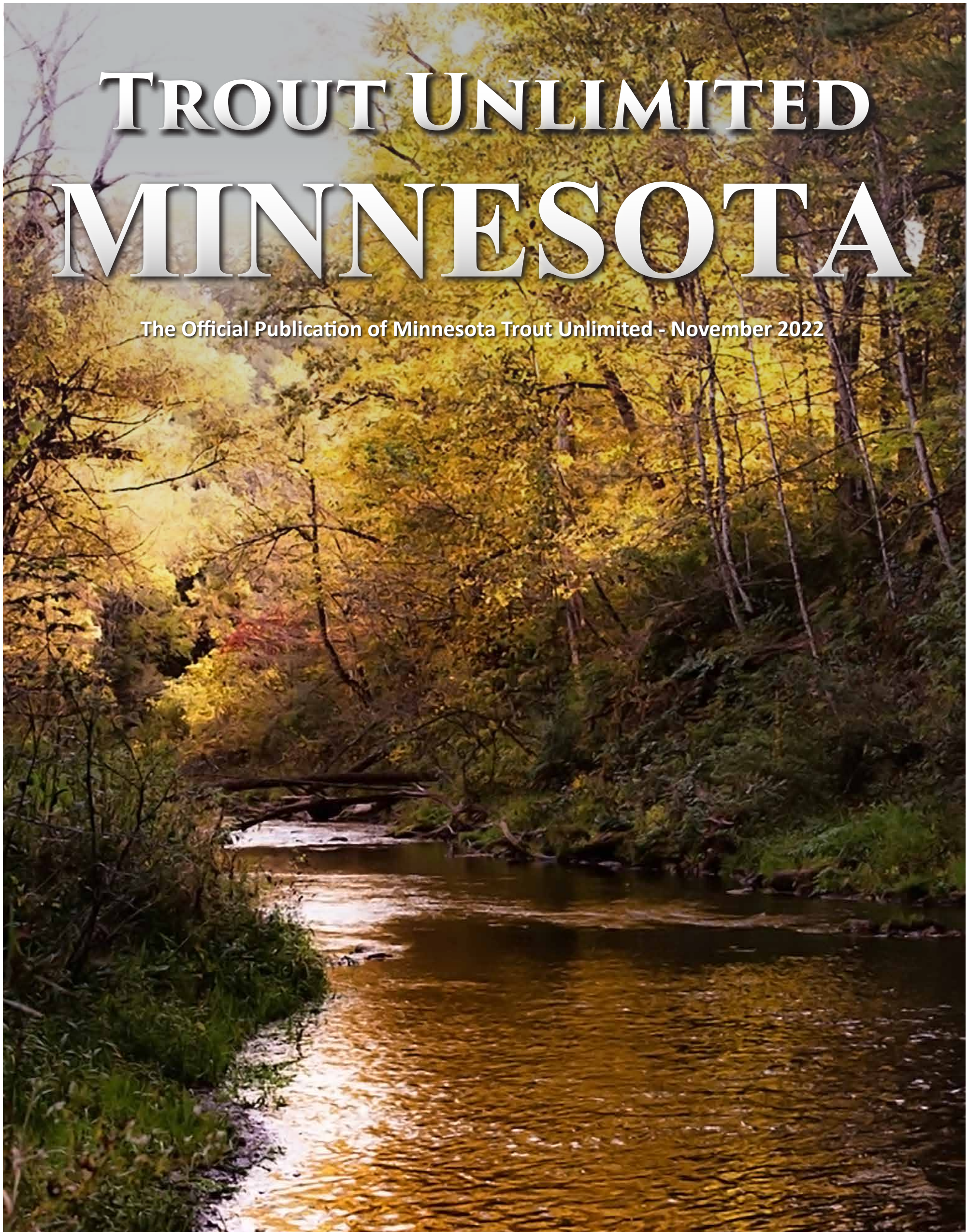


TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - November 2022



THE EFFECTS OF NEONICOTINOIDS
RUSH CREEK FISH KILL
FLY FISHING STARTER PACK
FORESTVILLE CREEK
TYING THE NEVER SINK TRUDE
DAUGHTER IN THE DRIFTLESS

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EDITOR'S ANGLE

HABITAT MANAGEMENT IN THE FACE OF CLIMATE CHANGE

By Jade Thomason, Editor

The warm weather of fall has held for a long time this season, lasting through October and into when we normally might see some snow. Accompanying this warmth has been an extended dry spell. The pleasant weather has made for a great time on the water and some fun fall fishing, but the extended warmth is a harbinger of climate change and larger issues to come for Minnesota's trout waters.

According to the University of Minnesota's modeling, we will likely see more of these broad, wide swings in weather in the future. While Minnesota overall may end up slightly wetter in the face of climate change, it is also more likely to experience what we have seen this fall: long periods of unusually dry weather. Equally probable are long periods of unusually wet weather. Together, these

trends will cause more challenges for our trout waters. Steady, consistent precipitation is best for streams and their residents. Without it, we will need to focus our habitat restoration and management efforts on creating more climate-resilient watersheds.

In large part, MNTU is already engaging in this work around the state. In the north, we are working to diversify our riparian forests that shade our northern waters. In the Driftless, we strive to restore streams so that they are connected to their floodplains and can safely handle increasingly frequent heavy rain events.

These actions are just some of the steps that we can take to help ensure sustainable trout waters for the anglers of Minnesota. Read more in this issue about what we've been up to in the Driftless,



and visit some of our latest work in the Beaver Creek watershed for a look at how MNTU works to restore and enhance resilient coldwater watersheds.



JOHN WEISS PHOTO

ON THE COVER

Sunrise along the Middle Branch of the Whitewater River is golden in fall. The chance to see such colors is one of the great reasons to be out in early fall, along with a chance to catch trout. John Weiss photo.

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HIAWATHA CHAPTER MEMBERS, ALONG WITH A FEW MEMBERS FROM WIN-CRES TU, HAD THE PLEASURE OF MEETING THE NEW DRIFTLESS AREA PROGRAM MANAGER SARA STRASSMAN ALONG WITH MNTU HABITAT MANAGER, DUSTAN HOFFMAN.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

LESSONS FROM THE RIVER

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

I was recently out steelheading with a buddy who likes to strike up conversations with anglers he meets on the river. I am friendly enough with the random anglers I meet, but my buddy is downright chatty. No problem with chatty, so long as he doesn't give away all our hard-earned knowledge of precisely how to rig, or volunteer precisely where the steelhead are holding or how to mend "just so" to get the right drift. Still, I enjoy the general banter and encouragement and find most anglers respond in kind.

Busy steelhead rivers like the Bois Brule teach anglers to respect other anglers' space and personal preferences in angling methods. I might prefer to fish a run or pool with different tackle, but that doesn't mean another angler's choice is wrong or evil. And steelheaders learn that they need to take turns fishing through the better spots, even though

we are essentially competing for a small number of migratory fish. We remain friendly and respectful of each other as we take turns with our "competitors" for steelhead hook ups.

The same principles must apply in the political realm. We can disagree on candidates and issues, but still respect those with different views and not demonize them. And democracy requires that sometimes we take turns on getting our way. In other words, we need to be decent to one another, whether on the river or in town meetings.

The TU family recently lost a wonderful leader from the Winona area who lived by these principles. Joe Lepley, former President of the Win-Cres Chapter, passed away on August 31. Joe was generous and treated everyone with respect, even those he disagreed with. Let's all be more like Joe, in honor of his passing.



MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

MN IS A BIG FISH STATE

By Brent Notbohm, Minnesota Council of TU Chair

In July I had the opportunity to attend Trout Unlimited's national conference in Portland, Maine—the "Cx3" (clever abbreviation for "community, coldwater, conservation"). Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, this was my first TU national conference since being elected chair of the Minnesota State Council's Board of Directors in 2020. It was an illuminating experience on several levels. First, it was truly rewarding to connect with so many people from across the country who share a passion for and commitment to our mission. TU is a very big pond indeed! Second, seeing how TU operates in other states and on the national level was such a benefit. I returned with new ideas and tools that will help me navigate the waters ahead as a leader in our organization. Finally, hearing stories and challenges from other TU leaders made me incredibly proud of the extraordinary volume of work we do here in Minnesota. If TU is a big pond, then MNTU is one of the biggest fish in it!

We're so fortunate to have an abundance of coldwater in Minnesota. Some states literally have only one or two rivers to protect—we have entire regions of the state! However, to paraphrase a certain spidery comic book hero: "with great coldwater water resources, comes great responsibility." Being one of the leading TU organizations in the nation means we have a lot to do to fulfill our mission. Frankly, there is just more work than can be accomplished alone by our tireless executive director, John Lenczewski, and dedicated cadre of volunteers.

Since becoming board chair, much of my time has been focused on expanding our organization's capacity to sustain our success in the years ahead. For example, in the last year we hired development director, Mark Abner, and executive assistant, Scott Criqui. Both have been terrific additions to the MNTU team. Talking with other leaders at the Cx3, I proudly proclaimed that because of the Outdoor Heritage Fund we do more state-funded habitat work in Minnesota than most of



the other 38 TU state councils combined! Considering the sheer magnitude of this work, with approximately eight million dollars committed to current projects, we need help on this front. Therefore, I'm proud to announce that in the next couple of months we'll be hiring a new habitat program director to manage our habitat projects across the state.

Continued on Page 5.



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THE EFFECTS OF NEONICOTINOIDS

INCREASED CONCERN OVER ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

By Neal Mundahl

Have you ever had the feeling that emergences of mayflies (e.g., Hendricksons, Sulphurs, Tricos) on your favorite trout stream seem to be reduced compared to past years? Have you turned over a few rocks on the streambed recently expecting to find lots of aquatic invertebrates crawling around, but instead found very few? In my 30+ years of monitoring stream communities in southeastern Minnesota, I've wondered why different types of stoneflies, mayflies, amphipods, and even snails seem to have vanished from some streams where they used to be abundant. We all might be noticing some local examples of what is becoming a widespread phenomenon: a decline in aquatic invertebrates, especially insects, possibly caused by the largest group of insecticides currently on the global market.

Neonicotinoid insecticides, a group of several, similar chemicals closely related to nicotine, were first introduced in the early 1990s as environmentally friendly replacements for the problematic organochlorine and organophosphate insecticides. Although highly effective against agricultural and other pest insects, those earlier chemicals were notorious for broad-spectrum toxicity to non-target organisms caught in the drift of spray applications, bioaccumulation in fatty tissues of animals that eventually led to near extinction of species such as the Bald Eagle and Peregrine Falcon, and even the poisoning of human applicators.

In contrast, neonicotinoids are highly selective for insects, are applied to crops as seed coatings rather than as spray, are advertised as much less toxic to fish, and do not accumulate in the tissues of animals. Standard toxicity testing on rainbow trout and water fleas, the species typically used to assess potential dangers of chemicals to aquatic organisms, indicated little to no effects of the pesticides at expected environmental concentrations. They appeared to be nearly perfect insecticides, protecting both agricultural crops and the environment at the same time. But the honeymoon with these new pesticides was short-lived.

Neonicotinoids are water soluble and easily move throughout all plant tissues, protecting all plant parts from pest insects. However, it was reported in 1996 that bees died after consuming the nectar or pollen from flowers of a treated crop. Subsequently, wildflower nectar and pollen also were found to be contaminated with neonicotinoids, indicating spread of these insecticides via dust or soil water from treated fields into untreated areas. Worldwide, 75% of honey samples were found to contain one or more types of neonicotinoids.

It is estimated that an average of only 5% of neonicotinoids applied to seeds is actually taken up by the intended crop plant, leaving the majority behind in the soil. While neonicotinoids do break down gradually (over periods ranging from weeks to months) in the soil, rain events can transport



MAYFLIES, CADDISFLIES, AND MIDGE LARVAE ARE AMONG THE AQUATIC INSECTS MOST SENSITIVE TO NEONICOTINOIDS.

these chemicals into rivers, streams, lakes, and wetlands via surface runoff or groundwater. Reports from around the globe indicate that high percentages (50-100%) of surface water samples are contaminated with neonicotinoids. While pesticide concentrations in rivers and streams often fall in the parts-per-billion (ppb) or parts-per-trillion (ppt) range, even these levels can be problematic for many sensitive aquatic insects. Concentrations of pesticide residues in surface waters in the United States and elsewhere have been found to be increasing significantly over the past 20 years, despite a general lack of surface water quality monitoring in many countries and an underreporting of pesticides even in localities where water quality monitoring is common.

Neonicotinoids affect insects by binding permanently to specialized receptors on nerve cells, setting off continuous electrical impulses that ultimately kill the nerve cells, which cannot be regenerated or replaced once they die. As the nerve cell death toll mounts with continued exposure to the pesticides, insects lose control of important functions and eventually die. Even extremely low pesticide concentrations (<100 ppt) can destroy nerve cells and cause organism death if exposures are prolonged.

Within aquatic habitats, insects have been found to be thousands of times more sensitive to neonicotinoids than some non-insect arthropods, or some segmented worms. Mayflies, caddisflies, and midge larvae are consistently among the aquatic insects most sensitive to neonicotinoids. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has established toxicity benchmarks for neonicotinoids, meant to protect aquatic life from harm from short-term (acute) and long-term (chronic) exposure, but the Agency's own data indicate that these benchmarks are too high (up to two or

orders of magnitude too high) to adequately protect the more sensitive aquatic invertebrates. Even if concentrations are not high enough to kill aquatic insects in the short or long term, many sub-lethal effects with long-term consequences to organisms have been documented. These effects may include feeding inhibition, impaired movements, reduced body size, molting problems, skewed sex ratios (no males!), and reduced reproductive abilities. Modeling studies have suggested that up to 40% of the species in stream invertebrate communities currently are facing serious impacts from exposure to one or more of the neonicotinoid pesticides.

Recent studies have documented changes in the mass emergence patterns of *Hexagenia* mayflies in both the Upper Mississippi River and the western basin of Lake Erie. By 1970, *Hexagenia* had disappeared from the western basin and large sections of the Upper Mississippi due to human-caused pollution. Populations recovered as water quality improved after 20 years of targeted environmental and conservation efforts in both systems. Now, however, populations are again trending downward, with *Hexagenia* production and mass emergences declining by 50% over the past 20 years in both the river and lake. Neonicotinoid concentrations 40 times greater than the EPA's less-than-adequate toxicity benchmark suggest that these pesticides may have a significant role in the declines of *Hexagenia*.

Although originally thought to be harmless to fish, multiple studies now indicate that neonicotinoids can have both lethal and sublethal effects on several species of fish. These effects appear most often in early life stages, decreasing the viability and hatching success of fertilized eggs and inhibiting the growth and early development of fish larvae. Even the hatchability of common carp eggs can be

reduced by exposure to neonicotinoids.

Unfortunately, populations of aquatic species exposed to neonicotinoids often do not recover to pre-exposure densities, if they recover at all. These declines in abundance can have profound effects on organisms at higher trophic levels that depend on aquatic invertebrates or their winged adult stages as food. Trout in particular, but also many other species of fish, birds, and bats, are likely impacted negatively by reductions in available prey.

