

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION N·E·W·S·L·E·T·T·E·R

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WINTER 2013-2014

CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

38TH ANNUAL DINNER

Live and Silent Auction | Bucket Raffle | Rods, Reels, Trips and ... !



"Evening Cast" by guest artist Charles McCaughtry

January 18, 2014 | USS Chowder Pot IV

165 BRAINARD ROAD, HARTFORD, CT

Social hour, auction preview: 5 - 6:00 p.m. Live Auction: 6:00 p.m. Followed by dinner \$45 per person

Guest Speaker: John R.J. Burrows Director of New England Programs, Atlantic Salmon Federation (ASF) "New Strategies For Atlantic Salmon Conservation and Restoration"

Reservation form at: ctriversalmon.org

Meet Guest Artist Charles McCaughtry

CRSA is proud to have Connecticut's Charles McCaughtry as the 2014 Guest Artist Series contributor. He is the third in a series of distinguished painters of wildlife and nature whose artwork is a key element of the CRSA Dinner poster.

Charles McCaughtry paints what he knows—the land and waters he explores. His art springs, in part, from his love of small boats and fly fishing. His watercolors have been widely exhibited in galleries, museums and universities in the United States and Canada. His local commissions have included ones from the Dodd Center at the University of Connecticut and the Hartford Insurance Company.

www.mccaughtryart.com

Transitioning to the Atlantic Salmon Legacy Program

By Stephen Gephard, Senior DEEP Fisheries Biologist

In the last CRSA newsletter, I summarized the events that led up to the decision by the Connecticut River Atlantic Salmon Commission (CRASC) to step back from a directed restoration program that has been in place for over 40 years and instead pursue a more limited salmon management program in the Connecticut River basin—now known as the Legacy Program. As we close the books on 2013—the transition year—and look forward to 2014, it is a good time to review what has been done. By means of a quick review, I will remind the readers that the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the states of Massachusetts, New Hampshire, and Vermont terminated all raising and stocking of salmon in their facilities and waters, leaving just Connecticut to carry on limited stocking.

The objectives of the program are to (1) maintain the presence of the native, heritage species of Atlantic salmon in our waters; (2) serve as a living gene bank for this unique strain of Atlantic salmon; (3) support continued education about salmon and ecosystems and support for Salmon-in-Schools; (4) support scientific research for Atlantic salmon; (5) allow salmon to serve as an environmental sentinel species; and (6) support angling by maintaining the broodstock fishery in the Shetucket and Naugatuck rivers.

During the spring of 2013, the states of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Vermont stocked some fry into targeted streams. Connecticut stocked around 760,000 fry, Massachusetts stocked 900,600 and Vermont stocked 240,450 for a total of around 1.9 million. This will be the last stocking Massachusetts and Vermont conduct. The Roger Reed State Fish Hatchery in Palmer, MA, depopulated all remaining salmon broodstock from its facility and shifted its production to other species. Vermont never had broodstock at its Roxbury State Hatchery but simply hatched and stocked eggs provided by the Roger Reed Hatchery.

In the not too distant past, annual stockings averaged 6 million. It takes salmon in our watershed about four years to return as adults—two years on average in freshwater and two years at sea. That means that adults from this last stock-

Merrimack River Atlantic Salmon Restoration to End

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary, and Robert Jones, CRSA President

On September 5, US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) announced it would end its 30-year Atlantic salmon restoration effort in the Merrimack River watershed. "Facing federal budget cuts and stubbornly low annual returns of sea-run Atlantic salmon, it will end its investment," Joe McKeon, supervisory fishery biologist, said in an interview with the North Andover, MA, *Eagle Tribune* on September 5. He added, "We have budget cuts and are under sequestration... we've had to restructure some things."

THE CONNECTICUT RIVER SALMON ASSOCIATION

The Connecticut River Salmon Association (CRSA) is a nonstock, nonprofit Connecticut corporation. Our mission is to support Atlantic salmon in the Connecticut River basin.

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> CRSA 76 Deming Street South Windsor, CT 06074 (860) 644-0159 email: info@ctriversalmon.org

www.ctriversalmon.org

As previously reported, this announcement follows that which ended the similar effort on the Connecticut River.

