

JANUARY/FEBRUARY 2006

TROUT TALK

Schrems West Michigan Trout Unlimited



Dedicated to Conserve, Protect & Restore West Michigan Cold Water Fisheries and their Watersheds

Conservation Committee Update

By David Smith

As I write this, we have been hit with heavier than normal snow in December, and the temptation for many to hibernate until spring is strong, but for the Conservation Committee, it has been busy few months. Starting with November, and working with our friends from the Lansing and the Chicago Oakbrook TU Chapters, we completed a project on the Coldwater River near Freeport to restore the river channel and prevent major stream bank erosion. We have also met twice and exchanged several emails on some new initiatives for the future.

The first project is our "Home Rivers" initiative. With this initiative we want to more clearly identify our local coldwater rivers where we feel that it is our responsibility to take a leadership role in their protection. We are working to develop a list of these rivers, but in general we feel that our "Home Rivers" includes the coldwater tributaries of the Grand River, the Muskegon and Coldwater Rivers.

We will continue to directly support conservation efforts on other rivers in Michigan based upon the interests of our membership. We will continue our efforts on rivers like the Pere Marquette, the AuSable and the Manistee, but we are more clearly defining where we need to focus our leadership and attention. An initial survey to identify coldwater rivers and streams within our local area identified over 24 rivers! We really do live in an area that is blessed with an abundance of coldwater habitat for trout. Our mission is to preserve, protect and restore these coldwater fisheries so that we can enjoy them long into the future.

As part of this initiative, we will target one or more rivers each year for special focus. This focus may include stream surveys, in stream projects for habitat improvement and erosion prevention, education for landowners on the river, and potential grants to landowners for stream improvements. Look for more information on our Home Rivers Initiative on the WMTU web site later this winter or early spring.

As part of our leadership role, members of our Conservation Committee are now aligned and a part of the different watershed councils in our area. Paul Eberhart, Dick Smith, and Ron Barch are all members of the Coldwater River Watershed Council. Brad Boomstra is our new representative to the Rogue River Watershed Council with Dick Smith volunteering to serve as our alternate. Paul Eberhart was recently hired as the Grand River Watcher for West Michigan Environmental Action Council (WMEAC). Hopefully we will be able to leverage our resources by working with these other organizations.

Our second project is to continue to prioritize and implement our many projects identified from the Forest Stewardship plan for our property along the Coldwater River. We are currently working through the permit process that will allow us to enhance some wetlands areas on the property and we are also targeting some invasive species control of Garlic Mustard this spring. A member of the Lansing TU Chapter donated a wood chipper to us for our use in improving the trail network on the property. We definitely do not have a shortage of projects on our list as we move into 2006!

We hope that by developing better long range plans that we can improve our ability to communicate and resource these projects. Look for further information on our conservation efforts at our banquet this spring, and if you are able or willing to help out on these or other projects, please let any member of the Conservation Committee know.

DINNER SEMINARS

Friday, January 27 2006
at the Hilton Hotel on
28th and Patterson



Kevin Feenstra
Swinging Streamers
for Steelies

SWMTU
Board Meetings
1st Tuesday of every month
6:00 PM

Leave Messages at:
Voice Creel
616-752-8596

E-mail: wmtu@wmtu.org
Website: www.wmtu.org

SCHREMS WEST MICHIGAN

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TROUT UNLIMITED

JANUARY SEMINAR: *Swinging Streamers for Steelies*

Kevin Feenstra will talk about steelhead fishing the Muskegon River with streamer patterns. Kevin is a West Michigan guide who's on the rivers 250 days a year. He considers himself a traditionalist and prefers to swing flies in the time-honored West coast manner. Most of his steelhead fishing involves swinging flies of his own design on a sinking-tip line.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!!! BRING A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER!!!

Please RSVP by Monday, January 23 to wmtu@wmtu.org or 616-752-8596.

When RSVPing, please leave your name, number and the number attending. You can assume that we got your RSVP. If for some reason the seminar gets changed, we'll contact you.

