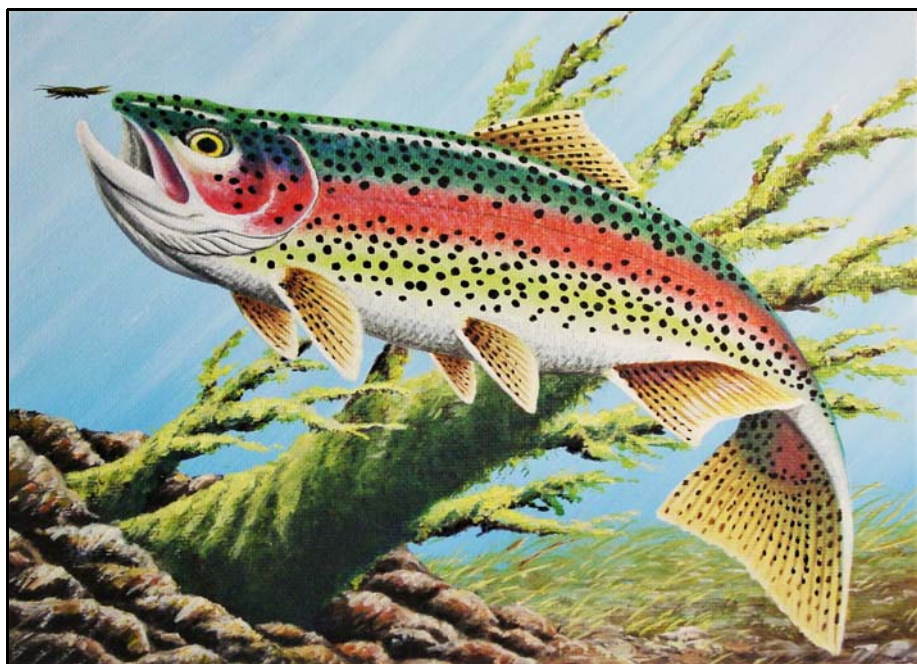




Wisconsin Trout

Winter 2021



ROBERT LEUM SELECTED AS 2021 TROUT STAMP CONTEST WINNER

The cover of the 2021 Wisconsin Trout Regulations pamphlet will feature a painting of a rainbow trout chasing a nymph created by artist Robert Leum of Holmen, Wisconsin. Signed and numbered prints and collector stamps will be available through Wisconsin Trout Unlimited for chapter events and other activities. Artists considering entering their work next year are encouraged to enter their artwork early. Entries will be accepted until August 2, 2021. For more information contact Trout Stamp Coordinator Darrell Toliver at DJTSOK@aol.com or (651) 269-8804.

Busy year expected for Friends of Wisconsin Trout Unlimited grant program

By Kim McCarthy, Friends of Wisconsin TU Coordinator

The Friends of Wisconsin TU grant program has been an enormous success for Wisconsin Trout Unlimited since we created it nearly 20 years ago. This year has the potential to be the busiest year in the history of the program, due to the pandemic.

Trout habitat projects are caught in a complicated web being spun by the virus. Trout stamp sales have increased dramatically as people have flocked to the outdoors for safe and healthy recreation. As more people fish, the need for more improved habitat and places to find quality fishing has never been greater. But TU chapters' inability to conduct traditional fundraising activities has made it difficult for many of our chapters to fund habitat projects.

Our Friends of Wisconsin TU grants have long been a key piece of

the funding puzzle for chapter habitat projects. Last year eight TU chapters used Friends grants, along with their own funds, to support a wide variety of projects, and requests this year have increased even more. Because chapters have cancelled their key fundraising events, we expect an increase in requests for Friends grants.

The goal of the program is to provide grants to all worthwhile grant requests, and we've always been able to do this because our donors have always shown outstanding support of this program. The State Council has not yet had to reject a request for a worthwhile project due to a lack of funds, and we are hoping to keep that record intact. Our hope is that existing donors, as well as new donors, will consider making a contribution to the program in 2021. Thank you for considering a donation.

Wisconsin TU asks for your support

By Kim McCarthy

The past year has been quite an adventure for all of us. It has been an especially difficult time for charitable organizations, and the impacts will be felt well into the future. The challenge for organizations such as Trout Unlimited will be how we can make sure that all of the good work we accomplish will continue as we go forward and hopefully move into a post-COVID period.

The Wisconsin State Council has long been involved in many good impactful conservation programs. Advocating for good legislation, picking up all the overhead costs for Friends of Wisconsin TU and Watershed Access Fund programs, running our annual youth fishing camp, supporting stream improvement projects across the state, lobbying to support good programs such as stewardship, assisting and supporting 21 chapters, and publishing an excellent State Council newspaper are many of the activities undertaken by your State Council.

All of those activities have costs, so the ability to raise funds is a necessary part of the Council's ability to continue its many worthwhile activities. But the pandemic has taken away our primary fundraising activity.

Our annual banquet, traditionally held on the first Saturday in February, had to be cancelled for 2021 due to the threat of COVID-19. The cancellation is difficult for a variety

of reasons. The banquet has become that once-a-year event that gave members from across the state the opportunity to congregate face to face and enjoy the company of our dedicated volunteers. The cancellation also creates a very large hole in the Council's funding, and threatens our ability to continue all of the activities members have come to expect.

In light of the banquet cancellation we're asking our members for support, so that we don't have to make major cuts to programs. Inside of this edition of our newspaper you will find a donation envelope. On the envelope there are boxes to check for various donations.

One of the boxes is for General Revenue to the Council. It is our hope that our supporters will consider donating to the Council's general revenues; perhaps even at the level that would have been made as a banquet contributor.

Our membership has always been loyal and generous in supporting the Council. Hopefully many of you will be in a position where you can continue that support. We would like to thank you in advance for any support you can give to the Council in this difficult time.

Kim McCarthy is a former state council chair; National Leadership Council representative and currently oversees our Friends of Wisconsin TU and Watershed Access Fund grant programs.



presents the annual
STATE COUNCIL MEETING
SATURDAY, FEB. 6

Due to health concerns, our Council Meeting will be held virtually on Zoom.

See event details and a link to register at:
wicouncil.tu.org/chapter/events

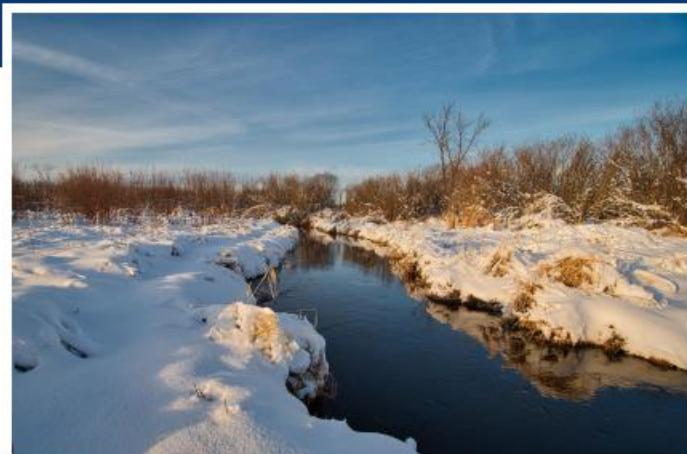
Saturday, Feb. 6 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

NOTICE: proposed Bylaw change

We will be voting to change the bylaws to the language below to align our fiscal year with TU National.

Article VII. Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Council shall be April 1 to March 31 or such other fiscal year as shall be adopted by Trout Unlimited.



Council online auction fundraiser April 18-25

The Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited will be hosting an online auction to raise funds for the Council. The auction, hosted by Eventgroove, will begin Sunday, April 18 and end Sunday, April 25.

Our goal is to have 30 auction items, which will include loaded fly boxes, merchandise and guided trips. A list of items will be published in the spring edition of *Wisconsin Trout*, along with registration and payment procedures for the auction.

Donations from individuals and chapters have already started coming in. Thank you for your donations. If you or your chapter would like to make a donation, please contact Banquet Chair and Council Vice Chair Scott Allen at jscottallen12@gmail.com.

WRDA and GLRI update

A thinned-down version of the Water Resources Development Act (WRDA) has made its way through Congress by passing both the House and Senate and is awaiting a signature from the President. This version includes authorization of the Brandon Road Lock and Dam project to keep Asian carp out of the Great Lakes and makes changes to the local cost share. The bill 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.

This is a key change to help ensure that the State of Illinois, or any state that wants to assist in the future, can reduce the states' financial burden and begin to plan for the associated costs of the project. TU will continue to push for a full waiver of the local portion as we still see this as a national and regional issue, not solely to be undertaken by Illinois. Unfortunately, GLRI reauthorization was removed from this bill, but the Great Lakes Congressional delegation approve GLRI funding in a separate bill.

Further details emerge about East Town Dairy manure spill

By Gillian Pomplun

Details have been slow to emerge about the latest manure spill from a Driftless Area CAFO. This is a headline that has become all too common in recent years.

According to the DNR's Claire O'Connell, the spill occurred on Friday, October 30. She said the spill was self-reported to the DNR's hotline, and that local DNR employees Warden Shawna Stringham and fisheries biologist Kirk Olson responded to the scene.

"The spill was self-reported by the dairy as being about 3,000 gallons of liquid manure," O'Connell said. "That's all we have to go on is the dairy's report, especially when our investigation occurs so far after the fact."

O'Connell said that the spill occurred when dairy staff were spreading manure in a field above and to the west of the breached Mlsna dam, which sits on an ephemeral stream that feeds into Knapp Creek. The dairy was using a dragline hose to spread the manure. She said that manure had run off the field, through the breached dam, and down the ephemeral stream to its confluence with Knapp Creek.

"The manure joined with Knapp Creek between Kelbel and McElhose Roads," O'Connell said. "According to the dairy, there was no known equipment failure that would have caused the spill."

O'Connell said that Kirk Olson had recovered 118 dead trout of "varying sizes" from the creek.

2019 fish kill

Like the Wild Rose Dairy in rural LaFarge, East Town Dairy is a major supplier of milk for Kwik Trip. Wild Rose Dairy was the location of two manure spills into Otter Creek, one in October of 2017 and another in June of 2019.

The Mlsna East Town Dairy sits in the headwaters of Knapp Creek, a major tributary of the West Fork of the Kickapoo River. The West Fork is recognized as one of Wisconsin's premier trout streams. It also sits at the headwaters of Brush Creek, a tributary of the Kickapoo River, and joins the river near Ontario. The dairy is owned by the Nick Mlsna.

In 2019 there was a large fish kill in Brush Creek, close to the dairy's location. In that incident, which according to the DNR remains "cause unknown," the area had experienced a high volume of rainfall, reporting of the incident by two fishermen did not happen until some time after the incident, and the fish found were in an advanced state of decomposition.

A subsequent investigation of the dairy's facility and fields by the DNR reported a manure storage structure on the verge of overtopping, manure in a nearby pond in Vernon County, and improper storage of leachate from the silage storage pad, which was observed to be running off onto the landscape.

Gillian Pomplun is a reporter for the Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout.



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42% of sales will directly support Wisconsin Trout Unlimited's work to ensure future generations access to cold, clean, fishable water.

Chair's Column

Playing the advocacy long game

As I write this, I'm still celebrating the recent Bristol Bay decision by the Army Corps of Engineers to deny the Pebble Mine permit. The Pebble saga is a long one, and it serves as a reminder about the importance of playing the "long game" when it comes to advocacy efforts.

The mineral deposit was discovered in 1987 and after further studies, mineral rights were secured in 2001. For the next decade, a patchwork coalition of conservationists developed to protect Bristol Bay's waterways, the salmon fishery and its local economies.

I had the opportunity to participate in a Bristol Bay fly-in to Washington D.C. in 2012. Anglers, guides, lodge owners and local tribal leaders came from all across the country to meet with our respective legislators. We were all there to deliver a clear and concise message: This was the wrong mine in the wrong place.

In 2014 we saw good news, as a three-year study of the area by the EPA appeared to block approval of the mine. Their final report found that "mining in the headwaters of these river systems could cause harm to the valuable fishery in Bristol Bay." At the time, our attitude was celebratory,

Of course, we now know how the next chapter unfolds. In 2017, a new federal administration was interested in re-examining the possibility of what would be North America's largest open-pit mine. The EPA was ordered to throw out their previous

report, and a new mining permit application was being considered.

The latest rejection by the Army Corps feels more permanent, but it's likely to be appealed. And without permanent protections, the threat will continue to loom over Bristol Bay. The job is not done, and thankfully, we're in this fight for the long haul.

We can learn some valuable lessons from the Bristol Bay experience and apply this knowledge to our own advocacy efforts right here in Wisconsin.

We know that economics and local economies matter. It's hard to put a monetary value on cold, clean, fishable water, but we're learning. We've done two studies on the economic impacts of trout angling in the Driftless Area, and recent studies by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Outdoor Industry Association are starting to shed light on the economic impact of outdoor recreation in our state.

Our outdoor recreation economy is thriving because Wisconsin has invested in public land and water access through the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program. But we could do more. This past year has showed us just how important our public lands are, and in the upcoming budget session, it's time to see a long-term reauthorization of the Stewardship Program.

Outside of economics, Bristol Bay has taught us that stories matter. Legislators and policy makers need to hear our stories of time



Mike Kuhr

SCOTT ALLEN EXPLAINS THE BENEFITS OF OUR STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM
State Council Vice Chair Scott Allen (left) discusses the benefits of Stewardship with Sen. Howard Marklein (right) and Charles Carlin (center) from Gathering Waters on a visit to Bear Creek in Sauk County.

spent in Wisconsin's woods and waters. As important as the facts and figures are, these personal stories have the most powerful impact.

The story of our restoration work needs to be told too. Every local TU chapter has their "home waters." We're leaving these waters better than we found them, thanks to the effort of our volunteers. In a typical year, Wisconsin TU members will volunteer more than 50,000 hours. That's dedication!

The DNR has requested a 10-year reauthorization of the stewardship program at \$51 million per year (currently \$33 million per year). We'll know in a few weeks if the Governor's budget honors that request. Then it will be on to the Legislature's Joint Finance Committee.

In the coming months we'll be looking to build relationships with these legislators by getting them out on the water and touring some of our local restoration work, so they can see the positive impacts of public fishing easements.

Last fall we held successful site

visits with Sen. Marklein (R-Spring Green) on Bear Creek in Sauk County and with Sen. Roth (R-Appleton) on the Pine River in nearby Waushara County. Both visits gave local chapter leaders an opportunity to engage with their legislators on some familiar stream banks.

We were joined at both visits by leaders from our partners at Gathering Waters, a non-profit representing Wisconsin's Land Trusts. Gathering Waters has taken a lead role in advocating for the stewardship program and we hope to build on these positive experiences.

Let's see if we can channel some of that Bristol Bay momentum and get Wisconsin's iconic public lands initiative, the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship program, a 10-year reauthorization.

Do you have a story to tell? It's never too late to start advocating on behalf of our waters.

*Much Respect,
Mike Kuhr
State Council Chair*



presents the virtual series
"TALKING TROUT"

Interactive, virtual gatherings of trout enthusiasts
Join us on Zoom!
1st Wednesday of the Month
@ 8:00 pm Central
Conservation & Fishing topics, guest presenters,
Live Question and Answer

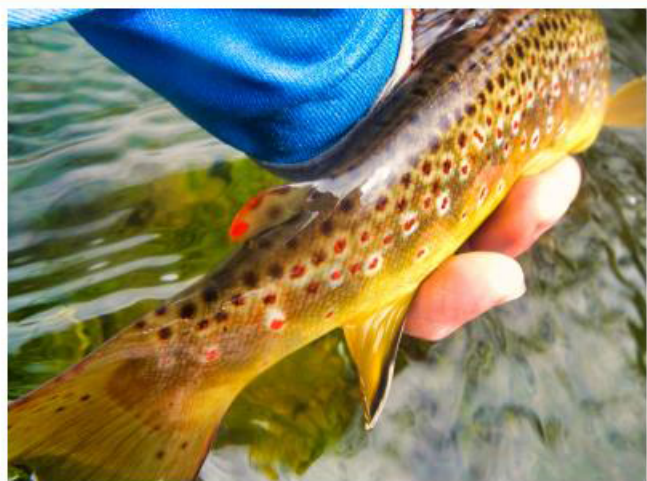
visit <https://wicouncil.tu.org> for meeting link

Upcoming Events: Jan. 6, Feb. 3, Mar. 3

Future Guests:

Jan. Mike Banaszewski, TU's Service Partnership Coordinator

Feb. Kyle Zemple, Black Earth Angling Co.



Erik Helm's Classical Angler Fly fishing service



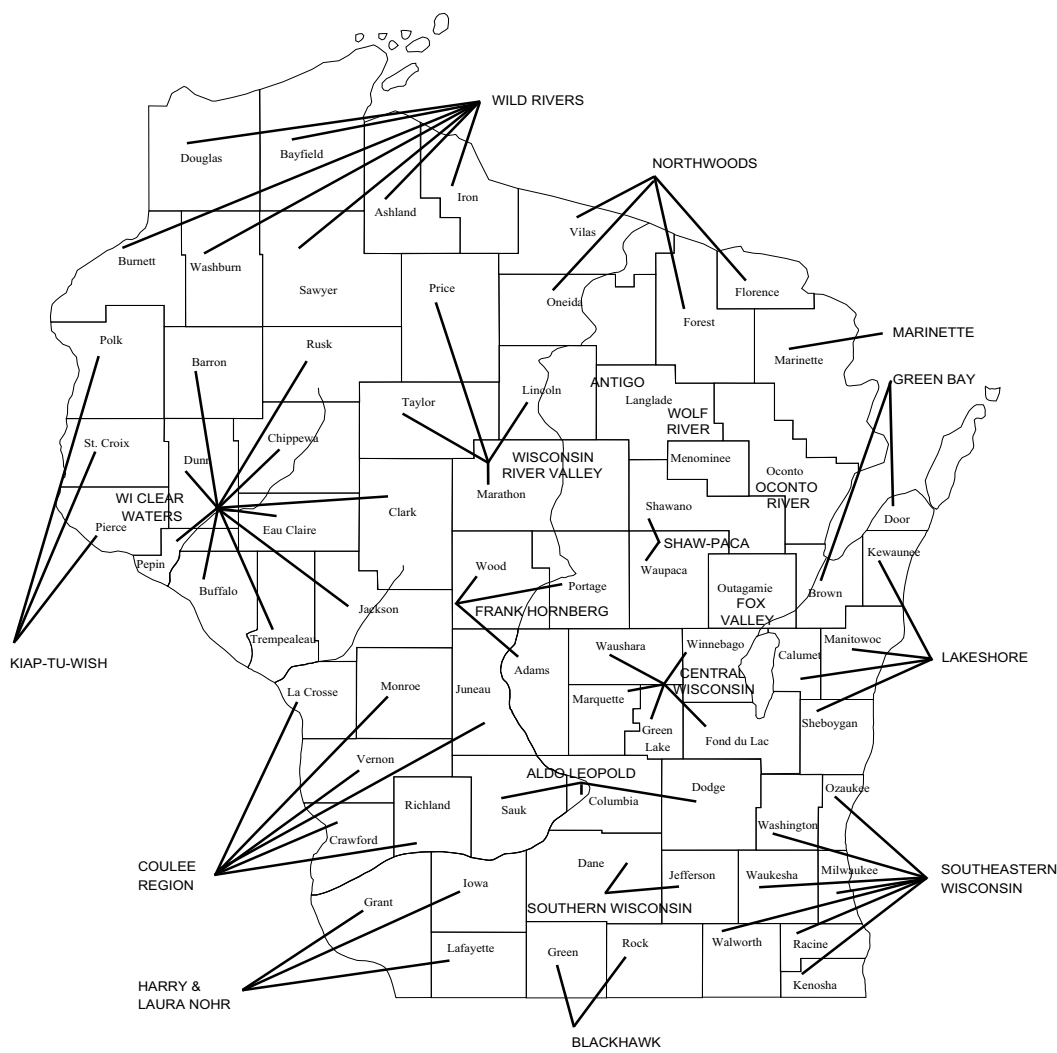
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Wisconsin TU Chapters, Presidents, and Websites



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

- Aldo Leopold (#375):** Mike Barniskis, 805 S. Center St., Beaver Dam WI 53916; barniskis@yahoo.com; aldoleopold.tu.org
- Antigo (#313):** Scott Henricks, 213 Mary St., Antigo, WI 54409-2536 715-623-3867; henricks51@yahoo.com
- Blackhawk (#390):** Dave Brethauer; 17348 W. Gepler Road, Brodhead, WI 53520; 608-897-4166; dave.brethauer@gmail.com; www.BlackhawkTU.org
- Central Wisconsin (#117):** Stan Cichowski; 6395 E. Decorah, Oshkosh, WI 54902; 708-362-9001; stanleycichowski@att.net; cwtu.org
- Coulee Region (#278):** Fred Spademan; fred@spademan.com; 429 2nd St. North, LaCrosse, 54601; 248-408-3873; CouleeRegion-TU.org
- Fox Valley (#193):** Nate Ratliff, 199 Taylor Street, Little Chute, 54140 (920) 851-0502; nratliff@new.rr.com; www.foxvalleytu.org
- Frank Hornberg (#624):** Doug Erdmann, 1523 Rosewood Ave., Wisconsin Rapids, 54494; 715-712-3134; Derdmann55@charter.net; www.Facebook.com/HornbergTU
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- Oconto River (#385):** Wayne Czynpinski; 920-590-2748; wczynpinski@yahoo.com; ocontorivertu.com
- Shaw-Paca (#381):** Kyle Kossel, E2392 Cardinal Court, Waupaca, WI 54981; 920-379-5741; kylekossel@yahoo.com; shawpaca.tu.org
- Southeastern Wisconsin (#078):** Jim Rennpferd; P.O. Box 86, Brookfield, WI 53008; John_Rennpferd@hotmail.com; 414-745-8488; sewtu.tu.org; www.facebook.com/southeastwisconsintroutunlimited; SoutheasternWITU on Instagram
- Southern Wisconsin (#061):** Jim Hess; jim.hess@tds.net; P.O. Box 45555, Madison, WI 53744-5555; www.swtu.org
- Wild Rivers (#415):** Kevin Seefeldt; Ashland, WI; 715-292-1614; kseef9@gmail.com; www.wisconsinTU.org/wildrivers
- Wisconsin Clear Waters (#255):** Jim Erickson; 341 Garfield Ave., Eau Claire, 53701; 715-559-1864; ttangler@outlook.com; WisconsinTU.org/ClearWaters
- Wisconsin River Valley (#395):** Kirk Stark; 811 2nd Street, Rothschild, WI 54474; 715-432-0560; kfgstark@gmail.com; wrvtu.org
- Wolf River (#050):** Chuck Valliere, 5040 Hardy Trail, Waunakee, WI 53597; 608-836-1908 or 608-332-9652; woodtickchuck1950@gmail.com; WolfriverTU.org

State Council Leadership

Chair: Mike Kuhr, 6103 Queen-sway, Monona, WI 53716; (414) 588-4281; mikek.trout@yahoo.com

Vice Chair: Scott Allen; E4835 N. Stoney Ridge Road, Reedsburg, WI 53959; 608-495-1482;

Secretary: Bob Rice 74355 Kauka-mo Road, Iron River, WI 54847; (715) 292-1143; bobrice723@gmail.com

Treasurer: Gary Stoychoff, 1326 14th Ave., Green Bay, WI 54304 garystoychoff@att.net

Vice Chair, Central Region: Tom Lager, 1700 Spring Hill Ct., Neenah, WI 54956; tomkarinla-ger@new.rr.com

Vice Chair, Northeast Region: Dale Lange, See Marinette Coun-ty above.

