

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Another Successful Year in 2023

First, I want to thank all of our chapter leaders and volunteers who made 2023 another success story. As you read this newsletter, you'll see some of the many programs and activities our volunteers were engaged in during the year to pursue TU's mission to conserve, protect and restore our coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Secondly, looking ahead to 2024, we are already involved with several schools in our region teaching coldwater conservation lesson plans, fly tying and casting, and planning field trips and fishing events. While our chapter gets involved in a variety of community programs, including working with our military veterans and remediating streams, it is recruiting the next generation of coldwater conservationists that ranks highest on our list of priorities. You can help in that effort.

I invite you to join us at one of our monthly meetings to find out more about our planned activities and how you can become involved. We always wrap up our monthly meetings with a social hour and pizza. It's a great opportunity to meet other members, discuss new fly patterns, and plan some fishing trips. I hope to see more of you there!

Larry Myers
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UPCOMING EVENTS

Grey Hackle Gang

The Gang started up January 2nd for another season of fly tying, story telling and camaraderie at the Tin Lizzy restaurant in Youngstown. Come for lunch at noon and fly tying upstairs afterwards. The group meets every Tuesday until the fish start biting in spring. Beginners are welcome.

Vietnam War History Presentation

Monty Murty, past President for Forbes Trail and US Army Major (Retired), will present a history of the Vietnam war from an infantry officer's perspective. Forbes Trail offers a fishing event each fall for area military veterans and first responders. It is intended to teach fly fishing as a means to heal the body and soul. This is part of the National TU Service Partnership program. Monty's presentation will be **Wednesday, March 13** at 6:30 pm at the Westmoreland Conservation District, 218 Donohoe Road, Greensburg. **Preregistration is required via info@forbestrailtu.org or (724) 454-9345.**

"Slide Show 'n Tell"

Each year we invite members to present slides and videos of their latest fishing expeditions at one of our spring meetings. This year it will be **Wednesday, April 3** at the Nimick Family Education Center in west Ligonier. Presenters are asked to keep presentations to 15 minutes and must preregister. Bring a friend. As always, refreshments will be provided.

WINTER 2024 SCHEDULE



January 2 Grey Hackle Gang Begins - Noon Tin Lizzy

January 11 Youth Group Begins - Ligonier Valley Middle School

January 25 Youth Group Meeting - Ligonier Valley Middle School

February 7 Monthly Meeting - 6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

February 8 Youth Group Meeting - Ligonier Valley Middle School

February 22... Youth Group Meeting - Ligonier Valley Middle School

March 6 Monthly Meeting - 6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

March 7 Youth Group Meeting - Ligonier Valley Middle School

March 13 Vietnam War History - 6:30 pm WCD Barn, Greensburg

March 21 Youth Group Meeting - Ligonier Valley Middle School

April 3 Slide Show 'n Tell- 6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

Schedule is subject to change. Cancellations due to weather or other factors will be posted on our website, www.forbestrailtu.org as soon as possible. Check the website for updates.

NEWS FROM THE ANNUAL MEETING

Officers and Directors Elected

FTTU Officers for the coming year were approved at the Annual Meeting on October 4th. Returning as President is Larry Myers, as Treasurer, Ron Rodgers and as Secretary, Scott Minster. We welcome new officer, Rick Yaksic to the Vice President position.

Rick is happily married for the past 22 years and retired from Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports where he ran a program that helped adults with mental illness achieve life skills. This program covered all of Westmoreland County including Torrance State Hospital and inmates in our county jail.

Rick is currently seated as a member of Westmoreland Casemanagement and Supports Board of Directors.

Rick is an active member of his church's council. For the last 15 years he has been a member of the Ray of Hope Suicide Awareness Task Force.

Rick has been a fisherman all his life but has only been fly

fishing for the past 3 years. He also enjoys fly tying and because of an invitation from Larry who attends the same church as Rick does, became a member of Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited and enjoys helping with all the community events and educational activities as much as possible.

A huge thank you is owed to outgoing V.P. Denny Hess who served seven years in the post. Denny will continue to be involved as chair of the Conservation Committee.

The lineup of chapter Directors remains the same as Bill Somogyi and Milt Claney have agreed to re-up for another 3-year term. Chapter Directors are; Milt Claney, Bill Somogyi, Rod Cross, Angela Schultheis, Hank Balles and Doug Yocabet.

One other change has Tom Keller replacing Bonnie Robinson as Membership Committee Chair. Thanks to Bonnie for serving in this position the past several years and really being the first to do this job which involves keeping track of the chapter's membership, sending out welcome packages to new members and reminder postcards to lapsed members.



Officers (L-R) Larry Myers, President; Rick Yaksic, Vice President; Scott Minster, Secretary; and Ron Rodgers, Treasurer.



Directors (L-R) Angela Schutheis, Bill Somogyi, Milt Claney, Rod Cross and Monty Murty. Not Pictured is Hank Balles and Doug Yocabet.

THANK YOU, OUR MEMBERS FOR ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RAFFLE!

FTTU's Fall Fundraiser Raffle wrapped up on November 16th with the prize drawings held at the PA Fly Co fly shop. Thanks to an outstanding response from you, our members, 801 tickets were sold and seven \$250 gift certificate prizes and one \$500 prize were awarded. The total was just shy of the record of 844 tickets sold in 2021. Many of you bought or sold all ten tickets you received in the mailing. You all deserve a pat on the back!

The financials work out this way, \$8,010 in revenue less \$2,250 in prizes minus \$527.44 in expenses (printing and postage) leaves us with a gross profit of \$5,232.56. We pledged 10% of our profits would go to the Westmoreland Food Bank so we rounded that up to \$600 leaving the chapter with a net profit of \$4,632.56 which will go into our unrestricted funds account.

SAVE THE DATE - SUMMER PICNIC 2024

Forbes Trail is planning another family picnic at Twin Lakes Park For Saturday, June 22. Please reserve the date. Members are encouraged to bring family and friends for a catered picnic lunch, raffle prizes and games for the kids. More information will be provided on our web site and future meeting announcements.

OUTSTANDING VOLUNTEERS RECEIVE AWARDS

Also at the Annual Meeting in October, we recognized several outstanding members for their service. The Chapter has a selection of formal awards they present to TU members and other individuals and businesses from the community.

The Russ Mowry Memorial Silver Trout Award is reserved for individuals who have gone above and beyond in volunteering their time and talents. This year, the award was presented to Angie Schultheis from Latrobe, and Milt Claney from Greensburg.

Angie chairs the Chapter's Diversity Committee and also serves on the Board of Directors. Angie has worked very hard over the years to develop programs for both ladies and youth, including STREAM Girls. STREAM Girls is an outdoor watershed experience for middle school aged girls that employs STEM-based education (science, technology, engineering, math), recreation and arts to explore a local stream. She has also organized fly tying, fly casting and fly fishing trips for the Chapter's lady members. Angie's entire family is involved in TU activities.

Milt Claney, a TU member since 1989, was also a recipient of our Russ Mowry Memorial Silver Trout Award. Milt is a retired teacher with the Westmoreland IU...but he has never stops teaching. He's always looking for new ways for the Chapter to reach out and recruit young conservationists, including starting new programs in local schools. Milt serves on the Chapter's Membership Committee and is always present at meetings to



Service award winners (L-R) Joe Bilotta, Angela Schultheis and Milt Claney

welcome and introduce new members and guests. Milt also serves on our Board of Directors.

The third award of the evening was the R. Drew Banas Education Award for outstanding service in the field of education and was presented to Joe Bilotta. Joe serves as Chair of the Chapter's Education Committee. Joe coordinates all of the Chapter's outreach and education activities with local schools, scouts, 4-H, and community groups and has developed working relationships with each. He also maintains the Chapter's supply of equipment and materials for various programs.

Forbes Trail applauds the award winners for their dedication to TU's mission and for their generous donation of time and talent to make all of TU's programs and activities successful!

CHECK PRESENTED TO THE WESTMORELAND FOOD BANK



Pictured at the check presentation (L-R) Denny Hess and Ron Rodgers of FTTU, Jennifer Miller, and FTTU's Rick Yaksic, Larry Myers and Monty Murty.

Again in 2023, FTTU was pleased to share a portion of our Fall Raffle income with The Westmoreland Food Bank. The check was for \$600.00 and the presentation was made on December the 14th.

"I want to thank the members and all of those who purchased tickets or supported this project in any way", noted Jennifer Miller, WFB Chief Executive Officer. "We are very grateful for this effort as it helps to feed 8,000 families throughout Westmoreland County who are finding it difficult to make ends meet. With this support we can assure that all neighbors who need our help throughout the year can rest easy knowing that people care enough to make sure that no one has to know the anguish of food insecurity."

"This is the fourth year we've conducted this raffle and shared the profit with the Food Bank. It's an easy way for our chapter to raise unrestricted funds for community, school and local stream projects" explained Larry Myers, Chapter President. "It's an opportunity for all of our 500 plus members to get involved in fundraising with minimal effort."

2023 VETERAN'S FISHING DAY

What an incredible day of fishing and camaraderie as over 40 veterans and first responders hooked and landed trout, panfish and catfish! Military veterans, first responders, Scouts and volunteers from Kinston Veterans Sportsmen Club and Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited celebrated the end of summer with a spectacular day on the water. Unfortunately, the weather was more cooperative than the trout this year. Some of the anglers spent Saturday relaxing and reacquainting with friends. Others took the fishing opportunity more seriously learning how to use a fly rod for the first time and honing their casting skills.



