

# The Flyline



***A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited***

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## **President's Message**

*by Dave Maher*

I, first of all, would like to thank the membership of MLTU for entrusting in me your confidence in the leadership of this chapter. No one can or will ever replace our friend and mentor, Randy Buchanan. So I ask all of you for your continued assistance and support as we all move onward and forward from this point together.

The first order of business is our annual fundraising banquet coming up on Saturday March 25 at the Holiday Inn, downtown Johnstown. This event will have special significance as we come together to honor Randy as well as honoring others who have made contributions to the coldwater resource with awards and recognition. I am also pleased to report that, thanks to the banquet committee members, sponsors, and willing donors, the prize tables for the banquet will be as full as ever.

The funds raised will enable us to continue our efforts and projects in coldwater resource conservation through the rest of the year and beyond. Thanks in advance for your continued support, and I look forward to seeing all of you at our banquet, meetings, and projects and angling together on the water.



## **Thank you Senator Casey**

Senator Robert Casey was instrumental in sponsoring and passing the bi-partisan Safeguarding Treatment for the Restoration of Ecosystems from Abandoned Mines (STREAM) Act, which infuses millions of dollars into treatment and remediation of abandoned mine discharges and landscapes. Perhaps most importantly, this law allows funds to be set aside for the long-term operation and maintenance of treatment systems, which are critical infrastructure for stream health. Casey spoke at the Oven Run re-dedication ceremony in September.

The Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited and the Stonycreek Conemaugh River Improvement Project acknowledged Casey's support and stalwartness and wrote him thank you letters in February. If you would like a copy of the PATU letter, contact Len Lichvar.

## Stewart Run Update

*by Butch Kerchenske & Dave Wright*

Good News!

In December, an application was submitted for a grant of \$3,500 to be used on phase two of the Stewart Run Project. This grant was sponsored by Berkshire Hathaway Energy, formerly Dominion Energy, and administered through the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy. We were one of sixteen applicants, so the competition was rough. We did make the cut and were granted the full amount approved for \$3,500. Phase two is budgeted for \$4,600 so this will off set the costs considerably. No firm date has been set but the work will likely be done in August. Last August, structures were placed as part of phase one of this three phase project. Butch inspected this work in March and found the structures functioning as intended. The stream, which is a tributary to Blacklick Creek, was then stocked by the PA Fish and Boat Commission and volunteers.

The grant will be presented on Wednesday, April 19, at Chestnut Ridge Resort near Blairsville. A networking luncheon is scheduled from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. We are to have two representatives from the chapter attend, so let Butch know if you are interested.

Special thanks to Mark Stockley from the Cambria County Conservation District and Phil Thomas from National TU for their letters of support.

*New MLTU Board Member, Jeff Baird, stocks trout in Stewart Run. Photo by Dave Wright.*



## Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp *by Dave Wright*

The membership of MLTU will be proudly sponsoring a junior from Bishop Carroll High School in Ebensburg at this year's Rivers Conservation & Fly-Fishing Youth Camp to be held at Messiah College, Grantham PA. The Cumberland Valley Chapter hosts the camp that is in its 28<sup>th</sup> year. Up to 24 students will be participating. "Classes include principles of ecology, hydrology, trout stream entomology, aquatic invertebrates, hydrology, watersheds, the biology of pollution, reptiles and amphibians, trout behavior, and riparian corridors." The camp will be Sunday, June 18 through Friday, June 23. Indoor activities will be held in the campus Jordan Science Center. Outdoor activities are scheduled for the grassy areas of the campus, and fishing activities will be along the famous Yellow Breeches Creek, which flows through the campus. Hopefully, the sponsored student will attend a future chapter meeting and present a report on this unique educational experience. The total cost to the chapter is \$550, which includes tuition, all course materials, and room and board.



*by Dave Wright*

We had a tremendous response this year for our fly tying classes, presumably due to the article featuring the class in the *Tribune-Democrat*. Unfortunately, many people were turned away.

