



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc. Fall Newsletter

Autumn 2006

Volume 7, Number 2

Public forum to follow talks from mussel expert, power plant representative at Fall Roundtable meeting Oct. 19 at Oxbow

Board of Directors

Aquatic Resources: Don Gowan

Citizen "At Large:"

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Coal: Dink Shackelford

Conservation Groups:

Bill Wasserman

Education: Dr. Ed Davis

Environmental Groups:

Steve Brooks

Forest Industry: Greg Gambrel

Industry: Rick Holmes

Planning Districts:

Lynn McKinney

Real Estate Development:

Larry Johnston

Local government:

Bonnie Aker

Teresa Guice

Charlie Clark

George Price

Claude Ray

Audie Spangler

Local Watershed Groups:

John Murrey

Diane Johnson

SWCD: Sherman Wallace, Jr.

Tourism: Kathy Roberson

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable and St. Paul Tomorrow will co-host a public forum at the semi-annual Roundtable meeting Thursday, Oct. 19, at 6 p.m. at the Oxbow Center in St. Paul. John Ragone, director of new fossil and hydro projects for Dominion Power, will give a presentation on the plant proposed for St. Paul. Dr. Richard Neves, professor in the fisheries and wildlife department of Virginia

Tech, will talk about fresh water mussels and the uniqueness of the Clinch River. Dr. Neves is a senior scientist for the U.S. Geological Survey. A public forum will follow to allow time for questions.

Registration will begin at 5:15 p.m. Dinner will begin at 6 p.m. The cost for dinner is \$10 per person and will include chicken tenders, green beans, potatoes, macaroni and cheese, rolls, banana pudding, coffee or tea.

A silent auction will also be held to assist with funding past the EPA Targeted Watershed Grant.

Please notify the Roundtable office by Monday, Oct. 16, if you will attend.

Payment may be made in advance or at the door, but you must pre-register to be guaranteed a meal. A registration form is on page two, or you may call the office at 276-628-1600.



Letter from the Roundtable Chair

Dear Friends,

On a personal note, I want to thank the Roundtable for the privilege to serve as Chair of this unique group for the past two years. As my term draws to a close, I would like to offer a few lessons that I've learned. First, no matter how noble the purpose, an organization is only as good as its individuals. Second, partnerships can make or break your organization. Third,

there is never enough money to accomplish our goals.

The Roundtable Board is eager to return to its roots and offer a public forum for citizens from our region to learn more about the proposed power plant for St. Paul as well as the importance of the mussels that populate our rivers. We hope you will join us Oct. 19 for this exciting event.

Although we have a lit-

tle breathing room, we continue to raise funds for the Roundtable to operate after the EPA grant. We invite each of you to participate in the silent auction at the fall meeting. If you have something to donate, please contact us. Also, if you'd like to assist with projects or fundraising, please let us know.

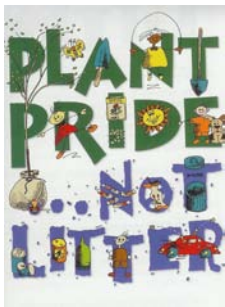
Hope to see you soon.

George E. Price

Coordinator's Corner

By Carol W. Doss, Coordinator

The Roundtable's Third Annual Regional Stream Cleanup is still underway, so it's not too late to pitch in if you haven't already helped. The Litter Control and Recycling Team has been busy organizing the cleanup, which is funded by TVA. In preparation, the team learned how to identify materials discards from "meth" labs from Sgt. John Ruffin of the Virginia State Police during a July meeting at the Wilderness Road State Park. When picking up litter, be wary of mason jars, two liter bottles containing liquid, coffee grinders, sealed plastic containers, smashed batteries, bunches of matches, and foam coolers. When finding such items, notify the police because a "meth" lab may be somewhere in that area. To keep volunteers safe, the team has been inspecting all sites prior to cleanups.



