



HATCHES

Newsletter of the Doc Fritchey Chapter
P. O. Box 227, Palmyra, PA 17078 www.dftu.org
Winter 2025



"Dedicated to the conservation, protection and restoration of the cold water resources of Dauphin & Lebanon Counties"



From Your President:

On behalf of the DFTU Board, I'd like to wish each of you and your families a happy, healthy and prosperous New Year. It's hard to believe I woke up this first week of January to 2025 and my 77th birthday. As I wind down my tenure as chapter president and transition to past president, I want to thank our board of directors, activity

coordinators and volunteers for making our chapter one of the best. Our meetings have improved, with chapter activity updates, fun activities and a very diverse group of speakers. Members can now enjoy food and beverages before the meeting. We have increased our number of corporate sponsors, added a Partner Recognition program and participated in a number of new outreach activities, all while maintaining our active schedule of events from past years. Our chapter is a great addition to our surrounding communities. Our fall auction provided needed funds to help offset the cost of our regular conservation, education and youth sponsorship programs. The common denominator is that we accomplish our goals through our volunteers who are willing to donate their time and talents to our chapter. We are a very active chapter with a long list of activities and a longer list of potential activities. Members have submitted suggestions, but we can't seem to get coordinators or volunteers. To cut to the chase – we need your help!

Discussions with our newsletter editor, Bill Zeiders, revealed yet another interesting volunteer story. Bill became interested in our chapter and attended a meeting. At the meeting he signed up to help with the diversion well crew and was welcomed as a "newbie". Bill became a regular meeting attendee and signed up for the fly-tying classes, again feeling welcome. Bill volunteered to share his talent by becoming our *Hatches* newsletter editor, and we eventually approached him about becoming a board member. He accepted, and is now active on our board, involved in chapter outreach, and serves as a fly-tying mentor and a regular on the diversion well crew. His main reasons for continuing to be active are that he feels he's serving the community and having fun.

One of my duties as president is to appoint a nominating committee to seek interested DFTU members in becoming board members, activity planners/coordinators, or dependable volunteers to secure the future of our chapter. Members will be contacted by phone, email or in person to ask for your help. Why don't you "jump the gun" and call or email us to share your time and talent for 2025. Working together we can make a difference in conservation, education and our communities.

Chuck Swanderski

Winter/Early Spring a Perfect Time to Learn to Tie Flies!



Our Doc Fritchey chapter will once again offer both Beginner and Intermediate fly-tying classes to the public. If you haven't learned to tie flies, this is the perfect opportunity. Both courses are taught by seasoned tiers and assisted by a host of

chapter members who are at your elbow, helping you out. The Beginner course is intended to get the newcomer started by learning skills that can be utilized long after the course is completed. For the Intermediate course, we change the patterns that are introduced each year, so that returning students can learn new techniques and become more creative in their tying. The cost for each course is VERY REASONABLE (\$50 total) and the materials that are used each night of the class are included. Follow-up emails (often with videos) are sent out after each class. All students have ease of communication with the instructors during the week, and the feedback from past courses has been terrific. We also offer for sale a very nice set of fly-tying tools at a decent price (\$70) to any student who would like to purchase a set. If you're unsure about fly tying, members are invited to observe one of our classes.

For Beginners, we offer two location options:

- A Beginner course will be held at Palmyra Sportsmen's Association, located in Annville, on Wednesday evenings, from 6pm to 8pm, for six consecutive weeks, beginning Wednesday, February 12. To register for this, a registration link will be provided on our www.dftu.org website.
- A Beginner course will also be held at Wildwood Park's (Harrisburg, PA) Olewine Nature Center building, on Thursday evenings, from 6pm to 8pm, for six consecutive weeks, beginning Thursday, February 13. Register for this course online at: explorewildwoodpark.org/event/beginner-fly-tying-course-with-trout-unlimited/

For Intermediates, we will have one section of the course:

