



BACKLASH

Capital District Fly Fishers

Conserving - Restoring - Educating
Through Fly Fishing

October 2006



Presidents Message

The first meeting back inside is over and what a good turnout, there were new faces as well as old faces. It was good to see everyone and hear some good stories. We (the board) are working on the presentations and other ideas that club members have come up with. I have been doing presentations and promoting the club and fly-fishing in different areas and I would like to thank Rodney for filling in for me on a couple. You as a member of the club are also representatives so if someone asks if you can do a presentation, say yes and do it, you may like it and enjoy it. Let us know if you are doing something and if we could help, we (the board) don't have to do all of them. If you are afraid to do them, don't be, most people will not notice any mistakes or flubs that accidentally happen to you. They are usually amazed at what you are doing and talking about.

At the meeting I will be looking for volunteers for the nominating committee, so if you would like to look for an officer please speak up. After the committee is selected, anyone interested in being an officer of the club should approach the committee and let them know of your desire. A slate will be announced in November for the election and installation of the officers in December.

As of January of 2007 we will lose Rodney as Newsletter Editor for the Backlash, he will be embarking on other adventures to help the club and sport. We need someone to step forward and use your talents to keep the newsletter coming. *That's right the December newsletter may be the last if no one* steps forward. Rodney and the rest of us will work with you on it, *you will not be alone*. If you have any questions and or are interested please talk to Rodney or myself. New people, new ideas, new look could be a good thing.

Did you remember to get your new fishing license? The old one ended at the end of September

We are always looking for ideas and comments so let us know your thoughts. If anyone is interested in rod building please let us know, if there is enough interest and members will to take a class we maybe able to set something up.

REMEMBER IT IS YOUR CLUB
NOT THE BOARDS AND OFFICERS

See You at the meeting
Paul Sinicki

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Click hear to go to the [FFF Web Page](#)
 Click hear to [Email FFF.](#)

CDFE Raffle

At every monthly meeting we have a raffle. The raffle prize consists of **at least** two prizes, and generally more than two due to the generosity of our members. We always have a fly box full of flies tied by our member's. Our second raffle item that is generally in keeping with the meeting theme.

How do you participate in the monthly raffle?

The preferred way is by contributing a fly, for which you get One Chance!!!

We always have a tying theme each month; however, your contribution need not be limited to that theme.

OR

**You can purchase raffle tickets for \$1.00 each, 5 for \$5.00
 or any combination of \$1 buck equals one ticket.**

This Months Fly of the Month is;

Streamers

See *Up Coming Events* for next months FOM and tie them ahead!!

You can't win if you don't participate!

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'Our beautiful river is destroyed'

Tons of silt released from a hydro plant dam choke
the life out of a premier trout habitat in the North Country

By PAUL GRONDAHL

CHATEAUGAY, NY -- This is the time of year that quickens the pulses of fly fishermen in this wild North Country landscape. Anglers from New York and Canada usually come in September to test their skills against native brown trout that rise to a caddis fly in the pools and eddies of the roiling Chateaugay River with the fury of a boxer's uppercut. But fishermen won't even bother to make a cast this autumn. One of New York's premier trout streams is now dead water.

"Our beautiful river is destroyed and I'm outraged," said William Tandy.

The Poughkeepsie lawyer and former Manhattan assistant district attorney drives five hours to the Chateaugay, where he's owned a fishing camp on 100 acres and a mile of river frontage for the past 15 years. Several miles of this fast-moving and rocky-bottomed wild river near the Canadian border in Franklin County are now choked with tons of silt. The sediment smothered insects and aquatic life and drove out the trout.

The muck, which had accumulated for several years behind a hydroelectric dam, was released on Sept. 5. Flouting state environmental regulations, the dam owner opened a 4-foot drain gate at the bottom of the Chasm Hydro Dam. He was draining the 40-foot-high by 60-foot-wide concrete barrier so he could make structural repairs. Releasing sediment from a dam decreases the chance its turbines will clog and boosts efficiency. It can also kill a river.