Be sure to register early for the Oct. 19 Fall Roundtable dinner. Please use the form at right. A brief business session will be held to discuss proposed changes to the bylaws. The proposal is being email to you with the link to this newsletter, but if you didn't receive a copy, please call me at 276-628-1600. Hope to see you on Oct. 19!

Registration Form

for Oct. 19 Roundtable Dinner

Please cut out and mail this form to Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, P.O. Box 2359, Abingdon, VA 24212, no later than Oct. 13, 2006.

Yes, I will attend dinner.

I am enclosing \$ _____ for _____ meals.

No, I can't attend, but am enclosing my donation of \$ _____.

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

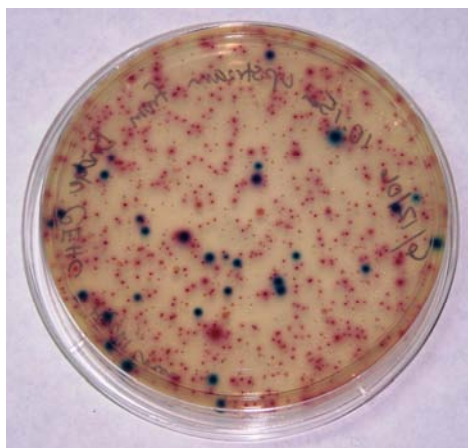
Monitoring program expands to include bacteria

By Martha Chapman, Conservation Assistant

As 2006 comes to an end, I will be finishing up the Citizen Monitoring Grant from the Department of Environmental Quality. This grant has given UTRR the ability to expand the citizen monitoring program to include bacteria monitoring. Monitoring bacteria levels are an integral part of understanding the threats to water quality in our region.

Impairments due to unacceptably high levels of fecal coliform and *E. coli* contamination is the most common reason for streams to be added to the Department of Environmental Quality's impaired list. Using the Coliscan® Easy Gel Bacteria monitoring kits, volunteers are able to identify "hot spots" of bacteria contamination that would have otherwise gone unnoticed.

Through the DEQ Citizen Monitoring Grant, ten sites in the Clinch and Powell watersheds were selected for bacteria sampling. At all ten of those sites, fecal coliform and *E. coli* contamination is present. This comes as no surprise, as many of these streams are subjected to straight pipes, failing septic systems and a



lack of livestock exclusion.

Bacteria levels on the Clinch, Holston, and Powell rivers will continue to be monitored throughout the fall, winter, and possibly longer. If you are interested in finding out more about bacteria monitoring or want to attend a training session, please contact me at (276) 628-1600.

At left, this water sample was taken from Hall Creek on the campus of Emory and Henry College. The purple dot indicates the presence of *E. Coli*. The pink and blue dots represent general and fecal coliforms. At right, a new brochure is available for anyone interested in Save Our Streams monitoring.



First Roundtable canoe float successful on Clinch

By Kristin Costanzo, OSM/VISTA

Summer has been an extremely busy season of preparation for festivals and float trips here at the Roundtable. On Saturday, Aug. 19 the Roundtable hosted its first Citizen Canoe Float down the Clinch River in Russell County. The trip was organized by OSM/VISTA* volunteers Shane Barton and Kristin Costanzo, OSM intern Chris Green, Martha Chapman, and Dr. Ed Davis of Emory and Henry. The next float is set for Sept. 30 on the Holston River. A Powell River float will be planned for next spring or summer.

Providing both recreational and educational opportunities for local residents to engage with their river, the trip proved to be an extremely successful event. For several participants, it was actually their first experience in a canoe! The local nonprofit organization, Cleveland Virginia Rural Development, assisted the Roundtable with logistical planning and shuttling of participants to the put in. Nearly 50 people turned out for the much-anticipated event, including Cleveland and Russell County residents, as well as local and state agency employees. Tammy and Elmer



Above, Matt Crum of The Nature Conservancy talks to the float participants, who at left are gathering together.

Roush, whose mother, Jannie, is a Cleveland resident, even drove over two hours from Dublin to participate.

