

Tuck Tales



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



January/February 2005

Tuckasee Chapter #373 of Trout Unlimited

Vol. 7 No. 8

Next Meeting Date Change!!!

The Tuckasee Chapter of Trout Unlimited will hold its next regular monthly membership meeting on **WEDNESDAY** (instead of Tuesday), January 5, at 6:30 PM at the United Carolina Community Bank located on highway 107 south in Sylva due to a conflict with scheduling. The meeting room is at the rear of the building.

Our program will be a fly tying demonstration by fellow chapter member Willie Cope. Be sure to read Willie's article on *Winter Fishing in the Smokies* in this issue of *Tuck Tales*.

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

Tuck Tales is published six times per year by Tuckasee Chapter of Trout Unlimited, a nonprofit organization, for its members and supporters.

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Statement By TU Vice President Chris Wood On New Forest Service Planning Regulations

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE DECEMBER 22, 2004

Contact: Chris Wood, TU VP for Conservation Programs, 304.492.4115

WASHINGTON -- The USDA Forest Service today released new planning regulations that govern management of 191 million acres of National Forests -- about 8 percent of the U.S. land-base. These regulations replace more protective measures that were developed over seven years and finalized in 2000, but never implemented by the Bush administration.

The new planning regulations offer little in the way of planning and nothing in the way of regulation. The two most notable changes in the government's new approach are the diminishment of protections for imperiled fish and wildlife, and the potential for dramatically reducing requirements for environmental analysis and public comment on Forest Service timber, mining, grazing and off-road vehicle usage of National Forests.

Forest planning regulations are essentially zoning requirements. They govern activities ranging from timber harvest and road construction, off-road vehicle use, grazing, recreation and water developments on National Forests. They are the most significant expression of the government's trust responsibilities to manage public lands and waters in an ecologically sustainable manner for the American people.

More than 25 trout, salmon and steelhead that are listed for protection under the Endangered Species Act depend on habitat provided by Forest Service lands and waters. Diminishing the requirement to maintain viable populations of these species within forest borders is of grave concern to Trout Unlimited and its 135,000 members. Also of grave concern is the likelihood that these changes will reduce public input on hunting and fishing opportunities on public lands.

We are also deeply concerned by the proposal to exempt forest planning from the environmental analysis and public involvement requirements of the National

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Environmental Policy Act (through “categorical exclusions”). While few would defend the bureaucracy and red-tape inherent in existing forest plans, we are deeply concerned that this proposal continues a recent trend of the government shutting off avenues for public involvement in management of public lands and waters.

Each of Trout Unlimited’s more than 450 chapters on average spends more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time and labor working to improve fish and wildlife habitat, including on National Forests. The government should be seeking ways to improve public access to public land management, not closing the few opportunities that remain.

For this new approach to have any success in protecting fish and wildlife habitat, and drinking water, the Forest Service will require dramatic increases in funding for its fish and wildlife and monitoring programs. Funding for these programs has been in decline in recent years.

Trout Unlimited is North America’s leading coldwater fisheries conservation organization, dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. The organization has more than 135,000 members in 450 chapters in North America.



Chapter Officers Elected for 2005 at December Meeting

The Tuckasegee Chapter, at its regular meeting in December, elected officers for the year 2005. Richard Morgan of Waynesville was elected Chapter President. Vice President will be Delos Monteith of Sylva. Secretary/Treasurer is Ernie Sipler of Cullowhee. Directors are; Milt Wofford, Larry Tucker, Mike Lackey (past president), all of Sylva and Richard Echelman of Webster. Also from Sylva is Webmaster Willie Cope. Newsletter Editor is Craig Forrest of Cullowhee.



In other action, the chapter elected to go to a bimonthly newsletter. The decision to do this was an economic one. The primary cost to the chapter for the newsletter is of course postage. With around 150 members and others on the mailing list, our postage costs are a large percentage of what we spend during the year as a chapter. The printing is graciously donated by chapter member Steve Gray through his Sylva Herald newspaper. With the savings realized with this change the chapter will be able to fund the cost of sending a student from one of the high schools in our service area to the third annual N.C.T.U. Rivercourse: Coldwater Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp. This year’s camp will be held the week of June 12 - 17, 2005 at Lake Logan Center near Canton.

All members with Internet access are encouraged to decline the snail-mail newsletter and opt to be notified via e-mail when the pdf version of the newsletter is available for download from the chapter’s web site. This can save the chapter a tremendous amount of expense and provide you with a version of *Tuck Tales* in color. In order to sign up simply e-mail your

editor at:

craigforrest@sleepyhollowstudio.com

You will be added to the e-mail notification list and will no longer receive a physical copy of the newsletter. We understand that everyone doesn’t have Internet access and some members will need to continue receiving their newsletter through the mail. That’s fine. But for those who do have Internet access, please do your chapter a favor and sign up for the pdf notification. **Do it today!**

Our program was provided by Matt Kulp of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Matt gave an interesting presentation on fishing in the park; past, present and future. He also provided information about populations of the fish in the park, their survival rates and the effects of certain environmental pressures on fish populations. This was a brand new program just recently put together by Matt and his staff and was very informative.

