

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded that the success of Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited is measured not by the number of events we held, but by the dedication of the people who made them possible. Every project, every meeting, and every volunteer hour reflects our shared commitment to conserving, protecting, and restoring the cold-water resources we all cherish.

Our stewardship of Linn Run remained at the heart of our conservation efforts. Members devoted countless hours to water quality monitoring, brook trout redd surveys, macroinvertebrate sampling, and limestone sand applications while working with conservation partners to advance the Linn Run Conservation Project. These efforts are helping ensure that one of western Pennsylvania's premier native brook trout streams remains healthy for generations to come. We also rolled up our sleeves during stream cleanups along the Delayed Harvest Artificial Lures section of Loyalhanna Creek and Mission Road, removing debris and improving the health of our local waterways.

Education continues to be one of our chapter's greatest strengths. From working with the Ligonier Valley Middle School Conservation Club and the Greater Latrobe High School Capstone Group to supporting Trout in the Classroom, Science in the Stream Day at Powdermill Nature Reserve, and Earth Day activities, we introduced young people and community members to fly fishing, stream ecology, and the importance of protecting our natural resources. Watching students tie their first fly, make their first cast, or catch their first trout reminds us that conservation succeeds only when the next generation embraces it.

Equally important are the opportunities we create to bring people together. Our Veterans and First Responders Fishing Event once again demonstrated the healing power of time spent on the water, while our annual Family Picnic provided an opportunity for members, spouses, children, and grandchildren

to celebrate another successful year of conservation and fellowship. Whether gathered around a picnic table or standing knee-deep in a stream, these moments strengthen the friendships that make our chapter feel like family.

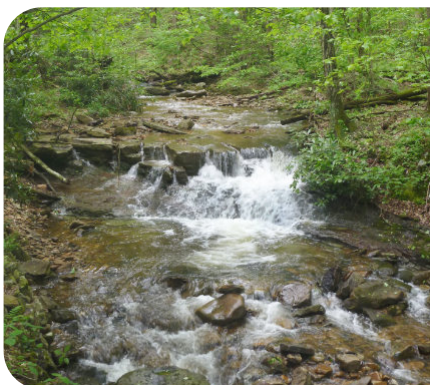
Community outreach remained an important part of our mission. During Fort Ligonier Days, members shared our conservation story with thousands of visitors, while our monthly About Trout articles continued educating readers about trout biology, fly fishing, and stream conservation. Our fundraising events, including the Poker Run and Meat Raffle, generated the financial support necessary to sustain conservation projects, youth education programs, and community outreach. Behind every successful event are volunteers whose dedication often goes unseen but never goes unnoticed.

The weekly gatherings of the Grey Hackle Gang continue to remind us that Trout Unlimited is about more than conservation. It is about friendships, mentoring, storytelling, and preserving traditions that connect us to one another and to the waters we love.

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication of our volunteers, the support of our partners, and the generosity of our members and sponsors. On behalf of the Executive Committee, thank you for your passion, your hard work, and your unwavering commitment to our mission. Together, we are leaving a legacy of healthier streams, thriving wild trout populations, stronger communities, and future generations who will appreciate and protect these remarkable resources.

I look forward to another year of working alongside each of you as we continue writing the next chapter in the story of Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited.

Rick Yaksic
ryaksicps@yahoo.com



FTTU FALL 2026 SCHEDULE

September 2Monthly Meetings Resume- 6:00 pm Nimick Center

October 3.....Vets & First Responders Fishing Day - Kingston Club 9 am

October 7.....Annual Membership Meeting - 6:00 pm Nimick Center

November 4.....Monthly Meeting - 6:00 pm Nimick Center

You can sign-up for the Veterans and First Responders fishing event by visiting our website, filling out and submitting the form found on the Veterans Page.

The deadline for registration is September 18th.

IN MEMORIAM

Sad news to report in this issue of The Trails as we say goodbye to two important members and friends

Milt Claney



Milt Claney loved fishing with his family, grandsons and FTTU friends

We were shocked and saddened to learn of the passing of our friend and fellow member Milt Claney on Sunday, July 26th.

Milt was much more than a member of Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited—he was a mentor, an accomplished fly tier, and a passionate conservationist who willingly shared his knowledge and love of fly fishing with others. Whether demonstrating fly-tying techniques, offering advice to a new angler, or lending a hand at chapter events, Milt's quiet generosity and enthusiasm left a lasting impression on everyone fortunate enough to know him.

Many of us have benefited from Milt's experience, his patience, and his willingness to help preserve the traditions of fly fishing while supporting our mission to conserve, protect, and restore our cold-water resources. His friendship and dedication will be deeply missed, but his legacy will continue to inspire our chapter for years to come.

Milt was the man who would greet you with a smile at the entrance to our meetings and made sure you had your name tag! He always made new faces feel welcome. If you were attending your first FTTU meeting, Milt would learn your name and make you feel like one of the gang.

What better way to remember Milt than with some quotes from those who knew him well.

"He was our grandfather I'll truly miss him"

"I will certainly miss Milt. We talked about casting techniques and he was seriously interested in improving, no doubt so he could help young and old. Especially our veterans."

"Milt was always the first one to help out. He really was our grandfather. God bless Milt."

"I have no words to express the profound sadness that I feel and I am sure that we are all experiencing. I so looked forward to chatting with him at the meetings and with the Grey Hackle Gang! He had a unique welcoming personality and a wealth of knowledge that he was so willing to share!! We will miss this remarkable man!"

"Milt was everything we all want to be. A great man and dear friend and mentor. It is a very sad day and may you RIP Milt, you will not be forgotten."

"Milt was a saint among us. He touched so many lives not just us fly fishers. He had heart of gold as cherished working with all youth even more so with the special needs children."

"Milt was truly a great person always willing to assist. I'll miss hearing him teaching folks at the Gray Hackle meetings."

"His compassion and generosity knew no bounds. He took a genuine interest in everyone he met and set a shining example of how we should treat each other. Your legacy in our chapter will never be forgotten."

Milt made everyone feel like his best friend. So humble and kind. Ethel Kennedy also was a friend. She changed her National logo to the Pennsylvania logo that Milt had created for the special Olympics after a meeting with him. He was a Saint!

"I've only gotten to know Milt for a very short time but what I observed was a compassionate serving man who loved to teach, to share and give of himself not just his love of our sport of flyfishing but of making someone else's experience a wonderful thing."

Joe Bauraskas

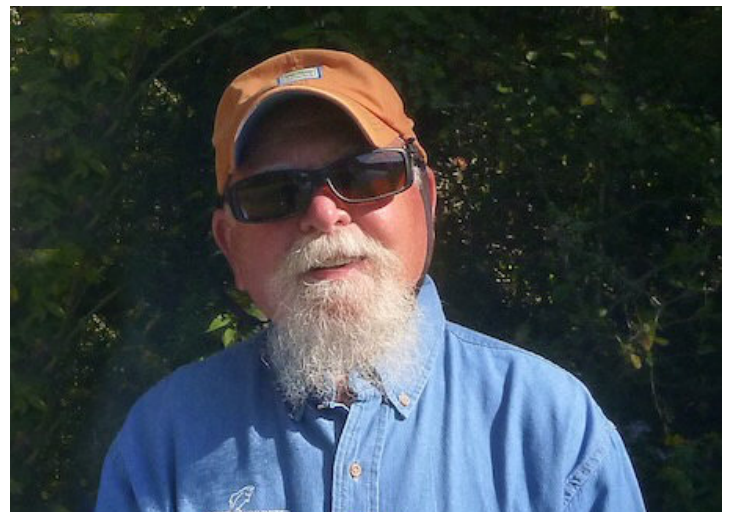
We lost another good friend and conservationist when Joe Bauraskas passed away in February 2026.

"Joe B" was an avid angler and fly tier and was always generous with his time and eager to share his skills and knowledge with others.

He was a regular volunteer/mentor at our Veterans fishing outings and enjoyed socializing with the vets.

Joe served FTTU as chair of the Advocacy Committee and as a liaison to the Mountain Watershed Association.

We will miss his companionship, good humor and upbeat personality.



Always smiling, Joe B seen here taking a break from assisting veterans at our fishing event

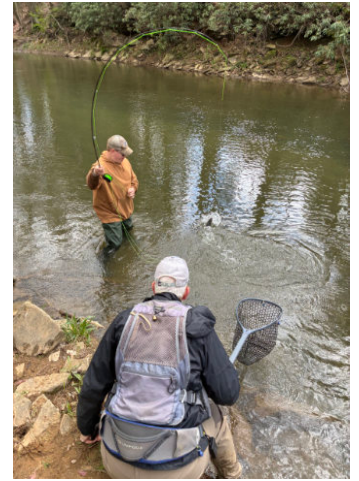
EDUCATION

LVMS Outdoors Club

Forbes Trail TU members worked closely with students at Ligonier Valley Middle School, teaching students about water conservation, the art of fly tying and the fundamentals of fly casting. These students then had the opportunity to apply their knowledge with a day on the water along the DHALO section of Loyalhanna Creek. They assisted PA Fish & Boat with stocking and had some success at catching trout as well. This outing served as a reward for their enthusiastic participation throughout the year and strengthened their connection to conservation and the outdoors.



LVMS Students enjoying their April outing on Loyalhanna Creek



Capstone Students

At Greater Latrobe High School, Forbes Trail TU again worked with students in the Capstone program coordinated by instructor Patrick Roberts. Volunteers held a program in the classroom for these students covering cold water conservation and fly casting lessons. FTTU then hosted two days of fishing at Unity Lake. For some students, it was their first time holding a fly rod. For others, it was a chance to build confidence and new skills.

Community Outreach

The chapter's educational efforts also extended into the community. Members participated in Science in the Stream Day at Powdermill Nature Reserve, and the Earth Day event at St. Xavier's Nature Preserve, sharing lessons about stream ecology, aquatic insects, trout biology and conservation.

Fly Tying Workshop

Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited Chapter had a great time hosting a beginner-friendly fly tying workshop at Forbes State Forest on Saturday, February 28— and it was a huge success!

Participants enjoyed learning about water conservation and aquatic biology, gaining a better understanding of the ecosystems that support our trout streams. Then came the hands-on fun — tying their very own flies to use on their next fishing adventure! It was wonderful to see so many eager learners around the table, asking questions, sharing stories, and discovering just how rewarding fly tying can be.



Latrobe High School Capstone Students at their outing on Unity Lake



The adult fly tying workshop at the Forbes State Forest office in Laughlintown

CONSERVATION

LINN RUN

Limestone treatment is ongoing in the headwaters and the Chapter continues to monitor water quality on a quarterly basis. The Coldwater Conservation Plan (CCP) completed in 2023 indicated elevated levels of aluminum in the headwaters. Aluminum occurs naturally in the earth's soil but is released more rapidly when low pH rainwater infiltrates the soil. Aluminum is toxic, and even fatal to young-of-year (YOY) trout. Since wild brook trout naturally seek cold headwaters to spawn in the fall, the elevated aluminum in that area could be either killing the YOY, or driving them downstream. By raising the pH and alkalinity with the limestone, the aluminum precipitates out making it unavailable to the fish. It will take several quarters of water sampling data to ascertain whether the liming is effective. In the meantime, groups of volunteers will conduct electro-fishing in the headwaters at the end of July to see if they can capture YOY wild brook trout. Macroinvertebrate (trout bugs) surveys will be conducted in the fall. Water quality sampling, macro assessments and electro-fishing will continue for years to come.



Washed out bank and culvert



After repairs June 17th

As part of the CCP Implementation Grant we received last fall, contractors and volunteers completed streambank repairs and replaced two stormwater pipes under the trail to redirect runoff. Flooding in the past had eroded the bank and washed out several sections of trail making it hazardous for hikers, and nearly impossible for an emergency extraction. Additional remediation work will continue this fall.



Mud Sill built June 15-16

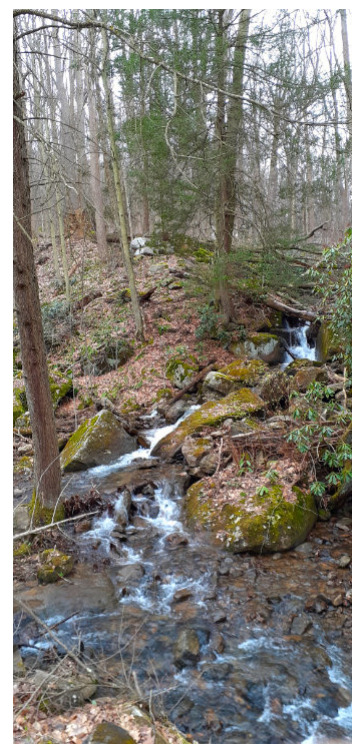


Electro Fishing Survey

On July 31, TU volunteers partnered with Powdermill Nature Reserve and Loyalhanna Watershed Association to conduct fish surveys on Linn Run using a technique called “electrofishing”. A large backpack with battery passes a DC current through the water directly in front of the surveyor. Electrodes are held in the water and the generator is adjusted to temporarily stun, but not harm the fish. Volunteers follow behind with nets to scoop up the stunned fish and put them in buckets. The fish are identified, measured then released unharmed. Four areas were surveyed along the stream, mostly in the headwaters. We were primarily looking for young-of-year (YOY) wild brook trout. We know the stream holds wild brook trout. We’re trying to determine if they are successfully spawning in the headwaters. In the very headwaters we found a total thirteen wild brook trout, but none over four inches. Most were likely YOY. The lower surveyed section which included the upper limit of stocked trout water produced a total of twenty-one trout including four stocked rainbows and six brook trout. The remaining eleven were wild brook trout ranging from three to nine inches, at least five being young-of-year.

ROCK RUN

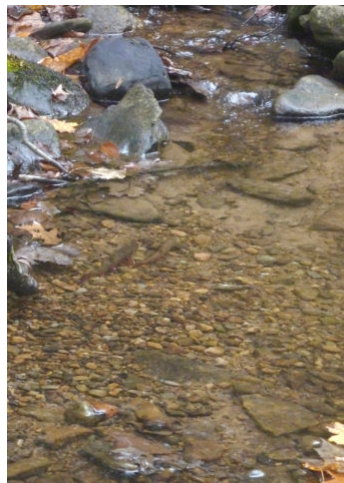
FTTU Citizen Scientists continue to monitor our acid mitigation project on Rock Run. We are now testing water samples quarterly. So far in 2026, pH has averaged 6.8 and alkalinity has averaged 6.83 over three readings. Although these numbers vary over the months and years due to stream flow, alkalinity has improved nearly two points since we started testing in 2017. Before the project began in 2005, a pH reading of 4.7 was recorded at the mouth. Today, we are getting consistent results in the upper 6 range.



CONSERVATION

Spawning Survey

FTTU volunteers conducted our first ever brook trout spawning survey on Linn Run November 2nd through the 13th 2025. It covered the main stem of Linn Run from the confluence with Rock Run upstream to the limestone treatment site, plus major tributaries. Surveyors were searching for and recording total number of trout observed, paired trout preparing to spawn and actual redds. A total of 75 trout, 4 spawning pairs and 2 redds were observed. Conditions were low with clear flow. We may have been a bit late as an informal survey revealed spawning trout in mid October. Trout spawning behavior is hard to predict and is influenced by weather, water temperatures and stream flow. Water temperatures in the low 50s and high 40s together with shorter daylight hours are the signal for trout to start pairing up. This can occur anytime from late September in higher elevations to late November.



Can you spot the spawning brook trout pair?



The Ligonier Crew



The Latrobe Crew

Another team, comprised of students from the Intro to Fly Fishing class at Ligonier Valley Middle School and volunteers from FTTU, worked together to clean up a section of Loyalhanna Creek in Latrobe. Nine bags of trash were collected along with larger items.

LITTER CLEAN-UP

In honor of Earth Day, dedicated volunteers from Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited rolled up their sleeves and spent the day giving back to one of our treasured local waterways.

One team completed a stream clean-up along the DHALO sections of the Loyalhanna Stream, covering both sides from the Route 711 bridge down to the 2 Mile bridge. Their hard work made an immediate impact—removing 9 bags of garbage, a discarded tire, 3 signs, and even sections of vinyl siding from the stream corridor.

FUNDRAISING

WATCH YOUR MAILBOXES! FTTU'S ANNUAL AUTUMN SPECIAL MEAT RAFFLE BEGINS IN OCTOBER



Support your local TU chapter. We will be conducting our “Autumn Special” meat raffle again this year. Members should look for their tickets to arrive in October with the drawings to be held in November. We are asking members to buy/sell 10 tickets. Last year, thanks to you, our members, we had a very

successful raffle selling 872 tickets - a new record. We were able to draw 9 winners and shared over \$600 of the profit with the Westmoreland Food Bank. Our net profit added up to \$5,400.00!

We seek grants for large projects, but cash raised through the raffle serves as unrestricted funds we can use for everyday expenses, insurance, supplies, youth camp sponsorships etc.

Fort Ligonier Days

FTTU cart wranglers were at it again during Fort Ligonier Days in October 2025. Monty Murty led 16 volunteer drivers operating three handicap carts over the three days of the event. It's no easy task navigating through the throngs of festival goers with machines that are, let's say, “a bit finicky”.

We are permitted to have a donation collection box in the carts and generous riders contributed over \$900 to our Veterans Service Partnership Program.



Milt Claney getting ready to make another run

CHAPTER NEWS



Monty and Marlene Murty



Ralph Koscianski with Denny Hess (L) and son Doug (R)



Larry Myers

Awards

Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to two of its most esteemed and long serving members at our 2025 annual meeting in October.

Forbes Trail created a new award to recognize members who have devoted years, if not decades, to serving in leadership roles, developing policy and direction for the Chapter, and managing projects and activities pursuant to its mission. The new award is titled the "Monty Murty Lifetime Achievement Award", and was presented to both Monty Murty and Ralph Koscianski.

Monty is a Life Member of TU who served as president of the chapter for many years as well as financial reviewer. He continues to serve in various capacities at both the State Council and National level including currently assisting in developing direction and policy to address climate change and mitigate its adverse impact on trout streams. His expertise and devotion to education have led to new in-classroom and on-stream lesson plans and ecology studies. Monty is adept at working with elected officials, environmental regulatory agencies and advocacy groups to find viable solutions to technical and politically challenging environmental problems.

Ralph's monumental contribution to serving the chapter and its mission began a couple decades ago to address the disastrous impact of acid rain on trout streams in the Laurel Highlands. While Penn State and other research groups focused on the national and regional impacts, Ralph lasered his attention on

Linn Run and its tributaries. Ralph worked with academia and consultants to formulate a treatment process to remediate the water quality in Rock Run, a major tributary to Linn Run, that would allow macroinvertebrates and wild brook trout to survive. Because of low pH and alkalinity caused by decades of acid rain, trout were nonexistent in Rock Run, as well as the bugs they normally eat. By selecting crushed limestone with the appropriate chemical and physical composition, he and other volunteers began treating the stream in 2005. Today, Rock Run's water quality has improved to the point that it supports natural reproduction of wild brook trout.

FTTU would like to offer our sincere thanks to outgoing President Larry Myers. Larry has gone above and beyond by serving as President for seven years!

During that time FTTU has been a very busy chapter expanding our education outreach, celebrated our 50th anniversary with a very successful banquet, continued to improve our veterans fishing outing which Larry spearheaded, and conducted a thorough cold water conservation plan for the Linn Run Watershed.

Under Larry's leadership we have acquired several grants including a PA Fish and Boat Commission R3 Grant to equip our education efforts and a Coldwater Heritage grant to do work on Linn Run in 2026.

We presented Larry with a gift of a bamboo fly rod hand-built by Ligonier's Gig D'Orio and an Hardy reel.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING

The Forbes Trail Chapter of Trout Unlimited will hold its Annual Membership Meeting on Wednesday, October 7, 2026 at 6:00 pm at the Nimick Education Center, 6 Old Lincoln Highway West, Ligonier, PA 15658.

At this meeting there will be elections of Officers and Directors. There are two officer positions open this year, Secretary and Treasurer and at least one Director position to be filled. The Officer terms are two years and the Director terms are three years.

If you would like to serve the chapter in any of these positions, please attend the September meeting on Wednesday, September 2nd when we will have nominations. The September meeting will be held at the Nimick Center beginning at 6:00 pm.

ABOUT TROUT



For the past two years, FTTU authors have been submitting a series of articles for publication in the Latrobe Bulletin and Ligonier Echo. The series is called "About Trout" and the articles appear monthly. If you've not seen them, no worries, all the past articles are available on our website, forbestrailtu.org on the "About Trout" page.

CHAPTER NEWS

FTTU Volunteers Help With TIC Program

Five Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited volunteers traveled to the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission's headquarters in Bellefonte on January 7, 2026, to help pack trout food for classrooms participating in Pennsylvania's nationally recognized Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program. Did you know Pennsylvania has one of the largest TIC programs in the country, with 442 participating classrooms? Just look at all those boxes! The volunteers returned on January 12 to assist with packing trout eggs, helping prepare thousands of eggs for delivery to schools across the Commonwealth. Having participated in this effort for several years, our experienced volunteers continue to play an important role in inspiring the next generation of conservationists.



The gang at Benner Springs all decked out in their FTTU shirts



Summer Picnic

We had our summer picnic on Saturday, June 27 at the Timken Pavilion at Legion Keener Park, Latrobe. There were 60 in attendance and we were served a delicious lunch by our own Chef Dan Ferguson. There was also a bucket raffle featuring a lot of really nice prizes including an Orvis rod and reel combo and a Yeti cooler.

Thanks to all who attended and to our prize donors for making this another successful event. Although not intended as a fundraiser, thanks to our generous prize donors, we were able to eke out a small profit.

LAUREL HIGHLANDS TROUT TRAIL POKER RUN



Twenty-eight adults and four youth challenged the Laurel Highlands Trout Trail streams participating in the Forbes Trail Trout Unlimited Poker Run (FTTU). The Poker Run (PR) is a fun time fishing the Top Ten beautiful trout streams in the Laurel Highlands as they tested their skill to catch the elusive trout. The PR concept is to get men, women and youth to go fishing with an opportunity to win gift cards provided by FTTU.

This year, there were 45 fishing outings recorded among 31 participants, an increase over last year.

The most popular streams on this years Trout Trail was a tie between Loyalhanna Creek and Laurel Hill each getting 10 visits. Indian Creek and the Yough River trailed behind with 5 each.

Registered trout trailers would take a "selfie" photo at one of the LHIT signs, then send it in to us for an official score.

Congratulations to Allison Lunko and Andy Garstek who visited all 10 streams!

The more streams fished, the greater the chance to win. Entrants earned tickets for each stream fished to be entered into the prize drawing. This is not a fundraiser for FTTU, all the entry fees collected go into the prize fund.

The prize drawings will be held before our September meeting.

For more information check out the Laurel Highlands Trout Trail website at laurelhighlandstrouttrail.org and view more photos at forbestrailtu.org/laurel-highlands-trout-trail-poker-run

THE FORBES TRAIL CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

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Youngstown, PA 15696

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

SEPTEMBER 2

Officer/Director Nominations
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

OCTOBER 7

Annual Meeting - Election of Officers/Directors
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

NOVEMBER 4

Monthly Meeting
6:00 pm Nimick Education Center

