

Tuck Tales



<http://www.smokyonthefly.com/tucktu/>



April 2004

Tuckasee Chapter #373 of Trout Unlimited

Vol. 6 No.4

April Meeting

The Tuckasee Chapter of Trout Unlimited will hold its regular monthly membership meeting on Tuesday, April 6, at 6:30 PM at the United Carolina Community Bank located on highway 107 south in Sylva. The meeting room is at the rear of the building.

This is one you will not want to miss! Willie and Ernie are going to do a casting clinic. Willie asks that you please bring your rod and reel to the meeting so you can practice along with him and Ernie. Daylight Savings Time will be in effect so we should have plenty of light.

Members and other concerned persons are cordially invited to attend our meeting. The Tuckasee Chapter is made up of members from Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain counties.

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TU Urges Support for EPA SO₂, NO_x Rule, but Opposes New EPA Mercury Rule

In December 2003 the Environmental Protection Agency announced two proposed Clean Air Act rules governing coal-burning power plants, one related to sulfur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (SO₂ and NO_x) and one related to mercury.

TU supports the SO₂ and NO_x rules, because they would reduce the pollutants that cause acid rain. TU urges you to file comments in support of that rule with EPA by March 30.

TU opposes the mercury rule. Although the rule would require reductions in mercury emissions, those reductions are far less than the Clean Air Act legally requires for this toxic pollutant. TU also urges you to file comments opposing this proposed rule by March 30.

Support the Interstate Air Quality Rule for SO₂ and NO_x, and urge EPA to require even deeper cuts in these pollutants.

In December EPA announced a new proposed "Interstate Air Quality Rule" that would reduce emissions of sulfur dioxide (SO₂) and nitrogen oxides (NO_x) from coal-fired power plants. The rules are designed to meet new air quality standards for ozone and fine particulate pollution, which are primarily caused by emissions of SO₂ and NO_x, the same pollutants that cause acid rain. Reductions of both pollutants under the rule would provide significant relief from the effects of acid rain on streams and lakes in the Appalachian mountains.

TU National believes that the quickest and surest way to reduce both SO₂ and NO_x emissions would be to amend the Clean Air Act to impose tighter caps on emissions of both pollutants from power plants. However, bills that would do this have been stalled in Congress, and the proposed interstate rule provides a viable route for reducing the pollutants that cause acid rain in the absence of congressional action.

The rule for SO₂, which causes particulate pollution and is the primary driver of stream and lake acidification in most of the East, would build on the success of the cap-and-trade program for SO₂ passed by Congress in 1990. SO₂ emissions from power plants in the East will be cut 50 percent from 2002 levels by 2010 and by 71 percent by 2015. The ultimate cap on SO₂ will be 3.1 million tons annually, compared to the 9.8 million ton cap that is to be implemented by 2010 under the current Clean Air Act.

The rule for NOx will build on a cap-and-trade program for the East, scheduled to take effect in 2004, that is designed to control summer ozone pollution. The new rule would implement similar NOx cuts, but on a year-round basis, helping to reduce the acidifying effects of fall, winter and spring NOx pollution. The new rule would ultimately require a 65 percent cut in NOx emissions from current levels by 2015. Both the SO2 and NOx programs would be implemented by individual state implementation plans (or SIPs) that EPA will require after the new rule is finalized. The rule would require the SIPs to impose specific emissions caps on individual power plants, and would allow the states to opt into a region-wide cap-and-trade program.

A number of recent studies have shown that cuts of the magnitude required by the rule will have significant benefits for lakes and streams in the East currently threatened by acid rain. A 1998 TU study modeled the effects of cuts of approximately this magnitude and predicted that such cuts would significantly reduce the number of streams in Virginia that will ultimately succumb to acid rain (reducing the loss of streams from 22 percent to 6 percent). In New York, estimates show that reductions of this magnitude will promote the recovery of many lakes. EPA modeling estimates that the number of acidic lakes in the East will drop from six percent to one percent by 2030 if these cuts take effect.

Although the cuts provided by the rule will provide considerable benefits, TU believes that deeper cuts are possible and would provide a greater margin for safety in meeting air quality standards and stopping acid rain. TU will urge EPA to reduce the ultimate SO2 cap to 2.5 million tons a year by 2013, and under no circumstances to allow for a higher cap of either SO2 or NOx under the final rule.



