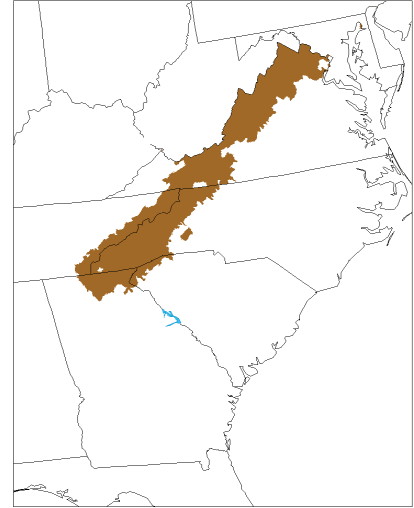


The Eastern Brook Trout Newsletter: South Eastern Division

*A partnership between
Trout Unlimited And the
Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture,
Together with all who value
Brook Trout And its Habitat*



Southeast Calendar

SouthEast RALLY – April 25, 26, 27 at Hungry Mother State Park in SW Virginia. Room and Board, good fishing and leadership training, all for \$90 for all. For reservation and information go to TU web site.

TROUTFEST -May 17 & 18 in TN - Troutfest raises funds for BT – Little River chapter in Tennessee – May 17 & 18 with a banquet the night before on the 16th. For info contact Jeff Hall at J.D.Hall@charter.net

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GEORGIA - Kevin McGrath, Georgia TU's BTB Chair

GA TU's focus this summer is on beginning restoration of Stover Creek and our intern program.

Stover Creek Restoration. Gold Rush TU, working with Oconee River TU, GA TU Back-the-Brookie, Chattahoochee National Forest and GA Department of Natural Resources, was awarded a TU Embrace-A- Stream Grant for restoration of Stover Creek to Southern Appalachian Brook Trout. Stover Creek is located in the shadow Springer Mountain, the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail. The Appalachian Trail crosses Stover Creek several times in one of the oldest and largest Eastern Hemlock stands on the east coast. Our plan is to heighten an existing barrier to prevent migration of brown and rainbow trout into brook trout water during high water events. Brown and rainbow trout will be removed from the area that they occupy above the barrier. Along the stream, structures are planned to improve flow and provide habitat. The Southern Appalachian Brook Trout population may be augmented from wild Southern Appalachian Brook Trout from nearby stream in the same watershed. Stover Creek is historically a brookie stream.

Interns. GA TU plans another robust intern program this summer. Thanks to contributions from many of our Chapters and a grant from Georgia Power, we will be able to expand our activities. We plan to continue stream mapping and habitat analysis and event water sam-

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ling. This year, with the help of our interns and Chapter work days, we are project building over one hundred in-stream structures in brook trout watersheds.

South Carolina by Dave Van Lear, SCTU's BTB Chair

Conservation:

Field work has been slow this winter but plans are progressing for restoration work during the rest of the year. The Partnership hopes to begin brook trout restoration in streams of the Jocassee Gorges, a state-owned 33,000 ac tract that lies in the middle of the brook trout's natural range in the state, i.e., between Oconee County in the west and Greenville County in the east. This tract contains numerous streams that once contained brook trout, but a century of logging and stocking non-native species has resulted in those streams now lacking brookies. We (TU and DNR) have written a proposal for funding to assess the habitat in those streams using the Basin-Wide Visual Estimation Technique and to use that information to enhance habitat for brook trout. These streams will be electroshocked to learn the extent of non-native brown and rainbow trout so that they can be removed before southern Appalachian brookies are stocked.

When southern Appalachian brookies are restored in streams of the Jocassee Gorges, brookies will then occupy headwater streams in all major drainages of the state where they once occurred. In the western part of their state range, in Oconee County, two streams have already been successfully restored to southern Appalachian brook trout, after first removing non-native trout, with documented reproduction in both for two years. Two other streams have been stocked with wild mixed strain brookies and reproduction observed. All four of these streams have protective barriers in the form of large waterfalls or cascades that prevent upstream movement of browns and rainbows into the brook trout sections.

In Greenville County in the eastern portion of the brookies' original range, a number of streams have sustaining populations of brook trout on protected lands. Some of these streams have been electroshocked and are known to have stable populations of brook trout. Some have the southern Appalachian strain of brookies while others have wild mixed strain brookies.

