



March 2006

Snags and Snarls



Committed To Coldwater Conservation

The Newsletter of the Pisgah Chapter of Trout Unlimited

From the President

This month's presidents report looks more like a laundry list of reminders than anything else.

The Green, Little and North Mills Rivers are scheduled for their first Delayed Harvest stocking of the Spring on March 6th. Let's hope for better weather than the March stocking a year ago. All I can say is dress warmly and consider wearing a couple of extra layers!

Rivercourse 2006 will be held June 18th - 23rd at the Lake Logan Center in Canton, N.C. More information may be obtained regarding Rivercourse at www.nctu.org. It is strongly recommended that applicants apply online by filling in the application and clicking 'SEND'. Early registration is encouraged as there is a limit of 18 campers.

From the President

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MEETING NOTICES

DATE/TIME: **Thursday, March 9, 2006**
7:00 p.m. Social • 7:30 p.m. Meeting
PROGRAM: **Speaker:** Michael Miller, Watershed Specialist, RiverLink
Topic: Lessons learned from the floods of 2004

DATE/TIME: **Thursday, April 13, 2006**
7:00 p.m. Social • 7:30 p.m. Meeting
PROGRAM: **Speaker:** Rich Witt, Land O' Sky Chapter Guide for Curtis Wright Outfitters
Topic: Fly Fishing in Wisconsin

A Chapter Board of Directors meeting is scheduled for **Wednesday, April 5, 2006** at 6:30 p.m. at the Log Cabin of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship on Kanuga Road. All members are invited. 🐟

Welcome to our New Member

We are happy to welcome the following new member to Pisgah Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Chris Cassels



Highway Clean Up

Tuesday, March 28th - Rain or Shine
Meet at the Coon Tree parking area at 9:30 a.m.
Art Smith will bring coffee and muffins.

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Snow Days - A Time For Review

John Carney

One of these days we probably will have a real snow day or two. After all the false alarms we have had this year we might actually welcome a bit of the white stuff, if nothing else, just to put into effect the bad weather plans that you made a couple of months ago. If you didn't make any plans, maybe we can help to occupy your time in front of the fireplace.

As we are all aware, the art/science/livelihood/hobby of fishing has been around for a very long time. We know that this is a fact because it has been mentioned in the written records and histories of many well-known and famous people. Fly-fishing goes back to around 200 A.D. according to some researchers and historians. Today, it seems that we have more fishing 'experts' than at any other time in history and they all write about and expound upon their skills, special techniques, and now, the newest technology and equipment. It seems that you can't be a full member of the fraternity unless you have a vest or boat-full of the latest and most expensive stuff. But, hold on a minute, and let's go back to the basics. Excluding the market folks with their nets and long lines, fishing still boils down to the simple stuff, lines, poles, hooks, bait and, maybe, a reel. Yep, that's right. That's all they had in the past and, based on their reports, they caught tons of fish. So are we really improving 'fishing' or are gadgets, technology and slick marketing overriding us? Let's have a look back at some of the earlier days of fishing for fun and survival.

Starting back in or about 200 A.D. Claudius Aelianus, now known as Aelian, in his book *On the Nature of Animals*, described how people fished with a fly for fish with speckled skins. "They fasten red (crimson red) wool around a hook and fix onto the wool two feathers which grow under a cocks wattles, and which in colour are like wax. Their rod is six feet long, and their line is the same length." According to the text, the fish go after this concoction and are caught. This sounds like an ideal Bass Pro starter combo outfit. Excerpts from this text are widely found on the web, perhaps some organization has made the whole text available.

In her *Book of St Albans* (1425), Dame Juliana

Berner described fishing methods of the time in an article entitled *A Treatise of Fysshynge Wyth an Angle*. The rods were described as about 15 feet in length and were made in two sections joined by a metal link. The line was twisted or braided horsehair top-knotted to the rod tip. No reel was mentioned. Dame Juliana did provide a description on tying twelve different flies or one for each month of the year. This sounds like a challenge for those that tie, and maybe we should be looking at these for our Fly of the Month. Some of the flies described are similar to current flies used today. It might be fun to try her recommendations on local waters. Needless to say, the book is rare and very expensive to purchase. You can access it on the web at: <http://darkwing.uoreg.on.edu/%7Erbear/berners/berners.html>.