The USFWS statement said "Things looked promising as recently as 2011, when more than 400 Atlantic salmon made their way to the Essex Dam Fish Lift in Lawrence, MA. But in 2012, just 137 sea-run salmon returned, and this year, as of July 10, 2013, only 22 returning salmon have been observed. The Merrimack River Policy Committee and the Service will look to the Merrimack River Technical Committee to develop a plan for what happens next, including plans for stocking the last of the Merrimack salmon remaining at the two hatcheries, and options for continued Atlantic salmon monitoring in the river."

Gerry Crow, a licensed NH fishing guide, was quoted in article as saying, "This program helped bring the focus to improving the watershed to help these species recover. We risk losing a lot of that focus and work."

The Atlantic salmon school programs in western Massachusetts and Rhode

Island will end as well. At one point there were nearly 45 schools in the school programs in the two states.

This development makes the CTDEEP Atlantic Salmon Legacy Program even more important to New England anglers and educators. Unfortunately, this program may be in some jeopardy since it is supported by the tentative use of the Richard Cronin National Salmon Station.

We recognize that the destruction of the White River hatchery and funding problems prompted the USFWS to take these actions. We question however the reasoning that low returns in both rivers are also to blame. It is clear that problems at sea are relevant to these low returns. What is not clear is what actions have been taken by USFWS to investigate or assist in the investigation of these problems. The two federal salmon hatcheries in Maine could easily be converted to shad or lake trout facilities. Maine Atlantic salmon certainly suffer from the same malady in the marine environment as those from the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers. We wonder what program will be next. •

CRASC Technical Committee: Extracts from 11/13 Report

[From the report prepared by Caleb Slater, MADFW; CRASC Technical Committee Chair]

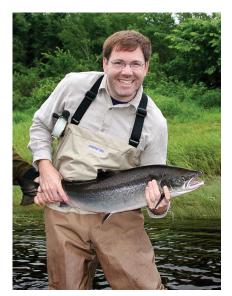
Salmon	
2013 Stocking	
Fry	
Vermont*	180,689
New Hampshire*	0
Massachusetts*	908,218
Connecticut	768,110
Total	1,857,017
Smolts* *No future stockings	100,103 planned.

2013 Adult Returns

- Total 92
- 88 from fry, 4 from smolt
- Difficulty trucking from MA toward end of season
- 11 pre-spawning mortalities
- 2013 Spawning
- CTDEEP bought the hormones for injection
- MADFW & USFWS captured mature parr from the Sawmill River
- Planned to inject on 27 Sept. and

take eggs 2 Oct. delayed due to government shutdown

- 17 Oct. spawned all but 11 females, most eggs looked very good
- 17 Oct. remaining females injected then spawned on 23 Oct.
- No genetic program-crosses were random blind with each female split between two males
- 59 females, 19 males
- Egg take estimated at 400,000
- All adult salmon sacrificed for fish health testing
- No visible signs of disease.
- Eggs will be held at RCNSS until fish health comes back
- Eggs will be sent to Kensington SFH if clean
- Kensington took @600,000 eggs from domestic broodstock
- No salmon spawning at Roger Reed no broodstock salmon on station



CRSA Dinner to Feature ASF's John Burrows on Maine's Atlantic Salmon Restoration Program

By Tom Chrosniak, Dinner Chairman

Atlantic Salmon Federation expert John Burrows will be the guest speaker at the 38th Annual CRSA Dinner. He will talk about the latest developments in the Atlantic salmon recovery programs in Maine.

John is the director of New England programs for the Atlantic Salmon Federation. He joined ASF in 2000 and has led ASF's conservation and advocacy efforts on the Androscoggin, Kennebec, Sebasticook and St. Croix rivers in Maine. John lobbies for the ASF at the Maine Legislature and a few years ago led the successful effort to create a \$5 million river-focused community development grant program. John has been project manager for several years of ASF's small dam removal and fishway construction projects as part of ASF's Maine Headwaters Program.

John has a Bachelor's Degree from Gettysburg College and a Masters Degree from the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

This is a unique opportunity to hear the latest news about efforts to support the recovery of the endangered Atlantic salmon in Maine. ◆

Consider Donating Goods for CRSA Dinner Auction

This school year there are 64 Salmon-in-Schools education sites. Participants range from elementary schools to two colleges, each using the CRSA-supplied education materials and training as it suits their needs. Almost every last dollar raised at the CRSA annual banquet goes to schools across the state in your communities.

