



Wisconsin Trout

Fall 2021

Coulee Region Chapter hosts a memorable STREAM Girls Day

By Mike Kuhr, Council Chair

On a Saturday in late August, girls from across southern Wisconsin came together at the West Fork of the Kickapoo River to learn about one of their home waters. Nine girls participated in the event, which was led by volunteers from the Coulee Region Chapter.

The West Fork Sports Club dried out from a recent flood just in time to host the event. STREAM Girls is a program with Wisconsin roots. Our own Heidi Oberstadt developed and organized the very first program a few years ago in Stevens Point.

STREAM Girls is TU's watershed STEM program for girls that builds confidence and breaks down barriers in science and the outdoors. Through the eyes of a scientist, artist and angler, girls make a personal connection to their home waters.

STREAM Girls is a partnership between TU and Girl Scouts USA. Typically held as a multi-day event, volunteers were able to condense the basic requirements of completing the program, and earning the STREAM Girls Patch, into one day.

The program was put together and led by Shannon Quie with assistance from Rebecca Rand. Coulee Region Chapter leaders Fred Spademan, Jason Freund and Cameron Quie provided volunteer support.

After a brief meet and greet, the

girls broke into two groups and headed out with Shannon and Rebecca on a stream walk. The girls made observations about the stream and its surroundings. The girls also learned to identify riffles, runs and pools.

The girls came back together and discussed what they had seen and then had some time to record their reflections and observations into their field notebook.

Next on the schedule was a fly-casting demonstration and practice session. Rods were rigged up and hula-hoop targets were set in the lawn. For safety, they just used a piece of yarn at the end of the leaders.

"Go with the flow"

An activity called "Go with the Flow" followed. The girls went back to the river and took measurements of its width and depth at certain locations. A bobber race ensued and the girls timed how long it took to travel 30 feet on the left side, right side and middle of the river. Volunteers then helped the girls use their measurements to calculate the flow in cubic feet per second.

By this time the sun had poked out and the August heat started to set in. It was time to head back to the water with kick nets, ice cube trays, magnifying glasses and macroinvertebrate charts.

Jason Freund showed the girls how to use a kick net to sample the



Mike Kuhr

KICKING UP ALL SORTS OF INTERESTING CRITTERS

Jason Freund showed the girls how to use a kick net to sample the aquatic insects in a riffle. The girls found lots of caddis larvae, a few nymphs and a bunch of crayfish. The largest was given the nickname "Big Jimmy."

aquatic insects in a riffle. The girls found lots of caddis larvae, a few nymphs and a bunch of crayfish. The largest was given the nickname "Big Jimmy".

The last kick-net survey surprised everyone, as they managed to catch a brook lamprey. The girls learned that these lamprey are actually fish and that they don't pose a threat to the other fish in the river, since they eat mostly dead and decaying material in the stream.

After identifying some of the creatures living in the river, the girls headed back to the shelter and did some fly tying. Cameron Quie led the girls through the steps of tying the woolly bugger, which when wet, looks like the crayfish they were catching in the river.

Next, the girls went on a scavenger hunt looking for the nine ingredients of a healthy stream – water, riffles, rocks, trees, wood, short plants, sky, animals and bugs.

The last activity involved making a bracelet with beads that represented each of the nine ingredients from the scavenger hunt. The bracelets were made with recycled fly line.

At the end of the day, the girls had time to share some of the things they had learned and what their favorite part of the event was.

These STREAM Girls all had a great time exploring the watershed together. Thanks to the parents and Girl Scout leaders for supporting and encouraging their STREAM Girls. And thank you to the Coulee Region Chapter volunteers for your efforts in making this event memorable for all involved.

Advocacy: Bringing people together on a stream

When I (Jim Erickson) read the article in the July issue of *Wisconsin Trout* about proposed cuts to the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, I knew we needed to do some educating.

For almost two decades our Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter has been working on Gilbert Creek in Dunn County. Much of the public access was acquired through this stewardship program, and I knew the most recent restoration work would be a perfect location for a stream walk with our state legislators.

I contacted Council Chair Mike Kuhr, and we set up a time to meet on site with several legislators. Sen. Rob Stafsholt (R-New Richmond), Sen. Kathy Bernier (R-Chippewa Falls) and staffer Nathan Duerkop joined us for a stream walk in the morning. Sen. Jeff Smith (D-Eau Claire) joined us in the afternoon.

The goals for the meetings were to show the value of

Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program acquisitions, Trout Stamp investments and local volunteer efforts.

Gilbert Creek is now recognized by the DNR as a brook trout reserve, meaning it has the characteristics most likely to provide suitable brook trout habitat in the



SHOWING THE VALUE OF STREAM PROJECTS

Nathan Duerkop from Sen. Bernier's Staff, Council Chair Mike Kuhr, Sen. Rob Stafsholt, and WI Clear Waters TU President Jim Erickson.

future.

DNR Biologist Heath Benike and Technician Nate Anderson were on hand to answer technical questions.

Local landowners Joe and Jean Kulzer allowed us to use their property for parking and stream access. They recently agreed to the easement along Gilbert Creek. The easement abuts public lands downstream and was a great example of how the stewardship program works with landowners to provide public access.

As we continued our walk, the DNR explained the design for a Brook Trout Reserve stream and pointed out the

mud line that was 20 feet from the actual bank. Two days prior the area was hit with 4-5 inches of rain. The overflow was gone, and the water was crystal clear.

What really impressed the senators was the fact that the banks we were standing on were filled with one ton of rock per foot. They were amazed at the amount of material needed to reduce flooding and sediment erosion on Gilbert Creek. We explained that the rising costs of materials are a primary reason we are seeking an increase in the cost of a Wisconsin trout stamp.

Engaging our local elected officials on site was a great experience and we would encourage other chapters to do the same. If you have a local restoration project you'd like to show off, contact Council Chair Mike Kuhr for assistance.

—Jim Erickson and Mike Kuhr

Little snails, big problems

New Zealand mudsnails discovered in more streams.



Ellen Voss

TOUGH, TINY AND SPREADING

These New Zealand mudsnails were brushed off a few small rocks in Iowa County's Strutt Creek. In some areas, such as Black Earth Creek, the shells are often smooth and black. These are covered in a thin layer of calcium carbonate because of water chemistry differences. Note the tweezers shown for scale.

**Ellen Voss, Aquatic Invasive Species Program Director,
River Alliance of Wisconsin**

A few weeks ago, I visited Strutt Creek in Iowa County for the first time, and as I wound my way down the curvy roads leading to the stream access, I kept thinking about how lucky I am to live in such a beautiful state with so much water. I was there to collect New Zealand mudsnails (NZMS) for a research project, and as such, the situation felt paradoxical. From above, the scene is idyllic: the Driftless Area hills as a backdrop, a small gurgling stream, overgrown goldenrod on the banks, and hummingbirds dipping into an abundance of jewelweed. But look a little deeper, and you'll soon realize that all is not well. Just below the surface, one snail species covered every available surface, from little rocks to pieces of wood to big boulders.

NZMS first showed up in Wisconsin almost a decade ago, and they've been slowly expanding their territory ever since, very likely with the help of hunters, anglers and paddlers. Unfortunately, two new locations were added to the map this summer: Token Creek and Elvers Creek in Dane County.

For many reasons, NZMS are the perfect invader. They're so small that unless you look really closely, you could mistake them for little specs of dirt or rock.

Unlike many species, a male and female aren't required for reproduction. These snails are all female, genetically identical clones that are born with developing embryos inside them that are ready to hit the stream crawling given the chance. As such, it only takes one snail to start a whole new population. It's a brilliant reproductive strategy from an evolutionary perspective but a catastrophic adaptation when an aquatic species finds itself on a new continent, which is our predicament in Wisconsin.

NZMS can live outside of water in damp conditions for over a month because of a trap door to their shell (called an operculum) they use to shut themselves off from the environment when needed. Incredibly, they're unaffected by most disinfectants, including bleach.

What does this snail do to

streams and stream dwellers? Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources biologists are working hard to figure that out. Based on reports from streams in the western United States, NZMS can reach such high densities (500,000 per square meter) that ecosystem effects are inevitable. They're grazers, competing for food and space with some of the native grazing species that fish (like trout) like to eat. Trout do eat NZMS, but studies have shown that these snails can pass through fish digestive tracts unharmed and alive. As such, NZMS not only provide little if any nutritional value but also potentially get a free ride to a new location when the fish evacuates.

This might all sound dire and overwhelming, but there are many reasons to be hopeful. The continued expansion of this snail is not inevitable. Snails move at a snail's pace, and they can't jump watersheds on their own. People are moving NZMS, and as such, people can stop their spread.

Here's how we can keep NZMS contained:

If you happen to fish in known locations with this snail, take extra precautions. Consider fishing from shore instead of getting in the water, and if possible, have a dedicated set of waders and boots for contaminated streams. If you're still using felt soles, make the switch to hard bottoms. Felt is slow to dry, giving NZMS a perfect habitat to live outside water.

When you're done fishing a stream and back at your vehicle, look over your gear well and use a stiff-bristled brush to dislodge anything that might be attached, including mud. If your boots have removable soles, pull them off and make sure any material caught between the boot and sole is removed as well. Many streams with known populations of NZMS have signage and stations equipped with boot and hand brushes to help you decontaminate your gear. Carry a jug of tap water in your vehicle to rinse everything off before you head to the next stream.

If you're done fishing for the day, you can also put all your gear in a big garbage bag and leave it in a freezer at least five hours. Hand-held steamers work, too.

Another option to use if you're

planning to fish again on the same day in a different stream is to spray your gear with Formula 409 after scrubbing. A new study out of Michigan showed that spraying down your gear with this cleaning agent and letting it sit for 10 minutes is 100 percent effective at killing NZMS. Just be sure to rinse everything off with fresh water away from the stream to prevent any accidental harm to native stream life from the Formula 409.

Fishing has become even more popular in the past year thanks to the pandemic, and NZMS may have already spread farther than we know. Current detection methods are time consuming and expensive, and, as such, we're currently working on ways to speed up the early detection process.

In 2020, the DNR, River Alliance of Wisconsin and Upper Sugar River Watershed Association partnered with Conservation Dogs Collective, Inc. (formerly Midwest Conservation Dogs, Inc.) to see if dogs could be trained to quickly sniff out this species from sediment samples. The initial results were encouraging, prompting a second study beginning this fall to fine-tune the methods and determine the limits of detection.

Volunteer monitoring efforts are essential too. The recent discovery

in Token Creek was made by citizen scientists (Rock River Coalition) out doing routine Water Action Volunteers sampling. If you're out fishing and notice a tiny snail that looks suspicious, let us know. Your local AIS coordinator can help, too; find out who yours is by searching "AIS contacts WDNR" online.

Efforts such as these are invaluable, but early detection is only part of the solution. We all have to do our part to prevent these snails from spreading further. Take a minute, have a good look, scrub for good measure and spray and rinse to protect the places you fish.

Just because NZMS are known to be in a stream doesn't mean they haven't already been moved to other places and haven't been found yet.

Known locations with New Zealand mudsnails:

Dane County:

Badger Mill Creek, Black Earth Creek, Badfish Creek Oregon Branch, Brewery Creek, Elvers Creek, Mt. Vernon Creek, Token Creek

Columbia County:

Rowan Creek

Iowa County:

Strutt Creek



Ellen Voss

TOOLS TO KILL NEW ZEALAND MUDSNAILS

Steam, Virkon Aquatic and Formula 409 are all effective at killing New Zealand mudsnails. Always be sure to brush off your gear first and rinse everything in clean water away from the stream. A sprayer with fresh water is shown in the photo, but a jug of tap water will do.



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Chair's Column

Living in the golden age of trout

As a trout angler, Wisconsin has been pretty good to me. Trout populations are in good shape and our state has invested heavily in public access on our trout streams. You could say we're living in the golden age of trout here in Wisconsin.

Our state provides a variety of opportunities for all trout anglers. Whether you're harvesting a meal, releasing your catch or hunting for a trophy, you can do it all with bait, lures or flies in Wisconsin.

Our recently expanded seasons mean you can chase trout from January to October (even into November on a few northern rivers). Add Great Lakes tributary fishing to the mix and we can fish for trout all year long.

It's important to remember that this "golden age" is no fluke. And things haven't always been this good. This golden age is the result of an awful lot of people rolling up their sleeves, putting on some waders and getting to work.

Wisconsin, with its abundant water resources, is home to some of the best fisheries science in the world. Over the years, our biologists have been given the freedom to try new ideas regarding stocking, regulations, restoration and management. We anglers get to enjoy the fruits of their labor.

Through trial and error, we learn what works best. We also learn what doesn't work and ask why so that we don't repeat those mistakes in the future. We are fortunate to be chas-

ing naturally reproducing trout in our home waters instead of chasing the hatchery truck on a Saturday morning.

Much like our roads and highways have different speed limits, our trout streams need different regulations, too. With such diverse size, habitat, fish population structure and management goals, our current system of county-wide base regulations, with options for special regulations to meet specific goals, works well.

The science behind our restoration work is evolving too. Trout Unlimited recently adopted a new strategic plan. A key component of this plan is to identify priority watersheds across the country to help focus our work on rivers home to native and wild trout that will be most resilient to climate change.

Wisconsin, in all likelihood, will end up with three or four watersheds on the priority list. These will be a regional focus point for local chapters, project managers and our partners.

But this type of planning can also be done at the local level. I would encourage each of our local chapters to identify home waters to focus on. Pick the waters where our native fish have the best chance to thrive in the future, and make a plan to see it through.

I was trying to pass an eighth-grade algebra class the last time Wisconsin closed its trout fishing season due to drought in the late



Mike Kuhr

1980s. Recent fishing closures in the West are a good reminder that it's only a matter of time before we're hit with another drought and stressed fish.

Our native brook trout, which depend on the coldest and cleanest water, will probably feel the effects of future droughts the most. It's imperative that we do all that we can to ensure they have strongholds in the future.

This work will require a mix of advocacy, restoration work and engagement from the TU community. Building a strong network of native and wild trout allies offers us the best chance at success.

Recent policy wins, such as the extension of the Knowles-Nelson Stewardship Program, will help ensure healthy fisheries. The program provides public fishing access and buffers the streambanks from pollutants and runoff.

Future policy issues include CAFO and high-capacity-well siting. And it's past time to increase the

Trout Stamp fee to help fund future habitat restoration projects.

For us to be successful, we will need to be more than just TU members who send \$35 to the national office every year. We will need to harness our unique skillsets as volunteers so we can monitor for threats, plan restoration work, engage with partners, advocate for good public policy, fundraise and tell the story of our coldwater fisheries.

Where will our children, our grandchildren or our great grandchildren be trout fishing in 20 years?

I hope it's somewhere in Wisconsin, because I know our TU community is ready to get to work. We're going to make sure those future generations have access to cold, clean, fishable water close to home so that they too can feel like they're fishing in the "golden age."

Much Respect,
Mike Kuhr
State Council Chair

New solutions needed to protect streams

Coon Creek researcher says today's rainfall events require more powerful solutions.

By Gillian Pomplun

About 50 people attended a presentation by Dr. Stanley Trimble at Sidie Hollow County Park in rural Viroqua on September 12. With rain on the way, the location above one of the 22 flood control dams in Vernon County seemed somewhat prophetic.

One of the more noteworthy attendees at the event was Burton Lee, 91, of Coon Valley. Lee's father Adolph was instrumental in the Coon Creek Watershed Project in the 1930s and 1940s. And, Lee was quick to help Trimble's research team, starting in 1974.

Coon Creek Watershed historian Marc Moilien said "Burton Lee is a friend, neighbor and relative. He is very concerned and interested in soil and water conservation and wildlife. He is also interested in the Coon Creek Watershed group that has formed recently, and his daughter Jody is involved with the Tainter Creek Watershed Council.

"Burton grew up on the edge of Coon Valley. His father, Adolph Lee, was very involved in the soil conservation work in the 1930s. The tree nursery for the Civilian Conservation Corps was on his farm. Aldo Leopold would stop and visit Adolph because of the conservation work and their mutual interest in wildlife."

Dr. Trimble conducted groundbreaking research about soil erosion in the Coon Creek Watershed. Trimble's almost four decades of research built on the work of scientists

who studied the watershed starting in the 1930s, where it is memorialized as the location of the nation's first watershed demonstration project.

Trimble presented a saga of the Coon Creek Watershed that ranged from the stable pre-settlement hydrologic conditions to the devastation that began at the turn of the century and reached its peak in the 1930s, before the modern era of flooding that escalated in 2018,

Trimble had observed that with the wide adoption of no-till management on hilltop farm land, the system had once again stabilized "as much as it can" under conditions of use of the land for agricultural production.

For Trimble, the flood of 2018 was a game changer. When he returned to the area to survey the damage in the aftermath of the rainfall and resulting widespread flooding, he was shocked to observe the impacts.

"The 2007 and 2008 floods exceeded anything I had ever seen before, but I was amazed at how well the landscape had handled those events," Trimble said. "But my mind was blown by the 2018 rain event and flooding."

Trimble had been particularly struck by the Coon Creek floodwaters overflowing the railroad embankment along the Mississippi River in Stoddard. To his knowledge, he said, this had never happened before.

"Given the flooding events we're increasingly seeing, something is ob-

viously going on," Trimble said. "Up to this point, no-till management has been working, but at this point the ag technicians are going to have to come up with something more powerful than no-till."

Trimble stated that he is skeptical that even the incredibly stable, pre-settlement landscape could have handled the rain event that caused the 2018 flooding.

Measurements

Trimble's measurements, taken following the 2007 storm, indicated that the upland no-till fields were not eroding and contributing additional sediment into the watershed. He said that sediment moving through the system was mainly legacy sediment, now moving from upper main valley areas like Coon Valley, and into lower main valley areas like Chaseburg.

But Monroe County Conservationist Bob Micheel, contacted after the meeting, has an updated view of the situation. His department uses a soil transect method yearly to measure the extent to which soil erosion is occurring in the county. In measurements from 2007 through 2018, Micheel has seen a steady and growing increase in soil erosion. In 2007, that amount was 2.2 tons-per-acre, and in 2018, the amount had doubled to 4.4 tons-per-acre.

Micheel attributed these changes to loss of dairy farms, and of dairy rotations on the landscape. Those rotations would include haylands and grass pastures.

In a conversation with the Independent, Micheel also agreed that starting in 2007, there had been a large withdrawal of acres enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), as prices for commodity crops grew. This demand for commodity crops created a corresponding increase in demand for cropland and rental rates increased. CRP payment rates could not compete with the increasing rental rates. The withdrawal from CRP resulted in many acres being taken out of perennial plantings and put back into production of annual row crops.

Trimble's story

When Dr. Stanley Trimble stepped back from his 39-year career of documenting soil erosion in the Coon Creek Watershed, he had witnessed a miraculous transformation of a very troubled environment.

In his book, 'Historical Agriculture and Soil Erosion in the Upper Mississippi Valley Hill Country,' Trimble uses measurements taken by his predecessors, combined with photographs and other records to establish the full magnitude of the devastation that took place from about 1907 to 1940.

In his book, he tells a tale of settlers encountering the verdant valleys rich in water resources, covered in perennial vegetation and full of rich, black prairie (mollisol) soils that had evolved over centuries.

See **TRIMBLE**, page 9

Please support our successful grant programs

Here's an update on our Friends of Wisconsin TU and Watershed Access Fund programs.

By Kim McCarthy

The State Council's Friends of Wisconsin TU program had a successful 2021. We approved \$23,000 in grants to help 12 chapters with stream improvement projects.

The success of the program is due solely to the generosity of our donors. Our grant programs put 100 percent of your donations into stream work and acquisitions. All administrative work is provided by our volunteer leaders.

To continue supporting our chapters with Friends of Wisconsin TU grants, we count on your support for 2022. If you have supported the "Friends" program in the past, we appreciate your donations and hope you'll continue your support. If you have not yet become a "Friend," please consider making a donation to support stream improvement throughout Wisconsin.

As for the Watershed Access Fund, we are working on an agreement to partner with the DNR on a purchase in northeastern Wisconsin. But we are always looking for new opportunities to secure public access to prime trout streams.

In this edition of *Wisconsin Trout* you will find a donation envelope for our Friends of Wisconsin Trout and Watershed Access Fund grant programs. Please consider making a donation to help us continue our successful conservation and public access efforts. Donors will be listed in *Wisconsin Trout* for four issues (one year) after the donation is made. We would love to see your name on the lists.

WITU Service Partnership now on Instagram

By Matt Cade and Mike Johnson,
Wisconsin TU Partnership Leads

Veterans and first responders have always faced an insurmountable amount of stress due to the risks and the weight of their jobs. To escape these stresses, many of these individuals look for a community of likeminded folks to break away and spend a few fleeting moments together and enjoy a moment of reprieve.

The Wisconsin Trout Unlimited Service Partnership (WTUSP) prides itself in the events that it does offer and looks to spread the message to many other veterans and first responders. The WTUSP hopes to do this through the growth of new social media pages on Instagram.

Newly appointed Wisconsin TU Partnership Leads Michael Johnson and Matthew Cade hope to reach as many people as they can and grow the magnificent things that previous State Lead Michael Burda set forth before them.

Burda understood the importance of getting people out on the

water or sitting down at a fly-tying vice and did so with a tremendous community outreach with Veterans on the Fly. Leaving big waders to fill, Mike Johnson and Matt Cade now hope to continue to grow what Mike Burda built and spread the information of statewide chapter events through a centralized social media presence.

