



Tuck Tales

Newsletter of the Tuckasegee Chapter #373 of Trout Unlimited serving the western North Carolina counties of Haywood, Jackson, Macon and Swain

A Monthly Newsletter

June, 2011

Rod Raffle

The raffle will continue for one of Jim Mill's custom graphite fly rods at the September 6th meeting.

September Meeting

The program for the September meeting will be announced later this summer.

Summer Hiatus

The May meeting was our last regular meeting before the next meeting on September 6th.

September Menu

The grub Committee for the September meeting will be announced later this summer.

Email addresses needed

Your editor requests that everyone please provide updated email addresses so we can make certain our data base is up-to-date and you won't miss notification of newsletter and event emails!

Editor's email address:

Send an email to:

craigforrest@sleepyhollowstudio.com

Tuckasegee Chapter of Trout Unlimited meets the first Tuesday of every month, with the exception of June, July and August, in the Community Room at the rear of the United Community Bank of Highway 107 South in Sylva at 6:30 PM. A meal is provided by the Grub Committee at a cost of \$5 per person. Guest are invited to join us at no charge.



FERC Issues First Set of Nantahala Area Hydro Licenses

May 4, 2011

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) today issued two of six new federal hydro licenses to Duke Energy for Nantahala Area hydro stations, which kickstarts processes for a variety of public recreation and aquatic habitat enhancements in the Tuckasegee River watershed.

The licenses issued today cover hydro developments on the East Fork (Tanasee Creek, Bear Creek and Cedar Cliff hydro stations) and West Fork (Thorpe and Tuckasegee hydro stations) of the Tuckasegee River. Licenses for hydro

stations on the Nantahala River watershed and others are expected soon.

“This first batch of new licenses is a credit to all who worked together to develop comprehensive plans for balancing numerous water needs. We value their insight and are deeply grateful to their commitment to this effort,” said Steve Jester, vice president of Hydro Strategy, Licensing and Lake Services. “From our initial review of the new licenses, it appears stakeholders' interests have been addressed, while preserving the area's clean, renewable hydroelectric generation.”

Between 2000 and 2003, Tuckasegee and Nantahala Cooperative Stakeholder Team members invested more than 9,000 person hours visiting sites, guiding study needs, reviewing reports and collaborating to address environmental concerns and public recreation needs. The Nantahala and Tuckasegee settlement agreements are key to successfully relicensing the hydro stations.

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The two legally binding agreements, signed in 2003, are the work of stakeholder teams representing 30 organizations, including Duke Energy. Settlement agreement provisions that FERC excluded as new license requirements will be implemented by Duke Energy in accordance with the agreement.

Once all of the licenses are issued, a series of steps can begin to have a recreation facilities plan and other documents approved by the FERC. At that point, likely about two to three years from now, Duke Energy can begin implementing enhancements throughout the life of the new licenses, which include:

- Increased continuous minimum flow releases for the Nantahala and Tuckasegee rivers, enhancing some of the most popular catch-and-release trout streams in the Southeast
- Special flow releases on a few days each year for high-skill boating downstream from Nantahala and Glenville dams
- New or enhanced public access areas on the Nantahala and Tuckasegee rivers
- Improved Nantahala Gorge boating access, in cooperation with the U.S. Forest Service
- Transfer of about 150 acres of Duke Energy property upstream of Wolf Creek Lake to the U.S. Forest Service for enhanced public recreation and protection of native brook trout habitat
- Canoe portages around dams at the Bryson (Oconaluftee River), Franklin (Little Tennessee River) and Mission dams (Hiwassee River) and Western Carolina University-owned Cullowhee Dam
- Primitive camping, handicapped-accessible docks, restrooms, improved parking and other improvements at larger lakes

These physical improvements will require more than \$10.5 million of new Duke Energy investment.

“The relicensing process is good public policy. It allows an open, formal review of specific projects, rivers, public recreation needs and new scientific information so we can arrive at the appropriate balance among all interests,” Jester said.

The new 30-year FERC operating licenses just issued are on the Tuckasegee River in Jackson County and the Oconaluftee River in Swain County.

