



NEWSCASTER

Winter 2023

Bill Watkins, Editor

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Sponsors

Conserving, protecting, and restoring coldwater fisheries and watersheds in northeast Tennessee since 1986.

President's Letter

Greetings! While we tend to do less fishing in the winter, the club remains quite active. We have an annual business meeting coming up to be followed by the always popular annual chili cook-off and swap.

We have fishing days planned. This time of year provides some great opportunities for large trout. Dress to stay warm and consider some junk flies. Egg patterns and squirmy worms can do well for you when the Blue Winged Olives and midges aren't moving the trout.

Check out our online calendar for details on these and other activities. We are in the early planning for a river cleanup on March 11th..

Speaking of cleanups, thank you to everyone who has worked or otherwise supported our projects and cleanups in 2022! These activities have a big impact on the trout and our enjoyment of fishing.

Hampton Creek is an example of the impact we can have. This an ongoing multi-year project to reintroduce and protect Southern Brook Trout. Along with our partners we have provided barriers to non-native trout, installed fencing, and more. Please go up there and check it out. That little creek and the brook trout provide different challenges and rewards than the tailwaters we usually fish.

Finally, I'd like to ask everybody to let me know of projects, events, or cleanups that would be beneficial.

Be safe and stay warm,

Rhett Morris

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 01/10 | OMTU Board Meeting |
| 01/17 | OMTU Annual Business Meeting |
| 01/28 | TN Council Cold Water Council Meeting |
| 02/04 | First Saturday Fishing Day |
| 02/14 | OMTU Board Meeting |
| 02/21 | Chili Cookoff and Swap |
| 03/04 | First Saturday Fishing Day |

2022 Fundraising Banquet

Our 2022 Fundraising Banquet held on Saturday, October 15th at the DoubleTree Hotel in Johnson City was a huge success. Seventy-two people attended the banquet, and we raised over \$8400 to be used for our local projects. Thank you to all of those that attended the banquet or participated in our online auction. We would like to send a special thanks to all our sponsors shown on the next page.

We would also like to thank The Erwin National Fish Hatchery, our Conservation Partner of the Year, for their continued support.

The 2023 banquet is scheduled for Saturday, October 7th at the DoubleTree Hotel in Johnson City.



OMTU Officers

- Rhett Morris, President
Sam Henry, Vice President
Rick Elliott, Treasurer
Philip Tipton , Secretary

OMTU Board of Directors

- Ryan Turgeon
Michael Givney
Stephanie Mann
Evan McDougall
Liz Rutledge

Questions? Comments?
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Banquet Sponsors

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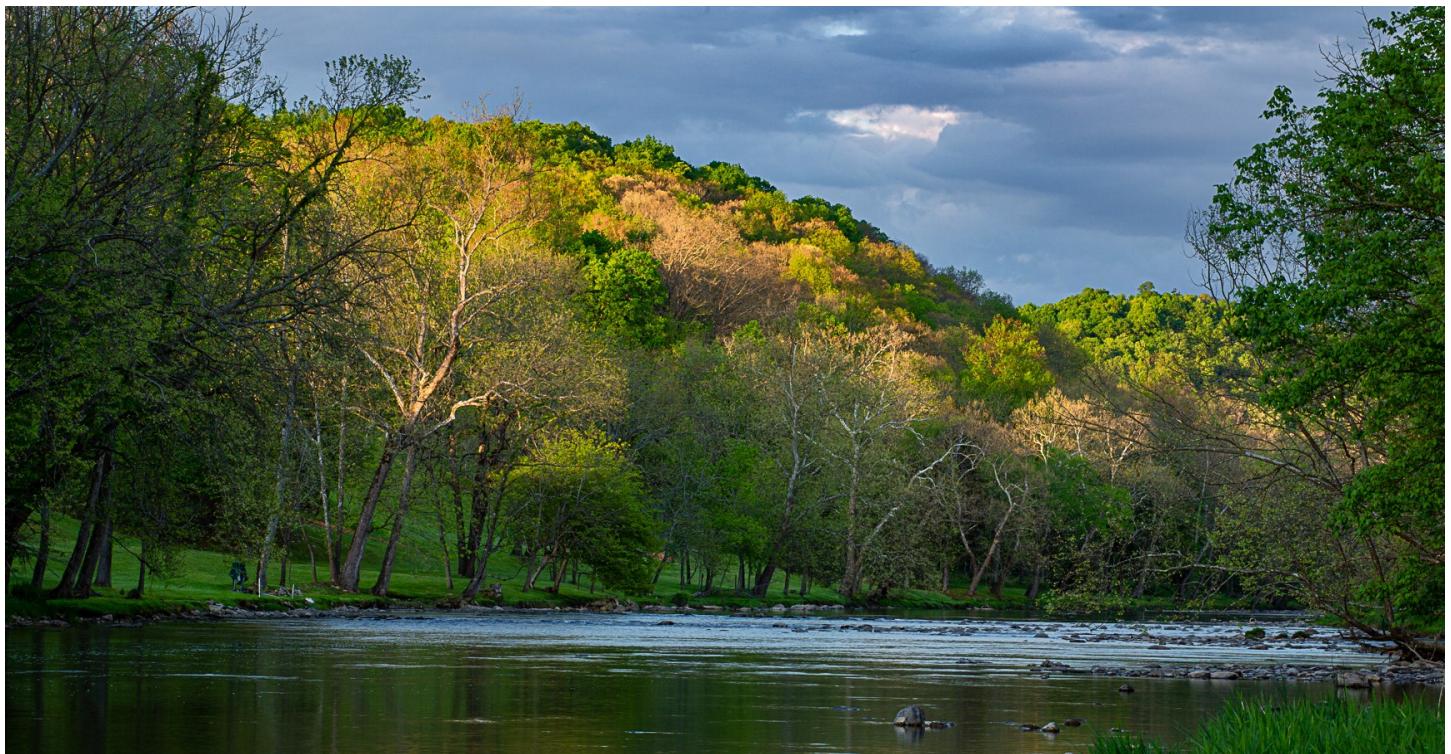