This new centralized location will provide an outlet for other chapters to reach as many veterans and first responders across Wisconsin and share upcoming event information and photographs of past events.

The new Instagram account can be found at [witu_servicepartnership](https://www.instagram.com/witu_servicepartnership). Please feel free to provide any photographs or news that you would like shared by sending a Direct Message to this account.

Any chapter in Wisconsin looking to share information across these platforms should reach out to Mike Johnson at 262-327-0849 or Matt Cade at 414-982-9784. Other chapters looking for information to build an outlet for veterans and first responders, please reach out to us.

TIC update

Many of our chapters cancelled their Trout In the Classroom (TIC) programs last year due to the coronavirus. Hopefully this school year we can start getting back to normal and increase participation. Last year the DNR could not provide eggs to schools due to the coronavirus, but plans on doing so this year. As before, it will provide free eggs to be picked up at the hatcheries. This includes the St. Croix Falls hatchery for brook trout and brown trout or Madison's Nevin Fish Hatchery for rainbows. The DNR can also ship them for a \$40 fee, which covers the cost of the box, cooler and shipping. The state council has agreed to pay for these fees.

Eggs should be available around the second week of November from the St. Croix Falls hatchery.

After obtaining permission from your local DNR fisheries biologist, established TIC programs can fill out Form 3600-130, which again can be obtained by your chapter president, to register for this school year. New programs will have to fill out the on-line DATCP fish farm registration.

If you have any questions about TIC, please contact State Council TIC Coordinator Greg Olson at driftless23@gmail.com.

2021 WITU youth camp cancelled

I had to do the hardest thing in my life this year for the youth camp. The Friday before the 2021 youth camp was scheduled to start, Pine Lake Bible Camp staff informed me that the camp was unavailable for that weekend.

I immediately started working with the camp to find a replacement venue. We called every camp within a 20-mile radius of Wautoma. After all the calling we found a camp that had an opening for that weekend, but they were unable to recruit the required staff. So I had to decide on a different option. With the camp only days away, with a heavy heart we decided to cancel it.

I immediately contacted TU National Headwaters Youth Program Director Franklin Tate, and let him know our predicament. He assured me that all the youth scheduled for the camp would receive their one-year youth membership, courtesy of Trout Unlimited, as if they had attended.

As this goes to print, we are in the process of picking up all items that were promised to the camp for swag and drawings to put together a swag package for all the youth attendees that were signed up. I will be shipping these out shortly, thanks to the State Council approving the costs of the shipping costs.

I have contacted about half the chapters that were sending youth and they have graciously agreed to send their youth to next year's camp. I will be contacting the rest of the chapter presidents to see if they will send their youth next year also.

I cannot thank everyone enough for their efforts to get this camp put together after the disappointment of 2020. A big thank you goes out to every Trout Unlimited member and chapter for their donations and generosity to make this year's camp almost possible. Whatever doesn't go into the swag packages will be carried over for the camp next year.

I have locked in our dates for 2022 and 2023. The camp next year will be August 18-21. Please watch for more information in future articles and postings.

Linn Beck

NLC report

By State Council National Leadership Council Representative Linn Beck

TU's National Leadership Council held its quarterly meeting via Zoom in late August. The meeting was attended by 25 of the 35 NLC representatives, along with several chapter chairs.

TU President/CEO Chris Wood was first up on the agenda, and he started off by reporting that membership is up 25 percent this year. He then updated and talked some on the Priority Watershed Initiative. One aspect of the new direction is to identify "Priority Waters" for restoration, with an emphasis on wild and native trout populations. The plan is to identify these waters by January 2022.

TU encourages chapters to work with their state councils for input into the process. Portland and New Hampshire are the test markets for this, with the other markets hoping to start up this fall. The last thing he touched base on was that there is a possibility of switching from direct mailings to membership engagement. They are tracking the numbers of donations and will make a total decision later after the data is in.

Steve Kendall, Steve Moyer and Helen Neville were up next with a 30 x 30 update. The 30 x 30 is being referred to as "America the Beautiful," and the plan is to protect/restore 30 percent of the land and water by 2030. You can track this by going to natureamerica.com.

After the updates, the NLC business portion was conducted. Elections were the first order of business, and it was reported that there were no Grassroots Board of Trustee positions opening, so there were no new nominations for the board. Mark Dillow took over the next portion of elections, which was for the renomination of current NLC chair Jim Walker and NLC secretary Rich Thomas. Both were renominated.

Jim Walker then talked about succession planning. He stated the importance of this plan on all levels of participation, from council chairs to NLC representatives on the state level and finally the NLC workgroups.

We closed with upcoming issues and events.

Beverly Smith talked about continuing efforts to deal with the coronavirus. It was encouraged that events be held with protocols in place and when possible to do them virtually. Trout Week is September 25 through October 2. Please go to tu.org/trout week to register for the events. The Trout Unlimited annual membership meeting is September 30.



VETERANS CAMPOUT INCLUDES FAMILIES

Veterans on the Fly hosted a campout June 15 that brought together TU members from all across Wisconsin. As seen in the picture, family is always welcome to our events.

Join the TUDARE fall bus tour

Annual trout stream tour October 12

On October 12 TU's Driftless Area Restoration Effort and Southern Wisconsin Trout Unlimited are hosting the Annual Fall Tour of restored trout streams in Dane and Green County. The tour will start at 9:30 a.m. from the parking lot of the Hyatt Place Madison/Verona (846 Liberty Drive, Verona, WI) and return to the parking lot around 3:30 p.m. Four stops are planned for the tour. Badger Mill Creek will be the first stop and is an urban trout stream project in Verona. Park Property Planner Sara Rigelman with Dane County Parks will lead discussion of this site and the second stop on the Sugar River. The Sugar River site includes a wetland restoration. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Private Lands Biologist Mike Engel will talk about the wetland.

Guests will be treated to a pizza lunch from the Sugar River Pizza Company at New Glarus Woods State Park before heading west to Hefty Creek, where DNR Fisheries Biologist Dan Oele has an active restoration project going on. The tour will conclude on the Kittleson Creek Project, where root wads are the main instream habitat practice.

We have a limited number of spaces on the chartered bus, so advanced registration is advised. The cost for transportation and lunch is \$10 and can be paid in advance by check or paid the day of the event. Checks can be made out to Trout Unlimited and sent to Jeff Hastings, E7740 Hastings Lane, Westby, WI 54667. You can also contact Jeff for questions at Jeff.Hastings@tu.org or 608-606-4158.

West Fork Sports Club work days October 16-17

Please consider helping out at the West Fork Sports Club Work Day weekend Oct 16-17. Seven trees need to come down and sawyers are needed. Please contact jason.freund4@gmail.com.

We could use other support workers as well. We'll be planting trees and grass, removing flood debris, splitting wood, moving picnic tables and more.

Please come help make the place you fish and stay sustainable, comfortable and flourishing.

Worker camping is free and meals will be provided. Sign up here so we can plan food and drink <https://forms.gle/KBtAi4YVUqZ1dfPW8>. If you cannot be there, feel free to donate funds so we can hire out future work as needed. For more information go to westforksportsclub@gmail.com.

Help bring fishing to foster care youth

By Kurt Meyer

The Mayfly Project pairs experienced fly-fishing anglers with youth in the foster care system. Its goal is to make connections with their environment, teach conservation, develop a relationship with the outdoors and have fun doing it.

I am looking for mentors who will be committed to the program, which runs five sessions. I am looking for people who enjoy teaching and working with youth. Experience in casting and fly-fishing instruction would be great, as well. We hope to get a program running by 2022 or 2023. There will be a time commitment. If interested, please contact me at therealkurtmeyer@gmail.com.

If you would like to learn more, please visit the website themayflyproject.com

Kurt Meyer teaches middle school math and science for the Fennimore School District and is an active member of the Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter, particularly with youth-related events and activities.

Letter to the Editor

Thank you for publishing articles on trout research and studies by trout fisheries experts. Of particular interest to me is the ongoing statewide Beaver-Trout Research Study being done by DNR Research Scientist Matthew Mitro. Matt had an article in *Wisconsin Trout* last year giving an overview of this study. Of interest to me, the study methods include allowing new beaver dams to be established on Class I trout streams and documenting the impacts to the stream habitat and trout populations. In the recent Summer 2021 issue of *Wisconsin Trout* Mitro and co-author Jessica Jaworski contributed information collected by use of a drone to document a new beaver dam (dam complex) on Class I Elk Creek in Richland County. The aerial photo gives a very good look at changes beaver dams make to the stream channel. I look forward to future articles in *Wisconsin Trout* about changes to the trout populations and trout habitat of these study streams. I recommend that we trout enthusiasts follow this study with great interest in the results.

—Lee Meyers

Watershed Access Fund: Obtaining public access

The Watershed Access Fund continues to help acquire public fishing areas around the state. As a donor to the Watershed Access Fund you will have your name added to the list and will see it appear in Wisconsin Trout for a year following your generous donation.

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BOOK REVIEWS, BY DUKE WELTER

“Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and a River,” by John N. Maclean,

First the father, Norman Maclean, in 1976 wrote an elegiac novella about his family set on the Big Blackfoot River, “A River Runs Through It.” Many of us who read it savored his writing about place and the craft of fly-fishing, even though they were less important to the story than the challenges faced by his family, especially son Paul. Now his surviving son John has provided a more prosaic but interesting book elaborating some of the themes and places, “Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and a River.”

Comparisons are inevitable here. Norman found his place and career as an English literature professor at the University of Chicago, teaching American and English authors of note. His novella written in retirement was his only book-length piece of published fiction, but it brought a tidal wave of interest in fly-fishing in the ‘90s when Robert Redford produced “The Movie,” led by Brad Pitt playing the ill-fated Paul. Norman wrote a few short stories and a straight-up recounting of the tragic Mann Gulch Fire in 1949, in which more than a dozen smoke-jumpers were killed.

John spent 30 years as a Chicago Tribune reporter, a notable career, and has written five books about wildland fire that are of significant interest to firefighters and policy makers alike in these days. His writing doesn’t soar like his father’s, but he is a first-rate story teller. The stories of his family and “their” river bring places to life, remember the history of those places, and fill in some of the gaps of his father’s novella. If you are curious about learning the background of the earlier book, if you, like me, are a lover of Montana’s rivers and the creatures in them, you will find this an informative and entertaining read.

“Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and a River,” by John N. Maclean, Custom House, New York, 262 pages, \$25.99

Hook, Line & Supper, By Hank Shaw

Hank Shaw developed the Hunter, Angler, Gardener, Cook blog (honest-food.com) and has traveled the world seeking recipes to adapt to American cooking. I’ve enjoyed cooking from his “Buck Buck Moose” cookbook, testing his recipes against my own for venison and other big game. Now comes “Hook, Line & Supper,” a wide-ranging book with some unique organizational twists that will help you become more versatile as a cooker of fish.

What twists? Well, he first organizes fish types by their fattiness and flavor and then suggests best cooking techniques and flavor possibilities for types. You might find a recipe for panfish that will also work well for some smaller saltwater species. And you’ll be warned off from using a dryer-fleshed fish like swordfish for a recipe better suited to halibut or walleye.

A second organizational approach is to examine cooking methods, some of them arcane these days like butter poaching, and advise which fish types work best with them. Once I lay my hands on the right fish, I look forward to making Chinese Sweet and Sour fish. His description: “It’s good. Really good. Shut-up-I’m-eating good.”

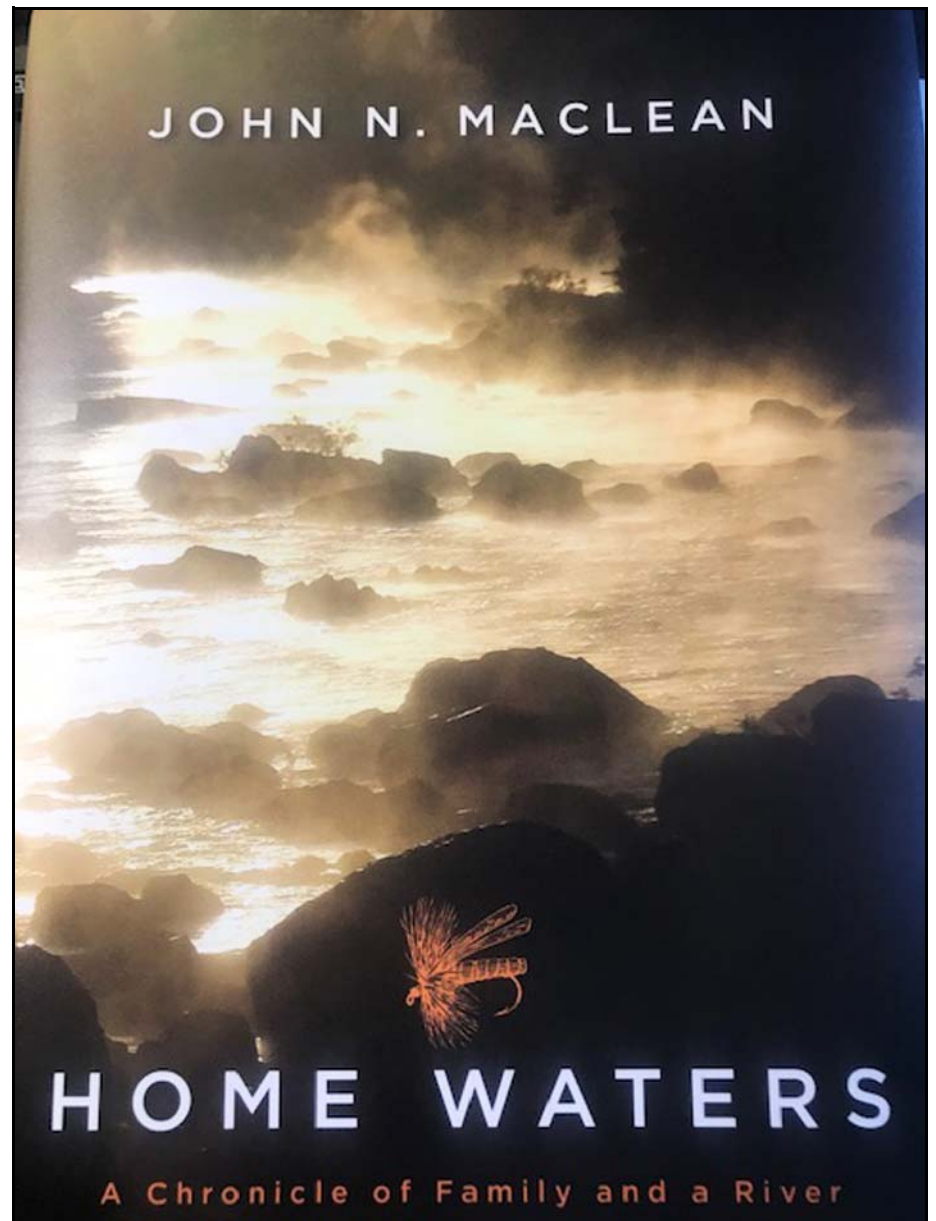
Photos by Shaw’s life partner Holly Heyser, well illustrate some tricky cleaning and filleting techniques.

Shaw is an entertaining writer of wide experience. I attribute the former to his being a UW graduate, of course. His experience equips him to recommend a wide range of approaches, so he can name a saltwater, coastal or inland fish for most recipes. In his big-game cookbook, this facility helped me in my long-time quest for a good venison shank recipe. After many experiments with middling success, he offered a Portuguese shank recipe that’s become my go-to.

Many cooking publications these days seem determined to find ingredients that just aren’t to be found in our supply sites. One of my current pet peeves about recipes in magazines and books is a tendency to find ingredients that are just impossible to find here in southwest Wisconsin, whether fresh, or spice mixes, or odd flavorings generally sold only in Nepal or somewhere else I’ll never visit. For the most part, Shaw doesn’t go for that; he cooks like a person who doesn’t have a specialty grocer like Dean & Deluca on the corner. (It may be the same impulse that leads fly-tying mags to tout the latest foolproof fly which can only be made with an ingredient one can only purchase from the author’s fly shop.)

In contrast to Bon Appetit magazine, for instance, Shaw is pretty good about using ingredients that can be found more widely, at least in your nearby ethnic food or spice shop. Almost everything used in this book to accompany a fish meal, I can find at the Viroqua Food Coop. Maybe not the fish or shellfish itself, but we have enough from our lakes, streams and rivers to cover most fresh-water bases. I might have to wait for conch fritters or a lobster roll until we visit a coast. Most likely I will never find local octopus that’s fresh enough, which I will not mourn. The only one I’d miss would be fresh Mediterranean sardines.

If Hook, Line and Supper doesn’t give you a double handful of fish recipes to try out, it will give you an interesting tour through the world of fish cookery. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I’m off to collect a few things from the freezer for one of those recipes.



Hook, Line and Supper, Hank Shaw, H&H Books, Orangevale CA, 2021, 336 pages, \$32.95

Return to Troubled Waters, By Scott Seymour

Don’t be put off by the title of this book. Rather than a front-page-to-back-page warning of the dangers of the Back 40 Mine on the Michigan side of the Menominee River, it is a pleasant collection of fishing stories from an angler of wide experience who grew up fishing the Menominee and moved on to many other rivers. Scott Seymour has spent several decades sampling our region’s waters from his Madison area home, with trips to farther-flung waters thrown in. He writes engagingly and tells a story well, relating catching the Black Earth Creek Trifecta and the nuances of playing livestock after hooking them. Each chapter offers some hint about a way to improve the reader’s fishing experience. And, as a career lawyer, in the final chapter he assembles and argues the case why the Back 40 mine severely threatens this important border river.

Return to Troubled Waters: A Fly Fisherman’s Journey Back to the Troubled River of His Youth, By Scott Seymour, Little Creek Press, Mineral Point WI, 2021, 130 pages, \$15.95

Fire in the Straw: Notes on Inventing a Life, By Nick Lyons

Many of us anglers of a certain age know Nick Lyons as the long-time back-page columnist for Fly Fisherman magazine and for authoring a host of books compiling those pieces. While Lyons yearned for trout waters, he toiled for his career as a literature professor in New York, raising kids with his artist wife Mari and stealing off for a few hours on a highly-pressured stream or a summer vacation in the west. We traveled and yearned along with Nick. We mourned, but understood, when he sold his bamboo rods to pay for his sons’ college expenses. When he reported small triumphs along the way, we too appreciated them. But it was a struggle all the way.

Lyons was an important ally of TU through it all, editing a number of books of essays about trout and fly-fishing. He’s one of those easterners who was connected to many, many anglers whose names we recognize, and he published or republished many of the most important angling books of the last half of the 20th century. He’s retired from all that now. Mari passed a few years ago. His son runs the publishing business he nurtured in his spare time.

This memoir fills in a lot of the gaps that were left from his fishing stories: his Army years in 1950s France, wending his way into a life teaching college students to love literature, a young kid in a struggling family with a grandfather who let him fish to his heart’s content at an upstate lake resort. Lyons has been a rich source of thought for a lot of reading anglers, and this book provides a late-in-life offering of his insights and memories. If you want to read a fishing-filled book of his quest to become adept at angling, you should read “Spring Creek.” If you want to be touched and entertained, read “Fishing Widows.” This memoir, instead rounds out the picture of an important contributor to the stream-centric world most of us occupy.

Fire in the Straw: Note on Inventing a Life, By Nick Lyons, Arcade Publishing, New York NY, 2020, 219 pages, \$24.99

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TRIMBLE, from page 3

So rich were those pre-settlement soils, they were considered to be 'inexhaustible.'

Those settlers were from western and northern Europe, and were unfamiliar with rainfall and growing conditions in the wet and humid Midwest. Lack of crop rotations, especially perennial grassed rotations, grazing of forested hillsides, and methods of plowing, destabilized the landscape from about 1860 to 1900.

From there, through about 1940, it was a story of increasingly devastating soil erosion resulting from even minor floods. Valleys filled up with sediment, roads, bridges and railroads were constantly damaged, landowners retreated further from lowlands, agricultural land in valleys

was turned unproductive, and whole communities disappeared.

Trimble's account in his book reads:

"Thus, the combination of gradual soil deterioration, inadequate rotations, plowing up and down slope and overgrazing led to increasing runoff and soil erosion, with rills and gullies eventually scarring the landscape. As soils became progressively thinner and less well structured, even more water and soil went down the rills and gullies with every rain. Valleys were covered with sediment, while small tributaries, flushed with the additional storm flow coming off cultivated and heavily grazed hillsides, began to erode their channels, sending even more sediment downstream.

"What drove the soil erosion, of course, was the hydrologic changes.

Water that earlier had infiltrated, recharging soil and groundwater, now cascaded off slopes, causing erosion of the slopes and flooding in the streams, a runoff condition termed by hydrologists as 'flashy.' But, between storms, there was consequently less groundwater available to keep streams flowing (baseflow) so springs and small streams began to dry up. Although this was problematic for people, it also affected wildlife. For example, the original brook trout were largely extirpated by muddy floods followed by low flows."

Transformation

He said that by the early 1900s, American agricultural experts had come to realize that techniques being employed by farmers were not adequate to cope with wind and wa-

ter erosion. States, followed by the federal government, started erosion control experiment stations to devise methods to mitigate soil erosion. One of these was the Upper Mississippi River Valley Soil Conservation Experiment Station established in 1931 near LaCrosse.

From that station's efforts, it was found that:

- A one-year rotation of grass was inadequate to allow soil to regain its structure, infiltration capacity, and resistance to erosion. Rather it required a three-to-four year rotation of grass.