Beginning at the Artrip bridge shortly after 9 a.m., the float navigated four miles of the scenic Clinch River to Cleveland's town park, where participants took their canoes out, enjoyed a barbecue, mingled, and discussed their experience on the river. While water levels were fairly good for the majority of the float, some canoeists found themselves momentarily hung up on rocks in the shallows, which led to creative problem solving and more than a few participants having to brave the waters.

Several speakers from local

environmental groups and state agencies like the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), the Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF), and the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) were on hand to give informational talks about both the biodiversity of the Clinch, which is home to numerous endangered species of fish and mussels, and the various threats to the river, including acid mine drainage, sedimentation and erosion, and agricultural impacts like nutrient runoff and fecal coliform.

Both Barton and Costanzo agree that education is key to the future of the rivers of Southwest Virginia. The purpose of this float was to give local citizens easy access to their river in a setting that is both enjoyable and conducive to learning. Donna Sue Musick, a member of Cleveland Virginia Rural Development, echoed the words of Barton and Costanzo as she was leaving to head home, stating that the most important thing people can take away from this trip is that "We're concerned about keeping the mussels safe and keeping our streams clean until they can last forever."



Participants in the first Roundtable canoe float enjoyed a day on the Clinch River at Cleveland in Russell County. A second float is planned on the Holston, and a third on the Powell.

Tour of Projects to feature work in region

By Carol Doss, Coordinator

A Roundtable task force is planning a series of tours throughout the region to showcase projects in an effort to secure funding for future work.

The first tour is tentatively slated for Oct. 23 and will target foundations and industries. A second tour will be planned for late spring or early summer for agencies.

Tours will feature one of the two farms that the Roundtable has assisted in installing best management practices to fence cattle out of streams. Mike Altizer, who worked as the Roundtable's grazing

systems specialist for the Roundtable's EPA Targeted Watershed Grant, has completed three best management practices. The tour will also feature the rain garden



Wetlands at St. Paul High School's learning center. Photo by Carol Doss

at St. Paul High School that the Roundtable assisted with at the learning center. Team Estonoa and teacher sponsor Terry Vencil secured funding from various sources for the garden.

The tour will also feature an alternative wastewater treatment system at Imboden. The Roundtable is working on a design for a similar system at Exeter. Both places are in Wise County. The UVA at Wise wetlands, an abandoned mine land site and other sites will also be included. For more information, call 276-628-1600.

Fundraising efforts raise operating money

By Carol Doss, Coordinator

Roundtable volunteers and staff worked this summer on eight fundraising events that raised \$2,653 toward general operating costs. Those involved did everything from coordinating an authors' night in Russell County to serving pizza and soft drinks to customers at Pizza Inn, Abingdon.

The silent auction at the semi-annual Roundtable meeting in June raised \$547.00. The night at Pizza Inn generated \$477. The Authors' Night, which featured New York Times bestselling author Sharyn McCrumb, as well as local authors Rachel Riggsby and Ken Henderson, raised \$270.

Office of Surface Mining Intern Chris Green along with OSM/VISTA workers Shane Barton and Kristin Costanzo organized these projects. Additionally, four grant applications have been submitted for projects, each including requests for administrative funding as well.



At left, Sharyn McCrumb offers her autograph at Authors' Night. At right is the Pizza Inn volunteer crew: Stacy and Charles Horton, Chris Green and Carol Doss, Kristin Costanzo. Ed Davis and Bobby Justus had left just before Pizza Inn took the photo.



