

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - November 2021



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MNTU YEAR IN REVIEW
INTRO TO FLY TYING SUPPLIES
SEASON'S END
WISE TO CHOOSE WISEL CREEK
TYING THE ELK HAIR CADDIS
CALL FOR MNTU COMMITTEE MEMBERS

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EDITOR'S ANGLE

YEAR END ROUNDUP

By Jade Thomason, Editor



The sun hanging lower in the sky during midday and the promise of northern lights through the night are harbingers of the winter ahead. As we head into the long fly tying season, it's a great time to reflect on a successful season of fishing trips made and habitats preserved, restored and conserved. Dig into what we've been up to around the state on John Lenczewski's Year in Review article on page 3 for all of the details. Miles of trout streams have been restored, offering exciting fishing possibilities for anglers to check out. We've also secured funding for more work, and are excited for the next few seasons of work to commence around the state.

While our new projects in SE Minnesota will open back up to fishing on January 1, not all SE streams are closed. If you're looking to check out some of the trout in our habitat reaches and satisfy that angling compulsion, you're still in luck. Head out and fish in the "Town

and Park" season in the Driftless. Previous habitat work like the South Branch of the Root River in Preston and Mill Creek in Chatfield always have trout available and are on my list to visit any day of the year. Check out the MN DNR website for regulation details.

As we move into the implementation of a new strategic plan for Minnesota Trout Unlimited, there will be plenty of opportunities and needs for volunteers to get involved. From habitat work to advocacy to planning, you can play a role in creating and leading the next chapter of coldwater conservation work around the state. Read more about what you can do to get involved on page 15.

If you're planning on spending a significant amount of time tying flies this winter, consider reading Jason Swingen's article about fly tying supplies. Jason does a great job decomplicating everything from thread to vises, and can help you



make the transition from beginning tyer to producing the flies that you need to catch fish on your next trip on the river. Check it out on page 8 for more information.

WILD ABOUT MACROS! CHECK OUT THE MN TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM UPDATE ON PAGE 10 AND OUR YOUTH SERIES ARTICLE ON PAGE 11!

ON THE COVER

Over 80 percent of Wisel Creek's nine miles is either under angler easement or across state lands. Access, combined with successful habitat work, makes it an excellent choice for anglers. Read more about it on page 12.

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CHET DANIEL HOLDS AN AWARD, PRESENTED TO HIM BY PHIL PANKOW, FOR DANIEL'S WORK IN COORDINATING AN ANNUAL FISHING OUTING FOR SENIOR CITIZENS AT A PARK IN LANESBORO.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

EXPLORING OUR ANGLING ROOTS

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

The headwater stream was small, but with a clean gravel bed and deep runs that would make any trout angler slow or stop. I did both. The current was brisk and water deep enough that despite its gin-clear condition I spotted no trout. At the small bakery in town, I grabbed a second cup of coffee and an impossible-to-resist pastry. The walls were lined with framed photographs from the logging era of the late 1800s and early 1900s. Although I had hundreds of miles to travel that day, it was early, and I got to chatting with the shop owner about the old logging camps in the area. I shared that my grandfather had worked in a camp outside this very town before my father was born. I studied the grainy black and white photograph of a team of horses hitched to a sled loaded high with massive pine logs.

My grandfather had driven one such team, navigating the iced skid roads to deliver logs to landings along the rail lines or perhaps beside the very headwater stream where I had stopped. He had emigrated from Poland as a teenager in the early 1900s, leaving the family farm and its small stream filled with native brown trout. He brought with him

a passion for angling and passed it on to my father. Growing up little more than an hour's drive from the Au Sable River, my father got hooked on trout fishing and fly fishing early. I too fell under the trout fishing spell as a young kid on summer camping trips back to my father's native Michigan. I spent weeks fishing with my father on Michigan trout streams from the wide Au Sable to the tight-quartered Fox River and other Upper Peninsula gems. We never fished the headwater stream near Dziadzia's logging camp but did fish it downstream where it joins other waters to become the "Holy Waters" section of Trout Unlimited lore.

TU's mission is to conserve, protect, restore, and sustain coldwater fisheries and their watersheds so that present and future generations can enjoy healthy fisheries in their home waters, as well as storied and secret waters across the country. On my September drive hopscotching from the Au Sable to Bridge and across the UP, I reflected on my great fortune in having my father share his love of the wild places and wild trout flashing at the end of the line. And he shared not just the "family tradition" of trout angling,



but an appreciation for the need of anglers to be active in protecting and restoring the special places trout require. This is what TU is all about—preserving and improving watersheds so that others can enjoy the pull of wild trout in beautiful places.

This past week on the Bois Brule I saw several fathers and mothers passing on the trout fishing "bug" to their children. I smiled watching a young girl excitedly reeling in a steelhead. Scenes like this are what we TUers all work for. Let's be sure that we quietly pass along a conservation ethic when we share our love of trout, steelhead and salmon fishing with families and neighbors.



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MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

A NEW ROADMAP FOR MINNESOTA TU

By Brent Notbohm, Minnesota Council of TU Chair

September 22, 2021 will likely go down as a significant date in the evolution of Minnesota Trout Unlimited. Three major items were approved at the Board of Directors meeting that evening which will have a lasting impact on this great organization. Item one was the final ratification of the 2021-25 MNTU Strategic Plan. The new plan, our first since 2013, is the product of 18 months of in-depth discussion, debate, and collaboration for which I want to personally thank all those who contributed their time, ideas, and feedback. THANK YOU!!!

The 2021-25 Strategic Plan saw revisions to our mission and vision statements, which I'm excited to share with you:

New Mission Statement:

The mission of Minnesota Trout Unlimited is to conserve, protect, restore, and sustain Minnesota's coldwater fisheries, their watersheds and groundwater sources.

New Vision Statement:

Guided by science and data, Minnesota Trout Unlimited envisions a future when all can enjoy the benefits of robust populations of native and wild coldwater fish in Minnesota's exceptional home waters.

A message we heard from members while developing the Strategic Plan was for the Board of Directors to foster more opportunities for grassroots participation in aspects of MNTU's operations. The new plan establishes an infrastructure to facilitate involvement by members from

across the state on key action steps and initiatives. Look for periodic "call to service" notifications in MNTU newsletters and emails. These calls will provide you with the opportunity to volunteer your valued time and expertise on the issues you're passionate about, whether that be in advocacy, education, communication, habitat projects, or leadership roles. Please consider volunteering when you see a call. Your participation in the work of MNTU is vital to the future success of our organization!

The first "call to service" (page 6) seeks volunteers to participate in the development of a comprehensive Advocacy Plan for MNTU. Many of us joined TU because we care about the natural world and want to do our part to help conserve, protect, sustain, and restore it. There is no doubt that we're at a pivotal moment in the natural history of our planet. Volunteering for the Advocacy Plan Working Group is a fantastic opportunity to have your voice heard and help direct how MNTU addresses environmental challenges in the years to come.

The second major item approved at the September Board of Directors meeting was an "organizational roadmap" designed to identify and guide the hiring of additional staffing needs for MNTU. The exponential growth and success of MNTU over the last decade has revealed the necessity to expand our professional staff. Frankly, there is simply too much work on any given day for our dedicated and outstanding Executive Direc-



tor, John Lenczewski, to accomplish. We need to add personnel to be an even more effective organization.

The initial step in the roadmap called for expanding our donor-based fundraising operations. To meet this need, the Board of Directors authorized major item number three—contracting former Vice President of Development for TU National and current TCTU member, Mark Abner, as MNTU's Director of Development. Please join me in welcoming Mark to this important role! Read more about Mark on page 7.

Next up on the "roadmap" will be the hiring of a part-time Executive Assistant who can support John and Mark with the day-to-day operations of MNTU. We're hoping to have this new member on the team by the beginning of 2022.

September's Board meeting established the path on which we'll travel over the next four years. Having a direction is only the beginning.

www.mntu.org

YEAR IN REVIEW

PROGRESS DESPITE THE PANDEMIC

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director



WISEL CREEK HABITAT RESTORATION NEARS COMPLETION AS VEGETATION BECOMES ESTABLISHED.

In March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic upended people's work and daily routines. Despite changes wrought by the pandemic, Minnesota Trout Unlimited adapted and pressed forward protecting, restoring, reconnecting, and sustaining coldwater fisheries around Minnesota. Reporting on MNTU's progress was likewise disrupted, but here now is a summary of its areas of focus and accomplishments over the past 18 months.

Habitat Restoration

Restoring and reconnecting trout, steelhead, and salmon habitat has been a core part of Trout Unlimited's work for six decades. But, since 2008, Minnesota Trout Unlimited has evolved into a powerhouse of trout stream restoration, thanks to the citizens of Minnesota. In 2008 voters approved the Legacy Amendment which raised a sales tax and dedicated it to clean water and natural resource work. MNTU's compelling habitat proposals have led to grants each year and completed projects soon after. Over the past five years MNTU has secured an average of \$2 million dollars per year to fund the professional design and construction of many miles of trout habitat restoration. A good portion of that on-the-ground habitat restoration work covered by these grants has been accomplished and the rest will be completed in the next few years. In July 2020 MNTU added Dustan Hoffman as a full-time employee to manage its habitat projects in southeast Minnesota. Working through pandemic-caused disruptions in labor, materials and agency input on designs and permitting, MNTU restored or improved habitat on nearly 13 miles of trout stream! Habitat restoration methods vary to

match the diverse ecological conditions found in different parts of the state.

Southeast Minnesota

Southeast Minnesota's "Driftless Area" streams suffer from a legacy of poor land use practices that buried valley floors in deep, highly erodible sediments. Restoration often requires removing streamside sediments to reconnect floodplains and create stable bank cover. Since shallow-rooted boxelder and buckthorn typically have invaded these disturbed areas, these invasive trees must be taken out to enable sediment removal and bank stabilization. These spring-fed streams are so cold they do not require a shade canopy

and, in fact, benefit from additional sunlight reaching the stream bed and driving the aquatic food chain. Rocks and logs are added to scour and maintain deep pools and cover habitat. In the past 18 months, large-scale habitat restoration was completed on 5.6 miles of southeast trout streams, including:

- South Branch Whitewater River (near Elba, MN) - 1.4 miles
- Wisel Creek at County Rd 18 (near Mabel, MN) - 1.3 miles
- West Indian Creek (near Plainview, MN) - 2.2 miles!
- Rush Creek (near Lewiston, MN) - .8 miles

- Wisel Creek at 403rd Ave (near Mabel, MN) - .8 miles

In addition, in locations where in-stream habitat is good and legacy sediments minor, invasive tree removal alone significantly improves habitat with less cost. This allows native grasses and forbs, which better secure soils, to become reestablished and lets beneficial sunlight reach the stream beds and boost stream productivity. Trout habitat was improved in this manner along an additional 7.1 miles of stream, including:

- Camp Creek (Preston, MN) - 1,400'
- Daley Creek (Houston, MN) - 2,100'



MNTU INITIATED A PROJECT TO PROTECT AND RESTORE HABITAT FOR REMNANT HERITAGE BROOK TROUT POPULATIONS.



ERODING BANKS ON WISEL CREEK WERE EXCAVATED TO RESTORE THE FLOODPLAIN, HALT EROSION AND IMPROVE IN-STREAM HABITAT.

- Duschee Creek (Lanesboro, MN) – 2,900'
- East Indian Creek (near Plainview, MN) – 3 miles!
- Little Pickwick Creek (near Winona, MN) – 6,000'
- Trout Run Creek (near St. Charles, MN) – 5,000'
- West Indian Creek (near Plainview, MN) – 4,200'

MNTU also initiated a separate Heritage Brook Trout project focused on protecting and restoring habitat for remnant populations of unique native brook trout. It was assumed that the native brook trout had been driven to extinction by 19th century settlement and displacement by stocked eastern hatchery strains. But a genetic study published in 2015 revealed that pockets of native brook trout unique to southeast Minnesota had survived in several streams. MNTU secured a \$2.3 million dollar grant and is working with the MN Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy and Trust for Public Land to focus protection efforts in six key watersheds and restore habitat for this special native population. These sturdy fish have been holding their own since the glacial period 10,000 years ago, escaping hatchery swamping, competition from browns and rainbows, and numerous other assaults. Hemingway, Coolridge, Pine, Maple and East Indian Creeks are among the project's candidate streams.

This past winter MNTU completed three miles of work on East Indian Creek to benefit its Heritage Brook Trout.

Northern Minnesota

Ecological, geologic and hydraulic conditions in northern Minnesota are drastically different than southeast Minnesota, and different restoration methods are required. A key difference is the relative scarcity of cold groundwater and seasonal swings in stream base flows. As a result, healthy forests are crucial both for shading and to store and slowly release precipitation. Removing barriers to trout and steelhead movement are also vital to allow seasonal movements to coldwater refuge areas.

