

Trout Unlimited

Western
Driftless
Hotline

TU Western Driftless

Hotline

Editorial by Carl Berberich

Fall fly-Fishing in the Southeast Driftless

The late fall fishing season has started in the southeast Minnesota. This catch and release only and runs to Dec 31, 2023. Again, this is only in the three state parks in the southeast: Forestville, Whitewater, and Beaver Creek State Park. And inside the city boundaries of the towns of Chatfield, Lanesboro, Preston, Rushford, and Spring Valley.

The following are the streams in the state parks. East Beaver Creek in Beaver Creek Valley State Park; Forestville Creek in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park; Canfield Creek in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park; South Branch Root River in Forestville/Mystery Cave State Park; Trout Run Creek in Whitewater State Park and Middle Branch Whitewater River in Whitewater State Park. The state park does allow in-park deer hunting on a limited basis. Please contact them to find out the where and when before you plan a fishing trip there.

Winter Fly-Tying

The Hiawatha Trout Unlimited chapter is going to have winter fly-tying at 125 LIVE in Rochester starting Dec 2, 2023, and running until March 9, 2024. This will be every Saturday except Dec 23, 2023. It will run from 9:00 am – 11:00 am. This will be free to attend and open to the public. We will be teaching many fly-tying patterns each Saturday to anyone and everyone. This includes beginners who have never tied before and do not have the equipment. It is also a social event where we also talk about fishing experiences in the Southeast.

Working with the MPCA

I'm working with the Winona County Clean Water Coalition, and we recently met with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency. Among the topics discussed, I told them about Trout Unlimited WiseH2O program, where we test local streams for seven different characteristics. Noticeably, at times the nitrate levels are above the Federal EPA standard of 10 ppm on many streams during the spring and summer. I correlated the data into a spreadsheet covering the last 6 months for only the southeast Minnesota region and showed this to the MPCA.

John Weiss has an article on page 6 of the newsletter about working with the MPCA and a proposal with TU members collecting water samples from springs for the MPCA in the SE MN next year.

Hiawatha TU Meeting

By John Weiss, HTU Board member

This was an in-person meeting at 125Live at 7 p.m. Oct. 2 With a few online, eight attended in all in person One big thing that came out later was need to up our game for meetings to add an education component etc.

We did not have a formal program but instead began a long-overdue chat about how to get more interest, and people, at our meetings.

Carl Berberich at first brought us up-to-date on Winona County's Clean Water Coalition; Fillmore County's is Responsible Agriculture in Karst Country.

There will be another public water-related meeting Oct. 30 for Winona's coalition at WSU while the Fillmore forum will be Nov. 16 at Eagle Bluff ELC. In both cases, a farmer will be there to talk about conservation changes.

Berberich said it's possible the number of fish killed that leads to an investigation could be lowered by the Minnesota Legislature.



When Winona met with MPCA Sept. 25, the members had three things they wanted to see: ban winter manure application in the karst region, get more monitoring of sensitive areas and revamp 2000 state feedlot rules.

Carl used WiseH2O app data to back up contention that there are too many nitrates in our water.

Berberich also said MPCA would like to talk with us about helping gather data. We don't know what they will need from us - WiseH2O or more. He, Don Parsons and John Weiss will meet with Justin Watkins of the MPCA.

Paul Krolak again brought up the need for a new president for our chapter. We have been without one for several years and have been operating by a committee.

Don Parsons said it would be helpful if we expanded our meetings to make them more inviting for more people. We need to talk about fishing and help each other with our fishing. This would help revive our chapter.



Greg Goodnow suggested having some kind of raffle each time with a small prize like a bunch of flies or a good reel. This would help get more people to our meetings. He also said it would be great to have some kind of education component to help younger anglers learn about the sport. We are getting too many of the same people. We have a shed full of merchandise and other materials and maybe we could get some prizes from that.

We could have some education, a speaker, and then maybe talk about how fishing is going.

