



# Tennessee Council Trout Unlimited

Chair, Ryan Turgeon, [ryanturgeon76@yahoo.com](mailto:ryanturgeon76@yahoo.com)

Vice Chair, t.b.d.

Secretary, Bill Watkins, [billwatkinsca@gmail.com](mailto:billwatkinsca@gmail.com)

Treasurer, t.b.d.

National Leadership Council, Mark Spangler, [Mspangl82@gmail.com](mailto:Mspangl82@gmail.com)

## TU/TVA Coldwater Meeting

Saturday, January 28, 2023

Tennessee Aquarium Conservation Institute  
175 Baylor School Road, Chattanooga, TN 37405

### Coldwater Meeting – Summary of Updates by Cooperating agencies:

#### Great Smokey Mountains National Park – Caleb Abramson

- The park fisheries staff have been concentrating on completing fish distribution studies, with a goal of mapping all the park by 2030. 29 of 38 watersheds have been surveyed since 1993, with 82% of all waters surveyed.

#### TWRA Region IV – Jim Habera

- TWRA has been concentrating on brook trout restoration in Region IV. The 2017 brook trout plan called for 21 to 24 km. Restored by 2027. Currently 16 km. have been restored. There are 80 native brook trout populations in Region IV.
- A 4-year study of rainbow trout in the Norris tailwater has shown substantial natural reproduction. A possible explanation is that the slot limit established several years ago has resulted in three times the number of spawning sized fish, establishing a critical mass. Studies in the Patrick Henry tailwater have shown that larger fish survive stocking best, and achieve one inch growth per month. These results will affect the policy of stocking lots of fingerlings in both rivers.
- The half-mile Boone tailwater has all five trout species stocked in TN, and they have very high growth rates.
- 2023 stocking – cutthroats in Boone tailwater; no brookies available; no fingerling rainbows in South Holston or Watauga until 2027; there is no shortage of adult rainbows, and a small surplus of stockable browns.

#### TWRA Region III – Justin Spaulding

- TWRA is concentrating on SABT restoration in the Tellico/Citico areas.
- There are 77.3 miles of wild trout in the south zone, including 89 miles of SABT and 6 miles of northern strain brook trout.
- The Caney Fork water control manual update is hoped to improve the trout fishery.
- Currently studying striper effects on trout fisheries. One mitigation is to stock when and where stripers are absent.

#### Army Corps of Engineers – Anthony Rodino, Nashville Water Coordination

- 98% of the COE employees are civilians, but the Nashville area is commanded by an US Army Lt. Col., and all COE operations are ultimately controlled by the army. COE operations were established before conservation priorities were established, so updating procedures can be a challenge.
- Auto-venting turbines have been installed in Center Hill dam to improve dissolved oxygen in the water release.



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- Water date (including d.o.) is available on COE and EPA websites.
- The Center Hill Water Control Manual (current version from 1998) draft revision should be available for comment this spring. They are currently studying minimum flows (current is one hour flow every 48 hours) and ramp rates.
- Discussion of minimum flows stressed that, from the point of view of improving the fishery, a continuous release would be the most beneficial.

## TVA – Dave Matthews

- TVA plans to repair the island at the weir dam on the Norris tailwater, where the island is being eroded endangering the operation of the weir.
- With regards to the MOA with TWRA, TVA will continue to pay for trout stocking through 2025.
- The permitting process for any changes to river operations has become much more complicated due to climate change considerations.
- TVA is taking climate change into serious consideration.

## US Forest Service – Matt Grove

- Matt is the replacement for Jim Herrin, and is officed in Cleveland. This is his first coldwater meeting, so the process is new.
- USFS is starting to re-stock Citico wilderness brook trout streams, and will for the next three years, to recover from the die-off in 2016. This will then be re-evaluated.
- USFS is ramping up habitat monitoring in the Cherokee National Forest. There is a massive lack of large wood in the streams; the ideal is 200-400 pieces per mile, but current levels are 0-120 pieces per mile.
- USFS is also working with Conservation Fisheries to monitor and re-establish numerous small (non-trout) fish in the forest.

