

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - February 2014

**NE MN Copper-Nickel Mining
What it Means for Our Watersheds**

**Fishing Our Habitat Work - Pine Creek
A North Shore Homecoming
Tying the Purple Prince Charming
MNTU Photo Contest
Father's Day Fishing
An Angler's Paradise
Urban Trout Stream Revitalization
And Lots More!**

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ON THE COVER

Contributor and Gitche Gumee Chapter board member Brent Notbohm with a great BWCAW lake trout caught on the fly. Photo by Cheri Henderson.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Fishing for trout in our SE Minnesota habitat improvment.
- How to tie a great early season fly pattern with Paul Johnson.
- Coaster Brook Trout
- Copper-Nickel Mining Issues in Minnesota
- Updates on habitat improvement and educational efforts around Minnesota.
- And Much More!

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MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

Moving Forward

By JP Little, Minnesota Council Chair

Welcome to the 2014 winter Minnesota Trout Unlimited statewide newsletter. 2013 was a very productive year in terms of protecting and restoring the coldwater resource in the state of Minnesota. We enter 2014 fully optimistic that the good work will continue.

As I have mentioned in previous newsletters, the engine that drives Trout Unlimited is the people that volunteer their time and skills – people like you who love to fish and have joined forces to protect and restore local waters. Nowhere is that more important than in

the 7 chapters that represent the 3000+ members across the state. There are many issues that need to be addressed at the local, chapter level. Straight from the TU National website: “We hope that you will consider taking on the exciting and rewarding responsibility of playing an active role in your local chapter or council. Depending on your position, leadership in TU could involve arranging projects, organizing trips, recruiting new members, coordinating youth education programs, fundraising, or acting as spokesman to media, elected officials, and the general public.”

What I have observed in my time with Trout Unlimited is that many of the leaders who end up on the State Council got their start with TU in leadership roles in their local chapters. Whether serving as newsletter editor, treasurer, secretary, president, etc., time spent in your local chapter prepares you to look at the bigger issues across Minnesota and the region. If you are already a volunteer leader in your local chapter consider doing some recruiting – the more the merrier!

Tight Lines!

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A WILD HERITAGE STRAIN BROOK TROUT HOLDS IN THE UNDERWATER CURRENT. THE TROUT WAS SAMPLED FROM “HUST CREEK” NEAR THE MALL OF AMERICA IN THE TWIN CITIES. AFTER WORK BY THE TWIN CITIES TU CHAPTER AND OTHER GROUPS ON THE STREAM, NATIVE TROUT WERE REINTRODUCED AND ARE NOW SUCCESSFULLY REPRODUCING. READ MORE ABOUT THIS STREAM ON PAGE 13. PHOTO BY STEVE CARLTON.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Conservation is About People

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

I have been clicking through the pages of an electronic draft of this newsletter which I received in the wee hours from our dedicated editor. Scrolling the pages I am struck by the sheer number of great volunteers who quietly do the many things, small and large, to protect our waters, improve our fishing and pass on the love of the outdoors to the younger generation. Some are disguised as mere smiling angler (Brent showing off a native lake trout) an encouraging father (Steve with Quinn) or grateful son (Glenn). Others hide in ads, like Hiawatha TU's Ray Ricketts "wearing" the beautiful canoe he built and is now donating to fund our conservation work, or behind pen names. Each of them is a committed conservationist with an inspiring backstory. Some of John Hunt's work is summarized in the Stream Champion article in the Winter 2014 issue of Trout magazine, but most of their stories are unchronicled. And there are countless others not referenced in this issue whom I have been fortunate enough to rub shoulders with through 30 plus years of membership in this great family of volunteers we call "TU".

Recently I received news that another conservation champion, Wayne Hoshal of Grand Rapids, MN, passed away. A number of us were fortunate enough to spend a few hours with Wayne on a sunny September day near Lake Superior. Wayne had made the drive to the Sucker River for our quarterly Council meeting to share news of the Waybinahbe Chapter's work and offer advice for our statewide efforts. The business end of conservation planning was wrapped up, lunch shared, and nearby habitat work inspected. In anticipation of a few hours chasing wild brook trout before long drives home, many of us began the happy bustling about our vehicles, stringing fly rods, struggling into waders, swapping flies and checking cameras. I visited with Wayne to see whether and where he might wet a line and we chatted about his energy level sapped by medical treatments. I am very fortunate I had the chance to thank Wayne for his dedication as we stood in the warm sun with the trees beginning to turn in trout country. Wayne was a consummate gentlemen and conservationist. We will miss him.



Effective conservation work is all about people, and the most rewarding part of my job is working alongside dedicated volunteers. So as we begin 2014 I want to express my sincere appreciation for all of you who volunteer your time and talents in the TU chapters across the state.

Thank you!



A HABITAT IMPROVMENT SECTION OF HAY CREEK IN THE AFTERNOON SUNLIGHT OF WINTER

EDITOR'S ANGLE

Fishing Around The State

By Carl Haensel



Every winter season as I sit tying flies I think about where I want to fish. This issue has got me dreaming of fishing around MN in my sleep! On the following pages we highlight a number of great locations, from my home waters of the Sucker River to a variety of locations throughout the state. I can't wait to get out and fish both in the winter season and when the springtime arrives. Make sure to take advantage of some of the great habitat improvement that has been done in Minnesota. Look for regular features in the newsletter to highlight places to fish in areas where we have been working to improve the habitat, beginning with Pine Creek this issue.

We are also pleased to bring you some interesting facts about some of our cur-

rent state environmental issues, as well as perspectives from two longtime TU members and editors of the precursor of this publication, MN Trout. It's always great to see continued involvement from people who have helped out MNTU over the years.

Lastly, we've got a new photo contest that will provide an opportunity to win some high-quality flies just in time for the heart of the fishing season this summer. Make sure to check it out and send us photos from your fishing trips around the state. The deadline is May 15th so you will have some time to fish and shoot photos this spring as well as sorting through last season's memories.

Good Luck Fishing!



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FISHING OUR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PINE CREEK

By Mark Reisetter

The Rush – Pine Watershed in southeastern Minnesota is really an 80,000 acre microcosm of the Driftless Area. Situated between the towns of Lewiston, on the north, and Rushford about 20 miles away to the southeast, this watershed is comprised of a half-dozen quality trout streams, of

trated and ambitious efforts in Habitat Improvement work that Trout Unlimited and its allies have made recently has benefited Pine Creek in southern Winona County; and since there are two different Pine Creeks in southern Winona County, let me direct you to the Pine Creek which is west of State Highway 43. In

The upper bridge, actually along the intersecting School Section Road, is a good starting point, partly because of an Angler’s parking lot that was built a few years ago near the bridge to accommodate trout and users of the State Forestry land that lies on the south side of Pine Creek, upstream from the bridge.

start your downstream trek, going as far as you have time and inclination. Walking “down” a new stretch first before fishing your way back up is a good way to familiarize yourself with the layout of the pools, runs and riffles. The corridor along the stream is wide enough on the north side so you won’t have to be right



A NICE PINE CREEK BROWN TROUT CAUGHT ON A STREAMER FROM THE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT SECTION

which Rush Creek and Pine Creek predominate.

Both Rush and Pine with their respective tributaries are streams that have boasted healthy populations of trout for many years, so we are fortunate the DNR has done a thorough job of acquiring angling easements from property owners along both of these flows. Also as a result of these easements,



FAILING BANKS ON PINE CREEK PRIOR TO HABITAT WORK

Rush and Pine have also been the focus of habitat improvement work, both before and after the Legacy Amendment which came into being five years ago.

the DNR Fisheries “Trout Angling” map booklet, turn to Map 5 on page 14. This Pine Creek is sometimes listed as the Fillmore County Pine Creek, but the improved stretch we are focusing on runs

mostly from west to east along Winona County Road 2.

This stretch of Pine Creek has two fairly new bridges, the lower one along CR 2 near the confluence of Pine with Rush.

The habitat work that was completed on Pine Creek above the School Section Road Bridge is around 25 years old and runs upstream almost to the confluence with Coolridge Creek. The new habitat



FISHING PINE CREEK AFTER IMPROVEMENT

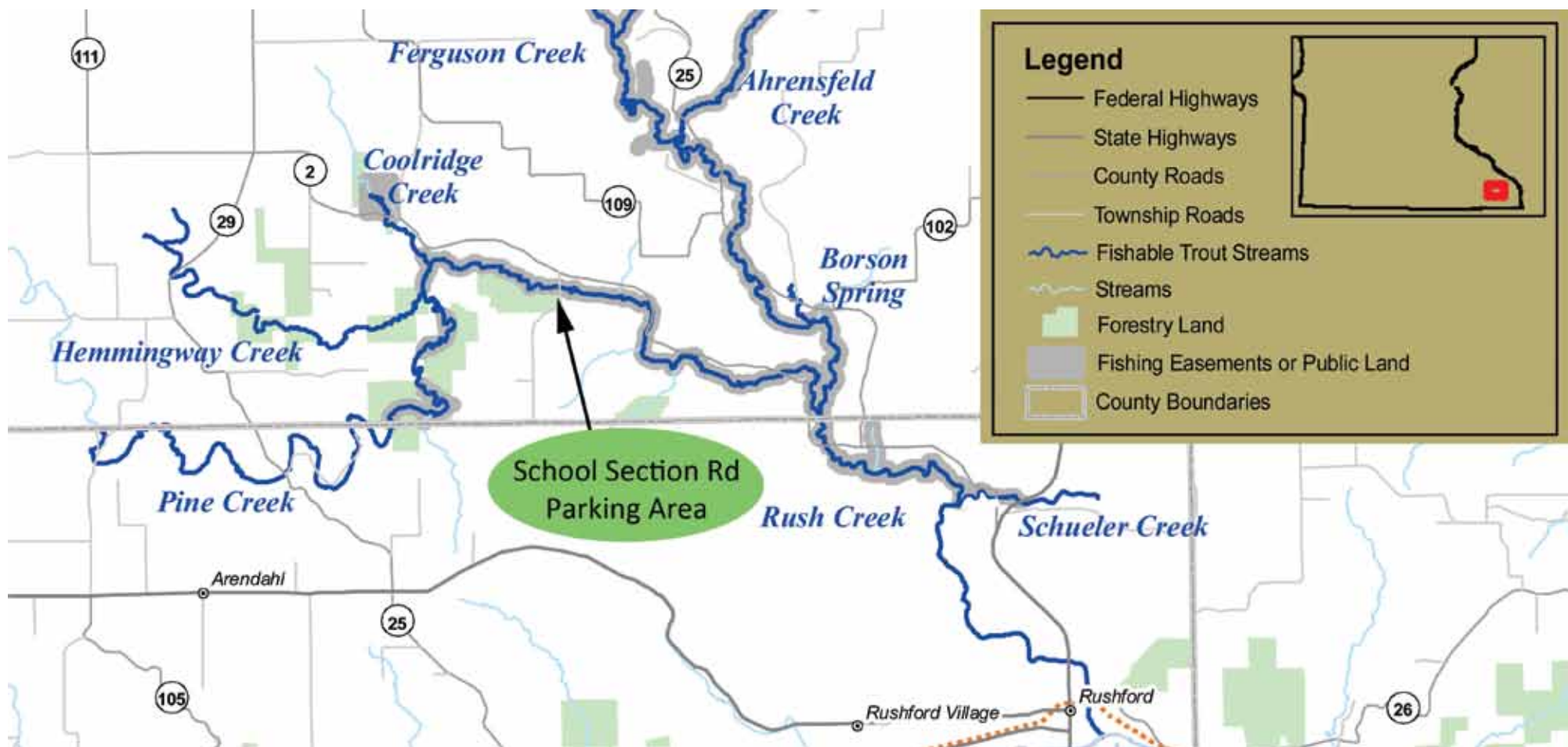
work began at this bridge and extends downstream for about two miles. The first mile was completed in 2012 and the second mile was completed just last fall.

