

TROUT LINE

SPRING
2015



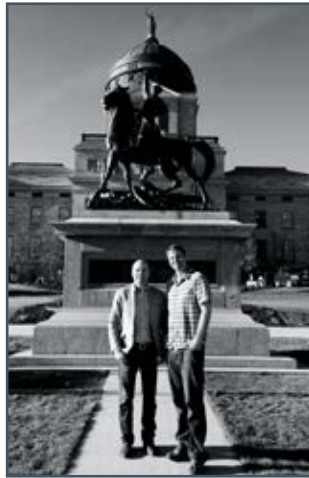
Newsletter from the Montana Council of Trout Unlimited

Legislature somewhat of a wash

Montana TU recaps 2015 State Legislative Session

by Staff

With one major exception, bills dealing with fish, wildlife, water and stream access did not, as in past years, inordinately dominate the 2015 Montana legislative gathering. The exception was the bill ratifying the water compact negotiated between the State of Montana and the Confederated Salish and Kootenai Tribes (CSKT). But aside from that, legislators largely worked around the edges of conservation, neither significantly harming protections for fish and water, nor adding much in the way of needed protection. Here's a look at how Montana TU's priorities turned out:



Brian and Mark team up in Helena

fish while protecting existing water uses.

Good bills we helped pass:

SB 262 – Sponsored by Sen. Chas Vincent (R-Libby), this bill ratified the CSKT water compact, culminating more than 10 years of negotiations and many public meetings. Congress must now ratify the accord, and then the CSKT Tribal Council. In the interim, compact implementation will begin, including water conservation efforts on reservation and in the upper Clark Fork region aimed at preserving stream flows for

see *LEGISLATURE*, page 5

Montana TU helps chapters improve habitat

State Council continues investing in on-the-ground projects

This spring Montana TU awarded nearly \$34,000 for fishery restoration and research projects to 10 TU chapters around the state. Twice a year, Montana TU's executive approves Chapter Mini-Grant proposals for projects that invest in habitat restoration and conservation education. In the last year alone, Montana TU awarded more than \$59,000 through this program to help our grassroots conserve, protect and restore the state's coldwater fisheries.

The 2015 Chapter Mini-Grant awards include:

- \$3,000 for the Bitterroot Chapter to help fund a multi-year project in partnership with the Bitterroot National Forest and Bitterroot Water Forum to improve watershed conditions in the Rye and Sleeping Child Creek watersheds.

see *CHAPTER MINI-GRANTS*, page 6



Fish ladder along a Blackfoot River tributary

Clean water wins

EPA finalizes rule to protect headwater streams

by Bruce Farling

In late May the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency finalized a detailed rule that makes it clear federal Clean Water Act protections apply to thousands of miles of vital headwater streams and more than 20 million acres of the nation's wetlands. The rule has been several years in the making and was necessitated by U.S. Supreme Court rulings in 2001 and 2006 that created confusion as to what waters fell under Clean Water Act jurisdiction.

EPA's action is important for Montana because it ensures that headwater tributaries that don't always flow year round but which are known to provide important seasonal spawning and rearing habitats for fish will be protected much as they were before the high court muddied things. Many of these streams are critical for cutthroat and bull trout. The rule also helps protect prairie

streams that often lose flows in summer but still host populations of dwindling native fishes and amphibians. The rule also clarifies that reaches of main rivers that don't always flow year round



Doug O'Looney

because of geological reasons or human-induced impact merit protection – much as they did before 2001 – from pollution and dredging. The upper Blackfoot River and its Landers Fork, both critical waters for native bull trout and cutthroat trout are examples of large streams that have reaches that go intermittently dry.

Critically, the rule restores protections to prairie pothole wetlands, which host an estimated 70 percent of the nation's habitat for breeding waterfowl. Prairie potholes are enormously important habitats for shorebird and waterfowl

see *CLEAN WATER*, page 6

MONTANA TU'S MISSION

is to conserve, protect and restore Montana's world-class coldwater fisheries and their watersheds.

Founded in 1964, Montana Trout Unlimited is a statewide grassroots organization comprised of 13 chapters and approximately 3,900 TU members.

www.montanatu.org

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Montana TU plates are available at your county motor vehicle office.



Spring is a time of emergence. Montana TU has emerged from another legislative session in Helena and I'd like to give a big thank you to the Montana TU staff, our MTU Legislative Chairman Harry Murphy, chapter members, and all those conservation-minded Montanans who contacted legislators in support of our mission to conserve, protect, and restore Montana's natural resources. You guys did great work.

