



Hammond River Angling Association



OCTOBER 2015 NEWSLETTER

President's Message



This year continues to be a positive year for the HRAA. The dinner in May was one of our most successful to date. Our Hammond River Nature Camp saw great attendance this summer, with most of the spots filled. We also held a kayak fishing derby (run by Joe Tilley) which saw a nice boost in participants, with each participant walking away with some great prizes. As some of you may have noticed, we are also in the midst of a significant wetland restoration project across from the Centre.

As the busy summer season is winding down, it's time for us to move right into planning mode for next year. The dinner committee will begin their plans soon, and there is always room for more volunteers. If being involved in this way interests you, please consider coming to the meetings. Also coming up is our annual whisky tasting event, currently being planned for early February. One of the projects planned is the second phase of the wetland restoration project. We are always interested in knowing what is going on in the watershed – if there are any areas of particular concern, please let us know. Contact Sean at the Centre for further information on any of the above areas.

We have been receiving concerning reports of illegal activities on the river – specifically driving through the river with trucks, 4 wheelers, etc. While I know that enforcement officers have been keeping an eye on things, I would like to encourage everyone to help them where we can. If you see things like this going on, please try to get a license plate number, or a picture, and report it to local enforcement.

Finally, with the fall colors in full force, it's a great time to go for a stroll along the river. You may even get to spot a redd!

Hoping to see you at the Christmas pot luck,

Jody Middleton

Staff Profile- Hannah Bradford (Biologist/Research Coordinator)



Hannah joined the HRAA in May 2015. She graduated in 2013 with a B.Sc. in Environment and Natural Resource Management (specializing in water resources) and is currently in the final stages of completing an M.Sc. in Biology at UNB. Over the past six months Hannah has become an integral member of the HRAA, leading the Hammond River watershed's newest strategic management plan set to be released in 2016. Hannah has become involved with all on-going projects at the HRAA including wetland restoration and the annual fish and salmon population assessments completed through electrofishing and monitoring daily catches at the smolt wheel during the spring smolt sea run. Over the winter, Hannah will complete proposal writing for the HRAA while finishing up data analysis and report writing for this year's projects. Hannah currently lives in Saint John with her partner Bob and her dog, Asia.

Hannah representing the HRAA at the annual St. John River Summit, held at the New Brunswick Museum in Market Square,



2015 Annual Tackle Swap & Sale

The 2nd Spring Tackle Swap & Sale was held the first weekend of May this year. Although the weather was much better this year (freezing rain the previous year), attendance was slow. Those in attendance enjoyed gaining a few new pieces of tackle and sharing some fishing stories.

2015 Fly Casting and Spey Casting Clinics

Fly casting and Spey casting clinics were held at the end of May with professional casting instructors from The Miramichi Fly Casting School. A morning session of single hand fly casting was followed by a BBQ. An afternoon of Spey casting rounded out the day.

June 2015 River Clean Up

The HRAA Spring Clean up was a success with the following areas getting a thorough clean up: Deep Hole upriver to the French Village covered bridge, Crowley's Pool and the Smithtown bridge. Our small group filled a large dumpster from GFL to the top and finished off the day with a well deserved BBQ. Unfortunately, not long after our clean up, garbage quickly began to reappear. In the future, a second clean up later in the season may be required to combat the remnants of summer partying and illegal dumping. The assistance from the volunteers was very much appreciated and we will be looking for more volunteers next year.

2015 Hammond River Classic

The 2015 Hammond River Classic was an amazing success! A huge thank you to all who participated and to all of our wonderful and generous sponsors! Despite forecasts of thunderstorms right up until the morning of the derby we crushed the previous year's numbers with a whopping 49 adults plus 8 kids taking to the water! 57 paddlers is quite an impressive number, and one we hope to build on for next year's derby! This year's winner was Sathe, who borrowed Joe Tilley's Old Town Predator MX for the event. Sathe was the only angler to land 7 different species through the day. The luncheon award went to Steve who landed a 39 inch shortnose sturgeon. Steve knows the Hammond and Kennebecasis rivers perhaps better than anyone else in the event and the local knowledge certainly played a role here! Steve also captured 2nd place with six species landed. Third went to Rene (also 6 species) who visited us from Fredericton in his Hobie. Four anglers landed 6 different species; in all, 10 different species were hooked, showing just how diverse our river system is.

We had a record 8 kids in this event. First time participant Annabelle landed 3 species to not only capture the kids division, but she also beat her Dad, which may be the best part of the day for her!

Overall the event went largely without incident until near the end of the day a motorboat cruised down the Kennebecasis without care for the canoes and kayaks scattered throughout the river. Unfortunately Bob and his grandson were not able to properly orient their canoe in time and got swamped. Bob lost a GoPro as well as some other gear which put a damper on his day.

