

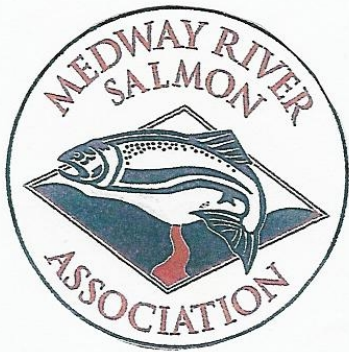
## Medway River Blues

With Halloween comes the last day of the salmon angling season in Nova Scotia. On October 31<sup>st</sup> salmon rivers in Cape Breton and northern parts of the province close down for another year. We will have to wait for the official results but from informed sources it was another successful year despite some challenging water conditions at various times of the angling season.

The Atlantic Salmon Federation reported that the returns to the majority of rivers in the Atlantic Provinces were up over the past number of years. We will have to wait for a report from Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) as to the number of salmon that passed through the Morgan Falls counting station on the LaHave River. These numbers determine the fishery on the LaHave ie retention or hook & release. As well, it determines what happens on the Medway and other southern rivers.

The conservation target of 1.96 million eggs above Morgan Falls, or 1,320 fish, is the determining factor. The count as of July 6, 2008 was 509 fish. This was made up of 92 salmon and 417 grilse. Using past data DFO is projecting a 90 % confidence range or a total of 904 fish. This will fall short of the conservation target of 1320, however, we will have to wait for the official count.

These numbers are encouraging and far above recent returns and although you cannot hang your hat on it, the results for the future looks promising.



Membership Meeting  
Sunday, November 23, 2008  
Greenfield School  
Highway 210 - Greenfield  
7:00 - PM

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## Presidents Message

The results for 2008 did not meet our expectations as funding requests for liming projects failed to materialize. That does not mean the year was a write off, however, some of the work we intended to accomplish has been put off until at least next year. I guess Rome wasn't built in a day and maybe we had anticipated more going forward but it sure is disappointing.

The good news on liming is the project at West River Sheet Harbour. It forges ahead with great results, pH 6 at the mouth of the river some 30 kilometers down stream from the Dozier. The fish are returning and the aquatic and plant life is improved. A smolt wheel has been installed and juvenile salmon are being removed and taken to the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility to mature. These mature salmon will be returned to the West River Sheet Harbour to facilitate the re-establishment of a sound population of Atlantic Salmon.

Looking back over 2008 and looking ahead to 2009 the Association has continued to move forward. We have played a more active role in the Nova Scotia Salmon Association and the DFO Zone Management Advisory Committee (ZMAC) 21. For the first time our Association participated in the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee (RFAC) and put forward recommendations for changes to the Medway River in respect to the fishing season from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 26<sup>th</sup>. (See article on changes page 5)

The Environment Committee has been looking into smaller liming projects and one of the committee members has developed a prototype for testing. The committee will be charged with preparing proposals for funding for the Adopt-A-Stream and Endowment Funds. The committee members have assisted DFO and Inland Fisheries with the distribution of Gene-Bank salmon, salmon parr and clipping and distributing sea run trout.

Yours in Conservation

Darrell Tingley



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## Gene-Bank Salmon Release

On October 1, 2008 the remaining Medway Adults from the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility were released into the Medway River. DFO staff from the Coldbrook and Mersey Facilities assisted by members of the Medway River Salmon Association released the sexually mature salmon in the following locations:

South Brookfield Bridge	17
Lower Westfield Bridge	17
Lake Pool @ Greenfield	32
Deans Bridge	74
Big Salmon	37
Island Falls Pool	37

In addition to the release 28 immature fish were transferred to the Milton Biodiversity Facility for conditioning with an anticipated release date in 2009.



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## Fall Parr Release

On October 16, 2008 the release of 29,700 fall parr took place at 11 sites of the Medway Watershed. This release was the result of the spawning of thirty (30) gene-bank salmon from the Coldbrook Biodiversity Facility and the rearing of same at the Mersey Biodiversity Facility. Approximately 2,700 parr were released at each of the following eleven sites.