Also emerging now are countless species of aquatic insects that we imitate when pursuing Montana's coldwater fish, rod in hand. Though it's hard for me to hang up my skis each spring, the opening of river and stream fishing season in Montana sure makes it easier.

Spring also marks the beginning of another field season for TU chapter volunteers and staff, as well as the many fisheries biologists and other agency personnel we work with to protect and improve Montana's coldwater fisheries.

Emergence

I'm excited that Montana TU just awarded almost \$34,000 in grants to 10 deserving chapter projects across the state. Twice a year we give out grants to our chapters for habitat restoration or education projects. They generally match the contribution, or, use it to leverage dollars from other sources.

Enjoy the emergence of your favorite aquatic insects on your favorite rivers this spring and summer, and know that Montana TU and you continue to make a difference for coldwater conservation in our state.



Ongoing raffle supports MTU

Get your tickets now for Saturday, September 12 drawing

Support Montana TU and become eligible for great prizes by entering the 21st annual Montana Shares Raffle. Montana TU recently joined Montana Shares, a partnership of nonprofit organizations working to build better communities across Montana.



Contributions to member groups are made through Montana Shares each year during statewide workplace giving campaigns. All donations to the raffle support Montana Shares in its efforts to help Montana TU and other nonprofits diversify our fundraising.

Raffle tickets and a list of prizes are available at www.montanashares.org. This year's Grand Prize (one of 36 total prizes) is "Fishing Fun," and includes:

- Cabela's high-quality 9 foot, 5 weight RLS+ Rod and Reel combo with moderate/fast action and a machine-aluminum reel seat;
- 2 Crazy Creek stadium chairs, Shimano Butterfly Jigs Bag, Dakota Outdoor Cutlery Fillet Knife and Lynne Pasquale's "Recipes from Fly Fishers Inn;"
- The Orvis "Safe Passage Carry It All" fishing bag, designed for the traveling angler. Rods are stored in the top, bottom half has adjustable dividers;

see RAFFLE, page 7
Spring 2015

MTU welcomes part-time assistant

Montana TU recently hired Kendra Sawitzky as a part-time Outreach Assistant. Kendra received her B.S. in Natural Resource Conservation Management and Planning at the University of Idaho, and worked at the school's experimental forest during her summers there.

Trout and fly-fishing have a special place in Kendra's heart. "My passion and education in conservation combined with my love for fly-fishing allow me to make a solid contribution



Kendra Sawitzky

at Montana TU," Kendra says.

Kendra works in the Missoula office, currently assisting staff with Montana TU's Conservation and Fly-Fishing Camp, chapter outreach, social media updates and membership services. Her e-mail is kendra@montanatu.org.

MONTANA COUNCIL OF TROUT UNLIMITED

OFFICERS

CHRIS SCHUSTROM, CHAIRMAN

Whitefish
(406) 260-1198
chris@gardenwallinn.com

SHARON SWEENEY FEE, TREASURER

Livingston
(406) 579-7735
ssfee123@yahoo.com

DOUG HAACKE, PAST CHAIRMAN

Billings
(406) 656-4072
dhaacke@gmail.com

DAN SHORT, NLC DIRECTOR

Kalispell
(406) 250-5064
dan.short55@gmail.com

BRIAN NEILSEN, TREASURER

Great Falls
(406) 240-3715
brian@finfetchers.com

LYLE COURTNAGE, SECRETARY

Billings
(406) 671-0572
lyle.courtamage@gmail.com

DAN VERMILLION, NATIONAL TRUSTEE

Livingston
(406) 222-0624
dan@sweetwatertravel.com

MONTANA TU STAFF

BRUCE FARLING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
bruce@montanatu.org

MARK AAGNES
CONSERVATION DIRECTOR
mark@montanatu.org

KELLEY WILLET
DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT
kelley@montanatu.org

KATE GRANT
PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR
kate@montanatu.org

KENDRA SAWITZKY
OUTREACH ASSISTANT
kendra@montanatu.org

MAILING ADDRESS
PO Box 7186
Missoula, MT 59807
Phone: (406) 543-0054

Hire a fishing guide July 24.



Montana TU's first annual Tip of the Hat Day is 7/24/15.

Please support select fishing guides who will donate their tips for one day only to Montana TU.

For more information, contact Kelley Willett at kelley@montanatu.org or 406.543.0054.

Thank you.