The five-week course was held at the Richland community room along Schoolhouse Road in Richland Township. We had nine students attend our Saturday morning session and eleven participate on Monday evenings. Several students repeated the class. As usual, the dry flies on week four proved to be the most difficult followed by the terrestrials on week five that are perhaps the easiest to tie. We also tied nymphs, streamers, and wet flies. The class emphasizes technique over specific patterns. Numerous chapter members contributed their expertise in teaching the class and helping the attendees with one-on-one hands-on instruction. The classes finished on Saturday February 25 with living macroinvertebrates on display and a pizza party lunch.

If you are a novice fly tyer, the experience and satisfaction of landing and releasing trout on a fly that you tied yourself is an immeasurable accomplishment.



Forest Hills Middle School students collect macroinvertebrates during a TIC Release Day last year. Photo by Melissa Reckner.

The Chapter held its annual election of officers at the March 2<sup>nd</sup> regular meeting. The results are as follows:

**President:** Dave Maher

**Vice President:** Shane Rudnik

**Treasurer:** Pat Buchanan

**Secretary:** Eric Fabrizio

**3 Year Board:** Butch Kerchenske &  
Dave Wright

**2 Year Board:** Gary Cooper &  
Melissa Reckner

**1 Year Board:** Adam Cotchen &  
Jeff Baird

Thank you to all that are serving and that served in the past.

### Trout in the Classroom

Trout in the Classroom resumed at several local schools in January, when rainbow trout eggs were shipped from the PA Fish and Boat Commission and PA Council of Trout Unlimited to participating schools. Release Day field trips are planned in April and May for the following schools:

- ◆ Blacklick Valley Jr./Sr. High School
- ◆ Divine Mercy Catholic Academy—East
- ◆ Divine Mercy Catholic Academy—West
- ◆ Shade-Central City High School
- ◆ Shanksville-Stonycreek Elementary School

Randy Buchanan was a staunch supporter of TIC and was present at nearly every Release Day. It would be fabulous to have more members help teach the next generation how to cast, tie flies, or fish and foster the love of fishing. If you can help, please contact Missy at [mreckner@brandywine.org](mailto:mreckner@brandywine.org).



*Editors note: The following is a letter PATU President, Len Lichvar, wrote and sent to PA Fish and Boat Commission's Executive Director, Commissioners, and Fisheries staff.*

Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited (PATU) represents approximately 17,000 members in Pennsylvania. The organization is dedicated to cold water conservation including the protection of PA's trout streams, rivers, and still waters.

Of major interest to PATU is the proposal to amend 58 PA Code 71, 73 which originally addressed the introduction of a Notice of Stocking and a Stocking Authorization requirement for any entity to stock fish in PA's waters. PATU feels that this is something that is long overdue, and we have been a strong supporter of this change.

At the most recent meeting of the PFBC Fisheries and Hatcheries Committee in January, it was noted that any reference to a Stocking Authorization has been totally omitted from the proposed change to 58 PA Code Ch. 71, 73 and now only included a Notice of Stocking. As explained by staff, the required Notice of Stocking would provide

staff with data indicating what, where, and what species the various entities are stocking in PA's waters. PATU supports this initiative.

Originally, staff explained that the Stocking Notice and the subsequent data gathered would lead into informed implementation of the requirement for all entities to obtain an authorization to stock fish. PATU has held the position that the requirement to obtain a Stocking Authorization is of great importance to effectively manage PA's fisheries, and we have strongly supported this initiative.

While there was some reference to revisit the stocking authorization issue expressed by a few Commissioners in the future, by having removed all language pertaining to a stocking authorization, there would be no requirement to do so in the future.

PATU believes that the implementation of an enforceable Stocking Authorization would contribute greatly to better management of PA's waters. We would strongly urge PFBC to reconsider and reinsert the Stocking Authorization language into the proposal to amend 58 PA Code Ch. 71, 73.



