

National Sporting Library Hosts its First Symposium on Fly Fishing



(L to R) Dr. Samuel Snyder, John Ross, Dr. Bryon Borgelt, James Prosek and Hoagy Carmichael, speakers at the symposium (Photo by Douglas Lees)

On Nov. 21, the National Sporting Library in Middleburg, Virginia, held its first symposium on fly fishing titled “A River Never Sleeps: Conservation, History, and the Fly Fishing River.” More than 50 attendees from across the country participated in the event. The symposium was part of the library’s Public Lecture Series made possible by the generosity of an anonymous donor.

Internationally known artist and author James Prosek from Easton, Connecticut, presented a talk entitled “Izaak Walton and Native Trout of the World.” The library has 90 editions of Walton’s *The Compleat Angler*, including a first edition from 1653. For his senior thesis in Yale, Prosek followed Walton’s footsteps throughout his native England. Local writer and activist John Ross of Upperville spoke on Virginia’s state fish, the native brook trout, noting early legislation to protect its habitat dating to the 18th century and discussing Trout Unlimited’s recent habitat restoration efforts. Hoagy B. Carmichael, author, filmmaker and historian from New York, spoke on the Grand Cascapedia, a magnificent Atlantic salmon river in eastern Canada.

The history of fly fishing in America would not be complete without a discussion on the wonderful Au Sable River in Michigan, the home of the founding fathers of Trout Unlimited in 1959. Bryon Borgelt, Ph.D., of Maumee, Ohio, outlined the history of fishing on the river, which was originally home to native grayling. The grayling disappeared in the late 19th century due to overfishing and logging on the river. The day’s program and a concluding panel discussion were moderated by Samuel Snyder, Ph.D., a historian of environmental ethics from Anchorage, Alaska. Dr. Snyder spoke extensively on “Wading through History: Understanding Angling’s Evolving Ethics,” touching upon such issues as whether fly fishermen are responsible for protecting the resource they enjoy and the awareness (or lack thereof) of fly fishing’s history. Snyder will be in residence in spring 2010 at the library as a John H. Daniels Fellow.

For those who missed the symposium, a DVD may be purchased for \$20. For more information, go to www.nsl.org/flyfishingsymposium.html.

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