



# **SMITH RIVER TU NEWSLETTER**

Summer 2026

## **UPCOMING EVENTS**

- **June 4, June Regular Meeting.** Meeting will be held at Hugo's Restaurant 6:30pm. Krista Hodges, Dan River Basin Association's Education Director will discuss the Trout in the Classroom trout releases from this past spring. We will also discuss the chapter's 2026 events, membership and financial updates then end the meeting with a raffle. Jason Collins is the lead, [jaymcoll81@yahoo.com](mailto:jaymcoll81@yahoo.com)
- **June 13, Introduction to Fly Fishing.** King's Grant. King's Grant, 350 King's Way Rd, Martinsville, VA. We will cover flies, equipment, fly rods, fly casting, fishing, wading safety and knots. Lunch will be provided. Jason Collins is the lead, [jaymcoll81@yahoo.com](mailto:jaymcoll81@yahoo.com).
- **August 15, Trash Float. River/Road Clean Up.** Assemble 8:00 am at the Bassett Canoe Access, 271 Trent Hill Dr. (off Route 57 E. in Bassett) or at the Smith River Sports Complex. Lunch will be provided for those participating. Matt Tuggle is the lead. [matt.tuggle@henry.k12.va.us](mailto:matt.tuggle@henry.k12.va.us)
- **August 22, Smith River Fest, Smith River Sports Complex, Axton.** We will have a booth and talk to festival attendees about fly fishing, conservation, TU, casting instruction and also demonstrate fly tying. [Jaymcoll81@yahoo.com](mailto:Jaymcoll81@yahoo.com)

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## PRESIDENT'S CORNER



Greetings friends and members of Smith River Trout Unlimited,

Thanks to everyone that sent in volunteer hours. This helps inform TU National about all our events and volunteers that help throughout the year. The chapter has reported about the same amount of hours year over year since 2021.

While our busiest months seem to be April and May, we have several great events coming up, along with a new event on June 6 and a fly-tying series throughout the summer. If you have suggestions for a new event, cleanup or trip please let me know. I'm all ears.

Thanks, and I hope everyone has a great summer!

Jason Collins,

Smith River Trout Unlimited President

276-732-3361

Jaymcoll81@yahoo.com



## Recent Chapter Events

April 11<sup>th</sup> – Patrick County Kids' Fishing Day. Members of SRTU helped out at the 6<sup>th</sup> annual Kids Fishing Day on the Mayo River.



February 28<sup>th</sup> and April 25<sup>th</sup> River/Road Trash Clean ups. The SRTU crew has already met twice this year to clean up the roadsides and river banks around the Smith River. As always, lots of trash.





FILM NEGATIVE



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# INTRODUCTION TO FLY TYING

## FREE CLASS!

Join us at the Philpott Lake Visitor Center and learn to tie a different fly each class.

Classes are led by Smith River Trout Unlimited; all supplies are provided, and all are welcome!

Philpott Lake Visitor Center  
1058 Philpott Dam Road  
Bassett, VA 24055

June 25, 6 - 8 pm

July 23, 6 - 8 pm

July 25, 12 - 2 pm

August 27, 6 - 8 pm

August 29, 12 - 2 pm

Sept. 24, 6 - 8 pm



**Register now:**

276-629-2703...or just stop by!

# BLUE RIDGE HERITAGE 11<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL VETERAN'S FISHING DAY

On a beautiful Saturday in May dozens of veterans came out to the Blue Ridge Heritage Home just off the Blue Ridge Parkway in Floyd, Va for a day of fishing and camaraderie. Hosted by Blue Ridge Heritage, Inc, and joined by members of the Smith River TU chapter, the event has been held the weekend after Mother's Day for the past few years to great success.



With a pond stocked with rainbow trout, veterans were treated to a day of fishing



and a cookout lunch of hamburgers, hot dogs and multiple sides. Members of the Patrick County Fishing Team helped out throughout the day and served lunch to all attendees.



As the day came to a close, veterans went home with some great fish for dinner and even better memories.

# PENNSYLVANIA FISHING TRIP RECAP

By Danny Newman

Tucked away in the scenic hills of Pennsylvania, the Yellow Creek Trout Club Inc. provided the perfect backdrop for an unforgettable spring fly-fishing getaway in April for Danny Newman, Richard Prillaman, and Eric Tichay. Staying in the lodge on site, the group spent a day and a half fishing the beautiful waters of Yellow Creek, enjoying cool mornings, peaceful surroundings, and some of the best trout action of the season.



