



New River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

Volume 1, Issue 4

Winter 2006, 2007

Dear TU member,

With an exciting spring trout season now upon us, it is a good time to look back at the accomplishments of our chapter in the past months and look forward to renewing our commitment to protecting our cold-water resources of the New River Valley. A strong series of chapter meetings through the winter months have been entertaining and informative, with an excellent presentation given by VDGIF's New River smallmouth bass biologist John Copeland and 'trips out West' guided by our own members, Lynn Hayes and Ryan McManamay. The meetings have also addressed the importance of strengthening our role as conservation leaders in the New River Valley by hosting speakers such as George Schaeffer who gave a call-to-arms for restoring the headwaters of Wolf Creek in Burke's Garden, Tazewell County.

In addition to the contacts that have been cultivated thanks to the Schaeffer talk, members have played an active role in identifying the projects where NRVTU can make lasting impacts. Jason Bowman has been in frequent touch with the Clinch Valley Chapter concerning a grant awarded to them for fostering the native brook trout populations in Dismal Creek in Giles County. Angelo Biviano has attended several forums on the exciting possibility of stream restoration of Dodds Creek in Floyd County. With the information that these and many other members have obtained about ways that our chapter can make lasting impacts on cold water habitat, our Conservation Director, Phil Taylor, has formed the Conservation Committee to proactively develop a long-term plan for NRVTU conservation efforts. All are invited to participate in the committee which meets one hour before monthly chapter meetings.

We are pleased to report that NRVTU fundraising efforts have been successful over the past months. The chapter is highly appreciative of a large donation made by AEP thanks to the efforts of member Brad Jones. The holiday raffle, managed by our Fundraising Director, Angelo Biviano, was also successful thanks to the generous support of the members.

In the weeks to follow, chapter activities will ramp; and we hope all the members are able to join in. In business, new nominations and subsequent elections for officers and board members will occur over the April 4th and May 2nd meetings. In conservation, the new Conservation Committee will advise the chapter on paths for future involvement in long-term projects. In the outdoors, two weekend camping trips to Grayson County Highlands State Park are planned in late April and May.

As we all enjoy the beauty of spring and the trout that embrace this time of year, let's continue to strengthen our commitment to conserving the NRV's cold-water habitat. I look forward to seeing everyone in the weeks to come.

Regards,

Todd Lowe

Director of Public Relations, New River Valley Chapter

Special points of interest:

• Next Meetings

Apr 4th

May 2nd

June 6th

• **When: 7pm**

• **Where: 1033**

**Derring Hall,
Va Tech**

Upcoming Activities

Chapter Campouts

Grayson County

Highlands State

Park

Two weekends:

April 27-29

May 25-27

Pandapas Pond

Kid's Fishing Day

Date TBA, contact

Ryan McManamay

or Todd Lowe for

details

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Early season action on Big Stoney - Ryan McManamy

To most of us, Big Stoney is the creek in the area with the largest potential to be a great blue ribbon trout stream. However, as you probably know, this potential is never met because of the intense fishing pressure imposed by 'catch and keep' anglers. When driving along the creek, you are probably mesmerized by the deep holes and large water at the lower end of the creek, and in the back of your mind you know that this stream could hold large monster browns or a big native brook. But to no surprise, if you are lucky enough to hang into a fish on these waters, it will most likely be a pasty-white stocked rainbow.

Well for one day, Travis Patton, Phil Taylor, and I met on the creek for a morning of fishing. We resolved one underlying issue before we came: We were going to be eating trout soon. I've let many people know this truth about myself: When I'm fishing for stocked fish, I'm a 'catch and keep' angler. But I only keep what need. When fishing for natives or naturalized fish (unless the naturalized fish are a pending threat to natives), I will throw them back.

It was a unique day. The sun was out, it was warm, and we fished the big holes together. The pickings were slim but we connected and found tight lines throughout the morning. We were a small flock of vultures hopping from hole to hole. I unzipped my vest pocket and pulled out my stringer, which to most TUer's is the ultimate sin, and slipped the first fish of the day onto it (picture 1). Travis, who is a local, hung into a nice 12" naturalized brown (picture 2) and was truly excited. He returned it to its home while rejoicing because catching one of those is a rare find and we all knew that the fish had worked hard to stay there. His coloration could attest to that. We attempted to sight fish. Some of the fish were found in pockets lumped together. We all fished around the same holes, taking turns casting and it reminded me of my childhood fishing on the Davidson River with my cousin.