With increasing concern over the environmental impacts of expanding use of neonicotinoid pesticides worldwide, some countries have taken action to protect the environment. For example, the European Union in 2013 banned the use of three neonicotinoid pesticides on crops attractive to bees. Canada recently has taken steps to ban the outdoor use of some neonicotinoids due to risks to aquatic organisms. In the U.S., the EPA currently is conducting reviews of the registrations of several neonicotinoids. These reviews are expected to include updated biological evaluations and risk assessments for each pesticide, with a projected timeline for completion in 2024. States such as California, New York, and Pennsylvania have studied neonicotinoid contamination of their surface waters, but no specific action plans have been instituted to address the problem. Sadly, unless more direct actions are taken by federal or state governments to limit the use of neonicotinoids before 2024, we likely will continue to observe fewer and smaller emergences of mayflies, caddisflies, and midges from our regional streams and rivers over the next several years.

Neal Mundahl is a professor of Biology at Winona State University and a longtime Win-Cres TU member and volunteer.

REMEMBERING STEVE SOBIENIAK

By Dave Shaffer

Lanesboro fly shop owner Steve Sobieniak, a conservationist who donated his hand-crafted bamboo fly rods to Trout Unlimited chapters, died Sept. 22 after a year-long battle with cancer. He was 67.

Steve greeted thousands of anglers with a smile and helpful fishing advice at the Root River Rod Co., the full-service fly shop he founded in a historic Lanesboro storefront 5 1/2 years ago. He was known for his kindness, integrity and generosity. He also was a nationally known maker of cane fly rods. It took weeks to construct each rod, but Steve made time to build and donate rods to TU chapters for fundraising. His last rod – finished in the late stages of his illness with help from friends – will be raffled by the Hiawatha Chapter in coming months.

Steve was born and raised in upstate New York and learned to fly fish from his father. Steve and his wife Vicki McKinney settled in the Twin Cities' western suburbs in the 1980s. His work as an artisan carpenter appeared in the Parade of Homes and on the TV show Hometown. His love of woodworking and fly fishing dovetailed into cane rod building. At 60, he and Vicki moved to Lanesboro to open Root River Rod Co. His workshop in a back room drew anglers from around the country to see Steve's rods or to discuss antique rods that he collected, studied, and sold. He once told a reporter that decades from now, anglers perhaps would be discussing and casting fly rods that he built. "I hope they say, 'This guy really knew what he was doing,'" he told the Rochester Post-Bulletin.

His fly shop pioneered guided drift-boat fishing on the North and South branches of the Root River. The shop spurred interest in the area's 200 miles of publicly accessible small trout streams, helping anglers from the Twin Cities and beyond to explore the bluff country with rod and reel. His shop also offered tools and materials for fly tiers. Steve's vision endures in the fly shop. It is now owned and operated by his daughter, Alayna Sobieniak, who learned to fly fish from her father, and her partner Lance Prado, who has been the shop's head guide and had been managing the retail business. Lance serves on the Hiawatha chapter board of directors.

Steve helped lead annual river cleanups, and he loved everything to do with fishing, including angling history and fly tying. He invented a fly called the Metolius Caddis, named after an Oregon river. He traveled widely to fish famous waters. He also loved skiing, scuba diving, skateboarding and wakeboarding. In 2014 he climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in Africa.

He is survived by Vicki, his wife of 37 years, two daughters, three grandchildren, his mother, three sisters and five nieces and nephews. A son, Brady, preceded him in death. His memorial service was held Oct. 8 at Camp Creek Farm overlooking a trout stream near Preston.

Memorials may be made on Steve's GoFundMe page.

www.gofundme.com/ff/steve-sobieniak



STEVE SOBIENIAK PLANES A STRIP OF TONKIN CANE IN THE PROCESS OF MAKING A NEW BAMBOO ROD.

MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE, CONTINUED

Continued from Page 3.

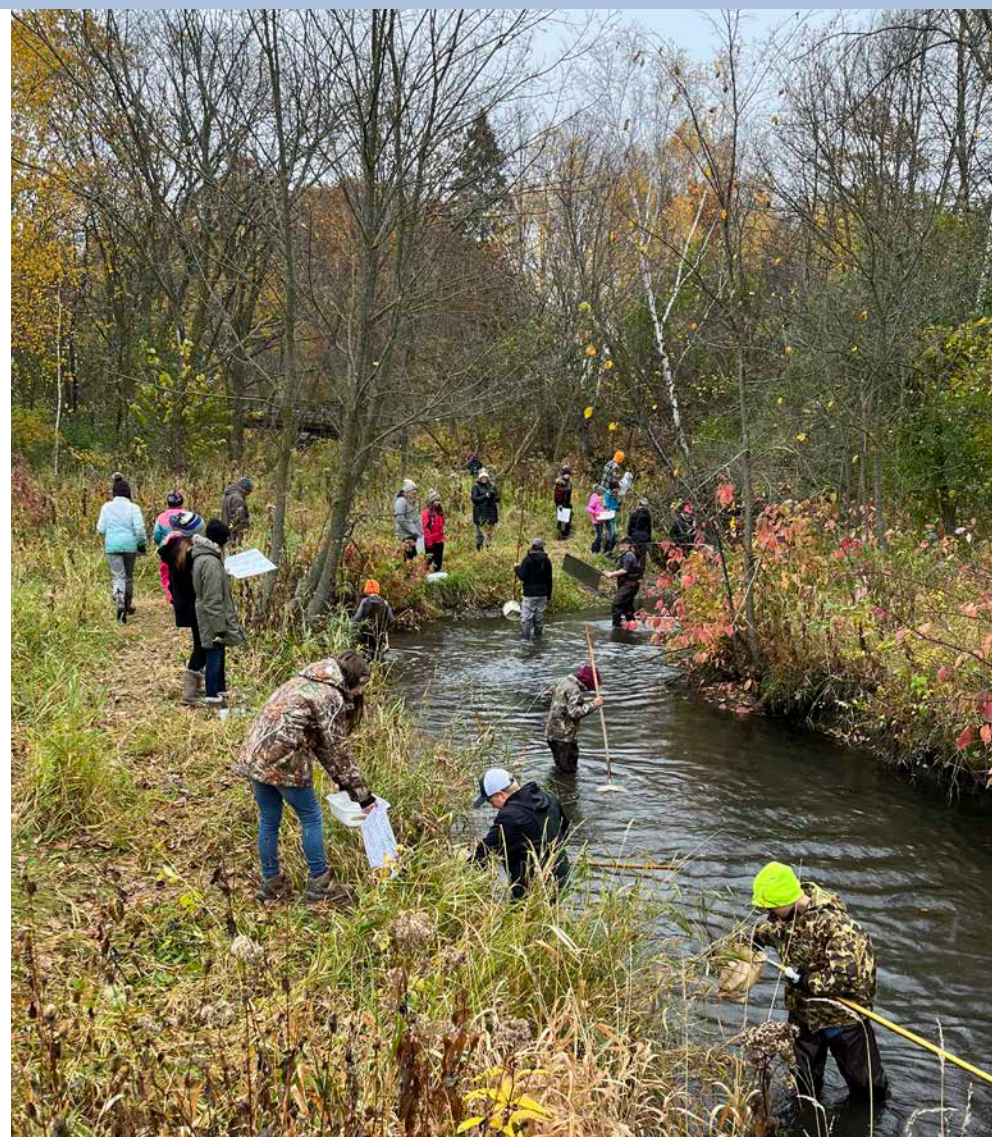
MNTU is also a national leader in education programming. As many of you know, we did not receive LCCMR grant funding for our education program this year when our proposal was cut last minute in an unprecedented maneuver by the state legislature. This unfortunate action jeopardized the future of our highly successful Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program, led by MNTU's wonderful education coordinator, Amber Taylor. Thanks to a grassroots effort initiated by the TCTU chapter board, each chapter contributed funds to keep TIC afloat for another year, along with a foundation grant secured by our education committee chair, Carl Haensel. We owe a debt of gratitude to all our chapter leaders, and particularly Carl and TCTU president Bob Luck.

I want to assure you that the MNTU board of directors heard you loud and clear—education programming is a priority for our members! We've applied for another round of LCCMR funding and have successfully passed through the initial screening phase. However, we need to develop new funding strategies if we're to continue this amazing opportunity for kids across Minnesota in the

years to come. Please share any ideas you have for the long-term funding of TIC with John, Carl, or myself. Even if we receive LCCMR funding next year, it's going to take a new approach in the long run to maintain this very successful program.

A final bit of news from the MNTU state council involves some much-needed clarifications to the board membership rules. At our June meeting we passed a new policy that governs nominations, qualifications, terms, and elections for all board members. With this revision to our bylaws, some long-term board members had an opportunity to step down after many years of valuable service. Our special thanks to super volunteer, Brad Gustafson, and former chair of the board and current vice-chair, J.P. Little. My heartfelt thanks to you both for all you've done for MNTU! We still have a couple of openings on the state council's board for 2023, so if you're interested in serving a 3-year term, please let me know.

Minnesota is a big fish state, literally and figuratively. It's thanks to you, our members, that we're a national leader in coldwater conservation, education, and habitat work!



TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM STUDENTS SURVEYING A LOCAL STREAM.

FLY FISHING STARTER KIT

THE GEAR ESSENTIALS

By Micah Crider



SIZING A FLY ROD TO YOUR TARGET SPECIES IS IMPORTANT, BUT YOU DO NOT NEED TO SPEND A FORTUNE. QUALITY RODS ARE AVAILABLE FOR \$150-\$250.

Hobbies are a good thing. They allow for pursuits outside of your profession, challenge you to grow, provide new knowledge and experiences, and foster relationships with other people who share the same passions. There are many hobbies one can choose to pursue, but one thing is common, where to begin can be intimidating and sometimes overwhelming.

Fly fishing is no exception to this rule. The idea of standing shin-deep, effortlessly casting a fly rod and catching a beautiful trout has captured many minds. “I’d love to try that someday,” or “I think I would really enjoy that,” are common phrases I hear but are often thoughts many people don’t act on.

Chances are that many of you reading this article would already consider fly fishing a hobby or even passion of yours and you are past the novice stage; but for those who may be new to the sport or have tried it once or twice, I’d like to offer some advice on what you will need to get started.

Think of this as a fly fishing starter kit. Like any hobby, there is a never-ending amount of gear to be acquired and money to be spent. Often this gear serves a purpose and is nice to have, but is ultimately not always necessary. It is also important to note that I’m tailoring this for inland trout fishing. We are fortunate in Minnesota to have many different fish species that we can target on the fly beyond trout, and some may require different equipment. This is Trout Unlimited after all, so I think it makes most sense to start with the species most people first target with a fly rod in hand.

Required

6 Fly Rod—It probably goes with-

out saying that you will need a fly rod in order to get started fly fishing, but since this is a no-judgement article, I will say it anyway. Where it can get a little tricky is understanding the right weight and length rod for trout fishing.

Fly rod sizes are described by weight (wt). The higher the weight number, the bigger the fly rod. For example, a 3wt fly rod would be something you may use for panfish at your local pond or on a small trout stream, and would be significantly smaller than a 10wt, which could be used for pike or musky. You could theoretically use a 10wt fly rod for trout, but it wouldn’t be much fun because it would be far too oversized. Why does this matter? You want to feel the fish at the end of your line and put your rod to work, without unnecessarily tiring the fish to the point of exhaustion. The goal is to match the fly rod weight with the size and fight of the fish you are targeting.

Fly rods also come in different lengths, but the standard is 9ft. For a first fly rod, I recommend a 9-foot, five weight (9ft – 5wt). This rod will give you enough feel that you can enjoy catching all sizes of trout and still manage to land a larger fish like a smallmouth bass or northern pike if need be.

As you might imagine, fly rod prices can vary drastically, anywhere from \$150 to more than \$1,000. If you enjoy having high-quality gear and have money to spend, I won’t tell you not to buy an expensive rod, but for most beginners (and the rest of us for that matter), you don’t need to spend much to get a nice fly rod that will meet your needs. Most fly rod companies offer great quality rods for \$150-\$250, and some even come with a reel and line ready to go. My first fly rod was a 9ft-5wt Orvis Clearwater and it is

still one of my go-to trout rods whether I’m fishing in the Driftless Area or out on western rivers.

Flies—If it seems like there are a lot of fly rod options to choose from, the flies themselves have even more options. While there may be endless types of flies and sizes, it’s no reason to be intimidated. Like fly rods, fly sizes are measured by a number that coincides with the size of the hook they are tied on; however, contrary to fly rod weight, fly sizes are measured in reverse. For example: a size 18 fly will be much smaller than a size 6.

Flies are generally categorized into three groups: dry flies, nymphs and streamers. Dry flies are meant to float on the surface of the water and mimic a hatched bug. Nymphs are meant to be fished under the surface of the water and mimic bug larvae. Streamers are also fished under the surface and are meant to mimic baitfish, leeches, crawfish and so on. For starters, I would recommend getting a few of each in different sizes. Below are some common flies in each category; this is not an exhaustive list, but we are keeping it simple and these flies will catch fish in most places.

Common dry flies: Elk Hair Caddis, Blue-winged Olive, foam hopper, Parachute Adams

Common nymphs: Zebra Midge, Pheasant Tail, Prince Nymph, Copper John, Hare’s Ear

Common streamers: Woolly Bugger, Muddler Minnow, Clouser Minnow

Line, leader & tippet—When it comes to fly line, leader and tippet, there are many options. Are you noticing a pattern? I will briefly break down each and suggest

what is needed to get started.

Fly line is the heavy, colored and coated line that provides the weight needed to cast. Fly line, like your rod, is weighted to pair with different-sized rods. Matching a line to a rod is quite simple because most lines specifically call out what sized rod they are intended to be paired with. So, if we are sticking to the 5wt rod, you will want to pair that with a 5wt line. Pretty simple! I also recommend starting with a floating line, which is the most common type.

Leaders connect to the end of the fly line and typically are between seven and nine feet. For our starter kit, I recommend purchasing a pack of nine foot leaders ending with 3-5X. What does the “X” mean? I’m glad you asked...

Tippet is the thinnest material, and is meant to be tied onto the end of a leader to lengthen it or pare down the size of the leader’s end. Like rods and line, tippet is measured in numbers ending with an “X.” The lower the number, the thicker the tippet and higher its breaking point. For example, 5X tippet is much smaller and will break easier than 2X tippet. I recommend getting a few different sizes to start with. You may want to use 4-5X tippet with a dry fly for a stealthy approach to rising trout or if you are using small nymphs. On the other hand, 2-3X tippet would come in handy if you are tossing bigger streamers or foam hoppers where stealth is less critical.

Important

Miscellaneous Tools: Some tools I would recommend having as you start fly fishing are a nippers (to cut leaders and tippet; fancier name and version of nail clippers), forceps or pliers (to remove hooks from fish or clothing),

floatant gel (applied to dry flies to keep them from becoming saturated with water), and split shot weights (to get your flies down deeper when needed).

Fly Box: You can always put your flies in a Ziplock bag, but you may prefer having them organized in a fly box where you can quickly see and select which one you'd like to use. Fly boxes come in many different sizes depending on how many bugs you wish to bring along with you.

Waders and Boots: Unlike the waders you may use if you are a duck hunter, most fly fishing waders are purchased separate from boots. Although they are nice to have when the weather is cold, waders are not critical. In the warmer months, I prefer to not wear them—an approach that is commonly called “wet wading.” You can get by with a pair of old shoes or sandals, but I would suggest at minimum, buying a pair of wading boots and neoprene socks. They will provide stability and traction that you won't find wearing any old pair of shoes. If it is in your budget, I do highly recommend purchasing both waders and boots, because once you get hooked (pun intended), you will want to fish more than just the warm summer months. Waders also help protect your body and legs from itching plants, bumps and scrapes.

Net: Having a net along is important for a few reasons—not only does it give you a better chance at landing a fish and not losing the big one, but it helps keep the fish wet and safely in the water during unhooking and release. There are many different sized nets, but for trout you generally won't need a very big one.

