

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA

The Official Publication of Minnesota Trout Unlimited - June 2015

MNTU Photo Contest Winners!
Vermillion River Update
MNTU Photo Contest Winners
Book Review - Sea Winter Salmon
Summer Volunteer Opportunities!
And Lots More!

**Brook Trout Biology
In Southeast Minnesota**

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P.O. Box 845
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ROCHESTER, MN

ON THE COVER

A pasture in the habitat improvement section of Pickwick Creek (Trout Brook) in Winona County at first light. Photo by Bruce Adelsman, MNTU 2015 Photo Contest Winner.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Brook Trout Biology
- Summer Volunteer Opportunities
- Vermillion River Update
- North Shore Steelhead
- New Subscription Opportunity
- And much more!

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MINNESOTA COUNCIL UPDATE

Time to Fish

By JP Little, Minnesota Council Chair

Welcome to the 2015 summer Minnesota Trout Unlimited statewide newsletter. Summer has broken out all over the great state of Minnesota, and 'tis the season to enjoy our many, many miles of trout streams. From Southeast to Central to the North Shore, we have countless opportunities to chase trout and wild steelhead.

I had the distinct pleasure of fishing with our esteemed editor and fishing guide Carl Haensel this May and it was a magic day on the Stewart River, north of Duluth. The steelhead were on the move and scattered throughout the river. Big males were tussling with each other. Pairs of steelhead were building redds

and spawning and generally ignoring us humans. A few steelhead even decided that our flies were worth taking – 'twas a glorious day.

I would like to welcome Dean Campbell as the incoming President of the Twin Cities chapter, and thank Mark Johnson for his service to the Twin Cities and (ongoing) participation on the State Council.

Tight Lines!



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FIRES BURN ALONG HAY CREEK AS PRAIRIE IS MAINTAINED AND WOODY VEGETATION IS KEPT AT BAY. WANT TO GET INVOLVED? LOOK FOR VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED WITH TCTU AND OTHER CHAPTERS TO HELP OUT IN STREAM RESTORATION PROJECTS THIS SUMMER ON PAGES 10 AND 11.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Your Voice Was Heard – Anti-Trout Provisions Removed or Changed!

By John Lenczewski, MNTU Executive Director

We join TU for many reasons; all sprung from our passion for trout fishing and the places trout inhabit. While we all want to focus on the fishing, we also know there are times we need to dip a finger (or pen) into the troubling waters of politics in order to preserve the local fisheries we cherish. This spring was one such time. I want to thank to all of you who responded to one of MNTU's recent action alerts by e mailing or calling your elected representatives. Your simple actions succeeded in preventing three anti-trout provisions from becoming bad law.

The provision restricting DNR's ability to designate new trout streams and apparently barring improved trout waters from being designated was removed from the final bill.

The provision gutting groundwater sustainability law and forcing DNR to permit every new pumping request until aquifers are so severely depleted that summer base flows in trout streams are

reduced by 20% was replaced with a study of the issue.

The exemption of counties and townships from restrictions on working in trout waters at destructive times of year and from using DNR input regarding proper culvert sizing and placement was effectively limited to streams and rivers other than designated trout streams. Impacts to trout and steelhead waters from poorly planned culvert work, including impacts on spawning migrations, summer movement to cold water refuges, egg development, habitat, etc., are not exempted.

Collectively our calls and e mails, along with the help which MNTU enlisted from our partners, succeeded in preventing the destruction of countless streams and wild fisheries around the state. You probably did not join TU just for "fun" of our action alerts, but your timely response to them is what keeps our trout and trout streams around to enjoy. Thank you for tolerance and swift action.



Volunteers Needed

We need many volunteers to help out with projects around the state this summer. Check out the opportunities to get involved in the chapter news section on page 10. In particular, there are some great chances to get "Up North" this summer and spend time helping out on the Blackhoof River and on streams up and down the North Shore.

See you on the water!



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A BIG STRAIGHT RIVER BROWN TROUT GETS READY TO SWIM AWAY AFTER BEING CAUGHT DURING THE HEX HATCH. HONORABLE MENTION 2015 CONTEST PHOTO BY STEVE YOUNG. LOOK FOR MORE CONTEST PHOTOS ON PAGE 8.

EDITOR'S ANGLE

Starting a Fishing Journal

By Carl Haensel, Editor

Rivers are flowing, fish are biting, and I hope that this edition of our state publication finds you preparing to head outside and explore the trout waters of Minnesota. On your way, remember to take plenty of pictures, make some memories, and maybe just start a fishing journal. As Minnesota Trout Unlimited works to protect, conserve and enhance our trout waters, it is you the anglers that hold the knowledge of the state of many of our trout waters, and journals are some the best records you can keep.

To be perfectly honest, I've had a mixed record in my journal keeping. I know friends of mine that can go back 20 years to the day and tell you just how Hay Creek was fishing on May 20th, 1995.

While I can't do that, my records highlight the good days, the really bad days and some of the strange experiences that I've had. Maybe it was the day a bull charged me 5 times in a row in a cow pasture, or the day I hooked the biggest brown trout I've ever seen. Regardless, I've written it some of it down in hopes I might dig back in my notes and gain some small amount of wisdom - or laugh at my earlier antics.

There is the also the potential of a broader use in the future. I hope that MNTU may soon call on those of you who've taken some notes to share with us and lead to more accurate records of what trout were present in what streams and when. Some of this this data could help us better advocate for our less well know



and well surveyed waters. For the moment, head fishing, watch out for cows and take notes!

BROOK TROUT

History, Natural History and the Genetics of Minnesota's Native Trout in SE MN

Neal Mundahl

It's hanging above the desk in my family room, a painting of two brook trout spawning in a boulder-strewn stream in Whitewater State Park. The picture was featured on the Minnesota State Parks annual vehicle permit many years back. I catch myself staring at it when I am supposed to be working on something else, daydreaming about streams and trout and good days outside.

I daydream about taking my kids fishing for brook trout, using worms and a bobber to catch colorful fish from that deep pool next to the cow pasture on East Burns Valley Creek. Or casting something fuzzy and fake into that rocky channel where East Beaver Creek gushes out of the hillside, hopeful that what we are offering is just as tempting as what the fish are catching as they slurp at the water's surface. Or sitting on a favorite trailside bench, having a snack while watching plump brookies finning lazily through the gin-clear water of Trout Run.

Those memories are still strong after 20 years. But had we visited those streams 10 or 20 years earlier, those fish and those good memories likely would be missing.

History

Fishing for brook trout in the Driftless Area of southeastern Minnesota apparently was remarkable during the mid-1800s, with reports of anglers harvesting dozens of fish per day. However, trout populations were decimated by the late-1800s, the result of extreme overharvest and stream habitat destruction stemming from intensive agriculture and log-



AN ADULT BROOK TROUT FROM COOLRIDGE CREEK IN WINONA COUNTY, SUMMER 2011. BROOK TROUT IN THIS AND SEVERAL OTHER STREAMS IN THE SAME WATERSHED REPRESENT THE DRIFTLESS AREA, OR REMNANT, GENETIC STRAIN.

ging. Native brook trout were presumed to have disappeared from the region, replaced by stocked, fishable populations of brown trout and rainbow trout

that were more tolerant of the degraded stream conditions.

