

*Celebrating  
31 Years of  
Lateral Lines*

# Lateral Lines

**Monthly Magazine of Winchester Trout Unlimited  
Chapter #638**

“The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come....” Song of Solomon 2:12 (RSV)

April 2026

Volume 31, Numbers 4

**Winchester TU Meeting**

Thursday, 2 April 2026, 7:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

**Winchester TU Priority Waters Meeting**

Thursday, 2 April 2026, 6:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

**Project Healing Waters Monthly meeting**

**Note the date change**  
Thursday, 9 April 2026, 6:00 PM  
Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, VA

**BarFly**

The next Winchester TU BarFly  
Wednesday, 15 April 2026  
7:00 PM at Escutcheon Brewing Co.  
142 W. Commercial Street, Winchester

**For complete calendars, please see**  
**Page 11 for Winchester Project Healing Waters**  
**Page 6 & 17 for Winchester Priority Waters**  
**Page 17 for Winchester Trout Unlimited**



## *In This Edition*

Winchester TU Speaker Schedule ----- Page 1  
 Winchester Priority Waters I: Skills ----- Page 2  
 Winchester Priority Waters II: Skills ----- Page 2  
 Winchester Priority Waters III: Sampling ----- Page 4  
 Winchester PHW I: Annual Report ----- Page 7  
 Winchester PHW II: Trout Day ----- Page 8  
 Winchester PHW III: Calendar ----- Page 11  
 Barbara's Books ----- Page 12  
 Angler Reflections: Shad Run ----- Page 13  
 BarFly ----- Page 15  
 South Fork Fly-Fishing Tournament ----- Page 15  
 Poet's Corner: Spring ----- Page 16  
 Letters to the Editor ----- Page 16  
 Winchester TU Calendar ----- Page 18

Bill Prokopchak, Newsletter Editor  
wilpro@comcast.net

**Winchester TU Featured Speaker**  
**Thursday, 2 April 2026, at 7:00 PM**  
**“Luke on Lake Fishing”**  
**by Luke Robins**



photo by Bill Prokopchak

**Winchester TU Featured Speaker**  
**7 May 2026**  
**Chris Wood, President**  
**& CEO of Trout Unlimited**

Chris Wood will be at Lake Frederick for the 7 May 2026 Winchester TU meeting.

Chris will update the chapter on TU's national initiatives and priorities and will be available for questions from members.



photo courtesy of TU

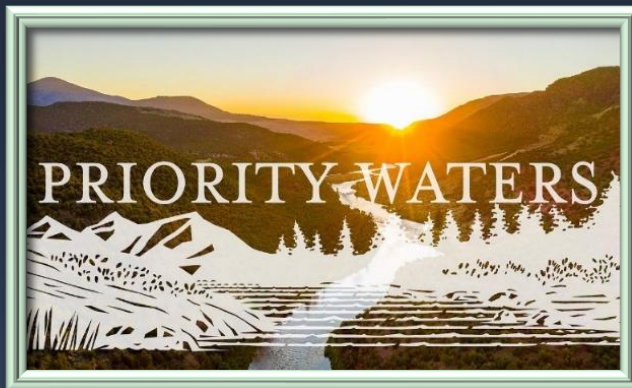
**Looking ahead to our annual meeting with the NSV Audubon group.**

Mark your calendar for the Winchester TU meeting on 7 October 2026 at Laurel Ridge Community College.  
More details in the May edition of LATERAL LINES.



# Winchester Priority Waters: Part I

## Skills Building



Prepared by the Winchester Priority Waters Team  
Tedd Gimber and Mike Makufka, primary inputs  
Mike Smith, assembler/scribe  
Photos by John Prescott

One of the tacit understandings among the Priority Waters team from the outset was that each member could improve his own stream assessment skills – not simply for one’s own sake but to assure all needed skills are available during field outings, lest one member’s absence would mean a skill lost for that day’s work.

The 5 March 2026 meeting addressed that need head on. At 6:00 PM team leader Mike Makufka called to order Ben Coffman, Tedd Gimber, Dave Juth, John Prescott, Bill Prokopchak, Luke Robins, and Mike Smith to initiate a brief training on field data sensors, and other field techniques. Tedd Gimber, first lead instructor, handed out training materials for pulling data from the in-stream temperature sensors. Tedd brought in a HOBO Tidbit sensor (the kind the team had deployed in 2025), and then had the crew access the application on their phones in order to connect everyone to the sensor and download data. Tedd’s demonstration was successful – all were able to open the app and view the data. Thus, for future field days, the crew would have the assurance of redundancy.

The next instruction featured Luke Robins providing some of the most important highlights of stream barrier assessment training. Luke emphasized that the formal training protocol itself is very extensive and that he would only be able to cover the high points. He described the types of barriers, pointing out there were several varieties of natural barriers, such as debris dams, but those are typically temporary, and often aquatic life can pass through. Human-made barriers, however, tend to last for decades and can significantly impair the movement of fish and other aquatic life. Barriers can impact seasonal migration patterns, including spawning interruption that can lead to depletion or extirpation of a species in the drainage if suitable spawning sites are thus deprived.

Luke showed the group the Southeast Aquatic Resources Partnership (SARP) barrier assessment instruction guide on his device and invited the crew to download it to get more information about stream barrier assessment. He noted that this guide is used with the *Survey123* mobile app to gather barrier data and upload assessments to the national database. Luke and Tedd added that the manual will be available on the Priority Waters Google Drive.

# Winchester Priority Waters: Part II

## Skills Building

The morning of 6 March 2026 found many of the Priority Waters group enroute to the Elizabeth Furnace Day Use Area at Passage Creek to receive training in aquatic invertebrate sampling, a course offered to the chapter by Maggie Dombroski of the Izaak Walton League. Field participants included Mike Makufka, Tedd Gimber, Dave Juth, John Prescott, Luke Robins, and Nick Skorup. Joining the group were Charles “Doc” Smith and Ian Hunter.



Tedd (white hat) and Luke (l) begin an impromptu Barrier Assessment Class for Dave, Nick, Maggie, Doc, Ian, and Mike M. (missing from the photo).

“Priority Waters” continues on the next page.

