

WINCHESTER  
TROUT UNLIMITED



CHAPTER #638

Celebrating  
30 Years of  
Lateral Lines

# Lateral Lines

The Monthly Magazine of Winchester Trout Unlimited  
Chapter #638

But ask the animals, and they will teach you. Job 12:17 (NIV)

July 2025

Volume 30, Number 7

## Winchester TU Meeting

Thursday, 7 August 2025, 7:00 PM  
Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge,  
Lake Frederick, VA

## Winchester TU Priority Waters Meeting

Thursday, 7 August 2025, 6:00 PM  
Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge,  
Lake Frederick, VA

## Project Healing Waters Monthly meeting

Wednesday, 13 August 2025  
Agenda to be announced later  
RSVP Required

## BarFly

The next Winchester TU BarFly  
Wednesday, 16 July 2025  
7:00 PM at Escutcheon Brewing Co.  
142 W. Commercial Street, Winchester

For complete calendars, please see  
Page 4 for Priority Waters Field Days  
Page 8 for Winchester Project Healing Waters  
Page 20 for Winchester Trout Unlimited



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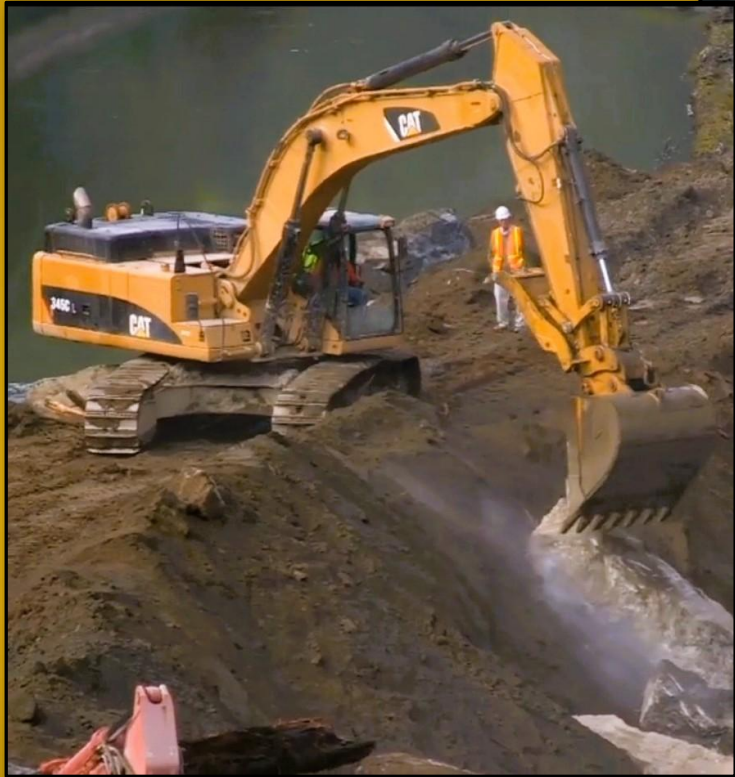
## Winchester TU Featured Video

Thursday, 7 August 2025 at 7:00 PM

Elwha River Dam Removal

"Return of the River"

introduction by  
Luke Robins



Luke has lived near the Elwha River in the state of Washington and is very familiar with the river before and after the removal of both dams. He has seen firsthand the initial recovery of migrating salmon in the Elwha River.

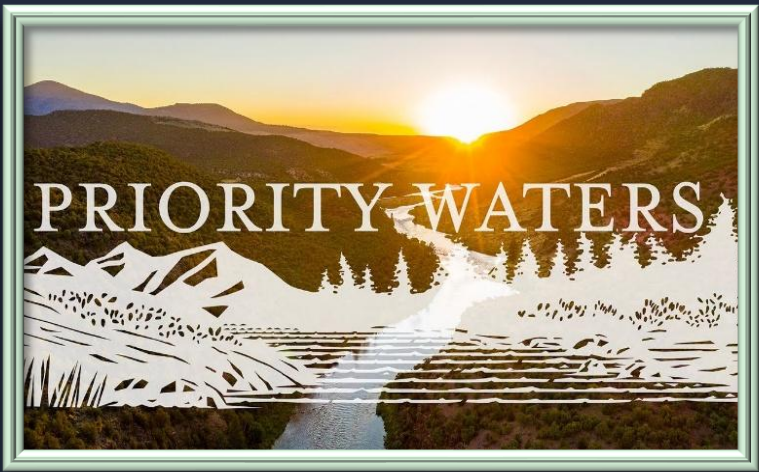
photo credit: "Return of the River"





# Winchester TU Priority Waters: Stream Barrier Assessment & Field Day

by Michael Lawler Smith



The Winchester TU Priority Waters team convened Thursday, 19 June 2025, via Zoom, to make final plans for their 25 June initial assessment of stream barriers. Team leader Mike Makufka advised the group that a health issue would prevent his field participation but noted that Luke Robins and Tedd Gimber could lead the activities that day based upon their recent successful training in barrier assessments.

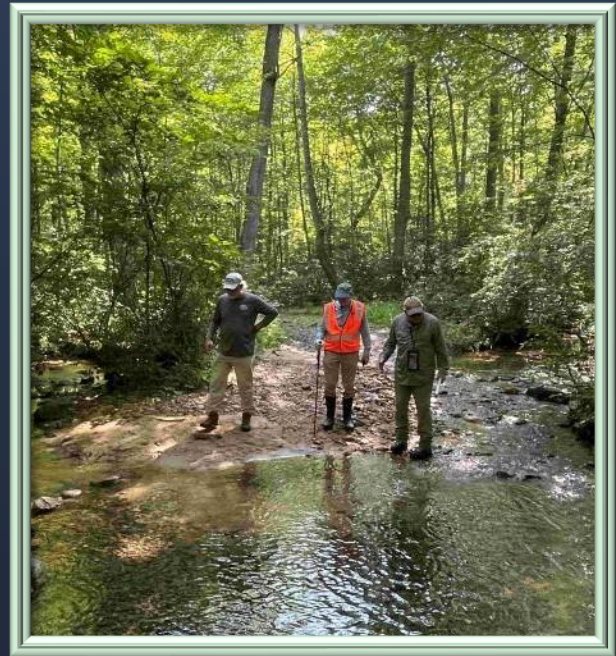
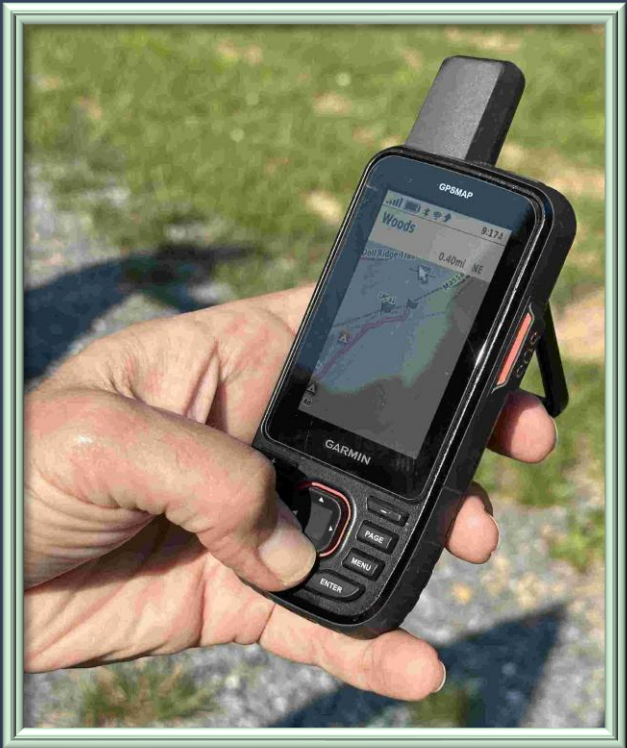
Mike indicated he would provide Luke the key to the gated Forest Road. The group also discussed its plans for the 8 July field outing which would be the first official “data harvest” from the HOBO “TidBit” data loggers the team had placed in April. Mike M. requested that all team members advise him of their availability for the 8 July 2025 project.

