



TU Western Driftless Hotline

Editorial by Carl Berberich Teaching Beginning Fly Fishing

The Goodhue Highschool Fishing Club held a teaching event on Saturday April 6 where we taught techniques for trout fishing here in the south-east Minnesota. This event was organized by Dustan Hoffman of the DNR and the WinCres Chapter of TU. There were approximately 49 students that attended and 10-11 volunteer teachers. We taught 4 classes: Spin Fishing, Reading Trout Water, Fly Casting and Fly Tying.



On April 26, the Goodhue Highschool Fishing Club will be holding a fishing event in Rushford, MN, and will be needing fishing guide volunteers.

Hiawatha TU Workday on Mill Creek

On April 20 the Hiawatha TU Chapter held a state-wide volunteer event to build lunger structures. These structures are part of a stream project and will be built into the streambanks of Mill Creek, just upstream with its junction of the North Branch of the Root River. This is on the far south side of the Chatfield city limits and on the edge of Mill Creek Park and Groen Park. About 14 people worked on the structures.



Hiawatha Road-Side Cleanup

Yes, it's that time of the year again, and..... it's been 31 years since we started this cleans up. WOW!

John Wiess has an article on page 5 for all the info on how you can help this year.

Hiawatha TU Members meeting

On May on May 6 members meeting Monta Hayner of FFWMN and FFI and TU will be our guest speaker. She is the reason more women are getting into fly fishing and we will also be hosting the Bamboo Flyrod raffle



Hiawatha TU April Members Meeting

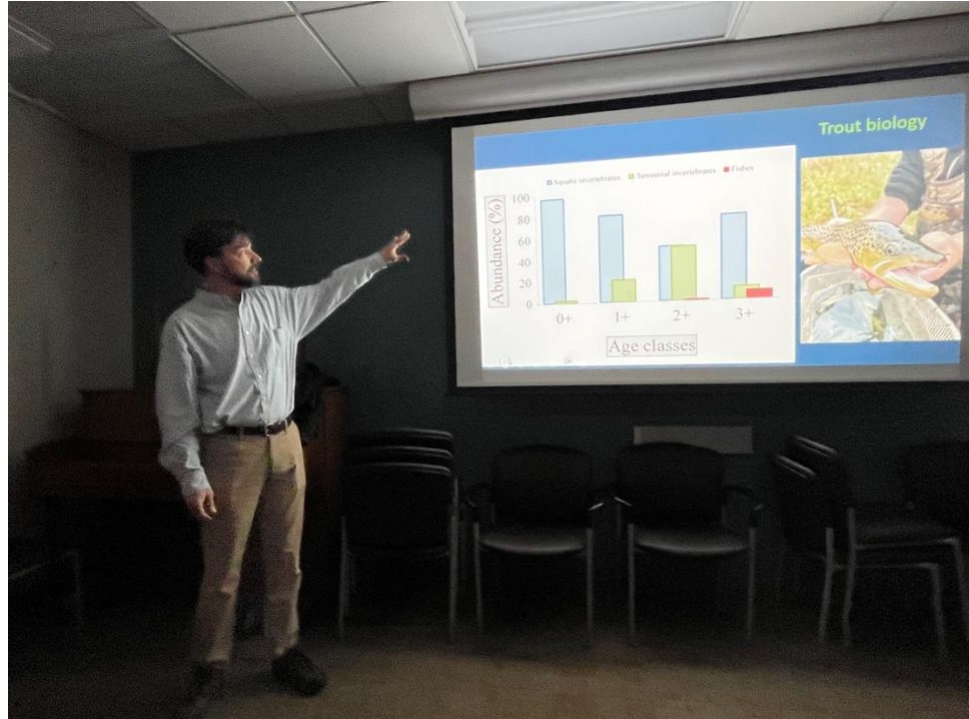
By John Weiss, HTU Board member

We began with some announcements, such as John Weiss saying he needs volunteers for April 13 expo in Chatfield and May 18 Trout Days in Preston.

We will also be building lunger structures April 20 in Chatfield. More volunteers needed there too.

Main speaker was Brian Nerbonne, regional DNR fisheries manager for area that includes SE Minn. He spoke about why big trout (15-inches plus) are rare and where to find them. He referred only to browns, not brookies.

First thing to think about is that trout don't want to be eaten, so big ones like pools where it's at least three feet deep - deeper isn't better. And they avoid shallows. At the same time, trout tend to be drift feeders, so they like to ambush food coming their way as they try to keep out of stronger currents. They also need cover such as undercut banks, trees or big rocks in the middle of streams where they can keep out of strongest current and yet also feed.



Wider streams are better because they will have more variability in habitats and are also more likely to get a good surge of water to wash out silt and deepen pools.

When trout are young, they can't eat larger food, so they concentrate on bugs. But once they hit three years, they can feed on minnows and larger food sources that also offer more calories for work expended to get them.