Keene Creek: MNTU recently restored a 1,400' section of Keene Creek in Duluth, MN. This native brook trout stream was devastated by the historically severe 2012 flood. A more natural, stable stream pattern was restored with lots of great pool habitat. Design and permitting work for additional segments is underway.

Tree plantings: Because streams in northern Minnesota have limited amounts of cold groundwater, healthy riparian forests are essential to slowly release precipitation and provide cooling shade. An outbreak of insect pests along the North Shore is killing nearly all the spruce and balsam along our prized brook trout and

steelhead waters. MNTU contractors are cutting the dead spruce and balsam alongside streams to create a series of 75 to 100' diameter clearings in which crews plant long-lived tree species such as white pine and white cedar. Thirty-one such gaps were planted along a 3,900' long section of the French River, located northeast of Duluth.

Restoring Fish Passage and Reconnecting Habitat

Poorly designed or maintained culverts in roads are a frequent, major obstacle to trout and juvenile steelhead migration. Minnesota Trout Unlimited is collaborating with several partners to replace the worst barriers with larger and more modern, fish-friendly culverts. MNTU's initial focus is removing and replacing the worst barrier culverts in the Baptism River and Manitou River watersheds, two of the most important North Shore watersheds for trout and steelhead. MNTU recently entered into a partnership with Lake County and the MNDNR to remove the last of three barriers in a major Baptism River tributary called Hockamin Creek. MNTU also worked with Cook County to replace three culverts this summer that were blocking the movement of native brook trout between the Two Island River and cold Fredenberg Creek near Tofté, MN.

MNTU has now restored or improved

habitat in more than 100 miles of streams and reclaimed six inland trout lakes since securing its first Outdoor Heritage Fund grant in 2009!

Advocacy Wins Under Divided Government

Minnesota Trout Unlimited continued in Trout Unlimited's long tradition of effective, non-partisan advocacy using science and fact-based policy to support its unique mission of protecting, restoring, and sustaining coldwater fisheries and their watersheds. Even during this time of pandemic, polarization, and divided government, Minnesota Trout Unlimited advocated successfully with our many conservation and environmental partners to advance its mission:

With partners, MNTU helped secure the Governor's more generous recommendations for DNR funding, which exceeded what many had thought could be realistically secured by the divided Minnesota Legislature.

MNTU helped pass the bill containing the recommendations of the Legislative-Citizen Commission on Minnesota Resources (LCCMR), which had been stalled for two years. This recurring source of lottery and gas tax-derived conservation revenue is crucial for many natural resource projects.



REMOVING BARRIERS TO TROUT AND STEELHEAD MOVEMENT IS A KEY FOCUS FOR MNTU IN NORTHERN MINNESOTA.



MNTU'S EDUCATION PROGRAM CONNECTS YOUTH WITH THEIR LOCAL WATERSHEDS BY PROVIDING HANDS-ON OUTDOOR LEARNING EXPERIENCES.

MNTU helped pass the bill containing appropriations from the state's Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Fund. The appropriation provides funding of over \$1 million dollars for Minnesota Trout Unlimited to restore additional trout habitat and funds more than \$100 million dollars in other natural resource protection and restoration projects.

Addressing climate change is a priority for MNTU, since coldwater fisheries in Minnesota's northern latitude are particularly vulnerable. Giving Minnesota car buyers options to choose vehicles which reduce carbon emissions is a common-sense step forward. MNTU helped convince legislators to allow adoption of the Clean Car Rule to provide these choices and cut carbon emissions.

MNTU fought back several assaults on groundwater sustainability, including a bill that would have dramatically increased the number of available groundwater permits, diminishing the amount of cold groundwater reaching trout streams. With partners, Minnesota Trout Unlimited fought off this and other similarly bad policy ideas.

Education Program Highlights

Minnesota Trout Unlimited has long had a strong education program for school children, led by its program staff, great teachers and a dedicated corps of volunteers. The goal of MNTU's suite of education programs is to connect youth with their local watersheds through hands-on,

experiential learning that establishes an appreciation for aquatic ecosystems and fosters environmental stewardship. MNTU also provides skills programs for families and adults.

MNTU's school-based outdoor education program in grades 4 to 12 classrooms combines the national Trout In the Classroom (TIC) curriculum with outdoor field days. This year, students in more than 60 schools across Minnesota will raise trout from eggs to fingerlings in classroom aquariums. Students participate in outdoor field days and lessons on biology, water quality, fish life cycles and other aquatic science basics, and even art, social studies, and history. The program culminates with the release of the fish into nearby trout streams.

In 2021 MNTU has been working to grow the funding base for this outdoor education program, which costs approximately \$150,000 per year. For the past six years, MNTU has funded the program largely through state grants from the Environment & Natural Resources Trust Fund, but this support could be winding down. To diversify funding, MNTU hired a professional grant writing consultant, Sarah Suemig, to pursue funding from a slate of private foundations.

Communications to Support Our Work
MNTU understands that it's not sufficient to simply do great work that benefits trout, steelhead, and salmon. It also

needs to communicate the value of that work to maintain and increase support for it. MNTU is working hard to communicate with Minnesota Trout Unlimited members and supporters, to ensure its conservation successes continue. For example:

MNTU continues to publish this Trout Unlimited Minnesota newsletter three times a year. This serves to inform and inspire readers to support MNTU's work and volunteer on a habitat project, help at a field day or fishing clinic, or respond to an advocacy appeal.

MNTU has added some great fly fishing and fly tying videos to its website, created by MNTU educator Evan Griggs. Links to these fun, informative videos are located on the Education pages of the www.mntu.org website.

Organizational Development

Minnesota Trout Unlimited is growing and achieving conservation success! The Board of Directors recognizes that MNTU needs strong business practices and visionary plans to further mature as a respected conservation force in Minnesota. The board and Executive Director have had a busy year working on these key initiatives:

In September, the board adopted a four-year Strategic Plan that compiles the priorities for Advocacy, Habitat Restoration, Communications, Education, and Organizational Development and Sus-

tainability.

The board initiated an audit of MNTU's financial statements as a healthy, proactive way to ensure that MNTU has in place best-practice financial controls.

Recognizing that Minnesota Trout Unlimited's expanded activities have outgrown the support that one executive director plus an active volunteer corps can provide, the Board of Directors charged a working group to spend six months developing an organizational roadmap that addresses growth and staffing needs. It's recommendation was adopted by the board in September. MNTU is investing in additional staffing, with a combination of employees and contractors, in order to increase our capacity to achieve greater conservation for coldwater fisheries.

Current staff consists of: John Lenczewski, Executive Director
Dustan Hoffman, Southeast MN Habitat Project Manager
Mark Abner, Director of Development
Amber Taylor, Education Program Supervisor

This winter, MNTU will hire a part-time Executive Assistant and within one to two years, a full-time Assistant Director.

The success and work accomplished in the past year would not be possible without the support of donors and the dedication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited's board, volunteers and staff.

HELP CRAFT OUR ADVOCACY PLAN

Minnesota Trout Unlimited seeks dedicated members to serve on the Advocacy Plan Working Group. This important group is charged with researching and composing a comprehensive Advocacy Plan to guide the advocacy work of MNTU over the next four years. The Advocacy Plan, due at the April 2022 Board of Directors meeting, will identify key policy issues, objectives, obstacles, and measures for success; create policy priority categories and criteria for each; establish criteria and a process for vetting "sign on" requests; develop a process for partnering with other advocacy organizations; establish criteria and a process for lawsuit involvement; identify the tools, resources, and personnel needed to execute the Advocacy Plan.

If you have any questions about this group and/or are interested in serving on it, please contact John Lenczewski (jlenczewski@comcast.net). Thank you for your service to MNTU!

MNTU INCREASES OUTREACH TO ITS DONORS

The new Minnesota Trout Unlimited Strategic Plan anticipates the need for greater investments in our stream restoration projects, advocacy in St. Paul, education programs and our service to members. To carry out this work, we also need to strengthen donor engagement.

Mark Abner will serve as Minnesota TU's new director of development for this important job. Mark has been a TU member and volunteer since the late 1990s. He has chaired banquets and auctions, served on the Twin Cities Chapter Board, flipped burgers for hard working volunteers and pulled buckthorn, served as MNTU's liaison to the Minnesota Clean Water Council, advised on fundraising and even worked for national Trout Unlimited as VP of Development.

Mark has spent his career helping members of conservation and education organizations contribute philanthropically. Having recently completed a capital campaign for Minnesota Public Radio|American Public Media, he is excited to work for MNTU.

"Minnesota Trout Unlimited does such valuable work for our state's waters and I am pleased to have this opportunity to serve our many generous donors. My goal is to thank, recognize and get to know our donors better so that I can learn how best to offer them tangible ways to have an important, direct impact on the mission," says Mark.

Mark can be reached at (651) 571-1011 or abner.mark2@gmail.com



BOOK REVIEW

HOME WATERS: A CHRONICLE OF FAMILY AND A RIVER

By John Hunt

“In our family, there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing.” So reads one of the most quoted sentences of Norman Maclean’s novella, *A River Runs Through It*. The story goes on to provide context to that statement, but it falls to John Maclean, Norman’s son, to reveal more about the life and family of one of outdoor writing’s most cherished authors. In *Home Waters: A Chronicle of Family and a River*, John Maclean shares an intimate, personal look at his family. We get a glimpse of how living in the two worlds of urban Chicago and the Montana mountains shaped Norman and the entire Maclean family, and how their cabin on Seeley Lake continues to serve as a focal point for the Maclean family and their friends.

I enjoyed reading how the author’s Canadian-born grandfather, the Rev. John Maclean, moved from Nova Scotia to Manitoba to California and then to Bozeman. After a detour back to Iowa that saw the birth of sons Norman and Paul, Montana called to the Reverend again. The young Maclean family headed this time to Missoula. Just imagine if the family had not returned to Montana. I’m not sure the Iowa prairie would have inspired Norman to pen such prose and praise for the Big Blackfoot and its surroundings.

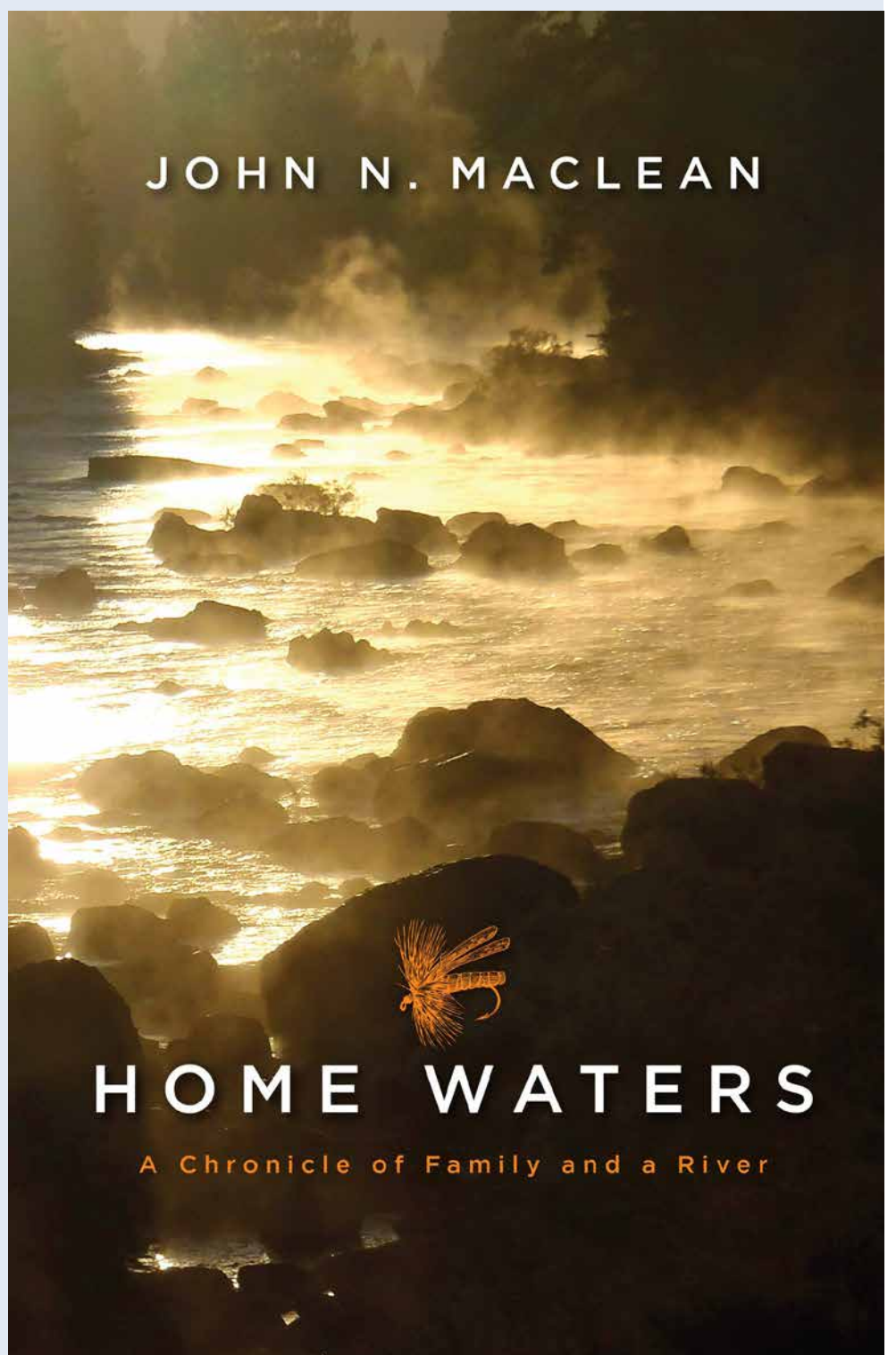
For many of us, the lives of Norman and Paul Maclean are what we recall from the big screen adaptation of the novella. Street fights, whitewater adventures on the river, fishing escapades, town festivals. Author John Maclean clarifies (perhaps corrects is a better word) which events were factual and which were exaggerated or recast to better fit the narrative of his father’s story. He recounts how Norman and

Paul were both good athletes, leading their Missoula County High football teammates to victories over their rivals from Butte. We also get a closer look at the college experiences of both brothers and their early career aspirations. John Maclean also pays tribute to his mother Jessie, who led a long, productive administrative career at the University of Chicago alongside her husband.

