



TU Western Driftless Hotline

Editorial by Carl Berberich

Tis the season for Teaching

On Hiawatha TU's members meeting on September 11, Bruce Frutiger, Sports Biology teacher at Century High School of Rochester asked attending members to help him teach fly casting on Wednesday September 13. There would be 3 classes of over 30 students each. He needed the help due to a recent shoulder surgery that prevents him from casting. Paul Krolak and myself helped him out by teaching the casting technique. With around 100 students in 3 separate classes who had never picked up a flyrod before, this was quite the challenge. Mr. Frutiger has been involved with our TU chapter for over 10 years, initially teaching Trout-In-the-Classroom TIC for us.

On Saturday September 16, I helped teach at the Veterans Fly Fishing Retreat at Whitewater State Park. This was an all-day event. This starting off with Dustin Hoffman stream habitat specialist for the DNR describing our trout streams, Peter Pfaff professor at SMU doing aquatic invertebrate sampling on the Whitewater stream.



There were many volunteers from Win-Cres helping teach fly-tying (we tied wooly-buggers and a beetle pattern). We then taught fly-casting. Mark Reisetter led this, and we had 2 instructors (Bill Hinton and Monta Hayner) from FFI. Lastly, the class members were taken fishing for the rest of the day. This was a very long but fulfilling experience for all.



Hiawatha TU

By John Weiss, HTU Board member

Anyone who's fished in the region in the past several years knows what a blessing habitat improvement projects have been, bettering so many streams and rivers, giving trout more places to live and giving us more places to catch them.

But how about other effects of HIP work?

On Sept. 11, about a dozen Hiawatha TU members and some on ZOOM heard about other benefits of HIP from Dustan Hoffman, the Department of Natural Resources new southern stream habitat specialist and Dr. Jenny Biederman, MNTU's new statewide habitat director.



The slide showed how grasses along the bank of West Beaver Creek where habitat work improved the stream; soon after, heavy rain flooded the creek but the grasses stayed in place.

Here's the basics of that work, which has increased dramatically in the past several years thanks to mega-bucks from Legacy Amendment coffers: Experts will go to a stream that has been beat up by too much erosion, heavy rainfalls, too many box elders and other trees along its bank and give it a major overhaul. Generally, that means narrowing the stream because they tend to be too wide and shallow (now and then, a stream might be too narrow), establishing deeper places for trout of all sizes to hide, getting rid of many of the wrong trees along it and (this is critical) shaping its banks so they slope back by about 3-to-1.

Sloping back is necessary because many streams have incised banks that are several feet tall. With a heavy rain, rising waters have no place to go, so they gouge the stream a bit deeper and often have to go faster to get through the incised portions. When sloped back, however, water spreads out, reducing its overall power so there's not as much erosion and also, some of the silt drops out in the floodplain.

Finally, they add riffle-run-pool combinations down the stream.

But Hoffman and Biederman also pointed out some ancillary benefits that we seldom see. TU is trying to document more of those benefits, Biederman said.

First, that means less silt heading down the stream into Mississippi River backwaters that are filling in much too fast; we're slowly losing a precious resource for fish, wildlife, all kinds of birds and bugs and vegetation.

Second, as part of the project you might notice a few small ponds or side channels with little or no flow. Those are places for turtles, frogs and other critters to live.

Third, one I didn't know much about until the two told us about them, was they will sometimes dump unneeded dirt out of the floodplain but with a vertical wall so birds like bank swallows have a place to nest. They said they are already seeing some nesting in a few places. "Stuff recolonizes real quickly," Biederman said.

Fourth, more grasses and maybe even flowers grow on the banks offering places for non-game wildlife to live.

