

# METU sponsors Women's Fly Fishing Seminar

Sponsored by the Mountain Empire Chapter Trout Unlimited (METU) and hosted by member Richard Formato, 16 participants were introduced to the sport of fly fishing at the June 11 Women's Fly Fishing Seminar.

The day-long program included learning the basics of necessary equipment and rigging, casting a fly line, learning two basic knots, and understanding fly selection. Instruction was led by chapter president, Dr. Eric Sacknoff, and Linda Good, member of the Overmountain Chapter and the Tennessee Council of Trout Unlimited (TU).

Local METU members Heather Davidson and Tony Pane harvested nymphs from the river to illustrate entomology -- the study of insects -- involved in fly fishing. They compared the artificial flies with the actual bugs representing the trout diet.

In the afternoon, each participant worked with experienced fly-fishing instructors on the South Fork of the Holston River to learn casting techniques.

TU is much more than a fly fishing "club." Under Sacknoff's leadership, the METU is a group of 100 anglers in Southwest Virginia committed to the protection, conservation and restoration of this area's cold waters and surrounding habitats. METU covers Carroll, Grayson, Smyth, Washington and Wythe counties.

This year the METU chapter was recognized as the "most outstanding chapter in the state of Virginia" receiving the Virginia Council Award of Excellence. In addition to stream restoration and conservation, other chapter activities include support for 13 tanks for the Trout In the Classroom program, co-sponsoring an annual Fish On! family fishing event in Marion, stewarding the fishing trail at the Buller Fish Hatchery, teaching conservation, and assisting fly fishing and fly tying for Wounded Warriors veterans.

METU welcomes new members. For more information, email [metuchapter@gmail.com](mailto:metuchapter@gmail.com).

Teachers Kristie Myers from Smyth County and Donna Mumpower from Washington County attended the seminar and shared their experience as Trout In the Classroom teachers. Mumpower is a middle school teacher working with students with multiple disabilities and needs. She noted, "Some of my students have physical disabilities that prevent them from participating in outdoor

experiences. Raising brown trout through the TIC program has helped my students engage daily with nature."

"Students have developed a better understanding of the life cycle of trout and the importance of clean water," said Mumpower.

"After students raised eggs to fingerlings, they had the fun of releasing them in local streams. For some of my students it was the first time they had ever been on a stream. This opportunity has opened doors for my students. For the first time, they have developed an awareness of the complex and fragile nature of environmental habitat. By raising trout and releasing them to local streams, they are able to participate and do something for their community. I am grateful to share in this unique project. Thank you, Trout Unlimited, and other sponsors for providing this wonderful classroom opportunity," Mumpower said.

Carol Sacknoff acknowledged the many donors to METU fundraising efforts that make possible projects such as the Trout In the Classroom program. LL Bean provided the rods and reels for the Women's Fly Fishing Seminar.

Each participant received a year membership to Trout Unlimited. The Trout Unlimited mission is "to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds." Over 450 chapters of TU nationwide accomplish this mission on local, state and national levels with an extensive and dedicated volunteer network.

National and regional offices of TU employ professionals who testify before Congress, publish a quarterly magazine, intervene in federal legal proceedings, and work with the organization's 152,000 volunteers to keep them active and involved in conservation issues.

More information about TU's action network, conservation initiatives and educational programs can be found at [TU.org](http://TU.org).

The Mountain Empire Chapter extended its appreciation to instructors Lisa Benish, Robbie Colley, Heather Davidson, Jeff Elliott, Richard Formato, Linda Good, Tim Ringley, Dr. Eric Sacknoff and Carol Sacknoff.

Attendees included Kimberly Austin, Susan Edwards, Lou Fincher, Teresa Fullen, Beth Gates, Karen Kiser, Donna Mumpower, Kristie Myers, Erica Poe, Dr. Jennifer Quesinberry, Hope Thomas, Patty Thomas, Dr. Jane Toothman, Stephanie Warren and Laticia Yonce-Irvin.



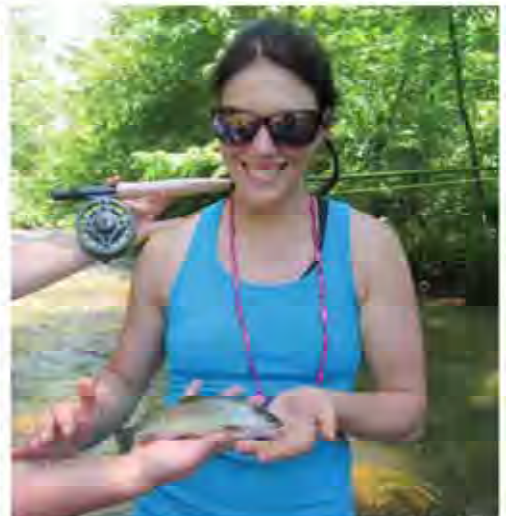
Women's Fly Fishing Seminar participants and instructors gather for group photo.



Lines fly at casting practice for the Women's Fly Fishing Seminar.



METU host, Richard Formato (left), and president, Dr. Eric Sacknoff, welcome the group at the Women's Fly Fishing Seminar.



Erica Poe has a nice catch during the Women's Fly Fishing Seminar.

## To learn more about METU

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**Donna Mumpower**

Teacher, speaking about Trout in the Classroom