## Winchester Priority Waters: Part II

### Skills Building -- continued

When all convened at the meeting point – the bridge at Elizabeth Furnace – the collective apprehensions were soon affirmed. The rain the night before had been heavy enough to not only discolor the flow but also increased its depth and velocity past the point for safe wading necessary for collecting macroinvertebrate samples. The drive to Passage Creek was not in vain, however, since the bridge site itself afforded Luke the opportunity to show the assembled crew how barrier assessments can be conducted at bridge structures. Tedd brought up the *Survey123* mobile app on his phone, and Luke walked the group through the key points of filling out the online form using the field app. The session was very effective – all concurred Luke’s presentation was very insightful, and all benefitted from the discussions in follow-up. Maggie Dombroski also graciously agreed to return to conduct the training at a later date in March.



**Top:** Luke explains the concept and importance of “bank full” when assessing barriers.

**Middle:** Luke points out several important features of this man-made and natural barrier.

**Right:** Maggie, Ian, and Doc, note where some of the old foundation has weathered over time.



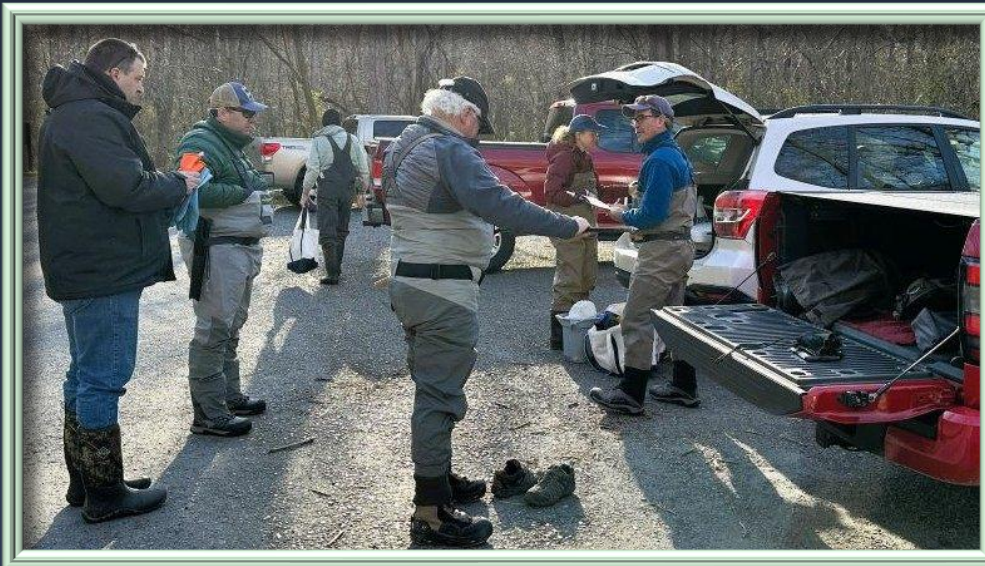
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# Winchester Priority Waters: Part III

## Aquatic Sampling

Prepared by the Winchester Priority Waters Team

While the aquatic invertebrate training slated originally for 6 March 2026 was something of a wash-out (with the raincloud's silver lining being an excellent opportunity to conduct an impromptu lesson on stream barrier assessment), Tuesday morning 24 March 2026 brought bright, albeit chilly, sunshine to the crew that convened at 8:00 AM in the Target parking lot.



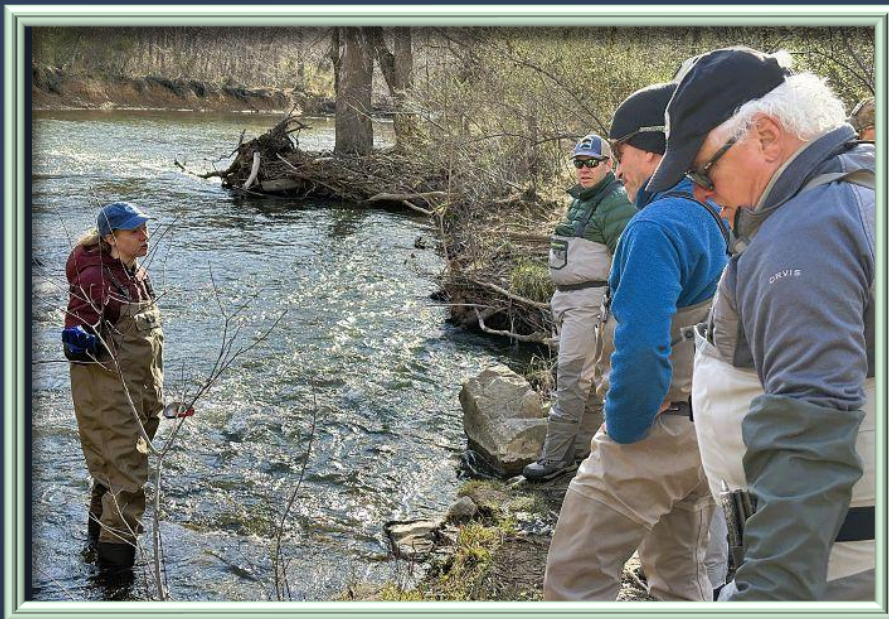
The group comprised Maggie Dombroski, lead trainer and Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams (SOS) Coordinator for the Izaak Walton League, Terry Fogle of Friends of the North Fork of the Shenandoah, and Winchester TU-ers Ben Coffman, Tedd Gimber, Dave Juth, Luke Robins, Nick Skorup, Charles "Doc" Smith, and Mike Smith.

Arriving at the Elizabeth Furnace Day Use Area along Passage Creek in the George Washington National Forest, the group hauled tables, seines, and collection apparatus to a point convenient to the stream that would allow for well-lit assessment of the samples.

**Top:** The Priority Waters team met March 24 at the Elizabeth Furnace Day Use area along Passage Creek for Aquatic Invertebrate training offered by the Save-Our-Streams program of the Izaak Walton League.

**Above:** Maggie Dombroski (l), lead instructor for the session, is the Mid-Atlantic Save Our Streams Coordinator for the Izaak Walton League of America. Here, Maggie is sharing key documents from the Aquatic Invertebrates training folder.

**Right:** Maggie Dombroski offers some final reminders to the seining crew before they undertake their first sample.



Lead instructor Maggie provided the group with some brief background on the Save Our Streams program (now with over 50 years history) and why and how the Izaak Walton League created it.

Next, she carefully explained the collection methodology and emphasized some key points, e.g., why a successful collection had to undertake four seining's within 100 meters of stream and attain at least 200 specimen; why samples were taken from downstream to upstream; and why the duration of each seining collection (20 seconds and 90 seconds) was an essential part of the overall protocol. She further noted that in the later tallying efforts, the specimens would be categorized into one of three groups according to their sensitivity to pollution: sensitive, less sensitive, and tolerant.