Michael Melford, Don Parsons and Blake Abdella said they will be on our committee as at large members.

The meeting ended at 8:23 p.m.



Win-Cres Happenings

By Mark Reisetter Win-Cres Board member

The Whitewater Vets Fly Fishing Retreat was held September 16. Thank you to Chuck Shepard, Dave Schulz, Dusty Hoffman, Carl Berberich, Mark Reisetter, and Don Nordby for volunteering to make this a special event for the veterans who attended.

Activities being postponed include the October 7 tree planting along Cedar Valley Creek to another time TBD, and the willow whacking along Garvin Brook will be moved to March of 2024.

Thank you to Chuck Shepard for his continuing efforts to inoculate the invasive Japanese knotweed. Results from previous injections indicate that this approach has been highly effective. Kevin O'Brien DNR Forestry Dept said he plans on spraying knotweed on state owned land along Garvin Brook this fall.

MNTU is forming a new Advocacy Advisory Committee. Each TU chapter is charged with providing at least one member who is committed to advocacy issues related to our cold-water fisheries. This person would represent the chapter and report to the chapter on issues brought before the committee. Most of the meetings will be virtual. Thank you to Neal Mundahl for volunteering to serve on the committee representing Win-Cres TU. If anyone else from our chapter feels strongly about serving on this committee, message Chuck Shepard at shepard@hbci.com

The bench or table honoring Joe Lepley for his generous bequest to Win-Cres as well as his leadership and service to the Driftless area is progressing. President Shepard and Bruce Fuller will meet with the Misato group who have also indicated an interest in honoring Joe Lepley.

Program for future membership meeting are as follows:

October 25 – Jeff Weiss, DNR, on the Root River restoration project

November 29 – Jennie Biederman, MNTU

These meetings will be held at Sobieski Lodge, East 7th St. Winona. Social hour at 6:00 p.m. and presentations at 7:00 p.m. A meal will be provided, and the public is welcome and encouraged to attend.

TCTU October News

By Bob Luck, President of TCTU

I spent the last four days of the 2023 Catch & Release Season deep in Southeast Minnesota. I stayed in a \$50-a-night (tax included) motel room that has seen better days: green fungus covered the exterior walls and the carpet had some suspicious looking stains, but the bed was clean and comfortable, and the shower had hot water. What else do you really need when all you want to do is fish?

On Day 1 it was overcast and rainy with gusty winds. I fished the Middle Branch of the Whitewater. I had several tugs on my streamer, but I landed a grand total of two fish. I saw only a few flies hatching, and no fish rising. Things were much better the following three days. I tried a different stream, and the action was steady all day: streamers in the morning and nymphs/dries in the afternoon. There was a nice blue-winged olive hatch in the early afternoon, and the trout were slurping them. The weather was better, too. Where did I fish those last 3 days? Regular Hotline readers have way more knowledge of Southeast Minnesota waters than I, so it would be an insult for me to say.

2023 has been a good year for habitat projects in the Twin Cities area. A couple of months ago, I described a massive 8000' project that was completed on Hay Creek in July. In October, we finished up another big project on Trout Brook, near Miesville. TCTU chapter member Tony Nelson was intimately involved with the project; here is his report:

In the Fall of 2022, folks from the DNR, Dakota County Parks and Trout Unlimited did the initial stream walks to decide if we should do the next 3500 feet of Trout Brook, just below the original section, and then to do the initial design concept. This took a couple more walks including with eligible contractors from which we hired the contractor. We were to begin in July of 2023 but because of several delays we started in early September and finished in early October. We restored about 3500 feet of Trout Brook and added additional habitat features at the top and bottom of the original project (about 600 feet).



