

The Flyline

Mountain Laurel Chapter
Trout Unlimited

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The Flyline

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TROUT UNLIMITED

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF
MOUNTAIN LAUREL CHAPTER
TROUT UNLIMITED

From Randy's Desk . . .

I am writing this article just two days after our 2013 banquet and fundraiser. As with all the projects that I am involved with as president of MLTU, I do spend a lot of time going over what we need to change and what went well. I do this because I know that at the first banquet meeting Gary has for next year, he will ask the question, what went well, and what do we need to improve?

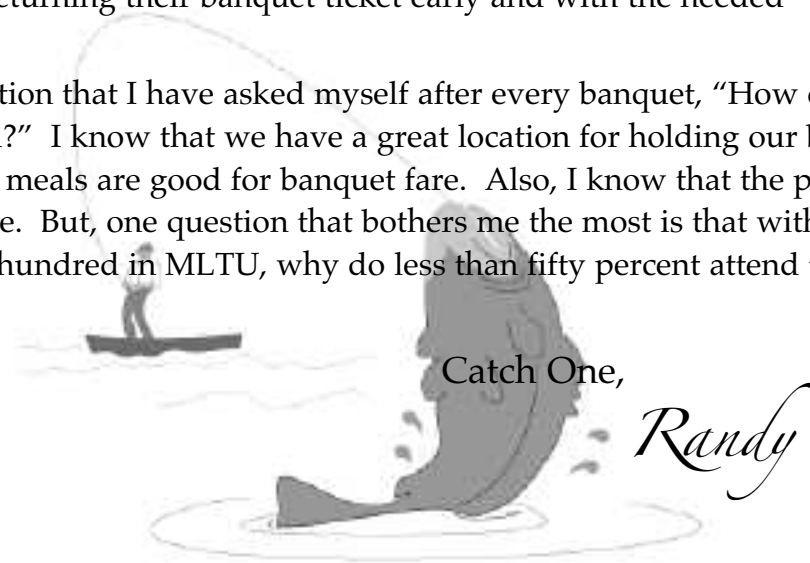
What went well? This year's banquet committee may have been the best group that I have ever worked with. Because of changes made to how we could run small games of chance, we had work to do. There were meetings about the changes in the law to attend and many hours spent viewing information on line. The biggest shock came when we found out that we could no longer use strip tickets. Without the use of strip tickets, we had to design a new ticket system to be used and we did it!

Designing a new ticket was not the only problem. How could we make these new tickets easy for everyone to use? The answer came at a banquet meeting when someone suggested address labels. Address labels were printed with the needed information. Each person attending the banquet was given a sheet of labels at the door, and then they only had to place a label on each ticket purchased.

So what went well? Overall I feel that the banquet went very well.

Remember the second part of the question; "what do we need to improve?" Well one thing is how do we get new people to help on the banquet committee, any ideas? The cost of printing the new ticket design will put a dent into this year's profits. Perhaps finding someone to sponsor the printing of the tickets could be the answer to this issue. The address labels that were used to make purchasing tickets easier were dependent on everyone returning their banquet ticket early and with the needed information.

Then there is the question that I have asked myself after every banquet, "How do we get more people to attend?" I know that we have a great location for holding our banquet. I know too that the meals are good for banquet fare. Also, I know that the prize selection is second to none. But, one question that bothers me the most is that with a membership of over two hundred in MLTU, why do less than fifty percent attend the banquet. Any ideas?



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Mountain Laurel Chapter, Trout Unlimited meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at the Gander Mountain Store in the old Wal-Mart store building beside the Galleria Mall at 7:00 PM unless otherwise noted in this newsletter. Board of Directors meetings are held at 6:30 PM on the same day as the regular meeting at the Gander Mountain Store.

The Flyline
Official Publication of
Mountain Laurel Chapter, Trout Unlimited

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The Flyline

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Membership Application and Renewals

If you are already a member of the chapter, you will receive a renewal notice in the mail. You may renew by check, credit card, or online at www.tu.org. If you are not a member, Go to www.tu.org to apply. We will not have application forms any more. New memberships will be handled at the national website.

Regular Membership\$35

Family Membership\$50

All other types of memberships will be listed on the TU website.



Natural Thoughts . . .



Nature is consistent in many ways. If left to her own devices, Mother nature will tend to go on with business as usual. Undisturbed, things will not change too much. The birds, mammals, fishes and insects go about their lives in much the same way they have for millions of years. Only man can impact what happens to natural things.