Concerned about the Smith River Watershed? Montana TU and our conservation partners created "Smith River Memories," a short video available now on YouTube. It includes stories from everyday Montanans on why this river is so special, and why it shouldn't be jeopardized by a proposed copper mine. To view the video, **log on to YouTube.com** and search for "Montana Trout Unlimited Smith River Memories." Also visit **SmithRiverWatch.org** for up-to-date news on the Smith River.



Jim Klug

Smith River floaters

Chapter News

Joe Brooks Chapter

More than 80 participants yielded 3,200 pounds of trash during the chapter's annual Yellowstone River Cleanup in April. Volunteers held a successful meet-and-greet for women in May at Dan Bailey's Fly Shop in Livingston, where lady anglers networked and planned future fishing excursions. The chapter hosted a kids' fishing day in early June, where young anglers learned about casting, tying flies, proper fish handling and – best of all – catching trout.

Madison-Gallatin Chapter

Mad-Gal TU continues to work on a fish passage project on Smith Creek of the Madison River and is still planning on funding a fencing project at Three Dollar Bridge, subject to landowner final approval. Chapter volunteers helped the Gallatin/Big Sky Noxious Weed Committee with a river clean up and weed pull in early June. Upcoming events include an Art Show on July 7 and a lower Madison River clean up on August 29 (details on p. 8). Chapter leaders plan to analyze a whitefish study report that could be completed this summer. Contact mgtroutunlimited@gmail.com.

Kootenai River Chapter

In addition to the Kootenai River Habitat Enhancement Project (see Mini-Grant article on p. 1), the chapter donated funds for a kids' fishing pond in Libby this spring. Volunteers are closely following an independent study from a doctoral candidate investigating

whether nutrient enrichment in the Kootenai River could inhibit growth of didymo, an invasive alga that degrades trout habitat.

Big Blackfoot Chapter

Ryen Neudecker, chapter project manager, led a watershed restoration tour in June. Her current endeavors include restoration work on two historical placer mining sites, installing fish screens in Stonewall and Sauerkraut Creeks and — with help from TU's WestSlope Chapter — a fish passage project in Shanley Creek. In July, chapter volunteers will host a Wounded Warriors float trip and lead a Blackfoot River Stewardship tour in conjunction with the *In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean* festival. Contact Ryen at ryen@montanatu.org.

Snowy Mountain Chapter

Chapter members hosted a fly-casting clinic for 83 Lewistown Junior High students in May. The chapter is working with FWP on a local rainbow



Fly-casting clinic with Lewistown 7th graders and Snowy Mountain TU volunteers

trout telemetry study, and volunteers continue raising funds for a telemetry project for rainbow trout using Warm Springs Creek. They are planning fly-tying demonstrations and a raffle at the Annual Chokecherry Festival in



From L to R: Bitterroot TU volunteers Eddie Olwell and Jack Maurer receive 'Outstanding Citizen' awards from the American Fisheries Society, presented by Adam Sepulveda, AFS awards chairman.

downtown Lewistown on September 12. Contact Mike Chapman at 406-538-2517.

Pat Barnes-Missouri River Chapter

This spring, chapter volunteers held another successful banquet, hosted a casting clinic and finished up several Trout-in-the-Classroom projects in Helena-area schools. They're looking forward to partnering with Rob Roberts, restoration project manager with national TU, on habitat improvements along the Little Blackfoot River.

Bitterroot Chapter

40 students participated in the chapter's Bitterroot Buggers after-school fly-tying class this school year. On the last day of the program, the kids fished with their own flies. This spring, the chapter hosted an adult fly-fishing clinic with a certified instructor. Other activities include sponsorship of a fisheries intern, active support in developing Bitterroot River flood plain regulations and partnership with the Bitterroot Land Trust to secure property for a park. Bitterroot TU plans to build a sign at the park to demonstrate the importance of fish and conservation. Volunteers are currently working on a campaign to encourage use of personal floatation devices on the river, and are planning their annual banquet for September 25 (details on p. 8). Contact Ross at rossrademacher99@gmail.com.



LEGISLATURE, from page 1

HB 140 – Rep. Jeff Wellborn (R-Dillon) carried this bill to modestly increase hunting and fishing license fees in Montana for the first time in 10 years. For example, a resident fishing license will increase by \$3. The bill also ensures license fees will be reviewed every four years instead of waiting a decade.

HB 525 – Rep. Mark Noland (R-Bigfork) sponsored this bipartisan measure to create a permanent trust fund to pay for dealing with aquatic invasive species.

