



Wisconsin Trout

Summer 2020

Watershed Access Fund and Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited update Grant programs finding tremendous success

Please consider supporting our habitat and access grant programs.



Monty Brink, Oconto County

COUNCIL'S WATERSHED ACCESS FUND SECURES ANOTHER EASEMENT

Our Watershed Access Fund helped secure a 37-acre parcel on the South Branch of the Oconto River just below County Highway AA in Oconto County. The river flows through most of the parcel.

By Kim McCarthy, WITU Grant Programs Coordinator

Covid-19 has had an impact on the Friends of Wisconsin TU and Watershed Access Fund programs, just like it has had on just about all aspects of life in recent times. The Watershed Access Fund was able to complete the purchase of

prime frontage on the South Branch of the Oconto River in Oconto County. Since the South Branch purchase, we have been asked to possibly participate in two more acquisitions. One is in western Wisconsin and one is in northeastern Wisconsin. Both of those projects have been quiet since the virus has

put most things on hold. Hopefully, as we are able to return to some kind of normalcy, both of those projects will get back on track, and we will be able to add more prime frontage to the public trout water in the state. Should the best-case scenario develop and the Watershed Access Fund ends up participating in both of these acquisitions, the fund would basically be depleted. That could actually be a good thing because it shows that the fund is fulfilling its mission to obtain access to prime trout water. Of course, we could miss additional opportunities that might arise because of a lack of donations in the fund. If you have donated to our Watershed Access Fund in the past, or are thinking of donating in the future, we would like you to know that the fund may be in need of dollars. The Friends program has had a very good year. Donations were very good and grant requests for good projects were also numerous. The grant request period is now over for the 2020 calendar year, so we now know that the final tally for 2020 will be eight chapters requesting grants. All requests met the established requirements of the program and

were accepted. We awarded \$16,000 to the requesting chapters. The biggest issue with the Friends program at this time is whether all of the projects will be able to be completed because of the pandemic. As of late May, DNR crews are not yet working, and TU National is still not authorizing any chapter activities that would violate social distancing practices. So the question hanging over the Friends grants is whether work crews will be able to get into the field to complete work that has been approved. As you read through this new edition of *Wisconsin Trout*, you will find an envelope for sending donations to our Watershed and Friends programs. Notice that the new envelope has a new address on it. Please discard and do not use old envelopes, because that address is no longer accurate. You will also see that the new envelope has places to check where you intend your donation to be used. Please be sure to indicate the intent of your donation. Thank you to all of our donors who make the successes of Friends and Watershed possible. Both of the programs are completely voluntary and would not be possible without your support.

WITU turns 50

By Todd Franklin, Wisconsin Trout Editor

The tumultuous sixties were over, and Americans were charging into a new decade. It was 1970. The Beatles had broken up, while Janis Joplin and Jimi Hendrix both died of overdoses at age 27. Four students were killed by National Guardsmen at Kent State University in Ohio during a demonstration protesting the U.S. incursion into Cambodia. The Datsun 240-Z is introduced to American car buyers and the Boeing 747 is introduced to world travelers. George C. Scott delivers an Academy-Award-winning performance in the movie *Patton*. Other movie hits that year included *MASH*, *Airport*, *Love Story* and best-picture winner *Midnight Cowboy*. A first-class stamp was six cents. Here in Wisconsin, the Seattle Pilots, after only one year, moved to Milwaukee and became the Brewers. A bomb planted by anti-war extremists exploded at the University of Wisconsin's Army Math Research Center in Madison, killing 33-year-old researcher Robert Fassnacht. Our own Sen. Gaylor Nelson suggested Earth Day as a means to focus national attention on ecological issues. Organizers identified 12

anti-environment members of the U.S. House and Senate, seven of whom lost their seats. **Tough times for trout waters** It was a tough time for trout, however. Many coldwater streams and rivers were being used for sewage discharge. Others were being straightened, sometimes legally, sometimes not. Some were lost forever when they were dammed to create lakeside housing developments or federal flood control projects, and many more nearly met that same fate. That includes the entire Blue River Watershed in Iowa and Grant counties, where nine dams were proposed by the Soil Conservation Service. Abuses such as these inspired a group of passionate and very determined Wisconsinites to establish the Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited. Although TU National had been in existence since 1959, and several chapters had formed in Wisconsin, including Wolf River, Green Bay, Southeast and Southern. There was an obvious need for a state-level Trout Unlimited presence. In July, they convened in Madison for an organizational meeting. The list of attendees included names we're now familiar with, such

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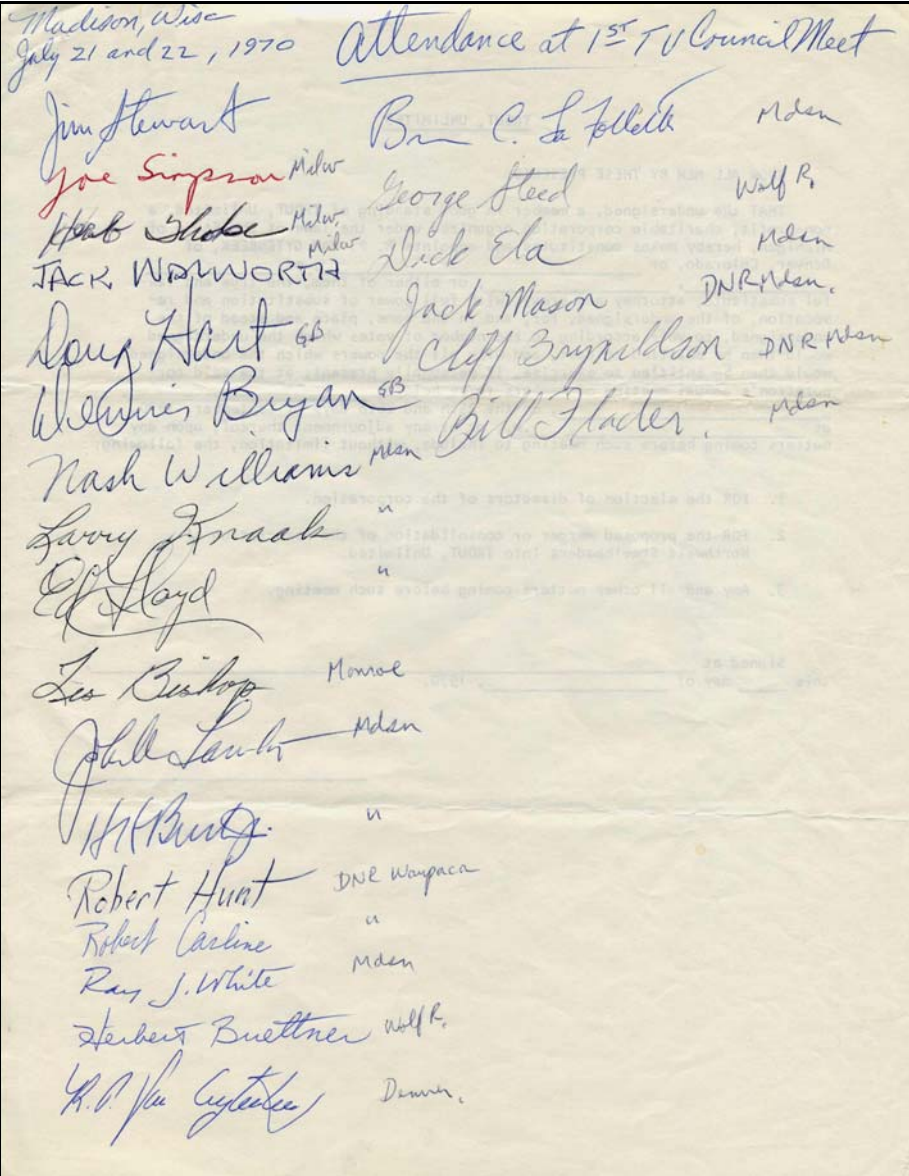
State Council Formed, July 22, 1970

Pete Van Gytenebeck, "Van", National Executive Director of TU from Denver was on hand along with delegates from the Green Bay, Wolf River, S.E. Wisconsin and the Southern Wisconsin Chapters. After a flurry of foot-shuffling and a few oblique glances around the room, the following members and delegates were elected to the State Council's various management and executive posts: Chairman, Jim Stewart, Madison; Vice Chairman, Dennis Bryan, Green Bay; Secretary, Fred Horn, West Bend; Treasurer, Dick Ela, Madison; Water Management, Ray White, Madison; Legal and Legislative Officer, John Lawton, Madison; Publicity, Public Relations and Publications, Jack Walworth, Milwaukee; Membership, Ed Lloyd, Madison; Fund Raising, Joe Simpson, Milwaukee; Division of Scientific Information, Vacant.

The State Council Board of Directors consists of the President and one delegate from each chapter plus the officers of the State Council.


FIRST COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
Volume 1, Number 1. In addition the list of the Council's very first officers and board members, this first State Council newsletter included eight pages of information about the many threats facing trout streams in Wisconsin. as Robert Hunt, Ray White, Nash Williams, Bronson LaFollette, Bill Flader, Dick Ela, John Lawton, Herb Buettner, George Steed, Larry Knack, Jack Mason, Cliff Brynoldson, Joe Simpson, Jim Stewart, Fred Horn, Jack Walworth, Dennis Bryan, Robert Carline, Les Bishop, along with Doug Hart of the Green Bay Packers and TU National Executive Director Pete Van Gytenebeck. The young new Council wasted no time getting down to business. In 1971 the Council supported legislation prohibiting the impoundment of trout streams without legislative approval. By 1972 the Council had impressed TU National enough that they hosted the annual meeting. In 1973, the Council's first chairman, Jim Stewart, was elected vice president of TU National. Jim was also a founder and first president of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter. He was the first of many Wisconsin TU leaders to serve key roles for TU National. Following in his footsteps over the years were some of our most active and influential leaders, such as Steve Born, John Christiansen, Dan Wisniewski, Duke Welter and Henry Koltz. The Council pushed hard for a trout stamp, supporting Rep. Jon Wilcox of Wautoma, who introduced legislation calling for a \$1

See *HISTORY*, page 6



SIGN-IN SHEET FROM ORGANIZATIONAL COUNCIL MEETING IN JULY 1970
The list of names from the Council’s organizational meeting includes many instrumental leaders, some of who are now memorialized via awards (The Council’s Robert Hunt Resource Professional Award) and events (Southern Wisconsin Chapter’s Nash Williams Awards Banquet). They were prominent business leaders, attorneys and even a Green Bay Packer — and all were hoping to turn the tide that threatened our coldwater resources.

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Chair’s Column

Look back, pause, then look forward

By Mike Kuhr, State Council Chair

History has been weighing on me lately. For more than a year now I’ve been trying to visualize the setting and tease out details of the State Council’s 50th Anniversary Celebration.

I envisioned a large gathering of outdoor enthusiasts on the banks of one of our more fabled trout waters, or maybe even one of our Great Lakes. We’d talk about how 50 years ago representatives from our earliest TU Chapters — Green Bay, Wolf River, Southeastern Wisconsin and Southern Wisconsin — came together and formed the Wisconsin State Council of TU.

We’d recognize that the threats many of our coldwater resources faced then, such as dams, water withdrawals, mining and public access, are still threats today. We’d make analogies of brook trout being the “canaries in the coal mine,” and add climate change to the list of challenges our watersheds face.

We’d rejoice in the expansion of TU in our state. We now have members in 21 chapters who have taken it upon themselves to protect their home waters. But water doesn’t recognize the lines on our maps. It only reacts to gravity. In order to be effective, we have to work at both the local and state levels.

We’d thank these chapters for supporting the Council, and acknowledge the Council’s duty in serving these chapters. The Council amplifies the conservation message and strengthens local efforts to protect our watersheds.

Having reflected upon our past, and reaffirmed the Council’s role in sustaining our coldwater resources, we would raise a glass and look forward to the next 50 years!

At least, that’s how I pictured it playing out. Then COVID-19 hit, and things haven’t been the same since.

Three months of being “safer at home” has brought some new perspective. We’ve done our part to protect our family and those around us in our community. We’ve been spending more time outdoors, not days or weeks at a time, but short daily jaunts exploring nature close to home.

I’m definitely a person who needs to be near the water — wading in it, hiking by it, paddling on it. It’s my connection to the natural world. These places keep me grounded and give me a sense of place.

As it turns out, a lot of folks have been reconnecting with nature. Our public lands and our public access to water have never been more important. We’ll need the voices of all these folks in our effort to renew the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund, Wisconsin’s iconic public lands program and the source of all those white and green “public fishing easement” signs.

I believe TU has a role to play as we start back down the path to “normal.” I know I’m ready to volunteer again, whether it’s cutting brush, rolling rock, cleaning up trash or whatever our local waterways need. Our TU workdays could be just the outlet many people are looking for. We can offer this opportunity to “do some good” while being respectful of everyone’s health. It won’t be the same, but we can keep our faces covered, keep our distance from each other and skip communal lunches.

The people in this organization



“I’m definitely a person who needs to be near the water - wading in it, hiking by it, paddling on it. It’s my connection to the natural world. These places keep me grounded and give me a sense of place.” — Mike Kuhr

are what I miss the most: Sharing moments on the water and sharing those stories afterwards. I know it’s been difficult to function as an organization these last few months, but I’m convinced that TU will come through this moment as a stronger organization.

The strength will come from opening our doors a little wider. It’s not enough to come through this pandemic and go back to normal. Normal will not keep us relevant during the next 50 years. We need to be extraordinary if we are to preserve the woods, meadows and waters that we cherish for future generations.

So what does it mean to “open the doors a little wider?” I’m a white male in my mid-40’s and I’ve never really had a problem fitting into this organization. That’s not the case for a lot of people who may be of a different gender, or race or generation.

I feel most comfortable knee

deep in a trout stream. What makes me uncomfortable is realizing that not everyone feels at ease recreating outdoors. It’s up to us to change that.

We have the tools in place, such as Trout In the Classroom, youth conservation and fishing programs, 5 Rivers College clubs, Diversity and Women’s initiatives, citizen science and restoration workdays, to start breaking down barriers.

It’s our responsibility to make space in TU for all voices to be heard. This organization has a way of bringing out the best in people. If we want our work to mean something in 50 years, we will have to evolve. Everyone deserves access to cold, clean, fishable water.

I’m looking forward to helping the next generation of conservationists rise up and occupy their space in the outdoor community, so that we can continue building our coldwater legacy. Are you with me?

Update on DNR habitat and stream projects

Wisconsin DNR habitat project teams were still sidelined by Covid-19 rules as of press time for *Wisconsin Trout*. A survey of fisheries leaders and project teams found the latter still waiting for the go-ahead.

Fisheries Bureau Assistant Director Todd Kalish said in early June “We are currently working on plans to incrementally and safely resume some fisheries field work. However, nothing has been finalized yet. We are primarily working on logistics to assure that all staff that resume field work can abide by all the current health and safety guidelines and have all the equipment and materials to assure the safety of staff and the public we serve.”

Meanwhile, habitat crews in the La Crosse, Black River Falls and Eau Claire areas have rock staged in place along several stream project sites, waiting for the word. With projects usually starting around May 1, they’ve lost two months of the season so far.

Other habitat projects being done by the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter, TUDARE and county conservation department contractors are under way.

—Duke Welter

Our readers write

In the spring issue of *Wisconsin Trout*, an article on potential restoration of Grayling in Michigan was published. It claimed Grayling were found in Montana and Michigan historically, but failed to mention Wisconsin. A friend somewhat older than me (I am in my 70s) used to tell me about fishing in his past. He often mentioned the great walleye fishing on the Turtle Flambeau Flowage when it was more recently flooded. He also mentioned catching Grayling in Iron County when he was a kid. This greatly interested me as I thought they were a species of northern Canada and Alaska. He assured me they were found within an Iron County stream he fished, but disappeared after the area was logged.

I no longer remember the name of the stream and my friend died several years ago. Perhaps early records of the Wisconsin Conservation Department might have records of Wisconsin Grayling, or historical records from Iron County may reference local fishermen catching Grayling. I recommended trying to restore them many years ago to the Wisconsin DNR Endangered Resources Bureau Director, but to no avail. If Michigan restores them successfully, perhaps we can someday get them back in Wisconsin.

—Bruce Moss

Youth camp postponed until 2021

Due to Covid-19, we postponed this year’s youth camp. After multiple phone calls with the staff at Pine Lake Bible camp, TU National camp directors and varying recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the Wisconsin Department of Public Health and the American Campers Association, we made the decision to postpone the camp until 2021.

Not only is it a big disappointment for all the youth we had signed up, but it is a major disappointment for all the TU members involved with the camp. We were looking forward to the camp this year, as there was a lot of early registration and we had 11 youth signed up, with quite a few inquiries about the camp.

It’s hard to believe, but there is a silver lining within all this. All the campers are able to attend in 2021. This means we already have 11 youth signed up for next year, leaving only nine positions available when we start registration next February. So, if your chapter usually sends a youth and you do not have anyone lined up, please start early on finding a camper for next year, as we anticipate filling out the roster early.

The camp will be August 19-22, 2021. Watch for more information in the fall issue of *Wisconsin Trout*.



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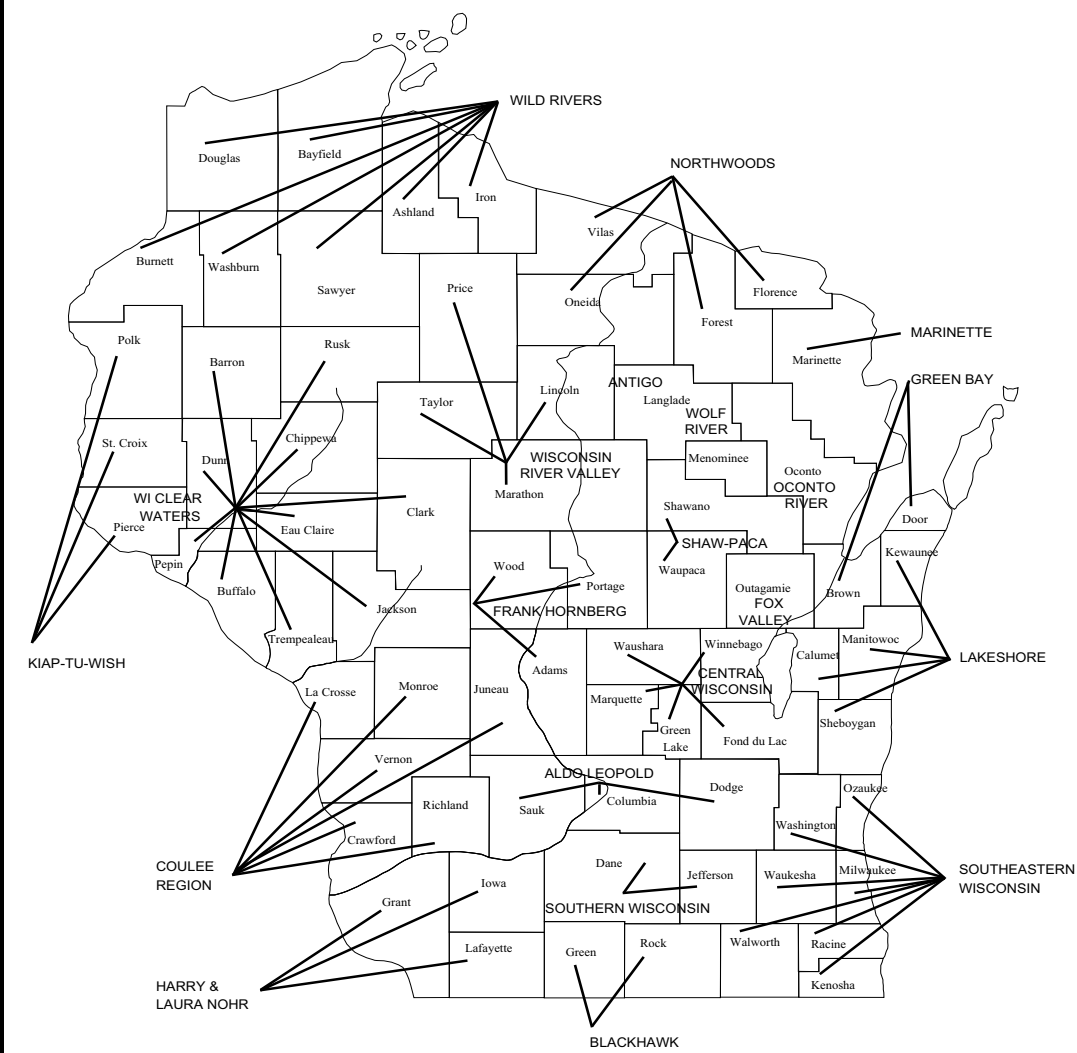
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Wisconsin TU Chapters, Presidents, and Websites



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- Legal Counsel:** Open
- Communications:** Open

Are you getting emails from TU?

If you are currently not receiving news and event-related email messages from your chapter, the state council and TU National, then you are truly missing out on what’s happening at all three lev-els. TU National manages the mailing list for the council and chap-ters, so update your address by going to www.tu.org, log in, then go to “Email Preferences.” You can also call 1-800-834-2419 to make these changes, or to ask questions about making the changes via the web site.

WISCONSIN TROUT

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Photo/article contributions, letters to the editor and advertisements are welcomed. Submit to:

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Mining update

News regarding the Back Forty Project and the proposed sulfide mine in Oneida County.

By Allison Werner, River Alliance of Wisconsin

Mining activities have not slowed down much in the last few months. Badger Minerals has begun exploratory drilling and the Menominee River has been named one of America's Most Endangered Rivers for the second time. There are actions you can take to continue to fight these mine proposals that threaten our waters.

Back Forty Project

Wisconsin's mighty Menominee River was just listed for a second time on the America's Most Endangered Rivers list. This listing is thanks to the work of the Coalition to Save the Menominee River. American Rivers has recognized that the threats to the Menominee River are far from over and that there is still a chance to stop this project.

You can take action today to protect the Menominee River by submitting the action alert on American Rivers' webpage that asks you to tell Michigan's Department

of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) to deny Aquila Resources, Inc.'s permit to develop the Back Forty project. Go to <https://endangeredrivers.americanrivers.org/> to learn more and take action.

Aquila Resources withdrew their Dam Safety Permit at the end of 2019 and has not submitted a new permit yet. There are a lot of concerns about the design of the dam and the risks to our waters if the dam fails.

After the catastrophic failure of the Edenville and Sanford dams in Michigan this spring, the Coalition to Save the Menominee River sent a letter to EGLE, "...to express our concerns about the permitting process for the Back Forty tailings dam in light of the unprecedented flooding after two dams collapsed in Michigan following record rainfall."

