



Trout Tales

Rocky River Chapter Trout Unlimited

August 2010



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Happy August! Enjoy the heat and thunderstorms and look forward to cooler months. I have a big 'Thank You' to all the current and past members of RRTU. The past few years we have been raising money with the idea of a 'Big Project' coming our way. I don't think anyone ever actually knew what it would be but rather thought we would recognize it when we saw it. Well, I think we have found one of those type projects. There is a need for \$30,000 to secure the acquisition of about 80 acres of land that impacts access to the upper section of the North Mills River. The real beauty of this investment in the North Mills is that once it is purchased by the Forest Service (in 2012 or 2013) the \$30,000 will be returned to TU in a trust fund for use on similar projects in Western North Carolina only. The trust fund will be managed as a restricted fund by TU National with NCTU having approval/veto privileges on fund expenditures. RRTU has a seat on the NCTU Council and therefore has a vote on where and how this fund is to be used. Pat yourself on the back as your efforts will make a difference.

Damon Hearne, Southeastern Land Protection Coordinator with Trout Unlimited, will present the August meeting program at REI Northlake mall at 7PM. The program will cover several projects in the southeast, including the North Mills/Big Creek Lodge property. We hope you will join us at the meeting!

The RRTU annual meeting occurs on September 15. The meeting will be at REI Northlake for the election of officers for the next year. Make your vote count by attending this meeting.

South Mountain State Park is hosting Nature Days on September 25 and has invited RRTU back. In the past, we have had fly tying and casting demonstrations as well as members working the crowd explaining TU's mission and how they can help. If you would like to volunteer, contact **Jim Mabrey** or **Bill Thomas** (bthomas999@bellsouth.net) to sign up.

Our fall Appletree trip is on the horizon. Expect sign up information in September.

- **Jim Mabrey** (rtojim@gmail.com)

RRTU Calendar of Events

Aug 18 ... RRTU meeting. Presentation by Damon Hearne (Southeast Land Protection Coordinator for TU)

Sep 15 ... RRTU annual meeting: Election of officers and new board members

Sep 25 ... South Mountain State Park - Nature Days

Oct 7-10 ... Appletree trip

Oct 20 ... RRTU meeting

Friends of Rocky River (FORR) update

In January 2010 RRTU launched a new fundraising initiative designed to eventually become the primary source of chapter income. With over 700 members, we feel confident that modest, annual pledges from members and business affiliates can raise the capital necessary to operate the chapter and sponsor our projects. Under the FORR program, we are challenging our members, friends and affiliates to make an annual donation to fund our activities.

If you have not yet sent a donation, please do so. Mail donations to RRTU, C/O Terry Hill, PO Box 456, Matthews, NC 28106.

- **Steve Craig/Terry Hill**, FORR Committee

RRTU Items For Sale – contact Bill Thomas

We still have a few items that were donated to raise money for the TIC programs we support. We would like to offer them to the local membership.

- Two nights at Meredith Valley Cabins in Elizabethton, TN (\$240 retail)

- Two to four tickets for a Pittsburgh Pirates home baseball game - 10 rows off of home plate (priceless)

- **Bill Thomas** (bthomas999@bellsouth.net)

TAILS FROM THE CREEK

Been fishing? Who went with you? Where did you fish? What did you use? #18 pinkie? Stick bait?

We're anxious to hear about your fishing adventures; your stories may inspire others to try out a new place. Please share!

- **Jonathan** and **Tim**

North Mills news from Tim Wilhelm

I participated in a conference call on August 5 and the state council voted to contribute matching funds totaling \$10,000 to the North Mills effort. Basically for every dollar given by a chapter, NCTU would give a dollar, so our chapter donation of \$5,000 has the weight of 1/3 of the total ask. Pat yourselves on the back.

Can't give you exact figures, but there have been roughly \$3,500 given by individuals and \$8,500 from chapters. With NCTU's matching donation that would make the running total roughly \$20,500. There are a couple chapters that are discussing the issue and I expect with that we will reach the \$10,000 NCTU would match.

That leaves perhaps \$6,000 that might need to come from other sources. There are some individuals that have been long time supporters of TU in North Carolina that are contacting their friends and associates with a direct and personal request for contributions, so I think the total amount needed, \$30,000, is within reach. Hopefully, there will not be a need for any heroic action at the eleventh hour, however, as council chair Dave Maeda stated: "Failure is not an option".