- Just planting on the contour was not enough. What was found necessary was to plant in contour strips of alternating land use such as corn, small grains and grass.

See **TRIMBLE**, page 26

REMINISCING**More than just caps**

Fishing hats have a curious history, and they have stories to tell about those who don them.

By "Angler Erik" Helm

The end of trout season found me putting away gear, and so, to the dreaded overstuffed closet I went. I was clearing space on the top shelf consisting of hats of all varieties when it occurred to me that I have a rather large and cumbersome collection of fishing hats in various styles and states of decrepitude. As I sorted through them, each brought back memories. An old Hardy ball cap that I had worn for years while chasing steelhead in the west almost got discarded after I tossed it in the washer and dryer and it turned into a frayed rag, but yet it still sat there with its sweat stains and little holes marking where I had stuck flies as I changed them.

Dad's old Irish hats were stacked in the corner. They get rotated and used each winter season because they hold different kinds of memories, and they keep my ears warm, and the snow off my neck. There was an old waxed cotton cowboy hat that sort of melted and deformed and thus fell out of circulation. Tweed caps filled a box. I wear one of them every year on the Brule River, and their inner brims are still filled with flies. In the back, buried under yet more hats was an old cap from the first fly shop I worked at many years ago. I took it out and hung it next to my tying area for inspiration.

Sometimes rooting around through old things spurs thought, and I began to ponder the fishing hat as an object symbolic of more: of time, of history, of expression. I may have traveled to the rivers and came home with images of water and fish burned into my cortex, but the hats retained even some of the dirt, the very substrate under the rivers. They weren't just hats, they were pieces of my angling history.

Sidetracked from my gear organization task, I paged through old copies of fly-fishing magazines and books looking for hats. I discovered a treasury of ads and photos that had one thing in common: a lack of commonality. Every hat that could be imagined was donned by the anglers in these images: terry cloth, tweed, straw, the ballcap, the bucket hat, the English driving cap, Irish walking hats, cowboy hats, trucker caps, packet hats, trilbys, even Bavarian alpine hats. They were stylish and yet whimsical.

Then I looked in a new magazine, and every picture had the same flat-brim ballcap. The variety had disappeared. I had a long discussion with other anglers older than I regarding fishing back in the day and the hats they wore and an idea emerged...

Back in England and in America until the turn of the twentieth century, there was a required "look" to going fishing, including proper attire, and topped by the finest in fashion chapeau. Some time between the 1920s and 1980s a change took place. Anglers no longer wanted to wear a "uniform." They did that five days a week on their job. Fishing became a time for getting away from

the factory and office, and an increase of working class anglers and hunters filled the outdoors on weekends. They finally had some leisure time. Entire trains were nicknamed "The fisherman express," and they rolled out of the cities on Friday evenings bound for the woods and streams. Those who left the cities behind also left the dress code behind. They escaped. Wearing a tie and coat with a derby was no longer socially necessary on the stream. People began to express themselves.

There was no look in common to them other than a "going fishing" look, and every one of the anglers had their favorite fishing hat, unless their wife had finally made good on her promise to destroy it. It was one thing they did have in common: the universal detestation of their chosen hat by their wives. That, and a sort of lack of affectation to "coolness" inherent in the varied old hats. The hat itself was a symbol of turning their backs,

and showed up with a newer cap, and not had a single fish rise to his fly. When he returned the next year, the old cap returned with him, cocked at a jaunty angle, and he out-fished everyone. Since then, he kept it in his safety deposit box at his bank. All his luck was contained in those old oil and sweat stains.

Whitey donned a tan bucket hat with blue and red banding. Stuck to the band were small spinning lures, half a dozen flies and a blue jay feather he had found.

For 10 years Lou had always stuck any fly he clipped off his leader into the hat, and never removed it. Somewhere under those hundreds of matted and tangled flies was an actual hat, but no one in the group had ever seen it. It looked like some sort of abstract sculpture. One time while fishing with the group, Lou had been attacked by a dive-bombing red-winged black bird defending his territory. The bird had become entangled in the flies, and Stumpy and Joe had to use pliers to free it. They were laughing so hard that Lou got sore at them and later after dinner, poured clam juice into their waders. Joe and Stumpy fished the next day surrounded by a hellish stink, and a cloud of flies they couldn't shake. They finally dived into the river to escape the hungry hoard.

Frosty had the most dilapidated hat of the group. It started out as a fine Stetson, but his wife had washed it, and it lost its form and much of its color. It looked perpetually droopy and soggy, and the crown had bumps and warts sticking out all over. He had set fire to the front brim one evening lighting a cigar to keep the mosquitoes away, and the hat had smoldered for 20 minutes, creating a large brown- and black-rimmed hole. A hillbilly would have scorned Frosty's hat, it was just that bad... or good... depending on who was talking.

Fred was the only angler in the party who had a new hat. He had bought an Irish walking hat in green Harris Tweed because he said he always wanted one. The actual reason, which came out around the fire after a few glasses of brandy, was that his wife had actually burned his old fishing hat in a garbage can in the back yard. The divorce followed shortly after.

These stories made me reflect that these old hats were more than just hats now. Maybe they had become a mold of the head and personality of the wearers: a now seemingly empty vessel full of thoughts, memories, destinations and companions. Donning them again was like putting on a magic mask that both transformed and empowered the wearer. Luck flowed in the fibers, the cloth and the sweat, and you can almost hear the ruffles in the stream, even if they now smell a bit fishy. One more reason to keep and wear that old fishing hat. A new one would have no stories to tell.



and breathing free... of escaping the cities... of non-conformism while not trying to look like a non-conformist... a whimsical hat...

My friend Stumpy showed up in the fishing camp that year with his old gray felt fedora, the top sporting a large hole. As he told it, the hat blew off his head 10 years back or so when he was playing a large trout. It had floated downstream and an otter swam out from some rocks on the bank and grabbed it, towing it ashore. Stumpy gave chase after landing his fish, and the hat lay in the grass on the bank soaking wet. The otter was nowhere to be seen. He was reaching down to pick it up, when the otter reappeared by chewing a hole in the very top of the hat and popping out, looking at Stumpy and squeaking. The rest of the gang speculated behind Stumpy's back that he was a better angler for it anyway, because his brain now got exposed to more fresh air.

Joe had an old ballcap with the logo of some farm machinery company. It was so stained with oil and grease that the name of the company was now unreadable. He had misplaced it one year

FLY TYING TIPS

Try these tips to keep your dry fly floating. Waterproofers, floatants and desiccants.

By Bob Haase

If we tie our own flies, there are things we can do to keep our dry flies floating. As a fly fisherman, there are also additional things we can do to help keep the flies that we purchase floating better.

Let's start out by talking about the things we can do as fly tiers, to help our flies float better. A lot of this has to do with the kinds and amounts of material used to tie the fly. Some materials absorb or repel water better than others. This is important, because any fly that easily absorbs water will usually not float very long.



As an example, the body hair of a rabbit easily absorbs water and this works well for tying a nymph like the hare's ear nymph. The hair on the feet of a snowshoe rabbit is somewhat water repellent, which makes it a good choice for flies like the Fran Betters fly called the usual.

CDC feathers from the butt end of a duck have preen oil in them, and the feathers have little barbules that trap air pockets which help them float. CDC works great until they eventually absorb water or get fish slime on them, and then they begin to sink. In order to dye CDC feathers, you have to remove the preen oil from them, and then add preen oil back after the dying process. Natural colored CDC seems to float slightly better than dyed CDC for this reason. You can purchase preen oil, and I have considered applying preen oil to other materials to see how it might help them float. A lot more research should be done on modifying tying materials to help them float better. You might think that adding preen oil to hackle might be a good idea, but this softens and reduces the stiffness of the barbules of the feather.

Be sure to select dry fly hackle that has stiff barbules to help support the fly on the surface film of the water and make them float better.

Deer and elk hair are not hollow, but they have a cellular structure that traps air and helps them float. Not all hair on the body of deer or elk has this cellular structure that traps air, so knowing what hair to select is important when selecting what hair to use for dry flies like the elk hair caddis. Knowing the characteristics of the materials used for tying a fly is important if you want the fly to float, or readily sink for

nymphs.

The methods used for tying a fly can also affect how well a fly floats, as well as the appearance on the surface of the water. Using more materials such as more elk hair, or more hackle can help a fly float better. This works good for fishing dries through rapids or disturbed water. Sometimes too much material and cause a fish to refuse a fly in still waters such as pools, where the fish have more time to evaluate their potential meal.

By being able to tie my own flies, I can tie what I call my "fast water dries." These flies have a lot more hackle on them than the conventional dry fly. I even eliminate forming a head and just leave enough room to tie the finishing knot. By selecting saddle hackle with a small diameter stem, it allows me to make more wraps of hackle in the same amount of space. Then I weave the hackle back and forth over and through the hackle as I am rotating my fly to make it even denser.

Fran Betters often used two different sized hackles when hackling his dry flies. He first wrapped a hackle with shorter barbules such as for a size 16, and then wrapped a second feather with a longer size such as a size 14. The idea behind this was that as the tips of the barbules absorb water and penetrate the surface film, the barbules of the smaller feather will help support the fly on the water. The tips of the hackle support the fly on the water, until they absorb water, and/or capillary action draws the fly down into the water. For this reason, we sometimes trim the hackle off the bottom of the fly which prevents this capillary action on the barbules of the feather. It also allows the fly to ride lower, which sometimes make it ap-



pear more natural.

Material selection allows us to change and improve the way a fly floats. Another example is the way I now tie my elk hair caddis. Rather than hackle the fly, I use a dubbing that I make from polypropylene-based carpeting fibers. Polypropylene floats, is very coarse, and traps air bubbles. I just dub the body, add the elk hair, and the fly is done. I then treat the fly with Water Shed

to keep it from absorbing water.

Another thing we can do when we finish tying our dry flies is to treat them with a water-proofer such as Water Shed. This helps to keep the materials from absorbing water. It also allows us to use some materials that typically would not be used for tying dry flies because they absorb water too quickly.

Water proofers, floatants and desiccants

The following information on water proofers, floatants and desiccants is taken with permission from an article written by Henry Kanemoto for the North American Fly Fishing Forum.

This might get a little technical in the beginning, but I think it is important to help understand the differences between water proofers, floatants, desiccants and why we might use one floatant over another.

In order to understand water proofers, floatants and desiccants, and how they work, it might be helpful to understand the chemical nature of water. Water has an oxygen atom at one end and two hydrogen atoms at the other. The oxygen end has slight negative charge and the hydrogen end a slight positive charge. Think of it as a small magnet. Because water is polar, water molecules are attracted to each other and are held together by the weak charges called hydrogen bonds. The attraction of water molecules to each other causes surface tension, which allows our flies, which may be heavier than water, to float.

Some compounds can attract and absorb water, and they are called hydrophilic. Other compounds repel water, and they are called hydrophobic. Both hydrophilic and hydrophobic compounds play a role in helping our flies float.

Because hydrophilic compounds attract water, they can help in absorbing moisture from a wet fly, helping it dry. The desiccants that we use to dry our flies are hydrophilic compounds made of a crystalline form of silica gel. Hydrophobic water-repelling compounds can be used as floatants, and they are more effective if the fly is dry when applied.

Some fly-tying materials absorb water more than others. One solution is to apply a permanent water-proofer after your fly has been tied. Permanent water-proofers come in liquid form such as "Watershed" or powder form such as "Gateway Feathers" for water-proofing the fletching on arrows and flies.

There are a lot of different kinds of products that claim to be permanent, but their efficiency fades after so many uses, and some are more water repellent than water-proofers. Products like Scotchguard, Rainex, CampDry and many other silicone-based products like this also work to help keep the materials from absorbing water.

Water-proofers are not floatants, but they do help the fly float better because they repel water. Most of these products need to cure for 24 hours before use, so the water proofer should be applied at home before use.

Floatants are usually applied on the stream, and work by providing a physical barrier to prevent water from being absorbed by the material. Floatants can also incorporate silicone compounds such as siloxane, which are hydrophobic, and chemically repel water.

Floatants come in gel, stick and liquid forms. Some floatants are

thick and can cause clumping of the feathers and present an unnatural presentation. Many of the floatants do not work well when used on CDC. Preen oil and some special floatants are made specifically for use on CDC. There are a lot of different brands and formulas of floatants available, and new ones are being developed all the time. Find what seems to work best for you.



Don't confuse silicone floatants with desiccants, which are strongly hygroscopic and attract and absorb water. Floatants repel water and desiccants absorb water. Almost all desiccants are a crystalline form of silica gel. If your fly is wet, a desiccant should be used to dry the fly before re-applying a floatant.

There are differences in floatants. Gel-based floatants like Aquel and Gink work by filling in the spaces so that water cannot penetrate. Liquids or sprays like Loon Hydrostop use an active hydrophobic chemical to help repel water. Waterproofing silicone sprays work similarly, but should be applied ahead of time and allowed dry. Hydrophobic powders like Frogs Fanny or feather powder used in archery, uses microscopic amorphous crystals of silicon dioxide and are very effective.

Fishing techniques to make your fly float better

Make sure that you are using a floating fly line and that you dress the line to help it shoot through the guides better and help it to float better. An un-dressed line that is dirty can sink and drag the leader and fly down with it.

Dress your leader with a silicone based floatant to help the leader float better and not drag down your fly.

Make shorter casts to create less drag, especially in faster, moving water. Lift the tip of your rod up to also create less drag. Increased drag will pull your fly under regardless of how much floatant you have on it.

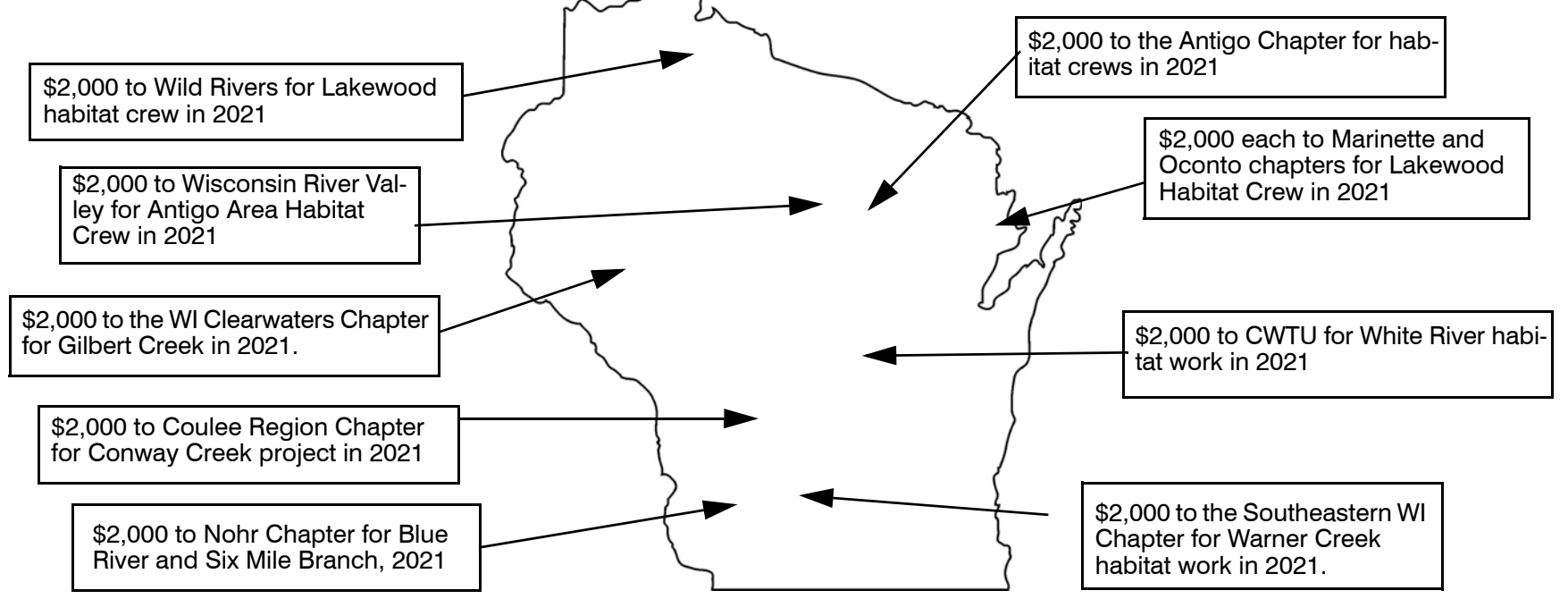
Take the time on the stream to dry your fly with a desiccant before re-applying a floatant to make your floatant work more effectively. Also make sure you are using the appropriate floatant for the fly you are fishing and the materials used.

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RECOLLECTIONS

Above the tree line

Author Rick Larkin recalls more tales from his adventures in Montana in the 1970s.

By Rick Larkin

The months after our last Montana trip went quickly. The personnel at the fishcamp apartment changed, leaving me, Howard, and a new non-fishing roommate. The Pegasus inflatable boat was now living in the storage locker in the basement of the apartment, along with much of our backpacking and fishing gear. We had to make room for the new roommate's two sets of golf clubs, stereo, record collection and various car parts. He had no interest in fishing. This was not anticipated but Howard and I were on the lease, and we needed his three hundred bucks a month.

Our jobs and other distractions had limited our local fishing significantly and most of our summer had been interrupted by weekend weddings and bachelor parties. Dave was now deep into grad school and had a summer internship. He couldn't go to Montana that year. Nobody else could, either.

Alarmingly, the late 1970's had mysteriously turned into July 1979. I was 25 and adulthood was starting to close in. Despite all this, Howard and I still planned to go to Montana and hike up to Fossil Lake for golden trout and grayling. We were the last men standing of the original Corps D'Trout. We needed to get back to what we now considered "our" Montana mountains.

Despite the Corps being reduced to just Howard and myself, we continued to get ready for another expedition with equal fervor. This time, it would be strictly backpacking with no need for an extensive pile of gear and a pack mule.

My little pickup truck now sported a fiberglass cap, so our trip could include a stop to sleep along the way and see some sights. We left on an

early Saturday morning in late July. Our first destination was Wall Drug. On our previous combined trips, we figured we saw about two thousand Wall Drug signs along the highway during the course of our previous trips. We had to see it.

It took only 12 hours to get to Wall Drug. Howard wanted a five-cent coffee. I settled for the free ice water. It took us about 20 minutes to see all we needed to see at Wall Drug. I grabbed a bag of free popcorn and we headed for Mount Rushmore and took a short tour, ending our day camping at Custer State Park in the Black Hills. The next day we highballed it to Montana, stopping only to take a quick look at the Custer battlefield. We bought "Custer Had It Coming" T-shirts at the Crow Agency.

On the evening of the following day we pulled into Al's place and caught up. I had called him earlier that month and he said he was full but would let us park at the lodge and sleep in the truck, probably figuring he would make enough money selling us fried egg breakfasts, hamburgers and beer. It was an astute business move. He said he had not heard anything about Fossil Lake and as far as he knew, nobody had been up there. We knew this would be a more challenging hike in and had planned for two days going up and one day coming back. Al thought that would be a good idea.

We also talked about gear and had researched enough about the higher elevations of the Beartooths to know that snow and foul weather was a real possibility, even in late July. A true friend, Al checked our gear and was happy to see cold-weather sleeping bags, down vests, long underwear, stocking hats and gloves. We were from Wisconsin, after all. Still, Al seemed relieved and



VIEW FROM OUR FOSSIL LAKE CAMP ABOVE THE TREE LINE

told us he wouldn't have to tie our frozen carcasses to the mule and haul us down the mountain. That is, unless the grizzly bears didn't get us first.

My library research listed the elevation of Fossil Lake to be 9,890 feet above sea level. The USGS information and a Montana mountain guide book indicated that snow was a possibility with temperatures potentially falling below 30 degrees at night, even in July. Fossil Lake lay directly north of Bald Knob (10,139 feet) and west of Mount Rosebud (11,168 feet). Tree line in this part of the Beartooths ranged from 6,500 to 8,800 feet, averaging 8,000 feet. At 9,890 feet, we would be way up there.

Fewer grizzlies above the tree line?

The only good news we found out was that grizzly bears are typically not found above the tree line. This was a small amount of relief, given what Al told us next.

Our talk with Al continued and covered the particulars of the two-day route up to Fossil Lake. We would start at the Coulter Pass Trailhead, pass Kersey Lake and proceed toward Fox Lake. We knew this part of the route very well from previous trips. Beyond Fox Lake it was new territory for us and marked by steeper inclines along with areas of mature forest and bush. This area was known for heavy bear activity, owing to the good cover and a large number of berry patches. And tasty hikers, I thought.

Al said to camp as close to the trail as possible and not to cook any food, just to be safe. I reminded him I now had a pistol. "Good," he said. "Just remember to save one for yourself, General Custer."

The trail would then parallel Russell Creek at 8,372 feet. It was a small tributary not unlike the one housing the box canyon that nearly drowned us two trips ago. At this point, the trail was steep, switchbacked, and difficult with a lot of loose rock. Here, we would ascend above the tree line, minimizing any bear problems.

Once past Russell Lake, we would enter a treeless alpine landscape with loose scree fields, scrubby pine trees and some remnant snowbanks. Then, Al said, the tough climbing would start. He said it was where you would realize you were a flatlander and stated that the eleva-

tion, now around 9,000 feet, makes mice out of men. He wasn't kidding.