- At Wildwood Park's Olewine Nature Center building, on Thursday evenings, from 6pm to 8pm, for six consecutive weeks, beginning Thursday, February 13. Register for this course online at: explorewildwoodpark.org/event/intermediate-fly-tying-with-trout-unlimited/

Upcoming Events

January

January 13 – Trout in the Classroom Eggs arrive – Cyndi Camp

January 28 – DFTU General Membership Meeting
ft. Rick Nyles: Fishing Penns Creek

February

Feb 12 – Beginner Winter Fly Tying Classes:
Palmyra Sportsmen Association

Feb 13 – Beginner & Intermediate Winter Fly
Tying Classes: Wildwood Park & Nature Center

Feb 25 – DFTU Board Meeting

March

March 25 – DFTU Annual Meeting

April

April 22 – DFTU Board Meeting

April 26 – Wetlands Festival @ Wildwood Park

January Membership Meeting to Feature Presentation on Penns Creek



On January 28, Rick Nyles of Sky Blue Outfitters will present "Penns Creek – The Hatch Factory." Rick will discuss the hatches, from Midges to the Green Drake, fly fishing techniques, what flies to use and tie, and the anatomy of the creek from Penns Cave to below Weikert. Rick has fished Penns for over 40 years and has uncovered some of her best kept secrets.

Rick has been guiding since 1999 and is an accomplished fly tier who is known for his CDC patterns, his simple approach to fly tying, and his fishing techniques. Rick placed 3rd in the Orvis fly tying contest by entering his unique Green Drake pattern. He is the owner of Sky Blue Outfitters and Executive Vice President for the PA Council of Trout Unlimited.

The meeting will be held on Tuesday, Jan 28, starting at 7:00pm at the Arrowhead Lounge at Fort Indiantown Gap. Photo ID is required for every person at the military gate entrance to the Gap.

PLEASE NOTE: The bar and food service will NOT be available that evening

Seeking Nominations for the 2025 Gerald L. Miller Volunteer Award

Since 2014, this award has been presented annually to a chapter member whose volunteer work has consistently and substantially contributed to the attainment of the chapter's mission to "conserve, protect, and restore the coldwater fishery resources of Dauphin and Lebanon counties" through education or hands-on involvement with chapter projects.

This award honors the tireless conservation work performed by the late **Gerald L. (Gerry) Miller** who passed away in 2013 after serving both the chapter and PA State Council in a variety of roles since becoming a TU member in 1999.

Head over to dftu.org/outstanding-volunteer-award/ to view the form and submit your nomination.

Project Healing Waters

Project Healing Waters (PHW) guides/mentors needed. John Dietz, PHW Regional Coordinator, has requested our help with PHW Program outing at the Ned Smith Center and Wiconisco Creek for their event on April 24-26. Guides/Mentors are needed on the 25th and possibly the morning of the 26th. This program gives our chapter an opportunity to assist Veterans through a fly-fishing experience. If interested contact either Chuck Swanderski (chucks@dftu.org) or John (John.Dietz@projecthealingwaters.org) to be included in more specific details and times. John is in the planning stages of this annual program and would like to solidify the guide/mentor volunteers.

March General Membership and Annual Meeting

Our DFTU Annual Meeting will be held on March 25th at the Fort Indiantown Gap Community Building at 7:00 PM. At this meeting we will have the election of officers and board members, presentations of chapter awards, slides recapping the 2024 DFTU activities and feature our guest speaker, PFBC Executive Director Tim Schaeffer. This is a great opportunity to meet your fellow DFTU members, hear what's going on with the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, speak with our internal volunteer program coordinators and explore volunteer opportunities within our DFTU Chapter. It's an easy way to spend an evening with your fellow conservationists and anglers. More details to come.