Picture 1. A trout caught I caught



Picture 2. A naturalized brown caught by Travis

Its fun at times fishing for stocked fish, because they hit hard and even though they haven't faced the hardships of growing up in a free-flowing environment where you have to hunt for food, they aren't too far off. And even though most of us complain about the potential that Big Stoney "could" have, I am glad that catch and keep places exist. It's nice to eat trout every now and then. And, of course, I really don't like it when I've got a guy fishing in my hole with corn and keeping everything he catches, but its no better than a smorgasbord of snobby-nosed fisherman lining the entire stream because they just watched a "River Runs Through It." Back when Norman Mclean wrote the book, he and his brother were purists, no doubt, but they wouldn't disgrace a fish by throwing it back. Things have changed as they have needed to. Back home, I fish a 'catch and keep' stream. I wouldn't change it, because if it were ever turned into 'catch and release' or 'delayed harvest', they would build a trail along the stream and then every fly fisherman and their brother would be out there everyday. As it is now, I can sneak out there and find myself all alone and catch a few stockers that swam downstream. So both types of water should exist.

Wherever you fish, two rules should always apply: Take only what you need and Treat your fellow fisherman as you would want to be treated.

Back when Norman Mclean wrote the book, he and his brother were purists, no doubt, but they wouldn't disgrace a fish by throwing it back. Things have changed as they



Picture 3. Phil and Travis fishing a hole together

Contribute to the newsletter: If you'd like to send in some pictures and a fishing story please send them to kelowe@vt.edu so we can post it in the newsletter.

Next Meetings: Apr 4th, May 2nd, and June 6th, 7pm @ 1033 Derring Hall

Announcements:

New River Valley Chapter campouts at Grayson Highlands (April 27-29 and May 25-27)

Our TU chapter is planning two (2) spring camping/fishing weekends at Grayson Highlands. The first trip is scheduled for April 27-29. and the second will be May 25-27. Camp sites will be re-served based on your response. Camp sites without water/ electricity are \$20 and large enough for 6-8 people. So look at your calendar (not your to do list!) and let me know if you plan to make it for a fishing weekend and which (or both) you plan to attend. We will start coordinating everything based on the response. Come enjoy some great fishing and camaraderie.~~Lynn Hayes, Director of Chapter Outreach

Kid's Fishing Day at Pandapas Pond

NRVTU will again participate in the Kid's Fishing Day at Pandapas. We will be there with several fishing combos available for children to borrow for the day. As one of the chapter thrusts is education, this gives us a perfect opportunity to spread the news of cold-water conservation in the best way we know!

The Chapter in the News: Bruce Ingram noted the efforts of NRVTU in establishing the Peak Creek Delayed Harvest section in a recent article in Virginia Fish & Wildlife. He named this fishery as one of the top 13 trout waters in Virginia for 2007. You may view the entire article at :

http://www.viriniagameandfish.com/fishing/trout-fishing/VA_0407_02/index.html

Have you checked out the NRVTU website? If you haven't, move your browser to

<http://filebox.vt.edu/users/kelowe/NRVTU/>. You may download old newsletters there as well as see the latest chapter news and events.



A Virginia-original, Harry Murray's Mr. Rapidan Dry Fly is a highly visible producer on any mountain stream. It may be used as a March Brown imitator, but will work consistently from late Spring through Fall as an attractor. The yellow wing makes it highly visible and all the fur and hackle help it to float like a cork.

Murray's Mr. Rapidan Dry Fly

Hook: Dry fly hook #12-#16

Thread: Brown or black
Tail: Black deer or moose hair

Wing: Yellow-died calf's tail, split to form separate wings
Body: Light brown natural dubbing (hare's ear pictured) mixed with sulfur superfine dubbing

Hackle: Heavily hackle using coachman brown hackle and grizzly hackle.

Get on the NRV Chapter Listserv. Keep updated on chapter involvements and projects. If you want to be on the listserv, send an email to Lynn Hayes, leh550@aol.com so that we can send you announcements of chapter meetings and activities.

