

VCTU Council Meeting Notes – February 22, 2025

Date: February 22, 2025

Time: 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Location: Shenandoah Lodge & Sports Athletic Club

Hosted by Winchester Chapter

Attendees:

In-Person: Jim Wilson (Chair), Burr Tupper (Vice Chair), Scott Allen (Secretary), Bill Pierce (Treasurer), Michael Heatwole (Treasurer-in-Training), Mike Makufka (TIC), Tom Benzing (NLC, Conservation), Amy Orr (At-Large), Paul Kearney (At-Large), Stan Ikonen (At-Large), David Juth (Webmaster), Tony Hill, Richard Foust, Bruce Akey, Fred Boyer, Red Bourdage, Gene Lewis, Michael Smith, Evan Childress (Guest Speaker)

Zoom:

Jeff Deering (At-Large, Michael Genthner, Fred Fox, Joe C, Andrew

Meeting Called to Order at 9:04 A.M.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:29 P.M.

Agenda:

- Opening remarks, introductions, and agenda review (Jim Wilson)

- Alaska Sweepstakes: \$1100, 21 Donors, 1027 tickets
Winner: Seth Coffman
- A check for \$15,000 was sent to UVA to fund their lab to analyze quarterly water samples from US Forest Service sites in 2025. We are working on developing grant applications to obtain funding in 2026.
(Tom)- VTSSS – 10-year cycle, Survey has been completed 4 times, funding for 2030 in question because EPA ended program funding at the end of the last government fiscal year.
- Environment America contacted TU chapters and Council regarding plastics

- Featured Speaker: Evan S. Childress, PhD, Chief of Natural and Cultural Resources, Shenandoah National Park

- Shenandoah eDNA Study Results
- [[Attachment 1](#)]
- Potential opportunities for volunteers for monitoring in the park
- Staff funding awaiting budget approvals

- DWR Report (Lane – via email)

Although I could not attend in person (as I emailed last week), I did attend online. Fisheries presented the smallmouth bass management plan. I can't say there was anything overly noteworthy about that.

But in the Fisheries Update, Mike Bednarski said that the next project is the state **stocked trout management plan**. Trout fishers represent 30% of the anglers and 85% of the constituent's concerns. Trout anglers will be surveyed, and the Department is not going to shy away from the tough questions--including the state's publicizing stocking information that some trout anglers find objectionable.

Also in the Fisheries Update, Mike talked about muskies, and that although only 5% of Virginia anglers go after muskies, the fishery does bring in a good number of out-of-state fishermen and their money. Fears that muskies are preying on smallmouth are irrational because the vast majority of the musky diet is suckers and suckers represent a large percentage of the biomass.

Immediately after the meeting, I reached out to Mike and offered to help out with the stocked trout study. I'll keep that dialogue ongoing. I assume that the Council may have some thoughts on stocking over wild fish.

- Priority Waters (Jim Wilson)

- Winchester (Mike)

[\[Attachment 2\]](#)

- Blue Ridge (Paul) Rapidan and Staunton rivers – monitor patterns of use

- Shenandoah (Tom) - Upper South River -215 volunteer hours & 22 crossings surveyed last year. Home Waters: Buffalo Creek -effort ongoing

- Massanutten (Richard) Dry River – Barrier training completed, 5 sites surveyed, 83 sites have not been surveyed, activity to resume this summer

- TJ (Bruce) Turnover in chapter has delayed work, but 2 members are interested in supporting PW, chapter could use some support from other chapters. The Moorman's River has been their chapter's primary focus to date.

- Treasurer's report (Bill Pierce)

- Truist bank CD as an option

- **Motion to put 10K into a 3 to 6-month CD // Approved**

- Mountain Empire finally cashed their rebate check

- Reimbursement for Regional Rendezvous

- **Motion for reimbursement of up to \$450 per chapter // Approved**

- **Motion for reimbursement for Council Officers up to \$600 // Approved**

- **Action Item: Bill will change the Council's address in tu.org to his current address.**

