



Fish Tales

Little Stony Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited - Newsletter

VOLUME I, ISSUE I SUMMER, 2008

UPCOMING EVENTS

- Little Stony Creek Chapter Revitalization Party/Picnic

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IN THE NET

Meeting Dates:

The chapter will typically schedule a guest speaker or activity for the first part of the meeting. Many members can also enjoy dinner while they exchange their latest fish tales. Regular meetings are held at 6:00 PM on the second Monday of the month. Locations to be determined.

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Conserving, protecting and restoring coldwater fisheries and their watersheds in beautiful southwestern Virginia

Little Stony Creek Chapter of Trout Unlimited
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Southwest Virginia Recreation Authority

The Virginia State Legislation recently formed the Southwest Virginia Recreational Authority (SVRA) as an authority to oversee the development of a multi-use trail systems in far southwestern Virginia. Both the House and Senate passed the legislation in the 2008 General Assembly session.



The goal of SVRA is to determine if a multi-use (ATV, blueway, hiking, fishing, bicycle, equestrian, etc.) public trail system is feasible in southwest Virginia. The proposed trail system is intended to utilize easements on privately owned lands through cooperative agreements. It will be governed by the state authority (SVRA) and patrolled by rangers with full law enforcement capabilities (appointed by SVRA). By appointing rangers the trail system will require users to abide by a strict set of safety and conduct rules, enforced to protect the users and the environment.

The counties included in the Authority are; Lee, Scott, Wise, Russell, Dickenson, Buchanan, Tazewell and the City of Norton. Each county/city has appointed a representative to be a member of the board. These board members are in need of advisors to assist in ideas and concepts to help build and improve our trails. If any member is interested in contacting their respective representative please contact us for more information.

Little Stony Creek Chapter Party/Picnic

The chapter is planning a party/picnic for all current and/or future members to be held at location yet determined on October 11, 2008. The purpose of the event is so old members can get reacquainted and new members can be introduced. We will also be discussing the chapter's projects (past, present & future), efforts, troubles or any other points of interest.. You must RSVP Mark Leonard to attend. To get more information please contact Mark.

Little Stony Creek Chapter Web Site

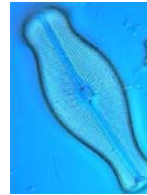
www.littlestonycreektu.com

The chapter is hard at work on a new Web Site. The site is up on the internet and can be accessed now. The site includes information on the chapter, conservation & project efforts, local waters,

and cold water fishery education. We are looking for local stories and reports to include on the site. Please contact Mark Leonard if you have information to contribute.

DIDYMO—What is it?

Didymo, *Didymosphenia geminata*, also known as “rock snot”, is present in three prominent Virginia tailwater rivers. The Jackson, Smith and our own Pound river. It is also found in nearby Tennessee rivers, South Holston and Watauga. It was first discovered by anglers and later confirmed by VDGIF in 2006.



Didymo is a non-toxic diatom that has the ability to colonize into long stalks and to cover entire river bottoms. But, is it a threat to our beloved Trout? It forms long, grayish brown tendrils that look like strands of dirty toilet paper. This spread smothers aquatic insect life and pose a severe threat to the food base for trout and other fish.

There is no known solution to rid streams of Didymo. But there are measures that each angler can take to prevent it's spread to other trout waters. VDGIF recommends the following steps:

- Check your gear before leaving the river. If any strands of algae is found on your equipment remove them and leave them on site
- Soak or scrub all contaminated gear for at least one minute in a 5% solution of bleach. Another way is to soak in hot water at least 115°F (scalding to the touch) for at least 40 minutes. Make sure all surfaces are thoroughly treated.
- If cleaning is not practical, dry your equipment in the sun for at least 48 hours before using it in another stream. Also consider non-felt wading shoes.
- Do not move fish, plants, rocks or other material from one stream to another.

To fight the spread of Didymo, VCTU, VDGIF, USFS and the Department of Conservation created a poster that's can be placed on stream sides and in tackle shops. They also have a wallet card that describes how to clean your tackle. If you know of an area stream that needs to be posted, please contact us for poster and cards.

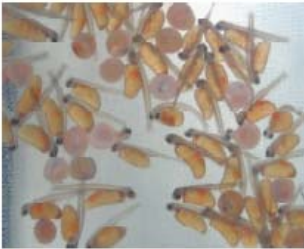


TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM

by Mark Zimmerman



... Student raise trout from eggs ...



... hatch them to alevins ...



... care for and release them as fingerlings.

connecting students to their watersheds

What has two heads, one tail, and a single egg sac? It's an anomaly, for sure; a two-headed alevin that hatched from a fertilized brown trout egg in one of our 60 Virginia Trout in the Classroom (TIC) tanks.

The TIC program, which is over 20 years old, is taking off in our state now. Students and teachers from elementary through high school are raising trout from fertilized eggs supplied by VDGIF hatcheries, in aquariums equipped with special chillers designed to keep the water near 50 degrees F. The students make daily temperature measurements, and monitor pH and ammonia levels with test kits. They record their data, plot trends, and make sure that the water quality is sufficient to support trout development.

New programs have started this year in Buena Vista, Waynesboro, Aldie and Winchester. And there are now over 30 tanks in the Martinsville area, where TIC is in its third year and going strong, thanks to the dedication and efforts of Dr. David Jones from the Smith River TU Chapter.

In Winchester, classes are raising brook trout from eggs donated by the Paint Bank Hatchery near Covington. The fingerlings, now almost an inch and a half long, will be released into Redbud Run, a spring creek in Frederick County which historically held a population of brook trout — and hopefully will again in the future.

“TIC is a unique way to teach the relevance of Watersheds in our area.”