Volunteer Steve Shirley tutors veteran Fred Exley on fly casting. Looks like he's catching on pretty good!

Veteran Fred Exley expressed, "I really want to get more into fly-fishing next year. I borrowed this rod this morning but I need to learn to reach out further on the water with it." Steve Shirley from Trout Unlimited was helping Fred with his casting skills, teaching how to transfer the energy from the rod to the shooting line. Trout Unlimited teaches fly fishing to veterans as a means to heal the body and soul.



Veteran Paul Adams and wife Chris enjoying the beautiful day.



Friendships and camaraderie is just as important as the fishing.



Veteran Gary Weimer with one of two large catfish he landed.

Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited began its program in 2018 focusing on military veterans. Partnering with Kingston Sportsmen allows ADA access to their lake stocked with trout, lunker catfish and panfish, and easy access to other facilities. This year, for the first time, they extended the invitation to local first responders. "We want to recognize first responders for their brave and dedicated service to the communities where we live", noted Chapter President, Larry Myers.

Keith Riffle, Club VP and President of the Veterans Committee recruited many of the veterans by visiting numerous VA medical centers, VFWs and American Legions. A veteran himself, Keith explained, "We'll do whatever it takes to provide a rewarding day on the water for our veterans and first responders."

This was the first time many of the veterans and first responders participated in this fishing event. For others, it was time for reacquaintances. The purpose of the program is primarily to introduce veterans and first responders to fly fishing for some R&R. But if using a fly rod is not comfortable, mentors assist the veterans using whatever fishing tackle they prefer. Some veterans have actually built their own fly rods and tied their own flies.

Many men go fishing all their lives without knowing that it is not the fish they are after.

- Henry David Thoreau

For retired Army First Sergeant, Cynthia Butler, this was her second event and would like to see more lady veterans get involved with fishing. Cynthia and several family friends and veterans enjoyed the day, even though the fishing was more challenging this year. The water was still a little warm and the bright sun, while welcoming to the anglers, drove the trout deeper in the lake. Still, every angler said they enjoyed the beautiful fall day and are looking forward to coming back next year. As a bonus, everyone enjoyed a delicious picnic lunch and many won raffle prizes of fly rods, autographed books and gift cards. Westmoreland County Commissioner, Doug Chew was on hand to recognize both military veterans and first responders for their dedicated service to our country and communities.

Other partners were Scout Troops 465 and 305. The Scouts, as in past events, prepared and served lunch for the crowd of 120 veterans, first responders and volunteers. They also opened the event by posting colors and later held a flag retiring ceremony which the veterans appreciated. We thank our event sponsors...Home Depot, three local Giant Eagle Supermarkets, Fish USA and Bent Rods Bait and Tackle.

The partner volunteers look forward to the annual event and enjoy the opportunity to, if even for just one day a year, be able to serve those who served their country. It was another relaxing and rewarding day on the water for all involved. Trout Unlimited salutes our veterans and first responders, and thanks all of our partners and sponsors who made this all happen.



Vet Warren Houseman landed this nice rainbow.



Scout leaders with retired Army First Sergeant Cynthia Butler.

FTTU HONORED AT STATE MEETINGS

FTTUers were honored with two awards at the PA TU State Council Annual Meeting held September 16th in Mill Hall, PA. Our President, Larry Myers was the recipient of the Ken Sink Award for outstanding service to State Council, and our chapter newsletter "The Trails" was recognized with the Samuel Slaymaker Award for best newsletter. Treasurer Ron Rodgers represented us at the meetings.

Larry somehow managed to get 5 TU chapters to cooperate and acquired grants to complete the Laurel Highlands Trout Trail project and this is at least the second time "The Trails" has won the Slaymaker award. We feel that communication with members is very important and helps to inspire involvement in chapter activities.



Larry Myers (center) with the Kin Sink Award.



"Trails" Editor Scott Minster with the Samuel Slaymaker Award.

THE FORBES TRAIL CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

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The Nimick Family Education Center

Directions: From the west, exit Route 30 at the first Ligonier exit. Cross the west-bound lanes at the flashing red lights and make the first left onto the Old Lincoln Highway. Make the first right onto the gravel road and proceed straight to NFEC located in the remodeled barn. There is limited parking at the barn and farmhouse. There is plenty of overflow parking in the Country Market area to the right of the gravel road.

MEETINGS

FEBRUARY 7

Monthly Meeting
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

MARCH 6

Monthly Meeting
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

APRIL 3

"Slide Show n Tell"
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