"The solution to any problem—work, love, money, whatever—is to go fishing, and the worse the problem, the longer the trip should be." - John Gierach

Volunteer Hours Reminder

Our chapter reports volunteer hours to National TU in April. Volunteer hours encompass the fiscal year of March 1 through February 28. Classification of hours can fall into these categories: Board Operations and Management, Youth Education, Conservation/Science/Monitoring, Communications/Engagement, Veterans/First Responder Services, Fundraising, Advocacy/Lobbying. DFTU Group activities hours such as Fly Tying, Ladies Day, Diversion Well, Stocking should be reported by the event coordinator. If you are reading this and have no hours to report the question is - **why not?!** We'd love to have you become engaged in one or more of our activities.

Youth Opportunities

Our chapter will sponsor up to three students that are accepted into either The Wildlife Leadership Academy or the 2025 Rivers Camp. Participants must be accepted prior to notifying DFTU of the requested tuition reimbursement. Tuition reimbursement is on a first accepted/first sponsored system. See information below:

The Wildlife Leadership Academy is currently seeking referrals of students ages 14 to 17 to become Conservation Ambassadors. Nominations are now being accepted online at [wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/nominate](https://www.wildlifeleadershipacademy.org/nominate). This is the ideal summer field school for students who are interested in conservation and the outdoors! The journey to become a Conservation Ambassador begins by attending our 5-day residential (overnight) summer field school. All field schools are held at Krislund Camp and Conference Center near Madisonburg, PA. The Brookie School is held on July 8-12, 2025

Accepted nominees will become certified Conservation Ambassadors through attending a 5-day residential summer field schools which focuses on a particular wildlife species, including white-tailed deer, bass, brook trout, turkey and bear. Students in each field school will gain extensive knowledge about natural resource conservation, leadership experience, and communication skills. Students are also eligible to apply for three college credits through Cedar Crest College, return to the Academy as a youth mentor the following year, compete for college scholarships, and join an Academy Alumni Network of wildlife, fisheries, and conservation professionals.

The mission of the Wildlife Leadership Academy is to engage and empower high school age youth to become Conservation Ambassadors to ensure a sustained wildlife, fisheries and natural resource legacy for future generations. The Academy, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is a cooperative initiative involving state agencies and conservation organizations.

For more information, contact Director of Outreach & Alumni Engagement, Katie Cassidy at kcassidy@wildlifeleadershipacademy.org or (570)939-5109. You can also connect with the Academy online at www.wildlifeleadershipacademy.org or Facebook (facebook.com/wildlifeleadershipacademy)

The 2025 Rivers Camp. The Cumberland Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited is hosting the **30th** Rivers Conservation and Fly Fishing Youth Camp. The Camp runs Sunday through Friday June 15-20, 2025 at Messiah University, Grantham, PA

This is not just a fly fishing camp. It is primarily a coldwater conservation camp with a balance of classroom instruction and hands on learning in both coldwater conservation, stream improvement and fly fishing. There are early morning and evening fishing sessions each day.

This camp is for boys and girls between the ages of 14 and 17. If you would like to have fun, work hard, and engage in a unique experience apply ASAP. Up to 24 youth will be accepted into the program. Do not send money with the application. Payment is due after the candidate is notified of selection. Total cost for tuition, room and board is \$550. The deadline for the early acceptance has passed BUT if any vacancies remain, applications accepted during the regular acceptance period (1/1/25 through 2/28/25) will be notified in early March 2025. To apply visit: <https://www.riverscamp.com/>



Annual Wetlands Festival at Wildwood

Our chapter has a great partnership with Wildwood Park and Nature Center and will again participate in the annual Wetlands Festival on April 26, 2025 from 10:00 AM till 4:00 PM. We will be demonstrating fly tying and discussing our many conservation projects in our footprint of Dauphin and Lebanon Counties. Visuals are provided by our chapter so bring your vise and have some fun. This is a very well attended public event and affords our chapter exposure to local people interested in conservation and the outdoors. We are looking to have at least 5 volunteers staff the booth. If interested, please contact Rich DiStanislao (rdistani@comcast.net) or Chuck Swanderski (chucks@dftu.org).

