



# Wisconsin Trout

Summer 2024

## Pre-disaster flood resiliency bill signed into law

By Mike Kuhr, WITU Advocacy Chair

On Wednesday, April 3, 2024, Governor Tony Evers signed Senate Bill 222 into law, which will create a pre-disaster flood resiliency grant program (2023 WI Act 265). The bill was authored by Representative Loren Oldenburg (R-Viroqua), Repre-

sentative Todd Novak (R-Dodgeville), and Senator Romaine Quinn (R-Cameron), who along with several co-sponsors, ushered the bill through the legislative process.

Wisconsin Trout Unlimited, along with our partners the Wisconsin Wetlands Association and the Wisconsin Towns Association, worked closely with the authors to develop this bill.

In discussing the broader issue of flooding with a large group of stakeholders, it became apparent that there are many resources to help communities repair and replace infrastructure damaged by floods but very few resources available to help those communities proactively address these issues before the next storm hits.

The flood resiliency grant program will be administered by the Wisconsin Emergency Management



### HIKING WITH THE GOVERNOR

Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter President Carol Murphy, Governor Tony Evers and Council Advocacy Chair Mike Kuhr at a hike in Governor Dodge State Park in April. Carol and Mike thanked Governor Evers for supporting the flood resiliency bill and discussed the importance of the Inland Trout Stamp and Knowles Nelson Stewardship Programs.

(WEM) Division of the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.

The program enables local governments to apply for assessment grants (capped at \$300,000 for a project) or implementation grants (capped at \$250,000 for a project). Assessment grants support gathering data about flood vulnerabilities at the watershed, catchment or stream-reach scale. The information gathered through an assessment will help local governments understand current conditions, which is the first step to improving them.

Where data indicates degraded conditions of wetlands, streams and floodplains are compounding the flooding problem, the program en-

ables implementation grants for hydrologic restoration. The projects enabled through an implementation grant restore the landscape's natural ability to store, infiltrate and slowly release runoff, helping to reduce flood damage and protect important infrastructure like roads.

WITU would like to thank the bill's authors, the Governor and our partners for their work to see this program created. We look forward to working with the Wisconsin Emergency Management Division and our local communities to improve the ability of our watersheds to handle flood waters in the future.



Rep. Loren Oldenburg



Rep. Todd Novak



Sen. Romaine Quinn

## Whirling disease detected in Wisconsin

The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) notified the DNR of a positive test result for myxobolus cerebralis (whirling disease) during routine fish health certificate testing of rainbow trout at a private fish farm. The testing was carried out by a private veterinarian on behalf of the fish farm license holder. DNR staff have been working with DATCP staff and implemented wild fish testing as a precaution following this notification.

The fish at this fish farm appeared normal and were not experiencing signs of the disease.

The disease is caused by a microscopic parasite called myxobolus cerebralis and is one of the main pathogens that is tested for in salmonids before legal movement between farms or stocking of fish in Wisconsin. The disease involves both a fish host and an invertebrate host, specifically the worm Tubifex tubifex.

Myxobolus cerebralis is only capable of harming salmonid fish. It poses no threat to humans, nor to common household pets like cats or dogs. There is no treatment for the disease.

DATCP's responsibility in this matter includes:

- Fish Farm License registration as authorized under Wisconsin Administrative code ATCP 10.6.
- Reportable disease notification: DATCP notified DNR of the positive test results.
- Pathogen tracing: Working directly with the farm owner to gather information on fish movement from the farm (private hatchery).
- Quarantining the private hatcheries known to have potentially infected fish on site after trace out.
- Providing the DNR with information about fish movement to other farms.

- Ordering and releasing quarantines on all fish hatcheries that have received fish from the affected farm.

DNR's responsibility in this matter includes:

- Providing information to staff on fish health certificate invalidations and holds on private stocking permit approvals that were identified by DATCP
- Sampling wild susceptible fish from Elton Creek, the hatchery's source water to determine if it is present in the waterbody. Sampling took place above and below the dam that is located just upstream of the affected hatchery. Only brook trout were captured during sampling as the more susceptible rainbow trout were not present in this creek. Samples were tested at the Washington Animal Disease Diagnostic Laboratory. Preliminary results were positive for the parasite

myxobolus cerebralis in both upstream and downstream fish samples

- The DNR is meeting regularly with DATCP for comprehensive discussions related to the discovery of the parasite, strategies for controlling the issue at the affected hatchery, epidemiological tracing and state surveillance strategies.
- The DNR will continue to work with DATCP to investigate, monitor and lessen spread.

### Planning in progress

There will be a surveillance plan put in place in coordination with other agencies and the Menominee Tribe.

Plans are to develop education tools for anglers and river users such as website content, media materials, disinfection protocols, signage, etc.

See **WHIRLING**, page 6

Chair's Column, with Scott Allen

# Elegy for Opening Day

*"You may ask, why did this tradition get started? I'll tell you why - I don't know. But it's a tradition, and because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do." — Tevye The Milk Man*



That first weekend of May of that first year of college should have been two days of study for my final exams. How often we find ourselves at a crossroad where the chosen path harbors a destination entirely at odds with the journey; food, romance and retail bling do that to us from time to time. I should have been poring over books and reciting from memory tree names like *Tsuga canadensis* and *Robinia pseudoacacia*, but the shadow of the tradition of opening day more than eclipsed my mind and made no exception but for grabbing my tackle and heading out the door.

That magnetic pull of rod and tackle on opening day, or whenever the bite is on, plays no part in stocking the larder. Some of us exhibit Pavlovian salivation at the thought of a shore lunch, others return a better person after an epic release. We fish for recreation, we fish for contemplation and relaxation, we anticipate the tradition of opening day. None of us catch trout to pay the bills, none of us will go to bed hungry without trout on the table. Tradition brings predictability and constancy to our lives, that's what the tradition of fishing gives us, that's what the May opener has provided for decades.

Tevye the Milk Man, the likeable, laughable protagonist in the musical *Fiddler On The Roof* offers his explanation of the purpose of tradition:

"You may ask, why did this tradition get started? I'll tell you why - I don't know. But it's a tradition, and because of our traditions, everyone knows who he is and what God expects him to do..."

This past April the Wisconsin DNR Spring Hearings were held at each of 72 counties at which a ballot of advisory questions was put before attendees, an internet voting option was also available.

Question 2 on the ballot offered voters the choice of moving the opener to the first weekend in April from the first weekend in May thereby increasing the harvest season by one month. The advisory question passed in 70 of 72 counties, effectively ending the May opener if promulgated by DNR. Regulations must always be in flux as habitat changes for better or worse, as harvests increase or decrease, as budgets grow or whither, ensuring there will always be fishable trout water in Wisconsin, and there will. But let's look beyond the creel and more towards the heart where our love of the traditions of outdoor sports belongs. Let's cherish the tradition along with the catch.

"Tradition, Tradition. Without our traditions, our lives would be as shaky as, as...as a fiddler on the roof."

—Tevye the Milk Man

You go, Tevye.

## Next Council meeting Saturday, Oct. 19 via Zoom

The next Wisconsin State Council meeting is Saturday, October 19 starting at 9 a.m. It will be held via Zoom, and not in person.

Chapter presidents and Council leaders will receive a Zoom invitation. If you would like to view or participate in the meeting, contact Council Chair Scott Allen at [jscottallen12@gmail.com](mailto:jscottallen12@gmail.com).

## Driftless Women On the Fly



THIS BROWN TROUT BROUGHT BIG SMILES TO CATHERINE SMITH

Marlene Huston

Driftless Women on the Fly fished, camped and shared stories at a gathering in early June at a county campground near Viroqua, Wisconsin. The group of women came together about three years ago to share their common love of flyfishing. The group ranges in skills from professional guides to beginners. It gives the women an opportunity to fish with old friends and meet new ones for future fishing adventures.

It rained Saturday morning, as is not uncommon in Wisconsin. Everyone left their camp stoves at camp and headed to the Daily Brew in Westby, where great coffee and delicious pastries cheered everyone up. Some folks made plans for fishing that afternoon while others decided to head to Viroqua to see what the Driftless Angler Fly Shop had in stock. If you don't know what flies to fish with that day, the Driftless Angler is a great place to stop for some flies and advice.

The fish we caught that day, mostly brown trout, were safely kept wet and returned to the stream. Hungry folks back from fishing were rewarded with brats served at the campground with many other goodies. Hillary Pinnella of Fly-Fishing Women of Minnesota provided much of the planning that helped make the event successful. She also provided the kiln-dried, bug-free firewood that made for a cheerful, relaxing campfire evening. We are all looking forward to next time.

## Wisconsin Neonic Forum Save the date!



Neonicotinoids, or neonics, are the most widely used insecticides in Wisconsin, applied to millions of acres of agricultural and urban land each year. What benefits do they provide and what risks do they pose?

**OCTOBER 30**  
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

DeLuca Forum at the UW-Madison  
**Institute for Discovery**  
330 N Orchard St, Madison, WI

### TOPICS INCLUDE:

- What neonicotinoids are and where these chemicals are used in Wisconsin
- Economic benefits of neonicotinoid use
- Risks to the environment
- Wisconsin's oversight of neonicotinoids
- Regulatory approaches from other states and countries



Registration opens August 1, 2024 at <https://www.cleanwisconsin.org/events>

# Reviving coaster restoration

Many partners in the Great Lakes community are meeting the moment to advance coaster restoration further than ever before.



Katie Steiger-Meister, USFWS

## ADULT MALE COASTER BROOK TROUT

By TU Great Lakes Engagement Coordinator Jamie Vaughan and TU Monitoring and Community Science Manager Jake Lemon

On the Lake Superior coast, a coalition of partners facilitated by TU are coming together to breathe new life into the study and recovery of native coaster brook trout, a life history variation of brook trout that spend part of their lives in Lake Superior. Scientists do not consider them to be genetically distinct from inland brook trout, so they are still scientifically known as *Salvelinus fontinalis*. However, they can grow much larger by foraging in the big lake, reaching up to 25 inches.

The revival of these coaster brook trout efforts kicked off just recently when their home waters were named a Priority Water – a new movement by TU that identifies rivers and streams where concerted efforts can have the greatest impact on building trout and salmon strongholds for the long term.

In mere months, the Great Lakes community has made great strides in stepping up to support these efforts, thanks to the zeal of local businesses, TU chapters and individual donors. When you start to learn about coasters, it's understandable why so many are excited to dive in and play a role in researching and recovering these special and rare fish.

### Initiative gets jumpstart from local business

One local business is showing its support by launching a limited-edition fly rod called "The Coaster." J.A. Henry Rod & Reel Company in Cannonsburg, Michigan is teaming up with TU to raise money for coaster brook trout research with the proceeds from its new Coaster Migratory 8-weight rod. The first \$10,000 in gross sales of The Coaster fly rod will support critical project functions of on-the-ground field work and data gathering and analysis.

The limited-edition Coaster is available for purchase today. It's a feather-light nano-carbon 8-weight and is available in both 9-foot and 10-foot options.

"By supporting research, we can better understand the coaster's ecology and unlock their genetic secrets. The ultimate goal is to conserve and restore coaster brook trout populations to their native range and to ensure their long-term survival," said Andrew Mitchell, owner and operator of J.A. Henry Rod & Reel Co.

### The power of "One TU"

In addition to the support from J.A. Henry, a groundswell of contributions from passionate individuals from the Great Lakes community have provided a launching pad for the coaster effort.

Notably, the late John M. Frey made a \$20,000 matching contribution to Michigan TU for coaster work, a move of remarkable hope and generosity that was the catalyst for key future donations. Frey was a second-generation trustee emeritus of the Frey Foundation and a staunch advocate for robust support of lakes, rivers, streams and watersheds. He was happy to be in the water as an avid fly fisherman and outdoor enthusiast and believed that we are caretakers of an impressive percentage of the world's freshwater resources, and therefore we must always "strive to keep our rivers Grand and our lakes Great."

Following the consequential matching gift, it was critical that other donors mobilize to be able to fully realize John's vision.

Luckily, the TU community in the Great Lakes is blessed with generous individuals who believe in the power of collaboration for conserva-

tion wins. Changemakers in coldwater philanthropy Roy Arnold and Grant Brown made significant contributions to forge the coaster brook trout initiative into reality.

While TU's grassroots network in Illinois may not have ample local trout waters to steward, these oft-overlooked Great Lakes chapters are some of the most impactful we have. The Elliott Donnelley Chapter, which covers the Chicago metro area, made a generous contribution to the coaster effort, bringing the coalition even closer to meeting its \$20,000 matching goal.

The Gary Borger Chapter, which serves Chicago's northern suburbs and whose members frequently fish in Michigan and Wisconsin, is also doing its part to propel the initiative forward. The chapter chose the coaster brook trout initiative as its cause to honor the late Gregory Heiser, a Gary Borger board member and a champion of the conservation of streams, rivers and habitats.

"He loved the natural beauty of Michigan and Wisconsin trout streams, and GBTU is proud to support this project as it is something Greg Heiser would have encouraged us to do!" shared Bill Davis, a fellow Gary Borger board member.

Greg had a passion for fly fishing, hiking and enjoying nature, and the substantial donation to advance coaster brook trout restoration seems a fitting and meaningful tribute to a life devoted to preserving our natural resources.

Perhaps what's most remarkable of these gifts is what links all the contributors. Few are living in the backyard of coaster brook trout habitat, yet they all recognized the tremendous value in protecting a wild and special fish such as the coaster, not for themselves but for the inherent good they represent. This was a truly selfless and forward-thinking act.

### Coaster history and restoration efforts: then and now

Historically, coaster brook trout were abundant in Lake Superior coastal waters. These large, lake-run brook trout held cultural significance for Native American nations and early European settlers, who relied on them as a food source and valued them for their beauty and sporting qualities.

Unfortunately, overfishing and habitat degradation from 19th century logging practices reduced populations until they were considered "fished out" by 1865 in Lake Superior waters near Marquette. Ongoing habitat degradation, overfishing and the introduction of non-native species furthered their decline in the subsequent 150-plus years.

Several known populations of coasters survive today, and there is a high likelihood that many more exist undocumented. The Great Lakes Fisheries Commission launched a coaster brook trout rehabilitation plan for Lake Superior

in 2003. Since then, momentum has surged and stalled with periods of intense activity followed by lulls in interest and funding.

With its renewed efforts, TU is working with partners like the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Michigan Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Red Cliff Band of Ojibwe Indians, the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community, Michigan Technological University, Michigan State University, the Michigan and Wisconsin state councils of TU and a network of local TU chapters.

TU and partners are ready to begin assessing current distribution of coaster brook trout and conducting research into the specific recovery, habitat and restoration needs identified by the stakeholder group, with hopes that this coaster research will inform the implementation of strategies that will help recover this fishery.

Thanks to funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Community-Based Restoration Program made possible by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, TU staff and partners are assessing habitat connectivity in identified coaster brook trout streams in Wisconsin and Michigan and replacing culverts and removing dams to open miles of coldwater stream habitat for migrating fish.

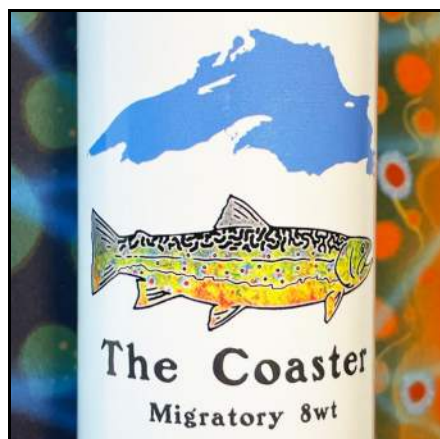
This summer, TU is kicking off monitoring efforts in partnership with the Michigan DNR and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service by conducting fisheries surveys and taking fin clips for genetic analysis.

### Conclusion

If the upwelling of support from the business community, grassroots leaders and trailblazing individuals is any indication, TU expects there will be much more work and good news on the horizon for coasters. We celebrate those who have left their mark on coaster efforts so far and look forward to getting to work and making progress in honor of those who so generously contributed.

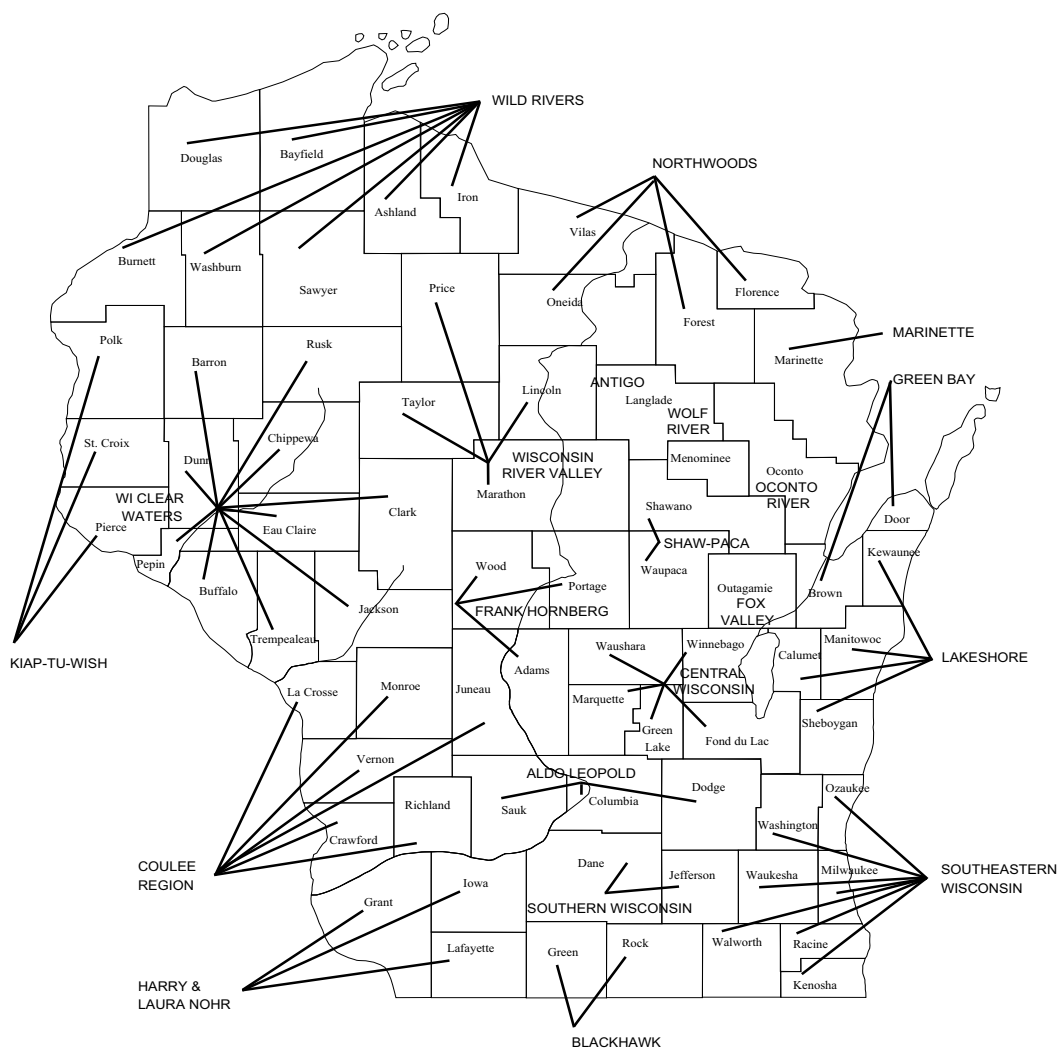
You can help support efforts to protect and restore these important and fascinating fish by purchasing The Coaster fly rod or with a tax-deductible donation today.

Scan the QR code to contribute to coaster research and restoration efforts:



J.A. HENRY'S "THE COASTER" LIMITED EDITION FLY ROD

## Wisconsin TU's 21 Chapters



Visit the Wisconsin State Council at [wicouncil.tu.org](http://wicouncil.tu.org) or find us on Facebook.

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**Vice Chair, Northeast Region:** Dale Lange, See Marinette County above.

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

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

## Are you getting emails from TU?

If you are currently not receiving news and event-related email messages from your chapter, the state council and TU National, then you are truly missing out on what's happening at all three levels. TU National manages the mailing list for the council and chapters, so update your address by going to [www.tu.org](http://www.tu.org), log in, then go to "Email Preferences." You can also call 1-800-834-2419 to make these changes, or to ask questions about making the changes via the web site.

## WISCONSIN TROUT

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

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### State Council Officers

Executive Committee includes officers and vice chairs

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**Myk Hranicka, Vice Chair**

**Boyd Roessler, Secretary**

**Scott Wagner, Treasurer**

# Driftless projects slated for 2024

Across the Driftless Area, there are exciting stream projects we'll see taking shape in Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota.

By Sara Strassman,  
TUDARE Program Manager

## Wisconsin

### Harry and Laura Nohr Chapter Snow Bottom Stream Improvement Project

The DNR granted the chapter a Surface Water Grant to improve a section of the Blue River that flows through the Snow Bottom State Natural Area in Grant County. The stream is a class II trout stream and is considered an exceptional water resource.

About 4,200 feet of stream will be improved. Streambanks will be sloped to improve access, remove brush, and improve flood carrying capacity. Some sites will be rock riprapped to prevent soil erosion. Fish habitat structures, including log deflectors, boulder clusters and escape logs, will be installed throughout. Two stream crossings will be installed to aid the DNR with property access and land management.

Construction is scheduled for mid-August of 2024. The project complements a previous Nohr

Chapter project on the adjacent property, and both will combine for 1.3 miles of improved habitat when completed.

