

# TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - June 2021



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**Artist Profile: Bob White**  
Family Traditions on Rush Creek  
Tying the Gussied-Up Lightning Bug  
Getting Started Pink Salmon Fishing  
New Garvin Brook Access  
2021 Photo Contest Winners

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# EDITOR'S ANGLE

## WILD TROUT

By Jade Thomason, Editor

**F**lowing through the valleys and glens of the southeast and the forests of the northern half of the state, we are fortunate in Minnesota to have a wealth of streams filled with trout. Depending on how you account and measure them, over 2,500 miles of trout water course through the North Star State. Tiny trickles seep from springs along limestone cliffs, and large brawling rivers hold trophy brookies sharing their home with walleyes, smallmouth bass and northern pike.

These trout streams, diverse as they are, share one thing in common: They hold wild trout. The fact that these trout, mostly native brook trout and wild browns, persist in the face of climate change, development, and threats from agriculture, forestry practices and mining is remarkable. Some trout streams are robust, with ample trout to spare, even enough to take home for a meal. Others are on the edge, with wild trout hanging in the

balance, as stream temperatures creep upward toward lethal levels approaching 78 degrees F in the late summer. In others, turbidity and sedimentation affects spawning success, leaving few progeny to populate the water and grow to create the next generation. In all of them our wild trout should be cherished.

The resiliency of our wild fish has allowed for anglers like you to head out into the field and visit hundreds of places around the state, some of which are highlighted by the winners of our annual photography contest. Check out the photos beginning on page 7. Thanks to everyone who entered and spread the word about the contest.

Read about the impact that a single trout stream, Rush Creek, has had on generations of anglers and landowners deep in the Minnesota Driftless. Dusty Hoffman recounts his encounters with people tied to the streams and the land they flow



through on page 14.

I hope that you're all fortunate enough to have ample opportunities to get out on the water this summer to fish and explore Minnesota. Enjoy your time on the water and cherish our wild trout.



KENDRA READER WITH A BROWN TROUT FROM A GOODHUE HIGH FISHING CLUB OUTING THIS SPRING.

### ON THE COVER

August "Auggie" Richards fishes Badger Creek in Houston County. Photo by her father, Paul Richards, Winona, MN. Check out the rest of the 2021 Photo Contest winners on pages 7 to 9.

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SEVEN YEAR-OLD GRETA ADAMS WITH A 28.5-INCH NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD. SHE CASTS, HOOKS AND LANDS FISH ON HER OWN WITH AN 11.5-FOOT SWITCH ROD.

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## GOOD TREES AND NOT SO GOOD TREES

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

Anglers this summer may encounter two very different looking stream habitat projects involving tree work. The first makes intuitive sense, while the second may cause some head scratching unless one understands the different setting and purpose.

In northern Minnesota, healthy trout streams depend upon healthy forests. Most northern trout streams have very little groundwater and instead rely upon forest canopy to shade and cool the water. The roots of native trees secure the soil and their branches deliver inputs of leaves and needles for the aquatic insects that have evolved in these forested watersheds. Here we plant long-lived tree species to provide shade and future sources of large woody cover habitat. Most people quickly see the purpose and value of restoring healthy riparian forests in the forested north.

The ecological setting in southeast Minnesota is very different and requires a different approach. The area is filled with cold, spring-fed streams. A century and a half of intensive farming and grazing transformed valleys and created disturbed conditions that enabled invasive

trees to take over. Many stream corridors are now choked by shallow-rooted, invasive trees which do a poor job of holding together streambanks. And they actually limit macroinvertebrate (food) production and trout abundance in the streams.

Along these cold spring creeks we selectively harvest invasive buckthorn, honeysuckle, and boxelder to encourage the growth of grasses, forbes and native hardwoods, all of which do a better job of preventing bank slumping and erosion. In addition, the increased sunlight reaching the streams will drive the aquatic food chain. Here in the south, aquatic insects are dominated by grazers rather than shredders and it is important for sunlight to actually hit the bottom of the stream bed. This benefits numerous aquatic and riparian species, not just trout.

I have overheard a few misinformed people suggest that Trout Unlimited is removing trees merely for the purpose of making fishing easier. Sorry folks, but removing casting obstructions is not one of our goals in doing this work. Our job is to improve the function and



productivity of the aquatic community and increase habitat. Sometimes habitat work makes casting easier, other times it requires anglers to be more precise and approach more carefully from different angles.

I hope you fish frequently this summer. Let us know how you do on some of the many miles of improved habitat.

Tight lines!



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## MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

### STRATEGIC PLANNING

By Brent Notbohm, Minnesota Council of TU Chair

A fellow angler paid me a visit this spring while I was fly fishing one of my favorite North Shore steelhead rivers. Big and bald, his fishing technique was as effortless as it was effective. He just swooped in, caught a nice steelhead and sailed on down the canyon with his prized catch, as I stood there, mouth agape, having struggled for hours to hook a solitary fish. Over the next week or so he paid me two more visits while I fished that river; both times harvesting another nice chromer while completely ignoring the sign that declares all wild steelhead to be immediately released.

My new fishing buddy was a bald eagle, of course, and I had several thoughts after witnessing his angling prowess. The first was that of a true North Shore steelhead fanatic—I wondered if we could somehow convince bald eagles to only eat suckers. Coming to my senses, I then reflected more deeply on the importance of our work with MNTU. The fish we so enjoy pursuing, like most everything in nature, are vulnerable simply because they exist in the natural world. Predators eat prey; it doesn't get any more natural than that. However, the negative impact of human beings—climate change, air and water pollution, the overharvesting of fish, poor agricultural or logging practices that degrade watersheds, to list a few examples—threaten the existence of fish in addition to what is already a brutal Darwinian world for them. An obvious point, perhaps, but one worth remembering as we contemplate the

future of MNTU.

As many of you know, the MNTU Board of Directors is in the midst of formulating a new five-year strategic plan. I shared the basic parameters of the plan with you in the last newsletter. After numerous conversations with chapter members and leaders, I wish to convey a basic summary of how the plan aligns with TU's mission. Very simply, the first three goals in the plan mirror the mission of TU:

**Protect = Advocacy in Goal #1:** Advocate for legislation, policies, regulations, funding, and judicial outcomes that protect and conserve Minnesota's coldwater ecosystems and their surrounding environment.

**Restore = Habitat Work in Goal #2:** Work with government entities and conservation partners to restore, reconnect, and sustain Minnesota's coldwater lakes, streams, and watersheds.

**Sustain = Education and Outreach in Goal #3:** Foster public support for Minnesota's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds through the education of youth, families, and the public.

To achieve the first three goals, we need to improve our communication and organizational infrastructure, which comprises the final two goals:

**Goal #4:** Effectively communicate with and engage members and the public to



foster support for the mission and work of MNTU.

**Goal #5:** Improve and expand the organizational capacity and sustainability of MNTU so that it can better fulfill its mission, accomplish its goals, and support its chapters and members.

The conversations I've had with MNTU members and leaders over the last several months have been truly engaging and illuminating. A special thanks to all of you who have taken the time to share your ideas and feedback. We welcome additional input from chapter members and leaders around the state. Continue reading further for some additional thoughts that have emerged as part of the ongoing dialog concerning the strategic plan:

*Continued on page 16*

[www.mntu.org](http://www.mntu.org)

# BOB WHITE

## AN ARTIST PROFILE

By Ben Nelson • Photos by Kelley DeSmit

The next time you're out on the North Branch of the Whitewater or the Split Rock, take a look around. Notice the ages of your fellow fishermen. Most will be in their fifties or sixties. There will also be the twenty-something crowd. You won't see as many guys in their thirties and early forties. Where are they? Hopefully they are inflating balloons for a three-year-old's birthday party. Maybe they're teaching someone how to ride a bike without training wheels. More often, unfortunately, they are in a Zoom meeting with the regional director, or stuck in a cubical staring at quarterly reports. If they get a moment of respite, they will loosen their neck ties and think about fishing. They'll go to the internet and look for an escape. And if they're lucky, they'll find Bob White.

It isn't hard to do. For over thirty years Bob White has been creating art that captures the essence of the outdoors. His work gives us a glimpse of hardwoods in soft autumn light while we're surrounded by concrete under flickering fluorescents. We can change diapers and fund 401Ks, dream about retirement and regret the season we're missing now. We can do what we need to do. Bob's work is there to help.

In an essay titled "Reflections on a Season not Hunted" Bob writes about missing a waterfowl season. Seven years prior, Bob had gutted the second floor of the home he and his wife Lisa share, preparing a nursery for the baby they were expecting. That baby, their daughter Tommy, was now six years old and still sleeping on the futon in Bob and Lisa's bedroom. The second floor was unfinished. Bob was needed at home. He sacrificed the season. Later, he wrote, "Just as we sometimes take our loved ones for granted, forgetting the small things about them that are unique and special to us, I found that not hunting for a season inspired me to reflect upon what I love most about spending time in the marsh." Like he does on canvas, Bob slows us down and reminds us of the beauty in sports. "I didn't realize how much I cherished the slow eventual greying of dawn... the smell of wet wool, a wet dog, and pipe tobacco... the quiet sound of falling snow on still evenings." And later, "I realized that the most poignant stories about hunting aren't written during the heart of the season, but after it's end... just as the truest love poems are composed in the absence of a lover."

Bob and Lisa White live in a well-kept old house on a quiet street above the St. Croix River. I arrived there on a cold March morning. Bob had arranged two chairs six feet apart on the back patio. One was in the shadow of the house. Bob offered me the chair in the sun. Lisa brought me a warm cup of coffee. Tommy, now seventeen years old, was in the backyard giggling at Reuben, a two month-old flat coat retriever. Reuben tripped over his leash and stumbled on what was left of the snow. Quill, a three year-old golden retriever pranced around the yard holding



HAZY DAY IN THE DRIFTLESS. 36 X 30 INCHES. OIL ON CANVAS.

both a rope toy and a ball in his mouth. He wagged his tail and put his nose in my lap.

Bob wears a ball cap and down jacket, a thin grey beard and round glasses. He has a lighthearted way about him. He smiles a little, like something funny is about to happen. He'll answer one question by shrugging his shoulders, raising his eyebrows, laughing, and saying

"Why not?" Another response will be sheer storytelling, engaging and hilarious. Bob stops during one answer, looks into the pines above us and exclaims, "That's her! I think that's her!" Rocket was an orphaned squirrel kitten that Lisa took in and bottle fed every four hours. "Rocket became Rockette when she was old enough to tell. Eventually, she began spending nights out in the wild. For a few months, she'd come to visit us,

scampering down a tree to run around on our shoulders, jumping back to the tree, then back on us. Every once in a while, a squirrel seems to be friendlier, less frightened than the others. We like to believe it's her."

Bob has arrived at a position in life where his interview answers can include, "If you'd asked me what I'd wanted to be doing when I was 62, I'd say what I'm



BOB WHITE: PAINTER, WRITER, DOG HUGGER.

doing now.” And, “What’s really fun for us: I’ll look up and ask Lisa, ‘Is today Wednesday?’” And, “I’ll never be able to retire. But this is what I want to do in retirement.” Emerging Minnesota fly fishing artists when asked about their long-term goals say, “Well... I want to be like Bob White.” Bob White is in a good place. And if you ask him how he got here, he’ll shake his head and say, “It’s a long and winding road. I didn’t have a plan.”

Bob grew up outdoors: hunting, fishing and trapping. “I always had my nose in an outdoor magazine,” he recalls. “At that time the photos were kind of grainy. It was the artwork that captured my mind. I grew up wanting to be that guy. In high school I studied art. I had one foot in athletics, one in the art department. I always thought I’d have a career in the arts, but since I like to eat on a regular basis I got a degree in delinquency and youth development.”

Bob’s path brought him to Minneapolis, 1984. He had been loitering around Bright Waters Fly Shop long enough to raise suspicion. “Tom Helgeson thought I was trying to shoplift something. ‘Actually’, I said, ‘I was wondering if you needed some help.’”

“Look around.” Tom said, gesturing over an empty shop. “Does it look like I need help?”

Bob had been working as a family counselor in Minneapolis for two years. “My only conversations were about problems. When I’d talk with my coworkers, those conversations were about problems too.”