Because they need larger food sources, they tend to live in larger, less-perfect streams. The small prime streams are fed heavily by springs and the water is relatively cool, which bait fish don't like. "They tend to be very simple fish communities," he said. At the same time, there are often fewer fish in those more marginal streams but ones you do catch could be a "memorable" fish. Those more marginal waters tend to be a bit warmer too so the fish there eat more.

"There is a lot the fish has to get through to get that size," he said.

After, Blake Abdella gave a really good presentation on leaders, which are best and a lot of other great info. Thank you Blake.

Win-Cres Happenings

By Mark Reisetter Win-Cres Board member

On April 26 guides will meet at 8:15 a.m. at CreekSide Park in Rushford to guide Goodhue students for a 3-hour onstream experience. On April 27, Win-Cres TU will work with the scouts at Gamehaven Scout Camp teaching fly tying, casting, and stream craft safety. Please contact [Dusty Hoffman](#) or a board member if you are available to assist on either date.

Regarding habitat work, Dusty Hoffman will coordinate a time and date (TBA) to continue the work needed on Little Pickwick. This session will again be on Jim Albrecht's farm. Managing invasive streamside Japanese knotweed continues to be a Win-Cres priority. Willow whacking along Garvin will be a May project.

The drawing for the winner of the statewide raffle for a 2wt. bamboo fly rod will be held May 6. Tickets are \$10 and you can purchase tickets by contacting a Win-Cres Board member.

Neal Mundahl, our MNTU Advisory Council representative, reported on MPCA's proposed multi agency protocol for reporting fish kills which can be found online.

Tom Stoa reported that he has reserved the Sobieski Lodge for our general meetings. The 2024 dates are October 23, December 4 and for 2025 January 22, February 26 and March 26.

Discussion was held regarding mowing along the stream banks for 2024. Dave Shaffer will not be heading up the mowing project this coming year. We thank Dave and his crew for the hours they have worked and the great job they have done. The mowing project serves the needs of a great many anglers. In some cases, mowing makes access to our streams possible and in other cases a much easier and more enjoyable experience. The board will discuss options for its continuation.

Roger Berg reported that Win-Cres will have a booth at the July 11-14, 2024 Winona County Fair.

The next Win-Cres Board meeting will be May 1 at Chuck and Judy Shepard's home.

TCTU April News

By Bob Luck, President of TCTU

TCTU is working on a large number of youth and family education events this summer. You can find details on our [website](#). As in past years, we will be teaching kids to panfish off docks in metro-area lakes. But what we are most excited about this year is our new Meet-A-Stream events!

Join MNTU education specialist and long-time fly angler, Evan Griggs, at his favorite MNTU habitat project sites. Tour the project site to see how habitat work benefits the stream. Learn about stream ecology by sampling macroinvertebrates to determine water quality and see what the trout are eating. Then we'll practice our fly fishing skills, like casting and knot tying, before heading out to try and catch some trout.

Our programs are tailored for kids, families, and newer anglers. This is a great way to explore some new fishing spots, understand how our habitat projects benefit trout, and grow your fishing skills! All gear provided and no fishing license or trout stamp are required for participants at these events. For ages 10+, an adult must accompany their minor(s) at all times. Dates, times, and locations are below with links for registration. If looking to register more than 3 people or have questions, contact Evan Griggs, tic.mntu@gmail.com.

- [May 4th, 9:00-1:00 @ Hay Creek, near Red Wing, MN](#)
- [June 1st, 9:00-1:00 @ Trout Run Creek near Chatfield, MN](#)
- [August 10th, 9:00-1:00 @ South Branch of Whitewater River near Elba, MN](#)
- [September 7th, 9:00-1:00 @ Vermillion River near Farmington, MN](#)

Alert readers have probably noticed that only one of the above events takes place on a metro-area stream, the Vermillion, and the other three are in the Driftless Area. We'd love to see some participants from Southeast Minnesota and Iowa. Spread the word!



Iowa Driftless Chapter

By Mike Rogers, President



Driftless Chapter's Annual Fundraiser

Our annual fundraising event coming up on Saturday April 27th where we'll be hosting the International **F3T Film Festival**. The event will be held at the Hotel Winneshiek here in Decorah, Iowa. Doors open at 5 pm and the show starts at 5:45 pm. Tickets are on sale now at the link below. Your ticket gets you into the event and covers you for the appetizer buffet. There

will also be a cash bar and some great prizes including a Helios 4 fly rod! Get your tickets now while they're still available!

<https://flyfilmtour.com/schedule/2024-usa-schedule/>

Otter Creek Easement acquisition—in partnership with the Iowa DNR and other organizations, the Driftless Chapter helped to fund two new easements on Otter Creek in Fayette County that will add over 2 miles of access on a section of Otter Creek that has never had any previous public access.