## Iowa

### North Bear Creek Phases 2 & 3

TUDARE met with the Iowa DNR, the Natural Resource Conservation Service and the landowners of the North Bear Creek Projects in April and May to discuss the final details of the projects.

The next phases are scheduled to begin in early June and will include improving fish and macro-invertebrate habitat, streambank stabilization and installing a stream crossing that can be used by the DNR and landowners. Some areas of the streambank will be sloped for improved access and erosion control. Habitat structures will include basking logs, boulder clusters, bank hides, root wads and weirs.

This project should be well received by the many anglers who visit the most heavily fished trout stream in Iowa.

## Patterson Creek

The Patterson Creek project is scheduled to begin in August or September of 2024.

There are still details of this project to be worked out. The project is planned to include fish and macro-invertebrate habitat structures, streambank stabilization and stream crossings that can be used by the landowner for the active cattle farm.

TUDARE is working with the Iowa DNR, NRCS and the landowner to implement a rotational grazing program, with an alternative watering source to help ease the pressure on the trout stream. Stay tuned for more updates soon.

## Minnesota

### Mazeppa Creek, Zumbro Falls

This project on a DNR-eased stream east of Zumbro Falls, Minn., has been in the works for four years. Construction is expected to commence in late May and will stabilize six long-eroding streambanks. Riffle structures will be installed to prevent streambed down-cutting and

add diversity to the stream, which is also known as Trout Brook. Rootwads and boulder clusters will be incorporated throughout the 3,300-foot project reach. A native riparian seed mix will be planted along the streambanks.

Funding for the project comes from MNTU, TUDARE the NRCS EQIP and RCPP programs and landowner contributions.

## Mill Creek, Chatfield

This project is on a DNR-eased section of Mill Creek in the town of Chatfield, Minnesota. The site adjoins a local park and will offer improved habitat in an easily accessible reach of stream. Rock riffles, rootwads and chapter-built LUNKER structures will be installed in this 2,300 foot reach just upstream from the Root River. Funding for the project comes from MNTU, TUDARE, the NRCS RCPP program and landowner contributions.

You can reach TUDARE Program Manager Sara Strassman at Sara.strassman@tu.org or 608-668-1632.

## Book Review

### “River Profiles: The People Restoring Our Waterways” by Pete Hill

By Matthew Mitro, Wisconsin DNR

A few years ago, in 2021, I gave an online presentation to the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited on trout and climate change. Not being in River Falls that night, I missed out on meeting those who attended in person, including Pete Hill.

Pete Hill is a watershed restorationist who worked for many years in watershed planning and stream and wetland restoration out of Washington, DC. He is currently based in Milwaukee and is the principal and owner of a consultancy organization called Great Lakes Watershed Opportunities. At the time he visited River Falls, Pete was researching for a book he was writing about stream restoration and the people behind it. Published this past April by Columbia University Press, Pete's book is titled, “River Profiles: The People Restoring Our Waterways.”

River Profiles comprises eleven chapters detailing some of the myriad personalities involved in river and stream restoration in locales ranging from Washington State to suburban Atlanta and places in between, including two chapters on Wisconsin.

Pete starts his book detailing his account of meeting with Dave Rosgen, who he refers to as “the most outsized personality” in stream restoration. Rosgen, who developed the widely used “Rosgen Stream Classification System,” has long been considered a controversial figure. Pete's chapter serves as an excellent primer, adroitly blending his interactions with Rosgen and the differing perspectives from others in the stream restoration world. The many other personalities detailed in Pete's book may be less-well known than Rosgen, but their stories are equally fascinating and their work surely inspiring.

The chapters on Wisconsin cover two restoration issues from two dif-

ferent ends of the state, each touching on two different rivers that bear the same name, the “Kinnickinnic River.” One chapter addresses stream restoration projects under the auspices of the Milwaukee Metropolitan Sewage District. The other, which will be of particular interest to Wisconsin trout anglers, focuses on Driftless Area streams in the River Falls area.

Now, my review of Pete's book is somewhat shameless in that he does mention me and the work I presented at the meeting he attended in River Falls. In the chapter, “Wisconsin Trout: Restoring Driftless Area Streams and Mitigating for Effects of Climate Change,” Pete uses my presentation on climate change and trout to set the stage for the important stream restoration work being done by my friends and colleagues Nate Anderson and Kasey Yallaly of the DNR and Kent Johnson of the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter of Trout Unlimited.

Perhaps we are our own worst critics, but I felt like I may have come across as the most pessimistic person profiled (though briefly) in the book, owing to the subject matter I addressed: the potential loss of trout streams to a warming climate. These days I am rather optimistic about the prospects for trout in Wisconsin, in part related to analyses of long time series of water temperature data, such as those collected by Kent on the Kinnickinnic River.

Monitoring and restoration work done by Kent and Nate and Kasey

form the basis of the chapter on restoring Driftless Area streams in Wisconsin. Pete describes Kent as an “uber-volunteer,” which I'm sure anyone who knows Kent will see as an apt description. I suspect many readers here are familiar with Kent's long history of TU-supported monitoring work, and whether you are or are not, this chapter will leave you with a refreshed appreciation

for his accomplishments supporting the trout streams we love to fish.

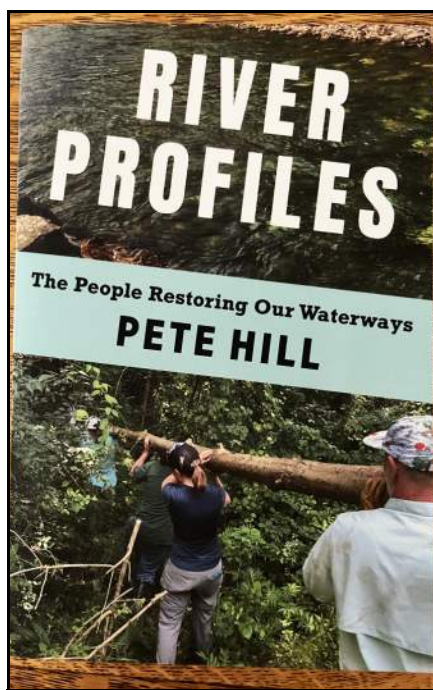
Nate and Kasey are also featured prominently in this chapter, Kasey as the DNR fisheries biologist for streams in the River Falls area and Nate as the leader of the DNR team doing the physical stream restoration work. Pete weaves together a detailed story of Nate and Kasey's restoration work in the context of a few different streams and ties that work together with the collaborative support they receive from Kent and other TU members.

What I personally found most interesting in Pete's book was his writing about beaver in the context of stream restoration. Overall, I would say that Pete provided a rather balanced view of beavers as they pertain to streams and salmonids. He let the stream restorationists, volunteers, and others tell their stories and generally did not editorialize. That is no small feat in today's world, where it seems like every popular science book on beavers sees them as the answer to any problem plaguing stream environs.

Preceding the chapter on Wisconsin Driftless streams is a chapter entitled, “Beaver Wranglers: Facilitating Functional River Restoration in Western Washington.” As you can imagine, this chapter was in general, though not exclusively, beaver positive. If you read any of the scientific literature on beavers and streams coming out of the Pacific Northwest, you will generally only read about the positive effects that beavers have on streams in mountainous or arid terrains. Beavers relocated for stream restoration purposes come from somewhere, however, and generally that is from more urban areas where beavers are often considered problematic. I liked that Pete did not shy away from the fact that beaver-human conflicts are not an exclusive problem of the Midwest.

One concern I have, however, is that if you only read the chapter on beavers in Western Washington, you could be left with the impression of Wisconsin as a beaver management backwater that has failed to keep up with the times. In that chapter, Pete quotes an introductory paragraph from an admittedly dated 1983 DNR publication on beavers and trout as a foil to the “current” research out west telling a different story. To be fair, he does revisit beavers multiple times in conversing with me, Nate, Kasey, and Kent, recognizing that beaver management in Wisconsin is complex and nuanced and open to new research that is ongoing in the state. You just have to read that next chapter to get that.

I found Pete's book to be very well written and a compelling read, particularly owing to the human connections he makes. I unequivocally recommend it to anyone wanting to know more about stream restoration in Wisconsin and elsewhere across the United States, and especially if one wants to know more about the people making it happen.



# TUDARE update

The summer season is upon us and the DARE team has been hard at work getting projects ready for construction, meeting with landowners, managing a successful grant round for the National Fish Habitat Partnership and wrapping up our winter/spring planning and coordination activities.

By Sara Strassman,  
TUDARE Project Manager

The summer season is upon us and the Driftless Area Restoration Effort team has been hard at work getting projects ready for construction, meeting with landowners, managing a successful grant round for the National Fish Habitat Partnership and wrapping up our winter/spring planning and coordination activities.

## Successful Symposium

We held our annual Symposium in March. We had about 300 live participants across the sessions with both new and familiar faces among our presenters. As always, the sessions were excellent, with agency, partner and student presentations. All the presentations were recorded and are available at the Driftless Area Restoration playlist on Trout Unlimited's YouTube channel.

We are working on an in-person Symposium for Feb. 25-27, 2025 in

LaCrosse, in partnership with the Wisconsin Wetlands Association. If you are interested in helping organize the Symposium, please reach out to me.

We held winter coordination meetings with state agencies, discussing joint priority projects and work areas. Our project updates section will provide more information on the projects going to construction this year. Please watch our Facebook page ([facebook.com/TU-Driftless](https://facebook.com/TU-Driftless)) for the news of our latest Driftless Area Restoration Effort Fish Habitat Partnership grant awardees, which will be coming soon.

Our first Iowa staff person, Cameron Aker, started in April. We are also fortunate to host this year's Jeremy Brooks Memorial Internship recipient, Kyle Kamm, who will begin in early June and will conduct habitat work, river and stream assessments and culvert inventories from St. Croix County in Wisconsin.

Returning this year are summer field crew leaders Maggie Dremsa



## KIDS FISHING DAY HATCH, AND TUDARE IS ALL OVER IT

TUDARE Partnership Specialist Peter Jonas spent a fun afternoon in Strum, Wisconsin showing children aquatic insects. He was trying to get them to categorize the bugs by their pollution tolerance, but what they really enjoyed doing was sucking up scuds in the turkey baster and flushing them back into the dish tub—over and over and over.

and Ernie Luedke. They will lead our culvert inventory work across Wisconsin's Driftless Area. We are also engaging some volunteers and two Iowa DNR seasonal technicians in this work to help us assess stream fragmentation across the

Driftless Area.

As you can see, we have a very busy summer underway.

Contact Sara Strassman by email at [Sara.strassman@tu.org](mailto:Sara.strassman@tu.org) or call her at 608-668-1632.

## WHIRLING, from page 1

A communication plan to staff, tribal nations, legislatures and stakeholders will be created.

DNR Fisheries Management staff have long maintained biosecurity standard operating protocols for prevention of spread of VHS (viral hemorrhagic disease), and these same protocols will be followed to prevent the spread of whirling disease. This includes, and is not limited to, following best management practices for decontamination and disinfection of boats, gear and equipment used in our fisheries staffs' day-to-day field work. Additionally, all state fish hatcheries have biosecurity plans and protocols for hatching, rearing, transporting and stocking fish including those that raise salmonids.

## General background on whirling disease (myxobolus cerebralis)

Myxobolus cerebralis is a microscopic parasite that can cause whirling disease in salmonid fish.

The life cycle involves both a fish host and an invertebrate host, specifically the worm Tubifex tubifex.

An infected trout releases hardy spores into the environment.

Tubifex worms eat the spores.

The parasite develops into its next life stage within the worm.

The next, water-borne life stage of the parasite, known as a triactinomyxon (TAM) is released from the worms into the water.

TAMs infect fish by attaching to their gills or skin.

The parasite then makes its way into the cartilage of its new fish host, where it forms spores, and the life cycle starts again.

The parasite damages the cartilage it infests and nearby nerve tissue, which can lead to the characteristic whirling that gives the disease its name.

It is possible for fish to be infected and never show signs of disease, especially older fish. However, these fish can still carry and spread the parasite.

## What species are at risk?

Whirling disease affects salmonids, which include trout and salmon.

Rainbow trout are considered highly susceptible.

It is important to note that the development and severity of the disease is impacted by factors such as age and size of the fish when exposed, with young fish being the most vulnerable to severe disease and death.

## What does a fish with whirling disease look like?

- Fish with whirling disease may:
  - Swim in a circular, "whirling" motion, hence the name of the disease.
  - Develop blackened tails, most notably with young fish 3-6 months old.
  - Have spinal or skull deformities.

It is important to understand that these disease signs are not specific to whirling disease only, but can be associated with diseases caused by other microbes, toxins, traumatic injuries, etc.

## How is the parasite spread?

Live or dead fish carrying the parasite are moved to new bodies of water. Infected tubifex worms living in the substrate and water are moved to new waterbodies.

Gear carrying water, aquatic vegetation, and/or mud containing the parasite are moved to new waterbodies.

Birds or other wild animals may carry the parasite to new waters.

## Where is it from?

Myxobolus cerebralis is thought to be native to Europe and was found in the United States for the first time in Pennsylvania in 1958. Since then, it has been detected in more than 20 states on both the east and west coasts and has also been detected in some parts of Canada.

## How is this parasite detected?

Typically, testing involves looking for myxobolus cerebralis spores in the head cartilage of susceptible fish.

A statistically appropriate number of the most vulnerable lot of fish at a farm is collected for testing.

Collected heads are submitted to a diagnostic lab, where the tissue is enzymatically broken down in a way that allows labs to look for the infectious spores.

If suspect spores are found, the identity of the spores is confirmed by either using a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test to look for genetic material specific to this species of parasite, or by looking for spores in tissue via histopathology, which allows examination of tissue at a cellular level.

While this is the first detection of the parasite in Wisconsin, no actual clinical signs of whirling disease have been seen at this farm or in the state of Wisconsin.

## There is no treatment

It is likely near impossible to eradicate this parasite once it establishes in a natural waterbody.

Spores in the environment are thought to be capable of remaining infectious for many years.

## How can the spread be lessened?

- Never move wild, untested fish to different water bodies.
- Never bring salmonid fish into the state that do not have the required fish health testing and importation permit.
- Always thoroughly drain and clean boating and fishing gear between water bodies.
- Avoid the use of felt-bottom boots. The increased surface area of the felt makes them difficult to clean thoroughly and makes them more likely to spread organisms. Use hard bottom rubber (cleated) boots or waders for use in trout streams.

Here are means of managing it and limiting its spread. This involves:

- For everyone, of upmost importance is to clean all equipment (such as boats, trailers, boots, waders, nets, fins) thoroughly to remove mud and aquatic vegetation, which can harbor the parasite (as well as many other pathogens and invasive species), before leaving any location.
- For limiting the spread of the parasite that causes whirling disease, we specifically recommend following guidelines for chlorine (allow at least a 15-minute contact time) and Virkon Aquatic (allow at least a 10-minute contact time)
- Please read labels and precautions before use. Improper use can damage equipment and/or cause endangerment.
- Finally, and also for everyone, make sure to thoroughly dry all sampling gear after cleaning.
- Do not dispose of fish tissue or by-products in bodies of water

## Could this impact Wisconsin's salmonids?

It is possible this could impact some of our salmonids. Outbreaks, in some cases, have affected rainbow trout populations in states such as Colorado and Montana.

Rainbow brook trout are the most susceptible salmonids in Wisconsin. Some other species, like brown trout, coho, chinook, and lake trout are only partially susceptible or even considered resistant (lake trout) to developing whirling disease and are therefore less likely to be negatively affected.

It is possible myxobolus cerebralis won't have a noticeable impact on wild fish in Wisconsin.

Some states, such as Virginia and Tennessee, have detected the parasite in their water bodies but have not actually seen any fish with whirling disease nor have they seen negative impacts on their salmonid populations.

## Reel Recovery returning in September

*Reel Recovery is hosting another retreat in the Wisconsin Driftless Area for men living with cancer.*

Reel Recovery is hosting another retreat in the Wisconsin Driftless Area for men living with cancer.

Tom Sather from the Wisconsin Clearwaters Chapter and Bruce Maher and Scott Wagner from the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter are teaming up to host a Reel Recovery Retreat for men living with cancer at the Oxbow Hotel in Eau Claire September 4-6.

Reel Recovery is a national non-profit organization that conducts fly-fishing retreats for men living with cancer.

Reel Recovery's mission is to help men in the recovery process by sharing with them the healing powers of the sport of fly-fishing, while providing a safe, supportive environment to explore their personal experiences with cancer, with others who share their stories.

Retreats are offered at no cost to the participants and are led by professional facilitators and expert fly-fishing instructors.

Reel Recovery provides all meals, lodging and fly-fishing equipment, and no previous fishing experience is required. Reel Recovery's overarching goal is to improve the lives of the men it serves.

Though only a few days in duration, a Reel Recovery Retreat can be a life-changing event for these men living with cancer. The retreats provide male cancer patients with information, education and a network of support that will help them as they proceed through their cancer treatment and/or recovery.

Retreat leaders provide participants an opportunity to gain new insights about living with cancer, about managing their disease and about coping with the psychological, social and emotional aspects of having cancer.

By sharing their stories with others who have gone through a variety of experiences with cancer, retreat participants learn about treatment options, navigating the healthcare system, dealing with insurance issues, facing mortality, coping with stressful family and work-related situations.

By learning from others in similar situations, retreat participants gain a fresh perspective about their disease and renewed hope about fighting and surviving it.

TU members living with cancer are encouraged to sign up to participate in a Reel Recovery retreat, and to encourage men they know who are living with cancer to learn more about Reel Recovery. TU members are also encouraged to consider volunteering as a fishing buddy for future Reel Recovery Retreats. Fishing buddies pair up one-on-one with retreat participants to support and mentor them during the fly-fishing sessions of the retreat.

For more information about signing up as a retreat participant or volunteering as a fishing buddy for future retreats, contact Reel Recovery at [info@reelrecovery.org](mailto:info@reelrecovery.org) or call 800-699-4490.

## Questions Answered About Friends Program

As grants coordinator for our Friends of Wisconsin TU and Watershed Access Fund, I often receive questions about the two grant programs. In this article I am going to address some of the specific questions that I have received about the Friends of Wisconsin TU fund.

**Why is there a January 15 deadline for submitting Friends of Wisconsin TU grant applications?**

Answer: The single January 15 deadline allows all grant applications to receive equal consideration, and it allows the Council to better manage the funds in the account. By using the January 15 deadline, the vice chairs are able to look at all incoming grants in a short period of time, consider any issues with any applications, consider the total amount needed for all grants, and make final decisions in time to award the grants at the February Council meeting.

After the grants are awarded in February, any remaining balance is placed in a safe certificate of deposit to earn additional funds prior to the start of the next grant cycle.

**Who is allowed to apply for a Friends grant?**

Answer: Only Wisconsin Trout Unlimited chapters are allowed to apply for Friends grants, and the projects funded by the grants must be located in Wisconsin. If an agency such as DNR is interested in using Friends funding for a project, the agency would have to connect with one of our local chapters. The local chapter would then have to submit the application to the State Council. If approved, that application would then count as the one chapter Friends grant allowed for any particular year and the requesting chapter would be responsible for supplying the funding for the re-

quired match.

**Does a chapter always have to request the maximum amount?**

Answer: This is a common question, and the answer is no. Situations arise where less than the maximum would still be helpful or perhaps a chapter may not be able to match the maximum amount. Chapters can request any amount up to the maximum of \$2,500. The chapter match requirement would then be equal to the requested amount. Chapters are limited to one grant annually.

**Can more than one chapter submit an application for the same project?**

Answer: Yes. Projects are becoming larger and more expensive and sometimes more than one chapter is involved. Partnering chapters would still be subject to the same restrictions in place for any other request. Maximum amounts, match requirements, and one grant per year would all still be in effect.

If your chapter is considering applying for a grant in 2025, feel free to contact me. My contact information is located on the leadership lists on page 4.

As always, I want to take time to thank our donors. The Friends of Wisconsin

TU program has developed a very loyal and supportive group of donors. Without them this program would not be possible. Thank you to the great group of people who continue to support the program. If you are not yet a member of our supporting group, please consider joining with a donation.

In the next issue of *Wisconsin Trout* I'll answer common question about our Watershed Access Fund program.

—Kim McCarthy

*The Friends of Wisconsin TU program has developed a very loyal and supportive group of donors. Without them this program would not be possible.*

## Wetland Science Conference in February

The Wisconsin Wetlands Association invites you to participate in the 30th Annual Wetland Science Conference February 25-27, 2025 at the La Crosse Center. Join other scientists and professionals of the wetland and water community of the upper Midwest to:

- Share your wetland research, restoration, management, or outreach program.
- Learn new identification and assessment approaches and techniques.
- Hear about approaches to incorporating wetlands into watershed and community planning.
- Discuss the latest in wetland science, planning and protection issues.
- Look ahead to the future of wetland science and practices in Wisconsin and the Midwest.

The three-day in-person conference, which regularly draws more than 350 attendees, will include plenary sessions, topical oral sessions, a poster session, workshops, working groups and field trips to area wetlands.

Joint sessions with the Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Symposium will feature trout and wetlands talks.

The conference will also offer many opportunities for networking and student engagement.

The submission deadline for special sessions is Sept. 30, 2024.

A call for presentations and posters will be issued in September and the submission deadline is Nov. 15, 2024.

Student scholarship recipients will receive free registration in exchange for a small amount of volunteering at the conference. The application deadline is Jan. 12, 2025.

There will be a student presentation competition with cash prizes.

Registration will open in December 2024 with a deadline of Jan. 17, 2025.