Yellow Creek is well known among fly fishermen for its carefully managed waters, which are stocked monthly with rainbow, golden, brown, and brook trout. The creek's series of small dams creates ideal holding areas for trout, making it especially suited for fly fishing. Although water levels were slightly low during the trip, the fishing proved to be outstanding from start to finish.

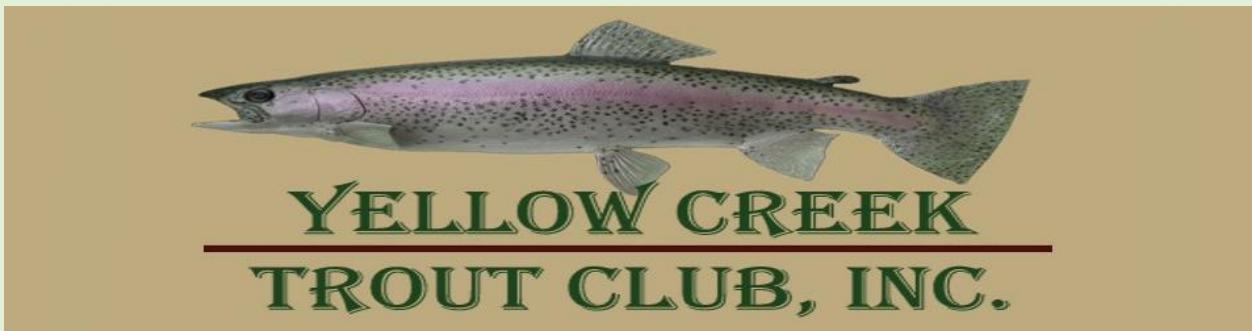
Over the course of the trip, the group caught and released more than 45 trout combined, with action nearly nonstop throughout the creek. The highlight came when Richard landed an impressive 27.5-inch rainbow trout weighing approximately 8 pounds — easily the trophy fish of the trip. Guiding Richard was experienced local guide Bobby Kish, whose knowledge of the water and techniques helped make the outing even more successful.



Between the steady fishing, comfortable lodge accommodations, and time spent sharing stories streamside, the trip became much more than just a fishing



excursion. For Danny, Richard, and Eric, it was a memorable few days of friendship, fly fishing, and appreciation for one of Pennsylvania's hidden trout fishing gems.



<https://yellowcreektroutinc.com>



## Every River Needs A Champion

Have you seen this message lately? Whether in an email from Trout Unlimited or on social media, “Every River Needs a Champion” is showing up everywhere. But what does it really mean, and why should we care?



The video above does a great job explaining why our rivers and streams need advocates now more than ever. Many people think of Trout Unlimited as a

fishing-focused organization—and that’s certainly part of who we are. Many of us first connected with Trout Unlimited through fishing. Maybe you attended a fly-fishing class, stopped by one of our casting demonstrations at a local event, or joined us on a weekend fishing trip with a friend.

But Trout Unlimited is more than a fishing club. We are advocates for clean water, healthy fisheries, and the protection of the rivers and streams that sustain our communities and natural spaces.

Today, those waters face increasing pressure from development, pollution, and declining support for public lands and conservation efforts. At the same time, people have more distractions competing for their attention than ever before. That’s why being a champion for our rivers matters.

Whether you’re a dedicated trout angler or simply someone who values clean water and healthy ecosystems, now is the time to get involved. By joining Trout Unlimited and supporting our conservation partners, you help protect the places we all depend on—today and for future generations.

Because every river truly does need a champion.

**EVERY RIVER NEEDS A  
CHAMPION**

# Virginia Trout Stream Barrier Survey (VTSBS) Training

By Eric Tichay

In partnership with the Dan River Basin Association, Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited (VCTU), VA Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR), and other partners, DRBA and SRTU

hosted stream barrier survey training on March 28, 2026, for 11 trainees.

Stream barriers are important to the health of our entire watershed and citizen stewardship. These barriers include culverts, bridges, and low-head dams that affect flood patterns and aquatic organism passage in local waterways.

Virginia's Wild Trout Management Plan, Issue 8: Connectivity, Goals 1 and 2, entails identifying fish passage barriers affecting wild trout populations and supporting efforts to remove or modify fish passage barriers on wild trout streams.