Their request to EGLE is, "In light of the recent dam failures and the well-documented threat of upstream dam failure for the proposed Back Forty tailings dam in an area of heavy rainfall, we are asking EGLE to exercise your authority to prohibit the upstream

dam construction design for the proposed Back Forty tailings dam. If EGLE fails to prohibit a dam design that has already been banned in Brazil, Chile and Ecuador as an inherently risky technology, the communities downstream from the Back Forty's tailings dam can only interpret this decision as placing Aquila's corporate profits over public health, safety and clean drinking water."

The coalition's legal challenge to Aquila Resources' wetland permit is still waiting for a decision. You can stay up to date on the Back Forty project and support the coalition's efforts with a donation by going to their website at <http://jointheriver-coalition.org>

Badger Minerals Threatens the Wolf River

The Oneida County Planning and Development committee approved Badger Minerals' exploratory license on April 22 (yes, ironically on Earth Day). Many Oneida County residents and concerned citizens sent in comments to remind the committee of the great pollution risks that come from sulfide mining.

Badger Minerals has also received all of their approvals for exploratory drilling from the DNR. They began drilling the first week of June. Tribal nations, non-profit organizations and local residents have come together to protect the Wolf River from this threat. They are holding a four-part virtual panel series that will feature tribal historians, tribal allies and environmental and political experts connected to the Wolf and Menominee Rivers. Panelists will discuss their experiences in cultural and environmental activism, as well as their knowledge of the mining process, followed by a brief question-and-answer session. All events in the series will take place online from 6:30-7:30pm. The dates and topics are:

- Tribal Allies, July 7
- Mining & the Environment, July 21
- Regulatory Mining Process, August 4

You can learn more about the panel series at <http://wolfriveractioncommittee.com/>

Remembering Dan Wisniewski, 1946-2020

Dan had a hand in conserving more than 100,000 acres of Wisconsin's most precious lands and waters during the last 20 years.

Dan Wisniewski, a stalwart leader of TU and a major contributor to Wisconsin resource issues for more than 40 years, passed away from heart complications on April 16 in Madison. He is survived by his wife, Frances De Graff, five children and eight grandchildren. He was 73.

During his career, Dan served Wisconsin with key roles including chief of staff to Gov. Tony Earl and policy advisor to two other governors and Democratic state senators and secretary of the Bureau of Commissioners of Public Lands (BCPL). He was an aide to two Dane County executives, including Kathleen Falk. He was a key advisor to Kathleen Falk as she organized and won Wisconsin's first and only local conservation fund referendum.

He was a citizen volunteer and leader of the Northwoods Land Trust, Dane County Parks Commission and other groups. He led efforts to continue and strengthen the state's Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and moved forward some of the state's major land acquisition and conservation efforts.

Dan's role in those positions wasn't necessarily as the guy at the microphone. His obituary said, "Always active in Democratic politics, Dan preferred to be the behind-the-scenes guy, working out strategy, coordinating successful campaigns, mentoring others and getting legislation passed."

Dan could often be found along the trout waters of southwestern Wisconsin or near his Vilas County cabin, expertly fishing his favorite soft-hackled flies and enjoying the solitude and peace to be found in those places. At the cabin on Spring Lake loved by Dan, Fran and their family, he planted (and protected from browsing deer) thousands of white pines, and built the "Zen Cabin" reminiscent of Aldo Leopold's

(although much better built), as a place for his grandchildren to enjoy.

As Dan's friend and co-conspirator of many decades, Topf Wells, put it, "He was a skilled and lovely angler. He tied a beautiful wet fly in traditional and innovative styles and fished them to great effect. His only disappointment was that his version of a Pink Squirrel wet fly only caught one trout (but it saved him from being skunked that day). He was a patient and skilled caster. He did not have to catch a lot of fish or big fish, but he hated being skunked."

We tried to fish together once or twice a season, and it was always evident that trout streams for Dan were places of great peace and contentment. We'd sit and talk and everywhere we went he'd be wondering how better to protect more of our state's special places. He would get equally excited about protecting a coldwater stream or an old-growth hemlock forest.

As a TU volunteer and leader, Dan worked with Southern Wisconsin TU, Wisconsin TU and the National Leadership Council on policy development and numerous projects. He co-led a key volunteer effort for SWTU to raise \$30,000 to purchase the Token Creek Springs on the northeast side of Madison. For years he served on the Dane County Parks Commission and strived to obtain for the county public access easements on all of the county's trout streams. Dan spoke for coldwater resources as the state developed Stewardship funding, and protected tens of thousands of acres of rare natural lands and forests through BCPL. In all, Dan had a hand in conserving more than 100,000 acres of Wisconsin's most precious lands and waters during the last 20 years.

At the national level, Dan spoke



and worked for public access to resources, and was a key strategist as the NLC and grassroots leaders fought two successive efforts in 2004 and 2007 to put TU on the sidelines when public access rights to waters were threatened. Big-monied interests in the west had bet that if they could forestall TU from speaking for access rights, they could abrogate Montana's stream access law and limit public access. But they were turned back and TU developed a workable policy to decide when to take an active role to protect access rights.

Dan also worked at the national level to develop a TU program to help acquire public access rights to

key riverine lands.

Both Wisconsin TU (in 2020) and Gathering Waters (in 2017), the state's land trust umbrella organization, honored Dan with Lifetime Achievement Awards for his work.

Dan's obituary summed up his contributions: "Dan dedicated his life to the betterment of Wisconsin and love of his family and friends, sharing his wisdom, kindness and optimism with all he encountered."

Dan's family asked that contributions in his memory be given to Southern Wisconsin TU, Northwoods Land Trust or Dane County Parks Endowment Fund.

—Duke Welter

HISTORY, from page 1

trout stamp, with all funds going toward habitat restoration and none toward put-and-take stocking. Finally, in 1977 the efforts of the Council, chapters and all TU members paid off, and the first stamps would be sold in 1978. By the end of 1978, the DNR had approved more than \$225,000 in habitat improvement projects. Also in 1978, the Council supported legislation imposing stricter standards on sewage discharges into trout streams. Here are more of the Council's historic highlights.

1980s highlights

* 1980: Recognizing the damage being done to trout streams and spring ponds by beavers, the Council establishes a Beaver Committee and commences putting together a video to educate the public about the situation.

* 1982: TU members from throughout the state establishes six new chapters: Aldo Leopold, Chequamegon, Oconto River, Blackhawk, Shaw-Paca and Wisconsin River Valley.

* 1984: The Council holds its first fundraising banquet at the Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton. About 250 attendees help raise more than \$5,000 for the Council. Meanwhile, Council members create three new chapters: Wild Rivers, Marinette County and Lakeshore. There were 22 chapters at the time, with statewide membership approaching 2,000.

* 1985: The Council creates a regional structure to help chapters work together on issues in their part of the state. The Council supports an amendment to the DNR's budget imposing penalties of \$100-\$200 per fish for illegal harvesting of trout.

* 1986: The Council voices concerns over a proposed underground mine and ore concentrating facility by Exxon near Crandon.

* 1987: The Council establishes a Special Regulation Committee to inform the DNR as it undergoes a major overhaul of trout fishing regulations. A new multi-category regulation system was introduced in 1990.

1990s highlights

* 1990: With a desire to increase revenues to meet the challenges of cold-water conservation in the 1990s, the Council establishes its Friends of Wisconsin Trout program, allowing for tax-deductible donations for the protection and restoration of coldwater resources.

* 1991: The Council's Friends of Wisconsin TU makes its first grants to support projects on Black Earth Creek, West Fork Kickapoo and Saul Spring Pond in Langlade County.

* 1991: Lincoln County approves the removal of the Prairie Dells Dam on the Prairie River, while the Willow Falls Dam in St. Croix County is removed.

* 1992: Council Chair Stephen Born submits a letter to DNR Secretary Buzz Besadny regarding the Council's concerns that the early trout season held in only eight southwestern counties has a disproportionate impact on the coldwater resources of that area.

* 1993: The Council forms a Catch-and-Release Committee to educate the public about the proper methods for releasing trout.

* 1994: The Council opposes the filling or altering of 80 acres of wetlands by the Crandon Mining Co.

* 1995: In spite of several years of opposition by the Council, Gov. Tommy Thompson's budget effectively eliminates the Office of Public Intervener and strips the Natural Resources Board of its ability to select the secretary of the DNR.

* 1995: The Council officially goes on record opposing the Crandon Mine.

* 1996: Inspired by Robert Hunt's research showing about half a million trout die in Wisconsin each year as a result of mishandling during release, the Council's Catch-and-Release Committee debuts a video on the proper techniques for safely handling trout for release. The script for the video was produced by Todd Hanson. The video was eventually distributed to all TU chapters in the nation with the help of TU National. The committee also developed "Consider Proper Release" signage to be placed along trout streams.

* 1998: The Council joins a lawsuit against a dairy farm operation on Black Earth Creek that had moved 500-700 cows into a feedlot along the headwaters, allowing them unrestricted and direct access to the creek.

* 1998: After three years of \$1.5 million in inland trout stamp fund surpluses, the Council's ad hoc Trout Stamp Committee creates and submits a report with recommendations to the DNR. The DNR adopts many of the committee's recommendations. In addition, the report recommends that the Council establish a Trout Stamp Coordinator to work with the DNR in promoting the trout stamp program and keeping the Council and chapters updated on the program's progress.

* 1999: The Council establishes its first website, called a "home page" at the time, thanks to the efforts of Andy Lamberson.

* 1999: A study by TU National shows that Wisconsin's trout management programs set an example for other states to follow. It pointed out that Wisconsin is one of few states that dedicates virtually 100 percent of its trout stamp funding to habitat restoration for wild fish, versus stocking.

Highlights from the 2000's

* 2000: Word of a plan by Perrier to drill a 100-foot-deep well in the Mecan River Springs State Natural Area sparks a movement. The Council and Central Wisconsin Chapter joined other groups asking the DNR to do a full environmental impact survey. After more than two years, Perrier finally gives up its plans.

* 2000: TU National presents the Council with its council of the year award for its efforts battling Perrier and for advocating for dam removals on trout streams.

* 2001: The Council backs a bill to give DNR authority over isolated wetlands after a U.S. Supreme Court ruling that said the Army Corps of Engi-

neers did not have permitting authority over wetlands that are not connected to navigable waters. The bill was eventually signed into law.

* 2001: The Council establishes the Jeff Carlson award in honor of Carlson, who spearheaded coaster brook trout restoration efforts near Ashland, including the establishment of the Whittlesey Creek National Wildlife Refuge. Carlson died unexpectedly of cancer at age 39.

* 2001: The Council goes on record opposing plans by two republican lawmakers to split the DNR into two agencies. The effort to split the agency eventually failed.

* 2001: The Council establishes an endowment fund for individuals and corporations to make donations to further the Council's goals.

* 2003: The Council produces a polluted runoff toolkit to help chapters identify and correct suspected nonpoint source pollution sites in their areas.

* 2003: The Council contributes \$5,000 toward the legal costs of challenging a high-capacity well permit to a water bottling plant being planned near Polar in Langlade County.

* 2004: With the support of the Council, the state legislature passes the Groundwater Protection Act. Although the Council deemed the bill "far from perfect," the bi-partisan, compromise legislation did forward groundwater protections in Wisconsin. The bill protects trout streams and larger springs from high-capacity wells.

* 2004: The Council helps defeat a bill that would have redefined navigable waters, privatizing hundreds of trout streams.

* 2005: A report is released outlining plans for a multi-state Driftless Area Restoration Effort for trout streams. Governors of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois commit to the plan.

* 2007: The Wisconsin Inland Trout Stamp turns 30 years old.

* 2007: Bob Haase and Linda Lehman lead a booth at a youth expo in Beaver Dam, beginning an annual WITU volunteer event that has since taught thousands of children how to tie a fly.

* 2007: On the suggestion from Robert Hunt, the Council's Consider Proper Release (CPR) Committee that produced various signs, brochures and a video 10 years earlier reconvened to update its CPR publication. The Council printed 50,000 flyers for statewide distribution.

* 2007: Duke Welter is elected chair of TU's National Leadership Council.

* 2007: Damaging floods deluge southwest Wisconsin, changing the look of many trout streams. Streams with habitat work held up better.

* 2008: The Council's top legislative priority came to fruition when the long-delayed state budget passed with a significant increase in funding to help farmers design and implement nutrient management plans.

* 2008: Another priority, reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, was also achieved, and specified that a portion be used for trout stream easements.

* 2008: The Council joined the Duluth Chapter of the Izaak Walton League, Minnesota TU and the Save Lake Superior Association in a federal lawsuit to compel two federal agencies to fulfil their responsibilities to protect public waters from the spread of viral hemorrhagic septicemia (VHS).

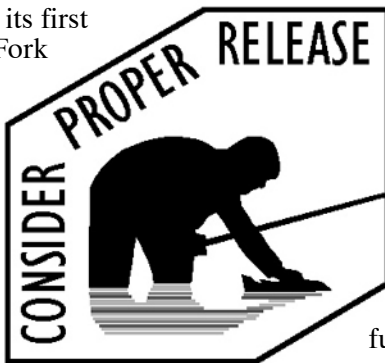
* 2009: After a year of discussion, the DNR and the Council's northeast chapters begin a process whereby the chapters and council will help fund work crews to do stream work in that part of the state. Chapters, along with a Friends of Wisconsin TU grant from the Council, covered two thirds of the \$22,500 cost for the first year. Trout stamp funds covered the remaining third. Since that time, TU-funded work crews have improved habitat on

many miles of trout streams.

* 2009: Larry Meicher passes away only two weeks after receiving the Council's first Lifetime Achievement Award.

* 2009: The Council announces plans to create a new Land Access Fund, with proceeds from the 2010 banquet being used as seed funding. Kim McCarthy and Bill Pielsticker volunteer to coordinate the new grant program's operational guidelines.

* 2009: Gary Stoychoff is elected Council treasurer, one of the most important council positions, and a role he continues to hold today.

**CPR IDEA FORMED IN 1993**

In 1993 the Council formed a Catch-and-Release Committee, which created a logo, brochures and in 1996, a video.

**BORN, COUNCIL VOLUNTEERS STRATEGIZE AGAINST PERRIER**

In 2000, word of a plan by Perrier to drill a 100-foot-deep well in the Mecan River Springs State Natural Area sparks a movement. The Council and Central Wisconsin Chapter joined other groups ask the DNR to do a full environmental impact survey. After more than two years, Perrier finally gave up its plans.

Highlights from the 2010's

- * 2010: The Council celebrates its 40th birthday at a meeting in Waupaca.
- * 2010: The Council's Northeast Region continues its second year of supporting DNR LTE crews doing habitat work in the northeast part of the state. In 2009 the crews did work on more than 21,000 feet on six streams. Plans for 2010 are even more ambitious. The NE Region also supports efforts to control beavers and also a tree drop on the Border Brule River.
- * 2010: The first grant from the Councils' new Watershed Access Fund provides \$4,000 to the Kinnickinnic River Land Trust for a purchase on the south branch of the Kinnickinnic River.
- * 2010: Former Council Chair and National Leadership Council Chair Duke Welter accepts a consulting position with TUDARE as an outreach coordinator.
- * 2011: TU President Chris Wood attends the Council banquet, calling us a model council for other states.
- * 2011: Amid Gogebic Taconite's efforts to mine in the Penokees, the council and many chapters take a stand against loosening environmental protections to accommodate mining interests.
- * 2011: Demand for Wisconsin sand for the fracking industry drives a dramatic increase in the number, size and scope of frac sand mines, processing facilities and transportation infrastructure. Concerns include water usage, air pollution, noise pollution, light pollution and decreased property values for neighboring landowners. Some operations are dangerously close to trout streams.
- * 2012: The Council's Northeast Region chapters approve more than \$40,000 to support DNR LTE crews doing habitat work that summer.
- * 2012: Dale Schultz is the lone Republican siding with Democrats to vote against a bill that gave Gogebic Taconite key wetland-protection exemptions and permitting process changes for its proposed mine in the Penoche Hills. The company eventually abandoned its mining plans.
- * 2012: The Council steps in to revive the inland trout stamp and print program.
- * 2012: TU National trustees meet in Spring Green, where they announced their plans to hold the 2013 national meeting in the Madison area.
- * 2012: In a collaboration with the DNR and the River Alliance of Wisconsin, the Council creates a web site to gather angler-supplied data on gill lice in the state's brook trout populations.
- * 2013: TU National chooses the Council to host its Midwest Regional Meeting in the Spring of 2013, which served as a sort of practice run for the national meeting in September.
- * 2013: The Council provides support for the first ever TU Stream Girls program for Girl Scouts.
- * 2013: The Council hosts an extraordinary National TU meeting, with hosted fishing, stream tours, a terrific awards ceremony at a local distillery and a grand banquet.



COUNCIL SUPPORTS INAUGURAL STREAM GIRLS EVENT

In 2013 the Council helped launch the first ever TU Stream Girls program for Girl Scouts.

- * 2014: The DNR announces that New Zealand mudsnails were discovered in samples taken earlier from Black Earth Creek in Dane County. The Council and other organizations take steps to promote clean angling to remove aquatic invasive species from their gear when they leave a stream.
- * 2014: Henry Koltz addresses the Assembly Transportation Committee with a powerful speech highlighting TU's many efforts. A bill providing Wisconsin TU with a license plate passes the State Assembly. The State Senate then approves the bill.
- * 2014: The DNR gears up on its efforts to obtain 100 miles of streambank easements during the next biennium.
- * 2014: In July, Gov. Scott Walker signs the Wisconsin TU License Plate bill into law.
- * 2014: After a surprise cancellation of the Outdoor Expo in Beaver Dam, organizers hold a similar event at the MacKenzie Center near Poynette. Council volunteers from throughout the state help hundreds of kids tie a fly.
- * 2014: The Council holds its first ever Youth Fishing Camp, which was a complete success, thanks to the many volunteers. 15 students attended the first camp, and some will return in subsequent years to serve as volunteers and mentors.
- * 2014: Wisconsin TU members volunteer at the TU National Teen Summit held at the Sugar Creek Bible Camp near Ferryville.
- * 2015: Wisconsin TU license plates become available. Many TU members are excited to display their new plates, most of them choosing personal-

ized versions.

* 2015: As the state legislature debates the proposed 2015-2017 budget, Wisconsin TU encourages members to contact their representatives and communicate their opposition to: A freeze of stream bank easement acquisitions; elimination of science positions within the Wisconsin DNR and rendering the Natural Resources Board advisory-only.

* 2015: The Council again supports the Stream Girls event for Girl Scouts. "TU volunteers came from all over Wisconsin to share their passion and knowledge about water, and I'm incredibly thankful for the kindness and generosity of everyone who contributed," organizer Heidi Oberstadt said.

* 2015: Council volunteers help more than 800 kids tie a fly at the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo at the MacKenzie Center near Poynette.

* 2015: At the Wisconsin Conservation Congress Annual Spring County Conservation Meetings, Wisconsin TU members introduced and spoke on behalf of a citizen resolution calling for providing DNR fisheries managers



COUNCIL MEMBERS HAVE TAUGHT THOUSANDS OF KIDS TO TIE A FLY

In 2007 Bob Haase and Linda Lehman (shown here) volunteered to teach fly tying to kids at a youth expo in Beaver Dam. The program evolved into the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo, now held in Poynette. Since that first year, many Council volunteers have taught thousands of kids how to tie a fly, with encouragement to use the fly to catch bluegills.

with the authority to set temporary alternate size and bag limits for trout. The resolution was passed in all 14 counties in which it was introduced, due to the efforts of dedicated Wisconsin TU members.

* 2015: At the 2015 Conservation Lobby Day, WITU members visited legislators to voice their positions on three specific budget proposals: freezing the Stewardship Program, eliminating science positions at the DNR, and turning the Natural Resources Board into an advisory body. Members also opposed proposed cuts to county conservation departments. Later the budget committee restored partial funding of stewardship program and reversed the NRB decision.

* 2015: The Department of Natural Resources released a list of 118 parcels of DNR-owned property that were to be evaluated for possible sale in order to meet the requirements of 2013 Wisconsin Act 20, the biennial budget bill. On the list were lands located in 40 counties totaling approximately 8,288 acres. Upon learning of the release of this list, those of our members who began searching through it quickly noticed how many of the listed properties contained frontage on, or were in close proximity to, designated trout waters.

* 2015: The Wisconsin State Senate Committee on Sporting Heritage, Mining and Forestry held a public hearing on a rule package that included new trout regulations. Henry Koltz, in testimony before the committee, commented on the thoroughness of the rule development process which allowed multiple opportunities for individuals to voice their opinions and provide the DNR with solid information on which the rule package is based. Mike Kuhr and Matt Krueger also testified in favor of the proposed rules.

* 2015: Chapters from the Central and Northeast Region approve \$52,500 to fund LTE stream crews in northeast and central Wisconsin. The program continues to grow and evolve, with additional support from trout stamp funds and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

* 2015: The Council creates TIC Guidelines for Wisconsin TU Chapters. The guidelines cover the necessary steps and suggested timeline for starting up new TIC programs. Kim McCarthy, Boyd Roessler, Greg Olson, Mike Kuhr and the DNR provide valuable input.

* 2015: The Council hosts a successful second annual Youth Fishing Camp. There were 13 great campers, including the first two girls. Campers came from throughout the state, and even a couple from out of state.

* 2016: The Council and its members advocate for and against various provisions in a substantial legislative bill regarding groundwater. We supported a provision to lengthen the distance from a high-capacity well to a trout stream before a special environmental review is required, the establishment of Sensitive Resource Areas, requiring the DNR to consider the cumulative impact of wells during the permitting process and a provision requiring periodic review of high-capacity

well permits.

* 2016: The Council supports two bills that provide civil liability immunity for individuals who construct and place, and maintain, habitat structures in navigable waterways under a permit or other approval from the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources.

* 2016: In ongoing efforts to bring more women into the TU community, Women's Initiative Coordinator Heidi Oberstadt encourages chapters to



WITU LICENSE PLATE BILL WAS SIGNED BY THE GOVERNOR IN 2014



FIRST WISCONSIN TU YOUTH CAMP IN 2014

In 2014, the Council held its first ever Youth Fishing Camp, which was a complete success, thanks to the many volunteers. 15 students attended the first camp, and some will return in subsequent years to serve as volunteers and mentors.

nominate Women’s Initiative Chairs.

* 2016: The Council and members continue to press the DNR to remove from potential land sales properties that are adjacent to trout streams and spring ponds. The Council also successfully lobbied against provisions in a large bill that allowed discharge permitting exemptions from drainages and roadside ditches, which serve as fish spawning habitat, or passages to fish spawning habitat.

