Silica Sand Bill Passes
Catching Trout in the Mississippi Headwaters
A Boy’s Trout Stream
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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Enjoy the Diverse Fisheries You Help Protect and Restore

By John Lencewski, MNTU Executive Director

Driftless area trout angling reminds us of the diverse coldwater fisheries Minnesota has to offer. I write this as the Memorial Day weekend approaches and am weighing whether to chase brook trout in northern Minnesota, browns in the southeast spring creeks, rainbows in trout lakes, heritage lake trout in the shallows of Boundary Waters lakes, steelhead in North Shore rivers, or elect to be surprised by several species off Lake Superior river mouths. It is likely I will have done several by the time you receive this issue, and hopefully you will have too.

Before heading out to recharge my battery following the legislative session, I want to thank all of you who made a call or sent a message to your legislators and Governor Dayton. You helped turn the tide in favor of protecting Driftless area trout streams from needless harm from an emerging silica sand mining industry. I hope this newsletter finds you having just returned from catching many wild trout in those picturesque valleys.

As the summer begins, please consider incorporating a few hours of rewarding work on a habitat project into a fishing outing to a new stream. The late spring and frequent high water have already thrown off work calendars, so please use the chapter contacts listed on page 3 or regularly visit www.mntu.org or chapter websites for updated calendars. Thank you again for helping conserve our cold-water fisheries and watersheds.

Editor's Angle

Time to Get on the Water

As the seasons begin to slowly shift here outside my window along the Sucker River, I know it's time to spend the longer days that we have now on the water. For me that means many things, but relative to trout there are two - fishing and habitat improvement. As you page through our summer issue, you’ll find tempting stories to lure you out on the water to cast, as well as opportunities to get out and participate on the ground in restoring our streams, rivers, lakes and forests around Minnesota. If you’ve never fished an area, summertime is the time to contact another TU chapter, learn some good spots to fish and have the chance to drop in and help out on a habitat improvement project or education program. From North of Grand Marais to SE Minnesota there are TU projects and programs that you can get involved with this year.

As we work to make this newsletter effort sustainable, please take the opportunity to donate directly to MNTU. You’ll find a form on the back cover, and with it you can help fund what we think is the best way to connect our volunteers, members, and all those who care about our trout waters. As always, make sure to take the time to support our advertisers and let them know that you saw their ad here in MNTU.

Good luck fishing this season and send us your photos for upcoming issues!
Welcome to the 2013 summer Trout Unlimited statewide newsletter. I want to again thank Carl and Cindy Haensel for agreeing to serve as editor and layout designer of a product that will help get the message of Trout Unlimited out more broadly across the state of Minnesota. We received a lot of very positive feedback on the spring edition of the newsletter. In May 2012, we were able to secure further state funding for coldwater habitat work. Direct from www.mntu.org: “On Tuesday May 1, Governor Mark Dayton signed into law a bill containing an appropriation of $2.1 million to enable the Minnesota Council and seven chapters of Trout Unlimited to continue enhancing and restoring in-stream, riparian and lake habitats around the State. The bill, Senate File 2493, appropriates proceeds of a constitutionally dedicated sales tax approved by Minnesota voters in November 2008. This fourth appropriation from the Outdoor Heritage Fund will be used by Minnesota Trout Unlimited chapters and members to improve habitat on thirteen streams and lakes. Habitat will be restored or improved on six northern Minnesota trout waters, two Twin Cities metropolitan area streams and five streams in the Driftless area of southeast Minnesota. The new appropriation becomes available in July and will fund 2013 field work on these trout waters: Boys Lake, Kimball Lake and Mink Lake in Cook County; a trout stream in Cook County; Camp Creek in Fillmore County; East Indian Creek in Wabasha County; Garvin Brook, Rush and Pine Creeks in Winona County; Hay Creek in Goodhue County; Mill Creek in Olmsted County; Stewart River in Lake County and the Vermillion River in Dakota County. “Many of these projects will be done this summer. We are also awaiting the governor’s signature this month on an additional $2.4 million appropriation bill. With this wonderful news, comes a challenge: all projects require volunteers to help with work in the field. You may notice that the majority of projects are in SE MN and on the North Shore. We have dedicated volunteers who have been working on projects for the last three rounds of grants, and we could use more volunteers to step forward. If you have never been involved in stream work, it is very gratifying. If you have an interest in participating in a TU project please step forward – and recruit a friend (or four). I can already see a couple vans streaming out of the Twin Cities to spend a weekend on stream work (throw in some fishing too) in SE MN. I’ll close by repeating something I said in the last newsletter: The heart of any great volunteer organization is its people. If you are not yet involved with the MN Council or your local chapter please consider sharing your skills and passion to meet the challenges and opportunities in front of Trout Unlimited. Tight Lines! Gregor - Thanks for taking the time to write. We encourage all those who are interested in the project and in helping support the Ruby Habitat Foundation to check it out online. The web address as provided by you is: www.rubyhabitat.org - The Editor
**TROUT FISHING THE HEADWATERS**

**Fishing Opportunities in the Headwaters of the Mississippi River**

By Bob Wagner

Looking to catch some good trout up north? Eleven streams and thirteen lakes in the Headwaters TU chapter area provide abundant and exciting trout fishing opportunities in North Central Minnesota. From a radius of Bemidji at the center, the Red Lake Reservation to the north, Park Rapids to the south, west to Bagley and east to Cass Lake there are a lot of opportunities to explore.