South Holston River Flows

On October 12th, OMTU board members met with TVA, TWRA, and some local guides to discuss concerns about the low flows on the South Holston River. The primary concern is that when the release schedule is only pulsing water once every 8 hours, the weir dam is completely draining before the generator releases water again.

The TVA will be conducting a study of the weir to determine what is happening and adjust the weir flows as needed. This work has been stalled. The first reason for the stall is that the day before the meeting it was discovered that there were low levels of dissolved oxygen in the water coming from the dam due to the turning over in the South Holston Lake. The TVA responded by releasing 200 CFS to prevent a fish kill. This caused the lake level to be higher than desired. To bring the lake to target levels the TVA has been releasing high water flows. We hope to complete this testing once TVA can resume normal flows.

Low Flows on the South Holston River



Thirsty Orange

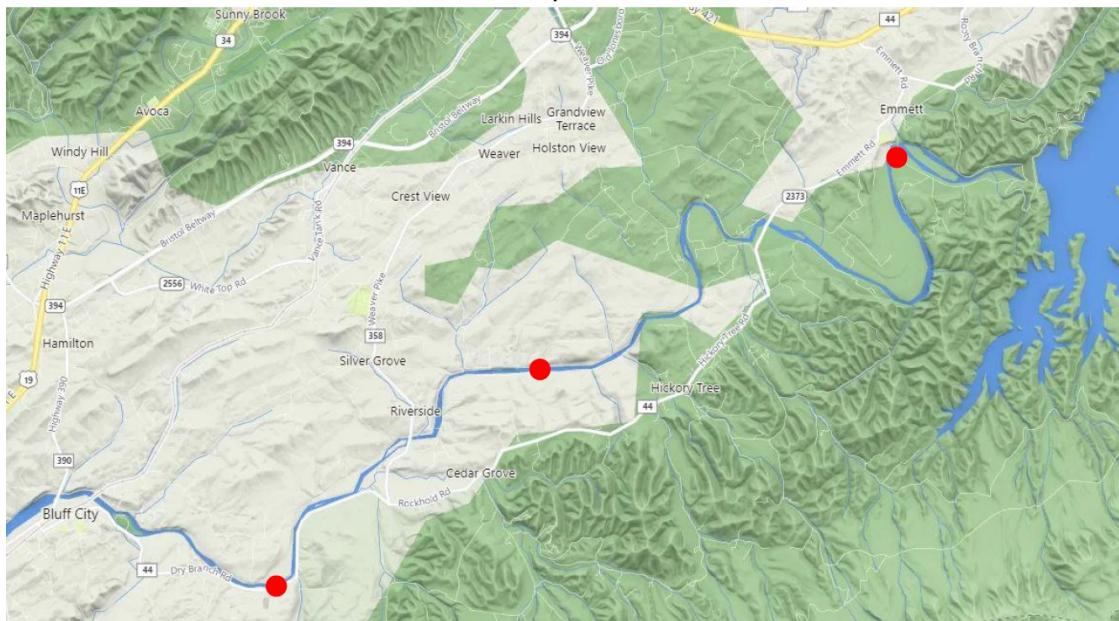
This year's Thirsty Orange is scheduled for Saturday, April 29. The Thirsty Orange is craft beer festival in Johnson City. OMTU receives a portion of the proceeds because we help obtain the beer permit and insurance for the event. This is our second largest fundraiser of the year for the chapter. We will be selling tickets for \$30 each at our chapter meetings and events. For more information go to thirstyorange.com