As the years passed and fishing became a popular gentleman's sport it was again addressed in a major work by Izaak Walton in his early treatise on fly fishing, *The Compleat Angler* (1653). In Walton's time, the rods were still about 15 feet long, of jointed wood, with a braided horsehair line of the same length and maybe a primitive reel. Walton was still promoting Dame Juliana's 12 basic flies. However, in 1676, *The Compleat Angler* was expanded with a section on fly-fishing by Charles Cotton. Cotton listed sixty-five trout flies. This was great news for some anglers as they would need at least one more fly box, or maybe two, since the early flies were large. Reprints are available from many bookstores and at Amazon.com.

In the 1700's and early 1800's rods, lines and reels were improved. Split bamboo was first used in rod building and the rods were shortened. Reels became more functional and horsehair was replaced by silk which was to stay around for a long time. Dry flies were developed and nymphs also emerged at the end of this period, necessitating additional fly boxes. *Floating Flies and How to Dress Them* (1886) and *Dry Fly Fishing in Theory and Practice* (1889) by Fredric Halford are supposed to be the prime works on the topwater lures and *Minor Tactics of the Chalk Stream* (1910), by George M. Skues, the initial nymphing text. These books are mentioned for information only. They

have been frequently cited as reference texts and may be available.

It is interesting to note that the Lewis and Clark expedition in 1805 did not appear to take any fly-fishing gear, but did have a significant amount of basic fishing equipment. In an article in the *Big Sky Journal*, *Montana's First Fish Story*, Ken Walcheck noted that they purchased ten pounds of lines and a large assortment of hooks, some of which were intended as gifts for the Indians. "Typical fishing tackle for expedition members consisted of assorted hooks, split shot, cork bobber, heavy line and a small round metal box in which to carry the assorted gear". No poles were bought. On one occasion, a willow tree was cut for a fishing session; presumably this was the practice followed when poles were required. Ask the writer to see this article.

The subject of fishing was not given much coverage in Stephen Ambrose's *Undaunted Courage*. To get the full details you need to take on the full eleven volumes which are available on the web at: <http://lewisandclarkjournals.unl.edu/>.

Jumping ahead to 1920 we find a text by a popular outdoor writer Nessmuk titled *Woodcraft* (later changed to *Woodcraft and Camping*). Nessmuk was a pen name used by George Sears in his articles for the *Forest and Stream* journals in the late 1800's. In his classic outdoors novel, Nessmuk offers the following hints. "In fly-fishing, one serviceable four ounce rod is enough: and plain click reel, of small size, is just as satisfactory as a more costly affair. Twenty yards of tapered, water-proof line, with six-foot leader, and a cost of two flies, complete the rig, and will be found sufficient." He writes further "We all carry too many flies. Some of my friends have more than sixty dozen and will never use a tenth of them". This one hundred page book is easy reading and often humorous. It offers a lot of useful hints and is recommended reading for anyone who likes and spends time in the outdoors. Copies are available.

While perusing *Streamer Fly-tying and Fishing* (1950) by Joseph D. Bates, Jr. we found the following paragraphs: "The young angler put away his newly made leaders in his canvas kit-bag and took from it a large aluminum fly box. He opened it and handed it to the old angler. It was fully packed with about two hundred beautiful streamers and bucktails of every size, type and color." (That's a really big fly box!) "The old man fingered them

carefully, poking one and then another. Occasionally he took one out and held it up to the light, then replaced it carefully in the box. "Streamers are made to catch fishermen as well as fish," he observed. "Some I tied years ago," the young man said "Some I bought and some were given to me. What do you think of them?" "You can throw away half of them," the old man said. "You can select about twenty of the others, and with them you can catch any fish that swims in fresh water that can be taken with a fly. Trouble with you is the same that is with most fishermen, you've got collectoritis. Fun, though, isn't it?" Earlier in the same book, the old man said "I am convinced, and science says it is so, that fish will strike at an artificial lure for four reasons. First, they will strike because they think it is something to eat and because they are hungry. If they don't happen to be hungry, they may strike at it from curiosity or from anger, or in a spirit of play." The old man eventually stated maybe ten were all that were really needed. As noted in the title, this is an interesting and sometimes humorous text on streamer fishing, tying and histories. Despite the comments on fly box contents by the old man, the author leaves you with nearly 120 streamer patterns and discusses others. This book is available.