Starting in the north, the Red Lake Indian Reservation is one of Minnesota’s best kept secrets for trophy rainbows and brook trout in pristine secluded lakes. During eight separate trips over the past 5 years I’ve caught rainbow trout averaging over 16 inches with 2 over 20 inches on each trip, plus brook trout over 2 lbs.

Pat Brown, Red Lake Fisheries Manager, explained their program started stocking 4 lakes with Rainbow and Brook trout in 1987 plus one additional lake with only Lake Trout that average 6-8 lbs. All five lakes are small deep, cold, spring fed gems. They have done very well at growing gorgeous, fat, chrome rainbows. I have been most successful with sink tip lines using an articulating leech pattern. One point to remember is that you have to hire an Indian guide to fish on the Reservation. My last six trips have been with the same guide, Darwin Sumner, which I recommend and whose contact information is found at the end of the article.

In Bemidji, Fisheries Specialist Tony Stricker area is working hard at protecting and improving the following streams and lakes. Tony has also been a key resource advocate for our TU sponsored Trout in the classroom and 5th grade fishing program. Tony are a number of good fishing opportunities near Bemidji:

- Necktie River: This river originates about four miles south of Bemidji, flowing over 10 miles into Steamboat Lake. The Necktie has natural reproducing brook trout.
- Sucker Brook: This is another success story with natural reproduction brook trout.
- Clearwater River: The river is about 15 miles NW of Bemidji by Pine-wood. It has a handicapped trail and multiple fishing sites off Co. Rd #22. There are six miles of managed trout water on a river system over 100 miles long. It is stocked with catchable rainbow trout.
- South Branch of the Battle River: Located north of Bemidji and 4 miles west of Kelliher, this creek is stocked with catchable rainbows.

All four of these streams are mostly wooded with typical northwoods mix of Pine and Hardwoods. These streams are not large but beautiful with little fishing pressure. Information about the exact locations, parking and fishing access sites can be found online at: www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/bemidji/index.html

Doug Kingsley in the Area Fisheries Supervisor located in the Park Rapids area. Along with Fisheries Specialist Mike Kelly they have been great to work with on multiple TU fisheries projects. They are responsible for the Trout Management of the following 6 streams and 4 lakes:

- Benjamine Lake: Northeast of Bemidji and just south of Blackduck, this lake is stocked with rainbows and browns. There’s a great picnic park and small beach on the north side with a fishing pier and boat ramp on the south side.
- Deep Lake: This lake near Clearbrook is stocked with catchable rainbows and is close to the Clearwater River if you want to try both the same day.
- Straight River: Located west of Park Rapids this premier river has 17 miles of natural reproducing brown trout water. You have a good chance of catching one over 20 inches. A detailed map of fishing easements is on the web site.

Use the above link to access the MN DNR Lake Finder for more information on the following four lakes:

- Upper Straight Creek: This small stream is located northwest of Park Rapids and feeds the Straight River system. No map is available on the website, contact DNR fisheries for information.
- Cat River: Found in Wadena County, this stream is stocked with brook trout.
- Cold Creek: In northern Hubbard County, this is a small brook trout stream.

Trout lakes in the Park Rapids area include:

- Newman Lake: Located 5 miles southwest of Bemidji and off of Hwy #3, this lake has a good access.
- Crappie Lake: Found in the Paul Bunyan State Forest, this lake is a walk in only experience.
- Blacksmith: This 38 acre lake is regularly stocked with rainbow trout fingerlings.
- Blue Lake: A larger water north of Park Rapids, this 324 acre lake has good public access.

For complete information, maps, location, access and etc on the above 10 Trout fishing opportunities go to: www.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/parkrapids/index.html

Trout Unlimited Headwaters Chapter 642 welcomes and encourages you to take advantage of these great trout fishing lakes and streams next time you’re in North Central Minnesota. If you would like more information, or would like to get involved with projects that the chapter has on these waters contact Bob Wagner at 218-586-2798 or 218-766-7757.

The author with a typical rainbow trout from the Red Lake Reservation
I’m definitely a caddis fisherman. I would say I catch more than half of my trout on caddis imitations. The simple reason is that caddis flies are abundant on just about any trout water I fish and particularly on the driftless streams of SE MN. Unlike mayflies, which have a very brief existence in their winged adult forms, caddis flies can live happily in their adult stage for weeks. Once they start emerging in April, there are adult Caddis flies present on our SE MN streams throughout most of the season. Either that or the trout have fond memories of the last emergence. An adult caddis makes a good searching pattern even when there is nothing at all on the water. An added bonus is that one can very effectively fish adult caddis imitations as a sloppy poorly casting fly fisher. Slap them down on the water, drag them, swing them, cast them sidearm and skip them across the water’s surface. These tactics can be deadly as adult caddis are very dynamic insects. I swear that fish sometimes come right out of the water to take them.