HB 7 – This bill funds the Dept. of Natural Resource and Conservation's Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program. It included funding for TU restoration projects in the Ninemile drainage and for fixing a dangerous diversion structure on the Bitterroot River.

Good bills that died

HB 626 –Contemplating the possibility of a new copper mine being located in the headwaters of the Smith River, Rep. Nate McConnell (D-Missoula) sponsored this bill to prohibit mining permits for operations that would leave pollution sources requiring management in perpetuity. This has been a chronic problem with state-approved mines. This common sense bill died in House Natural Resources on partisan lines.

SB 218 –Recognizing that taxpayers are spending millions annually to clean up

measure after Montana's Department of Environmental Quality and the mining industry claimed the bill was not needed, despite inarguable evidence that the agency consistently requires inadequate bonds.

Bad Bills we helped kill

HB 519 – Rep. Carl Glimm (R-Kila) sponsored this attempt to skirt an important court decision that limits the application of so-called exempt groundwater wells, which developers and private pond consultants have been using to avoid scrutiny of their water use on connected streams. It passed the House, but died in a Senate committee.

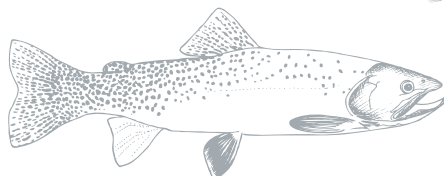
HB 149 – Rep. Mike Cuffe (R-Eureka) pitched this measure in order to open streams for fishing derbies for some species — an activity long opposed by TU members and other wild trout enthusiasts. It was tabled in a House committee.

HB 182 – Rep. Forest Mandeville (R- Columbus) introduced this radical measure to require zoning before any use of land could be regulated. Tabled in a House committee.

HB 427 – Rep. Brown (R- Thompson Falls), introduced this bill on behalf of fellow water compact opponents to force the State to dedicate public money to defend water right claimants if the accord was not ratified – even though the State negotiated and is party to the compact. It failed in the House.

Montana TU also helped beat back or buffer the effect of a number of budget measures that sought to reduce FWP's ability to purchase fishing access sites and wildlife habitat.

Thanks to all you TU members who weighed in with the Legislature on behalf of rivers, streams and trout. For more information on the 2015 Legislative session, contact Mark Aagenes at mark@montanatu.org.



Montana DEQ

Montana taxpayers continue to pay millions of dollars to clean up at the Zortman-Landusky Mine, pictured above.

after closed modern mines, Sen. Mary Sheehy Moe (D-Great Falls), sponsored this modest bill to increase reclamation bonds for mines that potentially produce acid-mine drainage, which can last for centuries. The Senate Natural Resources Committee rejected the

Montana Trout Unlimited

MONTANA TROUT UNLIMITED CHAPTERS & PRESIDENTS

BITTERROOT CHAPTER #80

Ross Rademacher, Corvallis (406) 522-9816
rossrademacher99@gmail.com
www.brto.org/blog/

BIG BLACKFOOT CHAPTER #544

Scott Gordon, Seeley Lake (406) 546-8420
gordon.scotta@gmail.com
www.bbctu.org

FLATHEAD VALLEY CHAPTER #85

Larry Timchak, Kalispell (406) 250-7473
ltimchak1@gmail.com
www.flatheadtu.org

GEORGE GRANT CHAPTER #183

Rich Day, Butte (406) 723-2307
richday@bresnan.net
www.georgegranttu.org

JOE BROOKS CHAPTER #25

Amy Schilling, Livingston (406) 223-2244
joebrookstu@gmail.com
www.joebrookstu.org

KOOTENAI VALLEY CHAPTER #683

Mike Rooney, Libby (406) 293-1947
kootfish162@gmail.com

LEWIS & CLARK CHAPTER #656

PO Box 903
Sheridan, MT 59749
www.lctu.org

MADISON-GALLATIN CHAPTER #24

Mark Peterson, Bozeman (406) 595-1409
mgtrotunlimited@gmail.com
www.mgtu.org

MAGIC CITY FLY FISHERS #582

Lyle Courtnage, Billings (406) 671-0572
lyle.courtnage@gmail.com
www.mcffonline.org

MISSOURI RIVER FLYFISHERS

Paul Considine, Great Falls (406) 595-7460
pconsidine10@gmail.com
www.missouririverflyfishers.com

PAT BARNES/MISSOURI RIVER CHAPTER #55

Lee Ricks, Helena (406) 465-7295
patbarnestu@gmail.com
www.patbarnestu.org

SNOWY MOUNTAIN CHAPTER #610

Mike Chapman, Lewistown (406) 538-2517
bmchap@midrivers.com

WEST SLOPE CHAPTER #56

Jamie Short, Missoula (406) 728-0630
westslopechapter.tu@gmail.com
www.westslopechaptertu.org

populations in Montana.

Approval of the rule didn't come easy. Developers and some national agricultural groups fought it, widely employing hysteria and misinformation. Many

Congress people lined up to oppose the rule, including Montana's Sen. Steve Daines and Congressman Ryan Zinke. Sen. Jon Tester, however, supported restoring Clean Water Act protections to Montana's intermittent streams and many

wetlands. TU members should thank him for leaning on science and reason in his support.

Montanans would do well to remind our congressional delegation that clean water and healthy streams are money in the bank to our state.

The rule, which EPA developed after consulting 1,200 peer-reviewed scientific papers documenting the value of wetlands and intermittent streams to fish, wildlife, flood control and drinking water, is not really new. It was the law of the land for nearly 30 years until the Supreme Court complicated things. The new rule maintains all previous exemptions to the Clean Water Act, including normal farming, ranching and logging activities. Further, it clarifies that the law doesn't apply to artificial lakes and ponds. Often overshadowed by the opponents' doomsday hyperbole about federal overreach is this simple fact: Clean

Water Act protection doesn't necessarily mean activities can't change water quality or create impacts for streams and wetlands.

Instead, it simply requires discharge permits and practices to control pollutants, and, in some cases, but not all, it can call for a permit and mitigation measures when a stream or wetland is dredged or filled.

Though the federal Clean Water Act has been an extraordinarily successful law, having led to the clean up and protection of thousands of miles of streams around the nation – including Montana – since the early 1970s, expect the development community to continue its pursuit to weaken the law in Congress. Montanans would do well to remind our congressional delegation that clean water and healthy streams are money in the bank to our state. They deserve the highest protection possible.

Contact Bruce Farling at bruce@montanatu.org for more information.

CHAPTER MINI-GRANTS, from page 1

- \$3,000 for the Kootenai Valley Chapter for a project led by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and FWP to place woody debris in the Kootenai River to benefit rainbow trout and bull trout.
- \$6,000 to the Big Blackfoot Chapter for a fish screen and fish-friendly diversion project on Trail Creek, a spawning tributary for bull trout in the Clearwater River drainage.
- \$3,500 to the Joe Brooks Chapter to purchase boot-cleaning stations for anglers around Yellowstone National Park, in cooperation with the Invasive Species Action Network.
- \$2,500 for the Snowy Mountain Chapter to help fund a FWP radio telemetry project documenting rainbow trout movement in the Warm Springs Creek drainage, near Lewistown.

- \$5,000 for the George Grant Chapter, in cooperation with the Big Hole River Foundation, for a project that will fence livestock out of Moose Creek, a key tributary of the Big Hole River.
- \$3,000 to the Madison-Gallatin Chapter for a design survey to help FWP construct barriers to prevent rainbow trout hybridization with native cutthroats in the upper Madison watershed.

- \$2,700 to the Missouri River Flyfishers and Pat Barnes-Missouri River Chapter to help fund a FWP Sun River fish movement study.
- \$5,000 for the Westslope Chapter to help The Nature Conservancy survey erosion conditions and fish-blocking culverts on a 1,200-mile forest road network of former Plum Creek lands in the lower Blackfoot watershed.



Rack-style (above) and tub-style (right) boot washing stations. Find their locations at www.stopans.org.



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Does your business match employee contributions to nonprofits? Many companies will match charitable donations made by their employees and retirees. Some even double the money! It's an excellent way to stretch your conservation dollars with a gift to Montana TU.

For more information on how you can make a gift to Montana TU, please contact us.

111 N. Higgins, Ste. 500

P.O. Box 7186, Missoula, MT 59807

Toll free: 888-504-0054 or kelley@montanatu.org



TU Supporters – Join or Renew Here

Trout Unlimited encourages members to stay current and welcomes new members to join our community. \$15 of TU's \$17.50 introductory membership goes right back to the new member's chapter. Be sure to indicate the chapter # you wish to join or renew—listed on the right-hand column of page 5 in this newsletter.

