

# NEWS CASTER

Overmountain Chapter

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Visit our Web site at omtu.org

Volume 13, Issue 2

March-April,  
2008



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### Coming Events

|              |          |
|--------------|----------|
| BOD:         | 03-13-08 |
| Meeting:     | 03-20-08 |
| TU SE Rally: | 04-26-08 |
| BOD:         | 05-08-08 |
| Meeting:     | 05-15-08 |

The March Meeting, set for 3-20-08, will be held at the Golden Corral, 3104 Brown's Mill Road, Johnson City. A buffet dinner begins at 6:00 p.m., followed by a short business meeting. Our speaker is Jeffery Simmons, aquatic stream biologist, TVA. His topic is "What fish are feeding on in the tailwaters." This should be a wonderful presentation that will give folks all they need to know about the trout flies that work in our area this time of year. Make you plans now to attend! Chris Ford, TN League of Conservation Voters, will also attend and bring us up to date on pending legislation of interest to us. He will also give us a brief overview of this organization's mission and activities.



**Above:** Neither rain, mud, cow manure, rocky soil, nor heavy wind could stop these brave souls from planting trees around the new fish barrier on Hampton Creek. See the President's Corner for details.

From left to right: Gary Barrigar, Perry Rindfliesch, Randall Rogers, Danny Sells, and Bob Fondry. The brave dogs who who seemed to enjoy the sloppy occasion were "Jake" and "Winston."



The Conservation Fund has purchased 68 acres of land on the South Holston Tailwater to be held for TWRA. TWRA plans to lease the property until funding is appropriated for purchase. The land is located on the right side of the river in this picture. See page 3 for details.

## Coldwater Meeting Report

By Bill Beazell

Ron Harrington and I represented OMTU at the Cooperative Program for Enhancing Coldwater Streams meeting held in Knoxville on January 26, 2008. There were 27 in attendance including representatives from TVA, National Forest Service, TWRA, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and Trout Unlimited chapters.

### TVA Report

- The 2007 rainfall in the TVA area was 66% below normal, and the runoff was 54% below normal. The chance for improvement in 2008 is "fifty-fifty."
- Studies of the insects in four tailwaters show that the levels in 2007 were back to those of 2004 and 2005, after a high count in 2006.

### National Forest Service/GSMNP Report

- Trout reproduction was good this past year despite the drought, and streams should bounce back if the rainfall returns to normal.
- Due to low pH levels, there has been no success in stocking brook trout at the higher elevations in the GSMNP.
- The removal of rhododendron along brook trout streams has resulted in an increase in the number of fish.

See Coldwater Meeting, page 5

**MAKE PLANS TO PURCHASE YOUR TU SPECIALTY PLATE NOW. FORMS ARE AVAILABLE AT OMTU MEETINGS OR ORDER AT TUPLATE.ORG. More information on page 5.**

## FY 2008 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 Beazell
- Bob Fondry
- Charles Martin

## Frequency of OMTU meetings changed for 2008

The OMTU Board has voted to change the frequency of the regular meetings from ten a year to six. The dates for 2008:

January 17  
March 20  
May 15  
July 17  
September 18  
November 20

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

## 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

Fellow Overmountain Members:

Spring is just around the corner and already your chapter is busy with a number of things. After presenting the Hampton Creek project as a slide show at the January chapter meeting we were invited to present it again to the adult Sunday School Class at 1st Presbyterian Church in Elizabethton on February 17th. It was very well received with many questions so the outreach continues from our work last summer.

The Boone Watershed Partnership published a very informative newspaper insert titled "Water Matters" in all of our local papers in February. Our chapter had a nice article in the insert that highlighted our many Embrace-A-Stream grants and contributions to our community.

Last Friday, March 7th five OMTU members planted hardwood trees at the new fish barrier in Hampton Cove to shade and protect our new project. Mother nature helped with a steady rain during the project and in a few short years I'm sure the new trees will be well along in rooting into the soil to maintain the structure. Thanks to Ron Harrington, Gary Barrigar, Bob Fondry, and Danny Sells along with Bart Carter from TWRA and the Forest Service for providing the trees.

Our program this month is a MUST for anyone who wants to know what trout in our tailwaters are feeding on. Jeff Simmons from TVA will be sharing bug counts in both the S. Holston and Watauga rivers. This is a very interesting presentation based on many hours of hard work on the part of TVA. Thank you Jeff for taking the time to share this information with us.

