

The Flyline



A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

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President's Message

by Randy Buchanan

This newsletter is the first of 2021; may it be better than the last year. I hope everyone has had a good and safe holiday season.

I hope everyone is safe and well and not too bored. I, for one, am not bored with all the changes the last few months have brought. I've had no time! Most of the changes I've had to deal with have been on a personal/social level, like where can I go fishing today and be alone. I can only imagine the changes the past few months have brought to the people who have still had to go to work or those who now work from home every day. Ah, retirement is great!

But, change we must, as a people and as a Trout Unlimited Chapter. In the beginning of the year, chapter meetings were cancelled. Then, in the late summer and early fall, meetings were held outdoors and again, in the late fall and early winter, meetings were cancelled.

Here comes that word again - "change." With the approval of the chapter officers and board, the chapter will be holding virtual meetings, thanks to Missy, who

organized the Zoom meetings. In January 2021, on Thursday the 7th at 7:00 PM, we will conduct our first Zoom meeting. I know many of you are saying, "Oh great, another online meeting." I am sure we will try to keep these meetings short and to the point. In this newsletter, there is information for those of you who would like to get involved in doing this type of meeting.

Using Zoom will allow the chapter to stay in contact with you, the membership, but, also allow committees to meet as the website committee has already done. So with the coming of a new year, change is coming to MLTU. Look in this newsletter for how you may participate. Missy, thank you for setting the Zoom account and here is to seeing everyone on Zoom.

Catch one!

Randy

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

Walter Lyon Award

by Len Lichvar

District Manager Len Lichvar and the Somerset Conservation District staff were recognized with the 2020 Walter Lyon Award presented by the Pennsylvania Association of Environmental Professionals. The award recognizes excellence in professional conservation efforts and outstanding natural resource enhancement project accomplishments.

The District, in addition to its many water quality improvement efforts and projects, also administers the Chapter 102 erosion and sediment control program, provides technical assistance to the agricultural community, conducts environmental education programs, administers the Dirt and Gravel Road Program for water quality protection and provides administrative and other support for local watershed groups and non-profits.



Somerset Conservation District staff pose with the Walter Lyon Award. Photo courtesy the District.

Soap Hollow Run Project Dedication

by Len Lichvar

The Soap Hollow Run Fish Habitat Improvement project was officially dedicated on October 15, 2020 with a ceremony recognizing the project's contribution to the enhancement of the Class A wild trout stream located in Greenhouse Park in Conemaugh Township Somerset County.

A variety of invited speakers discussed their role in the project that began over 3 years ago through the efforts of the Somerset Conservation District. District Watershed Specialist Greg Shustrick designed, secured grant funds, and oversaw the construction of the project.

The project received volunteer assistance and funding from the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited and additional funding came from National Trout Unlimited's Embrace-A-Stream Grant Program, Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited's Forever Wild Grant Program, Pennsylvania Environmental Council's Laurel Highland's Conservation Landscape Grant Program, and Johnstown Vision 2025 River Capture Team Grant program.

Articles in the Johnstown-Tribune Democrat, Somerset Daily American and a segment on WJAC-TV further promoted the efforts of all the partners in enhancing the coldwater resource and the significance of wild trout to the ongoing eco-tourism industry and recreational assets in the Cambria-Somerset region.



Conemaugh Township Supervisor, Steve Buncich, speaks. Photo by Len Lichvar.

Oven Run Trust Fund

by Len Lichvar

A trust fund to provide long term financial support for the Oven Run AMD Passive Treatment systems on the Stonycreek River has finally become a reality. The Somerset Conservation District's Oven Run Treatment Sites A, D, E and F Trust Fund is now an official fund with the Community Foundation for the Alleghenies.

The fund was established thanks to the long term and ongoing public information and education efforts spearheaded by the Somerset Conservation District.

The fund currently has \$26,830.00 thanks largely to an initial Facebook Fundraiser initiated by Chad Gontovick and Coal Tubin in March of 2020. An additional contribution of \$25,000.00 was made by the Somerset County Commissioners in October.

Charitable donations are now being accepted that will be required to grow the fund over

the coming years to support future operation and maintenance and reconstruction of the systems. The water quality of the Stonycreek River is now more secure and the long term growth of this fund will assist in ensuring that the previous successful efforts to revitalize the recreational and economic future of the Cambria-Somerset region will continue into the future.

To donate go to www.cfalleghenies.org.



Oven Run Site E. Photo courtesy Melissa Reckner.

Fine Fly Tying Materials

by Gary Cooper

Watch a really good fly tier sometime. Not only is he (or she) extremely skilled at using his hands, but his (or her) use of materials is almost flawless, or so it seems. If you look a little closer, however, you will notice that great tiers use fine materials. Fine tiers choose only the best materials available. They will use only wood duck flank feathers for wings and tails when wood duck is called for. Never would they use mallard dyed wood duck. It just does not handle as nicely as the real thing. Great flies come from quality materials. While these materials may be more expensive, they will improve the flies that you tie.

Learn to be choosy. When you can sort through a batch of deer hair, choose only those pieces that meet the standards for what you want. When looking for necks for hackle, sort through loose necks carefully. Take necks in bags out and check for length of sweet spot, stiffness, barb density, excess web, tip curvature, etc. When buying online, be choosy. Send any materials back that don't meet your standards. Buy the best materials you can afford. Also, study materials and ask questions about them. That way you will gradually improve in your selections.