The author’s memories of making the automobile trip every summer from their Chicago home to their Montana cabin caused me to smile. My wife’s family made a similar trip for nearly 20 years and my own family has made the Minnesota-to-Montana drive too many times to count. You come to realize that kids and long car rides really never change. The author’s tangent into the history of the Big Blackfoot valley was not entirely new material to me, but interesting, nonetheless. The account of Paul Maclean’s death (in Chicago, not Lolo) provided a very sincere look at how his uncle’s untimely demise weighed heavily on Norman throughout the rest of his adult life, finally compelling him upon retirement to write his now well-known novella.

Home Waters is an enjoyable glimpse into the life of one of my favorite authors. The next time I re-read one of Norman Maclean’s stories I will do so with a deeper appreciation for his passion for Montana, its trout rivers, and his family.

Editor’s Note: John Hunt is a long-time Trout Unlimited volunteer who has served in numerous positions over more than three decades. He has been authoring book reviews for the newsletter since 2013.



INTRODUCTION TO FLY TYING SUPPLIES

CHOOSING AND UNDERSTANDING YOUR TOOLS

By Jason Swingen



INVEST IN THE TOOLS YOU WILL USE THE MOST WHEN FLY TYING.

“You should tie your own flies,” they said. “You will save some money,” they said...Well, if you tie your own flies you know that this isn’t necessarily the case, but, looking back, do I wish I would have just bought all of my flies instead? Not for a second. Some days sitting down at the vise and clearing my mind is all I want to do. Just like fishing, it is a type of meditation. Relaxing and satisfying. Also, just like fly fishing, fly tying has a somewhat steep learning curve. There are new terms to learn as well as new techniques to master. But once you get started you will love sitting at a vise and whipping up a couple of standard patterns, or that new experiential fly that you are sure will fool the giant fish that no one else has been able to catch. So, if you are getting started tying flies, or even if you have tied for a while, hopefully some of these tips will help make tying more enjoyable.

1. Invest in the tools you use the most. Recommending tying tools can be difficult since the ones you use most depend greatly on the types of flies you tie. However, it doesn’t matter if you are tying size 20 Zebra Midges for trout, or double 4/0 articulated musky flies, you will want to invest in the four important tools that you will use every time: a vise, bobbin, scissors, and a whip-finishing tool.

Vise

You will use a vise for every single fly you tie, so getting one that fits your budget and tying style makes the entire process so much more fun. There are tons of different vises out there ranging from 20 to 30 bucks to hundreds.

I first started tying on a super

cheap vise that included a few tools. Was it fun to use? No. Did it hold my hooks in place? Kinda. But eventually, I upgraded and would never think of going back. Your perfect vise may depend on your fly tying setup, the type of flies you tie, and if you want to be able to travel with it to tie flies on the road. You will have to choose between a pedestal and a clamping vise. Pedestal vises sit on top of the table rather than clamping to the edge. Another useful feature to look for is a rotary function. Rotary vises are able to turn, enabling smoother application of materials. I’m currently tying on a Peak Rotary Vise and would recommend it for almost any new or seasoned tyer.

Bobbin

Bobbins are used to hold and dispense your thread. I started out with an extremely cheap bobbin. It wasn’t completely smooth on the inside and would cut my thread constantly. I’m a little surprised that I still tie flies after how many frustrating times my thread broke when I first started tying. After going through a few different types of bobbins, I would suggest not skimping on your thread bobbin. If your thread is breaking often then you may have an issue with your bobbin, or you could be using too light of thread, or you may be using too much tension.

Scissors

There are a ton of different options when it comes to fly tying scissors. I personally don’t like the tiny finger holes on fly tying scissors (or hemostats) and prefer to use Fiskars micro-tip scissors for all of my flies. Your fly tying scissors should be very sharp with a fine tip to be able to accomplish the finer details.

Whip-finishing Tool

You can whip-finish a fly (a technique of tying a knot on your hook to keep the fly from unraveling) without a specialized whip-finishing tool, but they are generally cheap enough that I would still recommend getting one. I personally use a tool and find it more convenient.

2. Extra Helpful Tools

After you have those main tools, you can start looking into extra items and niche tools that will help you tie specific patterns. If you want to tie larger bass and pike flies you may want to look into get-

ting a hair stacker and a hair packer. They will both make tying large deer hair poppers and divers much easier. If you primarily plan on tying trout flies, then having a pair of hackle pliers should be next on your list. These work as specialized tweezers to hold tiny feathers. Bodkins are basically just a needle with a handle, but they come in handy for a ton of different fly patterns. You can use them to pick out your material to look more buggy, clear the eye of your hook, or even apply head-cement. A dubbing spinner is also one of my favorite tools to use



HOUSEHOLD TOOLS LIKE HAIR TIES AND A BASIC COMB CAN BE USED IN PLACE OF EXPENSIVE SPECIALTY TOOLS WHEN TYING STREAMERS.

for many different bass, steelhead, and trout patterns.

3. Use some household tools you may already own. Instead of a fly tying-specific material keeper, I like to use small plastic hair ties to attach materials to my vise when I tie streamers. Also, when tying streamers I like to use a regular plastic comb instead of a bodkin to detangle materials. Once you are finished tying your fly, you can use general household super glue to keep it from falling apart (Zap-a-Gap is my preferred option).

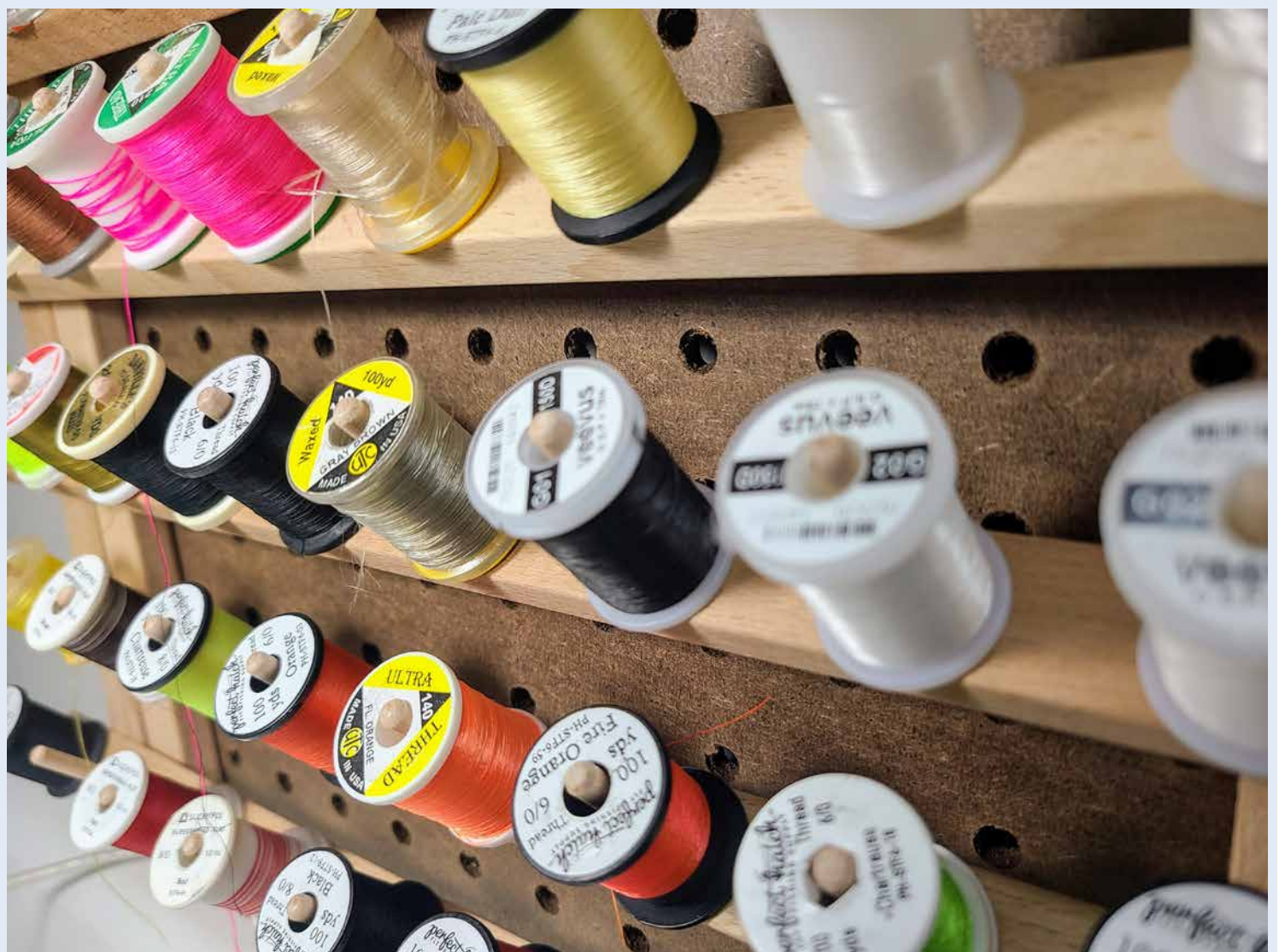
4. Avoid the tools you don't need.

There may be a time and place for some of these tools, but they are often only be used if you tie professionally or plan to tie very specific types of flies. These tools include foam body cutters, curved scissors, bobbin threaders, tweezers, thread splitters, fly-tying combs, material clips, and extended body twisters.

5. Not all threads are the same.

Just like with tippet, it can be tricky figuring out the different thread sizes to use. Many threads are measured in denier, which is basically the number of strands in each thread. If you are tying small trout flies you will primarily want 70D or smaller, medium-sized streamers are best tied with 140D, and your larger bass and pike flies are easier to tie with 210D. Using 210 denier thread on your average nymph will be way too bulky and can lead to problems like crowding your hook eye (more on that later). You may also see thread in sizes like 6/0 and 8/0. Thread in those sizes get smaller as the numbers increase, so a 6/0 thread works well on medium-sized nymphs and 8/0 is ideal for hooks 14 and smaller.

6. Keep even and consistent thread pressure. Keeping even thread tension is something that you will just need to practice. The tension needed will also change depending on the strength of your thread, which means you can and should use more tension when using thicker thread. Once you have figured out that pressure, it is important to keep that pressure even throughout your entire fly. Some bobbins allow



FLY TYING THREAD IS MEASURED IN "DENIER," WHICH IS ESSENTIALLY THE NUMBER OF STRANDS IN THE THREAD.

you to dial in the tension on the thread, which can be extremely helpful.

You should also keep in mind that the material you tie to your hook will naturally want to rotate around the hook in the same direction as you are tying. So when trying to tie material on the top of your fly, you may need to bias it slightly towards you as the thread pressure will slightly pull the material in the same direction you are wrapping the thread.

7. Spin your bobbin. Spinning your bobbin counterclockwise will flatten out your thread. This can be helpful when tying small thread-bodied flies for an even uniform look. Spinning your bobbin counterclockwise will also help you catch material to tie onto your hook as it makes the thread naturally want to pull towards the back of the hook. You can also spin your bobbin clockwise to "cord up" your thread. This technique can be helpful to build thread bumps on your

hook to keep your materials from sliding up or down the hook.

