



Eagle Valley Trout Unlimited held their first annual general membership meeting last night at Berry Creek Middle School. Dawn Witlin photo.

TU sparks Valley revival

Eagle Valley Trout Unlimited first membership meeting promotes waterway conservation

By Dawn Witlin

Special to the Mountaineer

The Eagle Valley Chapter of Trout Unlimited held its first annual general membership meeting since it was reactivated in January last night at Berry Creek Middle School in Edwards.

The rechartering of EVTU in January, an effort that began roughly two years ago, resulted from the hard work of board members, local businesses and community members, said Chapter President Alan Schaefer.

Ken Nuebecker, president of Colorado Trout Unlimited, highlighted the importance of Trout Unlimited's mission to protect, conserve and restore state waterways.

"One of our guiding principals is: 'If you take care of the fish, the fishing will take care of itself,'" he said.

Nuebecker went on to detail the state's massive system of water delivery from our reservoirs, or "diversions," and need for awareness of their environmental impact.

"Most people don't have any idea

the extent of the diversions in the water from the Colorado Basin over to the Front Range, but it comes with a heavy cost and too often we have been avoiding those costs," said Nuebecker.

Nuebecker used the Moffat System, Denver Water's Northern Delivery System, as an example of that cost.

The Moffat System diverts water from the Fraser River, named the most endangered river in the country.

20 out of 31 of Denver's water diversions from the Fraser are not required to be replenished, which essentially kills everything downstream and causes waterways dry up.

"There's not that much left of the Fraser," said Nuebecker.

The consequences of increased water diversions in the state cause reduced flow in the Fraser, Colorado, Williams Fork and Blue Rivers, lethal water temperatures and degraded water quality, among other dire scenarios.

"The rivers can suffer this kind of thing on an occasional basis, as long as they have water on other years from which to feed," said Nuebecker. "We're on the verge of

an entire ecosystem collapse in the headwaters of the Colorado River."

Nuebecker wrapped up the presentation with a call to action.

"A lot of people tell me that this little program I give is depressing," he said. "To me what's depressing is failure to do something. Don't get depressed, get involved."

Nuebecker encouraged members to keep up with Moffat and Windy Gap projects, write their legislators, along with the US Corp of Engineers, to prompt them to pay attention to community impacts of waterway diversions.

"As a culture, we've got a long history of passing the buck," he said. "We're the generation that has to deal with it, and we can't pass it on to our kids as it'll be too late."

The evening concluded with the auction of various items, including a Clearwater 2 fly rod donated by Fly Fishing Outfitters, which went out to Avon member Alex Beck.

You can become a member of Eagle Valley Trout Unlimited by visiting eaglevalleytu.org. For more information, contact Schaefer at alex@eaglevalleytu.org.