Here are the particulars:

Dates: Friday, January 27, 2006

Place: Grand Rapids Hilton - Patterson and 28th ST SE

Time: Doors Open at 6:00 pm, Dinner at 7:00 pm

Cost: \$20. Includes Dinner - there will be a Cash Bar

 **Committee Reports...**
The 2006 Annual Fundraising Banquet

will be held on *March 24, 2006 at the Hilton Hotel* on the corner of 28th Street and Patterson. We have moved the date up several weeks to better accommodate members who have conflicts with spring break and other events. We will also open the doors earlier to give all a chance to peruse the raffle and auction tables, catch up with old friends, and make new. Please mark your calendars now so that you will be able to attend the Banquet.

This year we are focusing on providing an abundance of rods and reels to individually raffle. There will be a special pre-dinner raffle for a spey rod/reel package, and several other special rod/reel combo raffles throughout the night. As usual, we will have the normal assortment of bucket raffle items, blind auctions and live auctions with premium fishing gear, original artwork, camping equipment, a GPS unit, a digital camera, and door prizes for all.

We are also seeking donations of items that could be raffled, or included in the auctions. Donated items do not need to be fancy, as people look forward to unique items on which to place bids. Please also consider donating weekend rentals, services, event tickets, or anything else you can think of. We will gladly arrange for pick-up of any item(s), please contact JR Hartman at 616-453-8344 or jr@hhmetalsource.com.

November 12, 2005 Coldwater River Project

By Paul Eberhart

On Nov. 12th, three TU Chapters and the CWRWC combined their efforts to clear a major stream-obstructing logjam above the town of Freeport. Chainsaws and brute strength (we really need a power winch) took care of most of the problem. The Barry County Drain Commissioner Tom Doyle is going to hire an excavating contractor to finish the heavy lifting and the removal of accumulated sediment from the stream bed. A very good time was had by the Oakbrook, Lansing, and one member of the Schrems Chapter in this effort. The weather was beautiful if chilly, lunch was spectacular, (Shamrock's famous pulled pork and scalloped potatoes). Lansing member Dick Augustine donated a chipper-shredder to the Coldwater River Watershed Council for use on trail work on the TU property and various access points on the river corridor. Thank You Dick! We also want to thank Mrs. Doris Dipp for granting access to the river thru her farm.

 **Just Beyond the Bend...**
Characters in the Stream

By Toney Sisk - Taken from the Housatonic Fly Fishermen's Association

We've all seen them--Characters. Fellow flyfishers who have given us pause--either because they inspire us, humor us . . . or cause us to run the other way. The following is a collection of people I've seen or fished with who strike me as interesting fishing characters (some bizarre, a few possibly insane). None of these characters remotely resemble you or me, keep in mind. And it is not relevant that some of them catch more fish than you or me. That's not the point. The point is . . . well, I'm not sure what the point is, but follow along anyway.

The Entomologist- This one knows bugs. All bugs. Doesn't even have to make up bug names. Can pronounce the scientific names of all bugs, as evidenced by his pointing out that you cannot pronounce any of them correctly. Has one fly box for every species of midge, caddis, and stonefly. Two for mayflies. Three for spinners. His six "summer boxes" have

dozens of grasshoppers with three colors of legs, ants in three shades of cinnamon, locusts (in preparation for the 17th year hatch) and billions of beetles. He has no woolly buggers. Often seen peering into small streams, exploring two-inch fingerlings with the same excitement as the Rambo type (see below) fighting a 38-inch steelhead. Sometimes dons scuba gear in two inches of water, getting animated about little pink eggs.

The Connected Crowd- This is the walkie-talkie/shortwave flyfisher, possibly touting a GPS and mapping software on his car laptop or palm-sized digital assistance. If he doesn't have a fly on a line, he is researching fly fishing online, and has his browser's favorites set to every flyfishing and insect database in existence. Where spotted: steelhead streams. He needs a worthy adversary. This one has the stalking skills of a sniper, that's why he brings a friend as a spotter with a walkie-talkie. Some may even be shortwave pirates on the lam, occasionally seen throwing dipoles in trees, launching their thoughts over USE and FM, watching their 6 for the FCC.