ATTENTION:

If we do not have your email and you would like to save us postage costs, please send an email to Lynn Hayes, leh550@aol.com so that we can get you on the listserv and send newsletters to you via email.

A Conservation Strategy for Virginia's Brook Trout - Angelo Biviano

In late January 2007, members of the New River Valley TU chapter attended a meeting to discuss conservation strategies for the state's native brook trout population. Virginia TU council members, its chapter representatives, research biologists from Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF), and members of the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV) attended the meeting, held in Verona, Virginia.

The meeting—which was more of a workshop—focused on data resulting from the recent 2006 “Hudy Report” which presents a detailed assessment of the status of and threats to native brook trout populations from Maine to Georgia. The report reflects several years of intense research carried out by eastern state game and fisheries departments, universities, and conservation organizations such as Trout Unlimited.

The report turned up critical facts regarding Virginia's brookies. While Virginia maintains the best native brook trout populations among southeastern states, 38% of these fish have been completely wiped out—or “extirpated”—from their historical ranges (areas which have traditionally been able to support them). Only 9% of Virginia's historical brook trout watersheds remains completely in-tact, with another 34% either reduced or greatly reduced.



Fig. 1: The beautiful brook trout, *salvelinus fontinalis*, is Virginia's only true native salmonid species.

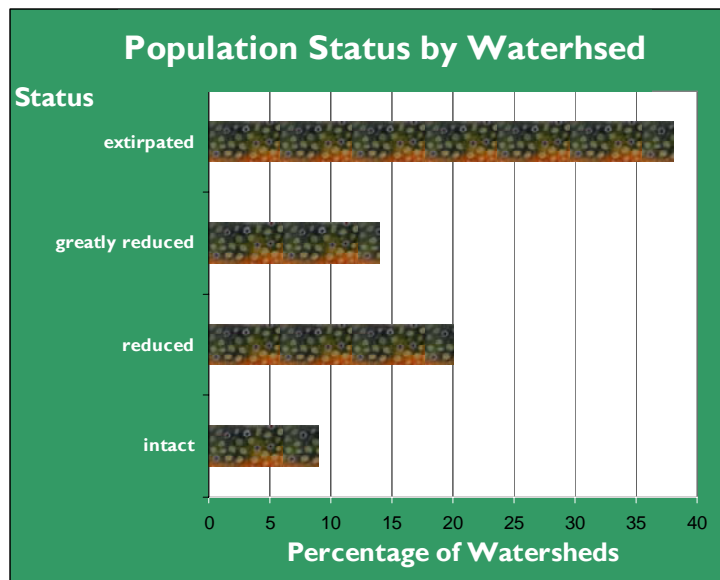


Fig 2: Population status on Virginia's Native Brook Trout Watersheds

As a result of the meeting, VDGIF officials, TU council members and chapter representatives agreed that future projects need to expand from traditional stream clean-ups and stockings to include more community-oriented and education-based activities. Projects seeking to educate landowners on better agricultural practices as well as helping them utilize the many government programs for protecting their riparian habitats, are ways in which TU can address the state's declining brook trout population. (See *Strategy*, page 5)

In addition to changes in historical brook trout ranges, the study shows that while acid rain was often the focus of conservation groups, the real threats to the state's declining brookie population and habitat are outdated land management, poor grazing practices, and the loss of riparian—or streamside—habitats.

Considering the alarming statistics resulting from the Hudy Report, most of the participants at the conservation strategy meeting agreed that a new approach was needed to confront the problems facing the state's brookies. Since a majority of intact streams are on public land under the watch of the VDGIF, the real conservation effort needs to be redirected towards private land, where a majority of the state's brook trout streams remain in a reduced or greatly reduced status.

Strategy (continued from page 4)

Likewise, these types of projects will also serve our own New River Valley chapter, which has a large number of reduced or greatly reduced brook trout watersheds in its region, most of which occur on private land. There will be an even stronger need for our members to get to know their communities and take an active role in both educating landowners about the importance of protecting native freshwater resources and helping them do it.