FLY FISHING FILM TOUR
2024

Saturday April 27th
 Doors Open @ 5 pm/Show Starts @ 6pm
 Hotel Winneshiek Opera House
 Decorah, IA

www.flyfilmtour.com

Trout Unlimited chapters in Iowa are excited to have new TUDARE (Trout Unlimited Driftless Area Restoration Effort) focus in NE Iowa—Cameron Aker was recently hired as the new Iowa Driftless Outreach Coordinator. We are super excited for the partnership and what it will bring for future Iowa projects!

TUDARE Iowa Driftless Outreach Coordinator, Cameron Aker



Hiawatha Chapter Roadside Clean-Up

By John Weiss HTU Board Member

Okay guys, it's that time of the year. Yes, it's time to pick up trash and find more Lite beer cans along U.S. 52 south of Chatfield.

Hiawatha TU will meet at the parking lot just beyond the Root River bridge at 6 p.m. May 13 (May 14 for rain date). We usually get about a dozen volunteers. This year, MNDOT said that all volunteers must be updated on tetanus shots (being anglers, I'm guessing most of us have those shots).

Also, we need to watch a safety video. Here is the URL:

<https://www.dot.state.mn.us/adopt/safety-parking.html>

I watched it and it's mostly common-sense things but also it tells us what to do if we find hazardous waste etc. It's worth watching.

Please email John Weiss weiss239@gmail.com to let him know how many are coming. He'll bring some cookies etc. Bring your own water or whatever.

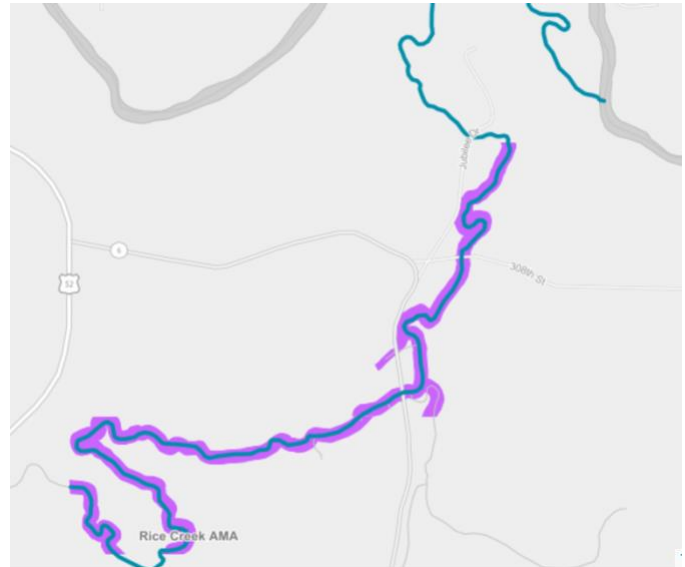
As you know, wear stout boots, and bring good gloves. Weiss will have bags and safety vests.

If we can get a dozen or so volunteers, we only need maybe 1.5 hours to do it.

2024 Projects in the Southeast MN

By Jennifer Biederman MNTU Habitat Program Director

This winter has been a busy time preparing for upcoming in-stream projects to enhance and improve trout habitat. The 2024 field season has kicked off with a 5,100-foot instream project on Rice Creek in Fillmore County with instream construction starting April 22. This project is located 30-miles southeast of Rochester, MN, right off (and flowing under) Hwy 52. Although a major spring enters the creek in the upper portion of the project, the current population of brown trout is limited by poor in-stream habitat and steep eroding banks. This project will improve access to the floodplain, deepen the stream, place in-stream cover and create high-quality riffle habitat for spawning and macroinvertebrate production.



After Rice is complete, we'll move onto a 2,300-foot project on Mill Creek, in Chatfield, Minnesota - hopefully by mid-to late May. This project builds on nearly 4 miles of habitat previously enhanced by MNTU and the Hiawatha chapter, and aims to restore damage by a flooding event, which cut off a large bend of the main channel. The upcoming project will restore connectivity of the original channel, lengthening the stream, while adding high quality trout habitat for spawning and cover, including luncker structures, riffles, and toewood. Additionally, based on a recent pre-project field estimate of soil loss in the project reach, the newly sloped banks will prevent 85 tons/year of soil loss into the stream. (That's equal to 6 dump truck loads!) This project will proudly feature 8 lunkers built by the Hiawatha chapter.

In June, we expect to move on to start an instream project in Maple Creek near Choice, MN. Stay tuned for more details.

Bamboo Flyrod Raffle

By Mark Reisetter

The Hiawatha and Win-Cres Chapters of TU are having a raffle to raise money for our state program of "Trout in the Classroom" which this year has a presence in 60 schools. We want to expand this program, especially here in the SE corner of MN. Next year, Rushford-Peterson High School, which has a teacher who has stepped forward, will be provided a tank with a cooling device along with 500 rainbow trout eggs. We also provide the necessary teacher training so that students will learn to monitor the water conditions to keep the "hatchery" conditions in prime condition, which will lead to the big day in the spring when students will release the trout in an area stream.