The catastrophe for the Chateaugay River is the latest example of what environmental watchdogs call a looming danger in the Adirondacks and the rest of the state. "This is an ongoing problem," said Bruce Carpenter, executive director of New York Rivers United, a river conservation organization. "Enforcement is lax and the penalties aren't high enough to discourage them." State-wide, up to 150 of the approximately 400 hydro dams, including Chasm Hydro, are exempt from the most stringent federal licensing regulations because they are too old and too small for the overextended Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

Moreover, the state Department of Environmental Conservation's dam safety section has been stretched thin by major breaches such as the Hadlock Pond Dam in Fort Ann, which burst on July 2, 2005, unleashing a wall of water. "Unfortunately, Line is overdrawn the Chateaugay River isn't the first and probably won't be the last time we'll hear of this sediment problem," said John

Sheehan of the Adirondack Council, an environmental lobbying group. "It's clear we need better oversight because the federal regulations are feeble and poorly enforced and state DEC staffing is inadequate."

The banks of the Chateaugay River provide a vivid snapshot of what happens when an estimated 4,000 cubic yards of sediment are let loose. On Wednesday, at Brayton Hollow, a pool below a waterfall that was 12 feet deep and once teeming with trout, crayfish and caddis fly larvae was filled with 11 feet of foul-smelling black muck coated by a layer of gray sand. There was no sign of fish or aquatic life at this spot, just north of the 6-million-acre Adirondack Park's boundary.

DEC officials have notified the dam's owner, John Dowd, that he faces fines, cleanup costs and other penalties for numerous violations. "I can understand why people are upset," said Dowd, who's owned the Chasm Hydro Dam for 25 years. The dam produces 1.5 megawatts of electricity, enough to power 1,200 homes. "It happened and it will get resolved. It's not the end of the world," he said. Dowd, 61, lives in Chateaugay and as a local entrepreneur was involved in building a wood-fired power plant in town that was sold to a Canadian company. He is also a principal in a controversial proposed wind-turbine farm nearby.

When Dowd opened the gate on his dam just after Labor Day, he choked the Chateaugay for more than three miles downstream with enough sediment to cover a 2 1/2-acre field under one foot of mud. In the aftermath, Dowd has been transformed from local economic development hero to environmental whipping boy. "I'm upset with John," said Mark Carter, who lives in Fort Covington and owns four acres and 275 feet of river frontage along the Brayton Hollow pool. Carter is a registered state guide and experienced fly fisherman who has practiced catch-and-release on the river for more than three decades. "The enjoyment I get from fishing the Chateaugay is priceless," said Carter, an administrator at a facility for developmentally disabled people. "The river is so beautiful and wild. It takes you away from everything." With his hand-tied caddis and stonefly flies, Carter has landed scores of aggressive native brown trout, with many in the 20- to 22-inch range. He also catches stocked brook trout and rainbow trout.

"When the conditions are just right, you can catch a trout on almost every cast," Carter said.

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The scenery is dramatic and spectacular. The river is lined by sandstone cliffs and overhangs. Stands of evergreens and hardwoods cover both banks. The Chateaugay is narrow and wild, coursing with rapids, waterfalls and tight chutes. Its width ranges from 20 to 60 feet with an average depth between three and six feet. Some of the pools are 15 feet deep. Carter and other anglers consider it one of the best-kept secrets in New York.

"John's pointing fingers and blaming it all on the state," Carter said. "That doesn't cut it with me. He's ruined our river. He's got to clean it up and pay the fines." In Chateaugay, a hardscrabble North Country community of 2,036 people, the reaction to the situation is more muted. "We're not happy about it, but we're a small town with limited resources. We count on the state for enforcement," said Don Bilow, a retired dairy farmer and a Democrat who's been town supervisor since 1998.

Bilow is worried about the loss of revenue from tourists who come to fish the river. He's also concerned about maintaining good relations with the town of Huntington, Quebec, just across the Canadian border. The Chateaugay River flows through Huntington and the dam's sediment will eventually end up there as the river flattens and slows.

In Chateaugay, Dowd's dam generates about \$40,000 in school and property taxes annually for the financially strained community, where the largest employers are the school district, state prisons and the McCadam Cheese plant.

Chateaugay (pronounced SHAT-uh-gay), which means "hospitable house" in French, was settled in 1799 by Vermonters and French Canadians who trapped and logged the wilderness. Some elderly residents still speak French. The town has struggled since the 1967 closure of an iron mine at Lyon Mountain, which had been the mainstay for more than a century.