According to the National Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative's (NACC) Barrier Inventory and Prioritization Tool, Virginia has 146,950 road/stream crossings. So far, only 3% or 4,408 of all crossings were surveyed! Of the surveyed crossing, 1,079 were identified as barriers.

The classroom training was held at Patrick Henry Community College and field training was held on and near Reynolds Homestead, Critz. Training was instructed by Tom Benzing, Virginia Trout Stream Barrier Survey (VTSBS) Coordinator, VCTU.

Trainees that completed the training were certified to conduct and report stream barrier surveys in the Southeast Stream Crossing Form (Survey 123). This data is then recorded in the NACC stream barrier inventory database on behalf of DWR.

Training consisted of the following steps:

Before the in-person class and field training:

- Download ArcGIS "Survey 123" app onto phone or tablet
- Apply to be a Virginia DWR Volunteer
- Sign up for the Brook Trout Fish Passage Project Training
- Watch the training webinar listed on the project training page
- Register for the Brook Trout Passage In-Person Training

- View online training: Bankfull Stage Determination in the Eastern U.S.
- Skim the instruction guide for conducting SARP surveys

In-person classroom and field training 8:00 am to 5:00 pm:

- Classroom presentation
- The National Aquatic Connectivity Collaborative's (NACC) Barrier Inventory and Prioritization Tool
- Equipment to conduct barrier surveys
- DWR Volunteer portal and the statewide Brook Trout Fish Passage Project
- Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) Standardized Culvert Assessment Protocol
- Southeast Stream Crossing Form (Survey 123)
- Travel to Reynolds Homestead, Critz to conduct stream barrier surveys
- Travel outside Reynolds Homestead sites to conduct three additional barrier surveys on Mill Creek

The next Virginia Trout Stream Barrier Survey training session will be held in the fall 2026. The date will be announced.



Group photo on a bridge in Reynolds Homestead. Photo by Anna Wheeler.



Culverts that empty into Mill Creek near Reynolds Mill.  
Photo by Anna Wheeler.

# INTRODUCTION TO FLY FISHING



## Free Class Open to All

Come learn the basics of fly fishing from local members of Trout Unlimited.

### Class includes:

- Introduction to Fly Fishing Equipment
- Insect basics and fly imitations.
- Safety
- Includes fly rod casting instruction and hands on practice.
- Includes lunch!!

Contact Jason Collins to reserve your spot today.

Ph: 276-732-3361

Email: [jaymcol81@yahoo.com](mailto:jaymcol81@yahoo.com)



**June 13, 2026**



**10:00AM–2:00PM**



**350 King's Way Rd, Martinsville, VA 24112**

**SMITH RIVER TROUT UNLIMITED**  
[Smithriver.tu.org](http://Smithriver.tu.org)



## COMMUNITY CORNER

Have an interesting article, fishing trip photo or some fishing tips you want to share in the newsletter? Please email us at [smithrivertusec@yahoo.com](mailto:smithrivertusec@yahoo.com). We'd love to hear from you.



For a fly fishing guide on the Smith give Matt a call.

Lucky Strips Fly Co.

[www.luckystripsflyco.com](http://www.luckystripsflyco.com)

276-732-0517

Smith River, Va



Interested in fishing on the Smith but aren't sure where the best spots are? Are they biting on dry flies or nymphs? Call Smith River Outfitters and schedule a full or half day trip.



Smith River Chapter

Trout Unlimited

[Smithriver.tu.org](http://Smithriver.tu.org)

Visit our Facebook group where we share event announcements and photos.  
<http://www.facebook.com/SmithRiverTU>



For story suggestions or to share photos from your recent fishing trips please contact us at [smithriverchapter@tu.org](mailto:smithriverchapter@tu.org)

## Smith River TU Chapter Officers

Chapter President – Jason Collins ([jaymcol81@yahoo.com](mailto:jaymcol81@yahoo.com))

Chapter Vice President Thomas Barbee ([tbarbee517@yahoo.com](mailto:tbarbee517@yahoo.com))

Chapter Secretary – Jeff Deering ([jdeer76@yahoo.com](mailto:jdeer76@yahoo.com))

Treasurer – Eric Tichay ([erictichay@yahoo.com](mailto:erictichay@yahoo.com))

### Board Members

Roy Ford

Al Kittredge

Matt Tuggle

Membership Chair Danny Newman