I have never seen this fly for sale in a shop so if you subscribe to the theory that I tie. I like to tie it on TMC 101 dry fly hooks because it is a little easier for me to keep material out of the straight eye featured by this hook. However any dry fly hook will do. I like size 16 in olive, cinnamon, green and yellow. There are smaller black and charcoal caddis that hatch early in the SE MN season in sizes 18 and 20. I also tie lighter shades with bleached woodchuck wings in yellow, cream and orange sizes 16 and 14. I cannot recall encountering any orange caddis in SE MN but sometimes trout are in a mood to savage the orange pattern. Attach your thread (color to match the body) to the hook and dub a body starting just in front of where the hook starts to bend forward to the 50% or 60% point in point sloping downward to a point just behind the eye of the hook. Try to leave room behind the eye so as not to crowd it and don’t make this slope too abrupt or it will be difficult to wrap the hackle collar over it. Now take the tiniest droplet of head cement (I use Loctite super glue) and spread it over the slope created by the trimmed butt ends. Wind the tying thread up this slope back to the wing tie in point, creating a smooth foundation for the hackle collar. For hackle I like a variegated feather like barred ginger, grizzly or cree if you have it. Tie in the hackle feather just at the wing tie in point and wind 3-5 turns of hackle forward to the hook eye. Tie off the hackle and finish the head. There you have it with all my hard earned tying secrets. For years I suffered with chuck hair wings that gradually fell out and spun around the shank until I discovered the little trick to locking in the slippery hair. I hope you give the chuck hair caddis a try and that you have as much good luck fishing with it as I have.
Most Fishers have a home stream: the stream they go to first, or on certain days, or with special friends. Usually it is close, accessible, and friendly. They have favorite, secret places on those streams, although they may not be so secret and others probably know about them. My boyhood home stream in the late 1940s and early 1950s was Minnesota’s Miller Creek.

Actually, it was my only stream because it was close to home. It had brook trout—a beautiful fish whose decisions about what might be good to eat are not always discriminating and whose approach to eating is sometimes described as ‘eager.’ Brook trout are usually not hard to catch, even for a boy fishing with a casting rod and worms. Brook trout and boys are made for each other, although that would probably not be the perspective of the trout.

In the Midwest—although we like to think we are at least as evolved as those who live on the coasts—flies came late for most of us. We started out as worm fishers. I have concluded that worm fishers are fly fishermen in the larval form. Thus, although I have fished with flies for more than thirty years that is not how my friends and I began what has become, for some of us, an obsession.

Miller Creek begins northeast of the Duluth Airport and flows into St. Louis Bay in Lake Superior about 10 miles downstream. I lived just off the Miller Trunk Highway on Arrowhead Road, about a mile and a half from the stream. When I visited it a few years ago and measured the distance from my home to the stream, I was amazed how close it was.

It was far enough away that my best friend Gordon Engberg and I, from the age of nine, would sometimes hitch a ride with strangers down Miller Trunk Highway when we did not walk to the stream. That was not advisable then or now, but I never had any problems and met some people I would never have encountered otherwise. A few of them did not drive well, a few drove too fast, a couple had been drinking, and one of them tried to convert me to his religion. I did not tell my mother.

Gordy and I would begin our fishing as the stream went under the Miller Trunk Highway. The water was clear and cold throughout the stream, but it was deeper on either side of the bridge. We didn’t have any waders, so we fished from the bank. Worms were our bait. We did not have any flies, and had neither the fishing equipment nor the skill to use them if we had. In truth, we didn’t even know anyone who had fishing equipment. That all seemed exotic and far away, certainly far away from Hermantown, our community. Everyone we knew fished for walleye and northern pike in the many lakes in the area, as we did when we did not go to Miller Creek.

We knew about such fancy equipment, though, because we read about it in Outdoor Life and Field & Stream. The cover story on those magazines seemed to invariably feature a picture of a charging bear and a terrified hunter who had only one shot to bring it down, according to the pages inside. (Or maybe it was just that those were the cover stories that were the most memorable.) The back of the magazine featured a full-page ad for Eveready batteries. The ad was always a story about some guys camping or hunting and getting lost or hurt. They needed the batteries for their flashlight to last through the night or they would not be found and would surely die. Just as the hunter on the cover of the magazine always shot the bear, that flashlight always lasted an amazingly long time. In each issue, both the bear hunter and the lost campers survived.

Gordy and I read the stories inside the magazines about exotic adventures in Canada and other places we could only dream about. We also read the ads, the most exciting being an ad for a Pflueger Supreme casting reel, the top of the line from that company. I think it cost about $35 in the late 1940s, a huge sum of money for young boys—but maybe we could get one when we were adults. The Pflueger Company, I note, still uses the Supreme model designation for several of its reels, no doubt taking advantage of the lure of that label for older customers buying for their grandchildren. Now, however, those reels are spinning reels—just another of the many things about which Gordy and I knew nothing.

We caught some brook trout in Miller Creek. They were always beautiful and invariably small, and we would bring them home for our mothers to cook. Once, and only once, in the spring when the water was high and roily, I caught a 12-inch brook trout, just in front of the bridge. Although it was an enormous fish, in my excitement I almost pulled it over my shoulder as I yanked it from the water. Usually, though, it was Gordy who caught the most fish and the biggest fish. He was a real outdoorsman who had his own trapline for ermine (although we knew them as weasel). I would walk the traplines with him through the woods, harvesting the occasional catch and helping him reset his traps.

Gordy did not exceed me in persistence, however. When fishing, I did not give up. On one occasion, while fishing alone, I was going to the city a few miles away on Arrowhead Road. Many chubs later, she persuaded me to leave, and we walked home.

Duluth, although only a few miles from our homes on Arrowhead Road, seemed quite far away to us. Gordy’s family and mine only went to the city a few times a year. In the sixty years since I lived in Hermantown, that community has become a suburb of Duluth, and Miller Creek has become what the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources describes as a true urban trout stream. Hermantown’s population has increased from fewer than 1,000 in 1950 to about 9,500 in 2010. The pressures are great on the stream and its brook trout; they are the fish that require the cleanest and the coldest water of all of the trout and are the only trout native to the Midwest. Because of those human population changes, the challenges facing Miller...
Miller Creek are now far greater than any threat that two young boys ever posed to its trout population. A stream that flowed almost entirely through rural fields and woods now winds near and through residential and commercial development. Parts of the stream have been straightened, and another section goes through a pipe on its way to Lake Superior. Its neighbors include Kohl’s, Target, and JCPenney, as well as a shopping mall. The commercial and residential growth in the watershed and the importance of that little stream to the area is revealed in the names of the businesses: Miller Garden Center, Miller Lawn and Landscaping, Miller Creek Townhomes, Miller Creek Medical Center, and Miller Hill Mall.