Bob did find a second job working at Burger Brothers Sporting Goods in South Minneapolis. “It was just really cool to be around those people. We’d talk about what was happening on the Kinni. What do you think of that new graphite rod? One guy had been a fishing guide. He’d regale us with stories of Alaska.”

On a particularly bad day at the therapy office, Bob needed to restrain a combative kid on hallucinogens. “I had been a wrestler. This was my hardest twenty-minute wrestling match. The police came. I was soaking wet. I got the name

and number of the lodge in Alaska and put together a completely fictitious resume. I got to Alaska never having run an outboard motor.”

“I was fortunate to have an old guide, Rusty, take me under his wing,” Bob explains. “Over that first season Rusty shared a decade’s worth of hard earned and useful knowledge. None of which had anything to do with catching fish. “What about the fishing?” I asked him once.”

“You wouldn’t be here if you couldn’t catch fish,” Rusty responded. “You’ll figure out that part on your own. Most days it’s the easiest thing about the job.”

After the fishing season Bob moved home to Belleville, Illinois. “I worked on a tug boat building tow; four twelve-hour days on, four days off. I began painting again on my days off.”

The next summer Bob brought his paintings with him to Alaska. Once a week he’d show his art at the lodge. It sold out. Bob suspects that these early sales were a bit of charity but the proceeds got him through the winter. He fell into a cycle of guiding Alaska in the summer, painting in the fall, guiding Argentina in the winter, and painting in the spring.

Bob and Lisa worked together at the lodge in Alaska. They were married there, by the lodge owner, on July 21, 1995.

Bob and Lisa still work together today. Bob is fond of saying, “I spend my days pushing paint and words around on paper. Lisa figures out how to pay the bills with the mess I made.” This isn’t completely figurative. “Lisa is the brains of the business. She manages the accounts receivable and payable, accounting, taxes, inventory, shipping and receiving, website management, newsletter design, social media releases, and sporting travel. And somehow, with all of that, she still manages our home, nurtures and guides our children, loves two dogs... and raises the occasional squirrel.”

Bob’s first magazine assignment was to illustrate John Gierach’s 1988 essay titled “East Big Fish” in Fly Rod and Reel Magazine. “After Lee Wulff’s tragic



BOB WHITE HAS BEEN CALLED THE REAL DEAL. HIS ART AS WELL AS HIS CHARACTER ARE INDEED GENUINE.

death in April of 1991, the editors at Rod & Reel asked John to write the magazine’s closing column, and he suggested that I illustrate his work,” Bob recalls. “Our first regular column together, ‘The Sporting Life,’ was published in March of 1992.” Since then, White and Gierach have published more than 150 pieces together. “John likes to say we retired five editors at Fly Rod and Reel.” Now Bob’s artwork and John’s writing arrive in your mailbox as the “Confluence” feature in Trout Unlimited’s TROUT magazine.

“I got lucky,” Bob says. But he’s not fooling anyone. We all know that talent,

success and ultimately contentment like his aren’t serendipitous. And White will admit, “I’ve always been pretty tenacious about what I do. If I were to give anybody advice, you’ve got to do the work. Have fun with it. If you’re fun people will want to be around you. You need to be willing to take chances. You may need to reinvent yourself. Multiple times maybe.”

“Painting or writing, when my best work happens, I’m just a conduit. The most important thing I can do is stay out of the way. The real magic happens when I step away from the process. I become unimportant. My best work, it’s all



AUTUMN REFLECTED. 50 X 22 INCHES. OIL ON CANVAS.



WHITE'S STUDIO IS LOFTED ABOVE THE GARAGE, MOOSE ANTLERS OUTSIDE, POT BELLIED STOVE INSIDE, THIS IS WHERE THE MAGIC HAPPENS.

about the painting, less about me.”

“I believe that art is successful when it evokes sensory responses beyond just the visual. If the viewer feels the welcome warmth of the sun burning through a cold morning mist, hears the sound of water tumbling over rocks or snow falling, smells the ripeness of a spring day, or the decay of an autumn dusk... then I’ve gotten something right. It’s important to me that my expression be felt (as well as seen) as genuine.”

“I find nothing more interesting or influential than serpentine reflected light going off into the distance. If I’m out fishing I find myself looking at water, weather, light, shadows. I’m actually kind of mixing colors in my mind. I’ll look at a hillside, ‘That’s yellow ochre, and burnt umber. Look at those lines.’ Consequently, I’m doing that as much as I’m fishing. I’m not as deadly a predator as I used to be. And I’m OK with that. When I do catch fish I’m more interested in its wetness and reflected color.”

“These are snapshots of a moment, light reflected on water through a matrix of trees. It’s just a second. It’s going to change. It’s a record of change. I’ve found I’m more attracted to reflected light at dusk. It’s transitory. Night is coming. It’s nostalgic, and not in a wallowing end of life sense.”

“It’s all about relationships. Not just relationships between people. It’s about the importance of that fish to that person. The relationship between the dog and the person. It’s about my relationship with the land, the light, the water. I paint so that I won’t forget those moments.”

“I used to try not to lose the drawing,” Bob says. He would

take care to stay inside the lines and follow the map he’d drawn. Now Bob allows himself to veer off course. “I know it’s somewhere to the north. I need to stay on this side of the road. If I just walk, the painting will get to where it needs to be.”

Stackpole Books recently published *The Classic Sporting Art of Bob White*. It is a collection of over 200 images of Bob’s

finest work. It is probably classified as a coffee table book but could also be an office shelf book. Take it off the shelf after a phone call with an upset client, or when you lose a percentage of market share. Let Bob remind you of that fish from last fall. Let him regale you with stories of Alaska. It’s almost like therapy.

To see more of Bob White’s work, visit

his website, [bobwhitestudio.com](http://bobwhitestudio.com).

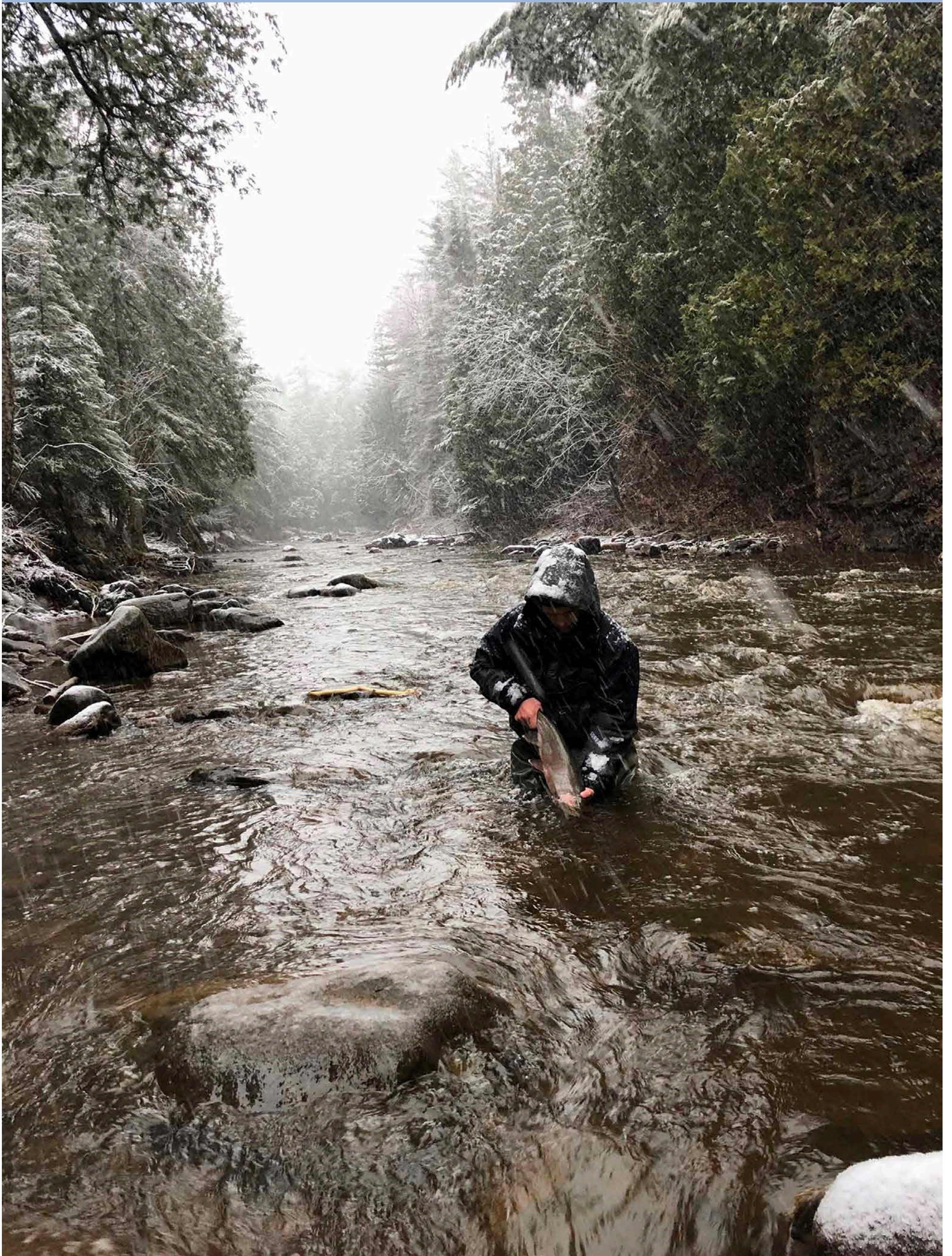
*The Classic Sporting Art of Bob White* can be purchased wherever books are sold. Signed copies are available on his website.

*Editor’s Note: Ben Nelson is a physician in Duluth. He lives there with his wife and three children.*



COLOR AND LIGHT REFLECTED - BROWN TROUT. 30 X 24 INCHES. OIL ON CANVAS.

# MNTU 2021 PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS



1 ST PLACE: STEWART RIVER OF THE NORTH SHORE OF LAKE SUPERIOR. PHOTO BY SETH HOFFMAN

CHECK OUT THE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR THE OTHER WINNING PHOTOS FROM THE 2021 MNTU PHOTO CONTEST. THE TOP THREE WINNERS WILL RECEIVE A BOX OF FLIES READY TO CATCH TROUT, THE OVERALL WINNER ALSO RECEIVES AN OFFICIAL MNTU HAT AND T-SHIRT.