You or your organization can show support for wetland conservation as a conference sponsor and receive complimentary conference registrations for your staff. Sign up by January 17, 2025, to guarantee your support is recognized on our printed program and signage. Choose from several optional add-ons including a table in the exhibit hall at a special rate for sponsors.

Exhibitors can secure a table in our exhibit hall so you can promote your work to our audience. Exhibit space is limited, so sign up early to reserve your spot. Sign-up deadline is January 17, 2025.

## 2024 Fish and Wildlife Service stream project funding announced

Four trout stream restoration projects and an important sculpin study will be funded in 2024 as a result of Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort's partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Stream restoration projects will take place on Traverse Valley Creek and a tributary of Chimney Rock Creek in Trempealeau County, Danuser Creek in Buffalo County and the South Branch of the Root River in Minnesota. The Wisconsin Clearwaters Chapter partnered with the Waumandee Rod & Gun Club and the River Country RC&D as applicants for the Wisconsin stream restoration projects.

UW-La Crosse will receive a research award to study the distribution and abundance of sculpins in 15 subwatersheds of the Kickapoo Riv-

er so that we can better understand their habitat utilization, their co-occurrence with trout and their conservation needs when designing future stream restoration projects.

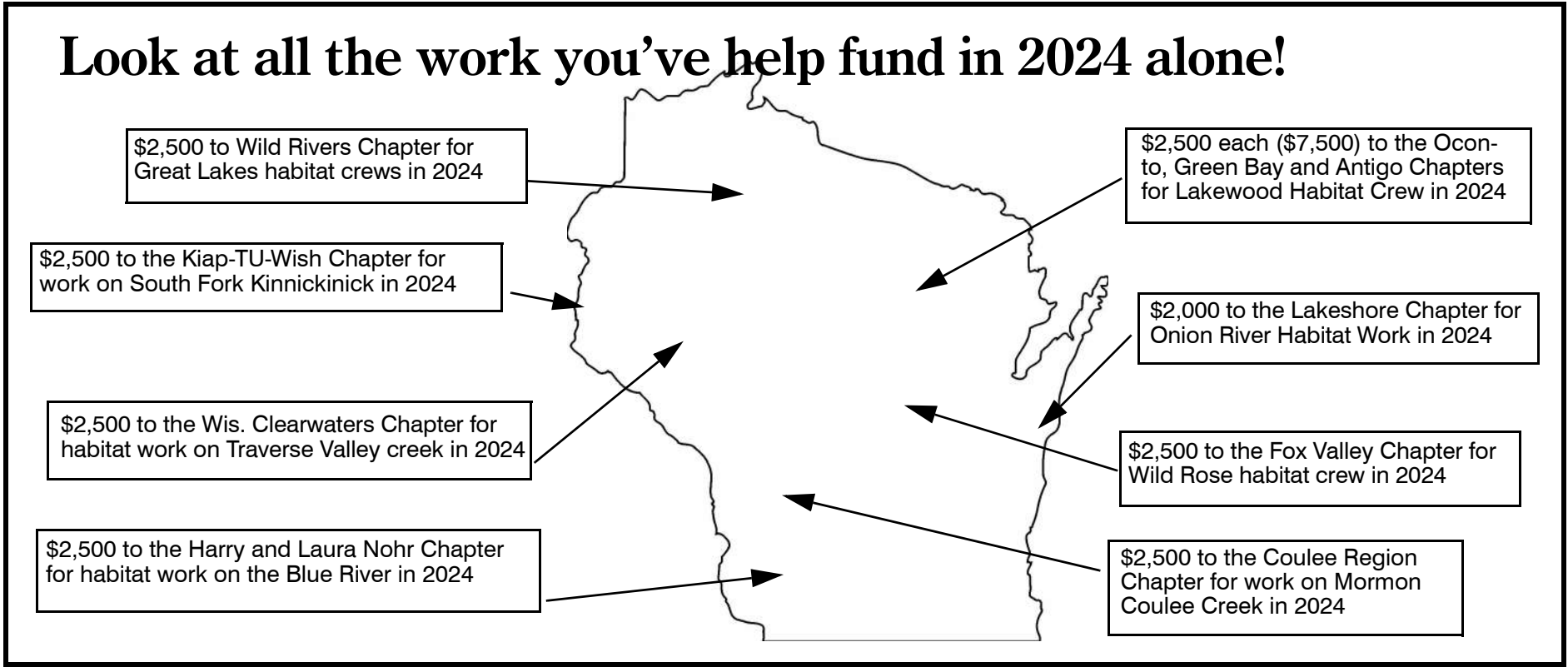
TUDARE is one of the original members of the National Fish Habitat Partnership (NFHP), which facilitates and funds projects between the Fish and Wildlife Service and non-profit organizations. TU chapters can access NFHP funds for projects through a matching grant program administered by TU-DARE. The five funded projects will cost a total of \$282,216 and received \$147,264 in NFHP funding.

For more information and details on each of these projects, or how to complete a National Fish Habitat Partnership Grant application, please contact either Sara Strassman or Peter Jonas.

# Please support Friends of Wis. TU in 2024

The 2024 Friends of Wisconsin TU grant request period ended on January 15 and 10 TU chapters have received grants totaling \$25,000 for projects across Wisconsin. The Friends of Wisconsin TU program wishes to thank all of our donors for their generous support. We could not do this without you.

## Look at all the work you've help fund in 2024 alone!



### Our Friends of Wisconsin TU

- |                             |                         |                          |                       |                                 |                     |
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|                             | In Memory of John Gribb |                          |                       |                                 |                     |
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*Yes, I want to join the "Friends" of Wisconsin TU.  
Enclosed is my check for \$100 or more, payable to Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.*

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

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Name

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Address

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City, State Zip Phone #



# New partnership for vet programs



VETERANS HELPING VETERANS: JJ, GINGER AND JOE HARPER

Veterans on the Fly is currently working with the BRAVE Program out of Milwaukee (<https://www.mcw.edu/departments/wisconsin-institute-of-neuroscience-wins/brave-program>). BRAVE is a traumatic brain injury recovery program specifically designed for military veterans and first responders. It is an intensive, outpatient program that focuses on diagnosing and treating brain injuries and post-traumatic stress so participants can return to normal life.

In April, the BRAVE Program started its first three-week Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP). For eight hours a day from Mondays through Fridays, participants go through life-changing, intensive speech therapy, physical therapy and mental health therapy. The nights and weekends are theirs to relax and do as they please. There are fun and therapeutic activities for participants to take part in during their free time.

That is where Veterans on the Fly comes in.

In the photo, from left is JJ, Ginger and Joe Harper. Each of these individuals has their own unique and amazing story.

Joe participated in an Avalon Action Alliance traumatic brain injury program at the Marcus Institute for Brain Health in Colorado. When he heard that Avalon was opening a clinic in his home state of Wisconsin, he immediately reached out to us. Joe finds solace in fly fishing and tying flies. He drove roughly an hour and a half, one way, to teach JJ and Ginger how to fly fish. Then afterwards we grilled out and ate lunch together. We are all strangers, yet we all are brothers and sisters in arms. This picture is the epitome of veterans helping veterans.

As you may know fly fishing can be a very healing activity. As a veteran that lives with TBI, fly fishing and Veterans on the Fly out of Madison have played a major role in his healing process and getting back to a normal life. If you know a veteran or a first responder that is suffering from a TBI, please let them know about the BRAVE Program and don't be afraid to ask them to go fly fishing.



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## Watershed Access Fund: Obtaining public access

**The Council's Watershed Access Fund has now completed its involvement in an important acquisition along the Kickapoo River. The hunt is now on for additional properties or easements that can be purchased to add to the amount of public water available for public trout fishing. Thanks go to all of our generous donors who have helped make our additions to public fishing areas possible. We appreciate your support.**

### Our WAF Contributors

- |                          |                   |                              |                   |
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| Dennis Anderson          | St. Paul, MN      | Dan Geddes                   | Milwaukee, WI     |
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| Stephen Born             | Madison, WI       | Dean Hagness                 | Custer, WI        |
| Linda and Dennis Buzzar  | DeForest, WI      | James Hammen                 | Madison, WI       |
| Terrence Clark           | Cottage Grove, WI | John Hammond                 | Appleton, WI      |
| M.Scott Conner           | Oconomowoc, WI    | Henry Haugley                | Sun Prairie, WI   |
| Andrew Cook              | Sheldon, SC       | Mark Heifner                 | Appleton, WI      |
| Dana Corbett             | Verona, WI        | Kurt Helker                  | Monona, WI        |
| Terry Cummings           | Rhineland, WI     | Robin Hering                 | Sparta, WI        |
| Dale Dahlke              | Knapp, WI         | Jeffrey & Kathleen Hook      |                   |
| Bruce Davidson           | Marinette, WI     | In Memory of John Gribb      |                   |
| Vernon & Elizabeth Drape |                   | John Hutchinson              | Sun Prairie, WI   |
| In Memory of John Gribb  |                   | Thomas Janssen               | Appleton, WI      |
| Katherine Duplessie      | Eau Claire        | Ronald Jirikowic             | Little Chute, WI  |
| Randall Durner           | Baraboo, WI       | James Kellner                | Grafton, WI       |
| R. Michael Elkins        | Mauston, WI       | John Kenealy                 | Waukesha, WI      |
| Doug Erdmann             | Wis. Rapids, WI   | Gerald Kobus                 | Milwaukee, WI     |
| John & Kathleen Ewen     |                   | Steve Krause                 | Oconto Falls, WI  |
|                          | Neenah, WI        | Joseph Kubale                | Dane, WI          |
| William Flader           | Madison, WI       | Angelo Laroccio              | Twin Lakes, WI    |
| Erik Forsgren            | Freemon, WI       | David Lenz                   | Middleton, WI     |
| Ronald French            | Fitchburg, WI     | David Linderud               | Durand, WI        |
| Stephen Gaffield,        | Madison, WI       | Michael Lutz                 | Middleton, WI     |
| In Memory of John Gribb  |                   | Larissa Lyon                 |                   |
|                          |                   | In Mem. of Thomas Puralewski |                   |

- |                            |                       |                              |                         |
|----------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Douglas MacFarland         | Dousman, WI           | Jeff & Mary Schmoeger        | Lake Mills, WI          |
| Larry Mahr                 | In Mem. of John Gribb | Frederick Seybold            | Madison, WI             |
| Paul & Nichelle Martin     | Baraboo               | Stewart Smith                | In Memory of            |
| Jeanne & Kim McCarthy      |                       | James Smith                  | Wisconsin Rapids, WI    |
| Carolyn McGuire            | Green Bay, WI         | Mary Spaay                   | In Memory of John Gribb |
| Jane Mc Mahon              | Marinette, WI         | Mark Steffensen              | Waupaca, WI             |
| Michael Medich             | Poynette, WI          | Michael Staggs               | Poynette, WI            |
| Peter Meronec              | Green Bay, WI         | Warren Stern                 | West Bend, WI           |
| Tom Mertens                | Stevens Point, WI     | Ronald Suslick               | Peshtigo, WI            |
| Robert Moser               | Green Bay, WI         | Jay Thurston                 | Viroqua, WI             |
| Gene Mueller               | Milwaukee, WI         | Patrick Trafton              | Madison, WI             |
| Doug Nelson                | Monona, WI            | John Tweddale                | Madison, WI             |
| Eric Nelson                | Appleton, WI          | Dennis, Becky Vanden Bloomen | Eau Claire, WI          |
| Paul Neuman                | Chili, WI             | Greg Vodak                   | Stoughton, WI           |
| In memory of Corky Hellyer |                       | Scott & Holly Wagner         | Hudson, WI              |
| Herb Oechler               | Wauwatosa, WI         | Donald Wellhouse             | Kaukauna, WI            |
| Cheryl & Winston Ostrow    |                       | Topf Wells & Sally Probasco  | Madison, WI             |
| Tina Pacente               | Viroqua, WI           | Timothy & Karen White        |                         |
| Donald Persons             | Middleton, WI         | In Memory of John Gribb      |                         |
| Randal Rake                | Janesville, WI        | Paul Williams                | Madison, WI             |
| Bob Retko                  | Helena, MT            | Lisa Wilson                  | Poynette, WI            |
| John & Susan Retzlaff      | Viroqua, WI           | Walter Zakahi                |                         |
| In Memory of John Gribb    |                       | In Memory of John Gribb      |                         |
| Micheal Richgels           | Onalaska, WI          | <b>TU CHAPTERS</b>           |                         |
| Kenneth Rizzo              | Oconomowoc            | Antigo Chapter               | Antigo, WI              |
| David Rhode                | Waukesha, WI          | Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter         | Hudson, WI              |
| Michael Routhieaux         | Janesville, WI        | Marinette Chapter            | Marinette, WI           |
| Mike Ryan, in Memory of    |                       | Oconto Watershed             | Gillett, WI             |
| Chuck Valiere, Rosholt, WI |                       | Southeast Wisconsin          | Milwaukee               |
| Tom Ryan                   | Whitefish Bay, WI     |                              |                         |
| Jack Saltes                | Mount Horeb, WI       |                              |                         |
| Charles Sanders            | Middleton, WI         |                              |                         |
| Jack Saunders              | Beaver Dam, WI        |                              |                         |

Here is my contribution of \$100 or more to the Wisconsin TU Watershed Access Fund

Make your check payable to Wisconsin Trout Unlimited

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

# Midwest outdoor expo a huge success

By Bob Haase

The 2024 Midwest Outdoor Heritage Expo in Milwaukee and Poynette was a huge success again this year with 4,823 kids and chaperones attending.

We have found that when we have that many kids (4th through 6th grade) it works better for the volunteers to tie the flies for the kids. The kids design their own fly by picking out the colors of the bead (head of the bug), the mop nugget (body of the fly), and the estaz for the legs. They have six colors to choose from for selecting the beads, mop nuggets and estaz, so that gives them a lot of design choices. That gives them some ownership in it. For smaller groups I still think it is nicer to have the kids tie the fly with the help of a volunteer.

We show them with an illustrated handout, how they can take the fly that they designed, attach it to a spinning or spincast rod and reel using a spinning float (bobber) to give the weight to cast the fly, and catch

panfish. The idea is to have them catch fish on a fly that they designed, and get hooked on fishing.

The one-day program at Havenwoods State Forest in Milwaukee attracted about 1,200 kids with 424 kids receiving a fly tied by TU volunteers. Volunteers for Havenwoods included Janet Fisher, Larry Worth, Steve Krakow, Ed Kosciak, Bob Haase and Ralph Klassy.

The MOHEE event in Poynette ran for two days and attracted about 3,600 kids, with 1,322 kids receiving a fly tied by TU volunteers. Volunteers at Poynette included Tracy Moran, Bob Haase, Ralph Klassy, Gary Cartwright, Dave Brethauer, Bill Millonig, Linda Lehman, Randy Durner, Ed Taylor, Sandy Klienast, Renee Sagel, Bob Asam, David Sands and Tony Vaughn.

A special thank you goes out to the volunteers who helped make this possible. We could not do this without your help. This is a great event for the kids, and there are more things that we can do, such as knot tying, fly casting, etc. We just



TU VOLUNTEERS TIED FLIES WITH NEARLY 1,800 KIDS

need the volunteers to do it. Make plans to volunteer next year and put it on your calendar for May 7 at Havenwoods and May 13 and 14 at

Poynette. Bring this up at a chapter meeting and see if you can get some tyers to participate.

## Summer volunteer opportunity: Signage patrol

*Your help is welcomed to repair, replace and remove old signage.*

Words and photos by Ellen Voss,  
Climate Resilience Director,  
River Alliance of Wisconsin

As we head into summer, there's an easy way to do some long-term good for Wisconsin streams while you're out fishing your favorite waters.

Ten or so years ago, there was a massive effort to get invasive species signage at as many stream access points as possible across the state to help educate anglers about the role they play in preventing the spread of invasive species. Signs are a good way to remind folks about the problem, and some of the locations also came with brushes that anglers could use to clean their boots and waders.

Like all of us, those signs (and brushes) are starting to show their age. Whether they've been hit by snowplows one too many times, are no longer near water or are illegible thanks to the unrelenting power of UV light, some of those well-intentioned signs and tools are no longer doing their job.

These relics need to be repaired, replaced or removed, and that's where you come in. This summer and fall, there are two ways to get involved.

Step one is getting an idea of where damaged signs are located.

While you're out fishing this summer, please let me know if you see a sign that needs some help. Minimally a GPS point or map link is a great starting point. Folks get bonus points for a photo of the sign, any notes you feel are important (e.g., "This sign is surrounded by wild parsnip."), and a phone number/email for future communication.

Step two involves actively repairing, replacing or removing old signs.

Once I compile the list of sites that need a visit, I'll need volunteers willing to take a sign and some tools and go make the repairs. Message me with your contact information, and details and instructions will follow at a later date.

Whether you just want to report a decrepit sign or have some time to do some active maintenance, this is a great summer volunteer opportunity that you can do solo or with your chapter. Let me know if you're interested by emailing [evoss@wisconsinrivers.org](mailto:evoss@wisconsinrivers.org) or calling 608-257-2424, extension 111. A response with details will follow.

Thanks for all you do for Wisconsin's valuable waters.

## Your opinions on water quality requested

*Only once every three years the DNR requests public input on surface water quality standards and related guidance. Don't miss your chance to speak up and be heard.*

Every three years, the DNR reviews Wisconsin's water quality standards or related guidance to determine which standards need development or revision, as required by the federal Clean Water Act. This comprehensive evaluation, called the Triennial Standards Review (TSR), is an essential process to keep Wisconsin's surface waters swimmable, fishable and drinkable.

This review helps DNR staff focus efforts to integrate the latest science, technology and federal requirements into how the state regulates water quality. In addition, the review assists the staff with work-planning and identifying needed actions for moving projects forward. Water quality standards act as guidelines for setting an appropriate level of protection for Wisconsin's lakes, rivers and streams.

Components of water quality standards reviewed as part of the Triennial Standards Review include

the following:

- Designated uses: Goals and expectations established for each waterbody.
- Water quality criteria: Narrative and numeric benchmarks established to protect the designated uses.
- Antidegradation: Policy or procedure established to protect high-quality waters.
- Water quality variances: Short-term changes to permit limits or water quality standards when criteria are unattainable.

### Public hearing and comment period

The DNR will hold a public hearing and informational webinar to gather input on which topics related to surface water quality standards should be top priorities for work during the next three years.

The hearing/webinar will be held

on Wednesday, July 17, 2024 at 2 p.m. Participants can join via a Zoom link or by phone at 833-928-4610

The Draft 2024-2026 Workplan is available for review and comment. This document includes a short description of each topic. At the public hearing, the DNR will review the department's draft list of priority topics, describe each topic, and take comments and questions. Participants may provide their comments verbally at the hearing or in writing.

Comments may be submitted to the DNR through July 26, 2024. Submit comments via email to [JenniL.Kempf@wisconsin.gov](mailto:JenniL.Kempf@wisconsin.gov) or via mail to:

Department of Natural Resources  
Attn: Jenni Kempf, WY/3, 101 S. Webster Street, Madison WI 53703

### Triennial review process

Step 1: Gather topic suggestions related to water quality standards. Compile a list of relevant topics.

Step 2: Solicit public input to rank topics during the public comment period and public hearing

Step 3: Use public input to help prioritize topics and draft a workplan for the next three years. Submit the final plan to EPA.

Once the Triennial work plan is complete, staff will begin work on the prioritized topics as time and resources allow.

### Previous cycles

Information about previous cycles is available on the DNR website. Work on topics begun in previous cycles will continue until work is completed.

Source: [dnr.wisconsin.gov](http://dnr.wisconsin.gov)

# Full WITU Youth Camp coming soon

*Volunteer help needed with mentoring, fishing, food prep.*

I think we set a record for the earliest filling of the camp. We confirmed our last camper in early May.

Now all the fun begins. We are still looking for some TU members to help with the camp. There are several positions that need to be filled to make the camp run smoothly. We are looking for mentors, fish-a-long mentors and some kitchen help for Sunday. Below are descriptions of the positions.

- **Mentors:** Help a youth with the aspects of the camp. Be there for them as they go

through the programs and help them with any problems they may have.

- **Fish-a-long mentors.** You would take a youth out for Sunday morning fishing. You would need to be at the camp by 7 a.m. for instructions. We will have spots picked out and marked for all the teams. There will also be maps and complete directions on how to get to the fishing locations. Two mentors and two students go to each fishing spot, so you will not be alone.
- **Food help on Sunday** – We

have all easy to prepare food for breakfast and lunch. We just need help getting breakfast and lunch set up and keeping track of the warming process.

Please remember that the State Council will pay for your lodging and meals if you volunteer and stay at the camp.

This year's camp runs from Thursday, Aug. 15 through Sunday, Aug. 18 at the Pine Lake Bible Camp between Waupaca and Wild Rose just off Highway K. The address is W5631 Akron Ave, Waupaca, Wis. 54981

We are in search of some TU members to join us on the Youth Camp Committee to ensure the camp can continue. The committee is responsible for planning the curriculum, recruiting and scheduling mentor and instructors, registering campers and so forth. We currently have openings for five volunteers. If you have a passion for working with young people and want to make a difference in their lives, you can help keep the tradition alive. Please consider joining us. Contact Linn Beck at chlbeck@att.net or 920-216-7408.

## Mining update

*Our quarterly mining update from our friends at the River Alliance of Wisconsin.*

**Johnson Bridgwater, Water Advocates Organizer,  
River Alliance of Wisconsin**

Summer is upon us, and hopefully that means you are all busy outside. I am busy inside today writing up this overview of all things mining in Wisconsin, but I may slip out for a bit to land some brookies on Tyler Forks.

