

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - November 2014

Exploring Our Habitat Work The Vermillion River

Tying the Bullet Head Hopper
Protecting Minnesota's Trout Waters
Got Trout? TIC in SE MN
Book Review - The Royal Wulff Murders
Scouting and TCTU
Rock Creek Habitat Work Planning
And Lots More!

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ON THE COVER

The Manitou River tumbles through Crosby-Maintou State Park in Lake County, MN on the Superior North Shore. Photo by JP Little.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Photo Essay on the Vermillion River.
- How to tie the Bullet Head Hopper with Paul Johnson.
- Opportunities for chapters to purchase flytying kits and signs!
- Threats to Minnesota's designated trout streams and laws.
- Updates on habitat improvement and educational efforts around Minnesota.
- And Much More!

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MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

New Leadership

By JP Little, Minnesota Council Chair

Welcome to the 2014 fall Minnesota Trout Unlimited state-wide newsletter. Hopefully most of you heeded my suggestion in the spring newsletter to get out and take advantage of the great trout fishing available in Minnesota.

As I write this article the trees are blazing with fall color in the backyard, and yet the daylight hours are shrinking precipitously. Instead of casting a fly rod many of us will be picking up shotguns and rifles to chase ducks, pheasants and deer. The four seasons of Minnesota are what make this a great place to live, work and play.

The face of the chapters across the state and the State Council continues to evolve. Although we have a very stable senior leadership team in the State Council (thanks everyone), we have added two new chapter presidents. Welcome to Micah Barrett as president of the Mid-MN chapter and Jon Aspie as president of the Gitche Gumee chapter. In previous columns I mentioned the continuing need to add new talents and thoughts to the TU leadership in Minnesota, and Micah and Jon represent exactly that.

Tight Lines!



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WIN-CRES CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS FROM THE GARVIN BROOK PROJECT IN SOUTHEAST MN VOLUNTEER EFFORT IS THE HEART AND SOUL OF MNTU AND MAKES OUR PROJECTS POSSIBLE.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Enjoying the New Fall Fishing Season

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

Minnesota trout fishing in October! For years, many of us have visited southeast MN in October to enjoy the beauty of trout valleys during peak color change. I can vividly recall sunny October afternoons camping in Whitewater State Park. Bluebird skies, the oak hillsides ablaze and large trout leisurely sipping small olive mayflies from the river's surface. With the trout fishing season closed, the sight of these large surface feeding browns inspired campfire debates with my father over whether floating a dry fly with hook bend cut off constituted "fishing", since trout could not possibly be hooked or caught.

Thanks to the persistence of Steve Klotz, Lanesboro Area Fisheries Supervisor, we now can enjoy catch and release trout fishing on southeast MN streams through October 15. And three state parks, Whitewater, Forestville and Beaver Valley, are open year round! While

many of you helped push through these rule changes, it would not have happened without Steve's leadership.

This October I found myself in the Root River Valley with a few hours to spare. On a warm, sunny afternoon I found the brook trout cooperative. I find that nothing recharges one's batteries for the hard work of conservation quite so well as the electricity sent up the line from a fat brookie or brown. As I released several outrageously colored, deep-bodied brook trout I could not help but utter a "thank you" to Steve.

With October trout now crossed off the bucket list, it is time to consider how I might slip out in November and December.

Tight lines,

John



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A VERMILLION RIVER BROWN TROUT RESTS ON THE STREAM BOTTOM AFTER SURVEY AND SAMPLE WORK. READ THE VERMILLION RIVER PHOTO ESSAY TO LEARN WHERE TO FIND THEM IN THIS METRO TROUT STREAM.

EDITOR'S ANGLE

Settling in to Winter

By Carl Haensel, Editor

Long before spring makes its way back to Duluth, I will be waiting for steelhead. When the first trickle of meltwater seeps down to the lower end of the Sucker River, something stirs in my mind and I march down to the edge. Down the snowy banks and the crumbling ice shelves. Down the muddy south facing hills with last year's yellowed grasses. I watch the river, waiting. The river rises and falls, the ice shudders and breaks, one shelf at a time. The river muddies and clouds with silt. The big fish nose about the first lower pool and find their way into the river, waiting for warmer water to make their epic leaps upstream. If I'm lucky I will catch one early, before the big melt. If not I will continue to wait.

This is the game of the spring steelhead angler. Waiting and watching and scanning weather forecasts. Trying to plan for the "perfect" day on the water that comes only every so often. The rivers have a promise when the steelhead are in them. A promise of strength on the end of the line and a day brightened by a wild and unpredictable fish.

Help TU make more perfect days possible on our North Shore rivers like the Sucker, Stewart, Knife and many more. Get involved with MNTU and the Gitche Gume Chapter this winter. Plan to help out on the ground this next summer. With a little luck you might just find yourself standing in a river on the shore this next spring, waiting and hoping



EXPLORING OUR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT: THE VERMILLION RIVER

A Photo Essay

Dan Callahan



TWIN CITIES CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS AND MN DNR STAFF SAMPLING THE VERMILLION RIVER



For the past six years, the Twin Cities Chapter of Trout Unlimited has partnered with the Minnesota DNR and others to improve habitat in and along the Vermillion River. One of the Twin Cities metro area's most threatened streams, its headwaters flow from suburbs and business parks, through culverts and along highways. Still, it manages to support a healthy wild brown trout population, as well as a popular stocked trout fishery. Improving, maintaining, assessing and protecting the wild brown trout of the Vermillion River has been a key mission of TCTU and its members. Their time in the field and the trout they hold and gently release show the compassion, dedication and care that

they have provided this local waterway. TCTU is ramping up work on a newly acquired DNR Aquatic Management Area which includes nearly one and one half miles of stream. In May and October 2014 more than two dozen TCTU volunteers worked removing invasive trees including buckthorn and box elder from the river corridor. MNTU is also pursuing Outdoor Heritage Fund funding for in-stream habitat work here, and if secured this session, in-stream project plans will be developed in 2015 for 2016 work. The September 2014 trout population survey captured in these photographs will provide baseline data for documenting the benefits of planned

habitat improvement work. While we have made an impressive start removing a jungle of invasive trees, there is much more to be done with your help to transform this riparian corridor.

Plan to take a weekend to explore the river this next season. There are plenty of locations to get on the water and springtime is a great time to explore the watershed when prairie grasses are low and the smaller tributaries are accessible. Visit the Twin Cities chapter online at www.twincitiestu.org for more information about the river including videos, photos and opportunities to get involved with this local resource this winter and next spring!



A VERMILLION RIVER BROWN TROUT SWIMS AWAY AFTER AN ELECTROFISHING ASSESSMENT.