The books listed above are some examples of earlier texts on fishing and fly-fishing as it has evolved through the ages. There are many new books on the shelf today written by knowledgeable people. These are not referenced as most of the readers of this article will already own a few of them and know the author's names well. Today's writers, however, address today's methods using today's technology.

There is one recent text that might be of interest when looking back at earlier times, "The Complete Angler" by James Prosek. Prosek was an admirer of Izaak Walton and his illustrated novel is a modern day adventure to the same streams and places that Walton visited. It is an enjoyable rambling written in the same vein as those that have attempted to re-create the Lewis and Clark voyage of discovery.

That's probably enough reading for one or two snow days. If you are lucky your local library may have one or more of these books available. The sequence and content of the texts is illustrative of the progress made in terms of methods and equipment but also points to our continuing tendencies

to overcomplicate our own personal fishing gear. Now we are seeing some movement to get back to the basics with minimalist gear from many of our

suppliers. There are choices now to suit everyone's likes. That was not true in days of old and not so far away. 🐟

Stocking Days - The Rest of the Story From The Hatchery Side

John Carney

A large number of our Pisgah Chapter members have spent many mornings waiting in isolated parking lots for the hatchery truck to show up to assist in fish stocking activities. The wait time is often spent discussing fishing tips, professing some new sure-fire catching methodology, showing a new rod or reel or just plain bragging, and is usually accompanied by frequent gulps of steaming hot coffee and maybe even a donut or two.

In the meantime, just to set the record straight, the hatchery personnel have been very busy. On days that stocking is to take place hatchery personnel start at about 7:30 a.m. or before. Their routine goes something like the following, depending upon the weather and other conditions. The transporter trucks are assigned to a particular

stream based on load size and access. For example, the East Fork requires a large tanker based on the load and, since it is all on paved roadway, any of the larger vehicles will do. For the Little River, travel is up and down narrow unpaved roadways and the smaller four-wheel drive tanker is ideal. Once the assignments are made, the trucks are fueled, if needed, and the oxygen systems are topped off.

Once ready, the trucks are moved to the appropriate raceways in preparation for loading fish. A special fish barrier is placed in the raceway and is moved in the water to a point near the raceway's end. This barrier concentrates the fish so that the hatchery personnel can easily scoop them into the catch nets. Usually one person will physically enter the water and stand in the raceway to net the fish. The full net is then weighed and passed up to

the truck for loading into one of the tank compartments. Personnel are careful to make sure that equal distribution is made to each of the tank compartments as overcrowding could result in damage to the fish. This factor is also important when 'guesstimating' the distribution spread at the stocking sites. The loading continues until the appropriate

numbers of fish are aboard. The loading activity requires a minimum of three or more persons due to the amount of weight and transfer mechanics involved in the process. Normally all of the trucks are loaded before any depart for the stocking sites. An exception might occur in the case of a long trip or special weather conditions. Depending upon the location and anticipated assistance that



might be available, the transporters may have a one or two person crew.

Questions always seem to arise as to the number of fish that are provided. There are two numbers that should be kept in mind when addressing this topic. The first number is the designated stream stocking level which is set by the WRC in accordance with a standard formula. The second figure, and the one creating the most mystery, is the actual number of fish that are put into the stream. If you have worked on a stocking crew, then you know that the fish come in a variety of sizes. Sometimes the buckets seem to hold only a few fish (trophy size) and other times there are lots of 'little uns'. The methodologies that the hatchery uses to set up the desired number are interesting and make allowances for the variations in growth that you will see over the stocking season. The hatchery samples a designated raceway and determines the number of fish per pound. This figure is then used to establish the number of pounds of fish needed to meet the stocking level. When larger fish are being stocked, they are always

counted. What all this means is that the streams are getting the correct numbers of fish per the guidelines however, the number of pounds of fish is going to be different every time.

We also need to keep in mind that the early season stockers are the fish that have been fed through the winter and spring and these will be larger. The late stockers are the fish that the hatchery has been nurturing to bring up to a minimum or larger size mixed with some large fish. Actual fish growth is influenced by a number of factors, starting with Mother Nature and the weather, as our local hatchery uses a surface water source. The hatchery goal is to produce the best quality fish possible and this effort requires constant monitoring and adjusting on a daily basis.

