



New Life in the Stream

Like all living things, organizations follow cycles of growth, dormancy and renewal. Our local chapter of Trout Unlimited has entered an exciting “renewal” phase. Bearing a new, more geographically-accurate name while retaining its old familiar initials, CVTU is emerging once more, restocked with new ideas, new energy and, importantly, new volunteers.

At a decisive meeting last spring, an impressive number of “new” folks showed up and stepped up. Some had been members on paper, paying dues to the national Trout Unlimited organization but only casually aware of the local chapter. Others had been quietly supportive but generally inactive, as is the case in all sorts of community organizations. What matters most is that people wanted to do things together, and were willing to pitch in to make them happen.



Family Day
photo by Janie McKenzie

Since then, your local TU chapter has pitched in to plant trees along Lewis Creek. And on a warm late-summer weekend, a fun Family Day combined food, demonstrations and fellowship. A few weeks later, a dozen or so CVTU people gathered to fish at the Salmon Hole. A mid-October get-together featured fishing in the Browns River followed by pot-luck snacks.



Fishing at the Salmon Hole
photo by Dave Barch

As the weather turns colder and the streams become a bit less inviting, CVTU is laying on a series of indoor winter and early spring activities, including fly-tying sessions and outstanding guest speakers. Watch this space – and follow us on Facebook - for details!

Stream Lines Returns

After a few seasons lurking beneath the surface of the pandemic and under shifting banks of available resources, your TU newsletter returns. We’ve kept the name *Stream Lines*, even as our chapter of TU has changed its official name. We’ll try to keep you up to date on activities, alert you to upcoming events, and highlight ways that you can help out.

A good newsletter needs *news*, and we want *yours*! Share a memorable adventure, a lucky discovery, or an important moment with your fellow chapter members. Got pictures? Send them along! Have an idea for a *Stream Lines* article? We’d love to hear it.

In 2021, *Stream Lines* shifted to electronic publication, reflecting both a conservation spirit and the soaring costs of printing and mailing. Going forward, the newsletter will be distributed primarily in electronic form. Active members who are “off the grid” can request a paper copy of *Stream Lines*. Contact CVTU Secretary Eileen Worcester (802-488-4213 - seworchester@msn.com.)

- Rob Brown, *Stream Lines* editor
rob.brown51@gmail.com

Mark Your Calendar!

November 14 6:30 PM – CVTU Chapter meeting, South Burlington Library. Guest Speaker: Andrea Morgante, Lewis Creek Association

December 12 6:30 PM - CVTU Chapter meeting, South Burlington Library. Guest Speakers: Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Chris Herrick

January 14 2:30 PM (Beginners) 4:00 PM (Next Level) – Fly tying, with Jamie Eisenberg, United Church in Underhill

January, February 2024 – CVTU Chapter meetings, guest speakers TBA

CVTU Activities

Conservation at Lewis Creek

Last spring CVTU continued to work with the Lewis Creek Association on the Hinsdale tree planting project. The project aims to restore a riparian area along Lewis Creek, and to help connect two spawning habitats for steelhead. Volunteers counted and installed protective tubing on saplings planted by CVTU last fall. The trees planted a year ago showed an over-winter survival rate of 80%, with some areas reaching 95%. What’s more, the young trees have not been affected by this summer’s flooding.



CVTU members at work

This project was originally identified by a CVTU member, and is the result of the chapter’s partnering with the Lewis Creek Association and the Vermont Rivers Conservancy.

Lewis Creek Association President and founder Andrea Morgante will be the featured speaker at the upcoming November meeting of CVTU. Members will hear about the Association’s work to preserve and protect this important Lake Champlain tributary, from its headwaters in Starksboro to its mouth near Ferrisburgh.

TIC – Trout in the Classroom

Trout in the Classroom – TIC for short - is our chapter’s largest program, one which we’ve continuously supported for twenty years. Trout in the Classroom is an environmental educational program in which students raise brook trout fingerlings from eggs, before releasing them into a state-approved stream. Sometimes we provide related advice and instruction, too. CVTU serves participating schools in Addison, Chittenden and Franklin Counties, and the list of classrooms that *want* TIC is growing. We need members’ help to make it happen.

The CVTU TIC team is looking for volunteers to help bring this important educational outreach program to schools in our chapter’s counties, whether it’s setting up and helping teachers maintain the classroom hatcheries, or just being a “trout chauffeur” - helping to ferry eggs to each school. Experience isn’t necessary – just a willingness to pitch in. If you missed out on the TIC training workshop, you can still get involved.