8. Be consistent. I'll admit, I get pretty distracted when I'm tying flies. I'll tie one fly, then think "wouldn't this be better if I added _____," then every fly ends up being a little different. There is nothing wrong with that style of tying, but if you want to become a better and more consistent tyer, you should do what Paul Johnson recommends and tie at least six identical flies every time you sit down to tie.

9. Experiment. I know I just said to be consistent, but there really are no rules in fly tying. That's most of the fun. Try something different, use a new material, combine your favorite parts of your favorite patterns. There is a level of enjoyment with catching a fish on a fly that you tied, but catching one on a fly that you designed and tied is that much more fun. Then once you have dialed in a new pat-

tern, you can work on consistency.

10. Don't crowd the hook eye! It's like John Mulaney's joke about writing "happy birthday" on a banner. You get "happy birt" down and realize you don't have any room left, so you end up writing "hday" in tiny, crooked, unreadable letters at the end. Just like writing a banner you will often become overconfident and think to yourself "I have plenty of room left," only to end up right at the eye without even starting on the head or thorax. You'll thank me when you are on the water and only have half of a #16 hook eye left to get your tippet through!

Editor's Note: Jason Swingen is the Gitchie Gume Chapter vice president and resides in Duluth. Check out his outdoors blog at www.js-outdoors.com



DIFFERENT TOOLS ARE USEFUL FOR DIFFERENT TYPES OF FLIES. A BODKIN AND A HAIR STACKER ARE PARTICULARLY CONVENIENT FOR NYMPHS AND DRY FLIES.



LEFT: STUDENTS FROM PARKER'S PRAIRIE HIGH WADED THROUGH SPRUCE CREEK THIS FALL, COLLECTING AQUATIC MACROINVERTEBRATES TO LEARN ABOUT THE CREEK'S HEALTH. SPRUCE CREEK IS HOME TO A CURRENT DNR TROUT STOCKING PROJECT THAT BEGAN IN 2019.



RIGHT: AN EAGLE RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT LOOKS CLOSELY AT A SAMPLE OF WATER THROUGH A MAGNIFIED BOX TO SEE IF THERE ARE ANY INSECTS TO BE DISCOVERED. THESE STUDENTS COLLECTED INSECTS FROM A POND NEARBY THEIR SCHOOL.

As Minnesota's Trout in the Classroom program grows, so does its impact on teachers, students, and their families. With 10 new and 50 returning schools participating this year, hundreds of students in grades 3 to 12 are learning about watersheds, ecology, water quality, aquatic macroinvertebrates, fish biology, and, of course, trout. TIC immerses and exposes students to these topics throughout the school year as they explore local bodies of water, engage in hands-on lessons, and care for the trout until their release in the spring. This program provides an essential component of maintaining the waters we care about and fulfilling MNTU's mission through connecting youth to their local watersheds. Curious what a TIC set up looks like in a classroom? Minnesota Bound filmed a segment about the program that aired this spring. Find it on the Minnesota Bound YouTube channel!

Each fall, students participate in lessons about aquatic macroinvertebrates, learning about their life cycles, biology, and the roles they play in the environment. This year, we collected and learned about insects in some new metro area waters including Eagle Creek, Otter Creek, and Bertram Lake. Equipped with waders, nets, insect ID sheets, and excitement, we caught everything from leeches and scuds to stoneflies, damselflies, creek chubs and more! For some of the TIC students unable to get to a body of water, MNTU educators brought insects to their classrooms. Regardless of how it happens, insects provide a tangible and visual learning experience for students that immediately connects them with the natural world. The opportunity to get up close and personal with creatures they never knew existed sparks a curiosity to learn more for even the most disinterested, skeptical, or scared students.

particulates from our waters. They are a valuable part of maintaining functional and healthy watersheds during every part of their life cycle, both in and out of the water. Teaching about Minnesota's aquatic ecosystems using insects is a great tool that gives students a close-up look at a part of nature that is otherwise hidden and unknown. For students of all ages, the experiences of holding a four-inch long dobsonfly larvae, watching a stonefly do push ups to pass water over its gills, seeing a caddis fly emerge from what they thought was just a stick, discovering the dragonfly nymph perfectly camouflaged on a leaf, or observing the swim pattern of a burrowing mayfly, are ones they will not soon forget.

Currently, tanks are set up and pre-cycling to establish robust and healthy bacterial colonies that will support the bioload of the system as eggs hatch and grow into fingerlings. Students help with tank set up and learn about trout habitat, discussing how their tank systems are similar or different from a natural creek or stream. The nitrogen cycle takes one to four weeks to complete, and during this time students practice testing the water chemistry for ammonia, nitrite, and nitrate, an important tank maintenance task that will be done regularly throughout the school year.



FOURTH GRADE STUDENTS GATHER AROUND THEIR SAMPLING BUCKETS TO HOLD AND IDENTIFY THE INSECTS THEY COLLECTED FROM EAGLE CREEK IN SAVAGE. EVEN THOUGH IT WAS MOSTLY SCUDS, LEECHES, AND CREEK CHUBS, THEY HAD A BLAST!

EGG TRANSPORTERS NEEDED

This year, our eggs will arrive on Thursday, December 9. Trout in the Classroom teachers and students around Minnesota rely on a team of dedicated volunteers to make egg delivery day a success. Your role will be to pick up and transport fish food and a cooler of 300 rainbow trout eggs, ensuring their safe arrival to schools. Egg sorting and distribution will take place in Burnsville, with pick ups starting around 10AM. Each volunteer's time commitment will depend on their availability, with the goal to have all eggs dropped off by the end of the school day. If you are able to deliver to one or more metro area schools, be the leg of a longer transport to one of our outstate schools, or have questions, please contact Amber Taylor at mntu.education@gmail.com. Visit the MNTIC website to learn more about the program and other ways you can get involved.

Insects are a source of food for trout and countless other organisms, serving to filter debris and other



THE MAYFLY NYMPHS THAT YOU MIGHT FIND IN YOUR LOCAL STREAM WILL EVENTUALLY TRANSFORM INTO ADULTS LIKE THE ONE SHOWN ON THE RIGHT.

Studying the life cycles of underwater creatures is kind of like watching an alien sci-fi movie. Here's a summary of the movie: We zoom in on a bunch of tiny creatures crawling around on rocks and plants on the bottom of the river. The water is like a never-ending hurricane in the atmosphere of a far away planet. If the creatures let go of the rock they'll get swept away—forever. Sometimes they'll live down there for years, eating algae and other tiny creatures. Until one day, they float to the edge of their atmosphere! Only a few will survive floating through the hurricane and make it to the edge. Once they break through the atmosphere, they pop out of their skin, grow wings and fly away into outer space. But they'll only live for a little while longer, and before they die they have to find a mate and carry on their species. Sounds like a pretty crazy movie right? Well, it's not sci-fi, it's nature!

These creatures that live underwater and have no bones in their body, are called aquatic macroinvertebrates (or just "macros" for short). It's important to study macros because they can tell us about water cleanliness. Some species can't survive if there is pollution in the water (scientists call this "low tolerance"). Others can live in very high levels of pollution ("high tolerance"). Knowing which macros are living in the

water tells us how healthy the ecosystem is in general, making these bugs indicator species.

Most of the macros found underwater are in a nymph or larva stage of development. Some go through a metamorphosis to change between life stages. Others grow slowly, molting many times before becoming an adult. Most macros eat algae and other vegetation, though some are predators. There are three groups, called "orders," of macros we commonly look for in trout streams (and other water bodies) that tell us the water is very clean: stoneflies, mayflies, and caddisflies.

Stoneflies are very ancient insects. They were alive even before the dinosaurs. Stonefly nymphs are recognizable by their long narrow bodies with an exoskeleton, two tails, and feathery gills by their legs. They will be nymphs underwater for one to three years. Unlike the other orders, stonefly nymphs crawl onto dry land to hatch into an adult. Adult stoneflies have long wings that lay flat over their back. They will land on vegetation near the water and will live there for a few days to weeks. To attract mates, they will drum their bodies against the vegetation. The female will fly and skid over the water to lay the eggs.

Mayfly nymphs look similar to stone-

flies, but they have three tails and gills along their abdomens. The nymphs will live underwater for one year. To change into adults, mayflies go through two phases. The first is when nymphs swim to the surface, hatch out of their skin and fly away to nearby vegetation. They are called a "dun" in this first phase. Within a day they may change again into the second phase with clear wings, called a "spinner." As adults, they have wings that stand straight up and three long tails. Once they become spinners, they will fly into a large swarm to mate. After mating, the females will land on the water to lay their eggs.

Caddis larva are a lot like underwater caterpillars. They have soft green bodies with a brown or black head. As larvae, many caddis carry their homes on their backs. Using a sticky silk they produce, they attach sand, pebbles, sticks, and other materials together to make a tube or purse-shaped case. Caddis live on rocks and graze on algae and other vegetation. They will live underwater for up to a year. Similar to butterflies and moths, caddis will turn their case into a cocoon. A pupa will form wings and legs, then hatch from the cocoon and quickly swim to the surface to become a flying adult. Adult caddis look similar to small moths, with wings that form a tent shape over their abdomens. They will land on nearby vegetation and mate.

Females will lay eggs near the edge of the water.

If you're interested in exploring the sci-fi realm of macros, here's an easy way you can do it! First, you will need to find a pond or stream near you and make sure you can easily access the water. The simplest way to catch a lot of macros is by using a leaf pack trap. Here's how to make and use this trap: You'll need a mesh bag that onions or oranges come in. Fill the bag with dry, dead leaves and tie the end closed.

Then bring the trap to the water body you'll be studying. Place the bag in the water so it is fully submerged and well secured to the bottom. Make sure it is not floating or swaying in the current. It's helpful to tie it off to a rock or log with some twine. Leave your trap in the water for at least one week to allow time for the leaves to become soaked and macros to start eating them.

Once you retrieve your trap, carefully open it and look on all the leaves for any macros. Once you find a macro, use your fingers or a plastic spoon to scoop them into a plastic tub with some water in it so you can see them better.

Judging by the macros you find, try to identify whether the water quality is good, fair, or poor using a biotic index.



CADDISFLIES LOOK LIKE CATERPILLARS AS LARVA AND SMALL MOTHS AS ADULTS. STONEFLIES LIVE AS NYMPHS UNDERWATER AND HATCH INTO FLYING ADULTS.

WISE TO CHOOSE WISEL CREEK

AS YOUR NEXT ANGLING DESTINATION

By Dustan Hoffman, MNTU Habitat Project Manager



WISEL CREEK HAS UNDERGONE SIGNIFICANT HABITAT WORK BY MNTU. PICTURED ABOVE IS THE "CHICKENTOWN BRIDGE" SECTION OF THE STREAM.

Many Minnesota trout anglers are aware that the southeast corner of the state contains a geologically diverse ecosystem known as the Driftless Area. For those unfamiliar with the Driftless Area's uniqueness, it is arguably the most highly concentrated number of spring-fed trout streams per mile found anywhere in the world. Productivity levels of invertebrates and trout are extraordinary in these streams due to the rich quantity of limestone rock that the waters flow in and around. The limestone makes the water's pH more basic than slightly acidic rainfall. Lucky we are to find more than 140 of these trout-abundant spring-fed creeks so close to home in southeast Minnesota.

There are a variety of ways one could sort out streams to determine which waters they will choose to fish. One could target waters that have brook trout only, brown trout only, or both species, and even include rainbow trout into the decision making as well. You could choose waters that are of a certain size or base flow allowing the option to bank fish, wade in the water, or drift by boat. Other ways to choose waters could be by the number of bridge accesses, the presence of an angler easement, or by streams with completed Habitat Improvement (HI) projects. If the latter two of those determination processes rings true with you, it would be wise for you to choose Wisel Creek as one of your next angling destinations.

Wisel Creek is in Fillmore County, near the Iowa border and the small communities of Canton, Newburg, and Mabel. The only bridge accesses are the

County Road 18 (CR 18) "Chickentown Bridge" and two roads that run south off CR 18. Measuring almost nine miles in length, 80 percent of Wisel Creek contains either an angler easement, or runs through state lands. Another way to access Wisel Creek is to park where CR 12 crosses the South Fork of the Root River (the "Million Dollar Bridge") and walk upstream on State Forest Land to the confluence with Wisel Creek. A set of extremely eager anglers could stage vehicles at the CR 12 and CR 18 bridges and fish from bridge to bridge, but the fishing in this stretch is so good, that it's unlikely one would be able to diligently fish that entire stretch in a single day.