Residential and commercial development means more houses with fertilized lawns, more roads, and more parking lots. The increasing presence of concrete and asphalt, salt from the nearby roads, and the removal of shrubs and trees along the stream have deteriorated the water quality, increased erosion, and raised the stream temperature. There are fewer trout.

There are people who care about Miller Creek today, just as two young boys did more than sixty years ago. To fix something, you first need to understand it. The DNR describes Miller Creek as perhaps the most studied stream in the Duluth area. People have learned from those studies and are acting on what they have learned to try to save the stream.

Will efforts to salvage and restore Miller Creek be successful? Will it be there for future generations to fish? I don’t know. The development and commercial pressures are great. It will take continued support to provide restoration and monitoring. It will also require the careful attention of local people who love Miller Creek and consider it their home stream. It will be worth it. Trout streams are not cheap, but they are precious, and no one is making them anymore.

My family moved from northern Minnesota in 1952 when I was twelve. My friend Gordy Engberg drowned in 1960 at the age of twenty, when his boat capsized while he was duck hunting on Rice Lake.

I took up fly fishing more than thirty years ago and have lived near and fished some of the best trout-fishing streams in this country and, occasionally, other countries. The fish are bigger; the equipment is modern and far superior to what I used in my youth.

Still, I miss Miller Creek. When I think of that huge 12-inch brook trout and when, on visits, I drive over that bridge on Miller Trunk Highway. And I miss Gordy.

Gordy Engberg at age eleven with his brothers (Jerry, age nine, and Ken, age three). Photo courtesy of Darlene Engberg Akey.
A hurdle to securing authority for it is of limited value unless the government entities best able to understand and consistently apply the information gathered (in this case the DNR) possess authority to restrict activity to prevent negative impacts. Until now the DNR has lacked authority to create necessary setbacks for trout streams, springs and groundwater tables.

Thankfully, efforts to obscure the lack of substantive DNR regulation with offers of more formal environmental review did not sway thoughtful legislators, including Sen. Matt Schmit, Rep. Rick Hansen, and Rep. Jean Wagenius.

The Legislative journey

Senator Game and Fish bill

In March the three restrictions described above were added to the Senate Game & Fish bill (S. 796) during the policy committee hearing process. On April 23 we learned that several senators on a finance subcommittee (Environment, Economic Development and Agriculture Division) had decided they did not care for any restrictions on any type of mining. At this point the MNDNR and Governor Dayton realized that they needed to take a public position on these provisions. On April 24 DNR Commissioner Tom Landwehr took the rare step of personally appearing and testifying in strong support of the restrictions on silica sand mining. Despite his excellent testimony and others’ efforts, a majority of committee members turned a deaf ear and removed the provisions via an oral amendment. On April 30 an effort was made to restore these protections in the full Finance Committee, but the motioned failed on a 10 to 11 vote. E-mails provided the pressure needed for more action alerts, wrote op-eds, and re-doubled efforts to educate senators and the public in preparation for a planned Senate floor amendment to restore these protections. That floor amendment was never offered, since members’ calls and e-mails provided the pressure needed to forge a compromise which will become law.

Compromise: Authority to regulate instead of uniform prohibitions

Opponents of uniform state restrictions to protect southeast trout fisheries realized the tide had turned and Sena-
or Schmit’s floor amendment had the votes to pass. However, since the House Game & Fish bill contained no similar provisions, a compromise was needed to ensure something meaningful could pass both bodies by other means. Politics has been described as the art of the possible. Ultimately, obtaining authority for the DNR to determine protective setbacks
in each instance (as opposed to uniform prohibitions) was the only achievement possible this session. Thanks to the strong leadership of Rep. Rick Hansen and Rep. Jean Wagenius, this grant of permitting authority to the DNR was carried into the Omnibus Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture Finance and Policy Bill, H.F. 976.

Key outcome: Authority to restrict activity near trout streams

- HF 976 prohibits silica sand mining within one mile of Driftless area trout streams unless the DNR issues a permit. Before the DNR can issue a permit it must require the project proponent to do a hydrogeologic evaluation and collect any other information necessary to assess potential impacts to hydrogeologic features. The DNR must identify appropriate setbacks from designated trout streams, springs, and other hydrogeologic features (such as water tables) and any other restrictions necessary to protect trout stream water quality, quantity, and habitat. See Article 4, Section 66 of HF 976. This provision gives the DNR authority to say “no” to sand mining activity which could harm coldwater resources. The DNR Commissioner has repeatedly said that the agency itself is a one mile exclusion zone near (setback from) trout streams and springs, as well as a prohibition against mining within 25 feet of the groundwater table. We expect the DNR to stick to these conservative setbacks, which it has testified are the appropriate setbacks for protecting the world-class fisheries in this area.

- The agency indicated that it preferred that the three uniform protective measures advanced by Sen. Schmit be enacted. In addition to the obvious advantage in terms of providing businesses with certainty, we suspect the DNR does not relish the thought that some individuals will ignore the warning flags and stubbornly pursue projects in these sensitive areas. Given the pressure which some individuals are likely to exert on the DNR, anglers and citizens will need to remain vigilant and encourage the agency not to retreat from these protections.