Fishing equipment, new clothing, new things for kitchen or home, artwork, trips, dinner certificates and funded lectures are just some donation possibilities. All of the funds come back to your communities and schools in the form of support for the nationally recognized Salmon-in-Schools environmental program. We also have a program to actively support all the hatcheries in Connecticut.

Contact Tom Chrosniak at (860) 729-5064 or tchrosniak@comcast.net. The dinner will be January 18, 2014 at the Chowder Pot Restaurant in Hartford. ◆

SUPPORT OUR FRIENDS!

Partner fishery organizations having banquets in 2014 are listed below. They deserve your support.

Connecticut Fly Fisherman's Association Expo and Banquet

February 1, 2014 Expo: 9am - 3pm Banquet: 6pm Location: Maneeley's, 65 Rye St. South Windsor, CT Visit: www.ctflyfish.org

Farmington River Anglers Association Annual Banquet

March 1, 2014 5:30pm Location: Cornucopia Banquet Hall, 371 Pinewoods Rd, Torrington, CT Visit: www.fraa.org

Housatonic Fly Fishermen's Association Banquet

March 15, 2014 6 pm Location: Monticello's Visit: www.hffa.net

Farmington Valley Trout Unlimited Annual Banquet

March 21, 2014 6 pm Location: USS Chowder Pot IV, 165 Brainard Rd., Hartford, CT Visit: www.fvtu.org

The CRSA "Salmon-in-Schools" Program

House Majority Leader Aresimowicz to Receive CRSA President's Award

By Dr. Vincent Ringrose, Awards Chair

CRSA President Robert Jones announced that House Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz will receive the 2014 CRSA President's Award at the CRSA Annual Dinner on January 18, 2014. The event is being held at the Chowder Pot IV Restaurant in Hartford.

The State Representative from the 30th District is being honored for his longtime efforts in support of the nationally recognized CRSA Salmon-in-Schools environmental education program. He has been previously honored by the Connecticut League of Conservation Voters for his environmental work.

Aresimowicz has three children who have attended Catherine McGee Middle School in Berlin, where he has been a lifelong resident. The Majority Leader's experience with the CRSA program is firsthand, since his family has participated in the CRSA Salmon-in-Schools Program.



From left: teacher Tom Francolino, CRSA Liaison Frank Kucharski and House Majority Leader Joe Aresimowicz on egg delivery day at Catherine McGee MS. [Photo: J. Carroll]

The salmon egg delivery pictured at the right was a happy reunion of sorts. As a young student, Aresimowicz was in Frank Kucharski's classroom when Kucharski taught at Catherine McGee. When he is not serving in the legislature, Aresimowicz is the Education Coordinator for the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Council 4.

Important Changes Coming in 2014 Stocking Guide!

A revised Stocking Guide will be available on our website shortly. Three significant changes can be announced now.

Eight Mile River (Devil's Hopyard): Under our new Connecticut Legacy Program, we will stock fry only in the Farmington and Salmon Rivers, and their approved tributaries. This means that the Eight Mile River, which includes the popular Devil's Hopyard site, is no longer available. Schools affected will have to look at other sites. I suspect the Salmon River Rec Area or Comstock Bridge area will be the most convenient. I encourage the teachers involved to look at the sites, which are very popular and require reservation as was the case with Devil's Hopyard. Someone should also look at the Blackledge River area—it's a Salmon River tributary used by only one school. Talk to your Liaison or me if you have any questions.

Salmon Brook – Holcomb Farm: Schools using this site must get advance approval from the Town of Granby Rec. Department through Daphne Shinder (860-844-5356; recreation@granby-ct.gov). She will enforce our limit for this site, which is one school at a time; three buses. For those schools wanting toilet access to the farm building ,CRSA will pay the cost BUT you must specifically make this request to Ms. Shinder so she can unlock the place, and let me know as well.