Nice-to-Have

Fly Fishing Pack: Like everything else we have covered, there are many styles

of fly fishing packs. Some may work better than others depending on where you are fishing, how much gear you are bringing, and in my wife's case, how many snacks you're planning to bring along. Some common styles are hip packs, vests, slings and backpacks. Any old backpack will work fine, but fly fishing specific packs are designed in a way that makes accessing and carrying gear simple and easy. Some are even waterproof, which can be nice if you are carrying a phone or other items that can't get wet, or if you slip and fall (which most fly fishers have done multiple times).

Polarized Sunglasses: Having a decent pair of polarized sunglasses allows you to better see in the water by cutting some of the glare, but also provides eye protection while you are swinging hooks around in the air.

Phone or Camera: We've all heard the fish stories that seemed a bit exaggerated. I always have a phone or camera along to capture memorable moments or memorable fish, for my own sake and to share with others. It's also useful for safety concerns if you ever need to call for help or share your location.

Conclusion

I would strongly encourage those reading who may be considering picking up the hobby of fly fishing to do so. And I hope this article provides some clarity on what you may need to get started. Fly fishing is a great way to get outside, make new friends and explore new places. I would also encourage anyone interested in getting started to visit one of our many local fly shops. They will have everything I've listed in this article and more, and can provide local knowledge around which flies may be fishing well and where you can go try out your new gear.



WADERS AND BOOTS ARE USEFUL WHEN FISHING IN COOLER WEATHER, BUT SANDALS OR AN OLD PAIR OF SHOES WORK JUST FINE DURING THE SUMMER.

I'm looking forward to getting out on some trout streams this winter and hope that many of you will be doing the same. I will leave you with the fly angler's farewell: Tight Lines!

Micah Crider is a MNTU Board member and avid fly fisherman. While he may have a desk job in corporate finance, he spends the majority of his free time exploring fisheries across the region and documenting his experiences through photography and writing.



A NET GIVES ANGLERS A BETTER CHANCE OF LANDING FISH, BUT ALSO AIDS IN KEEPING FISH WET AND SAFELY IN THE WATER DURING UNHOOKING.

RUSH CREEK FISH KILL FITS A DISTURBING PATTERN

HERE WE GO AGAIN

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

On July 25, 2022, a trout angler reported his discovery of a fish kill on Rush Creek near Lewiston, MN. The next day, state agencies began investigating the fish kill and quickly determined that it “likely did not occur naturally.” The agencies launched an investigation of the cause of the fish kill. More than three months later we are still waiting for the agencies to share even basic facts.

What We Know So Far

On Monday, July 25, Win-Cres TU member John Weaver stopped at the County Road 29 parking lot to fish MNTU’s recent habitat project on the upper reaches of Rush Creek in Winona County. He found dozens of dead brown trout and called the State Duty Officer that evening to report the fish kill. That same day, the landowner immediately downstream of the MNTU project site found many dead trout, including a 27-inch trophy-sized brown trout. The next day, the MNDNR investigated the site and confirmed dead trout throughout the three-quarter mile long project reach and downstream past the Interstate 90 bridge—roughly two miles of trout stream. The MNDNR estimated that 2,500 fish had been killed.

Agency Response to Date

Three state agencies are investigating this fish kill: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA); Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA); and Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR). The MNDNR serves as the lead agency on fish kill investigations until a discharge/release has been identified as the cause (rather than a natural cause). The MDA takes the lead for pesticide and fertilizer incidents. The MPCA investigates the impacts from pollutants such as manure, as well as releases of hazardous materials. Because the MPCA and MDA are leading this investigation, and not the MNDNR, we believe that this signals that pesticide and/or manure applications are the suspected cause of the fish kill. A multiagency “cone of silence” quickly descended on this investigation and just two short updates have been provided to the public.

On July 28, the agencies confirmed the following:

- The fish kill was reported on Tuesday, July 26.
- The fish kill did not occur naturally.
- A heavy rainfall occurred in the area on Saturday, July 23.
- MNDNR confirmed 2,500 fish were killed, 75% of them brown trout.

On August 10 the agencies revealed that:

- Water samples had been collected and were being tested.
- Aquatic insects had been sampled from four locations.

• More than 100 landowners located within a 10-square mile radius upstream of the fish kill were being asked to provide detailed information about the type, rate, timing, and location of ma-

nure and pesticide applications on their property.

The agencies will say no more at this time, not even to confirm whether the fish kill included the southern tributary or Rush Creek above the confluence with that tributary.

Upstream Start of the Fish Kill

While the agencies have remained silent, independent sources have confirmed that dead trout were found in the southern tributary above its confluence with Rush Creek. We also learned that few, if any, dead trout were found in Rush Creek above the confluence with the southern tributary, and none were found in Rush Creek above the County Road 29 bridge. This suggests that there is one source that drained from land feeding the south tributary.

Sensitive Geologic Setting

The headwaters of Rush Creek spring from classic karst topography and features. Fractured and dissolved limestone at or near the surface and numerous sinkholes connect the surface of the land to groundwater systems and springs. The springs provide the cold water that make Rush Creek such a productive trout stream. These sinkholes are vulnerable to pollutants such as manure and pesticides, particularly when applied too near them or when rain is forecast. The steep slopes from the plateau along Interstate 90 down to the stream valleys further increase the risk that pesticides or manure spread in the wrong places or at the wrong time will end up in the streams.

Past Fish Kills Point to Likely Cause

We do not know yet which pollutants caused this fish kill or which parcels of land were the source of the pollutants. However, investigations of past fish kills in the area suggest the cause of the Rush Creek fish kill is likely to be one of these:

- Pesticide applications (including fungicides).
- Manure applications from feedlot operations.

There have been a series of fish kills on area trout streams over the past decade, with the two largest occurring within 10 miles of Rush Creek: the South Branch of the Whitewater River in 2015 and Garvin Brook in 2019. These spurred extensive investigations and lengthy reports, but no real action by our state agencies or county feedlot regulators. Both reports are worth a read by concerned anglers, conservationists, and anyone who cares about clean drinking water. Visit the MPCA website for the February 2020 report on the Garvin Brook fish kill, entitled “Response to 2019 fish kill on Garvin Brook, Winona County”: www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/tdr-g1-22.pdf

Visit the MNDNR website for the December 2015 report on Whitewater River fish kill entitled “South Branch



DOZENS OF BROWN TROUT, INCLUDING THIS 27-INCH TROPHY, WERE FOUND DEAD ON JULY 25 IN RUSH CREEK NEAR LEWISTON. ROBERT MEYER PHOTO.

Whitewater River Unified Fish Kill Response”: <https://files.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lanesboro/unified-fish-kill-response12-22-15.pdf>

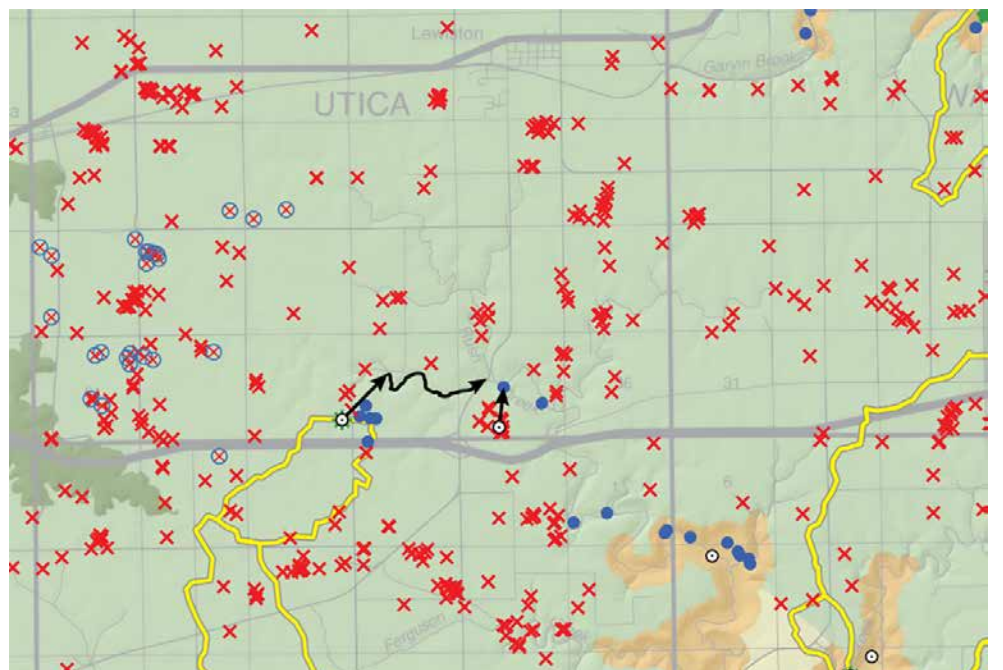
Common threads

Readers of these reports will note a few key things:

- Contaminants being washed off agricultural land by rainfall events is the likely cause of the fish kills.
- Pinpointing the exact source of pollutants with 100% certainty is very difficult,

due to the dilution effect of flowing water flushing the pollutants downstream before dead fish are discovered.

- The agencies are aware of how the karst setting accelerates polluted runoff into springs and streams.
- The agencies fail to acknowledge the ongoing risk posed by applications of manure and pesticides given the karst topography and regular rainfall patterns.
- There is an absence of any discussion of the need to reexamine application rules or apply risk management principles going forward.



A GRAPHIC OF KARST FEATURES IN THE RUSH CREEK HEADWATERS DEPICTS SINKHOLES IN ADJACENT UPLANDS AND SPRINGS (SOLID BLUE DOTS). THE TWO BLACK ARROWS DEPICT WHERE THE SPRINGS FROM TWO MAPPED “SPRINGSHEDS” (YELLOW POLYGONS) EMERGE NEAR THE HABITAT PROJECT AND FISH KILL SITE.

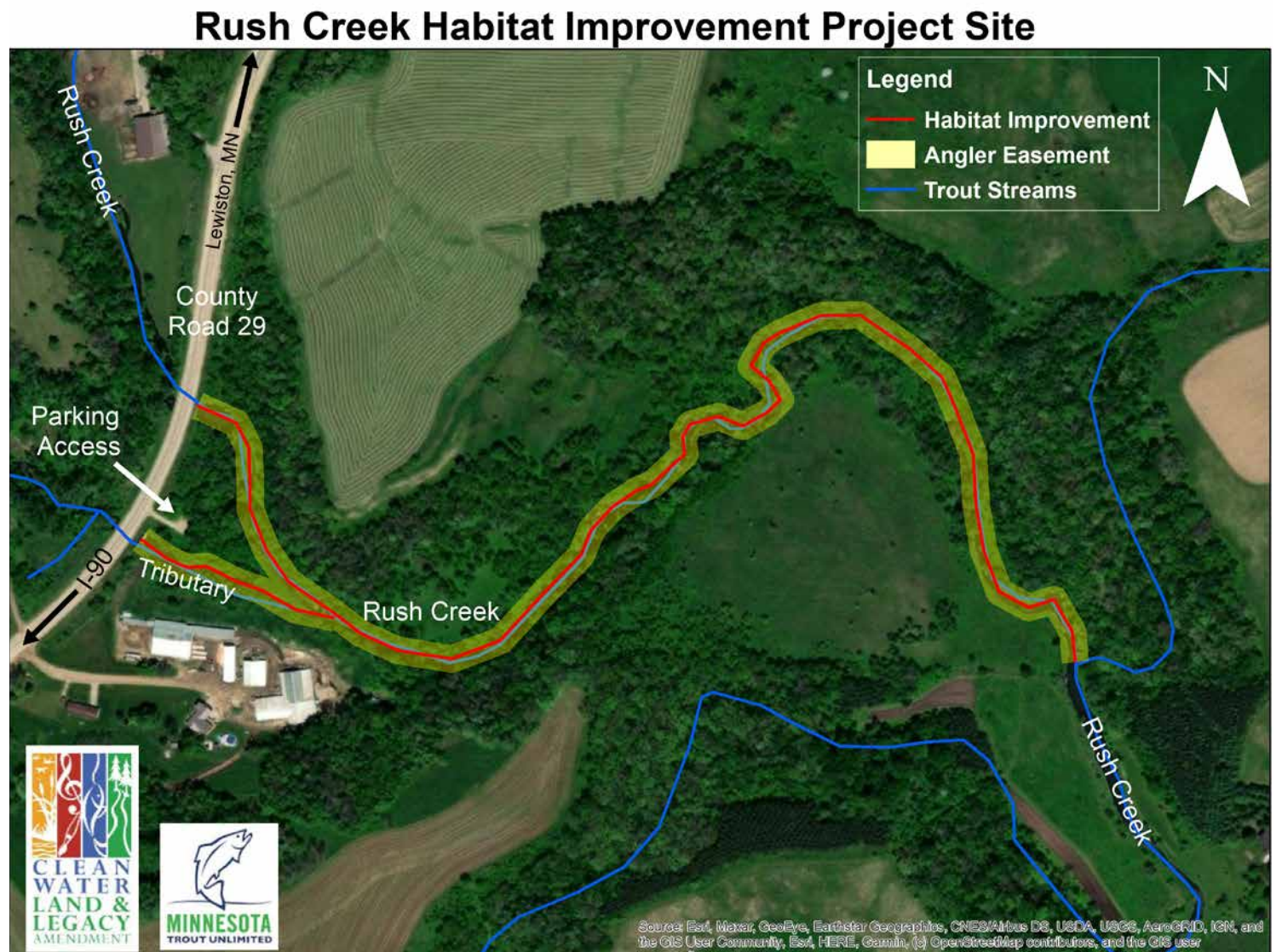
Lessons Learned?

The Garvin Brook report contains a section on “lessons learned.” Unfortunately, it illustrates how the agencies missed the lessons they should have learned from this fish kill and many others. The report correctly points out the “clear interaction between surface water and groundwater” in the area and the risk of drinking water well contamination. But the agencies then miss the lesson they should have learned—that the current rules and practices around the application of manure and pesticides are not working to keep these pollutants out of surface and groundwater. The report encourages individuals to test their wells so they know about the contamination, rather than examining measures to prevent contamination. There is also no mention of a need to apply risk management principles to these land practices.

Change Needed

Rush Creek is the fourth significant fish kill within a 12 mile radius in the past seven years (So. Branch White-water 2015, Garvin Brook 2019, Trout Valley Creek 2021, Rush Creek 2022). Past investigations have been long on staff hours and report pages, but short on meaningful conclusions or calls for change. It seems the focus has been exclusively on finding a single culprit who may not have followed the rules, rather than on considering systemic shortcomings in the rules and oversight.

We do not know at this time which pollutants caused this fish kill, nor which parcels of land they washed from. We



THE MNTU RUSH CREEK HABITAT IMPROVEMENT SITE WAS ONE OF THE REACHES AFFECTED BY THE FISH KILL.

may never know this with certainty. But whether or not the agencies end up pinpointing a single person and application as the cause of the Rush Creek fish kill, it is obvious that a comprehensive reexamination of the rules and regulatory oversight governing applications of

pesticides and manure in southeast Minnesota is needed. Hopefully the agencies will reach this conclusion in their forthcoming report of the Rush Creek fish kill. If not, MNTU will press for this reexamination.