**SECOND PLACE, CHARLY AT THE SOUTH BRANCH OF THE WHITEWATER RIVER. PHOTO BY GARRETT GRABKO.**



**THIRD PLACE, FISHING ON BADGER CREEK IN HOUSTON COUNTY. PHOTO BY PAUL RICHARDS.**





### HONORABLE MENTIONS

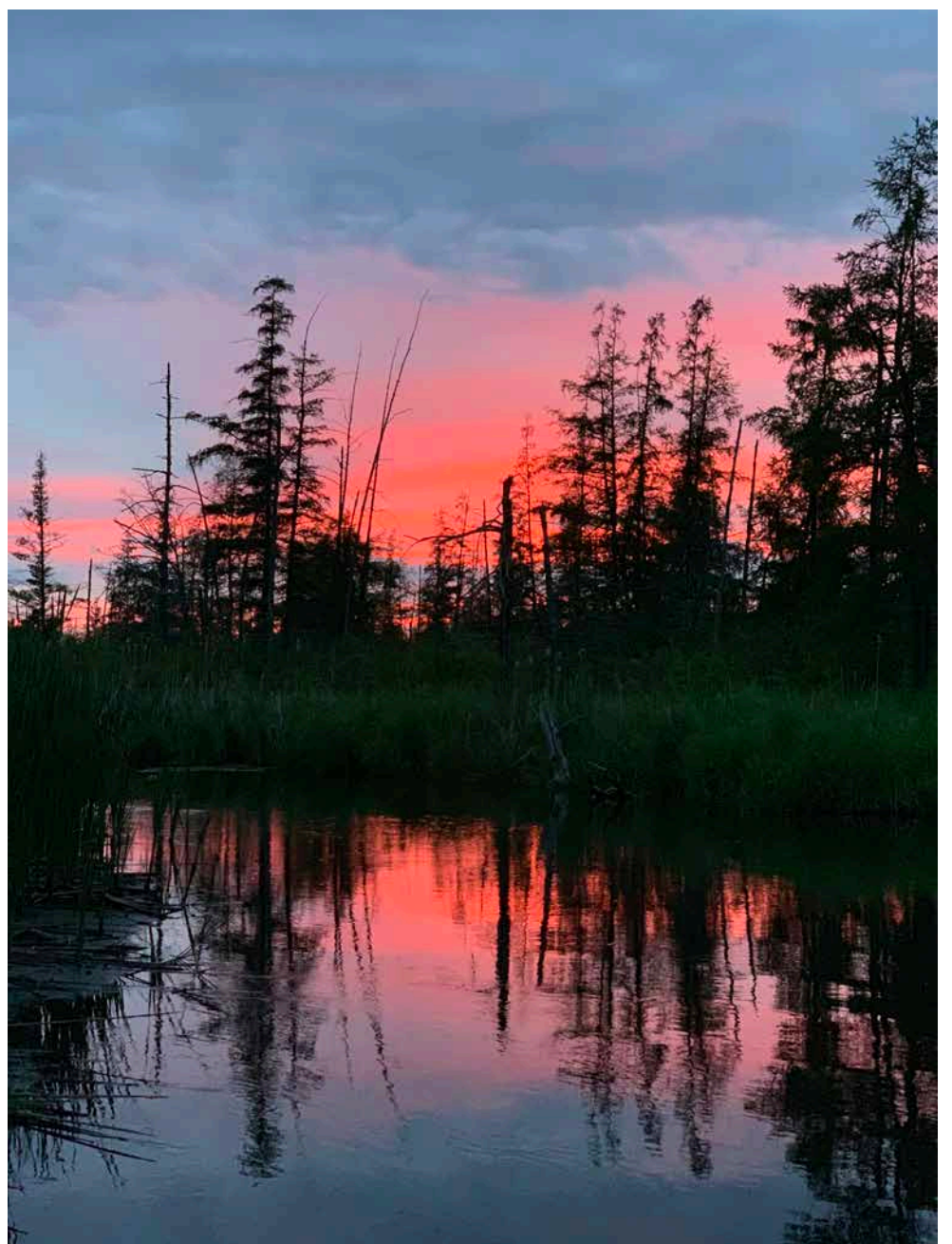
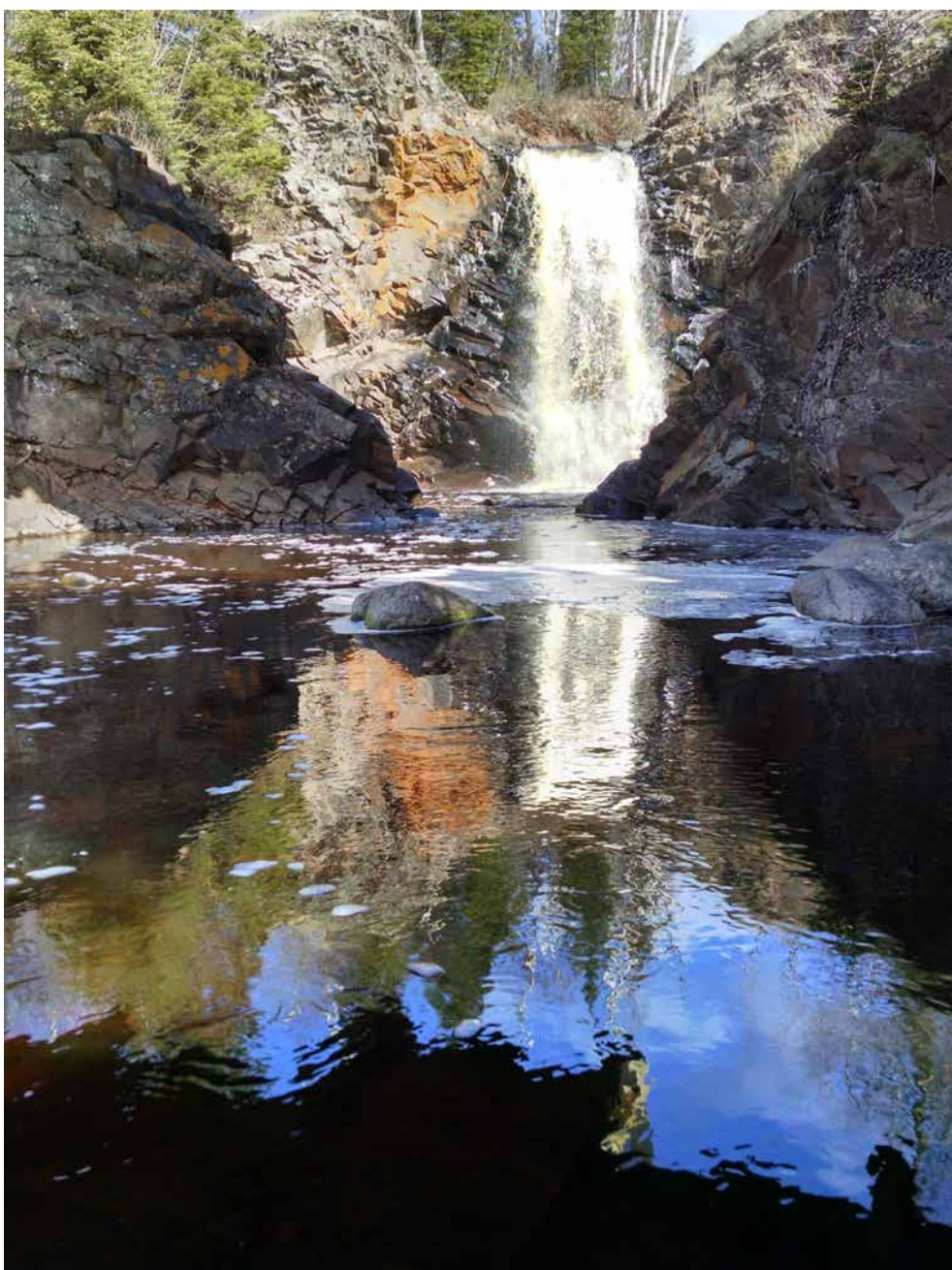
JUST A FEW OF MANY NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD LANDED THIS SPRING. TREVOR RODD PHOTO.

MATT SALKOWSKI WITH A PINK SALMON ON THE DEVIL TRACK RIVER. TOM SALKOWSKI PHOTO.

CROOKED CREEK CALEDONIA TROUT OPENER 2021 . MATT JOHNSON PHOTO

NORTH SHORE GEMS. BOB WAGNER PHOTO.

WAITING FOR HEX HATCH ON THE STRAIGHT RIVER. RON CAYKO PHOTO.





# MNTU EDUCATION UPDATE

JUNE, 2021

By Amber Taylor, MNTU Education Program Supervisor



**T**ROUT in the Classroom is a nationwide program with each state having anywhere from a dozen to hundreds of tanks in schools. It has existed longer in some states than others and there are variations such as species raised, equipment used, and release regulations. Regardless of these differing components, the overall mission of this education program remains the same: to connect youth with their local watersheds through hands-on, experiential learning that establishes a lifelong appreciation for aquatic ecosystems and fosters environmental stewardship.

Fourteen years ago, Bob Frazey, a board member of Headwaters Chapter 642 (HWTU) and passionate advocate for youth education, encouraged the chapter to start a Trout in the Classroom program with a school in their region. He understood the importance of connecting people with the natural world and had been doing so through fly tying and fishing programs with elementary and middle school students for roughly 25 years before becoming the catalyst for TIC finding its way to Minnesota. During his many years as an active HWTU member, Bob's dedication established youth education as a major component of the organization's mission.

In the fall of 2007, with funding from a Neilson Foundation grant, the chapter was able to purchase equipment and supplies to begin operation of the first TIC project in the state. Jeff Wade's classroom at Northern Elementary in Bemidji was home to the first tank. As an avid angler and outdoorsman, he helped start and lead the HWTU supported 5th grade Fly Fishing Program (5FFP) with Bob Wagner, a passionate volunteer also excited about youth education. The program covers fly tying, fly casting, knots, ethics, and live action fly fishing on the banks of the Clearwater River. His classroom was a natural fit for raising trout in the classroom. Bob recently shared the following:

"We are very fortunate to have a teacher like Jeff Wade actively involved in both programs [5FFP and TIC]. He is dedicated to youth and environmental education, and is a real, positive, and motivating individual who loves students and encourages learning. Jeff also provided a fish fry with fresh cut fries for students and volunteers at every fishing outing. It is amazing how much a fifth grader can eat!"

After 18 years of leading the 5FFP with Bob Wagner and 14 years of running TIC in his fifth grade classroom in partnership with the Headwaters chapter, Jeff is retiring this year. Thank you, Mr. Wade for sharing your knowledge and passions with well over a thousand students between the two programs!

The success of TIC in the Bemidji area is also due to the dedication and enthusiasm of HWTU member Steve Young.

When the funding was secured for equipment, Steve quickly

stepped up to lead the program. For 12 years he coordinated the program, scheduling guest speakers and visits to Spire Valley hatchery, implementing classroom activities, and planning spring releases. In addition, he helped with tank set up, fish care, and equipment for teachers each year as more joined. With his help, the program grew to reach nearly 200 students per year between all tanks in the region. In 2019, Steve passed his responsibilities to Jim McCracken, another dedicated volunteer looking to connect youth with fish, fishing, and their local waters.

Bemidji TIC students, in addition to raising trout in their classrooms, take a field trip to a DNR hatchery to learn more about raising trout from the professionals. Tony Standera with the MN-DNR fisheries department regularly visits classrooms to give presentations on trout biology and physiology, watersheds, water quality, aquatic invertebrates, fish management, careers in fisheries, and aquatic invasives. Additional speakers have included staff from the Minnesota Department of Health, the Beltrami Soil and Water Conservation District, and experts on topics such as aquatic insects and phenology. All of these learning ex-



HEADWATERS CHAPTER 642 MEMBER AND VOLUNTEER BOB FRAZEY PROVIDING EXPERT FISHING INSTRUCTION TO A 5TH GRADER AT THE CLEARWATER RIVER. THIS STUDENT WAS ONE OF MANY HE MENTORED OVER THE YEARS THROUGH HIS INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH EDUCATION WITH THE CHAPTER AND LOCAL TEACHERS.



STUDENTS SAMPLE AQUATIC MACROINVERTEBRATES IN WINDMILL CREEK, WHICH FEEDS ONE OF OUR NEW TROUT RELEASE SITES, GRINDSTONE LAKE IN SANDSTONE. THANK YOU TO OSPREY WILDS ELC FOR ALLOWING ACCESS TO THE CREEK AND LAKE FOR OUR STUDENTS TO HAVE A FUN AND HANDS-ON LEARNING EXPERIENCE ON A BEAUTIFUL SPRING DAY.



**AFTER RELEASING THEIR TROUT IN CLEARWATER LAKE NEAR DULUTH, STUDENTS FROM WINTERQUIST ELEMENTARY IN ESKO CELEBRATED WITH GAMES AND NATURE EXPLORATION AT ISLAND LAKE BEACH. THEIR RELEASE WAS FEATURED IN THE PINE JOURNAL AND DULUTH NEWS TRIBUNE.**

periences have and will continue to be supported by the Headwaters chapter both financially and with boots on the ground. Volunteers lead classroom activities, plan releases, and get youth excited about fishing and the outdoors. The chapter is a model for others looking to get members involved in education and provide full circle learning opportunities through programs like TIC and 5FFP.

This year, 48 tanks were set up in schools throughout Minnesota, with 42 of them raising fish successfully to their release this spring. Schools joining in new regions of Minnesota provided opportunities to explore additional DNR-approved release sites around the state. These include Spring Creek near Sleepy Eye, Spruce Creek near Miliona, the Little Cannon River, and Grindstone Lake in Sandstone. With COVID-19 continuing to limit teacher's ability to get students off-site this spring, some still had to do solo or small releases virtually with students. Our team was able to work directly with over 250 MNTIC participants in releases held throughout the state. In addition to releasing the trout, students tested water quality, collected aquatic macroinvertebrates, practiced fly casting, fished, and learned how to kayak.

We partnered with staff from the St. Croix River Association (SCRA) this year since many of our schools are within their watershed. Throughout the winter, they assisted with many of our ice fishing programs, and led snowshoeing hikes and other activities with our TIC students. For releases this spring, their educators taught students about prairie plants and mussels, and led groups out on the water in kayaks. On Earth Day our team conducted a live, virtual presentation about aquatic macroinvertebrates for SCRA's annual Youth Summit. We collected and identified insects, teaching students about using them as a biological indicator for water health. Over 225 students attended the summit and our presentation was a hit!

