



# NEWSCAST-

Fall 2019

Bill Watkins, Editor

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*Conserving, protecting, and restoring coldwater fisheries  
and watersheds in northeast Tennessee since 1986.*

## Pint Night Social Gathering

Wednesday, November 20, 2019

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Johnson City Brewing Company  
257 East Main St, Johnson City

Pint Nights are a lot of fun. We get together, drink good  
beer and talk fishing or whatever. The Chapter receives \$1  
for every beer sold that night.

Come by, enjoy yourself, and support the Chapter.

## Upcoming Events

11/20	Pint Night
11/22	Blevins Road Handicap Access Pier Dedication
12/10	OMTU Board Meeting
1/14	OMTU Board Meeting
1/21	Annual Business Meeting
2/11	OMTU Board Meeting
2/18	OMTU Chili Cookoff and Gear Swap

# Blevins Road Handicap Fishing Access Pier Complete!

The Overmountain Chapter of Trout Unlimited has partnered with the TVA to build a handicap fishing access pier at the Blevins Road access to the Watauga River. Our contribution consisted of \$15,000 from a license plate grant.

The project was expected to be completed months ago, but high water in the spring and summer prevented construction from even beginning. The rains eventually let up, flows were cut back, and construction commenced. Once begun, construction went quickly. The ramp is now complete.



## OMTU Officers

Ryan Turgeon President  
Bill Watkins, Vice President  
Sean Fagan, Treasurer  
Daniel Back, Secretary

## OMTU Board of Directors

Chris Lennon  
Michael Givney  
Lori Givney  
Bill Watkins  
Rick Elliot  
JP Kadish

Questions? Comments?  
[overmountaintu@gmail.com](mailto:overmountaintu@gmail.com)

[@overmountaintu](https://www.instagram.com/overmountaintu)





## Meet Fellow Members



Paul and Diane Ohlin moved to Elizabethton in April 2018 after working for a non-profit Christian organization in four countries in Central & West Africa for over 25 years.

Paul began fishing when he was a child in New England. Worms were the hot ticket. In high school he began fly fishing. To this day, the Kennebec is his favorite river, especially when landlocked salmon are running and caddis are hatching in May's low water.

Diane started fly fishing because of Paul in 1985. Prior to that, she had fished worms with her brothers on the Illinois River.

Together, they have fished in Africa, Alaska, Montana, Colorado, and of course here. There are some strange fish in Africa. Paul was shocked by an Electric Catfish there.

Paul and Diane attend our meetings when they can. They are still involved in supporting projects overseas.

Electric Catfish





# Women's Fishing Clinic

We held this year's Women's Clinic on June 22<sup>nd</sup>. The event, run by Lori Givney and guest instructor Laurel Monaghan from Valley Forge PA, was a huge success. We had ten participants who spent the day learning about safety, rivers, fish, bugs, knots, rigging, casting, and more.



Feedback from participants was excellent, but recognizing that one day is hardly enough to become competent fly fishers, all participants were given the opportunity for additional time with mentors.

Some of the women have taken full advantage of the mentoring program and are well on the way to being well rounded fly fishers and casters.



We've had the max number possible for our clinics in each of the past two years, and more women have expressed interest in learning fly fishing. So, next year we plan on having two clinics.



## Second Annual Tennessee Throwdown a Success

Our casting contest, the Tennessee Throwdown was held Saturday October 5, with 15 people attending, including 10 competitors. We were pleased to welcome two Milligan College students, Rubin Bacon and Robert Comfort. Both competed.

The contest consisted of five accuracy tasks and a distance competition. The accuracy events include things like hitting a coffee cup and seeing how far you can throw a fly through a hula hoop.

The story of the day was the wind. It was big and variable. All of the events required casting roughly with the wind. This made loading the rod for the cast a real challenge. If you could load the rod, you had to deal with variable winds on the delivery.



Mike Givney won the contest running away, with a score more than 100 points above runner up Bill Watkins. The gap between runner up and third, Robert Bacon, was much closer at 34 points. The real head-to-head match was between Robert Bacon and fellow college student Robert Comfort, Bacon eased past Comfort for third by only three points.

The chapter provided lunch after the competition. The contest wrapped up with a small awards ceremony. Everyone had a great time. It was a good morning.

