



Upper Tennessee River Roundtable Calendar of Upcoming Events

Great American Cleanup: Began March 1 and continues through May 31. To volunteer, call the office at 276.628.1600.

Indian Creek Cleanup in Cedar Bluff: Kickoff Saturday, April 18 and continues the next week. Call Lauren Lindgren at town hall at 276.964.4889 to volunteer.

Garden Faire Booth: The Roundtable will once again have a display on rain gardens and rain barrels at the Garden Faire in Abingdon Friday, April 17, and Saturday, April 18.

Spring Roundtable Meeting: Tuesday, May 5, featuring Dr. Phil Shelton. Cost per person is \$12.95. See story Page 1.

Southwest Virginia Growth Readiness Conference: Set for Thursday, April 30 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center Grand Hall.

S.O.S. Monitoring Training: Aug. 3 at 10 a.m. at White's Mill near Abingdon. Call the office at 276.628.1600 to register. Space is limited. Roundtable will also set up booth at Aug. 1 Eco Faire.

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.



Place your order and we will make a rain barrel for you! If you'd like to attend a workshop to make your own, let us know!



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



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Vacant

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Upper Tennessee River Roundtable, Inc. Newsletter

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May 5 Spring Roundtable meeting to feature Dr. Phil Shelton speaking on mountains of region

Dr. Phil Shelton of Wise will be the featured guest speaker for the Spring Roundtable dinner set for Tuesday, May 5, at 6 p.m. at Abingdon Senior Center.

Retired from the University of Virginia's College at Wise, Dr. Shelton teaches part-time. For the Roundtable meeting, Dr. Shelton will talk about, "High Altitude Forests of the Southern Appalachians, including the Smoky Mountains,

Roan Mountain, Grandfather Mountain and Mt. Rogers, with an emphasis on the latter.

Registration will begin at 5:15 p.m. for the 6 p.m. dinner. The menu will feature baked chicken, tilapia, roast beef, green beans, corn, baked potatoes, salad, bread, dessert, coffee or tea.

The cost per person is \$12.95 and **must be paid in advance** to guarantee a meal. Send payment to the Upper

Tennessee River Roundtable, P.O. Box 2359, Abingdon, Virginia 24212.

To reach the senior center, turn onto Valley Street, which is off Main Street. From Valley Street, turn onto White's Mill Drive. Take the first right onto Summers Street and the next first right onto Senior Drive. The center is on left.

Awards will be given to individuals

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Letter from the new Roundtable Chair

By Bonnie Aker

I recently had the good luck to run across, and borrow, (it was not for sale), a wonderful book, **Heart of the Land Essays on Last Great Places**, edited by The Nature Conservancy. Favorite writers were there: Barbara Kingsolver, Barry Lopez, Rick Bass, Louise Erdrich, Peter Matthiessen, James Welch, and Terry Tempest Wil-

liams.

Of a total of 33 designated geographic location in the U.S., the Pacific, and Latin America, our own Virginia has two, and these I read first. One concerned the "The Atlantic Barrier Islands, Virginia," and the second, "The Most Patient of Animals, Clinch Valley, Virginia," written by Joel Achenback.

Of course, he was talking about our mus-sels. The Clinch River which carved out this valley, is designated by the Nature Conservancy as the nation's hotspot of aquatic diversity and the #1 river in the nation to be protected. Of the 48 imperiled and vulnerable fish and mussel species found in the Clinch

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Coordinator's Corner: Busy, busy times ahead! By Carol W. Doss, Coordinator

Many events are planned for April, including the regional Great American Cleanup that began in March and continues through May. As part of that three-month event, a special emphasis is being placed on Indian Creek, home to endangered species in Cedar Bluff in Tazewell County. An entire week is focused on that area, beginning with a kickoff cleanup event and concluding with a free household hazardous waste and electronics collection day for all residents of that county.

Other events focus around Earth Day, which is April 22. Emory and Henry students are planning a cleanup that day as part of the Great American Cleanup. A large tree planting of about 10,000 trees is also set to begin at Sugar Hollow in Bristol through the sponsorship of Bristol Virginia Utilities and Alpha Natural Resources. Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful is a partner in this effort.

Numerous cleanups of illegal dumpsites are taking place throughout the three months with all localities participating in some way. Events are too many to name here, but if you want to help with one, let us know.

Master gardeners are host to the Garden Faire in Abingdon this month which will feature a rain barrel/rain garden booth manned by the Roundtable. Abingdon hosts an Earth Day celebration later in the month when the Roundtable will feature information on stream critters. Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful will borrow Wise County's recycling education trailer for this event. The town is also collecting electronics waste at the event.

The Southwest Virginia Growth Readiness Conference will take place Thursday, April 30 in Abingdon at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center. This conference will feature tools for quality growth planning. Elected officials, county administrators and planners are encouraged to attend. If you want to attend, please let us know. Cost is \$20 per person which includes a burger bar and salad lunch; vegetarian meal can be requested.