The next morning the start of the trail which we had taken twice before to Fox Lake went smoothly. We had finally figured out how to pack efficiently and we cruised through the woods at a good pace. Once past the trail to Fox Lake, the terrain changed into the dark heavier woods with openings full of berry patches and thick willows. It looked like a bear could pop out at any second. We moved along nervously, making as much noise as possible.

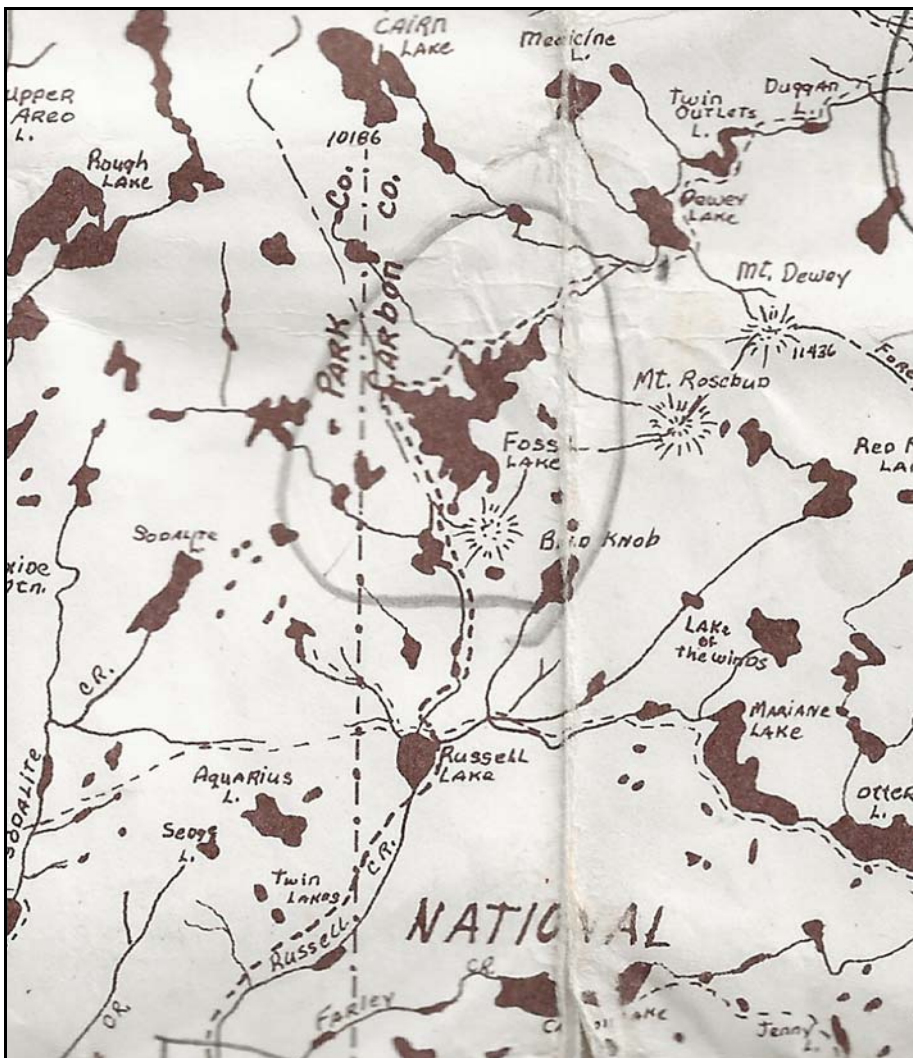
Al proved dead right about the elevation and my breathing became increasingly labored. I slowed down to a crawl. Howard's fitness was much better and soon he was getting way ahead of me.

Remember gorp?

By the time I made it to the camping area below Russell Lake, Howard had the tent up and had started a small fire. I sat and wheezed for quite a while, drinking hot tea, until I could eat some gorp, kind of an all-purpose backpacker food. It would suffice for dinner and supposedly stood for "good ol' raisins and peanuts." This acronym did not account for what I thought were prune bits, unidentified seeds and the mystery chunks that could only be dog kibble. After eating it for the first time, I thought not even a bear would want this stuff. Howard said he had two pounds of it. "Rather have fried fish, Ricky? Then we could meet some more bears!" Howard teased sarcastically.

I grumbled a little and crawled into my sleeping bag. I felt like I needed an iron lung. We passed a nervous night, listening for bears and thinking this whole Fossil Lake business might not be such a good idea.

Unlike camping in a deep mountain valley, the sunrise hits above treeline at about 5 a.m. Given how slow I was now moving at this higher elevation, this was a good thing. We stirred, made instant coffee, ate more gorp, and moved out. Soon, the elevation kicked in even harder. We were now approaching 9,000 feet above sea level and I now moved along like an asthmatic snail. Howard scampered away like a marmot. He must have lungs like a Sherpa, I thought. Soon he was out of sight, while I kept slowly trudging up an increasingly steep trail.



WE HAD OUR TRUSTY BEARTOOTH COUNTRY MAP

While the distance from Russell Lake to Fossil Lake looks fairly short and straight on our Beartooth Country Map, it took what seemed like forever. It proved to be riddled with switchbacks.

While the distance from Russell Lake to Fossil Lake looks fairly short and straight on our Beartooth Country Map, it took what seemed like forever. It proved to be riddled with switchbacks. As I slowly hiked toward Fossil Lake, my only encouragement was occasionally catching sight of Howard, way up ahead. I continued slowly, wheezing along like an old steam engine, cursing my lack of fitness and wishing for an oxygen bottle. When I got to where I thought we would see Fossil Lake over the next crest, Howard dropped out of sight. I was now dizzy and sick.

Shortly after I lost sight of him, I took a short break about a hundred yards short of where I thought I would finally see Fossil Lake. I sat down on a large flat rock, dropped my pack and tried to breathe awhile before my final assault on what I desperately hoped would be the last stretch. I sat there and surveyed this high treeless country.

Breathtaking scenery

Despite my heaving chest and pounding head, it was perhaps the most stunning scenery I have ever experienced. There were snow-capped mountains surrounding me and the sun shown brightly on them, making them look diamond-encrusted. I could see shimmering mountain lakes, snow fields and rushing streams tumbling down the mountains. Some were interrupted by waterfalls, making them even more dramatic. This stunning mountain scenery seemed to stretch to the horizon. It was, I realized, worth the effort.

Suddenly, Howard popped into view. What I saw will stay with me forever. He was running full tilt down the mountain trail. He had dropped his pack. This was trouble. While a grizzly bear at over 9,000 feet was supposedly unlikely, nothing in this country seemed impossible. I thought Howard had stumbled on a bear who was unfazed by a little altitude.

I pulled my bear revolver from the holster and aimed at the top of the rise behind the sprinting Howard, to where I thought the bear would appear. Howard waved his arms wildly and shouted "Ricky, don't shoot. There's a girl down by the lake and she's naked!" As I reflect, years later, this was the weirdest thing I ever heard Howard (or anybody else) ever say to me.

Maybe she's French

Huffing and puffing excitedly, he told me what he had seen up there. He said when he looked over the ridge which descended into the lake, he spotted what he said was a naked young female sun worshiper on a blanket in a patch of grass next to the water. He said he slid back from view, dropped his pack, and went running back to get me. True friend, I thought.

We tiptoed forward, and walked as quietly as we could, mindful of the loose scree. Amazingly, my breathing settled down. When we crested the ridge, we hid behind some rock piles and gazed upon a scene a young man can only dream of. About 50 yards away was a young woman lying on a blanket sunbathing and reading a book. Howard was a little wrong about the naked part, but only a little. The only thing she had on was sunglasses and a bathing suit which looked like it was made out of kite string and a couple of postage stamps. She was beautiful. About another 50 yards from where she lay sunning, her male companion was wading in the shallows of

Fossil Lake, intently casting at some rising trout. "Wow!" I thought. They just don't make girls like this back in Wisconsin.

Howard was reading my mind. "Maybe she's French," he whispered, and at that point we kicked loose a few rocks which began to clatter noisily down the slope. We stuck our heads up like two guilty marmots. She saw us, sat up, clutched her blanket, and screamed angrily at her male companion. "You said nobody would come up here!" She was definitely not from France.

Howard and I scuttled back down the trail like two naughty little boys. After a quick assessment of the situation, we waited a little before putting our packs back on to head back up the trail. We decided we would act like nothing happened. Howard

was a stunning place.

While taking in this unbelievable landscape, we looked around for a place to camp, finally selecting an area sheltered by some large boulders, a little ways away from the lake. There were only some scrub evergreens, so no real firewood supply was available. All we had was a small backpack stove. We cooked a quick lunch and set to work putting up the tent and setting up the camp. By late afternoon, even Howard was tired. I joked that he had worn himself out running away from an almost naked woman. The high altitude made setting up camp a long process. Late afternoon quickly became early evening and large clouds now appeared on the horizon. A strong cold wind began to blow. Exhausted, we heated up a quick freeze-dried supper and went

looked at the snow and the sky. It was still cold and very gray. It looked and felt like it could snow some more. There would be no sun to melt the snow, at least for some time. I crawled back into my sleeping bag. At least we could acclimatize to the nearly 10,000 foot altitude while laying there. Soon, we were bored. I dug in my pack. The only thing I had for reading material was a paperback copy of "Lord of the Rings." Howard, for some reason, had packed a Hot Rod magazine. We traded back and forth. Howard learned all about Hobbits. I learned all about high performance engine rebuilding. Soon it was time for a delicious gorp luncheon.

I became worried on several levels. What if I started to like gorp? If so, how much was left? When would the snow melt? Would the snow melt? How would we get the hell out of there if it didn't? If it didn't melt, when would the gorp run out? And so on.

Later that afternoon, the sun came out, accompanied by a warmer southern wind. Soon, patches of open ground appeared. Looking at the lake, I could see some trout rising to midges. Just before dark, aided by a small gas lantern, we cooked more freeze-dried food and retired. Tomorrow, we would catch some golden trout and grayling.

The next morning, the clouds lifted and a bright sun and warm wind melted the last of the snow and, by around 10 a.m. the lake seemed to come alive. Some tiny midges started hatching and the surface boiled with fish. We assumed these to be golden trout interspersed with grayling. I hurriedly strung my trusty Wonderod and tied on the smallest dry fly in my box. Howard pulled out his spinning rod and trusty Daredevils. We walked to the edge of the lake and began casting.

We each caught a trout on our first cast. They were small yellowish trout. We cast again and caught two more trout, both very small. Closer examination revealed orange red throat slashes. They did not have the deep golden and red coloration of the golden trout photos we had seen in fishing magazines. They were not golden trout. They were tiny cutthroats, tiny stunted cutthroats with large buggy eyes and scrawny underdeveloped bodies. Their ribs were visible above their shrunken bellies. The surface of the lake boiled with them. Apparently the backpackers who talked to Al were not too good at fish identification. We were stumped.

We kept fishing for a while with no change in results, catching more trout too tiny to eat. "Maybe we could fry them and eat them like smelt," offered Howard. I hoped it wouldn't come to that, but I kept wondering, were there any larger trout? And, where were the grayling? We checked the Beartooth Country Map Lake Guide. It said, "Fossil Lake: brook & golden" with no mention of grayling. We had seen neither, and continued to catch one dinky cutt after another. Each of us changed tactics. Howard chucked the biggest Dardevil in his box, thinking the heavier spoon would sink to a depth where the larger fish lived. I went with a big streamer and a split shot, which was basically thinking along the same lines.

Let the bets begin

These changes produced only more tiny cutthroats. We were flummoxed. Seeing my frustration, Howard offered the following: "OK, the lake is full of dinks.

See *TREE LINE*, page 25



AFTER MULTIPLE EFFORTS, I FINALLY CAUGHT THE LARGE CUTTIE

We had only enough time for some quick photos. I estimated it at just shy of 16 inches and maybe two pounds, a monster for this sterile high-country lake.

put on a pair of mirrored sunglasses. "Disguise," he said. I put on a baseball cap.

When we got toward the top of the ridge, the couple appeared, packs on, heads down and trudging rapidly down the trail. We passed on the narrow trail in awkward silence. Immediately after they passed, Howard turned, waved, and shouted, "Nice seein' ya!" which was met with a death stare by our formerly minimally clad sunbather. "Had to," giggled Howard, and we kept laughing as the couple disappeared.

We now looked out at Fossil Lake, which we now had to ourselves. It was much larger than Fox Lake, with an even deeper blue color. It had magnificent views of Bald Knob, Mount Rosebud, Mount Dewey and a couple of other peaks. The shoreline was a mix of large jagged boulders and patches of grass dotted with alpine flowers of all colors. Some patches of snow remained in the shadows of the bigger rocks. It

to bed. We would fish for Fossil Lake's golden trout and grayling tomorrow.

White wakeup call

The night seemed pretty cold, colder than any we had ever experienced on previous trips. The wind kept shaking the little tent but, with good sleeping bags, we fell asleep immediately. When I woke up, it seemed awfully dark for 6 a.m. I poked my head out of the tent, only to be hit in the head with a large chunk of snow which slid off the tent top. I looked out on a snowy wonderland. The previous night's wind had also dropped about six inches of wet snow. It was July 22 and we were snowed in. I just stared out at the snow.

"Gorp?" asked Howard. I was in shock. "Here, eat some gorp. We can't use the stove or we'll burn the tent down." So it was gorp and cold water for breakfast. After my gorp breakfast, I looked outside the tent again. Yup, around six inches. I

Wisconsin salmonids: Past, present and future

Lake trout: The largest and most mysterious of the Wisconsin salmonids.

By John Lyons

Lake trout are the largest and most mysterious of the Wisconsin salmonids. Because they spend their lives at great depths and require specialized gear to be caught, relatively few Wisconsin anglers have encountered them. Despite their large size – the hook-and-line record is more than 62 pounds and a commercial fisher in Canada once caught a 102-pound specimen – their inaccessibility means they attract few devotees compared to other trout and salmon. But they are a critically important species in the Great Lakes ecosystem and a fascinating fish wherever they occur.

I've been a lake trout fan almost as long as I can remember. I clearly recall the first one I ever saw. I was five years old, and we were on vacation in the Adirondack Mountains in northern New York. By this point, I was already obsessed with fish and fishing, and whenever a boat of anglers would return to the resort where we were staying, I would rush to the dock to see what they had caught. Usually it was a stringer of undersized smallmouth bass (the size limit was 10 inches, and nearly every legal fish was kept in those days) trolled from the rocky shoals along shore, but on this day, the fishermen told me they had been out in the middle in deep water. They pulled up their stringer and showed me a dark mottled fish with a streamlined body and a large, gaping mouth. They called it a "laker." It was by far the largest fish I'd ever seen up to this point, and although in hindsight it was probably only about 20 inches, at the time it seemed like a monster. I was enthralled, and I've been so ever since.

I didn't catch my first lake trout until much later when I was conducting graduate research at the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Trout Lake in Vilas County. I needed Yellow Perch for some experiments, and the easiest (and most fun) way to get specimens was to fish for them. I was casting minnows onto a mid-lake reef when my reel developed a tangle. While sorting it out, I drifted into much deeper water and my bait fell to the bottom. When I pulled up, I had a fish, much larger than the seven-inch perch I'd been catching previously. To my delight, it was a lake trout, a mere 17 inches, but a huge thrill nonetheless. Being a hungry grad student, I of course kept the fish and broiled it for dinner that night. It remains one of the best-tasting fish I've ever eaten.

Let's look at lake trout in Wisconsin, and maybe you'll understand my fascination with the species.

What is a lake trout?

Lake trout are native to the northern half of North America, including much of Alaska and Canada and the northern conterminous

United States. They are found in cold deep lakes and do poorly at water temperatures above the mid 50's. In a few very large deep lakes, including the Upper Great Lakes (Huron, Michigan, Superior) and Great Slave, Great Bear, and Mistassini lakes in northern Canada, Lake Trout have evolved into multiple forms, some so distinctive in appearance, life history and ecology that they were once considered separate species. However, all of these forms are interfertile and are now considered part of a single highly variable species.

Native American and early European fishers recognized dozens of different forms of lake trout in the Great Lakes, but scientists have grouped these into four types, lean, siscowet (also known as fat), humper (also known as banker or paper-belly), and redfin. Each of these types may in turn have (or once had) multiple divergent populations, collectively encompassing a wide range of diversity. Although there are minor genetic differences between the four types, inter-breeding sometimes occurs, producing fish with intermediate attributes known by commercial fishers as "half breeds." The lean is the type most anglers and diners are familiar with, and it is also the type found in all inland lakes. It has an elongated body, a pointed snout, dark coloration, and relatively little body fat. It lives near shore in relatively shallow water where it is captured by both sport and commercial fisheries.

The siscowet is more deep-bodied than the lean with a blunter snout, less distinctive coloration, and high concentrations of body fat, particularly in the belly. It lives offshore over very deep water, usually more than 250 feet. The high fat content is thought to be a buoyancy adaptation, allowing the fish to swim more efficiently at great depths. Siscowet have been found in the deepest parts of Lake Superior, more than 1,300 feet, but also at the surface, where they sometimes eat small birds, and they often move from deep to shallow water at night and return to the depths during the day. Anglers rarely see this form, but there is substantial commercial harvest.

The humper looks somewhat like the siscowet, but it has much lower body fat, particularly in the belly. It lives near deep "banks" or "humps" surrounded by much deeper water in offshore areas and is not found in Wisconsin waters. It does not grow as fast or as large as the other three types. It is almost never caught by anglers but is sometimes taken by commercial fishers.

The redfin is even more deep-bodied and robust than the siscowet or humper, but it has the lowest body fat of the four types. It also has relatively large and bright red or red-yellow fins. It has an intermediate growth rate and maximum size.



LAKE TROUT FROM LAKE MICHIGAN

A 20-pound stocked lake trout from Lake Michigan off Milwaukee. Note the missing pelvic fin.

It lives at intermediate depths around offshore islands such as Isle Royale, Michigan, and is also not found in Wisconsin waters. It too is rarely encountered by anglers but seen by commercial fishers.

The various lake trout types share certain life history characteristics but differ in others. They are all carnivorous, eating zooplankton, opossum shrimp (mysis), other invertebrates, and especially fish, although the relative proportions of each depend on location and type. Across the range of the lake trout, growth is dependent on water temperatures and food availability with fish from colder and less productive waters growing more slowly but often surviving to older ages and reaching somewhat larger sizes.

Fast-growing southern or fertile-lake populations may live to 25 years of age with a typical maximum size of 35-40 inches and 20-30 pounds, whereas slow-growing Arctic and infertile-lake populations may exceed 50-60 years, 40 inches, and 50 pounds if not heavily fished. Over their entire range, lake trout first reach maturity at 3-27 years of age and lengths of 8-27 inches, but in Wisconsin waters they typically mature at 5-14 years and 17-24 inches.



A SISCOWET-TYPE LAKE TROUT FROM LAKE SUPERIOR

Spawning differences are evident among the four types of lake trout in the Great Lakes region. All breed in the fall, although at somewhat different times, and some siscowet populations also spawn in the spring. Spawning occurs on silt-free rocky bottoms, usually in lakes, although historically there were populations of leans that spawned in rivers in boulder-strewn rapids or in lakes on clay bottoms, mats of bottom algae, or rooted aquatic plants. Some leans deposit their eggs as shallow as one foot, but most eggs are found at five to 50 feet.

Actual spawning locations for siscowet, humpers and redfins are unknown but are thought to be deeper. Spawning usually occurs at night, but daytime spawning populations are known. Not all adults spawn in every year. Unlike other trout and salmon species, the female lake trout does not prepare the spawning

area by digging a shallow depression or "redd" in the gravel and then burying the fertilized eggs, but instead just broadcasts hundreds or thousands of eggs over the bottom for the male to fertilize and then neither sex provides any parental care.

Fall-deposited eggs hatch in the late winter or early spring and spring-deposited eggs in the summer. After their first growing season, newly hatched fish are 3-6 inches long and look similar regardless of their type. Differences in appearance do not become pronounced until several years later.

The past: An ancient resident

Lake trout have been in Wisconsin far longer than people. A lake trout fossil more than 250,000 years old was found in Dunn County in the early 1900's, easily the oldest record of a modern fish species from the state. But lake trout were forced out of Wisconsin during the ice ages, when only the Driftless Area was not covered with thick glaciers. During those times, the frigid climate of the Driftless Area would have been tolerable to lake trout, but the lakes they needed were absent, and the



A LEAN-TYPE LAKE TROUT FROM TROUT LAKE, VILAS COUNTY

relatively deep cold waters where conditions were appropriate. In these lakes, survival of stocked fish was often good, but reproduction was minimal. Lake trout never became completely self-sustaining in any new inland Wisconsin lakes, and regular stocking was required to maintain sport fisheries.

A cornerstone of the Great Lakes fishery

Historically, lake trout were abundant in both Lake Michigan and Lake Superior. They were a keystone predator, at least partially controlling populations of their prey and determining the structure and functioning of the overall Great Lakes food web. Native Americans and early European settlers fished both lakes heavily for lake trout, particularly the more easily accessible nearshore leans. Although the Great Lakes yielded a variety of



THE MOUTH OF A SEA LAMPREY

John Lyons



ALEWIFE, THE KEY FOOD FISH FOR TOP PREDATORS IN LAKE MICHIGAN

John Lyons

food fishes, lake trout were among the most prized.