Please text or call:

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- Ed Collins -- 802 338-8675 coll158@comcast.net

President’s Message

Welcome back to the first post-Covid edition of the Champlain Valley Trout Unlimited Newsletter, “Stream Lines,” and welcome also to our first year of renewed in-person chapter meetings. We are very pleased to be back!

The Board of Directors has been working hard planning this year’s activities. We have a group of interesting and informative speakers planned for our winter meetings. Trout in the Classroom will once again be a big part of our education program. There are several conservation projects underway at various locations (Lewis Creek and Smuggs.) Several “Meet Up” activities have already taken place and more are planned. Stay tuned for details on all of these activities, as well as fun spring fund-raising events.

The Board of Directors has also undergone some changes. There have been some “comings” and some “goings”: new members joining the Board are Dave Barch, Jamie Eisenberg, Andrew McCane, Aaron Todd, Catherine Todd, and Eileen Worcester. We are very thankful for their willingness to join the Board of Directors! We are especially thankful that our Treasurer, Nicole Paquette, will continue to be active on the Board.

Leaving the Board are Larry Bruce, Janie McKenzie, and Barry Parker. We are extremely grateful for all of the contributions they have made to our chapter. Tight lines!!!

Ed Collins, President

Your CVTU Board of Directors	
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Have an idea? Got a suggestion? Reach out to your CVTU board members - your Champlain Valley TU chapter is only as active as you!

October Get-together

The fish may not have been biting, but there were plenty of nibbles for fishers, family and friends a few weeks ago, as CVTU celebrated October and fall fishing with a get-together at Mills Riverside Park in Jericho.



Advised by guide and CVTU Board member Jamie Eisenberg, folks spread out along the Browns River from the park upstream toward Underhill, trying to entice fall-sluggish brook trout. Returning from the stream, the group gathered in the park’s picnic pavilion for pot-luck snacks and a few fish stories: no trout in the net, but a few strikes and a momentary hookup was about all that was reported. Pot-luck fare ranged from chili and sandwiches to Dick Leyden’s amazing fall raspberries.

What seemed most noteworthy of all was the joining of old hands and new faces, about evenly distributed among the 20 or more people who attended. Such a meeting of longtime members and new people testifies to the rich and robust history of TU Chapter 138 along with the promising infusion of new energy to keep the organization flowing. CVTU members were joined at the event by a contingent from the Vermont Fly Gals group, a welcome reminder of the web of friendly alliances that can form beside the stream.



Special thanks go to Aaron and Catherine Todd, and to Jamie Eisenberg for organizing and overseeing this year’s fall gathering. One common reaction to this event was “Let’s do this again - but maybe when the fish are biting!”



Browns River - October '23

Remember, if you have feedback on this or any other CVTU event, or if you have an idea for a future activity, reach out to any CVTU board member!

Photos by Sharon Brown

Fly Tying

Jamie Eisenberg will lead a fly tying course for CVTU and VT Fly Gals, beginning in January at the United Church of Underhill, off Park Street. The course begins on Sunday January 14 and continues for 10 weeks. There will be a Beginners class from 2:00-3:30 PM and a “Next Level” (advanced skills) group from 4:00-5:30 PM. Tools, vises and materials will be provided, but feel free to bring your own. Participants keep flies tied during the session. Classes are limited to 12 participants. Cost is \$50 for each course, or \$5 per session. Sign up in advance by contacting eisenberg.jamie@gmail.com.

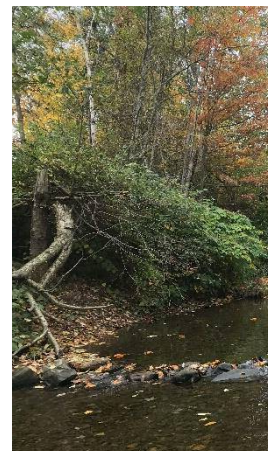
Random Notes: The Grawlix Tree

This is for everyone who has snagged a branch, hooked a root, lost a leader and bid goodbye to a pet fly, thanks to a streamside tree that you wish Nature had put somewhere else – *anywhere* else. If you’ve searched for just the *right* word for such a tree, you’re in luck. There is one.

Pro-ranked crossword puzzlers (and word-nerdy editors) know that a “*gawlix*” is a string of non-alphanumeric characters, sometimes used to represent strong language - %@&#!!!.