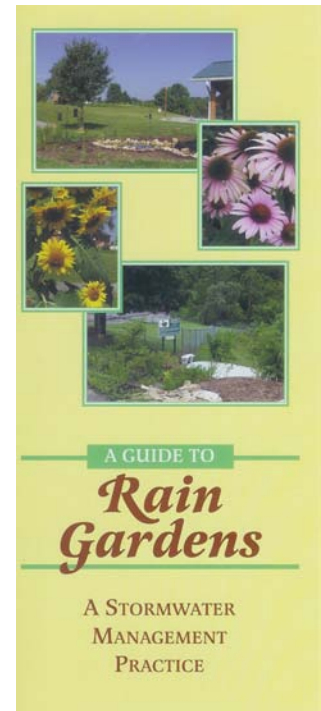
Brochures feature directions for rain barrels, gardens

By Carol Doss, Coordinator

Two new brochures are ready for distribution to anyone interested in learning more about rain barrels and rain gardens. Produced through funding from the Virginia Environmental Endowment, the brochures feature detailed directions for creating rain barrels and rain gardens.

Volunteers assisted in the development of the brochures through the Endowment grant. The grant also provided funding for rain barrel workshops that featured information about rain gardens.

Rain gardens featured on the cover of that brochure were installed with assistance from the Roundtable. The garden at top is at Abingdon Elementary School and the one in the bottom photo is at St. Paul High School. The Roundtable will assist with installation of other rain gardens through a Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation grant. To obtain brochures, call 276-628-1600.



Assign-A-Highway picks up speed

By Bobby Justus, Assign-A-Highway Coordinator

The past few months have been rather busy with scheduling and attending Assign-A-Highway informative meetings. I have given presentations to 15 out of the 21 Planning Districts. The Assign-A-Highway Program is spreading across the state and does not seem to be slowing down.

Assign-A-Highway utilizes probationers who are assigned sections of roadsides to pick up litter as part of their punishment. Attorney Frank Kilgore created the Program. The Roundtable received a grant from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality to fund a full-time person to promote the Program across the state.

The Program has now reached the Atlantic Ocean with Accomack hiring a Litter Control Officer and adopting the resolution. There are

12 counties implementing the Assign-A-Highway Program and those are Lee, Wise, Dickenson, Buchanan, Tazewell, Russell, Washington, Giles, Carroll, Henry, Hanover, and Accomack counties. Although most of the Program participants are clustered in Southwest Virginia, Central Virginia is now taking notice with Hanover County implementing the Assign-A-Highway Program. I am expecting to have at least 20 localities on board with the Program by January 2007.

Most of the recent counties to implement the Program have called requesting assistance. It is comforting to know that a Litter Control Officer is able to call me on the phone and ask for help. That is the benefit to all of the hard work that has been placed into this Program that is cleaning up our roadsides.

There were many conversations back and forth among Roundtable and other agencies about securing funds for the Regional and State Assign-A-Highway Coordinator for a second year. As a result, the Virginia Department of Transportation has promised to fund half of the coordinator's position.

VDOT has asked for more funds to be allocated out of their yearly budget to provide more materials for the implementing localities and for the Program Coordinator. The remaining portion of funds may come from Virginia DEQ pending grant application approval by the Litter Control and Recycling Funds Advisory Board.

I have begun to organize ideas and materials to begin working on projects planned for the upcoming year that starts in October.

Spring Roundtable Dinner recognizes volunteer efforts

By Carol Doss, Coordinator

The Roundtable recognized individuals and groups at the Spring Roundtable dinner at White's Mill for their outstanding contributions. Tarah Taylor of WCYB-TV received the media award for her outstanding coverage of the Roundtable's Litter Summit and other programs. Dante Lives On! earned the watershed group award for their energetic and enthusiastic approach. Russell County Litter Control and Recycling received the outstanding agency award for increased recycling rate and dump cleanups. Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District was recognized as the outstanding district for partnering with the Roundtable in many ways. Doug Mays and Charlie Hess of Russell County were named outstanding volunteers for their time and effort.



By Bonnie Aker, George Price, Kristin Costanzo



George Price, Roundtable chair, presented awards to Bobbie Gullett for Dante Lives On! at left, Shauna Russell and Katy Dowe of the Holston River SWCD above, Russell County Administrator Jim Gillespie above, Tarah Taylor of WCYB at right and at top right, Doug Mays and Charlie Hess.



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.

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