Vice Chair, Southern Region: Jim Wierzba, 2817 Country Club Drive, Mequon, WI 53092; 414-688-3606; hoke4me@aol.com

Vice Chair, Western Region: Gary Horvath, 623 W. Pine Street, River Falls, WI 54806 (715)425-8489; garyjhorvath42@comcast.net

National Trustee: Henry Koltz, 2300 N. Mayfair Rd., Ste. 1175, Milwaukee, WI 53226 (414) 331-5679 (H); hek@sdelaw.com

Awards: Todd Franklin; Contact info at right

Education: Bob Haase, W7949 Treptow Ln., Eldorado, WI 54932 (920) 922-8003 (H); flytier@milwpc.com

Friends of WITU and Watershed Access Fund Grant Coordinator:

Kim McCarthy, 736 Meadow-brook Court, Green Bay, WI 54313; 920-639-3697; kjmccarthy75@gmail.com.

Advocacy Chair: Henry Koltz

Membership: Chair Paul Kruse, 500 Saint Jude St., Green Bay, WI 54303 (920) 639-2361; kruser2@new.rr.com;

National Leadership Council

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Trout In the Classroom Coordina-tor: Greg Olson, 16370 Division St., Lakeland MN, 55043; driftless23@gmail.com

Service Partnership Coordinator: Mike Burda; 608-332-0397; north-ernlightsreef@yahoo.com.

Website: Brandon Schmalz schmalz.dev@gmail.com

Diversity Initiative: Heidi Oberstadt, 456 Wadleigh St., Stevens Point, WI 54481; 715-573-5104; heidi.oberstadt@gmail.com

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

Vol. 33, No. 1 — Winter 2021

Wisconsin Trout is the official publication of the Wisconsin Council of Trout Unlimited and is distributed to the members of Wisconsin's 21 TU chapters. Non-member subscriptions are \$12.50/year. Publication dates are the first weeks of January, April, July and October. Dead-lines for articles and advertisements are the 10th of December, March, June and September. For a current advertising rate sheet, contact the editor.

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

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toddfranklinwistrout@gmail.com

State Council Officers

Executive Committee includes officers and vice chairs

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Scott Allen, Vice Chair

Bob Rice, Secretary

Gary Stoychoff, Treasurer

Mining update

News regarding the Back Forty Project, Oneida County mine and mining rule changes.

By Allison Werner,
Policy and Advocacy Director,
River Alliance of Wisconsin

Back Forty Mine

We have been expecting Aquila Resources to submit their new Dam Safety Permit application to Michigan's Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE), which they did in November. EGLE has not issued a public notice about a virtual public hearing or deadline for submitting written comments yet. The Coalition to Save the Menominee River and others are reviewing this application. Watch their website for updates: <https://jointherivercoalition.org>.

There are many concerns with the design Aquila Resources is proposing for the tailings dam. They are still proposing an upstream design, which has failed and caused devastating harm in other locations like Brazil. The demonstrated risks and extreme instability of upstream dams led to a Global Industry Standard on Tailings Management to establish safer guidelines.

It is due to the serious environ-

mental 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/menominee-river/>.

Badger Minerals, Oneida County mine proposal

Badger Minerals completed exploratory drilling in July at the Shoepke site in Oneida County. They have publicly stated to WXP radio that the results of the exploratory drilling "were not considered significant enough to justify the purchase." Badger Minerals was considering purchasing land from Heartwood Forestland, whose land they conducted the exploratory drilling on this summer. Badger Minerals does still own other land in the region, which they could chose to explore in the future.

Mining rules discussed

On December 9 the Natural Resources Board discussed four administrative rules (NR 130, 131, 132 and 182) related to nonferrous metallic mineral exploration, prospecting, mining and mining waste management.

The DNR was required to update these four rules to make them consistent with 2017 Act 134. 2017 Wisconsin Act 134 weakened Wisconsin's nonferrous metallic mineral mining regulations, including removing the "prove it first" provision.

While we would prefer to not have Act 134, the DNR's process was thorough and inclusive. DNR staff worked with stakeholders over the last few years on updating these four rules and due to recent changes in the law, were required to stay within statute limitations when drafting and implementing administrative rules.

DNR did slightly increase fees, which hadn't changed since 1982 and provided clearer definitions that will help all sides understand what is expected during the mining

process.

The NRB passed one amendment to clarify how the agency would designate other lands as unsuitable for mining. The language they added at the request of Wisconsin Manufacturers and Commerce follows what the agency would have done without the added language. This was the only change to the rules requested by WMC, Aquila Resources and Foth during the NRB hearing. They were otherwise supportive of the rules.

The NRB has tabled the rules until their January meeting to give DNR staff time to properly fix a drafting error on notification to tribes. Since there were no other objections, we expect the rules to move out of the NRB in January. The legislature needs to approve the rules next.

All of us will need to continue to be prepared to provide oversight of future mining proposals. During the December NRB meeting, David Anderson from Aquila Resources stated that they are interested in exploration at both the Bend and Reef deposits next year.

Spreading the joy of angling

The DNR's "Angler R3" program continues to encourage more people to take up fishing.

By Theresa Stabo, DNR R3
Coordinator

As we continue to navigate the ongoing COVID-19 public health emergency, people are connecting with Wisconsin's great outdoors more than ever.

For those who need a place for space, Wisconsin has lots to offer. With 49 state parks, 15 state forests, 44 state trails, 84,000 miles of rivers and streams, and roughly 15,000 lakes, Wisconsin offers residents and visitors innumerable opportunities to "Find Your Adventure" and "Go Wild In Wisconsin."

Fishing and hunting have always been long-standing Wisconsin traditions, and many have found them to be rewarding outlets. So far this year, 1.3 million individuals purchased fishing licenses, an 11 percent increase.

Although the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) had to pause in-person programs such as instructor training, fishing clinics and "Fishing for Dinner" classes, and temporarily closed our tackle-loaner sites since state buildings are closed to the public, the DNR is working on training new Angler R3 instructors to help us spread the joy of angling.

In early January, we'll conduct our first online Angler R3 instructor training and certification workshop. We've limited attendance at our first foray into this virtual format and sent the announcement to people who expressed interest over the past year. We look forward to evaluating this class, learning from it ourselves and planning more, and we encourage TU members to participate in future workshops. Search for Fish-

ing for Dinner on the DNR's website, dnr.wi.gov for future workshops.

We are excited by the massive increase in license sales, with first-time license buyers accounting for 47 percent of the rise (59,017 of the 125,804 overall gain). The \$5 first-timer deal is available to anyone who has never had a fishing license in Wisconsin and those who have not bought a license in at least 10 years.

We're wrapping up a survey of these new anglers that we hope will tell us more about their motivations and help us design strategies to inspire them to make buying an annual license a healthy habit.

While still outnumbered by men, women are increasingly showing up on our trout streams. Based on available data, 29 percent of the overall inland trout stamp sales increase is attributed to women (8,250 out of the 28,860 total increase). Similarly, women took to Great Lakes trout and salmon fishing, contributing to the overall uptick by 27 percent (5,386 of the 20,305 total increase). Now our focus is on keeping newcomers and returning anglers in the fold, as well as coaxing back those who haven't gone out in a few years.

With the early trout season upon us, we may see some of these newcomers on our streams this winter who are unfamiliar with trout stream etiquette or safety practices. A measure of kindness and patience can go a long way in welcoming people while maintaining a safe distance of six feet or more.

You can contact Theresa Stabo at Theresa.Stabo@wisconsin.gov or 608-577-6332

Enrollment now open for 2021 WITU Youth Fishing Camp

With everything we've gone through this past year, we can all look forward to the 2021 WITU Youth Fishing Camp. Enrollment is open.

The camp coordinators look forward to getting back to normal, or at least a new normal, and are excited for us to come. As for policy measures, we will be waiting to see where we are at with vaccines and potential camp guidelines.

The camp will run from August 19-22 at the Pine Lake Bible Camp. All youth ages 12 to 16 are welcome to attend. We will still have our great curriculum and are looking at adding some new twists.

We welcome any and all volunteers, especially previous volunteers. Watch for an email from Wayne Parmley in January. Please respond as soon as you can. New volunteers should contact Linn Beck at 920-216-7408 or chlbeck@att.net or Wayne Parmley at 920-540-2315 or wparmley@gmail.com.

We're now creating a PDF file of the camp brochure, and we'll have a limited number of printed brochures available after the first of the year. Please contact Linn or Wayne if you'd like some.

As always, we welcome donations of money, fishing gear, flies, etc. to support our camp and develop future conservationists.

TU National Leadership Council report

By TU NLC Representative and past
Council Chair Linn Beck

The NLC has had two meetings since my last report, including our annual meeting in October. We received the "State of the Grassroots" report from Jim Walker and Rich Thomas, who said all NLC work groups had completed their "Message Roadmaps," plans of action. They contain three goals for each group to work on, and the means for them to meet their goals. There was one course of action for the NLC to respond to: the de-chartering of the Branson Chapter, based on a request from the Ozark Council.

In December we held our quarterly NLC meeting, which opened with an update that all Regional Rendezvous and the Annual TU meeting in Bangor are cancelled for 2021. We'll provide more information soon regarding virtual meetings. We handled one action item

regarding dechartering the Tri-Lakes Chapter of New York, with their members merging with the Lake Champlain Chapter.

Meghan Barker and Nelli Williams from TU Alaska thanked everyone on their efforts to stop the Pebble Mine, and noted that some mine investors were backing out when the Army Corps of Engineers denied the permit. They are expecting an appeal and are preparing a defense.

TU President and CEO Chris Wood discussed our Strategic Plan, which they are preparing to roll out to councils and chapters.

He said the new membership plan will be based on engagement. He also discussed three areas that TU is working on with President-elect Biden's transition team, including removing rollbacks for protection of our public lands, climate change and removal of the four dams on the Snake River.

Wisconsin salmonids: Past, present and future

As a first installment in a new series of articles focusing on the past, present and future of Wisconsin salmonids, author John Lyons explores our beautiful native brook trout.

By John Lyons

“Brookie.” Just saying or reading the word always gives me a happy little jolt. All salmonids are beautiful and fascinating, but the brook trout is hands-down my favorite. Brookies are gorgeous, particularly a male in bright spawning colors in the fall. They evoke images of the Northwoods in a bygone era, when all the rods were made of cane and a three-wet-fly rig fished across and downstream was the standard.



EARLY ANGLERS ON THE BOIS BRULE RIVER

“Limiting your catch” was a phrase yet unborn at that time.

Brook trout need cold and clean water, and if a stream has a healthy population, you know it’s in good shape. Occasionally, brookies can be incredibly finicky, as all trout should be sometimes, but mostly they are ready feeders, rewarding a well-matched fly and a good cast with a solid strike and a spirited fight. And if you’re so inclined, they taste delicious, especially when cooked in butter over an open fire after a long day on the water. What’s not to love?

The past

Brook trout and lake trout were the only two trout or salmon species originally native to Wisconsin, and only the brook trout was regularly found in inland streams and small ponds. Brookies also have the possible distinction, along with the slimy sculpin, of being the fish species with the longest continuous residence in the state.

Recall that tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands of years ago, most of what is now Wisconsin was covered by glaciers during a series of ice ages. Only the Driftless Area, so named because of its lack of glacial drift, the material deposited by overlying glaciers, remained ice-free. But it was no doubt a harsh, tundra-like place in those days, and only a few cold-loving, stream-dwelling species could have possibly survived there when glaciers covered the surrounding lands.

The brook trout and slimy sculpin are the most-likely candidates. All the other 140-odd native Wisconsin fish species survived glaciation in refuges further south and had to colonize the state when the glaciers finally receded beginning 10,000-20,000 years ago.

Of course, to get beyond the Driftless Area, brookies also had to do some colonizing of their own, and they did it well, reaching essentially all areas of the state soon after the glaciers were gone.

Given what we know of the geology of Wisconsin and the historic distribution of coldwater streams, the Driftless Area remained a stronghold for brook trout, includ-

ing northeastern Iowa, southeastern Minnesota, and perhaps a tiny piece of extreme northwestern Illinois. These populations represent the westernmost extent of the brook trout’s entire native range, and only in the Appalachians of the eastern U.S. do brook trout occur further south.

Brook trout were also numerous in the “Sand County” streams of central Wisconsin, and the “Northwoods” of the northern third of the state. Some scattered populations

occurred in a few spring-fed streams of eastern Wisconsin, but the streams in this region were generally too warm. Lake Superior had numerous brook trout, including the famous “coasters” that lived in near-shore areas. Lake Michigan also had coasters, but probably fewer than Lake Superior because most of its tributaries on the Wisconsin side were not suitable for brook trout.

Native Americans are believed to have moved into Wisconsin as transient hunter-gatherers soon after the ice age ended 8-10,000 years ago, although the earliest settlements excavated by archaeologists date back only 2-3,000 years. Interestingly, although brook trout are likely to have been widespread and common during this entire period, there is no conclusive evidence that they were eaten by indigenous peoples until the era of European exploration and settlement.

Numerous fish bones have been excavated at several pre-European archaeological sites around Wisconsin, indicating that fish were often an important part of the indigenous diet.

Bones of many different species have been found, including sturgeons, gars, bowfin, many different suckers, catfishes and bullheads, northern pike, muskellunge, basses, sunfishes, crappies, yellow perch, walleye, sauger, freshwater drum, and, at sites along the Great Lakes, lake trout, whitefishes, and ciscoes.

But brook trout bones are notable by their absence. Admittedly, the archaeological sites are located along larger rivers and lakes, not ideal brook trout habitats. But native Americans undoubtedly visited trout streams during their travels, so the lack of evidence for brook trout consumption is curious. But as the saying goes, the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, and future excavations may help clarify whether brook trout were important as food for early native Americans in Wisconsin.

In contrast, there is extensive evidence that the first European explorers and colonists consumed brook trout in large amounts. Early

accounts relate that many streams were full of brook trout and that settlers captured and ate prodigious numbers. By the 1850’s and 1860’s, market fisheries had developed for brook trout (and many other species), and large numbers were captured, processed, sold and shipped to fish shops and restaurants in the growing cities of the region.

Soon thereafter, well-to-do sportsmen from these cities began to travel to the countryside to catch fish on their own, particularly in northern Wisconsin. Entrepreneurial locals began to provide rustic lodging and meals and guide service, and the Wisconsin “fishing resort” was born. Many of these resorts focused on warmwater species such as largemouth and smallmouth bass and coolwater species such as walleye, northern pike, and muskellunge, but in the area near Lake Superior, where large coasters were plentiful, several resorts focused on brook trout. Most were located on the famous Bois Brule River in Douglas County. Early sport anglers absolutely did not practice catch and release, and harvests of hundreds of trout per day were commonplace.

Larger fish were the main target, but brook trout of only 5-6” were routinely kept, sometimes to spoil and be discarded before they could be eaten.

All of this fishing pressure took its toll, and by the late 1800’s anglers were already complaining that numbers and sizes of brook trout catches were down.

Whereas coasters up to five pounds had been caught earlier in the 1800’s, now fish over 1-2 pounds were rare. Catches in inland streams also dropped precipitously. Stocking was seen as a solution, and the first brook trout hatchery, Nevin, still in operation today, was built south of Madison in 1876. Other trout hatcheries soon followed.



FAMOUS COON CREEK PHOTO

Note the rider on the horse, atop the eroded creek bank. Those soils had eroded from the hillsides in a matter of decades.

The earliest hatchery brook trout in Wisconsin were derived from local wild fish, but by 1887 brook trout from outside the state were being imported to try to increase hatchery production. Brook trout were regularly brought into Wisconsin from elsewhere, often the northeast, to bolster stocking during the next 100 years.

Although overfishing was a serious problem, the existential threat to Wisconsin brook trout was from

the environmental impacts of European settlement.

First came agricultural development, moving from south to north. The prairies, savannas and wooded areas were cleared and cultivated and grazed with little regard for soil or water conservation. Massive erosion and sedimentation were the results, choking streams and smothering spawning areas with sand and silt. Wetlands were steadily drained and filled, lowering the water table and drying springs.

The Driftless Area, with its highly erodible soils and steep topography, was the hardest hit, and brook trout nosedived there first.

Dams were built almost everywhere, blocking spawning runs, particularly for fish coming out of the Great Lakes. And finally the northern pineries were cut and then the land was put to the plow in doomed agricultural attempts, again contributing to massive erosion and sedimentation and declines in spring flow. Efforts to float cut logs to market resulting in tremendous damage to stream channels, and in some parts of northern Wisconsin natural channel morphology has still not fully recovered more than a century after the last logging drives.

Brook trout hit their low point in the early 1900’s. By then the species was almost completely gone from the southern third of Wisconsin, uncommon and localized in the central third, and much reduced in the northern third. Coasters were eventually eliminated from the Wisconsin waters of the Great Lakes. Stocking was ramped up to compensate, but it was poorly focused, and most was of the “put and take” variety, and consequently little re-establishment occurred. If not for the introduction and spread of the more tolerant brown trout, trout fishing opportunities would have disappeared from most of the state.

First restoration project on Coon Creek

The road to recovery was slow. The first-ever watershed restoration project in the nation, under the guidance of Aldo Leopold, began in the Coon Creek Watershed in Vernon, Monroe and Lacrosse counties in the Driftless Area in the mid 1930’s.

Through trial and error, this project and the many others that

followed gradually developed and implemented new agricultural practices that reduced soil erosion, slowed runoff and increased water retention on the landscape, improving the water table. Dried-up springs started to flow again, and the land slowly healed.

Reforestation of the Northwoods began. Scientific fisheries management was initiated, including standardized fish population surveys, more rational stocking policies, effective regulations on fish harvest and efforts to improve trout stream habitat. Early stream improvements were often poorly con-

Lakes.

The current distribution of brook trout in Wisconsin streams, about 6,500 miles, although impressive by the debased standards of the early 1900's, is but a shadow of what it was before European settlement.

Habitat suitability models from the DNR estimate that in 1820 more than 20,000 miles of Wisconsin streams were probably suitable for brook trout. Over 10,000 miles of these streams, mainly headwaters, have since been so modified by agriculture, urbanization, forest clear-cutting, ditching and straightening, pollution, or dams that they



Wisconsin Historical Society

EARLY ATTEMPTS TO STEM EROSION ON COON CREEK

Farmers used willow branches to stem bank erosion in those earliest attempts at erosion control.

ceived, ineffective and short lived, but much was learned from these failures, and habitat techniques steadily improved.

By the 1970's and 1980's, more than 40 years of rehabilitation had begun to yield fruit. Stream hydrology and water and habitat quality had improved to the point that many formerly degraded streams could once again support self-sustaining trout populations, at least for brown trout.

Groups like TU and local fishing and conservation clubs worked with the DNR to improve trout streams in an effective manner. Trout stocking began to incorporate fish of wild origin (i.e., eggs and milt collected from wild fish) rather than just domesticated fish, which had been raised in the hatchery for many generations and had lost much of their natural wariness and "stream smarts."

As a result, survival and establishment of stocked fish jumped markedly. Brook trout began to reproduce again in the headwaters of many streams. Strict harvest regulations protected newly emerging populations. By the late 1990's, brookies in southern Wisconsin were doing better than at any time in the previous 100 years, and Northwoods brookies were on the upswing as well.

The present

Although exact numbers are hard to determine, as of 2020 self-sustaining brook trout populations occupy about 3,500 miles of streams statewide. Populations supported partially or completely by stocking cover another 3,000 or so miles of stream.

Most of these streams are in the Northwoods, but there are also many good populations in the Driftless Area and the Sand Counties, and a few scattered brook trout creeks in eastern and southeastern Wisconsin. Additionally, there are over 100 brook trout "spring ponds,"— cold, spring-fed ponds of a few acres or less, almost exclusively in the Northwoods, particularly in and around Langlade County.

Some of these spring ponds have the potential to produce large fish of two or more pounds. However, coaster populations remain extirpated from the Wisconsin Great

no longer can support any trout, despite the improved land use and restoration efforts of the past decades.

But perhaps up to 3,000 miles of larger streams that currently lack brook trout have perfectly adequate habitat and water quality conditions. In these streams, the reason for the absence of brook trout appears to be the non-native brown trout.

Brown trout grow larger and are more aggressive, and they are capable of displacing brook trout in many situations. Particularly in the Driftless Area, a healthy brown trout population usually eliminates brook trout or restricts them to tiny tributaries and headwater areas with icy cold water.

Where water temperatures are especially low, the brown trout's advantages are lessened. There is some suggestion that some types of stream habitat improvement, particularly increases in deep undercut banks, tilt the scales in favor of brown trout. Although the newly created habitat is suitable for brookies, it is even more favorable for browns, and the high densities of brown trout that result drive brook trout away through antagonistic behaviors and the threat of predation.

If brown trout are excluded and removed, as has been done in Seas Branch in Vernon County, brook trout numbers rebound quickly, and they readily occupy the deep undercut areas. Brown trout suppression of brook trout seems to be less of a problem in northern Wisconsin, where perhaps brook trout are better able to deal with the longer and harsher winters.

Coasters

The coaster brook trout of Lake Superior have drawn substantial attention and research during the last 25 years.

Coasters get their name from their habit of staying close to shore during their time in the lake, where they can be caught from shore or small boats in relatively shallow water. They typically spend their first 1-4 years in the tributary stream where they were born before migrating downstream to the lake, although some fish spend their entire lives in the lake, spawning on near-shore gravel shoals.

In the lake, coasters tend to avoid deep open water, instead staying near shore in bays and river mouths not far from their streams or shoals of origin. After some time in the lake, during which time they grow much faster and larger than do the resident brook trout that remain in the tributaries for their entire lives, many coasters return to the tributaries to spawn.

Usually, spawners return to the same stream where they were born. Spawning is a stressful and energetically expensive activity, and many fish die during or soon afterwards, but some fish survive and are able to spawn again in succeeding years.

Although gone from the Wisconsin and Minnesota tributaries of Lake Superior, small coaster populations persist in a few streams of the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Isle Royale, and the north shore of Ontario.

The largest remaining population, although substantially down from its heyday 100 years ago, is in the Nipigon River, Ontario, the source of the world record brook trout at 14.5 pounds in 1915. There has been great interest in restoring coasters in Minnesota and Wisconsin, but efforts to date have been unsuccessful.

In the 1990's and early 2000's, it was thought that coasters might be a distinct strain of brook trout, separate genetically from the stream residents they coexisted with. With this in mind, offspring from some of the remaining coaster populations were raised in hatcheries and then stocked into new waters, including Whittlesey Creek near Ashland, Wisconsin. But this approach proved ineffective.

Subsequent genetic analyses have indicated that each coaster population is somewhat unique and probably adapted to specific local

or migrating downstream to the lake during its lifetime is largely determined by the specific ecological conditions it experiences. But exactly what conditions trigger migration remain unclear. And with the major habitat and biological changes that have occurred in Wisconsin Lake Superior tributaries since coasters disappeared, especially the establishment of non-native brown trout, rainbow trout, and coho salmon, one wonders if the appropriate conditions for brook trout migration could ever actually occur again.

Experimental exclusion and removal of non-native salmonids from a high-quality brook trout tributary might help answer this question. Thus, coaster brook trout potential may still exist in Wisconsin, but whether coasters will ever reappear remains to be seen.

Wild versus domestic

As mentioned earlier, the stocking of "wild" versus domestic brook trout by the DNR has contributed greatly to the current expansion of brook trout populations. Recent advancements in our understanding of the genetic make-up of Wisconsin brook trout populations have been used to improve the wild stocking program.