Other provisions

HF 976 contains several other provisions laying the groundwork for future regulation of the emerging silica sand mining activity. These include:

- Environmental Quality Board will develop model standards and criteria for mining, processing, and transporting silica sand, which local units of government may use to develop ordinances (Art. 4, Section 91);
- Establishment of a technical advisory team to provide local units of government, at their request, with assistance with ordinance development, zoning, environmental review and permitting, monitoring, or other issues (Art. 4, Section 91);
- Directs EQB to review and update mandatory environmental review categories for silica sand activity (Art. 4, Section 105);
- Creates new interim mandatory EAW categories for mines of 20 acres or more and the processing facility must include a facility capable of storing more than 7,500 tons of silica sand or processing more than 200,000 tons of silica sand per year (Art. 4, Section 92);
- Adds requirements to contents of EAWs (Art. 4, Section 92);
- Allows local governments to extend local moratoria an additional year (Art. 4, Section 106);
- Grants rulemaking authority for particulate emissions (MPCA), mine reclamation (DNR), and air quality health-based value for silica sand (MDH) (Art. 4, Section 105f);
- Establishes a library of local ordinances adopted (Art. 4, Section 93);
- Provides $1 million to the EQB to lead the interagency team providing technical assistance regarding the mining, transport and processing of silica sand, and to develop model standards and criteria.

Other provisions improve ground-water monitoring, analysis, management and permitting efforts generally, but those are the subject of future article on water appropriation statewide. The text of HF 976 can be found on the state’s legislative website at: https://www.revisor.mn.gov/bills/text.php?number=HF976&version=0&session=2013&session_number=0&type=ccr

While we did not succeed in securing uniform setbacks from trout streams and springs, we did secure authority for the DNR to restrict silica sand mining activity proposed within one mile of Driftless area trout streams. At last the DNR will have the authority and ability to say “no” to poor site selection and methods which threaten coldwater rivers. This good outcome is the result of months of hard work by many individuals, especially legislative champions Sen. Matt Schmit, Rep. Rick Hansen, and Rep. Jean Wagenius. Vocal support by the DNR at Governor Mark Dayton in the last 4 weeks was also instrumental in securing permitting authority near trout streams. And of course none of this would have been possible without the calls and letters of TU members, friends, anglers and Driftless area residents.

May you know the joy of a quiet stream, and a Trout whose story must be told.

I first met Dr. Tom Waters at a Twin Cities TU meeting in the early 90’s. I was a relatively new TU member at the time, eager to learn and get involved. I don’t remember what we talked about anymore, but I do remember that our brief conversation spurred me to track down a copy of his first book, “The Streams and Rivers of Minnesota”. What I found in that book was a terrific primer on the moving waters of my home state. After quickly devouring that title, I picked up a copy of another of his books, “The Superior North Shore –A Natural History Lake Superior’s Northern Lands and Waters”. Again, Dr. Waters had blended the history of some of his favorite places with the patient teaching and explanation that was one of his unique traits as an author. Both books have since become my go to handouts when I need to unwind or pass some time on a rainy weekend.

In publishing “Wildstream – A Natural History of the Free Flowing River” in 2000, Dr. Waters once again endeavored to provide the average person with a look at the marvelous complexity and synergy that exist in rivers. The book’s target audience is the moderately informed angler or river conservationist. At over 500 pages, however, Wildstream is not a quick read. Organized into six basic sections, it begins by describing how different river forms originate on the landscape and then explains how aquatic systems draw energy and nutrients from their watersheds, and how that balance can be disrupted by changes in the landscape. With that foundational information in hand, Dr. Waters continues by providing the reader with a basic understanding of the interrelated bioclimatic reactions that weave together to support the multispecies food web in a variety of coldwater and warmwater environments. The book moves toward conclusion with a discussion of the variety of game fish we enjoy pursuing in rivers, including trout, salmon, smallmouth, and catfish. The final chapters, presented under the umbrella title of “By Clock and Calendar”, give the reader a snapshot into such diverse topics as daily invertebrate drill and annual salmon migration patterns.

One element of the book that I find particularly enjoyable is the series of brief “RiverSketches” that accompany each of the book’s 25 chapters. With intriguing titles such as “Northwest Passage”, “River Pigs and Log Marks”, and “Fish out of Water”, each RiverSketch provides a more personal dialogue or application of the preceding chapter’s discussion by which the reader can better transfer the subject matter to everyday life. The author closes with a call to action. He writes, “I hear a river singing. Across the country, I hear a murmur rising toward floodtide in a song of river advocacy, like the rising of a rapid’s roar after a downdrop.” I’d like to think that MNTU has carried on the legacy of Dr. Tom Waters with as much passion and determination as he himself showed for the rivers that he loved so much.
FISHING THE DARK RIVER

Browns, Brooks and Changes in the River

By Rod Prusi

I first fished the Dark River back in 1978 after moving to northern Minnesota from Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. I had started fly fishing when I was in high school after watching my father fly fish on our trout outings when I was young. I took some time before I caught my first trout on a fly but it was a 12” Brook trout and I can still see how it came right out of the water and took the fly on the way down.

After moving to the “land of the wall-eye”, I was somewhat surprised to hear that there was a trout stream not far from where I was working. After hearing most the water temperature was considerably colder. There was a natural spring feeding the stream which I knew was there but hadn’t paid much attention to before. I landed a fly in a deep hole at the spring and was rewarded with a 12” native brook trout. I had never caught a brookie in the Dark River before that, but now there seemed to be as many brook trout as browns.