See you soon.

Perry

## Support the Tennessee Bottle Bill

**"Pride of Place" is the comprehensive litter and recycling solution made possible by a Tennessee bottle bill. This is a project of Scenic TN/The TN Bottle Bill Project.**

**For specifics about TN Bottle Bill and how you can help go to [www.tnbottlebill.org](http://www.tnbottlebill.org)**

## VA Department of Game and Inland Fisheries announces regulation changes for 2008

The VDGIF Board has further clarified the definition of singlehooked artificial lures for special regulation trout waters. It is now clearly legal to use multiple single-hooked lures (such as dropper flies) in series.

The Board also clarified that it is illegal to cull creel trout in designated stocked trout waters. Once a trout is placed in a creel or on a stringer, it is part of the daily limit and cannot be released for the purpose of continuing to fish.

Source: VDGIF Web site

## 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."

### Monetary Settlement to Resolve North Shore Road Issue

On December 28, 2007 Paul Anderson, the Acting Southeast Regional Director of the National Park Service, signed a Record of Decision (ROD) that officially calls for a monetary settlement to Swain County, North Carolina as the conclusion to the Environmental Impact Statement process at Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

The decision clears the way for a new agreement to be crafted between the U.S. Department of Interior (DOI) and the other three parties to a 1943 Agreement which called for the construction of a 34-mile long road on the North Shore of Fontana Lake as a replacement for an earlier road that was flooded by the Lake during WWII.

Park Superintendent Dale Ditmanson said, "We anticipate scheduling a meeting early in the new year between a representative of the Secretary Interior and representatives of the Swain County Commission, North Carolina Governor Easley, and the Tennessee Valley Authority to develop a new document that will replace the 1943 Agreement. In anticipation of negotiations towards a new agreement and a monetary settlement, Representative Heath Shuler (NC) and Senator Lamar Alexander (TN) were successful in including \$6 million in the 2008 DOI budget which was signed on December 26 to be available as an initial payment to Swain County."

Ditmanson continued, "We sincerely appreciate the involvement of the public as well as local and national government officials throughout the EIS process that has allowed us to reach a solution that will both compensate Swain County and protect the resources of the Park."

Source: Great Smoky Mountains National Park News Release dated January 2, 2008

**"Our children no longer learn how to read the great Book of Nature from their own direct experience or how to interact creatively with the seasonal transformations of the planet. They seldom learn where their water comes from or where it goes. We no longer coordinate our human celebration with the great liturgy of the heavens."**

—Wendell Berry

### Protect the Headwaters

"I conclude by reminding the reader that management decisions are less effective when only applied to the mainstem of streams and rivers. To maintain good water quality and productive habitat throughout the river continuum, the headwaters of watersheds need to be protected. To accomplish the goal of healthy headwaters, wetlands need to be preserved with no discretion between isolated wetlands and federally regulated wetlands."

Jeff Feaga, "West Virginia's Vulnerable Isolated Wetlands." *Appalachian Voices*, November 2007

### Land purchased on South Holston Tailwater for fishing access

TWRA announced at the Coldwater meeting on January 26 that the Conservation Fund has purchased a 68 acre tract of land for fishing access on the South Holston Tailwater. The land is located just off Big Spring Road (near Hickory Tree), and consist of about 3500 feet of river frontage. The property is on the right side of the river as you face upstream from the road. TWRA is working on getting the area open to the public. According to Bart Carter, the time frame is uncertain at this time. "The last indication I had for TWRA getting the property transferred was in the spring of 2009."

Source: TWRA



### REPORT LITTER-BUGS!

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.

## 2008 Stream Cleanup Schedule

**Watauga River Tailwaters: April 26, 2008**

**South Holston Tailwaters: August 9, 2008**

**Todd Burleson Memorial Cleanup: TBA**

Make your plans now to participate in these important OMTU conservation projects. For more information contact Bob Fondry, OMTU Stream Cleanup Coordinator, at (423) 772-3236. Details will be announced via the OMTU NewsCaster preceding the cleanup, or via special “just in time” bulletins from OMTU communications.