* 2016: The Council denounces an opinion issued by Attorney General Brad Schimmel. As a result, it appears that DNR will no longer perform cumulative impact analysis of high-capacity well applications, and will only review wells using the certain criteria. In addition, DNR will only impose permit restrictions which are explicitly allowed by statute, which will consider upon request whether permit restrictions on existing permits will remain in force. Wisconsin TU believes that the DNR’s adoption of the attorney general’s opinion, and the broad action with significant statewide impacts that it triggers, sidesteps both legislative and court processes. Second, Wisconsin TU strongly believes that well permits should not be issued ignoring the presence of existing high-capacity wells.

* 2016: Council volunteers teach more than 750 kids how to tie a fly at the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo near Poynette.

* 2016: The Council’s Watershed Access Fund grant program helps secure an easement on the “horseshoe” section of the North Fork of the Bad Axe River in Vernon County.

* 2016: Numerous bills were introduced concerning a variety of topics including groundwater regulatory reform, high-capacity wells, aquaculture regulatory reform, stream work liability immunity, railroad crossings and in-stream dredging. The Council’s Legislative Committee and its volunteer members provided input to the Wisconsin Legislature concerning each of these bills, and traveled to Madison to testify at hearings.

* 2016: For the first time, the WITU Youth Camp reached our goal of 20 campers, who represented 16 of our 21 chapters.

* 2017: Generous supporters donated nearly \$15,000 to the Council’s Friends of Wisconsin TU grant program in 2016.

* 2017: The Council and members continue to advocate for an increase in the trout stamp fee, Great Lakes Restoration Initiative funding and periodic review of high-capacity wells and anglers’ ability to cross railroad tracks. Meanwhile, we continued to advocate against net pen aquaculture in the Great Lakes and splitting the DNR into two agencies. We also actively sought changes to a proposed inland aquaculture bill.

* 2017: Organizers embark on an ambitious plan entitled Trout Unlimited Central Area Restoration Effort for Sustainability (TU CARES). This plan called for funding and managing the Central Sand Hills Ecoregion in a manner similar to TU’s Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TU DARE) program.

* 2017: The Council’s Friends of Wisconsin TU grant program provides grants for six chapters. The Wisconsin Clearwaters Chapter received \$2,000 for maintenance of prior projects. The Antigo Chapter received \$2,000 for a DNR brushing crew. The Central Wisconsin Chapter received \$2,000 for the Wild Rose habitat crew. The Marinette Chapter received \$1,000 for a habitat crew for the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forests. The Wild Rivers Chapter received \$1,200 for a habitat crew for the Chequamegon/Nicolet National Forests. The Wolf River received \$2,000 for the Antigo habitat crew.

* 2017: The Council’s annual banquet continues to grow in popularity and fundraising success. The 2017 banquet raises \$21,000.

* 2017: The Council and its members strongly oppose new bills threatening to cut the Stewardship Fund from \$9 million to \$2 million. We also opposed bills that would change dredging laws to the potential detriment of coldwater resources. Meanwhile, we supported the idea of a statewide moratorium on Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs).

* 2017: The Council holds its fall meeting at the Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, in conjunction with an event entitled “At The Confluence 2017.” It featured author John Gierach, author/artist Bob White,

photographer Mike Dvorak and retired UW — Stevens Point scientist Alan Haney.

* 2018: The Council strongly advocates for changes to several bills that would remove protections for isolated wetlands. Our efforts led to various compromise amendments.

* 2018: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has begun the process of creating a Statewide Inland Trout Management Plan. Currently, no inland trout management plan exists, so this new plan will support the existing efforts in the department. The stakeholder group includes a TU member from four regions of the state.

* 2018: The Council’s Advocacy Committee outlined its conservation policy objectives for the next year, and reauthorization of the state’s stewardship program tops the list. Other priorities include protecting groundwater and surface water resources, increasing the trout stamp fee, and fully funding natural resource agencies and critical related programs.

* 2018: Council volunteers teach 839 kids how to tie a fly at the Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo near Poynette. As always, Bob Haase organized the troops.

* 2019: The Council continues to advocate for an increase in the trout stamp fee and reauthorization of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund. Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is proud to be a part of “Team Knowles-Nelson,” a consortium of more than 50 different groups advocating for a 10-year reauthorization of Wisconsin’s iconic public lands initiative at current funding levels. Meanwhile, the Council joins various hunting, fishing, trapping and conservation groups to form an advocacy coalition called “Sportsmen for Wetlands.” The goal is to advocate in a non-partisan effort to protect, restore and safely manage Wisconsin wetlands.

* 2019: The Council’s Northeast Region chapters and Friends of Wisconsin TU approve \$45,800 to support the work of DNR LTE habitat crews for the summer season. The program continues to be huge success, with many miles of streams receiving habitat work each year.

* 2019: Larry Mann of Hayward Flyfishing Co. takes 10 veterans from our Wisconsin veterans programs on a guided bass-fishing trip. The State Council paid for the lodging for the crew and some of our chapters provided support.

* 2019: Council volunteers teach 892 kids how to tie a fly at the annual Midwest Outdoor Heritage Education Expo near Poynette.

* 2019: Generous contributors donate \$18,000 for Friends of Wisconsin TU. The Council approved grants supporting the northeast stream crews, Nichols Creek, Sixmile Creek and stream repairs in Vernon County.

* 2019: The Council hosts a “Partners Paddle” on the Bois Brule River that includes U.S. Senator Tammy Baldwin.

* 2020: The Council’s annual fundraising and awards banquet, with TU CEO Chris Wood in attendance, nets nearly \$25,000. Dan Wisniewski is awarded the Council’s Lifetime Achievement Award. He passed away a short time later.

* 2020: The Council and members continue to advocate for reauthorization of the Stewardship Fund and support an increase in funding for county conservation staff and a pilot flood reduction project in Ashland County. We supported a bill which streamlines the permitting process for wetland, stream and floodplain restoration projects. However, the bill would have streamlined the permitting process for any “low-risk dam.” We felt that any new obstruction to free-flowing water should be given greater scrutiny than the bill’s general permit. We worked with our partners at the Wisconsin Wetlands Association and several legislators to have this language removed.

* 2020: The Council’s Watershed Access Fund helps secure property on the South Branch of the Oconto River.

* 2020: The Covid-19 Pandemic leads to social-distancing guidelines and the elimination of gatherings, leaving the Council and its chapters to cancel or postpone most activities.

Share your stories, your photos, your recollections!

Hopefully these highlights from the past 50 years spark some memories for you. Please consider sharing your experiences with your fellow Wisconsin TU members.

Whether you want to share your recollections of a particular event, a conservation battle or any other Council activity that has meant a great deal to you over the years, send it along.

Do you have some good photos relating to our history that perhaps have not been seen before? Send them along.

Or, perhaps you just want to share your thoughts about the Council highlights that we’ve included here.

Send them to Todd Franklin at toddfranklinwistrout@gmail.com or Todd Franklin, 1423 Storytown Road, Oregon, WI 53575.

The greatest fish there (n)ever was

An encounter with a monster trout leaves him wondering to this day.

By Kyle Siebers

When I first laid eyes on the spot, it was like an oasis in a desert. I had been slogging upstream through hundreds of yards of shallow riffle. My ankles felt like they were about to give up on me. My calf muscles burned in defiance of every step. I had already fished more than a mile and landed but a handful of small brook trout, none over six inches, and many too small to eat the spinner I was using. The spot I had just stumbled upon was sure to give up the biggest brookie of the day. What happened next was at once exactly what I expected, and like nothing I could have imagined.

A perfect spot

The spot this fish called home was a spot you just knew would hold a fish, just not this fish. Everyone would expect the biggest fish in the river to be in the 8-foot-deep plunge pool below the short but steep rapids upstream. A pool that deep would remain cool enough to withstand the dangerously high water temperatures of even the hottest summer. The depth was also excellent refuge cover. The rapids upstream provided an abundance of food and oxygen. This picture-perfect spot was not the home of the legendary fish, however. He chose to live elsewhere.

Downstream from the murky depths of our fish’s suspected haunt, the river widened and became quite shallow. If not for the impossibly slippery rocks of this wide riffle, you could cross the river in knee boots. Where this long riffle began to narrow ever so slightly, there was a small island. The smaller braid along the back side of the island was inconsequential. The other side, however, was where one had a chance to observe the fish that defied existence.

The stream in the vicinity of the island showed signs of bending. Not enough to notice at first, but if you stopped and looked up or downstream you were surprised you couldn’t see further. Because of this slight bend, and perhaps some perfect combination of rocks and boulders, there was spot on the far bank that had some depth to it. It wasn’t soakingly deep, but it was deep compared to the six-to-ten-inch riffle extending up and downstream as far as you could see. 16 to 20 inches was all the water this fish needed.

I can picture the fish now. The image in my mind couldn’t be clearer if I was holding it in my own two hands. And this fish was not just big, but truly gigantic. It’s a fish so big that nobody would believe it existed until you flopped it down dead at their feet. Even then, some may accuse you of poaching a private pond, or even burglarizing a fish from the state hatchery.

Your fishing buddy, an eyewitness with a firsthand account, may choose to believe it was a carp instead of a brown trout to avoid a stay in a mental institution. Indeed,

this fish was no ordinary big fish. This was not a fish of a lifetime. It was more. It was a fish that would immortalize your name in history. The picture of you holding this fish would spread like wildfire across the internet. It would be talked about in diners and dive bars, fly shops and farmers markets. This was a fish that incited sleepless nights, and endless daydreams.



A NICE BROOKIE, AND POTENTIAL MEAL FOR A GIANT BROWN

A love of brook trout

Brook trout were my first love. Far prettier than they had any right to be, they caught my eye, and my heart, at first sight. The first trout I ever caught were wild, native brook trout. The first fish I ever landed on a fly of my own creation, or any fly for that matter, was a brook trout. Their enthusiasm in the take was an addiction to which there was no overdose. As long as I live, I don’t foresee myself burning out on catching brook trout.

Part of the reason brook trout still hold a special place in my heart is their size. In my part of the world a 10-inch brookie is a quality fish, with fish over 12 inches being big ones, and anything 14 inches or better being a real trophy.

When compared to various other species of fish, it may seem silly to get excited by a 10-incher. A 10-inch smallmouth, while fighting doggedly, is considered a little guy. A 10-inch pike is exciting for the opposite reason, as you almost never catch them that small. If you caught 10-inch walleyes you would reel in and move to a new location. Brook trout are fun that way. I am just as much in awe of a 10-inch brookie as I am of an 18-inch smallmouth, or a 30-inch pike.

I had been walking steadily upstream, pausing only long enough to throw a cast or two at fishy looking cover. Some casts produced miniscule brook trout. Most turned up nothing. This section of stream was turning out to be worth a lot less effort than I was putting into it. Most of the stream was too shallow to hold fish. Riffles baked in midday sun were devoid of life. Even the log

jams producing depth and cover were often fishless. Still, I never gave up hope. I knew that my efforts would surely be rewarded with a quality brook trout.

The brookies I had been catching that day were fun, but at the end of the day they were nothing more than promising up-and-comers. That is why I could feel the adrenaline coursing through my veins when

moment before the fish lost the depth to remain upright a dark shadow charged. It took a swipe at the brook trout, trying to eat it, but because of the shallow water was forced to stop short. The fury with which it changed direction splashed water in my face.

Thankfully I was already on my knees in anticipation of landing the brook trout because I doubt I could have remained standing after such an event. I was frozen there, shaking, with my mouth hanging open. The splashing of the brook trout in front of me, still firmly attached to my line, snapped me out of my trance.

I unhooked and released the brook trout and sat down in the sand. By now my fishing partner had broken the silence with the question, “What just happened?” He of course already knew. We both knew. We were both standing right there from start to finish. How could we have missed it? We sat there replaying the scene out loud for the next ten minutes.

“Was that a...?”
“Had to have been.”
“How big do you think it was?”
Sigh “....Big.”
“Biggest brown I’ve ever seen. Pike aren’t that golden brown.”
“Yeah and carp don’t have spots like that on ‘em.”

“Are there even carp in here? Never mind, doesn’t matter. Wasn’t a carp. No way.”
“Had to be a brown.”
“Nothing else it could have been.”

We concluded that it had to have been a brown trout trying to eat the brookie I had on the line. I hadn’t gotten the best view of the ordeal. After all I had been kneeling to land the brook trout and the water splashed in my face altered my view of everything after that point. Ben had been standing the whole time, and he caught it all. We had both seen the color of the fish, and the spots the size of dimes. I hadn’t caught much of the fish’s retreat, but Ben had made note of stones on the riverbed to help us estimate a measurement. The stones were spaced wider than two wading boots were long. Almost two and a half in fact. Measuring our wading boots when we got home showed that one boot was thirteen inches long. Two and a half boots came out to thirty-two and a half inches.

Remembering we only got a rough estimate of the fish’s size we concluded the fish was a minimum of twenty-eight inches long. There was a real possibility the fish was larger. It could well have been in the low-to-mid thirty-inch range.

What to do next?

For the next few days it seemed this leviathan was all we could talk about. We both had dreams about it. We talked about how we would return to try for it again. Do we wait for nightfall? Do we try again during a rainstorm? Do we bring our bass gear: Stout rods with heavy braided line? Do we drift a large chub or a shiner into its lair from upstream? Would a big gaudy streamer work? Were we even allowed to try for it alone, or did we need to fish together what we had started together?

See **MONSTER**, page 16

BOOK REVIEWS

The natural world and the Bois Brule explored in three books

By Duke Welter

Our local library has, until very recently, been closed, and our home bookshelves are read bare. But the lack of good reading has been ameliorated by three recent books. Our three reviews this issue aren't angler-centric, but two should be of interest for the breadth of their focus on Wisconsin's natural world, and the third may interest those who are fans of the Bois Brule River and its unique history and culture.

Afield: Portraits of Wisconsin Naturalists, Empowering Leopold's Legacy, Vol. 1, by Sumner Matteson

One of the unexpected joys of reading over the last several pandemic months has been Sumner Matteson's book about Wisconsin Naturalists, "Afield." At more than 700 pages, it's not a quick read. But if you call our state's outdoors home and are at all curious about it, this book deserves your attention. Matteson has spent his career as a DNR naturalist, focusing for years on several major species restoration efforts, and started collecting material for this book 40 years ago. He interviewed naturalists, many now long dead, gathered their biographies, papers and journal excerpts and gleaned more materials from their publications. The writing is excellent and brings in thoughts from other sources, from Aristotle to Barry Lopez, to augment the main subject. I always fold up the lower corner of a page to bring me back to a rich thought or well-turned phrase. In some chapters almost every page is folded up.

Some names will be familiar: An interview with Sigurd Olson at his cabin in the Boundary Waters, "Listening Point," a few years before his death in 1982. Stories of Frances and Frederick Hamerstrom, legendary prairie chicken researchers in the Central Sands area. Some are tremendously focused in their work, like George Becker who gathered research on every fish species in the state over 25 years for his "Fishes of Wisconsin," considered the best survey of its type in the nation. Or the Rev. Sam Robbins, ornithological leader with a rarified ear for bird-song, writing his sermons as he walked outdoors with binoculars in hand. It's interesting to compare the table of contents with the inductees in the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, two lists with many overlaps.

Others are endlessly curious about everything: a subject may be a wildlife biologist assigned to make sure game numbers are enough to keep hunters happy, but when he walks through old-growth cedars or along the Green Bay shoreline he is noting every sedge, fungus, animal, bird and insect species, and waiting for the evening to stargaze. I've known a few of these folks, and the book's treatment in those cases comports nicely with my impressions and adds richness to their stories.

These are not all professional naturalists. There is room for self-taught urban prairie restoration expert Laurie Otto, for Bad River

Chippewa Band leader and long-time teacher Joe Rose, and for UW Soils Prof. Francis Hole, who sang the praises of Antigo Silt Loam and helped make it our official state soil. I wonder how many out there can still sing the "Antigo Silt Loam Song" he wrote and performed for anyone who would listen?

Reverence is regularly a topic of Matteson's interviews with his subjects, and sometimes in the excerpts from papers or letters. For many of his subjects, the wonders and order of nature can only be understood with an underpinning of reverence. The range of sources of that reverence makes another interesting aspect of this book.

One subject who contributed richly is the late LeRoy Lintereur, DNR wildlife biologist in the Oconto area, whose journals make up more than 125 pages of the book. He mourned the loss of old growth forests special to him being cut down for new subdivisions, celebrated the avian arrivals and departures each year, and was immensely candid about his observations about human impacts on the outdoor world. The quality of his journal writing evokes that of Aldo Leopold's essays. When a developer logged off 300-year-old hemlocks, Lintereur considered it an "ecologic crime shouting to heaven. Damn, when we humans decide to obliterate, we have it in our power to do a bang-up job in a hurry. Now, just like that, presto, it's gone, no one to even give a backward glance."

Lintereur was dismayed at the filthy water of Green Bay before the Clean Water Act took effect, and at the loss of irreplaceable resources. His journals sometimes scream with frustration at human's overuse, thoughtlessness and greed. One can't help but wonder: Had Leopold written with this bite, would he have obtained the reach he has?

This book is a gem. It should be in every high school and college library in the state, where it could inspire other young people with curiosity about the natural world. I'm pleased to hear there is a second volume in the works.

Afield: Portraits of Wisconsin Naturalists, Empowering Leopold's Legacy, Vol. 1, Sumner Matteson, Little Creek Press, 728 pages, \$29.95

Boys of the Brule By Ross Fruen

The Bois Brule River has long been iconic in our state's lore: The fur traders' and tribes' highway connecting Lake Superior and the Mississippi, log drivers' route, protected by wealthy post-logging families who built estates and hosted presidents, home to Gordon MacQuarrie's most famous trout fishing stories, paddling destination. Its many facets contribute to its richness in our minds. To me, quietly paddling the upper river through cathedral-like pines toward a fishing site is a time to appreciate a sublimely lovely place.

"The Boys of the Brule" is a many-faceted book as well. Written by a scion of one of the oldest lodge families on the river, the Gitchee Gumee Camping Club, also known as the "Noyes Camp," founded in the 1880s, it could have devolved



into a self-centered reminiscence of a lifetime of stays at their lodge and the antics of a bunch of guys now coming into their 70s. It has some of that, but to its credit it brings in more.

The two most interesting aspects, to me, were the history of some of the older lodges (like Cedar Island, owned by the Twin Cities' Ordway family) and private camps (like the Winneboujou Club on Big Lake), with some of the traditions and historic figures who guided the old families on the river, and the role the river played in the culture of the bands of the Lake Superior Chippewa tribe.

There's a little more attention to some legal wrangling than seemed necessary, but I guess that's not unexpected. One of the families associated with the club is the Noyes clan, notable Milwaukee attorneys and conservation supporters for well over a century. With a family of such notable legal acumen, some reporting of internecine disputes should not be unexpected. But it reminds me that plenty of Wisconsin's real estate law was spawned by Milwaukee lawyers on vacation at cabins on lakes, where they spent their leisure time fabricating new theories to settle a lot line dispute over a neighbor's encroaching driveway or petunia patch.

The book could have used some fact-checking, perhaps by some of the participants. One of the BOB crew is said to have gone to the 1963 Boy Scout National Jamboree and World's Fair in New York. Nope. The 1964 World's Fair was in New York and the 1964 Jamboree was in Valley Forge, PA. I know because I was there. It's a little thing, perhaps, but when I observe that I wonder about other recitations of fact which are new to me.

The Brule is a well-loved and varied river, with its fishing, rapids, lodges and scenery. Many other Wisconsin rivers are wild(ish) rivers, like the Wolf, Prairie, Mecan, Namekagen, Flambeau, Totogatic, and Popple, all of which have their fans and river keepers. Even hard-used ones like the Wisconsin, Kickapoo and Milwaukee do. Do we only revere those closest to wild, or do we appreciate the limited "wild" in others and appreciate them nonetheless?

Boys of the Brule, Ross Fruen, Cable Publishing, 231 pages, \$18.95

When Things Happen: A Guide to Natural Events in Wisconsin, By Randy Hoffman

Several of my long-time angling and hunting buddies have this quirky fascination with species other than that which we target in our outdoor endeavors. They stop casting to marvel at the warblers in the streamside brush, or quit walking up pheasants to watch a swirl of migrating waterfowl overhead. That's ok. I keep fishing or follow my dog while they're distracted. This book is for them.

For 40 or so years, Randy Hoffman has been one of our state's professional and most peripatetic naturalists, working for the DNR's Bureau of Endangered Resources (the folks you support with your eagle, badger or wolf license plate). Phenology, the study of coinciding events in the natural world, gives us plenty of clues to cyclic happenings, weather or climate changes, and the like. Hoffman is perfectly equipped to assemble a book like this. He's surveyed hundreds of sites and helped establish many of our State Natural Areas, and he's kept records of the species he's encountered. The extended period of observations and his wide-ranging knowledge makes this book useful to many subspecies of outdoor observers.

His self-published book breaks the year down into 36 10-day periods and reports on the natural phenomena you can observe in each. Lengths of days, meteor showers, bird and insect arrivals and departures, herptile activities, plant activity, fungi emergences, mating and spawning activity are each covered in succession. The sheer number of observations — for birds alone he has recorded at more than 400 sites over 40 years, from northern hemlock forests to his back yard in Waukegan—could be overwhelming, but interspersed with them are little essays in detail on dozens of topics. He consistently refers to information from a network of accomplished observers around the state, professional and otherwise, and to reports and observations in regularly published sources like the Passenger Pigeon, the long-time newsletter of the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology. Alien earthworms, seasonal fluctuations in migrations, expanding citizen study of dragonflies, and reasons and ways to support conservation are all well covered.

On ravens in the Northwoods in February, for example, he writes, “While many species are struggling to survive winter’s challenge, the common raven displays an exuberance that seems to defy the season. They are in preparation mode for courtship and anything goes. Observers in the north should spend time just watching these highly intelligent and creative birds. They have been seen swooping in the winds, making quick turns, completing barrel rolls, dropping stones and performing foot grabs while in flight. On the ground or in trees, they conduct tug-of-war games with leaves and twigs, hang by one foot or their bill, roll onto their backs, steal food, and play various other fun games.” He is a master of description whether he’s talking about newts, fungi, butterflies, snakes or anything else.

