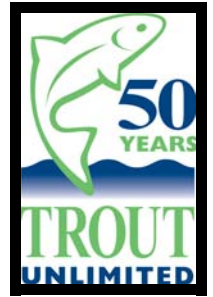


NEWS CASTER

Overmountain Chapter
Trout Unlimited

www.omtu.org

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Ron Harrington, Editor



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Happy New Year from OMTU



Coming Events

Meeting:	01-19-12
Coldwater/TCTU:	01-28-12
BOD:	02-16-12
Meeting:	03-15-12
BOD:	04-19-12
TU SE Rally:	04-12/14-12
Meeting:	05-17-12

Board/Chapter President Assignments for 2012:

Dec 2011/Jan 2012—Ron Harrington
Feb/Mar 2012—Dale White
Apr/May 2012—Gary Barrigar
Jun/July 2012—Bob Sherrill
Aug/Sept 2012—Randall Rogers
Oct/Nov 2012—Shannon O'Quinn

Above: A happy participant in the local Project Healing Waters program proudly shows off his fine catch. Plan now to attend the January meeting and learn more about this unique therapeutic program for our veterans and active military personnel.

January Meeting to feature a program about Project Healing Waters. We will also hold our annual fishing gear swap and sell event.

The next regular OMTU meeting is set for Thursday, January 19, 2012. We will meet at the Firehouse Restaurant, 627 West Walnut Street, Johnson City, TN. Dinner begins at 6:00, followed by a brief business meeting and our program. Ron Harrington will preside. Our speaker is **Jonathan Huckaba**, local Program Lead for Project Healing Waters fly fishing inc. Project Healing Waters Fly Fishing, Inc. is a not-for-profit organization dedicated to the physical and emotional rehabilitation of disabled active military service personnel and veterans through fly fishing and fly tying education and outings.

The January meeting will also feature our annual "swap and sell" event. Bring any fishing gear that you would like to sell, donate or barter. A special area will be set up for your items.

See page 2 for more information about Jonathan and the local Healing Waters program.

Meet Jonathan Huckaba

Jonathan Huckaba was introduced to fly fishing at age 16 by a family friend named Todd Burleson. While in high school he only fished small streams such as the Doe River. After high school other activities took the place of fishing and it wasn't until 2005 he picked up a fly rod again. Jonathan has spent the last few years fishing our local tail-waters and mountain streams. Last April he was asked to take the program lead position for the local Project Healing Waters chapter. Having had no previous experience with PHW and not being a veteran, he was hesitant about accepting the offer. After speaking with the regional coordinator for TN and with Alan Folger, the Veterans Service Program Director for TU, he accepted the position in June and started with one participant. The program has since grown to 13 participants. "We are fortunate to have volunteers from the Cherokee and Overmountain chapters of TU as well as every one of our local fly shops," Jonathan said. "We hold weekly classes at the VA. Classes range from casting to fly rod building. Four of our participants have been selected for all expenses paid fishing trips to WY, AK, and the Bahamas."

If anyone has any questions about the program on the national level please visit, <http://www.projecthealingwaters.org/>

To see what is going on locally please visit PHW's facebook at, <http://www.facebook.com/groups/203159926429871/>

OMTU is a proud member of the Boone Watershed Partnership, and the Tennessee Clean Water Network

The 2012 TU National Meeting will be held in Asheville, NC September 14-16
Details in the March issue.

Food for thought

"Clean water is the foundation on which enjoyable and productive hunting and angling trips are built," said Steve Kline, director of the TRCP Center for Agricultural and Private Lands. "We can create jobs without draining wetlands and polluting streams; indeed, thanks to sportsmen, wetlands and streams are great job creators. Sitting in a duck blind or floating on a trout stream, sportsmen have the chance to appreciate first-hand just what clean water means. Now we must act as advocates for the conservation of our nation's waters and wetlands until these irreplaceable resources are appropriately managed and conserved."