I learned that the DNR had been stockin brown trout for years, but after finding that the brook trout were naturally reproducing, had haltered the brook stocking program. In the last few years I

A graphite reproduction of a sixteen inch brown trout the author caught from the Dark River.

news from tu

The National Leadership Council

By Steve Carlton

A s the National Leadership Council person for Minnesota, I am required to attend the Trout Unlimited National Meeting every year. I’ve been blessed enough to attend every meeting since 2005. My highlight of the TUNA meeting comes on the Friday morning of the four day meeting. It’s the “State of TU” presentation. The attendees get to hear from the Chairman of TU Jon Christianson for a quick business meeting to vote for the Board and Trustees and to conduct other business.

Then we get to hear from Hillary Cooley, TU’s Chief Financial Officer about the financial shape of TU. But the highlight for me is the report from Chris Wood, TU’s President and CEO.

Chris gives a slideshow on TU and all of its successes over the past year. Talk about a grassroots organization. Wow! Every active chapter, state council and regional watershed projects are highlighted and brought to everyone’s attention. I’m especially proud of the work Minnesota TU has been able to do since the passage of the Legacy Amendment and the hiring of John Lenczewski as our Executive Director. Our projects are often highlighted during this program as well as in TROUT Magazine.

Over the past few years I have been able to make this same presentation at the Twin Cities Chapter Meeting in October. I hope you all are attending your local chapter meetings. It’s the first step in getting more active in your chapter. As you know, TU is a volunteer organization. It would be nothing without its members across the country. It is truly a grassroots organization.

The next time you find yourself cruising the web, please stop by www.tu.org. You can get lost surfing for information on National Issues like Bristol Bay, Climate Change, Protecting Public Lands and other issues affecting all of us. Some of the areas I like to check out are the “Recent Press Releases” and “Latest News”. Here you’ll find the latest info on national news that affect cold water fisheries.

If local or regional issues are your search du jour, there is plenty of information at tu.org also. “TU in Action” is your starting point. Recent articles include: Orvis’ support for Bristol Bay, dam removal on the Gros Ventre River in Wyoming, and a note from Sportsmen to President Obama: Follow Through on Climate Change. All of these articles and all TROUT Magazines since 2007 are archived on the TU website.

Any TU member can add to the Blog. If you have a story that you think would be fun to share with others, feel free to submit a story to the Blog. I’ve recently read a great article on Lahontan Cutthroat Trout. A few years back on a ski trip to Lake Tahoe, a friend and I skipped a day of skiing and hired a guide to take us up to Pyramid Lake, just north of Reno. Once you read this story, you too will find a reason to get to Reno for some of the oddest fishing you’ll ever see for very large trout. Anglers bring six foot ladders to the edge of the drop-offs and cast from the ladder. I urge you to look this story up. It’s the history of the ancient Lahontan Cutthroat and its near extinction and efforts for its comeback.

In addition to the conservation issues there are links to podcasts and videos. Some videos document TU projects, some are funny and there are links to Youtube Videos…like the infamous Hank Patterson Fishing Guide videos. If you haven’t seen the Hank Patterson Videos, please do yourself a favor and spend a few minutes belly-laughing to Your Fishing Guide, Hank Patterson. And like any good non-profit, on the website you always have the ability to donate to Trout Unlimited. Donate to TU, but remember that your local chapter and Minnesota TU (state council) will not receive any part of this donation. If you’d like to keep your local chapter and Minnesota Trout Unlimited doing all the great advocacy, education and habitat grant writing here in Minnesota and the Midwest you need to make direct donations to them. You’ll find a donation form in this newsletter. This newsletter is funded in part by advertisers, so please support them. Check out the Trout Unlimited website and it will make you feel great about your membership in a wonderful organization.

people talk about fishing for walleye and northern pike, one of my coworkers told me that he and his friends would catch brown trout in the river near his home north of Chisholm, Minnesota. This of course got my attention, and after getting directions to the river I found myself hiking into a brushy stream that reminded me of the Black River that my dad and I fished in Michigan.

My first outing yielded just one 14” Brown trout which I caught on a Mud-dler Minnow (still a favorite of mine on the Dark). I fished about a mile of the stream after work that afternoon and I fell in love with the river and the country around it. Hiking back to my car as darkness settled in I heard the call of a whip-poorwill. I hadn’t heard one of those since I was a kid back in the U.P. so the attachment was complete.

For the next 5 years or so I would venture back to the river and occasionally take a friend or two along. We would generally catch fish in the 8 to 12” range but rarely anything bigger.

I moved away from the area for several years, and after returning, I was anxious to get back to the quiet and solitude of the river. On my first trip back I picked up a few browns. When I reached a particular spot in the river I noticed haven’t caught a single brown trout. One of the last ones I caught was in 2007. I have a graphite reproduction of the fish mounted. It was 16” and I also caught one 14” and two brook trout 10” and 12” that day.

A few years ago our chapter assisted the DNR in an electro-shock survey of a section of the river. Over a two day period we were able to log several hundred brook trout in that short section of the river, the largest was 16” with numerous fish in the 10 -14” range. To my knowledge they were all brook trout.

