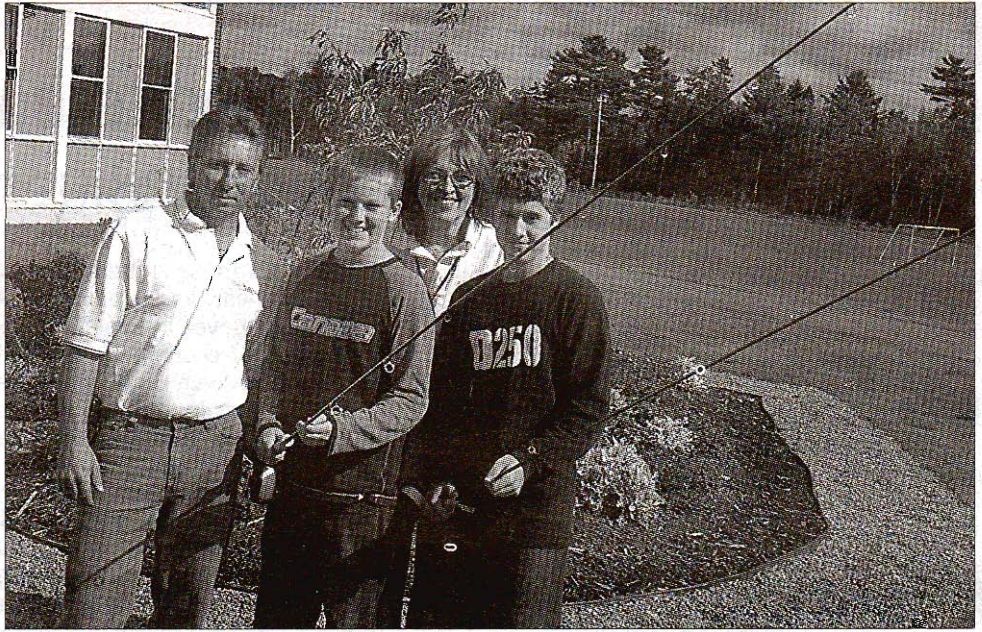


Chester Area Middle School students Colin Moore and Del Swinemar promise to be two of the first students signed up for the school's new fly fishing club. The club, in part, was made possible by private contributions including that of the Gold River Marina, represented here by Darrin Swinimer and Cindy Bradette.



ADAM JACOBS PHOTO

School starts fishing club

By ADAM JACOBS
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CHESTER — Soccer, basketball, volleyball and fly fishing all are traditional after-school extra-curricular activities, at least at Chester Area Middle School (CAMS).

Well, fly fishing isn't exactly a traditional after-school activity but that could soon change if the school's newest club takes off once it's launched later this month.

The plan is to foster this once popular pastime and return it to its past glory.

"There was a time, not too long ago, when you could go up and down the Gold River, say, and find a dozen or more people fly fishing," said Lewis Hinks, regional director of the Atlantic Salmon Federation and club instructor.

The seed for the club was planted about three years ago when Mr. Hinks and CAMS principal and avid fly fisherman John Burke were running a similar club outside the confines of the school.

"We used to meet with a bunch of young fellows a few years ago on the soccer field and teach them the basics of casting," Mr. Burke said. "This is really an extension of that."

The club kickoff is scheduled for October 22 at the school's exploratory days.

It may seem odd to begin such a club in late fall and carry it over into the winter months, given it is traditionally a warm weather sport.

"The idea is to teach kids the basic movements inside, out of the cold and wind," Mr. Hinks said. "Then, when they're comfortable we can bring them into the gym to practice short casting and then we'll go outside when the weather is right."

They would begin with indoor practice rods be-

fore moving onto the real thing.

The club is already headed in the right direction thanks to private donations from summer residents Christopher Wurtz and Curtain Windsor and the Gold River Marina.

The donations allowed for the purchase of six fly rods, three salmon rods and three trout rods.

At least two students have already shown interest in the club.

Grade 9 students Del Swinemar and Colin Moore, already avid fishermen, promise to be two of the first to sign up.

"This is great because it gives people a chance to go fishing who may not normally may not be able to do it otherwise," Mr. Moore said.

Darrin Swinimer, Gold River Marina manager, said in the short time the salmon fishery has been closed on the Gold River, a lot of the past has gone with it.

"There was so much knowledge around then," he said. "Now, with fly fishing having gone to the way-side, that knowledge has gone with it."

The idea is to help return some of that knowledge beginning with this first group of students.

"It's just a really good idea to involve kids in whatever it is you do," said marina officer manager Cindy Bradette.

One of the more attractive things about fly fishing is it's not an exclusive group. You generally don't need any special talents, aside from patience. Anybody can do it, if they take it seriously.

"It's a sport you can do all your life," Mr. Hinks said. "To this day I wouldn't dream about going anywhere, travelling anywhere, without my fly rod."

Mr. Burke agreed.

"It's an obsession."