Dowd was a NYSEG lineman for years and is a self-taught operator who bought the dam from NYSEG in 1981. It was a fixer-upper. Dowd paid a small sum initially. Since then, he said, he's sunk more than \$1.5 million into improvements and repairs on his one-man operation. He says he's currently spending more than \$200,000 on structural work on the drained dam, which is why he released the sediment on Sept. 5.

"The repairs are costing me a lot more than what I put in my pocket in a year," said Dowd. He said he makes "a decent living, but not like I've won the lottery." Dowd does not dispute that he released a massive amount of sediment in violation of a state DEC permit, which was issued on June 30. That permit, a water quality and stream disturbance certificate, authorized Dowd to dredge only 200 cubic yards of sediment from the upstream side

of his dam. DEC officials said he was denied a permit for structural repairs because his application was incomplete. Dowd says he sought DEC assistance in completing his application but was told the agency's dam safety section was facing a one-year backlog. He couldn't wait that long, he says.

DEC disputes that claim and said it responded to Dowd in a timely manner.

Because of its age and size, the dam got an exemption from licensing by the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, meaning it does not face the most stringent regulations. The same is true of an estimated 150 more hydro dams statewide.

In the division of power between the feds and the state, FERC is responsible for structural integrity of dams. The DEC has jurisdiction in environmental matters, although watchdog groups contend there is confusion between the two layers of bureaucracy.

Dowd claimed his dam was leaking and showing signs of stress, and that he checked with FERC, which gave him recommendations on how to do the repairs. "A dam operator can't move forward on any repairs before he's received the proper state permits," said Celeste Miller, a FERC spokeswoman in Washington, D.C. She said the DEC sent a copy of its permit that allowed dredging of 200 cubic yards of sediment from behind the dam. "We've become aware that there could have been a violation of the New York state permit and we're reviewing the matter now," Miller said.

"We intend to initiate enforcement for the violations and we're in discussions with Mr. Dowd on the actions he's going to have to take to remove the sediment and remediate the environmental damage," said DEC spokeswoman Maureen Wren.

After the Sept. 5 incident, the DEC inspected the river three miles downriver from the dam and found "few living fish or invertebrates."

Dowd offered this explanation for his actions: Over the summer, he tried to use a pump to draw out sediment from behind the dam, but it soon clogged. The 120-foot cliffs that bracket the dam make it impractical to bring in heavier industrial dredging or pumping equipment. His construction crews were poised to begin repairs after Labor Day, and he knew his dam had structural problems. "One section was starting to leak. I knew it had to be repaired because if that dam goes, I'm liable," Dowd said. "I had to take the pressure off the dam and the only reasonable way to do it at that point was to dump the water, which is what I did."

He watched the sediment release, which ran dark and turbid for about an hour but then appeared to clear up and he left the dam.

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Over the next several hours, 4,000 cubic yards of silt washed downriver, according to DEC estimates. Dowd disputes that figure and contends it was less than 2,000 yards. Dowd also owns nearly three miles along the river. "I've opened that gate up many times over 25 years and that's the way all the dam operators I know do it," Dowd said.

The apparent difference this year was that the water flow on Sept. 5 was much slower compared to other releases and the sediment didn't get washed as fast or as far this time. "We need to get the sediment out of the river now and let them point fingers later," said state Sen. Betty Little of Queensbury. Her six-county North Country district includes the Chateaugay River dam, the failed Hadlock Pond dam and several others identified as needing repair. She said last year's budget added positions to DEC's dam safety section, but the agency is still "stretched pretty thin." "We have to figure out how to manage these dams better," said Little, a Republican who co-sponsored legislation to address dam safety issues that passed in the Senate but went nowhere in the Assembly. "Problems with these dams are popping up one at a time, all

over," she said. "We need an overall plan to avoid future catastrophes."

FACTBOX:
Harmful impacts

Suspended sediment is the fine-grained particles that get transported in water and results in turbid water. Here is a look at the harmful impacts of sediment deposits:

- * Small spaces between gravel particles become clogged, preventing the flow of water and the removal of waste products from developing eggs. This causes the eggs to die leaving gravel beds unfit for the future incubation of eggs.

