



Wisconsin Trout

Fall 2020

Getting to know DNR Secretary Preston Cole

An interview by Wisconsin TU State Council Chair Mike Kuhr.

Hello Mr. Secretary, thank you for offering to spend some time with us. I want to start by recognizing the special relationship that our organization has with the DNR. Much of the conservation work that we do would not happen without our partnership. For many of us volunteers, our local fisheries biologist is one of the most valuable resources we have. However, we recognize that your agency is responsible for much more than just fisheries management. What are your top priorities at the moment?

Thanks, Mike, that's right. The DNR handles so much more than fisheries, and our priorities run the gamut but all focus on one single, continuous effort: The effective and responsible stewardship of our state's natural resources.

We are focused on our DNR budget at the moment, understanding the impacts that COVID will continue to have both to the way that operations function as well as any potential limitations on revenue.

Governor Evers declared 2019 the Year of Clean Drinking water, but the work didn't stop when we turned the calendar page. We are continuing the critical work to provide safe drinking water to the citizens of Wisconsin.

We are working on rules to address contamination from human-made chemicals called PFAS and are developing targeted standards to reduce polluted runoff like nitrates that contaminate private wells. We are also increasing funding for local communities to replace lead service lines that can degrade and leave lead in public drinking water supplies.

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund is up for re-authorization, and we will focus on the vital role it plays in providing outdoor recreational opportunities for the public. If COVID has shown one thing, it's that there is a strong desire for access to public lands, especially close to where people live.

Today's cultural climate has brought attention to the importance of supporting and growing a diverse workforce. Regardless of race, religion, ability or socioeconomic status, we want the DNR to reflect the people it serves, so we're developing diversity and inclusion strategies to strengthen the DNR workforce.

That's great to hear. Before we dig into some of these issues, could you tell us a little about your upbringing and what led you to this point in your career?

I am a proud FFA alum from southwest Michigan and a graduate from the School of Forestry, Fishing & Wildlife at the University of Missouri with a degree in timber management and a minor in agriculture.

I was the first African-American to graduate with a timber management degree from the University of Missouri since the school's reorganization in 1973. I was a resource forester with the Missouri Department of Conservation, a parks superintendent for the city of St. Louis and a forester for the city of Milwaukee.

The commissioner of neighborhood services for the city of Milwaukee is also part of my career, but my best job is being a husband and father.

See **COLE**, page 17



NOTHING BETTER THAN A SUCCESSFUL DAY IN THE DUCK BLIND

DNR Secretary Preston Cole grew up in rural Michigan. He says fishing, snowmobiling, pheasant hunting, walking in the woods, biking and other outdoor activities were a huge part of his childhood.

Permit hearing scheduled for Wild Rose Dairy

LaFarge CAFO with history of spills seeks to expand its herd.

By Gillian Pomplun, Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout

Wild Rose Dairy, a confined animal feeding operation (CAFO) dairy located in rural LaFarge, re-

sponsible for manure spills into Otter Creek in 2017 and 2019, is seeking WPDES permit renewal and to expand their operation. Wild Rose Dairy's WPDES permit has been expired since March 31, 2015.



2019 SPILL KILLED 661 TROUT. A 2017 SPILL KILLED 1,069 TROUT

The 2017 spill of approximately 30,000 gallons of manure killed 1,069 trout. The dairy waited more than 24 hours to report the spill.

In 2019, a spill of approximately 10,000 gallons of manure killed 661 trout. As of yet, no penalties have been announced by the Wisconsin Department of Justice for either of these spills.

According to the public notice published by the DNR in the Epitaph newspaper:

"The Department has referred the farm to the Department of Justice (DOJ) for enforcement related to previous discharge events and failing to timely submit a complete application for permit reissuance. The farm has since submitted a complete permit application and is currently in substantial compliance and has fulfilled all requirements for

permit reissuance. The enforcement action at DOJ is separate from this permitting action. Issuance of a permit to the farm does not resolve or in any way affect the outstanding enforcement action at the Department of Justice."

Expansion plans

Wild Rose Dairy is owned by Wild Rose Dairy, LLC and operated by David Abt and Dustin Harris. It currently has 1,784 animal units, including 985 milking and dry cows, 389 heifers and 300 calves.

Wild Rose Dairy has a total of 2,043 acres available for land application of manure and process wastewater. Of this acreage, 794 acres are owned and 1,249 acres are rented.

See **CAFO**, page 27

2021 State Council Banquet postponed

Due to health risks with the Covid 19 pandemic, we have decided to postpone the 2021 Wisconsin Council Awards Banquet scheduled for February 4 in Oshkosh. The banquet committee is working to organize an alternative fundraising venue, either in an on-line format or in Wisconsin Trout, featuring a limited number of silent auction and raffle items. These items will be fewer in number than what you would expect at the live venue, but of higher value, such as guided fishing trips.

Awards recognition will take place on the pages of Wisconsin Trout and we hope to give recognition to recipients at the 2022 banquet in Oshkosh.

The 2022 Wisconsin State Council Awards and Fundraising Banquet is scheduled for February 5, 2022 at the Best Western Premier Hotel and Convention Center in Oshkosh.

—Scott Allen, Council Vice Chair and Banquet Chair

NLC report

National Leadership Council report, from State Council NLC Representative Linn Beck

Even with all the craziness in the world with the Covid virus, it has been almost business as usual with Trout Unlimited and the NLC. The NLC and all its work groups have been conducting all our business via Zoom.

TU National's office is still closed until November, with all employees working from home. Right now, the National team, along with some TU members, has been hard at work on the strategic plan so they can roll it out at the annual meeting. We had a town hall meeting in August, and Chris Wood provided an overview of the strategic plan. We held another town hall meeting in late September.

On September 3 the NLC met for our business meeting, holding elections for grassroots trustees, Embrace-A-Stream representatives and NLC officers. We elected Judi Sittler and Paul Doscher as trustees. Embrace-A-Stream Midwest Regional Representative Mike Kruse from Missouri was up for re-election and was elected for a four-year term. Both the NLC chair and secretary come up for re-election every year. Jim Walker was re-elected for the NLC chair and Rich Thomas was re-elected as NLC secretary.

The NLC annual meeting is October 13. It will be a Zoom meeting for NLC officers, reps and council chairs.

Our readers write: Letter to the Editor

Regarding Bruce Moss's Letter to the Editor in the Summer 2020 issue of Wisconsin Trout pertaining to grayling in Wisconsin. An article entitled "Arctic Grayling: Distribution, Introduction, and Angling Records" is at <https://www.backcountrychronicles.com/arctic-grayling-distribution-maps/>

Yes, there were grayling in Wisconsin, not native, but introduced between 1904 and 1906 on the Namekagon, Upper Wolf, Brule, and Beartrap-Nemadji systems. By 1920, these introduction attempts had failed. I was able to verify this information by researching and cross checking other sources and writings.

As a youngster 60 some years ago, I too had heard stories of grayling in Wisconsin. I searched for the locations and fished for them to no avail. Later, after a tour of duty in southeast Asia, I learned of a location in Montana and my quest to catch a grayling was realized. Its beauty was more memorable than its fight.

Perhaps, someday, now with more fishery and environmental knowledge, maybe there will a young boy or a young girl admiring the beauty of grayling in Wisconsin.

Rev. Pat Pierce


Donate to Council 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.

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




presents a new series called
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visit <https://wicouncil.tu.org> for meeting link

Premier Event: Wed. Oct. 7 @ 8 pm Central
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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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Chair's Column

Staying Connected in the Age of COVID

2020 is sure to go down as one of the most difficult times our organization will face. The driving force propelling our mission of conserving, protecting and restoring our coldwater fisheries and their watersheds has always been the passion and commitment of our grassroots volunteers.

Now, due to circumstances (somewhat) beyond our control, we find ourselves isolated and disconnected. Banquets, kids fishing days, veterans events, and chapter picnics all keep popping up on the “cancelled” list. As a volunteer, it’s disheartening and exhausting.

Cold, clean, fishable water gives me hope.

I’m a firm believer in responsible recreation. Fishing is social distancing. You go upstream, I’ll go down. You take these two bends, I’m going to go on up ahead. So the stories at the end of the day lose a little luster because we’re not all huddled around the campfire. But there are still adventures to be had close to home and stories to be told.

Fish don’t know the Corona Virus from Corona beer. It’s ironic that as our ways of life have ground to a halt, life in the stream carries on much the way it has for ages – eggs laid, hatched, juvenile growth, predator, prey, survival, mate, repeat.

Sometimes I feel like we’re cleaning up from a manure spill. It looks dire and toxic right now, but we can come together and we can remedy the situation. We can give nature a chance to heal itself. When we do that, the waters will eventually run clear, the spawning gravel will become exposed again, and a new generation of life will find opportunity in the stream.

Many TU chapters and councils are creating their own opportunities now, giving us all new ways to connect with each other.

It helps that most of us are walking around with computers in our pockets. Social media sites like Facebook and Instagram give chapters instant access to a much wider audience within our communities.

I think it’s safe to say that Zoom is here to stay. From board of director meetings to chapter gatherings and fly tying events, video conferencing is a game changer. Many national and regional seminars are now all virtual, eliminating travel expenses and providing many of us with a chance to attend from the comforts of our own home.

The Council will be using our Zoom account to bring you a new series called “Talking Trout.” The Series will run live on the first Wednesday of the month at 8 p.m. (Central time). We’re kicking it off with special guest Tim Flagler from Tightline Productions on Oct. 7. Subsequent episodes will feature presentations and interviews with guests in the Wisconsin conservation and angling communities. Episodes will be archived in video and podcast formats.

For those looking to be active outdoors, stream monitoring offers a safe volunteer opportunity. You could start by offering to walk a stretch of your “home river” or a recent chapter restoration project and record conditions. TU’s new RIVERS app is ideal for this. If you’re in



the Driftless, see Kent Johnson’s article on the new WiseH2O app and how you can use it to help us gather data about the health of our watersheds. Or consider becoming a Water Action Volunteer stream monitor at wateractionvolunteers.org. They offer formal training and will help you identify sites close to home that need monitoring.

Some chapters are starting to put in place measures to hold socially distanced habitat restoration workdays. Small groups of volunteers, safely spaced and dispersed along a project site are still able to do valuable maintenance work like brushing. Please don’t share food or beverages at this time.

TU National’s Volunteer Operations staff should be commended for their help in making our efforts easier. An all new, easier-to-manage Tacklebox will be unveiled this fall, packed with the information volunteer leaders are looking for. They’ve also done a fantastic job of setting up a digital fundraising platform that’s available to all chapters and councils.

I’m really bummed that we won’t get to meet in person this February to celebrate at our 50th Anniversary Wisconsin Trout Unlimited Banquet. But the decision made by our Banquet Committee to postpone the event was the correct choice.

I can’t wait for the days of handshakes, high fives, raised glasses, and pats on the back. Until then, stay safe, mask up and keep washing those hands. We’re all in this together.

Much Respect,
Mike Kuhr
State Council Chair

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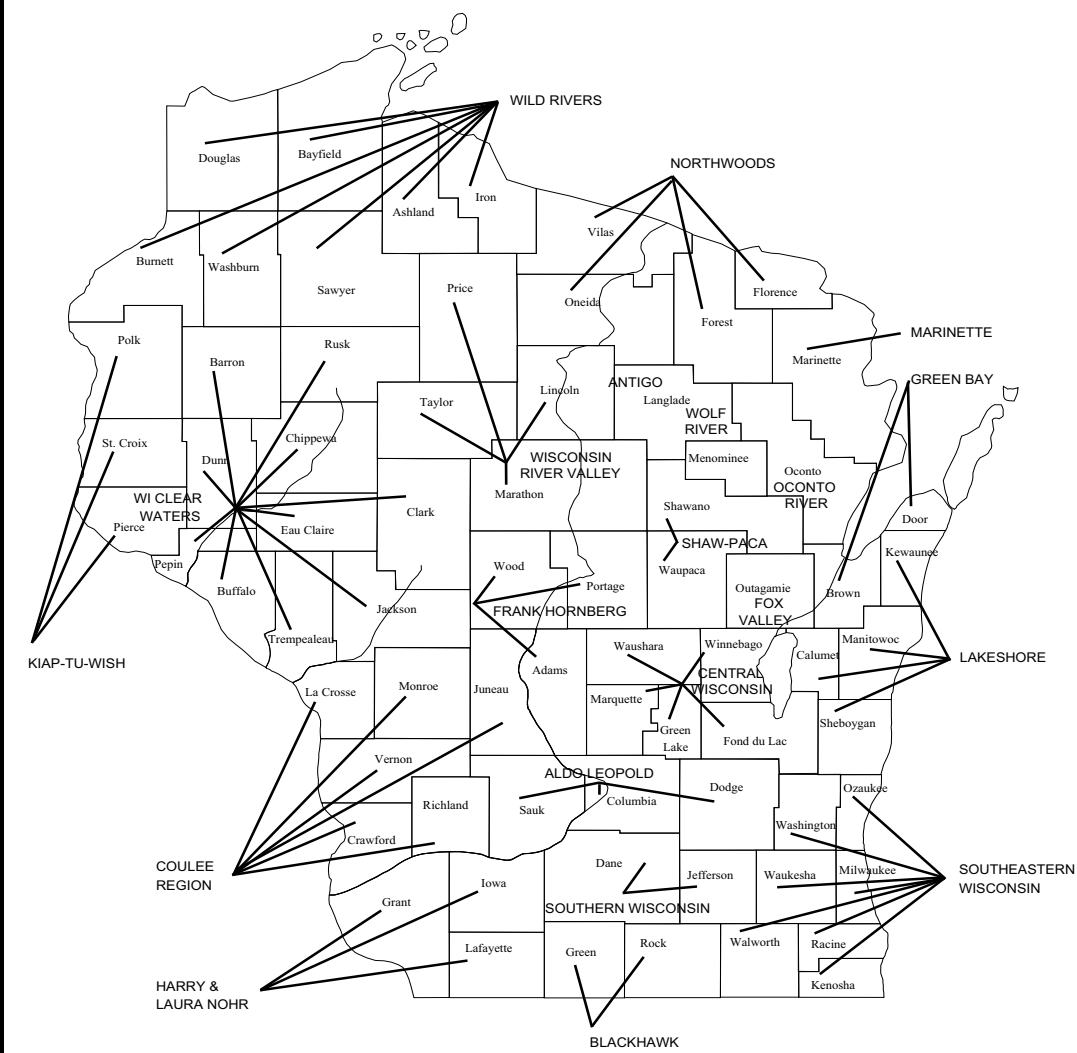
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Wisconsin TU Chapters, Presidents, and Websites



Visit the Wisconsin State Council’s web site at **wicouncil.tu.org**, or find us on Facebook.

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- Legal Counsel:** 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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State Council Officers

Executive Committee includes officers and vice chairs

- | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Mike Kuhr, Chair | Scott Allen, Vice Chair |
| Bob Rice, Secretary | Gary Stoychoff, Treasurer |

Council asking for award nominations

The Wisconsin State Council of TU believes it is important to recognize the outstanding efforts of our members and the broader conservation community, and we have been presenting a number of awards since 1983.

We are currently seeking nominations for our 2021 awards. Because we will not have a banquet in 2021, we will feature the award winners in *Wisconsin Trout*. We rely on you, our members and leaders, to let us know about those who deserve special recognition. So please take time to nominate individuals, groups or others you feel qualify for one of our awards.

Please submit your nominations, including a short narrative, to Awards Committee Chair Todd Franklin by December 1, 2020. Please contact Todd if you have any questions. His email address is toddfranklinwis-trout@gmail.com and his other contact information is on page 4.

The awards committee also includes Mike Kuhr, Jim Wierzba, Linn Beck, John Meachen, Scott Allen, Kim McCarthy and Henry Koltz. We welcome additional members to this committee, so please consider it. It takes very little time, and is one of the most rewarding things we do for TU: recognizing those members, chapters, groups, businesses and professionals who support our mission.

State Council Awards for 2021

Resource Award of Merit

Our highest award, the Resource Award of Merit recognizes a person, corporation or organization for outstanding contributions to conservation and may be a nonmember. Award can be presented posthumously.

Silver Trout Chapter of the Year Award

The Silver Trout Award recognizes the chapter that over the last year took innovative and thoughtful approaches to building community and advancing our mission. Criteria we consider include conservation impact, communications, member and community engagement, fundraising and volunteer leadership development.

Distinguished Service-Leadership

In memory of Jeff Carlson, this award recognizes an individual whose enthusiasm, persistence and leadership have inspired generations of conservationists. This award is for an individual whose leadership has enriched the TU community whether at the chapter, council, NLC or trustee level. A key attribute of leadership recognized by this award is the sharing of ideas, experiences and knowledge with others to nurture and mentor the next generation of coldwater conservationists and leaders.

Distinguished Service-Youth Education

This award recognizes the fundamental importance of creating a new generation of conservationists in a manner that sustains TU's conservation legacy. The award honors individuals who demonstrate exemplary leadership and a deep passion for inspiring young people to become thoughtful, responsible stewards of our coldwater fisheries. Adults and youth are eligible.

Distinguished Service-Veteran's Services

This award recognizes an individual who embodies the TU community-building spirit with regards to nurturing veteran's healing and involving veterans in their chapter events, activities and operations.

Reel Partner Award

This award recognizes businesses or organizations who have served as partners with the Council or its chapters in forwarding our mission.

Robert Hunt Resource Professional Award

In honor of Robert Hunt, this award recognizes a conservation professional who has shown concern for our coldwater resources over and above his or her normal duties.

Family, partners wrap up Citron Creek project

Funding partnerships and family sweat equity lead to Citron Creek streambank restoration.

By Gillian Pomplun, Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout

Citron Creek, as it runs through the farm of Eastman Township farmer Don Dudenbostel, has been the location of an ambitious restoration project that was recently completed. The project came about from a collaboration between the landowners, Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort (TUDARE), Crawford County Land Conservation Department and the Prairie du Chien Rod and Gun Club.

The project involved massive re-sloping of the banks of one-half mile of stream. This was to address the nine-foot vertical banks that had developed along the stretch of stream due to heavy rainfalls and sedimentation. The resulting sloping, grassed banks are designed to reconnect the stream with its floodplain, slow down and spread out the runoff from heavy rainfall events and prevent the Dudenbostel's topsoil from eroding.

"The primary concern that the project addresses for my family is to reduce or eliminate soil erosion on my farm," Don Dudenbostel explained. "With all the intense rainfall events that we've been getting in recent years, we've just watched the problem get worse and worse, and we knew we wanted to do something to stop it."

The Dudenbostel's granted a perpetual easement for public access to the stream along the entire one-and-one quarter mile stretch of the stream as it runs through their property. The easement is held by the Prairie du Chien Rod and Gun Club, which also helped with the cost of procuring the rock needed for the project. The property is located directly across Crawford County Highway E from the Hogback State Natural Area.

Dudenbostel seemed enthusiastic about the many benefits of the project for his family, for the wildlife and for the community.

"Of course, our family's primary motivation for the project was to preserve the stream banks, hold our soil and protect our farm fields," Dudenbostel said. "But now it is also a site for the public to enjoy, it is a beautiful place to fish or just take a walk, and the work that was done has brought life to the stream."

Paul Krahn of TUDARE seemed very proud of the work that he and the Dudenbostels had achieved on Citron Creek, a class three trout stream, meaning there is no natural production of native brook trout occurring in the stream. However, Krahn pointed out that in areas upstream from the project area there is brook trout habitat.

"We have seen amazing things happen to streams after we have done our projects, and we have high hopes that we will start to see more natural production in this stretch of stream and perhaps move it from class three to class two over time," Krahn said. "Not only that, but a key part of the work we do is to create habitat not just for trout, but also for amphibians, turtles and reptiles."

Sweat equity

Not only did the Dudenbostel family grant a perpetual public easement to the project. Don's sons Ian and Evan operated the excavator and did most of the heavy work on the project themselves. Paul Krahn of TUDARE was able to share his experience in doing these kinds of projects with the two young men, who described it as a valuable learning experience.

"It was wonderful to work with Paul. He taught us how to lay rip rap," Ian Dudenbostel said. "Throughout the whole process he was very patient and both my brother and I came out of the experience with more knowledge and skills than we had going in. We hope to continue to use both going forward in a construction business, and possibly in doing more of this kind of work."

Ian said that the best thing about



Paul Krahn, TUDARE

VERTICAL BANKS ALONG CITRON CREEK BEFORE RESTORATION

Vertical banks have made Citron Creek a funnel for high-speed runoff from increasingly large rain events. The erosion was carrying off valuable topsoil and sending nutrients like phosphorous into the Mississippi River system, and ultimately to the Gulf of Mexico. These nutrients have contributed to a "Dead Zone" in the gulf, and actions of farmers like the Dudenbostels are helping to correct this situation.

the project for him was in taking care of the erosion problems on his family's land.

"The fish habitat is a nice bonus too," he said.

Both Ian and his father observed that the vegetation that had been planted earlier in the project with their grain drill was already growing and greening up nicely. Both men seem optimistic that the measures that have been put in place will make their land more resilient, even in the face of large rainfalls.

Project funding

Dudenbostel said that his family had been interested in doing a project for several years, but it had taken about four years of planning, conversations and fundraising for it all to come together.

"We knew we wanted to do it," Dudenbostel said. "But it wasn't until we started talking with Duke Welter of TUDARE that we were able to start to see how it might be economically viable."

A major part of the funding

came from a \$9 million dollar, multi-year grant that TUDARE's Jeff Hastings had secured from NRCS' Regional Conservation Partnership Program. The group has used these funds to do projects all over the Driftless Area in recent years, and \$90,000 of the approximately \$150,000 cost of the project came from this source.