Rambo with a Fly Rod- A very courageous trout warrior. He has fished where no man has fished before. Has his proven steelhead flies pinned into the wall above his bed, to "impress the girls." Has been known to follow a small drainage for four days with a 50 pound pack on his back, with a compass or GPS in one hand and a fly rod in the other, catching IS-inch indigenous cutthroat trout, the color of which has never been seen before. Doesn't even have to lie as he sucks all the air out of the club house proclaiming his gift to flyfishing godliness. When not in the mountains, is sometimes seen with the Connected Crowd.

Average Joe- This one has just started out fly fishing 10 years ago, dropped the sport for five years, and is picking it up again, and again, and again each season. Has 6 types of flies, but fishes with only a Royal Wulff, but is beginning to think about bead-head nymphs. Will dutifully listen to anything you have to say about fishing, but won't understand anything you have to say about fishing. Will automatically assume you are a better fisherman and worth listening to because. . . well . . . you're the one doing all the talking and he is nice enough to not tell you to shut up.

The Terminator- Has the cunning of backyard cat. Tee shirt reads, "I practice catch and kill." Bumper sticker reads "My other car is pan-fried fish." Fish is food--no ifs, ands or buts. One thing is certain: this one is getting plenty of Omega-3 fatty acids and will outlive you or me. He wants big fish, really big fish, and catches them with one of five flies: black woolly bugger, red woolly bugger, brown woolly bugger, olive woolly bugger, and a yellow woolly bugger. Could easily beat the crap out of 12 Entomologists. Sometimes seen with the Rambo type. Show him a chironomid and he'll punch you. Mention that he should try an Ephemerella pattern, and he'll beat you up, thinking you just called him a homosexual.

No Fish Guy- This is person who is dutiful about all aspects of the sport. Practices casting on occasion, studies bugs to an extent, buys reasonable flies, kicked over a rock once to see what was underneath and then decided what he saw resembled bugs in books but nothing he or anyone else has ever tied. Catches small fish, but seems happy anyway. Also known as most everybody.

The Old Man- This man fished with Theodore Gordon, so he says. He probably has. He ties Bumblepuppies, Tup Indispensables and Cock-y-bundhu patterns just for laughs and shows them to the "chironomid kids", as he calls the young kids on his once favorite lake, which he'll constantly tell you was "His" lake until flyfishers started becoming more numerous than the midges. Being resourceful with materials at hand when need be, he has been known to tie with dog hair, but mainly ties with starling wings and bizarre parts of mammals and birds from English parts of the world. Sometimes found crouching next to a stream tossing ancient flies to a trout named George, who has been caught and released hundreds of times with the old man's flies. The fish will soon die of old age or boredom.



letter to the Editor...

from Paul W. Eberhart- in his own words...

Lumber or Forage?

The Dolan Natural Area/TU Property has been a wonderful asset for the Schrems Chapter for about twenty years. Over the last year the Board has put forth the effort to plan how this "pristine" resource should be used, according to the provisions in the deed, recommended by the generous donor, the Maher family. One of the options in the Forest Stewardship Plan is to harvest marketable hardwood trees to provide monetary resources to complete the other parts of the plan. As the unofficial caretaker of the area and a board member myself I have given considerable thought to this matter. I am not totally opposed to some tree harvest, but a good portion of the valuable trees are just as important to the wild residents of the property. The food produced by these trees is a good portion of the fall diet for animals that need to put on reserves for the winter season. The deer are already impacting the wildflowers such as the trillium so that the only place they grow now is where they can not be reached.