Spring Roundtable meeting set for Tuesday, May 5 at Abingdon Senior Center

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and organizations that have worked diligently on watershed issues during the past year. Award categories are soil and water conservation districts, watershed



agencies, educators and citizens, and media.

Anyone who attends one of these semi-annual meetings is automatically considered to be a voting member. For more information, call the office at 276.628.1600.

New Chair Bonnie Aker emphasizes the unique qualities of Upper Tennessee watershed

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watershed, 21 are federally listed as endangered or threatened. The Powell River watershed, home to one of the few true cedar glades left in the world, is designated as the third most important river in the nation to be protected. These two rivers, along with the Holston, make up the Upper Tennessee. And that takes us to the mission of the UTRR, which 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. "I spent a lot of time talking about these rivers when I taught Earth Science and coached the J.J. Kelly Envirothon Team.

They were good years. I retired from teaching a little over a year ago, but continue to work with the Wise Business Association and Wise Fall Fling, and to promote the betterment of our entire area, in which the protection of our waters is of the utmost importance. I have represented Wise County on the UTRR since the early days, and am always grateful for the broad range of talents and viewpoints, and the willingness to serve of the entire board. This is what makes the Roundtable so effective. Not to mention our Coordinator, Carol Doss. She is the glue that holds us together. As incoming Chair, I pledge to give it my best. Thank You for your vote of confidence.

Roundtable completes storm water management projects at Coeburn High School



With grant funds from the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and the Tennessee Valley Authority, the Roundtable partnered with Coeburn High School on a storm water management project, resulting in the installation of three rain gardens and two grass swales. Landscape architect Jeff Stapleton did the design. Chad Owens oversaw landscaping.



Before photo at left shows where water pooled in the parking lot. Rain garden and drain (above left) should alleviate that problem.



Photos taken by Claire Donley



Photo on left of paved swale replaced on right with planted grass swale.

Chad Owens and students worked on the project. OSM/VISTA Claire Donley coordinated volunteer work with teacher Diana Withen and her students. OSM/VISTA Allyson Green also assisted. Donley also did an impromptu water quality lesson for primary students onsite.



Permeable pavers installed at Pennington Gap

With a water quality improvement grant from the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and funding from Tennessee Valley Authority, the Roundtable paid for design an installation of permeable pavers at Pennington Gap between the two

concession stands at Leeman Field. Detail of pavers below.



Rain gardens installed in region

With funding from the VA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation and lots of volunteer labor, the Roundtable installed rain gardens at Meadowview Elementary School, above, in Washington County, and at right in Grogan Park in Gate City, in Scott County. Shown at right are town officials who had a groundbreaking.



EQT Corp. Foundation awards grant in partnership with AEP

By Carol Doss

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable received a \$20,000 grant from EQT Corporation's Foundation in March to provide hands-on watershed education in partnership with the East Kentucky Science Center and Chesterfield, Missouri based RiverWorks Discovery, a division of American Electric Power.

Del. Joseph P. Johnson, Jr. attended the presentation and expressed his appreciation to EQT Corporation for its support of the Roundtable. Johnson represents the fourth district.

EQT Corporation, formerly known as Equitable Resources, gives funds through its foundation to support many different nonprofits.

"We are pleased to be able to support the Roundtable's leadership efforts in environmental education," said Maurice Royster, manager of government relations for EQT Corporation in the Johnson City, Tennessee office. Royster presented the check to Teresa Harless, who at the time of the presentation was serving as secretary of the Roundtable Board of Directors, and to Carol Doss, Roundtable coordinator. Shown at left in the photo is Dan Adams



representing American Electric Power. A portion of the grant will be awarded to the Big Sandy Community and Technical College East Kentucky Science Center of Prestonsburg, Kentucky. Both the Science Center and the Roundtable formed a partnership with RiverWorks Discovery to seek funding from EQT Corporation's foundation. This partnership emerged after discussions between Errin Howard of RiverWorks and Ann Regn of the VA Dept. of Environmental Quality. Regn recommended that Howard work with Doss on this program. The education work will begin later this year.



Donation from Dominion Resources

Coordinator Carol Doss accepts a \$5,000 check from James Beazley and Emil Avram of Dominion Resources. OSM/VISTA Lauren Lindgren and several board members assisted in applying for this grant from Dominion.

Rain barrels continue to be popular in region

The Roundtable recently assisted with rain barrel workshops in Tazewell and St. Paul where citizens created their own barrels to catch roof runoff. Additional workshops are planned in St. Paul, Bluefield and Lee County. The Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District has been offering mini grants to help with these workshops.

The Tazewell workshop resulted in 31 barrels made, with 15 made in St. Paul.