Improved conservation practices since the 1940s resulted in better stream conditions, allowing brown trout populations in some streams to become self-sustaining. Stream habitat improvement projects accelerated recovery of fish populations in many streams, but brook trout remained very rare into the 1970s, despite both public and private stocking efforts.



AN ADULT MALE BROOK TROUT COLLECTED DURING A PRE-SPAWNING SURVEY OF SNAKE CREEK, WABASHA COUNTY, OCTOBER 2014. BROOK TROUT IN SNAKE CREEK REPRESENT THE MINNESOTA WILD GENETIC STRAIN.

During the 1980s, efforts were expanded to stock brook trout throughout southeastern Minnesota. Domesticated strains of hatchery-raised brook trout were brought to Minnesota hatcheries from several eastern states, including Maine,

New Hampshire, New York, West Virginia, and Massachusetts. After rearing and widespread, successful stocking of these various strains, brook trout again inhabited over half of the region's trout streams by the mid-1990s, with many populations reproducing naturally.

Since 1995, all reintroduction and supplemental stockings of brook trout in southeastern Minnesota have used a locally developed strain, Minnesota Wild (not to be confused with a later-arriving, professional hockey team). This strain began by mating fish collected from two, historically successful populations in Coolridge Creek (Winona County) and Spring Brook (Rice County). Minnesota Wild brook trout are now present in dozens of streams, supporting new and self-sustaining fisheries.

Brook trout can be aggressive feeders, eating whatever aquatic or terrestrial invertebrates are available. Because of this feeding behavior, they are easier to catch than other trout, but this makes them very vulnerable to overfishing.

Brook trout often are found only in the upper reaches of many streams. They are more tolerant than brown trout of these colder, spring-fed reaches, while also being weaker competitors against brown trout in warmer, downstream sections. So while both species can occur together in the same stream reach, brook trout appear to grow faster and achieve higher densities when brown trout are lacking.

Recent Happenings

A recent survey by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) fisheries biologists from Lake City and Lanesboro, led by John Hoxmeier and Dr. Doug Dieterman, found that brook trout inhabited 119 streams in southeastern Minnesota. These streams represented 68% of all those surveyed, a phenomenal change from the 1970s when only a meager 3% of streams had brookies. Brook trout were found in all major watersheds, especially the eastern half of the Root River drainage. In addition, brook trout populations were considered "abundant" (>250 fish/mile) in 34% of the streams that they inhabited. The MN DNR and University of Minnesota researchers, led by Dr. Loren Miller, also examined the genetics of many of the brook trout populations that they surveyed. As expected, the fish in many streams carried the genetic fingerprints of their hatchery-reared ancestors,

Natural History

Brook trout in southeastern Minnesota spawn during October and early November, often in stream sections with groundwater upwelling. Their spawning period overlaps with that of brown trout, so when they inhabit the same stream, hybrid "tiger trout" can occur. These hybrids can range from strangely marked to wildly colorful, but they typically are so rare that many anglers will never encounter one.

In many Driftless Area streams, brook trout grow slowly and seldom get large. By their first fall, brookies are 3 to 5 inches long, adding 3 to 4 inches in their 2nd year and 2 to 3 inches in their 3rd. A 12-inch brook trout is rare; I encountered only three such fish last fall, all in Trout Valley Creek, during an electrofishing survey of eight brook trout streams just prior to spawning season.

whether those were from the eastern U.S. or the Minnesota Wild strain. But about half of the populations had genetics that matched none of the known hatchery strains. Could these populations represent the ultimate survivors, the descendants of brook trout that we assumed were eliminated by the actions of our predecessors more than a century ago?

The genetics research found that these so-called remnant brook trout populations, also called Driftless Area Brook Trout (DABT), were clustered mostly in three watersheds: Zumbro River, Rush/Pine Creeks (Root River drainage), and South Fork Root River. Within the Zumbro drainage, DABT are common to abundant in Cold Spring Brook, Hammond Creek, Long Creek, Mazeppa Creek, and Middle Creek. DABT waters in the Rush/Pine watershed include Borson Spring, Coolridge Creek, Ferguson Creek, Hemmingway Creek, and Schueler Creek. DABT also are abundant in many streams of the South Fork Root River drainage, such as Maple Creek, Nepstad Creek, Swede Bottom Creek, and Vesta Creek.

Genetics patterns within each of these clusters, such as the degrees of related-

ness between closest and most distant populations, follow expectations based on long-term (100+ years) evolution, not shorter-term differences that may have developed after stocking. Interestingly, DABT populations within the South Fork Root cluster are both geographically and genetically closest to a population of brook trout that is assumed to be Iowa's last remnant population.

The genetics of several DABT populations cluster with streams not within their geographic areas, but these can be explained by documented translocations of fish among streams. For example, Hemmingway Creek fish (Rush/Pine region) were translocated to East Indian Creek, East Burns Valley Creek, and Swede Bottom Creek (all drainages outside of Rush/Pine) during the 1970s. If these many DABT populations truly are the ancestors of the region's indigenous brook trout, their distinctive genetics may be extremely well adapted for their environments. Various studies have predicted that brook trout populations in Wisconsin and northeastern Minnesota may suffer major losses in the face of continuing climate changes. However, the groundwater-based streams of Minnesota's Driftless Area, carrying the unique genetics of remnant brook trout,



A YOUNG OF YEAR "TIGER TROUT" FROM UPPER GARVIN BROOK IN WINONA COUNTY, SEPTEMBER 2014. THIS BROOK TROUT X BROWN TROUT HYBRID DISPLAYS THE ODD COLORATION PATTERN OF SPOTS AND STRIPES USUALLY FOUND ON THESE HYBRIDS. NO TWO HYBRIDS EXHIBIT THE SAME COLOR PATTERN.

may provide a refugium for the species not available elsewhere. In the future, will it be important to give these remnant populations special status to protect their distinctive features?

For now, I continue to daydream about brook trout here in southeastern Min-

nesota. And with the knowledge that some of these fish may be the survivors of remnant populations that somehow withstood the assaults of settlement on their numbers and habitats over a century ago, the daydreams take on a whole new dimension.

