

## Dave Pushee and Pemigewasset TU Support Inland Fisheries Research

The Inland Fisheries Division relies on dedicated volunteers throughout New Hampshire to assist with electrofishing and habitat, aquatic macro-invertebrate and stream crossing assessments. These devoted volunteers are helping the Department protect and restore aquatic species and ecosystems. Our volunteers often become local stewards, facilitating greater local project ownership. After we conduct initial baseline studies, volunteer groups can help protect pristine areas and address the impacts in disturbed locations. This help often comes from Trout Unlimited chapters, local land protection groups, town conservation commissions and river advisory committees, as well as lake and watershed associations – groups with a shared interest in promoting water quality, healthy ecosystems and open spaces.

**Dave Pushee** of the Pemigewasset Chapter of Trout Unlimited has been the driving force behind generating interest among volunteers and coordinating with Inland Fisheries staff. Dave, who lives in Plymouth, regularly ensures that there are an appropriate number of interested volunteers, willing and ready to assist with collecting scientific data. The chapter has actively supported Fish and Game assessments annually since 2009. This collaborative effort has resulted in a wealth of information from the Lakes Region and central New Hampshire that describes



*Dave Pushee coordinates volunteers to collect scientific data that helps determine the health of wild brook trout in central N.H.*

COURTESY PHOTO

the health of wild brook trout and other fish communities. Dave is also a talented photographer who has provided invaluable documentation of our survey areas; his photos are regularly used in presentations and grant applications.

In 2014, Dave and other members of the Pemigewasset Chapter of Trout Unlimited supported a habitat project in which The Conservation Fund purchased a 5,435-acre parcel abutting over six miles of the White Mountain National Forest in the towns of Campton and Sandwich. Efforts to formally protect this parcel are underway. Over the past two field seasons, the Inland Fisheries Division and Trout Unlimited collected a great deal of information on wild brook trout populations and the condition of aquatic habitat in the area. This data has been used to help justify funding for protection of the property, as well as to implement a large-scale habitat reconnection project. By replacing five road-stream crossings with bridges that provide the free movement of brook trout, this project will ensure that over half of the Beebe River Watershed will have a connected stream network in which wild brook trout can access necessary areas to sustain themselves and thrive. Protection of this property also will help maintain the long-term recreational use of the area.

– Ben Nugent, Fisheries Biologist

