

Down by the River

Fall dinner to feature former OSM/ VISTA Shane Barton Thursday, Nov. 4

By Carol Doss

The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable welcomes back former Office of Surface Mining/Volunteers In Service To America member Shane Barton who will be the featured speaker at the Fall meeting on Thursday, Nov. 4.

The meeting is set for 6 p.m. at the Ruritan Building in Nickelsville, Scott County. Cost per person is \$11 to cover the meal of country ham, biscuits, gravy, vegetables, bread, dessert, coffee, tea. Registration is required to guarantee a meal.

Shane served for two years in Cedar Bluff as the Roundtable's OSM/VISTA member. During that time he focused



on water quality issues of Indian Creek. After completing two years of service, Shane got his master's degree from Virginia Commonwealth University. As part of his studies, he created a watershed plan for Indian Creek.

Shane will share that plan with the full Roundtable at the Fall meeting. Shane accomplished many goals during his term as an OSM/VISTA; the photo above shows Shane helping at one of the many Roundtable rain barrel workshops.



News from the Roundtable Chair

Dear Roundtable Members:

I hope you will join us in Nickelsville on Nov. 4 for our membership meeting. The presentation from "our very own" Shane Barton on Indian Creek should be very informative.

A couple of items are under consideration by the Board of Directors. We are currently fine tuning an addition to our bylaws that addresses an attendance policy for Board members. We find

that having a productive board meeting means having good attendance, but we do have problems with attendance. We are also finishing up some guidelines for membership dues for our members. We hope this will generate some income to keep the Roundtable working toward its mission. Carol remains busy working on grant opportunities and fulfilling guidelines on current grants. Since our last VISTA left in September, Carol has

been running the office alone. We hope to qualify for another VISTA in the near future.

As always, the most pressing issue for the Roundtable is funding. Our annual fundraising drive will begin soon, headed by Martha Chapman of DCR. Please remember the Roundtable as you make your year-end tax deductible contributions.

Teresa Harless, Chair

Board of Directors:

Agriculture:

Glen Broadwater

Citizen "At Large:"

Teresa Harless

Coal: Margie Horton

Conservation Groups:

Bill Wasserman

Education: Dr. Ed Davis

Environmental Groups:

Steve Brooks

Forest Industry:

Greg Gambrel

Industry: Rick Holmes

Planning Districts:

Vacant

Real Estate

Development: Vacant

Local Government:

Bonnie Aker

Teresa Guice

Lynn McKinney

Shawn Morris

Nicole Price

SWCD: Lou Wallace

Local Watershed Groups:

Bob McKinney

Diana Withen

Tourism:

Sarah Love McReynolds

Recreation:

Justin Laughlin

Coordinator's Corner: Projects, grants, volunteers!

By Carol Doss

With this issue, we are diligently working to finish current grant projects while also looking for funds to do new projects beginning next year. That's the story of the Roundtable: constantly doing work and continually looking for funds.



The most exciting projects underway are two rain gardens and a green, vegetated kiosk. These three projects are funded by the Virginia Environmental Endowment and Dominion Foundation. We are so grateful to these two foundations for funding the projects and for cash match we are receiving from the Tennessee Valley Authority, Lebanon Square, and the Green Thumb Garden Club of Norton.

I enjoyed meeting with the Green

Thumb Garden Club; I've known many of the members for a long time, dating back to the days when I lived in Norton and Wise. I asked the club to help with the rain garden at Clear Creek Park in Norton. At the end of the meeting, the club voluntarily donated \$200 to help purchase plants. Four members volunteered to help plant. Thank you so very much!

I appreciate Shelly Knox, Norton recreation director, for her work in overseeing the project. The city is providing a huge in-kind match by excavating the rain garden as well as creating the soil mixture and putting it in the garden. Volunteers planted the rain garden and applied mulch.

The next projects are the rain garden at Lebanon Square and the green roof kiosk for Clear Creek Park. Both projects are expected to take place in the next few weeks to meet

our grant deadlines! I appreciate OSM/VISTA Patrick Smith for his help with the Lebanon project.

The Roundtable also recently received a grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to transform an abandoned coal tippie site into an outdoor classroom in Pennington Gap. Many agency partners have worked on the preliminary stages of this project. At the risk of leaving out someone, I'll wait and do a more complete report on this project in a future issue.

I'm grateful to OSM/VISTA Sarah Drakulich, Roundtable Assistant April Grace and Intern Kristy Brooking for all of their help with everything. I'd also like to thank Spencer Moss for her work for the Roundtable. Spencer completed her OSM/VISTA term in September and moved to Wyoming for a second VISTA term. Best wishes to Spencer from all of us!