VERMILLION RIVER UPDATE

South Branch of the Vermillion River

By MN DNR Fisheries Staff

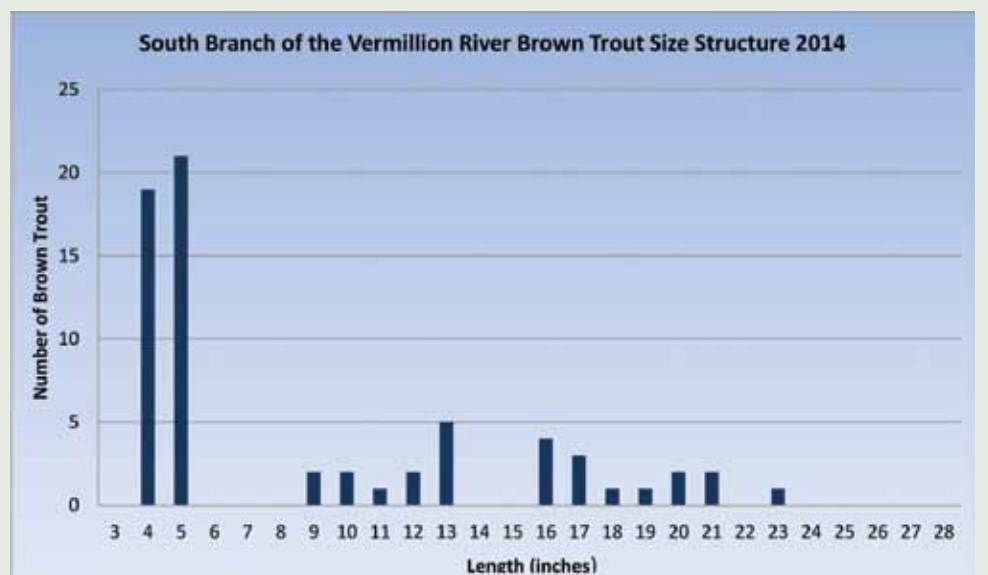
Fish community sampling was performed by Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MN DNR) and Twin City Trout Unlimited personnel at the South Branch of the Vermillion River Aquatic Management Area (AMA) during the fall of 2014. The goal was to collect data for Brown Trout and other fish species on the South Branch of the Vermillion River in Dakota County. A total of 9 different fish species were collected in 2014. White Sucker was the most common species sampled representing about half the catch. Brown Trout were the second most common captured species. Other species captured included Northern Pike, Largemouth Bass, Fathead Minnow, Black Crappie, Bluegill and Green Sunfish, Johnny Darter, Central Mudminnow and Iowa Darter. Young-of-year Brown Trout made up approximately 60% of total catch of trout. The abundance of Brown Trout estimated after combining the sample was 284 fish per mile. Brown Trout over 16 inches made up 20% of the catch with the largest trout measuring 22.6 inches in length.



A 5-LB, 23-INCH WILD BROWN TROUT CAPTURED IN THE ELECTROFISHING ASSESSMENT IN THE FALL OF 2014.



TCTU CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS CAME OUT IN FORCE ON SATURDAY APRIL 11TH TO WORK ON INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL ON THE SOUTH BRANCH, THANKS TO ALL FOR YOUR HARD WORK AND EFFORT.



MNTU PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

Last season we launched a new photo contest for our MNTU Newsletter. It was a great success and has grown by leaps and bounds this season. Thanks to the large number of contestants that sent a wide variety of photos from around the state. A selection of winning photos are presented on this page. If your photo was not used here, keep an eye for it in future newsletters or on the web site or our Facebook Page.

Rules from the 2015 Contest:

- Photos must be shot in Minnesota
- Photos should fall into a category:
Minnesota Waters
Trout, Salmon & Steelhead
Family Fishing
- Photos must include a trout, salmon or steelhead, **OR** a water body that they inhabit.
- Photos were to be submitted by May

15th, 2015. Top entries in each category 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: carlhaensel@hotmail.com.

There is an entry limit of three photos per individual. Please include the name of the photographer and the location the photo was taken in the submission.

- Submission of photos gives MNTU the right to publish photos in the MNTU newsletter, and in online media.

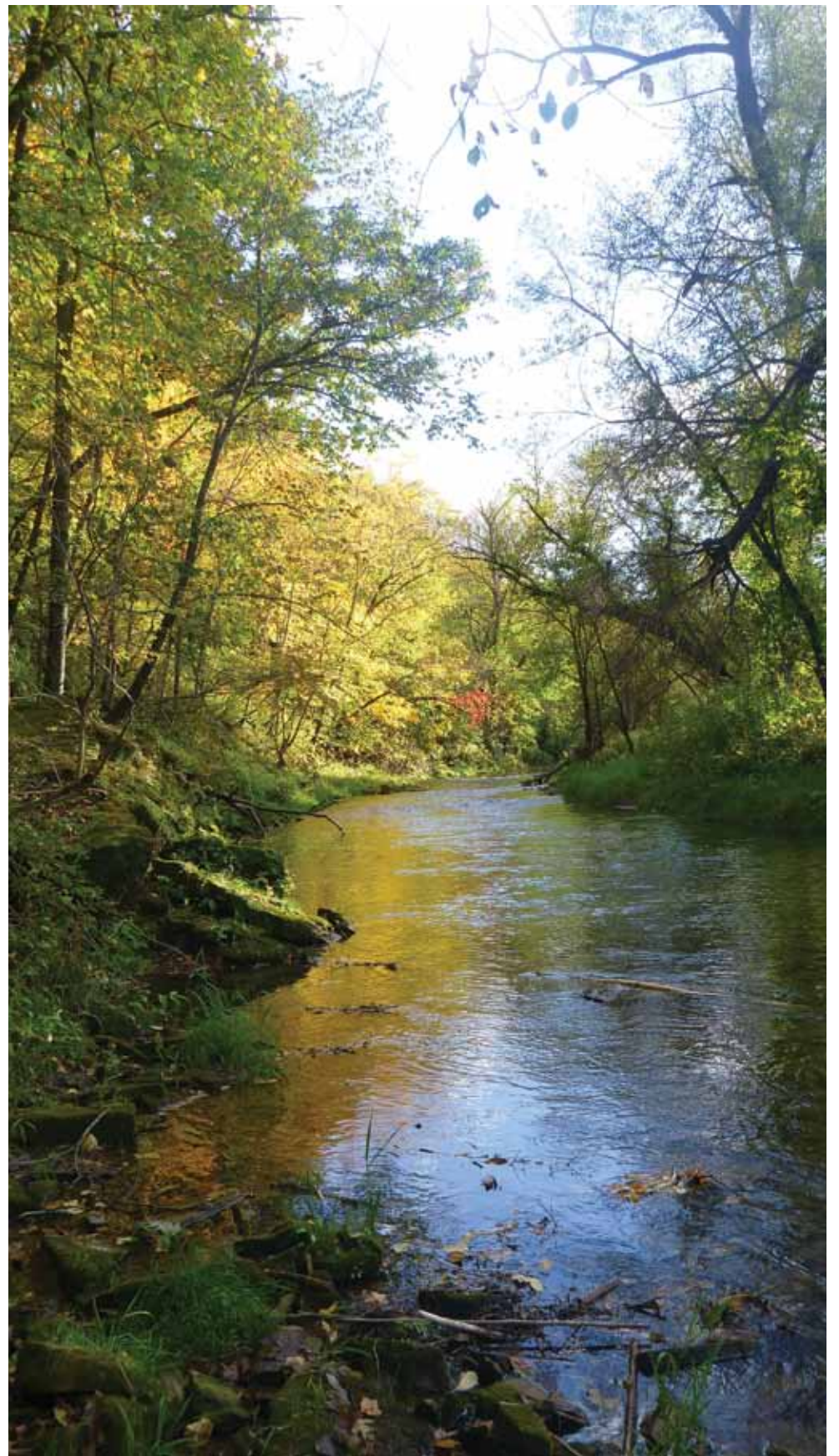
Prizes

The winner in each category are receiving a box of a dozen flies ready to catch trout this season. The overall winner will receive a wooden handled trout net.