Other projects that have been funded from this source in recent years include restoration work on Tainter Creek on the Rayner property in Star Valley, and work on Weister Creek in the upper Kickapoo River Valley on the Kickapoo Valley Reserve property.

The National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP) contributed \$40,000 to the project. NFHP started about 12 years ago and has been a vehicle that has allowed groups such as TUDARE to access and leverage federal dollars for projects. TUDARE was actually the group's

See *CITRON*, page 27

Egg facility proposed for Timber Coulee Creek valley

By Gillian Pomplun, Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout

VERNON COUNTY - Shockwaves rippled through the trout fishing and conservation communities recently when news of a planned 18,000-bird organic egg facility in the Timber Coulee Creek valley came to light.

Landowner Les Reimer has already begun site preparation for the barn, at the intersections of Olstad Road and Dogwood Lane in the Vernon County Town of Coon. Approval of a building permit was on the Town of Coon Board meeting agenda for Tuesday, July 21.

A Facebook post from Mat Wagner of the Driftless Angler, reposted by Coulee Region Trout Unlimited, summed up what some of the concerns about the facility are:

"Anyone ever fished on the Olstad Bridge on the Timber Coulee? Well, the Town of Coon has approved the first steps to put a large confined chicken operation (curiously just below the threshold for regulation as a CAFO) in the valley.

Yes we need farms, and yes we need food, BUT we also need intelligent choices on where any kind of facility is placed. Watching the disaster of the Coon Creek floods in 2018 and knowing it could happen again, putting in a large livestock facility in the path of high water is a terrible idea!

Chicken manure is higher in phosphorus, nitrogen and potassium than other livestock. A major pollutant to trout streams! Add to that the contamination of wells with the high levels of E. coli and Salmonella (and potentially arsenic and copper) that these facilities leach, and you have a multi-layered recipe for disaster! Not to mention the stench that will devastate property values and ruin the appeal of the valley.

"Please write to the Town of Coon supervisor Orlan Bakkum and tell him how important the fishing is, and the negative impact a large facility will have in the area. Please keep your letters and notes polite. Chairman: Orlan Bakkum, 608-452-3370, e-mail: ordenbak@mwt.net."

Timber Coulee Creek is classified by the Wisconsin DNR as an outstanding resource water, and feeds into Coon Creek, which is classified as exceptional. Coon Creek also has a storied history as the location of the nation's first watershed project. Since the 1970s, the creek has been the focus of numerous stream restoration efforts by the Wisconsin DNR and private groups like Trout Unlimited.

Last, but not least, the area was inundated with catastrophic flooding in August of 2018 when three flood-control dams in Monroe County breached after a catastrophic rainfall event. The breached dams sent a tsunami of water cascading into the watershed. For all these reasons, there is concern about the choice to locate an animal livestock operation in the valley.

Landowner's story

Les and Susie Reimer and their three children moved from Manitoba, Canada to Vernon County with dreams of starting a family farming business that would allow Les to spend more time with his young family. In Canada, he had farmed beef cattle and grain, and worked construction on the side.

The Reimers purchased their property in the Timber Coulee Creek valley from organic dairy operator Martina Chamberlain. The property extends on both sides of the creek, in both Vernon and LaCrosse counties. Working with the Reimers in development of the facility are Ernie Peterson of Cashton Farm Supply and Eric Nottestad of the Genoa State Bank.

"We are peace-loving, Christian people," Les Reimer said of his family. "Farmers are here to protect the environment, and it is farmers that allow anglers to have access to the trout streams. We want to be good neighbors and good community members."

Facility specifics

The number of layers to be housed in the facility is 18,000. According to a DATCP worksheet for calculation of animal units, laying hens equal 0.01 animal units. This means that the facility will contain 180 animal units, below the threshold of 500 animal units, which would require a Livestock Facility Siting Permit from the county. It is also below the 1,000 animal unit threshold that would require a Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit from the Wisconsin DNR.

Les Reimer says that he and Ernie Peterson are pursuing organic certification through Midwest Organic Services Association, and that the eggs generated would be organic brown eggs.



Gillian Pomplun

SITE PREPARATION IS UNDER WAY AT ORGANIC EGG FARM

The Olstad Road bridge can be seen near the site being prepared for Les Reimer's organic egg facility.

ic brown eggs. He said the facility would generate 85 tons of dry litter per year, which would be moved out of the facility daily on a conveyor belt, and stored on a roofed concrete pad.

The manure will be distributed to organic producers, of which he says he currently has five interested buyers. One of the producers alone has indicated that it will take up to 200 tons. He says that there is between 300-400 acres of land available for spreading of the manure.

When asked about the expected mortality rate of birds in the facility, Reimer responded that it would be "low." These dead birds will also be part of the facility's waste stream.

According to the Open Philanthropy website, the 60-week mortality rate for an egg-producing facility caged or cage-free is about five percent. So, by this calculation, the expected mortality rate of the facility would be 900-1,000 chickens per year, or 5,000 pounds at five pounds per bird, or two-and-one-half tons of dead poultry.

Conservation concerns

As far as his conservation concerns with the siting of his facility, Reimer emphasized that the facility site was not inundated with flood waters in the August 2018 flood event as it sits 17 feet above the floodplain. He said the site is distant from Timber Coulee Creek, and in between is dense vegetative cover. He said they plan to plant trees around the facility to screen it from public view.

Regarding any air quality issues, Reimer said that the facility will be a dry barn, and will not generate a liquid slurry manure. He said that extra insulation is planned to help with odor control, and that the manure will not be sitting around for long.

When questioned about the perennial flow feeder creek that runs just below the facility before joining with Timber Coulee Creek, Reimer responded that his children play in that creek and "have found no fish in it." Some trout fishing enthusiasts say that the feeder is a trout spawning area, where trout are present in the autumn to lay their eggs.

"Farmers are here to grow the environment," Reimer said. "Our facility will have a berm around the stream, and the manure will be con-

tained."

The Reimers said that they are very aware of the flooding history of the area, and had talked with their neighbors about the flood of August 2018.

"That was a 1,000-year flood," Reimer said. "It's very unlikely that any event of that magnitude will happen again in my lifetime."

Regulations

Questions have been raised about the facility, and whether its location makes it subject to either floodplain or shoreland zoning regulations. Others are concerned that it could be located in the hydraulic shadow of flood control dams in Monroe County, which would mean that floodplain zoning would apply. Another question is whether the size of the facility would mean that Reimer would be required to obtain a stormwater construction permit from the DNR. There is also concern about the facility's proximity to the Dogwood feeder is of concern to DNR fisheries biologists as trout spawning water.

"I have spent considerable time looking into this, and based on my findings the building site was not flooded in 2018, nor is it within the hydraulic shadow of any Vernon County flood control dams," Vernon County Conservationist Ben Wojahn said. "I have been told that the site is small enough to not require a DNR construction stormwater permit, and it is not in the floodplain. Because of the number of animal units, it also doesn't require a livestock facility-siting permit. Last, our county zoning department doesn't believe that the facility will require an impervious surface analysis."

Monroe County Conservationist Bob Micheel said he does not believe the hydraulic shadow of any of his county's flood control dams "extends that far down into the valley."

Brad Johnson, DNR wastewater specialist said that only if the footprint of the facility were greater than one acre would a construction stormwater permit be required.

"If the site were one acre or more, then a construction stormwater permit would be required before construction could begin," Johnson said. "In this process, we would conduct a review of the wetlands and would review the facility's erosion control plan before issuing a permit."

Kirk Olson, DNR fisheries biologist with the LaCrosse office, had this to report about the 'Dogwood Feeder' tributary that runs just below the chicken facility site:

See **EGGS**, page 24



Gillian Pomplun

NEPRUD PROPERTY IS JUST DOWN THE VALLEY FROM EGG FACILITY

The Neprud Property, just down the valley from Les Reimer's organic egg facility, along Coon Creek, has been the site of DNR, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, and Trout Unlimited stream restoration efforts since the 1970s.

TU CARES Update

By Tom Lager

While grappling with the public health restrictions of the past months, we still made progress on several fronts. The culvert at the Lake Drive crossing of an unnamed Class 1 trout stream and tributary to the West Branch White River was replaced in July. The DNR and TU CARES are pleased with the project, as the stream is functioning to transport sediment through the crossing, a process that will continue as flood events occur before reaching a natural state. Without concern, trout are able to migrate through the crossing and drainage water flows unencumbered by the former misaligned pipe.

The Town of Wautoma will report final costs of the project in September, thereby determining the amount of remaining funds available for future DNR habitat work at the road crossing. Future consideration is downstream bank cover, removal of the sill formed at the downstream end of the old plunge pool, creating visibility and access to the stream riparian corridor downstream of the crossing and adding signage about trout stream regulations and recognition of those involved in the project.

While the replacement of the Highway C culvert, upstream on this unnamed trout stream, was not a part of this project, it was this project that determined the replacement culvert design, thereby further enhancing water flow and trout migration opportunities in this tributary. The original grant for this project was \$25,000 from the Fox Valley Community Foundation.

West Branch White River Younglove Easement Project goals are restoration of the Younglove Easement in the West Branch White River to conditions sustaining viable trout populations by providing shel-

ter, feeding and spawning habitats and reducing erosion through bank stability; to improve access and aesthetic appeal of the easement by creating stream-side trails, removal of decaying man-made structures and invasive buckthorn, planting native plants and developing informational kiosk and signage in new parking lots; and to create and implement a regional public information program utilizing meetings with community organizations, newspaper articles, social media and signage at parking areas.

The DNR Trout Management Team, with volunteers, will:

- Create parking and access trails for equipment access.
- Remove old man-made structures while recycling usable materials
- Apply best science, enabling natural forces and placement of materials to shape habitat requirements for trout during all life stages and seasons.

Old structures may not be replaced in-kind. Natural in-stream wood can be augmented by structures, such as bank covers, tree wood and root wads to provide shelter and scour holes. Rock and wood deflectors and brush bundles will be used to restrict width and increase flows, exposing gravel and cobble for spawning and juvenile trout. Removed buckthorn will be recycled into stream structures and chips for trails.

Banks replanted with native plants will inhibit invasive plants and increase habitat resiliency and the aesthetic experience for the public.

Scott Bahn, through the Central Wisconsin Chapter, successfully applied for a TU Embrace-A-Stream Grant to help fund this project, which is estimated to cost between \$120,000 and \$140,000. This in-



Tom Lager

NEW CULVERT ON WEST BRANCH WHITE RIVER TRIBUTARY

Shawn Sullivan, Steve Devitt, Kyle Siebers and John Tucker view the newly replaced Lake Drive culvert on an unnamed Class 1 trout stream and tributary to the West Branch White River.

cludes labor, in-kind donations of volunteer labor, materials and equipment. Scott, through the Central Wisconsin Chapter, has also applied for funding support from the Elliott Donnelley TU Chapter and the Trout and Salmon Foundation.

Tom Lager, through the Fox Valley Chapter, is applying for a DNR Surface Waters Restoration (Rivers) Grant. The plan is for this project to be conducted over a two- to three-year period in 2021-2023. Continuing project needs include other grant opportunities and signing on partners and supporting groups.

The Groundwater Project continues through the summer, with the objective to gather monthly flow data at 10 sites and periodically download the data loggers.

Over the summer the data logger at the Wedde Creek site was stolen. We expect to purchase a replacement using project funds and place the new data logger at a site further upstream on Wedde Creek.

The problem of sand burying data loggers in Tagatz Creek persisted.

Therefore, a new means of anchoring using a rebar-suspended design has proven useful and will be deployed at a second Tagatz site, where sand has periodically buried the data logger.

A project review later this fall will highlight the data collected and present how it is being used in the DNR modeling programs. The new DNR contact for this program is Nicole L. Clayton, while TU National's Eastern Angler Science Coordinator Jake Lemon continues leadership of this project.

In other activities, Mike San Dretto and Chris Firkus provided TU CARES input to the DNR Central Sand Hills Fishery Areas Management Plan.

Articles about TU CARES activities continue to be published in Wisconsin Trout, Waushara Argus, Fox Valley Chapter's Trout Talk and the Central Chapter's The Brookie Newsletter. Periodically the TU CARES FaceBook page is updated with pictures and brief description of our activities.

RECOLLECTIONS

The "Trout" Knife

By Larry Hanneman

As a 12-year-old kid dreaming of becoming a trout fisherman, I paid close attention to what type of gear trout fisherman used. Besides the obvious essentials, every trout fisherman needed a knife to gut trout, as few legal-sized fish were released back then. Not just any knife would do. Most anglers carried a folding knife with a single narrow blade, not to be confused with the typical "jack knife" with multiple blades.

I discovered such a knife at the local Woolworth's store in Wisconsin Rapids. "What a beauty!" Snowy white pearl handle with nickel-plated ends and a single folding blade. The price was 49 cents. I had to wait for a week, until I got paid for mowing several lawns in the neighborhood. I went to the store every day, praying that the knife had not been sold. Finally, I was able to give the clerk two quarters and the knife was mine! I brought it home and my dad sharpened it for me to a razor sharp edge.

The first trout I ever caught was gutted with that knife, as were thousands of others during seven decades of trout fishing. Rods, reels, vests, etc. were replaced numerous times, but the knife remained a constant companion.

When I was home on leave from the army, prior to shipping out for Korea, I cleaned a catch of rainbows on the banks of the Chaffee Creek, wondering if that would be the last time I used the knife. I stored it in a drawer of

my room on Daley Avenue where it remained until my return.

The knife brings back memories of my quests for trout across the nation: California's Merced River, Montana's Bitterroot River, Wyoming's Snake River, Utah's Green River, Flaming Gorge, High Uinta lakes, Sevier River, and countless other waters, South Dakota's Black Hills, Nevada's Eagle Valley, the pristine waters of the Smokey Mountains in Tennessee and North Carolina and most of all, my favorite Wisconsin haunts. The blade has been dipped into the cold water and wiped clean on stream side grass in all the locations.

It has been lost and recovered twice. Once on the Tomorrow River in the 1950's and I found it a week later, where I had cleaned a last trout. The other time was on the Oconaluftee River in North Carolina. I was cleaning a brace of rainbows when a bear decided he wanted the fish. I beat a retreat across the river and forgot to pick up my knife. I found it two weeks later next to a pile of bear scat.

It went through washers and dryers when left in a pants pocket. The pearl sides are long gone and a series of knicks in the metal ends are from stunning fish prior to gutting. This knife is all that remains of an old trout fisherman's legacy.

Larry is now 88 years old and has been trout fishing for 76 years. He still trout fishes and his favorite waters are found in the Central Sands Region.



Larry Hanneman

READY FOR LUNCH?

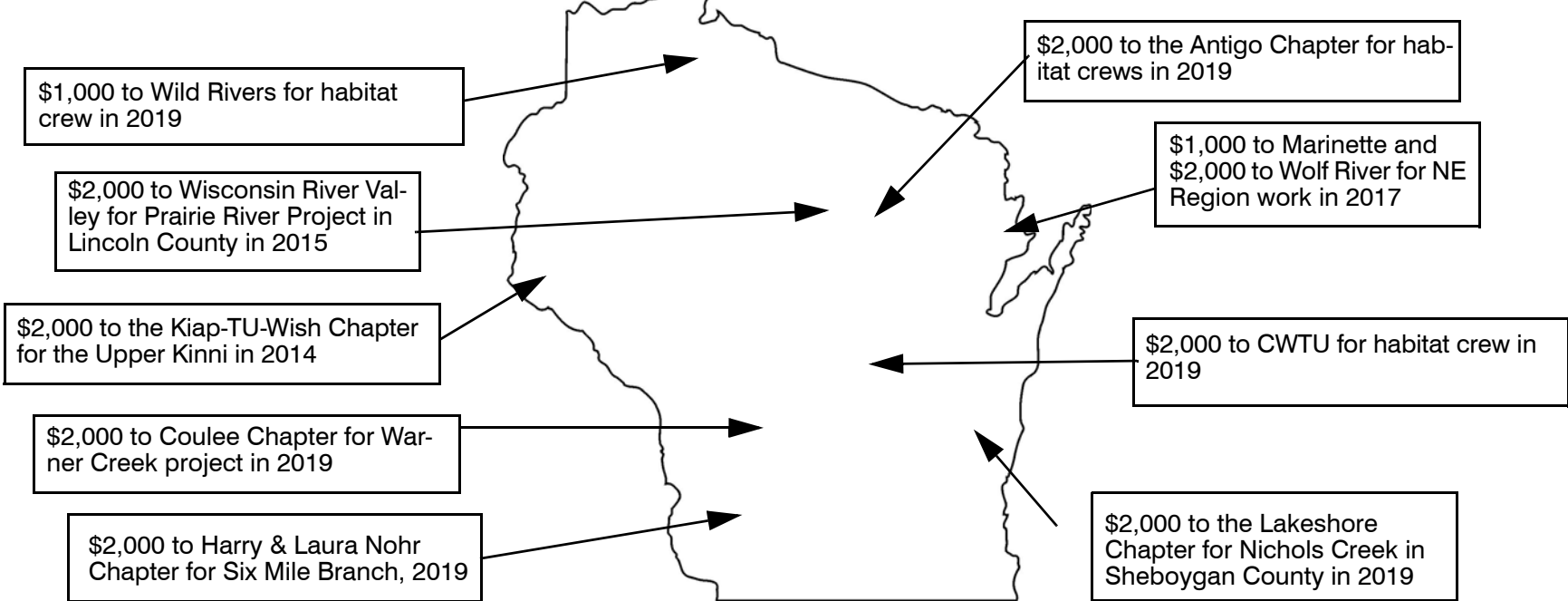
The author with a pair of trout, gutted and prepared for the pan with his trusty "trout" knife of 76 years.

Please support Friends of Wisconsin TU in 2020

2020 has been a very active year for the Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited habitat improvement program. This year eight different chapters 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.



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Driftless Rambler

With Duke Welter

Remembering Tom Wendelburg



A PROLIFIC WRITER, ANGLER AND FLY TYER

Although Wendelburg fished and wrote about notable Montana rivers like the Beaverhead and Rock Creek, Black Earth Creek was his lab and his home water. He often shared his knowledge, but not always his flies.

Black Earth Creek (BEC) is undoubtedly one of Wisconsin's best-known trout streams, cared for over nearly a century by conservationists and groups like TU. But the stream also benefits from a national reputation, from front-cover articles in *TROUT* magazine going back almost 40 years, inclusion in "America's 100 Best Trout Streams," and regular attention from the outdoor general magazines like *Outdoor Life*.

One of the reasons Black Earth got to that point was Tom Wendelburg, a long-time Madison-area resident who, for a couple of decades, was a regular author on the national scene, at a time when trout fishing was coming into a boom period. Wendelburg, 76, died early this summer.

A group of his friends got together in late August at the Community Park in Black Earth to remember him. The site was fitting because BEC became Tom's home waters and the focus of his obsessive attention for nearly 40 years.

Almost any day during the season you might find Tom stalking the stream at any time of day, studying insects, testing flies he'd developed, watching trout behavior, guiding a client or waiting for a hatch to begin. When I was beginning to learn the craft of fly-fishing for trout in the early 1980s and living in Madison, I'd find him along the stream and learn volumes from him in conversation. He might pull out his fly box and let me drool at the rows of Wendelburg Scuds, no-hackle caddis or Hexagenia imitations before he headed off to fish separately. He could also be found at Southern Wisconsin TU's Icebreakers or meetings, tying or just holding forth on any topic imaginable.

Jeff Mayers, who collaborated

with Wendelburg in 2001 on the book, "Catching Big Fish on Light Fly Tackle," compiling and rewriting many of his magazine articles, also wrote a fond obituary in early June. Wendelburg, Mayers wrote, was a peer and sometime fishing companion of "fly angling legends such as Joe Brooks, Dan Bailey and Doug Swisher and satisfied an elite group of outdoor magazine editors with a steady stream of articles. His life's work centered on the exploration of fishing tactics, the environment and aquatic life." While he fished and wrote about notable Montana rivers like the Beaverhead and Rock Creek, Black Earth Creek was his lab and his home water.

His friends at the BEC get-together swapped stories of appreciation for his contributions and talent as well as chuckles about his quirks and idiosyncratic behavior. Unless you were planning to buy one, he was stingy with his flies. Mayers, who fished with him often, told of a day they headed to the stream to fish the Hendrickson hatch. "I looked at my box and I only had one single Hendrickson fly. So I asked Tom if he would loan me a fly. 'No,' he said. 'No?,' I said, 'you've got dozens—hundreds—of them in your box.' 'Yeah, but I might need them,' he said."

For several summers, Wendelburg lived in his van or car near the creek and tied flies on a vise stuck into a piece of driftwood wedged into the steering wheel. Articles didn't pay much in those days (or now), and selling his flies gave him money for gas or food. Still, he had a reputation for never, ever picking up a check for a meal. Some of his typical guide days, one friend said, consisted of "you picking him up, fishing with him a while, buying him lunch, and then having him say, 'OK, now I'm going fishing,' and



walking off."

From across a room or well down a stream, when a distinctive cackling laugh rang out, it was certain Wendelburg was in the vicinity. He carried an ever-present cigarette and his voice showed it.

Dennis Franke, who's been a long-time champion of the creek and a stalwart of the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association, compared Wendelburg's intimate knowledge of his home waters to that of a pair of other authors around mid-century and later. "Like Vince Marinaro on the Letort River, and like Jim Leisenring on the Little Lehigh, Tom studied his stream intensely and knew almost everything a person could learn about it. And he used his lessons to teach thousands of other anglers how better to fish a trout stream."

Conservation and protection for streams were important to Wendelburg, and he was a strong supporter of SWTU and Black Earth Creek Watershed Association. It's safe to say Black Earth Creek could not have been protected from its many threats if those two groups hadn't fought for it for decades.