It continues to be quiet lately on the ground at all of the known Wisconsin mining deposits, but we know behind the scenes the mining interests continue to make moves trying to keep their businesses alive in Wisconsin.

Greenlight Metals, a Canadian company pursuing gold deposits in Wisconsin (the Bend Deposit in Taylor County; the Reef Deposit in Marathon County; and pursuing leases in Jackson County) released its most recent quarterly financial report, and it is very clearly struggling to survive financially. It has also fired its CEO/president and replaced him with yet another "junior partner."

And over on our eastern border, Gold Resources Corp., of Colorado, has once again failed to make any progress at all at the proposed Back

40 mine on the Menominee River. They are also struggling financially with large losses over the last quarter.

Unfortunately, our mining experience has taught us that teetering mining businesses do not equate with the mining pursuits going away. It means the failing company will seek a new strategy to convince investors to keep them afloat, or just as commonly they will seek a company to buy them out. So stay tuned, as this summer should reveal which direction Greenlight and Gold Resources will turn.

On the federal mining level, we are closely following two pieces of mining legislation. HR2925, the Mining Regulatory Clarity Act of 2024, is essentially a give-away to big mining companies at the expense of our waters and lands. It has passed the House of Representatives and now sits with the U.S. Senate for consideration.

One other federal mining bill to follow is HR3195, the Superior National Forest Restoration Act, sponsored by Minnesota Congressman Pete Stauber. This bill seeks to overturn the Biden Administration's decision to withdraw more than 225,000 acres of Boundary Waters land

from mining and cancel existing mineral leases in Minnesota's Superior National Forest.

We are creating a regional mining coalition composed of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan members. Due to recent developments in these neighboring states, it is becoming necessary to assure a regional-level response is built out as we follow funding and developments being promoted by the Department of Defense related to nickel and copper mining.

A company called Talon Metals has been given large federal grants through the Department of Defense to pursue nickel exploration in Minnesota and the U.P. of Michigan.

Please reach out to your neighboring Trout Unlimited chapters and councils in Minnesota and Michigan to make sure they too are following potential impacts to our precious waters and fish.

Questions or comments? Feel free to contact me about all things mining. You can also visit River Alliance of Wisconsin's Mining Page for online resources dedicated to mining education, and you can sign up for our "Mining Updates" emails. Simply visit <https://wisconsinrivers.org/mining/>

## What is the NLC?

*Too many TU members do not fully understand and appreciate the purpose and function of the National Leadership Council, but they should. Here's why.*

### What is the NLC?

The National Leadership Council (NLC) is the volunteer body that sets the direction of TU and is made up of one representative each from TU's 36 state councils. The NLC has three purposes:

- Establish the National Conservation Agenda (NCA)
- Facilitate the National Conservation Agenda (NCA)
- Build the organizational capacity of TU

The NLC representatives accomplish these three tasks by serving as liaisons between their state councils and TU national. They bring issues and concerns from their states to the national level and then bring decisions and initiatives from the national level back to their councils. The Council meets annually in person at the TU National's Annual Meeting and via teleconferences quarterly throughout the rest of the year.

The NLC chair and secretary serve on the TU Board of Trustees. In addition, the NLC nominates grassroots trustees to serve on the Board as well as Embrace-A-Stream committee members. NLC repre-

sentatives also serve on workgroups that focus on specific conservation or organizational issues that span more than two states.

NLC workgroups were established to address regional or organization-wide issues. These workgroups are composed mainly, but not exclusively, of NLC members and are supported by one or more staff members. All TU members are eligible and invited to join the workgroups. There are two main categories of workgroups: conservation and organizational.

#### Conservation workgroups

Climate Change  
Delaware River  
Driftless Area Restoration Effort  
Great Lakes  
Land Conservancy  
Native Trout  
Responsible Mining and Energy

#### Organizational workgroups

Communications  
Diversity, Equity and Inclusion  
Grassroots  
New Initiatives  
Youth Education

These workgroups are an integral part of TU. They are made up of a dedicated group of TU volunteers who are working hard to improve and help our councils and chapters. More importantly, they are aligning their work with the Trout Unlimited Strategic Plan. These workgroups meet once a month by Zoom and they are open to members. Please consider joining a workgroup to help make a difference within Trout Unlimited. Simply reach out to the workgroup chair. You can find more information on the workgroups at [tu.org](http://tu.org). Just type NLC workgroups into the search bar.

### Why this article now?

Last fall the NLC members, council chairs and chapter presidents were asked to do complete a survey conducted by the NLC Grassroots Workgroup to measure the efficiency of the NLC. Results helped form three key recommendations:

Establish an executive committee of (5) NLC representatives (including the NLC chair and secretary) to oversee governance of NLC and re-

port accomplishments to the Board of Trustees every six months.

Restructure NLC workgroups to better support grassroots membership and align with TU's strategic planning.

Define the role and create a job description of a NLC representative to enhance frequency of communication to TU councils and chapters across all media channels including emails, social media, in-person meetings, phone, direct mail, etc.

All NLC reps and council chairs were asked to review the 2014 and the 2024 surveys and draw our own conclusions about them. Wisconsin Council Chair Scott Allen submitted our opinions to the NLC. We will be reviewing these findings in our next NLC meeting.

As things unfold further, I will be submitting a detailed article to *Wisconsin Trout* on where the NLC is at with the new process and developmental changes.

—Linn Beck, NLC representative



# Chapter News

## Aldo Leopold Chapter

It's been a fun summer for the chapter. We just finished up our annual picnic and in addition to the 10 bucket-affle winners, we had two lucky grand prize winners. Dan Pherson from the Southern Wisconsin Chapter won the bamboo fly rod built by PJ Julius Rod Co. and Mike Juran from the Coulee Region Chapter won the guided fishing trip with the Driftless Angler Fly Shop. Congrats to both of them and thank you to all who participated.

Our next big event is our fall workday with the crew from Stihl, as part of the grant we received from TUDARE and Stihl. The workday will be Thursday, Sept. 19 at 8 a.m. on Dell Creek between Reedsburg and Wisconsin Dells. As the old saying goes, many hands make light work, and we are hopeful that mem-

bers of our chapter and other area chapters might be able to come and assist that day.

Stihl will be providing 20-plus sawyers to cut brush, so we mainly need people to help drag brush and help prepare lunch. The workday will be located on a 40-acre section that ALCTU and other chapters partnered up to help purchase in January of 2022, so this workday will bring it full circle. Currently that section is nearly unfishable due to brush, but we are hopeful that with a large crew we can make a sizable dent on removing the brush so it is accessible. Please reach out to Dan Endres if you can help or if you have any questions at dtendres9@gmail.com or text/call at 608-963-1374.

—Dan Endres



HAPPY FACES AT ANTIGO CHAPTER'S KIDS FISHING DAY

## Antigo Chapter

We hope the spring was good to everyone. We held our annual banquet in March at Northstar banquet hall and had the best turnout in recent history: 265. Everyone enjoyed the festivities and we were very happy with the turnout. We raised money to fund our chapter for another year.

Our Kids Fishing Day was June 1 at Antigo City Park. We had light rain in the morning, but it was still a nice turnout with more than 300 kids. Again we had the fish tank full of fish, prizes for the kids and hamburgers and hotdogs. A big thank you goes out to the area DNR staff

who came and put on the casting contest for the kids.

We also awarded a girls and a boys bicycle to two lucky kids. Thank you to all the supporters who help make the day possible.

In early June we replaced the fishing dock floor at the intersection of Highway 45 and Highway C. The boards were starting to show their age. We replaced them with composite materials so it should last longer. We are very grateful to the men from McNaughton Correctional for their help, which allowed us to complete the work in one day. We cooked a nice lunch of hamburgers

and brats for all who helped. The dock looks great. Thank you for all the help.

We are currently planning more

work days for this summer. Stay tuned and have a great summer.

—Scott Henricks

## Central Wisconsin Chapter

The chapter has been crazy busy since the last update. Everyone has been using a nose-to-the-grindstone approach to get ready for our workday season, the Dan Harmon III Fly Fishing School and our Trout In the Classroom release.

At our May board meeting we held a special election for vice-president. Laura Tucker was elected vice president. Shawn Sullivan needed to step back from the position but agreed to stay on as a board member. Thank you, Laura, for stepping up.

May turned out to be quite a busy month. Besides the election, we started our habitat workday season. A Saturday in May found us on the Mekan River at the 9th Avenue parking lot. The day started out perfectly with bluebird skies and cooler temperatures for the morning.

The first workday of the season is a special one for us as typically we

are joined with a contingent of members from the Elliot Donnelly Chapter of Chicago. That day was no different, not only did they show up for the work, but they also presented the chapter with a \$4,000 check. Thank you, Elliot Donnelly Chapter.

A big thank you also goes out to the guys from Fox Valley Chapter and our friends and chapter members who came out and pitched in to support the workday activities.

## Honoring Elward Engle

This workday turned into something very special for us. We had the chance to honor Elward Engle, who spent most of his 40-plus years with the DNR as point man for locating and purchasing public hunting and fishing lands in Central Wisconsin. Elward was involved in 60 public-land-purchasing projects, and se-



ANOTHER GREAT YEAR FOR CWTU'S FLY FISHING SCHOOL

cured easements on more than 100 miles of trout streams. If you have ever fished or hunted on public lands in Central Wisconsin, you are probably on land he helped acquire.

He also spent 17 years on the Central Wisconsin Planning Commission and worked hard to keep highway and commercial development out of the trout streams south and west of Wautoma.

He was very instrumental in turning away the Nestle Corp. from drilling wells into the Mekan Springs for bottled water, which would have been highly detrimental to the Mekan River. One week after a confrontation at Coloma, Perrier decided to drop the project.

He was active in establishing Central Wisconsin Trout Unlimited.

At the time of joining CWTU he was concerned about the damming of streams to create lakes for development. Over the years, he donated most of his Saturdays to work with TU chapters on stream projects. For this and more we presented Elward with the first ever CWTU Elward Engle Conservationist Award, along with a memorial rock dedicated to him. Anyone interested in viewing the memorial rock can do so on the Mekan River at the 9th Avenue parking lot.

Our TIC release for Winnebago Lutheran Academy was rescheduled a couple of times, but we accomplished the release on May 30. We put about 130 healthy fish into Parson's Creek in Fond du Lac County.



CWTU HONORS ELWARD ENGLE

# Chapter News



We held the Dan Harmon III Fly Fishing School the first weekend in June at the Riverside Bible Camp in Amherst. About 24 students were joined by 18 volunteer instructors from the Central Wisconsin Chapter. They shared their knowledge, talents and experience to make this event a great time for all. The students had a fishing option to finish off the weekend: trout or bluegill. Thank you to Jeff Treu and John Gremmer for putting this event together and thank you to all the instructors for their time.

Our program committee has lined up the following presenters: Sept. 11 will feature Steve Heuser, Nov. 13 will feature Tim Waters and March 12 will feature Tim Land-

wehr. All presentations will be at the Fin-n-Feather in Winneconne. More information on these presentations can be found on our chapter website.

The chapter is taking its annual summer break from board meetings. We will resume in August with a chapter picnic at John and Laura Tuckers. Please look for an upcoming email with more information.

Save the date of Saturday, October 19 for our CWTU awards and fundraising banquet at the Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel and Convention Center in downtown Oshkosh. You can find more information on our chapter website.  
—Linn Beck

## Coulee Region Chapter

We have had all the rain we know what to do with. Creekside weeds are up to our ears, but the fishing has been good.

Our chapter rounded out its membership meeting schedule with two great meetings and our annual picnic. In March, Lauren Genske talked about her experiences at the TU Teen Summit in 2023. Her presentation included her impressions from the leadership and team-building workshops, along with conservation discussions.

Lauren is headed for another adventure. She was selected to participate in TU's Expedition in Green River, Wyoming. The Expedition involves learning about restoration processes and includes many hands-on restoration and assessment opportunities. We hope to invite her to share her experience when she returns.

In April Chris Firkus talked about fishing streamers in the Driftless Area. Chris gave all the anglers in the room a different perspective to consider when fishing the Driftless Area and shared many tips on how to scout water for those big fish. The chapter picnic was in May which marks the end of the membership meeting season. We had a very nice turn-out and we presented outgoing Chapter President Fred Spademan an engraved Ross Cimarón fly reel by Curt Rees to commemorate and celebrate Fred's tenure.

It is now event season for CRTU. We celebrated Valley Day on May 4 with the Coon Creek Community Watershed Council by handing out fishing rods on behalf

of the Council, and tied some flies and made some spinners courtesy of the Genske family and friends.

We hoped to see some of those new rods show up for TroutFest on June 22 in Coon Valley. We expanded our TroutFest programming to include a session on Creek Critters (bug identification) along with fly tying, fly rod casting, door prizes and contests.

On July 13 we will be at the Youth Outdoor Fest in La Crosse at Pettibone Park and on August 10 we will host StreamGirls in Avalanche at the West Fork Sports Club. We are also present at the Third Thursday Market at Second Nature at Reads Creek through October and we are joined by professional fly-casting instructors from Fly Fishers International (FFI), who will be holding free casting sessions.

Chapter President Jason Freund and other volunteers have been deploying temperature loggers in some streams in our region. Thank you to our generous supporters who donated to the chapter to sponsor 10 new loggers. We also were able to place several monitors owned by the University of Wisconsin-La Crosse. CRTU will use the data from the loggers to better understand stream temperatures and assess the effects of our stream restoration efforts. Data will be shared on our website.

Chapter volunteers helped with youth education events at Norskedalen Nature & Heritage Center for elementary and middle school students. We hosted two sessions for stream entomology. These activities are great community outreach for our chapter, and the kids love being



Patrick Dayton

### LEARNING ABOUT INVERTEBRATES AT NORSKEDAHLEN

Coulee Chapter members Duke Welter and Dale Jonson talk bugs with the kids.



Deb Muresan

### COULEE PAST PRESIDENT FRED SPADEMAN REELS IN AWARD

Curt Rees presents commemorative reel to Fred Spademan.

in the stream and finding the bugs.

The chapter also enjoyed participating with Driftless Angler in Viroqua on June 6 at their IF4 Fly Fishing Film Festival. The event featured carnival games and casting contests and the latest in gear from all the popular lines. At dusk, the films were shown on the drive-in theatre screen. Reviews were rave.

We worked on two tree-planting events with the DNR on Timber Coulee and on Maple Dale Creek. We helped plant more than 200 trees and are proud to be part of an effort to make a long-term difference for the habitat, not to mention getting a little upper body workout.  
—Deb Muresan

## Fox Valley Chapter

The Fox Valley Chapter kept very busy this spring. Perhaps the highlight of our spring was the 44th Fishing Day for Disabilities. Each year the chapter hosts a fishing event for people with disabilities.

This year we were at Camp Shiocton, the YMCA camp near Shiocton. Our members planted more than 100 rainbow trout from 15 to 20 inches in the pond for our guests and their families to catch. Camp Shiocton also has a number of warm-water species in the pond and everyone catches something.

The chapter provides a lunch after the event for all the participants and volunteers. This event stands out as a way to give back to our community and provide a great time for these special families.

We will again partner with the Central Chapter on habitat work days to improve the streams in the Central Sands Area. Since our chapter has no trout water in our boundaries, working with CWTU on stream improvement days benefits both chapters. We are thankful to Central Chapter and Shawn Sulli-



Deb Muresan

**SMILES ABOUND AT COULEE CHAPTER'S VALLEY DAY FLY TIE EVENT**  
Coulee Chapter member Lauren Genske helps tie flies at Valley Day.



Doug Nelson

**TWO CHAPTERS UNITE ON THE WEST BRANCH OF THE WHITE RIVER**



# Chapter News

van's DNR crew for inviting us to work alongside them to improve the coldwater resources.

At our April Angling Adventure in the Driftless Area, many members camped near Viroqua and shared angling adventures, great food and campfire stories. We look forward to our autumn event in the U.P. in September.

The Fox Valley Chapter has officially joined the Instagram generation. Join us at @foxvalleytroutunlimited. But that's not all. We want you to be a part of our Instagram community. Share your favorite FV-TU memories, snapshots from our events or anything else you'd like to showcase by tagging us or using our

official hashtag, #foxvalleytu. Let's celebrate our chapter together and spread the joy of our shared experiences far and wide.

Congratulations to Bob Jozwowski for winning our 2024 Scott Grady Bamboo Fly Rod Package Sweepstakes. Thanks to all of you who entered the sweepstakes for this great prize. Fox Valley TU thanks Scott Grady for his continued support. We also thank Al Johnson for contributing another beautiful net and to all those who contributed flies to the package. It is fitting that Bob won this prize for his continued work with River Keepers stream monitoring.

—Tony Pudlo



ALWAYS A FUN TIME AT FVTU'S FISHING DAY



BOB JOZWOWSKI WINS SCOTT GRADY ROD PACKAGE



GRAEME'S PULLED PORK A HIT AT FVTU'S APRIL ANGLING ADVENTURE

## Frank Hornberg Chapter

In April, the Wisconsin DNR put on an informative presentation about trout redd surveys at Fall Line Outfitters in Stevens Point. Steve Devitt and Kyle Kossel introduced the group on what to look for, when, and how an app will help track where the trout are reproducing. In October, we will take to the field, locate redds, and log their locations.

After being postponed due to rain in the forecast, we finally got our trailer cleaned up and organized. Special thanks to Jim Henke for allowing us to store our trailer on his property.

May found us at the Little Plover River teaching fly casting to 70 fourth graders from Roosevelt Elementary School. We were working with the Golden Sands Resource Conservation and Development Council to teach kids about the im-

portance of our coldwater resources and conservation. It was a pleasure working with the students.

On the Tomorrow River in June we brushed the stream and installed 500 Christmas tree bundles.

Our opening for the Youth Fishing Camp in August has been filled by a boy from the Fox Valley Area.

Finally, our brat fry will be on Saturday, July 13 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. in front of the Fall Line Outfitters Fly Shop in Stevens Point. Come out and support the chapter and the shop. This is our only fundraiser.

There will be no meeting in June due to hex season. If you fish the hex, you will know why there isn't time to think about anything else when they are hatching.

—Doug Erdmann



GREEN BAY AND OCONTO RIVER CHAPTERS TEAM UP AT HALLER CREEK

## Green Bay Chapter

Our chapter hosted two fantastic speakers. In February we had the privilege to welcome former DNR biologist and trout habitat improvement legend, Dave Vetrano. Dave presented on how the Driftless Area went from an incredible trout fishery to being nearly destroyed, then brought back to the world-class trout fishery we know today.

In April we hosted Casey Hicks of the Wisconsin Conservation Voters. Casey shared many ways folks in Green Bay and beyond can save money and protect the environment through various available programs.

At our April meeting we held our annual elections. We are proud to welcome three new leaders. Kevin Maes joined the GBTU Board of Directors (BOD). Dave Purnell and Jacob Dixon (alternate) are now serving as the chapter Brown Coun-

ty Conservation Alliance (BCCA) representatives. Carla Zimmerman was re-elected to the GBTU BOD. Janet Smith and Bruce Duechert were re-elected as BCCA representatives. Doug Seidl was re-elected as State Council representative. Thank you all for your willingness to protect, conserve, connect and reconnect our coldwater resources through GBTU.

Our 48th Annual Conservation Banquet was a huge success, with more than 200 attendees who came out to have a wonderful evening and support our cause. Thank you to everyone who came out and to our amazing Banquet Committee, led by Banquet Chair Carla Zimmerman. They once again completely outdid themselves collecting incredible prizes, attending several meetings and smoothly operating a

Doug Nelson

Doug Nelson

Adrian Meseberg

John Barkmeier

# Chapter News



Paul Kruse

## GREEN BAY, OCONTO RIVER CHAPTERS JOIN DNR AT DOTY CREEK

highly active and entertaining fundraiser.

We recently held a pair of work project days, including our first winter workday in March.

Sixteen volunteers from the Green Bay and Oconto River chapter came out to help install our final Trout "Tails" Educational Trail signs along Haller Creek (Brown County). We also removed invasive buckthorn from the streamside to improve angler access.

In May we kicked off our 2024 summer habitat improvement season on the North Branch Pigeon River, on the Doty Creek Fishery area property. We installed six brush bundles to narrow the channel and expose more of the gravel substrate through increased water flow. Seven volunteers from GBTU and three from Oconto River TU joined four members of the DNR to make this day a big success.

In an exciting bit of alternative

fundraising news, we were able to secure an international grant of 1,500 Euros for our GBTU Trout "Tails" Educational Trail. The grant came from a foundation of the Schwabe Corp. of Germany.

GBTU continues to run our Veteran's Service Program. They are held at First Presbyterian Church in De Pere where they meet to learn fly-tying and socialize every other Monday starting at 4:30 p.m. As we enter the summer months, we will be taking veterans on fishing outings. If you are a veteran who would like to participate, or if you would like to volunteer, please contact Veteran's Program Coordinator Paul Kruse at [kruser2@new.rr.com](mailto:kruser2@new.rr.com) or 920-639-2361.

For more Green Bay Chapter information visit our website at [greenbaytu.org](http://greenbaytu.org) or check us out on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook.

—Adrian Meseberg

## Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter

Work on Big Spring was completed this spring. That is another mile or so of stream bank improvement.

On the Snowbottom property, we had been waiting on the results of some archeological study before we get permits. That evaluation has been completed and no artifacts were found.