Plan to take lots of photos when you're out fishing this year for next season!



FIRST PLACE - TROUT, SALMON & STEELHEAD
RAINBOW TROUT
NORTH BRANCH WHITEWATER RIVER, WABASHA COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY JESS TORMANEN



SECOND PLACE - MINNESOTA WATERS
FANFARE OF FALL
FILLMORE COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY BRIAN SCHUMACHER



FIRST PLACE - FAMILY FISHING
SOUTH BRANCH ROOT RIVER, FILLMORE COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY STEVE YOUNG

FIRST PLACE & OVERALL WINNER
MINNESOTA WATERS
COVER PHOTO - THIS ISSUE
PICKWICK CREEK, WINONA COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY BRUCE ADELSMAN



HONORABLE MENTION - MINNESOTA WATERS
SOUTH BRANCH ROOT RIVER, FILLMORE COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY BRUCE ADELSMAN



SECOND PLACE - TROUT, SALMON & STEELHEAD

BROWN TROUT

CANFIELD CREEK, FILLMORE COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY STAN NICHOL



HONORABLE MENTION - TROUT, SALMON & STEELHEAD

BEAUTIFUL FALL BROOKIE

TROUT BROOK, DAKOTA COUNTY, MN
PHOTO BY TOBY HALLEY

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NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD

Waves of Gratitude

By Bob Wagner

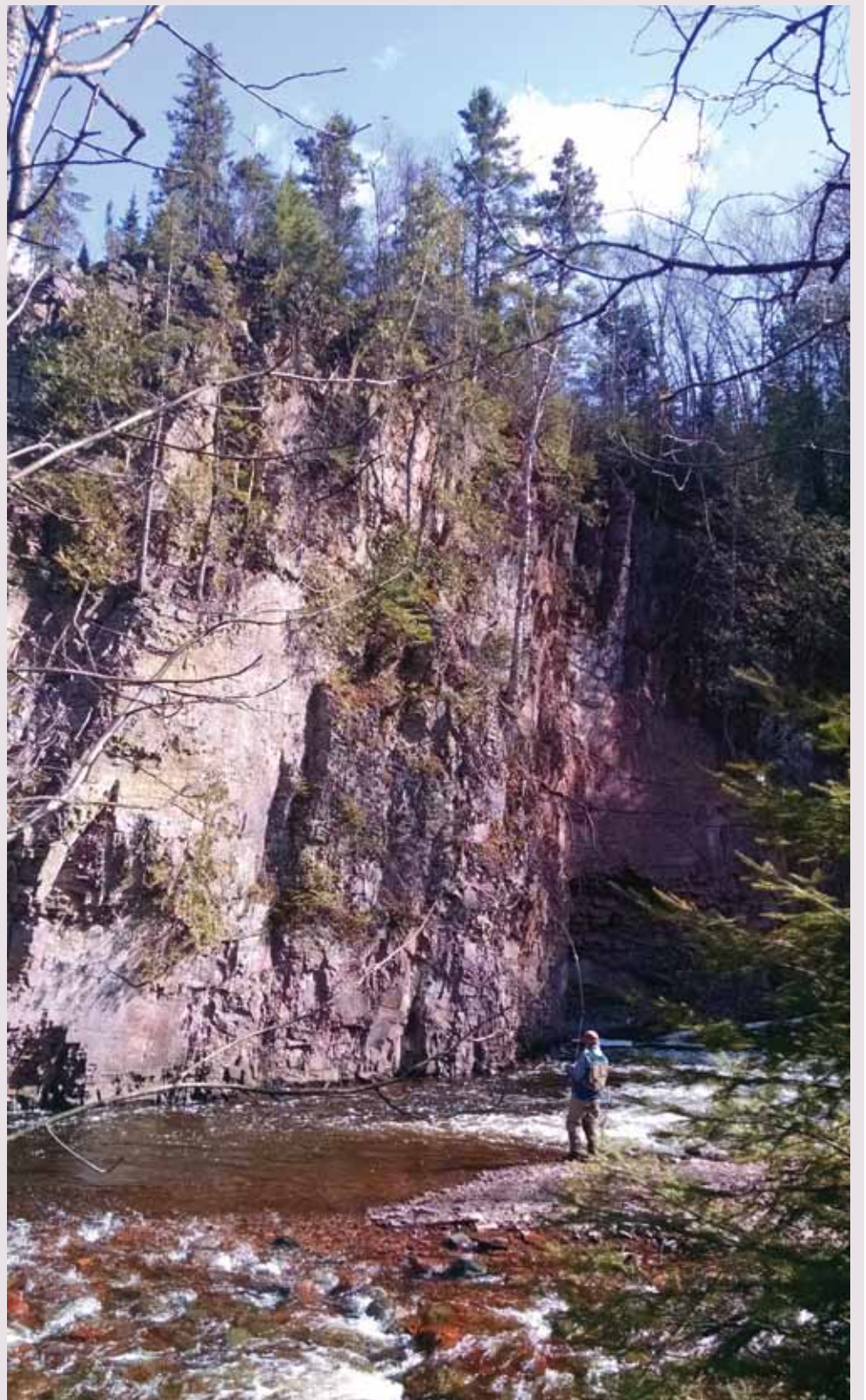
When you're immersed in the North Shore's spectacular scenery, wading in wild rushing rivers, feeling the majesty of Lake Superior and the pull of large chrome rainbows; we have to say thank you. When every year for fifteen in a row you get to dance with and briefly touch wild steelhead, I have to say thank you. When you learn it takes multiple agencies, associations, volunteers and private businesses to provide the environment that keeps this dance going; we have to say thank you. When you meet dozens of dedicated, helpful anglers who all play a significant role in dancing with chrome the following is a way I hope will say thank you.

My addiction (and it's a positive one) started fifteen years ago at Gander Mountain in Duluth where three buddies and I getting ready for our first steelhead trip, met Phil. We, four Bemidji guys, had no clue as to what, when or where to catch steelhead. To our great fortune, Phil, a veteran old time North Shore steelheader, decided to take us under his wing and share his knowledge, skill and experience. We tried to hire Phil but he would not accept any money. Phil shared his love, skill and experience of North Shore