Here are some other things we learned:

- In streams with brook trout, brown trout can be a competitor, so it's good to keep some browns. "Keep a brown trout, save a brook trout."
- Both showed before and after photos of projects, explaining what was done. One interesting one Hoffman talked about was Mazeppa Creek that has a monstrously high bank in one sharp bend. "It's like we are still dealing with those problems from 100 years ago" when wretchedly bad land use severely eroded hillsides and left deep gullies and streams in such bad shape.
- Vegetation management has become a bigger thing, Biederman said. They once contracted to have crews come back for one or two years. Now it's three years because it takes that long for vegetation to be established. Yet they also showed examples of new grasses flattened by floods yet they held, they stayed in place, they keep the banks from washing away.
- In winter, DNR crews cut out unwanted brush and other plants to keep the stream sides clearer (that unfortunately does not stop all nasties like wild parsnip from invading and conquering).
- They are doing erosion loss estimates and the amount seemed staggering. Little Winnebago Creek can have 218.2 tons flow down, mostly in snowmelt or after heavy rains.
- For 2024 and 2025, planned stream improvement projects and their length are: Maple Creek, 3,298 feet; Mill Creek, 6,170 feet; Trout Brook, 3,600 feet; Mazeppa Creek, 890 feet; Rice Creek, 6,996 feet; Cold Spring Brook, 4,917 feet; Gilbert Creek, 4,600 feet; and Root River in Lanesboro, length unknown.

Win-Cres TU Meeting Notes

By Mark Reisetter Win-Cres Board member

The Whitewater State Park Veterans Fly Fishing Retreat was held September 16 from 8 a.m.- 5:30 p.m. Win-Cres members were involved in several of the day's activities, including casting practice and as guides from 1-5 p.m.

Dave Shaffer shared that the brush mower has been repaired and stored at Paul Girtler's as we have reached the end of the mowing season. Dave picked up the new gas chain saw purchased from M&M in Rushford, paid for with the rest of the grant from Stihl. Paul Girtler has purchased plastic bins to house materials during non-mowing season.

Roger Berg brought forth the possibility of Win-Cres having a booth at the August 22 – September 2, 2024, Minnesota State Fair. Mark Reisetter contacted Janine Kohn, the DNR Project Wet Program Coordinator, asking her to pencil in the Win-Cres Chapter for a booth at the state fair. Janine is supportive of Win-Cres' involvement. Roger will investigate information as it comes out regarding our involvement.

Chuck Shepard updated efforts to eradicate Japanese Knotweed. Chuck shared that the results from previous syringe injections support this approach as a means of effectively ensuring the plant's demise. Chuck purchased a handheld injector costing \$332 for which he has been reimbursed. The new injector is specifically designed to inoculate knotweed and is an efficient means of inoculation. Kevin O'Brien DNR Forestry Department, Lewiston office, said he plans on getting the knotweed on state land along Garvin Brook sprayed this fall.

Dusty Hoffman, DNR, reported that Melissa Wagner (Lanesboro area supervisor) stated that the willow whacking along Garvin Brook will need to have the proper documentation before proceeding. Win-Cres will move that activity to March 2024. Dusty recommended that the brush pile from the work done on Steve Briggs' land be burned during winter. He also reported on fencing removal at Jim Albrecht's farm, and shared updates on upcoming stream restoration projects.

Tom Stoa, Win-Cres Treasurer, said checks have been made out to the city of Winona for use of Sobieski Lodge for our 2024 winter meetings. Tom also shared a copy of the document regarding Win-Cres' Joe Lepley Endowment Fund established with the Winona Community Foundation.

Bruce Fuller has been working with the City of Winona regarding the proposed bench honoring Joe Lepley for his generous bequest to Win-Cres as well as his leadership to Win-Cres, and service to the Driftless area. The city would like the bench to be installed next spring to coincide with the cherry blossom's emergence. The cost of the bench will be \$2000 which Win-Cres will pay for, and the city will install. A plaque honoring Joe and an accompanying inscription will be decided upon at another time.

Programs for future membership meetings will be as follows:

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

November 29 – Jennie Biederman, MNTU

These meetings will be held at Sobieski Lodge, 965 East 7th St, Winona. Social hour at 6:00 p.m. and presentations at 7:00 p.m. The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend.

