

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - February 2022



Copyright 2022 Minnesota Trout Unlimited - No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission of Minnesota Trout Unlimited.

WEST INDIAN CREEK HABITAT WORK
NEW LOCAL FILM: WATER SABBATH
YOUTH SERIES: ANATOMY OF A PREDATOR
TYING THE SLUMPBUSTER
YOUTH FISHING DATES
BEAVER POND BROOK TROUT

Minnesota Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 845
Chanhasseen, MN 55317-0845

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 281
ROCHESTER, MN



READ MORE ABOUT THE FILM WATER SABBATH, PUT TOGETHER BY FILM-MAKER MIKE THIENES AND ARTIST JAKE KEELER. THE FILM WILL PREMIERE AT THE UPCOMING GREAT WATERS FLY FISHING EXPO.

ON THE COVER

West Indian Creek's spring flow makes for steamy winter mornings in the Driftless. Read more about West Indian Creek on Page 12. Photo by John Weiss of the Hiawatha Chapter.

JOIN TU TODAY!

Want to subscribe to this newsletter? See the back page for details or visit www.tu.org to join Trout Unlimited!

Trout Unlimited Minnesota is the official publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited. Issues are distributed to all members of Minnesota Trout Unlimited chapters. Subscriptions are available by joining Trout Unlimited. See the back page for further details.

Copyright © 2022 Minnesota Trout Unlimited. No portion of this publication may be reproduced without written permission from Minnesota Trout Unlimited.

Advertising rate sheet available on request. Send all editorial and advertising correspondence or other inquiries to the volunteer editor:

Jade Thomason
 2067 E. Pioneer Rd.
 Duluth, MN 55804
 218-525-2381
editor@mntu.org

Address change?

Please call 1-800-834-2419 or email trout@tu.org to update your contact information.

EDITOR’S ANGLE

AN EXPO HOMECOMING

By Jade Thomason, Editor

I was deeply saddened to learn of the passing of Rich Frick this winter. I met Rich over a decade ago when we were both volunteers for T.U.N.E Camp, a multi-day outdoors experience that MNTU helps support. I watched Rich teach children to tie flies, cast a fly rod and check stream temperatures down in the Driftless. I was impressed with his patience and his ability to make everyone laugh, including the most stubborn kids. Over the next many years I would see Rich at various fly fishing events, but my highlight each year was spending the weekend with him over the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo.

We would jokingly refer to Rich as our "Fixer," and he really was. Within a few minutes of a problem arising, I could find Rich ready to help with whatever I needed. Running booth electric by hand, chauffeuring our headline presenters from place to place, or helping me hang a sign 20 feet in the air, I could

always count on Rich.

The pandemic and a new baby in our house has kept me from connecting in person with a number of my Trout Unlimited friends. The last time I saw Rich we were sharing laughs at a party in the upstairs of the barn on my property. That was 2019. Rich made a lasting impact on so many people. Read more about him on Page 7, Bob Wagner lost a good friend as well.

Great Waters will be different without Rich, but the show is going on. After a few years off we will be back again at Hamline University in St. Paul, March 18-20. Multiple years of planning has gone into this event to ensure that it is safe and pandemic-conscious. As per Hamline's policies, proof of vaccination and masks will be required. We can't wait to bring the community back together for what is many of our favorite fly fishing events of the year. Stop by to visit



with old friends or catch the programs from national fishing treasures like John Gierach and Matt Supinski. We'll have new programs about many subjects, and I hope to see you there.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

City Living <i>by Bob Luck</i>	page 4
Sculpins in Minnesota <i>by Neal Mundahl</i>	page 5
Water Sabbath <i>by Jake Keeler</i>	page 6
Remembering Rich Frick <i>by Bob Wagner</i>	page 7
Book Review: The Optimist <i>by John Meccia</i>	page 7
Youth Series: Anatomy of a Predator <i>by Carl Haensel</i>	page 8
MNTU Education Update <i>by Amber Taylor</i>	page 10
West Indian Creek <i>by Dustan Hoffman</i>	page 12
Beaver Pond Brook Trout <i>by Carl Haensel</i>	page 14
Tying the Slumpbuster <i>by Paul Johnson</i>	page 17
Chapter News.....	page 22
Select Poetry <i>by Larry Gavin</i>	page 24



BE FREE! TIC STUDENTS WATCH THEIR NEWLY SWIMMING FRY EXPLORE AFTER BEING RELEASED FROM THE BASKET INTO THE BIG, WIDE TANK. THEY HAVE BEEN OBSERVING AND CARING FOR THE TANK AS EGGS HATCHED, ALEVIN ABSORBED THEIR YOLK SACS, AND FRY MADE THEIR FIRST TRIP TO THE SURFACE FOR A GULP OF AIR TO FILL THEIR SWIM BLADDERS.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

PUBLIC WATER PROTECTIONS IN LIMBO?

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines limbo as “. . . a place or state of neglect or oblivion [or] . . . a state of uncertainty.” How appropriate, then, that a lawsuit which will determine whether small headwater streams and wetlands are “public waters” centers around Limbo Creek.

Minnesota regulates activities in or near streams and water bodies based upon whether or not they are “public waters” as defined by a state statute (Minn. Stat. 103G). The law required the Minnesota DNR to develop a list of all public waters called the Public Waters Inventory (PWI), as well as a map for each county. The PWI list and maps were developed in the early 1980s, but errors were made. Some waterways did not make it onto the list or maps.

Small meandering waterways and wetlands in the headwaters of streams, including trout streams, are important for water quality and the health of fish and aquatic life downstream. They slow and store runoff, capture sediment, and slowly release clean water to fish (sometimes trout!) downstream.

Limbo Creek, a small headwater stream

In Renville County, was not included on the original PWI list, but does appear on the map. When Renville County proposed to ditch the stream, the Minnesota Center for Environment Advocacy petitioned for environmental review of the ditching project. The County denied the petition on the basis that Limbo Creek is not a “public water” because it was not on the PWI list! MCEA appealed to the courts.

The key issue is whether a “public water” left off the PWI list is still a “public water” for purposes of Minnesota’s environmental review laws. It seems Limbo Creek was in, well, limbo. Does meeting the statutory definition control or does inclusion on the PWI list (or map) control? The Minnesota Court of Appeals ruled that the statutory definition of “public waters” is clear and controls, and that a water’s absence from the PWI is not determinative. A victory for Limbo Creek, headwater streams, and the public. But those who want to ditch and drain have asked the Minnesota Supreme Court for a contrary ruling.

Limbo Creek does not feed a trout stream, but a contrary interpretation of what is a “public water” could have



broad and long-lasting negative consequences for all small waterways and wetlands, including those in the headwaters of our trout streams. Consequently, MNTU has joined the case as a “friend of the court” to ensure that all headwater streams, whether on the PWI list or not, are protected. Using the courts to protect our trout streams is not new for MNTU. In the 1990s we successfully sued the DNR to ensure that trout stream tributaries would receive the same protections as trout streams, even though the DNR had initially left many off the PWI maps. This new case should provide certainty of protections for all headwater streams, including Limbo Creek. Perhaps a new stream name will then be in order.

THANK YOU DONORS!

Minnesota TU wishes to say thank you to the nearly 200 donors who responded to our December appeals for support! Your generosity makes delivery of this conservation mission possible. For those who still wish to give, please visit www.MNTU.org or mail your check to:

Minnesota Trout Unlimited; P.O. Box 845; Chanhassen, MN 55317.

MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

NEW DIRECTIONS AND A MOMENT OF THANKS

By Brent Notbohm, Minnesota Council of TU Chair

A good friend and I recently took advantage of a short break in this arctic winter to spend a day trout fishing in Southeast Minnesota. Being from “up north” and relatively unfamiliar with many of the streams in the Minnesota Driftless area, we were fortunate to have an excellent guide that day—MNTU’s Executive Director, John Lenczewski. A winter sojourn to the Southeast to fish with John has become something of a tradition over the last several years and each time I go, I’m impressed by the beauty, the water quality, and the great fishing. We’re so fortunate to have such a place in Minnesota!

Another emerging tradition for John and I is to take an annual trip into the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness each summer. The BWCAW is another one of those truly special places, which is why the recent cancellation of the Twin Metals mining lease by the Biden Administration is so important. Having special places comes with the responsibility of doing what we can to protect them!

Both traditions with John, along with other annual excursions I have with MNTU members, illuminate for me a core conviction—organizations such as

MNTU succeed because they’re comprised of people passionate about the natural world. Maybe I’m getting a little too sentimental after what has been a rough couple of years, but I find myself valuing the people in my life more than ever.

This is true of not just my close friends and family, but others who have impacted my life. I recently heard that Minnesota author and fishing legend Shawn Perich was having serious health issues. Shawn is the reason why I’m involved with MNTU. I went to my very first TU meeting in Duluth about ten years ago because Shawn was presenting on fishing the trout lakes of northern Minnesota—a subject I wanted to learn more about having read his terrific book *Fly-Fishing the North Country*. It was at that meeting I met John and fellow MNTU Board member Carl Haensel. In only a couple years, I was vice-president, then president of the Gitche Gume Chapter, and now find myself the Chair of the MNTU Board of Directors.

What’s the point of these reflective ramblings? Well, for me, the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into focus two essential aspects of my life—the people



I know and the places we go together. Both are worth fighting for, recognizing, and celebrating whenever given the chance. I’m proud to announce that one of the initiatives of the MNTU Strategic Plan is to develop annual state-wide awards that recognize members who have contributed to the mission of this organization. Too many have come and gone without much deserved accolades. We’re changing that.

But more so, I simply want to say thanks to all of you for the work you do and the values we share. And a special thank you and best wishes to Shawn Perich and all the Shawns out there who bring new members to this amazing organization!



MNTU CONNECTIONS

Executive Director

John Lenczewski
jlenczewski@comcast.net
612-670-1629
www.mntu.org

MN Council of TU Chair

Brent Notbohm
chair@mntu.org

TU MN Editor

Jade Thomason
editor@mntu.org

TU MN Advertisement Manager

Carl Haensel
carlhaensel@hotmail.com

Gitche Gume Chapter

Brandon Kime, President
brandon.kime@gmail.com

Headwaters Chapter

Kris Williams, President
topherjoel01@gmail.com

Hiawatha Chapter

Phil Pankow, Past President
pankow.phil0615@gmail.com
www.hiawathatu.org

Twin Cities Chapter

Bob Luck, President
bob.luck@twincitiestu.org
612-564-TCTU
www.twincitiestu.org

Win-Cres Chapter

Chuck Shepard, President
shepard@hbc.com
www.wincrestu.org

www.mntu.org

CITY LIVING

IT'S NOT JUST FOR HIPSTERS

By Bob Luck

Given my obsession with the Driftless, you might expect me to live on a stream in some coulee with a picturesque name like Swede Bottom Hollow or Bohemian Valley. Or maybe a charming little town with a fly shop and a couple of good restaurants like Lanesboro or Preston. Wrong on both counts. I married a city girl and I plan to keep her. Metropolises like Rochester and LaCrosse are far too small for my wife. She'd prefer New York or Chicago. We compromised on Minneapolis.

To be honest, a city suits my personality, too. Living in the country, or even a small town, requires a certain amount of handiness. Our friends Jeff and Florence are perfect examples. A few years ago they bought a charming old farmhouse on the edge of the Driftless. They installed a wood burning stove and remodeled the kitchen, featuring cabinets built by Jeff and ceramic tiles crafted by Florence. They have a large garden and they can or freeze all the vegetables they need for the winter. Jeff brews his own beer and Florence cooks the best Chinese food on this side of the Pacific. They never pay anybody to fix anything. We admire people like that, and you can bet that when the Zombie Apocalypse comes we will head straight to their place for refuge. But we lack the skill, patience and, above all, interest, to grow food, remodel houses and fix stuff. We have owned charming old houses in the past, and things didn't go well. Leaky roofs, drafty windows and faulty wiring. The storm windows failed to replace themselves with screens in the spring. Grass had an annoying tendency to grow. The last straw was a remodeling project in which we envisioned adding a new kitchen and some Japanese touches



THE SOUTH BRANCH OF THE WHITEWATER RIVER IN THE DRIFTLESS. GARY GRABKO PHOTO.

like an entryway with a shoe cabinet, and a neck-deep soaking tub. The contractor went way over budget and schedule, and we spent six months camping in the basement. Soon after the project was finished, we sold the house and moved into an apartment.