When the program began, the choice of donor streams for wild brook trout for use in the hatchery was driven mainly by which streams had enough adults to provide sufficient eggs. However, there was always a question of what genetic strains of brook trout were in these donor streams. Ideally, the goal was to stock wild Wisconsin-, or at least Upper Midwest-genome fish, rather than strains that had evolved elsewhere and then been introduced into the state.

The thinking, backed by results



COASTER BROOK TROUT NO LONGER IN BOIS BRULE

The Bois Brule River in Douglas County is a northwoods river with excellent brook trout populations in the headwaters and tributaries. The main channel, shown here, is now dominated by brown trout, rainbow trout and coho salmon. Formerly this river was known for producing large coaster brook trout, but they no longer occur here.

conditions. Coasters from a single or several nearby streams are more closely related genetically to the resident brook trout of those same streams than they are to the coasters of other streams further away. In other words, the resident and the coaster brook trout of a particular stream or set of nearby streams are the same genetic entity. Indeed, it is thought that both stream-residents and coasters might be produced by the same parents.

This implies that all of the brook trout in that stream or streams are potential coasters (or residents), and rather than being hard-wired genetically, the likelihood of a particular fish remaining in the stream

from other stocking and restoration efforts elsewhere in North America, was that Wisconsin or Upper Midwest fish would be better adapted to local conditions and more likely to persist going forward. But recall that fish from outside Wisconsin and the Upper Midwest had been stocked here regularly since 1887, and that hatchery fish had long been domesticated. It was unknown whether the original "native" wild strain still existed or whether it had been replaced or diluted by hybridization with domesticated or non-native strains.

Finally, within the last 15 years or so, sufficiently sophisticated genetic tools became available to ad-

dress this issue. A collaborative multi-state effort determined that there was still a distinctive wild “Upper Midwest” strain, possibly descended from those brook trout that may have survived the ice ages in the Driftless Area, and that it was still present in Minnesota, Wisconsin and at least parts of Michigan.

However, some self-sustaining populations were derived from domesticated hatchery strains that might include genetic material from the Northeast. Indeed, one of the original wild brook trout program streams, Ash Creek in Richland County, contained the domesticated strain.

The distribution of Upper Midwest and domesticated stream populations has now been mapped, and going forward, only the Upper Midwest strain will be used in the wild brook trout stocking program.

The future

Unfortunately, prospects for brook trout in Wisconsin are grim because of climate change. If the climate warms as expected and nothing changes in terms of watershed land use and stream management, DNR projections are that Wisconsin will lose about two-thirds of its brook trout stream mileage by 2060.

These losses will be episodic and abrupt rather than gradual, and they will be driven by periodic droughts and hot periods. All parts of the state will be vulnerable, and populations that are marginal now will be the first to disappear.

Although significant reductions in brook trout populations are al-

most inevitable, there are things that can reduce the losses.

First and foremost, we must work to reduce the concentrations of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere. These gases drive global warming, and as they continue to increase, so too will global temperatures.

If the 2060 projections are bad, then the projections for 2100 will be even worse unless greenhouse gases are brought under control. We must advocate for and implement policies and actions that both decrease gas emissions, such as reduced burning of fossil fuels and increase uptake of gases already in the atmosphere, such as restoring forests, grasslands, wetlands and other vegetated areas.

Without aggressive action, the brookie’s days in Wisconsin are numbered.

While we work to reduce greenhouse gases in the atmosphere over the long term, we also need to ameliorate the effects of a steadily warming climate on our brook trout streams in the short term.

Habitat suitability for brook trout in Wisconsin is driven by groundwater. More groundwater means greater flows and colder summer water temperatures and more resistance to drought and hot weather.

Watershed and riparian land-uses that promote greater infiltration of precipitation into the soil and the water table will ultimately maintain and improve groundwater flows, offsetting the impacts of warmer weather.

Examples include protecting and restoring wetlands, grasslands, forests and other naturally, permanently vegetated areas that allow precipitation to be absorbed into the ground.

Other examples include adopting and expanding regenerative agricultural practices that avoid exposing and compacting bare soil and that reduce runoff such as rotational grazing, no-till cultivation, and use of cover crops during fallow periods; minimizing impervious surfaces, such as roads, parking lots, sidewalks, building roofs, in future development, and routing of runoff from existing impervious surfaces into infiltration areas. Also, we need to continue reconnecting stream channels to their floodplains, which slows and spreads out flood waters, allowing them to better soak in.

Because groundwater inputs are sometimes derived from areas far afield, land-use management must be done broadly at watershed scales and cannot be limited just to areas along streams.

Besides groundwater, the other factor that can help deal with water temperature rises during increasingly hot weather is shade. Wisconsin studies have shown that a heavily shaded stream reach may be more than 5 degrees cooler than a similar reach open to the sun on a hot summer day. That 5-degree difference may be literally a matter of life and death to the brook trout.

But promoting shade is tricky. Forested stream corridors that block the sun may be desirable but can take decades to develop. And

early in their development, wooded streambanks may be dominated by dense growths of box elders, willows, alders, and other shrubs. Shade from these shrubs may keep the water cool, but this shade also eliminates the understory vegetation that anchors and stabilizes the stream banks, leading to wide shallow channels that provide little brook trout habitat and are difficult to fish.

The shrubs also often attract beaver, whose effects on stream temperatures and brook trout populations are sometimes negative, although in other cases may be hard to predict.

Consequently, many currently applied Wisconsin stream habitat improvement techniques remove shrubby riparian vegetation and “open up” stream banks in order to narrow and deepen the channel, discourage beaver, and improve fishing access. Yet this opening up eliminates shading, potentially leading to warmer water.

New ideas and perhaps new techniques are needed to manage riparian vegetation to reduce water temperatures while still insuring good-quality habitat and fishability. And these new ideas must come quickly, as the clock is ticking for Wisconsin brookies.

John Lyons is Curator of Fishes at University of Wisconsin Zoological Museum and a member of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of TU.

Farm profitability, market development and protecting soil and water all aims of new project

By Gillian Pomplun

Professor Randy Jackson traveled out to the Kickapoo Valley on Saturday, Sept. 26 for a presentation entitled “Can managed grazing improve soil health and water quality in the Driftless Area?” The presentation was part of the “Driftless Dialogue” series sponsored by the Kickapoo Valley Reserve.

About a dozen citizens were on hand to listen to the professor of Grassland Ecology in the Department of Agronomy at UW-Madison discuss the Grassland 2.0 project. The project has been funded through a five-year, \$10-million grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute for Food and Agriculture. It is based at UW-Madison.

According to their new website, Grassland 2.0 is a collaborative group of more than 30 scientists, educators, farmers, agencies, policymakers, processors, retailers and consumers working to develop pathways for increased farmer profitability, yield stability and nutrient and water efficiency, while improving water quality, soil health, biodiversity and climate resilience through grassland-based agriculture.

“The vision of our project is really to help transform modern agricultural production to increase farm profitability, while replicating all of the ecosystem benefits that the area’s original perennial grasslands provided,” Jackson explained. “Through the process, our goal is to implement a ‘JEDI’ system – justice, equity, diversity and inclusion.”

Problems with agriculture

Jackson seemed to feel it was appropriate to be talking about his project in the Driftless Area of Wis-

consin. “This area, from Aldo Leopold and the Coon Creek Watershed Project and forward, is renowned for its response in times of environmental crisis,” Jackson said. “When soil erosion and flooding had wreaked havoc on the environment, citizens in this area did a beautiful job of joining together to put things back in place, and protect lives, livelihoods, infrastructure and the ecosystem.”

Jackson contrasted the heroic efforts in the area in the 1930s through the 1970s, with some of the shifts in agricultural land use and practices that have evolved since then. “Modern agricultural production methods are basically rife with problems,” Jackson explained. “It all involves a gouging out of the earth, and it seems that no amount of bandaids can stop the system from being leaky – that is failing to prevent excess nutrients from reaching ground and surface water, keeping soil in place, and infiltrating enough water in the soil to prevent runoff and flooding.”

Jackson said that the pollution in the state’s waters, at least in the last 100 years, has primarily come from agriculture. He said that at some point, we have to ask ourselves why our production is primarily based on growing corn and soybeans.

“Most of the corn (40 percent) is used for feeding livestock, 35-40 percent for ethanol, and 15-20 percent for high-fructose corn syrup,” Jackson explained. “Soybeans are primarily used as a food additive, and the oil is used for livestock feed.”

Jackson says that it is crucial at this time in history that we ask ourselves: “Is this how we want to produce livestock?” Jackson also explained that the corn and bean monocultures were having a devas-

tating effect on biodiversity, and impacting the declines of birds and pollinators.

“Livestock can feed themselves, and they can spread their manure and their urine themselves as well,” Jackson said. “But to really make a positive impact on farm profitability and yields, as well as on protecting and enhancing ecosystem services, we need to see a transition away from continuous grazing to well-managed grazing.”

Profit and satisfaction

Jackson said he has spoken to more than one farmer who has made this transition, and heard about not only enhanced profitability, but also about increased job satisfaction. “Making a transition like this drives the farmer back to the land, and provides the challenge and satisfaction of being adaptive,” Jackson said. “What farmers tell me is that this is a considerable and unanticipated side benefit of making the shift.”

One example Jackson described was of a Dane County dairy farmer, Bert Paris.

“Bert Paris loves dairy farming. After more than 30 years, he’s beginning to transition the farm he operates near Belleville, Wisconsin, to his daughter, Meagan Farrell, who is excited about moving her family home to run it.

“Despite years of terrible headlines about the dairy industry, farmers like Paris and Farrell are bullish on dairy because, despite chronically low and erratic milk prices, they’ve controlled their production costs with managed grazing.”

“Grazing, financially speaking, was the best thing I’ve ever done for my business,” Paris says.

Grassland-based farming practic-

es represent a bright spot in an industry that is feeling the combined effects of low commodity prices, extreme weather events, rising production costs and limited processing and marketing options. Consumer data suggest that while red meat and milk consumption are declining overall, both grass-fed dairy and meat sales are surging.

A multi-decade analysis by the UW-Madison Center for Dairy Profitability found that although grazing-based dairies often produce less milk per cow, the money they save by grazing ultimately increases their profitability.

Benefits of doing it right

Jackson contrasted continuous grazing versus well-managed grazing, and helped event participants understand the benefits that come from “doing it right.”

“Continuous grazing doesn’t give the pasture time to recover, encourages undesirable plant species, and reduces the ability of the grass to hang on to nutrients and water,” Jackson explained. “Well-managed grazing, in contrast, maintains a dense stand of clover and grasses, which suppresses weeds, and develops a deep system of roots which infiltrates water and prevents nutrients from running off or percolating down into groundwater.”

Jackson quotes one of his managed grazing mentors, Spring Green grassfed beef farmer Dick Cates, about the benefits of well-managed grazing. “Dick Cates will tell you that making the transition to well-managed grazing is like putting money in the bank,” Jackson said.

See **GRAZING**, page 10

Pipeline impact statement expected in February

Enbridge re-route of Line 5 includes 40 miles of new pipeline in northern Wisconsin, with a Draft Environmental Impact Statement anticipated in February of 2021.

By Wild Rivers Chapter Vice President Melis Arik

Five years after successfully facing down a proposal for an open-pit iron mine perched at the top of the Bad River watershed, the citizens of northern Wisconsin are once again coming together in defense of our waters and lands.

This time we're dealing with the proposed expansion and reroute of an oil pipeline.

Enbridge Line 5 is just one segment of the Canadian company's 8,600 miles of active liquid petroleum pipelines that criss-cross the United States. The line transports about 23 million gallons of crude oil and natural gas liquids every day from refineries in Superior to refineries in Sarnia, Ontario, traversing rivers, streams and wetlands in Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron counties, including land in the Chequamegon National forest and tribal lands of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa.

The reroute would circumvent the Bad River Reservation, adding 42 miles of new pipeline, crossing hundreds of wetlands and, according to Enbridge's application materials, 182 waterways, including 27 designated trout streams and associated perennial tributaries, as determined by the company's analysis of DNR online mapping tools. Certain technical experts have pointed out the inadequacy of such tools for making jurisdictional determinations, so consider those figures a minimum.

Why the reroute?

Originally built in 1953 by Lakehead Pipeline Company, Enbridge Line 5 has shown multiple signs of deterioration and neglect, posing risks to farmlands, natural areas, wetlands, rivers and streams, and to communities downstream of its 645-mile corridor.

The tribe's concerns related to the integrity and maintenance of the pipeline within reservation boundaries resulted in the Tribal Council passing a resolution in 2017 with the decision not to renew expired easements and calling for removal of the pipeline from the entire watershed, in the interest of protecting the people, plants and animals that call this place home. The band reaffirmed this intention in a separate resolution passed by the Tribal Council in 2019 and is currently in litigation with the company related to these demands.

Documents related to these concerns and legal actions are available for public viewing on the tribe's website.

The reroute of Line 5 around the reservation is Enbridge's response to these actions.

Process and current status of the proposal:

- February 12, 2020. Enbridge submitted its application for Wetland and Waterway Permits to the DNR, noting an anticipated project start date of January 1, 2021, and end date of September 30, 2021.
- June 8, 2020. The DNR posted notice of the pending application, initiating a 30-day public comment period for comments related to the application and to the scope of the required Envi-

ronmental Impact Statement that the DNR is required to prepare.

- July 1, 2020. A public hearing was held in Ashland, which also included the opportunity to participate virtually. Lasting four hours, the hearing gave voice to forceful testimony from about 80 citizens, with nearly all of the testimony opposed to the project. The DNR also received more than 2,100 written comments between June 8 and July 11, 2020. The testimony and written comments are available on the DNR's "Enbridge Projects in Wisconsin" web page.
- September 23, 2020. Enbridge submitted an application to the DNR for the Construction Site Stormwater Runoff General Permit.
- February 2021 (anticipated). Prior to making any determination on either of these permits, the DNR is required to draft an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the proposed project, which will guide the evaluation of the project and permitting. It is anticipated that the draft EIS will be completed in February. At that time, the agency will announce the required 30-day public comment period and set the date of the public hearing for testimony related to the EIS.

The public comment period and hearing are critical opportunities for citizens to have a voice in the state's permitting process, as the agency is required to consider and respond to each and every comment received. This will be the second, and likely the last, public hearing relevant to state permitting on this project.

Separate from the permits required by the DNR, Enbridge will also have to apply for a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. This permit is related to impacts on waters and wetlands of the U.S. This permit also will require a public notice and comment period, and likely will require a public hearing as well. A list of other required permits and consultations are posted on the DNR Enbridge Projects web page.

What next?

Last November, Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer initiated action to shut down Line 5 by revoking and ending a 1953 easement that allows Enbridge Energy to run a dual pipeline through the Straits of Mackinac.

The question of the Line 5 reroute in Ashland and Iron Counties must be considered in light of this broader context. In relation to these developments, how can we, as members of Trout Unlimited, as representatives of our local chapters and as supporters of the TU State Council, best uphold our commitment to the TU mission "to conserve, protect and restore North America's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds?"

It is said that "oil and water don't mix." Is it possible to uphold our commitment to clean water and the life it supports (both human and non-human) while perpetuating dependence on fossil fuels?

Between now and the release of the DNR's draft EIS, we should be educating ourselves about the con-

sequences of this Canadian company's proposal to expand and reroute a pipeline whose primary purpose is to maintain the flow of petroleum products destined primarily for Canadian consumption from the Alberta Tar Sands to Sarnia, Ontario. We need to decide if we wish to perpetuate the threat posed by the presence of an oil pipeline by allowing a proposal that would move Line 5 higher into the headwater wetlands and streams of the Bad River watershed.

Rather than trusting the assurances of a company with so much to lose in the face of the pending litigation with the Bad River Tribe, and so much to gain with approval of this project, we need to consider the consequences of a rupture that might send 5,000 or 50,000 or 500,000 gallons of light crude oil into tributaries that serve as brook trout nurseries, or into adjacent wetlands, or further downstream into the traditional manoomin (wild rice) beds where the Bad River meets Lake Superior.

Now is the time to join forces with the many organizations and groups that are focused on organizing opposition to this project on the basis of the known risks to our waters, wetlands and downstream communities.

These groups include the Sierra Club (John Muir Chapter); Wisconsin League of Women Voters (Ashland-Bayfield Counties); Midwest Environmental Advocates; Wisconsin GreenFire, and others. Opposition to this project is also aligned with these groups' understanding that expanding and perpetuating operations that facilitate the flow of Tar Sands oil is the opposite of what we need to be doing, locally, nationally and globally, which is creating alternatives to fossil-fuel-based economies and societies in order to meet head-on the challenges posed by climate change.

Standing for the Seventh Generation

Despite Enbridge's community investments aimed at building social capital in the region, and despite the company's claims regarding their safety record and the safety of pipeline operations in general, this much is clear: This project, and the continued operation of Line 5, puts our

coldwater streams and ecosystems, our wetlands, our fish and wildlife populations, our wild rice beds and our communities at risk.

Pipelines operated by Enbridge have a long history of ruptures and spills. A 2010 rupture of Line 6B in Marshall, Michigan released more than one million gallons of diluted bitumen/heavy crude into Talmadge Creek and ultimately into the Kalamazoo River.

But what of the impacts of lesser-known incidents on Enbridge lines that happen every year, such as the 2003 spill of 189,000 gallons of crude oil into the Nemadji River in Superior or the 2007 spill of 50,000 gallons of crude oil onto a farmer's field in Clark County, or the release of 176,000 gallons of crude oil in Rusk County in the same year?

Research conducted by Beth Wallace of the National Wildlife Federation has found that Line 5 alone has spilled at least 1.13 million gallons of oil in 29 incidents since 1968, and that most of these spills or leaks were not discovered by the so-called "advanced" leak detection systems frequently touted by the company as evidence of their safety precautions.

This was the case in the Marshall, Michigan spill from Line 6B, which was not discovered until an outside caller contacted the company an estimated 17 hours after the rupture began.

Similarly, it was Bad River Natural Resources Department staff conducting fieldwork in the area who discovered a 49-foot pipeline exposure on the Bad River Reservation, of which 40 feet was fully unsupported due to continued water movement that undercut the pipe. Such incidents do little to inspire confidence in Enbridge's "advanced" protocols for monitoring the safety and integrity of their pipelines.

There is no doubt that these issues are layered with the complexity that all human communities face. On the other hand, there is the understanding, reflected in Bad River Tribal Council's 2017 and 2019 resolutions, that there is no greater wealth than our lands and waters, and no greater responsibility than the duty to protect them. What happens seven generations from now depends upon what we do today.

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Contact Todd Franklin at toddfranklinwistroutr@gmail.com.

West Fork Sports Club open for business

By Tina Murray

As it has every year for almost two decades, the West Fork Sports Club (WFSC) helped the Living Waters Bible Camp and the DNR raise and release brook trout. This year they released 2,600 of them. I'm sure you'd like to know where we put them. New members are always welcomed.

We were surprised to learn in August that some members thought we were not open for business in 2020. That and the pandemic did hurt the club's bottom line for 2020, which followed the rebuilding from the flood of 2018. The club has made incredible progress and hopes all members will return to the club, help promote it and bring along their friends in 2021. Please help promote the WFSC for 2021 as a beautiful and peaceful place to camp, fish and enjoy other outdoor endeavors.

Progress update

In 2019 the club reclaimed more than 50 percent of the campground from the horrific floods caused when three dams were breached. It also completed a quarter mile of stream restoration work.

In 2020 members reclaimed 90 percent of the grounds and the club was open 72 percent of the time due to county pandemic restrictions. They focused on grounds repairs and developed a stream restoration plan for the northernmost eighth-mile of stream, near the bridge.

This section of stream is famous as it is recognized in multiple books and publications and by TU National as one of the top 100 Trout streams in the United States.

We also took on being a test site for killing Japanese hops spread by the river. It strangles all other vegetation. We have a workable solution for 2021 and will share with TU DARE when we achieve 90-percent weed reduction.

In 2021 we plan to be fully open. We are working on a few surprises for early spring and extending camping through the end of October for bow hunters, fall sightseers and apple aficionados. If the pandemic continues, we may possibly provide a COVID-19 sanctuary available for self-contained campers after October 15. We shut the water off when the temperatures drop close to freezing.

The club participated in building new fishing stiles, which you slip through instead of crawling over like a ladder. We also helped put up some of the new signage and participated in the watershed meeting regarding the future plans for the dams and protecting our streams.

Many people commented on how great the campground looked this past summer. Our new Vice President Todd Landsman is mostly responsible for that. We did have to take out a pandemic relief loan to get through the spring, and our treasurer Colleen Kinsey is doing a fabulous job keeping us on track with the resources we have.

Camping is first-come-first-serve, unless you have 12 or more people and contact us before April 1. We will reserve sites for large groups.

The clubhouse and cabin are available for rent at <https://westforksportsmansclub.org/camping/reservations/>

The clubhouse is in great shape and has a full kitchen and bar, along with round and square tables and chairs for your events.

We sent out multiple surveys asking members to join committees and be involved in the club so that it may remain a viable and sustainable club for everyone. We will be creating the following committees:

- Local Outreach, to welcome those who live near to enjoy, use and invest time and energy in the club as a community asset.
- Conservation/Stream Restoration, for campground improvements such as signage and processes
- Sustainability/Fundraising
- Maintenance of club grounds, organize a spring and fall work weekend for the club
- Watershed involvement. There is a major study being conducted to determine the outcome of the breached dams above us.
- Events, education.

If a few people step up for each committee, the club will continue to thrive, the local folks would take physical control of the club again and the community would value it and protect it for future generations.

We would like to thank the many individuals and organizations that helped the club with financial donations in 2020. The volunteer board worked hard this year to make things happen and did a fabulous job opening up the entire campground for member enjoyment.

There is more work to do to maintain, improve and upkeep the grounds, offer workdays, create educational programming and complete more stream restoration.

There are very few "workers" helping with the work, so funding to pay others is key to improvements. Please consider donating your charitable end-of-year tax dollars to the WFSC. We have Paypal account at westforksportsclub@gmail.com.

Thriving members have \$500 yearly at their disposal, which can be donated to 501c3s. You can contact our board member Jeff Worrell at (651) 212-3026 or jeffreyjohnworrell@gmail.com. Many work places will match your charitable dollars.

Members have requested more picnic tables, as we lost about 15 in the flood. They also requested more fire rings and better signage.

We plan on planting some more trees and working on our stream plans with Vernon County.

Now, about those brook trout. They typically seem to run upstream. We invite families, children, school groups and local volunteers to help us release them. Usually in April, we typically put 200-400 trout in the Westfork of the Kickapoo River from River Road upstream in five different spots. Unfortunately, with Covid-19 restriction, we cannot raise brook trout for 2021, but will be back on track in 2022. The club spends approximately \$1,100 a year to feed these fingerlings.

For more information go to westforksportsclub@gmail.com

GRAZING, from page 8

"According to Dick, in addition to increased profitability, the benefits include increased productivity, enhanced biodiversity, healthy trout streams and increased bird habitat."

Impact on climate

In addition, Jackson said that well-managed grazing has great potential to help slow and reverse the impacts of climate change, which he says is disproportionately impacting farmers.

"Well-managed grasslands take carbon out of the atmosphere and store it at depth in the soil, Jackson explained. "Our studies at the Arlington Research Farm show that the prairies this area had in the past were able to store tremendous amounts of carbon."

Jackson said that his work at the university is at what he describes as the "frontier of soil science." He and his colleagues have dedicated their work to answering the question "why isn't the soil storing more carbon?" He says that the answers aren't as simple as they might seem. Part of the problem is that, from a climate perspective, the pace of change and deviations from the old normal mean that scientists are struggling to keep their models up to date with changing conditions.