Though his articles covered quite a wide range of fishing tactics, his two favorite topics were fishing with light tackle and his fly designs, Franke said, especially no-hackle and parachute flies for our spring creeks. In the 60s, Lee Wulff and Al McClane (editor of *Field & Stream Magazine*) championed fishing with light tackle, even for large fish. Wendelburg, Franke said, favored short, feisty bamboo rods like the 6 1/2-foot 4 weight Orvis bamboo "Flea" rod introduced in 1967, or the Paul Young "Midge," a 6'3" 4-weight. But when Orvis introduced its "Ultrafine" 2-weight 7'9" rod in 1984, he hardly fished with anything else, Franke said. Those rods, Wendelburg maintained, gave superior touch and accuracy and still had muscle for fighting good-sized trout. I can vouch for that: my Orvis 6-foot 2-weight "One Ounce" has played some very nice Driftless trout with success. And it's light enough to cast forever.

My old newspaper compatriot at the Capital Times in Madison, the late George Vukelich, wrote about Wendelburg in "North Country Notebook, Vol. II" back in 1992. Pa-

pa Hambone, as George called himself on his weekly radio show, had a wonderful way of saying something and still not quite saying it. He quoted a long-time Wendelburg fishing buddy, Steve Born, saying, "He can drive people right up the wall. He can talk your arm off. Not to mention your leg and waders. A lot of pretty good trout fishermen think they know as much about trout fishing as Wendelburg does, but Wendelburg doesn't think so."

Vukelich continued: "I consider myself an expert," Wendelburg says straight out. "I don't think I can be outfished by too many people in the world with a fly rod."

For quite a few years, Wendelburg put a UW-Madison journalism degree to good use in his freelance article writing. Born describes him as "the most prolific technical writer on trout to come out of Wisconsin." He worked as a reporter in Idaho for a time, guided a little in Montana, and taught at his alma mater, Brookfield Central High School, but ended up smitten by the little stream west of Madison and never got it out of his blood, though he kept on teaching at streamside.

For all his talents and contributions, Wendelburg still faced serious limitations later in his life. Eccentricities gave way to mental illness and alcoholism and limited him, and he mostly gave up writing. With all he knew, he had more than one book in him, though he only published one.

Wendelburg's book is still available in paperback from UW Press. When I reviewed it in 2001, I described it for a beginner as one that "should probably be your second—not first—'how-to' book." Skimming a few of its chapters again, I am impressed with the quality of the writing, but think that advice stands.

Tom is survived by his son Jay, sister Mary and her husband and nieces and nephews. Those at the memorial, fishing friends and family, discussed placing a memorial bench near the stream in remembrance of a man who spent so much of his life learning it and teaching about it. His family suggested memorials be made to Southern Wisconsin TU or the Black Earth Creek Watershed Association.

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



Mining News: Exploration and education

Exploratory drilling completed for Oneida County mine, while Aquila Resources now wants an underground mine at the Back Forty Project.

By Allison Werner,
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Exploration and education were the top mining activities this summer. While we are in a holding pattern on mining matters right now, there are many local activists watching over mining proposals and making plans for protecting our waters from mining pollution.

Badger Minerals explores Oneida County

Badger Minerals completed exploratory drilling in July at the Shoepke site in Oneida County. They will now analyze the samples to determine if the site has enough volume and quality of metals to make the site economically viable. If they decide to move ahead, more exploratory drilling would be expected. You can keep up to date on this project and find documents like the exploratory drilling permit on the DNR's website at <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Mines/Projects.html>.

ects.html.

If you missed the Wolf River Action Committee's four-part virtual panel series, "Mining Wisconsin's Riverways: Past & Present Issues & Activism," it's not too late to watch one or all of the videos. The series featured tribal historians and environmental experts connected to the Wolf and Menominee rivers. They discussed their experiences in cultural and environmental activism, their knowledge of the metallic mining process, and shared ways to get involved in protecting our waters from mining pollution. You can watch the series at <http://wolfriveractioncommittee.com/>.

Back Forty Project

Aquila Resources continues to tell prospective investors that the Back Forty Project is viable. During an August 2020 Aquila Resources investor presentation, they made it clear that they plan to mine in Wisconsin as well as Michigan. As they call it, it's "an attractive pipeline of projects."

They also publicly stated significant changes to their plans. They want to add an underground mine to the open-pit mine. They stated the preliminary economic assessment "Includes the known underground Mineral Resources at Back Forty, increasing the life of the mine to 12 full years." This doubles the expected life of the mine and raises a lot of questions, since an underground mine was not in their original mining application. See this PowerPoint presentation: <https://aquilaresources.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Aquila-Presentation-August-10-2020.pdf>

The Coalition to Save the Menominee River's legal challenge of Aquila Resource's wetland permit from Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) still has not been decided. Appeals are expected regardless of the decision. We are also waiting for Aquila to resubmit their Dam Safety Permit application to EGLE. They withdrew their application in 2019 after being told there was insufficient information and have recently stated that they will submit a new application before the end of 2020.

Many have concerns with the design Aquila Resources will propose for the tailings dam. Their original

proposal was for an upstream design, which in other mines has failed and caused devastating harm in other locations, such as Brazil. The demonstrated risks and extreme instability of upstream dams led to a Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management to establish safer guidelines for tailings dams.

It is due to the serious environmental and cultural threats posed by the Back Forty Project that American Rivers has listed the Menominee River as one of America's Most Endangered Rivers of 2020. You can send a letter to EGLE from American River's website to request they prohibit the upstream dam construction design for the proposed Back Forty tailings dam. The website is <https://endangeredrivers.americanrivers.org/>

WiseH2O Mobile Application goes Driftless

Monitoring Driftless Area trout streams with the WiseH2O App

By Kent Johnson, Driftless Area
Coordinator for WiseH2O App

National Trout Unlimited (TU) is placing a high priority on Community Science and the benefits it provides for angler education and coldwater resource management. Trout Unlimited's national science team partnered with MobileH2O, LLC to develop a customized mobile application (WiseH2O App) that can be used by anglers to monitor water quality and habitat conditions in Driftless Area trout streams.

In 2019, anglers from the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of TU participated in a successful WiseH2O App pilot project, testing the App on 10 local streams and rivers, making 83 observations and providing feedback to the developers on App improvements. The Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring plan, the 2019 pilot project report and an interactive map that enables viewing of all 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish WiseH2O App observations can be found on the MobileH2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/anglerscience>.

Given the success of the 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish pilot project, and with further app improvements in 2020, WiseH2O App monitoring expanded to the entire Driftless Area (southwestern Wisconsin, southeastern Minnesota, northeastern Iowa and northwestern Illinois) in early August. Besides Kiap-TU-Wish, 14 additional Trout Unlimited chapters now have an opportunity to monitor our regional coldwater resources. Although COVID-19 and development of the iPhone version of the WiseH2O App have delayed the Driftless Area roll-out, we are pleased to report that the iPhone version of the app is available, and the 2-in-1 test strips can be used to measure nitrite/nitrate concentrations. The app also has an updated

look and educational messaging that should be more user-friendly.

A "Get Started Guide" for prospective WiseH2O App monitoring participants is available on the MobileH2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/driftlessprogram>. In addition to summary information about the App and the 2019 pilot project with the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter in Pierce County, the guide provides information on:

- Downloading the free Android and iPhone versions of the app from the Google Play Store and Apple Store
- Completing on-line training
- Obtaining water chemistry test kits
- Creating a local monitoring plan, if desired. To facilitate our communication and coordination with participating Driftless Area groups (Trout Unlimited Chapters and non-profit organizations), it would be helpful for your group to designate a liaison (minimal responsibilities are described in the Guide).

We are very excited about this opportunity to go Driftless with WiseH2O App monitoring, and we look forward to your participation. Kent Johnson will be serving as the Driftless Area (TUDARE) coordinator for this project, so feel free to contact him with any questions, thoughts, or needs for follow-up information. Our Project Team includes Dan Dauwalter of Trout Unlimited and Carter and Sarah Borden from MobileH2O, LLC, <https://www.mobileh2o.com>. Their roles are critical as we advance this project, and they are also available for support.

For more information on the Driftless Area WiseH2O App project, please contact Kent Johnson at d.kent.johnson@gmail.com.

National news update

By Taylor Ridderbusch,
TU Great Lakes Organizer

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

As mentioned in the last edition of *Wisconsin Trout*, the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA) was on the verge of being passed out of the Senate. It was, in fact, passed out of the Senate and then signed into law August 4 by President Trump. This landmark legislation appropriates \$900 million annually, in perpetuity, to the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The dollars for the LWCF are collected from royalties of offshore oil and natural gas drilling, not taxpayers' pocketbooks. Additionally, it provides \$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 Management and Bureau of Indian Education accumulating maintenance backlogs on roads, trails, facilities and aquatic structures.

Water Resources Development Act

The Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) is still making its way through Congress. The House version includes \$335 million for the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), as well as a five-year reauthorization of the program. The Senate has not released its funding bill yet, but have included a one-year reauthorization of the GLRI. Both versions also include authorization of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project as well as make changes to the local cost share. The House adjusts the original 65/35 split to 80/20, meaning the federal government would be responsible for 80 percent of the project costs and the local sponsor — the State of Illinois — would need to cover 20

percent. The Senate version adjusts the cost share to 75/25. Those differences will need to be reconciled in a conference committee soon.

Asian carp

In addition to further progress in Congress, early September saw a major breakthrough on Asian carp at the state level.

Dating back to 2018, the State of Michigan had offered to cover \$8 million of the local cost share (about 80 percent of the overall cost) for the State of Illinois in order to get the pre-construction phase of the Brandon Road project off the ground. This offer was originally refused by then Illinois Governor Bruce Rauner, but with changes in the administration in both states, that deal was renegotiated.

Work by Trout Unlimited and other organizations such as the National Wildlife Federation led to the State of Michigan being ready to send the \$8 million to Illinois in mid-March. Unfortunately, with the outbreak of COVID-19, Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan line-item vetoed that expenditure, citing the need to reserve funds if necessary, for fighting the pandemic.

With state budgets in better shape than expected and a commitment to protecting the Great Lakes, Michigan legislators included the \$8 million in the last supplemental budget bill, which was signed into law by Gov. Whitmer. With an inter-governmental agreement in place for the transfer of funds, this should help clear the way for Illinois to sign a design agreement with the Army Corps of Engineers for the project and start the initial phases of design to keep invasive carp out of the Great Lakes.



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Founder passes away

WITU Youth Camp update

The State Council has lost another of the group of members who had the wisdom in 1970 to form the Wisconsin State Council. Dennis Bryan, a professor of education at UW-Green Bay at the time, was one of the charter members of the Green Bay Chapter and, together with TU members from southern Wisconsin and northeastern Wisconsin, the group understood the need for some kind of state level leadership and coordination.

The group met in Madison at a time when only a few chapters existed in Wisconsin. One of the primary battles emerging around the state in 1970 was opposition to building small dams on trout streams.

The Green Bay Chapter had been opposing a small dam on Handsaw Creek that would have endangered the Thunder River system in northeast Wisconsin.

It was popular to dam small creeks to form small flowages during that era. The damage to trout streams from those dams was just beginning to be understood. The founders of the Council realized that a statewide approach was needed on issues such as dams on trout streams. Out of the realization that statewide organization would be needed on issues occurring then and others that would appear in the future, the State Council was formed. Dennis was the original State

Council Vice Chair. It should be noted that the opposition by Dennis and Trout Unlimited to the Handsaw Creek Dam was ultimately successful and the dam was not built.

Following are some thoughts about Dennis from our State Council Treasurer Gary Stoychoff. Gary was also one of the early members of the Green Bay Chapter and knew Dennis for many years:

“As we mourn the passing of Dennis Bryan, I can’t help but reminisce about his role in the formation of the Green Bay Chapter. I joined the chapter in 1969 and Dennis, along with Hank Bredael, Doug Hart and others were instrumental in instilling in me the principles I use to this day in furthering our conservation agenda. Dennis was always there; offering thoughtful insight as to how the chapter should proceed as we worked to improve our resources and was always present as we toiled in and along streams to improve the fishery. Back in those days the chapter was on shaky financial grounds and we all, including Dennis, did our best to keep the chapter afloat. Since those days, I would see Dennis infrequently, but he always had that big smile and time to ask about how we were doing and to spend a few minutes reliving some of the things we did in those early years. RIP Dennis Bryan.”

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Not having the Youth Camp to look forward to for the first time in six years seemed strange. Normally the youth camp committee and myself are up to our elbows planning the camp all summer long. But this year it seemed we had no place to go, no events to plan and we didn’t even get to do as much fishing as we would have liked to.

The youth camp committee did have some great conversations over the summer. We have been working on ideas that would give the youth something to do if the virus should continue or something like this occurs again. Thoughts have ranged from a virtual camp to making videos of our presentation. This would give us a something to fall back on. We will keep you posted.

The good news is we will be getting ready for the 2021 youth camp this fall. We have 11 youth that were signed up for the 2020 camp who plan to come in 2021. We still have nine spots open and the registration for these spots will open starting with the February annual meeting.

The 2021 WITU Youth Camp will run from Thursday, August 19 through Sunday, August 22 at the Pine Lake Bible Camp. All youth ages 12 to 16 are welcome to attend and we hope to fill the camp as soon as possible.

If you have any questions please contact Linn Beck at 920-216-7408 or chlbeck@att.net or Wayne Parmley at 920-540-2315 or wparmley@gmail.com.
—Linn Beck



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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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Wisconsin Fly Tyers, with words and photos by Bob Haase

Duke Welter: Tying, traveling and making a difference



THE ULTIMATE MULTI TASKER

Anyone who has attended a State Council meeting might have seen Duke tying flies. He doesn't miss anything in the meeting, contributes to the conversations and leaves for home with flies to fill his fly boxes.

This series recognizes some of Wisconsin's great fly tyers, providing information on the role they played and are currently playing in the art of fly tying. Through this series we will learn more about them, the flies they tie and their tips to make us better tyers.

If anyone has ever attended a Wisconsin TU State Council meeting you may have seen Duke tying flies. I don't know of anybody who can multi-task as well as Duke, because he doesn't miss anything in the meeting, contributes to the conversations and leaves for home with flies to fill his fly boxes.

Duke has been active in fly tying and fly fishing for a long time and has fished all over the world.

He has also been very active in Trout Unlimited, having served as president or officer of various Wisconsin chapters. He also served as TU State Council Chair and as chair of the TU National Leadership Council and Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees of TU National.

One of Duke's greatest achievements and something we should all thank him for is his development and involvement with the TUDARE program. He was able to bring people together such as landowners, agriculture organizations, TU chapters, sportsman's clubs and other entities to help restore trout streams in the Driftless Area.

When we fish the streams of the Driftless Area we benefit from the work Duke has done to provide world-class trout fishing to Wisconsin.

Duke, how long have you been tying flies and how did you first get started?

I think I have been tying for at least 37 years. I began fly fishing when I was about 30 when my family gave me an L.L. Bean fly rod and a Pflueger Medalist reel.

After struggling a little and wanting to be a better fly fisher, I joined the Southern Wisconsin Chapter. Chapter members took me fishing and helped me become a better fly fisher. They also offered a fly tying class, and that is where I first learned to tie flies.

The year before, I'd purchased a couple dozen flies from this garage outfit in Nebraska called Cabela's that was just getting started. Every time I lost a fly that season I

thought that I was going to run out of flies and have to quit. I think that is what got me to take the fly tying class and start tying my own flies.

Do you remember who taught you to tie your first flies?

Larry Meicher taught me to tie my first fly, which I think was a brown-hackled peacock. Instructors Larry and Chuck Amacher taught me the basics, and I still have the guide book they provided for that class. They also had several itinerant hangers-out — guys like Henry Haugley, Dick Berge, Steve Born and Jim Bartelt. They'd come in and tie a particular fly pattern and tell a few stories and lies. We had such a good time that I decided this is not a bad group to be part of.

You mentioned that you started fishing before you got into fly tying. How long did you fish before you started fly fishing and fly tying?

I started fishing when I was about four or five years old with my grandfather. He wasn't a fly angler, so I started out fishing with worms and spinners. I continued to do that through high school, college and through my twenties. I liked the places where trout were found because they were so special. I wasn't a very successful trout angler at that time and really didn't get into fly tying until I got involved with TU.

A lot of people like me started out fishing with worms or spinners and some transitioned into fly fishers, and others still continue to fish with worms or spinners. Some of the great friendships that I have developed as a result of working on projects in the Driftless Area have been with people that are worm fishers, spin fishers or fly fishers, about divided into thirds.

Were there any books, videos, or other resources that helped you become a better tyer?

I spent a lot of time in the Madison Public Library checking out all the books on fly fishing and fly tying. TU and Scientific Anglers worked on a video called "The Way of the Trout," and I must have watched that about 400 times or more. It showed an angler tying a fly to represent an insect, catching a fish and releasing it to swim again. That was great for me. I had a really useful book by Terry Helleckson,

which was a compilation of several hundred fly patterns from all over the country. It had all the basics and had the recipe for the flies, but not necessarily the locally developed ones. Swisher and Richards books, David Hughes, Gary LaFontaine, and Gary Borger's books -- Nymphs and Naturals -- were good. Also, Vince Marinaro's book "The Ring of the Rise" was good, as was Pat McCafferty's book on aquatic entomology.

You developed what you call your home-waters fly box. Could you tell us a little about that?

One of the things that I kind of liked about fly fishing and fly tying was that it gave me a lot of outlets for my curiosity. I have always been curious about water and get water samples and turn over rocks and see what was in the water and attached to the rocks. I would also take a butterfly net and run it through the grasses along the stream during hopper season to see what kind of critters were in there.

That is where I started to develop my home-waters fly box. What are the insects and food that trout eat throughout the seasons on my home waters? I also like to have a couple trout for breakfast periodically and when I bring them home I always check what is in their guts. I have learned a fascinating amount from those autopsies. I could go home and tie flies based on what was in those fish. I think that has made me a better angler.

There are some insects that are only emerging for two, three or four days a year. If you are in your home waters and are curious about them, you will encounter them, and you will have knowledge about that stream that almost nobody else has. On one stream that I fish, there is a little #12 or #14 tan stonefly that comes off the end of June, and you won't find it on anybody's top 10 fly

list. When the hatch is coming off, every fish in the stream will be feeding on it, and if you don't have it, you won't be catching a fish. You could easily put together a Driftless Area Home-Waters Fly Box.

You have spent a lot of time fishing and trying out new patterns. How do you value the time you spend on the stream?

Trout streams have given me so many things that I appreciate. Streams give you something. They heal you, rest you, relax you, exhilarate you, challenge you and they give you so much more. There are also times that I just needed to sit by the stream and fishing didn't have much to do with it, but I probably had a rod in my hand. Probably the two most satisfying things that I have done in my outdoor life have been fishing and downhill skiing.

A long time ago I quit counting fish. It kind of became a question of what is enough. I don't need to count how many fish I catch in order to appreciate the water, the place and the time on the water. Sometimes you just laugh when your fly is hanging over a branch and the fish comes out of the water and takes it. Those things are wonderful parts of the experience.

It is always fun designing your own fly patterns or modifying existing fly patterns. Is there a fly pattern you might like to share with us that you designed or modified?

Ten years ago I was fishing in the Driftless Area with a friend from Eau Claire and there were fish that were taking flies in the riffle, but I could not catch them. Finally I got a fish to take an elk hair caddis and I kept it because I wanted to take a couple fish home for dinner.

The stomach of the fish felt like it was eating nickels or quarters. I opened up the stomach and found that it was full of those inch-long gi-



ENJOYING HIS HOME WATERS

Although Duke Welter has fished around the world, he really enjoys time on his home waters, and has even developed a "home waters" fly box. Driven by curiosity, he created this fly box to represent the insects and food that trout eat throughout the seasons on his home waters.

ant water bugs that we call “toe biters.”

When I got home I looked through all kinds of books and I couldn’t find it any of them, because it wasn’t a stonefly, caddis, mayfly or a regularly appearing beetle, hopper or ant. It was a predaceous water bug, but it was not a beetle. That led me to try to tie a fly to imitate it. That was 10 years ago and I am still working it. I don’t go out this time of the year without some toe-biters in my box, but think I have at least another 10 years of work on this. I wish somebody would come up with a definitive toe-biter pattern and send me some.

What are some of the major changes in fly tying since you first started tying flies?

Two of the major ones are way better hackle and way better hooks. In addition to the improved quality, we also have a lot more choices. The expansion of synthetic materials, foam and this UV stuff, beads, and other things that we didn’t have or were limited in availability. I am pleased with what we have to work with today...even the quality improvements in the vises.

Why do you tie your own flies rather than purchase them? What are some of the advantages to tying your own?

Well, we all know it saves you a lot of money. Also, I think for me it is the ability to tie to imitate what the fish here are eating now. The challenge is to try to do it in a way that makes those imitations effective. It has never gotten old in all the time that I have been tying.

From the time that I was taking that butterfly net along Black Earth Creek to capture insects, to the autopsies that I performed on the fish, I have found out so much more about the range of things that fish eat. Trout eat a lot of stuff. They are eating little green rock worms, caddis, spiders, bees and beetles #22 through #8. If you are going to fish beetles, you better have a full range. Sometimes you open a trout up and they are full of one thing, such as ants. The ants are dark and you don’t always see them on the water, but the fish are feeding on them.

Do you have any tips for someone just starting out or wanting to improve on their tying or their fishing?

Express your curiosity. Get out there and see what your home waters are all about.