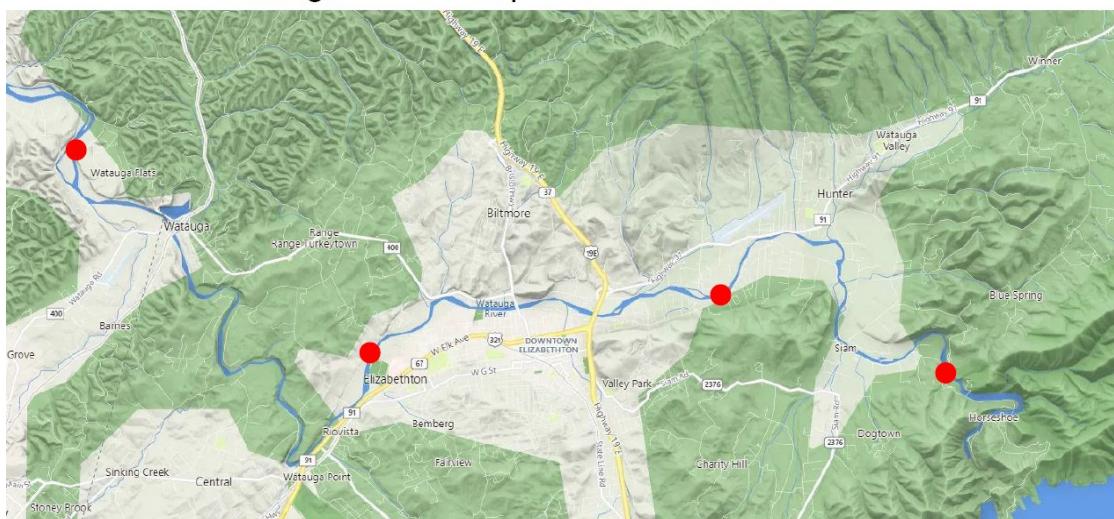
Tailwater Temperature Monitors

Last year we completed the installation of the temperature monitors on the South Holston and Watauga Rivers. Below are pictures showing where these monitors are located. So far the data isn't showing any alarmingly high temperatures that we should be concerned with, but we will continue to monitor them.

South Holston River Temperature Monitor Locations



Watauga River Temperature Monitor Locations



Trout Unlimited Southeast Rendezvous

Join fellow TU members, supporters, and volunteers from across the Southeast on March 10-12th, 2023 at the Crowne Plaza in Asheville, NC for some great fishing, informative presentations, inspiring dialogue, and engaging camaraderie with those who share your dedication to TU and our mission.

Located in the heart of the Smokies, where the French Broad and Swannanoa Rivers meet. A mecca of Appalachian fly fishing, this is the perfect location to join us for the weekend – and stay longer or make a family trip or fishing buddies escape around this great event!

Asheville is within striking distance of some amazing trout fishing opportunities, and we hope to score some great Spring weather to make that a reality!

TU regional rendezvous are occasions to be inspired – by the work of TU staff, lessons from volunteer leaders, and conversations with newfound friends. They are also an excellent opportunity to discuss the unique issues facing the region as well as a chance to network and build relationships with fellow TU volunteer leaders.

To register please go to <https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Tu-Southeast-Regional-Rendezvous-71590>



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Brook Trout Habitat Improvement Project

In 2021, OMTU obtained a \$9,509 grant from the TCTU Conservation Grant Program. This grant was for habitat improvement for native and wild trout in northeast Tennessee through the addition of woody material in areas where that habitat component is lacking. Traditionally, trout streams in this region would have contained large tree trunks and limbs in them, creating deep pools and pockets where trout could escape. The woody material also controlled the sediment flow and helped ensure gravel spawning habitat throughout the stream. Historic logging practices have significantly reduced the amount of wood found in high-elevation streams.

We plan to do work on three streams in our region. We are currently working to obtain permits from the US Forest Service for Little Jacobs Creek, Laurel Fork, and Briar Creek. We hope to receive the permits this spring and begin the work by early summer.



