

The Flyline



A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

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President's Message

by Randy Buchanan

I hope this newsletter finds everyone doing well going into the new year and that everyone had a very pleasant holiday season. This newsletter, I hope, arrives in everyone's hand in late December or early January. A lot of the information will cover programs that will start in early January and will give many members a chance to get involved with the Chapter. Two of the programs that the Chapter has on the schedule is Trout in the Classroom (TIC) and our fly tying classes.

The schools participating in TIC will be receiving their shipment of rainbow eggs in early January. The number of schools in our program is down from past years and will continue to drop if we don't get more members to volunteer with schools and/or maintenance of equipment when needed. I believe it would be a shame to lose TIC because we did not care to volunteer!

Fly tying starts early in January and the classes will continue for six weeks. This is a beginner's class, but we can make it a little more challenging for tyers with some skill.

January will also find us a little less than three months out from our spring fundraiser in March 2022. As of our last banquet meeting in November, new members have stepped up to help, and we thank them for the help. Everything that the Chapter does is dependent on the funds raised from our banquet.



This is just a bit of what is going on with the Chapter. Come to our meetings and learn more about how you can help move the Chapter forward.

Catch one!

Randy

MLTU Secretary Dave Maher, left, presents the Order of the Mug Award to MLTU President Randy Buchanan at the MLTU 2021 Annual Fund Raising Banquet. Photo by Len Lichvar.

Mark down this date: **Saturday March 26, 2022**. Why? This is the date of MLTU's 2022 annual fundraising banquet. This year's banquet will be held at the Holiday Inn in downtown Johnstown. Hopefully, Covid will have abated enough to allow many more people to attend.

Here are the details you will need to know. Each ticket costs thirty-five dollars. Tickets will be mailed out in January. If you would like extra tickets you can request them from:

Gary Cooper
Rear 704 Scalp Ave.
Johnstown, PA 15904
Ph. 814-266-4763

This name and address is also where you return checks and stubs when purchasing tickets. Please be sure to check your dinner choice on the stubs. When you call the phone number, please leave a message with your name after the beep; I will get back to you.

Doors open at 5:00 PM and dinner will be at about 6:30. We will have three levels of prizes to raffle off. There will be a silent auction, prizes for the ladies, a basket raffle, a restaurant tree, special prizes, and more. Remember that this is a fundraising banquet. You may buy tickets by cash, check, or credit card.

MLTU is back in business. Let's have a great time and raise a lot of money for stream improvement. See you there!

Fly Tying for Beginners

by Gary Cooper

By the time you receive this newsletter, our winter fly tying classes may have already begun. This is no cause for alarm. If you only missed the first week, we can catch you up - no problem.

This year you have your choice of two classes. One course is held on **Saturdays from 9 AM until 12 PM**. The other course is held on **Monday night from 6:30 PM to 9 PM**. Each course runs for a period of six weeks with an additional snow day. Course dates are as follows:

SATURDAYS - January 8, 15, 22, 29 and February 5 and 12. The snow day is February 19.

MONDAYS - January 10, 17, 24, 31 and February 7 and 21. The snow day is February 28.

All courses are free to the public. Materials and tools are provided. Students are encouraged to learn about tools and to purchase a set with which to practice. In this course, you will learn the basics of fly tying and if you learn the basics that we teach, you will have a strong foundation for a lifetime of pleasure.

Our instructors have a wealth of experience tying flies. Some are well known on a regional level.

They will share many things with the students. Come and enjoy a fascinating art that you can use your whole life. We look forward to seeing you.



After debate, the U.S. Congress passed and President Biden signed the federal infrastructure legislation into law on November 15, 2021. The bill aims to revitalize the nation's roads, bridges, waterways and public transit. As part of the bill, the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act (SMCRA) was reauthorized to allow for extractive fees to continue to be used to reclaim abandoned mine lands and to treat abandoned mine drainage (AMD) that pollutes our local waterways such as the Stonycreek and Little Conemaugh Rivers. These national expenditures are really an operation and maintenance plan which shifts more federal funding towards waterway infrastructure.

Notice that the bill mentions "waterways" which not only provide transportation, but also recreation as well as industrial and drinking water. Our public good thrives when infrastructure is built and maintained. The need for infrastructure is not new. Remember the Erie Canal and the Horseshoe Curve, which brought the trains across the mighty Alleghenies? Congressman John Murtha understood this need when he created the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) in 1991. He charged it with making Johnstown's rivers swimmable, fishable and drinkable by 2000. Although the task has been daunting and is ongoing, local progress has occurred as witnessed by community facilities such as Greenhouse Park, events like the Stonycreek Rendezvous, and businesses including Coal Tubin'.



Aluminum gives an aqua color to AMD treatment systems. Photo by Melissa Reckner.

The historic improvement of water quality in the Stonycreek River by means of water treatment infrastructure, such as the Oven Run AMD passive treatment systems that prevent 433,620,000 gallons a year of AMD-laden water from reaching our rivers, provide clean water for industry and homes, and has restored over 20 miles of fishery.

