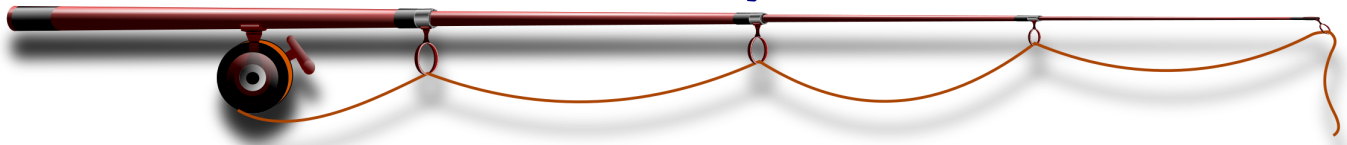


The Flyline



A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

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President's Message

by Dave Maher

I hope everyone had a nice summer!

The chapter was able to complete the phase three of Stewarts Run in July. Thank you to everyone that helped with Stewarts Run. We can always use a couple extra hands for these projects.

Rick Buchanan, Nolan Reed, and Dave Wright held a youth field day at Quemahoning Sportsman's Club in August, and several members led a macroinvertebrate and fly tying lesson at the International Conservation Center in Fairhope for young campers.

Thank you to Butch Kerchenske and Dave Wright for repairing the cables on the Fly Project on Clear Shade Creek.

The banquet committee held its first planning meeting in August. We can always use more help on the committee. If you would like to help out, contact Gary Cooper or Dave Wright.

Gary Cooper will have the *12 Days of Christmas* tickets in the mail by the time you receive this newsletter.

I attended the PA Council of Trout Unlimited meeting on September 14, and I'm proud to announce that **Mountain Laurel chapter received the Chapter of the Year award for 2024!** Good job to all the guys and gals in our chapter! CONGRATULATIONS!

Get out and enjoy the waters this fall.

Tight lines,

Dave

MLTU's annual fundraising banquet will be held Saturday, April 12, 2025 at The Willow near the Johnstown Airport.

Chapter of the Year!!



On behalf of the Mountain Laurel chapter of Trout Unlimited, Pat Buchanan and Dave Maher accept the Chapter of the Year award presented to the group at the Pennsylvania Council of Trout Unlimited annual meeting on September 14, 2024. MLTU was nominated by Melissa Reckner. Photo by Len Lichvar.

Mother Nature

by Dave Wright

The high-water flows resulting from Hurricane Debbie on Friday and Saturday, August 9 and 10, pulled down both the upper and lower cables that set the boundaries for the fly project on Clear Shade Creek. One of the trees holding the lower cable was dead and decayed and pulled out completely, swinging to the opposite bank with the orange sheathing still attached. The upper cable snapped and the orange sheath was lost. On Tuesday, August 20th, MLTU members repaired and re-stored the cables to their original positions. The project took about three hours to complete. The restrung cables are high enough for kayakers to pass underneath safely. Thank you to the Windber Water Authority for opening the gates, allowing easy access to this area of Clear Shade Creek.

The high water from Hurricane Debbie did not adversely affect the recently completed work on Stewarts Run. All of the structures held in place. Some of the top-dressed soil did wash away, but all the rock and wood held fast.



*Dave Maher holds one of the cables on Clear Shade Creek.
Photo by Dave Wright.*

Eric Null, adjunct instructor at Garrett College in Maryland, in partnership with the Somerset Conservation District, surveyed sections of Higgins Run, Coal Run, Shingle Run, and Dark Shade Creek for wild trout populations on Friday, August 16, 2024. This activity was open to the public and some MLTU members tagged along to observe.

Students from Eric's fisheries class, along with Greg Shustrick, the District's Watershed Specialist, and Adam Cotchen of the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, used electrofishing equipment to stun and capture the fish in nets so they could be counted and measured before being returned to the streams.