Buses at the Salmon River Rec Area: To relieve congestion at the parking area, and to reduce pressure on the two toilets, we are changing the limits at this site. Subject to the exception following, the limit is three schools, and, in any event, no more than four buses at the Rec Area at any one time. We have four schools with wonderful programs that regularly come with a fleet of buses: Catherine McGee, Bedford Middle School, Bennet Academy and Tolland Middle School. For these schools, we will reserve the whole place for one school, so schedule with CRSA (Dick Bell) early. Also, six buses is the limit and they will park NOT at the Rec Area BUT on the Firemen's Field adjacent. We will provide two additional portable toilets at the Firemen's Field Pavilion on these days at CRSA expense. There are a few details remaining to be worked out for these four schools, and I will take those up with them directly.

Good Luck!! ♦

— Dick Bell for CRSA

Senator Bye Attends Conard Salmon-in-Schools Start-up

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

State Senator Beth Bye joined West Hartford's Conard High School in the start-up of CRSA'a Salmon-in-Schools environmental education program on December 13. CRSA liaison Bob Hoffman delivered the 200 eggs in an insulated jug to teacher Andrew Plantz's SIS (Science Investigational Skills) classroom. Conard is one of a number of schools in Senate Education Committee member Bye's district that use CRSA's national award-winning environmental education program.

Andrew Plantz brings to award-winning Conard High School seven years of teaching experience in New Hampshire schools using the incubation of Atlantic salmon eggs and alevin as an environmental teaching tool.

The Atlantic salmon eggs will be incubated in a 20gallon tank and stocked out in April or May on a date selected by the school and Plantz. By controlling the water temperature in their classroom tank, students can optimize the number of hatching fry to match a date selected to meet the school's schedules.

Principal Julio Duarte said, "At Conard we strive to create opportunities for our students to participate in authentic learning experiences. By participating in the Salmon-in-Schools program we are able to accomplish this task and help maintain the salmon population. We are truly excited about this new partnership." ◆

At right, students and Senator Bye watch teacher Andrew Plantz select salmon eggs. [Photo: Lawrence Cook]



Above (left to right) Assistant Principal Matt Pace, Science Department Supervisor Rich Fritz, Senator Beth Bye, Principal Julio Duarte, and CRSA Director Bob Hoffman [Photo: J. Carroll]



Teachers' Orientation Attended by New and Veteran Teachers

By Elizabeth Kendall, CRSA Director

On October 22nd, CRSA held their 18th Teacher Orientation meeting at the Northeast Utilities facility in Berlin, CT. The daylong program was well attended by new and veteran teachers from kindergarten to the college level, who will use Salmon-in-Schools in different ways as a teaching tool in the 2013-2014 school year.

CRSA Vice President and Chair of the Education Committee Dick Bell hosted the event with the assistance of Secretary Jim Carroll and CRSA director and educator Elizabeth Kendall. Several CRSA liaisons attended as well to meet the new teachers and hear news of the 2013-2014 salmon season.

Steve Gephard, Connecticut Fish & Game Senior Scientist and Tim Wildman, Fish & Game scientist, offered expert lectures on Atlantic salmon. Steve presented an overview of the life cycle of Atlantic salmon. He also updated attendees on Connecticut's Atlantic Salmon Legacy Program. Tim presented the important math-based Development Index Excel program, the science tool that makes possible the regulation in the classroom of the maturation rate of the eggs and alevin so teachers and students can pick their fry stocking dates. (See Orientation, page 6)

Bennet Sets New Record With 7 Tanks!

Bennet Academy, a public 6th grade academy in Manchester, had 1,400 Atlantic salmon eggs delivered for seven tanks in mid-December by CRSA liaison Gordon Tedford. According to CRSA records and the Atlantic Salmon Federation information, this is the largest number of tanks in a single school in North America—ever! And probably in the world too.

Pioneered by teacher Bill McDougall at Bennet Academy, the program now involves seven science teachers and



Principal Chella (4th from left) and Bennet Academy's record setting team. [Photo: J. Carroll]

all of the 400 plus students in the middle school. The Salmon-in-Schools Program is integrated into the school's curriculum so that it involves all parts of STEM: Science, Technology, English and Math. "It's a great way to add a hands-on element to our students' learning: it truly brings learning to life for our students," says Bennet Academy Principal Joseph Chella.

