

NEWS CASTER

Overmountain Chapter
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Visit our website at omtu.org

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Coming Events

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Meeting:	01-15-09
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The January Meeting, set for Thursday, January 15, 2009, 6:00 p.m., will be held at our new location: House of Ribs, 3100 Kingsport Hwy, Johnson City, TN. This is state route 36.

OMTU is a proud member of the Boone Watershed Partnership

Trout Unlimited is North America's leading Coldwater fisheries conservation organization, with more than 150,000 members dedicated to the protection and restoration of trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.

Start the New Year by attending the January 15, 2009 regular meeting.

Program:

OMTU member Bob Viers will be our speaker. His presentation—entitled “Montana Ecstasy”—will be about fishing in Montana. Bob will cover several rivers. The title suggests that this should be a very interesting program. Bob always does a great job.

Redington Rod, Reel and Case to be raffled

This will be your last chance to win the Redington 9-wt. rod, reel and case that we are raffling off. The winner will be drawn at the meeting. To date we have only sold 12 tickets so the chances of winning are very good. We will sell additional tickets before the raffle is held. This is a \$450.00 value!!! All proceeds benefit the chapter.

\$10.00 Rebates to be issued for those who purchased TNTU plates

This will be one of the next two meetings when we will issue \$10 bills for rebates to those who purchased TN TU plates. Not everyone who purchased a plate might want a rebate but some have asked about it already. Members can only get the rebate by attending either the January or March meetings. We will have a list of all chapter members who purchased a plate so your name needs to be on the list in order to get the \$10 bill.

2009 is the 50th anniversary of the founding of Trout Unlimited. Help celebrate by becoming more active as a member—attend meetings, help with cleanups and stream restoration projects, make a monetary contribution to TU campaigns, advocate for legislation that will protect wetlands and streams, introduce someone to trout fishing.

Rocky Fork Saved

The Conservation Fund and the U.S. Forest Service have purchased the 10,000-acre property known as Rocky Fork from New Forestry, LLC. The deal was closed on December 16, 2008.

The 10,000-acre tract includes 4,000 undeveloped mountain acres in Greene County and had been considered the "the largest high-elevation, single-ownership holding" in the eastern United States. Rocky Fork is also the largest unprotected tract in the Appalachian Mountains. It includes 16 miles of trout streams and represents 2.2 percent of the "prime bear breeding habitat" in the U.S. and is home to the endangered peregrine falcon.

As part of the overall acquisition, The Conservation Fund acquired 7,387 acres, which the organization will temporarily hold as it raises money to transfer this portion of the property to the state of Tennessee and the U.S. Forest Service for permanent ownership and management. The U.S. Forest Service acquired an additional 2,237 acres of the Rocky Fork tract, which is now part of the Cherokee National Forest.

(Continued on page 3)

FY 2009 OMTU Board and Officers

Officers:

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

Board Members:

- Bill Bezell
- Bob Fondry
- Ron Harrington

Meeting Dates for 2009

January 15

March 19

May 21

July 16

September 17

November 19

The 2009 schedule is also posted on the OMTU website calendar.

Make your plans now to attend

WANT TO BUY OR SELL PROPERTY?

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

The President's Corner

By Perry Rindfleisch

Our calendars and thermometers tell us it's January but we are coming up on the middle of our fiscal year. Lots of new things are happening within our chapter:

You will note a new location for our meetings at the House of Ribs in Johnson City. With a fixed price of \$18.50 this is more luxurious than Golden Corral but we will have a quiet room in which to listen to our speakers as well as enjoy a delicious dinner.

Please join us at our new location

Our mid-meeting activity for February is actually in January. We are planning to go to the Charlotte, NC fly-fishing show on Saturday January 31st. This was suggested by member Lynn Smith and agreed to by the board. We hope to car pool but will need to know how many are going at some point before the date. Charlotte is almost a 4 hour drive so plan on leaving about 6 AM, walking the show from about 10 AM until 2 PM then returning to Johnson City by about 6 PM.

This is a large show full of numerous display booths and opportunities for "hands on" things, too. You will see everything that is new in fly-fishing gear, flies, places to go and things to do.

Bob Viers is doing a wonderful talk on Montana fly fishing this month so if you ever wanted to know about this abundant area of fishing please come on Thursday to hear him. He will be speaking about several rivers in the state with photos of what they are like.

Our chapter is starting a new initiative that you will be interested in. For years we have held stream cleanups to pick up trash from our rivers and streams. As rewarding as these cleanups are, we need to get upstream in order to try to prevent litter in addition to picking it up. In partnership with the Boone Watershed Partnership we are starting the Eastern Tennessee Anti Litter Initiative with property signs that say: Litter hurts everyone, please don't. These signs

say: **Litter hurts everyone, please don't.** These signs will be free to landowners who want to post them in an effort to raise awareness of how litter hurts.

