



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc. Newsletter

Fall 2008

Volume 9, Number 2

Nov. 20 meeting to feature project presentation; DCR's Miller to speak on growth readiness in area

Board of Directors

Aquatic Resources:

Teresa Harless

Citizen "At Large:"

Diana Withen

Coal: Vacant

Conservation Groups:

Bill Wasserman

Education: Dr. Ed Davis

Environmental Groups:

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Forest Industry: Greg Gambrel

Industry: Rick Holmes

Planning Districts:

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Real Estate Development:

Larry Johnston

Local government:

Bonnie Aker

Teresa Guice

George Price

Claude Ray

Lynn McKinney

SWCD: Lou Wallace

Local Watershed Groups:

Bob McKinney, Holston

Tourism:

Sarah Love McReynolds

Agriculture:

Glen Broadwater

By Chris Green, OSM Intern

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable will host its fall "large" Roundtable meeting Thursday Nov. 20, at 6 p.m., at the Bonanza restaurant in Lebanon.

Kelly Miller, regional manager for the Abingdon office of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, will speak on "Growth Readiness in Southwest Virginia: Using Environmentally Friendly Development Practices Before It's Too Late."

This meeting will also feature a presentation showcasing Roundtable projects completed during the EPA Targeted Watershed Grant

that wrapped up in September of this year. These projects span five years and include funding from multiple grant sources.

New business will include the Roundtable board's recommendation that the Roundtable change the name of the "coal" seat to an "energy" seat.

"Large" Roundtable meetings are open to any interested citizens. All attendees are automatically considered voting members of the Roundtable. No reservations are required for the "large" Roundtable meeting, as dinner is Dutch treat: attendees can order dinner if they choose.

The Roundtable board meeting will take place at 5:30 pm, prior to the "large" Roundtable meeting.

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable is a non-profit organization striving for clean water in the Upper Tennessee River watershed, which stretches from Lee County toward Wythe County in Southwest Virginia.

The Roundtable is interested primarily in water quality issues in the Clinch, Powell and Holston rivers, especially those issues that affect biodiversity. For more information, contact the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable at 276.628.1600 or visit <<http://www.upperriver.org>>.

Planning for growth in Southwest Virginia

By Kelly Miller, Regional Manager, Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Soil and Water Conservation and Shannon O'Quinn, Watershed Team Leader, Cherokee-Douglas, Tennessee Valley Authority

Reflecting on Southwestern Virginia, no one can accuse us of being a metropolitan hub. In total, Virginia has decreased in population by 14.4 % from 2000 through 2007 ¹. Most counties in Southwest Virginia experienced a decline in population according to the 2000 Census

with the exception of a few localities. Washington County ranks 34th in Virginia for population growth and the City of Bristol ranks 85th with a modest growth at 0.01% ².

However, when you think about the I-81 and Rt. 460/19 corridors, chances are you've noticed a few more shopping centers, restaurants, parking lots and asphalt roads. In Southwest Virginia, we can safely say our growth is not measured in numbers but rather the increase in service/shopping oriented services. Exit 7 off I-81 is famous for its variety of restaurants and shopping opportunities. Some

counties have even enjoyed an increase in the construction of secondary or vacation homes.

So why question a good thing? Isn't the benefit of convenience a due reward? Absolutely! We authors would counter—but, do we want to look like Fauquier County in 10 years? We conservationists often joke "there's one tree left in Fauquier County and we're trying to preserve it." Our rural character in Southwestern Virginia is what gives us so much appeal. It defines our quality of life, something we
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With the many projects and activities taking place, it's been difficult to squeeze everything into this newsletter, but I've tried to include the highlights. One project in particular deserves extra attention here and that's the Cedar Bluff storm water structures. Shown at right are some of the key players, but there were many others who helped accomplish what seemed an impossible task of the EPA Targeted Watershed Grant. After struggling for over four years, the team switched gears, selecting a different project—units installed underground that filter out sediment, oils, gases, litter. These substances will be stored in compartments until the town pumps them out, therefore keeping them out of Indian Creek and away from endangered species. These two units will improve water quality which is important to area residents since an intake for drinking water is just downstream from these sites in Cedar Bluff.

