

TU Annual Meeting

It was a privilege to represent UCCTU at TU's Annual Meeting in Wisconsin last month. It proved to be a great opportunity to learn how the organization operates on a national scale and to connect with important leaders.

One such connection was with Franklin Tate, Director of TU's Youth Education Program, who updated us with information about several innovative programs. One was the TU 5 Rivers College Outreach Program, which encourages chapters to work with local colleges and universities to sponsor TU Student Chapters as club activities. Another new program is TU's Teen Summit, an annual meeting for teens from across the country to develop ideas about how the organization can better engage teen members and become TU leaders in their communities. Franklin also showed a short video from fly casting guru Bruce Richards designed to help train the trainer in casting techniques, which you can view on the web at vimeo.com/48298814.

During his State of TU address, President Chris Wood showed videos of the many contributions local chapters have made to conservation efforts all across the country. One of the major projects TU has undertaken is opposing the Pebble Mine, which if approved would be an enormous strip mine located at the headwaters of Alaska's Bristol Bay, home of the world's largest sockeye salmon run. As one of the largest mines in the world, it would generate toxic waste in a seismically active region. The good news is that global mining company Anglo American recently pulled out of the project due to public pressure. However, Nanci Lyon, the first female licensed guide in Bristol Bay, reported that there is still much work to be done to preserve some of the most beautiful rivers in Alaska.

During the meeting we also learned about some of TU's science-based conservation policies such as a proposed Resolution on Oil and Gas Development. Essentially it states that TU will work to promote activities that protect cold water fisheries and habitat from degradation due to the production of oil and natural gas. During the discussion an interesting question was raised but not answered: what are the long term consequences of taking surface water from the hydrologic life cycle and using it for deep shale gas drilling?

I'm glad I took the time to go to the meeting. Seeing first-hand the impact of TU's efforts on a national scale reinforced my commitment to the organization's efforts to conserve, protect and restore our cold water fisheries.

Jim Harvey