Trout Unlimited volunteers have helped SCDNR and Forest Service crews with the electroshocking and with the stocking efforts. They also have helped prepare streams for electroshocking by removing vegetation that interferes with the electroshocking efforts. TU volunteers will help monitor water quality in restored streams by sampling water quality and stream temperatures.

Education:

We are planning a Fall meeting of landowners who own property along brook trout streams in the state. We will use this meeting to educate those landowners about the status of the brook trout and current efforts to restore the species. As was done for conservation/environmental leaders this past fall, a short segment of a brook trout stream will be electroshocked this coming Fall to show attendees how beautiful the southern Appalachian brookie is when in spawning colors and why they need protection.

We are writing another article about brook trout restoration efforts in South Carolina

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and plan to submit it to Sandlapper – The Magazine of South Carolina. In mid-March, we are also hosting Dr. Michael Steinberg, an author who is researching a book about the eastern brook trout. He will visit some of our brookie restoration streams.

TU volunteers have played a major education role in publicizing the restoration efforts by writing articles, making posters, hosting field trips, and giving numerous presentations about the restoration efforts.

TENNESSEE by TNTU's Jeff Hall & George Lane

The Little River Chapter's Troutfest is an outdoor arts and craft festival held annually by the Little River Chapter of Trout Unlimited. Now in its fifth year, Troutfest serves as a means for the Chapter to raise funds for Southern Appalachian brook trout restoration projects in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Troutfest features local artisans, vendors, live music, fly tying, fly casting, activities for children, and an education tent on the grounds of the Townsend, TN visitor's center. The education tent includes sections manned by various organizations, including the Great Smoky Mountains Fisheries Department, the Tennessee Wildlife Resources Association, the Little River Chapter, Casting for Recovery (a group that helps breast cancer survivors), and the University of Tennessee with its live bee display.

Troutfest falls on the third weekend in May. That puts this year's dates as 17 & 18 May, with a banquet on the evening of the 16th preceding the main outdoor activities.

Troutfest has allowed the Little River Chapter to donate \$46,000 over the past four years to the Park's Fisheries Department. The Park critically needs the funds for its ongoing brook trout restoration work, which includes a successful Southern Appalachian restoration on Sams Creek on the Tennessee side of the Smokies. This year, the Park will begin its most ambitious restoration work to date, the Lynn Camp Prong project in the same Middle Prong Little River watershed. If successful, the Lynn Camp restoration project will allow brook trout to live in seven miles of a Smokies stream below an elevation of 1,067m, an important factor given that such an elevation results in less negative impacts from acid deposition and its harmful pH affects on fish.

It's an important project. Indeed, the Great Smoky Mountains Fisheries Department presented the Lynn Camp Prong project to the Eastern Brook Trout Joint Venture (EBTJV), and the EBTJV subsequently rated it as the number one proposal for funding.

The Little River Chapter will not only assist the project with funding, but will do so with manpower as well. Chapter volunteers will work closely with the Fisheries department during the project timeline of Apr 08 - Jun 09. Such work allows the Chapter to help fulfill its mission of "conserving, protecting, and restoring coldwater resources in and around the Great Smoky Mountains National Park."

STATEWIDE RECOGNITION

The Tennessee Wildlife Federation has given the Trout Unlimited Brook Trout education module their Conservation Communication award for 2007. The ceremony was held in Nashville on

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Wednesday night, March 19. More information about the ceremony can be found on www.tnwf.org.

This educational video and its companion lesson plans for high school students is the dedicated work of TU member Linda Good. Linda also received a National Award from TU for this work. It is doubling rewarding to have another organization reward our efforts. This is well deserved recognition for an outstanding contribution.

VIRGINIA by Larry Puckett, VATU's BTB Chair

Two Virginia Chapters were the recipients of Embrace A Stream grants this year. Our Winchester Chapter received a grant for their Redbud Run project where they are attempting to establish a breeding population of brookies in a Shenandoah Valley spring creek. The chapter is also supporting two "Trout in the Classroom" installation at local schools near the stream.

The New River Valley chapter located in Blacksburg, received their grant for a project on Stony Creek. In the project, the chapter working with the USFS and the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries will develop a riparian corridor for approximately 1 mile of Stony Creek by planting native trees, repairing and re-vegetating eroding banks, and improving in-stream habitat using log and rock structures. Other grants and funding are also being pursued to expand this into a major, multi-year project.

Finally, Virginia just reactivated a chapter in the Abingdon-Marion-Wytheville area along I-81. This is a very important move since this chapter is located near some of the state's most important native trout streams in the area southwest of Roanoke.