Please come to the meeting to see a mockup of the sign and make suggestions prior to final printing.

Stay well and stay warm.

Perry

Lost and Found:

I found a nice landing net in the trophy section of the Watauga on Sat., Dec. 20. If someone lost one they should call me at 423-723-0404. Thanks. Rick Currie

A recent poll of 400 licensed hunters and anglers in Colorado reveals that 71 percent of them strongly believe the federal government should take more steps to protect wildlife and fish habitat from oil and gas extraction. The poll, conducted by Harrisonburg, Va.-based Response Management, sought out the opinions of hunters and anglers in Colorado, Wyoming, Montana and New Mexico about energy development activities in the Rocky Mountains and its possible impacts on hunting and fishing. Source: TU news release

OMTU Board announces meeting leaders and program planners for 2009

January 2009: Bob Viers
March 2009: Charles Martin
May 2009: Ron Harrington
July 2009: Bob Fondry
September 2009: Bob Sherrill
November 2009: T.A. Smith

If you have any ideas for a meeting contact any of these people or e-mail Ron Harrington at omtuinfo@bvunet.net

Rocky Fork (continued from page 1)

When this land became available for purchase, a broad-based coalition of local, state and federal leaders sprang into action to save it because of the property's natural resource value and importance. The U.S. Forest Service ranked Rocky Fork as its top acquisition priority in the nation. The Tennessee congressional delegation advanced the project by securing Land and Water Conservation Fund dollars for the U.S. Forest Service's acquisition of Rocky Fork.

The Tennessee Heritage Conservation Trust Fund—which provided a grant to aid in the purchase—is interested in opening discussions concerning possible land exchange opportunities, in which the U.S. Forest Service could take ownership of additional Rocky Fork property by, in part, releasing some of its other local property deemed less strategic for management back into private ownership.

The Fund also has worked with a team of local leaders interested in increasing Rocky Fork's and the region's importance as a gateway to the Southern Appalachian Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina. "We've made a commitment to this community - that together, we will forge a conservation solution that enhances the local environment and economy," says Rex Boner, vice president and southeast representative for The Conservation Fund. "Even as we celebrate this milestone, our work continues. Rocky Fork is an important part of the heritage of Tennessee and we're receiving widespread support not just in the state, but also in the region and nationwide. We need a continued coordinated effort across multiple levels of government to secure funding so that Rocky Fork can be fully protected for future generations."

Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy are leading critical local conservation efforts, rallying community support and raising public and private funds.

"Acquisition of the Rocky Fork tract has been a goal of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) since the Appalachian Trail (A.T.) received federal recognition as the nation's first national scenic trail more than 40 years ago," said ATC Executive Director David Startzell.

OMTU applauds those who worked so diligently to make this happen. By any measure, Rocky Fork is huge. Not just in acreage, but also in value to the environment, the economy and the public.

Sources: [The Greeneville Sun](#) and a Conservation Fund News Release

Below: Two hikers stroll along the banks of Rocky Fork



REPORT LITTERBUGS!

CALL TDOT AT 1-877-854-8837

- Tn License Plate #
- Type/make of Vehicle
- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident
- Type of litter

REPORT FISH AND GAME 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.

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.

Help save our environment by participating in Tennessee's Household Hazardous Waste Program (HHW)

When you look in your garage, under your sink, in the basement or shed, do you see lots of old chemicals, containers of dirty paint thinner, old computers or TVs, unwanted pesticides, and other unusable household chemicals? If the answer is "Yes," you may be ready for a household hazardous waste (HHW) collection. **Tennessee has a mobile HHW collection service that goes from county to county every Saturday from mid-March to mid-November.**

HHW is any unwanted or spent household product that can catch fire easily (flammable), eat away at or irritate living tissue (corrosive), react violently with water or other chemicals (reactive), or is poisonous to humans and animals (toxic). Usable household products may exhibit hazardous properties but until they become a waste they are not appropriate for the household hazardous waste program.

The average home in Tennessee produces 20 pounds of household hazardous waste each year. Typical items to dispose of include cleaning fluids, pesticides, mercury thermometers and thermostats, swimming pool chemicals, paint thinner and automotive fluids. Some items that are accepted but may be recycled locally and on a year-round basis are used oil, batteries, used antifreeze, propane cylinders, paint, fluorescent bulbs and electronics. Many of these items are commodities and may generate revenue for the local collection site.