The actual collections commenced shortly after 9:00 AM. The water temperature was a crisp 8.9° C (about 48° F.). At the first seining site, using the rocky stream bottom method, Maggie emphasized the importance of how the seine should be positioned and bottom materials moved to assure good collection numbers.

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

## Winchester Priority Waters: Part III

### Aquatic Sampling -- continued



**Left:** The crew makes its way to the first sample site along the riffle. Passage Creek was clear, cold, and flowing slightly higher than normal.

**Below:** Ben Coffman and Dave Juth look on as Luke Robins (center) dislodges a rock. Tedd Gimber and “Doc” Smith wield the seine, as instructor Maggie assesses their progress.

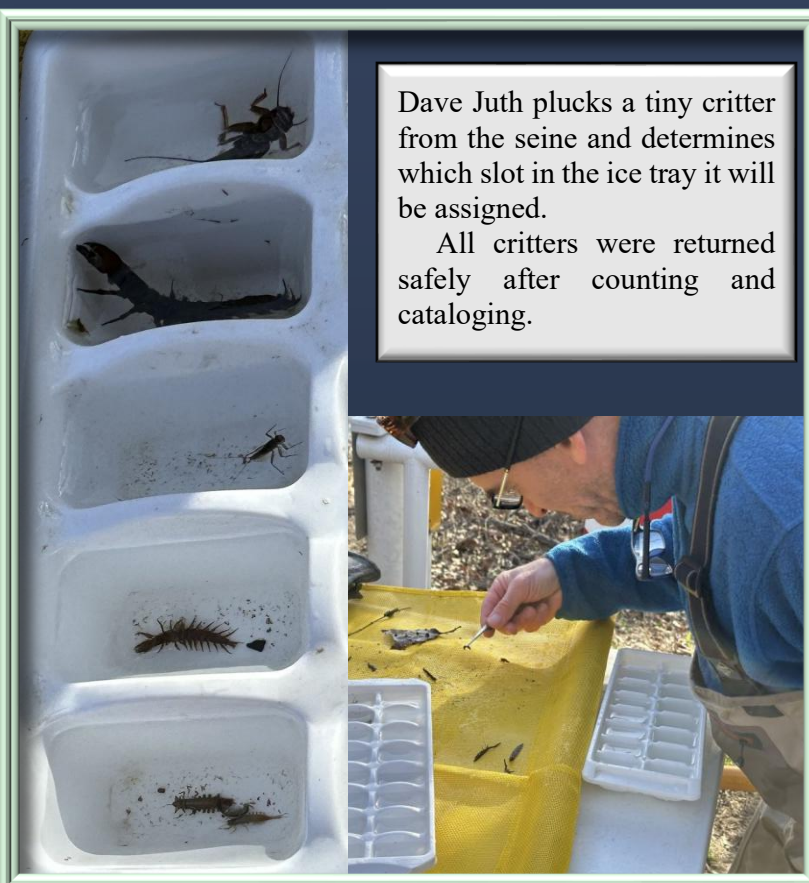
At the second seining point, the students began to apply what they had been shown. After the first two collections, everyone repaired to the counting tables to begin the process of picking and sorting the invertebrate stream life. Collected specimen were gingerly picked with fine-point tweezers and carefully dropped into waterfilled, white plastic ice cube trays. The goal was to handle the little critters as gently as possible – yes, strict “catch-and-release” even with our bug life!

In just a matter of minutes the students began to realize the impressive range of life forms even a small portion of stream riffle can provide. When the first round of picking and counting was accomplished, with creatures sorted out to Order (not family, genus, and species), the seine crews returned to the upper reaches of the riffle for two more collections.

After all the collections had been sorted and counted, Maggie Dombroski guided the group through the use of the Save Or Stream tally sheets. Responding to group questions, she explained how the 200-specimen minimum had been devised (per research at Virginia Tech in the 1990’s), how to assess overall habitat conditions, when and how to make special notations about conditions in the local environment that may have impacted the day’s count. She also briefly described the collection method for obtaining samples from mud and silt bottom waterways.

And speaking of totals, the crew’s count for 24 March 2026 at the bridge at Elizabeth Furnace yielded a sum of 463 specimens representing more than a half-dozen Orders. Black flies were the most numerous, thanks to one particularly dense concentration on the second collection.

To the group’s further dismay, the overall SOS Multimetric Index Score at the site was only a 7, falling into the status of Unacceptable Ecological Condition. Further group discussion yielded insights into possible reasons for the low score – paved surfaces, a nearby campground, livestock in the drainage, etc.



Dave Juth plucks a tiny critter from the seine and determines which slot in the ice tray it will be assigned.

All critters were returned safely after counting and cataloging.

**“Priority Waters”**  
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# Winchester Priority Waters: Part III

## Aquatic Sampling

### -- continued



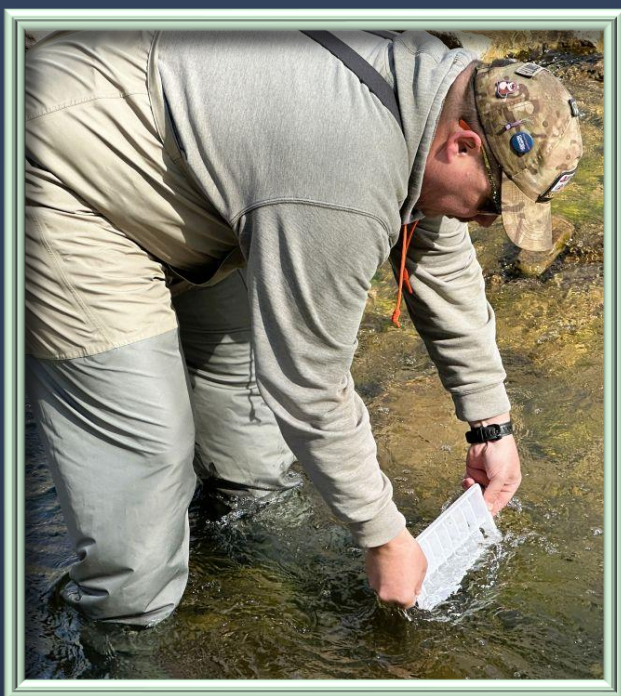
All participants spoke highly of the training, and all acknowledged the long-term values it would provide the Winchester TU Priority Waters endeavors on Mill Run and Little Passage creeks. Several members agreed that the training was so beneficial that other chapter members should seek it out just to deepen their knowledge and appreciation of trout stream ecology. Further information on Save our Streams is available from the Izaak Walton League of America, 707 Conservation Lane, Gaithersburg, MD 20878-2983, or online at <https://iwla.org/save-our-streams>.