"With climate change, we've seen that the nights, winters and springs are becoming generally warmer," Jackson said. "This means that even if there is no plant growth, the soil microbes are still waking up sooner, and doing their thing."

The research at Arlington has now been ongoing for about 30

years. The team has previously been basing their research and conclusions on cores drawn from fields maintained in various cropping systems after 20 years. They have only recently drawn new 30-year core samples.

"What we found after 20 years was that the only system accruing carbon was managed grazing with cool season grasses," Jackson said. "Most of this carbon is being stored at less than a meter into the soil, but when we take cores that are deeper than that, what we're finding is 500-year-old carbon that was stored by the prairie systems."

Other factors

Jackson emphasized that in addition to research to understand what the best production models are for well-managed grazing, his team is also taking a much broader approach. That approach will take into account the social, political, economic and market factors that can be an impediment to a producer making the decision to transition.

"We have already seen a massive shift in agriculture in Wisconsin with the catastrophic loss of small to mid-sized dairy farms," Jackson said. "In 2003, the state had 16,000 dairy farms, in 2020 it has just 7,000 dairy farms, and is on pace to have only 5,000 dairy farms by 2030."

Our project aims to address the social issues of "what it means to be a farmer." A lot of these issues are very personal to the individuals involved, such as not wanting to be critical of the previous generation or feeling loyalty toward peers.

For this reason, Jackson said, the Grasslands 2.0 project involves plans to convene various "learning hubs" around the Upper Midwest to unite groups of people that "usually don't talk."

Jackson said that his group is in the final stages of evaluating proposals from different groups of stakeholders about where the learning hubs will be based. He says the final decisions will be based on the enthusiasm of the local stakeholders for the project, and final choices will be announced in mid-November.

Jackson's colleague, Dr. Eric Booth, has created a simplified version of the SNAPplus program that farmers can use to quickly and easily model what different land-use choices might look like on their land. These will be accompanied by an economic analysis of what impact

making those transitions might have on the farm's profitability.

The model for the learning hubs will be to convene groups of stakeholders, including local farmers, county, state and federal agency staff, and even interested citizens, to participate in a series of visioning sessions.

"Our hope is that we will be able to catalyze a transformation of consciousness and practices with our models," Jackson said. "What we want to demonstrate is the connections between transforming of the landscape, and the transformation of farm economics and ecosystem services."

For more information visit www.grasslandag.org

Gillian Pomplun is a reporter for the Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout.

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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.

Landowners recognized for stream restoration project

By Wes Domine

The Fountain City Rod & Gun Club (FCR&G) recently recognized Buffalo County landowners for conservation practices and for allowing public fishing access to trout streams on their property. They awarded formal recognition plaques to Roy and Suzanne Fried and Barry and Laurie Fried for a stream restoration project completed in 2019. Restoration efforts were performed on a 4,700-foot stretch of Eagle Creek within their property adjacent to County Highway G, where angler parking has been provided.

Funding sources for the extensive stream restoration project were made possible by the Fried Family's donating of a perpetual public fishing access easement, which was granted to the Fountain City Rod and Gun Club. Easements like these make stream restoration projects possible. Funding sources include the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), Trout Unlimited, Buffalo County Land Conservation, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the DNR's trout stamp funds, Fountain City Rod and Gun Club and other local contributions.

Local funding and volunteer hours are often matched by the co-operating agencies. The goal is to complete the project without added

cost to the landowner.

Stream restoration planning is initiated by landowners. Planned restoration activities focus on key features within the stream corridor, such as stream-bank stabilization attained by sloping banks and placing rock riprap. Stream habitat is enhanced by strategically placing boulders, wood or vortex weirs, depending upon the existing stream type. Water quality improves as soil erosion and sediment loads are reduced. The ecosystem further improves due to a narrower-but-deeper stream with sustained colder temperatures. The improved water quality provides the healthy ecosystem trout and sustaining invertebrate populations need, plus critical riparian habitat for other species.

In recent years approximately 25 stream restoration projects have been completed in Buffalo County, with nearly 12 miles of public fishing access.

The Fountain City Rod & Gun Club and other area conservation clubs are most grateful to the landowners who make these stream restoration projects possible. None of this would be possible without their willingness to work with conservation agencies and provide perpetual easements.

The FCR&G Club and Buffalo County Conservation Alliance wish to thank the agencies and individuals for stream restoration accom-

Funding sources for the extensive stream restoration project were made possible by the Fried Family's donating of a perpetual public fishing access easement.



FRIED FAMILY HONORED FOR EAGLE CREEK RESTORATION
The Fountain City Rod & Gun Club recently recognized Buffalo County landowners Roy and Suzanne Fried and Barry and Laurie Fried for conservation practices and for allowing public fishing access.

plishments, including: Buffalo County Land Conservation, NRCS, TU, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DNR-Fisheries, UW-Extension, water monitoring volunteers, Vision Design of Winona, KKB Law of Arcadia, local government leaders and local community support.

This article and photos were contributed by Wes Domine, president of the Buffalo County Conservation Alliance. The alliance is comprised of five member county conservation/rod & gun clubs.

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Watershed Access Fund: Obtaining public access

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 Great Lakes Stream Restoration Program update



SHAWANO CREEK CULVERT REPLACED

Here are before and after photos of a crossing replacement we completed with the U.S. Forest Service on Shawano Creek, where a perched and undersized culvert was replaced with a larger structure to improve fish passage and flood resiliency at the crossing.

**Words and photos by Chris Collier,
TU Great Lakes Stream Restoration
Manager**

As we near the end of 2020 we have a great opportunity to reflect on a successful year. Nine road-stream crossings were replaced, reconnecting more than 30 miles of coldwater habitat. We removed a remnant logging dam from the North Branch Oconto River, restoring and reconnecting about 1.5 miles of aquatic habitat, and we helped partners perform inventories of more than 100 road-stream crossings. While construction season has wrapped up, our work protecting coldwater habitat has not.

A large part of our post-construction focus has been on survey-

ing fish-passage barriers that we plan to replace in the next few years. This involves collecting topographic data at crossings so we can design new crossing options that improve fish passage and flood resiliency. This year we worked with the U.S. Forest Service, DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to survey crossings in Forest, Marinette and Oconto counties.

Another project we've been involved with is updating the Great Lakes Road-Stream Crossing Inventory methodology. After an in-depth review process with the U.S. Forest Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Wisconsin and Michigan DNRs and others, the inventory now shows if an existing crossing creates a fish passage barrier but also if there are any major flood risks.



Also, inventories can now be completed using your phone or tablet through the free Survey 123 app. If you are interested in organizing training sessions to use this new method, let me know. I'm happy to help your chapter start inventorying crossings.

Looking ahead to 2021 we have several exciting projects planned. First, we are planning 11 fish-passage projects for 2021 or 2022. We plan to bring back our in-person road-stream crossing project tour and design workshop events. We are partnering with the Forest Service to complete a bank stabilization and aquatic habitat restoration project in northwest Wisconsin's Marengo River. Project plans are being finalized, and we hope to have the project out to bid in December. Lastly, we have partnered with the Ashland U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service office, Douglas County and other local partners to explore fish passage

projects in tributaries to the famed Bois Brule River.

The stream restoration program has had a very successful year, and this success has been recognized by our funding partners. Over the past six months, the program has received more than \$1 million in support from federal, state, local and private grants to continue and expand our road-stream crossing work in the Lake Michigan basin. This is an exciting opportunity to grow our efforts and I can't wait to share more with you over the next few years. Obtaining funding at these levels would not be possible without support from TU members and grassroots leaders like you. Feel free to reach out to me at chris.collier@tu.org or (419) 296-4390 with any questions or if you want more details on our projects.

See you on the water.

DNR Trout Management Plan update



MANAGEMENT PLAN INCLUDES BROOK TROUT CONSERVATION EFFORTS

The Wisconsin Inland Trout Management Plan was approved by the Natural Resources Board in late 2019 and now it's time for implementation.

The plan lays out an ambitious 10 years' worth of work that will move Wisconsin inland trout management forward. During the first year of implementation, we've continued to conduct core work and added a few additional tasks.

Feedback from both DNR Fisheries staff and the public focused on

accomplishing many new objectives of the plan without reductions to existing initiatives. We have identified priority new or expanded objectives within the management plan which will become the focus of our next two-year work plan (work plan projects include staff time and funding in two-year cycles). We intend to work hard to make progress on these new objectives while continuing our same level of work on existing core objectives such as stream surveys and habitat management.

In order of priority, the "short list" of action items are: 1) streambank easements; 2) culvert & stream crossings; 3) brook trout conservation actions (a group of actions including Brook Trout Reserves, considering brown trout/brook trout interactions and more); 4) evaluating and developing guidance on the Trout Habitat Program; 5) creel surveys; 6) climate change (a group of actions) and 7) reviewing regulations statewide (scheduled to be completed in 2026).

During the next two years, our intention is to expand upon our current efforts and include more of these new action items.

Work has already begun on streambank easements and stream crossing repairs and we're already making headway on a few additional priority items. We have hired excellent habitat specialists in La Crosse, Eau Claire and Fitchburg who will play major roles in accomplishing habitat restoration work associated with culvert and stream crossings, as well as currently planned habitat restoration projects.

Statewide creel surveys are planned and slated for implementation during the spring of 2021. These surveys will help us collect the necessary angler data needed to better manage our inland trout populations.

With these additional priority

items and despite new habitat management staff, we continue to deal with staffing and funding limitations elsewhere. Since funding levels for trout management have not changed significantly, we expect that accomplishing these new objectives, in addition to our current workload, will require some creative problem solving.

To accomplish these expanded objectives, we'll need to focus more on building partnerships and grant funding opportunities in the future. In other instances, we may need to evaluate and modify our approaches to our existing management work. This could include modifying our survey techniques for greater efficiency as well as incorporating climate change considerations into existing planning and implementation of habitat projects.

The Trout Team is excited to begin implementation of the Wisconsin Inland Trout Management Plan. It will take a lot of hard work to accomplish all of the outlined goals during the next 10 years, but we anticipate the first biennium to be very productive.

For more information on Wisconsin's Inland Trout Management Plan, visit the Wisconsin DNR website and search "inland trout management."

Source: DNR Fisheries Biologists Justin Haglund and Kirk Olson

DNR Trout Research: A Review of the 2020 Field Season

Matthew Mitro and Emma Lundberg,
Wisconsin DNR, Office of Applied
Science, Fisheries Research

The 2020 field season was not the field season any of us had expected. Back in March, when DNR employees were sent to work from home and the nation was told we needed “15 days to flatten the curve,” we thought our spring field season would be set back a mere week or two. Two months later we were concerned we might not even have a summer or fall field season.

Eventually, we were able to resume field work in late June, under restrictions that ensured the safety of ourselves and the communities we worked in during the pandemic. Working from home during spring became a time for catching up on data entry and analyses, reviewing scientific literature and writing papers and reports. There were plenty of Skype calls and Zoom meetings. After our ‘catch-up’ spring, we eventually received the go-ahead to resume field work in June, and we hit the ground running.

Largely new field crew

One challenge was starting the 2020 field season with a largely new field crew. Nick Hoffman was our lone field veteran, then going into his second year. We hired Emma Lundberg, a UW-Madison doctorate candidate, to a half-time appointment in February. Emma had previously been working with us in a volunteer capacity as a graduate student, and part of her dissertation is focused on brook trout movement in northeastern Wisconsin streams.

Mirjana Mataya and Ben Breaker were hired to round out the crew just before the start of the pandemic. Mirjana, a UW-Madison graduate, started in March, and Ben started in May, having just completed his master’s degree at Central Michigan University studying Lake Michigan steelhead.

The success of our 2020 field season was largely attributed to this productive and dedicated field crew, who worked together professionally and safely.

Our field work was largely focused on the beaver-trout study, which Matt wrote about in the summer 2020 issue of Wisconsin Trout.

This is a study of how beaver influence trout populations and stream habitat in coldwater streams throughout the state’s three beaver management zones. We also continued monitoring temporal trends in trout populations (data that will support the beaver-trout study), brook trout age and growth, and survival and reproduction of stocked brook trout.

Impressive stats

Here are some stats from our 2020 field season: After starting on June 19, we continued doing field work for 21 weeks, into mid-November. We worked on 61 streams in 21 counties. Many streams were visited once, others were visited multiple times, some up to 12 times.

We conducted 141 fish surveys. A fish survey was a single electrofishing pass through a length of stream about 35-times the mean stream width, but at least 100 meters long and typically less than 200 meters.

Some surveys were longer, up to 500 meters.

For 78 surveys we collected data on all fish species present, to calculate an index of biotic integrity. For the remaining 63 surveys we focused solely on trout. In some of these surveys we tagged the trout for studying movement and survival.

We completed 20 full habitat surveys. A habitat survey included the following: mapping the sequence of riffles, runs, pools and bends across a length of stream 35-times mean stream width; measuring stream width and bankfull width at 12 equally-spaced transects, plus categorizing riparian vegetation and disturbance on either side of the stream; measuring, at four points along each transect, the water depth, substrate composition, and canopy cover, and categorizing fish cover; and measuring flow. We also maintained water temperature data loggers, and sometimes water pressure data loggers for calculating water level, at all study streams.

We measured dimensions and GPS coordinates of 62 beaver dams, which included some dams measured multiple times over the course of the year.

We also mapped the sequence of beaver dams and riffles, runs, pools and bends in five streams, often over many kilometers of stream length.

Studying brook trout movement

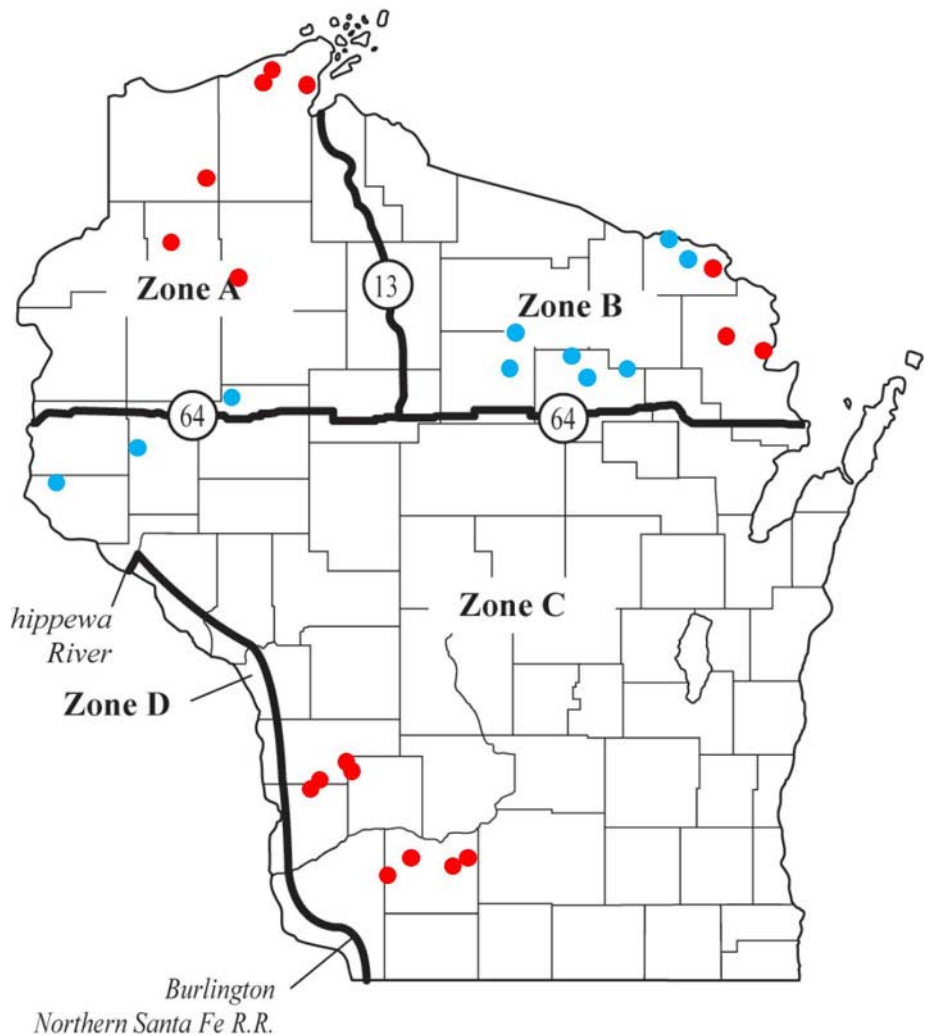
Earlier we mentioned Emma’s dissertation work on brook trout movement. Emma has been maintaining multiple PIT tag detection arrays along a stream system in Marinette County to document seasonal movement and habitat use by brook trout.

Hundreds of trout have been tagged with passive integrated transponder (PIT) tags over the past two years. The detection arrays continuously scan the water, and when a tagged trout swims through the detection array, the tag is activated and a code is electronically read and recorded, documenting which direction the fish was moving. By looking up the tag in our database, we can tell when the fish was tagged and where it moved from.

The detection arrays were installed in late June and will be maintained into the winter until the stream freezes over. This work will be a critical component of the beaver-trout study, in which we are studying free-flowing stream conditions versus beaver dams as possible obstructions to trout movement.

Here are some observations from our 2020 field season:

- We counted and measured, often weighed, and sometimes tagged, more than 13,000 trout. All brook trout were inspected for gill lice.
- Beaver dams have been built on five of 17 study streams designated for beaver recolonization.
- We evaluated 10 additional streams for potential inclusion in the beaver-trout study, with two of them now confirmed additions.
- One Driftless Area stream had 11 beaver dams by September, but an October flood removed seven of them.
- Five beaver dams were built this summer precisely within a study



BEAVER-TROUT STUDY LOCATIONS

Locations of 17 beaver-trout study streams (red) where beaver are being allowed to colonize streams previously maintained under free-flowing conditions and 10 streams (blue) evaluated for potential inclusion in the study.

reach on a Marinette County trout stream, where we had previously collected fish and habitat data; but by October, three of them had been physically removed. When we surveyed the stream reach with the newly-built beaver dams, we observed 13 species of fish, including a handful of species we had not captured in that reach previously.

- In Marinette County, we observed limited brook trout movement during summer. But so far during the fall spawning season and beginning of a relatively mild winter, we have observed a mix of no recorded movement, short-range movement, and long-range movement.
- We observed very high numbers of young-of-year trout in most Driftless Area streams, indicating it was a very good year for reproductive success.
- Early October flooding cleared many gravel areas in some Driftless Area streams, and trout began actively spawning in these areas. This may be another excellent year for trout reproductive success.

- We began a brook trout stocking study in 2018 using F1 (eggs from wild brook trout), F2 (eggs from F1 brook trout), and domestic brook trout (eggs from hatchery broodstock). In September we observed large numbers of wild, young-of-year brook trout in the stocked stream, indicating excellent reproductive success within two years of stocking. We collected fin clips from these wild offspring to run genetics analyses to determine which stocked brook trout produced them. We also began replicating this study in a second stream.
- Anecdotally, we seemed to encounter trout anglers more frequently this year compared to past years.

We are confident we have a solid start on the beaver-trout project, and we look forward to another productive field season and sharing more study results in 2021.



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RECOLLECTIONS

Into the west, part two: In from the other side



COOKE CITY PROVED TO BE A PERFECT TOWN TO JUMP FROM

My buddy Dave said most backpackers and fishermen jumped into the Beartooths from the Cooke City, Montana side.

By Rick Larkin

This is the second in a series of stories about our annual backpacking trout fishing trips to Montana and beyond in the late 1970's and early 1980's. In this one, we get to meet some bears.

After our first trip to Montana, a great summit of trout fishermen was called. We had news of the Beartooths and its fabulous trout fishing. We called our fishing pals and organized a beer-bash cookout. We needed to share these new-found discoveries and drum up interest for a return trip. Those we called from around the state included old college mates who had disbursed for the summer. It would be a blast.

It was indeed, a blast. A bunch of those friends showed up and by mid evening the bratwurst and hamburgers were gone. A nearly empty quarter barrel now floated awkwardly in a tub of mostly water with a few chunks of ice. Only the serious fishermen were left and the serious talk of a Montana trout expedition took place, and the primary questions were "Who would really commit to going?" and "Who had any money?"

Dave and a buddy planned on going to the Beartooths at the end of August before he had to go back to graduate school. While Big Joe and I made some bold talk about going with them, the reality of being

broke and only marginally employed dashed all hope. We knew, with the exception of the new tent and one framed backpack, that our gear was just not up to another wilderness trip anytime soon. The Beartooths would have to wait until the following summer.

On Labor Day weekend, Dave returned from Montana and said Joe and I had done it all wrong. He said most backpackers and fishermen jumped off from the Cooke City Montana side, not from East Rosebud as we did. "Way too steep," said Dave. "Locals say the fishing is not nearly as good with most of those lakes containing only small stunted trout." We agreed with that assessment.

Bars, as in plural?

Then Dave told us about what he found on the Cooke City side. The nearby Coulter Pass trailhead provided easier access to more lakes at lower elevations. The trails were not as steep, and most of the lakes had more and larger fish. He also said Cooke City was a fun little town with bars, cafés, cheap motels and fly shops. Plus, nearby Yellowstone National Park could provide more opportunities.

"Bars, as in plural?" I thought. Dave also said they met a guy named Al who owned a place called the Big Bear Lodge, just outside town. Al rented cabins, guided fly fishermen and rented horses. There

was also a little café. The phone call with Dave went on for at least an hour or more with me scribbling furiously on a notepad. "Sheesh!" I thought, "This place sounds damn near perfect."

Dave continued. He and his buddy started at the Coulter Pass Trailhead, just off the Beartooth Highway, along the Clark Fork of the Yellowstone River. They bypassed Kersey Lake on Al's advice and headed straight for Fox Lake, which lay a few miles off the main trail. At Fox Lake, they camped at an old elk outfitter's camp. It was next to a rushing tributary stream which provided drinking water. Fox Lake was full of big rainbows and brook trout. He also mentioned bears. It seemed that this side of the Beartooths was popular with the bears, too.

Bears?

Dave stressed the importance of properly taking care of your food supplies. Washing dishes and securing your gear was emphasized. He said he saw two black bears, but no grizzlies. He indicated grizzlies mostly lived in Yellowstone Park, but I paid very close attention. I also thought about not telling this to Big Joe, given his well-established fear of bears.

When we finished the call, I knew this was where I wanted to go. I called Joe and repeated a slightly edited version of what Dave told me.

Throughout that fall and winter and into the spring we scrimped, saved and planned. We would go the following July for 10 days. It was all we could afford. Joe, Howard, Dave and I would go. Howard was an old friend and would be a real plus for the group. He was invariably cheerful and a skilled outdoorsman, with many Canadian canoe trips under his belt. He grew up camping and fishing and would be a great addition.

A corner of our fishcamp apartment now became the official Cooke City Montana Expedition Staging Area. Now, two tents, three frame backpacks, a new miniature stove, a tiny gas lantern, lightweight sleeping bags and a pile of freeze-dried food occupied the space.

We scoured the Sunday want-ads for used backpacking or camping

stuff and looked for sales at the outdoor stores. Catalogs came in the mail and orders were placed. New flies were purchased. In June, I greased my hiking boots, which I had not worn since last summer, took my fly rod, and went to a park to practice my casting. Joe called Al at Big Bear and booked two cabins. Anticipation was now reaching a fever pitch.

Party of five

As our July departure date drew nearer, Joe announced his girlfriend Katie was coming along. This increased the party to five, increased our vehicle requirement to two, and generally threw us into a state of mild chaos. While we had met his girlfriend a couple of times, we didn't know her very well. She didn't seem to be the outdoorsy type, but Joe assured us she was going to be OK. Plus, he said she liked to fish.

