



TIGHT LINES

February 2000

Newsletter of the Rabun Chapter of Trout Unlimited

Rabun Chapter holds Annual Rabun Rendezvous and Winter Carnival as the Snow and Ice Fall

Despite a wintry blast of snow and ice that quickly converted Dillard into a winter wonderland, the Rabun Rendezvous celebrated thirteen years of raising funds for cold water fisheries and a good time was had by all at the party.

By the time the pig was ready for pickin' and one Foxfire Boy had a worried look on his face as he peered through the falling snow, looking for the rest of the group, TU'ers, spouses, girl friends, uniformed DNR and USFS folks (actually they were not in uniform...it's an inside joke) had begun to snoop through the bucket raffle and silent auction items in anticipation of getting a real deal.

Attendance was down from past years but spirits were high and the 131 who braved the elements this Saturday night did their part for trout with their usual gusto. Final tallies are not in but we

really did okay considering we had to guarantee a crowd of 175.

Fishing trips, fly collections and a really neat Scott rod drew a lot of interest. Other chapters and many individuals and companies really came through with a wide range of attractive items. We simply can't do it without their support each year.

Special thanks to the Foxfire Boys who generously donate their time and huge talent each year. (Was that Nugget signing autographs by the fireplace?) And another big thank you to Maria and Bill for getting so many people in the community to participate.

Thanks too to the rest of the chapter members who showed up and helped set things up.

Already looking forward to next year. I think that there is a tornado scheduled. Never fear!

Planning Meeting Scheduled for Saturday, February 12th, at the Dillard House

Our annual planning meeting in which we set the programs, budget etc. will be held in the front dining room at the Dillard House on Saturday, February 12th, beginning with breakfast at 8:30 AM. Those interested in putting their two cents in make plans to join us. If there isn't a good turnout, Bill Kelly and I are going to vote to spend the entire treasury balance on a fishing trip to St. George Island, Florida!

Chapter President Terry Seehorn named Teacher of the Year

Congratulations to our very own Terry Seehorn, named Teacher of the Year in the State of Georgia, by the National Association of Conservation Districts. Terry was recognized at the NACD-Zeneca Conservation Awards recently and travels to the annual convention in early February to receive the award. Again, a tip of the glass to you Terry...for all you have done over the years to safeguard the Little Tennessee watershed and beyond, and to educate so many about the vital necessity for conserving our priceless natural resources. We are proud of you!

Wildlife Resources Division Draws the Ire of the Preservationist

On January 6th, Doug Adams and Tom Landreth attended a meeting at the Wildlife Resources Division's headquarters in Social Circle. The WRD had asked conservation and preservation groups to assemble to hear them out on their position relative to the USFS Rolling Alternative.

Their primary concern is that they cannot effectively manage lands included in officially designated wilderness areas. Wildlife openings, trout stocking, stream research would all be restricted if not eliminated entirely.

Since that meeting, Georgia Forest Watch has made sure the public reads their view and both an article and editorial have appeared in the Atlanta Constitution. The article by Charles Seabrook presents a fairly balanced view, but the editorial came down hard on the WRD with a lot of misleading statements and unfounded accusations.

Word went out, primarily by E-mail, to concerned conservationists urging them to contact the Board of Directors of the Department of Natural Resources, supporting the position of the WRD.

Some of you responded with letters and E-mails to the board. Many others outside the Rabun Chapter did as well. Thanks to all who spoke up and supported our friends at the WRD.

To make a long story short, after hearing from all concerned, including Doug Adams, at a meeting last week, the Board lent their support to the WRD, while urging the WRD to seek some common ground with the preservationist groups.

The Board of Natural Resources has issued a resolution in support of the WRD and the complete text is contained on page three. I hope you can read it as it came to me as a fax and may not reproduce to well. If not, it will be at the next chapter meeting for you to peruse.

If you care to lend a hand, drop Tom Wheeler, Chairman of the Natural Resources Board at note at P O Box 957209, Duluth, GA 30095.

This conflict is ongoing and Forest Watch has determination if not all the facts.

Stoneflies on the Trout's Winter Menu

With the streams here in the mountains running in the low forties, and mayfly hatches minimal if non existant, do the trout just quit eating? Nope! They just like to expend as little energy as possible and when they do so, they are looking for something worth the effort.