We also added a series of 16 rock dams on a part of the tributary that feeds into the main branch of Trout Brook to reduce the amount of sediment (about 40% of the total) flowing into Trout Brook. The main project involved some tree removal, mostly box elder, as well as stream narrowing (to about 14 feet) and placement of rock along both banks for stabilization as well as numerous rock riffles in the creek to create a pool/riffle/pool system and establishing prairie along each bank. We discovered a large colony of a threatened plant species called Snowy Campion along the banks which caused our delay. Through a series of procedures including partnering with the U of M Arboretum to collect the seeds and grow new plants for restoration to the park next Spring, we were able to complete the project and preserve what may be the largest colony of this plant in the country. Any future projects on this stream may well hinge upon our ability to protect this colony.



here: <https://tu.myeventscenter.com/event/Oktoberfish-78659>

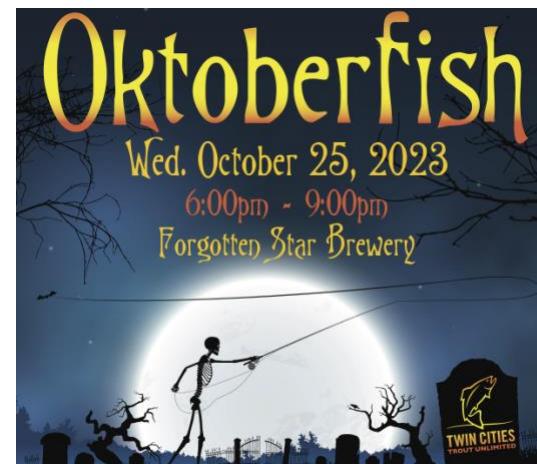
If you can't attend, you can still participate in our Silent Auction. We have some great items and experiences, including vacation homes in Big Sky, Montana, and, even more impressive, Wisel Creek! Visit the auction

here: <https://go.tulocalevents.org/36550b>

All proceeds from Oktoberfish and the Silent Auction will be used to fund Youth Education throughout Minnesota.

Below are "Before" and "After" photos, plus an access map. An additional note: the DNR has not yet added Trout Brook to the Winter season so wait until Spring to fish it!

2023 has been a great season, and I look forward to celebrating it with other TU members and supporters at our Oktoberfish celebration and fundraiser on Wednesday, October 25th. If you can make it to the Twin Cities, please attend! You can buy a ticket



MPCA Water Project with HTU

By John Weiss, HTU Board member

Next year, Hiawatha TU members hope to spring into action to help learn even more about nitrates and other pollutants.

We've been doing WiseH2O sampling for national TU for three years and recently, three members - Don Parsons, Carl Berberich and John Weiss - began talking about upping our game, hoping to do more monitoring and find ways to make the data more useable for the state.

On Oct. 9, we chatted online (along with Paul Krolak) with Justin Watkins, a top local Minnesota Pollution Control Agency water expert about how we can do this. It quickly became apparent that our TU data is good for an indicator of problems, but the date is not precise enough. We only use testing strips and it's entered via a phone app. "The test strip stuff, I don't think we could ever just use only that to make an assessment of a stream," Watkins said.

Watkins said we need to have water analyzed by a certified lab. The MPCA and Minnesota Geological Survey already do such work on many streams, but he said it could use our help in getting water samples from springs. "It would be springs, there is a great interest in long-term monitoring of spring nitrates," he said.

Getting water tested isn't the big expense, going out to get samples is the expense. Several TU members immediately volunteered to help next year. We will have to be trained to make sure we take samples just right and take proper care of them once we have them.

Watkins also said it would be helpful if any angler who sees a fish kill could take a water sample from the water with any available container. Maybe it wouldn't be good enough to hold up in court because it isn't taken by a state official but at least we would have a better chance of knowing the cause. HTU has even talked about making "kill kits" for anglers to have with them. They would have a few small bottles for water samples, a plastic bag for dead fish and instructions. We haven't decided on that yet. But Watkins said that just knowing the cause of a kill can be very instructional for farmers. "It's infinitely better than nothing," he said.

He said going out after storms doesn't tell us much because storm water is diluted and nitrate-poor; this often gives a negative spike. With phosphorus, it's the opposite because "they peak with the storms." We know the chronic nitrate levels in trout streams, he said.