The group also discussed potential and substantive roles that the Northern Virginia Chapter might be able to play. The group has acknowledged the desirability for a detailed inventory of aquatic benthic invertebrates.

One team member queried if there was a standard form or collection protocol that TU advocated. Several team members noted that TU chapters usually used the collection practices and forms developed by Save Our Streams and that the Save Our Streams group would even come out and conduct training in their method.



On Wednesday morning, 25 June, the Priority Waters field crew (Tedd Gimber, Drew Patterson, John Prescott, Luke Robins and Mike Smith) departed the Target parking lot at Riverton Plaza shortly after 8:00 AM and headed toward the uppermost sites on Little Passage. The group had decided this locale would yield the best opportunity for easy access and still permit several measurements before either the heat wave or a thunderstorm won the day.



**Top left:** Luke Robins shares with John Prescott and Drew Patterson some of the key points learned at the stream barrier assessment training.

photo by Mike Smith

**Above:** Tedd Gimber checks his GPS to locate the first barrier the Forest Service’s earlier field survey had disclosed.

photo by Mike Smith

**Left:** Drew Patterson, Mike Smith, and Luke Robins watch the schools of small fishes observed at the uppermost site: blacknose dace and creek chub were reasonably certain IDs. But the possibility of subadult brook trout added a touch of extra excitement.

photo by John Prescott

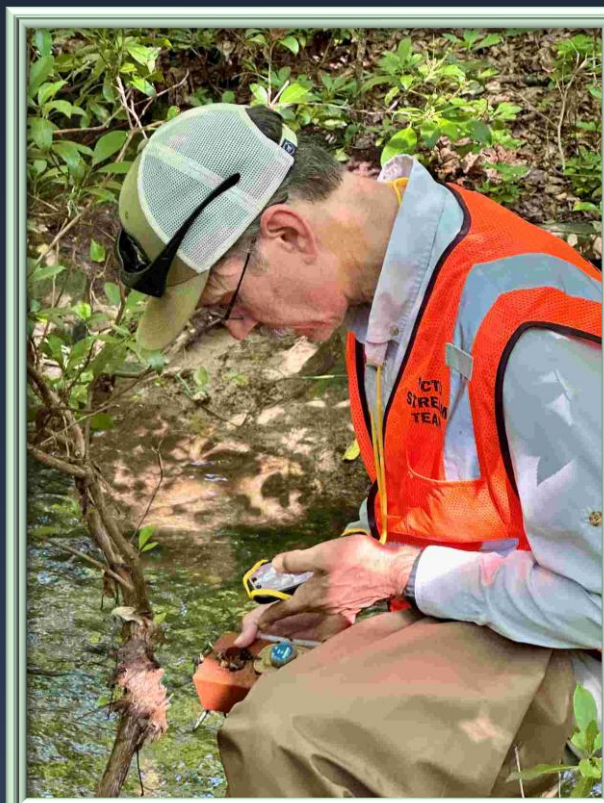
**“Priority Waters” continues on the next page.**



# Winchester TU Priority Waters: Stream Barrier Assessment & Field Day -- continued

Once up on the rutted access road, all were favorably impressed by both stream flow and soil moisture. Water temperatures were quite reasonable considering the time of year and current heat wave. The group was enthused and excited by the sightings of *possible* subadult or young-of-year brook trout at the first barrier site upstream from Strasburg Reservoir. Among the “for sure” species spotted (to the extent aging eyes can be trusted): eastern blacknose dace and creek chub. But the collective belief that all had seen at least a few brook trout was really encouraging.

Since this site was just a brief walk from the first data logger, Tedd used his hand-held GPS to relocate the April-deployed TidBit device — the preliminary data that linked and fed to the software on his smart phone was very encouraging, with May-June water temperatures ranging no higher than 66 degree F.



The second barrier site was the water control structure in Strasburg Reservoir, and its concrete outflow tailwater. This latter site is now under very heavy forest canopy, and the channel braiding noted in April seems far less pronounced now. Nonetheless, the group still believes it needs to seek counsel from a biologist and hydrologist regarding some habitat repair in the 100' (+/-) linear feet of stream immediately below the outfall.

The quest for the third site listed on the initial Forest Service barrier inventory yielded no visual (from the roadway) stream obstacle at all. The group concluded that the earlier GPS coordinates may have been entered in error and that the true third site is, in fact, the road ford.

At this site, the team observed an even greater number of fishes — mostly creek chubs, plus more eastern blacknose dace, and a possible sighting of a rosyside dace. Luke explored up by the head of the pool and estimated that the water was nearly three feet deep.



**Top:** Tedd Gimber prepares to download stream temperature readings from the HOBO “TidBit” data to the software on his smartphone. The Priority Waters team will revisit the project streams on 8 July for further data captures.

photo by Mike Smith

**Above:** Drew Patterson and Tedd Gimber consult on the best approach to determine a “bank full” reading for the stream.

photo by Joyn Prescott

**Right:** Tedd Gimber (l) adjusts a range finder, as John Prescott holds the stadia rod on the concrete release structure below Strasburg Reservoir.

photo by Mike Smith



“Priority Waters” continues on the next page.



# Winchester TU Priority Waters: Stream Barrier Assessment & Field Day – continued

Tedd Gimber and Luke Robins attempted to determine a formal “bank full” stream height; and to this end, Luke and Drew Patterson hiked a short distance downstream according to the recommended measurement formula demonstrated in stream barrier assessment training.

