

Tuck Tales



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



March 2003

Tuckaseegee Chapter #373 of Trout Unlimited

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Next Month's Meeting

The Tuckaseegee Chapter of Trout Unlimited will hold its next regular monthly membership meeting on Tuesday, March 4, at 6:30 PM at the United Community Bank located on highway 107 south in Sylva. The meeting room is at the rear of the building.

The program for the March meeting will be a presentation by Steve Moore, fisheries biologist with the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Steve will discuss the brook trout restoration project planned for Bear creek, the first major tributary on the left side of Forney creek heading upstream from Fontana lake.

The Tuckaseegee Chapter has agreed to assist with this project both monetarily and with manpower. The project will be very similar to the Sams creek brook trout restoration project that was conducted by Steve on the Tennessee side of the park. Bear creek has been determined to be suitable for such a project for several reasons, but primarily due to the fact that it is a low elevation stream.

This will probably be one of the most important projects our chapter has participated in to date. Every member of the chapter should make an effort to participate in this project.

Tuck Tales is published twelve times per year by Tuckaseegee Chapter of Trout Unlimited, a non-profit organization, for its members and supporters. Edited by Craig Forrest.

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The Tuckaseegee Chapter has a web presence at:
<http://www.smokyonthefly.com/tucktu/>

Last Month's Meeting

Our program for last month's meeting was provided by personnel from the Great Smoky Mountains National Park involved with working toward a settlement of the 1943 agreement between the US government and Swain County.

The Park Service has been ordered by the Bush Administration to reach a settlement of this issue one way or another. In the past the Park Service has been opposed to the construction of a road due to environmental concerns. The primary concern being deposits of Anakeesta rock which when disturbed have been know to cause harm to fish and other animals in streams. An example would be the Beech Flats section of the park.

There are several possible conclusions to this controversy according to the presentation.



- No Action
- Build the proposed Two-Lane Road
- Cash Settlement to Swain County
- Build a Low-Standard Road
- Construct a Laurel Branch Picnic Area at the Terminus of the Tunnel
- Extend the Road and Develop a Recreation Facility

The Tuckaseegee Chapter has passed a resolution in opposition to the extension of the North Shore Road. As yet, neither State Council nor TU National have expressed an opinion on this issue.

President's Message

In February, the Chapter heard about the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) process for the long promised North Shore Road within the Great Smoky Mountains National Park from NPS Officials. They emphasized the importance for us collectively, and individually, to become involved in that process and participate. **If you don't participate in anything else our Chapter does, you should get involved in this!**

You may wonder why this issue is of importance to our Chapter? Simply put, completion of the North Shore Road would bisect the largest remaining roadless tract in the Southeastern US, impacting three major wild trout fisheries and threatening significant ecological damage to the Park.

Our Chapter is on record in opposition to the completion of that environmental disaster and financial boondoggle. But that was just the initial step. This may well be a long protracted process, which will require diligence and tenacity on our part. After all, those supporting the road have been pursuing that objective for over 60 years; a few more won't make any difference to them. Your first opportunity to weigh in will be the public scoping hearings on the EIS on March 10th and 11th in Bryson City and Asheville respectively. I expect several members will be attending one or both meetings and I encourage you to join us! A car pool will be organized for anyone interested in going, an announcement on place and time to meet will be made at our March meeting.

Good news came out of Swain County about the Road on 2/11/03, when the Swain County Commissioners voted 4-1 in favor of a cash settlement instead of construction of the Road. This is a turnabout in the Board's position and could lead to a more expedient settlement of the issue at a fraction of the estimated financial and environmental costs of construction. Now, if only our elected politicians will actually listen to the public and finally settle this, saving us all both time and money! But don't count on it; we cannot take anything for granted in protecting this national treasure. **Remember, numbers do count!**