Another thing is “old timers.” Those people have lots and lots of wisdom to share. There is an older guy in my old chapter, Clarence Wilson, who has forgotten more than I will ever learn, and I don’t think there is a time that I talked to him that I didn’t learn something. People like Lowell Gennrich from Southern Wisconsin, and Bob Hunt? You couldn’t help but learn from them. Palmer Olsen from Cashton had been tying flies since the 1930’s.

Those folks have got local knowledge and we can learn a lot from them. Learn from your own waters and learn from the “old farts.” I hope to be one someday.

You have fished all over the world. How well do patterns that fish well here fish elsewhere?

It has been fascinating to me, wherever I have fished, to learn things that might help me on the waters I fish here...my home waters. I met a guide from the south island of New Zealand along the

Kinnickinnic River here in Wisconsin. We had a little fishing, some beers and some great conversation. He was developing a fly while here in the United States that he took back and tested in New Zealand, and now it is one of his favorite flies there. I went back a few years ago to New Zealand and fished with him and had a great time with that fly there, and brought it back here. There are other patterns that I have found when I have fished in other places that have attributes that makes them effective here.

I went to a little fly shop in Paris and found Hot Spots and Lafontaine emergers. But at the same time there were other flies developed in France, such as the Fan Wing Royal Coachman and others like European minnow imitations. Some of these flies have traveled widely, and yet others you won’t find anywhere else.

You have been one of the major leaders in planning and obtaining the needed resources to make the Driftless Area one of the best fishing regions in the United States. What are some of the things you learned through all of this?

When we finally started working on the Driftless Area around 2002 we were not aware of anyone who was doing those kinds of things on a

planning and work that was done. So why couldn’t we expand those methods to 42 counties instead of six?

We needed to make sure that everyone would be able to get what they need. The farmers and NRCS wanted to keep agricultural land working, the Fish and Wildlife service liked the idea that we could do fish habitat, as well as habitat for other species such as turtles, frogs, birds and so on.

The NRCS liked projects reducing erosion and improving water quality. The DNR liked it because they were getting fish habitat and high-quality public fisheries. The rod and gun clubs were also an important part of this in these rural counties. Here were all these benefits that could be accomplished by working together. I have some really good relationships with farmers in the area. They wanted to do the right thing by their land, but didn’t have the money to do it. That’s where we came in.

Part of this is that we needed to make the projects more diverse. Another part is the conditions that Mother Nature is throwing at us in terms of climate change are more challenging than they were years ago. We have found ways to reduce the damage done by these large floods and reduce the eroded sedi-

I had that privilege to work at all those levels and then, oddly, to become a TU employee. The chance I have had to work with TUDARE was one of the richest experiences of my life and would not have traded it for anything. Every volunteer can find a place in TU.

Do you think that chapter fly-tying programs and programs like this can help recruit new members?

I think it is a useful tool for gathering people together in an organization that gets us some social support and teaches them not only about fly tying, but fishing as well. It can be done at a number of different ages. My wife Kris did a thing with Girl Scouts last winter teaching them to tie. They tied flies and made fly brooches like Bob Hunt once tied. We could work more with schools, boys and girls clubs, scouts and other groups that are good ways to get kids involved. An outdoor club at a middle school or high school could be another way to get kids involved with TU, not only with fly tying, but a lot of other things like ecology, habitat, fishing and the like.

Is there anything else that you would like to talk about that we are doing or could be doing related to fly tying and fly fishing?

I think there are good ideas out there relating to involving other groups, especially non-traditional groups. The challenge to us is to welcome people who are interested in what we do.

Traditionally we have been a group of old white guys. I have been embarrassed for a long time about the imbalance in both gender and race when it comes to TU and our sport. Women have been involved in fly fishing forever. If you look back at the 1880’s and into the 1900’s, there were a lot of avid women anglers who loved and contributed to it.

I think TU has made a lot of progress when it comes to gender and racial bias, but we can and should be doing a lot more. An example would be getting more involved in the BOW (Becoming an Outdoor Woman) program. Another question: Where are we working with our tribal neighbors? One of the strengths of TU is our dedicated volunteers working together. We need to expand that by reaching out to include like-minded organizations in what we do.



IMITATION AND A REAL TOE BITER

Join our toe-biter tying contest

If you ever get the chance to sit down and talk one on one with Duke, you will find he is a reference library of knowledge and experience. He is one of those people he talks about in this article when he says “Those folks have a lot of local knowledge and we can learn a lot from them.” The only difference is that he expands on the local knowledge and can relate that to fishing all over the world.

Here is a challenge to all fly tyers. Duke has been working on perfecting the “toe-biter” (giant water bug) and I think we might be able to help him. We are sponsoring a contest to see who can tie the best toe-biter. Every tyer can submit one toe-biter fly to Duke. He will select two other people to help him judge the entries and select a winner. The top five flies will be featured in the next issue of *Wisconsin Trout*, along with some tips on how to fish the fly by Duke. The first-place winner will receive a box of 48 flies tied by Bob Haase. Send your entries to: Duke Welter at 329 S. Lincoln Ave., Viroqua WI 54665.

region-wide basis. We had the benefit of this single geologic neighborhood that had richness yet problems. We had high-quality, high-pH water, good temperatures and consistent flows. We also had terrible habitat, historic land use abuses and the handicap of working with private land.

What helped was that we had a couple of places that were beginning to figure it out. The Nohr Chapter in southwest Wisconsin, the Hiawatha Chapter over by Rochester, Jeff Hastings and the NRCS conservationist Jim Radke in Vernon County, were doing it on a limited basis. Jeff and Jim were bringing in several hundred thousand dollars from outside the county to do projects on land where they had easements.

Dave Vetrano and his habitat crew were also instrumental in the

ment that affect our streams and the agricultural land around them.

On one 3,200-foot project, NRCS has estimated that it reduced the sediment loss by more than 600 tons per year and phosphorous loss by 600 pounds a year. Some problems still exist with these major rain and flood events, but those projects are pretty much durable.

You have been involved in TU for a long time. How has TU and your work with TU affected your life?

There have been people in the conservation world who have been really influential when I think of what impact you can have working as a group or an organized entity. One of the things about TU is that you can get involved at any level you want to. You can work with your local chapter, the State Council or even TU National.



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RECOLLECTIONS

Into the west, part one: The first look

The following is the first in a series of stories about our gang's trout fishing trips to Montana's Beartooth Mountains and Yellowstone National Park. If you have ever fished these places, nothing more needs to be said.

By Rick Larkin

By the summer of 1977, we were getting pretty good at this trout fishing thing. Most of us were just out of college and spent that summer pursuing employment. The economy was weak and most any job would do. None were serious jobs, nor were any even remotely career-oriented (landscaper, waiter, house painter, etc.) so we could go to our usual haunts west of Madison or up in Marinette County and come home with trout.

We also expanded our trout fishing horizons, exploring the streams of northern Wisconsin like the Deerskin River near Eagle River and the streams in the Sand Country around Waupaca and Steven's Point. Early that summer, we took a canoe trip down the Namekagon River in the northwestern part of the state for big browns. We also caught chinook, coho, rainbows and lake trout off the Milwaukee breakwater on Lake Michigan, heaving heavy-weight spoons like Little Cleos and Kastmasters. We also constructed various alewife rigs, from ornate and complicated bottom rigs to oversize bobber rigs which were designed to float out away from the breakwater when we had a westerly wind. We even tried a kite rig we saw in a fishing magazine. It didn't work. Still, we managed a few fish.

Nearby inland lakes like Oconomowoc, Okauchee and Pewaukee provided us with bluegills, perch and the occasional walleye. Our cruddy apartment on Milwaukee's east side functioned as a fish camp and fisherman's halfway house inhabited by various residents, a dog and an occa-

sional girlfriend. It was the home of fried-fish dinners along with the smoked and grilled salmon which we prided ourselves in. Our second floor apartment's outdoor landing had a deep fryer, charcoal grill and a smoker. An apple tree in our east side neighborhood provided clandestinely snipped green twigs, our secret ingredient for smoked fish. The tables and shelves of the place were littered with fishing magazines. Fly rods, spinning rods, nets, waders, nets and tackle boxes lived in various corners of the place.

Stories of Montana trout

One July evening, we were having a post-fishing beer with our college friend Dave, who was taking a break from his summer house painting job upstate. He told us he was working with a guy who fished Montana in a mountain area north of Yellowstone Park. The guy told Dave of an area with a trail running along a chain of mountain lakes connected by streams, where the trout species changed as you got higher in elevation. There were browns and brookies in the lower elevation lakes, with rainbows, cutthroats, hybrid cutbows, and goldens as you got higher up. There were supposedly graylings at the top of the chain, above the treeline.

He gave Dave a hand-drawn map. Dave made me a copy as he couldn't go until late August, prior to his starting graduate school. While we loved our Wisconsin trout fishing and had only scratched the surface of our state's trout fishing opportunities, trout news of this magnitude was mind boggling. We needed to go as soon as possible.

Big Joe was my apartment mate and business partner in our summer painting business. He was one of a number of guys who came and went in our little fish camp apartment during those years. Joe and I decided that night that we needed to go immediately. We did not want this fabulous multi-species trout opportunity to slip away. Somebody else might get there first. As our business was pretty much casual in nature (We were cash-only house and garage painters.), we could set our own hours. Therefore, we decided we would backpack the Beartooth Mountains in the Gallatin National Forest right away.

We had never backpacked before. You really couldn't count the Boy Scout overnights where we carried our stuff in our little canvas rucksacks. Preparation included an inventory of our gear which was primarily suited for Wisconsin tent camping and the close proximity of an automobile. Most of our stuff, especially the canvas tents, were old, heavy and not terribly portable. Plus, they tended to leak at even the suggestion of rain. Our sleeping bags were the old bulky ones which were especially good at attracting moisture.

Soon, we started scouring the Sunday paper for used stuff and discovered the backpacking department at the old Laacke and Joys outdoor store in downtown Milwaukee. Our first purchase was a nylon backpacking tent. Joe bought himself a framed backpack and a new mummy-style sleeping bag which he tied on top. I thought my big leather bottomed canoe pack would do just fine. A tiny stove, some lightweight cooking gear, and some newfangled freeze dried food completed our ini-



WHAT NOT TO BRING ON A BACKPACKING TRIP

On his first ever western backpacking trip, Author Rick Larkin discovered what not to bring. But at least he was armed with his white Shakespeare Wonder Rod and a post-college hairdo.

tial purchases.

The rest of our equipment was cobbled together from what we already had, including canned tuna, beans, and other food raided from my parent's pantry. Our clothing, especially our rain gear, was Wisconsin oriented, meaning kinda heavy. This stuff was squashed down as much as possible to accommodate our fishing gear. When full, my backpack probably weighed more than a good-sized Labrador retriever. I was afraid to weigh it. Now, we needed better maps.

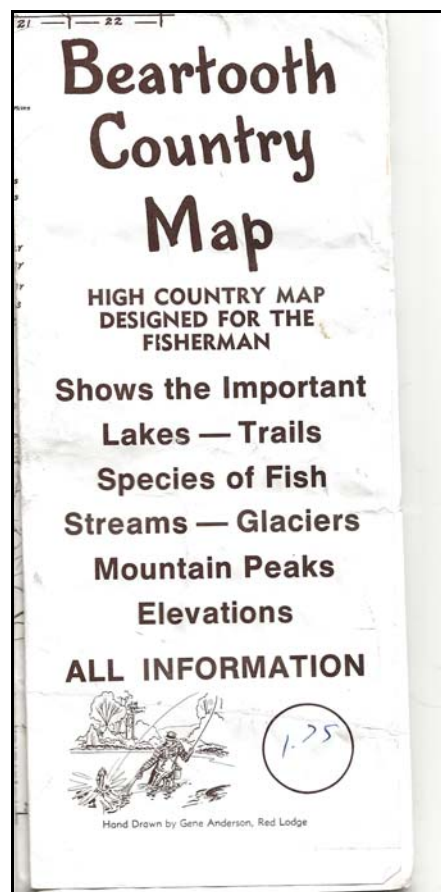
The old Milwaukee Map Company store was a most wonderful place. If you needed a map for ascending Mount Everest or exploring Borneo, they had it. After much fumbling with the hand drawn map and the assistance of a very patient old clerk, we had a map. It was a U.S. Geological Survey Quadrangle Map, Alpine, Montana-Wyoming; 1956 Edition. The route, adapted from Dave's hand drawn map, was to begin in the Custer National Forest at the East Rosebud Trailhead at Alpine, Montana and progress up a pass, starting at about 6,200 feet and ending the first day at Elk Lake at around 7,000 feet above sea level. A hike of similar length would take us to Rimrock and Rainbow Lake, followed by Lake at The Falls, our final destination. All in all, it was just over 10 miles as the crow flies. This would be a piece of cake for a couple of 23-year-olds.

It looked like an easy hike to fabulous fishing. Along the way, we would see the Snowbank and Sun-

dance Glaciers, along with Mount Snowbank and Castlerock Mountain, which rose to 12,408 feet above sea level. We lived most of our lives at 617 feet above sea level, along the shores of Lake Michigan. "No problem," we agreed. We could cover it in a 10-day trip. Like all of our expeditions of this era, we thought we could do it all. We put off any painting for 10 days and got ready for adventure.

On our way

I changed the oil in my used pickup truck and we were off. Excitement and anticipation propelled us through an all-night, 24-hour, two-thermos trip from Milwaukee to Billings, Montana. One guy drove while the other slept. When both of us were awake, we blasted the radio and drove as fast as we could. Arriving in Billings, on the verge of complete collapse, we got a cheap motel room, slept a little, and prepped our gear. The next morning, we saw mountains visible in the distance for the first time. I stopped at a fly shop and bought another map. The "Beartooth Country Map-High Country Map Designed for the Fisherman-Shows the Important Lakes-Trails-Species of Fish-Streams-Glaciers-Mountain Peaks-Elevations-All Information" was hand-drawn by a guy named Gene Anderson of Red Lodge. It cost a buck seventy-five. I also bought my first "western" dry flies. Humpies, mostly, I remember. The hand drawn map caused us



MAP OF THE TIMES

The cover of the Beartooth Country map is a cool example of "outdoorsy" marketing of the period. I Googled the author Gene Anderson extensively and came up with nothing. I am assuming he is deceased. Note the price.

See *MONTANA*, page 23

New life for Marinette County’s NB Beaver Creek

The North Branch Beaver Creek in Marinette County had a history of flooding at the 25th Road crossing. The four 36-inch culverts of the original crossing were partially embedded and could not accommodate excessive flows during the spring. Additionally, floating debris would accumulate on the upstream side of the old crossing. The new crossing, manufactured by CONTECH, consist of precast concrete footers, five individual spans and wing walls. The new crossing was placed to better align with the stream channel, will reduce flooding of the road and improve stream connectivity. This is the last road crossing on the north branch of Beaver Creek and improved access for trout to more than 20 miles of connected, coldwater tributary streams.

Former TU staffer Laura McFarland (now with the DNR) produced the original stream profile of the site in 2018. The Green Bay chapter donated \$5,000; the Town of Beaver received grants from the DNR's Office of Great Waters (\$60,000), DNR River Protection Grant (\$50,000) and the Wisconsin Coastal Management Program (\$54,500). The Town of Beaver also contributed \$40,000 toward the project. The Marinette County Land Information Department assisted with a grant application. Richlen Excavating completed the work in August.

—Chip Long, DNR Fisheries Biologist



BEFORE: FOUR UNDERSIZED EMBEDDED CULVERTS



AFTER: PRECAST CONCRETE FOOTERS, FIVE SPANS AND WING WALLS

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RECOLLECTIONS

Hex camp traditions

By Joe Knight

IRON RIVER – Here I was, stuck in the muck, in the dark, at the edge of the White River, while mosquitos buzzed around my ears. It was good to be back after an absence of several years.

Upstream I had heard the distinctive slurp of a trout eating a large mayfly and I was going to do my best to catch him as soon as I worked my way out of this bed of muck.

I had come up the river by canoe with Dick Berge, 83, of rural Iron River. I had come to briefly revive the tradition of Hex camp — if you can still call it “camp” when you’re down to two fishermen, and I wasn’t a founding member. Also, although neither of us said this specifically, we needed to tell a few stories about the most recently departed Hex camp regular — Richard Bell. Bell was my neighbor in Eau Claire and sometimes canoeing, hunting and fishing partner. He was also sort of my personal librarian. He was always handing me books that I needed to read. He had been a reference librarian for UW-Eau Claire.

For Bell and Berge, the connection went back much further, to when they were young teachers in Madison. They came up north with

a friend who had a cabin near the White River and fished the Hex hatch. “Hex” is shorthand for the genus of large mayflies that hatch on late June nights in Wisconsin. When Berge’s wife Evie heard there was a shack for sale on a lake located between the Brule and White rivers, they bought it. Evie’s only requirement was that indoor plumbing be installed before she spent any time there.

That was 40 years ago.

Trout fishing friends soon began showing up at Hex time, mostly from Madison, but the early group included Charlie Gritzner, Berge’s brother-in-law from Iowa. In the following years more than 30 anglers came to Hex camp from states that included New York, Pennsylvania, Iowa, Minnesota and Michigan. Some anglers who already lived in the area dropped by to socialize and fish with this crew, but slept in their own beds.

When Dick and Evie retired 15 years after purchasing the original tarpaper cabin, they replaced it with a year-round home and moved north for good.

Gritzner owned a cabin on the same lake a few properties down, and that became the base for Hex camp.

See **HEX CAMP**, page 25

**DICK BERGE HAS HOSTED HEX CAMP FOR MORE THAN 40 YEARS**

When Berge’s wife Evie heard there was a shack for sale on a lake located between the Brule and White rivers, they bought it. Evie’s only requirement was that indoor plumbing be installed before she spent any time there. That was 40 years ago.

Snapshot Day 2020

Volunteers search for aquatic invasive species across the state to protect our waters.

By Jaclyn Lucas and Ellen Voss

On August 15, 139 volunteers put on their masks, rolled up their sleeves and explored 200 different monitoring sites across Wisconsin to search for aquatic invasive species (AIS). This event, known as Snapshot Day, has been hosted by River Alliance of Wisconsin in partnership with the Department of Natural Resources and UW-Division of Extension since 2014 and has become an annual August tradition for many across the state.

Initially focused on rivers and streams, the program has expanded to include lakes and other water bodies. The premise and training remain the same: volunteers and local partners team up to help prevent the spread of invasive species that harm rivers, lakes and wetlands. The statewide “citizen-science” approach helps to maximize the number of sites being checked, and this free event allows volunteers to learn about their local waters and how to help keep them healthy.

The question as to whether Snapshot Day 2020 could occur in the midst of a pandemic required careful consideration. By implementing some creative programming tweaks and instituting mandatory Covid-conscious guidelines, we were able to do it safely.

While a great way to get outdoors and explore, this one-day event also contributes a vast amount of AIS data to the DNR.

During the first week of August, volunteers participated in a brief “virtual training.” Equipped with the tools needed to find AIS, volunteers then travelled to their assigned sites for the statewide “AIS scavenger hunt.”

Volunteers can participate in a

variety of ways, from scooping substrate to look for snails and crayfish to tossing a rope rake to collect aquatic plants, to recording data and taking photos. The monitoring information is then compiled and verified by AIS experts and added to a statewide database so that appropriate measures can be taken if new species are detected. In addition to prevention, early identification is a key factor in stopping the spread of these pesky plant, algae and animal species from spreading throughout the beautiful waters of Wisconsin.

The data for Snapshot Day 2020 are still rolling in, and potential discoveries are being confirmed, but based on the information compiled thus far, there were no new findings at many of the Snapshot Day monitoring sites. The statewide results will be posted on the River Alliance of Wisconsin website and in the DNR’s database when they are finalized. To see what species were found during Snapshot Day 2019, check out the interactive story map at <http://bit.ly/aisstorymap2019>.

How can you help? Plan to take part in the 8th annual Snapshot Day on Saturday, August 21, 2021. This year we only had two Snapshot Day events in the entire Driftless Area. Our goal is to add more sites in this region in 2021 and create a comprehensive network of volunteers, anglers and paddlers to help combat AIS. In addition, help is still needed to add more river sites statewide. If your TU chapter would be interested in hosting or joining a Snapshot Day event, please contact me at evoss@wisconsinrivers.org. Thank you for your continued efforts to protect Wisconsin’s rivers and streams.

**ARMED AND READY TO SEARCH FOR AQUATIC INVASIVE SPECIES**

Volunteers can participate in a variety of ways, from scooping substrate to look for snails and crayfish to tossing a rope rake to collect aquatic plants, to recording data and taking photos.

**TOOLS AND TRAINING PROVIDED**

When you volunteer for Snapshot Day you will be provided with the training and materials needed to identify AIS on your favorite body of water.

COLE, from page 1

I know you served with one of our own TU leaders, Duke Welter, in your time on the Natural Resources Board. We'll save the "Duke Stories" for another time, but I wanted to get your perspective on the importance of the board in shaping DNR policy in Wisconsin.

I have a very unique perspective as someone who has served on and now works with the Natural Resources Board. This board is an incredibly important part of the work we do.

The NRB is an unusual entity that is not replicated anywhere in the country, where seven governor-appointed and confirmed members develop and approve policy around natural resources management in Wisconsin. I am proud to say that this process has been working well for more than 85 years.

Can you recall a moment in your childhood when you made a special connection with the outdoors?

Living in rural Michigan provided me with a myriad of opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. Our older sisters would send us outside at 8 a.m. Fishing, snowmobiling, pheasant hunting, walking in the woods, biking and other outdoor activities were a huge part of my childhood.

I was lucky to have robust opportunities outdoors in the 15 wooded acres in our community. That existence helped form me to whom I am today.

Nice. I was about six years old and playing on the streambank when my dad caught a 22 inch brown trout in the river near my grandma's house. I've been drawn to water ever since.