Another important partnership that began to really grow this spring is with Twin Cities Trout Unlimited. A huge thank you to Bob Luck and Gary Witrock for working with Evan Griggs and I to get the chapter more involved in youth education, both through Trout in the Classroom and fishing skills programs. This spring, Bob, Gary, and a few other volunteers assisted with numerous spring releases at Brown's Creek and one at the Vermillion River. They helped with casting lessons and led water quality testing and discussions with students using the WiseH20 app in order to record their results as a part of the chapter's developing Streamkeepers program. In addition to their support this spring, TCTU is also providing funding for us to lead fishing skills programs with partner organizations throughout the metro area this summer. Numerous chapter members have volunteered not only to assist with these programs, but also lead some of them. Thank you TCTU!

Fifteen years after the first tank was set up in Minnesota, there will be nearly 60 schools participating in all reaches of the state. New outstate schools include Spring Grove, Byron, and Bertha, with seven more scattered throughout the metro. This growth is not only due to the grant funding that has covered much of the program costs for teachers over the last six years, but also the educator and volunteer support they receive throughout the year. During the 2021-2022 school year, MNTU is unable to cover equipment costs, and although this was a barrier for some, ten new schools still plan to join, with teachers working to secure funds from grants, their administration, PTO groups, and/or families. For many teachers, the value of TIC in their classrooms and the authentic learning experiences it provides is an opportunity that is well worth the time and effort involved in fundraising and implementing the program throughout the year. Joe Adams, a seven-year TIC teacher in Bemidji, calls it the single most valu-

able teaching tool he has ever had in his classroom, a sentiment shared by most educators participating in the program.

These tiny trout fascinate and steal the hearts of thousands of students, teachers, and their families each year. They provide a yearlong platform on which teachers can build lessons and curriculum that encompass a vast array of subjects, from science and math, to social studies, art, and history. What is good for trout is ultimately good for us. Life sustaining, in fact. Students participating in this program are future voters, environmental advocates, educators, biologists, researchers, policy makers, and water resource specialists. Programs like TIC help to protect our waters for generations to come.

Contact Amber Taylor, [education@mntu.org](mailto:education@mntu.org), with questions or if you are interested in getting involved with MNTU youth education.



**FROM LEFT TO RIGHT, LONGTIME HEADWATERS CHAPTER 642 VOLUNTEERS GAIL BROOKS, VINCE CAFARO, STEVE YOUNG, AND BOB FRAZEY. AMONG THEIR OTHER VOLUNTEER EFFORTS, BROOKS AND CAFARO HELPED WITH THE CHAPTER'S FLY TYING AND FISHING PROGRAMS FOR MANY YEARS BEGINNING IN THE EARLY 1990s. YOUNG COORDINATED THE TIC PROGRAM FOR BEMIDJI AREA SCHOOLS FOR 12 YEARS.**



TEQUEELYS ARE AN EXCELLENT FLY CHOICE FOR A WIDE RANGE OF SPECIES, INCLUDING THE BROWN TROUT PICTURED ABOVE.

Summer break is finally here! When I was a kid growing up in the city, my favorite thing to do was to fish the streams, ponds, and lakes in my neighborhood. When my parents were at work, I'd hop on my bike with my friends and explore the urban waterways and discover the creatures that called them home. In fact, we would head to the lake three different times a day, and we knew where all the big fish lived. If you find yourself with extra free time this summer, a bike, and some fishing tackle—I'll break down the best ways to find fish near you and everything you need to catch them.

First is having some equipment and tackle, and knowing how to use it. You should have a rod, reel, and good fishing line. A tackle box with different kinds of lures and tools is also good. If you don't have a set up yet, you don't necessarily need to go buy one from the store! Ask around your family or friends, more than likely someone you know has a setup that they aren't using in their garage or basement that they would be willing to let you use. In the event you don't have the equipment and know anyone who does either, you can easily make a rod! Just find a long, flexible stick and some fishing line. Tie the line to the end of the stick, and you're good to go.

There's two common types of spin fishing reels: closed face and open faced. Closed face reels are the kind with a button on the back. Open face reels have a thin wire bail around it that clicks up and down. There are also baitcasting reels. Baitcasters require a lot of practice to get right, so I'd recommend starting out with a closed or open faced spin reel. (I've only used a baitcaster once when I was a kid, and I got a huge "bird's nest" tangle on the first cast and never used it again.)

A fishing pole is pretty simple! They are usually made of graphite or fiberglass, will have large round eyelets to put your line through and a foam or cork section to grip. Some rods are really flexible and sensitive for using light baits and catching smaller fish, others are pretty stiff to throw big heavy lures and to catch bigger fish. If you're using a closed face or a baitcaster reel, it should be held with the reel and pole eyelets facing up. Open face reels and the pole eyelets are held facing down. If you have a fly rod and reel, the reel and rod eyelets face down when you're holding it.

Fishing line is rated by its breaking strength, so if you are trying to catch sunfish or trout two- to six-pound breaking strength is good. For walleye, bass, and

pike I like to use 8- to 15-pound breaking strength lines. Catfish and carp will need a 15- to 30-pound line. Muskies will need a really strong line of 40-plus pounds. There are three types of line for spin fishing: monofilament (mono), fluorocarbon (fluoro), and braided. Mono is the standard line, easy to find, very affordable and works for most situations. Fluoro is very strong, but is sometimes hard to find and can be expensive. Braided line is strong, resistant to toothy fish like walleye, pike, and muskies, but requires specialized knots and a monobase on the reel to attach it. I suggest just using mono to keep things simple if you're just getting into fishing.

Fly fishing uses a different system of line because it's a different style of fishing. In

fly fishing, we use a "weight" system to categorize our lines and rods. A 3 weight line is good for sunfish and small trout. A 5weight is the best all around rod weight and works for trout, small bass, and panfish. An 8 weight is good for big bass, pike, carp, and small muskies. There are four different kinds of line on a fly reel. First is backing, which is essentially a braided fishing line—don't worry too much about your backing. Next is the fly line, which is thick, rubbery, and usually a cool color (this is the important stuff!). The best all around fly line is a weight-forward (thicker at one end than the other) floating line that should match the weight of your rod. So if I am using a 5 weight rod, I would use a weight-forward, 5 weight, floating fly line. Next is a tapered leader, made of mono, which



BE SURE THAT YOU'RE FISHING LEGALLY BY STAYING ON PUBLIC LAND OR FISHING EASEMENTS. YELLOW SIGNS LIKE THIS ONE CAN LET YOU KNOW YOU'RE IN A GOOD SPOT.



**LEFT:** A BOX TO HOLD YOUR FLIES OR SPINNING TACKLE IS USEFUL TO KEEP THINGS ORGANIZED.  
**RIGHT:** OPEN FACED REELS ARE THE MOST VERSATILE OF SPINNING OPTIONS.

connects to the end of your fly line. Lastly, the super thin end of your leader is the tippet, and that is what we tie onto the hook.

Find some sort of tackle box to hold all of your lures and tools. The tools you'll need include a fingernail clipper to cut your line and a needle-nose pliers or forceps to remove hooks from fish and pinch the barb on your hook. If you need to purchase basic tackle, I'd get some bobbers, split shot sinkers, and some Aberdeen hooks. For bait you can use: worms, canned corn, or Powerbait trout nuggets, these work great! If you're fly fishing, have generic flies such as: Hare's Ear nymphs, Woolly Buggers, Elk Hair Caddis, and foam grasshoppers or poppers.

Once you have all the equipment, then you can learn how to cast. Check out YouTube for some great instructional videos on how to cast and set up spin and fly rods. Did you know MNTU has a YouTube channel? Go check it out! When casting, focus on accuracy instead of trying to throw it super far. Most of the fish are closer than you think!

There's fish in most waters in Minnesota. So if there's a park with a pond, lake, or stream near your home—go fish it! Do not fish on someone's private property though. You can fish any creek or river if you access it from a park or bridge and keep your feet wet at all times. Lakes are different, you can only fish a lake from a park, public fishing pier, boat landing or boat. When I was a kid, I only fished places I could bike to and were in parks, so I knew I wouldn't get in trouble.

If you're 16 or older, you'll also need a fishing license! You can buy one from the MN DNR website. It's \$5 for a youth angling license and \$10 for a trout stamp, if you'd like to try for trout. While you're on that website, you should also check out the fishing regulations booklet. It will tell you the laws of fishing, such as fishing seasons (when you can fish for certain species), how many of a certain species you can keep etc. If you aren't sure which bodies of water are good to fish near you, you can also check out the LakeFinder or Recreation Compass on

the DNR website to find out what lakes and access points are near you. The DNR website is: [www.dnr.state.mn.us](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us)

When you get to your fishing spot, it might seem hard to find fish. That's OK, part of the fun of fishing is finding them and figuring out what they want to eat! Just remember—all fish are paranoid and lazy! So I try to find places fish can hide from predators, like weeds, logs, rocks, deep spots, or shade. Fish don't like to work too hard for their food. So cast your line where fish don't have to swim too far to get to it. The best way to get "good luck points" is by picking up trash at your fishing spot, being very gentle while holding fish, and even releasing

the big fish you catch! The fish will thank you and reward you for these actions.

If you have questions, reach out to fishy folks in your community! Visit your local bait or fly shop, talk with friends or relatives who fish for guidance, or reach out to your local TU chapter for mentors who can help you. If you really get hooked on fishing, you can even try starting a fishing club at your school! Find a teacher who likes to fish too, and ask them to help you set up a club, reach out to your local TU or other fishing organization for volunteer support and gear donations, and you could start a whole new community of anglers! That's what I did

in high school, I wasn't into sports or theater so I started a fly fishing club with my geometry teacher. At one point we had 30 kids in the club, we would have volunteers from Trout Unlimited and the Federation of Fly Fishers teach us how to cast and tie flies, then we'd fish on our local lake. That club launched me into my current career of being an outdoor educator and fly fishing guide!

Fishing is such a great summer break activity. Have fun, explore new spots, and ask lots of questions to keep learning more about the fish, their homes, and habits. I hope this info helps you catch many fish, and I can't wait to see you on the water.



**TRY TARGETING CARP IN TWIN CITIES WATERS, THEY FIGHT HARD AND ARE GREAT FUN ON FLY OR SPINNING TACKLE.**

# FAMILY TRADITIONS ON RUSH CREEK

## GENERATIONAL CONNECTIONS

By Dusty Hoffman, MNTU Habitat Project Manager

In life, when asked the question “What’s most important to us?” many of us will put family and happiness at the top of our list. However, being that this article is published in the MNTU newsletter, considering a secondary set of answers directed toward our “most important” passions and hobbies may be useful. It’s likely many of us will include some form of trout fishing at the top of our list. Tying the two lists together, this article allows us the opportunity to hear two different families’ generational connections to Rush Creek. First, the story of a family that annually travels five hours across Minnesota for a week of trout fishing in southeast Minnesota’s spring creeks. Second, a third-generation landowner shares insights on the changes in land ownership, land uses, and overall stream conditions on a section of Rush Creek he has known since his childhood days.

Early this May, while inspecting the work of a past habitat improvement project on Rush Creek, I was privileged to meet a group of anglers fishing between the bridges on County Road 25. After some friendly introductions and interesting discussions, it dawned on me that the conversation we were having was a story that should be shared with others. The Duenow family from Fergus Falls has been taking an annual trout fishing trip down to southeast Minnesota for about 35 years. Brett and Wendy were introduced to the Driftless Area streams by way of their good friend and Rushford, MN resident George Schmeling. Brett and Wendy reminisced with delight about their early experiences, “George would take us all around the area teaching us different streams, fishing with him was like having our own personal guide.”

Josh, Brett and Wendy’s oldest son, was also on this year’s annual trout trip. “Josh was still in diapers the first time he ever fished for trout,” they recalled. They were on the South Branch of the Whitewater River camped out in Lloyd’s Pasture when a cow went wandering by, snagging Josh’s line and walking off with the entire spool of line. Brett, beaming with laughter in his voice chuckled, “We had to drive over to Elba, just so we could buy more fishing line.” Josh made mention of how this year’s trip was initially planned to include his three little girls, but scheduling conflicts with school brought on by the pandemic made it difficult to involve his entire family this year. As they should be, Brett, Wendy, and Josh all gleamed with smiles as they proudly talked about the family’s annual trout fishing tradition they’ve been successfully passing down through the generations.

