

NEWS RELEASE

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September 16, 2005

M. Gary Verholek, LRCTU



Hugh Success of 2005 Trout Festival Benefits Smoky Mountain Fisheries

Townsend, Tenn. – The Little River Chapter of the national conservation organization Trout Unlimited (TU) held its **2005 TROUTFEST** this past June. The second such event hosted by LRCTU was heavily attended by families and outdoor enthusiasts, and raised much needed funds for fisheries work in and around the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. LRCTU president, Joe Hatton presented Dale Ditmanson, Park Superintendent and Steve Moore, NPS Fisheries Department Manager, a check for \$12,532.58, to support work by GSMNP Fisheries Department staff. In the two years that the event has been held, LRCTU has presented the GSMNP Fisheries Department over \$20,000 for coldwater conservation.



Photo: L-R, front row, Dale Ditmanson (GSMNP), Joe Hatton (LRCTU), Steve More GSMNP) and Tim Doyle (LRCTU); back row: Joe Tefteller, Jeff Hall, Charity and Ian Rutter, all of LRCTU.

Other LRCTU board members participating in the presentation were Joe Tefteller, Jeff Hall, Charity & Ian Rutter, and Tim Doyle. Widespread media exposure in newspapers and magazines, and on TV and radio provided publicity throughout the South, bringing visitors from surrounding states. Generous corporate sponsors, numerous civic and local groups, and the tireless efforts of many LRCTU members help make the event a grand success.

“Streams in the Smokies suffer a furious onslaught from threatening forces,” said Joe Hatton of the Little River Chapter, “including acid rain, polluted runoff and heavy public use. This event is good fun for the whole family, and a good way to support the environment we live in.”

Since its formation in 1992, Little River Chapter members have supported the GSMNP Fisheries Department by participating in numerous projects in and around the park, fulfilling the Trout Unlimited mission to “...Preserve, Protect and Conserve...” The desire to expand that support prompted the idea of hosting a fun-filled educational experience to raise awareness of the fragile nature of the unique public resources available in the GSMNP. TROUTFEST was envisioned as a way to introduce our mission and educate the public to enjoyable ways they might help the environment they enjoy.

TROUTFEST open-air activities were held on Saturday and Sunday, and included vendors of fishing related equipment, art & crafts, and items related to our mountains and streams, a variety of foods, and local musicians. An educational tent provided demonstrations and exhibits for the whole family, including live fish, bees, as well as, presentations of water conservation work and fish surveys by the GSMNP Fisheries Department. There were activities specifically directed to children and young adults -- paint-a-trout, tie a fly, learn to cast a fly rod, and more. TWRA, TVA, Tremont Institute, and Little River Watershed Association were just a few of the organizations that provided educational exhibits. Professionals ran an adult casting contest and provided fly tying and rod building exhibitions.

TROUTFEST is a family-oriented, educational festival held annually at the doorstep of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The event raises funds and awareness for the need to continue conserving and protecting the rivers and streams in and around the GSMNP.

More information on **TROUTFEST** and other LRCTU activities is available at our web site --- www.lrctu.org.



Trout Unlimited is North America's leading coldwater fisheries conservation organization, dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds. The organization has more than 130,000 members in 450 chapters in North America.



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