



MIRAMICHI SALMON ASSOCIATION

Leading River Conservation Since 1953

Press Release: Miramichi River Stories Video Series

5 July 2022

Miramichi Salmon Association

Miramichi, NB

As the foremost salmon conservation organization in the Miramichi watershed since 1953, the Miramichi Salmon Association (MSA) has a long and important history. Our story is inherently intertwined with many of the beloved characters who worked at fishing camps and in the communities that relied on the MSA to help conserve healthy runs of Atlantic Salmon. The MSA Communications Committee has launched an initiative to gather and preserve the oral history of the Miramichi as told by local icons, and to document the long and storied relationship between the local community, the MSA, and Atlantic Salmon.

"These wonderful stories tell about the pleasure and peace that being on the river can bring. It's about being in the wilderness, away from the stresses of everyday life. And many of the experiences described in these stories can still be experienced on the Miramichi today by anyone of any age who enjoys the great outdoors," said Greg Sprague, chair of the MSA Communications Committee. "The video interviews pay tribute to the pioneers who played an important role in creating an industry that provided jobs for outfitters, guides, camp cooks, tackle shops, fly tyers, as well as business for service industries like restaurants, general stores and motels. This salmon angling and tourism-based industry is a critical component of the Miramichi economy to this day."

Beginning in 2018, Greg Sprague and fellow MSA Communications Committee member Dawson Hovey set out to capture these stories on video by interviewing iconic guides, sports and MSA supporters along the Miramichi River. "At the outset, this seemed like a simple project – gather stories and tales from around the watershed, edit them into an entertaining and informative video, and then share the video through our various communications platforms. Once started, however, we realized that there is a lot of 'behind the scenes' effort involved in producing informative and entertaining videos!" said Butch Dalton, MSA Development Coordinator and member of the MSA Communications Committee. Sprague and Hovey gather and review footage after interviews are conducted and identify clips to be used in episodes. The clips are submitted to the MSA office, where MSA staff edit the footage. Following review, episodes are uploaded and shared with MSA supporters through email and social media channels.

The first episode of Miramichi River Stories was shared on Tuesday, June 7th and featured a story from Mervin Green about the elements of a good fishing trip. New episodes will be posted on the first Tuesday of every month. Upcoming episodes will include stories from Bud Bird, Bill McKay, Bimbo Shaw, Donnie Fraser, and Wes McKay.

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Along with the challenge of gathering and editing videos, the MSA Communications Committee has had to navigate issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Meeting in person to gather stories and tales of times-gone-by proved to be a challenge; understandably people were hesitant to meet in person to talk at length. As restrictions loosened, Greg and Dawson found that people were eager to share their memories and more than willing to participate. The result is a collection of amusing tales related to the history of MSA, the Miramichi, and the people that spent a lifetime working and playing here.

“Reflecting on the past 70 years will guide us into the next 7 decades. Thanks to dedicated volunteers like Greg and Dawson, we can preserve these stories and share them widely,” said MSA president Robyn McCallum.

Greg said, “My ultimate goal is to preserve the Atlantic Salmon and the whole Miramichi way of life so that my children and grandchildren and future generations can still experience the joy of being on the Miramichi. One way to get people interested in salmon and river conservation is to educate them about the exciting history of the river and to encourage them to come and see this bit of largely untouched wilderness for themselves - and to then have their own river stories to tell.” These videos are available on the MSA’s Youtube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/miramichisalmonassociation>) and through MSA’s social media channels. For more information, visit www.miramichisalmon.ca.