The DNR completed a HI project on Wisel Creek in 2008, covering 4,100 feet downstream of the Cedar Valley Road bridge. In summer 2020 Minnesota TU improved trout habitat on a 7,400 foot long segment from the CR 18 "Chickentown Bridge" downstream. This past September MNTU completed habitat work on another 4,100 foot long segment downstream of the 403rd Avenue bridge. This bridge is located a short distance south off CR 18 and at the upstream end of the designated trout water. In all, nearly three miles of habitat has been improved on Wisel Creek. If you find yourself attracted to fishing one of these HI project locations, please continue your angling adventure beyond the project reaches to observe some of the differences between project sites and those that have not received work.

Fishing beyond the HI project area will allow you the opportunity to see firsthand the many reasons HI projects are

important to the long-term protection of our cherished trout resources. The three easiest characteristic differences to look for when comparing stream reaches that have had HI projects versus reaches that have not, are high eroding banks, channel width/depth ratios, and overhead tree cover. High and unstable eroding banks are common in the Driftless Area, due to early settlers unintentionally misusing the landscape, which led to landslides and an abundance of topsoil being washed into the valley floors. Today, along many stream corridors, shallow-rooted box-elder trees lean over the streams and their canopies prevent deeper rooted

grasses from growing. These invasive tree species allow streambanks to erode beneath them, causing bank destruction during high water events. As trees are washed downstream, they smash into the banks, widening them and bringing in unhealthy amounts of sediment that smother habitat needed by invertebrates and trout. When we see long sections of trout rivers and streams that are straight, flat, wide, and shallow, we are typically looking at degraded sections. When HI projects are completed, the banks are lowered and stabilized, the undesirable trees are removed and native seed mixes are used to encourage deep rooting na-



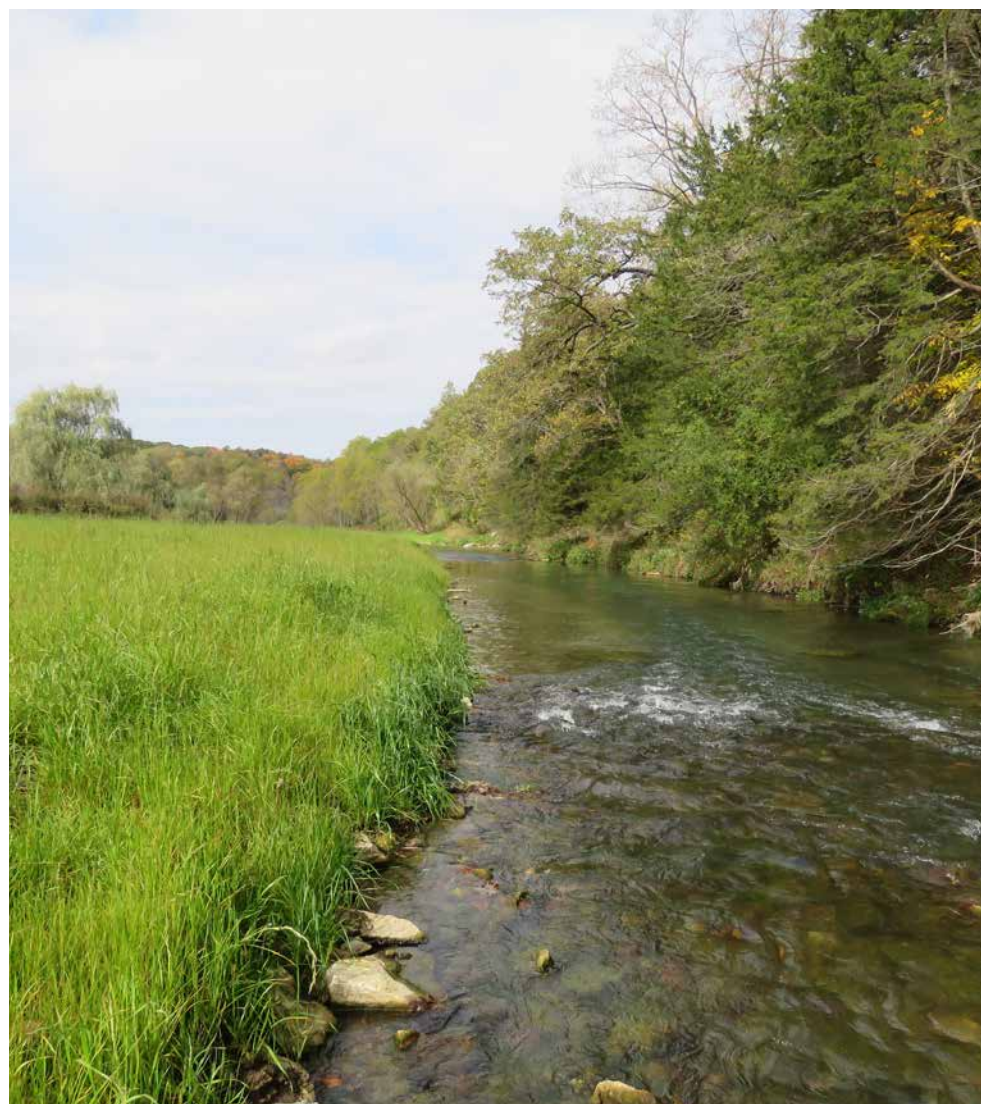
WETLAND SCRAPES ARE INCLUDED ON SOME MNTU PROJECTS TO BENEFIT BIRDS, REPTILES, AMPHIBIANS AND OTHER WILDLIFE.

tive plant species that hold soil in place. Channel characteristics are created that maintain habitat diversity such as riffles, runs, and pools. Restoring some bends to the system (sinuosity) also helps maintain habitat diversity. Some of the trees cut to enable lowering high banks are used as pool logs or bank features to provide overhead cover for trout.

Many projects also create small basins of wetland scrapes to benefit birds, reptiles, amphibians, and other wildlife. What is a wetland scrape you may ask? Wetland scrapes are small depressions created in the floodplain that are intended to capture runoff water or spring water seeps. They provide habitat for reptiles, amphibians, insects and birds. Often there are large logs placed in the wetland scrapes so the species using them can perch, rest, or sun themselves. The 2021 Wisel Creek habitat project site has several wetland scrapes, as well as additional bird habitat. Some of the enormous quantity of soil removed from high streambanks to allow the stream to access the floodplain was used to benefit birds. Removing this soil reconnects the stream to a more sustainable floodplain than when it had been choked between high streambanks. Excess soil was placed in two large mounds far from the stream and the

faces of the mounds were shaved vertically to mimic the face of a streambank or bluff-side. Bank swallows and kingfishers can make homes here.

The 2021 project site was severely degraded, mostly made up of long, flat, wide, and shallow water with high vertical banks. There were three riffles within the stretch, but the riffles had built up over time (were aggraded) and were backing up water much like a dam. By lowering those three aggraded riffles, longer riffles once again became functional, bringing greater habitat diversity with more riffle-run-pool combinations. Riffles help to oxygenate water, provide ideal spawning areas for trout, and produce great habitat for the invertebrates trout prefer. With a full growing season under its belt, vegetation on the 2020 project site downstream of “Chickentown Bridge” has become well established. Collectively, the contractors and MNTU staff noticed that it is rare not to see one or more cars parked at the bridge nearly every day. People are out fishing MNTU’s habitat projects! With so much angler easement access, and nearly three miles of habitat restored, Wisel Creek should be near the top of your bucket list to fish.



STUNNING RIFFLE-RUN-POOL SECTIONS ARE A JOY TO FISH ON WISEL CREEK.

THE GOLDEN TROUT OF FALL

AN APPRECIATION OF THE SPLENDOR OF NATURE

By Tom Carpenter

As the mornings put some chill in the air and the leaves begin to turn colors, few folks think of trout fishing. As much as I am a hunter in my heart, I am a hunter of fish as well.

So it is that, sometime in September, my mind and heart and attention turn to trout, if only for a morning or afternoon.

We head down toward the stream, the bird dog and I, through meadows looking like autumn. I think she thinks it must be odd that we are not hunting, but then again I think “She doesn’t care when we are in a place such as this and she is free to romp and roam. She lives in the now. I try.”

The last of the hardy fall wildflowers bloom. The goldenrod is turning brown. Above, the forested bluffs twinge with reds and yellows and russets toward the full glory they will be in a couple weeks.

Finally, the stream. I hear it before I see it, and then smell it before my eyes lay upon it: springwater fresh, gin-clear, cold and pure, rushing over cobble after every bend and then zooming off once more after pooling up again.

I could tell you a tale and say that the fishing itself is beside the point and that it is the being here that matters. And while that is true, it is only part of the story. I am also here to catch fish. Gold-sided brown trout memories that I will slip back in the water to carry me through winter, to catch again next spring and summer...and two, just two, to pack out and put on ice for the trip home and to eat fresh.

Two facts make my dog an ideal trout fishing dog. One, she is more interested



in birds and mice and rabbits and squirrels and butterflies than fish, so spends most of her time back in the meadow or forest or whatever we are fishing through, in search of her game. Two, she is not much interested in water. This can be a liability when a rooster falls into the slough while we are pheasant hunting, but it’s quite the handy trait when you don’t need a little French Brittany sloshing through a trouty hold.

And so I fish. Today, in the spirit of the kind of hunting we are not doing, it is a simple size 10 gold hook and size 7 split shot drifting nightcrawler halves through riffles and runs and into holes.

At first, I focus on the holes, but not

much is doing other than a few small but pretty trout. The bigger fish must be feeding harder, so I start concentrating on faster water, and get a good hit. Setting the hook fast again (to be able to release any fish I don’t want to creel) it’s a hookup. A nice brown trout leaps out of the water then streaks down the run and bulldogs and flashes gold through the hole before I finally net it: Not as big as I thought, but bigger than the others, the perfect eater.

A couple hours later, I have released a couple handfuls of trout and have one more in my vest. I fish the run into one last pool, this one green-clear with depth, until finally, a take.

This fish makes my hands shake and heart thump, and I slide into the water to net it.

Flanks of the goldst gold fading up to silver blue. Dime-sized spots of ruby red and inky black. Hooked jaw. Toothy maw. It’s all my shaking hand can do to hold the trout’s ample girth as I snap a forever picture in my mind’s eye and then watch it shimmer off in an autumn-gold flash into the current.

Our trout season is over.

TU member Tom Carpenter can never quite get enough of Minnesota’s Driftless.

SEASON'S END

TROUT FISHING THE DRIFTLESS WINTER

By Bob Luck

My life settled into a comfortable routine after I retired a few years ago. I finished out my fishing season in October, got my fill of turkey and football on Thanksgiving, and flew off to Japan in early December, where I had lived for about two decades in my past life as a corporate serf. Tokyo is a steamy, rainy mess in the summer, but the winter skies are blue, with daytime highs in the 50s and 60s. Seafood is at its prime, with freshly-brewed sake to wash it down. If I found myself missing winter, world-class ski resorts were a couple of hours away, boasting deep snow and real mountains, features that are sadly lacking in the Midwest. I stayed in Japan until early March, when Minnesota again became suitable for human habitation, and the blue-winged olives started hatching on Driftless streams.

Last year, the pandemic forced a change in plans. Japan, population 125 million, saw 200,000 COVID cases in 2020. Minnesota, population 5.5 million, had 400,000. American visitors were about as popular as skunks at a picnic, and the Japanese government barred Americans from entering the country.

I am not a fan of trout fishing in the winter. When it is cold out, I want to be moving to keep myself warm, not standing in an ice-cold stream trying to tie a fly onto a leader with numb fingers. I don't understand how it is even possible when the temperatures dip below freezing; more time is spent de-icing the rod guides than actually fishing. A friend of mine was out a few years ago on a sub-freezing day and dropped his rod in the water. A few minutes after he pulled it out, the reel had frozen into a block of ice. October may be the best month of the season: no mosquitoes, the weeds are dying back, temperatures are pleasant, and the trout in their spawning colors are as beautiful as the flaming gold and red hillsides. It goes downhill fast in November—temperatures plunge, clouds roll in, and the trout are either on their redds and should be left alone, or else skinny and worn out after spawning. I had made a few November trips down to Whitewater State Park to fish for the big rainbows the DNR stocks there every fall, but otherwise I generally left the streams alone after October 31.

Last December, as boredom settled in at our house like an unwelcome relative, I started reconsidering my aversion to winter fishing. It helped that the weather was freakishly warm, with several days in the 30s and 40s, and even, once, in the low 50s. The trout season in Minnesota and Wisconsin is closed in November and December, presumably to prevent anglers from being harvested by over-eager hunters. Minnesota created an exception a few years ago, allowing year-round angling in a few towns and state parks in the Southeast where hunting is prohibited. Iowa doesn't close its fishing season—maybe their DNR figures that the hunters down there have more common sense—or maybe they have decided to let anglers wear



CANFIELD CREEK EMERGES FROM ITS SOURCE CAVE IN FORESTVILLE STATE PARK.

big boy pants and decide for themselves how much risk to take. I was intrigued by the idea of fishing in Iowa—I had a couple of fantastic days in early October with hoppers many years ago—but I decided to stick with close and comfortable, and limited my excursions to Minnesota.

