



# Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc. Spring Newsletter

Spring 2008

Volume 9, Number 1

## May 15 Roundtable Meeting to feature biologist Anna Hess at Dungannon Depot in Scott County

### Board of Directors

#### Aquatic Resources:

Teresa Harless

#### Citizen "At Large:"

Diana Withen

**Coal:** Vacant

#### Conservation Groups:

Bill Wasserman

**Education:** Dr. Ed Davis

#### Environmental Groups:

Steve Brooks

**Forest Industry:** Greg Gambrel

**Industry:** Rick Holmes

#### Planning Districts:

Debbie McReynolds

#### Real Estate Development:

Larry Johnston

#### Local government:

Bonnie Aker

Teresa Guice

George Price

Claude Ray

Lynn McKinney

**SWCD:** Lou Wallace

#### Local Watershed Groups:

Vacant

#### Tourism:

Vacant

Upper Tennessee River Roundtable's spring meeting is set for Thursday, May 15, at 6 p.m. at the Dungannon Depot in Scott County.

Anna Hess, a biologist, will be the featured speaker for the dinner. Anna will talk about the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid.

Anna is the environmental director of the Clinch Coalition.

Woolly adelgids attach themselves to eastern hemlock, slowing growth and causing the

needles to drop. Needle loss causes the trees to die in generally 5 to 10 years.

Registration will begin at 5:15 p.m., with dinner at 6 p.m. The cost for dinner is \$10, which will include the meal plus dessert and coffee or tea.

The Dungannon Depot is located in Dungannon across from the New People's Bank and The Dollar Store. Park at the bank.

*From Abingdon,* take Alt. US 58 to Castlewood. Take left at first light on Rt. 65 and travel 11 miles to Dungannon. Turn left after

crossing the Clinch River at stop sign and go about one mile to the Depot.

*From Wise County,* exit Alt US 58 in Coeburn onto Route 72. Travel 12 miles to Dungannon and the Depot is on the right.

Please notify the Roundtable office by Monday, May 12, if you plan to 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 five, or call the office at 276-628-1600.

## Tour planned May 29 for government officials

A tour highlighting projects completed by the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable and partners is planned for Thursday, May 29, beginning at the farmer's market in Abingdon at 9 a.m.

The Roundtable is inviting government officials and Roundtable board member to participate in this tour that will wind through Washington

and Wise counties and end back at the farmer's market.

Roundtable coordinator Carol Doss is working with agency partners Kelly Miller, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, as well as Martha Podren, Emily Lachniet and Mark Odom of the Tennessee Valley Authority to plan the tour.

Tour stops will include

a Great American Cleanup site, St. Paul High School where the Roundtable, Team Estonia, TVA and DCR are installing a green vegetated roof, and a reclaimed mined land site near Norton. A presentation by Office of Surface Mining/ Volunteers In Service To America will be done during lunch. To register, call 276.628.1600.

This spring newsletter is chock full of news about projects underway or recently completed by the Roundtable and agency partners. The keys to planning and completing a successful project are dedicated partners and ample funding. The Roundtable is blessed to have so many involved partnering agencies, organizations and volunteers to assist with and to fund these projects, but even more work is needed to sustain this organization.

The April 15 meeting of the Organization Coordinating Group is a prime example of successful partnerships at work where a number of agency representatives brainstormed and prioritized focus areas for a five-year plan. Nicole Vachon-Hanlon of the Canaan Valley Institute, facilitated the day-long session for us. CVI and Nicole have been instrumental partners in our planning work. It's been five years since this group met to create the first plan that ends Dec. 31 of this year. Shortly after that meeting, the Roundtable received the \$800,000 Environmental

Protection Agency Targeted Watershed Grant, which ends Sept. 30, but which contains no more operating expenses. In the EPA grant a number of agencies are working on a toxic spill/stormwater project at Cedar Bluff, another effective partnership. One continuing theme of the OCG and other recent meetings is how will we financially sustain this organization beyond grants. Operating funds are needed for rent, phone bills, liability insurance, postage. Personnel funding is needed for the Assign-A-Highway Program Coordinator, Bobby Justus, to continue this highly successful program.

Volunteers and staff completed a fundraiser last week as a result of a successful partnership with the Master Gardeners. The Roundtable first partnered with the Master Gardeners on a rain barrel workshop and later on a rain garden. Because of this partnership, the Master Gardeners allowed us to have a rain barrel fundraising booth and to coordinate a rain garden tour, which resulted in lots of citizen interest and generated some income as well. Thanks to all of our partners!