Shown in the photo are Darian Musick at left and his business partner in Crossroads Engineering Kevin Sutherland, second from right. They subcontracted the installation to Chad King of King General Contractors shown second from left, along with one of his key



crewmen, Jim, at far right. Betty Edmondson, in center, with the Virginia Department of Transportation, was instrumental in seeing the project through to completion as were many other agency representatives, including the town and Town Manager Jim McGlothlin. Thanks to everyone who helped over the past five years with this project. We did it!

Roundtable, DCR, TVA assist with installation of green roof at St. Paul High School

The Roundtable in partnership with Team Estonoa and St. Paul High School in Wise County installed a green roof on the tractor shed near the learning center. Funded by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation and the Tennessee Valley Authority, this green roof is perhaps the first one in this region. The plants will absorb rain water, with any runoff filtering down into rain barrels. Dave Schwartz, at right, designed the green roof. Jeff Stapleton created the landscape plan for the roof, which was planted by students.



Two storm water structures installed in Cedar Bluff to filter pollutants



With the help of many partnering agencies, the Cedar Bluff storm water project funded by the U.S. EPA Targeted Watershed Grant to the Roundtable ended with the installation of two units to filter sediment, oils and gases, and litter. This system will keep pollutants from entering Indian Creek, home to many endangered species. This project was most difficult of all 26 projects in the EPA grant to find the most suitable and most affordable solution. Many thanks to all of the partnering agencies for their diligence in helping to see this project to completion. The top unit is installed at the Post Office and the bottom unit on Birch Lane.



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

By Carol Doss

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable and two programs operating under its umbrella, Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and Assign-A-Highway, each received a first place award during the Keep Virginia Beautiful ceremony in Richmond Oct. 22.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, the nation's largest regional Keep America Beautiful affiliate, received a first place litter prevention award from Keep Virginia Beautiful for the program that covers nine counties and two cities in Southwest Virginia. The localities included in this Keep America Beautiful affiliate are Lee, Wise, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, Washington, Smyth, Buchanan, Dickenson counties and the cities of Bristol and Norton. The Roundtable



got first place under the beautification category for its partnership efforts to create rain gardens. A rain garden is more than just a beautifully landscaped area; it also serves to manage storm water runoff. In the past year, the Roundtable has installed rain gardens at Abingdon Elementary School, Abingdon Senior Center and the Abingdon Farmer's Market. A rain garden was also begun at Meadowview Elementary School. Others have been installed in previous years by the Roundtable and partners.

The Assign-A-Highway Program won a first place award from Keep Virginia Beautiful under the waste reduction category. Assign-A-Highway utilizes probationers who pick up litter on assigned sections of roadsides throughout their probationary periods. Forty-two counties, cities and towns currently utilize the program in Virginia.

The Assign-A-Highway Program is promoted by the Roundtable through grants from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The Roundtable is contracting with its former Assign-A-Highway coordinator, Bobby Justus, to complete the work for these grants. Thanks to Bobby for all of his good work on this program. His work will end in November when funding runs out.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful awards Norton, Dickenson County

By Carol Doss

Keep Southwest Virginia recently honored the City of Norton and Dickenson County in its 2008 Beautification and Community Improvement Awards Program.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful chose the city and the county based on long lists of litter control and recycling accomplishments completed in the past year.

The city also received this distinguished honor for volunteering to participate in the cigarette litter prevention campaign initiated by Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and for rescuing the former Toms Creek Outdoor Classroom by moving it to Clear Creek Park. When the Toms Creek outdoor classroom could no longer be utilized, Knox moved the signs and learning stations to Clear Creek Park



Carol Doss, center, presents the city's award to Shelly Knox and Norton Mayor Robert Raines.

where they can be used. Knox was also one of the first Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful localities to volunteer to implement the cigarette litter prevention campaign, along with Lester Turner, who coordinates Dickenson County's litter control and recycling program. Later, Gate City and Wise joined this effort.