On a warm July morning, a little yellow Toyota hatchback containing Big Joe and Katie rolled out of Milwaukee. A blue Chevy pickup with a camper cap and three guys sitting on the bench seat followed behind and headed toward the Great American West. We drove straight through, taking about 26 hours, taking shifts driving and catching catnaps. After gallons of truckstop coffee and hours of AM radio, we made it to Montana.

We got to the outskirts of Cooke City midday and found the Big Bear Lodge and pulled in. Jazzed and jabbering, we sat at the little lunch counter and talked to Al. He seemed glad to see Dave from the year before. He agreed that Fox Lake was probably our best bet for good fishing and talked about files and different spots on the lake. Joe walked into the café and grabbed all of the free pamphlets. Out of the corner of my eye, I saw he slipped a "Grizzly Bear Safety" brochure into his pile of free publications.

I finished what felt like my 15th coffee of that day and went back into our cabin. Dave and Howard had each claimed a bed. I was stuck with the floor. After sitting cheek to cheek with them on the long drive out, I was not anxious to sleep with either of them. Plus, it was only mid afternoon, and I was anxious to get into Cooke City and sample some Rainier beer. I thought it might be



READY TO HEAD IN: FRAME PACKS AND WAFFLE STOMPERS

an effective antidote for all the coffee. We left Joe and Katie in their cabin, figuring they needed some privacy, and went into town.

Wow! Dave was right. There must have been five bars or bar/restaurant combinations in this little mountainside town. We hit them all, guzzling Rainier like prohibition was going to start tomorrow. We also ate greasy hamburgers, french fries and a pizza, knowing that trout dinners were likely soon, but not guaranteed. Also knowing that freeze-dried food might keep you alive, but not necessarily happy. We had a grand time as we went from one place to the next.

Big one

Later, we sat at a bar with a big picture window overlooking the backyard and a dumpster which served the kitchen. At dark, floodlights came on. It turned out to be the local bear-watching bar and we sat in amazement as a small black bear rummaged around in the dumpster, gobbling discarded french fries, pizza slices, old hamburger buns and generally having a grand old time. It was comical and everything was pretty funny when suddenly the little guy stood up, bolted and ran into the woods.

A big grizzly walked out of the dusk and took his place in the dumpster. Our little group at the bar got real quiet.

While we may have had a number of Rainiers, we sobered up quickly and studied this huge hump-backed male grizzly, now munching cold french fries, and less than five miles from where we planned to start our trip.

"Don't tell Joe," said Howard, quietly. The bartender could see our discomfort.

"Big one," he observed.

"Yah, real big" I said.

"Comes here all the time" he added.

Great, a regular, I thought.

"What are you guys up here for?" he asked.

"We planned to backpack up into Fox Lake tomorrow and camp" I said

"Oh, you're probably OK. Got a gun?" he asked.

"No", I said.

"Don't worry, this guy is here most nights" he continued.

Bet he's got friends, I thought.

The pig sticker

We were once again short in the bear defense department. Bear spray was not common back then and we put all of our money into gear, not even thinking of firearms. Howard volunteered that he had brought a big bowie knife. He called it his pig-sticker. Small comfort, I thought. The pig sticker and a small camp axe was all we had. We left the cast iron frying pan at home.

We watched the big bear intently. The bartender interrupted our viewing. "Watch this," he said, and walked to the back door, holding a can of beer. He tossed the can into the dumpster and the bear dove down to get it. The bear popped up with the can in his mouth and crushed it. Beer squirted and foamed all over his face while he licked furiously. He appeared to like beer a great deal. He also acted like it was not his first one.

"HA, HA, HA, HA, HA!!" the bartender laughed. "This never gets old," he howled.

"Ha, ha, ha, ha," we laughed politely. I looked at the big bear, now happily licking up the foamy beer on his muzzle and crunching on the can. This guy could make five miles

in a flash, eat us and be back for happy hour, I thought to myself.

"Joe's gonna crap himself if we tell him," said Dave.

"Hoo-boy is he ever!" I agreed. Howard nodded. We departed when the bear left and went back to the cabin.

The next morning, we ate breakfast at the café and talked about last night's fun. We avoided any mention of the bear. Joe, after a night of pamphlet reading, assumed the role of bear authority and discoursed loud and long about the dangers of hiking and camping in grizzly bear country. These dangers were especially great for young women of child-bearing age. Katie cringed a little. It seems some young female campers had been attacked and mauled in Yellowstone a couple of years ago and the Park Service was making a big effort to warn all campers.

A cautious start

After breakfast, we drove to the trailhead, left a note in the box indicating our location and trip length, and set off. Our mood was cautious. Our little group of backpackers hiked into the tall pines and spruce, walking slowly to Fox Lake, looking around every bush and tree for bears. After awhile, walking through this stunning wilderness



FOX LAKE PROVED TO BE AS BEAUTIFUL AS WE IMAGINED

calmed us. What could be better than this? It was such a beautiful day. Our mood brightened and Howard, the physical fitness maniac, scampered ahead, coming back with scouting reports as we made our way to Fox Lake.

Howard had a degree in Physical Education and had started teaching gym to middle schoolers. When not fishing, he spent his off hours weight lifting for competitions or distance running to train for marathons. While not tall, he was quite a specimen and much fitter than any of us. Shirtless, and packing his big pig-sticker, he ran back and forth and up and down the trail like some sort of compact Davy Crockett. Always cheerful, he coaxed us along and encouraged the group and made at least a few of us forget the huge beer-drinking grizzly from the night before.

We passed Kersey Lake and took the trail to Fox Lake. I walked with Joe and Katie, who was having some first-time altitude difficulty. The three of us took a water break while Howard and Dave went ahead. After a little while, Howard came jogging down the trail with no backpack. "Guys!" he said excitedly. "You gotta see this lake!" With that, he ran back, down the trail to the lake. We followed quickly.

First view, deep blue

I first saw Fox Lake through the trees. It was situated in a steep sided valley and was bigger than any of the lakes we had seen the previous summer. It was lined with tall pines and spruce. As I got closer, I could see a number of small tributaries tumbling into the lake. One side of the lake featured tall cliffs with large boulders along the shore which stuck up like small islands. The water seemed to be an especially deep blue. Getting closer, I could see the little camp area at an inlet where a bigger tributary became a tumbling waterfall. So beautiful, I thought.

When I got there, Dave and Howard were setting up our new tent (supposedly a three man), near the water. Joe and Katie set up their tent a short distance away. I dropped my pack and started to gather firewood.

Our little operation, I thought, looked worthy of an experienced backcountry camp. I got some water from the waterfall next to our campsite. This would be our home for a few days. I smiled and forgot about the bears, and looked out at the lake. Fish rose here and there and the shallows were full of smaller cruising trout. Dave just smiled at me knowingly. He was here last year.

of trout was tied to the base of a tree by the shallows. They were, indeed, bigger than last year's trout. They were chunky Rainbows along with a couple of nice brookies. Joe flashed an ear to ear grin.

"Fish for dinner!" shouted Howard.

The bears will get to know us right away, I thought to myself, thinking of our hump-backed friend back at the bar.

Like last summer at Rainbow Lake, darkness came quickly to Fox Lake which was located in a similar deep valley with high peaks on either side. Suddenly, we found ourselves in deep shadows. Our little group walked the path along the lake's edge toward the camp as dusk deepened. As we got closer, I could see our two tents and also saw some stuff scattered about which I did not recall when we were scrambling to get to the lake to fish. In our excitement, we didn't put all the food away. Something had raided our camp.

Howard palmed his pig sticker and Dave and I put a couple of rocks in our pockets. We weren't going down without a fight. As we got closer, I saw a squirrel running into the woods with a foil pouch of freeze dried food in its mouth. No big loss I thought. I never liked mixed vegetables anyway.

The damage from the squirrel raid was minimal and confined to two bags of freeze-dried veggies. Howard, providing cover with the pig sticker, accompanied me into the woods to hang our supplies in a tree. Joe and Katie got dinner together while Dave cleaned the fish and walked the entrails into the woods, far from the camp. We baked the trout in foil packs to avoid the smell of frying fish. We ate quietly as all of us knew that daylight raiding squirrels were the least of our problems.

Despite our collective anxiety, the fresh trout were delicious. Even the remaining mixed vegetable medley was very tolerable.

Darkness sets in

Our post-dinner satisfaction was short-lived. It was now almost fully dark. While the panoramic view of stars over the lake was stunning, we stayed by the little fire. Joe sat close to the fire, saturating his clothing in smoke, just like last year. Joe and Katie looked like two scared lovebirds and retired into their smoky tent. I recreated Joe's monofilament line and aluminum cooking gear perimeter tripwire from the previous summer's trip for early warning purposes. Dave burned the foil and scraps in the fire. Howard walked the perimeter with the big knife strapped to his hip and looked into the woods, aided by a tiny flashlight. We retired for an uneasy sleep.

Nothing woke us during the night. At dawn, I poked my head out of the tent and watched as fog hung over the lake. Joe was up, stirring the fire back to life and making a pot of coffee. He saw me and held up one of our lightweight aluminum cooking pots. It was chewed and dented.

"Look at this," he said in an agitated voice.

I crawled out of the tent and took a closer look at the chewed pot. "Raccoon probably," I said, trying to calm him down.

We had left the pot next to the stream where we did the evening dishes. It was dark by then and we failed to see it. All it must have had in it were a few vegetable bits and maybe some fishy fingerprints. That, I thought, is a very hungry coon.

Fly rods versus bait

I strung my Wonderrod while Dave assembled a new Fenwick fly rod given to him by his grandfather. Joe and Howard were spin guys and both big believers in the red and white Daredevil. Howard had also brought his walleye tackle, including slip sinkers and slip bobbers. It was obvious he had been doing some trout homework and had studied bait techniques for mountain trout. He now pulled a small bag of mini-marshmallows and a Styrofoam container of nightcrawlers out of his backpack. Howard was loaded for a different kind of bear. We fanned out along the lake.

Dave and I decided to fish together and headed for another tributary outlet, not too far from camp. There, small hungry brookies eagerly took our flies. Next, we tried a spot where a third waterfall tumbled into the lake with the same results.

"Hey, I thought you caught bigger ones?" I asked Dave.

"Saving them for tomorrow" he replied. "Let's go see how the wormers are doing."

Joe, Howard, and Katie were sitting on some large boulders at the edge of some deeper water. Slip bobbers had been cast out as far as they could throw them. Joe and Howard were also casting their trusty Daredevils. A healthy stringer

Still, it could cause problems. We would have to be more careful.

Stocking up

We had promised all of our friends back home that we would bring back enough trout for a big dinner. Back in those days, the Montana trout possession limit was very liberal. Joe and Howard figured we needed at least ten pounds of trout for the party and had invested in a big cooler which was locked in the back of my truck at the trailhead. Our breakfast discussion centered on how we could get that much trout down the mountain, and not attract every bear in the area. We came up with a plan. It was a plan only people in their twenties with little or no bear experience could come up with.

We would catch a load of trout, run them down the mountain to the truck, go back to the Al's, freeze the fish, and get back to the camp. It made sense to us.

After breakfast, we fanned out along the lake, intending to catch as many trout as we could. We began to fish in earnest. The trout cooperated heroically. Dave and I took fat rainbows and brookies on flies along the drop-offs where the small waterfalls entered the lake. Joe, Katie and Howard hauled in a bunch with their bait and Daredevils.

By noon, we had our party trout and began cleaning. Howard and Dave hiked the guts deep into the woods and buried them. We figured the bears would have to at least work for their fish.

We hiked back to the camp and laid the fish in the grass for a quick photo. We packed the trout into plastic bags, loaded a big plastic bag, and put the cargo in Howard's backpack. Howard saw this as a fitness challenge and volunteered to run the trout down the mountain. We loaded him up and gave him the truck keys. He scampered off, shirtless as usual, with his pig sticker strapped to his hip. As he disappeared, we came to an uneasy realization that we may never see him again. While we knew bears were generally nocturnal, we didn't really know for sure. We sat around camp, a little uneasy. Fishing was over for the day.

In a few hours, Howard reappeared. We were all relieved and mystified. How did he do it so fast? Did he just dump the fish and run away when a bear showed up or something like that? Just what the heck happened?

We gathered around Howard, excitedly. It turns out that jogging on a generally downward slope pushed by a backpack loaded with pounds of trout allowed Howard to pick up quite a head of steam. He flew down the mountain and the trip that took us the better part of a day took him less than two hours.

He told us his only complaint was that the bag in the backpack leaked, covering him with fishy slime. He said he felt like a bear snack.

At the lodge, Al was more than happy to freeze the fish. He was amazed we caught so many. For a treat, he provided a six pack of beer and told Howard he might ride his horse up to see just what the heck we were doing.

We celebrated Howard's safe return with freeze-dried Chicken Alfredo and a beer each. Later, we passed the remaining beer around the fire, sharing it till it was gone. That night, things were quiet. Maybe freeze-dried Chicken Alfredo was not a popular bear treat.

Bitt and Shirl

Early the next morning, we could hear horses coming down the trail,

toward our camp. Soon two women rode past our camp. We exchanged waves. They were older, probably in their sixties. Each had a fly rod case tied to their saddle.

They tied off their horses and began to string their rods. Dave and I were curious and walked over to say hello. We figured they were going to fish where the larger stream entered the lake like we did, but we were wrong.

They were pretty friendly and introduced themselves as Bett and Shirl. They said they were going to climb up the tributary and try to catch some cutthroats out of the pocket water. They asked us if we wanted to go along and see what they were doing.

"Cutts?" I thought. "Sure," I said. I had never seen a real cutthroat. Dave was thinking the same thing and tagged along. They scrambled up the rocks, quicker than monkeys. We struggled to keep up.

Climbing up a hundred yards or so, they saw a small pool, no larger than a bathtub which accepted water from a side channel of the trib. Bett went first. Crouching low, she cast a big red Humpy into the little pool. "Wham!" and a six-inch cutthroat wiggled at the end of her rod. Its red and gold colors were as intense as those seen in a fishing magazine. "One" she winked at us. Shirl went next, using a yellow Humpy. "Wham" same result. "Two" she said.

We went on to the next pool with the same results. "One" followed by

Tainted water supply?

On the hike back, I noticed a small tributary flowing directly through the skeletal carcass of a dead mule deer. I hadn't noticed this on the way up. The trib flowed into the bigger stream we had been using for our drinking and cooking water. We hadn't been too careful about things and had stopped using the little purifying pills because they made the water taste bad. My in-nards flipped a little. I showed the dead deer to Dave.

We discussed our toilet paper inventory and if we had any appropriate medication. Joe was already a big enough worrywart and we agreed not to tell him about the dead deer. We would just boil our water from now on and hope for the best.

We bid our new friends goodbye as they mounted up. No one was at the camp, so we went off to look for everybody. We each took a roll of toilet paper just in case and took off down the shore. As we hiked along the trail along the edge of the lake, we occasionally needed to hike up some steep slopes which were more than 50 feet above the lake.

From this vantage point we could see huge trout cruising just off the edge of the deeper water, well out of casting range.



NO ULTRA-LIGHT CAMPING GEAR BACK THEN, BUT IT GOT THE JOB DONE

"Two." Dave and I looked at each other. They had a bet going. We climbed higher and found more little cutthroats. The competition got a little heated and they started to trash talk each other a little. We learned that they had bet not only which color Humpy would work the best, they also bet as to who would miss a fish first and break the streak. This went on for a while as we went from pool to pool.

We moved up to another little pool. "Wham" was followed by an immediate "Aw...shoot" Shirl missed a fish. The pressure was on Bett. A quick flip and she connected. Bragging rights were all hers. We all started to laugh. It was all good fun and both Bett and Shirl seemed to enjoy our company.

We climbed down, back to the horses. On the way back we learned they did this every year, having discovered this small stream full of native cutthroats years back. The trip gave them a good excuse to saddle up the horses and do a little fishing. They also got a trout supper to boot.

We headed back and listened to them talk about being retired school teachers and heard about all the lakes and streams they fished in the last 40 years. They said things had changed so much and fishing was not nearly as good as it was years back. Fox Lake, they said, used to hold huge cutthroats. The rainbows and brookies were planted, they said.

From this higher vantage point, we could see huge trout cruising just off the edge of the deeper water, well out of casting range. There were large numbers of them and they were much larger than any of the ones we were catching. Some appeared to be over five pounds and looked well over 20 inches long.

Dave said they were larger than anything he had seen on his previous trip. "I think I know where all the little cutts go when they get too big for the trib," I said. Dave agreed. We just stood there, looking at them.

We hiked further and saw Joe, Katie and Howard at the lake's outlet. There was also a guy standing next to a horse. It was Al.

When we walked up, we saw our friends catching trout with slip sinkers using Howard's deadly min-marshmallows and crawlers. Al seemed amused by all of this and made a few casts, catching a nice trout. He grinned. Gotta go!" Al rode off, waving as he went.

As we hiked back to camp, Howard said he explained to Al that he and Joe used the same setup for walleyes back home and it worked pretty well for trout, too. Al then showed them the outlet and said it was the best spot on the lake.

Al also knew about our homecoming trout party and volunteered to take some more trout back so we would have some more to eat after the party.

Howard also mentioned that Al said we should be extra careful be-

cause he heard that some bears that were raiding campgrounds in Yellowstone were being trapped and released into the Beartooths. Great, I thought and trudged back to our campsite, thinking of a fried-fish-triggered bear attack in the middle of the night, while experiencing a dead-mule-deer-induced gastric calamity.

It was Howard's turn to cook and he liked fried trout. Dinner was great. No mixed vegetables this time. We had real potatoes, courtesy of Al who also brought two cold six packs of beer. At that point, my bear anxiety briefly subsided. Howard showed us he had a great future as a fry cook if the physical education thing didn't work out. We ate with gusto.

After dinner, Dave and I surgically scrubbed the dishes, burned the garbage, and secured the food bag high in a tree. Joe gave himself only a light smoke job and we all turned in. It was now about eight hours since I last drank any

water from the stream. "So far, so good" I thought and dozed off with the giant cutthroats dancing in my head.

The tripwire cooking pots clanked at about 3 a.m. The three of us simultaneously woke up. Howard unsheathed the pig sticker. I grabbed the axe. "Make a lot of noise," whispered Dave.

I slowly unzipped the tent. Howard was right behind me. I flipped on my little backpacker's flashlight and illuminated a small black bear. It looked at me quizzically. "Hey bear!, hey bear!, hey bear!" shouted Dave. Howard and I shouted, too and the little bear ran away. "It's gone!"

I yelled, thinking this would prevent Joe from having a stroke. It was quiet in his tent, maybe he was trying to hide, or, maybe he already had a stroke. He didn't. He was sound asleep and annoyed about all the noise. Notoriously a deep sleeper, he poked his head out of his tent and growled at us. "What are you idiots yelling about?" he grumbled. He had no clue.

"Joe, we had a bear," I said and it slowly dawned on him. His eyes widened and a look of panic set in. He emerged from his tent in his underwear and started to revive the fire, using all of the wood and some pine cones to create bright flames and billowing smoke. He would now take over bear security.

"Want the pig sticker?" asked Howard. Dave tossed the axe in his direction.

"Put some pants on, Smokey" I said, and we went back into the tent. The bear never showed back up.

Sober and serious

The next morning was sober and serious. Around a pot of Joe's inky mountain coffee we sat silently, each wondering what to do. Thus far, we had escaped some well-deserved bear problems due to our inexperienced food handling.

Right then, we heard a helicopter. The chopper came over the lake above the trees. It carried a big cargo net underneath. It looked like a big spray-painted bear, a big sedated orange bear which had just been kicked out of Yellowstone National Park.

See *WEST*, page 24

River Alliance launches clean water campaign

“You Can’t Wisconsin Without Clean Water”

Allison Werner, River Alliance of Wisconsin

As a TU member, you know that almost everything we love about Wisconsin depends on clean water. Unfortunately, you also know Wisconsin’s waters and communities are at risk.

Farming, fishing, boating, swimming and clean water for drinking — not a day goes by without needing water. But, you also know that too many Wisconsinites cannot drink, swim in or eat fish caught in our waters. Clean water is essential for the entire state, including our economy, but not enough is being done. We need a new way to make change.

For years and years, Wisconsinites like you have been asking elected leaders to take action to clean up and protect our waters. We applaud Governor Evers and the legislature for focusing on water issues recently. 2019 was both the Year of Clean Drinking Water and the year the Speaker’s Water Quality Task Force (WQTF) traveled across the state to hold public hearings.

The members of the WQTF heard that there’s not a community in the state that isn’t facing some water issues that impact water quality and water quantity. These issues impact everyone from farmers to young children to business owners.

The proposals from the WQTF fell short and the Senate never took action on the legislation that was put forth. The new calendar year

will provide an opportunity to introduce new legislation to address the top water-quality issues raised during the WQTF hearings.

It is time to elevate these issues to the level of priority they deserve. Our leaders need to know that we believe clean water is a right that all Wisconsinites deserve and that we want meaningful actions now.

We know from our work across the state and from our many partners that access to clean water is a bi-partisan issue. River Alliance of Wisconsin is launching the Clean Water Now campaign to empower Wisconsinites to raise the volume on critical water issues.

The Clean Water Now campaign is a county-level, non-binding referendum to show unity around the pressing need to address critical water issues. It is an opportunity to let Wisconsin’s policy leaders know that having clean water is an issue that voters across the state want them to provide.

County by county—on ballots in April 2021 and beyond—Wisconsinites will demand Clean Water Now.

The referendum question is simple: Should the State of Wisconsin establish a right to clean water to protect human health, the environment, and the diverse cultural and natural heritage of Wisconsin? The answer is YES!

This campaign is also about protecting the diverse cultural and natural heritage of Wisconsin. Think back to your childhood memories and family traditions. Many likely



involved the waters of Wisconsin.

The 12 tribal nations in Wisconsin are deeply connected to the waters in Wisconsin. Their cultures require access to clean water for ceremonies, sustaining wild rice, fishing and more.

Farming is also part of Wisconsin’s heritage. Being good stewards of the land and water is what many farmers aspire to do. They know their cows and other livestock need clean water and their families do too. Many farmers are implementing practices like cover crops to help reduce their impact on our waters.

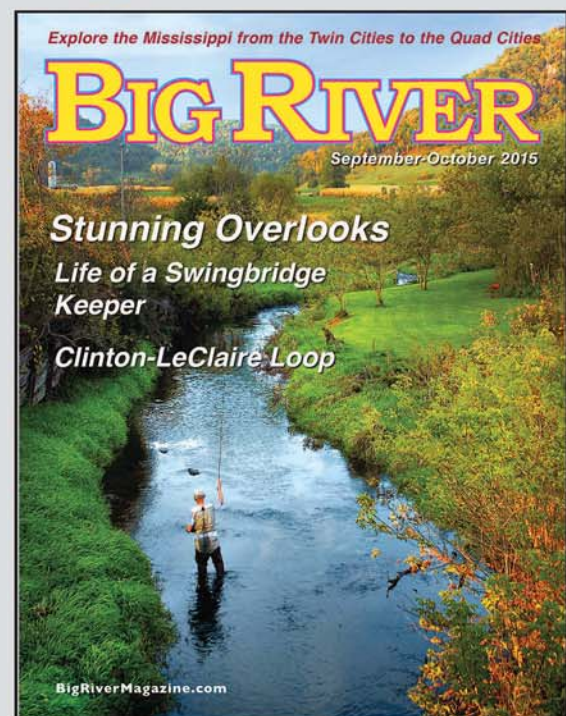
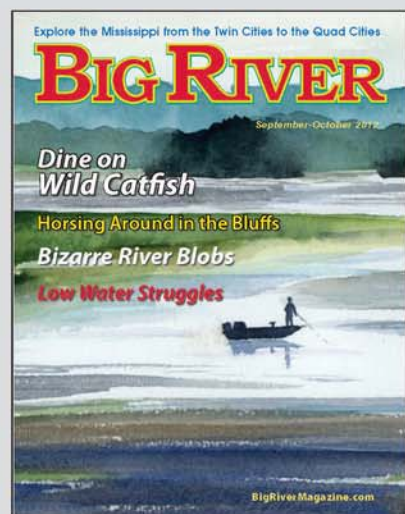
We know people across Wisconsin will say “Yes!” with their votes. When they do, the powers that be will all have more reasons to ensure that our water is truly cherished. Clean Water Now will help bring more people into our movement to

ensure decision makers make water a top priority in Wisconsin.