Hopefully this article will clear up some of the mysteries and myths on our stocking activities. For those of you that help in our chapter's stocking endeavors, a big thanks. For those of you that don't, perhaps you should give it a try sometime. If nothing else, it is good outdoor exercise and an interesting experience. 🐟

Fly of the Month - H & L Variant

Jack Frisch

Hook: #10 - #18
Thread: 6/0 black
Tail: White calf hair
Body: ½ Peacock quill, ½ Peacock herl
Wing: White calf hair
Hackle: Brown or Ginger



1. Attach a number 16 dry fly hook in the vice and start the thread just behind the eye. Run the thread to the mid point of the hook, secure a wing sized clump of calf hair to the hook, butt ends forward; the tips will form the tail.
2. Pull the butt ends 90 degrees to the hook shank and wrap in front to form the wings. Then wrap to the bend of the hook to form a smooth underbody.
3. Take one peacock herl and, using a white plastic eraser, remove about 1½" of herl from the quill. Tie in the stripped quill at the bend of the hook and wrap the thread back to the wings. Wrap the quill forward forming the first half of the body, and continue wrapping the un-stripped herl to form the second half of the body.

4. Tie off the herl behind the wing.
5. Tie in the hackle material (I use a Whiting Farms Dry Fly Hackle. It's more expensive but it saves time sorting through hackles to find the proper size). Wrap the hackle material a couple of times behind the wing and a couple of times in front of the wing, this also helps keep the wings perpendicular to the hook shank.
6. Tie off the thread. As with other stripped quill flies, the quill can be coated with head cement to make it more durable. 🐟

From the President

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Additional information may be obtained from Dick Heald at rdbjheald@bellsouth.net or Betsy Craig at ercraig@citcom.net.

This year's South East Rally will take place April 28th - 30th at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Center near Abingdon, VA. \$65 per person covers breakfast Saturday through breakfast Sunday, a bunk for Friday and Saturday nights, all workshops and a whole lot of fishing. Accommodations are very basic buildings with single bunk beds and group 'facilities', but do have heat and air. What to bring: sleeping bag and/or blankets, pillow, towel, all personal toiletries, flash light, hat and, of course, fishing gear. Coolers with adult refreshments are welcome. For more information see below. Remember to be prepared for any type of weather!

I have received a number of e-mails and phone calls concerning the Pisgah Chapter Fly Fishing School that is generally conducted near the end of April. I do not want to see this useful event fall through the crack and perhaps by the wayside. We have about 10 people interested in attending the school at this point and I'm sure we could easily pick up a few more. We have lost some of the corporate knowledge due to unfortunate circumstances and conflicting obligations so we need additional assistance in conducting the class. If you are interested in volunteering, or attending the class, please contact me: (828) 243-6783, troutfish@bellsouth.net or Karl Kaufman (828) 667-2406, rkarlk@bellsouth.net.

The national office of Trout Unlimited has undergone some personnel changes recently. Gary Berti is now heading up the Back the Brookie program. Kim Ryals had, until recently, occupied the position and I'm sure we all wish her luck in her

future endeavors. John Gale has left Trout Unlimited for a position with the National Wildlife Federation in Boulder, CO. The national office is actively seeking a replacement for his position.

There have been some recent developments regarding personnel changes that are a little closer to home. I am seeking nominations for the board as a director. Additional unforeseen obligations have put one of our members in a position that he believes would be better served by a member that has more time to devote to the Pisgah Chapter. If you are interested in serving your fellow members in this capacity, or know someone who is, please let me or any member of the board know.

Update on the Pigeon River Project from the Land O' Sky Pigeon River Project: 2006 is a crucial year for the program. Sponsorship has declined to the point where continued stocking and feeding of our managed stretch of the East Fork of the Pigeon will not be feasible beyond this year. Annual Sponsorship is \$65, Guide Sponsor is \$120 and a Lifetime is \$500. The daily fee is \$7. For more information regarding the Pigeon River Project contact the LOS TU Pigeon River Project, PO Box 117, Asheville, NC 28802-0117 or via the website: www.landoskytu.com.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who has nudged me with friendly reminders over the past six months regarding this or that event or situation. It has certainly been an interesting time putting together all the data that arrived in a box from Craig's. With a little luck, and a lot of assistance from the board and membership, our schedule for 2006 should move along relatively smoothly. Now if the fish will cooperate, everything will be just fine.