When I heard about the book, I was intrigued to see if it would cover a specialized area of phenological occurrences which I have been studying casually for close to 40 years: as we go through the annual cycle of aquatic and terrestrial emergences and subsidences along our streams, what are the parallel happenings in other parts of our world? My fishing journal for May 16, 2003 on a stream near Viola reported: “lilacs and trilliums and cad-

dis and craneflies thornapple and crabapples and apple blossoms. Oh my. This is a spectacular country, fish or no fish.” You may follow the spring ephemeral wildflowers in their succession along trout streams you frequent, watching trout lilies and baetis, ramps and black caddis, Hendricksons and bluebells, lilacs and sulfurs. Hoffman touches a few of these coinciding events, but he’s not too concerned with them, in light of the wider plethora of events going on. His book is

rich with a range of insects—did you know there are six cicada species found in the state?—as well as birds and butterflies. Grasshoppers get some attention too, but if you’re a real dedicated hopper fan you should turn to Kathryn Kirk and Prof. Chuck Bomar’s monograph “Guide to the Grasshoppers of Wisconsin,” which reports on more than 80 of that species catalogued here. Reading Hoffman’s book just after Matteson’s first volume, one can’t help but think the former would be a perfect subject for volume two. They’re birds of a feather, if I may coin a phrase. *When Things Happen: A Guide to Natural Events in Wisconsin, Randy Hoffman, 240 pages, \$19.98.*

Update from Washington, D.C.

By Taylor Ridderbusch,
TU Great Lakes Organizer

Despite Congress and state houses spending much of the last few months responding to COVID-19, there are still several very important conservation bills making their way through the U.S. House and Senate. First, the Great American Outdoors Act (S. 3422) (GOA) addresses the maintenance backlogs on public lands and ensures full, dedicated funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a program that received reauthorization last year and has been a topic covered in previous editions of *Wisconsin Trout*. If passed, GAOA would appropriate the full \$900 million annually allocated to LWCF in addition to providing \$1.9 billion annually through fiscal year 2025 to address the National Park Service, U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Bureau of Land Manage-

ment and Bureau of Indian Education accumulating maintenance backlogs on roads, trails, facilities and aquatic structures. GAOA has already been passed out of committee and could see a floor vote in the Senate as early as June. Second, America’s Water Infrastructure Act (S. 3591), this year’s version of the biannual Water Resources Development Act (WRDA), has also seen movement through the Senate in recent weeks. This bill includes a number of vital Great Lakes provisions, including reauthorizing the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) at \$350 million, funding Asian carp defenses at Brandon Road and funding to address toxic contaminants like PFAS. Trout Unlimited hopes to see both of these bills passed and signed into law before Congress breaks for their summer recess and the upcoming election.

Does your fishing car have a TU license plate yet?

Support Wisconsin TU and get your Wisconsin TU license plate now. Go to www.dot.state.wi.us/drivers/vehicles/personal/special/trout.htm



Watershed Access Fund: Obtaining public access

During the Spring of 2020 funding from our Watershed Access Fund, along with donations from Oconto River, Marinette and Green Bay chapters, the Wisconsin Stewardship Fund, Oconto County and Oconto County Conservation Clubs, allowed acquisition of a key parcel bordering the South Branch of the Oconto River in Oconto County. This acquisition is important for northeastern Wisconsin trout anglers because it will greatly improve access to the South Branch below Menominee County and provide a put-in point for those wanting to float the lower South Branch. This recent acquisition continues the success of the Watershed Access Fund in providing public access to important trout waters in all areas of Wisconsin. Thanks go to our donors for the contributions that made this purchase possible.

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TU CARES's public outreach in the Central Region

By Tom Lager

TU CARES (Trout Unlimited Central Area Restoration Effort for Sustainability), while influenced by current COVID-19 constraints, progressed both "in-field and at-home-bound" activities.

A Waushara County Highway C road-crossing culvert was replaced on an unnamed Class 1 trout stream and tributary to the West Branch of the White River. This event was inspired by the TU CARES-funded culvert replacement project at the Lake Drive crossing just downstream. The Highway C culvert is now properly sized for stream flow and sediment transport, which also enhances free migration of brook and brown trout.

The Lake Drive culvert is scheduled to be replaced later this year to enhance trout passage and water flow through the road crossing.

Materials for this project were funded by a \$25,000 Community Foundation of the Fox Valley grant obtained by TU CARES. The Wautoma highway department did a wonderful job with the replacement and worked with the DNR's Brad Betthausen for permitting.

The Younglove Project plan to revitalize a 40-year-old section of the West Branch of the White

River was completed by Shawn Sullivan and Steve Devitt (DNR Wild Rose Trout Habitat Management Team). The main goals are to 1) improve and increase habitat for trout spawning, juvenile trout nurseries and adult trout, 2) bank stabilization and 3) increase accessibility for fishing and other recreational uses.

Scott Bahn prepared and submitted an Embrace-A-Stream Grant request to partially fund the estimated \$160,000 cost. Other TU funding sources are being explored with TU CARES chapters including Central Wisconsin, Fox Valley, Frank Hornberg and Shaw-paca, as well as other TU chapters within Wisconsin and Illinois. Additional grants being explored are from the DNR River Restoration Grant and Trout and Salmon Foundation. The project is planned for 2021 – 2022.

TU CARES chapters achieved our stretch goal of raising \$29,000 to support Limited Term Employee salaries working on the Wild Rose Trout Habitat Management crew. The details of chapter volunteer support for 2020 planned habitat work are pending DNR COVID-19 guidance.

The Groundwater Project measuring stream flows and water temperatures at 10 headwater trout stream sites continues



Tom Lager

NEW CULVERT ON TRIBUTARY OF THE WEST BRANCH WHITE RIVER

Here's what the Waushara County Highway C culvert looks like after replacement, improving trout passage and water and sediment transport through the road crossing.

in partnership with DNR and Jacob Lemon (TU Eastern Angler Science Coordinator) to fill data gaps in DNR modeling efforts designed to describe the interrelationship of groundwater and surface cold waters.

This work was supported by DNR and TU grants totaling \$10,000 in 2019. Mike San Dretto and Chris Firkus prepared

and submitted TU CARES input to the DNR Property Master Plan for Central Sand Hills Ecological Landscape. The input was focused on coldwater trout streams and the associated riparian areas, based to a large degree on the vision TU CARES has for this region.

DNR studying beaver influences on streams, trout

By Matthew Mitro, DNR Fisheries Research Scientist

Discussions of beaver and trout in Wisconsin often elicit two different views.

"Beaver and trout are incompatible in Wisconsin's low gradient streams. Their dams create ponds that destroy trout habitat. Beaver and beaver dams should be removed to maintain free-flowing conditions to best support trout."

"Beaver dams create deep pools with large trout and are easy to fish, in streams otherwise limited in trout habitat. We should allow beaver to build dams to improve trout fishing."

There is perhaps an element of truth to both statements. And both views are about equally supported by trout anglers. In a 2011 survey of Wisconsin trout anglers to solicit input on our trout management program, we asked anglers about their familiarity and satisfaction with Wisconsin's beaver damage management program for removing beaver and beaver dams from designated coldwater streams to restore and maintain free flowing conditions.

This was not a well-known program among survey participants, and support for it was mixed. About half were unfamiliar with the program and 41 percent heard of it but knew little about it. For the 11 percent quite familiar with the program, 42 percent were satisfied with it and 36 percent were unsatisfied.

Beaver management in Wisconsin is not all about trout. A DNR beaver management plan was updated in 2015 with input from many different stakeholders, including trappers and anglers. While the plan maintained beaver control efforts to minimize negative impacts on trout,

gaps in the science supporting the program were identified and research was recommended.

A new study on beaver impacts on trout was prioritized by DNR Fisheries Management, is being conducted in cooperation with DNR Wildlife Research, and will address concerns raised in the beaver management plan. The goal of this study is to test for the effects, both positive and negative, of beavers, beaver dams and beaver dam removal on coldwater stream habitat and trout populations in different ecoregions and beaver management zones across Wisconsin.

The study design utilizes an experimental approach. One group of streams have had years of beaver control to maintain free-flowing conditions. We are allowing beaver to recolonize and build dams on these streams. In another group of streams in which beaver have not been controlled, beaver and dams will be removed. And we will use a group of control streams in which there will be no changes in beaver management. Control streams will help ensure that any changes we document in treatment streams are a result of changes in beaver management and not year-to-year variability in trout populations, temperature, flow and other habitat characteristics.

We began the project in autumn 2018, working with DNR fisheries managers to begin identifying study sites. Study sites will represent trout streams in Beaver Management Zones A (north of Hwy 64 and west of Hwy 13), B (north of Hwy 64 and east of Hwy 13), and C (south of Hwy 64 in the Driftless Area). Sites will also be in the three major drainage basins: Lake Michigan, Lake Superior and Mississippi River basins.

In 2019, we surveyed fish communities and stream habitat at 58 sites in 29 streams, of which 15 were deemed suitable for changing beaver management for the purposes of the study. For control sites, we will be making use of many DNR trout stream trend sites, supplementing Fisheries Management trout surveys with habitat surveys and data loggers to measure water temperature and flow. This year we will be scouting additional sites to ensure regional representation of different quality trout streams.

We are collecting data on multiple characteristics of streams, including fish community composition; trout abundance, size structure, growth and movement; physical stream habitat; and water temperature and flow. We will also document the presence of beaver and measure characteristics of the

dams they build.

Beaver colonization has begun on some streams. Beaver control will stop on some additional study streams this year and some next year. This will be a multi-year study, and the length of the study may depend on how quickly beaver do their part in streams we are allowing them to recolonize. Some monitoring will also likely continue to document longer-term effects in some study streams.

We will share more information as the study progresses. If you have any questions, you can contact me at matthew.mitro@wisconsin.gov or Dr. Nathan Roberts at nathanm.roberts@wisconsin.gov.

Matt Mitro is the DNR's coldwater fisheries research scientist based in Madison and working on trout and streams statewide.



MEASURING A BEAVER DAM ON A DRIFTLESS AREA STREAM

Driftless Angler

Keeping a business alive while keeping a community safe.



ALWAYS WORKING ON GETTING MORE WOMEN INTO THE SPORT
Geri has focused on providing more opportunities for female fly anglers. The Driftless Angler has a line of women’s outdoor clothing and equipment.

By Mike Juran and Curt Rees

“Mat,” Geri said with tears in her eyes, “What have we done? We are so screwed.”

It’s August, 2004 and Mat Wagner and his wife Geri Meyer had just purchased a building on Main Street in downtown Viroqua. Geri recalls the weather being unbearably hot, with highs above 100 degrees. Mat and Geri had moved across the country with two small boys and were preparing to open a fly shop and guide service here in the Driftless Area of southwest Wisconsin.

For two solid weeks before they opened, Geri and Mat had been fishing the local spring creeks and had not caught a single trout. Panic and fear could have overtaken them, but the community came to their rescue. This would set a precedent of the symbiotic relationship between their business, the Viroqua area, and the trout angling community.

Let’s move to Wisconsin?

Before coming to Viroqua, Mat and Geri met in Taos, New Mexico where Mat guided and managed a fly shop and Geri ran a French bistro. They met through mutual friends, fished together, and the rest of their relationship is history.

They soon decided to try their hand at running their own fly shop. With no desire for big city life, they searched for opportunities where the fishing was good and there was need of a fly shop. One of Mat’s friends from Minnesota had frequently talked about this area called the Driftless. Mat’s own research kept finding the Midwest spring creeks in the top five places to fish in the U.S. After further investigation, Mat said to Geri, “Let’s move to Wisconsin.”

As you can imagine, Geri’s response was classic ... and unprintable, but they looked for the center of the Driftless region and found Viroqua. Geri thought it sounded French, and they began their quest.

Mat’s parents made a trip from

Michigan to Viroqua and found the very building that now houses the Driftless Angler. Geri and Mat made a trip from Taos for a long weekend and quickly fell in love with the area and the friendly people. The dream of a fly-fishing shop in Viroqua started to take shape and the relationship with our special area began.

They had purchased the building and officially started their business without ever having wet a line in local water, so not catching a trout in their first two weeks was terrifying. It would have been understandable for them to just take jobs in the private sector and squelch the dream but help arrived in the form of Driftless legends, John Bethke and Bob Blumreich. John, the creator of the pink squirrel and local guide Bob, a local guide, helped clue them in, and to put aside their Western ways of fly fishing and learn techniques and skills needed for our narrow, tree-laden spring creeks.

Another local hero

Before they had even unpacked all the boxes of materials, flies, rods, and other fishing gear, another hero came to their aid. Pete Cozad, renowned guide in our area, taped a simple note to the shop’s front door. “Hi, I’m Pete Cozad and I’m a fly-fishing guide. I wonder if you would consider hiring me?” Mat joked sarcastically, “Being the experienced business people we are, we took his note, checked one reference (a very positive one) and hired him,” and Pete has been with them since the beginning. Pete had previously guided for people from the Chicago area and also had Minneapolis contacts. He helped lend credibility to the fly shop and build their initial business.

Diversity and fly angling

The Driftless Angler stands out from most fly shops across the country as Mat and Geri have a very diversified guide staff. They currently employ five full time guides and four part-time guides, including

Mat and Geri. Besides Geri as a female guide, the rest of the guides come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds. They all possess skill sets that meet the expectations of their clients.

The fly-fishing world has traditionally been more affluent, white and male, but the shop is trying to bring more diversity and opportunity to the sport. It makes business sense to expand the diversity of the client base, but Mat and Geri also recognize that it is also good for the sport and the preservation of the natural resources on which their business depends. Clients have come from Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago as you can imagine, but they also include visitors from South Africa, Japan and Great Britain.

For years Geri has focused on providing more opportunities for female fly anglers. The Driftless Angler has a line of women’s outdoor clothing and equipment. Geri used to get a lot of eyerolls when attending vendor seminars when she asked about more focus on equipment for female anglers. Thanks to her persistence and more recognition from gear vendors, the availability of fly fishing equipment for women grew.

Their shop now carries full lines of women’s apparel in a variety of sizes, unlike many other fly shops which may only have a more limited selection. Their commitment to their clients and expanding the sport across demographic lines is admirable and runs counter to an efficient focus on only one part of the demographic. As you will see, that is the type of people they are — community centered, not profit centered.

One-fly tournament

The Driftless Angler supports the development of the next generations of anglers with their support of Pete Cozad’s Driftless One-Fly Tournament. For the past six years, Pete has organized the “One-Fly” to raise thousands of dollars to support local youth angling and outdoor initiatives. This is an all-day event, where each member of a four-person team is allowed to have one fly for the day. If the fly is lost or needs to be retied, that team member is done, contributing to the official score of the team. There are a limited number of teams that can participate, and preference is given to

youth anglers. Any team having a competitor under the age of 18 is an automatic entry into the tourney. The rest of the teams are selected at random drawing. There is a fun energy among the people this event brings together, and it wouldn’t happen without Pete and the support of Driftless Angler.

Fly shop built on relationships

The Driftless Angler is always available to help trout fisherman. “It’s a relationship,” emphasizes Mat, and they can provide a wealth of information to anglers. If you walk through their doors, use their bathroom, make fun of Mat’s hair, and then ask for a top stream destination, it’s possible you will be sent to the East Fork of the Kickapoo or just down the road to the TUDARE improvement project on Shitze Creek. It is a business after all, so if you venture into any fly shop, support them. Be kind and polite of course, but also buy some tippet, floatant, or a couple of recommended flies. Information may flow more freely. If you invest in them, they will invest in you and help you have the best possible experience on the stream.

Hire a guide?

Hiring a guide is another way to invest in a fly shop, but I personally think the angler benefits much more than the fly shop. I learned to fly fish on Arkansas tailwaters and the trout don’t seem to care about bad casts. Trying that same approach in the Driftless was a completely different matter. Tangles, lost flies and monologues of swear words grossly outnumbered the trout caught in an outing.

And just like Bethke and Blumreich helped Mat and Geri figure out trout fishing here, Mat did the same for me in 2008. I hired Mat for a guide trip during their initial shop years and he taught me more in four hours than I would have learned in four years on my own. Yes, we caught fish that day, but more than that, Mat saved me years of frustration with expert advice on how to read pieces of water, where to place a fly, and how to fine tune my Driftless cast.

See **DRIFTLESS**, page 23
DRIFTLESS, from page 13



MAT LOVES WHAT HE DOES. CAN’T YOU TELL?
Clients have come from Madison, Milwaukee, and Chicago, but they also include visitors from South Africa, Japan and Great Britain.

RECOLLECTIONS

The Pemebonwon River Expedition

Two young anglers embark on a late 1970s camping trip in search of Marinette County's bountiful trout waters.

By Rick Larkin

In the late 1970s I discovered a publication entitled "Wisconsin Trout Waters — Maps — Complete List for 58 Counties," published by the Clarkson Map Company of Kaukauna, Wisconsin. It cost six bucks, was atlas-sized, and had maps of all Wisconsin counties where trout streams were present. Each county map had a graphic listing the name of the trout stream, the amount of trout water present, trout species present ("x" for stocked, "n" for native), which portions of the streams support trout, the miles of trout water, and the portions of the stream which were Class I, II or III. All of this for six bucks? We could not believe our good fortune, but, where to start?

We started by looking at counties where we had fished before. In Dane County, home of Black Earth Creek, the book listed six trout streams. We already knew four. Vernon County had eight at that time and La Crosse had three. All in all, not too many, so we kept on paging through the book.

We struck gold with Marinette County. We were stunned to see that it had 58 trout streams. The map and stream information covered two pages and was a mass of blue squiggles showing all of the streams.

We read on. There were 241.8 miles of Class I water! We added this up on an old adding machine. Fifty or so had native brookies. Most had either native or stocked browns. Two had native rainbows. Vernon County didn't list any Class I water. Dane County listed only 10 miles. It was too much. We needed to go to Marinette County.

We didn't just jump in the car and start driving. We really didn't know where Marinette County was exactly, as we all lived in the Milwaukee area. Nobody had a family cottage up there and nobody had ever camped there, or had even driven through it. Our journeys northeast usually stopped in Green Bay. In those days, Packer tickets were easy to come by and cheap, sometimes free, in the dark years between Super Bowls.

Desperate, I went to the library and rummaged around the Wisconsin tourist and guide books. I discovered the following from a pamphlet: "Marinette County abounds with inexpensive county and township campgrounds, usually in forested locations along Marinette County's numerous rushing trout streams."

Bingo! Now we just needed to assemble the camping gear for a week-end expedition.

Even in those youthful days, the prospect of tent camping separated the trout fishing sheep from the trout fishing goats. The number of enthusiastic viewers of the Clarkson map book shrank a great deal when confronted by having to camp out. Suddenly things like June weddings,

graduation parties, golf outings, and other excuses reduced the "Corps de Trout" to two guys — myself and Jeff (one of my fishing buddies of that era and a good camper). We commenced planning our attack and assembling gear.

Much of our camping gear consisted of stuff given away when our old Boy Scout Troop 114 disbanded a few years earlier. We had a waterproof two-man canvas pup tent that I think went into Germany with Patton, aluminum cooking gear, and a similar vintage rain fly which was coated with the same smelly waterproofing our tent was coated with. A metal ice chest, my Coleman lantern, a jointly owned Coleman stove, cast-iron frying pan, sleeping bags, air mattresses, a bike pump, and a few army surplus kitchen utensils completed the equipment list as a campfire dinner of fried trout and fried potatoes danced in our heads.

Fishing gear included our fly rods and waders, two spinning rods, a tackle box, and a Styrofoam cooler with about a hundred worms. Jeff was a little unsure about the fly-fishing part of the plan as it pertained to dinner.

We were loaded for bear. This pile of stuff would be jammed into Jeff's tiny yellow Toyota wagon.

Where oh where to go? So much water! So many streams! We agonized. We studied the map book. The North Branch of the Pike River had 29.5 miles of Class I water with native brook and brown trout. We would start there. Next, we decided to explore the Wausaukee River near Athelstane as one of the Marinette County brochures I looked at in the library had a big ad for a tavern near Athelstane depicting a large pizza next to a pitcher of beer. Plus, the Wausaukee also had native brooks and browns. Next, we saw the Pemebonwon River and its various branches to the north of Highway 8. The book indicated native brookies. Plus, we thought the name sounded cool. This constituted about fifty miles of trout water which we would fish during the course of a two-day weekend.

We left Milwaukee on a Friday night after work and headed up I-43 to Green Bay. At Green Bay we took U.S. Highway 41 and then Highway 141. We were now in uncharted territory. The countryside, now in full dusk, revealed miles of heavy pine forest. We were "up north."

The little signs indicating county campgrounds were difficult to see but after a few missteps we found one by Dave's Falls on the Pike River. We found a site, put up our smelly tent, pumped up the air mattresses and made a small campfire. Under the glow of the lantern, we had a sandwich and a beer, and poured over our trout maps and a Marinette County highway map we got at a gas station. At first light, we would hit the Pike. We thought downstream from the campsite would offer bigger water and bigger

fish. We had never camped in pine woods before and the north woods smell was intoxicating. Sleep came quickly. Large browns soon danced in our dreams.

In those days we did not have internet-based stream-flow data, satellite weather, Doppler radar, or anything like that. We just watched Paul Joseph on Channel 4. If Paul said it was OK, it was assumed to be OK. In his defense, Paul's forecast did not extend into Marinette County. While skies were clear on the drive up, we did not know it had been raining during the previous week.

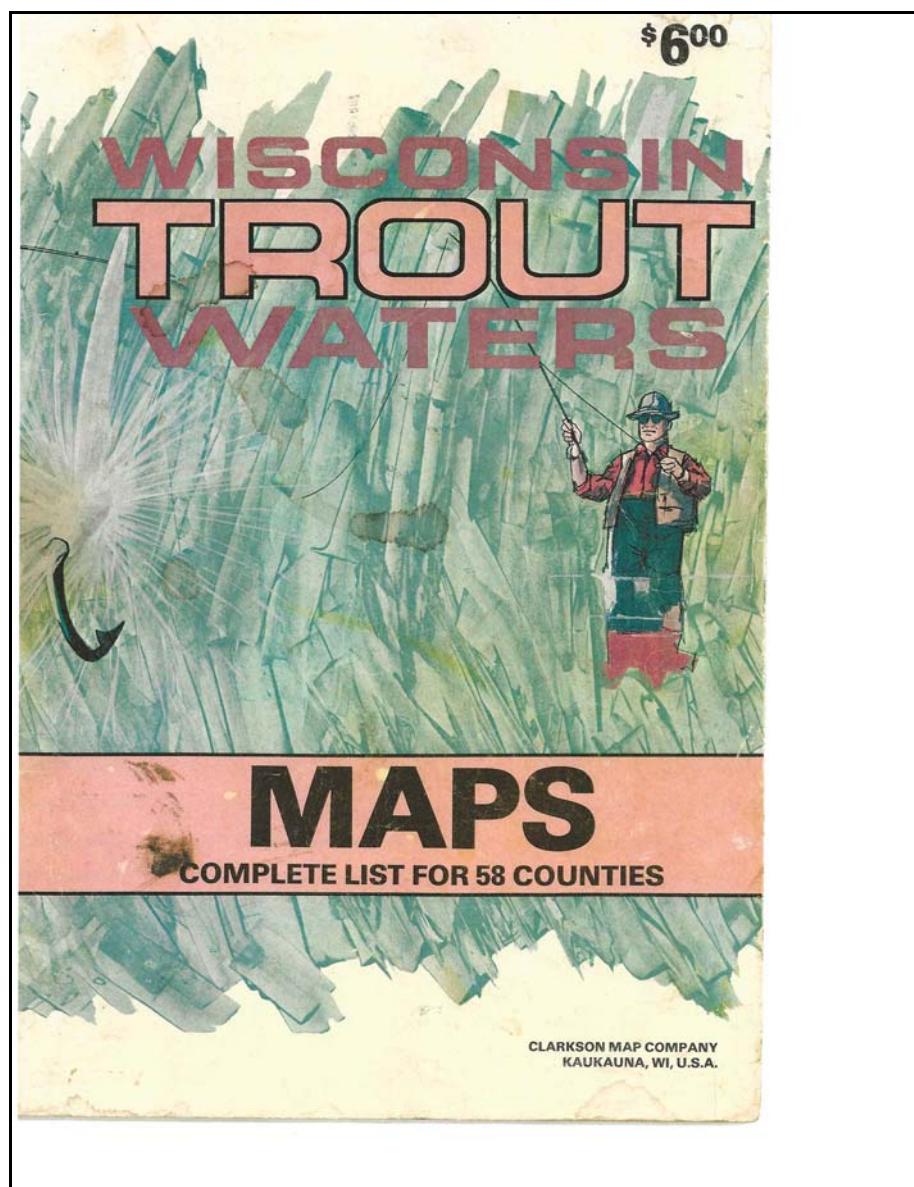
At first light, we had peanut butter toast made on the camp stove and instant coffee. Granola bars and the French press had not yet been invented. We left camp and drove a short distance to our chosen "spot" on the Pike. We were armed with fly rods and Muddler Minnows, hoping for big hook-jawed browns. To say the water was a little high was an understatement. It was a raging whitewater torrent. We thought that being swept to our death was not a good idea and jumped back in the car. We drove a little further upstream and came to another county park access. We walked down the trail to the sound of rushing water.