Choose one of three options:

1. Join or renew at www.tu.org, or
2. Call TU's membership services toll-free 8 a.m.–5 p.m. mountain time at 800-834-2419, or
3. Send payment with this completed form to TU, Box 7400, Woolly Bugger, WV 25438.

Membership Level (Circle Amount)

Introductory – New Members Only	\$17.50	Youth Membership	\$12
Regular Membership	\$35	Family/Contributor	\$50
Senior Membership (age 62+)	\$20		

To learn about TU's additional membership levels, visit www.tu.org or call 800-834-2419.

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RAFFLE, from page 1

- A one-night stay at the Mountainview Lodge & Suites in Bozeman; and
- A \$100 gift card for Town Pump gas stations.

Through Montana Shares, Montana

TU is able to raise thousands of *additional* dollars through workplace giving each year and raise public awareness of Montana TU's mission within state and federal agencies and the more than 150 other workplaces that take part in the annual giving campaign.

Tickets are \$10 each, or 3 for \$25. Need not be present to win. To enter, go to MontanaShares.org or use the tickets below. Return completed tickets and payment to: **Montana Shares, PO Box 883, Helena, MT 59624.**

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THIS ISSUE:

State Legislature results

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EPA clarifies protection
of small streams

Page 1

Restoration projects, MT Shares raffle,
Chapter news and more

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TROUT LINE

UPCOMING EVENTS

www.montanatu.org

7/8/15 **Art Show for Mad-Gal TU**
5-8 p.m. at 406 Brewing Company, 101 E. Oak St. in Bozeman. Artists will donate 15% of their sales to TU's Madison-Gallatin Chapter. Contact Mark at mgroutunlimited@gmail.com.

7/10/15 **Norman Maclean Festival**
July 10-13 at Seeley Lake and on the Blackfoot River. Alpine Artisans presents, In the Footsteps of Norman Maclean: a Literary Festival. Register for tours, presentations, dinners and a writing workshop at www.macleannotsteps.com. Join TU's Big Blackfoot Chapter for a tour of successful stream restoration projects. Contact Jenny at 406-754-0034 or rohreravid@aol.com.

7/12/15 **MTU's Fly Fishing and Conservation Camp**
July 12-16 at Camp Watanopa on the banks of Georgetown Lake. Camp is full. Contact Kate at kate@montanatu.org or 406-543-0043.

7/24/15 **Montana TU's 'Tip of the Hat' Day**
Join participating fishing guides who'll donate their tips – for one day only – to Montana TU. Contact Kelley Willett at 406-543-0054 or kelley@montanatu.org.

7/28/15 **Big Hole River Day**
All-day event in Melrose, MT with music, fly tying and casting demonstrations, kids' activities, live and silent auctions, vendors, BBQ and more. Proceeds benefit the Big Hole River Foundation and other community organizations. Details at www.bhrf.org.

7/25/15 **Big Sky Fly Fishing Festival**
Banquet and silent auction July 25 at Gallatin Riverhouse Grill. Outdoor Festival July 26 in Big Sky's Town Center Park, followed by F3T Film Tour at Lone Peak Cinema. Proceeds support conservation and restoration work in the Upper Gallatin River watershed. Details at www.bluewatertaskforce.org.

8/23/15 **Madison River Cleanup**
9 a.m.-1 p.m. from Warm Springs Access to Trapper Springs Pavilion. Organized by TU's Madison-Gallatin Chapter. Contact Mark at mgroutunlimited@gmail.com or 406-595-1409.

9/3/15 **Trout Unlimited Annual Meeting**
Sept. 16-20 at the Hilton Conference Center in Scranton, PA. Workshops, conservation tour, banquet and hosted fishing open to all TU members. Details and registration at www.tu.org under "get involved."

9/25/15 **Bitterroot TU's 36th Annual Banquet and Auction**
5 p.m. at the Bitterroot River Inn, 139 Bitterroot Place Drive in Hamilton. Enjoy dinner, drinks, live and silent auctions, door prizes, drawings and awards. Contact Ross at rossrademacher99@gmail.com or Marshall at drtrout@mtbloom.net.

9/26/15 **MTU State Council Meeting**
9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. in Hamilton, hosted by the Bitterroot Chapter of TU. Check calendar for location and details at www.montanatu.org. Contact Kate at 406-543-0054 or kate@montanatu.org.

WANT OVER 3,900 MONTANA TU MEMBERS TO HEAR ABOUT YOUR EVENT?

Please contact us at 406-543-0054 or kate@montanatu.org to get the word out in Trout Line

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