The resulting eco-tourism finds a network of bicycle and hiking trails along our waterways, which are being revived, in part, by these infrastructure projects. The newest project is the active mine drainage treatment plant to address the legacy deep mines along the Little Conemaugh River. The successful completion of this large infrastructure project, in the headwaters near Portage, will further clean up rivers all the way to Pittsburgh and beyond.

Like treatment of drinking water, our network of AMD treatment facilities is a vital component of the national infrastructure. AMD water treatment facilities represent an investment that must be maintained similar to bridges, roads, and busses. The benefit of clean water adds a

marked improvement to the quality of life around our region and to the pride that we take in our outdoor mecca of fishing, kayaking, biking, and scenic splendor.

Western Pennsylvania Conservancy (WPC) received a grant from the Coldwater Heritage Partnership to complete a planning project for the Bens Creek watershed in Cambria and Somerset Counties. The Coldwater Heritage Partnership welcomes public involvement in the development and planning of the project. To provide an opportunity for public input, WPC created a story map to provide background information on the watershed and the goals and methods of the project. Please follow the link below or scan the QR code to check out the story map and find out how you can help. <https://tinyurl.com/28yywyzk>



Bens Creek is a High-Quality/Exceptional Value tributary to the Stonycreek River in the Kiski-Conemaugh drainage located in northwestern Somerset and southwestern Cambria counties. Bens Creek is a prized coldwater fishery, offering both wild and stocked trout fishing opportunities, adjacent to the city of Johnstown. Nearly seven miles of stream in the watershed are stocked annually by PA Fish & Boat Commission (PFBC). The Bens Creek watershed contains nearly 60 miles of naturally reproducing trout streams, including 10 miles of Class A waters.

Despite the abundance of wild trout and favorable water quality found in the watershed,

there is certainly much room for improvement. According to PA Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) surveys, nearly nine miles of stream in the watershed are listed as impaired and do not meet designated aquatic life uses.

“The Bens Creek watershed contains...10 miles of Class A waters.”

The key partners in this project are the Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU) and Somerset Conservation District (SCD). This project relies on public input from stakeholders like you. Local knowledge is the best source of information. Do you know of a problematic culvert, an eroding stream-bank, or other water quality issue? Are you interested in a stream improvement project on your property? If so, please add it to the story map or feel free to reach out by email to acotchen@paconserve.org with any comments or questions.



This project was financed in part by a grant from the Coldwater Heritage Partnership on behalf of the PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (Environmental Stewardship Fund), the PA Fish and Boat Commission, the Foundation for Pennsylvania Watersheds, and the PA Council of Trout Unlimited.

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Trout in the Classroom

By Melissa Reckner

MLTU currently supports Trout in the Classroom at the following schools:

- ◆ Berlin-Brothersvalley High School
- ◆ Blacklick Valley Jr./Sr. High School
- ◆ Conemaugh Township Middle School
- ◆ Divine Mercy Catholic Academy East
- ◆ Divine Mercy Catholic Academy West
- ◆ Forest Hills Middle School
- ◆ Shade-Central City High School
- ◆ Shanksville-Stonycreek Elementary School (delayed until 2023, as there is a new teacher)

Volunteers are needed to help with schools' release day activities, be it demonstrating fly tying, helping kids to fish, or teaching them how to cast. They're always fun days! Join us at one or more this spring! All you need is patience and your child abuse and criminal clearances. For more info, contact me at mreckner@brandywine.org or 814-242-4285.

On an aside, if MLTU would like to support TIC at additional schools, we'll need an additional TIC Coordinator, as I'm limited on the time I can commit to TIC with my job.

Keystone Coldwater Conference



A joint meeting of the Keystone Coldwater Conference and the Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Fisheries Society is slated for February 25-26, 2022 at the Ramada Inn Conference Center in State College. The conference's theme is "Learning from the Past, Adapting for the Future."

Neither a schedule or registration is available yet, but will be at www.coldwaterconference.org, so check the website regularly.

This is always an informative event that offers great networking opportunities.

**Mountain Laurel
Trout Unlimited**

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Johnstown, PA 15904



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We're on the web!
www.mltu.org

Save the Dates!

- ◆ January 6 - MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ January 19 - Banquet Committee Meeting @ the Buchanan's, 7 PM
- ◆ February 3 - MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ February 16 - Banquet Committee Meeting @ the Buchanan's, 7 PM
- ◆ Feb. 25-26 - Keystone Coldwater Conference
- ◆ March 3 - MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ March 8 - MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM. Submit materials to Missy.
Newsletter covers April 1 - June 30, 2022.
- ◆ March 16 - Banquet Committee Meeting @ the Buchanan's, 7 PM
- ◆ March 26, 2022—MLTU Annual Banquet (changed from April 2 to avoid trout opening day)
- ◆ See page 2 for dates of the fly tying classes.