At the river, a rock formation of dark granite created a large angular

obstruction in the middle of the river creating a mix of water moving at different velocities over what looked like a small waterfall with a distinct swirl at the bottom. The Marinette County Park Department placed a "DANGER-WHIRLPOOL" sign on a sheet of white-painted plywood, which was also adorned with a large hand-painted skull and crossbones in red, just in case the written warning wasn't enough. We got the hint and kept moving upstream.

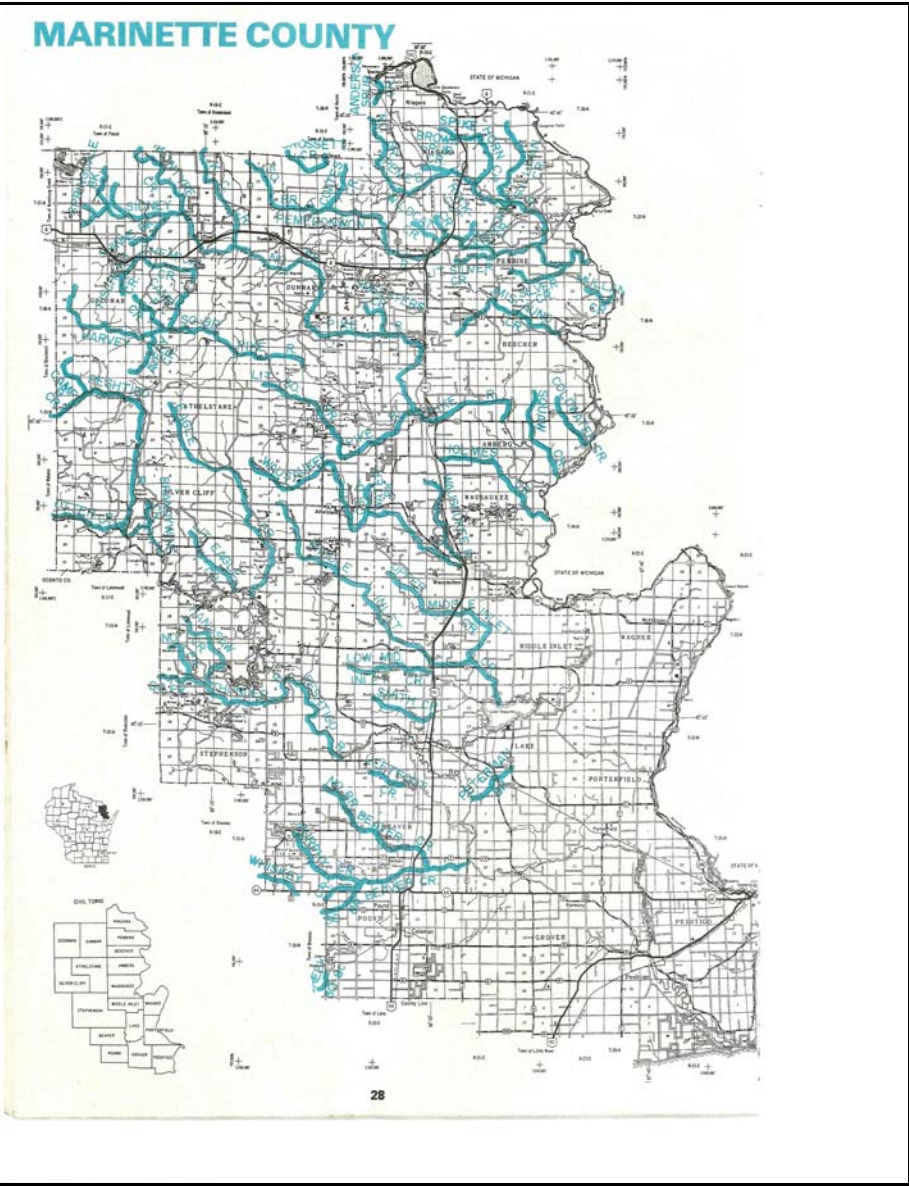
We eventually came to less menacing water and began swinging our Muddler Minnows in the Pike. It was mildly stained at this point and everything looked real fishy. We did the downstream wet fly swing. We swung and swung and swung some more. We moved upstream and swung even more. We changed flies to some streamers, stripping through the current in every way we could think of. We tried them weighted and un-weighted. Then we tried Woolley Buggers. Jeff went back to the car for his spinning rod and trusty night crawler rig. No dice. Not even a bump all morning. The Pike soundly defeated us.

It was after noon and time for lunch. After driving around for a while, we found the pizza joint near Athelstane, had pizza and licked our wounds. We adjusted our strategy



ALL THIS FOR SIX BUCKS?

In the late 1970s the author discovered a publication entitled "Wisconsin Trout Waters- Maps- Complete List for 58 Counties," published by the Clarkson Map Company of Kaukauna, Wisconsin. It cost six bucks, was atlas-sized, and had maps of all Wisconsin counties where trout streams were present. Each county map had a graphic listing the name of the trout stream, the amount of trout water present, trout species present ("x" for stocked, "n" for native), which portions of the streams support trout, the miles of trout water, and the portions of the stream which were Class I, II or III.



FEW STREAMS IN SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN, SO HEAD NORTH

The book listed six trout streams in Dane County, eight in Vernon County and three in LaCrosse County. It listed 58 trout streams in Marinette County.

over sausage and mushroom pizza and Schlitz. We now turned our attention to the Pemebonwon. It was already past two in the afternoon and the Wausaukee would have to wait for another expedition. After finishing lunch, we drove north on 141.

The Pemebonwon and its branches flow in a mostly easterly direction towards Pembine. Given the condition of the Pike, we thought smaller water upstream might be best. On 141, we turned west on a gravel road with heavy woods and undergrowth on either side. We began looking for access points to the Pemebonwon.

The map showed all county and township forest land located in a maze of county and poorly marked gravel roads. Based on the trout map book and the county road map, the stream should have crossed the gravel road we were on at two points. We couldn't find either. Then, we stopped the car and soon heard the unmistakable sound of rushing water coming from either side of us. We walked in one direction and found the Pemebonwon, or what we thought was the Pemebonwon, flowing under a large culvert, obscured by tag alders and a jungle of thick undergrowth. We had located crossing number one. We walked in the other direction about a couple of hundred yards and found the same scenario for crossing number two with the same thick undergrowth. Both branches of the stream were very small at this point. We could barely see the water. A light rain was starting to fall, making things even more fun.

Just how in the hell were we going to fish this? Jeff was not much of a fly fisherman and was fresh from his fly-fishing defeat at the hands of the Pike. He grabbed a spinning rod and the worm cooler. "I'm sitting on the road. Probably be a hole by the culvert," he said. He was probably right. Still, despite everything — the

Pike River failure, the rain and the need to catch dinner -- I would fly fish. I badly wanted to catch a brookie on a fly.

I had a selection of Adams, Royal Wulffs and some other small dries. All were known to be brookie favorites, based on the outdoor magazine articles I had read. I also had some small wet flies and the bigger muddlers and streamers we used to try to catch browns in the Pike.

This woods had to open up, I thought, so into the thick wet woods I plunged. Thank God for deer and trout fishermen, a narrow path paralleled the creek. The undergrowth was still pretty thick, so I kept walking, or more correctly squishing, stumbling and crashing along the muddy creek bottom, which was also the home of thousands of mosquitoes and black flies. I wanted to catch a native brook trout on a fly more than ever and pushed deeper and deeper in the woods along the creek.

The woods did open up a little and I strung my fly rod and tied on an Adams. The creek now flowed through a more or less open forest floor with mature pines and hardwoods creating a dense canopy above. It was dark, but fairly open, save for the large trees, with no tag alders and only moss and ferns growing on the forest floor. The water was very clear, small, shallow and meandered through the forest floor showing a white sand bottom and mossy green banks. Little riffles interrupted the otherwise clear stretches of still slower flowing water. It was quiet, save for the gurgling of the little river. It was easily one of the most beautiful places I had ever seen. It was almost fairytale-like and if a couple of gnomes or elves showed up, I wouldn't have been shocked.

I checked my back cast distance and let out some line. My first false cast caught on a branch and

snapped off my fly. It was much tighter than I thought. Same result for casting attempt number two. My Adams supply was now down to two flies, so I tied on a Royal Wulff and lost that, too. During my failed casts I noticed that I had spooked a number of fish that headed downstream to Jeff, who was probably catching brookies on worms like a commercial fisherman. I crept on, losing flies as I went.

I rethought my approach and got down on my knees. I tried to slowly and quietly crawl to a more open riffle a few yards ahead. I could now see a couple of nice brookies lazily finning in the pool below the riffle. I tried a short roll cast with my last Wulff. Best cast so far. They ignored it. They also ignored the next 10 casts. Then they ignored the last Adams. It started to rain a little more. I tried a wet fly and swung it through the pool. No dice. Multiple casts in the most beautiful brookie-filled pool in the most magical forest I had ever seen produced nothing. The gnomes and elves must have been laughing their asses off.

It rained a little harder as late afternoon turned into a long early summer evening. I kept moving around this forested paradise trying the various pools and riffles with what flies I had left. I was skunked. Jeff must have 20 brookies by now, I thought. "Hope he didn't keep that many," I grumbled to myself while tying on a muddler. They didn't like the muddler, either, so my skunking continued. I looked at my watch. I had been fishing this little stretch for more than three hours. I said I would be out by eight o'clock and I figured I had about 15 minutes left before I needed to start walking back to the car.

In times of desperation, desperate men do desperate things. I knelt down on the mossy forest floor and began to dig for worms with my bare hands. It was easy digging and soon I had about a half dozen. I found a split shot in my vest and a stray wet fly. I now entered the dark side as I fed my worm-dressed weighted wet fly into a little pool and hoped for the best. I had five minutes until I needed to start walking out.

Very soon, a chunky male Brookie inhaled my fly/worm combo and was hauled in with little ceremony. In my hand, the trout was as beautiful as the little magic forest stream he just came from. He was a very dark green, almost black along the top which accentuated the spots and wormy patterns of the flanks. His white belly was as white as the sand in the stream. The white-tipped orange and red fins were brilliant and intense in color. It was perhaps the most beautiful fish I had ever seen.

He was also for dinner, so in my creel he went.

The rain intensified as I slogged back to the car. I emerged from the woods and found Jeff sitting in the front seat of the Toyota, drinking a beer and listening to the radio. I tapped on the window. He opened it a crack. "How'd ya do, flyboy?" he laughed. It was not his first beer. "Got one," I said defensively. "Hah!" he laughed, "Kept a limit and let a bunch go!" he hooted. "Even got out my fly rod and ran a wet fly through the culvert and got a couple more!" That really hurt. Still, we had enough for dinner.

It was now raining even harder. "Gonna let me in?" I asked, and he did so without any further taunting. I was now thoroughly soaked and we drove back to the campground with the heater on full blast so I could dry out. Once on the highway, we stopped for gas and I bought two of those emergency clear plastic ponchos for a buck each.

We drove back to our camp site to make the fabulous fried trout dinner we talked about during the planning stages of the trip. Cooking dinner was slow going with the rain interfering at every step. We deployed George Patton's leftover stinky rain fly, which was now really showing its age and keeping out only some of the rain. Every time a raindrop hit the lantern or the hot oil a big "PFFFFT" was heard as we cooked the fish and potatoes. Clouds of steam and airborne oil created a foggy scene in the lantern light.

I can remember the rain dripping off the bill of my baseball hat and the rain fly. It dripped onto my dinner plate and I had to pause from time to time to drain rainwater from the fried trout and potatoes. Still, it was one hell of a trout dinner. Those brookies tasted so good. Soggy fried potatoes are not nearly as appreciated as they should be. Beer never tasted better. Kings don't eat this well.

No photos survive of the two young men in clear plastic ponchos eating a late night trout dinner under a canvas fly by lantern light in the June rain. Despite a night of wet sleeping bags, a leaky WWII canvas pup tent, bugs, general physical misery, and generally uncooperative trout, I always smile when someone mentions the Pemebonwon. Sometimes, on the rare occasion when I am eating a fried trout dinner, I pour a little water on the plate and then drain it off, just for old time's sake. I grin a silly grin and people think I'm nuts. I know the Pemebonwon gnomes and elves think so. If I ever get back there, I will try to catch one.



THE AUTHOR TRIES TO WADE THE PIKE RIVER

The trout didn't come easily on this soggy trip to northeastern Wisconsin, but it was a trip they'll never forget

MONSTER, from page 9

We had posed so many questions and answered them all. We had ranked our tactics in order of confidence from highest to lowest. We had even tossed around the idea of contacting the local fisheries biologist to see if he was interested in electrofishing that section to see if we could turn up this fabled fish.

We spent so much time reliving the event and daydreaming about Act II of the saga that we never went back for another attempt. I

think we were reluctant to return to this fish because we were subconsciously afraid of the inevitable heartbreak we would suffer when the fish never materialized. We were so afraid of seeing the fish again and not catching it that we never even tried. Or maybe it was enough just to know a fish of that caliber existed. Maybe we never returned out of respect for a fish that large and that old. Whatever the reason, that fish remains the greatest fish there (n)ever was.



IS THERE A PRETTIER FISH THAN A BROOKIE?

Trout stamp program seeks art entries

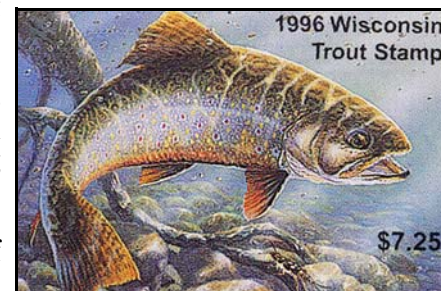
By Darrell Toliver, Trout Stamp Coordinator

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is happy to announce that the annual Inland Trout Stamp Design Contest has been reinstated and is now open and accepting entries! The winning art will appear on the 2021 Inland Trout Stamp.

Judging for the top 10 pieces of artwork for the Inland Trout Stamp Design Contest will take place in an open session in September 2020. The top three pieces of submitted artwork (that is, the 1st, 2nd and 3rd-place entries) may be displayed at external venues. Please be sure that your submitted artwork conforms to the specifications outlined in the "2021 Wisconsin Inland Trout Stamp Design Contest Rules." Also, please take note that entries should not be protected by any covering such as acetate or cellophane. You may use an acetate envelope for protection during mailing, as long as this envelope can be easily removed.

For a copy of the 2021 Inland Trout Stamp Design Contest Reproduction Rights Agreement and the 2021 Inland Trout Stamp Design Contest Rules, please contact me. Read over the instructions carefully. All paperwork can be included with your artwork during mailing, and you may mail entries and paperwork for Inland Trout Stamp design contests in the same package if you wish. Entries must be delivered or postmarked by August 2, 2020.

If you have any questions, please contact me at DJTSOK@aol.com or 651-269-8804. Good luck. We look forward to seeing your entry.



Isherwoods win Supreme Court case

A farmer created trout habitat and authorities tore it out. After years in court, he won the right to rebuild.

By Rob Mentzer,
Wisconsin Public Radio

For a time, thousands of brook trout spawned in the Portage County creek known as the Isherwood Lateral.

But the trout habitat built there by Donald "Justin" Isherwood became the subject of a bitter dispute with local authorities, and in June 2017, just weeks before a scheduled court hearing, those authorities brought construction equipment onto Isherwood's property to dredge the creek and destroy the habitat.

The court case took years to make its way through the legal system. But it's now official: Isherwood prevailed. The local drainage district had no right to destroy his trout habitat.

The last step came in March when the state Supreme Court declined to hear the case, leaving an appellate judgment in Isherwood's favor to stand.

Now, Isherwood and his wife, Lynn Isherwood, have applied for new state permits and have plans to begin rebuilding the habitat this summer.

"Let's just say it was a long haul," Lynn said. Having the case brought to a close, she said, was an "extreme relief."

It's been nearly four years since Justin filed suit against the Portage County Drainage District, and almost three years since the destruction of the habitat. And the dispute itself goes back many years before that.

Justin farms potatoes, corn, peas and other crops on about 1,600 acres of land in central Wisconsin. The Isherwood Lateral is a creek that runs through the land he owns. Even the definition of it as a "creek" was contested by members of the Drainage District, who called it a "ditch." Their position in the

dispute was that the alterations the Isherwoods made to the water running through their property could create problems with the drainage system that could affect other farms. They never showed actual harm had come from the project, according to a court finding.

The habitat itself was nothing more than dozens of old Christmas trees staked to the creek bed. The woody material acted as cover for trout, and the stream's gravel bed was a place for them to lay their eggs. It worked. By 2016, thousands or even tens of thousands of trout were spawning in the creek.

But by that time, following years of tension and fruitless negotiations, Justin was locked in a dispute with the drainage district, led by Paul Cieslewicz of nearby Bancroft. Justin filed suit in July 2016 to try to stop the district from tearing out the habitat.

"His trout habitat is definitely going to come out," Cieslewicz said in a July 2017 interview with WPR. "There's no doubt."

And it did.

The case had a court date set for June 28, 2017. On June 7 of that year, the drainage district brought a backhoe to the Isherwood Lateral and pulled the Christmas trees from the river and cut down other trees on both banks, returning the creek to something that looked much more like a ditch.

"I'm devastated," Justin told WPR then. "It's been nuked...It's all gone."

In retrospect, Lynn said, that aggressive move by the drainage district may have helped their case.

"It was devastating at the time," Lynn said, "but actually it worked to our advantage because it really insulted the court."

The judge in the case would call the abrupt removal of the habitat a "flagrant and knowing disregard of

the judicial process" and a "pig-headed move."

Cieslewicz told WPR in 2018 that "the judge calling me a bonehead for taking the obstructions out, that is very unprofessional of the judge. It's crazy that the judge can have this much bias and get away with it."

In February 2018, the judge ordered the drainage district to pay Justin's legal fees and reimburse him for the cost of restoring the trout habitat. Instead, the drainage district appealed the case. They lost the appeal, and appealed again to the state Supreme Court.

When the Supreme Court chose not to take the case this year, it was over.

In a brief phone interview,

Cieslewicz said he had "nothing to say" to WPR about the conclusion of the case.

"You blew it out of proportion last time; you're not going to do it again to me," Cieslewicz said.

Lynn said she and her husband have presented their plans to the state Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection for permitting. They've been collecting Christmas trees. With any luck, they'll be out this summer putting the trees in and staking them down. There are still some trout left in the stream, and they're hoping they can help ensure that there are more each year.

Thank you to Wisconsin Public Radio for allowing us to publish this article.



George Kraft

CLEARING OUT THE ISHERWOOD LATERAL

In June of 2017, just weeks before a court hearing, the Portage County Drainage District dredged the woody debris that Justin Isherwood had placed in the Isherwood Lateral. Although it was mostly old Christmas trees, the woody material provided brook trout cover and the stream's gravel bed was perfect for spawning. By 2016, thousands of trout were spawning in the creek.

Wisconsin Great Lakes Stream Restoration Program update

By Chris Collier, Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager

This has not been the spring or summer any of us were imagining. Despite all that has happened, I'm still encouraged by all that TU has been able to accomplish nationally, regionally and locally. From encouraging #ResponsibleRecreation to dedicated members and volunteers making sure policy and project goals are not forgotten, you have shown that coldwater conservation doesn't stop.

When the pandemic came to a head in March, I was interviewing potential summer interns. We were not sure if we would be able to safely have interns in the field this season, but fortunately some dedicated staff members developed protocols for working during the pandemic.

We were able to bring on two interns, Rachel LaPorte from Wisconsin Lutheran College and Hannah Kieler from the University of Washington (a Wisconsin local home for the summer). They started their internship the first week of June (I'm actually writing this update around a campfire in Marinette County after their first day) and will be helping us inventory road-stream crossings to identify fish passage barriers and help with other summer projects.

Speaking of those other projects, we still have a full workload with the U.S. Forest Service. Eight culverts creating fish passage barriers are scheduled to be replaced this summer in partnership with the Chequamegon-Nicolet National

Forest, reconnecting more than 20 miles of trout habitat. We're also working on a remnant logging dam removal on the North Branch Oconto River near Wabeno and I will be excited to share updates on that project in the future.

While our work with the U.S. Forest Service is moving full steam ahead, we have felt the negative impacts of working during a pandemic. In 2019 we hosted a project tour that brought together more than 40 local road managers and officials to learn about our road-stream crossing projects. We were planning to host another tour this year in the northwest part of the state, but after postponing the original tour date, we have decided to cancel the event to err on the side of caution. Our plan is to host the tour next year, but keep on the lookout for updates as we explore new ways to spread the word about better stream management.

But it's you, our dedicated members and volunteers, who continue to make TU one of the leading voices in conservation. Through these difficult times you've continued to support TU and make sure coldwater conservation isn't overlooked. This is what makes TU such a successful organization and it makes me proud to work with you on these important efforts. I sincerely applaud your efforts and can't wait until we can gather in a room again to share stories, victories and project updates.