**Above Left:** Tedd Gimber, Terry Fogle, and Dave Juth double check the count of each order of the invertebrates and record them in preparation for the final tally.

**Above:** Nick Skorup works to key out one of the more challenging species collected.

**Below left:** Charles "Doc" Smith returns the invertebrates to their riffle on Passage Creek.

**Below:** A very engaged crew!



### Dates Scheduled for Winchester Priority Waters 2026 Field Work

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>
1 Apr 2026	Macroinvertebrate Survey and Water Quality Monitoring
6 May 2026	Tentative for electroshocking with Seth
3 Jun 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
5 Aug 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
7 Oct 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment
2 Dec 2026	Water Quality Monitoring and/or Barrier Assessment





# ANNUAL UPDATE

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS

by Wayne White

As Winchester Healing Waters enters its fifth year of operation, I wanted to take this opportunity to provide perspective on our Chapter's status and outline our goals for this year and beyond. I recently had the privilege of updating the Winchester Trout Unlimited Chapter, our Fly-Fishing Organization sponsor, and realized that it would serve our entire community well to know the health and wellness of our organization and the success of our mission.

Established in February 2022, the Winchester Chapter is one of ten in the Virginia Region and is part of the National Project Healing Waters Fly-Fishing, a 501(c) (3) nonprofit. The Chapter supports the mission of "healing America's veterans through the therapeutic art of fly fishing." In total, there are 164 Chapters across 45 states.

Through our meetings, activities, and outings over the last four years, we have witnessed the therapeutic benefits of fly-fishing for our Veterans as a positive, low-stress activity that fosters restoration, resilience, community, and lasting connections on their healing journey. We have realized the tangible benefits of fly fishing, but more importantly, we have learned that the immeasurable effects are the personal benefits.

During this relatively short time, the Chapter has grown significantly. Currently, we have registered 59 Participants (49 Men and 10 Women); 48 Volunteers (45 Men and 3 Women), and 16 of those Volunteers are also Veterans. Those numbers include 17 Participants and six new Volunteers we registered in 2025.

Our Volunteers serve as instructors, coaches, and mentors for our Participants, and we are fortunate to have such a dedicated and experienced cadre. They lead a full complement of core services – fly casting, fly tying, rod building, and angling education – to help Participants learn the art of fly-rod angling. Our comprehensive instruction includes learning about fly rods and lines, casting basics, knot tying, entomology – aquatic insects, and other fish food, understanding and selecting flies, and the process of finding, hooking, fighting, and releasing fish, as well as safety and environmental considerations. All of this means preparing our Participants for a great fishing experience and enjoying the outdoors, while connecting and sharing camaraderie in the community of fellow Veterans!

In 2025, we expanded our activities and events to allow more Participants opportunities to learn and develop their angling skills. In addition to the instructions at the monthly meetings, we added fly-tying classes at Jake's Bait and Tackle in Winchester, held a five-week rod-building class there as well, and organized nine local fishing outings. Participants also attended three Regional overnight fishing outings. Last year was also the first time we held two socials with families -- the Annual Smallie Challenge fishing outing at Cool Spring, on the Shenandoah River, and our Holiday Party at Lake Frederick. We also maintained our Community Outreach participation in the National Park Go Fish Day, the Annual Field of Honor Memorial Day, hosted by the Winchester Rotary, the Capon Valley Bank Veterans Community Festival, and the Veterans Day Celebration at the Shenandoah National Park Dickie Ridge visitors center.

Building on the success of last year's activities and events, we plan to continue improving angling skill development and education, schedule additional fly-tying and rod-building classes, and organize two local fishing outings each month. For additional fishing opportunities, we encourage our Veterans to maximize their participation in local, regional, and national destination outings held at Oak Heart Lodge in Newaygo, MI, and at Freedom Ranch in Wise River, MT. Leveraging leadership opportunities for our Participants, we are encouraging these Veterans to become instructors and volunteer guides for others in the Chapter. As we build awareness, encourage others' support, and promote Healing Waters opportunities for Veterans, we will expand our outreach and communications within the community.

All Chapter activities and events are provided at no cost to Participants. Project Healing Waters provides funding for supplies, support activities, and planned day and overnight trips. Donations to the National Headquarters are encouraged to support the 164 national Chapters. However, donations in-kind, grants, and restricted donations may be made to help local Chapters fund special events or equipment purchases.

Looking ahead, the Winchester Chapter is staffed and prepared for an exciting year of activities and events. We are committed to making fly fishing a great experience for our Veterans. If you would like more information about Healing Waters, please contact me. To learn more about the Winchester Chapter and meet our Veterans and Volunteers, please feel free to join us at our regular monthly meetings on the second Wednesday of the month from 6:00 to 8:30 PM in Rachel's Kitchen at Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, Virginia.

Thank you for your support and generosity in helping heal those **who serve!**



Follow Us on Facebook: Project Healing Waters — Winchester, Virginia  
 Donate at: <https://give.projecthealingwaters.org/PHWWinchester>





EST. PROJECT 2005  
HEALING WATERS

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS

### Opening Trout Day at Lake Neff Challenges and Learning for Winchester Healing Waters

by **Wayne White**

photos by **Wayne White** unless otherwise noted

A beautiful early Spring Day with warm temperatures greeted Winchester participants and volunteers at Lake Neff, for the Opening Day of Trout season on the Izaak Walton property in Winchester on Saturday, 21 March.

The 15 Winchester Chapter participants and volunteers were invited to test their angling skills alongside Izaak Walton members and their families, at the invitation of Brian Callahan, Izaak Walton Operations Manager.