When asked about their favorite ways to fish trout, Brett responded, “We like to do it all, bait fish, plugs, spinners, fly fishing. We really like to fly fish, that’s something we can’t really do for trout where we’re from. We do have a tiny prairie stream running through some lowlands, but that’s tough fishing, it’s nothing like what we see



WENDY, BRETT AND JOSH DUENOW OF FERGUS FALLS HAVE A 35-YEAR TRADITION OF FISHING THE DRIFTLESS AREA.

down here.” Josh agrees with his dad by adding, “Yeah there’s nothing better than a trout on a fly rod.” Through time, the family has planned their trip during the weekdays to avoid much of the weekend traffic and nearly have the place to themselves. To tell the truth, at one point during the chatting I started to feel bad for cutting into their limited fishing time, but their kind nature and enthusiasm for the experience let me know it was OK.

I couldn’t help but notice Wendy was lugging around a folding camp chair and I eventually had to inquire if she was fishing too. Wendy contentedly replied, “I usually just follow these guys around and like to find a nice little riffle of water where I can sit back in a chair with my book and listen and read, it’s like heaven. I’ll fish sometimes too, but mostly leave it to them and just enjoy being here.” About then, Brett chimed in with the phrase, “This is where we get at peace with the world! If you can’t get at peace with the world coming out here doing this, you’re a very angry elf, that’s all there is to it.” We all laughed in agreement. Brett carried the group from smiles and laughter to head nods of deep appreciation when he stated, “What they do with the easements down here, we have nothing but praise for the landowners that will allow people to go through their property to experience something special like this, it says a lot about those landowners.”

The family likes to seek out a new stream to fish every year to expand their experience, but Rush Creek, Pine Creek, and other streams with habitat improvement draw them back annually. Brett elaborated,

“What we’ve seen with the stream improvement that TU and the DNR has done in this area over the years has been fantastic! We’ve fished this particular section of Rush Creek for about 35 years and it has been a night and day difference from what it once was. It used to be wide shallow water with a sand or muck bottom and way less fish, now we’re looking at prime fishing with beautiful habitat here.”

As our conversation came to a close, I asked the Duenow family if I could get their picture to accompany this article. About then, Wendy kindly prompted Brett to make sure his TU sling pack and hat were properly situated for the picture. They proudly revealed their membership to the Headwaters Chapter of TU for over 10 years, even though it is based over 100 miles from their home. It was incredible to hear how many different conservation organizations Wendy and Brett belonged to, even more impressive though was experiencing their love and commitment for carrying on their annual family trout fishing tradition.

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Rush Creek in Winona County is a well known stream not only for its great fishing, but also for the angler easement access and miles of stream that have received habitat improvement projects. For locals or anglers who have spent considerable amounts of time in Rush Creek’s watershed, the last name Schueler may be familiar. There is even a tributary named Schueler Creek that flows downstream under State Highway 43 into Rush Creek. This May I was able to

meet Zane Jacobson, grandson to Elmer and Margaret “Margie” Schueler, a family that once owned nearly three miles of streambank on Rush Creek. Zane owns a piece of property that received a habitat improvement project completed in 2018. Zane and I crossed paths because a giant tree had recently fallen in the stream and could have become detrimental to habitat structures downstream in the event of high waters.

While the contractor hired by Minnesota Trout Unlimited worked to remove the large tree dropped against the streambank by a flood, Zane with his outgoing and friendly personality drew me into conversation. Ice breaking conversations started with me asking if he fished the stream much, which led to Zane recounting the largest trout he had ever caught: a four-pound, 24-inch brown trout, back when his grandma and grandpa owned the land. Zane pointed just down the hill from his present-day home, “That was the place right there, but it doesn’t look anything today like it did back then. A lot has changed since back then.” The conversation took its course while Zane talked about the creek and how certain flooding events, like the flood of 2007, had changed the creek’s route. In some cases, new channels were formed hundreds of feet from where the old channel once existed.

While describing the location where he caught the largest trout of his lifetime, Zane also discussed the challenges of the steep sandy banks that once towered over that location. He said, “See how my house up there is sitting on a mound different from the rest of that hillside?”



FISHING ALONG RUSH CREEK IN THE EARLY SPRINGTIME.

That's because they needed somewhere to go with all of the dirt and sand they were removing from these banks." I must have given a look of confusion or wonderment, because Zane repostured as he said, "I watched them move dirt for well over a week! There were over 300 truckloads of dirt taken off these banks and moved up there." The question could rise in some people's minds as to the truths of that statement, but if you visit sections of Rush Creek downstream of that habitat improvement project, it will quickly become evident that the high banks around the unimproved sections can easily give anglers the feel of fishing in the trenches of South Dakota's Badlands. "Grandpa used to raise cattle," Zane says, as he goes on to describe the deep-rooted love his grandfather had for fly fishing. He talked about how his grandpa used to fence the cattle a decent distance from the streambanks so they wouldn't erode the banks any worse. Access to get down into the stream channel when Zane was a boy was challenging, he recalled, "It was actually dangerous when I was a kid."

It was extremely evident in talking to Zane that he had a great respect for his grandparents, their land and legacy, and a request he heard his grandfather once made about hoping his land would someday be a park. Zane expresses, "Grandpa was big time into conservation!" The Schueler family once owned roughly 1,200 acres around Rush Creek. Nowadays, the majority of the land is in the ownership of The Nature Conservancy and managed by the DNR as a Wildlife Management Area.

Elmer Schueler was a passionate fly fisher who had an office in the farmhouse containing several mounts of the giant trout he landed over the many years he fished his Rush Creek property. When

I asked Zane if his grandpa ever passed down his passion for fly fishing to anyone else he replied, "Grandpa tried! He gave some of us fly rods for birthdays. I can remember I was 12 years old when grandpa gave me my first fly rod, it never stuck though." Through a passionate stiff grin Zane went on to say, "Grandpa had bad names for people who used spinning and bait casting reels." It sounds like his grandpa was what some would call a fly fishing "purist." Zane and I caught a big laugh before he went on to talk about the mink farm his grandpa ran. For many years the farm was located along county

Road 27, something I recall seeing the remnants of in my early years chasing trout around the Minnesota Driftless. It was an incredible experience to be able to meet a whole-hearted and cheery person like Zane Jacobson, brought on by the random chance of a tree falling into the creek behind his house. Better yet, it's been heartwarming to hear Zane talk about his family and their traditions. Zane is as supportive of seeing others able to trout fish on easements and improved waters as his grandpa likely envisioned when he sold an easement and wished his land would someday be a

park. I asked Zane, "What's it like having an easement in your backyard? Do you ever have challenges with that?" He replied, "I have no complaints about anglers, in fact, it's downright great when every once in a while one of them stops by on their way through and gives thanks for the access." Zane's words are a reminder of what we can all do to give landowners our thanks. Taking the time to appreciate landowners for their participation in easement programs is a great way for us to connect to others, and even learn about their family fishing traditions.



RUSH CREEK IS HOME TO QUALITY TROUT THROUGHOUT ITS LENGTH. STEVE CARLTON, PAST MNTU CHAIR, IS PICTURED HERE WITH A RAINBOW.

# A BLAST FROM THE PAST

## FLIES FROM THE WORLD OF CLASSIC CARS

By Kris Williams

I've spent the last year thinking about the past. I started my fly fishing adventure about nine years ago. Later that same year I started tying my own flies at the Headwater Chapter 642 Community Fly Tying events. Shortly after I started tying flies I received some materials from my father-in-law who used to tie flies in the late '60s. This came as a surprise to his children because they didn't know about this part of his life. I'll admit that many of the materials were not stored properly and the feathers and fur had started to degrade. To be fair, they were about 40 years old at the time. I've used some of his materials but I have purchased so many more. Fast forward to a little over a year ago, my father-in-law passed away and I was in for a surprise.

While his house was being cleaned out I was given more boxes of fishing-related items. They included old fishing reels, rods, tackle, and books, pretty much anything related to fishing. There were things I learned about him after his death that his own children didn't know about. Not only was he into tying flies, but he made price books for the flies that one can assume he sold. He also made rubber jigs, spinnerbaits, and hard baits. But the most interesting items I found were some old fly tying books and promotional pamphlets from Chevrolet with car-based fly tying instructions. At first, I didn't think much of these and just set them aside along with the other books and magazines. About six months later I picked them up and actually looked at them.

There are four booklets in all. I started researching them online to find out more information, such as how many different brochures were made and who the author was. Unfortunately, there is not much information about them or the author of the booklets, Fred W. Rea. I found some information on the Classic



THE AUTHOR'S UNCOMMON PROMOTIONAL CHEVROLET FLY TYING BOOKLETS.

Fly Rod forum related to the author so I posted a message on there. It was a long shot but I thought maybe I would be able to find out if anyone had more information about these booklets.

I really didn't have much hope of an answer since the message I was replying to was almost 18 months old. But within minutes there were replies from people with their own stories of the same booklets and more. One member mentioned that the flies were also listed in a book titled "Perrault's Standard Dictionary of Fishing Flies." I'll have to remember to check if that book is in with the other materials I received.

Another member of the forum looked for a picture of the flies he tied in 1993 from the 1964 booklet. Several people mentioned having two of the booklets, but from what I can tell, I may be the only one who has four of them. Hope-

fully, there are more. One member posted an image of a business card from Fred that included a fly tied by the author. The business card lists Fred's title as "Hobby...Flytier" and he worked for GM as a Budget Supervisor in the Advertising Department. Apparently, in an older post, Fred also included a letter to people who requested one of the booklets. In the letter, he says that his instructions are the basics of tying dry flies, wet flies, nymphs, streamers, and bass bugs, all inspired by various Chevy vehicles. To see these resources, go to [www.classicflyrodforum.com/forum](http://www.classicflyrodforum.com/forum) and search for Fred Rea.

Of course, the story doesn't end there. I couldn't have these treasures and not share them with everyone. I scanned the documents and uploaded the PDF files to our website, [tu642.org](http://tu642.org). If you are interested you can go to our website and look under Recent Posts. There I have all

four of the Chevy Fly brochures that I was fortunate enough to get. Our website had received 56 new website views on those files within 12 hours of my post to the forum. That may not seem like a big deal, but we only average a handful of hits per day. I can only hope that someone might see these brochures and have more insight into them.

I plan to continue to research these brochures and see how many were made. But my next step will be to work my way through trying all of the flies in each brochure and mounting them in a shadowbox for display. The author says that these booklets teach the basics of fly tying. I may be far from that, but I want to tie them simply for nostalgia's sake. But that's a project for colder weather.

*Editor's Note: Kris Williams is the MNTU Headwaters Chapter president in Bemidji.*

## STRATEGIC PLANNING - CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

*Continued from page 3*

We are very fortunate to have so many talented people in our organization, and we need to do a better job of tapping the various interests and abilities of our members from across the state. A key component of the strategic plan will be the creation of infrastructure to provide opportunities for members to get more involved in the specific areas they are most passionate about, such as habitat work, advocacy or education.

MNTU has grown exponentially over the last 10+ years, largely because of the Outdoor Heritage Fund. As a result, we need to professionalize some of our operations. I'm pleased to announce the Board of Directors approved at the April meeting the formation of an Organizational Roadmap Working Group. Their charge is to bring forth recommendations on what kind of profes-

sional personnel are needed so that when the strategic plan is ratified this fall, we can hit the ground running.

The Board of Directors needs to provide more resources for chapter development and involvement. The essence of this organization is its members. People join MNTU because they are united by our mission. We must do all we can to foster an environment of inclusivity and respect. This is essential as we look to recruit and develop the next generation of MNTU leaders.

The forthcoming strategic plan is an ambitious one, no doubt. There will be much work to do to fulfill all of its goals and objectives. But of this I'm certain—we can accomplish so much when we work together. Now if only we could figure out how to convince bald eagles to just eat suckers.



THE CORE OF THE NEW STRATEGIC PLAN IS MNTU'S MISSION STATEMENT: PROTECT, RESTORE AND SUSTAIN MINNESOTA'S COLDWATER FISHERIES AND THEIR WATERSHEDS.