# Todd Burleson Memorial Cleanup

Each year in September, the community of Roan Mountain turns out for the Todd Burleson memorial Cleanup of the Doe River and its tributaries. Our chapter has supported this cleanup since its inception with participation and giveaways.

This year's cleanup had great weather and an excellent turnout. The Burleson family provided breakfast and lunch for participants, and over 500 pounds of trash were collected.

Todd Burleson was a local guide who loved fishing small mountain streams. He initiated the cleanup of Roan Mountain area streams. His family and our chapter continued the cleanup after his death.

## Why Learn to Cast Well?

I was fishing with a new fly fisher on one of our small mountain streams when I mentioned that she should practice casting. She replied "Why? You don't cast that way when fishing."

She was right, at least when it comes to little creeks. Small streams don't have the room for a standard cast. Trees and brush are everywhere. Anyone who approached it with only the standard cast would spend most of their time trying to extract flies from trees and retying their rig when they failed.

We were using water loads, roll casts, side casts, and whatever else we needed to deliver a fly and get a drag-free drift.

It's also true that most trout caught are not very far from the fisher.

So, why learn to perform the standard cast well?

Because you need to know the standard cast to perform the casts a small stream requires. A small stream presents a sequence of casting challenges. You meet those challenges by improvising, and you can't improvise well if you don't have a good understanding of the standard cast and the principles of that cast.

Lefty Kreh's four principles of the cast are a good place to start. They are:

1. You must get the line moving before you can cast.
2. The line goes the direction the rod tip speeds up and stops.
3. The loop size is determined by the length of the speed up and stop.
4. The more help needed on the cast, the longer the rod should travel on the back and forward cast.

Lefty was prolific. You can easily find his books and videos on these principles with a web search. If you need hands-on help, our mentoring program has people who are happy to help you.

# Trout in the Classroom

Our Trout in the Classroom program is seeing rapid growth under Mike Givney. This year we added three new schools for a total of six schools! Participating schools are Emmet Elementary, Happy Valley High, Central Heights Elementary, Tennessee High, Andrew Jackson, and Holston View Elementary.

Trout in the Classroom is an environmental education program for students in grades K – 12. We provide water tanks, coolers, and all the other material necessary to raise trout from eggs provided by the Erwin Fish Hatchery to fry. The fry have historically been released into the South Holston River in partnership with the TWRA.

Students at participating schools raise the trout, monitor tank water quality, and study trout lifecycles and stream habitat. They learn to understand ecosystems and appreciate our cold-water resources.

This year, our chapter has developed and implemented a new youth education program to augment the Trout in the Classroom program for our high school participants. The Student Science Program is a conservation program that will allow students to work on actual streams. This year's project, called Two Streams, is a study of two small mountain streams. The students have "adopted" two small tributaries in the school's watershed. The students are monitoring water quality, studying macro invertebrate populations, assessing habitat, and monitoring flows and temperatures. All this is to determine which of the two streams provide the best habitat for trout. They will also use their study to recommend possible future conservation projects for those streams.





# Third Annual Banquet a Huge Success!

Initiated only three years ago, the annual banquet has become one of the highlights of the year. This year, we had 86 participants in our September 14<sup>th</sup> dinner, up from 55 in 2017 and 60 in 2018. Sponsorship was up too. We had 11 sponsors who contributed \$150 or more.

The event was a financial success too, raising \$5,800 to support our work. This is up from \$400 in 2017 and \$2,400 in 2018.

We had lots of auction items and raffles. The food was excellent. The company was great. Everyone had a good time.

Prior to the annual dinner, the club was dependent on a single source of revenue, one that was beyond our control and could potentially disappear with little notice. The success of the dinner means that we are in a more diversified, and thus secure, financial condition. Very importantly, we have more control over our revenues.

Putting on a dinner like ours is not a trivial task. It's takes a lot of work and coordination. Big thanks to those who solicited sponsors and organized the event.

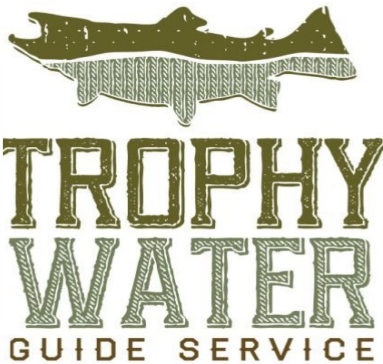




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