

The HATCH

Newsletter of the Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Fall 2008

Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited Awarded \$7,500 to Continue Habitat Restoration Work on the Batten Kill

SWVTTU has been awarded a \$7,500 grant through the Embrace-A-Stream program — TU National's mainstay program to fund habitat projects throughout the country. Only about 25% of applications are funded. Our chapter's grant has been funded at the full amount requested.

In order to take full advantage of available matching federal funds from the USFS - Green Mountain National Forest, SWVTTU will contribute these funds to the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance, and stipulate that they be used for ongoing habitat restoration work in VT (such as the Twin Rivers Farm Habitat Restoration project). As a condition of the grant, the chapter will contribute \$5,000 of our own funds, yielding a total contribution through TU of \$12,500. When matched at 60% by the USFS-GMNF, that makes for a \$20,000 contribution toward installing more large woody debris and rock structure in the river. And

we all know the benefits of more habitat! See the story and photos below and on page 3 for more on the measurable success at the Twin Rivers Farm Habitat Restoration project site.

It should not go unmentioned that the Greater Boston Chapter of TU (GBTU) generously donated \$1,000 towards this project in 2008. GBTU has now contributed \$4,000 over three years. Our sincere thanks to Greater Boston TU!

An exciting feature of the grant award is that our chapter will contribute a minimum of 40 hours of manpower to the work that will be done in September/October. The specific work details will be arranged with the US Forest Service - GMNF. If you wish to contribute any time to this project please contact Doug Lyons at ddclyons@aol.com. We'll put you to work for a great cause!

Chapter Recognized on Clean Water Day

Our chapter was recognized by Governor Douglas on Clean Water Day, which was held on June 7, 2008. Speaking at the Manchester Green by "Malfunction Junction", the Governor took the time to discuss the importance of clean water and recognize the hard work done by TU, the Batten Kill Watershed Alliance and the Battenkill Conservancy, who conduct water quality testing throughout the watershed. Governor Douglas also recognized the efforts of long time chapter member of SWVTTU, Dick Finlay as well as Ken Nicholson. A board member of the BKWA, Nicholson is a retired teacher who was mentored by Finlay and spread the word about the value of clean water to generations of children in Arlington.

Speaking on behalf of the Chapter, Doug Lyons spoke briefly regarding the activities the chapter has been engaged in to help our local waters. Lyons also took a moment to thank the state for taking the long-term view on the Batten Kill and not giving in to public pressure when the stocking issue was raised two years ago.



Clean water.
Where would we be without it?

2008 Electro-Fishing Survey Nets Positive Results of Habitat Restoration Two Years Running!

On July 17th, fisheries biologists electro-shocked the habitat-restored Twin Rivers section of the Battenkill for the second time after habitat restoration was completed in 2006. As most are aware, the results last year were outstanding with brook and brown trout populations increasing in the 500-700 % range compared to pre-restoration assessments in 2005 and 2006.

While results from a single year can not be considered a trend, two years worth of positive increases suggest or hint that a trend is being established: there are more trout across a variety of size ranges in the restored sections of the river. While the actual numbers have not been crunched, District Fishery Biologist Ken Cox indicated that the numbers of fish collected appear to be in line with what was recorded in 2007. In other words, the numbers appear to be holding steady (i.e. maintaining that original 500-700% increase) which is great news.

After the official shocking was completed, a non-scientific evaluation of the habitat introduced last fall was conducted. This involved quickly moving through (i.e. electro-shocking) various structures to confirm the presence of trout to verify that our finny friends are using the newly established cover. This was indeed the case as most structures held trout (and more than a few of them were of considerable size).



A crew of biologists and technicians from the VT Fish and Wildlife Department and the USFS-GMNF Fisheries and Wildlife Program conducted the electro-fishing survey on July 17, 2008.

As a side note, non-game fish were also collected for further pathological study by the state fisheries biologists. And lest anyone suggest that there are few or no such fish in the Battenkill (an oft raised "rural legend"), rest assured that the river is bristling with bait fish — which explains why the browns being caught are so darn fat! So get out your tying gear and work on those sculpin, dace, sucker and crayfish imitations!

(For more photos from the electro-shocking, see page 3.)

An Open Letter to the Members of the Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited

October 2008

As many of you may know, Doug Lyons has resigned the position of chapter president. I will be assuming his duties until the Annual Meeting.

Annual Meeting: Tues, Nov 11, 7pm — West Mountain Inn (Arlington, VT).

It would seem that our chapter is at a cross roads. For the last few years we have seen a sharp decline in member participation. It has reached the point that we are consistently unable to attract a quorum at meetings. This makes it impossible to conduct business.

It is possible that there simply is not enough interest to sustain a local chapter. If this is the case, we would do well to acknowledge an unpleasant reality and dissolve the chapter. This would be unfortunate and while I am sure that no one would like to see it happen, the harsh reality is that a viable chapter can not be run by 3 or 4 people.