REPORT A FISH KILL
Call the MN Duty Officer
immediately if you find a fish kill.
1-800-422-0798

BOOK REVIEW

THE MAN IN THE PINES

By Carl Haensel

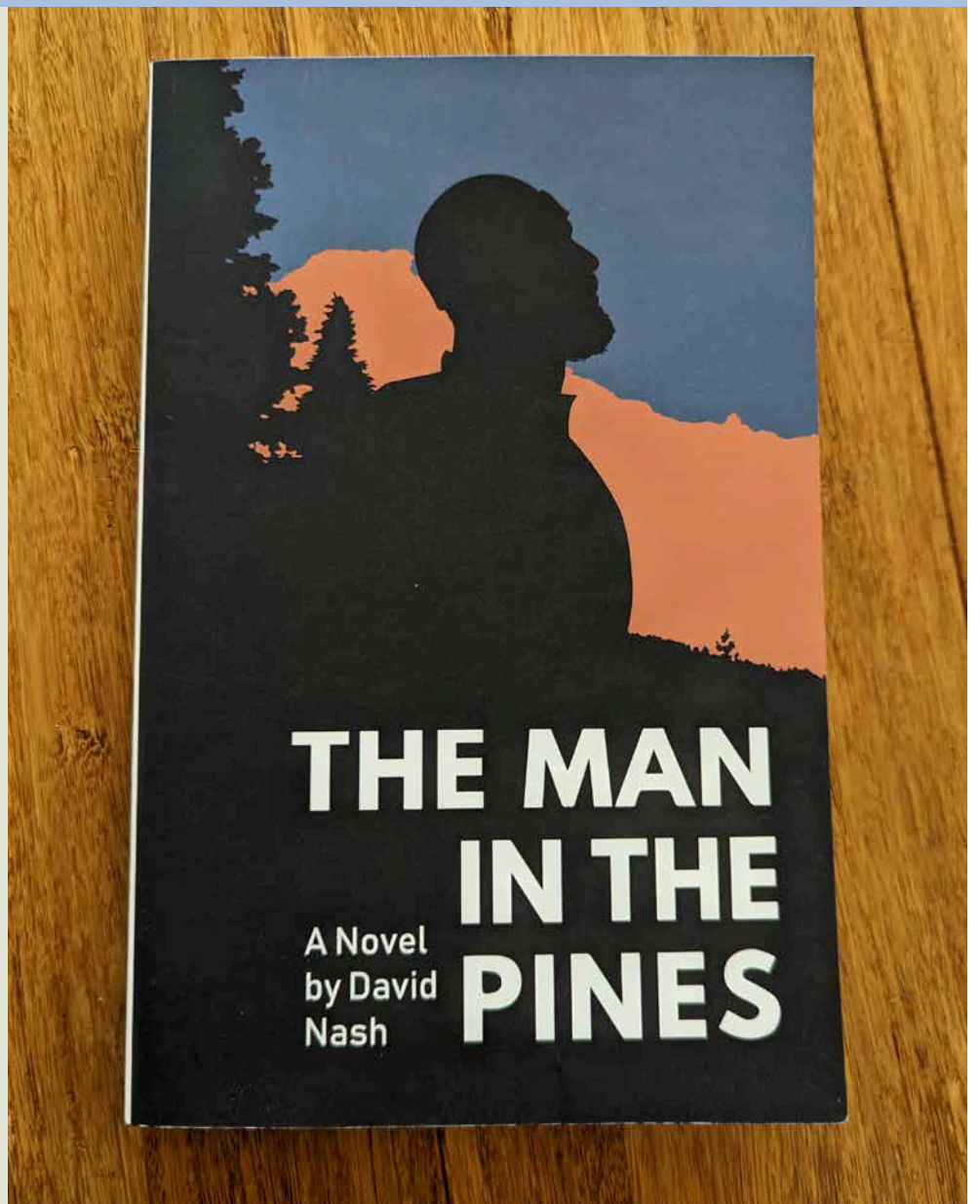
The mythos of the logging era in northern Minnesota has long been a central part of our cultural heritage. The removal of the big pines, from the late 1800s through the 1930s and even later captured the imagination of the state and led to hundreds of stories, both real and imaginary. None rise any taller than that of Paul Bunyan, the folk hero for many a small town up north. This book is a reimagining of the fable of Paul, told from a first-person perspective that is lost in most of the tall tales we’ve heard in our youth. It leads the reader through the thoughts of what it could be like to be “not quite normal,” but to still work and function in society. Life, love and loss humanize and bring to Earth a character that previously had been one-dimensional and static. Stories expand and run wild from happenings in Paul’s life and lead to a kind of notoriety that expands into legend. A key aspect of Paul’s journey through life in the North Woods in this tale is the loss of the trees. From a point of pride and accomplishment, to the changing thoughts on forest management, it gently takes the reader down a path of consideration of what we’ve collectively done as we’ve used our land. From hubris to conservation, this tale of one of the captivating legends

of our region offers some hope to readers as we work to reforest the land.

As an angler and advocate, I’ve come to believe that restoring our trout streams in the northern half of the state is dependent on successful forest management. Replanting the big white and red pines that fell during the logging era is a key part of our work, and often some of the most enjoyable. This satisfying 167 page novel by author and musician David Nash is a perfect accompaniment to our collective need for that work. It is perfect for a fireside evening or two as we settle into the longer nights of late fall and winter.

In addition to writing the book, David recorded a studio album also entitled *The Man in the Pines*. An enjoyable listen, it was thoroughly interesting to listen to music that was created with a book in mind after finishing reading. Find the music anywhere music is streamed. Find the book online or learn more about David’s music, writing and works at www.davidnashcollective.com

Carl Haensel is the Northern Minnesota Vice Chair of MNTU and is a fly fishing guide and author. He resides in Duluth.





MNTU EDUCATION UPDATE

NOVEMBER 2022

By Amber Taylor, MNTU Education Program Supervisor



The MNTU education program is still going strong, with another successful round of summer fishing skills programs and an expanded list of Trout in the Classroom (TIC) schools around the state! When the LCCMR funding for education fell through last spring, every chapter in the state stepped up to ensure we could continue offering these important programs. I know there were a lot of phone calls, meetings, and some “spirited” conversations to make it happen, so a huge thank you to everyone that put in the time, energy, and effort to advocate for youth education.

In addition to these generous chapter donations, we received funding from the Jeffers Foundation to lead programs with TIC students and assist schools with busing costs incurred through MNTU-related outings such as field days or spring releases. Our funding was rounded out with a few small grants applied for and received throughout the year, including one from the MN DNR’s “No Child Left Inside” initiative. NCLI funding is given to organizations seeking to get youth outdoors and actively engaged with nature. MNTU does this with hundreds of students each year through our quickly growing statewide education programs.

This year, the Trout in the Classroom program has 63 schools and two nature centers with tanks eagerly awaiting trout eggs in December. Even before receiving the eggs, the learning has begun! In the TIC program, learning happens both in and outside the classroom throughout the school year. By the time you receive this newsletter, hundreds of TIC students will have conducted aquatic macroinvertebrate studies on lakes, rivers, creeks, and ponds in their communities. In addition to these fall field days, teachers and students explore the essential components of trout habitat while setting up their tanks to mimic a natural trout environment, complete with plenty of aeration, a chiller, and a filter. They test the water chemistry parameters regularly, recording and graphing the data to monitor the nitrogen cycle and ensure a healthy tank environment for their trout.

Teachers, students, administrators, and families love this program. These tiny trout impact a lot of people each year and the learning that surrounds them is essential. At the end of each year, teachers write a summary about their participation in the program. Below are a few excerpts from those reports.

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to participate in this program. It was the perfect complement to an array of fishing curriculum and programming that we do in our building. Announcing our participation in this program, setting up the tank, and awaiting the delivery of fertilized trout eggs was so exciting for the students. I think one of the best parts of any adventure is the planning and preparation prior. This was certainly the case in our classroom. The hands-on interaction with testing and cycling the tank beforehand was a

great learning experience and when we took delivery of the eggs, the students were so proud to be their caretakers. The experience was building-wide. Beyond those directly involved with tending to the tank, other students and staff frequently came to take a look at how the trout were growing. This allowed the students to become the experts and answer questions others had about what we were doing. The immersive, hands-on nature of this program is exactly what science classrooms need.” – High School TIC Teacher

“Students were able to tie in the trout as an authentic learning application when learning about cells, cell energy, genetics, evolution, animal adaptations, and ecology. By raising the trout, the units we studied were richer and we were able to dive deeper into the content. The timing of it was aligned for each phase of trout development to really have that close authentic learning connection. The science field trip was a total success. In May we were wrapping up Ecology so we were able to perform water quality tests on the Vermillion River where we release the trout, analyze components of their environment, and do real field science out in nature. From my 20+ years of teaching I can conclude that raising the trout has been the single most positively impactful resource for students to enhance learning.” – Middle School TIC Teacher

Another essential component to MNTU’s education programming occurs in the summer months with our fishing skills programs. This year, we led 20 fishing skills programs with a total of almost 200 participants. The programs were held on lakes and rivers throughout the Twin Cities and supported by over 70 hours of volunteer time. People of all ages had the opportunity to experience both spin and fly fishing, learning how to tie flies, set up rods, cast, bait hooks, and about Minnesota fish ecology. Thank you to the volunteers that assisted with these programs. We hope to have another robust list of summer fishing programs scheduled with partners for summer 2023, so stay tuned for more information



A FAMILY PARTICIPATING IN ONE OF MNTU'S SUMMER FISHING SKILLS PROGRAMS WATCHES THEIR LINE CLOSELY FOR A BITE. PARTICIPANTS LEARN THE BASICS OF BOTH SPIN AND FLY FISHING AT THESE POP UP/DROP-IN PROGRAMS CONDUCTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE MN VALLEY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER.

on how you can get involved and share your passion for fishing!

Additional ways to get involved with MNTU youth education are below. Contact Amber Taylor, education@mntu.org for more information about any of these volunteer opportunities.

Field Support Team: We are working to build a team of dedicated TIC volunteers around the state! Volunteers would work closely with one or two schools throughout the school year to deliver their eggs, assist with tank set up and fish care, and help with field days and classroom activities.

Egg transport: Eggs will arrive on Wednesday, December 7 this year and we rely on a team of 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 in the morning. Each volunteer's time commitment will depend on their availability.

Fly tying and Ice Fishing Programs: We will be teaching fly tying and ice fishing programs with our TIC students this winter, starting in January. Please consider volunteering to assist with one or more of these programs!

Contact Amber Taylor, education@mntu.org for more information



MNTU'S EDUCATION SUPERVISOR WITH A GROUP OF EXCITED STUDENTS GETTING READY TO PUT ON WADERS AND GET IN THE CREEK TO CONDUCT THEIR AQUATIC INSECT INVESTIGATION. THERE WAS SNOW, SLEET, AND RAIN THROUGHOUT THE DAY, BUT THEY STILL HAD A BLAST.

PRETTY GOOD, TOO

CAMPING IN THE DRIFTLESS

By Meckenna Holman

Fly fishing is new to me, almost brand new. I had four flies in my magnetic tackle box to launch me into an official weekend of fly fishing with my husband and mother-in-law this spring. And even though the scenery is breathtaking, the water crystal clear, and the fish pretty neat, I'm finding a few other things I really like about fly fishing.

On our inaugural fly fishing weekend trip to southern Minnesota, the vehicle was pulling our beloved 2001 Coleman Pop-Up camper, and although I was excited to fish, I was just as excited to sit around the campfire and cook a tin-foil packet or two—that's my thing: campfire cooking. Our site was tucked into a valley in Minnesota's southernmost state park, and I had grabbed a park map on my way in to figure out, not where we would fish, but where we would hike.

We arrived late, per usual of weekend visitors commuting after work from the Twin Cities, and within minutes my husband had disappeared into the dark with a headlamp to trek down the embankment of the stream running along the sites. Like most southern MN trout streams, it was a thing of beauty fed by a big spring that promised constant chilly temperatures regardless of the time of year.

My mother-in-law and I tended to the campsite and the fire where meals like Grandma's famous "Hobo Burgers" and my favorite "Salsa Verde Chicken" foil packets would be cooked. I sat back in the cool spring air to listen to the stillness of pre-mosquito silence (which is something special if you know anything about the lowland areas of the Driftless region). There's just no two ways around it: I love to camp. I have since I was a little kid.

Now, my family never once fished growing up, but despite the agenda of the weekend, the feelings of camping felt just about the same. I was able to camp, cook, and breathe in deep, all thanks to a fly fishing weekend.

Our first morning in the Driftless was glorious. I held my breath waiting to find my bedmate already gone by sunrise, hitting the streams at whatever ungodly hour of the morning fish usually swim in, but he was right next to me with the sunlight of the morning streaming through the canvas. All the pop-up lovers and tenters out there understand this morning feeling – it can't be beat.

Coffee was next, and camping coffee is also too good, especially when you drink it in a lawn chair around a smoldering fire ring. My anticipation of a fast-paced fly fishing weekend melted away with the morning dew into something so slow and marvelous.

I timidly requested a hike, hoping it didn't seem like I was "putting off" fishing, which I wasn't. I've only known camping one way, and it felt criminal to

not take a hike. I hurriedly explained that there was a simple one-mile trail that we could hike to get our blood flowing before we hit the stream. My husband gave me a side-longed look, but out of sheer kindness and love for the woman that he married, he consented.

Forty-five minutes later, and a beautiful hike of diverse foliage, we were geared up and ready to fish. My husband pointed out on the map where we would enter, and I almost laughed out loud. The stream ran along the longest hiking trail in the park. To separate from the growing crowd of the morning, we would hike a mile or so down the hiking trail before splitting up and entering the stream. More hiking, and I wasn't about to complain!

After three hours, we had one trout to our name, and it was not caught by yours truly. Although the state park was beautiful, the reality was it was just too crowded on a Friday with perfect weather, dog-walkers and swimming pups, and curious onlookers. I usually enjoyed the hype of a bustling state park, appreciative of other nature lovers, but I too felt the impact of too many people on such a delicate sport. I knew one thing about trout after three hours of fishing: they are easily spooked. And there was no way I was catching a spooked trout.

My husband insisted we leave the park and traverse elsewhere guided by the MN DNR trout stream guide instead. I tried not to grumble; we were here without really being here, but, as he had consented to morning coffee, I consented to an early(er) morning outside of the state park.

I became the map guide the next morning. I've always loved paper maps ever since a college road trip to Florida sans GPS. It was a feat I was forever proud of. I oriented myself to the unfamiliar markers—light gray easement markings—as my husband explained how trout fishing worked on private property. It was a new part of trout fishing I didn't even know existed. I loved the navigation and grabbed a pen, marking spots where it looked like we would have road access during our scouting drive.

I nearly gasped in delight when we spotted our first ladder easement, right up and over a fence. It felt like a Narnia situation—rays of sunshine brightening up a green valley and a small footpath leading down to a sparkling stream, which was teeming with trout. My husband cast into the stream and within a minute pulled up his first trout of the day. And then his second and third.

As any good guide will do, he lined me up with the ripples, told me to minimize my false casting, and gave me the go ahead. I presented my wet nymph and felt the first ever fly fishing tug on my rod.

What a moment.



THE AUTHOR WITH A BROWN TROUT DURING A BEAUTIFUL DAY ON THE WATER.

I'm a squealer, there is just no two ways around it. With my husband right by my side, I started stripping line until a little seven-inch trout was in my wet hands. It was the thrill of a lifetime.

I didn't catch anything for the rest of the day though. I think I got a little nibble once, but other than that I mostly just scared the fish away. Hours later, genuinely disappointed, I chalked up the solo catch to pure luck.