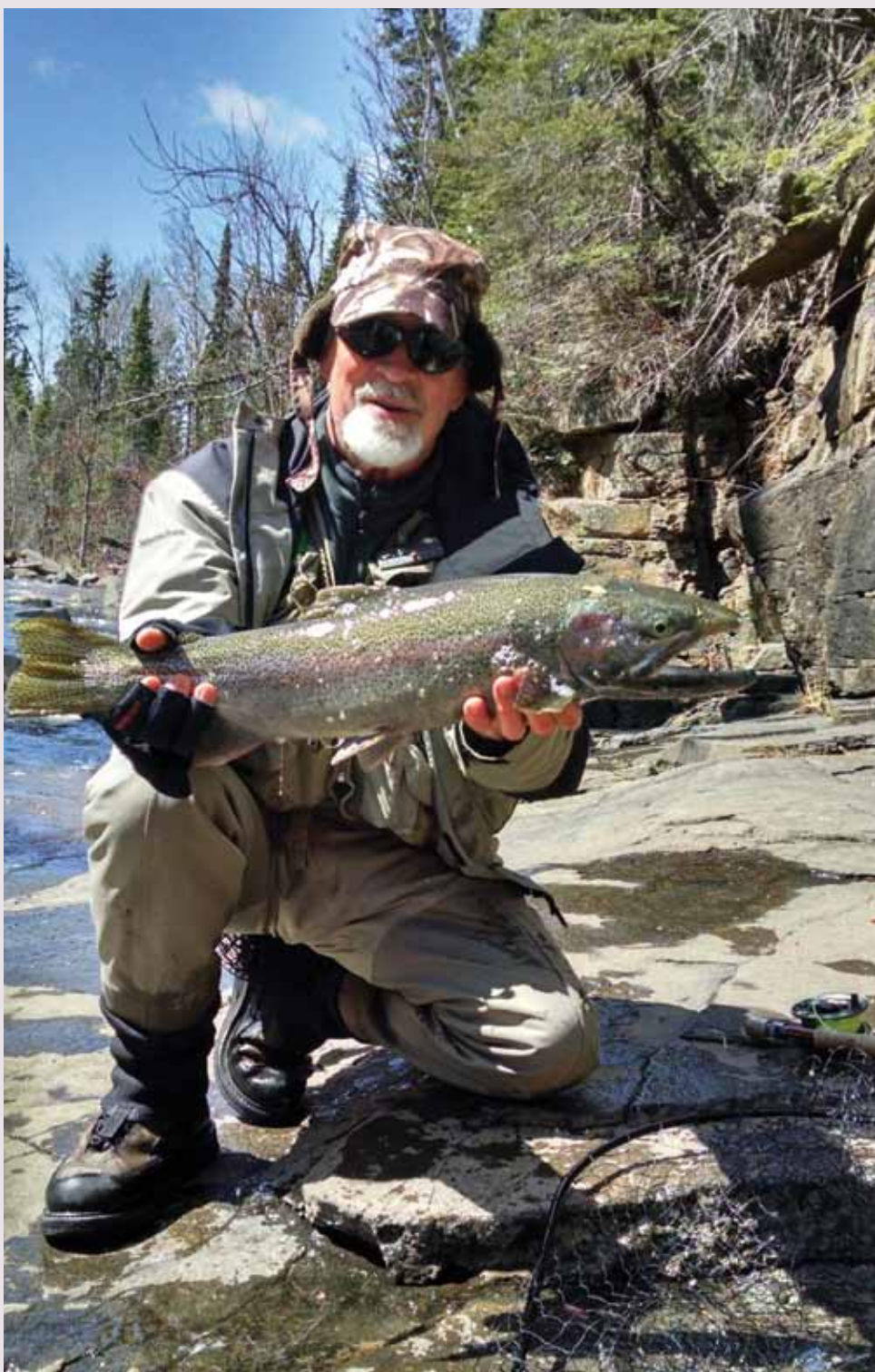
steelheading for all the right reasons. We didn't know it at the time but his sharing was greatly frowned upon by the "North Shore Steelhead Cult". This cult was born out of the great runs of thousands of steelhead in the late 60's and early 70's. In Phil's own words, "We took great numbers of fish for granted." When fish numbers started declining the seemingly natural "cult of secrets" became a safeguard to protect the fish. A rather selfish and short sighted safeguard at best. However, we're probably all guilty of keeping secrets instead of mentoring advocates.

Just as the grand rods of yesterday, the black hornets, brown Fenwicks and yellow lamiglass rods, have been replaced with high modulus graphite – a cult of secrets has been replaced with a realization. This is that sharing the excitement, fun and knowledge in catching steelhead will build advocates who, in turn, will help promote greater numbers of fish by conservation and restoration practices. For Phil and some of his friends like Tim Carroll, sharing techniques and their love of this great sport has built a life long appreciation in myself and others for steelhead. I say thank you.

It's always dangerous to name people



THE AUTHOR'S WIFE VAL, HOOKED UP ON A NORTH SHORE RIVER



THE AUTHOR WITH A HEALTHY WILD NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD

and organizations and I will undoubtedly miss some. I apologize in advance. Ernie Schwibert's book *The Death of a River Keeper* puts a unique perspective on the commitment and importance of such rare individuals. If you want to see and experience several successful restoration projects of different scales and hydrology visit the River Keeper himself, Carl Haensel. We steelheaders, and the fish themselves, are fortunate to have such an individual on the North Shore living in the Sucker River watershed.

North Shore anglers of all styles, ages, and pursuits are so fortunate to have two great non-profit organizations, Trout Unlimited and The Lake Superior Steelhead Association. Speaking of Trout Unlimited and dedicated individuals who work hard to protect and conserve this sport of cold water fisheries, my wife Val and I stumbled across just such an individual this spring on the Stewart River. There he was bent in posture, fly rod extended, totally immersed in the delicate swing of a soft hackle fly. Within fifteen minutes of smiles and hand shakes John Lenczewski, TU executive director, was hooking and landing a 29 1/2 chrome hen (see photo). Minnesota Trout Unlimited is

filled with such individuals, such as JP Little (state council chair) all the way through its seven chapters. The Lake Superior Steelhead Association, Kevin and Mary Bovee, Scott Thorpe, Maria Manion, Gary Siverson, Paul Sandstrom and many many more all play a significant tune in the dance with chrome especially on the historic Knife River.

Steelhead color, iridescent, vibrant, a living breathing kaleidoscope of silver, chrome, red, and purple can show every hue alive in your net. Steelhead are one of nature's most beautiful and inspiring creations. We all need and benefit from beauty and its aesthetic therapy in our lives. Whether you fish for steelhead or simply appreciate the beauty of the rivers they swim in, there's a way to support and protect both fish and rivers. Both Trout Unlimited and the Lake Superior Steelhead Association are dedicated and working hard at conserving and protecting the fish, plus restoring the rivers they live in. If you are not a member, join Trout Unlimited and/or Lake Superior Steelhead Association. It is a way to stay connected and show gratitude towards this great resource.

We also owe a great deal of thanks towards the private business side of steelhead; the fly shops, outfitters, guide services and guides. I, like so many other fishermen, thought I would never hire a guide. Long story short I did and discovered it was the best investment I ever made. You will learn more about fish and fishing techniques that will increase your own skill and enjoyment. A good guide models gratitude and builds advocates that in turn protect and support this sport we love and appreciate.

There's an old saying that, "It takes a village to raise a child". My time chasing chrome, being involved in TU, LSSA, assisting the DNR and patronizing private businesses has shown me that "It takes an entire shoreline and its people to raise a steelhead." The steelhead is a living, swimming icon of the North Shore and its rugged majestic beauty. The fish, the shore, and all the people that keep them alive and well deserve our deepest gratitude.

Thank you.



MNTU EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR JOHN LENCZEWSKI MEASURING A LARGE NORTH SHORE STEELHEAD BEFORE RELEASE.