Both Knox and Turner did outstanding jobs in coordinating this program by conducting three scans each, where each cigarette butt was counted within a three to four block area. With grant funds from Keep America Beautiful and Phillip Morris, Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful purchased ash receptacles for all participating localities, as well as pocket ashtrays and custom made posters.

Turner accepted the county award at a Dickenson County Board of Supervisors meeting. He also coordinates a successful litter control and recycling program. Turner organizes numerous cleanups, especially removal of illegal dumpsites, and does various education programs, including a groundwater festival. He served as the affiliate's chairman for two years and is active in fundraising and other efforts. He is organizing the first golf tournament for this affiliate.

Natural gas extraction in Southwest Virginia: Working together to minimize land-disturbing impacts

By David Asbury, Director, Dept. of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Gas and Oil and Kelly R. Miller, Regional Manager, Dept. of Conservation & Recreation, Division of Soil & Water Conservation

Natural gas is a substantial portion of the economy in Southwest Virginia. Southwest Virginia is blessed with a large supply of natural gas historically extracted by drilling conventional wells into deep reservoir rock. Improvements in technology have enabled the gas industry to tap into methane gas produced during the formation of coal and adsorbed within the pores of coal seams. In 2007, approximately 1588 wells produced 23.5 billion cubic feet of gas from conventional hydrocarbon reservoirs, while 4132 wells produced 88.3 billion cubic feet of coal bed methane gas from coal seams ¹. Virginia's gas production has increased by about 500% since 1990.

From January 2008 through September 2008, 3095 new permits have been issued for gas well installation for conventional gas extraction, coal bed methane extraction, pipeline installation, facilities management, and service wells to 35 different companies. The concentration of conventional wells and coal bed wells is in Buchanan (2613), Dickenson (1624), Wise (622), Russell (437), and Tazewell (375) ². Gas well activity is also present in Lee and Scott counties.

[Virginia's Gas and Oil Act of 1990](#) authorized a comprehensive program to protect public safety and the environment from potential impacts associated with gas and oil exploration and development. The law and regulations govern activities from prior to initial disturbance of land for site preparation

until after a well is no longer in service and reclaimed. The installation and operation of gathering pipelines is also governed by the law and regulations. The Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy's (DMME) Division of Gas and Oil (DGO) is responsible for administering law and regulations ³.

As of June 2006, in accordance with an exception granted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, land disturbing activity associated with oil or gas exploration or production is exempt from the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Regulations ⁴ and the Virginia Stormwater Management Program (VSMP) Permit Regulations. This guidance is mandated by the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (a.k.a. Clean Water Act) which authorizes states to institute programs to govern land disturbing activities. However, this does not mean the oil and gas industry is not regulated to take preventive measures to control erosion and sediment run-off. The DGO regulations are very similar to those regulations in the Erosion and Sediment Control Law (10.1-560-10.1-571) enforced by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of Soil and Water Conservation (DSWC), and DSWC has been party to DGO's regulation development. The Erosion, Sediment Control and Reclamation regulations enforced by DGO can be found at 4VAC25-150-260 of the Administrative Code. In summary, property to be disturbed must have sediment controls in place prior to construction, maintained during construction and must have stabilization measures applied after disturbance is complete. Due to the nature of the land disturbance and the usually short amount of time the gas wells,

road or pipelines are under construction, the regulations allow for more use of natural controls such as brush barriers, water bars, and traffic limitations at stream crossings.

Since 2006, the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation's Division of Soil and Water Conservation, Abingdon Regional Office and the Division of Gas and Oil have jointly designed and delivered training to 166 natural gas company employees to increase their awareness of erosion and sedimentation controls. Virginia's Secretary of Natural Resources L. Preston Bryant and Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Patrick Gottschalk support efforts to responsibly access and extract natural gas reserves. Training efforts are planned to continue in the spring of 2009.