A couple of years ago we upgraded to a townhouse. Rented. When the roof leaks, I call the management office. Water heater needs to be turned up? Call the management office. Light bulb burned out? They take care of that, too. There is a Starbucks around the corner, Whole Foods is a block away, and we can order a different kind of cuisine for take-

out every day of the month if we choose. Several years ago my parents were no longer able to maintain their own home and moved into a retirement community. Residents first move into "independent living" when they are generally still able to take care of themselves, but need a little help with shopping, meals, cleaning and other chores. As needed, they can move into "Assisted Living" which is more like a hospital room, but the monthly payment stays the same. My brother Steve was intrigued by this concept, and started talking about signing up for one so he could have financial peace of mind and save his kids the burden of caring for him. "Steve is pretty excited about this," I told my wife one night, "Cooking, cleaning, maintenance, it's all taken care of." "So how is that different from our life now?" she asked.

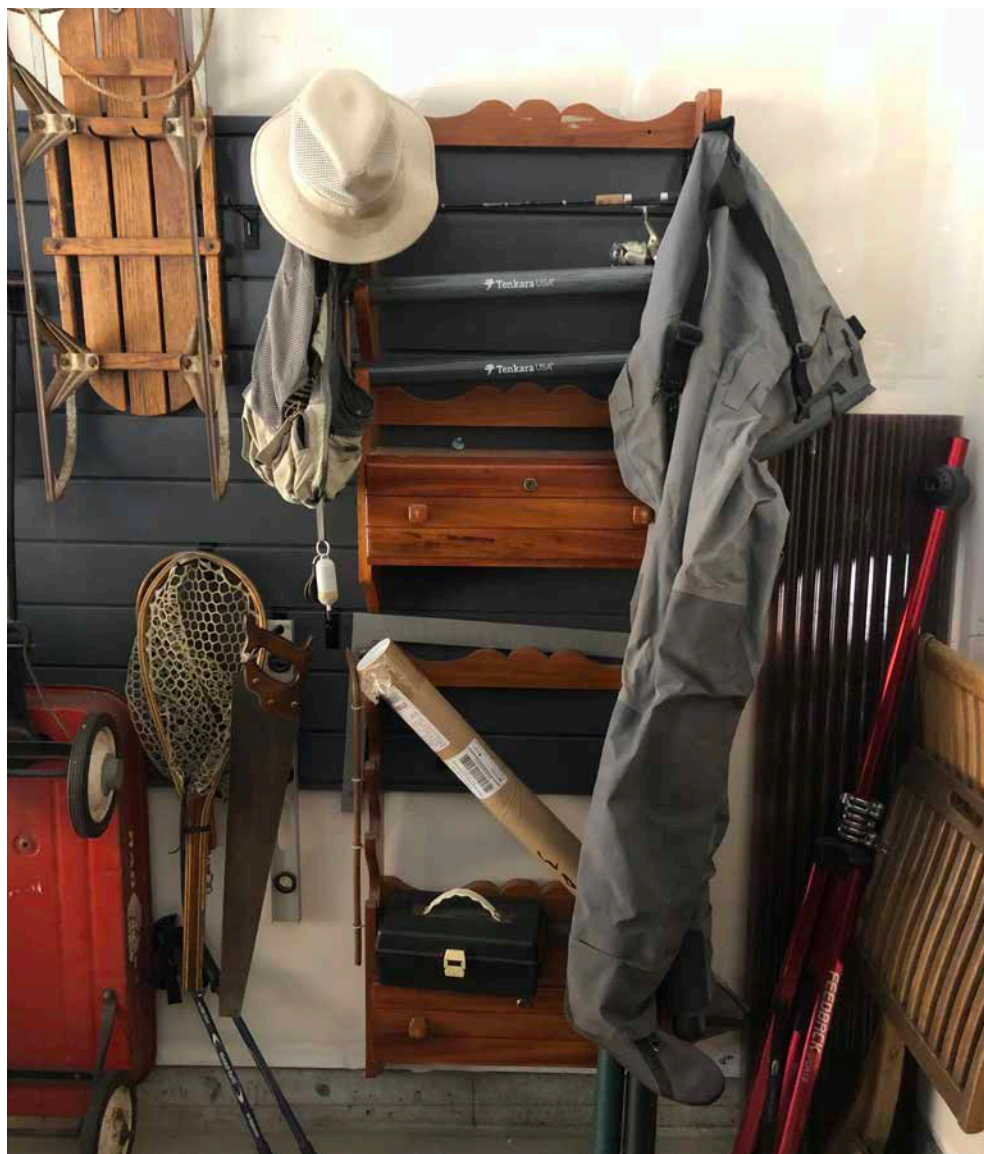
If I avoid rush hour, I can be on some lovely streams in an hour. I know some commuters who drive longer, and they have to go to work. Although our townhouse was not designed with fishing in mind, it does possess one key feature: an attached garage with plenty of room to store my gear and dry my waders. My wife has ceded the garage to me, on the condition that I don't bring my gear into the rest of the house. I once read in a wader care manual that it was a good idea to wash them in the laundry machine on the gentle cycle, and I was foolish enough to try it. After performing community service (cleaning every bit of sand out of the washer) and promising never to bring my waders indoors again, I was placed on parole. Along with a couple of hooks to hang my waders and other wet stuff, my garage features a homemade gun rack repurposed to store my rods, reels and tackle. I don't bother to unstringing my favorite rods in season. I am sure this is bad for them, and increases my likelihood of breaking a tip while loading or unloading the rod in the car, but I hate wasting an extra five minutes stringing a rod when I could be fishing, and loading a rod into a car is one of the

few ways I haven't broken a rod—so far.

I drive a small Mazda SUV. I can't ford streams or climb Pikes' Peak with it, but such feats are rarely needed in Minnesota, and I like the quiet ride and sporty handling. A strung nine-foot rod just barely fits from the back gate to the windshield. When I bought the car, I did give a little thought to buying a hybrid or electric vehicle so that I could reduce my carbon footprint, and I must admit to feeling a bit of guilt every time I look at the odometer and think about all that CO2 I'm emitting. But I just couldn't wrap my head around a car that sounds like an elevator. Maybe we old dinosaurs have to die off before humans take serious steps to reduce global warming. Or maybe I can just get over myself and buy a battery-powered car.

Occasionally I'll see a nice place beside one of my favorite streams, and think that if I lived there, I'd be home now. But the urge to own a country home soon passes. I recently had the opportunity to fish some private water on the lower Kinnickinnic. The landowner is a former DNR employee who has restored the prairie and oak savannah. A prairie-style house looks over the fields of milkweed, black-eyed Susans, goldenrod and assorted native fauna. It is one of the most beautiful places I've seen, and a prime stretch of the Kinni is just minutes from the door. The landowner told me that this was his fourth fishing trip of the year, which was as much fishing as he'd done the previous four years put together. "I spend all my time taking care of this place and keeping out invasive species," he told me. "If I wanted to fish more, I should have lived in the city."

Bob Luck is the current Twin Cities Chapter president and an avid angler. He never thought while growing up that he would end up in a big city, but after living in Boston, Tokyo, Singapore and Minneapolis, he's decided he likes it.



WADERS WERE BANISHED TO THE GARAGE AFTER AN UNFORTUNATE INCIDENT INVOLVING SAND AND A WASHING MACHINE.

SCULPINS IN MINNESOTA

ECOLOGY, LIFE HISTORY AND REINTRODUCTIONS

By Neal Mundahl

Sculpin are ugly fish. Big head, bulging eyes, gaping mouth surrounded by big lips, massive pectoral fins, skinny body. If they don't win the "Ugly Fish Award," at least they make the podium.

Despite their looks, trout anglers have long known that sculpin can be important prey for big trout and salmon. Way back in 1937, the slimy sculpin was the inspiration for Minnesota fisherman and tackle entrepreneur Don Gapen to develop the Muddler Minnow to catch big brook trout at his resort in Ontario. The Muddler now is used worldwide in many variations because of its universal appeal to game fish, but it still is mostly prized for catching big trout and salmon. What trout angler doesn't have several variations of the Muddler in their fly fishing arsenal?

Minnesota is home to four species of sculpin: slimy, mottled, spoonhead, and deepwater. The latter two are mostly found in deep, coldwater lakes such as Lake Superior and are seldom, if ever, seen by most people. But slimy and mottled sculpins live in coldwater streams where they often can be seen darting across the bottom in search of new hiding places among the rocks and vegetation. In many trout streams, sculpin are by far the most abundant fish present. It's in these streams where sculpin interact with trout.

In 2003, the Minnesota DNR introduced its plan to reestablish slimy sculpin in several trout streams in southeastern Minnesota (http://files.dnr.state.mn.us/areas/fisheries/lakecity/semn_sculpin_reintroplan.pdf). While the trout angling community understood the rationale for the reintroductions, many others in the state wondered why the Minnesota DNR was spending precious fisheries management dollars to stock ugly, nongame fish into its prized trout streams. Why not spend the money directly on the trout? But Wisconsin fish biologists had succeeded with a sculpin reintroduction back in the 1970s, reestablishing a native species while providing additional forage to help trout grow bigger. Win-win!

Biologists with the Minnesota DNR sculpin reintroduction program had to locate and study potential donor populations of slimy sculpin in southeastern Minnesota, since sculpin are not raised in any hatchery in Minnesota or else-

where. Once chosen, fish from each of the three donor streams were tested annually for four or five years to make certain that they were free of any disease, a requirement for any fish to be stocked into Minnesota waters.

Sculpin reintroductions began in 2003, with 10 streams having been stocked to date. Each recipient stream received fish from all three donor streams, 50 fish from each stream, for two consecutive years, an attempt to maximize the genetic diversity of the introduced populations. Follow-up surveys have indicated that sculpin were successfully reestablished and reproducing in six streams, unsuccessful in only one, and status was still to be determined in the remaining three.

The sculpin reintroduction program in Minnesota initiated additional research on sculpin in southeastern Minnesota, conducted by biologists from the University of Minnesota, Saint Mary's University of Minnesota, and Winona State University. These biologists have studied sculpin genetics, spawning behavior, habitat preferences, and diets. Through these studies, we have learned a lot more about a species of fish that previously had been mostly neglected in our region.

Sculpins feed on a wide variety of prey, normally bottom-dwelling invertebrates. Biologists at Winona State have documented slimy sculpin feeding on 35 different kinds of prey, from ants and beetles to mayflies, caddisflies, snails, and various small crustaceans. This agrees with what U of M biologists previously have observed in streams elsewhere in Minnesota. Most sculpin appear to prefer fly larvae (such as midges) and amphipods (scuds). Young sculpin feed almost exclusively on midge larvae, whereas older fish include more large prey in their diets. Studies in other parts of the country have reported that sculpin are primarily nocturnal feeders, locating their prey by sensing the weak electrical fields produced by the contracting muscles of moving prey.

Winona State researchers also found that adult sculpin prefer to spend most of their time under the cover of rocks or vegetation on the stream bottom or along deep banks. Younger fish were usually found in gravel or small rocks in shallower water. The maximum life expectancy for sculpin in southeastern Minnesota is probably four or five years, with



LARGE ADULT SLIMY SCULPIN FROM COLD SPRING BROOK NEAR ZUMBRO FALLS, MINNESOTA. SCULPIN FROM THIS STREAM WERE USED TO STOCK OTHER STREAMS IN SOUTHEASTERN MINNESOTA.

most populations dominated by one- or two-year-old fish. Biologists from Georgia have reported that adult sculpin establish territories in the most preferred habitats in streams, protecting their access to high densities of prey. The oldest and biggest fish tend to occupy patches of habitat with the best prey, forcing younger fish to occupy more open and potentially more dangerous habitats with fewer prey.

Saint Mary's University biologists found that slimy sculpin spawn in early spring in southeastern Minnesota, with males fertilizing eggs that females deposit on the undersides of rocks and logs. Males may attempt to attract multiple females to the "nest", driving off each female after it has laid its eggs. One male was reported to be guarding eggs from nine females! Males guard the developing eggs, keeping them clean and removing those that may develop fungus. Within a week of hatching, the young sculpin leave the nest and the male sculpin ends his watch over his brood.

U of M studies of sculpin genetics have documented interesting patterns that will benefit future reintroductions. Despite introducing fish from three source streams, the genetic diversity of their offspring was lower than expected. At most reintroduction sites, one source population contributed more genetically to the new generation of sculpin than either of the other two sources. This suggests that future reintroductions might better be made from a single source population, taking advantage of genetic strains of sculpin from that source to stock nearby streams that are likely to be most ecologically similar to the source stream.