SEA WINTER SALMON Book Review

By John Hunt

Sometimes the paths we follow in life converge in unexpected ways. Such was my experience about 10 years ago when I came upon a reference to St. Paul railroad magnate James J. Hill in a report documenting the history of Montana mining in the vicinity of one of my projects at work. One thing led to another, and soon thereafter I had published an account of the Baptism River Fishing Club (founded by the Empire Builder and several of his business associates) in Minnesota History magazine.

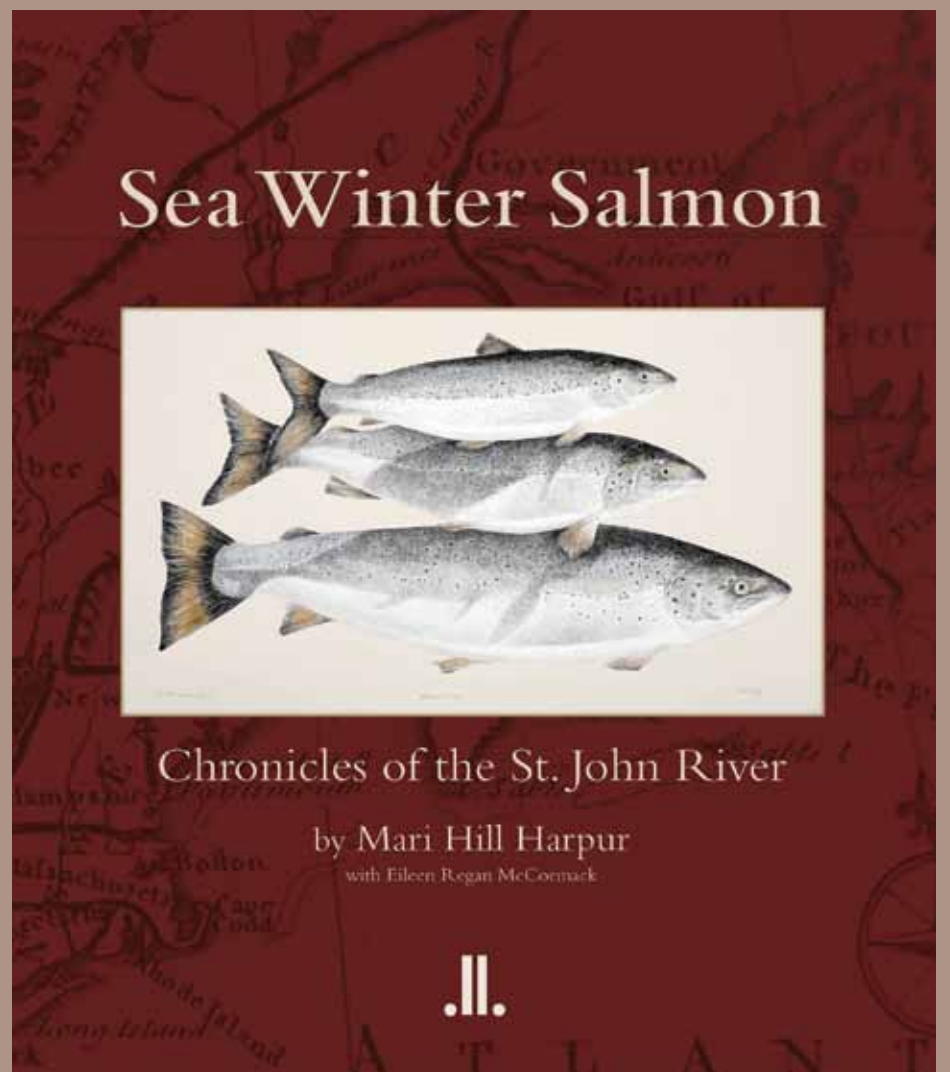
Fast forward to 2015. I recently received an invitation to attend a publicity event here in the Twin Cities for a new book entitled, "Sea Winter Salmon – Chronicles of the St. John River". The book's primary author, Mari Hill Harpur, is the great-granddaughter of James J. Hill. In photographs and prose, Ms. Harpur's book presents the story of James J. Hill's efforts to establish an Atlantic salmon fishing camp in the wilds of Quebec, as well as her family's efforts to preserve the camp and the populations of *Salmo salar* that migrate each year up the river that flows past its front door. In the author's own words, "This is a story of that river and some of the fish and people that have been touched by its magic."

Sea Winter Salmon draws from Hill family records now on file at the Minnesota Historical Society and Ms. Harpur's own experiences growing up visiting the camp and fishing for salmon in the footsteps of her famous

great-grandfather. It includes numerous photographs (both historical and contemporary), and gives credit not only to James J. Hill and his descendants, but also to the multiple generations of families (both native and immigrant) that have served as caretakers and guides at the camp in the last 100 years.

The origin of the camp is not unlike that of other fishing camps established by the affluent in the last decades of the 19th century. Between 1897 and 1901, Hill focused on identifying and securing property on a suitable salmon river for the purposes of building a fishing camp. Ultimately, the St. John River was selected. In one 10-day stretch in July 1900, Hill's group caught 236 salmon totaling just over 3,100 lbs. By 1901, the camp house was constructed and the fishing could begin in earnest. Fishing remained good for a number of years, with Louis W. Hill, Sr. catching the largest recorded fish of 36.5 lb in 1906.

The elder Hill died in 1916, but the Hill family's ownership and use of the property has not waned. If anything, the succeeding generations have treasured this place as a bridge that ties them together and connects them with their past. In the closing sections of the book, the author's passion for conservation is on display. Discussion of the life history of salmon spawned in Quebec waters, the impacts of netting and poaching, and other related topics broadens the book's appeal for me.



Finally, despite the fact that most of us cannot identify with the lifestyle of one of Minnesota's most famous families, all of us can recognize and appreciate memories that come from time well spent with friends and loved ones in natural settings that recharge our spirits.

Editor's Note: Find a link to the great story that the author mentioned regarding the Baptism River Fishing Club on the MNTU web site. Look in the Lake Superior tributary section at:

www.mntu.org/conservation/



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Gitche Gumee Chapter

Volunteers Needed for July & August Work on Blackhoof River

We need lots of volunteers this summer helping to notch or remove logjams on the Blackhoof River near Barnum, MN. We are currently scheduling Saturday work dates between July 7 and August 30 and need volunteers to let us know which dates work best. The Blackhoof is the best coldwater stream in the Nemadji basin and closest steelhead river to the Twin Cities. Please send an e mail or leave a voicemail expressing your interest in helping one Saturday this summer. We will follow up with you to check which dates might work for you and get you on a project specific email list. Send e mails to jlenczewski@comcast.net or leave a message at 612-670-1629. See our March 2015 newsletter for a description of the project.