You can “gear up” at the parking lot and

on top of things going down and still be able to notice some areas that look fishy that you might have walked up on too closely when fishing back upstream, had you not scouted them out on the way down.

This first mile down from the School Section Road bridge is really a night to day difference from before the habitat work. Before the work, I avoided this stretch. Now, it’s one of my favorite destinations. It used to be difficult to fish because of steep,

six to eight-foot mud banks and overhanging box elder trees everywhere. Also, the flow through that mile used to be quite slow with mostly long pools without many riffles or runs. Part of the success of this project is due to the logging crew that went through this



THE PINE & RUSH CREEK AREA IN SOUTHEAST MINNESOTA NEAR RUSHFORD. SHADED AREAS ARE DNR EASEMENTS OPEN FOR FISHING. MAP COURTESY MN DNR

entire stretch the winter before TU did the in-stream habitat work. The riparian corridor was cleared of shallow-rooted box elder trees. The crew had massive

slight meanders, and the nicely sloped banks make for an enjoyable outing. Pine Creek has great invertebrate diversity with most of the hatches common to our area. The tricorythodes or “trico” hatch is one mayfly species that does not appear in all of our streams, but Pine Creek has great trico hatches in the fall. Because of the speed of water coming into these plunge pools and the depth of four to five feet going past some of the structures, if a hatch is not happening, you will need to weight your offerings to get them down far enough to entice the trout. I have had good success with streamers with

do empty into Pine above this location, so an occasional brookie isn’t out of the question. Because the brookies in this system, through DNA studies, have been identified as Heritage fish, the fisheries folks with the MN DNR are in the midst of an intensive ten-year program that includes implanting Passive Integrated Transponder (PIT) Tags in brook trout and some brown trout that allow them to

for clipped fins before biting down.

The fishing in Pine Creek is good, and it’s only going to get better because of the great collaboration of MN TU, local TU Chapters, TU DARE, TU National, the Winona County SWCD and Federal Farm dollars, the LSOHC, our MN legislature, and most importantly, the important landowners. This project is ongoing



A CLIPPED TAIL ON A PINE CREEK BROWN TROUT INDICATING A POSSIBLY PIT TAGGED FISH

chippers, and the scrap wood chips were trucked to LaCrosse, Wisconsin, to make electrical power.

Clouser eyes at those in-between times. A bead headed nymph will fish equally as well.



A SECTION OF TU HABITAT WORK ON PINE CREEK IN THE WINTER

Now, even though the stretch is fairly straight, the plunge pools with embedded skyhooks (fish hiding structures), the

Brown trout will be what you will catch mostly in this stretch, but two brook trout streams (Hemmingway and Coolridge)

verify growth rates and movement. Fish with a PIT Tag embedded have a clipped fin, either adipose or caudal. In case some of you decide to kill a fish, check

next spring on Pine Creek as it meanders its way to Rush Creek near the Winona/Fillmore County border.

MNTU PHOTO CONTEST

Share Your Best Fishing Photos and Win!

This season we are kicking off a new photo contest for our MNTU Newsletter.

Rules of the Contest:

- Photos must be shot in Minnesota
- Photos should fall into a category: Minnesota Waters Trout, Salmon & Steelhead Family Fishing
- Photos must include a trout, salmon or steelhead, **OR** a water body that they inhabit.
- Photos must be submitted by May 15th, 2014. Top entries in each category will be published in the June issue of the MNTU Newsletter.

- All photos submitted must be sent in *.jpg format at their original resolution to the Editor at: carlhaensel@hotmail.com. There is an entry limit of three photos per individual. Please include the name of the photographer and the location the photo was taken in the submission.
- Submission of photos gives MNTU the right to publish photos in the MNTU newsletter, and in online media.

Prizes

The winner in each category will receive a box of a dozen flies ready to catch trout this season. The overall winner will receive a handmade wooden handled trout net.



GETTING READY TO LAND THE BIG ONE!

A NORTH SHORE HOMECOMING

By Perry Palin

I cast the little streamer to the grassy bank and let it sink deep to swing in the current. There was a broad flash below the surface, I pulled back on the rod, felt the weight of a good fish, and then it was gone. My 5x tippet had

ward and a big beaver swimming slowly across the channel dove under the surface with a splash. The beaver swam downstream. I could track his progress by the line of bubbles that rose to the surface. I waited for ten minutes be-

I never found out. I went back the next day and saw the big fish turn twice toward a streamer, but it never hit the fly. It was the middle of June. My friend Alan and I were fishing a length of the Sucker River on Minnesota's Lake Su-

The brook trout are still in the stream. The upper Sucker River runs through public and private lands, and much of the private land has fishermen's easements. There's a lot of water between the bridges. We were fishing at about 1200 to 1350 feet above sea level. Lake Superior is officially 602 feet in elevation. I learned many years ago that the brook trout fishing starts at about 1000 feet.

After moving from the North Shore I learned that Driftless Area trout would feed in my presence, but strike only the right fly. The North Shore fish are not used to fishermen, but they do know threats from otters and fishing birds, and sloppy wading or the slap of a fly line will put them down. When I managed a careful approach and proper presentation, these northern fish took a wide range of flies.

We fished through forests of aspen, birch, and ash. There were alders too. We found a few deep slow water pools, and the beaver meadows, and then long stretches of runs and riffles. Alan likes to fish the rocky shallow runs and pools with a dry fly. I like to fish the slow deep water with wets and nymphs for the chance to catch a bigger fish. On a long walk upstream I found a place I had camped as a teenager. A big white pine I knew was gone. The neighboring big spruce was dead, the top broken and lying on the ground. The spruce stump was a three foot diameter snag, ten feet tall. We found the tracks of a wolf on the riverbank.



broken. The fish was a nice one, but it wasn't really big. I had tied a poor knot. Forty feet downstream a brook trout about a foot long came out twice to nip at my fly. But he didn't take it. I was catching the small ones, and missing the bigger ones.

fore moving again, hoping the beaver's passing had not frightened the trout that would be swimming in the channel. I would see that beaver several more times in our three day visit, along with a painted turtle, a frog the size of my fist, and a lot more brook trout.

Near the beaver dam, I was playing a

perior North Shore. We were about a dozen stream miles above the lake, above the reach of the steelhead, above



THE RIVER CABIN

The water in the beaver meadow was a dozen feet wide and too deep for me to see to the bottom. I was standing in last year's brown and broken swamp grass. I stepped for-

six inch fish when a large trout came up and made a grab for it. He missed, or I did, and the big trout retreated to an undercut bank. Was this a brook trout, or one of the rare browns this far upstream?



RUNS AND POOLS ALONG THE SUCKER RIVER

most of the brown trout, where brook trout are at home. I grew up within bicycling distance, and I fished this stream many times in the 1960's and early '70's. This was a homecoming of sorts, though there have been some changes. There are more homes along the roads, and I know only a few of the people who live there now. The stream still runs through forests, but over forty or fifty years the trees have grown and some have fallen, and the largest trees from my youth are gone.

We had warm sunny weather, and not too many mosquitoes or ticks. Spring was late this year, and in mid-June the leaves on the North Shore's birches and ash trees showed their early season bright greens. The big trout all got away, as is often the case, but we were happy with the fish we caught, running to about eleven inches. We stayed in a small cabin a short distance from the river. With the windows

open we could hear the stream sliding over stones. The cabin is surrounded by mature evergreens. A grouse drummed in the woods, and one morning we heard a deer blowing in the brush across the stream.

We told ourselves that the best fishing was in the mornings and the evenings. That gave us a chance to drive out for mid-day meals in some of the good restaurants on the Shore between Duluth

and Knife River. We told each other stories, and went to sleep at night with a waxing moon rising late in the cabin windows. In the morning the windows caught the sun, and we fished for small trout in the front yard while our breakfast coffee was brewing.

We had a good three days in the north woods. We drove home tired and satisfied, and I believe that I'll go back again.

Perry Palin grew up in the Knife River watershed on Minnesota's North Shore. Author of *Katz Creek and Other Stories*, he lives now in rural NW Wisconsin and has enjoyed a long association with the Kiap-TU-Wish Chapter in Hudson, Wisconsin.

His latest book, *Fishing Lessons: Stories and Essays from Midwestern Streams* is available from Whitefish Press at www.witefishpress.com



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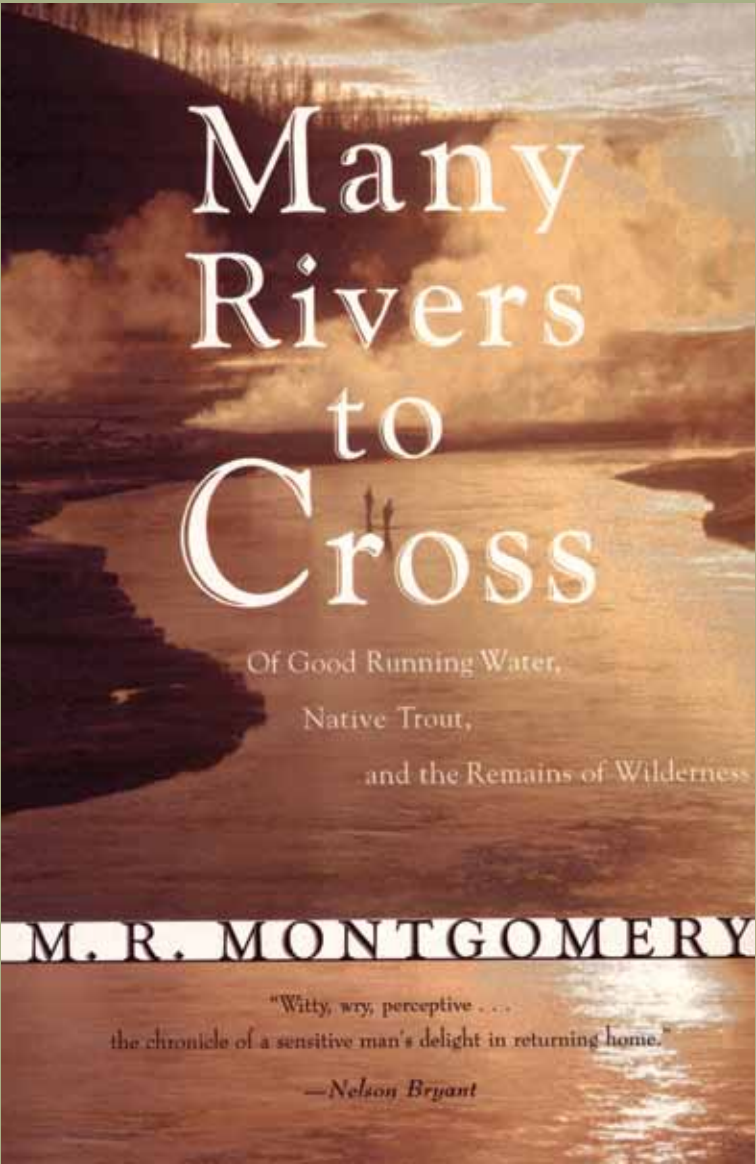
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MANY RIVERS TO CROSS

OF GOOD RUNNING WATER, NATIVE TROUT, AND THE REMAINS OF WILDERNESS

Book Review

By John Hunt

One draw of trout fishing for me is that it often takes me to places less travelled. For every fish I bring to hand along a stretch of stream running through a pasture in southeast Minnesota, I can think of days spent fishing in wilder, less trampled environs. It is this fact that first drew me to the book "Many Rivers to Cross" by M. R. Montgomery. The subtitle of the book perhaps expresses it better, "Of Good Running Water, Native Trout, and the Remains of Wilderness". The book's attention is definitely tilted to the American West, but the author's observations and musings on fishing, mankind's impacts on his surroundings, and how integral family and friendships can be to our outdoor experiences is a universal message.