Have sculpin reintroductions benefitted trout in those southeastern Minnesota streams? That question is difficult to answer. Trout and sculpin diets have a great deal of overlap, especially during winter. Studies at the U of M suggest that competition for food can significantly reduce growth rates of both sculpin and fingerling brown trout. However, it's assumed that by consuming sculpin, trout will more than compensate for any initial growth suppression caused by competition with those same sculpin.

Studies from the 1940s reported that brown trout in southeastern Minnesota regularly consumed sculpin. Current re-



MICROSCOPIC VIEW OF FOOD ORGANISMS REMOVED FROM A LARGE, ADULT SCULPIN COLLECTED FROM THE SOUTH BRANCH OF THE WHITEWATER RIVER NEAR ELBA, MINNESOTA. AMPHIPODS (OR SCUDS) AND SNAILS WERE THE MOST COMMON PREY CONSUMED BY THIS FISH.

search by U of M biologists is finding much the same pattern, with sculpin regularly appearing in stomachs of larger brown trout in many different streams. It seems that when sculpin are present, trout will eat them with some regularity, even though sculpin are most active at night and trout mostly feed during the day. Eating sculpin should benefit trout growth rates because even small sculpin provide much better nutrition than invertebrates with those tough, indigestible exoskeletons.

We have learned more about sculpin in Minnesota in the past 10 years than we did during the previous 100. Will we continue to learn more in the future? Sculpin certainly are an important part of coldwater trout streams in Minnesota, and reintroductions have returned these important fish to several streams. Unfortunately, Wisconsin was forced to discontinue their sculpin reintroductions because of concerns about spreading viral hemorrhagic septicemia, or VHS. In Minnesota, sculpin are still missing from many trout streams where they likely occurred early last century. Hopefully in the near future we can continue to help sculpin become reestablished in more of their former habitat, and help trout along the way, too.

Neal Mundahl is a professor of Biology at Winona State University and a long-time Win-Cres TU member and volunteer. This article originally appeared in the March 2013 edition of TUMN.



CLOSE-UP OF THE HEAD OF A SLIMY SCULPIN COLLECTED FROM GARVIN BROOK NEAR STOCKTON, MINNESOTA. A NUMBERED TAG HAD BEEN INJECTED UNDER THE SKIN BELOW THE LIP, TO IDENTIFY THE FISH IF IT WERE COLLECTED AGAIN AFTER STOCKING IT INTO ANOTHER STREAM.

WATER SABBATH

NEW LOCAL FILM

Filmmaker Mike Thienes was looking for something new, something to break from his regular work and offer him a path to explore his passions for fishing, the outdoors, working with artists and makers, and generally telling compelling stories about people pursuing creative purposes. He brought this pursuit to Jake Keeler, a life-long friend and artist looking to elevate his own artistic vision to see if they could develop a project together. After some brainstorming sessions, fishing sessions, and a break due to Covid, Water Sabbath started to become a reality. The idea was simple: create a documentary-style film and a series of art inspired by said film/process.

The simple idea became a labor of love, time, and dedication. Spanning a full season, it required both Mike and Jake to have a clear vision, plan, and patience. The project overall explores the idea of water and the outdoors as filters that generate creativity, peace, and meaning beyond the daily grind.

The film focuses on Keeler as the subject to explore these ideas—offering a window into his process of making art and how it correlates to his approach to fly fishing. It showcases the symbiotic relationship through themes, location, emotions, music, and the environments

and waterways. There is thought and deliberate artistic decisions to the film, and in that Mike and Jake are trying to bring something different to the table. It tells a story of a cycle, and leaves the viewer inspired to ask questions about their own purpose and pursuits.

Alongside the film, Keeler has made a series of works. One for each chapter, capturing the imagery, mood, and vibe of each passage. The work is immediately recognizable as Keeler's unique brand of fly fishing art, but it does explore some nuanced differences with color, material, and composition. This artwork will be released in a limited run of prints with the release of the film, and the originals will be on display at the Great Waters Fly Fishing Expo.

Water Sabbath became exactly what Mike and Jake set out to create, but it likely will be more significant in how it drives Keeler's artwork forward, and how it inspires and builds new and exciting bodies of work and film for Thienes.

The full film will premiere for the first time at the Great Waters Film Showcase, on Saturday March 19. It will also be released online in chapters and in-full through March and April by The Fly Fish Journal.



REMEMBERING RICH FRICK

FRIENDSHIPS FORMED BY TROUT UNLIMITED

By Bob Wagner

Friendship is such a valuable component to a healthy life, it enriches us beyond measure. Rich Frick was such a friend to me and his passing leaves a void. I'm sure other friends feel the same. I was at my daughter's home in Boise, Idaho when Rich's son Jason called with the unexpected sad news. I had just talked to Rich a few days prior and he shared that his wife Linda was not home yet from her extended stay in medical rehab. He also commented on one of his favorite subjects, Trout Unlimited, and that he was recently planning on participating in a TU project clearing buckthorn. I could hear the pride and commitment in his voice when he talked about several of the TU functions, outings and restorations he thoroughly enjoyed taking part in over the years.

Rich was an easy person to like and form a lasting friendship with. He was generous, kind, a good listener, and enjoyed learning and sharing fly patterns, new fishing and woodworking ideas. He was also a meticulous, excellent fly tyer. He was a valued member of the Laughing Trout group in the west Twin Cities metro, and I know they miss him dearly as well.

My wife and I first met Rich at the premiere opening of the Great Water Fly Fishing Expo about 18 years back. Rich

helped unload and haul in every piece of heavy furniture we had and, after several trips, surprisingly Rich said "I'll be back on Sunday to help you pack up and haul out what's left." Rich showed up Sunday and every year after that to help us. That is one great and gracious TU volunteer. Over the years Rich played many roles with TU—helping with banquets, teaching youth, habitat work and more. He was always a man behind the scenes helping out with some of our largest success stories.

Rich came up to Bemidji and stayed with us twice to participate in the Headwaters TU Chapter 642 Pike Hunt. I felt honored to be able to fish with him and watch him experience his first pike on his brand new 8wt, plus I enjoyed netting a couple dozen bass and sunfish for him off our dock. Rich did not need to catch big fish or lots of fish, he simply loved to fly fish. He was the kind of guy that surprised Val and I on a camping brook trout trip on the North Shore with a perfectly-grilled, delicious pork tenderloin ready for us when we got to the campsite. Consequently, I need to recognize without TU I would not have met Rich. I give credit to all the opportunities TU provides to volunteers in a myriad of programs which in turn provide connections (friendships) between people.



Someone wrote that we are the places we fish, and I think that is true. Maybe more so we are the people we fish with. They become part of us and enrich us, occupying those sacred places where all memories of fishing and friends exist.

Two days prior to Rich leaving us he had planned on doing what he loved: volunteering (clearing buckthorn) for a

TU project. Volunteering gave Rich purpose and pride, plus friendships that all of us treasure dearly. Thank you Rich. We will fish again on another river.

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

BOOK REVIEW

THE OPTIMIST

By John Meccia

"I don't want other people to know, and perhaps I don't want to admit it to myself, just how much I think about fishing."

If you're reading this, you're probably one of the afflicted like me. My liver has been blown. The folks at Excelsior Bay Bookstore know and have asked me to render my opinion on some fly fishing related books.

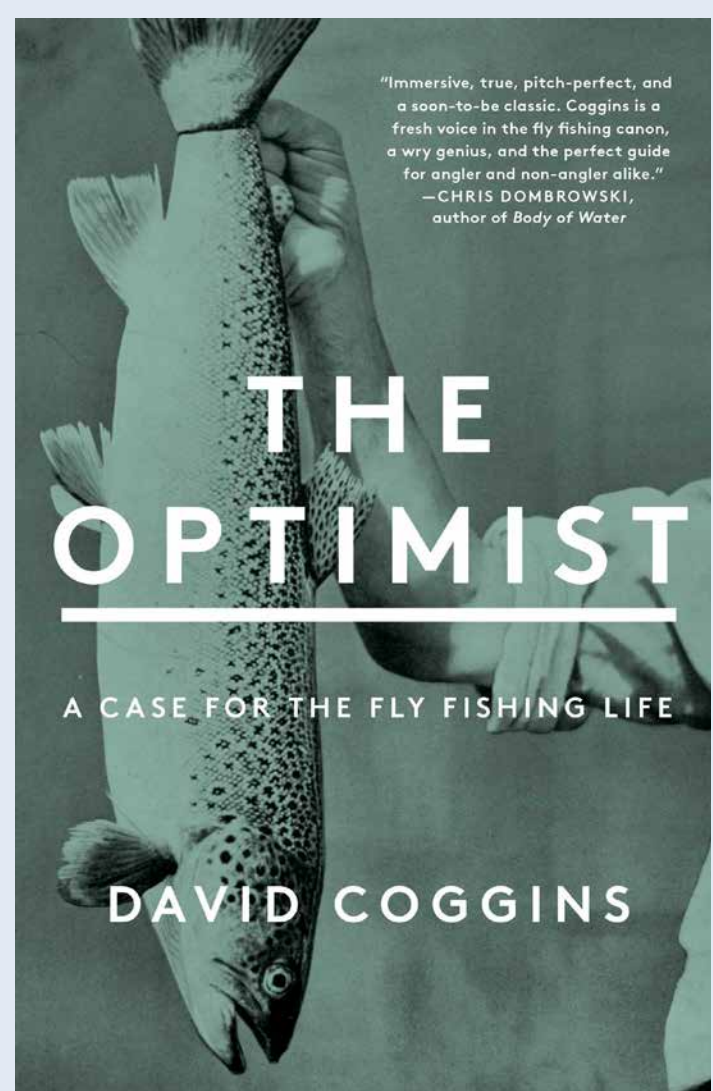
If I wrote a book explaining my attraction to fly fishing, it may sound a lot like *The Optimist*. The author, David Coggins, is preaching to the choir. The book is an insightful look at the pursuit of fishing—our anticipation, waiting, the mystery of what the river will hold that day. He encourages us to improve our skills and knowledge but realizes some luck is necessary, and if it all goes as planned you may actually land a fish. We can do everything right and still fail, but we'll be back with the hope of success. He makes it clear why we have all said "this is my last cast," but it's usually not.

The short chapters each describe adventures targeting specific species of fish.

The first chapter hooked me recounting stories of popper fishing for smallmouth on Wisconsin rivers. He continues capturing the aura around fly fishing by describing other trips he's taken out west for cutthroats, or bone fishing in the Bahamas, and more. Coggins incorporates some technical aspects, but the ideals of fishing remain the primary theme.

If you need a book to help you hold on until your next day on the water or until planning your next big trip, *The Optimist* will get you through.