John Prescott and Mike Smith, meanwhile, had been learning how to use the laser range finders — though the sites visited that day generally did not require their use. All in the group noted that at the tail-out of the ford pool, it was obvious that “normal” high flow events could easily reach a level a full two feet above the stage observed that day. Moreover, there was an obvious embankment that appeared to have been augmented recently with fresh deposits of sand and cobble.

Understandably, the character of the upper Little Passage Creek corridor is visually quite changed from the April visit. The summer vegetation is abundant, even lush. Soil moisture is high, and it appears the water table is currently capable of maintaining a reasonably healthy base flow. Regular replenishing rainfall, obviously, will greatly improve over-summer trout survival.

Despite the success of the outing, there is a discouraging observation to share: the road in, poor as it was in April, is now significantly worse. There are troublingly deep incisions not only in the main road bed (especially on slopes) but also along the side “gutters” of the roadway. It is difficult to dismiss the potential impact such storm damage may have on silt deposition in the stream. Road damage may now have to be counted as a serious long-term threat to upper Little Passage. And, realistically, effective and economical solutions are likely unavailable for the foreseeable future.



## VCTU focuses on Priority Waters

by Michael Lawler Smith

The most recent gathering of the Virginia Council of Trout Unlimited was held 30 May – 1 June 2025 at Hungry Mother State Park, just north of Marion, VA.

One of the focuses of the meeting was to highlight challenges and progress made by various chapters in addressing TU’s national goals for conserving Priority Waters.

Three members of the Winchester Team Represented Winchester Trout Unlimited – team leader Mike Makufka, Mike Hart, and Mike Smith. The weekend was geared less toward “show and tell” chapter reports, and more to national and regional guidelines, along with insights into the rapidly shifting scene of federal budget cuts and impacts on public lands and waters.

TU Regional Vice-president for Eastern Conservation, Keith Curley, shared with the group that in its Midwest region, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service had already sustained a 20% cut to its fisheries budget. Even before the impacts of these cuts are fully realized at the field level, Curley advocated for increased outreach methods to build better grassroots networks of volunteers to address pressing local conservation needs.

He also emphasized the need to explore lower cost, low-tech habitat restoration methods wherever possible. And Curley shared some impressive examples of TU field projects in West Virginia in which deeply incised streams had been restored to dramatically improve critical base summer flows.

Seth Coffman and Sammy Vest provided an excellent overview of the restoration opportunities in the Upper James and Blue Ridge watersheds, and long-term conservation goals. They noted, too, that the Grayson Highlands is also an area of great concern, but TU still has to develop greater capacity – more local chapters – within that region before substantive projects can progress.

TU’s stream restoration specialist Ben Bradley updated the group on Virginia’s Aquatic Organism Passage and Barrier Survey and urged that members familiarize themselves with TU’s Rivers App where they can log stream data and upload pictures of barriers.

The Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources (DWR) Southwest Regional Biologist Jeff Williams provided the group with an informative overview of the region’s coldwater fisheries resources per the qualitative surveys conducted annually on a select number of waters, including nine “sentinel” streams monitored every year.



## Winchester TU Priority Waters 2025 Calendar of Field Days courtesy of Mike Makufka



Tuesday, 8 July 2025  
Tuesday, 9 September 2025  
Tuesday, 18 November 2025



# WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS PREPARING FOR SUMMER FISHING

by Wayne White

With summer fishing now in full swing, Winchester Project Healing Waters Veterans and Volunteers turned their attention to targeting the area's warm-water fisheries. Fly-tying classes and casting sessions focused on creating imitations for smallies and preparing for an evening outing on the Shenandoah River at Cool Spring on 24 July 2025.

“The Clawdad” was the featured fly at the June monthly meeting. Dave Harrelson led the group through his techniques to achieve a very convincing crayfish imitation, which the novice tyers found extremely helpful as they attempted this new fly pattern.



Sessions for July and August will include Dave’s poppers and Mike Smith’s soft hackles. Later this month, we will announce additional classes that Winchester PHW will hold at Jake’s Bait and Tackle.

With the upcoming outing on the Shenandoah River, the casting session at the monthly meeting helped casters understand how to target fish in moving water and manage their lines effectively.

Besides making a good cast with a compelling presentation, Jackson Dierberg helped participants understand how to hook, fight, and bring the fish to the net. Having volunteers act as running and charging smallies, added some very entertaining comic relief to the finer angling points Jackson emphasized.

Instead of the regularly scheduled July meeting, participants and volunteers will share an evening of fishing at Cool Spring, located on the Shenandoah University Campus in Bluemont, Virginia, on Thursday, 24 July 2025, from 4:00 to 8:30 PM.

In addition to the angling opportunities, this will be our second annual fishing social at the picturesque river campus, thanks to Gene Lewis, who coordinates with the university to host this special event there.



**Top right:** Erwin’s finished Clawdad fly!  
photo by Wayne White

**Above left:** Volunteer lead casting instructor Jackson Dierberg (r) assists participant Ben Matthews with the correct finish for his cast.  
photo by Michael Smith

**Left:** Tom Giles (l) pays close attention to Erwin Casto’s technique for tying in the claws on the Clawdad.  
photo by Michael Smith

“Winchester PHW”  
continues on the next page.



# PREPARING FOR SUMMER FISHING – CONTINUED



**Above:** Volunteer casting instructors Dan Soper (left) and Jeb Stewart (far right) joke with Christian and Christina Nelson about which one of this husband-and-wife team made the best and most accurate casts during some family-friendly competition.

photo by Wayne White



This year, instead of Mark Zimmerman and Peter Smith, our volunteer hospitality team, who usually cook and prepare the meal, Phil Stevens has arranged for the Winchester Mission B-B-Q to cater for the event. Winchester program participants and volunteers will receive a formal electronic invitation and a Letter of Instruction for the event by July 7 at the latest. There will be an event posting for the Cool Spring event on our Facebook page, Project Healing Waters — Winchester, Virginia.

**“Winchester PHW”**  
continues below.

# WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS COMMUNITY OUTREACH – A WAY TO SAY THANK YOU

by Wayne White



Shenandoah Park Ranger Corrina Wendel, third from left, joins the Winchester PHW outreach team of Christian Nelson (l), Mike Smith, Wayne White (kneeling), Jess Michie, Erwin Casto, and Warren Dudenbostel for a photo on National Go Fish Day at the Dickey Ridge Visitor's Center.

photo by a Park Visitor

**“Winchester PHW”**  
continues on the next



# COMMUNITY OUTREACH – CONTINUED

by Wayne White



The Project Healing Waters Virginia Region celebrated “National Go Fish Day” in the Shenandoah National Park on 18 June 2025 as part of the Virginia Region’s support of the event. Winchester treated park patrons to fly-tying and casting demonstrations at the Dickey Ridge Visitor’s Center, while other programs demonstrated Healing Waters activities at Big Meadows Park. The support for this day is a heartfelt thank you on behalf of the Virginia Region and Healing Waters for the annual grant from the National Park Foundation, which funds the Region’s annual Wild Brook Trout fishing outings, as well as other fishing opportunities in the Park.