The pending licenses are on the Hiwassee, Little Tennessee and Nantahala rivers. These cover 12 hydro reservoirs and nine hydroelectric stations primarily in Clay, Macon and Swain counties. Their combined installed generating capacity is about 98.5 megawatts. This is about

99.5 percent of the total Duke Energy hydro generation in the Nantahala area.

The remainder is from Queens Creek Hydro Project in Macon County, which received its initial license in 1976 and was relicensed in 2002.

Project reservoirs are in Clay County (Mission Lake); Jackson County (Bear Creek, Cedar Cliff, Glenville, Tanasee Creek, Tuckasegee and Wolf Creek lakes); Macon County (Diamond Valley, Dicks Creek and Whiteoak Creek reservoirs, Lake Emory and Nantahala Lake); and Swain County (Lake Ela). A very small portion of Nantahala Lake is also in Clay County.

Customer demand for electricity in the 1,729-square mile Nantahala Area outgrew this local hydro generation in 1971. During the peak hour of electric demand by the nearly 72,000 Duke Energy customers in these rugged mountains in mid-December 2010, more than 75 percent of their energy came from Duke Energy power plants located outside the Nantahala Area.

The Duke Energy facilities here, and many others operated by different utilities across the nation, needed FERC licenses after a 1965 federal court case broadened the licensing requirement to include more projects located on tributaries of navigable rivers. Federal operating licenses have been required for non-federal hydro projects on navigable rivers since the 1920s.

In 1980 and 1981, FERC issued initial licenses to Nantahala Power and Light Company, which Duke Power purchased from Alcoa in 1988. With new licenses issued, these Nantahala Area hydro projects have completed their first relicensing process.

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<http://www.orgsites.com/nc/tctu/>

Trails Closed in GSMNP Due to EF 4 Tornado

Date: May 5, 2011

Officials at Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the National Weather Service have determined that a severe EF 4 tornado swept across the northwestern corner of the Park last Wednesday causing extensive damage to seven park trails. The popular Abrams Falls Trail remains impassable due to numerous blow downs and over 40 areas where root balls were ripped out of the trail surface leaving hot-tub sized craters. Park managers hope to have Abrams Falls Trail reopened by Memorial Day.

After an inspection of other trails in the affected area, managers have announced the full closure of all or parts of seven trails totaling 27 miles. A survey by trail workers shows a total of over 4,500 trees down on the closed sections with some areas resembling jackstraws for over a mile at a time. They also

counted over a thousand areas where trees were blown down and their roots tore gaps in the trail. In addition to all of the Abrams Falls Trail, the following trails are now officially closed to both hikers and equestrians until further notice:

- Rabbit Creek Trail
- Hannah Mountain Trail from Rabbit Creek Trail to Abrams Creek

- Hatcher Mountain Trail
- Beard Cane Trail – backcountry campsites #3 and #11 are also closed
- Ace Gap Trail
- Little Bottoms Trail from campsite #17 to the Hatcher Mtn. Trail Jct. (campsite #17 is open)

“We have closed the trails because the tangled trees and damaged surfaces make them extremely hazardous.” Park Chief Ranger Clay Jordan said, “But to make matters worse, our ability to send rescuers in to extract anybody who is injured is seriously compromised.”

Park managers stress that no park roads are affected by the storm damage, and that the remainder of the park’s 800 miles of trails remain open. In the Cades Cove area visitors are encouraged to seek alternative trails. Access to Gregory Bald via Parson Branch Road is unaffected. Visitors can stop at any park visitor center for advice.