Can you speak to the importance of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and the access to outdoor recreation that it provides?

The Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Fund has been a critical tool in protecting Wisconsin's outdoor heritage. Over 30 years, it has helped save critical landscapes and habitat, places to fish, hunt, hike and inspire new generations to love the outdoors.

Public-private partnerships are at the heart of what has led to so much success. Working with groups like Trout Unlimited and other conservation partners have allowed the state to leverage funding and bring community support for critical projects. We look forward to working with partners like TU to shape the future of stewardship.

Reauthorization of Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program is WITU's number one priority heading into this budget season. We're looking forward to working with the DNR, the governor's office and the legislature to extend Wisconsin's iconic public lands initiative.

Speaking of working together, in the past we've been fortunate to have some excellent people such as Joanna Griffin and Larry Claggett occupy the role of trout coordinator within the DNR. Are there plans to fill that position in the future?

The state is under a hiring freeze as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic.

ic. While we continue to assess vacant positions in the department, I can't make any commitments at this time about filing that specific position.

The public trust doctrine is the centerpiece for protection of our waters and is key to addressing major issues affecting our trout streams, including groundwater protection and agricultural runoff and pollution. Is the agency and DNR Board aggressively relying on that doctrine in water resource management and regulatory programs? What are some examples?

Outdoor recreation activities generate nearly \$8 billion each year and support more than 93,000 jobs in our state. Much of the reason for that economic boost is because we have great lakes, rivers and streams in our state, and they are clean and healthy in part because of our public trust doctrine.

In Wisconsin, our constitution says that our waters are held in trust for future generations. These waters are not owned by any riparian landowner, business or government agency. We continue to take this public trust responsibility very seriously and see it as one of our most important guiding principles for everything from habitat protection to wetland restoration activities.

In fact, all of the permitting activities that involve nearshore habitat impacts are driven by those public trust responsibilities. Strong shoreland zoning regulations are supported by the public trust doctrine.

What are the biggest impediments to successfully implementing programs to address the agricultural runoff and water quality problems that threaten or impair our trout waters?

With the exception of large animal farms, known as concentrated animal feeding operations or CAFO's, the Clean Water Act does not apply to agricultural runoff and the resulting water-quality problems. We must rely on largely voluntary approaches to protect waters like trout streams.

While the overwhelming majority of agricultural producers want to do the right thing and many are innovative leaders in that regard, it only takes one or two bad actors in a watershed to cause severe impacts to sensitive coldwater resources.

In addition, climate change brings with it large precipitation events that quickly overwhelm rivers and streams and flush excess nutrients and polluted runoff into those waters.

Despite those challenges, we are making slow but steady progress and we hope that the new targeted performance standards in areas of the state with very susceptible soils and high nitrates will enable us to provide greater protections to critical habitat like the 11,000 miles of coldwater streams in Wisconsin.

Some of our best partners in local water conservation are farmers who grant public fishing access and easements on which we're able to buffer the streams by restoring the riparian corridor. At the same time, we're alarmed to see so many high-capacity wells appearing on the

landscape. I see us heading for a future in which we're left asking who needs the water more, the fish or the farmers? Do you think it's possible, through regulation and management, to see both fish and farmers survive and thrive, even in times of drought?

Every watershed in our state has a water budget. Only so much water can be taken out of it before the water budget is overdrawn. Thankfully in many parts of the state, especially during wet years like the last couple, it is not too difficult to allocate those waters in a way that provides



ALL SMILES ON THIS NORTHWOODS OUTING

DNR Secretary Preston Cole says his dream trip would either be to Boulder Junction or trout fishing with Duke Welter.

for healthy riverine corridors and water for things like crop irrigation.

But there are parts of the state, like the central sands near Stevens Point, where the cumulative impacts of many high-capacity wells in smaller more sensitive watersheds can adversely impact streams, rivers and even some lakes that rely on groundwater. In those areas, we do our best to work with high-capacity well users to minimize those impacts and to, when necessary, restrict new wells from going into an already overdrawn watershed.

There are good examples of regulatory approaches in states like Kansas, Nebraska and Texas that have done well at finding this balance. Minnesota and Michigan also have some useful models from which we can draw possible solutions.

Until new legislative tools are available, the DNR will continue to use our current resources to balance the need for high-capacity wells for agricultural and municipal use with the imperative to protect some of our most iconic coldwater resources.

Now just for fun, let's say I give you a seven-day, all-expense-paid hunting or fishing trip anywhere in the world. Where would you go?

Boulder Junction, Wisconsin. And some trout fishing on the Prairie River...with Duke Welter!

Well played, Mr. Secretary. Ok, let's bring it back home. We've both spent time in Milwaukee. I was amazed to find out how much access there is to the outdoors within the city through parks, trails and public waterways. Do you have a favorite outdoor location in Milwaukee?

Any place on the shore of Lake Michigan: Lakeshore State Park, Bradford Beach, South Shore and Bayview Park. You're right, Milwaukee has a wealth of public access to lands and waterways. There are fantastic inland locations, too, like Havenwoods State Forest and neighboring McGovern Park.

Estabrook Park is also a hidden gem, nestled in the city along the Milwaukee River. Not only are there some great fishing opportunities, there is a Biergarten, disc golf course and excellent trails.

Oh, those are all great spots. My friend Jeff, who's African American, lives in the inner city, and didn't have a car at the time, would always tell me about the weird looks he would get riding the bus with his waders and fishing pole. It may sound strange to those who haven't spent time in Milwaukee, but there

are some phenomenal fishing opportunities not far from the bus stops.

As a person of color who enjoys hunting and fishing, what do you think we need to do to make sure all Wisconsinites feel comfortable and are able to access outdoor recreational opportunities?

I recently had the opportunity to discuss this very topic virtually at a national conference for fish and wildlife agencies here in the U.S.

What people of color want from the great outdoors varies from person-to-person. It's not a monolithic group. Some people are conservationists, some are there for health and wellness and some want to enjoy a space in which their tax dollars are being invested. There's no single answer here that will fit everyone.

But for me, the answer in any of these areas is simple: Make the outdoors welcoming, no matter the activity, whether it's hunting, fishing, hiking or camping.

If we as the DNR, as conservationists, as stewards of our natural resources, make the effort to be welcoming, people of color will be there.

We encourage that by showing diversity across our internal and external platforms and working to promote these areas with our partners at the Department of Tourism to maximize our reach to a more diverse audience.

When we can show and tell the stories of people of color, it shows that they belong there, in our natural resources story, too. It's essential to tell the stories to those who help build these areas.

The key is to get people out to enjoy the outdoors.

Mr. Secretary, we look forward to working with you and the DNR towards that goal. Thank you again for taking the time to share your thoughts with us and for your commitment to public service.



Chapter News



ANTIGO CHAPTER MEMBERS REPAINT FISHING PIER AT SHADICK SPRING

Antigo Chapter

Where did the summer go? We hope everyone is safe. It's been a different year for us all. Since we didn't hold our annual summer kid's fishing day, our chapter placed 700 trout in Remington Pond for the kids to catch this summer.

We sent the DNR a check for \$2,000 to help fund a UTV for the Antigo DNR use in the field. We again this year funded the fuel for the DNR dredge. They are working on two small spring ponds this summer.

Our chapter has held two work days so far this year. The first was on the fishing dock north of town at

the intersection of Highways 45 and C, on the East Branch of the Eau Claire River. We replaced some broken boards and did some painting. Then we cut the weeds and grass in the front of the fishing dock, making it easier for people to fish. The wood on the pier was thirsty for stain, as I think we used six gallons to finish the job. Thanks to the guys who helped. It was a great way to spend some time together and get things done.

We're hoping for a better rest of the year and better 2021. Keep the faith!

—Scott Henricks

Central Wisconsin Chapter

The Central Wisconsin Chapter has continued to make many painful decisions since the COVID virus struck. In the interest of the health and safety of our members and guests during the pandemic, we decided against holding in-person events for the rest of the year. One exception has been and will continue to be the dedicated work of our River Keepers. We thank them for their continuing dedication to our coldwater trout streams.

The CWTU Board continues to hold meetings each month on a virtual platform. We still hope to resume our live meetings and events when possible. Perhaps next year we will be able to restart live meetings, hold Trout Fest and celebrate our 50th anniversary. CWTU continues to enjoy strong support from our members. Even during this time of inactivity for our members, we have grown our membership and now have more than 400 members.

As a chapter, CWTU has remained active, with several projects underway. For several years CWTU has been supporting and working with the Wisconsin DNR to reclaim and restore Bird Creek in Wautoma from Highway 21 to River Road. The stream had become severely overgrown with buckthorn and other invasive plants, and in some places was almost inaccessible.

The river is being restored for natural trout habitat and reproduction, and a walking trail is being established along the east side of the creek. The trail alongside Bird Creek will allow access by anglers,

students at the nearby schools and the general public.

Native plants and trees will eventually be planted along this section of stream. This project is funded by Trout Unlimited and with labor provided by TU volunteers under the direction of the DNR. CWTU has supported the project with donations and has held numerous workdays and events at Bird Creek. We have been joined in these efforts by members of several of our fellow chapters, particularly Fox Valley and the Elliot Donnelley Chapter in Chicago which has made a series of very generous donations of cash and manpower.

CWTU approached the City Council of Wautoma and sought recognition for one of our founding members, Dr. Thomas W. (Doc) Poulette, who recently passed away. The CWTU team of Dan Harmon III, Dick Krause, Tom Meyer and John Wilcox appeared before the city council, made a presentation, answered questions and requested a formal resolution recognizing Poulette. The council agreed and passed a resolution naming the trail in memory of Poulette and approved the placing of a marker on the trail to identify it. CWTU will commission a stone marker and have it placed beside the trail.

"Doc" Poulette was born in 1932 and was raised in Wautoma by his grandparents Emma and Thomas Poulette. His grandfather was the railroad station agent in Wautoma. Doc graduated from Wautoma High School in 1950 and then attended

Ripon College where he earned a bachelor's degree under the ROTC program.

After that he became a lieutenant in the U.S. Army and served in Europe. He returned to Wisconsin and taught biology and coached basketball at Elkhorn High School.

In 1958 he attended Marquette Dental School and in 1962 started his practice on Main Street in Wautoma. Doc was a beloved dentist and had a successful practice for many years. Upon retirement in the late 90's he divided his time between Florida and Waupaca. During his time in Wautoma he raised two sons and one of them, George Poulette, is a noted heart surgeon in Kenosha.

Doc was very active in the Boy Scouts, the Rotary Club in Wautoma, Ducks Unlimited and the American Legion. He was a founding member of the Central Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited in 1971. Green Bay Packer defensive back Doug Hart was the keynote speaker at that first meeting. Doc was an active member in TU until his death in May of 2019.

Wisconsin TU members will remember him as a respected leader, teacher, mentor and friend. All who knew him loved him for his intelligence, kindness and wonderful sense of humor. He was especially good friends and trout fishing buddies with Judge Jon Wilcox and Dan

Harmon III, who spoke on his behalf at the meeting Monday night. He will be missed, but the trail along Bird Creek will be dedicated in his memory and his legacy and dedication to conservation of our coldwater resources will live on forever.

CWTU Board Member Scott Bahn has taken the lead in applying for grants to help fund the restoration of the Younglove Easement on the West Branch of the White River in Waushara County. The funds will be used to purchase materials for the construction and maintenance of overhead bank covers and other in-stream habitat. The project is led by TU CARES, which is comprised of the four Central Wisconsin Chapters: CWTU, Fox Valley, Frank Hornberg and Shaw-Paca.

Scott applied for an Embrace-a-Stream grant of \$9,000 for the project. CWTU, Fox Valley and the Elliot Donnelley Chapter in Chicago will provide funds and labor in the amount of \$25,000 for the \$34,000 project. We recently learned that we had been awarded a \$3,500 Embrace-A-Stream from TU for this work. There is also a grant application pending with the Trout and Salmon Foundation. Hopefully, we will be able to start this project in May of 2021 and bring it to completion by September 2022.

—Stan Cichowski

Coulee Region Chapter

Our first few meetings of the year have been held via Zoom video as we do our part to help with abiding by pandemic protocols. Our first chapter meeting of the year was held on August 26. Linn Beck was our guest presenter and shared information on CAFOs (concentrated animal feeding operations) and how TU chapters have and should address issues related to watershed health and these operations. Kristal Welter led a discussion on what meetings will look like for the year and gathered information on what our membership would like to see for topics and presenters. Our September meeting featured the DNR's Mike Leonard, Paul Krahn of TUDARE, and Matt Albright, the land and water conservation technician from Vernon County. They shared progress on area stream projects and what is planned for the upcoming months and into 2021.

Terry Becker led a fly-tying class in early 2020 in Viroqua with the assistance of several CRTU members and he plans to do the same this upcoming winter. The first classes went very well and he is going to add some instructional videos as part of his work. If interested in assisting Terry with the class or participating, you can contact him at NLpanther74@gmail.com. There is a small fee for the class and the chapter can provide the vises and tying tools if attendees do not have their own.

Chapter leaders and members

continue to monitor the developments of the poultry operation on Timber Coulee and the Wild Rose Dairy expansion in Crawford County. For the most current information on these two operations, the Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout news group has done an excellent job of reporting on the issues. Find the Independent/Scout on Facebook and at swnews4u.com.

As of September 11, 2020 the Crawford County Land Conservation Committee voted down a proposal to recommend a one-year extension of the CAFO moratorium to the Crawford County Board. There were 14 sportsperson and agricultural organizations (including CRTU, the Nohr Chapter, and the River Alliance of Wisconsin) which signed on to a recommendation to extend the moratorium. The extension of the moratorium failed on a 3-2 vote.

We have new caps and decals for sale to promote our chapter. Caps are \$20 and decals are only \$1. You can purchase them online at www.couleeregiontu.org or contact Curt Rees at 608-317-3747 and curtrees@gmail.com. The caps come in navy or charcoal and feature the angry brown trout logo.

For more information on the upcoming CRTU chapter meetings, follow us on Facebook and at couleeregiontu.org.

—Curt Rees

Frank Hornberg Chapter

Exciting things are in the works for our chapter. We are doing a reorganization with new President Doug Erdmann, new Treasurer Dan Holloway and new Secretary Walter Clark. Currently, we are calling all of our 190 members and asking them what types of activities they

would like to be involved in. Several people expressed interest in becoming more actively involved. So far, members would like habitat work days, kids fishing days, guest speakers, stream clean-ups and social events like picnics and Trout on Tap. We will be planning these events in

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each county in our chapter. Their responses will help us develop yearly goals.

In July we helped 11 boys from Amherst BSA Scouts Troop 296 earn their fly-fishing merit badge. We maintained social distancing and each scout had their own equipment, so that items did not have to be shared. Scout leadership provided masks and hand sanitizer for personal use. The scouts learned about fly rods and flies, tied various knots, practiced casting and tied two flies.

Then they put their skills to work by catching panfish in Lake Pacawa in Plover. Special thanks to Wyatt, Beth and Jack Bohm and Dale Hewitt for instructing.

We ordered 250 biodegradable fly cups with our logo. They will be used as promotional incentives at our upcoming events. We have a large supply of flies that we can put in the cups.

We are exploring the RIVERS Mobile App at TU.org. This app will allow us to catalogue damaged

or degraded habitats for potential restoration projects. No cell reception is needed for this app to work. TU.org has several training documents on their website.

In August we held our first Zoom meeting with some of our board members. We received positive feedback and it saved us the

travel time to an in-person meeting. We will use this format going forward.

In late September we inventoried our storage trailer. Be sure to follow us on Facebook at facebook.com/HornbergTU

—Doug Erdmann

Green Bay Chapter

On July 18 the Green Bay Chapter held its first work project since

August 2019. We partnered with the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and

The Hatch that created Fox Valley Trout Unlimited

Ever wonder how FVTU started? I asked John Hammond, a former FVTU board member I served with, and he told me some of the history and shared with me a “Synoptic History of the FVTU” that he had previously authored. However, he said if I really wanted to know the complete history, then I should interview Ron Gillard who, along with several others, started it all. Recently I interviewed Ron by phone. He’s 84 years young, retired and lives in New Berlin.

The name Fox Valley Chapter is intended to demonstrate our interest in attracting members from the entire Fox Cities area. Founded in 1973, the chapter elected the following officers: President Robert Towns, Menasha; Vice President Warren Schweitzer, Menasha; Secretary Ron Gillard, Appleton and Treasurer Mike Syverson, Neenah. Directors were Wayne Ellis Appleton, Al Miller, Neenah and Glen Ihde, Menasha.

That was the spring of 1973, but before that, in the late ‘60’s, Ron Gillard was transitioning to trout fishing and conservation. Along the way he joined others in this adventure. There was Wayne Larson from the Wirtz’s Liquor and fishing store on Wisconsin Avenue, who interested Ron in coldwater conservation. Then there was Bob Towns, known as “Road Kill Townes,” for his favorite method of gathering fly-tying material. They joined Warren Schweitzer, who hosted meetings of this growing group at his Appleton home. Ron has been fly fishing since age eight using hand-tied flies made from craft feathers. As a school boy Ron fished often, catching bluegills and rock bass. These pan fish from West Allis lagoons were a weekly feature on the Gillard family dinner table.

In the 1970’s Ron worked for the telephone company, known then as “Ma Bell.” Like Warren, he also hosted fishing and TU related meetings and he did so at telephone company facilities. One of their first conservation projects was to clean up channels or the mouths of rivers emptying into Lake Winnebago. They were untrained in stream work but they knew they were doing good and having a good time doing it.

As the group grew, they became more focused on their sport and conservation. They became aware of two neighboring TU groups. The Green Bay TU chapter had been active for some time while the Central Wisconsin Chapter had recently become chartered in March of 1971. Leaders of both neighboring chapters offered to help launch a new Fox Valley Chapter. They also learned that Wisconsin would host the National TU Meeting in Madison in August of 1972. It was time to get serious.

Ron said his favorite go-to fly at the time was the locally created Pass Lake pattern that he fished both as a dry and as a subsurface bug. Ron would often meet his fishing buddies, including John Hammond, Dennis, Bob and



JOHN HAMMOND: FVTU HISTORIAN AND FOUNDING MEMBER

John Hammond, who wrote a “History of FVTU,” was one of the founding members of the Fox Valley Chapter.

others in Wautoma at the Silvercryst for a day’s fishing adventure at one of their favorite local streams which included the Mecan, Chaffee and Wedde Creek. The only fly shop at the time was Erickson’s in Poyissippi.

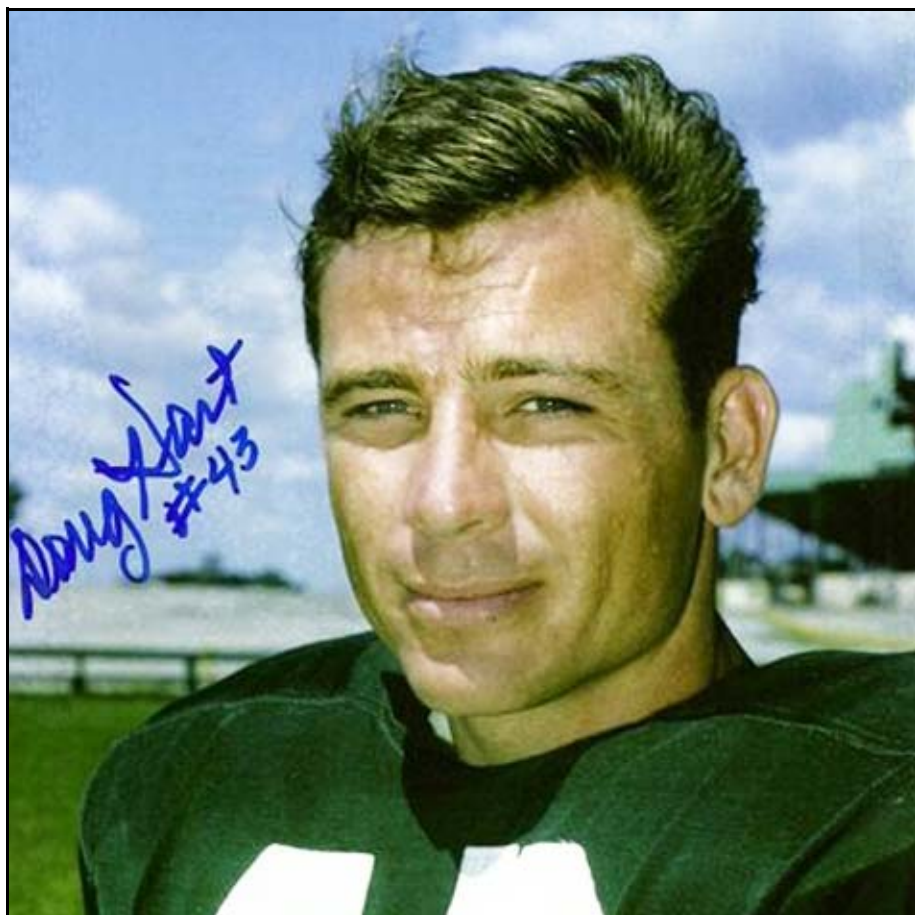
In early 1973 at a meeting at Warren’s home, it was decided to seek TU chapter status and Bob Towns was appointed acting president with the task of contacting the Wisconsin State Council for that purpose. At the time there were 700 TU members in four Wisconsin chapters based in Milwaukee, Madison, Green Bay and Wautoma. Soon Bob met with Nash Williams in Madison to hatch a plan. It was decided an organizational meeting to gauge interest level and solicit membership was the next step. Then Bob met with former Green Bay TU chapter president Doug Hart at the Ridgeway Country Club. As a former Lombardi-era Packer defensive back, and avid fly angler, “Number 43” was sure to draw a crowd.