Man can cause species to become extinct. Man can degrade habitats or destroy them completely. Man can alter whole earth habitats, such as in the case of global warming.

Man may even outsmart himself and cause his own extinction. The intermingling of the peoples of the world have caused untold damage to plants and animals. Our once bountiful American Elms have almost been wiped out by the Dutch Elm Disease. How about the devastation caused by the chestnut blight. The Gypsy Moth threatens our oak trees.

Man can also restore the environment. Many are working to develop disease resistant strains of chestnut trees. Acid mine drainage is being cleaned up in many of our streams.

Cars are being made cleaner and with better gas mileage. Still though we remain our own worst enemies. We did not learn from the tragedies caused by coal mining. Now we are faced with Marcellus Shale Drilling and its environmental impact. The bottom line in all of this is money and greed.

"So what does this have to do with me?" you ask. Even though you are only one person, you can make a difference. Trout Unlimited gives you the chance to protect, enhance, and restore cold-water habitats. This is not just for the trout. It is for us. We cannot live without cold, clean water. It's time to stop being selfish! Don't use the excuse that you are too busy to help. Get involved! Come to a TU meeting. Volunteer to help with a project. Contribute your time and money. Don't just be a trout fisherman. Be a cold-water advocate!

Annual Fund-Raising Banquet Successful

Saturday, March 16, 2013 saw another successful fund-raising banquet for MLTU. A fine crowd gathered at the Holiday Inn in downtown Johnstown to help support the chapter. The crowd ranged from regular attendees to many first timers. This year's banquet had the banquet committee a little nervous due to the newly enforced rules for Pennsylvania's small games of chance law. Many MLTU volunteers helped to explain the new ticket forms to the crowd, and in the end, things went pretty smoothly. Banquet goers were treated to a wonderful assortment of raffle prizes. There was a wide range of fishing gear to please the most ardent fly fisherman. Ladies attending had a delightful selection of prizes to take chances on. Even the kids received free kids prizes. As usual the top prize was Bill Conlin's fly rod with its beautiful rod case, handcrafted by Bill.

During a brief program after dinner, secretary Dave Maher presented the chapter's top award, The Order of the Mug, to George Mostoller for his work with the Coldwater Conservation Corps. The president's award was presented to the Shade Creek Watershed Association by chapter president Randy Buchanan. Several silver trout pins were presented to Gary Cooper, Pat Buchanan, and Len Lichvar for their dedicated work during the year. David Wright received the chapter's Sportsman of the Year award.

MLTU really appreciates the support of many of its members as well as members of the public. Your support enables us to continue our important work. Thanks to all who worked so hard to make the banquet happen as well. If you are a member and didn't make the banquet, you really missed a great evening. Make it a point to attend next year's banquet, support Mountain Laurel, and have a great time as well. You could be a winner!

PFBC Fiscal Call to Action

Here is a call to action to all anglers, boaters and the general public.

The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) has begun the difficult process to reduce its expenses over the next four years by 9 million dollars. The reason is not declining fishing license sales or participation. License sales have leveled off and current sales are ahead of last year's pace. However, the price of those user fees, which are the predominant source of funding for the agency, has not increased since 2005. The many costs associated with conducting the essential services the Commission provides have continually increased and the income generated by license sales, no matter the number sold, has not and will not keep up the same pace.

Here are the impacts.

The Commission will close two trout hatcheries, Bellefonte and Oswayo, that will reduce trout stocking numbers by 750,000 to 800,000 statewide. Although this impact will get the most play in the media and stir the greatest concern among anglers, the reality is no one's catch rate is really going to suffer with the removal of this number from the total of 3.2 million trout that are annually raised. However, the real issue is if the Commission is forced to take this action now any expanding difference between revenue and expenditures, which is where things are headed, will surely create a future more catastrophic reduction that will negatively impact recreational opportunities for the cold water anglers.

Of greater concern are many often seemingly hidden, but very real services, the Commission provides. In law enforcement, as of now, no new Waterways Conservation Officer (WVCO) training classes are being scheduled because of cost. As current WCO's retire or leave their positions they will not be filled. The result will be fewer WCO's and their eyes and actions to protect the natural resources from those who will no doubt continue to abuse them with much less fear of being apprehended.

The fulltime Coordinator of the PFBC's statewide public Access Program has left the agency and the vacant position will not be filled. The state wide public access program, that was just beginning to see results by working in cooperation with private landowners to increase and secure public access to waterways, will now be reduced in scope and capacity. The issue of access has been a primary concern among anglers and boaters and now this unfortunate trend will have less to buffer its downward spiral.