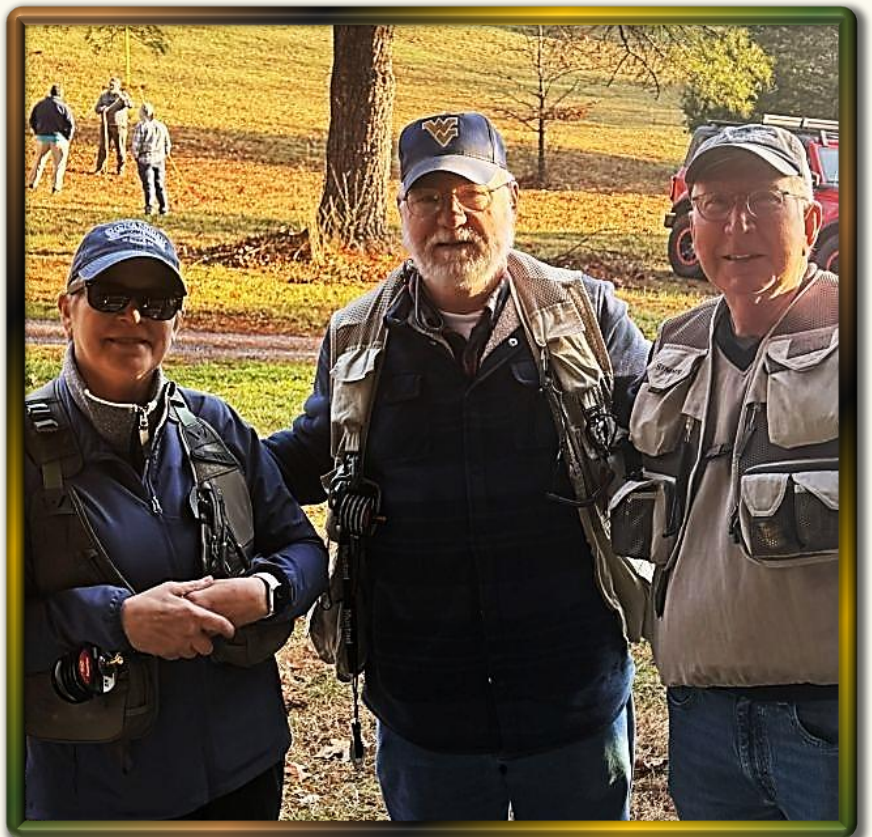
The Lake had been closed to fishing for the previous two weeks, following the first season stocking of Trout. Needless to say, on Saturday, the lake banks were packed with eager anglers stalking numerous large trout. The early bird catches the worm, as the saying goes, and so does the early fisherman with a worm usually catch the first trout. And that can be frustrating for fly anglers, especially when fishing for stocked fish, whether someone is new to the sport or a seasoned veteran.

The Winchester group began assembling around 8:00 AM and was amazed to witness many of the younger anglers already landing fish, and not a fly rod in sight. After assembling rods, choosing flies, and talking through a safety brief, some of the experienced Veteran anglers headed to the Lake to stake out a piece of the bank to get in on the action.



**Top Right:** As usual, Erwin Casto lands the first and largest trout of the day. He used a two-fly rig with a strike indicator, an egg pattern trailing his own "Killer Bug" nymph, which the big fish preferred.  
photo by Izaak Walton Fisherman

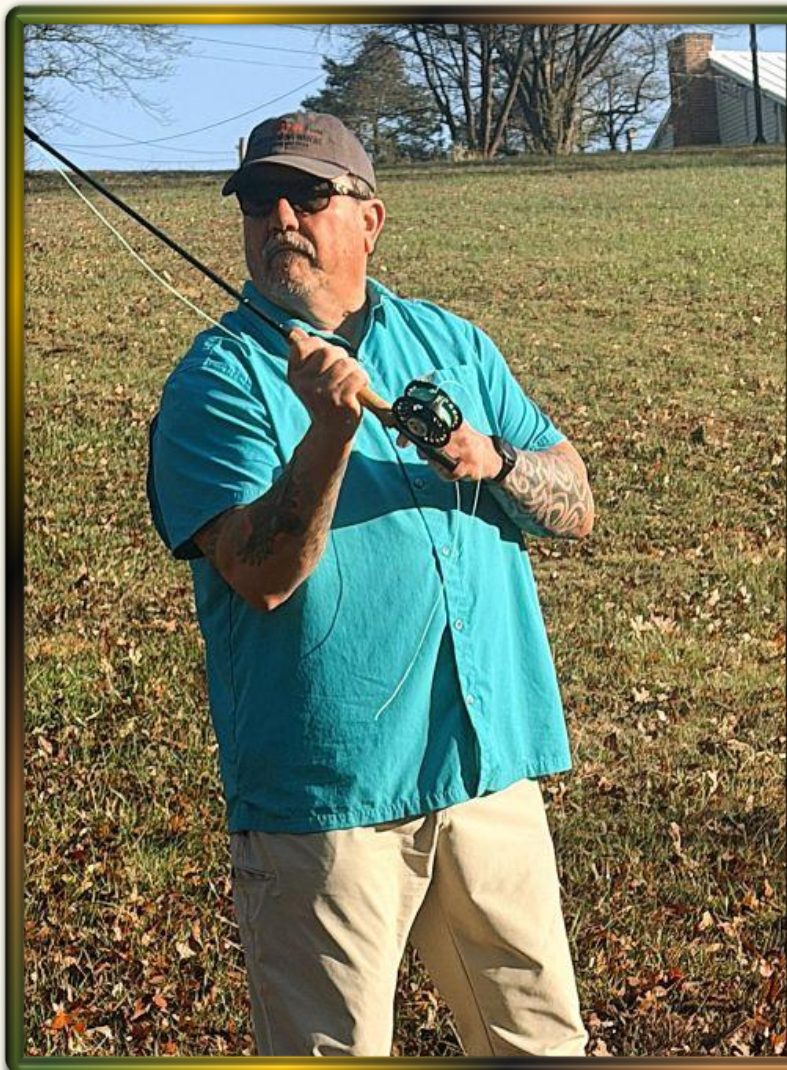
**Right:** Linda Litchfield (l) and Gary Myers (r) talk with Erwin Casto about his strategy for fishing Lake Neff before they try to find a place on the crowded banks of Lake Neff.



**"Winchester Healing Waters" continues on the next page.**

## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS OPENING DAY AT LAKE NEFF

### Challenges and Learning -- continued



It did not take long for Erwin Casto to find his favorite honey hole, where he quickly landed two rainbows, one of which was the largest on the day that took his "Killer Bug" nymph tied as a dropper off an egg pattern. The second fish took his signature black Woolly Bugger. Erwin was quick to share the flies he had crafted for the event with others. However, the fish feeding frenzy turned off almost as quickly as it started. Besides the quick end to the catching, the Lake was a little off-color from the rain the night before, and finding cooperative hungry fish was not easy for the rest of the outing.