This is part of the state's desire to see changes. "They are asking big picture questions.... how long it takes to see changes in water quality in trout streams if we change land use. The state monitors springs feeding the region's three fish hatcheries. Peterson, which gets water from deeper in the region's aquifers, was once around 2 parts per million but now has risen to 5 or 6 ppm. Lanesboro and Crystal Springs are more variable. Springs around Fountain, which is even higher in the region's aquifers, aren't increasing so maybe they have a faster response to changes in the land, he said.

Having TU as part of the whole program helps show that others besides just the state are interested, he said. It would show a good partnership. TU members would do 4 to 6 samples a year.

Watkins second question was whether HTU might consider donating some money to help pay for testing. Olmsted County's lab might do it for free. HTU members said it's very possible we could chip in some of the money.

We won't do away with WiseH2O because it's a national TU project but we're still trying to find ways to make it better. Berberich, Parsons and Weiss are working on that.

Weiss will be the main contact between state and TU.

Clean Water Coalition Forum

By Martin Moore

10/5/2023 – Contaminated water, health, agriculture, and economics in karst country provide core topics for a forum on Monday, Oct. 30, 2023, from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at Winona State University, 103 Stark Hall. The event is free and open to all. An online Zoom option is available.

The Winona County Clean Water Coalition is organizing the educational event in response to Minnesota Department of Agriculture well testing programs that confirm significant nitrate and pesticide contamination of rural drinking water. Prevailing farming practices and karst topography have contributed to dangerous levels of contaminants in drinking water.

The coalition includes the Minnesota Well Owners Organization (MNWO), League of Women Voters- Winona chapter (LWV), Izaak Walton League-Winona Will Dilg chapter, Trout Unlimited Minnesota (TU), Land Stewardship Project (LSP), and the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA). The League of Women Voters – Winona chapter is moderating the program.

A Resource in CRISIS

A forum on water quality in Winona County

Free and all are welcome! Monday, **October 30, 2023**, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Stark Hall, WSU, 175 W. Mark St., Winona, MN



Questions? Email us at CleanWaterCoalitionWinona@gmail.com



An update on the EPA petition to use emergency authority to address the drinking water crisis in southeast Minnesota will be part of the program. Other speakers will address the role of karst

topography in private well water quality, water contamination versus human health, the role of regenerative farmers, the economics of clean water, and state feedlot rules.

Speakers include: Paul Wotzka, hydrologist and MNWOO founder, on ecological disaster and the state of our water; Aleta Borrud, MD., and Masters in Public Health and Epidemiology, on the health impacts of nitrates and other contaminants; Monta Hayner, Driftless Fly Fishing Co. guide, on clean water economy; Mike Rupprecht, beef grazier and co-owner of Earth-Be-Glad Farm, on responsible agriculture in karst country; and Joy Anderson, Supervising Attorney for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA), on the EPA petition and feedlot/manure storage issues.

The program will include presentations and facilitated Q&A along with information tables. For the Zoom link or more information, please contact Kelley Stanage at CleanWaterCoalitionWinona@gmail.com, or visit our Facebook page: "Winona County Clean Water Coalition."

Fillmore County Clean Water Coalition

By Carl Berberich

Fillmore County also has Clean Water Coalition, where Don Parsons of HTU is a member. They will also be holding a Forum at the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center on Nov 16 for 7:00 – 8:30 pm. The following is their flier about the presentations.

WATER QUALITY FORUM
Fillmore County

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 16TH
7-8:30 PM

Paul Wotzka
Hydrologist, farmer, co-founder of Minnesota Well Owners Organization

Aleta Borrud
Physician with Masters of Public Health in Epidemiology

Monta Hayner
Fly Fishing Guide and Women's Outreach and Marketing Director, Driftless Fly Fishing Company

Martin Larsen
Farmer, cover, Olmsted Soil and Water Conservation District Feed of Officer

Carly Griffith
Water Program Director for the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy

FREE AND OPEN TO ALL!

Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center
28097 Goodview Drive
Lanesboro, MN 55949

QUESTIONS?
responsibleaginkarstcountry@gmail.com

Flyfishing Women of Minnesota Update

By Sally Noll, Chair FFWNMN

For “Fishing Around Town” events, our next event was located a little further way and

titled “Fishing Around Town on the Road in Preston MN”; Saturday September 23 and Sunday September 24. Hosted by Monta Hayner. It was a good weekend although the Friday and Saturday rainfall made stream visibility a problem at times. Regardless, the rain was a much-welcomed event. The group first met at the Driftless Fly Fishing Company on Saturday morning to review best flies to use and to organize groups to fish in different areas. One of our new members got her first trout!! Fishing continued on Sunday along with a little bit of shopping in the area as well!



at

<https://flyfishingwomennm.com/>

Our annual club membership meeting will be held November 9. Nominations for board positions have closed and election form are to be sent out next week. Membership in the club is required for events and board nominations/election. For women that might be interested in our club and/or want to join, please visit our website



Iowa Driftless Chapter

By Mike Rogers, President



STREAM CLEANUP DAY—Saturday, November 4--

We will be having a **stream cleanup day on Saturday, November 4th**. We encourage anyone and everyone to join **@ 9am at our normal meeting location, the DNR campground @ 1280 Quandahl Rd.**

Trash Bags and transport of trash afterwards will be provided, but please come prepared with gloves and/or grabbers. Also, it's never a bad idea to bring a pair of waders along.

October Troutin

By Jason Rieke

Crisp mornings, colorful trees, bright red finned brookies, and fired up brown trout. October in the driftless is a special time. With all the transitions and beautiful colors, fall is my favorite season. The good fishing often found this time of year is just a bonus. As a trout angler in SE MN, we have until October 15th to fish wherever we want. I've found this month to be a great time to hike back into some of our remote valleys where the spectacular scenery can at times be matched by equally spectacular fishing.



October brown trout colors



Beautiful fins of a Minnesota Native in October

This year, October 1-15 flew by quickly. I am blessed to work close to a few trout streams and can get a half-hour of fishing time during lunch every now and then. That ended up being the extent of my fishing this October.

The fishing itself wasn't much to write home about but I greatly enjoyed soaking up the scenery and fooling a few small trout. No complaints here!



Trout Run creek on a rainy October day this fall



Fly of The Month: The Wooly Bugger

By Lance Prado, HTU Board member



The Wooly Bugger is a classic streamer pattern that is very effective and can be tied in almost any size and color variation. This fly is one that any new or advanced fly tyer needs and should know how to tie because it will teach you the basics of portioning materials, thread control and palmering feathers. This fly has produced some of the biggest fish for us and is one that every angler must have in their fly box. Watch our video on our take of the Wooly Bugger and give it a Try. All Materials are available at Root River Rod Co.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W2d6fdFMrHU>

Monthly Fishing Reports

Lanesboro MN: Root River Rod Co

Fly Fishing in Southeast MN is closed except for a few designated areas. A few of those areas are Lanesboro city limits, Preston city limits, Forestville State Park, White Water State Park, Chatfield, Rushford and Spring Valley. The areas that have been fishing well for us this week and been through Lanesboro using Nymphs and Streamers and Forestville has been getting a decent BWO hatch in the afternoons. Water levels are still low, but rain is expected this week along with a big temperature drop. We have also noticed on a few of the streams that the brown trout are starting to spawn and redds are showing up so watch your step out there.

Flies Recommended:

#16 Prince Nymph

#18 BWO

#8 Wooly Bugger Black or Olive

#14-16 Scud Pink, Orange or Green.