Wildcat  
Lower Westfield Bridge  
Below Harmony Bridge  
South Brookfield Bridge  
Bridge between 1<sup>st</sup> /2nd Christopher  
Below Lake Pool  
Bangs Falls Bridge  
Buggy Hole Brook  
Deans Brook  
Wentworth Brook  
Limestone Brook



## Recreational Fishing Advisory Committee

As reported in the May issue of the Medway River Blues (volume 2 # 1) early season fishing on the Medway River, April 1st to May 26<sup>th</sup>, has had and will continue to have negative results for Atlantic Salmon unless changes are forthcoming to recreational fishing regulations. The issue at hand is related to the type of gear used when fishing for trout at this time of the year. To protect the out-migration of Kelt “slink” a reduction in the arsenal used to catch trout must be put in place in salmon rearing rivers to enhance the survival of the species.

To this end a motion was passed at the May 2008 meeting of the Association membership to pursue changes to the fishing regulations for the Medway River in 2009 and beyond. The motion presented to the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting in Liverpool on October 6, 2008 is as follows:

“That fishing on the Medway River, Queens County, from the Highway 103 Bridge upstream to Ponhook Lake, not including Ponhook Lake or tributaries, from April 1<sup>st</sup> to May 26<sup>th</sup>, be restricted to single hook lure/fly/bait hook. That the hooks be barb-less or have pinched barbs.”

“From May 26<sup>th</sup> to the end of all fishing seasons artificial fly with barb-less of pinched barb hooks only.”

The resolution was thoroughly discussed at the meeting, and although not unanimously endorsed, it will now go to Inland Fisheries who, in turn, will propose changes for the 2010 angling season for the Medway River. Their recommendation will appear in the 2009 Angling Handbook and will be voted on at the Recreational Fisheries Advisory Committee Meeting in the fall of 2009.

Education of the fishing populations, of the potential damage to out-migrating Kelt “slink” salmon by the use of gear with spinners and barbed treble hooks, will go a long way to the conservation of our precious resource “the Atlantic Salmon”

## Sea Run Trout

On Thursday October 23, 2008 members of the Medway River Salmon Association assisted staff of the McGowan Lake Fish Hatchery in fin clipping approximately 12,000 sea run trout. The trout will be held at the Hatchery until water levels improve and then released into the Medway River. Members of the Association will assist McGowan Lake staff with site selection and the release.

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Manager Mike McNeil and his staff for their co-operation and assistance.



# Salmon group aims to restore rivers

Association limes N.S. waterways to combat lingering acid rain problem

By BILL SPURR Features Writer  
Sat. Oct 25 - 9:37 AM

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George Ferguson, vice-president of the Nova Scotia Salmon Association, takes a pH reading on the West River near Sheet Harbour. The association is adding lime to the river from a silo (shown in background) to counteract the effects of acid rain. (PETER PARSONS / Staff)

The southern uplands of Nova Scotia — basically the Eastern Shore, the South Shore and around the coast to Digby — contains 65 salmon rivers, but hardly any salmon.

While salmon thrive in the northern parts of the mainland and Cape Breton, acid rain has killed all the salmon in 25 of the southern uplands rivers, adversely affected 25 more, and reduced the total population by three quarters.

But there's hope, thanks to an acid rain mitigation program undertaken by the Nova Scotia Salmon Association. About 30 kilometres upstream from the ocean at Sheet Harbour is the head of the West River, and on the bank is a silo, containing not livestock feed, but lime.

Three years ago, the association raised more than \$250,000 to build a road to the site, run power and phone lines to it and import the silo from Norway. Lime costs \$40 a tonne and the bin holds 50 tonnes.

"It gets delivered in a blower truck and gets blown in," said George Ferguson, the association's vice-president. "That's just as expensive as the lime itself. So each time we fill this up, it costs about \$2,500. It works on water flow, and with low flow, we'll go a month and a half with 50 tonnes. In high water, sometimes we're putting seven tonnes of lime in a day."

"This is basically a big silo. Underneath is a well, two feet across and eight feet deep. There's a six-inch inlet pipe out in the stream that feeds the well . . . and an eight-inch outlet that runs a hundred feet down into the river.

"The lime drops down, and it's all computerized. So depending on the flow and the amount of lime we want to put in, it drops that amount of lime into the well. It gets mixed in the well and shot out into the river." The goal is to reduce the pH of the river so the water is once again hospitable to salmon and other creatures.

The silo was installed in the fall of 2005 and it took a year to figure out the right dosage of lime to maintain an ideal pH of 5.5 at the river mouth.

The river, Ferguson said, is now a hundred times less acidic than it was.

"We're monitoring invertebrates and we've really noticed an increase in invertebrates — mayflies, stoneflies, every little creature that lives under the rocks," said Ferguson.