**Top left:** Mike Smith (l) discusses the flies he ties for Brook Trout fishing with some park patrons. photo by Erwin Casto

**Above:** Jennifer Meyers (r), Jake’s Bait and Tackle, presents Winchester Healing Waters Program Lead, Wayne White, with the check from the proceeds of the sale of the “Shenandoah National Park Brookie Back” T-shirt. photo by Jared Mounts

**Left:** Rich Brooks (l) discusses the Healing Waters mission with a patron at Jake’s Fishing Flea Market. photo by Wayne White

**Below:** Jess Michie (l) talks with Jim Stonestreet (r) about the flies Mike Smith and Phil Stevens are creating. photo by Wayne White

At the annual Jake’s Bait and Tackle Fishing Flea Market and Vendor Show on June 21, Winchester veterans and volunteers demonstrated fly-tying and discussed the program with patrons and businesses, sharing its impact on veterans and their healing journeys.

This was an excellent opportunity for the Winchester program to thank Jared Mounts and the staff of Jake’s for all their support and use of the facility for our fly-tying and rod-building classes this year.

“Winchester PHW”  
continues on the next page.





## COMMUNITY OUTREACH – CONTINUED

We also want to thank the businesses and patrons who made donations to our program by purchasing items available at the flea market. Jennifer Myers, Jake's Bait and Tackle, also presented a check from the sale of the special Project Healing Waters T-shirt that features Dan Soper's original artwork of a Brook Trout that Winchester Participant Charles "Doc Smith" caught. The Brookie is prominently displayed on the back, under a banner that reads, "Shenandoah National Park." A very special thanks to Dan for donating his original artwork. More of his creations are at Runs and Riffles Art on Facebook and Instagram @runs\_and\_riffles\_art

**Right:** Jared Mounts (standing center), Jake's Bait and Tackle, receives a warm thank you from Winchester Volunteers Erwin Casto (l), Rich Brooks (r), and Mike Smith at the Fishing Flea Market.

photo by Wayne White



## WINCHESTER PROGRAM UPDATE – JULY 2025



Instead of the regular monthly meeting for July, participants and volunteers will share an evening of fishing at Cool Spring, located on the Shenandoah University Campus in Bluemont, Virginia, on Thursday, 24 July 2025, from 4:00 to 8:30 PM.

The following fly-fishing activities and events, tentatively scheduled for 2025 and subject to change, are designed to support our veterans' ongoing education and skill development in fly-fishing.

### July

24 – Fishing Outing Cool Spring, Shenandoah University Cool Spring Campus, Parker Lane, Bluemont, Virginia

### August

13 – Monthly Meeting at Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

### September

10 -- Monthly Meeting at Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

### October

8 -- Monthly Meeting at Rachel's Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, from 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM

15 – Fishing Outing at Double Spur – day trip

TBD – Fishing Outing on the Rose River

Additional information and updates about these activities and events will be published in *LATERAL LINES* at <https://winchestertu.org/>.

Updates and post-activity information will be posted on Facebook at **Winchester Project Healing Waters**.

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## Bud on the Run:

**The next workday is tentatively set for Saturday, 5 July 2025 at 9:00 AM weather permitting. Bud will notify the Redbud Regulars.**

by Bud Nagelvoort

After a two-week delay due to weather, a good crew initiated and came close to wrapping up a major effort to add to Redbud fish protection at Wayne Seipel's unique private stretch of Redbud Run. Terry Lay and Bud had cased the site earlier in the month and ended up agreeing that a very steep north bank immediately downstream from Sycamore Notch at Terry's huge dead sycamore deserved classic bank protection where the flow bordered Boyer's Bog Pool.

At the top of the steep bank are two very large trees with some root exposure, likely to collapse into the stream in the not distant future without bank protection efforts.

As good fortune would have it, a very large remnant log from Terry's giant sycamore was immediately available just upstream for movement to the steep bank site. Using our classic tactics, i.e., a cable/pulley operation with Bill operating his power winch from his truck (out of sight of Terry directing the dragging of the log into position with communication help from John and Bob.

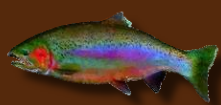
In any event, Terry, Bill, John Prescott, Clark Thomas, and Bob Fish with Terry's direction, maneuvered the log into place without any serious problems. Score another great engineering effort for the Redbud Team.

After that was done, it was a matter of securing the log in place with John and Terry driving the stabilizing steel 6-foot fence posts and Bill with our standard wire, stapled to the log. John and Bud collected and launched rocks down the south bank for placement at a future date between the new bank protection log and the steep bank.

Four solid hard work hours to enhance bank protection for Redbud Rainbows. Thanks, guys.

And thanks, Bill and Bob, for providing bagels from Lenny Sweet's BIG L's BAGELS, 38 E. Picadilly St., Winchester.

Will anyone be available for a work session on Saturday, 5 July 2025?



**Above:** John Prescott sets a stabilizing steel T-post at the down-stream end of the 1000-pound log the team had set moments earlier.

**Below:** Terry uses a Dave VanBenschoten-designed T-post driver to secure the log to the Redbud Run creek bed.

photos by Bill Prokopchak





Barbara's Books

Compiled by Barbara Gamble

Return to the Sky

The Surprising Story of How One Woman and Seven Eaglets Helped Restore the Bald Eagle

Authors: Tina Morris  
Hardcover: 208 Pages  
ISBN-10: 1645022633  
ISBN-13: 978-1645022633  
Publisher: Chelsea Green Publishing  
Publication Date: 3 October 2024

In **Return to the Sky**, Tina Morris, one of the first women to engage in a raptor reintroduction program, shares her remarkable story that is as much about the human spirit as it is about birds of prey.

In the spring of 1975, on the eve of the US Bicentennial, Tina was selected to reintroduce Bald Eagles into New York State in the hope that the species could eventually repopulate eastern North America.

Young and female in a male-dominated field, Tina was handed an assignment to rehabilitate a population that had been devastated by the effects of DDT.

The challenges were prodigious—there was no model to emulate for a bird of the eagle’s size, for one—but Tina soon found that her own path to self-discovery and confidence-building was deeply connected with the survival of the species she was chosen to protect.

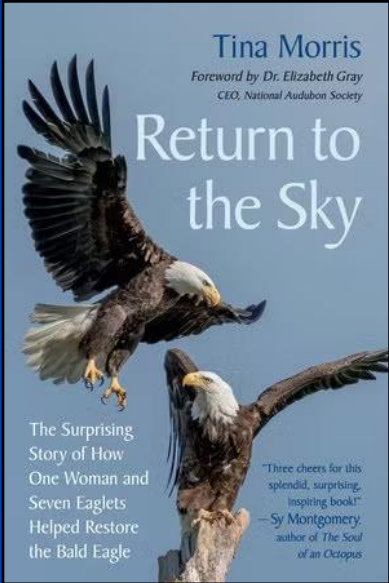
Ultimately, Tina spent two years playing “mother” to seven eaglets at Montezuma National Wildlife Refuge, east of Seneca Falls in New York. Driven by her passion, she discovered unknown reserves of patience, determination, and grit.

