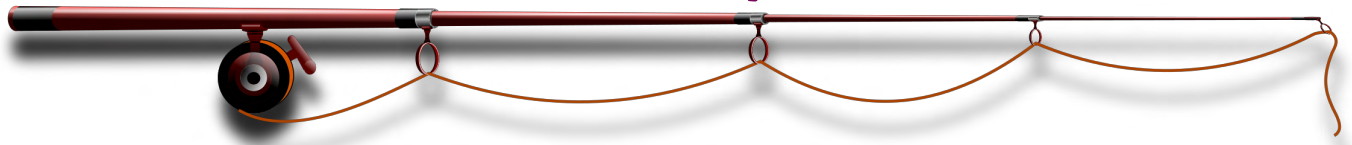


The Flyline



A publication of Mountain Laurel Trout Unlimited

January 2025

Volume 63, Issue 72

President's Message

by Dave Maher

I hope this newsletter finds everyone doing well going into the New Year. MLTU will be busy going into the new year.

Our beginner fly tying class will start on Monday, January 6 and run for six weeks. We hope to have up to fifteen students for each class, so if you are able, please come out and give us a hand.

TIC schools will be receiving the Rainbow Trout Eggs in early January. We can always use extra help with the TIC program in the spring. Mark it on your calendar. Thank you.

MLTU will be holding four stream cleanups starting in April.

January will find us a little more than three months out from our Spring Fundraising Banquet. The Banquet Committee has been meeting every month since October. Everything the Chapter does is dependent on the funds raised at our banquet. This year's banquet will be held on **Saturday, April 12, 2025 at The Willow** on Airport Road.

NatureWorks at the Bottle Works will be held on March 15, 2025 from 10:00 am till 2:00 pm.

Please come to our monthly meeting and learn more about how you can help move the chapter forward.

Tight lines,

Dave



NatureWorks is an event designed to introduce guests to the area's abundant natural resources and outdoor recreation opportunities. Over two dozen conservation groups, including MLTU, will be present to share information and activities for all ages. It is a free event that is open to the public and will be held Saturday, March 15, 2025 from 10 AM–2 PM at the Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center in Johnstown. Stop by or lend a hand!

The primary goal of the historic abandoned mine drainage (AMD) remediation efforts, centered in the Oven Run watershed, a sub-watershed of the Stonycreek River in Somerset County, initiated in the early 1990's was never intended to restore the aquatic life of Oven Run itself. Those efforts, pioneered by the Somerset and Cambria County Conservation Districts, led to the formation of the Stonycreek-Conemaugh River Improvement Project (SCRIP) which then empowered federal and state agencies along with local non-profits and volunteer groups to begin the daunting task of constructing AMD treatment systems. The Stonycreek River was the target to be improved. Oven Run was to be the sacrificial lamb.

Fast forward to over 25 years later and with the reconstruction of four of the Oven Run systems by the Somerset Conservation District, as well as a fifth system completely rehabilitated by the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection Bureau of Abandoned Mine Reclamation (PADEP BAMR), more alkalinity is being generated, more metals are being removed and more water is now treated. Also contributing are 19 other AMD treatment systems that have been constructed in the Stonycreek River watershed as a result of the momentum generated by the Oven Run Projects.

The sampling data collected by InnoH2O, under contract by the Somerset Conservation District, has clearly demonstrated that water quality in the Stonycreek River is being improved beyond the initial enhancements initially generated by the original Oven Run treatment systems. This documented data knowledge led the Somerset Conservation District to attempt to determine what impact all this just might be having on Oven Run, which has been devoid of aquatic life for 125 years. The District organized an electro-fishing expedition, in cooperation with Garrett College of Maryland on Oven Run in August 2024.

This first ever fish survey of Oven Run made a monumental discovery. In the 100-meter section that was sampled, five species of fish were found. A total of 58 individual fish were documented that included white suckers, creek chubs, northern hog suckers, long nose dace and black nose dace. A young of the year creek chub was identified, indicating that that natural reproduction is occurring in Oven Run. In addition, caddis larva and crayfish were also found.

A newspaper article dated July 9, 1993 in the *Johnstown Tribune-Democrat* headlined that the Oven Run project, "Aims to resurrect the Stonycreek River." Today, it can be readily seen that this multi-million dollar effort, combined with thousands of hours of professional and volunteer contributions, has done just that. The result has been the creation of opportunities for outdoor recreation that has created an eco-tourism boom and generated an economic engine that had previously not existed in the Cambria-Somerset region.



Caddisfly larva found in Oven Run.