Meanwhile, Rich Brooks held a casting clinic on the grass for new participants, Patrick Whitson, Norman Marriot, and Lewis McElfresh, to introduce them to the fly rod and basic casting. Working with a fly-flo training rod, which uses a long piece of yarn on a short section of a fly rod, he demonstrated the stroke technique and the line's arc when executing a simple pick-up and lay-down cast. After some practice with the training device, the novice anglers tried casting an actual fly rod and soon appreciated the importance of the technique Rich had explained.

**Above:**

Checking his back cast, Lewis McElfresh, watches his line and the loop while practicing the basic fly cast.

**Below:** Rich Brooks, second on left, talks with Norman Marriott (l), Patrick Whitson (c) and Lewis McElfresh about the basic fly cast using the fly rod trainer.



**"Winchester  
Healing  
Waters"**  
continues on  
the next page.



## WINCHESTER HEALING WATERS OPENING DAY AT LAKE NEFF

### Challenges and Learning -- continued



Although few fish were caught by our group, the outing provided an excellent classroom experience in which casting techniques, fly selection, knot tying, and patience were all part of the learning process that makes fly-rod angling unique. And that has been found to be the therapeutic value of this sport, which greatly supports our Veterans' healing journey.

We also want to thank Izaak Walton for their generous invitation to fish Lake Neff and for the hospitality, including the breakfast sandwiches they delivered to us while at the Lake.

These fishing outings are not possible without the commitment of our Volunteers. I want to thank Rich Brooks, Gary Myers, Michael Hart, and Galen Hart for their time and expertise in assisting our participants during the day.

**Above:** Waiting patiently for the fish to turn on again to the bite, Kurt Koller focuses on his strike indicator.

**Below:** It was a beautiful spring day for Winchester Healing Waters to experience and enjoy the connections, camaraderie, and community while fishing at Lake Neff.





# WINCHESTER CHAPTER UPDATE – MARCH 2026

by Wayne White

## PLANNED ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS APRIL – JUNE 2026

### April

**Change—Monthly Meeting. Thursday, 9 April** – Rachel’s Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick, 6:00 to 8:30 PM. **Casting Clinic.** Terry Cummings, Federation of Fly Fishers International, Certified Casting Instructor

**22 – Double Spur Outfitters.** Winchester Fishing Outing at Cedar Creek, Star Tanery. Limited to six participants and six guides

**22 – 24 -- River Bound.** Virginia Regional Fishing Outing, Lebanon, Virginia. Winchester has slots for one participant and one guide.

**30 – 2 May -- Back Creek.** Virginia Regional Fishing Outing, Bath County. Winchester: Participant - Cole Bradshaw, Volunteer Guide – Rich Brooks.

### May

**3 – (T) -- Beaver Creek,** Winchester Day Fishing Outing – Limited to four participants and four volunteer guides. Slots are filled.

**5 – 9 – Virginia Regional Trip** Oak Heart Lodge, Newaygo, MI. Erwin Casto and Christina Nelson will attend. Wayne White is the Trip Lead.

**13 – Monthly Meeting.** Rachel’s Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick

**15 -- New Event – Matt Spaid Fishing,** Cedar Creek, Strasburg, Virginia. Winchester Fishing Outing at Cedar Creek. Six participants and six volunteer guides.

**27 – Rose River,** Winchester Day Fishing Outing, Rose River Farm, Syria, VA – Six participants and six volunteer guides.

**30 – Leetown** Fish Hatchery, Winchester Fishing Outing, at USGS Science Center, Kearneysville, WVA. Open to all participants and volunteers.

**30 – South Fork Fly-Fishing Tournament,** Shenandoah River State Park. The Winchester Chapter will sponsor three Veteran Participants.

### June

**6 – Thornton River,** Winchester Day Outing, Sponsored by Turkey Mountain Fly-Fishing Club (TMFFC), Sperryville, Virginia. Limited to six participants and six guides

**10 – Monthly Meeting,** Rachel’s Kitchen, Shenandoah Lodge, Lake Frederick

**27 – (T) - Annual Smallie Challenge,** Cool Spring, Shenandoah University, Parker Lane, Bluemont, Virginia.

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## Barbara's Books

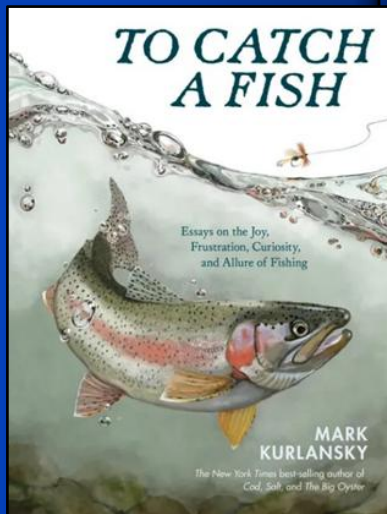
Series created by Barbara Gamble

### **To Catch a Fish: Essays on the Joy, Frustration, Curiosity, and Allure of Fishing**

**Author:** Mark Kurlansky  
**Print Length:** 176 pages  
**ISBN-10:** 1635869722  
**ISBN-13:** 978-1635869729  
**Publisher:** Storey Publishing, LLC  
**Publication Date:** 31 March 2026

For as long as there have been humans, there have been humans trying to catch fish. The two species -- fish and man -- live in constant tension. One chases the other. One tries to get away. Some of us -- author Mark Kurlansky included -- are hard-wired for that chase. Guiding readers through the waters and into the mind of the fish, Kurlansky considers who fish are and why they behave the way they do, and along the way delves into the many approaches to catching a fish, their ecology, and the ins and outs of cooking and eating your catch.

Whether you're a seasoned angler or a novice, or simply want to explore the world of fish, the forty short essays in this collection and the dazzling illustrations by Bri Dostie, shed new light on these creatures and our relationship to them.



"This informative book is almost a guilty pleasure. It is perfectly paired with lovely illustrations that make reading about fishing even better than actually going fishing—at least until one finishes the book."  
 —Carl Safina, PhD, author of *Song for the Blue Ocean* and *Alfie & Me*

Mark Kurlansky is a former commercial fisherman, journalist, and the *New York Times* bestselling author of *Cod*, *Salt*, *The Big Oyster*, and dozens of other books of fiction and non-fiction.