With the help of the Central Wisconsin and Green Bay chapters, an organizational meeting was planned for late March at the Boy’s Brigade in Neenah. The group worked hard to promote the meeting. There were posters at local sports shops, newspaper ads and PSA spots on WHBY radio. Organizers planned a great program, including the screening of two films about trout fishing and Russ Daly of the DNR speaking about Lake Michigan trout and salmon programs. With Doug speaking and a strong program, a crowd of more than 200 prospective members attended. Coincidentally, in 1971 Doug Hart helped jumpstart the Central Wisconsin Chapter and is considered one of its founding members.

John Hammond writes in his History of FVTU, “As a consequence, a considerable number of attendees indicated interest in joining a soon-to-be Fox Valley Chapter. Included in that group were such long-time members as Bob Meier, Norman Zimmerman, Fritz Corsmeier, John Hammond, Lee Snyder and Del Schwaller. From the interest and enthusiasm exhibited at the meeting, the steering committee, with the help of the statewide organization, moved quickly to fulfill the requirements of having the chapter officially chartered. That occurred later in 1973.”

Recent interviews with Ron Gillard and John Hammond made this article possible. I thank them both for their time and their passion for FVTU. Also thanks to Tom Meyer whose book, “The Founders and Legends of CWTU” was an invaluable reference. Also an important information source is the Wisconsin State Council newsletter archives available to anyone via the State Council website at wicouncil.tu.org.

—Don Clouthier



FORMER PACKER AND CHAPTER LEADER DOUG HART HELPED OUT

Lombardi-era Packer Doug Hart was a chapter president for the Green Bay Chapter and helped get the Fox Valley Chapter started.



Chapter News



Adrian Meseberg

GREEN BAY CHAPTER HELPS CLEAR SPENCER CREEK IN FOREST COUNTY

GBTU partnered with the U.S. Forest Service and DNR for fishability brushing on Spencer Creek in Forest County. The creek had become so overgrown with buckthorn that it would have been almost impossible to fish. Five hours later the creek was left with a nice, open stretch of water.

DNR for fishability brushing on Spencer Creek in Forest County. The creek had become so overgrown with buckthorn that it would have been almost impossible to fish.

Five hours later the creek was left with a nice, open stretch of water. We were quite satisfied with the work and it was wonderful to see familiar faces again. There were 11 total participants. GBTU members who made the 1.5-hour trip to Spencer were Paul Kruse, Jim Vandenberg, Jeff House, Peter Tilleman, Chad Neta, Pat Hill and Adrian Meseberg. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, we practiced social distancing.

Last Spring GBTU created an alternative fundraising committee to address the fact our chapter has outgrown the activities and financial requests our banquet can fund alone. In June we held two virtual meetings and have begun grant-writing and other revenue-raising ideas.

GBTU has a Trout Educational Trail near the Northeast Wisconsin Zoo (N.E.W. Zoo) north of Green Bay. Running along Haller's Creek, the trail was created several decades ago and consists of 20 signs with physical structures demonstrating what is described on the signs. We are working with Brown County and the Reforestation Camp to completely upgrade the trail. The plan for the project includes a commitment from the Reforestation Camp to reroof the covered bridge that starts the trail.

Brown County is working to upgrade two ponds that Haller's Creek runs through. Our chapter had a

work project in September, where we partnered with Brown County and the Reforestation Camp to remove and treat buckthorn along the creek and remove the old signs, structures and run-down fencing.

During our August 6 virtual board meeting we created a Trout Educational Trail Committee. The nine-member committee met virtually to develop a theme and to start the process of new sign designs. Our chapter leaders are very excited about this project. The location of the trail sees a high number of people each year due to it starting near the zoo parking lot. This is a great opportunity for our chapter to do something meaningful during this pandemic.

The GBTU Board of Directors typically meets the first Thursday of each month from September through April. Since public gatherings are difficult at the time, we decided to try holding them virtually. We held our first on August 6, and it went very well. We held another meeting on September 2. At the September meeting we passed a 2020-21 budget. The budget looks different from recent years as we have to take into account what our activities, revenue and spending may look like during the next 12 months.

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

Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

The Stanek property project is complete. After completing the work on the Dieter Blue River property, the contractor moved to our Six Mile Branch project off County Highway Q. Most of the shaping and riprapping had been done and several weirs installed last fall. The remaining in-stream structures, shaping, seeding and mulching were just completed. This project also incorporated three wetland scrapes, which have frogs, geese and ducks and more utilizing them since the end of winter.

The Zadrzail property project,

on the Blue River below the confluence of Six Mile Branch, is slated to be done over two years. Located immediately downstream of the Stanek site just off County Highway Q, it includes the final 700 feet of Six Mile Branch and approximately 7,500 feet (1.4 miles) of the Blue. There is tremendous amount of soil that needs to be removed from this site.

The postponed banquet has been cancelled. We have received a couple very generous donations for stream work and we are checking on our schools to see if we can assist

with a grant related to coldwater resources during the pandemic.

Fennimore schools are planning to attempt TIC since they are going to be in school.

John Morton has produced two

newsletters this year with very good compliments. We shared these with a mailing and email. Eventually they will be on our web site.

—Brian Larson

Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

In administrative news Chapter Board member Pete Kilbarda stepped down from his position and we are looking diligently for a replacement. Thanks to Pete for his time served. Rip Rap Editor Ed Constantini put out his first issue and it was dynamite. The chapter continues its string of luck in finding talented people for our newsletter. Unfortunately, Covid eliminated our ability to get Rip Rap printed free of charge so we have been forced to put it out electronically. Kiap-TU-Wish is sending it out via email, so members are encouraged to contact TU National to update their profile with a current email address. The newsletter can also be found on our website at kiaptu-wish.org.

We cancelled our Spring Appeal to our members due to Covid-19 impacts. Additionally, the board cancelled plans for our annual holiday banquet usually held in December. Both events are our primary fundraising tools. At the time of this writing a special appeal was sent out, and we are hoping that members in a position to donate will continue their support of our work. The chapter also is pleased to report that we were awarded an Embrace-A-Stream grant of \$5,500 for "Monitoring to Assess the Ecological Benefits of Kinnickinnic River Dam Removal and River Restoration in River Falls, Wisconsin." Look for more news on this in future issues of *Wisconsin Trout*.

It was a busy summer for the Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring team. Chapter members 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. Water samples were collected and analyzed on several streams to better understand watershed impacts on water quality.

To complement stream temperature and water chemistry data, two weather stations were operated, providing data on air temperature, relative humidity, dewpoint and rainfall amounts. Kiap-TU-Wish also continued to provide financial

and volunteer monitoring support for USGS operation and maintenance of their Kinnickinnic River and Willow River flow gaging stations.

National Trout Unlimited is placing a high priority on community science and the benefits it provides for angler education and coldwater resource management. Trout Unlimited's national science team partnered with MobileH2O, LLC to develop a customized mobile application (WiseH2O App) that can be used by anglers to monitor water quality and habitat conditions in Driftless Area trout streams.

In 2019, Kiap-TU-Wish anglers participated in a successful WiseH2O App pilot project, testing the app on 10 local streams and rivers, making 83 observations and providing feedback to the developers on app improvements. The Mobile H2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/anglerscience> provides access to the Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring plan, the 2019 pilot project report and an interactive map that enables viewing of all 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish WiseH2O App observations. COVID-19 and development of the iPhone version of the WiseH2O App delayed the start of the 2020 monitoring season until early August. Although the 2020 monitoring season will be short, we are pleased to report that the iPhone version of the app is available, and the 2-in-1 test strips can be used to measure nitrite/nitrate concentrations.

The app also has an updated look and educational messaging that should be more user-friendly. Given the success of the 2019 Kiap-TU-Wish pilot project, and with further app improvements in 2020, WiseH2O App monitoring expanded to the entire Driftless Area in early August. Besides Kiap-TU-Wish, 14 additional TU chapters now have an opportunity to monitor our regional coldwater resources. For more information on the Driftless Area project, please contact Kent Johnson at d.kent.johnson@gmail.com.

Despite the uncertainties due to Covid-19, seven of our eight classrooms are going forward with Trout



KIAP CHAPTER WORKING WITH MONITORING APP

Kent Johnson collects a sample from the Trimbelle River for lab analysis.

Chapter News



ELEVATED RIPARIAN OPTIMIZATION STRUCTURE ON PLUM CREEK

The Kiap Chapter's first deployment of ERO Structures on a larger stream took place on Plum Creek where work recently wrapped up on the Van Holtum Farm easement. The structures are meant to provide deep water habitat and help move sand downstream.

In the Classroom this year and we have added an additional classroom as well. Hopefully, the kids will be able to complete the project unlike last year's classes which had to cut things short due to Covid-19.

Our traditional role of assisting the DNR with seeding/mulching operations on stream-restoration projects was usurped by the DNR's Covid work rules. Work which volunteers normally would have taken on at the mile-long Van Holtum easement on the Plum Creek restoration site was instead handled by the DNR staff.

Chapter members Tom Schnadt, Loren Haas, Dustin Wing, Dan Wilcox, Scot Stewart and Randy Arnold met with DNR staff members Kasey Yallaly and Nate Anderson over the course of the summer to evaluate newly acquired easements in our area. They were joined by Pierce County soil and water conservation staff and reviewed the easements'

restoration potential and also to evaluate solutions to the problem of sand loading on the South Fork of the Kinnickinnic River.

The group developed a preliminary plan to begin tree clearing this coming winter on three new connected easements on Cady Creek just outside of Elmwood. Chapter volunteer coordinator Randy Arnold met separately with DNR fish manager Kasey Yallaly in late July to visit several sites on the Upper Kinnickinnic which are in serious need of maintenance brushing and tree removal to keep them from returning to an unfishable jungle. Chapter members are looking forward to gearing up for our fall and winter workdays. We are hoping that chapter members will turn out and help with our tree removal and brushing operations while practicing social distancing.

With partial funding provided by the chapter, the DNR did hire an

outside contractor to perform maintenance mowing on previously restored sites in both the Kiap-TU-Wish and Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter areas. In our case, the contractor mowed much of the area comprised of the connected easements on the Trimble from the County Highway W bridge downstream to the Highway 65 bridge. Chapter member Jim Tatzel joined Randy Arnold several days after the mowing to spray herbicide on the stumps of small saplings left behind, as well as cutting and treating stumps which were missed by the mower.

Chapter member Loren Haas has continued to work with Nate Anderson of the DNR on the design, installation and performance evaluation of Elevated Riparian Optimization (ERO) Structures which Loren has designed to incorporate into stream restorations. The hope is that these structures will optimize the power of high-water events to provide deep-water habi-

tat for trout and efficiently move sand loads downstream.

The first deployment of ERO Structures on a larger stream took place on Plum Creek where work recently wrapped up on the Van Holtum Farm easement.

This easement consists of two separate parcels with over 19,000 feet of frontage on Plum Creek and almost a mile of frontage on Brunner Valley Creek. The work here is not the classic Driftless project with LUNKER structures and significant narrowing. This is a mixed fishery with brown and brook trout and classic Driftless restoration favors brown trout as we unfortunately learned on Pine Creek. This project contains a lot of wood and the narrowing is not so drastic. The goal is to enhance the brook trout habitat. As a result, anglers used to classic Driftless restoration projects may find the angling a bit more challenging.

—Gary Horvath

Lakeshore Chapter

As the maple tree leaves start to turn red and other fall colors start to emerge, Lakeshore can look forward to three more workdays for the year and look back at a very productive summer.

With Covid being a major restraint for everyone, it was hard to do business as usual for our chapter as well. We were able to stay busy though, having outdoor board meetings, workdays, virtual meetings and we are starting our fundraising in September, which is the earliest we've done this.

We've had to do some rescheduling of some projects we wanted to do this year, but it will put us ahead of schedule for next year because we'll be able to make better plans and acquire more help to accomplish these projects.

Our local DNR is very understaffed due to Covid and the restrictions they're under from the state, but they've been doing as much as they can to keep us on track to fulfill our grant requirements. Our fish biologist moved and our invasive species specialist was transferred. So I'd like to thank Travis and Tanya for filling the void and helping us meet our goals.

One thing our chapter has been focusing on is trying to get more recognition of how good our streams are. I honestly think the work we've been doing is starting to pay off. We've been experiencing a new wave of out-of-towners coming to check out what our area has to offer. Our streams have been a little

crowded through the summer, but we are seeing some enthusiasm from some of them who want to help do some work. This hopefully will spark even more folks to come out and lend a hand at our workdays, or even get involved with our chapter in other ways also. Regardless of the pressure, there have been some dandy fish caught.

For anyone who is interested in what our chapter has been up to, we've updated our webpage and we are always posting our upcoming events and workdays on Facebook. All of our links are on Facebook also. We really appreciate everyone who shares our posts, it really does help us reach more people.

A few years ago our chapter set out to begin a new "chapter" in our chapter to work on improving our streams and rivers and bring awareness to our communities about trout fishing, protecting coldwater fisheries and getting more people involved so our waters will thrive for generations to come. Well, all I can say is, so far, so good. We have a lot to be proud of.

Winter will start our brushing season. We will focus on workdays until the Covid restrictions are lifted and we can have member meetings again. From there, event planning will be an exciting change of pace, but only time will tell how long it will be before we are able to do anything like that. Until then, keep the rods swinging.

—Myk Hranicka

Marinette County Chapter

We canceled our annual fundraising banquet this year, but we had enough money to cover the summer projects. We were able to generate some funds from contributions from some of our special sponsors, sponsors and contributors. We

hope to be able to have our banquet again next spring and look forward to seeing all of the people and groups who have supported us and our conservation efforts during the last 37 years.

—Dale Lange

Oconto River Chapter

The Oconto River Chapter reports the passing of long-time member, officer, active member and TU leader in Oconto County. David Lowell Brunner, 89, of Oconto County, died July 15, 2020 in Auburndale, Fl. Dave presided over

many chapter meetings, worked diligently doing the newsletter, raised many trout at the chapter's "trout barn" and worked at the chapter's banquet, work projects and at youth and special needs fishing outings. He will be deeply missed as a men-



LAKESHORE CHAPTER EFFORTS ARE PAYING OFF

Lakeshore Chapter President Myk Hranicka hooked into this 25-inch brown trout on a dry fly in June on a local stream where the chapter has been working hard to improve habitat.



Chapter News

tor, fishing buddy, trout-fishing advocate and dearest friend.

We established a David L. Brunner Legacy Fund for donations in David's name. The fund will be used for stream restoration projects on David's favorite watershed — the Oconto River. A recognition ledger of donations will be kept and forwarded to the David Brunner Family. Please make your check out to Oconto River TU, note that it's for the Brunner Fund and mail it to our chapter address at P.O. Box 252, Gillett, Wisconsin 54124.

Our chapter helped with trout fishing and the casting at The Suring Sportsmen annual Youth Day in August, at their facility on River Road in Suring. The club preregistered 48 youth, most of whom showed up with parents, grandpar-

ents or guardians to participate in the following outdoor events: slingshot, archery, shotgun, 22 rifle, and pistol (depending on age), trout fishing and casting. Most of the kids caught trout, which were cleaned and even cooked if they wanted. The casting is somewhat of a contest where each participant gets a free raffle ticket with extra tickets awarded for hitting the target. The tickets are used to draw for prizes at the end of the day. We awarded four Zebco fishing outfits to lucky kids. Thanks to those members who volunteered to assist in this event.

We held an outdoor chapter board meeting in September to discuss fundraising and a tentative plan for 2021.

—Tom Klatt

Shaw-Paca Chapter

Our chapter donated \$5,000 to the DNR habitat crew for "fishability" brushing in Waupaca County and Shawano County. We will have a banquet in 2021 and letters will be

sent out to the members to notify them. Unfortunately both of the dates for this year's banquet were canceled due to Covid.

—Kyle Kossel

Southern Wisconsin Chapter

We at SWTU are not flush with great pictures of gettogethers with big smiling faces, but we do have some great news to share about vital habitat preservation.

Our chapter is grateful to Dan Oele, the DNR's crackerjack fish biologist for Dane, Rock and Green counties, for securing a major new easement on Black Earth Creek (BEC). One of the most popular spots on BEC has been the South Valley Bridge. Downstream lies the beginning of miles of public water. Anglers would gaze longingly upstream where a very fishy stretch of water did not have that access; above that property were yet more miles of public water. The gap is filled and that lovely stretch of water now has a permanent DNR easement. SWTU extends its most sincere thanks to Dan and the Statz family, owners of the land.

We are also excited by Dane County's decision to buy 160 acres with 4,000 feet of double-stream-bank frontage on the Sugar River and Badger Mill Creek, both very good trout streams. One feature of the property is the confluence of the two streams. As of press time, we and our members were urging the County Board of Supervisors to approve this purchase at their September 17 meeting.

Speaking of easements, have you checked out our chapter's Madison

Area Trout Streams (MATS) map yet? Created by Patrick Hasburgh, the MATS map is a Google map that can be opened on your smartphone and includes every public easement within 30 miles of the State Capitol. This map includes Dane County public lands and easements, DNR public lands and easements, municipal easements, places to park and points of interest. The MATS map better illustrates the actual meanders of the streams than a printed map and are color coded to match the DNR classifications in the printed trout fishing regulations.

Explore the map all you like from your computer at home — and once you load the MATS map on your smartphone you can (provided you get service) know exactly where you are on an easement or public land in real time! You can also click on a location to learn more and even get directions to that spot. Visit www.swtu.org and scroll to the lower left part of the homepage to start exploring today!

We are coming up with solid plans for virtual member events and will share those on www.swtu.org, so please check there for the latest. Thank you and be well.

—Drew Kasel



Brian Heikenen

NINE MILE CREEK EFFORTS CONTINUE FOR WOLF RIVER CHAPTER

Andy Killoren and Duane Velie in the foreground along with Kent and Michael Sikorski, and John Rose remove beaver logs in Nine Mile Creek. Brian Heikenen took photo.

Wild Rivers Chapter

As you can imagine, it has been incredibly quiet for the Wild Rivers Chapter. We had our first board meeting by phone a couple of weeks ago to accept the resignation of Bill Heart as chapter president. Bill's wife had a serious accident in late May and he has been the caregiver. He has been unable to function as chapter president.

We decided to do a short newsletter soon to all chapter members to ask for interest from members to

step up and join the board, and/or be an officer. The board has decided to purchase the Zoom software to hold virtual meetings for the near future. The board voted to elect Melis Ariks as a new member.

The board decided to cancel our annual Fishing Expo for 2020. Depending on the situation next April, we will be holding the Expo the first Saturday of April 2021 at a venue to be announced.

—Bill Heart

Wisconsin River Valley Chapter

I was driving north on Highway 17 a few days ago and I was happy, yet a little disappointed, to see the maples starting to change into their fall wardrobe. Although it's one of the most beautiful times of the year, knowing that those snowflakes are just around the corner always makes me a little sad. It also sets in the realization that I have been holed up in my house too much and need to get out on the stream before the season closes.

Odell Brewing and Sconni's were going to donate 50 cents to our chapter for every pint of Odell Beer they sold at Sconni's in June. Then the Covid-19 pandemic happened and it was canceled. But the awesome people at Odell still wanted to support us and provided an

extremely generous gift of \$1,000. Thank you so much! This money will be used for future events and improvements to the coldwater resources in north central Wisconsin.

We had hoped to have some stream work days this year but it was not possible. The DNR is continuing work on the Prairie River from Dags Road to Gross's Bridge. You can find details of the project at wrvtu.org. We hope to do some tree planting in the spring to complete the project.

We are planning some presentations via Zoom, and we hope to record them to be viewed on YouTube. From the Wisconsin River Valley Board, stay safe everyone. Enjoy those fall colors.

—Linda Lehman

Wolf River Chapter

The Wolf River Chapter had a busy summer restoring trout habitat on Nine Mile Creek. In June Andy Killoren led Scott Groff, Jon Graverson, Clayton Bahrke, Brian Biermier, John Carbonari, John Rose, Brian Heikenen and Curt, Cody and Greta Parsons to a remote portion of Nine Mile Creek to clear beaver dams and feed piles.

Unfortunately, due to extremely high water on the Wolf River and some construction going on at our Nine Mile Creek access, the July work day had to be cancelled. A few people worked on August 1 to clear trails from the blow-down remains from July 2019 for better access to Nine Mile Creek. Then on August 22, the volunteers floated Nine Mile Creek in canoes to remote areas to remove more beaver logs.

Chuck Valliere and Bill Livingston drove the shuttle, so after a long morning of paddling and pulling, Andy Killoren, Brian Heikenen, John Rose, Duane Velie, Michael and Kent Sikorski could easily load canoes at the takeout. Thank you to Andy Killoren for organizing the Nine Mile Creek work days to continue to bring cold spring water into the Wolf River and to all the volun-

teers who got dirty, wet and worked hard while the mosquitos swarmed.

Fishing on the Wolf River was interrupted for most in July as the river continued to rise, peaking around 2,950 cubic feet per second (cfs) on July 27. Normal flows around this time of year are below 500 cfs. During the high water, large root balls, logs and flotsam surged down the Wolf River. Rocks that have not been covered by water since USGS record keeping began in the mid 1960's now have driftwood debris sitting on top of them.

In August Bill Kallner caught a pretty 18-inch rainbow trout while swinging a wet fly looking for smallies on the Wolf River with Wayne Anderson. Bill said, "It's always interesting when a fly pattern works for multiple species." He added that with the high water levels again this year that the carryover of trout has been very good. Bill also thinks that the rainbow he caught has been in the river probably 4-5 years. This is the largest rainbow Bill has ever caught in the river. He released the trout after a photo was taken. Congratulations, Bill!