As European settlement increased, fishing pressure also rose dramatically, particularly in Lake Michigan. In the late 1800's an average of four to five million pounds of lake trout were harvested each year from throughout Lake Michigan, an unsustainable amount. Coupled with environmental degradation of the lake, overfishing caused the capture rate and average size of lake trout to decline. Fishers set even more nets and began to fish further from their home ports to maintain catches. Despite increased effort, annual harvest declined to an average of two to three million pounds by the 1930's. In Lake Superior, fishing pressure and environmental damage were less, and annual harvest during the first half of the 20th century remained relatively stable and averaged about four million pounds for the entire lake. Then the sea lamprey arrived.

The collapse and recovery of Great Lakes lake trout

Sea lamprey are native to the North Atlantic Ocean and its tributaries and are a blood parasite on fish and marine mammals. The refurbishment of the Welland Canal in the 1930's to allow ocean-going ships to bypass Niagara Falls provided an avenue for sea lamprey to enter the Upper Great Lakes. Once there, they found ideal habitat and became abundant. And they turned into a predator.

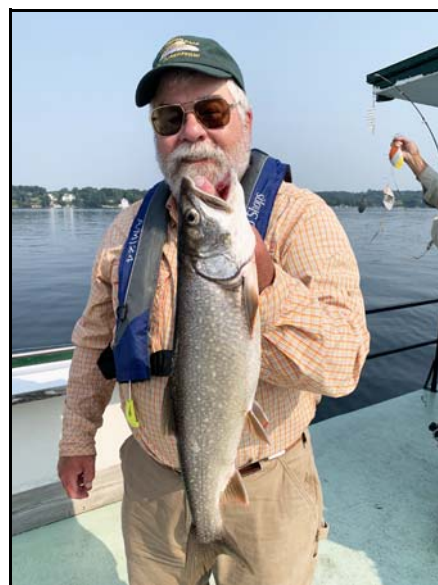
Native parasitic lampreys occurred in the Great Lakes and caused few problems, but the much larger sea lampreys were deadly. Sea lampreys reached 2-4 pounds and consequently sucked far more blood than their smaller native cousins, which were usually less

than half a pound.

In the North Atlantic, sea lampreys parasitized hosts weighing hundreds or even thousands of pounds such as large sharks and whales, and they rarely caused mortality. But in the Great Lakes, the largest fish were 20-40-pound lake trout, and most were much smaller.

At this ratio of lamprey to host size, over 10 times more than in the ocean, sea lamprey attacks were often fatal. In the late 1940's, fishers began to catch lake trout with sea lampreys attached. Lake trout numbers went into freefall, and by the mid 1950's, sea lamprey had completely eliminated lake trout from Lake Michigan and driven populations to low levels in Lake Superior. Burbot and lake whitefish populations were also devastated.

The U.S. and Canadian governments began a crash program to control sea lamprey numbers. Barriers and traps on the tributaries



SWTU'S TOPF WELLS WITH A BIG GREEN LAKE TROUT

John Lyons

where lampreys spawned helped, but populations remained too high. In the late 1950's, dogged work by U.S. Fish and Wildlife scientists led to the development of a highly selective and relatively safe lampicide, 3-trifluoromethyl-4-nitrophenol or TFM. This chemical killed larval lampreys in streams before they became parasitic. A massive joint U.S.-Canada operation began to treat all the lamprey-suitable tributaries of the Great Lakes, a complicated and expensive proposition that continues to this day. The effort was successful, and although sea lampreys were not eliminated, they were reduced to the point that recovery of Great Lakes fish populations could begin.

Commencing in the mid-1950's, state, provincial and federal agencies began stocking large numbers of lake trout in the Great Lakes. A variety of strains were used, but nearly all were leans. In Lake Superior, lamprey control, stocking and highly restrictive fishing regulations led to the gradual recovery of lake trout populations, including all four types, but in Lake Michigan, progress was slow. Stocked fish survived and grew well there but had little reproduction. Evidence accumulated that organic pollutants, particularly PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls), prevented egg and larval survival. Years of pollution control eventually reduced PCB concentrations, and by the 2000's, successful spawning started to occur.

The present: Inland lakes

Currently, inland fisheries management of lake trout focuses on 11 lakes, Trout and Black Oak with their native populations; five nearby

small lakes Little Trout, Long, Pallette, and White Sand in Vilas County and Big Carr in Oneida County, that serve as refuges for the Trout and Black Oak strains; and four other lakes with introduced populations, Big Cedar in Washington County, Big Green in Green Lake County, Geneva in Walworth County, and Goto in Langlade County.

Lake Trout numbers and reproduction have declined in Trout and Black Oak for reasons that are not clear, and stocking of fish raised from eggs taken from each lake coupled with highly restrictive fishing regulations are employed to help maintain their populations. The five nearby small lakes receive occasional plantings of either the Trout Lake or Black Oak Lake strain. No reproduction is expected in these, but survival is generally good, and they act as back-ups in case Trout Lake or Black Oak Lake suffers a catastrophic loss of lake trout. Fishing for Lake Trout is prohibited in Pallette and under the same restrictive regulations as in Trout and Black Oak in the other four lakes.

The remaining four lakes are stocked regularly, Goto with the Trout Lake strain and the other three with the Seneca Lake strain developed in New York. Little natural reproduction is expected. All four lakes have more liberal fishing regulations. Big Green is particularly popular and has several guides that specifically target lake trout during both the ice-fishing and open-water periods.

No specific contaminant advisories are in place for inland lake trout, and the Wisconsin DNR recommends that the general statewide human consumption guidelines for predatory fishes such as walleye, pike, bass, and catfish are followed, no more than one meal per week for men and for women over 50 and no more than one meal per month for children under 15 and women under

50.

Lake Michigan

After many years, natural reproduction of lake trout in Lake Michigan has finally reached significant levels again. Stocking is still needed, and commercial fishing is still banned in Wisconsin, but about 25 percent of the lake trout population is now derived from spawning in the lake. This percentage has been growing over the last two decades, and the hope is that it will continue to improve. However, nearly all of the lake trout in Lake Michigan appear to be leans derived from semi-domesticated strains, and all of the many distinctive populations that once occurred in the lake, including Siscowet, have been lost.

Lake trout are caught in good numbers by boat anglers in Lake Michigan, and although they aren't as popular as salmon, lake trout have saved many a charter boat trip when the salmon weren't biting. However, eating lake trout from Lake Michigan is constrained by mercury and PCB contamination. The Wisconsin DNR recommends only one meal per week of lake trout less than 22 inches, one per month of lake trout 22-30 inches and no consumption of lake trout over 30 inches.

Lake Superior

Lake Superior is the stronghold for lake trout in Wisconsin. Reduction of sea lamprey coupled with supplemental stocking and harvest controls have largely recovered the lean population, and nearly all fish are naturally produced. No fish have been stocked in the Apostle Islands Management Unit in Iron, Ashland, and eastern Bayfield counties in more than 20 years, and only limited stocking still takes place in the Western Lake Superior Management Unit in western Bayfield and Douglas counties. Siscowets, which were never stocked, are now thriving.



CLASSIC LAKE SUPERIOR GILL-NETTNG BOAT

The Barney Devine, a commercial gill-netting boat in Cornucopia Harbor, Bayfield County, Lake Superior.

John Lyons

ing.

Currently, the biggest challenge for lake trout in Lake Superior is managing sport and commercial harvest. Lake trout are the most important sport fish in the Apostle Islands area, but they are also a valuable commercial species. To protect the population and meet legal obligations, lake trout catches need to be carefully regulated and equitably allocated between Ojibwe tribal and Wisconsin non-tribal fishers. On the non-tribal side, harvest needs to be further partitioned between sport and commercial fisheries. Management of the lake trout fishery is complicated, and the division of fish among the various fishing groups is often contentious.

Every 10 years, the state and the Ojibwe negotiate a fishing agreement covering tribal versus non-tribal allocations and fishing regulations and monitoring and enforcement procedures. The most recent agree-

ment was signed in 2018. Detailed monitoring, computer modeling and statistical analysis by Wisconsin DNR and tribal biologists are used to develop a total allowable catch (TAC) of lake trout for each of the two management units. Tribal fishers, specifically the Red Cliff Band and the Bad River Band of the Lake Superior Ojibwe, get one half of the TAC and the state the other half. Of the state's half, sport anglers get two thirds and commercial fishers one third. To ensure that the TAC is not exceeded, tribal and non-tribal commercial fishers receive tags that they must attach to all captured lake trout. Once they have used all their tags, they must stop fishing. In the Apostle Islands Management Unit, where lake trout recreational fishing is greatest, the total angling catch is tracked via a creel survey, and if more than a specified number are

See LAKE TROUT, page 24

“Again” is new normal with Driftless floods

By Jason Freund

We got flooded, again, this summer. We went into August a bit below our average annual precipitation and came out of it well above average. Much of that spike in precipitation was due to the August 7 storms that hit the area. La Crosse broke a record for rainfall in a day that had stood since 1884. That is quite impressive. That same storm dumped rain on much of La Crosse and Vernon Counties and other parts of the Driftless Area.

The Highway 14 bridge in Coon Valley was closed for part of a Saturday, again. It is the third time I can remember that happening in the past five years. Highway 162 between Coon Valley and Chaseburg was also closed to traffic, again. The approach to the bridge over the West Fork of the Kickapoo at Bloomingdale gave way, again. The whole idea of 100-year floods is losing any sense of meaning. When you have experienced a 100-year flood in about half the years in the past decade, the milestone has become rather meaningless, other than to serve as a cautionary tale. It was conceived and calculated in a different time, one with fewer impacts to the watersheds, less impervious surfaces, fewer man-made structures, different land use and different rainfall patterns.

We have been on an upward trajectory when it comes to precipitation, stream flow and groundwater levels, and that has mostly been a good thing. The issue is that when it rains, it pours, quite literally. While we still get “normal” rainfall, we are increasingly getting big rainfalls and, in some cases, like 2018, really big rainfalls. A little flushing of the gravel, particularly when it occurs after the trout are out of their redds, is a good thing, as the Driftless Area is prone to sedimentation issues. Poor land-use practices of the past filled the valleys with sediments that were once on the hills, cultural sediment as we call it. Cultural sediment is today’s streambanks and this sediment is easily moved during floods, sending large amounts of nutrients downstream.

Driftless Area watersheds

Early settlers arrived at a landscape we would scarcely recognize today. Upon arriving, settlers cut the trees down on the hillsides and converted much of the land to wheat production. By the 1880’s, the area switched to the dairy production and row-crop agriculture we see dominate the landscape today. These agricultural practices, poorly suited to the terrain and climate, resulted in massive erosion and flash floods. This early settlement forever changed the valleys of the Driftless Area which were once mostly wet prairies. It is difficult to think about just how drastically different the valleys of the Driftless Area are now compared to before settlers and their agricultural practices that were poorly suited for the steep terrain of the Driftless Area.

Valley floors today range from a few feet to up to thirty feet higher than they were pre-settlement. Streams changed and became wider, shallower and more entrenched as their stream banks were higher due to the cultural sediment that was once on hillsides but is now in the valleys. With wider, shallower streams also comes increased water temperatures. And with these

changes, of course came changes to the fisheries.

It is hard to imagine now but early in the 1900’s, trout were relatively rare in much of the Driftless Area. By the 1930’s, an effort to improve the landscape was launched by farmers of the area who asked the government for help. What became today’s Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) was spawned from their efforts to control soil erosion. You may have noticed the Wisconsin state historical marker on Highway 14 just north and west of Coon Valley that recognizes the nation’s first watershed project led by farmers in the watershed, government agencies and Aldo Leopold, who was at the University of Wisconsin at the time.

The sign reads: “This point is near the center of the 90,000 acre Coon Creek Watershed, the nation’s first large-scale demonstration of soil and water conservation. The area was selected for this purpose by the U.S. Soil Conservation Service (then Soil Erosion Service) in October 1933. Technicians of the SCS and the University of Wisconsin pooled their knowledge with experiences of local farm leaders to establish a pattern of land use now prevalent throughout the Midwest. Planned practices in effect include improvement of woodlands, wildlife habitat and pastures, better rotations and fertilization, strip cropping, terracing and gully and stream bank erosion control. The outcome is a tribute to the wisdom, courage and foresight of the farm families who adopted the modern methods of conservation farming illustrated here.”

Current land use in the Driftless Area is changing in two important ways. First, there are more recreational owners, who often take the land out of agriculture, which is generally a pretty good thing for trout. Second, farms are getting larger, as are the row-crop agriculture fields, a particular issue on the steeper slopes of the Driftless Area. Commodity prices drive much of the land use in the Driftless Area and elsewhere, particularly as Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) payments have failed to keep up with commodity and rent prices. In Wisconsin, CRP enrollment dropped by more than 60 percent from 2007 to 2016, which represents one of the largest percent declines in the country. A quick look at one of the many websites that show aerial photos over time will show that in places, grassed waterways and other “set aside” lands that are useful in preventing and trapping sediment have been planted in row crops. As an Iowa State University publication states, there has been a rapid shift to larger farms (more cows per farm) and an increase in acreage of row crops.

This was evident on a day of fishing with a friend just last week. Looking up at the hillside, I noticed that the hill was now one large corn field. Less than a decade ago, the hill was terraced, broken into four different contoured fields with grassed waterways that help slow water delivered to the stream and reduce sediments delivered to the stream. Today it is one large field with a couple of smaller grassed waterways. I am sure the hill is more efficiently farmed, but it almost certainly does not hold soil or slow water delivery to the stream as it once did. To be clear, I am not blaming the farmers for doing this. I am sure

it makes financial sense and making a go of it as a smaller farmer is not an easy task. But I do worry that more of that across Driftless Area valleys will have negative effects on streams.

To be sure, that alone is not the cause of the increase in flood frequency and magnitude, but it is part of the picture. Floods are complex things. Climate change is at least partially responsible for delivering larger and more frequent storms. Larger storms falling over farms with more row crops exacerbate the flood’s magnitude. In some cases, we have more “stuff” built on the valley floors so there is more for floods to damage. We have infrastructure built for 100-year floods but we are seeing 500 and 1,000-year floods way too often. Roads and bridges serve as pinch points for the water, sediment and debris that floods are transporting. You see, water is only part of what floods transport; the rock, trees and other debris they carry is often what does much of the damage. And flooding has always been a way of life in the Driftless Area.

A history of flooding

Our rivers are flashy. We have steep-sided valleys that deliver their water quickly. This is nothing new. There is little use fighting topography and geology. Like the people, the streams and their fishes are resilient. They take a punch and roll with it. Only a few weeks after the 2018 floods had passed, things were getting back to a new normal. Streams were in new configurations and at times in new places in their valleys, but the fishing hardly skipped a beat. My best fish of 2018 came from a plunge pool that is now high and dry. Today the stream is at least 50 feet from where that fish was caught. The Wisconsin DNR rerouted the stream to help save the structure. This is but one reminder of how streams are dynamic. They are in place for maybe decades and a once-in-a-lifetime event changes all that. Of course, we have seen too many of these “once-in-a-lifetime” floods.

Communities along the Kickapoo River are no strangers to floods. Floods along the Kickapoo are pretty legendary. I have to imagine that many people who live in and along the floodplain sleep with one eye open when a large storm is forecasted. They have been through it before. What floods they remember is a pretty sure way to tell how long someone has lived in the valley. Floods are a way of life and they long have been, but they are getting larger and more frequent.

If you have been to Avalanche recently, you know that things have changed. Most notably, the general store that many of us have very fond memories of is gone. Gone too are a

number of other houses in the floodplain. FEMA has bought a number of properties and has turned them over to the county. This is much the same as they more famously did in Soldiers Grove and are slowly doing in a number of other communities, such as Avalanche. It is, I think, what we will see more of in the future. It simply is too expensive to keep paying to clean up flood after flood. There are also significant safety issues.

How about the future?

Nobody knows what is in store for the future but if the recent past has taught us anything, it is to expect more of the same. Quite simply put, floods have been a way of life in Ontario, La Farge, Viola, Reedstown, down to Soldiers Grove, Gays Mills, on down the Kickapoo River. It’s the same with Bloomingdale and Avalanche on the West Fork and increasingly, it seems, Coon Valley and Chaseburg on Coon Creek.

The people, and the fish, have been resilient. They have bounced back each time that there is a flood. The fish have little choice; the people and communities may be rethinking their situations. It cannot be easy to see the history of a place lost but it is not easy to have to clean up and rebuild every few years either. In some communities, the struggle is quite evident.

Part of the picture may be revisiting the lessons of the nation’s first watershed project. The challenges may have increased since Aldo Leopold, the Soil Conservation Service and the farmers within the Coon Creek watershed came together to improve their valleys. Large precipitation events have increased in both their frequency and the rate at which rain falls. We need programs like CRP to increase what they can pay to farmers and other landowners so when commodity prices go up, there is not such a strong incentive to pull land from that program and others. We need to incentivize keeping grass and buffers on the landscape. There have been a number of farmer-led watershed councils that have organized in the Driftless Area and this will certainly be a significant part of the solution. This is part of the legacy of watershed project led by Aldo Leopold and the farmers of the Coon Valley watershed.

We would like to think that 2018 is the high water mark and if you made it through 2018, you are probably good for future events but there are no assurances in that assumption. That is the thing with floods; they are unpredictable. They could rebuild Jersey Valley 500 feet downstream as is proposed and it could blow out in a 10,000-year flood. Or it could last for the next 100 or more years. That is the na-

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



Council seeking award nominations

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

We are currently seeking nominations for our 2022 awards, which we will bestow at our awards banquet February 5, 2022. We rely on you, our members and leaders, to let us know about those who deserve special recognition. So please take time to nominate individuals, groups or others you feel qualify for one of our awards.

Please submit your nominations, including a short narrative, to Awards Committee Chair Todd Franklin by December 1, 2021. Please contact Todd if you have any questions. His email address is toddfranklinwis-trout@gmail.com and his other contact information is on page 4.

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

State Council Awards for 2022

Resource Award of Merit

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

Silver Trout Chapter of the Year Award

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

Distinguished Service-Leadership

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

Distinguished Service-Youth Education

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

Distinguished Service-Veteran's Services

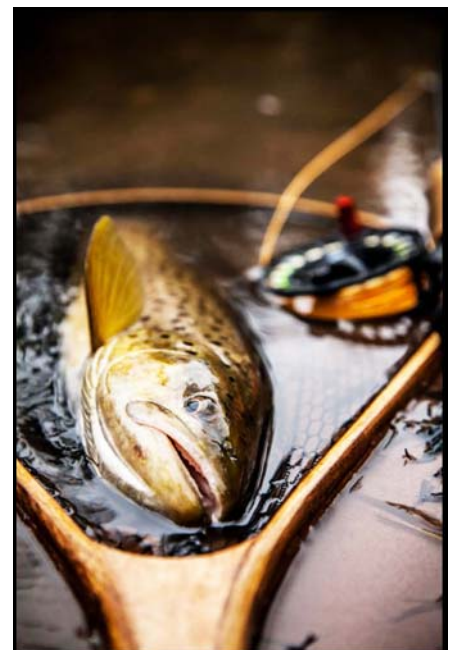
This award recognizes an individual who embodies the TU community-building spirit with regards to nurturing veteran's healing and involving veterans in their chapter events, activities and operations.

Reel Partner Award

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

Robert Hunt Resource Professional Award

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





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Wisconsin Trout Unlimited is seeking individuals and businesses to Sponsor our 2022 State Council Banquet to be held on Sat. Feb. 5 in Oshkosh

Levels of Sponsorship:
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Tributary = \$250
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**For more info visit: <http://wicouncil.tu.org>
 or contact Mike Kuhr at mikek.trout@yahoo.com**



Chapter News



LUCKY AND HAPPY BIKE WINNER

Kayla Clark is all smiles with the bike she won at the Antigo Chapter's Kids Fishing Day this past summer.

Antigo Chapter

We've had a good summer in northeast Wisconsin, with a good amount of rain to help the streams maintain some water for trout.

We did get some projects done this summer. The Antigo Chapter had four work days on projects on the East Branch of the Eau Claire River. We painted the fishing dock on the corner of Highways C and 45, north of town. We also replaced boards and railings and did some brushing along the fishing dock and parking lots in three places.

With approval from the DNR, our chapter members cleared a path on a down slope to the Eau Claire River to improve walking and kayak access. This project included brushing and the placement of posts with rope railing to help move up and down the

slope. We will place wood chips down as ground cover.

The chapter had a booth at Kretz Lumber Days at the end of September.

We have started to plan our fundraising banquet, which will be Saturday, March 26, 2022 at the Northstar Banquet Center, after a two-year hiatus. We hope all goes well.

We're looking to this fall for more things to get done. We will talk to private landowners about their forest land and the coldwater resource, and how they can work together. The Antigo DNR will also do stream shocking on Spring Brook. This should be informative and fun for all.

—Scott Henrichs

Central Wisconsin Chapter

The Central Wisconsin Chapter (CWTU) has been busy taking part in several initiatives in the area. In late August we held our fourth stream habitat restoration work day of the 2021 season at Bird Creek Park in the city of Wautoma. About 40 volunteers participated. DNR supervisor Shawn Sullivan gave a history of the Bird Creek habitat restoration project that began in 2019.

Past work included brushing of invasive streamside vegetation, building bank covers from harvested vegetation, strategic application of rock and gravel to enhance in-stream riffles, development of a streamside nature trail using numerous loads of wood chips, and the building of three bridges to ease access for those using the nature trail. Work crews assisted the DNR members in removing streamside



GROUP LOG PULL

The Central Wisconsin Chapter held a work day on Bird Creek in Wautoma's Bird Creek Park prior to the trail and memorial dedication.