The book begins with a question – Where does the West begin? In answering that question, Montgomery invites us to accompany him as he seeks out native cutthroat, redband, and Apache trout across the mountains of western North America. We tag along as the author helps a friend try to revisit a cave with Native American pictographs along a tributary of the Bighorn River near the Montana-Wyoming border. We are there as he discovers arrowheads near the alkali desert lakes of eastern Oregon, and we learn how trout seemingly jumped the Great Basin Divide as he retraces the trail of early Mormon settlers to the alpine meadows and drainages of eastern Utah.

A Boston newspaper reporter by trade, Montgomery provides interesting historical facts along the way, interspersed with his random observations of the people and places he visits during his journey. We get excerpts from Lewis & Clark's crossing of the Bitterroots, a chapter on Yellowstone National Park, and the author's experience chasing Rio Grande cutts on the invitation-only 250 square mile Forbes Trinchera Ranch in Colorado.

Another theme that is frequently interspersed throughout the book is the contrast between the fragility of Western streams and the persistence of native trout. Montgomery frequently expresses his pleasure in finding holdover fish in places an angler would rarely cast a line, and of his disappointment in the severe impacts that uncontrolled cattle grazing can have on streams. He exults at seeing the gradual visual transformation of cutt-bow hybrids back to a near-native cutts as he hikes upstream along the waterfalls and step pools of a remote creek that had once seen its lower end stocked with hatchery rainbows. He wonders whether we as a species appreciate how special cold water and trout are in the arid watersheds of the West.

All told, M. R. Montgomery gives us a chance to ride shotgun with him on an adventure. To catch fish, yes, but also to step back in time and really experience fish and fishing in some of the nation's most unique, and endangered, places.

SULFIDE MINING IN MINNESOTA

What the Potential of New Hard-Rock Mines Mean for Trout in NE MN

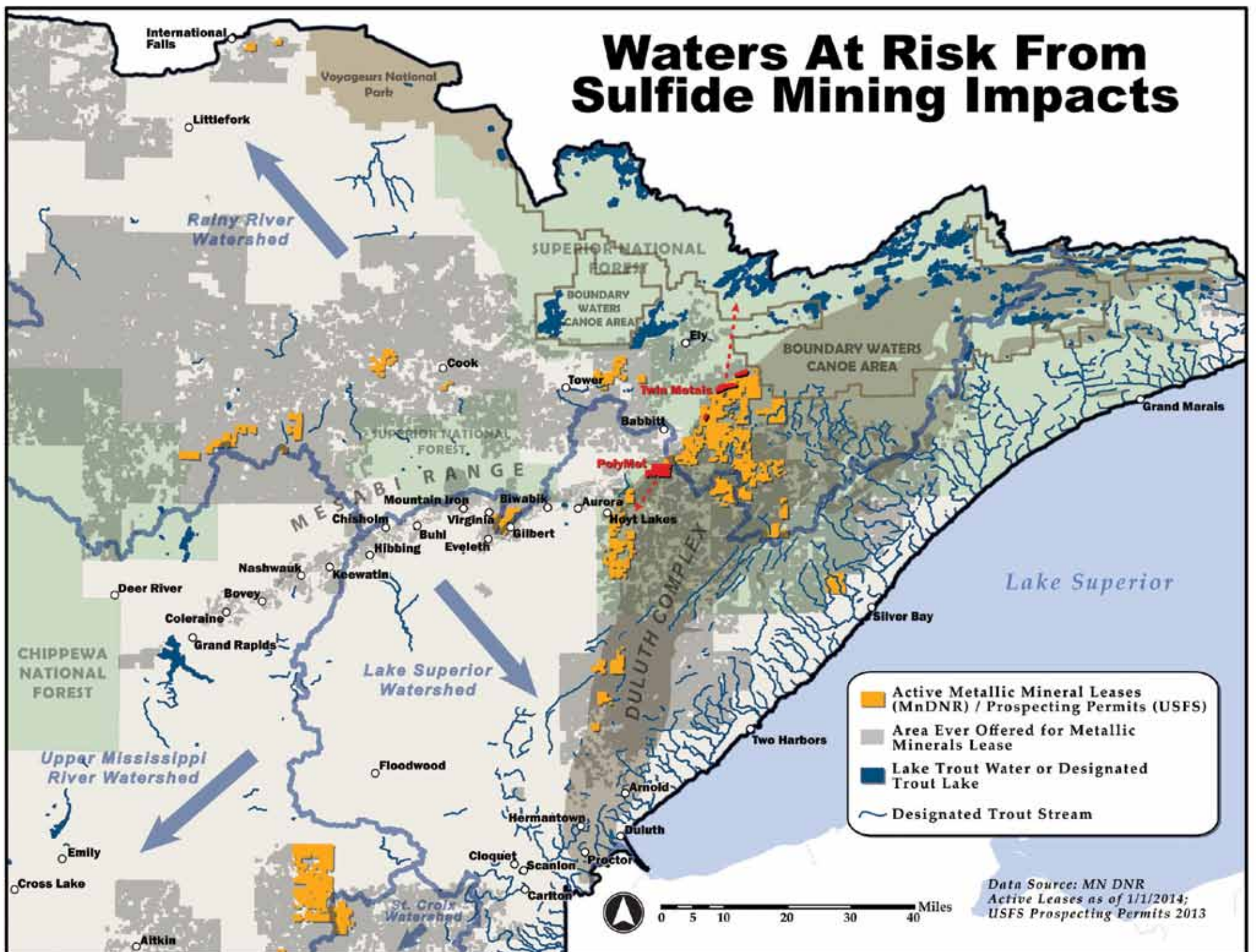
By John Lenczewski

Northern Minnesota's incredible coldwater fisheries – including Lake Superior, North Shore rivers, native lake trout lakes in and outside of the Boundary Waters, and some brookie streams – could potentially be impacted by a new type of mining in Minnesota. Sulfide mining is the mining of precious metals from sulfide ore deposits, and can generate fundamentally

different pollution than mining iron from iron oxide deposits. The first such mine, proposed by Polymet Mining, is undergoing environmental review and is now in the public review and comment phase. Sulfide mining has the potential to generate acid mine drainage and poison our waters for many generations. All anglers need to spend some time examining this issue and adding their voice to the public

quality and wetlands, increased emissions of mercury into the Lake Superior watershed, and inadequate financial assurances to assure that things would be done right. The project has since been revised and a Supplemental Draft Environmental Impact Statement (SDEIS) released in December 2013. The 2,200 page SDEIS explores most of the potential impacts from the proposed Polymet

which iron is mined is very different from sulfide bearing rock. Iron ore is mined from iron oxide deposits which are chemically inert and non-toxic. In contrast, the sulfide ores from which copper, nickel and other nonferrous metals are proposed to be mined are unstable when unearthed. When sulfides are exposed to water and oxygen they react to produce sulfuric acid and poison the



Where to Learn More

You can review and comment on the SDEIS through the DNR website at:

www.mndnr.gov/polymet

The website also includes an executive summary, and a series of fact sheets and documents designed to help the public understand the proposed project.

Several websites of groups which MNTU has worked with for several years on this issue contain very good factual summaries and analysis. Perhaps the best is the Mining Truth website:

<http://www.miningtruth.org/>

This website aims to present objective factual information to spur thoughtful public discussion. MNTU supports science-based decision making and we have therefore supported this public education effort.

A good source for objective reporting, including new developments, is the MPR website:

<http://minnesota.publicradio.org/>

The MNTU webpage will be updated as we work through the SDEIS and future blog postings will flag newly added material.

<http://mntu.org/>

discussion of whether and with what constraints this new type of mining is allowed in Minnesota.

Polymet Project Status

Polymet Mining is proposing to operate the first sulfide mine on the NorthMet site near Hoyt Lakes, MN. A draft environmental impact statement (EIS) was prepared in 2009 to assess the adverse impact the mine might have. The EPA reviewed this earlier draft and determined that the project and study were unacceptable. EPA cited possible impacts to water

mine. You can review and comment on the SDEIS through the DNR website at www.mndnr.gov/polymet

What is Sulfide Mining?

Sulfide mining targets sulfide ore deposits which contain very small concentrations of nonferrous metals such as copper, nickel and gold. The Polymet mine would mine and stockpile or process approximately 340 tons of sulfide bearing rock for every ton of metals it recovers. While there are large amounts of precious metals especially in the "Duluth complex" rock formation, vast quantities of "waste rock" would be generated to obtain them.

How Sulfide Mining Differs from Iron Mining.

The proposed mines are not Minnesota's traditional iron ore and taconite mines, but a new type of acid-producing mine which would extract minerals from sulfide ores. The character of the rock in

water. The potential for sulfuric acid drainage to pollute our waterways and lakes is what has thoughtful anglers and citizens very concerned. The SDEIS acknowledges that water from the Polymet operation will need to be treated for at least 500 years.

Fisheries in Harm's Way

The Polymet site straddles the divide between the Lake Superior and Rainy River basins. However, it is but the first of many mines being proposed across Northeast Minnesota. Runoff from several will flow into the interconnected lakes in and near the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness which are home to our rich heritage of native lake trout. Exploratory drilling is also occurring or planned for the headwaters of several North Shore rivers. Some of our best native brook trout fisheries could be impacted, as could some wild steelhead populations. Ultimately, the long term health of Lake Superior's wild coldwater

THE GREATEST CATCH

Connecting Youth with Trout and their Habitats in Minnesota

By Bob Wagner

A wild brook trout born in the clean gravel of a cool wooden stream. Fifty plus inches of defiant Musky finally teased into biting. That monster pike which inhaled your latest streamer creation. Maybe thirty inches of steelhead, six pounds of bass or a giant bluegill. Sorry it's none of the above. Truth be told it's not a fish but a person - or actually a group of people - young people, youth.

I admit I want to catch big fish. Looking at the future of TU, however, I believe that educating youth is our greatest potential catch. TU's national mission and vision statement really connects with my thoughts regarding any organization's long term success. -The long story told short is that you have to get youth involved. TU's vision is clear, "By the next generation, Trout Unlimited will ensure that robust populations of cold-water fish once again thrive within their North American range, so that our children can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters." The vision statement is challenging, compelling, and focused. It states a goal of not just by the next generation but actually for the next generation!

I believe the best way to accomplish this vision is obviously connecting with youth now, tomorrow and through the next generation. Bryan Moore, TU's VP of volunteer operations was quoted in TROUT magazine 2009 article, "*It's Elementary*", why youth outreach is

crucial to TU's next 50 years, he states, "Our goal is to have every chapter run an educational program and every TU chapter conservation project to have a youth educational component." Bryan goes on to explain how the Trout in the Classroom project has literally exploded in several eastern states. Connecticut, New York, and New Jersey each have more than 50 TIC projects in each state and that was three years ago. Currently Minnesota has only 3 TIC projects and two of them are in the Headwaters, Bemidji School District. More are planned and beginning in SE MN. The purpose of this discussion is to encourage all of us in TU that chapters need to increase our youth programming. It invigorates chapters and keeps them alive. I hope the following list and suggestions for youth programs and resources will be helpful and provide some ideas from our Headwaters Chapter here in Northern MN. It is important to remember youth programs energize current members by providing opportunities to teach, share skills and knowledge, and support cold water fisheries.

There are several TU sponsored youth activities every chapter should consider

such as:

- T.I.C. Trout in the Classroom - As mentioned we started this program 6 years ago and we added another classroom this year. Youth at many academic levels can connect with trout in the classroom. It's a highly successful multi-curriculum



TU VOLUNTEERS TEACHING A FLYTYING CLASS

gem every chapter needs. Our two board members, Bob Frazey and Steve Young have coordinated and monitored TIC from day one. (They are great resources if you have any questions.)