—Laurie Zen Netzow



Wayne Anderson

BEAUTIFUL WOLF RIVER RAINBOW

In August Bill Kallner caught a pretty 18-inch rainbow trout while swinging a wet fly looking for smallies.

MONTANA, from page 14

a little discomfort later on as the lake shapes, scale, distances, and pretty much everything else, looked a lot different from our USGS map. But our blinding youthful enthusiasm soon took sway and we were undeterred.

We drove from Billings to the East Rosebud trailhead, registered, shouldered our packs and took off. It was around noon when we finally started walking. We planned to make Elk Lake by that evening and make camp. East Rosebud Lake at the trailhead was the first mountain lake we ever saw up close. It was surrounded by mountains and as blue as a picture in National Geographic. It was July, and some peaks still carried snow. We could see Shepard Mountain (10,979 feet) on one side and Sylvan Peak (11,943 feet) off in the other direction. We hiked along a rushing tumbling whitewater stream that flowed from Elk Lake, four or so miles up the trail. It was our longest hike of the trip. It was also nearly all uphill and full of switchbacks. Our youthful excitement gave way to trying to hike with a heavy pack at well over 6,000 feet above sea level, we began to wheeze immediately.

“Up” was a factor for which we had not fully planned for or anticipated. “Up” or more correctly “real steep up” was not adequately accounted for. Nor were the switchbacks which appeared constantly. We didn’t know what a switchback was but determined that, when making a hiking map, it was easier to draw a squiggly line than draw an actual long switchback. We cursed the mapmaker, offering oaths to the silent mountains as we strained under our packs.

The narrow gravel and rock trail appeared to go almost straight up, finally disappearing between two smaller but menacing peaks where we assumed Elk Lake would be. The combination of a long car trip, short night’s sleep, the first exposure to higher elevations, and ridiculously heavy backpacks slowed our progress to a crawl. We were sweat-

**SCREE FIELDS CAN MAKE SOME FISHY SPOTS UNREACHABLE**

As badly as they wanted to fish this spot, a scree field unlike anything they’d seen in Wisconsin kept the young anglers from reaching it.

ing like crazy and wheezing in the mountain air. It was a long walk and our moods changed noticeably. By dusk, we had not yet reached Elk Lake and the area where the trail disappeared never seemed to get any closer despite hours of zig-zagging up the mountain. We decided to quit for the night. We found a level patch, just off the trail and set up the new tent.

First dome tent experience

We had never set up a nylon backpacking dome tent before and while I can now put one up in about fifteen minutes, that first effort took well over an hour and into the deep twilight. No, we did not try to set it up before we left. This was a little detail we constantly reminded each other of as we struggled with this new type of tent technology. After getting the tent up, and feeling the effects of the heavy packs, we decided to eat as much of the canned food as we could to lighten our loads.

I also failed to mention that our equipment purchases included new hiking boots. These were heavy Vibram-soled double-welted Danners which we thought we had broken in by walking around the block several times near our east side Milwaukee apartment. That evening, around a tiny campfire, we nursed our blistered feet, sore backs, legs and gut muscles. To make matters worse, Joe decided to make a late night pot of coffee with some “fresh mountain water” he scooped out of the little stream next to our trailside campsite.

Our education in the unanticipated effects of higher elevations now concerned boiling water and the making of coffee. We learned quickly that water boils really fast at higher elevations. It also seemed to boil more violently. Making coffee in the dark on a stove you have never used before also played into the next backpacking lesson. Soon after lighting the little stove and placing the little percolator coffee pot on top, the water quickly started to sound like some sort of little jet turbine. It now percolated intensely and shook violently on top of the little burner. Soon a very intense coffee smell was evident. Shutting off the burner, Joe let it sit awhile and poured a cup. “Ah, mountain brewed coffee”, he sighed. He was more romantic about coffee than I was. I tried a little and tossed the contents of my cup into the bushes.

In the dim firelight, the coffee appeared to be an opaque solid. I couldn’t even see any light penetrat-

sleeping bag and passed out.

By now the caffeine was roaring through Joe’s veins like illegal amphetamines and he was having a noisy one-man monologue. He expounded about the beauty of nature, stars, mountains, trout, birds, chipmunks and who knows what else. He jabbered into the night and eventually woke me up. I finally stuffed some toilet paper into my

**ROCKY MOUNTAIN DINNER FOR TWO HUNGRY YOUNG WISCONSINITES**

Although not the cutbows mentioned here, a meal of fresh trout tastes better than ever when fried on a fire at a remote Montana campsite.

ears and went to sleep. In the morning I found him sleeping outside in his bag by the remains of the little campfire. The pot was empty. He was difficult to arouse and not in a very good mood when he finally came to.

The other lesson learned by the two novice backpackers is not only how long it takes to set up your overnight camp, but how long it takes to break down your overnight camp. This second exercise took a couple of hours of screwing around before we finally trudged off to Elk Lake. By early afternoon, after slogging up seemingly endless switchbacks, we finally saw Elk Lake in the valley below. It was a pretty small lake and blue as a swimming pool. Now excited, our pace quickened as we descended to the lake’s shore and began looking for a level area to camp. It took a while, but we found a site near the inlet where a stream entered the lake and set up. Now, it was time to catch trout. Magically, our feet did not hurt anymore. The tent went up quickly. We scrambled around, rigging rods as trout dimpled the surface.

Four-inch brookies

A quick check of the Beartooth Country map showed Elk Lake had brookies, which could be expected at this elevation. What it did not say was that the brookies, while numerous and very hungry, were all about four inches long, stunted, and skinny with big goggle-like eyes. We had counted on trout for dinner and fished desperately for something of edible size.

Flies produced fish, but only small ones. Joe was always a big believer in the red and white Daredevil spoon and tried to heave one as far as he could, watching his line for a hit as it fluttered down to the deeper part of the lake where he thought the bigger trout would be. When he retrieved the big spoon, hordes of runty starving little brookies slashed at the big spoon with some foul-hooking themselves while trying to eat it. Despite all of our ef-

forts, nothing topped four inches. A couple of trout had fatally impaled themselves on the Daredevil. These were kept to make finger food. We mainly ate beans and freeze-dried chicken for dinner. I hid the coffee. We finished eating at dark and turned in. The next day it was off to Rimrock Lake.

The hike to Rimrock proved to be just as taxing as the one to Elk

Lake. We made it to Rimrock by mid-afternoon, much later than expected. We were now well over 8,000 feet and were wheezing like two asthmatic chainsmokers. Our map indicated brook trout and hybrid cutbows lived in Rimrock. What the book didn’t mention, or warn about, was that a descent through a steep unmarked skree field was required to reach the lake. It was then that we learned that the masses of parallel wiggly red lines lying next to each other on the map indicated steep topography. We were used to Wisconsin topography, not Montana topography.

We looked at the turquoise water of Rimrock Lake. It was larger than Elk Lake and it sat in a steep valley. I considered the now quarter-sized blister on my heel on my left foot and a larger one on the sole of my right. Joe was also considering his blister inventory. We took out the map and decided to push on to Rainbow Lake, which appeared to be just a short hike up the trail. The brookies and cutbows of Rimrock Lake would have to wait. Maybe Rainbow Lake would be easier to get to and we studied the map for the number of wiggly red lines around Rainbow. It seemed to be a go. We made it to a campsite by the shores of Rainbow Lake, just before dark. Our tent pitching and camp routine had improved greatly by day four. We ate freeze-dried noodles and fell asleep quickly.

The sun does not come early to deep mountain valleys. It was past eight when the first beams of sunlight lit up the tent. Still, we were slow to get going, due to even greater elevation, soreness and our blisters. We slowly got about our camp business. I foraged for some twigs and deadwood for a fire while Joe got his famous high-altitude atomic coffee going. I remember we had freeze-dried scrambled eggs, a tiny can of baked beans, some saltine crackers, and two packets of ketchup from the Billings McDonalds, one for each of us. This feast was wolfed down for what seemed like

thirty seconds. We then sat down with our coffee and studied Rainbow Lake.

Rainbow was the biggest of the lakes we intended to visit on this trip. The map said it had Golden Trout. We didn't even know what a Golden Trout looked like but we were keen to find out. We hoped they weren't all four inches long. Stringing our rods, we walked to the lake, a few yards away.

Rainbow Lake was larger and deeper than Elk Lake and it was fed by Rosebud Creek which flowed through the bottom of the valley and connected the lakes we fished. Rainbow also received additional water from two small tributaries, one taking the form of a small, but very pretty, waterfall. The lake was partially lined in some areas by tall pines and spruce trees and sheer rock walls in others, making it the prettiest lake we had seen so far. In the clear turquoise water we could see some cruising and rising trout. All of them seemed to be out of casting range, even for Joe and his long-range Daredevil.

We agreed to divide forces to find fishable water. I headed toward the main inlet which offered a shallow flat before a riffle run which descended into deeper darker water. "Fishy," I thought.

Finally, fish for dinner

Joe headed around the shore, pitching his Daredevil as he went. As I made my way toward the inlet, I watched Joe's line catching the sun, as his casts arced into the water. It was a pretty sight. Soon, he was into a fish, a good fish. I came running down the shore and scrambled over some rocks to see what he had. He was now netting the fish and sporting an ear to ear grin.

I got to where he was and looked at the fish. There wasn't any gold on it. It looked kind of like a rainbow, but it wasn't a rainbow. It definitely wasn't a brook or a brown. We had not seen a cutthroat either but figured it was probably a cutbow, owing to the pink rainbow flanks, greenish top, and the red throat slash. It was just over twelve inches, the biggest fish of the trip, and it looked like it would be good for dinner.

"Hey Joe," I said, "Keep a couple for dinner. I want to go to the inlet over there. See you in camp." and off I went.

Joe continued his way around the lake and I proceeded to the inlet. When I arrived, the flats below the inlet were full of trout. More trout were just hanging off the edge of the deeper water. They were eating bugs off the surface. I couldn't tell what they were, so I tied on a red Humpy and started to cast. I caught a small trout but could not reach the edge where the concentrations of bigger fish were feeding.

I had no waders, so I ran the short distance back to the camp, shucked my heavy hiking boots, and put on my canvas basketball shoes. These were my shoes for lounging around camp. They would now be my ticket to the bigger trout.

The cold water felt wonderful on my sore feet as I stepped into the water. I slowly waded toward the deeper water edge, casting as I went, until the feeding trout were in range. My casting now reached the fish and I was into a good trout immediately. My first fish was a beautiful pink-flanked cutbow, similar in size to Joe's. The feeding activity continued at a good pace and soon fish came on nearly every cast. While not large and averaging around twelve inches, they fought hard and took flies eagerly. I knew I

wasn't guaranteed a fish dinner with Jeff in charge down on the other end of the lake, so I kept two nice eating size fish, just in case. I kept fishing and kept catching and releasing fish till the Humpy was chewed to shreds.

After a while I looked down at my legs because I realized I couldn't feel them. They were blue, a contrast from my pink sunburn. Thinking I better get out of the water, I turned, only to realize, my legs no longer worked very well and I stumbled out of the water like a drunk, falling in the shallow water a couple of times. I made it to shore, just as the sun went behind the mountains immediately to the west, plunging our little lake and valley into an eerie darkness.

I shuffled the short distance back to camp with two wiggling trout hanging off my stringer. Joe had the fire going and I could smell food. We had a small cast iron frying pan (which we never took backpacking again) and Joe was cooking three headless trout, covered with flour.

"Also made freeze-dried hash browns" he said and pointed to a small aluminum pot warming by the fire. They smelled great.

"Yup, kept two" I said.

"Geez" he moaned, "I kept four, two each." I saw the fourth trout lying on a rock nearby.

"Looks like three trout each." I said.

"Hope you're hungry," I said. Joe continued to cook. I cleaned the fish where I had seen some old snow in a shady part of the woods and buried the guts in a pile of rocks. We powdered my trout in the remaining flour and added them to the pile. It was time to stuff our faces.

And what a stuffing it was. We each ate three good sized fried Cutbows. We also ate two packages of freeze-dried hash browns, which were much better than we thought they'd be. Joe said it was the little bits of freeze-dried onions in the mix. I could not disagree. We sat by our little fire, very contented and impossibly full. We had caught nice-sized trout on a mountain lake. Life was good.

What about bears?

The little camp was a mess. Fish skin, bones, tails, six trout heads, along with a pan partially full of grease was staring us in the face. Up until this point, we had not given much thought to bears. Now, after stinking up this entire valley with the smell of frying fish, we needed to do something. So, the first thing we did was start to argue with one another. This was unhelpful. We did revisit a conversation we had in a bar back in Billings on our first night whose gist was that this side of the Beartooths had large numbers of black bears but you didn't run into grizzlies until you got to the Yellowstone side of Beartooth Pass which was pretty far away. This was of little comfort. We needed a plan. We took stock. Our defensive weaponry consisted of a small camp ax, two Swiss Army knives and the cast iron frypan. We wouldn't last two seconds if the wrong bear showed up.

Thinking quickly, Joe set up a tripwire perimeter, using monofilament fishing line and our unused aluminum cooking gear. His thought was it would at least warn us or, maybe scare off the bear. I stoked the fire and burned the fish bits while slowly adding the used fishy cooking oil to the fire which would flare brightly, casting large shadows which all had a beary appearance. I am sure the clouds of fishy oily smoke was also an excellent bear attractant. We then

washed the dishes and put our remaining food stocks up a tree in a sack, some yards away in the woods.

For a final precaution, Joe sat by the fire and added some green pine boughs which smoldered heavily. He then sat as close as he could to the smoke, opening his shirt and sometimes his pants legs to fill them up with the smoke. He put his hair into the smoke and held his sleeping bag over it. "OK", he said. Let's get in the tent.

We got in the tent. "Why did you do that?" I asked. The tent interior now reeked of wood smoke. "Bears hate smoke." He said. I was unaware of this tidbit regarding bear behavior and I didn't try to argue with him, but I thought he smelled like a big summer sausage, a six foot four inch two hundred twenty pound summer sausage. All that night, every rustling noise, every snapped twig, and every stone tumbling off the mountain, sounded like a bear. We drifted off to a nervous sleep, ax, swiss army knives, and frying pan at the ready.

Morning came late to our little valley and Joe or "Smokey Joe" as I now called him, was making coffee. He insisted our survival owed itself to his smokey preparations. I also didn't want to argue as he made biscuits in the fry pan and his inky black coffee was starting to grow on me. The sun came out, the fish became active, I grabbed my tennies and fly rod. Joe grabbed his trusty Daredevil and we went our separate ways to fish. "Only two each!" I yelled as I headed for my magic inlet. I was still feeling a little full.

State of satisfaction

We spent the late morning into the early afternoon catching all of the Cutbows we wanted. I tried some different fly patterns and found that they hit pretty much anything. Joe did the same and found out any flashy lure would work. We each ate our two trout apiece for dinner along with the last can of beans. Pancake mix was substituted

for flour which made the trout taste kind of sweet, but still very good. Joe smoked himself in the fire again while I put the food away and finished the dishes. We were in a state of supreme satisfaction. We had never caught that many trout. We were fished out.

Tomorrow we would hike back. What had taken us three days going up would only take one full day going down. We never got to Lake at The Falls and we didn't try a return trip to Rimrock, but we were more than satisfied. On our way down we promised ourselves that we would spend a night in Red Lodge as we determined we had not had a beer in about six days. We also determined that we would take two days to drive back after Red Lodge as Joe wanted to see the Badlands, Wall Drug and the Custer Battlefield. It would be a triumphant tour home.

I would return to these mountains the next year and the years after that. I was smitten by the West. My soul now needed snow-covered mountains, deep lodgepole pine forests, clear cold water and western trout. I was thoroughly enchanted, addicted and swept away. There was so much to this place. I could never fish it all. There was no going back. I will always love my Wisconsin trout but the west had me. I wanted all of my fishing friends to come with me. And many of them did.

Rick Larkin is a long time member of SEWTU. He has fished and hunted in Wisconsin his entire life and reportedly caught a perch off his uncle's dock at age two on a cane pole. While he will fish for anything that swims and once had a trotline license for Mississippi River catfish, he is especially fond of all things trout and the Driftless in particular. He embraces the Robert Traver concept of "Whiskey in a tin cup tastes better out there." He also enjoys building LUNKER structures, cutting down buckthorn and listening to bad jokes around the campfire at the West Fork Sportsman's Club.

EGGS, from page 6

"I surveyed the stream last week, since it currently is not classified as trout water and has never been sampled. Our survey indicates that, similar to the many other small Timber Coulee tributaries, it is an important site for juvenile rearing and may also be used for spawning," Olson reported. "We captured 75 young of the year trout and one adult trout in 100 meters of stream using electrofishing equipment. In addition, the stream is an important source of cold water to Timber Coulee. It was running at 56 degrees fahrenheit when we sampled it last week, and 1.6 cubic feet per second (i.e. 718 gallons per minute)."

A neighbor's concerns

A neighbor of the facility, just to the west on Olstad Road, has been quite vocal in his opposition to the siting of the facility.

"Les Reimer is being played by Ernie Peterson," the neighbor said. "All the locals know that property was under water in the August 2018 flood. Since the last floodplain survey in 1996, there have been three

100-year floods in the valley."

The neighbor expressed that he believes the Reimers are "seeking the facility at the expense of their neighbors." He said they have been attempting a public relations campaign, writing letters to their neighbors. He said he had received one such communication himself.

"Aside from my concerns about surface water quality, I am also concerned about odors, air quality issues from the ammonia, and the noise that will come from the constant running of the facility's fans," he said. "The manure will be picked up three times per week,

which will mean lots of truck traffic on a town road that is not up to that level of traffic. Nor are the required setbacks from the town road being observed."

The neighbor questioned why the Reimers had chosen to locate the facility in the Vernon County versus the LaCrosse County portion of their property.

"On the Vernon County side, it is all low land along the creek, and there are lots of neighbors," he said. "On the LaCrosse County side there is higher ground, and no neighbors. I speculate that the deci-

sion was made based on the regulations they would face in attempting to locate the facility in LaCrosse County.”

The neighbor is concerned about the increasingly large and frequent rainfalls the area has experienced in the last decade.

“With all these large rains, there is no way that there is not going to be runoff, and the Reimers weren’t here in 2018 to see what happened,” he said. “In every business venture there is risk and reward – in this case the reward is all for one family, and the risk is that if there is a failure, a whole ecosystem could be destroyed. Further, neighbors of the facility face a decrease in their property values, and the township faces overuse of their road.”

The neighbor said that in the 2018 flood, his driveway was com-

pletely washed out, and the first floor of the Reimer’s home was completely under water. He pointed out that not all of the water that contributes to flooding comes from upstream.

“In 2018, the dry runs coming off the hillside above were all full of water,” he said. “The hillside is just barely above the site of the facility, with a spring-fed feeder creek that comes off the hillside and runs just below it. I think it’s possible that the 2018 rain event would have swept the whole facility off the hillside.”

The neighbor emphasized that he grew up on a farm in northern Illinois, where his family raised chickens and goats.

“I’m not against agriculture, but the Driftless Region is just special and different,” he said. “Buying my land and building my cabin along

Timber Coulee Creek was my dream, and the Reimers are stealing the joy from my life.”

The neighbor said that he believes that if the community were polled about whether they want the facility placed where it is, they would reject it. He said that there is no reason to build in the valley, and the facility should be located up on a ridge.

“Why risk one of the most celebrated trout streams in the Midwest?” he asked. “Just downstream on Coon Creek, the DNR has put huge resources into preserving and protecting Coon Creek at the Neprud property.”

He said that basically “we can all recognize when something is out of place.” He said that at this point, it all comes down to the town board, with Ernie Peterson and Eric Not-

testad pushing them to approve the building permit.

“I am extremely disappointed. My wife and I have two cute kids too. Why is one family more important than another family?” he asked. “And the only way that we’ll know for sure that this facility is a disaster is after it becomes a disaster.”

He pointed out that “the only real economic growth Vernon County has seen in recent years comes from trout fishing. He asked why an agricultural operation like this should be allowed to be sited in a way that threatens that economic resource.

“Believe me, if my property value is injured, I will sue,” he said. “I know that the ‘Right to Farm’ and the nuisance laws are stacked against me, but that’s why it’s the right job for a person who has the time and the money to pursue it.”

HEX CAMP, from page 16

I was never one of the regulars, but sometimes came up with Bell for a couple nights. If there was a full house, we camped out.

A late start

On what might have been the first time I joined these guys, we went to dinner at the Berges’ cabin. The conversation continued after dinner, as the daylight faded. I kept glancing at my watch, wondering if we were ever going to get to the river, but the veteran Hex anglers in the group knew that the good fishing would start at dark — around 10 p.m. — on these long summer days. If you arrived too early you would just be feeding the mosquitoes.

In due time the anglers dispersed – some to trails that led them into spots on the upper White where they could wade. Finding their way out in the dark took more skill, and occasionally they spent a night in the woods. Once they discovered another angler had marked one of their routes in with reflectors. They moved a few of the reflectors. I hope no one spent too long wandering in the dark as the result of that prank.

Some of the crew took canoes in, although they would park the canoes and wade when it came time to fish.

Hex camp reminded me of a deer camp I used to frequent, in the sense that participants were passionate about their sports and there was a strong social element to the gatherings, and a certain amount of beer and liquor consumed.

But the deer hunters got up well before dawn and ate a hearty breakfast with strong coffee before heading out into that cold, late November weather.

Some came in at noon to warm up and have some soup, then head back out until closing time, which was about dark.

The Hex anglers didn’t crawl out of bed until late morning, but then they didn’t come back until after midnight. Sometimes they didn’t stop fishing until midnight, then they had to find their way out and get out of their waders, a process that takes longer as we get older.