A Shoutout to TCTU Volunteers

By Bob Luck, President of TCTU

The Trico Hatch is fading quickly, and I have been seeing some Blue Wing Olives popping up on our streams. Fall is knocking on the door! With Fall comes a new season of chapter meetings. Last year the Twin Cities Chapter held all its chapter meetings in the West Metro (Eden Prairie), but we are going to alternate between the East and West metro areas this year. We have identified two venues in the East Metro: the VFW in North St. Paul, and the Wild Boar in Oakdale. We are going to test both venues this year, starting with the VFW, and decide which one we like best. In the West Metro, we are going to stick with the Fat Pants Brewing Company. If you happen to be visiting the Twin Cities, we'd love to see you in person at one of our chapter meetings, but we also offer a Zoom option for all meetings, so you lucky folks who live right next to a trout stream in Decorah, Winona, Spring Valley or Lewiston can feel free to attend from the comfort of your home.

We have a new chapter meeting coordinator this year, Rick Phetsavong. Rick is a fishing guide and weightlifting coach, and the best streamside chef in Minnesota. The photo is Rick cooking Kalbi Ribs at a recent outing on Hay Creek. Yum. Rick is nothing if not creative, and he is bringing in some interesting speakers. Exhibit A is our September speaker, Matt Jennings (aka the Master of Milwaukee), who will be talking about fishing Lake Michigan tributaries. The brown trout that Matt pulls out of those streams are so huge that photos of them look like cheap fakes. But they are real! All of our chapter meetings through March are now live on the TCTU [website](#), and the April and May meetings should be there soon.

In October, our chapter meeting will be replaced by [Oktoberfish](#), an in-person event to celebrate the end of the trout season in Minnesota and raise funds for Youth Education throughout Minnesota. We will also be holding a silent auction that may interest you. Lots of great fly-fishing gear, experiences (such as a cabin stay on Wisel Creek) and guided trips, including one offered by Rick—with lunch! If you want to try those Kalbi ribs for yourself, check out the auction [here](#).



Flyfishing Women of Minnesota Update

By Sally Noll, Chair FFWNMN

For “Fishing Around Town” events, the club had a session to do some Mississippi River fishing from Pike Island at Fort Snelling State Park in late August, hosted by Sally Noll. A nice bass was caught, and fish were rising to the surface, but it was difficult to get more bites on the flies we were using. Regardless it was a beautiful evening to be by the river! Our next event is located a little further way and is titled “Fishing Around Town on the Road in Preston MN”; Saturday September 23 and Sunday September 24. Hosted by Monta Hayner.



For other matters, FFWNMN board sent in comments on the dam removal and restoration project for the Kinnickinnic River to Corp of Engineers. It will be interesting to get future updates on the project. Our annual club membership meeting will be held November 9. Nominations for board positions are currently being solicited. 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 at <https://flyfishingwomenmn.com/>



Iowa Driftless Chapter

By Mike Rogers, President



On September 9, 30 friends and chapter volunteers met at the Decorah Fish Hatchery to build 25 bank hides that will be placed on upcoming stream projects at Patterson Creek and North Bear Creek. The chapter also funded the wood used to build the bank hides. At the September monthly chapter meeting, the chapter voted to dedicate \$7500 of funding to upcoming projects on North Bear Creek.

Next chapter meeting will be Thursday October 5th, 7pm in the basement space of T-Bock's Sports Bar & Grill in Decorah, IA. The meeting will also be held virtually each month thru google meet. If anyone is interested in joining or staying in the loop on their chapter, please email tuiadriftless@gmail.com.



Win-Cres Upcoming Meeting

By Dave Shaffer

A state hydrologist working on a major restoration of the North Branch of the Root River will be the speaker at the Oct. 25 membership meeting of the Win-Cres Chapter of Trout Unlimited. TU members are invited to dinner at 6 p.m. at the [Sobieski Park Lodge](#), 965 7th St, Winona, followed by the presentation at 7 p.m.