Kathy Neel was one of the participants at the Tazewell workshop.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, Assign-A-Highway honored by KAB

By Carol Doss

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and the Assign-A-Highway Program each received honors from Keep America Beautiful during the annual conference held in Washington, D.C. last December.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful, the nation's largest regional Keep America Beautiful affiliate, received the President's Circle Award for successfully meeting all requirements of the Keep America Beautiful Program. The Assign-A-Highway Program received a distinguished service citation, or the equivalent of a third place award, for recruiting and assisting localities with this highly



successful litter cleanup program.

Both Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful and Assign-A-Highway operate under the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable.

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 Roundtable currently has no more funding to pay anyone to coordinate the Assign-A-Highway Program. Roundtable Coordinator Carol Doss is completing just the basic tasks until more funding can be acquired to hire someone.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful includes nine localities: Lee, Wise, Scott, Russell, Tazewell, Buchanan, Dickenson, Smyth and Washington counties and the cities of Norton and Bristol. This local affiliate also won a first place Keep Virginia Beautiful award. Assign-A-Highway and the Roundtable also each won a first place award from Keep Virginia Beautiful. The Roundtable won for its installation of rain gardens throughout the region that reduce storm water runoff while also beautifying areas where they are.

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful to get six more cigarette litter grants

By Carol Doss

Keep Southwest Virginia Beautiful is receiving six more grants from Keep America Beautiful to continue focusing on the reduction of cigarette litter. Studies conducted by KAB show that people who toss cigarette butts usually do not throw out other litter. This campaign is designed to raise awareness so that people will realize that cigarette butts are litter, too.

These grants will be implemented in the city of Norton and in the towns of Wise, Clintwood, Gate City, Abingdon, and Grundy.

Keep Southwest Virginia received its first cigarette litter prevention grant last year.



That grant was implemented in Norton, Wise, Clintwood and Gate City. The new grants will expand the program in those localities. New programs will be introduced in Grundy and Abingdon.

The program involves forming a team of stakeholders, selecting a two to three block target area and counting the cigarette butts. All cigarette litter is then cleaned up.

Next, awareness is raised by purchasing cigarette and ash receptacles and placing them in the targeted areas, putting up posters in store windows, distributing pocket ashtrays and seeking publicity.

The four localities that participated last year reduced their cigarette litter by a total of 52 percent. As an example of the numbers of butts involved, Clintwood showed an initial count of 1,249, a second follow-up count of 968 and a third count of 899. Gate City had 847 initially and 502 at the second count. Norton had 1,329 initially, 1,210 on second count and 819 on the third count. Wise had the most, with 4,061 cigarette butts initially and 2,210 on second count.

Emory & Henry College radio show focuses on water quality

By Matt Allanson

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable and Emory and Henry College recently joined together to develop a radio show focused on water quality. The radio station creates a new means of informing the good people of southwest Virginia about the invaluable work that the Roundtable and other watershed groups in the area are doing to help preserve and improve the water quality of the streams and rivers in the Tennessee River watershed.

The college agreed to allow Board member, Dr. Ed Davis, and

three of his students, to host a 30 minute radio show on their college radio station. Matt Allanson, OSM/VISTA with the Roundtable, provides production support for the show.

"The Water Planet" airs on WEHC 90.7 FM every Friday from 1 p.m. – 1:30 pm. The show is also streamed over the internet through the college's website: <http://www.ehcweb.ehc.edu/masscomm/wehc/>.

The show focuses on water related issues and offers some solutions to problems that communities

in southwest Virginia can implement to help improve the water quality of their streams and rivers.

"The Water Planet" hopes to continue its success next spring semester at Emory and Henry College's radio station. With a new group of students, support from the Roundtable, and a larger broadcasting area, the Roundtable looks forward to drawing more attention to the problems plaguing the watershed and the increased amount of local citizens getting involved in their communities through the radio program.

90 illegal dumpsites mapped in Tazewell County as part of regional effort

By Lauren Lindgren

Over 90 illegal dumpsites were mapped in March by OSM/VISTA Lauren Lindgren with the help of Dave Kinder, GIS coordinator in Tazewell County.

Lindgren and Kinder spent three full days traveling all over the county, logging locations where trash, ranging from household waste to large appliances, was illegally left by roads and over hills throughout Tazewell County. Kinder donated his time, expertise, and GPS camera to assist Lindgren with the project.

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable initiated the illegal dumpsite survey project throughout the region. Tazewell County is one of the last to near completion of the survey.

Lindgren is a full-time volunteer for the Roundtable with the Appalachian Coal Country Watershed Team, a partnership between the Office of Surface Mining and Volunteers in Service to America. She will be working with the Roundtable through the end of August, focusing on Cedar Bluff and Tazewell.



These photos are an example of the illegal dumping problem in Tazewell County where OSM/VISTA Lauren Lindgren is working with Dave Kinder to map the sites. At least one dump site in Tazewell County is slated for cleanup during the Great American Cleanup, which extends through May.