**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.**

## South Fork of Holston River to be featured in a fly fishing show to air on the Outdoor Channel in July

The Outdoor Channel's fly fishing show, “Familiar Waters,” will include a fly fishing segment in July 2008 that was filmed recently on the South Fork of the Holston River. The show's host, Mike Pawlawski—a former NFL quarterback turned conservationist—serves on the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation board of directors. He is also a trustee of the Shenandoah National Forest and Skyline Drive. The South Fork is a naturally producing trout stream that runs through Smyth and Washington Counties before entering the South Hoston Lake.

Source: Bristol Herald Courier, Monday, 2-18-08

## Since 1959

“Trout Unlimited's mission hasn't changed since its founding in 1959. The most basic tenet of TU's philosophy—take care of the fish, and the fishing will take care of itself—hasn't changed either. Today's organization is one that TU's founders would know and love: a conservation group, not a fishing club.”

Charles F. Gauvin, TU President

## 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](http://www.anglerslegacy.org).

Source: Trout, Summer, 2007



## STOP AQUATIC HITCHHIKERS!™

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

[www.ProtectYourWaters.net](http://www.ProtectYourWaters.net)

## TNTU Council Meeting Report

By Bill Bezell

Ron Harrington and I represented OMTU at a regular meeting of the Tennessee Trout Unlimited Council, held in Knoxville on January 26, 2008. Twenty individuals, representing TU National and six chapters, attended.

- Rick Murphree, TU National, brought everyone up to date on chapter related activities. The top priority on the list of things to finish this year is for chapters to establish quantitative measures for conservation projects—the Conservation Success Index (CSI). This is a peer-reviewed method to measure progress towards a goal over time.
- Work is underway to develop the next TU five-year (2008-2013) strategic plan. The target date for completion is early summer so it can be reviewed and ready for approval at the annual meeting in September. When ready, chapters should review the plan and take the opportunity to respond as appropriate.
- Although TU National is in solid financial shape, TU ended up the fiscal year with a larger loss than anticipated. More was spent on conservation efforts than planned and there were timing issues between completion of projects and funding. A twenty five million dollar capital campaign is planned for FY 2008.
- Membership/participation in TU are down nationally. Several ideas for improvement were discussed.
- Steve Brown, TNTU President, emphasized that chapter by-laws need to be inline with the TU National by-laws. A copy will be placed on the TU National website to use as a guide.
- The TU Southeastern Rally will be held again this year at Hungry Mother State Park, near Marion, Virginia. The dates are April 26-27, 2008.
- Steve Fry, Appalachian Chapter, reported on the pending TU lawsuit against the U.S. Forest Service with regards to off-road vehicle damage to the Tellico River watershed. The ORV folks are gathering their forces to oppose any changes. TU members, as show of force, were strongly encouraged to participate in the Tellico River cleanup set for March 8, 2008.
- Bob Ross, Cherokee Chapter, announced that they now have a website. The chapter, in cooperation with the Overmountain Chapter and Marcia Carter, is planning a “rhododendron cutting.” The date will be announced later. Cherokee is studying winter fishing results on Paint Creek. The Cherokee Chapter will again sponsor a kids fishing day for the 20<sup>th</sup> year in a row. The goal is to introduce kids to this great sport and “hook” them for a lifetime. Members have been very successful in obtaining rods, reels and lines for use in this project. They will also continue their fly-tying classes this year.

See **TNTU Meeting**, page 6

## Coldwater Meeting continued from page 1

- The battle with groups representing off-road vehicles (ORV) is “not over,” and it is very important that TU has a good turnout at the annual Tellico River cleanup set for March 8, 2008. Meet at the Tellico Ranger’s District Office at 9:00 a.m.

## TWRA Report

- The Conservation Fund has purchased a 68-acre tract of land on the South Holston Tailwater for fishing access. TWRA will lease the land from the Conservation Fund until state funds are appropriated to purchase it. According to Frank Fiss, “You may be able to fish there as early as this spring.”
- Last year it was predicted that the construction of a fish hatchery along the Watauga River in Elizabethton was 10 years away, but it could begin sooner if the funding is approved. The continuing drought has placed a strain on other hatcheries, and thus may be an incentive to move ahead sooner on this one. TWRA continues to place this on their “wish list” for funding each year. Nevertheless, this will “be a long, drawn-out process.”
- The South Holston Tailwater has not been stocked with brown trout since 2003, but the brown trout population is the highest ever recorded.
- The stocking of a northern strain of brook trout (9 inches) will continue in the Watauga Tailwater. No large fish have been reported. These are being raised at the Dale Hollow fish hatchery, and they are now being stocked in the Clinch and Caney Fork Tailwaters as well.
- A protected slot limit will go into effect March 1 on the Clinch River (Norris Tailwater). The protected range is 14-20 inches. Only one fish can be killed per day over 20 inches. Based on experiences with this on the South Holston, it will probably take three years for the impact to be seen.
- Didymo has not yet been reported in the Caney Fork. Please make sure you properly clean your boots before fishing in this or any other stream where Didymo has not been reported. TWRA, in cooperation with the town of Gordonville, has purchased a new site for river parking and access.
- Hampton Creek has the highest abundance of wild brook trout in the state. Efforts will continue to remove all rainbows above the new barrier. Several were removed last October.
- Trout stocking will be “typical” this year, but low water may pose some problems at the hatcheries.