See you on the water (at least one rod length apart, for now)!



OTTER CREEK BEFORE CULVERT REPLACEMENT IN 2019



OTTER CREEK AFTER CULVERT REPLACEMENT IN 2019

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Chapter News

Aldo Leopold Chapter

Like in other chapters, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our activities. We cancelled our final round of Bar Flies, our fly-tying gatherings at local watering holes, we cancelled our spring camping/fishing weekend and we cancelled our annual fundraising picnic. Additionally, we have moved to virtual board meetings. We will follow TU guidance to decide when we will resume events.

I want to thank Bob Moss for his years of service on our board. Bob found it necessary to resign from the board recently, and he will be missed. He did great work as membership chair, reaching out to new members when they joined TU. Best wishes to Bob. Jim Peters has stepped up to take over the membership chair position. Thank you, Jim.

Due to cancellation of classes for the remainder of the school year, our Trout In the Classroom program in Sauk County had to be curtailed. Nate Nye and his crew from the DNR went to the schools and retrieved the fingerlings, which were then released into local trout streams. Hopefully TIC will be back next year.

Thanks are in order to the hosts of our Bar Flies events. Tumbled Rocks Brewing, Oooga Brewing and The Ballroom all made us welcome this past winter and we appreciate their support. We are already planning to expand Bar Flies next year, with more sessions throughout the winter.

We are in the process of arranging with the DNR for some mowing along Bear Creek on the Fargen easements. Nate Nye at the DNR is helping us with the details, but if all goes well later this season we should see some mown paths along the stream. This should make access a lot easier in the late season and it will also help keep woody vegetation from gaining any foothold.

Now for the really exciting news about Bear Creek. Nate Nye for-

warded us a copy of a recent DNR report on the Bear Creek watershed. This report documents an extensive survey of the watershed done in 2018, but incorporates data from 2013-2019. This is a new type of report for the DNR, focusing on the entire watershed. At 43 pages, it is lengthy and thorough. We plan to post a downloadable copy on our website, and the DNR will also have a copy on their website once they complete migration to a new website. I am really happy to report that Nate is recommending reclassifying Bear Creek upstream of Highway N from Class 2 to Class 1. That was one of our goals when we started BCHIP almost 10 years ago and it feels great to have achieved that goal. Here is a summary of the report's recommendations:

Management recommendations include:

- Retain current fishing regulations on all trout streams in the Bear Creek watershed.
- Maintain current trout classifications for Biser Creek and Croal Creek.
- Maintain current trout classification for Bear Creek below County Highway N.
- Reclassify Marble Creek and McCarville Creek from Class 2 to Class 1.
- Reclassify Bear Creek upstream of County Highway N from Class 2 to Class 1.
- Discontinue brown trout stocking in Croal Creek.
- Expand easement and fee title ownership when possible to provide additional habitat management and public access opportunities. Expand NRB acquisition boundaries during master planning to facilitate more acquisition.

Many, many people have contributed to our work on Bear Creek, and to see this success is a testament to those efforts. To all of you, we say thank you.

—Mike Barniskis

Antigo Chapter

We hope you all are well and safe. Boy, what the last five months have done. The changes and cancellations have hit us all, and our chapter is no different. Our annual banquet in March was delayed and now is canceled for this year. We have returned ticket money to people who wanted their banquet ticket money back. We will start organizing for next spring's banquet after Christmas.

We also canceled our annual June Kid's Fishing Day. We did place about 700 brook and rainbow trout in Remington Lake in early May, so the kids will have trout to catch this summer.

The culvert replacement project

involving our chapter and the Moose Lake Association, on Crestwood Road near Phlox, is complete. The previous culvert was a barrier to water flow and fish movement.

The June work day with area TU chapters and the DNR on the Evergreen River was canceled. Maybe we can reschedule it later.

We have talked to a landowner with property on the East Branch Eau Claire River to help enhance access to the river for fisherman. We will keep you all informed on our progress.

That's all for now. We hope things get better for all of us soon. Go fishing!

—Scott Henricks

Central Wisconsin Chapter

Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited has had to make many painful decisions since the COVID-19 pandemic struck. In the interest of the health and safety of our members and guests during the pandemic, we reviewed our programs and decided against holding in-person events, which was typically our busiest time of the year.

We had to cancel the Don Har-

mon III Fly Fishing School. We look forward to continuing this important chapter tradition that has introduced so many people to fly fishing for more than 40 years. We will offer the students who signed up last year a priority for next year's class.

We canceled our April, May and June programs, and we also canceled our stream habitat days for May and June. We will evaluate



Deb Jozowski

CWTU'S RIVERKEEPERS HAVE BEEN KEEPING BUSY

Frank Druecke (right) and Bob Jozowski (left) doing a depth measurement on Bird Creek in Walton's as part of CWTU's WAV monitoring duties.

whether to hold them for the rest of the summer as time goes by and we are able to evaluate the risks.

We have also canceled our annual banquet for this fall, opting hopefully for an event in 2021 which will celebrate the chapter's 50th anniversary.

We held our first virtual board meeting in May using the Zoom platform. It's a different experience, but at least we were able to get together, check in on each other and attend to chapter affairs. We are planning on using this forum for the foreseeable future until we go back to live meetings. Thanks to Tom Meyer for championing the idea and hosting it for us.

We were able to make a donation of \$12,000 to the DNR to support stream restoration work in 2020. Hopefully, they will be able to get their crews in the field this summer. If not, we are sure that the fish will be fine.

We have encouraged everyone to get out and enjoy Wisconsin's fine fishing. We have heard that many more people than usual are getting out and that there are many families on the streams and they are introducing their children to the sport, which is a great thing for fishing.

We welcomed a generous \$1,000 donation from the estate of Harlan Beutler. His daughter, Beth Lind, asked that the money be dedicated to stream improvements on the Mecan River in Waushara County. Harlan was a lifelong fly fisherman who loved the sport and the Mecan. His family is also selling Mecan River property to the DNR to ensure that the resource is preserved with access for all. We can't thank them enough.

We also welcomed two new members of the chapter who joined under TU's new program offering a one-year free membership to essential pandemic workers. The program appears to be very successful.

One bright spot has been the CWTU River Keepers. Bob Jozowski reports that the WAV beat goes on:

The Central Wisconsin TU River Keepers enters its 20th year of existence. Who would have imagined the challenges that we would be facing today. In past years, the dissolved oxygen kits we collected from each monitoring team the previous November would have been refurbished and distributed to each team

at our April board meeting so they would be ready to start the first monitoring session to collect May data. Then the COVID-19 lockdown hit us in March and our usual plans began to unravel.

But the key to success in any endeavor is persistence and maintaining a certain degree of flexibility. While our collected DO kits could be refurbished with fresh chemicals to provide a season's worth of water sampling in the usual time frame, distribution to the team captains needed to be delayed until a disinfecting procedure and social distancing plan could be implemented. In addition, UW—Extension and the DNR advised that monitoring activities should be postponed until further notice.

While the month of April came and went without any of the normal preparatory work, the first few weeks in May allowed us time to disinfect each DO kit and allow pick up or hand delivery of each kit to the team captains. In CWTU River Keepers, 40 percent of our teams consist of either single-person or single-household members, so social distancing guidelines would not restrict the team from functioning as usual. In the other cases, some thoughtful consideration of travel isolation (i.e. separate cars), and division of on-stream parameter measurement can serve the same function.

Standard WAV procedures require each team to make six measurements once per month at their assigned stream location. Those parameters are water temperature, transparency, dissolved oxygen, stream flow, macroinvertebrate (aquatic animals) collection and identification, and habitat assessment. If team members can be assigned one or two of these specific tasks, social distancing guidelines can still be observed.

Officially, the start of the 2020 monitoring season is targeted for June, but many of our 27 teams consisting of 75 volunteers measuring 36 stream sites have already begun their work. After two months of self-quarantine and cold spring weather to boot, we are all raring to get out on the streams to monitor.

Oh yeah, fishing is pretty good, too.

—Stan Cichowski

Chapter News



Coulee Region Chapter

The pandemic led to the cancellation of our last three chapter meetings and presentations. Sadly, several other events we sponsor or volunteer are also cancelled: Cozad's Driftless 1Fly, Coon Valley Trout Fest, Tainter Creek Stream Day, a work day with SEWTU at Esofea Park and the Youth Outdoor Fest. It is disappointing that these outreach events didn't happen, but we will prepare to be back with them all next year. Kristal Welter is already planning for the return of chapter meetings and guest presenters in the fall, or whenever it is deemed safe to gather in large groups again.

While our events didn't happen, our board met monthly over Zoom to take care of organizational business. We developed our committee structures to focus our work and also elected a new chapter president. Fred Spademan is the new Coulee Region leader and we are thrilled to have him at the top of our chapter. Fred has been a board member and constant volunteer and will do well in helping coordinate all we do. Many thanks to Rick Kyte and Cy Post for serving as co-presidents for the past year.

In other board business, we developed plans to find youth leaders for our chapter. We are also looking to continue our work with other TU chapters, such as the Lee Wulff and Gary Borger chapters, to replace fence stiles to allow safe access to streams and maintain the integrity of landowner fences and relationships. We welcome tips on rickety stiles in the Coulee Region so we can place them on our work list. If you see a bad stile, email Dale Jonson at dalewjonson@gmail.com.

We also formalized a process to welcome new CRTU members with

a personal email, phone call, or letter from members of our board. We have learned a lot from several of our board members participating in TU's online community forum and recommend other chapters do the same if you have not used this resource. Get started at tu.community.org.

This season our chapter is supporting more projects than ever before. While Wisconsin DNR's habitat crew in our area is working only on flood-repair projects, TUDARE and county-led projects continue. Three are being carried out by TUDARE's Paul Krahn and three more by Vernon County Land Conservation Department Technician Matt Albright. So far, these projects are budgeted at \$418,900. With our partners, including NRCS, Vernon County, Madison Fishing Expo, Cabelas/Bass Pro Shops, Orvis, Coon Valley Trout Fest, two memorial bequests to CRTU, and Friends of Wisconsin TU and chapters, we've assembled \$394,000 so far.

Our neighboring TU chapters have been great backers of these Driftless projects, and we thank the Blackhawk, Southern Wisconsin and the four Illinois chapters: Elliott Donnelly, Gary Borger, Oak Brook and Lee Wulff. We are still waiting on a couple of requests and grants, and hope they will come through. Our own chapter contributed \$28,300, and we're grateful to everyone who has supported our fundraising. We expect work to begin by press time and hope to complete projects on Warner, Conway, Citron, Esofea, Norwegian Valley and Knapp creeks this season. All projects will have permanent public fishing access.

—Curt Rees

Fox Valley Chapter

The world, as we know it, will change as the Covid-19 pandemic fades. Reflecting on the sport of fishing, I worry that the majority of our active members, like me, are aging. Where are our future leaders? What should be done to broaden our membership? It is easy to look at the barriers and be resigned to the inevitable. Life is more complex than when I began fishing in my youth. I could walk a few blocks to a stream with my only deadlines being lunch, dinner and the work expected of me around the house and yard.

Today fishing is competing with many attractive activities not available in my day: TV, computer, phone, games etc. Schedules are full

of work and family responsibilities. While much is beyond our control, there are practical things we can do. Most membership time is spent on outreach and attracting new members. This will always be important and needs to be continued, but retention of current and new members will be key.

I remember talking with a new member at a chapter meeting last fall. He related his experience coming to a chapter meeting 20 years earlier. The chapter meeting had an interesting speaker, but the members attending hung together in a small group offering no indication that he was welcome to join them. He left that night and did not return. Our chapter has committed to

not let that happen, and we're doing our best to engage new members as we see them at our events.

It is easy to become complacent and stop at actions that have been successful. At FVTU's Cabin Fever Day in January, Tina Murray of Shenanigans Women's Fly-Fishing talked about her years of experiences and approaches to engaging women in fly fishing and helping them to be successful, avid anglers. She has identified a set of experiences and has distilled that insight into actions we can take to encourage new anglers and grow our membership. Her talk highlighted many simple things we can do.

Tina is passionate about improving the experience for new and fu-

ture members and I think her approach makes a lot of sense. She challenges all chapters to improve member experiences. Our future depends on doing better.

Tina Murray's Challenge: Each chapter in this state should review Tina's list and identify three actions to improve. For each action, chapters should quantify the current status of the action, implement a plan to improve the use of that action and quantify the change and impact. The next year sustain those actions and pick three more to improve.

—John Barkmeier



FRANK HORNBERG MEMBERS HELP SCOUTS EARN BADGES

In March, members from the UW-Stevens Point Fly Fishing Club, along with the Frank Hornberg Chapter, taught seven girls from the Wisconsin Rapids Scouts BSA Chapter 9118 how to tie a zebra midge and a woolly bugger. Here, Heidi Oberstadt shares her technique.

Frank Hornberg Chapter

In March, members from the UW—Stevens Point Fly Fishing Club, along with the Frank Hornberg Chapter, taught seven girls from the Wisconsin Rapids Scouts BSA Chapter 9118 how to tie a zebra midge and a woolly bugger. This was a requirement to earn their fly-fishing merit badge. Special thanks to Craig at Fall Line Outfitters in Stevens Point for hosting the event.

When we can get back together safely, we want to work on the Tomorrow River above Lake Meyers

Road. Several downed trees are obstructing the flow of the river. Check our website or Facebook for upcoming details.

Please get out and support our local fly shop, Fall Line Outfitters, in Stevens Point. The economy has had a tough time the last couple months and we need a fly shop in our community. Let Craig know we care.

—Doug Erdman

Green Bay Chapter

With the Covid-19 pandemic disrupting our typical lives, Green Bay Trout Unlimited was no exception. First we cancelled our April Annual/Guest Speaker meeting. Our presenter was scheduled to be Retired DNR Biologist Dave Vetrano. Dave was to speak about the Driftless Area. This is also the meeting where we elect board of director members for open seats, but we'll have to put it off until later. Our meeting season lasts from September through April and our chapter by-laws require six meeting per year. This gives us some

time to prepare for our next meeting season and whether we do it in-person or online. We subsequently found out that the Brown County Conservation Alliance Awards, where we were to be honored as Conservation Group of the Year, was cancelled as well.

We had to cancel our annual June chapter picnic. Currently our work project season looks like it may be affected as well. We partner with the DNR and U.S. Forest Service for at least four habitat improvement efforts through the

10 Actionable items every Trout Unlimited Chapter can do to increase diversity and membership, improve retention and ensure sustainability for conservation.

1. Wear Name Tags at Meeting / Gatherings
2. Look Newcomers in the Eye - See them.
3. Be Welcoming - Offer a personal greeting.
4. Invite them to join your group - Make personal connection, make a space for them.
5. Treat them as competent individuals. - Respect them before knowing them.
6. Learn something about why they came - share personally and authentically.
7. Ask, don't tell - Assume they know until they share they don't.
8. Offer them opportunities to get involved (conservation / fishing)
9. Mentor newcomers - connect after meetings bring them into the community.
10. Catch them doing something right as they become a part of the Organization.

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Chapter News

summer. Our work project chair Paul Kruse said the DNR is using “Badger Bounce Back Guidelines.” The Antigo DNR has informed us they have not been allowed to do field work yet and are looking forward to working with us next year.

Our Veterans’ Service Program has been put on hold. Tight Lines Fly Shop, where we hold our meetings, currently has a three-person maximum admittance. Furthermore, we want to make sure our veterans are safe.

Myself and GBTU education chair Dave Ostanek have discussed the likelihood of canceling this summer’s youth events, including our popular Annual Kids’ Fishing Day.

This pandemic has many of us wondering how our Annual February Conservation Banquet may be affected. It is our premier fundraiser and our chapter depends on revenue raised to effectively carry out our mission. Several months back we created an Alternative Fundraising Committee. Over the next few months, we will reconvene to address this situation.

For more GBTU Chapter information, please visit our website at greenbaytu.org or check our social media on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Stay safe, everyone.
—Adrian Meseberg



Allison Meyer

HARRY AND LAURA NOHR CHAPTER RELEASES TIC FINGERLINGS

Kurt Meyer releases the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter’s Trout In the Classroom brown trout fingerlings from the Fennimore Middle School into Borah Creek, just north of Lancaster. The event was filmed live for the Fennimore Middle School Facebook page.

Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

Due to the pandemic, the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter held our board elections via email. All other meetings have been postponed or cancelled.

In early May the Fennimore Trout In the Classroom brown trout fingerlings were released into Borah Creek just north of Lancaster. The event was filmed live for the Fennimore Middle School Facebook page.

Regarding stream work, our contractor started moving equipment to the Dieter site in early May, with plans to move to the Stanek site after finishing work there.

The Dieter project is now complete. There was some bank shaping and rip-rapping to be done, as well as installing the remaining in-stream structures. The final shaping, seeding and mulching is completed, as well.

We did a tremendous amount of brushing and invasive tree removal on this property, as well as the adjoining state land, the Snowbottom Natural Area.

This helped improve access for fishing on both properties. The stream length was seeded with grasses, per Natural Resources Conservation Service specs. The

landowner and the Department of Natural Resources State Natural Areas manager are working together to maintain both sites in grasses and forbs.

The Stanek property project is about 65 percent complete. Most of the shaping and riprapping has been done and several weirs have been installed.

The remaining instream structures, shaping, seeding and mulching will be completed as soon as weather allows. We put a temporary cover crop on the disturbed ground, which is coming along nicely.

This project also incorporated three wetland scrapes, which already have frogs, geese and ducks utilizing them.

The Zadrazil property project, our largest ever, is slated to be done over the course of two years. Located immediately downstream of the Stanek site just off County Highway Q, it includes the final 700 feet of Six Mile Branch before it flows into the Blue River and approximately 7,500 feet (1.4 miles) of the Blue River. We hope to start after the Stanek property is done. There is a tremendous amount of soil that needs to be removed from this site.

—Brian Larson

Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

Like with other chapters around the country, Kiap-TU-Wish activities have been greatly curtailed by COVID-19. Luckily for us, late last year our chapter overhauled our communication tools. Under the guidance of member Chad Borenz, we upgraded our website at www.kiaptuwish.org. We can now post documents, such as reports on our monitoring efforts and an archive of our award-winning newsletter (RIPRAP) going back to 1987. We also changed our official chapter email address to info@kiaptuwish.org.

In a move that has proven fortuitous, the chapter also subscribed to Zoom, which was used to hold our last scheduled chapter meeting in May with a presentation by Nate Anderson and Kasey Yalally from the DNR on habitat projects and easement acquisitions. We also have conducted two board meetings, contradicting that adage that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks.

We had two members step down from the board this spring, Maria Manion and Perry Palin. We thank both for their service to the chapter. Luckily we were able to fill these seats with Dustin Wing and Scot Stewart. Welcome to both.

Over the past six years, under the guidance of Maria Manion, our newsletter RIPRAP has developed into a quality publication — artful, informative and fun to read. Along with her publishing team, Maria has provided our membership with a much-anticipated monthly splash of good news. Maria is stepping down as editor, and chapter member Ed Constantini will take over the reins of RIPRAP. He hopes to carry on with the excellence Maria has established.

Ed reported that the 2020-2021 editorial season for the Kiap-TU-Wish newsletter RIPRAP will continue to span the months of September through May and will include five editions starting in September, and continuing in November, January, March and May.

This schedule change will allow contributors an extended window for article submissions prior to each edition and will help defray expenses associated with the printing of the newsletter.

RIPRAP provides Kiap-TU-

Wish members with valuable information on chapter and local events, updates from chapter members charged with carrying out stream-related activities, plus informative articles and human-interest stories.

During the 2020-2021 season we hope to engage additional contributors, expand on the expertise of chapter members, and offer more non-proprietary board information. Questions or proposed articles and other subject matter can be forwarded to Ed at Econ4664@gmail.com.

Our chapter’s monitoring efforts have continued, even during the pandemic.

The Willow River is one of several local rivers and streams that we monitor for water temperature and other variables. In April of 2016, temperature loggers were installed at three locations. One is located at the USGS water flow monitoring site roughly ¼ mile downstream from Little Falls Dam. The other two are located roughly ¼ mile upstream from the Trout Brook Road bridge. One is in the main branch and one is in the Race.

The 2018/2019 data retrieved from the logger in the Race showed a minimum water temperature, in January 2018, of 32.04 degrees F, which is about as close to freezing as you can get. The maximum water temperature, in July 2019, was 76 degrees.

From what we’ve learned, this large temperature variance doesn’t bode well for trout populations. The water is too cold in the winter and too warm in the summer. An important thing to note is that this data was collected after the Little Falls Dam was removed.

In 2014 it was determined that the Little Falls Dam needed to be replaced. By the fall of 2015, the drawdown of Little Falls Lake was complete, and the dam was removed. This allowed the river to flow freely until early 2020 when a new dam was constructed, and Little Falls Lake began to fill in. As of today, the lake is nearly 100 percent full.

As our monitoring continues, it will be interesting to see if the dam, and the impoundment behind it, will affect the water temperatures



NEW KIAP BOARD MEMBERS GETTING THEIR FEET WET

New Kiap TU Wish Board members Dustin Wing (left) and Scot Stewart collect temperature data on the Trimble River at the chapter’s County Highway W project site.

Chapter News



going forward.

The Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring team has a busy schedule during the April-October 2020 period. Chapter members have deployed 30 temperature loggers in five local rivers, to evaluate the impacts of stormwater runoff, hydropower facilities and climate change, and to assess the ability of our stream restoration projects to improve temperature regimes.

Of the 30 loggers, 21 are deployed year-round. Numerous water samples are being collected and analyzed on several streams, to better understand watershed impacts on water quality, as well as the ability of restored river reaches to improve water quality.

To complement stream temperature and water chemistry data, two weather stations are being operated, providing data on air temperature, relative humidity, dew point and precipitation. Kiap-TU-Wish also continues to provide financial and volunteer monitoring support for USGS operation and maintenance of the Kinnickinnic River flow gaging station. See the data at https://waterdata.usgs.gov/wi/nwis/uv?site_no=05342000

National Trout Unlimited is placing a high priority on Angler Science and the benefits it provides for angler education and coldwater resource management: "Anglers gathering scientific information about the fish and the places they love." Stream water quality monitoring is one of the key Angler Science initiatives.

Trout Unlimited's national science team is currently partnering with MobileH2O, LLC to develop and implement a customized mobile application (WiseH2O mApp) that can be used by anglers to monitor water quality and habitat conditions in Driftless Area trout streams.

In 2019, Kiap-TU-Wish anglers successfully completed a pilot project using the WiseH2O mApp (mApp). The 2019 mApp project report is available on the MobileH2O website along with an interactive map that enables easy viewing of the 2019 mApp observations at: <https://www.mobileh2o.com/anglerscience>. A short video about the mApp can be found at: <https://www.mobileh2o.com/mh2oapp>.