There are several ways you can support the Clean Water Now campaign. Start by going to vote4cleanwater.com to learn more about this effort. From the website you can sign up for Clean Water Now updates and let us know if you want to be a local leader in your county.

Our goal is to have the referendum on the ballot in several counties in April 2021 and more during future election cycles. If you think your county board would support putting this question on the ballot we’d love to hear from you. Please feel free to reach out to Allison Werner at awerner@wisconsinrivers.org if you have questions about Clean Water Now for Wisconsin.

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Chapter News

Antigo Chapter

We hope everyone is well. We are still living in strange times, and like everyone, we hope it ends soon. In early December we held our winter Northeast Region meeting on Zoom. It is a nice way to talk and still get things done. Thanks to Dale and Mike for setting up this meeting. We're still getting some good things done. With the help of all the chapters in our region, the State Council and the Friends of Wisconsin TU grant program, we were able to fund the funding requests that came to us this year.

We finished cleaning and brushing two access and parking areas on the East Branch Eau Claire River this fall. In October our chapter

planted trout in Remington Lake in Antigo for the kids to fish this fall and winter.

We will have a meeting soon to plan and come up with different strategies for 2021. We still hope to have our spring banquet, but who knows? Like all chapters, we are trying to come up with different ideas to engage our members and supporters in our fundraising efforts in 2021. We are also looking at ways to hold meetings and events, maybe outside when the weather gets warmer.

Merry Christmas to all and a safe New Year!

—Scott Henricks

Blackhawk Chapter

It's been a bad year for the chapter in so many ways. Covid-19 restrictions have kept us from meeting together and caused the cancellation of many events. Like many chapters, the age of our members makes getting together not only risky but dangerous. We had planned to sponsor two young people at the Council's Youth Fishing Camp which had to be cancelled. We had planned a fly-casting clinic for the local youth outdoor day sponsored by Pheasants Forever, but it had to be cancelled. We originally thought we could reschedule our annual banquet, but ended up cancelling it altogether. We've had to mourn the passing of two of our longest and very active members.

But what is hardest is not being able to share work days and meeting where we can commiserate, tell stories, joke, jab, tell lies and share all the reasons we are part of Black-

hawk TU.

However, all is not bad news. All the work put into past events has enabled us to provide financial support for many projects. The chapter was able to contribute \$11,000 to projects in the Driftless Area. Part of that included a matching Friends of Wisconsin TU grant from the State Council. Work was done on Esofea Creek, Conway Creek and Warner Creek, some of which is still in progress. It is good to know that in times like this we can still support our mission of coldwater conservation, even if we can't be together working.

We have encouraged our members and other to stay in touch via our Facebook page. I encourage everyone to use it to stay connected as best we can. And we can always pick up the phone and call. There's nothing like hearing a familiar voice in these days of social distancing.

—Dave Brethauer

Central Wisconsin Chapter

This fall has been very challenging for the chapter and our members. Like many other chapters and organizations, our traditional activities have been constrained or eliminated by the pandemic. Unfortunately, the resurgence of the virus will continue to impact us as we move into the new year. Some of our members have contracted the virus, but fortunately, thus far, we are not aware of any fatalities.

In lieu of in-person chapter and board meetings, we have been holding our monthly board meetings using the Zoom platform. We will be trying to open these meetings to our members and attach a virtual program as well.

We cancelled our traditional October banquet. The banquet is a celebration of our members' and the chapter's achievements. Hopefully, we will be able to hold it next year and celebrate our 50th anniversary, tentatively set for Saturday, October 23, 2021. It is also our main fundraising event and the source of the funds we spend for stream restoration and projects with the DNR.

We have also canceled our annual TroutFest event, which has brought out so many of our members and guests in the lull of winter in late February. This year would have been our 21st TroutFest. Although it is a free public event, we have been able to use it as a fundraiser as well as a way to attract new members.

TU CARES, with the assistance of CWTU, has been exploring different sources for funds. Thanks to Scott Bahn, TU CARES, in conjunction with CWTU, was recently awarded a \$3,500 grant from TU National's Embrace-A-Stream grant program for work on the West Branch of the White River. We also received a \$3,000 grant from the Trout and Salmon Foundation.

In addition to being awarded the Embrace-A-Stream grant, on behalf of TU CARES, CWTU was selected by TU National to participate in an online fundraising event using the GiveGab website. Only 17 chapters nationwide were selected for this opportunity and we were one of them. In the eight-day fundraising window in early November, we raised \$2,200, which will be added to the West Branch of the White River project. In addition to that, if the goal of raising \$1,000 was reached, which it was, Orvis donated an additional \$500. We placed ninth out of the 17 participating chapters nationally. Our thanks go to Mike San Dretto and Wayne Parmley for spearheading this effort and making sure all the various requirements and information was loaded into GiveGab, as well as promoting the fundraiser throughout the TU CARES region.

Another fundraising effort this year is our CWTU 2021 calendar. This is the second year we have created a calendar. This year it will fea-



Vic Gullia

GREAT LAKES TRIBUTARY STREAMS STILL OPEN

CWTU's Jeff Treu reminds us that the Great Lakes tributaries are always an option. Many of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan and Lake Superior tributary streams are open to year-round fishing from the mouth up to the first dam or fish barrier.

ture the spectacular photography of our own Bob Haase. The calendar will be distributed to all of our chapter members with a few extras available for sale by the chapter. Those who return and/or make a voluntary donation when returning the form included with the calendar will be entered in a drawing. Making a donation is not required and will not improve the donor's chances of winning.

There will be a dozen different prizes including several 50th Anniversary CWTU wooden fly boxes with flies, wildlife prints by Bob Haase as well as the top prize, a signed copy of Bob Haase's book "Bob's Fly Tying Tips & Techniques," including a box of all the flies featured in the book. Hopefully by spring we may be able to resume our work days and put these funds to good use.

In the meantime, for those of you who are not able to fish the inland streams this early in the year due to poor conditions, Jeff Treu has a reminder that the tributaries are always an option.

Many of Wisconsin's Lake Michigan and Lake Superior tributary streams are open to year-round fishing from the mouth up to the first dam or fish barrier. Always check the state's fishing regulations con-

cerning the waters and species you desire to fish for, because there are exceptions.

Steelhead (rainbow trout) will enter the streams and rivers in November and December and many will winter under the ice to become some of the first late winter and early spring spawners. Then a second wave of steelhead will enter these same rivers in the winter to early spring to then spawn as well. Brown trout are late fall spawners but many remain in the larger rivers well into winter and in many cases until spring ice-out. So the brave winter angler has shots at these two species on the tributaries in January, February and March when conditions are right.

There are two fly-fishing options for this time of year. The first is to drift a nymph, wet fly or egg pattern. The second is to swing a streamer or spey-style fly. You will need to fish slow and deep. Fish are lethargic in water temps as low as the mid-30s, so patience and attention to detail can pay big dividends. If you're willing and prepared, fly fishing at this time of year can lead to some memorable trout and some rewarding winter days pursuing a passion instead of having to wait for the warm weather of spring to fish open water.

—Stan Cichowski

Coulee Region Chapter

We have had success with our online meeting format this fall as we continue to share information during the pandemic. In October, Dr. Kevin Rodolfo was our guest presenter and he shared information about karst geology in the Driftless. It was very informative to help us understand how this type of geology keeps our streams cold and healthy but are also under threat from CAFOs, sand mining and other surface contamination. Executive Director of the Wisconsin Wetlands Association Tracy Hames was our November guest speaker. He shared information on the biology of water-

sheds.

We have had good success with our online meetings, hosted in Zoom, and use of social media to share information with our chapter members and beyond. Our Facebook page now has more than 900 followers and has been a key tool in sharing information about what is happening with our chapter and other events in the area. Find us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/coulee and like the page to follow our events and other information we share.

We have used wix.com for a while to host our chapter web

Chapter News



THE COULEE CHAPTER IS OFFERING HATS AND DECALS

site and have now started to use the Wix business services for banquet ticket sales and our online store. That service has been seamless, helps with sales tracking and is a very transparent process for money coming into our chapter. We have used Square for banquet transactions for several years and our chapter also has a PayPal account for various other needs.

If other chapters would like to see how any of these tools might be a benefit to their membership and activities, we would be happy to share more.

Jason Freund leads our Facebook work and promotion of online chapter meetings. Curt Rees coordinates with treasurer Mark Kowaliw for the online business tools.

Connect with us on our website,

Facebook or email us at couleeregiontu@gmail.com.

We have new Coulee TU caps for sale, featuring our angry brown trout logo. That same logo is on 3.5-inch diameter decals which we sell for just \$1. Proceeds from the sale of these items support our chapter work with stream projects and outdoor outreach to youth and veterans. You can purchase them at www.couleeregiontu.com/shop or by contacting Curt Rees at curtrees@gmail.com or 608-317-3747.

Russell Peterson was the winner of our bamboo rod raffle in December. Many thanks to the Root River Rod Co. of Lanesboro, Minnesota and the Driftless Angler fly shop in Viroqua for their support in promoting the sale of these tickets.

—Curt Rees

Fox Valley Chapter

Once we were a very active chapter but now as the pandemic rages, Fox Valley TU members are masked-up, social distanced and mostly staying home. Like many chapters and other nonprofits, we are struggling to find our pandemic identity, especially how to fund our activities and complete our mission.

Cabin Fever Day, our annual and only fundraiser, has been cancelled due to the pandemic. In its place we are planning on a Virtual Cabin Fever Day event to be completed in February with a mid-January start. This event will feature a sweepstakes and multiple auctions. The sweepstakes will be highlighted by a Scott Grady cane rod, Orvis reel package and other attractive prizes. The online auction will feature about 30 wonderful items donated by TU members and the community. When you receive this issue of

Wisconsin Trout please immediately go to foxvalleytu.org to enter our digital fundraiser and support our mission to improve trout habitat.

So how do we get state legislators to renew the wonderful Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program? A few thoughtful FVTU members found a way. Al Johnson and Tom Lager invited Sen. Roger Roth to accompany them on a visit to local trout streams to see the volunteer work TU and TU CARES (Trout Unlimited Central Area Restoration Effort for Sustainability) is doing with the DNR to improve stream habitat. State Council Chair Mike Kuhr also participated.

The visit was hosted by our chapter, the State Council and Gathering Waters Alliance for Land Trusts. We were advocating for renewal of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program and to show and explain the



FOX VALLEY CHAPTER INVITES SENATOR ROTH TO VISIT STREAMS

Al Johnson and Tom Lager (right) invited Sen. Roger Roth (center) to visit local trout streams to see the volunteer work TU and TU CARES is doing with our DNR to improve stream habitat. They explained the importance of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program in these types of projects. Also participating was TU State Council Chair Mike Kuhr (left).

work TU chapters and TU CARES conducts to restore trout habitat under the direction of the DNR's Wild Rose Trout Habitat Management Team.

At the Pine River Aniwa Road site, we showed him 2014-15 habitat work, improved public access and control of invasive species. We also visited the unnamed tributary to the West Branch of the White River at Lake Drive, to show him a culvert replacement project from May of 2020. Roth was positively impressed and discussed approaches for gaining bipartisan support in the State Legislature for renewal of the Stewardship Program in 2021."

Fox Valley TU continues as an active participant in TU. Trout Unlimited Chapters participating in TU CARES have written grant applications for the project TU CARES is leading. The main project being supported for 2021-2023 is

the West Branch White River Younglove Easement Project that will restore 3,450 feet of stream downstream of Cottonville Avenue, which has been under public easement for 43 years. The main goals of the project are restoration, invasive species control, angler access and public awareness of a tremendous fishery, which is home to rainbow, brook and brown trout.

To help fund the project, FVTU applied for a \$17,000 DNR Surface Waters Restoration River Grant. Central Wisconsin TU has successfully obtained several grants, including a TU National Embrace-A-Stream grant and a grant from the Trout and Salmon Foundation. They have also partnered with the Elliott Donnelly TU chapter for additional funding support. The project is estimated to cost \$170,000.

—Don Clouthier

Frank Hornberg Chapter

As 2020 comes to a close, we reflect on how different this year was. There was very little in-person contact, no fundraising events and no habitat projects. We all hope that life will return to normal in 2021 so we can once again get our hands dirty and our feet wet as we continue to conserve, protect and restore our coldwater fisheries. For now, we continue to plan for the coming months and find new ways to grow interest in our chapter while limiting our in-person interactions.

We donated \$250 to UW-Stevens Point for a scholarship fund. This is open to UWSP students who are majoring in fisheries or water resources and have a GPA of 3.0 or higher. The last time we supported this scholarship was in 2016.

We sent a letter of support to TU CARES for a DNR Surface Water Restoration River Grant to help fund the West Branch White River Younglove Easement Project. The grant is for \$17,000. This support confirms our position that we are "One TU."

We have started using new tools on the TU Leaders Only site and have begun uploading our by-laws,

chapter minutes and property inventory sheets in one location. As this is maintained, we will not have to wonder where minutes are located or a piece of equipment is stored.

In November, Ryan Koehnlein demonstrated the TU RIVERS mobile app to our board. The application is a convenient way for chapters to collect data and map disturbances on our trout streams while fishing or conducting a watershed inventory. I believe this will be a way to identify potential future projects.

On Thursday, January 7 at 7 p.m. DNR Fisheries Biologist Jennifer Bergman will give a Zoom presentation on the Big Roche a Cri Creek in Adams County. It will include the history of the Big Roche a Cri and its State Fishery Area. Past habitat work and future projects will be discussed. Jennifer will present the survey information from two trend sites. An email will be sent to all chapter members as a reminder. It will also be posted on our Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/HornbergTU>

—Doug Erdmann

Green Bay Chapter

Since our last report, the Green Bay Chapter has continued to hold virtual board meetings via Google Meets. We met in October and November. We decided to give our leaders a break for December. Our bylaws require six meetings per year and we have met that.

For the sake of public safety, and like many of our fellow chapters, we decided to cancel our Annual Conservation Banquet in February.

With the cancellation of our banquet, it has been especially important that our newly created Alternative Fundraising Committee comes up with new ways to raise revenue. One of our committee members, Kim McCarthy, was able to secure two grants. One was the Green Bay Cellcom Green Grant. This grant was for \$1,000 to go toward signage for our Trout Educational Trail which we are in the process of revamping. The second is a Wisconsin DNR R3 grant which will help reimburse funding of our veteran's program. We are also prepared to launch a new fundraising campaign starting after the new year. Committee member Jose Diaz

has been extremely instrumental in this effort. It will be a direct-ask campaign featuring at least one "for-sale" item. More to come on this.

In early December GBTU members Kim McCarthy, Doug Seidl and Adrian Meseberg attended our area's annual Northeast Regional Meeting. It is at this meeting where GBTU commits the highest percentage of our yearly spending. The money is typically pledged to Wisconsin DNR offices in Lakewood, Antigo and Peshtigo, as well as the U.S. Forestry Service and TU National. The funds are primarily used to improve trout habitat in our Northwoods. This year these groups were seeking \$38,000. All funding was committed. GBTU pledged \$4,000, plus a \$2,000 Friends of Wisconsin TU grant, to the Antigo DNR, \$5,000 to the Lakewood DNR and \$1,000 to be "gifted" to the Antigo Chapter to be used as part of a dollar-for-dollar matching of a Wisconsin TU Friends grant in order to maximize our dollars.

For more GBTU Chapter information, please visit our website at



Chapter News

greenbaytu.org or check our social media on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

Stay safe everyone.
—Adrian Meseberg

Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

The Zadrazil property stream project on the Blue River below the confluence of Six Mile Branch, has started this fall/winter and is slated to be done over two years. Located immediately downstream of the junction with Six Mile Branch just off County Q, it includes the final 700 feet of Six Mile Branch and approximately 7,500 feet (1.4 miles) of the Blue River. There are lots of high exposed soil banks to remove.

Fennimore schools were planning to attempt a Trout In the Classroom project, but the DNR was unable to provide the eggs, due to the pandemic.

We recently received a DNR Angler R3 (Recruitment, Retention, Reactivation) grant which was submitted for the Women's Initiative. This grant will help fund much needed gear such as rods, reels, line and carry bags. Watch for upcoming 2021 women's programs and outings with a focus on introducing, expanding and enjoying fly and spin fishing skills. Contact Carol Murphy at nohrgirl@gmail.com if you are interested in participating, learning or lending a hand. Watch for more information on our Facebook page, newsletters and website.

—Brian Larson

Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

Our chapter filled the vacant board position created by the resignation of Pete Kilbarda. Matt Janquart, an educator who lives in River Falls, has agreed to serve out Pete's term. Chapter members are still encouraged to contact TU National to update their profile with a current email address to get Rip-Rap directly. Otherwise you can find it on our website at <http://www.kiaptuwish.org/>

As was reported in the last issue of *Wisconsin Trout*, we cancelled our annual Holiday Banquet. In lieu of our popular Conservation Banquet raffle that was a part of this event, Kiap is holding a 4 x 100 "Chance Offering" with four premium items: a Norling Bamboo 5-weight rod for \$20/chance; a Thomas and Thomas 3-weight rod for \$10/chance; a Joshua Cunningham framed oil painting for \$10/chance and a Yeti 45 Tundra cooler for \$10/chance. Make checks out to Kiap-TU-Wish and send your order to Tom Schnadt, 2174 Commonwealth Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108. The drawing will be February 28 or sooner. If you would like to pay online, contact Tom at: thschnad@hotmail.com for instructions.

We formed a working group on communications to tackle the various issues surrounding the production and use of social media, our website and newsletter. Dustin Wing, Ken Hanson, Gary Horvath, Ed Constantini and Scott Wagner held the first meeting in December.

This year Orvis again teamed up with TU on their Embrace-A-Stream Challenge, an online competition encouraging anglers and conservationists to "Give Where You Fish." The chapter is pleased to report that this effort yielded an additional \$2,410 to the \$5,500 Embrace-A-Stream grant that TU National awarded us last summer. These dollars are to prepare a monitoring plan surrounding the Powell Dam removal efforts on the Kinnickinnic River in River Falls.

A large rain event last June damaged the Powell Falls dam, resulting in an impoundment drawdown in October. This has forced the City of River Falls to determine how best to manage the situation until the dam's scheduled removal in 2023. Kiap-TU-Wish was asked to give our input so we contracted with Inter-Fluve, an experienced river restoration firm, to help craft our response.

Five of our nine TIC programs still wish to participate this year despite COVID restrictions and the threat of moving to on-line learning. Eggs will be delivered after the first of the year. Bugs in the Classroom and our ECO Day will not happen this year due to visitor restrictions at the schools.

This past summer members of our long-range planning committee met with Nate Anderson and Kasey Yallaly of the DNR on a walking tour of newly acquired easements within our chapter area.

We decided that our primary habitat improvement project for the coming two seasons would be a stretch of Cady Creek beginning at the bridge at County Road P and extending downstream for nearly 4,000 feet. This stretch of Cady is comprised of three easements. High, eroding banks exist along this stretch. Cady has an excellent thermal regime and good populations of both brown and brook trout. There is also excellent gradient throughout this stretch of water.

Brush clearing on Cady Creek began in October, and work is moving along at a brisk pace even with the unseasonably warm weather that kept volunteers a little too warm at times. Work started on the east bank at the bridge and moved downstream, as we removed box elder, buckthorn and honeysuckle. We cleared out space for rock to be delivered on site.

To date, we have held eight workdays there, comprising about 500 volunteer hours. Restrictions put in place by the DNR to manage Covid-19 exposure have limited our work crews to a maximum of 10 on site at any one time. We have been averaging eight volunteers per workday. Cutting back on the number of participants to ensure adequate social distancing has had little effect on our brush-busting abilities, as it seems folks are eager to be outside getting some exercise.

We recently began clearing the south side of the stream, working our way west. However, work here has been suspended for the year at the landowner's request.

There are several potential sites on the upper Kinni which need maintenance brush and tree removal to prevent past habitat work from once again becoming an imposing jungle of growth. Kiap's volunteer coordinator and Chief Chainsaw Operator Randy Arnold has done



Tom Schnadt

KIAP'S LOREN HAAS ON A SOUTH FORK KINNI ERO STRUCTURE

Brook trout populations have plummeted in the South Fork of the Kinni from the sand deposition in recent years. In early October 2020, Nate Anderson of the DNR installed nine elevated riparian optimization (ERO) structures on the South Fork of the Kinni.

an excellent job of moving things along. Additional volunteers are always welcome, as many of our regulars may need a break around the holidays.

A special thanks goes out to volunteers from neighboring Twin Cities and Clearwater chapters and to Dave and Judy Babcock, who were at the site on the Friday following Thanksgiving shooting aerial drone footage of this section while our crew was on the ground working below. The drone was flying at 1,300 feet and the volunteers looked like little blaze orange ants on the ground as we sought to distinguish ourselves from deer during the Wisconsin hunting season.

The Babcocks said they would return to shoot some more footage from a lower elevation once more of the trees had been removed.

Volunteers (and hours worked) who have helped thus far at Cady include Sydney Arnold (1 hour), Eli Anoski (1 hour), Randy Arnold (9 hours), Perry Bowyer (1 hour), Dave Brockaway (1 hour), Jeff Dahl (1 hour), Greg Dietl (2 hours), Dan Donahoe (1 hour), Don Fritz (2 hours), Dave Gregg (6 hours), Loren Haas (5 hours), Trish Hannah (5 hours), Alan Hopeman (1 hour), Matt Janquart (1 hour), John Kaplan (3 hours), Pete Kilbarda (2 hours), Ron Koehn (2 hours), Dave Kozlovsky (3 hours), Mary Lilly (1 hour), John Nowicki (1 hour), Chris Olson (1 hour), Dahlia Olson (1 hour), Jim Sackrison (2 hours), Sarah Sanford (3 hours), Jim Sauter (1 hour), John Skelton (8 hours), Scott Wagner (3 hours), Dan Wilcox (1 hour), Dustin Wing (3 hours), Brad Wistrom (1 hour) and Matt Wysocki (2 hours)

With the north side of Cady Creek cleared, Nate Anderson and his DNR habitat crew have moved their equipment on site to their starting point, downstream near the snowmobile bridge. This section of Cady Creek is plagued by extremely high banks, erosion and sand deposition in the stream channel. The habitat crew will require two years to complete this 3,500-foot section of stream. Project cost is a major factor in the timeline as an immense amount of material to stabilize the stream banks must be purchased.

Cady Creek is designated as a brook trout reserve with a good thermal regime. It is projected to be a holdout against the threats imposed by climate change. It also serves as a source of native brook trout brood stock for the DNR hatchery. DNR Senior Biologist Kasey Yallaly has come up with a

restoration plan using habitat types that will increase the competitive advantage of brook trout. This has become increasingly important as brown trout have begun moving up from the Eau Galle River in greater numbers, according to data from recent surveys.