For more information, go to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation web site and click on "Hazardous Waste"

Electronic recycling site to open in Gray, TN

Electronic Manufacturers Recycling Management Company LLC will open an electronics recycling site in Gray, TN beginning January 15, 2009. This is one of two locations in TN and 280 nationwide. MRM was founded by Panasonic, Sharp, and Toshiba. Consumers can drop off any of these companies' electronic products free. MRM is also committed to eliminating the export of hazardous electronic waste to developing countries. For more information and directions, contact Southeast Recycling Technologies, Inc., 108 Kwick Way, Gray, TN 37615. The number is 423-282-2022.

Take a Kid Fishing

More than 90 percent of today's anglers fish because they were introduced at a young age. Several studies show that a high percentage of children who participate in outdoor activities such as fishing, attending a TU youth camp or participating in Trout in the Classroom programs are much more likely to become conservationists. Pledge to take a child fishing by visiting www.anglerslegacy.org.

Source: Trout, Summer, 2007



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www.ProtectYourWaters.net

Wetlands initiative announced by USDA

In the last several months, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made restoring wetlands more attractive for private landowners under several initiatives and programs. In October, USDA announced additional payment incentives to be provided through several Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) wetlands and bottomland hardwood conservation practices.

Under an ongoing (continuous) signup, participants can apply for 10 to 15 year contracts on eligible lands for the CP23 Wetlands Restoration-Floodplain, CP23A Wetlands Restoration-Non-floodplain, and CP31 Bottomland Timber Restoration on Wetlands practices. In addition to the standard 50 percent cost-share for habitat restoration costs, they can now also receive a 40 percent Practice Incentive Payment on eligible restoration costs, a \$100 per acre up-front Signing Incentive Payment, and an extra 20 percent added to the annual rental payment they receive each year of their CRP contract.

Several months ago, several new State Acres for Wildlife Enhancement (SAFE) practices were announced for Tennessee, which included three CP38B "Wetlands for Wildlife" practices. Depending on site suitability, land may be enrolled as SAFE Shallow Water Areas, SAFE Wetlands Restoration, or SAFE Wetlands Restoration (Non-floodplain) practice. These SAFE wetlands practices have the same incentives as the above-mentioned practices except for the additional 20 percent extra on the annual rental payment. "The previous CP9 Shallow Water Area practice was very popular with duck hunters, and will likely be even more popular with the added SAFE financial incentives," Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency Wetlands Biologist Chris Hunter notes.

Land eligible for any of the CRP or CRP-SAFE practices must meet certain cropping history criteria. Check with your local USDA Service Center for eligibility. In the new Farm Bill passed by Congress in May and effective as of Oct. 1, 2008, lands enrolled in the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) under permanent easements, 30-year easements, or restoration agreements will receive compensation rates that are significantly higher than they were prior to Oct. 1. The WRP also pays for 100% of the restoration costs for permanent easements and 75 percent for 30-year easements and restoration agreements. To be eligible for WRP, the land must have been owned for at least seven years. "This is a significant move towards achieving wetlands acreage goals set by TWRA for adequate management of the many wildlife species that use wetlands, wetland buffer areas, and bottomland hardwoods," said TWRA Executive Director Gary Myers. "The USDA and private landowners are essential partners in increasing wildlife habitat on private lands."

Interested landowners can apply for these programs and find out more information at their local USDA service center. The TWRA has several wildlife biologists that can provide technical assistance to landowners on both wetlands and uplands habitats and assistance on navigating conservation programs. Visit www.TWRPrivatelands.org and click on the county the land is in for their contact information.

Source: TWRA News Release

GSMNP to celebrate 75th anniversary during 2009

Throughout 2009 there'll be dozens of events in and outside the park to celebrate this milestone. For example, there will be three-event anniversary weekend, June 13-15, designed to showcase Cades Cove, Sugarlands and Oconaluftee. To learn more about the events and ways you can help preserve the park for future generations, stop by one of the three visitors centers, or visit www.NPS.gov. For information about Friends of the GSMNP, call (865) 436-7318 or visit www.SmokiesInformation.org.

Source: Kingsport [Times-News](#), January 4, 2009

Another Point of View

"Energy and Environmental issues figured prominently in the recent campaign, and November's results gave us reason for optimism. But that doesn't mean the environmental community can relax. On the contrary, our strong voice is more important than ever.

In the coming months we have the opportunity to make historic strides changing the direction of environmental policy. Unfortunately, it comes at a time of unprecedented economic turmoil. Merging the need to protect the environment with a creation of 'green' jobs for the future is the path we must take now. We will need your help more than ever."

John Flicker, President, Audubon