Jeff Weiss, a hydrologist with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, has a key role in the nearly \$2 million effort to undo environmental consequences of an early 20th century hydropower plant on the river upstream from Lanesboro, Minn. He will describe the restoration and why it is needed.

The restoration project, expected to be done in 2024, seeks to re-meander the river closer to its original course, and to stabilize stream banks on the oxbow surrounding the Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center. The center and the Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District are partners in the project.



Jeff Weiss, a Minnesota Department of Natural Resources hydrologist, shows where the North Branch of the Root River, is being eroded below the site of the former Brightdale Dam. The dam sent much of the river's flow into a long-abandoned tunnel and power generating plant.

MNDNR: Becoming an Outdoor Woman

By Marlen Huston

Eagle Bluff Learning Center was the site of **MNDNR Becoming an Outdoor Women** program, September 15-17, 2023. BOW weekend workshops are for Women to try different activities. This fall workshop featured two fly fishing classes: *Introduction to Fly Fishing* (12 participants) and *On the Water* (10 Participants). Classes were led by Marlene Huston, CCI (Hiawatha TU, Win-Cres TU, RRRod Co, FFI) and volunteers Alayna Sobieniak (owner, Root River Rod Co), Wayne Pray (RRRod Co guide), Lee Stoe and Eric



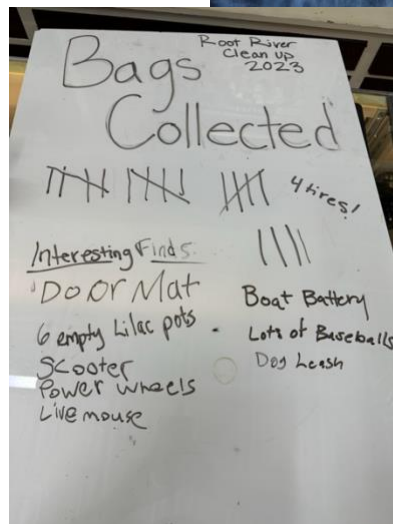
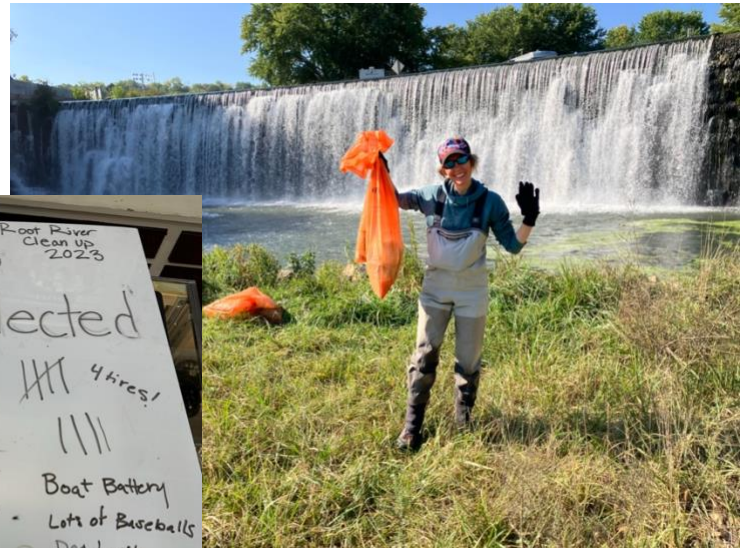
Lommen (TCTU, thanks to Gary Wittrock for putting the call out to TCTU Train the Trainer participants!). *On the Water* guides included the above and Tom Huston, Jamie and Joan Morely, and Sarah Sanford (Kiap-TU-Wish TU). Flies and fly boxes for the *On the Water* class were donated by Grace Glander (Laughing trout fly tiers) and the following Hiawatha TU members: Paul Krolak, Carl Berberich, Lance Prado, Ray Ricketts, Blake Abdella, John Weiss, Micheal Melford, and Lucas Dankwart. Win-Cres TU loaned the rods for the event.