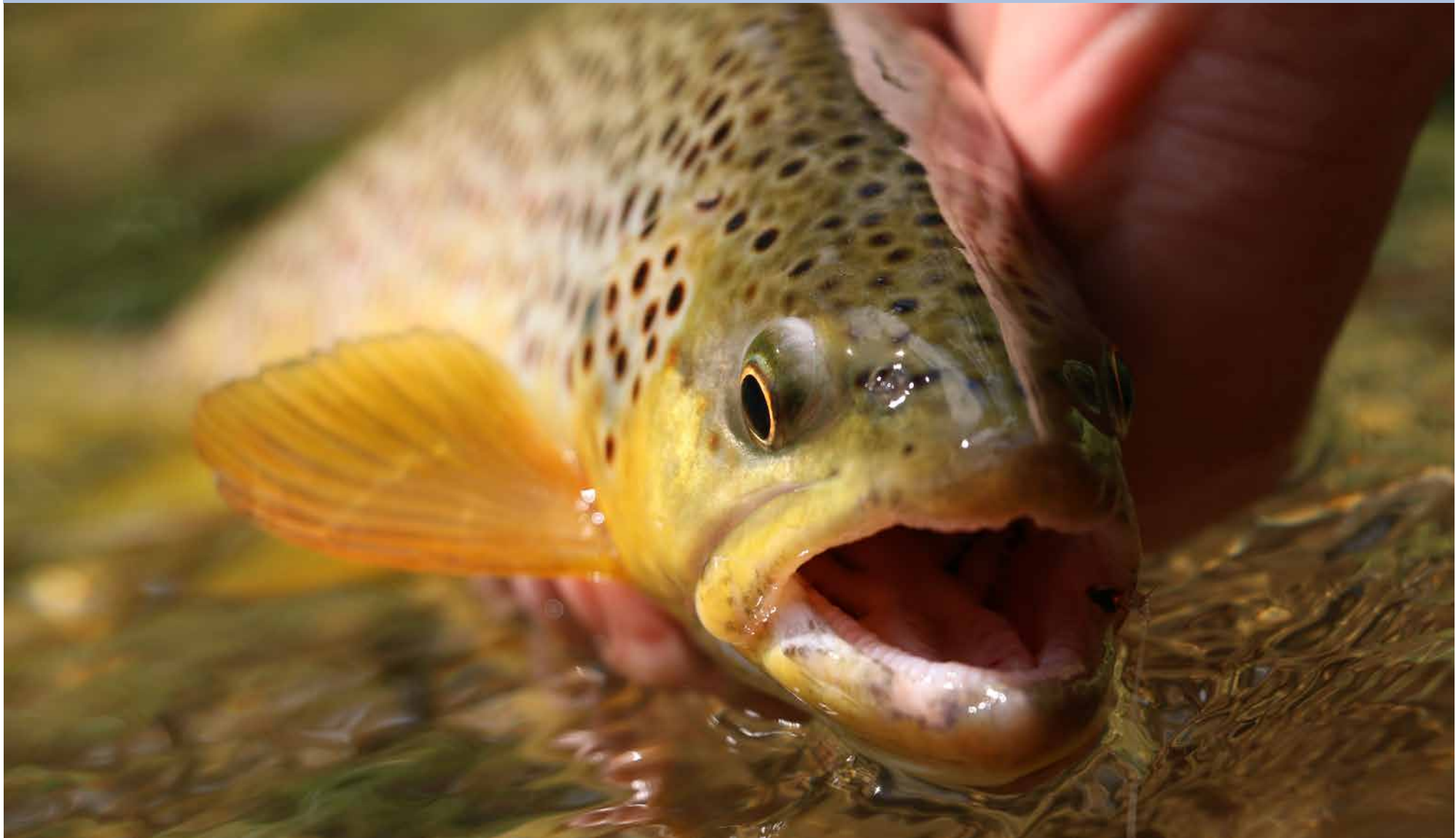
A day of local trout fishing or a multi day, backcountry fishing trip with John Meccia's brother allows him to refocus from his busy schedule involving mainly work and the usual life problems. John is a full time Otolaryngologist. He enjoys playing and competing in tennis, Nordic skiing, and sailing. Hopefully as a recent empty nester, he can again get some more days on the water fishing with his wife Lisa.



ANATOMY OF A PREDATOR: TROUT

YOUTH SERIES

By Carl Haensel



THE FINE-TOOTHED MOUTH OF THIS BROWN TROUT IS WELL SUITED TO TAKING PREY BOTH UNDERWATER AND ON THE SURFACE. ANGLERS OFTEN WILL FIND TROUT POSITIONED TO LOOK UP AND FEED ON HATCHING OR EGG-LAYING INSECTS ON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.

Large, aggressive trout are on the minds of many springtime anglers as they prepare for another fishing season. They possess qualities that allow them to thrive in rivers, streams and lakes around the state, and are challenging to catch. As a group, the trout and char that are found in Minnesota are members of the family Salmonidae. Family members that can be found in MN include brook, brown, rainbow and lake trout, as well as steelhead, a migratory form of rainbow trout. Chinook, pink and coho salmon are also found in Lake Superior. Ranging in size from brook trout just a few inches long to the 43 lb., 8 oz. state record lake trout, trout are formidable predators around the state. Take the time to learn about the unique characteristics that help them survive, and you might just have a better shot at hooking a big one the next time out.

Camouflage Coloration and Body Shape

Many trout may look brilliantly colored when viewed from the side, but both their coloration and body shape are often optimized for living in streams and rivers. The mottled coloration of the brown trout blends particularly well with variegated stones and pebbles in streams. The wavy, wormlike markings on the back of a brook trout, called vermiculation, blend with the rippled surface of the water when viewed from above. Many anglers are amazed when they release a good sized trout back into a small stream and it simply disappears due to this camouflage. The torpedo shapes of trout are streamlined for life in swift currents and are designed for high speed swimming. Any angler who has hooked into a large trout or steelhead can attest to their ability to escape both upstream

and down with incredible speed. Their body shape also allows for great leaping ability. Rainbow trout and steelhead can clear waterfalls and other obstacles six feet high when migrating.

Mouth and Teeth

The mouths of trout are well suited for feeding on the surface of the water as well as underneath. Many anglers enjoy fishing dry flies and other insects that float on the surface of the water to tempt trout living in streams and ponds. Look for trout cruising along the surface of the water on a lake or pond, or holding just under the surface of a stream as they wait for a meal. Trout may even jump clear of the water to take insects or other prey that are just above the water's surface. Trout have fine teeth that help them grasp and hold their prey. Trout also have vomerine teeth, which are

located on the inside of the upper jaw. These additional teeth help differentiate between different types of trout, salmon and char.

The Discerning Eyes of Trout

If you've ever seen a trout follow your lure or fly and then refuse at the last moment, you've witnessed a great example of trout eyes at work. Trout eyes are very similar to human eyes, and contain both rods and cones. They can see in both color and in tones of gray, depending on how much light is available to them. Like many animals, they can see ultraviolet (UV) light, while humans cannot. Most lures or flies that are presented in low light conditions to trout will tend to appear dark grey or black, just as they would to humans. Look at your fishing tackle at dusk to get ideas of lures to use in low light conditions. Try using lures



LEFT: THE ADIPOSE FIN OF TROUT, LIKE THIS STEELHEAD, MAY HELP IN NAVIGATING TURBULENT WATERS MORE EASILY AND MAKE SWIMMING MORE EFFICIENT. RIGHT: THE NARES OF THIS STEELHEAD, A TYPE OF RAINBOW TROUT, ARE LOCATED JUST TO THE FRONT OF ITS EYE. THEY TAKE IN CHEMICALS AND HELP PROVIDE ITS AMAZING SENSE OF SMELL.

or flies that are brightly colored in these conditions, especially if they absorb UV light.

Lateral Line

Trout have a finely tuned lateral line that helps them sense their surroundings, much like other fishes. As fish that inhabit moving waters, trout are able to use their lateral line rather than their eyes to judge and control their movements, especially in low light conditions. Trout also use their lateral line to sense prey and make judgments before attacking food. As predators, the prey of trout is often alive. Sometimes when a trout decides not to eat your artificial fly, it may be because it because the trout did not sense the right vibrations or hear the correct sounds coming from your lure. Lake trout in deep waters can use their lateral lines to sense prey even in total darkness.

An Extra Fin?

Trout and salmon are some of the only fish species that have a special extra fin

called an adipose fin. It is located on the top of the back of the fish, just forward of the tail, or caudal fin. Long a mystery to fisheries biologists, recent studies show that this small fin helps trout sense turbulence in the water in swift flowing streams, and may help them navigate and efficiently use their tail fin.

Sense of Smell

Trout and steelhead returning to their home waters to spawn may be able to sense a thimble full of a scent in over a billion gallons of water. They use special holes called nares that are located in front of their eyes on their head to sense chemicals in the water. Their keen sense of smell has become legendary, and trout use it to detect prey as well. Anglers can take advantage of this with a variety of different baits and scents especially designed to attract trout. Unfortunately, agricultural pollutants and heavy metals that may be present in some waters can affect the trout’s sense of smell.



THE COLORATION OF BROWN TROUT IS WELL SUITED TO LIFE IN STREAMS AND RIVERS. THE BLACK AND RED SPOTS OF THIS BROWN TROUT BLEND IN WELL WITH THE STREAM BOTTOM.

MNTU 2022 PHOTO CONTEST: WILD WATERS

This is the official announcement of the 9th season of the MNTU Photo Contest. We're excited to bring back one of the most popular annual features of the publication. This year, we welcome submissions that highlight the places and waters that you've been able to visit around the state, particularly during the pandemic. Fishing is one of the few things that we've been able to consistently participate in, and we hope you've been able to get out and take some great photos!

Send in your entries early, we look forward to seeing your photos!

Rules of the Contest:

- Photos must be shot in Minnesota.
- Photos must include a trout, salmon or steelhead with water in the background of the photo, **OR** a water body that they inhabit.
- Photos must be submitted by May 15, 2022. Top entries will be published in the June issue of the MNTU Newsletter.
- All photos submitted must be sent in *.jpg format at their original resolution to the Editor at: mntueditor@gmail.com
- Submission of photos gives MNTU the right to publish photos in the MNTU newsletter, in online media, and in other print mediums.

2022 Prizes:

The winner in each category will receive a box of a dozen flies ready to catch trout this season. The overall winner will receive a Minnesota TU t-shirt and an official MNTU hat.

Share this announcement with your friends near and wide, we welcome submissions from members and non-members alike. Photos from the contest will be used in the upcoming June 2022 issue of *TU MN* and will be highlighted on our website, Facebook page and in other promotions.

Questions? Contact the newsletter editor at: mntueditor@gmail.com.

Looking for Inspiration?

Check out some of the entries from past years. Photos have come from trout waters around the state, and have featured brook, brown, rainbow, steelhead and lake trout. We'd love to see even more salmonids! From the Driftless to the North Shore, photos have encompassed the length of the state. Even more waters are out there for you to explore, fish, and hopefully snap a few photos of as you're on the water.



MONTA HAYNER 2019 PHOTO.



BOB WAGNER 2020 PHOTO.



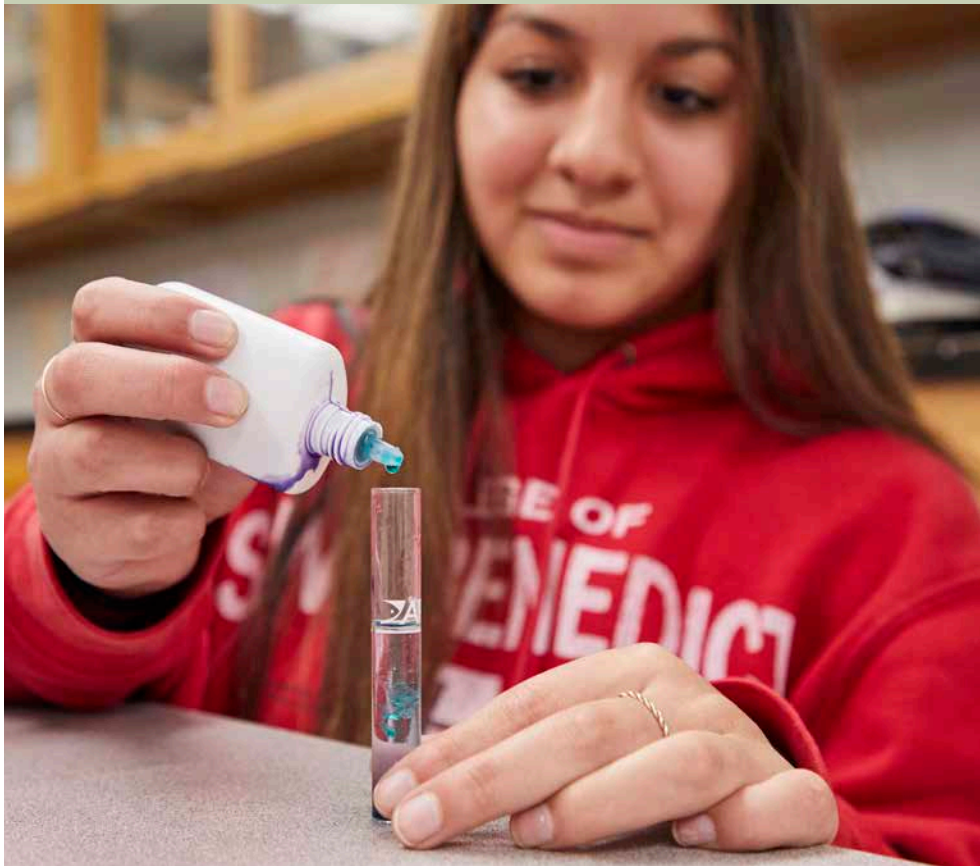
DAVID HOLMES 2019 PHOTO.



MNTU EDUCATION UPDATE

FEBRUARY 2022

By Amber Taylor, MNTU Education Program Supervisor



LEFT: A STUDENT CAREFULLY MEASURES THE CORRECT NUMBER OF DROPS INTO A TEST TUBE TO TEST THE WATER CHEMISTRY OF THEIR TANK.

RIGHT: MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS IN CLOQUET CLOSELY MONITOR THEIR EYED EGGS AS THEY TEMPER BEFORE BEING PUT INTO THE TANK. THIS ENSURES A BETTER TRANSITION FOR THE EGGS AS SUDDEN CHANGES IN TEMPERATURE CAN HARM THEM. ONCE THE EGGS ARE WITHIN A FEW DEGREES OF THE TANK'S WATER TEMPERATURE, THEY ARE GENTLY POURED INTO THE BASKET TO GROW AND DEVELOP.