Vermillion River Fishing Regulations

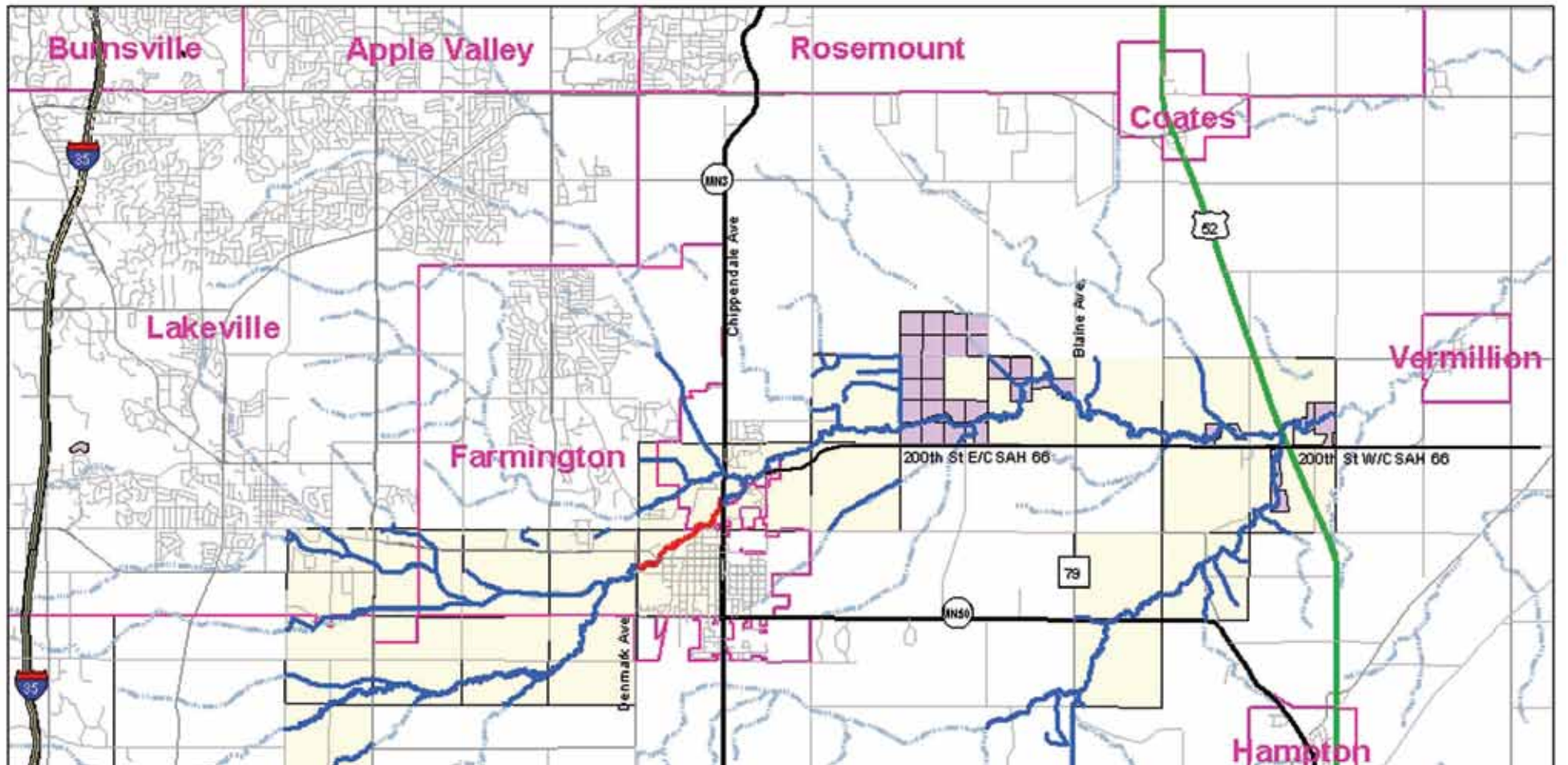


Legend

- Designated trout stream sections
- Public land

Trout Designation

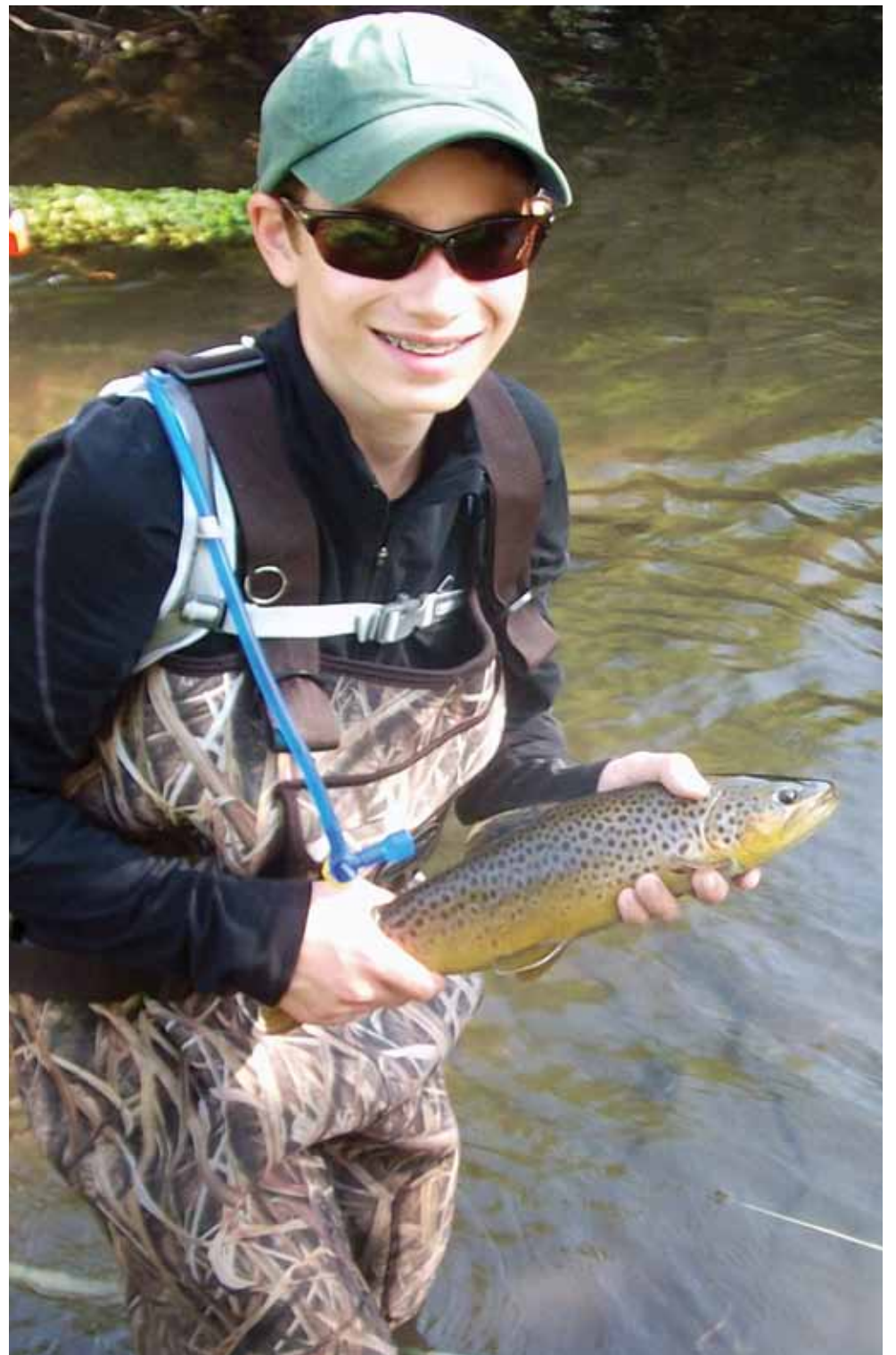
- Designated trout stream, catch-and-release only for trout
- Designated trout stream, statewide regulations
- Not a designated trout stream



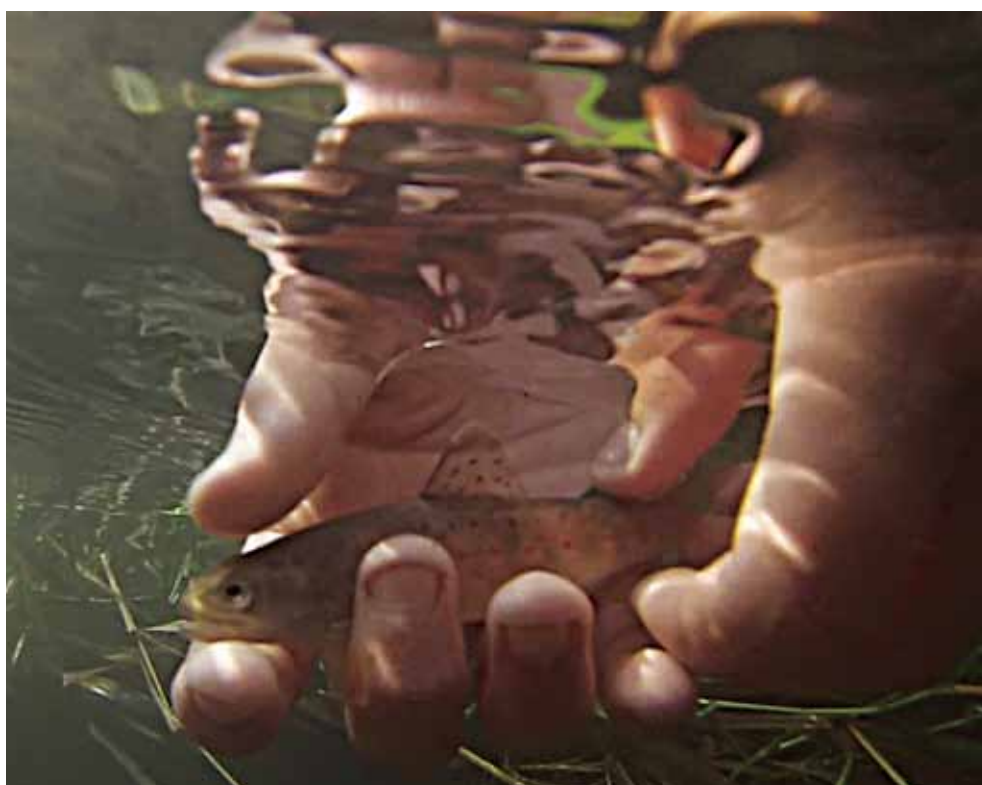
THIS MN DNR MAP HIGHLIGHTS THE DESIGNATED TROUT WATER AVAILABLE IN THE VERMILLION RIVER WATERSHED IN DAKOTA COUNTY. THERE ARE MANY ACCESS POINTS AND LOTS OF SMALL TRIBUTARIES AVAILABLE TO EXPLORE THROUGHOUT THE AREA. BIG TROUT OFTEN COME FROM SMALL STREAMS IN THIS AREA, SO DON'T BE SURPRISED TO FIND A 20-INCH TROUT IN A SECTION OF STREAM ONLY THREE OR FOUR FEET ACROSS. LARGER WATER IN THE LOWER PUBLIC LAND SECTION OF THE RIVER OFTEN HOLDS NORTHERN PIKE AS WELL AS TROUT SO BE PREPARED WITH EXTRA FLIES AND WIRE LEADERS IF YOU HEAD THERE!