Great seeing TU members from various chapters to come out to help. Thanks again everyone!

Root River Cleanup

By Lance Prado

Root River Rod Co hosted its annual Root River clean up this past weekend on Sunday 17. The Root River sees a lot of recreation Tubing, Canoeing, Kayaking and fly fishing. At the end of season Root River Rod Co hosts a river clean-up to keep the river looking and fishing great. This year the river clean-up was dedicated to Steve Sobieniak who passed away last fall and was the founder of Root River Rod Co. We had a great turn out of people and donations from great companies for giveaways and prizes. There was about 15 full bags of garbage, Tires, Door Mats and various trash items picked up between the Lanesboro dam and the first canoes landing. People went out in groups on foot, and we also had two drift boats that went down to hit the places that are hard to get to from shore. Everyone that showed up worked hard and did a great job. We look forward to having a river clean up again for next year. Be sure to sign up at Rootriverrodco.com email list so that you can join us.



Fly of The Month: Ice Dub Pheasant Tail Euro Jig

By Lance Prado, HTU Board member



Fly of the Month is a Pheasant Tail with an Ice Dub Wing case. This fly is super productive year-round and is relatively easy to tie. I personally like to tie this in a size 16 and use it under an indicator or tight lined. It can also be used as a dropper from your favorite terrestrial. This is one fly that is a must have in your fly box. Click the link to watch the full tutorial video on YouTube and be sure to subscribe.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jgvYxJOpE4&t=20s>

Monthly Fishing Reports

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

Fall is in the air the brown trout are on the move. We are starting to see brown trout sporting their fall spawning colors and they are getting vicious. Fall is a great time to catch a larger brown trout using bigger streamers. Also, we are still seeing Tricos, BWO's and Caddis. Hoppers are still working well, and they should be around until the first frost. There isn't much longer to explore Southeast MN for stream trout before the season closes October 15 then it goes to designated areas like Lanesboro and the surrounding state parks and more. So be sure to get out now and explore. As always Root River Rod Co is stocked with all the best flies and gear so be sure to stop in or check us out online. Feel free to call if you are looking for more information.

Decorah IA: [Bear Creek Anglers](#)

Still no changes in water levels aside from them continuing to drop, but water temps will be safe to fish moving forward until the winter months even in the upper Iowa.

Trico hatches are remaining good through late morning, elk hair caddis are still working at times during late evening, with other small appearances of BWO hatches. Patterns most effective:

-Tricos size 18-22

-Elk hair caddis size 16, orange is a favorite body color of ours.

-BWO size 18-22

-Griffith's Gnat sizes 18-22

-Adam's and parachute Adam's sizes 16-20

-Don't forget about terrestrials too early in the season—size 12 and 14 beetle patterns

For nymph fishing—mayfly, caddis, scud, midge with some favorites being:

-any caddis larvae/emergers

-pheasant tails, hare's ear (try with a hot pink bead head), prince nymph all sizes 16-18, perdigon size 16-18 (red or green butted tail end with black thread above, silver tungsten bead head, flash tinsel hotspot/wing casing), and rainbow warrior patterns.

-Grey scuds size 14-18

-Streamer fishing has been as successful for those tossing them as any other method from reports.

Upcoming Events Schedule:

Flyfishing Women of MN "Fishing Around Town on the Road in Preston MN"; Saturday September 23 and Sunday September 24. Hosted by Monta Hayner.

MCEA's annual event: Legally Green on the River Oct 1, 2023 1:00 pm [Tickets are here.](#)
Leopold's Mississippi Gardens, 9500 W River Rd, Minneapolis

Hiawatha TU Members Meeting: Oct 2, 2023, 7:00pm at 125 Live 125 Elton Hills Dr NW, Rochester

Iowa Driftless Chapter members meeting Thursday October 5th, 7pm in the basement space of T-Bock's Sports Bar & Grill in Decorah, IA

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 Park Lodge](#), 965 7th St, Winona, followed by the presentation at 7 p.m.

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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