CWTU DEDICATES MEMORIAL TO "DOC" POULLETTE

John Wilcox, Dick Kraus, Dan Harmon III and Tom Meyer were good friends of Thomas W. "Doc" Poulette and were the key players in making this monument and dedication possible. They are pictured with the memorial stone along Bird Creek.

trees that had succumbed to the invasive emerald ash borer beetle. The tree limbs would be removed and then the trunks were strategically placed in the stream for bank cover.

Afterward the volunteers, DNR staff, family and friends gathered streamside around a large rock memorial dedicated to Thomas W. Poulette, also known by many as "Doc." A dedicated trout fisherman, Poulette is credited with helping found our chapter. He was a graduate of Wautoma High School and for many years a dentist in Wautoma. Everyone who knew him have fond memories of his influence.

The CWTU memorial planning committee comprised of Dan Harmon III, Tom Meyer and Richard Kraus provided remarks before the unveiling. Judge Jon Wilcox and Edward Engle also provided remarks and memories of Doc. The city renamed the nature trail that runs ad-

acent to Bird Creek the "Thomas W. (Doc) Poulette Trail."

If you'd like to be added to the CWTU habitat restoration workday email distribution list, email Dennis Drazkowski at ddrazkowski@gmail.com.

This fall, CWTU will be offering two different fly-tying classes in Winneconne. For the beginner there will be "Fly Tying—A New Experience" and for the tyer taking the next step there is "Beyond the Woolly Bugger." Both will be one evening a week for four weeks starting in late September. For more information on either class contact David Pable at 920-233-2939 or dandgp@sbcglobal.net.

Due to the pandemic the board decided to postpone the annual chapter conservation banquet, which was planned for October 30. The banquet committee will look at date options for the spring of 2022.

—Wayne Parmley

Coulee Region Chapter

CRTU started the summer off right by hosting another successful Troutfest in Coon Valley in June. The event was a big draw and everyone attending had a good time.

In August we joined forces with SEWTU for a work day that involved more than 30 volunteers from four TU chapters. The other chapter highlight of the summer was a STREAM Girls event, which you can read about elsewhere in this issue of *Wisconsin Trout*.

Extreme weather events resulting from global climate change were foremost among concerns of Coulee Region trout fishers.

Major rain events in both June and August led to flooding, damage and even disaster declarations for several counties in our area. In one June event, parts of Vernon and Crawford counties received 9-12 inches of rain within a six-hour period. Severe storms in July resulted in some lesser flooding.

An early August event did more extensive damage, especially to streams north of Highway 14. Timber Coulee appears to have taken the worst of the damage while the habitat work done on Bohemian held up well.

In July the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service announced a recommendation to decommission flood control dams on the West Fork of the Kickapoo and Coon Creek. It was recommended that the Jersey Valley dam, which failed in 2018, was recommended for a downstream relocation. A study revealed that the cost to relocate the dams would exceed the value of the potential flood control that would be realized from the relocations. The Jersey Valley Dam was an exception due to the recreation value it holds.

An interesting footnote came from La Crosse Fisheries Biologist Kirk Olson. His crew re-captured a 14-inch brown trout in Warner Creek that had previously been captured and tagged on Elk Creek two years prior, meaning the fish had traveled more than 30 miles since its initial capture.

"Movements of this distance appear to be fairly uncommon in our streams, but they happen," he said.

—Brad Bryan

Chapter News



Fox Valley Chapter

The approximately 225 Trout Bums of TU's Fox Valley Chapter have enjoyed a spring and summer of exceptional fishing and sometimes fabulous catching. Autumn fishing looks to be even better. With the unusually hot summer weather, some of us learned you can catch tons of brookies in the UP all summer long.

Fox Valley TU asks you to check this issue of *Wisconsin Trout* for our ad promoting Cabin Fever Day 2022. We invite you to experience the fun and fellowship of our 21st annual fishing expo. Check out our ad, which highlights the expert speaker program, auction and bucket raffle, Scott Grady Rod Raffle, the huge used equipment sale and much more. Cabin Fever Day is our only fundraiser, with proceeds funding stream improvement and habitat work. For the third year in a row, John Barkmeier will lead our efforts in putting the fun in fundraising. The latest and complete details can be found on our web site at foxvalleytu.org. Please save the date. You will not be disappointed.

Jerome Herro leads our habitat work efforts. Joint habitat improvement days with the Central Wisconsin Chapter (CWTU) and Shawn Sullivan's DNR crew were held the third Saturday of the month beginning in May. Work mainly consisted of brushing and fishability improvement. The work was conducted on the West Branch of the White River and Bird Creek, both located in Waushara County. FVTU members attended each of the events and some members brought other family members, including spouses and children, to join in the fun. The final work day was September 18.

The August 21 event included a dedication ceremony of the Thomas W. (Doc) Poullette memorial at Bird Creek Park. Doc was one of the founders of CWTU and a large, engraved boulder was prominently installed near the creek in his honor.

Former chapter President Nate Ratliff now plans our chapter meetings. He lists the following chapter events up to our fundraiser Cabin

Fever Day 2022. Initially these meetings will be via Zoom and everyone reading this can participate, so check our web site for details.

- Our October 21 chapter meeting will feature aquatic biologist and author Ann Miller. She will discuss insect hatches, taxonomy and behavior based on her comprehensive field guide: *Hatch Guide for Upper Midwest Streams*.
- Our November 18 meeting will feature coldwater research scientist Matt Mitro. Matt will focus his presentation on how beavers influence coldwater stream habitat and trout populations. He will also discuss how trout density affects the size of the fish.
- Our December 16 chapter meeting will not feature a guest speaker, but instead be called "Tie and Lie," where members tie flies while telling tall tales about the huge fish they allegedly caught. You surely know what that's like. Someone always brings a huge carrot cake and everyone enjoys some fermented malt beverages.

Joe Bach continues to lead our efforts to save the last trout stream in Calumet County. He reports the newly formed "Friends of Stony Brook" is a consortium of stake holders who pooled their resources and began restoring Stony Brook to her glory. To prove this success, on August 18 there was a "Friends of Stony Brook Field Day." A DNR crew electro-fished a 1,000-foot stretch of Stony Brook. Half the length was improved and half is scheduled to be improved this year.

Interestingly, Joe says the shocking crew located young-of-the-year trout and no adults in the unimproved stretch. The section that was improved produced both young-of-the-year and adults of immense proportion, the largest being 17.8 inches long. We look forward to working with the many people of the 13 organizations involved in this important project.

—Don Clouthier

Frank Hornberg Chapter

In June and July Frank Hornberg members assisted CWTU, Fox Valley and Shaw-Paca chapters on a brushing project on the West Branch of the White River. This is always a well-run operation and we will continue to post upcoming CWTU workdays on our Facebook page.

Our chapter held its first workday on August 20 on the Little Wolf River in northeast Portage County. Kyle Kossel, president of Shaw-Paca TU and a DNR fisheries technician, called and asked if we wanted to start a joint workday similar to Central Wisconsin TU. I immediately said, "Yes!"



HARD WORKING FRANK HORNBERG CREW

Frank Hornberg Chapter members participated with a variety of other chapters on work days throughout the summer.

On our first effort 10 people showed up representing the Frank Hornberg and Shaw-paca chapters and the DNR. We brushed about 1,000 feet of this beautiful stream. No rain, no bugs and cooler temperatures made for a very enjoyable day.

Breakfast and lunch were purchased at Trout Bum Bakery in

Scandinavia. If you are ever fishing near Scandinavia, I recommend that you support this small business. The food was excellent.

We hope you have time to get out and fish this fall. In September, temperatures finally dropped and the streams had excellent flows.

—Doug Erdmann



GREEN BAY CHAPTER WORKS WITH DNR TO IMPROVE ACCESS

Seventeen GBTU members and DNR staff held a work day to improve access to Beaver Creek.



GBTU TEAMED UP WITH THE USFS ON THE THUNDER RIVER

GBTU joined our old friend Tom Moris of the U.S. Forest Service to improve fishability and add in-water structure on the Thunder River.

Green Bay Chapter

Since our last quarterly report, The Green Bay Chapter has held four additional work projects, bringing our summer total to five. On June 5 we teamed up with the Northern Oconto County Trout Alliance to help prepare the Lake-wood Trout Rearing Station for 2021. Approximately 18 total volunteers came out to clean and sterilize the tanks and clean up the driveway and fish runs.

On June 19 we partnered with the DNR to improve access to Beaver Creek. Seventeen volunteers and DNR staff made this a very successful day. On July 17 we joined our old friend Tom Moris of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) to improve fishability and add in-water structure on the Thunder River. Fifteen folks showed up on this gorgeous day. Finally, on August 21, 10 members from GBTU, Oconto TU and the DNR worked on Evergreen Creek.

As for youth events, on June 5 we took part in our first educational event in almost two years.

We joined the Outagamie County Conservation Club for their annual Take-a-Kid-Fishing Day. They had a record number of registrants for their event, which kept our volunteers busy. These included Dave and Jon Ostanek, Pam Van Erem and Adrian Meseberg. They were busy teaching fly tying and casting.

Our second youth event during the past couple months was the

29th Annual Kids' Fishing Day on July 26 at the Izaak Walton League ponds on the outskirts of De Pere. Other partners included Brown County Health and Human Services, the Green Bay Exchange Club, Festival Foods and Thrivent Financial.

About 20 kids and 35 adults, volunteers and sponsors came out for this very enjoyable event. Kids fished from 4 p.m.-6:30 p.m., followed by a dinner of hot dogs, beans, chips and cookies.

Finally, GBTU kicked off our meeting season on September 2. At the meeting our board of directors crafted and approved our 2020-21 budget. The budget will be shared with our membership for approval at our October meeting.

The board also approved a \$1,500 line-item addition to our 2021-22 budget for the purchase of Trout-In-the-Classroom equipment.

Board member Carla Zimmerman, who is also a teacher, plans to set it up at her school. It will be very interesting to see if more schools in our area become interested.

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

—Adrian Meseberg



Chapter News



Carol Murphy

NOHR CHAPTER DEDICATES BENCH TO BILL WEEGE

Nohr Chapter President Tim Fraley and Dan Watts show off the bench Watts created. It was dedicated to Bill Weege during the chapter's Summer Social at the Bower Road Blue River parking area.

Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

The Blue River project on the Zadrzil property is located immediately downstream of the junction with Six Mile Branch just off County Q and includes the final 700 feet of Six Mile Branch and approximately 7,500 feet of the Blue River. The Six Mile Branch portion and the 2020 portion of the Blue River (half the total) is completed. The balance will have the earth work done late this fall and completed with structures when the ground allows.

Next year's stream project will be on Big Spring on the last property before it goes into Six Mile Branch.

In August we had our Summer Social at the Bower Road Blue River parking area. We dedicated a bench to one of our original members, Bill Weege, who passed away earlier this year. We had some cast-

ing instruction and met several new members. The DNR did a stream shocking demonstration. The weather was perfect and the food was great, with approximately 45 in attendance, our biggest attendance yet.

Our annual banquet is Saturday, October 9 at Castle Rock Ridge. It was rescheduled this year due to the pandemic. Find more information in our fall newsletter and on our Facebook page. There will be something for everyone.

Our Don Pluemer is the winner of the Gathering Waters: Wisconsin's Alliance for Land Trusts' 2021 Land Conservationist of the Year award for his work on our stream projects. This award will be presented at our banquet in October.

—Brian Larson

Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

On September 11 the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter participated in the Pheasants Forever Youth Game Fair in Hudson. More than 40 youth stopped by Kiap's booth and participated in fly tying, fly casting or fishing. Even a few pan fish were caught. It was fun seeing their intensity as they learned how to tie a fly or cast a fly rod. Thanks to the efforts of Bob Trevis, each participant left with a dozen flies. A hearty thanks go out to the volunteers who helped make this event happen, including Linda Radimecky, Scott Wagner, Monta Hayner, Tom Schnadt, Jon Jacobs, Randy Arnold, Jake Larsen, John Kaplan, Gary Horvath and Bruce Maher.

It is no doubt chapter activities have been hit hard by the continued issues brought on by the coronavirus. The newly constituted board is still finding its way. We met in person for the first time in June, which was a refreshing change from more than a year of Zoom meetings. The board selected Michele Bevis to fill a vacancy created when past-President Scott Wagner vacated his seat to serve as ex-officio member. The board approved a new Committee on Maintenance and New Projects. Members discussed finding a suitable past project that would benefit from tree plantings. The board did not meet in July and August so work should begin again in earnest in



Gary Horvath

KIAP TAKES PART IN PHEASANTS FOREVER KIDS EVENT

Kiap's Jake Larsen works with young fly-tying students at the Pheasants Forever Youth Game Fair in Hudson.



Gary Horvath

KIAP TEACHING CASTING AT PHEASANTS FOREVER EVENT

Randy Arnold, and Linda Radimecky share their casting skills with youngsters at the Pheasants Forever Youth Game Fair recently in Hudson.

September.

In July, Bob Trevis and Suzanne Constantini prepared a mailing list based for our annual Hap Lutter Memorial Appeal. The appeal letters went out on in July 26 and as of this writing we have raised \$6,690. You can also donate via our website at kiaptuwish.org/our-chapter/hap-lutter-spring-appeal/

Our Trout In the Classroom program continues with six of our 10 TIC classrooms participating this school year, with one classroom undecided. The three declining schools are waiting another year due to coronavirus concerns. We are welcoming a new school this year, Glenwood City High School. The other programs are in Hudson, River Falls (2), Amery (3), Hammond, Ellsworth, and Prescott. As for Bugs in the Classroom, we will have to wait and see what coronavirus restrictions are in place for school visitors in the spring.

The DNR wrapped up work on lower Cady Creek in Pierce County. This work was like that on Plum Creek which incorporated many root wads and three ERO structures. Cady is being managed for brook trout, so did not include LUNKER structures and dramatic narrowing, which favor brown trout.

The chapter managed to provide some volunteer opportunities this summer assisting area fish manager Kasey Yallaly with stream shocking. Those who helped on the Rush River were David Brockway, Tom Anderson, Pat Sexton, Kyle Smitz, and Dave Dreviske. Assisting on other streams were Mackenzie Zajack, Paul Wright, Colleen Grant and Mathew Benson. Assisting on a future survey of the Kinni will be Trish Hannah, Jon Pogatchnik with Loren Carver and UW-River Falls student Aubrey Stafford observing. Five individuals helped out with the Cady Creek seeding and mulching: Jim Tatzel, John Nowicki, Don Fritz, Mark Peerenboom and Dustin Wing.

There are no firm plans established for this winter's maintenance brushing. Randy Arnold will be meeting up with Kasey to visit potential sites. Our newly established Committee on Maintenance and New Projects will consider these and make recommendations at a later

meeting with DNR staff on brushing and maintenance.

Kiap-TU-Wish monitoring activities have continued throughout the spring and summer on five of our local streams: the Kinnickinnic, Willow, Trimble, Pine Creek and Plum Creek. We have temperature loggers placed in all five of these streams and we downloaded data from them this spring and will do so again this fall. All total, there are 29 loggers in these streams.

We sometimes find it necessary to move the loggers due to changes in the stream bottoms, such as when they become buried in silt. Or we may have to replace them due to dead batteries or their unexplained disappearance. Temperature data and water samples are also collected from Pine Creek and the Trimble River at County Highway W and are analyzed by an independent lab in St. Paul. These samples are collected four times per year.

Two weather stations are being operated to collect data on air temperature, relative humidity, dewpoint and rainfall amounts. Data from these stations allow a better understanding of the effects of local weather on stream temperatures.

The Kiap-TU-Wish chapter also provides financial and volunteer support focused on maintaining the USGS flow-gauging stations on the Willow and Kinnickinnic rivers as well as a temperature monitoring probe on the Willow River.

Our chapter also continues to spearhead the use of the WiseH2O app, which allows anyone to collect and share data regarding water quality and stream habitat conditions. We have 10 individuals who have been using the app at specific locations on 10 different streams in Pierce County. There are also several people who are using the app when and where they choose. Data from the app will be invaluable in monitoring the coldwater resources in our area. Anyone who would like to learn more about this app and how to use it can go to the WiseH2O website at www.mobileh2o.com/mh2oapp. If you have questions, please contact: John Kaplan, jmk8990@comcast.com or 612-963-1699.

—Gary Horvath

Lakeshore Chapter

Fall is just about here, but we were lucky enough to get our permits for the Onion and Ben Nutt. Working with the DNR and even Shawn Sullivan's crew from Central Wisconsin, the Onion River project is on its way to completion. Well, at least a portion of it.

Our chapter acquired a surface water grant about three years ago to

do this project. Our chapter members cut black locust trees to make the pilings. We delivered the 2x8x8's and had 14 truckloads of different-sized stone delivered. Our trout stamp funds pay for the labor, which is so great to have. Plans to continue our efforts to improve the Onion further south will be a years-long process, but we look forward to the

Chapter News



Myk Hranicka

LAKESHORE CHAPTER MAKING GREAT PROGRESS ON ONION RIVER
Crews install decking on a bank cover in the Onion River.

challenges ahead. We look more forward to the lifelong friendships we will make along the way and helping the local businesses these projects benefit the most.

Although workdays bring the most interest in what our chapter does, we are still focusing on bringing more events to our area. Casting and fly-tying clinics are a great start, but a fly-fishing festival and banquet are still being planned for the near future.

We are a small chapter but with some new recognition for how hard we work to improve our fisheries and work with our local community to bring awareness to the benefits of our sport, we will have a long and prosperous chapter for generations to come.

Thanks to everyone who donates their time to TU. This couldn't happen without you all.
—Myk Hranicka

Marinette County Chapter

The Marinette County Chapter will be back to in-person meetings starting in October. We had an enjoyable summer, although the streams are a little lower. But we're still having fun fishing.

The State Council's Northeast

Regional annual meeting is Saturday, December 4, and we're looking at a hybrid in-person/virtual meeting. More information will come, but start planning your 2022 summer projects before the meeting.
—Dale Lange

Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

SEWTU volunteers got back to business in a big way this summer with workdays in June, July and August and a joint workday with the Lakeshore Chapter in September. Our workday are led by Habitat Chairs Ken Rizzo and Rick Larkin, who is doing double duty as our

chapter vice president.

In June we returned to one of our favorite projects on Bluff Creek near Whitewater. We had 16 volunteers, including a member of Oakbrook TU, brave the sun and high temperatures in the upper 80s, to continue installing biologs upstream



SEWTU CREW HELPS CLEAN UP WEST FORK SPORTS CLUB

Although we had planned to work on some stream improvements on the West Fork of the Kickapoo River near Avalanche, devastating floods from the previous weekend washed away the materials, so the crew banded together to help Tina and the West Fork Sports Club clean up the campground and save some newly planted trees from getting choked by debris from the flood.

from the County Highway P bridge. It was nice that the water was only 58 degrees.

July found us on some new water in the southern part of our chapter's territory, Karcher Creek, where 14 SEWTU volunteers teamed up with seven members of the Oakbrook Chapter to lay waste to some nasty brush and buckthorn, under the guidance of two of our friends from the DNR.

August brought us back to the Driftless Area and the return of our annual campout and workday weekend with several of our friends from Southern, Coulee and Kiap-TU-Wish chapters. Although we had planned to work on some stream improvements on the West Fork of the Kickapoo River near Avalanche, devastating floods from the previous weekend washed away the materials, so the crew banded together to help Tina and the West Fork Sports Club clean up the campground and save some newly planted trees from getting choked by debris from the flood.

Overall we had 25 volunteers working together under ideal weather conditions, sharing fish stories and good food. Special thanks to Tina and the WFSC for all their hard work battling the flooding and getting the north end of the grounds

ready for camping and to Jason Freund and the Coulee Chapter for helping to coordinate the event.

We also had some great activities geared toward our veterans through the Veterans Service Program and the leadership of Matt Cade. Please see the separate article from Matt on his recent outing to the Sheboygan River.

Long-time volunteer and former president Boyd Roessler is stepping down from active duty on our board as chair of the Education Committee to take care of personal matters. We truly appreciate all the time Boyd has given to our chapter and for his friendship over the years. Boyd will continue to participate in chapter events and workdays as he is able. If you are interested in joining our Education Committee, please contact Andy or our chapter mailbox, as we need your help now more than ever.

On September 28 we held a live general membership meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus, including guest speaker Dave Ruetz, who talked about Wisconsin hatches.

Here are some of our upcoming events:

- October 2: Fish and Feather Festival, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. at Hubbard Park in Shorewood, hosted by the Village of Shorewood, Shore-



SEWTU CREW AFTER A HOT DAY'S WORK ON BLUFF CREEK

wood Waters Project and the Shorewood Conservation Committee. Visit villageofshorewood.org/watersproject for more details.

- October 16: Rosenow Creek work day from 9 a.m.-noon. Contact our mailbox at southeasternwitu@gmail.com for questions or to get details. Look for more details in an upcoming email blast and on our social media sites as we get closer to the event.
- October 28: SEWTU's fall fundraiser and banquet at New Berlin Hill Golf Course. Make sure you mark this one down as we will have lots of good food and prizes to give away, including some guided fishing trips.
- November 16: General membership meeting at the Bavarian Bierhaus.
- December 21: General membership meeting and holiday party at the Bavarian Bierhaus.

Are you getting our emails? Have a suggestion or question? Need some fishing tips? Want to help out? Please reach out to Andy via email at andyavgoulas@yahoo.com or 262-893-4965.

For general inquiries, please send an email to our mailbox at southeasternwitu@gmail.com.