- First Cast is another TU nationwide initiative. There is a great manual available and for more information visit tu.org
- Stream Explorers memberships. These also connect youth with their local chapters, allowing them to get involved in habitat restoration and

river clean-ups. Pre-teens receive four colorful issues of TU's Stream Explorers magazine, membership card, stickers, and more. Visit tu.org/youth or call 1-800-834-2419

- Fly fishing and fly tying programs. We have been extremely fortunate to connect with Jeff Wade, a fifth grade teacher who runs an after-school outdoor adventure program. Thirteen years ago we coordinated with Mr. Wade starting a 7 week fly fishing course that 18 students attended, that has expanded every year to 44 students last year. Our chapter covers all the instruction, coordination, and fishing guides for 4 sessions of fly tying, 1 session of casting, and a guided fishing experience for every student. We have worked with 354 students in this program to date. Most students catch fish but the GREATEST CATCH ARE TU members connecting with youth building advocates for TU's success.

Any TU members with questions on partnerships, utilizing school facilities, funding, etc should feel free to call 218-586-2798 or email:

bob@riverwooddesign.net to discuss.

We need to build advocates and future leaders that have the love, respect, and appreciation that cold water fisheries deserve. To that end and with TU's vision: Youth are the greatest catch!

fisheries is at stake as well. In short, the vast majority of trout water in northeast Minnesota could be impacted by decisions made in the review and permitting of this first sulfide mine.

How Sulfide Mining Could Impact Coldwater Fisheries

Minnesota TU's concerns center on the long term risk which nonferrous sulfide mining poses to water quality and fish consumption, since drainage from waste rock and tailings basins have the potential to harm coldwater fisheries for many generations. Sulfide mines throughout the U.S. have a track record of persistent contamination of lakes, rivers and groundwater with the sulfuric acid and heavy metals. This is the same type of mining which produces the acid mine drainage which has left thousands of miles of Eastern and Western waters polluted and threatens Bristol Bay. MNTU is concerned about how effectively the Polymet mine can prevent sulfides in the massive piles of waste rock from turning into sulfuric acid and leaching toxic heavy metals into Minnesota waters for centuries to come. The SDEIS acknowledges that water from the Polymet operation will need to be treated for at least 500 years, and it appears that even then will not meet water quality standards. In addition to the toxic effects of the acid on fish and other aquatic life, sulfuric acid also leaches other toxic heavy metals from the rock and soils through which it seeps. These toxic substances are persistent and if they escape the site they will eventually reach downstream waters, whether that be Lake Superior or

inland trout lakes.

Elevated levels of harmful sulfates in the wastewater can lead to greater conversion of mercury in the environment to a form of mercury easily taken up by fish, especially long lived lake trout, making them hazardous to eat. The wastewater generated by the Polymet site would ultimately drain to Lake Superior, where mercury levels are already high enough to trigger fish consumption advisories. Other mine sites being proposed would drain into our native inland lake trout lakes, including some strongholds in the BWCAW. Other sites being explored for sulfide mines are in the headwaters of several storied North Shore rivers.

MNTU's Major Concerns and Approach

Our primary concern is for preserving clean water and coldwater fisheries, as is discussed above. While Minnesota Trout Unlimited appreciates iron mining's important place in Minnesota's economy and culture, and many members are employed in it, we believe all mining should be done through environmentally safe mining practices that protect Minnesota taxpayers. Mining projects in sulfide ore bodies must have adequate protections to prevent pollution and adequate financial safeguards to ensure any future pollution will be fully remediated. As this article goes to press we are still analyzing the SDEIS to determine whether these two "tests" can be met.

Adequacy of Financial Assurances
Even a cursory scan of the Polymet

SDEIS raises serious concerns for our water resources and coldwater fisheries. More than 99% of the huge volumes of rock removed would be "waste" rock capable of leaching sulfuric acid and other heavy metals. Assuming the engineered containment measures would in fact continue working for hundreds of years, the collected waste water would need to be continuously treated for many hundreds of years at least. Any failure in the containment measures would be very costly to clean up. The costs for wastewater treatment for a minimum of several hundred years will be very large. Unless truly adequate "financial assurances" are required up front (essentially a multi-million dollar damage deposit) taxpayers could be left bearing this ongoing cost of the mine long after its 20 year operating life. If funds for monitoring or cleanup are not found in the future, our waters and fisheries will be harmed.

Purpose of Environmental Review

The SDEIS is intended to provide decision-makers and the public with the objective facts

about the significant environmental, social, and economic effects of a proposed project. It looks at ways to avoid or minimize the significant effects, and examines alternatives to the project, so those effects can be addressed in the design or permitting phases. The permitting process is separate from the environmental review and happens only after the review is completed. This public review and comment period is your opportunity to ask critical questions and challenge the three lead agencies to ensure the best projections, not the most optimistic ones, are publicly debated.

How to Express Your Concerns

Written comments should be e-mailed to:

NorthMetSDEIS.dnr@state.mn.us

E-mail submissions should include a full name and legal mailing address.

Written comments may also be mailed to:

Lisa Fay, EIS Project Manager
MDNR Division of Ecological and Water Resources
Environmental Review Unit
500 Lafayette Road, Box 25
St. Paul, MN 55155-4025

All comments must be submitted by 4:30 PM on March 13, 2014. It is possible that the comment deadline will be extended. In December, Minnesota TU joined other groups in asking for a longer period for the public to review and comment on this 2,200 page document. The DNR is still considering that request, but for now the safe assumption is that the comment deadline will remain March 13, 2014.

FATHER'S DAY FISHING

A Reflection on June 16, 2013

By Glenn Barth

On Father's Day, my children, now adults, my wife, and my father gave me a gift, a day to fish Hay Creek in Southeast Minnesota. It was a sunny morning. Kathy and I had breakfast on our deck. Drew (29) called from Sedona, where he and his fiancé were vacationing, to wish me a happy

untangle my often tangled line and took my worms out of tree branches. Most of all, he made the adventures fun.

As I traveled the final dirt roads toward the farm where we had done the work, I missed the turn-off. As I turned around, an SUV turned off the highway and

years ago on a trip to Gates Lodge on the Ausable River in Michigan. As I could see that there were now three who would be fishing a portion of the stream easily reachable from the road, I walked down the half-mile driveway of the farm to ask permission of the landowner to fish the section that crossed his land. This was fine since it was the section we had worked on five years earlier.

The farmer was in the field on a bobcat. He hopped off and came over to ask what I needed.

When I told him that I'd like to fish the stream on his property, he let me know that I was welcome to do so. He also reminded me that there is a 30 foot public easement on either side of the stream that fishers can use. He had a set of wooden steps over his electric fence. He

said he was working in the field to prepare a new section of his pasture for his cattle.

It was a windy 80 degree day. I was hoping to see a hatch that afternoon, but at 2 p.m. none was evident. So I tossed a #16 beadhead hare's ear into the first plunge pool. The same flat rocks we had placed were still in place. The stream tightened at the end of a flat deep pool creating more volume as the clear water cascaded over the rocks into the pool just 18 inches below. The strike indicator dipped, the line tightened and it wasn't long before a 10 inch trout came to hand.

the hydraulics pulled it down. Again the indicator dipped, as I set the hook, it was clear that this was a larger fish.

Immediately he ran for cover under the bank toward a lunger structure we had placed. These wooden structures can go six feet back under the bank to provide cover for trout from predators and protection from the current. I kept the line tight and the fish dashed down stream. I followed and slowed the run by palming the reel. Again he dashed behind a boul-



HAY CREEK NEAR REDWING, MN

Father's Day.

With a kiss from Kathy for love and good luck, I hopped in the car and headed for the stream, an hour-and-a-half drive from my home in Eden Prairie. I was on my way to an area where I had volunteered five years earlier in a Trout Unlimited Habitat Improvement project to see how it had turned out.

Once on the road, I called my Dad, now 87, who introduced me to trout fishing in the streams of Michigan, when I was 8. He was just learning himself. Our first time out, we went to Bear Creek, and "Duke," our barrel chested guide said, "Okay, take your pants off and get in." With that, we stepped into the cold stream in our skivvies to fish for willing brook trout.

To hook your child on trout fishing at a young age, help them catch fish. Dad let me fish with blood worms while he fished with flies. He was patient and helped me

whizzed by. I followed and he turned into the drive I was looking for. Then another car with two fishers arrived. By now, I knew I was in the right place. The



GLEN BARTH AND HIS PARENTS

SUV was filled with fishing rods.

I slipped on my waders and boots, picked up the Orvis Henry's Fork 8'6" five weight that Dad had given me twenty

Working my way from the tail to the head of the pool, I caught one after another. Then I flipped my fly on top of the rocks above the pool on the right side. It fell naturally over the edge and



THE COLORS OF A HAY CREEK BROWN TROUT

der into the depths of a pool. I worked my way to a position where the fish wouldn't cut my line on the rock. After a little more fight, he came in.

When he saw my hand reaching toward him, the fight resumed. This happened two more times until I landed the 15 inch brown. The fish was large enough that it was difficult to get my had around him as I flipped him upside down to remove the fly. (This gentle move momentarily disorients the fish so that it lays still.)

The trout had his summer colors; an iridescent gold with sparse dark speckling. He was tired from the fight, so I released him quickly and off he swam, back into the depths.

Katie, my grown daughter called my cell phone from Austin, TX, to wish me a happy Father's Day. I assured her that I couldn't be happier, kept the conversation short, and got back at it. As a husband, father, and fisherman, I couldn't have had a better day.

Editors Note: Take the opportunity to get out fishing with your family this spring and summer. Check out the Minnesota DNR flyfishing course description on page 15 and sign up today! Look to the next issue to provide information about our upcoming annual TUNE camp for youth, which will be held in late June.

Many other opportunities are also available, so contact a local flyfishing shop like some listed here and look for local guides who can help out. Want to get involved in teaching local youth and families? Contact your local TU chapter.

FLY TYING

With Laughing Trout Fly Fishing

By Paul Johnson

The Purple Prince Charming

Hook: Scud Hook size 14 - 16
Bead: Gold, brass or tungsten. Sized to match hook
Thread: Purple Uni 8/0 or 6/0
Tail: Mayfly Brown Zelon
Abdomen: Purple Montana Fly Wonderwrap or purple dubbing
Ribbing: Gold Wire, size Brassie
Wing : White Goose Biots
Collar: Brown or Grizzly Rooster Hackle

Tying Instructions:

1. Place bead on hook and insert into vice. Start your thread behind the bead
2. Tie in a clump of Zelon just behind the bead secure it back half way down the bend of the hook.
3. Clip the tag end to about ½ the length of your hook shank.
4. Tie in the gold wire at the bend of the hook.
5. Tie in a length of Wonderwrap at the bend of the hook. You want to make careful thread wraps to make the body as smooth as possible before going to step #6.
6. Palmer the Wonderwrap in touching turns and secure with your tying thread right behind the bead.
7. Counter wrap the gold wire with even spacing and secure behind the bead.
8. Clip off 2 goose biots and form a "V" with the tips and tie in on top of the hook just behind the bead.
9. Tie in a rooster hackle and make 3 or 4 turns to form a collar on the fly. Secure with your tying thread and clip off the excess.
10. Whip finish



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AN ANGLER'S PARADISE

By Brent Notbohm Photos By Cheri Henderson

I hear it often from fellow anglers I meet while fishing a North Country river or lake. After we exchange a few pleasantries, they inevitably ask:

"Where you from?"

"Duluth," I answer.

"You're so lucky. You get to fish here all the time."

"Yup," I graciously acknowledge.