Balance sheet - 1/31/2025			
Truist Bank			
	restricted	unrestricted	total
Checking		20,807.50	
Savings			
Garth Run Project	0.00		
Trout in the Classroom - Va	6,074.39		
Nat'l TU - travel for NLC rep	985.30		
Mtn. Empire-uncashed checks	0.00		
Skyline Chptr-chapter balance	7,325.85		
Youth Education & Conservation	15,480.53		
TC Energy Grant	13,820.95		
Totals	43,687.02	20,807.50	64,494.52

	71,491.13		= balance in register	9/17/2024
9/29/2024	-387.20		ck 1206	jim wilson-reimb for annual mtg lunch
9/30/2024	15,000.00		deposit from tc energy	grant funds
10/17/2024	115.92		sweepstakes deposit	
10/23/2024	-175.00		ck 1207	massanutten tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-1,065.00		ck 1208	capital tu - 2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	96.80		sweepstakes deposit	
10/23/2024	-142.50		ck 1209	new river tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-318.52		ck 1210	shenandoah tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-116.84		ck 1211	south river tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-398.90		ck 1212	thom jefferson tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-460.00		ck 1213	rapidan tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-419.49		ck 1214	roanoke valley tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-1323.75		ck 1215	no va tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-250.00		ck 1216	winchester tu-2024 annual rebate
10/23/2024	-50.00		ck 1217	little stony creek tu-2024 annual rebate
11/4/2024	-29.2		ck 1218	bill pierce-reimburse for stamps
11/14/2024	19.12		sweepstakes deposit	
11/27/2024	19.12		sweepstakes deposit	
12/2/2024	-51.25		ck 1219	little stony creek tu-replace 2023 rebate ck
12/2/2024	51.25		add back uncashed ck	ck #1183
	81,605.69		= balance in register	12/2/2024
12/3/2024	-1,065.00		ck 1221	capital tu - replace 2024 rebate ck
12/3/2024	1,065.00		add back uncashed ck	ck #1208
12/5/2024	-753.95		ck 1222	mt empire lu restricted funds balance of annual reba
12/4/2025	19.12		sweepstakes deposit	
12/5/24	96.80		sweepstakes deposit	
12/9/2024	-152.73		ck 1223	scott allen reimb for stickers
	80,814.93			
01/20/25	-526.76	80,288.17	ck 1224	massanutten tu-reimb landowners dinner
01/09/25	96.80	80,384.97	sweepstakes deposit	
01/13/25	48.25	80,433.22	sweepstakes deposit	
01/15/25	240.35	80,673.57	sweepstakes deposit	
01/31/25	-1,179.05	79,494.52	ck 1225	new river tu - tc energy grant
01/31/25	-15,000.00	64,494.52	ck 1226	the college uva vtsss funding
	64,494.52		= balance in register	1/31/2025

restricted funds reconciliation (after 9/17/2024)

date	tic-va	n/c rep travel	uncashed cks		skyline chptr (until 9/10/25)	youth conservation and education (until Feb 2029)	tc energy grant	total	comments
			mt. empire chptr						
balance 9/17/24	6,046.52	985.3	641.45		7,325.85	15,480.53	0.00	30,479.65	
9/24/2024	161.46								to correct 8/30/24 entry
9/24/2024	161.46								to correct 8/30/24 entry
9/24/2024	-295.05								vais conf: s/b 11/3/23
	6,074.39	985.30	641.45		7,325.85	15,480.53		30,507.52	
12/2/2024				112.50					2024 rebate
12/2/2024							15,000.00		tc energy grant
12/2/2024	6,074.39	985.30	753.95		7,325.85	15,480.53	15,000.00		
12/5/2024			-753.95						
1/31/2025							-1,179.05		new river chptr
balance 1/31/25	6,074.39	985.30	0.00		7,325.85	15,480.53	13,820.95	43,687.02	

- Trout in the Classroom (Mike Makufka)

- Talking with other organizations for cross pollination of ideas to support youth education

Year to Date Progress:

Everything seems to be on schedule. I have heard of very little issues with fish. Schools are already planning their release dates, and several coordinators have sent me their sites. I am waiting for DWR to send me the 2025 list of approved release sites. Also, I am waiting for the NFS letter granting permission to release in streams within NFS lands. I will be coordinating with the NFS and the chapters to make sure all parties have the correct dates.

The total number of schools participating is 220 this year.

TIC Manual:

I am writing the final draft to the updated TIC state manual. I realize that I am behind what my target date was. I am researching other state manuals to make sure I have up to date information. I am editing the bibliography and reference pages.