OSM/VISTA makes progress in Tazewell

Greetings everyone and happy fall! First, a special thanks to Carol Doss and Elizabeth Bennett for the support along the way and to many others who have been helpful and supportive. If I could sum up this season in one word it would be education. The summer was filled with education and outreach events including Tazewell County's 4-H Camp where I did the River-Works program, a rain barrel workshop with Tazewell High School, Landowner Incentive Program meeting in Cedar Bluff, rain garden replanting in Tazewell, and finishing a grant requesting funds to hold another Household Hazardous Waste collection in Tazewell next year.

With school back in session this fall, we have actively worked with students and teachers. On Sept. 17 and Oct. 6 we held Save Our Streams (SOS) trainings mostly targeting teachers.

The Roundtable was at the Cedar Bluff Heritage Festival where we got interviewed by the local radio station. I also worked a booth for the Roundtable at the Wise Fall Fling. There are river cleanups taking place in October and November as well. Currently, we are working on finishing a grant application for funds to build another storm water separator in Cedar Bluff, as well as rain gardens throughout the region. This winter there will be more River-Works programs with 6th and 7th graders in Tazewell County.

Also, the Roundtable wants you! Please contact us if interested in doing some volunteer work with the Roundtable. Projects can range from working with school groups, assisting in organizing events, writing local articles for



Sarah with teacher Steve Ahn at SOS event. newspapers about river news or meeting with local civic groups. The possibilities are open to raise awareness and reach out in our watershed! I'd like to end with a quote I found most enjoyable and nice to keep in mind. It comes from Frank A. Clark, a cartoonist of the 1960s. He said, "If you can find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere." While the path is not always easy, hopefully we still find the journey worthwhile.

Roundtable assistant educates youth, adults

My name is April Grace and I have been working with the Upper Tennessee River Roundtable since December 2009. My time at UTRR is spent mostly on Wednesdays; my other days are spent at Appalachian Sustainable Development as the Learning Landscapes Assistant. My work at ASD is funded through a generous grant from "The Raymon Grace Foundation." Through this grant I am able to contribute time to UTRR as well as ASD.

While working at UTRR I have been focusing on the mission by working to educate youth on water conservation and pollution prevention by speaking at environmental awareness events and to classes in local schools.

I have also spent time assisting with rain barrel and composting workshops for adults. I've also provided the public with information about UTRR at booths at fairs and festivals. Much of my time has been spent developing various lesson kits on water conservation and litter



April gives one of at least 12 presentations during the Russell County Natural Resources Festival. Photo courtesy of Angela White

prevention. Each lesson addresses various Standards of Learning and helps meet the Meaningful Watershed Experience requirements.

I have enjoyed working with UTRR very much and look forward to continuing for another year. During that year I hope to learn more about water and share my knowledge with as many people as possible.



Making rain barrels and planting a rain garden

Participants made rain barrels during a July Roundtable workshop at Hungry Mother State Park (left). Debbie Mullins (right) of the Norton Green Thumb Garden Club helped Guest River Restoration Project members and other volunteers plant a rain garden at Norton's Clear Creek Park outdoor classroom Oct. 22. The city completed excavation work. The Roundtable received grants from Virginia Environmental Endowment and Dominion Foundation to fund the project. The club also made a donation.

River Spotlight: Four Save-Our-Streams trainings conducted



Above, Cathy Landy (facing camera with cap) of Tennessee Valley Authority offers instruction on how to find the tiny bugs, or macroinvertebrates, that live on the bottom of stream beds. The types and quantities of insects found are an indicator of stream health. This Roundtable conducted the event at White's Mill as part of the Virginia Highlands Festival.



Above, Chip Sparks, Eddie Cumbow and Shelley Williams, all of the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality, help with the event. Dan Manweiler, third from left, also of DEQ, took photos for the festival. Chip and Eddie later went into a pond beyond the bridge seen above and got a sample there for folks to see. The Sept. 11 event was organized by several OSM/VISTA members. In spite of a heavy rain that Saturday, everyone enjoyed the morning learning from Martha Chapman of the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation about chemical, bacterial and biological (SOS) monitoring.



At top, Matthew Bowman, a student at Emory & Henry College works with Macy Leonard, a seventh grader from E.B. Stanley at a monitoring event held Sept. 11, also at White's Mill.

Middle photo above, Wendy Cheers (center) and Glenn Mooney (right) of St. Anne's Catholic School attended two teacher workshops organized by the Roundtable. At left is science teacher Patrick Cronce of Abingdon High School. The Roundtable is recruiting teachers to become certified. Three have passed the test.

Bottom photo above, Meg Short of the Holston River Soil and Water Conservation District leads a game for the children called "Incredible Journey" about how water travels through a watershed.