



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.

UTRR Newsletter

Spring 2004

Volume 5, Issue 1

Board of Directors

Agriculture

Charlie Clark

Aquatic Resources

Don Gowan

Citizen "At Large"

Vacant

Coal

Dink Shackelford

Conservation Groups

Bill Wasserman

Education

Dr. Ed Davis

Environmental Groups

Steve Brooks

Fishing/Hunting Groups

William Steele

Forest Industry

Bill Anderson

Industry

Guy Cerimele/Rick Holmes

Local government

Riley M. Boy*

Claude Ray*

George Price

Audie Spangler

Bonnie Aker

Local Watershed Groups

John Murrey

Diane Johnson

Other Recreational Uses

Tom Davenport

PDC

Lou Ann Johnson*

Real Estate Development

Larry Johnston

Small Business

Emily Lachniet

SWCD

Vacant

Tourism

Kathy Roberson

*Nominated for seat

Letter from the Chair:

Dear Friends of the Roundtable,

Spring is finally here! As the new chair, I'd like to introduce myself. I represent Appalachian Sustainable Development on the board of the Roundtable, where I work as a forester. My office is located in Abingdon, down the hall from Carol Doss, our new coordinator. This time of year, you may be more likely to find me in the woods. I live in Damascus with my husband where we are volunteer stream monitors on the Tennessee Laurel Creek. I enjoy hiking with my dogs, gardening, and poking around in caves.

This will be an exciting year, as many of the EPA Watershed Initiative grant projects are underway. As we begin to dig in on these worthwhile projects, it will be our challenge to look beyond the EPA grant for the future direction of the organization. I hope to see a lot of you at the spring meeting and to get your feedback about the work that the Roundtable is doing.

Emily Lachniet

Inside:

Join us for the Spring Roundtable Meeting
Thursday, May 13, at Hungry Mother State Park
in Smyth County. Be sure to register in advance!



Remember the Vision of the UTRR:

We envision the citizens within the watersheds of the Clinch, Powell, and Holston rivers practicing conservation and good stewardship thus insuring water quality and quantity so that the waters are fishable, swimmable, and sustain a healthy and diverse ecosystem.

My first six months on the job have been quite interesting, to say the least! Since October I've been helping to establish an office, develop policies and procedures, learn a bookkeeping software program, gain insight into the EPA grant, and take steps to begin grant projects. It's been a good learning experience for me and I'm enjoying the process.

Work on the EPA grant, now called the Targeted Watershed Grants Program, is progressing. Sub award agreements have been finalized with two of the three RC&DS that will carry out work in North Carolina and Tennessee. Virginia projects are also making progress. Mike Altizer, former UTRR Board member, has just been hired as the Roundtable's grazing specialist. He will work with farmers in the Middle Fork of the Holston River on Best Management Practices and a mussel decline investigation. Sawdust projects in Lee County will be ready to start soon. Plans call for removing sawdust and applying some of it to mined lands and composting some of it with chicken litter. The Tri State Regional Low Impact Development Conference is set for May 19 and 20 at the Ramada Inn in Wytheville. The agenda features two choices—site development and regional growth readiness. Both sound very informative.

It's been a privilege to work with the OSM/VISTA volunteers in our area, especially the Roundtable's own Stacy Fowler, and Amanda Wood, Lisa Harris and Billy McConnell. Our Emory & Henry College intern, Martha Whitaker, has done a wonderful job with a variety of projects.

Finally, I need to let you know where I am located so you can get in touch with me. The mailing address is P.O. Box 2359, Abingdon, Va. 24212 and the physical address is 289 W. Main St., Abingdon, at the same location as Appalachian Sustainable Development. The phone number is 276.628.1600. The fax is 276.628.4100. The email address is utrr@eva.org. Feel free to call or send an email anytime and stop by when you're in the area. I hope to see you at the spring meeting May 13 at Hungry Mother State Park! Be sure to register for the meal no later than May 5.