Minnesota Trout in the Classroom (TIC) tanks around the state now have hundreds of swimming trout fry. For teachers keeping high water temps in their tanks, the fish may already be considered fingerlings at two inches or more. Considering their start, this is great news! Each year, egg delivery is a giant Tetris game of coordinating volunteers, routes, and teachers to make it happen in one day. While we have learned many ways to improve the process and make it more efficient, the program has doubled in the last three years, which means more eggs to sort, package, and deliver. On December 9, almost 80 people were organized and prepared to transport eggs, food, and MNTU newsletters to schools around the state. Coolers, ice packs, newsletters, trout food, cups, bubble wrap, scales, tape, spoons, distilled water, and paper towels were set up and ready to go. There was hot coffee and donuts for transport volunteers to take on their drive.

And then I received the notification that our eggs were going to be delayed until the following day, when Minnesota was set to receive a major snow storm and many of the volunteers were unavailable. After numerous phone calls, emails, and texts all eggs were delivered successfully, over the next four days. By the 13th, all eggs were safely distributed to tanks from Chisholm to Alexandria, Sleepy Eye, Rochester, Lake City and dozens of Twin Cities schools. Thank you to all MNTU volunteers that communicated throughout the process, drove through the snow, traveled for many hours, helped on the weekend, and took time to ensure this important cargo arrived safely. Teachers and students are grateful, and we couldn't have done it without you.

Since fall of 2018, our educators have engaged almost 10,500 youth through Trout in the Classroom and fishing skills programming. Aquatic

macroinvertebrate studies, fly tying, all seasons of fishing, trout releases, watershed ecology and trout habitat lessons, MN fish identification and adaptations, and more. This number represents the students with whom our team directly led the group's activity, and is ultimately only a component of the overall impact this program has statewide. It does not take into account all of the incredible things teachers are doing on a daily basis to engage their students with the trout, tank, and TIC related lessons.

Many schools have more than one class or grade level involved with TIC, while others have the entire school participating through observations, tank maintenance, and fish care. Students participating in TIC are engaged throughout the school year. In the fall, the focus is watershed ecology and aquatic macroinvertebrate studies, then during tank set up and preparation they learn about the important components of trout habitat. Feeding and caring for the fish teaches them about life cycles, biology, and the

nitrogen cycle, while tank maintenance provides opportunities to learn responsibility and establish a sense of ownership. As a STEAM program, teachers in multiple disciplines use the fish and tank for lessons and projects, furthering its impact and reach throughout the state.

Thanks to a generous donation from the Twin Cities TU chapter, we are able to offer additional programming this winter, spring, and summer. In late February and March, MNTU educators will be conducting fly tying programs with TIC students throughout the metro. Hundreds of students will learn how to tie the San Juan Worm and Wooly Bugger fly patterns. Starting in April, we will lead spring releases at which students will learn about water quality through the WISE H2O app and testing process, release their trout, learn how to fly cast, and go fishing where possible. MNTU has partnered with 12 new and returning partner organizations to offer over 25 fishing skills programs this summer. Between June and August, we are conduct-

ing both spin and fly fishing programs for youth and families throughout the Twin Cities. See the list in this newsletter for details about dates, times, partners, and locations. More programs will continue to be added. Refer to our Facebook page for the most up to date details.

As our education programs grow, so does the need for volunteer support! There are a variety of ways for you to get involved: be a TIC classroom liaison, help with fall field days and spring releases, assist with fishing skills programs, egg delivery, or become a mentor for "Foster the Outdoors" (check out the Foster the Outdoors announcement on page 21). Information about what's happening with MNTU's education programs can be found on our social media pages, in newsletter updates, through individual chapter communications, and the website (mntu.org). Please contact Amber Taylor, education@mntu.org, with questions.



STUDENTS GATHER AROUND FOR A PICTURE WITH MINNESOTA BOUND'S CREW, HOLDING THE LIFE SIZED FISH REPLICAS USED FOR A FISH IDENTIFICATION LESSON. LAURA SCHARA AND HER CAMERAMAN SPENT A MORNING WITH TIC STUDENTS AT BENILDE-ST. MARGARET'S TAKING VIDEO AND INTERVIEWING TIC STUDENTS, THEIR TEACHER, AND THE MNTU EDUCATION TEAM TO LEARN ABOUT THE PROGRAM. THE EPISODE WITH THIS SEGMENT ABOUT TIC CAN BE FOUND ON THEIR WEBSITE.

YOUTH AND FAMILY FISHING PROGRAMS

2022 TWIN CITIES METRO OPPORTUNITIES

MN Trout Unlimited will be offering Youth and Family Fishing Programs throughout the Twin Cities metro area again this summer. Join us for a few hours of fun, learning, and meeting other anglers! Both spin and fly fishing programs will cover the basics, including how to set up a rod, cast like a pro, and take fish off your hook.

- All equipment is provided.
- Participants over 16 years old will need to buy a MN fishing license.
- The program dates may change with cancellations, additions, and changes in schedules. Check our website for an updated list and links for registration information.
- Email Amber Taylor with questions: education@mntu.org

Date	Time	Location	Program Type	Partner Organization
Saturday, May 7	9:00am-12:00pm	Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Event - Family Fishing Clinic	Anoka County Parks and Rec No registration needed
Thursday, June 9	10:00am-12:00pm	Tyacke Park	Youth – Spin	Burnsville Parks & Rec
Sunday, June 12	4:00pm-6:00pm	Holland Lake	Family – Spin	Dakota County Parks and Rec
Tuesday, June 14	10:00am-12:00pm	Tyacke Park	Family – Spin	Burnsville Parks and Rec
Wednesday, June 15	6:00pm-8:00pm	Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Women’s (ages 15+) Fly Fishing	Anoka County Parks and Rec
Saturday, June 18	4:00pm-7:00pm	Robert Ney Nature Center	Family – Fly tying & fishing	Wright County Parks and Rec
Saturday, June 25	2:00pm-4:00pm	McCarrons Lake	Youth – Spin	Ramsey County Parks and Rec
Wednesday, July 6	5:00pm-7:00pm	Powderhorn Park	Family – Spin & Fly	Minnesota Valley NWR No registration needed
Thursday, July 7	6:00pm-8:00pm	Coon Rapids Dam Regional Park	Family – Fly	Anoka County Parks and Rec
Saturday, July 16	10:00am-12:00pm	Shady Oak Lake	Family – Spin	Nine Mile Creek WD
Wednesday, July 20	5:00pm-7:00pm	Powderhorn Park	Family – Spin & Fly	Minnesota Valley NWR No registration needed
Thursday, July 28	6:00pm-8:00pm	Thompson County Park	Family – Spin	Dakota County Parks and Rec
Saturday, July 30	2:00pm-4:00pm	Fairhaven Mill Park	Family – Fly	Wright County Parks and Rec
Wednesday, August 3	5:00pm-7:00pm	Powderhorn Park	Family – Spin & Fly	Minnesota Valley NWR No registration needed
Thursday, August 4	10:00am-12:00pm	Tyacke Park	Youth – Spin	Burnsville Parks and Rec
Thursday, August 4	2:00pm-4:00pm	Bertram Chain of Lakes	Youth - Spin	4H Club – Wright County
Saturday, August 6	10:00am-12:00pm	Verderosa Avenue & 494 -Mississippi River	Family – Spin	South St. Paul Parks and Rec
Saturday, August 6	2:00pm-4:00pm	Spoon Lake	Youth - Fly	Ramsey County Parks and Rec
Tuesday, August 9	10:00am-12:00pm	Tyacke Park	Family – Spin	Burnsville Parks and Rec
Saturday, August 13	10:00am-12:00pm	Bush Lake	Family – Spin	Nine Mile Creek WD
Tuesday, August 23	6:00pm-8:00pm	Thompson County Park	Family – Spin	Dakota County Parks and Rec

WEST INDIAN CREEK

HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

By Dustan Hoffman, MNTU Habitat Project Manager

Less than ten miles northwest of the well-known Whitewater River system in southeast Minnesota flows another sparkling gem of a trout stream, where Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU) has undertaken a recent Habitat Improvement (HI) project. West Indian Creek parallels County Road 4 just north of Plainview, MN, where trout anglers are able to catch both brown and brook trout. During the summers of 2020 and 2021, a multi-phase HI project took place, installing the initial groundbreaking phase of the project. In all, the HI project covers 11,400 feet (2.16 miles) of stream length and has improved this section for fish, wildlife, and anglers.

People may have the thought that HI projects are completed in a single year, because the major changes to the stream channel, floodplain, and overhead structures are all taken care of in the initial phase. Like the gigantic trout of a lifetime, people seldom see the “behind the scenes” continued monitoring and maintenance contractors do on the stream. MNTU keeps the contracted designer and construction contractor “on the hook” for a period of three years after the initial installment to make any adjustments that may be revealed with time. Ideally, MNTU and contractors hope there is time for vegetation to become well established during the following growing season, but a highwater event two or three years after installment allows an opportunity to see how the stream will react to natural processes.

Some of the key items MNTU and contractors will look for are the way sediment is transported, sediment deposition location, and any washouts or erosion issues. Soil settling typically occurs over time, and the process of thawing and freezing in the spring months contributes to the way soils will settle out. After soils settle and plants take root, it becomes easier to see where there may need to be adjustments, such as adding rock to stabilize banks more thoroughly, or if installed features or structures like root wads, pool logs, or lunkers need extra stabilization. Vegetative growth is extremely important for holding soils in place. Seed mixes used on HI projects contain a mix of cover crop seeds and native grass and forb (herbaceous flowering plants) seeds. The contractors mow the riparian corridor the second and third year after installment to help native plants establish themselves and also knock back invasive species.

The setting at West Indian Creek prior to the HI project was the typical scene we see on many of the trout streams in southeast Minnesota: high eroding banks, degraded in-stream habitat, and a tangle of boxelder trees with other invasive species growing intermixed along the stream corridor. These types of conditions are able to maintain some trout and wildlife, however, the long-term health and resiliency of these ecosystems become more sustainable when they receive HI projects. Much



THE "COTTONWOOD HOLE" ON WEST INDIAN CREEK SHOWN AFTER AND BEFORE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT WORK.

of the high-bank soil that was removed from the floodplain during this project was hauled out to the edge of the agricultural fields to be spread after crops were taken down. One of the greatest features of the West Indian Creek project was giving life back to an abandoned channel that was re-routed during a major rain event. The forces of water were strong enough to blow through about 40 feet of soils, by-passing a 700 foot long segment of stream. Re-connecting this stream section brought back opportunities for everyone: the fish, the insects, and the angler.