Once the anglers got back to camp, they would tell stories over a beer or a drink, so it might be after 1 a.m. before people headed to bed.

Scattered around the cabin were portable fly-tying vises, and the down time before the evening hatch was often occupied by fly tying and socializing. Some of the more ambitious might spend the afternoon fishing for bluegills

Midwest tradition

“It’s who we are,” Steve Born told me more than once when I inquired about Hex camp. He was one of the originals. He was a college professor and was recently inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame, partly for his work with Trout Unlimited and the River Alliance.

I mulled this over. Trout anglers in the West get to fish in the daytime on wide-open rivers with snow-capped mountains in the background, while we stumble around in the dark, in a swamp with a thousand mosquitoes, snagging our flies on unseen branches.

But there is something exciting about hearing a big trout feeding on big flies in the dark.

The Hex camp always ended before the Fourth of July. The Hex might still be hatching then, but it was time for families to come up to the lake and for the old fishermen to shuffle off to wherever old fishermen go.

Attrition

The last year for Hex camp with a full crew was 2015, due both to members passing or having conflicting activities at Hex time.

Larry Meicher, one of the more colorful members, died in 2009. He was known as the “Pass Lake Kid” for his devotion to that Wisconsin pattern. They held a streamside service for him on the White, just above his favorite bend. They committed his ashes to the river, along with two Pass Lake flies – the size he used during the Hex hatch. The surviving members drank a toast of red wine. Then they went fishing. Larry would have wanted that.

A few years later they held a streamside service for Charlie Gritzner and committed his ashes to the river. They toasted with Jim Beam, which was his preferred beverage.

Steve Born is involved in the Henry’s Fork Foundation and is out in Idaho fishing the green drakes — a daytime hatch — when the Hexes are hatching in Wisconsin.

Now Bell has passed. It was up to Berge and me to carry on.

Berge has had some challenges too, surviving cancer and a near drowning in late September when he rolled his canoe while fishing alone on a small, wild lake. After that, Evie said no more solo fishing, especially after dark.

Berge slipped on the ice this winter and broke his leg. He had to order new wading boots a couple sizes larger to fit over his swollen ankle. Otherwise, he was good to go.

Return to the White

The river was running a little high and slightly turbid – good fishing conditions, Dick said. We met an angler where we launched who said there had been a heavy hatch the night before.

We paddled the canoe up river, settled on a place to fish, and pulled the canoe up on the bank. It was more efficient to wade and fish rather than try to fish out of a canoe.

We got our rods out, put on mosquito dope and waited.

The white throated sparrow sang – an indication, according to outdoor writers of the past, that trout should soon be rising. The flute-like notes of the veeries and hermit thrush drifted through the streamside vegetation. A green frog croaked. But we didn’t hear the sound we were waiting for until about 9:45 p.m. – the sounded of a trout sucking down a mayfly. I headed upstream, and after temporarily getting stuck in the muck, I stepped into the stream. It had a solid sand bottom. Easy wading.

There were some fish in the middle of the river making tiny rings as they fed on something. They would readily take my large Hex imitation. I caught two of them, both 12-inch brown trout, but I was after bigger game tonight.

The big mayflies never hatched in any numbers, but there must have been some on the water because I could hear the slurp of a feeding trout now and then. I tried to mark the location, then wade up to it and cast. I hooked some alder branches using that method, but also lost a fish that had some weight, and caught another that was a nice fish, although short of the 18-inch minimum size limit.

I stopped hearing rising fish, and thought I had better get back and see how Dick was doing.

He was fine. He had heard some trout feeding in a corner where he couldn’t reach them. There were never enough on the water to draw the trout

out from under the alders.

We paddled out with the fireflies. We still had one more night of Hex camp.

The next morning we fished for bluegills until the heat and direct sunlight chased us off the lake. Here, in the Northwoods on the first day of July there were still orange-breasted male bluegills defending their nests.

When we got back, after cleaning some bluegills, Berge showed me how he tied his Hex pattern. He ties commercially. His large tying desk positioned in front of a large picture window where he can look out on Deep Lake, through a screen of trees, when he took a break from tying.

His flies are available in some small fly shops in northern Wisconsin.

I learned, as he tied, that the spent-wing patterns we were using were a little different than the ones he sells commercially. He couldn’t give away all his secrets, he said. He also tied up some rubber spiders for me that had worked well on bluegills,

That evening we left the canoe at home and fished the White further upstream where Berge had a report that there had been a good Hex hatch a night or two earlier. He stayed at the pool where we started, while I waded upstream, walking on tiptoes in one spot to avoid shipping water over the tops of my waders.

One story Berge told about our late friend Bell was that he wouldn’t waste time taking off his waders to empty them out if he fell in. He would go to the bank, lie on his back and lift his legs in the air, allowing the water to flow out while muttering “God that’s cold water.” Then he would go back to fishing. I tried to avoid wading too deep.

There were mayflies caught in streamside spider webs. There had been a recent hatch. But not tonight. We must have been fishing portions of the stream between the hatches.

About 9:45 p.m. I saw a trout rise and it took my fly when I drifted it over him. It was a small brook trout.

I saw few other trout rise, but I caught a number of brown trout between 10 p.m. and 10:30 p.m. They had moved away from the overhanging alder branches and were looking for big, yellow mayflies. With few real mayflies on the river, my imitation got a lot of attention.

I turned around about 10:30 p.m. and listened for feeding trout as I waded back down. I cast to some good-looking spots, but the trout had stopped.

The moon came out, which made finding my way back easier. There were insects the size of hummingbirds dipping down to the river to lay eggs. An extension bug expert later told me they were probably big stoneflies. I’m glad they were friendly.

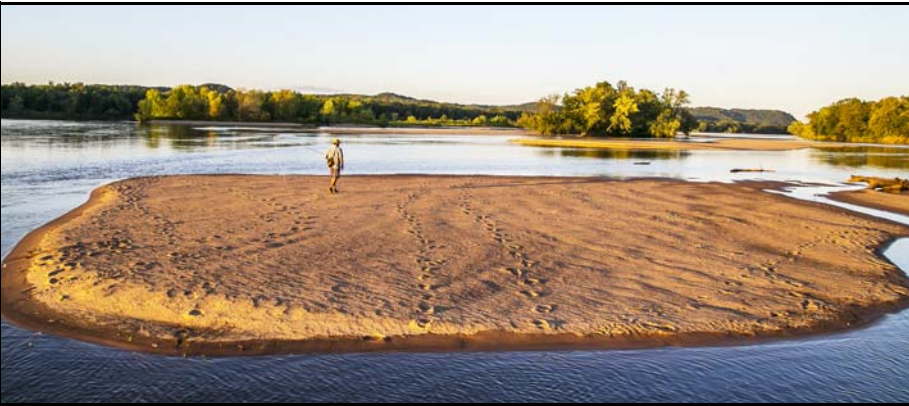
When I got back I found Berge sitting on the back of the truck, drinking a cold beer. His waders were already off and packed away. He seemed to be enjoying the moment.

He hadn’t caught a trout in our two nights of fishing, but said it was just good getting back out on the river at Hex time.

I think I understand. It’s who we are.
Joe Knight was the outdoor writer for the Eau Claire Leader Telegram for 34 years. He was the State Council 's outdoor communicator of the year in the late 1980s. For a year he was the president of the Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter after the incumbent became ill. (Al Noll,sadly, died this year.) He’s currently retired and serving on the Eau Claire County board.

DESTINATIONS

A tale from two rivers that share a name



SEARCHING FOR THE “CRASH”
The Lower Wisconsin River is a wide, shallow waterway with plenty of sandy bars which make an ideal lunch spot.

By Jim Schmiedeskamp

Fishermen who typically take a summer break from trout fishing during the warm dog days of July and August may want to give smallmouth bass a try by checking out the Wisconsin River.

At approximately 430 miles long, the Wisconsin River is the state’s longest river, bisecting the state running south from its origination in the forests near the border of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. It flows south across the glacial plain of central Wisconsin, passing through Wausau, Stevens Point and Wisconsin Rapids.

In southern Wisconsin it encounters the terminal moraine formed during the last ice age, where it forms the Dells of the Wisconsin River. At this point, the river’s character begins to change. Known as the Upper Wisconsin River until the Dells, its depth ranges from four to 10 feet with a rocky bottom and tannin-stained color.

North of Madison at Portage, the river turns to the west, flowing through Wisconsin’s hilly western upland and Driftless Area before joining the Mississippi approximately three miles south of Prairie du Chien. This section is known as the Lower Wisconsin River and becomes a wider, shallow waterway with a sandy bottom.

If you enjoy great scenery and

solitude, the Wisconsin River offers both, plus the combative smallmouth bass. During two-day August weekday trips on both rivers, I saw more bald eagles than other fishermen.

Lower Wisconsin River: sand bars and the “Crash”

The Lower Wisconsin River (LWR) is a wide river, rarely getting over 10 feet deep and is often less than four feet in depth, which makes navigation difficult, if not impossible, with large power boats. Unlike the rocky bottoms of the Upper Wisconsin River, the sandy bottoms of the LWR cause its “channels” to shift daily.

A natural phenomenon that occurs on the Lower Wisconsin River is the “crash,” when smallmouth bass and white bass, work in schools to corral baitfish. This occurrence is often identified by the violent surface activity of numerous fish devouring baitfish in the top six inches of the water surface. TU-endorsed guide Kyle Zempel, owner of Black Earth Angling guide service, has promoted summer trips during the annual “crash” season between the Driftless Area spring and fall trout seasons.

During my August trip with Kyle and his jet boat, we experienced this top-water feeding frenzy within minutes of leaving the boat launch on a windless day on a calm river.

Kyle uses an 18-foot jet boat as his fishing platform, which is ideal for navigating the shallow river with its ever-shifting sandbars.

My companion and I used a 7-weight outfit and a handmade balsa “Pencil Popper” which mimicked a jumping, skittering shad minnow on the water’s surface. A cast into the top water turmoil netted the day’s first hook-up with a nice white bass. After catching a dozen white bass, including a couple of doubles, a school of smallmouth moved in, displacing the white bass. An hour and 20 smallies later, tranquility returned and we headed downstream to fish the river banks and any wood structures.

“Our main focus on the LWR varies by season,” Zempel explains. “Spring is pre/post spawn smallmouth bass, post-spawn pike and the white bass run. Summer is when the LWR is at its peak and the crash occurs with some frequency.”

As it is with most rivers, you’re never quite sure what you’re going to catch, since the Wisconsin River holds dozens of fish species. On any given day you may catch smallmouth, northern pike, muskies, walleye, sauger, catfish, largemouth, plus assorted rough fish — all from the same area.

Upper Wisconsin River: Big rocks and fast rapids

The Upper Wisconsin River is a river with many flavors. In the northern-most stretches it is a wild river with rapids, dense forests and giant rocks. As it flows south, the river widens and slows down. The Upper Wisconsin offers world-class smallmouth and muskie fishing and features braided channels with

rocky islands.

Abe Downs is a TU-endorsed guide and owner of Great Northern Fly Fishing, and calls the Upper Wisconsin River his “home water,” which he fishes more than 100 days each year for both smallmouth and muskie. During my two days of fishing with Abe for smallmouth this past August, we cast streamers, diving frogs and poppers from his McKenzie-style drift boat, but found our greatest success throwing streamers with a 7-weight outfit against the banks and around the river’s many boulders and rock formations.

“I’ve been fishing the Upper Wisconsin River for 20 years and have found it to be a consistent smallmouth fishery,” Downs explains. “We’ll typically fish for smallmouth May through August before pursuing muskie in September and October.”

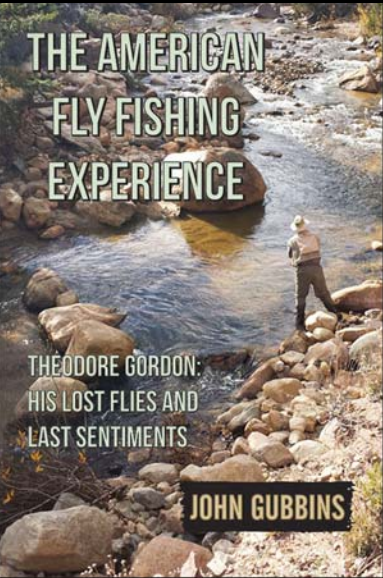
As you plan your 2021 fishing trips next spring, think about checking out the Wisconsin River in July and August while giving trout a “summer break.”

Visit blackearthangling.com and greatnorthernflyfishing.com for more information.

Jim Schmiedeskamp is a member of Chicago's Oak Brook Chapter where he was the communications and publicity chair from 2014-2020. Jim graduated from the University of Missouri School of Journalism and recently retired after 40 years as a corporate marketing executive. He spent most of his career building leading brands at Fortune 500 companies Owens Corning and Accenture. Jim continues to write articles on Midwest conservation initiatives and fly fishing adventures.



THE UPPER WISCONSIN: RAPIDS, ROCKS AND REMOTENESS
The Upper Wisconsin offers world-class smallmouth and muskie fishing and features braided channels with rocky islands.



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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.

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CITRON, from page 5

first pilot partnership, and has become an example for other groups that have formed across America. The partnership draws in funding from the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the National Marine Fisheries Service, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the National Fish & Wildlife Association.

The Crawford County Land Con-

servation Department was able to contribute half of their 2019/2020 Fish & Wildlife Habitat Project – County Conservation Aids funding to the project. This amounted to \$2,902, and has helped the Prairie Rod & Gun Club to secure some of the needed materials for the project.

In addition, TU’s Coulee Region Chapter, Cabela’s and some TU chapters from Illinois contributed funding to make the project possible.



FUTURE STREAM RESTORATION CONTRACTORS?

Ian and Evan Dudenbostel have ambitions to augment their farming income with a construction business. Having bought the equipment, the two were able to contribute their sweat equity to the project to preserve their family’s farmland, while receiving valuable instruction in streambank restoration techniques from TUDARE’s Paul Krahn.



The Dudenbostel clan, with multiple generations present, was on hand to accept the ‘Farm Family of the Year’ award from the Crawford County Land Conservation Department. Completed work in photo below.



CAFO, from page 1

Wild Rose Dairy has submitted an application for reissuance of their WPDES permit. The application is complete, and the facility has been determined to be in substantial compliance. This will be the third permit reissuance for this facility.

Wild Rose Dairy has a planned expansion to 2,812 animal units by 2022, including 1,540 milking and dry cows, 648 heifers and 324 calves. With the expansion, Wild Rose Dairy plans to construct a new heifer barn, two manure storages and upgrades to the feed storage area. Plans will be approved by the DNR. Wild Rose Dairy has an approved Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) that is written according to WPDES permit and Chapter NR 243 Wis. Adm. Code requirements.

Local citizens concerned

Attorney George Wilbur of LaFarge submitted a letter to the DNR, signed by 17 local citizens, to request that the public hearing be held. That letter read as follows:

The interest in the proposed permit of the persons requesting the hearing:

Confined Animal Feeding Operations are inherently detrimental to the environment and health of everyone. The operation in question is in the Otter Creek watershed that drains into the Kickapoo River. The history of this permit applicant allowing environmental disasters polluting area streams and rivers is cause to deny continued permitting, and certainly to deny expansion.

These basic interests are heightened for those who reside downstream from Wild Rose Dairy and those who fish the waters downstream from the site of the proposed distribution of pollutants.

Tourism-related businesses in Vernon County, which are dependent on the area’s reputation for high water quality and a vibrant trout fishery are

also subject to the impact of pollution in area waters.

Moreover, all who live in this area draw water from aquifers that may be polluted as a result of spreading massive amounts of pollution on karst geography, as is proposed by this CAFO.

Reasons for the Request: The permittee’s system of distribution of waste is inadequately monitored to prevent spills into public waters. Moreover, the permit would allow the annual production of approximately 11,159,875 gallons of manure and process wastewater and 6,123 tons of solid manure in the first year of the permit term, and by 2021 the farm is projected to generate 23,914,5540 gallons of manure and process wastewater and 1,242 tons of solid manure, as stated in your findings of fact.

Your findings include: “That some fields included in the NMP are directly adjacent to or have high potential to deliver nutrients and sediment to the Kickapoo River...” Your petitioners question if it is possible to spread this much waste on the applicant’s 2,043 acres (794 owned and 1,249 controlled) of land without impacting the area watershed, including ground water in this karst region. If a village produced this much waste, they would be required to install a multi-million dollar waste treatment plant.

Last, but not least, your department finds that “Wild Rose Dairy LLC currently has an undetermined amount of days for storage of liquid manure, process wastewater and rainfall.”

Why are you issuing a permit without this information?

The Issues Proposed to be Considered at the Hearing:

- 1. Is there adequate treatment and safe disposal of waste?*
- 2. Proposed monitoring of waste disposal to prevent new spills as has occurred in the past.*
- 3. Why a permit should be issued to a permittee that has a record of spills and noncompliance with the permit law.*
- 4. Why expansion should be al-*

Public hearing October 13

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has announced that a public hearing about Wild Rose Dairy’s application for a water quality permit, and for their expansion plan, will be held virtually on October 13, at 2 p.m.

The virtual hearing will be conducted using the Zoom platform. If you want to attend the hearing, please fill out the registration form at the following link:

<https://zoom.us/j/92639454769>

To call in the day of, after registration, please use the following number and access code:

Meeting ID: 926 3945 4769

Dial by your location: +1 312 626 6799 US (Chicago)

The public notice published in the September 10 issue of the Epitaph newspaper of Viola states that the department has tentatively decided that the above specified Wisconsin Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (WPDES) permit should be reissued.

lowed.

5. *Whether the Karst geology of this region should not prohibit a permit of this type.*

According to an article in LaFarge’s Episcope newspaper, some local townships are also concerned about the waste from the CAFO entering streams that flow through their townships, and increased wear and tear on town roads:

“The application of Wild Rose Dairy in the Town of Webster to add 1,000 animal units to their dairy operation was discussed at the meeting on August 19. The matter also concerns the Town of Stark as water running off the ridge where the farm is located flows into two watersheds that flow through the town – Otter and Weister Creeks. It appears that a public hearing on Wild Rose’s application will be held, and the board members felt like they should attend.”

Town of Webster resident Mark Katz, who lives on Green Hollow Road, just below the dairy’s location, attended the Town of Webster board meeting where the dairy’s expansion and permit application were discussed.

“Supervisor Gordy Nemec

brought up the public notice that was published in the Episcope regarding the dairy’s proposed expansion,” Katz said. “The board expressed that they felt disrespected because they were not informed of the dairy’s intention to expand their operation.”

Wear and tear on town roads is a top concern, along with impacts to town waterways and drinking water.

“The dairy’s traffic is already beating our road to crap, and I can only imagine what doubling that traffic will do,” Katz said. “And not only that, Buckeye Ridge Road is full of Amish, and that road is taking a beating too.”

Katz reports that the township does not want to be on the hook to subsidize Wild Rose Dairy’s profits. He said the last time the township tried to pass a CAFO Moratorium, a group of farmers and Wild Rose Dairy co-owner David Abt had showed up and spoken against it.

Katz also reports that part of Green Hollow Road is also in Stark Township.

“Their board also discussed the expansion, and are aware of the current and potential future problems for town roads and waterways,” Katz said.

Wisconsin Great Lakes Stream Restoration Program update

By Chris Collier, Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager

Despite the difficulties and strangeness of 2020, our Great Lakes stream restoration efforts have continued. We, like everyone, have felt negative impacts from COVID-19, highlighted by the decision to cancel our road-stream crossing (RSX) tour and workshop events. While large events like those had to be postponed, we were able to get a lot of great work done.

After an initial delay this spring, we were able to get two interns hired to help with our RSX inventory efforts. I introduced Rachel and Hannah in my last article, and I am happy to report that they did excellent work this summer. They inventoried more than 90 percent of the

RSXs in the Pemebonwon watershed in Marinette and Florence Counties, assisting Florence and Oneida County land and water conservation staff with RSX inventories at high-priority sites, and working with Forest Service hydrologists to survey stretches of the Border Brule River. All this work is helping TU and our partners identify, prioritize and design future projects that will reconnect and restore important coldwater habitat.

TU also had another successful year working with the US Forest Service to replace culverts creating fish-passage barriers. This year, our partnership resulted in seven barriers being replaced, reconnecting more than 15 miles of habitat in and around the national forest. One project I want to highlight is a dam

removal on the North Branch Oconto River in Wabeno. A few years ago, a survey identified three remnant logging dams (boulder and wood structures) constricting the river and creating fish passage barriers for brook trout in Wabeno. This was the second dam removed and it reconnected at least 1.5 miles of habitat. We owe a huge thank you to the Forest Service for providing funding for this project. Next up is dam number 3!

Florence County, the Wisconsin DNR and Town of Beaver also replaced barriers on Woods Creek (Florence County) and the North Branch Beaver Creek (WDNR and Town of Beaver). While TU wasn't directly involved in the construction phase of these projects, our team

did help with applying for funding (Woods Creek) and design (NB Beaver Creek). These projects are a perfect example of how TU can help our partners complete projects in roles ranging from project lead to technical assistance with individual phases.

Now that summer is closing, it's time to enjoy the last few weeks of trout season and warmer weather. Fall and winter bring on our survey, design and project-planning seasons and we already have a nice list of projects taking shape for 2021 and 2022. Thanks for all you do keep coldwater conservation a priority during these trying times. Feel free to reach out if you want to know more about any of our projects.

See you on the water.



NORTH BRANCH OCONTO RIVER DAM REMOVAL
The construction crew from M. Jolma Inc. of Ashland grades stream banks during the remnant logging dam removal.



NORTH BRANCH OCONTO RIVER AFTER DAM REMOVAL
This section of the North Branch Oconto River in Wabeno flows freely after the removal of a remnant logging dam this summer.



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