On December 4, I headed down to Forestville State Park. The South Branch of the Root is the marquee stream of this park, but I had my eye on Canfield Creek, which flows nearly fully formed out of a cave at the south edge of the park and flows north for about a mile-and-a-half before dumping into the South Branch. I figured the constant water temperature of this spring creek would be a plus in December, and it is so pretty that I wouldn't mind driving two hours to hike its length, even if the fish weren't biting. Feeling no need to arrive at the crack of dawn, I pulled into the angler's parking lot at 10. The skies were clear, winds light, and the air temperature was in the high 20s, heading towards the high 30s. I headed down the hill to the South Branch and ran into four anglers as I walked upstream towards the mouth of Canfield. That's more anglers than I saw when I fished the sulphur hatch on the South Branch in June. I was not the only one with cabin fever.

Despite the crowd on the South Branch, I was alone on Canfield. I started to work my way up the stream, casting tandem nymphs with my 13' Tenkara rod. I soon felt a slight tug as my rig drifted through a narrow seam. So slight I couldn't really tell whether it was a fish or a weed, and by the time I reacted, there was nothing. I swung the flies over and inspected them for weed residue, but found nothing. I cast into the same place and felt the same gentle tug. I lifted the rod tip immediately, and found myself attached to a 6" brown. Not exactly a trophy, but it was the first fish I had ever caught in December, and it always seems like a small miracle whenever I catch a fish on

a fly. Over the next five hours I worked my way up to the mouth. Although I spooked plenty of fish in the shallows, most of them were stacked up in the deeper holes, and that was where I saw most of the action. I rarely got a solid take on the nymphs, sometimes I felt a subtle tug and sometimes the line just stopped moving. Most of the time, I reacted too slowly, and the fish had already ejected the nymph. If I had a better reaction time or attention span, it would have been a 30-fish day. I settled for 10. The largest fish was just over 13 inches. It was a bit skinny after spawning, but fought hard and did not waste any time darting back into the deep water after I released it. Right around noon, a pod of trout started rising to blue-winged olives for about 30 minutes. With my rod rigged for nymphing, all I could do was eat my lunch and watch. The fish were in a shallow, clear riffle and I would have been hard-pressed to catch any of them even if I had been equipped to cast a dry fly.

After my successful outing in Forestville, I set my sights on East Beaver Creek. East Beaver shares many of Canfield's traits: short, large spring flow, constant water temperature, and surrounded by a state park. I had had several productive outings here during the summer, and I was eager to try it out in the winter. It was 30 degrees when I left Minneapolis early in the morning on December 10. I drove through Rochester and turned left

on I-90 towards La Crosse. The outdoor temperature reading on the dashboard began ticking up, touching 40 as I exited on Highway 76 and descended into the valley 500 feet below. Two minutes later, the thermometer had retreated to 26, and it stayed there until I arrived at the creek. Despite the cold start, it was a beautiful clear day with light winds and temperatures that eventually did warm into the high 40s. I had seen good hatches of blue-winged olives here in the past, so I packed along a 4-piece dry fly rod to keep the Tenkara rig company. I never bothered to assemble it, seeing only a few flies on the water and perhaps three or four rises all day. Not that I was knocking them dead with the Tenkara. It was lunchtime before I caught my first fish, and I ended the day with a grand total of three. The trout were stacked up in the deep holes, just as they had been at Canfield, and I felt plenty of gentle tugs, but I just couldn't seal the deal. I was overconfident, impatient, unlucky or all three. At 3:30, with the sun behind the bluffs, I gave up and walked back to my car.

After a brief cold spell, the temperature climbed back into the upper 30s, and I decided to go back to Forestville for two days, booking a motel in Preston for the night of December 21. I had the whole place to myself—the owner left the door unlocked and told me to call her if I had any problems. I returned to Canfield Creek the first day, and fished upstream

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 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.

for a half-mile, catching a respectable six fish. At about 3PM, I started heading back to my car, stopping at one deep hole where I'd caught a couple previously. Over the next 45 minutes, I pulled 12 trout out of that hole, ranging from 10 to 15 inches, with a strike on nearly every cast. I played the fish carefully, avoiding unnecessary splashing and landing them a bit downstream. I don't know if it was the TLC, or the late-afternoon gloom, but nothing seemed to put the fish down, and I probably could have caught several more if I had hung around until dark. I declared victory, ordered a takeout pizza to celebrate, and got up the next morning, eager to try Forestville Creek. How did I do? Let's just say it was a repeat of East Beaver. The next day an old-fashioned cold front moved in, bringing six inches of snow and sub-zero temperatures. That's it for my winter trout season, I told myself. Unless we see a January thaw, that is.

Editor's Note: Bob Luck is the current Twin Cities Chapter president and an avid angler.



BOB LUCK ENJOYED THE 2020 WINTER TROUT SEASON AND IS PICTURED ABOVE WITH A NICE BROWN TROUT.

CALL FOR MNTU COMMITTEE MEMBERS

MNTU NEEDS YOUR INPUT

By Carl Haensel

With the completion of the new strategic plan for MNTU, there are many exciting changes afoot across the state. As we work to implement new programs and efforts, there are opportunities for Trout Unlimited members to play a role in helping to guide and create the aspects of the organization that you love.

The following are committees that help organize and implement some of the key activities of Minnesota TU. You can also check out the specific call for involvement in our advocacy work on page 6, led by our Executive Director, John Lenczewski.

If you're inspired to get involved, check out these different options, and get in touch with Carl Haensel to start the process as we move forward.

Education Committee

The work of the Education Committee focuses on coordinating our Trout in the Classroom, Fishing Skills, Fly Tying and Foster the Outdoors mentorship efforts, as well as other programs to engage all ages of people in our mission. If you're excited about getting kids and adults out on the water fishing and learning about our trout waters around Minnesota, getting involved in this committee might be for you.

Fundraising Committee

The work of the Fundraising Committee spans all of MNTU's fundraising opportunities. Including our Riverkeeper's Council, Annual Appeal, Film Showcase, apparel and more, there are a number of specific components to play a role in, as well as the chance to create new fundraising streams for our organization.

Communications Committee

The work of the Communications Committee centers on the regular operation of our email, website, social media and print media. Broadly, the committee works together to share materials and

keep MNTU members and the public informed and involved in what's going on with our organization. There are opportunities to help out with photography, newsletter articles, social media management, print media, signage and other components of how MNTU reaches out.

Email Carl with your interest in getting involved or with any questions or ideas at carlhaensel@hotmail.com Virtual meetings will be scheduled in December to kick off renewed committee activities.



A WILD MINNESOTA BROWN TROUT FROM THE DRIFTLESS AREA.

BAMBOO ROD RAFFLE

OWN A PIECE OF TROUT UNLIMITED HISTORY



ALONG THE BANKS OF MICHIGAN'S AU SABLE RIVER, 15 INDIVIDUALS MET AND FOUNDED TROUT UNLIMITED. ON THIS PROPERTY WAS A LARGE RED OAK THAT FELL IN 2005 DURING A SEVERE STORM. WOOD FROM THIS OAK, DUBBED THE "FOUNDER'S TREE," HAS BEEN USED TO CRAFT HANDMADE RODS TO RAISE FUNDS FOR TROUT UNLIMITED CHAPTERS. STEVE SOBIENIAK OF ROOT RIVER ROD CO. HAS CRAFTED AN OAK REEL SEAT FROM THIS VERY TREE.

- 8', 5WT, 4OZ, 2-PIECE WITH EXTRA TIP
- HOLLOW MADE, MEDIUM FAST ACTION
- VARNISHED FLAME FINISH
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TICKETS \$10, LIMITED AT 250 TICKETS
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PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE GREAT LAKES FLY SHOP, THE SUPERIOR FLY ANGLER OR THE ROOT RIVER ROD CO. OR MAIL A CHECK PAYABLE TO GITCHE GUMEE TROUT UNLIMITED TO:

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5412 AVONDALE STREET
DULUTH, MN 55804

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO PAY VIA CREDIT CARD, CONTACT ANDREW AT ASTCROIX4@GMAIL.COM OR 612-790-0651

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. You can also make MNTU a beneficiary of your 401k, IRA or life insurance

policy. 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

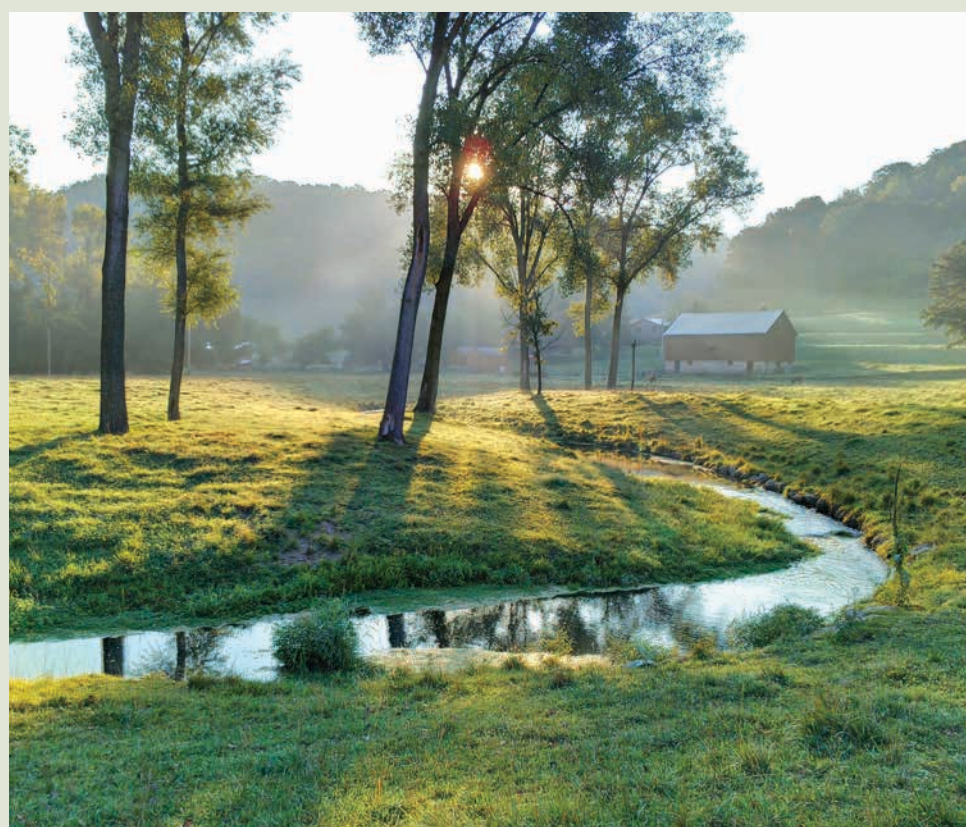
The official bequest language for Minnesota Trout Unlimited is:

Unrestricted General Legacy:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, EIN# 52-1766036, 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, EIN# 52-1766036, my (specific personal property item(s) and/or real property located at _____) to be used at the discretion of its governing board."



Gift of Residuary Estate:

"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, EIN# 52-1766036, 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 or at 612-670-1629.



FLY TYING

WITH LAUGHING TROUT FLY FISHING

By Paul Johnson



Elk Hair Caddis

The Elk Hair Caddis is one of my main “go-to” flies. I will fish it from the spring through summer and into the fall.

It is a very simple fly pattern with only three materials. Dubbing, hackle and, of course, elk hair. It is also pretty straightforward to tie. That is, after you have tied a few dozen.

I have a confession to make. When I first started tying flies, I could not tie an Elk Hair Caddis that was worth a hoot. The first steps in the tying process of getting the dubbing and hackle wraps were easy. After that, I would tie in the elk hair wing. It would look good until I would whip finish the fly and all the elk hair would twist around to the side of the hook shank. My solution at that time was to add more glue!

Since that time, I have made a few changes as to how I tie this fly that

makes it easier to tie and also more durable. The first change was to switch from bull to cow elk hair. I have found the cow elk to be a little softer which will compress easier. The next change was to switch from 6/0 to 8/0 tying thread. You have to be careful with the lighter thread, but using it along with the cow elk seems to help me get tighter thread wraps. The other big change is to lift up small segments of the butt ends and get thread wraps down into the bundle of hair. To finish up, I will make a couple thread wraps where I originally tied in the elk hair wing, and after this I go underneath the butt ends and whip finish right behind the hook eye.

Give this a try and see if you can master the Elk Hair Caddis.