Infrastructure needs, such as the costs to upgrade high hazard dams such as Somerset Lake, are already over 30 million dollars with zero dollars available. Further cuts will mean boat ramps, access areas and other Commission facilities that are heavily used by the public will fall into disrepair and even the porta-potties will be removed.

In education there will be a significant cut back in the type and amount of materials produced that are in high demand by schools, nonprofits and many other groups that rely on them to educate the next generation of conservation minded citizens. Financial grants that help to empower youth education and other initiatives the Commission has supported may be cut.

Much of these spending cuts will be through attrition, not by outright loss of jobs. However, as employees retire or leave their positions they will not be filled leaving workloads that cannot and will not be fulfilled.

Most of these services that may be eliminated are often taken for granted by the public, but in reality only occur because of the outstanding professional efforts by an already undermanned staff.

The good news, if there is any, is that many of these cutbacks will be gradually phased in over several years beginning with next year's budget in July of 2014. Also, every already acted on, including the hatchery closings, as well as anticipated reductions in service could be restored or not implemented if additional funding is made available. That solution, however, must be authorized by the state legislature and approved by the Governor.

Despite this fiscal crisis the Commission has not actively sought a license increase. Rather the Commission's Executive Director and Board of Commissioners have sought innovative funding alternatives that have been widely circulated in the public and the legislature. However, so far none of these proposals have gained the traction they need to move forward.

So it is up to you, the anglers, boaters and citizens who benefit from the multitude of recreational opportunities, water quality protection and economic benefits derived from Commission supported angling and boating in this state. It is up to you to let your elected officials know if you want to see these attributes continue. If on the other hand none of that is a priority in your life, then you can remain silent.

The choice is yours and the results, or lack of them, will be borne by you and the generations that follow.

Len Lichvar, of Boswell, is the District 4 Commissioner for the PA Fish and Boat Commission. There are ten legislatively appointed Commissioners statewide that oversee the operations of the Commission. Commissioners serve as unpaid volunteers.

Reprinted from the Somerset Daily American

Quemahoning Tail Water Restoration

The Somerset Conservation District is taking the leadership role in restoring the original stream channel of the last 1.3 miles of Quemahoning Creek below the Quemahoning Reservoir located along Quemahoning Dam Road in Conemaugh Township. At some point, decades ago, prior to today's better understanding of natural stream flows and regulations, this section was dredged in order to provide the flow of water coming from the spillway out of the dam a more unencumbered path downstream. The consequences of this action served to remove virtually all of the natural structures and holding water for fish and other aquatic life.

When the Manufacturers Water Company properties, which included the Quemahoning Reservoir, were publically purchased in 2000 through the foresighted vision of organizations such as the District, it mandated a re-permitting of the reservoir and the creation of a conservation release to restore the historic flow of water to Quemahoning Creek that had been virtually eliminated by the construction of the reservoir 100 years earlier. It took years to be implemented, but for nearly three years now a daily 10.8 MGD conservation release of cold water comes out of the dam into Quemahoning Creek and then the Stonycreek River.

With this restored flow the missing ingredient to sustain a coldwater fishery was the lack of habitat. The District, in cooperation with California University, electro shocked the Quemahoning Creek two years ago and found no coldwater species such as trout. A second survey by the PA Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC) and the District last year confirmed the outcome.

Temperature loggers, placed into the stream by the District, also confirmed that the temperature regimes, thanks to the conservation release, were in the comfort range for trout year round.

With this data in hand the District devised a preliminary habitat restoration design and requested funding support for the project from the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds. In late 2012 the Foundation announced it awarded \$58,000.00 of GenOn settlement funds to the project that will directly benefit and enhance natural resources in the Conemaugh River watershed that this special funding is dedicated toward. Over a decade ago the Foundation also provided funding to complete the Quemahoning Creek Watershed Restoration Plan from which this and other projects have been derived.

The District also secured additional project funds from the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP), Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU), Somerset County Sportsmen's League and the Boswell American Legion to bring the total investment so far to \$65,000.00.

According to District Watershed Specialist Greg Shustrick, "The project will involve the strategic placement of rocks, root wads and log veins that will provide cover and habitat for trout and other species as well and provide woody debris for insect life to thrive. The beauty of this project is that we are simply putting back what is supposed to be there anyway."