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Lover's Lane Boat Ramp

If you haven't seen it yet, stop over and look at the new boat ramp at Lovers Lane. TWRA, TVA, and Carter County did a great job on this project. It looks great and it is now much easier to launch a boat from this location.

A ribbon cutting ceremony was held on September 9, 2022 to officially open the boat ramp. Because of a \$4000 donation that OMTU gave towards the construction, we have been given naming rights to the ramp. We plan to name it in honor of Bill Beazell. A naming ceremony is tentatively scheduled for some time in March.



Todd Burleson Memorial Cleanup

On September 24th, 2022, OMTU once again teamed up with the Burleson family and the Roan Mountain community members to clean up the Doe River and its tributaries. Nearly 30 people showed up to lend a hand at this event. Afterwards, the Burleson family treated us to a chili cookoff.

Left Prong Hampton Creek

Over the years, OMTU has done many projects on Hampton Creek's Left Prong. Recently we were contacted by TDEC to partner with them on a couple more projects. The first project is to purchase and install a sign telling about the history of the Brook Trout reintroduction to Hampton Creek and the role that TU has played in that journey. The sign is designed and is currently being fabricated. We will install it in early spring of 2023.

The second project is to install an additional cattle watering system in one of the pastures on the far side of Hampton Creek. OMTU worked with Jeff Wright from TU National to install fencing to keep the cattle out of the stream to reduce sedimentation entering the stream. Now that the fencing project is complete, the cattle need a water supply while they are grazing on the other side of the stream. TDEC is currently designing the watering system and we should know more about it in the next couple of months.



FIRST LINE OF DEFENSE
ABOVE THE WATER FALL PLEASE HARVEST RAINBOW TROUT ACCORDING TO THE REGULATIONS



Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) are Tennessee's only native trout species, and they are genetically distinct from Brook Trout in the more northern parts of the species' range. They require the cold, clear water. This is the short story of how the species was restored here in the Left Prong of Hampton Creek.

Wild Brook Trout now are found only in the coldest and cleanest streams in the mountains of eastern Tennessee at elevations typically above 3,000 feet where water temperatures are typically below 68°.

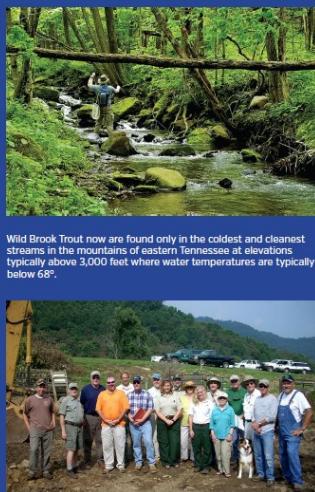
In 1997, several government agencies and non-profit organizations contributed to the design, engineering, and construction of the first "fish barrier" on the Left Prong of Hampton Creek, which was built to retain habitat upstream of the waterfall to protect Brook Trout while excluding the more competitive Rainbow Trout downstream of the constructed waterfall.

By late July of 2007, the partners had a design and budget for the new barrier and a plan for the structure and reshaping the stream channel. Construction and site rehabilitation were completed that year.

The established Brook Trout population above the constructed waterfall barrier is one of the best populations in Tennessee and has been the focus of research and education for many years.

Funding for this display was provided by the Overmountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Thank you to all the partnering organizations for providing funding and expertise to make this valuable project happen.



7TH ANNUAL BILL BEAZELL & ALLEN ROBBINS MEMORIAL

TAILWATER ROUNDUP

SATURDAY
MARCH 11
8AM - 3PM



WATAUGA CLEAN UP
8AM at Ingles Elizabethton

SOUTH HOLSTON CLEAN UP
8AM at Bluff City Boat Ramp

After Party

Watauga River Lodge - 643 Smalling Rd, Watauga, TN
Doors open at 4PM | Giveaways at 5PM
Food will be provided!

Annual Dinner Sponsors Rainbow and above levels Page 1



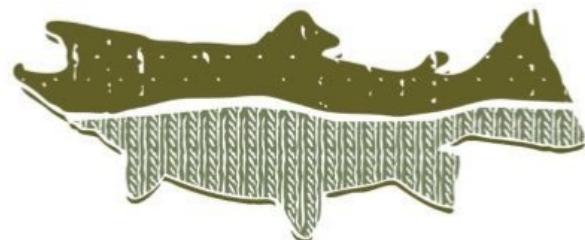
Mahoney's



Annual Dinner Sponsors Rainbow and above levels Page 2

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