Bill has been an important contributor to the orientations given to new Salmon-in-Schools teachers. He has offered insight on lesson plans, technology used by the teachers and how the stocking out of the fry in the spring adds an important piece to the school environmental experience.

"The Secret Life of Salmon" Symposium

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

CRSA director Elizabeth Kendall organized "The Secret Life of Salmon Symposium" June 21-23 at the Need House at the Cape Cod National Seashore in Eastham, MA. The project objective was to bring together students and expert teachers to discuss wild Atlantic salmon and climate change.

The symposium was supported by a grant from the National Parks Foundation obtained by Kendall. Presentations discussing wild Atlantic salmon and the effect of climate change were solicited in PowerPoint, paper, book, video or any other medium. The oral or video presentations were limited to ten minutes in length and all entries were made at the symposium or sent to Elizabeth Kendall. The jury panel included faculty from Auburn University's nationally recognized aquaculture school and qualified, selected teachers and students.

Connecticut's Capital Region Education Council, the state's largest; the CT DEEP; the Cape Cod National Seashore Park; and the interdistrict program River To The Sea were also supporting partners of the symposium. ◆

Orientation (from page 5)

Veteran teachers Bill McDougal of Bennet Academy in Manchester and Rick Rossi of Windsor Locks Middle School gave teachers a view of the practicalities of raising salmon in the classroom. Bill's school had six tanks last year and will have seven classrooms with tanks this school year, perhaps the most for any school using Atlantic salmon as a science tool in eastern Canada, Europe or Maine. Rick Rossi received a National Science Teachers Foundation award several years ago for his use of Salmon-in-Schools.

Through generous support from the Capital Region Education Council, Continuing Education Units, or CEUs, were available to the participating teachers. Evaluations of the Salmon-in-Schools program must be made by the participating teachers as a condition of the CEU system. CRSA thanks CREC for their important contribution and Northeast Utilities for making their excellent facilities available.

Kendall Appointed CRSA Website Director

By Jim Carroll, CRSA Secretary

At the September CRSA board of directors meeting, director Elizabeth Kendall was appointed CRSA website manager by President Bob Jones. Since then she has been hard at work editing materials and planning for a redesign. Jones said, "Her enthusiasm, background in the Connecticut education system and knowledge about aquatic matters is a good match for our needs and the Salmon-in-Schools program."

The website has been a portal for access by students and teachers to educational and scientific materials about wild Atlantic salmon. Elizabeth plans to broaden the curriculum materials available to teachers. The site also provides a password-protected area for teachers and schools to schedule fry stocking and offer comments to the CRSA. Elizabeth is soliciting input from teachers and other interested parties about how the CRSA website can better serve them. She can be reached at ekendall@cox.net.

Martha Sherman of Sherman Communications will continue to provide website support consulting services. ◆

Legacy Program (from page 1)

ing will return in 2017, with some stragglers coming in during 2018. The adult returns will ramp down, with adult numbers expect-ed to drop incrementally in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018, by which time the returning adults will be mostly from Connecticut's greatly reduced Legacy Program stocking, anticipated to range from 200,000 to 250,000 fry annually.

The Kensington State Fish Hatchery in Berlin, CT, has been holding salmon broodstock and hatching the eggs into fry for stocking. After the fall spawning in 2012, it reduced its numbers of broodstock by stocking more into the Shetucket and Naugatuck rivers for the trophy fishery. This past October, there were fewer fish to spawn and fewer eggs to incubate—all leading to the reduced number of fry planned for stocking in Connecticut during the spring of 2014. Volunteers will still be used to help stock fry but many fewer volunteers will be needed. The fry stocking plan will be developed over the winter once we learn the eye-up rate of the eggs now at Kensington.

There will be no reduction of the number of eggs made available to the CRSA's Salmon-in-Schools program. By the time you read this, those eggs will have already been distributed to the schools and will be incubating in their chilled aquaria.

One looming issue that has yet to be resolved is the status of the Richard Cronin National Salmon Station (RCNSS). This is a specialized holding facility operated by the USFWS. Adult salmon captured in the fishway traps have been transported to RCNSS to be held over the summer and spawned in the fall to produce valuable 'sea-run strain' eggs for the program. The facility was specially designed for this task and holds no other fish. It is not a standard hatchery but is a stand-alone quarantine station. In 2013, the RCNSS stayed open with one staff person operating it. All salmon that returned to the river were captured and taken there (except for three accidental escapees) and all the resultant eggs will have been transferred to the Kensington hatchery by the time this article is printed. However, it is now the budget of the USFWS that is under severe strain and unless partners come up with a plan to fund it, it will be closed and not be available to hold salmon in 2014.

With no alternative facilities for us to turn to, this means that all returning adult salmon will be released at the fishways and allowed to continue upstream. We don't know if that will occur yet, but all of the partner agencies are starting to think about what that means and what needs to be done to protect those fish. Considerable time was spent at the last CRASC meeting in November discussing this issue. Even in the absence of a restoration program in upstream states, we want those fish to survive and spawn if they can.

Regulations still prohibit the taking of any sea-run salmon in the Connecticut River basin. Prior to 2013, every tenth salmon arriving at the Holyoke Fishlift was released (usually with a radio tag) and allowed to swim upstream. Operators of upstream fishways (Bellows Falls and Wilder) opened their fishways when the tag monitoring indicated that a salmon was on its way. (Holyoke, Turners Falls, and Vernon fishways stay open all season long to pass shad but shad did not pass Bellows Falls, historically.) In 2013, no salmon were released from Holyoke so TransCanada, the owner of the Bellows Falls dam, opened that fishway voluntarily to pass migrating sea lamprey. Plans are now being developed to determine when fishways would be opened during 2014 whether or not RCNSS is opened. Another fishway that will be affected by these plans is the blind trap & truck facility operated by the US Army Corps of Engineers at its Townshend Flood Control Dam on the West River.

CRASC also has to decide whether or not to tag released salmon, what data to collect, and who will do it. TransCanada has been putting radio tags in some salmon and now has a number of mandated studies as part of the relicensing process for its (and First Light Power's) mainstem hydro projects. Some radio tagging may assist those studies. Furthermore, if adult salmon move up some of these upstream fishways, how long must the downstream passage facilities at those dams be operated to allow the spent salmon to drop back down? So there are a lot of decisions that are waiting on the decision whether or not to close the RCNSS. Although the USFWS and the three upriver states have ceased the production and stocking of young salmon, they and CRASC will remain involved in salmon management decisions for several more years to come. ◆

CRASC (from page 2)

2014 Plans

- Searun fry: The Tech committee discussed the stocking of searun fry as a source of mature parr for spawning. It was decided that searun fry would be stocked in Pine Brook (CT) rather than the Sawmill River (MA).
- Availability of RCNSS to hold searun returns still unknown I
- If RCNSS is available adult holding and spawning will proceed as in 2013
- If RCNSS is not available all returning salmon will be released to continue upstream
- Tech Committee agreed that basic data should be collected from all returning fish (length, weight, scale samples) and that some sort of tag or mark applied
- CT will stock fry in 2014, plan to be developed when eggs eye up
- Searun fry: The Tech committee discussed the stocking of searun fry as a source of mature parr for spawning. It was decided that searun fry would be stocked in Pine Brook (CT) rather than the Sawmill River (MA).

Status of Salmon Subcommittee

• It was decided that the salmon subcommittee would be populated with personnel from CT (the only state with a still active salmon program) the subcommittee chair would report to the Technical committee and reach out to other members of the Tech Com as necessary.

Volunteers and Mentors Needed!

It is great fun and richly rewarding to give a little time to the nationally recognized CRSA Salmon-in-Schools Program. The state DEEP and the CRSA can give a local and worldwide perspective on Atlantic salmon. And, yes we have a strong viable salmon operation in Connecticut feeding the schools as well as our angling public.

Join us at our January 18 banquet to learn more, or email Jim Carroll at jcarrolljr@comcast.net or Dick Bell at bellawrg@cs.com.

Application for CRSA Membership

If you are not a member of CRSA, then you are receiving this complimentary copy of our newsletter in hopes that you find it informative and that you will consider joining CRSA by completing the application below.

If you are a member already, thank you! **Please consider helping us keep costs in check by receiving this newsletter via email**. Just email us at newsletter@ctriversalmon.org and we'll add you to our email distribution list.

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