Our 2024 stream work is on the Blue River, a class 2 trout stream in Grant and Iowa counties. The 2024 work will be done in Iowa County on the Straka property in the Town of Eden a couple miles northeast of Montfort. The Blue River is among the Exceptional Resource Waters, and this area has a DNR fishing

ease. Work will be done on about a mile of stream and include shaping of stream bank and adding root wads, backwater ponds and vortex weirs. Funding comes from our chapter, a DNR Surface Water Grant, a grant from the State Council, donations from other TU chapters in Wisconsin and Illinois, and donations from some other individuals and organizations. The donations are critical in getting the DNR Surface Water grant.

We had a successful fundraiser and awards banquet on May 3. Thank you to all who attended and contributed to the event. We had a great attendance with lots of baskets



Kurt Meyer

## NOHR CHAPTER'S TIC KIDS ENJOYING THE STREAM

and silent auction items.

We have had a couple joint work days with SWTU, DNR and others, including planting trees on the Grant River and Lowery Creek and cutting out willows on the upper

part of Big Spring.

Our TIC Fennimore students raised and put 37 trout in a stream and learned about Driftless Area springs and streams.

—Brian Larson

## Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter

The Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter had two strong meetings to conclude our meeting schedule until we start up again in the fall. In April Clarke Garry and Kent Johnson talked about "Kinnickinnic River Macroinvertebrate Monitoring: Past, Present, and Future." They discussed aquatic insect populations, threats to these populations and possible solutions. They also explained a multi-year project to understand the past and present health of aquatic insect populations in the Kinnickinnic River.

Our meeting season concluded with presentations from the DNR. LTE Dustin Shurrer discussed fish survey results from 2023 and Habitat Specialist Nate Anderson provided an overview of 2023 stream restoration projects and future project plans. Our communication committee led by Scott Larson and Badger Flowers took advantage of this fact to have our inaugural live stream on our new YouTube Channel. While we had some kinks to iron out, it was a success. The meeting can be viewed at <https://www.youtube.com/@Kiap-TU-WishTroutUnlimited>

Our board also elected officers in April, with Suzanne Constantini being elected president. Badger Flowers was elected as vice president, Missie Hanson, secretary and Gary Horvath, treasurer.

In April entomologist Dean Hansen visited our TIC schools in Ellsworth, Prescott and River Falls. "Dr. Dean" impressed students with giant hellgrammites and the grace-

ful undulations of burrowing mayflies.

In May, all three schools released their brown trout fingerlings into the Willow and Trimble rivers. The release was accompanied by fly-casting instruction, in-stream macroinvertebrate collection, trout art, games and more. Nearly 300 elementary students and about 25 TU volunteers were engaged in these enriching Bugs-in-the-Classroom and TIC experiences.

On a beautiful day in May our members and other volunteers gathered at the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club on the Rush River for the third annual STREAMGirls day. The volunteers set up the learning stations and girl scouts enjoyed muffins and pastries before the day began. We started with a stream walk along the Rush River to learn about riffles, pools, runs, plants and animals that depend on the river, and to give the girls a sense of the place where they would spend the day.

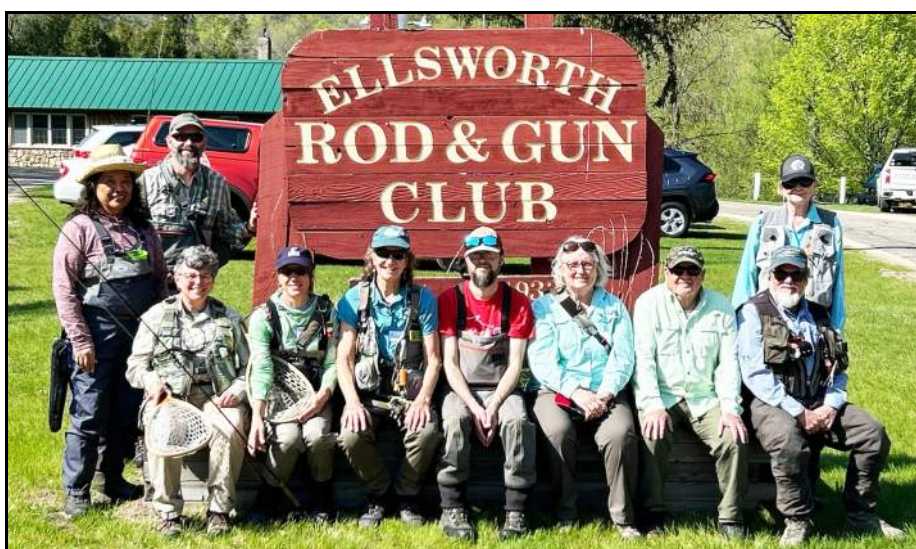
The group of 10 girls split into two groups. While one group learned to cast on land, then on water, the other group tied black woolly buggers. After lunch, the girls "dove" into their waders with unmatched enthusiasm. They spent the afternoon in the river hunting for macroinvertebrates, which they later identified.

And when the groups switched stations, they timed the speed of floating tennis balls, then inserted their data into formulas that allowed them to measure the stream flow in order to calculate the vol-



Linda Radimecky

## KIAP'S STREAMGIRLS STUDENTS ON THE RUSH RIVER



Linda Radimecky

## KIAP'S 2024 STREAMGIRLS INSTRUCTORS



## Chapter News



KIAP'S STREAMGIRLS CLASS OF 2024



KIAP TIC STUDENT WITH A HELGRAMITE NYMPH

ume of water in the river channel, in cubic feet per second (cfs). Before “graduation” and receiving patches and certificates, the girls used colored beads to make key chains, as reminders of the nine components making up a healthy river ecosystem.

It was a lot to learn and coordinate in one day but every girl was eager to fish for an hour with their guiding mentor. The weather was beautiful and the girls enjoyed using waders in the stream. They were fascinated by all the life that lives in and around our rivers and streams and they enjoyed feeling the pressure and sensation of water rushing through their legs.

This group of girl scouts were eager and spirited. Most caught fish, and all left with smiles and ideas for future fishing ventures. This great program is made even better by the generous donation of the Ellsworth Rod and Gun Club for the use of their facilities. Thanks to all the volunteers and the chapter members who helped make this a success.

We held our annual fly-fishing clinic in June at Glen Park in River Falls, which we've done during the

state's free fishing weekend for the last 20 years. This year 17 participants took part in the instruction and guided mentoring. They spent the first half of the class learning equipment essentials and casting techniques. They then traveled below the Junction Falls dam on the Kinnickinnic River to collect stream invertebrates, learn about stream morphology and general stream tactics, and practice casting on a river environment.

Following a chapter-sponsored dinner, participants paired up with chapter volunteers and descended into Glen Park to fish the lower Kinnickinnic River. Although the river was running high and stained from the week's rainfall, the sulphur and caddis hatch still had trout looking up and many new fly anglers caught their first trout on the fly. The clinic is a partnership between the chapter and the City of River Falls Parks and Recreation Department and is held annually the first weekend of June.

On the habitat front, Chapter Habitat Coordinator Randy Arnold led six volunteers in April girdling box elder trees on the stretch of the Kinni starting at the bridge at Stee-



KIAP'S PROUD TIC VOLUNTEERS

Rainbow Barry, Tom Schnadt, Tim Peterson, Dean Hansen, Ted Hanna, Dave Gregg.

ple Drive and continuing downstream to its confluence with Parker Creek. This is a stretch where we will be doing major tree removal this coming winter and the girdling gives us a head start on the process.

In April volunteers helped Kasey Yallaly and her DNR crew plant trees along the newest restoration project on Gilbert Creek. Don Fritz assisted by watering the trees with his portable pump and has agreed to keep tabs on the trees over the summer to make sure that they get water when needed.

Later that same day, Jim Tatzel and Randy Arnold assisted a property owner on Lost Creek by help-

ing her remove some troubling box elder trees. On May 15 Tom Anderson and Randy built LUNKER structures for Kinni landowner Tony Zezza, who had hired a private contractor to help restore an eroding streambank on his property just below the Quarry Road bridge.

Also in June, Randy Arnold met up with Flannel River Organization Director Matthew Chaplinski. It's a non-profit that connects kids with the outdoors. Along with his wife and five young kids, we planted tamarack seedlings on the stretch of recently restored Parker Creek.

—Gary Horvath

### Lakeshore Chapter

It's been a busy spring here on the lake shore. In March we were honored by the Sheboygan County Conservation Association as the 2023 Club of the Year. Our board member Wendy Lutzke and member John Nelson were also recognized. Wendy was awarded Educator of the Year award for her work launching our first STREAM Camp in 2023. John Nelson, a member and former DNR fish biologist for Sheboygan County, was honored with induction into the SCCA Hall of Fame for his work in the late 1990's and early 2000's restoring the Onion River to a class 1 trout stream. Congratulations to John and Wendy for these well-deserved awards.

Our TIC programs held success-

ful releases this spring. Sheboygan Farnsworth Middle School students released their beloved rainbow trout into the Sheboygan Quarry and the St. Mary's Springs kids released wild strain brook trout they had raised into Parsons Creek and two Calumet County streams. Successful releases were also conducted by Plymouth and Random Lake schools. The TIC program is such a huge favorite of the kids. Thank you to the teachers and volunteers who make these programs work.

Work days on the Onion River have been well attended and productive. In five work days we have completed 290 hours of labor. This summer our partners in the DNR will roll out the heavy equipment to help us put the final touches on a



LAKESHORE CHAPTER AWARDED CLUB OF THE YEAR

The Sheboygan County Conservation Association recognized the Lakeshore Chapter with its Club of the Year Award.



# Chapter News



**LAKESHORE CHAPTER'S WENDY LUTZKE RECEIVES SCCA AWARD**  
Wendy Lutzke accepts Sheboygan County Conservation Association's Educator of the Year award.



**LAKESHORE CHAPTER'S TIC FISH RELEASE**  
The Lakeshore Chapter/Farnsworth Middle School TIC program held its fish release recently.

bunch of our work. A huge thank you goes out to all of the volunteers who invest their valuable time to support coldwater conservation. And thank you to the DNR for their ongoing support.

Lakeshore TU has also just become involved in the Water Action Volunteers (WAV). We had our initial training in May. Our chapter will now be monitoring sites on the Onion River, Ben Nutt Creek and Mill Creek for WAV. We are also monitoring the Sheboygan River

and Pigeon River and warm-water tributaries to Lake Michigan. We have 10 people active in the WAV program this year.

Thank you to those who made monetary and/or memorial gifts to our chapter, and also a big thank you to our corporate sponsors for their generous support of our chapter. They are Kwik Trip, Kohler Co., Merit Financial Advisors, American Excelsior, Northland Plastics and Feldmann Sales and Service.

—Al Wortz

## Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter

Spring 2024 got off to a good start with our volunteer crew of SEWTU Fly Tyers at the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel Sport Show at State Fair Park in early March. Organized by Chuck Staley and sharing space with Dan Small Outdoors, SEWTU volunteers assisted by our old friend Bob Haase, tied flies and distributed them to eager fishermen throughout the show's four-day run. We also manned an information kiosk and answered trout related questions and distributed SEWTU information. A few new members resulted from this great effort.

Our March chapter meeting featured Nathan Wick, who has spent the last few years splitting guiding duties between Alaska and Chile's Patagonia region. Nathan wowed us with some of the most spectacular scenery and some of the most unbe-

lievably large stream trout we have ever seen. It was a fun night with a raffle of new and vintage gear.

In April we had our first habitat workday of the year on Bluff Creek in the Southern Unit of the Kettle Moraine State Forest near White-water. Bluff Creek has been the site of numerous SEWTU workdays, and our efforts are evident. Aided by our friends with the Oakbrook Chapter, we planted 100 small trees including oaks to aid in bank stabilization. We worked hard, got done early and enjoyed some bratwurst and camaraderie. It was a great day.

In April, we also enjoyed a presentation by Steve Vance of 1 Guide Flyfishing, who not only guides in SW Wisconsin, but in Belize and the Yucatan, as well. Steve also wowed us with photos of bonefish, permit, and other saltwater game species.



**SOUTHEAST WISCONSIN CHAPTER WORKDAY WITH HIGH SCHOOLERS**  
Boyd Roessler and Ken Rizzo led a workday at Rosenow Creek with the Oconomowoc High School A.P. Environmental Studies Class in May.

In May we helped the DNR's Ben Heussner with some invasive species removal from Paradise Springs. A heavy and thorny re-growth of buckthorn, black locust and multi-flora rose from earlier removal efforts had made much of this pond and spring unfishable for a fishery which is accessible for seniors, handicapped folks, kids and families. We also had one crew remove much of a large tree obstructing the accessible pier.

Another highlight from May was a workday on Rosenow Creek with the AP Environmental Sciences students from Oconomowoc High School. The group, equipped with new waders obtained via a grant written by one of the students, got into the creek, and continued the maintenance and the habitat improvements in this small, rare, cold-water brook trout stream in northwestern Waukesha County. Our Habitat Chair Ken Rizzo and Past President Boyd Roessler helped supervise the students and did some work, too.

A highlight of this event was the sincere effort and enthusiasm of

these students. After the workday was completed one student told Ken Rizzo, "Today was such a great day. This is the work I want to do for the rest of my life!" We see great things in these you people and see the continuation of our strong conservation tradition.

Peter Jonas of TUDARE joined us in May to discuss restoration efforts and fishing in the Driftless Area.

While monthly meetings take a break for summer, our workdays continue with Scuppernong Springs seeing some additional work in June. The chapter has worked on this little brook trout stream for more than a decade and the "before and after" is remarkable.

SEWTU volunteers assist with Fly Fishing 101 at the local Orvis store. This summer will also include our casting clinic in July, the third annual Mentored Driftless weekend in August, and our hosting of the IF4 Fly Fishing Filmfest in September at the Bavarian Bierhaus in Glendale.

—Rick Larkin

## Southern Wisconsin Chapter

Our 3rd annual Spring Fair Fundraiser in April was a fantastic time. Held on the shore of Lake Monona at the East Side Club, we feasted on wonderful food catered by 608 Community Supported Kitchen. The improved sound system arranged by member Mark Nash ensured everyone could hear our entertaining master of ceremonies, Topf Wells.

The spin and fly casting competition was challenged a bit by mother nature, but Pat Hasburgh, Carol Murphy and Kayln Hoggard braved the elements and pulled it off. The event raised more than \$12,600 to

support the chapter's key conservation work. Many thanks to our fundraising committee, generous donors and all who traveled near and far to join us and make a difference.

This spring has also featured a number of highly successful stream workdays, again coordinated by Jim Hess. At a joint workday on Big Spring with many friends from the Harry & Laura Nohr Chapter, we were able to see a SWTU donation roar to life and make short work of dense vegetation. We're speaking of the DNR's new mower and chipper funded by SWTU.

This new machinery will improve



**CASTING COMPETITION WITH A VIEW OF THE CAPITOL**  
The Southern Wisconsin Chapter's Spring Fair Fundraiser was a great success, although winds made casting contests a bit more challenging.

Karl Spiekerman

access and vegetation along trout stream easements ... and one would hope help better control wild parsnip along some streams. Even our path to the worksite was made easier as the mower cut a clear and easy path through thick brush and brambles. You may see it out and in use by the DNR this summer and even over the winter. And if you show up

### Marinette County Chapter

The Marinette County Chapter had a very successful banquet in April. Funds raised will cover all of our commitments from the Council's Northeast Regional Meeting.

We're hoping to create a crew of our members that can help the

### Oconto River Chapter

Thank you to our sponsors and attendees at the Oconto River Watershed Chapter conservation fundraiser banquet and drawing in April. You provide the resources needed to honor our mission and efforts in conserving, protecting and restoring coldwater fisheries and their watersheds with education and partnering with organizations that share our goals.

We had more than 60 sponsors and more than 200 attendees, who won more than 170 prizes. A special thanks goes out to Gillett's Jacob Timm and Pulaski's Cedric Pettis. These instructors helped TIC students build four casting rods for the banquet. Also, thanks to all the volunteers and Banquet Team Leader Gary Lemmen for making this event possible.

In March members Pat and Tom Klatt joined 14 volunteers from the Green Bay Chapter to put some finishing cleanups on and around

### Wild Rivers Chapter

Our Annual WRTU Conservation & Fundraising Expo in April at Flat Creek Lodge in Hayward turned out to be a great success. Thanks to a lot of great conservation exhibitors and wonderful donations from the local fly shops and the sales representatives for the top fly-fishing brands, we reached more attendees and raised funds for future conservation work. Spreading the word through social media seemed to help create more awareness and generated a wider area attendance. A special shoutout goes to the other Wisconsin TU chapters that helped spread the word for us.

In late April we helped DNR fishery biologists set up the signage and kiosks for the anglers' creel survey at various access locations along the White River and several northwest Wisconsin stocked trout lakes. Based on the report for the general fishing opener in early May, a lot of trout fishermen were taking the time to fill out the survey cards.

Thanks to the efforts of Bob Traczyk and Dick Berge, 22 students from Ashland High School

to a normally overgrown stream and are surprised to find it easier walking and casting, the DNR's new mower may be to thank.

As always, you can visit swtu.org to learn more about our chapter events and activities.

—Drew Kasel

Green Bay Chapter on their summer work days. We are also looking to get members together to do a fishing day this summer and enjoy some of our hard work. Our monthly meetings will resume in October.

—Dale Lange

Haller Creek at the Brown County Reforestation Camp. The focus of the workday was to remove some of the invasive buckthorns that had started crowding the area around Haller Creek and to replace the signs with new ones along the educational trail.

Again, the chapter distributed brown trout and rainbow trout at public access locations in Suring, Hintz, Underhill and Pulicfer in late April. The chapter's Go Fund Trout Stocking program obtained a DNR fish stocking permit which allows us to stock trout in the northern main Oconto River. This is a stretch of the river that has less than ideal reproduction potential.

Chapter members are planning to part take in the TU/DNR stream restoration projects in northeast Wisconsin on the third Saturdays of May, June, July and August this summer.

—Tom Klatt

participated in fly-tying lessons, a fly-casting clinic and trout fishing with the flies they tied.

Bob Traczyk helped make another great year for the Hurley students' TIC program. They released the brook trout they had raised into Weber Lake in Iron County.

We donated \$1,500 to Rivers of Recovery. This year Rivers of Recovery has three drift boat trips planned for women veterans all guided by women. A special thank you to Wendy Williamson and Sarah Sanford for their expert guiding help.

Our chapter also donated \$500, along with the Brule River Sportsman's Club, to help support the DNR's Brule Hatchery Family Fun Day on August 17. Chapter members will also help teach fly tying and fly casting.

In June we helped the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with the 24th Annual Kids Fishing Day at the Northern Great Lakes Visitor Center in Ashland, Wisconsin. Twenty-five years ago, Susan Nelson from the

U.S. Forest Service asked chapter members Jeff Carlson and William Heart about starting a Kids Day. It has been a wonderful success for families and kids ever since.

With help from chapter members

Larry Mann and Wendy Williamson, we will be holding a fly-casting clinic at Silverthorn Park, just north of Seeley, on July 20. The public is invited to this free event.

—John Simonson

### Wisconsin Clear Waters

Like most of Wisconsin, our region experienced the "Winter That Wasn't" this past season, which graced us with a bumper crop of mosquitos in spring. The mild winter shortened our stream-clearing season to one project day.

In January an eight-person crew organized by Matt Wysocki cleared alder and box elder on more than 150 feet along Hay Creek in Chippewa County. This section adjoined an area where the DNR had recently completed an extensive stream-bank reshaping project, which also bordered an area our chapter had cleared in previous seasons. The result is a significant continuous section of Hay Creek that can be more easily fished.

In February we gathered at The Brewing Projekt in Eau Claire for a presentation by our regional DNR fisheries crews on current research projects, stream improvement projects and area stream census results.

One of the more unusual pilot projects was the use of goats to clear persistent canary grass from trout stream banks. A pilot using the services of a local enterprise, "Scapegoats," was completed on a section of Fall Creek in Eau Claire County that had become overgrown with the grass. The goats were confined to the area needing clearing by fencing, which required creative modification during the pilot to achieve the desired results. One interesting observation was that the goats seemed to prefer invasive species, including buckthorn, over desirable native plants.

The pilot was determined to be successful enough to proceed with another goat clearing project on Gilbert Creek scheduled to start in June.

The March doldrums were livened up by a presentation at The Brewing Projekt on "Fly Fishing for Carp."

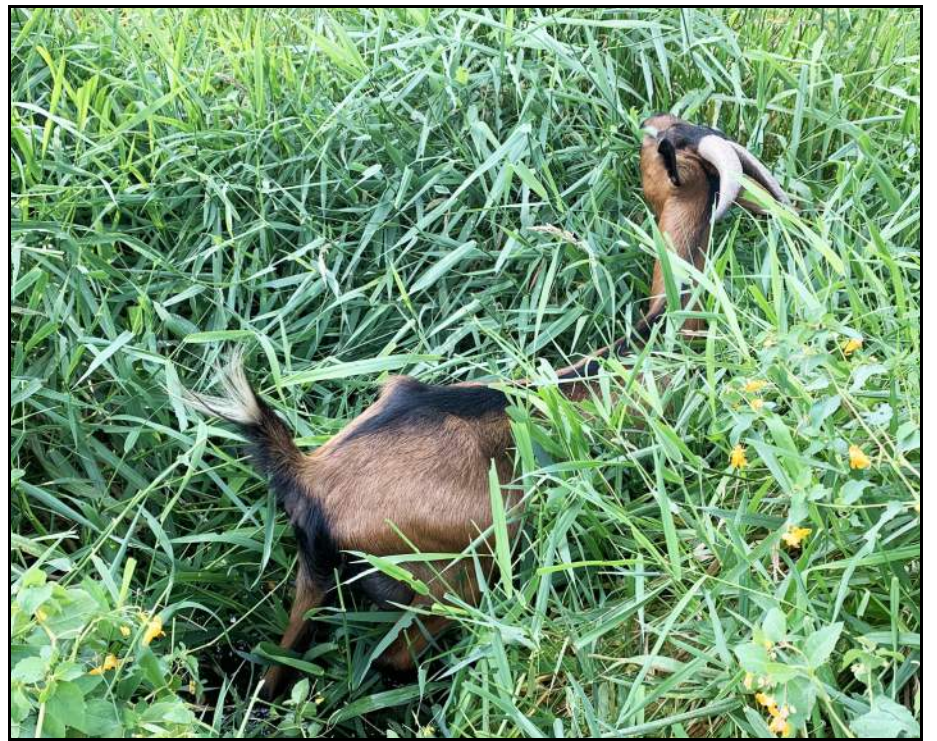
One of the important takeaways was to leave the new carbon composite fly rod at home and dig out your old fiberglass fly rods from the back of the closet when pursuing these heavy-weight brawlers. Sight fishing the "rubber-lipped trout" compared well to stalking saltwater flats for bone fish, but is available right here in the Midwest.