Trout fishers know that our favorite streams are sometimes bounded with Grawlix (%@&#!!!) Trees. Trout love to hold where they overhang the bank or have fallen into the water. The trees hold their turf on the stream bank, eagerly waiting to inhale incautious casts and unsuspecting tackle.

Despite their appetite for favorite flies and leaders, though, Grawlix Trees improve more than our vocabulary. Overhanging trees provide shade and cover. Where they’ve fallen, their branches and roots improve habitat and biodiversity while contributing to the stream bank’s stability. Go ahead and snarl at snags, but remember that the Grawlix Tree is, in its own way, a good thing. It only takes a few minutes to tie a fly - but it takes years to grow a tree!



A typical specimen of Grawlix Americanus, aka the %@&#! Tree

The Winter Angle

Vermont teases us. Many of our favorite trout streams remain open to catch-and-release fly fishing year round, even as conditions try to persuade us otherwise. For those willing to brave the elements, winter fishing can be challenging fun.

Even when partially covered with ice, streams usually remain above freezing, and they harbor both fish and the stuff they like to eat. Trout will often hunker down in deeper pools where there's plenty of cover. Winter streams are smaller, thanks to ice that locks up runoff. "Anchor" ice that freezes all the way to the bottom also reduces the amount of available room for fish, and so you may find them gathered up in hospitable spots.

A cold-blooded creature, a trout's metabolism slows in icy winter water. Fish will seek places where they don't have to expend much energy to hold against the current. Feeding becomes less important than safety from predators, and trout may not be as quick to grab a snack.

Just a bit of warmth, whether it comes from a mild spell or flow from a hidden spring, can change things. Trout will grow more interested in food when the water temperature gets above 45, and a convincing stonefly or midge nymph, a scud or worm, or some other nibbly morsel can prove tempting.



Battenkill in winter
(Wikimedia archive)

Meeting the challenges of winter trout fishing generally calls for preparation and an abundance of common sense. Go with a buddy.

Dress in layers, make sure that whatever is supposed to be waterproof is waterproof, and bring

along a wading staff or ski pole. If you don't *have* to wade, don't – that way you won't risk trampling redds. Vermont streams are open for catch-and-release winter fishing, except where they aren't. If you're not sure, check the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website.

Of course if braving the elements in search of sleepy trout doesn't appeal *that* much, there's plenty to keep you focused. If you tie your own, there's always a new irresistible bug to work on, to say nothing of replacements for all the flies you broke off and left behind. And of course there are membership meetings and social events sponsored by your CVTU chapter.

Featured Fly

By Jamie Eisenberg

I was introduced to the Picket Pin wet fly in my first fly tying class at the Classic Outfitters in 1993 (or thereabouts). The shop was overlooking the Winooski River in the old Champlain Mill building, stocked to the rafters with rods, reels, gear, fly tying materials and every gadget you could ever need. It was a great place to shop and an even better place to get a tip or two from the experts that ran the shop.

The Picket Pin has become one of my most trusted "confidence flies," especially for brook trout. Much like the venerable Woolly Bugger, it can be fished in a variety of ways - dead drifted, swung in the current, dangled or stripped. It is the fly I use when nothing else has worked and it will often get a tug, I just let it drift, let the line straighten out and then "wham!" - the fish sets the hook and all I need to do is hang on.

I was once asked by a new angler why this is one of my favorite flies. The answer was simple, it catches a lot of fish!

NAME:	PICKET PIN
HOOK:	2X LONG NYMPH #8 - 12
BEAD:	OPTIONAL
THREAD:	BLACK OR BROWN 8/0 or 70d
TAIL:	STIFF BROWN HACKLE OR COQ DE LEON
RIB:	COPPER WIRE
BODY:	PEACOCK HERL OR DUBBING
	BROWN HACKLE
WING:	GRAY SQUIRREL
THORAX:	PEACOCK HERL



Calling all CVTU members!

Stream Lines is **your** newsletter, connecting members with the Chapter **and each other**. Please consider sharing your know-how, insight, wisdom or wit by contributing to the next Stream Lines.

Do you tie your flies? Think about sending a picture and a recipe for a favorite pattern. We'd love to make it our next Featured Fly.

Both complete articles and rough-sketch ideas are welcome. Gentle editing help is available for "writing-hesitant" contributors!

Rob Brown, Stream Lines editor
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