# FLY TYING

## WITH LAUGHING TROUT FLY FISHING

By Paul Johnson



### Gussied-Up Lightning Bug

**M**y Gussied-Up Lightning Bug is a modification of a fly pattern tied by Walter Wiese at Yellowstone County Fly Fishing, his is called the Gussied Lightning Bug Nymph.

I have found that this fly works best starting in the summer and throughout the fall.

It is a pretty straight-forward fly to tie. The trickiest part is to get nice even wraps with the black micro tubing over the slippery red tinsel. I typically will tie this fly on a size 14 scud hook. There are some folks in our Laughing Trout Fly Tying Club that will tie it down to a size 18. For smaller sizes, I would switch out the micro tubing for black wire in a size small.

As always, if you have any questions that I can help you with, please let me know.

Paulwaconia@gmail.com

Materials List	
Hook:	Scud Hook, Size 14-16
Bead:	Gold Tungsten
Thread:	14/0 Red
Tail:	Mayfly Brown Zelon or Coq de Leon Dark-Speckled
Abd:	Holographic Tinsel Red Med
Ribbing:	Micro Tubing Black
Collar:	Superbright Peacock Dubbing
Legs:	Midge Flash Red



**Step 1.**  
Place bead on the hook and insert into tying vise. Start the tying thread behind the bead and form a slightly tapered thread base.



**Step 2.**  
Tie in a length of Zelon. Take care to keep the Zelon directly on top of the hook. Trim the tail to roughly a hook gap in length.



**Step 3.**  
Return the tying thread to the bead. Tie in a length of micro tubing. Pull it tight as you wrap the thread to the tail.



**Step 4.**  
Tie in the red tinsel and wrap back to the tail. Return your tying thread to the bead.



**Step 5.**  
Wrap the tinsel forward to the bead to form a smooth abdomen. Secure with the thread and clip the excess.



**Step 6.**  
Wrap the micro tubing forward with evenly spaced turns up the bead. Secure with the thread and clip the excess.



**Step 7.**  
Form a short dubbing noodle on the thread with the peacock dubbing.



**Step 8.**  
Form a dubbing ball behind the bead. Tie in two lengths of the midge flash with x-wraps to form two legs. Trim the legs to half-way down the abdomen.



**Step 9.** Form another small dubbing noodle on the tying thread and dub directly behind the bead and in front of the legs. Whip finish. Go fish!

**HABITAT HELPERS NEEDED**

We need volunteers to assist with maintenance inspections of completed projects, as well as numerous hands-on tasks on 2021 projects. To volunteer or receive information on opportunities to help with inspections and/or hands-on work, send an email to: [monitor@mntu.org](mailto:monitor@mntu.org) List "inspection" or "habitat help" in the subject line and tell us what type of things or specific streams you might want to help with. Please provide a phone number; we will not use your information for other purposes.



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# WIN-CRES PROVIDES ACCESS TO GARVIN BROOK

By Chuck Shepard

The Win-Cres Chapter has arranged for an additional access site on Garvin Brook, one of the Driftless Region's better trout streams.

Garvin has been the site of major habitat improvement (HI) work in 2014, 2017, and 2018. The work was accomplished through a partnership with MNTU, DNR Fisheries and Forestry, MN DOT, and Win-Cres TU. Funding was provided primarily through the Outdoor Heritage Fund. Nearly two miles of stream have been improved.

The DNR has previously purchased an easement on the stream corridor. As often was past practice, no access easement was purchased. The landowner at the time the stream easement was purchased was comfortable with fishermen walking down his driveway to the stream. The land was sold. The new owner was initially comfortable with the old arrangement. Unfortunately, bad angler behavior caused him to change his mind. An angler drove down his driveway, parked by the stream, and refused to move his vehicle when requested. The NO TRESPASSING sign went up shortly afterward. Most of us would have done the same thing. A similar event occurred on Rush Creek a few years

ago. Access to the lower 0.67 miles of the Garvin HI area became much more difficult.

Win-Cres members became aware of a small parcel of land between Highway 14 and the railroad tracks which could provide legal access to the stream corridor. An arrangement was made for a courtesy walk-in access through this parcel. Once on the stream corridor, anglers are free to move up and down the stream. The downstream end of the easement is at the end of the habitat improvement work, marked by a fence line. Anglers can move upstream through Farmers Community Park.

The access is 2.8 miles west of Stockton, MN, on US Highway 14, near mile marker 248.75. The Fire Call Number is 24325. You can park at highway level (don't block the mailboxes), or drive down the driveway a short distance. There is parking for three cars between the highway and railroad tracks. There is a sign and a mowed path at the lower parking area. Do not cross the railroad tracks, either on foot or by vehicle.

*Editor's Note: Chuck Shepard is the president of the Win-Cres chapter of MN Trout Unlimited.*



A LOSS OF ACCESS ON GARVIN BROOK RESULTED FROM POOR ANGLER BEHAVIOR. WIN-CRES HAS ARRANGED FOR ADDITIONAL ACCESS BETWEEN HIGHWAY 14 AND THE RAILROAD TRACKS NEAR FARMERS COMMUNITY PARK.

## INCLUDING MNTU IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

Any loss in a family is challenging. It's much easier to delay answering uncomfortable questions such as, "What happens to my assets and my loved ones when I or my partner dies?" So it's no surprise that roughly half of Americans don't have a will, and even fewer have an estate plan. While it is a hard subject to discuss, an estate plan goes much further than a will. Not only does it deal with the distribution of assets and legacy wishes, but it may help you and your heirs pay substantially less in taxes, fees, and court costs, as well as benefit the people and causes that you care about.

Including MNTU in your estate plans not only helps to provide for future programmatic and organizational security, it can take many different forms to balance your financial and philanthropic goals. Drafting these documents may seem like a daunting task at first, until you realize all the good that comes from having them. A gift in your will or living trust lets you make a meaningful gift to MNTU with ease and be flexible in your commitment. You can give cash, specific property or a percentage of your estate, with restrictions or without. Because your gift doesn't come to MNTU until after

your lifetime, you can change your mind at any time. To make sure your will accomplishes your goals according to your wishes, we recommend that you obtain the professional counsel of an attorney who specializes in estate planning. We've included specific bequest language below for usage with individual or estate planning.

### Bequest Language

The official bequest language for Minnesota Trout Unlimited is:

### Unrestricted General Legacy:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, the sum of (dollar amount)/ or percentage of (\_\_\_%)/ residue of my estate to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

### Specific:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, my (specific personal property item(s) and/or real property located at \_\_\_\_\_) to be used at the discretion of its governing board."



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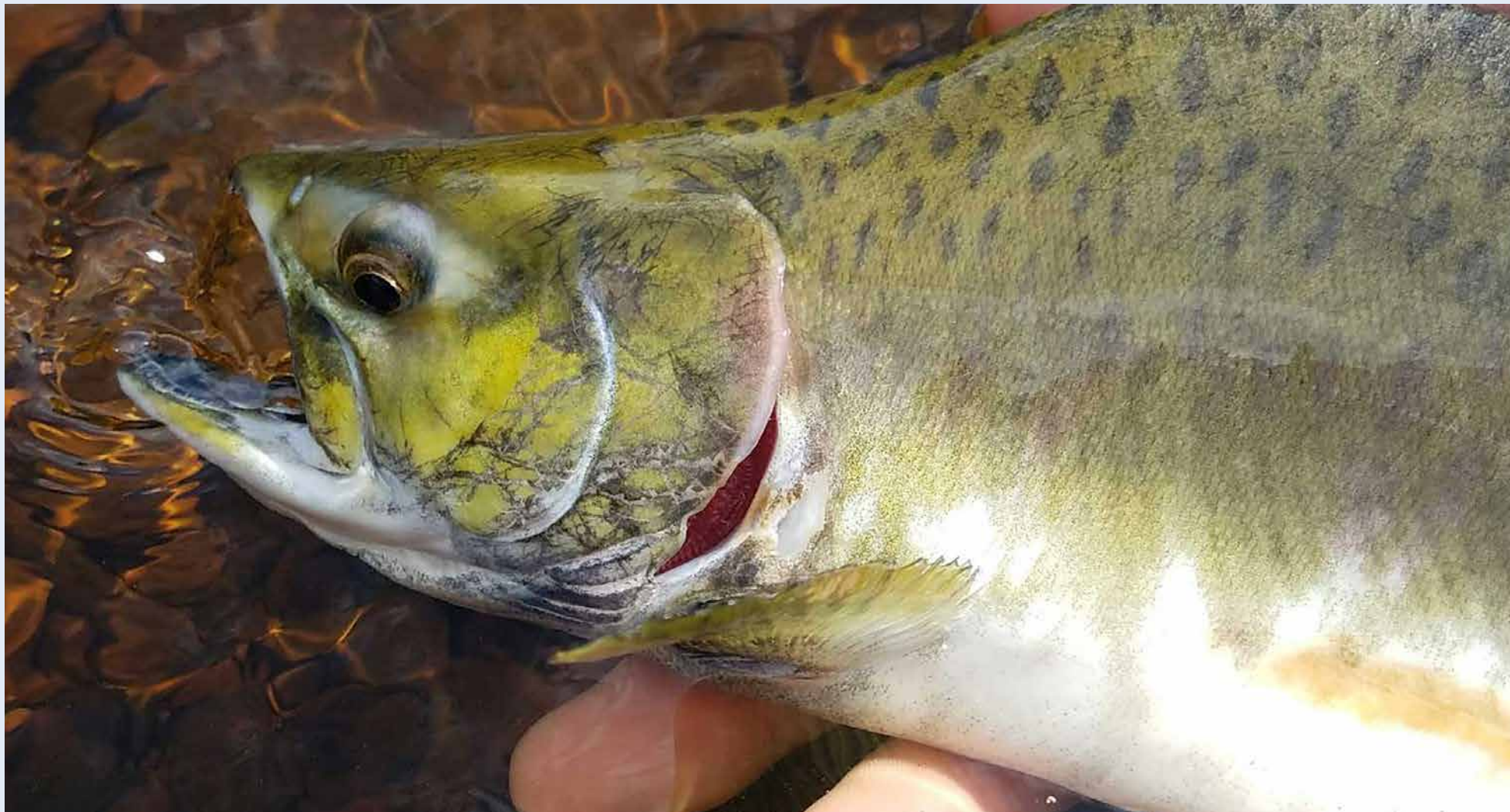
"All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, and wherever situated, I give, devise and bequeath to Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845 to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

The information above is not intended as legal or tax advice. For such advice, please consult an attorney or tax advisor. Contact our executive director, John Lenczewski, with any questions, or for assistance with estate planning, using this language or using this process: [jlenczewski@comcast.net](mailto:jlenczewski@comcast.net) or at 612-670-1629.

# INTRODUCTION TO PINK SALMON

## AN EARLY FALL OPTION ON THE NORTH SHORE

By Jason Swingen



THE PINK SALMON ON MINNESOTA'S NORTH SHORE CAN BE IDENTIFIED BY THEIR OLIVE SPECKLED BACKS AND BRIGHT WHITE BELLIES.

**P**ink salmon are one of the most underrated migratory fish on the North Shore. They often enter Lake Superior's tributaries in great numbers, can be fairly easy to find, and fight extremely hard for their size. They are a great species for beginners to get started into fly fishing, as well as a good option for advanced anglers to fine-tune their skills in preparation for the spring steelhead run.

This article will cover everything you need to know to catch pink salmon this fall! Including a background on pink salmon, when and where to fish for them, as well as the gear you will need.

### How to Identify a Pink Salmon

Pink Salmon (*Oncorhynchus gorbuscha*) are often referred to as "pinks" because of the pink hue on their sides during the spawn, or "humpies" because of the large hump on their back (more prominent on males). The upper half of their bodies are a greenish/olive color with dark oval spots, while the lower half is mostly white. They have small scales and a slightly forked tail.

### How Big Do They Get?

Most pinks in Minnesota are 12 to 16 inches long and weigh a couple of pounds. Although they are not as large as some of the other trout and salmon found on the North Shore, they do put up quite a fight! The biggest pink salmon caught in Minnesota was in the Cascade River back in 1989. That fish weighed 4.5 lbs and was nearly two feet long!