It is also possible that the lack of interest is because chapter members have not found the kind of chapter, or the kind of activities that they are looking for. If this is the case, it can be remedied. This chapter belongs to the members. It can be nearly anything they would like it to be. At the local level, TU is structured to be run by the Board and the membership — not the executive officers.

If we are to keep this chapter viable, we need to do something different. But I don't know what, and even if I did, it wouldn't matter. The ideas that will make a difference must come from the members. I hope that chapter members will give this issue some consideration and that they will contact me and the other members with ideas that we can discuss.

I will set aside a significant portion of the Annual Meeting for an open floor discussion of how we can restructure ourselves into the kind of chapter that the membership is looking for.

One generality that I will throw out there: We are currently small in number. It is better to do a few things and do them well than to try to do many things and do them poorly.

Let us start small and excellent and we can grow from there.

Anyone should feel free to contact me with any thoughts and if asked, confidence will be respected.

Kim Kolakowski (email: VP@SWVTU.org)

Vice President

Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Reaching Out to the Community

The chapter hosted its Third Annual Pancake Breakfast this year with a change of venue and date. Rather than braving the elements that are traditionally a wee bit uncomfortable on VT's Opening Day, the Breakfast was moved to early May. The venue was changed to the American Legion hall in Arlington. End result: The event was a rousing success! Folks came in throughout the morning and were served enormous pancakes and plentiful bacon cooked up by Mike Healy and Kimberly Bellamy.

A great feature of this year's event was that funds were raised to help the Arlington school system and the Mettawee Community School in Pawlet to initiate "Trout in the Classroom" (TIC) programs. From the proceeds of the breakfast, the chapter donated approximately \$267 to each school for implementing TIC programs.

In order to be fully involved with this program the chapter needs at least one volunteer interested in coordinating "Trout in the Classroom" activities. Please notify a board member if you are interested in volunteering. This is a great opportunity for anyone with kids in the school system. More than one person is welcome and encouraged to lend a hand.

Whether you're an educator or an interested volunteer, visit the "Trout in the Classroom" website (<http://www.troutintheclassroom.com>) for more information (including sample lesson plans, materials for TIC coordinators, etc).

TROUT IN THE
CLASSROOM

Rain Dampens the Second Annual Batten Kill Bar-B-Que

On September 9th, the chapter held its Second Annual Batten Kill BBQ at the Arlington Recreation Park. This year, based on our success at the Pancake Breakfast, we upped the ante, and partnered with the Sons of the American Legion in Arlington to serve up a Chicken BBQ. Thanks to Chapter Director Jeff Swedberg, we had everything in place and all the fixin's lined up for a great cookout and a successful fund-raiser. We had raffles for smaller items including books, DVDs, and gift-certificates to local restaurants. There were also raffle tickets available for two exciting high-end prizes: 1) a Leonard bamboo fly rod valued at \$1500 (see page 3 for details) and 2) a brand new Orvis ZG Helios 9' for 5 weight (4 piece) fly rod. We also had Bill Cairns on hand for another impressive fly-casting demonstration.

The only problem: Mother Nature dealt us a nasty day for a cook-out, so those chapter members who showed up to help out ended up with plenty of left-overs. We had a few brave souls stop in and fill a plate or two and drop a few bucks in the raffle buckets. But all in all, we'll have to write this one off to bad luck and hope for better weather next year.

We drew several winners from the raffles and handed out several books and dinners-for-two, but we're holding on to both rods for future raffle drawings at upcoming meetings to give more folks a chance to win and contribute!

On the plus side, the chicken was great! Most importantly, many thanks to Jeff Swedberg for organizing this year's BBQ!



Win a Classic Rod! Restore a Classic Stream!

SWVTU Raffles a Leonard Bamboo Fly Rod and Orvis CFO Reel All Proceeds to Benefit Batten Kill Habitat Restoration Work



To support the ongoing habitat restoration work on the Batten Kill, the Southwestern Vermont Chapter of Trout Unlimited is raffling off a Leonard Duracane 7' 2/2 for 4 weight rod. Built in the 70's, this impregnated rod is beautifully finished in the traditional green wraps that Leonard rods are famous for. Nickel silver ferrules and cap-and-ring reel seat accent a rod that is attractive to the eye and a delight to cast. To complete the package, this rod comes paired with an Orvis CFO 123 reel (and 4 weight Orvis Wonderline) — the perfect outfit for a discriminating angler.

This rod and reel were generously donated, so every dollar of every ticket sold will go directly toward Batten Kill habitat restoration work. The Vermont Battenkill is one of the few historic Northeast trout streams with a population of truly wild brown and brook trout. Now you can participate in the effort to make this legendary trout stream even better and you can do it by purchasing a ticket for a chance to win a legendary bamboo fly rod.