TU Opposes Mercury Rule

At the same time EPA published the proposed air quality rule for SO2 and NOx, it published a rule for the future regulation of mercury emissions. EPA's regulation of mercury has been the subject of constant litigation for the last 10 years. In part prompted by that litigation, EPA made a finding that, because of mercury's toxicity, emissions from power plants should be regulated under a program known as MACT (Maximum Available Control Technology). The MACT program would require all power plants to reduce mercury emissions to the level that is achievable using the best available modern technology. The preferred approach proposed by EPA in December would reverse the 2000 finding, take mercury out of the MACT program, and implement a cap-and-trade program for mercury (which would be prohibited under the 2000 finding because of mercury's toxicity). An alternative approach proposed by EPA would keep mercury in the MACT program, but with emissions standards that are weaker than what is achievable.

Coal-burning power plants are the one of the largest source of mercury emissions, emitting 48 tons of mercury, 42 percent of all emissions, annually. They are the only source of mercury emissions that is not currently regulated under the Clean Air Act. Mercury pollution has become a significant threat to public health and to recreational fishing. Forty-two states have some kind of fish consumption advisory caused by mercury pollution, and 19 states have such advisories applicable to all of their freshwater lakes and rivers.

Estimates illustrate that applying the best available technology to coal-fired plants could reduce their mercury emissions by up to 90 percent. EPA's proposals fall far short of this potential. Its first proposal would rescind the MACT requirement, and move mercury into the NSPS program (new source performance standard) under section 111 of the Clean Air Act. The rule would set up a cap-and-trade program under that provision with a 34-ton cap required by 2010 and a 15-ton cap by 2018. As an alternative, EPA has also proposed a MACT standard that would only cut power plant emissions of mercury to 30-34 tons by 2010. Deeper cuts, imposed sooner, are both feasible and needed to protect human health and the health of our waterways.

What You Can Do

TU urges you to file comments supporting the SO2 and NOx rules, but urging even deeper cuts in SO2. We also urge you to file separate comments opposing the new mercury rule. In your comments on the mercury rule, urge EPA to adopt a strong and meaningful MACT standard that would achieve the greatest feasible reductions in mercury. Contact by snail mail or web:

Environmental Protection Agency
Ariel Rios Building
1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W.
Washington, DC 20460

http://cascade.epa.gov/RightSite/dk_public_collection_detail.htm?ObjectType=dk_docket_collection&cid=OAR-20030053&ShowList=items&Action=view

http://cascade.epa.gov/RightSite/dk_public_collection_detail.htm?ObjectType=dk_docket_collection&cid=OAR-2002-0056&ShowList=items&Action=view

Bear Creek Project Conclusions

The bear Creek fishing project gave Great Smoky Mountains fishery biologists additional information on the effects of no limit angling on rainbow trout populations over a one-week period. Populations were reduced by 16% in Bear Creek while rainbow trout populations were reduced by 40% in Sams Creek and by 50% in Lynn Camp Prong. However, in all three projects, the majority of the fish around 4 - 5 inches were not harvested. Most of the people who fished Bear Creek were from either North Carolina or Tennessee and non local anglers did not catch any fish.

Information from this project, along with information from Sams Creek and Lynn Camp Prong, help show that fishing alone cannot remove rainbow trout from a stream. Data indicate that only the larger fish were removed from the population and most of the smaller fish remained in the stream.

We feel that the Bear Creek fishing project was a success because of the information that we gained and the information that we were able to provide. It gave us a chance to talk to people about the Great Smoky Mountains National Park fishery program and about the antimycin treatment that followed the fishing project. The Great Smoky Mountains national Park fisheries program is committed to restoring brook trout, in select streams, back to their original range, reopening brook trout fishing in those streams, and eventually, reopening brook trout fishing across the Park.

Steve Moore
 Matt Kulp
 John Hammonds



April Hatches

Hatches this month are numerous and include:

Midge (Chironomidae)	all month
Quill Gordon (E. pleuralis)	1st half of month
Blue Wing Olive (B. vagans)	all month
Little Black Caddis (C. aterrima)	all month
Hendrickson (E. subvaria)	all month
March Brown (S. vicarium)	last 3rd of month
Large sulphur (E. invaria)	last 3rd of month

Upcoming Events/Projects

Saturday, April 3

Sparkle Day

Great Smoky Mountains National Park
 Friends of the Smokies and Trout Unlimited invite everyone to meet at 9:00AM at the Oconaluftee Visitor's Center to participate in a cleanup along highway 441 on the North Carolina side of the Park.

Saturday, April 17

Annual Tuckasegee River Cleanup

The Tuckasegee Chapter of Trout Unlimited will participate by picking up trash on both sides of the Tuckasegee River on the original Delayed Harvest section between Jack the Dipper Ice Cream and the Webster bridge.
 Meet at 8:00AM at the pull-off just below Jack the Dipper.
 Bring gloves and waterproof boots.



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NEWSLETTER OF THE TUCKASEEGEE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED
Serving Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain Counties