Coordinators:

Rapidan is still looking for a coordinator, Chuck Hoysa has been filling in, but he does not want to be the regular guy. I am reaching out to all coordinators to send them up to date lists and letters and again reminding them about funding possibilities for TIC programs: including the TC Energy grant and the Youth education money through state council.

TC Energy Grant:

Virginia Trout Unlimited *Trout in the Classroom* is happy to announce the program has received a grant from TC Energy to help the program move forward. The grant will be composed of two categories:

1. Support TIC equipment replacement
2. Partially alleviate transportation costs for schools to conduct a trout release field trip and other travel costs.

Eligibility:

Any school enrolled in the Virginia TIC program is eligible to apply for funding. Schools must contact their local TIC coordinator. The coordinator will apply for the funding on behalf of the TU Chapter. If a program is in the Virginia Beach area, the coordinator must submit a request to the Virginia State Council TIC coordinator for approval.

What can be Funded:

1. Equipment Replacement: Filters, Chillers, Hoses, Air Pump, chemicals and Test Kits
2. Partial Funding (1/2 the cost) of buses for field trips.
3. Mileage reimbursement for egg delivery travels. Reimbursed at the state rate at that time.

What will not be funded:

1. Any type of salaries or reimbursement for hours
2. Any equipment for new schools entering the program.
3. Any mileage other than what is listed above.

Review Process:

Once a Request for Funding form is filled out and sent to the Virginia State TIC Coordinator (mmakufka@gmail.com); the request will be reviewed by the state coordinator and the Virginia Council Treasurer for approval. If approved, all funds will be sent to the TU chapter requesting those funds.

All funding request forms will be posted on the website, or they can be requested directly from me.

So far, I have only one school apply for equipment funding, NOVA just applied this week and the Capital chapter is working on a grant submission as well. I will be contacting all the coordinators to remind them of the funding opportunities.

- Community Committee (Burr Tupper)

-Newsletter will be sent out by end of March

- Suggested topics
 - Chairman report
 - NLC report
 - TIC
 - Priority Waters Update
 - Virginia
 - Chapters
 - Eastern Rendezvous
 - Others???

Winchester Chapter Funding Request

- Winchester Priority Waters program is part of chapter effort in conjunction with National Forest Service and Department of Wildlife services.
 - Request is for purchasing equipment to monitor water temperature, pH and dissolved oxygen in Little Passage Creek and Mill Run water bodies in the Washington Jefferson National Forest. Also, will be purchasing equipment for barrier assessment on Little Passage Creek
 - Both water bodies support the populations of native Brook Trout
 - Total request for \$1,210. Richard Foust advised that the grant request be revised to reflect the latest testing methods and be re-submitted.
 - Additional funding is coming from chapter donations
 - Letters of support come from Winchester Chapter president and Dawn Kirk
- US Forest Service Fish Biologist

VCTU Educational Grant Program

- Program established 12 months ago
- There have been no requests to date
- TIC has its own source of funding
- Suggestion
 - Launch advertising program
 - Move funds to conservation programs
 - Other ideas
- Possible use with 5 rivers
- Put an article in the NL to promote the grant

- NLC report (Eric Tichay)

1) Eric Tichay, Virginia Council TU Representative to the National Leadership Council (NLC) and Chair for the Native Trout Workgroup (NTWG) term ends February 2025. Tom Benzing will replace Eric beginning March 01.

2) Rich Thomas, NLC Chair asked Eric to stay longer as an advisor/co-chair for the NTWG. (Eric agreed to extend the NTWG leadership to March 2025.) Rich Thomas acknowledged one misconception NLC leaders were under is that you had to be an NLC Rep. to chair an NLC workgroup and that is not explicitly stated.

3) On February 10, Rich Thomas, NLC Chair distributed a *Trout Unlimited Grassroots Trustee (GT) Nomination Package* to all TU NLC Representatives, TU Council Chairs, Chapter Presidents, and other TU Leaders. This year, there will be three vacancies to be filled among the GTs. The new GTs will assume their role after the 2025 annual meeting. New GTs will be eligible and are expected to serve—three complete 2-year terms.