Covid-19 has given you time to practice. Take advantage and learn about the materials you are using.

With the pandemic continuing and the loss of light and warm temperatures that allowed for outdoor meetings, MLTU secured a professional Zoom license so that it may hold meetings virtually until circumstances change.

Beginning January 7, MLTU's monthly meetings will be held via Zoom. Meetings will begin at 7 PM on the first Thursday of each month. If you're not familiar with Zoom, I'll be available to give a few pointers on January 7, from 6:30 PM–7 PM. You don't need a Zoom account to join a meeting, but you will need to download the Zoom software. This can take a few minutes (usually less than five, depending on your Internet), so if you've not used Zoom before, you might want to start this at 6:25 PM.



To begin Zoom, go to zoom.us and, in the upper right corner, click “Join a Meeting.” Alternatively, you may download the Zoom app on your smart phone. You will need to enter a meeting ID, which will be **841 1763 7796** – a code unique to MLTU monthly meetings, and follow the prompts. You should have the option to click “Launch Meeting” or “Open” Zoom Meetings. You'll need to enter the password, which is “**Stonycreek**” and then click “Join Meeting.” You'll have an option to “Join with Video” or without. It doesn't matter which you choose, but, on the next prompt, you will need to “Join with Computer Audio” to allow your microphone to work. You'll end up with a view of others in the meeting. Menu buttons, usually at the bottom of your screen, will appear when you move your cursor. Here, you can mute/unmute yourself, show yourself via your webcam—or not, and participate in a chat with the group or an individual, among other things. I'll highlight these features during the intro to Zoom.

Don't have the Internet? No problem! You can still join the meeting by calling 1-646-558-8656. You'll need to enter the meeting ID, above, and a digital passcode: 4882726568.

An invitation/reminder to the Zoom will be shared via email the day of the meeting. If you are not currently receiving MLTU emails from me (you didn't receive notification of the Zoom intro offered in December), please send your email address to me at mreckner@brandywine.org and I'll add you to the list. I'm not a Zoom expert, but I did stay at a Holiday Inn once! Hahaha. Seriously, I'll try to help you navigate Zoom as much as I can. Note, I'm not familiar with Macs.

I know meeting in person is preferred and that no one wants to look at a computer screen longer than they need to, but I—and others—feel this is a good, safe alternative to not meeting at all. I think Zoom is one of the most user-friendly platforms and could be used for other meetings, like those of the Banquet Committee, or maybe for an advanced fly tying course!

12 Days of Christmas Ticket Sales

by Randy Buchanan

The 12 Days of Christmas tickets have been sold and winners should have received their checks. With great response in past years, I am disappointed to report that this year was the first year that the Chapter did not sell all 500 tickets. The Chapter had 28 tickets that were not returned. Better luck for the Chapter next year!

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Member Publishes Book About Turkeys

by *Gary Cooper*



Tom Hindman interacts with participants at NatureWorks. Photo by Melissa Reckner.

Trout Unlimited has long been thought of as an organization for fly fishermen. As I have stated many times, we are a cold-water conservation group with a diverse membership. One of my friends is such a fellow. If you were sitting next to him at a TU banquet, you might have no idea that the man sitting next to you is one of the most well-known turkey hunters in the world. I am referring, of course, to Tom Hindman. Tom has been involved with the NRA and the Wild Turkey Federation for decades. He has won numerous national awards and accolades from both organizations for his work as an instructor and for his conservation work. Locally he helps to sponsor and teach twice-yearly classes on turkey hunting at Stackhouse Park. Tom has other interests, but turkey hunting has long been his first love (next to his wife). Tom is also a fly fisherman and fly tier. He has long been a member of our chapter and supports the chapter by attending our banquet when he can fit it into his spring travel schedule. During NatureWorks at the Bottle Works each spring, you will see Tom staffing the booth for the local Wild Turkey chapter.

Recently Tom has published a memoir, *The Perfect Pursuit*, from the Wild River Press. This is a limited run of 350 copies. This is a book about life, nature, ethics afield, and the joys of hunting turkeys. A significant portion of the proceeds will go to benefit Stackhouse Park where conservationists and environmentalists work together toward a common cause. By purchasing a copy of the 188-page book, you will be supporting a local author and a local park. To order the book, please mail a check of forty dollars plus shipping payable to Tom Hindman at 1636 Sunshine Avenue Johnstown, PA 15905. Please call Tom with any questions or to check on free local shipping at (814) 525-2303. If you love to hunt turkeys, or if you want a great read about life, philosophy, and nature, get your copy now. You won't regret it.

Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

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www.mltu.org

Important Dates

- ◆ January 7 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ January 21 - SCRIP Meeting via Zoom, 1 PM (contact Missy for link)
- ◆ February 4 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ March 4 - MLTU Meeting via Zoom, 7 PM
- ◆ March 9 - MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 5 PM (contact Missy)

Trout in the Classroom Update

by Melissa Reckner

With all the uncertainty and changes occurring in our schools because of the pandemic, the PA Fish and Boat Commission and PA Council of Trout Unlimited modified the TIC program this year. Instead of shipping eggs in the fall, participating schools will receive their rainbow trout eggs in January. Schools had the option to opt out this year with no adverse impacts on future TIC



participation. To my knowledge, Divine Mercy Catholic Academy East and West, as well as Shanksville-Stonycreek Elementary School chose to receive trout eggs this year. Forest Hills Middle School opted out. The other MLTU-supported schools did not respond to inquiries.