North Shore Stream Temperature Study Requires Volunteers This Summer

A research project to identify crucial groundwater areas in our best North Shore rivers, which MNTU helped UMD craft, was funded by a Legislative appropriation this month. Research begins in mid July and many volunteers are needed this summer. Pairs of volunteers are needed to walk reaches of the top 15 watersheds on the North Shore. You will carry sophisticated temperature sensing equipment which will pinpoint locations of vital groundwater. This is a great way to discover portions of our best trout waters and an excuse to spend a fishing weekend in the Arrowhead region. UMD researchers will design and lead the data collection. MNTU is coordinating volunteers. Please send an e mail or leave a voicemail expressing your interest in helping one day this summer. We will follow up with you to check which dates might work for you and get you on a project specific email list. Send e mails to jlenczewski@comcast.net or leave a message at 612-670-1629. This is also a great opportunity for families, friends, clubs and the general public to lend a hand conserving wild brook trout and steelhead fisheries.

Jon Lenczewski

Hiawatha Chapter

Summer Activities

June 11 is Senior Fishing Day in Lanesboro, Minnesota. The DNR Fisheries and other organizations, including HTU, will get together at the ponds in Lanesboro's Sylvan Park and take seniors from several surrounding senior centers fishing. The DNR provides the equipment and worms and many volunteers help clean fish and help the

seniors fish. HTU will again feed the volunteers. This event has been going on for over 25 years thanks to organizer Chester Daniels and the help of his family, along with the DNR and others having compassion for their elders. Contact HTU to sign up to help today!

June 25-28 is T.U.N.E. Camp. TUNE stands for The Ultimate Nature Experience for youth. This event is put on by Pheasant's Forever and Trout Unlimited. They teach school-age kids many outdoor skills including orienteering, survival, fly fishing, fly tying, casting, entomology, and stream ecology. The kids have a blast and it gives them the love of being away from all their electronic devices and into the outdoors enjoying fresh air and skills they can enjoy the rest of their lives.

July 6 will be the second HTU stream-side members meeting at Trout Run near Tom and Marlene's cabin, up stream from the Bidowee Bridge. Details and map location can be found at the HTU web site.

August TBD will be the last HTU stream-side meeting at Camp Creek in the town of Preston, Minnesota. Date and details to be announced on the HTU web site calendar at www.hiawathatu.org

Trout in the Classroom Update

In the November 2014 issue of the Minnesota Trout Unlimited (MNTU) newsletter, Kelli Schmeling wrote a fantastic article titled Got Trout? She encapsulated how the Trout in the Classroom (TIC) program got started and has been growing ever since. Hiawatha Trout Unlimited (HTU) has four schools involved in TIC now. Our original school, Stewartville Middle School with teacher Kelli Schmeling; Mayo High School with teacher Kevin Landherr and Century High School with teacher Bruce Frutiger, both in Rochester; and our newest school, Plainview/Elgin/Millville High School with teacher Steve Hinrichs. All of our schools have sent their samples of fish to the Minneapolis DNR office for testing and will be releasing their fish into the local streams in June.

All of these dedicated teachers have a passion for teaching their students about fish habitat, water ecology, and other aspects of the development and life cycle of trout. Their students are being exposed to many of the fields of trout including biology, water quality and turbidity, ecology, fisheries, and many others. In doing so, some of their students may become interested in those fields of study and keep expanding the future of the protection and raising and conservation of trout and the environment they live in.

Deb Groebner, Director of the DNR Fisheries MinnAqua Program in Southern Minnesota, helped facilitate getting the eggs to the schools and Greg Goodnow of Rochester's Fish-N-Pets



MN DNR FISHERIES SPECIALIST TONY STANDERA DISCUSSES AQUATIC INSECTS WITH STUDENTS DURING THE TROUT IN THE CLASSROOM RELEASE EVENT ON THE CLEARWATER RIVER ON MAY 29TH.

has been instrumental in supplying the equipment and helping with a wealth of knowledge of set up and troubleshooting with nitrate issues and other problems the schools face with equipment.

As of this article the fish will already be released, so although you can't come out and support the students and teachers with the release, you can encourage and support TIC in your local schools.

Want to get involved? From T.U.N.E. Camp to to TIC in the fall we need more volunteers. Contact Phil today to get involved!

Phil Pankow

Headwaters Chapter

The Kabekona cattle crossing is finished and working well, we learned a lot, had failure and great success thanks to several volunteers, the DNR and the land owner.

A major habitat project is shaping up on the Clearwater River with the landowners agreement to fence the river off from adjacent pasture land. This new development is pushing grant writing and future restoration projects. Special thanks to Tony Standera, cold water fisheries specialist, Bemidji DNR.

We completed our 13th annual 5th grade fly fishing course on May 14 with the river fishing and the traditional fish fry. This program has several approximately taught 478 5th graders. Twenty some volunteers are the work force without them it wouldn't happen. Also hats off to the tow 5th grade teachers, Joe Adams and Jeff Wade, who run trout in the classroom projects. On May 29 the 5th graders released their trout (browns and rainbows) into the Clearwater River. TU volunteer coordinator for TIC is Steve Young. Thanks Steve!

Our last membership meeting of March 31 set a new attendance record of 47 participants. Our panel presentation of four cold water fisheries professionals did a great job, thank you all.

We ran 7 winter fly tying nights with great success. There were 97 total participants including 23 first-time tiers and 13 women. Jeff Korbel was again our master tying demonstrator. John Lueth is helping us pursue fly fishing with kids for sun fish this summer. Thank you Jeff and John. Contact Bob to get involved with the kids fishing programming.

May 13 was the last of 4 helicopter tree drops on the Straight River. Thanks to Park Rapids fisheries, DNR Heli Tac crew, Luther Aadland river ecologist Fergus Falls DNR and many others. From 10am to 8:30pm 150 pines were placed, building 32 new structures, re-

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storing 3 old ones, plus other work. The big beautiful browns are smiling as they swim around their new playground.

A fly casting work shop is being planned for this summer. Contact Bob Wagner to learn more and help out with summer-time programming

Bob Wagner

Twin Cities Chapter

Hay Creek

TCTU working with a burn crew from the Goodhue County Pheasants Forever burned a portion of the adjacent prairie on about a mile or so of Hay Creek along 325th street. Also a landowner burned another portion upstream of our burn just below the old train trestle. Because of high winds & the now wet weather we wont be able to do any more this spring. I checked it out on the Opener & found the creek wide open, no fisherman but excellent fishing as I landed a 15" brown on my first cast. We will re-start the stretch just downstream of the campground as soon as the ground dries out. We are in the middle of restoring about a mile & have about 1/3rd of that to do. Watch for volunteer opportunities on this stretch which we will post on the TCTU website & Facebook page.

South Branch of the Vermillion River

We had a buckthorn clearing day on April 11th. We had about 50 volunteers show up including members of the Southern Dakota County Sportsman Club & the Hastings High School Trap Team. Working with Mark Nemeth of the DNR (this was our 3rd cutting) we have now cleared about 2300 feet of stream. Watch for another cutting this Fall. This 7000 foot stretch of stream runs through an Aquatic Management Area maintained by the DNR. Last Fall, working with the DNR we did an electro-shocking on the same stretch of stream and netted some 20" plus fish as well as a number of young of the year. The DNR figures the population of Brown Trout to be about 400 per mile and the odds of you catching (if you catch one) a trophy size fish (over 16") to be about 50%. This stream is adjacent to Hwy. 52 & County Road 66 in Empire Township and is close to several other improved stretches that we have done on the Main Branch of the Vermillion. Not a large population (catch & release only) but is an easy drive for people in the Twin Cities. It's 10 minutes from my house! The DNR is exploring the possibility of stocking Rainbow Trout in the tributaries such as this, on a put & take basis in the near future.