We hope to see you soon at one of our upcoming events.

—Andy Avgoulas

Partnership growth expands SEWTU Service Partnership opportunities

The word "foundation" is derived from the Latin word fundare and is defined as to lay a base for. John Graba laid a foundation in Milwaukee for the Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter with Veterans on the Fly at our local VA Medical Center, which I have used to refocus our SEWTU Service Partnership. I have used it as a guiding light and inspiration to build upon as I connect with new partnerships to serve our heroes.

As a new lead with the SEWTU Service Partnership, I have faced the same struggles as everyone else across the state when it comes to serving our community with restrictions due to the coronavirus.

Restrictions have caused many headaches in lost venues to hold fly-tying events in our area. And it has prevented many folks from wanting to break that social distance when it comes to meeting up for fishing events.

With little to no social media communication to spread the news of breaking into our community beyond patients at the VA, I felt it necessary to partner with local organizations that have a far-reaching impact across our state. I have participated in their events in the past and I felt it important to share what TU accomplishes with them in the hopes that I could grow numbers



Chapter News



VETERAN'S EVENTS BECOMING MORE FAMILY FRIENDLY

Sam Rogers, Afghanistan War veteran and Wisconsin's Coalition Director for Concerned Veterans for America (CVA), enjoys a first fish on the fly with his daughter, Eleanor.

and participation in our own organization.

I reached out to Wisconsin Hero Outdoors (WHO) in July and I hosted an event that saw not only potentially new members learning about TU, but I saw a growth with a building partnership to create opportunities in serving veterans, first responders and their families. The day included a casting clinic at their headquarters in Pewaukee and quickly moved to a local pond to put those new skills to the test.

WHO Co-Founder and Executive Director Eric Falkner was on hand and said, "I hope that with what we offer with WHO, we can continue to build our relationship and help grow your own mission and reach more heroes with more events."

I was very impressed with the open and welcoming arms to our mission and I look forward to hosting more events with them. Plans are already in place to do so, with fly-tying events at their headquarters beginning in November.

I had also invited Sam Rogers and his daughter to join us that day. Sam is an Afghanistan War veteran and contributes greatly to our nation's veteran community as Wisconsin's Coalition Director for Concerned Veterans for America (CVA). But just as important, I had invited Sam's daughter to join us, because she has made just as many sacrifices for this country as her dad while he fought overseas.

I feel that in order to serve our community of heroes the right way, we need to include the families in

our mission. Not only does it strengthen everyone's healing process, but it also builds our foundation as an organization within our generation of youth.

It is my belief that if our spouses and children are experiencing the same great escapes that we offer to our heroes, it acts as a stronger conduit of enjoyment and beneficial therapeutic activity.

After watching his daughter learn how to cast a fly line, Sam also witnessed her catch her first fish on the fly and said he hopes this can translate further into our community.

"CVA in Wisconsin is an organization that at its core is about empowering veterans, their families and building communities. Seeing organizations like TU working to support veteran fishing communities across the great state of Wisconsin reinforces how collaboration is the key to success. I hope to continue to connect other veterans to TU opportunities not only in southeast Wisconsin, but also to the Northwoods," said Sam.

So in turn, focusing on what John Graba has taught me regarding taking the reins of this great task in hand, I have learned that I need these partnerships and they need us, too. I am excited to continue these events with WHO, CVA and hopefully others. I am excited to see how we grow, and the impact that we continue to make on our community.

—Matthew Cade

Southern Wisconsin Chapter

SWTU has a new in-person meeting place for the fall – Schwoegler's Lanes on the west side of Madison. There is plenty of parking and meeting space, and it's close

to the beltline, so is quite convenient. We had hoped to meet in September but the coronavirus had us shift that forward. Check out swtu.org for the latest on our in-per-

son meetings.

While the indoor meetings have suffered, our fresh-air outdoor workdays have been tremendous both in terms of work accomplished and friendly camaraderie shared. We have a robust schedule for fall and welcome all helpers. Find details on our website. We'd love to have you.

We're happy for the workdays but sad to get reports of New Zealand mudsnails in more streams, including Dane County's Token Creek and Elvers Creek. This is disappointing, and we're doing what we

can to alert our members and help officials with signage and cleaning station placement. It's a good reminder to all of us to clean our gear.

As part of our spring elections our board said farewell to Tom Parker, who has served an amazing six-year run as treasurer. Tom's thoughtful professionalism created a solid financial foundation we were able to build on and make a true difference for our coldwater resources. We thank Tom profoundly and are excited to welcome Nick Jackson to the role.

—Drew Kasel

Wild Rivers Chapter

While some of the state saw a lot of rain, much of our chapter's area experienced excessive heat and drought conditions this summer. Many anglers gave the trout a break and focused on other sport fish. But as fall approaches and cooling rains come, we'll be out to make up for lost time on the stream.

Our most noteworthy recent event was assisting with the Wisconsin Youth Conservation Congress's August weekend on the Namekagon River. Frank Pratt hosted three days of activities: fish shocking with the DNR, paddling the river with staged volunteers demonstrating fishing styles along the way, and an evening of fly tying, lure making and pizza eating. Our members were proud to be included.

Also of interest is our current involvement with Landmark Conser-

vancy in promoting their acquisition of 218 acres of the Mount Telemark property outside of Cable. This intact forest plays a vital role within the upper Namekagon watershed for the protection of groundwater sources and the larger ecosystem.

Our local watersheds continue to face concerns. The proposed CAFO in the Town of Trade Lake in Burnett County, which intends to house 26,350 hogs, has drawn many in the community to work with officials to preserve the environment that defines our community. And the Kristle KLR proposal in Bayfield County to bottle artesian well water for sale outside the Lake Superior Basin has been rejected twice at the county level, thanks in part to the swift and vibrant response within the community.

—Kevin Seefeldt

Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter

Another summer is in the books, not without challenges from climate change, TU New Direction and managing an outdoor chapter event.

Because of the coronavirus, we embarked upon a new challenge to have an outdoor event for our chapter members and the general public in August. We called it "The Silent Auction." Unfortunately, two members passed, but the families graciously donated fishing equipment. We filled more than 15 8-foot tables with silent auction items and rummage sale bins. We also added four raffle items, including vendor tables consisting of three guides, a fly shop, DNR representatives, a custom rod builder, a Wisconsin Clear Waters Project table, and Free the Kinni. Plus, two drift boats and Stealth Craft Jet Engine Boat.

Thanks to Dale Dahlke, Bill Heth, Steve Gausman, Kim Erickson, myself and a homeless guy who

offered to help and refused to be paid, although we stuffed \$20 into his hand, we managed to set up the event. Around 3 p.m. the wind dropped, the sun started to peek through, the guides showed up with three boats, and Lunds Sport Shop set up a pop-up shop.

The exciting part was the number of younger attendees under 40 years old who participated in the auction, fly tying and casting. Next year, we will schedule this again, and "The Silent Auction" will become an annual event.

The Gilbert Creek project has added another continuation of existing restorations. A new landowner has accepted a DNR easement offer to continue the rehabilitation to connect the "Triangle." Gilbert Creek is a Brook Trout Reserve Stream, and our chapter is very fortunate to be part of working with past restorations and the next mile



CLEAR WATERS CHAPTER HOSTED "THE SILENT AUCTION"

The chapter filled more than 15 tables with silent auction items and rummage sale bins. They also offered four raffle items, vendor tables and other activities.

Chapter News



JAM-PACKED FLY BOXES, DRIFTBOATS AND MUCH MORE

It doesn't get any better than that, and the Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter's outdoor silent auction featured that and much more.

and a half to tie the headwaters to existing restorations.

The DNR has acquired a new easement on McCann Creek. The DNR and Wisconsin Clear Waters Chapter are proposing a thalweg restoration design in August, and a new parking lot and a restoration plan are on the schedule. DNR Stream Specialist Nate Anderson sent us the process explaining the thalweg restoration

McCann Creek has long been recognized as one of the most popular and best streams in Chippewa County for naturally reproducing brook trout. The McCann Creek State Fishery Area surrounds nearly the entire creek. More than 50 percent of the fishery area is in state easement or fee title. The upland headwater area contains an outwash plain in which stormwater seeps into the ground and resurfaces as springs in or near McCann Creek. These springs assure adequate and quality baseflow for the stream.

Due to the shallow gradient of the section of the stream just upstream from County Highway SS, the stream is wide and shallow. Because this site was previously disturbed, it has created extensive braiding, side channels and meander cut-offs. Subsequently, the stream has become shallow and wide with poor fish habitat. Water depth throughout the section is generally less than two feet. There is lit-

tle pool habitat or overhead cover for trout, mainly because the stream bottom is covered with coarse substrates such as rubble, cobble and gravel, which prevent natural scouring from occurring, typically providing pool habitat. Thermal impacts and lack of habitat reduce biodiversity and water quality.

An easy and cost-effective way to provide a pool habitat is to use mechanical equipment to create a pool habitat. Excavated material will be used to create a current deflector on the inside bend of the creek to channel the creek's flow into the newly created pool area. All material placed on banks will be from the stream channel, with no other rock brought onsite for bank creation. The extensive shallow channel will have an excellent run-riffle-pool ratio when completed for added trout habitat enhancement. There will be spawning riffles, a deep overwintering pool, and a feeding and resting run after completion.

This section of the stream will be an attractive fishing area and provide outstanding recreational opportunities. Our members cannot wait to see this project materialize.

Given the coronavirus resurgence, we're waiting to see how the chapter will present upcoming meetings. But we have options, such as hybrid in-person/Zoom meetings or even full-virtual meetings.

—Jim Erickson

Wisconsin River Valley Chapter

I'm not sure how our other WAV teams are doing but I am enjoying my first year collecting data. May, June and July were wonderful to be out there hearing the bird song and watching for rising trout and bug hatches. August was like a switch had been flipped and was very different, as there were very few bugs flying around. I did not miss the deer flies that typically greet when we arrive, but I enjoyed the chill returning to the water after a fairly hot summer. The songbirds are already en route to the tropics for the winter, leaving the woods nearly silent on our most recent data-collection day. I miss their sweet song already, and I'll be waiting for them to return.

Here is the news from our neck of the woods. On September 8 we held our first chapter Meet & Greet at Sconnies. After so many virtual meetings, it was nice to be able to cautiously venture out and chat in

person at a distance. Thanks to everyone who came out to introduce themselves or swap stories.

Upcoming events include:

- October 12: Member meeting with guest speaker Tom Lager, who will discuss the American grannom, also known as the black caddis.
- November 9: Member meeting with a DNR report by Tim Parks
- December 8: Member meeting with Ron Schmidt discussing spin fishing in the Driftless Area, as well as how to make spinning lures.
- January 13: Member meeting with Craig Cook discussing the fly shop industry and technology.
- As for the Fly Fishing Film Tour, we are keeping our fingers crossed. However, no date has been set yet. Stay tuned.
- March 10: Member meeting with a DNR update on the Prairie River Project, presented by Tay-

- lor Curran
- April 14: Member meeting with Carmin Hardin discussing "Tips for Solo trips, Where to find Beer, Bathrooms and Fish."
 - May 12: Member meeting with Heidi Oberstadt discussing diversity with Trout Unlimited
- All presentations are planned to be at Sconnis Alehouse and

Eatery, 1239 Schofield Ave, Schofield. Social time and chapter announcements are from 6 p.m. to 6:45 p.m. Presentations will begin after announcements. Please join us. Stay safe and enjoy these last few weeks of the season.

—Linda Lehman



WOLF RIVER CHAPTER CONTINUES WORK ON NINEMILE CREEK

John Rose paddles Nine Mile Creek during the Wolf River Chapter's July 10 work day. Their long-time and ongoing efforts keep the creek flowing freely, delivering needed cold water into the Wolf River.

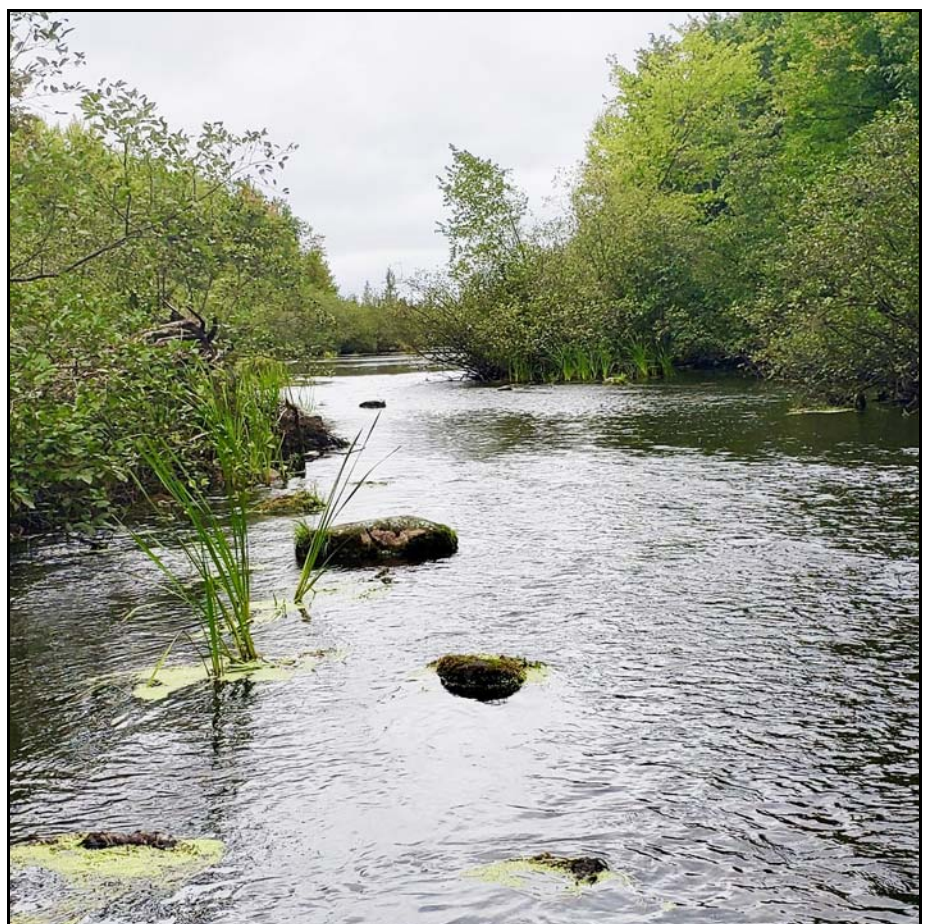
Wolf River Chapter

The Wolf River Chapter has continued its work on Nine Mile Creek, a coldwater tributary of the Wolf River. In July we had a work day up creek of the culverts. After the workers dragged their canoes to the creek from the trail, Tim Waters recorded a water temperature of 62 degrees. They launched their canoes and headed upstream and deepened the breeches in several beaver dams to keep that cold water flowing and the Nine Mile Creek in its banks.

Our final work day of the summer was in August, and the general feeling is that with the beavers and the majority of the dams eliminated for now, Nine Mile Creek is healing itself. This will be an ongoing proj-

ect as we have discovered from past experience that as the beaver move back in the creek gets dammed up quickly, raising the water temperature.

Another cold water tributary of the Wolf River was explored in early September by Vice President Zach Buchanan. He measured the water temperature at the mouth of the Hunting River to County Highway T at 62 degrees, and he found beaver slides and chew sticks with all sand and muck bottom. There was no trout habitat and he spotted three small northern pike. Blue Spring, which drains into the Hunting River, had a water temperature of 50 degrees. Above Fitzgerald



HUNTING RIVER ALSO PROVIDES COLD WATER TO THE WOLF RIVER

Wolf River Chapter member Zach Buchanan explored the Hunting River, finding coldwater springs, as well as beaver activity.



Chapter News



OAK BROOK CHAPTER TEAMS UP WITH SEWTU ON KARCHER CREEK

This was the first workday that SEWTU had done on Karcher Creek in southwest Racine County. Some brushing work had already been done by the DNR, but there was still plenty to do.

Dam Road, the water temperature was 58 degrees and he saw three beavers.

Water levels remained very fishable this summer, about 350-500 CFS. Reports from late summer fishing have been excellent with smallmouth bass being extremely active. Several local fisherman have talked about achieving their lifetime bests in number of fish caught in a day.

On September 11, about 13 chapter members became the WRC Volunteer Team at the Wolfman Triathlon, earning the chapter \$500. Thanks to the entire WRC Volun-

teer Team for a job well done and to the Wolfman Triathlon folks for making this fundraising opportunity possible.

By the time you read this, our chapter will have held our annual Autumn (October 2nd) meeting at the Bear Paw Outdoor Adventure Resort. Upcoming events include the return of the Wolf River Fly Tying Rendezvous on January 22 at the Bear Paw Outdoor Adventure Resort on Highway 55. And planning has begun for a 2022 Wolf River Meet & Greet on the third Saturday of May.

—Laurie Zen Netzow

Oak Brook Chapter

The Southeast Wisconsin Chapter (SEWTU) generously invited us to join them for two recent workdays: Bluff Creek on June 10 and Karcher Creek on July 10. SEWTU has a proud heritage of frequently conducting hands-on stream improvement workdays streams in their area. We are excited to grow our relationship with SEWTU and look forward to working together more in the future. They are a friendly group and we encourage members to attend future workdays.

Karcher Creek is located in

southwest Racine County, south of Burlington, Wisconsin, and is less than a 1.5-hour drive from the Oak Brook Chapter area. Seven OBTU members participated in the workday, which was followed by a traditional brat fry lunch. Karcher Creek is in the Karcher Springs State Natural Area, located at the southern end of SEWTU's area, close to Illinois. This was the first workday that SEWTU had done on Karcher Creek. Some brushing work had already been done by the DNR, but there was still plenty to do. Work consisted mainly of cutting down



OAK BROOK/SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN CHAPTER KARCHER CREEK CREW

buckthorn with a chainsaw and dragging the branches away from the stream corridor. Also, loppers were used to cut numerous other invasive species. There were enough volunteers to split up into three groups, each with a person geared up for chainsaw cutting.

Karcher Springs State Natural Area is owned by the Wisconsin DNR and was designated a State Natural Area in 1972.

The springs originate on the east side of a wooded esker and feature a complex of springs, calcareous fen, and stream. The stream is small, but fast and undisturbed in its upper reaches. The DNR has been stocking the creek with fingerling brook trout for several years and is finding some 6-to-8-inch carryover fish in surveys.

Bluff Creek is a spring-fed trout stream in southeast Wisconsin. The June 10 project consisted of placing "biologs" along a bank of the creek in its upper stretch. This is a slow-flowing stretch, with a lot of sand and silt deposition. The biologs narrow the stream, creating a deeper, swifter flow.

Conway Creek Update

The contractor hired to do the main restoration began work in June. Bank stabilization and habitat improvement, such as weirs, embed-

ded root wads and mid-stream boulders, is expected to be completed this summer.

OBTU is serving as a sponsor and funding leader of this project. We were awarded an \$8,000 Embrace-A-Stream grant from TU National for the project.

With help from the Coulee Region Chapter, OBTU raised a matching contribution of \$8,000 and presented a check to TUDARE for \$16,000. The total cost of the project is expected to be more than \$80,000, about half of which will be covered by USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) funding. Other organizations providing financial support include Bass Pro Shops and Cabela's, Blackhawk TU, Crawford County and Elliott Donnelley TU.

After 17 years of hosting Youth Fly Fishing Classes designed to meet the Boy Scouts of America fly fishing merit badge requirements, OBTU was forced to shut down in 2020 due to the coronavirus. So for 2021 we retooled our youth fly-fishing classes using the Zoom platform, which we conducted last winter. These included fly tackle, outdoor code, safety, etc., which could be accomplished on-line. A hybrid program was devised to complete remaining aspects of the program requiring in-person instruction, such as fly tying, casting, fishing, etc.

LAKE TROUT, from page 15

harvested, the lake trout sport fishery is closed for the year.

Leans are the backbone of the recreational fishery, but Siscowet are actually more abundant in the lake and caught in greater amounts by commercial fishers. Leans are preferred for eating because most people consider siscowets too fatty. However, siscowets have commercial value if smoked or rendered for fish oil. Because of some mercury, PCB and PFAS (perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination, the Wisconsin DNR recommends people eat no more than one meal of Lake Superior lake trout, of any size, per month.

The future: Inland lakes

The outlook for inland lake trout in Wisconsin is cloudy because of global warming. Two climate change trends are most worrisome, longer summers and more intense precipitation. In summer, lake trout are restricted to the cold bottom layer of the inland lakes. The longer the summer, the more liable this bottom layer is to run out of dissolved oxygen. If this happens, lake trout will be forced into shallower warmer water that still has dissolved oxygen

and will experience thermal stress and perhaps die.

More intense rainstorms can lead to greater runoff of nutrients into the lakes, accelerating the decline in bottom dissolved oxygen during summer. Poor land use in the surrounding watershed and along the lake shore can further add nutrients, making the problem even worse. Summer bottom oxygen conditions are already marginal in Geneva and Big Cedar lakes in warm years, and such years are expected to become more common. If climate warming cannot be halted, even the lakes with the best bottom conditions, Trout and Big Green, will eventually lose their lake trout.

Lake Michigan

The big question for lake trout in Lake Michigan is whether natural reproduction will continue to improve to the point that they eventually become self-sustaining. Current projections are encouraging, but the lake ecosystem has been destabilized from invasions of many non-native species over the years and is highly dynamic and unpredictable.