He's won numerous awards, including the James A. Beard Award, ALA Notable Book Award, and New York Public Library Best Books of the Year Award, and his writing has appeared in *The New York Times* Sunday Magazine, *Audubon Magazine*, *Food & Wine*, *The Los Angeles Times*, and more.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers

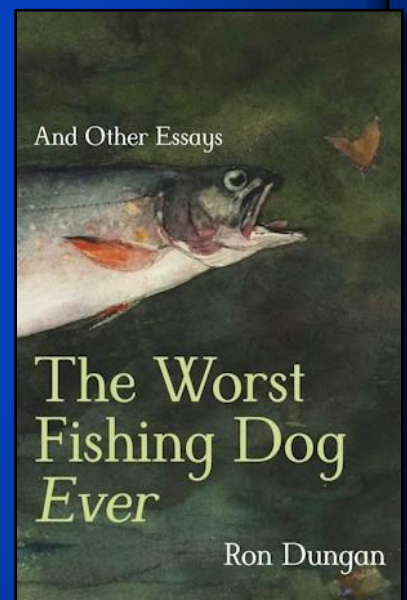
### **The Worst Fishing Dog Ever and Other Essays**

**Author:** Ron Dungan  
**Print length:** 176 pages  
**ISBN-10:** 0826369200  
**ISBN-13:** 978-0826369208  
**Publisher:** UNM Press  
**Publication Date:** 17 March 2026

Ron Dungan, like many fly-fishers, can be obsessive. Although decades of fishing trips have led him to encounter snakes, bears, and treacherous terrain, his main focus is always the fish -- how to find them, how to outsmart them, and how to hook them.

In twenty-seven essays, Dungan takes us on a journey down bad roads and backcountry streams. Each tells a tale about fishing but also about hunting dogs, death, public-land policy, the trap of materialism, and accelerating environmental damage. This last becomes a new obsession. Fly-fishing in the arid Southwest has always been precarious, but how has fly-fishing changed, and what further impacts will climate change and resource extraction have? With his dog curled at his feet, Dungan attempts to unravel the tangled line of these hard questions.

"For outdoor-and nature-enthusiast readers seeking (like Dungan) peace and quiet, this book of daydreams and ramblings is as soothing as an afternoon of fishing." — *Library Journal*



Ron Dungan was a travel and outdoors writer for the *Arizona Republic* for many years, where he contributed to a Pulitzer Prizewinning story on the history of the border.

More recently, as a reporter for public radio affiliate KJZZ, he had pieces on NPR and Here and Now. His work has appeared in the *New York Times*, *Gray's Sporting Journal*, *USA Today*, *Sierra*, the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, *Southwest Fly Fishing*, and the *Miami Herald*, among others.

Sources: amazon.com and the publishers



# ANGLER REFLECTIONS

## ANGLER REFLECTIONS



## Shad Run

reflections by Nick Brognano

Fred, Dan, and I visited the Rappahannock River in Fredericksburg at daybreak. It was supposed to warm up to about 71 degrees, but that didn't happen, and I wished I had brought my Carhartt hooded jacket. We robotically fished at the same popular sandy spot we fished at last year where the Route 1 bridge is downstream to our right. Fred fished between Dan and me. The Shad were there, and we caught a bunch using Shad Darts, jigs, and an assortment of other metal stuff. Hooking onto fish when they are schooled up like this is not very challenging and can be considered dull. Nevertheless, the monotony is more than offset by the sensational fight in the Shad. It is that leaping and hard-fought contest that makes you stand where you are and try again and again. So, my advice is to get there before the crowds converge.



photo by Bill Prokopchak

When the fish are so bunched up it is difficult to avoid snagging them. Even though the fight is rewarding, hooking a fish on its back or side is not pretty and you are left with a lugubrious sight or short-term feeling of guilt until the next cast. I saw Fred fishing with a dropper and decided to try it hoping I would get lucky and hook two fish at the same time. Unfortunately, that never happened to either one of us. I brought my spinning rod and fly rod, but the spinning rod got the most use. There was a fisherman nearby fishing with his fly rod. He wasn't having anywhere near the luck we were having using our spinning rods. At some point, I went downstream and tried using my fly rod. I had no luck with it and grew impatient. I Decided to stay with the spinning outfit.

It was when I got back to the original spot and noticed a small circular metal contraption pinned to Fred's fishing vest that I asked, "What is that device?"

Fred said it was a "counter." He was counting the number of fish he "allegedly" caught. My sometimes-disturbed legal mine quickly (quickly? that's an over statement) kicked in and I immediately became suspicious. I wanted to say, "Fred who is doing the counting and when was the last time that ancient item was calibrated?" Fred is an honest guy, and I decided to keep my thoughts to myself. At the end of the day, he self-proclaimed 17 caught before his counter jammed up. Nevertheless, the thought of counting fish caught sent me back in time when my fishing companion was a young man named Jim who had the same habit. Jim didn't use a mechanical counter. He used his mouth! I remember fishing with him for the first time for Bass on the Potomac. The guy would yell out across the wide river to proudly shout another fish caught.

**Above:** "...I wished I had brought my Carhartt hooded jacket."

**Right:** "Fred fished between Dan and me."



photo by Bill Prokopchak

"Angler Reflections"  
continues  
on the next page.

# ANGLER REFLECTIONS -- CONTINUED



photo by Bill Prokopchak

The size and species of fish didn't matter to him. It was all about numbers and who ended up catching the most fish. He was the most competitive fisherman I have ever fished with. I found his fishing habit to be disturbing and didn't care for it, but Jim was a wonderful young man, and we fished together many times after that first experience despite the loud proclamations. It is no secret a person will put up with a lot of stuff from another if that individual is highly thought of.

Except for my wandering off downstream for a short time with my fly rod, neither Dan, Fred nor I left our happy productive spot. Dan clearly caught the most fish. He had too. He was much younger, taller, and better-looking not to mention his pleasant personality.

The fish simply liked him more. The fact that this wasn't his first rodeo fishing for Shad combined with quickly laying claim to the best spot on the entire length of the Rappahannock gave him an additional "significant" advantage. Thank God he didn't keep count!

Earlier when we all met to begin our trip, Dan had introduced himself and said we had met last year when fishing for Shad. I then recalled meeting him and asking if the multi-fly rig I had found somewhere was legal to use. He did not know. I decided not to use it, but I really wanted to. It was possible to hook on at least eight fish with that dragnet of hooks. What a dream that would have been! Incidentally, Dan was standing in the same exact spot a year ago when I first met him and asked about the rig. I bet next year he will be standing in the same place. Somethings never change.