In April we returned to two sections of McCann Creek to plant trees where we'd cleared the banks in previous winters. Decades ago this area had been improved with extensive rock work, which has held up well.

A crew of eight members organized by Matt Wysocki, and under the guidance of DNR Fisheries Biologist Joseph Gerbshak planted more than 650 moisture-tolerant trees including swamp white oak, black spruce, hackberry, tamarac, and white cedar provided by the DNR.

As this area represents a common land form in our sandy region of broad stream valleys with wide, hummocky, densely brushed alder swamp banks, the sites will be monitored to determine which tree species thrive best.

—Bob Mitchell



"SCAPEGOAT" CLEARING CANARY GRASS ALONG FALL CREEK



BUTT-WARMING FIRE FOR WISCONSIN CLEARWATERS CHAPTER CREW  
Joe Knight, Bill Heth, Bob Mitchell, Frank Lowry, Rick Koziel, Phil Porter, Dean Rosemeyer and Steve Voller warm their backsides while clearing alder and box elder along Hay Creek. Not pictured is photographer Matt Wysocki.



### WILD RIVERS VOLUNTEERS TEACH TYING, CASTING, FISHING

Thanks to the efforts of Bob Traczyk and Dick Berge, 22 students from Ashland High School participated in fly-tying lessons, a fly-casting clinic and trout fishing with the flies they tied.

## Wisconsin River Valley Chapter

Thank you so much to those of you who have come out to tie and share your tips and tricks at the Hackle and Hops events. At the last session of the season, I was amazed at the skill of a youngster who attended with his father to do some tying. We look forward to seeing you at these events this fall.

In March we gathered at the Sawmill Brewing Co. to hear TU Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager Chris Collier discuss "Building Bridges: How TU's Great Lakes Program Uses Infrastructure to Connect People and Trout."

Chris discussed the Brule River Headwaters Restoration Plan, a two-year project with 21 stream-crossing replacements, four dam removals and some road reconstruction. Reconstruction of roads and replacement of undersized culverts will prevent 3,299 cubic yards of sediment from being discharged into streams. The plan will also reopen more than 60 stream miles for passage of aquatic organisms.

In April Craig Cook of Fall Line Outfitters discussed new products coming into his shop and even a "Recycle and Reuse" program that offers good quality used items for less.

Students, teachers and parents at the Maple Grove School truly appreciated the TIC program. Teacher Jessica Barrick created powerful learning experiences across the school year involving the trout, and they are interested in receiving trout eggs again next fall. They were thankful for all we've done to help students learn about these fish and the importance of aquatic habitat health.

In May Bob Paine presented The Good, The Bad and The Ugly. Bob gave some history on some old fly patterns that still catch fish. Many I had not heard of before like the Bumblepuppy streamer, the Strawman nymph, the Rat-faced McDou-

gal or the Professor, the Jenny Lind or the Parmachene Belle.

In May I headed down to the Outdoor Education Expo at the MacKenzie Center to tie flies for the many students and grown-ups who attended. I was surprised to tie flies for kids that lived near to my "neck of the woods," such as Merrill and Wisconsin Rapids.

In May, at the Taylor County Youth Expo, John Meachen and Bob Paine and other volunteers helped with tying and casting.

June featured Kiwanis Kids Day at South Wood County Park in Wisconsin Rapids. Although the day started out slow with a steady morning rain, I still was able to tie flies for or give instruction to about 40 kids who came to my station.

June was also the start of our WAV volunteers' monthly stream data collection, including air and water temperature, turbidity, flow rate, depth and the dissolved oxygen. Then there's the fun stuff, such as catching aquatic bugs. We found lots of caddis flies, several mayfly nymphs, some water snipes, a couple of dragonfly nymphs and a crane fly nymph. Next month we will be watching for the wild native Lesser Purple Fringed Orchid (*Platanthera psycodes*) that blossoms near our testing area.

August 24 is the Outdoor Heritage event at the Wausau School Forest in Mosinee. We tie flies with kids in the morning and cast in the afternoon. If you know of a child 8-16 who may be interested or you'd like more information, go to [www.wausaunoonoptimist.org/sporting-heritage-youth-day](http://www.wausaunoonoptimist.org/sporting-heritage-youth-day) If you are interested in volunteering please contact Linda Lehman at [buglehm-an@yahoo.com](mailto:buglehm-an@yahoo.com).

July 13 will be a stream workday on Spring Creek, a tributary of the Prairie River. Watch your emails for additional information.

—Linda Lehman

## Wolf River Chapter

Long-time chapter member Tim Waters has been extremely busy during the last few years with several projects that have and are greatly affecting the Wolf River in eastern Langlade County. He has been monitoring the water temperatures of Nine Mile Creek, a coldwater tributary of the Wolf River. In 2009, the average air temperature, during thermistor monitoring, was 61.14 degrees at East Hollister and Nine Mile Creek's average temperature was 64.54 degrees or 3.4 degrees higher than the air temperature.

After 14 years of stream restoration consisting of removing beaver, beaver dams and returning Nine Mile Creek to a free flowing spring fed creek within its banks, there has been significant change to water temperatures at East Hollister.

In 2023, the average air temperature increased to 66 degrees, but the creek temperature fell to 64.02 degrees or minus 1.98 degrees. Even though the average air temperature increased by 4.9 degrees the creek temperature dropped 0.5 degrees, proving that the restoration work done by the Wolf River Chapter on Nine Mile Creek is working.

Of course the proof also shows itself with the incredible fishing reports coming in from those who fish the Wolf River.

Bill Kallner, who has been fishing the Wolf River since the early 1980s, claims the fishing has never been better with bigger, fatter, healthier trout. He attributes his success to the slot size requirement on the Wolf River, restoration work that

the chapter has done and cooler summer river temperatures the last few summers. I have heard from many others who fish the Wolf River about increased fish size and fantastic numbers of trout caught.

For those interested in learning more about fishing the Wolf River, there is a new book out by Tim Waters, entitled "The Wolf River of Eastern Langlade County." This book includes the history of the Wolf River, including the logging era, post logging and much information about Cap Buettner, "the Godfather of the Wolf River."

Waters explicitly describes access points and the many named, misnamed and un-named rapids in his book. The nine chapters each have captivating explanations for appreciating the Wolf River and fishing for trout on "the largest free-stone river east of the Mississippi that still holds trout."

The book covers species of trout, Waters' personal trout logs, hatch descriptions, what flies to fish with and when and where to find the trout. There is much to enjoy in this 374-page book.

Tim's book is available for purchase at Tim Waters' The Wolf River Fly Shop recently opened at N6530 State Highway 55 in White Lake, or on Amazon. Check the website [WolfRiverFlyShop.com](http://WolfRiverFlyShop.com) for Waters' hours as the shop is open part-time until next year. I recommend picking one up at the shop so that Tim can autograph this compelling book for you.

—Laurie Zen Netzow

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## Book Review

### Norman Maclean: A Life of Letters and Rivers

Review by John Hunt

I admit to being a true disciple of Norman Maclean. I have sought out and enjoyed many books and stories written both by him and about him since I was introduced to his writing in the early '90s. Author Rebecca McCarthy's recently released book, *Norman Maclean: A Life of Letters and Rivers*, provides a different perspective than earlier looks at Maclean's life and career.

Drawing from her personal friendship with Norman, conversations with the Maclean family, and subsequent research during the last four decades, McCarthy looks beyond the common perceptions of Norman Maclean, the author. McCarthy's approach also carries us beyond Maclean the son, brother, father and passionate trout angler to pull the curtain back on his years as a college professor and mentor. In doing so, she broadens her reader's understanding of what contributed to Maclean's professional persona across his multi-decade teaching and writing career.

As a teenager, McCarthy met the aging Maclean in Montana while visiting family. Captivated by Norman's encouragement of her interest in poetry, the author is drawn to attend Maclean's beloved University of Chicago in the early 1970s. As a student in the English department, McCarthy is given an opportunity to grow under Maclean's watchful eye as both a student and a writer.

Although Norman retired in 1973, the grandfatherly professor fulfilled his promise to McCarthy's mother that he would look after her if she moved to Chicago. We read of afternoon walks the pair took through the changing neighborhoods surrounding the campus during all seasons

and their sampling of an assortment of non-traditional cuisines available in the Windy City.

There are also a number of interesting glimpses of Maclean's life that I had not previously encountered, such as his friendship with Theodor Geisel (the future Dr. Seuss) while an undergrad at Dartmouth, or how Norman and his wife Jessie enjoyed hosting lively dinner parties for students in their Chicago home. It was interesting to learn that he was good friends with researchers working on elements of the Manhattan Project at the university and how he led the marksmanship training on campus for prospective Army recruits during WWII.

We learn of his fascination with the Battle of the Little Bighorn, known as "Custer's Last Stand."

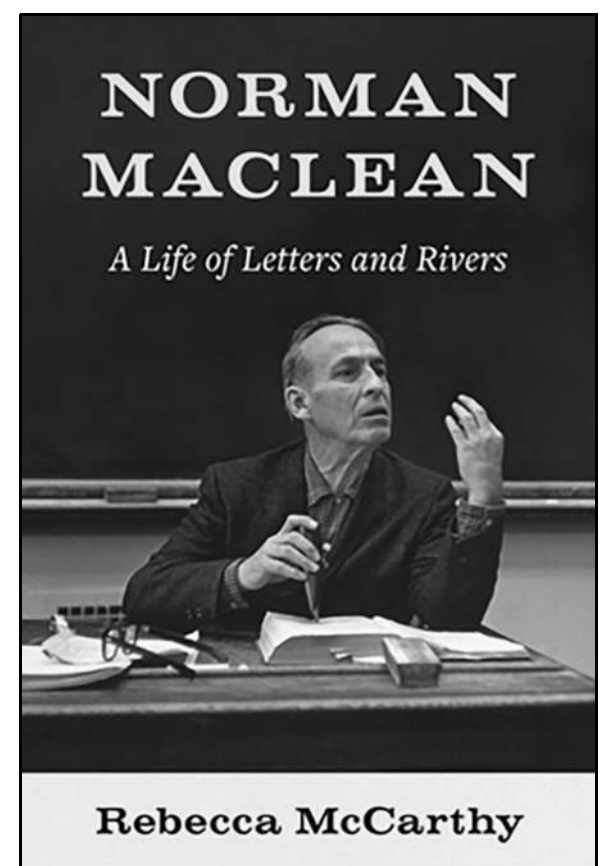
Another feature of the book is its tendency to crisscross through time. Stories and reflections from one part of Maclean's life presented in one chapter often overlap with stories from an earlier or later era. While not fatal stylistically, it did cause me as a reader to pause several times and retrace my steps to make sure I understood what part of Maclean's career the story was exploring.

McCarthy includes a quote from Norman Maclean in her book that offers a thoughtful synopsis of Maclean's vision as a writer: "Words to me are things you take chances with both in what you say and how you say it..." Another interesting quote came from Michael Curley, who had taken a room at Maclean's home while in graduate school. "He [Norman] came out of an oral tradition in which he could tell a story a lot of different ways. When you write it down, there's just one version."

And that, perhaps, is the best description of *Norman Maclean: A Life of Letters and Rivers*. Re-

becca McCarthy presents Maclean as a supreme storyteller, shaped by his love of family, friends, Montana and the English language. In doing so, she fills in some of the gaps in his life story that might have existed for fans of Norman Maclean.

John Hunt is a TU member from Minnesota who has served in numerous positions over more than three decades. He has written book reviews for



# All I wanted was to catch a dang trout, and I wound up working for TU

By Peter Jonas,  
TUDARE Partnership Specialist

When I first joined Trout Unlimited in the early 1990's, all I wanted to do was catch a dang trout. That wasn't the only reason I joined, but that's where I was at in my development as an angler.

I purchased my first fly rod (a new-to-me Sage RPL 9-foot, 5-weight) from Tom Helgeson's very cool fly shop in Minneapolis. Tom gave me some basic casting instruction and taught me how to tie a Wolly Bugger. Along with that, he made it clear that if I was serious about fishing, I better be serious about the environment. I really think Tom was less interested in building a customer base than he was in building a cadre of environmentalists.

So I joined TU as a way of engaging in environmental issues, but I also thought if I want to catch a dang trout, it won't hurt to hang out with a group of people who seem like they know what they are doing. When I began attending Southern Wisconsin TU chapter meetings, I soon met people who were both insanely good anglers and passionate warriors for the environment and public access.

## Fly fishing opened my eyes

The thing I value most about my journey as an angler is that it has both intensified and broadened my way of seeing nature. When I fished for trout with a spinning rod, I would occasionally see trout splashing in the water, but I never noticed what they were eating because I wasn't looking for it. When trout were feeding selectively, I would float a big nightcrawler directly past a fish that was feeding and it would completely ignore my bait, and I had no idea why.

When I started fly fishing, I began seeing more intensely. I started looking for the bugs, and sure

enough they were there. If a fish was rising, or if I came upon a spot I thought might be fishy, I would lock in on the current seam and the bank cover with laser focus.

Physically managing a fly rod took all the concentration I could muster. When I finally was able to make a good cast, I was so amazed by my accomplishment that I forgot to get the line under control. By the time I got a hold of the fly line, the fly was skittering across the current. Then I remembered what mending was and tried to do it, but it was too little, too late. Now when I teach someone to fly fish, I always try to remember how steep the learning curve truly is.

When I was in the "I just want to catch a dang trout" phase of my angling journey, I saw what was immediately in front of me with great intensity, but even though I fished in some beautiful places, I seldom looked around. My eyes were like a Northern Pike's, looking straight ahead. Even now, many years later, I still love the complete absorption that comes over me when the predatory instinct kicks in and intensifies my focus while I am fishing. It really does make everything else go away.

Eventually I began to catch a few fish and calmed down some, although my friends would say, not much. At this point, I still fished with intensity and concentration, but I also began to look around. My vision of natural processes broadened.

## That first hex hatch

The first hexegenia hatch I experienced as a young man was an epiphinal experience. Those of you who know this hatch know that the hex is a massive mayfly that hatches at nightfall. I remember feeling almost overwhelmed by the life-force around me as countless birds and bats swooped and dove to intercept mayflies in midair or on the surface of the stream in the dark. Mean-

while, trout and bass were furiously attacking the hex before they could become airborne. The mystical power of that night prepared me to embrace the idea of what Aldo Leopold calls "the biotic community," not just as an intellectual concept, but as a dynamic force that I participate in.

## Early tunnel vision

When I began fishing, I only saw my prey. I might as well have been fishing in a tunnel.

But as I evolved as an angler, I began to engage Leopold's biotic community, which we now call an ecosystem: first macroinvertebrates and other forage, and then game and non-game wildlife.

When I began to immerse myself in conservation issues, I learned to see the health of the banks and riparian corridor, the farm practices and management in the fields and hills surrounding the stream, the history that has shaped the landscape's past, the economic and real estate pressures that effect farming and other human impact on a stream, the public policies that shape its presence and future. In other words, fishing led me to begin seeing and thinking like a watershed.

People develop environmental passion and commitments in many ways. But personally, my environmental awareness would have remained dormant without fishing.

The short answer to why I wound up working for Trout Unlimited is that as a volunteer I dove so deep into the financial and logistical details of how to get a stream restoration project done that I accidentally made myself useful to TUDARE as a staff person.

## Out of the tunnel

But the longer answer to why I wound up working at TU is that it was the consequence of decades of

fishing with and hanging out with people who care about the environment. This helped me break out of the tunnel and broaden my ecological vision, so I could learn how to think like a watershed and act on it.

My role as partnership specialist at TUDARE has moved me to broaden my vision of a trout stream's biotic community even further.

## Solitude

While I enjoy fishing with a partner, I will confess that I often prefer fishing alone. Like many folks, I fish in part to seek solitude and some sense of inner renewal. But my home waters where I find solitude run through a working agricultural landscape, not a pristine wilderness.

Because this landscape and its trout streams bear historical scars and face ongoing threats, concerted human effort and intervention is required to restore, maintain and defend their health. In other words, if I want trout streams that are whole enough to offer a sense of solitude, I need to engage the human members of the biotic community that have an outsized influence on their well-being.

TUDARE literally works with hundreds of government, non-profit and business partner organizations. Each has their own priorities, ethos and personalities. The human members of the biotic community often prove to be the most perplexing. All our partners and their conservation programs all have acronyms—lots and lots of acronyms. Stream restoration technical standards often go by just numbers and a letter if you're lucky. Numbers are worse than acronyms.

My learning curve has been steep, not unlike learning how to fly fish. But I embrace these challenges because our streams' biotic communities and the human members of those communities must find a way to live in harmony.

## Buffalo County Conservation Alliance member clubs celebrate "Trout Day"

Words and photos by Wes Domine,  
Buffalo County Conservation Alliance

The 12th annual Buffalo County Trout Day Celebration was held in May on Trout Creek at the Barry Johnson and Family Farm. The family friendly and public celebration is held annually in recognition of successful stream restoration projects completed on Buffalo County streams. Attending youth anglers received new fishing equipment and although drizzle and showers greeted the early participants, neither the kids nor the trout seemed to care. Everyone enjoyed good fishing and grilled hotdogs.

Improved trout fishing opportunities have provided significant economic boost to communities of the Driftless Area. In recent years approximately 25 stream restoration projects have been completed in Buffalo County, resulting in nearly 12 miles of restored stream with public fishing access. You can find a complete listing with access map links on the Buffalo County website under Land Conservation Depart-

ment. Or search "Trout stream field guide booklet."

Trout Day event activities included a fish survey conducted by DNR professionals. Young and old spectators were impressed by the many brook trout thriving in the restored stream area. Land conservation professionals explained stream restoration programs and processes including bank stabilization techniques, public access easements and funding sources.

Sponsors of the event included the Alma Rod and Gun Club with sponsor help from Buffalo County Conservation Alliance, Arcadia Sportsmen's Club, Fountain City Rod & Gun Club, Gilmanton Sportsmen's Club, Mondovi Conservation Club, Waumandee Rod & Gun Club and Trout Unlimited. Agency assistance included that from the DNR, NRCS, and Buffalo County Land Conservation Department.

Everyone involved is most grateful to the landowners who make these stream restoration projects possible. Their openness to work



### JOHNSON FAMILY FARMS RECOGNIZED

Members of the Johnson Family — Carol, Beau, Allison and Jennifer — accept a conservation recognition plaque.

with conservation agencies to improve water quality and environment, plus grant perpetual easements allowing public fishing access, is a very significant gift to

our communities. During this year's event we presented a recognition plaque to the Barry Johnson Family Farm.

# Vernon County Board hears about proposal to decommission flood control dams

By Gillian Pomplun

The time is approaching for the LaCrosse, Monroe and Vernon county boards to make a final decision about the USDA-NRCS proposal to decommission flood control dams in the West Fork Kickapoo and Coon Creek watersheds.

It is anticipated that the land conservation committees in each county will make a recommendation to their county boards in May, and then each of the three boards of supervisors will vote on the proposal at their June meetings.

Vernon County will make a decision about the five dams in the Coon Creek Watershed and the eight dams in the West Fork Kickapoo Watershed.

There is a proposal on the table to rebuild the ninth West Fork Kickapoo Watershed Dam, Jersey Valley.

In Vernon County, two of the nine dams in the West Fork Kickapoo River stand breached following the August 2018 rainstorm that led to historic flooding. The Mlsna Dam is in the process of being decommissioned using funding from the Wisconsin DNR.

LaCrosse County will make a decision about the two dams, and Monroe County about the seven dams, in the Coon Creek Watershed.

In Monroe County, three of the seven dams stand breached following the August 2018 rainstorm event that led to historic flooding on the Little LaCrosse, Coon Creek and the Kickapoo River.

Cost share to decommission the dams from NRCS is 100 percent. Cost share to rebuild Jersey Valley is 100 percent for the aspects of the project that relate to flood control, and 50 percent for the aspects that relate to recreation.

With Vernon County as the local sponsor for the project, their estimated portion of the \$18.6 million project to rebuild Jersey Valley would be \$465,000.

The counties will shoulder some costs to decommission the dams. These costs will be for permit fees, land rights acquisition and relinquishment of easements.

For Vernon County, those costs are estimated at \$32,000 for the Coon Creek dams and \$80,000 for the West Fork Kickapoo dams.

"We're not going to get a better deal than this, and Vernon County doesn't have the resources to go it alone in repairing and maintaining these dams," Vernon County Conservation Director Ben Wojahn told the Vernon County Board of Supervisors at their April 23 meeting.