Another View

"Natural gas is a critical "bridge fuel" that can help to wean us off our dependency on oil....We can, and should, have natural gas development. But we must have it under the guidance of science-based regulations that are sufficiently financed, strongly monitored, and professionally enforced **without political bias or interference.**"

John Randolph, publisher emeritus, *Fly Fisherman*.
August-September, 2011



National Fish Hatchery funding restored for FY 2012

Good news! The FY 2012 Appropriations bill, recently signed by the President, fully restored funding for the mitigation hatcheries. This includes funding for the National Fish Hatchery in Erwin. The signing of the bill also provides an opportunity for these hatcheries to determine their own destiny. The signing of the bill provided the Fish and Wildlife Service with the following directions:

- All of the mitigation hatcheries will be fully funded in FY 2012.
- Congress supports the efforts by the Service to recover mitigation costs from other Federal partners such as the Corps of Engineers and the Tennessee Valley Authority.
- The amount of reimbursable funding must be sufficient to fully operate and maintain the mitigation hatchery program.
- Each reimbursable must be in place before FWS moves forward to eliminate Service funding for the mitigation hatcheries.
- Since the mitigation hatcheries are fully funded there should not be any operational disruption at any of the hatcheries.

The following sworn testimony before the House Committee on Appropriations, Subcommittee on Interior, Environment and Related Agencies by FWS Acting Director Rowan Gould and Deputy Director Dan Ashe, would lead one to believe the mitigation hatcheries will not only be funded in FY 2012, but also in FY 2013 and beyond:

- “We see it as a transfer of funds.”
- “Our goal is to continue the operation of all these mitigation hatcheries by working with the other federal agencies.”
- “From a policy perspective our goal is the same, and that is to keep these hatcheries operating and providing the mitigation fish to support this function.”

John Robinette, Manager, Erwin National Fish Hatchery said he was pleased with this development, and is “optimistic that the funding will be there beyond 2012.”

This topic will be on the agenda of the January 28 meeting of the Tennessee Council, TU. Steve Moyer, Vice President for Government Affairs, TU National, will be in attendance. John Torchick, President, TCTU, had the following comments: “With funding through 2012, we are not under the gun as before. This bit of breathing room will allow us to plan a strategy for further funding with the goal of having the funding in place for the hatcheries as a permanent item in the Federal budget. With the elections coming up this year, we need to be ready no matter who is in the White House and which party is in control of Congress. Budget cuts are still a possibility and we need to be ready to meet the challenge to keep funding.”

Sources: Article from Rick Nehrling disseminated by TCTU, and e-mail from John Torchick, President, TCTU

Report Fish and Game Violators!

Call the TWRA “Poaching Hotline at 1-800-831-1174. 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 the nature of violation, date, location, vehicle description, license plate number and so forth.

Report Litterbugs!

Call TDOT at 1-877-854-8837

- License plate #
- Type/make of vehicle
- Date and time of incident
- Location of incident
- Type of litter

Our Mission

The mission of Trout Unlimited is to conserve, protect and restore North America’s coldwater fisheries and their watersheds

OMTU DISPLAY BOARD

Thanks to the hard work and creativity of Gary Barrigar and Shannon O'Quinn (left to right in the picture), OMTU now has a beautiful and classy display board. This is a first for OMTU. The board will be used for displays at OMTU meetings and public activities, conservation/environmental conferences and retreats, OMTU presentations and so forth. The board is available for use by members. To reserve the board, contact Ron Harrington via e-mail or phone 423-646-2558.



OMTU 2011 Annual Report

By Ron Harrington, editor

As we enter the New Year, it's time again to pause, look back, and reflect on our activities during the past year. Doing so gives us perspective on what we've accomplished within the parameters of our mission; and provides us with opportunities for improvement and goal setting. Overall we had a good year—membership continued to increase, we remained financially stable, and we accomplished some new things. Here are the highlights:

- T.A. Smith—long time board member—retired from the Board of Directors. We will miss his leadership, wisdom, and enthusiasm.
- Conducted two strategic planning sessions.
- Revised our By-Laws to be in compliance with TU National's requirements.
- Sponsored a fly-tying workshop at Eastman Employee Center in January.
- Sponsored and/or co-sponsored three stream cleanups:
 - Carter County Clean Streams: Watauga Tail-water
 - South Holston Lake and Tail-water.
 - Roan Mountain-Todd Burleson
- Worked with TVA to clear an access trail to the South Holston tail-waters as part of National Trails Day in June.
- Supported TVA's successful efforts to build a parking lot at the river access trailhead (end of River Bend Road, Sullivan County).
- Assisted TWRA in fish sampling on Beaverdam Creek, Doe Creek and Rocky Fork.
- Designed and developed—for the first-time—a display board for use at meetings and public events.
- Designed and developed—for the first time—a nice OMTU brochure to help publicize and promote our chapter.
- Had a booth at the TVA's Public Lands Day on September 24, 2011
- Sent two volunteers to serve as mentors for TU Youth Camp and provided a \$200 grant towards the tuition for one youth to attend from the area.
- Held six regular meetings with interesting and informative guest speakers.
- Continued to monitor and advocate for legislation that will help protect, restore and preserve our cold water streams. One focus was on advocating for federal and state funding for the complete protection of the Rocky Fork Wilderness area. Approximately 1200 acres remain unprotected as of this report.
- Financial Report
 - Total cash on hand: \$2784 Equipment and Inventory: \$1500 Total Assets: \$4284
 - Members contributed 1,425 volunteer hours, which has an in-kind value of \$30,438 .
 - Conservation (restoration, protection or advocacy projects): 900 hrs
 - Fundraising ("Sustain") = 40 hrs
 - Youth Education and Outreach ("Sustain") = 120 hrs
 - General Education and Outreach ("Sustain") = 80 hrs
 - Travel = 85 hrs
 - General Operations: "Sustain"= 200 hrs
- Membership: We now have 286 TU members assigned to our chapter.

Trout Unlimited supports EPA rule governing power plant emissions

In a press release dated December 21, 2011, TU announced its support of the Environmental Protection Agency's court-ordered final rule that requires coal- and oil-fired power plants to reduce mercury and other toxic emissions into the air.

Emissions from fossil fuel-fired power plants are blamed for "acid rain," which can eventually make rivers and streams uninhabitable to native fish and to other organisms that depend on clean water for survival. Additionally, mercury from power-plant emissions can build up in fish, making them unsafe to eat.

"This rule makes good sense and should result in significant reduction of mercury and other acid rain-producing toxins into the air," said Steve Moyer, TU's vice president of government affairs. "The EPA, in response to a court order to enforce the Clean Air Act and consider emissions technology as a way to reduce toxins in the country's air and water, has offered a reasonable road map for industry to follow in order to meet these requirements."

The rule gives the power generation industry three years to install emissions-reduction technology in power plants, with the option of applying for a fourth year if the technology cannot be installed on time. A number of energy companies have already taken significant steps to prepare for the new regulations.

"Since 1959, TU volunteers and staff have worked to protect and restore trout watersheds throughout the nation, and we've come to realize that fish-trout in particular-are barometers for both air and water quality," Moyer said. "Along the Eastern Seaboard, we've had to react to pollutants in the air that eventually find their way into the water. For instance, eastern brook trout in some Appalachian mountain watersheds are particularly susceptible to pollution that alters the natural chemical balance in their native streams. In order to keep some populations from winking out altogether, we've had to resort to unusual tactics to keep these fish alive, including adding lime to some streams to restore the water's chemical equilibrium."

TU volunteers in Virginia and other eastern states have worked with researchers to document the fish and wildlife habitat destroying affects of acid rain. These and other studies have compelled state and federal agencies to require cleaner emissions from power plants. In the Northeast, lakes and streams have made some progress in recovering from the impacts of acid rain following the enactment of the 1990 Clean Air Act amendments, but in the southeast, where brook trout are relegated to high-elevation streams, some waters remain persistently acidic. **This rule will require that all existing power plants meet more stringent mercury emissions rules, and that new power plants be required to meet more stringent emissions standards regarding mercury and other pollutants.**

"This is a welcome move that will ensure, over time, that brook trout populations will have the opportunity to recover naturally," Moyer said. "We congratulate the EPA on this measured approach and look forward to experiencing the positive effects this rule will have on our air, our water and, of course, our fish."

Source: TU news release dated December 21, 2011