This project will also add to the 12,745 feet of Cady Creek that was restored in 1999 and 2000, upstream from these new easements, which were graciously provided by the Meyers, Schneider and Gilles families. The "Cady Creek Brook Trout Habitat Improvement Project" was made possible through Wisconsin trout stamp funds and a \$5,000 Pierce County Conservation Aid grant, which was matched by Kiap-TU-Wish.

With the assistance of Kasey Yallaly, Nate Anderson, Dustin Wing and Loren Haas, Kiap-TU-Wish was also able to secure a generous \$15,000 grant for this project from the American Sportfishing Association's conservation and research foundation (FishAmerica Foundation or FAF) in partnership with the philanthropic arm of Brunswick Corporation, manufacturers of popular boating equipment including Mercury Marine, Tracker, Boston Whaler, Harris FloteBote and Cypress Cay Pontoons and many other brands (Brunswick Public Foundation). They awarded the FAF grant based on our project's ability to improve sport fish populations, aquatic habitat and water quality.

The brook trout populations have plummeted in the South Fork of the Kinni from the sand deposition in recent years. In early October 2020, Nate Anderson of the DNR installed nine elevated riparian optimization (ERO) structures on the South Fork. Sand started moving immediately, however, the true potential of the structures won't be realized until some spring floods and a few major rain events.

The Plum Creek two-year project has been completed. At first glance, you realize this stream is dominated by woody structure and root wads which provide overhead cover and habitat for insects. It will require skill and precision to avoid snags and still result in fish hook-ups. The diverse habitat includes two ERO's and two cross-vane weirs. Evaluation and comparison will be made annually for three to five years to determine which provides better deep-water habitat for brook trout.

Although summer is the peak of the Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring year, monitoring will continue during the

Chapter News



KIAP CHAPTER BRUSHING CADY CREEK

Brush clearing on Cady Creek began in October, and volunteers have been hard at work. This day's work crew included Scott Wagner, Sarah Sanford, Trish Hannah, Ron Kuehn, Matt Wysocki, Jim Sackrison, John Kaplan, Jim Tatzel and John Skelton.

winter months at several streams and rivers, including three restoration project locations — Pine Creek, Plum Creek and the Trimble River — and the Willow River, where the Little Falls Dam in Willow River State Park was replaced in 2020, refilling Little Falls Lake.

Deployment of 21 temperature loggers will continue through the winter to evaluate the year-round impacts of climate change, to provide data for assessing the impacts of the new Willow River dam, and to evaluate the ability of our stream restoration projects to improve temperature regimes. In January, water samples will be collected and ana-

lyzed at the Pine Creek and the Trimble River project locations to better understand water quality during winter baseflow conditions, when watershed contributions of pollutants are minimal. To complement stream temperature and water chemistry data, two weather stations are operated year round, providing data on air temperature, relative humidity and dew point. Kiap-TU-Wish also provides financial and volunteer monitoring support to the USGS for their year-round operation and maintenance of the Kinnickinnic River and Willow River flow-gaging stations.

—Gary Horvath

Lakeshore Chapter

It's been a tough go trying to keep things rolling, but we have stayed pretty busy. We finalized our plans for the work we are doing on the Onion River and presented it to the DNR. We hope to be able to start the project in April or May.

Fundraising is a slow go also, but that is to be expected. We have some plans for next year, which we hope will help.

Our workdays continued into November. We started back up in December and will work through the winter months, doing brushing and tree removals. Workdays have been a great break from the stresses of cabin fever and a great way to look for future projects. We have also been very safe to not spread Covid-19.

Not being able to meet inside, we've been holding our board meetings outside. At our last board meeting we issued our first award to a chapter member in many years. Herb Twiss won a custom-made fly

rod made by Mark's Stirrin Stix. Herb won the award for his many years of dedication to our chapter and being one of the most active members this year. Herb started a weekday work crew for people who can't always make weekend workdays. Herb is really an amazing guy and we are very fortunate to have him in our chapter. Congrats, Herb, you deserve it!

Hopefully by the Spring edition of *Wisconsin Trout*, our local DNR will be fully staffed, which will help us tremendously. We've been working without a fish biologist since February. Covid-19 hit in March, so they haven't been able to hire anyone. Our invasive species specialist also transferred, but the future looks promising from what I've been told.

We are all looking forward to the early trout season. We need to get back into the swing of things.

—Myk Hranicka

Oconto River Chapter

Our meetings were cut short in February, we had to cancel the banquet and we reached out to major donors for donations. We didn't do any stream work in the Oconto River Watershed due to the pandemic. Trout In the Classroom for 2020-21 is a go. We are starting a Mayfly

Project, which is a project to help foster kids in the Oconto area. Mentors will work with the kids to do different projects and fishing. Our board met in September to start planning for 2021.

—Wayne Czipinski

Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

We're back in business. Recently the board of directors authorized Zoom meetings, and we have resumed our chapter meetings online. SEWTU will meet online until it is safe for us to meet in person. Make certain that your email address is up to date, and that you are not filtering out our chapter updates into your junk mail, as the invites to the meetings come via our email blasts.

All our habitat work has been on hold due to the virus. However, the board has been working to direct funds to projects that can proceed during the crisis. We are going to work out some wins, and 2020 will not become a lost year for coldwater conservation.

Looking forward to 2021, the board of directors is always looking for volunteers to staff committees.

With Zoom online meetings, we can now facilitate that work, and any member that is interested in our existing committees or has an idea for a new committee should reach out to myself or anyone on the board.

The Lake Michigan tributaries are still open to fishing. Steelhead

season is around the corner, and I am looking forward to the early inland season after the new year. I hope to see you on the stream and hope you all have tight lines and fair weather.

—John Rennpford

Southern Wisconsin Chapter

We made a large donation to the DNR so Dan Oele, Scott Harpold and their crew were able to complete far more of the ongoing restoration of Kittleson Creek than had been planned for this year. This project substantially improves access and habitat on the creek above Drammen Valley Road. One outstanding feature is the extent the crew has incorporated the trees that had to come down into the in-stream habitat and streambank stabilization.

With another donation, we are assisting the Dane County Land and Water Resources Department and the City of Verona in a complex restoration of almost a mile of Badger Mill Creek in the City of Verona. The project includes major sewer infrastructure, moving and improving a segment of the Ice Age Trail, replacing invasive vegetation

with appropriate native plants and a stream restoration that will address channelization, eroding banks and daunting tangles of box elders. The first phase of the project, scheduled to run through much of 2021, has just started.

Finally, we're thankful that our friends in Dane County have secured another easement with a stream restoration on Black Earth Creek and Halfway Prairie Creek, an important tributary to lower Black Earth Creek. Stay tuned for even better news for Black Earth Creek.

We are about to take our fly-tying classes online and roll out some other presentations for our members. We will share those on sw-tu.org, so please check there for the latest news. Thank you and be well.

—Drew Kasel

Wild Rivers Chapter

In October our long-time President Bill Heart resigned. We elected Kevin Seefeldt as president, Melis Arik as vice president and Alan Brew as secretary. Bob Traczyk remains our treasurer and all other board members are unchanged. We sincerely want to thank Bill for his many years of leadership, and we are incredibly pleased that he will remain active with our group.

Our chapter has been reflecting on membership. We have acquired a Zoom account and have conducted board meetings and a general membership meeting with this new medium. We know that even before COVID-19, distance has been a barrier for some members, as we encompass a seven-county area. We are planning to include guest speakers to our future meetings when possible. We hope all our members can join us.

At the request of Past President

Bob Rice, we have formed a Diversity Committee to look at inclusivity. Melis Arik is chair. We hope to expand our presence to reach everyone interested in coldwater conservation. We are looking for opportunities to join with partners in this endeavor.

With board approval, we have recently signed onto the North American Non-Lead Partnership, initiated by both the director of the Oregon Zoo and the CEO of the Peregrine Fund. The declaration advocates for minimizing the unintended impacts of lead to wildlife resources in our environment.

It isn't likely that our customary winter fly-tying events will happen. Instead, I'll be pulling out our past chapter newsletters and trying out Dick Berge's patterns while I look forward to open streams in spring.

—Kevin Seefeldt

Wisconsin Clear Waters

As we enter 2021 we are still cautiously optimistic about pursuing a safe environment for our events and projects. One of our strategic goals is to expand our social media presence to inform our members and surrounding communities that encompass our chapter's region. We began utilizing G Suite for Nonprofits to manage our chapter projects and events, which will allow new and current board members to access documents, grant applications, policy and procedures to help them hit the road running. We have plunged forward into an expanded social media presence thanks to Tom Sather adding Two Ties, a Tip, and a Tune, and we are setting the foundation for a Clear Waters Podcast. Tom also hosted our November chapter virtual meeting, which is posted on our website at wcwu.com.

Despite the pandemic, our chapter did have a few exciting projects this year. The DNR improved another section of Gilbert Creek in

Dunn County in the fall, and our Trout In the Classroom partner challenge added three new schools, in addition to the seven schools which were already involved with the program.

There is one Zoom technology caveat. We are in the process of starting a January Zoom Guru Fly Tying Class. Of course, you do not need to be a guru, but it sounds impressive. Our Guru Fly Tying Committee will select a date, a fly to tie and send out a time and login script for this event, along with materials you need. It is free and open to anyone interested in starting or improving their skills or just spending time with a bunch of crazy, fishy guys. Depending upon the response, we are working on having two time periods, one in the morning and the other after 7 p.m. However, if you are working from home and just happen to join, we are compelled by the "Trout Gods" to attest that you never attended the event.



Chapter News



CLEARWATERS CHAPTER'S GILBERT CREEK BEFORE LAST FALL'S WORK



GILBERT CREEK AFTER LAST FALL'S WORK

Until next time, please respect the streams and be courteous to the landowners for allowing us to enjoy and appreciate their gift to the cur-

rent and future trout nuts.
—*Jim Erickson*

Wisconsin River Valley Chapter

Hello and Happy Holidays. I'm sure everyone is replenishing their fly boxes in anticipation of getting out to wet a line. As my hair keeps trying to turn gray, I have noticed that my balance isn't as good when I'm wading as it used to be, and that's without rocks under my feet. So I'm hoping to dust off the cross country skis, as soon as we get some snow, and give skiing a try this year to hopefully improve my balance. Wish me luck.

We had our first presentation via Zoom by Craig Cook of Fall Line Outfitters, entitled "Guiding, Fishing and Running a Fly Shop During a Pandemic." Many thanks to Craig for his time and expertise and to all

of you who tuned in.

We do have presentations planned with the DNR and Bob Hasse, so watch for that information. We are working on getting more presentations scheduled, so please watch for announcements.

We are looking into stream monitoring to learn more about how to collect stream data and record it for the DNR. It sounds like the perfect way for our member volunteers to explore some new water that they haven't visited before.

Stay safe and healthy. We look forward to seeing everyone when we can once again gather together and share some good fish stories.

—*Linda Lehman*

Wolf River Chapter

Our autumn chapter meeting scheduled for October 3 was cancelled due to COVID-19. At this time, we have no definite plan spring meeting, and our Fly Tying Rendezvous has been cancelled until further notice. Dear Santa: The Wolf River Chapter needs Zoom and someone to administer it.

The Schoepke Site, near the Wolf River in Oneida County, will not be further pursued for metallic sulfide mining at this time. However, Act 134 still needs to be overturned to protect northern Wisconsin and the Wolf River from future metallic sulfide mining.

According to Tim Waters, 2020 was the best fishing year he ever had on the Wolf River, catching 152 trout total. Fortunately for us, he keeps a trout log. Of course, much of the detailed information will not be shared, such as secret locations and whatever else he does to catch all these beautiful fish. Most -127 - were brown trout. Fifteen browns

were 18 inches or bigger and 59 were 16 inches or bigger. Tim also landed 23 brook trout and two rainbow trout. Obviously, the record high water did not bother Tim or the trout.

DNR Fisheries Biologist Dave Seibel from the Antigo office reported that in September 5,500 rainbow trout, averaging six inches in length, were stocked in the Wolf River. In October, 15,032 brown trout, averaging 5.7 inches in length, were stocked. This bodes well for the 2021 trout fishing season and the future.

I would like to end this chapter report with a thank you to Todd Franklin for all the hard work he does putting this newspaper together to keep Trout Unlimited members informed of the goings on around Wisconsin concerning trout. Well done, Todd, THANK YOU, I hope you got out trouting yourself, in spite of the pandemic.

—*Laurie Zen Netzow*

Oak Brook Chapter

Conservation director Dave Carlson held a cleanup on the west branch of the DuPage River in Naperville. This event is held twice each year, spring and fall. This past October we had 11 members show up to collect and remove trash from the banks of the river.

Our chapter is also a member of a group that is promoting and spearheading assistance with the removal of the Pucker street dam on the Dowagiac River near Niles, Michigan. Recent reports confirm that the dam removal is well underway and reconstruction of the riparian zone is in the planning process.

In partnership with the Blackhawk and Coulee chapters we are helping to fund a TUDARE project. The effort is supported by the DNR, the USDA's Natural Resource Conservation Services, University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Tainter Creek Farmer Led Watershed Council.

The funding will restore more than a half mile of Conway Creek where it meets Tainter Creek, resulting in better flood resilience, water quality and habitat for brook trout and brown trout. Stream improvements are expected to support enhanced habitat for spawning, juveniles and some adult trout. This section is under easement and accessible to the public. The downstream Kickapoo River watershed will also benefit.

To date, partners have raised \$20,248 for the project, a combi-

nation of donations from the Coulee, Blackhawk and Oak Brook chapters, a TU National Embrace-A-Stream grant, and a matching fund challenge from Orvis of \$1,800.

The chapter has been hosting successful Zoom chapter meetings with guest speakers and topics and information on Bristol Bay, Alaska, Northeast Iowa night fishing with Brian Fankhauser of the Iowa Natural Heritage Foundation, Kent Kleckner of Decorah-based Bear Creek Anglers and Mike Siepker of the Iowa DNR. This subject came about because of OBTU's contribution to Bloody Run Creek.

Our November event was titled "Adventures in Southwest Colorado" with Tim Patterson, owner of the Ridgway Independent Guide Service (RIGS), who led a program on fly-fishing opportunities and conservation in southwest Colorado.

We also conducted several fall fishing trips to Wisconsin's Driftless Area in September and Iowa's Driftless Area on October.

Our youth education committee has been meeting via Zoom for the past several months and are in the planning stages of adjusting our day-long youth learn-to-fly-fish program to be able to present the program remotely via Zoom and hopefully some face-to-face events in the spring and summer of 2021.

—*Stan Zarnowecki*

Trend of increasingly heavy rainfall documented in Driftless Area

By Gillian Pomplun

Dan Baumgardt, Chief Science and Operations Officer for the National Weather Service in LaCrosse, has documented a trend of increasing rainfall impacting the Driftless Area since about 2008. In particular, his research shows that from 2016 to 2019, the percent of days in the region with rainfall events of one inch or more has more than doubled compared to the percent of days from 1970 to 1999.

"My research into rainfall trends started with a question: 'Is it raining more?'" Baumgardt said.

"In 2008 we saw the breach and emptying of Lake Delton and the flooding in Cedar Rapids, Iowa; on July 11, 2017, we had a flash-flood emergency in northeast Iowa and far southwest Wisconsin after the area received more than eight inches of rain in five to six hours; in August of 2018, an area near the border of Wisconsin's Vernon and Monroe counties received up to 12 inches of rain, causing the breach of five flood control dams and historic flooding."

From 1970 to 1999, the percentage of days with more than one inch of rainfall was 1.75 percent or approximately 6.5 days per year. From 2016 to 2019, the percentage more than doubled to four percent, or approximately 14-15 days per year.

The area that Baumgardt is talk-

ing about covers Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Illinois, roughly between Interstates 80 and 90. The normal precipitation for the area is typically about 35 inches per year.

"In 2018, Harmony, Minnesota recorded 60 inches of rainfall," Baumgardt said.

"In the same year, northeast Iowa received the same." The area he described received nearly one foot more rain per year than the maximum rainfall recorded for the area for the previous 41 years.

Baumgardt explained that if you look at the maps of recorded precipitation, the area including the Driftless Area "really stands out."

"The 2019 precipitation in the region was 150-200 percent of normal levels," Baumgardt said. "These increases in rainfall create a situation of soil saturation, which really decreases the soil's capacity to infiltrate more water, and increases the likelihood of runoff and flooding."

Baumgardt said that discharge levels into rivers are a great measurement of these precipitation increases.

For instance, the U.S. Geological Survey has maintained a stream gauge on the Kickapoo River in LaFarge since 1939. These gauges measure the amount of water flowing in the river in cubic-feet-per-second (cfs).

See **RAINFALL**, page 26

RECOLLECTIONS

The last day

By Curt Rees

For anglers, opening day of the season is a red-letter day on the calendar. Families and friends gather on familiar bodies of water to welcome a new sporting season. It is an exciting time, and we see more anglers on trout streams than any other weekend of the year. Some folks enjoy the challenge of getting up before the sun to reach a prime stretch of water before another like-minded angler does. I understand the excitement, but I tend to stay away from the streams that first weekend and let others enjoy the hunt for unoccupied access points.

For me, I prefer the last days of Wisconsin trout fishing. There are fewer anglers on the stream, as attentions turn to hunting, and those with younger children get pulled to school and sports activities. During the last days, we benefit from having spent many hours on the water, with the knowledge of what has worked from the fly arsenal what has not. I do not think many would disagree that the Wisconsin landscape is more beautiful in October than it is in early May. The opening weekend scenery shows promise of what is to come, and the end of season scenery is proof of what was promised.

My end-of-season routine typically consists of two “last” events. There is the last weekend outing of the year where I go out for the day or at least a long afternoon, fishing until sundown. After that, the true finale is the last actual day of the season, which involves a shorter outing in the brief period of time after weekday work and dark.

This fall my last weekend of the season was spent with my friend Mike, whom I frequently fish with during the season when our schedules align. We are a good pair, as our fishing styles work well together on a narrow stream, know when to chuckle at one another’s attempts at humor, and have enough history together to carry on a meaningful conversation when we have exhausted the obligatory topics of what flies

to use and where we would expect to find fish. We have fished together often enough that we have developed our own shorthand vocabulary and non-verbal signals to communicate when one of us jumps ahead upstream, whose turn it is to work a section, or when we need to quietly approach a promising looking pool with rising fish.

This year Mike and I met on a West Fork trib, which we previously fished in the spring when little midges brought plenty of fish to net. This was a sunny, yet chilly, October afternoon, and we had time to catch up on family and world news as we rigged and hiked to the stream. It turned out to be one of those days where my flies did not have the same magic as Mike’s did. I struggled to land two small fish, and he at least quadrupled my efforts. While we do not usually keep track of the number of fish caught, I knew Mike had a good sense of the day’s score as he kindly gave me the first shot at the last few holes toward the end of the day.

For the very last day of the season, my son Gavin had been my partner for the past few years, but he left for college in August and was not home. I knew his class schedule and calculated that he could leave campus right after class and still make it home for a few hours of fishing with me. However, he is a dedicated student and said he had to put his studies ahead of fishing, and politely declined the invitation. I guess it is possible for a parent to be disappointed in their child’s ability to make the right decision.

Thankfully my 14-year-old daughter, Harper, was obliging enough to join me for the last day this year. Maybe it was out of pity for her dad, or maybe it was a chance for new content on her Instagram feed. I did not ask which, but I am OK if the answer was a mix of both. Like most teens, trout fishing has not typically been her activity of choice, but she is no novice when it comes to angling. She was a quick study of fly casting as a 10-



Curt Rees

FIRST TROUT ON THE LAST DAY

The author’s daughter, Harper, shows off a beautiful 12-inch brown trout which she caught on her last cast of the last day of season with a garish purple and yellow foam hopper which she chose to fish because she liked the colors.

year-old, when learning and practicing in the yard, but never had the patience to stick with it on the stream, especially when she saw her older brother having such success with spinning gear.

This fall Harper was ready to leave the spin gear at home and stick with the fly rod for the last couple of nights of the season with me. We went to a section of stream where I knew there were few fly eating trees in the range of her back cast, but there was an adequate population of fish in the water. She picked a garish purple and yellow foam hopper that I tied, because she liked the color combination.

When I choose a fly, I think about water clarity, air temperature, hatch cycles, naturals on the water, time of the year, etc. I suppose “I like how it looks” is just as reasonable and effective as any of my decision-making rationale. We fished hard for the few hours of remaining daylight with only a couple of weak takes, but no trout to show for it. We hiked back in the dark along the stream toward the car and

made one last stop at a pool where there was just enough light to see the edge of the water without falling into it. On her first cast into the pool, the hopper landed near the edge where we couldn’t see it, but I did hear the splashy take and her teen shriek of “I got one!”

A few seconds later she hoisted the 12-inch brown out of the stream. We had a brief Instagram photo shoot before returning it to the water. That photo may likely be forgotten or overlooked amidst everything else Harper posts on her account over the next several years, but that grassy-edged pool will forever be known to me as the place she caught her first trout on a fly the last day of the season.

Curt Rees grew up in South Dakota, fishing for walleyes on the Missouri River with his dad and two brothers. His first fly-caught trout was a rainbow taken on a tinsel streamer in the Medicine Bow National Forest in southern Wyoming. He lives in La Crosse and is known to knock over the elderly in order to jump ahead on a stream to catch tiger trout.

Famed artist, traveler and long-time Nohr Chapter supporter Bill Weege passes

Sometime around the year 2000 the Nohr Chapter held its first conclave on Otter Creek between Dodgeville and Highland. A gentleman in attendance asked how much we made. When I replied \$400, he got a look in his eye and said we need to talk. That gentleman turned out to be Bill Weege, retired art professor from the University of Wisconsin and a successful artist, who had his work on display at the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C., in addition to many galleries in Chicago and New York.

The result of future discussions was an organization that completely reflected Bill’s sense of how an organization ought to be: no officers or bylaws and, most importantly, no meetings. Members donated \$250 to stream habitat work and in return got a hat. Bill insisted every penny go into the resource, so he designed and had all the hats printed at his personal expense. Later, when the conclave became the Spring Creek Festival, Bill designed all the promotional literature, apparel and many of the prizes. Every penny was to go to the resource. I’d guess that Bill’s efforts contributed more than \$50,000 to the coldwater resources in our area. And I can’t imagine what he must have spent out of his own pocket.

Bill loved to fish, and fished all over the world. His fishing style was like him — unique. His final iteration, which he used on our spring creeks, was a 12-foot, 3-weight rig with a modified spey cast. A stimulator with a dropper was his go-to rig, and he would provide all you needed if you cared to follow his lead. To say Bill was generous is an understatement. His love of all things natural was endless, and his mind was always going 100 miles an hour.

RIP Bill.

Words and photo by Dave Fritz.



TROUT FISHING TALES

The psychology of stimulators

By Erik Helm

It was a late September afternoon when I received a phone call from a friend I will call 'Spud.'

"In the Driftless Area of Wisconsin for the weekend... Fish?" was the question. The answer was in the affirmative (Duh!) and the time set for late the next morning. I have not fished with Spud more than a few times for trout, as our meetings were usually occupied with steelhead, or a lack of them on beautiful rivers where I lead him on epic detours and short-cuts which he puts up with for some reason I can only speculate about. When I have traipsed the creeks with him in pursuit of the wily spotted trutta, I have found him to be among the best spring creek fishers I know.

Because of his expertise, I decided to take him to a tiny brush-clogged stream, and one of my favorites: intimate and complex, besides being filled with challenging trout. I always feel at home here, like I passed through time and the river to a more elemental and simple place. We met at noon, and after a cup of tea, packed up his truck, and were off.