I am fortunate, though it took some time for me to realize it, as Duluth has not always been my home. In 2001, I reluctantly moved "up north" for a job from my hometown and homewaters in Wisconsin's Driftless Area; that quaint setting known for its fabulous trout fishing. For several years thereafter, I traveled back to the pastoral rivers and streams of the Badger State's southwest corner for the majority of my fishing endeavors. But in 2006 I began to embrace my 'Sota surroundings by exploring and discovering the many treasures of the Northland. Now, having



A NICE MINNESOTA LAKE TROUT FROM THE BWCAW

west. And I haven't even mentioned the official state fish, so coveted by anglers that the first day of the open water season bares its name. If I have learned anything since relocating north, it's that for Minnesotans, the "Walleye Opener" is an esteemed holiday like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Add to all that the close proximity of Wisconsin's famous

sands of pristine lakes and rivers teeming with fish, both inside and out of the magnificent BWCAW.

With so much water to explore, I feel a bit like the voyager of old, discovering places where fish have yet to see a fly or lure. Perhaps this is just unbridled romanticism, but with so much world-

class fishing at my doorstep in lovely and remote places, you can hopefully understand the source of this indulgence. Spend some time fishing many of those crowded "bucket list" places out East or West, and you will appreciate how truly fortunate we are to have all this uninhibited public access to the land and water of Minnesota.

Of course, none of this is new to most Minnesotans, who are accustomed to a life of fishing adventure in the land of 10,000 lakes. Minnesota

sells more fishing licenses per capita than any other state besides Alaska. That's a lot of anglers. That's a lot of water to protect, reconnect and restore. Finding paradise inevitably propels one to be an advocate for it. So it's on behalf of the Gitche Gumee Chapter of Trout Unlimited that I invite you to join us on our quest to be stewards of the cold waters of Northeast Minnesota.

We are revitalizing the Gitche Gumee Chapter and the active role it plays to ensure this fishing paradise is maintained for future generations. Meetings are usually the second Thursday of the month, October through April, at 7:00 p.m. at the Hartley Nature Center in Duluth. Comprised of a conversation centered on a selected topic—like steelhead or brook trout fishing—meetings provide attendees with an opportunity to learn

more about our waters, how to fish them, and what's being done to protect and restore them. You need not be a TU member to come; simply someone interested in preserving the awesome fishing we have in Northeast Minnesota.

I have to admit; with each passing year I further forsake my adolescent waters of Wisconsin's Driftless Area for the wilder frontier of Northeast Minnesota. I still very much appreciate those rivers and streams of my youth, but am reminded of my current good fortune whenever I encounter a "southerner" on vacation up north.

"You're so lucky."

"Yup."

So are all of us who fish and live in the North Country.

Brent Notbohm is a board member of the Gitche Gumee Chapter and can be reached at blnotbohm@hotmail.com.



A HEFTY NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD

spent several years investigating this region in a canoe, float tube and waders, I often ask myself:

"Is Northeast Minnesota an angler's paradise?"

It's the kind of question usually asked by an outsider, as most native folk take for granted their familiar environs, wherever they may be. So trust me when I say there is much evidence in the affirmative—wild brookies in wild rivers; big trout in lakes and big lake trout; mammoth muskies and monstrous pike; incredible smallies in the incomparable Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW)—say nothing for Great Lakes steelhead in some of the most fantastic scenery in the Mid-

Brule River, and you can definitely make the argument for the Twin Ports of Duluth/Superior as an epicenter of fishing nirvana.

It's not just the variety of fish species we get to pursue here in Northeastern Minnesota, but also the significant number of beautiful places to cast a line—many of them wild and undeveloped, completely surrounded by public land. If you're an outdoor adventurer like myself, this is what makes this part of the state so very special. Great state parks like Tettegouche, George H. Crosby Manitou and Cascade River, to name a few, offer anglers a wealth of fishing opportunities, and the Grand Portage State Forest has numerous terrific fishing lakes. Then there's Superior National Forest, which at nearly four million acres, hosts thou-

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RBC WEALTH MANAGEMENT EMPLOYEES HELP AN URBAN TROUT STREAM

By Hal Tearse

A small trout stream flows quietly in the shadow of the Mall of America and flight path of the Twin Cities Metropolitan airport. Located within walking distance of the mall, a visitor can suddenly leave the confines of the metro area and escape into the Pond-Dakota Mission Park where the stream flows through on its journey to the Minnesota River. This small creek is spring fed from the bluffs above the Minnesota River in Bloomington and surprisingly has survived the encroachment of development. In 2007 the Twin Cities Chapter of TU worked alongside the DNR and MN Valley Wildlife Refuge to reintroduce native brook trout, which had been extirpated several decades ago. In 2012 TCTU helped these partners reconnect habitat by removing a dam, restore stream channel, install woody habitat and stabilize streambanks. Surveys are finding 200 trout per mile and several year classes from natural reproduction.

A complimentary project to further improve the watershed is one of several initiatives in the metro area that is managed by Great River Greening, a St. Paul nonprofit dedicated to "Securing the legacy of Minnesota lands and waters through community-based restorations, stewardship and partnership."

On Friday, June 14, 2013 in celebration of RBC Blue Water Day, over 100 volunteers from RBC Wealth Management in the Twin Cities gathered to spend an afternoon clearing invasive plant species along the stream and planting native species to help filter water as it moves through the soil to the creek. The RBC Blue Water Project™ is a 10-year global commitment to help support and protect fresh water resources around the world. To date, RBC has committed \$38 million dollars to more than 650 charitable organizations including Great River Greening. In 2012, RBC awarded a \$100,000 three-year Leadership Grant to Great River Greening to enable them to continue the important work they are doing. Community volunteers like employees of RBC and partnerships with other non-profits, government entities and landowners are key to the success of their projects.

The work that volunteers performed included clearing several types of invasive plant species, preparing the cleared area for receiving the native plants and



"HUST CREEK" FLOWS THROUGH THE MINNESOTA RIVER VALLEY. A NUMBER OF GROUPS HAVE WORKED CLOSELY TO RESTORE, IMPROVE AND ENHANCE THE SMALL UNNAMED STREAM

then planting the new ground cover. In order to accomplish this important phase of the process, volunteers previously removed trees in order to allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor so that the native species can thrive. As woodland areas mature and restrict sunlight from reaching the forest floor it opens the way for non-native plants like buckthorn to begin to take over. The only way to reverse the situation is to clear

enough small trees to allow sunlight to reach in and then clear out the invasive plant life. This process takes thousands of volunteer hours and hard work.

As the photos show, the volunteers worked in groups of ten and each group focused on one particular area to clear, prepare and plant. Great River Greening supplied all of the tools required, bug spray and gloves! The volunteers spent about three hours on site and accomplished a great deal.



volunteers from RBC Wealth Management consisted of home office staff ranging from finance, risk management, marketing, corporate intelligence, RBC Foundation, training and a variety of operations departments. Several financial advisors, summer interns and branch directors also participated in the effort. It was a wonderful afternoon for all concerned. A great deal of work was accomplished and employees had a chance to support the RBC Blue Water Project while having some fun out of the office working together for a great cause.

On a larger scale, the RBC Blue Water Project grants have made quite an im-

pact over the past six years of the program throughout North America and the world.

When we launched the RBC Blue Water Project in 2007, we decided to support two broad areas: watershed protection and access to clean drinking water. We felt that by casting such a wide net, we could get to know the fullest range of people and organizations working to protect water; fast track critical funding to a variety of national, regional and community-based projects around the world; and learn as much as we could about water. At the same time, we also wanted to help raise awareness about water issues.

In 2011 - 12, we commissioned the Monitor Institute to evaluate the social and environmental impacts of the RBC Blue Water Project to date. Monitor surveyed a cross-section of about 20 percent of our grant recipients and developed a small subset of metrics that were common across most of the initiatives we funded. Monitor found that:

- 3 million North American households were positively affected by programs funded by RBC.
- Nearly 2.5 million kilolitres of water were conserved through programs funded by RBC.
- More than 810,000 people attended service/training opportunities with organizations funded by RBC.
- 80,000 people logged over 400,000 hours volunteering with community-based watershed protection programs funded by RBC.

One of the goals of the RBC Blue Water Project is to help create capacity in the charitable water sector. RBC has a reputation for integrity and due diligence in our grant-making processes and, over the years, many charitable organizations have told us that RBC funding is often considered a de facto "seal of approval," allowing them to attract additional funding from other donors more easily. The Monitor study revealed that more than 80 organizations in North America were able to leverage their RBC Blue Water Project grants to acquire more than \$4.7 million in additional funding, an average of \$50,000 per organization.

RBC is proud to partner with Great River Greening and other community based non-profits focused on water issues in Minnesota and around the world. To learn more about the RBC Blue Water Project please go to the website that has lots of terrific information and videos discussing the wide range of projects that are supported by the RBC Foundation.

<http://www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/environment/rbc-blue-water/about/index.html>

To learn more about Great River Greening please go to <http://www.greatrivergreening.org>

Hal Tearse is a Branch Director for RBC Wealth Management. He is a Life Member Trout Unlimited & former Editor-in-chief of MN Trout.

RBC Wealth Management, a division of RBC Capital Markets, LLC, Member NYSE/FINRA/SIP C.

Learn more about this trout stream and TCTU's restoration work at:
www.twincitiestu.org



The Blue Water Day

THE CHANGING FACE OF STREAM RESTORATION

By Marty Melchior

Twenty years ago I worked on my first trout stream habitat project as a TU volunteer. In a nutshell, that experience led me to quit my job, go back to school, and embark on a career in river restoration. I have had the good fortune of working at a place where I can do river restoration every day and with

few things. The fields encompassed within river restoration include fluvial geomorphology, hydraulic engineering, hydrology, hydrogeology, geology, botany, stream ecology, sediment transport, construction management and of course, fisheries. This was a bit overwhelming when I first realized how much I didn't

apprenticeship atmosphere. This on the job learning was true of traditional fish habitat jobs, but what's different is that now that job experience includes consideration of fluvial geomorphology and to some degree, engineering.

Structure based habitat work dominated stream fish management practice for several decades, starting with earnest in the 1930s. WPA-type projects dominated the 30s and 40s, with grade control and bank stabilization being a major focus. Luna Leopold began to influence federal agency approaches to empirical stream data collection and the US Forest Service was beginning to think about more holistic approaches back in the 50s. In the early 1980s, my company was just starting out, doing riffle and pool stream restoration projects for large ranch clients in Montana, and Dave Rosgen was starting to piece together his understanding of the patterns he was seeing. When I began my career, stream restoration was largely done by agency staff and mostly on the west coast or inter-mountain states. In the Midwest and east, stream work was largely fish habitat work and consisted mainly of traditional structure based approaches like LUNKERS, wing deflectors and the like. We've lagged a bit behind the coasts in terms of acceptance of geomorphic process based design, but I've seen some significant changes over the past 20 years. The DNR teaches their own short courses now and are requiring many of their staff to have at least some introductory training in fluvial geomorphology. As mentioned, more people are coming out of school with formal education in the field.

I know that there have been struggles in the past between the old way of doing things and new approaches, but Minnesota Trout Unlimited members are interested in doing the right thing, even if that changes over time. By definition, they're good scientists. Coldwater stream restoration has, at its origin, trout fishing. Angling, regulations, trout stamp money, and now state tax dollars are all linked together. When projects were small and maybe a few thousand dollars, we could design them without much consideration of geomorphology or engineering because there wasn't much at stake. Risk was low. "Hydraulic intuition" I once heard someone say. Now that projects are bigger, with more tax dollars at stake, there are more discerning eyes watching. People want to see proper standards of practice in place, and they want good results. How can we get there? The best way to achieve both is to consider the science behind the practice. When we design a project, the first thing we do is to ask ourselves, what is the appropriate level of due diligence required to achieve the project goals? In other

words, how much fluvial geomorph, engineering and other ologies to we need to employ? It's very easy to do too little. You can never have too much due diligence, but you can slow projects down or make them too expensive if you go overboard. When we incorporate fluvial geomorphology and river engineering science into the assessment and design of trout habitat projects, we give ourselves and our organization (TU) added reassurance that the project will succeed. We then also protect our investor's (tax payers, dues payers) investment. In the face of climate change, with its associated frequent and damaging flooding, this becomes ever more important.