VOLUNTEERS RECORDING DATA ON BROWN TROUT WHILE WORKING ON THE VERMILLION RIVER



A PROUD VOLUNTEER WITH A HEALTHY VERMILLION RIVER BROWN TROUT



A HEALTHY YOUNG-OF-YEAR BROWN TROUT IS RETURNED TO THE RIVER

TU'S NATIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

How National TU Works for Us

By Steve Carlton

Trount Unlimited is a unique national conservation organization in that the grassroots members are a key part of both the local and national work of the organization. While we have a highly qualified staff of more than 200 working in offices across the nation and at the national headquarters in Arlington, VA, they alone do not set the agenda for TU.

While many big conservation groups decide on their conservation agenda at the staff and trustee level, TU employs a group of member volunteers to help guide the organization. These dedicated folks are elected by each state council and serve as the National Leadership Council. In short, they represent the members, chapters and councils as the national organization decides which conservation issues to tackle and how to tackle them.

The NLC members actually meet face to face as a whole group just once a year. (Other work is generally done electronically, at region meetings or by conference call). This year, the NLC met in Santa Fe, New Mexico during the TU Annual Meeting.

Among their tasks are the usual organizational matters such as electing officers. Larry Harris, who has served ably for the past four years, retired as Chair and Mick McCorcle of Texas, a former chapter president, NLC Rep and Grassroots Trustee, was elected as Chair. Paul Doscher of New Hampshire, himself a former NLC Rep and Grassroots Trustee, was elected to replace Mary Weiss as Secretary.

The NLC is charged by the TU bylaws with establishing the National Conservation Agenda. This is, in short, one of the NLC's two most important functions. From year to year the NCA often remains relatively unchanged, although when a previous problem has been successfully resolved, an item will be removed. This year, thanks to a great collaborative effort by the Colorado Council, chapters and national staff, issues related to water withdrawals on the upper Colorado River were successfully addressed, so this item was removed from the NCA.

The NCA is limited to eight items, so the resolution of the upper Colorado issue made room for a new NCA item. There has been an NLC work group on climate change for the past couple of years, and this year they recommended that addressing climate change be added to the NCA. This was unanimously approved by the NLC. National staff has produced a new fact sheet on TU and climate change that can be downloaded from the TU web site: http://www.tu.org/sites/default/files/ClimateChange.CurrentImpactsV2_0.pdf

The NLC accomplishes most of its work through workgroups. They are orga-

nized into two broad categories – conservation and organization. Conservation work groups focus on the National Conservation Agenda and related projects or programs, sometimes regional in nature. Organization workgroups focus on the other main purpose of the NLC, to assist in improving TU's "organizational capacity" by initiating programs and providing assistance that improve the effectiveness and leadership capabilities of TU's councils, chapters and national staff.

The meat of the annual NLC meeting is reports from the work groups. This year we received reports from the following:

National Conservation

Stream Access: There were no access issues to resolve this year (the Access Group is charged with reviewing chapter and council requests to engage in access controversies or disputes), so the Access Work Group is focused on doing research on access history and various state access laws.

Climate Change: The past year there was a survey of TU leaders about climate change and the results of the survey were shared. While climate change can be a divisive issue, the group recognized that change is occurring and TU needs to increase the exposure of how it is affecting our streams and fisheries.

Responsible Energy: This work group spent a good year developing a draft policy on how energy development and transport can affect aquatic systems and fisheries.

The Board of Trustees reviewed it and after some valuable revisions approved it. Find it at: http://www.tu.org/sites/default/files/tu_policy_on_promoting_responsible_energy_development_to_protect_coldwater_fisheries.pdf

There are a host of related issues, including hydraulic fracturing (an excellent CD has been produced for TU on this issue. You can get a copy by contacting Richard Davis, chair of the Responsible Energy workgroup at: rdavismd@comcast.net), oil and gas pipelines and the pending EPA rules restoring protection to headwater streams under the Clean Water Act. (for more information see the TU website)

Land Conservancy: This work group has focused on providing support to the national staff land protection work. That work has been successful and finding grant money to allow TU to assist land trusts in protecting trout habitat in the Chesapeake basin and Upper Colorado Plateau. There is a potential for a grant to expand this work to the entire range of Eastern Brook Trout, and TU leaders will be asked to provide support for the proposal.

Regional Conservation:

Great Lakes: In a survey of members, the group has identified that the highest

priority for the Great Lakes is invasive species (fish and others). Also on their radar is the issue of hard rock mining in the Great Lakes watersheds, although this one is highly technical and costly to address. Thankfully a new TU staff person has been hired to help.

Western Native Fish: TU's Senior Scientist Jack Williams gave an encouraging report about the efforts to suppress Lake Trout in Yellowstone Lake, and restore the native Yellowstone Cutthroat. Not so encouraging was the report on the impact of fire on Gila Trout in New Mexico and Arizona.

Delaware River: As in the past, the challenge in the upper Delaware is water releases from the NY City owned reservoirs. Much effort has gone into establishing better communications with the key players, and this year devastating warm water releases during the summer were avoided. The work group has reached out to other interests and an economic analysis of the benefits of the cold water fisher has been prepared. Hydraulic fracturing is a concern, but NY state has still not issued regulations that would allow it to begin. Finally, local stream restoration work is being done on the tributaries and this is helping build good local relationships.

TUDARE: For those not from the upper Midwest, this stands for TU Driftless Area Restoration Effort. This multistate effort has been going on for 10 years, making remarkable achievements. To date 50 miles of stream restoration have been completed. This success has created a large demand for TUDARE services, even as funding sources have declined. They are seeking new ways to make the program more self supporting so it can meet the need.

Organization:

Education and Youth: TU chapters and Councils across the nation are doing a huge amount with youth education and outreach. The work group has a goal of making information about all this great work more widely available, including techniques to use social media in this endeavor.

Grassroots: This work group focused the past year on updating the Chapter Effectiveness Index that all chapter leaders are familiar with. This is the first update and improvement since the CEI was created, and the work of the committee has resulted in a much-improved CEI. The hope is to roll it out simultaneously to the establishment of an online volunteer hours reporting system, so that completing the CEI can become faster and easier. The group is also at work on a similar index to measure Council effectiveness.

Women's Initiative: Last year 2500 women joined TU as part of the free membership initiative. While this was great news, retention of those new members has not been strong. More work

needs to be done to attract and retain women members and more projects involving women are being planned. The good news is that women are now 8 percent of TU members, as compared to 6% in the previous year.

Communications: A new work group, created at this year's NLC meeting. In response to a recent study of NLC effectiveness, it was determined that the largest challenge the NLC faces is establishing and maintaining effective communications. This is not just among the NLC members, but with chapters, councils and other members. The fact that many TU members don't know what the NLC is, and what it does, reflects a need for better communication. A work group to address this problem was created by Chair Larry Harris, and will continue to work through the next year on this challenge.

So, there you have it. The NLC meeting in a nutshell. If you just have to know more, feel free to contact Paul Doscher, NLC secretary and he can send you a copy of the draft minutes of the meeting. And of course, your engagement and ideas are welcome by any of the NLC workgroups. For a list of the workgroup chairs and their contact information, contact Paul at padoscher@comcast.net.



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TCTU SPRING BANQUET

By Mark Johnson

Did you know that Trout Unlimited is the largest non-profit organization in the United States that protects clean water? Not only does our work make it possible for us to enjoy trout fishing, a sport we all love, but even more we are conserving and protecting our streams and rivers for future generations. And, we are supporting community efforts such as Project Healing Waters, T.U.N.E. Camp, and Casting for Recovery. We are part of something bigger than ourselves and we are making a difference!

In order to ensure that we are able to continue making a difference now and in the future, we need your support! A great and fun way to support our organization is to attend our annual banquet, which is our organization's biggest fundraising event of the year. Proceeds from the event support these local TCTU initiatives and they will help support a new initiative we are excited to launch called "Trout in the Classroom."

Please save the date on your calendar and join us at the 2015 Twin Cities Trout Unlimited Annual Banquet.

Date: Saturday, March 7, 2015

Time: 6:00pm

Location: Nicollet Island Pavilion, Minneapolis, MN

Here are just a few more reasons to attend:

You can win cool stuff! We'll have silent and live auction items such as personal guided fishing trips, fishing rods, and more. Last year, we even had a day with a Tesla Model S electric car.

It's really fun! The Nicollet Island Pavilion is a great venue. The food is delicious and the games are fun. Bring your significant other, your sons and daughters,

your parents, and your friends. All are welcome.

You can connect with your friends and others who share your passion for fly fishing! Or, as one of the wives of a TCTU member shared after last year's event "My husband usually makes me come. This year, I had a great time and next year I'm going to bring a bunch of my girlfriends!"