See you on the water!

Dale ↘

THE FIFTH ANNUAL SOUTH-EAST RALLY

APRIL 28TH THROUGH 30TH

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA 4-H EDUCATIONAL CENTER

25236 HILLMAN HIGHWAY, ABINGDON, VIRGINIA

TELEPHONE 276-676-6180

RESERVATIONS MUST BE MADE BY APRIL 25TH

LODGING IS AVAILABLE ON-SITE AND IN THE IMMEDIATE AREA

PLEASE SIGN UP USING THE ATTACHED FORM

The Fifth Annual

SOUTH—EAST RALLY



Mark Your Calendars

A good time get together for the TU members from the deep south including fishing, music, and learning about your TU. Register on Friday night, do some TU business, go fishing, and have some fun. Music by recording artists “High Windy” on Saturday Evening. Fishing Saturday and Sunday afternoons in heart of some of Virginia’s highest terrain and best Trout Streams. And it is located in easy distance of Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia and West Virginia. Come on, and bring a friend.

April 28 through 30

Southwest Virginia 4-H
Educational Center

25236 Hillman Highway
Abingdon, Virginia
Ph: 276-676-6180

Registration, Details
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Friday Night:

Registration and Check In, Welcome,
Get together, and Fun.

Saturday :

Breakfast, Home Rivers Initiative, workshops,
Lunch, Back the Brookie and Council Meetings,
Monitoring Field trip, and fishing in nearby
streams. Dinner and Music of the evening.

Sunday Morning:

Breakfast, Putting BTB to Work, How TU uses
Media, and a Message from the top.
Check out by Lunch.



Location Details

From Exit 19 on I-81, travel south on U.S. Route 11 for approximately 1/2 mile. Turn right on State Route 609 (Hillman Highway). Look for the blue 4-H Center sign at the intersection. Follow Route 609 for approximately 1-1/2 miles to the 4H Center entrance on the right.

Group Cabins lodging (heated), programs and meals only \$65 for Friday Night through Sunday morning. Couples Only rooms available w/up charge.



Reservations must be made by April 25th. Lodging is available on-site and in the immediate area. Please sign up using the attached form.

Details

This year's Rally is in the same location as last year's. We will begin on Friday night, April 28, and go through Sunday, April 30. The registration fee includes Lodging, Workshops and Meals from Saturday breakfast through Sunday breakfast.

Lodging:

\$65 per person covers breakfast Saturday thru breakfast Sunday, a bunk for Friday & Saturday nights, all workshops, and a whole lot of fishing.

Accommodations are very basic buildings with single bunk beds and group "facilities", but do have heat and air.

What to bring: sleeping bag and/or blankets, pillow, towel, all personal toiletries, flash light, hat, Fishing gear (of course). Coolers with adult refreshments are welcome.

Dress for any type of weather!

Payments:

You may make payments either by check or credit card. Payment in full is required at the time of registration. Please use the attached forms and send along with payment to:

Sally Armstrong
Trout Unlimited
1300 North 17th Street
Suite 500
Arlington, VA 22209-3801
Fax: 703-284-9400

More Info:

About the Center: <http://www.ext.vt.edu/resources/4h/southwest/>

Local Flyshop: www.vcflyshop.com

Barter Theater: www.bartertheatre.com

For other questions please contact: Gary Berti at gberti@tu.org

South East Rally

Registration Form

The Rally takes place on April 28 -30, 2006 at the Southwest Virginia 4-H Educational Center near Abingdon, Va. Fees include lodging, meals and programs. Costs vary by lodging type and all costs are per person, regardless of number in party. Conference Center rooms are reserved for couples only.

Registration Information:

Last Name: _____ First name: _____ TU Membership # _____

Address: Street: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone Number: _____ Email Address: _____

Payment Information:

I am making cabin reservations for _____ people @ \$65 per person

Amount \$ _____

I am making Conference Center reservations for _____ couple(s) at \$180
(Reserved for Couples Only)

Amount \$ _____

Total Amount Due \$ _____

My preferred method of payment is:

By Check (enclosed) _____ (Please make payable to Trout Unlimited)

By Credit Card: Name as it appears on Card _____

Card Number : _____

Expiration Date: _____

Source Code: SRAL06

Description: SE Rally Registration