Some have been fishing West Indian Creek for years; those folks may talk about the presence of an old HI project completed back in the 1980s by the Minnesota Department of Natural Re-

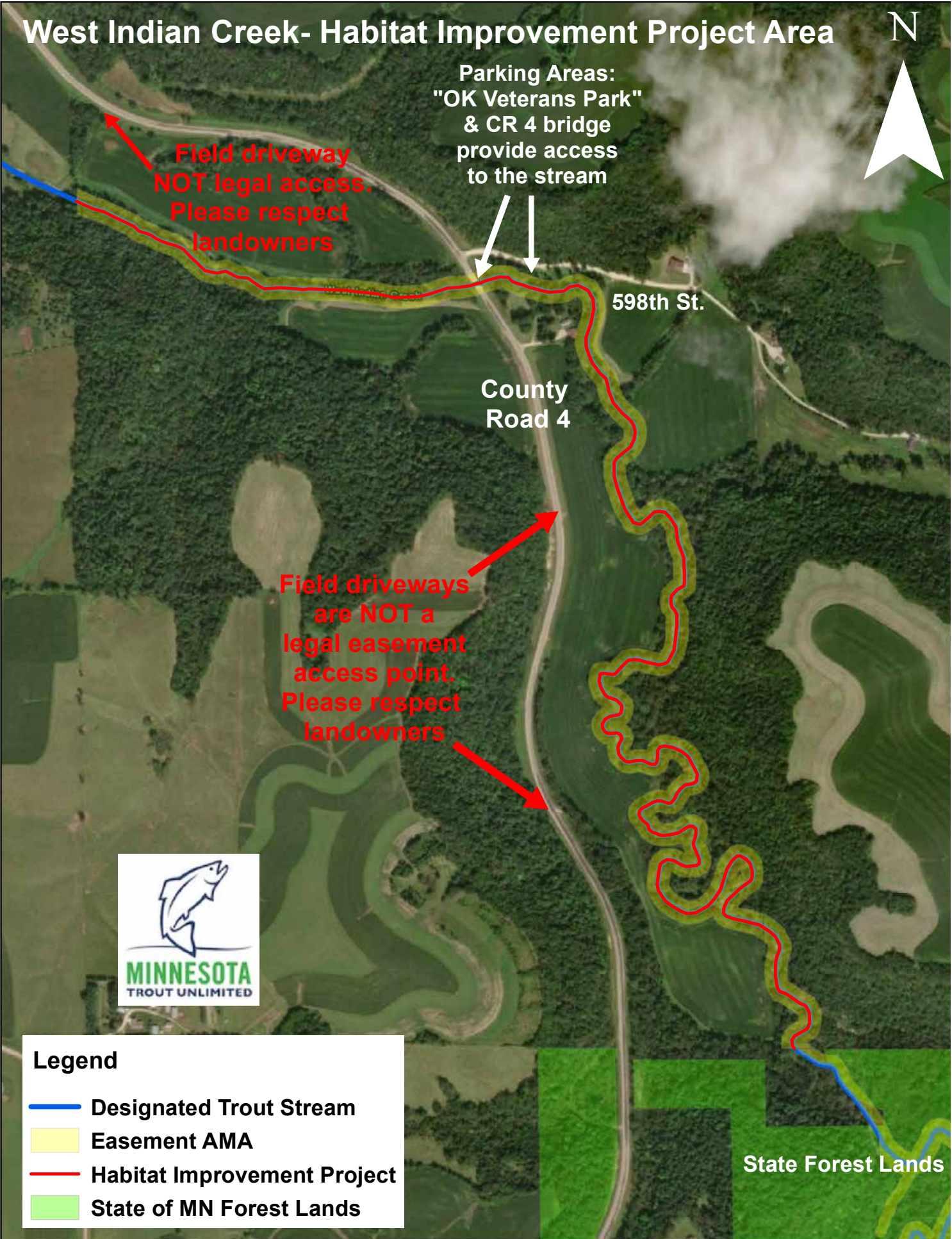
sources. Back in that era of HI projects, it wasn't as common to address lowering high banks of streams as it is in modern practices. Remnant riprap rocks along the bank toe are still visible in some locations. Another remnant feature are some old gabions, which are a structure placed along the banks of old projects to prevent bank erosion. Gabions are a cyclone fence material that bundles up a large mass of smaller rock than what is spaced along the toe of the bank. For anyone interested in seeing gabions, they can be found on West Indian Creek about 500 yards upstream of the parking/access area near the old bridge abutment.

Access is another topic essential to this article. With all HI projects MNTU is completing in southeast Minnesota, there is always an angler easement in

place. The only legal access points to the easement corridor can be found at the County Road 4 bridge, and just around the corner from the bridge on 598th Street. The old bridge abutment site on 598th Street has been modified by some of the locals into a park known as “Ok Veterans Park,” which has enough room to park at least three vehicles. In the past, people “helped themselves” to parking at agriculture field driveways and walked across the field to the stream to fish. We’re hoping this article has the ability to inform people of the proper locations to access West Indian Creek. Please respect the landowner’s wishes and use the appropriate access parking areas. From Ok Veterans Park anglers are able to fish upstream 8,800 feet of the new HI project, while the downstream reach of HI and access extend 2,400 feet.

Additional opportunities to fish a HI on West Indian Creek are a couple miles north on County Road 4, at Whippoorwill Kampground. In 2011, a HI project was completed on 4,200 feet of angling easement flowing through the campground and continuing a few hundred yards upstream. If you find yourself making a trip to fish there, it wouldn't be complete without grabbing a bite to eat at BJ's Bar and Grill. Mark, the owner of the bar and campground is a great guy who appreciates anglers, he even stocks trout in the campground ponds for kids to fish. Mark makes the best eggs benedict I've ever had, it was smothered in an incredible hollandaise sauce that had a touch of horseradish in it.

For the able-bodied angler that just can't get enough, here's one final treat for you. Nestled about a mile and a half upstream of the parking area at Ok Veterans Park, there is roughly another mile and a half of West Indian Creek flowing through easement and State Forest land. This water is rarely fished because access is very limited. There are two ways to get there, either you like to walk A LOT, or you are willing to take one of the worst death marches southeast Minnesota has to offer, which would be by accessing on State Forest land off County Road 4. I highly recommend you don't try the State Forest route, unless you are dying to buy a new fishing rod, you are very likely to break a rod or bones taking this route. For humor's sake, here's what you'd see: A down-hill slip slide on loose rock used to build up County Road 4 over 100 feet high, followed by a trudge up a steep bluff to the top where you'd have to sidestep around a rock cropping (to stay on Forest land and be legal), then a long downhill thick, thorny, brush-beating jaunt before you finally end up at the stream. If you still have a pole, fish for a bit to rest, then turn around so you can make it out of there before dark. Take the long walk instead! There's some great fishing up in there, brookies are more common, and there is a tributary with good fishing too.



HABITAT IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS TAKE MORE THAN ONE YEAR TO FILL IN WITH VEGETATION AND LOOK NATURAL. PICTURED ABOVE IS THE COTTONWOOD HOLE SHORTLY AFTER THE COMPLETION OF THE INITIAL CONSTRUCTION PHASE.

BEAVER POND BROOK TROUT

IN SEARCH OF HIDDEN WATERS IN THE NORTHWOODS

By Carl Haensel



AN ANGLER FISHING ON A BEAVER POND IN SEARCH OF BIG BROOKIES ALONG THE MINNESOTA NORTH SHORE.

In the world of North Shore trout fishing, searching for brookies in beaver ponds is an experience all to itself. Plenty of hushed conversations in bars, along with the showing of a photo of an incredible fish, accompany the buzz about big northwoods brookies. In all the stories that you'll hear, there's a grain of truth. It absolutely is possible to catch 20-inch brook trout on the North Shore from a small stream beaver pond. Some anglers manage to do it with some regularity and an epic amount of work. Some bushwhack through the forest for years without catching many brook trout, let alone a large one. To find big brookies in the depths of the forest takes research, patience, skill and a whole lot of ability to deal with horrible conditions. If you've not given up yet, assume that by the end of your first trip to a remote stream you'll have gotten bit by about 4,500 mosquitoes, ripped a hole in your waders and maybe fallen 20 times. If you're lucky, you won't have broken a fly rod. Don't worry, that will happen on your second trip. A friend of mine buys cheap fly rods in bulk when they go on sale just for this purpose. If you're dragging a canoe around, make sure you don't mind a few scratches in the finish. It's not the kind of trip for your new Kevlar canoe. Once, I even dropped a paddle in the forest and had to back-track nearly a mile to find it. If all of this sounds fun, keep reading and dreaming of finding big fish.

A few rules of basic North Shore brook trout biology play a strong role in determining where the fish will be. The first is temperature. Since brookies get

stressed out by stream temps in the low to mid-70s, with anything over 78 being lethal, the stream has to be cool. Some streams have dozens of beaver dams, one right after the next on the main stem of a small creek. These can warm up way too much to hold brook trout in the majority of those ponds, no matter how deep and full of food they are. The second key factor is the ability of trout to spawn. Some short-lived, fantastic fisheries develop when beavers dam up and isolate a new reach of a stream, trapping a large bunch of brook trout in new, deep water. This can lead to amazing fishing for a few years, but soon, without an influx of new fish, the brookies initially trapped will age out of the pond, and it will be empty. If the brookies can find some spawning areas in the pond with upwelling cold water coming through the gravel, they're in luck and these fish can spawn in the pond with enough success to perpetuate themselves. This is where the science gets tricky. Nowhere on the entire North Shore is there amazing, unlimited food for brook trout. To grow big fish fast, they need almost unlimited food. If a pond has excellent brook trout reproduction and cold water, it will fill with brook trout that don't grow that large, since they will compete significantly with each other. If there is no natural reproduction, there will be no trout. To get truly big fish, a small amount of natural reproduction is needed, along with plenty of food. A warmer beaver pond—but not too warm—that supports an abundance of minnows and other forage will provide just what brook trout need to get huge.

Finding one of these “holy grails” of brook trout ponds in the wilderness has kept generations of anglers trekking through the Superior National Forest backcountry. Initially, it was loggers just after 1900 that moved fish around, did some early stocking, and then went back to try to harvest fish. Later, in the 1920s and 1930s, early anglers traveled on the old logging roads and abandoned railroad grades that had been punched deep into the forest to harvest white pine. The new growth of aspen after the logging brought more beavers, more ponds, and, for some streams, more trout. After World War II and the advent of spin fishing, a greater number of anglers explored the North Shore looking for big brookies to catch and harvest. Stories with a hint of truth in them from locally grown writers like Rudy Senarighi and Perry Palin

are worth seeking out and reading to get a feel of what the fishing was like. Along with the writing of Sigurd Olson and others, they make up the volume of writing about our local waters. They might even give you a few ideas—if they haven't changed the names of the streams to protect their favorite haunts.

To find such a perfect brook trout pond, we now have much better tools than originally existed. Start by looking at a stream you're thinking about fishing on Google Earth or Google Maps. It will be easy to see if there are beaver ponds in the watershed, as well as how many and how big the impoundments are. Some are enormous. A few years ago, my father and I launched a canoe on one such little stream, really not much more than three or four feet across where it was



THE PASS LAKE IS A CLASSIC FLY PATTERN FOR NORTHWOODS BROOK TROUT.

flowing. We ended up travelling nearly a mile upstream, pulling over a few beaver dams as we worked up. Most were warm and filled with minnows. We ended at a beaver pond that was nearly 20 acres and 15 feet deep. Dead ash trees poked out of the water, providing what seemed to be perfect habitat. We didn't catch the giant trout that we were dreaming of, but the potential was there, along with some trout and a reason to go back in the future. Once you've determined the location of a few intriguing ponds, the real work sets in. It's common that the furthest upstream ponds are the coldest, when they are stacked one right after the next. Also, it's probable that the furthest upstream pond may offer more spawning habitat, if there's a decent stream that flows into it. Unfortunately, many of these far upstream ponds have virtually no flow, and can be the shallowest in the system. It's now up to you to find the exceptions.

In some cases, upwelling groundwater can make one pond in a string of ten an excellent brook trout water. Or maybe a small feeder stream only a foot or two wide feeds into a pond, providing spawning habitat that you can only see when you're there on the ground. It's hard to tell depth from an aerial photo, so often you'll think a pond could be incredible, only to get there and find it to be 18 inches deep. Other exceptions are where there's a beaver pond on a stream with no additional dams nearby or directly upstream. There's a decently sized North Shore trout stream within 20 minutes of my house with one of these types of dams that's been there for many years. The topography just doesn't allow for many other beaver dams in the area, so one large dam is usually all that remains, year after year. In a fortunate year, it has some giant trout. In others, it has a good handful of quality-sized fish up to 14 inches. Either way, it's always worth fishing.

Other beaver-related fishing spots can also be productive on the upper ends



A WILD BROOK TROUT RESTS IN HAND, READY TO BE RELEASED TO GROW LARGER IN THE MINNESOTA NORTHWOODS.

of trout streams that course through the Northwoods. Long, flat sections are found high in the watersheds of most North Shore trout streams. While some will contain beaver dams now, many have held dams in the past that may have washed out or were abandoned. Look for deep holes and undercut banks in these reaches, which, regardless of the presence of beavers, can hold some pretty nice fish, if not giant ones. Casting a streamer along the bank edges while walking or paddling these reaches can be a great way to search for trout as you're exploring the water. If you're fortunate to get a hatch on water like this, it's a great time to see where fish like to hold. Often, fish will cluster near groundwater seeps or spring holes, which can be hard to see with the naked eye. If you find a good school of brookies holding in an area during a hatch, it's often possible to catch them again in the same area when the trout aren't rising. Try looking on the bottom of the stream in these reaches to see if you can spot the springs. In some spots with high spring flow, you can ac-

tuually see schools of brook trout holding along the bottom of a stream where the cool water emerges.