WiseH2O mApp monitoring in 2020 has been delayed by a combination of COVID-19 and difficulties encountered with development of the iPhone version of the mApp. Nonetheless, we are hoping that Kiap-TU-Wish anglers will still have an opportunity to monitor Pierce County trout streams and rivers for

a portion of 2020. In addition, a broader Driftless Area roll-out of the mApp is anticipated this summer. Stay tuned for more details.

Trout in the Classroom ended abruptly this year with the schools closing due the COVID-19 outbreak. Bugs in the Classroom, usually done at the end of April, had to be cancelled as well, including the Rocky Branch Elementary Eco Day. At least all the classes got to experience the egg hatching, fry feeding and fish tank monitoring for temperature and ammonia levels.

In six classes, the teachers released their fry in the Willow River, while recording the event to share with their students digitally. Two classes trained the custodians to look after the fry in their absence in hopes that they can release the fish when they return in the fall. This is something that has not been attempted before and we are curious to see how big the fry get by September.

Prior to the full effects of COVID-19 we held 17 brushing days over the course of the off season starting back in November, wrapping up with a final workday on March 27 to take advantage of some late season snow. With close to 100 bluebird nesting boxes in place at various restoration sites, a call was put out at the end of March seeking volunteers to close up the nest boxes as they were out and about hitting their favorite waters for some early season fishing.

Things have been slow since then with our DNR partners on work-from-home orders since the outbreak of the Corona virus. We remain hopeful that things will return to normal so that restoration work may be resumed on Plum and Gilbert creeks, providing some seeding and mulching opportunities for volunteers.

The status of the ever-popular late July/early August stream surveys, when chapter volunteers assist the DNR with their stream shocking, also remains up in the air due to COVID 19. Chapter Habitat Coordinator Randy Arnold encourages members to make the best of the situation and conduct their own stream surveys using hook and line.

As of this writing, Kent Johnson and Gary Horvath are putting the final touches on a TU National Embrace-A-Stream Grant for a monitoring project that will assess the ecological benefits of Kinnickinnic River dam removal and river restoration.

—Gary Horvath



Myk Hranicka

LAKESHORE'S DAVE LECHELT PASSES AWAY

From left to right, Dave Lechelt, Nathaniel Rateliff, Herb Twiss, Jaidyn Hranicka on an Onion River workday last year. Dave passed away in March. A memorial bench was made in Dave's honor and will be placed on a local stream.

Lakeshore Chapter

There hasn't been much going on in our neck of the woods. Without being able to meet, it's been hard to stay busy with our 2020 plans. Our streams and rivers were hit very hard this spring, and due to that lots of repairs are needed. Luckily, some of our members have been going out on their own to brush areas that need attention. Thank you to Herb Twiss and Larry Doebert for organizing those workdays.

We were looking to start workdays again in June. With some restrictions being made, we think we can do this very safely. On a sad note, we lost a very dear friend and member Dave Lechelt back in March. Dave was a huge asset to our

chapter. He was always the first one to engage new members and welcome them. He would always have a great story and was always there to lend a hand. A memorial bench was made in Dave's honor and will be placed on one of our local streams. R.I.P. Dave. You will be missed.

Hopefully things will begin picking up soon. With the first half of the year being very hard on everyone, I hope things will get back on track sooner than later and we can have a better second half. I hope it's not just wishful thinking.

Lakeshore wishes everyone to be healthy and happy through these trying times.

—Myk Hranicka

Marinette County Chapter

The Marinette County Chapter will hold our annual fundraising banquet Monday, August 3 at Embers 1871 in Peshtigo. Anyone interested in making a donation, helping or attending the banquet should contact Dale Lange at 715-582-1135. Doors will open at 5 p.m., with

the chicken and tips dinner being served at 7 p.m. Tickets are just \$35. There will be a live auction, silent auction and raffles. Money raised at the banquet will be used to cover the cost of this summer's work projects in northeastern Wisconsin.

—Dale Lange

Northwoods Chapter

On April 23 the science teachers from James Williams Middle School in Rhinelander and Terry Cummings released this year's hatch from Trout in the Classroom into Gudegast Creek northeast of Rhinelander. Gudegast Creek is primarily a Class 2 stream with some Class 1 water, and it is on record for receiving domestic strain brook trout. Jeff Mosher and Zach Woiak from the DNR facilitated procurement of our stocking license, getting eggs from the St. Croix Falls hatchery, and identifying the release loca-

tion. The teachers and students did an excellent job, and 36 healthy brookies were released. Unfortunately the students could not participate in the release.

Our chapter joined the Wolf River Chapter in opposing the Badger Minerals proposed sulfide mine in the Town of Schoepke in Oneida County. Our opposition was presented via a resolution from the chapter to the Oneida County Board.

—Terry Cummings

Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

I hope everyone is healthy and safe. The past few months have been rough for all of us. I sadly share the bad news that former SEWTU President Ed Christie recently passed away. Ed was president of the chapter in the late 1970's and early 1980's. As president he was responsible for guiding our early work at Rosenow Creek and Para-

dise Springs. Ed engaged our chapter with national figures, and he was active in teaching youth to cast and fish. My thoughts and prayers go out to the Christie family in their time of loss.

We have been unable to hold chapter meetings and now find ourselves transitioning into our summer months where we normally do not



LAKESHORE'S HERB TWISS WORKS ON LA BUDDE CREEK IN FEBRUARY



Chapter News

hold meetings. In light of the fact that we cannot hold meetings, our Spring Raffle drawing will not happen until we can meet in person. As soon as we can hold a meeting we will. Safety and occupancy limits on meeting locations are what will dictate when we can meet. The board and officers have high hopes that we can do it this fall, and perhaps sooner, if possible.

The most recent information available out of the Zablocki Medical Center is that entrance to the facility is still restricted for safety of the patients, and staff. We stand ready to step up and help when the Veterans Administration gives us the word.

The committee chairs, board members and officers have been in contact with our partners in the community. The July casting clinic is currently on hold. We are looking to August with hopes that Milwaukee County will begin permitting events by then. Our workdays are currently on hold, and we are com-

municating with our partners at the DNR to determine when those events can continue. The most recent word from the DNR is that they are not permitting volunteer workdays at this time, and that DNR employees are restricted in the size of groups they can meet in for discussions. Some good news is that this pandemic will not have a negative effect on our sponsorships of Bluff Creek and Tichigan Creek, as the DNR is extending our sponsorship contracts by one year to offset these unfortunate times.

The board and officers are not sitting idle, as we are looking at where we can target chapter resources to prevent 2020 from being a lost year for conservation. We will get through this, things will return to normal and our love of fishing will continue. Fishing is a great activity while socially distancing, please get out and enjoy any number of the 13,000 miles of trout streams Wisconsin has to offer.

—John Rennpford

Wild Rivers Chapter

As you can imagine, the Wild Rivers Chapter has been noticeably quiet since this virus raised its ugly head. We are just starting to think about trying either a virtual meeting, or maybe just the board in a park or along a river that we can keep our distance from each other. I also keep thinking about our postponed Fishing Expo and hoping that it could possibly be held this fall. But more than likely like we may just have to cancel it.

I received a call from long time Wild Rivers Chapter member Phil Wallace, who was a board member for a few years back around 2010 or so. Phil lives just outside of Spooner and used to attend most of our meetings. If I remember correctly, he rarely missed a meeting except maybe in the winter when he and his wife travelled to Arizona. Phil is kind of unable to fish much anymore, so he called to let me know that he would like to donate his fishing gear to Wild Rivers. Dick Berge traveled down to Spooner recently to pick up Phil's donation.

Many years ago, Dick and I drove down to fish with Phil on the Clam River, Phil's favorite home river. Phil and I talked about that fishing trip and he apologized about sending Dick and I on one section of the Clam while Phil went to another section by himself. As it turned out, Dick and I caught fish, but Phil, fishing by himself, caught many nice fish. We had a good laugh.

Wisconsin Clear Waters

We are sad to announce the passing of Al Noll of Menomonie. A long-time member and contributor to the Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter, he passed from complications of Alzheimer's Disease on May 12. Al served as a board member and president and was a reliable participant in stream projects and other activities until his disease prevented it. He was 68.

He is survived by his wife, Paula, four daughters (Amy, Megan, Jodi, and Rachel) and their families. We send them our deepest sympathy for their loss.

In memory of Al Noll, Wisconsin Clear Waters has established the Al Noll Gilbert Creek Memorial Fund.

The fund's main objective is to continue with restoration projects on Gilbert Creek and to encourage fellow fishermen to respect and maintain Gilbert Creek's healthy environment for current and future anglers.

Our next task is to evaluate what the future holds for the chapter, under this pandemic environment. We were fortunate that past Chapter President Bob Swanson established a rainy day fund. These dollars were set aside for a "what-if" situation, and the ensuing chapter presidents maintain the same practice. Well, that rainy day has become a monsoon, and because of the foresight of the previous chapter presidents,



TOM SATHER LAUNCHES VIDEO SERIES

Wisconsin Clear Waters board member and secretary Tom Sather launched a video interview series called "Two Tips, A Tie, & A Tune." You can find Tom's interviews on the Clear Waters Facebook page or the chapter website at www.wcwtu.com.

the Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter will weather this economic storm.

As a past board member and the current president, I have jokingly stated that "I am going to drag the board into the 20th Century." Unfortunately, we are in the 21st Century. However, the new elephant in the room, "The Pandemic," has forced us to create and redefine how Wisconsin Clear Waters will operate currently and in the future.

When the pandemic hit, we adopted the guidelines set forth by local health agencies. The next step was to keep in touch with our members without direct contact, and here is where technology has become a vital partner during this pandemic.

Wisconsin Clear Waters added Zoom Pro with the optional Webinar Plugin. Our first Zoom launch, we created a Zoom Board Meeting. The next step is organizing the October chapter meeting utilizing Zoom and the webinar feature. We are scheduling guest speakers, which gives us a broad range of presenters, because we no longer have travel limitations. The theme for these presentations will coincide with Trout Unlimited guidelines of maintaining cold, clean water, and a bit of fishing. If you miss the meeting, we will record the session and

add a link to our website.

But how do we continue to engage our members electronically? With the help of Zoom and the webinar feature, we are hosting a master fly-tying class beginning in January, and we are seeking instructors. We have the advantage of a wide range of instructors because travel or the weather is not a factor, and we plan to have a new instructor each week for six weeks. We will record the class, and you will have an opportunity to view the presentations on our website.

We created winter activities, but we still have four to five months before the fall and winter season are here. Never fear, because board member and secretary Tom Sather launched a video interview series called "Two Tips, A Tie, & A Tune." You can find Tom's interviews on the Clear Waters Facebook page or our website at www.wcwtu.com.

We are all experiencing a difficult period of uncertainty and anxiety about what is best for you and your family. Still, we will all get through this by being cautiously optimistic.

—Jim Erickson



WISCONSIN CLEAR WATERS MOURNS LOSS OF AL NOLL

A long-time member and contributor to the Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter, Al Noll passed from complications of Alzheimer's disease on May 12.

Chapter News



Wisconsin River Valley Chapter

I hope everyone is doing okay. The beautiful greens of summer are finally here, along with birdsong and wildflowers. We hope you are getting out to enjoy Mother Nature's version of "live streaming."

Congratulations go to Myk Hranicka, whose name was randomly drawn from those who submitted what they were working on as projects during the Safer-at-Home period. He created a beautiful pathway to his greenhouse, and he won a fly box for his entry. Thanks to all who

submitted pictures of their projects. The current pandemic precautions have forced the cancellation of all events planned for this summer. We will start planning presentations for our chapter as safety permits. Keep checking our website and Facebook page as we all wait this thing out. Stay safe, but get out and enjoy some summertime. Those white flakes will be flying before we know it.

—Linda Lehman

Wolf River Chapter

According to Tim Waters, the 2020 spring fishing was crazy good. His trout log shows that he caught 95 trout in the Wolf River, with 80 percent browns, 20 percent brook trout and no rainbows. Gray drakes turned the trouts' attention starting on May 23. Tim uses Cougar Tease and Zh2o streamers, bead-headed Woolly Nymphs and Cap's Hairwing dry flies. He and Bill Livingston credit the great fishing on the Wolf River, the largest freestone river in the Midwest, with no brood-stocked trout, to the slot size adopted about four years ago and, of course, Mother Nature.

Work continues on restoring

brook trout habitat on Nine Mile Creek. First, blown-down trees from the July 2019 storms had to be cleared from the "roads" to get back in there, as it's a very remote location. Social distancing rules were adhered to for the very small group of chapter members, even during photo opportunities. More organized beaver dam removal work days on the Nine Mile Creek are upcoming in July and August. Check out our Facebook page for more information or contact Andy Killoren at akilloren@centurytel.net to sign up.

The Metallic Sulfide Mining Exploration Project Site, referred to as the Schoepke Site, has been very ac-



WOLF RIVER MEMBERS CLEARING TRAIL TO NINE MILE CREEK
Bill Livingston Brian Biermier and John Rose maintain social distancing while clearing blown-down trees off a trail to Nine Mile Creek

tive, first with clear-cutting all the trees in May and then with the actual drilling beginning on June 1. Some folks from the White Lake area have been up there to see what has been happening. The trees with prayer ribbons were all cut down. The activity and protests have been followed by local news channels. I also heard about some successful brook trout fishing on Stockley

Creek. Most of Schoepke Site land is enrolled in the Managed Forest Law program, which increases hunting and fishing opportunities in exchange for reduced property taxes for property owners. Please keep a trout log with dates, locations, and fish caught or not. Documentation is valuable.

—Laurie Zen Netzow

His Bethke influence introduced me to my first pink squirrel. I immediately improved my fly-fishing skills and had a core set of tips that I could put to use and practice on my own.

Angling community asset

The Driftless Angler has a reputation of benevolence for giving back to the trout fishing community. They are key contributors for Coulee Region Chapter events, the Cozad Driftless One-Fly Tournament and many other local activities. Many other trout organizations across the Midwest have benefited from their presentations and donations to banquets and stream days.

Pandemic impacts

As with other small businesses, the pandemic has drastically affected their daily operations and business model. They followed state and federal guidelines and immediately stopped all guided trips. They shifted to drive-up and mail shopping, and then quickly downscaled to just mail orders.

In the first weeks of the shelter-in-place order, Mat continued to post daily fishing reports on the shop's web page. Mat noticed that the pandemic resulted in many people suddenly having lots of free time to fish Driftless Area streams. While fishing is an appropriate way to exercise and avoid crowds of people during the shelter order, traveling hours from home to fish seemed to counter to the message of stopping the spread of the virus.

So contrary to a business focused solely on profit, Mat and Geri suspended the daily fishing report and wrote a very poignant article asking people to protect our streams and our local community by staying home, or at the very least stay local. This of course led to some pushback on social media, but they have stayed the course to maintain their

focus on protecting the Driftless Area community at this time.

As Wisconsin starts to reopen, the Driftless Angler has communicated with other fly shops to share best practices in serving their clientele in this new environment. Guides and clients will now have a different experience to keep all parties safe. Clients will need to arrive at the stream in their own vehicle and bring their own food and drink. Until more is known about how the corona virus spreads, it may mean that anti-bacterial wipes are needed when rods are exchanged.

The Driftless Angler, as of June 8, is now open again, but your fly shop experience will change to a "new normal" for now. Staff will assist and pick flies for you. There are limits on the number of anglers in the store at one time.

Although not a legal requirement, do your part and wear a mask to protect the staff. The same buff or bandana that keeps gnats out of your nose on the stream can also be used to reduce any possible germs you might expel when in the fly shop or other place of business. Keep a respective distance of other anglers in the shop or on the stream.

We will survive

Together, just like the last 14 years, we can support each other and care for our little gem we call the Driftless and the people we cherish at the Driftless Angler. Like other small businesses, especially many in the Viroqua area dependent on tourism, coming back after a nearly three-month standstill is a challenge. Strong established ties to the community and its anglers has equipped them to weather this economic storm. By protecting the community and fishery resource, the Driftless Angler has demonstrated a people-before-profit attitude. We applaud their efforts as we all try to find our way to a "new normal" in these strange and unfamiliar times.

Remember TU as Part of Your Legacy

Have you considered making Trout Unlimited part of your legacy? For loyal TU members, making a bequest to TU in your will or trust is a wonderful way to continue supporting clean water and healthy trout populations. Help assure that TU is able to continue its good work now and into the future.

Should you decide that TU is worthy of a legacy bequest, be sure to specify in your will or trust if the bequest is intended to benefit National TU, the State Council or your local chapter.

Thank you for considering Trout Unlimited in your estate planning.



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Clean angling Q and A

On a typical day of fishing in southwest Wisconsin, I fish three or four streams, sometimes more. Do I really need to disinfect my gear after fishing each one?

The simple answer is yes. It is Wisconsin state law that you inspect and remove all mud, plant material, and water from your equipment prior to leaving a waterbody.

We should continue the tradition of good sportsmanship that anglers are known for by protecting fisheries and the habitats that we frequent. New Zealand mudsnails have now been found in seven streams in Wisconsin and are notorious for being transported on the waders and boots of anglers from one stream to another.

Other invasives that detract from the fishing experience, such as wild parsnip, spread between popular fishing spots via seeds on wading boots.

How can I possibly remove all of the dirt from my waders and boots when hopping from stream to stream?

One simple way anglers can limit the spread of invasive species

between streams is to carry a stiff synthetic scrub brush in your vehicle or pack. Before moving to another stream, take a minute to brush off your boots and waders, including the grooves, laces and tongue.

These actions cannot guarantee that you won't transmit invasives to a new stream, but minimizing risk is key. If you wish to more thoroughly clean your gear, use a pump sprayer filled with clean tap water to rinse your waders and boots AFTER you've given them a good scrubbing with a brush.

I have a trip planned out west this summer. Many of the rivers I plan to fish are infested with AIS. What should I do to prevent spreading them further?

While fishing out of state, if possible, plan to visit uninfested rivers first. Ask guides or shops which rivers are infested with invasive species; they will know.

After fishing an infested river, there is a high risk that you will spread invasive species on your gear! High-risk anglers should follow one of the three decontamina-

tion recommendations on the right side of the "Go with the Flow" chart: soak gear in a mild bleach solution for ten minutes, freeze gear, or allow gear to dry completely for a minimum of five days after brushing off mud and debris.

Before leaving and upon returning to Wisconsin, it is imperative that you follow those same steps. Or, do as many others do: keep a pair of waders and boots for strictly fishing in Wisconsin and another pair for out-of-state fishing, which is the safest bet, but shouldn't preclude cleaning your gear.

I refuse to give up my felt-soled wading boots. Felt is not the only culprit, and if I fall in a river, my fishing days are done. What steps can I take to minimize the risk of my spreading AIS on my felt-soled boots?

The most important thing to remember is that felt takes a long time to dry and is difficult to clean, and often, disinfection solution does not fully penetrate the felt to kill invasives. This is why rubber is the better option when it comes to preventing the spread of invasives.

However, if you must use felt, you should use a pressure sprayer (like small herbicide applicators) and a stiff-bristled scrub brush to clean the felt the best you can when moving between Wisconsin streams. Again, if traveling between states, having two pairs of boots is recommended: one for use within Wisconsin, and another pair for use elsewhere.

What should I do if I see something suspicious in Wisconsin waters that I think might be invasive?

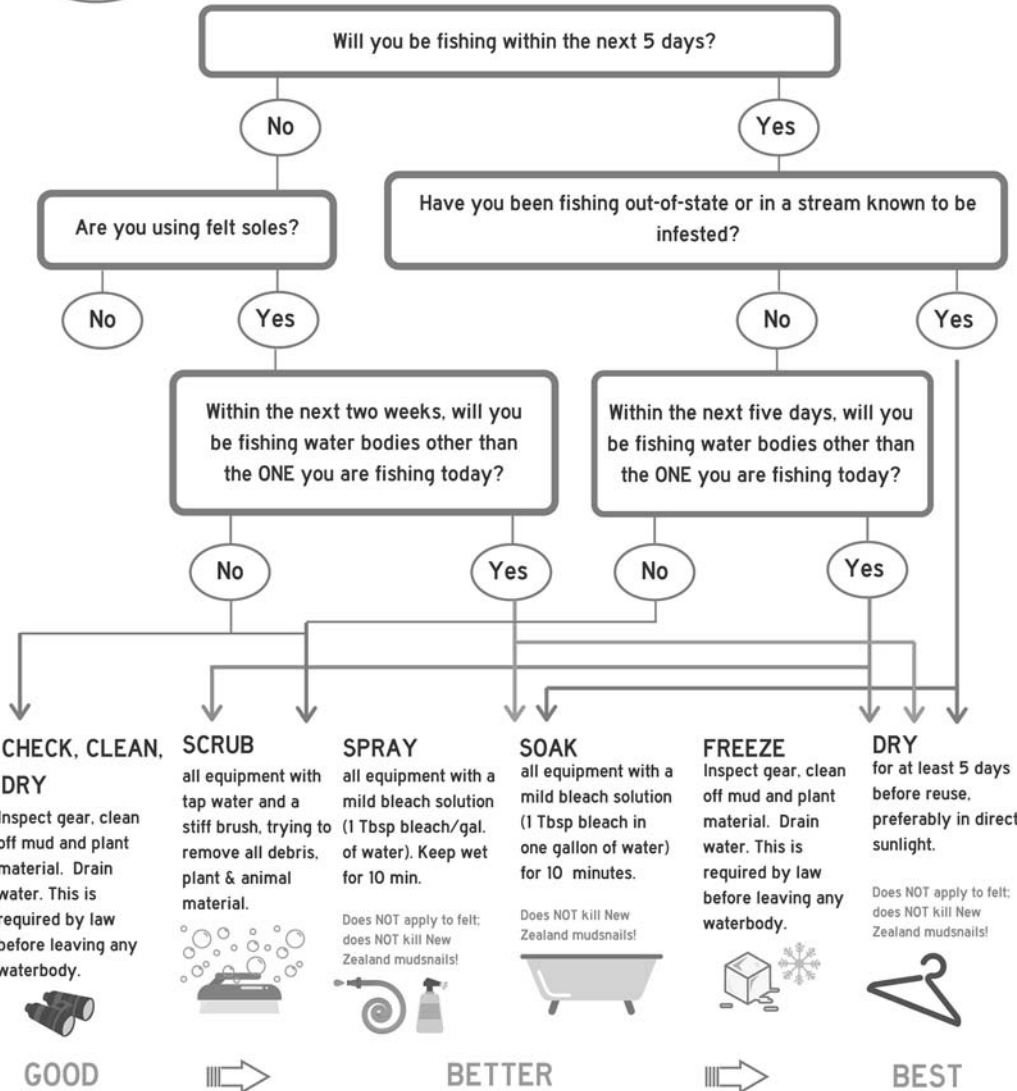
The best thing you can do is take a picture of the suspicious plant, animal, or algae and email it to River Alliance of Wisconsin (ais@wisconsinrivers.org) or your local DNR fisheries biologist for identification. DNR biologist and invasive species reporting information can be found at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/Invasives/report.html>

For more information contact the River Alliance of Wisconsin at 608-257-2424 or visit www.wisconsinrivers.org.