## SWEET environmental education team works on DEQ grant

By Carol Doss

Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Team, also known as SWEET, has begun working on a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality capacity building grant received by the Roundtable. SWEET includes the region covered by Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, nine counties and two cities in Southwest Virginia, as well as watershed groups from Tennessee.

SWEET will work on developing an effective network, doing a needs assessment and will launch the RiverSmart campaign, a public outreach program to encourage water conservation. SWEET will also plan and conduct workshops and assist with the Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Task Force publication.



SWEET members include, front row, Megan Krager, Nicole Vachon Hanlon, Carol Doss; second row, Cathy Landy, Emily Lachniet, Lisa Harris, Elizabeth Bennett, Joyce Buchanan; and back row, Kirsten Collins, Blaine Delaney, Jack Noll, Lois Boggs and Terry Vencil. There are also other members who were not able to attend this initial meeting.

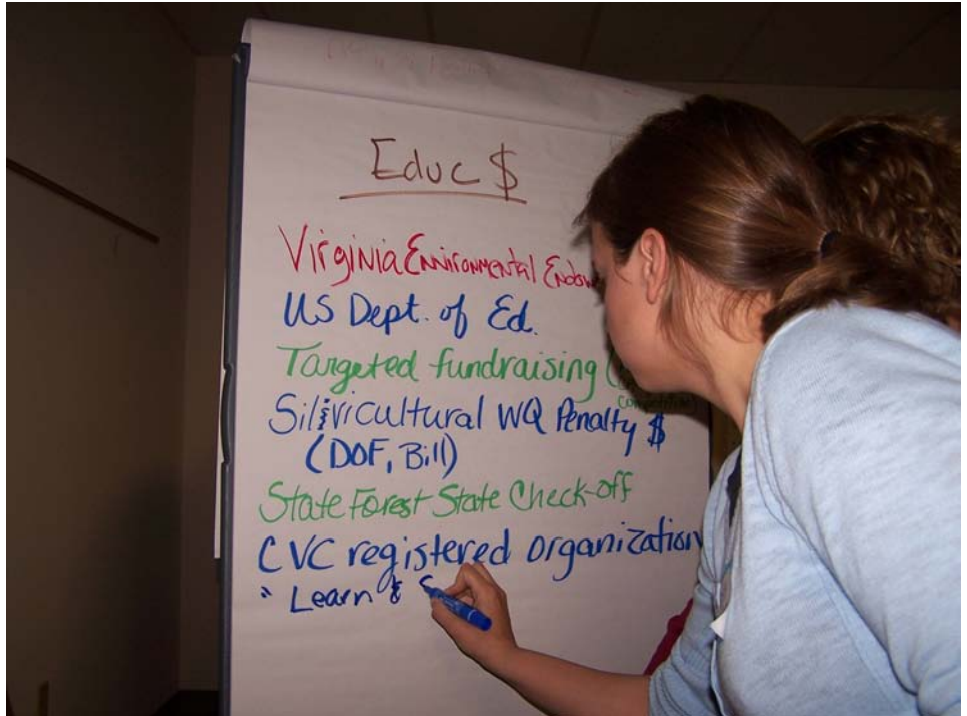
# Agency partners spend day formulating goals, five-year plan recommendations

Agency partners spent a day working on a new five-year work plan for the Roundtable. The Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation funded this workshop through one of its six grants to the Roundtable.

Facilitated by Nicole Vachon-Hanlon of the Canaan Valley Institute, the session resulted in a draft plan that will be presented for full board approval this summer.



Martha Podren of TVA and April Trent of the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team, help rank priority areas. April works with OSM/VISTA workers in the region.



Emily Lachniet of the Tennessee Valley Authority, above, adds to the list of potential education grant sources during the Organization Coordinating Group (OCG) meeting held April 15 at DEQ as part of the Roundtable's five-year planning process. The Roundtable board is trying to narrow its focus areas in the five year plan to just three to five instead of the long list now included so as to be most effective. The Roundtable board discussed which focus areas to include prior to the OCG meeting. The OCG worked on many details of the plan.



Above, planning district representatives contribute to five-year planning. Debbie McReynolds, at left, represented the Cumberland Plateau Planning District. Debbie also serves on the Roundtable board of directors. Kalena Porter represented the LENOWISCO Planning District. In photo far right is Brad Stallard of the Wise County Health Department and below right is Betty Edmondson of the Virginia Department of Transportation.



# Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, Roundtable, Assign-A-Highway honored

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, the nation's largest regional Keep America Beautiful affiliate, has received a first place state award, a third place national award and the KAB President's Circle Award for its litter prevention program operating in Lee, Wise, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Buchanan, Dickenson counties and the cities of Bristol and Norton. The Assign-A-Highway Program won a first place state award and second place national award.

Assign-A-Highway utilizes probationers who pick up litter on assigned sections of roadsides throughout their probationary periods. Thirty-one counties, two cities and seven towns currently utilize the program in Virginia.

Both Keep Southwest Virginia



and Assign-A-Highway operate under the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, based in Abingdon, and working in the Upper Tennessee River drainage. Dickenson and Buchanan partner with the Roundtable, although they are in different watersheds.



KSVB Chair Lester Turner, Coordinator Carol Doss and Assign-A-Highway Coordinator Bobby Justus receive awards.

## Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful offers community improvement recognition for counties, towns, cities

The Keep Southwest Virginia 2008 Beautification and Community Improvement Awards competition is now open. Last year, KSVB honored Buchanan County and the Town of Pocahontas with awards. Buchanan County received the award for its outstanding litter control program.

The Assign-A-Highway Program was first successfully implemented in Buchanan County and is making a tremendous difference there.

The Town of Pocahontas received an award for its work to preserve a large cemetery in town that is listed on the national register of historic

landmarks as well as for other improvements in town.

KSVB encourages all counties, cities and towns to enter the 2008 Awards Program. Deadline to enter is July 30, 2008. Entry forms have already been mailed to each locality within the KSVB region. If you did not receive an entry form, call the office at 276.628.1600.



Shown at left are Buchanan County Litter Control Coordinator Jerry Ward, KSVB and Roundtable Coordinator Carol Doss, Buchanan County Supervisor Carroll Branham, County Litter Control Officer Richard Lee, and Bobby Justus, regional and state Assign-A-Highway coordinator.



Pocahontas Town Council, above, accepted the outstanding town award in the 2007 KSVB awards contest.

# Roundtable assists with regional training through EPA grant

By Carol Doss

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable collaborated with the Appalachian RC&D Council of Jonesborough, Tennessee and



Roundtable Board member Lou Wallace, left, talks with Connie Deagin and Mark Odom, both of TVA, at right and Martha Chapman of DCR at left, at March 1 training.

Nicole Vachon-Hanlon of the Canaan Valley Institute to plan a two-day fall training conference in Bristol for regional watershed groups. These organizations partnered again March 1 for a training in Kingsport geared toward board development.

Both trainings helped to fulfill goals of the EPA grant and provided a wide variety of information for participants. The Roundtable and partners, including CVI and DCR, also offered a series of monitoring classes in conjunction with the fall conference through a partnership with Southwest Virginia Community College. The classes were offered again this spring and



Christine Smith of the Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District demonstrates the lesson, "Who Polluted the River," at the fall watershed conference organized by the Roundtable and partners.

Are offered again in May and June. For more information about these classes, call 276.628.1600.

## Assign-A-Highway Program successful, but sustained funding is needed for next year

By Bobby Justus, AAH Coordinator

The past three years have been very successful for securing funding from agencies for the Assign-A-Highway Coordinator's position under the Roundtable.

In 2005, the Virginia Litter Control and Recycling Fund Advisory Board funded the position completely for the first year of the position's existence.

The following two years have been a combination of funding from the Fund Advisory Board and the Virginia Department of Transportation, splitting the bill equally. Beyond this third year is now beginning to look bleak. Many of the state agencies have been cutting back on their spending.

VDOT in particular, which

benefits both financially and socially from the Assign-A-Highway program, has had many cutbacks that have left the future of the coordinator's position in limbo.

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Cumberland Plateau Planning District Commission, and others will be meeting to discuss possible funding opportunities to allow the coordinator position to be funded and continue offering services to every locality across the Commonwealth of Virginia.

The Assign-A-Highway Program is rapidly spreading across Virginia, with 32 counties, two cities, and seven towns currently participating. Any and all input will be greatly appreciated for funding possibilities. Call us at 276.628.1600 to offer ideas and/or assistance.

## Registration Form

for May 15 Roundtable Dinner

Please cut out and mail this form to Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, P.O. Box 2359, Abingdon, VA 24212, no later than Monday, May 12, 2008.

Yes, I will attend dinner.

I am enclosing \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ meals.

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Names of guests I'm bringing:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Roundtable, partners complete rain garden projects in region *By Carol Doss, Coordinator*

The Roundtable received funding from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation to install a number of rain gardens, some of which were featured on a citizen tour April 18 on partnership with the Garden Faire. The Tennessee Valley Authority and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also provided funding for some of the rain gardens, which help filter pollutants.