I offer the following suggestions for the next decade of trout stream restoration and habitat improvement in Minnesota:

1) When projects are being chosen, there needs to be fluvial geomorphic assessment on a watershed scale. If this is not done, you can end up working on projects in lower reaches where the channel morphology is greatly impacted by disturbances higher up in the watershed. This is a recipe for failure.

2) When devising projects, we need to consider geomorphology, engineering, hydrology, stream ecology, botany and the other fields mentioned above. That means everyone, not just the designers and the regulators. If we all grasp the concept of complex geosystems, we'll all get along well.

If we follow these two general guide-



STREAM RESTORATION WORK ON THE SUCKER RIVER

some of the best people in the fields of fluvial geomorphology and river engineering. I'm not a good fisherman, so if I want to hang around trout, I reasoned that I needed to be a good scientist. Part of good science means not adhering to one paradigm or another, and continuously gathering and processing new information as it comes. Faced with this code of conduct, my opinions about habitat and restoration have changed constantly, and I think for the better, over the years. Some 200 river projects later, I often find myself reflecting on the history of river restoration and how things have changed over my career. Like our high school teachers told us, those of us who don't know history are doomed to repeat it.

In order to be really good at stream and river restoration, one has to know a little about a lot of things, and a lot about a

know, but what a revelation! To be an expert at just one of these fields would take a lifetime of study, but who doesn't like a challenge, right? It's a field that I think is geared for those right brained people who like both science and art. As stream restoration has grown more popular, short courses and university curriculums have responded in kind. It's a little bit of the chicken and egg phenomenon, as these programs have generated a significant interest that keeps them going. Unlike when I was in school, if you want to, you can now go out and get either a Master's degree or PhD in fluvial geomorphology. The University of Minnesota, Portland State, Utah State and other schools have Stream Restoration Certification curricula available to students in water resources, engineering, biology or landscape architecture. Still, most of the actual practical design knowledge is gained on the job, in an



THE AUTHOR SURVEYS RECENT STREAM WORK

lines, we'll keep moving forward. To some, this may seem obviously self-serving, as it's what I do for a living, but that has never been my motivation. Those who know me know that I and other scientists like me just want to restore as many streams as possible. We can't do it alone. Luckily, we have good people at our state and federal agencies and with Minnesota Trout Unlimited that can help us. By working together, we can cover many miles. It's very exciting to see the changing face of trout stream management in Minnesota and Wisconsin. I look forward to the future.

Marty Melchior is the Regional Director for Inter-Fluve, a river restoration design firm based in Hood River, Oregon. Marty lives with his family in Lodi, WI. Marty is the former Editor-in-chief of MN Trout.



MINNAQUA YOUTH & ADULT FLYFISHING WEEKEND

Sign Up Today!

By Deb Groebner. Photos By Monica Willits

Ever wanted to learn about fly fishing, but didn't have anyone to show you how? During the DNR MinnAqua Beginners Fly-Fishing Weekend for Youth/Adult Pairs, youth and their adult fishing partner will team up with an experienced fly-fishing men-

To qualify, youth and adult must have little or no fly-fishing experience; both should have a sincere interest in learning. Eligible youth include Minnesota girls and boys who will be between the ages of 11 - 17 on May 2, 2014.

Cost: \$120 per youth/adult pair (includes meals, lodging, aquatic education programs, guiding services, and additional materials). Each youth and adult participant will set up and fish with a new fly rod that is theirs to keep. Sponsorships to

Experienced and enthusiastic fly anglers who are interested in being a mentor for a youth-adult pair on May 2-4, 2014 are encouraged to contact Deb Groebner. Mentors will be registered as DNR Volunteers and must be able to pass a background check. Food and lodging are provided at Eagle Bluff ELC in Lanesboro. Mentors should plan on arriving at Eagle Bluff by 6:00 p.m. on Friday, May 2 and participating until the event wraps up around 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, May 4.



Last year, Hiawatha-TU, FFF-Lew Jewett Chapter, and Izaak Walton League-Bush Lake Chapter generously sponsored participant-pairs by paying their registration fee (\$120/pair). On their Application to Participate, pairs indicate whether they'd like to be considered for a sponsorship. Organizations or chapters that are interested in sponsoring one or more youth-adult pairs should get in touch with Deb.



tor to develop basic skills, learn about aquatic habitat, practice tying flies, and fish for trout together!

offset registration fees may be available from angling and conservation organizations.

Dates and Location: May 2 - 4, 2014 at Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center near Lanesboro in southeast Minnesota. Activities begin Friday evening and wrap up by 2 p.m. on Sunday.

This event is limited to 20 youth/adult pairs. Please download the registration form located at: http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/education_safety/education/minnaqua/y-aff_2014_final_application.pdf

This is a PDF file. You will need Adobe Acrobat Reader to download it, and complete it according to the instructions provided.

Contact Deb Groebner, MinnAqua Aquatic Education Specialist at deborah.groebner@state.mn.us or (507) 359-6049 for more information, to sign up, volunteer or sponsor program participants.

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COME ON COASTERS!

By Gary Meier

BIG brook trout. Not the 15 inch-er you caught in a beaver pond after you had bushwhacked and slogged through a mile of tussock grass and tag alder back in the summer of '81, but truly huge brook trout. Square-tails measured in pounds not inches – and not just a few of them either. Abundant is the word that describes their numbers. At this point you might be thinking that this is an article about some brook trout Nirvana like Labrador, Newfoundland, or Northern Quebec, but you'd be wrong. These brook trout were found in our own Lake Superior, and its tributaries below their natural barrier falls. Coaster brook trout.

Coasters were widely distributed throughout the Lake Superior Basin until the end of the 19th century when the habitat destruction caused by the removal of our native pine forests and subsequent "running" of the logs down the north shore streams virtually pounded nails into the Coaster's coffin. Rapacious over-fishing by "sport" and commercial fishermen nearly pounded in the final nail. Pictures of anglers in the 1800s proudly posed with hundreds of enormous Coasters they had caught on fishing trips were commonplace during that period. Coasters went from abundant to rare in most of the waters of Lake Superior.

A n a d r o m o u s Coasters were the only native brook trout in the Lake Superior Basin. They spent most of the year growing large on the forage available to them in the Big Lake but would return to their natal streams or shoreline spring up-wellings in the fall to spawn. No brook trout were found above the barriers on the north shore streams until they were carried there by human beings. Such stockings were informally and randomly performed by natives and European immigrants at first and then formally over the years by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) on a more scientific basis. Some of the fish carried above the barrier falls were probably coaster offspring, but the DNR did stock brookies from outside the watershed with some consistency over the years.

Interestingly enough, the only place in Lake Superior that still had relatively robust Coaster populations was in Ontario's Nipigon watershed. Ontario fisheries personnel carefully managed this Coaster fishery and it became a mecca for those who wanted a chance to catch huge brook trout they could no longer catch elsewhere in Lake Superior.



NETTING A BIG COASTER SAMPLED BY ELECTROFISHING

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Grand Portage Band of Ojibwe took note of the success the Canadians were having and embarked on a project to restore Coasters in the Grand Portage area.

For a variety of reasons, the Grand Portage effort met with mixed results, but

The Lake Superior Committee is a group made up of the Departments of Natural Resources of the three states bordering Lake Superior, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Ojibwe bands whose lands are contiguous to the Lake. The Committee had been studying and hypothesizing how to restore Coasters and had the framework of a plan developed that had been in place since 1992.

Because of TU's interest in restoring Coasters and the award we presented to the Grand Portage Band, TU was well represented at the conference by John Hunt and me from

can't speak for the other gentlemen, but I learned a lot and left the conference fired up to make Coaster restoration a reality.

One of the critical things we learned at the Coaster Conference was that too little was actually known about Coasters to effectively plan for and restore their populations. To begin to fill in those blanks, the Gitche Gumee Chapter applied for and received an Embrace a Stream grant in 1996. The grant was to be used to fund a study from which it was hoped we would determine: 1. If there were remnant stocks of brook trout present below the barriers on the Minnesota Tributaries; 2. If there is a genetic difference between brook trout found above the barriers and those found below; 3. If there has been any influence of stocked brook trout on wild brook trout both below and above the barriers; 4. Based on the analysis of the biological population structure of brook trout found below the barriers, if brook trout found above the barriers could be used as a source for brood stock for coaster restoration.

The work on the grant project was undertaken jointly by the Minnesota DNR and the members of the Gitche Gumee Chapter. An electro-shocking survey was done below the barriers on 22 north shore streams in the Fall of 1997. Around 300 fish were sampled. A summer survey of the same streams above the barriers was accomplished the following summer. Tissue samples (adipose fins and scales) were taken for genetic analysis. The analysis was performed at the Great Lakes Science Center in Ann Arbor, Michigan.

We did find brook trout below the barriers during the Fall survey – some even the silvery color that might be indicative that they had recently been in the Big Lake – but most of the brookies shocked were generally small and not visually different from what might be found above the barriers.

The final genetic analysis took some time to accomplish and showed that there is a genetic difference in the brook trout found below the barriers, as compared to those above the barriers, but that difference was not as great as one might expect, or hope for, from two discrete populations. The question of whether Coasters are a distinct brook trout variety or may just be brook trout living above the barriers that are "blown out" over the barriers and into Lake Superior during high water events remains to be and may



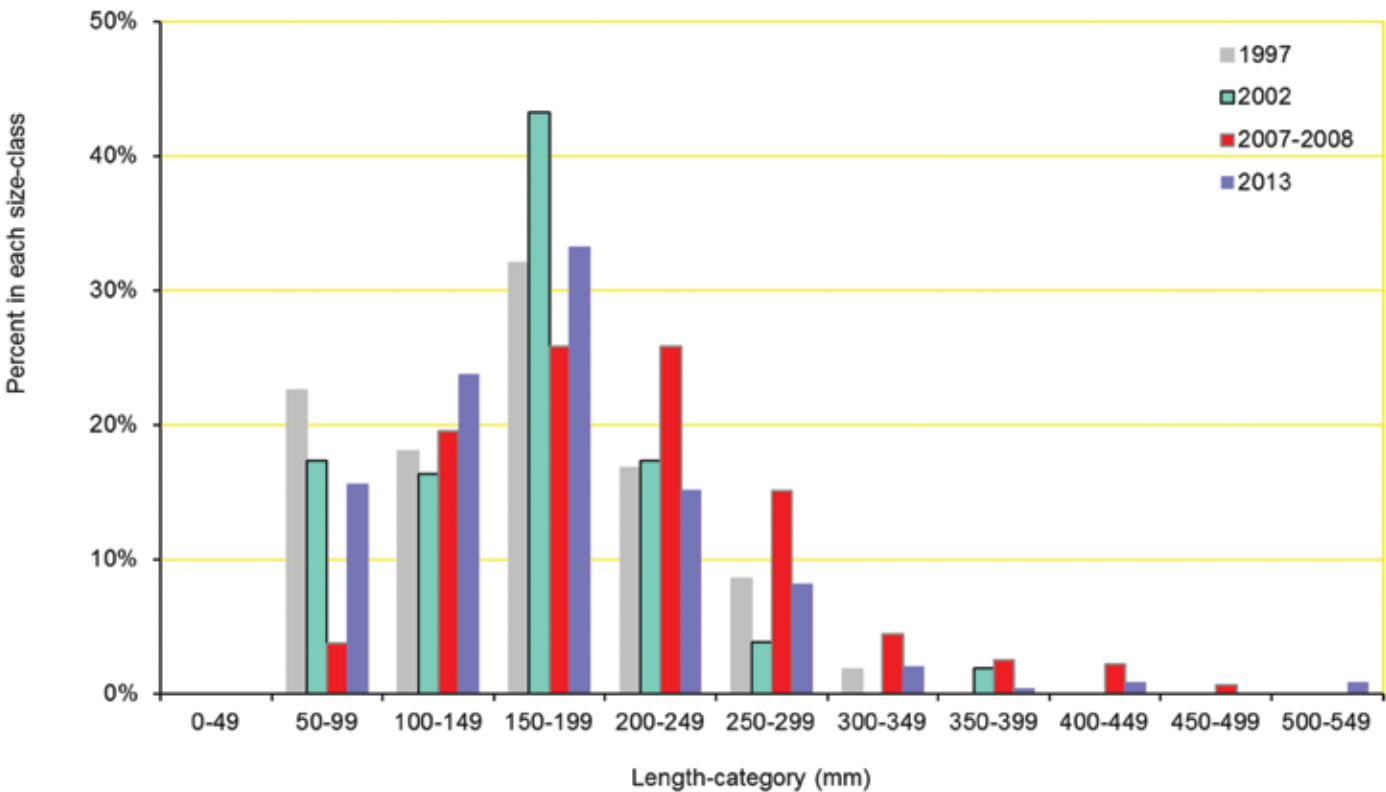
A BIG COASTER FROM THE FALL 2013 SURVEY

Coaster populations were increased and tagging and radio tracking of adults revealed important information about their behavior and movement. One could actually observe several Coasters cruising around the bay from a nearby dock. Very cool indeed! The Band's efforts were recognized by Trout Unlimited at a Coaster Conference held in Grand Portage by the Lake Superior Committee.