Tips on Winter Fishing in the Smokies

Yes, it's cold outside. For most the best thing to do would be to cozy up to a nice warm fire and watch a favorite show. For the restless one might get the fly tying stuff in order and prepare to begin tying patterns for the spring season when the temps are warmer and the fish more cooperative. Without something to do to pacify the soul of an individual who truly loves the outdoors, cabin fever can drive you crazy. The cure for this would be to get out and do some fishing for those bigger trout during the milder afternoons. In the southeast we may get some chilly weather but it usually doesn't last longer than a few days at a clip. When the warmer afternoons are upon us is usually the best time to go. Although on a still day when the snow is falling gently it is hard to not be on the river enjoying the beautiful surroundings and thinking what could be better than this.

These winter months are when the trout are packed full of energy. How is this?

The fish's metabolism has slowed down quite a bit from what it was during the spring through fall season. They are not as actively seeking food as during the prime warmer season. Hence the term lethargic. In this state of laziness the fish is sitting on the bottom expending as little energy as possible. (*This is why winter caught fish can put up quite a fight when hooked*). They will eat whatever comes along through their path but won't usually move more than foot or less on either side to do it. On a milder afternoon from around 11 am to 3 pm is the best part of the day to be out on the water. Here it is important to catch the sun. When the sun is gone so is the fishing. The best way to take advantage of this is to carry a small thermometer of some type that you can use to measure the water temperature. A real streamside thermometer, a food/kitchen or HVAC thermometers all work well. I use a HVAC thermometer and they are relatively inexpensive costing only a few dollars. You are looking for water around 40 degrees Fahrenheit. When the sun gets on the water there is solar or radial warming begin to take effect and the fish respond accordingly. A degree or more rise in water temp is all it takes to get the fish looking around for food. They gotta eat. No hibernation for trout!

The techniques involved in a successful outing for winter trout are what keeps most from going astream (*Nymph Fishing*). To begin with you will need an arsenal of nymphs and a pretty decent weight rod. A five or six weight 8 to 9 ft in length would be a good choice. You want a rod with enough back bone to pitch your weighted offerings. Leader setup is your next important choice. I have seen too many times when anglers try to cast too long a leader - more than they can handle! Where it would be more beneficial for them if they were to shorten it up a bit. Leaders from 5 to 8 ft in length are often all you will need in these parts. The important thing is what you put on the end of your leader and the size of your tippet. Smaller diameter tippet sinks quicker. You want to put your offering on or very near the bottom structure. Your old dry fly leaders would be great to rebuild for this type of rigging. You could utilize say the 2 1/2 to 3 foot section of the butt end, then add a section of 8 lb. test (3x) around 1 - 1 1/2 ft. then another section of 6 lb. test or (4x) tippet about another 1 - 1 1/2 ft. At this point you need to decide whether you are fishing one nymph or two. If you are only fishing one then add another 12 - 16 inches of 5x tippet. You may then place an appropriate amount of split shot 6 - 10 inches above your offering, add a strike indicator and you are set. For those wishing to fish 2 flies, tie on the first one at the end of the 4x junction then tie a length of 5x tippet about 12 - 16 inches and tie on your second offering. With the two fly rig you need to decide where to put your split shot. It is common for most to put the shot about 6 - 10 inches above the first fly. However you may add the split shot in between the 2 flies if you plan to suspend your offerings. I usually do this last method. I like enough weight that I tick the bottom and use a strike indicator so that I can readily make adjustments in depth.



Where to catch em?

I usually look for some good structure with some depth. And start by methodically covering the water. The key here is to know when you are getting a good drift. With some practice you can learn to read the signs of a good drift. In other words, if your indicator is going "*Mach 2*" your flies pretty much are as well. The more hang time you get in a run the better your flies are covering the bottom and giving that sluggish fish a chance to hit your offering assuming that you have put on a large enough split shot. (*Just enough weight and you will tick bottom occasionally - too much weight and you will constantly snag the bottom.*)

Now we are into fish! Don't be disappointed that you will miss many. Usually the takes are light. A good rule of thumb is to set the hook whenever the drift looks funny, hesitates, or does anything unusual. At this point most anglers SET! - especially when the guide SAY'S, "SET!" Then they continue to lift the flies out of the water and recast to the same or next slot over. I recommend just a swift, light lift - just enough to drive the hook through. But instantly drop the rod tip if nobody is home. This technique enables me to continue my drift and the flies are not very far up in the water column to resume the drift.