Trout in the Classroom



Cyndi Camp has added two schools this year to our Trout in the Classroom Program (patroutintheclassroom.org) bringing the total to five. Trout in the Classroom (TIC) is a co-op program between the PA Council of TU and The PA Fish and Boat Commission and local schools. Eggs will be delivered to the participating schools on or about January 13th. If you would like to learn more or assist Cyndi please contact her at ccampsilva@verizon.net.

DFTU Trailer has been sold!

Your board agreed to sell the DFTU trailer and rent a storage shed for our stream improvement tools, stocking barrels, TIC aquariums and chillers, fly-tying materials and tents. Thanks to the efforts of Becca Fronk, Trip McGarvey and Willie Bixler our trailer has been sold. Most of our equipment and materials are now stored at the Forge Road Self Storage Facility. Funds from the sale will be used to help offset the monthly rent at the new facility.

The Stony Valley Group



On December 15, eight volunteers assisted in opening the round well at the Trout Unlimited Acid Mine Remediation Project on Rausch Creek. It was the first time in 6 months that there was enough stream flow to operate the well. The square well remains closed. As of January 5, the PH readings were 8.25 downstream and 5.57 upstream. The crews have been hard at work the last few weeks shoveling tons of limestone in to the well as stream flow continues to improve. Thanks to our dedicated crews of volunteers who brave the cold and frozen piles of limestone to help maintain this important project.

A Look Back:

How the Rausch Creek Diversion Wells Originated

From all appearances, Stony Creek is a pristine trout stream. Its headwaters are in the heavily forested mountains north of Harrisburg, and for most of its 20-mile length it flows through a beautifully wooded valley. After a victory in a fight with a power company that wanted to build a pump-storage facility on Stony Creek in the mid-1970s, Stony Creek's watershed is now protected under PA's Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Consequently, vehicular access to most of the valley is prohibited. Stony Creek and its valley are an invaluable resource located 15 miles from a metropolitan area of a quarter of a million people.

There is a fly in the flotant though. During the latter half of the 1880s, extensive coal mining occurred in the Stony Creek watershed. As a result, mine acid drainage from old, abandoned mines flows into Stony Creek making it inhospitable for trout, except on a put and take basis. Very few trout were able to hold over in the stream due to a pH which generally ranges from 4.2 to 5.5 (a pH of 7.0 is neutral).

The Dauphin Chapter of Trout Unlimited has been very active in protecting the Stony Creek Valley. The chapter was instrumental in forming a coalition of about 50 environmental groups which thwarted the power company's plans, and it lobbied hard to have the valley protected by the state's Wild and Scenic Rivers program. Since 1980, the chapter has been intent on mitigating the mine acid problem on Stony Creek. With the help of Dr. Dean Arnold from the Fish and Wildlife Research Unit at Penn State University, the chapter explored a variety of acid mitigation devices. Dr. Arnold and his students collected baseline data on the stream for almost two years.

One acid neutralization device considered by the chapter was rotating drums that dispensed lime. The problem with rotating drums is the high maintenance they require. Since the headwaters of Stony Creek are relatively inaccessible, the chapter couldn't replenish the lime in the drums as frequently as required. Soda ash hoppers which dispense highly alkaline soda ash into the stream were investigated. The cost of soda ash ruled out this method because the hoppers would require \$14,000 worth of soda ash in a year. With Dr. Arnold's expert advice, the chapter decided that, given the ability to finance and maintain any device, we needed to use limestone to neutralize the acidity of Stony Creek. We quickly ruled out limestone beds or gabions. Others have tried these methods and found that they were ineffective in mitigating mine acid. Mine acid generally carries a considerable amount of iron dissolved in the discharge. As the pH of the water is raised, the iron precipitates out of the water, coats the limestone, and prevents any

reaction between the calcium carbonate and the water. Also, the limestone in beds and gabions doesn't dissolve fast enough to neutralize the acidity in mine acid discharges.