More detailed information, as well as maps illustrating population statuses for brook trout in eastern states, can be found at some of the following online resources:

www.brookie.org

<http://www.easternbrooktrout.org/>

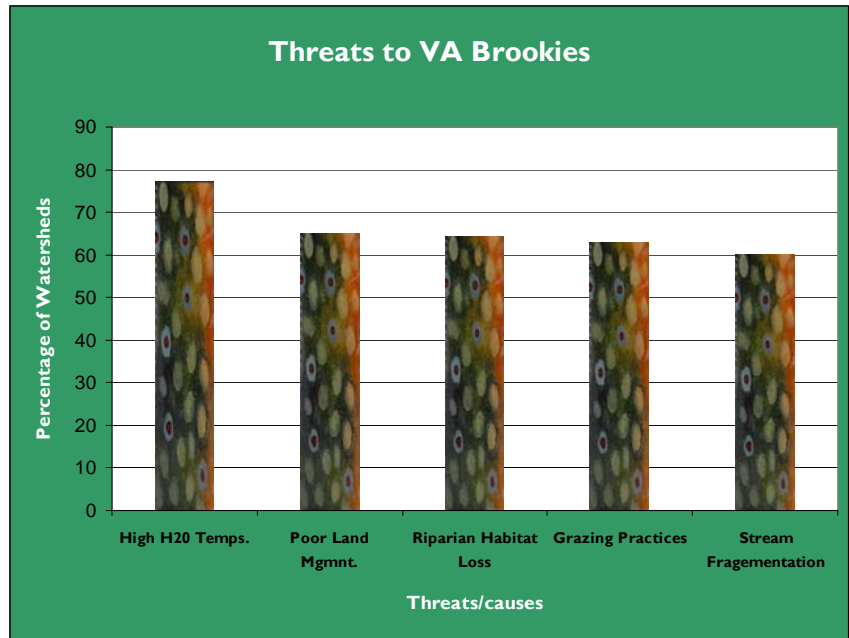


Fig. 3: Leading threats/causes to decline in Virginia’s brook trout watersheds

The contributor, Angelo Biviano, is currently the chapter’s Director of Fundraising.



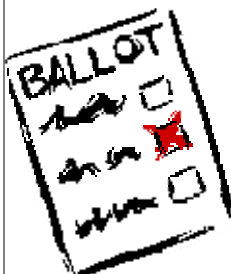
Chapter Conservation:

Are you interested in helping more with NRVTVU’s efforts to improve the outlook for brook trout?

A new Conservation Committee is being formed thanks to the efforts of Conservation Director, Phil Taylor. Meetings will be conducted at 1033 Derring Hall beginning one hour prior to normal monthly chapter meetings. All are invited and encouraged to attend to help solidify the conservation mission for NRVTVU.

The Conservation Committee will discuss courses of action for at least three potential projects for the chapter. These meetings will be instrumental in planning and executing the conservation mission for the chapter in months and years to come. Those who are interested in learning more may attend the committee’s monthly meeting or contact Phil via email at pgtaylor@vt.edu.

Image credit: <http://www.homestead.com/twra4streams/BrooktroutID.jpg>



Chapter Elections

Nominations for new chapter leadership will be open beginning April 4th through elections during the chapter meeting on May 2nd. These nominations will include all officers and board members (directors), and we look forward to your participation in the process.

New River Valley Chapter Trout Unlimited

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In closing...

Pandapas Pond is perhaps the ideal location for a put-and-take trout fishery: there are no native or wild trout in the pond or the stream that feeds it, it is easily accessible to a wide population including children and the elderly, and some of the stocked fish support a lunker largemouth bass fishery. So if you haven't already tried to hone your casting skills there or picked up a few stockers for the skillet as yet, take a recent trip by Chapter President Ryan McManamay as motivation.



Ryan caught this monster brookie while fishing one evening in late March. So much for needing to take that trip to Labrador.

Directions to our meeting:

Take Price's Fork Rd. exit of 460 Bypass toward campus. Turn right onto West Campus Drive and then a left on Perry Street. Derring Hall is the 2nd building on the right. Our meetings are always on the first Wednesday of every month in 1033 Derring Hall.

Contact Info:

Officer

Pres.: Ryan McManamay

Vice Pres.: Jason Steele

Treas.: Chuck Harrell

Secretary: Rachel McManamay

Director: Lynn Hayes

Director: Phillip Taylor

Director: Todd Lowe

Director: Angelo Biviano

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