"It's too early to tell if it's making a big difference in fish. We see trout where there weren't any before, but there's no scientific evidence."

The West River hasn't been good for sportsmen since the 1970s and is now classified as a remnant river, which means there are a few sweet spots that fish will come back into and spawn, and the eggs will survive.

Acid rain originates mostly in New England and central Canada and more dramatically affects the southern half of the province because of the area's poor soil.

"The soil here doesn't have the buffering capacity; it's mostly granite and so on, very thin soils," said Ferguson.

"The buffering capacity was completely depleted 40 or 50 years ago. That's why the acid rain problem is getting better everywhere else, but it's not getting better here."

In 1990, Canada and the U.S. reached an agreement on reducing the industrial emissions that cause acid rain. By then, considerable damage had been done in areas with a lot of granite, thin soil and not much limestone.

"There was so much damage done, especially in these areas that are highly susceptible, that right now even the little bit of acid rain that we get is enough to impact the river," said Eddie Halfyard, a biologist who works with the association.

"So, if we were to step back and leave the river on its own, it's been estimated that it would take 70 to 100 years for that river to recuperate, even without further (deposits) of acid. So, as far as the salmon are concerned, and we're concerned, that's too long.

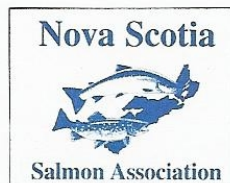
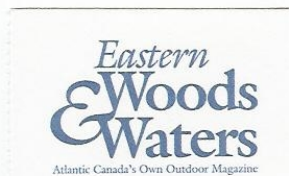
"It's physiological. Any organism . . . has to osmoregulate, keeping water and salts in balance within each individual cell in the body. Because (humans are) in air, we have a little bit of a barrier against the environment. But a fish in water is in close contact with its environment. In acidic water, the ability of a fish to osmoregulate is reduced, so it can't pump salts in and out of its body. So it's under a lot of stress. The major thing is it deforms gills, which inhibits the fish's ability to bring up oxygen."

Ferguson said salmon populations in the area started to fall in the 1960s, declining sharply in the '70s.

Fisheries and Oceans Canada ended its own acid rain mitigation program in about 1990 and a stocking program that saw several million smolt (immature salmon) deposited in southern uplands rivers stopped a decade later. Now, Ferguson said, the federal department has "thrown up its hands" on the issue of acid rain and salmon.

Acid rain mitigation has been taking place for 25 years in Norway, with excellent results, but the program isn't cheap.

"Norway spends about \$20 million a year; Sweden, I think, spends about \$200 million a year mitigating for acid rain," he said. "We're hoping that in another five years, if it works, that we can have some kind of sport fishery here."



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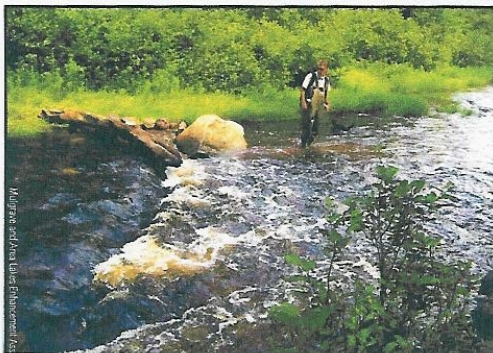
If you would like to become a member of the Medway River Salmon Association or if wish to renew your membership in our Organization or if you would like more information about our goals and objectives please send your name and mailing address to:

Medway River Salmon Association  
P.O. Box 93  
Mill Village, N.S.  
B0J 2C0

Membership Fee is \$10.00

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## The Nova Scotia Adopt-A-Stream Program



PAINTED BLUE CHARM

<b>Hook:</b>	Barbless Mustad 36890 any size, fluorescent green
<b>Thread:</b>	6/0 Waxed, Black
<b>Tag:</b>	Fine Oval Silver Tinsel
<b>Tip:</b>	Neon Green Floss
<b>Tail:</b>	Golden Pheasant
<b>Body:</b>	Medium Black Holographic Tinsel
<b>Rib:</b>	Medium Oval Silver Tinsel
<b>Throat:</b>	Fluorescent Blue Hackle
<b>Wing:</b>	Dark Moose Hair
<b>Head:</b>	Black

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The Medway River Salmon Association is affiliated with the Nova Scotia Salmon Association and the Atlantic Salmon Federation.