Over the last few years the river has gone through a lot of natural changes due to high water, storms and various other situations, fishing the Dark has been a challenge lately due to blow downs, brushy undergrowth and as always, mosquitoes. It takes determination and patience to fish that same stretch I have worked over the years, and success has varied. Regardless of the effort or the reward, I always get back to my vehicle a much happier person than when I arrived.
There are numerous habitat projects planned along Minnesota’s North Shore this summer. Large projects include two reaches on the Sucker River totaling nearly 3000 feet and preparing for work on the Stewart River. Chapter members will also be doing maintenance on the nearly 7000 trees the chapter has planted in the past two years.

Fish the Hex Hatch

The Arrowhead Fly Fishers will join us on our project on the outlet of Kimball Lake, a designated trout lake. This HI week will coincide with the Fly Fishers’ annual Hex Camp, and should offer some great fishing opportunities. A tentative date has been scheduled for Saturday, July 6th. Contact Carl Haensel at carlhaensel@hotmail.com to get involved in stream habitat improvement opportunities this summer.

Carl Haensel

Hiawatha Chapter

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) has a lot of habitat improvement (HI) work coming up. Work is to continue on Mill Creek in north of Chatfield, Minnesota, and coming up. Work is to continue on Mill Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) has opportunities this summer.

Please R.S.V.P so we can plan accordingly on numbers. Call Bob Wagner 218-586-2798 or 218-766-7757 or email bob@riverwooddesign.net. Everyone that R.S.V.P by Monday June 10th will be registered for a special door prize.

Bob Wagner

Twin Cities Chapter

TCTU is beginning the bidding process on a mile of Hay Creek habitat improvement work for this season. This stretch is downstream of the Hay Creek campground on State Forest land. With the bid process & permitting to complete yet we are looking at a July timeline. Watch the TCTU website for volunteer dates as they become known.

TCTU is looking at additional properties on the Vermillion that are being acquired by the DNR for future work as well as Rice Creek which is south of Northfield & Trout Brook which is a beautiful creek in Miesville Ravine Park adjacent to the Cannon River in southern Dakota county. Trout Brook has a large resident population of native Brook Trout but is a very involved project that will involve local landowners, the county & other partners. Rice & Trout Brook are scheduled to begin in 2014.

Stream Maintenance Team

TCTU would like to sign up a group of volunteers to monitor & do re-seeding & patching on the banks of Hay Creek(4.5 miles), the Vermillion(2.5 miles) & MOA Creek(200 feet). We need a dedicated group of people who can monitor the existing stretches so that the habitat group can work on new stretches of these streams as well as new streams. Here’s your chance to help maintain the quality of the streams you are fishing. Bring your kids & shovelies, we supply the seed, bring a picnic lunch & your fishing poles & do it on your own schedule...

As always we are looking for volunteers to work with Tony Nelson & Tom Lane by e-mail at mwtrok@riverland.com . Visit the chapter website at www.wincresuto.org for more information.

Win-Cres Chapter

Win-Cres has high hopes for completing major Stream Habitat Improvement work on Win-Cres Brook this summer. Actual work dates have not been set yet, but members who would like to contribute in this meaningful way should check in with Mike Jeresek, Win-Cres stream improvement chair, to get on the work crew notification list, so that when work dates are set, you will receive a notice. Mike Jeresek can be reached at (507) 450-3701 or by e-mail at mje@riverland.org.

Our third annual Veterans’ Fly Fishing Extravaganza is well into the planning stages again. The date is set for Saturday, August 10, in Lanesboro. Once again, the event will be free to U.S. Military Veterans and their families, offering fly fishing instruction, fly tying instructions, educational displays by the National Trout Center, and a great lunch. Contact Mike Trok, the driving force for this Veterans’ event, for more information or to get involved. Mike Trok can be reached at (651) 245-2923 or by e-mail at mwtrok@riverland.com. Visit the chapter website at www.wincresuto.org for more information.

Waybinahbe Chapter

The chapter is pleased to report that we received the good news that our grant application for work on Matsuoka’s Creek was accepted and we have begun the necessary paperwork to get our project under way in June of this year. We will be contacting contractors for bids on the work and once things are under way we will be photographing the progress. Anyone interested in getting involved in the work should contact the chapter.

As mentioned in the last newsletter our other task is the re-chartering of our Charter. We have our by-laws updated and will proceed with getting member approval.

Many members have discussed the first Newsletter and we are impressed and are looking forward to more. I hope we can receive more input from our members on future issues.

Rad Prunis

Giitchi Gumee Chapter

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Carl Haensel

Hiawatha Chapter

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) has a lot of habitat improvement (HI) work coming up. Work is to continue on Mill Creek in north of Chatfield, Minnesota, and new work is scheduled for Cold Spring Brook near Zambro Falls, Minnesota.

We also have several programs we have just completed and many more coming up. HTU recently finished the Rochester Community Education fly fishing class in April and the DNR MinnAqua Adult/Youth mentorship fly fishing weekend at Good Earth Village in Spring Valley Minnesota, was held the weekend of May 3-5. Between several DNR specialists and HTU members and other individuals, many kids and their parents were introduced to the wonderful sport of fly fishing.

Senior Days will be held in Lanesboro, Minnesota, on June 13. For many years HTU, has fed the many volunteers that help seniors fish at the ponds in Sylvan Park in Lanesboro. Another upcoming event is the Coon Valley Trout Fest. More information can be found at www.cooncreektroutfest.com.

Roundout the list is T.U.N.E. Camp at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center near Lanesboro, Minnesota, June 21-23. I look back at all the fantastic and knowledgeable fly fishers I’ve met over the years that I have spent supporting HTU and cold stream fisheries in Southeast Minnesota. They have been inspirational, open to teaching, and ever involved in their own passion. I haven’t enough room to put all the inspirational names of the people that have influenced, guided, and taught me, but you know who you are, and I gratefully thank you all.