UTRR/Organization Coordinating Group Five -Year Plan Update

Last year on March 27, 2003, Steve Talley of the Canaan Valley Institute led approximately 35 members of the Organization Coordinating Group (OCG) through a facilitated process that ultimately generated the Five Year Plan which was approved in January 2004 by the UTRR Board of Directors. The seven parts of the plan include Mining, Tourism and Trash, Endangered Species and Toxics, Forestry and Agriculture, Citizen Action, Education, and Urban.



How will the implementation of this plan be orchestrated? Neal Kilgore (Chair of the OCG) hopes to identify at least one person who will coordinate the implementation of each section of the Plan. For example, Carol Doss has volunteered to take the lead with Tourism and Trash. Joey O'Quinn will lead the effort with Mining. Theresa Carter will tackle Education, Don Gowan will address Endangered Species and Toxics, while Neal will lead the Urban section. We still need committed people who are willing to address Forestry and Agriculture as well as Citizen Action.

Finally, a "quick-reference" timeline has been developed that coincides with the targeted timeframes outlined in the objectives throughout the Plan. Neal will be occasionally prompting the people mentioned above to provide updates so he can report progress to the UTRR Board of Directors. The Board extends its appreciation to all those who participated in this process and especially to those who are now taking an active role in the implementation. As Neal has commented, "So far we've got the equivalent of a "dream team" line up for those that have volunteered to help with the implementation of the Five Year Plan." For more information, contact Neal Kilgore at (276)676-5529 or at nkilgore@dcr.state.va.us.

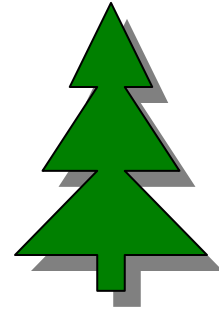
Submitted by Neal Kilgore

Spring Roundtable Meeting set for May 13

Highlights of the spring meeting will be a trip to a Smyth County farm, a talk about a demonstration forest project, dinner, awards, and a business session. **Dinner reservations must be made in advance by May 5.** The meal is \$15.00 for first-time citizens and \$16.50 for all others. Cost at the door is \$22.00 - provided that food is still available. To reserve your meal, fill out the form below and return. Prior to dinner, we will visit Billy Meek's farm in Sugar Grove. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation recently recognized Meek for his conservation practices. After the meal, we'll hear from Jon Rockett of the Powell River Project about a proposed demonstration forest project. A business session will follow. Questions? Call Emily Lachniet, chair, at 276.623.1121, or Carol Doss, coordinator, at 276.628.1600.

Agenda for Thursday, May 13, Spring Meeting

- 4:00 p.m. Meet at Exit 45 off I-81. Park at Appletree Restaurant to carpool to Meek's farm.
- 5:30 p.m. Return.
- 6:00 p.m. Welcome by Emily Lachniet, Chair, Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.
Dinner
- 6:40 p.m. Business Session Call to Order by Emily Lachniet (Review Voting Procedure)
Approve Minutes from October 2003 meeting
Old Business
 - Advocacy Policy Committee Report
 - New Business
 - Guest Speaker: Jon Rockett, Powell River Project Research & Education Center Manager and Educator
 - Awards
 - Open Forum
 - Closing Comments by Emily Lachniet
- 8:45 p.m. Adjourn



UTRR Mission Statement: The Mission of the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable is to achieve clean water throughout the watershed with the involvement of citizens in planning, education, coordination, attracting funding, and serving as an advocate for our water resources.

Clip this form, fill it out, and mail it to UTRR, P.O. Box 2359, Abingdon, VA 24212, by **May 5, 2004.**

Dinner will only be guaranteed to those who make a reservation. Funds are limited and nothing is available to subsidize meals. Price for the meal is \$15.00 for first-time citizens and \$16.50 for others. Price at the door is \$22.00 if food is available. Make your check payable to Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.

Name _____

Organization or Group _____

Mailing Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone _____ Email _____

UTRR college intern learns how to teach kids about watersheds

By Martha Whitaker

Beginning in March, I started traveling with the EnviroScape to the schools in Smyth County. I have visited 7 of the elementary and middle schools. Of those 7 schools, I have been working with the fourth and sixth grades, explaining to them about watersheds and the effects of pollution. Of those seven schools in Smyth County I have been to 28 classes and spoken to 554 kids. At each and every school the teachers were extremely pleased to have such a hands-on demonstration available to them and each requested information so they might have someone bring the EnviroScape during the next school year. Some of the schools were more enthusiastic about the demonstration than others. Chilhowie Elementary,



Martha uses watershed model to teach students about pollution.