Although cloudy and cool, we timed the fishing perfectly. The water had warmed enough that a hatch of blue-winged olives had begun. Not a major hatch yet, but enough to get the trout looking up for snacks. I tied on a little size 18 BWO dry fly, and Spud tied on a size 16 olive stimulator. Yes, a size 16 olive stimulator dry, for that is all Spud fishes with for trout. You have to respect his trust in it, his determination that the fish will see it as a morsel of food, despite it being too large and the wrong shape for the hatching insects on the stream.

We progressed up the stream, carefully placing casts to the tight cover and avoiding all the obstacles in the form of myriad bushes and overhanging branches. The trout were cooperating too, as I discovered Spud's "Modus Operandi," simply by over-hackling the stimulator, he could place it in the tightest quarters between twigs, bounce it off the water, gently pull it in and out of snags, and effectively fish every inch of productive water near trout cover without worrying about his fly getting stuck. It was almost a fly with built-in weed guard. The fly was his magic power, his cloak of invulnerability, his helmet of confidence.

We both took decent fish out of the complicated chess game the river demanded of us, and Spud being a lefty, we traded off in runs based on openings that demanded either a left-handed caster or right. After an hour or so, we ran out of river, as it braided out at an upper bridge, and proceeded downstream to a lower section. This is the kind of happy-go-lucky fishing I love: no pressure or worries, and a guide's day off. Catch or catch not, pick your relaxed pace and fish the challenges with little agenda and a good friend who is as happy when I catch a fish as I am when he does.

The hatch of tiny mayflies of the dusky persuasion we were playing amongst had increased in intensity when we wet our boots in the lower water. I began catching trout with regularity, and Spud briefly considered changing to a more realistic pattern, but decided instead to increase his agenda of dancing his seductive little stimulator over, under and through every obstacle. He picked up the fish my fly didn't tempt quite enough. The menu specialized in small olives du jour, but the blue-plate special of meatloaf and mushroom gravy with mashed potatoes found on the back page tempted up some hefty and hungry diners.

Then the impossible happened. A nice fish chewed up Spud's meatloaf stimulator and it would not float anymore. Reaching into his vest, he opened a fly box that... you guessed it... usually contained nothing but size-16 olive stimulators. Alas, the horrors!... it was empty. What to do? After all, we were only halfway up the stretch of river we were fishing. It seemed that

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At least with the orange paint, we could see him coming, assuming he attacked us during the day, I thought. The helicopter flew out over the lake and headed toward the outlet where we fished the day before and disappeared. "At least it will have a lot of fish guts to eat before it gets here," observed Dave.

We had been lucky so far and we knew it. The thought of camping with a rogue bear prowling around convinced us. We knew it was time to leave Fox Lake. We knew dumb luck would only carry us so far.

Breaking camp, we loaded our packs, and started the hike out. We cleared out quickly and like Howard's trout run the day before, it took only a few hours going downhill to get to the trailhead and the vehicles. By dark, we got back to the lodge and the cabins. Al was having coffee in the café and we babbled about the helicopter, the orange bear and our decision to leave early.

After we calmed down, Al told us he had good news and bad news. The good news was he had a cabin available and would take a check in payment. The bad news was it was the only cabin available. Howard volunteered to sleep in the horse barn in the hayloft. Joe looked at us.

Then, Dave and I thought the horsebarn sounded OK, too. Once settled, we thought spending our remaining time exploring the trout water around Cooke City would be adventure enough.

In the hayloft, safe from bears, I went to bed and my thoughts drifted again to the huge cutthroats in the deep waters of Fox Lake. They were so damn big. They were trophies, submarines, fish of a lifetime. "Next year," I thought. "We will get them next year." Howard and Dave were thinking along the same lines. The planning for next year's expedition began at breakfast the next morning.

Rick Larkin is a long-time member of SEWTU. He has fished and hunted 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 troilne license for Mississippi River catfish, he is especially fond of all things trout, and the Driftless Area 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 Sports Club.

there is a first time for everything, as Spud extended his leader and tied on a BWO similar to mine, and cast it forward into the maze of riffles and protruding flora.

The change was shocking. I had to look at him to be sure who I was fishing with. His first cast got stuck in a tree behind him. His second cast he mended into a bush. Then he stood on the line while it tangled around the tip of his rod. "What is going on Spud?" I asked. "I am all discombobulated and unstimulated," he replied, while placing his fly into another bush and slipping on a rock. He started teetering back and forth in an uncoordinated manner, and if I didn't know that he was a confirmed avoider of alcohol, might have thought he had secretly sneaked a snoot-full of potables.

I began laughing, and he did too. I said carefully "You know, I am laughing with you, not at you... I think this is all psychological..."

"No kidding!" he now almost shouted, "It's like someone gave me kryptonite! Before, all I could see was water and targets, now all I can see are obstructions and obstacles!" It was like a bizarro world, a world of negatives where black was now white and white now black... targets on the water to be missed, and every branch, rock, tree, or even his hat turned into some sort of magnet... and it was all psychological. Removing that damned stimulator was like pulling out some essential piece of mental DNA, or putting his batteries in backwards. His wet flies floated, and his dry flies sank. In short, his confidence and mindfulness was short-circuited. You could almost hear the fuses popping.

I seem to fish best when being mindful, yet in a Zen state... a harmony with everything... a sense of 'Wa' as the Japanese would describe it. If I am too distracted, or even too full of concentration and thinking, things often begin to go wrong... not to the extent of Spud's malaise, but all of us have been there at some point in our angling, or will be.

The answer is to stop thinking of the problem itself, and return to the beginning. Sit down on the bank and close your eyes. Take a deep breath, or follow the path of one 'Tin Cup,' the golfer and psychological disaster played by Kevin Costner in the movie of the same name. In the movie, a distracted, in love, and nervous Costner is at the practice driving range at the opening of the U.S. Open golf tournament, and keeps slicing his drives into his fellow competitors including some famous PGA pros. The other golfers start staring at him and making comments as he unravels worse and worse, and can only seem to hit the ball backwards and sideways. He had become his own 'hazard' on the course, and he had not even begun play yet. The solution proffered by his coach and caddy played by Cheech Marin is to tie his shoes together, put on his hat sideways, transfer his change to his other pocket, and other goofy things. Tin Cup states that he feels like a fool! The coach says "Excellent... swing away!" and Cup does with a perfect drive. "How'd you do that?" he asks. The answer: You stopped thinking about shanking and slicing your shots. That simple.

Spud's solution was a bit different but equally effective. He went back to the beginning and cleared his head too, as he rooted around through myriad fly boxes and found one last, misplaced size-16 olive stimulator, a somewhat-battered former gladiator, but ready to be tied on and sent forward into the fray. He cast gracefully and perfectly, placed the fly in an impossible spot, and hooked and landed a fish... and another... and another.

When the fly finally fell apart from all those tiny teeth, he reeled up, thanked me for a great day of fishing, and we walked off the water, and had dinner. It was his closing to the trout season, and would give him all winter to replenish his box of stimulators. I am thinking of tying a few too, and putting them in a small pill box... like medication of the placebo kind for that inevitable day when I become all tangled up in my psychological underwear.

Life and the Corona Virus

So far there has been no scientific data that trout or any other fish are capable of catching or spreading the Corona virus. That is good news for us because it means that we can fish as much as we want, and handle as many fish as we can catch without fear of catching the virus.

We are also less likely to catch the virus outside as we would indoors, another reason to leave home and go fishing. Streams provide plenty of room for social distancing and walking around anybody we might meet on the stream. When the lakes freeze over, we will also be able to ice fish and maintain our social distance.

If we are forced to stay in, it provides a good opportunity to fill our fly boxes. We can check the internet and look for new patterns to tie. You can never have too many flies.

There are still a lot of fly-tying and fly-fishing magazines with articles and books that I have not read yet. If this virus keeps me inside this winter, I will have plenty of things to read.

Now that I know how to use Zoom, I can still get together with some fishing buddies that are using Zoom and talk about our 2020 fishing season and make plans for 2021. We can even get together and tie some new fly patterns using Zoom.

There are a lot of things we don't know about this virus, but we do know it is real, and we need to respect it. Having said that, I am not ready to let it get me down. I will have plenty of things to do, and if I run out, I know my wife might find a couple things for me to do.

I have some very good friends that are dealing with some health issues such as cancer. I just fished with one of them a couple days ago. We have fished together for 40 years. It has put things in perspective for me regarding this virus. I will continue to respect it and do my part to get it under control, but I will not let it get me down.

They say that having a positive fishing attitude can increase our chances of catching fish. I think having a positive mental attitude can also help us get through this virus. Life is still good if we make it that way!

—Bob Haase

Please support Friends of Wisconsin TU in 2020

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

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

Providing habitat improvement grants since 1991.

\$1,000 to Wild Rivers for habitat crew in 2019

\$2,000 to Wisconsin River Valley for Prairie River Project in Lincoln County in 2015

\$2,000 to the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter for the Upper Kinni in 2014

\$2,000 to Coulee Chapter for Warner Creek project in 2019

\$2,000 to Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter for Six Mile Branch, 2019

\$2,000 to the Antigo Chapter for habitat crews in 2019

\$1,000 to Marinette and \$2,000 to Wolf River for NE Region work in 2017

\$2,000 to CWTU for habitat crew in 2019

\$2,000 to the Lakeshore Chapter for Nichols Creek in Sheboygan County in 2019

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Enclosed is my check, payable to Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.*

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Wisconsin Fly Tiers, with words and photos by Bob Haase Helen Shaw... First Lady of Fly Tying

This series recognizes some of Wisconsin's great fly tiers. This series will provide 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 tied, and their tips to make us better tiers.

I wonder how many tiers have heard of Helen Shaw. I have been tying flies for more than 65 years, and it wasn't until about 25 years ago that I first learned of her



FLIES FOR FISH AND ANGLERS

One of the salmon flies she tied for fishermen. As Helen got older, she still enjoyed tying flies to fool the fish, but also enjoyed flies intended for display, that were intended to attract the fishermen.

through a book she wrote entitled "Fly Tying; Materials, Tools, and Techniques," which was published around 1989. It reminded me of my early tying days. She did not use a bobbin and she wrapped the thread around a rubber bumper to secure the thread between tying steps.

I remember doing this and cutting a 36 in section of thread, separating the four strands, and using one strand to tie some size #32 trout flies for a man from Madison. I used a magnifying glass and a magnifier mirror behind to tie them. I still have that magnifying mirror. We didn't have small diameter thread back then. As I was reading the book, it caused me to reflect on the simplicity of the tools, materials and tying techniques that were used back then.

There were not many instructional books on tying and I sure could have used that book back then. The book had clear instructions and was illustrated with some nice pictures that did a fantastic job of teaching the basics. Even though the tools, materials and tying techniques have changed a lot, I still find that book useful. I am not sure that a person can really appreciate the resources we have today for fly tying, without knowing about tiers like Helen Shaw, and others who shared their knowledge with us.

I would like to thank Mark Rhinerson for hooking me up with Harry Peterson, because this article would be incomplete without their help. Harry spent a long time researching Helen Shaw and he was nice enough to provide me with all of his research work on her.

Helen was born in 1910 in Madison, Wisconsin and graduated from high school in Sheboygan, Wisconsin. She began fishing with her father and learned to tie flies while in high school. It wasn't long before her flies became sought after by area fly fishers because of her talent and attention to detail. Art Kade, a bamboo fly rod maker in Sheboygan, hired Helen to tie flies while she was still in high school. She later developed a partnership with Art and they opened a business in Sheboygan called Art Kade Flycrafters.

By age 20 she was earning her living tying flies.

Helen was offered jobs with companies like Weber Tackle in Stevens Point, but turned them all down. She told "American Angler" and "Fly Tier" magazine during an interview in 1989 that she wanted no part of mass producing flies. Helen was a meticulous tier and speed and mass production ran against her high standards. Maybe we could learn from this: It is not how fast we tie, but how good we tie.

Helen became one of the world's best fly tiers of her time. Some of her customers included President Herbert Hoover and artist Normal Rockwell. In recognition of "Esquire" magazine's 50th Anniversary, editor Arnold Gingrich was presented with a collection of 100 of Helen's flies. Upon receipt of the flies, he said "I never had a Helen Shaw fly; now I have a hundred. Nobody's worth that much."

Helen demonstrated her fly-tying skills at the International Outdoors Shows in Chicago from 1939-1941. She was the only woman member of an all men's fly casting group in Chicago, called "The Grand O' Dawn Club." In 1937 the



FLIES FOR THE FISH

One of the fishing flies she tied for the fish.

Spring Farm Rearing Club hosted its first annual conservation tying exhibition, with thousands of people in attendance. For one of the first times, excellent women fly tiers like Helen Shaw and Beatrice Morken were invited to participate, demonstrating their tying skills. In 1949, Helen was recognized as the world's greatest fly tier at a banquet of the Sportsmen's Club of America. She was also inducted in to the Fishing Hall of Fame. In 2002, Helen was awarded the prestigious Buz Buszek Award, which is the Federation of Fly Fisher's highest honor in fly tying.

Helen took time out from her tying to serve in the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps, reaching the rank of 2nd Lieutenant. After serving her time in the Corps, she returned to Sheboygan and rejoined with Art Kade in his shop. In 1952 Art died from a long illness, and Helen opened her own shop in Sheboygan. Her reputation continued to grow nationwide and she became good friends with the art director of Field and Stream magazine, Hermann Kessler. It wasn't long before they were married and she closed her shop in Sheboygan and they moved to New York.

Helen and her husband collaborated on writing and publishing three instructional books on fly tying. She did the writing and Hermann did all the photography. Her writing, and the photography showing things from the tier's perspective, made it easy to understand. The first book, "Fly Tying," pub-



HELEN SHAW'S TYING SKILLS WERE UNSURPASSED

Helen and her husband collaborated on writing and publishing three instructional books on fly tying.

lished in 1963, became known by many as a fly tiers bible. "Flies for Fish and Fishermen" was published in 1989, followed by their last book "Fly-Tying: Materials, Tools, and Techniques." In addition to the books, Helen also contributed fly patterns and articles to a number of publications.

Helen passed away in 2007 at the age of 97. She will always be remem-

bered for her fly tying and her sharing of knowledge with other tiers. We can carry on her tradition of quality in the flies we tie and sharing our knowledge with other tiers. She will further be remembered by the Helen Shaw Fly Fishing Club in Sheboygan and the work they do in honor of her contributions to fly tying and fly fishing.

RAINFALL, from page 22

"The average cfs at the LaFarge Station is 195," Baumgardt said. "In the 2016-to-2019 time frame, the cfs or amount of water flowing in the rivers was 85 percent above the average."

The data shows that these extreme weather events have disproportionately occurred later into the summer and the early fall. He said that one factor that could influence that timing of these rainfall events is that it is pre-harvest, when crops are approaching maximum canopy.

"When there is excessive moisture in the soil, then the plants will transpire more water," Baumgardt said. "That increased moisture in the atmosphere provides additional fuel for these intense rainfall events, and is likely part of the explanation about why they seem more likely to

occur at the end of the growing season."

Baumgardt explained that "2020 had presented a break in the pattern" even though, after 2019, the area had started the year with very high soil moisture levels. He said that the drought which impacted some of the westernmost portions of the area, from Nebraska into western Iowa, may have had an impact on a break in the trend.

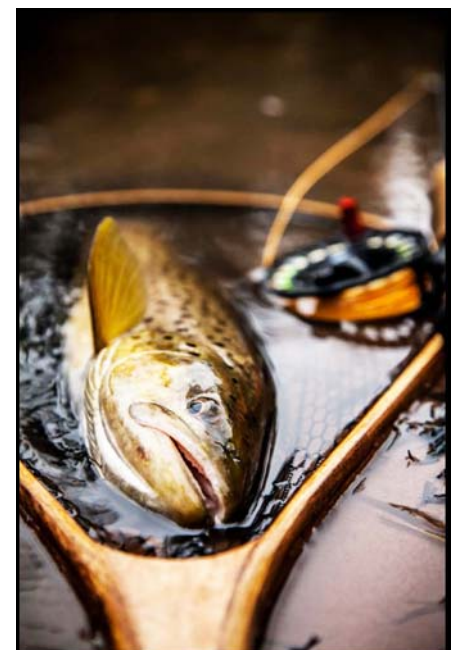
Based on his findings, he said "there is no question that we are in an anomalous precipitation period across the region." The data shows that extreme rainfall events are increasing across the region, and the rivers are running historically high, which begets more flooding.

Gillian Pomplun is a reporter for the Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout.

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Canine collaborative to sniff NZ mudsnails

By Maureen Ferry, Statewide AIS Monitoring Coordinator, Division of Environmental Management, Bureau of Water Quality Water Resources Program and Ellen Voss, AIS Program Director for the River Alliance of Wisconsin

Little did DNR Stream Biologist Mike Sorge know that in January 2012, the net he dipped into Black Earth Creek to scoop out a macro-invertebrate sample would unveil the first documented population of New Zealand mudsnails (*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*) in Wisconsin.

These rice-sized snails are difficult to detect. Other factors that further complicate their detection are that they are born pregnant and resist desiccation and most chemical disinfectants.

They are thought to have negative impacts on fisheries since they outcompete native species and provide little, if any, nutritional value to fish.

Once these snails are on the landscape, they are extremely difficult to manage and control. The most practical and cost-effective management practice to stop these snails from spreading further is early detection and prevention.

Since their initial discovery, volunteers, partners and the DNR

have been using nets and DNA to search streams for these extremely tiny snails.

The DNR is now exploring conservation canines as detectors. Midwest Conservation Dogs, Inc. (MCDI) has been training dogs to detect various species since 2016. In 2020, the DNR and MCDI have partnered to detect these snails. To prevent the risk that the dogs themselves might unintentionally spread the snails during stream surveys, volunteers and biologists from the DNR, River Alliance of Wisconsin and Upper Sugar River Watershed Association collected sediment samples from streams with and without New Zealand mudsnails.

The goal was to determine if the dogs could detect which sediment samples had snails.

After almost two months of training, MCDI K9s Betty White and Ernie can sniff out as few as one New Zealand mudsnail in a half cup of sediment. Sniffing 35 samples during the first round of official surveys, Betty White indicated 70 percent positive detections, and Ernie indicated 80 percent positive detections.

Be sure to keep track of our progress on the DNR, MCDI and River Alliance Facebook & Instagram pages.



ERNIE, HOT ON THE SCENT OF NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAILS.

Midwest Conservation Dogs, Inc.

Remember to do your part to stop the spread of New Zealand mudsnails and other invasive species:

- Inspect waders, boats, trailers, motors and hunting equipment, including boots, push poles, blinds and dogs.
- Remove all plants, animals and mud.
- Drain all water from boats, motors, decoys, live wells and other equipment.
- Never move plants, animals or live fish away from a waterbody.
- If you think you've found these

invasive snails, report your findings to the DNR and let your local AIS coordinator know.

Sources of more info on this subject include:

- <https://dnr.wisconsin.gov/topic/Invasives/report.html> and
- https://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/invasives/Contacts.aspx?role=AIS_CTY_TRIB

To see videos of the K9s in action, check out MCDI's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/MidwestConservationDogs>

WiseH2O Mobile Application goes Driftless

By Kent Johnson

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, 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: <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 WI, southeastern MN, northeastern IA, and northwestern IL) in August 2020. 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>.

Those who are interested in Driftless Area monitoring in 2021 can take the following steps to prepare this winter:

- Download the WiseH2O App. Android and iPhone versions of the WiseH2O App are available for free download at the Google Play Store and Apple Store (search WiseH2O). Instructions for downloading the WiseH2O App can be found in the WiseH2O App User Guide, located on the MobileH2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/mh2oapp>.
- Complete on-line training. Detailed on-line instructions for use of the WiseH2O App can be found in the WiseH2O App User Guide and the Video Tutorial for Using the WiseH2O App, both located on the MobileH2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/mh2oapp>.
- Obtain water chemistry test kits: Depending on each participant's level of interest and desired extent of involvement with water chemistry monitoring, three types of test kits are available. These three test kits can be ordered directly from MobileH2O at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/shop>.

To help offset the start-up cost of test kits for Driftless Area TU chapters and their participants in 2021, Trout Unlimited can offer a limited number of free starter kits (up to five basic kits and three premium kits) for each TU chapter, with funding provided by TU's Coldwater



MONITORING DURING RUNOFF EVENTS CAN IDENTIFY WATER QUALITY PROBLEMS

ter Conservation Fund.

Kent Johnson can work with your chapter to provide the kits, based on chapter needs. A reliable thermometer for WiseH2O App temperature measurements can also be purchased at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/shop>.

Consider a monitoring plan

If your group is interested in monitoring particular streams and their water quality and/or habitat conditions within your locale, you may want to prepare a short monitoring plan to guide participants to these special locations. For the 2019 WiseH2O App pilot project, the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of TU prepared a monitoring plan that can be used as a reference and/or customized to serve your group's needs. This plan, prepared by Kent Johnson, can be found on the

MobileH2O website at <https://www.mobileh2o.com/anglerscience>. Kent is also available to provide support for monitoring plan preparation.

We are excited about this chance to "go Driftless" with WiseH2O App monitoring, and we look forward to your participation in 2021. Kent Johnson will be the Driftless Area (TUDARE) Coordinator for this project, so feel free to contact him with any questions, thoughts or needs. Our Project Team includes Dan Dauwalter (Trout Unlimited) and Carter and Sarah Borden (MobileH2O, LLC). 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.

Toebiter contest report

As you may recall, in our last issue we ran a story in which the merits of a good toebiter fly were discussed, and readers were challenged to tie an example which would be judged by a panel and a winner selected.

The winner would receive a box of four dozen hand-tied flies by one of the state's best tyers, Bob Haase.

Our judges were former Wild Rivers and SWTU Chapter President and well known commercial tyer Dick Berge from Iron River, whose Hex patterns are amazing, and Tom Lager of Fox Valley TU, an avid entomologist and amazing fly tyer and angler. They generously shared their impressions of our entries and settled upon a winner.

The entries came from good anglers and good tyers across the state. They each offered some innovative twist of materials or design. They looked for a fly that wasn't a top floater, so designs with less foam and some way to get them under the surface were favored. Wayne Parmley of CWTU gave that a lot of thought and designed a fly that will float with head down and tail up,

because they breath through a tube on their rear end.

Those sinkability concerns led to using bead-chain eyes or a dubbed body with some non-toxic wire. Silhouette and size were important, so a #6 or #8 streamer hook with a fly better than an inch long were the fi-

Toebiter tying instructions

- Hook - Steamer hook; 6X or 4X Long
- Thread - 6/0 Black
- Underbody - Self-adhesive-backed lead tape, cut to shape
- Body - SLF Squirrel dubbing, dark brown
- Legs - Turkey biots, knotted
- Wing - Pheasant feather from the rump or shoulder, coated with thin coat of UV Flexible Epoxy
- Head - Small pheasant feather from the wing or shoulder, with thin coat of UV Flexible Epoxy
- Coating - UV Flexible epoxy



DAVE BRETHAUER'S WINNING TOEBITER FLY

nalists. Motion? Legs varied from knotted biots to knotted rubber legs, so that when you twitch this fly, they'll move like the natural. One body approach that was intriguing was a lacquered pheasant body feather like Jack Gartside used on his hopper patterns. I'll try some of those this winter.

The winner is Dave Brethauer of Brodhead, president the Blackhawk Chapter of TU, a haven for good fly tyers. When we advised Dave of his

win, he told us he was tickled to be selected, and generously donated the flies back to the State Council for its spring fundraiser.

Dave is happy to provide detailed instructions if you contact him at dave.brethauer@gmail.com. Or you can contact me at [dwel-ter@tu.org](mailto:dwelter@tu.org).

Thanks again to all our participants and our judges. This was a lot of fun. Just remember that if you fish this fly to use a strong tippet.



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