We were beginning to despair when Dr. Arnold came across a passing mention of diversion wells in the literature on the treatment of acidified waters. We found out that diversion wells had been used successfully in Scandinavia to treat acidified streams. After extensive inquiries, the chapter could not find where diversion wells were used anywhere in the U.S. Therefore, we wrote to the Swedish embassy in Washington, and they put us in touch with Dr. Harold Sverdup at the Institute of Technology in Lund, Sweden. Dr. Sverdup was very helpful in providing the chapter with information on the use of diversion wells in Sweden and Norway.

A diversion well is a relatively simple device. It consists of a large, cylindrical container partially filled with soluble limestone. The water to be treated is piped into the container under considerable pressure where it agitates and reacts with the limestone before it flows back into the stream. The agitation of the limestone, called fluidizing, prevents any coating of the limestone by iron, and it speeds up the dissolution of the limestone. The diversion well offered the chapter the most economical and easily maintained method of mitigating the acid in Stony Creek. Since diversion wells had never, to our knowledge, been used in our country, the Dauphin Chapter's decision to use one on Stony Creek made our project both a stream improvement project and a research project.

The chapter's next task involved getting the necessary permits to move forward with the project and raising the money to construct the diversion well. We applied for a grant from the Living Brightwater Fund at National TU, and we received \$1,800. We solicited contributions from chapter members and other interested organizations which netted us another \$1,300. We also asked for donations of materials and equipment from local businesses. Particularly noteworthy were the donations made by Bill Fritz and Lebanon Rock, Inc. Bill is a past National Director of TU and the retired owner of a Harrisburg heating and air conditioning firm. Bill donated 400 feet of 8-inch pipe needed to pipe the water into the diversion well. This length of pipe was necessary in order to create enough head pressure to agitate the limestone in the well. Lebanon Rock, Inc. donated 23 tons of high-quality limestone to use in the well. Bruce Whitman, outdoor writer for the Harrisburg Patriot newspaper, gave the project terrific coverage, including recognition of everyone who had donated materials and equipment. Since the project is located in an area designated as Wild and Scenic, the chapter felt compelled to make the diversion well and the pipe leading to it as unobtrusive as possible. Therefore, we buried the well and the pipe leading into it. In addition, we constructed a low head dam of stone some

300 feet upstream of the well. Approximately 800 hours of effort by chapter members and other volunteers were devoted to the project. As is true of most similar endeavors, a handful of individuals did most of the work, and the project reinforces the notion that a few committed people can accomplish a great deal. In this case, those committed people are Dale "Shag" Schwalm, Tom Ricker, Bill Swalm, Warren Ricker and Gene Breidigan.

The preliminary results of the diversion well are very heartening. The pH of Rausch Creek above the well continues to be in the 4.0 to 5.5 range; however, for the month since the diversion well began operating, the pH in the stream below the well has run 6.7 to 8.4. Also, initial data indicates that the well is dramatically increasing the alkalinity of the water in Rausch Creek. Chapter members have had to replenish the limestone in the well at the rate of about one ton every 14 to 15 days. In other words, the well is dissolving one ton of limestone every two weeks.

Only after the diversion well is operating for a year can we draw conclusions as to its long term impact on water chemistry and aquatic life. The early data, though, exceeds our wildest hopes.

Editor's note: This article, written by Dauphin Chapter President Ron Evans, originally appeared in the Winter 1987-88 issue of the PA Trout newsletter. The Dauphin Chapter was later re-named the Doc Fritchey Chapter in honor of Dr. John A. Fritchey, Jr.'s accomplishments in preserving the pristine nature of Stony Creek Valley.

Online Store Update



DFTU has partnered with Travel Champs (one of our sponsors) to increase our presence in the community, feature our chapter volunteers at events and help with funding of our chapter activities. We have recently added additional clothing items to our store with selected logo apparel offered for men, ladies and youth. Cost is reasonable (compared to other chapters and shops) and our prices are below other similar online stores. Please support our chapter by visiting the online store via our DFTU website: (dftu.org).

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