At a time when the mass extinction of bird species is a critical global topic, *Return to the Sky* reminds us how, with a mix of common sense, resilience, and resolve, humans can be effective stewards of the natural world.

“Emotional and inspiring proof that one person can make a difference.”—*Kirkus Reviews*

Raised in a large family and surrounded by myriad orphaned creatures both domestic and wild, **Tina Morris** was imbued with a lifelong love of animals. After a few wrong turns and a stormy relationship with science in college, she found a way to make her life’s ambition - rescuing endangered birds of prey -- into a reality. Tina earned her undergraduate degree from Oberlin College and her graduate degree in ornithology and wildlife biology from Cornell University, where she helped develop the first techniques for releasing introduced Bald Eagles. Her field research ultimately became the instruction manual for eagle restoration programs in other eastern states. Tina was formally inducted as an honorary Iroquois into the Confederacy of Six Nations for her work returning the Bald Eagle to the nation’s skies.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers



Fountain Creek:

Big Lessons from a Little River

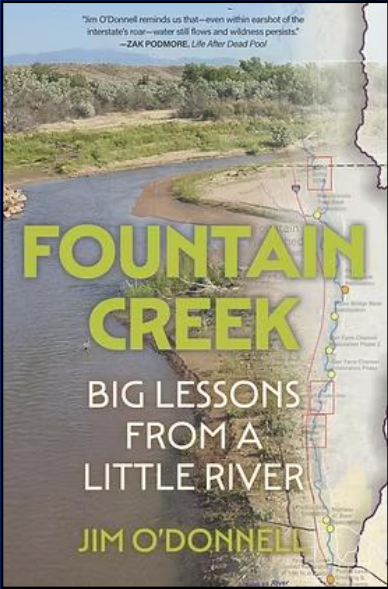
Author: Jim O'Donnell  
Paperback: 369 pages  
ISBN-13: 979-8890920119  
Publisher: Torrey House Press  
Publication Date: 22 October 24

What is a river? Who owns history? Who decides the future?

Over the past two hundred years, society has taken what was once a near-holy relationship with water and morphed rivers into trashed, overused commodities. Now, the rivers humans depend on may no longer be up to the task.

So, now what? Fountain Creek is a waterway that lived through the worst of human interaction. It has been dammed, diverted, poisoned, reduced, and much more and yet, it endured. The Fountain looks both to the past and the future for guidance asks humans to rethink the relationship with the brooks, streams, creeks, and rivers that give us life.

“**Fountain Creek** is a meticulous, heartfelt ode to a chronically mistreated watershed. Every stream in the American West deserves a biographer as affectionate, thorough, and lyrical as O'Donnell. May this book help us find the wisdom to restore Fountain Creek and many other waterways like it.” —BEN GOLDFARB, Crossings



Jim O'Donnell is a writer and photographer whose work has appeared in *Sierra Magazine*, *El Palacio*, *MM Magazine*, *Ensis*, and elsewhere.

O'Donnell continues to work as a community conservation activist and wilderness advocate in the American Southwest where he works to protect and restore wetlands and watersheds. Born and raised in southern Colorado, O'Donnell lives in Taos, New Mexico.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers





# My Trout Fly Box

## The Mickey Finn All-Time Classic Streamer

article and photos  
by Burr Tupper

Mickey Finn, not to be confused with the spiked drink, is one of those flies that seems able to catch almost anything. It has been responsible for catching Browns, Rainbows, Steelhead, Salmon, Bass, and many other species.



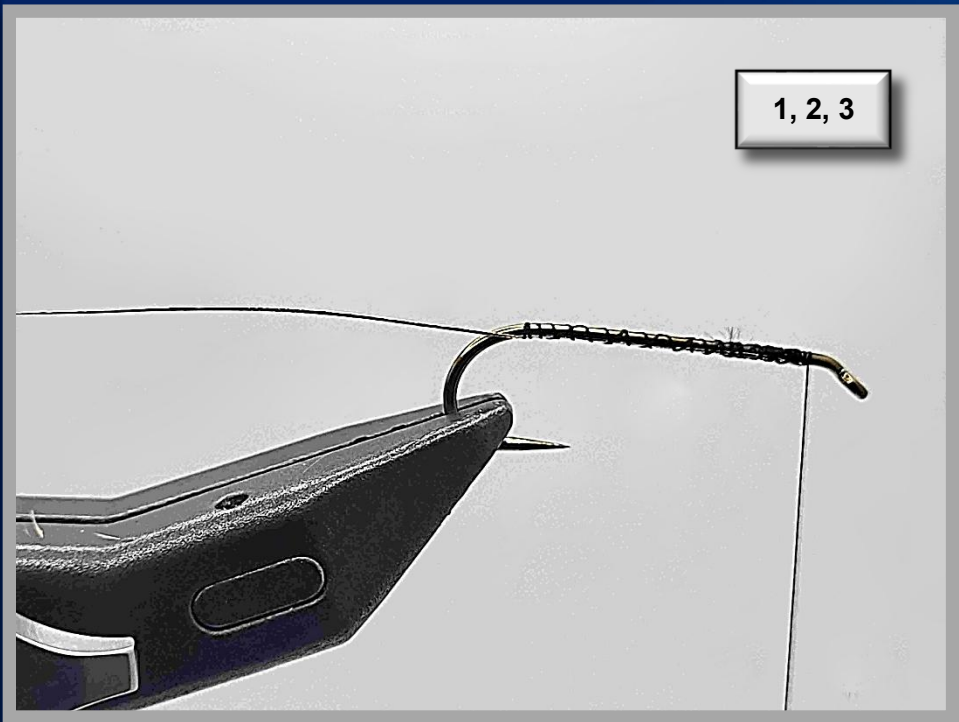
The Mickey Finn

The classic Mickey Finn is easy to tie.

There is no tail and just a ribbed tinsel body and a wing of red and yellow bucktail.

It may be an easy fly to tie, but it is not an easy fly to look good.

The keys to a good Mickey Finn are a smooth body with an even rib, a sparse wing with a good separation between the colors and a small head.



### Materials List

- Hook: 4X long #4-12 streamer hook
- Thread: Black
- Rib: Medium oval gold tinsel or fine gold wire
- Tail: Deer hair
- Body: Flat mylar tinsel
- Wing: Yellow over red over yellow bucktail
- Head: Black tying thread



“My Trout Fly Box” continues on the next page.