Photo by Len Lichvar.

Continued on next page



Fish found in Oven Run.

Photo by Len Lichvar.

This natural resource conservation effort is the foundation that all the other more recent recreational-oriented initiatives in the region have been built on.

Recent articles in the *Tribune-Democrat* have been titled, “Outdoor Enthusiasts give Tour of Region’s Amenities” and “National Coalition visits Johnstown to see examples of rural reinvention.” These and many other realizations now demonstrate that the foresighted vision generated over 30 years ago by a small group of local conservation minded citizens, as described back in 1993, have more than achieved their intended goal.

It should be noted, however, that never ending operation and maintenance of the existing treatment systems is still a never ending responsibility that understaffing and underfunding continue to be hurdles that make sustaining all these achievements an ongoing behind the scenes struggle and challenge.

Another reality is the resurgence of Oven Run may be just a footnote in a much larger saga. However, for those who still vividly remember the horrifically polluted conditions of both the Stonycreek, much less tributaries such as Oven Run, and believed it could change when many naysayers thought otherwise, it is an important and satisfying milestone nonetheless.



Wondering what these are? See “Youth Education” on page 4.

MLTU-Branded Clothes

MLTU has worked with Damin Printing to offer clothes embroidered with MLTU's logo for sale to the public. Choose from hats, hooded tees, short-sleeved tees, polos, and performance wear for both men and women in a variety of colors and sizes! Shop and place your order through the following website or scan the QR code and allow 1-2 weeks for delivery. Questions? Contact Damin Printing at 814-472-9530 or onlineapparelorders@daminprinting.com. A portion of each sale will be donated to MLTU.

troutunlimited.secure-decoration.com



Youth Education

by Dave Wright

The chapter has purchased two similar products to promote fly casting in preparation of this year's TIC release days and similar events. LAWN TROUT is a felt fish in conjunction with a Velcro fly. BACKYARD BASS is a plastic fish with a channel formed to catch a plastic baitfish (just a little bigger than a Swedish fish candy) that is casted to it. We have purchased ten of each type. Both of these products make fly casting into a game that the students will respond to well. Up to now, we have been casting to hula-hoops, frisbees, and mouse traps to make fly casting on the lawn more interesting.

Fly casting is a difficult proposition to teach to young people that have never experienced it and we only have about an hour to cover the topic. These kids are not familiar with the explanation of moving the rod top from 10 to 2 on a clock face because everything to them in their young lives is digital. Some have never used bait casting gear or been fishing with any method.

The instructions with the products suggest playing golf or putting the target fish inside a circle of casters or assigning values to the targets to score points when they are caught.

This purchase should be a good investment in youth and make TIC Release Days more satisfying to the students.

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

Beginners Fly Tying Classes

Cost: **FREE** Class size is limited.

Where: Richland Municipal Building

Dates: Two sessions, Saturday mornings at 9am, and Monday evenings at 6pm.
Saturdays, January 11th through February 15th. Mondays, January 6th through February 10th.

Register: Call, Gary Cooper at 814-266-4763

Tools and materials will be provided, "if you have your own bring them".

Pies & Flies Saturday February 15 th 9 am to ?. Join with us for some delicious pizza and a fly tying party, This is a fun event featuring local tyers giving hands on demonstrations in an informal setting, sharing thier knowledge with you. Weather permitting we hope to have live macroinvertebrates (bugs).

Chapter Fundraising Banquet

Saturday April 12, 2025

Location: **"The Willow"** 650 Airport Road, 5:00 pm.

Tickets available from Gary Cooper 266-4763

**Mountain Laurel
Trout Unlimited**

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Johnstown, PA 15904



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Save the Dates!



- ♦ Jan. 2 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Jan. 15 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:00 PM
- ♦ Feb. 6 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Feb. 19 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:00 PM
- ♦ Mar. 6 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Mar. 14 — MLTU newsletter submission deadline, 4 PM. Submit materials to Missy.
Newsletter covers April 1 - June 30, 2025.
- ♦ Mar. 15 — NatureWorks at the Bottle Works Ethnic Arts Center, 10 a.m.—2 p.m.
- ♦ Mar. 19 — Banquet Committee Meeting @ Dave Maher's House, 6:00 PM
- ♦ Apr. 3 — MLTU Meeting @ Richland Municipal Bldg., Board 6:30 PM; Membership 7 PM
- ♦ Apr. 12 — MLTU Annual Fundraising Banquet at The Willow

Please see page 5 for fly-tying class dates.

Happy 2025!