A HEALTHY MINNESOTA COASTER BROOK TROUT

the Minnesota State Council and Gitche Gumee Chapter, Jeff Carlson from the Wild Rivers Chapter in Wisconsin, and Joe McGurrin from TU National. I



COMPARISON OF BROOK TROUT SAMPLED IN LAKE SUPERIOR TRIBUTARIES BELOW BARRIER FALLS, 1997-2013
GRAPH AND DATA COURTESY MN DNR LAKE SUPERIOR FISHERIES

never be answered.

Despite the less than definitive genetic results, one thing that was made abundantly clear through our project was that there were brook trout living below the barriers and, presumably, also in Lake Superior. Brook trout regulations for Lake Superior and its tributaries below the barriers allowed a continuous season with a five fish daily bag limit, a minimum size of 10 inches with no more than three of those fish to be over 16 inches. This regulation was completely incompatible with protecting the small and fragile Coaster population, let alone restoring it to a more robust level. Then State Council President, Elliott Olson, wrote to the DNR Commissioner in July 1996 urging him to close the season on brook trout below the barriers entirely, or, at the very least, implement a change in regulations that would result in protection for any remnant Coasters.

DNR Fisheries responded to TU's outcry for regulation changes by holding a series of meetings to determine regulatory options that might work and those that could successfully make it through a rule making process with the least resistance. Several proposals were made. TU's proposal was that there should be an immediate closure of the brook trout season in Lake Superior and its tributaries below the first barriers. Without question, this proposition would put Coaster populations in the best circumstance to rebound, but it was a position that was not viewed favorably by some other angling groups. On seeing the hard-line resistance to this common-sense approach for protecting Coasters, TU advocated strongly for a possession limit of one brook trout with a 20 inch minimum size

ular, if not routine, catches of brook trout between 16 and 20 inches during the fall steelhead season - something that was a real rarity before the regulation change. Typically these reports are coming from larger rivers, such as the Baptism, which are too big, and deep to effectively sample with electro-shocking equipment, and though totally unscientific in nature, may well serve as a further barometer of how Coasters are doing.

This fall, for the first time in many years, TU volunteers once again helped the DNR shocking crew with its Coaster survey. Those of us who were part of the '97 shocking crews were able to witness first hand that the Coaster size structure had increased noticeably. In 1997, the largest brook trout we shocked was a silvery fish about 14 inches long - and we were excited about that! This year, many of the brookies shocked were at or near that size range, and two gorgeous 21 inch fish were shocked! Such success was hardly imaginable in 1997 and makes the hearts of those of us who love them beat just a little bit faster!

So what else can we do to move the Coaster recovery along? The answer is not clear, but it most likely requires a multiphasic approach and, I believe, some creative new ideas. Certainly, maintaining a healthy, cold Lake Superior and its north shore tributaries must be the base. Finding ways to stabilize flows and temperatures in the tributaries is also key. Beyond these axioms, and at the risk of inflaming those who are entirely besotted by the naturalized exotics we know as steelhead, or worse yet, the put and take Kamloops, perhaps more money currently being spent on these exotics needs to be devoted to Coaster



ELECTROFISHING ON A NORTH SHORE RIVER

limit for Lake Superior and its tributaries up to the first natural barrier. Although we did not feel that this regulation was ideal, we thought it would give Coasters an opportunity to spawn several times by the time they reached such a prodigious size, and that was about as good as we could do given the opposition from other angling groups. In 1997, the regulation for which we had lobbied so hard became official and has remained in place since then.

There is some evidence that the regulation is working - though slowly. The DNR has been conducting electro-shocking surveys for brook trout below the barriers every five years since the initial 1997 survey. These surveys have not shown any real increase in abundance, but they have shown an increase in the size structure. In addition to the "harder" evidence gathered by the DNR, anglers up and down the shore are reporting reg-

restoration. Perhaps an assessment of north shore streams should be accomplished and several of those deemed most suitable for Coasters should be set aside and managed only for Coasters. Urge the DNR to make Coaster restoration a priority!

In the meantime, the two most important things we can all do is: a) educate our fellow anglers about Coasters; and b) not kill any brook trout we catch below the barriers and in the Big Lake - don't succumb to the desire to place one of these big works of art on your wall! They are still much too scarce. Handling these rare gems gently and preferably never taking them out of the water is also imperative if we wish for these beauties to live on to spawn and grow big Coasters for future generations. It may take a while, but I'm excited by the fact that we have made progress.

REELING IT IN - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

water you know there's a nice fish or two holding. The sun was off the water and if there was ever going to be a rising fish moment this could be it. "See, that riffle? And then where the water piles up into a run?" "Ya, ya I see it", "Ok, get a good drag free drift right down the pipe with that hopper, I'll keep the boat creeping slowly along". With probably one of his most perfect casts of the day he landed that dropper rig just high enough in the riffle to get that hopper drifting just dead with no drag what so ever. Now I am one who believes in river karma and that the Trout Gods will at times come into perfect alignment and reward the patient and conscientious angler.

What happened next kinda fits that belief. Doink, Doink the hopper goes rafting down the riffle with all the animation of a real struggling terrestrial. The next thing I know, I hear a cell phone ringing and my mind almost explodes. Pard answers the phone and sits down in the swivel chair in the front of the boat. In the blink of an eye and with inexplicable perfect synchronicity the hopper simultaneously bobs along the riffle and drops into the run and Kah-boom! The water literally explodes. Our Pavlovian fisherman was startled out of his wits. Well to be honest I was a bit too but I happened to be watching the fly and not my phone. In one single fluid movement he jumped to his feet while my inner voice was screaming "Noooooooooooooooo!" He swept his arm back to super-set the hook and all we could do was wave goodbye as leader and line came fluttering back to the boat. Oh, and he was still talking on the phone. Now I know, you always hear about the one that got away but ... Just to make sure the lesson was driven home our piscatorial prey put on one of the better displays of finning off an angler that I have ever seen. I can safely tell you that as brown trout go this was close to the fish of a lifetime or at least a season. Not once, not twice but three times this brown came out of the water still stinging from the foam hopper firmly planted and visible in the corner of his mouth. Each of those three times he came out of the water completely and in a grace usually only seen in a tarpon, tail walked across the pool until close to where it tailed out. He then disappeared into the overhanging bank covered with willows on the far side, returning to once again resume his obvious role as master of his own domain. While his 'walks' on the water were brief he proudly displayed a tail that was easily as wide as my hand with my fingers spread. I would guess 25 inches as his size and that would be conservative. Once it was over there was silence. Wait? Now! You choose to not chat away on your phone? I stood stunned both hands on the stern of the

boat hunched over slowly banging my forehead on the back of my drift boat. If ever there would have been magnificent fish porn that would have been it ... The water was tight all he had to do was hold him and I could have pounced on that fish with my net like a bear readying itself for a feast. The image of happy angler, good lighting for the photo and classic western water background flashed through my mind but instead the reality was a big plate O' nuttin'. Not possibly, not maybe, not could be, but definitely this river hates me!

But no not really, the river didn't hate me. I had put the pieces of the puzzle together and found that fish just like I should have. And the river and the Trout Gods schooled us. We were reminded that the river flows downstream whether you are paying attention or not, and the fish don't care.

I've held that trout in my mind for a while now. It's a memory that helps focus my time on the water. I've come to understand and accept that life flows like a trout stream and we are only as irreplaceable as the space left behind after we step from the water.

Once the ice and snow breaks and you head out to that lush spring creek or late summer western river you've waited all winter to visit, take a break from the rest of the world. Do yourself the kindness and give the waters some respect. Turn your phone off, tune out the rest of the world and plug in to a different connection.



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A photograph of a rainbow trout swimming in water, with its body reflecting light and creating a colorful shimmer.

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MNTU CHAPTER NEWS

Gitche Gumee Chapter

There are multiple chapter meetings coming up. Here's a short list, we hope to see you there!

SE MN Winter Fishing Roundup

Learn all about fishing SE Minnesota, where the fish are, what watersheds to target and what flies will bring the trout to hand from a variety of sources. The meeting will begin at 7 PM at Hartley Nature Center in Duluth on February 13th.

Coaster Brook Trout & North Shore DNR Update Meeting

The chapter is excited to announce that we again will be partnering with the Arrowhead Fly Fishers to host a joint meeting at the Clyde Iron Works in Duluth on Tuesday, March 18th. A social meeting will start at 6 PM and the presentation will begin at 7 PM. Open indoor flycasting is available so bring your rod. Dinner can be ordered. Bring your friends



CONSTRUCTION WORK IN ACTION ON THE SUCKER RIVER

and learn the latest information from MN DNR fisheries.

State of the Steelhead and Annual Chapter Meeting

The chapter will host its annual state of the steelhead meeting on April 10th at 7 PM at Hartley Nature Center in Duluth. Come down to discuss the steelhead run, the annual rainbow trout report and learn what rivers are running and where the fishing is hot. Bring your friends and hang out at our last formal meeting of the season before the habitat improvement season begins. The chapter will also hold board elections and update its bylaws.

A spring tree planting is scheduled for Saturday, May 17th beginning at 9AM. Planting will take place on the Sucker River at our habitat improvement locations where we worked last season, starting at the Ryan Road bridge. Contact Carl Haensel for more information and to help plant trees. Other tree planting dates and mid-summer habitat improvement information will come out in the next newsletter and via email.

Carl Haensel

Hiawatha Chapter

Numerous habitat projects are moving forward and the chapter has many irons in the fire. Active projects include more work on Pine Creek near Rushford, Camp Creek near Preston, Blagsvedt Creek near Amherst, Mill Creek near Chatfield, Cold Spring Brook near Zumbro Falls and East Indian Creek near Weaver. Tree removal is underway on East Indian Creek and in-stream work will begin this spring. Volunteers are vital to our many projects and are always needed. Contact the chapter if you would like to get involved.

Projects in the design stage include a section of Pine Creek that will include a significant re-meander to restore a straightened channel. Work will be finished on Cold Spring Brook, including a new section which the DNR regularly monitors. Later work on the lower segment of Cold Spring Brook will be coordinated with the Wabasha County's replacement of the county road 86/MN 60 intersection.

habitat) and Lynch Creek (in-stream habitat). The projects undergoing planning or scheduled for construction in 2014 total over six miles.