## My Trout Fly Box -- continued

5, 6



6



### A couple of tips for building a well-tied Mickey Finn

1. Start the thread in the front and run the rib the full length of the shank. Tying the rib in the rear will leave a bump.
2. Return the thread to just behind the eye.
3. Make sure that the thread base is absolutely smooth.
4. Tie in the mylar tinsel behind the eye and wrap the tinsel in two layers: front to rear and back to front in touching turns, never overlapping.
5. Tie the rib forward in a spiral.
6. Use sparse bunches of bucktail in layers: yellow, red, yellow
7. Keep the head small.

6



7





# ANGLER REFLECTIONS

## Fly Fishing at Costco reflections by Nick Brognano



A few days ago, Bill, the God-sent editor of this popular monthly newsletter, invited me and a bunch of other TU fellows to accompany him on a float trip on the Shanandoah. It was like watching a house of cards fall as each invited guest declined the invite. Various reasons were given, mine was spousal related. She said I could and should go fishing with Bill.

My wife knows my love for fishing runs deep but deeper yet is my love for her. At this moment she needs me home not on a stream, and I know that. So, like the others, I sadly declined the gracious offer to go fishing. Nevertheless, for the rest of the day my mind was on that float trip.

In my youth, my mom would often say to me, “Why can’t you stay still, do you have ants in your pants?” I am not the sedentary type and just hanging around the house all day doing much of nothing really drives the ants crazy. Around mid-morning, I became desperate and drove to Cosco for cheap gas. I persuaded my reluctant wife to leave the house and accompany me. The short trip there was uneventful but the visit to the crowded Cosco Water Hole was not so.

It was while standing at the gas pump that I decided over the objection of my wife, to replenish my depleted supply of fig bars that I traditionally eat with my first cup of morning coffee. Cosco sells them cheap and in a giant box. My thoughtful and health-conscious wife believes the fig bars to be an undesirable breakfast substitute. Not only am I stubborn, but I am also a victim of habit and simply disagree, smart, eh?



image courtesy  
of Costco.com



Not thinking, I asked my wife if she wanted to come inside with me. The minute I said that, I rolled my eyes heavenward and bit my lip because I then quickly realized I had made a HUGE mistake, and this was not going to be a fast in and out visit.

I knew what I wanted and knew where the item was displayed. It should have been a 10-minute purchase, but as expected, it didn’t turn out that way.

**Above:** “... I decided over the objection of my wife, to replenish my depleted supply of fig bars.”

**Left:** “... I knew her favorite Cosco fishing hole and knew where she would be.”

**“Angler Reflections”  
continues on the next page.**



# ANGLER REFLECTIONS -- CONTINUED



**Above:** “The colorful object had a faint white outline around its edges and looked like a Brookie I thought.”

**Right:** “... proudly displayed a multi-buttoned item that resembled a spotted, magnificent Brown Trout.”

The Trout were visible and there were a lot of them just lying all around her. I was mesmerized and stood off a distance so as not to create a disturbance. She carefully waddled around and between manmade structures strategically placed in the wide water hole while I just stood there spellbound.

She was very methodical and scrutinized everything as if she were shopping for another purse, God forbid. There was no need to rush. There were so many Trout lying undisturbed that my big fig box suddenly turned into a mid-size creel.



She was captivated and so was I. The shine on her face was the best evidence that she had found the glory hole. I stood off waiting for a cast. It didn’t take long to get a hit. Her first catch was held up and gently handled with the touch only a woman has. The colorful object had a faint white outline around its edges and looked like a Brookie I thought. It was thoroughly examined before she gestured me over and asked what I thought. I am a catch and release fisherman and while I liked the item, I felt guilt ridden in taking it home, but she insisted I do so.

“Angler Reflections” continues on the next page.

No sooner than we entered the place did we split. She went her way, and I went my way. Within one minute I had the big box of figs in my hand and began looking for my wife. That did not take long because I knew her favorite Cosco fishing hole and knew where she would be.

The second I saw her in the clothing section my wild imagination took hold and transported me to a much more desirable place. The uninspiring clothing section was immediately transformed into an inspirational Trout stream. She was standing in the middle of it. It was the sighting of the purse that struck me like a bolt of lightning and converted itself into a fly rod. She was holding a fly rod not a purse! At first, her eyes were focused on a box of flies deciding which one to tie on. This vision changed everything, and it was the most pleasurable Cosco visit I have ever experienced.



# ANGLER REFLECTIONS -- CONTINUED



She was enjoying this fishing trip so much that she continued casting about. Fishing can do that to a person. In no time she promptly and proudly displayed a multi-buttoned item that resembled a spotted, magnificent Brown Trout. She again asked if I would like to take it home. Once again, I said, “Honey, I have enough, I don’t need anymore.”

Some fisherwomen are very determined and never give up, my wife is like that.

She continued fishing until she landed a third one with a fine pink stripe running across its mid-section. It was a medium-size Rainbow Trout I saw! I then surrendered and decided to put all three in the recently purchased creel.

**Left:** “She continued fishing until she landed a third one with a fine pink stripe running across its mid-section.”

I expected to spend a small amount on the figs, certainly no more than a dozen flies would have cost. That did not happen. In the end, it felt like I'd hired an Orvis guide for this Cosco fishing trip. By inviting my wife to fish at Cosco, I should have known better but like my sometimes-frustrated father would often say to me, “When are you going to smarten up?”

As I sat in my comfortable chair at home sipping a glass of my homemade wine and chewing on a few olives, I reexperienced the somewhat enjoyable fishing time with my wife at Cosco. I realized that without Bill’s invite this memorable misadventure would never have occurred. It all may appear silly to the welcomed reader of this vignette but if a Harry Potter can run through a brick wall, or a child in Narnia, can disappear in a closet or better yet, a knight named Don Quixote, can see a Windmill to be a fierce giant then why can’t I or my wife fish at Cosco?

Unless otherwise noted, the illustrations for this article were generated in collaboration with Microsoft Copilot.with prompts from Bill Prokopchak.



## Winchester TU Monthly “BarFly” Events

Wednesday, 16 July 2025, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 20 August 2025, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 17 September 2025, 7:00 PM

Escutcheon Brewery  
Commercial St., Winchester, VA

The Winchester Chapter of Trout Unlimited (WTU) will gather at Escutcheon Brewing in Winchester to offer anglers and **non-anglers** in our area the opportunity to learn about Trout Unlimited and to tie fishing flies.

No fly-tying or fly-fishing experience is necessary.  
All participants under age 21 must be accompanied by a responsible adult.





# Walking for Whiskey

## 22 Virginia State Parks

### and Virginia Spirits

with Stuart & Karen Pregnall



Walking for Whiskey is back!

We’ve hiked in a lot of State Parks since the past publication of Walking for Whiskey – twelve in all. We visited five in January, six in April and one in May. January was frigid – so cold the Potomac River was frozen over. April was much milder, and Spring flowers were blooming everywhere. Our last trip at the end of May felt more like early April – cold and rainy.