We would love to have you join us at the 2015 Annual Banquet on March 7, 2015. Come show your support for this great organization so we can continue to make a difference in the future. Further details and registration information will be sent to members in January.



Find More Information at:
www.twincitiestu.org

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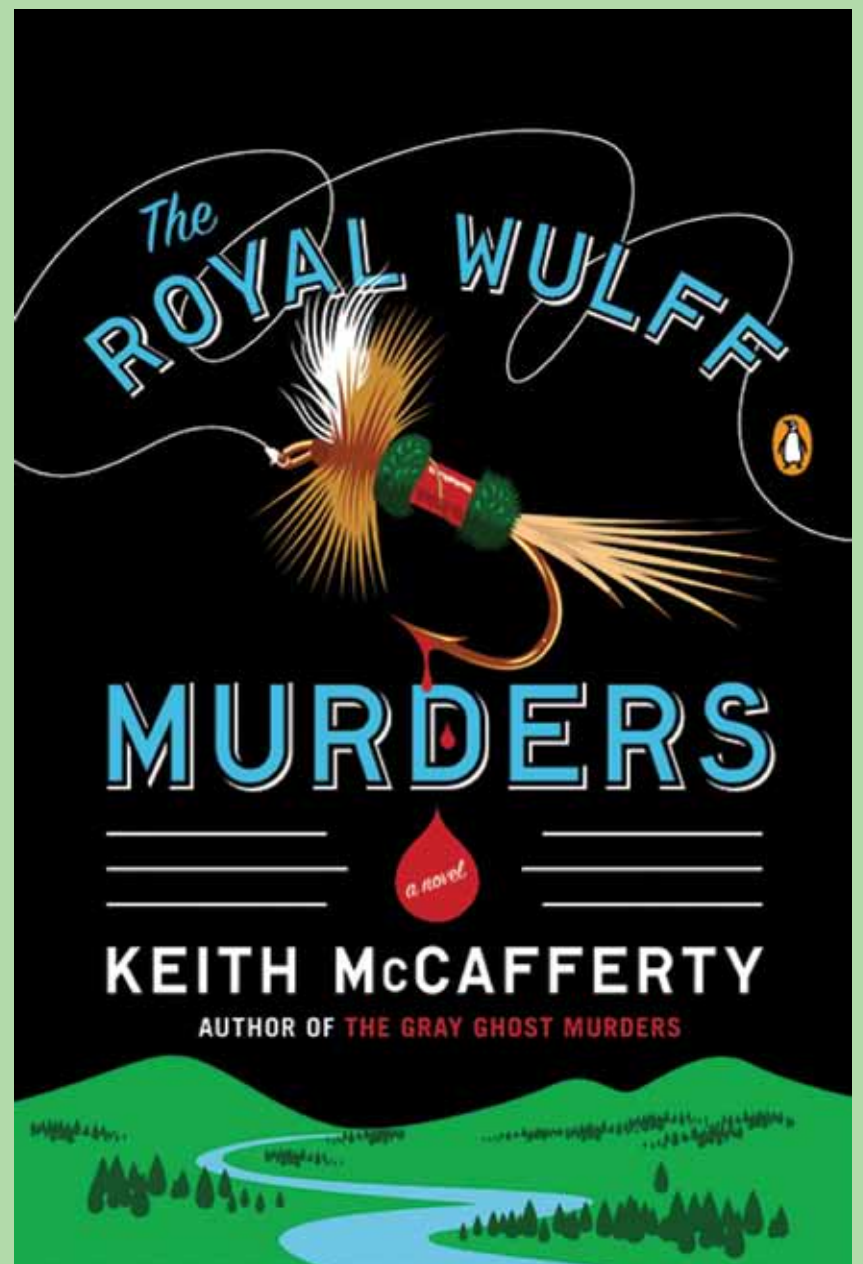
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THE ROYAL WULFF MURDERS Book Review

By John Hunt

If you are like me, as the leaves begin to fall and the fishing season fades, you might look for a good book to help bridge the weeks until the start of the winter season or until a trip to a warmer locale arrives. Nothing heavy, mind you, but something that you can simply read without feeling guilty that it wasn't included on the New York Times bestseller list last week. Author Keith McCafferty has produced a trio of Montana-based mysteries that fits the bill nicely. Starting with *The Royal Wulff Murders* (2012) and following up with *The Gray Ghost Murders* (2013) and *Dead Man's Fancy* (2014), McCafferty has created a series that allows the reader to tag along with Sean Stranahan, a reformed private detective and aspiring fishing guide and artist as he adjusts to life in Montana.

Although each story is perfectly capable of standing alone, the author's character development progresses in steps throughout all three books, providing an ever-growing look inside the thoughts and world of Stranahan as he interacts with his neighbors, the local sheriff and her staff, and the occasional stereotypically wealthy landowner. In a fashion that isn't over-the-top, McCafferty also uses glimpses of Sean's life before Montana to add context to his current outlook, feelings, and actions. By placing his story elements in towns and natural settings that will be familiar to aficionados of fly fishing in the Big Sky state, the author also draws the reader into the scene (hey, I've been there!).

The common element between the stories are the mysterious deaths that occur in the area, and Sean's predilection for inserting himself into the sheriff's investigations. In the *Royal Wulff* plot, a victim is found floating in the Madison River with said fly embedded in his lip. In *Gray Ghost*, it is two shallow graves found on Sphinx Mountain that lead Sheriff Martha Ettinger to draw Stranahan into the case. In *Dead Man's Fancy*, the sheriff once again reaches out to the one-time detective in an effort to solve the death of man found impaled on the antlers of a trophy elk carcass discovered on a local ranch.

My sense is that a new reader would be best served by starting with the first book of the series, mostly so that he or she can experience the gradual ebb and flow of Sean's relationships with the sheriff, or with the on-again, off-again love interests that enter his life. If I were to pick just one, however, I might choose *The Gray Ghost Murders*. I enjoy Keith McCafferty's style of fiction writing, and realized only after purchasing his first book that I had previously read his work in *Field and Stream* magazine. He is also a past winner of the Robert Traver award for angling literature, for those of you that have enjoyed that annual contest put on by *Fly Rod & Reel* magazine.

So, the first time you think about drawing up to a nice fire this winter with a book (or an e-reader for those of you so inclined), I recommend you give Sean Stranahan a try.

GOT TROUT?

Trout in the Classroom in SE MN

By Kelli Schmeling

TROUT in the Classroom (TIC) is a nationally based program that is beginning to gain steam in Minnesota. The premise of the program is an exciting one: to teach Minnesota youth the importance of cold-water fisheries conservation through a hands-on approach to learning. To accomplish this goal, TIC classrooms collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and Trout Unlimited (TU) to raise rainbow trout from eggs to fingerlings and release them at the end of the school year. This is not a stocking program; students get a front row seat experience not only of raising the fish, but exposure to trout-related experiences such as fly-tying, fishing, and habitat management. This past year the Hiawatha Chapter of TU based out of Rochester, Minnesota, assisted in getting three TIC classrooms up and running. Fish-N-Pets in Rochester was instrumental in assisting teachers with equipment and expertise, as was Deb Groebner of the DNR in procuring Rainbow Trout eggs for classrooms. Monica Willits, a member of the Hiawatha TU executive board, served as project visionary, helping TIC transform from an idea to a living and viable program.

There are many different and exciting ways that the TIC program can be implemented into a school's curriculum. This was seen in the various approaches each of the three schools took to introduce TIC into their respective classrooms this past year. Stewartville Middle School (SMS) in Stewartville, Minnesota, was one of the schools represented by the Hiawatha Chapter. Eighth grade science teacher, Kelli Schmeling, had the 125 gallon tank set up during the first weeks of school to generate curiosity and enthusiasm. Students gravitated to it and curiosity got the best of them—"What is going

in this tank!?" As the excitement grew, students from other grades stopped by to check it out. As part of the experience, the eighth grade took a field trip to the Lanesboro Fish Hatchery to interactively participate in the process which ultimately provided them with the trout eggs they would need. In early December about 450 eggs were delivered to the school. Temperature of the trout eggs was continuously monitored to predict when they might hatch. Over the course of the following few months, students were able to observe the various life cycle stages of the trout firsthand (and become quite attached to them). To assist in maintaining the water quality of the aquarium, two students were selected each week to monitor water chemistry parameters such as ammonia, nitrates, nitrites, temperature and pH. Upon entering the classroom each day students would record this water chemistry data into a spreadsheet, as well as any mortalities that had occurred. This information was then used to have a broader discussion connecting what it takes for these fish to survive in nature and why certain streams in Southeastern Minnesota are more suitable for trout than others. It also led into larger topics such as the ways that people can maintain and even improve trout habitat. To conclude the year, students had a comprehensive final where they analyzed water samples from three local sources and used the results to predict which water sample and stream would be most conducive for trout survival. Ultimately, the Minnesota DNR and TU determined which water body the trout would be released into. After a small sample of fish were tested for disease and cleared, students took a fieldtrip—with great fanfare—to the release site, letting the remaining fish go into their new environment.