But the day—the day was beautiful. I didn't even give the state park a second thought. We were in the most idyllic farm country at a bend in the gravel road where nobody drove. One farm house was off in the distance, and I fished from a grazing pasture for a donkey. As I struggled to cast up and down the stream, the donkey munched on green grass and glanced up at me periodically. Despite the fishing drought, I was overflowing with contentment.

Almost five hours later, with a lunch break in between, my mother-in-law and husband set out for another round of fishing. I was exhausted and ready to be done. I felt full in the happiest sense, so, guilt-free, I grabbed a book and blanket instead, nestled myself along the embankment, and cracked open a Pulitzer Prize finalist to read with a donkey in the background.

In the stillness of the late afternoon, I reflected on my weekend fly fishing experience. I was, by no means, a good fisherwoman, far from it. I had caught one trout under the direct guidance of my husband and landed nothing else for the

rest of the day. Meanwhile, my husband caught over thirty fish and made mention of his success several times on the drive home later that evening. But I was learning slowly. I was settling into a rhythm, understanding the stream and fish better than ever before.

I was also, by no means, a "die hard," fishing from sunrise to sunset. That was not my preference. Instead, I had loved the weekend so much because of all the things I got to do along with fly fishing.

As the sun began to set, sinking behind the bluffs, a fellow fly angler emerged from the stream, likely heading back from his sunup till sundown day of fishing. I had my book in my hand, but paused my reading as he approached.

He smiled at me tentatively, unsure if he should interrupt my domain, but I smiled a greeting. He spoke then, the most thoughtful words he could.

"Well, if you're not fishing, reading's pretty good, too."

And I smiled back. Reading was pretty good, and so was camping, and cooking, and coffee, and hiking, and maps, and fly fishing, too.

Meckenna Holman is a writer and hobbyist with her husband in the Twin Cities. They juggle a host of hobbies in their free time: coffee roasting, beer brewing, biking, camping, canoeing, gardening, and, as of late, fly fishing.

2022 HABITAT PROJECT UPDATE

WEST BEAVER CREEK AND WINNEBAGO CREEK

By Dustan Hoffman, MNTU Habitat Project Manager



BEFORE AND AFTER OF THE WEST BEAVER CREEK HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT.

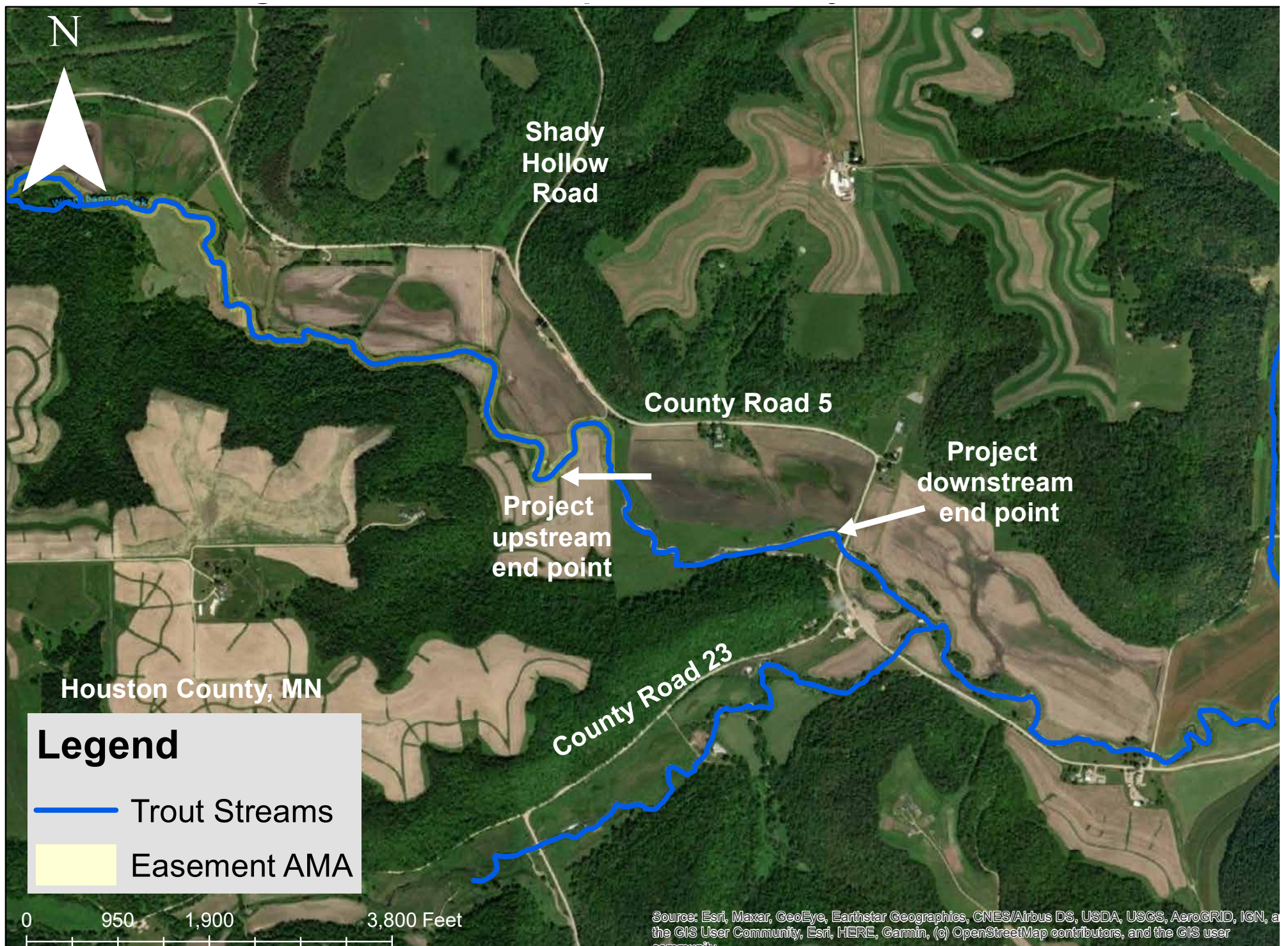
Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU) completed the initial installation of two in-stream habitat improvement (HI) projects this summer in southeast Minnesota, with the help of funding from Minnesota's Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment, which was awarded by the Lesard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council. Both projects addressed issues common

among streams in southeast Minnesota's Driftless Area. Project objectives included lowering high banks to give the stream a better floodplain, channel narrowing and bank stabilization to help pass sediment that degrades habitat. This provides overhead cover habitat, and replaces less desirable vegetation (box elder trees, buckthorn, and honeysuckle) with native grasses and forbs

that root deeply.

The HI on West Beaver Creek in Houston County took place in June and July this summer. The new MNTU HI project (2,563 ft) connects to a downstream HI project (2,483 ft) completed by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) in 2012, which contains a walk-in-easement (see map). The entire 2022

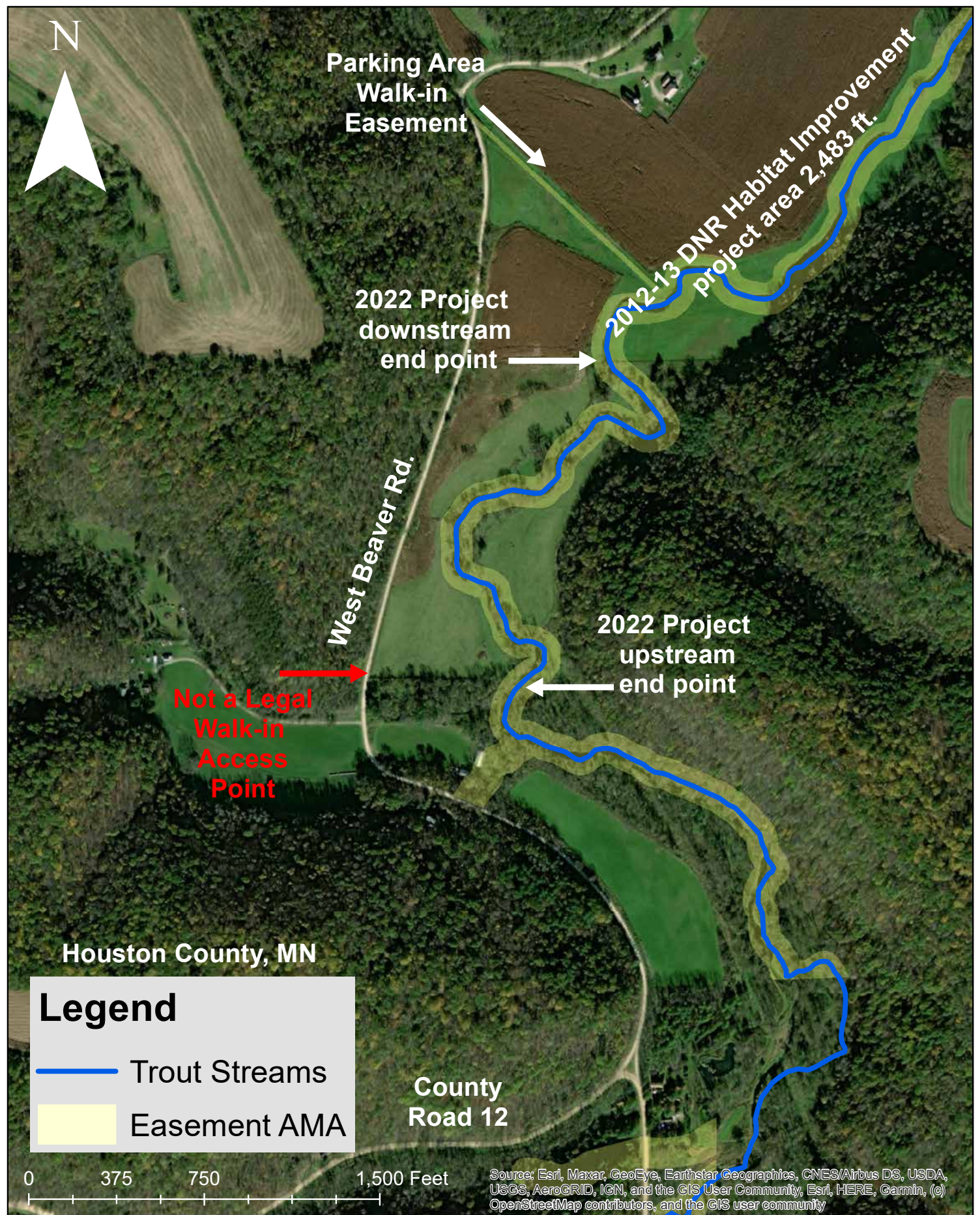
HI project area was part of a 1987 HI project the DNR completed to stabilize eroding banks, though HI project techniques from that era have been modified greatly in comparison to HI projects today. Today, there is much more focus on floodplain reconnection, riffle stabilization and grade control, and in-stream overhead cover.



Members of the Hiawatha, Win-Cres, and Twin Cities Chapters all came together at West Beaver Creek to build six luncker structures placed in the project. Luncker structures look much like a pallet, but are constructed of green cut oak, and are placed in the banks to provide overhead cover for trout. One of the highlights of this project was stabilizing a dry run that continually washed in cobble rock. We were able to build up a riffle to form a wide, multi-channel section of stream.

Winnebago Creek's HI project took place in July and August on the section of stream upstream of the County Road 5 bridge (see map). Frequent rain events made for great growing conditions of vegetation seeded within the project area, and rains were light enough that work was not delayed much. The project site is approximately 4,523 feet in length, meeting up with a downstream HI project completed by the MN DNR in the summer of 2021 that stabilized a high eroding bank near the CR 5 bridge. The DNR project and Trout Unlimited project each included one set of luncker structures, providing overhead cover for trout. Several other overhead structures were included in the design of the MNTU project, including root wads, large overhang rocks, and pool logs.

Sections of the Winnebago Creek HI project site were extremely wide, so the channel was narrowed to help the stream pass sediment that otherwise collected and covered ideal substrate for use by invertebrates and trout spawning. One section measuring over 70 feet wide was narrowed to approximately 20 feet of width. Extra soils removed from high bank areas were either used to fill and narrow the channel, or they were blended into the toe of the bluff. Soil stockpiled on the bluff toe has been placed in a manner that should encourage swallows and king fishers to use them for nesting, as we have seen on other recent HI projects.



THE WEST BEAVER CREEK HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT HAS AN AREA OF 2,563 FEET.

ADOPT A STORM DRAIN

By Doug Moran

Want to make water cleaner for fishing and other outdoor activities?

Don't just expect others (cities, farmers, governments) to take action. YOU can take direct action and have an impact.

Don't just complain. Do something. Adopt A Drain is an easy and valuable thing you can do.

Adopt-a-Drain asks residents to adopt a storm drain in their neighborhood and keep it clear of leaves, trash, and other debris to reduce water pollution. Volunteer fifteen minutes, twice a month, for cleaner waterways and healthier communities. Storm drains flow directly to local lakes, rivers, and

wetlands, acting as a conduit for trash and organic pollutants.

Go to the website below, sign-up and adopt the drain or drains by your home. You can track how much debris you keep OUT of the storm sewer system, and therefore out of our waters. And it's great because you are doing something to protect our water resources.

www.adopt-a-drain.org

Doug Moran recently joined Twin Cities TU. He credits his father with teaching him two important life lessons:

1. Acting beats complaining
2. If you enjoy the great outdoor resources in Minnesota, then do some volunteer work to protect them

ADOPT
A STORM
DRAIN





FLY TYING

WITH LAUGHING TROUT FLY FISHING

By Paul Johnson



The Never Sink Trude

Several years ago, I came across a fly on Instagram by Son Tao that I borrowed to create my current version of the Never Sink Trude.

I am not sure if the fish think that this is a grasshopper, or maybe a beetle. Whichever, the fish really seem to like to eat this fly. I will fish this fly from summer into the fall. It can be fished as a single fly to get to those tight spots along a grassy bank. It also floats well to be able to put on a weighted nymph as a dropper.

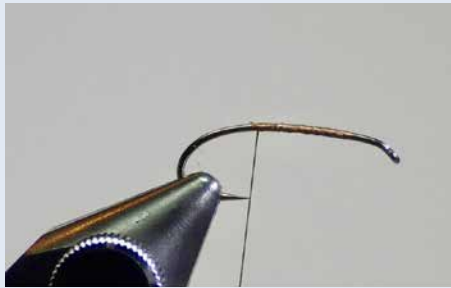
This is a pattern that you will want to have in your fly box next summer.

If you have any questions, please feel free to let me know.

Paul Johnson
Paulwaconia@gmail.com

Materials List

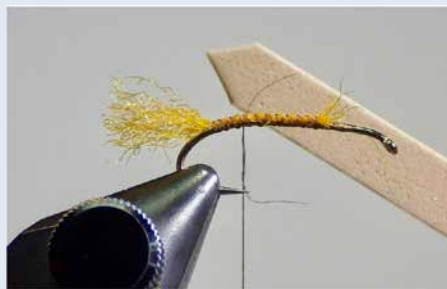
Hook:	#12 Hopper (2XL)
Thread:	6/0 Brown
Shuck:	Z Yarn Amber
Back:	2mm Tan Foam
Abdomen:	Wapsi Super Bright Peacock Dubbing
Underwing:	Bleached Deer Hair
Overwing:	Congo Hair White
Legs:	Olive Sili Legs



Step 1.
Insert the hook into your vise and start the tying thread. Wrap a smooth thread base.



Step 2.
Tie in a length of Amber Z Yarn on top of the hook shank. Trim to just over a hook gap in length.