If you have any questions or comments, please let me know.

Paulwaconia@gmail.com



Materials List

Hook: Dry Fly Hook, Size 12-18
 Thread: 6/0 Brown
 Tail: Mayfly Brown Zelon or Coq de Leon Dark-Speckled
 Abd: Tan Superfine Dubbing
 Ribbing: Brown Rooster Hackle
 Wing: Elk Hair



Step 1. Start your tying thread at the 2/3 mark and lay a thread base back to the bend of the hook.



Step 2. Prepare a rooster hackle by closely clipping some barbs off of the stem, and tie in at the bend of the book.



Step 3. Form a small dubbing noodle on your tying thread.



Step 4. Dub the body of the fly from the bend of the hook to the 2/3 mark. The body should have an even taper from back to front.



Step 5. Palmer the hackle to the 2/3 mark with evenly spaced wraps.



Step 6. Clean and stack a clump of elk hair. Tie in starting with two loose wraps, pull tight and secure with six or seven tight wraps of thread.



Step 7. Lift about one third of the butt ends of elk hair and make a tight wrap at the point. Repeat twice more.



Step 8. Make several tight thread wraps on the bare hook right behind the eye.



Step 9. Make several more tight thread wraps at the point where you originally tied in the elk hair.



Step 10. Return your thread to the eye of the hook and whip finish or make several half hitch knots. Clip tying thread.



Step 11. Clip butt ends of the elk hair at a slight upwards angle. Go fish!

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Foster *the* Outdoors

Connecting Minnesota families to the outdoors through Fly Fishing with a Volunteer Mentor

May – Mentor-Match-Up

As a volunteer mentor, we pair you up with a local Minnesota youth and a guardian. MNTU provides 2 fly rods for each youth/adult pair to use.

Summer – Go Fishing!

Exchange contact information and coordinate 2-3 outings with your youth/adult pair.

October – Fly Tying

We meet for a fly-tying session with a local fly-tying group.

January – Shop Tour

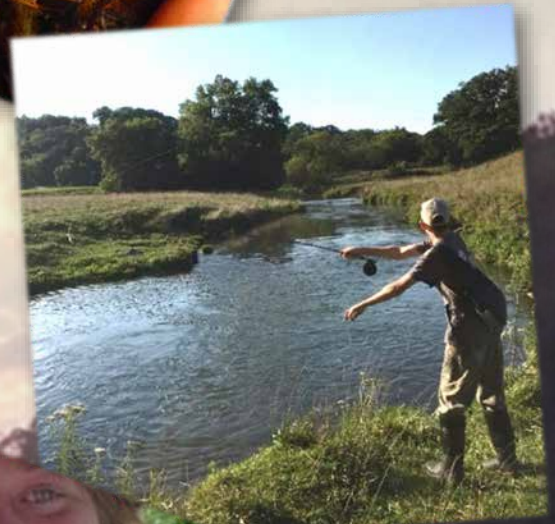
We tour a local fly shop. Review some gear options and ask questions.

March – Great Waters - Fly Fishing Expo

Introduction to the community of fly fishing.

April – End of Season

Final group outing to a trout stream. Formally thank our mentors and look forward to seeing our youth/adult pairs at TU meetings, future Expo's and as future mentors.



Sign up to be a mentor today!

FOSTER THE OUTDOORS MNTU MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

GREAT NEWS! THE MNTU FOSTER THE OUTDOORS MENTORSHIP PROGRAM WILL BE RESUMING ACTIVITIES IN 2022! THE PROGRAM HAS BEEN ON HIATUS DUE TO COVID, BUT WILL BE BACK IN 2022. TIM HEMSTAD, PROGRAM FOUNDER AND COORDINATOR SINCE THE BEGINNING IN 2017, HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY BUSY WITH YOUTH SPORTS COACHING ACTIVITIES AND TURNED OVER THE REINS TO PROGRAM MENTORS KEVIN WIER AND RICH FEMLING. KEVIN AND RICH WILL SERVE AS CO-COORDINATORS OF THE PROGRAM MOVING FORWARD. WE ARE EXCITED TO KEEP THIS PROGRAM GOING AND CONTINUE THE GREAT WORK OF CONNECTING FAMILIES TO FLY FISHING AND THE OUTDOORS THAT TIM HAS STARTED. ABOVE IS A SUMMARY OF THE PROGRAM COMPONENTS. SPECIFIC DATES AND DETAILS FOR 2022 WILL BE COMING IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER IN FEBRUARY.

IF YOU HAVE QUESTIONS OR ARE INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MENTOR, PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT KEVIN OR RICH DIRECTLY AT FOSTERTHEOUTDOORS@HOTMAIL.COM

A MONTANA ROAD TRIP

ANGLERS AFIELD SERIES

By Micah Crider • Photos by Micah Crider & Abigail Crider



ABIGAIL AND I BORROWED A RAFT FROM A FRIEND WHO LIVES IN BELGRADE, MONTANA AND FLOATED THE MADISON RIVER FOR THE FIRST TIME. WE MANAGED TO CATCH SEVERAL FISH AND HAD FUN ROWING WHAT SEEMED TO BE A NEVER-ENDING RIFFLE! FISH WERE CAUGHT ON BOTH HOPPERS AND NYMPH DROPPERS. UNFORTUNATELY, THE MOUNTAINS SURROUNDING THE RIVER WERE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO SEE DUE TO WILDFIRE SMOKE, BUT IT WAS AN AWESOME FLOAT REGARDLESS.



LEFT: AFTER SPENDING A NIGHT IN MISSOULA, WE DROVE UP TO THE FLATHEAD NATIONAL FOREST AND CAMPED FOR THREE NIGHTS. THE DRIVE ALONG THE FLATHEAD RIVER OFFERED SOME SPECTACULAR VIEWS AND GREAT CUTTHROAT FISHING.

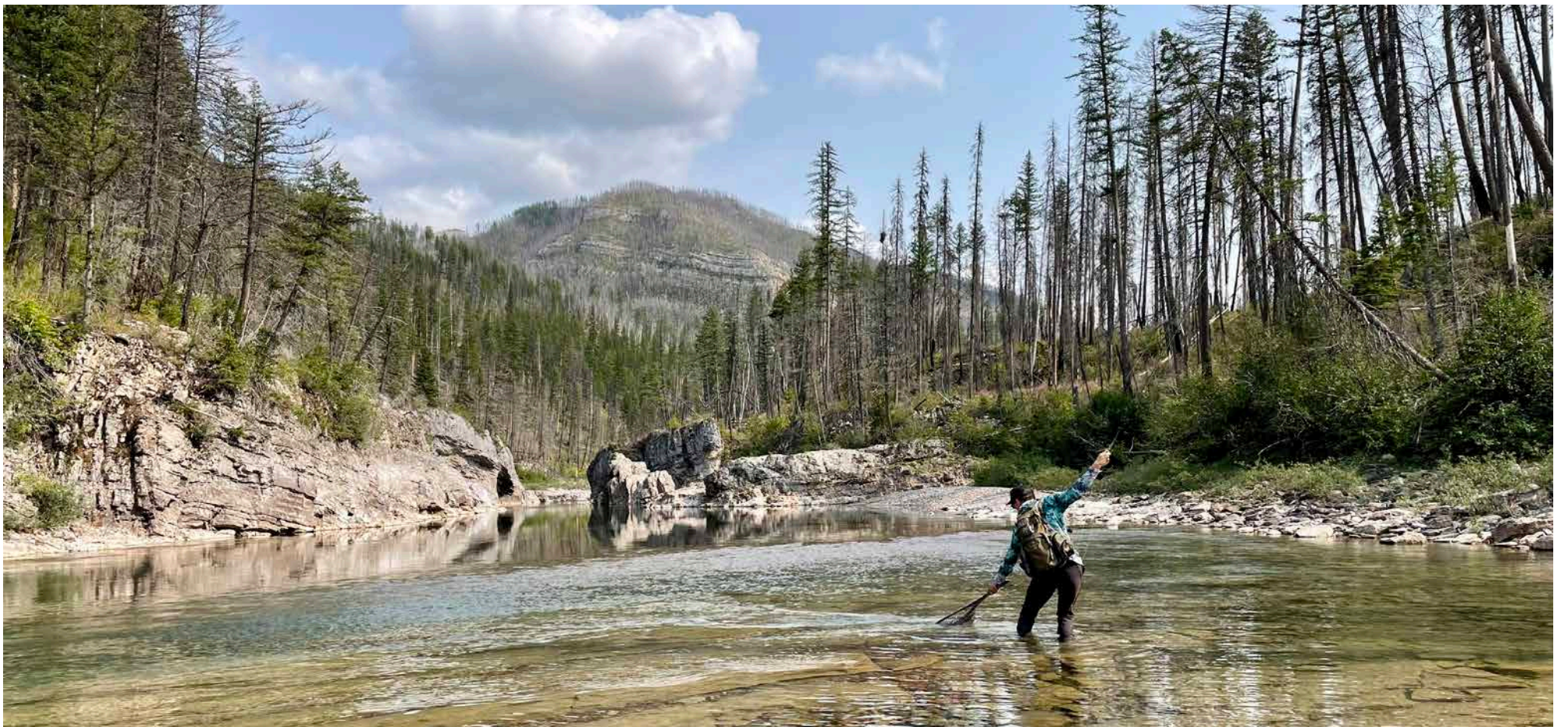
ABOVE RIGHT: WE CONNECTED WITH A MUTUAL FRIEND, BEN, WHO WORKS IN GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. EVEN THOUGH WE HADN'T EVER MET IN PERSON, WE REACHED OUT AND HE WAS HAPPY TO TAKE US ON A QUICK FLOAT IN HIS INFLATABLE DRIFT BOAT. THE FISHING WAS EXCELLENT BUT THE COMPANY WAS EVEN BETTER.

RIGHT: NEXT, WE HIKED A MULE TRAIL ON THE SIDE OF A RECENTLY BURNED MOUNTAIN RIDGE TO REACH A REMOTE PART OF THE RIVER.



LEFT: THE AREA WE HIKE WAS STUNNING. THE COLOR OF THE WATER WAS UNIQUE AND THERE WERE IMPRESSIVELY DEEP HOLES WHERE YOU COULD SEE COUNTLESS CUTTHROAT FINNING.

RIGHT: RELEASE OF A CUTTHROAT BACK INTO ONE OF THE STEEP DROPOFF HOLES. FISH WERE CAUGHT ON DRY FLIES AND IN SOME CASES YOU COULD SEE THE FISH COMING FROM 15 FEET BELOW THE SURFACE BEFORE THEY CONFIDENTLY SIPPED OUR FLIES.



ONE COULD CATCH AS MANY CUTTHROAT AS THEY PLEASED IN THIS SPOT. THE FISH WERE EAGER TO TAKE A DRY FLY ALMOST IMMEDIATELY AFTER IT LANDED ON THE WATER.



WE MANAGED TO TAKE A BREAK FROM FISHING FOR A DAY AND VISITED GLACIER NATIONAL PARK. THE PARK WAS VERY BUSY, BUT WE WERE ABLE TO GET AWAY FROM THE CROWDS DURING A LONG HIKE.

Gitche Gumee Chapter

Fall is one of my favorite times of the year. As the weather cools and the calendar changes from August to November, the rivers come alive with migratory fish. I was able to spend a number of days in October on a not-so-secret South Shore river fishing for steelhead and lake-run browns. Lots of memories were made and I was even lucky enough to land a few fish. We've enjoyed unbelievable weather this fall here in the Northland! Like me, many of our members had the opportunity to enjoy the weather hiking and fishing for salmon, steelhead, and coaster brook trout across our area. If you haven't had the opportunity to spend time in the fall on our waters, make plans to do so next year.

Our chapter has been busy this past summer into fall. GGTU partnered with the City of Duluth this summer and offered a series of fly casting clinics. We had good turnouts at each event and it was great talking to folks interested in fly fishing and Trout Unlimited. In September, we held a maintenance event on the Sucker River. Our habitat project on the Sucker River is thriving and we thank everyone that has helped over the years.

We held a joint meeting with the TCTU Chapter at the end of September to kick off our 2021-2022 program season. Our vice president Jason Swingen presented Targeting Migratory Trout in Lake Superior Tributaries. In November we will hold another joint meeting, this time with the Hiawatha Chapter. Paul Johnson from the Laughing Trout Fly Fishing Club will be our presenter and will be demonstrating fly tying some patterns that seem to catch trout almost anywhere!

In late spring, one of our members spent a day on the Kadunce River planting trees. My family and I explored the river in August to see how the trees handled the dry summer. I anticipated finding many of the saplings in rough shape. As we walked past one sapling to the next, we were surprised to find that almost all them were in great condition! We are hoping to schedule a tree caging event before the ground freezes. If we don't get to it this year, we will plan to finish the project next spring.