At only \$10 per ticket, how can you pass up the chance to win a Leonard rod?

The winning ticket will be drawn at the November 11, 2008 SWVTU Annual Meeting. You need not be present to win.

Don't miss out on the opportunity to win this outstanding Leonard rod and become a partner in the restoration of one of America's most beautiful wild trout streams!

To Purchase Raffle Tickets by Mail

Make your check (\$10 per raffle ticket) payable to:

**The Southwestern Vermont Chapter
of Trout Unlimited**

and mail it to:

SWVTU

Post Office Box 88

Manchester Center, VT 05254

Note in the comment section of the check that the check is for the "Leonard Raffle/Batten Kill Fund".

Please include your name, phone number, and street address so we can contact the lucky winner in the event that you aren't able to attend the Annual Meeting, Nov. 11, 7pm.



Habitat Restoration Efforts Indicate Success!

In mid-July, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department conducted an electro-fishing survey in the habitat-restored section of the Batten Kill and the results continue to look promising two years in a row. While we anxiously await the final crunched numbers, take a minute to consider that the numbers of brown trout in one restored reach were up over 700% and brook trout were up over 500% when compared to pre-habitat-restored fish population surveys in the same reach.



Annual Meeting

The chapter will hold it's Annual Meeting on Tuesday, November 11, 2008 at 7pm at the **West Mountain Inn** in Arlington, VT. In addition to officer elections and the Leonard rod raffle, the meeting will feature an open discussion of where our membership would like to see the chapter head in the future, i.e. the types of projects, activities and endeavors that we should focus on. We want this to be an honest and open discussion, so please join us prepared to share your thoughts and listen to those of others in your chapter.

This will also be your last opportunity to purchase a chance to win the Leonard bamboo fly rod. At the close of the meeting, we'll draw the winning ticket for the Leonard Duracane, so come on out and join us.

Nov 11 – Open Discussion / Chapter elections / Leonard Rod Raffle

The Annual Meeting will start at 7pm. Board members will meet briefly beforehand at 6:30pm. All are welcome to the Board meeting prior to the Annual Meeting.

Upcoming Chapter Election

All chapter officers' positions will be voted upon at this election: President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, plus at least 2 Directors. All current officers are eligible for another year in office. Whether they choose to accept nomination for another term is up to those individuals. If you are interested taking on a leadership role in the chapter, and are willing and able to commit a few hours per month, please notify any of the board members of your interest and join us at the Annual Meeting, November 11th.

Last Paper Issue of *The HATCH*?

This could be the last issue of *The HATCH*. At this point, we have three options. We need someone to edit and layout the newsletter if we are to continue producing paper copies. Alternatively, we could switch to an e-news format assuming most chapter members have email access. A third choice is to drop the newsletter distribution entirely, in favor of disseminating chapter information via the chapter website. But we need your input to make this decision. Join us at the Annual Meeting to voice your opinion.

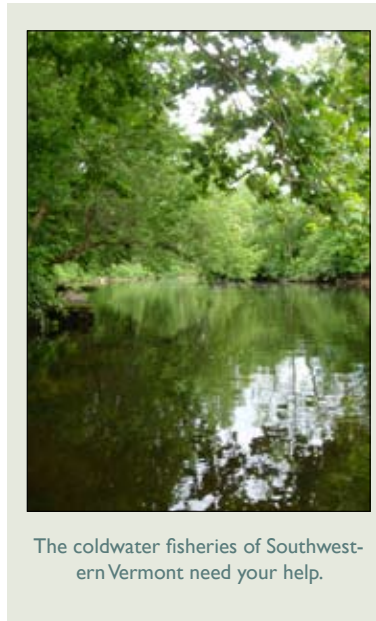
What can you do to help?

A successful chapter needs both volunteers and leaders. Right now, we need volunteers to lend a hand in many different capacities, from the newsletter and website (newsletter/website editing, writing, photography and layout) to our various fund-raising projects (BBQ, breakfast, an annual banquet, etc) to restoration projects (river clean-ups, rock-rolling and tree-planting), not to mention educational programs like "Trout In The Classroom" or partnering with local schools or Boy Scouts to teach fly-tying, entomology, fly-casting, etc.

We also have a pressing need for leaders who are willing and able to steer this ship. Among other things, we need help with membership, program development (bringing in interesting speakers for the regular chapter meetings), fundraising, social activities, etc, etc.

If you love to fish the cold waters of Southwestern Vermont, couldn't **you** spare an hour or two, once per month to give something back and help conserve, protect and restore our local cold water fisheries?

Join us at our Annual Meeting to find out what you can do to help.



Web site: <http://www.TUSWVT.org>
General E-mail: Info@TUSWVT.org

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.