A Clean Angler's "Go with the Flow" Chart

Do you know when you are at risk of transporting invasive species between waterbodies? You pose the greatest threat when you use felt soles or travel from states with known infestations. Use the flow chart below after you leave a waterbody to decide what measures you should take to prevent the spread of invasive species.



For more information contact the River Alliance of Wisconsin at (608) 257-2424 or visit www.wisconsinrivers.org.



Donate to Wisconsin TU via Thrivent Lutheran Financial

If you are a TU member and have investments with Thrivent Lutheran Financial, you may have the ability to make charitable donations to groups of your choosing through Thrivent Financial's Thrivent Choice program.

The Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited is now a listed entity within the Thrivent

Choice program.

If you are a Thrivent member and have the ability to make Thrivent Choice donations, we would be honored if you'd consider including the Wisconsin Council of TU within your charitable planning, and making a donation to our cause.

Council adopts mining resolution

Resolution in Opposition to Metallic Sulfide Mining in and around the Wolf River Area

WHEREAS, the mission of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited (WITU) is to conserve, protect and restore the coldwater resources of our state, and to support both our national organization and our local chapters in their pursuit of that mission; and,
WHEREAS, there are known metallic sulfide mineral deposits in and around the Wolf River area, and a foreign owned company has recently gained a license to drill exploration holes in the headwaters of the Wolf River, with the intent to locate an open pit metallic sulfide mine at that location. The Wolf River being one of the largest watersheds in northern Wisconsin, which passes through Forest, Oneida, Langlade, Menominee, Shawano, Outagamie, Waupaca, and Winnebago counties before emptying into Lake Winnebago, and ultimately Lake Michigan and;
WHEREAS, the Wolf River provides a unique habitat for species of special concern such as trout and other freshwater fish, which would be negatively impacted by discharges into the water and;
WHEREAS, the Wolf River and its surrounding areas support a robust outdoor recreation economy and a thriving tourism industry and;
WHEREAS, the potential impacts of the mine include long-term leaching of acid-producing wastes into the groundwater and the river which would harm sport-fishing and essential sources of drinking water and;
WHEREAS, the hazardous wastes generated by the mine would degrade water quality and present risks to human health and the environment in Wisconsin, and knowing the fact that sulfide mines are the largest source of taxpayer liability under the EPA's Superfund cleanup program and;
NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the State Council of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited strongly opposes metallic sulfide mining and urges the Wisconsin DNR, the Wisconsin State Legislature and Governor to deny a mining permit for any metallic sulfide mine in the Wolf River Watershed.

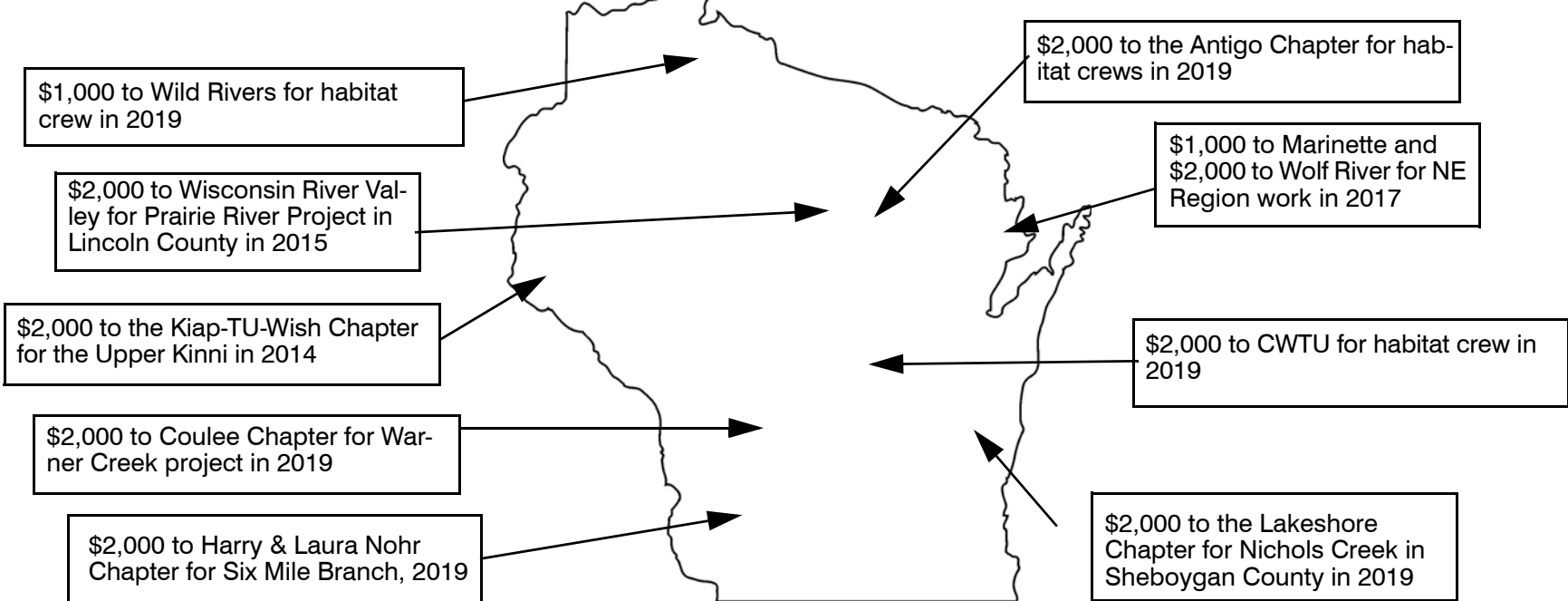
Dated this 12th day of May, 2020
Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, Inc.
By: Mike Kuhr, its Council Chair

Please support Friends of Wisconsin TU in 2020

2020 has been another very active year for the Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited habitat improvement program. This year eight different chapters have received grants from the program: Antigo, Blackhawk, Coulee Region, Fox Valley, Green Bay, Harry and Laura Nohr, Southern Wisconsin and Lakeshore.

Each of the requesting chapters received \$2,000 grants. Much good habitat work will take place as a result of this year’s grants. Thank you to all of our donors who make the grants possible.

Providing habitat improvement grants since 1991.



Here are our Friends of Wisconsin TU

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Yes, I want to join the “Friends” of Wisconsin TU.
Enclosed is my check, payable to Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.

MAIL TO:
Kim McCarthy
736 Meadowbrook Court
Green Bay WI 54313

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Phone #

Why trout need wetlands

By Tracy Hames and Erin O'Brien,
Wisconsin Wetlands Association

A few years ago, on a warm and sunny July day, I paid a visit to Bull Gus Creek, a class 1 trout water in the Penokee Hills of Iron County. During my hike that day, I chanced upon an area where the creek snaked through a fairly large sedge meadow wetland complex. I approached its sinuous channel thinking I could catch a nice photo of the wetlands by standing in the creek. One step into the channel, however, brought me up to my neck in cold, cold water. Luckily, I'm an old duck hunter, skilled at keeping my gun out of the water. So the camera stayed dry.

Now this experience didn't make me mad. It got me excited.

The trout habitat at this location on Bull Gus creek is about as good as it can be. The channel is narrow and deep, helping maintain spawning gravels. Grasses and sedges stabilize undercut banks. The water is cold, with groundwater levels at or near the surface. And it winds through a broad, well-connected floodplain with the bonus of abundant wetlands from terrace to terrace.

It's a striking contrast to many streams I've seen across Wisconsin where the water may still run cold but the physical condition of the channel is highly degraded. Eroded banks, incised channels disconnected from adjacent floodplains, and once narrow streams that now run shallow and wide, are but a few examples. Elsewhere, water temperature and supply may be compromised.

All of these degraded conditions affect trout habitat, and all are tied to changes to watershed hydrology — in other words, how and when water moves through a watershed. Restoring wetlands in the upper reaches of our watersheds and reconnecting streams to their floodplains offers an effective, but underutilized, approach to restoring the health of Wisconsin's coldwater fisheries.

So let's start by reviewing two very basic needs of trout and how healthy upper watershed wetlands and healthy floodplains help meet these needs.

Trout need cold water

We all know that we can't have trout if we don't have cold water. Because Wisconsin summers are so warm, trout-bearing, coldwater streams rely on upwelling groundwater. That groundwater supply also helps buffer the effects of warmed surface runoff entering streams. Most groundwater originates from sources above the ground, especially snowmelt and spring rains.

Upper watershed wetlands capture this melting snow and spring rainwater, slow it down and allow it to infiltrate into the ground. The ground, acting like a refrigerator, keeps the precipitation cold as it makes its underground journey toward the stream. Though the snowmelt may have entered the ground in March, it will likely not reach the stream until the heat of the summer when the trout need this cold baseflow more than ever. Loss of wetland storage, whether through drainage or development, disrupts this infiltration and subsequent summer baseflow.

Trout need healthy channel form and habitat structure

In many Wisconsin trout waters, healthy habitat conditions are characterized by deep and narrow channels underlain with gravels, undercut banks stabilized by fibrous-rooted grasses and sedges, and woody debris and other features supporting aquatic invertebrates and adding to structural diversity. Complex watershed-scale interactions between water, geology, geomorphology and vegetation influence channel form and structure.

Wetlands affect channel form in two important ways, both related to the energy of flows.

When upper watershed wetlands capture and slow the flow of runoff, the energy of the runoff is reduced. But when upper watershed wetland storage is removed, water moves swiftly across the land, in the form of unnaturally large, short duration (flashy) runoff events. These high-energy, flashy events cause large amounts of erosion.

To accommodate these flashy flows, the channel must change its shape. Channels generally change



Tracy Hames

NECK DEEP AND NARROW: PERFECT TROUT HABITAT

Bull Gus Creek minutes after I stepped into the channel and sunk up to my neck. This narrow channel and sedge meadow floodplain help this creek maintain its Class 1 trout status.

their shape in two ways. One way is by digging themselves deeper into the ground. This is called incision, and is very common in trout streams across Wisconsin. Another way is by making themselves wider and shallower. This condition is more common in trout streams in the Central Sands region. As channels change their shape to accommodate flashy runoff events, they become increasingly disconnected from their floodplains.

When a stream becomes disconnected with its floodplain, the energy associated with the runoff stays in the channel. This increases bank erosion and downstream sedimentation, causing further disconnection of the channel from its floodplain. With each runoff event, conditions get worse, tributary channels become gullies, floodplain disconnection increases, spawning gravels become buried in sediment, summer baseflow is reduced, bank habitat is lost, and the stability and complexity of the channel suffers.

Back to Bull Gus Creek

Remember the high-quality site where I went in up to my neck? Walk up from that site and you'll find wetlands covering nearly 50 percent of the upper watershed, effectively capturing runoff and reducing the energy of the 200-250 inches of snow that falls there each winter. The large sedge meadow floodplain where I took a dip further reduces the energy of the water flowing from above. The combined energy reduction helps keep the channel stable, deep and narrow, which is great habitat for trout. It's an amazing place, and one of my favorite landscapes in Wisconsin.

Connecting hydrologic restoration to habitat recovery and resilience

I've spent much of my career protecting, restoring and managing large acreages of habitat in coldwater salmon- and trout-bearing watersheds. Over the decades I've learned much by watching, living with and managing the properties I've restored. Many of you also have long-term knowledge of the waterways you help protect, restore, manage and fish.

Now we've all worked on projects

where the objective is to fix something that's messed up at a given site. And we've all worked on projects where for one reason or another what we tried didn't stick. At least I know I have.

One of the most important things I've learned from these experiences is that the more degraded the hydrology is upstream from a site I'm working, the harder it is to achieve self-sustaining restoration goals on-site. So, after decades of careful attention, when I approach a restoration effort today, I always ask the same three questions:

- How did water historically move through this watershed?
- What's changed over the years to alter that movement and how do those changes affect this site?
- What can we do to restore some semblance of historical water movement in a modern context?

The main point is that keeping your favorite fishing spot healthy may require work upstream. In some places, re-establishing wetland storage and infiltration and reconnecting streams to historic floodplains might give you the biggest bang for your restoration buck in the long run. This is especially important given the increasingly intense precipitation events we are experiencing in Wisconsin.

Because a hydrology-based, watershed approach to habitat restoration also helps reduce flooding and runoff and conserves soil, integrating these practices can further increase public investment and community engagement in your restoration work. Restoring watershed hydrology with these co-benefits in mind is the root of an exciting new collaboration between WWA and Trout Unlimited staff in Northern Wisconsin (see sidebar). We'll have much more to report on this collaboration soon, so stay tuned.

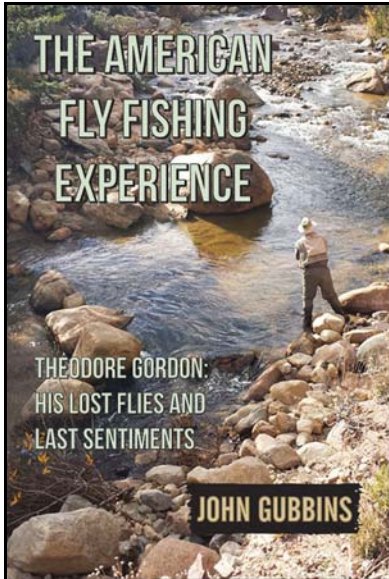
Wisconsin Wetlands Association is a statewide, non-profit, non-partisan, science-based organization dedicated to helping communities and decision makers understand how wetlands can be solutions to the water issues they face. Please visit our website for more information about wetlands, watersheds, hydrologic restoration, and how you can support our work.



Tracy Hames

BULL GUS WETLAND AFTER FLOODING

An upper watershed wetland in the Bull Gus watershed in July 2016, a couple of days after a historic event dropped more than 11 inches of rain throughout the region. This rain event caused more than \$35 million in public infrastructure damage. Thanks to the thousands of wetlands like this capturing runoff, there was minimal damage in the Bull Gus watershed.



John Gubbins has done a fine and masterful job as biographer of the rather clandestine life of Theodore Gordon, one of America's truly great flyfishers....anyone interested in...some really great angling tactics and ideas will find this book not only informative, but also fun to read.
Gary Borger, Author of Presentations, Nymphing, and Designing Trout Flies

John Gubbins has given us a great insight into Gordon's life, as an angler, a fly tier, a writer, a person of many secrets, and most importantly to me, a conservationist. I found it hard to put this book down once I started to read it.
Bert Darrow, Author, Guide & President of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers

John Gubbins has taken all that Gordon has written by and about Gordon, filled in a few gaps and reveals him a real human being...not only did [he] read everything available about Gordon, he painstakingly tied the flies Gordon developed and fished them. The flies work. So does the book.
Harry Peterson, President Emeritus, Western Colorado University

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(paperback with endorsement gratis)



For over 25 years we have partnered with conservation groups to protect and enhance quality lake and river fishing. Through our fundraising efforts, we donate to children's fishing programs, conservation groups like The River Alliance, and fund boat ramp improvements. Join us for interesting monthly programs.

Wisconsin Smallmouth Alliance
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WWA and TU team up on watershed restoration

Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, Ashland County and many others have teamed up in the flood-prone Marengo River watershed of Northern Wisconsin to develop and implement a pilot watershed approach to hydrologic restoration.

Together, we'll be exploring opportunities to strategically improve upper watershed wetland storage and floodplain connection in order to sustainably improve fish habitat and passage, reduce flooding and protect vulnerable infrastructure.

The watershed approach being developed with this partnership is drawing much attention and support, with funding coming from sources focused on habitat, healthy forests, hazard mitigation, climate change and more.

Even the Wisconsin Legislature recognized its value, providing \$150,000 toward the planning and construction of demonstration projects to show how upper watershed and floodplain wetland restoration can help address water management issues in light of increasingly strong storm events.

This legislation, 2019 Act 157, passed with unanimous bipartisan support before being signed by the governor. Both WWA and WITU lobbied in support of this bill.

For more information on this partnership, please contact WWA's Kyle Magyera at kyle.magyera@wisconsinwetlands.org or TU's Chris Collier at chris.collier@tu.org.

Wisconsin Inland Trout Stamp by the Numbers

Anglers Investment in Habitat is Paying Dividends

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited supports an increase in the Inland Trout Stamp Fee to help make trout fishing even better in Wisconsin.



Wisconsin has over 13,000 miles of classified trout streams and about 1,000 spring ponds.
The Inland Trout Stamp was \$7.25 in 1992 and raised to its current price of \$10 in 2006.

On average, Trout Stamp funds improve and maintain 25 miles of trout streams and 1 spring pond every year.
(source: WI Inland Trout Management Plan, 2019-2029).

If we keep pace for the next 20 years, that's 500 miles of improvements and 20 spring ponds.

If we increase the Trout Stamp to \$15, that's 750 miles of improvements and 30 spring ponds.
(Estimates DO NOT account for rising costs of materials and labor)

Outpaced by Inflation:
\$7.25 Fee in 1992 adjusted for inflation would be \$12.86 in 2018.
\$10 Fee in 2006 adjusted for inflation would be \$12.38 in 2018.

Table 6: Annual Inland Waters Trout Stamp account activities, fiscal years 2011-2018.

	FY 2011	FY 2012	FY 2013	FY 2014	FY 2015	FY 2016	FY 2017	FY 2018
Beginning cash balance	\$394,044	\$351,350	\$402,377	\$508,242	\$666,611	\$627,515	\$552,282	\$389,738
Revenues	\$1,498,739	\$1,570,291	\$1,506,574	\$1,549,946	\$1,609,090	\$1,582,639	\$1,591,126	\$1,616,529
Total available funds	\$1,892,783	\$1,921,641	\$1,908,951	\$2,058,188	\$2,275,701	\$2,210,154	\$2,143,408	\$2,006,267
Total expenditures	\$1,541,433	\$1,519,264	\$1,400,709	\$1,391,578	\$1,648,186	\$1,657,872	\$1,753,670	\$1,661,315
Cash balance	\$351,349	\$402,377	\$508,242	\$666,611	\$627,515	\$552,282	\$389,738	\$344,952

Source: Wisconsin Inland Trout Management Plan, 2020 - 2029
Note: Cash Balance includes funds allocated towards restoration projects in the following F.Y.

2019 Spring Hearing Results
Question #82. Would you favor a legislative change to an increase in the Inland Trout Stamp from \$10 to \$15 to allow more trout stream restoration?
70.3% answered YES
(5324 Y, 2241 N)

What Our Neighbors are Doing:
Iowa: \$14.50 trout stamp
Minnesota: \$10.75 trout stamp plus a 0.375% Legacy Fund sales tax to support conservation work
Michigan: In 2014, the Trout Stamp was eliminated. At the same time, the general fishing license was increased from \$15 to \$26 for residents and from \$42 to \$76 for non-residents.

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization which consists of approximately 5,200 members in 21 local chapters working to ensure that future generations have access to cold, clean, fishable water.
<https://wicouncil.tu.org>



Record year scheduled for stream restoration

By Jeff Hastings,
TUDARE Project Manager

Despite most county conservation field offices restricted to limited staff at any one time in their office, it looks like conservation will not be limited by the coronavirus disease. In the fall of 2018 TUDARE was awarded one of the largest conservation awards in Trout Unlimited's history — a Phase II \$9.2 million-dollar Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award. I wrote the proposal with strong support from TU chapters that do work in the Driftless Area, as well as other partners wanting to contribute towards the matching requirements of the award.

The first successful RCPP, Phase I, covered just Minnesota and Wisconsin, Phase II was written to cover the entire Driftless Area. Because Wisconsin field offices and chapters were so successful in obligating Wisconsin's \$1.4 million share of Phase I, Phase II was written so that Wisconsin will be receiving even a larger share --\$3.9 million. The Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) funding, like the first phase, will go through the local Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field offices to agricultural producers.

The dollars will target coldwater stream conservation type practices in the Driftless Area, with priority given to streams with angler access. TUDARE developed a screening process with NRCS so that for a project to even qualify it must contain habitat for trout or nongame species and cannot simply be a bank stabilization project. In 2019 nearly 50 landowners signed contracts with

NRCS for almost 16 miles of work, utilizing about a third of Wisconsin's allocation of the award.

Trout Unlimited Chapters, DNR fish habitat crews and county conservation field offices are working with private landowners where there is public access to cover most of the cost of the restoration projects. Ag producers sign up for RCPP and then reassign the EQIP payment over to the organization, with the understanding that the producers' share of the access area will be paid for. Producers get projects at no cost, and the organization receives approximately 75 percent of the cost of the project through EQIP.

We have been doing projects like this for more than 20 years in the Driftless Area, but have had to compete against other funded EQIP conservation practices such as waterways, dams and barnyards. With these targeted RCPP dollars we are only competing against other stream restoration projects, with the best projects being ones with public access and habitat.

Even if your Trout Unlimited chapter does not do projects in the Driftless Area I would be glad to visit with you on how you can use EQIP dollars targeted for your county to help fund stream restoration projects. EQIP dollars can be used to clear brush, plant a buffer, remove log jams, install fish habitat and more.

We are grateful to WITU and the chapters that have donated to TUDARE. Even large awards such as this \$9.2 million one do not cover administrative costs to run our programs.

You can contact Jeff at Jeff.Hastings@tu.org



A RECENTLY COMPLETED PROJECT ON PINE CREEK IN MINNESOTA

TUDARE offering pollinator seed

We have again purchased about \$5,000 worth of pollinator seed, all forbs, which are available for any coldwater Driftless Area stream project scheduled for this summer.

At a rate of 3 ounces per acre and an ounce of common milkweed, it should give you an additional 5 to 10 seeds per square foot (typical seeding mix is around 40 seeds per square foot).

Although it will not replace your already planned seeding, it will enhance any riparian mixture. We have worked with Prairie Moon Nursery to identify a hardy pollinator seed mix to compete with other seed mixtures in the riparian zone.

Let me know what stream you are working on, how many acres you plan to seed and when you will need it. We'll either mail you the seed or find a way to get it to you.

The enhancement mixture includes Purple Giant Hyssop, Great Indian Plantain, Rose Milkweed, Tall Bellflower, Sweet Joe Pye Weed, Great Blue Lobelia, Glade Mallow, Wild Golden Glow, Golden Alexanders and Common Milkweed.

Contact Jeff Hastings at Jeff.Hastings@tu.org



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