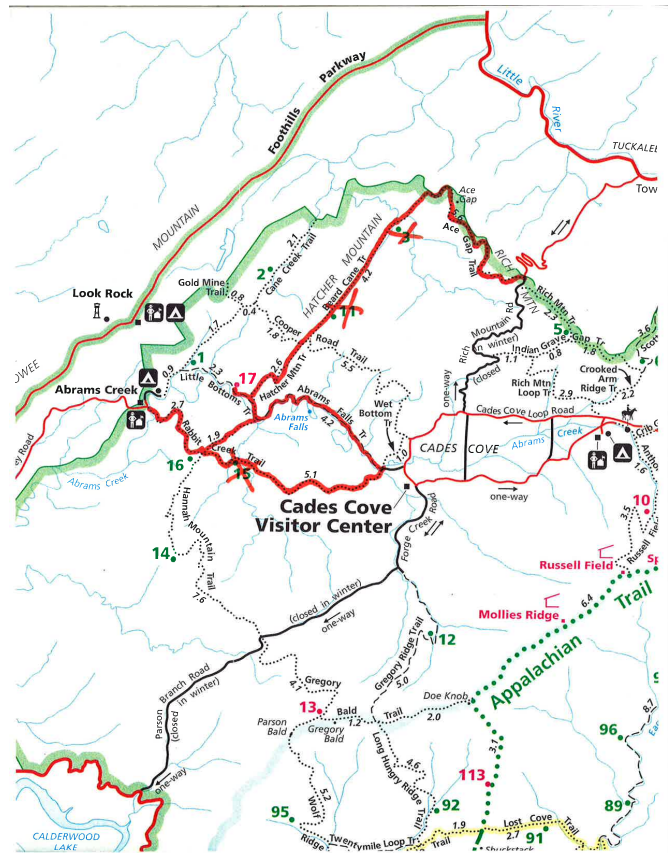


Photo courtesy GSMNP

Wildlife Federation Offers Reward For Elk Poaching



The recent killing of an elk near the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in western North Carolina has prompted the North Carolina Wildlife Federation to make a major commitment to help find the perpetrator. The conservation organization has pledged \$5,000 towards a reward pool. With the contribution, the award amount will be up to \$10,000 being offered to a person who provides information about the elk killing that directly leads to an arrest, a criminal conviction, a civil penalty assessment, or forfeiture of property by the subject or subjects responsible.

“This contribution to the reward pool will hopefully entice anyone with information to come forth,” said Tim Gestwicki, executive director of the North Carolina Wildlife Federation. “We are providing these resources to

underscore the seriousness we place on the poaching of this iconic species.”

The poached elk Number 16, a bull, was among the original 25 released in the park in 2001 as part of an experimental program to reintroduce the animals in the Smokies. The elk population is a huge ecotourism boost to the area, which is already highly popular as the most visited national park in the country.

“We hope the investigation yields results and that the message is crystal clear: poaching elk in North Carolina will not be tolerated,” says Gestwicki. “We condemn in full any illegal wildlife violations and remain resolved to assisting state and federal agencies in upholding the regulations and guiding principles of fish and wildlife management.”

“We are committed to pursuing all leads as we continue this investigation,” says Colonel Dale Caveny of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission’s Division of Law Enforcement. “We hope that this addition to the reward fund will prompt someone to come forward with additional information that will help us bring criminal charges in this case.”

Anyone with information is encouraged to call the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission toll free wildlife violations number at 1-800-662-7137.

The above press release was provided by the North Carolina Camo Coalition.



Annual East Laporte Cook-Out 2011

Despite some rain TCTU members were able to enjoy some good food and a great time!

The May meeting cook-out has been an annual event for the Tuck Chapter for some time now.

This year's Tuckasegee Chapter May meeting cook-out was a great success despite the fact that we experienced some rain that evening. Carl Bowers and Glenn Causby handled the cooking with masterful perfection.

As you can see in the photo above, Jerry Deweese and President Dickie Woodard were working right along with the two chefs providing their expert advice and recommendations regarding the best way to cook hot dogs and hamburgers in a slight drizzle. (They could have at least offered to hold an umbrella for Glenn and Carl!)

Members and their families brought covered-dish items to share at the cook-out. Those items were outstanding and enjoyed immensely by all in attendance.

After the meal we were approached as a chapter by Buddy Hoxit of the Little Canada Community to assist in petitioning the US Forest Service to halt their plans to re-open some roads in the upper-Little Canada area of Jackson County.

Buddy had asked President Woodard for a few minutes of time to present his concerns to our chapter regarding the possible damage to several trout streams in that area which may occur due to re-opening the roads.

If you missed participating in the annual cook-out this year please make an effort to join us at next year's May cook-out.

(Note: That's not beer - it's muddy water in those cups Glenn used to douse the flames.)



There was a lot of great food to go with the hot dogs and hamburgers provided by the chapter!

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