### Can I Keep Any?

Under the current MNDNR regulations you can catch and keep a combination of any five salmon (chinook, coho, pink, Atlantic), with a minimum length of 10 inches. Although not

thought of as one of the best eating fish, you shouldn't feel too bad about keeping a few since pink salmon will not live after spawning. Keeping a limit of pinks will have a very minimal impact on the overall population. Unlike steelhead that run up the river to spawn then travel back down to the lake, pink salmon will stay in the rivers after spawning but will start to decay after a few weeks.

### When Can I Catch Them?

Depending on river temperature and river flow, the fall run usually begins in September but can start as early as August or as late as October. It is important to keep your eyes on the North Shore river flows in order to see when the best time to fish is. You should look for a spike in river flows that will push the fish into the rivers. The increased flow will

also cause the rivers to be more difficult to fish and decrease visibility. Generally a day or two after a significant rain is the best time to fish the North Shore.

The life cycle of a pink salmon consists of hatching during the winter after the fall spawn, moving out into the lake to grow and returning after two years. Originally they would only spawn every other year (on even years), but today there are schools that have gotten off-track, so there is currently a run of pink salmon every year!

### Where Can I Catch Them?

There is no secret spot to find them. Most tributaries on the North Shore will take a run of pinks, from Duluth all the way into Canada. Once you find a river on the North Shore that you'd like to fish you'll

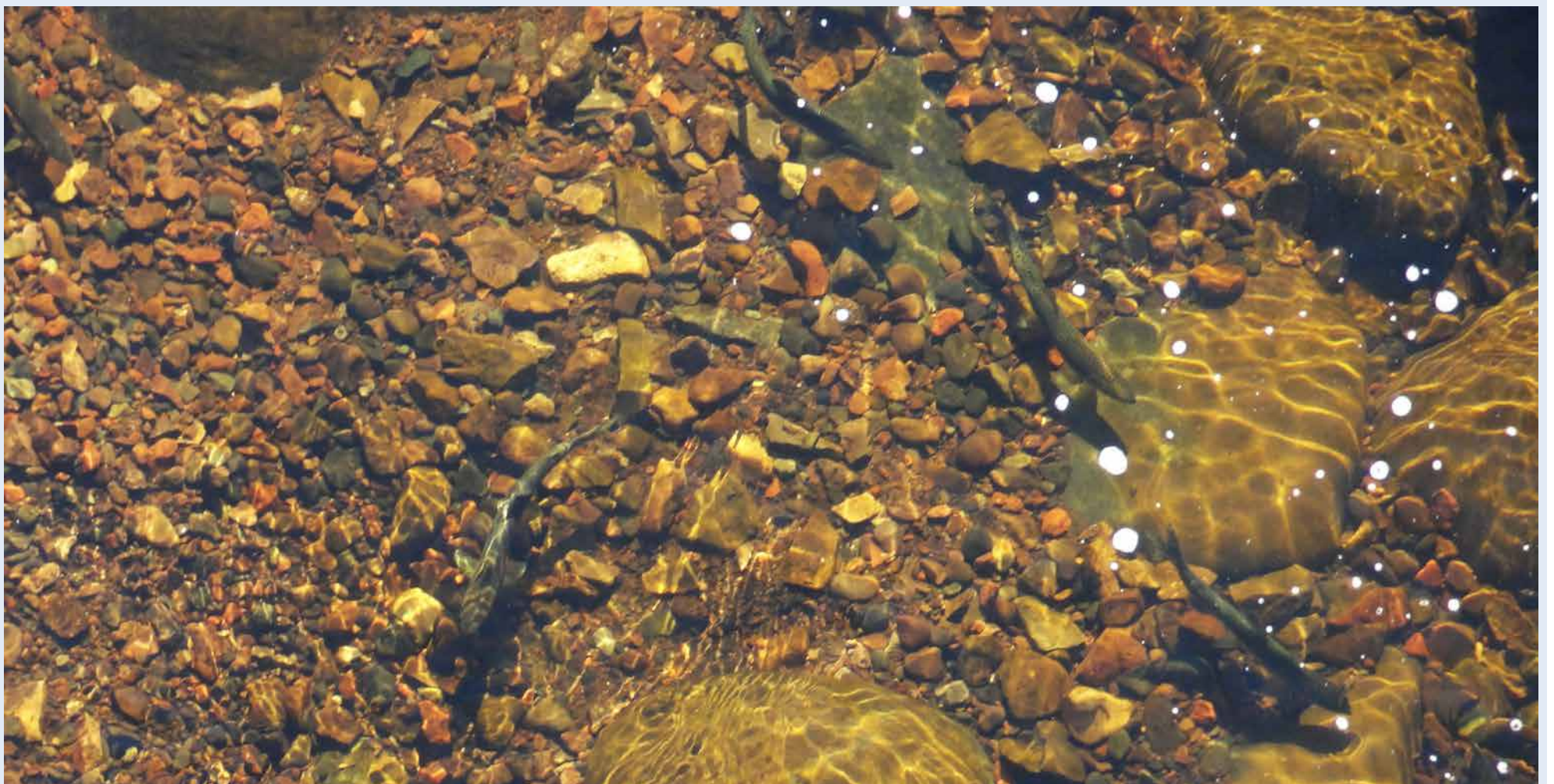
still have to find the salmon. It is usually a good idea to start at the mouth of the rivers and work your way up. These fish aren't the best jumpers, so if you get to a medium-sized waterfall there is a good chance they haven't made it past that point.

### Yeah, But Where in The Rivers?

The water in the fall is much lower and clearer than in the spring. Given the water conditions and the fact that pinks will often school together and swim close to the surface makes it fairly easy to target them. Their bright white bellies tend to give them away as they dart around, often towards the tailout of bigger holes. However, don't overlook deep pools and seams that may hold these fish and other species that may be in the rivers like brook, brown, and



OLIVE WOOLLY BUGGERS ARE A STRONG CHOICE TO CHASE MORE AGGRESSIVE PINKS IN FALL.



IN FALL THE FLOWS ON NORTH SHORE RIVERS TEND TO BE LOW. OFTEN PINK SALMON CAN BE SEEN SWIMMING THE POOLS AND TAILOUTS.

rainbow trout, or even coho salmon.

### What Kind of Fishing Gear Do I Need?

You can catch pinks on nearly any type of fishing equipment, but the most popular method is using a fly rod and reel. Your standard 4 to 5wt, 9-foot fly rod is perfect for the North Shore rivers. But you can use anything from a 3wt up to an 8wt. Because of the often clear water, you'll want to use fluorocarbon tippet between 3x and 5x (5lb to 10lb).

If you have targeted other trout and salmon species with a fly rod, the techniques used for pinks will be similar. Depending on water conditions, a variety of nymphs, egg patterns, and streamers can be used. In slow, somewhat clear water I have had the best luck on small nymphs (size 12 to 20). This includes Frenchies, Pheasant Tails, Copper Johns, Prince Nymphs, Scuds, and Zebra Midges. In faster, slightly dirtier water, I like fishing bright egg patterns like Glo-Bugs or beads. If you aren't getting any bites using nymphs, or are looking to step up the size of fish

you are catching, try throwing a streamer in front of them. I have had great luck using a size 8 Beadhead Woolly Buzzer in black, olive, or pink. Another great option is a standard Muddler Minnow. Even though these fish will come up to the surface, it is best to fish a weighted streamer, add a few split-shot to your leader or use some type of sink-tip line. The added weight will allow you to strip your streamer in short quick bursts to entice a big humpie to bite!

### Fly Rods

My favorite way to catch pink salmon is with a fly rod. A 9-foot, 4wt fly rod like a St. Croix Mojo Trout is just about the perfect fly rod for pink salmon on North Shore rivers. These fish will still put a bend in an 8wt, but you are still able to pull them in with a 3wt.

That's it. Time to hit the water! If you have more questions feel free to email me.

*Editor's Note: Jason Swingen is the Gitche Gumee Chapter vice president and resides in Duluth. Check out his outdoors blog at [www.js-outdoors.com](http://www.js-outdoors.com)*



ZEBRA MIDGES ARE A GOOD OPTION FOR MORE FINICKY FISH.



THE CHARACTERISTIC HUMPED BACK ON PINK SALMON EARN THEM THE NICKNAME "HUMPIES."

## Gitche Gumee Chapter

Spring finally sprung in the Northland in late April/early May! A lower snow base than normal and a warm spell in mid-March melted enough snow to get river temps just right for the first run of steelhead in our rivers. We had a couple of rain storms after the snow melted in mid-April to sustain our steelhead runs. From my own experience and hearing various reports, fishing was good but the run sputtered, ending earlier than typical years due to limited rainfall. It's always hard to put the equipment away, but we have summer now to look forward to.

Thank you to everyone that participated in our chapter survey this spring. Our goal was to hear from you on issues such as conservation, stream restoration, volunteer opportunities, and fishing our waters. Looking through the initial survey data there is some good information. High five to you! I'm excited to review the data with the board later this year.

We had a successful tree planting event on the Sucker River on Saturday, May 15. Chapter and community members met up and planted white pine and cedars along the upper Sucker River. Thank you to those who made it to the event and dedicated time to this project. These newly planted trees in the riparian area will stabilize the streambank and provide shade that is crucial for the trout population. If you weren't able to make this event, don't worry as we will be planning a river maintenance day later this summer.

Interested in learning how to fly fish or know someone that has always wanted to try it? We will be partnering with the City of Duluth this summer for a fly casting clinic. Details are just starting to be worked out. As we formalize event details, we will post information on our Facebook page and send details out in a chapter email newsletter.

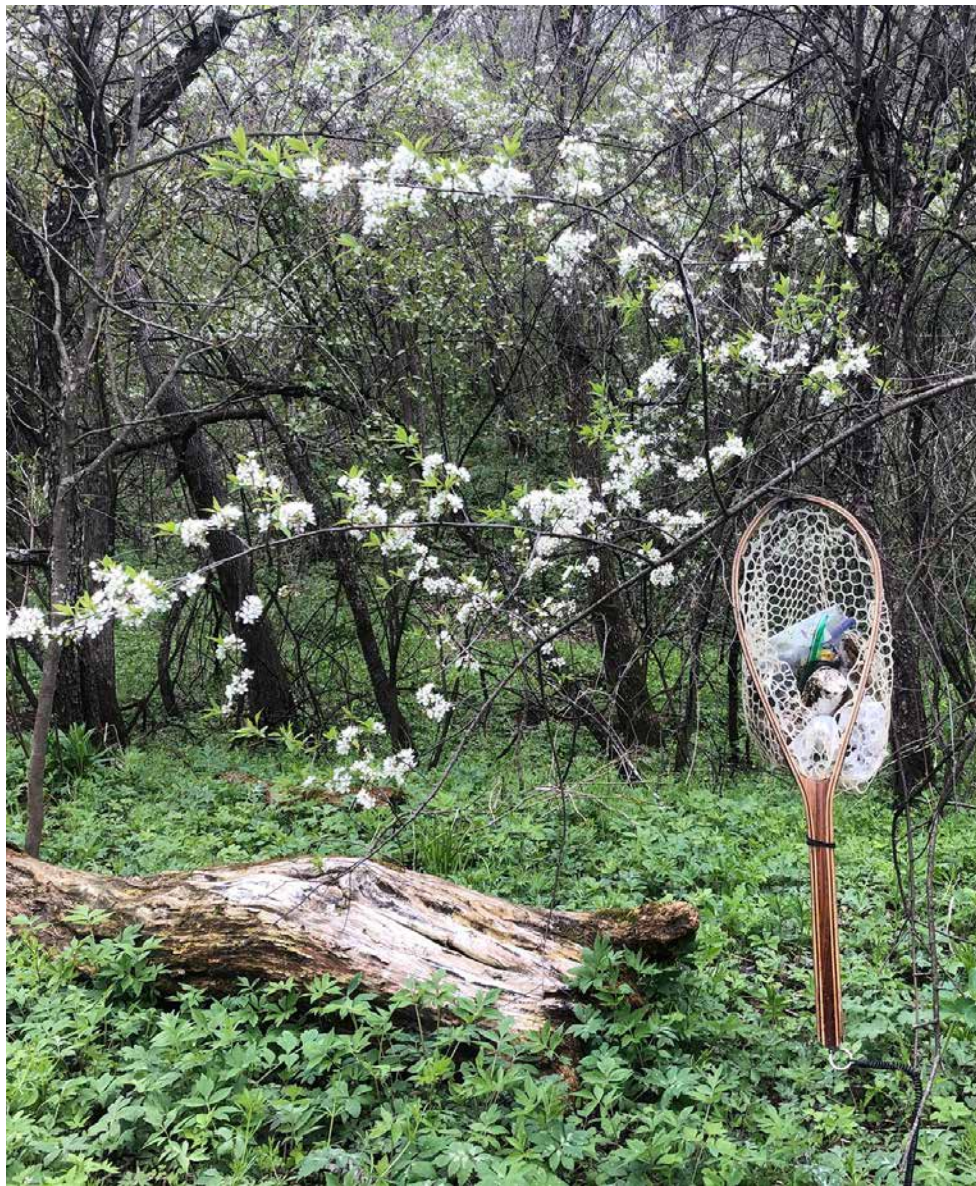
I'd like to say THANK YOU to our board members for your work this year. This past year was truly trying and though not ideal, we became proficient with Zoom. We did a great job keeping relevant and bringing several awesome presentations to our communities. With COVID-19 restrictions starting to ease, I'm hopeful that we will be able to bring in-person meetings back to the forefront.