- * Bottom-dwelling organisms, such as crayfish and insects, are destroyed. Fish rely on these organisms for food.

- * Sheltered areas between boulders and gravel particles are gone. Young fish need these areas to survive.

- * Fish hurt by the sediment filled waters: Brown trout; Brook trout; Rainbow trout

One day, two guys Joe and Bob were out fishing. A funeral service passes over the bridge they're fishing by, and Bob takes off his hat and puts it over his heart. He does this until the funeral service passes by.

Joe then said "Gee Bob, I didn't know you had it in you!"

Bob then replies " It's the least I could do. After all I was married to her for 30 years."

NYS Fishing License

License Year October 1, 2006 - September 30, 2007

Have you purchased your new license yet???

REMINDERS

CDFD MEMBERS - Fly Tying Night will resume on October 4th at the Colonie Youth Center, 5 First Street, Latham NY, off Route 2, just east of the Latham Traffic Circle. The evening get going around 6:30 and winds down at 8:30. Secrets shared and help offered. Hope to see some new faces this year.

CDFD Fly Tying Classes - The annual CDFD formal fly tying classes are scheduled to start January 2007 at the Clifton Park & Halfmoon Emergency Corps Building in Clifton Park. The Classes fill quickly, so if you know anyone who may be interested, have them contact Paul Sinicki or Rod Priddle for info. The cost this year is \$65.00 for non members, \$55.00 for members. **This year we have an exciting new tyers manual that will be given to all students including material to tie at least 70 files (14 patterns X 5 each).**

CDFE E-Regular Monthly Meeting September 13, 2006

Meeting started @ around 6:30, with Jack Whiteman in the Fly Tiers Corner working on Salmon River Fly's

The formal meeting was called to order by CDFE President Paul Sinicki.

The meeting thrust consisted of the annual Round Robin of what did you do in the fishing department this summer. There were a number of great stories from the 35 member who were present for the Round Robin. For the record, we had a number of guest, and we hope they liked what they saw and will become members.

Old Business:

- A report was given covering the events of the last Executive Board Meeting.

New Business -

There was a vote by the membership to have an impromptu on the water meeting for September 24th on the West Canada Creek at the Barn Pool. Which is located on the west side of Rt 28 just north of the Rt. 8 intersection. It is marked with a DEC Fishing Access / Parking marker and of course, a BARN. No time was set, but normally one shows up in the early afternoon, fishes a bit to get familiar with the area, break for dinner around 5:30, then get back to the water for the evening hatch.

Next E-Board meeting is 6:30pm, October 23, 2006 at Latham 76 Diner, Latham NY.

Next Regular Monthly meeting is 6:30pm, October 11, 2006 at the Albany Polish Community Center.

Respectfully Submitted
Rodney E Priddle Sr.

CDFE E-Board Meeting September 18, 2006

Meeting started, give or take around 6:30

Present: Paul Sinicki - President, John Prokorym - VP, Rodney Priddle - Secretary, Walter Susko - Treasure.

Old Business

- review of the "Upcoming Events Calendar"
- Pending events reviewed, discussion concerning open dates and program ideas
- Paul is having problems contacting our guest speaker
- Programs agreed upon for balance of year and first 5 months of 07.
- Assignments were given to various members to engage and confirm speakers and tiers.

Reports given on all pending Old Business items

- Club insurance still in progress – will be renewed w/o laps.
- Colonie Youth Center – no info yet on Youth Fly Tying Night – Rod to contact
- CDFE Fly Tying Classes for 07 are going fine.

New business -

- Rod Priddle reported that he will be moving up in the ranks of the Northeastern Council of the Federation of Fly Fishers, and believes that he can do more for all fly fishers at the State, Regional and National level by accepting the new position. Accordingly, he will no longer have the time to commit to doing the CDFE newsletter. His resignation is effective with the publishing of the December newsletter.

Next E-Board meeting October 23, 2006 at 6:30pm Latham 76 Diner, Latham NY.

Respectfully Submitted
Rodney E Priddle Sr.