The work of these students at Abingdon Elementary School was coordinated by Denise Peterson of Learning Landscapes which was completed just in time for rain garden tour, at left.



Carol Dixon helped plant the rain garden at the farmer's market. The Roundtable and DCR selected this site because of the high visibility and prime opportunity for education and outreach.



Above, Ann Newman, Carol Dixon and Jenny Carmack paused a moment from planting a rain garden at the farmer's market in Abingdon, also funded by the Roundtable through a grant from DCR. Newman is horticulturist for the town of Abingdon. The completed garden at bottom right was featured on the rain garden tour April 18.



## Roundtable plans 'green' roof at St. Paul, AML projects, rain gardens

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable has secured grants for a variety of projects, including a "green" roof at St. Paul High School. The Roundtable will also be installing bioretention cells, similar to rain gardens, and grass swales at Coeburn High School. U.S. Fish and Wildlife and DCR are funding abandoned mined land reclamation projects in Lee County, also being coordinated by the Roundtable.

St. Paul High School will have a green vegetated roof on the tool shed at right thanks to a grant from DCR to the Roundtable. Team Estonoa is coordinating this project.



### *Master Naturalists volunteer at Garden Faire Booth*

Lou Wallace volunteered to help with the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable's rain garden and rain barrel booth at the Garden Faire in Abingdon. Lou, as well as Teresa Harless and Annette Poore, who also volunteered, are enrolled in the Holston River Chapter of the Master Naturalist program. Lou and Teresa also serve on the Roundtable board of directors. The program emphasizes preserving and conserving natural resources and is set up similarly to the Master Gardener program where members volunteer a certain number of hours per year.



### *Cleaning up illegal dump sites in the region*

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and all of its partnering localities are sweeping the region with dozens of cleanups of illegal dumpsites for the March through May Great American Cleanup. Volunteers are pitching in across the region for roadside cleanups.

KSVB Chair Lester Turner, center photo, works to clean up a site in Washington County, also above.

## You're invited to Clinch River float trip set for Saturday, May 16 By Dan Wilson, OSM/VISTA

Hello again from Tazewell! I am still here and doing some great work. The year has gone by quite fast. My time here in your region will soon be finished and I will once again be on the road heading for new experiences. I know I haven't met many of you, so it is my hope that you'll come out and be a part of a river float on the Clinch.

Danielle Dutton, OSM/VISTA for the Guest River Project and I are

organizing a float down the Clinch River for Americorps Week and would personally like to invite everyone. Americorps week has been designed as a week to get the word out about what OSM/VISTA volunteers like myself do in your watersheds and to let state and local officials know what we're doing.

This is also a fantastic opportunity for all of you to ensure that they see the level of community involvement in the

Upper Tennessee Basin. Come out and let them know how active this community is with water related issues. Mark it down on your calendar! May 16. All details have not been worked out, but call me at 276.988.2501 or the Roundtable at 276.628.1600 and reserve your spot and we'll get you the details. Before I go, I want to see you all out on the river as part of this leisure and learning experience. Come and enjoy a day on the Clinch River!



## Upper Tennessee River Roundtable Calendar of Upcoming Events

**Great American Cleanup:** A program of Keep America Beautiful offered by Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful March 1 through May 31. Trash bags, gloves, safety vests provided. To get supplies, call 276.628.1600.

**Spring Semi-Annual Meeting of the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable:** Thursday, May 15, 6 p.m. at Dungannon Depot in Scott County. Pre-registration.

**Tour of Projects for Government officials:** Thursday, May 29. Register now!

**Pizza Inn Fundraiser:** Monday, June 9, 5 to 8 p.m., Abingdon. Show your support! Tickets \$10.

**Stream Monitoring Workshop:** Thursday, July 31, 10 to 11:45 a.m., White's Mill, Abingdon, as part of Virginia Highlands Festival. Pre-registration required.

**Rain Barrel Workshop:** Friday, Aug. 8, 10 a.m. to 12 noon, White's Mill, Abingdon, as part of Virginia Highlands Festival. Fee and pre-registration required.

### Roundtable selling rain barrels, recycling bins

To purchase a rain barrel for \$50 or a recycling bin for \$15, call the Roundtable office at 276.628.1600.



Barrels, bins may be picked up at the Roundtable office. Proceeds help pay for indirect costs, such as rent.



**Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc.**

**366 West Main St., Suite 400**

**P.O. Box 2359**

**Abingdon, VA 24212**