Similar to beaver ponds, a handful of natural trout lakes occur on trout streams or serve as their headwaters. Most are found on the North Shore or further inland toward the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness. While they're not beaver impoundments, they can sometimes function similarly. A few are surveyed and managed for brook trout by the MN DNR. Others simply hold a few trout from time to time. Some, like Junco Lake in the Devil Track River watershed, are worth noting on their own. They're not as productive as our stocked, managed lakes, but the fact that they hold wild, naturally reproducing brook trout makes for an entirely different experience, in my opinion. Don't look for glory there, but for something wild and a bit more untouched. Some lakes like 220-acre Balsam Lake in the Manitou River watershed are large, but most are under 20 acres in size. Like beaver ponds, these

lakes have potential, but big trout are significantly rare. Most are exceedingly hard to reach, and will require some serious planning before you try to visit them.

If you're thinking that someone at a local fly shop, TU meeting or other social gathering might share the location of a good beaver pond, think again. These are some of the most guarded secrets, and even a few good beers rarely bring out more than a rumor of where they are. Plan on lots of exploration, but this is what makes beaver pond fishing an exciting adventure, and every trout caught a hard-won victory. With a little bit of luck, you'll have your own stories to share at the fly shop while you carefully craft a tale about a nearby stream that wasn't really the one with all the fish in it.

Carl Haensel is the Northern Minnesota Chair of MNTU and resides in Duluth. This article is an excerpt of his upcoming book Fly Fishing Minnesota. Find more information at www.namebini.com



A BEAVER LODGE SITS ALONG THE SHORE OF A HIDDEN POND DEEP IN THE WOODS ON THE MINNESOTA NORTH SHORE, READY TO BE DISCOVERED.

BAMBOO ROD RAFFLE

OWN A PIECE OF TROUT UNLIMITED HISTORY



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

- 8', 5WT, 4OZ, 2-PIECE WITH EXTRA TIP
- HOLLOW MADE, MEDIUM FAST ACTION
- VARNISHED FLAME FINISH
- PROCEEDS BENEFIT THE GITCHE GUMEE CHAPTER OF TROUT UNLIMITED

TICKETS \$10, LIMITED AT 250 TICKETS
DRAWING TO BE HELD ON FEBRUARY 26, 2022

PURCHASE TICKETS AT THE GREAT LAKES FLY SHOP, THE SUPERIOR FLY ANGLER OR THE ROOT RIVER ROD CO. OR MAIL A CHECK PAYABLE TO GITCHE GUMEE TROUT UNLIMITED TO:

ANDREW ST. CROIX
5412 AVONDALE STREET
DULUTH, MN 55804

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

INCLUDING MNTU IN YOUR ESTATE PLANNING

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

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

401k, IRA or life insurance policy. Because your gift doesn't come to MNTU until after your lifetime, you can change your mind at any time. To make sure your will accomplishes your goals according to your wishes, we recommend that you obtain the professional counsel of an attorney who specializes in estate planning. We've included specific bequest language below for usage with individual or estate planning.

Bequest Language

The official bequest language for Minnesota Trout Unlimited is:

Unrestricted General Legacy:

"I give Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, EIN# 52-1766036, the sum of (dollar amount)/ or percentage of (___%)/ residue of my estate to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

Specific:

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



Gift of Residuary Estate:

"All the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, both real and personal, and wherever situated, I give, devise and bequeath to Minnesota Trout Unlimited, a Minnesota non-profit corporation, presently at P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, MN 55317-0845, EIN# 52-1766036, to be used at the discretion of its governing board."

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



FLY TYING

WITH LAUGHING TROUT FLY FISHING

By Paul Johnson



The Slumpbuster

For some reason or another, I do not often fish a streamer for trout. Because I don't often fish a streamer, I don't tie very many of them either!

When I do fish a streamer, the first one out of my fly box will be a Slumpbuster. The Slumpbuster is a fun fly to tie. It is also pretty straight-forward with only a couple different materials. I like to use pine squirrel instead of rabbit for this pattern. The hair from the pine squirrel is a little shorter and finer and makes for a better looking fly.

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

Paul Johnson
Paulwaconia@gmail.com

Materials List

Hook: Streamer Hook, Size 4-12
Thread: 6/0 Uni to Match Squirrel
Cone: Gold Size Medium
Optional: .020 Lead-Free Wire
Rib: Gold Wire Size Brassie
Body: Gold Sparkle Braid
Wing/Tail: Pine Squirrel
Collar: Pine Squirrel

* Color options: black, natural, rust or chartreuse



Step 1.
Place the cone on the hook and insert the hook into the vise. Pictured is a Mustad 3366 size 4. Start the thread behind the cone and wrap a smooth thread base back to the bend of the hook.



Step 2.
Tie in a length of wire at the bend of the hook.



Step 3.
Tie in a length of Sparkle Braid at the bend of the hook.



Step 4.
Wrap the tag end of the Sparkle Braid, ending directly behind the cone.



Step 5.
Wrap the Sparkle Braid forward to form a smooth body. Secure the Sparkle Braid with the tying thread behind the cone. Trim the excess.



Step 6.
Pull or cut a length of pine squirrel fur from the hide.



Step 7.
Push the end of the pine squirrel up under the cone and tightly secure directly behind the cone with the tying thread.



Step 8.
Lift the pine squirrel fur upright and make a tight wrap with the wire to secure the fur to the hook shank.



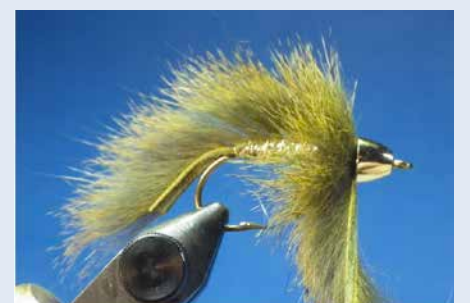
Step 9.
Evenly spiral wrap the wire forward to the cone. Take care to not bind down any excess fur with the wire. Secure the wire with the thread and cut excess wire free.



Step 10.
Trim the tail of the fly to roughly a hook shank in length.



Step 11.
Pull or cut some of the pine squirrel fur from the hide. Again, push the end up under the cone and secure with several tight wraps.



Step 12.
Make three or four tight wraps of the pine squirrel around the hook, packing it into the cone. Secure with your thread and clip the excess. Whip finish.

CALL FOR MNTU COMMITTEE MEMBERS

As we work to implement new programs and efforts, there continue to be opportunities for Trout Unlimited members to play a role in helping to guide and create the aspects of the organization that you love.

The following committees help organize and implement some of the key activities of Minnesota TU. We also specifically need involvement in our advocacy work led by our Executive Director, John Lenczewski. If you're inspired to get involved, check out these different options, and get in touch to start the process as we move forward.

Education Committee

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

Fundraising Committee

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

Communications Committee

The work of the Communications Committee centers on the regular operation of our email, website, social media and print media. Broadly, the committee works together to share materials and keep members and the public informed and involved in what's going on with our organization. There are opportunities to help out with photography, newsletter articles, social media management, print media, signage and other components of how MNTU reaches out.

Email with your interest in getting involved or with any questions or ideas at jlenczewski@comcast.net or carl-haensel@hotmail.com. Virtual meetings will be scheduled soon.



**GUIDED TOURS
FULL SERVICE FLY SHOP
EXPLORE THE NORTH SHORE**



**FLY BOX
& COMPANY**

FLYBOXMN.COM

INFO@FLYBOXMN.COM

218 370-9659

GRAND MARAIS

THE DRIFTLESS FLY FISHING COMPANY

WORLD HEADQUARTERS
"WE KNOW WHERE THEY LIVE!"

- ◆ Guided Trips ◆ Gear & Tackle
 - ◆ Kayak & Canoe Rental and Shuttle Service
 - ◆ Flies for Area Streams
 - ◆ Fly Fishing Lessons
- ◆ Local Info ◆ Wader Repair
 - ◆ Kayak & Canoe Sales
 - ◆ Fly shop now open!

**BOOK YOUR 2022
GUIDED TRIPS**
Call or Email Mel today
507-327-4276
melvin@minnesotaflyfishing.com

Information & store hours at
www.minnesotaflyfishing.com




Authorized Dealer

208 St. Paul St SW, Preston

*Welcome to Minnesota's
Trout Capital on the South
Branch of The Root River.*







Photo Credit Brian Schumacher

HABITAT HELPERS NEEDED

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

NAMEBINI



**Guided Flyfishing
Northern MN & WI**

**Trout
Steelhead
Smallmouth
Northern Pike
Drift Boat Trips**

Carl Haensel

218-525-2381

WWW.NAMEBINI.COM

GREAT WATERS FLY FISHING EXPO

MARCH 18-20, 2022



HAMLIN UNIVERSITY - ST. PAUL, MN
WWW.GREATWATERSFLYEXPO.COM

PROCEEDS SUPPORT MN TROUT UNLIMITED

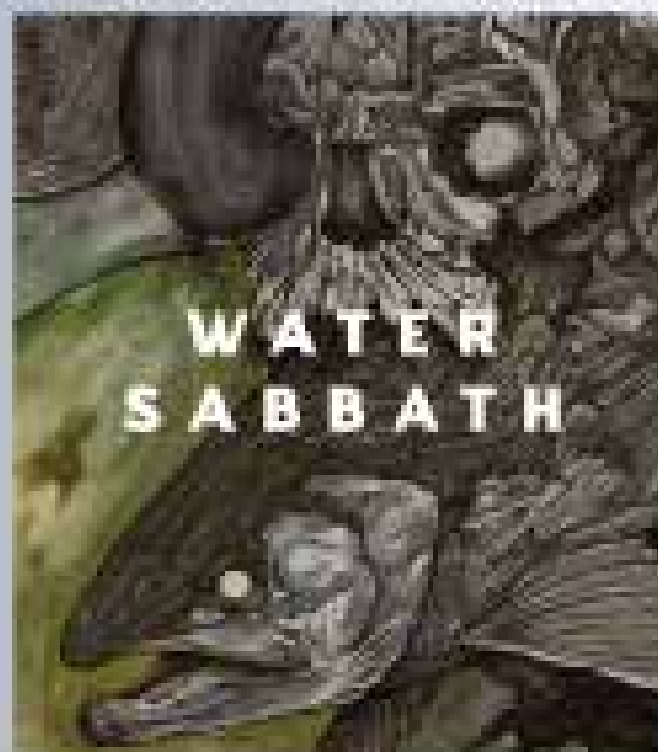


DON'T MISS:

- NEW 2022 GEAR FROM TOP MANUFACTURERS
- MIDWEST TROUT STREAM PROGRAMMING
- FLY CASTING & TYING DEMONSTRATIONS
- KIDS 12 AND UNDER FREE!
- BEGINNER PROGRAMS EVERY DAY
- FLY FISHING FOR BASS, MUSKY AND PIKE
- SPEY CASTING & EURO NYMPHING
- FREE PARKING!


DOZENS OF PROGRAMS
MATT SUPINSKI
JOHN GIERACH

FILM SHOWCASE & PREMIERE SATURDAY, MARCH 19TH



Lanesboro, Minnesota

Root River Rod Co.



507-467-2101 • Lanesboro, MN

WWW.ROOTRIVERRODCO.COM

LakeLady

CUSTOM-CRAFTED FISHING RODS

Bold • Innovative • Imaginative

www.lakeladyrods.com

rodbuilder@lakeladyrods.com - 218-251-2626



passion

FOR PERFECTION

KRIS KRISTUFEK

OWNER, LAKE LADY

CUSTOM-CRAFTED

FISHING RODS

KRIS KRISTUFEK IS A CERTIFIED PROFESSIONAL ROD BUILDER

AND A MEMBER OF THE CUSTOM ROD BUILDERS GUILD

FRONT 20 OUTFITTERS

ALL THINGS FLY FISHING:

FLY SHOP • GUIDE SERVICE • FLY FISHING CLASSES/WORKSHOPS

Smallmouth

Largemouth

Northern

Crappie


Bluegill

Carp

Fly Fish MN

FRONT20OUTFITTERS.COM

PERHAM, MN




WILDERNESS LITE

...THE ULTRALIGHT FLOAT TUBES

www.wildernesslitefloattubes.com

Superior

Fly Angler



EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO HOOK UP

310 Belknap St. Superior, WI • (715) 395-9520

WWW.SUPERIORFLYANGLER.COM



Foster *the* Outdoors

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

May – Mentor-Match-Up

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

Summer – Go Fishing!

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

October – Fly Tying

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

January – Shop Tour

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

March – Great Waters - Fly Fishing Expo

Introduction to the community of fly fishing.

April – End of Season

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



Sign up to be a mentor today!

FOSTER THE OUTDOORS MNTU MENTORSHIP PROGRAM UPDATE

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

I don't know about you, but January 2022 seemed to fly by in a blink of an eye. The coldest and shortest days of the year are behind us, thank goodness, and I'm looking forward to a great start to the new year. It's been a cold start to the year here in the Northland, but I'm hoping that, with longer days, temperatures will moderate and I'll be able to get out and enjoy some cross-country skiing and be on a trout stream with friends.

