

NEWS CASTER

Overmountain Chapter
Trout Unlimited Ron Harrington, Editor

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COMING EVENTS

September Meeting: 09-08-05

Todd Burleson Memorial
Cleanup: 09-24-05

Board Meeting: 10-03-05

October Meeting: 10-13-05

Board Meeting: 10-31-05

November Meeting: 11-10-05

No December Meeting

Beaverdam Creek Cleanup TBA

**NEXT REGULAR
MEETING IS SET
FOR SEPTEMBER
8TH AT CAMS
CATERING, 203
HIGHPOINT DRIVE,
JOHNSON CITY—
BUFFET DINNER AT
6PM.**

TODD BURLESON MEMORIAL STREAM CLEANUP SET FOR SATUR- DAY, SEPTEMBER 24, 2005

This is the 11th annual cleanup that honors Todd Burleson, an OMTU member, environmentalist, and fishing guide who died in the prime of life. Roan Mountain is a beautiful place to bring your family for a half day of beautifying, socializing, and good food. Many OMTU members consider this the most enjoyable of all the cleanups. Dress appropriately and assemble at the Roan Mountain Community Park, Hwy 143, Roan Mountain at 9:00 a.m. For more information, call Don Kreh (423-349-4637) or Bill Bezell (423-239-6991).



Cub Scout Pack 109 members and parents ready to go at the 13th Annual South Holston Lake and River Cleanup. A total of 17 scouts and parents picked up 24 bags of trash. See page 4 for a report.

TWRA TROUT MANAGEMENT PLAN NEEDS TO ADDRESS MORE IN-FORCEMENT FOR THE SOUTH HOLSTON TAILWATER

By Bob Viers, OMTU President

I have just finished reading the TWRA Proposed Trout Management Plan. The authors have done a good job for the most part. Unfortunately, one critical element appears to have been overlooked. There is no mention of any proposed changes to enforcement of fishing regulations. It appears that significant violations have been occurring on the South Holston Tailwater, and that enforcement is not adequate. The trout management plan for that fishery establishes a slot limit to protect the brown trout brood stock that is important to the survival of the wild trout program in place for that river. In order for the program to succeed, the slot limit **MUST** be enforced. I personally have viewed two violations and reported both to the TWRA hotline. I understand that the two Wildlife Officers in Sullivan County have a lot of regulations to enforce, but lack of enforcement doesn't cut it when we talking about a fishery as important as the South Holston. (See Trout Plan, page 4)

WILL YOU BE A BUDDY TO A NEW MEMBER?

By Perry Rindfleisch
Membership

As new members come into our Chapter, we want them to feel welcome and learn the area. A great way to do this is to link them with a "Buddy" to show them the ropes. All you are required to do is call the new member, introduce yourself and offer to bring them to a meeting, take them fishing, or provide them information about TU and our Chapter.

This is also a great way for you to meet new fishing partners. If interested please send an email to perryrindfleisch@comcast.net to get your name on the Buddy list.

**From October 2004-
through July 2005, 61
new members joined
OMTU**

FISHING THE RIFFLES

With Don Kreh

"Hot" is a good word to describe my fishing success of late using terrestrial patterns...and as you certainly know, "hot" is the best word to describe these dog days of summer of the past weeks!

On a recent early morning, I prepared to wet-wade into a favorite riffle on the Watauga River to escape, at least for a short while, the ninety-degree temperatures. Taking Charles Martin's advice from his "master minute" at a recent meeting at Cams Catering, I stopped to take notice of my surroundings...water, sky, temperature, etc. I noticed a lot of 7X tippet-like material draped over some rocks and hanging from some trees and bushes, but didn't give it a great deal of thought. Charles says to take notice of environmental factors and to take these into account before you decide what fly or lure to use. I was too eager and ready to wade right in and get one hooked and ...as my son says..."dry one off" to pay much attention to that stuff on the rocks and trees. Although the water was a frigid "bottom-of-the-dam-cold," it felt so good after a hot sleepless night! Fog was still on the water and the cool air was moving slowly down the river, continually washing over me. What a great feeling!

A couple of small rainbows were interested in the bead-head nymph that I was offering, but this action just stopped dead as a door nail as the morning progressed and the air temp warmed. I switched to other flies in my fly box, but the action had just turned as cold as the water surrounding me then nearly numb legs. Frustration soon followed as literally the entire riffle became alive with feeding fish! I tried a sulfur pattern, midges, various nymphs and other dries, different sizes, without any success. Many fish were just rolling over almost within reach of my fly rod, but they sure weren't interested in anything that I was throwing at them. It looked like it was

going to be "one of those days"!