Bob did win the early bird prize of a rod/reel/line which helped to cheer him up, but the karma gods weren't finished there. Bob was also randomly drawn as the winner of the big prize of the day – and Old Town Predator XL kayak! This more than made up for his misfortune and both he and his grandson were over the moon with excitement about winning the kayak. Bob had been eyeing this exact same boat over the past few months.



Thanks entirely to our sponsors, every participant in the event went home with a prize equal to or above the registration fee of \$30. A goodie bag was prepared to give out in the morning featuring stickers, promotional materials, lures and a \$20 Cabela's gift certificate. Every participant who submitted their e-mails will receive an online subscription to Kayak Angler magazine. Plus of course the prize selected at the end of the day which included paddles, rods/reels, accessories, clothes, hooks and much, much more! Not to mention of course the random draw for the grand prize of the Old Town Predator XL kayak courtesy of Old Town!

If you have suggestions to improve on next year, work for a company who would consider being a sponsor, or are willing to help out please let us know.

Project updates

- ***Public School Education*** (sponsored by the NB Wildlife Trust Fund and the Environmental Trust Fund)

HRAA's "Experience Nature" program educates students from Kindergarten to Grade 12 through lessons on environmental awareness, wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, tree planting and species identification. Lessons also include wetland/watershed tours, fly tying, fishing, tadpole rearing, population monitoring and macroinvertebrate identification. Each lesson is designed to spark the students' interest in nature and the environment.



- ***Hammond River Nature Camp*** (sponsored by the NB Wildlife Trust Fund)

HRAA's goal with this summer educational program is to encourage children to develop respect for our environment, an appreciation for nature, and an understanding of the impact humans can have on their environment. We aim to instill positive naturalist attitudes in campers in a fun, active, outdoor setting. Our core activities include: fishing & fly-tying, kayaking, swimming, field games, and environmental education.

Camp is open to all children entering Grades 1-7. Campers can apply using the convenient on-line registration form via our website (hraa.ca). In addition, interested high school students can apply to be a Counselor-in-Training. Camp was a great success once again this summer with most weeks achieving maximum registration. Many familiar faces returned for a third season of fun, with many new campers attending as well. This year



we continued two programs introduced last year: “Munchkin Camp,” a 4 day camp session for children entering kindergarten this fall; and “Leadership Camp” which was offered to students starting Grade 8 or 9 in the fall. These programmes made camp available to campers who were outside of our age range in previous years. Both of these programs were a great success and will be offered again in 2016.

Thank you to all the camp staff and Counselors-in-Training for all of your hard work! We hope to see many of our staff and campers back next year.

➤ ***Hammond River Water Quality Monitoring Project (sponsored by the Environmental Trust Fund)***

Thanks to our friends at the Environmental Trust Fund, HRAA was sponsored to update its strategic management plan for the watershed (last updated in 2008). Data was collected across the Hammond River watershed during the summer of 2015 and results will be released in March 2016. This management plan takes a comprehensive look at the watershed to identify sources of stress and the condition of the environment. To do this, the report looks at water quality, the impact of human activity, habitat condition, fish populations and the pollution tolerance of benthic macro-invertebrate communities in the streams. The report will serve as a guidance tool for stewards and stakeholders of the watershed and will give the residents of the Hammond River watershed a unique look at the quality of their environment. The management plan will be used to set goals specific to different areas in the watershed that enhance fish populations and restore the natural environment.

➤ ***Hammond River Smolt Assessment (sponsored by the NB Wildlife Trust Fund and the Atlantic Salmon Conservation Foundation)***

Annually, during the spring smolt run, the HRAA implements a smolt wheel upstream of the French Village Bridge. The wheel is checked daily for the duration of the run and the number and size of smolt are recorded and the caudal fin of each smolt is clipped. Smolt are released upstream of the wheel and the number of recaptured smolt are used to help estimate the efficiency of the wheel and the total abundance of smolt in the Hammond River watershed. Since the first implementation of the smolt



wheel in 2013, HRAA has learned about the timing of smolt migration and can now provide reliable estimates of the number of smolt in the watershed (above French Village). The smolt estimate for 2015 was 3,400 (4,850 in 2014). We are very grateful to the Atlantic Salmon Federation for allowing us to use the smolt wheel for another season as this study is essential to having a comprehensive understanding of the Atlantic salmon population in the Hammond River.

➤ ***Ducks Unlimited Wetland Trips (sponsored by Ducks Unlimited)***

HRAA hosts class field trips, in coordination with Ducks Unlimited, to broaden elementary school students’ interest in waterfowl, wetlands and conservation. Field trips teach students about the types of waterfowl, some aspects of their biology, their habitat, food sources and conservation issues. During the tour, students visit a wetland and go critter dipping which gives them a unique hands-on experience.