Decorah IA: Bear Creek Anglers

Water is NEIA is still significantly low but rain, and even early snow might be headed our way soon. This time of year brings a large influx of anglers from Wisconsin and Minnesota as the seasons close in those states, so fishing pressure is high right now and fish are as pressured as ever between that and the water conditions. The brown trout spawn is in full-swing right now with redds popping up more and more each day. **AVOID FISHING AT SPAWNING FISH AND AVOID STOMPING THROUGH REDDS!**



BWO hatches are hot right now, hatches are hard to miss and so are the fish—size 18-22 BWO patterns have been best, particularly size 20. With dry flies, still don't hesitate to throw elk-hair

caddis patterns, especially later in the evening if surface activity is present—October caddis in size 16-18 are a favorite too. When bigger mayflies are showing, Adam's dry fly patterns can be effective sizes 14-18, and do not discount your emerger patterns for BWO and caddis.

Nymph fishing--sizes 16-20 pheasant tail nymphs, hare's ear and prince nymphs are all effective, and adding hotspots/wing casings/collars with brighter coloration always seems to be even more effective. Don't forget about perdigon patterns—the name of the game is getting the flies down into the water column, and perdigons will do this as well as any nymph will.

Small midges/scuds/larvae—Think small—size 20-22 Griffiths gnats for dries, size 16-20 red/black/green zebra midge styles, size 16-20 caddis larvae. For scuds, basic grey and tan scud patterns size 14-18 and pink squirrels can be effective.

Streamers/leeches/etc. Fishing the Upper Iowa is still tough with water levels, so we best recommend sticking to smaller single hook streamers and leech patterns in the tributaries. Sizes 10-12 olive and black leech patterns stripped and even dead drifted are effective.

Upcoming Events Schedule:

OktoberFish TCTU's fundraiser Oct 25, 2023 Tickets and Details [here](#)

Win-Cres Chapter Meeting Oct 25. Dinner at 6 p.m. at the Sobieski Lodge, East 7th St. Winona, followed by the presentation at 7 p.m. Jeff Weiss, DNR, on the Root River restoration project.

Iowa Driftless Chapter: Saturday Nov 4, 2023, Stream Cleanup Day. 9am at our normal meeting location, the DNR campground @ 1280 Quandahl Rd.

Hiawatha TU Members Meeting: Nov 6, 2023, 7:00pm at 125 Live 125 Elton Hills Dr NW, Rochester. Amber Taylor will discuss TIC via Zoom

Flyfishing Women of MN: Nov 9, Club Membership meeting. Detail are [here](#)

Iowa Driftless Chapter Fly Tying Saturday Nov 11, 2023. 9:00 am – noon. @ CHRIS WASTA'S—1468 Old Stage Rd. Decorah, IA 52101

Win-Cres Chapter Meeting Nov 29. Dinner at 6 p.m. at the Sobieski Lodge, East 7th St. Winona followed by the presentation at 7 p.m. Jennie Biederman, MNTU

Resources:

- [SE Stream Conditions](#) (MN DNR)
- [State Map Trout Streams](#) (MN DNR)
- [Southeast Streams](#) (MN DNR)
- [AMA](#) (MN DNR Aquatic Management Areas)
- [WMA](#) (MN DNR Wildlife Management Areas)
- [SNA](#) (MN DNR Scientific and Natural Areas)
- [State Forest](#) (MN lands)
- [Driftless Hatch Chart](#) (Driftless Region)
- [MN DNR Fish Kills Reporting](#) (or call 651-649-5451 or 800-422-0798)
- [Trout-In-the-Classroom Map](#) (School Locations in MN)
- [Wisconsin DNR Trout Streams](#)
- [Iowa DNR Driftless Trout Stream Maps](#)
- [IA WMA](#) (IA DNR Wildlife Management Areas)
- [HTU's Iowa Driftless Stream Map](#)
- HTU Website:** <https://hiawatha-tu.org>
- TCTU Website:** <https://www.twincitiestu.org/>
- TCTU Events:** <https://www.twincitiestu.org/events.html>
- [2023 MN DNR Driftless Stream Projects Map](#)

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