Of particular importance is the food base. The Lake Michigan sport fishery is currently managed for five top predators, lake trout, brown trout, rainbow trout, coho salmon,

and chinook salmon. All of them feed primarily to almost exclusively on alewife, a non-native species. Alewife were formerly extremely abundant, but in the last two decades their numbers have declined. The food needs of the five predators now almost exceed the amount of alewife available. If alewife numbers get too low, the fishery for trout and salmon could collapse, as has happened in Lake Huron. To prevent this, management agencies have been reducing trout and salmon stocking, but this is unpopular with anglers. And as natural reproduction increases, which has been the case for lake trout in the lake proper and for chinook salmon in tributaries in Michigan, agencies have less direct control over predator numbers and are more at the mercy of natural fluctuations in predator abundance. Several future scenarios are plausible, some of them not good.

Lake Superior

In Wisconsin, lake trout are most secure going forward in Lake Superior. Climate change is warming the lake, but it is so big and has so much volume that it should continue to have good lake trout habitat for many years. However, some nearshore areas may gradually become less

suitable, and successful sport and commercial fishing may require longer and more expensive trips to offshore areas. Loss of nearshore habitat will affect leans more than siscowets. Sea lampreys remain a threat, and effective control must continue for lake trout to thrive.

Conclusions

Lake trout have long been and continue to be an important species in Wisconsin, providing unique sport fishing opportunities in a few inland lakes and serving as a keystone top predator and supporting valuable sport and commercial fisheries in the Great Lakes. Overfishing, sea lamprey predation and pollution problems that had devastated Great Lakes lake trout have been brought under control, and Lake Superior populations have largely recovered, and Lake Michigan populations are improving. Climate change threatens inland lake trout, and possible collapse of the food base is a major concern in Lake Michigan. Future prospects are best for lake trout in Lake Superior.

A member of the Southern Wisconsin Chapter of Trout Unlimited John Lyons is curator of fishes at the University of Wisconsin Zoological Museum.

TREE LINE, from page 13

Still, it's a cool place and we have plenty of food." Mostly gorp, I thought.

"So," Howard continued, "ten bucks for the guy who gets 50 fish. Plus, we'll go barbless." He pulled out a small needlenose pliers and blunted the barbs on his Daredevil. "Well, flyboy? What about it?"

Always a sucker for a Howard bet based on some sort of pointless competition, I knocked down the barbs on my streamer. The bet was on. Howard added some more rules. First you had to count out loud. Second, you had to show your opponent your fish. "OK, go!" he shouted and the game was on. It was neck in neck although the barbless hooks did present a challenge as a number of the little buggers did get off. After an hour or so, a tie was declared due to both of us losing count and Howard catching a single larger cutthroat. Seeing an actually eatable-sized fish, our competition went to pieces and we now focused on a trout dinner.

After figuring out how to catch some "larger" 10-inchers, and getting enough for dinner, Howard proposed another competition. "OK", he said, "What about catching a trout on something weird? Weirdest bait wins the 10 bucks." "Howard", I said, "who gets to decide what the winning weirdest bait will be?" "Me", he said. I couldn't argue with that logic, so we began this new contest immediately.

Howard started with a single freeze-dried green pea, strung onto a gold number 10 hook. He added a split shot and chucked it out into the lake. As anticipated, a starved miniature cutt slammed it. Howard grinned.

I was next. I noted earlier that day that the pair of undershorts I had chosen for this portion of the trip had seen better days. Strips of white elastic dangled through holes around the waist band and legs. I pulled some strips of this white elastic from the leg band of my undies and made a white elastic streamer. It would be a sure killer. I impaled the elastic strips on a small hook. Howard did not stand a chance. The white elastic undie streamer would be my ticket to victory.

Oozing with confidence, I placed a lovely 30-foot cast toward a pod of tiny feeding trout. Maybe, I thought, an elusive grayling might also like underwear elastic. If so, I would be the king of Fossil Lake. I stripped the seductive white elastic slowly, just under the surface. A trout, a little larger than Howard's 10-incher, inhaled it. The Wonderod bucked and jiggled. We had another eater. Victory was mine. And, given my history of losing to Howard in almost every other competitive situation, this victory was especially sweet.

A celebration was in order. Howard scrounged up enough twigs and spruce knots for a small fire. I cleaned the trout, powdered them in some biscuit mix, and fried them along with some rehydrated hash browns. No bears at 9,890 feet, I thought. I even cooked the rest of the dried peas as a side. Dessert would be gorp. It was a feast.

After dinner, Howard and I discussed the fact that we were both really scared to death when we woke up to the snow. Both of us were silently contemplated about trying to get down the mountain and agonized about finding the trail along with the possibility of getting lost or caught in even worse weather. Al's comment about hauling out our frozen carcasses was in both of our minds. We never mentioned this to

one another while stuck in the tent. Howard made Hobbit jokes, while I made "Vrroom, Vrroom" hot rod sounds and showed him pictures of the girls in bikinis in the hot rod mag. Now, in the glow of a tiny twig fire and with the thoughts of frozen doom behind us, our day of catching even small cutthroats made us two of the happiest trout fishermen in Montana. It's funny how fishing, even not necessarily good fishing, can change things for the better, I thought. Howard was probably thinking the same thing.

First glimpse of the big boy

The next morning, I hiked around the lake. Howard stayed around camp, emptying his tackle box and trying anything which might appeal to a larger cutthroat or maybe a grayling. I was about half way around the lake when I came across a large inlet that looked cut off from the main lake. A grassy bank constituted one shore. A light breeze was blowing and a small grasshopper landed in the water. Out of nowhere, a large cutthroat rose from the bottom of the inlet and inhaled the hopper. Some larger fish were here after all.

It hadn't seen me and finned just below the surface, enjoying the big wind-blown meal. I crept backwards and, once out of sight, walked back to Howard and told him about the big fish. Maybe, between the two of us, we could figure out something to catch this big trout.

We crept up on this small body of water, keeping a low profile. We could see the big fish lying just off the bottom. The water was unbelievably clear. The big fish could probably see everything and clearly had the advantage. It looked like it was the only fish in this water. "Maybe", Howard whispered, "it ate everybody else." "I think you're right." I whispered back.

"Whadda ya think?" I asked. "Definitely fly country, Ricky. Go for it. The daredevil would scare the crap out of it." I agreed. It would be like throwing a brick into the water. I dug around and found a big Joe's Hopper in my box. It looked similar to the hopper the big fish just ate. I spliced on some additional tippet and tried to figure out how to best mimic a hopper being blown into the clear water from the grass bank, while not showing myself to the fish.

After thinking about a strategy, I walked around the pool to get on the far side of the grass bank, staying out of sight. Howard hid by a large rock to view the action. I snuck from rock to rock until I was in casting range. Patience is not my strong suit and it took an enormous amount of will power not to try a long cast and just plop the hopper on the big fish, and hope for the best.

I waited for a breeze to stir the surface. Then, I began to false cast. The hopper fell into the pool just as the breeze died. I waited for what seemed a long time. Once the surface was perfectly flat, I gave a small twitch. I could see the big fish rise off the bottom to just below the hopper. It refused the fly and sank back into the depths. I waited and twitched again. It rose up a little, but sank back into the depths. Again, I was refused. When another breeze rippled the surface, I picked up the fly and took a look at it. I dried it and applied some more floatant. My next cast was refused again. I decided to give it a rest.

Howard crawled over to where I was hiding beside a large boulder. We could see the big fish cruising slowly around the bottom of the pool. "Maybe I could try a surface

bait." Howard offered, seeing my frustration. He continued, "Maybe a Jitterbug." I scowled. He knew he had me right where he wanted me. Flyboy had failed yet again. "How about a Hula Popper or a Bassere-no?" He was having great fun, rattling off bass baits which he knew wouldn't work and taunting me as only Howard could. "What about a rubber frog?" he offered. I ground my teeth.

"Hey, I know! How about the fly you made out of your underwear?" I had to laugh. After all, we were two lifelong friends who fished together since we were little boys. He could razz me all he wanted. I would get this big trout on a fly if it took a couple of days. I would wait until the big fish wanted to eat again. We sat behind a big rock, watching the big fish and waiting.

Now the breeze was dying and I would make my last attempt for the day. The surface was still faintly rippled and I tried again. This time I didn't wait for the surface to calm and twitched the hopper the second it hit the surface and skittered it along the top for a second. The big fish swam up off the bottom and exploded on the hopper. I had a good hookup. The fish was on.

This was no stunted cutthroat. It was a powerful fish and it plowed all over the little pool, staying close to the bottom, and not tiring for a long time. It charged back and forth, trying to break me off using every corner of its small kingdom. I worked hard to keep the big fish from breaking the thin tippet in the jagged rocks which lined the bottom of the pool.

After what seemed like a long time, it tired. Once on the surface, Howard ran over and netted the fish which proved to be long but skinny, just like its tiny cousins. Its gills pumped heavily in the net just like my breathing in the thin air. Its throat had the bright orange-red slashes of a cutthroat.

We had only enough time for some quick photos. I estimated the fish to be just shy of sixteen inches and maybe two pounds, a monster for this sterile high-country lake. Howard sprinted over to the main lake with the net and released the big fish, just in case its private pool was really separated from the main lake. "That fish was way too cool to eat." He declared and added. "Now it can eat some of those dinks!"

After releasing the fish, Howard asked me, "How much does a fly rod cost anyway? I might have to buy one." I was shocked. Had my catching the big trout unseated the trusty Daredevil? All I could do was shake my head in disbelief. As I walked back to camp I thought of what an unbelievable trout fishing experience I had just had.

We would hike out the next morning. That last night after dinner we sat around a dying little twig fire, drinking coffee and laughing about the hard climb, the snow, the gorp, and our angry sunbather. But mostly, our discussion was about the big trout. "Pretty cool fight," Howard observed. "Very cool indeed," I said as I remembered the time and effort spent to catch just one fish. "Worth it," I thought.

We also talked about the lack of any golden trout or grayling. We re-

checked the Beartooth Country Map which listed the two hundred or so mountain lakes in the Beartooths, each listing the fish species supposedly living in them. We were puzzled. Fossil Lake listed "brook and golden." Fox Lake, which we knew pretty well, listed "Rainbow."

"Geez", I said, "didn't we also catch cutts, cuttbows, and brookies in Fox?"

"Yup", said Howard.

I thought a little further. Rainbow Lake, where I camped three years before, listed "rainbow and brook" I caught only cuttbows. Then it dawned on me. These were stocked fish and the Montana fisheries people were probably playing "mix and match" with what the hatchery was producing to maintain the fishing. While golden trout and grayling may have indeed inhabited Fossil Lake at one time, the tiny cutts we caught probably came up the mountain in buckets hauled in by horses or mules, or maybe dropped out of a helicopter. We thought there was probably not enough food at such a high elevation which accounted for their stunted size and their willingness to attack anything vaguely resembling food. Our big fish must have been a holdover. We were a little crestfallen.

Tough to say goodbye

The next morning, we packed out and said goodbye to Fossil Lake and its surreal treeless landscape. While catching the big lone cutt was a highlight for me, it was also a little disappointing, knowing we were catching what were most likely stocked fish. Still, it was a hell of a beautiful place. I just wished I could breathe a little better. On the way down the trail, as my breathing got better, we talked about what we might do for next year's trip. "Maybe Yellowstone," I said to Howard. I had never been there but heard it was pretty cool and had some pretty famous trout streams. I had never seen a geyser or even a moose or buffalo for that matter. Howard agreed with my suggestion. Maybe next year, we would assemble a crew and go to Yellowstone. We talked as we hiked down the mountain.

"You, know" said Howard, "we have to go there."

"We do?" I asked

"Did you forget, it's an annual."

So, the planning for the first Yellowstone National Park Expeditionary Force Trout Trip started while hiking down the mountain from Fossil Lake on that very afternoon in the late July of 1979.

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 troline 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.

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TRIMBLE, from page 9

In particular, it was found, grass intercepted the water and sediment from upslope, allowing water to infiltrate and sediment to be trapped.

- Improved crops such as alfalfa were introduced, which send down deep roots and encourage water infiltration. Other plants such as corn were improved to allow for denser plantings, which reduced erosion.

Demonstration areas allowed neighboring landowners to see the success of the methods, and to convince them to invest the time and money to change from the old ways.

In his book, Trimble writes:

“The utility of these demonstration areas was shown by the spread of contour-strip farming from the Coon Creek demonstration area to adjacent counties during the period 1939-1967. In 1939, contour striping was limited to Coon Creek and its immediate environs, but by 1967, it was ubiquitous across the four-county area [Vernon, Crawford, Richland and Grant counties].

“It is important to note that the soil conservation revolution has never ceased in the Hill Country, or indeed in the United States. NRCS and the Farm Services Agency (FSA) continued to work with farmers between 1982 and 1992, increasing grassed waterways, contour strips and terracing.

“Since the 1980s, there has been another conservation revolution: no-till farming. Instead of plowing the soil, seeds and fertilizer are injected into the soil, protected with a deadened grass cover.”

Trimble said the measures deployed on the landscape in the 1930s and 1940s had produced a ten-fold improvement in preventing soil erosion. He said that no-till farming had produced improvements that were “another order of magnitude.”

Watershed problems

Trimble described several problems facing watersheds in the Driftless Area.


First, he said that the increase in intensity of rainfall events due to climate change will pose additional challenges. To contend with rainfall events like the one in 2018, agricultural techniques more powerful than no-till will be required.

Second, he said that legacy sediment is still moving through the system. He said that moving the eroded soil is a process that will likely take centuries or more. He said this means that soil will continue to be moved from the upper reaches of watersheds into the lower main valleys. This has potential to continue to raise the level of floodplains in those areas, imperiling communities and public infrastructure.

Third, to the extent that no-till management is holding the soil in place on upland fields, the intensity of rainfall events means that greater amounts of clear water are coming off those fields. The relatively clearer water, which Trimble describes as ‘hungry water’ has more erosive power than muddy water. He said that these more powerful flood waters continue to move sediment, and are building up natural levees along streams, resulting in floodplains being cut off from the streams. This is resulting in more swamps, where areas that had been dry in the 1970s, when Trimble’s team had first worked there, being wet in the 1990s. As more sediment is deposited in the lower main valleys, the groundwater table rises, and basements previously dry will become flooded.

Gillian Pomplun is a reporter for the Crawford County Independent and Kickapoo Scout. We thank them for sharing this article.

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Great Lakes Stream Restoration Program update



Chris Collier

WITH CULVERTS REPLACED, MOSQUITO CREEK FROWS FREELY

This project on Mosquito Creek in Oconto County reconnects three miles of class 1 trout stream.

By Chris Collier, Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager

We've had a hot summer across the Northwoods. This highlights the importance of making sure wild and native trout are able to access cold headwater refuges during these increasingly common heatwaves. The survivability of these trout we all enjoy depends on healthy and connected watersheds, and I'm happy to report that we've had another successful summer developing and implementing projects.

We had an incredibly productive field season, thanks to our new project coordinator, Danielle Nelson, and our three interns. They spent the summer completing road-stream crossing inventories, filling in large data gaps between the national forest boundary and the Lake Michigan coastal zone. This information will be used to help local communities identify and prioritize coldwater conservation projects. They also partnered with U.S. Forest Service

staff to complete habitat improvement projects on the North Fork Thunder River in Oconto County, helping to restore habitat that was reconnected by previous barrier removal projects.

Danielle also worked with Jake Lemon to launch a new monitoring program that is taking a deeper look into how trout populations respond to our crossing replacement projects. She identified two future project sites and tagged fish at each site with PIT tags that give a unique identifier to each trout. She then set up an antenna array that registers when a tagged fish passes through. This will show us when fish try to pass through a culvert and if they are successful, giving us more data about how our projects are benefiting trout movement and populations.

Regarding implementing barrier removals, as of August 31 we've completed five crossing replacement projects with our partners this summer. These projects reconnected

more than 15 miles, bringing our total miles reconnected to 135 since 2017. The streams we worked on this summer are located in the Menominee, Oconto and Peshtigo watersheds.

Lastly, I think many of you have started to hear about TU's priority waters initiative. The goal of this process is to identify priority waters in each state that provide high-quality, climate-resilient, and locally important coldwater habitat. We can then use these identified watersheds to direct our volunteer, chapter, council and national programming. This process will heavily feature your grassroots knowledge and is meant to help foster more collaboration between TU chapters and TU National. I'll provide more information as it comes, but feel free to con-

tact me with any questions.

In closing, while it's always exciting for me to share project updates with you, it's equally or even more important for us to remember to take time for ourselves and get out to enjoy the trout, waters and public spaces we work so hard to protect. I recently took the time to jump across state lines and chase wild brown and rainbow trout in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Honestly, I couldn't believe how refreshed and recharged I was after just one day out of cell service chasing trout, so make sure you take some time to get outside before the snow flies.

If you would like to learn more, or check out one of our projects, reach out to me at 419-296-4390 or chris.collier@tu.org.

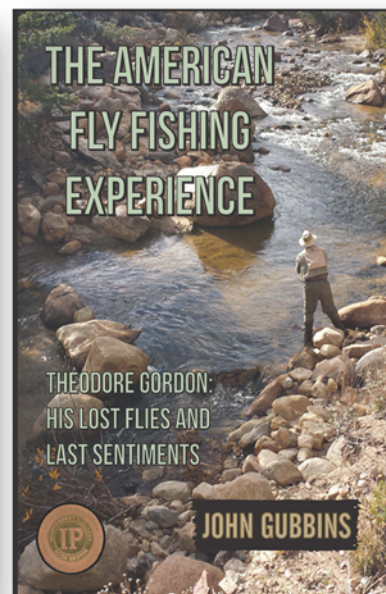
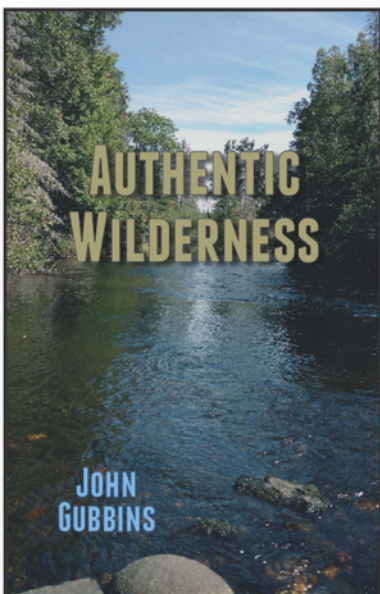
See you on the water.



Caddis Shack Guide Service

AUTHOR TAKES TIME TO FISH IN THE UP

Considering how much time and effort TU's Chris Collier has put into reconnecting streams in northern Wisconsin, it's nice to see him enjoying the resources he works so hard to improve.



In John Gubbins's beautiful new book, what begins as a story of adventure in the wilderness of Alaska, rife with both camaraderie and loneliness, soon becomes much more, as memory and destiny intrude, carrying with them the sort of heartache and soul-sickness that in Gubbins's careful hands, burst with an electric and affirming humanity.

Matthew Gavin Frank

Professor, MFA Program in Creative Writing, N. Michigan University, Marquette, MI

**Winner: 2020 IPPY Bronze Award
2020 Finalist Indie Award**

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

Bert Darrow, Author, Guide & President of Theodore Gordon Flyfishers

For Books and Inquiries: Amazon - Kindle & Paperback
John Gubbins, 665 Tony's Lane, Ishpeming MI 49849

PH: 906-869-6679 · profoundriver@gmail.com (paperback with endorsement gratis)



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

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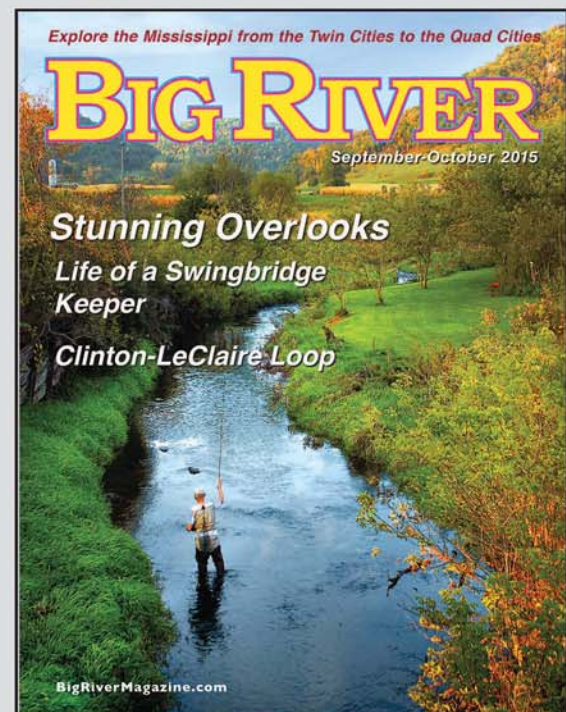
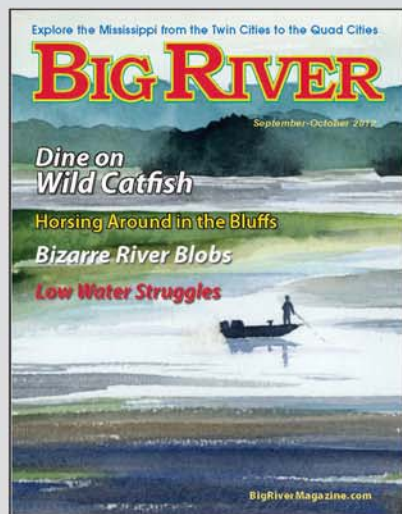
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