Step 3.
Cut a strip of tan foam to a 1/2" in width. Trim one end to a point.



Step 4.
Tie in the foam on top of the hook shank. Take care that it is wrapped to the back of the hook.



Step 5.
Form a dubbing noodle on your tying thread with the peacock dubbing.



Step 6.
Form a smooth body with the dubbing up to the 75% point on the hook shank.



Step 7.
Pull the foam forward and secure with the tying thread. Wrap this down from the 75% point to the eye of the hook.



Step 8.
Clean and stack a clump of deer hair. Tie in at the 75% point. The tips should extend to the back of the foam body. Trim closely.



Step 9.
Tie in a clump of white Congo hair over the deer hair. Trim so it extends just past the deer hair wing. Trim closely.



Step 10.
Tie in a Sili Leg on each side of the hook shank.



Step 11.
Form another small dubbing noodle on your thread with the peacock dubbing.



Step 12.
Make several turns of the dubbing noodle from the 75% point forward to the hook eye.



Step 13.
Fold the front of the foam back over the top of the fly. Trim the foam off just in front of the wing. Whip finish.

THE FUTURE OF FISHING

TIC IS A BIG DEAL

By Bob Wagner

What does the future hold for Trout Unlimited? Should we put most of our resources, time and money into growing fish (habitat work) or growing anglers (educational programs like Trout in the Classroom)? This may be an unfair question, considering that most of our federal, state and some private grant dollars are dedicated to habitat work. The philosophy of “take care of the fish and the fishing will take care of itself” is a concept still printed in Trout Unlimited national membership material. It’s a cute, seventy year-old piece of writing that was sufficient maybe up to thirty years back. Unfortunately, cute doesn’t cut it. “Taking care of the fish” is important, and our habitat work has accomplished significant improvements in fish populations, but we need to make similar investments in angler recruitment. The sport of fishing has not grown to any significant degree with regards to the number of people buying fishing licenses compared to the overall population. Also involvement of women, youth and people of color is embarrassingly low. Sure, there was a surge in participation based on the film “A River Runs Through It” and another from COVID; but really, is that what it takes, a movie and a pandemic?

In reading my first two sentences of this article, it seems like there is an automatic, no-brainer response: “Easy answer, we need to do both.” I totally agree with this answer and I believe most TU members I’ve talked to over twenty years feel the same way. Unfortunately, doing both is not automatic and definitely not easy as explained in the Editor’s article, The End of Trout in the Classroom, in the last MNTU newsletter. Fortunately, the program didn’t end this year. Several people need to receive credit for a major effort that took place from our MNTU State Council, Bob Luck, the president of Twin Cities Chapter, as well as other TU Chapters, Carl Haensel, and Jade Thomason. The combined effort was able to find dollars and resources to

keep TIC going for another year. Also, the TIC program director going on five years, Amber Taylor, has remained flexible as the program has shifted.

The future of TU and TIC isn’t known. We can’t accurately predict factors of funding, politics, and climate change, however, we can and must better educate ourselves on the magnitude of TIC’s importance to TU’s future. Like everyone involved in environmental non-profits, we question our future. We all share the sacred need in one form or another for time in the Great Outdoors. How do we best maintain, protect, and preserve fishing into the future?

We all know politics are involved, and always have been, in major decisions regarding public natural resource use. Ultimately, politicians make the final decisions. Politicians respond to voters to stay in power. It’s tempting to cite corruption and polarization and say “the hell with it” and go fishing. Unfortunately, that doesn’t solve our need to protect the sport we all love, respect and need. But how do we grow informed, caring voters? Two-time Pulitzer Prize winning author and scientist of world renowned fame, Edward O. Wilson, in his book *Naturalist* gives us insight into TIC with this quote “There are certain experiences in childhood that surge up through the limbic system to preempt the thinking brain and hold fast for a lifetime to shape value and motivation.” Wilson goes on to explain, “Our remembered images are reinforced like pictures improved by overlay upon the next, each adding finer detail. In the process edges are sharpened, content refined, emotional colors nuanced.” In reading this, I immediately thought of TIC and our youth fly fishing program. For over twenty years I participated in teaching, observing, evaluating and re-designing how I and fellow TU volunteers share learning experiences with youth and parents. The great gift of TIC is its “layer effect” of positive, science-based opportuni-



ALLISON TISDALE, LONG-TIME TIC 5TH GRADE TEACHER, IN THE COLD AND SNOW WITH HER CLASS FINDING MACROINVERTEBRATES.

ties for every student in each classroom to connect day after day with trout for six months. Each student watches trout grow, and feeds the fish, checks water temperature, and maintains water chemistry. Through 120 days, students learn the environmental needs of trout, as well as the importance and role of trout in the aquatic ecosystem. Art, literature, and math are incorporated as multi-discipline learning activities. I have seen, read and enjoyed beautiful art, poetry, short stories and science projects all created by TIC students. It’s apparent to every teacher and TU volunteer in this program that universally students relate and connect to these baby trout in ways we can’t even explain. The trout reinforce lasting positive connections between a person and fish. A connection that is ultimately needed in this political world.

Probably most important are the real

numbers, which every TU board member, chapter participant, and volunteer needs to comprehend. Currently, according to Amber Taylor’s records, we have 72 TIC tanks in 63 schools, serving approximately 5,000 students in Minnesota. Remember, that each of those 5,000 students is receiving trout eggs in their classroom and, 120 days later, releasing live trout into a stream or lake. Layer upon positive layer of science-based reinforcement of why trout matter, for 120 days. I know of no better way to build knowledgeable, long-term advocates for trout, and clean, cold water. TIC holds the future for Trout Unlimited and that is a Big Deal!

Bob Wagner is a Headwaters TU Chapter board member and past president. He lives outside Bemidji with his wife and fishing partner Val.



TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM STUDENTS EXPLORING SPRUCE CREEK IN MILTONA. THIS CREEK HAS BEEN STOCKED WITH BROWN AND RAINBOW TROUT SINCE 2019 THANKS TO SOME DEDICATED ANGLING GROUPS ENCOURAGING THE DNR TO GIVE IT A SHOT. STUDENTS GET TO DO THEIR FALL INSECT STUDY AND TROUT RELEASE AT THIS SITE.

FORESTVILLE CREEK

A FILLMORE COUNTY GEM

By Bob Luck

I spent about twenty years of my adult life in Japan, and I got a lot of experience trying to explain Minnesota to Japanese friends. I'd start out by telling them that it is the 12th biggest state. It is more than half the size of the whole country of Japan, but the population, at 5.6 million, is the same as a dozen or so wards in central Tokyo. The typical response was amazement that any place on earth that could be so empty, but the few Japanese I've met who have actually traveled here between December and March have the opposite reaction: how could so many people intentionally live in such a God-forsaken place? The answer has something to do with skyways, heated garages, and an airport with direct flights to Cancun, all of which are found in the Twin Cities Metro Area. That's where you'll find the people, too. Take away the 12-county metro area, and you'd still be left with a big state, #16 to be exact, but the population would barely reach 2 million. Instead of 64 people per square mile, we'd be at 24, like Nebraska or Kansas. Urbanites often refer to this area of the state as "Outstate Minnesota" or "Greater Minnesota." A resident of Alexandria (definitely outstate) retaliated by telling the Minneapolis Star-Tribune that it should start calling the metro area "Lesser Minnesota."

All of which is a long-winded way of saying that we still have space for a few trout streams, even in Lesser Minnesota. Most of the good water is outside the Twin Cities metro area, and some of the best is in Fillmore County, on the Iowa border. The population density of Fillmore County happens to be the Greater Minnesota average of 24 per square mile. That's far more people than the 1.6 you'll find in Cook County on the other end of the state, but it is few enough that some of the trout streams never pass under a road. That sounds to me like a good working definition of a place that is more wild than civilized.

One of those streams is Forestville Creek.

This is my first-ever stream writeup, and I must confess to being uncomfortable about it. Revealing a stream's secrets feels a bit like kissing and telling, and not many trout streams have been ruined by too little publicity. On the other hand, it is pretentious to think that enough people are going to read this essay that it would have any effect on fishing pressure, especially on a stream as remote and difficult to fish as Forestville, so I'll take a few steps down the slippery slope. I have only fished it a handful of times, but I have managed to fish its entire length, which I haven't done for many other trout streams. I figure that gives me at least one qualification to write about it.

According to DNR documents, the creek was first surveyed by Thaddeus Surber in 1920. He described a stream emerging from a cavern at the base of a 150-ft high cliff, flowing through a deep, narrow, wooded valley and ending

at the junction with the South Branch of the Root River. A local landowner told him that it had been an excellent brook trout stream in the 1880s. Somewhere along the line, brown trout were introduced into the stream and have become the dominant species. The browns may not be native to the creek, but they have been wild for generations: the last stocking of Forestville Creek was in 1976.

Most of the creek flows through public land, and the DNR, in its wisdom, has purchased perpetual easements on the rest. Perhaps due to its isolation, the creek's watershed was never farmed intensively, and there are no steep, muddy banks of topsoil buildup that are so often observed on other Driftless streams. Some habitat improvement work was done from the 1950s through the 1980s, but it has long since blended into the natural scenery. It is one of the loveliest valleys in a lovely region, and it would be worth visiting even without a fly rod in hand.

I've never fished in the cave itself, but the store at Maple Springs campground displays a photo of an angler casting a fly into it. I neglected to ask if he caught anything. The creek flows shallow and wide for a few hundred yards until a large spring dumps into it. For the next half-mile, it flows narrow and deep through a picture-perfect pasture, cows grazing peacefully, with one fishy-looking undercut bank following another. It looks like perfect hopper water. I tested this theory on a breezy August afternoon, fishing from the start of the pasture to the cave. I didn't get a strike. I retrieved a shred of dignity on the walk back by tightlining nymphs through a couple of promising holes and landing two six-inchers. I have no clue why the



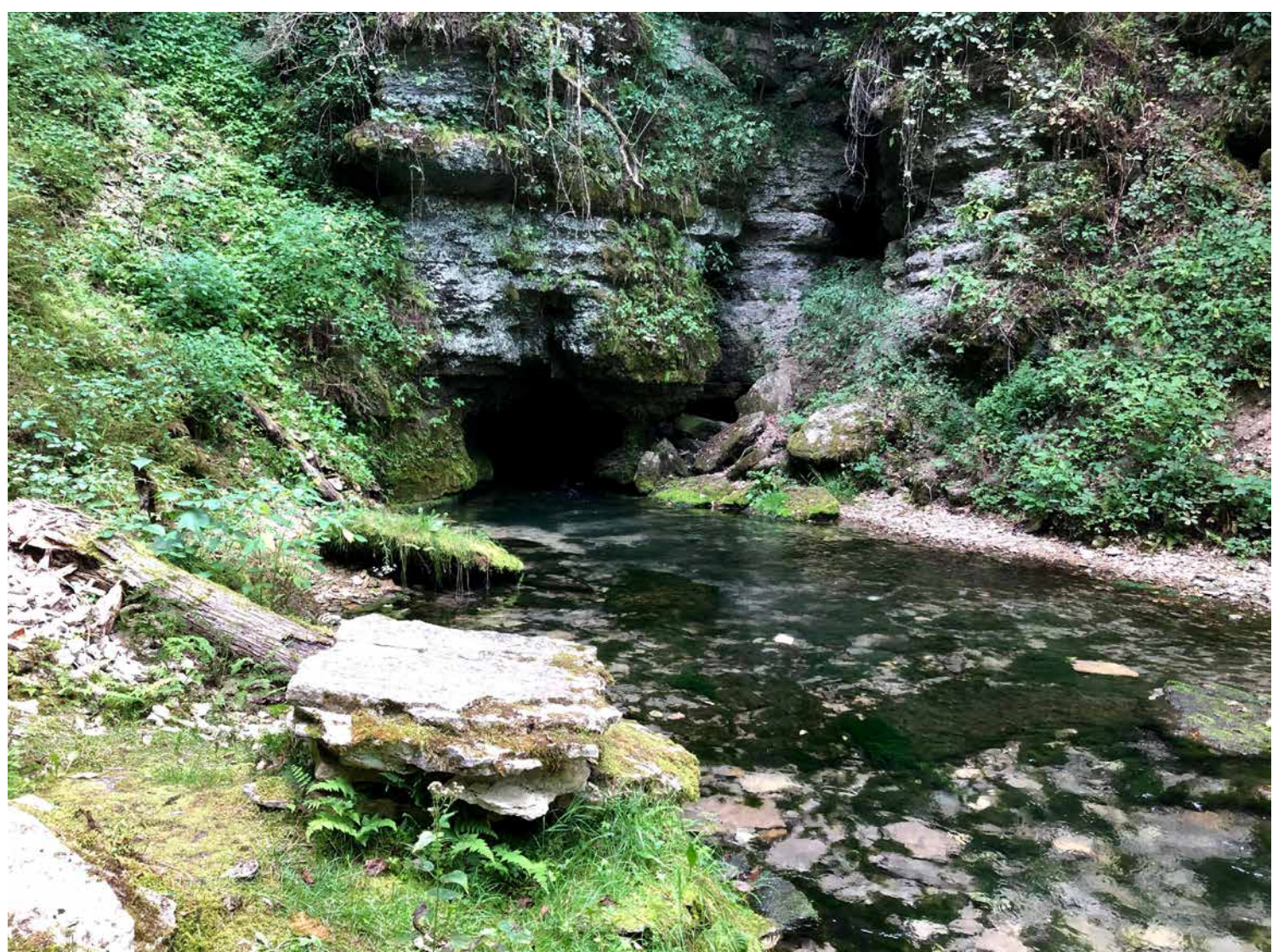
THE 14-INCH TROPHY.

hopper wasn't working; additional field research is indicated.

Just as the creek enters the forest, but before it gets too brushy for back-casting, there are two plunge pools that you won't want to miss. My stream notes indicate catching 13-inch fish in each of these holes, and I wouldn't be surprised if larger fish are lurking in them.

For the next couple of hundred yards, the creek is nearly impossible to fish, or at least it was in mid-August, when I tried it. The creek is filled with thick weed beds, leaving dry flies as the only alternative, but the banks are choked with brush, making it nearly impossible to cast them. I suspect this may be a good stretch in the springtime, after winter has cleared out the vegetation.

A little farther downstream, the weed beds subside as the creek picks up some speed and heads through a series of riffle-pool sequences for about a quarter of a mile until it reaches the campground. The brush is still thick, but back-casting is possible in some places, roll-casting in others, and you can always make a bow-and-arrow cast, which works more often than you might think. Unless you fancy fishing in somebody's backyard, skip the next couple of hundred yards where campers park their RVs. Downstream from the campground is a half-mile stretch of water with undercut banks, riffle-pool sequences, and few enough trees that casting is actually possible. This, along with the pasture, is the most pleasant part of the creek to fish, and I found it more productive than the pasture.



THE SOURCE OF FORESTVILLE CREEK.

Maple Springs campground has been around since the 1970s when the owners of a small family farm put a pay box on the gate and invited families to camp in their cow pasture. Things are more organized these days, with clean, hot showers, a well-stocked store and, believe it or not, fast Wi-Fi. You are unlikely to get a site along the creek—all but one are reserved for season campers—but it is just a few minutes' walk to the creek from any site. Non-campers who want to park their car to fish the upper reaches of the creek can purchase a day pass for a few bucks.