## Tennessee State Council Meeting

- The meeting was called to order at 12:38 by Council Chair Tony Gregg.
- The minutes of the October 29, 2022, council meeting were approved.
- The financial report for the calendar year ending 12/31/2022 was approved. The financial report is appended to the minutes.
- Elections were held for the next two years. Ryan Turgeon was nominated as council Chair, and Bill Watkins as secretary. Both were elected unanimously. The offices of vice-chair and treasurer are open.
- Jeff Wright, TU Southern Appalachians Project Manager, reported on his activities.
  - His boss is Abbie McQueen, who is in charge of eastern conservation for TU.
  - Reports by collaborating agencies make it plain that TU is integral to agency work. The council and TN chapters are major supporters of agency activity in the state.
  - TN, GA, NC, and SC all have TU license plate programs, but the TN program does the most for its state; all proceeds in GA go to the GA DNR, NC gets less funding from



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their program, and the SC program is just starting. TN provides over \$100,000 per year for conservation and education programs in the state.

- 2022 successes – the northern zone temperature monitoring program, funded by the license plate program and supported by the Cherokee, Overmountain, and Little River chapters, monitor 14 sites which either have brook trout or are potential targets for restoration of brook trout. The monitors are Bluetooth based systems, which are read by smart phones; the cost about \$130, with a 15% TU discount.
- 2022 successes – GSMNP barrier surveys. Jeff has trained crews in evaluating stream crossing barriers. There are 700-800 possible crossing in the park, but we are looking seriously at about 140 on the TN side and 26 on the NC side. Four or five teams are set up, with the goal of surveying all the sites in TN this spring.
- 2022 successes – Wolf Creek (brook trout stream in Cocke County) crossing replacement was in the works for several years. The original cost of the project was estimated at \$300K, but cost increases due to covid raised the project to \$507K plus design and management costs; USFS supplied 80%, and TU supplied 20%.
- 2023 plans – continue year 5 temperature monitoring project and GSMNP barrier surveys. Support strategic wood loading in the Cherokee NF; a 4-man crew is due to start February 5. There may be opportunities for volunteer work. Community science surveys.
- Future opportunities are provided by the \$40M MOA between TU and the USGA.
- Mike Givney (state TIC coordinator) reported on Trout in the Classroom:
  - The main aim of TIC is to produce young conservationists. To that end we are trying to put tanks into middle and high schools and to include community science activities and involve older youths.
  - Tennessee education is emphasizing agriculture, which ties in with TIC. TIC fits into numerous TN education standards.
  - TIC has been “a nightmare” due to remote learning due to covid for the last couple of years.
  - We have recently completed a Google drive with “how to do TIC”, available to any teacher or TU member, by making a request to [tictenn@gmail.com](mailto:tictenn@gmail.com).
  - Ordering materials and distribution has been consolidated and streamlined and utilizes drop shipping to local schools.
  - There are currently schools, some with multiple tanks.
  - Chillers are no longer available from Europe, and have been difficult to acquire; we are currently on a waiting list, so no new programs can be supported except by attrition.
  - Budgeting – we started the year with \$16,983; we used \$12,905. We will spend about \$3K this fall; \$9K is earmarked for new equipment (about \$1500 per tank), and \$4K is set aside for replenishment.
  - Our long-term goal is about 6 new tanks per year.



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- Effect on students: for each class/tank, with 5 principal students, at one hour per week actual time spent caring for the tanks – 7,000 hands-on time. With an average of 20 students per classroom – 132,000 hours of exposure per year.
- Sean Fagan, trout camp director, outlined plans for this summer:
  - We already have 12 boys and 1 girl applicants for this camp.
  - The camp costs the council about \$15K, funded from the license plate proceeds.
  - On Tuesday we will need about 14 volunteers for casting instruction, and 14 on Wednesday for fishing on Norton Creek (we will fish later this year, until about 7 p.m.) Last year we had volunteers from 7 of 8 chapters, which is great participation.
- Sean moved that we rename the camp from “John Thurman Great Smokey Mountain Trout Adventure Camp” to simply “John Thurman Trout Adventure Camp”. The motion was passed.
- Mark Spangler moved the council provide \$400 to each chapter to help fund members going to the Southeast Region Rally in Asheville in March 10-12. The motion passed.
- Due to time constraints, no other agenda items were discussed. The date and place of the next council meeting are to be determined.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:03.