"Some property owners will be affected by decommissioning the dams, and we know that not everyone will be happy about the decision."

## Project endorsed

Wojahn stated emphatically to the board that he sees no reason not to take this offer from NRCS to decommission the dams.

"Our county has greater liability now than before the August 2018 rainstorm and the breach of five flood control dams because we now know definitively why those dams failed," Wojahn explained.

"Those dams failed because they are anchored to sandstone in the hillsides, which conducts water and

eventually erodes away, causing the dams to fail."

Vernon County Resource Conservationist Mark Erickson has been the lead on maintenance and repair of the flood control dams in the county for years. He was involved with NRCS and other partners in the study that evaluated the dams in the process of deciding what their future should be after the 2018 storms.

## Storms more intense

"The storms have changed and gotten more intense, and the dams are no longer adequate to handle them," Erickson explained. "What this means is that we are seeing more flow over the auxiliary spillways, and the pipes are undersized for the types of storm events we're seeing."

Erickson said that all of the key infrastructure of the dams is aging, and some of it is already in need of repair. He said that this means that 'repairing' the dams is not an option, and what would be required would be a complete rebuild. And, most telling, he explained that because of the fractured sandstone in the hillsides the dams abut, the most expensive part of a rebuild project would be in addressing that geologic feature that caused the dams to fail in 2018.

## Controlling costs

Wojahn acknowledged that the numbers presented for the costs to the local sponsors are just estimates, and so it is hard to say for certain that those costs might not increase.

"These numbers will remain estimates until the projects are approved, the designs are completed, the bids are let, and the work is completed," Wojahn said. "It is possible that some of our costs may be defrayed through funding from the DNR's Municipal Grants Program, and some of our expenses can be paid with in-kind staff time contributions."

Wojahn pointed out that in the public comments received, either at in-person meetings or online, there were more people in favor of rebuilding Jersey Valley than against it. He said that historically, Jersey Valley has been a very popular park and beach in a county that doesn't have many lakes.

## Question/answer

Supervisor Mary Henry pointed out that historically, the dams had been built for the purpose of flood control. She asked what will happen after they are removed, and how the county can prepare or help citizens affected?

"We don't have the best answers," Wojahn responded. "For instance, the Coon Valley Park has not been protected from flood damages with the dams in place. Without the dams, the water will rise more quickly, and it will subside more quickly, but at least communities won't experience a wall of water from the breach of a dam. We need to see more conservation land use to reduce the stormwater runoff that leads to flooding."

Supervisor Nathan Slack asked Wojahn how the county can incentivize land use that increases infiltration. He pointed out that the county has lost a lot of hayfields, contour strips, terraces and reten-

tion structures.

"You're on point – at least we have succeeded in getting some contour strips back in place on the county farm," Wojahn responded. "The Wallasers have a great story to tell about use of dairy manure and cover crops to increase soil health and infiltration – what we need is more staff to build more capacity to assist landowners with the Farmland Preservation Program, building soil health, installing buffers and increasing perennial plantings on the landscape."

Supervisor Frank Easterday said that he lives below the breached Pilot Mlsna Dam, but also below the remaining Pilot Klinkner Dam. He asked what it would cost to repair the Klinkner Dam?

"Because the county did repairs to the Klinkner Dam, we technically have 90 more years on our federal agreement on that structure," Erickson explained. "That being said, the pipes on that dam are separated, and would require either some sort of fix to the existing pipes, or digging the pipe out and replacing it."

"Klinkner is the only one of our West Fork Kickapoo dams that we could keep and still have federal support," Wojahn said. "However, I don't see any reason to keep it. It doesn't have a large storage capacity, and I don't want to see future Vernon County burdened with the costs of maintaining it."

Another supervisor asked if decommissioning the dams would cause flood insurance rates in Coon Valley to rise?

"Decommissioning the dams will not impact flood insurance rates," Wojahn responded. "And the decommissioning plan includes funding for the re-mapping of the floodplain."

USDA-NRCS State Conservation Engineer Steve Becker further clarified the situation with the floodplain maps.

"The original mapping of the floodplain didn't include the stormwater retention capacity of the dams because of questions about their reliability, and the fact that the amount of water retained was statistically insignificant from an overall watershed perspective," Becker explained. "The funding for decommissioning will include \$100,000 in Coon Creek and \$200,000 in West Fork Kickapoo to re-map the Zones A in the immediate proximity of the dams after they are decommissioned, but the rest of the watershed will remain unaffected."

Supervisor Wade Lawler said that his understanding is that in decommissioning, the dams will be notched to allow a 100-year storm event to pass downstream without obstruction. He asked what would happen if we got a storm event larger than this, and whether the county would continue to have any liability with the dams after decommissioning?

## Stabilizing site will be challenging

"Getting the site stable during decommissioning will be the challenge," Erickson responded. "The Mlsna Dam project is going to be our guinea pig."

"There aren't a lot of guarantees about what will happen with the notched dams in a rain event that exceeds the 100-year storm," Wojahn said. "The goal in decom-

missioning will be to make the sites as stable as possible, and through doing this, Vernon County will divest itself of liability."

Supervisor Will Beitlich observed that it seems like Vernon County will be on its own after decommissioning in the event of a storm larger than the 100-year storm event.

"It's a good question how long the stability of the structure will be evaluated after decommissioning," Erickson responded.

"With notching the structures to pass the 100-year storm event, the geometry of it means that any water that accumulates behind the structures will be less than three feet in depth, and most of the dams are relatively small, and will have less than that," Becker said. "Indeed, with most of the dams being relatively small, there won't be much left of them after they are notched to pass the 100-year storm, and the water impounded behind those will be insignificant."

Another supervisor commented that he anticipated some very volatile town meetings about the decommissioning topic, and asked what he should tell people who are upset?

"Tell them that we need people to move out of harm's way, and the best way to help reduce the impacts of flooding is to focus on smaller structures (like farm ponds) rather than large structures," Wojahn responded.

Supervisor Mary Henry pointed out that NRCS has lots of money now from the Inflation Reduction Act, and asked how many landowners are affected in the West Fork Kickapoo, and what it would take to be proactive to help people?

"We've never stopped trying to be proactive – give us more resources, and we'll make it happen," Wojahn responded. "As far as how many people it will take in the watersheds to reduce the impacts of flooding, the answer is that we need everyone to become involved."

Supervisor Frank Easterday provided some perspective for the board on the topic of the dam removal.

"I saw the floods before the dams were built in 1954, and I saw the flooding and damages in 1978," Easterday said. "The damages were still terrible in 1978, and it was very scary to live below the Mlsna Dam when it was full and overflowing in August of 2018 – I'm not that concerned about decommissioning the dams."

## Better for county to deploy smaller practices

"It will be better for the county to deploy many smaller practices on the landscape than to have these big dams that can fail," Wojahn said. "We can't stop the floods – it's all about mitigating the impacts and infiltrating more water on the landscape."



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# Iowa citizens tackle safe drinking water issues

By Gillian Pomplun

A coalition of environmental groups and the Iowa Environmental Coalition (IEC) recently filed a petition with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, alleging the state isn't doing enough to protect drinking water supplies from nitrate pollution. The group states the problem is particularly severe in the northeast region of the state, with its underlying karst geology.

The carbonate bedrock typical in regions with karst geology is cracked and fissured limestone or sandstone that quickly conducts contaminants from the surface into the aquifers below. The region is also characterized by sinkholes, and shallow depths of soil overlaying the bedrock. The geology in northeast Iowa is very similar to that of southeast Minnesota. It is similar, but not identical to the karst geology in the unglaciated areas of the Driftless Region in southwest Wisconsin and northwest Illinois.

"The area of particular concern in northeast Iowa has soluble rock near the surface, as well as sinkholes, caves, springs and disappearing streams," IEC's Water Program Director Alicia Vasto explained to participants on a webinar about their EPA petition. "What this means is that there are close connections between the surface of the land and groundwater."

## State laws insufficient

Vasto explained that the various mechanisms through state means are insufficient to protect groundwater aquifers in karst terrain. She said that the State of Iowa offers state funding for private well owners to test their water through the 'Grants to Counties' program, providing each county \$50,505 per year.

Tests have shown problems with nitrate levels in wells, with 38.6 percent of wells tested between 2016 and 2023 showing between three and 20+ milligrams-per-liter (mg/L) of nitrate.

The state Groundwater Protection Act of 1987 states that "preventing contamination of groundwater is of paramount importance," and that groundwater contamination "shall require appropriate actions to prevent further contamination."

"Even with this language in the law, and with mounting evidence of nitrate contamination, there is no program for cleaning up pollution from agricultural chemicals," Vasto pointed out. "In no way is agriculture being held liable for the costs of this clean up."

## Water quality data

Chris Jones, retired research engineer at the University of Iowa, and author of the book, 'The Swine Republic,' spoke at an event at the Driftless Wetlands Centre in Marquette, Iowa in May. He once oversaw surface water quality testing for the State of Iowa, working with the Iowa Flood Center.

"7,000 private wells have tested above the safe drinking water standard of 10 mg/L since the year 2000," Jones pointed out. "One third of Iowa's public water supplies are vulnerable to nitrate contamination, and 60 are actively removing nitrate from the drinking water they supply their customers. Of the water being supplied to citizens from public water supplies, 25 percent has been treated for nitrate reduction."

And then, he pointed out, there is the amount of agricultural nutrients, mainly nitrate and phosphorous, running off into Iowa's surface waters. Ultimately, those nutrients are carried by the Mississippi River to the Gulf of Mexico, where they have created a dead zone where no life can thrive.

"In 2011, prompted by the Gulf Hypoxia Task Force, the State of Iowa adopted a 'Nutrient Reduction Strategy,'" Vasto said. "This strategy was adopted in 2018 as the official state policy to reduce nutrient pollution, but adherence is entirely voluntary for the biggest polluters in the state."

Vasto said this 'voluntary' approach is not working, and documented by the data. The goal of the strategy is a 45 percent reduction in total nitrogen load in surface waters, but actual water quality data shows no improvement.

Jones pointed out that Iowa accounts for 21 percent of the land that drains to the Upper Mississippi River, but 45 percent of the nitrate. In the Missouri River Basin, a major tributary of the Upper Mississippi River, Iowa accounts for 3.3 percent of the land in the basin and 55 percent of the nitrates. In the entire Mississippi River basin, Iowa accounts for 4.5 percent

of the land, 29 percent of the nitrates, and 15 percent of the phosphorus reaching the Gulf of Mexico.

"In stream-water-quality monitoring between 2000 and 2020, the data has established that in three of the 44 streams sampled, there have been modest improvements in water quality (five percent)," Jones pointed out. "And 25 of the 44 have seen water quality declines in that time frame."

## Federal laws

IEC staff attorney Michael Schmidt pointed out that the federal Clean Water Act of 1972 (CWA) regulates only "point" sources of surface water pollution, such as a factory or a municipal sewage plant, but does not regulate "non-point" sources such as storm water runoff from agricultural fields or production facilities. The act, she said, also does not protect groundwater.

"The Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (SDWA) was passed by Congress to protect public supplies of drinking water," Schmidt explained. "It was originally focused on treatment and finished drinking water quality, but amendments passed in 1996 broadened the scope of the SDWA to include provisions to protect the aquifers from which public drinking water supplies are drawn."

Schmidt says that under the SDWA, "EPA retains emergency powers to abate present or likely contamination of a public water system or underground sources of drinking water, if it receives information that the contamination may present an imminent and substantial endangerment to the health of persons and appropriate state and local authorities have not acted to protect the health of such persons."

## Iowa rule making

Schmidt explained that in Iowa, the Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) adopts rules for the

Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) to implement. Rule change proposals can originate from an agency, or the Administrative Procedure Act allows anyone to petition for new rules.

"IEC asked for two rule changes in 2021 and 2022," Schmidt explained. "In 2021, they asked that the animal livestock rules be changed to increase the vertical separation requirements from karst landforms from five feet to 25 feet, to prohibit construction where there is less than five feet of separation, to use monitoring to protect drinking water, and to allow IDNR to consider cumulative impacts when making a CAFO permitting decision. In 2022, IEC proposed that IDNR update the state's 100-year floodplain maps."

Schmidt said the first 2021 petition was denied by the EPC, and after the second petition was submitted in 2022, IDNR released a draft Animal Feeding Operation (AFO) rule in September of 2023. IEC submitted comments on the rule, and it was sent to the Governor's office for "pre-clearance." Then in May of 2023, EPC released new draft rules, and IEC once again submitted comments. After several more iterations and comment periods, IDNR once again sent the

draft rules to the Governor's office for pre-clearance, and rules were pre-cleared without any of the added protections in karst areas. Finally, on April 16, 2024, the EPC adopted the rules as pre-cleared by the Governor's office, with the added protections for karst areas removed.

Schmidt explained several features of EPA's emergency powers granted in the SDWA:

- EPA can act on "information," and there is not a requirement for the type of evidence or a specific burden of proof
- The contaminants of concern include nitrate, with reference to the federal drinking water standard of 10 mg/L
- Underground sources of drinking water are those that serve, or those that could serve, as a source of water for a public drinking water supply.

Imminent and substantial endangerment means potential harm, with no requirement of actual or demonstrated harm; that the conditions for endangerment are present even if actual harm may not be realized for years; and that there is a high likelihood of ingestion that could lead to disease or a serious threat of harm.

"So, for instance, in an area with karst geology, and with more than one source of nitrate contamination, EPA has the authority to issue multiple formal administrative orders with enforceable milestones to protect public health," Schmidt explained. "If necessary, EPA can require provision of alternative drinking water from the state for affected citizens until compliance with their administrative orders is achieved."

Schmidt explained that these emergency powers granted to EPA by the SDWA can only be used if the problem is not being handled effectively by the state or local government in a timely fashion, but does

not require any finding that those units of government have failed to act. EPA can proceed with use of their emergency powers even if the state and local governments are working jointly with EPA.

"A similar petition was filed in the State of Minnesota in 2023, about karst areas in southeast Minnesota which has geology like that or northeast Iowa," Schmidt explained. "Through testing, it was determined that 9,218 residents in that area are at risk for consuming water above the drinking water standard for nitrate. Now, EPA expects Minnesota to hold sources of nitrate accountable using all available tools to reduce the amount of nitrate they release to groundwater."

## Minnesota requirements

In response to the petition in Minnesota, EPA required the state to:

- create a communicable plan
- identify residences on private wells threatened by nitrate, and provide owners with immediate notice and instruction
- create and implement a plan to sample drinking water for all residents that request it
- provide an alternative source of drinking water to impacted residents
- maintain and publish records on the scope and severity of the contamination and the response
- provide regular progress reports to EPA on actions, accomplishments and timelines
- develop and implement a long-term solution to achieve nitrate reductions in drinking water supplies.

## IEC requests to EPA

In their petition, IEC asked the EPA to:

- investigate current CAFO permitting procedures in Iowa
- investigate other potential sources of nitrate pollution
- determine enforcement measures for CAFOs and other agricultural sources
- provide a timetable for implementation
- order polluters to provide alternative drinking water and water testing
- provide assistance to private well owners to protect their wells
- prohibit new or expanded CAFOs until nitrate levels in wells consistently measure below 10 mg/L
- impose monitoring and discharge requirements for manure and wastewater storage, and land application
- take civil enforcement actions against polluters.

"EPA's response will likely come after the 2024 presidential election, and concerned citizens will need to engage in ongoing advocacy for the solutions asked for in the petition, and for legislative priorities based on the anticipated EPA response," Schmidt said. "We will also need to plan for further action in the event that EPA fails to respond."

## New group forming

At the meeting at the Driftless Wetlands Centre in Marquette, Iowa, attorney James Larew announced that a new group is forming in Iowa's Driftless Area to take steps to protect surface and groundwater quality in the region with karst geology.

"I have worked as an attorney for 35 years, and served as General Counsel and Chief of Staff for the

*Iowa accounts for 21 percent of the land that drains to the Upper Mississippi River, but 45 percent of the nitrate.*

Iowa Governor's Office," Larew told the group present. "After that experience, I decided to leave the Governor's Office and embark on a new environmental law practice."

Larew said that after successfully holding polluters accountable in an air quality case in Muscatine, Iowa, he is ready to turn his attention to issues of water quality. He said, "Chris Jones is doing something about things you care about. The State of Iowa has issued 10,000 CAFO permits and never denied a single one. It's time for Iowa people to start thinking about our water differently."

Chris Jones told the group that he loves Iowa, the state where he was born, but now divides his time between Iowa City and a property he owns in DeSoto, Wisconsin.

"I want Iowa to be better, and I'd like to see our state have environmental integrity," Jones said. "Experiencing nature is part of what it means to be a human, and if we want things to get better, we're going to have to fight for what's right."

Jones pointed out that the cost of nitrogen fertilizer in Iowa today is about 50-cents per pound, but the cost to remove nitrogen from the environment using best management practices is \$2 to \$10 per pound. He said that removing nitrogen would cost the state's taxpayers between \$540 million to \$2.7 billion per year.

"The biggest problem we have in Iowa is the federal Renewable Fuel Standard, which props up the price on corn grown for ethanol," Jones

said. "In Iowa alone, 11,000 square miles of land is used to grow corn for ethanol. This is an area equal to 20 cities."

Jones said that it is "just a fantasy" to think that the nitrate pollution problem can be solved farmer-by-farmer, with practices implemented on private lands. He says that what is needed in Iowa is to diversify agriculture beyond corn and beans.

"Ethanol has got to die. If you remember one thing from my talk, remember that," Jones told the group. "The industry wants us to believe that ethanol produces lower greenhouse gas emissions, but that is simply not true, and studies have shown that it has actually increased emissions by 24 percent."

Jones pointed out that the ethanol industry was created by public policy, and said that we need our government to formulate a different policy that produces more diversity in agricultural production to give us the environmental outcomes we want. For instance, he said, the southern and western parts of Iowa used to be dominated by pasture. Why isn't it now?

Jones followed up on attorney Larew's introduction, and confirmed that he has agreed to be president of a new group forming in northeast Iowa called "Driftless Water Defenders."

"The group will be dedicated to protection of water resources in this part of the state," Jones said. "I think at this point, we're ready to fight with a little more zest."

## Fish-cicada project: Who's got the Guts?

*Researchers ask for angler help as they study the effects of the rare cicada hatchings on fish and ecosystems.*

We're sure you've heard the buzz about the overlapping cicada broods hatching in 15 U.S. states right now. Trillions of cicadas are expected to emerge with these broods. Prof. Rich Walker and his team at UNI are working to collect data on these broods in the short window that they'll be active above ground. This only happens every 221 years and provides a fleeting opportunity to study their effects on recipient ecosystems.

Their goal is to characterize and quantify the consumption of cicadas by fish during this rare event. But they need your help to catch many more fish. If you are interested in contributing data as a citizen scientist, please follow the below guidance.

### We need your fish guts

We will accept any fish species from any water body within the range identified on the attached map.

We are looking for fish caught or collected between May and November 2024.

We will accept whole fish or at a

minimum the stomachs from fish.

We will accept frozen fish or fish preserved in ethanol.

All whole fish from the same location can be placed in labeled Zip-lock bags with the below information.

- Date
- Time of day collected
- Waterbody name
- Sample location information (e.g., road crossings, access points, GPS points)
- Cicada presence or absence (visual or auditory)

All fish stomachs should be placed in individually labeled bags.

If you do not have freezer space, please let Dr. Walker know and he will find a sample drop-off or hand-off location.

We really appreciate your help! Feel free to pass this information on to other potentially interested individuals/groups. Please do not hesitate to reach out to Walker at [rwalker2442@gmail.com](mailto:rwalker2442@gmail.com) if you have any questions or are ready to hand off your samples.

## For caddis, press the easy button first

*Suggestions for catching even more trout on caddis patterns.*

Peter Jonas, TUDARE

May and June are great months for fishing caddis patterns in the Driftless Area. This year, I noticed many fish receptive to caddis patterns stationed in shallow, fast water in broad daylight. Here are a few suggestions that might help you catch more trout on caddis patterns.

I am not a big fan of floating caddis patterns that ride low in the water or use CDC. All the caddis I see are riding high in the water while manically trying to get airborne before they are eaten, or are hovering around the surface near the bank.

One of the great things about fishing caddis is that a dead drift is good, but a bit of movement on the fly can be even better. I would like to tell you that I always do this with intentionality, but in reality, a trout's willingness to hit a moving caddis can make up for a multitude of casting and mending errors.

I like a high-floating fully hackled, deer or elk hair caddis. And if I can get away with it, I like my caddis a size larger than the ones I see on the water. If I get a couple good floats over an actively rising fish and it takes a look and says, "I don't think so," then I tip my cap and size down.

Save your subtlety for mayfly imitations. When it comes to caddis, push the "easy button" first, and more often than not you will actually be able to see your fly and catch fish.

Unless the fish are just going bonkers, I almost always tie on an emerger on about 20 inches of 4x tippet off the back of the dry fly's hook. This year I have been catching about half my fish on the emerger and about half on the adult.

If fish are really hammering the

adult, I just cut the emerger off. Fish tend to strike the adult aggressively (although not always), but frequently take the emerger with a bit more restraint. I always try to remind myself to let the fish go up and down before setting the hook. Saying "God save the King" before setting isn't the worst idea.

This may sound counterintuitive, but caddis are generally more effective on sunny days than on cloudy days. Every rule has its exceptions, but generally in May and June fish mayfly imitations on cloudy days and caddis on sunny ones.

I am writing this article on May 18 and the fishing has been so good at midday that I haven't seriously started fishing in the evening yet. And I'm not really an early riser.