Kevin Landherr from Mayo High School and Bruce Frutiger from Century High School in Rochester were the other two

TIC startup schools that the Hiawatha Chapter supported. Though there were some similarities in their implementation of TIC when compared to SMS, there were also some significant differences because of the age of the students taught and the specialized nature of the courses that these instructors teach. In all three schools water chemistry was a major theme as was student involvement in the project. A major difference between SMS and the high schools was that both Kevin and Bruce teach a class called "Sport Biology" in their respective high schools. This is a very specialized course that is taught to upperclassman only. TIC was a powerful addition to the curriculum for this class which focuses on topics such as conservation, natural resource management, limnology, taxidermy, and entomology. Approximately 120 students from each high school take this class per year. By implementing the TIC project, these teachers were able to improve upon topics they were already teaching and make it more meaningful to their students. Some of the different ways they were able to do this was by having students collaborate with the DNR to do different types of stream sampling. One type of stream sampling that each class focused on was for macroinvertebrates. In this most hands-on type of activity possible, students would actually get in the stream and assist in the sampling! They would then use their results to discuss and predict why a given stream may or may not support a healthy fish population. By collaborating with the DNR, students were also able to observe fishery workers in the field assessing fish populations by electrofishing and to connect it to their own sampling results. Other ways that these teachers brilliantly connected the TIC project to their students and the outside world was by teaching their students how to fish. Members from the Hiawatha Chapter of TU assisted by showing kids how to fly fish

and cast. This in turn generated enthusiasm from the students, not only about fishing but ultimately about becoming part of TU themselves. Students from all three TIC schools attended chapter meetings and were volunteer helpers at the annual fundraising banquet as they were eager to get involved.

As you can see, there are many exciting ways to incorporate the TIC project into Minnesota schools. It is by no means a one size fits all program, but with proper forethought it can be implemented successfully in different types of schools and at different age levels. Though TIC is fairly new in the state of Minnesota, it has already started to 'hook' the next generation of anglers and conservationists. By expanding the TIC program into other schools we are ensuring that the vision of coldwater fisheries value and preservation continues in our great state. If we truly care about the future of our fisheries and getting the youth of today involved in this noble cause, TIC is an efficient and effective way to do so.



RECENTLY HATCHED TROUT WITH THEIR EGG SACS STILL ATTACHED IN THE STEWARTVILLE TIC PROGRAM

SCOUTING AND TCTU

By Don Eckenrode

The TU'ers, conservationists and dedicated anglers of the future belong to the youth of our communities today. Who knows if one or more of the young people we teach will become a leader in the mission we hold so dear? There are many opportunities to engage our local youth, and the Boy Scout fly fishing merit badge is the starting point for this story.

On a recent autumn Saturday with reasonably cooperative weather, several members of the Twin Cities chapter hosted a fly fishing workshop for eight boy scouts from troops 9261 and 9270 from the Twin Cities suburbs. Pre-workshop homework prepared the boys for a day of orientation, knots, fly tying, casting, and fishing. Parental sign-off on the usually final step of the merit badge

indicated that they cleaned, cooked, and ate a purchased fish prior to the big day. Several parents participated in the day-long event. Others came during the fishing session which lasted an hour longer than planned. Other than catching a small fish on a fly rod, the highlight of the day was the lineup of eight boys getting signoff on the merit badge requirements. This was easily made possible since one Twin Cities chapter member is a certified merit badge counselor.

As the wrap-up continued and the good-byes were said several boys agreed that this was "The most fun merit badge yet". Participants and instructors agreed that this was a great use of time, talent and the chapter's collection of fly rods and tying kits. Thanks also goes out to the Laughing Trout club that always helps in these events.



INSTRUCTING YOUTH IN THE ART OF FLYCASTING FOR THE BOY SCOUTS FLY-FISHING MERIT BADGE. CONTACT THE TWIN CITIES CHAPTER TO LEARN MORE ON HOW YOU CAN INVOLVE YOUR CHAPTER IN SCOUTING.

FLY TYING

With Laughing Trout Fly Fishing

By Paul Johnson

Bullet Head Hopper

Materials List

Hook: Dai Riki #280 size 10
 Thread: Uni 6/0 Orange
 Tag: Red Congo Hair or E.P. Fibers / Golden Pheasant Feathers
 Body: Yellow Congo Hair / Yellow Floating Yarn / Lt. Olive UV Dubbing
 Underwing: Pearl Krystal Flash
 Overwing: White Widows Web / Zelon
 Head: Deer Hair
 Legs: Round Rubber Legs in Barred Olive

Tie this small hopper for use on any of our local trout streams. It serves well out west as well and anywhere where the hoppers are flying in the summer and even into early fall. Dress it well with floatant to keep it up and on the surface. Synthetic materials help it to shed water and dry more quickly during use.



THE BULLET HEAD HOPPER READY TO TAKE OUT ON A LOCAL STREAM AND FISH. USE THIS FLY IN MID AND LATE SUMMER WHEN GRASSHOPPERS ARE FLYING

Tying Instructions:



Step 1. Insert your hook into the vise. Start your thread and lay a base to the bend of the hook.



Step 2. Tie in a length of Red Congo or Puglisi Hair. Clip to about a hook gap in length.



Step 3. Tie in a length of Yellow Congo Hair.



Step 4. Wrap the Congo Hair around the hook advancing to the 2/3 point on your hook and clip the excess.



Step 5. Tie in 4 to 6 strands of Krystal Flash. Trim in length to reach the end of the Red Congo Hair.



Step 6. Tie in a clump of White Widows Web to form the under wing. Clip in length to the back of the hook.



Step 7. Advance your thread to the eye of the hook. Clean and stack a clump of deer hair that you will tie in at this point. The wing should be about a hook shank in length.



Step 8. Clip the butt ends and wrap them down back to the 2/3 point on your hook.



Step 9. Pull the deer hair to the back of the hook, trying to keep the hair on top of the hook shank. Secure with several tight wraps of thread.



Step 10. Tie in rubber legs on each side of the hook. Whip finish, glue and go fishing!



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Contact Guide
J. Mark Reisetter

LITTLE ROCK CREEK

The Mid-Minnesota Chapter's Upcoming Project



ABOVE: A LITTLE ROCK CREEK ALDER TUNNEL

On September 17th, the Mid-Minnesota chapter board took to the waters of Little Rock Creek near Rice, MN. Accompanying the chapter was Little Falls DNR fisheries manager Eric Altana. The group walked over a half mile stretch looking for areas of opportunity to use either brush layering and/or toe-wood construction to improve the sediment load and correct the channel flow.

The end goal of the chapter's potential project is to reduce bank erosion and provide more gravel exposure to create more ideal living and breeding habitat. A great number of potential sites were documented through photographs and gps coordinates. The chapter is currently considering a multi-year project which would have a target start time of Summer 2015. This project can be a great fishery improvement and opportunity for Minnesota anglers. Little Rock Creek is regularly stocked with brown trout two out of every three years. The 2012 Electrofishing survey on the stream also found populations of wild brook trout with some measuring up to 16 inches. There is excellent potential for anglers to get out wet a line in central Minnesota for quality trout, so plan to visit and lend a hand.

Interested in helping or getting involved? The Mid-Minnesota chapter can use your help! Any inquiries about the stream or project can be directed to chapter president Micah Barrett at 320-241-0870.



MN DNR FISHERIES MANAGER ERIC ALTANA WADING A DEEP SECTION OF LITTLE ROCK CREEK

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TROUT IN THE FOAM

Big trout rise in the eddy foam. Steelhead rest in the foam line. Discerning trout & steelhead anglers sip foam at our local microbreweries. Join a casual gathering of anglers touring local taprooms each month. Excursions are from 5:00 to 7:00 PM starting December 17.

FISHING IS SPOKEN HERE.

Dec. 17 - Fulton's Brewery
414 6th Ave N, Mpls

Jan. 21 - Urban Growler Brewing
2325 Endicott Street, St. Paul

Feb. 18 - Indeed Brewing
711 15th Ave NE, Mpls

IMPROVING OUR BROOK TROUT FISHING

By Bob Wagner

The new brook trout stream sign highlighted to the right will provide chapters with an opportunity to be educationally proactive at fishing access sites. I believe overharvest is often due to a lack of understanding. Solving this problem requires dissemination of appropriate information.

I want to first point out that idea sharing is a real benefit of belonging to Trout Unlimited. When an average guy like me shares an idea such as a new sign with other TU chapters and you find it's really a statewide concern a small idea can hopefully grow into a statewide benefit for brook trout. I think that's really cool.