The Gitche Gumee Chapter had a great finish to 2021. In early December several members met at the Kadunce River north of Grand Marais for a river maintenance day. The group caged over 40 trees that had been planted earlier in the year. This is a project our chapter had been planning to do and I'm grateful to the volunteers that made it happen. These trees will help stabilize the river banks and fill in a forest that has been battered by windstorms. If you visit the Kadunce River in 2022 you'll see these trees as you make your way up river from Hwy 61.

We are fortunate to have a bamboo rod donated and crafted by Steve Sobieniak of Root River Rod Company in Lanesboro, MN. We cannot thank Steve enough for his generosity and support of Trout Unlimited. This is a beautiful 8' 5-weight bamboo rod that one lucky winner will take home with them. We are raffling this rod away, with a 250 ticket limit. \$10 a ticket. Seems like pretty good odds to me! Drawing will be February 26 and if you need tickets, please contact Andrew St. Croix at 612-790-0651 or astcroix4@gmail.com.

Later this Spring, we will be bringing you topics on conservation projects across our region and our popular State of the Steelhead presentation. These presentations will be virtual. Once we have final details, information will be posted to our Facebook page (under Gitche Gumee Trout Unlimited) and in the chapter email newsletter. Contact our vice president, Jason Swingen at jason.swingen@gmail.com to be added to the chapter email list.

Until the next MNTU issue, have a great rest of the winter and we hope to see you at one of our virtual presentations. Oh, and think warm weather thoughts too!

Brandon Kime

Headwaters Chapter

Life is slowly returning to normal here. We started work on a restoration project on the Kabekona River, our community fly tying nights have returned, and we are preparing for another successful year at the Great



DON MITCHELL AND JOHN ASPIE OF THE GITCHE GUMEE CHAPTER VOLUNTEERED ON THE KADUNCIE RIVER MAINTAINING PLANTED TREES THIS DECEMBER.

Waters Fly Fishing Expo.

The summer restoration project on the Kabekona River project was pushed back to late fall, but several volunteers from the Headwaters chapter assisted with restoration work at a cattle crossing on the river. Jake Shaughnessy from the Hubbard Soil and Water Conservation District organized the work on the lower Kabekona to reduce E. coli from a cattle pasture going downstream to Kabekona Lake. The project was in the planning and permitting stage for many months. It finally came up at the end of October, so, with short notice, several volunteers arrived to work. The project included digging trenches, filling them with brush bundles and covering them with dirt. The hope is to limit the cattle's access to the creek when crossing to access the pastures. The project involved cutting brush, tying it into bundles, and burying it in trenches along the creek bank. The cutting and bundling went well as there was an abundance of material along the project perimeter, but digging the trenches for the bundles in frozen ground was very difficult. Thanks to all who assisted: Jake Shaughnessy, Jack and Mike Brooks, Mark Studer, Dave Mosier, John Sorensen, Kris Williams, and John Lueth.

Our Trout in the Classroom program is continuing this year with some changes. This year our chapter is sponsoring five tanks: three at Gene Dillon Elementary, and one each at Kelliher schools and the Headwaters Science Center. John Latimer, phenologist from KAXE/KAWB visited four Dillon classrooms in October and shared fall wildlife observations with students. The trout eggs were delivered in early December. Students and their teachers prepared fish tanks to be

ready for their special cargo to arrive. Northome School has suspended its TIC program for this year. It is still unknown if the 5th Grade Fly Fishing program will take place, but our fingers are crossed.

Our Community Fly Tying nights have returned with in-person sessions at the Garden Grill & Pub in Bemidji every other Thursday night. This year we are also continuing our virtual nights on Thursdays opposite the in-person nights. If you live outside the Bemidji area and want to tie flies, Front 20 Outfitters is hosting several fly tying events in the Perham, Park Rapids, Fergus Falls, and Detroit Lakes areas. They also have some special sessions coming up where they will host Gunnar Brammer, a RIO Signature Tyer on February 19. Space is limited. For more information about this

and other offerings from Front 20 Outfitters, visit www.front20outfitters.com to learn more.

Doug and Roxanne Harthan run fly fishing classes through Front 20 Outfitters as well as full fishing guide service and fly tying classes all from the "Biggest little fly shop in Minnesota!"

And finally, it's been two long years since we last set foot at Great Waters. I think all of us can't wait to get back to the expo. Our chapter will be back to teach fly tying to beginners and those that just want to learn a fly they haven't tied before. Hope to see you there!

Kris Williams

Hiawatha Chapter

Several Hiawatha TU members were busy in mid- to late-2021 to give women veterans flies to use, or take home, during a special retreat, and to help others learn to cast fly rods.

In mid-July, we were asked to make the flies for the early-August Women's Veterans Flyfishing Retreat at Whitewater State Park.

Several TU members came to one or both Monday evenings at the VFW to chat, compare notes on how time a copper john and tie, tie and tie some more. Some made bigger flies, easier to see, such as pink foam hoppers, while others tied smaller ones. Some just stopped by with dozens of flies already done.

Dave Larsen said he just liked the cause. "I thought it was a good idea to tie for those ladies who put their lives on the line for us," he said.

"Amen," added Phil Pankow.

"Even if they don't fish another day, if they have a good time it's worth it," said



CARL BERBERICH OF THE HIAWATHA CHAPTER TEACHES A MAN NEW TO FLY FISHING SOME OF THE NUANCES OF CASTING A FLY ROD.

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



HEADWATERS CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS ASSISTED WITH RESTORATION WORK ON A CATTLE CROSSING ON THE KABEKONA RIVER.

Larsen who was tying a hair-wing caddis.

Paul Krolak, who coordinated the fly tying, said he did it for veterans and fun.

The total flies given to the project, including both those tied by members as well as some commercial ones donated, was estimated at between 10 and 15 dozen.

In Preston, on September 18, five TU members and Vaughn Snook from the Department of Natural Resources, introduced about a dozen young, old, men, women and children to the beauty, grace, madness, frustration and joy of casting a fly rod.

The six—Greg Goodnow, Phil Pankow, Carl Berberich, Curt Hale and John Weiss of Hiawatha TU and Vaughn Snook of DNR fisheries—were at the annual Taste of the Trail celebration in Preston.

First came Bill McClintock of Owatonna who was out fly fishing when he heard about the chance to get better—he's just beginning to get into fly fishing. Berberich worked with him on more nuances of casting.

Teaching was one way TU members try to connect with the general public. We talked about casting but also about trout, our streams and the joys of standing in moving water casting a dry fly upstream. Oh yes, we also mentioned the frustrations of getting hung up. But that's part of fishing.

John Weiss

Twin Cities Chapter

As I write this, the Twin Cities are coming off a -19 degree day and looking forward to -11 tomorrow morning. That probably seems balmy to our friends in Bemidji and International Falls, but not to us folks in the tropical part of Minnesota. Rumor has it that the temperatures may rise above the freezing point next week, though. If they do, I am heading to a stream! I haven't fished since the middle of October, and I have a serious case of the DTs (Deficit of Trout).

On December 11, we had big plans for a buckthorn cut on Eagle Creek, just south of Minneapolis. Mother Nature had big plans, too, dumping 20 inches of snow in the South Metro. We had expected some snow, but not 20 FREAKING INCHES! We had to cancel at the last minute, but we hope to get another crack at that buckthorn soon.

We have had more success with indoor events, with chapter meetings featuring TU DARE, Patagonia and "The State of the State." Upcoming meetings include presentations on the effect of habitat projects on brook and brown trout, and Hexamania on the Straight River. You can find our events in the TU Events Center (tu.myeventscenter.com). You can also check the Events Center if you'd like to volunteer for a Youth Education event. In collaboration with Trout in the Classroom, we plan to run fly tying courses in metro-area schools during the shoulder season, and to take kids fishing once the weather gets warmer. Please volunteer!

There is big news over in Cheesehead country and I am not talking about the Aaron Rogers saga. A couple of years ago, responding to a grassroots "Free

the Kinni" campaign, the River Falls City Council voted to remove the two dams on the Kinnickinnic River. The lower dam was originally scheduled to come out by 2025 and the upper dam between 2035-2040. The flood of June 2020 damaged the lower dam, and the schedule for removal has recently been moved up to the winter of 2022-23. Removal of the dams will significantly reduce the water temperature of the lower river, as well as create over a mile of new trout stream where there is now a shallow, nearly barren impoundment. We are collaborating with our sister chapter, KIAP-TU-WISH to do advocacy work and raise money for habitat improvement. If you are interested in getting involved, please contact me at bob.luck@twincitiestu.org or visit the Kinni booth at the Great Waters Expo.

Bob Luck

Win-Cres Chapter

Chuck Shepard

A few of our more venturesome members have started their 2022 trout season. The fish are there, hunkering down

in deep holes and runs. Heavy Hare's Ear and red Zebra Midges are reported to work, along with deep drifted Woolly Buggers. The rest of us are either tying flies or dunking wax worms on the Mississippi backwaters.

Win-Cres is participating in the development of a "We Are Water" exhibit, a joint project of the Minnesota Humanities Commission and the Winona County History Center. The exhibit will highlight the connection we all have to water, with the goal of developing stewardship for this vital resource. The exhibit will be on public display in March and April at the Winona County History Center and other places around the county. Win-Cres is also developing our own display, which will highlight our work to improve stream habitat and water quality. We are hoping the display will have other uses, including the County Fair, to increase our exposure and perhaps gain a few new members. We will also be hosting a public event on April 30 on Garvin Brook.

The "We Are Water" exhibit will be taking place in seven Minnesota communities this year, with some general content and some content unique to the site. The exhibit will be in St. Paul in January and February.

Covid continues to complicate our activities. After having two in-person meetings, we have reverted to Zoom for our January meeting. If other chapters are looking for programs, I would recommend John Lenczewski, MNTU's executive director. He has excellent presentations on habitat work both in the Driftless Area and the North Shore.

We are planning to continue our home-and-home series with the Goodhue Fishing club. Our members will travel to Goodhue to teach skills. The Goodhue members will come to Rush Creek for guided fishing in April. This is a remarkable club, with 70 members, nearly half of them young women. They have their own jackets, with ads and logos from supporting businesses.



Great Lakes Fly Shop
"The Next Best Place To Be"

John C. Fehnel
Owner

4426 Regent Street
Duluth, MN. 55804
(218) 740-3040
lesterriver@aim.com
www.greatlakesflies.com

WANT TO GET THIS NEWSLETTER?

THERE ARE **TWO** WAYS!

JOIN MINNESOTA
TROUT UNLIMITED



Healthy streams benefit everyone, not just anglers.

We'll assign you to a local MN chapter. Chapters meet regularly to hear about fishing hot spots, discuss conservation issues, plan work days on their home waters, organize fundraisers, and, of course, swap a few fish tales and learn how to tie the latest fly patterns.

All members also receive this publication, as well as TROUT, TU's national magazine. Other benefits include a 16-month TU calendar, car rental & hotel discounts and more. TU offers a variety of membership categories.

Visit www.tu.org today to sign up.

OR SUBSCRIBE!

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!

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Circle one: 1 Year Subscription @ \$20 3 Year Subscription @ \$55

Only Checks Are Accepted.

Mail Completed Forms To:
Minnesota Trout Unlimited

P.O. Box 845, Chanhassen, Minnesota 55317

SELECT POETRY

By Larry Gavin

Ceremony: Duschee Creek

I gaze off the bridge
and watch minnows
lip the algae from rocks
in the shallows. They wish
only to grow bigger
a constant force
like the force of sun
as it reddens the horizon.

Consider the loss
of fitness, an emptiness
equal to all those things
we don't want to believe
to be true, but are true
just the same.

The ache that becomes
a friend. Trusting the gift of time
and water to complete us.

Waders tugged on at the car,
and a rod lined, moves
the ritual forward, begins
the ceremony that is today.
The sweet taste of something
new, if only for now.
Standing, finally, in water,
where only good things happen.

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

Donate to MNTU!

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

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____

Donation _____

The fastest and most secure way to contribute to Minnesota Trout Unlimited is to visit our website to make a donation online at www.mntu.org

We also welcome gifts by check sent to:
Minnesota Trout Unlimited
P.O. Box 845
Chanhassen, MN 55317



JASON RIEKE, WIN-CRES TU BOARD MEMBER, RECENTLY HAD A GREAT TIME WINTER TROUTING IN WINONA COUNTY.