To keep our efforts going we are always in need of more volunteers. Visit the chapter website at www.hiawatha-tu.org to get involved.

Editor, writer, fly fisher and fly tier, and trout nut

Philip N. Pankow

Headwaters Chapter

June Stream Restoration Projects

The Kabekona cattle crossing is progressing thanks to Steve Young’s good work. Steve will need help with landscape and rock work. If you can help call Steve 218-243-2574. There are other projects coming up as well in the summer, contact us to get involved.

The Summer Membership meeting-meeting will be held June 11th at the Keg and Cork in downtown Bemidji, located at 310 Beltrami Ave NW.

There will be a 4:00pm Board meeting, 5:00pm Social and Taco Buffet. Highlights include speaker Dallas Hudson, Straight River Guru, discussing flies and tactics of the famous Straight River Hex Hatch and Big Browns. Plus 7:00 p.m. fly casting demonstrations and practices at nearby Library Park- Special casting games and prizes for kids.

Win-Cres Chapter

Win-Cres has high hopes for completing major Stream Habitat Improvement work on Win-Cres Brook this summer. Actual work dates have not been set yet, but members who would like to contribute in this meaningful way should check in with Mike Jeresek, Win-Cres stream improvement chair, to get on the work crew notification list, so that when work dates are set, you will receive a notice. Mike Jeresek can be reached at (507) 450-3701 or by e-mail at mje@riverland.org.

Members who are not receiving club e-mails should register their e-mail address with club President Joe Lepley. Joe Lepley can be reached at (608) 323-2339 or by e-mail at jlepley@riverland.org.

Our third annual Veterans’ Fly Fishing Extravaganza is well into the planning stages again. The date is set for Saturday, August 10, in Lanesboro. Once again, the event will be free to U.S. Military Veterans and their families, offering fly fishing instruction, fly tying instructions, educational displays by the National Trout Center, and a great lunch. Contact Mike Trok, the driving force for this Veterans’ event, for more information or to get involved. Mike Trok can be reached at (651) 245-2923 or by e-mail at mwtrok@riverland.com.

Visit the chapter website at www.wincresuto.org for more information.

Mark Reinseter
SEND US YOUR FISHING PHOTOS!

Want To Appear in TU MN?

Email the editor with your photo, your name, the location the photo was taken, and any interesting information regarding the photo. We reserve the right to decline to publish any photos. Emailing the photo to the editor grants MNTU the right to utilize the photo for non-profit purposes.

REELING IT IN

Of Trout, Water and People ...

By Corky McHandle

FRACK ME!

OR

IF THERE IS SAND MINING IN THE FOREST WILL THERE STILL BE A STREAM?

I often hear about how sportsmen and women are the greatest of all conservationists and stewards of the land. The thing is that many of those who state this choose to ignore the lessons from someone one considered one of the the greatest conservationists, Theodore Roosevelt. Let’s not forget that Teddy wasn’t just about Smokey the Bear and National Parks. He also pointed out the dangers of selling our heritage to corporate special interests. We need to remember that corporations are not people. They are most certainly made up of people but ultimately they don’t have a collective conscience regarding the natural heritage of our great country and the legacy we pass on to future generations. Well, not unless that conscience is somehow connected to increased profits. Not that being profitable is wrong. The issue is being profitable at any price.

Back in the halls of Frackmania there appears to be a glimmer of hope, and not just in the area of regulations and controls. One thing that appears to be happening is that not unlike ethanol, the boom in frack sand mining for natural gas extraction may just be blasting a bit (see I told you some good old days might be around). At least in Minnesota the deposits may be of limited size that ‘margins’ won’t warrant the effort, at least in some cases. Another bright star is that apparently ‘some’ of the mining operations appear to be behaving responsibly in their ability to restore prairie lands in southeast Minnesota.

Kudos to our MNTU Executive Director and others for putting up a valiant fight regarding frack sand mining. This has been another case where we watch billions of potential dollars compete against the intrinsic value and the future legacy of our land and watersheds. Ecological arguments often get shot down as ‘silly’ environmentalism or anti-capitalistic or even anti-American. The ultimate lesson that needs to be learned is that despite the promise of cheaper energy, neither this (fracking) nor corn based ethanol have delivered that which they have promised so ardently in an effort to get people to surrender to their (indus-)try concerns.

So in this recent round of threats to our Driftless streams with Midwestern Mountain topping what have you done? Did you write a Congressman or woman? Did you go to a rally at the Capitol? Write a personal note? A person may think, ‘oh well they’re working on it’ or ‘someone else will go’ but if everyone thinks this then guess what? No one does. Recently I read an interesting quote, “Organized greed trumps disorganized democracy every time”. Over one hundred years later Teddy Roosevelt’s warnings and concerns are more valid than ever. We outdoors people are a shrinking violet of a demographic voice, and are at risk of passing to political oblivion.

Make yourself heard, we do not have time to waste.

DONATE TO MINNESOTA TROUT UNLIMITED EFFORTS

Minnesota TU is the leading voice, your voice, advocating for coldwater fisheries and watersheds in Minnesota and the region. Our effective advocacy work and successful habitat grant writing efforts cannot continue without your direct financial support of Minnesota TU. We receive none of the donations raised from TU’s direct mail and other fundraising efforts, and the small portion of your membership dues we receive is less than the cost to print and mail this newsletter. We need direct support from you—members and non-members alike—to keep us working effectively for you, your family and your friends. Every dollar of that donation will be used here in Minnesota.

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