¹As reported by the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Gas and Oil public website: <http://www.mme.state.va.us/divisiongasoil.shtml>

²Data obtained from the Virginia Department of Mines, Minerals, and Energy, Division of Gas and Oil on-line production database: www.dmme.virginia.gov/dgoinquiry/frmmain.aspx

³www.mme.state.va.us/dgo/documents/welldevelopmentactivities.shtml

⁴EPA Final Rule: Amendments to the Storm Water Regulations for Discharges Associated with Oil and Gas Construction Activities; 40 CFR Part 122, EPA-HQ-OW-2002-0068; FRL-8183-3, RIN 2040-AE81

“In Remembrance,
Bob Wilson, Retired Director, Department of Mines, Minerals and Energy, Division of Gas and Oil (August 1, 1943 – September 20, 2008)”



Chad Owens of Owens Landscaping of Abingdon installed the permeable pavers in the parking lot at Saltville. Above, the completed handicapped spaces located at the trail head.

Permeable pavers installed on Saltville birding trail parking lot handicapped spaces

By Carol Doss

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable completed a permeable pavers project at the Saltville birding trail in October. Through funding from a Water Quality Improvement Grant from the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, the Roundtable selected this site as one of nine storm water management projects. The grant initially called for six projects, but the funds were stretched to include more.

Jeff Stapleton of Stapleton Landscape Architecture of Nickelsville completed the design for the project that included the two handicapped spaces. Chad Owens of Owens Landscaping of Abingdon installed the pavers.

Permeable pavers are an alternative to asphalt and help with storm water runoff. This project serves as a demonstration project and an example of what can be done at homes and businesses instead of choosing an impervious surface.



OSM/VISTA member begins service

A native of Delaware, Lauren Lindgren moved to Cedar Bluff in September to begin a one-year term of service assisting Cedar Bluff, Tazewell and the Roundtable. Lauren graduated from Millersville University with a degree in speech communication. Lauren says she is “thrilled to be given the opportunity to work toward such an important cause. It’s something that needs to be done and I’m more than ready to be a part of the movement.” Lauren, who is pictured at left in the photo above, has already helped with a number of projects in the region. Welcome aboard, Lauren!



Conference focuses on green building, energy conservation

The Southwest Virginia Environmental Education Team through a Virginia Dept. of Environmental Quality grant to the Roundtable, hosted a green building conference at St. Paul High School Oct. 11. Dwayne Powell of Eco-Populace was one of the speakers. Emily Lachniet of TVA in center served as event emcee and Lisa Harris is co-chair of the team.

OSM/VISTA member brings skills to region

By Matt Allanson, OSM/VISTA Member

In June of 1995, reality kicked in. I quickly realized that my life had just started. Having no clue as to what I wanted for myself in life, I enrolled in my local Community College. Working full-time and going to community college part-time was difficult because I still did not know what I wanted to do for a career.

After completing my Associates Degree in 4 years, I then enrolled at Virginia Commonwealth University. I decided to only go part-time and keep my job as an auto-detailer. After one and a half years of back-breaking work cleaning cars and going to night classes, I knew I had to make a change.

I decided to leave my job, move back home, and take out Financial Aid to complete college. Along with Financial Aid, I decided to open my own business using my knowledge of car detailing. I started my own mobile car detailing business to help pay down some of my debt. Although my business only lasted a year, it was a valuable learning experience.

After one full semester in the School of Business at VCU, I then realized that I wanted to work in the non-profit world. I knew that there were not millions to be made in this area but that did not matter to me. Graduating from VCU with a degree in Business Administration in August of 2007, I began to look for jobs in Richmond. With no luck securing a job in my home town, I began to look elsewhere. This is when my journey as a VISTA begins.

In the beginning of April 2008 I was excited to find a web site advertising an AmeriCorps VISTA position with the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team (ACCWT) in my home state of Virginia. I submitted my resume and information to AmeriCorps and hoped for the best.



Matt shown with other members at left and helping with workshop.

To my surprise, I received a phone call from Dr. Allen Comp of the Office of Surface mining. Dr. Comp, the founder of ACCWT, asked me if I would be interested in a new position with the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable. Being that my goal was to work for a non-profit organization, I immediately said, "Yes." This position would allow me to familiarize myself with the non-profit world, which I have wanted to be a part of since my sophomore year in college, and help to build my resume for the future.

