

Students release their 'babies'

BABIES • FROM 1

Working with a grant match, the chapter donated \$500, which was matched by an additional \$500 from the school.

The funding was used to purchase all the equipment, including tanks, filtering and a temperature monitor called a "chiller" that kept the water at 55 degrees.

The 200 trout eggs were then donated to the project from the state Fish and Boating Commission.

The students tended to the fish for the school year and instructor David Herring visited the school on holidays and during power outages to make sure the fish were healthy.

"He was very dedicated to this," Siebert said of Herring. "He would be here a lot when we were out of school. Even if we weren't here, these fish still needed taken care of and he did it."

When the fish reached their classroom maturity, growing from 2 to 4 inches, the students packed them in ice water and set out for Dunbar Creek to release them.

"There aren't many high schools that do this," Herring said of the project.

"This was a good program and way to teach the students about the importance of clean water and the effects of pollution. I was very happy that we had the support of the board and the administration for this."

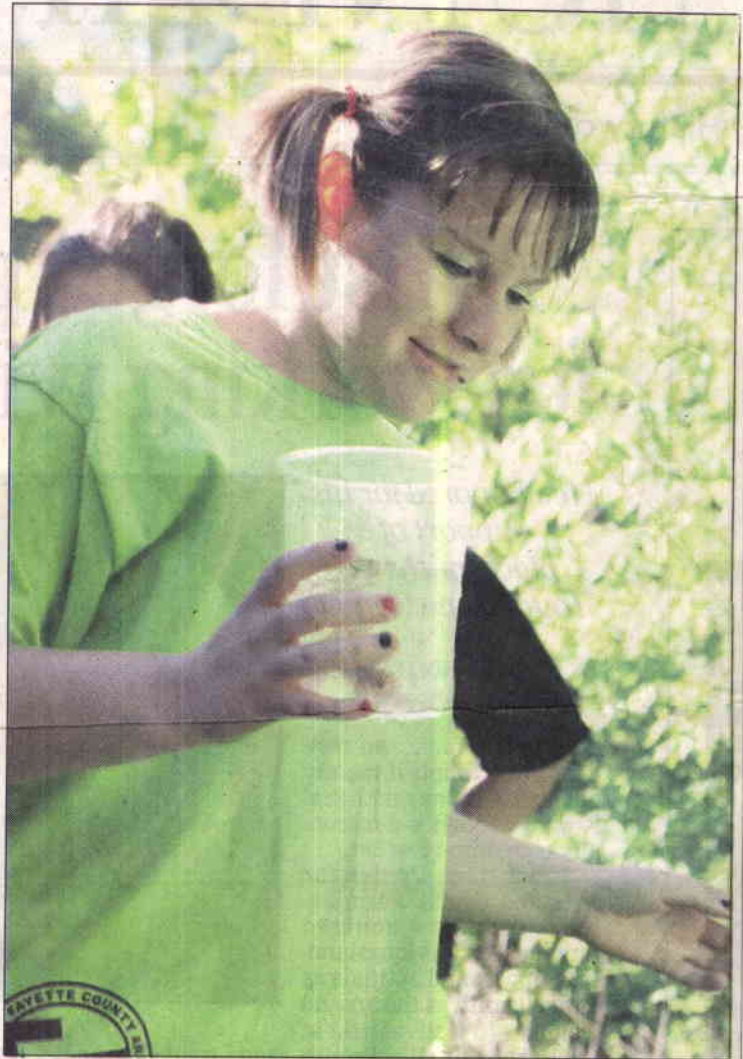
Working quickly, the students scooped the fish from the chilled water into smaller containers and set them free in the stream.

"These kids are so excited, but it's a little sad," Siebert said. "They raised these fish from eggs and it's almost like your own babies. They even named a few. They all looked the same to me, but they would know which was which."

Sixty-seven fingerlings were released with hopes they will grow and replenish the stream.

School board member, Trout Unlimited member and retired teacher Jim Tobal was instrumental in bringing the project to the school, and he finds it both fun and educational.

"I'm a teacher first of all, and I really like to trout fish, and I knew what a great program this was," Tobal said. "It's a great



MARILYN FORBES/FOR THE TRIBUNE-REVIEW

Tabitha Farrier grabs her fish to head for the stream to release them.

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KAREN SIEBERT
PROGRAM ASSISTANT

way to educate the students on the environment."

Many of the students involved

in the program were undergraduates and look forward to repeating the process next year.

"I learned a lot from this," Laurel Highlands sophomore Tabatha Jemas said. "It was very interesting to see how much it takes to take care of these fish, and I think that it gave us a lot of experience. I hope that these fish will help the trout population and mature."

The program may be brought to other districts and schools next year and will be repeated at the technical school.

"I think this was an excellent program," Principal Brian Reams said.

"This was not just about taking care of the fish, but it was unique opportunity for the students to experience a full project. They were able to see through from start to finish.