The productive water ends roughly where the creek flows back into the forest a few hundred yards above the state park boundary. For roughly a mile, until it passes a set of concrete slabs allowing hikers to hopscotch across, the creek is shallow and slow, with few good lies. Fallen trees provide a marginal amount of cover, but are difficult to fish, and frustrating to navigate. I spent the better part of a day covering this stretch and emerged with mosquito bites, nettle stings, and a bad mood after having

caught only one small fish and lost a nice one in a deadfall. I could have avoided this fiasco if I had looked carefully at the map. Productive water is usually characterized by lots of twists and turns, indicating deeper holes and undercut banks. This stretch of Forestville Creek flows nearly straight across the map.

The fishing improves in the final half-mile. The obstacle course continues, but the creek deepens and resumes its serpentine pattern all the way to where it empties into an impossibly aquamarine pool in the South Branch of the Root. The last time I fished this stretch I pulled a 14-inch brown out from under a fallen log. For once, everything went right: I set the hook on a hunch, guided it away from obstacles that could snap the 5x tippet, and managed to keep my 13-foot Tenkara rod from hanging up in the canopy of tree branches. It felt like a trophy when I finally got it in the net.

Bob Luck is the current Twin Cities Chapter president and an avid angler.



TROUT FISHING IS NOT PROHIBITED!

DAUGHTER IN THE DRIFTLESS

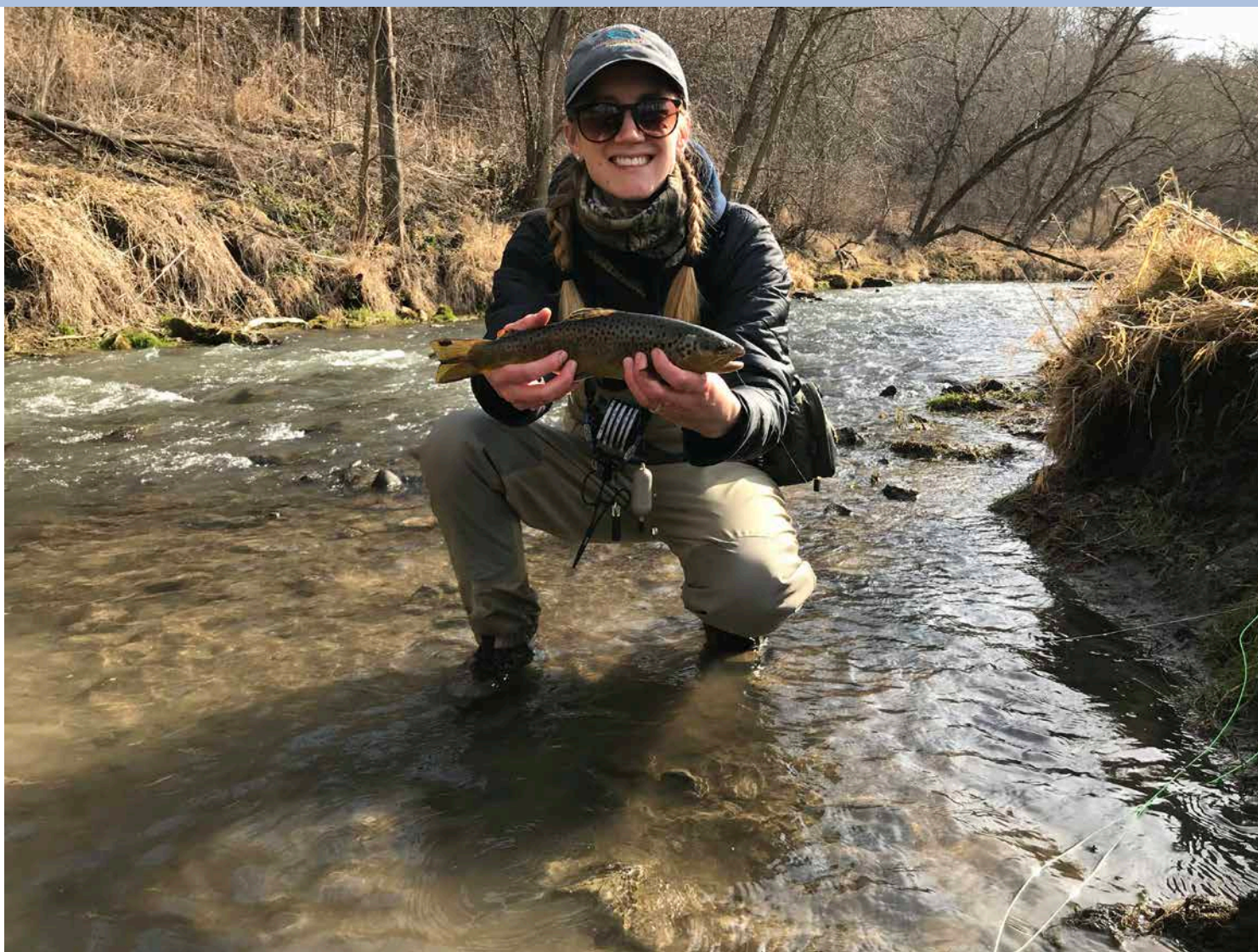
HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

By Holly Wandersee

As my 11th birthday approached, my brain overflowed with typical 11 year-old girl thoughts. I worried about my upcoming math test, wondered when it would finally be warm enough to wear my “stylish” new Bermuda shorts and platform flip flops (which for those of you who only have khaki-colored items in your closets and are not aware—were very stylish for middle school girls), and dreamed about the books and games that might be wrapped up in my birthday presents. At the time, I was not thinking too much about the trout-fishing outing to southeastern Minnesota that my dad had planned as part of the birthday festivities.

It would be great to continue by telling a story about how my first time on a trout stream was the most magical day of my life, that we netted dozens of monsters, and I immediately became a fly fishing prodigy. My story could be tied up in a neat little bow, like one of my birthday gifts, and I would have sailed off into the sunset (in a sweet drift boat). However, the journeys our lives take us on are rarely straight, well-defined paths.

Here is a real view of fly fishing as a pre-teen girl. For those first fly fishing trips throughout the Driftless Area, my dad bought me a nice, thick brown pair of neoprene waders. They kept me toasty warm in March, but once July came around, I spent more time dumping handfuls of river water into my waders to cool off than I did actually fishing. I definitely cried on multiple occasions if the cows who roamed the pastures got too close to me or my feet got stuck in the mud. On many trips, the number of candy bars I ate outnumbered the fish I landed. I missed countless fish because I was having my own private Taylor Swift karaoke sessions. And finally, I consistently left a trail of flies stuck in trees and bushes everywhere I went.



THE AUTHOR HOLDS A BROWN TROUT.

However, the frustration with every snag and knot in my line, the hours of boredom when the fishing was slow, and the soreness of wading boots that didn't fit just right were exponentially outnumbered by moments of great joy, excitement, and learning. Fishing trips with my dad started to get scheduled more and more amidst basketball tournaments, sleepovers, and school dances. I can now tell dozens of stories of great fish we have landed, even greater fish that we have missed, and numerous life lessons that I learned on the banks of meandering trout streams.

As each year passes, I get more and more excited about these traditional birthday outings with my dad. These days we spend weeks awaiting a day near my birthday that we can sneak away from work and spend a cool spring day on a stream. I am forever thankful for the memories that fly fishing has helped me and my dad create together. So, if the stories of 11 year-old Holly eating candy and singing Taylor Swift songs remind you of the young anglers in your life, remember that lessons are being learned and lives are being changed for the better, even if it doesn't always seem like it. What often sticks with kids are the

memories that are created rather than the fish that end up in the net.

Stay tuned for more stories from an amateur fly angler that all became possible because a dad took his daughter fishing.

Holly Wandersee has lived in Minnesota for her entire life. She is currently a teacher in Willmar, and lives in West Central Minnesota with her husband and cat. Holly learned how to fly fish catching panfish in local lakes, and she loves weekend adventures anywhere there are fish, trails, and campfires.

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:

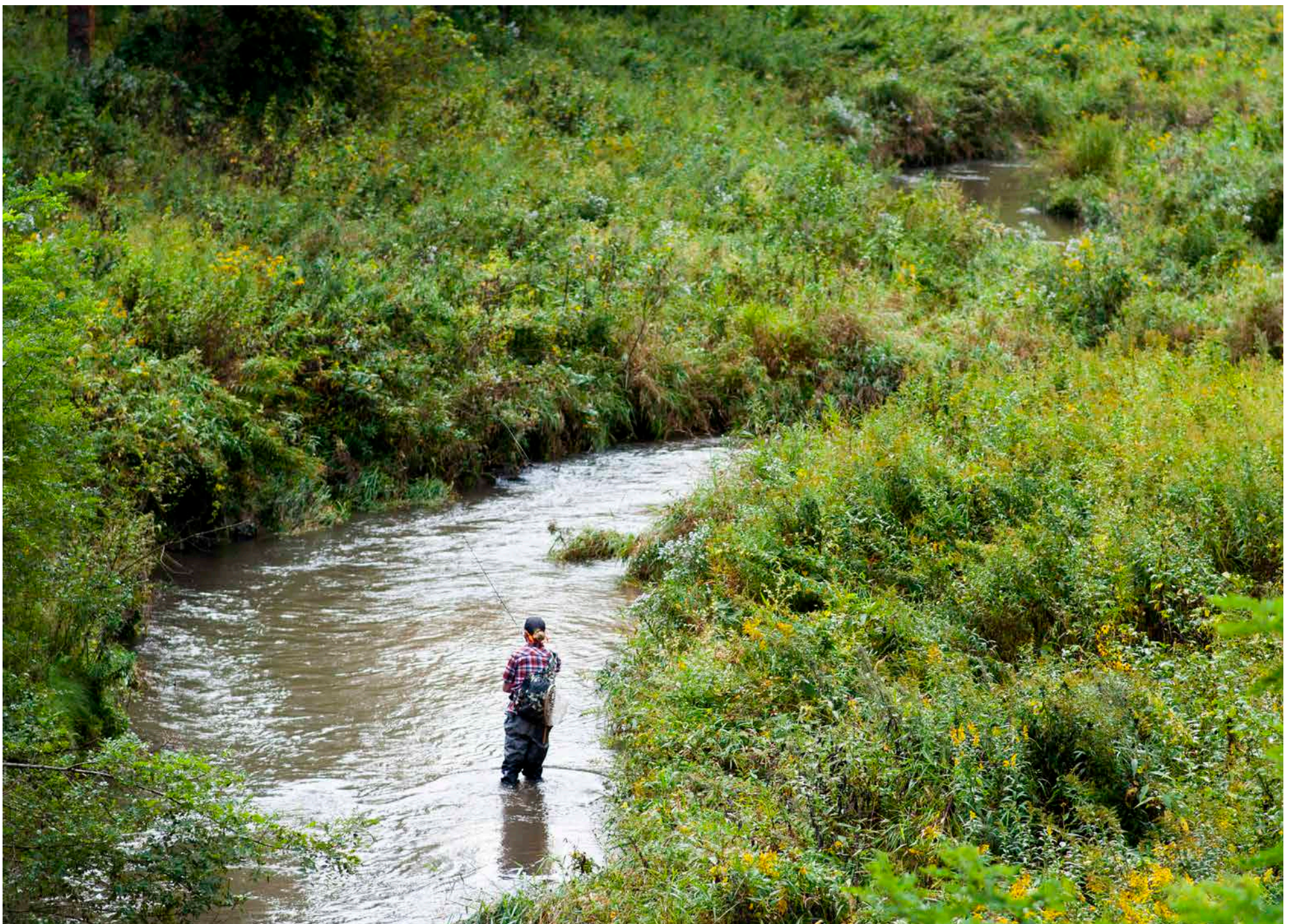
"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, EIN# 52-1766036, my (specific personal property item(s) and/or real property located at _____) to be used at the discretion of its governing board."



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.



A STUNNING DAY ON HAY CREEK. MIKE RIEMER PHOTO.



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**HABITAT HELPERS
NEEDED**

We need volunteers to assist with maintenance inspections of completed projects, as well as numerous hands-on tasks on 2023 projects. To volunteer or receive information on opportunities to help with inspections and/or hands-on work, send an email to: monitor@mtu.org List "inspection" or "habitat help" in the subject line and tell us what type of things or specific streams you might want to help with. Please provide a phone number; we will not use your information for other purposes.



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Have a Video of a Fly Fishing Adventure?



Content

We are seeking short films and videos that showcase fly fishing in the upper Midwest. Share your experiences of connecting with the water, hooking the big one, or that day when all the fish were rising. We encourage entries that display creativity, adventure, exploration and wise resource use.

Selected films and videos will be screened during an evening event at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo in March 2023.

Rules

- Must be 2-7 minutes long
- Must portray fly fishing in Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Michigan, Ontario and/or Wisconsin
- Any species of fish may be included
- Must contain no copyrighted material without permission
- Must be edited (no uncut video) and have a sound track
- No still photos

Prizes

2022 Prizes Included: Trxstle CRC fly rod transport system, Orvis rod & reel combo, Umpqua tackle pack and Rep Your Water gear. Look for 2023 prize information in early 2023.

To have your video considered, send a YouTube or Vimeo link of it to: videoshowcase@greatwatersflyexpo.com by Saturday, February 11, 2023. Include your phone number with submission.



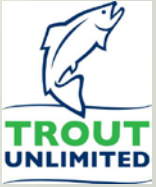
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Connecting Minnesota families to the outdoors through Fly Fishing with a Volunteer Mentor

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

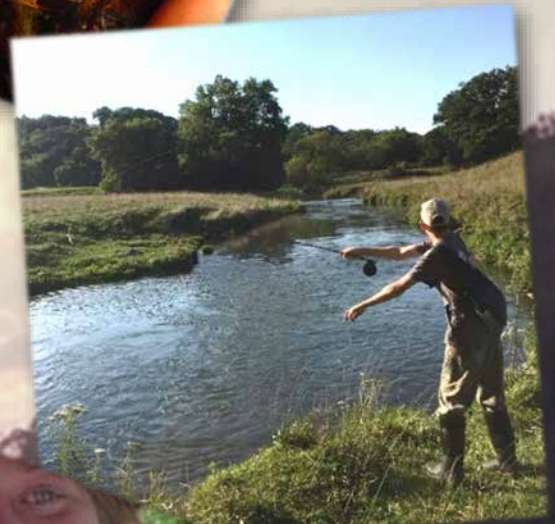
We tour a local fly shop. Review some gear options and ask questions.

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

WE ARE ACTIVELY SEEKING VOLUNTEER MENTORS FOR THE 2022 PROGRAM YEAR. PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN "EXPERT" BY ANY MEANS. YOU JUST NEED A LITTLE PATIENCE AND THE DESIRE TO SHARE WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT FISHING AND THE OUTDOORS WITH A YOUNG PERSON.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED, PLEASE CONTACT THE PROGRAM COORDINATORS KEVIN WIER 612-867-5768 OR RICH FEMLING 763-807-5878. OR VIA EMAIL AT FOSTERTHEOUTDOORS@HOTMAIL.COM



MNTU CHAPTER NEWS

Gitche Gumee Chapter

Snow fell across the northland for the first time this season on October 14. Depressing, yes, but not to worry, it all has since melted away. Inevitably, winter will arrive in our region soon enough, but before then we'll enjoy the cooler weather along with a few warm ups as we chase the steelhead and salmon that run up our North and South Shore tributaries of Lake Superior. Watersheds across the region are lower than average due to severe drought conditions, per the National Drought Mitigation Center. But don't let that limit your spending time on the area's rivers. Fall is a great time to explore, enjoy the beautiful scenery and chase these awesome fish.