My lower body was cool, okay let's say cold, but I was starting to get hot under the collar. Why could I not find anything to interest these fish that appeared to be on a feeding frenzy? Well, some of that hot under the collar blood apparently worked its way upstream to some of my gray matter, because I finally thought to look for a terrestrial of some sort in my fly box. There, mashed into the corner, was the only thing I had: a little ole beat up black ant that had been chewed on during a previous trip last year. It looked pretty sad when tied onto my 5X tippet! Surely this was not going to work either. I cast out that miserable looking little ant letting it dead drift down river and lo and behold there was an immediate "bam" and a feisty brown was on before the float had gone even 20 feet. I hooked and released a nice rainbow on the very next cast. I thought, "Hey...maybe this really will be one of those days!" And it turned out to be just that... a truly great morning.

That little ole ant continued to do the trick even after it just looked like a black nondescript piece of fuzz. Finally after bringing quite a few fish to hand, that ant gave up the ghost and turned into a bare hook. So I waded out... cool and collected and headed for home and the fly tying vice. Needless to say the fly box has been well stocked with a nice selection of newly tied ants that have fooled many nice browns and rainbows during the past few weeks.

A Watauga River brook trout has not yet showed itself on the end of my line. I'm interested to know whether any of you guys or gals have hooked into a stocked brookie yet. (See **Fishing the Riffles**, page 3)

Officials estimate that over 1000 persons participated in the 2005 South Holston Lake and River Cleanup. Approximately 47 tons of trash was collected.

Fishing the Riffles (from page 2)

I presume TWRA did stock some this year as they had earlier been planning to do, but I have not heard any reports of any catches.

Oh, you have probably guessed by now, and I did realize at the time, that the 7X tippet-like material draped over the trees, bushes and rocks was spider web filament. Had I paid more attention at the time, I would have been thinking spiders, bugs---terrestrials before I even got my feet wet! I should have been thinking bugs early in my fly selection! Charles, please give me another chance to do better.

Brian Wilson at Mahoney's says that terrestrials should stay hot for several more weeks. Anything buggy ought to work well. Don't forget the hoppers either. Brian says to "dead drift your terrestrials if you are out in the middle of the river." He reports having some "nice fish come four and five feet off the bottom to take a well presented beetle." Brian's advice for bank side conditions under trees and bushes is to "make your presentation with a good little plop that will attract nearby fish." He says, "It works all the time."

Well, I better saw this off for now. See you in the riffles.

Best Regards, Don Kreh

Farewell Ken Chase

Ken Chase and his wife, Vickie, are moving to New Cumberland, PA shortly and thus will be leaving our club. Ken's leadership and efforts on behalf of OMTU will be sorely missed, but we're sure he will continue his conservation and fly fishing interest in the limestone streams of south central Pennsylvania.

Ken Chase returned to the Tri-Cities in August 1994 after completing twenty-seven years in the United States Navy. He retired with the rank of Captain. He joined the Chapter in 1994

and served as Vice-President and Program/Membership Chairman in 1995 and as President from 1996 to 1999. He served as President again when the Chapter was reactivated in November 2002 until March 2004. Ken received the Tennessee Conservation League "1998 Water Conservationist of the Year Award" for work with Boone Watershed Partnership, Adopt-A-Watershed and Trout Unlimited. Under Ken's leadership the Chapter received Trout Unlimited's "Silver Trout Award" in 1997 for the Southeast Region for habitat and stream bank improvement efforts. The Chapter also received Tennessee Conservation League's "1997 Outstanding Conservation Organization Award" and Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation "Aquatic Resources Preservation Award" in 2003. He was instrumental in completing several Embrace-a-Stream projects during his membership.

Thanks Ken for your many accomplishments. Tight lines.

GREAT PROGRAM SET FOR SEPTEMBER MEETING!

Our speaker for the September 8, 2005 regular meeting will be Bob Brien. His topic will be "Fly Fishing Key West and the Lower Keys." So mark your calendar, tie a ribbon on your pinkie, leave a note on the refrigerator and plan to attend!



Mad Branch Creek Watershed Study Underway By Bill Beazell

On August 11, the City of Kingsport, led by Ron Wankel, Waste Water Manager, hosted a Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation Watershed meeting concerning Mad Branch Creek, which originates from a number of springs under Fort Henry Mall, and eventually meanders down to the South Holston River in Kingsport.

Dredging to control flooding, bank erosion, and wastewater runoff have left the stream in very poor condition, and efforts are underway to study the situation and develop a plan for improvement.

Approximately 25 persons attended, including representatives of TDEC, TVA, RC&D Council, Eastman Chemical, TU, and others.

An application for a \$20,000 state grant has been submitted, and depending on the results of this first effort, additional grants are available.

South Holston River Tailwater Cleanup Successful

The 13th annual South Holston Lake and River Cleanup was held on August 13, 2005. OMTU, in cooperation with the South Holston Ruritan Club, coordinated the cleanup for the Tailwater. Sixty-seven persons, including volunteers who set up and manned two registration sites, participated. Eight OMTU members were involved. One hundred and nine bags of trash, and 26 old tires were collected. Most of the trash was found at parking places and bridges adjacent to the river.

Thanks and tip of the hat to the TVA, the Hickory Tree Rescue Squad, and Roger Cox for providing services that made this possible.

THE SCIENTIFIC ANGLER

“Although color patterns of artificial lures can be important under certain conditions, they are seldom as critical as anglers believe...If you know what fish are feeding on, try to approximate the size. If you don't know, try lures of varying size. Size is generally much more significant to a fish than color.”

Sosin and Clark, *“Through the Fish's Eye,”* Harper and Row, 1973

The Tennessee Bottle Bill Project website is <http://www.tnbottlebill.org>. Look!

(Trout Plan, from page 1)

I hope that TWRA will encourage the authors to revisit the draft of their Proposed Plan and include more enforcement for the South Holston.

Note: The above comments were taken from an e-mail that Bob sent to TWRA. The TWRA press release and the proposed plan can be accessed at <http://tennessee.gov/twra/troutpressrel.html>. Written comments will be accepted until November 30, 2005. You can also request a copy by calling (615) 781-6575. **(Editor)**

New Law Allows Citizens to Comment on Water Permits

A new Tennessee law was passed this year that will allow citizens to comment on pollution and water quality permits for the first time in 30 years.

For more information, visit www.tcwn.org.

Source: [Appalachian Voice](#)

NEWS CASTER

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The
Mailing
Address
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TDEC Watauga River Watershed Meeting

By Gary Barrigar

As the purpose of TU is “conserving, protecting and restoring North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds,” the Overmountain Chapter continues to be involved as a positive force concerning watershed issues in our area.

Six members from the chapter attended the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation's Watauga River Watershed Meeting on August 8, 2005 in Mountain City. Tennessee has identified 54 watersheds within the state and every 5 years reports on each specific watershed. The fifty or so agency representatives, government officials, conservation groups and private individuals in attendance were able to connect and discuss various issues.

The five-year report on Watauga provided some interesting and valuable information. TDEC made use of exhibits, maps and displays of data collected. The Boone Watershed Partnership and Buffalo Creek Watershed Alliance displays provided information about the function of this volunteer watershed group and several Johnson County residents expressed an interest in forming a watershed group there.

The most valuable part of the meeting was that it provided a forum for discussion of water quality in the watershed among attendees. There was no opportunity to discuss the cattle feeding operation, which threatens tributaries of Roan Creek.

Fish Kill in Virginia's Shenandoah River Wipes Out Bass and Other Fisheries for the Next 3-5 years

According to a July 2005 News Release from the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), a “persistent fish kill has severely reduced the adult smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish population in 100 miles of the South Fork and Mainstream Shenandoah River. Fisheries biologists estimate that 80% of the adult smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish have died. The good news is that young smallmouth bass and redbreast sunfish have not been affected, but replacing the quality size smallmouth that have perished will take 5-10 years.”

Fish began dying in late April following “significant” rains. The fish exhibited bacterial sores that were deemed to be secondary to an unidentified “stressor,” which compromises the fish's resistance and make them susceptible to bacterial infection.

Several scenarios are being examined that might have caused this. “The most plausible of these would suggest that several natural environmental factors combined with water quality impacts associated with excess nutrients might be the culprit. Many tributaries of the South Fork Shenandoah suffer from nutrient overload, which can cause algal blooms and excessive aquatic weed growth, which at times can degrade water quality and stress fish. To further complicate issues, stream bank erosion, runoff from parking lots, rooftops, roads, and pesticide/herbicide runoff can also negatively contribute to stream health.”

According to [Appalachian Voice](#), “Experts suspect one cause of the fish kill can be found in the massive industrial poultry farms that release their waste into the river. A large runoff of waste, fertilizer and sediment from these operations in April has been linked to the collapse of the fishery.” The land along the affected streams is primarily agricultural, with more than 900 farms in the valley.

Could this happen to one or more of our favorite trout streams in our neck of the woods? You bet! We must remain vigilant, and keep a close eye on our streams. The OMTU Stream Watch Program could serve us well in this respect by continually monitoring designated streams. State and federal agencies usually do not have enough personnel to adequately monitor streams. In the Shenandoah Valley, for example, the Department of Environmental Quality [had only two biologists for river monitoring in 14 counties](#). The agency relies on citizen monitoring groups to help. See the August issue of the [NewsCaster](#) for a list of OMTU StreamWatch leaders or call Bill Beazell (276) 239-6991.

We must also work together with all citizens living in northeast Tennessee and southwest Virginia to prevent and reduce nutrient runoff. The best way to improve water quality, according to VDGIF, is “To restore vegetated buffer zones along all streams and drainages in the watershed. These ‘riparian’ zones are natural filters that help remove excess nutrients, sediment, and other pollutants from our waterways.”

Programs are available that provide financial and technical assistance to landowners in restoring these buffer zones. Interested persons should contact the local Soil and Water Conservation District, the Natural Resource Conservation Service, or the respective state fish and wildlife department.

Ron Harrington, Editor