FERC Update

by Steve Yurkovich

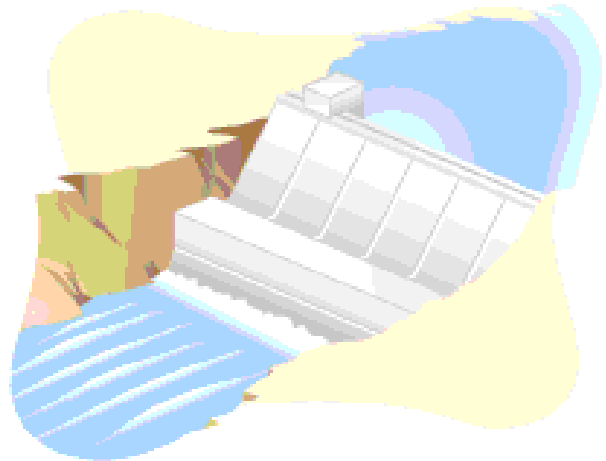
After telling you in the November newsletter that everything was ready for negotiations the proceedings have come to a screeching halt. There were no Stakeholder Team meetings in December and January because the Duke scientists had not collected and analyzed the necessary baseline data.

The February meeting saw the presentation of the lake shore habitat protection plan and lake use restriction plans (on all the Duke Power-Nantahala Region lakes). Perhaps the most controversial part of the lake use plan was granting an exception to the homeowners on Lakes Glenville and Nantahala to allow them to construct piers in wetlands areas. In addition, Duke provided information on the Recreation Use and Needs study. They outlined their proposed upgrades to lake facilities and to downstream users. Access sites under consideration for development or upgrading along the Tuck include locations near the confluence of the east and west forks, at the Jackson County Recreation Park in East Laporte, at the Cullowhee Dam, downstream from Jack-the-Dippers, at Dillsboro Dam if it is not removed, at Barkers Creek, and another site downstream from Barkers Creek. Duke suggested that if they could obtain permissions from landowners that these would be developed to allow put-ins and take-outs for boaters. Many of the property owners have already been contacted and access was being discussed with them. **Thanks to all of you who provided input to me for this study!**

Time is quickly running out for Duke to submit applications to FERC for relicensing. Since the data is dribbling in at the last

moment Duke will submit two packages to FERC: The run-of-river relicensing applications (Dillsboro, Mission, etc.) are due June 30 and the upstream dams applications are due January 31, 2004. We received the preliminary application materials (two huge boxes full of stuff!) for run-of-river projects this week. View those at:

<http://www.nantahalapower.com/relicensing/hydro.htm>. The Stakeholders Teams along with Duke agreed that all negotiations will be completed by May 30, 2003 for all projects to allow



time for the writing and review of applications. To that end five meetings have been set up with each of the Stakeholders Teams (Nantahala and Tuckaseegee) as well as several joint meetings to resolve common issues among the various dam projects.

At the next meeting I expect to see information on proposed minimum flows, bypass flows, and discussions on the proposed removal of the Dillsboro Dam. If you have input please contact me.

WNC Alliance Presents Great Smokies Film and Fundraiser Event at WCU

March 27th (7PM) at the Mt. Heritage Center

The Western N. Carolina Alliance celebrates over 20 years of grassroots environmental activism with a presentation on the "Great Smokies National Park: Past and Present," including a showing of the film "The Mystery of George Masa" at Western Carolina University's Mountain Heritage Center on Thursday, March 27 at 7 PM. Admission to the film is \$10; there is no charge to members of the WNC Alliance.

"The Great Smokies: Past and Present" includes a showing of Paul Bonesteel's documentary film on Masahara Iizuka's (George Masa) pioneering photography of the Smokies in the 1920/30's. George Masa is often referred to as the Ansel Adams of the Southern Appalachian mountains. Paul Bonesteel, filmmaker, will also be present. This program also includes a current update on critical issues facing the Smokies by Greg Kidd, S.E. Associate Director for the National Parks Conservation Association.

Upcoming Projects

Assist NC WRC with the Delayed Harvest Stocking 10:30AM Wednesday March 5th

March 15th - Oconaluftee River Cleanup - Meet at Collins Creek Picnic Area 9:00AM

Tuckaseegee River Cleanup April 26th 8:00AM

Ducks on The Tuck at 3:00PM April 26th

Bear Creek Brook Trout Restoration - GSMNP - September 6th - 13th

Cataloochee Stream Monitoring - October 9th - 11th



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Special thanks to Chapter Member Steve Gray for having his company print and fold our newsletter!

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NEWSLETTER OF THE TUCKASEIGEE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED
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