On June 24, 2008 I boarded a plane in Richmond, and headed to Atlanta to attend the Pre-service Orientation that AmeriCorps offers to new VISTA members. I learned what it means to be a VISTA, the goals, and my mission with my sponsoring organization. As a bonus, I was able to meet all kinds of people from around the United States who were there to be a part of something special. To this day, I still am in contact with a majority of the people that I meet in Atlanta.

Returning from Atlanta on June 27, I packed up my car and moved to Abingdon. I finally got to meet my supervisor, Carol Doss, on June 30. We went over some of the plans for my VISTA term, toured the office and met some of my co-workers. After my first day, I knew that this would be a challenging, but rewarding experience that would stay with me for the rest of my days.

Planning for growth readiness helps preserve quality of life, environment

Continued from Page 1

usually only appreciate after coming home from visiting other places. Congestion, pollution, frustration all come with growth. But it doesn't have to be that way.

During the last few years, the notion of benefiting from our growth while preserving our quality of life and our environment has gained momentum. Experts in design and planning have pooled ideas and given us tools we can use to grow while lessening our impact on the environment. The Environmental Protection Agency sponsors the "Smart Growth" program, research at the University of Connecticut developed the "Non-point Source Education for Municipal Officials" program, and the state of Tennessee with assistance from the Southeast Watershed Forum have developed Growth Readiness workshops for localities. All these programs offer tips and tools for localities to use when planning for development.

Thanks to the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Wise and Tazewell Counties have sponsored Growth Readiness workshops. At these workshops, elected officials, community leaders, county/town planners closely examine their current development ordinances, are lead through a facilitated evaluation of their long-term plans for growth, and given county specific tools to plan for development while decreasing their impact on the

environment and while maintaining their quality of life.

As we move forward with our efforts, the next step is to host a regional Growth Readiness conference where we hope to broaden our focus to all local governments and planners in Southwest Virginia. Our hope is to introduce the concepts of Growth Readiness and follow-up with those counties who express a need. These counties will be offered one-on-one assistance from all our partner organizations. Eventually we hope to offer funding and staff to assist localities with their planning needs.

The Cumberland Plateau, Mount Rogers, and LENOWISCO Planning Districts are supporting and helping to organize growth readiness activities. Kelly Miller of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation will be presenting more information on Growth Readiness at the Fall Meeting of the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable on Nov. 20 at 6 at the Bonanza in Lebanon.

1 U.S. Census 2000; <http://www.census.gov/population/www/cen2000/briefs/phc-t2/tables/tab02.pdf>

2 U.S. Census Bureau; http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GCTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=04000US51&-ds_name=PEP_2007_EST&-_lang=en&-redoLog=false&-mt_name=PEP_2007



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable Calendar of Upcoming Events

Networking/Fundraising Workshop: Saturday, Nov. 1, Oxbow Center, 9 to 3. Cost: \$5 includes lunch. Door prize: spend a day with a grant writer developing a funding proposal.

Outdoor Classroom Workshop: Saturday, Nov. 15, 9 to 3, Norton Community Center. Cost: \$5 includes lunch, curriculum guide.

Regional Stream Cleanup: Offered by Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful now underway. Trash bags, gloves, safety vests provided, thanks to TVA and Clean Virginia Waterways. To get supplies, call 276.628.1600.

Fall Roundtable Meeting: Thursday, Nov. 20. See Page 1.

Applebee's Fundraiser for KSVB: Saturday, Nov. 8, 7 to 9 a.m. in Norton. \$5 for all you can eat pancake breakfast. All proceeds benefit Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful.

Fundraisers: Rain barrels for sale; see below. Thanks to everyone who gave for the major donor campaign and to everyone who has purchased a rain barrel!!

Roundtable selling rain barrels, recycling bins

To purchase a rain barrel for \$50 or a recycling bin for \$5, 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, phone.



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