## TNTU Report, from page 5

- The Clinch River Chapter will sponsor fly-tying classes for youth again this year. They have a chapter outing each year, usually a float trip with various types of boats.
- Dick Davis gave an update on the TN Specialty License Plate: He urged members to look at the money from the plates as a "Conservation Annuity." Only 330 plates have been sold to date, and we only have 155 days left. There will be a nice ad in the next issue of Trout. This should reach 130,000 members nationwide.
- The Cumberland Chapter worked with Linda Good to establish "Back-the-Brookie" classes in their area. They are also working through the Tennessee Legislature for a constitutional amendment, called the "Right to Hunt and Fish." This would reduce the number of frivolous lawsuits against the state by folks opposed to hunting and fishing. This is moving along through the legislature and should be on the ballot at a future general election.
- The Little River Chapter reported that they raised \$4,000 by selling hot dogs to the public outside a sporting goods store. Their big event each year is the annual "Trout Fest" held in Townsend, Tennessee. The dates are May 16, 17 & 18. The annual banquet and auction will be held on Friday night, May 16. They have raised over \$46,000 the last four years for conservation projects.
- Bill Bezell and Ron Harrington gave a report on OMTU activities this past year as well as plans for the coming year.
- A proposed budget of \$5,250 and a \$500 donation to the Cast for Recovery Program were approved.

## Trout Unlimited Specialty Plate Update

According to Dr. Richard Davis, Cumberland Chapter, we were closing in on 500 plates as of March 11, but have only 120 days left to sell the remaining 500. About 19 % of TU members statewide have preordered plates (476 out of 2519 members). Twenty-six OMTU members (11%) have preordered. If we do not preorder 1000 plates or more by July 1, then the deal is off the table and it would probably take several years, if at all, to be eligible again. If the goal is not met, your money will be refunded by TU.

By investing in the Trout Unlimited specialty plate, you will be supporting conservation efforts statewide, with 90 % of the proceeds benefiting Tennessee conservation programs directly such as the National Trout Unlimited Back-the-Brookie, Embrace-A-Stream projects in Tennessee, and Trout Unlimited special projects. \$17.50 of the \$35 additional license fee will be returned to Trout Unlimited each year.

You can order your plate on line at [www.tuplate.org](http://www.tuplate.org), or you can pick up a form at an OMTU meeting.

**The OMTU Board of Directors has approved a \$5.00 rebate to all OMTU members and friends who pre-order a specialty plate, provided that the goal of 1000 is met. To get your rebate, bring proof of purchase to any OMTU meeting after July 1, 2008.**

## 29th Annual Spring Nature Festival set for Warriors' Path State Park

The 29th Annual Spring Nature Festival, "Reading the Season," will be held at Warriors' Path State Park, Kingsport, Tennessee, Friday-Sunday, April 18, 19, & 20, 2008.

You can participate in seminars taught by professionals, and walks guided by trained naturalist. Each will highlight a different area of natural history, and a different part of the park

OMTU member Gary Barrigar and Mark Odum will present a stream ecology seminar and creek walk on Saturday. For more information contact Marty Silver at (423) 239-8531 or email: [Marty.Silver@state.tn.us](mailto:Marty.Silver@state.tn.us).

## East Tennessee Environmental Conference set for March 18-19 at the Meadowview Conference Center

The 2008 East Tennessee Environmental Conference is set for March 18-19 at the Meadowview Conference Center, Kingsport. You can register by going to [www.tnenvironment.com](http://www.tnenvironment.com). For a look at the agenda, go to [www.tnenvironment.com/draft2008program.pdf](http://www.tnenvironment.com/draft2008program.pdf)