Our fishing was very limited – January was out of the question, our April trip offered only warm water fisheries, and on our last trip we ventured into the famed Rapidan via the fire road. It was just after the Memorial Day weekend on a chilly and wet day, and the trout were uncooperative. But we rewarded our efforts with visits to local distilleries.

The January trip took us to the parks along the Potomac River. We chose A. Smith Bowman Distillery in nearby Fredericksburg as our whiskey destination. It was the first legal distillery in the Commonwealth, receiving its license in 1934 immediately after Prohibition ended. It remained the only licensed distillery in Virginia until the 1950’s – hard to imagine but the facts stand for themselves. The original product is familiar – Virginia Gentleman – and it is still produced by Bowman today. But the shift to producing small batch hand-crafted whiskeys has given Bowman the opportunity to explore and experiment, using its knowledge of distilling gained over decades of experience. And it’s broken a few traditions along the way while retaining others.



The Bowman story is long and quite remarkable. If you’re interested, a combination of the distillery’s website, and a Google search on A. Smith Bowman will give you some of the details. But the best stories come during the free distillery tour and tasting (you register on-line at their web site).



One factor that distinguishes Bowman’s products: a “straight bourbon whiskey” must be aged for a minimum of two years to achieve that designation. Bowman’s expression ages for seven years. Bourbon barrels are traditionally stored on their sides to take advantage of being able to roll the barrels from point A to point B. Bowman stacks pallets of vertical barrels and ages *lots* more bourbon on the same floor space.

A four-pour tasting concluded our tour, already waiting for us, complete with little note cards describing each glass’s contents. Our guide provided a lively description of each sample, but was careful to caveat her descriptions with “your palate may discover other tasting notes.”

Here are our tasting notes in the order we sampled the four Bowman offerings.

**Bowman Brothers Virginia Straight Bourbon Whiskey – Small Batch:** Aged seven years in charred oak. Ninety proof. This small batch bourbon is distilled three times, using corn, rye, and malted barley. The distillery’s description suggests a “warm nose with notes of cherry and baked apple” and notes of vanilla, spice, and oak on the palate.

We each tested the nose – neither of us could pick up cherry or baked apple, but there was an enticing and distinct warmth. The first sip was smooth and welcoming. There were distinct vanilla notes, a delightful hint of spiciness, and all backed up by a lingering finish of toasty oak. The second sip reinforced the initial impression – this was a fine whiskey indeed. I think most of the other folks in the tasting were in agreement.

“Walking for Whiskey” continues on the next page.

**Above:** Karen and Stuart visit Westmoreland Park and the Potomac River.

**Left:** Stuart and Karen visited the A. Smith Bowman Distillery product display in January.



# Walking for Whiskey -- continued

**Isaac Bowman Virginia Straight Bourbon Whiskey – Port Barrel Finished:** Aged in charred oak barrels, finished in Port barrels, 92 proof. The distillery again suggests a nose with cherry and baked apple but adds a palate description calling for notes of “jam, vanilla, brown spice and toasted pecans.”

Karen’s initial impression on the nose was distinct – “hot.” I couldn’t pick up much other than alcohol either. Our initial and follow up sips weren’t as rewarding as described, and certainly not as rewarding as the Small Batch version. However, many of the others on the tour enjoyed the Port version. Everyone has their own tastes!

Stacks of aging whiskey barrels at the A. Smith Bowman Distillery.



**Curiously Bright and Complex Tinkerman’s Gin – 92 proof:** Named for the constant tinkering with the distilling formula. The distillery describes the nose as “exotic and floral,” and a fresh, bright palate influenced by Asian fusion. Karen’s first impression on the nose was “this smells just like a gin and tonic.” The sips did provide hints of botanicals, but we weren’t sure there was much of an Asian vibe. If you’re looking for a gin with similar characteristics, we would suggest The Botanist – it’s made by Bruichladdich Distillery of Islay malt fame and is bursting with botanical notes.

**Mary Hite Bowman Caramel Bourbon Cream Liqueur – 17% Alcohol:** As named, this is a liqueur meant to be savored after a meal. It is a blend of Bowman bourbon (not specifically named) and real dairy cream and caramel. Think Bailey’s Irish Cream, but with a Virginia bourbon heritage. The nose was rich, creamy, and boozy. A sip confirmed those initial impressions, with a silky and luxurious mouth feel. The aftertaste was surprisingly bright – the bourbon held its own against the cream and caramel. Our tour guide admitted to using it in milkshakes and as an ice cream topping. I’m not a fan of cream/whiskey combos, but Karen declared it delicious and a perfect brunch-time coffee creamer.



Virginia ABC lists several Bowman expressions, including the Straight Bourbon Whiskey among its products. Virginia Gentleman is available as well. But if you’re in the Fredericksburg area, the free distillery tour and tasting are well worth the visit.

Our tasting setup as presented by the A. Smith Bowman Distillery.

In April we headed to the Southwest corner of Virginia, full of history -- from the Daniel Boone exploration through Cumberland Gap – which opened the southernmost route for Westward exploration - to coal and iron mining and the towns and railroads that were built to support those industries. The countryside is both breathtakingly beautiful and heartbreakingly blighted. Each Park had its own piece of history and individual beauty, and given the early time of year, we enjoyed no crowded trails and the peace and quiet of Nature. One fishing note from this area – Clinch River State Park has an oxbow lake teeming with sunfish and quite a few bass. The fish are wary but so are brook trout. The river runs through St. Paul, VA, which has an increasing reputation as an outdoor destination, and the area in general is regarded as having one of the richest biomes in the U.S.

We chose Davis Family Winery and Distillery as our destination for whiskey sampling – it was conveniently located and the hours it was open coincided with our hiking schedule. As we pulled through the entrance gate we were somewhat concerned to note that all the vineyard’s grape vines seemed to have died. But we were here to sample whiskey, and we continued.

We wound up the hill to the wine and whiskey tasting rooms (separated due to Virginia ABC laws). We were greeted by a cheerful gentleman who offered us a wine tasting – and when we said we were interested in their spirits he chuckled and said – oh, that’s on the other side of the house. We trooped through a door and the rooms’ aromas changed from wine to whiskey.

“Walking for Whiskey” continues on the next page.



# Walking for Whiskey -- continued

Barry (our guide) hadn’t stopped talking during the short walk, giving us a firehose rundown on the operation. Davis sources its grains from nearby farms, the water comes from the limestone aquifer running through the valley, and the barrels come from Speyside Bourbon Cooperage, which is nearly next door to the distillery. We stopped at a vat which had a rectangular stainless-steel vessel at its base. It held a fresh batch of rye whiskey waiting to be barreled for aging, and he instructed us to dip our fingers in for a taste. Ooh boy, was it tasty.

