

Trout Unlimited Canada



Northern Lights Fly Fishers

2019 YEAR IN REVIEW

Our 41st year meeting schedule stayed much the same as in previous years but the content was perhaps more eclectic than usual. We started off with the resurrection of a long time tradition, the Iron Fly Tyer Challenge, which incorporated a surprise material not usually associated with the art of tying. The trophy, which had to be recovered from a previous winner now living in Nova Scotia, was awarded to Stan Barron. In May we had another challenge, 'Tying the perfect Humpy', but this time made Stan the judge in order to give other tyers a fighting chance. It was close, but Michael Dell finally prevailed.



Through the year a number of members made presentations: Dave Parker on 'matching the hatch'; Dennis Southwick demonstrating stonefly patterns in March and the Vampire Leech, Rainbow Emerger and his own 'dennisized' backswimmer pattern in November; Ross Chow on saltwater fishing; Jim O'Neil and Ken Monk with a progress report on the upper Pembina Arctic grayling project; Michael Dell on one material flies and again in October on tying the blue winged olive; Rob Hinchcliffe with some great photos of his trek across Mount Edziza, and Ken Monk and Emmerson Dober from our sister club, The Northern Lights Bait Fishers, on fishing the North Saskatchewan River.

We held a number of Roundtables this year in what turned out to be a very successful endeavour to share some of the collective expertise and knowledge of our members. Topics included; fishing locations; fly lines; leaders and tippets; tying with foam; what to take/wear when stream fishing; post summer trip info

sharing; cleaning and regreasing different types of fly reels. The collective wisdom turned out to be immense.

Guest speakers also added greatly to the variety: Bruce Dancik shared photos and stories from his fishing trips to Patagonia; Peter Crowe-Swords, president of the Bow River Trout Foundation, came up from Calgary to provide an update on plans for that fishery; Billie Mulholland, author of 'Living in the Shed' talked about the work of the North Saskatchewan Watershed Alliance; Wayne Oakes, avid birdwatcher and photographer, presented information on the 95 different species of birds he'd found in Whitemud Ravine, and Meghan Jacklin of the Edmonton and Area Land Trust, talked about that organization and also about native pollinators and their importance.

This year also saw us hold a very successful chironomid fly swap that saw the creation of a few new patterns along with the classics.

We held our usual activities starting with our AGM in January at which this year's executive were elected, all by acclamation, and a revised Constitution, reflecting changes necessitated by the new Charter with Trout Unlimited Canada, was adopted. In January we also held out annual seminar, this year featuring Fred Noddin on fishing techniques in different seasons of the year and some proven ways to catch grayling, Nick Sliwkanich on tying and fishing pike flies and our own Barry White on finding fish in flowing waters plus some tips on improving your casting. Our fly tying booth at the Boat and Sportsmen's Show in March saw over 400 (mostly kids) tie a woolly bugger. We also taught flytying at Cabelas north and south and at a few schools, helped out at ACA's Kids Can Catch events and an introduction to fishing session for new Canadians. A large turn-out for the Muir Lake clean up and fish made the work load lighter this year.



The annual conclave was held in August on the North Ram and other group trips took place on the North Saskatchewan, at Telegraph Pond and the Freeman River.

With funding again from the Alberta Conservation Association we were able to continue our work on gathering data on the Arctic Grayling population, or what remains of it, in the upper Pembina River system. Where before there were populations in all ten tributary streams they now only exist in Dismal and Rat Creeks. Temperature probes were installed along with trail cameras and Ken Monk managed some more videography of the area looking for areas in need of bank stabilization etc. Some of this work was featured on an episode of 'Lets Go Outdoors' by Michael Short <https://letsgooutdoors.ca/blogs/item/274-citizen-science-plays-role-in-conserving-water-resources> and on CHED radio's Ryan Jespersen Show. ACA funding also enabled us to stock Beaumont Pond (now known as Don Sparrow Lake) with rainbow and brown trout and to create and erect educational signage on identifying each species of stocked trout, and on responsible angling. We also arranged for signage from Alberta Environment on the illegality of dumping fish and aquarium contents to be installed at the lake and at all stormwater ponds in Beaumont. It is expected that a presentation made by the Chapter to Beaumont Council on the benefits of recreational angling will result in Beaumont becoming a Partner in Conservation with ACA in early 2020.



We were active again in advocacy with representation on the Fisheries Advisory Committee to Alberta Environment and Parks, providing input to the Environmental Appeal Board on proposed gravel mining activities on the Freeman River, and working with a number of other organizations and members of the angling public in opposition to Border Paving's interest in wet mining for gravel at the headwaters of Stauffer Creek.

Once again our November Fundraising Dinner Auction was a fun evening and a great success. We realized sufficient funds to manage our regular operating expenses – hall rental, storage, insurance, etc. – for another year plus some for other projects that we have started and that will continue into 2020:

- An analysis of the DNA of Artic Grayling in the upper Pembina compared to that of the species further north in Alberta
- Replacement of the Welcome sign, two of the Educational signs, two Hall of Fame signs and the addition of two more Hall of Fame signs at Muir Lake (in conjunction with the Edmonton Trout Fishing Club and Edmonton Old Timers Fishing Club)
- The MacKenzie Creek project in conjunction with TUC et al to help protect a vital bulltrout spawning area. <https://letsgooutdoors.ca/blogs/item/279-mackenzie-creek-a-model-in-conservation-cooperation>

In retrospect we achieved a great deal towards our Aims and Objectives thanks to the volunteer work and willingness to share of our members. Our main challenge going forward is largely related to attracting more anglers to join with us in achieving our goals, in contributing to the collective wisdom of the Chapter and sharing in the fishing and the fun.

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