The cost of each raffle ticket is \$10. The raffle drawing will be held May 6 at the Hiawatha Chapter meeting at 125Live in Rochester at 7 pm.



The **first prize** is a 2 weight split bamboo fly rod made by Harry Boyd from the Earl Stanek collection.

The **second prize** is a 1/2 day Guided Fishing Trip with St. Charles guide Mike Toft of whitewaterguiding.com.

The **third prize** is an autographed copy of Gary LaFontaine's "The Dry Fly" along with a framed Original Illustration from the book by artist Gretchen Grayum.

Raffle tickets are \$10 and may be purchased from either Hiawatha or Win-Cres members. If you don't want to hunt down a board member, tickets can also be purchased by sending a self-addressed stamped envelope and a check for

the desired quantity of tickets (at \$10 per ticket) to:

Hiawatha Trout Unlimited
PO Box 7064
Rochester, MN 55903-7064

Fly of The Month: Thrasher

By Lance Prado, HTU Board member



In this fly tying tutorial - Tying a Thrasher, Philip shows us how to tie, not just a streamer but, an articulated streamer! We cover some of the basics in streamer tying as well as learn some techniques to help you with hackle tails and tying with deer hair. The Thrasher is an up-and-coming streamer pattern you should have in your box for targeting that apex predator. Get the materials here: <https://rootriverrodco.com/shop>

[YouTube Video](#)

Material List:

Gamakatsu B10s - Size 2 & 4
UTC 210 Thread - Olive
Schlappen - Sculpin Olive
Grizzly Hackle
Flashabou - Copper
UV Polar Chenille - Copper UV
Premo Deer Hair - Sculpin Olive
Senyo Laser Dub - White & Olive
Senyo intruder Wire - Copper/Orange
Hareline 3d Bead - Brown
Dumbbell eyes - Red/Nickel
Perfectly Barred Sili Legs - Pumpkin

Monthly Fishing Reports

Lanesboro MN: [Root River Rod Co](#)

Root River Rod Co Fishing Report

Caddis! We are excited to see Caddis flies back for the season and they are big. We have been seeing size 16-14 Gray Caddis along with a mixture of other bugs in the air. Stoneflies are still out but not for long and Blue Wing Olives have been great on cloudy days. Midges are still the most predictable fly that trout have been coming up to the surface for. Streamers are working and fish have been very aggressive.

Recommended Flies:

Thrasher Streamer
Back Flop Jig
Gray Caddis #16-14
BWO #20-16
Midges Drys #22-18
Zebra Midges #20-18
Partridge and Orange #18-16

Decorah IA: [Bear Creek Anglers](#)

We're finally seeing some spring rains helping to raise water levels—flows and water levels in rivers and streams have increased, hopefully the rain keeps coming!

Spring came a bit early this year and with it came an early arrival of caddis hatches. Especially on the warmer days we've had, the caddis have been hatching frequently and as early as 10am on warmer days. We've seen black caddis, as well as many with darker tan bodies/wings. Look to fish Elk Hair Caddis with similar colors size 16-18. The BWO hatches are still happening but will soon start to disappear. Throwing BWO patterns, Adam's/Parachute Adam's in sizes 16-20 can still be effective. Fishing soft hackle emerger patterns for both caddis and BWO is a good idea, especially fished in tandem with a dry or nymph. Patterns such as simple partridge and orange, or black/grey body soft hackle patterns can be effective in sizes 16-18.

Nymphs—pheasant tail nymphs (orange or red hotspots/collars), prince nymphs (red hotspot/collar), copper john (chartreuse, red, orange, copper) sizes 14-18. Midge patterns—zebra midges (tan/red/black) and if you can fish these with a wing casing or emerger effect, definitely give it a shot.

Finding proper depths is always a key focus—especially with water levels beginning to rise, invest as much thought in your depth as you do your fly.

Upcoming Events Schedule:

TCTU's Chapter meeting: April 22 at Wild Boar Bar & Grill: Upping your game in fly fishing.

Hiawatha TU Members Meeting: Monday, May 6, 7pm 125Live - Chapter Meeting. Monta Hayner presenting. We will also have the Bamboo Flyrod raffle drawing.

Driftless TU Chapter Fundraiser: Saturday April 27, 5pm. Hotel Winneshiek, Decorah, IA

Hiawatha TU Roadside Cleanup: Monday May 13 at 6pm. Meet at Hwy 52 Parsley Bridge Rest stop.

TCTU's Chapter meeting: May 27 at Fat Pants Brewing Co: The St. Croix.

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>