Here's the story: One of our board members was concerned a brook trout stream is being overfished. This stream supports a self-sustaining, wild brook trout population and is not stocked. The brook trout population in this relatively infertile stream is vulnerable. When we observe certain anglers repeatedly keeping their limits it is alarming, especially when reliable fishing reports have indicated declining numbers of large fish and overall numbers. A significant number

of such anglers keeping limits of brook trout do not understand that a designated wild brook trout stream actually means that it is not stocked and therefore relies entirely on natural reproduction.

The sign explains this in clear, direct language and asks everyone reading it to please limit the fish taken. Will this new sign work on every angler? Probably not. However we believe this educational effort will positively influence the majority of anglers who read it. We have shared this with our MN DNR area coldwater fisheries specialist who supports it. The sign has been designed to be a 8.5"x11" aluminum back and vinyl wrapped front as seen to the right. Our current bid price to purchase these signs is \$11.00 per sign if ordering two dozen or more and \$13.00 per sign if ordering 12 or less.

Chapter Buying Power

The more signs we order the lower the price per sign each individual chapter will have to pay. If you are interested-please call or e-mail me

Bob Wagner
218-766-7757
bob@riverwooddesign.net

ATTENTION Trout Fisherman



©MN DNR, C. Iverson

This Brook Trout stream is not stocked. It relies on natural reproduction, please limit the number of Trout you keep.

Made possible by Trout Unlimited - www.mntu.org

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A WILD MN BROOK TROUT PRIOR TO RELEASE

TOM HELGESON'S GREAT WATERS FLY FISHING EXPO

MARCH 20-22, 2015

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MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

Details at
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- Fly tying
- Ask The Expert Booth
- FREE parking

ASSAULTS ON MN'S WATER USE LAW WILL TROUT STREAMS LOSE PROTECTION?

Threats, challenges and ongoing issues with trout stream protection

By John Lenczewski

In the June 2014 newsletter we summarized how Minnesota regulates the appropriation of ground and surface waters, and outlined groundwater sustainability requirements adopted in 2010. This article explores recent efforts to roll back these protections, particularly in trout stream watersheds. These efforts will surely be renewed this coming legislative session. All trout anglers need to become informed so they can speak up for our trout streams.

Key aspects of the 2010 groundwater sustainability law include: (1) prohibiting the DNR from issuing appropri-

The DNR Process for Assessing Cumulative Water Use and Negative Impacts to Trout Streams

Given the exaggerated, misleading and false claims we are likely to hear soon in an attempt to justify gutting Minnesota's water law and removing trout stream protections, it is important to understand the process which the DNR is actually following.

Step One: Calculating the Percentage of Water Appropriated by Subwatershed

The Vermillion River in Dakota County is among the first watersheds where the DNR has conducted a cumulative analysis of existing appropriations to determine whether negative impacts to the stream and its trout fishery may already be occurring. Here the DNR had the benefit of more extensive monitoring data of stream flows and groundwater levels than nearly anywhere else in the state. The initial analysis used GIS to calculate mean annual runoff in each subwatershed and modeled the flow of the river based upon stream gauges. They determined for each subwatershed what percentage of mean annual runoff was being appropriated. This initial step is a relatively "coarse" filter used merely to determine in which subwatersheds water use was high (10% or more). The DNR then examined whether higher water use was negatively impacting the stream by lowering low (base) flows.

Step Two: Determining if Low Flows are Being Impacted

Low streams flows in summer negatively impact trout fisheries by increasing water temperatures and shrinking the amount (volume) of physical habitat

available to trout and their food sources. The DNR examined historic stream gauge data to see if they could discern a shift in data which suggested that low flow levels (base flows) were becoming lower in high water use areas. If they discern no statistical shift to lower low flows or more frequent low flows, they believe it is likely that the current water use is not yet having a significant negative impact. If they discern a downward trend in low flow characteristics, they believe negative impacts are already occurring. In some subwatersheds there is simply too little stream gauge data available to make a determination yet.

to 15%. They also determined that the river reaches downstream from (east of) Farmington did not exhibit a shift in low flows (to lower base flows or more frequent low flows). However, they found that the base flows in South Creek, located just west of Farmington, may already have been reduced. In 2013 and 2014 several individuals applied for permits to pump additional groundwater from under the Vermillion River. The DNR worked through the process outlined above and determined that the wells proposed to the east of Farmington would not have a negative impact on flows and the trout resource. The DNR granted these permits, but cautioned the applications that these new permits might be altered in the future if better study and modeling showed negative impacts were occurring. Although these permits were granted, the mere mention of possible constraints in the future caused a stir among irrigators.

In the case of an irrigation well proposed near South Creek, the DNR determined that it was likely to have a negative impact on the stream. The applicant proposed to pump groundwater from the Prairie du Chien aquifer, which is closely connected to the trout stream in this area. Because the DNR's assessment determined this well would negatively impact the stream, DNR told the applicant that the permit would be denied unless they drilled to a deeper, more confined aquifer which is not connected to the stream. Rather than accepting the fact that additional pumping from some shallow aquifers is harmful to public waters and not sustainable, irrigators pressed several legislators to ignore science and gut a law which they view as an inconvenient hindrance to their private use of a finite public resource.

MNTU Blocks Attempt to Gut Protection For Connected Surface Waters

State law prohibits negative impacts to trout streams via surface water appropriations from them. The 2010 groundwater law acknowledged the connection between surface and groundwater by requiring that where groundwater pumping has the potential to impact surface waters the surface water protection standard be applied. Effectively this prohibits the issuance of pumping permits that have the potential to negatively impact trout streams. This past spring several legislators tried to gut protections for trout streams by requiring that the DNR "prove" negative impacts before it could deny a permit for new withdrawals of groundwater essential for trout fisheries. This ridiculously high burden of prior proof would have meant that no permit could have been denied until after the damage was already done. Luckily MNTU



NATIVE MINNESOTA BROOK TROUT ARE THE PROVERBIAL "CANARIES IN THE COAL MINE" AND THEIR PLIGHT HIGHLIGHTS THE THREATS TO OUR TROUT STREAMS

tion permits unless it determines that the groundwater use is sustainable to supply the needs of future generations and will not harm ecosystems; (2) effectively prohibiting groundwater appropriations which will have a negative impact on designated trout streams; and (3) giving the DNR authority to designate groundwater management areas and limit total annual withdrawals within these areas. Most significantly, the DNR was given a mandate, not just clearer authority, requiring that it consider the cumulative effects of the existing appropriation permits in an area when considering whether and under what conditions to issue an additional permit.

The DNR began to implement these new requirements in 2013 and 2014. But even before the process could be completed in the first watershed – the Vermillion River – there was substantial pushback, including outright assaults on these provisions and on several trout streams themselves. Minnesota TU was able to turn back these assaults in the 2014 legislative session, but we expect even stronger attacks in 2015.

Step Three: Evaluation of Individual Permit Applications

Regardless of whether or not there has already been a downward shift in the trout stream base flows (low flows), each individual water appropriation permit application is evaluated using a "stream depletion calculation". The stream depletion calculation factors in the distance of the proposed well from the stream, the characteristics of the aquifer (especially the extent to which it is connected to surface water) and the pumping range. Where base flows have already been affected in an area or the groundwater aquifer is closely connected to the stream, the permit applications will be given much greater scrutiny and little or no reduction in stream flows will be permitted. The DNR is confident that reductions in flow of 15% or more are having negative impacts. However, they also know that less severe reductions in flow may also cause negative impacts, especially to water temperatures.

Vermillion River as a Test Case

The DNR found that the percentage of water use varied significantly by subwatershed, from less than 5% to close

was watching for such an attack and responded with timely testimony in opposition. The amendment was withdrawn as a result of our passionate defense. However, indications are that some agricultural irrigators oppose the protection of trout streams and will renew attempts to gut or repeal the law in 2015.

Direct Attacks on a Trout Stream: A Struggle to Preserve Cold Spring's Namesake

A second method of assaulting trout fisheries is to go after the trout stream itself, seeking to remove its protective designation so it can be harmed or destroyed with impunity. The aquifer located under the central Minnesota city of Cold Spring is being steadily depleted. A brewery located in Cold Spring, MN began to substantially increase its pumping of groundwater in the mid and late 2000s beyond originally permitted levels. These new withdrawals are removing groundwater from the local aquifer at an unsustainable rate. A wild brook trout stream, Cold Spring Creek or Brewery Creek, located nearby is threatened by declining base flows from excessive removal of groundwater. Because the self-sustaining fishery will be the first obvious casualty of continued unsustainable pumping, it has found itself in the cross hairs of two politicians.