Up Coming Events Calendar

October 3 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
October 10 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
October 11 Wednesday 6:30 FTC 7:00 Meeting	CDFE Monthly Meeting ~ Polish Community Ctr. Washington Ave. Ext., Albany Region 4 fisheries - Dan Solinski Contact = Steve Lawrence 607-652-2620 FTC – Myler tubing body Streamers – Featured Tier: Paul Sinicki
October 17 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
October 23 Monday	E-Board meeting - Latham 76 Dinner, Latham NY. All members are welcome and encouraged to attend - It's your club, come join us and share your thoughts!!!
October 24 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
October 31 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
November 7 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
November 8 Wednesday 6:30 FTC 7:00 Meeting	CDFE Monthly Meeting ~ Polish Community Ctr. Washington Ave. Ext., Albany William Schoch, from NYS DEC's Region 5 Fisheries Management – Program “Fishing for Trout” FTC Super Dry Flies Featured tier: Walter Susko
November 14 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
Nov 18-19	Somerset, NJ Intl Fly Tying Symposium
November 21 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
November 28 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
December 5 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
December 12 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
December 16 Saturday	CDFE Annual Holiday Party Bob Lindquist – Commercial Fly Tier and Published Author from Long Island - Confirmed PCC is booked for Saturday 12/16 – Buffet Dinner !!! Reserve the Date – Lots Prizes (Just ask Brad)
December 19 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
January 2 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
January 3	Fly Tying Classes Session 1
January 9 Tuesday 6:30	Fly Tiers Guild – Colonie Youth Center , 5 First Avenue, Latham - All CDFE members welcome - come tie what you want, chew the fat, share patterns, tying tips and enjoy the small talk!!!
January 10 Wednesday 6:30 FTC 7:00 Meeting	Dave Brandt – Catskill Fly Tier and Instructor for the Joan Wulff School of Fly Fishing will be our featured speaker doing a program, for which he is famous for, Catskill dry flies. We will also have him tying a Wulff pattern WITH OUT ANY TOOLS, including no VISE!!! FTC Catskill Dries Featured Tier: Dave Brandt

**There are trout in my river whose attitudes,
 Are quite of the blackest ingratitude;
 Though I offer them duns,
 Most superior ones,
 They maintain a persistent Black Gnatitude**

Algebra On A Trout Stream

By Mike Laskowski – Taken from the Tampa Bay Fly Fishing Club Newsletter

With all the new, super strong leaders and leader material on the market, some people are having trouble using the right tippet for the size fly they are fishing, and blaming it on the new fangled leaders.

Some of the old leaders and leader material still on the market are 2 lb. test with a 4x tippet size. The newer materials are 2lb. test with a 7x tippet size. A 4x tippet will cast a size 12 fly, but a 7x tippet will cause all kinds of problems. Yet they are both 2 lb. test!

Choosing the right tippet for your fly shouldn't be determined by lb. test. It is best determined by the diameter of the tippet. You don't have to carry a pocket calculator with you to figure out which size tippet to use, if you follow a few simple rules.

Let's start with leader basics. The tippet is the business end of the leader. This is the end you attach your fly to. A tippet is given an "X" number which is determined by its diameter, such as 1X, 2X, 3X, etc. This number, which is in thousandths, is easy to decipher using a simple formula: $11 - X = \text{DIAMETER}$.

Take for instance a 5X tippet. Using the formula, $11 - 5 = 6$. That means the 5X tippet is .006 in diameter.

The tippet must be attached to the fly you are using. There is a formula for this too. Divide the hook size you are using by 3. For example, if you are using a size 12 fly: $12 \text{ divided } 3 = 4$, so you would use a 4X tippet.

There is some leeway due to different types of flies, wind, and water conditions. If you are using a sparsely tied spinner in a flat calm, you could easily go 1X size lighter.

Signs of using too light of a tippet are the fly spinning and twisting your leader, breaking off flies while casting, and poor turnover of the leader. If any of these are happening to you, go to the next size heavier tippet.

The BACKLASH - Is the official publication of the Capital District Fly Fishers Inc. and is published monthly from September through May, with summer editions as needed.

Submissions for publication **must** be in the editor's hands two (2) weeks prior to the scheduled monthly meeting.

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