

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



Upper Tennessee River

WHY IS THIS WATERSHED SPECIAL?

The Upper Tennessee River, nestled in the majestic mountains of southwest Virginia, serves as an important resource to Virginia, Tennessee, and North Carolina. Three major tributaries – the Clinch, Holston, and Powell Rivers – feed the river, which drains a total of 5,686 square miles. Many species of bats, cave invertebrates, plants, and amphibians are globally unique to this area and are at risk.

ENVIRONMENTAL CHALLENGES

The Targeted Watersheds Grant will focus on the following key environmental problems:

- Imperiled and vulnerable fish and mussel species, including many endangered or threatened species.
- Polluted runoff of nutrients, sediments, toxic chemicals, and bacteria from agriculture, mining, logging and urban expansion.

RESTORATION ACTIVITIES

The Upper Tennessee Roundtable will use Targeted Watersheds Grant funds to test several new approaches and technologies, including:

- Experimental measures to protect mussels, including a mussel-friendly bridge design demonstration.
- A stormwater toxic spill protection project to demonstrate new technologies for containing toxic waste spills.
- Bacterial source tracking research to identify potential sources of microbial pollution.
- Septic Tank Effluent Pump (STEP) sewer demonstration project to test an innovative and cost-effective method of eliminating polluted runoff.
- A new Buffer Easement Land Trust.
- A riparian corridors protection model along with technical and financial assistance to landowners.
- Creation of an 850-acre mussel preserve on the Clinch River.

“The EPA Grant is funding a number of demonstrations that will not only help us learn more about how to protect our water resources, but will also allow us to spread that knowledge throughout the watershed.”

– Emily Lachniet, Chair,
Upper Tennessee
River Roundtable



A STRONG PARTNERSHIP FOR CHANGE

Citizens founded The Upper Tennessee River Roundtable in June 1999 in response to the watershed's ecological challenges. The Roundtable is a true grassroots organization – any citizen coming to a biannual meeting is a voting member. More than 500 citizens participate. The Board of Directors of the Roundtable has representatives from twenty-six different stakeholder groups, and provides a forum for seeking consensus on water quality issues.



Dr. Ed Davis, Upper Tennessee Roundtable, wears a costume portraying "Russell the Mussel" to teach citizens about the importance of mussels. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service loaned the costume to the Roundtable.

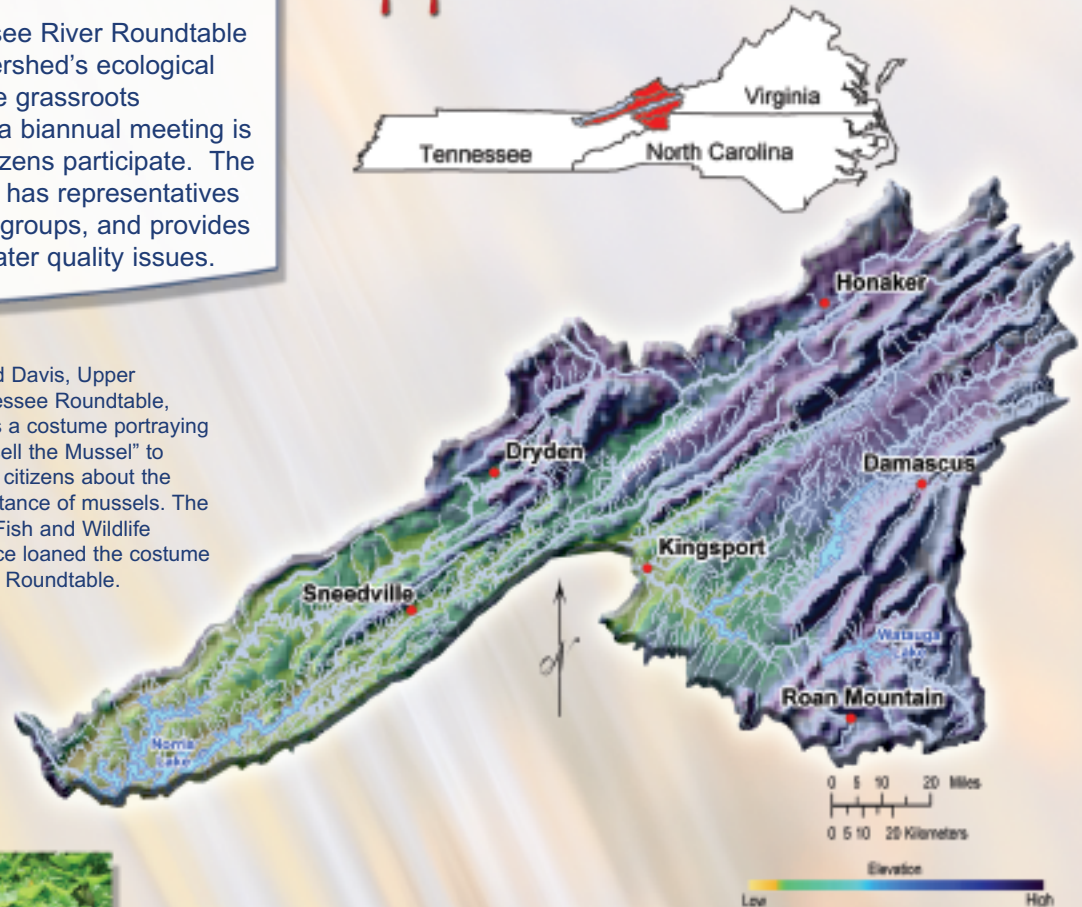


Volunteer tests water for dissolved oxygen, pH, and iron levels at an abandoned mine in St. Charles, VA, the site of a 1997 fish kill.



Volunteers learn how to do riffle stability index monitoring.

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EPA'S TARGETED WATERSHEDS GRANT PROGRAM

EPA's Targeted Watersheds Grant Program is a new, competitive grant program designed to encourage collaborative, community-driven approaches to meet clean water goals.

For more information about the selected watersheds, please visit:
<http://www.epa.gov/owow/watershed/initiative/>



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