Rich Valley Elementary and Northwood Middle School were exceptional. The teachers at these schools were more than helpful and the fourth grade teachers were exceptionally thankful that the presentation completely covered Section 4.8 of their Standards of Learning. The students at these three schools were exceptional as well, many knowing more than I did at that age about watersheds and pollution.

In May or June, I plan to return to Northwood Middle School for an Environmental Day. The teachers (and students) asked me to come back with the EnviroScape so that the whole school may enjoy and learn.

OSM/VISTA Volunteer works with Lee County Water Quality Initiative

Amanda Wood, OSM/VISTA for the Daniel Boone Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) in Lee County, Virginia, will complete her one year term of service this week. She has participated in many exciting events related to protecting the quality of the Powell River.

Amanda has been involved in acid mine drainage (AMD) monitoring at several sites in the North Fork Powell River watershed. One site was the Upper Mason Blow-out site in St. Charles. Amanda used monitoring data to apply for a Watershed Cooperative Agreement from the U.S. Department of the Interior's Office of Surface Mining. The grant, which was awarded on April 8, will provide a total of \$100,000.00 to install an AMD abatement system wetland.

This wetland will prevent AMD from entering Straight Creek and causing harm to aquatic life.



Amanda spends time taking water samples.

The Daniel Boone SWCD recently hosted a Virginia Save Our Streams (SOS) workshop. Twelve participants learned how to perform SOS monitoring and the importance of collecting macroinvertebrate data and citizen monitoring. As a result, the Daniel Boone SWCD has already chosen two sites to monitor on a regular basis.

Amanda has also been working with local residents to form citizen-based watershed groups. During public meetings, citizens are informed about on-

going projects in their area, ways they can be involved and types of activities/projects their watershed group could participate in. Amanda encourages citizens to become aware of the importance of good water quality, citizen monitoring programs (like Virginia SOS) and citizen volunteer opportunities (Adopt-A-Highway, Adopt-A-Stream, litter clean-ups, etc.).

Educational activities are also part of Amanda's duties. She has visited numerous local schools to present information about water pollution and prevention using an EnviroScape model. She has attended local festivals to make citizens aware of programs and incentives the Daniel Boone SWCD offers. Plans are currently being made with the Lee County School System for two Kids in the Creek days that will allow local sixth graders to get hands on experience in various of water quality related issues.

Submitted by Amanda Wood

Two rain gardens to be installed in Abingdon this spring

Do you have a place in your yard that puddles? Do you want to improve water quality? Well, we may have a solution for you... a Rain Garden.

A "rain garden" is a man-made depression in the ground that is used as a landscape tool to improve water quality. The rain garden forms a "bioretention area" by collecting water runoff and storing it, permitting it to be filtered and slowly absorbed by the soil. The bioretention concept is based on the hydrologic function of forest habitat, in which the forest produces a spongy litter layer that soaks up water and allows it to slowly penetrate the soil layer. Everyone landscapes their yard... why not improve water quality at the same time. By installing a Rain Garden in your yard with native plants and wild flowers, it will soak up rainwater and then filter it before it goes into the ground or a stream