- **Tim Wilhelm**

What's NEW at tu.org

How many of you make use of the Trout Unlimited web presence? Do not ignore this valuable resource. You will find the TU web site here:

<http://www.tu.org/>

This summer TU has a television program titled *On the Rise* airing on the Sportsman Channel. If you do not have access to the Sportsman Channel, links for those

video segments are available on the TU website. You will find radio interviews and pictures as well. Check at this URL for more information:

<http://www.tu.org/press-room/on-the-rise>

- **Jonathan**

Appletree stories

Jim Mabrey asked several spring 2010 Appletree attendees to write a short story on their fishing experience. In some cases this would be father-son fishing, fishing with a good friend or even fishing with a new acquaintance. The August 2010 selection was written by RRTU member **Jonathan Miller** ...

Though I have only attended a few of the recent Appletree trips, each one has brought a slightly different experience. And each time I have had the pleasure of bringing my son Brian ... we have been fishing together for most of his life! In the early days we trout fished mostly in Watauga County ... Dutch Creek, Elk Creek, Goshen Creek, Meat Camp Creek, Middle Fork of the New River, Watauga River with the occasional pond thrown in for good measure. Later when my cousin shared some of his knowledge of Ashe and Alleghany County streams, we started to fish those too. Those two counties added a number of streams to our list ... Cranberry Creek, Peak Creek, Roan Creek, Piney Fork Creek, Meadow Fork Creek, Three Top Creek, North Fork of the New River, Big Laurel Creek, Big Horse Creek and Buffalo Creek. Our first real exposure to fly fishing was on opening day of trout season in 2007 when Brian was living in Spruce Pine. We awoke on that Saturday morning pretty early to find 2-3 inches of snow on the ground ... and it was STILL snowing. We had planned to fish the hatchery supported section of Cane Creek outside of Bakersville. We drove over and parked on the railroad right of way near the junction of Cane Creek and the Toe River. We tried both spinners and worms as we worked our way upstream with no strikes. A fellow from Virginia was ahead of us on the stream and he was fly fishing (using nymphs). He already had his limit and he let Brian borrow his fly rod to try it out. With a little bit of instruction Brian started to catch fish left and right and I don't think it took 30 minutes for Brian to limit out. I tried a few casts and though I did not take to it as

quickly as Brian, I did catch my first fish (a nice rainbow) on a fly that day. Well since that time Brian has been (mostly) fly fishing for trout. Some of you who have seen me fly cast have given Brian this advice: "Your father needs professional help." And I suppose you are right! When RiverGirl Kelly McCoy was at the least meeting I noticed how reasonable her rates were; so I may run up there sometime in late September as a warm up for the upcoming Appletree trip.

In all our years of fishing together Brian and I have not concentrated much on the biggest fish or the most fish or the first fish or the last fish. In other words we have not turned fishing into a competitive sport. Mostly we're just happy to be out there on the stream matching wits with those trout. Over the years we've had plenty of trips where we fished all day without much success; but even when he was young, Brian never complained about that. We've had fair success the past few years and that's enjoyable as well. Besides just being "out there," I enjoy watching Brian fish. He's more observant than me and he picks up on hatches more quickly than I do. At the fall 2009 Appletree trip he noticed a blue winged olive hatch on the Nantahala on Friday afternoon; he caught several trout during that hatch. He talked me into switching to the BWO and when I hooked and landed a brown, I believe Brian was more excited than I was! During that hatch he hooked up with a trout while the Great Smoky Mountain Railroad train was passing; he had several people in the open air cars cheering for him. I know I've never had anyone cheering for me ... except maybe Brian!

During the spring 2010 Appletree trip Brian landed the largest trout he's ever caught on a stream ... a large brown he caught in the lower DH section of the Nantahala just below the powerhouse. This is what I sent some friends about this fish:

I must tell you the story of the "miracle" fish ... it's the BIG brown (German) trout that Brian is holding near the end of the slide show. That's the largest trout he's ever caught while stream fishing ... truth be told - that was supposed to be MY fish. We were fishing the Delayed Harvest (DH) section of the Nantahala River below the pumphouse (the one which says DANGER WATER MAY RISE RAPIDLY WITHOUT WARNING) on Saturday afternoon. Water from that pumphouse actually comes from Nantahala Lake on the other side of the mountains ... this