TEACHERS: If you're a TU Member and a teacher in Virginia, we'd like to alert you to some excellent educational programs that are part of our VCTU initiatives, the Trout in the Classroom, Tri-State Conservation & Fishing Camp and the Boy Scout merit badge award. For more information or details please contact us or access the links through our web site at : <http://www.littlestonycreektu.com/Education.htm>

Best Friends Festival Kids Fishing Day

June 14, 2008

The Little Stony Creek Chapter recently participated in the Best Friend Festival Kids Fishing Day at the Norton Reservoir. The event was a success although the weather did not cooperate as well as it could have. A total of 76 kids turned out with poles in hand to land a limit of 3 trout per kid. Most all kids landed their limit by 10:30 AM.

Any child who did not get the limit didn't go home empty handed. All children received a prize from the raffle at the end of the event. The Parks and Recreation Department, of Norton, gave away numerous prizes including bicycles, fishing poles and tee shirts.

The Little Stony Creek Chapter participated in the event by distributing prizes furnished by Gander Mountain, Orvis, Mountain Sports Limited, Virginia Creeper Fly Shop, Big Country Outfitters and Colgard.

The Chapter would also like to thank Dominion Power for donating a tent to Trout Unlimited and providing banners and posters to display information about joint conservation efforts in Virginia.



Please contact us for more information on how we can participate in your local Kids Fishing Day Events.



Our Own TU Man in Southwest Virginia



Ray Mullins

Habitat Restoration Biologist for Trout Unlimited

Ray Mullins, formerly with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service was transferred to TU in August 2007. He is responsible for habitat restoration in the area stretching from Staunton to Bristol. Among his current project is work with the New River Valley Chapter on its campaign to improve brook and brown trout fisheries at Glen Alton in the Thomas Jefferson National Forest. He is also busy working to get the new Mountain Empire chapter up and running.

Ray is a Russell County native and grew up in the hills outside of Castlewood. Growing up on a farm in rural southwest Virginia, he spent most of his childhood playing in the forest and streams. He attended high school at Castlewood where he excelled both academically and athletically. Upon graduation he received a partial athletic scholarship to play football for the University of Virginia's College at Wise.

While pursuing an education in the environmental science department, advisor Dr. Aaron Johnson influenced Ray to do an internship program with the USFWS. Maureen Gallagher, USFWS Appalachian Partnership Coordinator, offered Ray an internship where he would work on a complete stream assessment of Copper Creek in Russell and Scott Counties. During this project Ray meet with numerous environmental agencies and organizations and through his connections with landowners he found there was more interest in conservation in our area, particularly in the Copper Creek watershed.

Upon his graduation from UVa at Wise, with a BS in Environmental Science, Maureen Gallagher realized the benefits of having local people working in Southwest Virginia and kept Ray in the area by encouraging him to volunteer in the AmeriCorps VISTA program through the Office of Surface Mining called the Appalachian Coal County Watershed Team. He volunteered a year of service to educate communities about acid mine drainage and its affects on steam health. After this service Ms. Gallagher worked out a cooperative agreement with Trout Unlimited to hire Ray as a restoration biologist to specifically work on steams in Southwest Virginia to create a better habitat for trout as well as threatened and endangered species in our local waters.

As a current member of the Little Stony Creek Chapter, Ray has worked on several projects throughout Southwest Virginia including public and private land. These project include cattle exclusion, steam bank restoration, tree planting, in-steam habitat structures a and stream channel design..

VDGIF Providing Land Incentive Program (LIP)

Virginia is one of the most biologically diverse states in the nation. Over 3,000 species of native plants and animals are contained within the borders of the Commonwealth. Biological diversity is apparent throughout the various aquatic and terrestrial habitats across its coastal, piedmont, and mountain regions.

Virginia's [Wildlife Action Plan](#) identified 925 species of wildlife as rare or at-risk. Over half (465) of those species are aquatic or have aquatic life stages. The most abundant habitat for these species is Virginia's rivers, creeks, and streams. To protect and restore biological diversity, the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (VDGIF) is providing financial and technical assistance to landowners through the Landowner Incentive Program (LIP).

VDGIF's primary focus is stream restoration within selected watersheds in central and western Virginia where most of the rare, aquatic species occur. However, rare species can be found in numerous habitats including caves, wetlands, dunes, and other unique places. Landowners with these types of property are also part of Virginia's LIP plan. Technical assistance is available to all Virginians and funding may be available in additional watersheds in the future.

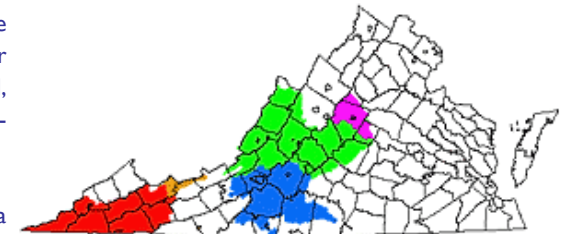
What is LIP?

- LIP is a federal grant program funded by US Fish and Wildlife Service
- LIP is a grant-based voluntary cost-share program administered by VDGIF
- LIP provides 75% cost share to landowners willing to install and maintain stream restoration and riparian buffer projects on their property for at least 10 years

Who can participate?

- Private landowners including farms, corporations, residents, hunting clubs, non-profits, and any other non-governmental organizations
- Individuals that own land along a river, creek, or stream within selected watersheds with rare wildlife species
- Landowners who are willing to protect their restoration project with at least a 35-foot vegetated buffer.

The LIP is currently available in the upper Tennessee River Basin including the Powell, Clinch, and Forks of the Holston Rivers and all tributaries.



Justin Laughlin is the area biologist from VDGIF and is working on numerous project in our area. You may contact the VDGIF for more information at <http://www.dgif.virginia.gov/habitat/lip>