Wishing you all a great summer!

Brandon Kime

## Headwaters Chapter

Things are starting to return to normal in the north country. We missed the social interaction of our winter Community Fly Tying but



TCTU RAN A PHOTO CONTEST IN MAY TO ENCOURAGE ANGLERS TO PICK UP TRASH ALONG LOCAL TROUT STREAMS. WINNERS RECEIVED FLY SHOP GIFT CARDS AND FLIES TIED BY PAUL JOHNSON.

tried to keep members engaged by doing some distance fly tying. It may not have been what everyone was used to, but we made the best of the situation. Six months from now we might be back to meeting in person, but use of the distance environment may continue. We were able to connect with some members who moved away but still wanted to participate.

The Trout in the Classroom program continued this year even though our members were not allowed into the schools. The year concludes with the students releasing the trout they raised in the classroom at the end of May. We will be able to have volunteers help with this, as well as a small streamside educational opportunity for the students.

Speaking of volunteering opportunities, we will be back in the stream this summer completing at least one project on a trout stream. We are hoping that enough of our members will have their vaccines and be able to participate in our restoration projects. We may only have one confirmed currently, but more are expected as the COVID restrictions are being lifted.

Our last thing that indicates a return to normalcy is the return of our in-person Pike Hunt. We are limiting this year's event to our chapter members only. This is out of an abundance of caution around COVID-19. I know the guidelines are changing every week, but we want to protect our participants as much as possible.

This past year was difficult to adapt to. Many people were used to in-person social interactions with other members. Technology allowed us to try and keep members involved, but it wasn't always easy. Issues with the internet and computer hardware always played a role in people not being able to attend our fly tying sessions. But on the positive side, we have been filming fly tying videos and posting them on our website. We may not go back to the way things have always been done before. We will likely adapt to a hybrid model of in-person and live streaming events. But we are all looking forward to a return to seeing other people's faces.

Kris Williams

## Hiawatha Chapter

Hello TU friends and members. Hiawatha TU is starting to get together again with our members. Slowly, but making efforts to have some normal face-to-face get togethers. Monday June 7 we are having a picnic near a recent stream project of ours on the South Branch of the Whitewater River. Also, we are back on for the Senior Fishing Day in Lanesboro at the ponds at Sylvan Park on Thursday June 17. More events will come, but nothing else is planned at this time. Keep watching our Facebook page and member emails for updates and events.

Phil Pankow

## Twin Cities Chapter

My name is Bob Luck and I was elected President of TCTU in February. I retired from a business career a few years ago, and I decided it might be a good idea to break up my fishing trips with volunteering for Trout Unlimited. It has been a great experience—TU has great people and a great mission, and Minnesota is a terrific place for us to make a difference. I believe the Twin Cities is the best big city in the U.S. to be based if you are a trout angler. We have some great streams with naturally reproducing trout populations within the metro area itself, and we are a short drive from two world-class fisheries: Lake Superior and its tributaries, and the spring creeks of the Driftless Area. Minnesota has good public access to waters, public funding for stream improvement, and a strong conservation ethic. But those of you who have been involved with TU longer than I have already knew all that!

Just like other chapters, the COVID-19 pandemic presented us with challenges in achieving our mission, as we had to close down many in-person educational and conservation events. We were able to move our chapter meetings to Zoom, and actually saw increased attendance. Evan Griggs was our featured speaker for our May chapter meeting, talking about "Urban and Uncommon Fly Fishing." If you want to learn how to catch carp, bass or bluegills on a fly, check out Evan's talk on our YouTube Channel (search TCTU). After our summer break, we plan to restart chapter meetings in September with in-person meetings (yay) that will also include a Zoom link.

As Minnesota opens up, we have begun to expand our in-person activities.

TCTU volunteers worked on our first habitat improvement project in over a year on the South Branch of the Vermillion. A team of volunteers worked with Mark Nemeth of the DNR to remove buckthorn and replace invasive reed canary grass with native grasses and wildflowers. The South Branch has seen over 5000 feet of habitat work in the past few years, as well as planting of native prairies in the surrounding uplands. It is a jewel of a stream less than 30 minutes' drive from the State Capitol. As things open more, we expect to get going on more habitat projects. Contact our Habitat Coordinator, Steve Kaukola at [steve.kaukola@twincitiestu.org](mailto:steve.kaukola@twincitiestu.org) if you'd like to volunteer or have questions.

We have started to pilot a Streamkeepers program on three Metro streams: The South Branch of the Vermillion, Trout Brook and Hay Creek. The idea behind this is to have a team of volunteers for each stream to keep an eye on things, monitor water quality, pick up occasional litter, and report on stream conditions to our membership. In the future, we will look at adding more activities, such as communicating with

# MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



JOHN WEAVER, WIN-CRES CHAPTER HABITAT IMPROVEMENT COORDINATOR, AND CHUCK SHEPARD, CHAPTER PRESIDENT, STAND NEAR THE NEW GARVIN BROOK ACCESS SIGN.

landowners or organizing volunteer events, as well as increasing the number of streams we cover. Hopefully we can get a cool T-shirt at some point as well. To monitor water quality, our Streamkeepers are using WiseH2O, a smartphone app that, combined with water testing strips, allows measurement of key analytes such as Nitrates, Nitrites, Phosphorous, pH and hardness. WiseH2O was first piloted in Wisconsin by our sister chapter KiapTuWish, and we are looking forward to expanding it to Minnesota. Our Streamkeepers also volunteered to work with students to test water quality using WiseH2O at a number of Trout in the Classroom trout releases on the Vermillion River in Farmington and Brown's Creek in Stillwater. It was terrific to see how much the students had already learned about water quality in the process of raising trout from eggs to fry. If you have questions about Streamkeepers or WiseH2O, please contact Jim Sauter at [jim.sauter@twincitiestu.org](mailto:jim.sauter@twincitiestu.org).

Our in-person outreach programs are also starting to gear up as more COVID-related restrictions are lifted. The volunteer opportunity that I am personally most excited about is the Fishing Skills Program, a partnership between MNTU and TCTU to teach fishing to youth and families in Twin Cities area parks. We will also be providing fly casting lessons for TU members and friends at three events this summer. If you are interested in volunteering to teach fishing, or would like to know more about our fly casting lessons, please contact Gary Wittrock at [gary.wittrock@twincitiestu.org](mailto:gary.wittrock@twincitiestu.org).

The caddis hatch is in the rearview mirror, but the sulphurs should be arriving soon. With no big rainfall events so far (fingers crossed) the streams are in great shape. Enjoy your summer and hope to see you on the water!

Bob Luck

## Win-Cres Chapter

With warming weather and more vaccinations, we have become more venture-some.

Our most significant outing was mentoring 20 students from the Goodhue High Fishing Club during a day on the stream. The club advisor, Robby Ebner, grew up

## SELECT POETRY

By Larry Gavin

### Dog Days on Lynch Creek

Sit stream side feet  
in the water to the knee:  
limestone, watercress,  
a cardinal wondering  
what's next. Let that  
cool water revive.  
The fish can wait  
they remain fish,  
and the birds  
swim in humid summer  
air. Let them. Continue  
to search for what  
is beneath the surface  
to reveal itself; like a good  
dream, just short of epiphany  
like catching a glimpse  
of the holy ghost  
in the back pew. Stunning  
in a simple way, like any  
tiny truth.

*Larry Gavin is a poet from Faribault, Minnesota. He is the author of five books of poetry. His newest, A Fragile Shelter: New and Selected Poems, is available from Red Dragonfly Press. [www.reddragonflypress.org](http://www.reddragonflypress.org)*

in Rushford and has many friends in the area. He has done a fabulous job developing interest and skills in the students. Twelve Win-Cres guides spent the morning with the students and their chaperones. After learning that the Goodhue Club was long on spinning equipment but short on fly rods, we donated two Orvis Encounter fly fishing outfits to the club, as well as flies, tippet, and other things to get the students started. We are grateful to the Laughing Trout Club and Wayne Bartz, as well as several Win-Cres members, for donating flies. The students should be able fish for trout, panfish, and bass this year.

The Chapter has had two habitat improvement outings. The first, on East

Burns Valley Creek, was primarily to open up a shaded stream corridor. Research has shown that grasses along the steambank provide significant overhead cover; in-stream vegetation provides habitat for aquatic insects and scuds, as well as cover for trout.

The second outing, at Cedar Valley Lutheran Church, involved removing standing dead trees that seemed destined to fall over the creek, making access difficult. There was also some removal of streamside shrubs.

We expect to work with the DNR and a contractor on Rush Creek this summer, building Lunger Structures. Dusty Hoffman, the MNTU Project Manager for the Driftless Region, has plenty of other opportunities for volunteers that are being considered.

Win-Cres was able to provide access to an improved area on Garvin Brook (see article on page 19).

Trout populations are good in area streams, with lots of 11- to 13-inch fish. The good old days are here.

Chuck Shepard

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# REELING IT IN

## FINDING TIGER TROUT

By Carl Haensel

The trout flashed deep in the pool, turning on my fly as it moved to take it. With a quick lift of the rod, the fish was on. Twisting and turning, it dove for the far bank, and then darted across the pool. Hurling toward the surface of the water, it vaulted into the air and hung there, for a fraction of a second in the shimmering sunlight of the late afternoon. What, I thought to myself, was on the end of the line? Certainly, it was a trout. I'd been catching brook and brown trout all day on this small Driftless stream. This one looked nothing like them at all. As the tired fish finally came to net, it was neither tawny and golden like a brown trout with black spots, nor flaked with red spots and blue halos like a brookie. The intense wavy lines across it revealed that it was a tiger trout.

in the fall, in some streams their spawning can occur at the same time and in the same stream reaches. It is in these cases where we have the opportunity for tiger trout to occur.

To find tiger trout, you'll have to search for streams that have healthy, naturally reproducing populations of both brook trout and brown trout. Plenty of streams in the Minnesota Driftless fit the bill in that regard. Tigers, while never common, are more frequently present in small headwaters streams with strong brook trout populations. Some streams seem to produce more trout than others, though it's unlikely you'll convince anglers to give up their secret spots. Plan to spend plenty of days on the water, even in the right places, without landing a tiger.

Tiger trout are hybrids, the product of a cross between our native brook trout and the introduced brown trout. While they are not fertile and produce no offspring, they are beautiful, grow fast and fight hard. In some areas of the country, they have been intentionally produced in hatcheries and stocked. In Minnesota, they are rare, unique and entirely wild. In recent years, anglers have caught more wild tiger trout in the Driftless Region in both Minnesota and Wisconsin. Brook trout populations have expanded, with increases in spring flows in some watersheds and habitat work and wild brook trout restoration efforts. Since both brook trout and brown trout spawn

If you're fortunate enough to catch a tiger trout, they are worth treating with care. Uncommon as they are, releasing them safely to swim another day helps provide fellow anglers with the chance to catch such rarities in Minnesota. With continuing habitat work throughout the headwaters streams of the Minnesota Driftless, and diligent work to protect and restore wild brook trout, I hope that we'll be seeing plenty of tiger trout in the years to come. They're a sign of a strong, healthy stream in the region, and with our collective efforts, more anglers will have the chance to catch some of these uncommon beauties.



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