Gitche Gumee Trout Unlimited wrapped up one of the chapters busiest summers in recent memories. We spent a number of days working on the Upper French River planting and caging cedar trees. Each of our work events had a good turnout and an estimated 100+ trees were added to the riparian corridor. In addition, we partnered with the City of Duluth in bringing "Intro to Fly Fishing" to the area's communities.

October kicked off our '22-'23 program season and we will continue to stay plenty busy. We wrapped up the first event of our program year by partnering with UMD Fly Club. Our first event, entitled "Fall Fly Fishing, Lake Superior Tributaries in MN and WI" was well attended with 50 to 60 folks. This was the first event held in-person in 2+ years and it was great to be in front of everyone and able to say "Hello" in person. It was great to see chapter members in person vs. watching their faces via Zoom. Throughout the season we will be meeting monthly and covering topics such as restoration projects in the northland, a fly tying get together, and talking with the MN and WI DNR on regional fishery updates. In addition, we plan to hold our popular Film Festival event sometime in early 2023. Details about all our upcoming events will be shared on our Facebook page as well as the chapters e-newsletter. If you'd like to get on our e-newsletter distribution list and stay up to date with our chapter news, send me an email at brandon.kime@gmail.com and we'll get you added to the list!

Wishing everyone a great fall season!

Brandon Kime

Headwaters Chapter

As we start the new school year we find our need for volunteers as strong as ever. On October

13 and 14 we had Jim Emery at Gene Dillon Elementary teaching our fifth graders about macroinvertebrates. The school is lucky enough to have a private pond on the property allowing students to easily experience some hands-on learning. Over the two days, we had six groups of students brave the cold and snowy weather sampling the water in search of aquatic insects. Jim explained to the students that the types of insects present could help determine the health of the water source. Students donned waders and hip boots to go into the frigid water and take samples. Most managed to stay dry. This is one of the first things these fifth-grade students get to do as part of the Trout in the Classroom program. And if their enthusiasm on this cold day is any indication, these students will be great stewards for trout. We will need more volunteers throughout the year as more activities are planned

While the students managed to find some damselfly and dragonfly nymphs, the most common macroinvertebrates were backswimmers. Finding so many of them gave me the idea to tie up an example of one to show the students how we imitate insects for fly fishing. In between two of the sessions, I managed to run home and create an example to show the next group. Hopefully, this simple fly will fool some fish into eating it yet this fall.

This simple fly will surely be on our schedule when our Community Fly Tying starts up again in November. Those who are interested can join us at the Garden Grill & Pub in Bemidji starting November 17. For more information check out our website for upcoming events: www.tu642.org

On the last Sunday in August, several TU642 volunteers helped teach fly casting at the Youth Outdoor Activity Day in Alexandria. Our chapter supplied equipment and volunteers to teach hundreds of people to cast a fly rod. This event draws thousands of people to Alexandria and is focused on getting youth into outdoor activities. To learn more about this event visit youthoutdooractivityday.org

Kris Williams

Hiawatha Chapter

On September 12, Sara Strassman stood in a place that makes her happy. "I like working on watersheds," said the new Driftless Area Program Manager for the Driftless Area Restoration Effort.

She was standing on a snowmobile bridge over the South Branch Whitewater River with the Whitewater Valley as a backdrop speaking to about a dozen members of Hiawatha and Win-Crest TU. A few years ago, that stretch of the river got a major facelift and became a much better stream thanks to a habitat improvement project.



JIM EMERY AT GENE DILLON ELEMENTARY TEACHING THE HEADWATERS CHAPTER'S TIC FIFTH GRADERS ABOUT MACROINVERTEBRATES

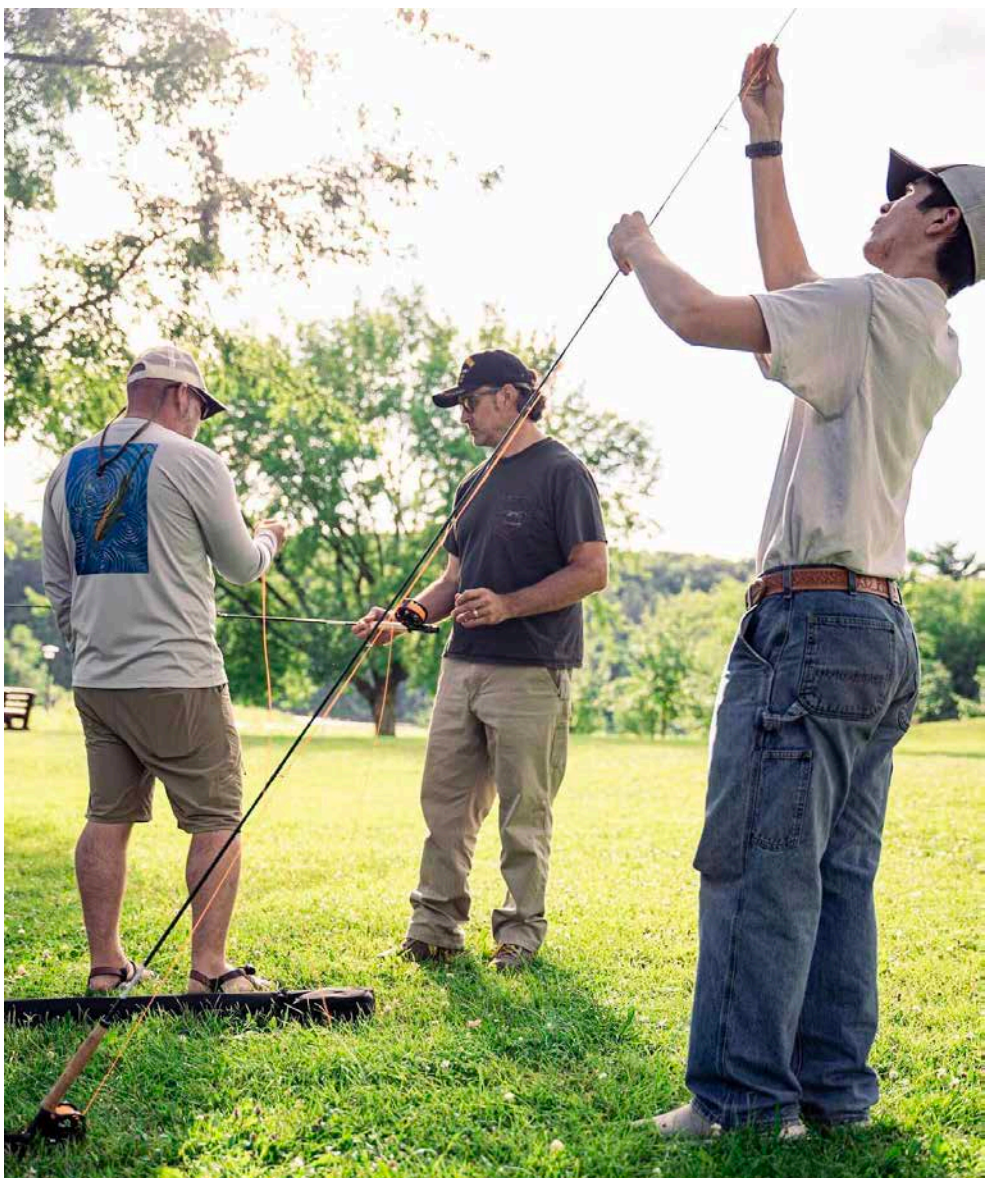
It was the first time she's met face-to-face with a local TU chapter. It's her new job after working with the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources on its Mississippi River team and before that on stream restoration for American Rivers, concentrating on dam removal.

She was raised in Michigan and "grew up playing in streams." She's a bait angler. "I love it, my kids love it," she said. She now lives in La Crosse, Wisconsin which is central to her job throughout the Driftless area of Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa and Illinois.

Her job involves setting direction for the Driftless Area for Trout Unlimited,

administering the Driftless Area Restoration Effort (a National Fish Habitat Partnership) and managing restoration programs across the Driftless states. The Driftless Area Restoration Effort began in 2004 as an effort to expand watershed restoration funding, partnerships and impact across the four-state area. The DARE program has been a National Fish Habitat Partnership since 2007.

She presented several updates for the Driftless. One of these updates relates to identifying culverts and bridges that may be barriers to fish as well as hazards to flooding. She is collaborating with TU's science team to work on that barrier inventory, beginning with Wisconsin.



THE GITCHE GUMEE CHAPTER HELD MULTIPLE VERY SUCCESSFUL COMMUNITY CASTING EVENTS OVER THE SUMMER.

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



Some other observations:

The new federal infrastructure bill is going to help all four Driftless states, potentially addressing problematic bridges and culverts.

A GIS-based analysis will be used to help prioritize brook trout restoration efforts.

DARE might keep the hybrid winter conference it used early this year because it allowed many more people to have a chance to hear experts on many topics.

The Regional Conservation Partner Program that gives money to farmers to help with in-stream projects was recently submitted for renewal. If awarded, States could receive \$200-\$250,000 per year for five years.

Under the Fish Habitat Partnership between TU and Fish and Wildlife Service, TU will be doing more strategic planning and administering grants, with the next call for proposals this winter.

• WiseH2O, TU's water quality mobile app, will be helpful in filling in data gaps in the Driftless and will help anglers monitor streams while they are out and about. There is a tutorial video on the DARE Facebook page and additional information on the MobileH2O website.

There is still time for folks to get in on a September Water Quality Blitz by capturing data in our brook trout streams. www.mobileh2o.com/driftlessprogram


John Weiss

Twin Cities Chapter

After a second year of drought in the Twin Cities Metro, we are getting a little tired of low water and spooky trout, and we are (almost) happy that the 2022 fishing season has ended. Here's hoping for a snowy winter to recharge the aquifers.

Actually, fishing season isn't over everywhere, and I am not talking about Iowa! Certain state parks and towns in south-east Minnesota allow fishing year-round. One of those parks, Whitewater State Park, will be the venue of our annual winter fishing camp from the evening of Friday, December 2, until Sunday, December 4. Fish for big rainbows, learn winter fishing tactics from some of our chapter's experts, and participate in our famous chili cookoff—either as a chef or judge! Anybody is welcome to join—you don't have to be a TCTU member. For details and registration contact event organizer Yves Charron at yves.charron@twincitiestu.org

We had a busy summer working with



TCTU NOTICE

ANNUAL MEETING AND ELECTION FOR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Twin Cities Chapter of Trout Unlimited (TCTU) will hold its Annual Meeting and elections for its Board of Directors on Wednesday, January 25th at 7 PM. The meeting will be held in-person at the Fat Pants Brewing Company in Eden Prairie, and online via Zoom. All members of TCTU in good standing with dues paid are eligible to vote. To register for the meeting, please visit the following website address:
<https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Tctu-70337>

Members of TCTU are also encouraged to run for the Board of Directors! If you would like to nominate yourself or another member, please visit the following website address:
www.twincitiestu.org/board-nominations.html
The deadline for nominations is December 26, 2022.

Please contact TCTU at info@twincitiestu.org if you have any questions.

youth at a variety of events including fishing skills seminars, Foster the Outdoors and T.U.N.E. Camp. Now we are working in classrooms throughout the Twin Cities to support the Trout in the Classroom program. Our volunteers are supporting teachers to teach youth about the trout life cycle and coldwater ecology. We are looking for more volunteers! No qualifications required except for an interest in working with youth. Please contact volunteer coordinator Gary Wittrock at gary.wittrock@twincitiestu.org if you are interested.

One of the best trout streams in Minnesota is Hay Creek near Red Wing. Over 4,000 feet of Hay Creek near the DNR Day Use Area got a serious habitat improvement upgrade in September. It will take a couple of years for the vegetation to fill in, but we already like the looks of the project and are eager to fish it next year. Even closer to the Twin Cities, the Vermillion River is a trophy trout stream just south of St. Paul. The DNR has proposed special regulations to extend the catch-and-release area all the way to Hastings, and to add the Vermillion and its tributaries to the list of streams open for winter fishing. The TCTU Board has submitted a resolution of support to the DNR, and we are hopeful that these proposed regulations will be approved.

It will be 2023 before we know it. In January, TCTU will be holding its annual meeting and election of Board Members. Serving on a chapter board is one of the best ways to make a difference to coldwater conservation. If you are a TCTU chapter member and interested in serving on its board, please contact me at bob.luck@twincitiestu.org, or take a look at www.twincitiestu.org/board-nominations

Bob Luck

Win-Cres Chapter

Many thanks to the six TU volunteers who whacked through a jungle of tall and toxic weeds along a stretch of Rush Creek this July along Hwy. 25 above Rushford.

Volunteers mowed about one mile on two sections that were not mowed during our effort on Rush Creek two weeks prior. This mowing included about a half-mile that has not been mowed before. The old path was obliterated by weeds taller than the tallest volunteer. The chapter's brush-cutting mower sliced through long stretches of wild parsnip, the yellow-topped plant that is the bane of anglers because it can cause a painful rash.

A special shout out to our newest volunteer, Mike Tanguay, a Twin Cities TU member with a camp on the South Branch of the Whitewater River. Volunteer Lou George, of Fountain City, Wis., also rejoined our crew, and has offered to share trailer-hauling duties with Neal Mundahl. The trailer has turned out to be a perfect fit for our 14.5-hp brush cutting mower. Thanks go to Paul Girtler, who not only stores it in his barn, but also has improved the setup with better fasteners.

Others who whacked through the weed jungle are Jim Reinhardt, Neal Mundahl, Mike Jersek and myself, Dave Shaffer.

This stretch is known to be great for hopper fly fishing. Get out there!

Dave Shaffer



A LARGE SECTION OF HAY CREEK NEAR RED WING RECEIVED HABITAT IMPROVEMENT THIS FALL.

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For those of you who are members of chapters in other states, or who would like to directly support MNTU's newsletter, we welcome subscribers who would like to receive and support the newsletter. Sign up to get three colorful issues annually. Sign up online at mntu.org or mail in this form to receive the next issue arriving in November!

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SELECT POETRY

By Larry Gavin

Volunteering at Senior Fishing Day

The blue bus does a poor interpretation of the sky. It pulls into the parking lot next to Winslow's pond. The senior citizens disembark: canes first, then walkers, then wheelchairs. Everyone gets a rod, a bench, and a spot along the grassy shore. Faces strain with effort and recollection. I understand, and see myself in every face. John is the guy I meet. We shake hands. His are smooth, but his grip is determined, strong. Pond-side benches, bait in plastic cups, John is skeptical. We talk fish and his eyes gaze at the horizon. My eyes look at his. He mentions Yellow Breeches Creek, the Letort the Beaverkill, the Battenkill from years ago. He speaks of big trout fooled and delicate flies, evening hatches, spinner falls, and an understanding wife gone ten years now. I say I know, but I don't, even though I want to. Instead, I tell him I have a fly rod in the car, and more flies than can be imagined. He brightens at the thought and minutes later, lays out a cast like a memory, gentle, soft and perfect. The fly landing like a forgotten promise. The rise is equally perfect. A stock tank bruised rainbow that somehow remembers to jump...twice. John bows to it, eyes full of knowing. The bus starts beneath an oak tree and idles pointlessly, "We have time for a few more casts," John says. Sounding like every fisher, to ever pick up a rod, on this earth.

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



GITCHE GUMEE CHAPTER MEMBERS COLLABORATED WITH THE GREATER LAKE SUPERIOR FOUNDATION TO INSTALL THESE COASTER BROOK TROUT INFORMATION SIGNS ALONG THE NORTH SHORE.