extra water supports the rafting and kayaking on the Nantahala above the Nantahala Outdoor Center. Anyway ... our plan on Saturday afternoon was to have me find/catch a large trout. Brian and I had been fishing together just above the pumphouse. I had crossed over to the river left side of the stream and Brian had stayed on the river right. He had just lost all of his wooly boogers a couple of holes earlier (don't ask) so he had tied on a single hook bass worm jig. So here he is fishing in a trout stream with a bass lure and oh yeah ... he left his net in the Ford. So I'm on Brian's left headed downstream when I hear him yell that he's got a big fish on and that he wants my net. So back across the stream I went in order to try and net the fish. While I was on the way, the fish was working on an escape plan ... it ran up the current into some tree roots and wrapped the line in those; then it went underneath a log and headed downstream. That was the situation when I arrived at the roots ... Brian was VERY anxious (ie. yelling) at me to untangle the line from the roots. I could not see the fish but I could see the tangled line, so I untangled it from the roots. Then I followed it down under the tree and through the water downstream. I could not imagine that the fish was still on so I gently pulled on the line; the fish rose to the surface and that was our first look at THE fish. It was definitely a BIG brown trout and was still on the line ... now Brian is shouting for me to untangle the line from that tree. For some reason I just never quite understood what he wanted ... so he ended up coming over, lifting the tree out of the water and running that nine foot fly rod underneath the tree to untangle the line himself. Now he's free to fight the fish some more and he starts working the fish to the river left side of the stream. I still have the net and, silly me, I had brought my rod with me when I came across the stream. Now I've tangled my line in the trees on the river right side and I still have the net! Brian wants the net so I waded half way across and tossed that to him. So now he's trying to hold the net, the rod and land this fish at the same time. I go back to the river right side, get myself untangled from the trees (I'll write another story sometime about large trees I have caught) and then look over to see Brian down on his knees with the big one in the net. I think he may have been thanking the fish gods. From "fish on" to the landing ... we're estimating that the

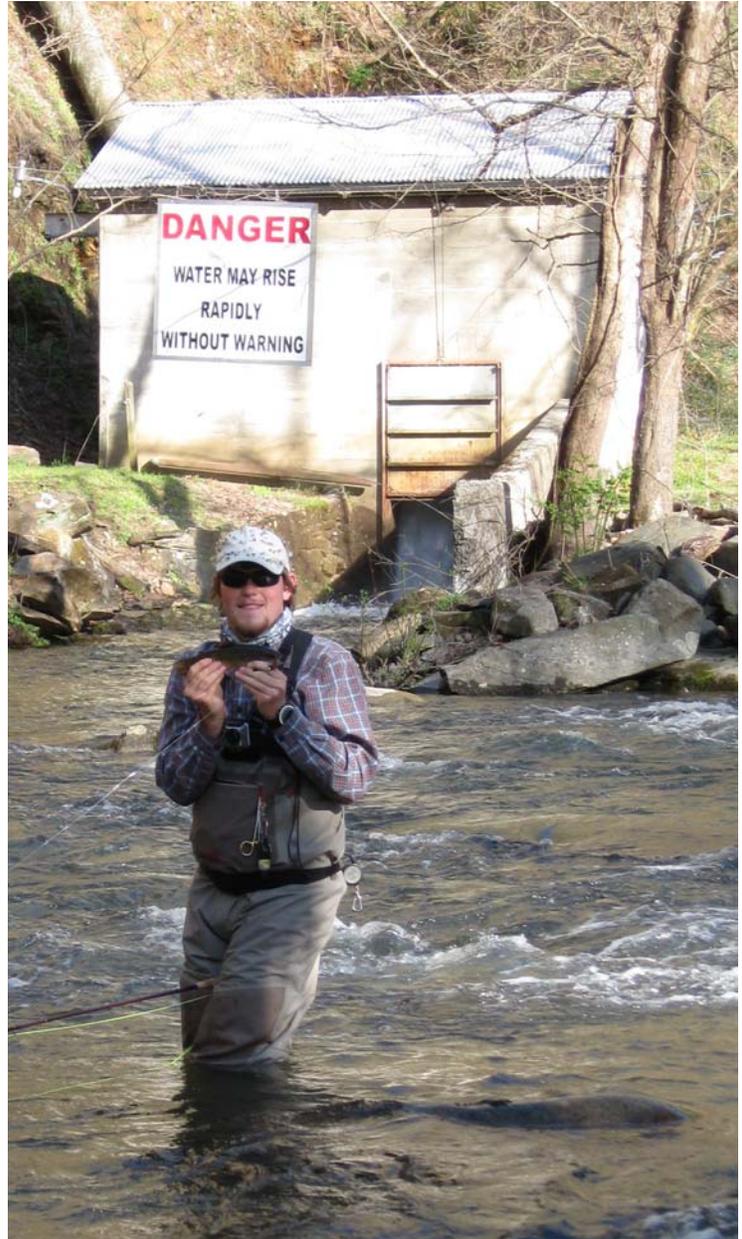
whole thing probably took less than 15 minutes ... but it seemed like a long time! And boy was it exciting ... and I must emphasize the importance of MY role in this whole thing. After all ... I waded across the stream twice, untangled the line from the roots, tugged gently on the line while the fish was on and let him borrow my net for the landing. That's my story and I'm sticking to it!