4) Rich Thomas, NLC Chair and Paul McKay, NLC Secretary, will hold Zoom meetings with Council Chairs and NLC Representatives. Discussion topics will include successes and/or issues which may be impacting member and leadership growth within respective states. Specific topics to explore are shared responsibilities, succession planning, what makes a good leader and supporting chapters. Rich will also share information on some specific TU initiatives expected in 2025.

5) Eric attended the NLC Communications Workgroup Zoom meeting held on Tuesday, February 11, 2025. Topics of discussion included (1) the need to improve communications throughout the TU community, especially from the top down and (2) federal government funding for conservation projects is under review by the administration.

6) The next new leader orientation is Wed, Feb 26 at 2:00 PM (EST). Register in the [TU Events Center here](#)

7) The 2025 Eastern Regional Rendezvous will be held in Shepherdstown, WV on April 25 – 27 at the National Conservation Training Center. This is your chance to connect with TU leaders, fishing enthusiasts, and conservationists while enjoying dynamic sessions, inspiring discussions, and hands-on activities.

Virginia Council Priority Waters Forum Update

Planning for the Virginia Council Priority Waters Forum to be held at Hungry Mother State Park in Marion, VA on May 30-31, 2025, is ongoing.

Most guest speakers agreed to give presentations, and a few participants committed to attending the event. U.S. Forest Service guest speakers must first get prior approval from their Public Affairs office.

Hungry Mother State Park officials emailed the event contract with facility rental and menu prices to Eric on February 5th. (State Park officials were not permitted to give us a break on the facility rental for Friday, May 30.) Eric forwarded the contract to the Virginia Council for signing. Once the contract is signed and sent to State Park officials, Eric will draft the event announcement and enter the event in the TU Online Event Center. Eric will coordinate the announcement with Virginia Council officers.

Eric has copies of Hungry Mother State Park cabin and camping fees and will soon make available local hotel lodging options.

Please contact Eric if you have any questions. erictichay@yahoo.com

- Chapter Reports

171 – Massanutten

(Richard) Landowners dinner: 65 attended, 50 landowners, cost \$1053

- Water temperatures of Beaver creek presentation well attended

- Beaver Creek Invitational is April 26

184 - Virginia Capital

(Jim) We need to expand their leadership group.

264 - Smith River

(Jason) – [[Attachment 3](#)]

286 - Thomas Jefferson

(Bruce) Rebuilding the chapter leadership: 6 board members and 3 officers, meetings starting to attract members

307 – Rapidan

- (Red) 300+ attendance at February show

- Kid's day on 5 April

360 - Northern Virginia

- (Tony) Sent out a snail mail with 2025 calendar and call to action

- Virginia General Assembly Update Feb. 22, 2025 (Jim)

- Last year Virginia lawmakers delayed acting to regulate data centers until the issue could be studied by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC), the Assembly's review arm. The report estimated that while VA's electricity demand had been stable or declining for years, the growth of data centers alone could triple Virginia's electricity needs by 2040. JLARC issued a list of legislative recommendations to help localities handle the zoning issues raised by data centers and to help the state and its utilities deal with the demand for service.

- Bills that remain alive include HB 1601 and SB 1449 are headed for conference committee. These are similar and would require localities to consider the noise generated by major industrial facilities on schools and nearby neighborhoods. Both bills also allow local government to require a report on the facilities' impact on water, agriculture, and parkland. SB 960 would require the State Corporation Commission to determine whether electricity providers such as Dominion are allocating costs correctly among different classifications of power customers. SB 1047 would require the state DOE to work with the SCC to study the need for demand response programs in Virginia.

- Bills were introduced in both the House (HB 1791) and Senate (SB 1225) to establish an Electric Vehicle Rural Infrastructure Fund. This would allow private developers to apply for grants for up to 70 percent of installation costs of EV chargers. On 2/20, the Senate substitute was agreed to by the House. Budget item for the SB is \$1 million.

- Open Discussion

- Rendezvous preparations (Jim)
 - Options for fishing or clean-up swim in WVA at that time of year
 - Tom Benzing – Presenting a stream barrier assessment session
 - Jim Wilson is working with Jim Irons (MD) to formulate a session about climate change
- Asa Dunovant – working on a proposed bill for a credit to landowners who provide access to adjacent waters

End