Now is a good time to tie on stonefly immita-

tions and drift them right across the bottom of pools and deep runs.

Most stoneflies are either black or dark brown. Large stonefly patterns like the Prince, Pheasant Tail and the like are good as well as the darker Wooly Boogers. You might even fish a WB with a Prince dropper. An indicator is helpful in detecting a strike.

Hoot on the Hooch

The Foothills Chapter of TU will hold their Hoot on the Hooch, March 18th, at the Beach House on the lake at Unicoi State Park. The banquet portion of the activities will get underway about 5 PM. A complete program that begins in the afternoon will be posted in next month's Tight Lines. Plan now to attend and give our brothers to the south your support.

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF NATURAL RESOURCES

WHEREAS, The Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division and its predecessors have been active partners with the U.S. Forest Service in the management of the Chattahoochee National Forest for over 70 years, and throughout this partnership has operated wildlife areas and managed trout streams on the forest using license fees and federal funds; and

WHEREAS, both state and federal law recognizes that the Department of Natural Resources through its Wildlife Resources Division has statutory authority over and responsibility for management of all non-migratory wildlife occurring on the forest; and

WHEREAS, the Department and Division is in the process of providing input and recommendations to the U.S. Forest Service for the Chattahoochee/Oconee National Forest planning process, and this action is within the Department's statutory authority and in accordance with the normal operating procedures endorsed by the Board; and

WHEREAS, that input is being generated by a team of experts in wildlife, fisheries, natural areas and nongame species management, and is with the expressed approval of the Commissioner and the Director of the Wildlife Resources Division, both of whom are also professionals in the conservation field; and

WHEREAS, the Department's goal is to provide diverse habitat for a variety of wildlife species, to continue traditional recreational access to the forest, and to protect the long-term investments made in wildlife management areas and trout streams; and

WHEREAS, the Department also recognizes the need for areas of old growth forest that allow recreational solitude, but recommends that those conditions be provided by placing certain, desirable tracts in land management categories other than wilderness or wilderness study areas.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT, the Board of Natural Resources does hereby affirm the authority of the Commissioner and Division Directors to execute the day-to-day resource management decisions that are necessary for the efficient operation of the Department, including the authority to provide timely input and recommendations to other agencies, corporations, or individuals regarding the impact of their activities on resources under the care of the Department; and

THAT, the Board concurs with the need to develop a balanced Chattahoochee/Oconee Forest management plan that provides for late successional forests, retains traditional recreational access, protects the past investments of hunters and anglers in wildlife management areas and trout streams, promotes wildlife diversity by allowing habitat manipulation where needed and, recognizes and concurs that certain areas are appropriate for wilderness designation, including the elimination of new road construction and commercial logging in the more scenic and pristine sections of the forest. While the Board desires to be kept fully informed on the progress made toward completion of an acceptable forest plan, the Board supports the position statement signed by Commissioner Barrett and Director Waller on December 16, 1999, which clearly establishes the intent of the Department and desire by the Board to work toward a negotiated, consensus solution to the issue to the extent practical; and

THAT, the Board directs Commissioner Barrett and Director Waller to advocate these goals for the forest management plan to the U.S. Forest Service, to the interested conservation organizations and to the public. The Board, through its Wildlife Resources Committee, is to be kept informed of this issue, and the committee's guidance and input is to be sought as deemed appropriate by the Commissioner or Director and that the Board be briefed at the February meeting of progress made in this regard and as appropriate and timely thereafter.

Adopted this 26th day of January, 2000.

Respectfully submitted:


Thomas W. Wheeler, Jr. Chairman

Attest:


Sara Clark, Vice Chairperson

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb 12	Chapter Planning Breakfast Dillard House, Dillard, GA	8:30 AM
Feb 15	Chapter Meeting	6:30 PM
Feb 19-20	Fly Fishing Show Charlotte, NC	10-5 DAILY
Mar 11	Georgia Council Work Project West Fork of the Chattooga River downstream of the Hwy 28 Bridge	9:00 AM
Mar 18	Hoot on the Hooch Beach House, Unicoi State Park	5:00 PM



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DON'T FORGE THE PLANNING MEETING ON FEB 12TH