GGTU will be holding a raffle on February 26, 2022 for a bamboo fly rod courtesy of Steve Sobieniak with Root River Rod Company. Steve is an exceptional rod maker. One lucky winner will walk away with a beautiful piece of his work. Additional information about the rod and tickets can be found on page 16. Please contact Andrew St. Croix at astroix4@gmail.com with questions.

As always, watch our Facebook page and chapter newsletter for additional events coming up this year.



HEADWATERS CHAPTER PRESIDENT KRIS WILLIAMS WITH PRIZE WINNER KINLEY AT THE YOUTH OUTDOOR ACTIVITY DAY IN ALEXANDRIA.

Headwaters Chapter

We had hoped that we would have returned to everyday life by now, but in an attempt to stay safe, that hasn't happened. We wanted to keep our members safe, so we postponed projects and events this past summer. Some things are returning to normal, but there will still be precautions.

Things didn't go as planned this summer. We had plans to do a couple of stream restoration projects but that didn't pan out. We had delays in planning, scorching weather, and concerns over the Delta variant. We will get to these projects when we can, but for now, we are erring on the side of caution. Even fishing was hard to do. We postponed our annual Pike hunt this spring. We usually do it in the first part of June, but this year the temperature reached 97 degrees. It was downright dangerous for us to be hunting for pike. On a brighter note, we will be returning to in-person fly tying this fall. I think many of us are looking forward to social interaction again.

Our Trout in the Classroom program is continuing this year with some changes. Northome School has suspended its TIC program for this year. The other schools are still on schedule. John Latimer from radio station KAXE will be visiting Gene Dillon and Kelliher schools to talk about Fall phenology. It is still unknown if the fifth grade fly fishing program will take place but our fingers are crossed.

This summer, Headwaters Chapter participated in the Youth Outdoor Activity Day in Alexandria (<https://youthoutdooractivityday.org>). This is a free, family-friendly event for youth to learn about outdoor recreation activities in-

cluding trap shooting, archery, hunting, angling, and many other related skills. Our chapter assisted with teaching fly casting to youths and adults. My daughter started teaching kids and adults how to fly cast and she had a blast. Over 2,000 people participated in this Sunday event. Our chapter also gave away two fly rods with an assortment of flies. Our lucky winners were Fearghus and Kinley. Hopefully, we have inspired them to continue with fly fishing. A special shout out to Bob Gibson who invited us to participate. I'm sure we will be back next year with more volunteers.

Kris Williams

Hiawatha Chapter

Chet Daniel of Stewartville was honored June 17 with a plaque from Hiawatha Trout Unlimited and the Department of Natural Resources for his 15 years as coordinator of a special Senior Citizens Fishing Day at a pond in a Lanesboro Park.

As Phil Pankow, former HTU chairman, presented him with the honor, several residents of Spring Valley Living care center were behind him, reeling in some of the 1,400 catchable-sized rainbow trout stocked by the DNR.

Daniel said he volunteered for and coordinated the event until a few years ago when health issues forced him to drop it.

He did it because he wanted residents to "just enjoy life ... not getting stuck inside all the time." He was on the board of directors for the Stewartville care center and saw how seldom residents were able to get out. "This was another chance

for me to try to get people out," he said. Sometimes they bring fish back already cleaned, thanks to the DNR and volunteers.

Daniel said he had fished at the pond and thought it was a perfect place for seniors to fish. They can get close to the water and volunteers can easily help them cast, net their fish and unhook fish. In the past few years, the DNR added a new fishing pier, making it even easier for fishing for all ages.

"At its peak, the one pond and a second one nearby were lined with 220 elderly, casting, catching fish, smiling and enjoying nature," Daniel said.

This year didn't come close to that number, in part because it was unusually hot and also because the DNR, because of COVID, didn't know until two weeks before that they would be able to help with the event. Besides stocking fish, the DNR also has fisheries officials bring rods and reels and worms, as well as help the residents with casting and reeling in the fish.

DeeDee Payne, Spring Valley activities director, said nine residents came; one was ready at the door at 5:30AM. "It's the enjoyment of getting outdoors," she said, "We were so excited to come, especially because of restrictions during the peak of COVID." Some just wanted to get outside, others grew up fishing and the event "brings them back to the good old days." Here is what three of the nine had to say about the day:

Mary Jane Island said she grew up in the Spring Valley area and loved to fish. Her family would fish at Lake Washington near Mankato; they lived over there in the summer. Her parents, Beulah and Curtis Severson, also once owned a resort up north so she fished there too.

Her usual fishing partners were three older brothers, Jack, Gene and Bruce. "They got stuck taking me along," she said. "They were great." She liked wall-eye fishing in summer, crappie fishing in spring. "I enjoyed anything with my family," she said.

She no longer fishes regularly. "I'm too old," she said, at 94. But on that hot day, Island was again fishing. She even got the help of DNR Conservation Officer Meng Moua. "They (DNR people) were great, they were really nice."

Like a true, die-hard angler, Island did a little bragging. "I got the biggest trout," she said. Actually, no one measured it and they didn't keep it but so what? "I don't have any proof and no one can prove it wasn't true," she said.

Loura Kilbourn loved to fish around Osakis. "We'd go two weeks in the spring and two weeks in the fall," she said. "We had our own boat." She and her husband Melvin Kilbourn fished for "anything that could bite, we weren't after nothing special." Now that she's in the care center, she misses fishing. "I

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



CHUCK SHEPARD, WIN-CRES CHAPTER PRESIDENT, INJECTS INVASIVE KNOTWEED WITH HERBICIDE IN A NEW APPROACH TO HELP CONTROL THE NOXIOUS PLANT.

sure do because I enjoyed it," she said. She remembers "just being out in the boat, being out there."

At the fishing day in Lanesboro, she said she caught three fish, using worms for bait. She didn't get excited when the bobber went down. "Normal fishing for me," she said. Ho hum, just more fish for the veteran angler.

"I had a good time," she said. "I enjoyed it. "It was hot and all that but I still enjoyed it."

Loretta McGill, didn't fish much when she was young and didn't fish in Lanesboro. "I wasn't too good at fishing," she said. "I like to take a good book along." When younger, she said her family-husband Dewey Fetterly and her sons Terry and Jim--would sometimes fish in Rochester, she said. Once the boys were old enough, she let them go with her husband.

Though she didn't touch a fishing pole, she went along just to get outside. "After being penned up all winter, this was a chance to get out. We had a picnic, it was fun."

After the fishing, they capped the outing with ice cream in downtown Lanesboro.

Though Daniel had to step down, Pan-kow willingly stepped up to coordinate the event that the DNR started, he said. He and his wife Shelly also prepared food for the volunteers.

Despite the late notice and fewer senior citizens, things went okay. "We just kept the tradition up," he said.

John Weiss

Twin Cities Chapter

After a big blank spot caused by the pandemic, TCTU got back into doing live outdoor events and outreach this summer. We partnered with Trout in the Classroom (TIC) to volunteer with kids as part of TIC's Fishing Skills program, and participated in 15 events throughout the metro. We spent a combined total of approximately 100 hours teaching 170 kids to fish. Four of the events were run completely by TCTU volunteers, with the other 11 being led by Jim Emery, an outdoor educator and MNTU contractor. Thanks to volunteers Yves Charron, Mike Grengs, Erik Lommen, Mark Millis, Brad Wistrom, Samuel Phipps, Thomas Konat, Mark Millis, Alan Witebsky, Craig Ramsey, Dave Edin, Rich Femling and Sally Noll. Special thanks to Amber Taylor of TIC for helping us get organized, and to Evan Griggs for training us on teaching kids to fish. Hours on the clock are so 20th Century! Now we teach casting by picking up the (cell) phone, pausing briefly to say "Hello" and then reaching it out, saying "it's for you."

Adults were not neglected this summer! Gary Wittrock organized three fly casting lessons between June and August for forty students from throughout the metro area. Special thanks to instructors Ken Barry, Fred Beier, Mike Grengs, Suzzane Herrick, John Jacobson, Tom Kalgren, Tom Konat, Eric Lommen, Nathan Nielsen, Joshua O'Tool, Craig Ramsey, Eric Serbus and Lee Stone.

Tony Nelson once again organized a booth at the Dakota County fair, and got help from a number of TCTU volunteers, including Keith and Lisa Ketchmark, Dennis Iverson, Matt Lowe, Den-

nis Murphy, Jerry Lo, David Draus and Steve Kaukola.

In September we held our first-ever hybrid event (live and online) featuring guide Jason Swingen who talked about targeting migratory trout in Lake Superior tributaries. Twenty companionship-craving members came to the Crooked Pint in Maplewood to attend the event in person, with a Zoom audience of 75. Many of the Zoom participants were members of the Gitche Gumee Chapter, which co-sponsored the event. We used the new TU Events Center to manage the event, and, as far as we know, sign-ups and logins went smoothly. If you had trouble, let us know! By the time you read this, we will have completed our season-end celebration and fundraiser on October 23, including our 2nd annual Wild & Scenic Film Festival and an online silent auction.

Also, by the time you read this, we will have completed a major overhaul of our website. Fingers crossed! Please check us out at www.twincitiesttu.org.

A few TCTU volunteers made it down to the far Southeast to help with a habitat project on Wisel Creek. Thanks to the Win-Cres and Hiawatha chapters for giving them a warm welcome. We hope to contribute more volunteers in the future, and to conduct more work on our metro-area streams, including Trout Brook, Hay Creek and the South Branch of the Vermillion. Our Streamkeepers were active on these and other streams, taking water quality measurements and identifying possible projects. Winter is a great time to work on habitat projects: no weeds, no mosquitos, no sweating, and not much fishing to distract us!

Bob Luck

Win-Cres Chapter

Southeast Minnesota has been spared the drought that plagued the northern part of Minnesota. We have had near normal rain, but it has fallen in several three to five-inch downpours. Our streams have near normal flows and are full of fish. Most of the trout are in the 10 to 14-inch range. There are a few 18 inchers out

there. And a report of a 24 incher being caught, possibly apocryphal.

It has been an active summer for Win-Cres members and friends. We continue to work to protect and improve the resource, and support new fishermen and fisherwomen. We have:

- Mowed about 1.5 miles of trails along Garvin Brook, which we regard as our home water.

- Removed brush and small trees along the upper reaches of Cedar Valley Creek, in anticipation of habitat improvement (HI) work over the next few years.

- Built lunger structures for projects on both upper Rush Creek and Wisel Creek. See accompanying article about the cooperative three chapter effort on Wisel (page 12).

- Supported the Women Veterans Fly Fishing Retreat at Whitewater State Park. Win-Cres members and friends provided 20 fly boxes with 25 flies each to the veterans. Members also provided fly tying and casting instruction to this high spirited group of women.

- Knotweed control. We have been spraying the highly invasive Japanese knotweed on Garvin Brook each fall for five years. We have kept the plant from spreading, but have not eradicated it. Some of the stands have been sprayed yearly, with little visible effect. This year we tried a different approach, injecting the stems directly with herbicide. This appears to be more effective, as the injected stems did not flower and many dropped their leaves. Since the herbicide works on the root system, we will have to wait until next summer to see the full effect.

- Helped the landowner remove old fencing and wire from a 1990s Win-Cres project site.

I am grateful to our dedicated members and friends for their generosity of spirit.

Chuck Shepard

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SELECT POETRY

By Larry Gavin

Directive for Fishing Trout

Sweep the front porch clean
then do the same with your heart.

The gate is broken and no one
ever uses the pasture.

Look into the water and see
you and you and you on a cloud.

You suddenly realize you would make
a bad bird and a terrible fish.

Listen for trout they make
a sound like falling in love.

Study the water then forget
everything you have just seen.

Imagine the darkness then reimagine
all those things you hoped to own.

Trust the rocks and roots
to always speak the truth.

Please remember you are small,
nearly invisible, barely imagined.

You are a flawed creature full
of misguided ambition; cast there.

I, Larry, apologize for ever being
anywhere else; the fish will join me.

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

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Minnesota TU is the leading voice, your voice, advocating for coldwater fisheries and watersheds in Minnesota and the region. Our effective advocacy work, and the work necessary to obtain grants to fund our stream restoration and environmental education programs, **cannot continue without your direct financial support of Minnesota TU.** We receive none of the donations raised from TU's direct mail and other fundraising efforts, and the small portion of your membership dues we receive is less than the cost to print and mail this newsletter. We need direct support from you - members and non-members alike - to keep us working effectively for you, your family and your friends. Every dollar of your donation will be used here in Minnesota.

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MEMBERS OF THE WIN-CRES CHAPTER BUILD A LUNKER STRUCTURE FOR THE RECENT UPPER RUSH CREEK HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT