

NEWS CASTER

Overmountain Chapter

Trout Unlimited Ron Harrington, Editor
omtinfo@aol.com

Visit our Web Site at omtu.org

Volume 12, Issue 1

January 2007

HAPPY NEW YEAR!



CONTENTS

Coming Events:	1
Chemical Spill Contained:	1
Road to Nowhere Status:	1
2006 OMTU Volunteer Report:	1
President's Corner:	2
Clean Water Act Legislation:	2
Implications of 2006 Election:	3
TU and Youth Education:	3
Global Warming Effects:	4
Volunteers for Merit Badge:	4
Stream Cleanup \$ for VA:	4

COMING EVENTS

Regular Meeting:	01-11-07
BOD:	02-01-07
Regular Meeting:	02-08-07
BOD:	03-01-07
Regular Meeting:	03-08-07

The January 11, 2007 Meeting will be held at Sunny's Cafeteria, 601 Spring Street, Johnson City, TN. A buffet dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by a short business meeting at 7:00 p.m., then a program. See Page 2 for Program details.

VOLUNTEER REPORT FOR 2006

By Randall Rogers, Treasurer

During our 2006 year, OMTU members contributed 3,277 volunteer hours of time towards OMTU projects and activities.

Conservation:	1,718
Special Events:	299
General Ops:	700
Education:	298
Travel:	262

The total hours are about 3% higher than last year. The value of the total hours, using a Federal guideline of \$18.05 per hour, comes to \$59,150. Thanks to all members who gave of their time and effort this year.



The VA Dept. of Environmental Quality and Dept. of Conservation and Recreation have announced a \$27.5 million plan to clean up Beaver and Little Creeks in Washington County and Bristol, VA. Above is a typical section of Beaver Creek as it flows through farmland where wading and runoff from livestock manure contaminates the water. See story on page 4.

CHEMICAL SPILL QUICKLY CONTAINED

Thanks to a quick and effective response by local authorities, a potentially disastrous chemical spill on New Years Day at the Tri-Cities Plating in Elizabethton was contained and cleaned up before causing any serious environmental damage. The spill involved about three hundred gallons of two highly toxic chemicals, nickel sulfate and nickel chloride, some of which went into a ditch and nearby storm drain only a few blocks from the Watauga River. It's good to know that systems were in place to deal with such an occurrence, thus preventing another major fish kill in the Watauga River, one of the premier trout streams in the area. Please join me in applauding the City of Elizabethton for this accomplishment.

This "near miss" should serve as a reminder that we must remain diligent—we should never let down our guard when it comes to protecting our wetlands and streams. TU members should continue to push for public policy and laws that assure that our cold-water streams will remain clean and clear for generations to come!

Source: George Grant, Bristol Herald Courier, January 4, 2007

STATUS REPORT ON THE "ROAD TO NOWHERE"

By Bob Fondry

The following update was provided by Bob Miller of the National Park Service: In early 2006, the public was given an opportunity to comment on the future prospects of this proposed road in Swain County, NC. These comments were solicited in order to complete an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for this road construction project.

The NPS staff in Atlanta completed their review of these comments and included them in the final EIS report. The EIS was sent to NPS Headquarters office just 2 weeks ago. The NPS leadership should now select a preferred solution to this protracted activity. Due to changes in leadership for both the Department of Interior and the National Park Service this decision may take a while as the new personnel must have the opportunity to learn about and understand this issue.

It is worthy to note that with the election of Heath Shuler to the US Congress, the outlook for this issue is (See **Status Report on "Road to Nowhere,"** page 3)

FY 2006 OMTU Board and Officers

Officers:

- President: Perry Rindfleisch
- Vice President: T.A. Smith
- Treasurer: Randall Rogers
- Secretary: Bob Sherill
- Immediate Past President: Bob Viers

Board Members:

- Marcia Carter
- Bill Bezell
- Bob Fondry
- Charles Martin
- T. A. Smith
- Ron Harrington
- Gary Barrigar

Program Set for January 11, 2007 Meeting

The speaker for our January 11, 2007 meeting will be Katherine Sells of the Soil Conservation District of Sullivan County, TN. This a USDA agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service(NRCS). Katherine will tell us about how this agency focuses on improving water quality.

The President's Corner

By Perry Rindfleisch

Members and Friends:

Happy New Year 2007!

I hope this finds all of you recovering well from the Holidays and looking forward to some fishing this winter or early spring. It will be interesting to see what impact our warm weather will have on the brown trout spawn and early quality of fishing in our streams.

Our chapter has submitted an Embrace-A-Stream grant from Trout Unlimited National requesting \$9,940 to be used to rebuild the Brook Trout barrier in Hampton Creek. The old one has once again failed due to settling and erosion allowing Rainbow Trout to migrate upstream into the prime spawning area for Southern Appalachian Brook Trout. Since they spawn at different times this is a threat to the Brookies. Since Hampton Creek is one of the premier streams that breed wild Southern Appalachian Brook Trout, TWRA, NFS, TN Division of Wild Areas (part of TDEC), Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy (which manages this tract of land for the state of Tennessee) and two chapters of Trout Unlimited are working together to reconstruct this fish barrier to keep the two species apart.

This is a really exciting project that will bring the Cherokee Chapter in Greeneville and Overmountain Chapter together on a sizeable project and allow us to meet and get to know our trout unlimited neighbors to the west.

We should hear from TU National in February about our grant request; and our tentative goal is to complete the project this summer. We hope you will plan to join the team in bringing this project to successful completion. We will need all the hands we can muster. You will be notified about the workdays in advance. We also need assistance with our public relations effort in eastern Tennessee, which is an integral part of the grant request.

Stay well and I hope to see all of you at one of our spring meetings.

Perry

Legislation Before Congress to Undo Court rulings that Damaged the Clean Water Act

Congressman James Oberstar (D-MN) has introduced legislation to undo recent rulings by the U.S. Supreme Court that has "watered down" the Clean Water Act of 1972. For example, one ruling declared that "isolated, non-navigable, intrastate wetlands" were no longer protected by the act, thus clearing the way for developers.

The legislation is called the Clean Water Authority Restoration Act (HR 1356). A companion bill has been introduced in the Senate By Russell Feingold (D-WI). The intent of this bill is to reinstate the federal clean water protections of the original act.

OMTU members and friends: Write of call your members of the Senate and House today and ask that they support this legislation.

"Clean water is essential to all life. Since the Clean Water Act became law in 1972, it has been our first line of defense against water pollution and wetlands development."

John Flicker

Audubon, January-February 2007



Cattle grazing along an unprotected section of Beaver Creek near Wallace, VA (Washington County VA). See story on page 4.

2006 ELECTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

"The implications of this election go far beyond partisan score-keeping. It appears that voters rejected extremism in national policy and restored the balance that promises full and open debate on crucial issues, including environmental protections. That bodes well for the health of resources we all depend upon."

"The challenge now is to rise above partisanship and enact policies that protect our natural resources while addressing critical energy problems. Voters want solutions and an end to a special interest-dominated energy policy that has consisted of little more than drilling, despoiling and denial. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle can meet voter expectations by blazing the trail to a clean energy future that protects human health, wildlife and treasured places."

"We look to the new Congress and its leaders to offer constructive dialog over dogma, and solid solutions over sound bites. Now is the time for real and lasting progress on energy and other priority conservation concerns:

- Combating global warming, while preparing for its already escalating consequences;
- Safeguarding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge;
- Ensuring protection of our endangered species;
- Adequately funding enforcement of federal environmental regulations and legislation, conservation programs, and essential, overdue upkeep of national parks and refuges; and
- Protecting and restoring wetlands vital to environmental and economic health.

"Audubon is eager to work with the new Congress to bridge partisan divides and sup-

TROUT UNLIMITED'S VISION

"By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters."

port the forward-looking policies needed to protect our natural heritage. Conservation is a cherished part of America's values -- with the new balance in Congress, our lawmakers have a chance to show that they share those values with the voters they serve."

John Flicker, President, Audubon Society

Source: Audubon, November-December, 2006

TU AND YOUTH EDUCATION

"A generation ago, 60 percent of our population grew up on farms or in rural areas. Today, over 80 percent of our children spend their formative years in cities and suburbs. Youth in urban and disadvantaged areas have become increasingly disconnected from the fragile system of natural resources that sustains our landscapes. Trout Unlimited's youth education initiatives seek to address this problem. Acting as camp counselors, casting instructors, fly-tying teachers and mentors, TU members volunteer over 38,000 hours of their time every year—the equivalent of 20 full-time educators—to introduce young people to conservation and fly fishing."

John Gale, Manager of Volunteer Operations and Membership Services, TU

CHECKING THE PULSE ON DIDYMO

>According to TWRA, stream monitoring has shown that the "Didymo" plague, so far, has had no adverse affect on the trout fisheries in the Norris, South Holston, or Wilbur tailwaters.

>Didymo can live up to 40 days out of water under damp conditions.

WANT TO BUY OR SELL PROPERTY?

Call Dempsey Shell, Shell & Associates Real Estate, (423) 547-9377. 10% of net will be donated to OMTU.

REPORT VIOLATORS!

Call TWRA Hotline at 800-332-0900

You can help TWRA game and fish officers with their role of enforcement of the Tennessee fishing regulations by reporting violations to the TWRA Hotline. They need "real-time" information such as nature of violation, date, location, vehicle description, license plate numbers and so forth.

Status Report on "Road to Nowhere" continued:

subject to the consideration of his thoughts and desires. Congressman Shuler is on record as favoring a cash settlement rather than road construction.

"We've said from the very beginning that we think the road has the appropriate name. We don't need to build that road. The appropriation to build that road is now a dead issue."

Congressman Heath Shuler (As quoted by the Associated Press)

Renew your Trout Unlimited membership today!

Become an active member by attending meetings and participating in OMTU activities such as stream cleanups and those aimed at promoting conservation of our wetlands and streams.

Volunteers Needed for Boy Scouts of America Merit Badge University

By J.V. Dollard

The ESTU-sponsored BSA Merit Badge University is scheduled for January 20, 2007 in the Culp Center Ballroom on the ETSU Campus. Volunteers with fly-fishing and fly-tying expertise are again needed to assure success for the Fly-Fishing Merit Badge component. Specifically, four volunteers, two for the morning, and two for the afternoon, would be great assuming that the class is the same size as last year. The big segments of the program are casting, knot tying, and fly tying. Topics for this merit badge include fishing safety, fly-fishing equipment, knots, casting, flies, fly tying, and conservation. These topics will fill the day and provide for plenty to do. Identifying aquatic insects may be done if resources permit, but actual fishing cannot be carried out.

The Ballroom is next to the cafeteria and provides an excellent PR opportunity for OMTU. Plan now to help out!

For more information or to volunteer, contact me at jvdollard@earthlink.net. Thanks!

State of Virginia Presents Plan to Clean up Beaver Creek and Little Creek

In early December Virginia state officials presented to the public a \$27.5 million plan to clean up Beaver and Little Creeks that flow through Washington County VA and the Bristol area (and eventually into the Holston River system). The multi-year clean up will focus on reducing bacterial contamination from human and animal waste. Both streams flow through farmland where cattle and other livestock pollute the streams by wading or through runoff contaminated by manure. Believe it or not human waste enters these creeks through faulty septic systems or sewage pipes that empty directly in the streams. Residents had until January 2007 to comment on the plan.

In a December 12, 2006 editorial, the *Bristol Herald Courier* urged residents to "buy into the plan and take advantage of the grant funds and tax breaks. Neither the cost nor the timeline should discourage these efforts. Clean water isn't a nicety; it's a necessity."

These creeks are so polluted that they are on federal and state lists of impaired or "dirty" waterways. The goal is have the creeks "clean" by 2019.

Source: *Bristol Herald Courier*, Tuesday, December 12, 2006

ON GLOBAL WARMING AND THE EFFECTS ON TROUT FISHING

"Global warming will reduce the coldwater fish habitats of the world in size and quality. Thus the habitats of those fish on which the sport of fly fishing has historically depended will also be reduced."

A study by the EPA predicts that a 4.5 increase in average global temperature over the next 70 years could cut the habitats of trout by 25-30% nationwide. In the northeastern U.S., this could be as high as 86%

Source: John Randolph, "Global Warming and Trout," The Flyfishman, September, 2006.

STREAM CLEANUP SCHEDULE

Check this spot in future issues for the 2007 schedule.

I appreciate and thank those of you who helped with the cleanups in 2006. We had a good year and the selected streams sure look better; and we have helped to improve the overall quality of the streams and the fishing experience.

Bob Fondry, OMTU Steam Cleanup Coordinator



STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

Prevent the transport of nuisance species.
Clean all recreational equipment.
Particularly waders/boots.

www.ProtectYourWaters.net