Higgins Run flows into the Quemahoning Reservoir and is in the process of a "chop and drop" large wood project to improve stream habitat. Several age classes of wild brown and a single rainbow trout were documented in Higgins Run. According to Somerset Conservation District Watershed Specialist Greg Shustrick, "The survey documented that there are more trout in the 2 to 3 year age class and the young of the year are larger than pre-habitat installation." There were 102 wild trout captured in the 100-meter section and that does not include those that escaped the survey. Shustrick adds, "We hope to see this documented trend continue in the coming years."

Coal Run and Shingle Run are located within State Game Lands 228 and join to form Dark Shade Creek. Coal Run did not produce any trout, although the limestone bed treatment system installed in Gahagen to improve the stream's pH was only completed earlier this year. Shingle Run and Dark Shade Creek did produce a few impressive and beautifully colored, 10-11-inch wild brook trout. In the upper portion of Dark Shade Creek, several wild brook trout were captured and others were seen escaping.

Shingle Run received limestone sand in 2008 and also had wild brook trout transferred to it in order to reestablish a wild trout population. The stream was resurveyed in 2009 and wild trout still survived; however, since that time, data has been lacking. Shustrick points out, "This stream is a candidate for large wood addition, but more monitoring, water chemistry, and macro data are needed. There is real potential for this waterway."

This survey documented that wild trout are indeed present in the Shade Creek watershed. More evaluation and data are required in order to determine how best to increase both the quality and quantity of wild trout in these waterways.

It was an enlightening and enjoyable day for all involved.



Photos by Len Lichvar.

On July 18, chapter members presented a macroinvertebrate and fly-tying lesson at the Pittsburgh Zoo's International Conservation Center (ICC) near Fairhope in Somerset County. The ICC is a beautiful facility in a most picturesque area of Somerset County and is where the Zoo keeps elephants, camels, and more unique species.

Six campers and four adults examined macroinvertebrates collected offsite and then each tied a Walt's Worm and a Wooly Bugger. There was also time for a fly-casting demonstration. Thanks to everyone who helped: Jeff Baird, Rick Buchanan, Jack Gilbert, Matt Hughes, Melissa Reckner, Shane Rudnik, and Dave Wright. Photos below by Melissa Reckner.

Chapter members also presented a macroinvertebrate and fly-tying demonstration at the Quemahoning Rod & Gun Sportsmen's Club grounds on Saturday, August 17. Approximately sixty youth participated from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. Thank you to Rick Buchanan and Nolan Reed for volunteering with me for this program.



Trout in the Classroom 2024-2025

MLTU looks forward to working with the following schools on their Trout in the Classroom projects this year. If you would like to help with the release days listed below, please contact Missy Reckner or Adam Cotchen.

- ♦ Bishop McCort Elementary East & West – Tuesday, May 13
 - ♦ Blacklick Valley Jr.-Sr. High School – Friday, May 17
 - ♦ Richland Elementary School – TBD
 - ♦ Shade-Central City High School – Thursday, May 9
- ♦ Shanksville Stonycreek Elementary School – Friday, May 3

MLTU Board Members

President: Dave Maher
Vice President: Shane Rudnik
Treasurer: Pat Buchanan
Secretary: Eric Fabrizio

Jeff Baird
Gary Cooper
Adam Cotchen
Butch Kerchenske
Melissa Reckner
Dave Wright



The Shade Creek Watershed Association (SCWA) celebrated its 25th anniversary with an open house and tour on September 21, 2024. SCWA, MLTU, and others work to improve water quality, restore fisheries, and promote coldwater resources in this 133-square-mile watershed. Above, Jeff Sarver, SCWA President, and Larry Hutchinson, SCWA Vice-President and Founding President, smile with their gifts of appreciation. Photo by Melissa Reckner.

**Mountain Laurel
Trout Unlimited**

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Save the Dates!



- ♦ Oct. 3 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Oct. 16 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:00 PM
- ♦ Nov. 7 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Nov. 20 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:00 PM
- ♦ Dec. 2 — MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM. Submit materials to Missy.
- ♦ Newsletter covers January 1 - March 30, 2025.
- ♦ Dec. 5 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Mar. 15 — NatureWorks at the Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.
- ♦ Apr. 12 — MLTU Annual Fundraising Banquet at The Willow

Happy Holidays!