Removing acorns and beech nuts and hickory nuts will just contribute to more foliage damage in the next year and force them to cross roads to access agricultural crops in the area. Wild turkeys also use the mast crop (nuts, etc.) extensively. A solution? Come to the fundraising banquet and help us raise enough funds to do the coldwater conservation work in the Plan so we can leave the trees where they are, providing food, oxygen, and shade. Go to the website and review the Forest Stewardship Plan and comment by email or phone.

Conservation Committee Chair- Paul W. Eberhart

SWMTU LOGO T-SHIRTS

As a fund raising effort, the chapter will be offering great looking t-shirts with the SWMTU logo. These t-shirts are high quality cotton with a chest patch embroidery of the SWMTU logo. We will have long sleeve and short sleeve t-shirts available for direct order or available at seminars. Short sleeve are \$20, long sleeve \$25. For more info, or to order a shirt, call Teresa Skye at 616-826-0367. Remember, any support of your chapter helps fund projects that directly impact your fishing enjoyment!



...from the Fly Bench

NYPH FISHING FOR STEELHEAD

by Dick Smith

The farther upstream steelhead go, the more likely it is that small flies will be needed to catch them. If the water is very clear, or shallow, or cold, or the sun is shining brightly, it is more likely that an anadromous fish will take a small nymph or a single egg fly, than it is that the fish will take a larger fly, such as a streamer or wooly bugger.

One of the most common things I hear streamer fishermen say when they are fishing to fish on the redds is, "They keep following the fly, but they won't take it." What often looks like a fish following a streamer is really a fish backing downstream to get out of its way, and then returning to its place on the redd.

Anadromous fish become very active in the changing light of dawn and dusk. In the spring and fall when the water temperature is in the comfortable range for them, early and late are the times of day when steelhead are most likely to take a fly. But in the winter, when the water temperature is cold, the small rise in temperature that occurs in the afternoon, and peaks about four o'clock is the most likely time for a steelhead to take a fly.

The **spring wiggler**, which was tied to imitate a Hexagenia nymph, has been around for over fifty years. Steelhead have been caught on it every winter since it was developed, and it will catch some more steelhead this winter. It was originally tied by the owner of Spring's bait and tackle in Muskegon and it is the standard steelhead fly stocked by tackle stores today. The first ones were tied with yellow chenille for the body, but today they come in almost every possible body color.

Tail - fox squirrel tail. The squirrel tail strands are used both as tail and overlayment for the body. It is tied in tightly nearly the full length of the hook shank, and the tail should extend out farther than it will finally end up. Tie in a piece of gold wire, and a nice soft brown hackle.

Body - yellow chenille.

Hackle - wrap the soft brown hackle the full length of the body. The body should be about five-eighths of an inch long with about four wraps of hackle. Hackles are generally longer today, and more couple more wraps is fine.



Overlayment - take half to two-thirds of the strands of the tail and pull them forward over the back. Tie them in place and then wrap the gold wire over the strands on about the same path as the hackle was wrapped, to segment the fly and strengthen it. Trim it and tie it all off. Trim the tail fibers to the length you want them.

In late winter and early spring, small **early stoneflies** will crawl out on the shelf ice to hatch. If there is no ice they crawl out on the shoreline. We have several different early stoneflies in Western Michigan, but they are all small and nearly black. Every imitation of an early stonefly eventually ends up being tied too large. We always worry that the steelhead won't see the small nymph we are offering them. But steelhead notice everything that comes near them in the water and those steelhead made a living eating small nymphs when they were in the river the first time. They can see them very well and they recognize them as one of their early food sources.

The best of the early stonefly patterns that I have used is tied this way.

Tail - about six strands of gray squirrel tail, tied in so they extend a quarter of an inch beyond the hook.

Body - iron blue dun spun fur. The body should be thin and about a half inch long, which is bigger than the naturals.

Rib - gold wire.

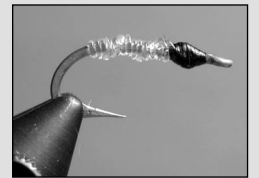
Wing case - soft black hair or black squirrel tail, tied about one-third the body length.