Canaries With Fins

Groundwater springs are the lifeblood of our trout streams. Trout depend upon a steady supply of cold groundwater to keep streams cool enough in summer, and warm enough in winter. In recent decades the rising demand for permits to pump groundwater from our aquifers has outstripped the finite supply. Once viewed as limitless (and still mistakenly viewed as such by some), many aquifers are being depleted by excessive and unsustainable pumping. As aquifer levels drop, the volume of flow from natural springs into trout streams begins to decrease. Where unsustainable pumping continues, eventually too little groundwater remains in the aquifers to supply trout streams with the minimal base flow required to support trout. For this reason, the persistence of wild trout are a good indicator of the health and sustainability of our groundwater systems. Thoughtful individuals recognize that trout are finned versions of "canaries in the coal mine", which can warn us of dangerous changes occurring underground. Cold Spring Creek and the slow demise of its wild brook trout have been warning us that the supply of drinking water (groundwater) from this aquifer is threatened. Documented impacts to Cold Spring Creek from excess groundwater removal first raised concerns about the declining aquifer levels.

DNR Has Been Very Accommodating

The DNR has been extremely accommodating of the brewery, even granting it temporary permits to pump at substantially increased levels. The DNR has shown great patience working with the brewery and City of Cold Spring, allowing them several years to secure

alternative water supplies. The brewery has publically promised to work with the DNR to secure other water sources. However, the introductions of two bills by local legislators raise questions about the brewery's commitment to preserving a scarce public resource.

Shoot the Canaries!

Rather than heed nature's early warning and address the underlying problem of overuse of groundwater from this aquifer, two legislators this spring proposed that we instead shoot the canaries. Rep. Jeff Howe (Rockville) and Sen. Michelle Fischbach (Paynesville) introduced identical bills which would have removed Cold Spring Creek from the list of designated trout streams. This would have removed all protections from the trout stream. The legislators' thinking apparently is that we can magically remove the problem of "deficit spending" from this aquifer by killing off our early warning system. This assault on a public resource to make things temporarily easier for one private business is outrageous and shortsighted. Constituents of similarly confused legislators in 2015 might want to let them know that such approaches are both unacceptable and ineffective. We sincerely hope that the brewery has had no role in these legislators' attempts to undermine our water laws and destroy the public's trout stream. We encourage the brewery to publically disavow this attack on clean water and anglers.

Attempt To Hide Behind Beer Drinkers and Brewers

These same legislators' second tact was to require the DNR to issue a permanent water appropriation permit to the brewery. Since state law prohibits legislation designed to benefit just one individual or entity ("special legislation"), the bills had to be written to cover all brewers. The DNR has bent over backward, issuing temporary permits to the brewery to provide time for it and the city to find an alternative, sustainable water supply. These bills would take advantage of this accommodation and use it against the DNR and citizens they represent. While these bills did not advance in 2014, similar attempts to destroy trout waters through removing designation or awarding special exemptions enabling their degradation for the gain of a few can be expected to resurface in 2015. Trout anglers are discerning anglers, and it is very likely that they are discerning beer drinkers as well. As such they surely enjoy local beer and also expect their local brewers to support clean water. It is time we ask all of Minnesota's craft brewers to publically pledge to support clean water and to oppose all efforts to undermine groundwater protections for the convenience of a few.

We expect similar attempts in 2015 to roll back the groundwater sustainability requirements and to remove protections from individual trout streams. Please stay informed and be prepared to educate your own legislators and neighbors in the coming year.

FLY TYING KIT PURCHASE OPPORTUNITY

A Unique Opportunity for Chapters

By Bob Wagner

Paul Olson Supplies is giving TU Chapters a great discount on closing out his remaining stock of fly tying kits. With a minimum order of 20 kits per order our price is \$15.00 per kit or \$300 for 20 kits. If somehow we could find a donor or deep pocket to buy all 200 remaining kits, Paul would sell them to us at \$10.00 a kit. Considering the MSRP is \$49.95 this is a significant savings at \$15.00. Each kit contains an AA vise and eight other essential tying tools as described below:

AA Vise: table mount base clamp, holds hooks from size 20 to 5/0

Ceramic Tip Bobbin: offers the best protection against breaking fine tying threads.

Bobbin Threader: makes drawing thread through the small bobbin tube easy.

Dual Density Hackle Pliers: grasps even the finest fibers and hackles

English Hackle Pliers: standard size hackle pliers for most fly tying.

Bodkin: a pin with a brass handle, useful for separating different fibers and to cement heads.

3.5" Tying Scissors: will cut close for beautifully finished flies.

Brass Hair Stacker: helps define nice straight ends when using hair in your tying.

Matarelli Style Whip Finisher: proven to be the easiest, fastest whip finisher design available

To order kits for your chapters tying classes, workshops or members you simply call Paul Olson at 612-963-7650.

You will have 3 options of delivery pick up:

1. At Paul's house in Eden Prairie
2. Have Paul mail them to you (approx. \$25 for 20 kits)
3. Pick them up at Great Waters fly fishing expo at Riverwood Design booth March 20-22

I have personal experience in using these kits over the past 12 years. The Headwaters chapter has coordinated the 5th grade fly fishing/tying course. Over the years we have used about 75 of these kits with students purchasing most of them. They are a beginner level kit that is very sufficient for teaching new students. If you have any questions call Paul Olson at the phone number listed above.



FLY TYING KIT AS DESCRIBED ABOVE



MNTU CHAPTER NEWS

Gitche Gumee Chapter

In July Gitche Gumee Chapter volunteers worked with DNR Grand Marais Area Fisheries to complete a barrier at the outlet of Kimball Lake in Cook County. The rock and wood barrier will prevent future invasions of non game species into three connected trout lakes. MNTU and GGTU worked closely with DNR to hire a company specializing in aquatic chemical applications. Kimball, Mink and Boy Lakes were reclaimed in early October. Kimball and Mink Lakes will be re-stocked with yearling rainbows beginning next May, and Boys Lake stocked with brook trout next fall.

In late September we worked with the DNR Lake Superior Area Fisheries Office to survey the juvenile steelhead population on the Little Stewart River project site. Design and permitting work are underway and we look forward to construction of the in-stream habitat project in July and August 2015.

Our brook trout habitat project on the upper Split Rock River was designed with DNR Finland Area Fisheries personnel this summer. The project could not be built this fall due to the long turnaround time needed for US Army Corps of Engineers permits. Project work (all manual labor) will take place in the July to September 2015 window.

These upcoming meetings will be held at the Hartley Nature Center in Duluth, MN at 7:00 PM:

December 11, 2014 – Prioritizing North Shore watersheds to sustain coldwater fisheries. Join a discussion to identify consensus top tier watersheds to target for protection and restoration efforts.

January 13, 2014 - Fish Passage Challenges on Minnesota's North Shore

Jon Aspie

Hiawatha Chapter

At the Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) October members meeting, Vaughn Snook covered the numbers of trout and health of the streams in Southeast Minnesota and also reviewed the changes to the DNR regulations that took effect last month. Our November's meeting was the HTU 2nd Annual Chili Feed and Fly Tying Night at the Izaak Walton League cabin. HTU held these in years long past and last year the board decided to bring it back. We have a lot of fun and there's nothing like chili and fly tying to bring together a great crowd of like-minded people at all levels of skill and backgrounds to share knowledge and tips.

Habitat Projects Completed

We accomplished a good deal

of trout habitat work this season. Work resumed on Cold Spring Brook this summer and completed work in August. All major work on the East Indian Creek project near Weaver was completed in September. Strategic tree planting will be done along this brookie stream next spring. Two projects on Camp Creek near Preston were constructed between late August and early October. Work on Pine Creek continues, since the DNR determined that pre-project habitat conditions prevent successful reproduction. Work to improve these poor conditions will continue weather permitting.

Mending Fences

Ray Ricketts and Paul Krolak recently reviewed the Newburg Creek project design with its design consultant and its preparing a construction bid package. Newburg Creek is a tributary to Wisel Creek located southeast of Harmony, MN. Habitat work will restore the stream so that it once again supports brook trout throughout the year and provides good spawning habitat for both brook and brown trout.

The project spans two parcels - the downstream owner hopes to turn his property into a few acres of oak savannah along with the improved trout stream. The planned stream work will dovetail nicely with renewed prairie, as we plan to reseed with native grasses and forbs. Over time these deep-rooted grasses will help to naturally narrow the channel and provide overhead cover. The adjacent property upstream is an active pasture, and this is where fence mending enters the picture.

We were finally able to meet with the owners of the upper eased reach - who



VOLUNTEERS ELECTROFISHING THE LITTLE STEWART RIVER IN A FUTURE PROJECT SITE NEAR TWO HARBORS, MN

took an exception to Hiawatha Trout Unlimited's reporting in its November 2012 newsletter on how they were managing their land. That article described muddy banks and cows in the stream. While not ideal practice, this is allowed under the terms of the easement and is not unusual in a pasture during a hot, dry summer like 2012 was. Our recent visits demonstrated that the landowners are not poor stewards of their land and we could have been less quick to paint an unflattering picture.

We went over our project design, which includes hardened cattle crossings that

would give cows access to water without muddying the stream and protecting the banks. Temporary fencing will keep the cows clear of the construction area until banks are re-vegetated and permanent fences and gates will help the owners protect both the cows and the stream in cases of high water or softened banks.