Last year's eagle was still there perched high on the same leafless tree. With his chest stuck out he looked like he was the king bird of the river. What a magnificent bird. He and all the other birds either sat or flew around providing cheap entertainment and thankfully breaking up the boredom of constantly flinging objects into the water all day. Not moving from one spot can be a challenge to a person's staying power. Chewing gum helps and sometimes smoking a cigar or a pipe is nice. For me, however, between hits or strikes I travel vicariously. When I don't respond to someone calling me, they often think it's because of my poor hearing. This is true, but that is not always the case.

There is so much more to fishing than catching fish, which obviously is no guarantee. To be outdoors where the ceiling can consist of shades of beautiful blue and traveling white clouds that the most gifted artist is incapable of duplicating on canvas is not forgotten nor taken for granted.

To also gaze around and see breathtaking autumn colors, if that is the season, can only enhance the experience. If you're standing in a trout stream the water can be so clean and clear that it is tempting to drink. I recall fishing in Montana where the river bottom was a kaleidoscope of colorful rocks, and the stream gave off an emerald shine from a distance. I vividly remember that more than the number of fish caught.

Augmenting the fishing and surrounding environment are the guy's you fish with. You get to know them. Often arrangements are made to fish together again. Friendships are built and fishing stories are born and told repeatedly, always aged with increasing embellishment especially the size of the fish caught or the one that somehow got away. On this trip I was reacquainted with Dan, a father of three young children who graciously said grace before we ate our lunch.

On our drive home, Dan asked Fred for some advice on going into business. In addition to being a fisherman, Fred is a successful retired entrepreneur. I sat back and enjoyed the talk. As I listened to their conversation I reminisced about my younger days and my dreams for tomorrow. Having hopes and dreams helps make life exciting and rewarding. Fishing is a little like that.

**Above:** "...he self-proclaimed 17 caught before his counter jammed up."

**Below:** "Dan clearly caught the most fish."



photo by Bill Prokopchak with modifications by Copilot



# Winchester TU Monthly "BarFly" Events

Wednesday, 15 April 2026, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 20 May 2026, 7:00 PM

Wednesday, 17 June 2026, 7:00 PM

Escutcheon Brewery  
Commercial St., Winchester, VA



See you at the next  
Winchester TU BarFly.



Fly by Luke Robins  
Photo by Tedd Gimber

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.



## SOUTH FORK FLY FISHING TOURNAMENT



BENTONVILLE VIRGINIA  
**2026**

**Saturday,  
May 30, 2026**

884 Indian Hollow Road  
Bentonville, VA US 22610

**DOWNRIVER VIRGINIA  
CANOE COMPANY STATE PARKS**



### Tournament Overview

- Competitors must use park-designated access points only
- 6:30 a.m. - Check-in begins
- 7:30 a.m. - Lines in
- 2:30 p.m. - Mandatory lines-out
- 3:30 p.m. - Awards

**Prizes include trophies, gear, gift cards, and more!**

### Categories

- ★ Grand Champion
- 🏆 The Lunker
- 🏆 Lady Lunker
- 🏆 Youth Lunker
- The Small Fry
- The Bottom Feeder

Scan for information and registration!



Registration Fees  
Adults \$50  
Youth (ages 10-15) \$25

Editor's Note: Remember to fish with barbless hooks or bend down your barbs, especially when catch-and-release fishing.

**Scan for information and registration!**



Registration Fees

**Adults \$50**

**Youth (ages 10-15) \$25**



## Poet's Corner:

Poems selected  
for the angler

### Spring

by *Christina Rossetti*  
1830-1894  
England



CHRISTINE ROSSETTI  
Ink wash by W.M. Prokopchak © 2026  
after a PUBLIC DOMAIN, Wikipedia drawing by her brother,  
Dante Gabriel Rossetti



Frost-locked all the winter,  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
What shall make their sap ascend  
That they may put forth shoots,  
Tips of tender green,  
Leaf, or blade, or sheath;  
Telling of the hidden life  
That breaks forth underneath,  
Life nursed in its grave by Death.

Blows the thaw-wind pleasantly,  
Drips the soaking rain,  
By fits looks down the waking sun:  
Young grass springs on the plain;  
Young leaves clothe early hedgerow trees;  
Seeds, and roots, and stones of fruits,  
Swollen with sap, put forth their shoots;  
Curled-headed ferns sprout in the lane;  
Birds sing and pair again.

There is no time like Spring,  
When life's alive in everything,  
Before new nestlings sing,  
Before cleft swallows speed their journey  
back  
Along the trackless track, —  
God guides their wing,  
He spreads their table that they nothing lack,  
Before the daisy grows a common flower,  
Before the sun has power  
To scorch the world up in his noontide hour.

There is no time like Spring,  
Like Spring that passes by;  
There is no life like Spring-life born to die,  
Piercing the sod,  
Clothing the uncouth clod,  
Hatched in the nest,  
Fledged on the windy bough,  
Strong on the wing:  
There is no time like Spring that passes by,  
Now newly born, and now  
Hastening to die.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Jim (Stonestreet) asked me to email you and tell you how much he liked your brook trout on the newsletter. He thought it would be a good trademark.

Thanks for all your work on the newsletter. He enjoys it so much even though he is not able to get to the meetings.

Pat Stonestreet  
Winchester, VA



# Calendar of Events

See also  
<http://winchester.tu.org/>

## Winchester Trout Unlimited

(For the complete Winchester Project Healing Waters calendar, please see page 7 of this newsletter.)

### April 2026

**Thursday, 2 April 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 2 April 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Thursday, 9 April 2026 (Note the change in date)**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 15 April 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

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

### May 2026

**Thursday, 7 May 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 7 May 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 13 May 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 20 May 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

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

### June 2026

**Thursday, 4 June 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Priority Waters monthly meeting

**Thursday, 4 June 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 10 June 2026**

6:00 PM – Winchester Project Healing Waters monthly meeting

**Wednesday, 17 June 2026 – Winchester Trout Unlimited BarFly**

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

### Looking Ahead -- October 2026

**Thursday, 1 October 2026**

7:00 PM – Winchester TU annual meeting with Northern Shenandoah Valley Audubon  
 Featured speaker is Brad Fink, Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources  
 Cold Water Fisheries Biologist



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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Steelhead, Shad, and Brookie end mark artworks © by Bill Prokopchak

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