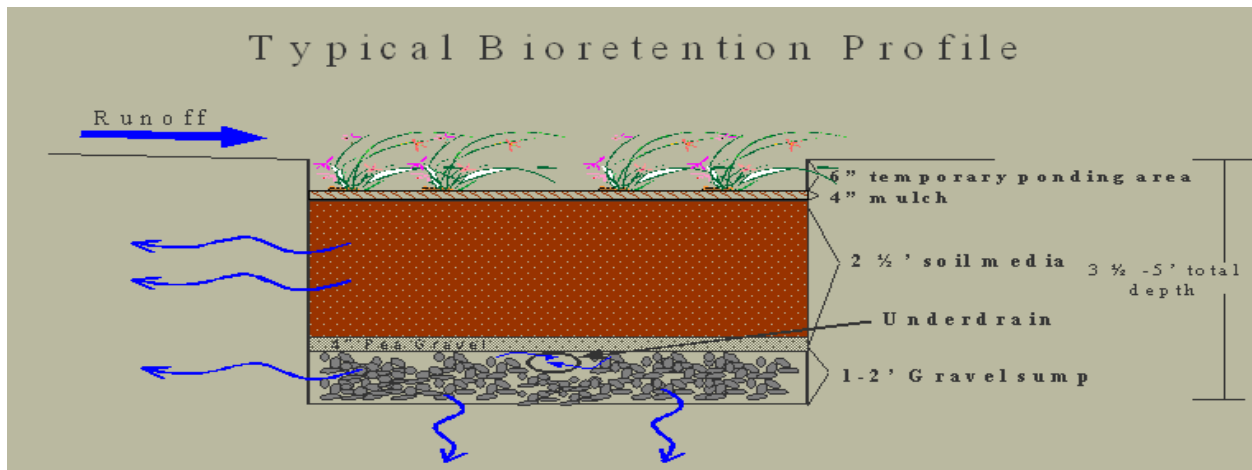
Thanks to the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Tennessee Valley Authority and the Town of Abingdon, two Rain Gardens will be installed in Abingdon. One will be at the trailhead of the Virginia Creeper Trail and the other will be in front of the new Public Works Building. The sites will intercept water runoff from the parking lots and buildings. Construction will begin late April or early May.

For more information about the Virginia Creeper Trail Project, please contact Theresa Carter at (276) 676-5418 or tcarter@dcrr.state.va.us If you would like more information about Rain Gardens or Low Impact Development please contact the Department of Conservation and Recreation. (276) 676-5529 or check out the websites. <http://www.raingardens.org/Index.php>

http://www.goprincegeorgescounty.com/government/agencyindex/der/ppd/lid/pdf/bioretention_design_manual.pdf



Submitted by Theresa Carter



Upcoming Events: *Mark your calendar*

May 1: 9:45 a.m., Cedar Bluff Town Hall: SOS and Acid Mine Drainage Monitoring training. Call 676.5529.

May 13: 10 a.m. Beaverdam Creek, Damascus: SOS Monitoring training. Call 676.5529.

May 19, 20: Tri State Regional Low Impact Development Conference, Ramada Inn, Wytheville, \$65.00. For information, call 276.228.2879.



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.
P.O. Box 2359
Abingdon, VA 24212

Roundtable's OSM/VISTA works in Upper Clinch and Holston River watersheds

Hello. My name is Stacy Fowler and I'm the OSM/VISTA volunteer for the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable. This means that I am a Volunteer In Service To America affiliated with the Office of Surface Mining to mitigate mining effects in my watershed. My mission is to fight poverty through natural resource realization, capacity-building, and citizen empowerment.

I work in two main areas, the Upper Clinch and the Holston River watersheds. Most of my time is spent in the Upper Clinch River watershed since it has been impacted by mining. I've been focusing on a special community called Cedar Bluff and a unique watershed coalition known as the Clinch River Headwaters Association (CRHA). Both the town and the coalition have an extraordinary mindset that allows resource conservation to occur. I've partnered with the town, CRHA, and Tazewell Soil and Water Conservation District to write a grant proposal to Canaan Valley Institute for signage and kiosk construction on the Overlook Park Trail. I've also worked with partners on a proposal to the US Fish and Wildlife Service for agricultural and urban best management practices in Tazewell County, including two demonstration rain gardens in both Tazewell and Cedar Bluff. While grant writing keeps me busy, my main objective is to begin sustainable citizen water quality monitoring programs in the Clinch and Holston drainages. In both watersheds, the Virginia Save-Our-Streams method will be taught while a new technique developed with the help of the Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy will be used in the Clinch River watershed. This technique will emphasize the detection of acid mine drainage problems and includes chemical tests for pH, hardness, sulfates, dissolved oxygen, and iron content. I'm partnering with local watershed coalitions to build up these monitoring programs and efforts are currently underway to train and equip volunteers to monitor stations in their watersheds.



Stacy Fowler (l) helped with a cleanup.