Hackle - two wraps of soft grizzly angled back slightly.

Green Rhyacophila caddis patterns work good for steelhead and resident trout on the Muskegon. A new one I have been tying is easy to tie and it catches fish. I tie it on heavier hooks when it is meant for steelhead. It is tied this way.

Body - twenty pound test Stren hi-vis green catfish line. The line is tied in at the head and wrapped about three times going back to the bend in the hook. Then it is wrapped back to the head to shape the body.

Head - the black tying thread wrapped heavily around to cover the two ends of the hi-vis line.



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MISSION STATEMENT

To conserve, protect and restore West Michigan's coldwater fisheries and their watersheds and to provide a forum for the exchange of information concerning coldwater fisheries and the techniques and the sport of trout fishing.

SWMTU EVENT CALENDAR**January 27, 2006****Dinner Seminar - Kevin Feenstra talks about streamer fishing for steelhead on the Muskegon River****February 24, 2006****Dinner Seminar - John Miller, guide and master bug photographer, will talk about the changing hatches on the Muskegon River.****March 26, 2006****Annual Fundraising Banquet - Hilton Hotel in Grand Rapids.**

The Chapter would like to thank *The Allstate Insurance Foundation* and *The Milnes Group LLC* for its generous donation of \$500. Please don't forget to add SWMTU to your company's list of possible donors for 2006. Remember, it's a qualified tax deduction for your company and it goes to a great cause.

 **Last Cast...****BOOK REVIEWS** Reviewed by Bruce E. Harang**Fit to Fish – By Stephen L. Hisey and Keith R. Berend**

Frank Amato Publications, Inc., Portland, OR, 2005

158 pages, softbound, illustrated, color, suggested price \$19.95

This is a very interesting book about how to protect against injury while fly fishing and how to recover from injuries if they occur written by a MD and a Physical Therapist who have studied fly fishing related injuries. The book is broken down into eight chapters and a final word as well as an excellent glossary and an index. The first three chapters discuss Fishing and Pain, Pain and Its Origins, and the Basic Concepts of Self-Treatment. While these discussions are important, and are a must read, they are a bit of a slow read. But stay the course because the next five chapters are not only much easier to read they are extremely interesting and helpful to the fly fisherman. Chapter four discusses the shoulder that allows a layperson to understand why, where, and how the various injuries to your shoulder happen. Chapter five discusses the elbow and the differences between tennis elbow and golf elbow. Chapter six looks at the wrist and how it is affected by the repetition of casting all day. Chapter seven discusses low back pain in relation to fly-fishing, casting, and stalking fish. Chapter eight teaches the reader about injuries and pain to knees and ankles. All of the chapters have great color illustrations and photos to help explain the joints and connecting tissue involved as well as illustrate exercises to help prevent injury as well as to recover from injury.

Anyone who is limited to a few weeks of fly-fishing each year or is planning a once in a lifetime fishing trip needs to read this book and follow the advice for preventative exercises. In addition, the knowledge of how to treat an injury when it occurs will lessen the severity and duration which might just be the difference between fly-fishing on your trip and sitting in the boat watching your buddies fly-fishing on your trip. Furthermore, by knowing how to treat an injury right after it happens can mean less damage and quicker recovery.

For anyone who fly fishes this is one of the best pieces of fishing gear you can purchase. And at \$20.00 it is also one of the least expensive quality fly-fishing products you will encounter.

2005-06 COMMITTEES: Conservation- Paul Eberhart, Chair- Dick Smith, Ron Barch, Dave Smith, Bradley Boomstra, Membership/Education- Cregg Start, Chair- Dick Smith, Ron Barch, Dave DeJonge, Dave Smith, JR Hartman, Andy Milnes Fundraising- Eric Starck, Chair- Jim Scott, Teresa Skye, Larry Risbrider, Robert Fox, Michael Lindley State Council- Paul Eberhart, Ron Barch



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