With some or a lot of practice, knowing the guys in Tuckasegee chapter (a lot), you can be enjoying some great mountain trout fishing without the crowds of tourist season.

There are many more techniques and variances to the ones mentioned above. I'm trying to keep this sorta of short and not a novel length instructional. There should be enough information here to get you started on the learning curve of the art of Nymph fishing the Smokies.



I will be doing the program on fly tying this month and will, if any one wishes, address some of the above discussed methods or any variances of these that you may wish to talk about.

Till the next cast Big Browns, lost flies, broken tippets and slippery rocks.....

Willie Cope.

Commission Schedules Public Hearings On Proposed Regulations Changes

RALEIGH, N.C. (Nov. 17, 2004) – The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will hold its annual public hearings at nine locations across the state beginning Jan. 11. During each hearing, Wildlife Commission biologists will explain proposed changes to the state's hunting, fishing and trapping regulations.

How to participate...

Comments must be received by February 1, 2005.

- Attend a public hearing
- Submit comments online
- Send written comments to:

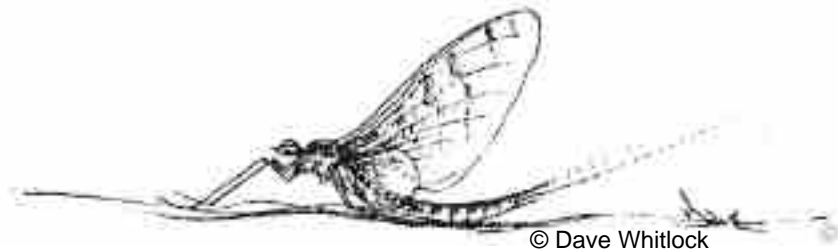
NCWRC
1701 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1701
(Please include your full name and address.)

The public can ask questions about the proposals or provide comments on a variety of wildlife-related topics. Remarks from these hearings will be forwarded to the Commissioners for review before they vote on the changes in March. Approved proposals will take effect during the 2005-2006 hunting, fishing and trapping seasons, which begin July 1.

“We always look forward to hearing directly from anglers, hunters and trappers,” said John Pechmann, chairman of the Wildlife Commission. “Using input and suggestions from the public, we intend to provide the best possible fish and wildlife programs today and in the future.”

Among the proposed changes to the regulations are: establishing a youth hunt day for turkey on the Saturday preceding the current spring turkey season on private lands statewide; establishing disease-testing requirements to import waterfowl into North Carolina; reclassifying several mountain trout waters; and prohibiting the stocking of fishes, mollusks and crustaceans into inland fishing waters without a permit from the Commission.

Submit your comments in person at the public hearings or in writing to 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N.C. 27699-1701. You also can submit comments online via the link at: <http://www.ncwildlife.org/>



North Shore Road Meeting Dates Set

Contact

Bob Miller, (865) 436-1207

Managers at Great Smoky Mountains National Park have set the next round of five meetings for February-March 2005 to discuss the future of the proposed North Shore Road through the Swain County, NC portion of the park. The upcoming meetings are the next milestone in the park's development of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement which is due out by the fall of 2005.

Since the last series of public workshops in February and March 2004 a team of specialists have completed extensive surveys and studies to identify the natural or cultural resources that might be affected by one or more of the five alternative actions being considered. At the next meetings set for February/March 2005 the park and its consultants will present an impact analysis of each alternative along with the estimated economic impacts and construction costs of each action.

Park Superintendent Dale Ditmanson said, "We are now at the point in the decision-making process where we can compare the pros and cons of each of various actions based upon concrete and factual information. So, we are looking forward to having an informed discussion of the action alternatives."


The five alternatives which the park is evaluating as possible resolutions of the 1943 Agreement include: 1) No Action (i.e., no road – no resolution), 2) a monetary settlement agreement to replace the 1943 Agreement, 3) construction of a picnic area and exhibits near the end of the current road at Laurel Branch, 4) constructing 7 miles of new road to terminate at a recreational and educational facility along Fontana Lake at Bushnell, and 5) building 29 to 38 miles of new road along a North Shore Corridor as called for by the 1943 Agreement.

National Park Service will use a combination of the resource and cost information and public input to develop a preferred alternative which will be presented for public review in the form of a Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS). A final series of public hearings will follow the release of the DEIS. Once the DEIS is released full completion of the decision process is expected to take an additional 12 to 16 months.

The upcoming meetings will be held in Bryson City, Robbinsville, and Asheville, North Carolina and in Knoxville and Gatlinburg, Tennessee. Information and comments on the North Shore Road decision process is available at: www.NorthShoreRoad.info. Written comments may be sent to: North Shore Road Project, PO Box 30185, Raleigh, NC 27622.



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Special thanks to Chapter
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