It is important to note that caddis do not need to be hatching steadily or in great numbers for caddis imitations to be effective. This year I have seen only one completely satisfying, honest-to-goodness caddis hatch. But I have probably had six or seven days of above-average caddis fishing with a smattering of caddis on the water and two of those days were borderline epic.

I think over the years I have probably overestimated the amount of caddis activity necessary to trigger feeding activity. I deeply regret this. Now if I see just a few caddis or a random trout rising here or there, I assume it is game-on and I am usually right. Trout just seem not to need much of an excuse to start looking for caddis.

Riffles or the heads of the run are usually the best spots because this is where caddis typically emerge. But don't neglect the mid-run current seam or foam line. If it's a good day fish will even set up bold



### CADDIS PATTERN INSPIRED BY GIANNIS ANTETOKOUNMPO

The author's son, Brendan, has come up with a hybrid caddis larva/scud pattern tied with a black bead head, a purple sparkle collar and a green body tied a bit loose. He calls it The Greek Freak.

as brass in the tail of the pool. These fish are totally exposed, so they will be edgy even if they are actively feeding.

There are zillions of caddis patterns that use every conceivable material and design to imitate the adult, emerger or pupa and larva. I use four.

For the adult I tie A.K. Best's St. Vrain caddis (not to be confused with his spent caddis). I like the fact that the body is a bit more distinct than the classic Troth pattern, but the Troth is probably just as good.

For the emerger I tie the classic Lafontaine sparkle emerger. If I'm in a hurry, I tie Garry Borger's Down and Dirty Caddis pupa.

For the larva, I tie the Real Deal

Caddis Meal, but honestly this pattern looks like a lot of other bead-head caddis. When I am in a hurry, I skip the Fino Skin on the back.

My son Brendan has come up with a hybrid caddis larva/scud pattern tied with a black bead head, a purple sparkle collar and a green body tied a bit loose. He calls it The Greek Freak. Both the name and the Milwaukee Bucks color scheme were inspired by Giannis Antetokounmpo. It seems like a strange foundation to build a fly on, but he sure catches fish with it.

I tie all these flies in black, green and tan, usually on size 16-18 hooks.

Life is complicated, but fishing caddis doesn't have to be.

# Sculpins: It's not only about the trout



## SCULPINS ARE ENVIRONMENTAL INDICATORS...AND PREY FOR TROUT

Like brook trout, they serve as a type of “canary in the coal mine.”

Words and photos By Jason Freund

TU is of course about the trout. But as much as anything we are a coldwater conservation organization, much the same way that Ducks Unlimited is a wetland conservation organization. When a wetland is improved, diversity of life increases and we see increases in birds, insects, plants and other life. What is most unique about coldwater streams is that the coldest, most pristine of streams have the lowest biodiversity. More typically, as habitats are restored or improved, biodiversity increases. Not so in coldwater streams.

What we expect in the coldest of coldwater streams – those with the highest biotic integrity – are brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*) and sculpin (*Cottus* spp.) only for fishes. Index of biotic integrity (IBI) is a method used to measure how close a stream's fish assemblage is to “pre-settlement conditions.” Wisconsin's coldwater IBI (Lyons et al. 1996) has five metrics that each score between 0 and 20 points for an optimal value of 100.

Those metric are: number of intolerant species, percent of all individuals that are tolerant species, percent of all individuals that are top carnivores, percent of all individuals that are stenothermal coolwater and coldwater species, and percent of salmonid individuals that are brook trout. Streams earning the highest IBI scores are those with sculpin and native brook trout. As you might expect, for most IBIs, including IBIs developed for warmwater stream fishes, IBI scores typically increase as the number of species increases. Not so for coldwater streams.

Why is this? The simplest and most obvious cause is that it is difficult to live in cold water. Although cold water holds oxygen more effectively, the lack of heat slows biological processes, particularly for cold-blooded organisms. Few fishes have evolved to live in cold water, particularly in streams which provide their own unique challenges. In Wisconsin streams, those species are primarily the brook trout and two species of sculpin: mottled sculpin (*Cottus bairdii*) and the poorly named slimy sculpin (*C. cognatus*).

We tend to categorize streams based on their summer temperature maximums because this is the limiting factor for most fishes. Streams that reach 70-72 degrees F (20-22 C). for very long first lose brook trout and at a few degrees warmer,

brown trout may be lost. A single, prolonged warm spell or drought is often enough to change fish assemblages in a stream. Coldwater streams are defined as having summer maximum water temperatures of less than 22 C. (72 F; Lyons et al. 1999) As streams transition to coolwater streams, which Lyons et al. (2011) defined as having June-through-August mean water temperatures of 17–20.5 C, July mean temperatures of 17.5–21 C, and maximum daily mean temperatures of 20.7–24.6 C, they gain species.

Coldwater streams are among the most sensitive environments with species adapted to living in these unique environmental conditions. There are many parallels with other naturally low-diversity habitats such as low-productivity wetlands, deserts, oligotrophic lakes and the open ocean. Each of these environments are globally important and possess species unique to those specific environments. The loss of trout species demonstrates a loss of habitat quality.

Although our native brook trout get most of the attention, sculpin deserve even more of our attention. They are my favorite fish. I helped capture more than 100,000 mottled sculpin in West Virginia streams in a few years of fish community sampling. Mottled sculpin were nearly everywhere in West Virginia. When I returned to Wisconsin I was surprised they weren't everywhere.

They are the near perfect benthic fish, keeping in mind that evolution does not strive for perfection but merely to allow a species to survive and reproduce. Their most easily identifiable characteristics are their large pectoral fins and their greatly tapered shape. Additionally, they are well camouflaged to their benthic (bottom-dwelling) life and have lost their swim bladders.

Together, these characteristics make them the near perfect benthic fish. They live in and among the rocks on the bottom of the stream and have small, sticky eggs that are attached to the underside of rocks, a characteristic that requires streams to be relatively free of fine sediments.

Sculpin have their origins in marine waters, however there is a pretty great diversity of freshwater sculpins. But given our glacial history, like with most other fishes, Wisconsin possesses a rather depauperate fish fauna. We have just four species of sculpin (Becker 1983), the previously mentioned mottled and slimy sculpin in the ge-

nus *Cottus* along with spoonhead (*C. ricei*) and deepwater sculpin (*Myoxocephalus thompsonii*) both of which are only found in the Great Lakes. Of our stream sculpins, mottled sculpin tend to be more widely distributed and generally are able to withstand warmer temperatures than slimy sculpins.

In West Virginia, we caught mottled sculpin in all but the most impaired of streams. Not only did we catch them, but we also caught them in amazing numbers. It was not uncommon for their densities to exceed a fish per square meter of stream bottom.

In Wisconsin, distribution of sculpin is difficult to understand and I have never seen densities like those we saw in West Virginia. We are at the southern extent of the slimy sculpin's range and their distribution in the Driftless Area looks to be a relict population. Slimy sculpin occur in a number of Lake Superior tributaries and the lake itself. There are fewer records from Lake Michigan.

Mottled sculpin are much more widely distributed, both in North America and in Wisconsin. They are distributed in many Wisconsin watersheds and appear to be absent from some places where I would expect them to be present. Because mottled sculpin are more tolerant of warmer temperatures, they are often found in both cold and coolwater streams.

We have both mottled and slimy sculpin in the Driftless Area, but have a rather poor understanding of their distributions. Some things we do know is that they are quite territorial, have relatively small home ranges (Petty and Grossman 2004) and are rather sensitive to sedimentation.

I must assume that much of their current distribution is a mixture of places where they were able to withstand the cultural sedimentation that took place in the Driftless Area (Vondracek 2019) and places where they have been restored by reintroductions.

For example, we have in our collection at UW-La Crosse mottled sculpin from Fort McCoy, which may have been protected from the agricultural practices that caused most Driftless Area streams to be choked with fine sediments.

In 2023 DNR Fisheries Biologist Kirk Olson and his colleagues reintroduced slimy sculpin to several streams that currently only hold brook trout. Therein lies other potential reasons for loss of sculpin in Wisconsin streams — competition, behavioral alteration and predation by non-native brown trout (Zimmerman and Vondracek 2007).

We recently were awarded a grant to better understand the distribution of sculpin in the Kickapoo River watershed. The Kickapoo is one of those watersheds where both mottled and slimy sculpin have been reported, though there are likely some historic issues with their identification. Complicating matters is the fact that the two species are known to hybridize (Strauss 1986). We aim to better understand how the two species fill different niches, if they do.

Why should we care about a

small, non-game fish of seemingly little consequence? First, they have intrinsic value as native fish. Knowing that intrinsic value is not something that appeals to everyone, given their restricted movements (Petty and Grossman 2004), they are indicators of local stream and watershed conditions (Freund and Petty 2007). When sculpin are present, there is evidence that a particular stream has been long free of significant degradation. Sculpin would be expected to be slow to return to streams that experienced fish kills, for example. Like brook trout, they serve as a type of “canary in the coal mine,” but given their restricted movements compared to brook trout, they are better indicators of local and long-term watershed conditions. And, of course, the fly angler recognizes their importance as prey for trout.

Fishes and invertebrates of coldwater streams live in a narrow balance. With the clean, cold water come the trout and, if all is right in the world, the sculpin too.

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Jason Freund teaches Biology at the University of Wisconsin - La Crosse. After avoiding being a chapter president as long as possible, he is currently President of the Coulee Region Chapter of Trout Unlimited. In his free time, he fly fishes, ties flies, writes for his blog *thescientificflyangler.com*, and maybe a few non-fly



AUTHOR'S SCULPIN PATTERN



# Viroqua: The Heart of the Driftless Area

The trout fishing, stores, restaurants — and now the restored Hotel Fortney — all help secure Viroqua as the heart of the Wisconsin's Driftless Area.



HOTEL FORTNEY MORE THAN A CENTURY AGO

By Tom Meyer

When I think of the Driftless Area I think of fabulous trout streams in southwest Wisconsin, Iowa and Minnesota. I usually make the 2.5-hour drive five to 10 times every season. Sometimes the trips are overnight stays, depending on the river and weather conditions.

A friend, Jeff Bartynski, owned a home in Viroqua for several years and held "Trout Week" in April each year at his house. Jeff, a retired physician, is a skilled fly fisherman, fly tier and a generous host. Sometimes as many as 10 guys would come and go throughout the week. Jeff has since sold his house and moved to another part of the state, but I hope to still get out fishing with him in the future.

I've stayed at a number of different motels and cabins in the area but many times I drive back home, which makes for a long day.

I recently met friend and former coworker John Wieseler at a bridge on one of our favorite little streams. It doesn't seem possible, but John and I started fishing together 45 years ago, when we were still using spinning gear. We fished different stretches of the same river that ran through private property but had a fishing easement. Stream rehab had been done on this river a few years ago, thanks to the fantastic work of TUDARE, the DNR, the local TU chapter and the local farmers and landowners.

The water levels seemed perfect, although a bit high and colored from recent rains. It was a clear day, but the stained water helped avoid spooking fish, and I could move up on the nice runs and fish them easily. The fish were active and were enthusiastically taking my weighted wooly worm. It turns out John had success with small nymphs.

None of my fish were that large, but I considered it a great day and life was good. While driving home that afternoon I took a moment to appreciate what the area had to offer and I was thankful for the community effort that it took to have this kind of great fishing. The river was just a few miles outside of Viroqua which for me is the heart of the Driftless Area.

I've heard that the Viroqua area is becoming known as "Hemp Hollow." I don't know about that but I do know that many of the road

names have the word "Hollow" in them and sometimes it's hard to keep them straight when looking at maps.

## Great fly shops, hotels, restaurants, stores

Viroqua has a wonderful fly shop owned by Matt Wagner and Geri Meyer and a number of motels, restaurants, stores and even a hospital. If you have spent time there you know it is quite a unique small city. You see Amish folks with their horse and buggies and plenty of anglers. At the Co-op on Main Street you might see an eclectic mix of organic farmers and consumers, Amish folks, retired people and, of course, trout anglers.

It's a place where it's totally normal to see 75-year-old men with pony tails. You see earthy-looking women with long flowered skirts and tie-dye t-shirts shopping and working at the co-op.

It blends well with the number of Toyota Prius cars in the lot, the all-gender bathrooms, reusable yellow jacket traps, EV charging stations and everything organic, non-GMO, sugar free and gluten free sold in the store. The produce is locally grown and many of the products like nuts, coffee and grains are sold in bulk. I actually enjoy going there and often have lunch or take a break there between fishing sessions. I like the people watching but really dislike the paper biodegradable straws in the cafe.

## Co-ops abound

The organic flavor of the co-op is prevalent all over the city with a population of 4,450. Ed Holahan, a co-op employee who also produces podcasts for WDRT, a local non-profit radio station, says that Viroqua has more co-ops per capita than any city in the country. That tells you that the people who live here have a stake in the success and progress of the city and area, says Ed.

A local construction company with local owners is building a 65-unit apartment complex with retail



HOTEL FORTNEY TODAY

stores and even an assisted living facility across from the co-op to house us aging fishermen. There is a store next to the fly shop called Ewetopia, which sells yarn and other products made from sheep.

## Hotel Fortney a gem

I recently discovered a gem in Viroqua a few blocks south of the co-op, the Hotel Fortney. Last March I attended a fly-tying event in the hotel lounge. I was impressed with the recently renovated hotel so I booked a night in late May for myself and my wife for a midweek getaway.

The hotel was built in 1899 by the Fortney family and was operated as a 40-room hotel for many years. Around 1950 the hotel transformed into a rooming house for low-income folks and remained that way for years. In 2020 it went up for sale and caught the eye of organic farm project manager Brian Wrobel and his wife Amy from Stoddard, as well as Brian's parents, Larry and Sue Wrobel.

They acquired the building and worked with social agencies to find lodging for its residents. Once they were all relocated, the building was shut down and the restoration began. The hotel reopened in 2023 and is absolutely stunning. It is now a boutique-style hotel with 14 rooms, each with its own unique charm and character. The owners did a lot of the work on the hotel and are not afraid to get their hands dirty doing painting, electrical work, maintenance work and housekeeping.

They thought of every little detail and bring a personal touch to the hotel as well as a desire to pass the hotel on to their children.

The hotel's website accurately describes it as the "perfect blend of old-world elegance and modern comfort." The bathrooms have heated floors and modern fixtures but still has that look and feel of an old historic building. The windows are new but have the original shape and style. They maintained the integrity of the historic architectural

design, but installed modern amenities.

The rooms have high ceilings and tastefully done floor-to-ceiling curtains. The lounge features the original tin ceiling, refurbished stained glass windows and terrazzo floors. Original doors from the 2nd and 3rd floor guest rooms were repurposed for table tops in the lounge. The original front desk was also repurposed and now serves as the lounge bar, which features craft beers, wines and liquor as well as food from the attached Nobel-Rind Artisan Cheese shop and the Driftless Cafe.

During our stay we enjoyed cocktails and a local cheese board in the lounge. The presentation was amazing, like something you would see in a big city at a fancy hotel, not in a small town in southwest Wisconsin. We then had dinner next door at the Driftless Cafe, with locally grown food from organic farms, of course.

Not having to drive anywhere, we walked back to the hotel and discovered a trivia contest underway in the lounge. It's a happening place. Hotel lounge manager Justin Miller has organized several music festivals this summer, which are held outside the hotel. Court Street on the south side of the hotel is closed off for band stages, food tents etc.

Something to consider is that most of the 14 rooms have only one bed, either king size or queen size. There are a couple of two-room suites with built-in bunk beds and one that sleeps eight, but they are designed for families. I shook off the idea of a group of my fishing buddies sharing one of those rooms. Four or five CPAP machines running in close proximity does not equate to a restful night of sleep for me.

The Driftless Area is going to mean something more than fishing for me from now on. For a special occasion or a quick get-away, take your spouse or significant other to the Fortney Hotel in the heart of the Driftless Area in downtown Viroqua. While you're there, go fishing and have fun catching some non-GMO fish on a stream that runs through an organic farm.

Tom Meyer is an active TU leader with the Central Wisconsin Chapter. You can reach him at [tommeyer241@gmail.com](mailto:tommeyer241@gmail.com).

*"Viroqua has more co-ops per capita than any city in the country. That tells you that the people who live here have a stake in the success and progress of the city and area."*

# Great Lakes Stream Restoration update

By Chris Collier, Great Lakes Stream Restoration Manager

After a mild winter with little to no snow across the Northwoods, summer is here with a welcome surprise. Persistent spring rains have rescued water levels after scary low-flow conditions. On the not-so-great side, the ticks really enjoyed those 70-degree February temperatures, but I guess the job can't be perfect. With summer here our Great Lakes Stream Restoration team has hit the ground running.

We're working on two culvert replacement projects on a class 1 tributary to the Bois Brule, a culvert replacement on a tributary to the Montreal River, at least five culvert replacements in the Border Brule, Peshtigo and Oconto River watersheds and one logging-dam removal on the North Branch Oconto River.

Our science and monitoring program, led by Danielle, will continue to manage our temperature monitoring sites in the Upper Wolf River, leading our brook trout monitoring efforts and exploring partnership opportunities in the Lake Superior watershed to track potential coaster brook trout populations. While all this is happening, we will also be keeping an eye on 2025 and 2026 by moving designs and project permitting forward for more work in the Border Brule and Bois Brule watersheds.

### This year's seasonal techs

We're excited to welcome three seasonal technicians to our 2024 field team: Tessa Tormoen, Willow Pingel and Tyler Olson. Tessa and

Willow started at the end of April and Tyler joined the team in mid-May.

So far, they have focused on road-stream crossing inventories in the Mecan River Watershed and in Bayfield County. This inventory effort will continue throughout the summer and will also include the White River Watershed in Bayfield in Ashland counties.

They also received a quick break from inventories to join their UP counterparts, U.S. Forest Service staff and a volunteer from the UP for a tree planting along Allen Creek in Forest County.

The team will also be helping Danielle with her temperature study on the Wolf River and her brook trout monitoring. They will also join partner organizations to help with other fishery assessment efforts and join in aquatic habitat restoration projects.

Now, let's let Tessa, Willow and Tyler introduce themselves.

### Tessa Tormoen

Hello. My name is Tessa Tormoen and I graduated from Michigan Technological University in 2023 with a degree in ecology and evolutionary biology and a minor in fish biology. I am from Arbor Vitae, Wisconsin and I grew up enjoying the beautiful Wisconsin Northwoods. I currently live in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan.

Outside of work and school, I have many different hobbies including reading, baking, cooking, running, biking, skiing, gardening, swimming, hiking... I could go on.

I'm adventurous and tend to dab-



### LEAD SEASONAL TECH TESSA TORMOEN

Tessa Tormoen is our lead seasonal tech and after growing up in northern Wisconsin and spending a season working on Isle Royale.

ble in everything. I'm so excited to be returning to northern and central Wisconsin with TU this summer. I love TU's mission and I am excited to be a part of such a fantastic organization.

Additionally, this is a beautiful opportunity to give back to the area that raised me and taught me the value of nature, and to assist in the conservation of habitats and animals that I loved as a kid.

In the future, I want to return to school to receive a master's degree, and ultimately a PhD. I hope to educate future generations about the importance of conservation and inspire more stewards of nature to

protect and love our planet.

### Willow Pingel

I'm from Kendall, Wisconsin, went to Tomah High School, and got a BS in biology from the University of Wisconsin in Stevens Point where I minored in aquaculture/fish culture, conservation biology and their wetland science certificate. I'm particularly interested in ichthyology, and some day hope to go on to grad school for paleobiology so I can study fossil fishes in the future.

I worked in UWSP's fish lab taking care of their live fish collection, which taught me everything I know

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**TECHNICIAN WILLOW PINGEL SERVED ON DRIFTLESS CROSSING TEAM**

Willow Pingel was part of our Driftless Road Stream Crossing team in 2023 and is excited to bring her experience to the 2024 Northern Wisconsin team.

about aquaria. If you ever visit UWSP's fish lab, say hi to Beau the West African lungfish! (I named him!) I can't currently keep an aquarium where I live, but an African lungfish is my dream fish, and I can't wait until I can keep one.

I love taking care of fish, but wasn't so interested in captive wildlife as a career, so I'm excited to get started with TU so I can get more field experience, more aquatic habitat restoration experience, and overall do some good for our native fish populations that way.

Outside work, I'm the secretary of the Aldo Leopold Audubon Society in central Wisconsin, I have two cats named Lio and Scrambled

Eggs, and I love reading, playing D&D, going for bike rides, and going to metal shows.

**Tyler Olson**

I graduated from the UW—Stevens Point in May. I grew up in Sheboygan Falls, where I learned to hunt and fish. I am excited to work for TU because I want the public to enjoy the outdoors just like I do. I want to increase my knowledge about streams to be able to keep great fishing in streams for generations to come. I plan to use my experiences to become an advanced technician in the future and to continue to work in streams.

**Conclusion**

As you can see, we have a great seasonal team this year. Their work will help identify future projects and provide data that will direct future projects.

We have a lot happening this summer. As always, if you have any

questions about projects, or interest in seeing them in person, feel free to email me at [chris.collier@tu.org](mailto:chris.collier@tu.org). Also, if you'd like to meet any of our full-time or seasonal team members in the field, please reach out. We would be excited to get in the field with you.



**TECHNICIAN TYLER OLSON PREVIOUSLY VOLUNTEERED FOR TU**

Tyler Olson recently graduate from UW Stevens Point and after a season where he volunteered with the Wolf River Chapter, he's excited to have a position with TU to increase his experience with coldwater conservation.



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