Hiawatha TU has also started Trout in the Classroom programs in three Southeast Minnesota schools including Mayo High School, Century High School and Stewartville Middle School. The eggs were delivered by the DNR and the kids are very excited and on board with learning the ecology, ecosystems and conservation of trout streams.

Make sure to attend the 2014 Hiawatha TU annual banquet. It will be held April 5th at the Rochester Convention Center near the Rochester Airport. Doors open at 6:00 PM. Tickets are \$35.00 in advance or \$50.00 at the door. Auctions, raffles and prizes will be available. Check out the canoe raffle information on page 11 of this newsletter. For more info and tickets go to www.hiawathatu.org

Phil Pankow

Headwaters Chapter

We are continuing work on a cattle crossing project on Kabakona river south of Bemidji. Past bank stabilization and planting efforts have been successful. We are working on a redesigned phase III narrowing down of the actual crossing. The cattle have refused to read the plans and gate design mutually implemented by fisheries and TU volunteers and have been challenging to work with.

The Clearwater River will see another round of improvements this spring and summer according to Tony Standera, Fisheries Specialist Bemidji DNR. TU members will have opportunities for involvement. We'll try to get Tony to the April 8th meeting to explain details.

The Straight River in Park Rapids has

provided great electroshocking results for big Browns. Unfortunately we are monitoring several potential problems; pipeline crossing requests, a water management task force plan, and additional water well requests from the expanding potato industry, etc etc, it never ends.

On a positive note, our chapter membership has increased over 35% last year. We now have over 155 members. I believe one of the key factors in membership spike is the excellent job John Lenczewski, Executive Director and Carl Haensel, Editor of the TU MN newsletter accomplished in producing two statewide hard copy newsletters last summer. Congratulations great work! Also expanded youth programs have added new members.

Headwaters Chapter Meeting Dates

Free fly tying instruction by Jeff Korbel 5:30-8:30 PM at the Garden Grill & Pub, Bemidji

Equipment is available call Bob 218-586-2798 February 13th & 27th

Starting date for our 5th grade fly fishing course is April 4. It will run every Friday through May 9th from 3-5PM at Northern Elementary School. Contact the chapter to volunteer.

April 8th Spring Membership Meeting
Cattails Restaurant, Bemidji
5:30 PM Social
6:00 PM Dinner
7:00 PM Business Mtg
7:30 PM Program
Trout fishing the North Shore Presenter Carl Haensel, Guide, TU Editor, instructor

Don't miss this program, call any with questions or to volunteer.

Bob Wagner

Mid- Minnesota Chapter

Chapter Meeting & Program: "Fishing SE MN Trout Streams"

Following our program we will gather your ideas for future chapter meeting, projects, outings, etc. and pass the torch to new leaders willing to lend a hand. This meeting will serve as our annual meeting.

Wednesday April 9, 2014
5:30 pm - 7:00 pm
Great River Regional Library
St. Cloud, MN
Bremer Community Room 104

Bring a friend, nonmembers are always welcome.

Ken Nodo



BROOK TROUT TAKEN DURING A SURVEY OF COMPLETED HABITAT WORK ON THE SUCKER RIVER NEAR DULUTH

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



GETCONNECTED

Trout Unlimited Banquet **MARCH 8TH 2014**

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Tickets: \$65 Per Person, \$72 After Feb 21st

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Twin Cities Chapter

TCTU had a busy 2013 stream project season. On May 3rd 2013, the area around Hay Creek near Red Wing received 16 inches of heavy wet snow, causing a barn collapse near Hay Creek & putting about 50 full sized trees in the stream plus many on the land on either side of the stream. This was the 9000 foot stretch of Hay Creek that we worked on the summer before. A crew of volunteers from TCTU and the KiapTUWish chapter were able to cut up & remove all of the trees from the creek & many of the others on the banks that spring. We then completed an additional 1200 feet on Hay Creek immediately downstream of the 9000 feet we completed in 2012.

2014 projects:

We have designed an additional 5300 feet of stream re-construction on Hay Creek, downstream of the town of Hay

volunteer opportunities on these projects this spring on the TCTU website.

Looking for some evening entertainment? You can watch a segment that was shown on Ron Schara's MN Bound TV show about the project we did on the Vermillion River in Dakota County in 2012. Go to his website & look for episode #673 (televised September 22, 2013). It's short but was good exposure for TCTU and you can see your favorite TCTU personalities.

Volunteers are needed to help man the booth at the Great Waters Flyfishing Expo. Spend a day connecting with other anglers and help answer questions about TCTU.

Call Tony Nelson at 952-486-2282 or via e-mail



TCTU TREE REMOVAL FROM HAY CREEK AFTER THE STORM

Creek, to be done this season. Planning continues for about a mile of stream work on Trout Brook in the Miesville Ravine Park which is near Cannon Falls and another mile on Rice Creek, which is south of Northfield. We will post schedules for

Tony@1igprint.com to volunteer or get involved with any of the opportunities listed above.

Tony Nelson

Win-Cres Chapter

The chapter recently held a winter meeting on Garvin Brook at the high railroad trestle at the top end of the stretch slated to be worked on this year. Topics widely ranged and included garlic mustard and other invasive plants, tentative scheduling of this year's work, reporting of monitoring, and including the Oevering stretch in place of the headwaters stretch in our habitat improvement schedule of approved projects.

The chapter is planning a "Trout Day" in late May on Pickwick Creek at Bruce Harem's farm. Contact the chapter to get involved in the planning. We will participate in Take A Kid Fishing the first weekend in June at Whitewater State Park. Volunteers are needed and contact information is below. Instream work on Garvin Brook will begin in earnest this summer.



A MEETING OF THE MINDS ON GARVIN BROOK. IT TAKES MANY PARTNERS TO MAKE A TU PROJECT. FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: TOM STEVENS (WIN-CRES), STEVE KLOTZ (DNR FISHERIES), MELISSA PETERSON (DNR FISHERIES), JOHN LENCZEWSKI (MNTU), JOE LEPLEY (WIN-CRES PRES.), JIM CLARK (WIN-CRES), BRUCE HAREM (WIN-CRES), AND DR. TOBY DOGWILER (WSU). PHOTO BY MARK REISSETTER (WIN-CRES)

Want to volunteer or help out on a project? Mike Trok can be reached at (651) 245-2923 or by e-mail at mwtrok@riverlandcom.net. Visit the chapter web site at www.wincrestu.org for more information

Joe Lepley

As a means of continuing the operation of the chapter I have asked Kathy Krook to fill in as Secretary/Treasurer.

As far as the Matuska's Creek project goes we have gained permit approval and have selected a contractor, New Sight Landscape & Design. We hope to begin reconstruction as soon as allowable in the spring.

Rod Prusi

Lewiston Area Trout Guides



Contact Guide
J. Mark Reisetter

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A RAINBOW TROUT FROM THE WHITEWATER RIVER IN JANUARY 2014
CONNECT ONLINE TO LEARN THE LATEST ABOUT YOUR FAVORITE STREAM
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REELING IT IN

Of Trout, Water and People ...

By Corky McHandle

Now that we're neck deep in a good old-fashioned Minnesota winter, a serious case of the shack-nasties has set in and the only escape seems to be reminiscing about warmer days, hatches and big rising fish. Just like many of us these days I am 'connected' to the world, complete with laptop, desktop, tablet and smart phone. Well at least it's smarter than I am. Seems like with rare exception our lives are barely our own anymore. Now that Dick Tracy style watches are soon to be the norm, what's next? As I roam the 'net looking at fishing blogs and tall tails of trout I can't help but think about the price this super-fast instant world of megainformation costs us.

A while back the river hand-delivered me a whopper of a honest lesson on what has become our obsessive-compulsive addiction to technology. It was one of those summers you might remember when half the West was on fire, rain was sparse and some days you could fry an egg on a rock so fast you didn't have time to scramble it. Low water and river closures had fish struggling to keep it together just as much as anglers were struggling to find them. Now being super smart and connected to the information super highway my partner in crime that day and myself decided we were more intelligent than the average trout and would float the river late in the day when things were cooling off.

Now all day long this fella was on and off his cell phone. "Business ya know", he would say, "Things are really 'popping' it's a wonder I got to go West at all". Ok, I thought, oh well, there's just the two of us in the boat and soon enough on the river there'd be no signal (heh, heh, heh, evil angler laugh). Well, we got to the ramp, his phone rings and he takes the call. We're rigged and ready to float and I'm being told to just hang on, this is important. Oh well, as soon as we're on the river there'll be no signal ('nuther evil angler laugh). At last we push off into the river all by ourselves. No other boats! Oh Boy! We're gonna kill 'em today! Twenty minutes later the phone rings. Really? I mean really? No rising fish and now this? Especially where there should be no signal? This river hates me.

Fifteen more minutes on the phone. Blah, Blah, yack, yack ... sorry, but this is super important. Uh huh. Another forty minutes of fishing go by, we turn a fish or two but hook nothing. "Where are all the fish?" My pard asks as the phone rings again. "Arrghhh" I think, and in more of a Charlie Brown voice than a pirate. Yet another twenty minutes or so of fishing time wasted while I sit at the oars with seemingly nice looking water drifting by. "Look, I want to be polite but you really are going to have to decide if you want to fish or talk on the phone! Conditions are less than optimal and everyone has been having a helluva time boating fish. If you want to catch anything you're going to have to focus on your fishing and give work a rest for a few hours." "Ok"

He says, "I know you're right so let's get at it!" Now you're talking! So what happens next? No, the phone didn't ring but we go almost two hours and nuthin' not even a rise. I'm starting to think maybe I should have left well enough alone and let him talk on the phone. At least then I'd have a reasonable excuse. This river must truly hate me.

A couple more hours go by and then the grumbling starts. Not that we were skunked. We did manage a couple of small fish and one fair sized but pitifully stressed rainbow with scarred lips. Not a bad fish but not up to the river's reputation and it took a bit to properly revive that fish. So now I am starting to get a bit nervous, thinking "What am I doing wrong?" As much as I would have loved to blame the cell phone at this stage it was all on me. "Did I come all the way out on my first trip west for this?" "No, no", I comforted him, "The day is starting to fade and we're about to float into some really good 'Hopper Water', let me switch you up with a hopper dropper rig and just be a bit more patient" Over the next three quarters of an hour he gets several hits and misses and we boat a couple of 'ok' fish. "You know I was reading about this river on the internet before I got on my flight and it just seems we should be seeing more activity". My inner voice was trying to decide whether to fall back on the old reliable, "You should have been here last week" or "Well why don't you pull your phone back out, get online and ask it where the fish are?" instead I say nothing. "Ok, there are some side channels up ahead and with the drought the water is a bit thin so most of the guides don't float them and I will have to get out in several places and walk the boat through but you stay in and keep fishing and remember to cast straight out the boat so the fish are seeing your fly before the boat or if you can angle that cast and hit it right up on the bank". Dang I sounded all professional.

Floating along we rounded the bend and there on river right was the opening to the channel. Phone fishing buddy got all excited and started casting faster and getting his second wind. He was up for it! "Ok, ok slow down and try to get as long a drift with that fly as possible. The only time you catch fish is when your fly is on the water." Dang, my guidish vernacular was now in tip top form! So like Huck Finn and Jim we headed into the backwaters, easing our way away from the main river. Before long we get into that skinny, skinny water I mentioned. "Ok, hang on I am going to get out and wade and walk the boat through this, see that bend up ahead?". "Ya, ya I see it." What I was pointing to was one of those classic Out West fast riffles gliding into a bend surrounded by willows on one side and an open meadow on the other. A place where the water bounces and then runs down into not quite a pool but enough

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