13th Annual First Cast MSA

Submitted by Paul Valeri

First Cast MSA has become a Miramichi tradition with eager participation for its free two day program that introduces the ethics of fly fishing and conservation for Atlantic salmon to newcomers of all ages, who arrive in buddy pairings. June 28-29 fielded 22 enthusiastic attendees, many from the Ukrainian communities of Moncton, Riverview, and Fredericton.

The Atlantic Salmon Museum has successfully partnered First Cast with the Miramichi Salmon Association since its inception in 2009. Moderator-Founder, Paul Valeri, kicked off first day, Saturday, with a spirited morning presentation regards program's intentions to welcome life-long active participation in all the Miramichi has to offer. Paul stresses appreciation of Nature to be the secret to becoming effective at becoming fly fisherman who truly understand how we seek to conserve Atlantic salmon.

Inquisitive attendees completed Saturday morning by being given a professional guided tour of the Museum followed by lunch, once again hosted by the most gracious ASM. Then came viewing Joan Wulff's "Dynamics of Fly Casting", followed by usage of fly-o's to begin to develop some basic rhythm for casting line with rod & reel. From there all attendees advanced, with actual full gear provided by MSA, to try their hand at actual fly casting on the home pool of the Museum under the personalized guidance of Hall of Famer, Vince Swazey. Huge shou-out goes to Museum Director, Paige Storey, Museum Guide, Austin Gillespie, and especially to Daphne Nippard, who has tirelessly supported First Cast, MSA for well over a decade.

Sunday the entourage met early at Blackville Irving for caravan to Dewey Gillespie's nearby camp on the Miramichi. Personal guidance was provided by MSA's seasoned volunteers fully engaged with all attendees in the river working on actual fly fishing. Dewey, a colorful man of legend on the Miramichi, boated a crew to across the river, while Paul and Kirk Smith closely supervised the remainder, properly lined up in the pool in front of Dewey's camp. Tasty barbeque lunch prepared and served once again by Jeff Russell, MSA's Coordinator of Special Events.

Of special note this year is how many attendees are remaining in touch with Paul, showing definite interest in returning to the Miramichi, and into being serious about fly fishing. Being stressed is the next vital step so essential to become familiar with driving to actual public pools within the Miramichi system. Begin to work off the MSA website that describes location of certain public pools, come visit them, and get friendly with simple things like parking, boundaries of the pools, and be free to engage with fellow fishermen you meet there!

Lastly, please take the time to see the outstanding video reel shot on Sunday, June 29th by a professional videographer, wife of one of the attendees. First Cast Instagram Reel. A rewarding weekend had by all at this, our 13th Annual First Cast, MSA.