➤ ***Fish Friends*** (sponsored by HRAA and the NB Wildlife Trust Fund)

Each year HRAA participates in Fish Friends, a program that provides elementary classes (grade 4) with salmon eggs and a refrigerated fish tank so students can watch the eggs hatch right in their classroom. Once the eggs have hatched, the classes return to the Hammond River and release the alevin, all the while



learning about the life cycle of salmon, habitat requirements of fish and the place of fish in the food chain! Thanks to funding from the New Brunswick Wildlife Trust Fund, we will be able to continue this program in 2016 and provide fish eggs and fish release programs for approximately 20 schools in our region.

➤ ***Salmon Population Assessment*** (sponsored by the NB Wildlife Trust Fund)



This project continues to monitor the juvenile Atlantic salmon population of the Hammond River. Electrofishing of designated sites throughout the watershed is currently underway. Our long-term data shows a declining trend in numbers of juvenile Atlantic salmon in the Hammond River and its tributaries. Results from 2014 suggest that the number of Atlantic salmon in the river is slowly declining since the start of data collection in 1979. Results from this year's assessment will be available later this winter. Look for updated results at our Annual General Meeting in February.

➤ ***Wetland Restoration*** (sponsored by the National Conservation Plan)

The HRAA is currently reclaiming a 20 acre fallow pasture with funding provided by the Government of Canada's National Conservation Plan. The objective of this program is to conserve Canada's natural heritage by safeguarding and enhancing biodiversity and ecosystems through conservation and stewardship action. Restoring this property to natural wetland habitat will enable the attenuation and filtration of more water while increasing natural habitat and food sources for species that reside in this area.

Here is the process of restoring a wetland from fallow pasture:

Year 1

- Hay the field, remove all vegetative cover (grasses) and leave a buffer zone next to bodies of water
- Earthwork (plowing, discing, bulldozing)
- Implement sediment structures in low lying areas (sediment fence)
- Creation of vernal pools which work with the natural landscape
- Seed a low lying cover crop (i.e. annual rye)
- Order trees

Year 2

- Tree planting using a variety of native species including Silver Maple, Oak, Serviceberry, Willow, Alder and Red Osier Dogwood
- Sediment structure removal
- Monitoring (tree survival, species recruitment, natural succession of wetland)

HRAA collaborated with Boreal Environmental and the Canadian Rivers Institute during the planning phase of this project.

Featured fly- Chief Needahbeh

In 1962, after fishing on the Miramichi for a number of years, Randy Giffin, Past President of the HRAA, began to look through his many fly tying books for a bright fly to bring salmon up from the depths of many of the deeper pools on the river. He found a streamer, in John Veniard's FLY DRESSERS GUIDE, called the Chief Needahbeh. After deciding that this was the type of fly he was looking for, he experimented with it on a #6 - 4x hook with two inch long yellow and orange feather wings and excluded the jungle cock included on the original pattern as tied by Chief Needahbeh. It proved to be an immediate success and Randy has tied many hundreds of that pattern since.



In 1975, Randy purchased a property on the Hammond River and continued to fish for salmon there as well as on the Miramichi. In 1958 he landed his first salmon on the Hammond and became familiar with many of the pools on the river. One of the better pools was the Titus Mill Pool, a large pool that required long casts. He found that the feather wing Chief would not stand up to the strain of those long casts. This was the beginning of the hair wing version of the Chief using yellow and orange calf tail for the wing. The problem of wing breakage was solved and the Hair Wing Chief became a very successful pattern. It was, in fact, the fly pattern used when the largest salmon recorded to date (32 lbs) was landed on the Hammond River by John Storrie in 1982. The mounted salmon is presently located in our Conservation Centre along with the Hair Wing Chief that it was caught on.

The feather wing version of the Chief is included in FISHING ATLANTIC SALMON - The Flies and Patterns by Joseph D. Bates and Pamela Bates Richards, along with the original version as tied by Chief Needahbeh and a version as tied by Warren Duncan.

Randy is the first to tie the hair wing version of the Chief Needahbeh, which has been quite successful for Atlantic salmon both black and bright. The featherwing and hairwing versions shown below were tied by Randy in 2007.



Upcoming events

- **Annual Redd Count – First 2 weeks of November**
Sean is always looking for volunteers to assist with fall redd counts; it's a great opportunity to walk some spectacular stretches of our river without being harassed by bugs or hot weather. Counts are river flow and weather dependent ...call Sean at the Centre for further information.
- **Annual Christmas potluck – Sunday, December 13th**
This is a great opportunity to join your fellow members of the HRAA in the festive season. There will be lots of great food, good company and a few raffles to round out the event.
- **Scotch 505 – TBA (early February)**
This event sells out every year. Tickets will be offered first to last year's attendees. Any remaining tickets will be distributed first-come, first-serve to those registering their names on a waiting list with Sean at the Centre.
- **Annual General Meeting – TBA**
- **21st Annual Dinner & Auction – Saturday, May 7th**
- **2016 Hammond River Nature Camp – July & August**
- **2016 Hammond River Classic (kayak fishing tournament) – August 24th**



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Thank you to our many sponsors



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Reflections of the Hammond