Respectfully submitted,  
Steve Brown, TCTU Secretary.

## Financial Report:

Account	Book Balance (Reconciled)	Net Available
License Plate Account	\$94,916.10	\$94,916.10
Operating Account	\$23,385.36	\$23,385.36
TIC Account	\$13,721.62	\$13,721.62
Thurman Trout Camp	\$4,079.60	\$4,079.60

*Total cash on hand: \$136,096.68*

*Book Balances (Reconciled) as of 12/31/2022*

\*License plate revenue year-to-date: \$78,953.95. One (1) additional distribution from the State in this fiscal year – tracking to exceed \$100,000 in revenue for the first time since inception. THERE ARE NO OUTSTANDING/PENDING ITEMS ON THIS ACCOUNT.

\*Operating Account - THERE ARE NO OUTSTANDING/PENDING ITEMS ON THIS ACCOUNT.

\*Total General & Administration expense (this year-to-date) are \$4,407.41.



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## Attendees

Name	Email	Chapter	
Anthony Rodino	Chief, Water Management Section	Army Corps	12 Appalachian
Bernie Kuhajda		TNASI	0 Cherokee
Bernie Maloy	52bazzman@gmail.com	Little River	4 Clinch
Bill Watkins	billwatkinsca@gmail.com	Overmountain	1 Great Smoky Mt
Bob Stephan	bobstephan59@me.com	Clinch River	4 Hiwassee
Brian Batka	brian.batka@yahoo.com	Appalachian	6 Little River
Brian Pondergrass		Appalachian	2 Music City
Buzz Buffington	Buzz.buffington@gmail.com	Clinch River	7 Overmountain
Caleb Abramson	Supervisory Fishery Biologist	GSMNP	1 Unknown
Dan Quarles	dan@qvlc.com	Appalachian	2 USFS
Dave Matthews	Aquatic Zoologist	TVA	1 TVA
David King	dfking6@gmail.com	Music City	3 TWRA
David Stephens	wdstephens@charter.net	Appalachian	1 GSMNP
Evan McDougall	evanmcdougall@gmail.com	Overmountain	1 Army Corps
Harry Fetterman	hefetterman@gmail.com	Little River	1 TNASI
Ian Rutter	ian@randrflyfishing.com	Little River	1 TU
Jason Shelton	jasonshelton6@icloud.com	Appalachian	<b>47 Total</b>
Jeff Wright	Southern Appalachians Projects Manager	TU	
Jim Habera	Region 4	TWRA	
John Michael Ables	mikeables20@gmail.com	Appalachian	
Justin Spaulding	Region 3	TWRA	
Lisa Young	young_l@hcde.org	Hiwassee	
Lori Givney	tictenn@gmail.com	Overmountain	
Mark Spangler	m.spanger@charter.net	Little River	
Matt Grove	Forest Aquatic Biologist - North Zone	USFS	
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Ryan Turgeon	ryanturgeon76@yahoo.com	Overmountain	
Sally Petre	Streams & Rivers Biologist Region 4	TWRA	
Sara Bishop	bishmoose@sbcglobal.net	Little River	
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Shane Boyd	boyd12122000@yahoo.com	Hiwassee	
Sherrell Greene	srgreene@protonmail.com	Great Smoky Mountain	
Steve Brown	wsbrown08@gmail.com	Clinch River	
Steve Fry	fryfisherman@gmail.com	Appalachian	
Tom Sayne	thomaspsayne@epbf.com	Appalachian	
Tony Gregg	tgregg@inbox.com	Clinch River	
Travis McDonald	Fisheries Biologist - South Zone	USFS	



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