We're also asking Jeff Hastings from TUDARE to get involved, as he's a master at shaking loose Farm Bill money to help the owners qualify for other conservation practices.

As Dave Vetrano (retired Wisconsin DNR) likes to say, cows and trout can go together.

Paul Krolak

As always, you can find the all the information you need to know at www.hiawathatu.org

Phil Pankow



A NEW BENCH INSTALLED BY THE HEADWATERS CHAPTER ALONG THE CLEARWATER RIVER

Headwaters Chapter

The Headwaters Chapter has had an active season working on a wide variety of projects. Check out the photo of the new bench in the handicapped section of the Clearwater River on this page. Elsewhere in the newsletter take note of the opportunities to get your chapter active with flytying kits and signs to highlight wild brook trout fisheries in your area. Take time to stop by any of our upcoming meetings. All are welcome and it's a great time!

Dec. 18 Free Winter Fly tying classes start Dec. 18, Thursday at the Garden Pub and Grill. It all starts with 5:30 set up, order food and tying starts at 6:30.

MNTU CHAPTER NEWS



Instruction is free. If you are a beginner and need equipment it is available just call Bob at 218-586-2798. We are tying the electric and bead head bugger.

March 27 Starting date for our spring 5th grade fly fishing course. It will begin at 3:00pm at Northern Elementary. We will need volunteers throughout the spring! Call Bob Wagner if you can help.

March 31 Our spring membership meeting at Cattails restaurant will be held at 5:30pm. The highlight of the event will be a Coldwater Fisheries Specialist Panel from Park Rapids, Walker, Bemidji, and Red Lake covering 27 different lakes and rivers.

Bob Wagner

Mid- Minnesota Chapter

The Mid-Minnesota chapter has big plans afoot for the 2015 season and is working hard to protect and enhance local trout streams. Check out the article on page 10 to see some photos of Little Rock Creek and get the details.

Micah Barrett

Twin Cities Chapter

The Twin Cities Chapter had a busy summer of work with volunteer work on Hay Creek, Eagle Creek and Vermillion River. Two dozen volunteers spent a half day in early May cutting and hauling invasive buckthorn and box elder trees along the Vermillion River. They began what will likely be a multiyear effort to remove invasive tree species to allow deep rooted grasses to narrow and deepen the river over time. Our October members' meeting was held on the Vermillion River. Close to thirty people came out to clear another tangled mess of invasive trees from the river corridor



THE FINAL STEPS OF RESEEDING THE GARVIN BROOK PROJECT AREA AFTER A LONG SUMMER OF WORK NEAR WINONA, MN

and then enjoyed lunch and comradery on this sunny fall day. We are planning one or more additional half day events this winter, so please check the TCTU and MNTU websites regularly for updates.

Work on Hay Creek above the town of Hay Creek wrapped up in June 2014. In July work shifted downstream of town to a reach suffering from an overly wide stream channel filled with sand. The project is narrowing the low flow channel to a proper width to enable the natural flushing of sand, and re-exposing gravel and gobble substrates and stable holes with overhead woody cover. Volunteers had a fun morning building wood cover structures, before afternoon fishing. A work day in September was combined with a chapter pick nick and fishing outing. We received lots of appreciative praise from many local residents who passed by. Folks were thrilled with the transformation and looking forward to its completion next spring.

In September TCTU volunteers spent a couple days helped the DNR survey trout populations in Eagle Creek in Savage, MN and the Vermillion River near Farmington, MN. The surveys are part of an ongoing effort to collect data to assess the benefits of recently completed and planned habitat projects.

Upcoming TCTU chapter meetings will be held on January 27th and February 24th from 6:30 to 8:00 PM at the Wood Lake Nature Center in Richfield. Please check the TCTU website at www.twincitiestu.org for details.

Dan Callahan

Win-Cres Chapter

The Win-Cres Chapter of Trout Unlimited had a busy work schedule this spring and summer. We had a total of seven work days on three streams; Pickwick Creek, Hemingway Creek and Garvin Brook. On Hemingway and Pickwick, we cleared brush and fallen logs out of the creek bed. We worked on Pickwick



BEFORE (ABOVE) AND AFTER (BELOW) ON THE GARVIN BROOK PROJECT AREA



with Charlie McNally, who displayed his expertise operating an excavator. On Garvin Brook we worked with the Lanesboro DNR crew. They operated the heavy equipment. We helped rake, seed and remove trees. We also put in two snake hibernation structures. Neal Mundahl and a few of his Winona State students also joined us on Garvin Brook. Good progress was made on Phase I of our habitat restoration project. Several Win-Cres members have reported catching fish in the improved portion of the stream

We have an exciting line up for fall speakers. Rich Enochs from the National Trout Center in Preston, MN spoke to a small gathering at Stumpy's in Rushford. Duke Welter spoke to our general membership meeting on October 22. George Howe, who helped direct and produce the *Mysteries of the Driftless Area*, is speaking and showing his film at our wild game feed Nov. 19. The film has been nominated for an Emmy in the documentary category.

We also held our fourth Veteran's Appreciation Day in Lanesboro on August 9. Fly casting, fly tying and rod building were demonstrated. The Hiawatha TU Chapter helped us out. Board member Mike Trok put a lot of energy organizing this event and seeking donations over the past four years. We hope to continue appreciating our veterans in the years to come.

We are looking forward to Winona Senior High School and Rushford High School implementing Trout in the Classroom this next year or next fall.

Joe Lepley

Waybinahbe Chapter

Our Matuska's Creek habitat project was complete in late summer. The DNR's Jeff Tilma supervised construction which entailed restoring the stream bed severely damaged by a 2012 flood. An undersized culvert increased stream velocities, washing away banks and causing the stream bed to down cut approximately 2 ft. The culvert was left perched, creating a barrier to trout movement. The project restored the stream channel to a natural condition and installed a larger diameter culvert to prevent future erosion and ensure fish passage. Improved fish passage will improve the wild brook trout population in Matuska's Creek and Smith Creek.

The chapter continues to search for a few individuals to get things rolling again.

Rod Prusi

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A SOUTHEAST MN TROUT STREAM SPARKLES IN THE AUTUMN LIGHT. MAKE PLANS TO GET OUT AND FISH IN MINNESOTA'S NEW YEAR-ROUND TROUT SEASON. FIND MORE INFORMATION AT WWW.DNR.STATE.MN.US

REELING IT IN

The Dreaming Time of Year

By Sam Troutt

In the world of fishing, there are often things that surprise us. A large trout rising in an unexpected location, a mayfly hatch when you didn't predict it, maybe a fish on the last cast of the day. These pleasant surprises are what become the focus of our dreams this time of the year. As the noontime sun sags lower on the horizon each day, we dream of warm breezes, green grass and the dimpling rises of trout at dusk. We plan adventures in our heads and read books of New Zealand, British Columbia and Montana. What we at Trout Unlimited need to remember is that our goals are to make these pleasant surprises commonplace for anglers in our area. Finding a rising pod of trout at one time was a regular occurrence for anglers in the Twin Cities metro area on streams like Nine Mile Creek in Bloomington or Purgatory Creek in Eden Prairie. Now those streams funnel stormwater swiftly down into the Minnesota River valley. Finding a trout in one of them would truly be a pleasant surprise, however unlikely. We still have waters locally well worth protecting, improving, and making worth dreaming about. I had the opportunity to hear a story the other day about one of them, and I can only hope to have it happen to me some day.

time back. They pulled over at a culvert where a road crossed a tributary and decided to fish it. Traditional anglers, they had opted for worms on light spinning rods to coax the big trout to bite. They each took a station on either end of the culvert, prepared their bait and cast in to the dark recesses of the middle of the road. Letting their line and bait settle to the bottom, the first one felt a slight tug. Setting the hook hard, he immediately hollered "fish on" to his compatriot on the other side of the road. "I've got one too!" came the reply. "And it's a big one!" The first one hollered back "So is mine!" And the fight was on. Anglers often relish getting a "double" or catching two fish at once, especially when they are large, quality fish. After a short time, however, it became obvious that the anglers in this case were somehow connected to the same fish! The first angler paid out some slack in his line and after a long tussle the first angler reeled in a hefty 22-inch brown trout that had not one but two hooks in its mouth! It seems the hungry brown trout had eaten both baits almost as soon as they had hit the water. After some discussion, the anglers snapped a quick photo and slid the big trout back into the water. It was only later that they learned that regulations required they release their trout.

A pair of anglers took a drive out into the lingering vestiges of rural Dakota County just a couple of years ago. They had heard rumors of large, even giant brown trout in the Vermillion River watershed. One of them had even caught a few some

Check out some of the photos of big Vermillion brown trout in this issue and start dreaming of your own local trout adventure



LOOKING FOR MORE BROWN TROUT? LOOK TO OUR NEXT ISSUE FOR A PROFILE OF ANOTHER TWIN CITIES METRO STREAM WHERE THIS BIG ONE SWIMS!

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