Rice Creek

We are exploring the possibility of shifting our project on this brook trout stream near Northfield where the stream is wider. We are working with the local SWCD and landowners to possibly

establish a new easement downstream on larger water to better enable us to create sufficient habitat to increase the fish population. Will keep everyone posted as things develop.

Trout Brook

This is a very nice stream in the Miesville Ravine County Park just east of Cannon Falls. This has a current population of 3500 native Brook Trout per mile on some stretches. We are in the early stages of planning to restore about 3000 feet but are working with a private landowner that has property within the park that our stretch of stream runs through. If we are able to get an easement from them, it will make the design work much simpler. Feel free to head down to the park & fish now. This is a very wild park & access to the stream can be difficult but you can catch some nice Brookies & very large Browns.

Burnsville Trout Streams

Dan Callahan and I working with TJ Debates and Mark Nemeth of the DNR, have researched some of the small streams that flow north into the Minnesota River, near the Black Dog power plant. These are currently listed as trout streams but face a real probability of being de-listed. We researched 4 of these and placed temperature loggers into 3 of them. This Fall we will pull those out and if the temperatures are cold enough over the whole summer, then we will petition the DNR to maintain their current status as trout streams & lobby to re-stock them with native Brook Trout, as we did with the Mall of America stream (We call it Hust Creek after TU's own Duke Hust), which currently has a small but solid population of Brookies, some up to 14" in length. These will probably never be legal to fish but it is nice to know we have trout that close.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITES

We are always looking for additional help. If you would like to have some say in the planning & restoration of Trout streams in our area, this is your chance. If you can volunteer for a few hours or up to as much time as you want, or would like to organize our volunteer lists or send out e-mails or make phone calls based on those lists, feel free to reach Tony Nelson @ 952-486-2282 or Tony@1igprint.com

Tony Nelson

Win-Cres Chapter

The Win-Cres Chapter of TU was busy in May as the chapter sponsored "An Evening with Trout" at the recently completed habitat improvement project along Garvin Brook. We enjoyed the support of many co-sponsors: Stockton-Minnesota City-Rollingstone Watershed District, Winona County

Planning office, MN DNR Forestry, MN DOT, MN DNR Fisheries Office in Lanesboro, MNTU, USFW and TU-DARE. Activities included a stream walk to show before and after results, fly casting demonstrations, guided fishing, talks on invasive species, a macro-invertebrate display, an explanation on the importance of the Legacy Amendment, and a light supper.

On June 13th, Win-Cres will volunteer to help with "Take A Kid Fishing" at Whitewater State Park. Contact Joe Lepley below to get involved and help out with this program.

We will also help the Lewiston Sportsmen's Club with their "Kids in the

Outdoors" program that introduces young kids to fishing and other outdoor activities.

Throughout the summer, Win-Cres will work to remove invasive species like Japanese knot weed and garlic mustard from the improvement area along Garvin Brook. We can always use another hand in removing weeds, come on down and help out this summer!

Contact chapter president Joe Lepley to get involved. You can reach him at 608-865-1327 or 608-323-2339

Joe Lepley



RECENTLY COMPLETED WIN-CRES HABITAT IMPROVEMENT ON GARVIN BROOK

OUTDOOR EDUCATION GRANT FUNDED

Get involved with Trout in the Classroom

On the final day of the regular legislative session money was appropriated for MNTU's outdoor education program, which will utilize the Trout in the Classroom curriculum as a centerpiece for broader hands on education focused around aquatic resources, watersheds and groundwater.

Interested schools and teachers still have a few days to apply to MNTU to get this program in their school next fall. Those who have not already taken our survey or received an application should inquire without delay by sending an e mail to ticminn@gmail.com or Jlcenczewski@comcast.net

TROUT ON TAP

Talk trout and drink good local microbrews. Join fellow trout and steelhead anglers to swap news of hatches, rivers and adventures.

Obsess with the obsessives

Monthly from 5:30 to 7:30 pm.

FISHING IS SPOKEN HERE.

June 18th - Bauhaus Brew Labs
1315 Tyler St NE, Minneapolis

July 16th - LynLake Brewery
2934 Lyndale Ave South, Minneapolis

August 13th - Excelsior Brewing Co.
421 Third St, Excelsior

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THERE ARE NOW **TWO** WAYS!

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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!

TROUT UNLIMITED MINNESOTA IS NOW OFFERING SUBSCRIPTIONS

For those of you who are members in other chapters in other states, or who would like to directly support MNTU's newsletter, we are now welcoming subscribers to the newsletter. Sign up to get three colorful issues annually. Mail in this form today to receive the next issue arriving this fall in November!

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A WILD SE MN BROOK TROUT IN SPAWNING COLORS CAUGHT IN AN UN-NAMED STREAM IN GREAT RIVER STATE PARK, WINONA COUNTY, MN. HONORABLE MENTION, 2015 MNTU PHOTO CONTEST BY NEAL MUNDAHL

REELING IT IN

An Angler's Journey

By Sam Troutt

Finding a "new" trout stream is adventure that most anglers relish. Pouring over maps, reading books and driving back roads is as much a part of fish for some of us as casting is. So it was with excitement and hope that I set out the other day to find a new trout stream in the coulee country of SE Minnesota. I had heard rumors of big trout from a few trusted sources. I had even seen photos of a cliff pool that looked tempting. With no specific directions and only a few bridges in the watershed, I knew there would be plenty of walking in store. At the top of the watershed I found a small stream that came together from a few spring sources at the edge of a cow pasture. The milky blue water flowed slowly through a trough alongside the roadway, with little movement to the water as it began its journey to the Mississippi River. I tied on a small nymph and floated it though the pool. No takes were had. After changing flies a couple of times I put on a small streamer, a minnow imitation made of rabbit fur and tinsel. Two casts later I was into

a large trout. It dogged the bottom of the stream bed and burrowed toward the edges of some downed brush. I remembered that I had tied the streamer onto 5X tippet, too light to pull the fish away easily. With patience and hope the fish slowly veered away from the brush and eventually made its way to the bank. A fat brook trout of maybe 14 inches lay on its side, crimson flanks shining in the afternoon sun. With a quick flip of the tail it was gone after I removed the hook, back into the depths.

Each trout that we catch tells a tale of a stream, how it is faring, and how we have cared for its watershed. The brook trout are our most sensitive trout in Southeast Minnesota. Every time I have the opportunity to hook a brook trout I know it is the culmination of the efforts of many landowners, TU members, DNR staff and others, and for this I am thankful.

Editor's Note: Read more about SE MN brook trout biology and natural history in Neal Mundahl's article on page 6.

Donate to Minnesota Trout Unlimited Efforts

Minnesota TU is the leading voice, your voice, advocating for coldwater fisheries and watersheds in Minnesota and the region. Our effective advocacy work and successful habitat grant writing efforts **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 that donation will be used here in Minnesota.

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