Barry took us over to the tasting table where he ran down the range of spirits.

Our tasting notes:

**Owen Cox Heritage Bourbon:** Aged three years in charred oak. 93 proof. Mash bill – 66% corn, 14% rye, 20% barley. This was a fine sipping whiskey, aromatic on the nose and smooth on the palate. The barley notes offered a pleasant twist to the profile – definitely worth trying.

**Owen Cox Virginia Mountain Gold:** Aged one year in charred oak. Mash bill – 70% corn, 30% wheat. Despite the limited aging period, this was a far more complex palate than we had anticipated. The wheat added an assertive blend of flavors to the table, resulting in a spirit that could stand on its own, but that would also create a strong supporting role in traditional bourbon-based cocktails.

**Owen Cox Mountain Maple:** A “bourbon” flavored with maple syrup sourced from nearby Whitetop farms in Grayson Highlands, VA. Smooth, not too sweet, perfect for a dessert digestif, topping for ice cream, or a twist on Irish coffee.

**Samuel Franklin Solera: 90 proof:** “Solera” is a Spanish process involving three tiers of barrels. It takes three years to complete the process. Half of the whiskey from the bottom barrel is removed and bottled. Half of the whiskey in the middle barrel is then removed and transferred to the bottom barrel. Half of the whisky in the top barrel is then removed and transferred to the middle barrel. Finally, the top barrel is topped off with unaged whiskey. The newly bottled whiskey is aged for one year before being available for sale. This was a tasting teaser for us – there were both bright notes and well-aged complexities. The overall profile would/might suit someone new to whiskey as a good introduction - not overpowering while offering the promise of more interesting whiskey ahead.

**Davis Moonshine Original:** 100% corn. We’re not Shine aficionados, but this was potentially addictive, tasting like buttered popcorn. Yikes! Davis also offers several fruit flavored moonshines.

Our most recent Park was Culpeper Battlefield, and nearby was Belmont Farms Distillery. A multigeneration farm growing its own grains for distilling, Belmont harkens back to traditional pot-stilling methods which require more time than modern column distilling used in producing mass production spirits.

The overall vibe at Belmont is an experience of stepping back in time: the farm was originally established as a land grant, and like most of Virginia, the land was the site of Civil War battles and encampments. The distillery itself is built of reclaimed wood from an old nearby Catholic church lost to fire, and the distilling pots and sundry equipment have all been used in other operations. There are also ties to the time-honored yet illegal history of making spirits out of the sight of ABC regulations and revenue taxes. Belmont and the Discovery Channel have worked together on the channel’s “Moonshiners” series, in which Discovery documents what are claimed to be illicit distilling operations. A legal moonshine collaboration between Tim Smith, who is featured of the show, and Chuck Miller of Belmont known as Climax Moonshine is now widely available for sale.

Following the distillery tour, we opted to taste only two whiskeys. Rain was bucketing down and our drive home along Routes 29/15 and 17 were notoriously occupied by commercial traffic, so having 100% of our faculties was advisable.

**Kopper Kettle Virginia Straight Bourbon Whiskey:** Following distilling, transferred to Virginia White Oak and Applewood barrels for two months, then ages 4 years in charred oak barrels. 92 proof. The nose offered a slight freshness that we attributed to the benefits of soaking in apple wood. The palate was straightforward, a pleasant and uncomplicated bourbon perfect for sipping or mixing. Slight caramel, maybe some vanilla, a little bite at the end to remind you that you were enjoying neat spirits. Quite nice.

**Kopper Kettle Bonded Whiskey:** Aged 4 years in charred oak after two months in White Oak/Apple barrels. 100 proof. Marketed as “Grain to Glass,” the “Bonded” label assures that every step of the distilling process is inspected to guarantee the final bottled spirit is exactly what the label says and that its contents have been distilled at that location. The higher proof disguised the freshness we detected in the Straight Bourbon Whiskey, but the nose was clean and inviting. The palate was slightly warmer than the previous pour, again due to the higher alcohol content, but there were no “hot” notes. Similar to the Straight Bourbon Whiskey but with a little more – but not overwhelming - “oomph.”

**Coming next:** We aren’t sure – there is a small group of parks down near Damascus, and another group due south of Winchester near the John Kerr Reservoir along the VA/NC border. Our last will be False Cape on the Atlantic Ocean shore at the VA/NC border. The logistics of that trip will require some expeditionary-type planning. We’ll make plans and report back on what we find. Until then, endure the summer, wait for fall, and tight lines when you can get out on the water.





# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Only 68 days until '2025 Great Canada Fishing Adventure - Number 22' begins! My brother and I have only missed one yearly episode...when Covid had closed the border crossing. See you,  
Larry Holmes  
Winchester, VA



These were caught on the first day (Saturday, 21 June 2025). Chuck has been out fishing me 8 to 1. The smallie he is holding was 19 inches and fat.  
Crazy storm went through Sunday night with micro bursts. Several cottages damaged from trees.

Fred from Sand Lake



I'm the winner of the lottery today.  
21 inches  
Fred from Sand Lake





# 2025 Calendar of Events Winchester Trout Unlimited & Winchester TU Priority Waters

See also  
<http://winchestertu.org/>

## July

Thursday, 3 July 2025

There is no Winchester TU monthly meeting in July

Tuesday, 8 July 2025 – Winchester TU Priority Waters Field Day

Saturday, ? July 2025 – Tentative Winchester Trout Unlimited Workday

Bud will contact the “Redbud Regulars” to schedule a July workday that does not interfere with the Independence Day weekend.

Wednesday, 16 July 2025 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester

## August

Thursday, 7 August 2025

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

Thursday, 7 August 2025

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

Elwha River Dam Removal video “Return of the River” introduced by Luke Robins

Saturday, 9 August 2025 – Tentative Winchester Trout Unlimited Workday

Bud will contact the “Redbud Regulars” to schedule the August workday

Wednesday, 20 August 2025 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester

## September

Thursday, 4 September 2025

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

Thursday, 4 September 2025

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

Elwha River Dam Removal video “Return of the River” introduced by Luke Robins

Saturday, 6 September 2025 – Tentative Winchester Trout Unlimited Workday

Bud will contact the “Redbud Regulars” to schedule the September workday

Tuesday, 9 September 2025 -- Winchester TU Priority Waters Field Day

Wednesday, 17 September 2025 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly

7:00 – 9:00 PM – Escutcheon Brewery, Commercial Street, Winchester



The opinions expressed in *Lateral Lines* are those of the individual authors and are not necessarily those of Winchester Trout Unlimited or Trout Unlimited National.

All water sports, including fishing, and stream restoration activities have inherent dangers. Participation in all Winchester Trout Unlimited activities is at the participant’s own risk and participants agree to hold harmless Winchester Trout Unlimited and its members. A responsible adult must accompany all minors.

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