*MLTU Board Member, Adam Cotchen, holds a wild brown trout that was collected during an electro-fishing survey of Bens Creek on June 13, 2022.*

*Editors note: The following is a letter Len wrote to Gary Smith, PFBC's Area 8 Fisheries Manager, and copied to Tim Schaeffer, Kris Kuhn, Dave Nihart, Don Anderson, Tyler Crooks, Dina Cable, Shane Rudnik, Adam Cotchen, Greg Shustrick, Dave Rothrock, BJ Small, William Gibney, Bill Brock, Charles Charlesworth, Richard Kaufman, Richard Lewis, John Mahn, Daniel Pastore, Eric Hussar, Rachel Kester, Jen Orr-Greene, Chris Wood.*

Dear Gary and Area 8 Fisheries Management Staff,

The Mountain Laurel Chapter of Trout Unlimited (MLTU) would like to inform you that there will be a Coldwater Conservation Plan for the entire Bens Creek watershed in Somerset County completed by early March of this year. Among the data and information will be suggested resource and fishery management recommendations that we would like to discuss in person with you and your staff at a later date.

Until then, in response to official action taken by the chapter, we would like, in the short term, to strongly advise that you ensure that the Class A wild trout designated section of the South Fork of Bens Creek does not receive hatchery raised trout within the designated boundaries of Jenners Lane and Keafer Hill Road.

We make this known to you because we previously witnessed PA Fish and Boat personnel, which included three PFBC Commissioners and the PFBC Executive Director, multiple Waterways Conservation Officers, and volunteers, placing hatchery trout within that designated Class A section during last year's pre-season stocking of the stream. We understand how this situation may have occurred inadvertently; however, this action is still a clear violation of PFBC Fisheries Management Policy.

In order to address this and related issues that are relevant statewide, when the Conservation Plan is finalized we want to discuss, among other issues, how sections of Class A water, that are bounded by stocked sections, should be marked or visually designated so that not only PFBC staff and stocking personnel, both professional and volunteer, know where the boundaries are, but also the anglers who are clearly unaware of these designated sections as well. We have several innovative concepts to suggest which would minimize the effort required, reduce angler concerns, but still provide the intended result of information and education that we have documented to be lacking for waters such as the South Fork and no doubt others statewide that have similar multiple management designations.

Thank you for your attention to our comments and we look forward to working with you cooperatively to improve the natural resources and recreational opportunities in the Bens Creek watershed and similar waterways throughout the state.

A copy of the [Bens Creek Coldwater Conservation Plan](http://www.coldwaterheritage.org) will be available at [www.coldwaterheritage.org](http://www.coldwaterheritage.org) once it is finalized.

**Mountain Laurel  
Trout Unlimited**

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## Save the Dates!

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- ◆ March 26 — Benscreek litter cleanup; Meet @ Jim & Jimmies, 10 AM
- ◆ April 1 — Opening day of trout season! Enjoy!
- ◆ April 6 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ April 19 — Fly Tyers Reunion @ Seven Springs, 6 PM
- ◆ April 22 — Yellow Creek litter cleanup; Meet @ Frontier Restaurant, 9 AM
- ◆ April 28 — Blacklick Valley TIC Release Day @ Lake Rowena
- ◆ April 29 — Little Paint Creek litter cleanup; Meet @ Berwick Road, 8 AM
- ◆ May 4 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ May 5 — Shanksville-Stonycreek TIC Release Day @ the school
- ◆ May 11 — Shade-Central City TIC Release Day @ Shade Sportsmen's Club & Reitz #1
- ◆ May 12 — Divine Mercy TIC Release Day @ Greater Ferndale Sportsmen's Club
- ◆ May 13 — Shade/Crumb Road litter cleanup; Meet @ Iron Bridge 9 AM
- ◆ June 1 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ◆ June 3 — Kids Rodeo @ Windber Sportsmen's Club, 8 AM
- ◆ June 6 — MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM. Submit materials to Missy.  
Newsletter covers July 1 - Sept. 30, 2023.