I have enjoyed all the Appletree trips thus far. Everyone has made us feel very welcome on these trips! The RRTU members who attend all seem to have a fine time fishing, eating, camping, talking together on these trips. These are a few highlights which seem to happen on each trip:

- the Thursday night stews (cooked by Kurt several times)
- the nightly bonfires (usually manned by Caleb)
- the Saturday night cobbler (made by Dave)

Oh ... and don't forget the fishing! As you can see, the food is an important part of these fishing trips; Bill and Jim do a fantastic job on meal planning and execution. Everyone pitches in and having many hands makes the workload on any one person a bit less. If you have not attended one of the RRTU Appletree trips, I would highly recommend them. Bring your father or your son or your friend ... or make a new friend when you arrive. That will add even more to the experience. Hope to see many of you in October at the fall Appletree trip.

- **Jonathan**



FLY OF THE MONTH

“The Catskill style of dry fly captures the mayfly silhouette. It perches on its hackle points and tail fibers, giving the proper light impression on the water of a mayfly dun drifting on the surface waiting for its wings to dry. In brisk water, this light impression is the key that triggers trout to move upward to take the fly. That is one reason why the traditional hackled dry is often more effective than a more imitative dressing, tied without hackle... Another reason is that the imitative dressing is difficult to keep afloat and hard to see when it does remain on the surface.” (Dave Hughes, Trout Flies the Tier’s Reference.)

I suppose the Light Cahill was my first fly of choice simply for those very reasons that Mr. Hughes states. The fly floats well and is easy to see. As my skills and abilities improved, that “go to” fly became an Elk Hair Caddis and then a Parachute Adams, both progressively darker and lower in the water. Yet there is nothing that compares to a Catskill pattern and once the tie is mastered, simple adjustments in color and size can leave your fly box well supplied for any hatch and many streams.

Ernest Schwiebert tells us in his two volume tome TROUT that the pattern was developed by Daniel Cahill who “*was a simple man who fished and worked as a brakeman on the Erie and Lackawanna...*” Although his text does not give a date, taken in context with the story Schwiebert is telling, the pattern appears to have been developed in the 1880’s.

The Light Cahill is identified by W. Patrick McCafferty in his aquatic entomology book as being a flatheaded mayfly (Family Heptageniidae), called such because of its appearance while in its nymph form. Certainly we

have all picked up stones in the stream and found these critters scurrying about on the underside.

McCafferty goes on to say: “*In eastern and central regions,*

species of the genera Stenonema and Stenacron can be very important: these genera occur both in trout waters and in warmer waters that do not support trout. The familiar name Light Cahill applies primarily to Stenacron interpunctatum.”



The Light Cahill hatch can be quite sparse, but it can be important because there is so little competition on the water on late-season evenings. The best hatching in the East is in late June and early July.

CATSKILL LIGHT CAHILL DRY



HOOK : Dry, 1X Fine, Round Bend – Tiemco 100 or equivalent size **12,14,16,18,20**
Thread : Uni 8/0 Light Cahill
Tail : Cream Rooster Spade hackle
Body : Light Cahill dry fly dub
Wings : Lemon Wood duck flank
Legs: Cream Rooster hackle

NOTE TO READERS: This seems complicated and there is a lot of description, but do not let that hinder you from trying. After the first attempt, reread the directions and I hope they become clearer.

Directions:

1. Wrap tight from the eye, starting two or three eye lengths back from eye, to approx. one third (1/3) the distance to the hook bend. Let bobbin hang.
2. Select Lemon Wood Duck flank feathers. Choose a feather by observing the total width of the center and straightest, i.e. pull back those which do not line up evenly at the end of the feather. Do not pluck the unneeded ones and save them for later use on other flies. Pinching the center ones and stroke forward you can observe if they appear too few or too many for the size fly being tied. Practice will help in this selection. You may also pre-size and separate

feathers once purchased and store as preselected avoiding some anxiety.

3. Tie in the whole feather, with several firm wraps, at the rearmost point of the thread wrap leaving the length of the wings approx. one and one half (1 ½) the size of the hook gape. With the wings somewhat secure, bring the thread forward of the tie in point (approx. six turns) and bring it under the wings and over the top of the hook shank. Take the thread firmly back toward the hook bend and over the shank pulling against the wings and they will rise up to the correct position. It may take several wraps to firmly position the wings, but do not build up the thread to hold them in place. The tension of the angle by the thread from pulling back against them should do the trick.
4. Cut the excess feather as close to the upright as the tie in allows, using a straight, vertical cut with your scissors.
5. With the thread forward of the wings, select and divide the upright wing into approx. halves. Grasp the one-half, divided feathers away from the tier with your left hand, bring the thread through the middle gap (toward the hook bend) over the top of the shank and pull down firmly immediately past and down of the upright feathers, bringing the thread around the base of the feathers and over the hook shank, going first to the eye and then to the bend. That will leave the thread such that the same action on the feathers closest to the tier may be wrapped in the same fashion. This will create an "x" pattern around the base of the upright feathers on top of the hook shank. Do this several turns and finish with two turns over and under the shank in an "x". Take the thread to the hook bend in tight wraps and bring wraps back to the stub of the wings (where they are tied on top of the hook shank) and let the bobbin hang.
6. Select eight or ten cream spade hackle barbs choosing web free, stiff ones from a feather. Holding by the tips will even them and pull away as one from the quill. This should leave a curly section at the base of the barbs which you can trim with scissors making the end nice and even. Place the barbs on top of the hook and butt them against the end of the wings. Keeping the tail on top of the shank, wrap the thread

softly over about half of the tail and let the bobbin hang while you examine the length of the tail. Trim and repeat as often as necessary to make the length, past the bend, about same length as the shank. When satisfied with the length, wrap the thread softly from the hook bend (directly above the barb of the hook) toward the eye and increase pressure as you approach the wings rearmost tie in point. Return the thread to the point above the hook barb and let the bobbin hang.

7. Begin dubbing by waxing about two inches of thread, pull a tiny amount of dub from the package and spin the dubbing on with your fingers. Always rotate in the same direction. Make the dub very, very small and tight. It will often take several applications of dub to finish almost any size hook. Begin wrapping the dubbed thread forward in tight loops and add dub as necessary advancing to two eye widths back from the wings. Let bobbin hang.
8. Select cream rooster hackle sized for the hook, this should be slightly larger than the hook gape (about one and one half (1 ½)). Strip a quarter inch to expose the quill and tie in, with the shiny side facing the tier, at a 45 degree angle. The first two wraps of thread will bind the quill behind the wing and there should be enough quills to wrap several turns in front of the wing. Do not overwrap thread at this point and make sure to leave two eye lengths bare of thread. Let the bobbin hang.
9. Grasping the hackle by the tip (you can use hackle pliers, though I usually do not for the first several wraps on size 16 and larger hooks) advance the hackle by wrapping for three or four turns behind the wings and the same in front of the wings. Make sure as you wrap the hackle does not rotate or spin on itself. Always keep the shiny side toward the eye. Stop two eye lengths back from the eye and pick up the bobbin allowing the thread to bind the hackle stem against the hook. By wiggling the thread back and forth slightly as the thread is wrapped it will work its way between the barbs avoiding an unsightly gather of barbs. Three or four tight wraps to secure.
10. Form head with several wraps and apply cement.

This is the area of the newsletter where I try to persuade those that are receiving their newsletter by snail mail to subscribe to the expanded email newsletter, but since you already receive the email version, I don't have to beg.

We, Jonathan Miller (editor), Tom Adams (fly tier/photographer extraordinaire), and myself (the guy responsible for folding and placing stamps on the email version), want to thank you for making the effort to subscribe and we hope you enjoy it. If you have ideas or would like to contribute something, please let us know. There is always room on the editorial staff.

There is one thing you can do for us. Tell your friends what they are missing and encourage them to subscribe. Come the first of the year, we are going to be making changes in how we distribute the newsletter by dropping those that are receiving the newsletter by snail mail. We'll still issue an email version and would like to see everyone receive that. Perhaps if you might speak with them, they might subscribe.

Thanks

Tim

**August Meeting Program:
Damon Hearne, TU Southeast Land Protection Coordinator**

**REI Northlake Mall
9755 Northlake Centre Parkway
Charlotte, NC 28216
Wednesday August 18th
Social Time: 6:30 pm
Meeting Starts: 7:00 pm**