The permitting process is currently underway and the Cambria-Somerset Authority has approved the project. If all goes well the project should begin by late summer. The PFBC plans to stock the restored section with fingerling trout in order to initiate a put and grow tail water trout fishery.

According to Randy Buchanan, President of MLTU, "Tail water trout fisheries are considered among the best coldwater angling destination points. It remains to be seen just how well this restoration works, but the opportunity to create a new economically and recreationally important destination point that provides year round fishing for local anglers is very real."

If successful this water will be the state's newest tail water trout fishery and help complete an entire watershed restoration effort that began over 20 years ago. The completion of the Jenners and Boswell AMD abatement Passive Treatment Systems restored the water quality of the upper watershed and the Quemahoning Reservoir. The public acquisition of the reservoir opened up a huge amount of formerly private land and water to the public and with the upcoming restoration of the lower watershed additional recreational and economic opportunity will be added to the mix.

These past and current projects can all trace their roots to the efforts of public sector agencies such as the District, PA Department of Environmental Protection, federal Office of Surface Mining and the Natural Resources Conservation Service partnering with groups such as SCRIP, MLTU, Southern Alleghenies RC&D and Conservancy, Somerset County Conservancy and local watershed and sportsmen's groups.

As Buchanan points out, "These efforts that improve our economic sustainability as well as our quality to life do not happen by accident and should not be taken for granted as they often are. It clearly proves that government agencies and public tax dollars along with private contributions coupled with locally led initiatives provide us all a tremendous return on that investment of time and dollars."

Len Lichvar

Reprinted from the Somerset Daily American

Upcoming Chapter Events

Regular Monthly Meetings

Tuesday, April 9, 2013

Tuesday, May 14, 2013

Tuesday, June 11, 2013

Tuesday, July 9, 2013

Monthly meetings are held at the Gander Mountain Store in the Gander Store at 7:00 pm. Board of Directors meetings are held at the Gander Mountain Store at 6:30 pm on the day of the regular meeting.

April Happenings

Saturday, April 6, 2013Paint Creek road cleanup. Meet on Rte. 160 between Elton & Windber - 9 am

Sunday, April 7, 2013Yellow Creek Coalition meeting, Bowsers Cabin. Open to Coalition Members - 2 pm

Wednesday, April 10, 2013Johnstown Sportsmen's Banquet - Call Bob Wardrop for details

Friday, April 12, 2013Quemahoning Creek Stocking - 8 am. Meet at Jenner Community Sportsmen's at 8 am

Saturday, April 20, 2013Yellow Creek cleanup. Meet at New Frontier Restaurant at 7:30 am for breakfast. 9 am workday

May Happenings

Saturday, May 4, 2013.....Shade Creek road cleanup. Meet at New Ashtola at 9 am.

Wednesday, May 8, 2013Conemaugh Township TIC fish release 8:30 am to 12:30 pm. Meet at Sports Complex along Bens Creek. Rain date May 13th.

Friday, May 17, 2013St. Benedicts TIC fish release. Meet at Ferndale Sportsmen's Club

Friday, May 24, 2013Shade Central City TIC Fish release. Central City Sportsmen's Club

Friday, May 10, 2013Bishop McCort TIC fish release. Ferndale Sportsmen's Club

June Happenings

Saturday, June 1, 2013.....Brumbaugh Road Cleanup - 8 am on site. Clearing on left or right at top of mountain

Saturday, June 8, 2013.....Yellow Creek Coalition Pig Roast. 1 - 5 pm Picnic Grounds - Jack's Corner Road. Tickets - Gary Cooper - 266-4763 - \$20.00.

Saturday, June 29, 2013.....PA Trout Ex-Comm Meeting.

Chapter News and Notes

Sometime this summer, MLTU volunteers will help with habitat improvement work on the Quemahoning Creek below the Quemahoning dam. (See Lichvar article) Hopefully this will create a new tail water fishery below the dam. Volunteer some of your time to help.

MLTU volunteers will help with many of the trout releases for Trout in the Classroom in our area. If you can help with any of these releases, call Randy Buchanan at 467-4034.

Don't forget the stocking of Quemahoning Creek the day before the trout opener in our area. Meet at the Jenner Community Sportsmen's Club at 8:00 a.m.

We will be doing work on Potter Creek, Bedford County this summer. As dates become available, we will publish them in our summer newsletter. Plan to help out on this limestone jewel.

Memberships for the Yellow Creek Coalition and tickets for this year's YCC pig roast are available from Gary Cooper at 266-4763. Memberships cost \$20.00 and so do pig roast tickets.