post Show, Kittery, ME

Kennebec Valley Show, ME

Rangeley Region Guide Association Event, ME



The past year saw an increase in NEC's work with Boy Scouts. Introducing young people to the joys of fly fishing and related activities is an ongoing effort of NEC's commitment to education. NEC members offered free fly



tying lessons to Boy Scouts at the Somerset and Marlboro Fly Tying Shows. NEC members who are FFF Certified Casters taught fly casting at two huge scout Camporees. The first hosted by the US Military Academy at West Point and the second by the Boston Minuteman Council at Barnstead, NH. All of these events were highly successful and NEC is hoping to add at least one more big camporee to the list this fall.

Staffing these events and conducting classes happens only because NEC members generously donate their time, skills and knowledge. If you want to be part of NEC's efforts to spread the

FFF mission, step forward and volunteer. If you know of another opportunity for NEC member involvement, suggest it. Contact NEC President, Bob Ford at fordrr@hotmail.com with offers to help and with ideas for NEC involvement

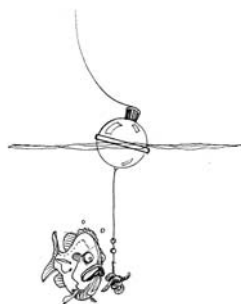
"If I'm not going to catch anything, than I'd rather not catch anything on flies" - Bob Lawless



Swan Song on the Big Horn

Since the opening of the Bighorn River to public fishing, my friend Jim Keech and I have made annual trips to visit our friend, Art Pitts, who lives in Harden, and we fished the fabulous Bighorn River. Being relative conservatives, we usually fished the Afterby, Three Mile and the Thirteen Mile access sites and fished as wade fishers, a process which becomes more difficult as advancing age takes over. This year we parted ways and Jim fished with his brother two weeks before my son and I planned to fish with the same guide, who just happened to be Art Pitts son-in-law. Consequently, Keech called me before I made the venture and advised me of his brother and him catching 60 or more big trout per day, many of which were in the twenty inch category. His final advice to me was, "do it the way the guide tells you to". Little did I realize the ignominy of that advice.

My son and I managed to fish for three hours on the evening of our arrival, and Brad caught five fish on a dry fly at St. Xavier Bridge, one a large rainbow, so as far as I was concerned the trip was a success: he had caught a runner... Who could ask for anything more? The next day we floated with our guide, Todd Peterson, and learned the new technique...bobber fishing with a size two English bait hooks tied with red copper wire, and did we ever catch fish. The number sixty may sound like an exaggeration, but it probably is a conservative number. Many were over twenty inches, an all were the most beautiful wild fish the river has to offer. In all those previous years we had never experienced such a super event. In fact you might call it paradise regained, but that it surely isn't. Any respectable fly fisher has to be dismayed at bobber fishing. All are equal, the neophyte and the old pro, all catch fish, and every guide on the river has adopted the same technique. Call it what you will but it surely isn't fly fishing, but it was fun while it lasted.



"Call it what you will but it surely isn't fly fishing, but it was fun" while it lasted"

As an octogenarian I have done it all, and that is the end of that.

Al Himmel

(editor's note - Al Himmel sent this story to me when he heard that I had taken over as editor of BackCasts. Al is well know in fly fishing circles for his wit and willingness to share)

Call for Articles and Information

NEC is embarking on a new era of electronic communication. More frequent notices, updated web site and, hopefully a timely and informative newsletter. Our plans are a bold part of NEC's efforts to better serve individual and club members. All of us who work on these projects are volunteers who have a commitment to FFF's dedication to the betterment of the sport of fly fishing through conservation and education. But, we need your help. Have a great idea for an article? Have a special fly to share? Want other fly fishers to know about you or your club's activities? What ever the topic, if you want it to be considered for a special announcement to all NEC members or included in the next issue of BackCasts, send a note to Paul Metzger, BackCasts Editor at flytyer07950@verizon.net

"Flyfishing is like sex, everyone thinks there is more than there is, and that everyone else is getting more than their share." –Henry Kanemotto

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